MA 137 — Calculus 1 for the Life Sciences
The Sandwich Theorem and Some Trigonometric Limits
(Section 3.4)

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The Sandwich (Squeeze) Theorem

Suppose we want to calculate $\lim_{x\to\infty} e^{-x}\cos(10x)$.

We soon realize that none of the rules we have learned so far apply. Although $\lim_{x\to\infty} e^{-x} = 0$, we find that $\lim_{x\to\infty} \cos(10x)$ does not exist as the function $\cos(10x)$ oscillates between -1 and 1.

We need to employ some other techniques. One of these techniques is to use the Squeeze (Sandwich) Theorem.

Sandwich (Squeeze) Theorem

Consider three functions $f(x)$, $g(x)$ and $h(x)$ and suppose for all x in an open interval that contains c (except possibly at c) we have

$$f(x) \le g(x) \le h(x).$$

If $\lim_{x\to c} f(x) = L = \lim_{x\to c} h(x)$ then $\lim_{x\to c} g(x) = L$.

From the inequality

$$-1 \leq \cos(10x) \leq 1$$

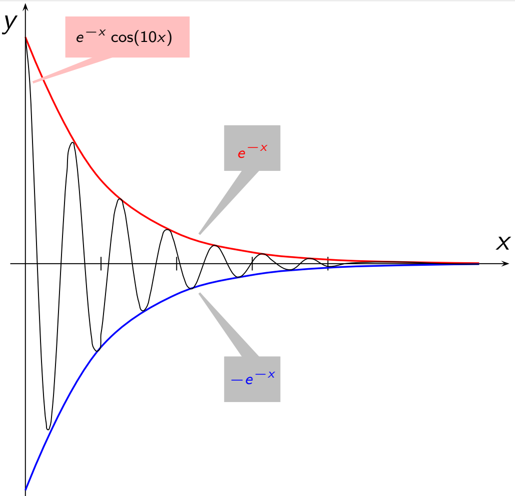
it follows that (as $e^{-x} > 0$, always)

$$-e^{-x} \leq e^{-x}\cos(10x) \leq e^{-x}$$

Then, since

$$\lim_{x\to\infty}(-e^{-x}) = 0 = \lim_{x\to\infty} e^{-x}$$

our function $g(x) = e^{-x}\cos(10x)$ is squeezed between the functions $f(x) = -e^{-x}$ and $h(x) = e^{-x}$, which both go to 0 as x tends to infinity.



So by the Squeeze Theorem it follows that

$$\lim_{x\to\infty} e^{-x}\cos(10x) = 0.$$

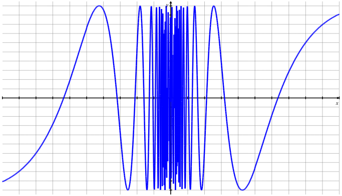
Example 1: (Online Homework HW10, # 2)

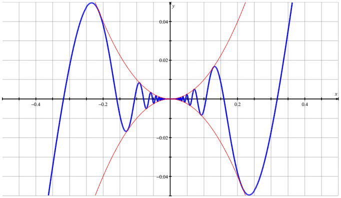
Suppose $-8x - 22 \leq f(x) \leq x^2 - 2x - 13.$

Use this to compute $\lim_{x \to -3} f(x).$

Example 2: (Neuhauser, Example # 1, p. 114)

Find $\displaystyle \lim_{x\to 0} x^2 \sin\left(\frac{1}{x}\right)$.





Fundamental Trigonometric Limits

The following two trigonometric limits are important for developing the differential calculus for trigonometric functions:

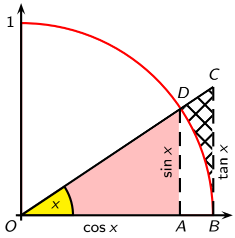
$$\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{\sin x}{x} = 1 \qquad \lim_{x \to 0} \frac{1 - \cos x}{x} = 0$$

- Note that the angle x is measured in radians.
- We will prove both statements.
- The proof of the first statement uses a nice geometric argument and the sandwich theorem.
- The second statement follows from the first.

