

# Notes for M.A. Armstrong's *Groups and Symmetry*

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## 1 Symmetries of the Tetrahedron

**Symmetry group** Captures the rules of how symmetries combine for a given object.

**Order of operations** In the *product*\*  $xyz$ , do  $z$  first, then  $y$  and finally  $x$ . If order doesn't matter in  $G$ , it's commutative (or *abelian*). Remember to label geometric vertices.

### Multiplication

- For  $\mathbb{Q} - \{0\}$ ,  $\mathbb{Q}^{\text{pos}}$ ,  $\mathbb{R} - \{0\}$ ,  $\mathbb{R}^{\text{pos}}$ ,  $\{+1, -1\}$ ,  $\mathbb{C} - \{0\}$ ,  $\mathbb{C}^\dagger$ ,  $\{\pm 1, \pm i\}$ :  $e = 1$  and  $x^{-1} = 1/x$ .

**$\mathbb{Z}$  under addition modulus  $n$**   $e = 0$ ,  $x^{-1} = n - x$  for  $x \neq 0$ , finite *abelian* group and denoted  $\mathbb{Z}_n$ .

**$\mathbb{Z}$  under multiplication modulus  $n$**  Requires  $n$  to be prime.

## 2 Axioms

**Group** Set  $G$  with *multiplication* (addition, rotation, etc.) satisfying

- **associativity**, i.e.  $(xy)z = x(yz)$
- **identity element**  $e \in G$  such that  $xe = x = ex$
- **inverse**  $e \in G$  such that  $x^{-1}x = e = xx^{-1}$

**Properties common to all groups**

- The identity element of a group is unique.
- The inverse of each element of a group is unique.

## 3 Numbers

**Addition of  $\mathbb{Z}$ ,  $\mathbb{Q}$ ,  $\mathbb{R}$ ,  $\mathbb{C}$**

- Identity is zero
- $-x$  is the inverse

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\*Rotations, flips, multiplications, additions, etc. Same order as functional composition.

## 4 Dihedral Groups

When  $n \geq 3$  we can manufacture a plate which has  $n$  equal sides. These are the non-commutative *dihedral rotational symmetry groups*  $D_n$ . E.g.  $D_3 = \{e, r, r^2, s, rs, r^2s\}$ .  $x^m x^n = x^{m+n}$  and  $(x^m)^n = x^{mn}$  provided we interpret  $x^0 = e$ . For any multiplication table, each element in  $G$  appears only once in every given column or row.

$$r^n = e, s^2 = e, sr = r^{n-1}s, r^{n-1} = r^{-1}, \text{ etc.}$$

Each element is of form  $r^a, r^a s$  where  $0 \leq a \leq n-1$ .

For  $k = a +_n b$ ,  $r^a r^b = r^k$  and  $r^a (r^b s) = r^k s$ . For  $l = a +_n (n-b)$ ,  $(r^a s) r^b = r^l s$  and  $(r^a s)(r^b s) = r^l$  — thus  $r$  and  $s$  **generate**  $D_n$ .

The **order**  $|G|$  is the number of elements in the group. If  $x^n = e$ , then the *element*  $x$  has *finite* order  $n$  when  $n$  is the smallest such  $n$ .

## 5 Subgroups and Generators

A **subgroup** of  $G$  is a subset of  $G$  which itself forms a group under the multiplication of  $G$ . For  $H$  to be a

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<sup>†</sup>Complex numbers of modulus 1.

subgroup of  $G$ ,  $H < G$ :

- $xy \in G$  for any  $x, y \in H$
- $e_H \in G$
- For any  $x \in H$ ,  $x^{-1} \in G$
- Associativity in  $G$  implies the same for  $H$ .

**Subgroup generated by  $x$ , or  $\langle x \rangle$**  For an element  $x$  in  $G$ , the set of all  $x^n$  is a subgroup of  $G$  (remember  $x^0 = e$ ). Finite order  $m$  means  $x^0 = e, x^1, \dots, x^{m-1}$ . So order of  $x \in G$  is precisely the order of  $\langle x \rangle$ . If  $\langle x \rangle = G$ , i.e., generates all of  $G$ , then  $G$  is a **cyclic group**.

**Subgroup generated by  $X$**  If  $X < G^\ddagger$  and, for example,  $r, s, r^2, sr$  (called *words* of  $X$ ).

### Theorems

- (5.1) A non-empty subset  $H$  of a group  $G$  is a subgroup of  $G$  if and only if  $xy^{-1}$  belongs to  $H$  whenever  $x$  and  $y$  belong to  $H$ .
- (5.2) The intersection of two subgroups of a group is itself a subgroup.
- (5.3) Every subgroup of  $\mathbb{Z}$  is cyclic. Every subgroup of a cyclic group is cyclic.

