EXAMPLE 1 The Slope of the Graph of a Linear Function

To find the slope of the graph of $f(x) = 2x - 3$ when $c = 2$, you can apply the definition of the slope of a tangent line, as shown.

EXAMPLE 2 Tangent Lines to the Graph of a Nonlinear Function

Find the slopes of the tangent lines to the graph of $f(x) = x^2 + 1$ at the points $(0, 1)$ and $(-1, 2)$, as shown in Figure 2.6.

Definition of the Derivative of a Function

The **derivative** of f at x is

$$f'(x) = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{f(x + \Delta x) - f(x)}{\Delta x}$$

provided the limit exists. For all x for which this limit exists, f' is a function of x.

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{\Delta y}{\Delta x} = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{f(x + \Delta x) - f(x)}{\Delta x} = f'(x).$$

EXAMPLE 3 **Finding the Derivative by the Limit Process**

See LarsonCalculus.com for an interactive version of this type of example.

To find the derivative of $f(x) = x^3 + 2x$, use the definition of the derivative as shown.

EXAMPLE 4 **Using the Derivative to Find the Slope at a Point**

Find $f'(x)$ for $f(x) = \sqrt{x}$. Then find the slopes of the graph of f at the points $(1, 1)$ and $(4, 2)$. Discuss the behavior of f at $(0, 0)$.

EXAMPLE 5 Finding the Derivative of a Function

See LarsonCalculus.com for an interactive version of this type of example.

Find the derivative with respect to t for the function $y = 2/t$.

EXAMPLE 6 **A Graph with a Sharp Turn**

See LarsonCalculus.com for an interactive version of this type of example.

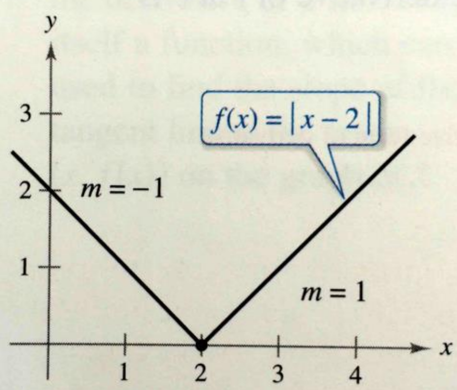
The function $f(x) = |x - 2|$, shown in Figure 2.12, is continuous at $x = 2$. The one-sided limits, however,

$$\lim_{x \to 2^-} \frac{f(x) - f(2)}{x - 2} = \lim_{x \to 2^-} \frac{|x - 2| - 0}{x - 2} = -1 \quad \text{Derivative from the left}$$

and

$$\lim_{x \to 2^+} \frac{f(x) - f(2)}{x - 2} = \lim_{x \to 2^+} \frac{|x - 2| - 0}{x - 2} = 1 \quad \text{Derivative from the right}$$

are not equal. So, f is not differentiable at $x = 2$ and the graph of f does not have a tangent line at the point $(2, 0)$.



f is not differentiable at $x = 2$ because the derivatives from the left and from the right are not equal.
Figure 2.12

EXAMPLE 7 A Graph with a Vertical Tangent Line

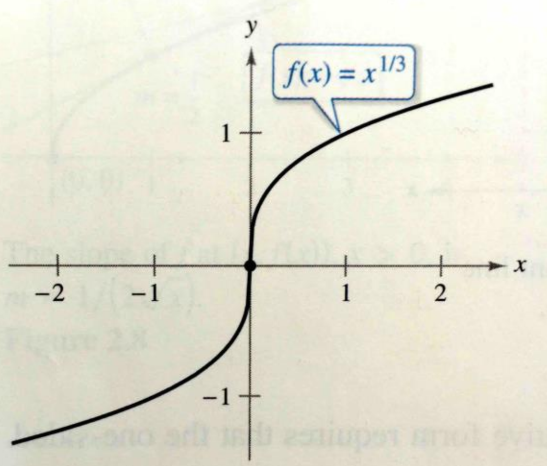
The function $f(x) = x^{1/3}$ is continuous at $x = 0$, as shown in Figure 2.13. However, because the limit

$$\lim_{x \to 0} \frac{f(x) - f(0)}{x - 0} = \lim_{x \to 0} \frac{x^{1/3} - 0}{x} = \lim_{x \to 0} \frac{1}{x^{2/3}} = \infty$$

is infinite, you can conclude that the tangent line is vertical at $x = 0$. So, f is not differentiable at $x = 0$. ■

From Examples 6 and 7, you can see that a function is not differentiable at a point at which its graph has a sharp turn *or* a vertical tangent line.

> **THEOREM 2.1 Differentiability Implies Continuity**
>
> If f is differentiable at $x = c$, then f is continuous at $x = c$.



f is not differentiable at $x = 0$ because f has a vertical tangent line at $x = 0$.

Figure 2.13