

Discrete Algebraic Structures

WiSe 2025/2026

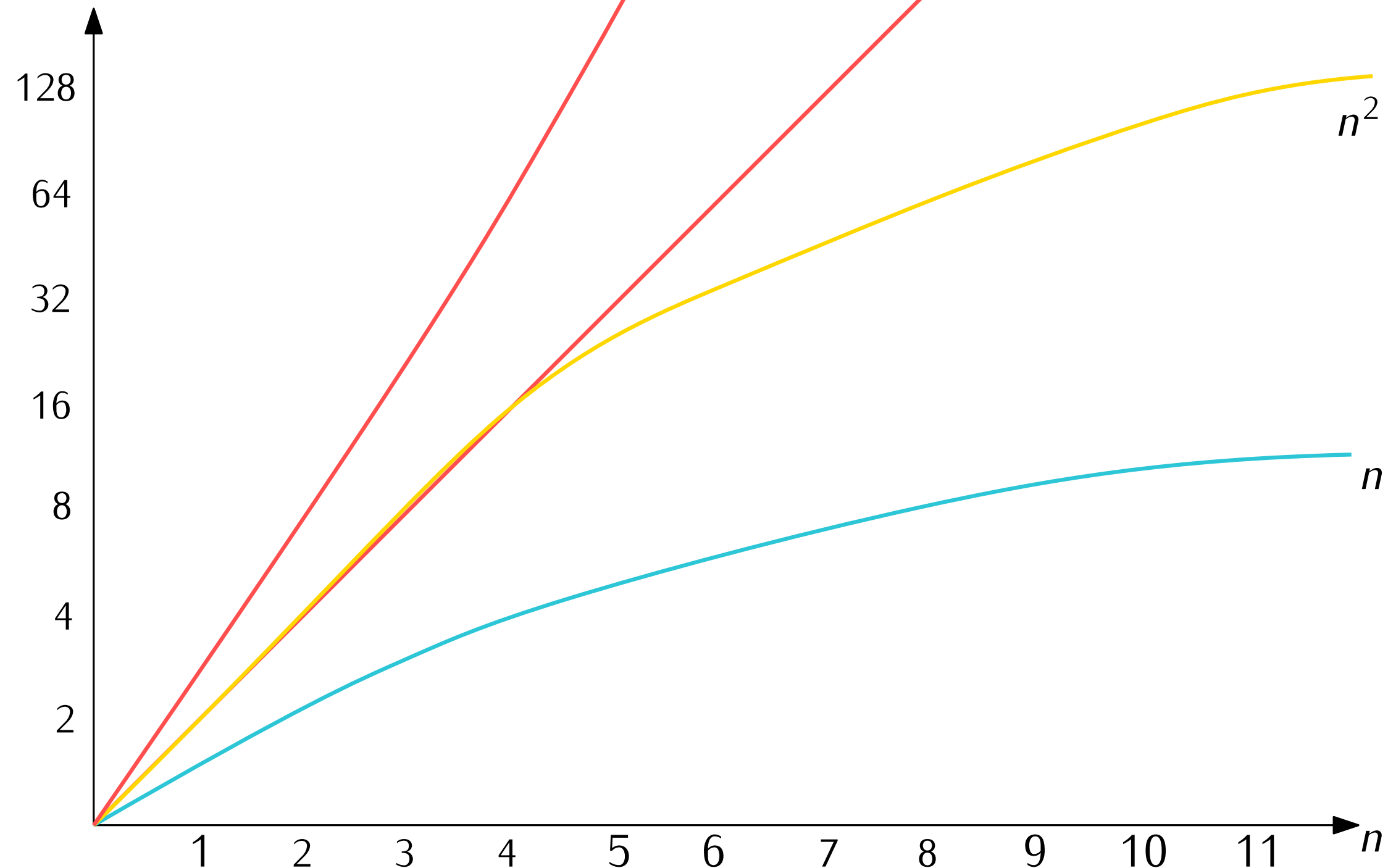
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Theorem. The number of partitions of $\{1, \dots, n\}$ into k parts is

$$\frac{1}{k!} \sum_{r=0}^k (-1)^r \binom{k}{r} (k-r)^n$$

Any idea how big this is?
How about k^n ?



