

## 2.7

## Piecewise Functions

## What you should learn

**GOAL 1** Represent piecewise functions.

**GOAL 2** Use piecewise functions to model **real-life** quantities, such as the amount you earn at a summer job in **Example 6**.

## Why you should learn it

▼ To solve **real-life** problems, such as determining the cost of ordering silk-screen T-shirts in **Exs. 54 and 55**.

**GOAL 1** REPRESENTING PIECEWISE FUNCTIONS

Up to now in this chapter a function has been represented by a single equation. In many real-life problems, however, functions are represented by a combination of equations, each corresponding to a part of the domain. Such functions are called **piecewise functions**. For example, the piecewise function given by

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} 2x - 1, & \text{if } x \leq 1 \\ 3x + 1, & \text{if } x > 1 \end{cases}$$

is defined by two equations. One equation gives the values of  $f(x)$  when  $x$  is less than or equal to 1, and the other equation gives the values of  $f(x)$  when  $x$  is greater than 1.

**EXAMPLE 1** Evaluating a Piecewise Function

Evaluate  $f(x)$  when (a)  $x = 0$ , (b)  $x = 2$ , and (c)  $x = 4$ .

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} x + 2, & \text{if } x < 2 \\ 2x + 1, & \text{if } x \geq 2 \end{cases}$$

**SOLUTION**

- a.  $f(x) = x + 2$  **Because  $0 < 2$ , use first equation.**  
 $f(0) = 0 + 2 = 2$  **Substitute 0 for  $x$ .**
- b.  $f(x) = 2x + 1$  **Because  $2 \geq 2$ , use second equation.**  
 $f(2) = 2(2) + 1 = 5$  **Substitute 2 for  $x$ .**
- c.  $f(x) = 2x + 1$  **Because  $4 \geq 2$ , use second equation.**  
 $f(4) = 2(4) + 1 = 9$  **Substitute 4 for  $x$ .**

**EXAMPLE 2** Graphing a Piecewise Function

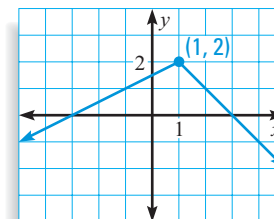
Graph this function:  $f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2}x + \frac{3}{2}, & \text{if } x < 1 \\ -x + 3, & \text{if } x \geq 1 \end{cases}$

**SOLUTION**

To the left of  $x = 1$ , the graph is given by  $y = \frac{1}{2}x + \frac{3}{2}$ .

To the right of and including  $x = 1$ , the graph is given by  $y = -x + 3$ .

The graph is composed of two rays with common initial point  $(1, 2)$ .

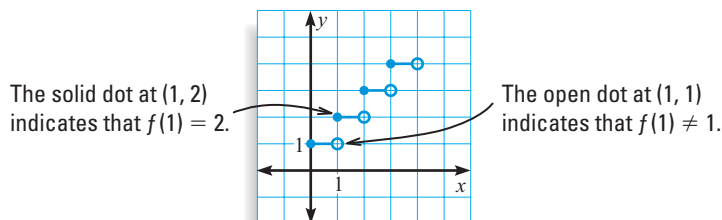


**EXAMPLE 3** Graphing a Step Function

$$\text{Graph this function: } f(x) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } 0 \leq x < 1 \\ 2, & \text{if } 1 \leq x < 2 \\ 3, & \text{if } 2 \leq x < 3 \\ 4, & \text{if } 3 \leq x < 4 \end{cases}$$

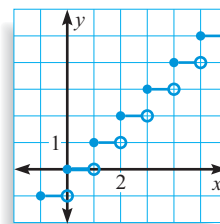
**SOLUTION**

The graph of the function is composed of four line segments. For instance, the first line segment is given by the equation  $y = 1$  and represents the graph when  $x$  is greater than or equal to 0 and less than 1.



