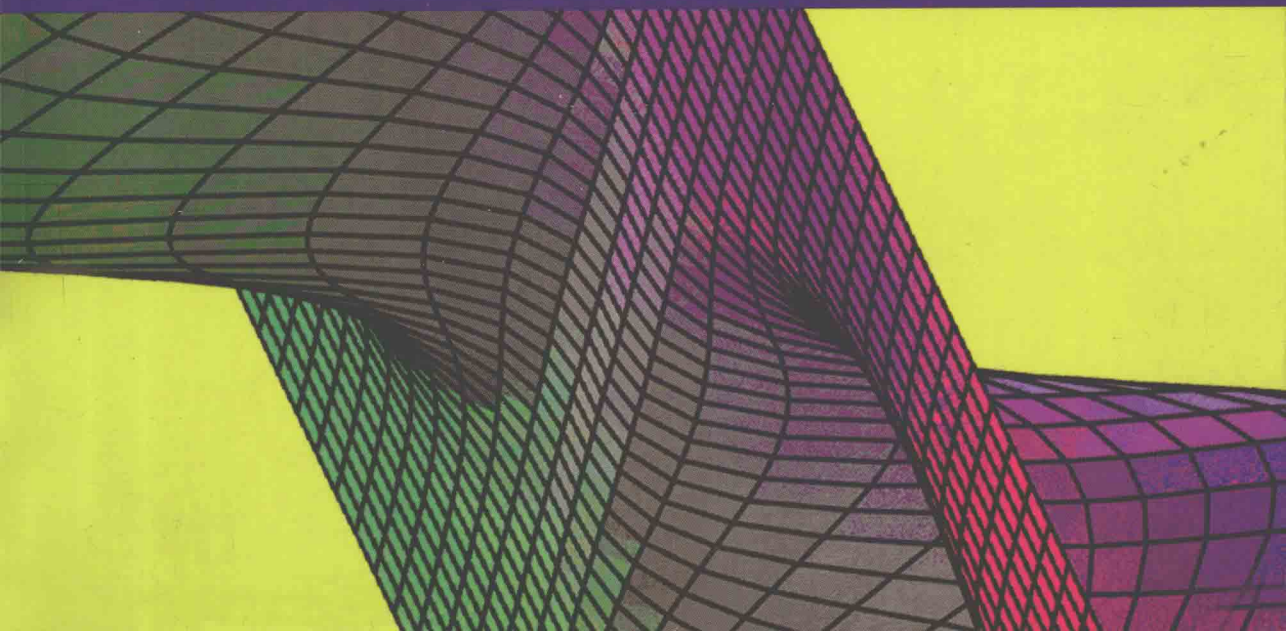




**K.F. RILEY
M.P. HOBSON
S.J. BENCE**

**MATHEMATICAL
METHODS
FOR PHYSICS AND
ENGINEERING**



Mathematical methods for physics and engineering

A comprehensive guide

K. F. Riley, M. P. Hobson and S. J. Bence



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Preface

A knowledge of mathematical methods is important for an increasing number of university and college courses, particularly in physics, engineering and chemistry, but also in more general science. Students embarking on such courses come from diverse mathematical backgrounds, and their core knowledge varies considerably. We have therefore decided to write a textbook that assumes knowledge only of material that can be expected to be familiar to all the current generation of students starting physical science courses at university. In the United Kingdom this corresponds to the standard of Mathematics A-level, whereas in the United States the material assumed is that which would normally be covered at junior college.

Starting from this level, the first six chapters cover a collection of topics with which the reader may already be familiar, but which are here extended and applied to typical problems encountered by first-year university students. They are aimed at providing a common base of general techniques used in the development of the remaining chapters. Students who have had additional preparation, such as Further Mathematics at A-level, will find much of this material straightforward.

Following these opening chapters, the remainder of the book is intended to cover at least that mathematical material which an undergraduate in the physical sciences might encounter up to the end of his or her course. The book is also appropriate for those beginning graduate study with a mathematical content, and naturally much of the material forms parts of courses for mathematics students. Furthermore, the text should provide a useful reference for research workers.

