

Avoidance in permutations

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1 Introduction

In this paper we will investigate pattern avoidance in finite sequences of natural numbers. Let us start by consider the ordered sequences 123 and 1324. We can describe the relationships between elements of the sequence 123 as follows: the first element in the sequence is the smallest element of the sequence, the second element of the sequence is the second smallest element of the sequence, and the third element of the sequence is the largest element of the sequence. Now notice that there is an ordered subsequence of 1324 that follows the same general pattern, namely 124. The relationships between elements of the sequence 124 is the same as the relationships we described for 123. In this situation we say that the sequence 1324 *does not avoid* 123. If we examine the sequence 1432 we see that there are no ordered subsequences of 1432 that have the same relations between elements as 123. We say that 1432 *avoids* 123.

With an example of a four element sequence that avoids 123 and a four element sequence that does not avoid 123, it is natural to ask the question, how many four element sequences avoid 123? As we will see below, the answer to this question is simply 5, but this leads to a more general question, how many n -element sequences avoid 123? If we define $s_n(123)$ to be the number of n element sequences that avoid 123, then the question above is equivalent to identifying the sequence $(s_n(123))_n$. In this paper we consider specific cases of a very general avoidance problem, describing the sequence $(s_n(\sigma))_n$ where σ is any permutation of the elements of the set $\{1, 2, \dots, k\} \subset \mathbb{N}$ for some k .

In section 3 we will consider sequences $s_n(\pi)$ for π a permutation on the set $\{1, 2, 3\}$, and prove that the sequence $s_n(\pi)$ for all such π is in fact the sequence of Catalan numbers. In section 5 we will consider sequences $s_n(\pi)$ for π a permutation of $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$. In section 6 we consider a variation of the avoidance problem that considers the problem of avoiding sequences in a subset T_n of the permutations of n elements. Before proceeding, we will formally introduce the notation that will be used throughout this paper.

1.1 Notation

Definition 1. The set S_n is the collection of permutations of the set $\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$.

Example 1. $S_3 = \{123, 132, 213, 231, 312, 321\}$.

Remark 1. The notation used to describe the elements of S_n above is ‘one-line’ notation. Thus far we have ignored the fact that S_n has a group structure. When discussing this group structure it is convenient to use a different notation known as ‘cycle’ notation. This alternative notation will be used in Section 5 and an introduction to cycle notation can be found in Appendix [1].

Definition 2. Two finite permutations a_1, \dots, a_k and b_1, \dots, b_k in S_k have the same relative order if the i^{th} largest entry of each unordered set $\{a_1, \dots, a_k\}$ and $\{b_1, \dots, b_k\}$ appears in the same position in $a_1 \dots a_k$ and $b_1 \dots b_k$ for each $1 \leq i \leq k$.

Remark 2. An equivalent definition is that two permutations in S_k have the same relative order if the elements in each position of the sequence satisfy the same set of inequalities.

Definition 3. A permutation $a_1 a_2 \dots a_n$ avoids a permutation $b_1 \dots b_k$ with $n \geq k$ if no subsequence $a_{i_1} a_{i_2} \dots a_{i_k}$ of $a_1 a_2 \dots a_n$ has its terms in the same relative order as $b_1 \dots b_k$.

Definition 4. A permutation $\sigma \in S_n$ avoids a permutation $\pi \in S_k$ if the sequence of numbers for the one-line notation for σ avoids the sequence of numbers for the one-line notation for π .

Definition 5. For a permutation $\pi \in S_k$, $s_n(\pi)$ represents the number of permutations in S_n that avoid π .

2 Flipping and Reversing

2.1 Generating Trees

Before continuing we introduce generating trees, a tool we can use to study pattern avoidance. The generating tree for the sequence $s_n(\pi)$ is the infinite tree whose vertices are elements of S_n that avoid π . To construct the tree, we define the children of an arbitrary node. Let $\omega \in S_k$ be a node of the generating tree of $s_n(\pi)$. Then the children of ω are elements of S_{k+1} that avoid π and that can be obtained by inserting the integer $k + 1$ between integers in ω . Figure 1 is an example of the generating tree of $s_n(312)$.