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The function in Example 3 is called a **step function** because its graph resembles a set of stair steps. Another example of a step function is the *greatest integer function*. This function is denoted by  $g(x) = \llbracket x \rrbracket$ . For every real number  $x$ ,  $g(x)$  is the greatest integer less than or equal to  $x$ . The graph of  $g(x)$  is shown at the right. Note that in Example 3 the function  $f$  could have been written as  $f(x) = \llbracket x \rrbracket + 1$ ,  $0 \leq x < 4$ .

**EXAMPLE 4** Writing a Piecewise Function

Write equations for the piecewise function whose graph is shown.

**SOLUTION**

To the left of  $x = 0$ , the graph is part of the line passing through  $(-2, 0)$  and  $(0, 2)$ . An equation of this line is given by:

$$y = x + 2$$

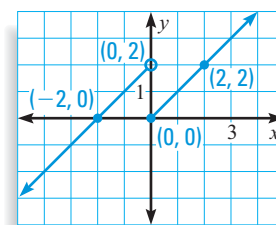
To the right of and including  $x = 0$ , the graph is part of the line passing through  $(0, 0)$  and  $(2, 2)$ . An equation of this line is given by:

$$y = x$$

► The equations for the piecewise function are:

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} x + 2, & \text{if } x < 0 \\ x, & \text{if } x \geq 0 \end{cases}$$

Note that  $f(x) = x + 2$  does *not* correspond to  $x = 0$  because there is an *open* dot at  $(0, 2)$ , but  $f(x) = x$  *does* correspond to  $x = 0$  because there is a *solid* dot at  $(0, 0)$ .



## GOAL 2 USING PIECEWISE FUNCTIONS IN REAL LIFE



### EXAMPLE 5 Using a Step Function

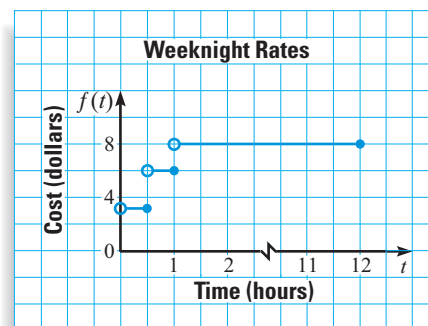
- Write and graph a piecewise function for the parking charges shown on the sign.
- What are the domain and range of the function?

**Garage Rates (Weekends)**  
**\$3 per half hour**  
**\$8 maximum for 12 hours**

#### SOLUTION

- For times up to one half hour, the charge is \$3. For each additional half hour (or portion of a half hour), the charge is an additional \$3 until you reach \$8. Let  $t$  represent the number of hours you park. The piecewise function and graph are:

$$f(t) = \begin{cases} 3, & \text{if } 0 < t \leq 0.5 \\ 6, & \text{if } 0.5 < t \leq 1 \\ 8, & \text{if } 1 < t \leq 12 \end{cases}$$



- The domain is  $0 < t \leq 12$ , and the range consists of 3, 6, 8



### EXAMPLE 6 Using a Piecewise Function

You have a summer job that pays time and a half for overtime. That is, if you work more than 40 hours per week, your hourly wage for the extra hours is 1.5 times your normal hourly wage of \$7.

- Write and graph a piecewise function that gives your weekly pay  $P$  in terms of the number  $h$  of hours you work.
- How much will you get paid if you work 45 hours?

#### SOLUTION

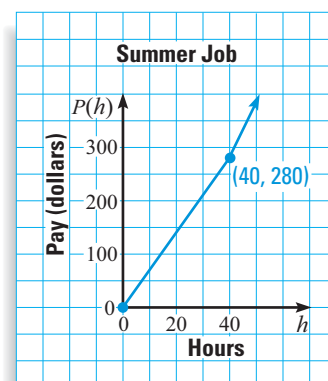
- For up to 40 hours your pay is given by  $7h$ .  
For over 40 hours your pay is given by:

$$7(40) + 1.5(7)(h - 40) = 10.5h - 140$$

- The piecewise function is:

$$P(h) = \begin{cases} 7h, & \text{if } 0 \leq h \leq 40 \\ 10.5h - 140, & \text{if } h > 40 \end{cases}$$

The graph of the function is shown. Note that for up to 40 hours the rate of change is \$7 per hour, but for over 40 hours the rate of change is \$10.50 per hour.



