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# Compendium of Lecture Notes and Exercises in Introductory Abstract Algebra

Adopted from lectures, notes, and exercises by

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## Chapter 0

# Foundations

### 0.1 Prerequisites, conventions, and notation

We will assume the reader is familiar with the concept of a set, set-builder notation, and basic set operations. By convention, the set of natural numbers  $\mathbb{N}$  will be taken to start from 1.

### 0.2 Sets and relations

**Definition 0.2.1.** For two sets  $A$  and  $B$ , any subset of  $A \times B$  is called a **relation**, and for all  $(a, b)$  in this relation, we say  $a$  is **related to**  $b$ , denoted, for example, by  $a \sim b$ .

**Definition 0.2.2.** A relation  $a \sim b$  is called an **equivalence relation** if it is

- (1) reflexive: for every  $a$ , we have  $a \sim a$ ;
- (2) symmetric: for every  $a, b$  such that  $a \sim b$ , we have  $b \sim a$ ; and
- (3) transitive: for every  $a, b, c$  such that  $a \sim b$  and  $b \sim c$ , we have  $a \sim c$ .

**Definition 0.2.3.** The set  $[a] = \{b \mid a \sim b\}$  is called the **equivalence class** of  $a$ .

**Theorem 0.2.4.** Let  $\sim$  be an equivalence relation on a set  $X$ . Then, the equivalence classes are disjoint and form a partition of  $X$ .

*Proof.* Let  $x_1, x_2 \in X$  and consider the equivalence classes  $[x_1]$  and  $[x_2]$ . Suppose they are not disjoint. Then, there exists a  $y$  such that  $y \in [x_1] \cap [x_2]$ , so  $x_1 \sim y$  and  $x_2 \sim y$ . By the symmetric property,  $x_1 \sim y$  and  $y \sim x_2$ , so by the transitive property,  $x_1 \sim x_2$ .

Now let  $x \in [x_1]$ . Then,  $x_1 \sim x$ , and since  $x_1 \sim x_2$ , we have  $x_2 \sim x$ , so  $x \in [x_2]$ . Thus,  $[x_1] \subseteq [x_2]$ , and similarly,  $[x_2] \subseteq [x_1]$ , so  $[x_1] = [x_2]$ . ■

### 0.3 Examples of proofs

**Claim 0.3.1** (For a direct proof). The product of two odd numbers is odd.

*Proof.* Let  $a$  and  $b$  be odd. Then,  $a = 2n + 1$  and  $b = 2k + 1$  for some  $n, k \in \mathbb{Z}$ , so we have

$$ab = (2n + 1)(2k + 1) = 4nk + 2n + 2k + 1 = 2(2nk + n + k) + 1$$

which is odd since  $2nk + n + k \in \mathbb{Z}$ . ■

**Claim 0.3.2** (For a proof by contraposition). Let  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ . If  $n^2$  is odd, then  $n$  is odd.

*Proof.* Suppose  $n$  is even. Then,  $n = 2k$  for some  $k \in \mathbb{Z}$ , so

$$n^2 = (2k)^2 = 4k^2 = 2(2k^2)$$

which is even since  $2k^2 \in \mathbb{Z}$ . Hence, if  $n^2$  is odd, then  $n$  is odd. ■

**Claim 0.3.3** (For a proof by contradiction). Let  $p \in \mathbb{Z}$ . If  $p$  is prime, then  $\sqrt{p} \notin \mathbb{Q}$ .

*Proof.* Suppose  $\sqrt{p} \in \mathbb{Q}$ . Then, there exist some  $a, b \in \mathbb{Z}$ ,  $b \neq 0$  such that  $\sqrt{p} = a/b$ . Without loss of generality, assume  $\gcd(a, b) = 1$ . We see

$$p = \left(\frac{a}{b}\right)^2 = \frac{a^2}{b^2} \iff pb^2 = a^2 \implies p \mid a^2,$$

and since  $p$  is prime, we see  $p \mid a$ . There must then exist some  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$  such that  $a = np$ , so

$$pb^2 = a^2 = (np)^2 = n^2p^2 \iff b^2 = n^2p \implies p \mid b^2 \iff p \mid b.$$

Thus,  $p$  divides both  $a$  and  $b$ , but this is a contradiction since  $\gcd(a, b) = 1$ . Hence,  $\sqrt{p} \notin \mathbb{Q}$ . ■

**Claim 0.3.4** (For a proof by induction). Let  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ . If  $n \geq 5$ , then  $n! \geq 2^n$ .

*Proof.* For our base step, note  $5! = 120$  and  $2^5 = 32$ , so  $5! \geq 2^5$ .

As our inductive hypothesis, assume  $k! \geq 2^k$  for some  $k \geq 5$ . Then,

$$(k + 1)k! \geq (k + 1)2^k \geq 6 \cdot 2^k \geq 2 \cdot 2^k = 2^{k+1} \implies (k + 1)! \geq 2^{k+1}.$$

Hence,  $n! \geq 2^n$  for all  $n \geq 5$ . ■

Note that this does not address the fact that  $4! \geq 2^4$ .

## Solved exercises

For each of the following, find  $A \cap B$ ,  $A \cup B$ ,  $A \setminus B$ ,  $B \setminus A$ ,  $A \times B$ , and  $B \times A$ .

**Exercise 0.1.** Let  $A = \{-1, 1\}$  and  $B = \{1, 2, 3\}$ .

*Solution.* We have

$$\begin{aligned} A \cap B &= \{1\}, \\ A \cup B &= \{-1, 1, 2, 3\}, \\ A \setminus B &= \{-1\}, \\ B \setminus A &= \{2, 3\}, \\ A \times B &= \{(-1, 1), (-1, 2), (-1, 3), (1, 1), (1, 2), (1, 3)\}, \\ B \times A &= \{(1, -1), (1, 1), (2, -1), (2, 1), (3, -1), (3, 1)\}. \end{aligned} \quad \square$$

**Exercise 0.2.** Let  $A = [-1, 1]$  and  $B = (0, 3]$ .

*Solution.* We have

$$\begin{aligned} A \cap B &= (0, 1], \\ A \cup B &= [-1, 3], \\ A \setminus B &= [-1, 0], \\ B \setminus A &= (1, 3], \\ A \times B &= \{(a, b) \mid a \in [-1, 1], b \in (0, 3]\}, \\ B \times A &= \{(b, a) \mid b \in (0, 3], a \in [-1, 1]\}. \end{aligned} \quad \square$$

**Exercise 0.3.** Let  $A = (1, 3)$  and  $B = [0, \infty)$ .

*Solution.* We have

$$\begin{aligned} A \cap B &= (1, 3), \\ A \cup B &= [0, \infty), \\ A \setminus B &= \emptyset, \\ B \setminus A &= [0, 1] \cup [3, \infty), \\ A \times B &= \{(a, b) \mid a \in (1, 3), b \in [0, \infty)\}, \\ B \times A &= \{(b, a) \mid b \in [0, \infty), a \in (1, 3)\}. \end{aligned} \quad \square$$

Let  $a, b, c \in \mathbb{N}$  where  $a$  and  $b$  are coprime. Prove the following.

