

Advanced Modern Algebra second edition

Selected Solutions

Chapter 1: Groups I

October 2, 2023

1.1. Classical Formulas

Exercise 1.1. Given $M, N \in \mathbb{C}$, prove that there exists $g, h \in \mathbb{C}$ with $g + h = M$ and $gh = N$.

Proof. Consider the quadratic equation $x^2 - Mx + N = 0$ and apply the quadratic formula, we have two roots $r_1 = \frac{-M + \sqrt{M^2 - 4N}}{2}$ and $r_2 = \frac{-M - \sqrt{M^2 - 4N}}{2}$. Notice that $r_1 + r_2 = -M$ and $r_1 r_2 = N$. Then we see that $-r_1, -r_2 \in \mathbb{C}$ that satisfies the relation. \square

Exercise 1.3. (i) Find the complex roots of $f(x) = x^3 - 3x + 1$.

(ii) Find the complex roots of $f(x) = x^4 - 2x^2 + 8x - 3$.

Exercise 1.4. Show that the quadratic formula does not hold for $f(x) = ax^2 + bx + c$ if we view the coefficients a, b, c as lying in the integers mod 2.

Proof. Take $f(x) = x^2 + x + 1$, applying the quadratic formula, we have $r_1 = \frac{-1 + \sqrt{1-4}}{2} = \frac{1+1}{2} = 1 \neq 0$ and $r_2 = \frac{-1 - \sqrt{1-4}}{2} = \frac{1-1}{2} = 1 \neq 0$. \square

1.2. Permutations

Exercise 1.5. Give an example of functions $f : X \rightarrow Y$ and $g : Y \rightarrow X$ such that $gf = 1_X$ and $fg \neq 1_Y$.

Proof. Consider $f : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}, g : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ where $f(x) = -x, g(x) = |x|$. Then we see that $gf(x) = |-x| = x, \forall x \in \mathbb{Z}$ while $fg(1) = -|1| = -1$. \square

Exercise 1.6. Prove that the composition of functions is associative: if $X \xrightarrow{f} Y \xrightarrow{g} Z \xrightarrow{h} W$, then

$$h(gf) = (hg)f.$$

Proof. $h(gf)(x) = h(g(f(x))) = (hg)f(x)$ □

Exercise 1.7. Prove that the composite of two injections is an injection, and that the composite of two surjections is a surjection. Conclude that the composite of two bijections is a bijection.

Proof. Injection: Suppose we have $f : X \rightarrow Y$, $g : Y \rightarrow Z$ both injections. Then we see that $\forall a_1, a_2 \in X, a_1 = a_2 \implies f(a_1) = f(a_2) \implies g(f(a_1)) = g(f(a_2))$. Hence the composition of two injections is an injection.

Surjection: Suppose we have $f : X \rightarrow Y$, $g : Y \rightarrow Z$ both surjections. Then we see that $\forall c \in Z, \exists b \in Y$ s.t. $g(b) = c$. Also, since f is surjective, there is $a \in X$ s.t. $f(a) = b$. Hence there is $a \in X$ with $g(f(a)) = c$ for all $c \in Z$.

Bijection: Since bijections are injective and surjective at the same time, compositions of two bijections must also be both injective and surjective at the same time. □

Exercise 1.8 (Pigeonhole Principle). (i) Let $f : X \rightarrow X$ be a function, where X is a finite set. Prove equivalence of the following statements.

- (a) f is an injection.
- (b) f is a bijection.
- (c) f is a surjection.

(ii) Prove that no two of the statements in (i) are equivalent when X is an infinite set.

(iii) Suppose there are 501 pigeons, each sitting in some pigeonhole. If there are only 500 pigeonholes, prove that there is a hole containing more than one pigeon.

Proof. (i) Since bijective iff surjective and injective, we only need to prove (a) iff (c).

Suppose f is injective, then no two elements in X are mapped to the same element, hence $|X| = |f(X)|$ or equivalently, f is surjective.

(ii) Consider $f : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ where $f(x) = x + 1$. We see that f is an injection, but not surjection, since 1 does not have a preimage. This implies that injective cannot be equivalent to surjection, and hence the three statements are not equal to each other.

(iii) We prove the contrapositive, if each of the 500 pigeonholes contain only one pigeon, then there has to be exactly 500 pigeons. This is obvious by (i) as we have 500 pigeons to map to 500 pigeonholes, then surjectivity implies bijectivity and hence there are 500 pigeons.

□

Exercise 1.9. Let Y be a subset of a finite set X , and let $f : Y \rightarrow X$ be an injection. Prove that there is a permutation $\alpha \in S_X$ with $\alpha|_Y = f$.

Exercise 1.10. Find $\text{sgn}(\alpha)$ and α^{-1} , where

$$\alpha = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 \\ 9 & 8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Exercise 1.11. If $\alpha \in S_n$, prove that $\text{sgn}(\alpha^{-1}) = \text{sgn}(\alpha)$.

