

Algebra (Winter) Notes

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Last updated January 26, 2024

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Note: Theorem numbers come from the order they are presented in lecture, and do not correspond to any textbook or written course material.

Week 1

Introduction to Groups

1.1 What is a group?

Definition of a group:

A **group** G is a nonempty set together with a multiplication $G \times G \rightarrow G$ satisfying

1. $(ab)c = a(bc) \forall a, b, c \in G$, (Associativity)
2. there exists $e \in G$ such that $ea = ae = a \forall a \in G$, (Identity)
3. and for every $a \in G$ there exists $b \in G$ such that $ab = ba = e$. (Inverse)

Example of a group:

Let $\mathbb{R}^\times = \mathbb{R}^\dagger = \{a \in \mathbb{R} : a \neq 0\}$ together with multiplication on \mathbb{R} .

Associativity is immediate.

The identity is $1 \in \mathbb{R}^\times$.

For every $a \in \mathbb{R}^\times$, $\frac{1}{a} \in \mathbb{R}$ and $a(\frac{1}{a}) = \frac{1}{a}(a) = 1$.

So \mathbb{R}^\times is a group.

Remark: When we need to highlight the group multiplication we write a group as a pair of the set and the multiplication, e.g., $(\mathbb{R}, +)$, (\mathbb{R}, \cdot) .

From now on, G is **always** a group.

Theorem 1.1

There is a unique identity element in G .

Theorem 1.2 Cancellation

Suppose $ba = ca$ for $a, b, c \in G$. Then $b = c$

Proof. Let $d \in G$ be an inverse for a , i.e. $da = ad = e$. Multiplying on the right by d , we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}(ba)d &= (ca)d \implies b(ad) = c(ad) \\ &\implies be = ce \\ &\implies b = c.\end{aligned}$$

□

Theorem 1.3 Uniqueness of Inverses

For every $a \in G$ there is a unique element $a^{-1} \in G$ such that $aa^{-1} = a^{-1}a = e$.

Proof. Suppose $a \in G$ and $b, b' \in G$ are inverses of a , then

$$ba = e = b'a \implies b = b'$$

(by theorem 1.2)

□

Example of inverses in different groups:

1. For $b \in \mathbb{R}^\times$, $b^{-1} = \frac{1}{b}$.
2. For $b \in \mathbb{R}$ under addition $b^{-1} = -b$.
3. For $b \in \mathbb{Z}_n$, $b^{-1} = n - b$.

Example of groups using a field F :

1. $(F, +)$ is a group (Imitate $(\mathbb{R}, +)$).
2. (F^\times, \cdot) where $F^\times = F^\dagger = \{a \in F : a \neq 0\}$ is a group. In particular, if p is a prime number, then $\mathbb{Z}_p^\times = \{1, \dots, p-1\}$ is a group.
3. The set of $m \times n$ matrices with entries in F , $M_{mn}(F)$ is a group under addition. When $n = 1$, $M_{m1}(F) = F^m$.
4. The set of invertible $m \times n$ matrices with entries in F , $GL(n, F) = \{A \in M_{nn}(F) : \det(A) \neq 0\}$ together with matrix multiplication is called (rank n) **general linear group** (over F). The identity matrix $I \in GL(n, F)$ is the identity. $\det(A) \neq 0 \implies \exists A^{-1} \in GL(n, F)$ such that $AA^{-1} = A^{-1}A = I$.

Example of the symmetries of the equilateral triangle:

Let σ = flip through the vertical axis. Let ρ = rotation by $\frac{2\pi}{3}$.

We can compose two symmetries, e.g., $\sigma\rho = \sigma \cdot \rho$.

We can show that the symmetries given by σ and ρ under composition are $\{e, \rho, \rho^2, \sigma, \sigma\rho, \sigma\rho^2\}$ where e = doing nothing.

We call this set D_3 . It forms a group under composition. Clearly $\rho^3 = \rho\rho\rho = e$, $\sigma^2 = \sigma\sigma = e$, and $\sigma\rho\sigma = \rho^2 = \rho^{-1}$.

