Chapter 1: The Real And Complex Number Systems

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Integers

Exercise 1.1. *Prove that there is no largest prime. (A proof was known to Euclid.)*

There are many proofs of this result. We provide some of them.

Proof (Due to Euclid). If $p_1, p_2, ..., p_t$ were all primes, then write

$$n = p_1 p_2 \cdots p_t + 1$$

and there were a prime number p dividing n. p can not be any of p_i for $1 \leq i \leq t$, otherwise p would divide the difference $n - p_1 p_2 \cdots p_t = 1$, that is, $p \neq p_i$ for $1 \leq i \leq t$, which is absurd. $\Box$

Supplement (Due to Euclid). *Show that $k[x]$, with k a field, has infinitely many irreducible polynomials.*

Proof (Due to Euclid). If $f_1, f_2, ..., f_t$ were all irreducible polynomials, then write

$$g = f_1 f_2 \cdots f_t + 1 \in k[x]$$

and there were a irreducible polynomial f dividing g (since $\deg g = \deg f_1 + \deg f_2 + \cdots + \deg f_t \geq 1$). f can not be any of $c_i f_i$ for $1 \leq i \leq t$ and $0 \neq c_i \in k$, otherwise f would divide the difference $g - f_1 f_2 \cdots f_t = 1$, that is, $f \neq c_i f_i$ for $1 \leq i \leq t$ and $0 \neq c_i \in k$, which is absurd. $\Box$

Proof (Unique factorization theorem). Given N.

(1) *Show that* $\sum_{n \leq N} \frac{1}{n} \leq \prod_{p \leq N} \left(1 - \frac{1}{p}\right)^{-1}$.
By the unique factorization theorem on $n \leq N$,

$$\sum_{n \leq N} \frac{1}{n} \leq \prod_{p \leq N} \left(1 + \frac{1}{p} + \frac{1}{p^2} + \cdots\right) = \prod_{p \leq N} \left(1 - \frac{1}{p}\right)^{-1}.$$

(2) By (1) and the fact that $\sum \frac{1}{n}$ diverges, there are infinitely many primes.

$\square$

Proof (Due to Eckford Cohen).

(1) *ord*$_p n! = \left[\frac{n}{p}\right] + \left[\frac{n}{p^2}\right] + \left[\frac{n}{p^3}\right] + \cdots$. For any $k = 1, 2, ..., n$, we can express k as $k = p^s t$ where $s = \text{ord}_p k$ is a non-negative integer and $(t, p) = 1$. There are $[\frac{n}{p^a}]$ numbers such that $p^a \mid k$ for $a = 1, 2, ...$ Therefore, there are

$$\left[\frac{n}{p^a}\right] - \left[\frac{n}{p^{a+1}}\right]$$

numbers such that $\text{ord}_p k = a$ for $a = 1, 2, ...$ Hence,

$$\begin{aligned}\text{ord}_p n! &= \left(\left[\frac{n}{p}\right] - \left[\frac{n}{p^2}\right]\right) + 2\left(\left[\frac{n}{p^2}\right] - \left[\frac{n}{p^3}\right]\right) + 3\left(\left[\frac{n}{p^3}\right] - \left[\frac{n}{p^4}\right]\right) + \cdots \\ &= \left[\frac{n}{p}\right] + \left[\frac{n}{p^2}\right] + \left[\frac{n}{p^3}\right] + \cdots.\end{aligned}$$

(2) *ord*$_p n! \leq \frac{n}{p-1}$ *and that* $n!^{\frac{1}{n}} \leq \prod_{p|n!} p^{\frac{1}{p-1}}$.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{ord}_p n! &= \left[\frac{n}{p}\right] + \left[\frac{n}{p^2}\right] + \left[\frac{n}{p^3}\right] + \cdots \\ &\leq \frac{n}{p} + \frac{n}{p^2} + \frac{n}{p^3} + \cdots \\ &= \frac{\frac{n}{p}}{1 - \frac{1}{p}} \\ &= \frac{n}{p-1}.\end{aligned}$$

Thus,

$$n! = \prod_{p|n!} p^{\text{ord}_p n!} \leq \prod_{p|n!} p^{\frac{n}{p-1}} = \left(\prod_{p|n!} p^{\frac{1}{p-1}}\right)^n,$$

or

$$n!^{\frac{1}{n}} \leq \prod_{p|n!} p^{\frac{1}{p-1}}.$$

(3) $(n!)^2 \geq n^n$. Write $(n!)^2 = \prod_{k=1}^n k \prod_{k=1}^n (n+1-k) = \prod_{k=1}^n k(n+1-k)$, and $n^n = \prod_{k=1}^n n$. It suffices to show that $k(n+1-k) \geq n$ for each $1 \leq k \leq n$. Notice that $k(n+1-k) - n = (n-k)(k-1) \geq 0$ for $1 \leq k \leq n$. The inequality holds.

