2

Limits and Continuity

OVERVIEW Mathematicians of the seventeenth century were keenly interested in the study of motion for objects on or near the earth and the motion of planets and stars. This study involved both the speed of the object and its direction of motion at any instant, and they knew the direction at a given instant was along a line tangent to the path of motion. The concept of a limit is fundamental to finding the velocity of a moving object and the tangent to a curve. In this chapter we develop the limit, first intuitively and then formally. We use limits to describe the way a function varies. Some functions vary *continuously*; small changes in x produce only small changes in $f(x)$. Other functions can have values that jump, vary erratically, or tend to increase or decrease without bound. The notion of limit gives a precise way to distinguish between these behaviors.

2.1 Rates of Change and Tangents to Curves

Calculus is a tool that helps us understand how a change in one quantity is related to a change in another. How does the speed of a falling object change as a function of time? How does the level of water in a barrel change as a function of the amount of liquid poured into it? We see change occurring in nearly everything we observe in the world and universe, and powerful modern instruments help us see more and more. In this section we introduce the ideas of average and instantaneous rates of change, and show that they are closely related to the slope of a curve at a point P on the curve. We give precise developments of these important concepts in the next chapter, but for now we use an informal approach so you will see how they lead naturally to the main idea of this chapter, the *limit*. The idea of a limit plays a foundational role throughout calculus.

Average and Instantaneous Speed

HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY*
Galileo Galilei
(1564–1642)

In the late sixteenth century, Galileo discovered that a solid object dropped from rest (not moving) near the surface of the earth and allowed to fall freely will fall a distance proportional to the square of the time it has been falling. This type of motion is called **free fall**. It assumes negligible air resistance to slow the object down, and that gravity is the only force acting on the falling object. If y denotes the distance fallen in feet after t seconds, then Galileo's law is

$$y = 16t^2,$$

where 16 is the (approximate) constant of proportionality. (If y is measured in meters, the constant is 4.9.)

A moving object's **average speed** during an interval of time is found by dividing the distance covered by the time elapsed. The unit of measure is length per unit time: kilometers per hour, feet (or meters) per second, or whatever is appropriate to the problem at hand.

*To learn more about the historical figures mentioned in the text and the development of many major elements and topics of calculus, visit **www.aw.com/thomas**.

EXAMPLE 1 A rock breaks loose from the top of a tall cliff. What is its average speed

(a) during the first 2 sec of fall?

(b) during the 1-sec interval between second 1 and second 2?

Solution The average speed of the rock during a given time interval is the change in distance, Δy, divided by the length of the time interval, Δt. (Increments like Δy and Δt are reviewed in Appendix 3, and pronounced "delta y" and "delta t.") Measuring distance in feet and time in seconds, we have the following calculations:

(a) For the first 2 sec: $\dfrac{\Delta y}{\Delta t} = \dfrac{16(2)^2 - 16(0)^2}{2 - 0} = 32 \dfrac{\text{ft}}{\text{sec}}$

(b) From sec 1 to sec 2: $\dfrac{\Delta y}{\Delta t} = \dfrac{16(2)^2 - 16(1)^2}{2 - 1} = 48 \dfrac{\text{ft}}{\text{sec}}$ ■

We want a way to determine the speed of a falling object at a single instant t_0, instead of using its average speed over an interval of time. To do this, we examine what happens when we calculate the average speed over shorter and shorter time intervals starting at t_0. The next example illustrates this process. Our discussion is informal here, but it will be made precise in Chapter 3.

EXAMPLE 2 Find the speed of the falling rock in Example 1 at $t = 1$ and $t = 2$ sec.

Solution We can calculate the average speed of the rock over a time interval $[t_0, t_0 + h]$, having length $\Delta t = h$, as

$$\frac{\Delta y}{\Delta t} = \frac{16(t_0 + h)^2 - 16t_0^{\,2}}{h}. \tag{1}$$

We cannot use this formula to calculate the "instantaneous" speed at the exact moment t_0 by simply substituting $h = 0$, because we cannot divide by zero. But we *can* use it to calculate average speeds over increasingly short time intervals starting at $t_0 = 1$ and $t_0 = 2$. When we do so, by taking smaller and smaller values of h, we see a pattern (Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1 Average speeds over short time intervals $[t_0, t_0 + h]$

Average speed: $\dfrac{\Delta y}{\Delta t} = \dfrac{16(t_0 + h)^2 - 16t_0^{\,2}}{h}$

Length of time interval h	**Average speed over interval of length h starting at $t_0 = 1$**	**Average speed over interval of length h starting at $t_0 = 2$**
1	48	80
0.1	33.6	65.6
0.01	32.16	64.16
0.001	32.016	64.016
0.0001	32.0016	64.0016

The average speed on intervals starting at $t_0 = 1$ seems to approach a limiting value of 32 as the length of the interval decreases. This suggests that the rock is falling at a speed of 32 ft/sec at $t_0 = 1$ sec. Let's confirm this algebraically.

If we set $t_0 = 1$ and then expand the numerator in Equation (1) and simplify, we find that

$$\frac{\Delta y}{\Delta t} = \frac{16(1+h)^2 - 16(1)^2}{h} = \frac{16(1 + 2h + h^2) - 16}{h}$$
$$= \frac{32h + 16h^2}{h} = 32 + 16h.$$

For values of h different from 0, the expressions on the right and left are equivalent and the average speed is $32 + 16h$ ft/sec. We can now see why the average speed has the limiting value $32 + 16(0) = 32$ ft/sec as h approaches 0.

Similarly, setting $t_0 = 2$ in Equation (1), the procedure yields

$$\frac{\Delta y}{\Delta t} = 64 + 16h$$

for values of h different from 0. As h gets closer and closer to 0, the average speed has the limiting value 64 ft/sec when $t_0 = 2$ sec, as suggested by Table 2.1. ■

The average speed of a falling object is an example of a more general idea which we discuss next.

Average Rates of Change and Secant Lines

Given any function $y = f(x)$, we calculate the average rate of change of y with respect to x over the interval $[x_1, x_2]$ by dividing the change in the value of y, $\Delta y = f(x_2) - f(x_1)$, by the length $\Delta x = x_2 - x_1 = h$ of the interval over which the change occurs. (We use the symbol h for Δx to simplify the notation here and later on.)

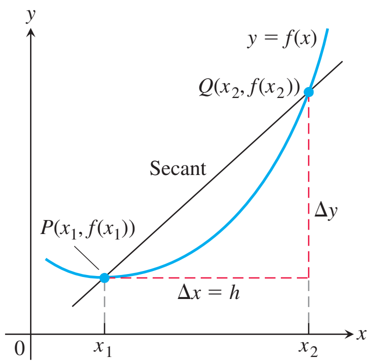


FIGURE 2.1 A secant to the graph $y = f(x)$. Its slope is $\Delta y / \Delta x$, the average rate of change of f over the interval $[x_1, x_2]$.

DEFINITION The **average rate of change** of $y = f(x)$ with respect to x over the interval $[x_1, x_2]$ is

$$\frac{\Delta y}{\Delta x} = \frac{f(x_2) - f(x_1)}{x_2 - x_1} = \frac{f(x_1 + h) - f(x_1)}{h}, \qquad h \neq 0.$$

Geometrically, the rate of change of f over $[x_1, x_2]$ is the slope of the line through the points $P(x_1, f(x_1))$ and $Q(x_2, f(x_2))$ (Figure 2.1). In geometry, a line joining two points of a curve is a **secant** to the curve. Thus, the average rate of change of f from x_1 to x_2 is identical with the slope of secant PQ. Let's consider what happens as the point Q approaches the point P along the curve, so the length h of the interval over which the change occurs approaches zero. We will see that this procedure leads to defining the slope of a curve at a point.

Defining the Slope of a Curve

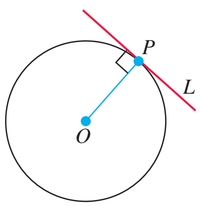


FIGURE 2.2 L is tangent to the circle at P if it passes through P perpendicular to radius OP.

We know what is meant by the slope of a straight line, which tells us the rate at which it rises or falls—its rate of change as a linear function. But what is meant by the *slope of a curve* at a point P on the curve? If there is a *tangent* line to the curve at P—a line that just touches the curve like the tangent to a circle—it would be reasonable to identify *the slope of the tangent* as the slope of the curve at P. So we need a precise meaning for the tangent at a point on a curve.

For circles, tangency is straightforward. A line L is tangent to a circle at a point P if L passes through P perpendicular to the radius at P (Figure 2.2). Such a line just *touches* the circle. But what does it mean to say that a line L is tangent to some other curve C at a point P?

To define tangency for general curves, we need an approach that takes into account the behavior of the secants through P and nearby points Q as Q moves toward P along the curve (Figure 2.3). Here is the idea:

1. Start with what we *can* calculate, namely the slope of the secant PQ.
2. Investigate the limiting value of the secant slope as Q approaches P along the curve. (We clarify the *limit* idea in the next section.)
3. If the *limit* exists, take it to be the slope of the curve at P and *define* the tangent to the curve at P to be the line through P with this slope.

HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY
Pierre de Fermat
(1601–1665)

This procedure is what we were doing in the falling-rock problem discussed in Example 2. The next example illustrates the geometric idea for the tangent to a curve.

