

5.4 The First Derivative Test for Local Extrema

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 9 marks

KEY WORDS local minimum 极小值 • local maximum 极大值 • local extremum 局部极值
• critical point 临界点

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on the **First Derivative Test**.

You must be able to:

- use the sign change of f' to classify a **local extremum** 局部极值

1 Worked examples

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

■ First Derivative Test

At a critical point, look at how f' changes:

- + to - $\rightarrow$ local **maximum**;
- - to + $\rightarrow$ local **minimum**;
- no sign change $\rightarrow$ neither.

■ Example

$f'(x) = 2x - 4$ at $x = 2$: f' goes - (for $x < 2$) to + (for $x > 2$), so $x = 2$ is a local minimum.

2 Practice

2.1 State the sign change for a local maximum. [1]

2.2 State the sign change for a local minimum. [1]

2.3 For $f'(x) = 2x - 4$, classify $x = 2$. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A local maximum occurs where f' changes [1]

- A - to +
- B + to -
- C stays +
- D stays -

3.2 A local minimum occurs where f' changes [1]

- A + to -
- B - to +
- C stays 0
- D never

3.3 $f'(x) = 2x - 4$, critical at $x = 2$.

(a) State the sign of f' for $x < 2$. [1]

(b) State the sign for $x > 2$. [1]

(c) Classify $x = 2$. [1]

Solutions

2.1 f' changes from $+$ to $-$.

2.2 f' changes from $-$ to $+$.

2.3 f' goes $-$ to $+$, so $x = 2$ is a local minimum.

3.1 B.

3.2 B.

3.3 (a) negative. (b) positive. (c) local minimum.