

Lecture 14: Integrals along a Path

Reading:
Kreyszig Sections: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3

Integrals along a Curve

Consider the type of integral that everyone learns initially:

$$E(b) - E(a) = \int_a^b f(x) dx \quad (14-1)$$

The equation implies that f is integrable and

$$dE = f dx = \frac{dE}{dx} dx \quad (14-2)$$

so that the integral can be written in the following way:

$$E(b) - E(a) = \int_a^b dE \quad (14-3)$$

where a and b represent “points” on some *line* where E is to be evaluated.

Of course, there is no reason to restrict integration to a straight line—the generalization is the integration along a curve (or a path) $\vec{x}(t) = (x_1(t), x_2(t), \dots, x_n(t))$.

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$$E(b) - E(a) = \int_{\vec{x}(a)}^{\vec{x}(b)} \vec{f}(\vec{x}) \cdot d\vec{x} = \int_a^b g(x(\vec{t})) dt = \int_a^b \nabla E \cdot \frac{d\vec{x}}{dt} dt = \int_a^b dE \quad (14-4)$$

This last set of equations assumes that the gradient exists—i.e., there is some function E that has the gradient $\nabla E = \vec{f}$.

Path-Independence and Path-Integration

If the function being integrated along a simply-connected path (Eq. 14-4) is a gradient of some scalar potential, then the path between two integration points does not need to be specified: the integral is independent of path. It also follows that for closed paths, the integral of the gradient of a scalar potential is zero.⁶ A simply-connected path is one that does not self-intersect or can be shrunk to a point without leaving its domain.

There are familiar examples from classical thermodynamics of simple one-component fluids that satisfy this property:

$$\oint dU = \oint \nabla_{\vec{S}} U \cdot d\vec{S} = 0 \quad \oint dS = \oint \nabla_{\vec{S}} S \cdot d\vec{S} = 0 \quad \oint dG = \oint \nabla_{\vec{S}} G \cdot d\vec{S} = 0 \quad (14-5)$$

$$\oint dP = \oint \nabla_{\vec{S}} P \cdot d\vec{S} = 0 \quad \oint dT = \oint \nabla_{\vec{S}} T \cdot d\vec{S} = 0 \quad \oint dV = \oint \nabla_{\vec{S}} V \cdot d\vec{S} = 0 \quad (14-6)$$

Where \vec{S} is any other set of variables that sufficiently describe the equilibrium state of the system (i.e., $U(S, V)$, $U(S, P)$, $U(T, V)$, $U(T, P)$ for U describing a simple one-component fluid).

The relation $\text{curl grad } f = \nabla \times \nabla f = 0$ provides method for testing whether some *general* $\vec{F}(\vec{x})$ is independent of path. If

$$\vec{0} = \nabla \times \vec{F} \quad (14-7)$$

or equivalently,

$$0 = \frac{\partial F_j}{\partial x_i} - \frac{\partial F_i}{\partial x_j} \quad (14-8)$$

for all variable pairs x_i, x_j , then $\vec{F}(\vec{x})$ is independent of path. These are the Maxwell relations of classical thermodynamics.

⁶In fact, there are some extra requirements on the domain (i.e., the space of all paths that are supposed to be path-independent) where such paths are defined: the scalar potential must have continuous second partial derivatives everywhere in the domain.

Path Dependence of Integration of Vector Function: Non-Vanishing Curl

The path dependence of a vector field with a non-vanishing curl ($\vec{v}(\vec{x}) = xyz(\hat{i} + \hat{k} + \hat{z})$) is demonstrated with a family of closed curves.



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Integrals over a Curve, Multidimensional Integrals

1 Examples of Path-Dependent Integrals: Vector Fields with Non-Vanishing Curl

Here is a vector function (xyz, xyz, xyz) for which the curl does not vanish anywhere, except the origin

```
Needs["VectorAnalysis`"]
VectorFunction = {x y z, x y z, y x z}
CurlVectorFunction = Simplify[Curl[VectorFunction, Cartesian[x, y, z]]]
{x y z, x y z, x y z}
```

These are the conditions that the curl is zero:

```
ConditionsOfZeroCurl = Table[0 == CurlVectorFunction[[i]], {i, 3}]
{0 == x (-y + z), 0 == y (x - z), 0 == (-x + y) z}
```

There is only one point where this occurs:

```
FindInstance[ConditionsOfZeroCurl, {x, y, z}]
{{x -> 0, y -> 0, z -> 0}}
```

Let's evaluate the integral of the vector potential ($\oint_C \vec{v} \cdot d\vec{s}$) for any curve that wraps around a cylinder an axis that coincides with the z-axis

Any curve that wraps around the cylinder can be parameterized as $(x(t), y(t), z(t)) = (R \cos(t), R \sin(t), A P_{z,1}(t))$ where $P_{z,1}(t) = P_{z,1}(t + 2\pi)$ and in particular $P_{z,1}(0) = P_{z,1}(2\pi)$.