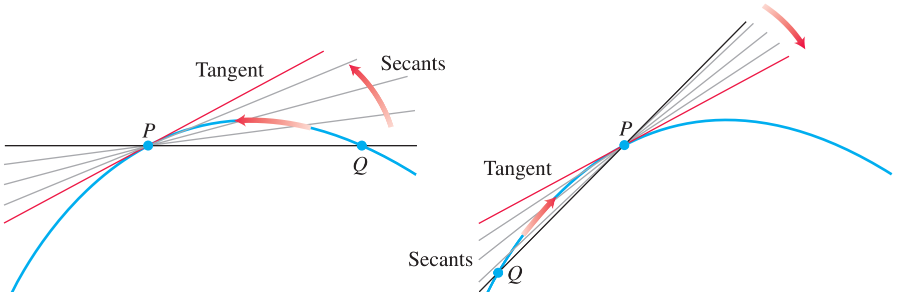


FIGURE 2.3 The tangent to the curve at P is the line through P whose slope is the limit of the secant slopes as $Q \to P$ from either side.

EXAMPLE 3 Find the slope of the parabola $y = x^2$ at the point $P(2, 4)$. Write an equation for the tangent to the parabola at this point.

Solution We begin with a secant line through $P(2, 4)$ and $Q(2 + h, (2 + h)^2)$ nearby. We then write an expression for the slope of the secant PQ and investigate what happens to the slope as Q approaches P along the curve:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Secant slope} = \frac{\Delta y}{\Delta x} = \frac{(2 + h)^2 - 2^2}{h} &= \frac{h^2 + 4h + 4 - 4}{h} \\ &= \frac{h^2 + 4h}{h} = h + 4.\end{aligned}$$

If $h > 0$, then Q lies above and to the right of P, as in Figure 2.4. If $h < 0$, then Q lies to the left of P (not shown). In either case, as Q approaches P along the curve, h approaches zero and the secant slope $h + 4$ approaches 4. We take 4 to be the parabola's slope at P.

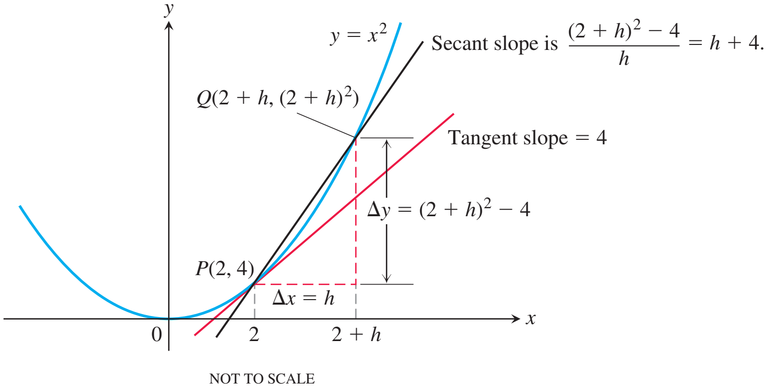


FIGURE 2.4 Finding the slope of the parabola $y = x^2$ at the point $P(2, 4)$ as the limit of secant slopes (Example 3).

The tangent to the parabola at P is the line through P with slope 4:

$$y = 4 + 4(x - 2) \quad \text{Point-slope equation}$$
$$y = 4x - 4.$$

Instantaneous Rates of Change and Tangent Lines

The rates at which the rock in Example 2 was falling at the instants $t = 1$ and $t = 2$ are called *instantaneous rates of change*. Instantaneous rates and slopes of tangent lines are closely connected, as we see in the following examples.

EXAMPLE 4 Figure 2.5 shows how a population p of fruit flies (*Drosophila*) grew in a 50-day experiment. The number of flies was counted at regular intervals, the counted values plotted with respect to time t, and the points joined by a smooth curve (colored blue in Figure 2.5). Find the average growth rate from day 23 to day 45.

Solution There were 150 flies on day 23 and 340 flies on day 45. Thus the number of flies increased by $340 - 150 = 190$ in $45 - 23 = 22$ days. The average rate of change of the population from day 23 to day 45 was

$$\text{Average rate of change: } \frac{\Delta p}{\Delta t} = \frac{340 - 150}{45 - 23} = \frac{190}{22} \approx 8.6 \text{ flies/day.}$$

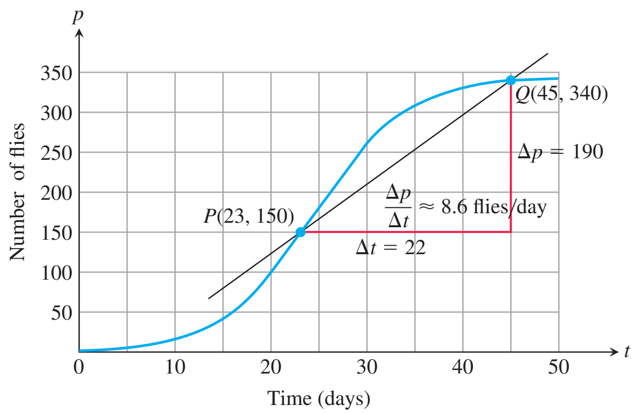


FIGURE 2.5 Growth of a fruit fly population in a controlled experiment. The average rate of change over 22 days is the slope $\Delta p/\Delta t$ of the secant line (Example 4).

This average is the slope of the secant through the points P and Q on the graph in Figure 2.5.

The average rate of change from day 23 to day 45 calculated in Example 4 does not tell us how fast the population was changing on day 23 itself. For that we need to examine time intervals closer to the day in question.

EXAMPLE 5 How fast was the number of flies in the population of Example 4 growing on day 23?

Solution To answer this question, we examine the average rates of change over increasingly short time intervals starting at day 23. In geometric terms, we find these rates by calculating the slopes of secants from P to Q, for a sequence of points Q approaching P along the curve (Figure 2.6).

Q	Slope of $PQ = \Delta p/\Delta t$ (flies / day)
(45, 340)	$\dfrac{340 - 150}{45 - 23} \approx 8.6$
(40, 330)	$\dfrac{330 - 150}{40 - 23} \approx 10.6$
(35, 310)	$\dfrac{310 - 150}{35 - 23} \approx 13.3$
(30, 265)	$\dfrac{265 - 150}{30 - 23} \approx 16.4$

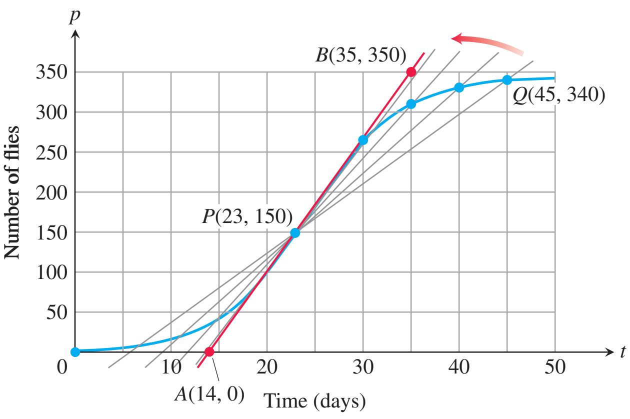


FIGURE 2.6 The positions and slopes of four secants through the point P on the fruit fly graph (Example 5).

The values in the table show that the secant slopes rise from 8.6 to 16.4 as the t-coordinate of Q decreases from 45 to 30, and we would expect the slopes to rise slightly higher as t continued on toward 23. Geometrically, the secants rotate counterclockwise about P and seem to approach the red tangent line in the figure. Since the line appears to pass through the points (14, 0) and (35, 350), it has slope

$$\frac{350 - 0}{35 - 14} = 16.7 \text{ flies/day (approximately).}$$

On day 23 the population was increasing at a rate of about 16.7 flies / day. ■

The instantaneous rates in Example 2 were found to be the values of the average speeds, or average rates of change, as the time interval of length h approached 0. That is, the instantaneous rate is the value the average rate approaches as the length h of the interval over which the change occurs approaches zero. The average rate of change corresponds to the slope of a secant line; the instantaneous rate corresponds to the slope of the tangent line as the independent variable approaches a fixed value. In Example 2, the independent variable t approached the values $t = 1$ and $t = 2$. In Example 3, the independent variable x approached the value $x = 2$. So we see that instantaneous rates and slopes of tangent lines are closely connected. We investigate this connection thoroughly in the next chapter, but to do so we need the concept of a *limit*.

Exercises 2.1

Average Rates of Change

In Exercises 1–6, find the average rate of change of the function over the given interval or intervals.

1. $f(x) = x^3 + 1$

a. $[2, 3]$ **b.** $[-1, 1]$

2. $g(x) = x^2 - 2x$

a. $[1, 3]$ **b.** $[-2, 4]$

3. $h(t) = \cot t$

a. $[\pi/4, 3\pi/4]$ **b.** $[\pi/6, \pi/2]$

4. $g(t) = 2 + \cos t$

a. $[0, \pi]$ **b.** $[-\pi, \pi]$

5. $R(\theta) = \sqrt{4\theta + 1}$; $[0, 2]$

6. $P(\theta) = \theta^3 - 4\theta^2 + 5\theta$; $[1, 2]$

Slope of a Curve at a Point

In Exercises 7–14, use the method in Example 3 to find **(a)** the slope of the curve at the given point P, and **(b)** an equation of the tangent line at P.

