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abc

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Lab

Find the difference quotient of $f(x)$ when $f(x) = x^3$.

We proceed as demonstrated in the lab manual; assuming that $h \neq 0$ we have

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h} &= \frac{(x+h)^3 - x^3}{h} \\ &= \frac{x^3 + 3x^2h + 3xh^2 + h^3 - x^3}{h} \\ &= \frac{3x^2h + 3xh^2 + h^3}{h} \\ &= \frac{h(3x^2 + 3xh + h^2)}{h} \\ &= 3x^2 + 3xh + h^2\end{aligned}$$