Proof that $\lim_{x\to 0} \frac{\sin x}{x} = 1$

- Since we are interested in the limit as $x \to 0$, we can restrict the values of x to values close to 0.
- We split the proof into two cases, one in which $0 < x < \pi/2$, the other in which $-\pi/2 < x < 0$.
- Since $f(x) = \sin x/x$ is an even function (indeed, it is the quotient of two odd functions!) we only need to study the case $0 < x < \pi/2$.

  In this case, both x and $\sin x$ are positive.



We draw the unit circle together with the triangles OAD and OBC. The angle x is measured in radians. Since $\overline{OB} = 1$, we find that

$$\text{arc length of } BD = x \qquad \overline{OA} = \cos x \qquad \overline{AD} = \sin x \qquad \overline{BC} = \tan x.$$

Furthermore the picture illustrates that

$$\text{area of } OAD \leq \text{area of sector } OBD \leq \text{area of } OBC$$

The area of a sector of central angle x (in radians) and radius r is $\frac{1}{2}r^2x$.

Therefore, $\frac{1}{2}\cos x \cdot \sin x \leq \frac{1}{2} \cdot 1^2 \cdot x \leq \frac{1}{2} \cdot 1 \cdot \tan x.$

Dividing this pair of inequalities by $1/2\sin x$ yields

$$\cos x \leq \frac{x}{\sin x} \leq \frac{1}{\cos x}.$$

Solving now for $\sin x/x$ we obtain

$$\cos x \leq \frac{\sin x}{x} \leq \frac{1}{\cos x}.$$

We can now take the limit as $x \to 0^+$ and find that

$$\lim_{x\to 0^+} \cos x = 1 \qquad \lim_{x\to 0^+} \frac{1}{\cos x} = 1.$$

Finally the Sandwich Theorem yields $\lim_{x\to 0^+} \frac{\sin x}{x} = 1.$

By symmetry we also have that $\lim_{x\to 0^-} \frac{\sin x}{x} = 1.$

Proof that $\lim_{x\to 0} \frac{1-\cos x}{x} = 0$

Multiplying both numerator and denominator of $f(x) = (1-\cos x)/x$ by $1+\cos x$, we can reduce the second statement to the first:

$$\begin{aligned}
\lim_{x\to 0} \frac{1-\cos x}{x} &= \lim_{x\to 0} \frac{1-\cos x}{x} \cdot \frac{1+\cos x}{1+\cos x} \\
&= \lim_{x\to 0} \frac{1-\cos^2 x}{x(1+\cos x)} \\
&= \lim_{x\to 0} \frac{\sin^2 x}{x(1+\cos x)} \\
&= \lim_{x\to 0} \frac{\sin x}{x} \cdot \lim_{x\to 0} \frac{\sin x}{1+\cos x} \\
&= 1 \cdot 0 = 0
\end{aligned}$$

Example 3: (Online Homework HW10, # 7)

Evaluate $\displaystyle\lim_{\theta\to 0} \frac{\sin(4\theta)\sin(8\theta)}{\theta^2}$.

Example 4: (Online Homework HW10, # 10)

Evaluate $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{\tan(5x)}{\tan(6x)}$.

Example 5: (Neuhauser, Example 3(c), p. 118)

Evaluate $\lim_{x \to 0} \dfrac{\sec x - 1}{x \sec x}$.

