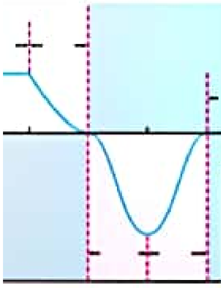

Chapter 3

DIFFERENTIATION

OVERVIEW In Chapter 2, we defined the slope of a curve at a point as the limit of secant slopes. This limit, called a derivative, measures the rate at which a function changes, and it is one of the most important ideas in calculus. Derivatives are used to calculate velocity and acceleration, to estimate the rate of spread of a disease, to set levels of production so as to maximize efficiency, to find the best dimensions of a cylindrical can, to find the age of a prehistoric artifact, and for many other applications. In this chapter, we develop techniques to calculate derivatives easily and learn how to use derivatives to approximate complicated functions.

3.1 The Derivative as a Function

HISTORICAL ESSAY
The Derivative

History

At the end of Chapter 2, we defined the slope of a curve $y = f(x)$ at the point where $x = x_0$ to be

$$\lim_{h \to 0} \frac{f(x_0 + h) - f(x_0)}{h}.$$

We called this limit, when it existed, the derivative of f at x_0. We now investigate the derivative as a *function* derived from f by considering the limit at each point of the domain of f.

DEFINITION Derivative Function

The **derivative** of the function $f(x)$ with respect to the variable x is the function f' whose value at x is

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

provided the limit exists.

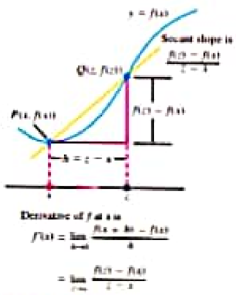

FIGURE 3.1 The way we write the difference quotient for the derivative of a function f depends on how we label the points involved.

We use the notation $f(x)$ rather than simply f in the definition to emphasize the independent variable x, which we are differentiating with respect to. The domain of f' is the set of points in the domain of f for which the limit exists, and the domain may be the same or smaller than the domain of f. If f' exists at a particular x, we say that f is **differentiable (has a derivative)** at x. If f' exists at every point in the domain of f, we call f **differentiable**.

If we write $z = x + h$, then $h = z - x$ and h approaches 0 if and only if z approaches x. Therefore, an equivalent definition of the derivative is as follows (see Figure 3.1).

Alternative Formula for the Derivative

$$f'(x) = \lim_{z \to x} \frac{f(z) - f(x)}{z - x}.$$

Calculating Derivatives from the Definition

The process of calculating a derivative is called **differentiation**. To emphasize the idea that differentiation is an operation performed on a function $y = f(x)$, we use the notation

$$\frac{d}{dx} f(x)$$

as another way to denote the derivative $f'(x)$. Examples 2 and 3 of Section 2.7 illustrate the differentiation process for the functions $y = mx + b$ and $y = 1/x$. Example 2 shows that

$$\frac{d}{dx}(mx + b) = m.$$

For instance,

$$\frac{d}{dx}\left(\frac{3}{2}x - 4\right) = \frac{3}{2}.$$

In Example 3, we see that

$$\frac{d}{dx}\left(\frac{1}{x}\right) = -\frac{1}{x^2}.$$

Here are two more examples.

You Try It

EXAMPLE 1 Applying the Definition

Differentiate $f(x) = \frac{x}{x - 1}$.

Solution Here we have $f(x) = \frac{x}{x - 1}$

and

$$f(x+h) = \frac{(x+h)}{(x+h)-1}, \text{ so}$$

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

$$= \frac{\dfrac{x+h}{x+h-1} - \dfrac{x}{x-1}}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{1}{h} \cdot \frac{(x+h)(x-1) - x(x+h-1)}{(x+h-1)(x-1)}$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{1}{h} \cdot \frac{-h}{(x+h-1)(x-1)}$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{-1}{(x+h-1)(x-1)} = \frac{-1}{(x-1)^2}.$$ ■

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EXAMPLE 2 Derivative of the Square Root Function

(a) Find the derivative of $y = \sqrt{x}$ for $x > 0$.

