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Integration of Rational Functions by Partial Fractions

A. The degree of the numerator is greater than the degree of the denominator.

- 1) Perform long division.
- 2) Integrate each term.

Example:

$$\int \frac{x^3 + x}{x - 1} dx$$

After performing long division and integration, we get

$$\int \frac{x^3 + x}{x - 1} dx = \int (x^2 + x + 2 + \frac{2}{x - 1}) dx = \frac{x^3}{3} + \frac{x^2}{2} + 2x + 2\ln|x - 1| + C$$

B. The degree of the numerator is less than the degree of the denominator.

Let's consider a rational function

$$f(x) = \frac{P(x)}{Q(x)}$$

where P and Q are polynomials. Then

Factor in denominator $Q(x)$		Term in partial fraction decomposition
1	Product of distinct linear factors $(a_1x + b_1)(a_2x + b_2) \dots (a_kx + b_k)$	$\frac{A_1}{a_1x + b_1} + \frac{A_2}{a_2x + b_2} + \dots + \frac{A_k}{a_kx + b_k}$
2	Product of linear factors, some of which are repeated $(ax + b)^k$	$\frac{A_1}{a_1x + b_1} + \frac{A_2}{(a_1x + b_1)^2} + \dots + \frac{A_k}{(a_1x + b_1)^k}$
3	Irreducible quadratic factors, none of which is repeated $ax^2 + bx + c$	$\frac{Ax + B}{ax^2 + bx + c}$



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Factor in denominator $Q(x)$		Term in partial fraction decomposition
4	Repeated irreducible quadratic factor $(ax^2 + bx + c)^k$	$\frac{A_1 + B_1}{ax^2 + bx + c}$ $+ \frac{A_2 + B_2}{(ax^2 + bx + c)^2} + \dots$ $+ \frac{A_k + B_k}{(ax^2 + bx + c)^k}$

Examples:

1. Product of distinct linear factors.

$$\int \frac{x^2 + 2x - 1}{2x^3 + 3x^2 - 2x} dx$$

Factor the denominator.

$$2x^3 + 3x^2 - 2x = x(2x^2 + 3x - 2) = x(2x - 1)(x + 2)$$

$$\frac{x^2 + 2x - 1}{2x^3 + 3x^2 - 2x} = \frac{A}{x} + \frac{B}{2x - 1} + \frac{C}{x + 2}$$

To determine the values of A, B, and C, we multiply both sides of the equation by the product of the denominators, $x(2x - 1)(x + 2)$, obtaining

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 + 2x - 1 &= A(2x - 1)(x + 2) + Bx(x + 2) + Cx(2x - 1) \\ &= A(2x^2 + 3x - 2) + Bx^2 + 2Bx + 2Cx^2 - Cx \\ &= 2Ax^2 + 3Ax - 2A + Bx^2 + 2Bx + 2Cx^2 - Cx \\ &= (2A + B + 2C)x^2 + (3A + 2B - C)x - 2A \end{aligned}$$

Since the left hand side and the right hand side of the equation are equal, so coefficients must be equal. Thus,

$$2A + B + 2C = 1, 3A + 2B - C = 2, \text{ and } -2A = -1$$

Solving, we get $A = \frac{1}{2}, B = \frac{1}{5}, C = -\frac{1}{10}$, and so

$$\begin{aligned} \int \frac{x^2 + 2x - 1}{2x^3 + 3x^2 - 2x} dx &= \int \left[\frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{x} \right) + \frac{1}{5} \left(\frac{1}{2x - 1} \right) - \frac{1}{10} \left(\frac{1}{x + 2} \right) \right] dx \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \ln|x| + \frac{1}{10} \ln|2x - 1| \\ &\quad - \frac{1}{10} \ln|x + 2| + K \end{aligned}$$

2. Product of linear factors, some of which are repeated.



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$$\int \frac{4x}{x^3 - x^2 - x + 1} dx$$

Factor the denominator.

