

Integral Calculus

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Chapter 6: Indeterminate Forms and Improper Integrals

Main Content

- 1 Review
- 2 Indeterminate Forms
- 3 L'Hôpital's Rule
- 4 Improper Integrals

Review

In the beginning of this section, we remind the reader with definition of limits and list some rules of the limits. Let f be a defined function on an open interval I and $c \in I$ where f may not be defined at c . Then,

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x) = L, \quad L \in \mathbb{R}$$

means for every $\epsilon > 0$, there is $\delta > 0$ such that if $0 < |x - c| < \delta$, then $|f(x) - L| < \epsilon$.

■ **Some Rules of the Limits:** If $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x)$ and $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} g(x)$ both exist, then

- 1 **Sum Rule:** $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} (f(x) + g(x)) = \lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x) + \lim_{x \rightarrow c} g(x)$.
- 2 **Difference Rule:** $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} (f(x) - g(x)) = \lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x) - \lim_{x \rightarrow c} g(x)$.
- 3 **Product Rule:** $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} (f(x) \cdot g(x)) = \lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x) \times \lim_{x \rightarrow c} g(x)$.
- 4 **Constant Multiple Rule:** $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} (k f(x)) = k \lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x)$.
- 5 **Quotient Rule:** $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} \left(\frac{f(x)}{g(x)} \right) = \frac{\lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x)}{\lim_{x \rightarrow c} g(x)}$.
- 6 **Power Rule:** $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} (f(x))^{m/n} = \left(\lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x) \right)^{m/n}$.

■ **Notes:**

- $\frac{0}{a} = 0$ where $a \neq 0$
- $\frac{a}{\pm\infty} = 0$ where a is a number.
- $\frac{\pm\infty}{a} = \pm\infty$ where a is a positive number.

Example

Find each limit if it exists.

$$1 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} x$$

$$2 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 8} \sqrt{x}$$

$$3 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} (x^2 - 2x + 1)$$

$$4 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow \pi} \sin x \cos x$$

$$5 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} \frac{x}{(x^2 + 1)}$$

$$6 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 3^+} \frac{1}{(x - 3)}$$

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Solution:

1 $\lim_{x \rightarrow 1} x = 1$

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Solution:

$$\textcircled{1} \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} x = 1$$

$$\textcircled{2} \lim_{x \rightarrow 8} \sqrt{x} = \sqrt{8} = 2\sqrt{2}$$

Example

Find each limit if it exists.

$$① \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} x$$

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$$⑤ \lim_{x \rightarrow 1} \frac{x}{(x^2 + 1)} = \frac{\lim_{x \rightarrow 1} x}{\lim_{x \rightarrow 1} (x^2 + 1)} = \frac{1}{2}$$

Example

Find each limit if it exists.

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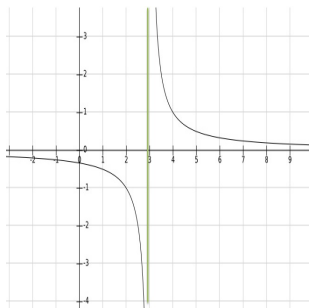
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6 $\lim_{x \rightarrow 3^+} \frac{1}{(x - 3)} = \infty$



Indeterminate Forms & L'Hôpital's Rule

■ Indeterminate Forms.

Example

$$\textcircled{1} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin x}{x} = \frac{0}{0}$$

$$\textcircled{2} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{e^x}{x} = \frac{\infty}{\infty}$$

$$\textcircled{3} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^2 \ln x = 0 \cdot \infty$$

$$\textcircled{4} \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 1^+} \left(\frac{1}{x-1} - \frac{1}{\ln x} \right) = \infty - \infty$$

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In the following table, we categorize the indeterminate forms:

List of the indeterminate forms.	
Case	Indeterminate Form
Quotient	$\frac{0}{0}$ or $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$
Product	$0 \cdot \infty$ or $0 \cdot (-\infty)$
Sum & Difference	$(-\infty) + \infty$ or $\infty - \infty$
Exponent	0^0 , 1^∞ , $1^{-\infty}$ or ∞^0

Indeterminate Forms & L'Hôpital's Rule

■ L'Hôpital's Rule

The following theorem examines the indeterminate forms $\frac{0}{0}$ and $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$.

