

SECTION 4.6: LIMITS AT INFINITY AND ASYMPTOTES (and sophisticated graphing)

1. Limits at Infinity: In plain English, what should the symbols below mean?

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} f(x) = L \quad \text{As } x \text{ gets larger \& larger, } f(x) \text{ gets closer \& closer to the } y\text{-value } L.$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} f(x) = L \quad \text{As } x \text{ gets smaller \& smaller, } f(x) \text{ gets closer \& closer to the } y\text{-value } L.$$

2. Three Principles (a is a constant) and a Strategy

- If a is a constant, then $\lim_{x \rightarrow \pm\infty} ax = \pm\infty$ (just have to check the sign)

- $\lim_{x \rightarrow \pm\infty} \frac{1}{x} = 0$

- If $\lim_{x \rightarrow \pm\infty} f(x) = a$ and $\lim_{x \rightarrow \pm\infty} g(x) = \pm\infty$, then $\lim_{x \rightarrow \pm\infty} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = 0$

- Strategy: Divide numerator and denominator by the highest power of x in the denominator.

3. Use the Principles to evaluate the limits below. Then, use your calculator to confirm your answer is correct.

(a) $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{(2x^2 - x) \cdot \frac{1}{x^2}}{(3x - 5x^2) \cdot \frac{1}{x^2}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{2 - \frac{1}{x}}{\frac{3}{x} - 5} = \frac{2}{-5} = -\frac{2}{5}$

Check: $\frac{2(1000)^2 - (1000)}{3(1000) - 5(1000)^2} = -0.4000400...$ ✓

(b) $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{(2x^3 - x) \cdot \frac{1}{x^2}}{(3x - 5x^2) \cdot \frac{1}{x^2}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{2x - \frac{1}{x}}{\frac{3}{x} - 5} = \infty$

(c) $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{(3x + \sin(x)) \cdot (\frac{1}{x})}{(\frac{1}{x})} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{3 + \frac{\sin(x)}{x}}{1} = 3$
 Note: $\sin(x) \leq 1$

My answer \rightarrow $\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} \frac{(2x+1) \cdot \frac{1}{x}}{(\sqrt{x^2+1}) \cdot \frac{1}{x}} = *$

(d) $\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} \frac{2x+1}{\sqrt{x^2+1}}$ (Pay attention to the sign here!)

Note: for $x \approx -10^{100}$ i.e. really small x -values $\sqrt{x^2+1} \approx \sqrt{x^2} = -x$ the "1" doesn't matter.

$$* = \lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} \frac{2 + \frac{1}{x}}{-\sqrt{\frac{x^2+1}{x^2}}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} \frac{2 + \frac{1}{x}}{-\sqrt{1 + \frac{1}{x^2}}} = \frac{2}{-1} = -2$$

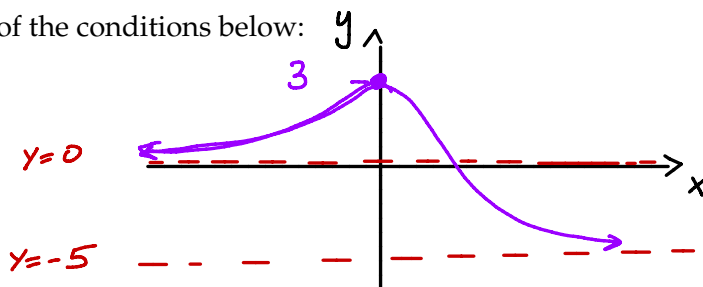
We are selecting the positive square root but x -values are negative!

4. Fill in the blanks.

- If $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} f(x) = L$, then $y = L$ is an asymptote of the graph of $f(x)$.
- If $\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} f(x) = L$, then $y = L$ is an asymptote of the graph of $f(x)$.

5. Sketch a graph of a function $g(x)$ that satisfies all of the conditions below:

- it's continuous on $(-\infty, \infty)$
- it has an absolute maximum of 3 at $x = 0$
- $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} g(x) = -5$
- $\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} g(x) = 0$.

