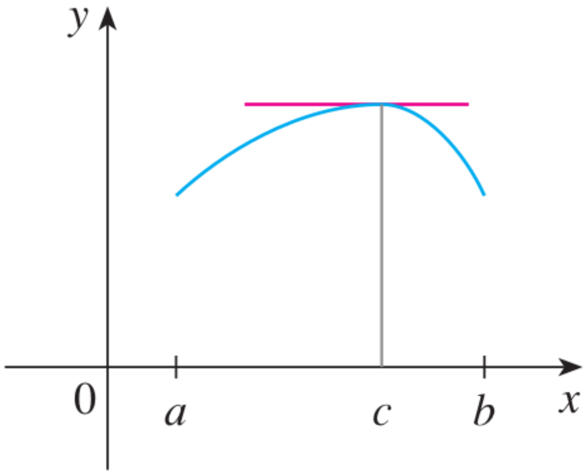
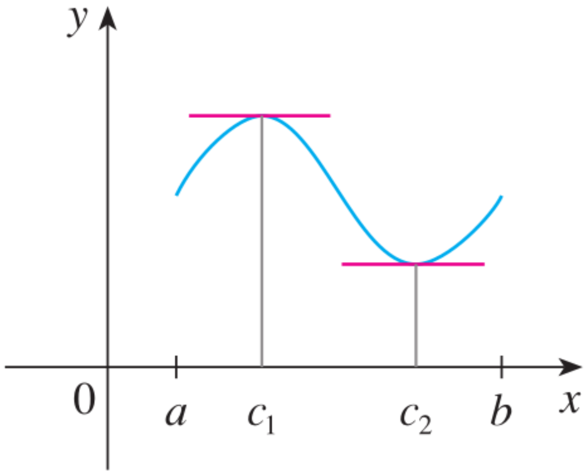
Chapter 3
Applications of Derivatives

3.2 The Mean Value Theorem

The following graphs have a commun geometric property.



(b)



(c)

Is there a condition that garantees that a graph of a function has horizontal tangents?

Rolle's Theorem Let f be a function that satisfies the following three hypotheses:

1. f is continuous on the closed interval $[a, b]$.

2. f is differentiable on the open interval (a, b).

3. $f(a) = f(b)$

Then there is a number c in (a, b) such that $f'(c) = 0$.

EXAMPLE 2 Prove that the equation $x^3 + x - 1 = 0$ has exactly one real root.

The Mean Value Theorem Let f be a function that satisfies the following hypotheses:

1. f is continuous on the closed interval $[a, b]$.
2. f is differentiable on the open interval (a, b).

Then there is a number c in (a, b) such that

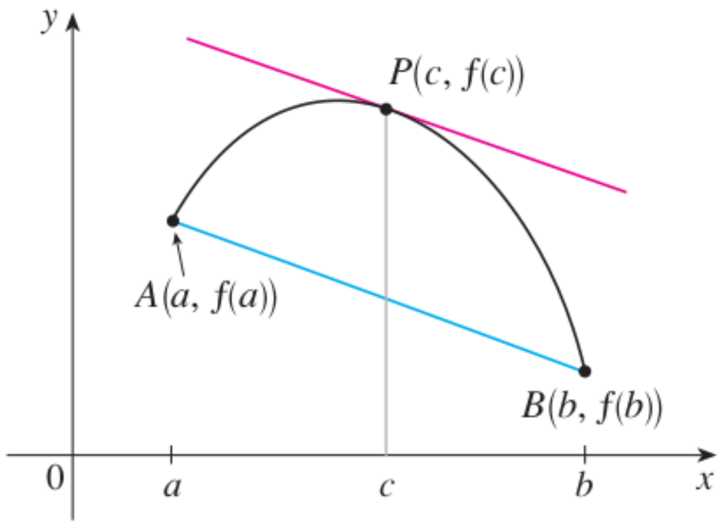
$$f'(c) = \frac{f(b) - f(a)}{b - a} \tag{1}$$

or, equivalently,

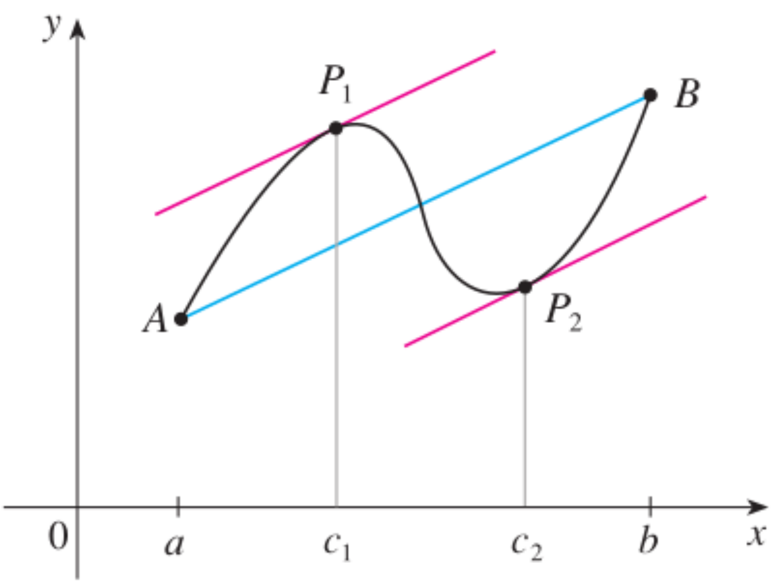
$$f(b) - f(a) = f'(c)(b - a) \tag{2}$$

The Meaning:

Only one c.



Multiple c.



Example

15–16 Find the number c that satisfies the conclusion of the Mean Value Theorem on the given interval. Graph the function, the secant line through the endpoints, and the tangent line at $(c, f(c))$. Are the secant line and the tangent line parallel?

15. $f(x) = \sqrt{x}, \quad [0, 4]$

Consequences of the Mean Value Theorem.

5 Theorem If $f'(x) = 0$ for all x in an interval (a, b), then f is constant on (a, b).

7 Corollary If $f'(x) = g'(x)$ for all x in an interval (a, b), then $f - g$ is constant on (a, b); that is, $f(x) = g(x) + c$ where c is a constant.

EXAMPLE 5 Suppose that $f(0) = -3$ and $f'(x) \leqslant 5$ for all values of x. How large can $f(2)$ possibly be?