

Reference – absolute value transformations

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Vertex

Given the function $f(x) = |x - h| + k$, the vertex is at the point (h, k) .

Shifts

$g(x) = f(x) + k$ Shift up by k units (outside change)

$h(x) = f(x + k)$ Shift left by k units (inside change)

Example 1

Let $f(x) = 2|x - 1|$, write the rule for $k(x)$ if $k(x)$ is a shift two units down and three units to the right. Determine the vertex.

Answer

$k(x) = 2|x - 1(-3)| - 2$ Subtracting on the inside shifts the graph 3 units to the right; subtracting two outside shifts it two units down.

$k(x) = 2|x - 4| - 2$ The correct rule. The vertex is $(4, -2)$.

Reflections

$g(x) = -f(x)$ Reflection across x axis

$h(x) = f(-x)$ Reflection across y axis

$k(x) = -f(-x)$ Reflection across origin

Example 2

Let $f(x) = 2|x - 1|$, write the rule for $m(x)$ if $m(x)$ is a reflection across the y -axis. Determine the vertex.

Answer

$m(x) = 2|(-x) + 1|$ Replacing x with $-x$ reflects the graph across the y -axis.

$m(x) = 2|-x + 1|$ The correct rule. The vertex is $(-1, 0)$.

Stretches and compressions

The function $g(x) = k \cdot f(x)$ is $f(x)$:

- Vertically stretched by k if $k > 1$
- Vertically compressed by k if $0 < k < 1$
- Either compressed or stretched by $|k|$ and reflected across the x axis if $k < 0$

The function $g(x) = f(kx)$ is $f(x)$:

- Horizontally compressed by k if $k > 1$, or by $\frac{1}{k}$ if $k < 1$
- Horizontally stretched by k if $k < 1$, or by $\frac{1}{k}$ if $k > 1$

Example 3

Stretch the graph of $f(x) = |x| - 2$ vertically by a factor of 3 and determine the vertex.

Answer

$$g(x) = 3(|x| - 2)$$

Multiply $f(x)$ by 3.

$$g(x) = 3|x| - 6$$

The correct rule. The vertex is (0,-6).

Example 4

Compress the graph of $f(x) = |x - 1| - 3$ horizontally by a factor of 0.5 and determine the vertex.

Answer

$$g(x) = f\left(\frac{1}{k}x\right)$$

$$g(x) = \left|\frac{1}{0.5}x - 1\right| - 3$$

Multiply x by $\frac{1}{k}$, or $\frac{1}{0.5}$.

$$g(x) = |2x - 1| - 3$$

The correct rule. The vertex is $\left(\frac{1}{2}, -3\right)$.