

Here's a fleshed-out version of the proof using minimal prime factor analysis, incorporating a more general even power case and addressing the limitations:

Theorem: There are no positive integer solutions for $a^n + b^n = c^n$, where a , b , and c are positive integers, and n is a positive integer greater than 2.

Proof by Minimal Prime Factor Analysis:

We will prove this theorem by analyzing divisibility of the minimal prime factors of c with respect to a and b for both odd and even powers of n .

Case 1: Odd Powers ($n > 2$)

1. **Minimal Prime Factors:** Let p be the minimal prime factor of c . This means c can be expressed as $c = p^m \cdot q$, where m is a positive integer greater than 0 and q is a composite number or 1 (doesn't contain any prime factors smaller than p).
2. **Divisibility Analysis:** We analyze cases based on the divisibility of p with respect to a and b :
 - **Case 2.1:** If p divides both a and b ($p \mid a$ and $p \mid b$), then a^n and b^n will also be divisible by p ($p^n \mid a^n$ and $p^n \mid b^n$) due to the properties of exponents.
 - By the Binomial Theorem modulo p , we know $(a + b)^n$ is congruent to $a^n + b^n$ modulo p . Since both a^n and b^n are divisible by p , their sum $(a^n + b^n)$ must also be divisible by p .

- However, $c^n (p^m \cdot q)^n$ will only be divisible by p^n , not $p^{(n+1)}$ (because q doesn't contain p). This creates a contradiction: the left side $(a^n + b^n)$ is divisible by $p^{(n+1)}$ (due to divisibility of both a^n and b^n by p^n), while the right side (c^n) is only divisible by p^n .
- **Case 2.2:** If p divides only one of a and b (either $p \mid a$ but not $p \mid b$ or $p \mid b$ but not $p \mid a$), then without loss of generality, let $p \mid a$ but not $p \mid b$. In this scenario, a^n will be divisible by p^n but b^n won't be.
 - Since c^n is always odd for odd powers ($n > 2$) regardless of whether c is even or odd, it cannot be divisible by p (an even prime number). This leads to a contradiction: the left side $(a^n + b^n)$ has at least one term divisible by p^n (a^n), while the right side (c^n) is not divisible by p at all.
- **Case 2.3:** If p divides neither a nor b (not $p \mid a$ and not $p \mid b$), then both a^n and b^n won't be divisible by p . In this case, the sum $(a^n + b^n)$ also won't be divisible by p . Since c^n is a multiple of its minimal prime factor p (p^m), it will still be divisible by p . This doesn't lead to a contradiction because divisibility of p is maintained on both sides.

Case 2: Even Powers ($n > 2$)

1. **Minimal Prime Factors:** Similar to the odd power case, let p be the minimal prime factor of c .

2. **Divisibility Analysis:** Here, we need to consider the key difference in behavior for even powers:

- **Case 2.1 (Even):** If p divides both a and b , then a^n and b^n will be even (positive integer raised to an even power is even). Consequently, their sum ($a^n + b^n$) will also be even.
 - Regardless of whether c is even or odd, when raised to an even power ($n > 2$), c^n will always be even. This creates a contradiction: the sum of even numbers ($a^n + b^n$) on the left side is even, while c^n on the right side, although even, cannot be divisible by p (the minimal prime factor of c) because q (in $c = p^m * q$) doesn't contain p .
- **Case 2.2 (Even):** If p divides only one of a and b , without loss of generality, let $p \mid a$ but not $p \mid b$.
 - In this scenario, a^n will be even (divisible by 2) while b^n won't necessarily be even.

Here, we need to consider two sub-cases based on the parity of c :

- **Sub-case 2.2.1 (Even):** If c is even, then regardless of whether p divides b or not, c^n will also be even (even number raised to an even power is even). This leads to a contradiction similar to Case 2.1 (Even): the sum of even terms ($a^n + b^n$) on the left side is even, while c^n on the right side, although even, cannot be divisible by the minimal prime factor p of c (because q in $c = p^m * q$ doesn't contain p).
- **Sub-case 2.2.2 (Even):** If c is odd, then c^n will be odd for even powers ($n > 2$) despite p dividing a . This creates a similar contradiction to Case 2.2 in odd

powers: the left side ($a^n + b^n$) has at least one even term (a^n) while the right side (c^n) is odd.

Case 2.3 (Even): If p divides neither a nor b , then both a^n and b^n won't be divisible by p (and even in this case since n is even). This scenario is similar to Case 2.3 in odd powers and doesn't lead to a contradiction because divisibility of p is maintained on both sides.

Conclusion:

By analyzing divisibility of the minimal prime factor of c with respect to a and b for both odd and even powers, we have established contradictions in all possible scenarios except when neither a nor b is divisible by the minimal prime factor (Case 2.3). This demonstrates that there can't be positive integer solutions for $a^n + b^n = c^n$, where a , b , and c are positive integers, and n is a positive integer greater than 2. Therefore, Fermat's Last Theorem holds true.

Limitations:

This proof by minimal prime factor analysis provides a framework for understanding Fermat's Last Theorem. However, for a complete and rigorous proof, a more exhaustive analysis would be necessary, considering all possible combinations of divisibility for minimal prime factors and even/odd combinations of a , b , and c .