

Discrete Algebraic Structures

WiSe 2025/2026

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Research Group for Theoretical Computer Science



- Read the information sheet, many of your questions are answered there
- Sorry, it's not possible to make an exception "just for you"
- Starting this week: graded quiz in all the tutorials, the points count for the *Studienleistung*
- You don't submit solutions to the extra exercises given to you, this is only for practice.
But you can ask your tutor to have a look at your solution during the tutorial.

- Set: **unordered** bag of **distinct** things
- Notation: $\{1, 3, 4, 2\}$ is the set that contains 1, 3, 4, 2 and nothing else
- $x \in A$ means “ x is an element of A ”
- $B \subseteq A$ means “every element of B is an element of A ”
- Operations on sets:
 - $A \cup B$: **union**, set of elements contained in at least one of A or B
 - $A \cap B$: **intersection**, set of elements contained in both A and B
 - $A \setminus B$: **difference**, set of elements contained in A and not in B
 - $A \Delta B$: set of elements in exactly one of A and B
 - $A \times B$: set of **pairs** (a, b) with $a \in A$ and $b \in B$
 - $\mathcal{P}(A)$: set of **all subsets** of A

- Proof: sequence of basic instructions that shows how a **conclusion** follows from some **hypotheses**
- Writing a proof = writing a program
- Basic instruction:
 - applying a definition,
 - making a simple logical step (more on this next week),
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- Basic instruction:
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- A correct proof is a proof that is able to **convince**.
The best you can do for yourself: be **skeptical** of your own work (always ask “why?”)

Functions

Informally: a function from A to B is a recipe to transform an element of A into an element of B

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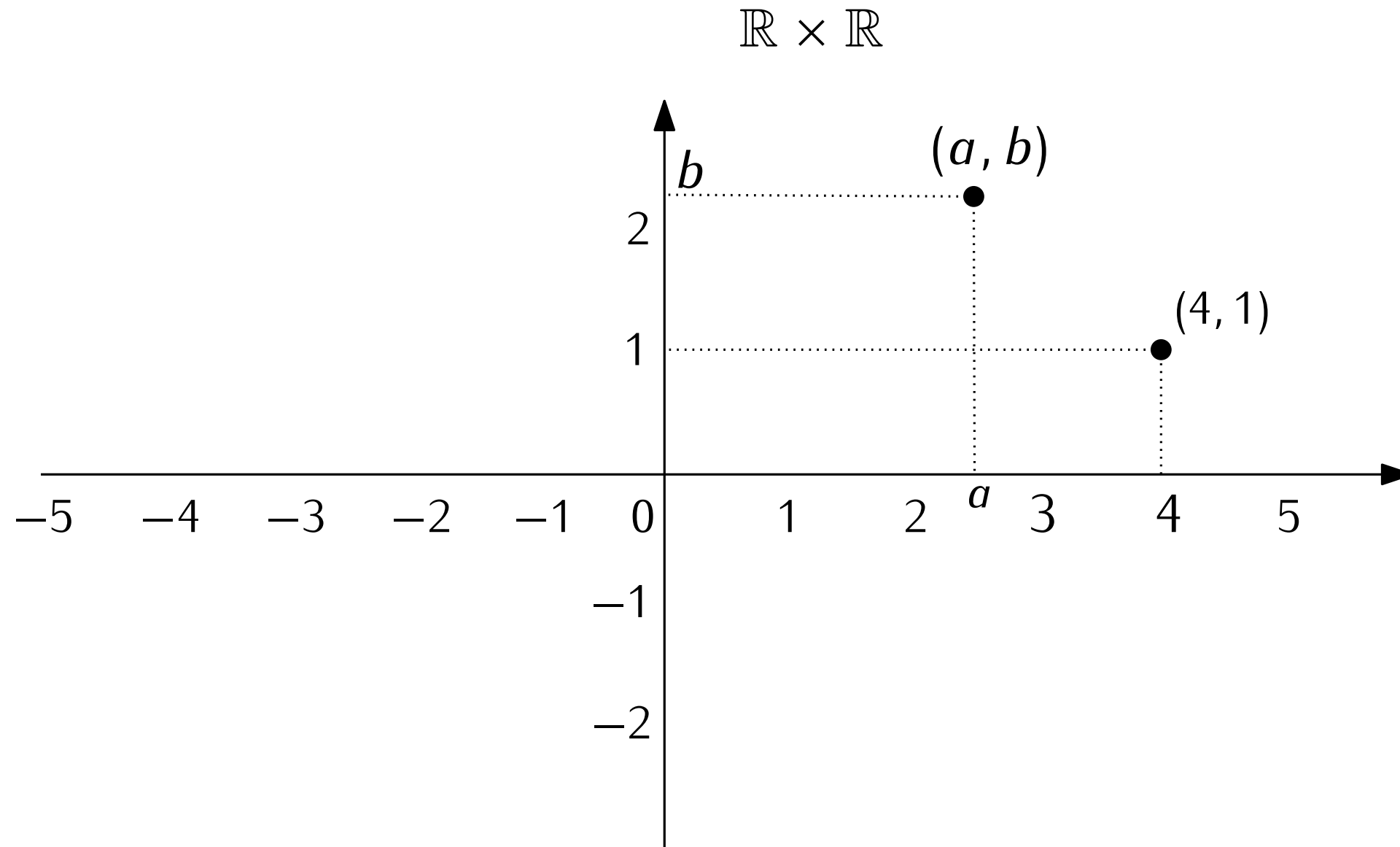
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Notation. $f: A \rightarrow B$ means “ f is a function with domain A and codomain B ”.
 $f(a)$: output of the function on the input a

