Chapter 1

Functions and Limits

1.6 Calculating Limits Using the Limit Laws

Limit Laws Suppose that c is a constant and the limits

$$\lim_{x \to a} f(x) \qquad \text{and} \qquad \lim_{x \to a} g(x)$$

exist. Then

1. $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to a} [f(x) + g(x)] = \lim_{x \to a} f(x) + \lim_{x \to a} g(x)$

2. $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to a} [f(x) - g(x)] = \lim_{x \to a} f(x) - \lim_{x \to a} g(x)$

3. $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to a} [cf(x)] = c \lim_{x \to a} f(x)$

4. $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to a} [f(x)\, g(x)] = \lim_{x \to a} f(x) \cdot \lim_{x \to a} g(x)$

5. $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to a} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = \frac{\lim_{x \to a} f(x)}{\lim_{x \to a} g(x)} \quad \text{if } \lim_{x \to a} g(x) \neq 0$

EXAMPLE 1 Use the Limit Laws and the graphs of f and g in Figure 1 to evaluate the following limits, if they exist.

(a) $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to -2} [f(x) + 5g(x)]$ (b) $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to 1} [f(x)g(x)]$ (c) $\displaystyle \lim_{x \to 2} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)}$

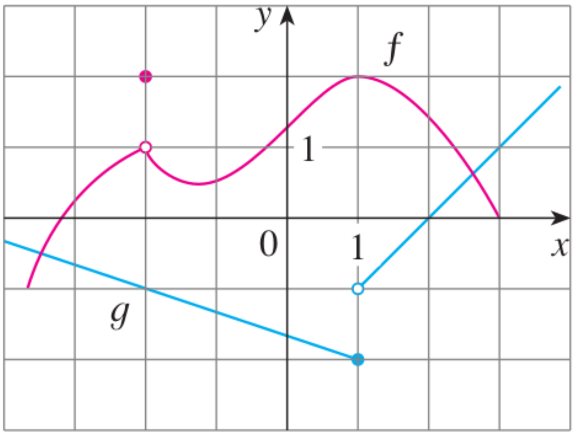


FIGURE 1

Power Law.

6. $\lim_{x \to a} [f(x)]^n = \left[\lim_{x \to a} f(x)\right]^n$ where n is a positive integer

Three particular cases:

a)

b)

c)

EXAMPLE 2 Evaluate the following limits and justify each step.

(a) $\lim_{x \to 5} (2x^2 - 3x + 4)$

(b) $\lim_{x \to -2} \dfrac{x^3 + 2x^2 - 1}{5 - 3x}$

Root Law.

11. $\lim_{x \to a} \sqrt[n]{f(x)} = \sqrt[n]{\lim_{x \to a} f(x)}$ where n is a positive integer

[If n is even, we assume that $\lim_{x \to a} f(x) > 0$.]

Example. Compute $\lim_{u \to -2} \sqrt{u^4 + 3u + 6}$.

Remark:

Direct Substitution Property If f is a polynomial or a rational function and a is in the domain of f, then

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

Remark:

EXAMPLE 3 Find $\lim_{x \to 1} \dfrac{x^2 - 1}{x - 1}$.

Property used:

If $f(x) = g(x)$ when $x \neq a$, then $\lim_{x \to a} f(x) = \lim_{x \to a} g(x)$, provided the limits exist.

EXAMPLE 4 Find $\lim_{x \to 1} g(x)$ where

$$g(x) = \begin{cases} x + 1 & \text{if } x \neq 1 \\ \pi & \text{if } x = 1 \end{cases}$$

EXAMPLE 5 Evaluate $\lim_{h \to 0} \dfrac{(3 + h)^2 - 9}{h}$.

EXAMPLE 6 Find $\lim_{t \to 0} \dfrac{\sqrt{t^2 + 9} - 3}{t^2}$.

EXAMPLE 7 Show that $\lim_{x \to 0} |x| = 0$.

EXAMPLE 8 Prove that $\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{|x|}{x}$ does not exist.

EXAMPLE 9 If

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} \sqrt{x - 4} & \text{if } x > 4 \\ 8 - 2x & \text{if } x < 4 \end{cases}$$

determine whether $\lim_{x \to 4} f(x)$ exists.

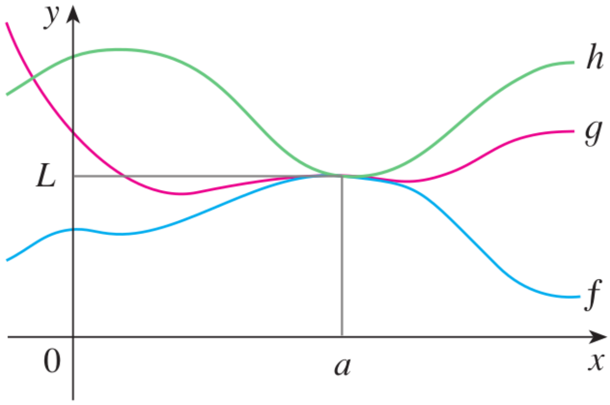
The Squeeze Theorem.

3 The Squeeze Theorem If $f(x) \leqslant g(x) \leqslant h(x)$ when x is near a (except possibly at a) and

$$\lim_{x \to a} f(x) = \lim_{x \to a} h(x) = L$$

then

$$\lim_{x \to a} g(x) = L$$



EXAMPLE 11 Show that $\lim_{x \to 0} x^2 \sin \dfrac{1}{x} = 0$.