Definition of a dihedral group:

The **dihedral group** of order $2n$ is defined by

$$D_n = \{e, \rho, \dots, \rho^{n-1}, \sigma, \sigma\rho, \dots, \sigma\rho^{n-1}\}$$

where $\rho^n = e$, $\sigma^2 = e$, and $\sigma\rho\sigma = \rho^{-1}$. This is a group with the multiplication given by $\sigma\rho\sigma = \rho^{-1}$.

Remark: D_n is the group of symmetries of a regular n-gon.

Definition of an Abelian Group:

A group G is **abelian (commutative)** if $ab = ba$ for all $a, b \in G$

Example of classifying groups:

1. $(F, +)$ where F is a field is Abelian.
2. (F^\times, \cdot) where F is a field is Abelian.
3. $(M_{mn}(F), +)$ is Abelian.
4. $(GL(n, F), \cdot)$ is not Abelian.
5. D_n is not Abelian.

Definition of the group of units:

Let $n \geq 2$ and $U(n) = \{1 \leq k \leq n-1 : \gcd(k, n) = 1\}$.

$U(n)$ is called the **group of units** of \mathbb{Z}_n

Recall Facts about $d = \gcd(a, b)$:

1. $d \mid a$ and $d \mid b$, and d is the largest integer with this property
2. There exists $l, m \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $\gcd(a, b) = la + mb$
3. $\gcd(a, b)$ is the smallest positive \mathbb{Z} -linear combination of a and b .
4. If $f \mid a$ and $f \mid b$ then f divides $\gcd(a, b) = la + mb \implies f \mid d$

Example of $U(n)$ together with multiplication mod n is a group:

Facts 2 and 3 tell us that $\gcd(k, n) = 1 \iff \exists l, m \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $lk + mn = 1$.

So $U(2) = \{1\}$, $U(3) = \{1, 2\}$, $U(4) = \{1, 3\}$, $U(5) = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$, etc.

So $U(p) = \{1, \dots, p-1\} = \mathbb{Z}_p^\times$ where p is prime.

Definition of exponentiation:

Suppose $g \in G$.

1. $g^0 = e$
2. $g^n = g \cdots g$ (n times)
3. $g^{-n} = (g^{-1})^n$

Theorem 1.4 Socks and Shoes

Suppose $a, b \in G$. Then $(ab)^{-1} = b^{-1}a^{-1}$ (only relevant for non-abelian groups)

Proof.

$$\begin{aligned}(ab)(b^{-1}a^{-1}) &= aea^{-1} = aa^{-1} = e \\ (b^{-1}a^{-1})(ab) &= b^{-1}eb = b^{-1}b = e\end{aligned}$$

□

Definition of the order of a group and its elements:

The number of elements in G is called the **order** of G . Suppose $a \in G$.

Then the **order of a** is the largest positive integer n such that $a^n = e$.

If no such integer exists, we say a has **infinite order**. We denote the order of a by $|a|$.

Example of the order of $\{e\}$:

We know $|\{e\}| = 1$, and $e^1 = e \implies |e| = 1$

Example of the order of \mathbb{R}^\times :

\mathbb{R}^\times is an infinite group so it has infinite order.

Obviously, $|1| = 1$.

$|-1| = 2$ since $(-1)^2 = 1$ and $(-1)^1 \neq 1$.

All other real numbers in \mathbb{R}^\times have infinite order.

Example of the order of D_3 :

$|D_3| = 6$.

$|\sigma| = 2$, $|\rho| = 3$, $|\rho^2| = 3$, $|\sigma\rho| = 2$, $|\sigma\rho^2| = 2$.

1.2 Subgroups and subgroup tests

Definition of a subgroup:

A **subgroup** of G is a subset $H \subseteq G$ which is a group under the same group multiplication as G .

Example of subgroups:

1. $\{\pm 1\} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^\times$ is a subgroup
2. $\mathbb{Z}_5 \subseteq \mathbb{Z}$ is not a subgroup of \mathbb{Z} since they have different group multiplications

Theorem 1.5 2-step subgroup test

Suppose H is a non-empty subset of G . Then H is a subgroup of G if and only if:

1. $a, b \in H \implies ab \in H$ (closure under multiplication)
2. $a \in H \implies a^{-1} \in H$ (closure under inverse)

Theorem 1.6 1-test subgroup test

$\emptyset \neq H \subseteq G$ is a subgroup $\iff a, b \in H \implies ab^{-1} \in H$

Proof. The forward direction is immediate.