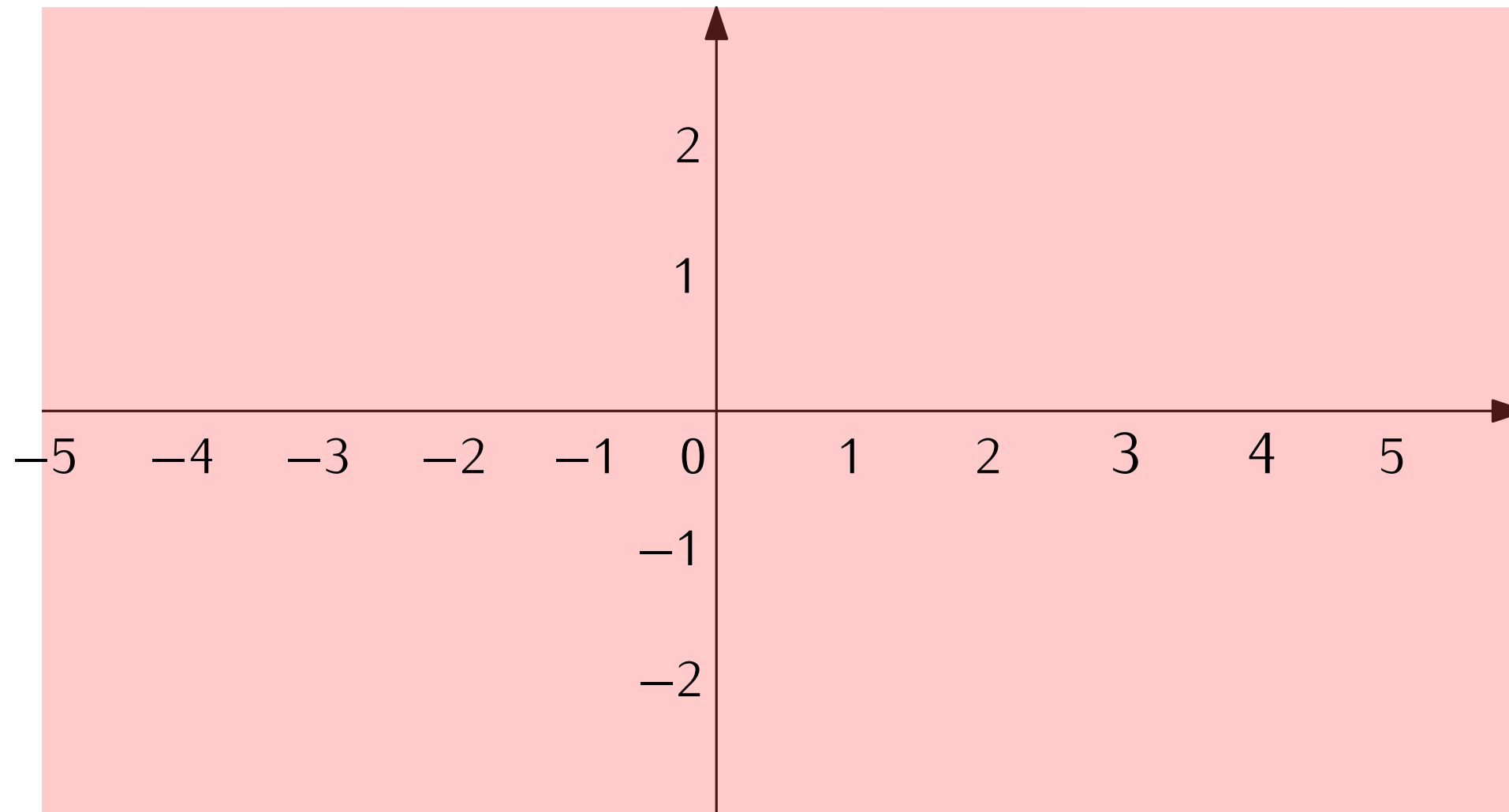
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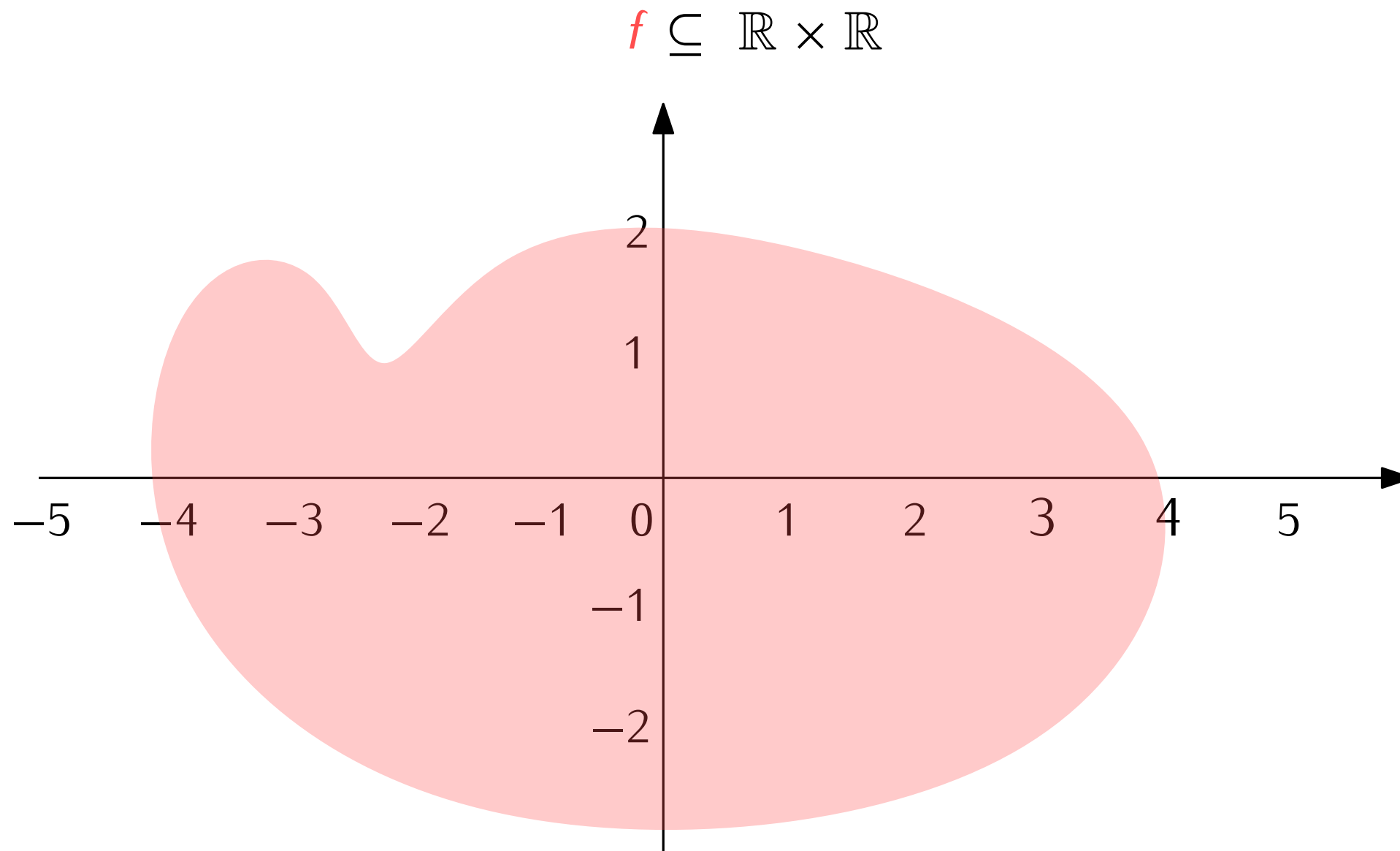
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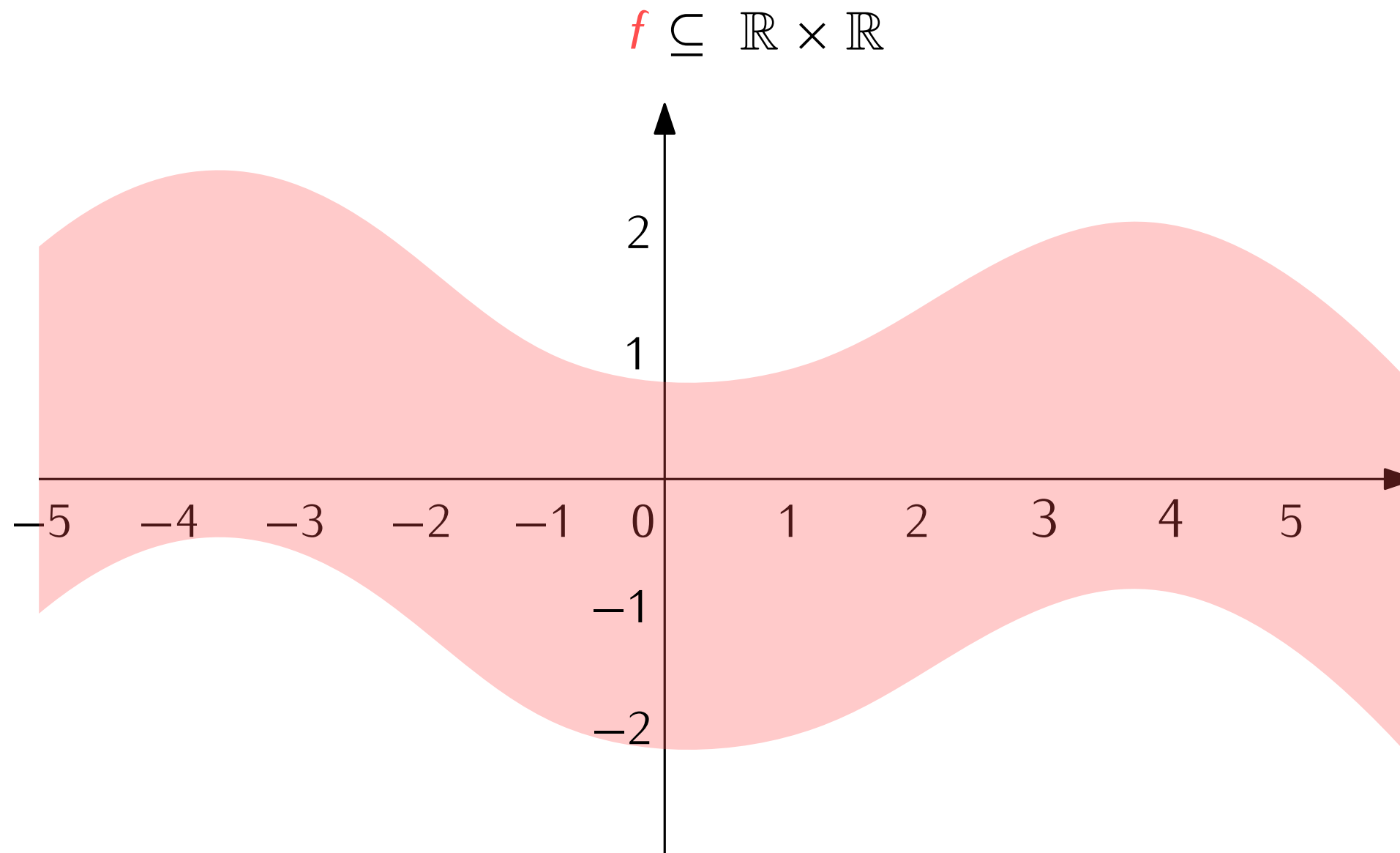
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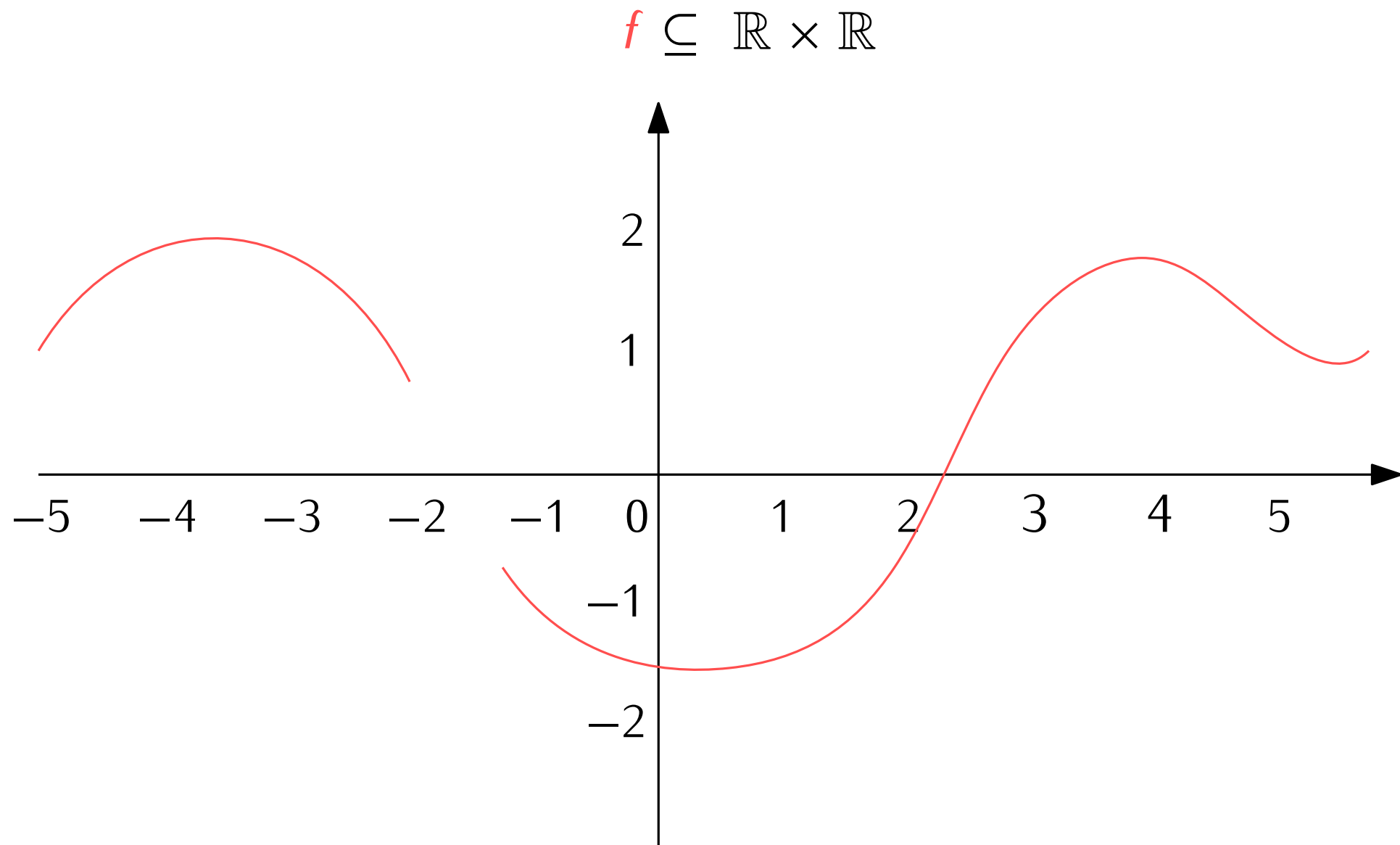
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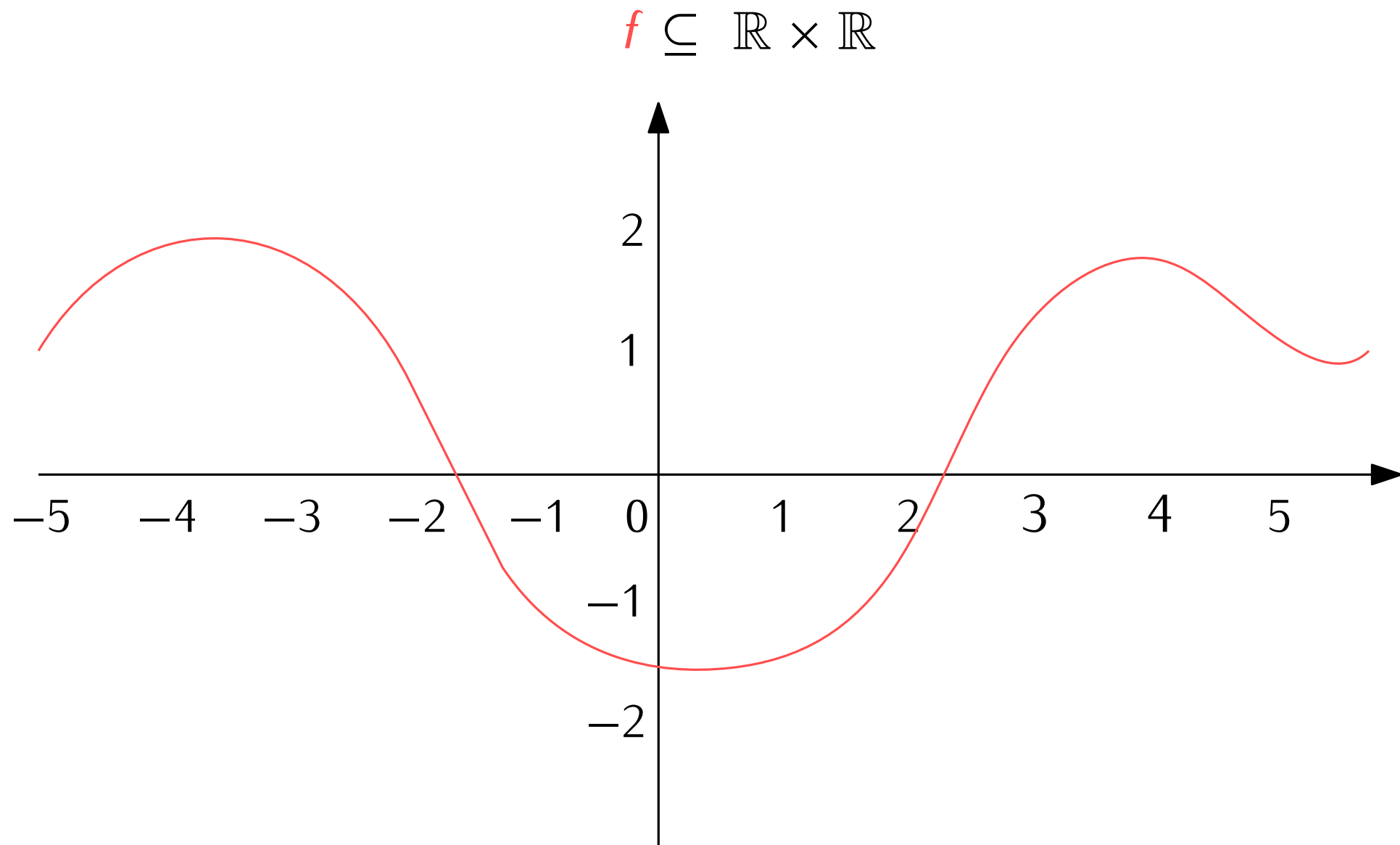
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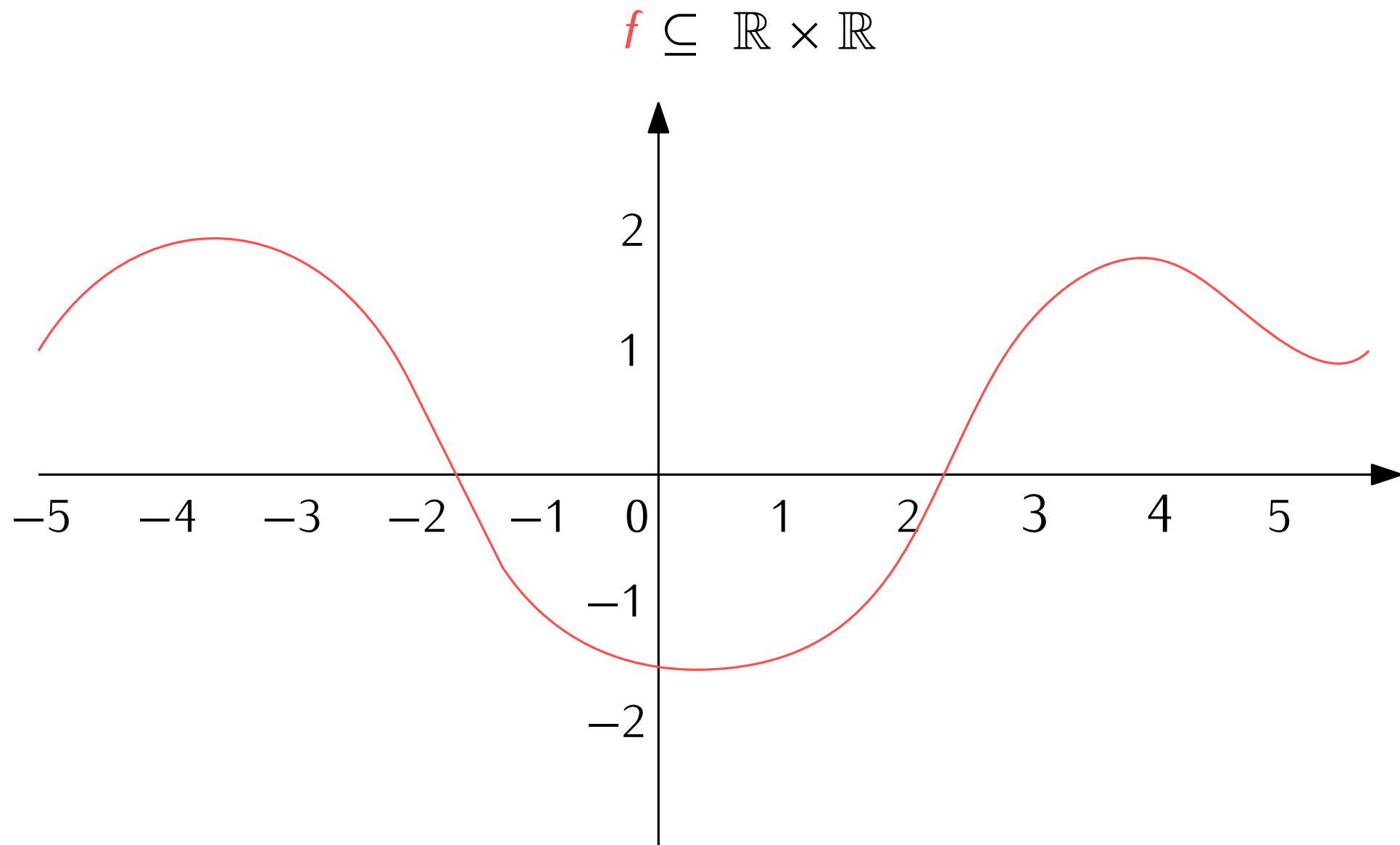
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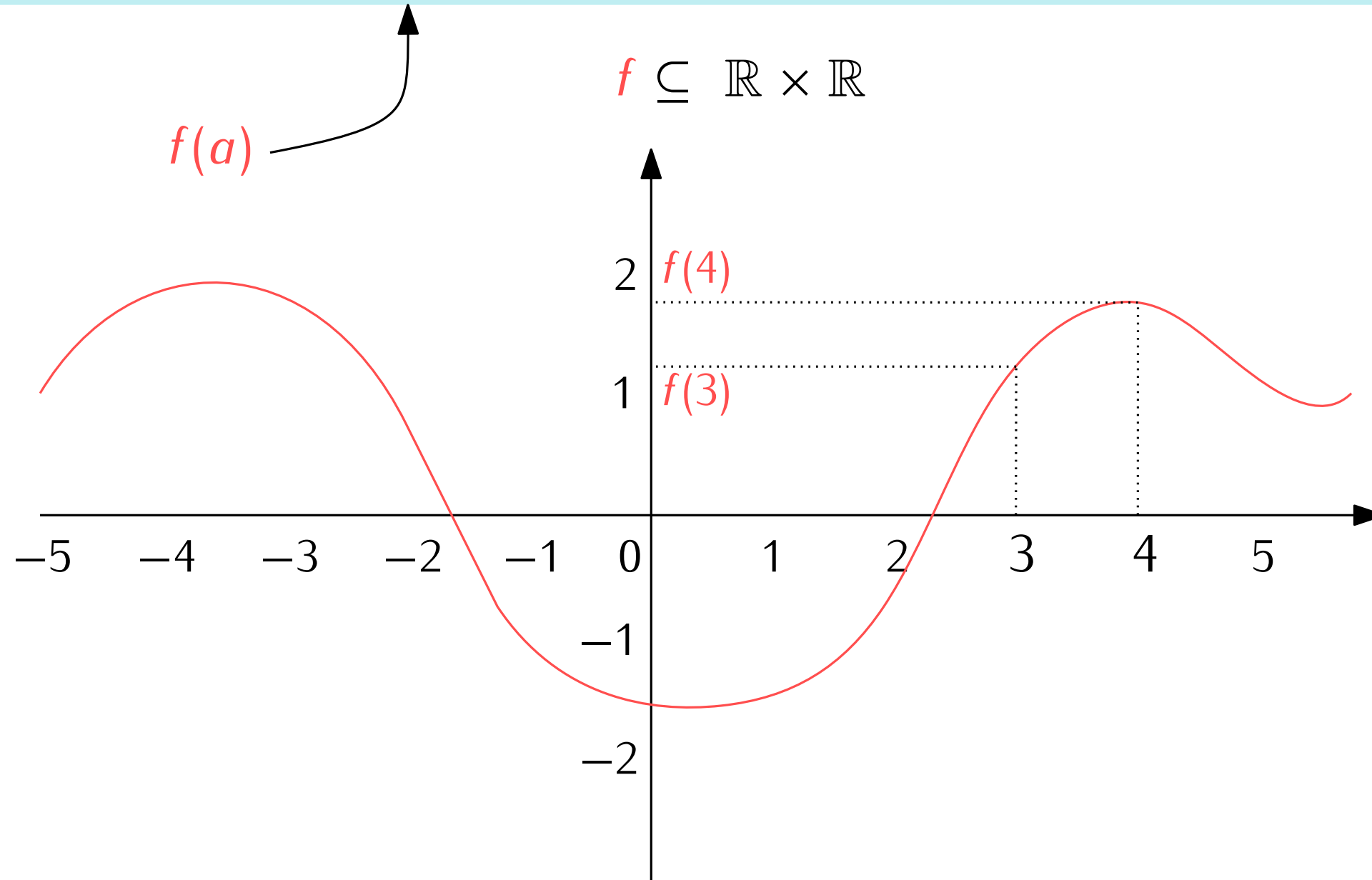
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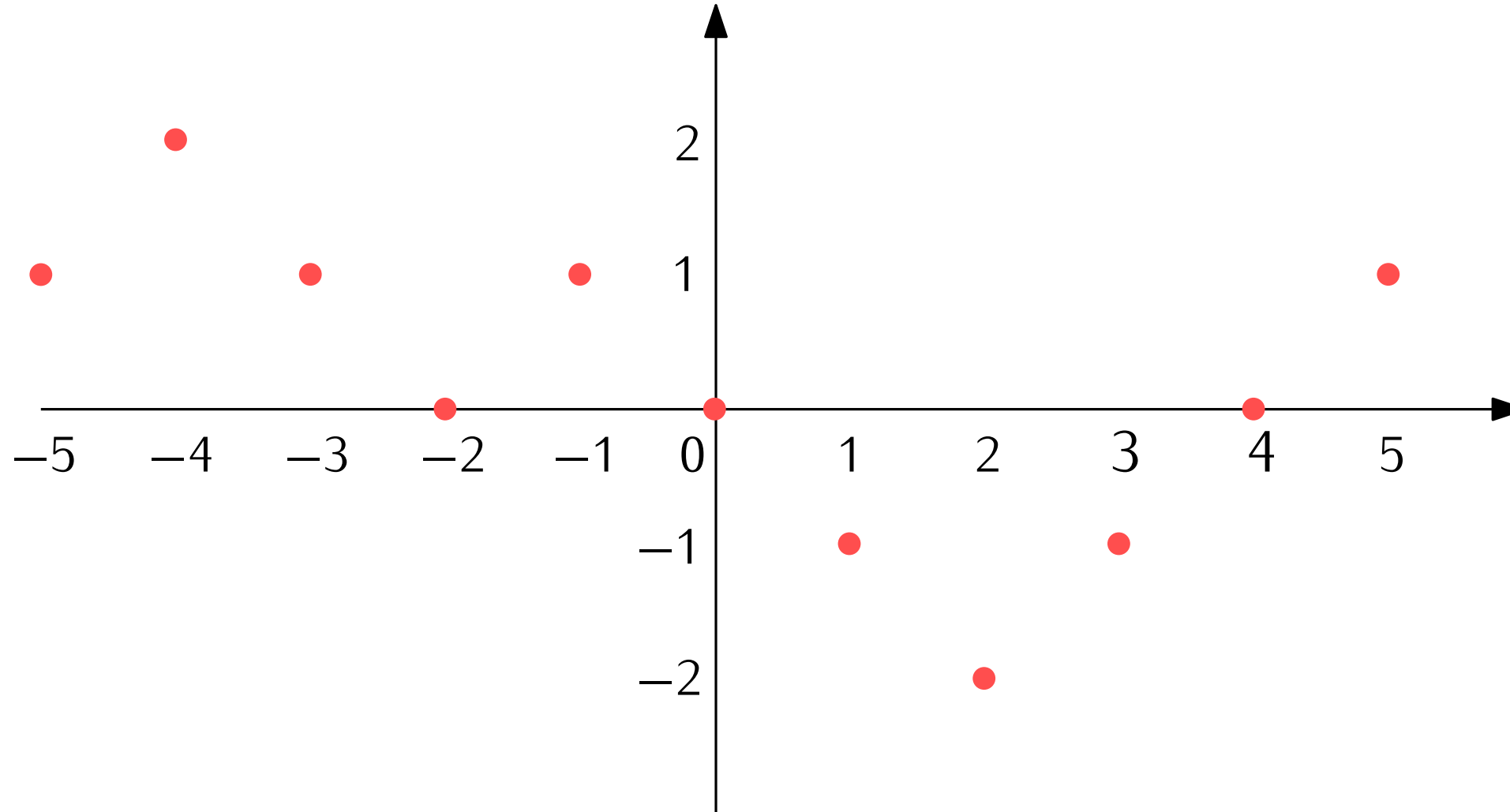
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How do we draw functions with such sets?

