

# Algebra: Chapter 0 Exercises

## Chapter 3, Section 4

Ideals and quotients: Remarks and examples. Prime and maximal ideals

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**Problem 4.1.** Let  $R$  be a ring, and let  $\{I_\alpha\}_{\alpha \in A}$  be a family of ideals of  $R$ . We let

$$\sum_{\alpha \in A} I_\alpha = \left\{ \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha \text{ such that } r_\alpha \in I_\alpha \text{ and } r_\alpha = 0 \text{ for all but finitely many } \alpha \right\}$$

Prove that  $J = \sum_{\alpha} I_\alpha$  is an ideal of  $R$  and that it is the smallest ideal containing all of the ideals  $I_\alpha$ .

*Solution.* First we prove that  $J$  is an ideal of  $R$ .

*Proof.* Let  $a, b \in J$ , so that

$$\begin{aligned} a &= \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha \\ b &= \sum_{\alpha \in A} s_\alpha, \end{aligned}$$

where each  $r_\alpha, s_\alpha \in I_\alpha$  and all but finitely many  $r_\alpha$  and  $s_\alpha$  are nonzero. We then have:

$$\begin{aligned} a + b &= \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha + \sum_{\alpha \in A} s_\alpha \\ &= \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha + s_\alpha. \end{aligned}$$

Each term  $r_\alpha + s_\alpha$  is in  $I_\alpha$  since  $r_\alpha, s_\alpha \in I_\alpha$  and  $I_\alpha$  is an ideal, and clearly all but finitely many  $r_\alpha + s_\alpha$  are nonzero since  $(r_\alpha)_{\alpha \in A}$  and  $(s_\alpha)_{\alpha \in A}$  both have that property, so  $a + b \in J$ .

Additionally, if  $s \in R$  and  $r \in J$  so that  $r = \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha$  (where all but finitely many  $r_\alpha$ 's are zero), then we have

$$\begin{aligned} rs &= \left( \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha \right) s \\ &= \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha s \\ &\in J, \end{aligned}$$

where the last line is true because each  $r_\alpha s \in I_\alpha$  as a result of each  $I_\alpha$  being a right-ideal of  $R$ , and the fact that if  $r_\alpha$  is zero then  $r_\alpha s$  is also zero, implying that there are cofinitely many zero terms in this resulting sum as well. A similar argument shows that  $J$  is a left-ideal of  $R$  if each  $I_\alpha$  is also a left-ideal.  $\square$

Now, we will show that  $J = \sum_{\alpha \in A} I_\alpha$  is the smallest ideal of  $R$  containing each of the ideals  $I_\alpha$  for  $\alpha \in A$ .

*Proof.* We just proved that  $J$  is an ideal of  $R$ , so now we just need to show that  $J$  is a subset of any ideal containing each of the ideals  $I_\alpha$ . This is immediate: if  $r \in J$  is such that  $r = \sum_{\alpha \in A} r_\alpha$  for  $r_\alpha \in I_\alpha$ , then of course any ideal of  $R$  containing each  $I_\alpha$  contains  $r$ , since such an ideal is closed under addition.  $\square$

■

**Problem 4.2.** Prove that the homomorphic image of a Noetherian ring is Noetherian. That is, prove that if  $\varphi : R \rightarrow S$  is a surjective ring homomorphism and  $R$  is Noetherian, then  $S$  is Noetherian.

*Solution.* Suppose  $I = (a_1, \dots, a_n)$  is an ideal of  $R$  and  $\varphi : R \rightarrow S$  is surjective. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(I) &= \varphi \left( \sum_{i=1}^n (a_i) \right) \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n \varphi((a_i)) \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n (\varphi(a_i)), \end{aligned}$$

and so  $\varphi(I)$  is finitely generated.

To see that these operations are justified, note that if  $g \in R$  and  $J = (g)$  is an ideal, then we have

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(J) &= \varphi(\{rg : r \in R\}) \\ &= \{\varphi(r)\varphi(g) : r \in R\} \\ &= \{r\varphi(g) : r \in R\} \\ &= (\varphi(g)), \end{aligned}$$

where the third equality follows from the surjectivity of  $\varphi$ .

