



planetmath.org

Math for the people, by the people.

generator for the mutiplicative group of a field

Canonical name	GeneratorForTheMutiplicativeGroupOfAField
Date of creation	2013-03-22 16:53:17
Last modified on	2013-03-22 16:53:17
Owner	polarbear (3475)
Last modified by	polarbear (3475)
Numerical id	16
Author	polarbear (3475)
Entry type	Result
Classification	msc 11T99
Classification	msc 12E20

**Proposition 1** *The multiplicative group  $K^*$  of a finite field  $K$  is cyclic.*

Theorem 3.1 in the <http://planetmath.org/FiniteField> entry proves this proposition along with a more general result:

**Proposition 2** *If for every natural number  $d$ , the equation  $x^d = 1$  has at most  $d$  solutions in a finite group  $G$  then  $G$  is cyclic. Equivalently, for any positive divisor  $d$  of  $|G|$ .*

This last proposition implies that every finite subgroup of the multiplicative group of a field (finite or not) is cyclic.

We will give an alternative constructive proof of Proposition 1:

We first factorize  $q - 1 = \prod_{i=1}^n p_i^{e_i}$ . There exists an element  $y_i$  in  $K^*$  such that  $y_i$  is not root of  $x^{(q-1)/p_i} - 1$ , since the polynomial has degree less than  $q - 1$ . Let  $z_i = y_i^{(q-1)/p_i^{e_i}}$ . We note that  $z_i$  has order  $p_i^{e_i}$ . In fact  $z_i^{p_i^{e_i}} = 1$  and  $z_i^{p_i^{e_i}-1} = y_i^{(q-1)/p_i} \neq 1$ .

Finally we choose the element  $z = \prod_{i=1}^n z_i$ . By the Theorem 1 <http://planetmath.org/OrderOfElement> we obtain that the order of  $z$  is  $q - 1$  i.e.  $z$  is a generator of the cyclic group  $K^*$ .