

(revised June 2003)

La Matematiko

## Document 780300 DC (Direct Current) Circuit

Consider an electrical circuit containing a battery, a resistor, and an inductor in series. Suppose that the battery generates a potential difference of  $V$ , and the resistor has a resistance of  $R$ , and the inductor has an inductance of  $L$ . It is essential to be aware that an inductor poses a resistance to the current proportional to the rate of change of the current. ( $L$  is the constant of proportionality.) We will use "I" to stand for the function giving the amount of current flowing in the circuit at a given time. That is,  $I, t$  is the current in the circuit at time  $t$ . We take  $I, 0$  to be 0.

Our goal: Obtain a formula for  $I$  in terms of known quantities. Note that we consider  $V, R$ , and  $L$  to be known. However, we also consider other things to be known, such as the exponential function ( $\epsilon$ ) and the identity function ( $i$ ), which we can use freely along with  $V, R$ , and  $L$  in stating the final formula.

We now begin the analysis leading to our goal.

The voltage drop across the resistor is  $RI$ , and the voltage drop across the inductor is  $LI'$ . Their sum must equal the total voltage drop  $V$ . Therefore,

$$LI' + RI = V.$$

Therefore, dividing through by  $L$ , we obtain

$$I' + \frac{R}{L} I = \frac{V}{L}.$$

But this is a first order linear differential equation:

$$f' + Pf = Q,$$

in which  $f = I, P = R/L, Q = V/L$ , and  $f, 0 = 0$ .

Therefore, the solution is

$$I = \frac{V}{R} \left( 1 - \epsilon_{-R/L} \left( \frac{-Ri}{L} \right) \right).$$

The above formula constitutes reaching our goal.

750800