Additionally, if  $I, J$  are ideals of  $R$ , then we also have

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi(I + J) &= \varphi(\{i + j : i \in I, j \in J\}) \\ &= \{\varphi(i) + \varphi(j) : i \in I, j \in J\} \\ &= \varphi(I) + \varphi(J) \end{aligned}$$

Note, then, that if  $J$  is an ideal of  $S$ , then  $\varphi^{-1}(J)$  is an ideal of  $R$ , allowing us to see that  $J = \varphi(\varphi^{-1}(J))$  is finitely generated. Therefore, every ideal of  $S$  is finitely generated, and so  $S$  is Noetherian.  $\square$

**Problem 4.3.** Prove that the ideal  $(2, x)$  of  $\mathbb{Z}[x]$  is not principal.

*Solution.* First, we (quite clumsily) compute the ideal  $(2, x)$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}(2, x) &= \{2p + xq : p, q \in \mathbb{Z}[x]\} \\ &= \{(2a_0 + 2a_1x + \cdots + 2a_nx^n) + (b_1x + b_2x^2 + \cdots + b_mx^m) : a_j, b_j \in \mathbb{Z}\} \\ &= \{2a_0 + a_1x + a_2x^2 + \cdots + a_nx^n : a_j \in \mathbb{Z}\}.\end{aligned}$$

In other words, the ideal  $(2, x)$  consists of all the polynomials in  $\mathbb{Z}[x]$  with an even constant term.

Note, then, if  $(2, x) = (g)$  for some polynomial  $g \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$ , then there must be a polynomial  $p \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$  such that  $2 = gp$ , since  $2 \in (2, x)$ . If this is the case, then we have  $\deg g + \deg p = 0$ , and so  $\deg g = \deg p = 0$ . This means that  $g$  is constant, and hence is either 1 or 2. In the former case,  $(g)$  is the whole ring  $\mathbb{Z}[x]$ , and in the latter case,  $(g)$  is the ideal  $2\mathbb{Z}[x]$ . Neither of these ideals equal the ideal of  $(2, x)$ , leading us to conclude that no single polynomial in  $\mathbb{Z}[x]$  generates the ideal  $(2, x)$ . ■

**Problem 4.4.** Prove that if  $k$  is a field, then  $k[x]$  is a PID. (Hint: Polynomial division with remainder)

*Solution.* Let  $I \subseteq k[x]$  be an ideal. If  $I = 0 = (0)$ , then clearly it is principal. Otherwise, let  $p \in I$  be a monic polynomial of minimal degree  $d$ . Let  $I \subseteq k[x]$  be an ideal. If  $I = 0 = (0)$ , then clearly it is principal.

Otherwise, let  $g \in I$  be a monic polynomial of minimal degree  $d$ . If  $p \in I$ , then we can apply division with remainder to find polynomials  $q, r \in k[x]$  such that

$$p = gq + r,$$

where  $\deg r < d$ . Note that since  $p \in I$  and  $gq \in I$  by (right-) absorption, we then can see that  $r = p - gq \in I$ , since  $I$  is closed under addition. But  $d$  is the smallest degree of any nonzero polynomial in  $I$  and  $\deg r < d$ ; it then follows that  $r = 0$ , and so

$$p = gq,$$

showing us that  $I \subseteq (g)$ .

Of course  $(g) \subseteq I$ , so we then have  $I = (g)$ , as desired. ■

**Problem 4.5.** Let  $I, J$  be ideals in a commutative ring  $R$ , such that  $I + J = (1)$ . Prove that  $IJ = I \cap J$ .