7. $y = x^2 - 5$, $P(2, -1)$

8. $y = 7 - x^2$, $P(2, 3)$

9. $y = x^2 - 2x - 3$, $P(2, -3)$

10. $y = x^2 - 4x$, $P(1, -3)$

11. $y = x^3$, $P(2, 8)$

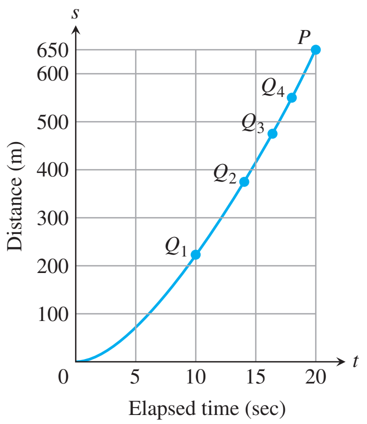
12. $y = 2 - x^3, \quad P(1, 1)$

13. $y = x^3 - 12x, \quad P(1, -11)$

14. $y = x^3 - 3x^2 + 4, \quad P(2, 0)$

Instantaneous Rates of Change

15. Speed of a car The accompanying figure shows the time-to-distance graph for a sports car accelerating from a standstill.



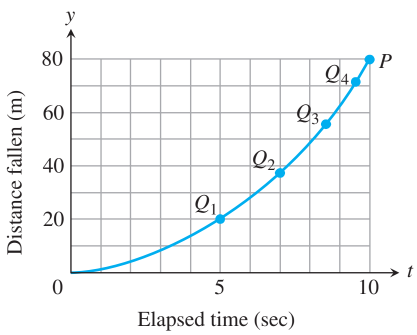
a. Estimate the slopes of secants PQ_1, PQ_2, PQ_3, and PQ_4, arranging them in order in a table like the one in Figure 2.6. What are the appropriate units for these slopes?

b. Then estimate the car's speed at time $t = 20$ sec.

16. The accompanying figure shows the plot of distance fallen versus time for an object that fell from the lunar landing module a distance 80 m to the surface of the moon.

a. Estimate the slopes of the secants PQ_1, PQ_2, PQ_3, and PQ_4, arranging them in a table like the one in Figure 2.6.

b. About how fast was the object going when it hit the surface?



T **17.** The profits of a small company for each of the first five years of its operation are given in the following table:

Year	Profit in $1000s
2010	6
2011	27
2012	62
2013	111
2014	174

a. Plot points representing the profit as a function of year, and join them by as smooth a curve as you can.

b. What is the average rate of increase of the profits between 2012 and 2014?

c. Use your graph to estimate the rate at which the profits were changing in 2012.

T **18.** Make a table of values for the function $F(x) = (x + 2)/(x - 2)$ at the points $x = 1.2, x = 11/10, x = 101/100, x = 1001/1000, x = 10001/10000$, and $x = 1$.

a. Find the average rate of change of $F(x)$ over the intervals $[1, x]$ for each $x \neq 1$ in your table.

b. Extending the table if necessary, try to determine the rate of change of $F(x)$ at $x = 1$.

T **19.** Let $g(x) = \sqrt{x}$ for $x \geq 0$.

a. Find the average rate of change of $g(x)$ with respect to x over the intervals $[1, 2]$, $[1, 1.5]$ and $[1, 1 + h]$.

b. Make a table of values of the average rate of change of g with respect to x over the interval $[1, 1 + h]$ for some values of h approaching zero, say $h = 0.1, 0.01, 0.001, 0.0001, 0.00001$, and 0.000001.

c. What does your table indicate is the rate of change of $g(x)$ with respect to x at $x = 1$?

d. Calculate the limit as h approaches zero of the average rate of change of $g(x)$ with respect to x over the interval $[1, 1 + h]$.

T **20.** Let $f(t) = 1/t$ for $t \neq 0$.

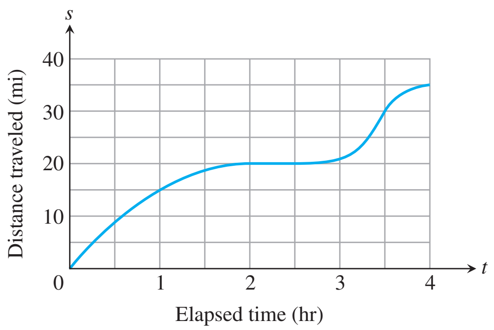
a. Find the average rate of change of f with respect to t over the intervals (i) from $t = 2$ to $t = 3$, and (ii) from $t = 2$ to $t = T$.

b. Make a table of values of the average rate of change of f with respect to t over the interval $[2, T]$, for some values of T approaching 2, say $T = 2.1, 2.01, 2.001, 2.0001, 2.00001$, and 2.000001.

c. What does your table indicate is the rate of change of f with respect to t at $t = 2$?

d. Calculate the limit as T approaches 2 of the average rate of change of f with respect to t over the interval from 2 to T. You will have to do some algebra before you can substitute $T = 2$.

21. The accompanying graph shows the total distance s traveled by a bicyclist after t hours.

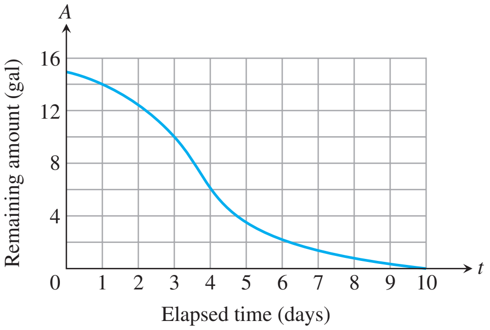


a. Estimate the bicyclist's average speed over the time intervals $[0, 1]$, $[1, 2.5]$, and $[2.5, 3.5]$.

b. Estimate the bicyclist's instantaneous speed at the times $t = \frac{1}{2}$, $t = 2$, and $t = 3$.

c. Estimate the bicyclist's maximum speed and the specific time at which it occurs.

22. The accompanying graph shows the total amount of gasoline A in the gas tank of an automobile after being driven for t days.



a. Estimate the average rate of gasoline consumption over the time intervals $[0, 3]$, $[0, 5]$, and $[7, 10]$.

b. Estimate the instantaneous rate of gasoline consumption at the times $t = 1$, $t = 4$, and $t = 8$.

c. Estimate the maximum rate of gasoline consumption and the specific time at which it occurs.

2.2 Limit of a Function and Limit Laws

In Section 2.1 we saw that limits arise when finding the instantaneous rate of change of a function or the tangent to a curve. Here we begin with an informal definition of *limit* and show how we can calculate the values of limits. A precise definition is presented in the next section.

HISTORICAL ESSAY
Limits

Limits of Function Values

Frequently when studying a function $y = f(x)$, we find ourselves interested in the function's behavior *near* a particular point c, but not *at* c. This might be the case, for instance, if c is an irrational number, like π or $\sqrt{2}$, whose values can only be approximated by "close" rational numbers at which we actually evaluate the function instead. Another situation occurs when trying to evaluate a function at c leads to division by zero, which is undefined. We encountered this last circumstance when seeking the instantaneous rate of change in y by considering the quotient function $\Delta y/h$ for h closer and closer to zero. Here's a specific example in which we explore numerically how a function behaves near a particular point at which we cannot directly evaluate the function.

EXAMPLE 1 How does the function

$$f(x) = \frac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1}$$

behave near $x = 1$?

Solution The given formula defines f for all real numbers x except $x = 1$ (we cannot divide by zero). For any $x \neq 1$, we can simplify the formula by factoring the numerator and canceling common factors:

$$f(x) = \frac{(x - 1)(x + 1)}{x - 1} = x + 1 \qquad \text{for} \qquad x \neq 1.$$

The graph of f is the line $y = x + 1$ with the point (1, 2) *removed*. This removed point is shown as a "hole" in Figure 2.7. Even though $f(1)$ is not defined, it is clear that we can make the value of $f(x)$ *as close as we want* to 2 by choosing x *close enough* to 1 (Table 2.2). ■

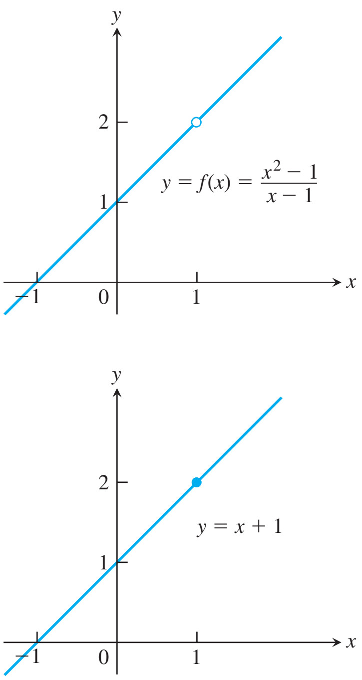


FIGURE 2.7 The graph of f is identical with the line $y = x + 1$ except at $x = 1$, where f is not defined (Example 1).

