

The Chain Rule

More general question: How do we differentiate the composition of two functions (functions inside of functions)?

The Chain Rule

If $f(x)$ and $g(x)$ are differentiable, then

$$\frac{d}{dx} [f(g(x))] = f'(g(x)) \cdot g'(x)$$

If we let $z = g(x)$ and $y = f(z)$, then $y = f(g(x))$ and we can write the chain rule in the following way:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{dy}{dz} \cdot \frac{dz}{dx}$$

Questions

3. Differentiate the functions below:

(a) $(x^3 + 1)^3$ (How does this compare to our answer above?)

(b) $(x^2 + 1)^{100}$

(c) $(8x^2 + 2)^7$.

(d) $\left(\frac{1}{x^2} + x + 1\right)^3$.

(e) $\left(\frac{(2x+3)^2}{(x+1)^3}\right)^{\frac{3}{2}}$.

4. A new proof of the quotient rule using the chain and product rules:

5. Find the equation of the tangent line to $f(x) = \left(\frac{2}{x} - 1\right)^3$ at the point where $x = 3$.

6. The Triple Chain Rule: What about the composition of three functions, $f(g(h(x)))$? How would we differentiate that?

Homework Problems

You are driving north from Durham. The temperature gets colder and colder farther and farther north of Durham. The function $F(x)$ gives the temperature, in degrees Fahrenheit, x miles north of Durham. The function $s(t)$ gives your distance north of Durham, in miles, after you have been driving for t hours.

1. Explain the meaning of the function $f(t) = F(s(t))$.
2. What are the units of $f'(t)$
3. Explain the meaning of each of the following (give units):
 - (a) $s(3) = 160$
 - (b) $s'(3) = 80$
 - (c) $F(160) = 75$
 - (d) $F'(160) = -0.05$
4. After 3 hours of driving, how fast is the temperature changing outside your car? Give units. Use your answers from above.
5. $f'(3) = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ (remember to use units)
6. Which of the following is the correct formula for $f'(3)$? Circle your answer:
 - $f'(3) = F'(3) \cdot s'(3)$
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 - $f'(3) = F'(s(3)) \cdot s'(3)$