

4.7: L'Hôpital's Rule

Theorem 4.12: L'Hôpital's Rule

Suppose f and g are differentiable on an open interval I containing a with $g'(x) \neq 0$ on I when $x \neq a$. If $\lim_{x \rightarrow a} f(x) = \lim_{x \rightarrow a} g(x) = 0$, then

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow a} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = \lim_{x \rightarrow a} \frac{f'(x)}{g'(x)}$$

provided the limit on the right exists (or is $\pm\infty$). The rule also applies if $x \rightarrow a$ is replaced with $x \rightarrow \pm\infty$, $x \rightarrow a^+$, or $x \rightarrow a^-$.

Theorem 4.13: L'Hôpital's Rule (∞/∞)

Suppose f and g are differentiable on an open interval I containing a with $g'(x) \neq 0$ on I when $x \neq a$. If $\lim_{x \rightarrow a} f(x) = \pm\infty$ and $\lim_{x \rightarrow a} g(x) = \pm\infty$, then

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow a} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = \lim_{x \rightarrow a} \frac{f'(x)}{g'(x)}$$

provided the limit on the right exists (or is $\pm\infty$). The rule also applies for $x \rightarrow \pm\infty$, $x \rightarrow a^+$, or $x \rightarrow a^-$.

Note: Limits of the form $\frac{0}{0}$ and $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$ are called *indeterminate forms*.

Notes on grading:

1. Unless specifically told to use L'Hôpital's Rule, you may use any valid method to evaluate limits.
2. Remember to
 - a) keep your limit notation until the direct substitution step
 - b) connect each step with equal signs
 - c) notate the equal signs where L'Hôpital is used
3. L'Hôpital does NOT replace the quotient rule!

Example. Find the following limits with and without L'Hôpital's Rule:

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{x^2 - 4}{x - 2} \quad (\frac{0}{0})$$

$$w/ \lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{x^2 - 4}{x - 2} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{2x}{1} = 4$$

$$w/o \lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{x^2 - 4}{x - 2} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 2} x + 2 = 4$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{2x^2 + 3x}{x^3 + x + 1} \quad (\frac{\infty}{\infty})$$

$$w/ \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{2x^2 + 3x}{x^3 + x + 1} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{4x + 3}{3x^2 + 1}$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{4}{6x} = 0$$

$$w/o \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{2x^2 + 3x}{x^3 + x + 1} \left(\frac{1/x^3}{1/x^3} \right) = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{3/x + 3/x^2}{1 + 1/x^2 + 1/x^3} = 0$$

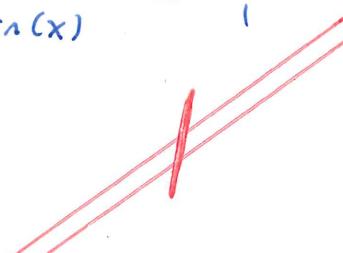
Note: L'Hôpital's Rule only works for indeterminant forms!

Example. Find the following limit with and without L'Hôpital's Rule:

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{\sin(x)}{1 - \cos(x)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{\cos(x)}{\sin(x)} = \frac{0}{1} = 0$$

w/

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{\sin(x)}{1 - \cos(x)} = \frac{1}{1} = 1$$



This limit is NOT
an indeterminant form

Example. Find the following limits:

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 1} \frac{t^3 - 1}{4t^3 - t - 3} \quad (\frac{0}{0})$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow 1} \frac{3t^2}{12t^2 - 1} = \boxed{\frac{3}{11}}$$

$$\lim_{z \rightarrow 0} \frac{\tan(4z)}{\tan(7z)} \quad (\frac{0}{0})$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{z \rightarrow 0} \frac{4 \sec(4z)}{7 \sec(7z)} = \boxed{\frac{4}{7}}$$

Example. Find the following limits. Repeat L'Hôpital's Rule each time you get an indeterminant form:

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin(x) - x}{x^3} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\cos(x) - 1}{3x^2} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{-\sin(x)}{6x} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{-\cos(x)}{6} = \boxed{-\frac{1}{6}}$$

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{t \sin(t)}{1 - \cos(t)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin(t) + t \cos(t)}{\sin(t)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\cos(t) + \cos(t) - t \sin(t)}{\cos(t)}$$

$$(\frac{0}{0}) \qquad (\frac{0}{0})$$

$$= \frac{2 - 0}{1} = \boxed{2}$$

Example. Evaluate:

$$\left(\frac{-\infty}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\ln(x)}{x} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \ln(x)$$

Not
indet form

$$= (\infty)(-\infty)$$

$$= \boxed{-\infty}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 3} \frac{2x^2 - 5x + 1}{x^2 + x - 6} = \frac{18 - 15 + 1}{9 + 3 - 6}$$

$$= \boxed{\frac{2}{3}}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{1}{2}} \frac{6x^2 + 5x - 4}{4x^2 + 16x - 9} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{1}{2}} \frac{12x + 5}{8x + 16}$$