The general aim of the book is to present a topic in three stages. The first stage is a qualitative introduction, wherever possible from a physical point of view. The second is a more formal presentation, although we have deliberately avoided strictly mathematical questions such as the existence of limits, uniform convergence, the interchanging of integration and summation orders, etc. on the

grounds that ‘this is the real world; it must behave reasonably’. Finally a worked example is presented, often drawn from familiar situations in physical science and engineering. These examples have generally been fully worked, since, in the authors’ experience, partially worked examples are unpopular with students. Only in a few cases, where trivial algebraic manipulation is involved, or where repetition of the main text would result, has an example been left as an exercise for the reader. Nevertheless, a number of exercises also appear at the end of each chapter, and these should give the reader ample opportunity to test his or her understanding. Hints and answers to these exercises are also provided.

With regard to the presentation of the mathematics, it has to be accepted that many equations (especially partial differential equations) can be written more compactly by using subscripts, e.g. u_{xy} for a second partial derivative, instead of the more familiar $\partial^2 u / \partial x \partial y$, and that this certainly saves typographical space. However, for many students, the labour of mentally unpacking such equations is sufficiently great that it is not possible to think of an equation’s physical interpretation at the same time. Consequently, wherever possible we have decided to write out such expressions in their more obvious but longer form.

During the writing of this book we have received much help and encouragement from various colleagues at the Cavendish Laboratory, Clare College, Trinity Hall and Peterhouse. In particular, we would like to thank Peter Scheuer, whose comments and general enthusiasm proved invaluable in the early stages. For reading sections of the manuscript, for pointing out misprints and for numerous useful comments, we thank many of our students and colleagues at the University of Cambridge. We are especially grateful to Chris Doran, John Huber, Garth Leder, Tom Körner and, not least, Mike Stobbs, who, sadly, died before the book was completed. We also extend our thanks to the University of Cambridge and the Cavendish teaching staff, whose examination questions and lecture hand-outs have collectively provided the basis for some of the examples included. Of course, any errors and ambiguities remaining are entirely the responsibility of the authors, and we would be most grateful to have them brought to our attention.

We are indebted to Dave Green for a great deal of advice concerning typesetting in \LaTeX and to Andrew Lovatt for various other computing tips. Our thanks also go to Anja Visser and Graça Rocha for enduring many hours of (sometimes heated) debate. At Cambridge University Press, we are very grateful to our editor Adam Black for his help and patience and to Alison Woollatt for her expert typesetting of such a complicated text. We also thank our copy-editor Susan Parkinson for many useful suggestions that have undoubtedly improved the style of the book.

Finally, on a personal note, KFR wishes to thank his wife Penny, not only for a long and happy marriage, but also for her support and understanding during his recent illness – and when things have not gone too well at the bridge table! MPH is indebted both to Rebecca Morris and to his parents for their tireless

PREFACE

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Ken Riley, Michael Hobson and Stephen Bence
Cambridge, 1997

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xvii
1 Preliminary calculus	1
1.1 Differentiation	1
<i>Differentiation from first principles; products; the chain rule; quotients; implicit differentiation; logarithmic differentiation; Leibnitz' theorem; special points of a function; theorems of differentiation</i>	
1.2 Integration	13
<i>Integration from first principles; the inverse of differentiation; integration by inspection; sinusoidal functions; logarithmic integration; integration using partial fractions; substitution method; integration by parts; reduction formulae; infinite and improper integrals; plane polar coordinates; integral inequalities; applications of integration</i>	
1.3 Exercises	31
1.4 Hints and answers	33
2 Complex numbers and hyperbolic functions	34
2.1 The need for complex numbers	34
2.2 Manipulation of complex numbers	36
<i>Addition and subtraction; modulus and argument; multiplication; complex conjugate; division</i>	
2.3 Polar representation of complex numbers	43
<i>Multiplication and division in polar form</i>	
2.4 de Moivre's theorem	45
<i>Trigonometrical identities; finding the nth roots of unity; solving polynomial equations</i>	
2.5 Complex logarithms and complex powers	51
2.6 Applications to differentiation and integration	52