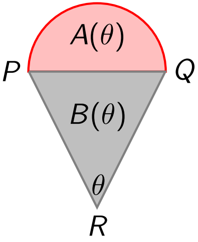
Example 6: (Online Homework HW10, # 13)

Evaluate $$\lim_{x \to \pi/4} \frac{3(\sin x - \cos x)}{5\cos(2x)}.$$

Example 7: (Online Homework HW10, # 14)

A semicircle with diameter PQ sits on an isosceles triangle PQR to form a region shaped like an ice cream cone, as shown in the figure. If $A(\theta)$ is the area of the semicircle and $B(\theta)$ is the area of the triangle, find

$$\lim_{\theta \to 0^+} \frac{A(\theta)}{B(\theta)}$$



Aside: Trigonometric and Exponential Functions

- We will sometimes use the double angle formulas

$$\begin{aligned}\cos(2\alpha) &= \cos^2\alpha - \sin^2\alpha \\ &= 2\cos^2\alpha - 1 \\ &= 1 - 2\sin^2\alpha\end{aligned} \quad \text{and} \quad \sin(2\alpha) = 2\sin\alpha\cos\alpha$$

which are special cases of the following addition formulas

$$\cos(\alpha+\beta) = \cos\alpha\cos\beta - \sin\alpha\sin\beta$$

$$\sin(\alpha+\beta) = \sin\alpha\cos\beta + \cos\alpha\sin\beta.$$

- What about $\sin(\alpha/2)$ and $\cos(\alpha/2)$? With some work

$$\cos(\alpha/2) = \pm\sqrt{\frac{1+\cos\alpha}{2}} \qquad \sin(\alpha/2) = \pm\sqrt{\frac{1-\cos\alpha}{2}}$$

(the sign ($+$ or $-$) depends on the quadrant in which $\dfrac{\alpha}{2}$ lies.)

- Is there a 'simple' way of remembering the above formulas?

Euler's Formula

Euler's formula states that, for any real number x,

$$\boxed{e^{ix} = \cos x + i \sin x,}$$

where i is the imaginary unit ($i^2 = -1$).

- For any α and β, using Euler's formula, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \cos(\alpha+\beta) + i\sin(\alpha+\beta) &= e^{i(\alpha+\beta)} \\ &= e^{i\alpha} \cdot e^{i\beta} \\ &= (\cos\alpha + i\sin\alpha)\cdot(\cos\beta + i\sin\beta) \\ &= (\cos\alpha\cos\beta + i^2 \sin\alpha\sin\beta) \\ &\qquad + i(\sin\alpha\cos\beta + \cos\alpha\sin\beta). \end{aligned}$$

- Thus, by comparing the terms, we obtain

$$\cos(\alpha+\beta) = \cos\alpha\cos\beta - \sin\alpha\sin\beta$$

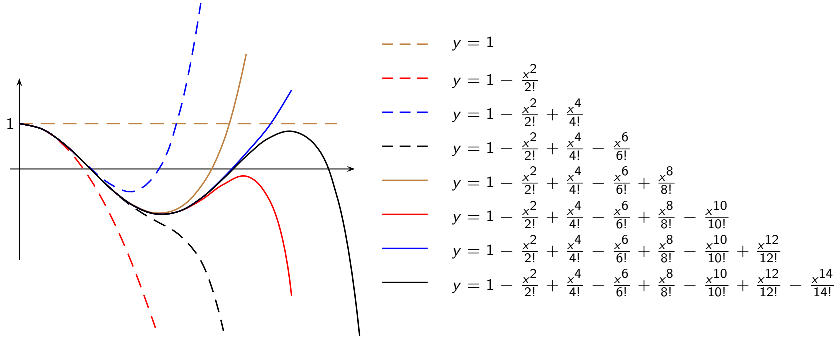
$$\sin(\alpha+\beta) = \sin\alpha\cos\beta + \cos\alpha\sin\beta.$$

Approximating $\cos x$

Consider the graph of the polynomial

$$T_{2n}(x) = 1 - \frac{x^2}{2!} + \frac{x^4}{4!} - \cdots + (-1)^{n-1}\frac{x^{2(n-1)}}{(2n-2)!} + (-1)^n\frac{x^{2n}}{(2n)!}.$$

As n increases, the graph of $T_{2n}(x)$ appears to approach the one of $\cos x$. This suggests that we can approximate $\cos x$ with $T_{2n}(x)$ as $n \to \infty$.