Theorem

Suppose f and g are differentiable on an interval I and $c \in I$ where f and g may not be differentiable at c . If $\frac{f(x)}{g(x)}$ has the form $\frac{0}{0}$ or $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$ at $x = c$ and $g'(x) \neq 0$ for $x \neq c$, then

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

if $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} \frac{f'(x)}{g'(x)}$ exists or equals to ∞ .

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if $\lim_{x \rightarrow c} \frac{f'(x)}{g'(x)}$ exists or equals to ∞ .

■ Notes:

- 1 We can apply L'Hôpital's rule for $c = \pm\infty$ and when $x \rightarrow c^+$ or $x \rightarrow c^-$.
- 2 When applying L'Hôpital's rule, we should calculate the derivatives of $f(x)$ and $g(x)$ separately.
- 3 Sometimes, we need to apply L'Hôpital's rule twice.

Indeterminate Forms & L'Hôpital's Rule

Example

Use L'Hôpital's rule to find each limit if it exists.

$$1 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow 5} \frac{\sqrt{x-1} - 2}{x^2 - 25}$$

$$2 \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln x}{\sqrt{x}}$$

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Solution:

- ① Since $\lim_{x \rightarrow 5} \sqrt{x-1} - 2 = 0$ and $\lim_{x \rightarrow 5} x^2 - 25 = 0$, we have the indeterminate form $\frac{0}{0}$. By applying L'Hôpital's rule, we have

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 5} \frac{\sqrt{x-1} - 2}{x^2 - 25} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 5} \frac{\frac{1}{2\sqrt{x-1}}}{2x} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 5} \frac{1}{4x\sqrt{x-1}} = \frac{1}{40}.$$

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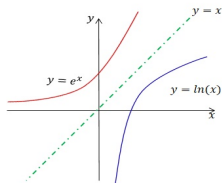
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- 2 The indeterminate form is $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$. Apply L'Hôpital's rule to obtain

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\ln x}{\sqrt{x}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\frac{1}{x}}{\frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{2}{\sqrt{x}} = 0.$$

$$\frac{\frac{1}{x}}{\frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}} = \frac{1}{x} \div \frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}} = \frac{1}{x} \times \frac{2\sqrt{x}}{1} = \frac{2\sqrt{x}}{x\sqrt{x}} = \frac{2}{\sqrt{x}}$$



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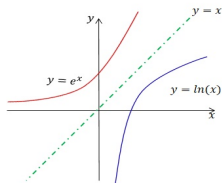
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$$\frac{\frac{1}{x}}{\frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}}} = \frac{1}{x} \div \frac{1}{2\sqrt{x}} = \frac{1}{x} \times \frac{2\sqrt{x}}{1} = \frac{2\sqrt{x}}{\sqrt{x}\sqrt{x}} = \frac{2}{\sqrt{x}}$$

- 3 The indeterminate form is $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$. By applying L'Hôpital's rule, we have $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{e^x}{x} = \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{e^x}{1} = \infty$.



Indeterminate Forms & L'Hôpital's Rule

■ Techniques for other indeterminate forms.

■ Indeterminate form $0 \cdot \infty$.

① Write $f(x) \cdot g(x)$ as $\frac{f(x)}{1/g(x)}$ or $\frac{g(x)}{1/f(x)}$.

② Apply L'Hôpital's rule to the resulting indeterminate form $\frac{0}{0}$ or $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$.

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Find the limit if it exists $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^2 \ln x$

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Example

Find the limit if it exists $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^2 \ln x$

Solution: The indeterminate form is $0 \cdot (-\infty)$, so we cannot apply L'Hôpital's rule. We need to rearrange the expression in a way that enables us to apply L'Hôpital's rule. By using the previous techniques, we have

$$x^2 \ln x = \frac{\ln x}{\frac{1}{x^2}}$$

The indeterminate form of the new expression is $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$. Therefore, we can apply L'Hôpital's rule:

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\ln x}{\frac{1}{x^2}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{\frac{1}{x}}{\frac{-2}{x^3}} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{x^2}{-2} = 0.$$

Note: $y = \frac{1}{x^2} = x^{-2} \Rightarrow y' = -2x^{-3} = \frac{-2}{x^3}$

Hence, $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x^2 \ln x = 0$.