*Solution.* The simple fact that  $IH \subseteq I \cap J$  was already proven in the text, so suppose  $r \in I \cap J$ . Since  $I + J = (1) = R$ , we know there exists an  $i \in I$  and a  $j \in J$  such that  $1 = i + j$ . Note, then, that:

$$\begin{aligned}r &= r \cdot 1 \\ &= r \cdot (i + j) \\ &= r \cdot i + r \cdot j.\end{aligned}$$

Since  $r \in J$  and  $R$  is commutative, we know that  $ri \in IJ$ , and since  $r \in J$ , we also know that  $rj \in IJ$ . Hence  $r = ri + rj \in IJ$ , and so  $I \cap J \subseteq IJ$ . Therefore,  $IJ = I \cap J$ , as desired. ■

**Problem 4.6.** Let  $I, J$  be ideals in a commutative ring  $R$ . Assume that  $R/(IJ)$  is reduced (that is, it has no nonzero nilpotent elements). Prove that  $IJ = I \cap J$ .

*Solution.* We will proceed by proving the contrapositive. Since we already know that  $IJ \subseteq I \cap J$  for any ideals  $I, J$ , assume that  $I \cap J \not\subseteq IJ$ . There then exists an  $r \in I \cap J$  with  $r \notin IJ$ ; that is, such that the coset  $r + (IJ)$  is nonzero in  $R/(IJ)$ . Note, then, that  $r^2 = rr \in IJ$ , since  $r \in I$  and  $r \in J$ , and so  $(r + IJ)^2 = 0$  in the ring  $R/(IJ)$ . Hence  $R/(IJ)$  is not reduced, as desired.

Therefore, if  $R/(IJ)$  is reduced, then  $I \cap J \subseteq IJ$ , and therefore  $I \cap J = IJ$ . ■

**Problem 4.7.** Let  $R = k$  be a field. Prove that every nonzero (principal) ideal in  $k[x]$  is generated by a unique monic polynomial.

*Solution.* Let  $I$  be an ideal of  $k[x]$ . Then, by exercise 4.4, there is a monic polynomial  $p_1 \in k[x]$  such that  $I = (p_1)$ . Let  $p_2 \in k[x]$  be such that  $(p_2) = (p_1) = I$ . Then, since  $p_1 \in (p_2)$  and  $p_2 \in (p_1)$ , there exist  $q_1$  and  $q_2$  such that

$$p_1 = q_1 p_2$$

and

$$p_2 = q_2 p_1.$$

We then have

$$p_1 = q_1 q_2 p_1,$$

and hence  $q_1 q_2 = 1$ , as  $k[x]$  is an integral domain.

Note, then, that

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \deg(q_1 q_2) \\ &=^1 \deg(q_1) + \deg(q_2), \end{aligned}$$

where equality (1) follows from  $k[x]$  being an integral domain and thus having no nonzero zero divisors. Therefore,  $q_1$  and  $q_2$  are both degree 0, that is, constants.

It then follows that if  $p_2$  is monic, then  $q_1 = 1$  and so  $p_1 = p_2$ , showing that  $I$  is generated by a unique *monic* polynomial as desired. ■

**Problem 4.8.** Let  $R$  be a ring and  $f(x) \in R[x]$  a monic polynomial. Prove that  $f(x)$  is not a (left- or right-) zero divisor.

*Solution.* Let  $g(x) \in R[x]$ , be a nonzero polynomial and  $a$  be the leading coefficient of  $g(x)$ . Since  $f(x)$  is monic, the leading coefficient of  $f(x)g(x)$  and  $g(x)f(x)$  is  $1 \cdot a = a \cdot 1 = a$ . Hence, if either one of these polynomials is zero, then  $a = 0$ . Since  $a \neq 0$  as  $g(x)$  is nonzero, neither of these polynomials is zero. Hence  $f(x)$  is not a left- or right- zero divisor. ■

**Problem 4.10.** Let  $d$  be an integer that is not the square of an integer, and consider the subset of  $\mathbb{C}$  defined by

$$\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}) := \{a + b\sqrt{d} \mid a, b \in \mathbb{Q}\}$$

- (a) Prove that  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$  is a subring of  $\mathbb{C}$ .
- (b) Define a function  $N : \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}) \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$  by  $N(a + b\sqrt{d}) = a^2 - b^2d$ . Prove that  $N(zw) = N(z)N(w)$  and that  $N(z) \neq 0$  if  $z \in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}), z \neq 0$ .

The function  $N$  is a 'norm'; it is very useful in the study of  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$  and of its subrings.

