Partial Derivatives

Partial Derivatives of a Function of Two Variables

DEFINITION **The partial derivative of $f(x, y)$ with respect to x at the point (x_0, y_0) is**

$$\left.\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\right|_{(x_0, y_0)} = \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{f(x_0 + h, y_0) - f(x_0, y_0)}{h},$$

provided the limit exists.

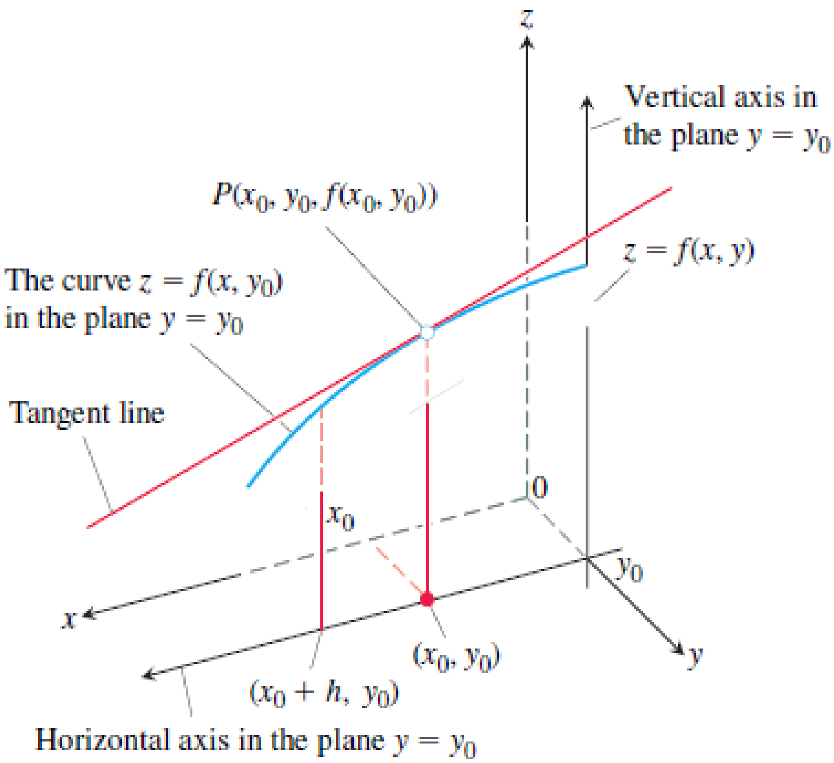


FIGURE 14.16 The intersection of the plane $y = y_0$ with the surface $z = f(x, y)$, viewed from above the first quadrant of the xy-plane.

The partial derivative of $f(x, y)$ with respect to x at the point (x_0, y_0) is the same as the ordinary derivative of $f(x, y_0)$ at the point x_0:

$$\left.\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\right|_{(x_0, y_0)} = \left.\frac{d}{dx} f(x, y_0)\right|_{x=x_0}.$$

A variety of notations are used to denote the partial derivative at a point (x_0, y_0), including

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}(x_0, y_0), \qquad f_x(x_0, y_0), \qquad \text{and} \qquad \left.\frac{\partial z}{\partial x}\right|_{(x_0, y_0)}.$$

When we do not specify a specific point (x_0, y_0) at which the partial derivative is being evaluated, then the partial derivative becomes a *function* whose domain is the points where the partial derivative exists. Notations for this function include

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}, \qquad f_x, \qquad \text{and} \qquad \frac{\partial z}{\partial x}.$$

DEFINITION **The partial derivative of $f(x, y)$ with respect to y at the point (x_0, y_0)** is

$$\left.\frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\right|_{(x_0, y_0)} = \left.\frac{d}{dy} f(x_0, y)\right|_{y=y_0} = \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{f(x_0, y_0 + h) - f(x_0, y_0)}{h},$$

provided the limit exists.

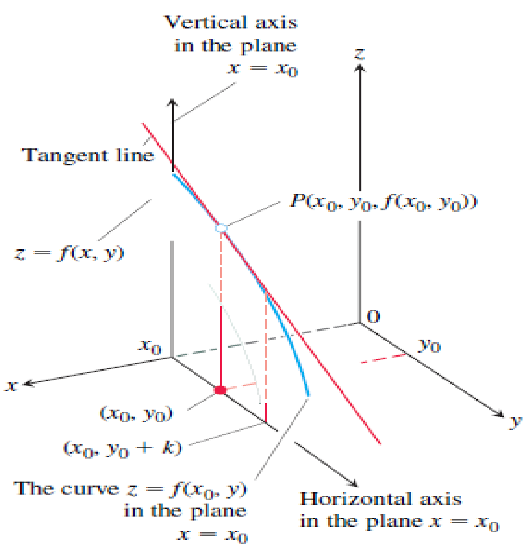


FIGURE 14.17 The intersection of the plane $x = x_0$ with the surface $z = f(x, y)$, viewed from above the first quadrant of the xy-plane.

Tangent lines in both XZ- and YZ- planes.

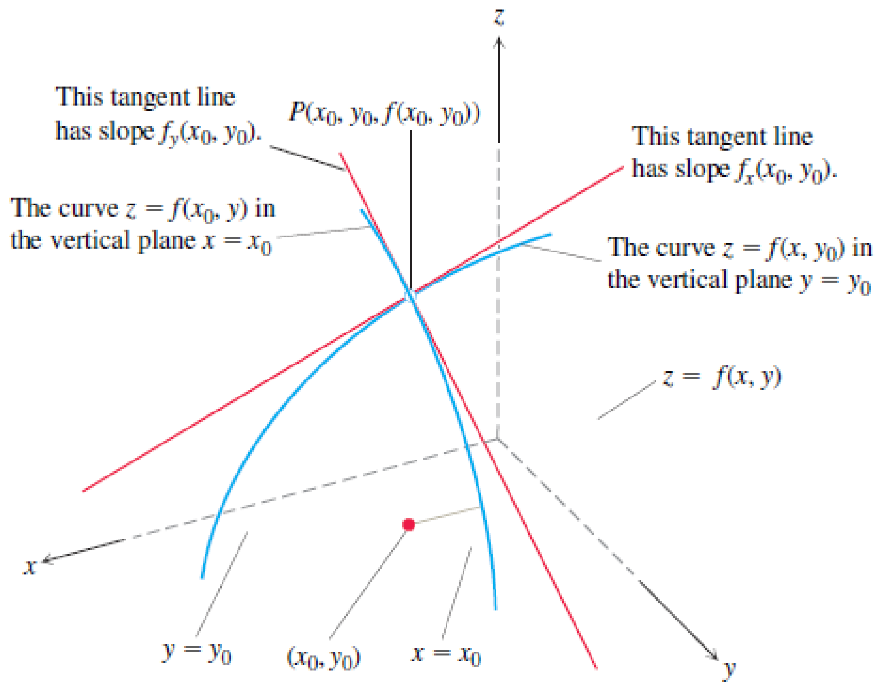


FIGURE 14.18 Figures 14.16 and 14.17 combined. The tangent lines at the point $(x_0, y_0, f(x_0, y_0))$ determine a plane that, in this picture at least, appears to be tangent to the surface.

EXAMPLE 1 Find the values of $\partial f/\partial x$ and $\partial f/\partial y$ at the point $(4, -5)$ if

$$f(x, y) = x^2 + 3xy + y - 1.$$

Solution To find $\partial f/\partial x$, we treat y as a constant and differentiate with respect to x:

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x}(x^2 + 3xy + y - 1) = 2x + 3 \cdot 1 \cdot y + 0 - 0 = 2x + 3y.$$

The value of $\partial f/\partial x$ at $(4, -5)$ is $2(4) + 3(-5) = -7$.

To find $\partial f/\partial y$, we treat x as a constant and differentiate with respect to y:

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial}{\partial y}(x^2 + 3xy + y - 1) = 0 + 3 \cdot x \cdot 1 + 1 - 0 = 3x + 1.$$

The value of $\partial f/\partial y$ at $(4, -5)$ is $3(4) + 1 = 13$. ■

EXAMPLE 2 Find $\partial f/\partial y$ as a function if $f(x, y) = y \sin xy$.

