Applications of Derivatives

Extreme Values of Functions

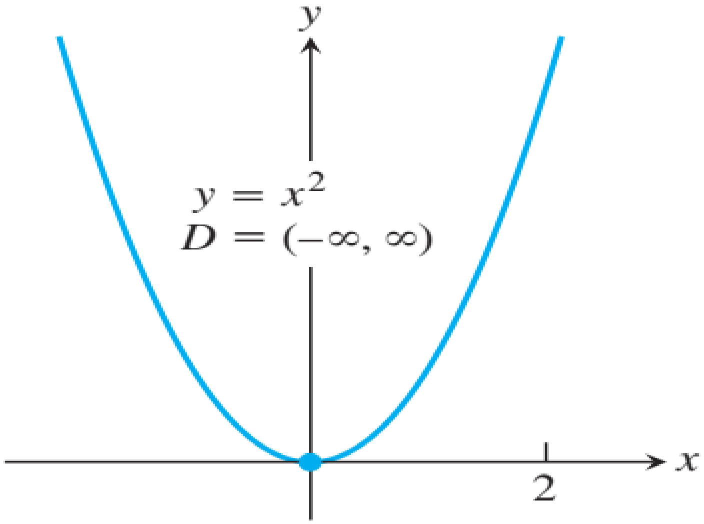
DEFINITIONS Absolute Maximum, Absolute Minimum

Let f be a function with domain D. Then f has an **absolute maximum** value on D at a point c if

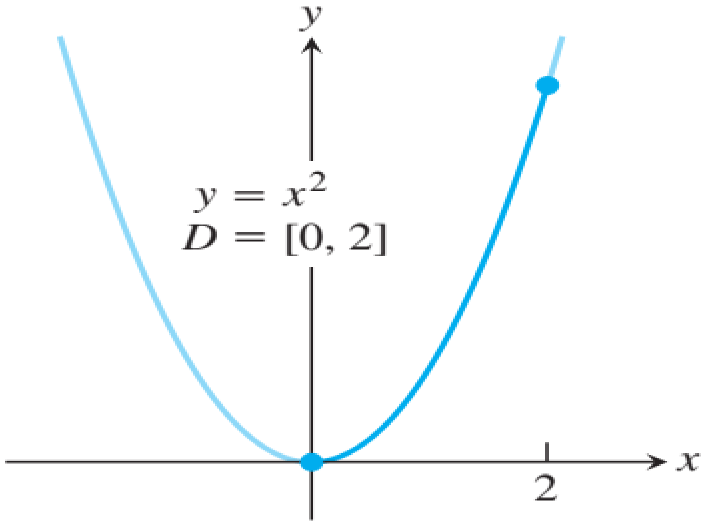
$$f(x) \leq f(c) \qquad \text{for all } x \text{ in } D$$

and an **absolute minimum** value on D at c if

$$f(x) \geq f(c) \qquad \text{for all } x \text{ in } D.$$



(a) abs min only



(b) abs max and min

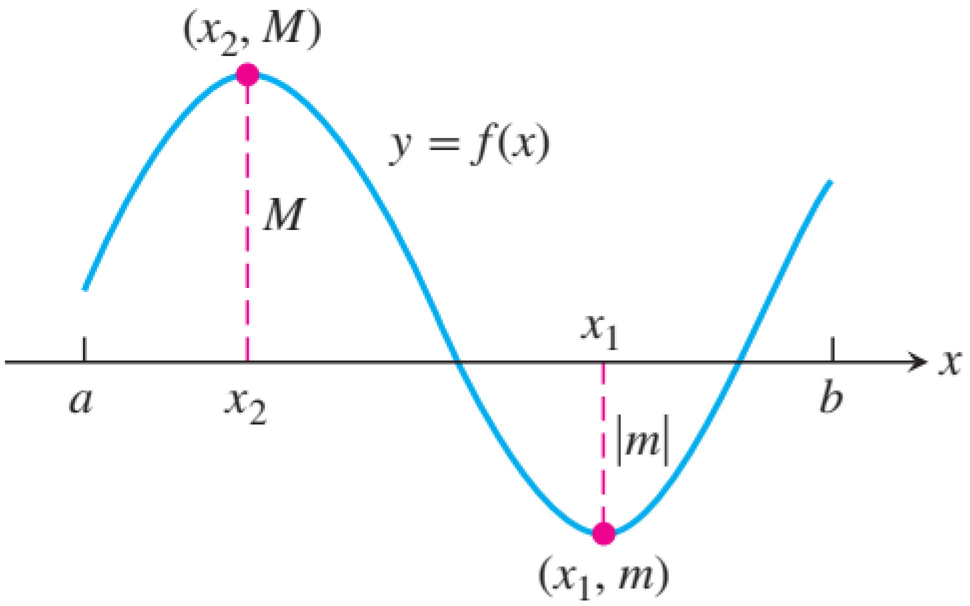
f(x) is greater or equal to f(0) forall x in R.