TABLE 2.2 As x gets closer to 1, $f(x)$ gets closer to 2.

x	$f(x) = \dfrac{x^2-1}{x-1}$
0.9	1.9
1.1	2.1
0.99	1.99
1.01	2.01
0.999	1.999
1.001	2.001
0.999999	1.999999
1.000001	2.000001

Generalizing the idea illustrated in Example 1, suppose $f(x)$ is defined on an open interval about c, *except possibly at c itself*. If $f(x)$ is arbitrarily close to the number L (as close to L as we like) for all x sufficiently close to c, we say that f approaches the **limit** L as x approaches c, and write

$$\lim_{x \to c} f(x) = L,$$

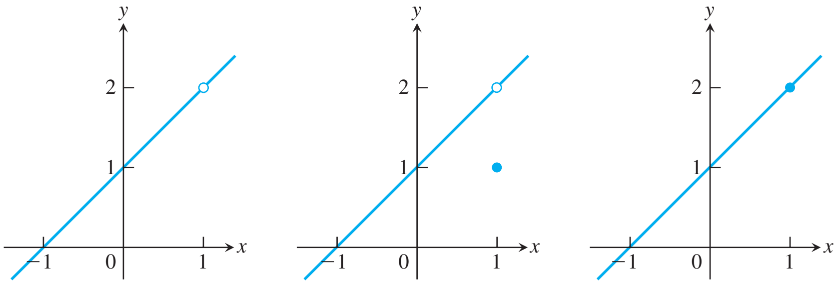
which is read "the limit of $f(x)$ as x approaches c is L." For instance, in Example 1 we would say that $f(x)$ approaches the *limit* 2 as x approaches 1, and write

$$\lim_{x \to 1} f(x) = 2, \qquad \text{or} \qquad \lim_{x \to 1} \frac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1} = 2.$$

Essentially, the definition says that the values of $f(x)$ are close to the number L whenever x is close to c (on either side of c).

Our definition here is "informal" because phrases like *arbitrarily close* and *sufficiently close* are imprecise; their meaning depends on the context. (To a machinist manufacturing a piston, *close* may mean *within a few thousandths of an inch*. To an astronomer studying distant galaxies, *close* may mean *within a few thousand light-years*.) Nevertheless, the definition is clear enough to enable us to recognize and evaluate limits of many specific functions. We will need the precise definition given in Section 2.3, however, when we set out to prove theorems about limits or study complicated functions. Here are several more examples exploring the idea of limits.

EXAMPLE 2 The limit value of a function does not depend on how the function is defined at the point being approached. Consider the three functions in Figure 2.8. The function f has limit 2 as $x \to 1$ even though f is not defined at $x = 1$. The function g has limit 2 as $x \to 1$ even though $2 \neq g(1)$. The function h is the only one of the three functions in Figure 2.8 whose limit as $x \to 1$ equals its value at $x = 1$. For h, we have $\lim_{x \to 1} h(x) = h(1)$. This equality of limit and function value is of special importance, and we return to it in Section 2.5. ■



(a) $f(x) = \dfrac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1}$ (b) $g(x) = \begin{cases} \dfrac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1}, & x \neq 1 \\ 1, & x = 1 \end{cases}$ (c) $h(x) = x + 1$

FIGURE 2.8 The limits of $f(x)$, $g(x)$, and $h(x)$ all equal 2 as x approaches 1. However, only $h(x)$ has the same function value as its limit at $x = 1$ (Example 2).

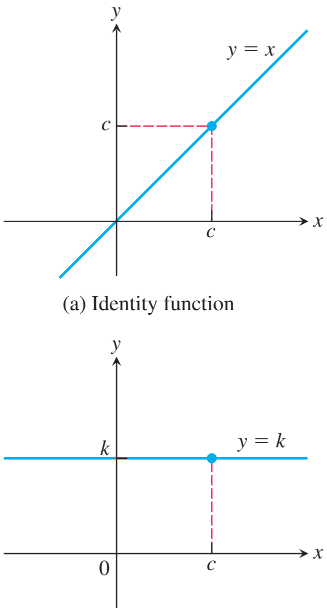
EXAMPLE 3

(a) If f is the **identity function** $f(x) = x$, then for any value of c (Figure 2.9a),

$$\lim_{x \to c} f(x) = \lim_{x \to c} x = c.$$

(b) If f is the **constant function** $f(x) = k$ (function with the constant value k), then for any value of c (Figure 2.9b),

$$\lim_{x \to c} f(x) = \lim_{x \to c} k = k.$$



(a) Identity function

(b) Constant function

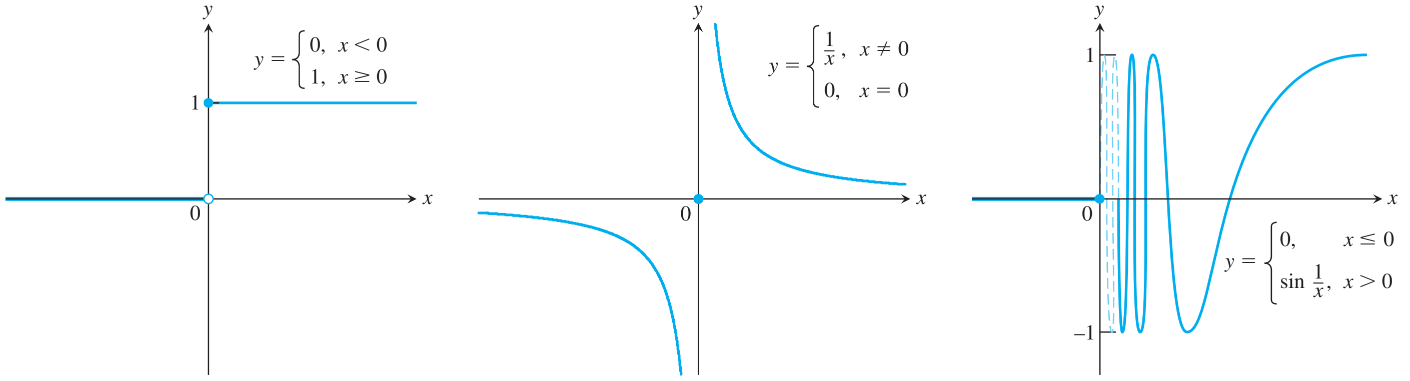
FIGURE 2.9 The functions in Example 3 have limits at all points c.

For instances of each of these rules we have

$$\lim_{x\to 3} x = 3 \qquad \text{and} \qquad \lim_{x\to -7}(4) = \lim_{x\to 2}(4) = 4.$$

We prove these rules in Example 3 in Section 2.3. ■

A function may not have a limit at a particular point. Some ways that limits can fail to exist are illustrated in Figure 2.10 and described in the next example.



(a) Unit step function $U(x)$ (b) $g(x)$ (c) $f(x)$

FIGURE 2.10 None of these functions has a limit as x approaches 0 (Example 4).

EXAMPLE 4 Discuss the behavior of the following functions, explaining why they have no limit as $x \to 0$.

(a) $U(x) = \begin{cases} 0, & x < 0 \\ 1, & x \geq 0 \end{cases}$

(b) $g(x) = \begin{cases} \dfrac{1}{x}, & x \neq 0 \\ 0, & x = 0 \end{cases}$

(c) $f(x) = \begin{cases} 0, & x \leq 0 \\ \sin\dfrac{1}{x}, & x > 0 \end{cases}$

Solution

(a) It *jumps*: The **unit step function** $U(x)$ has no limit as $x \to 0$ because its values jump at $x = 0$. For negative values of x arbitrarily close to zero, $U(x) = 0$. For positive values of x arbitrarily close to zero, $U(x) = 1$. There is no *single* value L approached by $U(x)$ as $x \to 0$ (Figure 2.10a).

(b) It *grows too "large" to have a limit*: $g(x)$ has no limit as $x \to 0$ because the values of g grow arbitrarily large in absolute value as $x \to 0$ and do not stay close to *any* fixed real number (Figure 2.10b). We say the function is *not bounded*.

(c) It *oscillates too much to have a limit*: $f(x)$ has no limit as $x \to 0$ because the function's values oscillate between $+1$ and -1 in every open interval containing 0. The values do not stay close to any one number as $x \to 0$ (Figure 2.10c). ■

The Limit Laws

To calculate limits of functions that are arithmetic combinations of functions having known limits, we can use several fundamental rules.

THEOREM 1—Limit Laws If L, M, c, and k are real numbers and

$$\lim_{x\to c} f(x) = L \quad \text{and} \quad \lim_{x\to c} g(x) = M, \quad \text{then}$$

1. *Sum Rule:* $\lim_{x\to c}(f(x) + g(x)) = L + M$
2. *Difference Rule:* $\lim_{x\to c}(f(x) - g(x)) = L - M$
3. *Constant Multiple Rule:* $\lim_{x\to c}(k \cdot f(x)) = k \cdot L$
4. *Product Rule:* $\lim_{x\to c}(f(x) \cdot g(x)) = L \cdot M$
5. *Quotient Rule:* $\lim_{x\to c} \dfrac{f(x)}{g(x)} = \dfrac{L}{M}, \quad M \neq 0$
6. *Power Rule:* $\lim_{x\to c} [f(x)]^n = L^n$, n a positive integer
7. *Root Rule:* $\lim_{x\to c} \sqrt[n]{f(x)} = \sqrt[n]{L} = L^{1/n}$, n a positive integer

(If n is even, we assume that $\lim_{x\to c} f(x) = L > 0$.)

In words, the Sum Rule says that the limit of a sum is the sum of the limits. Similarly, the next rules say that the limit of a difference is the difference of the limits; the limit of a constant times a function is the constant times the limit of the function; the limit of a product is the product of the limits; the limit of a quotient is the quotient of the limits (provided that the limit of the denominator is not 0); the limit of a positive integer power (or root) of a function is the integer power (or root) of the limit (provided that the root of the limit is a real number).

