

1. The goal of this first part is to compute the derivative of the inverse function  $f^{-1}(x)$  of a function  $f(x)$  (and this way prove the formula).

(a) Write down the chain rule.

*The goal of this exercise is to have the students prove the formula for  $(f^{-1}(x))'$ .*

(b) Let  $f(x)$  be a function and  $f^{-1}(x)$  its inverse.  
What is  $f(f^{-1}(x))$  equal to?

(c) Take the equation from the preceding point and differentiate both sides with respect to  $x$ .  
What do you get? Have you used the chain rule? If so, where?

(d) Use what you have found to determine the derivative  $(f^{-1}(x))'$ .

(e) What do we assume when using the previous formula?

*The existence of  $f'(x)$  and  $f'(x) \neq 0$ .*

Let us now apply what we have just seen.

2. We want to compute the derivative of  $f(x) = \ln x$ . How can we use the preceding formula?

3. Let us now focus on the derivative of  $f(x) = a^x$ .  
How can we rewrite this function in terms of  $e^x$  and  $\ln x$ ?  
Then what is  $(a^x)'$  ?

*One should introduce here the formula for  $(\log_a)'$ .*

4. Compute the derivatives of:

i)  $f(x) = \ln(\sin x)$

*This exercise and the next one are a good opportunity to talk about the “limitations” of the formula of the derivative. I.e. when is the  $\ln$  defined.*

ii)  $g(x) = \frac{1}{\ln 3x}$

iii)  $h(t) = 3^{t^2}$

iv)  $f(z) = \log_5 e^z$

v)  $g(t) = \ln(e^{3t} \sin^2 t)$

vi)  $h(x) = \log_2(2^x e^2)$

vii) What is wrong with the following statement?

The derivative of  $f(x) = \ln(\ln x)$  is  $f'(x) = \frac{1}{x} \ln x + \ln x \frac{1}{x} = \frac{2 \ln x}{x}$ .

*One could also ask: how many points should a student who gives this answer get?*