



Department of Mathematical Sciences

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Correct Handling of Known Infinite Limit Forms

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{3x^2 + 2}{x}$$

The following approach does not work although all steps are correct.

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{3x^2 + 2}{x} &= \text{division} \\ \frac{\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 3x^2 + 2}{\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x} &= \text{addition} \\ \frac{\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 3x^2 + \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 2}{\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x} &= \text{multiplication} \\ \frac{(\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 3) (\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x)^2 + \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 2}{\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x} &= \frac{2}{0}. \end{aligned}$$

The conclusion is arithmetically undefined, that is, we cannot divide by zero except **inside** a limit. This hints at the following solution which does work.

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{3x^2 + 2}{x} &= \\ \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x} \cdot (3x^2 + 2) &= \text{multiplication} \\ \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x} \cdot \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} (3x^2 + 2) &= \text{addition} \\ \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x} \cdot \left(\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 3x^2 + \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 2 \right) &= \text{multiplication} \\ \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x} \cdot \left(\left[\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 3 \right] \left[\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} x \right]^2 + \lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} 2 \right) &= \infty \end{aligned}$$

The conclusion is the result of known forms including the infinite form $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0^+} \frac{1}{x} = \infty$.