The Factor Theorem

Examples

1. Show that $(x-2)$ is a factor of $x^{3}+x^{2}-4x-4$.

2. Fully factorise $2x^{3}+x^{2}-18x-9$.

Using the factor theorem to find unknown coefficients:

1. Given that $2x+1$ is a factor of $6x^{3}+ax^{2}+1$, determine the value of $a$.

Test your understanding



2. Given that $3x-1$ is a factor of $3x^{3}+11x^{2}+ax+1$, determine the value of $a$.

Extension

1. *[MAT 2006 1E]* The cubic $x^{3}+ax+b$ has both $\left(x-1\right)$ and $\left(x-2\right)$ has factors. Determine the values of $a$ and $b$.

2. [MAT 2009 1I] The polynomial $n^{2}x^{2n+3}-25nx^{n+1}+150x^{7}$ has $x^{2}-1$ as a factor

1. for no values of $n$;
2. for $n=10$ only;
3. for $n=15$ only;
4. for $n=10$ and $n=15$ only.

The **remainder** **theorem** states that if $f(x)$ is divided by $(x-a)$, the remainder is $f(a)$. This similarly works whenever $a$ makes the divisor 0.

(No longer required for A Level)

3. [MAT 2013 1G] Let $n\geq 2$ be an integer and $p\_{n}\left(x\right)$ be the polynomial

$$p\_{n}\left(x\right)=\left(x-1\right)+\left(x-2\right)+…+(x-n)$$

What is the remainder, in terms of $n$, when $p\_{n}\left(x\right)$ is divided by $p\_{n-1}\left(x\right)$?

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