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POLAR COORDINATES

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CONVERTING BETWEEN CARTESIANS AND POLARS

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Question 1

A curve C has Cartesian equation

$$(x^2 + y^2)^2 = a^2(x^2 - y^2), \quad a \neq 0.$$

Determine a polar equation for C .

$$r^2 = a^2 \cos 2\theta$$

$$\begin{aligned} (x^2 + y^2)^2 &= a^2(x^2 - y^2) \\ \Rightarrow (r^2)^2 &= a^2(r^2 \cos^2 \theta - r^2 \sin^2 \theta) \\ \Rightarrow r^4 &= a^2 r^2 (\cos^2 \theta - \sin^2 \theta) \\ \Rightarrow r^2 &= a^2 \cos 2\theta \end{aligned}$$

Question 2

A curve C has Cartesian equation

$$(x^2 + y^2)^3 = (x + y)^4.$$

Show that a polar equation for C is given by

$$r = 1 + \sin 2\theta, \quad r \geq 0.$$

proof

$$\begin{aligned} (x^2 + y^2)^3 &= (x + y)^4 \\ \Rightarrow (r^2)^3 &= (r \cos \theta + r \sin \theta)^4 \\ \Rightarrow r^6 &= r^4 (\cos \theta + \sin \theta)^4 \\ \Rightarrow r^2 &= (\cos \theta + \sin \theta)^4 \\ \Rightarrow r &= (\cos \theta + \sin \theta)^2 \\ \Rightarrow r &= \cos^2 \theta + 2 \cos \theta \sin \theta + \sin^2 \theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= 1 + 2 \sin \theta \cos \theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= 1 + \sin 2\theta \end{aligned}$$

Question 3

A curve C has Cartesian equation

$$(x^2 + y^2)^2 = 2x^2y.$$

Show that a polar equation for C can be written as

$$r = \sin 2\theta \cos \theta.$$

proof

Handwritten proof for Question 3:

$$\begin{aligned} (x^2 + y^2)^2 &= 2x^2y \\ \Rightarrow (r^2)^2 &= 2(r \cos \theta)^2(r \sin \theta) \\ \Rightarrow r^4 &= 2r^3 \cos^2 \theta \sin \theta \\ \Rightarrow r^4 &= 2r^3 \cos^2 \theta \sin \theta \quad r \neq 0 \\ \Rightarrow r &= 2 \cos^2 \theta \sin \theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= (2 \cos \theta \sin \theta) \cos \theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= \sin 2\theta \cos \theta \quad \text{As required} \end{aligned}$$

Also shown in a box: $x^2 + y^2 = r^2$, $x = r \cos \theta$, $y = r \sin \theta$

Question 4

A circle has Cartesian equation

$$(x-3)^2 + (y-4)^2 = 25.$$

Show that a polar equation for the circle is given by

$$r = A \cos \theta + B \sin \theta,$$

where A and B are constants.

$$r = 6 \cos \theta - 4 \sin \theta$$

Handwritten proof for Question 4:

$$\begin{aligned} (x-3)^2 + (y-4)^2 &= 25 \\ \Rightarrow x^2 - 6x + 9 + y^2 - 8y + 16 &= 25 \\ \Rightarrow x^2 + y^2 - 6x - 8y &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow r^2 - 6r \cos \theta - 8r \sin \theta &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow r - 6 \cos \theta - 8 \sin \theta &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow r &= 6 \cos \theta + 8 \sin \theta \end{aligned}$$

Also shown in a box: $x^2 + y^2 = r^2$

Question 5

A circle has polar equation

$$r = 4(\cos \theta + \sin \theta) \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi.$$

Determine the Cartesian coordinates of the centre of the circle and the length of its radius.