f(x) is less or equal to f(2) forall x in [0,2]

f(x) is greater or equal to f(0) forall x in [0,2]

THEOREM 1 The Extreme Value Theorem

If f is continuous on a closed interval $[a, b]$, then f attains both an absolute maximum value M and an absolute minimum value m in $[a, b]$. That is, there are numbers x_1 and x_2 in $[a, b]$ with $f(x_1) = m$, $f(x_2) = M$, and $m \leq f(x) \leq M$ for every other x in $[a, b]$ (Figure 4.3).



Maximum and minimum
at interior points

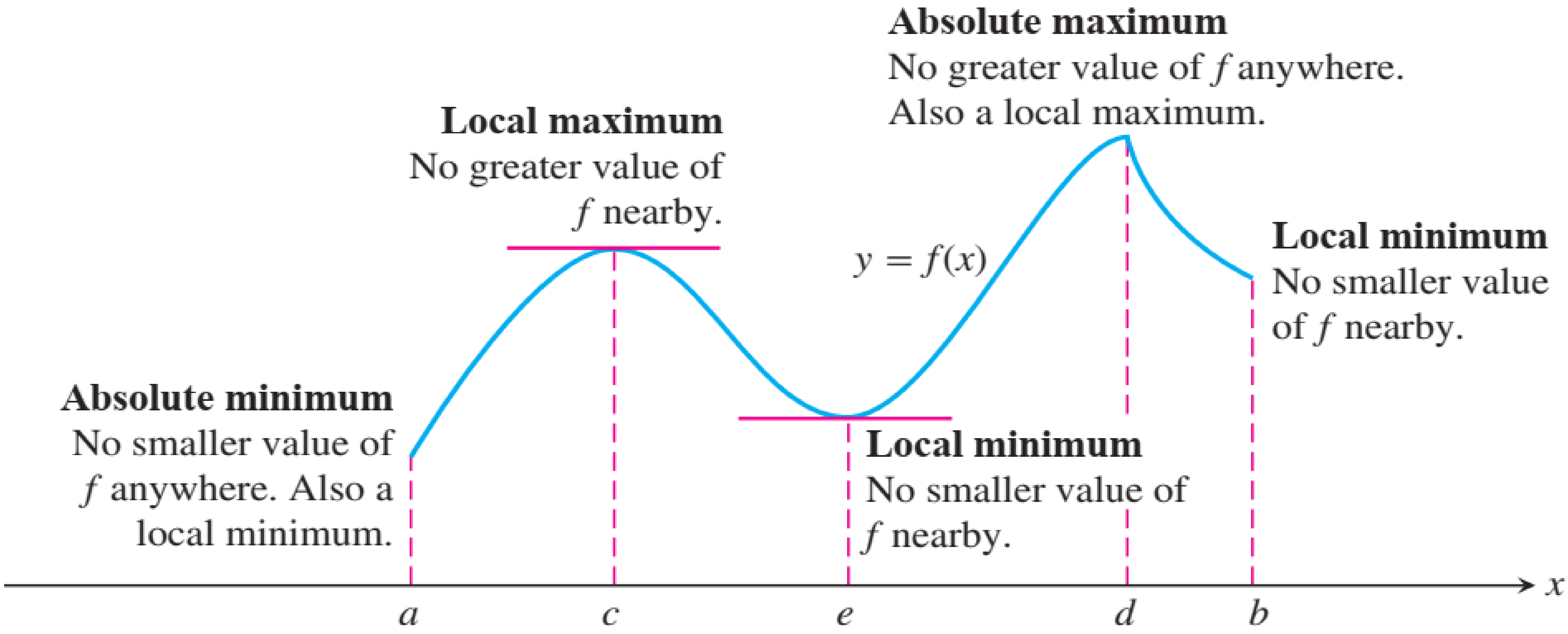
DEFINITIONS Local Maximum, Local Minimum

A function f has a **local maximum** value at an interior point c of its domain if

$$f(x) \leq f(c) \qquad \text{for all } x \text{ in some open interval containing } c.$$

A function f has a **local minimum** value at an interior point c of its domain if

$$f(x) \geq f(c) \qquad \text{for all } x \text{ in some open interval containing } c.$$



THEOREM 2 The First Derivative Theorem for Local Extreme Values

If f has a local maximum or minimum value at an interior point c of its domain, and if f' is defined at c, then

$$f'(c) = 0.$$

DEFINITION Critical Point

An interior point of the domain of a function f where f' is zero or undefined is a **critical point** of f.