Therefore $\oint_C \vec{v} \cdot d\vec{s} = \int_0^{2\pi} (-R \sin(t), R \cos(t), P'_{z,1}(t)) \cdot (-y(t), x(t), A P'_{z,1}(t)) dt$

The integrand for an integral of "VectorFunction" around such a curve is (written in terms of an arbitrary $P(t)$):

- 1:** *VectorFunction* (xyz, xyz, xyz) is an example vector field that has a *non-vanishing curl*. The curl is computed with `Curl` which is in the `VectorAnalysis` package. Here, the particular coordinate system is specified with `Cartesian` argument to `Curl`.
- 2-3:** The curl vanishes only at the origin—this is shown with `FindInstance` called with a list of equations corresponding to the vanishing curl.
- 4:** This is the integrand $\vec{v} \cdot d\vec{s}$ computed as indicated in the figure, $d\vec{s} = -(y(t), x(t), P'(t))dt$. $P(\theta)$ represents any periodic function, but $(x, y) = R(\cos \theta, \sin \theta)$ representing paths that wrap around cylinders.
- 5:** *PathDepInt* is an integral for \vec{v} represented by *VectorFunction* an arbitrary path wrapping around the cylinder.
- 6-9:** These are examples of a computation by using a replacement for a periodic $P(\theta)$ (i.e., each of the $P(\theta)$ begin and end at the same point, but the path between differs). The examples use $P(t) = \sin(t)$, $\cos(t)$, and $t(t - 2\pi)$. That the results differ shows that \vec{v} is path-dependent—this is a general result for non-vanishing curl vector functions.
- 10:** These results show that, for *some* closed paths, the result will be path-independent (here, for $P(t) = \cos(nt)$ the path-integral vanishes for integer n . This doesn't imply path-independence for all paths.
- 11:** Our last result seems to contradict the result in **7** for which the integral was zero. However, computing the limit resolves the contradiction.

Examples of Path-Independence of Curl-Free Vector Fields

A curl-free vector field can be generated from any scalar potential, in this case $\vec{w} = \nabla e^{xyz} = \vec{w}(\vec{x}) = e^{xyz}(yz\hat{i} + zx\hat{k} + xy\hat{z})$ will be shown to be curl-free.

Try the path dependence with a conservative (curl free, or exact) Vector Function:

Start with a scalar potential

```
temp = Grad[Exp[x y z], Cartesian[x, y, z]] 1
```

Create another vector function that should have a zero curl

```
AnotherVFunction = {ex y z y z, ex y z x z, ex y z x y} 2
Simplify[
Curl[AnotherVFunction, Cartesian[x, y, z]]
```

```
anothervf =
AnotherVFunction.{-y, x, D[P[t], t]} /.
{x → Radius Cos[t], y → Radius Sin[t],
z → P[t]} // Simplify 3
```

The integral depends doesn't on the choice of P(t)

```
PathDepInt = Integrate[anothervf, t] 4
```

```
eRadius2 Cos[t] P[t] Sin[t]
```

```
(PathDepInt /. t → 2 Pi) - (PathDepInt /. t → 0) 5
```

```
0
```

- 1: To ensure that we will have a zero-curl, a vector field is generated from a gradient of a scalar potential. The curl vanishes because $\nabla \times \nabla f = 0$.
- 2: This is a demonstration that the curl does indeed vanish.
- 3: Here is the integrand for $\oint \vec{v} \cdot d\vec{s}$ for the family of paths that wrap around a cylinder for the particular case of this conservative fields.
- 4: This is the general result for the family of curves indicated by $P(\theta)$.
- 5: This demonstrates that the path integral closes for any periodic $P(\theta)$ —which is the same as the condition that the curve is closed.