$$(2, 2), \text{ radius} = \sqrt{8}$$

Handwritten solution for Question 5:

$$\begin{aligned} \Rightarrow r &= 4(\cos \theta + \sin \theta) \\ \Rightarrow r &= 4\left(\frac{x}{r} + \frac{y}{r}\right) \\ \Rightarrow r^2 &= 4x + 4y \\ \Rightarrow x^2 + y^2 &= 4x + 4y \\ \Rightarrow x^2 - 4x + y^2 - 4y &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow (x-2)^2 - 4 + (y-2)^2 - 4 &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow (x-2)^2 + (y-2)^2 &= 8 \end{aligned}$$

\therefore CENTRE AT $(2, 2)$
RADIUS $2\sqrt{2}$

Question 6

Write the polar equation

$$r = \cos \theta + \sin \theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi$$

in Cartesian form, and hence show that it represents a circle, further determining the coordinates of its centre and the size of its radius.

$$\left(x - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 + \left(y - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 = \frac{1}{2}$$

Handwritten solution for Question 6:

USING THE "EXPANDED TRANSFORMATION" EQUATIONS

$$\begin{aligned} \Rightarrow r &= \cos \theta + \sin \theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= \frac{x}{r} + \frac{y}{r} \\ \Rightarrow r^2 &= x + y \\ \Rightarrow x^2 + y^2 - x - y &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow \left(x - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{4} + \left(y - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{4} &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow \left(x - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 + \left(y - \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 &= \frac{1}{2} \end{aligned}$$

\therefore IMAGED A CIRCLE
CENTRE AT $\left(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}\right)$
RADIUS $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$

Question 7

A curve C has polar equation

$$r = 1 + \cos 2\theta.$$

Determine a Cartesian equation for C .

$$\left(x^2 + y^2\right)^3 = 4x^4$$

$$\begin{aligned} r &= 1 + \cos 2\theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= 1 + (2\cos^2\theta - 1) \\ \Rightarrow r &= 2\cos^2\theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= 2\left(\frac{x}{r}\right)^2 \\ \Rightarrow r &= 2\frac{x^2}{r^2} \\ \Rightarrow r^3 &= 2x^2 \\ \Rightarrow (r^3)^{\frac{1}{3}} &= (2x^2)^{\frac{1}{3}} \\ \Rightarrow (r^3)^{\frac{1}{3}} &= 4x^{\frac{2}{3}} \\ \Rightarrow (x^2+y^2)^{\frac{1}{3}} &= 4x^{\frac{2}{3}} \end{aligned}$$

Question 8

A curve C has polar equation

$$r = \sec \theta + \tan \theta.$$

Determine a Cartesian equation for C .

$$x^2 + y^2 = \frac{y^2}{(x-1)^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} r &= \sec \theta + \tan \theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= \frac{1 + \sin \theta}{\cos \theta} \\ \Rightarrow r &= \frac{1 + \sin \theta}{\cos \theta} \\ \text{Let } x &= r \cos \theta \\ y &= r \sin \theta \\ \Rightarrow r &= \frac{1 + \frac{y}{r}}{\frac{x}{r}} \\ \text{Multiply top/bottom by } r \end{aligned}$$

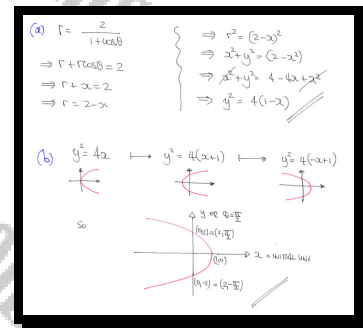
Question 9

A curve C has polar equation

$$r = \frac{2}{1 + \cos \theta}, \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi.$$

- a) Find a Cartesian equation for C .
- b) Sketch the graph of C .

$$y^2 = 4(1-x)$$



Question 10

The curve C has Cartesian equation

$$(x^2 + y^2)(x-1)^2 = x^2.$$

Find a polar equation of C in the form $r = f(\theta)$.

