Outline

1. Basic Terminology
2. Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations
3. Examples
Basic Terminology

Second order differential equations can be written as

\[ F(x, y', y'') = 0. \]

This chapter is concerned with a specific type of second order equations. These are the second order linear equations.

**Definition**

A second order linear differential equation is an equation which can be written in the form

\[ y'' + p(x)y' + q(x)y = f(x) \]  \hspace{1cm} (1)

where \( p, q, \) and \( f \) are continuous functions on some interval \( I. \)
Basic Terminology

Definitions

Given a second order linear differential equation (1), we have the following terminology. The functions $p$ and $q$ are called the coefficients of the equation. The function $f$ is called the forcing function or the nonhomogeneous term.

Examples:

1. $y'' + 6y' + 8y = e^{3x} + \cos(2x)$

2. $x^2y'' + 7xy' + 8y = x^2$

3. $x^2y'' + 3xy^3y' - y = e^x$
Basic Terminology

Existence and Uniqueness

Given a second order linear equation (1). Let \( a \) be any point in the interval \( I \), and let \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) be any two real numbers. The IVP

\[
y'' + p(x)y' + q(x)y = f(x), \; y(a) = \alpha, \; y'(a) = \beta
\]

has a unique solution.

Remark

Unlike the case of first order linear equations where we can always find a solution, there is no general method for solving second (or higher) order linear differential equations. There will be methods for solving certain types of second order linear equations and these will be the focus of this chapter.
Basic Terminology

Definitions

The linear ODE (1) is *homogeneous* if the function \( f \) on the right side of the equations is 0 for all \( x \in I \). In this case, equation (1) becomes

\[
y'' + p(x)y' + q(x)y = 0. \tag{H}
\]

The equation (1) is *nonhomogeneous* if \( f \) is not the zero function on \( I \).

As we will see moving forward, most of our attention will be devoted to solving homogeneous equations.
The first thing we note about (H) is that the zero function $y \equiv 0$ is a solution:

$$y \equiv 0 \text{ gives } y' \equiv 0 \text{ and } y'' \equiv 0,$$

therefore we have

$$0 + p(x)0 + q(x)0 = 0.$$

We call the zero function the *trivial solution*. Our interest is in finding nontrivial solutions. Unless otherwise stated, the term “solution” will mean “nontrivial solution.”
Theorem 1

Given any two solutions $y = y_1(x)$ and $y = y_2(x)$ for (H), then $u(x) = y_1(x) + y_2(x)$ is also a solution for (H).
Given any two solutions $y = y_1(x)$ and $y = y_2(x)$ for (H), then $u(x) = y_1(x) + y_2(x)$ is also a solution for (H).

Denote the ODE as a differential operator

$$L(y) = y'' + p(x)y' + q(x)y$$

As we have seen before, $L$ is linear.

Hence

$$L(y_1 + y_2) = L(y_1) + L(y_2)$$
Theorem 2

Given any solution $y = y(x)$ for (H) and $C$ a real number, then $u(x) = Cy(x)$ is also a solution for (H).
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

**Theorem 2**

Given any solution \( y = y(x) \) for (H) and \( C \) a real number, then \( u(x) = Cy(x) \) is also a solution for (H).

As above, denote the ODE as a differential operator

\[
L(y) = y'' + p(x)y' + q(x)y
\]

By the linearity of \( L \),

\[
L(Cy) = C L(y)
\]
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

Definition

Let \( f = f(x) \) and \( g = g(x) \) be functions defined on some interval \( I \), and let \( C_1 \) and \( C_2 \) be real numbers. We call the expression

\[
C_1 f(x) + C_2 g(x)
\]

a linear combination of \( f \) and \( g \).

Theorem 3

Given any two solutions \( y = y_1(x) \) and \( y = y_2(x) \) for (H) as well as real numbers \( C_1 \) and \( C_2 \), then

\[
y(x) = C_1 y_1(x) + C_2 y_2(x)
\]

is also a solution for (H).
**Note**

Theorem 3 tells us that any linear combination of solutions of (H) is also a solution of (H).