2.2 Flipping

Another notion that we will use in this paper is the concept of ‘flipping’. We define the *flip* of a sequence a as the sequence b with the same elements as a , but with the largest element swapped with the smallest element, the second largest element swapped with the second smallest element, etc. For example, the flip of 1324 is 4231. We will discuss the flip as it becomes useful.

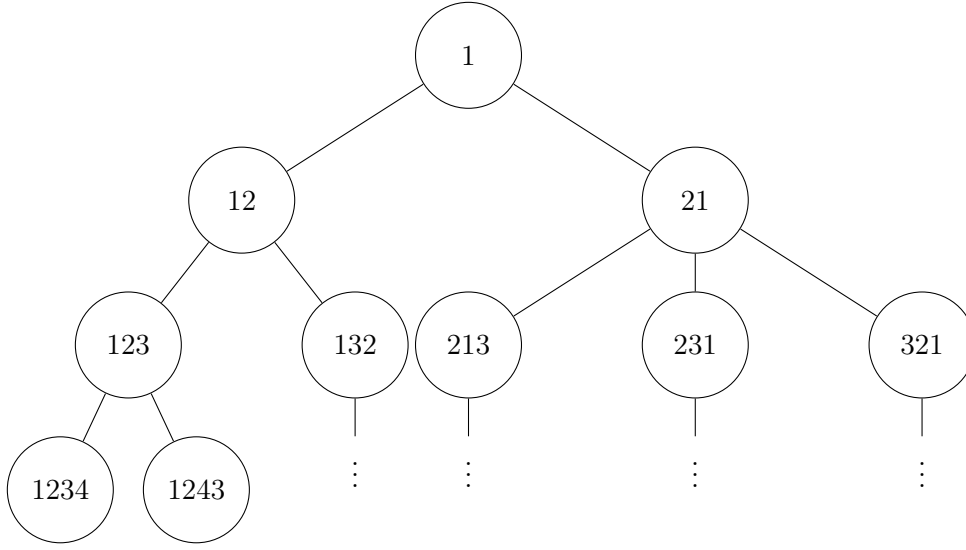


Figure 1: Generating tree of the sequence $s_n(312)$

2.3 Reversing

3 Terms in the sequence $s_n(312)$

We claim that the sequence of numbers $s_n(312)$ is in fact the sequence of Catalan numbers. We state this result formally as the following theorem,

Theorem 6. *The total number of permutations of $\{1, 2, 3, \dots, n\}$ that avoid the order 312 as a subsequence is C_n where C_n is the n^{th} Catalan number.*

Before proving the theorem, we state and prove the following lemma, that will be used in our proof of the theorem.

Lemma 7. *All permutations of $\{1, 2, \dots, k, k+1\}$ ending in i that avoid the order 312 as a sub-sequence must be of the form,*

$$\pi_1 \pi_2 i$$

where π_1 is a permutation of $\{1, 2, \dots, (i-1)\}$ that avoids the order 312 as a sub-sequence and π_2 is a permutation of $\{(i+1), \dots, (k+1)\}$ that avoids the order 312 as a sub-sequence.

Proof. It is clear that any subsequences of the permutation $\pi = \pi_1 \pi_2 i$ must avoid 312 if the entire permutation π is to avoid 312 as well; this implies that the permutations π_1 and π_2 must avoid 312 as well.

We proceed with a proof by contradiction.