Solution We treat x as a constant and f as a product of y and $\sin xy$:

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial f}{\partial y} &= \frac{\partial}{\partial y}(y \sin xy) = y \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \sin xy + (\sin xy) \frac{\partial}{\partial y}(y) \\ &= (y \cos xy) \frac{\partial}{\partial y}(xy) + \sin xy = xy \cos xy + \sin xy.\end{aligned}$$ ■

EXAMPLE 3 Find f_x and f_y as functions if

$$f(x, y) = \frac{2y}{y + \cos x}.$$

Solution We treat f as a quotient. With y held constant, we use the quotient rule to get

$$\begin{aligned}f_x &= \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\left(\frac{2y}{y + \cos x}\right) = \frac{(y + \cos x)\frac{\partial}{\partial x}(2y) - 2y \frac{\partial}{\partial x}(y + \cos x)}{(y + \cos x)^2} \\ &= \frac{(y + \cos x)(0) - 2y(-\sin x)}{(y + \cos x)^2} = \frac{2y \sin x}{(y + \cos x)^2}.\end{aligned}$$

With x held constant and again applying the quotient rule, we get

$$\begin{aligned}f_y &= \frac{\partial}{\partial y}\left(\frac{2y}{y + \cos x}\right) = \frac{(y + \cos x)\frac{\partial}{\partial y}(2y) - 2y \frac{\partial}{dy}(y + \cos x)}{(y + \cos x)^2} \\ &= \frac{(y + \cos x)(2) - 2y(1)}{(y + \cos x)^2} = \frac{2 \cos x}{(y + \cos x)^2}.\end{aligned}$$ ■

Implicit differentiation works for partial derivatives the way it works for ordinary derivatives, as the next example illustrates.

EXAMPLE 4 Find $\partial z/\partial x$ assuming that the equation

$$yz - \ln z = x + y$$

defines z as a function of the two independent variables x and y and the partial derivative exists.

Solution We differentiate both sides of the equation with respect to x, holding y constant and treating z as a differentiable function of x:

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial}{\partial x}(yz) - \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\ln z &= \frac{\partial x}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial y}{\partial x} \\
y\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} - \frac{1}{z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} &= 1 + 0 \qquad \text{With } y \text{ constant, } \frac{\partial}{\partial x}(yz) = y\frac{\partial z}{\partial x}. \\
\left(y - \frac{1}{z}\right)\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} &= 1 \\
\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} &= \frac{z}{yz - 1}.
\end{aligned}$$

EXAMPLE 5 The plane $x = 1$ intersects the paraboloid $z = x^2 + y^2$ in a parabola. Find the slope of the tangent to the parabola at (1, 2, 5) (Figure 14.19).

Solution The parabola lies in a plane parallel to the yz-plane, and the slope is the value of the partial derivative $\partial z/\partial y$ at (1, 2):

$$\left.\frac{\partial z}{\partial y}\right|_{(1,2)} = \left.\frac{\partial}{\partial y}(x^2 + y^2)\right|_{(1,2)} = \left.2y\right|_{(1,2)} = 2(2) = 4.$$

As a check, we can treat the parabola as the graph of the single-variable function $z = (1)^2 + y^2 = 1 + y^2$ in the plane $x = 1$ and ask for the slope at $y = 2$. The slope, calculated now as an ordinary derivative, is

$$\left.\frac{dz}{dy}\right|_{y=2} = \left.\frac{d}{dy}(1 + y^2)\right|_{y=2} = \left.2y\right|_{y=2} = 4.$$

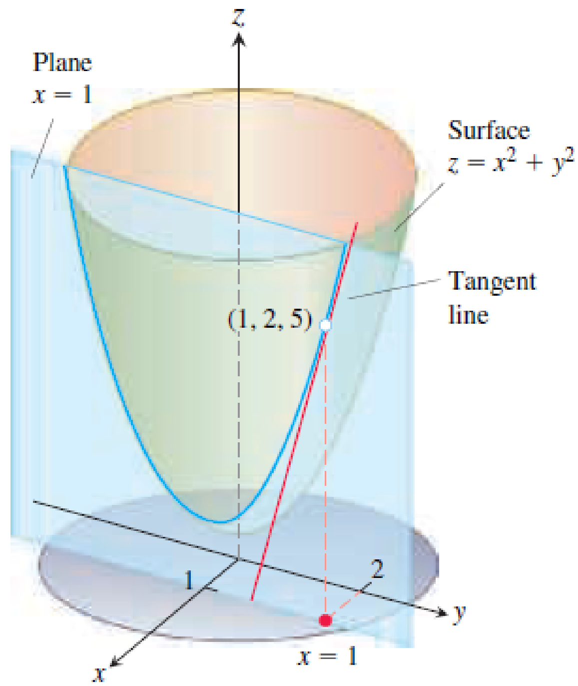


FIGURE 14.19 The tangent to the curve of intersection of the plane $x = 1$ and surface $z = x^2 + y^2$ at the point (1, 2, 5) (Example 5).

Functions of More Than Two Variables

EXAMPLE 6 If x, y, and z are independent variables and

$$f(x, y, z) = x \sin(y + 3z),$$

then

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial f}{\partial z} &= \frac{\partial}{\partial z}\left[x \sin(y + 3z)\right] = x \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \sin(y + 3z) && \text{x held constant} \\
&= x \cos(y + 3z) \frac{\partial}{\partial z}(y + 3z) && \text{Chain rule} \\
&= 3x \cos(y + 3z). && \text{y held constant}
\end{aligned}$$

Partial Derivatives and Continuity

A function $f(x, y)$ can have partial derivatives with respect to both x and y at a point without the function being continuous there. This is different from functions of a single variable, where the existence of a derivative implies continuity. If the partial derivatives of $f(x, y)$ exist and are continuous throughout a disk centered at (x_0, y_0), however, then f is continuous at (x_0, y_0), as we see at the end of this section.

EXAMPLE 8 Let

$$f(x, y) = \begin{cases} 0, & xy \neq 0 \\ 1, & xy = 0 \end{cases}$$

(Figure 14.21).

(a) Find the limit of f as (x, y) approaches $(0, 0)$ along the line $y = x$.

(b) Prove that f is not continuous at the origin.

(c) Show that both partial derivatives $\partial f/\partial x$ and $\partial f/\partial y$ exist at the origin.

Solution

(a) Since $f(x, y)$ is constantly zero along the line $y = x$ (except at the origin), we have

$$\lim_{(x,y)\to(0,0)} f(x, y)\bigg|_{y=x} = \lim_{(x,y)\to(0,0)} 0 = 0.$$

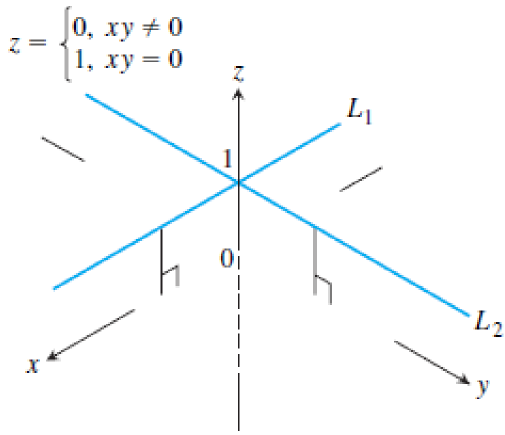


FIGURE 14.21 The graph of

$$f(x, y) = \begin{cases} 0, & xy \neq 0 \\ 1, & xy = 0 \end{cases}$$

consists of the lines L_1 and L_2 (lying 1 unit above the xy-plane) and the four open quadrants of the xy-plane. The function has partial derivatives at the origin but is not continuous there (Example 8).

(b) Since $f(0, 0) = 1$, the limit in part (a) is not equal to $f(0, 0)$, which proves that f is not continuous at $(0, 0)$.

(c) To find $\partial f/\partial x$ at $(0, 0)$, we hold y fixed at $y = 0$. Then $f(x, y) = 1$ for all x, and the graph of f is the line L_1 in Figure 14.21. The slope of this line at any x is $\partial f/\partial x = 0$. In particular, $\partial f/\partial x = 0$ at $(0, 0)$. Similarly, $\partial f/\partial y$ is the slope of line L_2 at any y, so $\partial f/\partial y = 0$ at $(0, 0)$. ■

Second-Order Partial Derivatives

When we differentiate a function $f(x, y)$ twice, we produce its second-order derivatives. These derivatives are usually denoted by

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} \text{ or } f_{xx}, \qquad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y^2} \text{ or } f_{yy},$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x\, \partial y} \text{ or } f_{yx}, \qquad \text{and} \qquad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y\, \partial x} \text{ or } f_{xy}.$$

The defining equations are

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\right), \qquad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x\, \partial y} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\right),$$

and so on. Notice the order in which the mixed partial derivatives are taken:

$\dfrac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x\, \partial y}$ Differentiate first with respect to y, then with respect to x.

