

Session 58: Primes

- Primes
- Basic Theorems on Primes

Primes

Definition: A positive integer p greater than 1 is called **prime** if the only positive factors of p are 1 and p . A positive integer that is greater than 1 and is not prime is called **composite**.

Example:

The integer 7 is prime because its only positive factors are 1 and 7

The integer 9 is composite because it is divisible by 3.

The Fundamental Theorem of Arithmetic

Theorem: If n is an integer greater than 1, then n can be written as the product of primes.

Examples:

$$100 = 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 5 \cdot 5 = 2^2 \cdot 5^2$$

$$641 = 641$$

$$999 = 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 \cdot 37 = 3^3 \cdot 37$$

$$1024 = 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 = 2^{10}$$

Proof of Fundamental Theorem of Arithmetic

Proof: (strong induction) Let $P(n)$ be the proposition that n can be written as a product of primes.

- BASIS STEP: $P(2)$ is true since 2 itself is prime.
- INDUCTIVE STEP: The inductive hypothesis is $P(j)$ is true for all integers j with $2 \leq j \leq k$. To show that $P(k + 1)$ must be true under this assumption, two cases need to be considered:
 - If $k + 1$ is prime, then $P(k + 1)$ is true.
 - Otherwise, $k + 1$ is composite and can be written as the product of two positive integers a and b with $2 \leq a \leq b < k + 1$. By the inductive hypothesis a and b can be written as the product of primes and therefore $k + 1$ can also be written as the product of those primes.

Hence, it has been shown that every integer greater than 1 can be written as the product of primes. \square

Trial Division

Theorem: If n is a composite integer, then n has a prime divisor less than or equal to \sqrt{n} .

Proof:

If n is composite it can be written as $n = ab$.

Either $a \leq \sqrt{n}$ or $b \leq \sqrt{n}$: if this is not the case, i.e. $a > \sqrt{n}$ and $b > \sqrt{n}$, $ab > n$, which is a contradiction.

W.l.o.g. assume $a \leq \sqrt{n}$.

Then either a is prime, or a has a prime factor that is smaller than \sqrt{n} .

In either case the theorem follows. □



Eratosthenes
(276-194 B.C.)

The Sieve of Eratosthenes

The *Sieve of Eratosthenes* can be used to find all primes not exceeding a specified positive integer.

For example, begin with the list of integers between 1 and 100.

- Delete all the integers, other than 2, divisible by 2.
- Delete all the integers, other than 3, divisible by 3.
- Next, delete all the integers, other than 5, divisible by 5.
- Next, delete all the integers, other than 7, divisible by 7.
- Since all the remaining integers are not divisible by any of the previous integers, other than 1, the primes are:

{2,3,5,7,11,13,17,19,23,29,31,37,41,43,47,53,59,61,67,71,73,79,83,89, 97}

The Sieve of Eratosthenes

TABLE 1 The Sieve of Eratosthenes.