CONTENTS

2.7	Hyperbolic functions	53
	<i>Definitions; hyperbolic–trigonometric analogies; identities of hyperbolic functions; solving hyperbolic equations; inverses of hyperbolic functions; calculus of hyperbolic functions</i>	
2.8	Exercises	61
2.9	Hints and answers	63
3	Series and limits	64
3.1	Series	64
3.2	Summation of series	65
	<i>Arithmetic series; geometric series; arithmetico-geometric series; the difference method; series involving natural numbers; transformation of series</i>	
3.3	Convergence of infinite series	73
	<i>Absolute and conditional convergence; convergence of a series containing only real positive terms; alternating series test</i>	
3.4	Operations with series	81
3.5	Power series	82
	<i>Convergence of power series; operations with power series</i>	
3.6	Taylor series	86
	<i>Taylor's theorem; approximation errors in Taylor series; standard Maclaurin series</i>	
3.7	Evaluation of limits	92
3.8	Exercises	95
3.9	Hints and answers	98
4	Partial differentiation	99
4.1	Definition of the partial derivative	99
4.2	The total differential and total derivative	101
4.3	Exact and inexact differentials	103
4.4	Useful theorems of partial differentiation	105
4.5	The chain rule	106
4.6	Change of variables	107
4.7	Taylor's theorem for many-variable functions	109
4.8	Stationary values of many-variable functions	110
4.9	Stationary values under constraints	116
4.10	Thermodynamic relations	121
4.11	Differentiation of integrals	124
4.12	Exercises	126
4.13	Hints and answers	128
5	Multiple integrals	130
5.1	Double integrals	130
5.2	Triple integrals	133

CONTENTS

5.3	Applications of multiple integrals <i>Areas and volumes; masses, centres of mass and centroids; Pappus' theorems; moments of inertia; mean values of functions</i>	134
5.4	Change of variables in multiple integrals <i>Change of variables in double integrals; evaluation of the integral $I = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-x^2} dx$; change of variables in triple integrals; general properties of Jacobians</i>	143
5.5	Exercises	151
5.6	Hints and answers	154
6	Vector algebra	155
6.1	Scalars and vectors	155
6.2	Addition and subtraction of vectors	156
6.3	Multiplication by a scalar	157
6.4	Basis vectors and components	160
6.5	Magnitude of a vector	162
6.6	Multiplication of vectors <i>Scalar product; vector product; scalar triple product; vector triple product</i>	162
6.7	Equations of lines and planes <i>Equation of a line; equation of a plane</i>	170
6.8	Using vectors to find distances <i>Point to line; point to plane; line to line; line to plane</i>	172
6.9	Reciprocal vectors	176
6.10	Exercises	177
6.11	Hints and answers	182
7	Matrices and vector spaces	184
7.1	Vector spaces <i>Basis vectors; the inner product; some useful inequalities</i>	184
7.2	Linear operators <i>Properties of linear operators</i>	190
7.3	Matrices <i>Matrix addition and multiplication by a scalar; multiplication of matrices</i>	192
7.4	The null and identity matrices	197
7.5	The transpose of a matrix	197
7.6	The complex and Hermitian conjugates of a matrix	198
7.7	The determinant of a matrix <i>Properties of determinants</i>	200
7.8	The inverse of a matrix	204
7.9	The rank of a matrix	206
7.10	Simultaneous linear equations <i>N simultaneous linear equations in N unknowns</i>	208

7.11	Special square matrices <i>Diagonal; symmetric and antisymmetric; orthogonal; Hermitian; unitary; normal</i>	212
7.12	Eigenvectors and eigenvalues <i>Of a normal matrix; of Hermitian and anti-Hermitian matrices; of a unitary matrix; of a general square matrix</i>	214
7.13	Determination of eigenvalues and eigenvectors <i>Degenerate eigenvalues</i>	220
7.14	Change of basis and similarity transformations	223
7.15	Diagonalisation of matrices	226
7.16	Quadratic and Hermitian forms <i>The stationary properties of the eigenvectors; quadratic surfaces</i>	228
7.17	Mechanical oscillations and normal modes	232
7.18	Rayleigh–Ritz method	238
7.19	Exercises	240
7.20	Hints and answers	245
8	Vector calculus	248
8.1	Differentiation of vectors <i>Composite vector expressions; differential of a vector</i>	248
8.2	Integration of vectors	253
8.3	Space curves	254
8.4	Vector functions of several arguments	258
8.5	Surfaces	259
8.6	Scalar and vector fields	262
8.7	Vector operators <i>Gradient of a scalar field; divergence of a vector field; curl of a vector field</i>	262
8.8	Vector operator formulae <i>Vector operators acting on sums and products; combinations of grad, div and curl</i>	269
8.9	Cylindrical and spherical polar coordinates <i>Cylindrical polar coordinates; spherical polar coordinates</i>	272
8.10	General curvilinear coordinates	279
8.11	Exercises	285
8.12	Hints and answers	288
9	Line, surface and volume integrals	290
9.1	Line integrals <i>Evaluating line integrals; physical examples of line integrals; line integrals with respect to a scalar</i>	290
9.2	Connectivity of regions	296
9.3	Green’s theorem in a plane	297
9.4	Conservative fields and potentials	300

