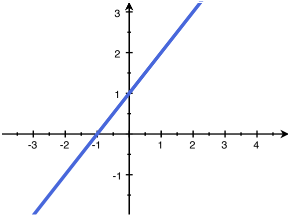
Curve Sketching

11/2/2011

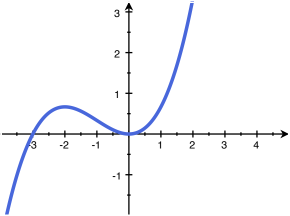
Warm up

Below are pictured six functions: f, f', f'', g, g', and g''. Pick out the two functions that could be f and g, and match them to their first and second derivatives, respectively.

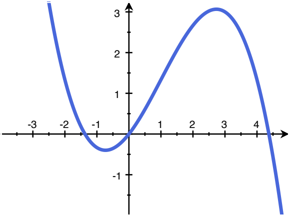
(a)



(b)



(c)



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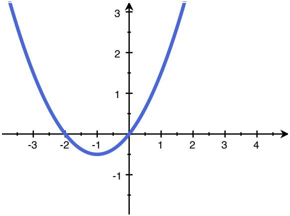
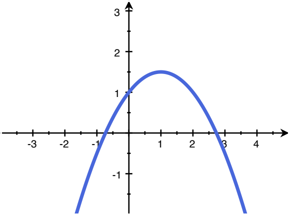
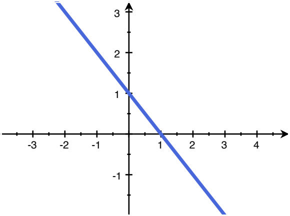


(f)



(g)



Review: Monotonicity of functions on intervals

Suppose that the function f is defined on an interval I, and let x_1 and x_2 denote points in I:

1. f is increasing on I if $f(x_1) < f(x_2)$ whenever $x_1 < x_2$.
2. f is decreasing on I if $f(x_1) > f(x_2)$ whenever $x_1 < x_2$.
3. f is constant on I if $f(x_1) = f(x_2)$ for any x_1, x_2 in I.

Review: Testing monotonicity via derivatives

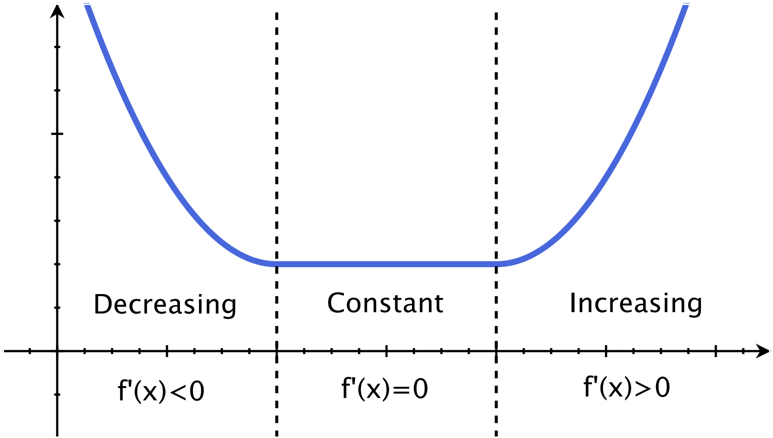
Recall: The derivative function $f'(x)$ tells us the slope of the tangent line to the graph of the function f at the pointe $(x, f(x))$.

Theorem (Increasing/Decreasing Test)

Suppose that f is continuous on $[a, b]$ and differentiable on the open interval (a, b) . Then

1. *If $f'(x) > 0$ for every x in (a, b), then f is increasing on $[a, b]$.*
2. *If $f'(x) < 0$ for every x in (a, b), then f is decreasing on $[a, b]$.*
3. *If $f'(x) = 0$ for every x in (a, b), then f is constant on $[a, b]$.*

What it looks like:



Theorem (Extreme Value Theorem)

If f is continuous on a closed interval $[a, b]$, then

1. *there is a point c_1 in the interval where f assumes it maximum value, i.e. $f(x) \leq f(c_1)$ for all x in $[a, b]$, and*
2. *there is a point c_2 in the interval where f assumes its maximal value, i.e. $f(x) \geq f(c_2)$ for all x in $[a, b]$.*

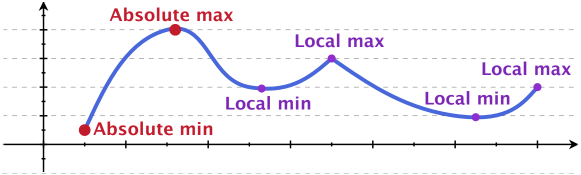
Finding minima and maxima is all about *optimizing* a function. So how do we find these values?

Finding Extreme Values with Derivatives

Theorem

If f is continuous in an open interval (a, b) and achieves a maximum (or minimum) value at a point c in (a, b) where $f'(c)$ exists, then either $f'(c)$ is not defined or $f'(c) = 0$.

