Numbers of various sorts

Exercises

1. Prove the following formulas by induction.

(i) $1^2 + \cdots + n^2 = \frac{n(n+1)(2n+1)}{6}$

Proof. Let $n = 1$. Then $\frac{1(2)(3)}{6} = 1$, so the formula holds. Now assume that the formula is true for some $k \in N$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
1^2 + \cdots + (k+1)^2 = 1^2 + \cdots + k^2 + (k+1)^2 &= \frac{k(k+1)(2k+1)}{6} + (k+1)^2 \\
&= \frac{k(k+1)(2k+1) + 6(k+1)^2}{6} = \frac{2k^3 + 9k^2 + 13k + 6}{6} \\
&= \frac{(k+1)(k+2)(2(k+1)+1)}{6}
\end{aligned}$$

□

(ii) $1^3 + \cdots + n^3 = (1 + \cdots + n)^2$

Proof. Let $n = 1$. Then $1^3 = 1^2$, so the formula holds. Now assume that the formula is true for some $k \in N$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
1^3 + \cdots + (k+1)^3 &= (1^3 + \cdots + k^3) + (k+1)^3 = (1 + \cdots + k)^2 + (k+1)^3 \\
&= (1 + \cdots + k)^2 + (k+1)^2(k+1) = (1 + \cdots + k)^2 + k(k+1)^2 + (k+1)^2 \\
&= (1 + \cdots + k)^2 + 2\frac{k(k+1)}{2}(k+1) + (k+1)^2 \\
&= (1 + \cdots + k)^2 + 2(1 + \cdots + k)(k+1) + (k+1)^2 \\
&= (1 + \cdots + (k+1))^2
\end{aligned}$$

□

2. Find a formula for

(i) $\sum_{i=1}^{n}(2i-1) = 1 + 3 + 5 + \cdots + (2n-1)$

Proof.

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_{i=1}^{n}(2i-1) = 1 + 2 + \cdots + 2n - 2(1 + 2 + \cdots + n) &= \frac{2n(2n+1)}{2} - 2\frac{n(n+1)}{2} \\
&= n(2n+1) - n(n+1) = 2n^2 + n - n^2 - n = n^2.
\end{aligned}$$

□

(ii) $\sum_{i=1}^{n}(2i-1)^2 = 1^2+3^2+5^2+\cdots+(2n-1)^2$

Proof.

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n}(2i-1)^2 = 1^2+2^2+\cdots+(2n)^2-4(1^2+2^2+\cdots+n^2) = \frac{2n(2n+1)(4n+1)}{6}-4\frac{n(n+1)(2n+1)}{6}$$
$$= \frac{8n^3-2n}{6} = \frac{2n(2n-1)(2n+1)}{6}$$

□

3. If $0 \le k \le n$, the "binomial coefficient" $\binom{n}{k}$ is defined by

$$\binom{n}{k} = \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!} = \frac{n(n-1)\dots(n-k+1)}{k!}, \textbf{ if } k \neq 0, n$$

$$\binom{n}{0} = \binom{n}{n} = 1 \textbf{ (a special case of the first formula if we define 0! = 1)},$$

and for $k < 0$ or $k > n$ we just define the binomial coefficient to be 0.

(a) Prove that

$$\binom{n+1}{k} = \binom{n}{k-1} + \binom{n}{k}$$

Proof.

$$\binom{n}{k-1}+\binom{n}{k} = \frac{n!}{(k-1)!(n-(k-1))!}+\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!} = \frac{kn!}{k!(n+1-k)!}+\frac{(n+1-k)n!}{k!(n+1-k)!}$$
$$= \frac{n!(k+n+1-k)}{k!(n+1-k)!} = \frac{(n+1)!}{k!(n+1-k)!} = \binom{n+1}{k}$$

□

(b) Notice that all the numbers in Pascal's triangle are natural numbers. Use part (a) to prove by induction that $\binom{n}{k}$ is always a natural number.

Proof. Let $n = 1$. Then $\binom{1}{0} = 1$ and $\binom{1}{1} = 1$, so the binomial coefficient is always a natural number. Next, suppose that for some number n, and $0 \le k \le n$, $\binom{n}{k}$ is always a natural number. Then if $k = 0$ or $k = n+1$, then $\binom{n+1}{k} = 1$, which is a natural number. Otherwise,

$$\binom{n+1}{k} = \binom{n}{k} + \binom{n}{k-1}, \text{ and } 1 \le k \le n, 0 \le k-1 \le n-1,$$

so $\binom{n+1}{k}$ is a sum of two natural numbers, and is therefore also a natural number. □

(c) Give another proof that $\binom{n}{k}$ is a natural number by showing that $\binom{n}{k}$ is the number of sets of exactly k integers chosen from $1, \dots, n$.

