

Sets, relations, and functions

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- Logical consistency: A set of propositional logic statements is consistent if at least one state of affairs satisfies every statement in the set.
- Inference: a conclusion is *valid* with respect to a set of premises if the conclusion is true in every situation where the premises are true (van Benthem, et al, section 2-4).

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- Data independence through abstraction.
- The interdefinability of fundamental modeling constructs.
- Deep vs. superficial differences in modeling languages.
- The expressiveness vs. tractability tradeoff.
- The fundamental role of a very small set of inter-related concepts.

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Formal set-theoretic accounts

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- They're willing to sacrifice conceptual richness and subtlety for precision and rigor.
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- Sometimes a demonstration that we *can* account for something in terms of simple sets is seen as valuable, even if it's not convenient or practical to ever use the reduction again.

The notion of set is taken as “undefined”, “primitive”, or “basic”, so we don’t try to define what a set is, but we can give an informal description, describe important properties of sets, and give examples. All other notions of mathematics can be built up based on the notion of set.

Description: a set is a collection of objects which are called the members or elements of that set. If we have a set we say that some objects belong (or do not belong) to this set, are (or are not) in the set. We say also that sets consist of their elements.

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- When specifying a set in predicate notation, different descriptions may pick out exactly the same set.
- But properties are not defined by their instances. Therefore, properties and sets are different.

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- $\emptyset \subseteq \{a, b, c\}$ but $\emptyset \notin \{a, b, c\}$

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- But the set of odd integers between 2 and 8 is the same as the set of primes between 2 and 8. This is not just any equivalence relationship: we’re talking about only one set.
- You might specify a category “students enrolled at the iSchool,” but its *extension* would be different sets at different times.

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- Relative Complement: $A - B =_{def} \{x | x \in A \text{ and } x \notin B\}$

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- $A \times B \times C =_{\text{def}} ((A \times B) \times C)$

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- A relation $F \subseteq A \times B$ is a *function* (or mapping) $F : A \rightarrow B$ if and only if the domain of F is A and F pairs every element in that domain with exactly one element in the range, i.e. $\langle a, b \rangle \in F$ and $\langle a, c \rangle \in F$ implies $b = c$.