Section 10.8: Taylor and Maclaurin Series

Series Representations: We've seen that geometric series can be used to generate a power series for functions having a special form, such as $f(x) = \dfrac{1}{1-x}$ or $g(x) = \dfrac{3}{x-2}$. Can we also express functions of different forms as power series?

If we assume that a function $f(x)$ with derivatives of all orders is the sum of a power series about $x = a$ then we can readily solve for the coefficients c_n.

Suppose

$$f(x) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} c_n (x-a)^n = c_0 + c_1(x-a) + c_2(x-a)^2 + c_3(x-a)^3 + \cdots$$

with positive radius of converges R. By repeated term-by-term differentiation within the interval of convergence, we obtain:

Definitions: Let $f(x)$ be a function with derivatives of all orders throughout some open interval containing a. Then the **Taylor Series generated by** $f(x)$ **at** $x = a$ is

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{f^n(a)}{n!}(x-a)^n = f(a) + f'(a)(x-a) + \frac{f''(a)}{2!}(x-a)^2 + \cdots + \frac{f^{(n)}(a)}{n!}(x-a)^n + \cdots .$$

The **Maclaurin Series generated by** $f(x)$ is the Taylor series generated by $f(x)$ at $a = 0$.

Example 1: Find the Taylor series generated by $f(x) = \dfrac{1}{x}$ at $a = 2$. Where, if anywhere, does the series converge to $\dfrac{1}{x}$?

Definition: Let $f(x)$ be a function with derivatives of order $1, \dots, N$ in some open interval containing a. Then for any integer n from 0 through N, the **Taylor polynomial** of order n generated by $f(x)$ at $x = a$ is the polynomial

$$P_n(x) = f(a) + f'(a)(x-a) + \frac{f''(a)}{2!}(x-a)^2 + \cdots + \frac{f^{(n)}(a)}{n!}(x-a)^n.$$

Just as the linearisation of $f(x)$ at $x = a$ provides the best linear approximation of $f(x)$ in a neighbourhood of a, the higher-order Taylor polynomials provide the best polynomial approximations of their respective degrees.

Example 2: Find the Taylor Series and Taylor polynomials generated by $f(x) = \cos(x)$ at $a = 0$.

Example 3: Find the Maclaurin Series generated by $f(x) = \sin(x)$.

Example 4: Find the Taylor Series generated by $f(x) = e^x$.