

2.1 Distinguish sequences from series and select a valid sum

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 24 marks

KEY WORDS arithmetic sequence 等差数列 • geometric sequence 等比数列 • series 级数

Objective

Distinguish sequences from series and select a valid sum. Original GAC004-aligned practice, not an official assessment. Show the method as well as the result. All applied scenarios are invented classroom problems.

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ Key knowledge: constant differences and constant ratios give different models

An **arithmetic sequence** 等差数列 has constant difference d , with $u_n = a + (n - 1)d$. A **geometric sequence** 等比数列 has constant ratio r , with $u_n = ar^{n-1}$. Here a is the first term and n starts at 1. A **series** 级数 adds terms of a sequence.

For n arithmetic terms, $S_n = n[2a + (n - 1)d]/2$. For geometric terms with $r \neq 1$, $S_n = a(1 - r^n)/(1 - r)$. If $r = 1$, the sum is na . For a nonzero first term, an infinite geometric sum is $S_\infty = a/(1 - r)$ only when $|r| < 1$; a finite sum can still exist when the infinite series does not converge.

■ Worked example: row counts differ by a constant amount

row 1: 4 • • • •

row 2: 7 • • • • • • •

row 3: 10 • • • • • • • • • •

Known: row counts are 4, 7 and 10, continuing with the same difference. Thus $a = 4$ and $d = 3$. For the fifth row:

$$u_n = a + (n - 1)d$$

$$u_5 = 4 + (5 - 1)(3) = 16$$

For the first five rows together, use the arithmetic sum, not the fifth term.

$$S_n = \frac{n}{2}[2a + (n - 1)d]$$

$$S_5 = \frac{5}{2}[2(4) + (5 - 1)(3)] = 50$$

2 Practice

2.1 An arithmetic sequence begins 5, 9, 13. Find its tenth term. [2]

2.2 A geometric sequence begins 3, 6, 12. Find its sixth term. [2]

2.3 Find the sum of the first 20 terms of the arithmetic sequence with first term 7 and common difference 3. [3]

2.4 Find the sum of the first five terms of the geometric sequence with $a = 16$ and $r = 1/2$. State its infinite sum. [3]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 An auditorium has 12 seats in its first row and 2 more seats in each subsequent row. (a) Find the seat count in row 15. (b) Find the total in the first 15 rows. (c) Find the smallest number of complete rows whose combined count is at least 400. [6]
