

# Set Theory

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# Sets and Subsets: Definitions and Properties

**Set:** Well-defined collection of distinct objects

(Ex:  $\mathcal{S} = \{4, 9, 16, \dots, 81, 100\} = \{x^2 \mid x \text{ is integer and } 1 < x \leq 10\}$ )

- **Membership:** Element belonging to (or a member of) a set  
(Ex:  $25, 64 \in \mathcal{S}$  and  $50, 72 \notin \mathcal{S}$ )
- **Cardinality:** Number of elements in a set (Ex:  $|\mathcal{S}| = 9$ )
- **Finite Set:** Set having finite cardinality (Ex: The set,  $\mathcal{S}$ )
- **Infinite Set:** Set having infinite ( $\infty$ ) cardinality  
(Ex:  $\mathcal{T} = \{1, 2, 4, 8, 16, \dots\} = \{2^y \mid y \text{ is integer and } y \geq 0\}$ )

**Subset:** A set ( $\mathcal{A}$ ) is a subset of another set ( $\mathcal{B}$ ) iff each element of  $\mathcal{A}$  is also a member of  $\mathcal{B}$ . Formally,  $\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B}$  iff  $\forall x [x \in \mathcal{A} \Rightarrow x \in \mathcal{B}]$ .

Hence,  $\mathcal{A} \not\subseteq \mathcal{B}$  iff  $\neg \forall x [x \in \mathcal{A} \Rightarrow x \in \mathcal{B}] \equiv \exists x [x \in \mathcal{A} \wedge x \notin \mathcal{B}]$ .

(Ex: Let  $\mathcal{R} = \{z \mid z \text{ is composite integer and } 2 \leq z \leq 100\}$ , so  $\mathcal{S} \subseteq \mathcal{R}$ )

**Equal Sets:**  $\mathcal{A} = \mathcal{B}$  iff  $[(\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B}) \wedge (\mathcal{B} \subseteq \mathcal{A})] \equiv \forall x [x \in \mathcal{A} \Leftrightarrow x \in \mathcal{B}]$

**Proper Subset:**  $\mathcal{A} \subset \mathcal{B}$  iff  $[\forall x (x \in \mathcal{A} \Rightarrow x \in \mathcal{B}) \wedge \exists y (y \in \mathcal{B} \wedge y \notin \mathcal{A})]$

**Null Set:** Set containing NO element, denoted using  $\phi$  or  $\{\}$

(Ex:  $\mathcal{Q} = \{z \mid x + y = z \text{ and all } x, y, z \text{ are odd}\} = \phi$ )

Note:  $|\phi| = 0$ , but  $\phi \neq \{0\}$  and  $\phi \neq \{\phi\}$  (since,  $|\{0\}| = |\{\phi\}| = 1$ )

# Power Set and Set Properties

**Power Set:** Set of all possible subsets of a set ( $\mathcal{A}$ ), denoted as  $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{A})$  or  $2^{\mathcal{A}}$

(Ex: Let  $\mathcal{A} = \{1, 2, 3\}$ ,

Thus,  $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{A}) = \{\phi, \{1\}, \{2\}, \{3\}, \{1, 2\}, \{1, 3\}, \{2, 3\}, \{1, 2, 3\}\}$ )

**Cardinality:**  $|\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{A})| = 2^{|\mathcal{A}|}$  (Why?)

*Proof:* Let  $|\mathcal{A}| = n$ . There are  $\binom{n}{k}$  subsets of size  $k$  possible (for any  $k$ ,  $0 \leq k \leq n$ ). So, the total number of subsets =  $\sum_{i=0}^n \binom{n}{k} = 2^n$ .

