

Properties of continuous functions

Are the continuous functions $f: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

- ▶ a field?

No: $\sin(x)$ is continuous, but the reciprocal $1/\sin(x)$ is not continuous.

- ▶ a vector space?

Yes.

- ▶ closed under taking the maximum?

In other words, if $f(x)$ and $g(x)$ are continuous functions, is $\max\{f(x), g(x)\}$ continuous too?

Yes.

Proof for continuity of maximum at a point c

Suppose ε is a prescribed positive number.

By hypothesis, there is a positive δ such that $|x - c| < \delta$ implies $|f(x) - f(c)| < \varepsilon$ and $|g(x) - g(c)| < \varepsilon$, or, equivalently,

$$-\varepsilon < f(x) - f(c) < \varepsilon \quad \text{and} \quad -\varepsilon < g(x) - g(c) < \varepsilon$$

or

$$f(c) - \varepsilon < f(x) < f(c) + \varepsilon \quad \text{and} \quad g(c) - \varepsilon < g(x) < g(c) + \varepsilon.$$

But $f(c) + \varepsilon \leq \max\{f(c), g(c)\} + \varepsilon$ and

$g(c) + \varepsilon \leq \max\{f(c), g(c)\} + \varepsilon$.

Combining these inequalities shows that

$$\max\{f(x), g(x)\} \leq \max\{f(c), g(c)\} + \varepsilon.$$

A similar argument shows that

$\max\{f(c), g(c)\} - \varepsilon \leq \max\{f(x), g(x)\}$. So we are done.

Nutty ionic exercise

Continuity of f at c means:

$$\forall \varepsilon > 0 \exists \delta > 0 \text{ such that } |x - c| < \delta \implies |f(x) - f(c)| < \varepsilon.$$

What do each of the following mangled properties mean?

1. $\exists \varepsilon > 0 \forall \delta > 0 \ |x - c| < \delta \implies |f(x) - f(c)| < \varepsilon.$
2. $\forall \varepsilon > 0 \forall \delta > 0 \ |x - c| < \delta \implies |f(x) - f(c)| < \varepsilon.$
3. $\exists \varepsilon > 0 \exists \delta > 0 \text{ such that } |x - c| < \delta \implies |f(x) - f(c)| < \varepsilon.$
4. $\forall \varepsilon < 0 \exists \delta < 0 \text{ such that } |x - c| < \delta \implies |f(x) - f(c)| < \varepsilon.$