

$$\lim_{\lambda \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^\pi f(x) \sin(\lambda x) dx = 0$$

We assume that  $f(x)$  is continuous on the interval  $0 \leq x \leq \pi$ . The function  $\sin \lambda x$  is periodic with period  $P := 2\pi/\lambda$ . Partition the interval  $[0, \pi]$  into sub-intervals of length  $P$  – but an integer number of them will usually not fit exactly. There will usually be a bit left over. Let  $N$  be the largest integer so that  $NP \leq \pi$ . Then  $NP \leq \pi < (N+1)P$ .

Let  $x_0 = 0$ ,  $x_1 = P$ ,  $x_2 = 2P$ ,  $\dots$ ,  $x_N = NP$  and rewrite the integral as

$$\begin{aligned} J &:= \int_0^\pi f(x) \sin(\lambda x) dx = \left( \int_0^{x_1} + \int_{x_1}^{x_2} + \dots + \int_{x_{N-1}}^{x_N} + \int_{x_N}^\pi \right) f(x) \sin(\lambda x) dx \\ &= J_1 + J_2 + \dots + J_N + E. \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Except for the last one, each of these integrals is over one full period of  $\sin(\lambda x)$ . If in the  $k^{\text{th}}$  interval the function  $f(x)$  is a constant,  $f(x) = c_k$ , then

$$\int_{x_{k-1}}^{x_k} f(x) \sin(\lambda x) dx = c_k \int_{x_{k-1}}^{x_k} \sin(\lambda x) dx = 0. \quad (2)$$

The idea is that since  $f$  is continuous on the closed and bounded interval, it is uniformly continuous there so if  $P$  is small (that is,  $\lambda$  is large),  $f$  is *almost* a constant in the  $k^{\text{th}}$  interval – and the integral should be almost zero.

In greater detail, given any  $\epsilon > 0$ , there is a  $\delta > 0$  so that if  $|x-y| < \delta$  then  $|f(x)-f(y)| < \epsilon$ . Now pick  $\lambda$  so large that the length of each interval,  $P$ , is less than  $\delta$ , that is,  $2\pi/\lambda < \delta$ . Then in the  $k^{\text{th}}$  interval  $f(x) = f(x_k) + [f(x) - f(x_k)]$  where  $|f(x) - f(x_k)| < \epsilon$ . Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} J_k &:= \int_{x_{k-1}}^{x_k} f(x) \sin(\lambda x) dx \\ &= f(x_k) \int_{x_{k-1}}^{x_k} \sin(\lambda x) dx + \int_{x_{k-1}}^{x_k} [f(x) - f(x_k)] \sin(\lambda x) dx \\ &= J'_k + J''_k. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

By equation (2),  $J'_k = 0$  while  $|J''_k| < \epsilon(x_k - x_{k-1})$ .

Also, the last integral,  $E$ , in equation (1) is easily estimated as follows. Let  $M = \max_{[0, \pi]} |f(x)|$ . Then, if needed, choosing  $\lambda$  even larger

$$|E| = \left| \int_{x_N}^\pi f(x) \sin(\lambda x) dx \right| \leq M(\pi - x_N) \leq MP = 2M\pi/\lambda < \epsilon.$$

Therefore

$$|J| \leq |J_1| + |J_2| + \dots + |J_N| + |E| < \epsilon(x_N - x_0) + \epsilon \leq (\pi + 1)\epsilon.$$

**Generalization** If  $f \in C([0, 1])$  and  $\varphi: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is continuous and periodic with period  $P$ , then

$$\lim_{\lambda \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^1 f(x)\varphi(\lambda x) dx = \bar{\varphi} \int_0^1 f(x) dx.$$

Here  $\bar{\varphi} := \frac{1}{P} \int_0^P \varphi(t) dt$  is the average of  $\varphi$  over one period.

To prove this, one first does the special case where  $\bar{\varphi} = 0$ . It is almost identical to what we did above. For the general case let  $\psi(t) = \varphi(t) - \bar{\varphi}$ . Then  $\bar{\psi} = 0$  so we can use the special case and are done.

EXAMPLE Using  $\varphi(t) = |\sin t|$  and  $f(x) = 1$ , this generalization shows how to compute

$$\lim_{\lambda \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^1 |\sin(\lambda x)| dx.$$

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