0 Proof Techniques

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Outline

0 Proof Techniques

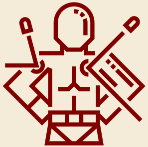
What is a *formal* proof?

A formal proof (in a logical system) is a **sequence of statements** such that each statement

1. is an *axiom* (of the logical system), or
2. follows from previous statements using the *inference rules* (of the logical system).

Among experts: Suffices to *convince a human* that a formal proof *exists*.

But: Use formal logic as guidance against faulty reasoning. $\rightsquigarrow$ bulletproof



Notation:

- Statements: $A \equiv$ "it rains", $B \equiv$ "the street is wet".
- Negation: $\neg A$ "Not A"
- And/Or: $A \wedge B$ "A and B"; $A \vee B$ "A or B or both"
- Implication: $A \Rightarrow B$ "If A, then B"; $\neg A \vee B$
- Equivalence: $A \Leftrightarrow B$ "A holds true *if and only if ('iff')* B holds true."; $(A \Rightarrow B) \wedge (B \Rightarrow A)$

0.1 Proof Templates

Implications

To prove $A \Rightarrow B$, we can

- directly derive B from A *direct proof*
- prove $(\neg B) \Rightarrow (\neg A)$ *indirect proof, proof by contraposition*
- assume $A \land \neg B$ and derive a contradiction *proof by contradiction, reductio ad absurdum*
- distinguish cases, i. e., separately prove
  $(A \land C) \Rightarrow B$ and $(A \land \neg C) \Rightarrow B$. *proof by exhaustive case distinction*

Equivalences

To prove $A \Leftrightarrow B$,
we prove both implications $A \Rightarrow B$ and $B \Rightarrow A$ separately.

(Often, one direction is much easier than the other.)

Set Inclusion and Equality

To prove that a set S contains a set R, i. e., $R \subseteq S$,
we prove the implication $x \in R \Rightarrow x \in S$.

To prove that two sets S and R are equal, $S = R$,
we prove both inclusions, $S \subseteq R$ and $R \subseteq S$ separately.

0.2 Mathematical Induction

Quantified Statements

Notation

- Statements with parameters: $A(x) \equiv$ "x is an even number."
- Existential quantifiers: $\exists x : A(x)$ "There exists some x, so that $A(x)$."
- Universal quantifiers: $\forall x : A(x)$ "For all x it holds that $A(x)$."

  Note: $\forall x : A(x)$ is equivalent to $\neg\exists x : \neg A(x)$

Quantifiers can be nested, e. g., *ε-δ-criterion for limits*:

$$\lim_{x\to\xi} f(x) = a \quad :\Leftrightarrow \quad \forall\varepsilon > 0\ \exists\delta > 0 : \big(|x-\xi| < \delta\big) \Rightarrow \big|f(x) - a\big| < \varepsilon.$$

To prove $\exists x : A(x)$, we simply list an example ξ such that $A(\xi)$ is true.

For-all statements

To prove $\forall x : A(x)$, we can

- derive $A(x)$ for an *"arbitrary but fixed value of x"*, or,
- for $x \in \mathbb{N}_0$, use ***induction***, i. e.,
  - prove $A(0)$, *induction basis*, and
  - prove $\forall n \in \mathbb{N}_0 : A(n) \Rightarrow A(n+1)$ *inductive step*

More general variants of induction:

- complete/strong induction
  inductive step shows $\big(A(0) \land \cdots \land A(n)\big) \Rightarrow A(n+1)$
- structural/transfinite induction
  works on any *well-ordered* set, e. g., binary trees, graphs, Boolean formulas, strings, …

  no infinite strictly decreasing chains

0.3 Correctness Proofs

Formal verification

- verification: prove that a program computes the correct result

$\rightsquigarrow$ **not** our focus in COMP 526
but some techniques are useful for *reasoning* about algorithms

Here:

1. Prove that loop or recursive call eventually *terminates*.
2. Prove that a *loop* computes the *correct* result.

Proving termination

To prove that a recursive procedure $\mathtt{proc}(x_1, \ldots, x_m)$ eventually terminates, we

- define a *potential* $\Phi(x_1, \ldots x_m) \in \mathbb{N}_0$ of the parameters
  (Note: $\Phi(x_1, \ldots x_m) \geq 0$ by definition!)

- prove that every recursive call decreases the potential, i. e.,
  any recursive call $\mathtt{proc}(y_1, \ldots, y_m)$ inside $\mathtt{proc}(x_1, \ldots, x_m)$ satisfies

$$\Phi(y_1, \ldots, y_m) \; < \; \Phi(x_1, \ldots, x_m) \qquad \text{which means}$$

$$\Phi(y_1, \ldots, y_m) \; \leq \; \Phi(x_1, \ldots, x_m) \mathbf{- 1}$$

⇝ $\mathtt{proc}(x_1, \ldots, x_m)$ terminates because
we can only strictly *decrease* the (integral) potential
a *finite* number of times from its initial value

- Can use same idea for a loop: show that potential decreases in each iteration.
  - ⇝ see tutorials for an example.

Loop invariants

Goal: Prove that a *post condition* holds after execution of a (terminating) loop.

```
// (A) before loop
while cond do
    // (B) before body
    body
    // (C) after body
end while
// (D) after loop
```

For that, we

- find a *loop invariant* I (that's the tough part!)
- prove that I holds at (A)
- prove that $I \wedge cond$ at (B) imply I at (C)
- prove that $I \wedge \neg cond$ imply the desired post condition at (D)

Note: I holds before, during, and after the loop execution, hence the name.

Loop invariant – Example

- loop condition: $cond \equiv i < n$
- post condition (in line 13):
  $curMax = \max_{k \in [0..n-1]} A[k]$
- loop invariant:
  $I \equiv curMax = \max_{k \in [0..i-1]} A[k] \wedge i \leq n$

```
1  procedure arrayMax(A,n)
2      // input: array of n elements, n ≥ 1
3      // output: the maximum element in A[0..n − 1]
4      curMax := A[0]; i = 1
5      // (A)
6      while i < n do
7          // (B)
8          if A[i] > curMax
9              curMax := A[i]
10         i := i + 1
11         // (C)
12     end while
13     // (D)
14     return curMax
```

We have to proof:

(i) I holds at (A)

(ii) $I \wedge cond$ at (B) $\Rightarrow$ I at (C)

(iii) $I \wedge \neg cond$ $\Rightarrow$ post condition