$f_{yx} = (f_y)_x$ Means the same thing.

EXAMPLE 9 If $f(x, y) = x \cos y + ye^x$, find the second-order derivatives

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2}, \quad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y\, \partial x}, \quad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y^2}, \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x\, \partial y}.$$

Solution The first step is to calculate both first partial derivatives.

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x}(x \cos y + ye^x) = \cos y + ye^x$$

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial}{\partial y}(x \cos y + ye^x) = -x \sin y + e^x$$

Now we find both partial derivatives of each first partial:

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y\, \partial x} = \frac{\partial}{\partial y}\left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\right) = -\sin y + e^x \qquad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x\, \partial y} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\right) = -\sin y + e^x$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x}\left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\right) = ye^x. \qquad \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y^2} = \frac{\partial}{\partial y}\left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\right) = -x \cos y.$$

The Mixed Derivative Theorem

THEOREM 2—The Mixed Derivative Theorem
If $f(x, y)$ and its partial derivatives f_x, f_y, f_{xy}, and f_{yx} are defined throughout an open region containing a point (a, b) and are all continuous at (a, b), then

$$f_{xy}(a, b) = f_{yx}(a, b).$$

EXAMPLE 10 Find $\dfrac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x\,\partial y}$ if

$$w = xy + \frac{e^y}{y^2 + 1}.$$

Solution The symbol $\partial^2 w/\partial x\,\partial y$ tells us to differentiate first with respect to y and then with respect to x. However, if we interchange the order of differentiation and differentiate first with respect to x we get the answer more quickly. In two steps,

$$\frac{\partial w}{\partial x} = y \qquad \text{and} \qquad \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y\,\partial x} = 1.$$

If we differentiate first with respect to y, we obtain $\partial^2 w/\partial x\,\partial y = 1$ as well. We can differentiate in either order because the conditions of Theorem 2 hold for w at all points (x_0, y_0).

Partial Derivatives of Still Higher Order

Although we will deal mostly with first- and second-order partial derivatives, because these appear the most frequently in applications, there is no theoretical limit to how many times we can differentiate a function as long as the derivatives involved exist. Thus, we get third- and fourth-order derivatives denoted by symbols like

$$\frac{\partial^3 f}{\partial x\,\partial y^2} = f_{yyx},$$

$$\frac{\partial^4 f}{\partial x^2\,\partial y^2} = f_{yyxx},$$

and so on. As with second-order derivatives, the order of differentiation is immaterial as long as all the derivatives through the order in question are continuous.

EXAMPLE 11 Find f_{yxyz} if $f(x, y, z) = 1 - 2xy^2z + x^2y$.

Solution We first differentiate with respect to the variable y, then x, then y again, and finally with respect to z:

$$\begin{aligned} f_y &= -4xyz + x^2 \\ f_{yx} &= -4yz + 2x \\ f_{yxy} &= -4z \\ f_{yxyz} &= -4. \end{aligned}$$

Differentiability

The concept of *differentiability* for functions of several variables is more complicated than for single-variable functions because a point in the domain can be approached along more than one path. In defining the partial derivatives for a function of two variables, we intersected the surface of the graph with vertical planes parallel to the xz- and yz-planes, creating a curve on each plane, called a *trace*. The partial derivatives were seen as the slopes of the two tangent lines to these trace curves at the point on the surface corresponding to the point (x_0, y_0) being approached in the domain. (See Figure 14.18.) For a differentiable function, it would seem reasonable to assume that if we were to rotate slightly one of these vertical planes, keeping it vertical but no longer parallel to its coordinate plane, then a smooth trace curve would appear on that plane that would have a tangent line at the point on the surface having a slope differing just slightly from what it was before (when the plane was parallel to its coordinate plane). However, the mere existence of the original partial derivative does not guarantee that result. Just as having a limit in the x- and y-coordinate directions alone does not imply the function itself has a limit at (x_0, y_0), as we saw in Figure 14.21, so is it the case that the existence of both partial derivatives is not enough by itself to ensure derivatives exist for trace curves in other vertical planes. For the existence of differentiability, a property is needed to ensure that no abrupt change occurs in the function resulting from small changes in the independent variables along any path approaching (x_0, y_0), paths along which *both* variables x and y are allowed to change, rather than just one of them at a time.

DEFINITION A function $z = f(x, y)$ is **differentiable at** (x_0, y_0) if $f_x(x_0, y_0)$ and $f_y(x_0, y_0)$ exist and $\Delta z = f(x_0 + \Delta x, y_0 + \Delta y) - f(x_0, y_0)$ satisfies an equation of the form

$$\Delta z = f_x(x_0, y_0)\Delta x + f_y(x_0, y_0)\Delta y + \varepsilon_1 \Delta x + \varepsilon_2 \Delta y$$

in which each of $\varepsilon_1, \varepsilon_2 \to 0$ as both $\Delta x, \Delta y \to 0$. We call f **differentiable** if it is differentiable at every point in its domain, and say that its graph is a **smooth surface**.

THEOREM 3—The Increment Theorem for Functions of Two Variables
Suppose that the first partial derivatives of $f(x, y)$ are defined throughout an open region R containing the point (x_0, y_0) and that f_x and f_y are continuous at (x_0, y_0). Then the change

$$\Delta z = f(x_0 + \Delta x, y_0 + \Delta y) - f(x_0, y_0)$$

in the value of f that results from moving from (x_0, y_0) to another point $(x_0 + \Delta x, y_0 + \Delta y)$ in R satisfies an equation of the form

$$\Delta z = f_x(x_0, y_0)\Delta x + f_y(x_0, y_0)\Delta y + \varepsilon_1 \Delta x + \varepsilon_2 \Delta y$$

in which each of $\varepsilon_1, \varepsilon_2 \to 0$ as both $\Delta x, \Delta y \to 0$.

Note: Functions with continuous first partial derivatives are differentiable. They are closely approximated locally by a linear function.

Corollary of Theorem 3

If the partial derivatives f_x and f_y of a function $f(x, y)$ are continuous throughout an open region R, then f is differentiable at every point of R.

THEOREM 4—Differentiability Implies Continuity

If a function $f(x, y)$ is differentiable at (x_0, y_0), then f is continuous at (x_0, y_0).

If $z = f(x, y)$ is differentiable, then the definition of differentiability ensures that $\Delta z = f(x_0 + \Delta x, y_0 + \Delta y) - f(x_0, y_0)$ approaches 0 as Δx and Δy approach 0. This tells us that a function of two variables is continuous at every point where it is differentiable.

<u>Application of partial derivative idea to some systems in the real world and their mathematical representations :</u>

The **three-dimensional Laplace equation**

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial z^2} = 0$$

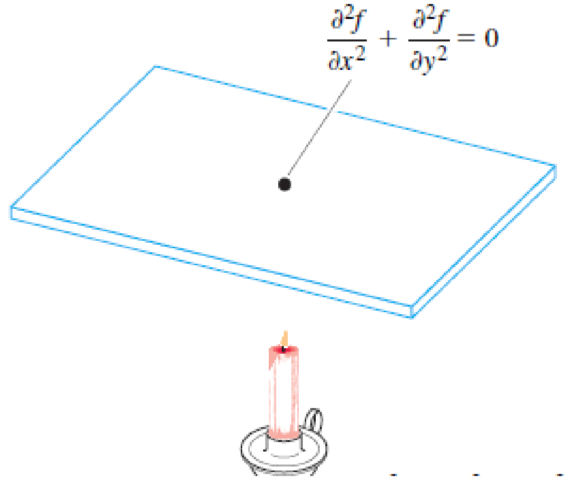
is satisfied by steady-state temperature distributions $T = f(x, y, z)$ in space, by gravitational potentials, and by electrostatic potentials. The **two-dimensional Laplace equation**

$$\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y^2} = 0,$$

obtained by dropping the $\partial^2 f/\partial z^2$ term from the previous equation, describes potentials and steady-state temperature distributions in a plane (see the accompanying figure). The plane (a) may be treated as a thin slice of the solid (b) perpendicular to the z-axis.