**Exercise 0.4.** If  $a \mid bc$ , then  $a \mid c$ .

*Solution.* Suppose  $a \mid bc$ . Then, there exists some  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$  such that  $na = bc$ , so  $b \mid na$ . Now suppose  $n$  is not a multiple of  $b$ . Then,  $a$  and  $b$  must share a common

factor greater than 1, but  $a$  and  $b$  are coprime, so this is impossible. Therefore,  $n$  must be a multiple of  $b$ ; that is, there exists some  $k \in \mathbb{Z}$  such that  $n = kb$ , so

$$na = bc \iff \frac{n}{b}a = c \iff \frac{bk}{b}a = c \iff ka = c \implies a \mid c. \quad \square$$

**Exercise 0.5.** If  $a \mid c$  and  $b \mid c$ , then  $ab \mid c$ .

*Solution.* Suppose  $a \mid c$  and  $b \mid c$ . Then,  $c$  is a multiple of  $a$ , and  $c$  is a multiple of  $b$ . Let  $p_1p_2 \cdots p_n$  be the prime factorization of  $a$ , and let  $q_1q_2 \cdots q_k$  be the prime factorization of  $b$ . Since  $a$  and  $b$  are coprime, we see  $\{p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n\} \cap \{q_1, q_2, \dots, q_k\} = \emptyset$ , so the prime factorization of  $c$  must include all of the  $p_i$ s and all of the  $q_i$ s. Therefore,  $c$  is a multiple of  $p_1p_2 \cdots p_nq_1q_2 \cdots q_k = ab$ , so  $ab \mid c$ .  $\square$



## Chapter 1

# Groups and Subgroups

### 1.1 Groups

**Definition 1.1.1.** Let  $S$  be a set. A mapping

$$\begin{aligned}\odot : S \times S &\rightarrow S \\ (x, y) &\mapsto x \odot y\end{aligned}$$

is called a **law of composition** on  $S$ .

Note that  $S$  is necessarily closed under the operation defined by such a law. Examples include addition of natural numbers and multiplication of  $n \times n$  matrices. Subtraction of natural numbers, however, is not closed and therefore not a law of composition.

**Definition 1.1.2.** A law of composition  $\odot$  on  $S$  is called **associative** if for every  $x, y, z \in S$ , we have  $(x \odot y) \odot z = x \odot (y \odot z)$ . The law  $\odot$  is called **commutative** if for every  $x, y \in S$ , we have  $x \odot y = y \odot x$ .

**Definition 1.1.3.** Let  $G$  be a set and  $\odot$  be a law of composition on  $G$ . A pair  $(G, \odot)$  is called a **group** if

- (1)  $\odot$  is associative;
- (2) there exists a **neutral element**  $e \in G$  such that for every  $g \in G$ , we have

$$g \odot e = e \odot g = g;$$

and

- (3) for every  $g \in G$ , there exists an **inverse element**  $g^{-1} \in G$  such that

$$g \odot g^{-1} = g^{-1} \odot g = e.$$

A group whose law is commutative is called **commutative** or **abelian**.

We will typically refer to a group by its set and denote compositions of its elements using multiplicative notation  $ab$  if commutativity is not assumed, or additive notation  $a + b$  if commutativity is assumed; in the latter case, the inverse of  $a$  is denoted  $-a$ .

**Proposition 1.1.4.** The neutral element of a group is unique.

*Proof.* Let  $G$  be a group, and let  $e_1, e_2 \in G$  such that for every  $g \in G$ , we have

$$e_1g = ge_1 = g \quad \text{and} \quad e_2g = ge_2 = g.$$

Then,  $e_1e_2 = e_1$  and  $e_1e_2 = e_2$ , so  $e_1 = e_2$ . ■

**Proposition 1.1.5.** Let  $G$  be a group. For every  $g \in G$ , its inverse element  $g^{-1}$  is unique.

*Proof.* Let  $g \in G$ . Suppose  $h_1$  and  $h_2$  are both inverses of  $g$ . Then,

$$gh_1 = h_1g = e \quad \text{and} \quad gh_2 = h_2g = e,$$

so

$$h_1 = h_1e = h_1(gh_2) = (h_1g)h_2 = eh_2 = h_2.$$

Hence, the inverse of  $g$  is unique. ■

**Proposition 1.1.6.** Let  $G$  be a group, and let  $g, h, i \in G$ . Then,

- (1)  $(g^{-1})^{-1} = g$ ;
- (2)  $(gh)^{-1} = h^{-1}g^{-1}$ ;
- (3) the equations  $gx = h$  and  $xg = h$  have unique solutions  $x \in G$ ; and
- (4) if  $gi = hi$  or  $ig = ih$ , then  $g = h$ .

These can be proven with straightforward computations.

## 1.2 Subgroups

**Definition 1.2.1.** Let  $(G, \odot)$  be a group, and let  $H \subseteq G$ . If  $(H, \odot|_{H \times H})$  is a group, it is called a **subgroup** of  $G$ .

**Theorem 1.2.2.** Let  $G$  be a group, and let  $H \subseteq G$ ,  $H \neq \emptyset$ . Then,  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$  if and only if for every  $h_1, h_2 \in H$ , we have  $h_1h_2^{-1} \in H$ .

*Proof.* ■

We will use the notation  $n\mathbb{Z} = \{n \cdot k \mid k \in \mathbb{Z}\}$  where  $\cdot$  is standard multiplication.

**Proposition 1.2.3.** Let  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ . Then,  $(n\mathbb{Z}, +)$  is a subgroup of  $(\mathbb{Z}, +)$ .

*Proof.* We see  $0 \in n\mathbb{Z}$  for all  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ , so  $n\mathbb{Z} \neq \emptyset$ .

Let  $a, b \in n\mathbb{Z}$ . Then,  $a = kn$  and  $b = ln$  for some  $k, l \in \mathbb{Z}$ , so we have

$$a + (-b) = a - b = kn - ln = (k - l)n = n(k - l) \in n\mathbb{Z}.$$

Hence, by Theorem 1.2.2,  $(n\mathbb{Z}, +)$  is a subgroup of  $(\mathbb{Z}, +)$ . ■

Do this  
proof!

**Proposition 1.2.4.** Every subgroup of  $(\mathbb{Z}, +)$  is of the form  $(n\mathbb{Z}, +)$  for some  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ .

*Proof.* Let  $H$  be a subgroup of  $(\mathbb{Z}, +)$ . If  $H = \{0\}$ , then  $H = 0\mathbb{Z}$ . Otherwise, let  $k \in H$ ,  $k \neq 0$ . Without loss of generality, take  $k$  to be positive. Now let  $S = H \cap \mathbb{Z}^+$ . Since  $k \in S$ , we see  $S \neq \emptyset$ , so  $S$  has a minimal element, say  $n$ .

Since  $n \in H$ , we see  $n\mathbb{Z} \subseteq H$ . Additionally, rewriting  $k$  in terms of its Euclidean division by  $n$  as  $k = ln + r$  where  $l, r \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ ,  $0 \leq r < n$ , we see  $r = 0$  since  $n$  is minimal. Thus,  $k = ln \in n\mathbb{Z}$ , so  $H \subseteq n\mathbb{Z}$ . Hence,  $H = n\mathbb{Z}$ . ■

**Proposition 1.2.5.** Let  $G$  be a group, and let  $S \subseteq G$ . Then, there exists a unique subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  such that

- (1)  $S \subseteq H$  and
- (2) if  $H'$  is a subgroup of  $G$  and  $S \subseteq H'$ , then  $H$  is a subgroup of  $H'$ .

