

Solutions to Exercises from ‘Algebra: Chapter 0’

ABSTRACT. Solutions to exercises from the book 'Algebra: Chapter 0' by Paolo Aluffi.

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Preface

This document contains my attempt at writing (hopefully correct!) solutions to exercises from Aluffi's book, while engaging in some self-study of modern abstract algebra with the ultimate aim of teaching myself some modern algebraic geometry.

CHAPTER 1

Preliminaries: Set theory and categories

1. Naive set theory

EXERCISE 1.1. Let $U = \{x \mid x \notin x\}$. Then, $U \notin U \iff U \in U$, a contradiction. This is Russell's paradox. Either we assume the *set of all sets* doesn't exist, or we need to give up the axiom of *unrestricted comprehension* in set theory.

EXERCISE 1.2. Suppose \sim is an equivalence relation on a set S . For every element $a \in S$, define the *equivalence class* of a (with respect to \sim) by

$$[a]_{\sim} := \{b \in S \mid b \sim a\}.$$

Then, we note that due to *reflexivity*, the equivalence class $[a]_{\sim}$ of every element $a \in S$ contains a , and hence, is nonempty. Also, $[a]_{\sim} \subset S$, and therefore, $\bigcup_{a \in S} [a]_{\sim} = S$. Finally, we show the equivalence classes are mutually disjoint. Indeed, for any two elements $a, b \in S$, if $[a]_{\sim}$ and $[b]_{\sim}$ are disjoint, then there is nothing to prove. So, suppose $[a]_{\sim} \cap [b]_{\sim}$ is nonempty. Then, there exists some $c \in S$ that belongs to such an intersection. Thus, $c \sim a$ and $c \sim b$. By symmetry, $a \sim c$, and thus, by transitivity, $a \sim b$, which by symmetry again, implies $b \sim a$. Therefore, for all $x \in [a]_{\sim}$, we have $x \sim a$, and since $a \sim b$, by transitivity, $x \sim b$, which implies $x \in [b]_{\sim}$, from which we conclude $[a]_{\sim} \subset [b]_{\sim}$. We can similarly show $[b]_{\sim} \subset [a]_{\sim}$. Hence, $[a]_{\sim} = [b]_{\sim}$. This establishes equivalence classes are mutually disjoint. Hence, the set \mathcal{P}_{\sim} of equivalence classes of S is indeed a partition of S .

EXERCISE 1.3. Suppose \mathcal{P} is a partition on a set S . Define a relation \sim on S as follows: For any two elements $a, b \in S$, $a \sim b$ iff a and b belong to the same set in the partition. Then, it is easy to check \sim is indeed an equivalence relation on S . \mathcal{P} is, therefore, the corresponding partition of the aforesaid equivalence relation, and we are done.

EXERCISE 1.4. Note the set of equivalence relations on a set S are in a one-to-one correspondence with the set of partitions of S . Thus, the number of different equivalence relations that may be defined on $S = \{1, 2, 3\}$ equals the number of partitions of S , and this number equals 5, since the partitions of S are

$$\{\{1\}, \{2\}, \{3\}\}, \{\{1, 2\}, \{3\}\}, \{\{1, 3\}, \{2\}\}, \{\{2, 3\}, \{1\}\}, \{\{1, 2, 3\}\}.$$

The above partitions are also written as 1|2|3, 12|3, 13|2, 23|1, 123.

EXERCISE 1.5. An example of a relation R (defined on a set S) that is reflexive and symmetric but not transitive is the following:

$$R = \{(1, 1), (2, 2), (3, 3), (1, 2), (2, 1), (2, 3), (3, 2)\}, \text{ where } S = \{1, 2, 3\}.$$

EXERCISE 1.6. Define a relation \sim on the set \mathbb{R} of real numbers by setting

$$a \sim b \iff b - a \in \mathbb{Z}.$$

We claim \sim is an equivalence relation. To that end, note, for all $a \in \mathbb{R}$, we have $a \sim a$, since $a - a = 0 \in \mathbb{Z}$. Therefore, \sim is reflexive. Also, if $a \sim b$, then $b - a \in \mathbb{Z}$, which implies $a - b \in \mathbb{Z}$, and thus, $b \sim a$. Therefore, \sim is symmetric. Finally, suppose $a \sim b$ and $b \sim c$. Then, $b - a, c - b \in \mathbb{Z}$, and thus, $c - a = (c - b) + (b - a) \in \mathbb{Z}$. Thus, \sim is transitive. Therefore, \sim is an equivalence relation on \mathbb{R} .

