

Question

Show that the roots of $x^4 + (4-\varepsilon)x^3 + (6-2\varepsilon)x^2 + (4+\varepsilon)x + 1 - \varepsilon^2 = 0$ have the form

$$x = -1 + (2\varepsilon)^{\frac{1}{4}} e^{i\pi \frac{(2n+1)}{4}} + O\left(\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}\right), \quad n = 1, 2, 3, 4, \quad \varepsilon \rightarrow 0.$$

Answer

$$x^4 + (4-\varepsilon)x^3 + (6+2\varepsilon)x^2 + (4+\varepsilon)x + 1 - \varepsilon^2 = 0$$

$$\text{Put } \varepsilon = 0: x^4 + 4x^3 + 6x^2 + 4x + 1 = 0$$

Pascal's Triangle should come to mind (look at 1,4,6,4,1 pattern).

Thus we have $(x+1)^4 = 0$ i.e., $x = -1$ four times degeneracy.

So try ansatz

$$x = x_0 + x_1\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}} + x_2\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}} + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}})$$

and substitute.

$$\begin{aligned} & [x_0 + x_1\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}} + x_2\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}} + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}})]^4 + (4-\varepsilon)(x_0 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}}x_1 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}x_2 + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}}))^3 \\ & + (6+2\varepsilon)(x_0 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}}x_1 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}x_2 + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}}))^2 + (4+\varepsilon)(x_0 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}}x_1 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}x_2 + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}})) + 1 - \varepsilon^2 = 0 \\ & x_0^4 + 4x_0^3x_1\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}} + 6x_0^2x_1^2\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}} + 4x_0^3x_2\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}} + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}}) \\ & + (4-\varepsilon)(x_0^3 + 3x_0^2\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}}x_1 + 3x_0\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}x_1^2 + 3x_0^2\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}x_2 + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}})) \\ & + (6+2\varepsilon)(x_0^2 + 2x_0x_1\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}} + 2x_0x_2\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}} + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}x_1^2 + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}})) \\ & + (4+\varepsilon)(x_0 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}}x_1 + \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}x_2 + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}})) \\ & + 1 - \varepsilon^2 \end{aligned}$$

Balance at

$$O(\varepsilon^0): x_0^4 + 4x_0^3 + 6x_0^2 + 4x_0 + 1 = 0 \Rightarrow \text{roots } -1(\times 4) \text{ as above}$$

$$O(\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}}): 4x_0^3x_1 + 12x_0^2x_1 + 12x_0x_1 + 4x_1 \Rightarrow \text{put } \alpha x_0 = -1 \text{ and see}$$

$$0 = -4x_1 + 12x_1 - 12x_1 + 4x_1. \text{ Therefore no information on } x_1. \text{ Must go to } O(\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}).$$

$$O(\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}): 6x_0^2x_1^2 + 4x_0^3x_2 + 12x_0x_1^2 + 12x_0^2x_2 + 12x_0x_2 + 4x_2 + 6x_1^2 = 0$$

$$x_0 = -1 \Rightarrow 6x_1^2 - 4x_2 - 12x_1^2 + 12x_2 - 12x_2 + 4x_2 + 6x_1^2 = 0$$

$$0 = 0!!$$

What's happening? It's just an extreme version of what we have met before: degenerate roots lead to extra work in the sense that you have to go to higher orders. In fact $O(\varepsilon^{\frac{3}{4}})$ also leads to $0=0$. Only when you get to $O(\varepsilon)$ can you get: $2 + x_1^4 = 0 \Rightarrow x_1 = 2^{\frac{1}{4}} e^{-\frac{\pi}{4}(2n+1)}$.

$$\text{Thus } x = -1 + 2^{\frac{1}{4}} e^{\frac{i\pi(2n+1)}{4}} \varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}} + O(\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{2}}), \quad n = 0, 1, 2, 3$$

To check this just substitute back into equation and observe the cancellations up to $O(\varepsilon^{\frac{1}{4}})$.