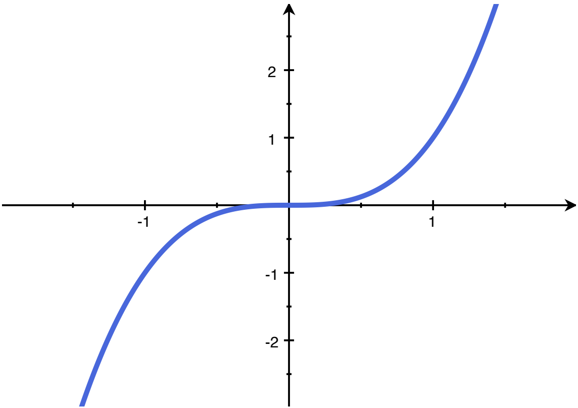
Big Idea: if $f'(c)$ exists, and is not equal to 0, then $f(x)$ is either increasing or decreasing on both sides of c, so $f(c)$ could not be a min or a max.



Definition: A point $x = c$ where $f'(c) = 0$ or where $f'(c)$ doesn't exist is called a **critical point**. If $f'(c)$ is undefined, c is also called a **singular point**.

Warning: Not all critical points are local minima or maxima:

Example: If $f(x) = x^3$, then $f'(x) = x^2$, and so $f'(0) = 0$:



Strategy for closed bounded intervals

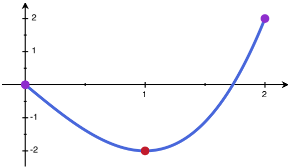
1. Calculate $f'(x)$.
2. Find where $f'(x)$ is 0 or undefined on $[a, b]$ (critical/singular points).
3. Evaluate $f(x)$ at the critical and singular points, and at endpoints. The largest (reps. smallest) value among these is the maximum (reps. minimum).

Example: Let $f(x) = x^3 - 3x$. What are the min/max values on the interval $[0, 2]$.

$$f'(x) = 3x^2 - 3 = 3(x+1)(x-1)$$

So $f'(x) = 0$ if $x = -1$ or $\boxed{1}$.

x	$f(x)$	
1	-2	critical points
0	0	end points
2	2	

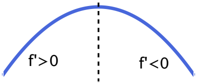


First Derivative Test

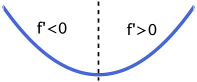
Finding local extrema can be useful for sketching curves.

Let c be a critical/singular point of of a function $y = f(x)$ that is continuous on an open interval $I = (a, b)$ containing c. If f is differentiable on the interval (except possibly at the singular point $x = c$) then the value $f(c)$ can be classified as follows:

1. If $f'(x)$ changes from positive to negative at $x = c$, then $f(c)$ is a local maximum.



2. If $f'(x)$ changes from negative to positive at $x = c$, then $f(c)$ is a local minimum.



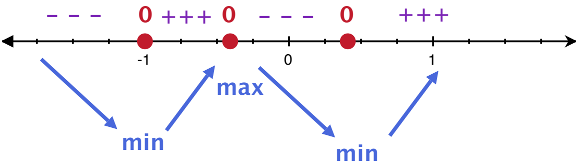
3. If $f'(x)$ doesn't change sign, then it's neither a min or a max.

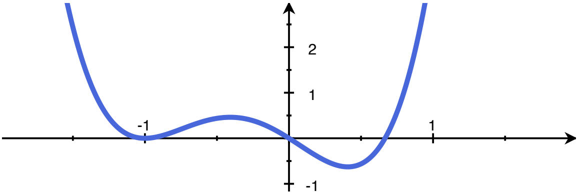
Example

Find the local extrema of $f(x) = 3x^4 + 4x^3 - x^2 - 2x$ over the whole real line.

Calculate $f'(x)$:

$$f'(x) = 12x^3 + 12x^2 - 2x - 2 = 12(x+1)(x - 1/\sqrt{6})(x + 1/\sqrt{6})$$





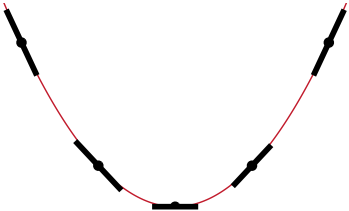
Example

Find the local extrema of $f(x) = \dfrac{x^4 + 1}{x^2}$ over the whole real line.

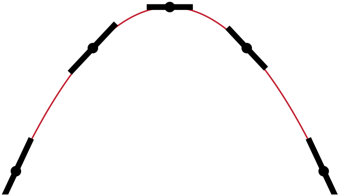
[Hint: find a common denominator after taking a derivative.]

