

## Chapter 1: Rings and Ideals

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**Exercise 1.1** *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.*

*Proof.*

- (1) Suppose  $x^m = 0$  for some odd integer  $m \geq 0$ . Then

$$1 = 1 + x^m = (1 + x)(1 - x + x^2 - \cdots + (-1)^{m-1}x^{m-1}),$$

or  $1 + x$  is a unit.

- (2) If  $u$  is any unit and  $x$  is any nilpotent,  $u + x = u \cdot (1 + u^{-1}x)$  is a product of two units (using that  $u^{-1}x$  is nilpotent and applying (1)) and hence a unit again.

□

*Proof (Proposition 1.9).*

- (1) *The nilradical is a subset of the Jacobson radical.*

(a) The nilradical  $\mathfrak{N}$  of  $A$  is the intersection of all the prime ideals of  $A$  by Proposition 1.8.

(b) The Jacobson radical  $\mathfrak{R}$  of  $A$  is the intersection of all the maximal ideals of  $A$  by definition.

- (2) By Proposition 1.9,  $x \in \mathfrak{R}$  if and only if  $1 - xy$  is a unit in  $A$  for all  $y \in A$ . So  $1 + x = 1 - (-x) \cdot 1$  is a unit in  $A$  since  $x$  is a nilpotent and  $\mathfrak{R}$  is an ideal.

□

**Exercise 1.2** *Let  $A$  be a ring and let  $A[x]$  be the ring of polynomials in an indeterminate  $x$ , with coefficients in  $A$ . Let  $f = a_0 + a_1x + \cdots + a_nx^n \in A[x]$ . Prove that*

- (i)  *$f$  is a unit in  $A[x]$  if and only if  $a_0$  is a unit in  $A$  and  $a_1, \dots, a_n$  are nilpotent. (Hint: If  $b_0 + b_1x + \cdots + b_mx^m$  is the inverse of  $f$ , prove by induction on  $r$  that  $a_n^{r+1}b_{m-r} = 0$ . Hence show that  $a_n$  is nilpotent, and then use Exercise 1.1.)*

- (ii)  $f$  is nilpotent if and only if  $a_0, a_1, \dots, a_n$  are nilpotent.
- (iii)  $f$  is a zero-divisor if and only if there exists  $a \neq 0$  such that  $af = 0$ . (Hint: Choose a polynomial  $g = b_0 + b_1x + \dots + b_mx^m$  of least degree  $m$  such that  $fg = 0$ . Then  $a_nb_m = 0$ , hence  $a_ng = 0$  (because  $a_ng$  annihilates  $f$  and has degree  $< m$ ). Now show by induction that  $a_{n-r}g = 0$  ( $0 \leq r \leq n$ ).)
- (iv)  $f$  is said to be primitive if  $(a_0, a_1, \dots, a_n) = (1)$ . Prove that if  $f, g \in A[x]$ , then  $fg$  is primitive if and only if  $f$  and  $g$  are primitive.

*Proof of (i).*

- (1) ( $\Leftarrow$ ) holds by Exercise 1.1.
- (2) ( $\Rightarrow$ ) There exists the inverse  $g$  of  $f$ , say  $g = b_0 + b_1x + \dots + b_mx^m$  satisfying  $1 = fg$ . Clearly,  $1 = a_0b_0$ , or  $a_0$  is a unit in  $A$ . Also,

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= a_nb_m, \\ 0 &= a_nb_{m-1} + a_{n-1}b_m, \\ 0 &= a_nb_{m-2} + a_{n-1}b_{m-1} + a_{n-2}b_m, \\ &\dots \end{aligned}$$

A direct computing shows that

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= a_n^1 b_m, \\ 0 &= a_n(a_nb_{m-1} + a_{n-1}b_m) \\ &= a_n^2 b_{m-1} + a_{n-1}a_nb_m \\ &= a_n^2 b_{m-1}, \\ 0 &= a_n^2(a_nb_{m-2} + a_{n-1}b_{m-1} + a_{n-2}b_m) \\ &= a_n^3 b_{m-2} + a_{n-1}a_n^2 b_{m-1} + a_{n-2}a_n^2 b_m \\ &= a_n^3 b_{m-2}, \\ &\dots \end{aligned}$$

So we might have  $a_n^{r+1}b_{m-r} = 0$  for  $r = 0, 1, 2, \dots, m$ .

- (3) Show that  $a_n^{r+1}b_{m-r} = 0$  for  $r = 0, 1, 2, \dots, m$  by induction on  $r$ .
  - (a) As  $r = 0$ ,  $a_nb_m = 0$  by comparing the coefficient of  $fg = 1$  at  $x^{n+m}$ .
  - (b) For any  $r > 0$ , comparing the coefficient of  $fg = 1$  at  $x^{n+m-r}$ ,

$$0 = a_nb_{m-r} + a_{n-1}b_{m-r+1} + \dots + a_{n-r}b_m.$$

Multiplying by  $a_n^r$  on the both sides,

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= a_n^{r+1}b_{m-r} + a_{n-1}a_n^r b_{m-r+1} + \dots + a_{n-r}a_n^r b_m \\ &= a_n^{r+1}b_{m-r}. \end{aligned}$$

by the induction hypothesis.

