NICE PROOFS

SCALLOP YE

Proposition 1. *Let $f : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ be a continuous function with period T, and let $x_0 \in \mathbb{R}$. If $f(x_0) \neq 0$ and $\int_0^T f(x)dx = 0$, then f has at least two zeros in the interval $I = (x_0, x_0 + T)$.*

Proof. The function f is periodic with period T, so

$$f(x_0 + T) = f(x_0) \neq 0,$$
$$\int_{x_0}^{x_0+T} f(x)dx = \int_0^T f(x)dx = 0.$$

Without loss of generality we may assume that $f(x_0 + T) = f(x_0) > 0$. By the mean value theorem for definite integrals, there exists a $c \in I$ such that

$$f(c) = \frac{1}{T}\int_{x_0}^{x_0+T} f(x)dx = 0.$$

Hence f has at least one zero in I. Suppose for sake of contradiction that f has only one zero in I. Again, suppose that $f(x) < 0$ for some $x \in I$. But by the intermediate value theorem f has an extra zero in (x_0, x) or $(x, x_0 + T)$, a contradiction. Thus we have $f(x) \geq 0$ for all $x \in I$. Since f is continuous, there exists an $a \in I$ such that

$$f(x) \geq \frac{f(x_0)}{2} \quad \forall x \in (x_0, a).$$

By the properties of the Riemann integral

$$\int_{x_0}^{a} f(x)dx \geq \int_{x_0}^{a} \frac{f(x_0)}{2}dx = \frac{a - x_0}{2}f(x_0) > 0,$$
$$\int_{a}^{x_0+T} f(x)dx \geq 0,$$
$$\int_{x_0}^{x_0+T} f(x)dx = \int_{x_0}^{a} f(x)dx + \int_{a}^{x_0+T} f(x)dx > 0.$$

This contradicts the fact that $\int_{x_0}^{x_0+T} f(x)dx = 0$. Thus f has at least two zeros in I, as desired. ∎