*Proof A.* Let  $X$  be the set of all subgroups of  $G$  that contain  $S$ . Since  $G \in X$ , we see  $X \neq \emptyset$ . Now let  $H = \bigcup_{J \in X} J$ . Then,  $S \subseteq H$ . Finally, let  $x, y \in H$ . Then,  $x, y \in J$  for all  $J \in X$ , and since each  $J$  is a subgroup of  $G$ , we have  $xy^{-1} \in J$  for all  $J \in X$ . Thus,

$$xy^{-1} \in \bigcup_{J \in X} J = H,$$

so, by Theorem 1.2.2,  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ .

Now suppose there exist two subgroups  $H_1, H_2$  satisfying (1) and (2). Then,  $S \subseteq H_1$  and  $S \subseteq H_2$ . Since  $H_2$  is a subgroup of  $G$  containing  $S$ , by (2) we have  $H_1 \subseteq H_2$ ; likewise,  $H_2 \subseteq H_1$ , so  $H_1 = H_2$ . Hence,  $H$  is unique. ■

Alternatively, we can use a constructive proof:

*Proof B.* Let  $H = \{g_1^{\pm 1} g_2^{\pm 1} \cdots g_k^{\pm 1} \mid g_1, g_2, \dots, g_k \in S\}$ . Then,  $S \subseteq H$ . Further, let  $x, y \in H$ . Then,  $x = g_1^{\pm 1} g_2^{\pm 1} \cdots g_n^{\pm 1}$  and  $y = h_1^{\pm 1} h_2^{\pm 1} \cdots h_m^{\pm 1}$  for some  $g_1, g_2, \dots, g_n, h_1, h_2, \dots, h_m \in S$ , so

$$\begin{aligned} xy^{-1} &= g_1^{\pm 1} g_2^{\pm 1} \cdots g_n^{\pm 1} (h_1^{\pm 1} h_2^{\pm 1} \cdots h_m^{\pm 1})^{-1} \\ &= g_1^{\pm 1} g_2^{\pm 1} \cdots g_n^{\pm 1} (h_m^{\pm 1})^{-1} \cdots (h_2^{\pm 1})^{-1} (h_1^{\pm 1})^{-1} \\ &= g_1^{\pm 1} g_2^{\pm 1} \cdots g_n^{\pm 1} h_m^{\mp 1} \cdots h_2^{\mp 1} h_1^{\mp 1} \in H. \end{aligned}$$

Thus,  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ . Uniqueness can be shown in the same way as in Proof A. ■

**Definition 1.2.6.** The subgroup  $H$  from Proposition 1.2.5 is called the subgroup **generated by**  $S$ , denoted  $\langle S \rangle$ . This is, in other words, the smallest subgroup of  $G$  that contains  $S$ . When  $\langle S \rangle = G$  for some group  $G$ , we say  $S$  **generates**  $G$ . When this  $S$  is finite, we say  $G$  is **finitely generated**.

**Definition 1.2.7.** A group generated by one element, say  $x$ , is called a **cyclic group**, denoted  $\langle x \rangle$ .

We will use the notation  $x^n$  to denote an element  $x$  of a group composed with itself  $n$  times.

**Proposition 1.2.8.** Let  $G$  be a group, and let  $g \in G$ . Then,

- (1)  $\langle g \rangle = \langle \{g\} \rangle = \{g^m \mid m \in \mathbb{Z}\}$ ;
- (2)  $\langle g \rangle$  is infinite if and only if there does not exist an  $m \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $g^m = e$ ; and
- (3) if  $\langle g \rangle$  is finite, then  $|\langle g \rangle| = \min\{m \in \mathbb{N} \mid g^m = e\}$ .

*Proof.*

- (1) Since  $\langle g \rangle$  is a group, it must contain all compositions of  $g$  with itself, i.e.  $g^m$  for all  $m \in \mathbb{N}$ , as well as its inverse  $g^{-1}$  and the inverses of those compositions, so at the minimum,  $\langle g \rangle$  contains  $\{g^m \mid m \in \mathbb{Z}\}$ , which is a subgroup of  $G$ . Hence,  $\langle g \rangle = \{g^m \mid m \in \mathbb{Z}\}$ .
- (2) Suppose  $\langle g \rangle$  is finite. Equivalently, there exist some  $n, k \in \mathbb{Z}$ ,  $n \neq k$  such that  $g^n = g^k$ ; without loss of generality, take  $n > k$ . We see

$$g^n = g^k \iff g^n g^{-k} = g^k g^{-k} \iff g^{n-k} = e,$$

i.e. there exists an  $m = n - k \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $g^m = e$ . Hence,  $\langle g \rangle$  is infinite if and only if such an  $m$  does not exist.

- (3) From the proof for (2), it follows that if  $\langle g \rangle$  is finite, then the set  $\{m \in \mathbb{N} \mid g^m = e\}$  is nonempty and therefore has a least element, say  $n$ . We see  $\{e, g, g^2, \dots, g^{n-1}\} \subseteq \langle g \rangle$ . Let  $g^k \in \langle g \rangle$  for some  $k \in \mathbb{Z}$ . We can rewrite  $k$  in terms of its Euclidean division by  $n$  as  $k = nq + r$  for some  $q, r \in \mathbb{Z}$ ,  $0 \leq r < n$ , giving us

$$g^k = g^{nq+r} = (g^n)^q g^r = e^q g^r = g^r \in \{e, g, g^2, \dots, g^{n-1}\},$$

so  $\langle g \rangle \subseteq \{e, g, g^2, \dots, g^{n-1}\}$ . Hence,  $\langle g \rangle = \{e, g, g^2, \dots, g^{n-1}\}$ , so  $|\langle g \rangle| = n$ . ■

**Definition 1.2.9.** Let  $x$  be some element in a group. Then,  $|\langle x \rangle|$  is called the **order** of  $x$ , denoted  $\text{ord}(x)$ .

## 1.3 Cosets

**Definition 1.3.1.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ , and let  $g \in G$ . Then, the set

$$gH = \{gh \mid h \in H\}$$

is called the **left coset** of  $H$  associated with  $g$ , and the set

$$Hg = \{hg \mid h \in H\}$$

is called the **right coset** of  $H$  associated with  $g$ .

**Theorem 1.3.2.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ , and let  $x, y \in G$ . Then, the relations  $\sim_l$  and  $\sim_r$  on  $G$  such that

$$x \sim_l y \iff x^{-1}y \in H \quad \text{and} \quad x \sim_r y \iff xy^{-1} \in H$$

are equivalence relations.

