

9.5 Integrating Vector-Valued Functions

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 16 marks

KEY WORDS vector-valued function

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **integrating vector-valued functions**.

You must be able to:

- integrate a vector function **component by component**
- use an **initial condition** to find each constant
- recover velocity from acceleration, or position from velocity

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.

■ Integrate each component

$\int \vec{r}(t) dt$ integrates each component separately, giving a **vector** of constants $\vec{C}$:

$$\int \langle f(t), g(t) \rangle dt = \left\langle \int f dt, \int g dt \right\rangle + \vec{C}.$$

■ From acceleration to velocity

Given $\vec{a}(t) = \langle 2, -6t \rangle$ and $\vec{v}(0) = \langle 1, 0 \rangle$: integrate, $\vec{v}(t) = \langle 2t + C_1, -3t^2 + C_2 \rangle$. Apply $\vec{v}(0) = \langle 1, 0 \rangle$: $C_1 = 1$, $C_2 = 0$, so $\vec{v}(t) = \langle 2t + 1, -3t^2 \rangle$.

■ From velocity to position

Integrate $\vec{v}$ and use $\vec{r}(0)$ to fix the constants. Each component is a separate initial-value problem.

■ **Definite integral of a vector**

$\int_a^b \vec{v}(t) dt$ gives the **displacement** vector over $[a, b]$ – integrate each component between the limits.

2 Practice

Now apply the methods above.

2.1 Find $\int \langle 2t, 3 \rangle dt$ (include the constant vector). [2]

2.2 Given $\vec{a}(t) = \langle 0, -10 \rangle$ and $\vec{v}(0) = \langle 5, 0 \rangle$, find $\vec{v}(t)$. [3]

2.3 Evaluate $\int_0^2 \langle 1, 2t \rangle dt$. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 To integrate a vector-valued function you [1]

- ☐ **A** integrate each component separately
B take the magnitude first
C differentiate it
D add the components then integrate

3.2 A particle has acceleration $\vec{a}(t) = \langle 6t, 2 \rangle$, with $\vec{v}(0) = \langle 0, 1 \rangle$.

(a) Find $\vec{v}(t)$. [3]

(b) Find $\vec{v}(1)$. [1]

3.3 A particle has velocity $\vec{v}(t) = \langle 2t, \cos t \rangle$ and starts at $\vec{r}(0) = \langle 1, 0 \rangle$. Find the position $\vec{r}(t)$. [4]