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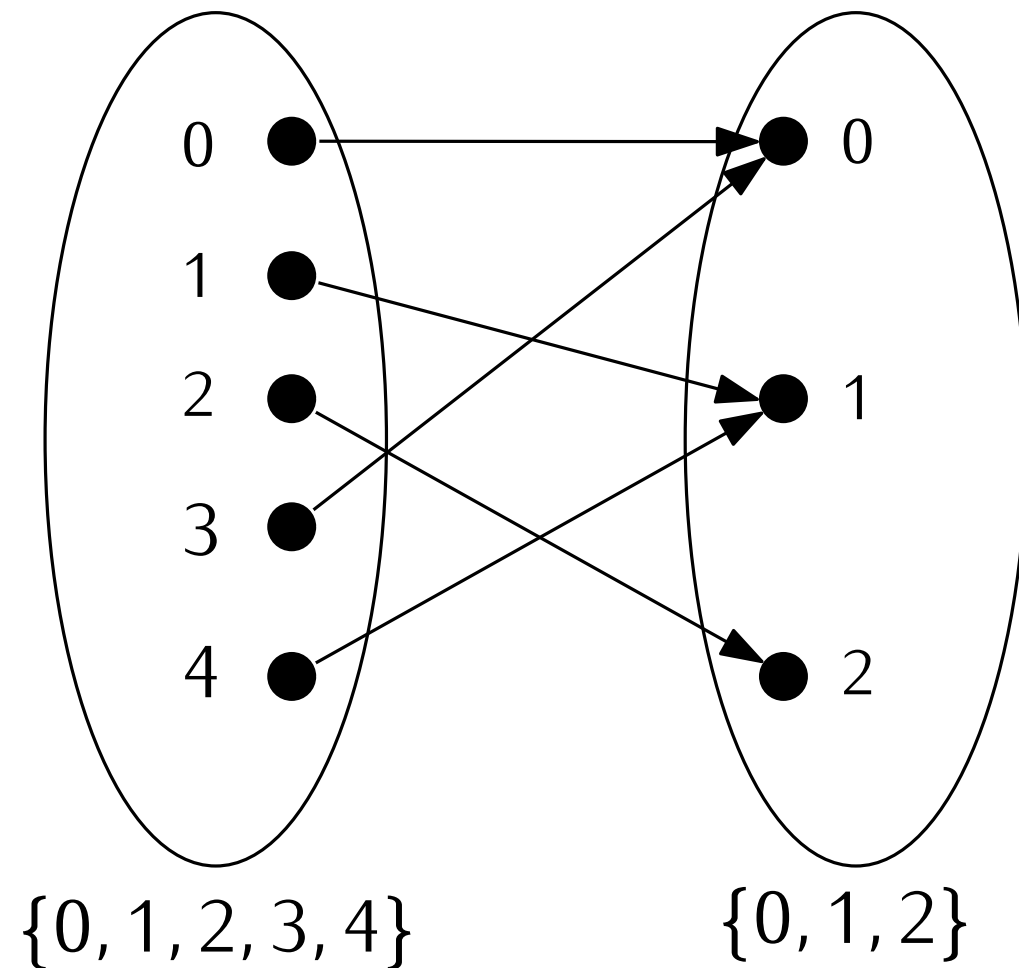
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A function $f: \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \{-2, -1, 0, 1, 2\}$

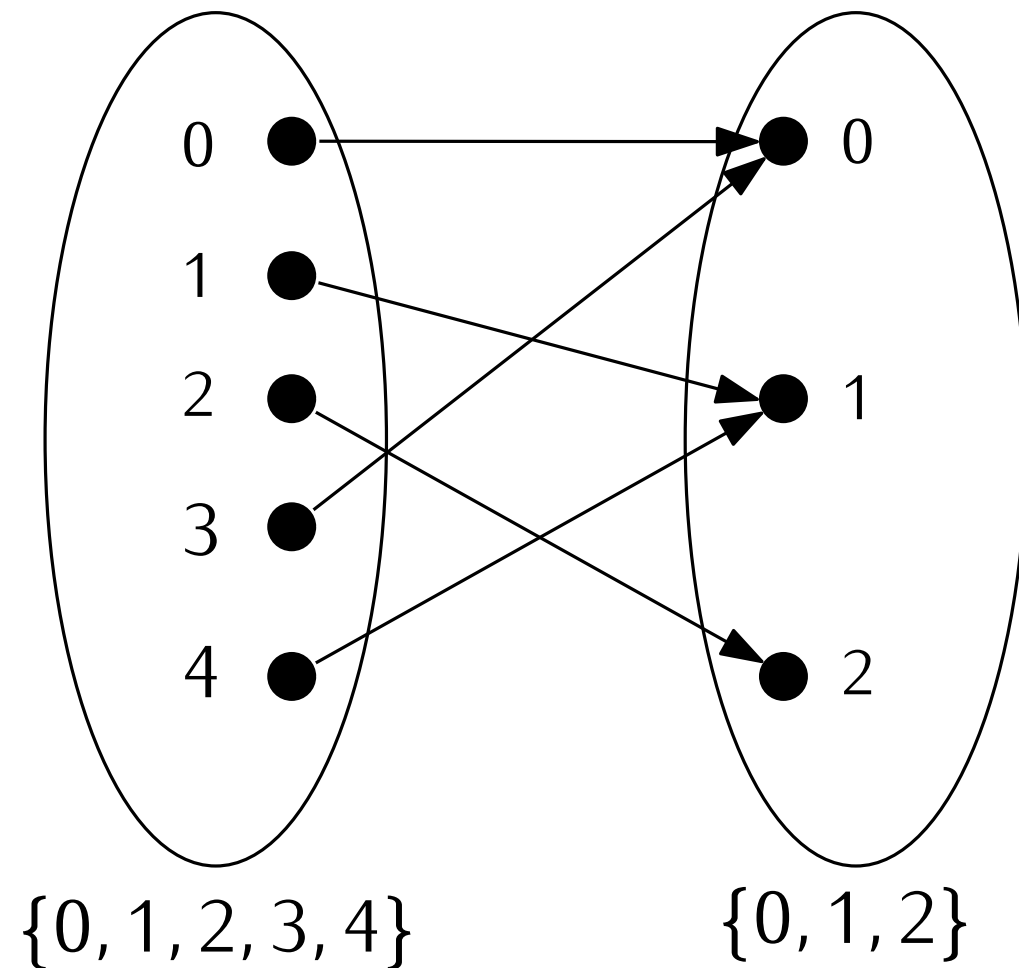
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This represents the function

$$f = \{(0, 0), (1, 1), (2, 1), (3, 0), (4, 2)\}$$

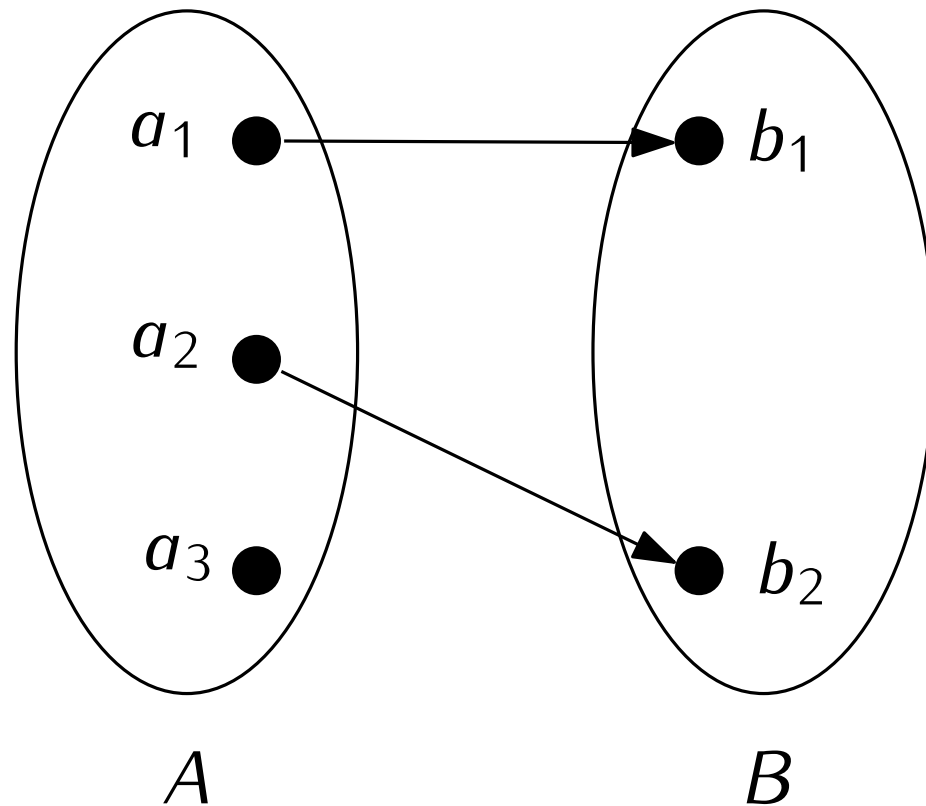
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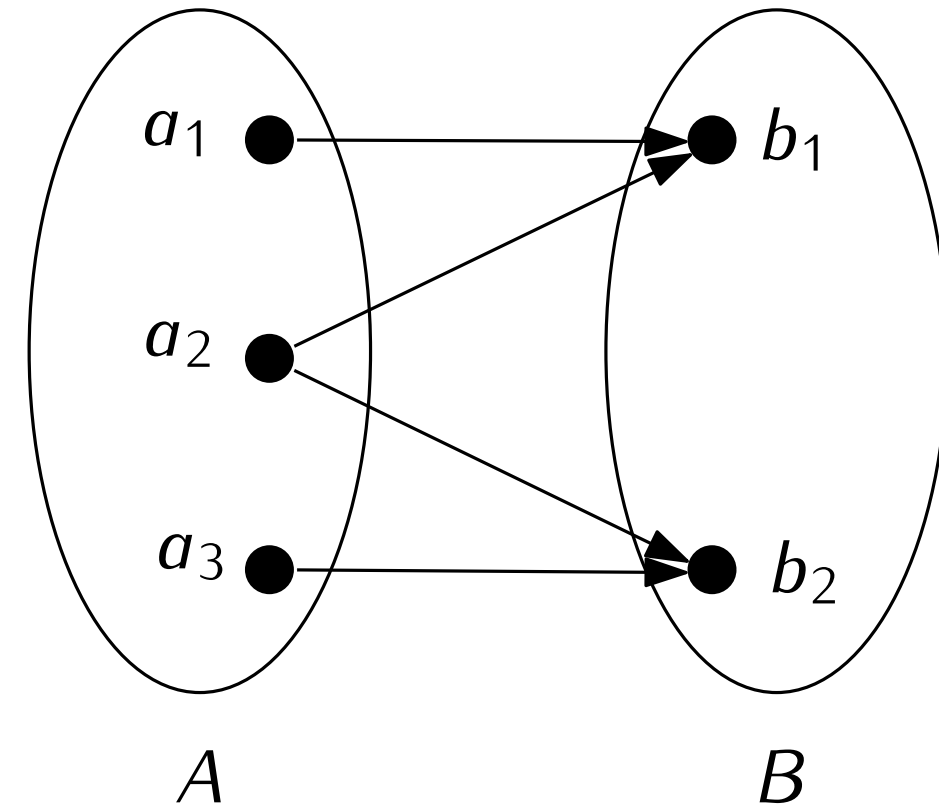
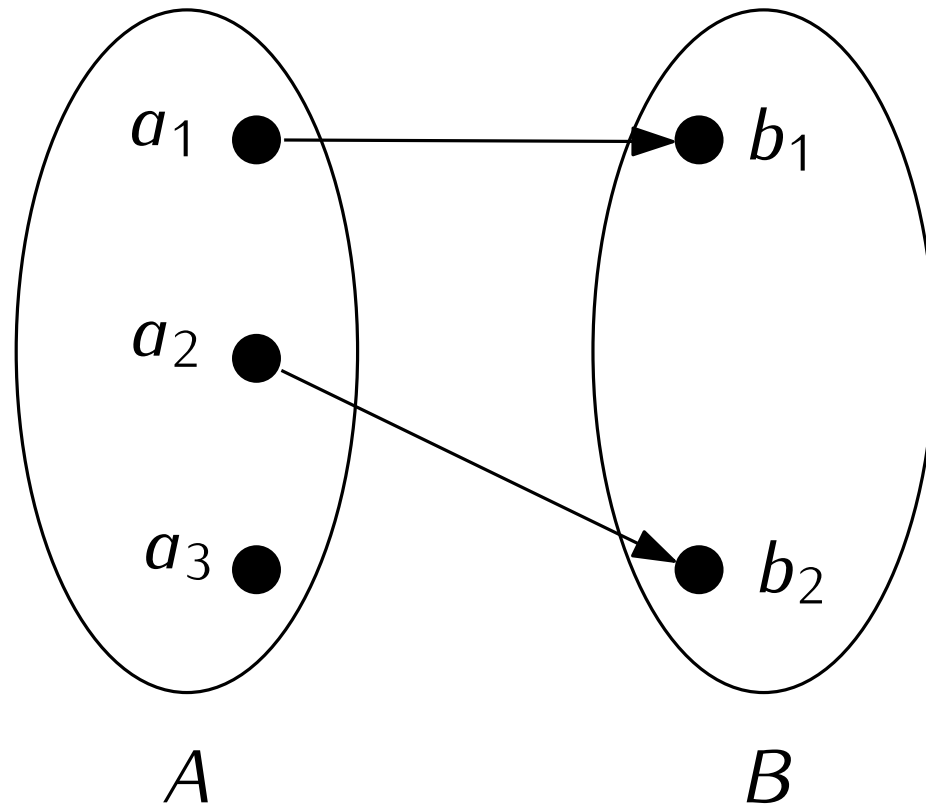
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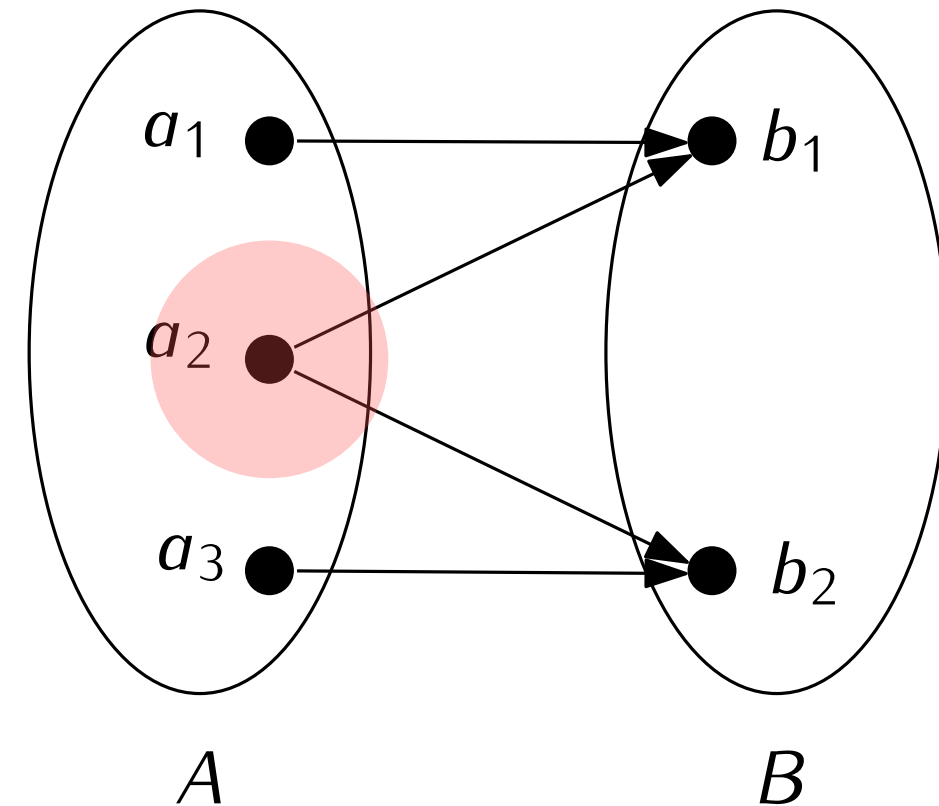
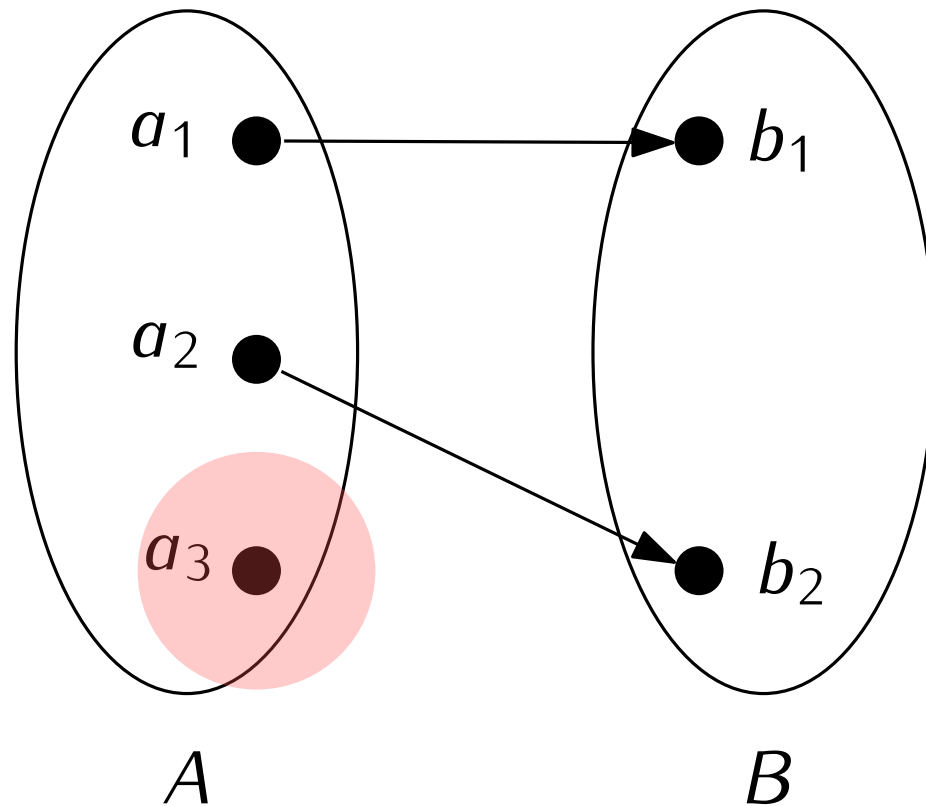
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Which of the following sets are functions $\{1, 2, 3\} \rightarrow \{1, 2\}$?