Examples of Path-Independence of Curl-Free Vector Fields on a Restricted Subspace

If a path-integral is path-dependent for an arbitrary three path, it is possible that path-independence can occur over closed paths restricted to some surface where the curl vanishes. To find a function that is curl-free on a restricted subspace (for example, the vector function $\vec{v}(\vec{x}) = (x^2 + y^2 - R^2)\hat{z}$ vanishes on the surface of a cylinder) one needs to find a \vec{m} such that $\nabla \times \vec{m} = \vec{v}$ (for this case

- For a last example, suppose the curl vanishes on the cylindrical surface defined above:



Suppose we can find a function that has a non-vanishing curl on this surface

We want to find a function which is generally non-curl free, but for which the curl vanishes on a surface. Let's pick the cylinder as our surface.

```
VanishOnCylinder = x^2 + y^2 - Radius^2
```

1

If a function can be found, that has the following curl, then we will have constructed such a function,

```
CurlOfOneStooge = {0, 0, VanishOnCylinder}
```

2

It is easy to see that this is the curl of *Stooge*, where we construct *Stooge* by integrating.

```
Stooge =
{-1/2 Integrate[VanishOnCylinder, y],
 1/2 Integrate[VanishOnCylinder, x], 0}
```

3

In fact, we could add to *Stooge*, any vector function that has vanishing curl--there are an infinite number of these

```
Simplify[Curl[Stooge, Cartesian[x, y, z]]
```

4

Its integral doesn't care which path around the cylinder it takes, the integrand doesn't depend on $P(t)$

```
WhyIOughta = Stooge.{-y, x, D[P[t], t]} /.
{x -> Radius Cos[t],
 y -> Radius Sin[t], z -> P[t]} // Expand
```

5

This is the value for "any" path on the cylinder that is closed.

```
Integrate[WhyIOughta, {t, 0, 2 Pi}]
```

6

$$-\frac{\pi \text{Radius}^4}{2}$$

- 1–3: This demonstrates a method to find a vector field for which the curl that vanishes on a on a surface. This is an example for the cylinder surface. The zero constraint, *VanishOnCylinder*, is used to produce a vector field that will represent the curl, *CurlOfOneStooge*. The formula for the curl is integrated to find the vector function, *Stooge*, that has the specified curl.
- 4: This demonstrates that the curl is what we designed it to be.
- 5–6: This demonstrates that the integral of *Stooge* is path-independent on the cylinder and its value is $-\pi R^4/2$.

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Multidimensional Integrals

Perhaps the most straightforward of the higher-dimensional integrations (e.g., vector function along a curve, vector function on a surface) is a scalar function over a domain such as, a rectangular block in two dimensions, or a block in three dimensions. In each case, the integration over a dimension is uncoupled from the others and the problem reduces to pedestrian integration along a coordinate axis.

Sometimes difficulty arises when the domain of integration is not so easily described; in these cases, the limits of integration become functions of another integration variable. While specifying the limits of integration requires a bit of attention, the only thing that makes these cases difficult is that the integrals become tedious and lengthy. MATHEMATICA[®] removes some of this burden.

A short review of various ways in which a function's variable can appear in an integral follows:

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	The Integral	Its Derivative
Function of limits	$p(x) = \int_{\alpha(x)}^{\beta(x)} f(\xi) d\xi$	$\frac{dp}{dx} = f(\beta(x)) \frac{d\beta}{dx} - f(\alpha(x)) \frac{d\alpha}{dx}$
Function of integrand	$q(x) = \int_a^b g(\xi, x) d\xi$	$\frac{dq}{dx} = \int_a^b \frac{\partial g(\xi, x)}{\partial x} d\xi$
Function of both	$r(x) = \int_{\alpha(x)}^{\beta(x)} g(\xi, x) d\xi$	$\begin{aligned} \frac{dr}{dx} &= f(\beta(x)) \frac{d\beta}{dx} - f(\alpha(x)) \frac{d\alpha}{dx} \\ &\quad + \int_{\alpha(x)}^{\beta(x)} \frac{\partial g(\xi, x)}{\partial x} d\xi \end{aligned}$

Using Jacobians to Change Variables in Thermodynamic Calculations

Changing of variables is a topic in multivariable calculus that often causes difficulty in classical thermodynamics.

This is an extract of my notes on thermodynamics: <http://pruffle.mit.edu/3.00/>

Alternative forms of differential relations can be derived by changing variables.

To change variables, a useful scheme using Jacobians can be employed:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\partial(u, v)}{\partial(x, y)} &\equiv \det \begin{vmatrix} \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} \\ \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} \end{vmatrix} \\
 &= \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} - \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} \\
 &= \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} \right)_y \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial y} \right)_x - \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial y} \right)_x \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial x} \right)_y \\
 &= \frac{\partial u(x, y)}{\partial x} \frac{\partial v(x, y)}{\partial y} - \frac{\partial u(x, y)}{\partial y} \frac{\partial v(x, y)}{\partial x}
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{14-9}$$