Theorem. The number of **partitions** of $\{1, \dots, n\}$ into **k parts** is

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Definition. Let $f, g: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$. We say **$f \in O(g)$** if there are $C, n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$ such that for all $n \geq n_0$, $f(n) \leq C \cdot g(n)$.

Example. $4n^2 + n + 1 \in O(n^2)$

Theorem. The number of **partitions** of $\{1, \dots, n\}$ into **k parts** is

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Definition. Let $f, g: \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$. We say **$f \in O(g)$** if there are $C, n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$ such that for all $n \geq n_0$, $f(n) \leq C \cdot g(n)$.

Exercise. Prove that the relation $\{(f, g) \mid f \in O(g)\}$ is a **quasiorder**.

	Order matters	Order does not matter
Replacement	n^k	$\binom{n+k-1}{n-1} \in O(n^k)$
No replacement	$n^{\underline{k}} \in O(n^k)$	$\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!} \in O(n^k)$

Number of surjective functions:
(from a set of size n to a set of size k)

$$O\left(\sum_{r=0}^k (-1)^r \binom{k}{r} (k-r)^n\right) \ni k^n$$

Number of partitions:
(of a set of size n into k parts)

$$O\left(\frac{1}{k!} \sum_{r=0}^k (-1)^r \binom{k}{r} (k-r)^n\right) \ni k^n$$

Take away message:
 $O(n^k)$ is “ok” for algorithms if k small
Don’t ever try $O(k^n)$, even if k is small

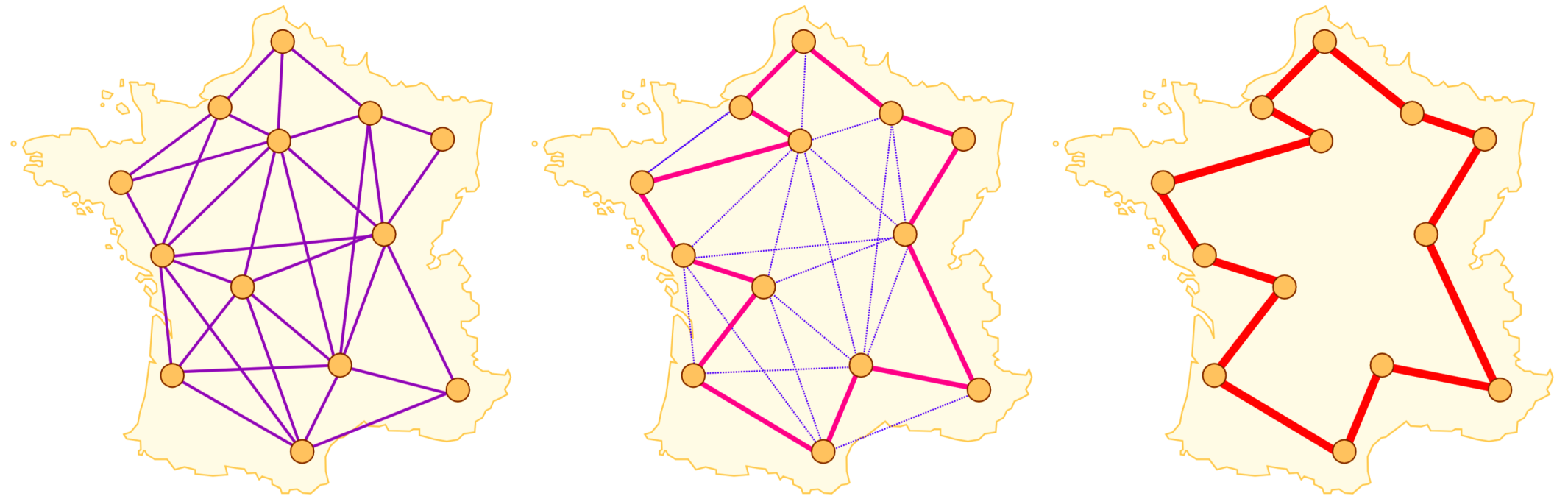
$f(n)$: runtime (say, in seconds) of a program when the input has size n

