



## Why

We list some principles which our intuition of area in planar geometry satisfies.

## Common notions

We take two common notions; these are analagous to those we developed for length.

1. The area of the whole is the sum of the area of the parts; the *additivity principle*.
2. If one whole contains another, the first's area at least as large as the second's area; the *containment principle*.

Again, the task is to make precise the use of “whole,” “parts,” and “contains.” We start with rectangles.

## Definition

The *area* of an rectangle is the sum of the lengths of its sides.

Two rectangles are *non-overlapping* if their intersection is a single point or empty. The *area* of the union of two non-overlapping intervals is the sum of their areas.

A *simple* subset of the real numbers is a finite union of non-overlapping intervals. The length of a simple subset is the sum of the lengths of its family.

A *countably simple* subset of the real numbers is a countable union of non-overlapping intervals. The length of a countably simple subset is the limit of the sum of the lengths of its family; as we have defined it, length is positive, so this series is either bounded and increasing and so converges, or is infinite, and so converges to  $+\infty$ .

At this point, we must confront the obvious question: are all subsets

of the real numbers countably simple? Answer: no. So, what can we say?

A *cover* of a set  $A$  of real numbers is a family whose union contains  $A$ . Since a cover always contains the set  $A$ , its length, which we understand, must be larger (containment principles) than  $A$ . So what if we declare that the length of an arbitrary set  $A$  be the greatest lower bound of the lengths of all sequences of intervals covering  $A$ . Will this work?

### Cuts

If  $a, b$  are real numbers and  $a < b$ , then we *cut* an interval with  $a$  and  $b$  as its endpoints by selecting  $c$  such that  $a < c$  and  $c < b$ . We obtain two intervals, one with endpoints  $a, c$  and one with endpoints  $c, b$ ; we call these two the *cut pieces*.

Given an interval, the length of the interval is the sum of any two cut pieces, because the pieces are non-overlapping.

### All sets

**Proposition 1.** *Not all subsets of real numbers are simple.*

*Exhibit:  $\mathbb{R}$  is not finite.*

**Proposition 2.** *Not all subsets of real numbers are countably simple.*

*Exhibit: the rationals.*

Here's the great insight: approximate a set by a countable family of intervals.