How to Find the Absolute Extrema of a Continuous Function f on a Finite Closed Interval

1. Evaluate f at all critical points and endpoints.
2. Take the largest and smallest of these values.

EXAMPLE

Find the absolute maximum and minimum values of $f(x) = x^2$ on $[-2, 1]$.

Solution The function is differentiable over its entire domain, so the only critical point is where $f'(x) = 2x = 0$, namely $x = 0$. We need to check the function's values at $x = 0$ and at the endpoints $x = -2$ and $x = 1$:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Critical point value:} && f(0) = 0 \\ &\text{Endpoint values:} && f(-2) = 4 \\ & && f(1) = 1 \end{aligned}$$

The function has an absolute maximum value of 4 at $x = -2$ and an absolute minimum value of 0 at $x = 0$. ■

EXAMPLE Find the absolute extrema values of $g(t) = 8t - t^4$ on $[-2, 1]$.

Solution The function is differentiable on its entire domain, so the only critical points occur where $g'(t) = 0$. Solving this equation gives

$$8 - 4t^3 = 0 \qquad \text{or} \qquad t = \sqrt[3]{2} > 1,$$

a point not in the given domain. The function's absolute extrema therefore occur at the endpoints, $g(-2) = -32$ (absolute minimum), and $g(1) = 7$ (absolute maximum).

EXAMPLE

Find the absolute maximum and minimum values of $f(x) = x^{2/3}$ on the interval $[-2, 3]$.

Solution We evaluate the function at the critical points and endpoints and take the largest and smallest of the resulting values.

The first derivative

$$f'(x) = \frac{2}{3}x^{-1/3} = \frac{2}{3\sqrt[3]{x}}$$

has no zeros but is undefined at the interior point $x = 0$. The values of f at this one critical point and at the endpoints are

Critical point value: $f(0) = 0$

Absolute Minimum occurs at 0

Endpoint values: $f(-2) = (-2)^{2/3} = \sqrt[3]{4}$

$f(3) = (3)^{2/3} = \sqrt[3]{9}.$

Absolute Maximum

Exercise 4.1 Question # 1-6, 15-18

Find the derivative at each critical point and determine the local extreme values

$$y = x^{2/3}(x + 2)$$

$$y' = x^{2/3}(1) + \tfrac{2}{3}x^{-1/3}(x+2) = \frac{5x+4}{3\sqrt[3]{x}}$$

crit. pt.	derivative	extremum	value
$x = -\frac{4}{5}$	0	local max	$\frac{12}{25}10^{1/3} = 1.034$
$x = 0$	undefined	local min	0

Local extreme values exist at critical points.

The Mean Value Theorem

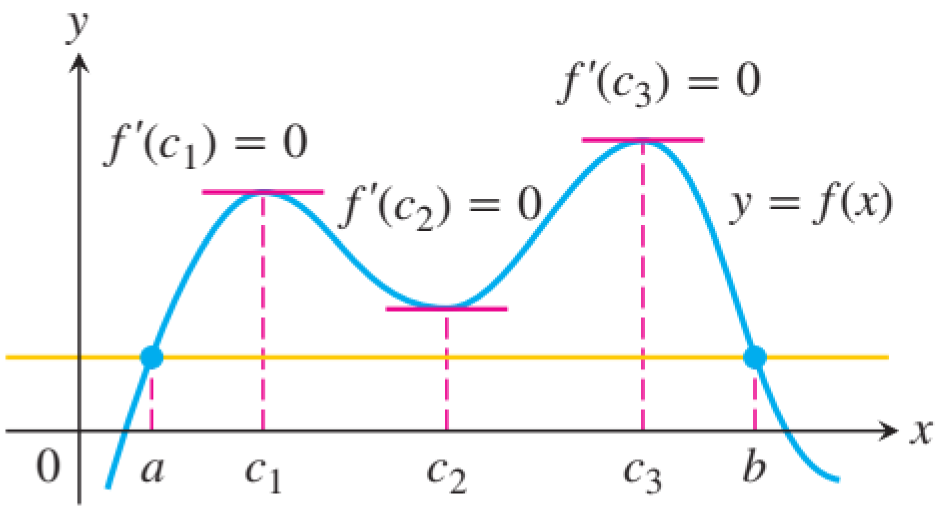
THEOREM 3 Rolle's Theorem

Suppose that $y = f(x)$ is continuous at every point of the closed interval $[a, b]$ and differentiable at every point of its interior (a, b). If

