Proof: We first prove the "if" part of the theorem. We suppose that $R^n \subseteq R$ for $n = 1, 2, 3, \ldots$. In particular, $R^2 \subseteq R$. To see that this implies R is transitive, note that if $(a, b) \in R$ and $(b, c) \in R$, then by the definition of composition, $(a, c) \in R^2$. Because $R^2 \subseteq R$, this means that $(a, c) \in R$. Hence, R is transitive.

We will use mathematical induction to prove the only if part of the theorem. Note that this part of the theorem is trivially true for $n = 1$.

Assume that $R^n \subseteq R$, where n is a positive integer. This is the inductive hypothesis. To complete the inductive step we must show that this implies that R^{n+1} is also a subset of R. To show this, assume that $(a, b) \in R^{n+1}$. Then, because $R^{n+1} = R^n \circ R$, there is an element x with $x \in A$ such that $(a, x) \in R$ and $(x, b) \in R^n$. The inductive hypothesis, namely, that $R^n \subseteq R$, implies that $(x, b) \in R$. Furthermore, because R is transitive, and $(a, x) \in R$ and $(x, b) \in R$, it follows that $(a, b) \in R$. This shows that $R^{n+1} \subseteq R$, completing the proof. ◁

Exercises

1. List the ordered pairs in the relation R from $A = \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4\}$ to $B = \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$, where $(a, b) \in R$ if and only if

a) $a = b$. **b)** $a + b = 4$.
c) $a > b$. **d)** $a \mid b$.
e) $\gcd(a, b) = 1$. **f)** $\operatorname{lcm}(a, b) = 2$.

2. a) List all the ordered pairs in the relation $R = \{(a, b) \mid a \text{ divides } b\}$ on the set $\{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6\}$.
b) Display this relation graphically, as was done in Example 4.
c) Display this relation in tabular form, as was done in Example 4.

3. For each of these relations on the set $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$, decide whether it is reflexive, whether it is symmetric, whether it is antisymmetric, and whether it is transitive.

a) $\{(2, 2), (2, 3), (2, 4), (3, 2), (3, 3), (3, 4)\}$
b) $\{(1, 1), (1, 2), (2, 1), (2, 2), (3, 3), (4, 4)\}$
c) $\{(2, 4), (4, 2)\}$
d) $\{(1, 2), (2, 3), (3, 4)\}$
e) $\{(1, 1), (2, 2), (3, 3), (4, 4)\}$
f) $\{(1, 3), (1, 4), (2, 3), (2, 4), (3, 1), (3, 4)\}$

4. Determine whether the relation R on the set of all people is reflexive, symmetric, antisymmetric, and/or transitive, where $(a, b) \in R$ if and only if

a) a is taller than b.
b) a and b were born on the same day.
c) a has the same first name as b.
d) a and b have a common grandparent.

5. Determine whether the relation R on the set of all Web pages is reflexive, symmetric, antisymmetric, and/or transitive, where $(a, b) \in R$ if and only if

a) everyone who has visited Web page a has also visited Web page b.
b) there are no common links found on both Web page a and Web page b.
c) there is at least one common link on Web page a and Web page b.
d) there is a Web page that includes links to both Web page a and Web page b.

6. Determine whether the relation R on the set of all real numbers is reflexive, symmetric, antisymmetric, and/or transitive, where $(x, y) \in R$ if and only if

a) $x + y = 0$. **b)** $x = \pm y$.
c) $x - y$ is a rational number.
d) $x = 2y$. **e)** $xy \geq 0$.
f) $xy = 0$. **g)** $x = 1$.
h) $x = 1$ or $y = 1$.

7. Determine whether the relation R on the set of all integers is reflexive, symmetric, antisymmetric, and/or transitive, where $(x, y) \in R$ if and only if

a) $x \neq y$. **b)** $xy \geq 1$.
c) $x = y + 1$ or $x = y - 1$.
d) $x \equiv y \pmod 7$. **e)** x is a multiple of y.
f) x and y are both negative or both nonnegative.
g) $x = y^2$. **h)** $x \geq y^2$.