Efficient algorithm: when $f \in O(n^k)$ for $k \in \mathbb{N}$

- $f \in O(\log(n))$: locate an item in a sorted array
- $f \in O(n)$: find shortest path in a directed graph, find smallest element/biggest element/median in an array
- $f \in O(n \log(n))$: sort an array
- $f \in O(n^3)$: compute the multiplication of two matrices of size n

Problems where **no efficient algorithm** is known:

- $O(2^n)$: problem of finding a satisfying assignment for a propositional formula, optimal clustering of a set of n points into two clusters
- $O(n!)$: finding optimal tour visiting cities



- Countable sets, uncountable sets
- Countable sets = what can be represented exactly on a computer
- Combinatorial proofs as a way to prove equalities/inequalities about numbers using functions

$$\text{Injection } A \rightarrow B \iff |A| \leq |B|$$

$$\text{Surjection } A \rightarrow B \iff |A| \geq |B|$$

$$\text{Bijection } A \rightarrow B \iff |A| = |B|$$

- Drawing a tuple/(multi)set with/without replacement

n = size of the set we are drawing from

k = number of draws

- How to use double counting
- The inclusion-exclusion principle for 2 and 3 sets
- How to apply the pigeonhole principle

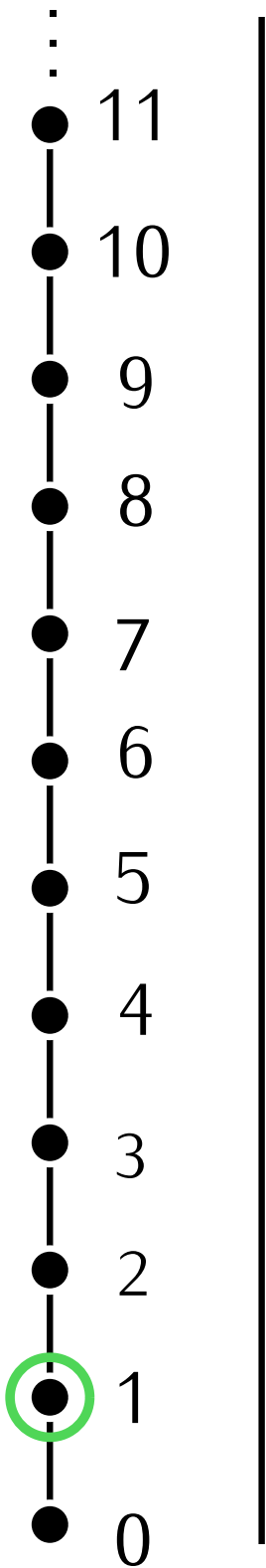
	Order matters	Order does not matter
Replacement	n^k	$\binom{n+k-1}{n-1}$
No replacement	$n^{\underline{k}}$	$\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$

Elementary Number Theory

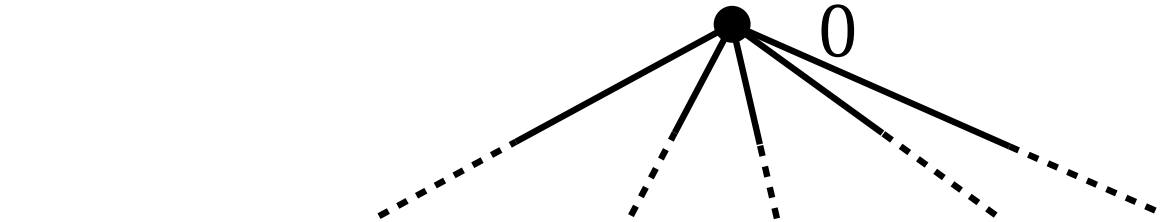
$$R = \{(n, m) \in \mathbb{N}_0^2 \mid n \leq m\}$$

- Linear
- Minimal elements: 0
- Maximal elements: None
- $n \wedge m$ always exists: $\min(n, m)$
- $n \vee m$ always exists: $\max(n, m)$

