DEFINITIONS The sequence $\{a_n\}$ **converges** to the number L if for every positive number ϵ there corresponds an integer N such that for all n,

$$n > N \qquad \Rightarrow \qquad |a_n - L| < \epsilon.$$

If no such number L exists, we say that $\{a_n\}$ **diverges**.

If $\{a_n\}$ converges to L, we write $\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = L$, or simply $a_n \to L$, and call L the **limit** of the sequence (Figure 10.2).

EXAMPLE 1 Show that

(a) $\lim_{n\to\infty} \frac{1}{n} = 0$ **(b)** $\lim_{n\to\infty} k = k$ (any constant k)

Solution

(a) Let $\epsilon > 0$ be given. We must show that there exists an integer N such that for all n,

$$n > N \qquad \Rightarrow \qquad \left|\frac{1}{n} - 0\right| < \epsilon.$$

This implication will hold if $(1/n) < \epsilon$ or $n > 1/\epsilon$. If N is any integer greater than $1/\epsilon$, the implication will hold for all $n > N$. This proves that $\lim_{n\to\infty}(1/n) = 0$.

(b) Let $\epsilon > 0$ be given. We must show that there exists an integer N such that for all n,

$$n > N \qquad \Rightarrow \qquad |k - k| < \epsilon.$$

Since $k - k = 0$, we can use any positive integer for N and the implication will hold. This proves that $\lim_{n\to\infty} k = k$ for any constant k. ■

EXAMPLE 2 Show that the sequence $\{1, -1, 1, -1, 1, -1, \ldots, (-1)^{n+1}, \ldots\}$ diverges.

Solution Suppose the sequence converges to some number L. By choosing $\epsilon = 1/2$ in the definition of the limit, all terms a_n of the sequence with index n larger than some N must lie within $\epsilon = 1/2$ of L. Since the number 1 appears repeatedly as every other term of the sequence, we must have that the number 1 lies within the distance $\epsilon = 1/2$ of L.

It follows that $|L - 1| < 1/2$, or equivalently, $1/2 < L < 3/2$. Likewise, the number -1 appears repeatedly in the sequence with arbitrarily high index. So we must also have that $|L - (-1)| < 1/2$, or equivalently, $-3/2 < L < -1/2$. But the number L cannot lie in both of the intervals $(1/2, 3/2)$ and $(-3/2, -1/2)$ because they have no overlap. Therefore, no such limit L exists and so the sequence diverges.

Note that the same argument works for any positive number ϵ smaller than 1, not just $1/2$. ■

DEFINITION The sequence $\{a_n\}$ **diverges to infinity** if for every number M there is an integer N such that for all n larger than N, $a_n > M$. If this condition holds we write

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = \infty \qquad \text{or} \qquad a_n \to \infty.$$

Similarly if for every number m there is an integer N such that for all $n > N$ we have $a_n < m$, then we say $\{a_n\}$ **diverges to negative infinity** and write

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = -\infty \qquad \text{or} \qquad a_n \to -\infty.$$

THEOREM 1 Let $\{a_n\}$ and $\{b_n\}$ be sequences of real numbers, and let A and B be real numbers. The following rules hold if $\lim_{n\to\infty} a_n = A$ and $\lim_{n\to\infty} b_n = B$.

1. *Sum Rule:* $\lim_{n\to\infty}(a_n + b_n) = A + B$
2. *Difference Rule:* $\lim_{n\to\infty}(a_n - b_n) = A - B$
3. *Constant Multiple Rule:* $\lim_{n\to\infty}(k \cdot b_n) = k \cdot B$ (any number k)
4. *Product Rule:* $\lim_{n\to\infty}(a_n \cdot b_n) = A \cdot B$
5. *Quotient Rule:* $\lim_{n\to\infty} \frac{a_n}{b_n} = \frac{A}{B}$ if $B \neq 0$

EXAMPLE 3 By combining Theorem 1 with the limits of Example 1, we have:

(a) $\lim_{n\to\infty}\left(-\frac{1}{n}\right) = -1 \cdot \lim_{n\to\infty}\frac{1}{n} = -1 \cdot 0 = 0$ Constant Multiple Rule and Example la

(b) $\lim_{n\to\infty}\left(\frac{n-1}{n}\right) = \lim_{n\to\infty}\left(1 - \frac{1}{n}\right) = \lim_{n\to\infty} 1 - \lim_{n\to\infty}\frac{1}{n} = 1 - 0 = 1$ Difference Rule and Example la

(c) $\lim_{n\to\infty}\frac{5}{n^2} = 5 \cdot \lim_{n\to\infty}\frac{1}{n} \cdot \lim_{n\to\infty}\frac{1}{n} = 5 \cdot 0 \cdot 0 = 0$ Product Rule

(d) $\lim_{n\to\infty}\frac{4 - 7n^6}{n^6 + 3} = \lim_{n\to\infty}\frac{(4/n^6) - 7}{1 + (3/n^6)} = \frac{0 - 7}{1 + 0} = -7.$ Sum and Quotient Rules

DEFINITIONS A sequence $\{a_n\}$ is **bounded from above** if there exists a number M such that $a_n \leq M$ for all n. The number M is an **upper bound** for $\{a_n\}$. If M is an upper bound for $\{a_n\}$ but no number less than M is an upper bound for $\{a_n\}$, then M is the **least upper bound** for $\{a_n\}$.

A sequence $\{a_n\}$ is **bounded from below** if there exists a number m such that $a_n \geq m$ for all n. The number m is a **lower bound** for $\{a_n\}$. If m is a lower bound for $\{a_n\}$ but no number greater than m is a lower bound for $\{a_n\}$, then m is the **greatest lower bound** for $\{a_n\}$.

If $\{a_n\}$ is bounded from above and below, the $\{a_n\}$ is **bounded**. If $\{a_n\}$ is not bounded, then we say that $\{a_n\}$ is an **unbounded** sequence.

EXAMPLE 11

(a) The sequence $1, 2, 3, \ldots, n, \ldots$ has no upper bound since it eventually surpasses every number M. However, it is bounded below by every real number less than or equal to 1. The number $m = 1$ is the greatest lower bound of the sequence.

(b) The sequence $\frac{1}{2}, \frac{2}{3}, \frac{3}{4}, \ldots, \frac{n}{n+1}, \ldots$ is bounded above by every real number greater than or equal to 1. The upper bound $M = 1$ is the least upper bound (Exercise 125). The sequence is also bounded below by every number less than or equal to $\frac{1}{2}$, which is its greatest lower bound. ■

EXAMPLE 12

(a) The sequence $1, 2, 3, \ldots, n, \ldots$ is nondecreasing.

(b) The sequence $\frac{1}{2}, \frac{2}{3}, \frac{3}{4}, \ldots, \frac{n}{n+1}, \ldots$ is nondecreasing.

(c) The sequence $1, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{8}, \ldots, \frac{1}{2^n}, \ldots$ is nonincreasing.

(d) The constant sequence $3, 3, 3, \ldots, 3, \ldots$ is both nondecreasing and nonincreasing.

(e) The sequence $1, -1, 1, -1, 1, -1, \ldots$ is not monotonic. ■

DEFINITION A sequence $\{a_n\}$ is **nondecreasing** if $a_n \leq a_{n+1}$ for all n. That is, $a_1 \leq a_2 \leq a_3 \leq \ldots$. The sequence is **nonincreasing** if $a_n \geq a_{n+1}$ for all n. The sequence $\{a_n\}$ is **monotonic** if it is either nondecreasing or nonincreasing.

EXAMPLE 12

(a) The sequence $1, 2, 3, \ldots, n, \ldots$ is nondecreasing.

(b) The sequence $\frac{1}{2}, \frac{2}{3}, \frac{3}{4}, \ldots, \frac{n}{n+1}, \ldots$ is nondecreasing.

(c) The sequence $1, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{8}, \ldots, \frac{1}{2^n}, \ldots$ is nonincreasing.