(0)

$$= \boxed{\frac{11}{20}}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x - 8x^2}{12x^2 + 5x} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1 - 16x}{24x + 5}$$

($-\infty$)

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{-16}{24}$$

$$= \boxed{-\frac{2}{3}}$$

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{e^{2t} - 1}{\sin(t)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{2e^{2t}}{\cos(t)}$$

(0)

$$= \boxed{2}$$

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{8^t - 5^t}{t} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\ln(8)8^t - \ln(5)5^t}{1}$$

(0)

$$= \ln(8) - \ln(5)$$

$$= \boxed{\ln(8/5)}$$

Note: $0 \cdot \infty$ and $\infty - \infty$ are also indeterminate forms.

L'Hôpital's Rule can be used after these functions are converted into rational functions of indeterminate form.

Example. Find the following limits. Convert into indeterminant form as needed:

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 1^-} (1-x) \tan\left(\frac{\pi x}{2}\right) = \underset{(0 \cdot \infty)}{\lim_{x \rightarrow 1^-}} \frac{1-x}{\cot\left(\frac{\pi}{2}x\right)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \underset{x \rightarrow 1^-}{\lim} \frac{-1}{-\frac{\pi}{2} \csc\left(\frac{\pi}{2}x\right)} = \boxed{\frac{2}{\pi}}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} x^2 \sin\left(\frac{1}{4x^2}\right) = \underset{(\infty \cdot 0)}{\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty}} \frac{\sin\left(\frac{1}{4x^2}\right)}{\frac{1}{x^2}} \stackrel{LR}{=} \underset{x \rightarrow \infty}{\lim} \frac{\frac{1}{2x^3} \cos\left(\frac{1}{4x^2}\right)}{-\frac{2}{x^3}} = \boxed{\frac{1}{4}}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} (\csc(x) - \cot(x) + \cos(x)) = \underset{\infty - \infty + 1}{\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+}} \frac{1 - \cos(x) + \sin(x) \cos(x)}{\sin(x)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \underset{x \rightarrow 0^+}{\lim} \frac{\sin(x) + \cos^2(x) - \sin^2(x)}{\cos(x)} = \frac{0 + 1 - 0}{1} = \boxed{1}$$

Indeterminant forms 1^∞ , 0^0 , and ∞^0 .

Assume $\lim_{x \rightarrow a} f(x)^{g(x)}$ has the indeterminant form 1^∞ , 0^0 , or ∞^0 .

1. Analyze $L = \lim_{x \rightarrow a} g(x) \ln(f(x))$. This limit can be put in the form $0/0$ or ∞/∞ , both of which are handled by L'Hôpital's Rule.

2. When L is finite, $\lim_{x \rightarrow a} f(x)^{g(x)} = e^L$. If $L = \infty$ or $L = -\infty$, then

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow a} f(x)^{g(x)} = \infty \text{ or } \lim_{x \rightarrow a} f(x)^{g(x)} = 0, \text{ respectively.}$$

Note: 0^∞ and ∞^∞ are NOT indeterminant forms.

$$\begin{aligned} (0^0) \quad & \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^{-1/\ln(x)} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\ln(x^{-1/\ln(x)})} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{-\frac{1}{\ln(x)} \ln(x)} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{-1} = \boxed{e^{-1}} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} (\infty^0) \quad & \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} (1+2x)^{1/(2\ln(x))} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{\ln((1+2x)^{1/(2\ln(x))})} \\ (\infty^0) \quad &= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{\frac{\ln(1+2x)}{2\ln(x)}} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{\frac{x}{1+2x}} \stackrel{(\infty)}{=} \\ &\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{\frac{1}{2}} = \boxed{e^{1/2}} = \sqrt{e} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} (0^0) \quad & \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^{x^2} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\ln(x^{x^2})} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{x^2 \ln(x)} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\ln(x)}{1/x^2}} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{1/x}{-2/x^3}} \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{x^2}{-2}} = e^0 = \boxed{1} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^{\sqrt{x}} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\sqrt{x} \ln(x)} \stackrel{(0 \cdot -\infty)}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\ln(x)}{1/\sqrt{x}}} \\ &\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{1/x}{-1/2x^{3/2}}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{-\frac{x^{1/2}}{2}} \\ &= e^0 = \boxed{1} \end{aligned}$$

Note: L'Hôpital does not always work!