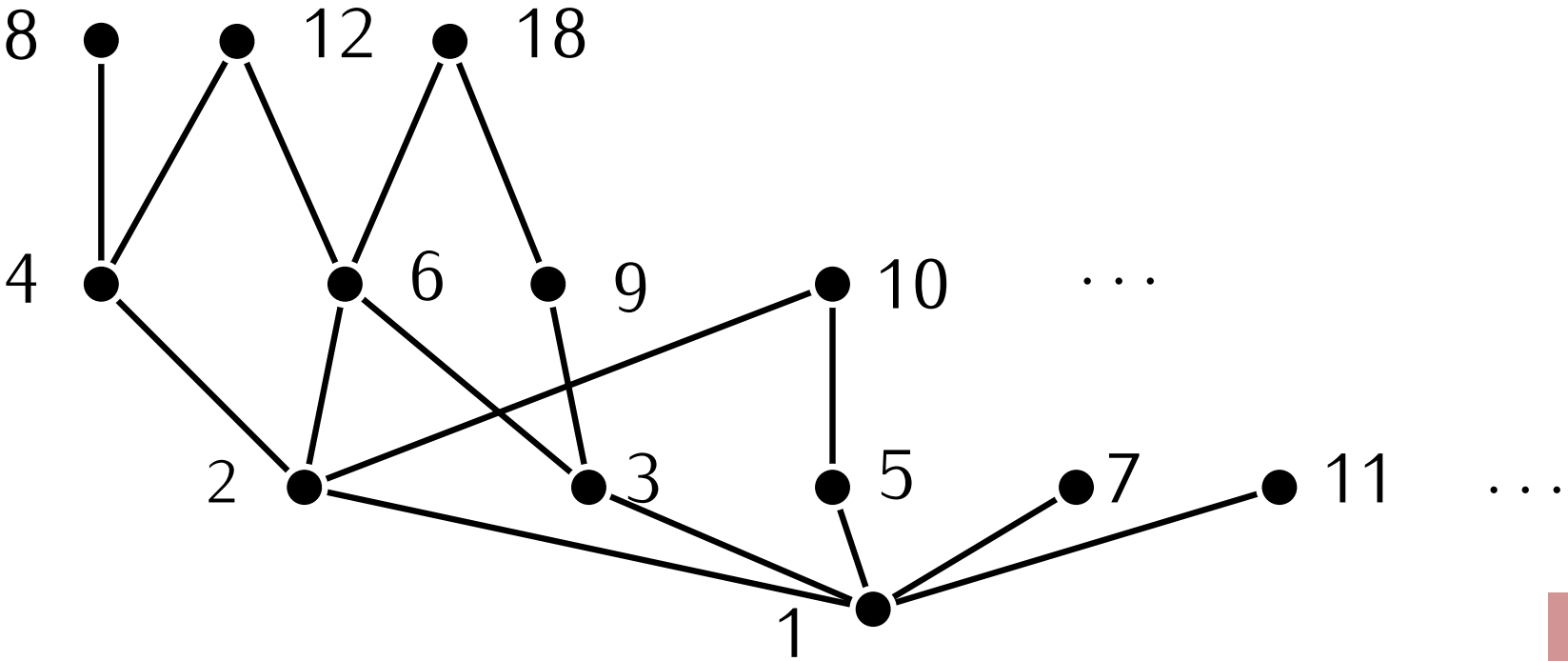
Every number n can be written (uniquely!) as $\textcircled{1} + \textcircled{1} + \textcircled{1} + \dots$



$$R = \{(n, m) \in \mathbb{N}_0^2 \mid n \text{ divides } m\}$$



- Linear?
- Minimal elements?
- Maximal elements?
- $n \wedge m$?
- $n \vee m$?



Theorem. For all $a, d \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $a \neq 0$, there exists a unique pair $(q, r) \in \mathbb{Z}^2$ such that:

- $a = q \cdot d + r$
- $r \in \{0, \dots, |d| - 1\}$

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \textcolor{red}{a} \text{ } \textcircled{131} \quad | \quad \textcircled{9}^{\textcolor{red}{d}} \\
 \underline{-(9)} \\
 41 \\
 \underline{-(36)} \\
 \textcircled{5}^{\textcolor{green}{r}}
 \end{array}
 \quad
 \begin{array}{r}
 860 \quad | \quad \textcircled{9}^{\textcolor{red}{d}} \\
 \underline{-(81)} \\
 50 \\
 \underline{-(45)} \\
 \textcircled{5}
 \end{array}$$

quotient

remainder

Almost the same as divmod in Python:

```
divmod(131,9) # (14,5)
divmod(10,-3) # (-4,-2)
```

