

Proving Trigonometric Identities: Part 2

More Strategies

1. Some trigonometric identities can be factored as differences of squares as follows

$$\begin{aligned} \cos 2\theta &= \cos^2 \theta - \sin^2 \theta = (\cos \theta - \sin \theta)(\cos \theta + \sin \theta) \\ \cos^2 \theta &= 1 - \sin^2 \theta = (1 - \sin \theta)(1 + \sin \theta) \\ \sin^2 \theta &= 1 - \cos^2 \theta = (1 - \cos \theta)(1 + \cos \theta) \end{aligned}$$

2. The numerator or denominator can sometimes be turned into a difference of squares factorable expression by multiplying the top and bottom by the conjugate:

$$\begin{aligned} (a + b) &\text{---> conjugate---> } (a - b) \\ (a - b) &\text{---> conjugate---> } (a + b) \end{aligned}$$

3. It's always possible to convert all trigonometric components to sines and cosines:

$$\tan \theta = \frac{\sin \theta}{\cos \theta}, \csc \theta = \frac{1}{\sin \theta}, \sec \theta = \frac{1}{\cos \theta}, \cot \theta = \frac{\cos \theta}{\sin \theta}$$

4. The squared trig functions $\sin^2 \theta$ and $\cos^2 \theta$ can be swapped easily with each other but their linear forms $\sin \theta$ and $\cos \theta$ cannot.

Practice

Prove the following:

a) $\frac{\sin^2 \theta}{1 - \cos \theta} = 1 + \cos \theta$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{L.S.} &= \frac{\sin^2 \theta}{1 - \cos \theta} \\ &= \frac{1 - \cos^2 \theta}{1 - \cos \theta} \\ &= \frac{(1 - \cos \theta)(1 + \cos \theta)}{(1 - \cos \theta)} \\ &= 1 + \cos \theta \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{R.S.} = 1 + \cos \theta$$

L.S. = R.S.
QED

$$b) \frac{1 + \sec \theta}{\tan \theta + \sin \theta} = \csc \theta$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{L.S.} &= \frac{1 + \sec \theta}{\tan \theta + \sin \theta} \\ &= \frac{1 + \frac{1}{\cos \theta}}{\frac{\sin \theta}{\cos \theta} + \frac{\sin \theta \cos \theta}{\cos \theta}} \\ &= \frac{\frac{\cos \theta}{\cos \theta} + \frac{1}{\cos \theta}}{\frac{\sin \theta + \sin \theta \cos \theta}{\cos \theta}} \\ &= \frac{\cos \theta + 1}{\sin \theta + \sin \theta \cos \theta} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{\cos \theta + 1}{\cos \theta} \cdot \frac{\sin \theta + \sin \theta \cos \theta}{\cos \theta} \quad \text{R.S.} = \csc \theta \\ &= \frac{\cos \theta + 1}{\cos \theta} \cdot \frac{\cos \theta}{\sin \theta + \sin \theta \cos \theta} = \frac{1}{\sin \theta} \\ &= \frac{(\cos \theta + 1)}{\sin \theta (1 + \cos \theta)} \\ &= \frac{1}{\sin \theta} \end{aligned}$$

L.S. = R.S.
QED

$$c) \frac{\cos \theta}{1 - \sin \theta} = \sec \theta + \tan \theta$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{L.S.} &= \frac{(\cos \theta)(1 + \sin \theta)}{(1 - \sin \theta)(1 + \sin \theta)} \\ &= \frac{\cos \theta (1 + \sin \theta)}{1 - \sin^2 \theta} \\ &= \frac{\cos \theta (1 + \sin \theta)}{\cos^2 \theta} \\ &= \frac{1 + \sin \theta}{\cos \theta} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{R.S.} &= \sec \theta + \tan \theta \\ &= \frac{1}{\cos \theta} + \frac{\sin \theta}{\cos \theta} \\ &= \frac{1 + \sin \theta}{\cos \theta} \end{aligned}$$

L.S. = R.S.
QED