

Series

■ Some interesting series

Leibniz proved his worthiness to Huygens when the latter gave him this one

$$1 + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{6} + \frac{1}{10} + \frac{1}{15} + \frac{1}{21} + \dots$$

But, he was lucky he had not been given this one

$$1 + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{9} + \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{25} + \dots + \frac{1}{k^2} + \dots,$$

which Euler discovered equals $\frac{\pi^2}{6}$.

■ Of what use are series?

Ever wonder how we find values of non-algebraic functions?

$$e^x = 1 + x + \frac{x^2}{2!} + \dots + \frac{x^n}{n!} + \dots = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{x^n}{n!}$$

$$\sin x = x - \frac{x^3}{3!} + \frac{x^5}{5!} - \frac{x^7}{7!} + \frac{x^9}{9!} - \dots = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (-1)^k \frac{x^{2k+1}}{(2k+1)!}$$

$$\cos x = 1 - \frac{x^2}{2!} + \frac{x^4}{4!} - \frac{x^6}{6!} + \frac{x^8}{8!} - \dots = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (-1)^k \frac{x^{2k}}{(2k)!}$$