- (c) Prove that  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$  is a field and in fact the smallest subfield of  $\mathbb{C}$  containing both  $\mathbb{Q}$  and  $\sqrt{d}$ . (Use N.)
- (d) Prove that  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}) \cong \mathbb{Q}[t]/(t^2 - d)$

*Solution.* First, we prove that  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$  is a subring of  $\mathbb{C}$ . If  $a + b\sqrt{d}$  and  $x + y\sqrt{d}$  are elements of  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$ , then we have

$$\begin{aligned} (a + b\sqrt{d}) + (x + y\sqrt{d}) &= (a + b) + (x + y)\sqrt{d} \\ &\in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}) \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} (a + b\sqrt{d})(x + y\sqrt{d}) &= ax + ay\sqrt{d} + bx\sqrt{d} + bdy \\ &= (ax + bdy) + (ay + bx)\sqrt{d} \\ &\in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}). \end{aligned}$$

Of course  $1 = 1 + 0\sqrt{d} \in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$ , so  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$  is a ring.

Now, define  $N : \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}) \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$  as in the question. Let  $z = z_1 + z_2\sqrt{d}$  and  $w = w_1 + w_2\sqrt{d}$ . We then have:

$$\begin{aligned} N(zw) &= N((z_1w_1 + z_2w_2d) + (z_1w_2 + z_2w_1)\sqrt{d}) \\ &= (z_1w_1 + z_2w_2d)^2 - (z_1w_2 + z_2w_1)^2d \\ &= z_1^2w_1^2 - z_1^2w_2^2d - z_2^2w_1^2d + z_2^2w_2^2d^2 \\ &= (z_1^2 - z_2^2d)(w_1^2 - w_2^2d) \\ &= N(z)N(w). \end{aligned}$$

Of course  $z = 0$  implies  $N(z) = 0$ , so  $N(z) \neq 0$  implies  $z \neq 0$ .

For part (c), let  $z = a + b\sqrt{d}$  be a nonzero element of  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$ . Since  $N(z) \in \mathbb{Q}$  and is nonzero because  $z$  is nonzero, we know that

$$\begin{aligned} w &= \frac{a - b\sqrt{d}}{N(z)} \\ &= \frac{a}{N(z)} - \frac{b}{N(z)}\sqrt{d} \\ &\in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d}), \end{aligned}$$

and so we find that

$$\begin{aligned} zw &= (a + b\sqrt{d}) \left( \frac{a - b\sqrt{d}}{N(z)} \right) \\ &= \frac{N(z)}{N(z)} \\ &= 1, \end{aligned}$$

showing that  $w$  is a multiplicative inverse of  $z$ , and hence that  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$  is a field.

Any subfield of  $\mathbb{C}$  that contains  $\mathbb{Z}$  and  $\sqrt{d}$  must contain  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$ , since subfields must be closed under the field operations. Hence  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$  is the smallest such subfield.

Finally, Let  $\varphi : \mathbb{Q}[x] \rightarrow \mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$  be the group homomorphism (defined in the book) that sends  $g(x) \in \mathbb{Q}[x]$  to the pair  $(r_0, r_1)$ , where  $r_0, r_1$  come from the remainder  $r_0 + r_1x$  when dividing  $g(x)$  by the polynomial  $x^2 - d$ .

An argument in the book establishes that  $\varphi$  is surjective with kernel equal to the principle ideal  $(x^2 - d)$ , and so we have

$$\frac{\mathbb{Q}[x]}{(x^2 - d)} \cong \mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q},$$

as abelian groups.

All we need to do, now, is endow  $\mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$  with a ring structure that makes  $\varphi$  a homomorphism, and show that this ring is isomorphic to  $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$ . Define an operation  $\cdot$  on  $\mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$ , then, by

$$(a_0, a_1) \cdot (b_0, b_1) = \varphi(\varphi^{-1}(a_0, a_1) \cdot \varphi^{-1}(b_0, b_1)),$$

where  $\overline{p(x)}$  is the coset of  $p(x)$  in the quotient ring  $\mathbb{Q}[x]/(x^2 - d)$ . Note that this is well-defined because  $\varphi$  is a bijection.