Indeterminate Forms & L'Hôpital's Rule

■ Indeterminate form $(-\infty) + \infty$ or $\infty - \infty$.

① Write the form as a quotient or product.

② Apply L'Hôpital's rule to the resulting indeterminate form $\frac{0}{0}$ or $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$.

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Find the limit if it exists $\lim_{x \rightarrow 1^+} \left(\frac{1}{x-1} - \frac{1}{\ln x} \right)$

Solution: The indeterminate form is $\infty - \infty$.

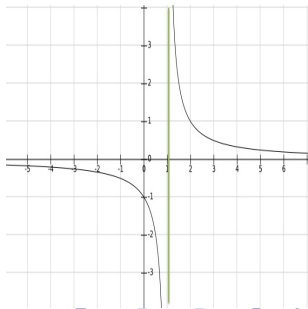
$$\frac{1}{x-1} - \frac{1}{\ln x} = \frac{\ln x - x + 1}{(x-1)\ln x}.$$

We have the indeterminate form $\frac{0}{0}$. From L'Hôpital's rule,

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

We have the indeterminate form $\frac{0}{0}$. We apply L'Hôpital's rule again to have

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 1^+} \frac{1-x}{x \ln x + x - 1} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 1^+} \frac{-1}{\ln x + 2} = \frac{-1}{2}.$$



Indeterminate Forms & L'Hôpital's Rule

■ Indeterminate forms 0^0 , 1^∞ , $1^{-\infty}$ or ∞^0 .

- 1 Let $y = f(x)^{g(x)}$
- 2 Take the natural logarithm $\ln y = \ln f(x)^{g(x)} = g(x) \ln f(x)$.
- 3 Apply L'Hôpital's rule to the resulting indeterminate form $\frac{0}{0}$ or $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$.

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Example

Find the limit if it exists $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} (1+x)^{\frac{1}{x}}$.

Solution: The indeterminate form is 1^∞ . To treat this form, let $y = (1+x)^{\frac{1}{x}}$. By taking the natural logarithm of both sides, we have

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

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

The indeterminate form is $\frac{0}{0}$.

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- 2 Take the natural logarithm $\ln y = \ln f(x)^{g(x)} = g(x) \ln f(x)$.
- 3 Apply L'Hôpital's rule to the resulting indeterminate form $\frac{0}{0}$ or $\frac{\infty}{\infty}$.

Example

Find the limit if it exists $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} (1+x)^{\frac{1}{x}}$.

Solution: The indeterminate form is 1^∞ . To treat this form, let $y = (1+x)^{\frac{1}{x}}$. By taking the natural logarithm of both sides, we have

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

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Indeterminate Forms & L'Hôpital's Rule

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Hence,

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \ln y = 1 \Rightarrow e^{\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \ln y} = e^1 \quad (\text{take the natural exponent of both sides})$$

$$\Rightarrow \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} e^{(\ln y)} = e$$

$$\Rightarrow \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} y = e \Rightarrow \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} (1+x)^{\frac{1}{x}} = e.$$

Improper Integrals

■ **Remember:** In Chapter 2,

For any function f bounded and defined on a closed bounded interval $[a, b]$, the definite integral of f from a to b is

$$\int_a^b f(x) dx = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \sum_k f(\omega_k) \Delta x_k, (\|P\| \rightarrow 0)$$

if the limit exists. The numbers a and b are called the limits of the integration.

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The proper integral is the Riemann integral (the function f must be bounded and the interval must be closed and bounded). If one of these conditions is not satisfied, we define a new sense of the integral called **the improper integral**.

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From this, there are two cases of the improper integrals:

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For continuous function f , we study integrals of forms:

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The second case: Discontinuous Integrands $\int_a^b f(x) dx$

Over the interval $[a, b]$:

If f is continuous on $[a, b)$ and has an infinite discontinuity at b i.e., $\lim_{x \rightarrow b^-} f(x) = \pm\infty$.