It is reasonable that the properties in Theorem 1 are true (although these intuitive arguments do not constitute proofs). If x is sufficiently close to c, then $f(x)$ is close to L and $g(x)$ is close to M, from our informal definition of a limit. It is then reasonable that $f(x) + g(x)$ is close to $L + M$; $f(x) - g(x)$ is close to $L - M$; $kf(x)$ is close to kL; $f(x)g(x)$ is close to LM; and $f(x)/g(x)$ is close to L/M if M is not zero. We prove the Sum Rule in Section 2.3, based on a precise definition of limit. Rules 2–5 are proved in Appendix 4. Rule 6 is obtained by applying Rule 4 repeatedly. Rule 7 is proved in more advanced texts. The Sum, Difference, and Product Rules can be extended to any number of functions, not just two.

EXAMPLE 5 Use the observations $\lim_{x\to c} k = k$ and $\lim_{x\to c} x = c$ (Example 3) and the fundamental rules of limits to find the following limits.

(a) $\lim_{x\to c} (x^3 + 4x^2 - 3)$

(b) $\lim_{x\to c} \dfrac{x^4 + x^2 - 1}{x^2 + 5}$

(c) $\lim_{x\to -2} \sqrt{4x^2 - 3}$

Solution

(a) $\lim_{x\to c}(x^3 + 4x^2 - 3) = \lim_{x\to c} x^3 + \lim_{x\to c} 4x^2 - \lim_{x\to c} 3$ Sum and Difference Rules

$= c^3 + 4c^2 - 3$ Power and Multiple Rules

(b) $\lim_{x\to c}\dfrac{x^4 + x^2 - 1}{x^2 + 5} = \dfrac{\lim_{x\to c}(x^4 + x^2 - 1)}{\lim_{x\to c}(x^2 + 5)}$ Quotient Rule

$= \dfrac{\lim_{x\to c} x^4 + \lim_{x\to c} x^2 - \lim_{x\to c} 1}{\lim_{x\to c} x^2 + \lim_{x\to c} 5}$ Sum and Difference Rules

$= \dfrac{c^4 + c^2 - 1}{c^2 + 5}$ Power or Product Rule

(c) $\lim_{x\to -2}\sqrt{4x^2 - 3} = \sqrt{\lim_{x\to -2}(4x^2 - 3)}$ Root Rule with $n = 2$

$= \sqrt{\lim_{x\to -2} 4x^2 - \lim_{x\to -2} 3}$ Difference Rule

$= \sqrt{4(-2)^2 - 3}$ Product and Multiple Rules

$= \sqrt{16 - 3}$

$= \sqrt{13}$ ■

Theorem 1 simplifies the task of calculating limits of polynomials and rational functions. To evaluate the limit of a polynomial function as x approaches c, merely substitute c for x in the formula for the function. To evaluate the limit of a rational function as x approaches a point c *at which the denominator is not zero*, substitute c for x in the formula for the function. (See Examples 5a and 5b.) We state these results formally as theorems.

THEOREM 2—Limits of Polynomials

If $P(x) = a_n x^n + a_{n-1}x^{n-1} + \cdots + a_0$, then

$$\lim_{x\to c} P(x) = P(c) = a_n c^n + a_{n-1}c^{n-1} + \cdots + a_0.$$

THEOREM 3—Limits of Rational Functions

If $P(x)$ and $Q(x)$ are polynomials and $Q(c) \neq 0$, then

$$\lim_{x\to c}\frac{P(x)}{Q(x)} = \frac{P(c)}{Q(c)}.$$

EXAMPLE 6 The following calculation illustrates Theorems 2 and 3:

$$\lim_{x\to -1}\frac{x^3 + 4x^2 - 3}{x^2 + 5} = \frac{(-1)^3 + 4(-1)^2 - 3}{(-1)^2 + 5} = \frac{0}{6} = 0$$ ■

Identifying Common Factors

It can be shown that if $Q(x)$ is a polynomial and $Q(c) = 0$, then $(x - c)$ is a factor of $Q(x)$. Thus, if the numerator and denominator of a rational function of x are both zero at $x = c$, they have $(x - c)$ as a common factor.

Eliminating Common Factors from Zero Denominators

Theorem 3 applies only if the denominator of the rational function is not zero at the limit point c. If the denominator is zero, canceling common factors in the numerator and denominator may reduce the fraction to one whose denominator is no longer zero at c. If this happens, we can find the limit by substitution in the simplified fraction.

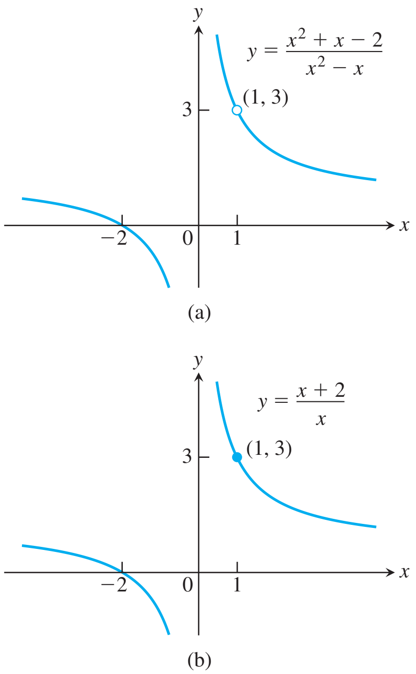


FIGURE 2.11 The graph of $f(x) = (x^2 + x - 2)/(x^2 - x)$ in part (a) is the same as the graph of $g(x) = (x + 2)/x$ in part (b) except at $x = 1$, where f is undefined. The functions have the same limit as $x \to 1$ (Example 7).

EXAMPLE 7 Evaluate

$$\lim_{x \to 1} \frac{x^2 + x - 2}{x^2 - x}.$$

Solution We cannot substitute $x = 1$ because it makes the denominator zero. We test the numerator to see if it, too, is zero at $x = 1$. It is, so it has a factor of $(x - 1)$ in common with the denominator. Canceling this common factor gives a simpler fraction with the same values as the original for $x \neq 1$:

$$\frac{x^2 + x - 2}{x^2 - x} = \frac{(x - 1)(x + 2)}{x(x - 1)} = \frac{x + 2}{x}, \qquad \text{if } x \neq 1.$$

Using the simpler fraction, we find the limit of these values as $x \to 1$ by Theorem 3:

$$\lim_{x \to 1} \frac{x^2 + x - 2}{x^2 - x} = \lim_{x \to 1} \frac{x + 2}{x} = \frac{1 + 2}{1} = 3.$$

See Figure 2.11. ■

Using Calculators and Computers to Estimate Limits

When we cannot use the Quotient Rule in Theorem 1 because the limit of the denominator is zero, we can try using a calculator or computer to guess the limit numerically as x gets closer and closer to c. We used this approach in Example 1, but calculators and computers can sometimes give false values and misleading impressions for functions that are undefined at a point or fail to have a limit there. Usually the problem is associated with rounding errors, as we now illustrate.

EXAMPLE 8 Estimate the value of $\displaystyle\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{\sqrt{x^2 + 100} - 10}{x^2}$.

Solution Table 2.3 lists values of the function obtained on a calculator for several points approaching $x = 0$. As x approaches 0 through the points ± 1, ± 0.5, ± 0.10, and ± 0.01, the function seems to approach the number 0.05.

As we take even smaller values of x, ± 0.0005, ± 0.0001, ± 0.00001, and ± 0.000001, the function appears to approach the number 0.

Is the answer 0.05 or 0, or some other value? We resolve this question in the next example. ■

TABLE 2.3 Computed values of $f(x) = \dfrac{\sqrt{x^2 + 100} - 10}{x^2}$ near $x = 0$

x	$f(x)$	
± 1	0.049876	approaches 0.05?
± 0.5	0.049969	
± 0.1	0.049999	
± 0.01	0.050000	
± 0.0005	0.050000	approaches 0?
± 0.0001	0.000000	
± 0.00001	0.000000	
± 0.000001	0.000000	

Using a computer or calculator may give ambiguous results, as in the last example. The calculator could not keep track of enough digits to avoid rounding errors in computing the values of $f(x)$ when x is very small. We cannot substitute $x = 0$ in the problem, and the numerator and denominator have no obvious common factors (as they did in Example 7). Sometimes, however, we can create a common factor algebraically.

EXAMPLE 9 Evaluate

$$\lim_{x\to 0} \frac{\sqrt{x^2+100}-10}{x^2}.$$

Solution This is the limit we considered in Example 8. We can create a common factor by multiplying both numerator and denominator by the conjugate radical expression $\sqrt{x^2+100}+10$ (obtained by changing the sign after the square root). The preliminary algebra rationalizes the numerator:

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\sqrt{x^2+100}-10}{x^2} &= \frac{\sqrt{x^2+100}-10}{x^2} \cdot \frac{\sqrt{x^2+100}+10}{\sqrt{x^2+100}+10} \\
&= \frac{x^2+100-100}{x^2\left(\sqrt{x^2+100}+10\right)} \\
&= \frac{x^2}{x^2\left(\sqrt{x^2+100}+10\right)} && \text{Common factor } x^2 \\
&= \frac{1}{\sqrt{x^2+100}+10}. && \text{Cancel } x^2 \text{ for } x \neq 0.
\end{aligned}$$

Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned}
\lim_{x\to 0} \frac{\sqrt{x^2+100}-10}{x^2} &= \lim_{x\to 0} \frac{1}{\sqrt{x^2+100}+10} \\
&= \frac{1}{\sqrt{0^2+100}+10} && \text{Denominator not 0 at } x = 0\text{; substitute.} \\
&= \frac{1}{20} = 0.05.
\end{aligned}$$

This calculation provides the correct answer, in contrast to the ambiguous computer results in Example 8. ■

We cannot always algebraically resolve the problem of finding the limit of a quotient where the denominator becomes zero. In some cases the limit might then be found with the aid of some geometry applied to the problem (see the proof of Theorem 7 in Section 2.4), or through methods of calculus (illustrated in Section 4.5). The next theorems give helpful tools by using function comparisons.