(Description of \sim) Note all reals that have the same decimal expansion belong to the same equivalence class under \sim . Thus, $[0]_\sim = \mathbb{Z}$, and for any $0 < \alpha < 1$, $[\alpha]_\sim = \{n + \alpha \mid n \in \mathbb{Z}\}$. This takes care of all the reals, since each real can always be written as $n + \alpha$, for some $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $0 < \alpha < 1$. Therefore, a ‘compelling’ description for \mathbb{R}/\sim is the unit interval $[0, 1]$, such that the endpoints, 0 and 1, are ‘glued’ together. In other words, it is a ‘loop’ or a 1-sphere.

Define a relation \approx on the plane $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}$ as follows:

$$(a_1, a_2) \approx (b_1, b_2) \iff b_1 - a_1 \in \mathbb{Z} \text{ and } b_2 - a_2 \in \mathbb{Z}.$$

Then, just as above, it is easy to show \approx defines an equivalence relation on $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}$. We note $[(0, 0)]_\approx = \{(m, n) \mid m, n \in \mathbb{Z}\}$, and for any $0 < \alpha, \beta < 1$, $[(\alpha, \beta)]_\approx = \{(m + \alpha, n + \beta) \mid m, n \in \mathbb{Z}\}$. Thus, a ‘compelling’ description of $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}/\approx$ is the unit square $[0, 1] \times [0, 1]$ with the four corners joined together, so that it forms a 2-sphere.

2. Functions between sets

EXERCISE 2.1. We claim the number of bijections from a set S with n elements to itself is $n!$. To begin with, any element in S can be mapped to any of the n possible elements in S . Then, the next element in S can be mapped to any of the remaining $n - 1$ elements in S , and so on, with the last element in S being mapped to the last remaining element in S . Thus, the number of bijections equals $n \cdot (n - 1) \cdot \dots \cdot 1 = n!$, which proves our claim.

EXERCISE 2.2. Assume $A \neq \emptyset$, and let $f : A \rightarrow B$ be a function. We claim f has a right inverse iff it is surjective.

(\Leftarrow) Suppose f has a right inverse, $g : B \rightarrow A$, say. Then, $f \circ g = 1_B$. Thus, for all $b \in B$, $b = 1_B(b) = (f \circ g)(b) = f(g(b)) = f(a)$, where $g(b) = a \in A$. This shows f is surjective.

(\Rightarrow) Suppose f is surjective. Then, for any $b \in B$, the fiber of f over b is nonempty. Thus, $\{f^{-1}(b)\}_{b \in B}$ is a family of nonempty sets, and therefore, using the *axiom of choice*, we can construct a function $g : B \rightarrow A$ as follows: For all $b \in B$, $g(b) = a$ for some $a \in f^{-1}(b)$. Hence, for all $b \in B$, $(f \circ g)(b) = f(g(b)) = f(a) = b = 1_B(b)$, and so, $f \circ g = 1_B$. This establishes g is the right inverse of f , and we are done.

EXERCISE 2.3. Suppose $f : A \rightarrow B$ is a bijection. Then, f has an inverse $f^{-1} : B \rightarrow A$ such that $f^{-1} \circ f = 1_A$ and $f \circ f^{-1} = 1_B$. Clearly, f is an inverse of f^{-1} , showing f^{-1} is also a bijection.

Suppose $f : A \rightarrow B$ and $g : B \rightarrow C$ are bijections. We claim $g \circ f : A \rightarrow C$ is also a bijection. To that end, we show $f^{-1} \circ g^{-1} : C \rightarrow A$ is the inverse of $g \circ f$. Indeed, $(g \circ f) \circ (f^{-1} \circ g^{-1}) = g \circ (f \circ f^{-1}) \circ g^{-1} = g \circ 1_B \circ g^{-1} = g \circ g^{-1} = 1_C$. And, $(f^{-1} \circ g^{-1}) \circ (g \circ f) = f^{-1} \circ (g^{-1} \circ g) \circ f = f^{-1} \circ 1_B \circ f = f^{-1} \circ f = 1_A$, and we are done.

EXERCISE 2.4. We show ‘isomorphism’ is an equivalence relation on any set of sets.

(Reflexivity) For all sets A , $1_A : A \rightarrow A$ is a natural bijection, and thus, $A \cong A$.

(Symmetry) Suppose $A \cong B$ for any two sets A, B . Then, there exists a bijection $f : A \rightarrow B$, such that its inverse $f^{-1} : B \rightarrow A$ is also a bijection (as shown in the above exercise.) Thus, $B \cong A$.

(Transitivity) Finally, suppose for any three sets, A, B and C , $A \cong B$ and $B \cong C$, with $f : A \rightarrow B$ and $g : B \rightarrow C$ as bijections. Then, from the previous exercise, $g \circ f : A \rightarrow C$ is also a bijection, and thus $A \cong C$.

Thus, our original claim is established.