**Properties:** For sets  $\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{B}, \mathcal{C}$ , we have the following:

- $\mathcal{A} \subset \mathcal{B} \Rightarrow \mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B}$ , but  $\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B} \not\Rightarrow \mathcal{A} \subset \mathcal{B}$ .
- $(\mathcal{A} \subset \mathcal{B})$  if and only if  $[(\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B}) \wedge (\mathcal{A} \neq \mathcal{B})]$ .
- $(\mathcal{A} \neq \mathcal{B})$  if and only if  $(\mathcal{A} \not\subseteq \mathcal{B}) \vee (\mathcal{B} \not\subseteq \mathcal{A})$ .
- $\phi \subseteq \mathcal{A}$ . If  $\mathcal{A} \neq \phi$ , then  $\phi \subset \mathcal{A}$ .  $\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{A}$  and  $\mathcal{A} \in \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{A})$ .
- If  $(\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B})$ , then  $|\mathcal{A}| \leq |\mathcal{B}|$ .  
If  $(\mathcal{A} \subset \mathcal{B})$ , then  $|\mathcal{A}| < |\mathcal{B}|$ .  
If  $(\mathcal{A} = \mathcal{B})$ , then  $|\mathcal{A}| = |\mathcal{B}|$ .
- If  $(\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B})$  and  $(\mathcal{B} \subseteq \mathcal{C})$ , then  $(\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{C})$ .  
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# Frequently-Used Set Examples and Notations

## Popular Set Examples:

$\mathbb{N}$  = Set of Non-negative natural numbers =  $\{0, 1, 2, \dots\}$

$\mathbb{Z}$  = Set of Integers =  $\{\dots, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, \dots\}$

$\mathbb{Z}^+$  = Set of Positive Integers =  $\{x \in \mathbb{Z} \mid x > 0\}$

$\mathbb{Q}$  = Set of Rational Numbers =  $\{\frac{a}{b} \mid a, b \in \mathbb{Z}, b \neq 0\}$

$\mathbb{Q}^+$  = Set of Positive Rational Numbers =  $\{r \in \mathbb{Q} \mid r > 0\}$

$\mathbb{Q}^*$  = Set of Non-zero Rational Numbers =  $\{r \in \mathbb{Q} \mid r \neq 0\}$

$\mathbb{R}$  = Set of Real Numbers

$\mathbb{R}^+$  = Set of Positive Real Numbers

$\mathbb{R}^*$  = Set of Non-zero Real Numbers

$\mathbb{C}$  = Set of Complex Numbers =  $\{a + ib \mid a, b \in \mathbb{R}, i^2 = -1\}$

$\mathbb{C}^*$  = Set of Non-zero Complex Numbers =  $\{c \in \mathbb{C} \mid c \neq 0\}$

## Frequently-Used Notations:

- For each  $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ ,  $\mathbb{Z}_n = \{0, 1, 2, \dots, n-1\}$

- For real numbers,  $a, b$  with  $a < b$ , we define intervals as follows:

(Closed)  $[a, b] = \{x \mid a \leq x \leq b\}$       (Open)  $(a, b) = \{x \mid a < x < b\}$

(Half-Open)  $(a, b] = \{x \mid a < x \leq b\}$     and     $[a, b) = \{x \mid a \leq x < b\}$

# Counting using Set Theory

Prove that,  $\binom{n}{r+1} = \frac{n-r}{r+1} \binom{n}{r}$

**Counting:** Total number of  $(r+1)$ -element subsets, formed from all  $r$ -element subsets by adding an element from  $(n-r)$  remaining elements, is,  $m = (n-r)\binom{n}{r}$ .

Ex: Let  $n = 4$  and  $S = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ . All 2-element subsets are,  $\mathcal{A}_1 = \{1, 2\}$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_2 = \{1, 3\}$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_3 = \{1, 4\}$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_4 = \{2, 3\}$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_5 = \{2, 4\}$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_6 = \{3, 4\}$ . From each  $\mathcal{A}_i$ s, a 3-element subset can be formed in two ways. So, total possibilities  $= 2 \times \binom{4}{2} = 12$ .

**Repetition:** Each  $(r+1)$  element subset can be formed from  $(r+1)$  different  $r$ -element subsets. So, the total choice reduces to,  $\binom{n}{r+1} = \frac{m}{r+1} = \frac{n-r}{r+1} \binom{n}{r}$ .

