

# Division Theorem Proof

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## Theorem

Let  $a$  and  $b$  be integers, with  $b$  being positive. Then there are unique integers  $q$  and  $r$  such that  $a = q \cdot b + r$  and  $0 \leq r < b$ .

## Proof

First we prove existence. Take a set of non-negative integers of the form  $\{a - k \cdot b\}$ . By the well-ordering principle, every non-empty set of positive integers contains a least element. Thus, if we have a set of non-negative integers of the form  $\{a - k \cdot b\}$ , we have picked the smallest one if we can show that this set is non-empty. Choosing  $k = -|a|$ , we have  $a + |a| \cdot b$ . Since  $b \geq 1$ , we have  $a + |a| \cdot b \geq a + |a| \geq 0$ . Since for  $k = -|a|$ , we have a positive integer, the set is non-empty. Now suppose that the smallest such integer in  $\{a - k \cdot b\}$  occurs when  $k = q$ , and let  $a - q \cdot b = r$ . Suppose that  $r \geq b$ , then we have  $r = a - q \cdot b \geq b$ . We can write this as  $a - q \cdot b - b \geq 0 \iff a - (q + 1) \cdot b \geq 0$ . But since  $q + 1 > q$ ,  $a - (q + 1) \cdot b < a - q \cdot b \iff 0 < b$ . But we already assumed  $a - q \cdot b$  was the smallest element. This is a contradiction, and thus  $r < b$ , and so  $0 \leq r < b$ . Hence, we have proved existence. Now we prove uniqueness. Suppose there are integers  $q_1, q_2, r_1, r_2$  satisfying  $a = q_1 \cdot b + r_1 = q_2 \cdot b + r_2$  with  $0 \leq r_1, r_2 < b$ . Then we can rewrite the above as  $q_1 \cdot b - q_2 \cdot b = r_1 - r_2 \iff (q_1 - q_2) \cdot b = r_1 - r_2$ , hence  $r_1 - r_2$  is some multiple of  $b$ . However, since  $0 \leq r_1, r_2 < b$  and  $r_1$  and  $r_2$  are integers,  $r_1 - r_2$  must be 0. Hence, we have  $r_1 = r_2$  and  $q_1 = q_2$ . Hence, we have proved uniqueness. Since we have proved existence and uniqueness, we have proved the theorem.

QED