8. Show that the relation $R = \emptyset$ on a nonempty set S is symmetric and transitive, but not reflexive.

9. Show that the relation $R = \emptyset$ on the empty set $S = \emptyset$ is reflexive, symmetric, and transitive.

10. Give an example of a relation on a set that is
a) both symmetric and antisymmetric.
b) neither symmetric nor antisymmetric.

A relation R on the set A is **irreflexive** if for every $a \in A$, $(a, a) \notin R$. That is, R is irreflexive if no element in A is related to itself.

11. Which relations in Exercise 3 are irreflexive?

12. Which relations in Exercise 4 are irreflexive?

13. Which relations in Exercise 5 are irreflexive?

14. Which relations in Exercise 6 are irreflexive?

15. Can a relation on a set be neither reflexive nor irreflexive?

16. Use quantifiers to express what it means for a relation to be irreflexive.

17. Give an example of an irreflexive relation on the set of all people.

A relation R is called **asymmetric** if $(a, b) \in R$ implies that $(b, a) \notin R$. Exercises 18–24 explore the notion of an asymmetric relation. Exercise 22 focuses on the difference between asymmetry and antisymmetry.

18. Which relations in Exercise 3 are asymmetric?

19. Which relations in Exercise 4 are asymmetric?

20. Which relations in Exercise 5 are asymmetric?

21. Which relations in Exercise 6 are asymmetric?

22. Must an asymmetric relation also be antisymmetric? Must an antisymmetric relation be asymmetric? Give reasons for your answers.

23. Use quantifiers to express what it means for a relation to be asymmetric.

24. Give an example of an asymmetric relation on the set of all people.

25. How many different relations are there from a set with m elements to a set with n elements?

☞ Let R be a relation from a set A to a set B. The **inverse relation** from B to A, denoted by R^{-1}, is the set of ordered pairs $\{(b, a) \mid (a, b) \in R\}$. The **complementary relation** $\overline{R}$ is the set of ordered pairs $\{(a, b) \mid (a, b) \notin R\}$.

26. Let R be the relation $R = \{(a, b) \mid a < b\}$ on the set of integers. Find

a) R^{-1}. **b)** $\overline{R}$.

27. Let R be the relation $R = \{(a, b) \mid a \text{ divides } b\}$ on the set of positive integers. Find

a) R^{-1}. **b)** $\overline{R}$.

28. Let R be the relation on the set of all states in the United States consisting of pairs (a, b) where state a borders state b. Find

a) R^{-1}. **b)** $\overline{R}$.

29. Suppose that the function f from A to B is a one-to-one correspondence. Let R be the relation that equals the graph of f. That is, $R = \{(a, f(a)) \mid a \in A\}$. What is the inverse relation R^{-1}?

30. Let $R_1 = \{(1, 2), (2, 3), (3, 4)\}$ and $R_2 = \{(1, 1), (1, 2), (2, 1), (2, 2), (2, 3), (3, 1), (3, 2), (3, 3), (3, 4)\}$ be relations from $\{1, 2, 3\}$ to $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$. Find

a) $R_1 \cup R_2$. **b)** $R_1 \cap R_2$.
c) $R_1 - R_2$. **d)** $R_2 - R_1$.

31. Let A be the set of students at your school and B the set of books in the school library. Let R_1 and R_2 be the relations consisting of all ordered pairs (a, b), where student a is required to read book b in a course, and where student a has read book b, respectively. Describe the ordered pairs in each of these relations.

a) $R_1 \cup R_2$ **b)** $R_1 \cap R_2$
c) $R_1 \oplus R_2$ **d)** $R_1 - R_2$
e) $R_2 - R_1$

32. Let R be the relation $\{(1, 2), (1, 3), (2, 3), (2, 4), (3, 1)\}$, and let S be the relation $\{(2, 1), (3, 1), (3, 2), (4, 2)\}$. Find $S \circ R$.