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\sqrt{x}}{\sqrt{\sin(x)}} \\ = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \sqrt{\frac{x}{\sin(x)}} \\ = \sqrt{1} = 1$$

$$\left(\frac{\infty}{\infty}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\cot(x)}{\csc(x)} \\ \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{-\csc^2(x)}{-\csc(x) \cot(x)} \\ = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\csc(x)}{\cot(x)} \dots$$

$$\left(\frac{\infty}{\infty}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{e^{3x} - e^{-3x}}{e^{3x} + e^{-3x}} \\ \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{3e^{3x} + 3e^{-3x}}{3e^{3x} - 3e^{-3x}} \\ = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{e^{3x} + e^{-3x}}{e^{3x} - e^{-3x}} \dots$$

Example. Find the following limits:

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 2\pi} \frac{x \sin(x) + x^2 - 4\pi^2}{x - 2\pi} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 2\pi} \frac{\sin(x) + x \cos(x) + 2x}{1} = [6\pi]$$

$$\left(\frac{\pm\infty}{\infty}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{2 \tan(x)}{\sec^2(x)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{2 \sec^2(x)}{2 \sec(x) \cdot \sec(x) \tan(x)} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1}{\tan(x)} = [0]$$

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow -1} \frac{x^3 - x^2 - 5x - 3}{x^4 + 2x^3 - x^2 - 4x - 2} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow -1} \frac{3x^2 - 2x - 5}{4x^3 + 6x^2 - 2x - 4} \left(\frac{0}{0}\right)$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow -1} \frac{6x^2}{12x^2 + 12x - 2} = \frac{-8}{-2} = [4]$$

$$\left(\frac{\infty}{\infty}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{27x^2 + 3x}{3x^2 + x + 1}$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{54x + 3}{6x + 1} \quad \left(\frac{\infty}{\infty}\right)$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{54}{6} = \boxed{9}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{x + \sin(x)}{x + \cos(x)}$$

$$= \frac{0+0}{0+1}$$

$$= \boxed{0}$$

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{2t}{\tan(t)}$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \frac{2}{\sec^2(t)}$$

$$= \boxed{2}$$

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sqrt{1+2x} - \sqrt{1-4x}}{x}$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\frac{1}{\sqrt{1+2x}} + \frac{2}{\sqrt{1-4x}}}{1}$$

$$= \boxed{3}$$

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{x^2 - 2x}{x^2 - \sin(x)}$$

$$\lim_{\theta \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1 - \sin(\theta)}{\csc(\theta)} = \frac{1 - 1}{1} = \boxed{0}$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{2x - 2}{2x - \cos(x)} = \boxed{2}$$

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{\sqrt[3]{3x+2} - 2}{x - 2}$$

$$\left(\frac{\infty}{\infty}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{100x^3 - 3}{x^4 - 2}$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{\frac{1}{(3x+2)^{2/3}}}{1}$$

$$= \boxed{\frac{1}{4}}$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{300x^2}{4x^3}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{75}{x}$$

$$= \boxed{0}$$

$$\left(\frac{0}{0}\right) \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin^2(3x)}{x^2}$$

$$\lim_{\theta \rightarrow \frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{1 - \sin(\theta)}{\csc(\theta)} = \frac{1-1}{1} = \boxed{0}$$

$$\text{LR} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{6 \sin(3x) \cos(3x)}{2x}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{3 \sin(3x) \cos(3x)}{x} \left(\frac{0}{0}\right)$$

$$\text{LR} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} 9 \cos^2(3x) - 9 \sin^2(3x)$$

$$= \boxed{9}$$

$$(00 \cdot 0) \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \cot(2x) \sin(6x)$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\sin(6x)}{\tan(2x)} \left(\frac{0}{0}\right)$$

$$\text{LR} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{6 \cos(6x)}{2 \sec^2(2x)} = \frac{6}{2} = \boxed{3}$$

$$(\infty - \infty) \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \left(\cot(x) - \frac{1}{x} \right)$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{x \cos(x) - \sin(x)}{x \sin(x)} \left(\frac{0}{0}\right)$$

$$\text{LR} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\cos(x) - x \sin(x) - \cos(x)}{\sin(x) + x \cos(x)}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{-x \sin(x)}{\sin(x) + x \cos(x)} \left(\frac{0}{0}\right)$$

$$\text{LR} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{-\sin(x) - x \cos(x)}{\cos(x) + \cos(x) - x \sin(x)}$$

$$= \frac{0-0}{1+1-0} = \boxed{0}$$

$$(\infty - \infty) \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} \left(\frac{1}{1 - \cos(\theta)} - \frac{2}{\sin^2(\theta)} \right)$$

$$= \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} \frac{1 + \cos \theta}{1 - \cos^2 \theta} - \frac{2}{\sin^2 \theta}$$

$$= \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} \frac{\cos \theta - 1}{\sin^2 \theta} \quad (\frac{0}{0})$$

$$\text{LR} = \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} \frac{-\sin \theta}{2 \sin \theta \cos \theta}$$

$$= \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} \frac{-1}{2 \cos \theta} = \boxed{-\frac{1}{2}}$$