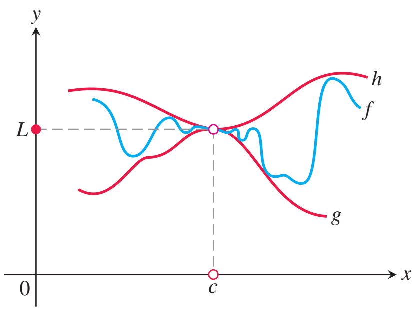


FIGURE 2.12 The graph of f is sandwiched between the graphs of g and h.

The Sandwich Theorem

The following theorem enables us to calculate a variety of limits. It is called the Sandwich Theorem because it refers to a function f whose values are sandwiched between the values of two other functions g and h that have the same limit L at a point c. Being trapped between the values of two functions that approach L, the values of f must also approach L (Figure 2.12). You will find a proof in Appendix 4.

THEOREM 4—The Sandwich Theorem Suppose that $g(x) \le f(x) \le h(x)$ for all x in some open interval containing c, except possibly at $x = c$ itself. Suppose also that

$$\lim_{x \to c} g(x) = \lim_{x \to c} h(x) = L.$$

Then $\lim_{x \to c} f(x) = L$.

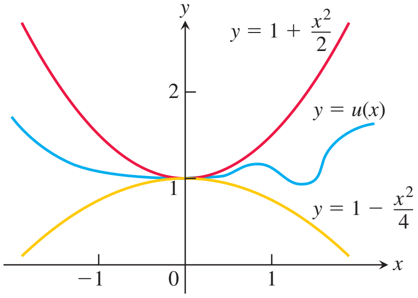


FIGURE 2.13 Any function $u(x)$ whose graph lies in the region between $y = 1 + (x^2/2)$ and $y = 1 - (x^2/4)$ has limit 1 as $x \to 0$ (Example 10).

The Sandwich Theorem is also called the Squeeze Theorem or the Pinching Theorem.

EXAMPLE 10 Given that

$$1 - \frac{x^2}{4} \le u(x) \le 1 + \frac{x^2}{2} \quad \text{for all } x \ne 0,$$

find $\lim_{x \to 0} u(x)$, no matter how complicated u is.

Solution Since

$$\lim_{x \to 0} (1 - (x^2/4)) = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad \lim_{x \to 0} (1 + (x^2/2)) = 1,$$

the Sandwich Theorem implies that $\lim_{x \to 0} u(x) = 1$ (Figure 2.13). ■

EXAMPLE 11 The Sandwich Theorem helps us establish several important limit rules:

(a) $\lim_{\theta \to 0} \sin \theta = 0$ **(b)** $\lim_{\theta \to 0} \cos \theta = 1$

(c) For any function f, $\lim_{x \to c} |f(x)| = 0$ implies $\lim_{x \to c} f(x) = 0$.

Solution

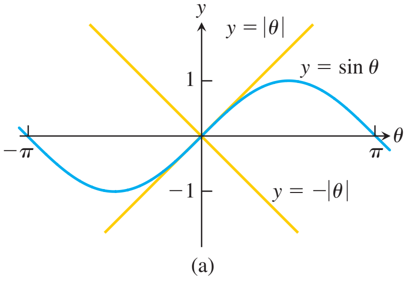
(a) In Section 1.3 we established that $-|\theta| \le \sin \theta \le |\theta|$ for all θ (see Figure 2.14a). Since $\lim_{\theta \to 0} (-|\theta|) = \lim_{\theta \to 0} |\theta| = 0$, we have

$$\lim_{\theta \to 0} \sin \theta = 0.$$

(b) From Section 1.3, $0 \le 1 - \cos \theta \le |\theta|$ for all θ (see Figure 2.14b), and we have $\lim_{\theta \to 0} (1 - \cos \theta) = 0$ or

$$\lim_{\theta \to 0} \cos \theta = 1.$$

(c) Since $-|f(x)| \le f(x) \le |f(x)|$ and $-|f(x)|$ and $|f(x)|$ have limit 0 as $x \to c$, it follows that $\lim_{x \to c} f(x) = 0$. ■



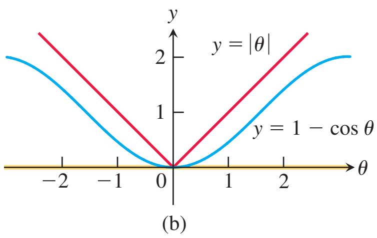


FIGURE 2.14 The Sandwich Theorem confirms the limits in Example 11.

Another important property of limits is given by the next theorem. A proof is given in the next section.

THEOREM 5 If $f(x) \le g(x)$ for all x in some open interval containing c, except possibly at $x = c$ itself, and the limits of f and g both exist as x approaches c, then

$$\lim_{x \to c} f(x) \le \lim_{x \to c} g(x).$$

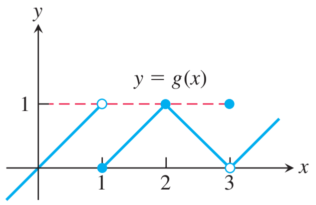
Caution The assertion resulting from replacing the less than or equal to ($\le$) inequality by the strict less than ($<$) inequality in Theorem 5 is false. Figure 2.14a shows that for $\theta \ne 0$, $-|\theta| < \sin \theta < |\theta|$. So $\lim_{\theta \to 0} \sin \theta = 0 = \lim_{\theta \to 0} |\theta|$, not $\lim_{\theta \to 0} \sin \theta < \lim_{\theta \to 0} |\theta|$.

Exercises 2.2

Limits from Graphs

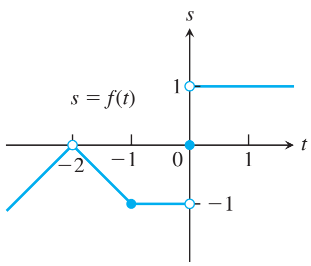
1. For the function $g(x)$ graphed here, find the following limits or explain why they do not exist.

   a. $\lim_{x\to1} g(x)$ b. $\lim_{x\to2} g(x)$ c. $\lim_{x\to3} g(x)$ d. $\lim_{x\to2.5} g(x)$



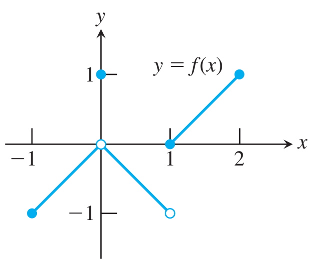
2. For the function $f(t)$ graphed here, find the following limits or explain why they do not exist.

   a. $\lim_{t\to-2} f(t)$ b. $\lim_{t\to-1} f(t)$ c. $\lim_{t\to0} f(t)$ d. $\lim_{t\to-0.5} f(t)$



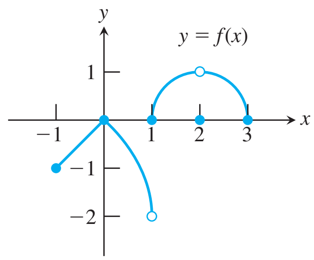
3. Which of the following statements about the function $y = f(x)$ graphed here are true, and which are false?

   a. $\lim_{x\to0} f(x)$ exists.
   b. $\lim_{x\to0} f(x) = 0$
   c. $\lim_{x\to0} f(x) = 1$
   d. $\lim_{x\to1} f(x) = 1$
   e. $\lim_{x\to1} f(x) = 0$
   f. $\lim_{x\to c} f(x)$ exists at every point c in $(-1, 1)$.
   g. $\lim_{x\to1} f(x)$ does not exist.



4. Which of the following statements about the function $y = f(x)$ graphed here are true, and which are false?

   a. $\lim_{x\to2} f(x)$ does not exist.
   b. $\lim_{x\to2} f(x) = 2$
   c. $\lim_{x\to1} f(x)$ does not exist.
   d. $\lim_{x\to c} f(x)$ exists at every point c in $(-1, 1)$.
   e. $\lim_{x\to c} f(x)$ exists at every point c in $(1, 3)$.



Existence of Limits

In Exercises 5 and 6, explain why the limits do not exist.

5. $\lim_{x\to0} \dfrac{x}{|x|}$

6. $\lim_{x\to1} \dfrac{1}{x-1}$

7. Suppose that a function $f(x)$ is defined for all real values of x except $x = c$. Can anything be said about the existence of $\lim_{x\to c} f(x)$? Give reasons for your answer.

8. Suppose that a function $f(x)$ is defined for all x in $[-1, 1]$. Can anything be said about the existence of $\lim_{x\to0} f(x)$? Give reasons for your answer.

9. If $\lim_{x\to1} f(x) = 5$, must f be defined at $x = 1$? If it is, must $f(1) = 5$? Can we conclude *anything* about the values of f at $x = 1$? Explain.

10. If $f(1) = 5$, must $\lim_{x\to1} f(x)$ exist? If it does, then must $\lim_{x\to1} f(x) = 5$? Can we conclude *anything* about $\lim_{x\to1} f(x)$? Explain.

