Subgroups and cosets

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MASC

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The second condition in the definition of group (associativity) will automatically be satisfied for H since it is purely a property of the operation and doesn't care whether the elements are in the subset H.

Conditions for a subset to be a subgroup

We only have to check two conditions to see if a subset H of a group $(G, *)$ is a subgroup:

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For the third example, these are the identity permutation id, plus α and $\alpha\alpha$ from earlier. We have already computed $\alpha(\alpha\alpha) = \mathrm{id}$. Moreover, $(\alpha\alpha)(\alpha\alpha) = (\alpha(\alpha\alpha))\alpha = \mathrm{id}\,\alpha = \alpha$, etc.

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Because of the regrouping property, $a \cdot a \cdot a$ is not ambiguous because both possible interpretations $(a \cdot a) \cdot a$ and $a \cdot (a \cdot a)$ must be equal. The same is true of all powers.

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For S_4, $\alpha = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$ has order 3 and

$$\langle\alpha\rangle = \left\{\alpha = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 & 4 \end{pmatrix}, \alpha^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 3 & 1 & 2 & 4 \end{pmatrix}, \alpha^3 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}\right\}$$

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- *Every element of G is in one of the cosets of H. In fact a belongs to $a \cdot H$ because H contains the identity e, and so $a \cdot e$ belongs to $a \cdot H$.*

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$$\text{for any } a \text{ in } G,\ a^{|G|} = e$$

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We can check Lagrange's Theorem against our previous examples. The group $(\mathbb{Z}_9, +)$ has order 9 and the subgroup $H = \langle 6 \rangle$ has order 3, so the number of cosets will be $9/3 = 3$.

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Lagrange's Theorem puts limits on the possible subgroups. For example, $(u(\mathbb{Z}_{16}), \cdot)$ cannot have any subgroups with size 3 or 5. The only possible sizes are factors of 8: $1, 2, 4, 8$.