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$$\begin{aligned}
 \frac{\partial(u, v)}{\partial(x, y)} &= -\frac{\partial(v, u)}{\partial(x, y)} = \frac{\partial(v, u)}{\partial(y, x)} \\
 \frac{\partial(u, v)}{\partial(x, v)} &= \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} \right)_v \\
 \frac{\partial(u, v)}{\partial(x, y)} &= \frac{\partial(u, v)}{\partial(r, s)} \frac{\partial(r, s)}{\partial(x, y)}
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{14-10}$$



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For example, the heat capacity at constant volume is:

$$\begin{aligned}
 C_V &= T \left(\frac{\partial S}{\partial T} \right)_V = T \frac{\partial(S, V)}{\partial(T, V)} \\
 &= T \frac{\partial(S, V)}{\partial(T, P)} \frac{\partial(T, P)}{\partial(T, V)} = T \left[\left(\frac{\partial S}{\partial T} \right)_P \left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial P} \right)_T - \left(\frac{\partial S}{\partial P} \right)_T \left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial T} \right)_P \right] \left(\frac{\partial P}{\partial V} \right)_T \\
 &= T \frac{C_P}{T} - T \left(\frac{\partial P}{\partial V} \right)_T \left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial T} \right)_P \left(\frac{\partial S}{\partial P} \right)_T
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{14-11}$$

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Using the Maxwell relation, $\left(\frac{\partial S}{\partial P}\right)_T = -\left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial T}\right)_P$,

$$C_P - C_V = -T \frac{\left[\left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial T}\right)_P\right]^2}{\left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial P}\right)_T} \quad (14-12)$$

which demonstrates that $C_P > C_V$ because, for any stable substance, the volume is a decreasing function of pressure at constant temperature.

It can also be shown that

$$C_P - C_V = -T \frac{\left[\left(\frac{\partial P}{\partial T}\right)_V\right]^2}{\left(\frac{\partial P}{\partial V}\right)_T} \quad (14-13)$$

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Example of a Multiple Integral: Electrostatic Potential above a Charged Region

This will be an example calculation of the spatially-dependent energy of a unit point charge in the vicinity of a charged planar region having the shape of an equilateral triangle. The calculation superimposes the charges from each infinitesimal area by integrating a $1/r$ potential from each point in space to each infinitesimal patch in the equilateral triangle. The energy of a point charge $|e|$ due to a surface patch on the plane $z = 0$ of size $d\xi d\eta$ with surface charge density $\sigma(x, y)$ is:

$$dE(x, y, z, \xi, \eta) = \frac{|e|\sigma(\xi, \eta)d\xi d\eta}{\vec{r}(x, y, z, \xi, \eta)} \quad (14-14)$$

for a patch with uniform charge,

$$dE(x, y, z, \xi, \eta) = \frac{|e|\sigma d\xi d\eta}{\sqrt{(x - \xi)^2 + (y - \eta)^2 + z^2}} \quad (14-15)$$

For an equilateral triangle with sides of length one and center at the origin, the vertices can be located at $(0, \sqrt{3}/2)$ and $(\pm 1/2, -\sqrt{3}/6)$.

The integration becomes

$$E(x, y, z) \propto \int_{-\sqrt{3}/6}^{\sqrt{3}/2} \left(\int_{\eta-\sqrt{3}/2}^{\sqrt{3}/2-\eta} \frac{d\xi}{\sqrt{(x - \xi)^2 + (y - \eta)^2 + z^2}} \right) d\eta \quad (14-16)$$



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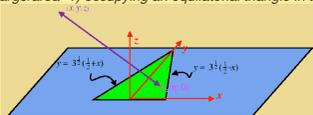
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Integrals over Variable Domains

This will demonstrate how MATHEMATICA® handles multiple integrals; in particular, when the domains depend on the integration variables. The goal is to find a function that will give the potential in the vicinity of a triangular patch with uniform charge density.

We will attempt to model the energy of ion just above one half of a triangular capacitor. Suppose there is a uniformly charged surface ($\sigma =$ charge/area=1) occupying an equilateral triangle in the $z=0$ plane:



what is the energy (voltage) of a unit positive charge located at (x,y,z)

The electrical potential goes like $\frac{1}{r}$, therefore the potential of a unit charge located at (x,y,z) from a small surface patch at $(\xi,\eta,0)$ is

$$\frac{\sigma d\xi d\eta}{r} = \frac{d\xi d\eta}{\sqrt{(x-\xi)^2 + (y-\eta)^2 + z^2}}$$

Therefore it remains to integrate this function over the domain $\eta \in (0, \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2})$

and $\xi \in (\frac{\eta}{\sqrt{3}} - \frac{1}{2}, (\frac{1}{2} - \frac{\eta}{\sqrt{3}}))$

$$\int_0^{\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}} \int_{\frac{\eta}{\sqrt{3}} - \frac{1}{2}}^{\frac{1}{2} - \frac{\eta}{\sqrt{3}}} \frac{d\xi d\eta}{\sqrt{(x-\xi)^2 + (y-\eta)^2 + z^2}} d\xi d\eta$$

