

6.14 Selecting Techniques for Antidifferentiation

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 10 marks

KEY WORDS completing the square • antiderivative

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **selecting antidifferentiation techniques** – choosing the right method quickly.

You must be able to:

- recognise when a **basic rule**, a **substitution**, **long division**, or **completing the square** applies
- match an integrand's shape to the fastest method
- carry the chosen method through to a correct antiderivative

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a question type used later – follow the steps and you can do the Practice and Exam-style questions yourself.

■ The decision guide

- **Basic rule** – a power, e^x , $\sin / \cos$, or $\frac{1}{x}$ on its own.
- **Substitution** – an inside function whose derivative also appears (e.g. $2x$ beside $x^2 + 1$).
- **Long division** – a rational function with numerator degree $\geq$ denominator degree.
- **Completing the square** – an irreducible quadratic $x^2 + bx + c$ in a denominator (arctangent).

■ Spotting a substitution

$\int x^2 e^{x^3} dx$: the x^2 is (up to a constant) the derivative of x^3 – **substitute** $u = x^3$.
 Answer $\frac{1}{3}e^{x^3} + C$.

■ **Spotting a division**

$\int \frac{x^3}{x^2 + 1} dx$: top-heavy, so **divide** first: $x - \frac{x}{x^2 + 1}$, then integrate (the second piece needs $u = x^2 + 1$).

■ **Spotting a basic rule**

$\int (2x + \cos x) dx$ needs no tricks – just the **basic rules**: $x^2 + \sin x + C$.

2 Practice

Now apply the methods above. For each, name the best method (basic / substitution / division / complete-the-square).

2.1 $\int \frac{1}{x^2 + 4} dx$ [1]

2.2 $\int 5x^4(x^5 + 2)^7 dx$ [1]

2.3 $\int \frac{x^2 + 1}{x} dx$ [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Which integral is best done by **substitution**? [1]

- ☐ A $\int (x^3 - 2) dx$
- ☐ B $\int \frac{1}{x^2 + 9} dx$
- ☐ C $\int \cos(x^2) \cdot 2x dx$
- ☐ D $\int \frac{x^2}{x + 1} dx$

3.2 Find $\int \frac{x^2 + 3}{x} dx$ (rewrite the fraction first). [3]

3.3 Find $\int \frac{6x}{x^2 + 1} dx$. [3]

Solutions

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

- Complete-the-square / arctangent form (basic arctangent rule)

2.2

- Substitution, $u = x^5 + 2$

2.3

- Basic – split into $x + \frac{1}{x}$ first

3.1 C

- $2x$ is the derivative of x^2 , so substitute $u = x^2$

3.2

- $\frac{x^2 + 3}{x} = x + \frac{3}{x}$; $\int (x + \frac{3}{x}) dx = \frac{x^2}{2} + 3 \ln |x| + C$

3.3

- $u = x^2 + 1$, $du = 2x dx$, so $6x dx = 3 du$; $\int \frac{3}{u} du = 3 \ln |u| = 3 \ln(x^2 + 1) + C$