

A simple **induction**:

$$f(a^m b^n) = a^{\min(n,m)} b^{|m-n|} c^{\min(n,m)}$$

$$f(a^x b^y c^k) = b^{x+y} a^k$$

$$f(a^k) = a^k$$

A simple **series**:

$$U_0 = m, V_0 = n$$

$$U_n = |U_{n-1} - V_{n-1}|, V_n = \min(U_{n-1}, V_{n-1})$$

$$\forall n \geq \gcd(m, n), U_n = 0$$

The **algorithm**:

**Input:**  $a^m b^n$

1- Remove an 'a' and a 'b', otherwise (no a, no b or both) goto 3

2- Add 'c', goto 1

3- Switch all 'a' to 'b'

4- Switch all 'c' to 'a'

5- If there is 'b', goto 1, otherwise halt

**Output:**  $a^x = a^{\gcd(m,n)}$

**An explanation:**

The main idea is to continuously subtract n from m to get a 'remainder'  $|m-n|$  'b' and 'quotient'  $\min(n, m)$  'a' until we get no more 'b' (remainder is 0) at step 4, therefore  $a^x = a^{\gcd(n,m)}$

A sample running:

aaaaaabbbbbbbbbb

aaaaabbbbbbbbbb

aaaaabbbbbbbbbc

aaaabbbbbbbbbc

aaaabbbbbbbbcc

aaabbbbbbbcc

aaabbbbbbbccc

aabbbbbbbccc

aabbbbbbbcccc

abbbbbbbccc

abbbbbbbcccc

bbbbbbccc

bbbbbbcccc

bbbbaaaaaa

bbbbaaaa

bbbbaaaac

bbbaaac

bbbaaac

baaac

baaac

aaacc

aaacc

bbccc  
bbaaaa  
baaa  
baaac  
aac  
aacc  
bbaa  
ba  
bac  
cc  
aa  
HALT  
 $\text{GCD}(14, 6) = 2$