*Proof.* By Definition 0.2.2, we have three criteria for  $\sim_l$  to be an equivalence relation:

- (1) We see  $x^{-1}x = e \in H$ , so  $x \sim_l x$  (reflexive).
- (2) Suppose  $x \sim_l y$ . Then,  $x^{-1}y \in H$ , so  $(x^{-1}y)^{-1} = y^{-1}x \in H$ ; therefore,  $y \sim_l x$  (symmetric).
- (3) Let  $z \in G$ . Suppose  $x \sim_l y$  and  $y \sim_l z$ . Then,  $x^{-1}y, y^{-1}z \in H$ , so

$$(x^{-1}y)(y^{-1}z) = x^{-1}(yy^{-1})z = x^{-1}z \in H;$$

therefore,  $x \sim_l z$  (transitive).

Thus,  $\sim_l$  is an equivalence relation. The same for  $\sim_r$  can be proven similarly. ■

**Corollary 1.3.3** (Alternative definition of the left and right cosets). Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ , and take  $\sim_l$  and  $\sim_r$  as defined in Theorem 1.3.2. Then, the left cosets of  $H$  in  $G$  are the equivalence classes of  $\sim_l$ , and the right cosets are the equivalence classes of  $\sim_r$ .

**Corollary 1.3.4.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . The left cosets of  $H$  in  $G$  form a partition of  $G$ . The same applies for the right cosets.

We will use the notation  $G/H$  to denote the set of left cosets of  $H$  in  $G$  and  $H \backslash G$  to denote the set of right cosets.

**Proposition 1.3.5.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . Then, there exists a bijection between  $G/H$  and  $H \backslash G$ . It follows that the number of left and right cosets is the same when finite.

*Proof.* \_\_\_\_\_

Do this  
proof!

**Definition 1.3.6.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . The cardinality of  $G/H$  is called the **index** of  $H$  in  $G$ , denoted  $[G : H]$ .

**Proposition 1.3.7.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . Then, there exists a bijection between any two cosets of  $H$  in  $G$ . It follows that if  $H$  is finite, then all the cosets are finite and have the same cardinality.

*Proof.* Let  $g \in G$ , and let

$$\begin{array}{ccc} f_g : & H & \rightarrow gH \\ & h & \mapsto gh \end{array}.$$

By the definition of  $gH$ , the mapping  $f_g$  is well-defined and surjective. Let  $h, h' \in H$  such that  $gh = gh'$ . Then, by Proposition 1.1.6, we see  $h = h'$ , so  $f_g$  is injective. Hence,  $f_g$  is a bijection, so  $|H| = |gH|$  when finite. ■

**Theorem 1.3.8** (Lagrange's theorem). Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . Then, the order of every subgroup of  $H$  divides the order of  $G$ .

*Proof.* By Corollary 1.3.4, we see  $G$  is the union of the left cosets, which are necessarily disjoint, so  $|G|$  is the sum of the cardinalities of the cosets. By Proposition 1.3.7, the cardinalities of the cosets are the same and equal to  $|H|$ , so

$$|G| = [G : H]|H|. \quad \blacksquare$$

**Corollary 1.3.9.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H, K$  be subgroups of  $G$  where  $K \subseteq H$ . Then,

$$[G : K] = [G : H][H : K].$$

**Corollary 1.3.10.** Let  $G$  be a finite group, and let  $g \in G$ . Then,  $\text{ord}(g)$  divides  $|G|$ . It follows that  $g^{|G|} = e$ .

**Corollary 1.3.11.** Let  $G$  be a group of prime order. Then,  $G$  is cyclic; in other words,  $G = \langle g \rangle$  for all  $g \in G \setminus \{e\}$ .

## 1.4 Normal subgroups

**Definition 1.4.1.** Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . If for every  $g \in G$ , we have  $gH = Hg$ , i.e. the left and right cosets are the same, then  $H$  is called a **normal subgroup** of  $G$ .

**Proposition 1.4.2.** Let  $G$  be a finite group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . Then,  $H$  is a normal subgroup of  $G$  if and only if for every  $g \in G$  and  $h \in H$ , we have  $ghg^{-1} \in H$ .

*Proof.*

( $\Rightarrow$ ) Suppose  $H$  is a normal subgroup of  $G$ . Then, for all  $g \in G$ , we have  $gH = Hg$ , so for all  $h \in H$ , we have  $gh \in Hg$ . This means there exists some  $k \in H$  such that  $gh = kg$ , so

$$ghg^{-1} = kgg^{-1} = k \in H.$$

( $\Leftarrow$ ) Let  $x \in gH$ , and suppose for every  $g \in G$  and  $h \in H$ , we have  $ghg^{-1} \in H$ . Then, there exists some  $h \in H$  such that

$$x = gh = gh(g^{-1}g) = (ghg^{-1})g \in Hg,$$

so  $Hg \subseteq gH$ . Similarly, it can be shown that  $gH \subseteq Hg$ ; hence,  $gH = Hg$ . ■

**Theorem 1.4.3.** Let  $(G, \odot)$  be a group and  $H$  be a normal subgroup of  $G$ . Then,  $G/H$  can be given a group structure with the composition law

$$\begin{aligned} \odot : G/H \times G/H &\rightarrow G/H \\ (xH, yH) &\mapsto (x \odot y)H \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* Since  $H$  is a normal subgroup,  $\odot$  is well-defined. Associativity and inverses follow from  $\odot$ . Since  $H = e_G H$ , we have, for all  $gH \in G/H$ ,

$$H \odot gH = e_G H \odot gH = (e_G \odot g)H = gH,$$

and, similarly,  $gH \odot H = gH$ , so we have the neutral element  $H$ . Hence,  $(G/H, \odot)$  is a group. ■

## Solved exercises

Determine whether the following are groups, and show why or why not.

**Exercise 1.1.** Consider  $(\{1, 0, -1\}, +)$  where  $+$  is standard addition.

*Solution.* Notice  $1 + 1 = 2 \notin \{1, 0, -1\}$ , so  $(\{1, 0, -1\}, +)$  is not a group. □

**Exercise 1.2.** Consider  $(\mathbb{R}, \odot)$  where  $\odot$  is defined such that for  $x, y \in \mathbb{R}$ , we have  $x \odot y = xy + (x^2 - 1)(y^2 - 1)$ .

*Solution.* Notice

$$\begin{aligned} 2 \odot (3 \odot 4) &= 2 \odot ((3)(4) + (3^2 - 1)(4^2 - 1)) = 2 \odot 132 \\ &= (2)(132) + (2^2 - 1)(132^2 - 1) = 52\,533 \end{aligned}$$

while

$$\begin{aligned} (2 \odot 3) \odot 4 &= ((2)(3) + (2^2 - 1)(3^2 - 1)) \odot 4 = 30 \odot 4 \\ &= (30)(4) + (30^2 - 1)(4^2 - 1) = 13\,605, \end{aligned}$$

so  $\odot$  is not associative. Hence,  $(\mathbb{R}, \odot)$  is not a group. □

**Exercise 1.3.** Consider  $(\mathbb{R}^+, \odot)$  where  $\odot$  is defined such that for  $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^+$ , we have  $x \odot y = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$ .

*Solution.* Notice that for all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^+$ ,

$$x \odot 0 = \sqrt{x^2 + 0^2} = \sqrt{x^2} = x,$$

so 0 is the neutral element under  $\odot$ ; however,  $0 \notin \mathbb{R}^+$ , so  $(\mathbb{R}^+, \odot)$  is not a group. □

**Exercise 1.4.** Consider  $(\mathbb{R} \setminus \{-1\}, \odot)$  where  $\odot$  is defined such that for  $x, y \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{-1\}$ , we have  $x \odot y = x + y + xy$ .

