MA 137 — Calculus 1 with Life Science Applications
Extrema and The Mean Value Theorem
(Section 5.1)

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Finding the largest profit, or the smallest possible cost, or the shortest possible time for performing a given procedure or task are some examples of practical real-world applications of Calculus.

The basic mathematical question underlying such applied problems is how to find (if they exist) the largest or smallest values of a given function on a given interval.

This procedure depends on the nature of the interval.

Global (or Absolute) Extreme Values

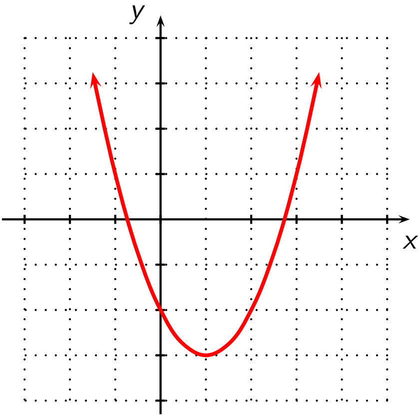
The largest value a function (possibly) attains on an interval is called its **global (or absolute) maximum value**.

The smallest value a function (possibly) attains on an interval is called its **global (or absolute) minimum value**.

Both maximum and minimum values (if they exist) are called **global (or absolute) extreme values**.

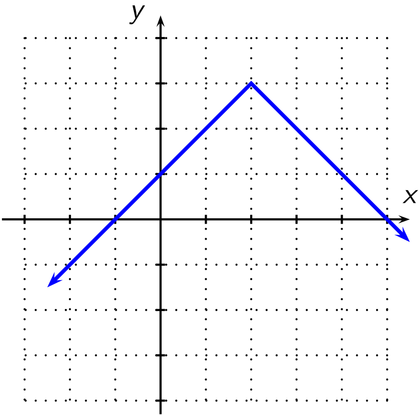
Example 1:

Find the maximum and minimum values for the function
$f(x) = (x-1)^2 - 3$, if they exist.



Example 2:

Find the maximum and minimum values for the function $f(x) = -|x-2| + 3$, if they exist.

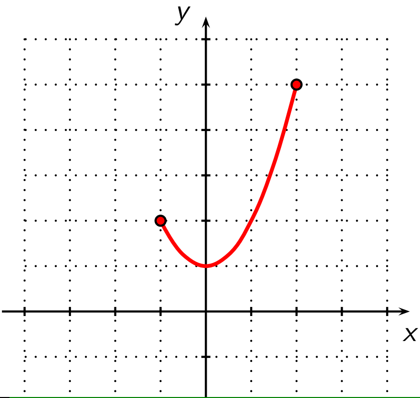


Example 3:

Find the maximum and minimum values for the function

$$f(x) = x^2 + 1, \qquad x \in [-1, 2]$$

if they exist.



The Extreme Value Theorem (EVT)

We first focus on continuous functions on a closed and bounded interval.

The question of largest and smallest values of a continuous function f on an interval that is not closed and bounded requires us to pay more attention to the behavior of the graph of f, and specifically to where the graph is rising and where it is falling.

Closed and bounded intervals

An interval is **closed and bounded** if it has finite length and contains its endpoints.

For example, the interval $[-2, 5]$ is closed and bounded.

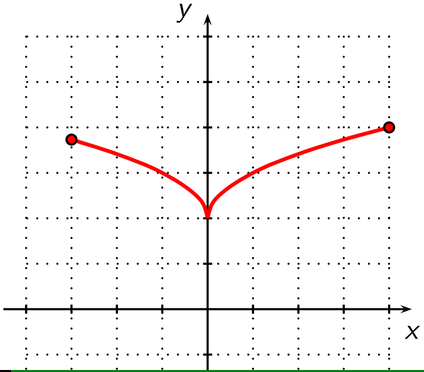
Theorem (The Extreme Value Theorem)

If a function f is continuous on a closed, bounded interval $[a, b]$, then the function f attains a global maximum and a global minimum value on $[a, b]$.

Example 4:

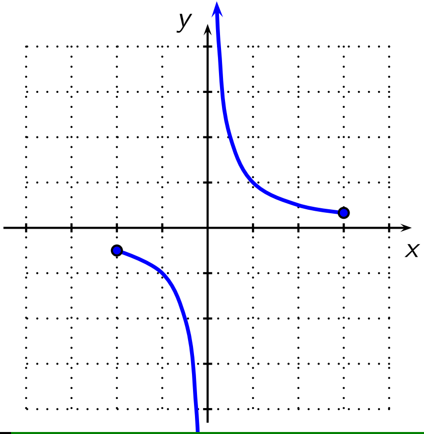
Let $f(x) = \begin{cases} 2+\sqrt{x} & \text{if } x > 0 \\ 2+\sqrt{-x} & \text{if } x \leq 0. \end{cases}$

Does $f(x)$ have a maximum and a minimum value on $[-3, 4]$?
How does this example illustrate the Extreme Value Theorem?