To prove that  $\varphi$  is then a ring homomorphism  $\frac{\mathbb{Q}[x]}{(x^2 - d)} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$ , note that:

$$\begin{aligned} \varphi^{-1}(a \cdot b) &= \varphi^{-1}(\varphi(\varphi^{-1}(a) \cdot \varphi^{-1}(b))) \\ &= \varphi^{-1}(a) \cdot \varphi^{-1}(b), \end{aligned}$$

from which it then follows that  $\varphi$  preserves multiplication.

The reader may wish to note, additionally, that the identity with respect to this multiplication defined on  $\mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$ , is the pair  $(0, 1)$ , as we have, for  $a_0, a_1 \in \mathbb{Q}$ :

$$\begin{aligned} (1, 0) \cdot (a_0, a_1) &= \varphi(\varphi^{-1}(0, 1) \cdot \varphi^{-1}(a_0, a_1)) \\ &= \varphi(\overline{1} \cdot \overline{(a_0 + a_1x)}) \\ &= \varphi(\overline{1(a_0 + a_1x)}) \\ &= \varphi(a_0 + a_1x) \\ &= (a_0, a_1), \end{aligned}$$

where each step follows from simple considerations concerning polynomial division by a polynomial of degree 2, and the properties of ideals with respect to the ring operations.

Since the remainder when dividing 1 by the polynomial  $x^2 - d$  is 1, we then know that  $\varphi(1) = (1, 0)$ , showing that  $\varphi$  preserves the identity with respect to multiplication.

Since  $\varphi$  is a bijection that preserves addition, multiplication, and the identity as defined on  $\mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$ , we then know that  $\mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$  is a ring isomorphic to the ring  $\mathbb{Q}[x]/(x^2 - d)$ .

To characterize this multiplication on  $\mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q}$ , we find with some algebra that

$$\begin{aligned}
(a_0 + a_1) \cdot (b_0 + b_1) &= \varphi(\varphi^{-1}(a_0, a_1) \cdot \varphi^{-1}(b_0, b_1)) \\
&= \varphi((\overline{a_0 + a_1x}) \cdot (\overline{b_0 + b_1x})) \\
&= \varphi(\overline{(a_0 + a_1x)(b_0 + b_1x)}) \\
&= \varphi(\overline{a_0b_0 + (a_0b_1 + a_1b_0)x + a_1b_1x^2}) \\
&= \varphi(\overline{(a_0b_0 + a_1b_1d) + (a_0b_1 + a_1b_0)x + (x^2 - d)(a_1b_1)}) \\
&= \varphi(\overline{(a_0b_0 + a_1b_1d) + (a_0b_1 + a_1b_0)x}) \\
&= (a_0b_0 + a_1b_1d, a_0b_1 + a_1b_0).
\end{aligned}$$

Inspection of the product  $(a_0 + a_1\sqrt{d})(b_0 + b_1\sqrt{d})$  quite easily shows that the mapping  $(a_0, a_1) \mapsto a_0 + a_1\sqrt{d}$  is a ring isomorphism  $\mathbb{Q} \oplus \mathbb{Q} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$ , and so we therefore get the isomorphism  $\mathbb{Q}[x]/(x^2 - d) \cong \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{d})$ , as desired. ■

**Problem 4.11.** Let  $R$  be a commutative ring,  $a \in R$ , and  $f_1(x), \dots, f_r(x) \in R[X]$ .

(a) Prove the equality of ideals

$$(f_1(x), \dots, f_r(x), x - a) = (f_1(a), \dots, f_r(a), x - a).$$

(b) Prove the useful substitution trick

$$\frac{R[x]}{(f_1(x), \dots, f_r(x), x - a)} \cong \frac{R}{(f_1(a), \dots, f_r(a))}.$$

*Solution.* First, suppose  $f(x) \in R[x]$  and  $a \in R$ . If we divide  $f(x) - f(a)$  by the polynomial  $x - a$ , we find that

$$f(x) - f(a) = q(x)(x - a) + r(x),$$

where  $q(x), r(x) \in R[x]$  and  $\deg r(x) = 0$ . Evaluating both sides at  $a$ , we then can see that

$$\begin{aligned}
f(a) - f(a) &= q(a)(a - a) + r(a) \\
\Rightarrow 0 &= r(a),
\end{aligned}$$

meaning  $r(x)$  must be the zero polynomial since it has degree zero and evaluates to zero at  $a$ . Thus, we have:

$$f(x) = q(x)(x - a) + f(a)$$

for all  $f(x) \in R[x], a \in R$  and some polynomial  $q(x)$ .