9.5	Surface integrals	303
	<i>Evaluating surface integrals; vector areas of surfaces; physical examples of surface integrals</i>	
9.6	Volume integrals	309
	<i>Volumes of three-dimensional regions</i>	
9.7	Integral forms for grad, div and curl	311
9.8	Divergence theorem and related theorems	315
	<i>Green's theorems; other related integral theorems; physical applications of the divergence theorem</i>	
9.9	Stokes' theorem and related theorems	320
	<i>Related integral theorems; physical applications of Stokes' theorem</i>	
9.10	Exercises	324
9.11	Hints and answers	326
10	Fourier series	327
10.1	The Dirichlet conditions	327
10.2	The Fourier coefficients	329
10.3	Symmetry considerations	331
10.4	Discontinuous functions	332
10.5	Non-periodic functions	334
10.6	Integration and differentiation	336
10.7	Complex Fourier series	337
10.8	Parseval's theorem	338
10.9	Exercises	340
10.10	Hints and answers	341
11	Integral transforms	343
11.1	Fourier transforms	343
	<i>The uncertainty principle; Fraunhofer diffraction; the Dirac δ-function; relation of the δ-function to Fourier transforms; properties of Fourier transforms; odd and even functions; convolution and deconvolution; correlation functions and energy spectra; Parseval's theorem; Fourier transforms in higher dimensions</i>	
11.2	Laplace transforms	364
	<i>Laplace transforms of derivatives and integrals; other properties of Laplace transforms</i>	
11.3	Concluding remarks	370
11.4	Exercises	371
11.5	Hints and answers	373
12	First-order ordinary differential equations	375
12.1	General form of solution	376

12.2	First-degree first-order equations	377
	<i>Separable-variable equations; exact equations; inexact equations: integrating factors; linear equations; homogeneous equations; isobaric equations; Bernoulli's equation; miscellaneous equations</i>	
12.3	Higher-degree first-order equations	387
	<i>Equations soluble for p; for x; for y; Clairaut's equation</i>	
12.4	Exercises	392
12.5	Hints and answers	393
13	Higher-order ordinary differential equations	395
13.1	Linear equations with constant coefficients	397
	<i>Finding the complementary function $y_c(x)$; finding the particular integral $y_p(x)$; constructing the general solution $y_c(x) + y_p(x)$; Laplace transform method</i>	
13.2	Linear equations with variable coefficients	403
	<i>The Legendre and Euler linear equations; exact equations; partially known complementary function; variation of parameters; Green's functions; canonical form for second-order equations</i>	
13.3	General ordinary differential equations	419
	<i>Dependent variable absent; independent variable absent; non-linear exact equations; isobaric or homogeneous equations; equations homogeneous in x or y alone; equations having $y = Ae^x$ as a solution</i>	
13.4	Exercises	425
13.5	Hints and answers	427
14	Series solutions of ordinary differential equations	429
14.1	Second-order linear ordinary differential equations	429
	<i>Ordinary and singular points</i>	
14.2	Series solutions about an ordinary point	434
14.3	Series solutions about a regular singular point	437
	<i>Distinct roots not differing by an integer; repeated root of the indicial equation; distinct roots differing by an integer</i>	
14.4	Obtaining a second solution	443
	<i>The Wronskian method; the derivative method; series form of the second solution</i>	
14.5	Polynomial solutions	448
14.6	Legendre's equation	449
	<i>General solution for integer ℓ; properties of Legendre polynomials</i>	
14.7	Bessel's equation	458
	<i>General solution for non-integer ν; general solution for integer ν; properties of Bessel functions</i>	
14.8	General remarks	470
14.9	Exercises	470
14.10	Hints and answers	473

