

**N3.** Find all function  $f: \mathbb{N}^* \rightarrow \mathbb{N}^*$  such that:  
 $f(xy) + f(x)f(y) + x + y$  is a prime for all integers  $x$  and  $y$

**Solution:**

$f(0)^2 + f(0)$  is a prime

We have  $f(0) = 1$  or  $f(0) = -2$

If  $f(0) = -2$ :

$-2 - 2f(x) + x$  is a prime, therefore  $-2f(x) + x - 2 = 2$  for all even  $x$ .

$f(x) = (x-4)/2$  for all even  $x$ .

But it is impossible for  $(xy-4)/2 + (x-4)(y-4)/4 + x + y$  to be a prime for all even  $x, y$ .

Therefore  $f(0) = 1$

$f(y) + y + 1$  is a prime for  $y$

$f(1) = 0$  or  $f(1) = -1$ , notice that  $f(-1)^2 + f(1) - 2$  is a prime and  $f(-1)$  is a prime

Therefore  $f(1) = 0$  and  $f(-1)^2 - 2$  is a prime

Main claim: For all even integers  $x, y$  satisfy  $x < 0, y < 0$ , at least one of  $f(xy) + 1 + xy$ ,  $f(y) + y + 1$ ,  $f(x) + x + 1$  is equal to 2.

Important collary: for all even  $x < 0$ , at least one of  $f(x) + x + 1$  or  $f(x^2) + x^2 + 1$  is equal to 2

Consider an even  $x < -1$  such that  $f(x) + 1 + x$  is odd

We have  $f(x^2) = 1 - x^2$

We have  $f(x^3) + (1 - x^2)f(x) + x + x^2$  is a prime. If  $f(x^3) = 1 - x^3$  then  $f(x) = 1 - x$ , contradiction. Therefore  $f(x^3) = 2 - x - x^2 + (x^2 - 1)f(x)$

Therefore  $f(x^4) = 1 - x^4$ . Now with this, we induct:  $f(x^{2k+1})$  is even and  $f(x^{2k}) = 1 - x^{2k}$  for all  $k$ .

Indeed,  $f(x^{2k+1}) + (1 - x^{2k})f(x) + x^{2k} + x$  is a prime.

If  $f(x^{2k+1}) = 1 - x^{2k+1}$ , by induction we have  $f(x^{2k}) = 1 - x^{2k}$ , then it is easy to see that  $1 - x^{2k+1} + (1 - x^{2k})f(x) + x^{2k} + x < 2$  since  $f(x) > 1 - x$ , contradiction.

Therefore  $f(x^{2k+1})$  is even and  $f(x^{2k+2}) = 1 - x^{2k+2}$  since  $f(x)$  and  $f(x^{2k+1})$  is even.

Induction complete.

We have  $f(x^{2k+1}) + (1 - x^{2k})f(x) + x^{2k} + x$  is a prime, but it is even, therefore

$f(x^{2k+1}) + (1 - x^{2k})f(x) + x^{2k} + x = 2$  for all  $k$ .

Therefore  $A(k) = (x^{2k} - 1)f(x) - x^{2k} - x + 3 + x^{2k+1}$  is a prime for all  $k$ . Since  $f(x) > 1 - x$ ,  $\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} A(k) = +\infty$  and consider a large  $k$ , if  $A(k) = p$  is a prime, consider  $A(k+p-1)$ ,

it is not a prime, contradiction.

Therefore we have  $f(x) = 1 - x$  for all even  $x < -1$ .

Now consider a positive integer  $x$ , we have  $1 - xy + f(x)(1 - y) + x + y =$

$y(1 - f(x) - x) + f(x) + x + 1$  is a prime for all even  $y < 0$ . If  $f(x)$  is not equal to  $1 - x$ , we can choose an even  $y < 0$  such that  $y(1 - f(x) - x) + f(x) + x + 1$  is not a prime.

Therefore  $f(x) = 1 - x$  for all positive integers  $x$ . And finally, consider an odd  $y < 0$ , we have  $-xy + (1 - x)f(y) + x + y$  is a prime for all even  $x > 0$ . Similarly we have  $f(y) = 1 - y$  for all odd  $y < 0$ .