$$r = 1 + \sec \theta$$

(Q) $(x^2 + y^2)(x-1)^2 = x^2$
 $\Rightarrow r^2(x-1)^2 = x^2$
 $\Rightarrow r^2 = \frac{x^2}{(x-1)^2}$
 $\Rightarrow r = \frac{x}{x-1}$
 $\Rightarrow r = \frac{r \cos \theta}{r \cos \theta - 1}$
 $\Rightarrow 1 = \frac{\cos \theta}{r \cos \theta - 1}$
 $\Rightarrow r \cos \theta - 1 = \cos \theta$
 $\Rightarrow r \cos \theta = 1 + \cos \theta$
 $\Rightarrow r = \frac{1}{\cos \theta} + 1$
 $\Rightarrow r = \sec \theta + 1$

Question 11

A curve C_1 has polar equation

$$r = 2 \sin \theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi.$$

- a) Find a Cartesian equation for C_1 , and describe it geometrically.

A different curve C_2 has Cartesian equation

$$y^2 = \frac{x^4}{1-x^2}, \quad x \neq \pm 1.$$

- b) Find a polar equation for C_2 , in the form $r = f(\theta)$.

$$x^2 + (y-1)^2 = 1, \quad r = \tan \theta$$

Handwritten solution for Question 11a and 11b:

(a) $r = 2 \sin \theta$
 $\Rightarrow r = 2 \left(\frac{y}{r} \right)$
 $\Rightarrow r^2 = 2y$
 $\Rightarrow x^2 + y^2 - 2y = 0$
 $\Rightarrow x^2 + (y-1)^2 - 1 = 0$
 $\Rightarrow x^2 + (y-1)^2 = 1$
 Circle centre (0,1)
 radius 1

(b) $y^2 = \frac{x^4}{1-x^2}$
 $\Rightarrow y^2 - xy^2 = -x^4$
 $\Rightarrow y^2 = x^4 + xy^2$
 $\Rightarrow y^2 = x^2(x^2 + y^2)$
 $\Rightarrow y^2 = x^2 r^2$
 $\Rightarrow r^2 = \frac{y^2}{x^2}$
 $\Rightarrow r^2 = \frac{y^2 \sin^2 \theta}{x^2 \cos^2 \theta}$
 $\Rightarrow r^2 = \tan^2 \theta$
 $\Rightarrow r = \tan \theta$

Question 12

Show that the polar equation of the top half of the parabola with Cartesian equation

$$y = \sqrt{2x+1}, \quad x \geq -\frac{1}{2},$$

is given by the polar equation

$$r = \frac{1}{1 - \cos \theta}, \quad r \geq 0.$$

proof

Handwritten proof showing the conversion of the Cartesian equation $y = \sqrt{2x+1}$ to the polar equation $r = \frac{1}{1 - \cos \theta}$.

Left side of the proof:

$$\begin{aligned} y &= \sqrt{2x+1} \\ \Rightarrow y^2 &= 2x+1 \\ \Rightarrow y^2 + x^2 &= x^2 + 2x + 1 \\ \Rightarrow r^2 &= (x+1)^2 \\ \Rightarrow r &= x+1 \\ \Rightarrow r-1 &= r \cos \theta \end{aligned}$$

Right side of the proof:

$$\begin{aligned} \Rightarrow r - r \cos \theta &= 1 \\ \Rightarrow r(1 - \cos \theta) &= 1 \\ \Rightarrow r &= \frac{1}{1 - \cos \theta} \end{aligned}$$

Question 13

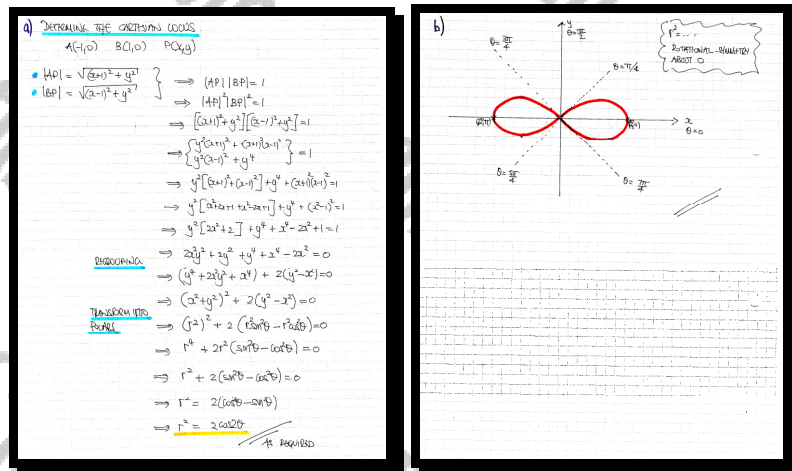
The points A and B have respective coordinates $(-1,0)$ and $(1,0)$. The locus of the point $P(x,y)$ traces a curve in such a way so that $|AP||BP|=1$.

