

STEP CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT

Postmortem: Assignment 5

Warm-up

- 1 (i) Best way to start is to write out the series in full: $\sin \frac{0 \times \pi}{6} + \sin \frac{1 \times \pi}{6} + \dots$ (there are 7 terms).

Remember that when we say “evaluate” or “find the value of” then we are not interested in approximations.

- (ii) It makes things clearer if you align like terms:

$$\begin{array}{r} rS_n - S_n = \quad r + r^2 + \dots + r^{n-1} + r^n \\ \quad \quad \quad -1 - r - r^2 - \dots - r^{n-1} \end{array}$$

or even more nicely:

$$\begin{array}{r} rS_n - S_n = r^n + r^{n-1} + \dots + r^2 + r \\ \quad \quad \quad -r^{n-1} - \dots - r^2 - r - 1 \end{array}$$

Lots of people realised that they could not use the formula they had found in the case $r = 1$ as this would mean dividing by 0; but most did not realise that they could still find an expression for the sum in this case (just by adding the terms in the series).

For the last part, all the terms are multiplied by a , so just multiply the formula for the sum by a .

- (iii) Again: no approximations, please!

You could just apply the formula you have found earlier (you have to identify a , n and r).

Preparation

- 2 (i) This purpose of this question was to try to ensure that you were thinking about the integral as an **area** under a graph rather than something to evaluate using an integration formula.

For this sort of integral (with limits) you don't need the "+c" because it will cancel out. Make sure that your final answer does not include +c.

- (ii) Here we were introducing you to the "floor" function. I particularly like the fact that $[10\pi] \neq 10 \times [\pi]$.
- (iii) A question to get you thinking about graph sketching. You should have found that you got a series of steps (the first step having height 0). You should **not** have vertical lines at $x = 1$, $x = 2$ etc since the function takes only one value at these points. The graph is **not** continuous. Either don't put in anything at all, or if you must have vertical lines, make them dotted.

If you are being particularly careful, you can indicate on your graph that the value of y when $x = 2$ is 2 by having an empty circle at the (right hand) end of the step for $1 \leq x < 2$ and a solid circle at the (left hand) beginning of the step for $2 \leq x < 3$ etc.

- (iv) This part is harder. It is best to consider different regions of x separately; for example, when $1 \leq x < 2$ then $[x] = 1$ and so in this region $y = x \times 1 = x$. You can show similarly that when $2 \leq x < 3$ then $y = x \times 2$, so you get sections of straight line graphs which get steeper as x gets larger. Be careful at the points where x is an integer as the graph is not continuous — do **not** draw vertical lines connecting the disparate line segments.

The STEP question

- 3** In all of your sketches, do not draw solid vertical lines joining up the horizontal bits: the graph is not continuous.

- (i) What is needed is a clear diagram showing the first few rectangles, three dots to show there are some in the middle and then the last rectangle (preferably showing that it starts at $x = a - 1$ and ends at $x = a$, and with the height written on it). Make sure that there is a "gap" to show that there are missing rectangles in the middle.

You can then write down the sum of the areas involved (make sure you put in \dots in the middle and show the first few and last one) before stating that this equals the given expression.

- (ii) Start in the same way in in part (i), i.e. draw a **sketch** (a sketch is often useful, even when you are not told to do it!). You can write down the expression for the sum of the areas (make sure that you include the last one, which is 2^{a-1}) and use the formula for the sum of a geometric progression (with a terms) (as proved in question 1) to get to the given result.

It is a common feature of STEP questions that letters are used to represent things other than what you are used to using them for. This is partly to check that you

actually understand what the formula is for rather than just substituting values in.

- (iii) In the previous parts you were considering the sum of rectangles all of width 1. In this part, the last rectangle will be narrower.

If you are stuck, a good starting point would be to draw a few sketches with particular values of a to see if working with these special cases helps you to understand the general case. You could start, say, by considering $a = 3.2$.

The key idea is that up to $x = [a]$ the graph looks just like the one in part (ii), and that $[a]$ is the last integer before a , so the last rectangle goes from $x = [a]$ to $x = a$. A careful sketch (and you can use the result from part (ii) to sum up all the “whole” rectangles) and you should be there.

A mathematical way of writing this would be to write:

$$\int_0^a 2^{[x]} dx = \int_0^{[a]} 2^{[x]} dx + \int_{[a]}^a 2^{[x]} dx.$$

Warm down

Start off with N bananas. You should be able to show that after Arthur has been at them there are $\frac{2}{3}(N - 1)$ left. Do this again for Brenda and Chandrima (I find it easier to simplify at each stage). The number of bananas left after Chandrima has had a go is the same as $3m + 1$ so you should now be able to derive the given equation.

The last two parts were found to be quite challenging. The important idea is that we are looking for pairs of integers (N, m) which satisfy the equation $8N = 81m + 65$. Not every integer N will work; for example if $N = 20$ we get $m = \frac{95}{81}$, which is not an integer.

First off, assume that N is a possible number of bananas, i.e. for this particular **integer** N we have a corresponding **integer** m so that $8N = 81m + 65$. Now consider N_0 which is defined as $N_0 = N + 81$ (and since N is an integer, N_0 is an integer). We then have:

$$\begin{aligned} 8N_0 &= 8(N + 81) \\ &= 8N + 8 \times 81 \\ &= 81m + 65 + 8 \times 81 \end{aligned}$$

(this last line was found by substituting in $8N = 81m + 65$). Another line or working or two and you should end up with $8N_0 = 81m_0 + 65$ where m_0 is an integer. You need to express m_0 in terms of m . Note that I have left 8×81 in the working — it is actually not all all helpful to work out what this is.

It is quite tricky to find any integer value of N such that when we substitute N into $8N = 81m + 65$ we also get an integer for m . You could start by trying $N = 1$, $N = 2$, etc, but you would be going a very long time before you found a value of N that worked.

If we step back a bit from the context of the problem (forget about bananas, just think about the abstract equation $8N = 81m + 65$) we can see that substituting the integer $N = -2$ does indeed give an integer value of m (which you should find).

We now have an integer value of N for which m is also an integer, namely $N = -2$. However we also know that if N is an integer solution, then $N + 81$ is an integer solution, so we can use this to find a **positive** value of N from our initial value of -2 . Now we have a positive value of N we can think about bananas again.