" \Leftarrow " Suppose 1 and 2 hold. 1 tells us that the group multiplication on G restricts to a multiplication on H . The associativity of this multiplication on H is inherited from the associativity of the group multiplication on G .

By 1 and 2, for any $a \in H$, $a^{-1} \in H$ and $e = aa^{-1} \in H$. Therefore $e \in H$.

Finally, 2 is the inverse axiom for H . \square

Example of showing subgroup-ness:

Let $\mu_4 = \{a \in \mathbb{C}^\times : a^4 = 1\} = \{1, -1, i, -i\}$.

$\mu_4 \neq \emptyset$.

$a, b \in \mu_4 \implies (ab)^4 = a^4 b^4 = (1)(1) = 1 \implies ab \in \mu_4$

$a \in \mu_4 \implies (a^{-1})^4 = a^{-4} = (a^4)^{-1} = 1^{-1} = 1 \implies a^{-1} \in \mu_4$

Theorem 1.7 Finite subgroup test

Suppose $H \neq \emptyset$ is a finite subset $H \subseteq G$. Then H is a subgroup $\iff a, b \in H \implies ab \in H$.

Proof. " \implies " Follows from 2-step subgroup test.

" \impliedby " By the 2-step subgroup test it is enough to show that if $a, b \in H \implies ab \in H$ then $b \in H \implies b^{-1} \in H$ also holds. Suppose $a, b \in H \implies ab \in H$ (*). Suppose $e \neq b \in H$. Let's prove $b^{-1} \in H$. By (*), $b^2 = bb \in H$, and by induction, $b^n \in H$ for all $n \geq 1$.

Since H is a finite set, $b^k = b^j$ for some $k > j \geq 1 \implies b^k b^{-j} = b^j b^{-j} = e \implies b^{k-j} = e$ for $k - j \geq 1$.

So $b^{-1} = b^{k-j-1}$. $k - j - 1$ cannot be zero, since then $b = e$. So $k - j - 1 \geq 1$ and so $b^{-1} = b^{k-j-1} \in H$. If $b = e \in H$, then its inverse (itself) is obviously also in H . \square

Example of a finite subgroup:

Consider $\{1, i, -1, -i\} \subseteq \mathbb{C}^\times$. By the finite subgroup test, it suffices to show that $\{1, i, -1, -i\}$ is closed under multiplication to prove that it is a subgroup. This can be done by brute force.

Week 2

Cyclic Subgroups

Definition of a cyclic group:

A group G is called **cyclic** if there is an element $a \in G$ such that $G = \{a^j : j \in \mathbb{Z}\}$. a is called a **generator** of G . We indicate that G is a cyclic group generated by a with the notation $G = \langle a \rangle$.

Theorem 2.1

Suppose $a \in G$. Then $\langle a \rangle$ is a subgroup of G .

Proof. Suppose $a^m, a^n \in \langle a \rangle$ where $m, n \in \mathbb{Z}$. Then $a^m a^n = a^{m+n} \in \langle a \rangle$ since $m+n \in \mathbb{Z}$. Also $a^{-m} \in \langle a \rangle$ for all m since $-m \in \mathbb{Z}$, and $a^m a^{-m} = a^0 = e = a^0 = a^{-m} a^m$.

By the 2-step subgroup test $\langle a \rangle$ is a subgroup. \square

Definition of a cyclic subgroup:

The subgroup $\langle a \rangle \subseteq G$ is called the **cyclic subgroup** generated by $a \in G$.

Example of generators:

Take $G = \mathbb{Z}_6 = \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$ together with addition mod 6.

$\mathbb{Z}_6 = \langle 1 \rangle$ since $n(1) = n \pmod 6$. Note that we also have $\mathbb{Z}_6 = \langle 5 \rangle$.

Remark: In general, \mathbb{Z}_n is cyclic and generated by $\langle -1 \rangle$. All finite cyclic are isomorphic to \mathbb{Z}_n for some n .

Remark: For $a \in G$, $\langle a \rangle = \langle a^{-1} \rangle$.

