Derivative

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Calculus I

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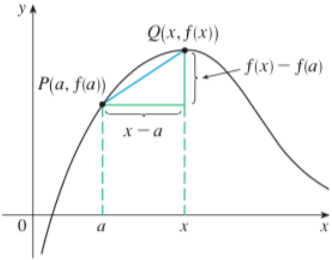

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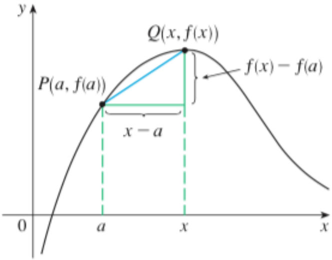

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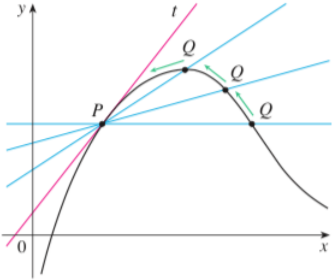
In other words, we define the tangent line to be the limiting position of the secant line PQas Q approaches P.



Definition

The tangent line to the curve $y = f(x)$ at the point $P(a, f(a))$ is the line through P with slope

$$m = \lim_{x \to a} \frac{f(x) - f(a)}{x - a}$$

provided that this limit exists.

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The expression for the slope of the tangent line becomes equivalently:

$$m = \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{f(a + h) - f(a)}{h}$$

Example:

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Here we have $a = 1$ and $f(x) = x^2$, so the slope is

$$\begin{aligned} m &= \lim_{x \to 1} \frac{f(x) - f(1)}{x - 1} = \lim_{x \to 1} \frac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1} \\ &= \lim_{x \to 1} \frac{(x - 1)(x + 1)}{x - 1} \\ &= \lim_{x \to 1} (x + 1) = 1 + 1 = 2 \end{aligned}$$

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Using the point-slope form of the equation of a line, we find that an equation of the tangent line at $(1, 1)$ is

$$y - 1 = 2(x - 1) \qquad \text{or} \qquad y = 2x - 1$$

Example: Find an equation of the tangent line to the hyperbola $y = \frac{3}{x}$ at the point $P(3, 1)$.

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Solution:

Let $f(x) = 3/x$. Then the slope of the tangent at $(3, 1)$ is

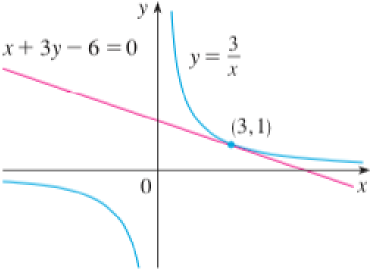
$$m = \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{f(3 + h) - f(3)}{h} = \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{\dfrac{3}{3 + h} - 1}{h} = \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{\dfrac{3 - (3 + h)}{3 + h}}{h}$$

$$= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{-h}{h(3 + h)} = \lim_{h \to 0} -\frac{1}{3 + h} = -\frac{1}{3}$$

Therefore an equation of the tangent at the point $(3, 1)$ is

$$y - 1 = -\tfrac{1}{3}(x - 3)$$

which simplifies to $$x + 3y - 6 = 0$$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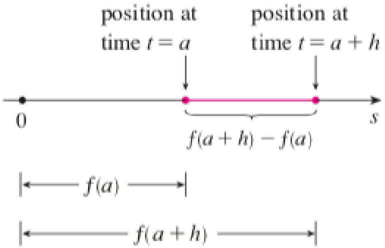

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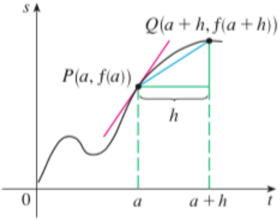

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This means that the velocity at time $t = a$ is equal to the slope of the tangent line at P

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Definition

The derivative of a function f at a number a, denoted by $f'(a)$ is

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

provided that the limit exists.

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Solution From the definition above

$$
\begin{aligned}
f'(a) &= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{f(a+h) - f(a)}{h} \\
&= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{[(a+h)^2 - 8(a+h) + 9] - [a^2 - 8a + 9]}{h} \\
&= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{a^2 + 2ah + h^2 - 8a - 8h + 9 - a^2 + 8a - 9}{h} \\
&= \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{2ah + h^2 - 8h}{h} = \lim_{h \to 0} (2a + h - 8) \\
&= 2a - 8
\end{aligned}
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Therefore, the equation of the tangent line to the curve $y = f(x)$ at a point $(a, f(a))$ is given by

$$y - f(a) = f'(a)(x - a)$$

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The equation of the tangent line is :

$y - (-6) = (-2)(x - 3)$ or $y = -2x$

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The quotient

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It can be interpreted as the slope of the secant line joining $(x_1, f(x_1))$ and $(x_2, f(x_2))$.

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$$\text{instantaneous rate of change} = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{\Delta y}{\Delta x} = \lim_{x_2 \to x_1} \frac{f(x_2) - f(x_1)}{x_2 - x_1}$$

Rates of Change

The following are all interpretations for the limit of the difference quotient,

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

1. The slope of the graph of $y = f(x)$ at $x = x_0$
2. The slope of the tangent to the curve $y = f(x)$ at $x = x_0$
3. The rate of change of $f(x)$ with respect to x at $x = x_0$
4. The derivative $f'(x_0)$ at a point