

Problem 11884

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Proposed by C. Lupu and T. Lupu (Romania).

Let f be a real-valued function on $[0, 1]$ such that f and its first two derivatives are continuous. Prove that if $f(1/2) = 0$, then

$$\int_0^1 (f''(x))^2 dx \geq 320 \left(\int_0^1 f(x) dx \right)^2.$$

Solution proposed by Roberto Tauraso, Dipartimento di Matematica, Università di Roma "Tor Vergata", via della Ricerca Scientifica, 00133 Roma, Italy.

Remark: this problem is a particular case of Problem 11756 with $[-1, 1]$ replaced with $[0, 1]$.

By the integral form of the remainder in the Taylor's Theorem we have that if $x \in [0, 1]$ then

$$f(x) = f(1/2) + f'(1/2)(x - 1/2) + \int_{1/2}^x f''(t)(x - t) dt.$$

Since $f(1/2) = 0$, it follows that

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^1 f(x) dx &= \int_0^1 \left(\int_{1/2}^x f''(t)(x - t) dt \right) dx \\ &= \int_{x=0}^{1/2} \int_{t=x}^{1/2} f''(t)(t - x) dt dx + \int_{x=1/2}^1 \int_{t=1/2}^x f''(t)(x - t) dt dx \\ &= \int_{t=0}^{1/2} \int_{x=0}^t f''(t)(t - x) dx dt + \int_{t=1/2}^1 \int_{x=t}^1 f''(t)(x - t) dx dt \\ &= \int_{t=0}^{1/2} f''(t) \left[-\frac{(t-x)^2}{2} \right]_{x=0}^t dt + \int_{t=0}^1 f''(t) \left[\frac{(x-t)^2}{2} \right]_{x=t}^1 dt \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \int_{t=0}^{1/2} f''(t)t^2 dt + \frac{1}{2} \int_{t=0}^1 f''(t)(1-t)^2 dt \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^1 f''(t) h(t) dt, \end{aligned}$$

where

$$h(t) = \begin{cases} t^2 & \text{if } t \in [0, 1/2] \\ (1-t)^2 & \text{if } t \in [1/2, 1] \end{cases}.$$

Hence, by the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality,

$$\left(\int_0^1 f(x) dx \right)^2 \leq \frac{1}{4} \int_0^1 (h(t))^2 dt \cdot \int_0^1 (f''(t))^2 dt = \frac{1}{320} \int_0^1 (f''(t))^2 dt$$

which is equivalent to the desired inequality. □