

Theorem: Suppose that  $f$  and  $g$  are differentiable functions with  $g \neq 0$ . Then

$$\left(\frac{f}{g}\right)' = \frac{f'g - fg'}{g^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\frac{f}{g}\right)' &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{\frac{f}{g}(x+h) - \frac{f}{g}(x)}{h} = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{\frac{f(x+h)}{g(x+h)} - \frac{f(x)}{g(x)}}{h} = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{\frac{f(x+h)g(x) - f(x)g(x+h)}{g(x)g(x+h)}}{h} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{h} \cdot \frac{f(x+h)g(x) - f(x)g(x+h)}{g(x)g(x+h)} = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h)g(x) - f(x)g(x+h)}{hg(x)g(x+h)} \end{aligned}$$

We smuggle in  $f(x)g(x)$

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\frac{f}{g}\right)' &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h)g(x) - f(x)g(x) + f(x)g(x) - f(x)g(x+h)}{hg(x)g(x+h)} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \left( \frac{f(x+h)g(x) - f(x)g(x)}{hg(x)g(x+h)} + \frac{f(x)g(x) - f(x)g(x+h)}{hg(x)g(x+h)} \right) \end{aligned}$$

We factor out  $g(x)$  in the first term and  $f(x)$  in the second.

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\frac{f}{g}\right)' &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \left( \frac{g(x)[f(x+h) - f(x)]}{hg(x)g(x+h)} + \frac{f(x)[g(x) - g(x+h)]}{hg(x)g(x+h)} \right) \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{hg(x+h)} + \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x)[g(x) - g(x+h)]}{hg(x)g(x+h)} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h} \cdot \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{g(x+h)} + f(x) \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{-[g(x+h) - g(x)]}{hg(x)g(x+h)} \\ &= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h} \cdot \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{g(x+h)} + f(x) \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \left( -\frac{g(x+h) - g(x)}{h} \right) \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{g(x)g(x+h)} \\ &= f'(x) \cdot \frac{1}{g(x)} + f(x) \cdot (-g'(x)) \cdot \frac{1}{(g(x))^2} \end{aligned}$$

This last conclusion is correct because of the following facts:

$$\lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h} = f'(x) \text{ by the definition of the derivative}$$

$$\lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{g(x+h)} = \frac{1}{\lim_{h \rightarrow 0} g(x+h)} = \frac{1}{g(x)} \text{ because } g \text{ is continuous at } x$$

$$\lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \left( -\frac{g(x+h) - g(x)}{h} \right) = -\lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{g(x+h) - g(x)}{h} = -g'(x) \text{ by properties of limits and the definition of the derivative.}$$

$$\lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{g(x)g(x+h)} = \frac{1}{\lim_{h \rightarrow 0} g(x)g(x+h)} = \frac{1}{g(x) \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} g(x+h)} = \frac{1}{(g(x))^2} \text{ because } g \text{ is continuous.}$$

Thus we have that

$$\left(\frac{f}{g}\right)'(x) = \frac{f'(x)}{g(x)} + \frac{f(x)(-g'(x))}{(g(x))^2} = \frac{f'(x)g(x)}{(g(x))^2} + \frac{f(x)(-g'(x))}{(g(x))^2} = \frac{f'(x)g(x) - f(x)g'(x)}{(g(x))^2}$$

For more documents like this, visit our page at <http://www.teaching.martahidegkuti.com> and click on Lecture Notes. E-mail questions or comments to [mhidegkuti@ccc.edu](mailto:mhidegkuti@ccc.edu).