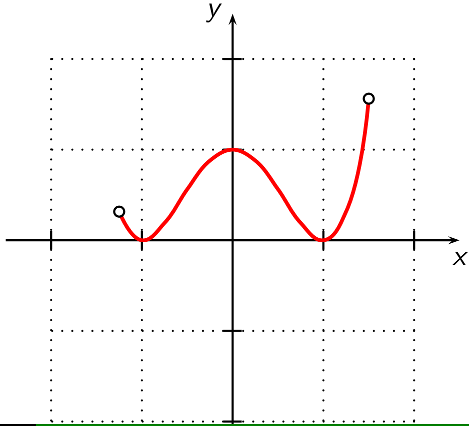
Example 5:

Let $g(x) = \dfrac{1}{x}$. Does $g(x)$ have a maximum value and a minimum value on $[-2, 3]$? Does this example contradict the Extreme Value Theorem? Why or why not?



Example 6:

Let $h(x) = x^4 - 2x^2 + 1$. Does $h(x)$ have a maximum value and a minimum value on $(-1.25, 1.5)$? Does this example contradict the Extreme Value Theorem? Why or why not?



Local Extreme Points

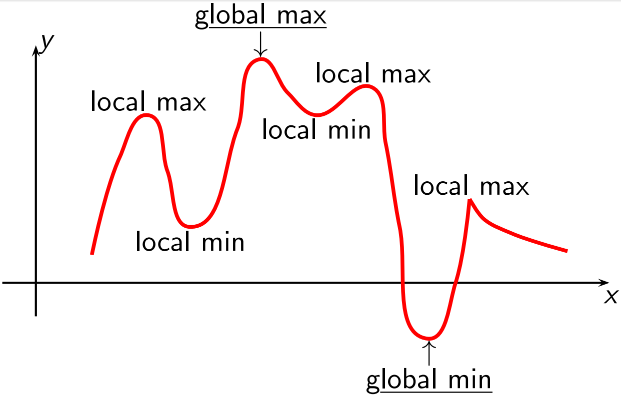
The EVT is an existence statement; it doesn't tell you how to locate the maximum and minimum values of f.

We need to narrow down the list of possible points on the given interval where the function f *might* have an extreme value to (usually) just a few possibilities. You can then evaluate f at these few possibilities, and pick out the smallest and largest value.

For this we need to discuss local (or relative) extrema, which are points where a graph is higher or lower than all *nearby* points.

Local (or relative) extreme points

A function f has a **local** (or **relative**) **maximum** at a point $(c, f(c))$ if there is some interval about c such that $f(c) \geq f(x)$ for all x in that interval. A function f has a **local** (or **relative**) **minimum** at a point $(c, f(c))$ if there is some interval about c such that $f(c) \leq f(x)$ for all x in that interval.



If you thought of the graph of the function as the profile of a landscape, the global maximum could represent the highest hill in the landscape, while the minimum could represent the deepest valley. The other points indicated in the graph, which look like tops of hills (although not the highest hills) and bottom of valleys (although not the deepest valleys), are the **local** (or **relative**) **extreme values**.

Fermat's Theorem

Theorem (Fermat's Theorem)

Let $f(x)$ be a continuous function. If f has an extreme value at an interior point c and if f is differentiable at $x = c$, then $f'(c) = 0$.

This results provide the following guidelines for finding candidates for local extrema:

Corollary

Let $f(x)$ be a continuous function on the closed, bounded interval $[a, b]$. If f has an extreme value at c in the interval, then either

- $c = a$ *or* $c = b$;
- $a < c < b$ *and* $f'(c) = 0$;
- $a < c < b$ *and* f' *is not defined at* $x = c$.

Remark: If f is defined at the point $x = c$ and either $f'(c) = 0$ or $f'(c)$ is undefined then the point c is called a **critical point** of f.

Example 7:

Find the maximum and minimum values of $f(x) = x^3 - 3x^2 - 9x + 5$ on the interval $[0, 4]$. For which values x are the maximum and minimum values attained?

Example 8: (Online Homework HW17, # 7)

Find the maximum and minimum values of $f(x) = \dfrac{4x}{x^2+1}$ on the interval $[-4, 0]$. For which values x are the maximum and minimum values attained?

Example 9:

Find the maximum and minimum values of $f(x) = x^{2/3}$ on the interval $[-1, 8]$. For which values x are the maximum and minimum values attained?

Example 10:

Find the t values on the interval $[-10, 10]$ where
$g(t) = |t - 4| + 7$ takes its maximum and minimum values.
What are the maximum and minimum values?

Example 11: (Online Homework HW17, # 9)

Find the absolute maximum and minimum values of the function

$$f(x) = \frac{10 \cos x}{4 + 2 \sin x}$$

over the interval $[0, 2\pi]$. If there are multiple points in a single category list the points in increasing order in x value.