- (4)  $a_n$  is a nilpotent. Putting  $r = m$  in  $a_n^{r+1}b_{m-r} = 0$  and get  $a_n^{m+1}b_0 = 0$ . Notice that  $b_0$  is a unit,  $a_n^{m+1} = 0$ , or  $a_n$  is a nilpotent.
- (5) Consider  $f - a_n x^n = a_0 + a_1 x + \cdots + a_{n-1} x^{n-1}$ , a polynomial  $\in A[x]$  of degree  $n-1$ . Note that  $f$  is a unit and  $a_n x^n$  is a nilpotent. By Exercise 1.1,  $f - a_n x^n$  is a unit too. Applying the (2)(3)(4) again,  $a_{n-1}$  is a nilpotent as  $n-1 > 0$ , that is, applying descending induction on  $n$  then yields the desired property.

□

*Proof of (ii).*

- (1)  $(\Leftarrow)$  holds since the nilradical of any ring is an ideal.
- (2)  $(\Rightarrow)$   $f^N = 0$  for some  $N > 0$ . So  $0 = f^N = a_n^N x^{nN} + \cdots + a_0^N$ . Comparing the coefficient in the leading term  $x^{nN}$  leads to  $a_n^N = 0$ , or  $a_n$  is a nilpotent.
- (3) Consider  $f - a_n x^n = a_0 + a_1 x + \cdots + a_{n-1} x^{n-1}$ , a polynomial  $\in A[x]$  of degree  $n-1$ . Note that  $f$  and  $a_n x^n$  are nilpotents.  $f - a_n x^n$  is a nilpotent too. Similar to step (5) in the proof of (i), applying descending induction on  $n$  then yields the desired property.

□

*Proof of (iii).*

- (1)  $(\Leftarrow)$  holds trivially.
- (2)  $(\Rightarrow)$  Pick a polynomial  $g = b_0 + b_1 x + \cdots + b_m x^m$  of least degree  $m$  such that  $fg = 0$ . Especially,  $a_n b_m = 0$ .
- (3) Consider

$$\begin{aligned} a_n g &= a_n b_0 + \cdots + a_n b_{m-1} x^{m-1} + a_n b_m x^m \\ &= a_n b_0 + \cdots + a_n b_{m-1} x^{m-1} \end{aligned}$$

(since  $a_n b_m = 0$ ).  $a_n g$  is a polynomial over  $A$  of having degree strictly less than  $m$ . Notice that  $f \cdot (a_n g) = a_n \cdot (fg) = 0$ . By minimality of  $m$ ,  $a_n g = 0$ .

- (4) Induction on the degree  $n$  of  $f$ .
- (a) As  $n = 0$ ,  $f = a_0$ . There exists  $b_m \neq 0$  such that  $b_m f = b_m a_0 = 0$  by (2).
- (b) For any zero-divisor  $f$  of degree  $n$ , there is a polynomial  $g = b_0 + b_1 x + \cdots + b_m x^m$  of least degree  $m$  such that  $fg = 0$ . By (2)(3),

$$\begin{aligned} (f - a_n x^n) \cdot g &= fg - a_n x^n g \\ &= 0 - 0 \\ &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

That is,  $f - a_n x^n$  is a zero-divisor of degree  $n - 1$ . By the induction hypothesis, there exists  $b_m \neq 0$  such that  $b_m(f - a_n x^n) = 0$ . So  $b_m f = b_m(f - a_n x^n) + b_m a_n x^n = 0 + 0 = 0$ .

(c) By (a)(b),  $(\implies)$  holds by mathematical induction.

□

*Proof of (iv).* Note that

- (1)  $f \notin \mathfrak{m}[x]$  for any maximal ideal  $\mathfrak{m}$  of  $A$  if and only if  $f$  is primitive.
- (2) For any maximal ideal  $\mathfrak{m}$  of  $A$ ,  $A/\mathfrak{m}$  is a field (or an integral domain).
- (3)  $A[x]$  is an integral domain if  $A$  is an integral domain.
- (4)  $A[x]/\mathfrak{m}[x] \cong (A/\mathfrak{m})[x]$  as a ring isomorphism.

Hence,

$$\begin{aligned}
 f, g : \text{primitive} &\iff f, g \notin \mathfrak{m}[x] \text{ for any maximal ideal } \mathfrak{m} \\
 &\iff f, g \neq 0 \text{ in } (A/\mathfrak{m})[x] \text{ for any maximal ideal } \mathfrak{m} \\
 &\iff fg \neq 0 \text{ in } (A/\mathfrak{m})[x] \text{ for any maximal ideal } \mathfrak{m} \\
 &\iff fg \notin \mathfrak{m}[x] \text{ for any maximal ideal } \mathfrak{m} \\
 &\iff fg : \text{primitive}.
 \end{aligned}$$

□