*Solution.* Suppose there exists a pair  $(x, y)$  such that  $x \odot y = -1$ . Then,

$$\begin{aligned} x + y + xy &= -1 \\ y(1 + x) &= -1 - x \\ y &= -\frac{1 + x}{1 + x} \\ y &= -1 \end{aligned}$$

so such a pair cannot be in  $(\mathbb{R} \setminus \{-1\}) \times (\mathbb{R} \setminus \{-1\})$ ; thus,  $\odot$  is a law of composition on  $\mathbb{R} \setminus \{-1\}$ . We also see

$$\begin{aligned} (x \odot y) \odot z &= (x + y + xy) \odot z = (x + y + xy) + z + (x + y + xy)z \\ &= x + y + xy + z + xz + yz + xyz \\ &= x + (y + z + yz) + x(y + z + yz) = x \odot (y + z + yz) \\ &= x \odot (y \odot z) \end{aligned}$$

so  $\odot$  is associative. Finally, notice that for all  $x \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{-1\}$ , we have

$$x \odot 0 = x + 0 + x(0) = x$$

(neutral element), and

$$\begin{aligned} x \odot -\frac{x}{1+x} &= x - \frac{x}{1+x} + x \left( -\frac{x}{1+x} \right) = x - \frac{x}{1+x} - \frac{x^2}{1+x} \\ &= \frac{x(1+x) - x}{1+x} - \frac{x^2}{1+x} = \frac{x^2}{1+x} - \frac{x^2}{1+x} = 0 \end{aligned}$$

(inverse). Hence,  $(\mathbb{R} \setminus \{-1\}, \odot)$  is a group.  $\square$

**Exercise 1.5.** Consider  $(\mathcal{C}, \cdot)$  where  $\mathcal{C} = \{z \in \mathbb{C} \mid |z| = 1\}$  and  $\cdot$  is standard multiplication.

*Solution.* Since  $\mathcal{C}$  is the unit circle, we can uniquely represent each  $z \in \mathcal{C}$  in polar form as  $z = e^{i\theta}$  for some  $\theta \in (-\pi, \pi]$ , and we know  $e^{i\theta} \in \mathcal{C}$  for all  $\theta \in \mathbb{R}$ . Let  $e^{i\theta_1}, e^{i\theta_2} \in \mathcal{C}$ . Then,

$$e^{i\theta_1} \cdot e^{i\theta_2} = e^{i\theta_1 + i\theta_2} = e^{i(\theta_1 + \theta_2)} \in \mathcal{C}$$

so standard multiplication is a law of composition on  $\mathcal{C}$ , and we know standard multiplication is associative. The neutral element under standard multiplication is  $1 = e^{i(0)} \in \mathcal{C}$ . Finally, notice that for all  $e^{i\theta} \in \mathcal{C}$ ,

$$e^{i\theta} \cdot e^{i(-\theta)} = e^{i\theta - i\theta} = e^0 = 1$$

(inverse). Hence,  $(\mathcal{C}, \cdot)$  is a group.  $\square$



**Exercise 1.6.** Consider  $(\text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R}), \cdot)$  where  $\text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$  is the set of all  $n \times n$  matrices over  $\mathbb{R}$  with determinant 1 and  $\cdot$  is standard matrix multiplication.

*Solution.* Let  $A, B \in \text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$ . Then,

$$\det(AB) = \det(A) \det(B) = (1)(1) = 1$$

so  $AB \in \text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$ . Thus, standard matrix multiplication is a law of composition on  $\text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$ , and we know standard matrix multiplication is associative. The neutral element under standard matrix multiplication is  $I_n$  and  $\det(I_n) = 1$ , so  $I_n \in \text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$ . Finally, taking  $A^{-1}$  as the standard matrix inverse, we see

$$\det(A^{-1}) = \frac{1}{\det(A)} = \frac{1}{1} = 1$$

so  $A^{-1} \in \text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$ . Hence,  $(\text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R}), \cdot)$  is a group.  $\square$

**Exercise 1.7.** Consider  $(Q, \cdot)$  where  $Q = \{\pm I_2, \pm I, \pm J, \pm K\}$ ,

$$I_2 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \quad I = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad J = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & i \\ i & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad K = \begin{bmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & -i \end{bmatrix},$$

and  $\cdot$  is standard matrix multiplication.

*Solution.* For  $I_2, I, J$ , and  $K$ , we have the composition table

$\cdot$	$I_2$	$I$	$J$	$K$
$I_2$	$I_2$	$I$	$J$	$K$
$I$	$I$	$-I_2$	$K$	$-J$
$J$	$J$	$-K$	$-I_2$	$I$
$K$	$K$	$J$	$-I$	$-I_2$

and we know for any matrices  $A$  and  $B$ ,

$$(-A)B = A(-B) = -AB \quad \text{and} \quad (-A)(-B) = AB$$

so standard matrix multiplication is a law of composition on  $Q$ . We also know standard matrix multiplication is associative. The neutral element under standard matrix multiplication of  $2 \times 2$  matrices is  $I_2 \in Q$ . Finally, from the composition table, we have the inverses

$$I_2^{-1} = I_2 \quad I^{-1} = -I \quad J^{-1} = -J \quad K^{-1} = -K$$

and from these we see

$$(-I_2)^{-1} = -I_2 \quad (-I)^{-1} = I \quad (-J)^{-1} = J \quad (-K)^{-1} = K.$$

Hence,  $(Q, \cdot)$  is a group.  $\square$

**Exercise 1.8.** Consider  $(H, \cdot)$  where  $H$  is the set of upper triangular  $3 \times 3$  matrices over  $\mathbb{R}$  whose diagonal entries are all 1 and  $\cdot$  is standard matrix multiplication.

*Solution.* Let  $a, b, c, x, y, z \in \mathbb{R}$ . Then,

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & x & y \\ 0 & 1 & z \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & a & b \\ 0 & 1 & c \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & a+x & b+xc+y \\ 0 & 1 & c+z \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \in H$$

so standard matrix multiplication is a law of composition on  $H$ , and we know standard matrix multiplication is associative. The neutral element under standard matrix multiplication of  $3 \times 3$  matrices is  $I_3 \in H$ . Finally, computing the standard matrix inverse, we see

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & x & y \\ 0 & 1 & z \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^{-1} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -x & xz-y \\ 0 & 1 & -z \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \in H.$$

Hence,  $(H, \cdot)$  is a group. □

For each of the following, determine whether  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ , and show why or why not.

**Exercise 1.9.** Let  $G = (\mathbb{R}, +)$  and  $H = \{-1, 0, 1\}$ .

*Solution.* Consider  $1 + 1 = 2 \notin H$ . Hence,  $H$  is not a subgroup of  $G$ . □

**Exercise 1.10.** Let  $G = (\mathbb{R}, +)$  and  $H = \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ .

*Solution.* The neutral element of  $G$  is  $0 \notin H$ . Hence,  $H$  is not a subgroup of  $G$ . □

**Exercise 1.11.** Let  $G = (\mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}, \cdot)$  and  $H = \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ .

*Solution.* Let  $h_1, h_2 \in H = \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ . Then, since  $h_1, h_2 \neq 0$ , we have

$$h_1 h_2^{-1} = h_1 \cdot \frac{1}{h_2} = \frac{h_1}{h_2} \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\} = H.$$

Hence,  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ . □

**Exercise 1.12.** Let  $G = (\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}, \cdot)$  and  $H = \{-1, 1\}$ .

*Solution.* We see

$$(-1)^{-1} = \frac{1}{-1} = -1, \quad 1^{-1} = \frac{1}{1} = 1$$

so

$$\begin{aligned} -1 \cdot (-1)^{-1} &= -1 \cdot -1 = 1 \in H, & -1 \cdot 1^{-1} &= -1 \cdot 1 = -1 \in H, \\ 1 \cdot (-1)^{-1} &= 1 \cdot -1 = -1 \in H, & 1 \cdot 1^{-1} &= 1 \cdot 1 = 1 \in H. \end{aligned}$$

Hence,  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ . □

**Exercise 1.13.** Let  $G = (\mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}, \cdot)$  and  $H = \{e^{i(2\pi k)/n} \mid k \in \{0, 1, \dots, n-1\}\}$  for some  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ .

*Solution.* Let  $h_1, h_2 \in H$ . Then,  $h_1 = e^{i(2\pi k)/n}$  and  $h_2 = e^{i(2\pi l)/n}$  for some  $k, l \in \{0, 1, \dots, n-1\}$ , so

$$h_2^{-1} = \left(e^{i(2\pi l)/n}\right)^{-1} = e^{-i(2\pi l)/n}$$

and we see

$$h_1 h_2^{-1} = e^{i(2\pi k)/n} \cdot e^{-i(2\pi l)/n} = e^{i(2\pi(k-l))/n}.$$

Let  $m = (k-l) \bmod n$ . Then,

$$h_1 h_2^{-1} = e^{i(2\pi(k-l))/n} = e^{i(2\pi m)/n} \in H.$$

Hence,  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ . □

**Exercise 1.14.** Let  $G = (\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{R}), \cdot)$  where  $\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{R})$  is the set of all invertible  $n \times n$  matrices over  $\mathbb{R}$ , and let  $H = (\text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R}), \cdot)$ .

*Solution.* Let  $A, B \in H = \text{SL}_n(\mathbb{R})$ . Then,

$$\det(A) = \det(B) = 1 \neq 0$$

so  $A^{-1}$  and  $B^{-1}$  exist and

$$\det(B^{-1}) = \frac{1}{\det(B)} = \frac{1}{1} = 1.$$

Therefore,

$$\det(AB^{-1}) = \det(A) \det(B^{-1}) = 1 \cdot 1 = 1$$

so  $AB^{-1} \in H$ . Hence,  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$ . □

**Exercise 1.15.** Let  $G$  be a group, and let  $x \in G$  where  $x$  is of order  $k$ . Prove that if  $m$  is an integer such that  $x^m = e_G$ , then  $k \mid m$ .

*Solution.* Since  $x$  is of order  $k$ , we have by definition that  $k$  is the smallest positive integer such that  $x^k = e_G$ . Suppose  $x^m = e_G$  for some  $m \in \mathbb{Z}$ . We can rewrite  $m$  in terms of its Euclidean division by  $k$  as  $m = kn + r$  for some  $n, r \in \mathbb{Z}$  where  $0 \leq r < k$ , giving us

$$x^m = x^{kn+r} = x^{kn} x^r = (x^k)^n x^r = e_G^n x^r = x^r.$$

so  $x^r = e_G$ . Since  $r < k$ , then  $r = 0$ , so  $m = nk$ . Hence,  $k \mid m$ . □



## Chapter 2

# Relations Between Groups

## 2.1 Group homomorphisms

**Definition 2.1.1.** Let  $(G, \odot)$  and  $(G', \oslash)$  be groups. A mapping  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  is called a **group homomorphism** if for every  $x, y \in G$ , we have

$$\phi(x \odot y) = \phi(x) \oslash \phi(y).$$

**Definition 2.1.2.** A group homomorphism is called an **isomorphism** if it is a bijection. A group  $G$  is called **isomorphic to** a group  $G'$  if there exists an isomorphism  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$ . We denote this by  $G \simeq G'$ .

**Proposition 2.1.3.** Let  $\phi : (G, \odot) \rightarrow (G', \oslash)$  be a homomorphism. Then,

- (1)  $\phi(e_G) = e_{G'}$ ; and
- (2) for all  $g \in G$ , we have  $\phi(g^{-1}) = (\phi(g))^{-1}$ .

*Proof.*

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) By definition,  $(\phi(g))^{-1}$  is the inverse of  $\phi(g)$  in  $G'$ . We see

$$\phi(g^{-1}) \oslash \phi(g) = \phi(g^{-1} \odot g) = \phi(e_G) = e'_{G'},$$

so  $\phi(g^{-1})$  is also the inverse of  $\phi(g)$  in  $G'$ . Hence, by uniqueness of the inverse,

$$\phi(g^{-1}) = (\phi(g))^{-1}. \quad \blacksquare$$

**Definition 2.1.4.** Let  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  be a homomorphism. The set

$$\text{im}(\phi) = \{\phi(g) \mid g \in G\}$$

is called the **image** of  $\phi$ .

**Proposition 2.1.5.** Let  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  be a homomorphism. Then,  $\text{im}(\phi)$  is a subgroup of  $G'$ .

Do this  
proof!

*Proof.* Let  $x, y \in \text{im}(\phi)$ . Then, there exist some  $u, v \in G$  such that  $\phi(u) = x$  and  $\phi(v) = y$ , so

$$xy^{-1} = \phi(u)(\phi(v))^{-1} = \phi(u)\phi(v^{-1}) = \phi(uv^{-1}).$$

Since  $uv^{-1} \in G$ , we see  $xy^{-1} \in \text{im}(\phi)$ . Hence,  $\text{im}(\phi)$  is a subgroup of  $G'$ . ■

**Definition 2.1.6.** Let  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  be a homomorphism. The set

$$\ker(\phi) = \{g \in G \mid \phi(g) = e_{G'}\}$$

is called the **kernel** of  $\phi$ .

**Theorem 2.1.7.** Let  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  be a homomorphism. Then,  $\phi$  is injective if and only if  $\ker(\phi) = \{e_G\}$ .

*Proof.*

( $\Rightarrow$ ) Suppose  $\phi$  is injective. Since  $\phi(e_G) = e_{G'}$ , we know  $\{e_G\} \subseteq \ker(\phi)$ . Let  $x \in \ker(\phi)$ . Then,  $\phi(x) = e_{G'} = \phi(e_G)$ , so since  $\phi$  is injective,  $x = e_G$ . Hence,  $\{e_G\} = \ker(\phi)$ .