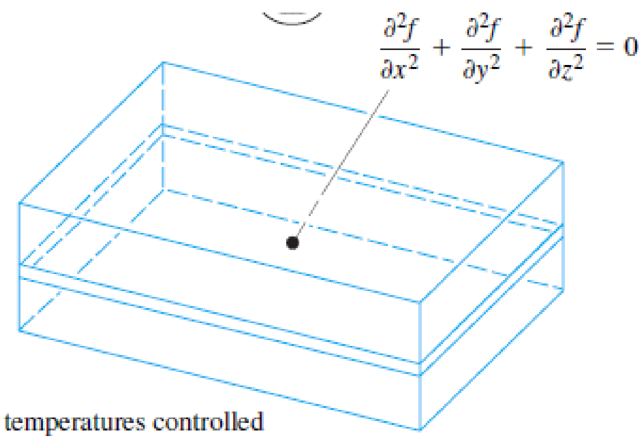
When thickness is nearly ineffective (a):

(a)



When thickness is does matter :

(b)



Boundary temperatures controlled

Example equations which fall into the above kind.

83. $f(x, y, z) = x^2 + y^2 - 2z^2$

84. $f(x, y, z) = 2z^3 - 3(x^2 + y^2)z$

85. $f(x, y) = e^{-2y} \cos 2x$

86. $f(x, y) = \ln \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$

87. $f(x, y) = 3x + 2y - 4$

88. $f(x, y) = \tan^{-1} \frac{x}{y}$

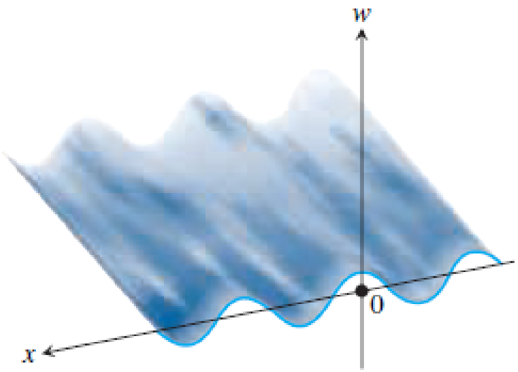
89. $f(x, y, z) = (x^2 + y^2 + z^2)^{-1/2}$

90. $f(x, y, z) = e^{3x+4y} \cos 5z$

The wave equation If we stand on an ocean shore and take a snapshot of the waves, the picture shows a regular pattern of peaks and valleys in an instant of time. We see periodic vertical motion in space, with respect to distance. If we stand in the water, we can feel the rise and fall of the water as the waves go by. We see periodic vertical motion in time. In physics, this beautiful symmetry is expressed by the **one-dimensional wave equation**

$$\frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2},$$

where w is the wave height, x is the distance variable, t is the time variable, and c is the velocity with which the waves are propagated.



In our example, x is the distance across the ocean's surface, but in other applications, x might be the distance along a vibrating string, distance through air (sound waves), or distance through space (light waves). The number c varies with the medium and type of wave.

Example equations which mimic the real world wave patterns:

91. $w = \sin(x + ct)$ **92.** $w = \cos(2x + 2ct)$

93. $w = \sin(x + ct) + \cos(2x + 2ct)$

94. $w = \ln(2x + 2ct)$ **95.** $w = \tan(2x - 2ct)$

96. $w = 5\cos(3x + 3ct) + e^{x+ct}$

97. $w = f(u)$, where f is a differentiable function of u, and $u = a(x + ct)$, where a is a constant

100. The heat equation An important partial differential equation that describes the distribution of heat in a region at time t can be represented by the *one-dimensional heat equation*

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2}.$$

Show that $u(x, t) = \sin(\alpha x) \cdot e^{-\beta t}$ satisfies the heat equation for constants α and β. What is the relationship between α and β for this function to be a solution?

103. The Korteweg-deVries equation

This nonlinear differential equation, which describes wave motion on shallow water surfaces, is given by

$$4u_t + u_{xxx} + 12u\,u_x = 0.$$

Show that $u(x, t) = \operatorname{sech}^2(x - t)$ satisfies the Kortweg-deVries equation.

14.4 The Chain Rule

The Chain Rule for functions of a single variable studied in Section 3.6 says that when $w = f(x)$ is a differentiable function of x and $x = g(t)$ is a differentiable function of t, w is a differentiable function of t and dw/dt can be calculated by the formula

$$\frac{dw}{dt} = \frac{dw}{dx}\frac{dx}{dt}.$$

For this composite function $w(t) = f(g(t))$, we can think of t as the independent variable and $x = g(t)$ as the "intermediate variable," because t determines the value of x

Functions of Two Variables

THEOREM 5—Chain Rule For Functions of One Independent Variable and Two Intermediate Variables
If $w = f(x, y)$ is differentiable and if $x = x(t)$, $y = y(t)$ are differentiable functions of t, then the composition $w = f(x(t), y(t))$ is a differentiable function of t and

$$\frac{dw}{dt} = f_x(x(t), y(t))\,x'(t) + f_y(x(t), y(t))\,y'(t),$$

or

$$\frac{dw}{dt} = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\frac{dx}{dt} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\frac{dy}{dt}.$$

$$\frac{dw}{dt} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{dx}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{dy}{dt}.$$

EXAMPLE 1 Use the Chain Rule to find the derivative of

$$w = xy$$

with respect to t along the path $x = \cos t$, $y = \sin t$. What is the derivative's value at $t = \pi/2$?

Solution We apply the Chain Rule to find dw/dt as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{dw}{dt} &= \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{dx}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{dy}{dt} \\
&= \frac{\partial(xy)}{\partial x}\cdot\frac{d}{dt}(\cos t) + \frac{\partial(xy)}{\partial y}\cdot\frac{d}{dt}(\sin t) \\
&= (y)(-\sin t) + (x)(\cos t) \\
&= (\sin t)(-\sin t) + (\cos t)(\cos t) \\
&= -\sin^2 t + \cos^2 t \\
&= \cos 2t.
\end{aligned}$$

In this example, we can check the result with a more direct calculation. As a function of t,

$$w = xy = \cos t \sin t = \frac{1}{2}\sin 2t,$$

so

$$\frac{dw}{dt} = \frac{d}{dt}\left(\frac{1}{2}\sin 2t\right) = \frac{1}{2}(2\cos 2t) = \cos 2t.$$

In either case, at the given value of t,

$$\left.\frac{dw}{dt}\right|_{t=\pi/2} = \cos\left(2\cdot\frac{\pi}{2}\right) = \cos \pi = -1.$$

Functions of Three Variables

THEOREM 6—Chain Rule for Functions of One Independent Variable and Three Intermediate Variables
If $w = f(x, y, z)$ is differentiable and x, y, and z are differentiable functions of t, then w is a differentiable function of t and

$$\frac{dw}{dt} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{dx}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{dy}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}\frac{dz}{dt}.$$

EXAMPLE 2 Find dw/dt if

$$w = xy + z, \qquad x = \cos t, \qquad y = \sin t, \qquad z = t.$$

In this example the values of $w(t)$ are changing along the path of a helix (Section 13.1) as t changes. What is the derivative's value at $t = 0$?

Solution Using the Chain Rule for three intermediate variables, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{dw}{dt} &= \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{dx}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{dy}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}\frac{dz}{dt} \\
&= (y)(-\sin t) + (x)(\cos t) + (1)(1) \\
&= (\sin t)(-\sin t) + (\cos t)(\cos t) + 1 \qquad \text{Substitute for intermediate variables.} \\
&= -\sin^2 t + \cos^2 t + 1 = 1 + \cos 2t,
\end{aligned}$$

so

$$\left.\frac{dw}{dt}\right|_{t=0} = 1 + \cos(0) = 2.$$

For a physical interpretation of change along a curve, think of an object whose position is changing with time t. If $w = T(x, y, z)$ is the temperature at each point (x, y, z) along a curve C with parametric equations $x = x(t)$, $y = y(t)$, and $z = z(t)$, then the composite function $w = T(x(t), y(t), z(t))$ represents the temperature relative to t along the curve. The derivative dw/dt is then the instantaneous rate of change of temperature due to the motion along the curve

Functions Defined on Surfaces

If we are interested in the temperature $w = f(x, y, z)$ at points (x, y, z) on the earth's surface, we might prefer to think of x, y, and z as functions of the variables r and s that give the points' longitudes and latitudes. If $x = g(r, s)$, $y = h(r, s)$, and $z = k(r, s)$, we could then express the temperature as a function of r and s with the composite function

$$w = f(g(r, s), h(r, s), k(r, s)).$$

THEOREM 7—Chain Rule for Two Independent Variables and Three Intermediate Variables
Suppose that $w = f(x, y, z)$, $x = g(r, s)$, $y = h(r, s)$, and $z = k(r, s)$. If all four functions are differentiable, then w has partial derivatives with respect to r and s, given by the formulas

$$\frac{\partial w}{\partial r} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial r}$$

$$\frac{\partial w}{\partial s} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial s} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial s} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial s}.$$