Ex: 3-element subset  $\{1, 2, 3\}$  can be formed from  $\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2, \mathcal{A}_4$  by adding an element to each. So, reduced number of possibilities  $= \frac{12}{3} = 4 = \binom{4}{3}$

Prove that,  $\binom{r}{r} + \binom{r+1}{r} + \dots + \binom{n-1}{r} + \binom{n}{r} = \binom{n+1}{r+1}$

Let the  $(n+1)$ -element set be  $= \{1, 2, \dots, n, n+1\}$ . From  $(n+1)$ -element set, choosing  $(r+1)$ -element subsets with smallest element  $i$  can be done in  $\binom{n+1-i}{r}$  ways. So, all such possible choice leads to,  $\sum_{i=1}^{(n+1)-(r+1)} \binom{n+1-i}{r} = \binom{n+1}{r+1}$ , implying the proof.

# Counting using Set Theory

Prove that,  $\sum_{i=0}^n i \binom{n}{i} = n \cdot 2^{n-1}$

From an  $n$ -element set, Size of a subset with  $i$  elements + Size of its complement subset =  $i + (n - i) = n$  and there are  $\binom{n}{i}$  number of these each.

Therefore,  $2 \sum_{i=0}^n i \binom{n}{i} = n \sum_{i=0}^n \binom{n}{i} = n \cdot 2^n$ , implying the proof.

Prove that, Number of Summands of  $n$  is  $2^{n-1}$ .

Consider,  $n = 4$ .

Summand	Subset Correspondence
$1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 1 + 1 + 1 + 1$	$\phi$
$2 + 1 + 1 = (1+1) + 1 + 1$	$\{1\}$
$1 + 2 + 1 = 1 + (1+1) + 1$	$\{2\}$
$1 + 1 + 2 = 1 + 1 + (1+1)$	$\{3\}$
$3 + 1 = (1+1+1) + 1$	$\{1, 2\}$
$2 + 2 = (1+1) + (1+1)$	$\{1, 3\}$
$1 + 3 = 1 + (1+1+1)$	$\{2, 3\}$
$4 = (1+1+1+1)$	$\{1, 2, 3\}$

$\therefore$  Number of summands of  $n$  = Number of subsets of an  $(n - 1)$ -element set =  $2^{n-1}$ .

# Set Operations

For two sets,  $\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{B} \in \mathcal{U}$  (universal set), the following operations are defined:

(Ex: Let,  $\mathcal{A} = \{1, 2, 3\}$  and  $\mathcal{B} = \{2, 3, 4\}$ )

**Union:**  $\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B} = \{x \mid x \in \mathcal{A} \vee x \in \mathcal{B}\}$  (Ex:  $\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B} = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ )

**Intersection:**  $\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B} = \{x \mid x \in \mathcal{A} \wedge x \in \mathcal{B}\}$  (Ex:  $\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B} = \{2, 3\}$ )

**Complement:**  $\overline{\mathcal{A}} = \{x \mid x \in \mathcal{U} \wedge x \notin \mathcal{A}\}$

**Relative Complement:**  $\mathcal{A} - \mathcal{B} = \{x \mid x \in \mathcal{A} \wedge x \notin \mathcal{B}\} = \mathcal{A} \cap \overline{\mathcal{B}}$  (Ex:  $\mathcal{A} - \mathcal{B} = \{1\}$ )

**Symmetric Difference:**

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{A} \Delta \mathcal{B} &= \{x \mid (x \in \mathcal{A} \vee x \in \mathcal{B}) \wedge x \notin \mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B}\} \\ &= \{x \mid x \in \mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B} \wedge x \notin \mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B}\} = (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}) - (\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B}) \\ &= \{x \mid x \in \mathcal{A} \cap \overline{\mathcal{B}} \wedge x \in \overline{\mathcal{A}} \cap \mathcal{B}\} = (\mathcal{A} \cap \overline{\mathcal{B}}) \cup (\overline{\mathcal{A}} \cap \mathcal{B}) \\ &= (\mathcal{A} - \mathcal{B}) \cup (\mathcal{B} - \mathcal{A}) = \mathcal{B} \Delta \mathcal{A} \quad (\text{Ex: } \mathcal{A} \Delta \mathcal{B} = \{1, 4\})\end{aligned}$$

**Mutual Disjoint:** Sets,  $\mathcal{A}$  and  $\mathcal{B}$ , are mutually disjoint (or disjoint), when  $\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B} = \phi$ .

