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Definition

Let $(A, +, \cdot)$ be a ring. A *polynomial* in A of *degree* d is a finite sequence of length $d + 1$. We call the elements of the sequence the *coefficients* of the polynomial.

Let $c = (c_0, c_1, \dots, c_{d-1}, c_d)$ be a polynomial of degree d . The *polynomial function* or *function of the polynomial* c is the function $f : A \rightarrow A$ defined by

$$f(a) = c_0 + c_1a^1 + c_2a^2 + \dots + c_da^d.$$

In accordance with this terminology, we often call function $f : A \rightarrow A$ a polynomial if there exists a polynomial c so that f is the polynomial function of c .

The function $f : A \rightarrow A$ is a polynomial of degree 0 and order 1 if there exists c_0 so that

$$f(a) = c_0$$

for all $a \in A$.

The function $g : A \rightarrow A$ is a polynomial of degree 1 and order 2 if there exists c_0 and c_1 so that

$$g(a) = c_0 + c_1a$$

¹Future editions will include, and most likely will build on quadratics.

The function $h : A \rightarrow A$ is a polynomial of degree 2 and order 3 if there exists c_0 and c_1 so that

$$h(a) = c_0 + c_1a + c_2a^2.$$

In other words, a second degree polynomial is a quadratic.

The function $p : A \rightarrow A$ is a *polynomial* of degree d and order $d+1$ if there exists a $d+1$ length sequence (c_0, c_1, \dots, c_d) in A so that

$$p(a) = c_0 + c_1a + \dots + c_da^d.$$