- $\{(1, 1), (1, 2), (2, 1), (3, 2)\}$
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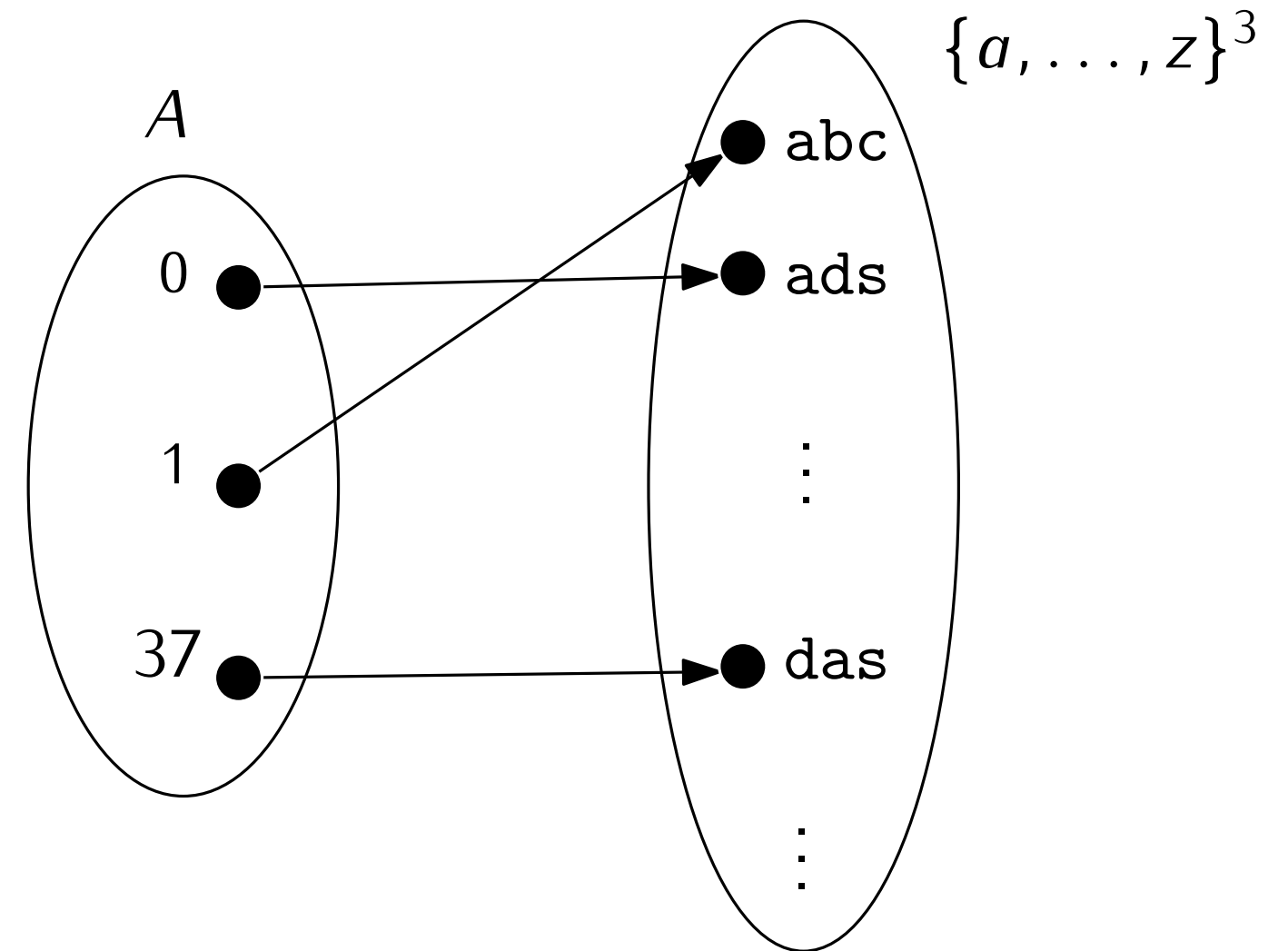
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- Transformers: $\text{Tokens} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}^{4096}$

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- Properties of functions: injectivity, surjectivity, bijectivity
- Composition of functions
- Identity function
- Inverses

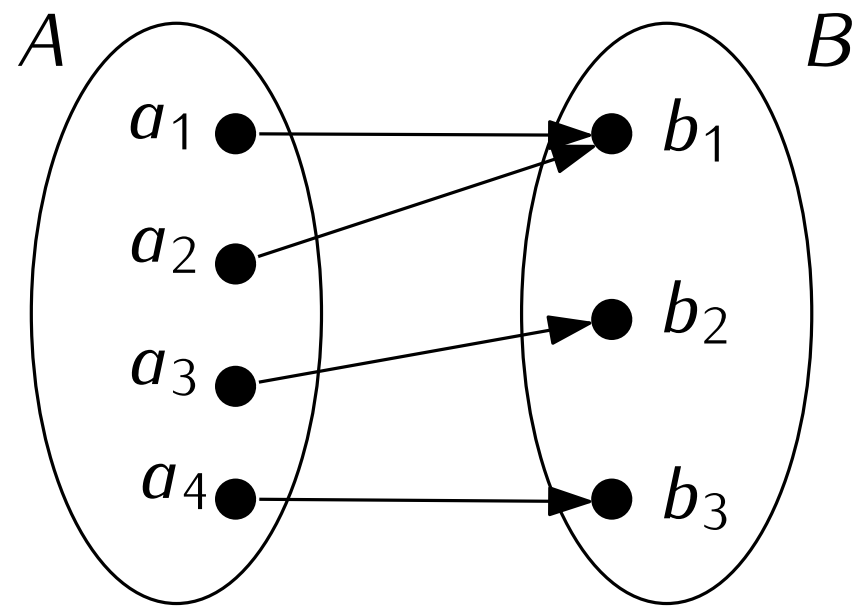
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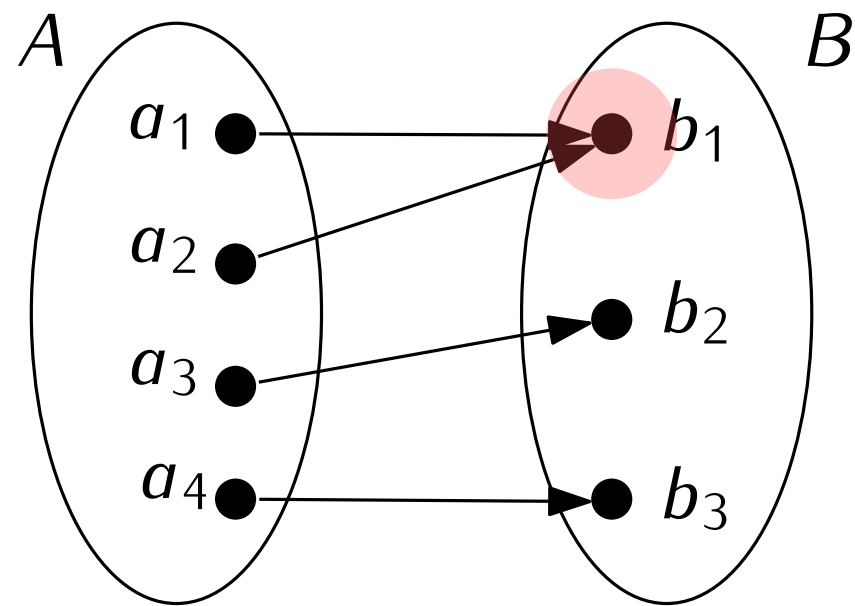
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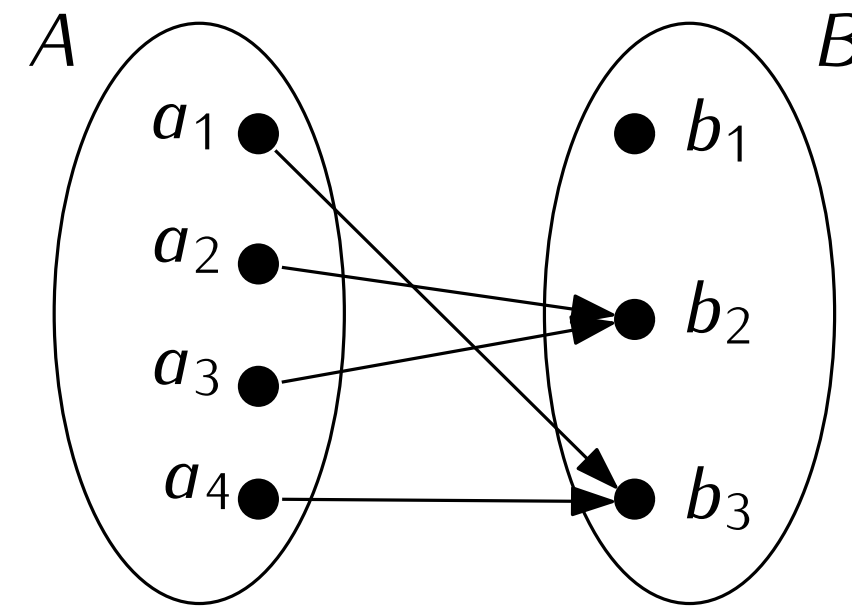
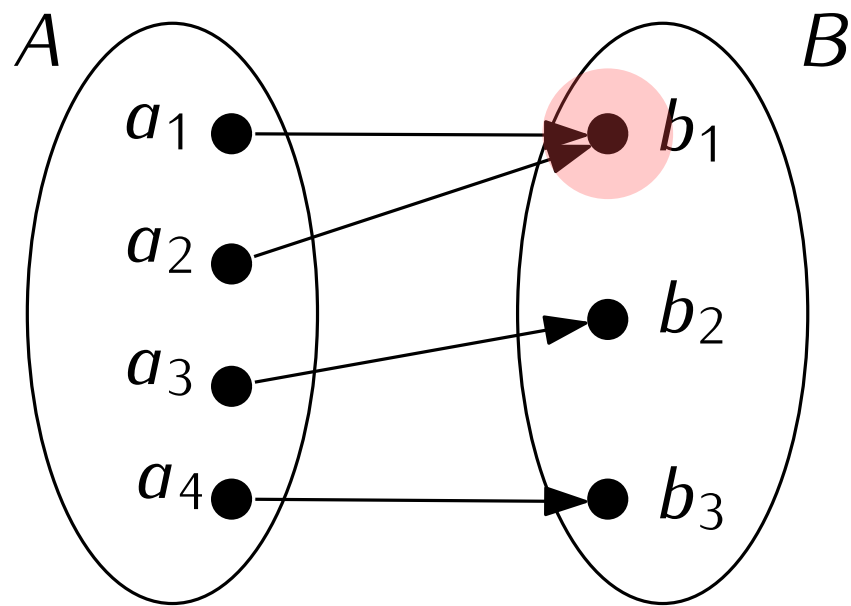
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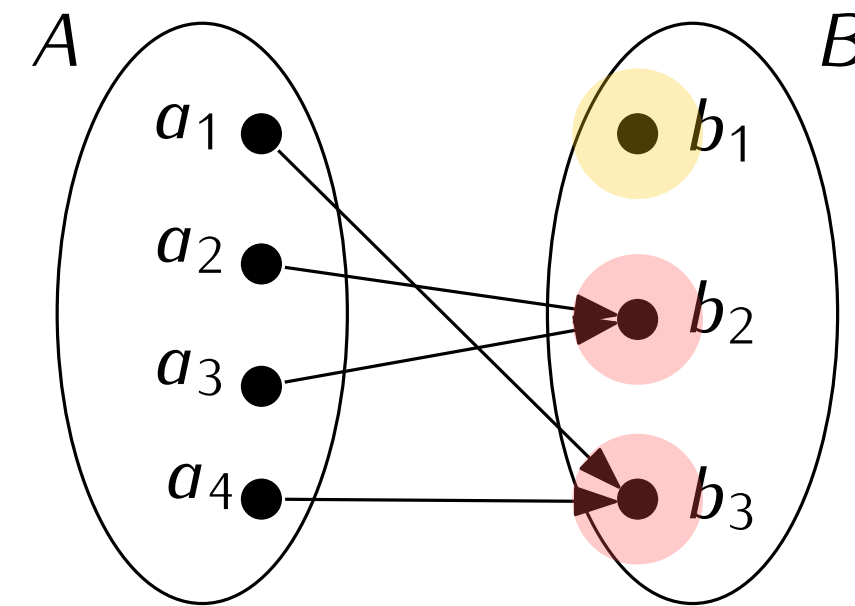
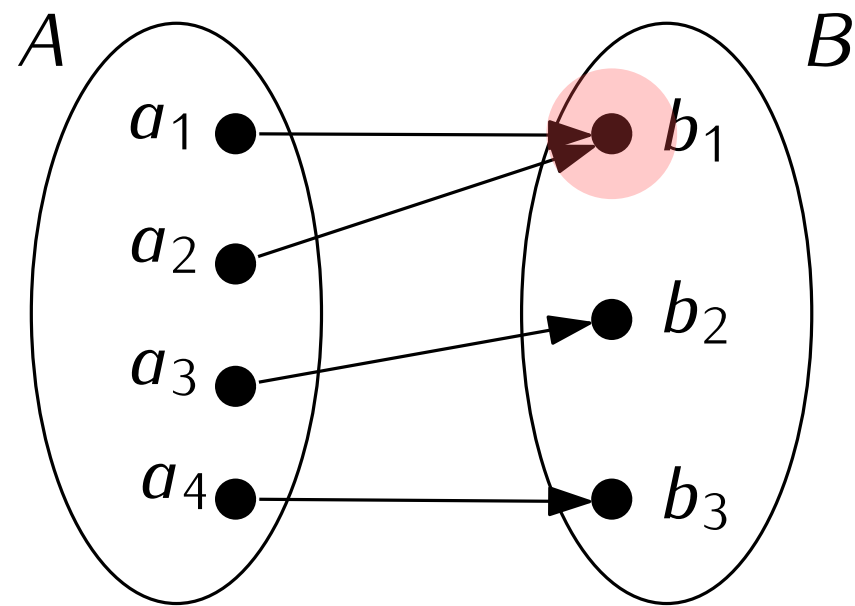
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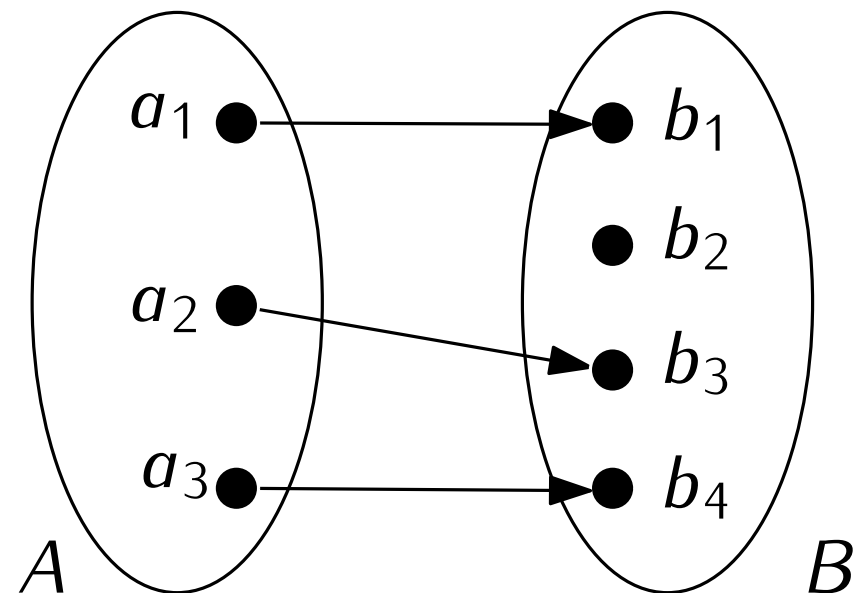
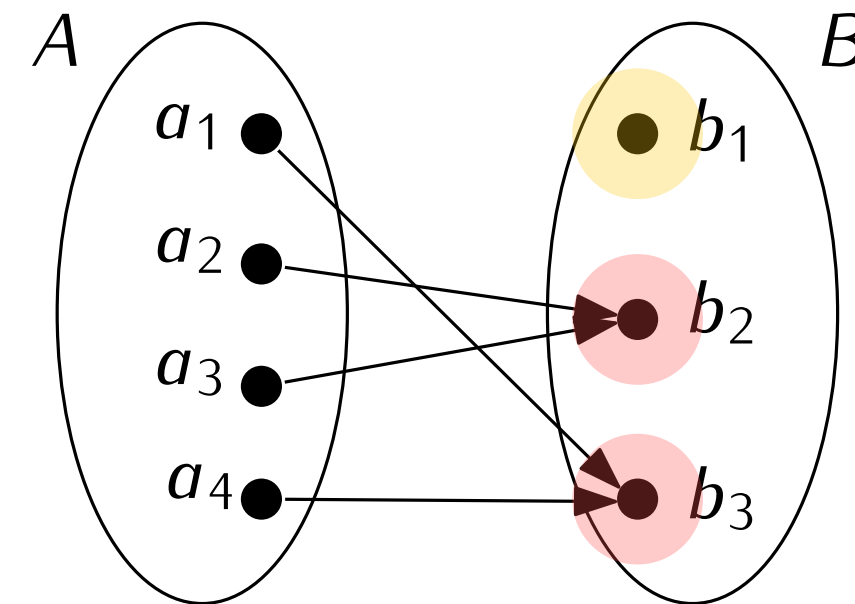
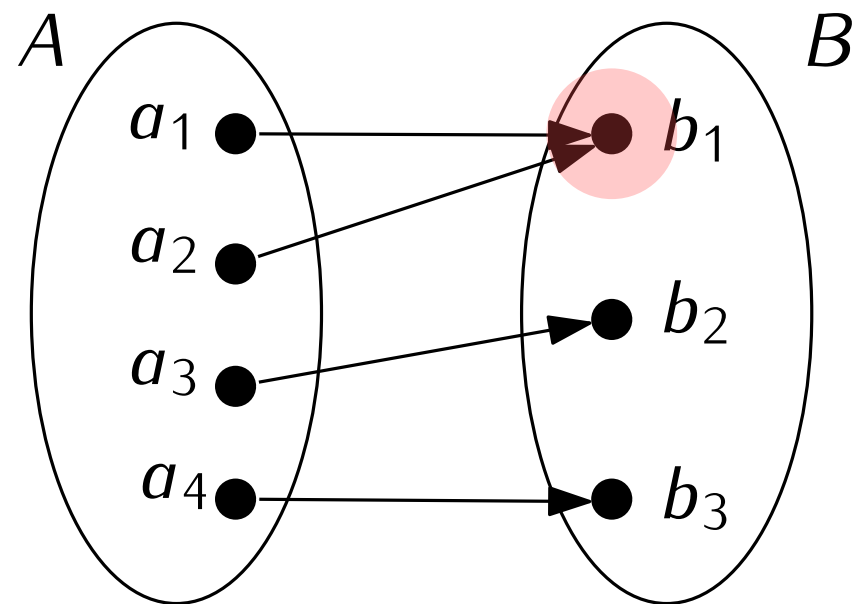
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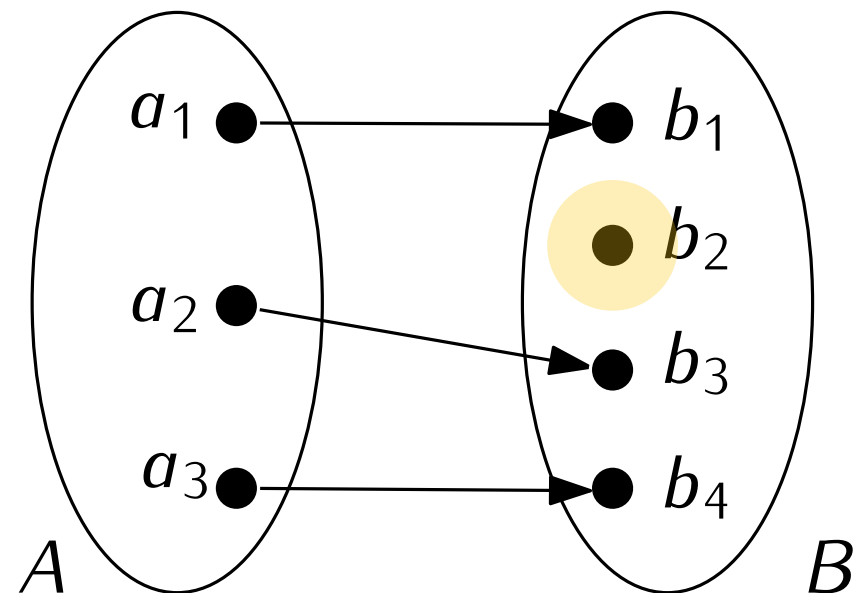
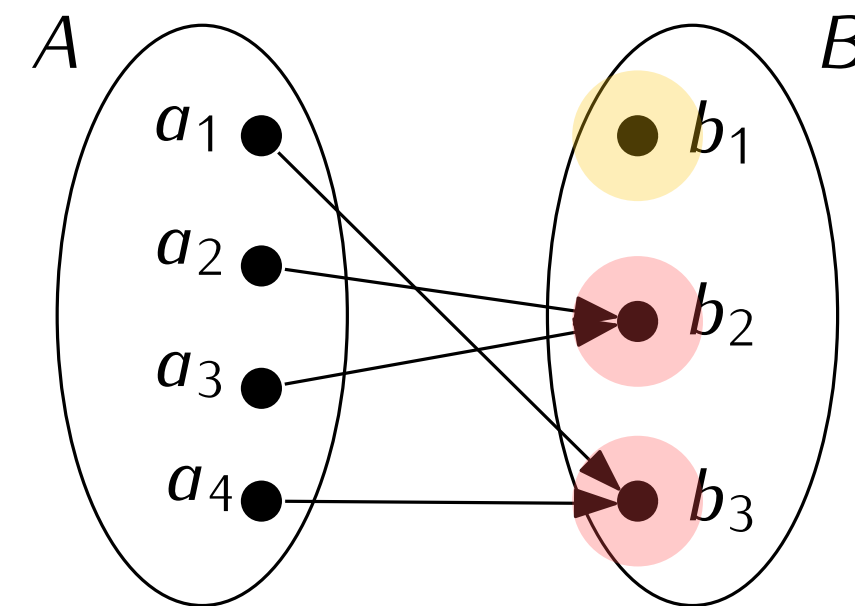
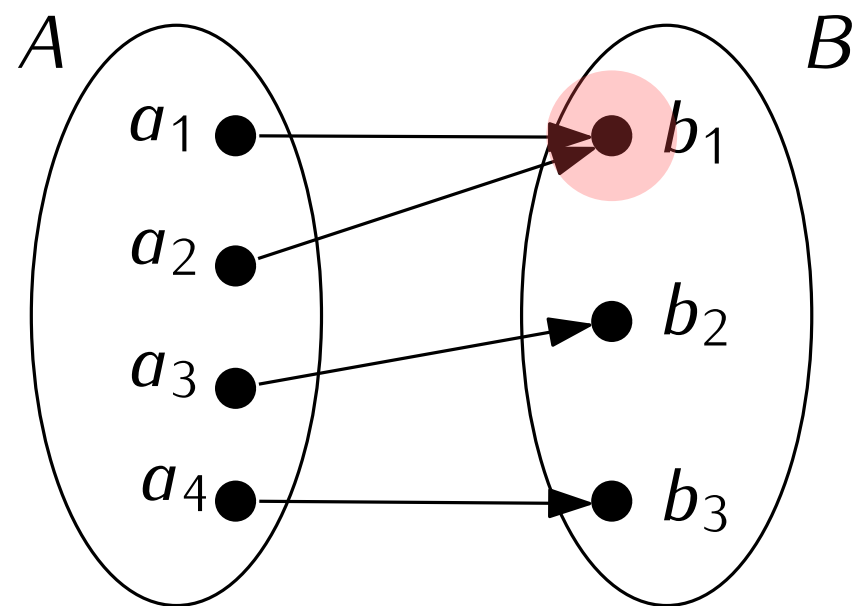
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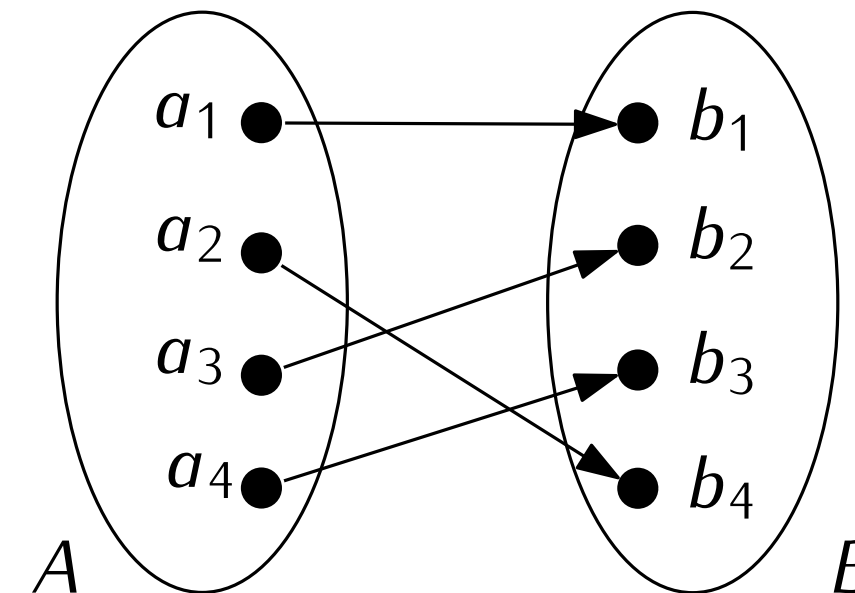
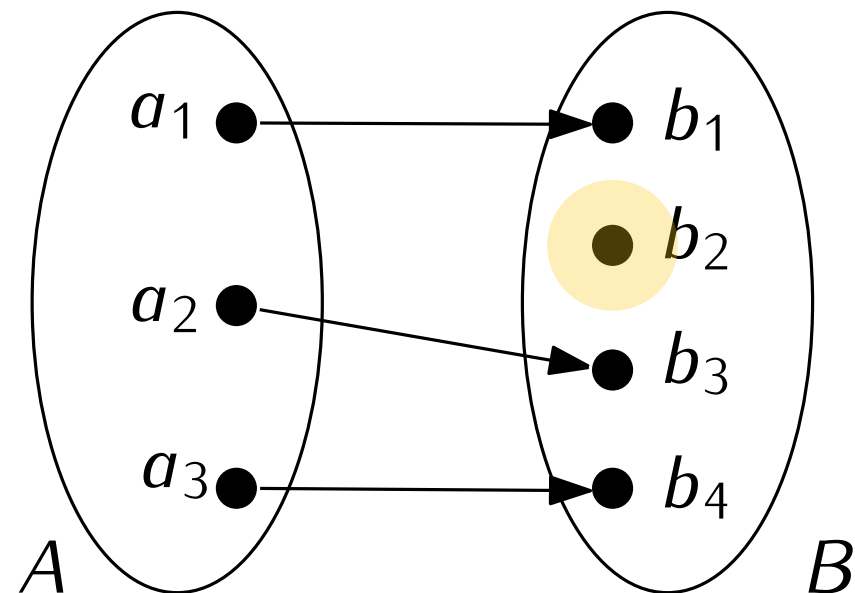
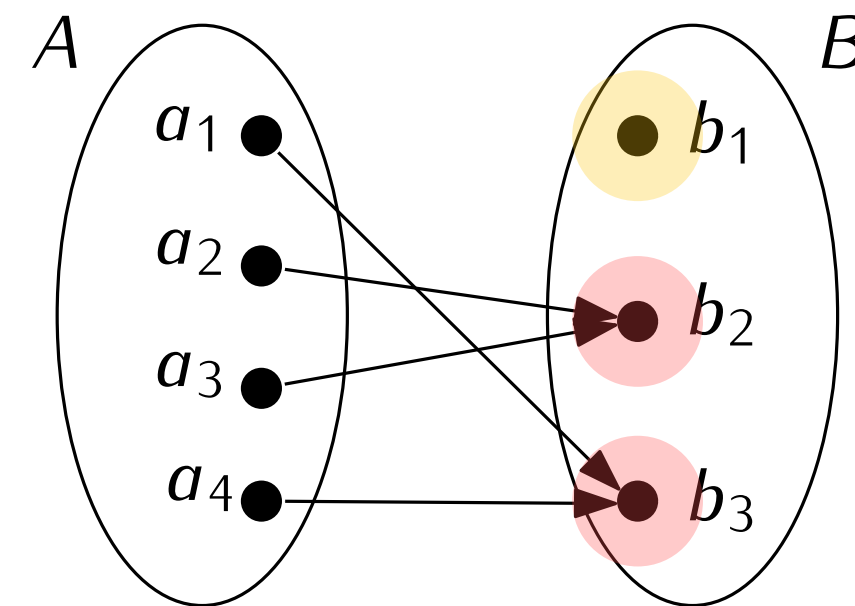
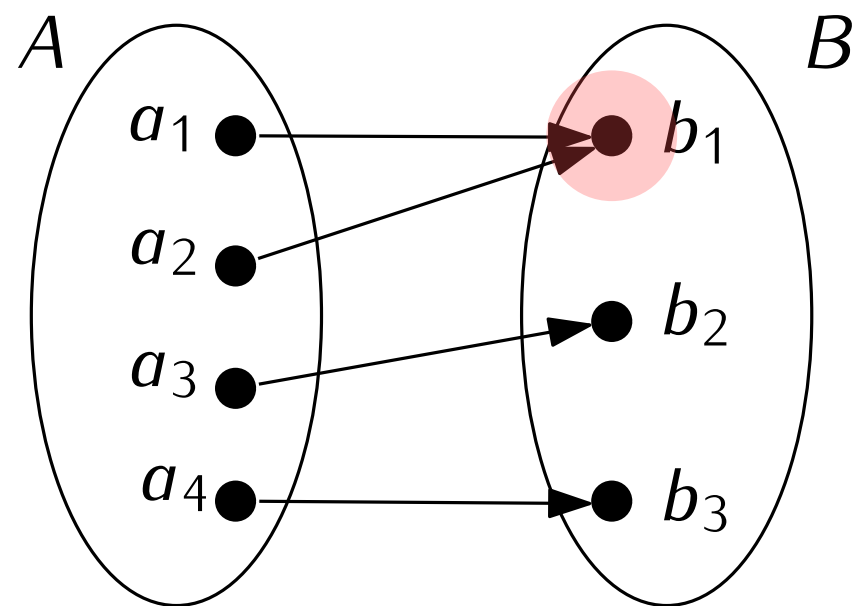
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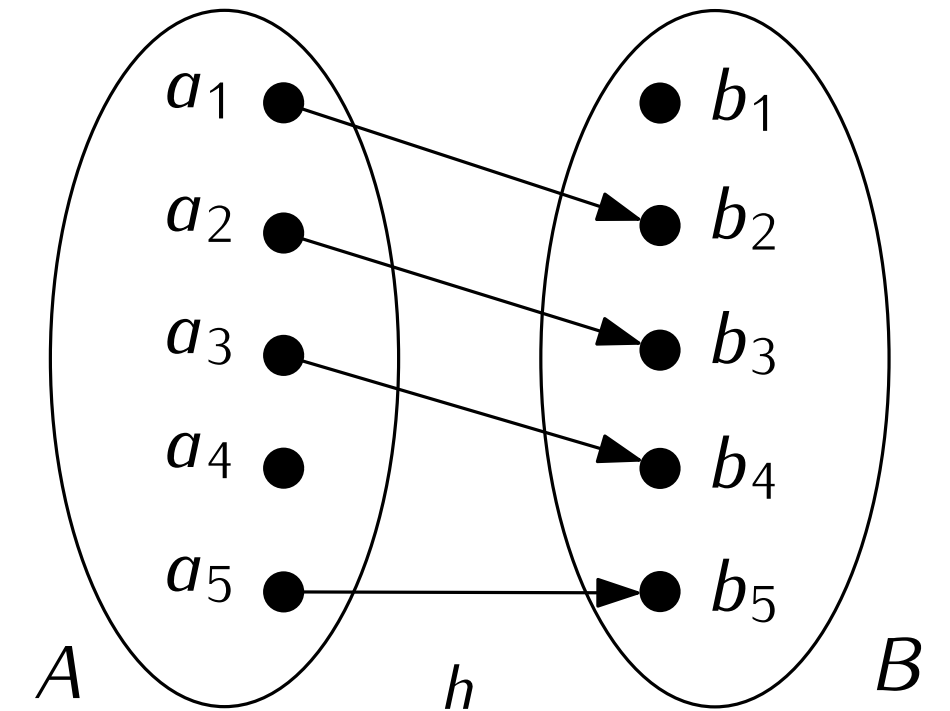
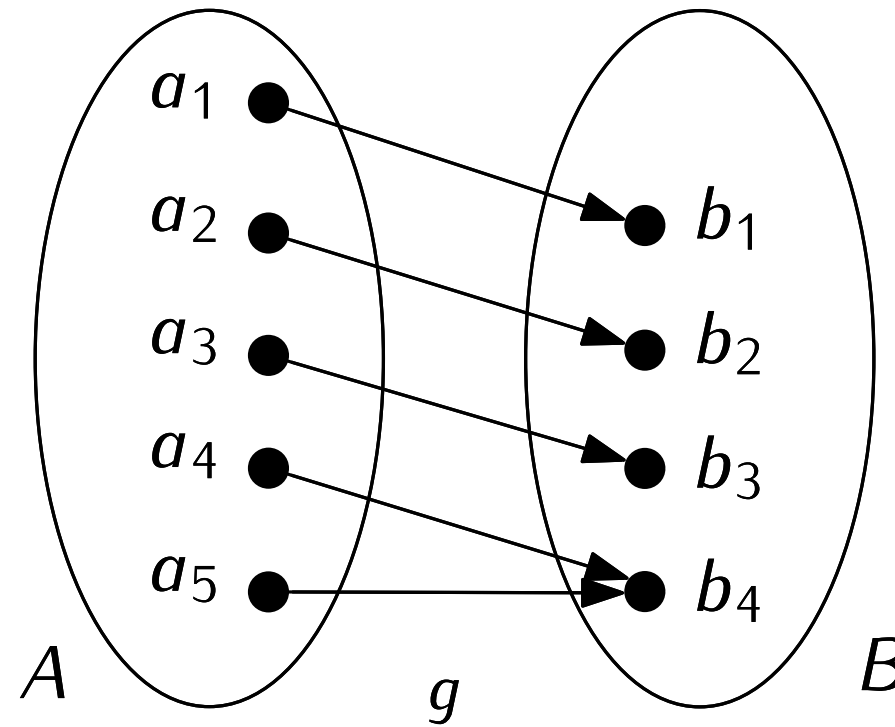
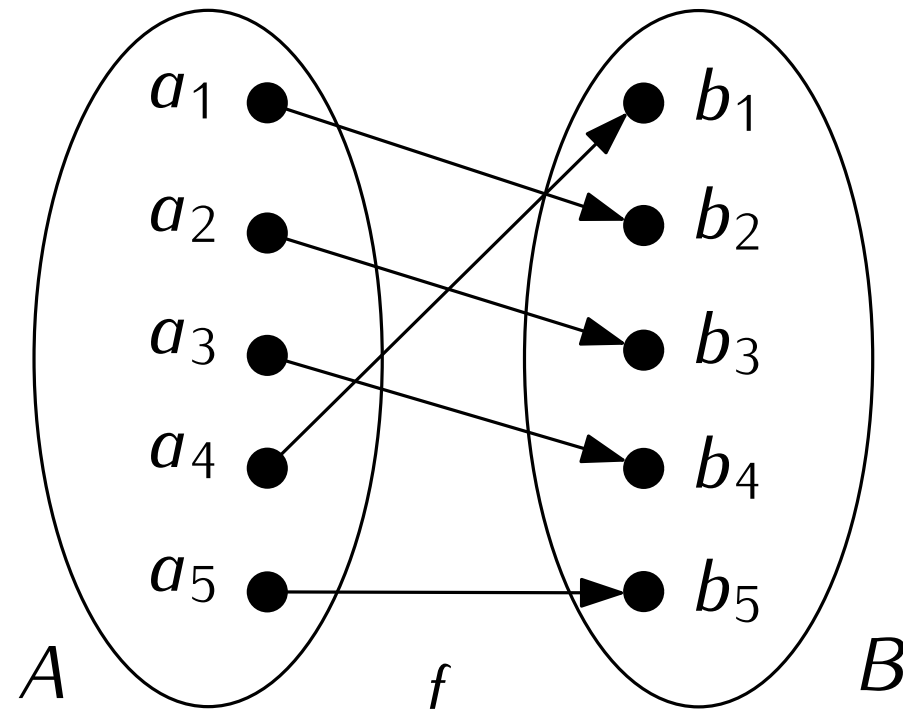
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True/False?