If f is continuous on $(a, b]$ and has an infinite discontinuity at a i.e., $\lim_{x \rightarrow a^+} f(x) = \pm\infty$,

If f is continuous on $[a, b]$ except at $c \in (a, b)$ such that $\lim_{x \rightarrow c^\pm} f(x) = \pm\infty$.

Improper Integrals

■ The first case: Infinite Intervals

Definition

- ① Let f be a continuous function on $[a, \infty)$. The improper integral $\int_a^{\infty} f(x) dx$ is defined as follows:

$$\int_a^{\infty} f(x) dx = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_a^t f(x) dx \quad \text{if the limit exists.}$$

- ② Let f be a continuous function on $(-\infty, b]$. The improper integral $\int_{-\infty}^b f(x) dx$ is defined as follows:

$$\int_{-\infty}^b f(x) dx = \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \int_t^b f(x) dx \quad \text{if the limit exists.}$$

The previous integrals are convergent (or to converge) if the limit exists as a finite number. However, if the limit does not exist or equals $\pm\infty$, the integral is called divergent (or to diverge).

- ③ Let f be a continuous function on \mathbb{R} and $a \in \mathbb{R}$. The improper integral $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) dx$ is defined as follows:

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) dx = \int_{-\infty}^a f(x) dx + \int_a^{\infty} f(x) dx.$$

The integral is convergent if both integrals on the right side are convergent; otherwise the integral is divergent.

Improper Integrals

■ Notes:

- 1 If an improper integral is convergent, the value of the improper integral is the value of the limit.
- 2 If both integrals in item 3 converge, then the value of the improper integral is the sum of values of the two integrals.

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Example

Determine whether the integral $\int_0^{\infty} \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx$ converges or diverges.

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Determine whether the integral $\int_0^{\infty} \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx$ converges or diverges.

Solution:

$$\int_0^{\infty} \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx$$

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Solution:

$$\int_0^{\infty} \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx$$

The integral

$$\int_0^t \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx = \int_0^t (x+2)^{-2} dx = \left[\frac{-1}{x+2} \right]_0^t = -\left(\frac{1}{t+2} - \frac{1}{2} \right).$$

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Thus,

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t \frac{1}{(x+2)^2} dx = -\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \left(\frac{1}{t+2} - \frac{1}{2} \right) = -(0 - \frac{1}{2}) = \frac{1}{2}.$$

This implies that the integral converges and has the value $\frac{1}{2}$.

Improper Integrals

Example

Determine whether the integral $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx$ converges or diverges.

Improper Integrals

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Determine whether the integral $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx$ converges or diverges.

Solution:

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx = \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \int_t^0 \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx + \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx$$

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Determine whether the integral $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx$ converges or diverges.

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We know that $\int \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx = \tan^{-1} x + c$, so

$$\begin{aligned} & \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \int_t^0 \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx + \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx \\ &= \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} [0 - \tan^{-1}(t)] + \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} [\tan^{-1} t - 0] \\ &= -\lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \tan^{-1} t + \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \tan^{-1} t \\ &= -\left(-\frac{\pi}{2}\right) + \frac{\pi}{2} = \pi. \end{aligned}$$

The integral is convergent and has the value π .

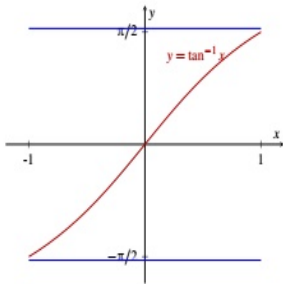


Figure 4.3

Improper Integrals

■ The second case: Discontinuous Integrands

Definition

- ① If f is continuous on $[a, b)$ and has an infinite discontinuity at b i.e., $\lim_{x \rightarrow b^-} f(x) = \pm\infty$, then

$$\int_a^b f(x) dx = \lim_{t \rightarrow b^-} \int_a^t f(x) dx \text{ if the limit exists.}$$

- ② If f is continuous on $(a, b]$ and has an infinite discontinuity at a i.e., $\lim_{x \rightarrow a^+} f(x) = \pm\infty$, then

$$\int_a^b f(x) dx = \lim_{t \rightarrow a^+} \int_t^b f(x) dx \text{ if the limit exists.}$$

In items 1 and 2, the integral is convergent if the limit exists as a finite number; otherwise the integral is divergent.