- To find how much you will get paid for working 45 hours, use the equation  $P(h) = 10.5h - 140$ .

$$P(45) = 10.5(45) - 140 = 332.5$$

- You will earn \$332.50.

## GUIDED PRACTICE

### Vocabulary Check ✓

### Concept Check ✓

1. Define piecewise function and step function. Give an example of each.
2. Look back at Example 3. What does a solid dot on the graph of a step function indicate? What does an open dot indicate?

Tell whether the statement is **True** or **False**. Explain.

3. In the graph of a piecewise function, the separate pieces are always connected.

$$4. f(x) = \begin{cases} 2, & \text{if } 1 \leq x < 2 \\ 4, & \text{if } 2 \leq x < 3 \\ 6, & \text{if } 3 \leq x < 4 \end{cases} \text{ can be rewritten as } f(x) = 2\llbracket x \rrbracket, 1 \leq x < 4.$$

### Skill Check ✓

Evaluate  $f(x) = \begin{cases} 3x - 1, & \text{if } x \leq 4 \\ 2x + 7, & \text{if } x > 4 \end{cases}$  for the given value of  $x$ .

5.  $x = 10$

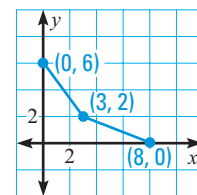
6.  $x = -\frac{1}{3}$

7.  $x = 4$

8.  $x = -2$

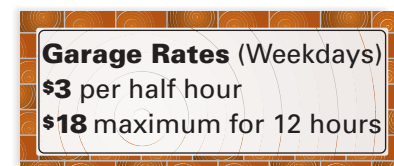
Graph the function.

$$9. f(x) = \begin{cases} 2x + 1, & \text{if } x < 1 \\ -x + 4, & \text{if } x \geq 1 \end{cases} \quad 10. f(x) = \begin{cases} 4, & \text{if } 0 \leq x < 2 \\ 5, & \text{if } 2 \leq x < 4 \\ 6, & \text{if } 4 \leq x < 6 \end{cases}$$



Ex. 11

11. Write equations for the piecewise function whose graph is shown.
12. **PARKING RATES** The weekday parking rates for a garage are shown. Write and graph a piecewise function for the weekday parking charges at that garage.



## PRACTICE AND APPLICATIONS

### STUDENT HELP

▶ **Extra Practice**  
to help you master  
skills is on p. 942.

**EVALUATING FUNCTIONS** Evaluate the function for the given value of  $x$ .

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} 5x - 1, & \text{if } x < -2 \\ x - 9, & \text{if } x \geq -2 \end{cases}$$

13.  $f(-4)$

14.  $f(-2)$

15.  $f(0)$

16.  $f(5)$

$$h(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2}x - 10, & \text{if } x \leq 6 \\ -x - 1, & \text{if } x > 6 \end{cases}$$

17.  $h(1)$

18.  $h(-10)$

19.  $h(6)$

20.  $h(0)$

**GRAPHING FUNCTIONS** Graph the function.

$$21. f(x) = \begin{cases} 2x, & \text{if } x \geq 1 \\ -x + 3, & \text{if } x < 1 \end{cases}$$

$$22. f(x) = \begin{cases} x + 6, & \text{if } x \leq -3 \\ -\frac{2}{3}x - 3, & \text{if } x > -3 \end{cases}$$

$$23. f(x) = \begin{cases} 2x + 13, & \text{if } x \geq -5 \\ x + \frac{1}{2}, & \text{if } x < -5 \end{cases}$$

$$24. f(x) = \begin{cases} -x, & \text{if } x > 2 \\ x - 4, & \text{if } x \leq 2 \end{cases}$$

$$25. f(x) = \begin{cases} 3x - 14, & \text{if } x \leq 4 \\ -2x + 6, & \text{if } x > 4 \end{cases}$$

$$26. f(x) = \begin{cases} x - 8, & \text{if } x < 9 \\ \frac{1}{3}x - 2, & \text{if } x \geq 9 \end{cases}$$

