1. Subgroup generated by subsets of a group

Proposition 1.1. *If $\mathcal{A}$ is any nonempty collection of subgroups of G, then*

$$\bigcap_{H\in\mathcal{A}} H \leq G.$$

Definition 1.2. Let A be any subset of G. The **subgroup generated by** A is

$$\langle A\rangle := \bigcap_{\substack{A\subseteq H\\ H\leq G}} H.$$

This definition says that $\langle A\rangle$ is the smallest subgroup of G that contains A. It is clear that if the subgroup generated by a subgroup H is H itself. What would be the subgroup generated by $\varnothing$?

Remark 1.2.1. (i) If A is a finite set, say $A = \{a_1,\dots,a_n\}$, then we simply write $\langle A\rangle = \langle a_1,\dots,a_n\rangle$

(ii) Recall from the previous lesson that $\langle a\rangle$ denotes the cyclic subgroup generated by a. With the definition above, it is easy to see that this is the same as the subgroup generated by $\{a\}$. Thus the notation is unambiguous.

(iii) If $A, B \subset G$, then we write $\langle A, B\rangle$ to mean $\langle A\cup B\rangle$. This subgroup is denoted $A\vee B$.

Definition 1.3. Let $A\subset G$. Define

$$\overline{A} = \left\{a_1^{k_1}a_2^{k_2}\cdots a_n^{k_n} \mid n\in\mathbb{Z}_0^+, a_i\in A,\ k_i = \pm 1 \text{ for all } 0\leq i\leq n\right\}$$

Note that n can vary and the a_i may repeat. We form finite products of elements of A because it would not make sense to form an infinite product of elements in a group. These finite products are called words. Note that A is not required to be finite. We convey $\overline{\varnothing} = \{1\}$. This way $\overline{A}$ is never empty.

Proposition 1.4. *If A is any subset of G, then $\langle A\rangle = \overline{A}$.*

Proof. We leave to the student to prove that $\overline{A}$ is a subgroup. Now it is clear that $A\subseteq\overline{A}$. Then $\langle A\rangle\subseteq\overline{A}$ since $\langle A\rangle$ is the smallest subgroup that contains A and $\overline{A}$ is one of the groups that contain A. On the other hand, the product of any two elements of A belongs to $\langle A\rangle$ because $\langle A\rangle$ contains A and it is closed under products. However, $\overline{A}$ consists exactly of any finite product of elements of A. Hence it easy follows $\overline{A}\subseteq\langle A\rangle$. The proof is complete. □

Remark 1.4.1. (i) In light of this result, we write

$$\langle A \rangle = \left\{ a_1^{k_1} a_2^{k_2} \cdots a_n^{k_n} \mid n \in \mathbb{Z}^+, a_i \in A,\, k_i \in \mathbb{Z} \text{ and } a_i \neq a_{i+1} \text{ for any } 1 \leq i \leq n \right\}$$

2. Normality, quotient groups and homomorphisms

A useful reference for this section is Hungerford, chapter 1, section 5.

There are two standard groups associated to any group-homomorphism: its kernel and its image.

Definition 2.1. Let $\psi \colon G \to H$ be a morphism of groups. The kernel of ψ is

$$\ker \psi = \{ g \in G \mid \psi(g) = 1_H \}.$$

The image of ψ is

$$\mathrm{Im}\psi = \{ \psi(g) \mid g \in G \}$$

Exercise 1 (Classwork)**.** With ψ as above, prove $\ker \psi \leq G$ and $\mathrm{Im}\psi \leq H$.

Proposition 2.2. *Let $\psi \colon G \to H$ be a group-homomorphism.*

(i) $\psi(1_G) = 1_H$

(ii) $\psi(g^{-1}) = (\psi(g))^{-1}$

(iii) $\psi(g^n) = (\psi(g))^n$

Proof. See Dummit & Foote, page 75. □

The only way to interpret $\psi(g)^{-1}$ is as the inverse of $\psi(g)$. Thus we may drop the parenthesis in $(\psi(g))^{-1}$.

Theorem 2.3. *Let $N \leq G$. The following conditions are equivalent.*

(i) Left congruence modulo N and right congruence modulo N define the same partition of G.

(ii) For any $g \in G$, $Ng = gN$.

(iii) For any $g \in G$, $gNg^{-1} \subseteq N$. Here $gNg^{-1} = \{ gxg^{-1} \mid x \in N \}$.

(iv) For any $g \in G$, $gNg^{-1} = N$. This means any g normalizes N.

Definition 2.4. If $N \leq G$ satisfies $gNg^{-1} = N$ for any $g \in G$, then we say N is a normal subgroup of G. In this case we use the notation $N \trianglelefteq G$.

By the previous result, N is normal if it satisfies any of the equivalent conditions of Theorem 2.3. The easiest way to verify a subgroup is normal is condition (iii). Thus

$$N \trianglelefteq G \iff gNg^{-1} \subseteq N$$

for any $g \in G$.

Theorem 2.5. *Let K and N be subgroups of a group G with $N \trianglelefteq G$. Then*

(i) $N \cap K \trianglelefteq K$

(ii) $N \trianglelefteq N \vee K$

(iii) $NK = N \vee K = KN$

(iv) If K is normal in G and $K \cap N = \{e\}$, then $nk = kn$ for all $k \in K$ and $n \in N$.

Exercise 2. Provide examples that show when these conditions fail if N is not required to be normal in G.

Proof. (i) We have to prove that $a(N \cap K)a^{-1} \subseteq N \cap K$ for any $a \in K$. Let $n \in N \cap K$ and $a \in K$. Then $ana^{-1} \in N$ because $N \trianglelefteq G$. Since $n, a \in K$ and $K \leq G$, we have $ana^{-1} \in K$. Thus $ana^{-1} \in N \cap K$.

(ii) Trivial (Why? Note $N \leq N \vee K$)

(iii) Exercise

(iv) Exercise

Exercise 3. Prove (iii) and (iv) of the preceeding theorem.

□

We have introduced normal groups for a reason: to make the quotient set of a group by a (normal) subgroup into a group. In this way we can build new groups out of old.

Theorem 2.6. *If $N \trianglelefteq G$, then*

$$G/N = \{\, xN \mid x \in G \,\}$$

is a group under the operation $(xN)(yN) = (xy)N$. Moreover, the order of G/N is $|G : N|$.

Proof. It suffices to show that the operation is well-defined, that is,

□

Theorem 2.7.

Proof. □

Remark 2.7.1.

Theorem 2.8.

Proof. □

Theorem 2.9.

Proof. □

Corollary 2.10.

Proof. □

Corollary 2.11.

Proof. □