8.4

Integration of Rational Functions by Partial Fractions

Method of Partial Fractions ($f(x)/g(x)$ Proper)

1. Let $x - r$ be a linear factor of $g(x)$. Suppose that $(x - r)^m$ is the highest power of $x - r$ that divides $g(x)$. Then, to this factor, assign the sum of the m partial fractions:

$$\frac{A_1}{(x-r)} + \frac{A_2}{(x-r)^2} + \cdots + \frac{A_m}{(x-r)^m}.$$

Do this for each distinct linear factor of $g(x)$.

2. Let $x^2 + px + q$ be an irreducible quadratic factor of $g(x)$ so that $x^2 + px + q$ has no real roots. Suppose that $(x^2 + px + q)^n$ is the highest power of this factor that divides $g(x)$. Then, to this factor, assign the sum of the n partial fractions:

$$\frac{B_1x + C_1}{(x^2+px+q)} + \frac{B_2x + C_2}{(x^2+px+q)^2} + \cdots + \frac{B_nx + C_n}{(x^2+px+q)^n}.$$

Do this for each distinct quadratic factor of $g(x)$.

3. Set the original fraction $f(x)/g(x)$ equal to the sum of all these partial fractions. Clear the resulting equation of fractions and arrange the terms in decreasing powers of x.
4. Equate the coefficients of corresponding powers of x and solve the resulting equations for the undetermined coefficients.

Heaviside Method

1. *Write the quotient with $g(x)$ factored:*

$$\frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = \frac{f(x)}{(x-r_1)(x-r_2)\cdots(x-r_n)}.$$

2. *Cover the factors $(x - r_i)$ of $g(x)$ one at a time*, each time replacing all the uncovered x's by the number r_i. This gives a number A_i for each root r_i:

$$A_1 = \frac{f(r_1)}{(r_1-r_2)\cdots(r_1-r_n)}$$

$$A_2 = \frac{f(r_2)}{(r_2-r_1)(r_2-r_3)\cdots(r_2-r_n)}$$

$$\vdots$$

$$A_n = \frac{f(r_n)}{(r_n-r_1)(r_n-r_2)\cdots(r_n-r_{n-1})}.$$

3. *Write the partial-fraction expansion of $f(x)/g(x)$ as*

$$\frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = \frac{A_1}{(x-r_1)} + \frac{A_2}{(x-r_2)} + \cdots + \frac{A_n}{(x-r_n)}.$$