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Basic concepts of set theory

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Sets

The terms *set* and *members* are given; they are considered basic concepts without any further official definition. However, the concept of a set is identified as a collection usually.

A specific set can be defined in many different ways, e.g.:

1. By enumerating its members,

- {spring, summer, autumn, winter} is the set of seasons,
- {0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7} or shortly {0, 1, ..., 7} is the set of octal digits, but
- the empty set is denoted by: \emptyset .

2. We can define a set using some common property of its members, constructing a condition that is satisfied by the members (and by the members only). E.g.:

- { a | a is a nonnegative integer and $a < 8$ }

3. We can define a set inductively.

Sets

The fact that an object a is membered in a set A is written as

$$a \in A,$$

where the symbol \in represents the *membership relation*.

To indicate that an object a is not membered in a set A , we can use the notation:

$$a \notin A.$$

For example, let us denote the set of natural numbers by \mathbb{N} , which can be written in the form:

$$\mathbb{N} \ni \{1, 2, 3, \dots\}$$

- 3 is a natural number, which can be expressed as $3 \in \mathbb{N}$,
- 0 is not a natural number, which can be written as $0 \notin \mathbb{N}$.

An inductive definition of a set consists of declaration steps and inductive steps. By using this technique, the inductive definition of the set of natural numbers \mathbb{N} can be the following:

The set of natural numbers \mathbb{N} is defined inductively as follows:

- $1 \in \mathbb{N}$, and
- if $a \in \mathbb{N}$ then $a + 1 \in \mathbb{N}$.

Sets

Let **A** and **B** be two arbitrary sets.

- The set **A** is the *subset* of the set **B**, if all members of **A** are membered in **B**. We denote it as: $A \subseteq B$.
- If $A \subseteq B$ and $B \subseteq A$ then **A** and **B** are equal: $A = B$.
- **A** and **B** are *disjoint* if they have no element in common.
- The *power set* of **A**, denoted by $\wp(A)$ or 2^A , is a set containing all subsets of **A**. E.g.:

$$\wp(\{\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{1}\}) = 2^{\{\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{1}\}} = \{\emptyset, \{\mathbf{0}\}, \{\mathbf{1}\}, \{\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{1}\}\}$$

Basic operations

Let **A** and **B** be two arbitrary sets.

- *union*: $\mathbf{A} \cup \mathbf{B} \Leftrightarrow \{ \mathbf{a} \mid \mathbf{a} \in \mathbf{A} \text{ or } \mathbf{a} \in \mathbf{B} \},$
- *intersection*: $\mathbf{A} \cap \mathbf{B} \Leftrightarrow \{ \mathbf{a} \mid \mathbf{a} \in \mathbf{A} \text{ and } \mathbf{a} \in \mathbf{B} \},$
- *difference*: $\mathbf{A} \setminus \mathbf{B} \Leftrightarrow \{ \mathbf{a} \mid \mathbf{a} \in \mathbf{A} \text{ and } \mathbf{a} \notin \mathbf{B} \}.$
- *symmetrical difference*: $\mathbf{A} \triangle \mathbf{B} \Leftrightarrow (\mathbf{A} \setminus \mathbf{B}) \cup (\mathbf{B} \setminus \mathbf{A}).$

Let **U** be the universal set: the set of all objects under our consideration. (A universal set is a set that contains all the elements or objects of other sets.)

- *complement*: $\overline{\mathbf{A}} \Leftrightarrow \mathbf{U} \setminus \mathbf{A}$

Cartesian product

Let A , B be two arbitrary sets. The *Cartesian product* of the sets A and B is denoted by $A \times B$ and it is defined as a set of all ordered pairs $\langle a, b \rangle$ where $a \in A$ and $b \in B$. Formally:

$$A \times B \Leftrightarrow \{ \langle a, b \rangle \mid a \in A \text{ és } b \in B \}.$$

Note that $\langle a, b \rangle = \langle c, d \rangle$ if and only if $a = c$ and $b = d$.

The *Cartesian product* of the sequence of sets A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n ($n > 0$) can be defined by using n-tuples:

$$A_1 \times A_2 \times \dots \times A_n \Leftrightarrow \{ \langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n \rangle \mid a_i \in A_i \text{ for all } i \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\} \}.$$

The A^n is an abbreviation for $\underbrace{A \times A \times \dots \times A}_{n \text{ times}}$.

Binary relations

Let A , B be two arbitrary sets. R is a *binary relation* between the sets A and B if

$$R \subseteq A \times B.$$

If $A = B$ and so $R \subseteq A \times A$, we can simply say that R is a binary relation on A .

Let $R \subseteq A \times B$ a binary relation.

- The *domain* of R :

$$\text{dom}(R) = \{ a \mid a \in A \text{ and there exists } b \in B \text{ such that } (a, b) \in R \},$$

- The *range* of R :

$$\text{rng}(R) = \{ b \mid b \in B \text{ and there exists } a \in A \text{ such that } (a, b) \in R \}.$$

Binary relations

Let R be a binary relation on A , and so $R \subseteq A \times A$.

R is called

- *reflexive*, if $a R a$ for all $a \in A$,
- *antireflexive*, if there is no such $a \in A$ where $a R a$,
- *symmetric*, if it is true that when $a R b$ then $b R a$,
- *antisymmetric*, if no $a R b$ and $b R a$ unless $a = b$,
- *asymmetric*, if there is no $a \in A$ and $b \in A$ such that $a R b$ and $b R a$,
- *transitive*, if it is true that when $a R b$ and $b R c$ then $a R c$.

Function

Let R be a binary relation so that $R \subseteq A \times B$.

R is called

- *injective* (or *left unique*), if it is true that

when $a R c$ and $b R c$ then $a = b$

- *surjective* (*right total*), if $\text{rng}(R) = B$,
- *left total*, if $\text{dom}(R) = A$,
- *bijective*, if it is *injective* and *surjective*.
- *functional* (or *right unique*), if it is true that

when $a R b$ and $a R c$ then $b = c$

- *function*, if it is *functional* and *left total*.