<i>Integers divisible by 2 other than 2 receive an underline.</i>										<i>Integers divisible by 3 other than 3 receive an underline.</i>									
1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5	<u>6</u>	7	<u>8</u>	9	<u>10</u>	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5	<u>6</u>	7	8	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
11	<u>12</u>	13	<u>14</u>	15	<u>16</u>	17	<u>18</u>	19	<u>20</u>	11	<u>12</u>	13	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	17	<u>18</u>	19	<u>20</u>
21	<u>22</u>	23	<u>24</u>	25	<u>26</u>	27	<u>28</u>	29	<u>30</u>	21	<u>22</u>	23	<u>24</u>	25	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	29	<u>30</u>
31	<u>32</u>	33	<u>34</u>	35	<u>36</u>	37	<u>38</u>	39	<u>40</u>	31	<u>32</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>34</u>	35	<u>36</u>	37	<u>38</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>40</u>
41	<u>42</u>	43	<u>44</u>	45	<u>46</u>	47	<u>48</u>	49	<u>50</u>	41	<u>42</u>	43	<u>44</u>	45	<u>46</u>	47	<u>48</u>	49	<u>50</u>
51	<u>52</u>	53	<u>54</u>	55	<u>56</u>	57	<u>58</u>	59	<u>60</u>	51	<u>52</u>	53	<u>54</u>	55	<u>56</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>58</u>	59	<u>60</u>
61	<u>62</u>	63	<u>64</u>	65	<u>66</u>	67	<u>68</u>	69	<u>70</u>	61	<u>62</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>64</u>	65	<u>66</u>	67	<u>68</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>70</u>
71	<u>72</u>	73	<u>74</u>	75	<u>76</u>	77	<u>78</u>	79	<u>80</u>	71	<u>72</u>	73	<u>74</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>76</u>	77	<u>78</u>	79	<u>80</u>
81	<u>82</u>	83	<u>84</u>	85	<u>86</u>	87	<u>88</u>	89	<u>90</u>	81	<u>82</u>	83	<u>84</u>	85	<u>86</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>88</u>	89	<u>90</u>
91	<u>92</u>	93	<u>94</u>	95	<u>96</u>	97	<u>98</u>	99	<u>100</u>	91	<u>92</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>94</u>	95	<u>96</u>	97	<u>98</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>100</u>
<i>Integers divisible by 5 other than 5 receive an underline.</i>										<i>Integers divisible by 7 other than 7 receive an underline; integers in color are prime.</i>									
1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5	<u>6</u>	7	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5	<u>6</u>	7	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
11	<u>12</u>	13	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	17	<u>18</u>	19	<u>20</u>	11	<u>12</u>	13	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	17	<u>18</u>	19	<u>20</u>
21	<u>22</u>	23	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	29	<u>30</u>	21	<u>22</u>	23	<u>24</u>	25	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	29	<u>30</u>
31	<u>32</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>36</u>	37	<u>38</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>40</u>	31	<u>32</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>36</u>	37	<u>38</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>40</u>
41	<u>42</u>	43	<u>44</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>46</u>	47	<u>48</u>	49	<u>50</u>	41	<u>42</u>	43	<u>44</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>46</u>	47	<u>48</u>	49	<u>50</u>
51	<u>52</u>	53	<u>54</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>58</u>	59	<u>60</u>	51	<u>52</u>	53	<u>54</u>	55	<u>56</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>58</u>	59	<u>60</u>
61	<u>62</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>66</u>	67	<u>68</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>70</u>	61	<u>62</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>66</u>	67	<u>68</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>70</u>
71	<u>72</u>	73	<u>74</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>76</u>	77	<u>78</u>	79	<u>80</u>	71	<u>72</u>	73	<u>74</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>78</u>	79	<u>80</u>
81	<u>82</u>	83	<u>84</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>88</u>	89	<u>90</u>	81	<u>82</u>	83	<u>84</u>	85	<u>86</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>88</u>	89	<u>90</u>
91	<u>92</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>96</u>	97	<u>98</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>100</u>	91	<u>92</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>96</u>	97	<u>98</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>100</u>

Infinitude of Primes



Euclid

(325 B.C.E. – 265 B.C.E.)

Theorem: There are infinitely many primes (Euclid).

Proof: Assume finitely many primes: p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n

- Let $q = p_1 p_2 \cdots p_n + 1$
- Either q is prime or by the fundamental theorem of arithmetic it is a product of primes.
 - None of the primes p_j divides q since
if $p_j \mid q$, then p_j divides $q - p_1 p_2 \cdots p_n = 1$.
 - Hence, there is a prime not on the list p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n .
 - It is either q , or if q is composite, it is a prime factor of q .
 - This contradicts the assumption that p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n are all the primes.
- Consequently, there are infinitely many primes. □

Summary

- Primes
- Basic Theorems on Primes
 - Fundamental Theorem of Arithmetic
 - Trial Division
- Sieve of Erastosthenes
- Euclid's Theorem