15	Eigenfunction methods for differential equations	475
15.1	Sets of functions <i>Some useful inequalities</i>	477
15.2	Adjoint and Hermitian operators	481
15.3	The properties of Hermitian operators <i>Reality of the eigenvalues; orthogonality of the eigenfunctions; construction of real eigenfunctions</i>	482
15.4	Sturm–Liouville equations <i>Valid boundary conditions; putting an equation into Sturm–Liouville form</i>	485
15.5	Examples of Sturm–Liouville equations <i>Legendre’s equation; the associated Legendre equation; Bessel’s equation; the simple harmonic equation; Hermite’s equation; Laguerre’s equation; Chebyshev’s equation</i>	488
15.6	Superposition of eigenfunctions: Green’s functions	492
15.7	A useful generalisation	496
15.8	Exercises	497
15.9	Hints and answers	500
16	Partial differential equations: general and particular solutions	501
16.1	Important partial differential equations <i>The wave equation; the diffusion equation; Laplace’s equation; Poisson’s equation; Schrödinger’s equation</i>	502
16.2	General form of solution	506
16.3	General and particular solutions <i>First-order equations; inhomogeneous equations and problems; second-order equations</i>	507
16.4	The wave equation	520
16.5	The diffusion equation	523
16.6	Characteristics and the existence of solutions <i>First-order equations; second-order equations</i>	526
16.7	Uniqueness of solutions	533
16.8	Exercises	535
16.9	Hints and answers	537
17	Partial differential equations: separation of variables and other methods	539
17.1	Separation of variables: the general method	539
17.2	Superposition of separated solutions	544
17.3	Separation of variables in polar coordinates <i>Laplace’s equation in polar coordinates; spherical harmonics; other equations in polar coordinates; solution by expansion; separation of variables in inhomogeneous equations</i>	552
17.4	Integral transform methods	576

17.5	Inhomogeneous problems – Green’s functions <i>Similarities with Green’s function for ordinary differential equations; general boundary-value problems; Dirichlet problems; Neumann problems</i>	582
17.6	Exercises	599
17.7	Hints and answers	603
18 Complex variables		604
18.1	Functions of a complex variable	605
18.2	The Cauchy–Riemann relations	607
18.3	Power series in a complex variable	610
18.4	Some elementary functions	613
18.5	Multivalued functions and branch cuts	615
18.6	Singularities and zeroes of complex functions	618
18.7	Complex potentials	620
18.8	Conformal transformations	625
18.9	Application of conformal transformations	630
18.10	Complex integrals	635
18.11	Cauchy’s theorem	639
18.12	Cauchy’s integral formula	642
18.13	Taylor and Laurent series	644
18.14	Residue theorem	649
18.15	Location of zeroes	651
18.16	Integrals of sinusoidal functions	655
18.17	Some infinite integrals	656
18.18	Integrals of multivalued functions	660
18.19	Summation of series	661
18.20	Inverse Laplace transform	662
18.21	Exercises	667
18.22	Hints and answers	671
19 Tensors		674
19.1	Some notation	675
19.2	Change of basis	676
19.3	Cartesian tensors	677
19.4	First- and zero-order Cartesian tensors	679
19.5	Second- and higher-order Cartesian tensors	682
19.6	The algebra of tensors	685
19.7	The quotient law	687
19.8	The tensors δ_{ij} and ϵ_{ijk}	688
19.9	Isotropic tensors	692
19.10	Improper rotations and pseudotensors	693
19.11	Dual tensors	696

19.12 Physical applications of tensors	697
19.13 Integral theorems for tensors	702
19.14 Non-Cartesian coordinates	703
19.15 The metric tensor	705
19.16 General coordinate transformations and tensors	708
19.17 Relative tensors	712
19.18 Derivatives of basis vectors and Christoffel symbols	713
19.19 Covariant differentiation	716
19.20 Vector operators in tensor form	720
19.21 Absolute derivatives along curves	723
19.22 Geodesics	725
19.23 Exercises	726
19.24 Hints and answers	729
20 Calculus of variations	731
20.1 The Euler–Lagrange equation	732
20.2 Special cases	733
<i>F does not contain y explicitly; F does not contain x explicitly</i>	
20.3 Some extensions	738
<i>Several dependent variables; several independent variables; higher-order derivatives; variable end-points</i>	
20.4 Constrained variation	741
20.5 Physical variational principles	744
<i>Fermat’s principle in optics; Hamilton’s principle in mechanics</i>	
20.6 General eigenvalue problems	747
20.7 Estimation of eigenvalues and eigenfunctions	749
20.8 Adjustment of parameters	752
20.9 Exercises	754
20.10 Hints and answers	757
21 Integral equations	758
21.1 Obtaining an integral equation from a differential equation	758
21.2 Types of integral equation	759
21.3 Operator notation and the existence of solutions	760
21.4 Closed-form solutions	761
<i>Separable kernels; integral transform methods; differentiation</i>	
21.5 Neumann series	769
21.6 Fredholm theory	771
21.7 Schmidt–Hilbert theory	772
21.8 Exercises	775
21.9 Hints and answers	777