Before proceeding, we define the sets A and B to be $\{1, 2, \dots, (i - 1)\}$ and $\{(i + 1), (i + 2), \dots, (k + 1)\}$ respectively. For the sake of contradiction, let us assume that there exists some permutation π of $\{1, 2, \dots, k, k + 1\}$ that ends with value i such that some integer $x < i$ (that is, $x \in A$) is to the right of some integer $y > i$ ($y \in B$). Clearly, this permutation is not of the form described above. It is also easy to see that π does *not* avoid the order 312 since the triple (y, x, i) satisfies the condition $y > x > i$ and is in the order 312.

From this we conclude that all $x < i$ must be to the left of all $y > i$. This information coupled with the fact that we are only considering permutations that end with i complete the claim that only permutations of the form described above can avoid 312. \square

With this lemma proven, we move on to the proof of our theorem.

Proof. The inductive hypothesis holds for our base case of $\{1\}$, since the only permutation of $\{1\}$ trivially avoids 312.

Now, we need to prove the inductive case. Let us first assume that for all i from 1 to k , the number of permutations of $\{1, 2, \dots, i\}$ that avoid the order 312 as a subsequence is C_i .

Now, we want to prove the inductive hypothesis for $\{1, 2, \dots, k, k + 1\}$ as well, that is the number of permutations of $\{1, 2, \dots, k, k + 1\}$ that avoid the order 312 as a subsequence is C_{k+1} .

We count the number of permutations of $\{1, 2, \dots, k, k + 1\}$ that avoid 312 by enumerating through all possible values of the last term of a valid permutation. If the last term of the permutation is i (where $i \in \{1, 2, \dots, k, k + 1\}$), then let us define the subsets A and B of the set $\{1, 2, \dots, k + 1\} \setminus \{i\}$ as the set of integers less than i and the set of integers greater than i respectively. It is clear from the definition of A and B that A and B are disjoint from each other.

Now, from the above lemma, we know that all permutations of $\{1, 2, \dots, k, k + 1\}$ ending in i that avoid 312 must be of the form,

$$\pi = \pi_1 \pi_2 i$$

where π_1 is a permutation of A that avoids the order 312 as a sub-sequence and π_2 is a permutation of B that avoids the order 312 as a sub-sequence. It is clear that the above permutation contains all integers between 1 and $k + 1$, from the definitions of the subsets A and B , which implies that $\pi_1 \pi_2 i$ is permutation of the set $\{1, 2, \dots, k, k + 1\}$.

Now, the total number of permutations π is,

$$n_{\pi_1} \cdot n_{\pi_2} = C_{i-1} \cdot C_{k-i+1}$$

since the total number of valid permutations π_1 is simply going to be C_{i-1} (total number of valid permutations of length $i - 1$ that avoid the order 312 as a sub-sequence is C_{i-1} ; similarly $n_{\pi_2} = C_{k-i+1}$)

Now, summing over all possible values of i , we see that the total number of permutations of $\{1, 2, \dots, k+1\}$ that avoid 312 is equal to,

$$\sum_{i=1}^{k+1} C_{i-1} \cdot C_{k-i+1} = \sum_{i=0}^k C_i \cdot C_{k-i}$$

which is in fact C_{k+1} , and we are done. □

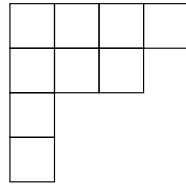
It is easy to see that the above proof can be modified slightly to prove that the sequences $s_n(132)$, $s_n(213)$ and $s_n(231)$ are in fact the sequence of catalan numbers as well. In fact, we claim that if σ and π are both permutations in S_k for some arbitrary k , then if $\sigma = \text{flip}(\pi)$, $s_n(\pi) = s_n(\sigma)$. This is easy to see since if a is a permutation that avoids σ , then $\text{flip}(a)$ is a permutation that avoids π – since this can be done both ways, it is bijective and we can conclude that the cardinalities of the two sets are equal, or $s_n(\sigma) = s_n(\pi)$.