(4) By (3)(4), $\prod_{p|n!} p^{\frac{1}{p-1}} \geq \sqrt{n}$. Assume that there are finitely many primes, the value $\prod_{p|n!} p^{\frac{1}{p-1}}$ is a finite number whenever the value of n. However, $\sqrt{n} \to \infty$ as $n \to \infty$, which leads to a contradiction. Hence there are infinitely many primes.

□

Proof (Formula for $\phi(n)$). If $p_1, p_2, ..., p_t$ were all primes, then let $n = p_1 p_2 \cdots p_t$ and all numbers between 2 and n are NOT relatively prime to n. Thus, $\phi(n) = 1$ by the definition of ϕ. By the formula for ϕ,

$$\begin{aligned}
\phi(n) &= n \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_1}\right)\left(1 - \frac{1}{p_2}\right) \cdots \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_t}\right) \\
1 &= (p_1 p_2 \cdots p_t) \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_1}\right)\left(1 - \frac{1}{p_2}\right) \cdots \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_t}\right) \\
&= (p_1 - 1)(p_2 - 1) \cdots (p_t - 1) > 1,
\end{aligned}$$

which is a contradiction (since 3 is a prime). Hence there are infinitely many primes. □

Exercise 1.2. *If n is a positive integer, prove the algebraic identity*

$$a^n - b^n = (a-b) \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-1-k}.$$

Proof.

(1)

$$\begin{aligned}
(a-b) \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-1-k} &= a \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-1-k} - b \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-1-k} \\
&= \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^{k+1} b^{n-1-k} - \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-k}.
\end{aligned}$$

(2) Arrange summation index:

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^{k+1} b^{n-1-k} &= \sum_{k=1}^{n} a^k b^{n-k} = a^n + \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-k}, \\
\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-k} &= b^n + \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-k}.
\end{aligned}$$

(3) By (1)(2),

$$\begin{aligned}
(a-b) \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-1-k} &= \left(a^n + \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-k}\right) - \left(b^n + \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} a^k b^{n-k}\right) \\
&= a^n - b^n.
\end{aligned}$$

$\square$

Supplement. Some exercises without proof.

(1) *Let x be a nilpotent element of A. Show that $1+x$ is a unit of A. Deduce that the sum of a nilpotent element and a unit is a unit.* (Exercise 1.1 in Atiyah and Macdonald, Introduction to Commutative Algebra.)

(2) *Prove that $1^k + 2^k + \cdots + (p-1)^k \equiv 0\ (p)$ if $p-1 \nmid k$ and $-1(p)$ if $p-1 \mid k$.* (Exercise 4.11 in Kenneth Ireland and Michael Rosen, A Classical Introduction to Modern Number Theory, Second Edition)

(3) *Use the existence of a primitive root to give another proof of Wilson's theorem $(p-1)! \equiv -1\ (p)$.* (Exercise 4.12 in Kenneth Ireland and Michael Rosen, A Classical Introduction to Modern Number Theory, Second Edition)

(4) *Suppose n and F are integers and $n, F > 0$. Show that*

$$B_n(Fx) = F^{n-1} \sum_{a=0}^{F-1} B_n\left(x + \frac{a}{F}\right).$$

where $B_n(x)$ are Bernoulli polynomials. (Exercise 15.19 in Kenneth Ireland and Michael Rosen, A Classical Introduction to Modern Number Theory, Second Edition)

(5) Exercise 1.3.

(6) Exercise 1.4.

$\square$

Exercise 1.3. *If $2^n - 1$ is a prime, prove that n is prime. A prime of the form $2^p - 1$, where p is prime, is called a Mersenne prime.*

It suffices to prove that: *If $a^n - 1$ is a prime, show that $a = 2$ and that n is a prime.* Primes of the form $2^p - 1$ are called Mersenne primes. For example, $2^3 - 1 = 7$ and $2^5 - 1 = 31$. It is not known if there are infinitely many Mersenne primes.

