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$(a, b) = (c, d)$ **if and only if** $a = c$ **and** $b = d$

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Following is a proof that the ordered pairs (a, b) and (c, d) are equal if and only if $a = c$ and $b = d$.

Proof. If $a = c$ and $b = d$, then $(a, b) = \{\{a\}, \{a, b\}\} = \{\{c\}, \{c, d\}\} = (c, d)$.

Assume that $(a, b) = (c, d)$ and $a = b$. Then $\{\{c\}, \{c, d\}\} = (c, d) = (a, b) = \{\{a\}, \{a, b\}\} = \{\{a\}, \{a, a\}\} = \{\{a\}, \{a\}\} = \{\{a\}\}$. Thus, $\{c, d\} \in \{\{a\}\}$. Therefore, $\{c, d\} = \{a\}$. Hence, $a = c$ and $a = d$. Since it was also assumed that $a = b$, it follows that $a = c$ and $b = d$.

Finally, assume that $(a, b) = (c, d)$ and $a \neq b$. Then $\{a\} \neq \{a, b\}$. Note that $\{\{a\}, \{a, b\}\} = (a, b) = (c, d) = \{\{c\}, \{c, d\}\}$. Thus, $\{c\} \in \{\{a\}, \{a, b\}\}$. It cannot be the case that $\{c\} = \{a, b\}$ (lest $a = c = b$). Thus, $\{c\} = \{a\}$. Therefore, $a = c$. Hence, $\{\{a\}, \{a, b\}\} = \{\{c\}, \{c, d\}\} = \{\{a\}, \{a, d\}\}$. Note that $\{a, b\} \in \{\{a\}, \{a, d\}\}$. Since $\{a\} \neq \{a, b\}$, it must be the case that $\{a, b\} = \{a, d\}$. Thus, $b \in \{a, d\}$. Since $a \neq b$, it must be the case that $b = d$. It follows that $a = c$ and $b = d$. \square