33. Let R be the relation on the set of people consisting of pairs (a, b), where a is a parent of b. Let S be the relation on the set of people consisting of pairs (a, b), where a and b are siblings (brothers or sisters). What are $S \circ R$ and $R \circ S$?

Exercises 34–37 deal with these relations on the set of real numbers:

$R_1 = \{(a, b) \in \mathbf{R}^2 \mid a > b\}$, the "greater than" relation,
$R_2 = \{(a, b) \in \mathbf{R}^2 \mid a \geq b\}$, the "greater than or equal to" relation,
$R_3 = \{(a, b) \in \mathbf{R}^2 \mid a < b\}$, the "less than" relation,
$R_4 = \{(a, b) \in \mathbf{R}^2 \mid a \leq b\}$, the "less than or equal to" relation,
$R_5 = \{(a, b) \in \mathbf{R}^2 \mid a = b\}$, the "equal to" relation,
$R_6 = \{(a, b) \in \mathbf{R}^2 \mid a \neq b\}$, the "unequal to" relation.

34. Find

a) $R_1 \cup R_3$. **b)** $R_1 \cup R_5$.
c) $R_2 \cap R_4$. **d)** $R_3 \cap R_5$.
e) $R_1 - R_2$. **f)** $R_2 - R_1$.
g) $R_1 \oplus R_3$. **h)** $R_2 \oplus R_4$.

35. Find

a) $R_2 \cup R_4$. **b)** $R_3 \cup R_6$.
c) $R_3 \cap R_6$. **d)** $R_4 \cap R_6$.
e) $R_3 - R_6$. **f)** $R_6 - R_3$.
g) $R_2 \oplus R_6$. **h)** $R_3 \oplus R_5$.

36. Find

a) $R_1 \circ R_1$. **b)** $R_1 \circ R_2$.
c) $R_1 \circ R_3$. **d)** $R_1 \circ R_4$.
e) $R_1 \circ R_5$. **f)** $R_1 \circ R_6$.
g) $R_2 \circ R_3$. **h)** $R_3 \circ R_3$.

37. Find

a) $R_2 \circ R_1$. **b)** $R_2 \circ R_2$.
c) $R_3 \circ R_5$. **d)** $R_4 \circ R_1$.
e) $R_5 \circ R_3$. **f)** $R_3 \circ R_6$.
g) $R_4 \circ R_6$. **h)** $R_6 \circ R_6$.

38. Let R be the parent relation on the set of all people (see Example 21). When is an ordered pair in the relation R^3?

39. Let R be the relation on the set of people with doctorates such that $(a, b) \in R$ if and only if a was the thesis advisor of b. When is an ordered pair (a, b) in R^2? When is an ordered pair (a, b) in R^n, when n is a positive integer? (Assume that every person with a doctorate has a thesis advisor.)

40. Let R_1 and R_2 be the "divides" and "is a multiple of" relations on the set of all positive integers, respectively. That is, $R_1 = \{(a, b) \mid a \text{ divides } b\}$ and $R_2 = \{(a, b) \mid a \text{ is a multiple of } b\}$. Find

a) $R_1 \cup R_2$. **b)** $R_1 \cap R_2$.
c) $R_1 - R_2$. **d)** $R_2 - R_1$.
e) $R_1 \oplus R_2$.

41. Let R_1 and R_2 be the "congruent modulo 3" and the "congruent modulo 4" relations, respectively, on the set of integers. That is, $R_1 = \{(a, b) \mid a \equiv b \pmod 3\}$ and $R_2 = \{(a, b) \mid a \equiv b \pmod 4\}$. Find

a) $R_1 \cup R_2$. **b)** $R_1 \cap R_2$.
c) $R_1 - R_2$. **d)** $R_2 - R_1$.
e) $R_1 \oplus R_2$.

