

Combinatorial Analysis

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January 10, 2024

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Lecture 1: Syllabus and Review

1 Introduction

This course is basically just a second course in Combinatorics, and will cover a range of topics.

Definition 1. Matroids are the structures that capture whether or not the greedy algorithm works. They will be covered later in the course.

Now, for some examples and review:

Definition 2. We say points are in **convex position** if no point is inside a triangle made by 3 other points.

Example. Given a finite set of points on the plane, what is the maximum number of points such that no 3 are on a line, and no 4 are in convex position.

Proof. Informally, we know that the “outside” of our points has at most 3 points in the shape of a triangle. We can then place a point in the middle. However, if we try to add another point, then we find that 4 points are in convex position, which is a contradiction. Therefore, 4 points is the maximum size of such a set.

This example is actually part of a more general problem, shown below.

Theorem 1. (ES, 1935) The maximum number of points such that no 3 are on a line and no n are in convex position is $\leq 4^n$ and $\geq 2^{n-2}$.

Theorem 2. (Suk, 2017) This number is actually $\leq 2^{n+o(1)}$

Notation. Think of $o(1)$ as standing for a function $f(n)$ such that $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} f(n) = 0$. In other words, for every $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists n_0 such that $|f(n)| < \varepsilon$ for every $n \geq n_0$.

Example. How many distinct 5-letter words are there on the 26-letter english alphabet?

Proof. There are 26 options for each of the 5 slots, so there are 26^5 words.

Example. What if repetitions aren’t allowed?

Proof. Each slot you lose an option, so there are $26 \cdot 25 \cdot 24 \cdot 23 \cdot 22 = \frac{26!}{21!}$ words.

Example. How many ways are there to choose 5 students out of 35 to present?

Proof. There are $\binom{35}{5} = \frac{35!}{5! \cdot 30!}$ ways.

Lecture 2: Review of Proofs

We will now review the types of proofs covered in Math-3012, as well as guidelines for writing them in this class.

Notation. If F is a mapping from N to M , we write $F : N \rightarrow M$.

Notation. Sometimes, $N \setminus \{a\}$ will be instead written as $N - \{a\}$.

Proposition 1. Let N be an n -element set and M be an m -element set. Then, there are m^n mappings (or functions) from N to M .

Proof. (Inductive) We go by induction on n .

Base case. For the base case $n = 0$, we consider the empty set \emptyset to be a mapping from the empty set to M . So $m^0 = 1$ and the base case holds.

Inductive step. Now, let $n \geq 1$ and assume that the proposition holds for $n - 1$ by induction. So, let $a \in N$. There are m^{n-1} mappings $F' : N \setminus \{a\} \rightarrow M$. For each such F' , we have m choices for where to send a . These mappings are all distinct, and every $F : N \rightarrow M$ can be obtained in this way. So, the number of mappings $F : N \rightarrow M$ is $m^{n-1} \cdot m = m^n$, as desired. \square

Definition 3. A **bijection** is a function $f : X \rightarrow Y$ such that f is one-to-one and onto.

Corollary. An n -element set X has 2^n many subsets.

Proof. (Bijective) For each $A \subseteq X$, let $F_A : X \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ such that for each $x \in X$,

$$F_A(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } x \notin A \\ 1 & \text{if } x \in A \end{cases}.$$

These mappings $F_A, F_{A'}$ are distinct for distinct subsets $A, A' \subseteq X$, and every mapping $F : X \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ is equal to F_A for some $A \subseteq X$. So by proposition 1, the corollary holds. \square

Lemma 1. For any non-negative integers n, k ($n, k \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$), we have $\binom{n}{k} = \binom{n}{n-k}$.

Proof. (Algebraic) We have

$$\begin{aligned} \binom{n}{k} &= \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!} \\ &= \frac{n!}{(n-(n-k))!(n-k)!} \\ &= \binom{n}{n-k}, \end{aligned}$$

as desired. \square

Theorem 3. (Binomial Theorem) Let $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$. Then

$$(x + y)^n = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} x^k y^{n-k}.$$

Proof. Consider

$$\underbrace{(x + y)(x + y) \dots (x + y)}_{n \text{ times}}.$$

For each $(x + y)$ term, we select either the x or the y , and there are $\binom{n}{k}$ ways to select k x 's and $n - k$ y 's. The formula follows. \square

Corollary. For any $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$, we have

$$2^n = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} \text{ and } 0 = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} (-1)^k.$$

Proof. Apply the binomial theorem with $x = y = 1$ to yield the first result, and with $x = -1, y = 1$ to yield the second. \square

Definition 4. A **permutation** is a bijection from a finite set to itself.

Example. One such bijection could be $1 \mapsto 2, 2 \mapsto 1, 3 \mapsto 4, 4 \mapsto 5, 5 \mapsto 3$.

Lemma 2. The number of such bijections is $n!$.

Proof. Exercise to the student! \square