The Method of Integration by Substitution

Remember that the *Chain Rule for Derivatives* is used for taking the *derivative* of *nested functions*:

Chain Rule for Derivatives:
$$\frac{d}{dx}$$
 outer $(inner(x)) = outer'(inner(x)) \cdot inner'(x)$

The goal now is to find the *general antiderivative* of a function f(x) that involves a *nested function*. That is, we wish to find the *indefinite integral* $\int f(x) dx$ where the integrand f(x) involves a nested function. This is not always possible. But sometimes it is, using the *Substitution Method*.

- **The Substitution Method** for finding the *indefinite integral* $F(x) = \int f(x) dx$ where the integrand f(x) involves a *nested function*.
- **Step 1 Identify the inner function and call it** u**.** Write the equation inner(x) = u to introduce the single letter u to represent the inner function. Circle the equation.
- **Step 2 Build the equation** $dx = \frac{1}{u'} du$. To do this, first find u', then use it to build equation $dx = \frac{1}{u'} du$. Circle the equation.
- **Step 3 Substitute, Cancel, Simplify.** In steps (1) and (2) you have two circled equations. **Substitute** these into the integrand of your indefinite integral. **Cancel** as much as possible and **simplify** by using the *Constant Multiple Rule*. The result should be a new basic integral involving just the variable *u*. (See **Remarks about Step 3** below.)
- **Step 4 Integrate.** Find the new indefinite integral by using the indefinite integral rules. The result should be a *function form* involving just the variable u and +C.
- **Step 5 Substitute Back.** Substitute u = inner(x) into your function from Step (4) The result will be a new function form involving just the variable x and the +C. This is the F(x) that we seek. Present the result clearly as F(x) = BLAH and circle it.

Remarks about Step 3: The result of **Step 3** should be a new indefinite integral with an integrand that is a function involving the variable u. There are three important things to check at the end of **Step 3**:

- There should be no *x* in the new indefinite integral. It should involve only *u*.
- The new indefinite integral should *not* involve a *nested function*, and it should be a *basic integral* that can be integrated using our indefinite integral rules.
- If the above two items are not satisfied, then either you made a mistake, or the original integral might be one for which the Substitution Method cannot be used.