EXAMPLE 3 Express $\partial w/\partial r$ and $\partial w/\partial s$ in terms of r and s if

$$w = x + 2y + z^2, \qquad x = \frac{r}{s}, \qquad y = r^2 + \ln s, \qquad z = 2r.$$

Solution Using the formulas in Theorem 7, we find

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial w}{\partial r} &= \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial r} \\
&= (1)\left(\frac{1}{s}\right) + (2)(2r) + (2z)(2) \\
&= \frac{1}{s} + 4r + (4r)(2) = \frac{1}{s} + 12r \qquad \text{Substitute for intermediate variable } z.
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial w}{\partial s} &= \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial s} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial s} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial s} \\
&= (1)\left(-\frac{r}{s^2}\right) + (2)\left(\frac{1}{s}\right) + (2z)(0) = \frac{2}{s} - \frac{r}{s^2}.
\end{aligned}$$

■

Two variable case: when w depends on x and y only :

If $w = f(x, y)$, $x = g(r, s)$, and $y = h(r, s)$, then

$$\frac{\partial w}{\partial r} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial r} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\partial w}{\partial s} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial s} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial s}.$$

EXAMPLE 4 Express $\partial w/\partial r$ and $\partial w/\partial s$ in terms of r and s if

$$w = x^2 + y^2, \qquad x = r - s, \qquad y = r + s.$$

Solution The preceding discussion gives the following.

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial w}{\partial r} &= \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial r} & \frac{\partial w}{\partial s} &= \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial s} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial s} \\
&= (2x)(1) + (2y)(1) & &= (2x)(-1) + (2y)(1) \\
&= 2(r - s) + 2(r + s) & &= -2(r - s) + 2(r + s) \\
&= 4r & &= 4s
\end{aligned}$$

Substitute for the intermediate variables.

■

Implicit Differentiation:

THEOREM 8—A Formula for Implicit Differentiation
Suppose that $F(x, y)$ is differentiable and that the equation $F(x, y) = 0$ defines y as a differentiable function of x. Then at any point where $F_y \neq 0$,

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = -\frac{F_x}{F_y}. \tag{1}$$

The two-variable Chain Rule in Theorem 5 leads to a formula that takes some of the algebra out of implicit differentiation. Suppose that

1. The function $F(x, y)$ is differentiable and
2. The equation $F(x, y) = 0$ defines y implicitly as a differentiable function of x, say $y = h(x)$.

Since $w = F(x, y) = 0$, the derivative dw/dx must be zero. Computing the derivative from the Chain Rule (dependency diagram in Figure 14.25), we find

$$\begin{aligned} 0 = \frac{dw}{dx} &= F_x \frac{dx}{dx} + F_y \frac{dy}{dx} \qquad \text{Theorem 5 with } t = x \text{ and } f = F \\ &= F_x \cdot 1 + F_y \cdot \frac{dy}{dx}. \end{aligned}$$

If $F_y = \partial w/\partial y \neq 0$, we can solve this equation for dy/dx to get

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = -\frac{F_x}{F_y}.$$

EXAMPLE 5 Use Theorem 8 to find dy/dx if $y^2 - x^2 - \sin xy = 0$.

Solution Take $F(x, y) = y^2 - x^2 - \sin xy$. Then

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = -\frac{F_x}{F_y} = -\frac{-2x - y\cos xy}{2y - x\cos xy} = \frac{2x + y\cos xy}{2y - x\cos xy}.$$

This calculation is significantly shorter than a single-variable calculation using implicit differentiation. ■

When F involves more than two variables :

The result in Theorem 8 is easily extended to three variables. Suppose that the equation $F(x, y, z) = 0$ defines the variable z implicitly as a function $z = f(x, y)$. Then for all (x, y) in the domain of f, we have $F(x, y, f(x, y)) = 0$. Assuming that F and f are differentiable functions, we can use the Chain Rule to differentiate the equation $F(x, y, z) = 0$ with respect to the independent variable x:

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \frac{\partial F}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial F}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial F}{\partial z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} \\ &= F_x \cdot 1 + F_y \cdot 0 + F_z \cdot \frac{\partial z}{\partial x}, \end{aligned}$$

y is constant when differentiating with respect to x.

so

$$F_x + F_z \frac{\partial z}{\partial x} = 0.$$

A similar calculation for differentiating with respect to the independent variable y gives

$$F_y + F_z \frac{\partial z}{\partial y} = 0.$$

Whenever $F_z \neq 0$, we can solve these last two equations for the partial derivatives of $z = f(x, y)$ to obtain

$$\boxed{\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} = -\frac{F_x}{F_z} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\partial z}{\partial y} = -\frac{F_y}{F_z}. \qquad (2)}$$

EXAMPLE 6 Find $\frac{\partial z}{\partial x}$ and $\frac{\partial z}{\partial y}$ at $(0, 0, 0)$ if $x^3 + z^2 + ye^{xz} + z\cos y = 0$.

Solution Let $F(x, y, z) = x^3 + z^2 + ye^{xz} + z\cos y$. Then

$$F_x = 3x^2 + zye^{xz}, \qquad F_y = e^{xz} - z\sin y, \qquad \text{and} \qquad F_z = 2z + xye^{xz} + \cos y.$$

Since $F(0, 0, 0) = 0$, $F_z(0, 0, 0) = 1 \neq 0$, and all first partial derivatives are continuous, the Implicit Function Theorem says that $F(x, y, z) = 0$ defines z as a differentiable function of x and y near the point $(0, 0, 0)$. From Equations (2),

$$\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} = -\frac{F_x}{F_z} = -\frac{3x^2 + zye^{xz}}{2z + xye^{xz} + \cos y} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\partial z}{\partial y} = -\frac{F_y}{F_z} = -\frac{e^{xz} - z\sin y}{2z + xye^{xz} + \cos y}.$$

At $(0, 0, 0)$ we find

$$\frac{\partial z}{\partial x} = -\frac{0}{1} = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\partial z}{\partial y} = -\frac{1}{1} = -1. \qquad \blacksquare$$

Functions of Many Variables

In general, suppose that $w = f(x, y, \ldots, v)$ is a differentiable function of the intermediate variables $x, y, \ldots, v$ (a finite set) and the $x, y, \ldots, v$ are differentiable functions of the independent variables $p, q, \ldots, t$ (another finite set). Then w is a differentiable function of the variables p through t, and the partial derivatives of w with respect to these variables are given by equations of the form

$$\frac{\partial w}{\partial p} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial p} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial p} + \cdots + \frac{\partial w}{\partial v}\frac{\partial v}{\partial p}.$$

The other equations are obtained by replacing p by $q, \ldots, t$, one at a time.

One way to remember this equation is to think of the right-hand side as the dot product of two vectors with components

$$\underbrace{\left(\frac{\partial w}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}, \ldots, \frac{\partial w}{\partial v}\right)}_{\substack{\text{Derivatives of } w \text{ with} \\ \text{respect to the} \\ \text{intermediate variables}}} \quad \text{and} \quad \underbrace{\left(\frac{\partial x}{\partial p}, \frac{\partial y}{\partial p}, \ldots, \frac{\partial v}{\partial p}\right)}_{\substack{\text{Derivatives of the intermediate} \\ \text{variables with respect to the} \\ \text{selected independent variable}}}.$$

Ponder: **Partial Derivative in p-axis=(Gradient) .(Tangent in p-axis)**

14.5 Directional Derivatives and Gradient Vectors

Directional Derivatives in the Plane

DEFINITION **The derivative of f at $P_0(x_0, y_0)$ in the direction of the unit vector $\mathbf{u} = u_1\mathbf{i} + u_2\mathbf{j}$** is the number

$$\left(\frac{df}{ds}\right)_{\mathbf{u}, P_0} = \lim_{s \to 0} \frac{f(x_0 + su_1, y_0 + su_2) - f(x_0, y_0)}{s}, \qquad (1)$$

provided the limit exists.

The **directional derivative** defined by Equation (1) is also denoted by

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f(P_0) \qquad \text{or} \qquad D_{\mathbf{u}}f\big|_{P_0}$$

"The derivative of f in the direction of $\mathbf{u}$, evaluated at P_0"

EXAMPLE 1 Using the definition, find the derivative of

$$f(x, y) = x^2 + xy$$

at $P_0(1, 2)$ in the direction of the unit vector $\mathbf{u} = \left(1/\sqrt{2}\right)\mathbf{i} + \left(1/\sqrt{2}\right)\mathbf{j}$.