Proof.

(1) *n is a prime.* Assume n were not prime, say $n = rs$ for some $r, s > 1$. By Exercise 1.2, $a^{rs} - 1 = (a^s - 1)(\sum_{k=0}^{r-1} a^{sk})$. $a^s - 1 = 1$ since $a^s - 1 < a^{rs} - 1$ and $a^{rs} - 1$ is a prime. Hence $s = 1$ and $(a = 2)$, which is absurd.

(2) $a = 2$. If a is odd, then $a^p - 1 > 2$ is even, which is not a prime. If $a > 2$ is even, $a^p - 1 = (a-1)(\sum_{k=0}^{p-1} a^k)$. Both $a - 1 > 1$ and $\sum_{k=0}^{p-1} a^k > 1$, which is absurd.

By (1)(2), $a = 2$ and that n is a prime if $a^n - 1$ is a prime. $\square$

Exercise 1.6. *Prove that every nonempty set of positive integers contains a smallest member. This is called the well-ordering principle.*

Proof. Use mathematical induction to establish that the well-ordering principle.

(1) Given a set S of positive integers, let $P(n)$ be the proposition 'If $m \in S$ for some $m \leq n$, then S has a least element'. Want to show $P(n)$ is true for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$.

   (a) $P(1)$ is true. For $m \in S$ with $m \leq n = 1$, or $m = 1$ by the minimality of $1 \in \mathbb{N}$, S has a least element 1 (m itself) in $\mathbb{N}$.

   (b) Suppose $P(n)$ is true. If $n + 1 \in S$, then there are only two possible cases.

      (i) There is a positive integer $m \in S$ less than $n+1$. So $n \geq m \in S$. Since $P(n)$ is true, S has a least element.

      (ii) There is no positive integer $m \in S$ less than $n + 1$. In this case $n + 1$ is the least element in S.

   In any cases (i)(ii), S has a least element, or $P(n + 1)$ is true.

   By mathematical induction, $P(n)$ is true for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$.

(2) *Show that the well-ordering principle holds.* Let T be a nonempty subset of $\mathbb{N}$, so there exists a positive integer $k \in T$. Notice that $P(k)$ is true by (1), thus T has a least element since $k \leq k$.

$\square$

Supplement. *Show that the well-ordering principle implies the principle of mathematical induction.*

Proof. Suppose that

(1) $P(n)$ be a proposition defined for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$,

(2) $P(1)$ is true,

(3) $[P(n) \Rightarrow P(n + 1)]$ is true.

Consider the set

$$S = \{n \in \mathbb{N} : P(n) \text{ false}\} \subseteq \mathbb{N}.$$

Want to show S *is empty, or the principle of mathematical induction holds.* If S were nonempty, by the well-ordering principle S has a smallest element m. m cannot be 1 by (2). Say $m > 1$. Therefore, $m - 1 \in \mathbb{N}$ and $P(m - 1)$ is true by the minimality of m. By (3), $P((m - 1) + 1) = P(m)$ is true, which is absurd.

$\square$

Rational and irrational numbers

Exercise 1.11. *Given any real $x > 0$, prove that there is an irrational number between 0 and x.*

Proof. There are only two possible cases: x is rational, or x is irrational.

(1) *x is rational.* Pick $y = \frac{x}{\sqrt{89}} \in (0, x) \subseteq \mathbb{R}$. y is irrational.

(2) *x is irrational.* Pick $y = \frac{x}{\sqrt{64}} \in (0, x) \subseteq \mathbb{R}$. y is irrational.

$\square$

Proof (Exercise 4.12). Pick

$$y = \lim_{m\to\infty} [\lim_{n\to\infty} \cos^{2n}(m!\pi x)] \cdot \frac{x}{\sqrt{89}} + (1 - \lim_{m\to\infty} [\lim_{n\to\infty} \cos^{2n}(m!\pi x)]) \cdot \frac{x}{\sqrt{64}}.$$

(1) *x is rational.* $y = \frac{x}{\sqrt{89}} \in (0, x) \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ is irrational.

(2) *x is irrational.* $y = \frac{x}{\sqrt{64}} \in (0, x) \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ is irrational.

$\square$