Exercise 1.12. If $1 \leq r \leq n$, show that there are

$$\frac{1}{r}[n(n-1)\dots(n-r+1)]$$

r -cycles in S_n .

Hint . There are exactly r cycle notations for any r -cycle.

Exercise 1.13. (i) If α is an r -cycle, show that $\alpha^r = (1)$.

Hint . If $\alpha = (i_0 \dots i_{r-1})$, show that $\alpha^k(i_0) = i_j$, where $k = qr + j$ and $0 \leq j < r$.

(ii) If α is an r -cycle, show that r is the smallest positive integer k such that $\alpha^k = (1)$.

Exercise 1.14. Show that an r -cycle is an even permutation if and only if r is odd.

Exercise 1.15. (i) Let $\alpha = \beta\delta$ be a factorization of a permutation α into disjoint permutations. If β moves i , prove that $\alpha^k(i) = \beta^k(i)$ for all $k \geq 1$.

(ii) Let β and γ be cycles both of which move i . If $\beta^k(i) = \gamma^k(i)$ for all $k \geq 1$, prove that $\beta = \gamma$.

Exercise 1.16. Given $X = 1, 2, \dots, n$, let us call a permutation τ of X an **adjacency** if it is a transposition of the form $(i \ i+1)$ for $i < n$.

(i) Prove that every permutation in S_n , for $n \geq 2$, is a product of adjacencies.

(ii) If $i < j$, prove that $(i\ j)$ is a product of an odd number of adjacencies.

Hint . Use induction on $j - i$.

Exercise 1.17. (i) Prove, for $n \geq 2$, that every $\alpha \in S_n$ is a product of transpositions each of whose factors moves n .

Hint . If $i < j < n$, then $(j\ n)(i\ j)(j\ n) = (i\ n)$, by Lemma 1.7, so that $(i\ j) = (j\ n)(i\ n)(j\ n)$.

(ii) Why doesn't part (i) prove that a 15-puzzle with even starting position α which fixes \square can be solved?

Exercise 1.18. Define $f : 0, 1, 2, \dots, 10 \rightarrow 0, 1, 2, \dots, 10$ by

$$f(n) = \text{the remainder after dividing } 4n^2 - 3n^7 \text{ by } 11.$$

(i) Show that f is a permutation.

(ii) Compute the parity of f .

(iii) Compute the inverse of f .

Exercise 1.19. If α is an r -cycle and $1 < k < r$, is α^k an r -cycle?

Exercise 1.20. (i) Prove that if α and β are (not necessarily disjoint) permutations that commute, then $(\alpha\beta)^k = \alpha^k\beta^k$ for all $k \geq 1$.

Hint . First show that $\beta\alpha^k = \alpha^k\beta$ by induction on k .

(ii) Given an example of two permutations α and β for which $(\alpha\beta)^2 \neq \alpha^2\beta^2$.

Exercise 1.21. (i) Prove, for all i , that $\alpha \in S_n$ moves i if and only if α^{-1} moves i .

(ii) Prove that if $\alpha, \beta \in S_n$ are disjoint and if $\alpha\beta = (1)$, then $\alpha = (1)$ and $\beta = (1)$.

Exercise 1.22. Prove that the number of even permutations in S_n is $\frac{1}{2}n!$.

Hint . Let $\tau = (1\ 2)$, and define $f : A_n \rightarrow O_n$, where A_n is the set of all even permutations in S_n and O_n is the set of all odd permutations, by $f : \alpha \rightarrow \tau\alpha$. Show that f is a bijection, so that $|A_n| = |O_n|$ and, hence, $|A_n| = \frac{1}{2}n!$.

Exercise 1.23. (i) How many permutations in S_5 commute with $\alpha = (1\ 2\ 3)$, and how many *textifeven* permutations in S_5 commute with α ?

Hint . Of the six permutations in S_5 commuting with α , only three are even.

(ii) Same question for $(1\ 2)(3\ 4)$.

Hint . Of the eight permutations in S_4 commuting with $(1\ 2)(3\ 4)$, only four are even.

Exercise 1.24. Given an example of $\alpha, \beta, \gamma \in S_5$, with $\alpha \neq (1)$, such that $\alpha\beta = \beta\alpha$, $\alpha\gamma = \gamma\alpha$, and $\beta\gamma \neq \gamma\beta$.

Exercise 1.25. If $n \geq 3$, prove that if $\alpha \in S_n$ commutes with every $\beta \in S_n$, then $\alpha = (1)$.

Exercise 1.26. If $\alpha = \beta_1 \dots \beta_m$ is a product of disjoint cycles and δ is disjoint from α , show that $\beta_1^{e_1} \dots \beta_m^{e_m} \delta$ commutes with α , where $e_j \geq 0$ for all j .