

Example Find $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x+1}{x}$

A standard technique is to divide both the denominator and the numerator by the highest power of x that appears in the denominator. In this case, this means x :

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x+1}{x} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x+1}{x} \cdot \left(\frac{1/x}{1/x}\right) \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1 + \frac{1}{x}}{1} \\ &= \frac{\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} 1 + \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{x}}{\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} 1} \\ &= \frac{1 + 0}{1} = 1 \end{aligned}$$

You could also reach the same conclusion by re-writing $f(x) = \frac{x+1}{x} = 1 + \frac{1}{x}$ and recognizing that as x goes to infinity the term $\frac{1}{x}$ is really small compared to 1, so the long run behavior of this function is more dependent on the 1 part of the function rather than the $\frac{1}{x}$. Also note that by our definition of horizontal asymptotes $x = 1$ is a horizontal asymptote for f .

Example Find $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x^2+1}{x}$.

Once again divide both the denominator and the numerator by the highest power of x that appears in the denominator. Again it is x ;

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x^2+1}{x} &= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x^2+1}{x} \cdot \left(\frac{1/x}{1/x}\right) \\ &= \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{x + \frac{1}{x}}{1} \\ &= \frac{\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} x + \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{x}}{\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} 1} \end{aligned}$$

Right there we stop. Even though in an extended real line course you can write that limit directly as $\frac{\infty+0}{1} = \infty$, we cannot do that in this class and we don't need to. Think of this way at the end you are considering $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} x + \frac{1}{x}$. Just as we noted at the end of the previous example as x gets larger and larger indefinitely, so does the x term in this limit: Since $\frac{1}{x}$ is small when x is large, it will not affect the value of x by much so $x + \frac{1}{x}$ will become very large and hence the limit is ∞ .