



STEP III, 2009 Q5 EC

5. This was the most popular question, with a few more attempts than question 3, but with a level of success matching the first two questions. Many showed the first two results correctly, and quite a few the third one. The last part tripped up many candidates, though the most successful used the first approach in the mark scheme. A number of candidates understood “independent of n ” in the question to be given information, and attempted to find a , b , and c by solving three simultaneous equations for specific values of n . However, there were commonly errors in the values of the S_n used. An efficient alternative solution is given in the mark scheme.



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