( $\Leftarrow$ ) Suppose  $\ker(\phi) = \{e_G\}$ . Let  $x, y \in G$  such that  $\phi(x) = \phi(y)$ . Then,

$$e_{G'} = \phi(x)(\phi(x))^{-1} = \phi(y)(\phi(x))^{-1} = \phi(y)\phi(x^{-1}) = \phi(yx^{-1}).$$

Thus,  $yx^{-1} \in \ker(\phi)$ , so  $yx^{-1} = e_G$ , which implies  $y = x$ . Hence,  $\phi$  is injective. ■

**Theorem 2.1.8.** Let  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  be a homomorphism. Then,  $\ker(\phi)$  is a normal subgroup of  $G$ .

*Proof.*

**Theorem 2.1.9.** Let  $G$  be a group and  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . Then,  $H$  is a normal subgroup of  $G$  if and only if there exists a surjective homomorphism  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  for some group  $G'$  such that  $H = \ker(\phi)$ .

*Proof.*

**Theorem 2.1.10.** Let  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  be an isomorphism. Then,  $\phi^{-1}$  is an isomorphism.

*Proof.* Let  $\odot$  denote the law of composition for group  $G$  and  $\oslash$  denote the law for  $G'$ , let  $f = \phi^{-1}$ , and let  $x, y \in G'$ .  $f$  is clearly well-defined, and we see

$$\phi(f(x) \odot f(y)) = \phi(f(x)) \oslash \phi(f(y)) = x \oslash y = \phi(f(x \oslash y)).$$

Since  $\phi$  is injective, this implies  $f(x) \odot f(y) = f(x \oslash y)$ , so  $f$  is a homomorphism. Injectivity and surjectivity can be easily verified. Hence,  $f$  is an isomorphism. ■

Do this  
proof!

Do this  
proof!

**Theorem 2.1.11** (Fundamental theorem on homomorphisms). Let  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  be a homomorphism. Then, the mapping

$$\begin{aligned} \psi : G/\ker(\phi) &\rightarrow \text{im}(\phi) \\ g\ker(\phi) &\mapsto \phi(g) \end{aligned}$$

is an isomorphism.

*Proof.* We have four criteria for  $\psi$  to be an isomorphism:

- (1) Let  $g, h$  be such that  $g\ker(\phi) = h\ker(\phi)$ . Then,  $h^{-1}g \in \ker(\phi)$ , so

$$\begin{aligned} \phi(h^{-1}g) &= e_{G'} \\ (\phi(h))^{-1}\phi(g) &= e_{G'} \\ \phi(g) &= \phi(h). \end{aligned}$$

Thus,  $\psi$  is well-defined.

- (2) Let  $g\ker(\phi), h\ker(\phi) \in G/\ker(\phi)$ . Then,

$$\begin{aligned} \psi(g\ker(\phi) h\ker(\phi)) &= \psi((gh)\ker(\phi)) = \phi(gh) = \phi(g)\phi(h) \\ &= \psi(g\ker(\phi))\psi(h\ker(\phi)), \end{aligned}$$

so  $\psi$  is a homomorphism.

- (3) Let  $g\ker(\phi) \in \ker(\psi)$ . Then,  $\psi(g\ker(\phi)) = e_{G'}$ , so  $g \in \ker(\phi)$ , which implies  $g\ker(\phi) = \ker(\phi)$ . Thus, by Theorem 2.1.7,  $\psi$  is injective.

- (4)  $\psi$  is surjective by construction since it maps to  $\text{im}(\phi)$ .

Hence,  $\psi$  is an isomorphism. ■

This theorem is also known as the first isomorphism theorem.

## 2.2 Permutation groups

**Proposition 2.2.1.** Let  $X$  be a set, and let  $\mathcal{S}(X)$  be the set of all bijections from  $X$  to  $X$ . Then,  $(\mathcal{S}(X), \circ)$ , where  $\circ$  is composition of mappings, is a group.

*Proof.* ■

Do this  
proof!

**Definition 2.2.2.** Take  $\mathcal{S}(X)$  as defined in Proposition 2.2.1 for some set  $X$ . A subgroup of  $\mathcal{S}(X)$  is called a **permutation group**. Any mapping in such a group is called a **permutation**.

The neutral element of a permutation group is naturally the identity mapping, which we will denote  $\text{id}$ .

**Definition 2.2.3.** Let  $A = \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  for some  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ . Then,  $\mathcal{S}_n = \mathcal{S}(A)$  is called the **symmetric group** on  $n$  elements.

More generally,  $\mathcal{S}_n$  can be used to describe the group of permutations of any finite set. Since any finite set is isomorphic to a subset of  $\mathbb{N}$ , we can apply this definition by assigning a label in  $A$  to each element. The results we will show for  $\mathcal{S}_n$  therefore apply with this generalization as well.

Note that for any  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ , we have  $|\mathcal{S}_n| = n!$ . This may be familiar if you recall the notion of a permutation of a set as a rearrangement of its elements. Consider the following permutation  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_5$ :

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &\mapsto 3 \\ 2 &\mapsto 2 \\ 3 &\mapsto 5 \\ 4 &\mapsto 4 \\ 5 &\mapsto 1. \end{aligned}$$

We will represent it with the notation

$$\sigma = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\ 3 & 2 & 5 & 4 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

**Definition 2.2.4.** Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$ . The set

$$\text{supp}(\sigma) = \{i \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\} \mid \sigma(i) \neq i\}$$

is called the **support** of  $\sigma$ .

**Proposition 2.2.5.** Let  $\sigma, \tau \in \mathcal{S}_n$ . If  $\text{supp}(\sigma) \cap \text{supp}(\tau) = \emptyset$ , then  $\sigma \circ \tau = \tau \circ \sigma$ .

*Proof.* Let  $i \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$ . We have three cases:

- (1) Suppose  $i \notin \text{supp}(\sigma) \cup \text{supp}(\tau)$ . Then,  $\sigma(i) = \tau(i) = i$ , so

$$(\sigma \circ \tau)(i) = \sigma(\tau(i)) = \sigma(i) = i = \tau(i) = \tau(\sigma(i)) = (\tau \circ \sigma)(i).$$

- (2) Suppose  $i \in \text{supp}(\sigma)$ . Then,  $i \notin \text{supp}(\tau)$ , so

$$(\sigma \circ \tau)(i) = \sigma(\tau(i)) = \sigma(i),$$

and since  $i \in \text{supp}(\sigma)$ , we have  $\sigma(i) \in \text{supp}(\sigma)$ , so  $\sigma(i) \notin \text{supp}(\tau)$ . Thus,

$$(\tau \circ \sigma)(i) = \tau(\sigma(i)) = \sigma(i) = (\sigma \circ \tau)(i).$$

- (3) If  $i \in \text{supp}(\tau)$ , the proof can be done in the same way as in the above case.

Hence,  $\sigma \circ \tau = \tau \circ \sigma$ . ■

**Theorem 2.2.6** (Cayley's theorem). Every group is isomorphic to a permutation group.

*Proof.* ■

Do this  
proof!



## Cycles

**Definition 2.2.7.** An element  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$  is called a **cycle** if there exists some  $x \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  such that  $\text{supp}(\sigma) = \{\sigma^i(x) \mid i \in \mathbb{N}\}$ . Let  $l = |\text{supp}(\sigma)|$ . We denote the cycle

$$(x, \sigma(x), \dots, \sigma^{l-1}(x))$$

where  $l$  is called its **length**. A cycle of length 2 is called a **transposition**.