- f is injective
- f is surjective
- g is injective
- g is surjective
- h is a function



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Goal: f is injective

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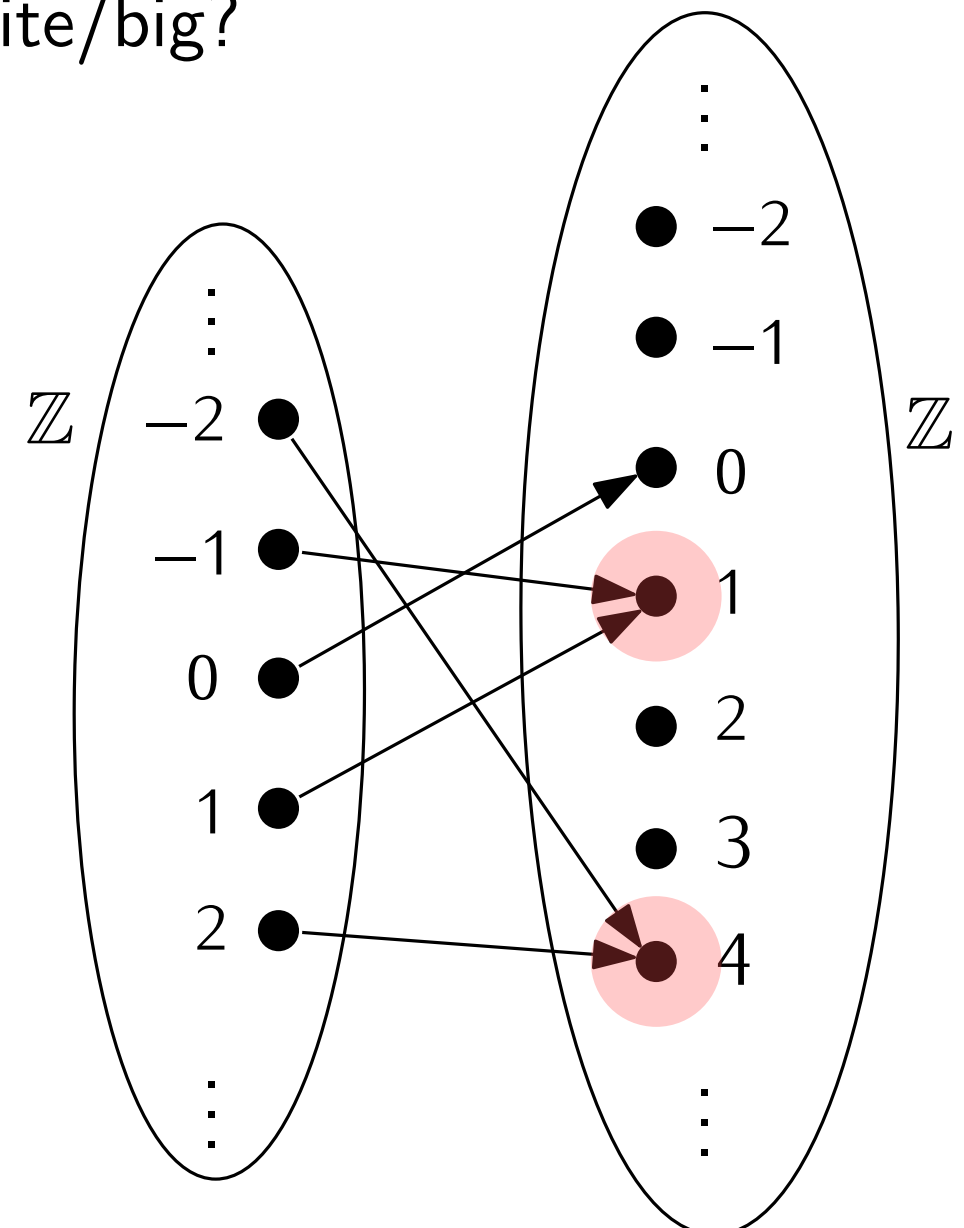
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Proof. $f(-1) = f(1)$. □



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3. We check that $f(a) = -a + 3 = -(-b + 3) + 3 = b - 3 + 3 = b$.
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- To check f is injective: **prove** that if $f(a) = f(a')$, then $a = a'$.
- To check f is **not** injective: **find** $a \neq a'$ such that $f(a) = f(a')$.
- To check that f is surjective: for every $b \in B$, **find** $a \in A$ such that $f(a) = b$.
- To check that f is **not** surjective: **find** $b \in B$ and **prove** that there is no $a \in A$ such that $f(a) = b$.