22	Group theory	779
22.1	Groups <i>Definition of a group; further examples of groups</i>	779
22.2	Finite groups	787
22.3	Non-Abelian groups	791
22.4	Permutation groups	794
22.5	Mappings between groups	797
22.6	Subgroups	800
22.7	Subdividing a group <i>Equivalence relations and classes; congruence and cosets; conjugates and classes</i>	802
22.8	Exercises	808
22.9	Hints and answers	810
23	Representation theory	812
23.1	Dipole moments of molecules	813
23.2	Choosing an appropriate formalism	814
23.3	Equivalent representations	820
23.4	Reducibility of a representation	822
23.5	The orthogonality theorem for irreducible representations	826
23.6	Characters <i>Orthogonality property of characters</i>	827
23.7	Counting irreps using characters <i>Summation rules for irreps</i>	830
23.8	Construction of a character table	835
23.9	Group nomenclature	838
23.10	Product representations	839
23.11	Physical applications of group theory <i>Bonding in molecules; matrix elements in quantum mechanics; degeneracy of normal modes; breaking of degeneracies</i>	841
23.12	Exercises	850
23.13	Hints and answers	854
24	Probability	855
24.1	Venn diagrams	855
24.2	Probability <i>Axioms and theorems; conditional probability; Bayes' theorem</i>	858
24.3	Permutations and combinations	867
24.4	Random variables and distributions <i>Discrete random variables; continuous random variables</i>	872
24.5	Properties of distributions <i>Mean; mode and median; variance; higher moments; higher central moments</i>	875
24.6	Generating functions <i>Probability generating functions; moment generating functions</i>	880

CONTENTS

24.7	Important discrete distributions <i>Binomial; hypergeometric; Poisson; Poisson approximation to the binomial distribution; multiple Poisson distributions</i>	888
24.8	Important continuous distributions <i>Gaussian; Gaussian approximation to the binomial distribution; Gaussian approximation to the Poisson distribution; multiple Gaussian; exponential; uniform</i>	898
24.9	The central limit theorem	911
24.10	Transformation of variables	912
24.11	Joint distributions <i>Discrete bivariate; continuous bivariate; conditional; marginal</i>	914
24.12	Properties of joint distributions <i>Expectation values; variance; covariance and correlation</i>	916
24.13	Multivariate distributions <i>Multinomial; multivariate Gaussian; transformation of variables in multivariate distributions</i>	922
24.14	Statistics: describing data <i>Mean; variance and standard deviation</i>	925
24.15	Statistics: estimating parameters <i>Mean; variance; estimating the error in the mean</i>	928
24.16	Exercises	932
24.17	Hints and answers	936
25	Numerical methods	938
25.1	Algebraic and transcendental equations <i>Rearrangement of the equation; linear interpolation; binary chopping; Newton–Raphson method</i>	939
25.2	Convergence of iteration schemes	946
25.3	Simultaneous linear equations <i>Gaussian elimination; Gauss–Seidel iteration; tridiagonal matrices</i>	948
25.4	Numerical integration <i>Trapezium rule; Simpson’s rule; Gaussian integration</i>	955
25.5	Finite differences	961
25.6	Differential equations <i>Difference equations; Taylor series solutions; prediction and correction; Runge–Kutta methods; isoclines</i>	963
25.7	Higher-order equations	972
25.8	Partial differential equations	973
25.9	Exercises	975
25.10	Hints and answers	978
<i>Appendix</i>	<i>Special functions</i>	980
<i>Index</i>		983