(d) The constant sequence $3, 3, 3, \ldots, 3, \ldots$ is both nondecreasing and nonincreasing.

(e) The sequence $1, -1, 1, -1, 1, -1, \ldots$ is not monotonic. ■

THEOREM 6—The Monotonic Sequence Theorem If a sequence $\{a_n\}$ is both bounded and monotonic, then the sequence converges.

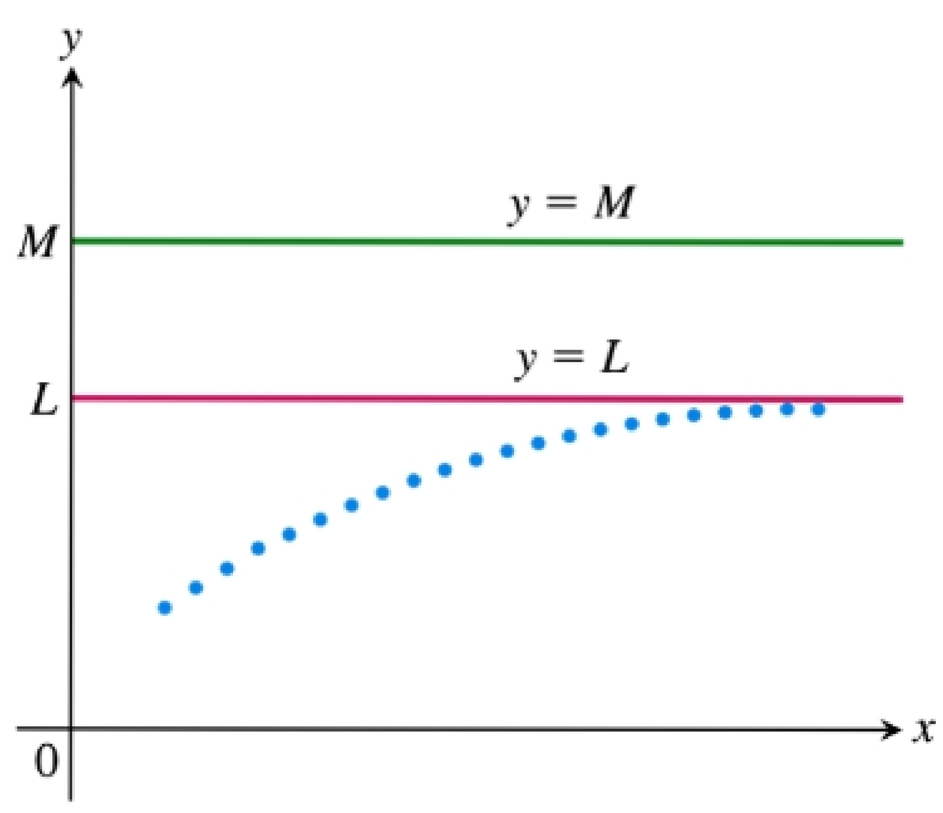

FIGURE 10.7 If the terms of a nondecreasing sequence have an upper bound M, they have a limit $L \le M$.

Proof Suppose $\{a_n\}$ is nondecreasing, L is its least upper bound, and we plot the points $(1, a_1), (2, a_2), \ldots, (n, a_n), \ldots$ in the xy-plane. If M is an upper bound of the sequence, all these points will lie on or below the line $y = M$ (Figure 10.7). The line $y = L$ is the lowest such line. None of the points (n, a_n) lies above $y = L$, but some do lie above any lower line $y = L - \epsilon$, if ϵ is a positive number. The sequence converges to L because

(a) $a_n \le L$ for *all* values of n, and

(b) given any $\epsilon > 0$, there exists at least one integer N for which $a_N > L - \epsilon$.

The fact that $\{a_n\}$ is nondecreasing tells us further that

$$a_n \ge a_N > L - \epsilon \qquad \text{for all } n \ge N.$$

Thus, *all* the numbers a_n beyond the Nth number lie within ϵ of L. This is precisely the condition for L to be the limit of the sequence $\{a_n\}$.