4 Terms in the sequence $s_n(321)$

Unfortunately, there is no clear way to reformulate Lemma 7 for the case of avoiding the permutation 321 or 123. As a consequence, the proof in the previous section simply does not hold. Fortunately, however, we still have a closed form expression for $s_n(321)$ (recall that $s_n(321) = s_n(123)$ by our flipping principle). Surprisingly, in fact, the sequence remains the same: $s_n(321) = C_n$, the n^{th} Catalan number. In order to prove this result, however, we will need the machinery of Young tableaux. What follows is a brief exposition of the key results, adapted from Stanley's *Algebraic Combinatorics*.

Definition 8. A Young diagram of a partition $\lambda = \{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_n\}$ of the integer $\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i$ is a left-justified array of squares, with λ_i squares in the i th row.

Example 2. The Young diagram of $(4, 3, 1, 1)$ looks like:



Definition 9. A standard Young tableau (or SYT) consists of the Young diagram D of some partition λ of an integer n , together with the numbers $1, 2, \dots, n$ inserted into the squares of D , so that each number appears exactly once, and every row and column is increasing. We call λ the shape of the SYT.

Example 3. There are five SYT of the shape $(2, 2, 1)$. They are given by

1	2			
3	4			
5				

1	2			
3	5			
4				

1	3			
2	4			
5				

1	3			
2	5			
4				

1	4			
2	5			
3				

Definition 10. Let u be a square of the Young diagram of the partition λ . Then the hook $H(u)$ is the set of all squares directly to the right of u or directly below u , including u itself. The size of $H(u)$ is called the hook length of u , and is denoted $h(u)$.

Example 4. In the Young diagram of the partition $(4, 2, 2)$ below, each square u contains its hook length $h(u)$.

6	5	2	1
3	2		
2	1		

Theorem 11. Let λ be a partition of n . Then f^λ , the number of SYT of shape λ , is given by

$$f^\lambda = \frac{n!}{\prod_{u \in \lambda} h(u)},$$

where the notation $u \in \lambda$ means that u ranges over all squares of the Young diagram of λ .

The theorem above is called the *hook-length formula*.

Example 5. The diagram above for the hook lengths of $\lambda = (4, 2, 2)$ tells us that the number of SYT of shape λ is given by

$$\frac{8!}{6 \cdot 5 \cdot 2 \cdot 1 \cdot 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 1} = 56.$$

It is an easy application of the hook-length formula to prove the following theorem:

Theorem 12. The number of SYT of shape (n, n) is given by C_n , the n^{th} Catalan number.

We need only one more result before we are ready to prove our central result.

Theorem 13. There exists an algorithm (called the RSK algorithm) which defines a bijection between the set of permutations in $S(n)$ avoiding a decreasing subsequence of length 3 and the set of pairs of size- n SYT of the same shape and at most two rows.

Using all this machinery and all these results, we are finally able to prove the closed-form expression for $s_n(321)$.

Theorem 14. *The total number of permutations of $\{1, 2, 3, \dots, n\}$ that avoid the order 321 as a subsequence is C_n , where C_n is the n^{th} Catalan number.*

Proof. By the first part of Theorem 12, there are $s_n(321)$ elements in the set A of pairs of size- n SYT of the same shape and at most two rows. By Theorem 11, the set B_n of SYT of shape (n, n) has its size given by C_n . We will construct a bijection between the sets A_n and B_n : because $|A_n| = s_n(321)$ and $|B_n| = C_n$, it will therefore follow that $s_n(321) = C_n$, as desired.

Given any pair of size n Young tableaux of the same shape and at most two parts, take the second tableau and invert its numbers: that is, send i to $2n + 1 - i$ for all i . Now rotate the Young tableau and ‘fit’ it into the first tableau. We demonstrate this process for a pair of Young tableaux with $n = 6$: we begin with

1	2	3	4			1	3	4	5
5	6					2	6		

Inverting the numbers of the second tableau gives us

1	2	3	4			12	10	9	8
5	6					11	7		

Finally, rotating the second Young tableau and fitting it into the first gives us

1	2	3	4	7	11
5	6	8	9	10	12

a valid Young tableau of shape $(6, 6)$.

