

3.8 Implicit Differentiation

a function is in explicit form if y is on its own side and by itself

e.g. $y = x^2 - 5x + 10$

↖ on its own side, not raised to power other than 1
and not part of another function (e.g. $\sin(y)$)

a function is in implicit form if it is not in explicit form.

e.g. $x^2 + y^2 = 9$

$$xy = \sin(xy)$$

Sometimes we can turn implicit into explicit: $x^2 + y^2 = 9$

$$y = \sqrt{9 - x^2}$$

but it's not always possible: $xy = \sin(xy)$

y cannot be isolated

finding $\frac{dy}{dx}$ or y' when y is explicit is straight forward.

but if y is implicit (e.g. $xy = \sin(xy)$), we need implicit differentiation

implicit differentiation is built upon the Chain Rule

if we know $y = 3x^2 + 5$

$$\text{then } \frac{d}{dx} (y)^3 = \frac{d}{dx} \underbrace{(3x^2 + 5)}_u^3 = \underbrace{3 \cdot (3x^2 + 5)^2}_{3y^2} \cdot \underbrace{(6x)}_{\frac{dy}{dx}}$$

the same applies if we don't know what y looks like
but we know y is a function of x

$$\frac{d}{dx} (y)^3 = 3y^2 \cdot \boxed{\frac{dy}{dx}} \quad \leftarrow \text{from chain rule}$$

↑
some function of y x

example

$$x^3 + y^3 = 8 \quad \text{find } \frac{dy}{dx}$$

↳ y is some implicit function of x

take derivative with respect to x on both sides

$$\frac{d}{dx}(x^3 + y^3) = \frac{d}{dx}(8)$$

$$\frac{d}{dx}(x^3) + \frac{d}{dx}(y^3) = \frac{d}{dx}(8)$$

y is a function of x
chain rule applies

$$3x^2 + 3y^2 \frac{dy}{dx} = 0$$

now solve for $\frac{dy}{dx}$

$$3y^2 \frac{dy}{dx} = -3x^2$$

$$\boxed{\frac{dy}{dx} = -\frac{x^2}{y^2}}$$

we can actually rewrite $x^3 + y^3 = 8$ in explicit form

$$y^3 = 8 - x^3$$

$$y = (8 - x^3)^{1/3} \quad \text{its derivative should match the other one}$$

$$y' = \frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{1}{3} (8 - x^3)^{-2/3} \cdot \frac{d}{dx} (8 - x^3)$$

$$= \frac{1}{3} (8 - x^3)^{-2/3} (-3x^2) = \frac{-x^2}{(8 - x^3)^{2/3}}$$

this is also

$$\frac{-x^2}{\underbrace{[(8 - x^3)^{1/3}]^2}_y} = \frac{-x^2}{y^2} \quad \text{matches the other form}$$

Example

$$\frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{y} = 2 \quad \text{find } \frac{dy}{dx}$$

y is some function of x

rewrite: $x^{-1} + y^{-1} = 2$

take deriv. of both sides with respect to x

$$\frac{d}{dx}(x^{-1}) + \frac{d}{dx}(y^{-1}) = \frac{d}{dx}(2)$$

$\hookrightarrow$ contains x so Chain Rule applies

$$-x^{-2} + (-y^{-2} \frac{dy}{dx}) = 0$$

solve for $\frac{dy}{dx}$

$$-y^{-2} \frac{dy}{dx} = x^{-2}$$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{x^{-2}}{-y^{-2}} = \boxed{-\frac{y^2}{x^2}}$$

Example

$$xy = \sin(xy)$$

$\swarrow \quad \searrow$
contains x

differentiate both sides with respect to x

$$\frac{d}{dx}(xy) = \frac{d}{dx}[\sin(xy)]$$

$\nwarrow$
product of two functions of x

product rule is required

$$(x) \cdot \frac{d}{dx}(y) + (y) \cdot \frac{d}{dx}(x) = \frac{d}{dx}[\sin(xy)]$$

$$x \cdot \frac{dy}{dx} + y \cdot 1 = \cos(xy) \cdot \frac{d}{dx}(xy)$$

$\underbrace{\hspace{10em}}$
product rule

$$x \frac{dy}{dx} + y = \cos(xy) \cdot (x \frac{dy}{dx} + y)$$

solve for $\frac{dy}{dx}$

$$x \frac{dy}{dx} + y = x \cos(xy) \frac{dy}{dx} + y \cos(xy)$$

$$x \frac{dy}{dx} - x \cos(xy) \frac{dy}{dx} = y \cos(xy) - y$$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} [x - x \cos(xy)] = y \cos(xy) - y$$

$$\boxed{\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{y \cos(xy) - y}{x - x \cos(xy)}}$$

example

$$e^{2y} + x = 8y \quad \text{find } \frac{d^2y}{dx^2}$$

↑ ↑
Contain x

derivative with respect to x on both sides

$$\frac{d}{dx}(e^{2y}) + \frac{d}{dx}(x) = \frac{d}{dx}(8y)$$

$$\frac{d}{dx}(e^u) = e^u \cdot \frac{du}{dx}$$

$$e^{2y} \cdot \frac{d}{dx}(2y) + 1 = 8 \frac{dy}{dx}$$

$$e^{2y} \cdot 2 \frac{dy}{dx} + 1 = 8 \frac{dy}{dx}$$

solve for $\frac{dy}{dx}$

$$2e^{2y} \frac{dy}{dx} - 8 \frac{dy}{dx} = -1$$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} (2e^{2y} - 8) = -1$$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{-1}{2e^{2y} - 8}$$

now differentiate
again to find $\frac{d^2y}{dx^2}$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = -(2e^{2y} - 8)^{-1}$$

form of u^{-1} deriv: $-u^{-2} \cdot \frac{du}{dx}$

$$\frac{d^2y}{dx^2} = -(-1)(2e^{2y} - 8)^{-2} \cdot \frac{d}{dx}(2e^{2y} - 8)$$

$$= (2e^{2y} - 8)^{-2} \cdot 2 \cdot e^{2y} \cdot \frac{d}{dx}(2y)$$

$$= (2e^{2y} - 8)^{-2} \cdot 2 \cdot e^{2y} \cdot 2 \frac{dy}{dx}$$

$$= 4e^{2y} (2e^{2y} - 8)^{-2} \cdot \boxed{\frac{dy}{dx}}$$

we know what this
looks like

$$= 4e^{2y} (2e^{2y} - 8)^{-2} \cdot -(2e^{2y} - 8)^{-1}$$

$$= -4e^{2y} \cdot (2e^{2y} - 8)^{-3}$$

$$= \boxed{\frac{-4e^{2y}}{(2e^{2y} - 8)^3}}$$