

## How to change the direction or speed of traversing a parametric curve

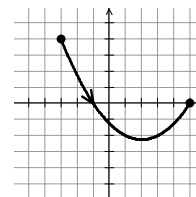
Supposed you already have parametric equations for a curve with a finite domain for the parameter, but you want to change the direction and/or speed of travelling along the curve. This can be accomplished by “changing the timeline”.

For example,

the parametric equations  $x = 2t - 1$   
 $y = t^2 - 3t$  for  $t \in [-1, 3]$  correspond to the curve on the right.

At time  $t = -1$ , the curve starts at  $(x, y) = (-3, 4)$  (the leftmost point) and at time  $t = 3$ , the curve ends at  $(x, y) = (5, 0)$  (the rightmost point).

In between, the curve was traversed from left to right.



Suppose you want to traverse the curve from right to left instead, and instead of taking  $3 - (-1) = 4$  units of time to do so, you want to take only 2 units of time.

Create a new time variable  $T$  and determine how the values of  $T$  correspond to the values of the original time variable  $t$ .

In this case, let's say you want  $T \in [0, 2]$  (so  $T$  spans  $2 - 0 = 2$  units of time).

At  $T = 0$ , you want to start the curve at  $(x, y) = (5, 0)$ , which corresponds to  $t = 3$ .

At  $T = 2$ , you want to end the curve at  $(x, y) = (-3, 4)$ , which corresponds to  $t = -1$ .

So,  $t = 3$  when  $T = 0$ , and  $t = -1$  when  $T = 2$ .

Now find a linear function for the original time variable  $t$  in terms of the new time variable  $T$ .

$$t = mT + b$$

$$m = \frac{\Delta t}{\Delta T} = \frac{3 - (-1)}{0 - 2} = -2$$

$$3 = -2(0) + b, \text{ so } b = 3$$

$$\text{So, } t = -2T + 3$$

Substitute this expression for the original time variable into the original parametric equations to get new equations in terms of the new time variable.

$$\begin{aligned} x = 2t - 1 & \Rightarrow x = 2(-2T + 3) - 1 & \Rightarrow x = -4T + 5 \\ y = t^2 - 3t & \Rightarrow y = (-2T + 3)^2 - 3(-2T + 3) & \Rightarrow y = 4T^2 - 6T \end{aligned} \text{ with } T \in [0, 2]$$

The final parametric equations and domain correspond to the curve on the right, as desired.

