

THEOREM 3—Limits of Rational Functions

If $P(x)$ and $Q(x)$ are polynomials and $Q(c) \neq 0$, then

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow c} \frac{P(x)}{Q(x)} = \frac{P(c)}{Q(c)}.$$

Identifying Common Factors

It can be shown that if $Q(x)$ is a polynomial and $Q(c) = 0$, then $(x - c)$ is a factor of $Q(x)$. Thus, if the numerator and denominator of a rational function of x are both zero at $x = c$, they have $(x - c)$ as a common factor.

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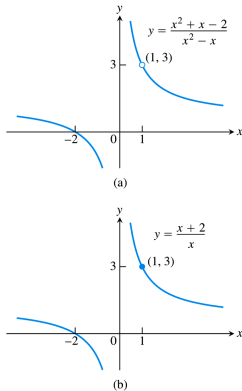


FIGURE 2.11 The graph of $f(x) = (x^2 + x - 2)/(x^2 - x)$ in part (a) is the same as the graph of $g(x) = (x + 2)/x$ in part (b) except at $x = 1$, where f is undefined. The functions have the same limit as $x \rightarrow 1$ (Example 7).

TABLE 2.3 Computer values of $f(x) = \frac{\sqrt{x^2 + 100} - 10}{x^2}$ near $x = 0$

x	$f(x)$
± 1	0.049876
± 0.5	0.049969
± 0.1	0.049999
± 0.01	0.050000
± 0.0005	0.080000
± 0.0001	0.000000
± 0.00001	0.000000
± 0.000001	0.000000

approaches 0.05?
approaches 0?