Concavity

Q. How can we measure when a function is concave up or down?



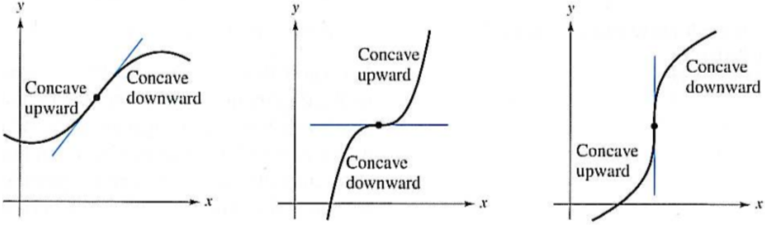
Concave up
$f'(x)$ is increasing
$\boxed{f''(x) > 0}$



Concave down
$f'(x)$ is decreasing
$\boxed{f''(x) < 0}$

Concavity and Inflection Points

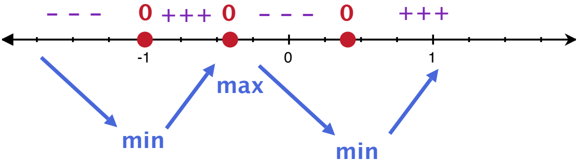
Definition: The function f has an **inflection point** at the point $x = c$ if $f'(c)$ exists and the concavity changes at $x = c$ from up to down or vice versa.



Back to the example $f(x) = 3x^4 + 4x^3 - x^2 - 2x$

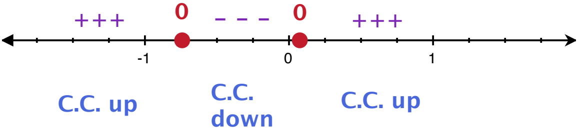
Find the inflection points of $f(x)$, and where $f(x)$ is concave up or down.

We calculated $f'(x) = 12x^3 + 12x^2 - 2x - 2$.

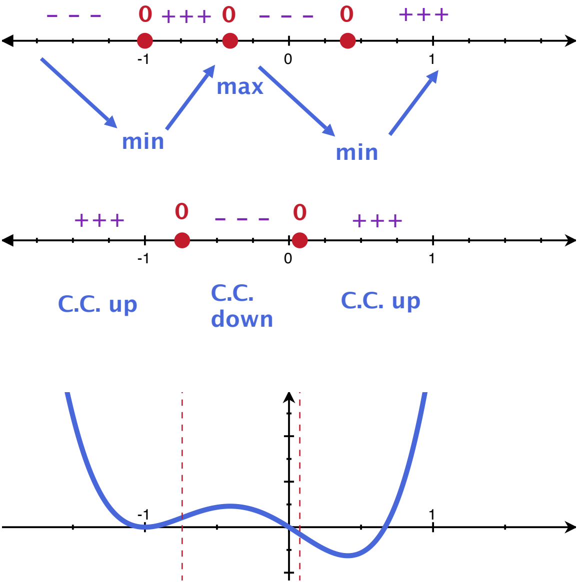


So

$$f''(x) = 36x^2 + 24x - 2 = (6x - (\sqrt{6} - 2))(6x + \sqrt{6} + 2)$$



Putting it together

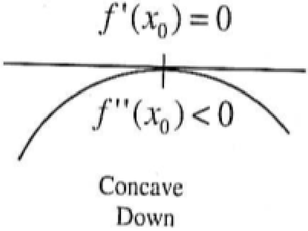


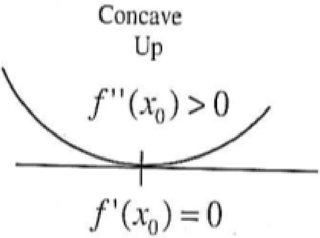
The second derivative test

Theorem

Let f be a function whose second derivative exists on an interval I containing x_0.

1. *If $f'(x_0) = 0$ and $f''(x_0) > 0$, then $f(x_0)$ is a local minimum.*
2. *If $f'(x_0) = 0$ and $f''(x_0) < 0$, then $f(x_0)$ is a local minimum.*
3. *If $f'(x_0) = 0$ and $f''(x_0) <= 0$, then the test* **fails**, *use the first derivative test to decide.*





Sketch graphs of the following functions:

1. $f(x) = -3x^5 + 5x^3$.
2. $f(x) = \dfrac{x^2 - 1}{x^2 + 1}$

Instructions:

Step 1 Find any places where $f(x)$ is 0 or undefined.

Step 2 Calculate $f'(x)$ and find critical/singular points.

Step 3 Classify where $f'(x)$ is positive/negative, and therefore where $f(x)$ is increasing/decreasing.

Step 4 Calculate $f''(x)$, and find where it's 0 or undefined.

Step 5 Classify where $f''(x)$ is positive/negative, and therefore where $f(x)$ is concave up/down.

Step 6 Calculate $\lim_{x\to\infty} f(x)$ and $\lim_{x\to-\infty} f(x)$ to see what the tails are doing.

Hint for 2: Always simplify as a fraction of polynomials after taking a derivative.