(b) Find the tangent line to the curve $y = \sqrt{x}$ at $x =$

You will often need to know the derivative of $\sqrt{x}$ for $x > 0$:

$$\frac{d}{dx}\sqrt{x} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}$$

Solution

(a) We use the equivalent form to calculate f':

$$f'(x) = \lim_{z \to x} \frac{f(z) - f(x)}{z - x}$$

$$= \lim_{z \to x} \frac{\sqrt{z} - \sqrt{x}}{z - x}$$

$$= \lim_{z \to x} \frac{\sqrt{z} - \sqrt{x}}{(\sqrt{z} - \sqrt{x})(\sqrt{z} + \sqrt{x})}$$

$$= \lim_{z \to x} \frac{1}{\sqrt{z} + \sqrt{x}} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}.$$

(b) The slope of the curve at $x = 4$ is

$$f'(4) = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{4}} = \frac{1}{4}.$$

The tangent is the line through the point (4, 2) with slope 1/4 (Figure 3.2):

$$y = 2 + \frac{1}{4}(x - 4)$$

$$y = \frac{1}{4}x + 1.$$ ■

We consider the derivative of $y = \sqrt{x}$ when $x = 0$ in Example 6.

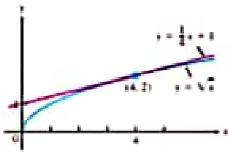


FIGURE 3.2 The curve $y = \sqrt{x}$ and its tangent at (4, 2). The tangent's slope is found by evaluating the derivative at $x = 4$ (Example 2).

Notations

There are many ways to denote the derivative of a function $y = f(x)$, where the independent variable is x and the dependent variable is y. Some common alternative notations for the derivative are

$$f'(x) = y' = \frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{df}{dx} = \frac{d}{dx}f(x) = D(f)(x) = D_x f(x).$$

The symbols d/dx and D indicate the operation of differentiation and are called **differentiation operators**. We read dy/dx as "the derivative of y with respect to x," and df/dx and $(d/dx)f(x)$ as "the derivative of f with respect to x." The "prime" notations y' and f' come from notations that Newton used for derivatives. The d/dx notations are similar to those used by Leibniz. The symbol dy/dx should not be regarded as a ratio (until we introduce the idea of "differentials" in Section 3.8).

Be careful not to confuse the notation $D(f)$ as meaning the domain of the function f instead of the derivative function f'. The distinction should be clear from the context.

To indicate the value of a derivative at a specified number $x = a$, we use the notation

$$f'(a) = \left.\frac{dy}{dx}\right|_{x=a} = \left.\frac{df}{dx}\right|_{x=a} = \left.\frac{d}{dx}f(x)\right|_{x=a}.$$

For instance, in Example 2b we could write

$$f'(4) = \left.\frac{d}{dx}\sqrt{x}\right|_{x=4} = \left.\frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}\right|_{x=4} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{4}} = \frac{1}{4}.$$

To evaluate an expression, we sometimes use the right bracket] in place of the vertical bar |.

Graphing the Derivative

We can often make a reasonable plot of the derivative of $y = f(x)$ by estimating the slopes on the graph of f. That is, we plot the points $(x, f'(x))$ in the xy-plane and connect them with a smooth curve, which represents $y = f'(x)$.

EXAMPLE 3 Graphing a Derivative

Graph the derivative of the function $y = f(x)$ in Figure 3.3a.

Solution We sketch the tangents to the graph of f at frequent intervals and use their slopes to estimate the values of $f'(x)$ at these points. We plot the corresponding $(x, f'(x))$ pairs and connect them with a smooth curve as sketched in Figure 3.3b. ■

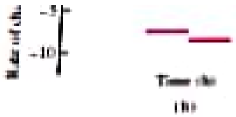
What can we learn from the graph of $y = f'(x)$? At a glance we can see

1. where the rate of change of f is positive, negative, or zero;
2. the rough size of the growth rate at any x and its size in relation to the size of $f(x)$;
3. where the rate of change itself is increasing or decreasing.

Here's another example.