$$\begin{aligned} x^3 - x^2 - x + 1 &= x^2(x - 1) - (x - 1) = (x^2 - 1)(x - 1) = (x - 1)(x + 1)(x - 1) \\ &= (x - 1)^2(x + 1) \end{aligned}$$

$$\frac{4x}{(x - 1)^2(x + 1)} = \frac{A}{x - 1} + \frac{B}{(x - 1)^2} + \frac{C}{x + 1}$$

$$4x = A(x - 1)(x + 1) + B(x + 1) + C(x - 1)^2 = (A + C)x^2 + (B - 2C)x + (-A + B + C)$$

Comparing coefficients, we get

$$A + C = 0, B - 2C = 4, \text{ and } -A + B + C = 0$$

Solving, we obtain $A = 1, B = 2, C = -1$, so

$$\begin{aligned} \int \frac{4x}{x^3 - x^2 - x + 1} dx &= \int \frac{4x}{(x - 1)^2(x + 1)} dx = \int \left(\frac{1}{x - 1} + \frac{2}{(x - 1)^2} - \frac{1}{x + 1} \right) dx \\ &= \ln|x - 1| - \frac{2}{x - 1} - \ln|x + 1| + K = \ln \left| \frac{x - 1}{x + 1} \right| - \frac{2}{x - 1} + K \end{aligned}$$

3. Irreducible quadratic factors, none of which is repeated.

$$\int \frac{2x^2 - x + 4}{x^3 + 4x} dx$$

Since $x^3 + 4x = x(x^2 + 4)$ can't be factored further, we write

$$\frac{2x^2 - x + 4}{x(x^2 + 4)} = \frac{A}{x} + \frac{Bx + C}{x^2 + 4}$$

$$2x^2 - x + 4 = A(x^2 + 4) + (Bx + C)x = (A + B)x^2 + Cx + 4A$$

So, $A + B = 2, C = -1, 4A = 4$, thus $A = 1, B = 1, C = -1$ and thus

$$\begin{aligned} \int \frac{2x^2 - x + 4}{x^3 + 4x} dx &= \int \frac{2x^2 - x + 4}{x(x^2 + 4)} dx \\ &= \int \left(\frac{1}{x} + \frac{x - 1}{x^2 + 4} \right) dx = \int \frac{1}{x} dx + \int \frac{x}{x^2 + 4} dx - \int \frac{1}{x^2 + 4} dx \end{aligned}$$



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$$= \ln|x| + \frac{1}{2} \ln(x^2 + 4) - \frac{1}{2} \tan^{-1}\left(\frac{x}{2}\right) + K$$

4. Repeated irreducible quadratic factor.

$$\int \frac{1 - x + 2x^2 - x^3}{x(x^2 + 1)^2} dx$$

$$\frac{1 - x + 2x^2 - x^3}{x(x^2 + 1)^2} = \frac{A}{x} + \frac{Bx + C}{x^2 + 1} + \frac{Dx + E}{(x^2 + 1)^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} -x^3 + 2x^2 - x + 1 &= A(x^2 + 1)^2 + (Bx + C)x(x^2 + 1) + (Dx + E)x \\ &= A(x^4 + 2x^2 + 1) + B(x^4 + x^2) + C(x^3 + x) + Dx^2 + Ex \\ &= (A + B)x^4 + Cx^3 + (2A + B + D)x^2 + (C + E)x + A \end{aligned}$$

Comparing coefficients, we get $A + B = 0$, $C = -1$, $2A + B + D = 2$, $C + E = -1$, $A = 1$, then $A = 1$, $B = -1$, $C = -1$, $D = 1$, $E = 0$. Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \int \frac{1 - x + 2x^2 - x^3}{x(x^2 + 1)^2} dx &= \int \left(\frac{1}{x} - \frac{x + 1}{x^2 + 1} + \frac{x}{(x^2 + 1)^2} \right) dx \\ &= \int \frac{1}{x} dx - \int \frac{x}{x^2 + 1} dx - \int \frac{1}{x^2 + 1} dx + \int \frac{x}{(x^2 + 1)^2} dx \\ &= \ln|x| - \frac{1}{2} \ln(x^2 + 1) - \tan^{-1}x - \frac{1}{2(x^2 + 1)} + K \end{aligned}$$