Solution Applying the definition in Equation (1), we obtain

$$\left(\frac{df}{ds}\right)_{\mathbf{u}, P_0} = \lim_{s \to 0} \frac{f(x_0 + su_1, y_0 + su_2) - f(x_0, y_0)}{s} \qquad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

$$= \lim_{s \to 0} \frac{f\left(1 + s \cdot \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}, 2 + s \cdot \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\right) - f(1, 2)}{s} \qquad \text{Substitute.}$$

$$= \lim_{s \to 0} \frac{\left(1 + \frac{s}{\sqrt{2}}\right)^2 + \left(1 + \frac{s}{\sqrt{2}}\right)\left(2 + \frac{s}{\sqrt{2}}\right) - (1^2 + 1 \cdot 2)}{s}$$

$$= \lim_{s \to 0} \frac{\left(1 + \frac{2s}{\sqrt{2}} + \frac{s^2}{2}\right) + \left(2 + \frac{3s}{\sqrt{2}} + \frac{s^2}{2}\right) - 3}{s}$$

$$= \lim_{s \to 0} \frac{\frac{5s}{\sqrt{2}} + s^2}{s} = \lim_{s \to 0} \left(\frac{5}{\sqrt{2}} + s\right) = \frac{5}{\sqrt{2}}.$$

The rate of change of $f(x, y) = x^2 + xy$ at $P_0(1, 2)$ in the direction $\mathbf{u}$ is $5/\sqrt{2}$. ■

Interpretation of the Directional Derivative

The equation $z = f(x, y)$ represents a surface S in space. If $z_0 = f(x_0, y_0)$, then the point $P(x_0, y_0, z_0)$ lies on S. The vertical plane that passes through P and $P_0(x_0, y_0)$ parallel to $\mathbf{u}$ intersects S in a curve C (Figure 14.28). The rate of change of f in the direction of $\mathbf{u}$ is the slope of the tangent to C at P in the right-handed system formed by the vectors $\mathbf{u}$ and $\mathbf{k}$.

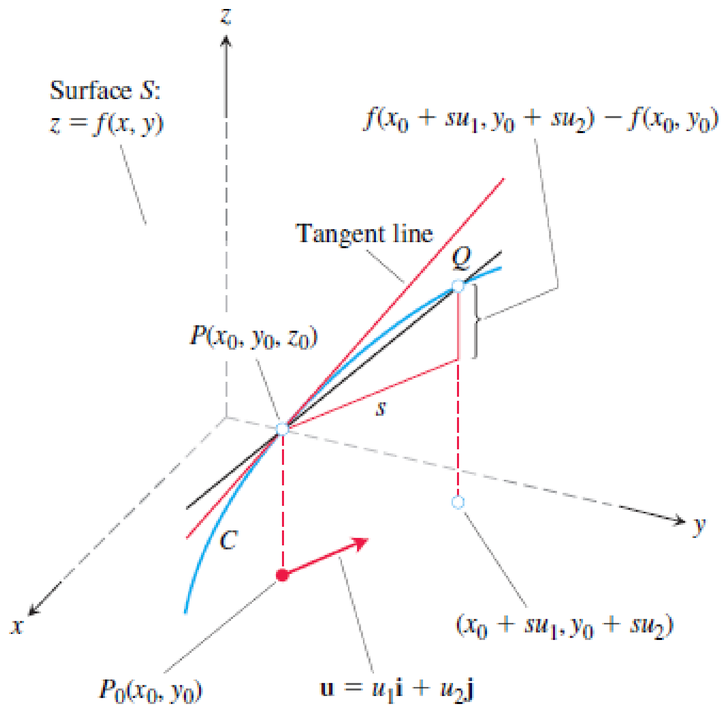


FIGURE 14.28 The slope of the trace curve C at P_0 is $\lim_{Q \to P}$ slope (PQ); this is the directional derivative

$$\left(\frac{df}{ds}\right)_{\mathbf{u}, P_0} = D_{\mathbf{u}} f\,\big|_{P_0}.$$

Calculation and Gradients

We now develop an efficient formula to calculate the directional derivative for a differentiable function f. We begin with the line

$$x = x_0 + su_1, \qquad y = y_0 + su_2, \tag{2}$$

through $P_0(x_0, y_0)$, parametrized with the arc length parameter s increasing in the direction of the unit vector $\mathbf{u} = u_1\mathbf{i} + u_2\mathbf{j}$. Then by the Chain Rule we find

$$\begin{aligned}
\left(\frac{df}{ds}\right)_{\mathbf{u},P_0} &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\bigg|_{P_0}\frac{dx}{ds} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\bigg|_{P_0}\frac{dy}{ds} && \text{Chain Rule for differentiable } f \\
&= \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\bigg|_{P_0} u_1 + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\bigg|_{P_0} u_2 && \text{From Eqs. (2), } dx/ds = u_1 \text{ and } dy/ds = u_2 \\
&= \underbrace{\left[\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\bigg|_{P_0}\mathbf{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\bigg|_{P_0}\mathbf{j}\right]}_{\text{Gradient of } f \text{ at } P_0} \cdot \underbrace{\left[u_1\mathbf{i} + u_2\mathbf{j}\right]}_{\text{Direction } \mathbf{u}}. && (3)
\end{aligned}$$

Equation (3) says that the derivative of a differentiable function f in the direction of $\mathbf{u}$ at P_0 is the dot product of $\mathbf{u}$ with a special vector, which we now define.

DEFINITION The **gradient vector** (or **gradient**) of $f(x, y)$ is the vector

$$\nabla f = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\mathbf{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\mathbf{j}.$$

The value of the gradient vector obtained by evaluating the partial derivatives at a point $P_0(x_0, y_0)$ is written

$$\nabla f|_{P_0} \qquad \text{or} \qquad \nabla f(x_0, y_0).$$

THEOREM 9—The Directional Derivative Is a Dot Product
If $f(x, y)$ is differentiable in an open region containing $P_0(x_0, y_0)$, then

$$\left(\frac{df}{ds}\right)_{\mathbf{u},P_0} = \nabla f|_{P_0} \cdot \mathbf{u}, \tag{4}$$

the dot product of the gradient ∇f at P_0 with the vector $\mathbf{u}$. In brief, $D_{\mathbf{u}}f = \nabla f \cdot \mathbf{u}$.

The notation ∇f is read "grad f" as well as "gradient of f" and "del f." The symbol ∇ by itself is read "del." Another notation for the gradient is grad f. Using the gradient notation, we restate Equation (3) as a theorem.

Example : Visualizing the Gradient through Level curves :

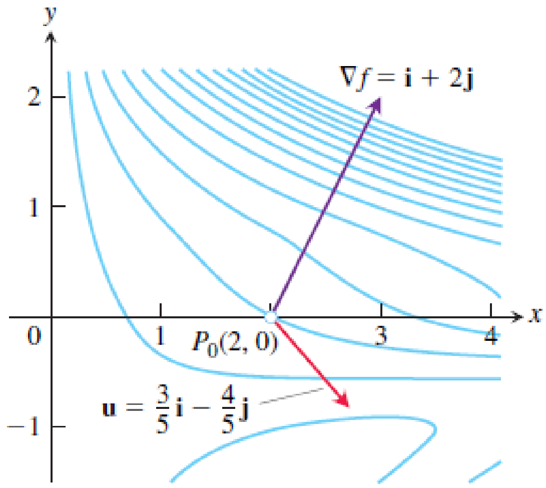


FIGURE 14.29 Picture ∇f as a vector in the domain of f. The figure shows a number of level curves of f. The rate at which f changes at (2, 0) in the direction $\mathbf{u}$ is $\nabla f \cdot \mathbf{u} = -1$, which is the component of ∇f in the direction of unit vector $\mathbf{u}$ (Example 2).

EXAMPLE 2 Find the derivative of $f(x, y) = xe^y + \cos(xy)$ at the point (2, 0) in the direction of $\mathbf{v} = 3\mathbf{i} - 4\mathbf{j}$.