1 `Integrate[f[x, y], y, x]`
`Integrate[f[x, y], {y, yi, yf}, {x, xi, xf}]`
`Integrate[f[x, y], {y, yi, yf}, {x, xi[y], xf[y]}]`

For example, consider the difference in the following two cases:
 First, we integrate over x and y using the two iterators in `Integrate` with the order $\{y, 0, 1\}$, $\{x, 0, y\}$. Then explicitly using two separate steps

2 `Integrate[Exp[3 x], {y, 0, 1}, {x, 0, y}]`
`interx = Integrate[Exp[3 x], {x, 0, y}]`
`Integrate[interx, {y, 0, 1}]`

Compared to
 integrate over x and y using the two iterators in `Integrate` with the order $\{x, 0, y\}$, $\{y, 0, 1\}$. Then explicitly using two separate steps

3 `Integrate[Exp[3 x], {x, 0, y}, {y, 0, 1}]`
`intery = (Integrate[Exp[3 x], {y, 0, 1}])`
`Integrate[intery, {x, 0, y}]`

1: These examples demonstrate that MATHEMATICA® integrates over the last iterator which appears in the argument-list of `Integrate` first: LIFI-FILI (last iterator, first integrated; first iterator, last integrated).

2-3: Here we demonstrate the order of integration explicitly, by first integrating with two iterators, and then integrating in two step-sequence. The methods are equivalent.



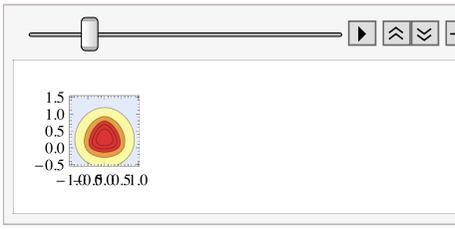
Potential near a Charged and Shaped Surface Patch: Brute Force

An example of a multiple integral and its numerical evaluation for the triangular charged patch.

```

TrianglePotentialNumeric[x_, y_, z_] :=
NIntegrate[1/Sqrt[(x - xi)^2 + (y - eta)^2 + z^2], {eta, 0, 1}, {xi, 0, 1}]
1
TrianglePotentialNumeric[1, 3, .01]
2
Plot[TrianglePotentialNumeric[x, x, 1/40], {x, -1, 1}]
3
cplot[h_] := cplot[h] = ContourPlot[
TrianglePotentialNumeric[x, y, h],
{x, -1, 1}, {y, -0.5, 1.5}, Contours ->
Table[v, {v, .25, 2, .25}], ColorFunction ->
ColorData["TemperatureMap"],
ColorFunctionScaling -> False,
PlotPoints -> 11]
4
Timing[cplot[1/10]]
5
Row[{TextCell[
"Computing ContourPlots a different
h: Progress: ", "Text"],
ProgressIndicator[Dynamic[h], {0, .5}]}]
6
cplots = Table[cplot[h], {h, .025, .5, .025}];
ListAnimate[cplots]

```



- MATHEMATICA® can't seem to find a closed-form solution to this integral over the triangular domain. However, the energy can be integrated numerically. Here is a function that calls `NIntegrate` for a location given by its arguments. We will call this function at different heights z . Multidimensional integration is generally computationally expensive.
- 3: Here are examples calling the numerical function `TrianglePotentialNumeric`. First, the function is evaluated at a single point; next, it is evaluated and plotted along a 45° -line parallel in the $z = 1/40$ plane.
- 4: The function `cplot` calls `TrianglePotentialNumeric` repeatedly at variable x and y to generate a `ContourPlot` at height specified by the argument to `cplot`. These plots will eventually appear in an animation, so `ColorFunctionScaling` is set to false so that the colors will be consistent between frames. The `Contours` are set explicitly so that they are also consistent across frames. `Timing` indicates that each plot consumes a large number of cpu cycles.
- 5: Because each frame is expensive to compute, it is not a good idea to compute them *within* an animation. Here, we use `Table` to generate individual frames (n.b., the `cplots` stores its previous calculations in memory). Because this is time consuming, we add a *progress monitor* that will dynamically update as each `cplot[h]` is computed. We use `ProgressIndicator` on the argument `Dynamic[h]`. `Dynamic` informs MATHEMATICA® that a particular variable will be changing; therefore the object that calls it will need to be updated.
- 6: We use `ListAnimate` on the pre-computed frames.

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