Beginning with a pair of size n Young tableaux of shape λ and at most two parts, it is easy to see that this process always yields a valid Young tableau of shape (n, n) . Indeed, we can also define the inverse: given any Young tableau for the partition (n, n) , we can find the shape formed by all numbers greater than n : split it off from the original tableau, rotate it, and invert the numbers to get a pair of size n Young tableau of the same shape and at most two parts. These processes can be easily checked to be inverses: hence the two sets are of the same size, and the proof follows. \square

5 Conjectures on $s_n(\pi)$ for $\pi \in S_4$

In this section we will present our findings and conjectures about sequences $s_n(\pi)$ for $\pi \in S_4$. We computed values up to s_{10} . It appears that there are three sequences that appear, and we have sorted the permutations according to which sequence they produce and paired them with their flips.

We define the following sequences based on the first 8 terms:

$$A := 1, 2, 6, 23, 103, 512, 2740, 15485, 91245 \dots$$

$$B := 1, 2, 6, 23, 103, 513, 2761, 15767, 94359 \dots$$

$$C := 1, 2, 6, 23, 103, 513, 2762, 15793, 94776 \dots$$

The table below lists the elements of S_4 generate sequences A, B, C for the first 8 terms.

B	A	C
1234, 4321	4132, 1423	4231, 1324
1243, 4312	4213, 1342	
1432, 4123	2431, 3124	
2134, 3421	2413, 3142	
2143, 3412	2314, 3241	
2341, 3214		

There is no guarantee that these sequences will not diverge and produce more than three distinct sequences, however for now we hypothesize that A, B , and C are the only sequences that arise for $s_n(\pi)$ with $\pi \in S_4$. Assuming this hypothesis, if we write each length four permutation in cycle notation, a pattern begins to emerge.

B	A	C
(1),(14)(23)	(243),(142)	(23),(14)
(34),(1423)	(234),(143)	
(24),(1432)	(124),(132)	
(12),(1324)	(123),(134)	
(12)(34),(13)(24)	(1243),(1342)	
(1234),(13)		

So we conjecture that sequence A is characterized by elements of S_4 that are three cycles or four cycles when written in cycle notation. Sequence B seems to be characterized by either a pair of disjoint two cycles paired with a flip that is a 2-cycle, or a single 4-cycle paired with a flip that is a 2-cycle. Sequence C appears to be characterized by a 2-cycle paired with a 2-cycle as a flip.

6 Avoidance of permutations of T_n

We now impose further restrictions on the set of permutations S_n . This new set of permutations, T_n is defined follows.

Definition 15. For even n , T_n is defined as the set of all permutations $\sigma \in S_n$ for which $1, 3, 5, \dots, 2n - 1$ appear in increasing order, and $2i$ always appears to the right of $2i - 1$.

Since T_n is only defined for even n , henceforth we shall refer to T_n as T_{2m} where m is any integer greater than or equal to 0.

Given the above definition of T_{2m} , we prove the following result about the cardinality of T_{2m} .

Theorem 16. $|T_{2m}| = 1 \cdot 3 \cdot 5 \cdot \dots \cdot (2m - 1)$

Proof. Observe that since $1, 3, 5, \dots, 2m - 1$ must appear in increasing order in T_{2m} , our problem is now reduced to determining the relative order of $2, 4, 6, \dots, 2m$ with respect to each other, as well as with respect to $1, 3, 5, \dots, 2m - 1$.

Let us first try to insert $2m$ into the sequence $1, 3, 5, \dots, 2m - 1$. Clearly, the way T_{2m} is defined, $2m$ can be inserted into only 1 slot, the one following $2m - 1$. (Here we define a slot as a gap between two existing elements of the sequence, or the gap that follows the last element of the sequence or the gap that precedes the first element of the sequence)

Now, let us try to insert $(2m - 2)$ into the sequence. $(2m - 2)$ can be inserted into 3 slots in the sequence – the one between $2m - 3$ and $2m - 1$, the one between $2m - 1$ and $2m$ or the one following $2m$.