Proof. The number of k-tuples of integers chosen from $1, \dots, n$ is $n(n-1)\dots(n-k+1)$, because there is n choices for the first element, $n-1$ choices for the second, etc. Now, for each k-tuple, it can be arranged in $k(k-1)\dots(1) = k!$ different ways, so to get the number of sets of size k, with elements chosen from $1, \dots, n$, we have $\frac{n(n-1)\dots(n-k+1)}{k!} = \binom{n}{k}$. □

(d) Prove the "binomial theorem": If a and b are any numbers and n is a natural number, then

$$\begin{aligned}(a+b)^n &= a^n + \binom{n}{1}a^{n-1}b + \binom{n}{2}a^{n-2}b^2 + \cdots + \binom{n}{n-1}ab^{n-1} + b^n \\ &= \sum_{j=0}^{n}\binom{n}{j}a^{n-j}b^j.\end{aligned}$$

Proof. Let $n = 1$. Then

$$(a+b)^1 = a + b = a^1 + b^1 = \sum_{j=0}^{1}\binom{n}{j}a^{n-j}b^j,$$

so the statement holds true.

Next, suppose that the statement is true for some $n \geq 1$. Then

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

□

(e) Prove that

(i)

$$\sum_{j=0}^{n} \binom{n}{j} = \binom{n}{0} + \cdots + \binom{n}{n} = 2^n$$

Proof. Let $n = 1$. Then

$$\sum_{j=0}^{n} \binom{n}{j} = 1 + 1 = 2 = 2^1,$$

so the formula holds.

Next, suppose that for some $n \geq 1$, $\sum_{j=0}^{n} = 2^n$. Then

$$\sum_{j=0}^{n+1} \binom{n+1}{j} = \sum_{j=0}^{n+1} \left(\binom{n}{j} + \binom{n}{j-1} \right) = \binom{n}{0} + \sum_{j=1}^{n} \binom{n}{j} + \sum_{j=1}^{n} \binom{n}{j-1} + \binom{n}{n}$$
$$= \sum_{j=0}^{n} \binom{n}{j} + \sum_{j=0}^{n} \binom{n}{j} = 2^n + 2^n = 2^{n+1}.$$

□

Proof. (alternative)

$$2^n = (1+1)^n = \sum_{j=0}^{n} 1^{n-j} 1^j \binom{n}{j} = \sum_{j=0}^{n} \binom{n}{j}$$

□

(ii)

$$\sum_{j=0}^{n} (-1)^j \binom{n}{j} = \binom{n}{0} - \binom{n}{1} + \cdots \pm \binom{n}{n} = 0$$

Proof.

$$0 = (1 + (-1))^n = \sum_{j=0}^{n} 1^{n-j} (-1)^j \binom{n}{j} = \sum_{j=0}^{n} (-1)^j \binom{n}{j}.$$

□

(iii)

$$\sum_{l \text{ odd}} \binom{n}{l} = \binom{n}{1} + \binom{n}{3} + \cdots = 2^{n-1}$$

Proof.

$$0 = \sum_{l=0}^{n} (-1)^l \binom{n}{l} = \sum_{l \text{ even}} \binom{n}{l} - \sum_{l \text{ odd}} \binom{n}{l},$$

so

$$\sum_{l \text{ even}} \binom{n}{l} = \sum_{l \text{ odd}} \binom{n}{l}.$$

Then

$$2^n = \sum_{l=0}^{m} \binom{n}{l} = \sum_{l \text{ even}} \binom{n}{l} + \sum_{l \text{ odd}} \binom{n}{l} = 2 \sum_{l \text{ odd}} \binom{n}{l},$$

so

$$\sum_{l \text{ odd}} = \frac{2^n}{2} = 2^{n-1}$$

$\square$

(iv)

$$\sum_{l \text{ even}} \binom{n}{l} = \binom{n}{0} + \binom{n}{2} + \cdots = 2^{n-1}$$

Proof. It follows from proof of (iii). $\square$

5.

(a) Prove by induction on n that

$$1 + r + r^2 + \cdots + r^n = \frac{1 - r^{n+1}}{1 - r}$$

if $r \neq 1$.

Proof. Let $n = 1$. Then $1 + r = \frac{(1+r)(1-r)}{1-r} = \frac{1-r^2}{1-r}$, so the formula holds.
Next, suppose that the formula is true for some $n \geq 1$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} 1 + r + r^2 + \cdots + r^{n+1} &= \frac{1 - r^{n+1}}{1 - r} + r^{n+1} = \frac{1 - r^{n+1}}{1 - r} + \frac{r^{n+1}(1 - r)}{1 - r} \\ &= \frac{1 - r^{n+1} + r^{n+1} - r^{n+2}}{1 - r} = \frac{1 - r^{n+2}}{1 - r} \end{aligned}$$

$\square$

(b) Derive this result by setting $S = 1 + r + \cdots + r^n$, multiplying this equation by r, and solving the two equations for S.

Proof.

$$S = 1 + r + \cdots + r^n \text{ and } Sr = r + r^2 + \cdots + r^{n+1}.$$

Then

$$S(1 - r) = 1 + r + \cdots + r^n - r - r^2 - \cdots - r^{n+1} = 1 - r^{n+1},$$

so

$$S = \frac{1 - r^{n+1}}{1 - r}$$

$\square$