12.1 Intro to Limits

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10:24 AM

* A fundamental concept of calculus is Limits.

Defn. of a Limit

If $f(x)$ becomes arbitrarily close to an unique number N as x approaches c from either side.

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

"The limit of $f(x)$ as x approaches c equals N".

As x gets close to c, but remains unequal to c, the corresponding value of $f(x)$ gets closer to N.

ex: $f(x) = \dfrac{x^2-1}{x-1}$ let $x=1$

$f(1) = \dfrac{0}{0} \leftarrow$ undefined

So instead of $x=1$, use "as x approaches 1".

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

x	.25	.50	.75	.90	.99	.999	.9999
$f(x)$	1.25	1.5	1.75	1.9	1.99	1.999	1.9999

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

B/c we can not use $x=1$ (its undefined) but it appears that $f(x)$ is going to be 2.

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

Ex. 1 Find the Limit Using a table

a) $\lim_{x \to 3} 5x^2$

x	2	2.5	2.9	2.99	2.999	3	3.0001	3.001	3.01	3.1	3.5
$f(x)$				.7005	44.970005	—	45.003	45.0300	45.030	45.30	48.05

f(x)	20	31.25	42.05	44.7005	...70005	—	45.003	45.0300	45.030	45.30	48.05

$$\lim_{x\to 3} f(x) = 45$$

b) $\lim_{x\to 2} \frac{x^2-4}{x-2}$

x	1.9	1.99	1.999	2	2.001	2.01	2.1
f(x)	3.9	3.99	3.999	—	4.001	4.01	4.1

$f(2) = \frac{(2)^2-4}{2-2}$

$f(2) =$ undefined

$$\lim_{x\to 2} \frac{x^2-4}{x-2} = 4$$

c) $\lim_{x\to 2} \frac{x^3-2x^2+4x-8}{x^4-2x^3+x-2}$

x	1.9	1.99	1.999	1.9999	2	2.0001	2.001	2.01	2.1
f(x)		4	.8896	.8889	—	.8888	.8882	.8815	.8196

$$\lim_{x\to 2} f(x) = .8888$$

Finding limits of graphs that are continuous (above examples) is easier than noncontinuous graphs.

d) $\lim_{x\to 0} \frac{x}{\sqrt{x+1}-1}$

x	-0.01	-0.001	-0.0001	0	0.0001	0.001	.01
f(x)		5	1.99995	—	2.00005	2.0005	2.005

$x = 0$ is undefined

$$\lim_{x \to 0} f(x) = 2$$

e) $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{\sin x}{x}$

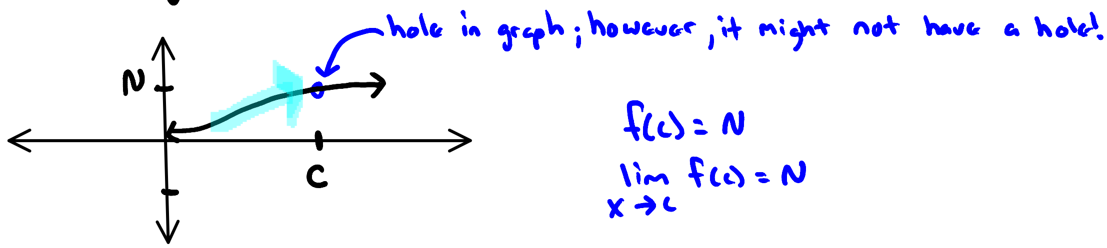
x	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1	-0.01	-0.001	0	.001	.01	.1	.2
f(x)	.9851		983	.99998	.99999998	—	.99999998	.99998	.9983	.9834

$$\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{\sin x}{x} = 1$$

Some functions can have a limit even though the number that it approaches makes f(x) undefined.

* It is important to realize that the existence or nonexistence of f(x) when x = c has no bearing on the existence of the limit of f(x) as x approaches c.

You can use graphs to determine limits!