Now, if we try to insert $(2m - 4)$ into this incompletely formed sequence, we will see that there are 5 possible locations into which this number can be inserted. Continuing this for all even numbers upto 2, we observe that the total number of ways such a sequence can be created is equal to $1 \cdot 3 \cdot 5 \cdot \dots \cdot (2m - 1)$, as desired. \square

Studying avoidance of permutations in T_n seems an interesting exercise. In the following section, we consider the sequence of numbers $t_n(\pi)$, defined as the number of permutations in T_n that avoid the permutation π . In particular, we consider permutations $\pi \in S_3$.

Before stating our conjectures, we present the computed sequences. Note that since the sequence T_n is defined only for even n , we only present the even terms of the sequence t_n .

$$\begin{aligned} t_n(123) &= 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, \dots \\ t_n(132) &= 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, \dots \\ t_n(213) &= 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, \dots \\ t_n(231) &= 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, \dots \\ t_n(312) &= 1, 3, 12, 55, 273, \dots \\ t_n(321) &= 1, 3, 12, 55, 273, \dots \end{aligned}$$

It is easy to see why $t_n(123)$ and $t_n(132)$ behave the way they do – since all odd numbers in T_n are increasing, it is impossible to have a permutation in T_n that avoids 123 and the permutation consisting of all increasing integers is the only permutation of T_n that avoids 132.

More interesting is the equivalences between 213 and 231, and 312 and 321. We will prove the equivalence between 312 and 321 below, but before doing so, we first state and prove the following lemmas which will be useful in our proof.

Lemma 17. *If a and b are two elements that appear in a permutation in T_n such that a is to the left of b , then if $a > b$, b must be even.*

Proof. For the sake of contradiction, let us assume that b is odd. Then there exist two possibilities that need to be considered – one, that a is odd, and two, that a is even.

- **Case 1:** a is odd.

Note that all permutations in T_n must have odd elements monotonically increasing. So if a appears to the left of b , and both a and b are odd, then a must be less than b – a contradiction. Hence, we conclude that a can't be odd.

- **Case 2:** a is even.

For all permutations σ in T_n , every even element j must be to the right of all odd elements less than j . From this, we conclude that since a is even, it must be to the right of all odd numbers less than it. But b is an odd number less than a – we conclude that a can't be even either.

Since a can't be odd or even if b is odd, we conclude that b must be even, as desired. \square

Lemma 18. *If x, y, z is a three-element subsequence of a permutation π in T_n such that $x > y > z$ or $x > z > y$, then swapping y and z in the permutation π yields a permutation π' that also belongs to T_n .*

Proof. From Lemma 17 we see that both y and z must be even. Then there exist two cases that need to be covered.

- **Case 1:** x is odd.

If x is odd, then it is clear that the permutation π' obtained from swapping y and z is still valid, since both y and z are to the right of the odd numbers $y - 1$ and $z - 1$ (since $y - 1$ and $z - 1$ are themselves to the left of x since they are strictly less than x)

- **Case 2:** x is even.

If x is even, then $x - 1$ which is an odd number greater than both $y - 1$ and $z - 1$, must be to the left of x . Since $y - 1$ and $z - 1$ are already to the left of $x - 1$, we conclude that swapping y and z still ensures that y and z are both to the right of $y - 1$ and $z - 1$.

Hence, we see that regardless of whether x is even or odd, swapping y and z in a permutation $\pi \in T_n$ if $x > y > z$ or $x > z > y$ yields a permutation π' that also belongs to T_n . \square

Given these lemmas, we now present a proof for $t_n(312) = t_n(321)$.