Solution Recall that the direction of a vector $\mathbf{v}$ is the unit vector obtained by dividing $\mathbf{v}$ by its length:

$$\mathbf{u} = \frac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|} = \frac{\mathbf{v}}{5} = \frac{3}{5}\mathbf{i} - \frac{4}{5}\mathbf{j}.$$

The partial derivatives of f are everywhere continuous and at (2, 0) are given by

$$f_x(2, 0) = (e^y - y\sin(xy))\Big|_{(2,0)} = e^0 - 0 = 1$$

$$f_y(2, 0) = (xe^y - x\sin(xy))\Big|_{(2,0)} = 2e^0 - 2\cdot 0 = 2.$$

The gradient of f at $(2, 0)$ is

$$\nabla f|_{(2,0)} = f_x(2, 0)\mathbf{i} + f_y(2, 0)\mathbf{j} = \mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j}$$

(Figure 14.29). The derivative of f at $(2, 0)$ in the direction of $\mathbf{v}$ is therefore

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f|_{(2,0)} = \nabla f|_{(2,0)} \cdot \mathbf{u} \qquad \text{Eq. (4) with the } D_{\mathbf{u}}f|_{P_0} \text{ notation}$$

$$= (\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j}) \cdot \left(\frac{3}{5}\mathbf{i} - \frac{4}{5}\mathbf{j}\right) = \frac{3}{5} - \frac{8}{5} = -1.$$

Additional details on Directional derivative for your understanding:

Properties of the Directional Derivative $D_{\mathbf{u}}f = \nabla f \cdot \mathbf{u} = |\nabla f| \cos\theta$

Evaluating the dot product in the brief version of Equation (4) gives

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f = \nabla f \cdot \mathbf{u} = |\nabla f||\mathbf{u}| \cos\theta = |\nabla f| \cos\theta,$$

where θ is the angle between the vectors $\mathbf{u}$ and ∇f, and reveals the following properties.

1. The function f increases most rapidly when $\cos\theta = 1$, which means that $\theta = 0$ and $\mathbf{u}$ is the direction of ∇f. That is, at each point P in its domain, f increases most rapidly in the direction of the gradient vector ∇f at P. The derivative in this direction is

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f = |\nabla f| \cos(0) = |\nabla f|.$$

2. Similarly, f decreases most rapidly in the direction of $-\nabla f$. The derivative in this direction is $D_{\mathbf{u}}f = |\nabla f| \cos(\pi) = -|\nabla f|$.
3. Any direction $\mathbf{u}$ orthogonal to a gradient $\nabla f \neq 0$ is a direction of zero change in f because θ then equals $\pi/2$ and

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f = |\nabla f| \cos(\pi/2) = |\nabla f| \cdot 0 = 0.$$

EXAMPLE 3 Find the directions in which $f(x, y) = (x^2/2) + (y^2/2)$

(a) increases most rapidly at the point $(1, 1)$, and

(b) decreases most rapidly at $(1, 1)$.

(c) What are the directions of zero change in f at $(1, 1)$?

Solution

(a) The function increases most rapidly in the direction of ∇f at (1, 1). The gradient there is

$$\nabla f|_{(1,1)} = (x\mathbf{i} + y\mathbf{j})\Big|_{(1,1)} = \mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j}.$$

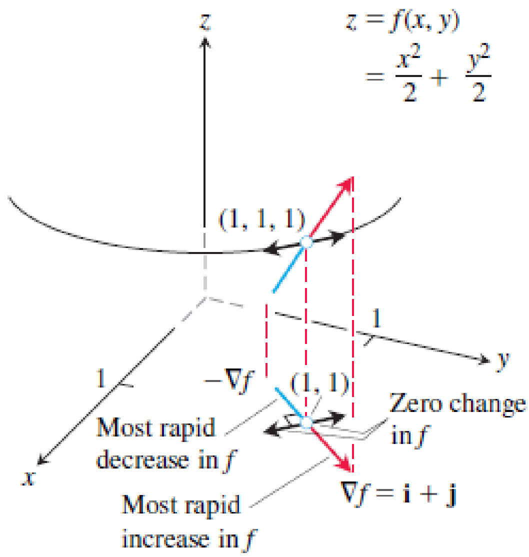


FIGURE 14.30 The direction in which $f(x, y)$ increases most rapidly at (1, 1) is the direction of $\nabla f|_{(1,1)} = \mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j}$. It corresponds to the direction of steepest ascent on the surface at (1, 1, 1) (Example 3).

Its direction is

$$\mathbf{u} = \frac{\mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j}}{|\mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j}|} = \frac{\mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j}}{\sqrt{(1)^2 + (1)^2}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{i} + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{j}.$$

(b) The function decreases most rapidly in the direction of $-\nabla f$ at (1, 1), which is

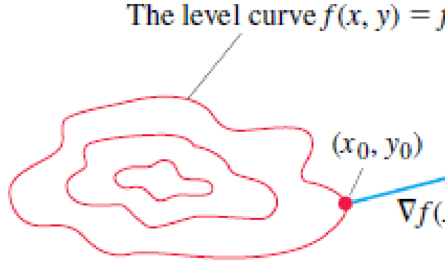
$$-\mathbf{u} = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{i} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{j}.$$

(c) The directions of zero change at (1, 1) are the directions orthogonal to ∇f:

$$\mathbf{n} = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{i} + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{j} \quad \text{and} \quad -\mathbf{n} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{i} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\mathbf{j}.$$

A beautiful property between a level curve and its gradient:

Gradients and Tangents to Level Curves



> At every point (x_0, y_0) in the domain of a differentiable function $f(x, y)$, the gradient of f is normal to the level curve through (x_0, y_0) (Figure 14.31).

Proof:

If a differentiable function $f(x, y)$ has a constant value c along a smooth curve $\mathbf{r} = g(t)\mathbf{i} + h(t)\mathbf{j}$ (making the curve part of a level curve of f), then $f(g(t), h(t)) = c$. Differentiating both sides of this equation with respect to t leads to the equations

$$\frac{d}{dt} f(g(t), h(t)) = \frac{d}{dt}(c)$$

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\frac{dg}{dt} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\frac{dh}{dt} = 0 \qquad \text{Chain Rule} \qquad (5)$$

$$\underbrace{\left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\mathbf{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\mathbf{j}\right)}_{\nabla f} \cdot \underbrace{\left(\frac{dg}{dt}\mathbf{i} + \frac{dh}{dt}\mathbf{j}\right)}_{\frac{d\mathbf{r}}{dt}} = 0.$$

Equation (5) says that ∇f is normal to the tangent vector $d\mathbf{r}/dt$, so it is normal to the curve. This is seen in Figure 14.31, where ∇f is a nonzero vector (it is possible for ∇f to be the zero vector).

Tangent Line to a Level Curve

$$f_x(x_0, y_0)(x - x_0) + f_y(x_0, y_0)(y - y_0) = 0 \tag{6}$$

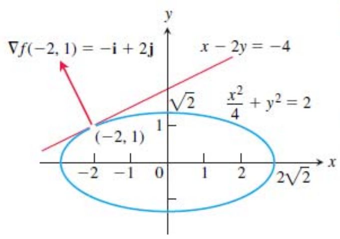


FIGURE 14.32 We can find the tangent to the ellipse $(x^2/4) + y^2 = 2$ by treating the ellipse as a level curve of the function $f(x, y) = (x^2/4) + y^2$ (Example 4).

EXAMPLE 4 Find an equation for the tangent to the ellipse

$$\frac{x^2}{4} + y^2 = 2$$

(Figure 14.32) at the point $(-2, 1)$.

Solution The ellipse is a level curve of the function

$$f(x, y) = \frac{x^2}{4} + y^2.$$

The gradient of f at $(-2, 1)$ is

$$\nabla f|_{(-2,1)} = \left(\frac{x}{2}\mathbf{i} + 2y\mathbf{j}\right)\Bigg|_{(-2,1)} = -\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j}.$$

Because this gradient vector is nonzero, the tangent to the ellipse at $(-2, 1)$ is the line

$$(-1)(x + 2) + (2)(y - 1) = 0 \qquad \text{Eq. (6)}$$
$$x - 2y = -4. \qquad \text{Simplify.}$$

Algebra Rules for Gradients

1. *Sum Rule:* $\nabla(f + g) = \nabla f + \nabla g$
2. *Difference Rule:* $\nabla(f - g) = \nabla f - \nabla g$
3. *Constant Multiple Rule:* $\nabla(kf) = k\nabla f$ (any number k)
4. *Product Rule:* $\nabla(fg) = f\nabla g + g\nabla f$
5. *Quotient Rule:* $\nabla\left(\frac{f}{g}\right) = \frac{g\nabla f - f\nabla g}{g^2}$

Scalar multipliers on left of gradients

EXAMPLE 5 We illustrate two of the rules with

$$f(x, y) = x - y \qquad g(x, y) = 3y$$
$$\nabla f = \mathbf{i} - \mathbf{j} \qquad \nabla g = 3\mathbf{j}.$$

We have

1. $\nabla(f - g) = \nabla(x - 4y) = \mathbf{i} - 4\mathbf{j} = \nabla f - \nabla g$ Rule 2
2. $\nabla(fg) = \nabla(3xy - 3y^2) = 3y\mathbf{i} + (3x - 6y)\mathbf{j}$

   and

   $$f\nabla g + g\nabla f = (x - y)3\mathbf{j} + 3y(\mathbf{i} - \mathbf{j}) \qquad \text{Substitute.}$$
   $$= 3y\mathbf{i} + (3x - 6y)\mathbf{j}. \qquad \text{Simplify.}$$

   We have therefore verified for this example that $\nabla(fg) = f\nabla g + g\nabla f$.