### STUDENT HELP

#### ▶ HOMEWORK HELP

**Example 1:** Exs. 13–20

**Example 2:** Exs. 21–26

**Example 3:** Exs. 27–32

**Example 4:** Exs. 35–40

**Examples 5 and 6:**

Exs. 50–59

**GRAPHING STEP FUNCTIONS** Graph the step function.

$$27. f(x) = \begin{cases} 3, & \text{if } -1 \leq x < 2 \\ 5, & \text{if } 2 \leq x < 4 \\ 8, & \text{if } 4 \leq x < 9 \\ 10, & \text{if } 9 \leq x < 12 \end{cases}$$

$$28. f(x) = \begin{cases} 6.5, & \text{if } -4 \leq x < -2 \\ 4.1, & \text{if } -2 \leq x < 1 \\ 0.9, & \text{if } 1 \leq x < 3 \\ -2.1, & \text{if } 3 \leq x < 6 \end{cases}$$

$$29. f(x) = \begin{cases} -1, & \text{if } 0 \leq x < 1 \\ -3, & \text{if } 1 \leq x < 2 \\ -5, & \text{if } 2 \leq x < 3 \\ -7, & \text{if } 3 \leq x < 4 \\ -9, & \text{if } 4 \leq x < 5 \end{cases}$$

$$30. f(x) = \begin{cases} 4, & \text{if } -10 < x \leq -8 \\ 6, & \text{if } -8 < x \leq -6 \\ 8, & \text{if } -6 < x \leq -4 \\ 9.1, & \text{if } -4 < x \leq -2 \\ 10, & \text{if } -2 < x \leq 0 \end{cases}$$

**SPECIAL STEP FUNCTIONS** Graph the special step function. Then explain how you think the function got its name.

**31. CEILING FUNCTION**

$$f(x) = \lceil x \rceil = \begin{cases} \dots \\ 1, & \text{if } 0 < x \leq 1 \\ 2, & \text{if } 1 < x \leq 2 \\ 3, & \text{if } 2 < x \leq 3 \\ \dots \end{cases}$$

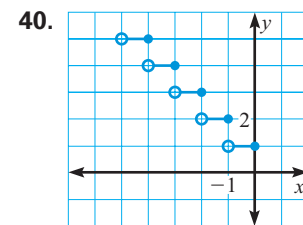
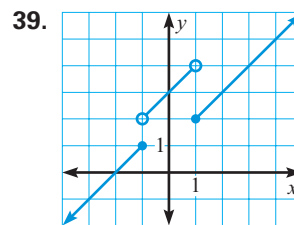
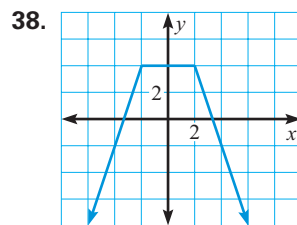
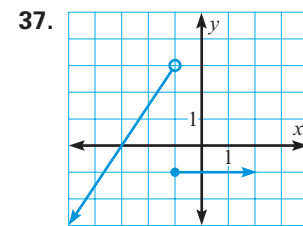
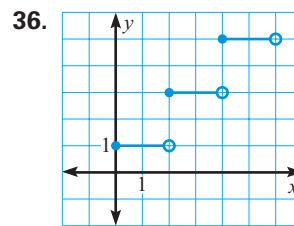
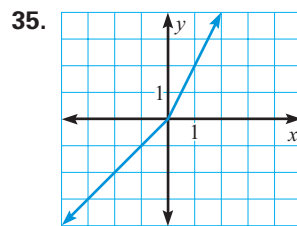
**32. ROUNDING FUNCTION**

$$f(x) = \text{ROUND}(x) = \begin{cases} \dots \\ 1, & \text{if } 0.5 \leq x < 1.5 \\ 2, & \text{if } 1.5 \leq x < 2.5 \\ 3, & \text{if } 2.5 \leq x < 3.5 \\ \dots \end{cases}$$

**33. CRITICAL THINKING** Look back at Example 2. How would the graph of the function change if  $<$  was replaced with  $\leq$  and  $\geq$  was replaced with  $>$ ? Explain your answer.