$$f(a) = f(b),$$

then there is at least one number c in (a, b) at which

$$f'(c) = 0.$$



THEOREM 4 The Mean Value Theorem

Suppose $y = f(x)$ is continuous on a closed interval $[a, b]$ and differentiable on the interval's interior (a, b). Then there is at least one point c in (a, b) at which

$$\frac{f(b) - f(a)}{b - a} = f'(c). \tag{1}$$

Monotonic Functions and The First Derivative Test

Increasing Functions and Decreasing Functions

DEFINITIONS Increasing, Decreasing Function

Let f be a function defined on an interval I and let x_1 and x_2 be any two points in I.

1. If $f(x_1) < f(x_2)$ whenever $x_1 < x_2$, then f is said to be **increasing** on I.
2. If $f(x_2) < f(x_1)$ whenever $x_1 < x_2$, then f is said to be **decreasing** on I.

A function that is increasing or decreasing on I is called **monotonic** on I.

COROLLARY 3 First Derivative Test for Monotonic Functions

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

If $f'(x) > 0$ at each point $x \in (a, b)$, then f is increasing on $[a, b]$.

If $f'(x) < 0$ at each point $x \in (a, b)$, then f is decreasing on $[a, b]$.

EXAMPLE 1 Using the First Derivative Test for Monotonic Functions

Find the critical points of $f(x) = x^3 - 12x - 5$ and identify the intervals on which f is increasing and decreasing.

Solution The function f is everywhere continuous and differentiable. The first derivative

$$\begin{aligned} f'(x) &= 3x^2 - 12 = 3(x^2 - 4) \\ &= 3(x + 2)(x - 2) \end{aligned}$$

is zero at $x = -2$ and $x = 2$. These critical points subdivide the domain of f into intervals $(-\infty, -2)$, $(-2, 2)$, and $(2, \infty)$ on which f' is either positive or negative.

Intervals	$-\infty < x < -2$	$-2 < x < 2$	$2 < x < \infty$
f' Evaluated	$f'(-3) = 15$	$f'(0) = -12$	$f'(3) = 15$
Sign of f'	$+$	$-$	$+$
Behavior of f	increasing	decreasing	increasing

First Derivative Test for Local Extrema

In Figure 4.23, at the points where f has a minimum value, $f' < 0$ immediately to the left and $f' > 0$ immediately to the right. (If the point is an endpoint, there is only one side to consider.) Thus, the function is decreasing on the left of the minimum value and it is increasing on its right. Similarly, at the points where f has a maximum value, $f' > 0$ immediately to the left and $f' < 0$ immediately to the right. Thus, the function is increasing on the left of the maximum value and decreasing on its right. In summary, at a local extreme point, the sign of $f'(x)$ changes.