Example of the integers:

Take $G = \mathbb{Z}$.

$$\langle 1 \rangle = \{j1 : j \in \mathbb{Z}\} = \mathbb{Z}.$$

$$\langle 2 \rangle = \{j2 : j \in \mathbb{Z}\} = \text{even numbers} \subset \mathbb{Z}.$$

$$\langle m \rangle = \{jm : j \in \mathbb{Z}\} = \text{integers divisible by } m \text{ for } m \neq 0.$$

$$\langle 0 \rangle = \{0\}.$$

Remark: Infinite cyclic groups are all isomorphic to \mathbb{Z} .

Definition of the centre of a group:

The **centre** of G is the subset

$$Z(G) = \{x \in G : xa = ax \forall a \in G\}$$

i.e., the elements that commute with everything in G .

Theorem 2.2

$Z(G)$ is a subgroup of G .

Proof. Suppose $x, y \in Z(G)$ and $a \in G$. Then $(xy)a = x(ya) = xay = axy = a(xy)$. Therefore $xy \in Z(G)$.

Moreover, $xa = ax \implies x^{-1}xa = x^{-1}ax \implies a = x^{-1}ax \implies ax^{-1} = x^{-1}axx^{-1} \implies ax^{-1} = x^{-1}a \implies x^{-1} \in Z(G)$.

By the 2-step subgroup test, $Z(G)$ is a subgroup of G . \square

Remark: 1. G is abelian $\iff Z(G) = G$

2. $Z(G)$ is abelian (even when G is not)

3. $Z(D_3) = \{e\}$ (brute force)

4. $x \in Z(G) \iff xax^{-1} = a \text{ for all } a \in G \iff axa^{-1} = x \text{ for all } a \in G$

Example of a non-trivial center:

$$Z(GL(2, \mathbb{R})) = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & a \end{bmatrix} : a \in \mathbb{R}^\times \right\}$$

Definition of the centralizer:

Fix $b \in G$. The **centralizer** of b in G is

$$\begin{aligned} C_G(b) &= C(b) = \{a \in G : ab = ba\} \\ &= \{a \in G : aba^{-1} = b\} \end{aligned}$$

Theorem 2.3

For any $b \in G$, $C_G(b)$ is a subgroup.

Proof. Subgroup test. □

Remark: 1. $C_G(e) = G$

2. $C_G(b) = G \iff b \in Z(G)$

3. $e \in C_G(b)$, $\langle b \rangle \subseteq C_G(b)$

Example of a centralizer:

$$C_{GL(2, \mathbb{R})} \left(\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix} \right) = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & b \end{bmatrix} : a, b \in \mathbb{R}^\times \right\}$$

Recall: G is cyclic if $G = \langle a \rangle = \{a^j : j \in \mathbb{Z}\}$ for some $a \in G$.

Theorem 2.4

Suppose $a \in G$. Then

1. If $|a| = \infty$, then $a^k = a^j \iff j = k$
2. If $|a| = n$, then $a^k = a^j \iff n$ divides $k - j$

Proof. 1. Suppose $|a| = \infty$. This means $a^n \neq e$ for any $n \geq 1$. Suppose now $a^k = a^j$ with $k \geq j$. Then $a^k a^{-j} = a^j a^{-j} = e \implies a^{k-j} = e$ for $k - j \geq 0$. Since $a^n \neq e \forall n \geq 1$, we have $k - j = 0 \implies k = j$.

2. Suppose $|a| = n$. This means $a^n = e$ and n is the least positive number satisfying this equation. Suppose $a^k = a^j$ with $k \geq j$. Then $a^{k-j} = e$ where $k - j \geq 0$. By definition of n , $n \leq k - j$. By the division algorithm, $k - j = qn + r$ where $q, r \in \mathbb{Z}$ are unique and $0 \leq r \leq n - 1$.
 $e = a^{k-j} = a^{qn+r} = a^{qn} a^r = (a^n)^q a^r = e^q a^r = e a^r = a^r$, so $r = 0$ by the minimality of n , and so $k - j = qn \implies \frac{k-j}{n} = q \in \mathbb{Z} \implies n$ divides $k - j$.
 Conversely if $qn = k - j$, then $a^{k-j} = (a^n)^q = e^q = e \implies a^k = a^j$.

