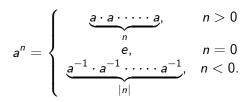
### Lecture 3: Elementary Properties of Groups

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Let  $(G, \cdot)$  be a group and  $a \in G$ . For  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ ,



Let (G, +) be a group and  $a \in G$ . For  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ ,

$$na = \begin{cases} \underbrace{a + a + \dots + a}_{n}, & n > 0\\ 0, & n = 0\\ \underbrace{(-a) + \dots + (-a)}_{|n|}, & n < 0. \end{cases}$$

For conventional notation, we will use the multiplicative notation  $\cdot$ .

# Order of an element

### Definition

A group  $(G, \cdot)$  is called a finite group if G has only finite number of elements. The **order**, written by |G|, of a group G is the number of elements of G. A group with infinite number of elements is called as an infinite group.

Let  $(G, \cdot)$  be a finite group and  $a \in G$ .

$$a \in G \stackrel{G \text{ group}}{\Rightarrow} a \cdot a = a^2 \in G, \dots, a^m \in G \text{ for all } m \ge 1$$

$$\stackrel{G \text{ finite}}{\Rightarrow} \text{ the elements } a, a^2, \dots, a^m, \dots \text{ can not be all distinct}$$

$$\Rightarrow a^i = a^j \text{ for some integer } 0 < i < j$$

$$\stackrel{j-i=:n}{\Rightarrow} a^{j-i} = a^n = e \text{ for } n \in \mathbb{Z}^+.$$

Thus for a finite group G,  $a^n = e$  for some  $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ . Also if G is an infinite group, it may still possible that  $a^n = e$  for some  $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ . For example,  $(-1)^2 = 1$  in  $(\mathbb{R}^*, \cdot)$ .

### Definition

Let  $(G, \cdot)$  be a group and  $a \in G$ . If there exists a positive integer n such that  $a^n = e$ , then the smallest such positive integer is called the **order** of a, and denoted by  $\circ(a)$ . If no such positive integer exists, then we say that a is of infinite order.

In other words,

 $\circ$  (*a*) = *n*  $\Leftrightarrow$  *n* is the smallest positive integer such that  $a^n = e$ .

If we consider the group (G, +), then

 $\circ(a) = n \Leftrightarrow n$  is the smallest positive integer such that na = e.

**Remark:** The order of an element helps us to determine the structure of the group itself.

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# Order of an element

#### Examples:

1. In  $(\mathbb{R}^*,\cdot)$  ,  $\circ\,(-1)=2,$  but all other elements except  $\pm 1$  are infinite order.

**2.** In  $(\mathbb{Z}_6, +_6)$ ,  $\circ(\overline{a}) = n \Leftrightarrow n$  is the smallest positive integer such that  $n\overline{a} = \overline{0}$ . Thus

$$\circ (\overline{0}) = 0, \circ (\overline{1}) = 6, \circ (\overline{2}) = 3, \circ (\overline{3}) = 2, \circ (\overline{4}) = 3, \circ (\overline{5}) = 6.$$

**3.** In  $(Q_8, \cdot)$ ,

$$\circ(1) = 1, \circ(-1) = 2, \circ(i) = 4, \circ(-i) = 4,$$
  
 $\circ(j) = 4, \circ(-j) = 4, \circ(k) = 4, \circ(-k) = 4.$ 

4. In  $(V, \cdot)$ ,  $\circ(e) = 1, \circ(a) = \circ(b) = \circ(c) = 2.$ 

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## Order of an element

Let  $(G, \cdot)$  be a group and let  $a \in G$ .

- If  $\circ(a)$  is infinite, then  $\circ(a^k)$  is also infinite for all  $k \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ .
- If \circ (a) is finite, then we can compute the \circ (a<sup>k</sup>) by using the following theorem.

#### Theorem

Let 
$$(G, \cdot)$$
 be a group and let  $\circ (a) = n$  for  $a \in G$   
(*i*) If  $a^m = e$  for some  $m \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ , then  $n \mid m$ .  
(*ii*) For every  $k \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ ,  $\circ (a^k) = \frac{n}{\gcd(k,n)}$ 

**Example:** In  $(\mathbb{Z}_6, +_6)$ ,  $\circ(\overline{1}) = 6$ . So

$$\circ (\overline{4}) = \circ (4.\overline{1}) = \frac{6}{\operatorname{gcd}(4,6)} = 3.$$

### Definition

A group  $(G, \cdot)$  is called a **torsion group** if every element of G is of finite order.

If every nonidentity element of G is of infinite order, then  $(G, \cdot)$  is called a **torsion-free group.** 

### Examples:

- 1.  $(\mathbb{R},+)$  ,  $(\mathbb{R}^+,\cdot)$  ,  $(\mathbb{Q}^+,\cdot)$  are torsion-free groups.
- **2.**  $(\mathbb{Z}_6, +_6)$  is torsion group.
- **3.**  $(\mathbb{R}^*, \cdot)$  is neither a torsion group nor a torsion-free group.

#### **Remarks:**

- Let (G, ·) be a group and let a, b ∈ G.
   If o (a) = m, o (b) = n ⇒ o (ab) < ∞ or o (ab) = ∞.</li>
- 2. Let (G, ·) be an abelian group and let a, b ∈ G.
  If ∘ (a) = m, ∘ (b) = n ⇒ ∘ (ab) | mn
  If ∘ (a) = m, ∘ (b) = n, gcd (m, n) = 1 ⇒ ∘ (ab) = mn
  - If  $\circ(a) = m$ ,  $\circ(b) = n \Rightarrow \circ(ab) \mid \operatorname{lcm}(m, n)$ .

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