- a) By forming a Cartesian equation of the locus of P , show that the polar equation of the curve is

$$r^2 = 2 \cos 2\theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi.$$

- b) Sketch the curve.

proof



Question 14

The curve C has polar equation

$$r = \tan \theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta < \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

Find a Cartesian equation of C in the form $y = f(x)$.

$$y = \frac{x^2}{\sqrt{1-x^2}}$$

Handwritten solution for Question 14:

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= \tan \theta \\
 \Rightarrow r^2 &= \frac{\sin^2 \theta}{\cos^2 \theta} \\
 \Rightarrow r^2 \cos^2 \theta &= \sin^2 \theta \\
 \Rightarrow (r \cos \theta)^2 &= \sin^2 \theta \\
 \Rightarrow x^2 &= \sin^2 \theta \\
 \Rightarrow x^2 &= 1 - \cos^2 \theta \\
 \Rightarrow \cos^2 \theta &= 1 - x^2 \\
 \Rightarrow \sec^2 \theta &= \frac{1}{1-x^2} \\
 \Rightarrow 1 + \tan^2 \theta &= \frac{1}{1-x^2} \\
 \Rightarrow \tan^2 \theta &= \frac{1}{1-x^2} - 1 \\
 \Rightarrow \tan^2 \theta &= \frac{1-(1-x^2)}{1-x^2} \\
 \Rightarrow \tan^2 \theta &= \frac{x^2}{1-x^2} \\
 \Rightarrow y^2 &= \frac{x^2}{1-x^2} - x^2 \\
 \Rightarrow y^2 &= \frac{x^2 - (x^2 - x^4)}{1-x^2} \\
 \Rightarrow y^2 &= \frac{x^4}{1-x^2} \\
 \Rightarrow y &= \pm \sqrt{\frac{x^4}{1-x^2}} \\
 \Rightarrow y &= \frac{x^2}{\sqrt{1-x^2}}
 \end{aligned}$$

TANGENTS TO POLAR CURVES

Question 1

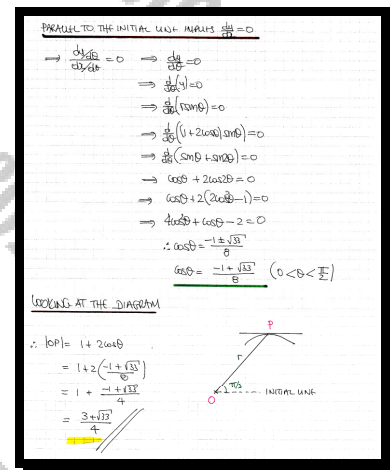
A Cardioid has polar equation

$$r = 1 + 2\cos\theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta \leq \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

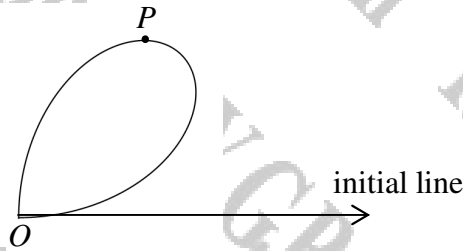
The point P lies on the Cardioid so that the tangent to the Cardioid at P is parallel to the initial line.

Determine the exact length of OP , where O is the pole.

$$\frac{1}{4}(3 + \sqrt{33})$$



Question 2



The figure above shows the polar curve with equation

$$r = \sin 2\theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta \leq \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

The point P lies on the curve so that the tangent at P is parallel to the initial line.

