

1.7 Rational Functions and End Behavior

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 9 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **rational functions and end behavior**.

You must be able to:

- describe a **rational function** 有理函数 as a quotient of polynomials
- find its end behavior from the ratio of the **leading terms**
- identify a **horizontal asymptote** 水平渐近线 where one exists

1 Worked examples

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

■ Rational functions

A **rational function** $r(x) = \frac{p(x)}{q(x)}$ is a quotient of two polynomials.

■ End behavior

For large $|x|$ each polynomial is dominated by its leading term, so the end behavior is the ratio of the leading terms:

- degree(top) < degree(bottom) → horizontal asymptote $y = 0$;
- degrees **equal** → $y = \frac{\text{leading coeff of top}}{\text{leading coeff of bottom}}$;
- degree(top) > degree(bottom) → **no** horizontal asymptote.

2 Practice

2.1 State what determines the end behavior of a rational function. [1]

2.2 For $r(x) = \frac{2x}{x^2 + 1}$, state the horizontal asymptote. [1]

2.3 For $r(x) = \frac{3x^2}{x^2 + 1}$, state the horizontal asymptote. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The end behavior of a rational function is found from the ratio of the [1]

- **A** constant terms
 - **B** leading terms
 - **C** zeros
 - **D** holes
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3.2 If the numerator degree is less than the denominator degree, the horizontal asymptote is [1]

- **A** $y = 1$
 - **B** $y = 0$
 - **C** none
 - **D** $y = x$
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3.3 $r(x) = \frac{4x^2 + 1}{2x^2 - 3}$.

(a) State the horizontal asymptote. [2]

(b) State whether the degrees are equal. [1]

4 Go further

- work through the **1.7 Rational Functions and End Behavior** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Polynomial and Rational Functions** section of the AP Precalculus hand-

out on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 the ratio of the leading terms of the numerator and denominator.

2.2 $y = 0$ (numerator degree is smaller).

2.3 $y = 3$ (equal degrees, ratio of leading coefficients $3/1$).

3.1 B.

3.2 B.

3.3 (a) $y = \frac{4}{2} = 2$. (b) yes (both degree 2).