Calculating Limits

Find the limits in Exercises 11–22.

11. $\lim_{x\to-3} (x^2 - 13)$

12. $\lim_{x\to2} (-x^2 + 5x - 2)$

13. $\lim_{t\to6} 8(t-5)(t-7)$

14. $\lim_{x\to-2} (x^3 - 2x^2 + 4x + 8)$

15. $\lim_{x\to2} \dfrac{2x+5}{11-x^3}$

16. $\lim_{s\to2/3} (8-3s)(2s-1)$

17. $\lim_{x\to-1/2} 4x(3x+4)^2$

18. $\lim_{y\to2} \dfrac{y+2}{y^2+5y+6}$

19. $\lim_{y\to-3} (5-y)^{4/3}$

20. $\lim_{z\to4} \sqrt{z^2-10}$

21. $\lim_{h\to0} \dfrac{3}{\sqrt{3h+1}+1}$

22. $\lim_{h\to0} \dfrac{\sqrt{5h+4}-2}{h}$

Limits of quotients Find the limits in Exercises 23–42.

23. $\lim_{x\to5} \dfrac{x-5}{x^2-25}$

24. $\lim_{x\to-3} \dfrac{x+3}{x^2+4x+3}$

25. $\lim_{x\to-5} \dfrac{x^2+3x-10}{x+5}$

26. $\lim_{x\to2} \dfrac{x^2-7x+10}{x-2}$

27. $\lim_{t\to1} \dfrac{t^2+t-2}{t^2-1}$

28. $\lim_{t\to-1} \dfrac{t^2+3t+2}{t^2-t-2}$

29. $\lim_{x\to-2} \dfrac{-2x-4}{x^3+2x^2}$

30. $\lim_{y\to0} \dfrac{5y^3+8y^2}{3y^4-16y^2}$

31. $\lim_{x\to 1} \dfrac{x^{-1}-1}{x-1}$

32. $\lim_{x\to 0} \dfrac{\frac{1}{x-1}+\frac{1}{x+1}}{x}$

33. $\lim_{u\to 1} \dfrac{u^4-1}{u^3-1}$

34. $\lim_{v\to 2} \dfrac{v^3-8}{v^4-16}$

35. $\lim_{x\to 9} \dfrac{\sqrt{x}-3}{x-9}$

36. $\lim_{x\to 4} \dfrac{4x-x^2}{2-\sqrt{x}}$

37. $\lim_{x\to 1} \dfrac{x-1}{\sqrt{x+3}-2}$

38. $\lim_{x\to -1} \dfrac{\sqrt{x^2+8}-3}{x+1}$

39. $\lim_{x\to 2} \dfrac{\sqrt{x^2+12}-4}{x-2}$

40. $\lim_{x\to -2} \dfrac{x+2}{\sqrt{x^2+5}-3}$

41. $\lim_{x\to -3} \dfrac{2-\sqrt{x^2-5}}{x+3}$

42. $\lim_{x\to 4} \dfrac{4-x}{5-\sqrt{x^2+9}}$

Limits with trigonometric functions Find the limits in Exercises 43–50.

43. $\lim_{x\to 0} (2\sin x - 1)$

44. $\lim_{x\to \pi/4} \sin^2 x$

45. $\lim_{x\to 0} \sec x$

46. $\lim_{x\to \pi/3} \tan x$

47. $\lim_{x\to 0} \dfrac{1+x+\sin x}{3\cos x}$

48. $\lim_{x\to 0} (x^2-1)(2-\cos x)$

49. $\lim_{x\to -\pi} \sqrt{x+4}\cos(x+\pi)$

50. $\lim_{x\to 0} \sqrt{7+\sec^2 x}$

Using Limit Rules

51. Suppose $\lim_{x\to 0} f(x) = 1$ and $\lim_{x\to 0} g(x) = -5$. Name the rules in Theorem 1 that are used to accomplish steps (a), (b), and (c) of the following calculation.

$$\lim_{x\to 0}\frac{2f(x)-g(x)}{(f(x)+7)^{2/3}} = \frac{\lim_{x\to 0}(2f(x)-g(x))}{\lim_{x\to 0}(f(x)+7)^{2/3}} \qquad \text{(a)}$$

$$= \frac{\lim_{x\to 0} 2f(x) - \lim_{x\to 0} g(x)}{\left(\lim_{x\to 0}(f(x)+7)\right)^{2/3}} \qquad \text{(b)}$$

$$= \frac{2\lim_{x\to 0} f(x) - \lim_{x\to 0} g(x)}{\left(\lim_{x\to 0} f(x) + \lim_{x\to 0} 7\right)^{2/3}} \qquad \text{(c)}$$

$$= \frac{(2)(1)-(-5)}{(1+7)^{2/3}} = \frac{7}{4}$$

52. Let $\lim_{x\to 1} h(x) = 5$, $\lim_{x\to 1} p(x) = 1$, and $\lim_{x\to 1} r(x) = 2$. Name the rules in Theorem 1 that are used to accomplish steps (a), (b), and (c) of the following calculation.

$$\lim_{x\to 1}\frac{\sqrt{5h(x)}}{p(x)(4-r(x))} = \frac{\lim_{x\to 1}\sqrt{5h(x)}}{\lim_{x\to 1}(p(x)(4-r(x)))} \qquad \text{(a)}$$

$$= \frac{\sqrt{\lim_{x\to 1} 5h(x)}}{\left(\lim_{x\to 1} p(x)\right)\left(\lim_{x\to 1}(4-r(x))\right)} \qquad \text{(b)}$$

$$= \frac{\sqrt{5\lim_{x\to 1} h(x)}}{\left(\lim_{x\to 1} p(x)\right)\left(\lim_{x\to 1} 4 - \lim_{x\to 1} r(x)\right)} \qquad \text{(c)}$$

$$= \frac{\sqrt{(5)(5)}}{(1)(4-2)} = \frac{5}{2}$$

53. Suppose $\lim_{x\to c} f(x) = 5$ and $\lim_{x\to c} g(x) = -2$. Find

a. $\lim_{x\to c} f(x)g(x)$

b. $\lim_{x\to c} 2f(x)g(x)$

c. $\lim_{x\to c} (f(x)+3g(x))$

d. $\lim_{x\to c} \dfrac{f(x)}{f(x)-g(x)}$

54. Suppose $\lim_{x\to 4} f(x) = 0$ and $\lim_{x\to 4} g(x) = -3$. Find

a. $\lim_{x\to 4} (g(x)+3)$

b. $\lim_{x\to 4} xf(x)$

c. $\lim_{x\to 4} (g(x))^2$

d. $\lim_{x\to 4} \dfrac{g(x)}{f(x)-1}$

55. Suppose $\lim_{x\to b} f(x) = 7$ and $\lim_{x\to b} g(x) = -3$. Find

a. $\lim_{x\to b} (f(x)+g(x))$

b. $\lim_{x\to b} f(x)\cdot g(x)$

c. $\lim_{x\to b} 4g(x)$

d. $\lim_{x\to b} f(x)/g(x)$

56. Suppose that $\lim_{x\to -2} p(x) = 4$, $\lim_{x\to -2} r(x) = 0$, and $\lim_{x\to -2} s(x) = -3$. Find

a. $\lim_{x\to -2} (p(x)+r(x)+s(x))$

b. $\lim_{x\to -2} p(x)\cdot r(x)\cdot s(x)$

c. $\lim_{x\to -2} (-4p(x)+5r(x))/s(x)$

Limits of Average Rates of Change

Because of their connection with secant lines, tangents, and instantaneous rates, limits of the form

$$\lim_{h\to 0}\frac{f(x+h)-f(x)}{h}$$

occur frequently in calculus. In Exercises 57–62, evaluate this limit for the given value of x and function f.

57. $f(x) = x^2, \quad x = 1$

58. $f(x) = x^2, \quad x = -2$

59. $f(x) = 3x-4, \quad x = 2$

60. $f(x) = 1/x, \quad x = -2$

61. $f(x) = \sqrt{x}, \quad x = 7$

62. $f(x) = \sqrt{3x+1}, \quad x = 0$

Using the Sandwich Theorem

63. If $\sqrt{5-2x^2} \le f(x) \le \sqrt{5-x^2}$ for $-1 \le x \le 1$, find $\lim_{x\to 0} f(x)$.

64. If $2-x^2 \le g(x) \le 2\cos x$ for all x, find $\lim_{x\to 0} g(x)$.

65. a. It can be shown that the inequalities

$$1-\frac{x^2}{6} < \frac{x\sin x}{2-2\cos x} < 1$$

hold for all values of x close to zero. What, if anything, does this tell you about

$$\lim_{x\to 0}\frac{x\sin x}{2-2\cos x}?$$

Give reasons for your answer.

T **b.** Graph $y = 1-(x^2/6)$, $y = (x\sin x)/(2-2\cos x)$, and $y = 1$ together for $-2 \le x \le 2$. Comment on the behavior of the graphs as $x \to 0$.

66. **a.** Suppose that the inequalities

$$\frac{1}{2} - \frac{x^2}{24} < \frac{1 - \cos x}{x^2} < \frac{1}{2}$$

hold for values of x close to zero. (They do, as you will see in Section 9.9.) What, if anything, does this tell you about

$$\lim_{x\to 0} \frac{1 - \cos x}{x^2}?$$

Give reasons for your answer.

