

$$V(\phi)$$

Inflaton

False vacuum

True vacuum

$\phi$

The diagram shows a potential energy curve  $V(\phi)$  as a function of the field  $\phi$ . The curve has three stationary points: a global minimum labeled 'True vacuum' at the bottom left, a local maximum in the center, and a local minimum labeled 'False vacuum' on the right. A black dot on the descending slope of the first valley is labeled 'Inflaton', with a small arrow pointing downwards along the curve towards the 'True vacuum'.