□

Remark: In part 2., n divides $k - j \iff (k - j) \bmod n = 0 \iff k \bmod n = j \bmod n$

Corollary 2.5

Suppose $|a| = n$. Then $a^k = e$ for some $k \in \mathbb{Z} \iff k$ is a multiple of $|a|$

Proof. Suppose $a^k = e$. Then $a^k = a^0$, so n divides $k - 0 = k$. \square

Corollary 2.6

Suppose $a \in G$. Then

1. If $|a| = n$ then $\langle a \rangle = \{e, a^1, a^2, \dots, a^{n-1}\}$ and $|\langle a \rangle| = |a|$.
2. If $|a| = \infty$, then $\langle a \rangle$ is infinite and $|\langle a \rangle| = |a| = \infty$

Proof. Didn't take notes for this one. \square

Corollary 2.7

Suppose G is a finite group and $a, b \in G$. Then

1. $|a|, |b|$ are finite
2. If $ab = ba$ then $|ab|$ divides $|a| |b|$

Proof. 1. Suppose by way of contradiction that $|a|$ is infinite. Then $\langle a \rangle \subseteq G$ is infinite. But G is finite so $|\langle a \rangle| \leq |G|$ is a contradiction.

$$2. (ab)^{|a||b|} = a^{|a||b|} b^{|a||b|} = (a^{|a|})^{|b|} (b^{|b|})^{|a|} = e^{|b|} e^{|a|} = e$$

\square

2 examples omitted. Sorry, I'm prepping for my tutorial later!

Theorem 2.8

Suppose $a \in G$ and $|a| = n$. Then for any $k \geq 1$, $\langle a^k \rangle = \langle a^{\gcd(n,k)} \rangle$ and $|a^k| = \frac{n}{\gcd(n,k)}$

Theorem 2.9 Fundamental Theorem of Cyclic Groups

Suppose $G = \langle a \rangle$ is cyclic and $|G| = n$. Then

1. Every subgroup of H is cyclic and $k = |H|$ divides $n = |G|$, i.e., k is a divisor of n
2. For every divisor k of n , there is a unique subgroup of G of order k and it is equal to $\langle a^{\frac{n}{k}} \rangle$

Proof. 1. Suppose H is a subgroup of G and $H \neq \langle e \rangle$. Let $m \geq 1$ be the least power of a such that $a^m \in H$. Since H is closed under multiplication and inversion, $\langle a^m \rangle \subseteq H$. Suppose $a^j \in H$. By the division algorithm, $j = qm + r$ with $0 \leq r < m \implies a^j = (a^m)^q a^r \implies a^j (a^m)^{-q} = a^r$, so since $a^j, (a^m)^{-q} \in H$, $a^r \in H \implies r = 0$ by the minimality of m .

2. Suppose k divides n , i.e. $\frac{n}{k}$ is an integer. Recall that $|\langle a^{\frac{n}{k}} \rangle| = |\langle a^{\frac{n}{k}} \rangle| = k$. It follows that $|\langle a^{\frac{n}{k}} \rangle| = k$.

Suppose $H \subseteq \langle a \rangle$ is a subgroup and $|H| = k$. By part 1, $H = \langle a^m \rangle$ for some $m \geq 1$. By Theorem 2.8, $k = |H| = |\langle a^m \rangle| = \frac{n}{\gcd(m, n)} \implies \gcd(m, n) = \frac{n}{k}$.

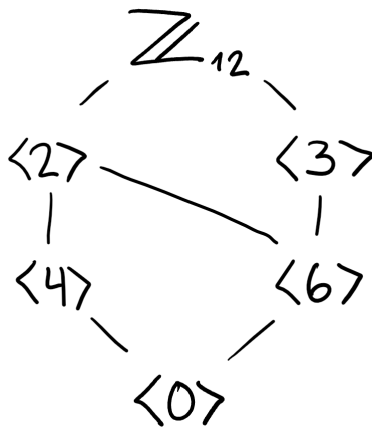
By Theorem 2.8 again, $H = \langle a^m \rangle = \langle a^{\gcd(m, n)} \rangle = \langle a^{\frac{n}{k}} \rangle$. □