T **b.** Graph the equations $y = (1/2) - (x^2/24)$, $y = (1 - \cos x)/x^2$, and $y = 1/2$ together for $-2 \le x \le 2$. Comment on the behavior of the graphs as $x \to 0$.

Estimating Limits

T You will find a graphing calculator useful for Exercises 67–76.

67. Let $f(x) = (x^2 - 9)/(x + 3)$.

a. Make a table of the values of f at the points $x = -3.1, -3.01, -3.001$, and so on as far as your calculator can go. Then estimate $\lim_{x\to -3} f(x)$. What estimate do you arrive at if you evaluate f at $x = -2.9, -2.99, -2.999, \ldots$ instead?

b. Support your conclusions in part (a) by graphing f near $c = -3$ and using Zoom and Trace to estimate y-values on the graph as $x \to -3$.

c. Find $\lim_{x\to -3} f(x)$ algebraically, as in Example 7.

68. Let $g(x) = (x^2 - 2)/(x - \sqrt{2})$.

a. Make a table of the values of g at the points $x = 1.4, 1.41, 1.414$, and so on through successive decimal approximations of $\sqrt{2}$. Estimate $\lim_{x\to\sqrt{2}} g(x)$.

b. Support your conclusion in part (a) by graphing g near $c = \sqrt{2}$ and using Zoom and Trace to estimate y-values on the graph as $x \to \sqrt{2}$.

c. Find $\lim_{x\to\sqrt{2}} g(x)$ algebraically.

69. Let $G(x) = (x + 6)/(x^2 + 4x - 12)$.

a. Make a table of the values of G at $x = -5.9, -5.99, -5.999$, and so on. Then estimate $\lim_{x\to -6} G(x)$. What estimate do you arrive at if you evaluate G at $x = -6.1, -6.01, -6.001, \ldots$ instead?

b. Support your conclusions in part (a) by graphing G and using Zoom and Trace to estimate y-values on the graph as $x \to -6$.

c. Find $\lim_{x\to -6} G(x)$ algebraically.

70. Let $h(x) = (x^2 - 2x - 3)/(x^2 - 4x + 3)$.

a. Make a table of the values of h at $x = 2.9, 2.99, 2.999$, and so on. Then estimate $\lim_{x\to 3} h(x)$. What estimate do you arrive at if you evaluate h at $x = 3.1, 3.01, 3.001, \ldots$ instead?

b. Support your conclusions in part (a) by graphing h near $c = 3$ and using Zoom and Trace to estimate y-values on the graph as $x \to 3$.

c. Find $\lim_{x\to 3} h(x)$ algebraically.

71. Let $f(x) = (x^2 - 1)/(|x| - 1)$.

a. Make tables of the values of f at values of x that approach $c = -1$ from above and below. Then estimate $\lim_{x\to -1} f(x)$.

b. Support your conclusion in part (a) by graphing f near $c = -1$ and using Zoom and Trace to estimate y-values on the graph as $x \to -1$.

c. Find $\lim_{x\to -1} f(x)$ algebraically.

72. Let $F(x) = (x^2 + 3x + 2)/(2 - |x|)$.

a. Make tables of values of F at values of x that approach $c = -2$ from above and below. Then estimate $\lim_{x\to -2} F(x)$.

b. Support your conclusion in part (a) by graphing F near $c = -2$ and using Zoom and Trace to estimate y-values on the graph as $x \to -2$.

c. Find $\lim_{x\to -2} F(x)$ algebraically.

73. Let $g(\theta) = (\sin\theta)/\theta$.

a. Make a table of the values of g at values of θ that approach $\theta_0 = 0$ from above and below. Then estimate $\lim_{\theta\to 0} g(\theta)$.

b. Support your conclusion in part (a) by graphing g near $\theta_0 = 0$.

74. Let $G(t) = (1 - \cos t)/t^2$.

a. Make tables of values of G at values of t that approach $t_0 = 0$ from above and below. Then estimate $\lim_{t\to 0} G(t)$.

b. Support your conclusion in part (a) by graphing G near $t_0 = 0$.

75. Let $f(x) = x^{1/(1-x)}$.

a. Make tables of values of f at values of x that approach $c = 1$ from above and below. Does f appear to have a limit as $x \to 1$? If so, what is it? If not, why not?

b. Support your conclusions in part (a) by graphing f near $c = 1$.

76. Let $f(x) = (3^x - 1)/x$.

a. Make tables of values of f at values of x that approach $c = 0$ from above and below. Does f appear to have a limit as $x \to 0$? If so, what is it? If not, why not?

b. Support your conclusions in part (a) by graphing f near $c = 0$.

Theory and Examples

77. If $x^4 \le f(x) \le x^2$ for x in $[-1, 1]$ and $x^2 \le f(x) \le x^4$ for $x < -1$ and $x > 1$, at what points c do you automatically know $\lim_{x\to c} f(x)$? What can you say about the value of the limit at these points?

78. Suppose that $g(x) \le f(x) \le h(x)$ for all $x \ne 2$ and suppose that

$$\lim_{x\to 2} g(x) = \lim_{x\to 2} h(x) = -5.$$

Can we conclude anything about the values of f, g, and h at $x = 2$? Could $f(2) = 0$? Could $\lim_{x\to 2} f(x) = 0$? Give reasons for your answers.

79. If $\lim_{x\to 4} \dfrac{f(x) - 5}{x - 2} = 1$, find $\lim_{x\to 4} f(x)$.

80. If $\lim_{x\to -2} \dfrac{f(x)}{x^2} = 1$, find

a. $\lim_{x\to -2} f(x)$ **b.** $\lim_{x\to -2} \dfrac{f(x)}{x}$

81. **a.** If $\lim_{x\to 2} \dfrac{f(x) - 5}{x - 2} = 3$, find $\lim_{x\to 2} f(x)$.

b. If $\lim_{x\to 2} \dfrac{f(x) - 5}{x - 2} = 4$, find $\lim_{x\to 2} f(x)$.

82. If $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{f(x)}{x^2} = 1$, find

a. $\lim_{x \to 0} f(x)$

b. $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{f(x)}{x}$

T **83. a.** Graph $g(x) = x \sin(1/x)$ to estimate $\lim_{x \to 0} g(x)$, zooming in on the origin as necessary.

b. Confirm your estimate in part (a) with a proof.

T **84. a.** Graph $h(x) = x^2 \cos(1/x^3)$ to estimate $\lim_{x \to 0} h(x)$, zooming in on the origin as necessary.

b. Confirm your estimate in part (a) with a proof.

COMPUTER EXPLORATIONS

Graphical Estimates of Limits

In Exercises 85–90, use a CAS to perform the following steps:

a. Plot the function near the point c being approached.

b. From your plot guess the value of the limit.

85. $\lim_{x \to 2} \frac{x^4 - 16}{x - 2}$

86. $\lim_{x \to -1} \frac{x^3 - x^2 - 5x - 3}{(x + 1)^2}$

87. $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{\sqrt[3]{1 + x} - 1}{x}$

88. $\lim_{x \to 3} \frac{x^2 - 9}{\sqrt{x^2 + 7} - 4}$

89. $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{1 - \cos x}{x \sin x}$

90. $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{2x^2}{3 - 3\cos x}$

2.3 The Precise Definition of a Limit

We now turn our attention to the precise definition of a limit. We replace vague phrases like "gets arbitrarily close to" in the informal definition with specific conditions that can be applied to any particular example. With a precise definition, we can avoid misunderstandings, prove the limit properties given in the preceding section, and establish many important limits.

To show that the limit of $f(x)$ as $x \to c$ equals the number L, we need to show that the gap between $f(x)$ and L can be made "as small as we choose" if x is kept "close enough" to c. Let us see what this would require if we specified the size of the gap between $f(x)$ and L.

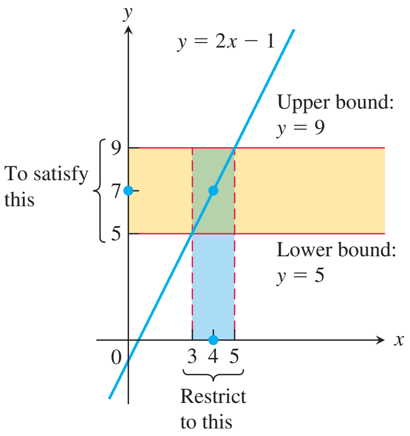


FIGURE 2.15 Keeping x within 1 unit of $x = 4$ will keep y within 2 units of $y = 7$ (Example 1).

EXAMPLE 1 Consider the function $y = 2x - 1$ near $x = 4$. Intuitively it appears that y is close to 7 when x is close to 4, so $\lim_{x \to 4}(2x - 1) = 7$. However, how close to $x = 4$ does x have to be so that $y = 2x - 1$ differs from 7 by, say, less than 2 units?

Solution We are asked: For what values of x is $|y - 7| < 2$? To find the answer we first express $|y - 7|$ in terms of x:

$$|y - 7| = |(2x - 1) - 7| = |2x - 8|.$$

The question then becomes: what values of x satisfy the inequality $|2x - 8| < 2$? To find out, we solve the inequality:

$$\begin{aligned} |2x - 8| &< 2 \\ -2 < 2x - 8 &< 2 \\ 6 < 2x &< 10 \\ 3 < x &< 5 && \text{Solve for } x. \\ -1 < x - 4 &< 1. && \text{Solve for } x - 4. \end{aligned}$$

Keeping x within 1 unit of $x = 4$ will keep y within 2 units of $y = 7$ (Figure 2.15). ■