Theorem 19. $t_n(312) = t_n(321)$

Proof. First observe from Lemma 17 that if x, y, z is a subsequence of three elements of a permutation in T_n in the relative order 312 or 321, then both y and z must be even.

Before proving that there exists a bijective mapping between all permutations in T_n that avoid 312 (call this set A) and all permutations in T_n that avoid 321 (call this set B), we establish a chain of transformation moves that can be used to transform an element $a \in A$ to an element $b \in B$.

Consider a permutation π in T_n that avoids 312. For each permutation $\pi \in T_n$ that avoids 312, we want to show that there exists a sequence of transformation moves that transforms π to a unique permutation π' that avoids 321.

If the original permutation π avoids 321 already, then clearly $\pi' = \pi$ avoids 321.

Now if π does not avoid 321, there must exist some sub-sequence x, y, z in π in the relative ordering 321. From Lemma 18, we see that swapping y and z in the permutation π yields another valid permutation π_1 in T_n – note that the permutation produced after this swap has x, y, z in the relative ordering 312 instead of 321. Note that π_1 may still have sub-sequences in the relative ordering 321, so we may have to perform the above swapping operation again to get some permutation $\pi_2 \in T_n$ such that a sub-sequence x_1, y_1, z_1 in π_1 that has a relative ordering 321 is in the relative ordering 312 in π_2 . Continuing this process produces the following chain of permutations,

$$\pi \rightarrow \pi_1 \rightarrow \pi_2 \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow \pi_k$$

Where the last permutation in the chain π_k does not have a single three-element sub-sequence in the relative ordering 321, that is $\pi' = \pi_k$ is a permutation in T_n that avoids 321.

This process is completely invertible, since we can take a permutation π' in T_n that avoids 321, and traverse through the above chain in reverse order to obtain a permutation that avoids 312.

We now prove that there exists a bijection between the sets A and B .

Let a be an arbitrary permutation in A . Clearly, by the definition of A , a must avoid 312. Now, we claim that for every element i in the permutation a , all even numbers in a to the right of i and less than i must be in decreasing order; if this were not the case, then we would have a subsequence in the relative ordering 312, which would be a contradiction. It is easy to see that we can make a corresponding claim about permutation b , that is for every element i in the permutation a , all even numbers in a to the right of i and less than i must be in increasing order.

The above two claims shows there's actually an easy way to transform an arbitrary permutation $a \in A$ to a $b \in B$, and similarly, to transform an arbitrary permutation $b \in B$ to a $a \in A$ – to obtain a permutation in B from a permutation $a \in A$, for every element i in the permutation a , all even elements in a to the right of i less than i should be reversed (that is reordered to in increasing order); similarly to obtain a permutation in A from a permutation $b \in B$, for every element i in the permutation b , all even elements in b to the right of i , less than i should be reversed (that is reordered to in decreasing order). Since the mapping from A to B is clearly reversible, and hence invertible, we conclude that the mapping we just established between A and B is bijective.

Since there exists a bijective mapping between permutations in T_n that avoid 312 and permutations in T_n that avoid 321, we can conclude that $t_n(312) = t_n(321)$. \square

Unfortunately, it turns out that proving the equivalence between 231 and 213 is not as straightforward as above, however we do prove that both the sequences $(t_n(231))$ and $(t_n(213))$ are equal to the sequence $1, 2, 4, 8, \dots$ below.

Theorem 20. $t_n(231) = 1, 2, 4, 8, \dots$

Proof. Proving the above theorem is equivalent to proving that the m^{th} term of $t_n(231)$ is equal to 2^{m-1} , or that the number of permutations in T_{2m} that avoid 231 is equal to 2^{m-1} .