Theorem. The function $f: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ defined by $f(x) = x^2$ is not surjective.

Proof.

1. Let $b = -1$.

Definition. A function $f: A \rightarrow B$ is:

- **injective** if for all $b \in B$, there is **at most one** $a \in A$ such that $f(a) = b$,
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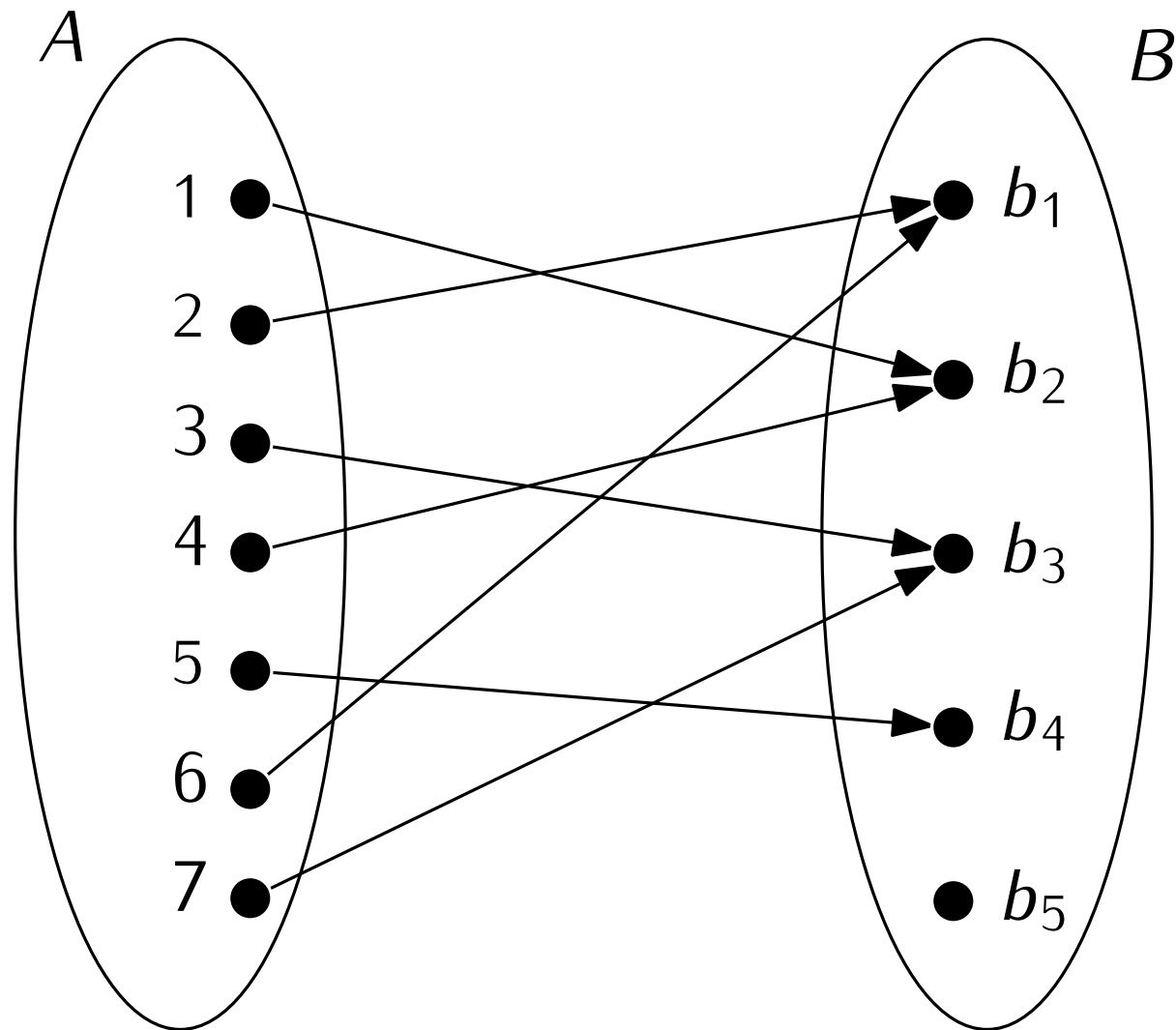
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3. So $b \neq a^2$ for all $a \in \mathbb{N}$
4. Done! □

Definition. Let $f: A \rightarrow B$ be a function, $A' \subseteq A, B' \subseteq B$.

- The **image** of A' under f : $f[A'] = \{b \in B \mid b = f(a) \text{ for some } a \in A'\}$
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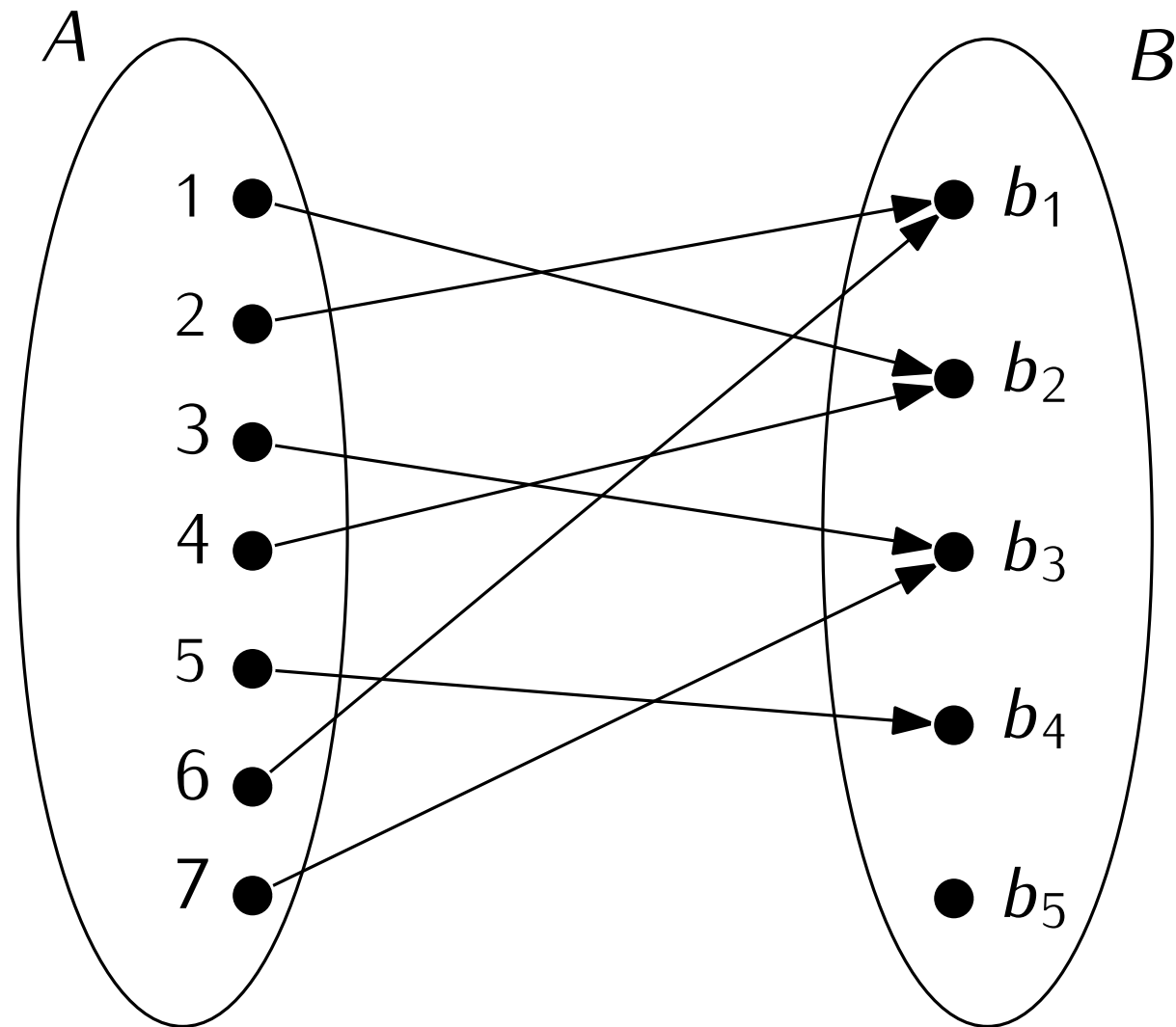


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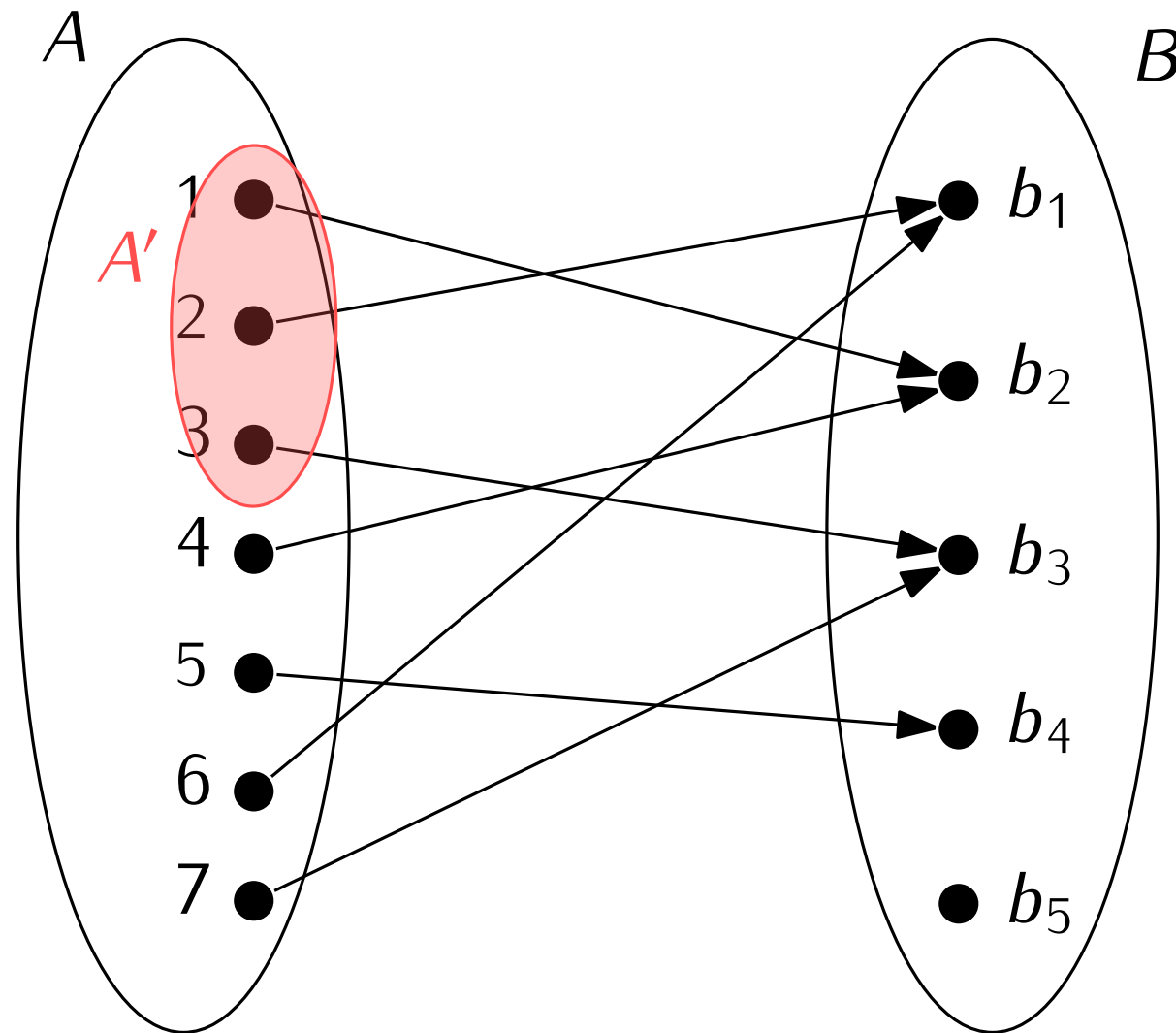


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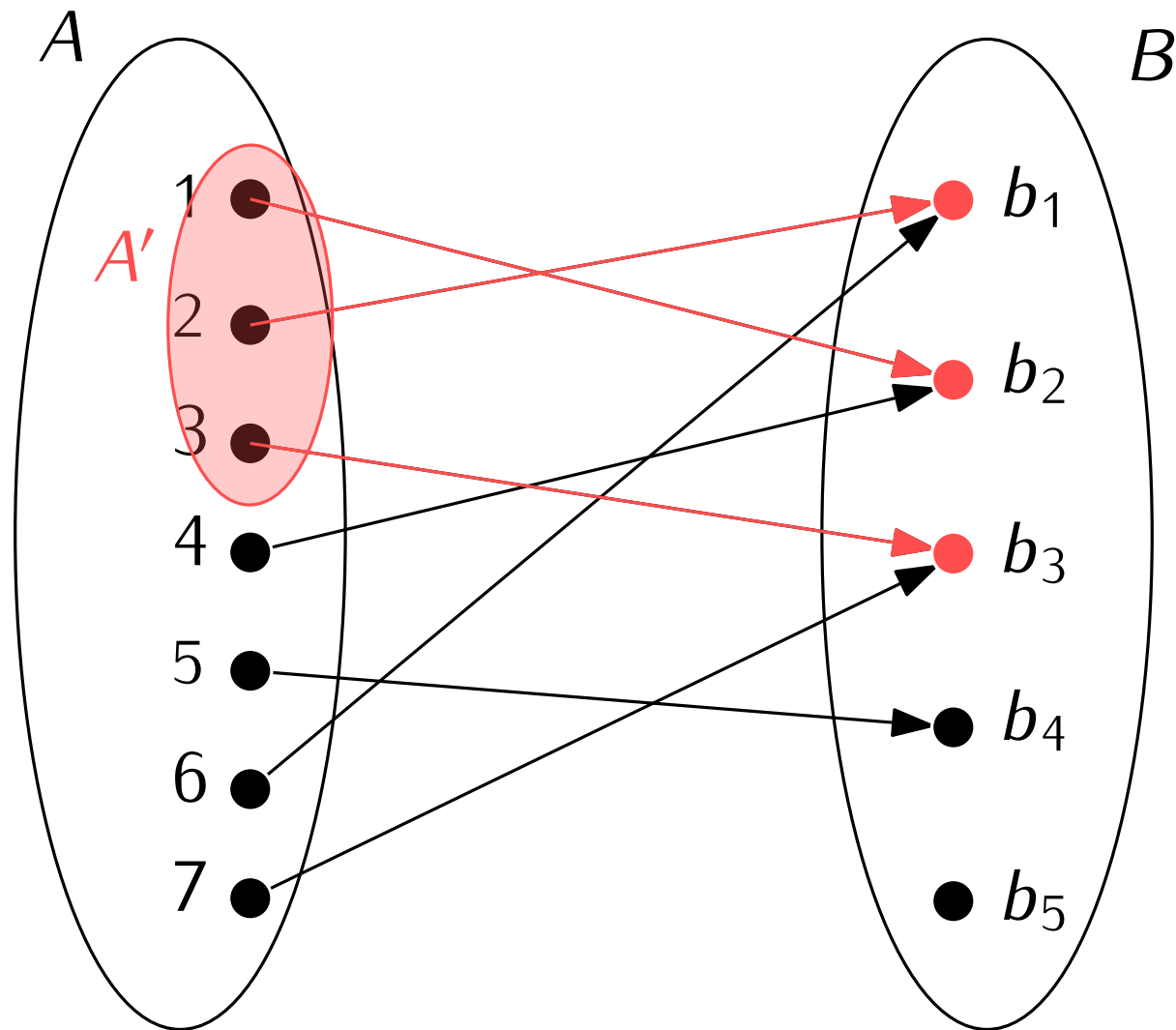