- If remainder is 0: we say d divides a
 a is a multiple of d

Notation: $d \mid a$

- Define $b \equiv_d b'$ by “they have the same remainder in the division by d ”
 $131 \equiv_9 860$

What does 131 really *mean*? $132 = 1 \times 100 + 3 \times 10 + 2 \times 1 = \sum_{i=0}^2 n_i \times 10^i$

Theorem. Let $b \in \mathbb{N}$ be such that $b \geq 2$. For every $n \in \mathbb{N}_0$, there exists a unique sequence $n_0, \dots, n_k$ of numbers in $\{0, \dots, b-1\}$ such that $n = \sum_{i=0}^k n_i b^i$.

This is the **decomposition of n in base b** , written $(n_k, \dots, n_1, n_0)_b$.

- Computers use bits 0 and 1 $\rightsquigarrow$ base 2
 $(131)_{10} = (10000011)_2$

What is the largest number that can be represented with 8 bits?
(So binary decomposition has length at most 8.)



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$$(131)_{10} = (10000011)_2$$

- Base 16 also very common: `commit 6d068c500bd1baede277a8c1f62d1a7b5d1a1d12`
 $= 622426021449319981362286421400854052354972589330$

about 17% shorter to write numbers in base 16 instead of 10, **75%** shorter than in base 2
 alphabet $0, \dots, 9, a, b, c, d, e, f$

$$\begin{aligned} (bad)_{16} &= \underset{\downarrow}{b} \times 16^2 + \underset{\downarrow}{a} \times 16^1 + \underset{\downarrow}{d} \times 16 \\ &= 11 \times 256 + 10 \times 16 + 13 = 2816 + 160 + 13 = 2989 \end{aligned}$$

- $\log_b(n)$: number in $[k, k+1)$ when $b^k \leq n < b^{k+1}$

$$3 < \log_{16}(2989) < 4$$

Definition. Let $\leq$ be an order on A , $S \subseteq A$, and $a \in A$. We say:

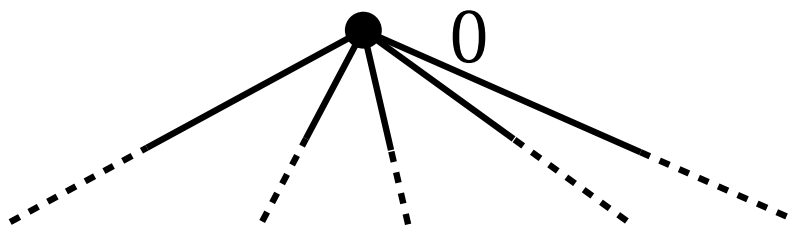
- a is a **lower bound** of S if for all $s \in S$, we have $a \leq s$
- a is a **greatest lower bound** of S if it is a lower bound and for every lower bound b of S , we have $b \leq a$.

We write $a \wedge b$ for the greatest lower bound of $\{a, b\}$, if it exists.

Definition. Let $S \subseteq \mathbb{N}_0$, and $d \in \mathbb{N}_0$. We say:

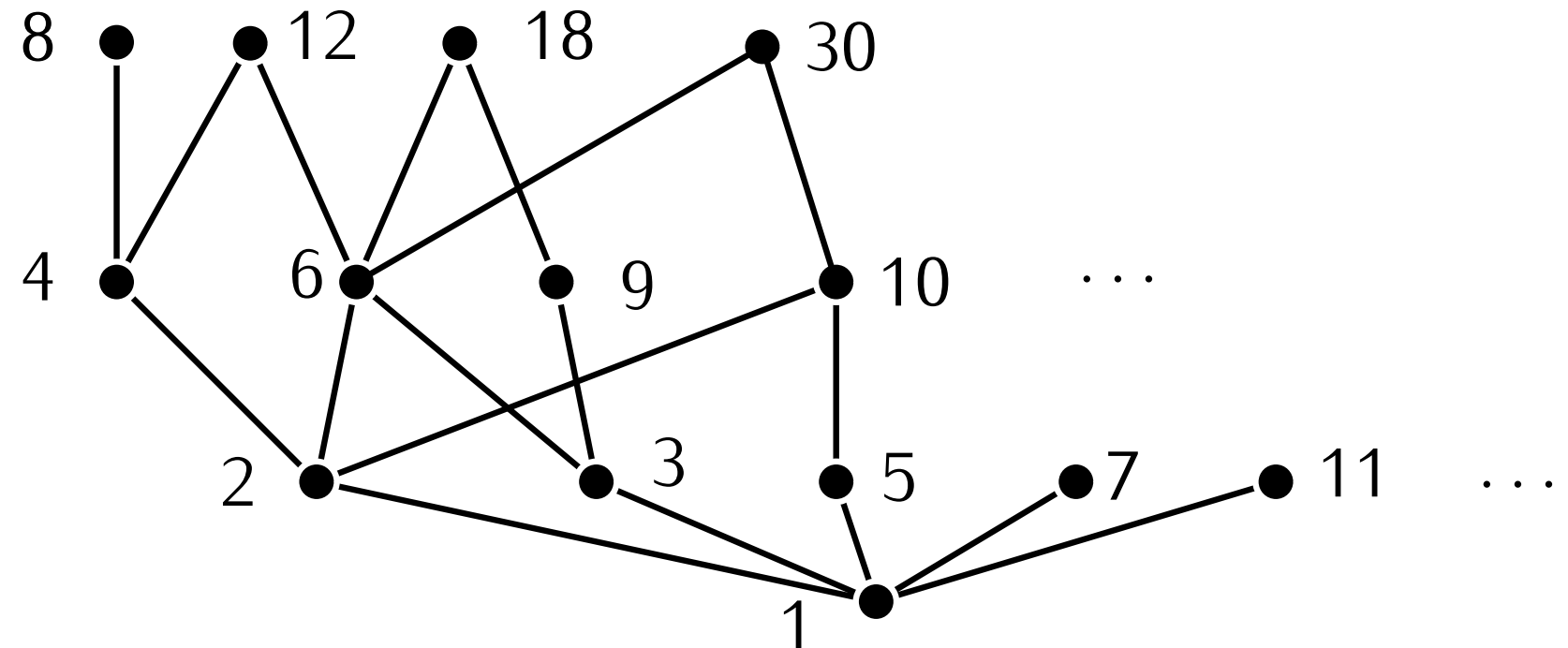
- d is a **common divisor** of S if for all $s \in S$, we have d divides s
- d is a **greatest common divisor** of S if it is a **common divisor** and for every **common divisor** d' of S , we have d' divides d

We write $a \wedge b$ for the **greatest common divisor** (gcd) of $\{a, b\}$.



What is $6 \wedge 10$?