Consider a permutation σ in T_{2m} that avoids 231. Consider an arbitrary even element $2i$ in σ . For this element $2i$, define A to be the set of numbers greater than $2i$ and to the left of $2i$ in the permutation σ . First off, note that the set A cannot contain any even numbers, because if it did, then the permutation σ would contain a three-element sub-sequence in the relative ordering 231 – if a is an even number in the set A , then $(a-1, a, 2i)$ would be a three-element sub-sequence of σ in the relative ordering 231 (Note that $a-1$ must be to the left of a in the permutation σ because of the way the set T_{2m} was constructed).

Furthermore, the set A cannot contain any odd elements greater than $2i+1$, because if it did, then again the permutation σ would contain a three-element subsequence in the relative ordering 231 – if $a > 2i+1$ is an odd number in A , then $(2i+1, a, 2i)$ is a three-element sub-sequence of σ in the relative ordering 231. Therefore, we conclude that the set A either only contains the element $2i+1$, or is empty.

From this we can conclude that the element $2i$ can be inserted into exactly two valid positions in a permutation of length $2m$ – at index $2i$ and at index $2i+1$. It follows from the above result that when element $2i$ is at index $2i$, element $2i+1$ is at index $2i+1$ in the permutation, and when element $2i$ is at index $2i+1$, element $2i+1$ is at index $2i$. Note that the element 1 must always be the first element in the permutation, and the element $2m$ must always be the last element.

Combining all these facts together, we see that the number of permutations σ in T_n that avoid 231 must be equal to $2^{(2m-2)/2} = 2^{m-1}$, as desired. \square

Theorem 21. $t_n(213) = 1, 2, 4, 8, \dots$

Proof. As before, proving the above theorem is equivalent to proving that the m^{th} term of $t_n(213)$ is equal to 2^{m-1} , or that the number of permutations in T_{2m} that avoid 213 is equal to 2^{m-1} .

First, let us define A_m as the set of all permutations in T_{2m} that avoid 213. It is easy to see that the m^{th} term of $t_n(213)$ is $|A_m|$.

We now claim that for every permutation σ in A_m , the numbers $2m-1$ and $2m$ must

be consecutive in the permutation σ . We argue that this must be true by contradiction. If this were not the case, then it is easy to see that the permutation σ would have a sub-sequence in the relative ordering 213 – let j be an element that's between $2m - 1$ and $2m$ in σ . Clearly, $j < 2m - 1 < 2m$ (since every element in σ other than $2m$ is less than $2m - 1$), which means $(2m - 1, j, 2m)$ are in the relative ordering 213. We conclude that $2m - 1$ and $2m$ must be consecutive.

Furthermore, we see that we can construct A_m from A_{m-1} by inserting the consecutive elements $2m - 1, 2m$ into a permutation σ' in A_{m-1} . Furthermore, we claim that we get a valid permutation σ in A_m from σ' only if we insert the consecutive elements $2m - 1, 2m$ right after either $2m - 3$ or $2m - 2$ in σ' (which themselves are consecutive in σ' from the above claim).

First, note that $2m - 1, 2m$ must be inserted to the right of both $2m - 3$ and $2m - 2$, because of the way T_{2m} is defined. Furthermore, if we insert $2m - 1, 2m$ right after some a in σ not equal to $2m - 3$ and $2m - 2$, then we see that the produced permutation σ has a three-element sub-sequence in the relative ordering 213 – $(2m - 2, a, 2m - 1)$. Hence we conclude that $2m - 1, 2m$ must be inserted to the right of either $2m - 3$ or $2m - 2$; since we can do this for every permutation σ' in A_{m-1} , we conclude that $|A_m| = 2|A_{m-1}|$.

Given that $|A_1|$ is trivially equal to 1, we conclude that $|A_m|$, or the m^{th} term of $t_n(213)$ is indeed equal to 2^{m-1} , as desired. \square

Note that even though we proved that the sequences $t_n(231)$ and $t_n(213)$ are both equivalent, the methods used to prove that each sequence is equal to the sequence $1, 2, 4, 8, \dots$ are vastly different.