**Proposition 2.2.8.** Let  $\sigma$  be a cycle of length  $l$ . Then,  $\text{ord}(\sigma) = l$ .

This follows by construction.

**Proposition 2.2.9.** Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$ , and let  $A = \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$ . Then, the relation  $\sim$  on  $A$  defined such that for all  $a, b \in A$ ,

$$a \sim b \iff \text{there exists some } k \in \mathbb{Z} \text{ such that } b = \sigma^k(a)$$

is an equivalence relation.

*Proof.* We have three criteria for an equivalence relation:

- (1) Since  $a = \sigma^0(a)$ , we have  $a \sim a$  (reflexive).
- (2) Suppose  $a \sim b$ . Then,  $b = \sigma^k(a)$  for some  $k \in \mathbb{Z}$ , so  $a = \sigma^{-k}(b)$ . Thus,  $b \sim a$  (symmetric).
- (3) Let  $c \in A$ . Suppose  $a \sim b$  and  $b \sim c$ . Then,  $b = \sigma^k(a)$  and  $c = \sigma^m(b)$  for some  $k, m \in \mathbb{Z}$ , so  $c = \sigma^m(\sigma^k(a)) = \sigma^{m+k}(a)$ . Thus,  $a \sim c$  (transitive). ■

**Corollary 2.2.10** (Alternative definition of a cycle). Take  $\sim$  as defined in Proposition 2.2.9 for some  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$ . Then,  $\sigma$  is a cycle if and only if  $\sim$  has at most one equivalence class containing more than one element.

**Theorem 2.2.11.** Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$ . Then, there exist some unique cycles  $\tau_1, \tau_2, \dots, \tau_k$  with disjoint supports such that  $\sigma = \tau_1 \circ \tau_2 \circ \dots \circ \tau_k$ . In other words, every permutation of a finite set can be decomposed as the product of unique cycles with disjoint supports.

*Proof.* Let  $A_1, A_2, \dots, A_k$  be the equivalence classes of  $\sim$ , and let  $\tau_1, \tau_2, \dots, \tau_k$  be the cycles defined such that

$$\tau_i(x) = \begin{cases} \sigma(x), & x \in A_i \\ x, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

We see  $\sigma = \tau_1 \circ \tau_2 \circ \dots \circ \tau_k$ , and since  $A_1, A_2, \dots, A_k$  are necessarily disjoint,  $\tau_1, \tau_2, \dots, \tau_k$  have disjoint supports. ■

**Definition 2.2.12.** Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$  with decomposition  $\sigma = \tau_1 \circ \tau_2 \circ \dots \circ \tau_k$  as given by Theorem 2.2.11. Let  $l_1, l_2, \dots, l_k$  denote the lengths of  $\tau_1, \tau_2, \dots, \tau_k$ , respectively, where  $l_1 \geq l_2 \geq \dots \geq l_k$ . The sequence  $(l_1, l_2, \dots, l_k)$  is called the **type** of  $\sigma$ .

**Proposition 2.2.13.** Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$  with type  $(l_1, l_2, \dots, l_k)$ . Then,

$$\text{ord}(\sigma) = \text{lcm}\{l_1, l_2, \dots, l_k\}.$$

*Proof.* We can decompose  $\sigma$  into cycles as  $\sigma = \tau_1 \circ \tau_2 \circ \dots \circ \tau_k$  where  $\tau_1, \tau_2, \dots, \tau_k$  have length  $l_1, l_2, \dots, l_k$ , respectively. Since the  $\tau_i$ s have disjoint supports, they commute, so for every  $m \in \mathbb{N}$ , we have

$$\sigma^m = \tau_1^m \circ \tau_2^m \circ \dots \circ \tau_k^m.$$

Since  $\text{ord}(\tau_i) = l_i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq k$ , we see that if  $\sigma^m = \text{id}$ , then  $m$  is a multiple of each of the  $l_i$ s. Hence, by definition,  $\text{ord}(\sigma)$  is the lowest such  $m$ . ■

## Transpositions and alternating groups

**Corollary 2.2.14** (to Theorem 2.2.11). Every permutation in  $\mathcal{S}_n$  can be decomposed as the product of transpositions.

**Proposition 2.2.15.** Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$ . Either all transposition decompositions of  $\sigma$  are the product of an even number of transpositions, or all of them are the product of an odd number of transpositions.

*Proof.* Consider the group  $\mathcal{S}_{I,n}$  of permutations of the rows of the  $n \times n$  identity matrix  $I_n$ . As remarked following Definition 2.2.3,  $\mathcal{S}_{I,n} \simeq \mathcal{S}_n$ . We know  $\det(I_n) = 1$ , and transposing any two rows of a square matrix changes the sign of its determinant.

Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_{I,n}$ , and let  $A = \sigma(I_n)$ . Suppose  $\sigma$  can be decomposed as an even number of transpositions. Then,  $\det(A) = 1$ . Now suppose  $\sigma$  can also be decomposed as an odd number of transpositions. Then,  $\det(A) = -1$ , a contradiction. Hence, no  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_{I,n}$  can be decomposed into the product of both an even number and an odd number of transpositions. ■

**Definition 2.2.16.** Let  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$ , and let  $k$  be the number of transpositions in some transposition decomposition of  $\sigma$ . The number  $\epsilon(\sigma) = (-1)^k$  is called the **signature** of  $\sigma$ . The permutation  $\sigma$  is called **even** if  $k$  is even or **odd** if  $k$  is odd.

**Proposition 2.2.17.** Let  $\mathcal{A}_n = \{\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n \mid \epsilon(\sigma) = 1\}$ . Then,  $\mathcal{A}_n$  is a normal subgroup of  $\mathcal{S}_n$ .

*Proof.* Let  $\alpha \in \mathcal{A}_n$  and  $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_n$ . For some  $k, m \in \mathbb{N}$ ,  $\alpha$  can be decomposed as the product of some number  $2k$  of transpositions and  $\sigma$  can be decomposed as the product of some number  $m$  of transpositions, so there exists a decomposition of  $\sigma \circ \alpha \circ \sigma^{-1}$  into some number  $m + 2k + m = 2(m + k)$  of transpositions. Since  $2(m + k)$  is even,  $\sigma \circ \alpha \circ \sigma^{-1} \in \mathcal{A}_n$ . Hence, by Theorem 1.4.2,  $\mathcal{A}_n$  is a normal subgroup of  $\mathcal{S}_n$ . ■

We can alternatively show that the mapping

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \epsilon : & (\mathcal{S}_n, \circ) & \rightarrow & (\{-1, 1\}, \cdot) \\ & \sigma & \mapsto & \epsilon(\sigma) \end{array}$$

is a group homomorphism and that  $\mathcal{A}_n = \ker(\epsilon)$ . By Theorem 2.1.8, this implies  $\mathcal{A}_n$  is a normal subgroup of  $\mathcal{S}_n$ .

**Definition 2.2.18.**  $\mathcal{A}_n$  as defined in Proposition 2.2.17 is called the **alternating group** on  $n$  elements.

**The dihedral group**

## 2.3 Finitely generated abelian groups

## 2.4 Group action on a set