The proof for nonincreasing sequences bounded from below is similar. ■

Finding Terms of a Sequence

Each of Exercises 1–6 gives a formula for the nth term a_n of a sequence $\{a_n\}$. Find the values of a_1, a_2, a_3, and a_4.

1. $a_n = \dfrac{1 - n}{n^2}$

2. $a_n = \dfrac{1}{n!}$

3. $a_n = \dfrac{(-1)^{n+1}}{2n - 1}$

4. $a_n = 2 + (-1)^n$

5. $a_n = \dfrac{2^n}{2^{n+1}}$

6. $a_n = \dfrac{2^n - 1}{2^n}$

Each of Exercises 7–12 gives the first term or two of a sequence along with a recursion formula for the remaining terms. Write out the first ten terms of the sequence.

7. $a_1 = 1, \quad a_{n+1} = a_n + (1/2^n)$

8. $a_1 = 1, \quad a_{n+1} = a_n/(n + 1)$

9. $a_1 = 2, \quad a_{n+1} = (-1)^{n+1}a_n/2$

10. $a_1 = -2, \quad a_{n+1} = na_n/(n + 1)$

11. $a_1 = a_2 = 1, \quad a_{n+2} = a_{n+1} + a_n$

12. $a_1 = 2, \quad a_2 = -1, \quad a_{n+2} = a_{n+1}/a_n$

Finding a Sequence's Formula

In Exercises 13–26, find a formula for the nth term of the sequence.

13. The sequence $1, -1, 1, -1, 1, \ldots$ — 1's with alternating signs

14. The sequence $-1, 1, -1, 1, -1, \ldots$ — 1's with alternating signs

15. The sequence $1, -4, 9, -16, 25, \ldots$ — Squares of the positive integers, with alternating signs

16. The sequence $1, -\dfrac{1}{4}, \dfrac{1}{9}, -\dfrac{1}{16}, \dfrac{1}{25}, \ldots$ — Reciprocals of squares of the positive integers, with alternating signs

Convergence and Divergence

Which of the sequences $\{a_n\}$ in Exercises 27–90 converge, and which diverge? Find the limit of each convergent sequence.

27. $a_n = 2 + (0.1)^n$

28. $a_n = \dfrac{n + (-1)^n}{n}$

29. $a_n = \dfrac{1 - 2n}{1 + 2n}$

30. $a_n = \dfrac{2n + 1}{1 - 3\sqrt{n}}$

31. $a_n = \dfrac{1 - 5n^4}{n^4 + 8n^3}$

32. $a_n = \dfrac{n + 3}{n^2 + 5n + 6}$

33. $a_n = \dfrac{n^2 - 2n + 1}{n - 1}$

34. $a_n = \dfrac{1 - n^3}{70 - 4n^2}$

35. $a_n = 1 + (-1)^n$

36. $a_n = (-1)^n\left(1 - \dfrac{1}{n}\right)$

37. $a_n = \left(\dfrac{n + 1}{2n}\right)\left(1 - \dfrac{1}{n}\right)$

38. $a_n = \left(2 - \dfrac{1}{2^n}\right)\left(3 + \dfrac{1}{2^n}\right)$

39. $a_n = \dfrac{(-1)^{n+1}}{2n - 1}$

40. $a_n = \left(-\dfrac{1}{2}\right)^n$

41. $a_n = \sqrt{\dfrac{2n}{n + 1}}$

42. $a_n = \dfrac{1}{(0.9)^n}$

43. $a_n = \sin\left(\dfrac{\pi}{2} + \dfrac{1}{n}\right)$

44. $a_n = n\pi \cos(n\pi)$

Recursively Defined Sequences

In Exercises 91–98, assume that each sequence converges and find its limit.

91. $a_1 = 2, \quad a_{n+1} = \dfrac{72}{1 + a_n}$

92. $a_1 = -1, \quad a_{n+1} = \dfrac{a_n + 6}{a_n + 2}$

93. $a_1 = -4, \quad a_{n+1} = \sqrt{8 + 2a_n}$