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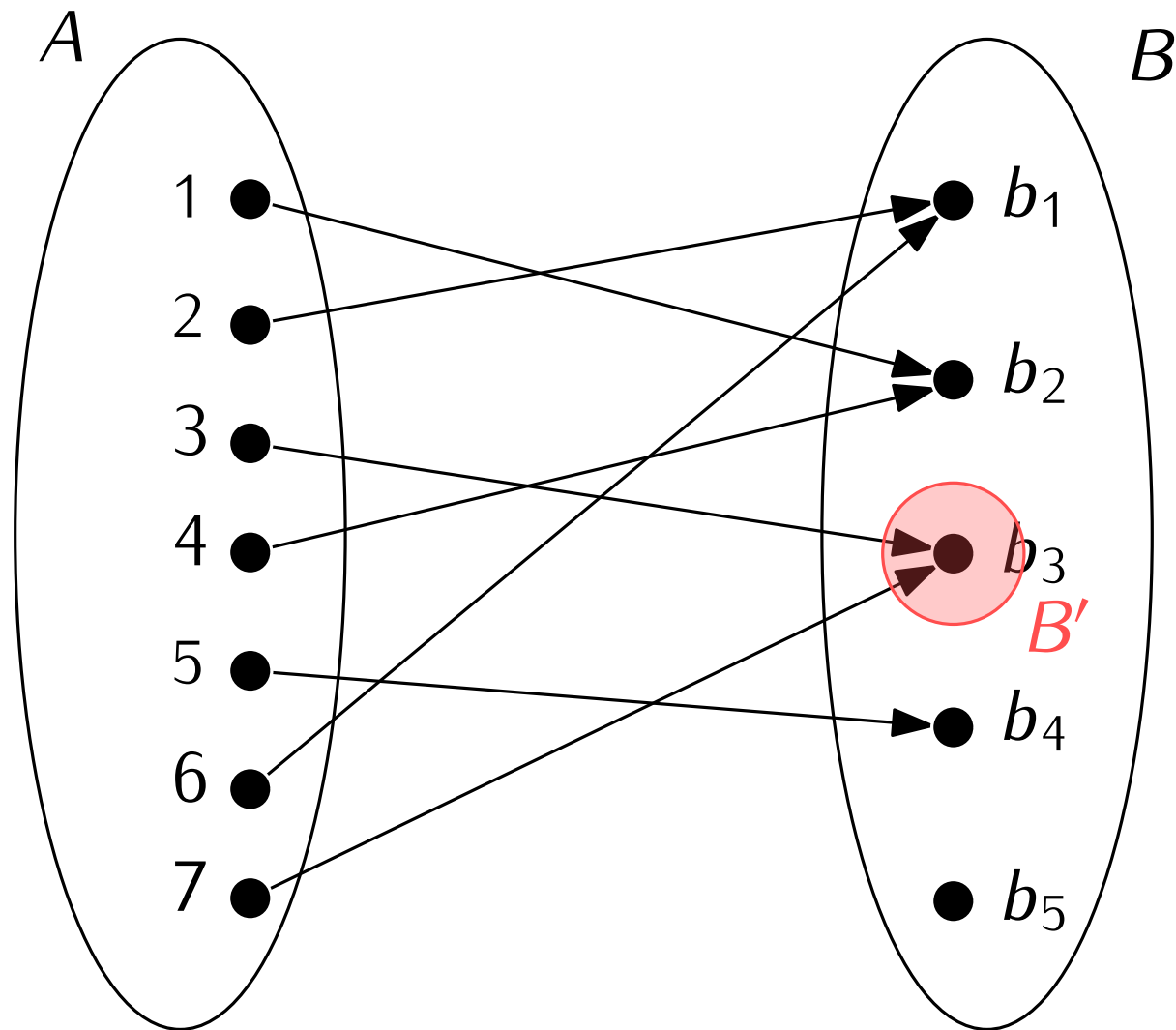


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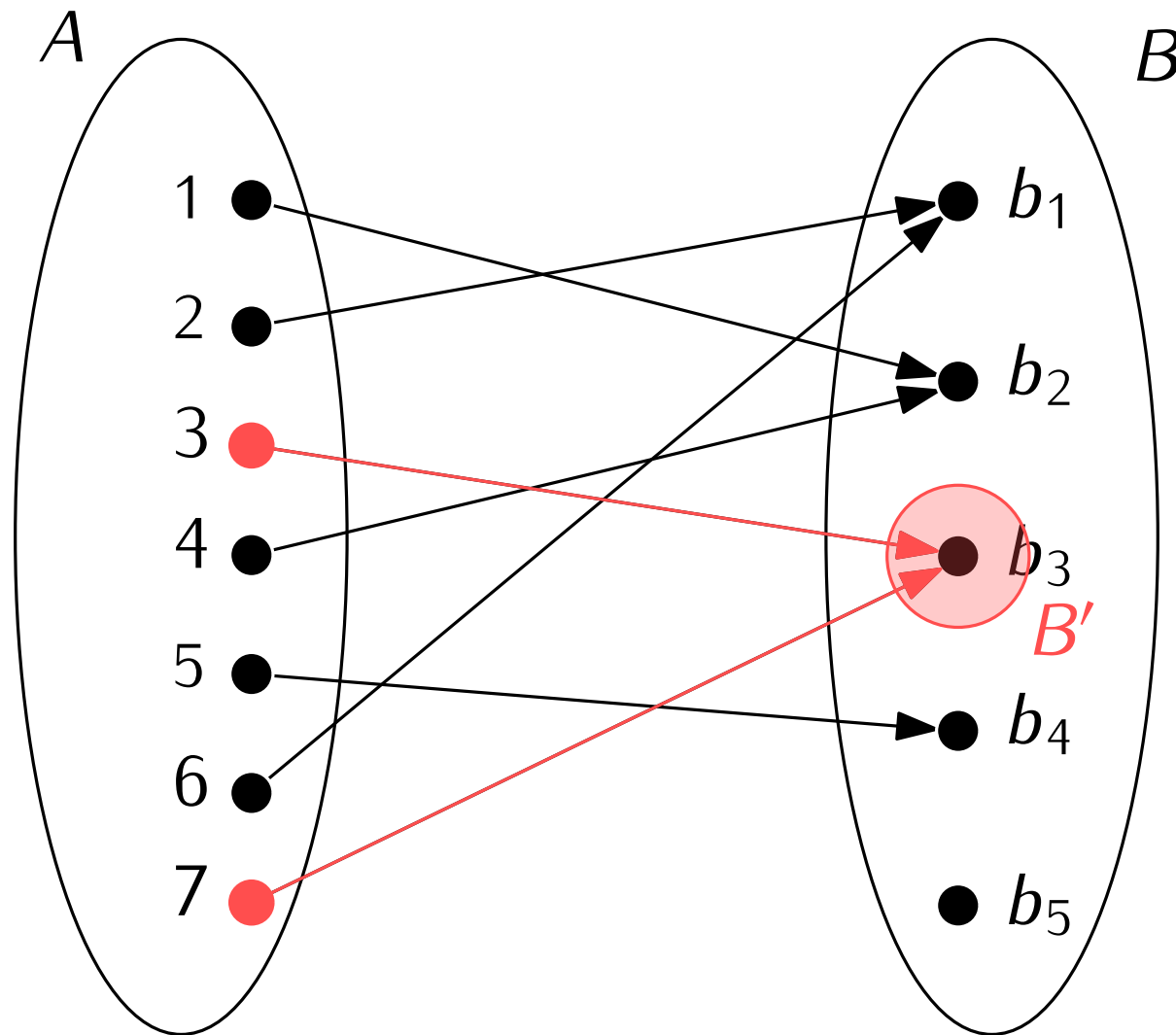


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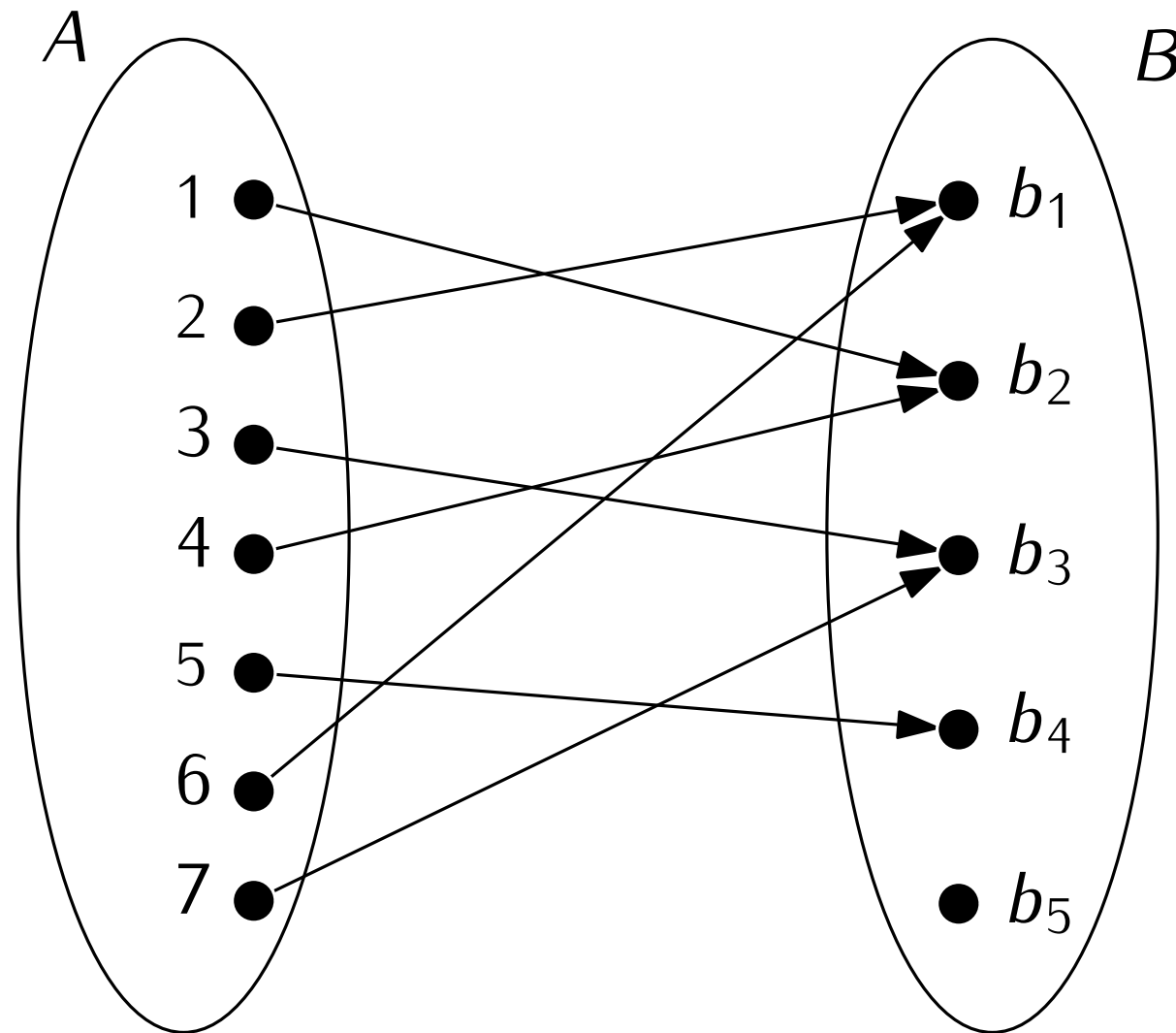
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Your turn!

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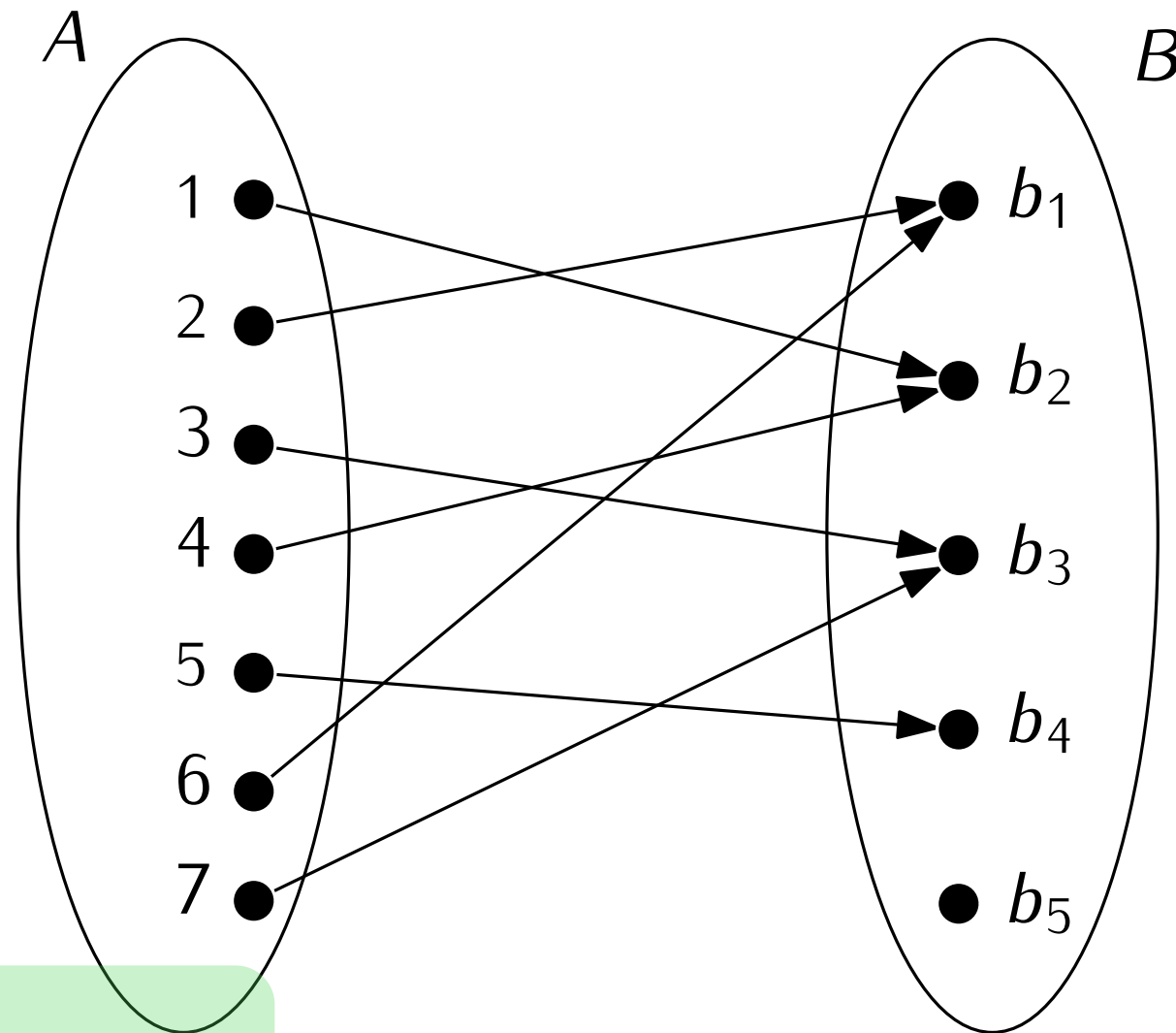
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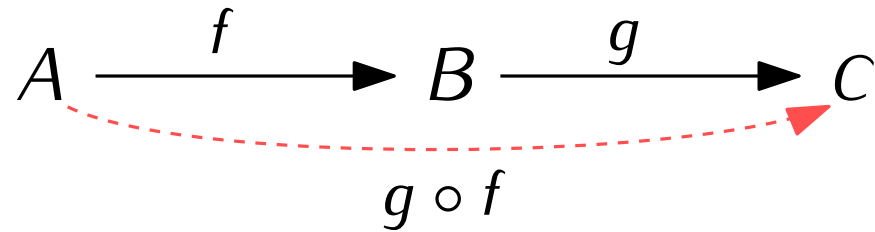


Self-check. Some things to think about:

- f injective ... what can we say about $f^{-1}[\{b\}]$?
- f surjective ... what can we say about $f^{-1}[\{b\}]$?

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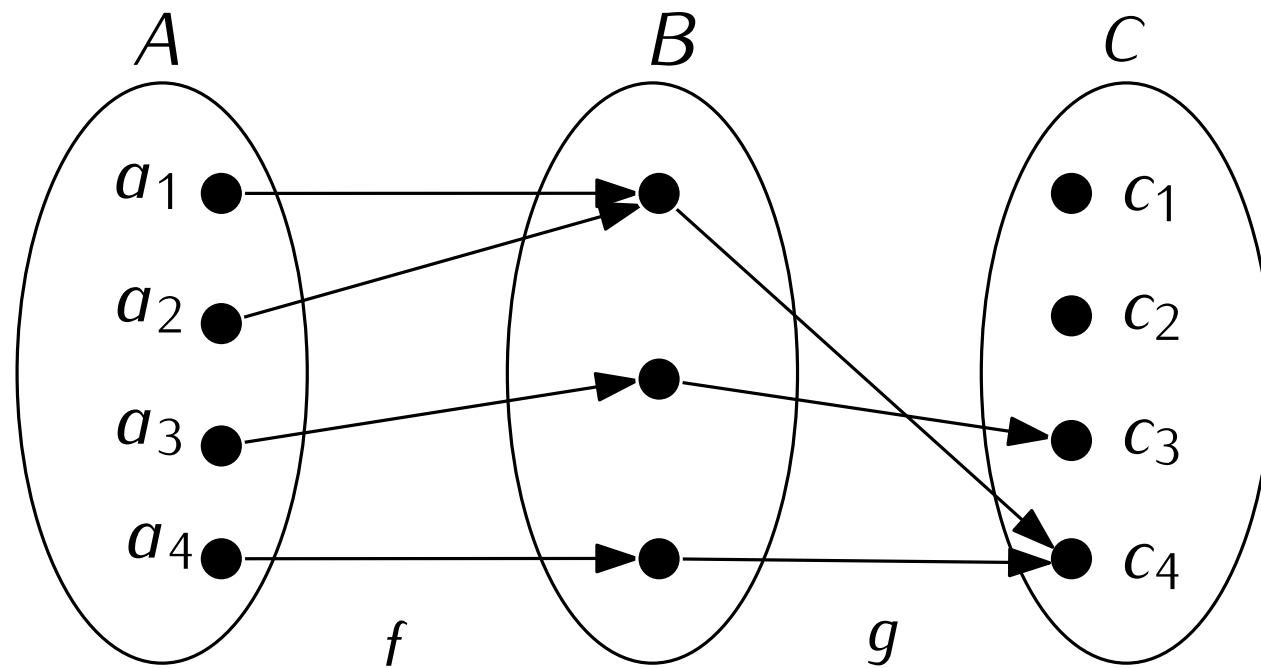
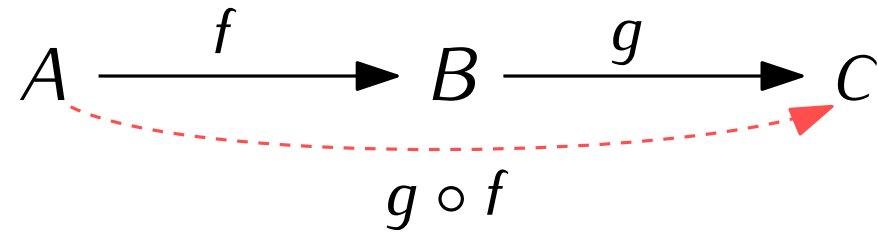
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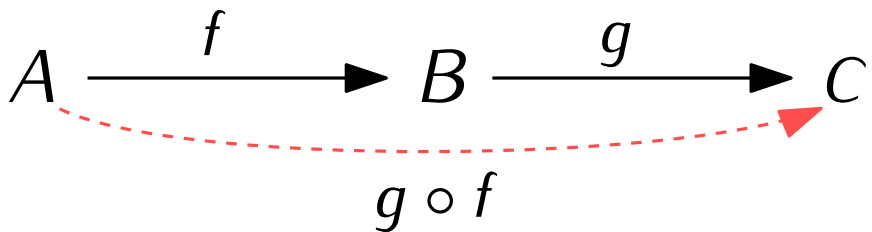