In such a case,  $\mathcal{A} \Delta \mathcal{B} = \mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}$ ,  $\mathcal{A} \cap \overline{\mathcal{B}} = \mathcal{A}$  and  $\overline{\mathcal{A}} \cap \mathcal{B} = \mathcal{B}$ .

**The following statements are equivalent:**

(Proof Left as an Exercise!)

- (a)  $\mathcal{A} \subseteq \mathcal{B}$ ,      (b)  $\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B} = \mathcal{B}$ ,      (c)  $\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B} = \mathcal{A}$ ,      (d)  $\overline{\mathcal{B}} \subseteq \overline{\mathcal{A}}$

# Laws of Set Theory

For three sets,  $\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{B}, \mathcal{C} \in \mathcal{U}$ , the rules given as follows:

Name of the Law	Mathematical Expressions
Double Complement:	$\overline{\overline{\mathcal{A}}} = \mathcal{A}$
DeMorgan's Laws:	$\overline{\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}} = \overline{\mathcal{A}} \cap \overline{\mathcal{B}}, \quad \overline{\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B}} = \overline{\mathcal{A}} \cup \overline{\mathcal{B}}$
Commutative Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B} = \mathcal{B} \cup \mathcal{A}, \quad \mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B} = \mathcal{B} \cap \mathcal{A}$
Associative Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup (\mathcal{B} \cup \mathcal{C}) = (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}) \cup \mathcal{C}, \quad \mathcal{A} \cap (\mathcal{B} \cap \mathcal{C}) = (\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B}) \cap \mathcal{C}$
Distributive Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup (\mathcal{B} \cap \mathcal{C}) = (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}) \cap (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{C}), \quad \mathcal{A} \cap (\mathcal{B} \cup \mathcal{C}) = (\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B}) \cup (\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{C})$
Idempotent Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{A} = \mathcal{A}, \quad \mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{A} = \mathcal{A}$
Identity Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup \phi = \mathcal{A}, \quad \mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{U} = \mathcal{A}$
Inverse Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup \overline{\mathcal{A}} = \mathcal{U}, \quad \mathcal{A} \cap \overline{\mathcal{A}} = \phi$
Domination Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{U} = \mathcal{U}, \quad \mathcal{A} \cap \phi = \phi$
Absorption Laws:	$\mathcal{A} \cup (\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B}) = \mathcal{A}, \quad \mathcal{A} \cap (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}) = \mathcal{A}$

An Example Proof Sketch:  $\mathcal{A} \cup (\mathcal{B} \cap \mathcal{C}) = (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}) \cap (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{C})$

$$\begin{aligned}x \in \mathcal{A} \cup (\mathcal{B} \cap \mathcal{C}) &\Leftrightarrow (x \in \mathcal{A}) \vee (x \in \mathcal{B} \cap \mathcal{C}) \Leftrightarrow (x \in \mathcal{A}) \vee ((x \in \mathcal{B}) \wedge (x \in \mathcal{C})) \\&\Leftrightarrow ((x \in \mathcal{A}) \vee (x \in \mathcal{B})) \wedge ((x \in \mathcal{A}) \vee (x \in \mathcal{C})) \\&\Leftrightarrow (x \in \mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}) \wedge (x \in \mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{C}) \Leftrightarrow x \in (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}) \cap (\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{C})\end{aligned}$$



# Some Derived Laws and Observations

$$A_1 = A_1 \cup (A_1 \cap A_2) \cup (A_1 \cap A_2 \cap A_3) \cup (A_1 \cap A_2 \cap A_3 \cap A_4) \cup \dots \quad (\forall i, A_i \in \mathcal{U})$$

*Proof:*  $A_1 \cup (A_1 \cap A_2) = A_1$ ,  $(A_1 \cap A_2) \cup (A_1 \cap A_2 \cap A_3) = (A_1 \cap A_2)$ ,  
 $(A_1 \cap A_2 \cap A_3) \cup (A_1 \cap A_2 \cap A_3 \cap A_4) = (A_1 \cap A_2 \cap A_3)$ , and so on ...