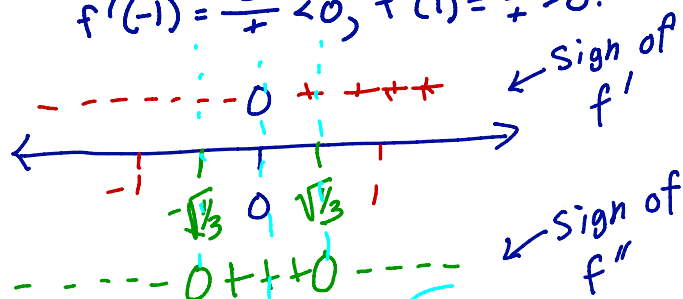


6. Given $f(x) = \frac{x^2}{x^2+1}$, $f'(x) = \frac{2x}{(x^2+1)^2}$, $f''(x) = \frac{-2(3x^2-1)}{(x^2+1)^3}$. Identify important features of $f(x)$ like: domain, asymptotes, local extrema, inflection points, and make a rough sketch.

domain: $(-\infty, \infty)$ asymptotes: v.a. none; h.a at $y=1$ ($\lim_{x \rightarrow \pm \infty} \frac{x^2}{x^2+1} = 1$)

↑, ↓, extrema: $f'(x) = 0$ when $x=0$.

$$f'(-1) = \frac{-2}{4} < 0, f'(1) = \frac{2}{4} > 0.$$



$f(x)$ is \downarrow on $(-\infty, 0)$ and \uparrow on $(0, \infty)$.

$f(x)$ has an absolute min at $x=0$.
and no local or abs max.

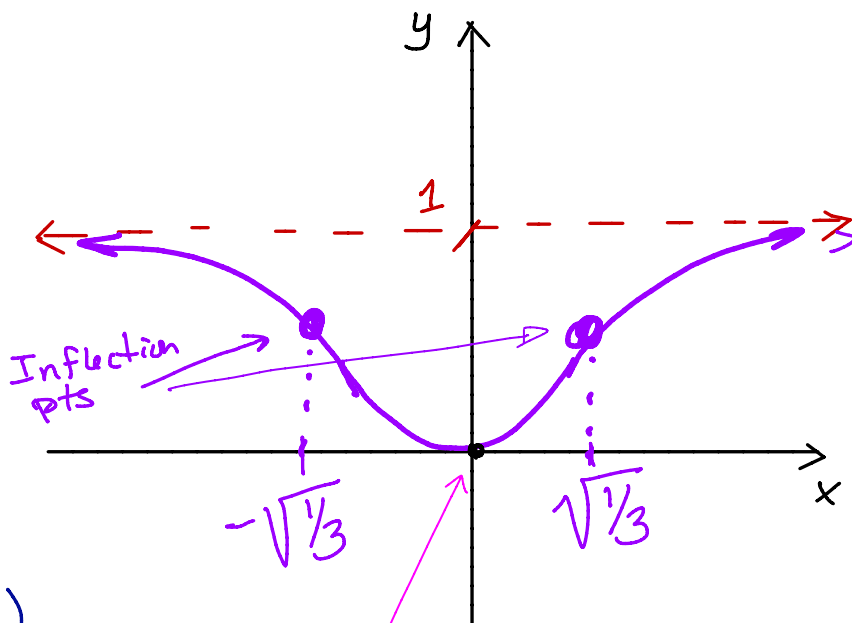
concavity $f''(x) = 0$ when
 $3x^2 - 1 = 0 \rightarrow x = \pm \sqrt{1/3}$
 $x^2 = 1/3$

$$f''(-1) = \frac{-2}{8} < 0, f''(0) = \frac{2}{1} > 0$$

$$f''(1) = \frac{-2}{8} < 0$$

$f(x)$ is conc up on $(-\sqrt{1/3}, \sqrt{1/3})$

and conc down on $(-\infty, -\sqrt{1/3}) \cup (\sqrt{1/3}, \infty)$



absolute minimum of 0
at $x=0$