
Let $\gcd(a, b)$ be the largest positive integer that divides both a and b . Assume $\gcd(0, 0) = 0$. Negative a and b are allowed, but $\gcd(a, b)$ is always nonnegative.

When traveling from (a, b) to a next point, the \gcd of the points is maintained. To show this, we first notice that any common divisor of a and b divides $a + b$ and $a - b$. So in particular, the greatest one, $\gcd(a, b)$, divides $a + b$ and $a - b$. Therefore, $\gcd(a, b)$ divides $\gcd(a + b, b)$ and $\gcd(a - b, b)$. Also, $a = (a + b) - b = (a - b) + b$, so by the same argument, $\gcd(a + b, b)$ and $\gcd(a - b, b)$ also divides $\gcd(a, b)$. Therefore they must all be equal.

So, if $\gcd(a, b) \neq \gcd(x, y)$, the answer is immediately “NO”, because we can only reach points with the same \gcd . The more surprising fact is that if $\gcd(a, b) = \gcd(x, y)$, then the answer is “YES”!

To show this, first note that the individual traversal operations are reversible. For example, from (a, b) , if we go to $(a + b, b)$, we can go back to (a, b) because $(a, b) = ((a + b) - b, b)$. Specifically, the first and third kinds of traversals are reverse operations of each other, and the same is true for the second and fourth. So instead of saying “ (a, b) can reach (x, y) ”, we say instead “ (a, b) is connected to (x, y) ” to emphasize the reversibility of the traversal.

Lemma 0.1. *A point (a, b) where $g = \gcd(a, b)$ is connected to one of the following points: $(g, 0)$, $(0, g)$, $(-g, 0)$, $(0, -g)$.*

Proof. For $g = 0$, the only point is $(0, 0)$, so the result holds.

For a fixed $g > 0$, we’ll prove the statement for all points (a, b) with $\gcd(a, b) = g$ by induction on increasing $|a| + |b|$. The number $|a| + |b|$ is always a positive multiple of g .

For the base case, if $|a| + |b| = g$, then (a, b) is already one of $(g, 0)$, $(0, g)$, $(-g, 0)$, $(0, -g)$, so the result holds.

Now suppose we want to show the result for (a, b) with $|a| + |b| > g$. Then:

- If $|a| \leq |b|$, then either $a - b$ or $a + b$ has smaller absolute value than b , so we go to either $(a, a + b)$ or $(a, a - b)$.

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- If $|a| > |b|$, then either $a - b$ or $a + b$ has smaller absolute value than a , so we go to either $(a + b, b)$ or $(a - b, b)$.

In any case, we end up with a smaller sum of absolute values, which by induction hypothesis is connected to one of $(g, 0)$, $(0, g)$, $(-g, 0)$, $(0, -g)$. Therefore the inductive case holds. \square

That $a - b$ or $a + b$ has smaller absolute value than $\max(|a|, |b|)$ follows from the fact that neither of a and b are zero (if one of them is zero and $|a| + |b| > g$ then $\gcd(a, b) > g$).

Now,

- $(g, 0)$ is connected to $(0, -g)$ because

$$(g, 0) \rightarrow (g, 0 - g) = (g, -g) \rightarrow (g + (-g), -g) = (0, -g)$$

- $(g, 0)$ is connected to $(0, g)$ because

$$(g, 0) \rightarrow (g, g + 0) = (g, g) \rightarrow (g - g, g) = (0, g)$$

- $(g, 0)$ is connected to $(-g, 0)$ because $(g, 0)$ is connected to $(0, -g)$ (using the first property), which is connected to $(-g, 0)$ (using the second property).

Therefore, $(g, 0)$, $(0, g)$, $(-g, 0)$ and $(0, -g)$ are all connected to each other.

So if $\gcd(a, b) = \gcd(x, y)$, (x, y) is connected to (a, b) because:

1. (a, b) is connected to one of $(g, 0)$, $(0, g)$, $(-g, 0)$, $(0, -g)$,
2. (x, y) is connected to one of $(g, 0)$, $(0, g)$, $(-g, 0)$, $(0, -g)$,
3. $(g, 0)$, $(0, g)$, $(-g, 0)$ and $(0, -g)$ are all connected to each other.

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