

set.1 Pairs, Tuples, Cartesian Products

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sec Sets have no order to their elements. We just think of them as an unordered explanation collection. So if we want to represent order, we use *ordered pairs* $\langle x, y \rangle$. In an unordered pair $\{x, y\}$, the order does not matter: $\{x, y\} = \{y, x\}$. In an ordered pair, it does: if $x \neq y$, then $\langle x, y \rangle \neq \langle y, x \rangle$.

Sometimes we also want ordered sequences of more than two objects, e.g., *triples* $\langle x, y, z \rangle$, *quadruples* $\langle x, y, z, u \rangle$, and so on. In fact, we can think of triples as special ordered pairs, where the first element is itself an ordered pair: $\langle x, y, z \rangle$ is short for $\langle \langle x, y \rangle, z \rangle$. The same is true for quadruples: $\langle x, y, z, u \rangle$ is short for $\langle \langle \langle x, y \rangle, z \rangle, u \rangle$, and so on. In general, we talk of *ordered n -tuples* $\langle x_1, \dots, x_n \rangle$.

Definition set.1 (Cartesian product). Given sets X and Y , their *Cartesian product* $X \times Y$ is $\{\langle x, y \rangle : x \in X \text{ and } y \in Y\}$.

Example set.2. If $X = \{0, 1\}$, and $Y = \{1, a, b\}$, then their product is

$$X \times Y = \{\langle 0, 1 \rangle, \langle 0, a \rangle, \langle 0, b \rangle, \langle 1, 1 \rangle, \langle 1, a \rangle, \langle 1, b \rangle\}.$$

Example set.3. If X is a set, the product of X with itself, $X \times X$, is also written X^2 . It is the set of *all* pairs $\langle x, y \rangle$ with $x, y \in X$. The set of all triples $\langle x, y, z \rangle$ is X^3 , and so on. We can give an inductive definition:

$$\begin{aligned} X^1 &= X \\ X^{k+1} &= X^k \times X \end{aligned}$$

Problem set.1. List all **elements** of $\{1, 2, 3\}^3$.

Proposition set.4. If X has n **elements** and Y has m **elements**, then $X \times Y$ has $n \cdot m$ **elements**.

Proof. For every **element** x in X , there are m **elements** of the form $\langle x, y \rangle \in X \times Y$. Let $Y_x = \{\langle x, y \rangle : y \in Y\}$. Since whenever $x_1 \neq x_2$, $\langle x_1, y \rangle \neq \langle x_2, y \rangle$, $Y_{x_1} \cap Y_{x_2} = \emptyset$. But if $X = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$, then $X \times Y = Y_{x_1} \cup \dots \cup Y_{x_n}$, and so has $n \cdot m$ **elements**.

To visualize this, arrange the **elements** of $X \times Y$ in a grid:

$$\begin{array}{l} Y_{x_1} = \{ \langle x_1, y_1 \rangle \quad \langle x_1, y_2 \rangle \quad \dots \quad \langle x_1, y_m \rangle \} \\ Y_{x_2} = \{ \langle x_2, y_1 \rangle \quad \langle x_2, y_2 \rangle \quad \dots \quad \langle x_2, y_m \rangle \} \\ \vdots \\ Y_{x_n} = \{ \langle x_n, y_1 \rangle \quad \langle x_n, y_2 \rangle \quad \dots \quad \langle x_n, y_m \rangle \} \end{array}$$

Since the x_i are all different, and the y_j are all different, no two of the pairs in this grid are the same, and there are $n \cdot m$ of them. \square

Problem set.2. Show, by induction on k , that for all $k \geq 1$, if X has n **elements**, then X^k has n^k **elements**.

Example set.5. If X is a set, a *word* over X is any sequence of **elements** of X . A sequence can be thought of as an n -tuple of **elements** of X . For instance, if $X = \{a, b, c\}$, then the sequence “ bac ” can be thought of as the triple $\langle b, a, c \rangle$. Words, i.e., sequences of symbols, are of crucial importance in computer science, of course. By convention, we count **elements** of X as sequences of length 1, and \emptyset as the sequence of length 0. The set of *all* words over X then is

$$X^* = \{\emptyset\} \cup X \cup X^2 \cup X^3 \cup \dots$$

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Bibliography