Applying this to our problem, we then have polynomials  $q_j$  such that

$$f_j(x) = q_j(x)(x - a) + f_j(a),$$

for all  $1 \leq j \leq r$ .

We then have, for all polynomials of the form shown on the left-hand side in the ideal  $(f_1(x), \dots, f_r(x), x - a)$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \left( \sum_{j=0}^r p_j(x) f_j(x) \right) + g(x)(x - a) &= \left( \sum_{j=0}^r p_j(x) (q_j(x)(x - a)) + f_j(a) \right) + g(x)(x - a) \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^r f_j(a) + \left( g(x) + \sum_{j=1}^n q_j(a) \right) (x - a), \end{aligned}$$

and so  $(f_1(x), \dots, f_r(x), x - a) \subseteq (f_1(a), \dots, f_r(a), x - a)$ . A nearly identical argument gives us the inclusion in the other direction, and so we have the desired equality of ideals.

With this shiny new lemma, we can now see that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{R[x]}{(f_1(x), \dots, f_r(x), x - a)} &= \frac{R[x]}{(f_1(a), \dots, f_r(a), x - a)} \\ &= \frac{R[x]}{(f_1(a), \dots, f_r(a)) + (x - a)} \\ &\cong \frac{R[x]/(x - a)}{(f_1(a), \dots, f_r(a))} \\ &\cong \frac{R}{(f_1(a), \dots, f_r(a))}, \end{aligned}$$

where the first equality follows from the lemma we just proved, the second equality follows from the definition of an ideal generated by multiple elements, the isomorphism in the third line follows from Exercise 3.3, and the isomorphism in the fourth line follows from the isomorphism

$$\frac{R[x]}{(x - a)} \cong R.$$

■

**Problem 4.12.** Let  $R$  be a commutative ring and  $a_1, \dots, a_n$  elements of  $R$ . Prove that

$$\frac{R[x_1, \dots, x_n]}{(x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)} \cong R$$

*Solution.* We will proceed by induction. For the base case  $n = 1$ , the isomorphism

$$\frac{R[x]}{(x - a)}$$

has already been established. For the induction step, suppose we have the isomorphism

$$\frac{R[x_1, \dots, x_n]}{(x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)}$$



for  $a_1, \dots, a_n \in R$ , and let  $a_{n+1} \in R$ . We then have:

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{R[x_1, \dots, x_n, x_{n+1}]}{(x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n, x_{n+1} - a_{n+1})} &= \frac{R[x_1, \dots, x_n][x_{n+1}]}{(x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n) + (x_{n+1} - a_{n+1})} \\
&\cong \frac{R[x_1, \dots, x_n][x_{n+1}]/(x_{n+1} - a_{n+1})}{(x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)} \\
&\cong \frac{R[x_1, \dots, x_n]}{(x_1 - a_1, \dots, x_n - a_n)} \\
&\cong R.
\end{aligned}$$

Here, the equality in the first line follows from the definition of multivariate polynomial rings and finitely generated ideals, the isomorphism in the second line follows from Exercise 3.3, the isomorphism in the third line follows from the general isomorphism  $R[x]/(x-a) \cong R$ , and the isomorphism in the fourth line follows from the inductive hypothesis. ■

**Problem 4.13.** Let  $R$  be an integral domain. For all  $k = 1, \dots, n$ , prove that  $(x_1, \dots, x_k)$  is prime in  $R[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ .

*Solution.* This follows immediately from the previous exercise, and the fact that the ideal  $I \subseteq R$  is prime iff  $R/I$  is an integral domain. ■

**Problem 4.14.** Prove 'by hand' that maximal ideals are prime, *without* using quotient rings.

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