

Problem: Solve the ODE

$$y'' + 2y(y')^3 = 0 \quad (1)$$

Solution:

Start by introducing a new function $v(y)$ such that

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = v \quad (2)$$

This implies

$$y'' = \frac{dv}{dx} \quad (3)$$

However, since x does not appear in the original ODE, it is undesirable to introduce a new variable. Accordingly we rewrite equation (3) using the chain rule.

$$y'' = \frac{dv}{dx} = \frac{dv}{dy} \frac{dy}{dx} = v \frac{dv}{dy} \quad (4)$$

Substituting (2) and (4) into (1), we find

$$v \frac{dv}{dy} + 2yv^3 = 0 \quad (5)$$

Equation (5) is a separable first order ODE, so we can solve in the usual manner:

$$\frac{dv}{v^2} = -2ydy \quad (6)$$

$$-\frac{1}{v} = -y^2 + C \quad (7)$$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = v = \frac{1}{y^2 + C} \quad (8)$$

We can now compute $y(x)$ by separating x and y and integrating both sides.

$$\int (y^2 + C)dy = \int dx \quad (9)$$

$$\boxed{\frac{1}{2}y^3 + Cy + D = x} \quad (10)$$

This is a cubic equation, so it can in principle be solved for $y(x)$; however the process is cumbersome, so I will not pursue it.