**34. CRITICAL THINKING** Look back at Example 3. How would the graph of the function change if each  $\leq$  was replaced with  $<$  and each  $<$  was replaced with  $\leq$ ? Explain your answer.

**WRITING PIECEWISE FUNCTIONS** Write equations for the piecewise function whose graph is shown.



**STUDENT HELP**  
**KEYSTROKE HELP**  
 Visit our Web site [www.mcdougallittell.com](http://www.mcdougallittell.com) to see keystrokes for several models of calculators.

**GREATEST INTEGER FUNCTION** On many graphing calculators  $\llbracket x \rrbracket$  is denoted by  $\text{int}(x)$ . Use a graphing calculator to graph the function.

- 41.  $g(x) = \llbracket x \rrbracket$
- 42.  $g(x) = \llbracket 2x \rrbracket$
- 43.  $g(x) = \llbracket x \rrbracket - 1$
- 44.  $g(x) = \llbracket x + 3 \rrbracket$
- 45.  $g(x) = 6\llbracket x \rrbracket$
- 46.  $g(x) = \llbracket 3x \rrbracket + 4$
- 47.  $g(x) = 4\llbracket x + 7 \rrbracket$
- 48.  $g(x) = -\llbracket x \rrbracket$
- 49.  $g(x) = 3\llbracket x - 2 \rrbracket + 5$

 **POSTAL RATES** In Exercises 50 and 51, use the following information.

As of January 10, 1999, the cost  $C$  (in dollars) of sending next-day mail using the United States Postal Service, depending on the weight  $x$  (in ounces) of a package up to five pounds, is given by the function below.



**DATA UPDATE** of United States Postal Service data at [www.mcdougallittell.com](http://www.mcdougallittell.com)

$$C(x) = \begin{cases} 11.75, & \text{if } 0 < x \leq 8 \\ 15.75, & \text{if } 8 < x \leq 32 \\ 18.50, & \text{if } 32 < x \leq 48 \\ 21.25, & \text{if } 48 < x \leq 64 \\ 24.00, & \text{if } 64 < x \leq 80 \end{cases}$$

50. Graph the function.

51. Identify the domain and range of the function.

 **PHOTOCOPY RATES** In Exercises 52 and 53, use the function given for the cost  $C$  (in dollars) of making  $x$  photocopies at a copy shop.

$$C(x) = \begin{cases} 0.15x, & \text{if } 0 < x \leq 25 \\ 0.10x, & \text{if } 26 \leq x \leq 100 \\ 0.07x, & \text{if } 101 \leq x \leq 500 \\ 0.05x, & \text{if } 501 \leq x \end{cases}$$

52. Graph the function.

53. **VISUAL THINKING** Use your graph to explain why it would not be cost-effective to make 450 photocopies.

 **SILK-SCREEN T-SHIRTS** In Exercises 54 and 55, use the following silk-screen shop charges.

- An initial charge of \$20 to create the silk screen
- \$17.00 per shirt for orders of 50 or fewer shirts
- \$15.80 per shirt for orders of more than 50 shirts

54. Write a piecewise function that gives the cost  $C$  for an order of  $x$  shirts.

55. Graph the function.

 **SOCIAL SECURITY** In Exercises 56 and 57, use the following information.

The amount of Social Security tax you pay, part of your Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) deductions, depends on your annual income. As of 1999 you pay 6.2% of your income if it is less than \$72,600. If your income is at least \$72,600, you pay a fixed amount of \$4501.20.



**DATA UPDATE** of Social Security Administration data at [www.mcdougallittell.com](http://www.mcdougallittell.com)

56. Write and graph a piecewise function that gives the Social Security tax.

57. How much Social Security tax do you pay if you make \$30,000 per year?

 **SNOWSTORM** In Exercises 58 and 59, use the following information.

During a nine hour snowstorm it snows at a rate of 1 inch per hour for the first two hours, at a rate of 2 inches per hour for the next six hours, and at a rate of 1 inch per hour for the final hour.

