

ON THE UNEXPECTED EXAMINATION

For a statement of the problem of the Unexpected Examination I refer the reader to the numerous articles on this topic which have appeared in this Journal (e.g. January 1966). These articles also give the details of the proof by which the students deduce successively that the examination cannot take place on Saturday or Friday or . . . or Monday and hence not at all. However there still remains the problem, at least for the students, of the master setting the examination, say on Wednesday, and it being unexpected. This note is intended to outline the practical steps the students must take to prevent such an examination being unexpected.

The steps are as follows. Before Monday the students should construct the above proof up to and including the line, 'The examination must be on Monday'. With this deduction if the examination is set on Monday it is expected.

If the master does not set the examination on Monday the students now take the following steps. Before Tuesday they should take the above proof up to and including the line 'The examination must be on Tuesday'. This proof will contain the sentence 'Suppose the examination has not been held before Tuesday'. The word 'Suppose' should be deleted. The students now have a proof that 'The examination must be on Tuesday'. This will prevent an examination on Tuesday being unexpected.

The process is repeated for each day of the week, with the result that if the examination is held it will be entirely expected.

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