- ③ If f is continuous on $[a, b]$ except at $c \in (a, b)$ such that $\lim_{x \rightarrow c^\pm} f(x) = \pm\infty$, the improper integral $\int_a^b f(x) dx$ is defined as follows:

$$\int_a^b f(x) dx = \int_a^c f(x) dx + \int_c^b f(x) dx.$$

The integral is convergent if both integrals on the right side are convergent; otherwise the integral is divergent.

Improper Integrals

Example

Determine whether the integral $\int_0^4 \frac{1}{(4-x)^{\frac{3}{2}}} dx$ converges or diverges.

Improper Integrals

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Determine whether the integral $\int_0^4 \frac{1}{(4-x)^{\frac{3}{2}}} dx$ converges or diverges.

Solution: Since $\lim_{x \rightarrow 4^-} \frac{1}{(4-x)^{\frac{3}{2}}} = \infty$ and the integrand is continuous on $[0, 4)$, then from Definition .2,

Improper Integrals

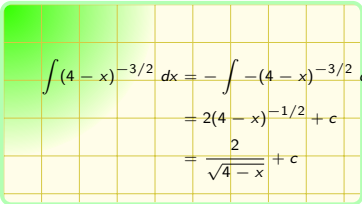
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Determine whether the integral $\int_0^4 \frac{1}{(4-x)^{3/2}} dx$ converges or diverges.

Solution: Since $\lim_{x \rightarrow 4^-} \frac{1}{(4-x)^{3/2}} = \infty$ and the integrand is continuous on $[0, 4)$, then from Definition .2,

$$\begin{aligned}\int_0^4 \frac{1}{(4-x)^{3/2}} dx &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 4^-} \int_0^t (4-x)^{-3/2} dx \\ &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 4^-} \left[\frac{2}{\sqrt{4-x}} \right]_0^t \\ &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 4^-} \left(\frac{2}{\sqrt{4-t}} - 1 \right) \\ &= \infty.\end{aligned}$$

Thus, the improper integral diverges.


$$\begin{aligned}\int (4-x)^{-3/2} dx &= - \int -(4-x)^{-3/2} dx \\ &= 2(4-x)^{-1/2} + c \\ &= \frac{2}{\sqrt{4-x}} + c\end{aligned}$$

Improper Integrals

Example

Determine whether the integral $\int_{-3}^1 \frac{1}{x^2} dx$ converges or diverges.

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Solution:

Since $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^-} \frac{1}{x^2} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x^2} = \infty$ and the integrand is continuous on $[-3, 0) \cup (0, 1]$, then

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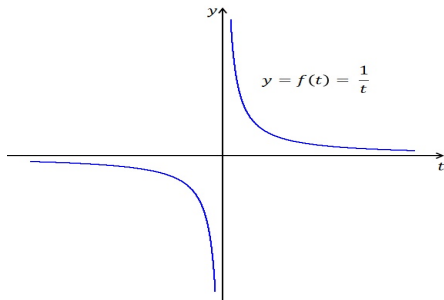
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Since $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^-} \frac{1}{x^2} = \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x^2} = \infty$ and the integrand is continuous on $[-3, 0) \cup (0, 1]$, then

$$\begin{aligned}\int_{-3}^1 \frac{1}{x^2} dx &= \int_{-3}^0 \frac{1}{x^2} dx + \int_0^1 \frac{1}{x^2} dx \\ &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^-} \int_{-3}^t \frac{1}{x^2} dx + \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^+} \int_t^1 \frac{1}{x^2} dx \\ &= - \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^-} \left[\frac{1}{x} \right]_{-3}^t - \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^+} \left[\frac{1}{x} \right]_t^1 \\ &= - \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^-} \left[\frac{1}{t} + \frac{1}{3} \right] - \lim_{t \rightarrow 0^+} \left[1 - \frac{1}{t} \right] \\ &= \infty.\end{aligned}$$



$$\int \frac{1}{x^2} dx = \int x^{-2} dx = \frac{x^{-1}}{-1} + c = -\frac{1}{x} + c$$