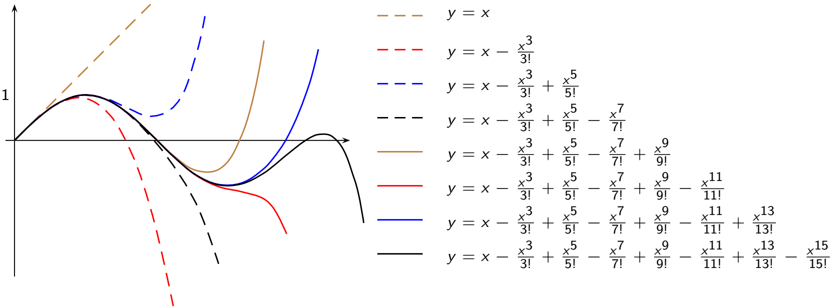


Approximating $\sin x$

Consider the graph of the polynomial

$$T_{2n+1}(x) = x - \frac{x^3}{3!} + \frac{x^5}{5!} - \cdots + (-1)^{n-1}\frac{x^{2n-1}}{(2n-1)!} + (-1)^n \frac{x^{2n+1}}{(2n+1)!}.$$

As n increases, the graph of $T_{2n+1}(x)$ appears to approach the one of $\sin x$. This suggests that we can approximate $\sin x$ with $T_{2n+1}(x)$ as $n \to \infty$.

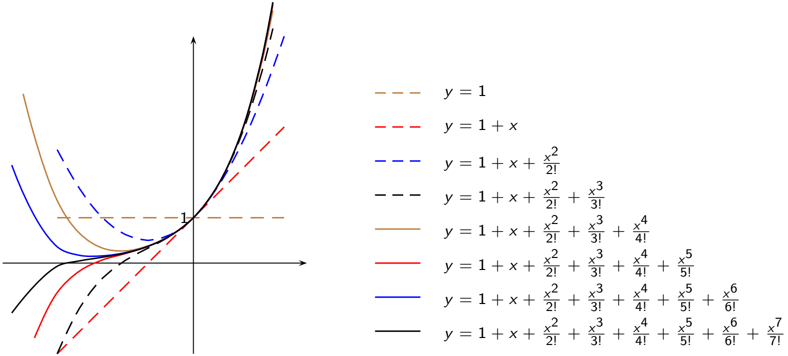


Approximating e^x

Consider the graph of the polynomial

$$T_n(x) = 1 + x + \frac{x^2}{2!} + \frac{x^3}{3!} + \frac{x^4}{4!} + \cdots + \frac{x^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} + \frac{x^n}{n!}.$$

As n increases, the graph of $T_n(x)$ appears to approach the one of e^x.
This suggests that we can approximate e^x with $T_n(x)$ as $n \to \infty$.



Idea of Why Euler's Formula Works

To justify Euler's formula, we use the polynomial approximations for e^x, $\cos x$ and $\sin x$ that we just discussed. We start by approximating e^{ix}:

$$\begin{aligned} e^{ix} &= 1 + ix + \frac{(ix)^2}{2!} + \frac{(ix)^3}{3!} + \frac{(ix)^4}{4!} + \frac{(ix)^5}{5!} + \frac{(ix)^6}{6!} + \frac{(ix)^7}{7!} + \frac{(ix)^8}{8!} + \cdots \\ &= 1 + ix - \frac{x^2}{2!} - \frac{ix^3}{3!} + \frac{x^4}{4!} + \frac{ix^5}{5!} - \frac{x^6}{6!} - \frac{ix^7}{7!} + \frac{x^8}{8!} + \cdots \\ &= \left(1 - \frac{x^2}{2!} + \frac{x^4}{4!} - \frac{x^6}{6!} + \frac{x^8}{8!} + \cdots\right) + i\left(x - \frac{x^3}{3!} + \frac{x^5}{5!} - \frac{x^7}{7!} + \cdots\right) \\ &= \cos x + i \sin x \end{aligned}$$

Curiosity: From Euler's formula with $x = \pi$ we obtain

$$e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$$

which involves five interesting math values in one short equation.