42. List the 16 different relations on the set $\{0, 1\}$.

43. How many of the 16 different relations on $\{0, 1\}$ contain the pair $(0, 1)$?

44. Which of the 16 relations on $\{0, 1\}$, which you listed in Exercise 42, are

a) reflexive? **b)** irreflexive?
c) symmetric? **d)** antisymmetric?
e) asymmetric? **f)** transitive?

45. a) How many relations are there on the set $\{a, b, c, d\}$?
b) How many relations are there on the set $\{a, b, c, d\}$ that contain the pair (a, a)?

46. Let S be a set with n elements and let a and b be distinct elements of S. How many relations R are there on S such that

a) $(a, b) \in R$? **b)** $(a, b) \notin R$?
c) no ordered pair in R has a as its first element?
d) at least one ordered pair in R has a as its first element?
e) no ordered pair in R has a as its first element or b as its second element?
f) at least one ordered pair in R either has a as its first element or has b as its second element?

***47.** How many relations are there on a set with n elements that are

a) symmetric? **b)** antisymmetric?
c) asymmetric? **d)** irreflexive?
e) reflexive and symmetric?
f) neither reflexive nor irreflexive?

***48.** How many transitive relations are there on a set with n elements if

a) $n = 1$? **b)** $n = 2$? **c)** $n = 3$?

49. Find the error in the "proof" of the following "theorem."

"*Theorem*": Let R be a relation on a set A that is symmetric and transitive. Then R is reflexive.

"*Proof*": Let $a \in A$. Take an element $b \in A$ such that $(a, b) \in R$. Because R is symmetric, we also have $(b, a) \in R$. Now using the transitive property, we can conclude that $(a, a) \in R$ because $(a, b) \in R$ and $(b, a) \in R$.

50. Suppose that R and S are reflexive relations on a set A. Prove or disprove each of these statements.

a) $R \cup S$ is reflexive.
b) $R \cap S$ is reflexive.
c) $R \oplus S$ is irreflexive.
d) $R - S$ is irreflexive.
e) $S \circ R$ is reflexive.

51. Show that the relation R on a set A is symmetric if and only if $R = R^{-1}$, where R^{-1} is the inverse relation.

52. Show that the relation R on a set A is antisymmetric if and only if $R \cap R^{-1}$ is a subset of the diagonal relation $\Delta = \{(a, a) \mid a \in A\}$.

53. Show that the relation R on a set A is reflexive if and only if the inverse relation R^{-1} is reflexive.

54. Show that the relation R on a set A is reflexive if and only if the complementary relation $\overline{R}$ is irreflexive.

55. Let R be a relation that is reflexive and transitive. Prove that $R^n = R$ for all positive integers n.

56. Let R be the relation on the set $\{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$ containing the ordered pairs $(1, 1), (1, 2), (1, 3), (2, 3), (2, 4), (3, 1), (3, 4), (3, 5), (4, 2), (4, 5), (5, 1), (5, 2)$, and $(5, 4)$. Find

a) R^2. **b)** R^3. **c)** R^4. **d)** R^5.

57. Let R be a reflexive relation on a set A. Show that R^n is reflexive for all positive integers n.

***58.** Let R be a symmetric relation. Show that R^n is symmetric for all positive integers n.

59. Suppose that the relation R is irreflexive. Is R^2 necessarily irreflexive? Give a reason for your answer.

9.2 n-ary Relations and Their Applications

Introduction

Relationships among elements of more than two sets often arise. For instance, there is a relationship involving the name of a student, the student's major, and the student's grade point average. Similarly, there is a relationship involving the airline, flight number, starting point, destination, departure time, and arrival time of a flight. An example of such a relationship in mathematics involves three integers, where the first integer is larger than the second integer, which is larger than the third. Another example is the betweenness relationship involving points on a line, such that three points are related when the second point is between the first and the third.

We will study relationships among elements from more than two sets in this section. These relationships are called ***n*-ary relations**. These relations are used to represent computer databases. These representations help us answer queries about the information stored in databases, such as: Which flights land at O'Hare Airport between 3 A.M. and 4 A.M.? Which students at your