

**Assumed Knowledge** Finding the roots of quadratic equations.

Euler's formula  $e^{i\theta} = \cos \theta + i \sin \theta$ .

### Objectives

- (11a) To be able to write down the auxiliary (characteristic) equation associated with a second-order differential equation with constant coefficients.
- (11b) To be able to construct the solutions to such differential equations in terms of real exponential and trigonometric functions.

### Preparatory Questions

1. Write down the auxiliary (characteristic) equations for each the following second-order linear differential equations with constant coefficients, and find their roots:

(i)  $\frac{d^2y}{dt^2} + 2\frac{dy}{dt} - 8y = 0$

(ii)  $\frac{d^2y}{dt^2} + 2\frac{dy}{dt} - 4y = 0$

(iii)  $\frac{d^2y}{dt^2} - 9y = 0$

(iv)  $\frac{d^2y}{dt^2} - 2\frac{dy}{dt} + 5y = 0$

(v)  $\frac{d^2x}{dt^2} + 2\frac{dx}{dt} + x = 0$

### Practice Questions

2. Find the particular solution of Preparatory Question 1 (i) with  $y(0) = 0$  and  $y'(0) = 3$ .
3. Find the general solution of Preparatory Question 1 (ii).
4. Find the particular solution of Preparatory Question 1 (iii) which satisfies the initial conditions  $y = 3$  and  $\frac{dy}{dt} = 3$  when  $t = 0$ .
5. Find the general solution of Preparatory Question 1 (iv).  
Express your answer in terms of real functions.  
What is the particular solution satisfying  $y(0) = 1$  and  $y(\pi/4) = 2$ ?
6. Find the particular solution of Preparatory Question 1 (v) which satisfies the initial conditions  $x(0) = 1$  and  $x'(0) = 2$ .

## More Questions

7. Find the general solutions of these second-order homogeneous equations.  
In each case give your answer in terms of real functions.

$$(i) \quad 2\frac{d^2y}{dx^2} - 7\frac{dy}{dx} + 3y = 0. \qquad (ii) \quad \frac{d^2y}{dx^2} + 3y = 0.$$

$$(iii) \quad \frac{d^2y}{dx^2} - 2\frac{dy}{dx} + 2y = 0.$$

8. Find the general solution of each of these second-order linear homogeneous equations.  
Hence find the particular solution for the given conditions.  
In each case give your answer in terms of real functions.

$$(i) \quad \frac{d^2y}{dx^2} + \frac{dy}{dx} - 20y = 0, \quad y(0) = y'(0) = 1$$

$$(ii) \quad \frac{d^2y}{dx^2} + 9y = 0, \quad y(0) = 1, \quad y(\pi/6) = 3.$$

$$(iii) \quad \frac{d^2y}{dt^2} + 4\frac{dy}{dt} + 7y = 0, \quad y(0) = 0, \quad \frac{dy}{dt} = 3 \text{ when } t = 0.$$

$$(iv) \quad \frac{d^2x}{dt^2} - 4\frac{dx}{dt} + 4x = 0, \quad x(0) = 1, \quad x(1) = 3e^2.$$

## Answers to Selected Questions

1. (i) The auxiliary equation  $\lambda^2 + 2\lambda - 8 = 0$ . Roots  $\lambda = 2$  or  $\lambda = -4$ .  
(ii) The auxiliary equation  $\lambda^2 + 2\lambda - 4 = 0$ . Roots  $\lambda = -1 - \sqrt{5}$ .  
(iii) The auxiliary equation  $\lambda^2 - 9 = 0$ . Roots  $\lambda = 3$  or  $\lambda = -3$ .  
(iv) The auxiliary equation  $\lambda^2 - 2\lambda + 5 = 0$ . Roots  $\lambda = 1 \pm 2i$ .  
(v) The auxiliary equation  $\lambda^2 + 2\lambda + 1 = 0$ . This has two equal roots  $\lambda = -1$ .

2.  $y = \frac{1}{2}e^{2t} - \frac{1}{2}e^{-4t}$

3.  $y = e^{-t}(Ae^{\sqrt{5}t} + Be^{-\sqrt{5}t})$

4.  $y = 2e^{3t} + e^{-3t}$

5. General solution, real form, is  $y = e^t(E \cos 2t + F \sin 2t)(1 + 2i)t + Be^{(1-2i)t}$ .  
Particular solution is  $y = e^t(\cos 2t + 2e^{-\pi/4} \sin 2t)$

6.  $x = 3te^{-t} + e^{-t}$

7. (i)  $y = Ae^{x/2} + Be^{3x}$  (ii)  $y = A \cos \sqrt{3}x + B \sin \sqrt{3}x$

(iii)  $y = e^x(A \cos x + B \sin x)$

8. (i) General solution  $y = Ae^{-5x} + Be^{4x}$ . Particular solution  $y = \frac{1}{3}e^{-5x} + \frac{2}{3}e^{4x}$

(ii) General solution  $y = E \cos 3x + F \sin 3x$ . Particular solution  $y = \cos 3x + 3 \sin 3x$ .

(iii) General solution  $y = e^{-2t}(E \cos \sqrt{3}t + F \sin \sqrt{3}t)$ . Particular solution  $y = \sqrt{3}e^{-2t} \sin \sqrt{3}t$ .

(iv) General solution  $x = Ae^{2t} + Bte^{2t}$ . Particular solution  $x = e^{2t} + 2te^{2t}$ .