Find the **Cartesian** coordinates of P .

$$\left(\frac{2}{9}\sqrt{6}, \frac{4}{9}\sqrt{3}\right)$$

For "Horizontal Tangent" $\frac{dy}{dx} = 0$

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{dy/d\theta}{dx/d\theta} = 0$$

$$\frac{dy}{d\theta} = \frac{d}{d\theta}(\sin\theta) = \cos\theta = 0$$

Differentiate & solve the equation

$$\Rightarrow 2\cos\theta(2\cos\theta - 1) + 2\sin\theta\sin\theta = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow 2\sin\theta(3\cos\theta - 1) = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow 2\sin\theta(3\cos\theta - 1) = 0$$

$\therefore \sin\theta = 0 \quad \cos\theta = \frac{1}{3} \quad \theta = \frac{\pi}{3}$

$\therefore \theta = \arccos\left(\frac{1}{3}\right)$

$\therefore r = \sin 2\theta = 2\sin\theta\cos\theta$

$$= 2 \times \frac{2}{3} \times \frac{1}{3} = \frac{4}{9}$$

Cartesian coordinates of P $\left(\frac{2}{9}\sqrt{6}, \frac{4}{9}\sqrt{3}\right)$

$x = r\cos\theta = \frac{4}{9} \times \frac{1}{3} = \frac{4}{27}$

$y = r\sin\theta = \frac{4}{9} \times \left(\frac{2\sqrt{2}}{3}\right) = \frac{8\sqrt{2}}{27}$

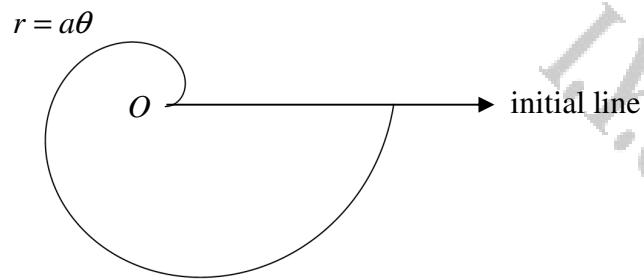
Cartesian coordinates $\left(\frac{4}{27}, \frac{8\sqrt{2}}{27}\right)$

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POLAR CURVE AREAS

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Question 1



The figure above shows a spiral curve with polar equation

$$r = a\theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta \leq 2\pi,$$

where a is a positive constant.

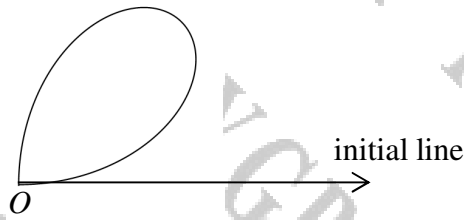
Find the area of the finite region bounded by the spiral and the initial line.

$$\text{area} = \frac{4}{3} a^2 \pi^3$$

Using the standard formula for polar area

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Area} &= \int_{\theta_1}^{\theta_2} \frac{1}{2} r^2 d\theta = \int_{0}^{2\pi} \frac{1}{2} (a\theta)^2 d\theta = \frac{1}{2} a^2 \int_{0}^{2\pi} \theta^2 d\theta \\ &= \frac{1}{2} a^2 \left[\frac{1}{3} \theta^3 \right]_0^{2\pi} = \frac{1}{2} a^2 \left[\frac{8\pi^3}{3} - 0 \right] = \frac{4}{3} a^2 \pi^3 \end{aligned}$$

