01204211 Discrete Mathematics
Lecture 7b: Binomial Coefficients (2)

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The binomial coefficients[1]

There is a reason why the term $\binom{n}{k}$ is called the binomial coefficients. In this lecture, we will discuss

- identities on binomial coefficients.

[1] This lecture mostly follows Chapter 3 of [LPV].

Identities in the Triangle

							1							
						1		1						
					1		2		1					
				1		3		3		1				
			1		4		6		4		1			
		1		5		10		10		5		1		
	1		6		15		20		15		6		1	
1		7		21		35		35		21		7		1

Odd and even subsets

							1							
						1		1						
					1		2		1					
				1		3		3		1				
			1		4		6		4		1			
		1		5		10		10		5		1		
	1		6		15		20		15		6		1	
1		7		21		35		35		21		7		1

Let's try to prove this identity with the Pascal's triangle

$$\binom{n}{0} - \binom{n}{1} + \binom{n}{2} + \cdots + (-1)^n \binom{n}{n} = 0.$$

A more formal proof

$$\binom{n}{0} - \binom{n}{1} + \binom{n}{2} + \cdots + (-1)^n \binom{n}{n} = 0.$$

The next experiment

							1							
						1		1						
					1		2		1					
				1		3		3		1				
			1		4		6		4		1			
		1		5		10		10		5		1		
	1		6		15		20		15		6		1	
1		7		21		35		35		21		7		1

Let's try to compute the sum of squares of numbers in each row.

$$
\begin{aligned}
1^2 &= 1 \\
1^2 + 1^2 &= 2 \\
1^2 + 2^2 + 1^2 &= 6 \\
1^2 + 3^2 + 3^2 + 1^2 &= 20 \\
1^2 + 4^2 + 6^2 + 4^2 + 1^2 &= 70
\end{aligned}
$$

Theorem:

$$\binom{n}{0}^2 + \binom{n}{1}^2 + \binom{n}{2}^2 + \cdots + \binom{n}{n}^2 = \binom{2n}{n}.$$

Another identity

							1							
						1		1						
					1		2		1					
				1		3		3		1				
			1		4		6		4		1			
		1		5		10		10		5		1		
	1		6		15		20		15		6		1	
1		7		21		35		35		21		7		1

This suggests

$$\binom{n}{0} + \binom{n+1}{1} + \binom{n+2}{2} + \cdots + \binom{n+k}{k} = \binom{n+k+1}{k}.$$

Theorem:

$$\binom{n}{0} + \binom{n+1}{1} + \binom{n+2}{2} + \cdots + \binom{n+k}{k} = \binom{n+k+1}{k}.$$