## 6 Permutations

A *permutation* is a bijection<sup>§</sup> from a set  $X$  to itself (e.g., replace all 3s with 1s). The collection of *all* permutations of  $X$  forms a group  $S_x$  under composition of functions (who each perform one specific permutation). When  $X$  consists of the first  $n$  positive integers, we get the **symmetric group**  $S_n$  of degree  $n$  and order  $n!$ .  $S_3$  is not abelian

$(a_1 a_2 \dots a_k)$  is called a **cyclic permutation**, sending  $a_1$  to  $a_2, \dots, a_k$  to  $a_1$ . Its length is  $k$  and a cyclic permutation of length  $k$  is called a  **$k$ -cycle**. A 2-cycle is called a **transposition**. Every element of  $S_n$  can be written as many such **disjoint**, meaning no integer is moved by

<sup>‡</sup>  $X$  is a subgroup of  $G$ .

<sup>§</sup> A one-to-one mapping between the elements of two sets, meaning you can always go backwards as well.

more than one of them. Therefore they are *commutative*.

### A few tricks

- Each *element* of  $S_n$  can be written as a product of cyclic permutations, and any cyclic permutation can be written as a product of transpositions:  $(a_1 a_2 \dots a_k) = (a_1 a_k) \dots (a_1 a_3)(a_1 a_2)$ . Therefore, each *element* of  $S_n$  can be written as a product of transpositions.
- $(ab) = (1a)(1b)(1a)$
- $(1k) = (k-1, k) \dots (34)(23)(12)(23)(34) \dots (k-1, k)$

### Theorems

- (6.1) The transpositions in  $S_n$  together generate  $S_n$ .
- (6.2a) The transpositions  $(12), (13), \dots, (1n)$  together generate  $S_n$ .
- (6.2b) The transpositions  $(12), (23), \dots, (n-1, n)$  together generate  $S_n$ .
- (6.3) The transposition  $(12)$  and the  $n$ -cycle  $(12 \dots n)$  together generate  $S_n$ .

Any *element*  $\alpha$  of  $S_n$  can be written as a product of *transpositions* in many different ways. But the number of transpositions is always even or always odd. If  $\alpha$  can be written as the product of an even number of transpositions, then its sign must be  $+1$ ; for odd, it is  $-1$ . Therefore, by the first trick above, a *cyclic permutation* is even precisely when its length is odd.

### Theorems

- (6.4) The even permutations in  $S_n$  form a subgroup of order  $n!/2$  called the **alternating group**  $A_n$  of degree  $n$ .
- (6.5) For  $n \geq 3$  the 3-cycles generate  $A_n$ .

## 7 Isomorphisms

If two multiplication tables have corresponding elements and products, they are **isomorphic**.

Two groups  $G$  and  $G'$  are **isomorphic** if there is a bijection  $\phi$  from  $G$  to  $G'$  which satisfies  $\phi(xy) = \phi(x)\phi(y)$  for all  $x, y \in G$ . The function  $\phi$  is called an **isomorphism** between  $G$  and  $G'$ . This is written  $G \cong G'$ .

### Notes

- $G$  and  $G'$  have the same order.
- $\phi(x)^{-1} = \phi(x^{-1})$  for all  $x \in G$ .
- If  $G$  is abelian, then so is  $G'$ .
- If  $H$  is a subgroup of  $G$  then  $\phi(H)$  a subgroup of  $G'$ .
- An isomorphism preserves the order of each element.
- If  $\phi: G \rightarrow G'$  and  $\psi: G' \rightarrow G''$  are both isomorphisms, then the composition  $\psi\phi: G \rightarrow G''$  is also an isomorphism.

### Examples

- $\phi: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{\text{pos}}$  by  $\phi(x) = e^x$  and  $\phi(x+y) = e^{x+y} = e^x e^y = \phi(x)\phi(y)$ .
- The non-abelian, rotational group  $G$  for the tetrahedron is isomorphic to  $A_4$ .
- Any infinite cyclic group  $G$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbb{Z}$  by  $\phi(x^m) = m$  and  $\phi(x^m x^n) = \phi(x^{m+n}) = m+n = \phi(x^m) + \phi(x^n)$ .
- Any finite cyclic group of order  $n$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbb{Z}_n$  by  $\phi(x^m) = m \pmod{n}$ .
- The number  $1, -1, i, -i$  form a group under complex multiplication. It is cyclic, and  $i, -i$  are both generators. It gives two isomorphisms between this group and  $\mathbb{Z}_4$ .
- $D_3$  and  $S_3$  are isomorphic.
- There is no isomorphism between  $\mathbb{Q}$  and  $\mathbb{Q}^{\text{pos}}$ .