**Fact**

The function \( y = C_1y_1(x) + C_2y_2(x) \) is the general solution to (H) if and only if

\[
y_1(x)y_2'(x) - y_2(x)y_1'(x) \neq 0.
\]
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

**Definition**

Let \( y = y_1(x) \) and \( y = y_2(x) \) be solutions of (H). The function \( W \) defined by

\[
W[y_1, y_2](x) = y_1(x)y'_2(x) - y_2(x)y'_1(x)
\]

is called the *Wronskian* of \( y_1 \) and \( y_2 \).

We use the notation \( W[y_1, y_2](x) \) to emphasize that the Wronskian is a function of \( x \) that is determined by two solutions \( y_1, y_2 \) of equation (H). When there is no danger of confusion, we will shorten the notation to \( W(x) \).

There is a short-hand way to represent the Wronskian of two solutions of equation (H) using the determinant of a \( 2 \times 2 \) matrix. We will write

\[
W(x) = \begin{vmatrix}
y_1(x) & y_2(x) \\
y'_1(x) & y'_2(x)
\end{vmatrix} = y_1(x)y'_2(x) - y_2(x)y'_1(x).
\]
Examples: Find the Wronskian for the following functions.

1. \( y_1 = e^{3x} \) and \( y_2 = e^{-x} \)
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

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1. \( y_1 = e^{3x} \) and \( y_2 = e^{-x} \)

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W(x) = y_1(x)y_2'(x) - y_2(x)y_1'(x)
\]
\[
= -e^{3x}e^{-x} - e^{-x}3e^{3x} = -4e^{2x}
\]
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

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2. \( y_1 = x^3 \) and \( y_2 = 5x^3 \)
Examples: Find the Wronskian for the following functions.

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= -e^{3x}e^{-x} - e^{-x}3e^{3x} = -4e^{2x}
\]

2. \( y_1 = x^3 \) and \( y_2 = 5x^3 \)

\[
W(x) = y_1(x)y_2'(x) - y_2(x)y_1'(x)
= x^315e^{3x} - 15x^2e^{3x} = 15e^{3x}x^2(x - 1)
\]
Theorem 4

Let $y = y_1(x)$ and $y = y_2(x)$ be solutions of (H), and let $W(x)$ be their Wronskian. Exactly one of the following holds:

(i) $W(x) = 0$ for all $x \in I$ and $y_1$ is a constant multiple of $y_2$ (or vice versa).

(ii) $W(x) \neq 0$ for all $x \in I$ and $y = C_1 y_1(x) + C_2 y_2(x)$ is the general solution of (H).
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

Definitions

A pair of solutions \( y = y_1(x) \) and \( y = y_2(x) \) of equation (H) is a fundamental set of solutions if

\[
W[y_1, y_2](x) \neq 0 \text{ for all } x \in I.
\]

A fundamental set of solutions is also called a solution basis.
Definitions

Given two functions \( f = f(x) \) and \( g = g(x) \) defined on an interval \( I \), we say that \( f \) and \( g \) are linearly dependent on \( I \) if there exists a number \( \lambda \) such that \( g(x) = \lambda f(x) \) for all \( x \in I \). When the functions are not linearly dependent, we say \( f \) and \( g \) are linearly independent.

Example 1. Consider the functions \( f(x) = 2x^2 \) and \( g(x) = -x^2 \). Clearly, we have that \( g(x) = -\frac{1}{2}f(x) \), for all \( x \). This shows that \( f \) and \( g \) are linearly dependent.

