

# Partial Derivatives<sup>1</sup>

1. Enter the following commands:

```
syms x y
f = x*y*(x^2-y^2)/(x^2+y^2)
fx = diff(f, x)
fx = simplify(fx)
subs(fx, {x, y}, {0, y}) ..... This is  $f_x(0, y)$ .
```

2. Define  $f(0, 0) = 0$  and compute, by hand,

$$f_x(0, 0) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(h, 0) - f(0, 0)}{h}.$$

Why is it necessary to use the definition to compute  $f_x(0, 0)$ ?

3. Try: `fy = simplify(diff(f, y))`  
`subs(fy, {x, y}, {x, 0})` ..... This is  $f_y(x, 0)$ .  
 Then, compute  $f_y(0, 0)$  by hand.

4. Compute, by hand,

$$f_{xy}(0, 0) = (f_x)_y(0, 0) = \lim_{k \rightarrow 0} \frac{f_x(0, k) - f_x(0, 0)}{k}$$

and

$$f_{yx}(0, 0) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f_y(h, 0) - f_y(0, 0)}{h}$$

What do you notice about  $f_{xy}(0, 0)$  and  $f_{yx}(0, 0)$ ?

5. Try: `fxxy = diff(fx, y)`  
`fxxy = simplify(fxxy)`  
`ezmesh(fxxy)`  
 What do you notice about the graph of  $f_{xy}$ ?
6. Either obtain a printout of the graph, or, carefully sketch it by hand, making sure to clearly label axes.
7. Using complete sentences and standard mathematical notation, write a brief report, showing your hand calculations and answering all the questions.

The user is reminded of the definition of derivative and encounters a situation where it must be used. The user also encounters a situation where second derivatives are not continuous and  $f_{xy} \neq f_{yx}$ .

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