

Ordinary Differential Equations *Classification*

Question

If one solution of $y'' - k^2y = 0$ is $y_1 = e^{kx}$, guess and verify a solution y_2 that is not a multiple of y_1 .

Find a solution to satisfy $y(1) = 0$ and $y'(1) = 2$.

Answer

As $y_1 = e^{kx}$ is a solution. A sensible guess for y_2 is $y_2 = e^{-kx}$.

Since

$$y_2'' - k^2y_2 = k^2e^{-kx} - k^2e^{-kx} = 0$$

then y_2 is confirmed as a solution.

The DE is linear and homogeneous, so any function of the form

$$y = Ay_1 + By_2 = Ae^{kx} + Be^{-kx}$$

is also a solution.

To satisfy the given conditions:

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= y(1) = Ae^k + Be^{-k} \\ 2 &= y'(1) = Ake^k - Bke^{-k} \end{aligned}$$

provided that

$$\begin{aligned} A &= e^{-k}/k \\ B &= -e^k/k \end{aligned}$$

So the solution is

$$y = \frac{1}{k}e^{k(x-1)} - \frac{1}{k}e^{-k(x-1)}$$