

Interval Notations and Examples

back to [Fan's Intro Math for Econ](#), [Matlab Examples](#), or [Dynamic Asset Repositories](#)

When we look at the problem facing a household, we often have to restrict the choice set for example to an interval.

Closed Interval

For example, if x is hours working, perhaps the household has to work at least a hours and up to b hours, so his choice is between a and b hours inclusive.

The interval that is inclusive of both endpoints is called a closed interval (note the square brackets):

- **closed interval:** $[a, b] \equiv \{x \in \mathbf{R} : a \leq x \leq b\}$

Open Interval

In general, an open interval is defined as (Note here we use parenthesis, not square bracket) :

- **open interval:** $(a, b) \equiv \{x \in \mathbf{R} : a < x < b\}$

Half Open and Half Close Interval

We can also have half open intervals:

- **half open (half closed) interval:** $[a, b) \equiv \{x \in \mathbf{R} : a \leq x < b\}$
- **half open (half closed) interval:** $(a, b] \equiv \{x \in \mathbf{R} : a < x \leq b\}$

Graph

If you were to graph an interval, you can draw an empty circle at either end of an interval that is open, and a solid circle if it is closed at that end.

```
close all;
figure();
x = linspace(-1,5);
line(x,0*ones(size(x)))
set(gca,'ytick',[],'Ycolor','w','box','off')
ylim([-0.1 0.1])
xlim([-10 10])
pbaspect([4 1 1])
grid on
```

