

Spring 2004 #3 (p 1 of 2)

The normalized wave function of a one-dimensional particle is

$$\psi(x) = N e^{-kx^2/2}$$

for some  $k > 0$ ,  $N$  is real and positive.

(a) what is  $N$ ?

use normalization condition to find  $N$ .

$$1 = N^2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-kx^2} dx = |N|^2 \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{k}} \Rightarrow \boxed{N = \left(\frac{k}{\pi}\right)^{1/4}}$$

(b) what is expectation value of  $x^2$ ?

$$\langle x^2 \rangle = |N|^2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x^2 e^{-kx^2} dx = |N|^2 \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{2k^{3/2}} = \sqrt{\frac{k}{\pi}} \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{2k^{3/2}} = \boxed{\frac{1}{2k}}$$

(c) what is the momentum space wave function  $\langle p | \psi \rangle$ ?

(see Abers eq 2.192) ( $\hbar = 1$ )

$$\begin{aligned} \langle p | \psi \rangle &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-ipx} \psi(x) dx = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-ipx} N e^{-kx^2/2} dx \\ &= \frac{N}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-(\frac{k}{2}x^2 + ipx)} dx \end{aligned}$$

note:  $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-(at^2 - bt + c)} dt = \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{a}} \exp\left(\frac{b^2 - 4ac}{4a}\right)$

so,

$$\langle p | \psi \rangle = \frac{N}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \sqrt{\frac{2\pi}{k}} e^{-p^2/2k} = \left(\frac{k}{\pi}\right)^{1/4} \frac{1}{k^{1/2}} e^{-p^2/2k}$$

$$\therefore \boxed{\langle p | \psi \rangle = \frac{1}{(\pi k)^{1/4}} e^{-p^2/2k}}$$

(d) what is the expectation value of  $p^2$ ? -- I assume they mean in x-space

$$\langle p^2 \rangle = -|N|^2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-Kx^2/2} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} e^{-Kx^2/2} dx = -|N|^2 \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-Kx^2/2} \frac{d}{dx} (-Kx) e^{-Kx^2/2} dx$$

$$= |N|^2 K \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-Kx^2/2} (e^{-Kx^2/2} - Kx^2 e^{-Kx^2/2}) dx$$

$$= |N|^2 K \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-Kx^2} (1 - Kx^2) dx = |N|^2 K \left[ \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{K}} - K \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{2K^{3/2}} \right]$$

$$= |N|^2 K \left( \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{K}} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{K}{\pi}} K \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{K}} = \frac{K}{2}$$

$$\therefore \boxed{\langle p^2 \rangle = \frac{K}{2}}$$

(e) The hamiltonian is

$$H = \frac{p^2}{2m} + V(x)$$

what is the potential  $V(x)$ ?

the wave function given is the ground state wave function for a harmonic oscillator with  $K \rightarrow m\omega$  in this case. So,

$$\boxed{V(x) = \frac{1}{2} K x^2 = \frac{m\omega}{2} x^2}$$