Question 2



The figure above shows the polar curve C with equation

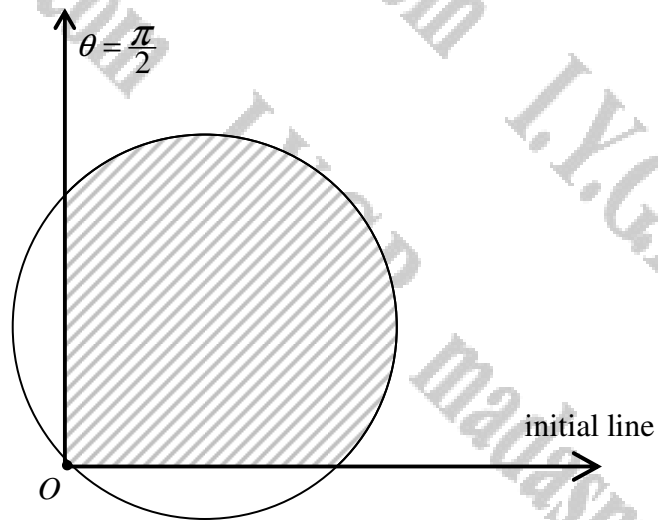
$$r = \sin 2\theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta \leq \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

Find the exact value of the area enclosed by the curve.

$$\text{area} = \frac{\pi}{8}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Area} &= \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1}{2} r^2 d\theta = \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1}{2} (\sin 2\theta)^2 d\theta = \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1}{2} \sin^2 2\theta d\theta \\ &= \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1 - \cos 4\theta}{2} \right) d\theta = \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1}{4} (1 - \cos 4\theta) d\theta \\ &= \left[\frac{1}{4} \theta - \frac{1}{16} \sin 4\theta \right]_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} = \left(\frac{\pi}{8} - 0 \right) - \left(0 \right) = \frac{\pi}{8} \end{aligned}$$

Question 3



The figure above shows a circle with polar equation

$$r = 4(\cos \theta + \sin \theta) \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi.$$

Find the exact area of the shaded region bounded by the circle, the initial line and the half line $\theta = \frac{\pi}{2}$.

$$\text{area} = 4\pi + 8$$

d) USING THE SHOWN FORMULA

$$\rightarrow A(\text{sh}) = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} [r(\theta)]^2 d\theta$$

$$\rightarrow A(\text{sh}) = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} 16(\cos \theta + \sin \theta)^2 d\theta$$

$$\rightarrow A(\text{sh}) = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} 16(\cos^2 \theta + 2\cos \theta \sin \theta + \sin^2 \theta) d\theta$$

$$\rightarrow A(\text{sh}) = \int_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}} 8(1 + 2\cos \theta \sin \theta) d\theta$$

$$\rightarrow A(\text{sh}) = 8 \left[\theta + \sin^2 \theta \right]_0^{\frac{\pi}{2}}$$

$$\rightarrow A(\text{sh}) = 8 \left[\frac{\pi}{2} + 1 - 0 \right]$$

$$\rightarrow A(\text{sh}) = 4\pi + 8$$

b) CONVERT FORMULA TO WORK IN CARTESIAN

$$\rightarrow r = 4(\cos \theta + \sin \theta)$$

$$\rightarrow r = 4 \left(\frac{x}{r} + \frac{y}{r} \right)$$

$$\rightarrow r = 4x + 4y$$

$$\rightarrow x^2 + y^2 = 4x + 4y$$

$$\rightarrow x^2 - 4x + y^2 - 4y = 0$$

$$\rightarrow (x-2)^2 - 4 + (y-2)^2 - 4 = 0$$

$$\rightarrow (x-2)^2 + (y-2)^2 = 8$$

\therefore CENTRE $(2, 2)$
RADIUS $2\sqrt{2}$

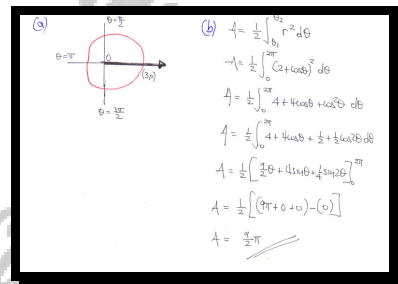
Question 4

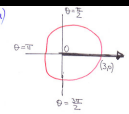
The polar curve C has equation

$$r = 2 + \cos \theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi.$$

- a) Sketch the graph of C .
- b) Show that the area enclosed by the curve is $\frac{9}{2}\pi$.

