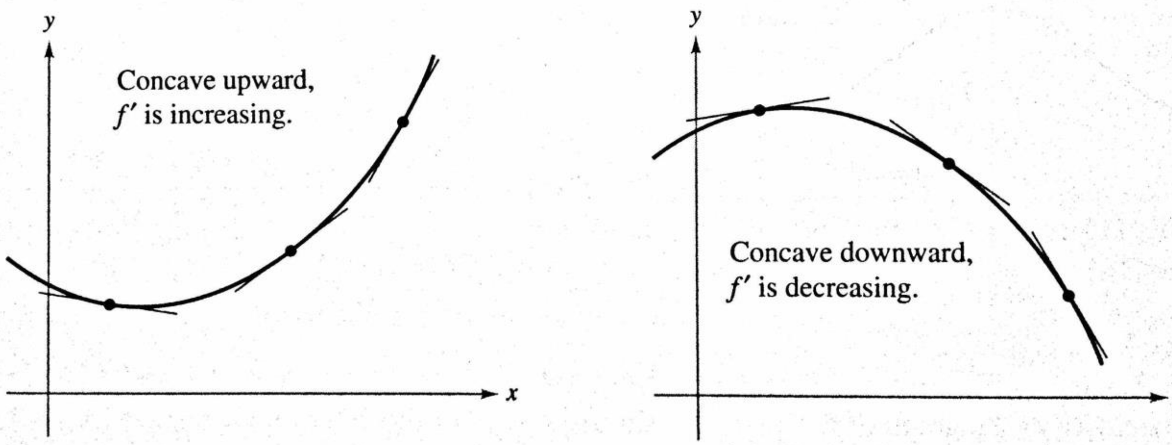
Definition of Concavity

Let f be differentiable on an open interval I. The graph of f is **concave upward** on I when f' is increasing on the interval and **concave downward** on I when f' is decreasing on the interval.



(a) The graph of f lies above its tangent lines. **(b)** The graph of f lies below its tangent lin

Figure 3.23

THEOREM 3.7 Test for Concavity

Let f be a function whose second derivative exists on an open interval I.

1. If $f''(x) > 0$ for all x in I, then the graph of f is concave upward on I.
2. If $f''(x) < 0$ for all x in I, then the graph of f is concave downward on I.

A proof of this theorem is given in Appendix A.

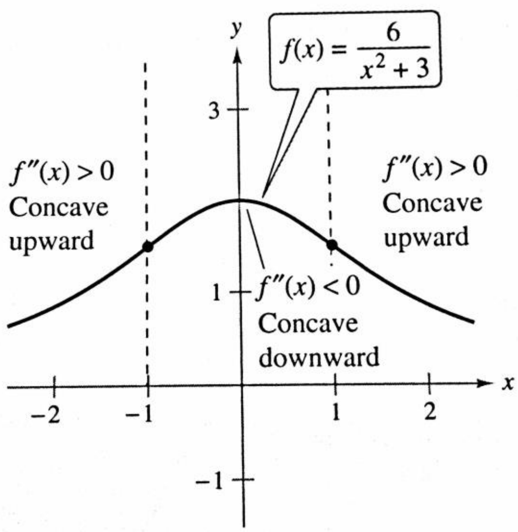
See LarsonCalculus.com for Bruce Edwards's video of this proof.

EXAMPLE 1 Determining Concavity

Determine the open intervals on which the graph of

$$f(x) = \frac{6}{x^2 + 3}$$

is concave upward or downward.



From the sign of f'', you can determine the concavity of the graph of f.

Figure 3.25

EXAMPLE 2 Determining Concavity

Determine the open intervals on which the graph of

$$f(x) = \frac{x^2 + 1}{x^2 - 4}$$

is concave upward or concave downward.

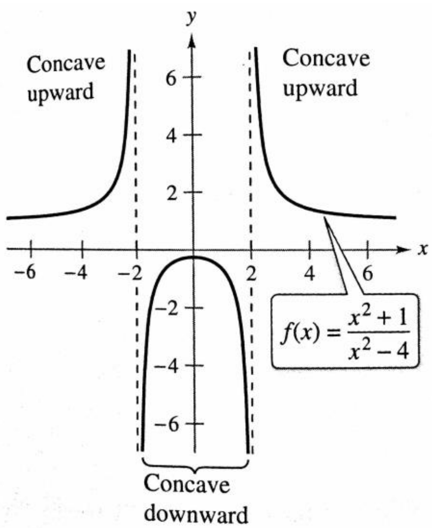


Figure 3.26

Definition of Point of Inflection

Let f be a function that is continuous on an open interval, and let c be a point in the interval. If the graph of f has a tangent line at this point $(c, f(c))$, then this point is a **point of inflection** of the graph of f when the concavity of f changes from upward to downward (or downward to upward) at the point.

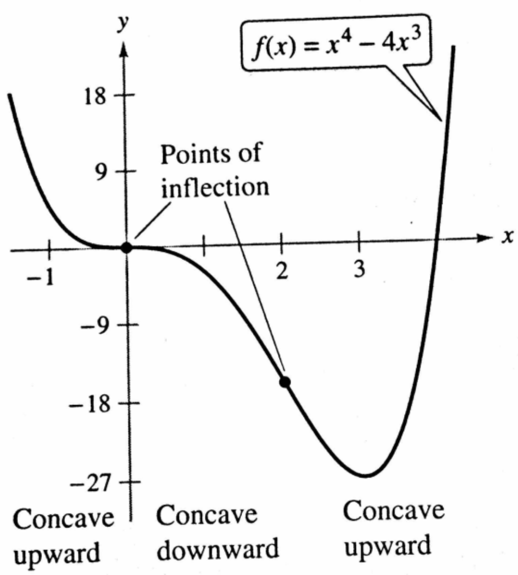
THEOREM 3.8 Points of Inflection

If $(c, f(c))$ is a point of inflection of the graph of f, then either $f''(c) = 0$ or f'' does not exist at $x = c$.