Similarly,  $A_1 = A_1 \cap (A_1 \cup A_2) \cap (A_1 \cup A_2 \cup A_3) \cap (A_1 \cup A_2 \cup A_3 \cup A_4) \cap \dots$

$$\overline{A \Delta B} = A \Delta \overline{B} = \overline{A} \Delta B$$

*Proof:* As,  $A \Delta B = (A \cup B) - (A \cap B)$  and  $A \Delta \overline{B} = (A \cap \overline{B}) \cup (\overline{A} \cap B)$ , so

$$\overline{A \Delta B} = \overline{(A \cup B) - (A \cap B)} = (\overline{A \cup B}) \cup \overline{(A \cap B)} = (\overline{A} \cap \overline{B}) \cup (\overline{A} \cap B) = \overline{A} \Delta B \text{ and}$$

$$\overline{A \Delta B} = \overline{(A \cap B) \cup (A \cap \overline{B})} = (\overline{A \cap B}) \cap (\overline{A \cap \overline{B}}) = (\overline{A} \cup \overline{B}) \cap (\overline{A} \cup B) = A \Delta \overline{B}$$

$$A - (B \cup C) = (A - B) \cap (A - C) \quad (A \cup B) - C = (A - C) \cup (B - C)$$

$$A - (B \cap C) = (A - B) \cup (A - C) \quad (A \cap B) - C = (A - C) \cap (B - C)$$

$$(A \cap B) - (A \cap C) = A \cap (B - C)$$

$$\overline{A \Delta B} = A \Delta \overline{B} = \overline{B} \Delta A = \overline{B} \Delta \overline{A}$$

$$A \Delta (B \Delta C) = (A \Delta B) \Delta C$$

$$A \cap (B \Delta C) = (A \cap B) \Delta (A \cap C)$$

# Index Set and Partitions

## Index Set

**Definition:** Let  $\mathcal{I} \neq \phi$  and  $\forall i \in \mathcal{I}$ , let  $\mathcal{A}_i \subseteq \mathcal{U}$  (universal set). Then,  $\mathcal{I}$  is called an *index set*, and each  $i \in \mathcal{I}$  is an index.

**Set Operations:** (Union)  $\bigcup_{i \in \mathcal{I}} \mathcal{A}_i = \{x \mid \exists i \in \mathcal{I}, x \in \mathcal{A}_i\}$

(Intersection)  $\bigcap_{i \in \mathcal{I}} \mathcal{A}_i = \{x \mid \forall i \in \mathcal{I}, x \in \mathcal{A}_i\}$

**Generalized DeMorgan's Law:**  $\overline{\bigcup_{i \in \mathcal{I}} \mathcal{A}_i} = \bigcap_{i \in \mathcal{I}} \overline{\mathcal{A}_i}$  and  $\overline{\bigcap_{i \in \mathcal{I}} \mathcal{A}_i} = \bigcup_{i \in \mathcal{I}} \overline{\mathcal{A}_i}$

## Partition of a Set

**Definition:** Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a non-empty set. A family of non-empty subsets,  $\{\mathcal{S}_i \mid i \in \mathcal{I}\}$  ( $\mathcal{I}$  being the index set) is said to form a partition of  $\mathcal{S}$  if the following two condition holds:

- $\bigcup_{i \in \mathcal{I}} \mathcal{S}_i = \mathcal{S}$  (Complete Set Cover), and
- $\mathcal{S}_i \cap \mathcal{S}_j = \phi, \forall i, j \in \mathcal{I}$  and  $i \neq j$  (Pairwise Disjoint).

**Example:** Let  $\mathcal{Z}_0 = \{3m \mid m \text{ is an integer}\} = \{0, \pm 3, \pm 6, \dots\}$ ,  
 $\mathcal{Z}_1 = \{3m + 1 \mid m \text{ is an integer}\} = \{\dots, -8, -5, -2, +1, +4, +7, \dots\}$   
 $\mathcal{Z}_2 = \{3m + 2 \mid m \text{ is an integer}\} = \{\dots, -7, -4, -1, +2, +5, +8, \dots\}$   
Now,  $\mathcal{Z}_0 \cup \mathcal{Z}_1 \cup \mathcal{Z}_2 = \mathbb{Z}$  and  $\mathcal{Z}_0 \cap \mathcal{Z}_1 = \mathcal{Z}_1 \cap \mathcal{Z}_2 = \mathcal{Z}_2 \cap \mathcal{Z}_0 = \phi$

# Thank You!