proof



(a) 

(b)
$$A = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} r^2 d\theta$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} (2 + \cos \theta)^2 d\theta$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} (4 + 4\cos \theta + \cos^2 \theta) d\theta$$

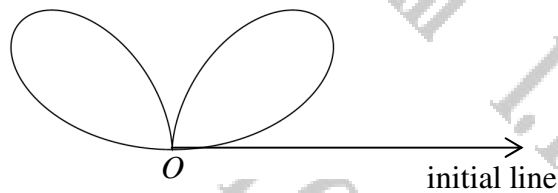
$$= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} \left(4 + 4\cos \theta + \frac{1}{2}(1 + \cos 2\theta) \right) d\theta$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \left[4\theta + 4\sin \theta + \frac{1}{4}\sin 2\theta \right]_0^{2\pi}$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} [8\pi + 0 + 0 - 0]$$

$$= 4\pi$$

Question 5

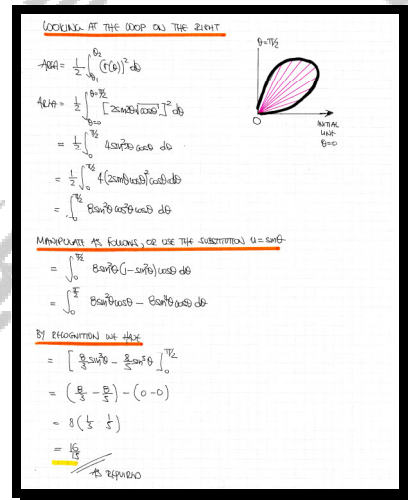


The figure above shows the polar curve C with equation

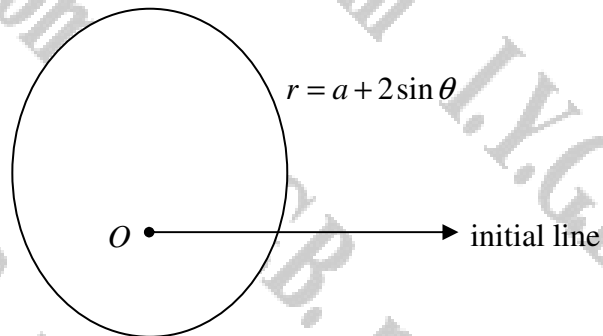
$$r = 2 \sin 2\theta \sqrt{\cos \theta}, \quad -\frac{\pi}{2} \leq \theta \leq \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

Show that the area enclosed by one of the two identical loops of the curve is $\frac{16}{15}$.

proof



Question 6



The diagram above shows the curve with polar equation

$$r = a + 2 \sin \theta, \quad 0 \leq \theta < 2\pi,$$

where a is a positive constant.

Determine the value of a given that the area bounded by the curve is 38π .

$$a = 6$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 A &= \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{1}{2} r^2 d\theta \\
 \Rightarrow 38\pi &= \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{1}{2} (a + 2\sin\theta)^2 d\theta \\
 \Rightarrow 38\pi &= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{2\pi} (a^2 + 4a\sin\theta + 4\sin^2\theta) d\theta \\
 \Rightarrow 76\pi &= \int_0^{2\pi} (a^2 + 4a\sin\theta + 4\sin^2\theta) d\theta \\
 \Rightarrow 76\pi &= \int_0^{2\pi} (a^2 + 4a\sin\theta + 2 - 2\cos 2\theta) d\theta \\
 \Rightarrow 76\pi &= [a^2\theta - 4a\cos\theta + 2\theta - \sin 2\theta]_0^{2\pi} \\
 \Rightarrow 76\pi &= (2\pi a^2 - 4a + 4\pi - 0) - (0 - 4a + 0 - 0) \\
 \Rightarrow 76\pi &= 2\pi a^2 + 4\pi \\
 \Rightarrow 38 &= a^2 + 2 \\
 \Rightarrow a^2 &= 36 \\
 \Rightarrow a &= 6 \quad (a > 0)
 \end{aligned}$$