



Why

We want to talk about several objects in order.

Definition

A *list* (or *finite sequence*, *string*, *n-tuple*) is a family (correspondence) whose index set is $\{1, \dots, n\}$ for $n \in \mathbf{N}$. The *length* (or *size*) of a list is the size of its index set, n . When the codomain of the sequence is a set A , we say that the sequence is *in* A or that it is a sequence *of* elements of A .

If $a : \{1, \dots, n\} \rightarrow A$ is a sequence, we refer to $a(k)$ as the *kth term* (or *entry*, or *element*¹) of a .

Notation

Since the natural numbers are ordered, we regularly denote finite sequences from left to right between parentheses. For example, we denote $a : \{1, \dots, 4\} \rightarrow A$ by (a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4) . $a(k)$ is the *kth term*. Following the convention with functions, we regularly usually denote $a(n)$ by a_n .

Orderings and numberings

Let A be a set with $|A| = n$. A sequence $a : \{1, \dots, n\} \rightarrow A$ is an *ordering* of A if a is invertible. In this case, we call the inverse a *numbering* of A . An ordering associates with each number a unique object and a numbering associates with each

¹We avoid this terminology because it conflicts with sets.

object a unique number (the object's *index*).

Relation to Direct Products

A *natural direct product* is a product of a sequence of sets. We denote the direct product of a sequence of sets A_1, \dots, A_n by $\prod_{i=1}^n A_i$. If each A_i is the same set A , then we denote the product $\prod_{i=1}^n A_i$ by A^n . The set of sequences in a set A is the direct product A^n .

Natural unions and intersections

We denote the family union of the finite sequence of sets A_1, \dots, A_n by $\cup_{i=1}^n A_i$. Similarly, we denote the intersection by $\cap_{i=1}^n A_i$.

Slices

An *index range* for a list s of length n is a pair (i, j) for which $1 \leq i < j \leq n$. The *slice* corresponding to the index range (i, j) is the length $j - i$ sequence s' defined by $s'_1 = s_i$, $s'_2 = s_{i+1}, \dots, s'_j = s_{i+j-1}$. We denote the (i, j) -slice of s by $s_{i:j}$. If $i = 1$ we use $s_{:j}$ and if $j = n$ we use $s_{i:}$ as shorthands for the slices $s_{1:j}$ and $s_i : n$.

