

slope

The steepness of the graph of a linear function of the form $y = ax + b$. When the coefficient a is zero, the graph will be a horizontal line. When the coefficient is positive, the line will ascend, i.e. the values of the function will grow, and when the coefficient is negative, the line will descend (the function values decrease). The slope of the function $y = ax + b$ is determined by the coefficient a alone while b determines the function's *intercept*. More generally, the slope can also be determined for a non-linear function, by finding its first derivative.