

1.7 Selecting Procedures for Determining Limits

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 8 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **selecting procedures for determining limits**.

You must be able to:

- choose the right method (substitution, factoring, one-sided) for a limit
- interpret what $\frac{0}{0}$ and $\frac{\text{nonzero}}{0}$ signal

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a question type used later.

■ Choosing a method

- try **direct substitution** first;
- $\frac{0}{0}$ (an **indeterminate form** 未定式) $\rightarrow$ factor and cancel, or rationalize;
- $\frac{\text{nonzero}}{0} \rightarrow$ check for a vertical asymptote and use one-sided limits.

■ Example

$\lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{x-2}{x^2-4}$: substitution gives $\frac{0}{0}$, so cancel to $\frac{1}{x+2} = \frac{1}{4}$.

2 Practice

2.1 State the first method to try. [1]

2.2 State what a $\frac{0}{0}$ result signals. [1]

2.3 State what a $\frac{\text{nonzero}}{0}$ result signals. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The first thing to try for a limit is [1]

- **A** factoring
 - **B** direct substitution
 - **C** rationalizing
 - **D** a table
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3.2 A $\frac{0}{0}$ form means [1]

- **A** the limit is 0
 - **B** more algebra is needed
 - **C** the limit is ∞
 - **D** no limit exists
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3.3 $\lim_{x \rightarrow 2} \frac{x - 2}{x^2 - 4}$.

(a) Substitute to see the form. [1]

(b) Factor the denominator. [1]

(c) Simplify and evaluate. [1]

4 Go further

- work through the **1.7 Selecting Procedures for Determining Limits** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Limits and Continuity** section of the AP Calculus BC handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 direct substitution.

2.2 that more algebra (factoring/rationalizing) is needed.

2.3 a possible vertical asymptote —check one-sided limits.

3.1 B.

3.2 B.

3.3 (a) $\frac{0}{0}$. (b) $(x - 2)(x + 2)$. (c) $\frac{1}{x + 2} = \frac{1}{4}$.