

Lecture 2: Set Theory Cont.

04. Jan. 2026

Some features of the natural numbers

$$\mathbb{N} = \{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$$

1). contains zero ($0 \in \mathbb{N}$)

2). if $x \in \mathbb{N}$ then $x+1 \in \mathbb{N}$ also

3). \mathbb{N} is the minimal set satisfying 1). & 2). \rightarrow if X is a set enjoying 1). & 2). then $X \supseteq \mathbb{N}$

An aside

\rightarrow Can model \mathbb{N} in the language of set theory.

\hookrightarrow So let's model 0 as the empty set \emptyset $0 \rightsquigarrow \emptyset = \{\}$

\hookrightarrow Can also model 1 as the all the elements we already have $1 \rightsquigarrow \{\emptyset\}$

\hookrightarrow or $2 \rightsquigarrow \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}$ $3 \rightsquigarrow \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}, \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}\}$ \rightarrow it's like thinking of numbers as the # of elements $\forall n$ the set

We can then say $n+1 \rightsquigarrow \{\text{all actors } \leq n\}$

\rightarrow just a place holder

3). let $\phi(_)$ be a property that any given number might or might not have.
thus $\phi(n) \rightarrow$ "n has property ϕ "

Example: $\phi =$ "is even" Suppose $\phi(0)$ is true and suppose $\phi(n) \implies \phi(n+1)$
then $\phi(n)$ is true for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$

Proof: consider $\Phi = \{n \in \mathbb{N} \text{ s.t. } \phi(n)\}$ $\Phi \subseteq \mathbb{N} \implies \Phi$ satisfies 3). $\implies \Phi \supseteq \mathbb{N} \therefore \Phi = \mathbb{N}$

Well ordering principle

4). Suppose $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ and $X \neq \emptyset$ then X has a smallest element

Method of infinite descent

Theorem: Suppose $\phi(_)$ is a property s.t. if $\phi(x)$ is false (i.e. a counterexample) then $\exists y < x$ s.t. $\phi(y)$ is false (note $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$) then $\phi(n)$ is true $\forall n \in \mathbb{N}$

Proof: $\Phi' := \{n \in \mathbb{N} \text{ s.t. } \neg \phi(n)\} \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ does not have a smallest element so must be \emptyset by well ordered principle (WOP).

\rightarrow Given $n \in \mathbb{N}$ consider the set $N_{<n} \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ \rightarrow the idea is that this set has exactly n elements $= \{0, 1, 2, \dots, n-1\}$

\rightarrow Recall from last time $f: X \rightarrow Y$ is bijective if $\forall y \in Y \exists! x \in X \text{ s.t. } f(x) = y$ AND that any bijection has an inverse defined by $f^{-1}(y) = x$ (unique x)

Lemma: if f is invertible then it is bijective

$$f \circ f^{-1} = \text{id}_Y \quad f^{-1} \circ f = \text{id}_X$$

\rightarrow if $f: X \rightarrow Y$; $g: Y \rightarrow Z$ are bijective then $g \circ f: X \rightarrow Z$ is a bijection

proof:

$$(g \circ f) \circ (f^{-1} g^{-1}) = \text{id}_Z$$
$$(f^{-1} g^{-1}) \circ (g \circ f) = \text{id}_X$$
$$f^{-1} g^{-1} g f = f^{-1} f$$

\rightarrow Consider the collection of all sets define symbol $X \cong Y$ to mean \exists bijection $X \rightarrow Y$

Definition: X is finite if $\exists n$ s.t. $X \cong N_{<n}$ else it is infinite. \rightarrow X is countable if it is finite and $\cong \mathbb{N}$ $\rightarrow |X| < \infty$

Property: if $|X| < \infty$ then there is exactly one $n \in \mathbb{N}$ s.t. $X \cong \mathbb{N}_{<n}$ in this case write $|X| = n$

→ In other words, we want to rule out the possibility that $X \cong \mathbb{N}_{<n}$ and $X \cong \mathbb{N}_{<m}$ and that $m \neq n$

→ Suffices to show that if $\mathbb{N}_{<n} \cong \mathbb{N}_{<m}$ then $n = m$ → We'll prove a theorem that will imply this

Theorem: (Pigeonhole principle)

Suppose $m > n$, $m, n \in \mathbb{N}$ then any $f: \mathbb{N}_{<m} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}_{<n}$ is not injective

equiv: if \exists injective map $\mathbb{N}_{<m} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}_{<n}$ then $m \leq n$

Proof: induction in n base case: $n = 0$ then $\mathbb{N}_{<0} = \emptyset$ if $\exists f: X \rightarrow \emptyset$ then $X = \emptyset$
and if $m > 0$ then $\mathbb{N}_{<m} \neq \emptyset$ because it contained $m-1$.

TBC