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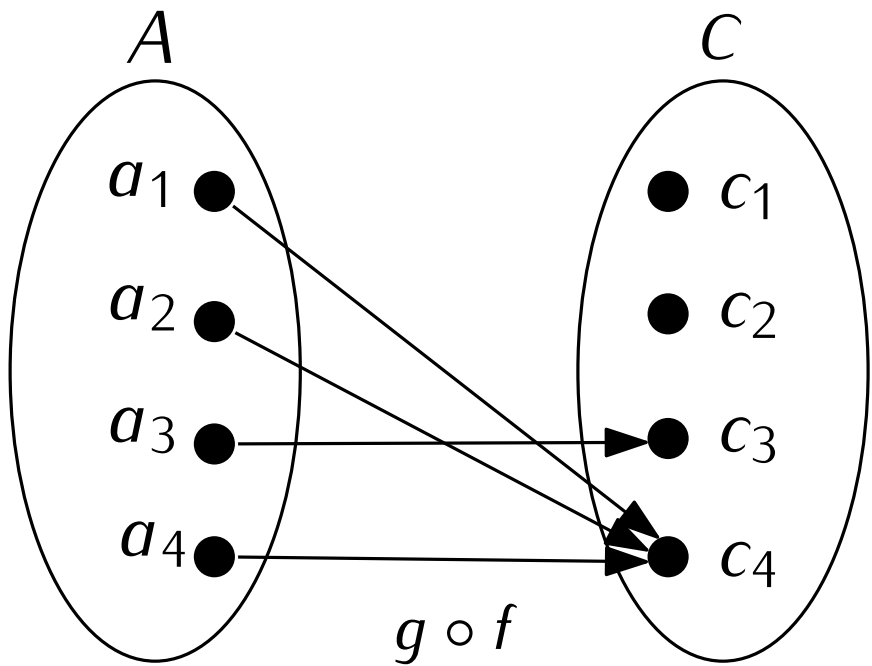
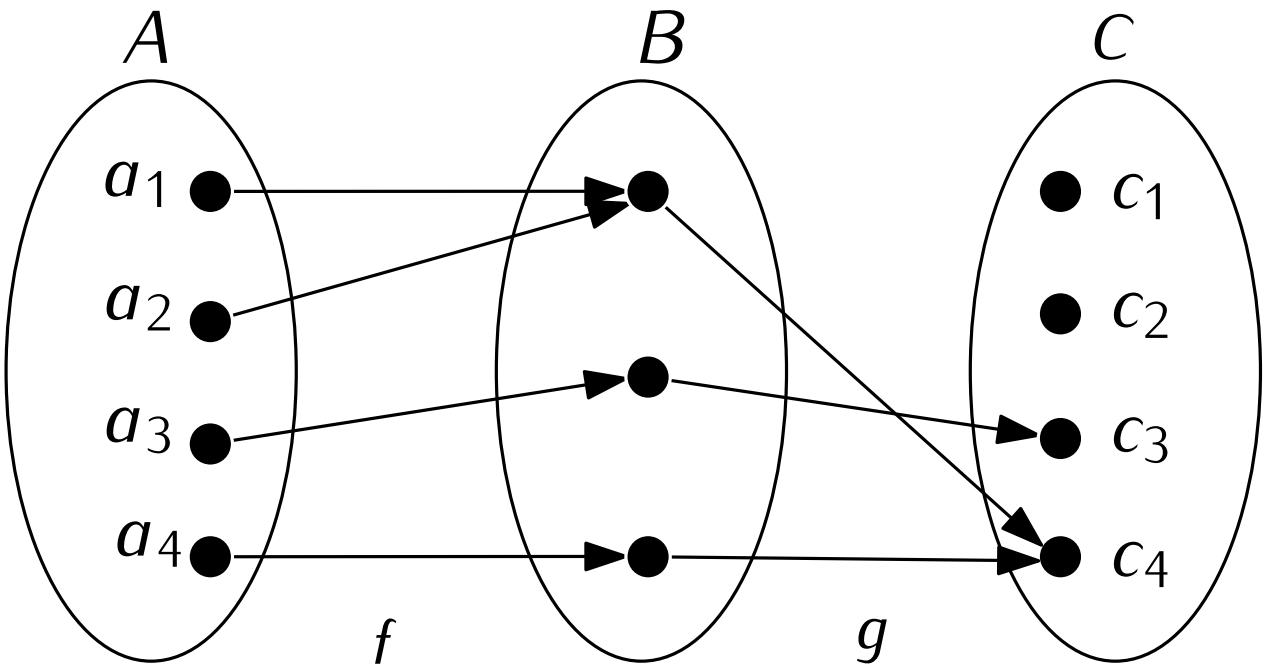
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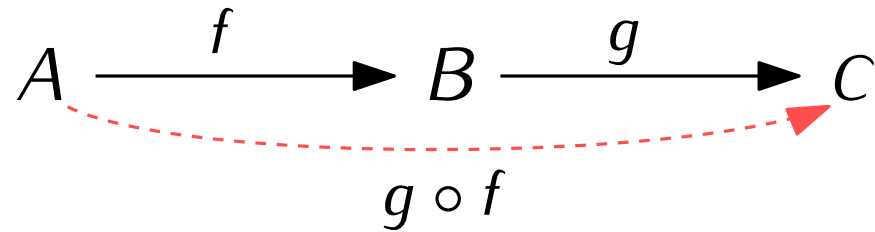
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Remark. Be careful!

- $f \circ g$ is not necessarily the same as $g \circ f$,
- $g \circ f$ only makes sense if the codomain of f is the same as the domain of g .

Same warning signs as with **matrix multiplication**!

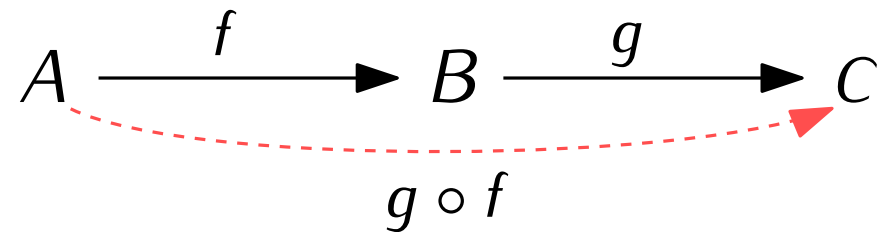
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Let $f: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ and $g: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$ be defined by $f(x) = x + 1$ and $g(x) = \frac{1}{x}$. Which of the following hold?

- $(g \circ f)(1) = \frac{1}{2}$
- $(g \circ f)(2) = \frac{1}{2}$
- $(f \circ g)(1) = \frac{1}{2}$
- $(f \circ f)(2) = 4$

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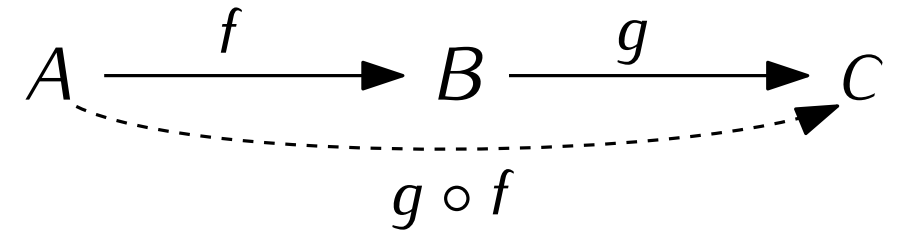
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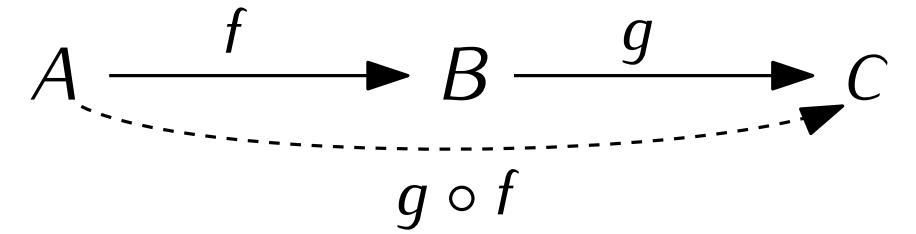
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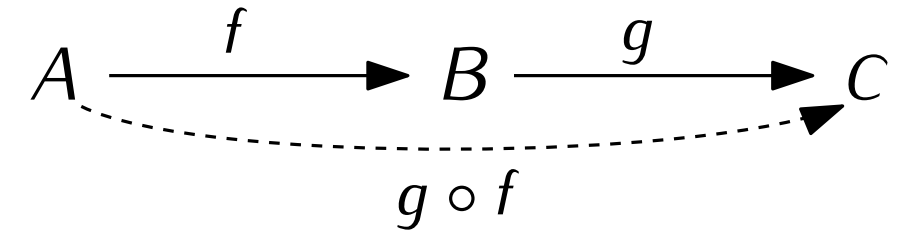


The **identity function** on a set A is the function $\text{Id}_A: A \rightarrow A$ defined by $\text{Id}_A(x) = x$.

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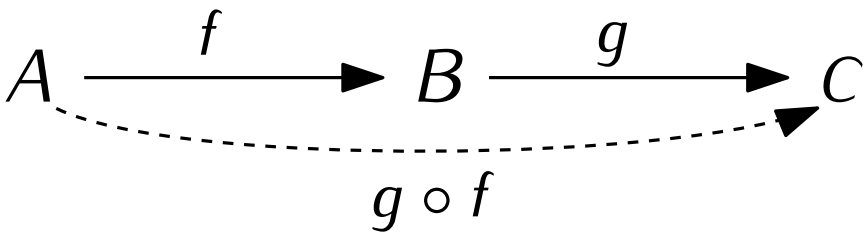
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Useful things about Id :

- If $f: A \rightarrow B$, then $f \circ \text{Id}_A = f$
- If $f: A \rightarrow B$, then $\text{Id}_B \circ f = f$

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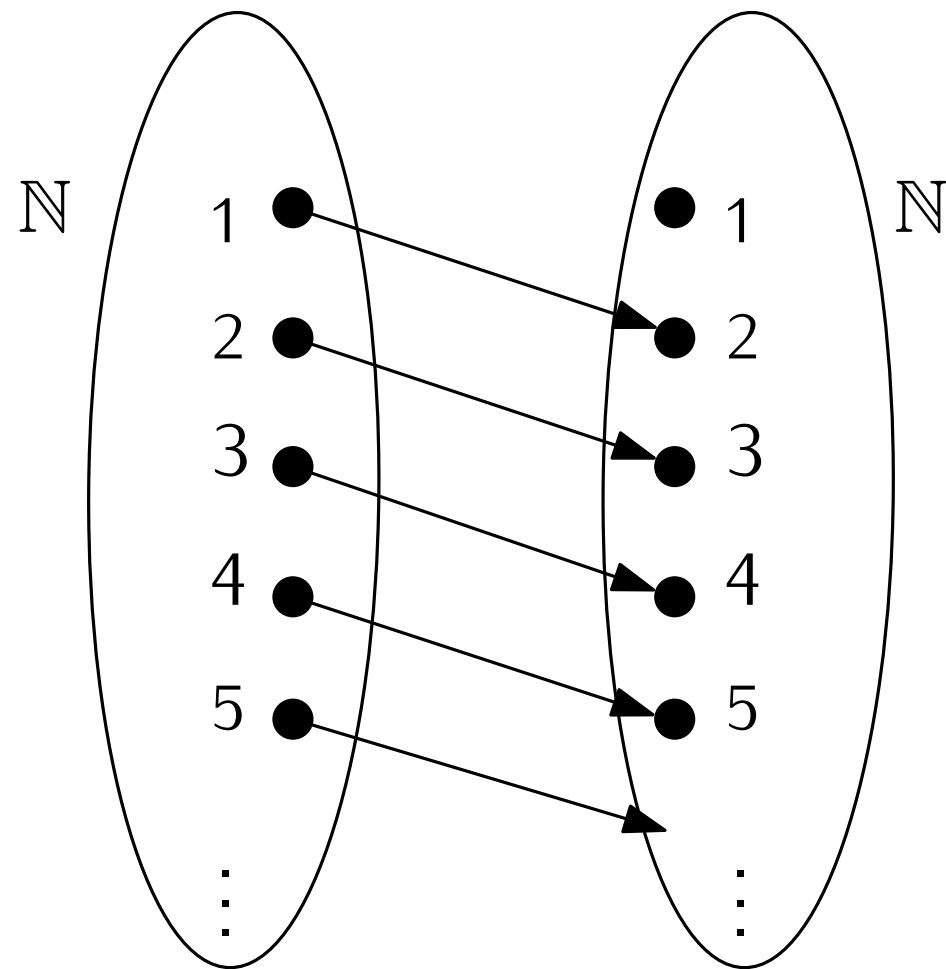
Analogies	
Numbers	Functions
Multiplication	Composition
\times	\circ
1	Id

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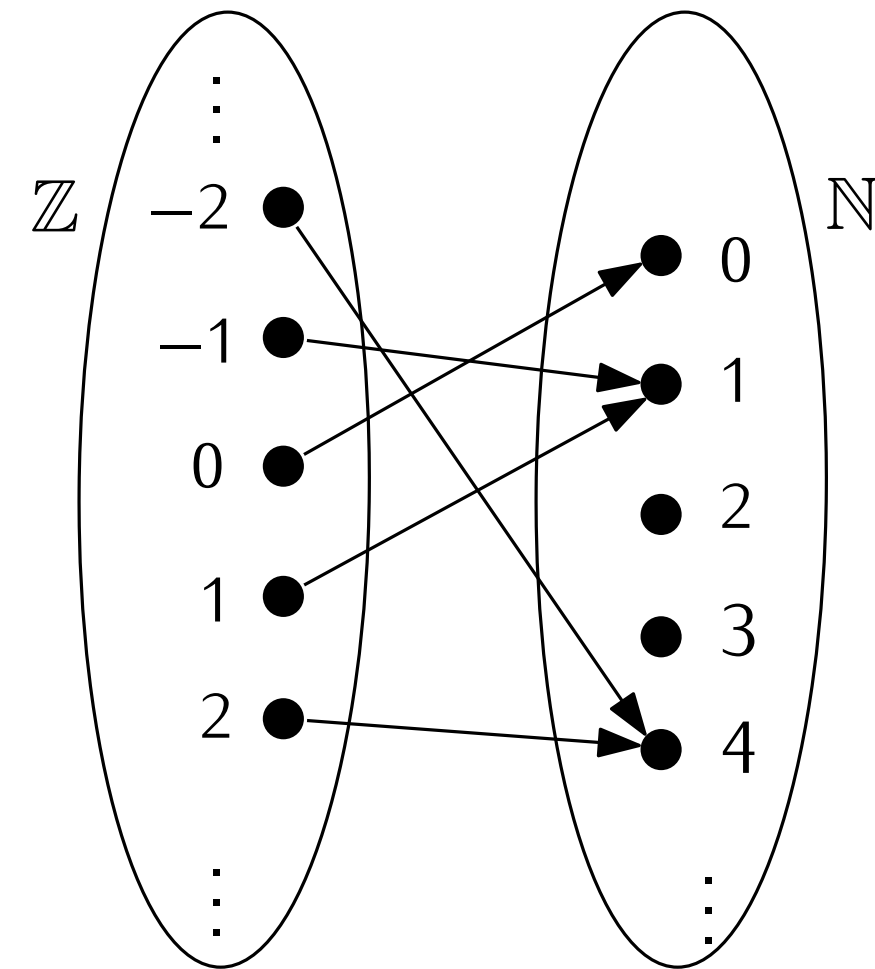
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Example. $f: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$, $f(x) = x + 1$.



$g: \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$, $g(x) = x^2$



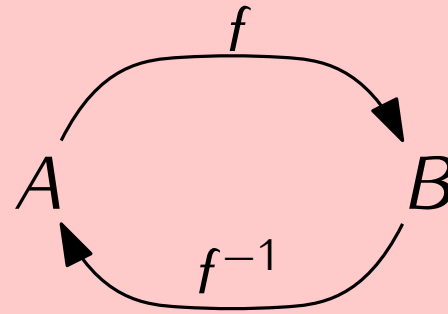
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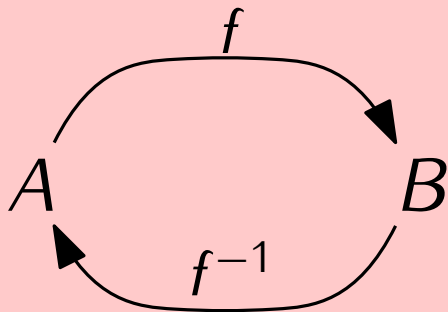


So $f^{-1}(f(a)) = a$ and $f(f^{-1}(b)) = b$ for all $a \in A, b \in B$.

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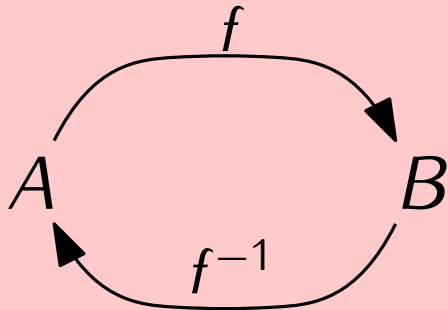
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Numbers	Functions
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\times	\circ
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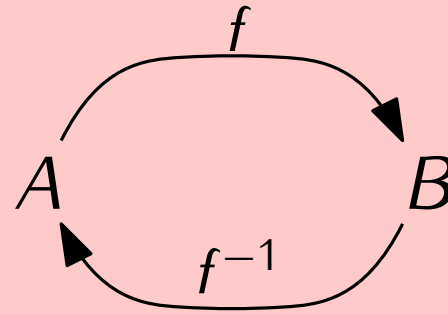
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Multiplication	Multiplication	Composition
\times	\times	\circ
I_n	1	Id
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What is the inverse of $f: \mathbb{Q} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$ defined by $f(x) = 3x + 2$?

- Trick question! f has no inverse
- Trick question! f is not a function
- $f^{-1}(x) = \frac{1}{3}x - 2$
- $f^{-1}(x) = \frac{1}{3}(x - 2)$
- $f^{-1}(x) = \frac{3}{x-2}$



- Definition; be able to determine if a given set $f \subseteq A \times B$ is a function or not
- Properties of functions: injectivity, surjectivity, bijectivity
- Composition of functions
- Identity function
- Inverses