Example of the subgroups of \mathbb{Z}_{12} :

The divisors of $n = 12$ are 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12

- $k = 1$: $\langle 0 \rangle$
- $k = 2$: $\langle 6 \rangle = \{0, 6\}$
- $k = 3$: $\langle 4 \rangle = \{0, 4, 8\}$
- $k = 4$: $\langle 3 \rangle = \{0, 3, 6, 9\}$
- $k = 6$: $\langle 2 \rangle = \{0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10\}$
- $k = 12$: $\mathbb{Z}_{12} = \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11\}$

Note: The lattice of subgroups of \mathbb{Z}_{12} illustrates the containment relationships.



Remark: In \mathbb{Z}_n , clearly $\langle m \rangle \subseteq \langle k \rangle \iff m \in \langle k \rangle \iff ka = m \iff k \text{ divides } m$.

Example of subgroups of \mathbb{Z}_p :

Consider \mathbb{Z}_p where p is prime. The only subgroup of \mathbb{Z}_p is $\langle 0 \rangle$.

Week 3

Permutation Groups (Symmetric Groups)

Definition of the Euler ϕ -function:

The Euler ϕ -function is defined for every positive integer $d \geq 1$ by

$$\phi(d) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } d = 1 \\ |\{1 \leq j \leq d-1 : \gcd(j, d) = 1\}| & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Definition of:

Suppose $A \neq \emptyset$ is a set. A **permutation** of A is a bijection $\beta : A \rightarrow A$ (1-1, onto). The **permutation group (symmetric group)** of A is the set of permutations of A under composition.

Recall some facts about functions: Let S_A be the symmetric group of $A \neq \emptyset$.

If $\alpha, \beta \in S_A$ then $\alpha \circ \beta(a) = \alpha(\beta(a))$ for all $a \in A$.

From MATH1800 composition of 1-1 and onto functions is again 1-1 and onto, i.e., $\alpha \circ \beta \in S_A$.

From MATH1800 $(\alpha \circ \beta) \circ \gamma = \alpha \circ (\beta \circ \gamma)$ for all $\alpha, \beta, \gamma \in S_A$. α permutation $\iff \alpha$ is invertible under composition.

Remark: Define $e \in S_A$ by $e(a) = a$ for all $a \in A$. Clearly $e \circ \alpha(a) = e(\alpha(a)) = \alpha(a)$ for all $a \in A \implies e \circ \alpha = \alpha$. We see that S_A truly is a group.

Example of:

Take $A = \{1, 2, 3\}$. What are the permutations in $S_3 = S_A$?

- $e \in S_3 : e(1) = 1, e(2) = 2, e(3) = 3$.
- $\beta \in S_3$ where $\beta(1) = 2, \beta(2) = 3, \beta(3) = 1$.

Let's rewrite β as follows: $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \mathbb{R}$.

In general for any $\alpha \in S_3$, we may rewrite it as $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ \alpha(1) & \alpha(2) & \alpha(3) \end{bmatrix} = \mathbb{R}$.

The number of permutations is given by the number of choices. This is $3! = 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1$. We just proved that $|S_3| = 3! = 6$.

Similar reasoning tells us that $|S_n| = n!$ for every $n \geq 1$.

Question

Paul Mezo said we "know everything" about linear algebra. What does that mean?

Answer

There are no unsolved problems in finite linear algebra.

3.1 Cycle Notation

Consider S_3 and $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \in S_3$. We rewrite this permutation as follows: $(1\ 2\ 3)$.

Notice that $\alpha = (1\ 2\ 3) \neq (1\ 3\ 2) = \beta$, but they are both 3-cycles.

Also, $\gamma = (1\ 2)$ is the permutation such that $\gamma(1) = 2, \gamma(2) = 1, \gamma(3) = 3$. It's a 2-cycle.

We omit 1-cycles.

The six permutations in S_3 in cycle notation are $e, (12), (13), (23), (123), (132)$.

Example of cycles of S_4 :

Consider S_4 . $|S_4| = 24 = 4!$.