Example 2. Consider the functions \( f(x) = 2x^2 \) and \( g(x) = x \). Suppose that there is a \( \lambda \neq 0 \) such that \( g(x) = \lambda f(x) \). Then \( x = \lambda \frac{2}{x}x^2 \Rightarrow x(1 - 2\lambda x) = 0 \) on an interval. This is false for any \( \lambda \). This shows that \( f \) and \( g \) are linearly independent.
Definitions

Given two functions $f = f(x)$ and $g = g(x)$ defined on an interval $I$, we say that $f$ and $g$ are linearly dependent on $I$ if there exists a number $\lambda$ such that $g(x) = \lambda f(x)$ for all $x \in I$. When the functions are not linearly dependent, we say $f$ and $g$ are linearly independent.

Example 1. Consider the functions $f(x) = 2x^2$, $g(x) = -x^2$

Clearly, we have that

$$g(x) = -\frac{1}{2} f(x), \quad \text{for all } x$$

This shows that $f$ and $g$ are linearly dependent.
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

Definitions

Given two functions $f = f(x)$ and $g = g(x)$ defined on an interval $I$, we say that $f$ and $g$ are \textit{linearly dependent on $I$} if there exists a number $\lambda$ such that $g(x) = \lambda f(x)$ for all $x \in I$. When the functions are not linearly dependent, we say $f$ and $g$ are \textit{linearly independent}.

\textbf{Example 1.} Consider the functions $f(x) = 2x^2$, $g(x) = -x^2$.

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This shows that $f$ and $g$ are \textit{linearly dependent}.

\textbf{Example 2.} Consider the functions $f(x) = 2x^2$, $g(x) = x$.

Suppose that there is a $\lambda \neq 0$ such that

$$g(x) = \lambda f(x) \Rightarrow x = \lambda 2x^2 \Rightarrow x(1 - 2\lambda x) = 0$$

on an interval. This is false for any $\lambda$.

This shows that $f$ and $g$ are \textit{linearly independent}. 
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Equations

Theorem 5

Let \( f = f(x) \) and \( g = g(x) \) be differentiable functions on an interval \( I \). If \( f \) and \( g \) are linearly dependent on \( I \), then \( W(x) = 0 \) for all \( x \in I \).

Equivalently, we can say:

Let \( f = f(x) \) and \( g = g(x) \) be differentiable functions on an interval \( I \). If \( W(x) \neq 0 \) for at least one \( x \in I \), then \( f \) and \( g \) are linearly independent on \( I \).
Theorem 4 Restated

Let $y = y_1(x)$ and $y = y_2(x)$ be solutions of (H), and let $W(x)$ be their Wronskian. Exactly one of the following holds:

(i) $W(x) = 0$ for all $x \in I$; $y_1$ and $y_2$ are linearly dependent.

(ii) $W(x) \neq 0$ for all $x \in I$; $y_1$ and $y_2$ are linearly independent and $y = C_1 y_1(x) + C_2 y_2(x)$ is the general solution of (H).
Examples

1. Verify that the given functions $y_1$ and $y_2$ are solutions of the given differential equation. Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

$$y'' - y' - 6y = 0; \ y_1 = e^{3x}, \ y_2 = e^{-2x}$$
Examples

1. Verify that the given functions $y_1$ and $y_2$ are solutions of the given differential equation. Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

$$y'' - y' - 6y = 0; \ y_1 = e^{3x}, \ y_2 = e^{-2x}$$

We have

$$y_1'(x) = 3e^{3x}, \ y_1''(x) = 9e^{3x}$$

Hence

$$y_1'' - y_1' - 6y_1 = 9e^{3x} - 3e^{3x} - 6e^{3x} = 0$$
1. Verify that the given functions $y_1$ and $y_2$ are solutions of the given differential equation. Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

$$y'' - y' - 6y = 0; \; y_1 = e^{3x}, \; y_2 = e^{-2x}$$

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Hence

$$y_1'' - y_1' - 6y_1 = 9e^{3x} - 3e^{3x} - 6e^{3x} = 0$$

Similarly,

$$y_2'(x) = -2e^{-2x}, \; y_2''(x) = 4e^{-2x}$$

Hence

$$y_2'' - y_2' - 6y_2 = 4e^{-2x} + 2e^{-2x} - 6e^{-2x} = 0$$
Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?
Examples

Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

\[
W(x) = y_1(x)y'_2(x) - y_2(x)y'_1(x)
\]
\[
= e^{3x}(-2)e^{-2x} - e^{-2x}3e^{3x} = -5e^{x}
\]

Yes, they do form a fundamental set of solutions.
Examples

2. Verify that the given functions $y_1$ and $y_2$ are solutions of the given differential equation. Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

$$y'' + 4y = 0; \ y_1 = \cos(2x), \ y_2 = \sin(2x)$$
Examples

2. Verify that the given functions $y_1$ and $y_2$ are solutions of the given differential equation. Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

$$y'' + 4y = 0; \quad y_1 = \cos(2x), \quad y_2 = \sin(2x)$$

We have

$$y_1'(x) = -2 \sin(2x), \quad y_1''(x) = -4 \cos(2x)$$

Hence

$$y_1'' + 4y_1 = -4 \cos(2x) + 4 \cos(2x) = 0$$
Examples

2. Verify that the given functions $y_1$ and $y_2$ are solutions of the given differential equation. Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

$$y'' + 4y = 0; \quad y_1 = \cos(2x), \quad y_2 = \sin(2x)$$

We have

$$y_1'(x) = -2 \sin(2x), \quad y_1''(x) = -4 \cos(2x)$$

Hence

$$y_1'' + 4y_1 = -4 \cos(2x) + 4 \cos(2x) = 0$$

Similarly,

$$y_2'(x) = 2 \cos(2x), \quad y_2''(x) = -4 \sin(2x)$$

Hence

$$y_2'' + 4y_2 = -4 \sin(2x) + 4 \sin(2x) = 0$$
Examples

Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?
Examples

Do they constitute a fundamental set of solutions of the equation?

\[ W(x) = y_1(x)y_2'(x) - y_2(x)y_1'(x) \]
\[ = \cos(2x)2 \cos(2x) - \sin(2x)(-2) \sin(2x) \]
\[ = 2(\cos^2(2x) + \sin^2(2x)) = 2 \]

*Yes, they do form a fundamental set of solutions.*
Examples

3. Show that the given functions are linearly independent on an interval $I$ and find a second-order linear homogeneous equation having the pair as a fundamental set of solutions.

$$y_1 = e^{3x}, \ y_2 = e^{-x}$$
3. Show that the given functions are linearly independent on an interval \( I \) and find a second-order linear homogeneous equation having the pair as a fundamental set of solutions.

\[
y_1 = e^{3x}, \quad y_2 = e^{-x}
\]

\( y_1 \) and \( y_2 \) are linearly independent on an interval \( I \) if there is no \( \lambda \neq 0 \) such that \( y_1(x) = \lambda y_2(x) \).

However, \( e^{3x} = \lambda e^{-x} \) on an interval implies \( e^{4x} = \lambda \) on an interval, which is false.
Examples

3. Show that the given functions are linearly independent on an interval $I$ and find a second-order linear homogeneous equation having the pair as a fundamental set of solutions.

$$y_1 = e^{3x}, \ y_2 = e^{-x}$$
3. Show that the given functions are linearly independent on an interval $I$ and find a second-order linear homogeneous equation having the pair as a fundamental set of solutions.

$$y_1 = e^{3x}, \ y_2 = e^{-x}$$

If the second-order linear homogeneous equation

$$y'' + ay' + by = 0$$

has 2 solutions of the form $e^{rx}$, then

$$r^2 e^{rx} + ar e^{rx} + be^{rx} = 0$$

Hence it must be

$$r^2 + ar + b = 0$$

with solutions $r = 3, -1$. Thus we have

$$b = (3)(-1) = -3 \quad \text{and} \quad a = (3) + (-1) = 2$$

Thus is must be $y'' + 2y' - 3y = 0$