

## Molniya Orbit Example using $f$ and $g$

This is a two-line element set for the Molniya 1-91 satellite:

MOLNIYA 1-91

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1 25485U 98054A 00300.78960173 .00000175 00000-0 40203-2 0 6131
2 25485 63.1706 206.3462 7044482 281.6461 12.9979 2.00579102 15222
```

Let's find the position and velocity at epoch and 30 minutes later.

The orbital elements are

$$\begin{aligned} a &= 26559 \text{ km} & e &= 0.704482 \\ i &= 63.1706^\circ & \Omega &= 206.346^\circ \\ \omega &= 281.646^\circ & \nu_0 &= 78.2265^\circ \end{aligned}$$

All but  $a$  and  $\nu_0$  are by inspection. The semimajor axis comes from the mean motion (2.00579102 revs/day), and  $\nu_0$  is obtained by first solving Kepler's equation for  $E$  (with  $M = 12.9979^\circ$ ) and then calculating  $\nu$ . We also need to know that  $t - T = 1,555.244$  seconds (calculated from the definition of  $M_0$ ).

The position and velocity vectors at epoch are

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{\mathbf{r}}_0 &= -10515.45\vec{\mathbf{I}} - 5235.37\vec{\mathbf{J}} + 49.17\vec{\mathbf{K}} \\ \vec{\mathbf{v}}_0 &= -2.10305\vec{\mathbf{I}} - 4.18146\vec{\mathbf{J}} + 5.563290\vec{\mathbf{K}} \end{aligned}$$

where units are in km and km/s.

Initially  $f = 1$ ,  $g = 0$ ,  $\dot{f} = 0$ , and  $\dot{g} = 1$ . Note that this satisfies the identity  $1 = f\dot{g} - \dot{f}g$ .

Now we want to calculate  $f$  and  $g$  and their derivatives at  $t = t_0 + 1800$  seconds. The steps are:

1. Calculate  $M$ :  $M = 28.04134^\circ$
2. Solve Kepler's equation for  $E$ :  $E = 64.45895^\circ$
3. Calculate the desired expressions;  $f = 0.757079$ ,  $g = 1684.296$ ,  $\dot{f} = -2.13588 \times 10^{-4}$ , and  $\dot{g} = 0.84569$ .

and

4. Substitute them into the expressions for  $\vec{\mathbf{r}}$  and  $\vec{\mathbf{v}}$

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{\mathbf{r}} &= -11503.18\vec{\mathbf{I}} - 11,006.39\vec{\mathbf{J}} + 9407.45\vec{\mathbf{K}} \\ \vec{\mathbf{v}} &= 0.467452\vec{\mathbf{I}} - 2.41800\vec{\mathbf{J}} + 4.69432\vec{\mathbf{K}} \end{aligned}$$