Cheatsheet - Binomial Coefficients & Identities

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1. Binomial Theorem

An expression consisting of two terms, connected by a $+$ or $-$ sign, is called a **binomial expression**. As we increase the power of binomials, expanding them becomes more and more complicated:

$$
\begin{aligned}
(x+y)^1 &= x+y \\
(x+y)^2 &= x^2+2xy+y^2 \\
(x+y)^3 &= x^3+3x^2y+3xy^2+y^3 \\
&\dots
\end{aligned}
$$

The **binomial theorem** helps us to simplify this expansion. Let x and y be variables, and n a non-negative integer. The expansion of $(x+y)^n$ can be formalized as:

$$(x+y)^n = \sum_{k=0}^{n} \binom{n}{k} x^k y^{n-k}$$

The **binomial coefficients** are the coefficients in the binomial theorem and denoted as:

$$\binom{n}{k} = \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$$

Here we say **"n choose k"**.

For example:

> *What is the coefficient of x^8y^7 in the expansion of $(3x-y)^{15}$.*

We can view the expression as $(3x+(-y))^{15}$. By the binomial theorem:

$$(3x+(-y))^{15} = \sum_{k=0}^{15} \binom{15}{k} (3x)^k (-y)^{15-k}$$

The coefficient of x^8y^7 in the expansion is obtained when $k=8$:

$$\binom{15}{8}(3)^8(-1)^7 = -3^8\frac{15!}{8!7!}$$

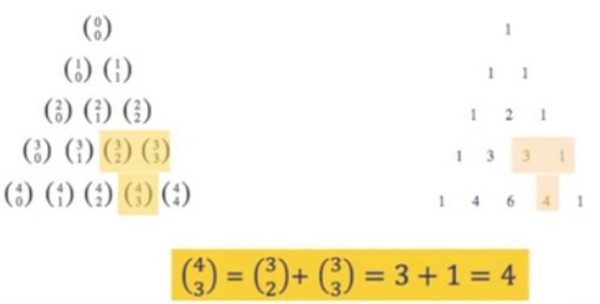
1.1. Pascal's Identity

If n and k are integers with $n \geq k \geq 1$, then:

$$\binom{n}{k} + \binom{n}{k-1} = \binom{n+1}{k}$$

1.2. Pascal's Triangle

Pascals' triangle is a number triangle with numbers arranged in staggered rows such that $a_{n,r}$ **is the binomial coefficient** $\binom{n}{r}$.



Using Pascal's identity, we can show that the result of adding two **adjacent** coefficients in this triangle is **equal** to the binomial coefficient in the **next row between these two coefficients**.

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