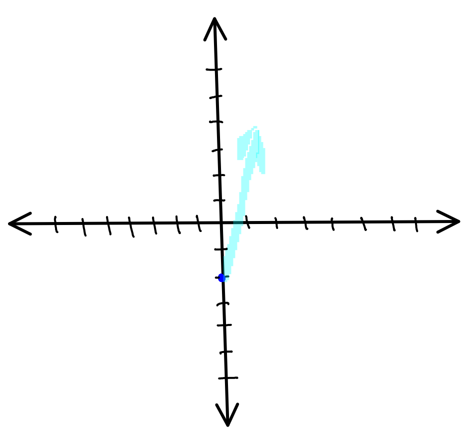
$f(c) = N$

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

Ex.2 Find the limit of f(x) as x approaches 2 where

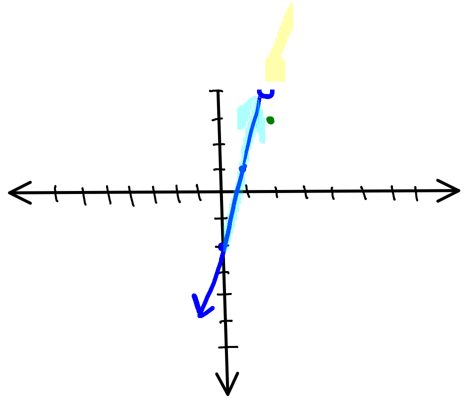
a) $f(x) = \begin{cases} 3x-2, & x \neq 2 \\ 3, & x = 2 \end{cases}$

$$\lim_{x \to 2} f(x) = 4$$

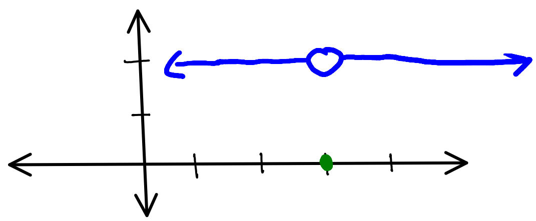


b) $f(x) = \begin{cases} 2, & x \neq 2 \end{cases}$

$\lim_{x \to 2} f(x) = 4$



b) $f(x) = \begin{cases} 2, & x \neq 3 \\ 0, & x = 3 \end{cases}$



$\lim_{x \to 2} f(x) = 2$

$\lim_{x \to \#^-} f(x)$ from left

$\lim_{x \to \#^+} f(x)$ from right

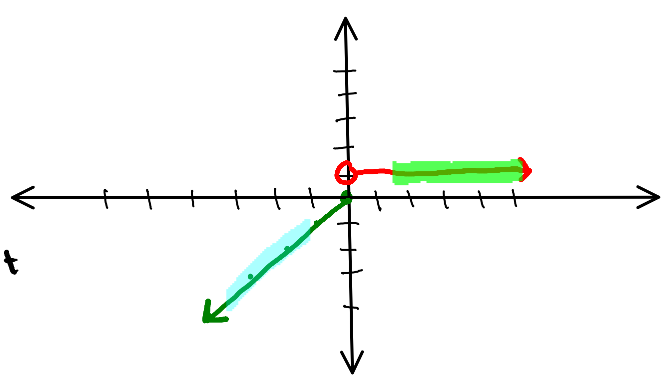
Limits that Fail to Exist

Sometimes there is no single # that the value of "f" approaches as x approaches c. If this occurs, f has no limit as x approaches c.

$\lim_{x \to c} f(x) =$ does not exist

Ex. 3 Find the limit if it exists.

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



oaches 0 from left

side (neg) lim = 0

as x approaches 0 from right side (pos) lim = 1

$\lim_{x \to 0} f(x)$ = doe not exist

b) $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{1}{x}$

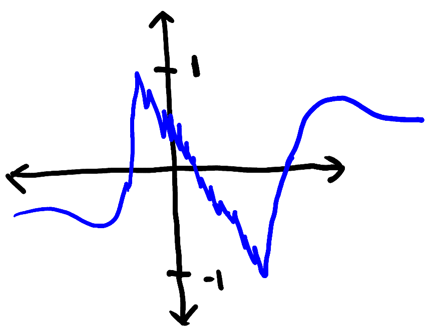
x	-0.5	-0.2	-0.1	-0.01	0	0.01	0.1	0.2	0.5
f(x)	-2	-5	-10	-100	—	100	10	5	2

$\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{1}{x}$ = does not exist

This function displays "Unbounded Behavior"

as x approaches 0 from right, f(x) approaches ∞
as x approaches 0 from left, f(x) approaches $-\infty$

c) $\lim_{x \to 0} \sin\left(\frac{1}{x}\right)$



$\lim_{x \to 0} \sin\left(\frac{1}{x}\right)$ = does not exist.

Oscillating Behavior

Conditions Under Which Limits Do Not Exist

The limit of f(x) as $x \to c$ does not exist if any of the following conditions is true:

1) f(x) approaches a different number from the right of c than the left of c. (ex. 3a)

2) f(x) increases or decreases without bound as x approaches c. (ex. 3b)

3) f(x) oscillates between 2 fixed values as x approaches c (ex. 3c)