12. We use Eq. 2-2 for average velocity and Eq. 2-4 for instantaneous velocity, and work with distances in centimeters and times in seconds.

(a) We plug into the given equation for x for $t = 2.00$ s and $t = 3.00$ s and obtain $x_2 = 21.75$ cm and $x_3 = 50.25$ cm, respectively. The average velocity during the time interval $2.00 \le t \le 3.00$ s is

$$v_{\text{avg}} = \frac{\Delta x}{\Delta t} = \frac{50.25\,\text{cm} - 21.75\,\text{cm}}{3.00\,\text{s} - 2.00\,\text{s}}$$

which yields $v_{\text{avg}} = 28.5$ cm/s.

(b) The instantaneous velocity is $v = \frac{dx}{dt} = 4.5t^2$, which yields $v = (4.5)(2.00)^2 = 18.0$ cm/s at time $t = 2.00$ s.

(c) At $t = 3.00$ s, the instantaneous velocity is $v = (4.5)(3.00)^2 = 40.5$ cm/s.

(d) At $t = 2.50$ s, the instantaneous velocity is $v = (4.5)(2.50)^2 = 28.1$ cm/s.

(e) Let t_m stand for the moment when the particle is midway between x_2 and x_3 (that is, when the particle is at $x_m = (x_2 + x_3)/2 = 36$ cm). Therefore,

$$x_m = 9.75 + 1.5t_m^3 \implies t_m = 2.596$$

in seconds. Thus, the instantaneous speed at this time is $v = 4.5(2.596)^2 = 30.3$ cm/s.

(f) The answer to part (a) is given by the slope of the straight line between $t = 2$ and $t = 3$ in this x-vs-t plot. The answers to parts (b), (c), (d) and (e) correspond to the slopes of tangent lines (not shown but easily imagined) to the curve at the appropriate points.