- e ,
- $(1\ 2), (1\ 3), (1\ 4), (2\ 3), (2\ 4), (3\ 4)$
- $(1\ 2\ 3), (1\ 3\ 4), \dots$
- $(1\ 2\ 3\ 4), (1\ 2\ 4\ 3), \dots$
- $(1\ 2)(3\ 4), (1\ 3)(2\ 4), (1\ 4)(2\ 3)$

Definition of disjoint cycles:

Two cycles $(a_1\ a_2\ \dots\ a_m), (b_1\ b_2\ \dots\ b_k) \in S_n$ are **disjoint** if $a_j \neq b_l$ for any j, l . Their product can be written equally in either order.

Composition of permutations is interpreted as products of cycles as follows:

Example of compositions in S_7 : • $(6\ 2\ 3)(1\ 2) = (1\ 3\ 6\ 2)$

- $(1\ 2)(3\ 4\ 7)(2\ 3) = (2\ 4\ 7\ 3\ 1)$
- $(1\ 3)(2\ 4\ 5\ 6\ 7)(3\ 2)(1\ 2\ 5) = (2\ 6\ 7)(5\ 3\ 4)$

Remark: 1. Some authors move from left to right, one cycle to the next. We move from right to left.

2. Cycles don't tell us which S_n they live in.

Example of powers of a k -cycle:

Consider $(a_1 \dots a_k) \in S_n$.

1. $(a_1 \dots a_k)^2 = (a_1\ a_2\ a_3\ \dots\ a_k)(a_1\ a_2\ a_3\ \dots\ a_k)$ sends a_1 to a_3 , and a_l to a_{l+2} if $l \leq k-2$. Sends $a_{k-1} \rightarrow a_1$, $a_k \rightarrow a_2$.
2. $(a_1 \dots a_k)^j$ sends a_l to $a_{(l+j) \bmod k}$.

In particular $(a_1 \dots a_k)^k$ sends a_l to $a_{(l+k) \bmod k} = a_{l \bmod k} = a_l$ for $1 \leq l \leq k$, so $(a_1 \dots a_k)^k = e \implies |(a_1 \dots a_k)| = k$.

Theorem 3.1

Every permutation in S_n is a product of disjoint cycles. The products of disjoint cycles $\alpha, \beta \in S_n$ commute, i.e., $\alpha\beta = \beta\alpha$.

Proof. Proof omitted. □

Remark: Products of disjoint cycles can be written in more than one way to represent a single permutation in S_n .

$$(1\ 2\ 3)(5\ 6) = (5\ 6)(1\ 2\ 3) = (5\ 6)(2\ 3\ 1)$$

Question

Dr. Mezo said they were unique "modulo" changing the order. Why use this language? What's the connection to modulo here?

Definition of the least common multiple:

The **least common multiple** of $m, n \geq 1$ is the smallest positive integer k such that m divides k and n divides k . We write $k = \text{lcm}(m, n)$.

Example of finding LCM:

1. $\text{lcm}(2, 3) = 6$

2. $\text{lcm}(6, 12) = 12$

3. $\text{lcm}(12, 8) = \text{lcm}(2^3 \cdot 3^1, 2^3 \cdot 3^0) = 2^3 \cdot 3^1 = 24$

Theorem 3.2

Let $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_k \in S_n$ be disjoint cycles. Then $|\alpha_1 \dots \alpha_k| = \text{lcm}(|\alpha_1|, \dots, |\alpha_k|)$

Proof. Proof omitted. □

Example of the theorem:

$$|(15)(37124)(986)| = 12 = \text{lcm}(2, 4, 3)$$

Definition of a transposition:

A **transposition** in S_n is a 2-cycle.

Example of transpositions:

Note

- $(1\ 2) = (2\ 1) = (1\ 2)^{-1}$
- $(1\ 2)(1\ 2) = (1)(2) = e$
- Similarly, $(a\ b) = (b\ a) = (ab)^{-1}$
- $(1\ 2\ 3) = (1\ 3)(1\ 2)$
- $(1\ 2\ 3) = (a\ c)(a\ b)$

Theorem 3.3

Every permutation in S_n is a product of transpositions.

Proof. $e = (1\ 2)(2\ 1) = (1\ 2)(1\ 2)$.