58. Write and graph a piecewise function that gives the depth of the snow during the snowstorm.

59. How many inches of snow accumulated from the storm?

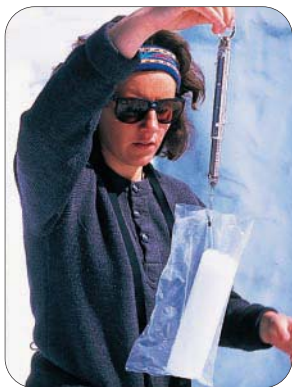
**STUDENT HELP**



**HOMEWORK HELP**

Visit our Web site [www.mcdougallittell.com](http://www.mcdougallittell.com) for help with problem solving in Exs. 52 and 53.

**FOCUS ON APPLICATIONS**



 **SNOWSTORM**

By weighing snow at the end of a snowstorm you can determine the water content of the snow. This information is one of the factors used to determine avalanche warnings.



**APPLICATION LINK**

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## Test Preparation

**QUANTITATIVE COMPARISON** In Exercises 60 and 61, choose the statement that is true about the given quantities.

- (A) The quantity in column A is greater.  
 (B) The quantity in column B is greater.  
 (C) The two quantities are equal.  
 (D) The relationship cannot be determined from the given information.

	Column A	Column B
60.	$f(3)$ where $f(x) = \begin{cases} 2x - 7, & \text{if } x \leq 1 \\ -x + 9, & \text{if } x > 1 \end{cases}$	$f(2)$ where $f(x) = \begin{cases} x + 2, & \text{if } x < 8 \\ 3x - 3, & \text{if } x \geq 8 \end{cases}$
61.	$f(0)$ where $f(x) = \begin{cases} 5x + 1, & \text{if } x < 9 \\ 6x - 4, & \text{if } x \geq 9 \end{cases}$	$f(-4)$ where $f(x) = \begin{cases} 9, & \text{if } x \leq -4 \\ 11, & \text{if } x > -4 \end{cases}$

## ★ Challenge

62. **SCUBA DIVING** The time  $t$  (in minutes) that a person may safely scuba dive without having to decompress while surfacing is determined by the depth  $d$  (in feet) of the dive. Using the information below, write and graph a piecewise inequality that describes the time limits for scuba divers at various depths.
- For depths from 40 feet (the minimum depth requiring decompression) to  $53\frac{1}{3}$  feet, the time must not exceed 600 minutes minus ten times the depth.
  - For depths greater than  $53\frac{1}{3}$  feet to less than 90 feet, the time must not exceed 120 minutes minus the depth.
  - For depths from 90 feet to 130 feet (the maximum safe depth for a recreational diver), the time must not exceed 75 minutes minus one half the depth.

### EXTRA CHALLENGE

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## MIXED REVIEW

**SOLVING EQUATIONS** Solve the equation. (Review 1.7 for 2.8)

63.  $|9 + 4x| = 15$       64.  $|7x + 3| = 11$       65.  $|21 - 2x| = 9$   
 66.  $|2x + 8| = 1$       67.  $|\frac{1}{2}x - 5| = 11$       68.  $|1 - \frac{3}{4}x| = 6$

**SCATTER PLOTS** Draw a scatter plot of the data. Then tell whether the data have a *positive*, a *negative*, or *relatively no correlation*. (Review 2.5)

69.

$x$	-8	-8	-7	-6	-5	-4	-4	-2	-2	-1
$y$	-2	-8	-5	-7	-1	-4	-8	-1	-3	-7

70.

$x$	1	1.5	1.5	2.5	3	3.5	5	5.5	7	8
$y$	9	8	6	5	6	4	2	3	1	2

71. **SLEEPING BAGS** To be comfortable, sleeping bags rated for  $-40^\circ\text{F}$  have 3.5 inches of insulation, and those rated for  $40^\circ\text{F}$  have 1.5 inches. Write a linear model for the amount  $a$  of insulation needed to be comfortable at temperature  $T$ . How much insulation would you need to be comfortable at  $0^\circ\text{F}$ ? (Review 2.4)