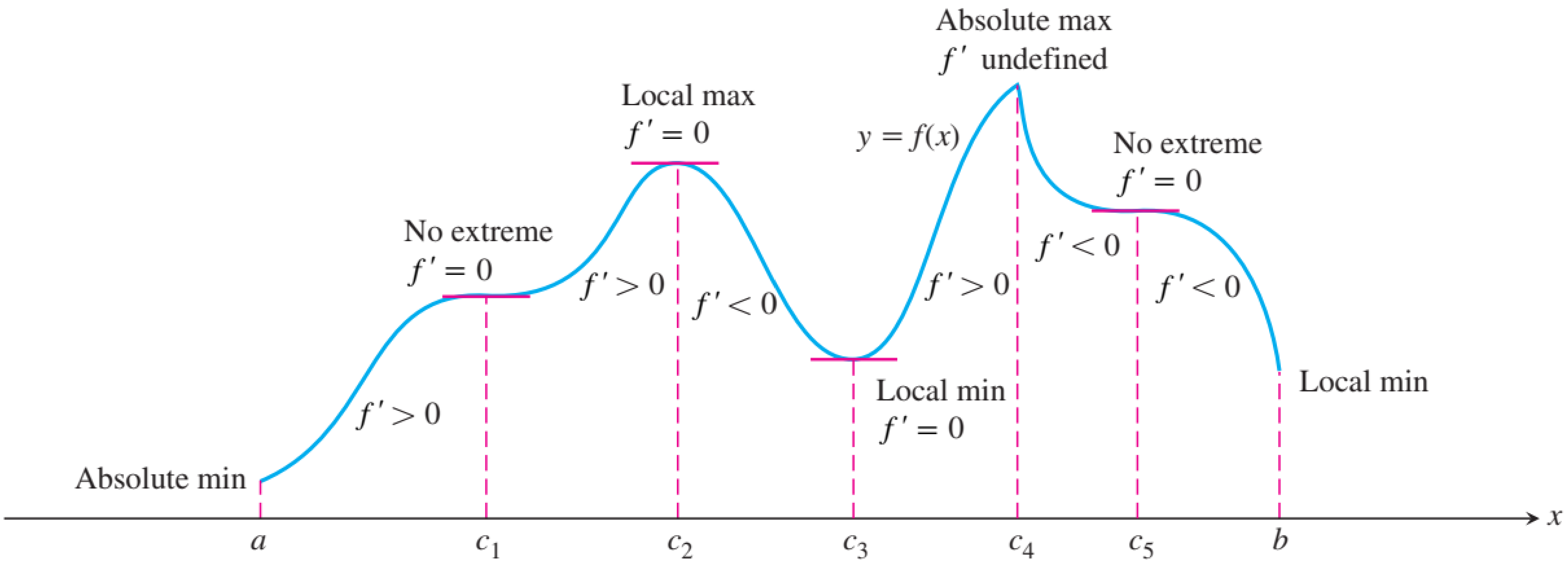


FIGURE 4.23 A function's first derivative tells how the graph rises and falls.

First Derivative Test for Local Extrema

Suppose that c is a critical point of a continuous function f, and that f is differentiable at every point in some interval containing c except possibly at c itself. Moving across c from left to right,

1. if f' changes from negative to positive at c, then f has a local minimum at c;
2. if f' changes from positive to negative at c, then f has a local maximum at c;
3. if f' does not change sign at c (that is, f' is positive on both sides of c or negative on both sides), then f has no local extremum at c.

EXAMPLE 2 Using the First Derivative Test for Local Extrema

Find the critical points of

$$f(x) = x^{1/3}(x - 4) = x^{4/3} - 4x^{1/3}.$$

Identify the intervals on which f is increasing and decreasing. Find the function's local and absolute extreme values.

Solution The function f is continuous at all x since it is the product of two continuous functions, $x^{1/3}$ and $(x - 4)$. The first derivative

$$\begin{aligned} f'(x) &= \frac{d}{dx}\left(x^{4/3} - 4x^{1/3}\right) = \frac{4}{3}x^{1/3} - \frac{4}{3}x^{-2/3} \\ &= \frac{4}{3}x^{-2/3}\left(x - 1\right) = \frac{4(x - 1)}{3x^{2/3}} \end{aligned}$$

is zero at $x = 1$ and undefined at $x = 0$. There are no endpoints in the domain, so the critical points $x = 0$ and $x = 1$ are the only places where f might have an extreme value.

Intervals	$x < 0$	$0 < x < 1$	$x > 1$
Sign of f'	$-$	$-$	$+$
Behavior of f	decreasing	decreasing	increasing

Corollary 3 to the Mean Value Theorem tells us that f decreases on $(-\infty, 0)$, decreases on $(0, 1)$, and increases on $(1, \infty)$. The First Derivative Test for Local Extrema tells us that f does not have an extreme value at $x = 0$ (f' does not change sign) and that f has a local minimum at $x = 1$ (f' changes from negative to positive).

The value of the local minimum is $f(1) = 1^{1/3}(1 - 4) = -3$. This is also an absolute minimum because the function's values fall toward it from the left and rise away from it on the right.

Exercise 4.3 Question 1-8, 29-33.

2. (a) $f'(x) = (x-1)(x+2) \Rightarrow$ critical points at -2 and 1

   (b) $f' = +++ \underset{-2}{|} --- \underset{1}{|} +++ \Rightarrow$ increasing on $(-\infty, -2)$ and $(1, \infty)$, decreasing on $(-2, 1)$

   (c) Local maximum at $x = -2$ and a local minimum at $x = 1$