EXAMPLE 4 Concentration of Blood Sugar

On April 23, 1988, the human-powered airplane *Daedalus* flew a record-breaking 119 km from Crete to the island of Santorini in the Aegean Sea, southeast of mainland Greece. Dur-



Differentiable on an Interval; One-Sided Derivatives

A function $y = f(x)$ is **differentiable** on an open interval (finite or infinite) if it has a derivative at each point of the interval. It is differentiable on a closed interval $[a, b]$ if it is differentiable on the interior (a, b) and if the limits

$$\lim_{h \to 0^+} \frac{f(a+h) - f(a)}{h} \qquad \textbf{Right-hand derivative at } a$$

$$\lim_{h \to 0^-} \frac{f(b+h) - f(b)}{h} \qquad \textbf{Left-hand derivative at } b$$

exist at the endpoints (Figure 3.5).

Right-hand and left-hand derivatives may be defined at any point of a function's domain. The usual relation between one-sided and two-sided limits holds for these derivatives. Because of Theorem 6, Section 2.4, a function has a derivative at a point if and only if it has left-hand and right-hand derivatives there, and these one-sided derivatives are equal.

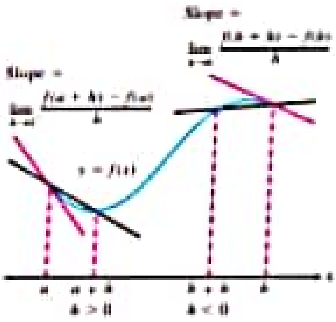


FIGURE 3.5 Derivatives at endpoints are one-sided limits.

EXAMPLE 5 $y = |x|$ Is Not Differentiable at the Origin

Show that the function $y = |x|$ is differentiable on $(-\infty, 0)$ and $(0, \infty)$ but has no derivative at $x = 0$.

Solution To the right of the origin,

$$\frac{d}{dx}(|x|) = \frac{d}{dx}(x) = \frac{d}{dx}(1 \cdot x) = 1. \qquad \frac{d}{dx}(mx + b) = m,\ |x| = x$$

To the left,

$$\frac{d}{dx}(|x|) = \frac{d}{dx}(-x) = \frac{d}{dx}(-1 \cdot x) = -1 \qquad |x| = -x$$

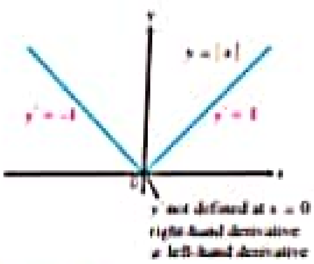


FIGURE 3.6 The function $y = |x|$ is not differentiable at the origin where the graph has a "corner."

(Figure 3.6). There can be no derivative at the origin because the one-sided derivatives differ there:

$$\text{Right-hand derivative of } |x| \text{ at zero} = \lim_{h \to 0^+} \frac{|0 + h| - |0|}{h} = \lim_{h \to 0^+} \frac{|h|}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0^+} \frac{h}{h} \qquad |h| = h \text{ when } h > 0$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0^+} 1 = 1$$

$$\text{Left-hand derivative of } |x| \text{ at zero} = \lim_{h \to 0^-} \frac{|0 + h| - |0|}{h} = \lim_{h \to 0^-} \frac{|h|}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0^-} \frac{-h}{h} \qquad |h| = -h \text{ when } h < 0$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0^-} -1 = -1.$$

■

EXAMPLE 6 $y = \sqrt{x}$ Is Not Differentiable at $x = 0$

In Example 2 we found that for $x > 0$,

$$\frac{d}{dx}\sqrt{x} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}.$$

We apply the definition to examine if the derivative exists at $x = 0$:

$$\lim_{h \to 0^+} \frac{\sqrt{0 + h} - \sqrt{0}}{h} = \lim_{h \to 0^+} \frac{1}{\sqrt{h}} = \infty.$$

Since the (right-hand) limit is not finite, there is no derivative at $x = 0$. Since the slopes of the secant lines joining the origin to the points $(h, \sqrt{h})$ on a graph of $y = \sqrt{x}$ approach ∞, the graph has a *vertical tangent* at the origin. ■

When Does a Function Not Have a Derivative at a Point?