Functions of Three Variables

For a differentiable function $f(x, y, z)$ and a unit vector $\mathbf{u} = u_1\mathbf{i} + u_2\mathbf{j} + u_3\mathbf{k}$ in space, we have

$$\nabla f = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\mathbf{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\mathbf{j} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z}\mathbf{k}$$

and

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f = \nabla f \cdot \mathbf{u} = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}u_1 + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}u_2 + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z}u_3.$$

The directional derivative can once again be written in the form

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f = \nabla f \cdot \mathbf{u} = |\nabla f||\mathbf{u}| \cos\theta = |\nabla f| \cos\theta,$$

so the properties listed earlier for functions of two variables extend to three variables. At any given point, f increases most rapidly in the direction of ∇f and decreases most rapidly in the direction of $-\nabla f$. In any direction orthogonal to ∇f, the derivative is zero.

EXAMPLE 6

(a) Find the derivative of $f(x, y, z) = x^3 - xy^2 - z$ at $P_0(1, 1, 0)$ in the direction of $\mathbf{v} = 2\mathbf{i} - 3\mathbf{j} + 6\mathbf{k}$.

(b) In what directions does f change most rapidly at P_0, and what are the rates of change in these directions?

Solution

(a) The direction of $\mathbf{v}$ is obtained by dividing $\mathbf{v}$ by its length:

$$|\mathbf{v}| = \sqrt{(2)^2 + (-3)^2 + (6)^2} = \sqrt{49} = 7$$

$$\mathbf{u} = \frac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|} = \frac{2}{7}\mathbf{i} - \frac{3}{7}\mathbf{j} + \frac{6}{7}\mathbf{k}.$$

The partial derivatives of f at P_0 are

$$f_x = (3x^2 - y^2)\Big|_{(1,1,0)} = 2, \qquad f_y = -2xy\Big|_{(1,1,0)} = -2, \qquad f_z = -1\Big|_{(1,1,0)} = -1.$$

The gradient of f at P_0 is

$$\nabla f|_{(1,1,0)} = 2\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}.$$

The derivative of f at P_0 in the direction of $\mathbf{v}$ is therefore

$$D_{\mathbf{u}}f\big|_{(1,1,0)} = \nabla f\big|_{(1,1,0)} \cdot \mathbf{u} = (2\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}) \cdot \left(\frac{2}{7}\mathbf{i} - \frac{3}{7}\mathbf{j} + \frac{6}{7}\mathbf{k}\right)$$

$$= \frac{4}{7} + \frac{6}{7} - \frac{6}{7} = \frac{4}{7}.$$

(b) The function increases most rapidly in the direction of $\nabla f = 2\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}$ and decreases most rapidly in the direction of $-\nabla f$. The rates of change in the directions are, respectively,

$$|\nabla f| = \sqrt{(2)^2 + (-2)^2 + (-1)^2} = \sqrt{9} = 3 \qquad \text{and} \qquad -|\nabla f| = -3.$$

The Chain Rule for Paths

If $\mathbf{r}(t) = x(t)\mathbf{i} + y(t)\mathbf{j} + z(t)\mathbf{k}$ is a smooth path C, and $w = f(\mathbf{r}(t))$ is a scalar function evaluated along C, then according to the Chain Rule, Theorem 6 in Section 14.4,

$$\frac{dw}{dt} = \frac{\partial w}{\partial x}\frac{dx}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y}\frac{dy}{dt} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z}\frac{dz}{dt}.$$

The partial derivatives on the right-hand side of the above equation are evaluated along the curve $\mathbf{r}(t)$, and the derivatives of the intermediate variables are evaluated at t. If we express this equation using vector notation, we have

The Derivative Along a Path

$$\frac{d}{dt}f(\mathbf{r}(t)) = \nabla f(\mathbf{r}(t)) \cdot \mathbf{r}'(t). \tag{7}$$

Tangent Planes

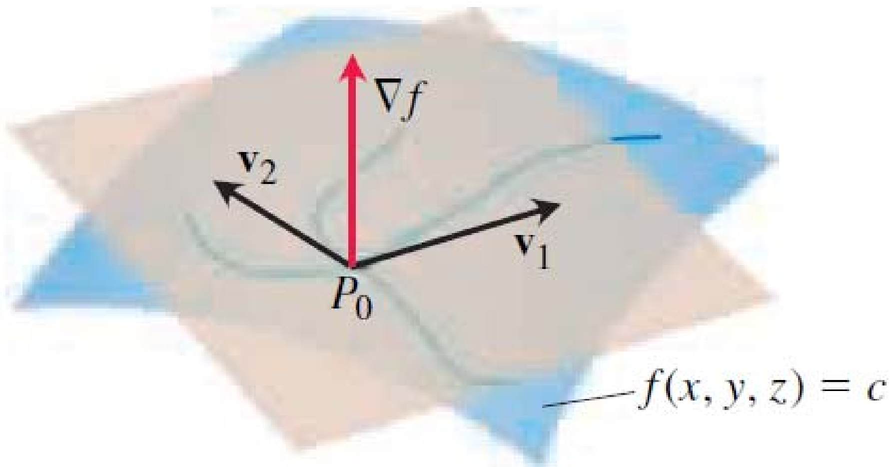


FIGURE 14.33 The gradient ∇f is orthogonal to the velocity vector of every smooth curve in the surface through P_0. The velocity vectors at P_0 therefore lie in a common plane, which we call the tangent plane at P_0.

> **DEFINITIONS** The **tangent plane** to the level surface $f(x, y, z) = c$ of a differentiable function f at a point P_0 where the gradient is not zero is the plane through P_0 normal to $\nabla f|_{P_0}$.
>
> The **normal line** of the surface at P_0 is the line through P_0 parallel to $\nabla f|_{P_0}$.

Tangent Plane to $f(x, y, z) = c$ at $P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$

$$f_x(P_0)(x - x_0) + f_y(P_0)(y - y_0) + f_z(P_0)(z - z_0) = 0 \tag{1}$$

Normal Line to $f(x, y, z) = c$ at $P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$

$$x = x_0 + f_x(P_0)t, \qquad y = y_0 + f_y(P_0)t, \qquad z = z_0 + f_z(P_0)t \tag{2}$$

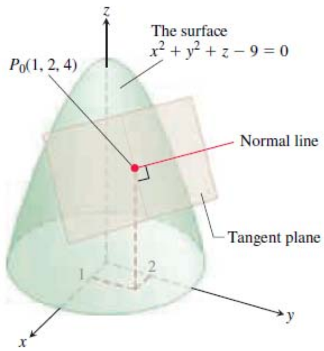


FIGURE 14.34 The tangent plane and normal line to this level surface at P_0

EXAMPLE 1 Find the tangent plane and normal line of the level surface

$$f(x, y, z) = x^2 + y^2 + z - 9 = 0 \qquad \text{A circular paraboloid}$$

at the point $P_0(1, 2, 4)$.

Solution The surface is shown in Figure 14.34.

The tangent plane is the plane through P_0 perpendicular to the gradient of f at P_0. The gradient is

$$\nabla f|_{P_0} = (2x\mathbf{i} + 2y\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k})\Big|_{(1,2,4)} = 2\mathbf{i} + 4\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k}.$$

The tangent plane is therefore the plane

$$2(x - 1) + 4(y - 2) + (z - 4) = 0, \qquad \text{or} \qquad 2x + 4y + z = 14.$$

The line normal to the surface at P_0 is

$$x = 1 + 2t, \qquad y = 2 + 4t, \qquad z = 4 + t.$$

END