$$(0^\circ) \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0^+} (\sin(\theta))^{\tan(\theta)}$$

$$= \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\tan \theta \ln(\sin \theta)} \quad (0 \cdot -\infty)$$

$$= \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\ln(\sin \theta)}{\cot \theta}} \quad (-\infty \infty)$$

$$\text{LR} = \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\cos \theta}{\sin \theta} \frac{1}{-\csc^2 \theta}}$$

$$= \lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0^+} e^{-\frac{\sin \theta \cos \theta}{\sin^2 \theta}} = e^0 = \boxed{1}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} (1 - 2x)^{\frac{1}{x}} \quad (1^\infty)$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} e^{\frac{1}{x} \ln(1 - 2x)} \quad (\frac{0}{0})$$

$$\text{LR} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} e^{\frac{-2}{1 - 2x}} = \boxed{e^{-2}}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} (\tan x)^x \quad (0^0)$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{x \ln(\tan x)} \quad (0 \cdot -\infty)$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\ln(\tan x)}{1/x}} \quad (-\infty \infty)$$

$$\text{LR} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\sec^2(x)}{\tan(x)} \frac{1}{-1/x^2}}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{-\frac{x^2}{\sin(x) \cos(x)}} \quad (0)$$

$$\text{LR} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{-\frac{-2x}{-\sin^2(x) + \cos^2(x)}} = e^0 = \boxed{1}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \left(1 + \frac{a}{x}\right)^x \quad (1^\infty)$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{x \ln(1 + \frac{a}{x})} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{\frac{\ln(1 + \frac{a}{x})}{\frac{1}{x}}} \quad (\frac{0}{0})$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{\frac{\frac{1}{(1 + \frac{a}{x})}(-\frac{a}{x^2})}{-\frac{1}{x^2}}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} e^{\frac{ax}{x+a}} \quad (\infty)$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} (e^{ax} + x)^{\frac{1}{x}} \quad (1^\infty)$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} e^{\frac{a}{1}} = \boxed{e^a}$$

$$= \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} e^{\frac{\ln(e^{ax} + x)}{x}} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} e^{\frac{\frac{ae^{ax} + 1}{e^{ax} + x}}{1}} = e^{\frac{a+1}{1}} = \boxed{e^{a+1}}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{x^x - 1}{\ln(x) + x - 1}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^x = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{x \ln(x)} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\ln(x)}{\frac{1}{x}}} \quad (0 \cdot \infty)$$

$$\stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{\frac{\frac{1}{x}}{-\frac{1}{x^2}}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} e^{-x} = e^0 = \boxed{1}$$

$$\Rightarrow \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{x^x - 1}{\ln(x) + x - 1} = \boxed{0}$$

$$\left(\frac{1-1}{-\infty + 0 - 1} \right)$$

Definition. (Growth Rates of Functions (as $x \rightarrow \infty$))

Suppose f and g are functions with $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} f(x) = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} g(x) = \infty$. Then f grows faster than g as $x \rightarrow \infty$ if

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{g(x)}{f(x)} = 0 \quad \text{or, equivalently, if} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = \infty.$$

The functions f and g have *comparable growth rates* if

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = M,$$

where $0 < M < \infty$ (M is positive and finite)

Theorem 4.14: Ranking Growth Rates as $x \rightarrow \infty$

Let $f \ll g$ mean that g grows faster than f as $x \rightarrow \infty$. With positive real numbers p, q, r, s and $b > 1$,

$$(\ln(x))^q \ll x^p \ll x^p (\ln(x))^r \ll x^{p+s} \ll b^x \ll x^x$$

Example. Rank the functions in order of increasing growth rates as $x \rightarrow \infty$:

$x^3, \ln(x), x^x$, and 2^x

$$\ln(x) \ll x^3 \ll 2^x \ll x^x$$

$x^{100}, \ln(x^{10}), x^x$, and 10^x

$$\ln(x^{10}) \ll x^{100} \ll 10^x \ll x^x$$

Example. Use limits to compare and rank growth ranks of the following functions:

$\ln(x^{20}), \ln(x)$

(*comparable*)

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln(x^{20})}{\ln(x)} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} 20 \frac{\ln(x)}{\ln(x)} = 20$$

$$100^x \ll x^x$$

by Thm. 4.14

$\ln(x), \ln(\ln(x))$

$\ln(\ln(x)) \ll \ln(x)$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln(\ln(x))}{\ln(x)} \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\frac{1}{\ln(x)}}{\frac{1}{x}} = 0$$

$e^{x^2}, x^{x/10}$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \left(\frac{x^{x/10}}{e^{x^2}} \right) \stackrel{LR}{=} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \left(\frac{\frac{1}{10}x^{x/10}}{2x e^{x^2}} \right) = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow x^{1/10} \ll e^{x^2}$$