EXAMPLE 3 Finding Points of Inflection

Determine the points of inflection and discuss the concavity of the graph o

$$f(x) = x^4 - 4x^3.$$



Points of inflection can occur where $f''(x) = 0$ or f'' does not exist.

Figure 3.28

THEOREM 3.9 Second Derivative Test

Let f be a function such that $f'(c) = 0$ and the second derivative of f exists on an open interval containing c.

1. If $f''(c) > 0$, then f has a relative minimum at $(c, f(c))$.
2. If $f''(c) < 0$, then f has a relative maximum at $(c, f(c))$.

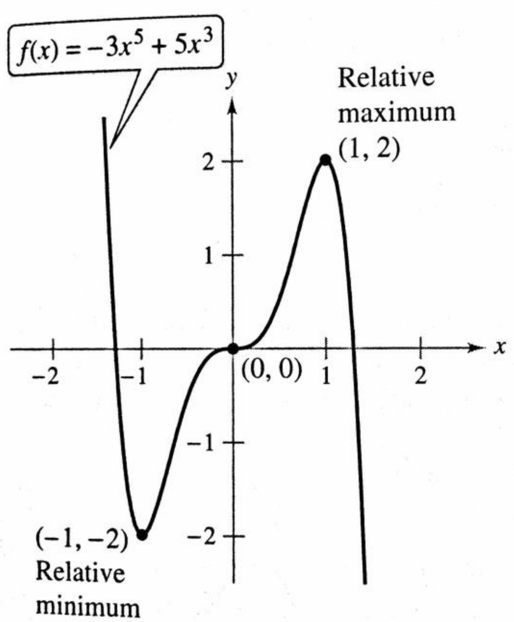
If $f''(c) = 0$, then the test fails. That is, f may have a relative maximum, a relative minimum, or neither. In such cases, you can use the First Derivative Test.

EXAMPLE 4 Using the Second Derivative Test

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

Find the relative extrema of

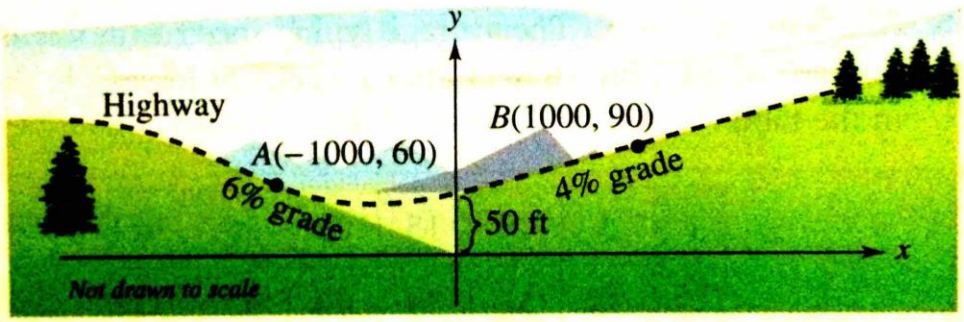
$$f(x) = -3x^5 + 5x^3.$$



(0, 0) is neither a relative minimum nor a relative maximum.

Figure 3.31

64. Highway Design A section of highway connecting two hillsides with grades of 6% and 4% is to be built between two points that are separated by a horizontal distance of 2000 feet (see figure). At the point where the two hillsides come together, there is a 50-foot difference in elevation.



(a) Design a section of highway connecting the hillsides modeled by the function

$$f(x) = ax^3 + bx^2 + cx + d, \quad -1000 \le x \le 1000.$$

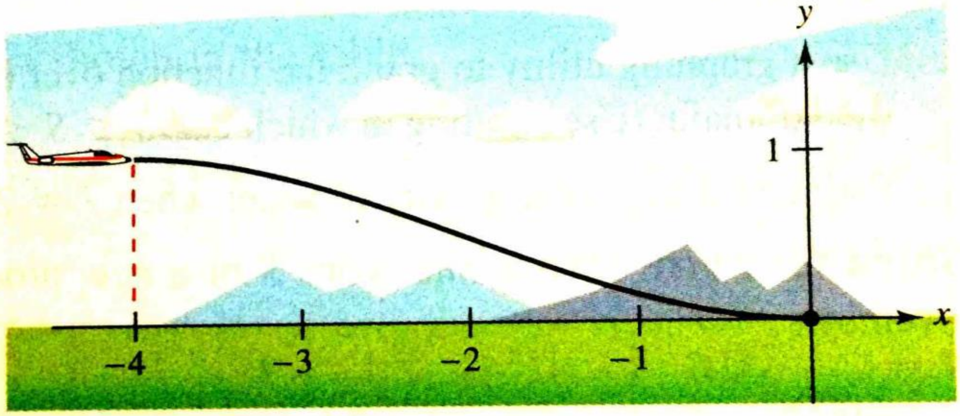
At points A and B, the slope of the model must match the grade of the hillside.

(b) Use a graphing utility to graph the model.

(c) Use a graphing utility to graph the derivative of the model.

(d) Determine the grade at the steepest part of the transitional section of the highway.

63. Aircraft Glide Path A small aircraft starts its descent from an altitude of 1 mile, 4 miles west of the runway (see figure).



(a) Find the cubic $f(x) = ax^3 + bx^2 + cx + d$ on the interval $[-4, 0]$ that describes a smooth glide path for the landing.

(b) The function in part (a) models the glide path of the plane. When would the plane be descending at the greatest rate?