Suppose $\sigma \in S_n, \sigma \neq e$. Then by a previous theorem, $\sigma = \beta_1 \dots \beta_k$ for disjoint cycles $\beta_1, \dots, \beta_k \in S_n$. If each β_j is a product of transpositions then so is σ .

Let $\beta = (a_1 \dots a_k)$ be a k -cycle in S_n . Let's prove by induction on $k \geq 2$ that $(a_1 \dots a_k) = (a_1 a_k)(a_1 a_{k-1}) \dots (a_1 a_2)$.

Base case is obvious. Assume it's true for k .

Let $\beta = (a_1 \dots a_{k+1}), \alpha = (a_1 a_{k+1}), \gamma = (a_1 \dots a_k)$.

By induction $\gamma = (a_1 \dots a_k) = (a_1 a_k)(a_1 a_{k-1}) \dots (a_1 a_2)$.

It suffices to show that $\beta = \alpha\gamma$.

Let $1 \leq l \leq k-1$. Then $\beta(a_l) = a_{l+1}$, and $\alpha\gamma(a_l) = \alpha(a_{l+1}) = a_{l+1} \implies \beta(a_l) = \alpha\gamma(a_l)$.

So $\beta(a_k) = a_{k+1}$ and $\alpha\gamma(a_k) = \alpha(a_1) = a_{k+1} \implies \beta(a_k) = \alpha\gamma(a_k)$.

So $\beta(a_{k+1}) = a_1$ and $\alpha\gamma(a_{k+1}) = \alpha(a_{k+1}) = a_1 \implies \beta(a_{k+1}) = \alpha\gamma(a_{k+1})$.

Rest of the proof was erased before I could get to it :(□

Lemma 3.4

If $e = \alpha_1 \dots \alpha_k$ is a product of transpositions $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_k \in S_n$, then k is even.

Proof. Proof omitted. □

Theorem 3.5

Suppose $\alpha \in S_n$ and $\beta_1 \dots \beta_r = \alpha = \gamma_1 \dots \gamma_s$ where $\beta_1, \dots, \beta_r, \gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_s \in S_n$ are transpositions.

Then either r and s are both even, or they are both odd (i.e., $r \bmod 2 = s \bmod 2$).

Proof. $\gamma_1 \dots \gamma_s = \beta_1 \dots \beta_r \implies \gamma_1^{-1} \gamma_1 \dots \gamma_s = \gamma_1^{-1} \beta_1 \dots \beta_r \implies e = \gamma_s \dots \gamma_1 \beta_1 \dots \beta_r$, so the identity is a product of transpositions.

By the lemma, $r + s$ is even. □

Definition of parity:

We say that $\alpha \in S_n$ is **even** if it is a product of even number of transpositions, we say α is odd if it is a product of an odd number of transpositions.

Example of parity of cycles:

1. $(a\ b)$ odd
2. $(a_1\ a_2\ a_3) = (a_1\ a_3)(a_1\ a_2)$ even
3. $(a_1\ a_2\ a_3\ a_4) = (a_1\ a_4)(a_1\ a_3)(a_1\ a_2) = (a_1\ a_4)(a_1\ a_2\ a_3)$

Remark: A k -cycle is even for odd k and is odd for even k .

Theorem 3.6

Let $A_n \subseteq S_n, n \geq 2$ be the subset of even elements in S_n . Then A_n is a subgroup (called the **alternating group**).

Proof. $e \in A_n$ so $A_n \neq \emptyset$. Suppose $\alpha = \beta_1 \dots \beta_s$ and $\sigma = \gamma_1 \dots \gamma_r$ for transpositions $\beta_1, \dots, \beta_s, \gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_r \in S_n$, i.e., s and r are even. Then $\alpha\sigma = \beta_1, \dots, \beta_s, \gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_r$ is a product of $r + s$ transpositions. Since $r + s$ is even, $\alpha\sigma \in A_n$.
 $\alpha^{-1} = (\beta_1 \dots \beta_s)^{-1} = \beta_s^{-1} \dots \beta_1^{-1} = \beta_s \dots \beta_1$ a product of s transpositions. Since s is even, $\alpha^{-1} \in A_n$. \square