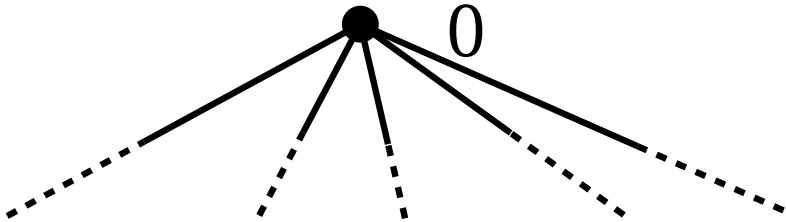
- 2
- 4
- 6
- 10
- 16



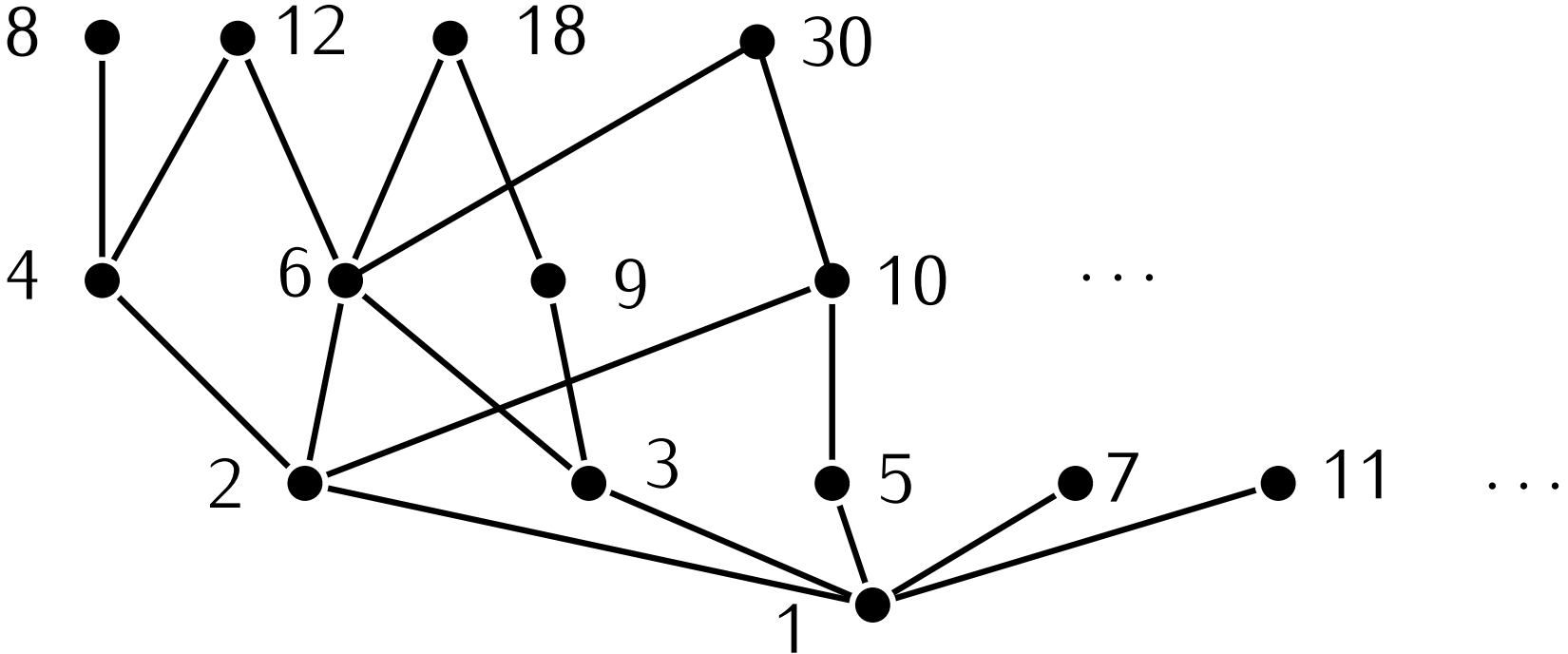
Definition. Let $S \subseteq \mathbb{N}_0$, and $d \in \mathbb{N}_0$. We say:

- m is a **common multiple** of S if for all $s \in S$, we have **m is a multiple of s**
- m is a **lowest common multiple** of S if it is a **common multiple** and for every **common multiple** m' of S , we have **m divides m'**

We write $a \vee b$ for the **lowest common multiple** (lcm) of $\{a, b\}$.



What is $4 \vee 10$?
(might not be on the picture!)



Input: two numbers $a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0$

Output: $a \wedge b$ (or $\gcd(a, b)$) $\longrightarrow$ In particular, $\gcd(a, b)$ **always** exists!



Euclid

(probably lived around -300)

```
def euclid(a,b):  
    if a > b:  
        a,b = b,a # swap a and b  
    if a == 0:  
        return b  
  
    remainders = [b,a]  
    while remainders[-1] != 0:  
        b = remainders[-2]  
        a = remainders[-1]  
        q,r = divmod(b,a)  
        remainders.append(r)  
  
    return remainders[-2]
```

Input: two numbers $a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0$

Output: $a \wedge b$ (or $\gcd(a, b)$) $\longrightarrow$ In particular, $\gcd(a, b)$ **always** exists!

On input $a = 7, b = 24$:

$$24 = 3 \times 7 + 3$$

remainders = (24, 7)

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$$7 = 2 \times 3 + 1$$

remainders = (24, 7, 3)

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On input $a = 7, b = 24$:

$$24 = 3 \times 7 + 3$$

$$7 = 2 \times 3 + 1$$

$$3 = 3 \times 1 + 0$$

remainders = (24, 7, 3, 1, 0)

↑
this is $\gcd(7, 24)$

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On input $a = 7, b = 25$:

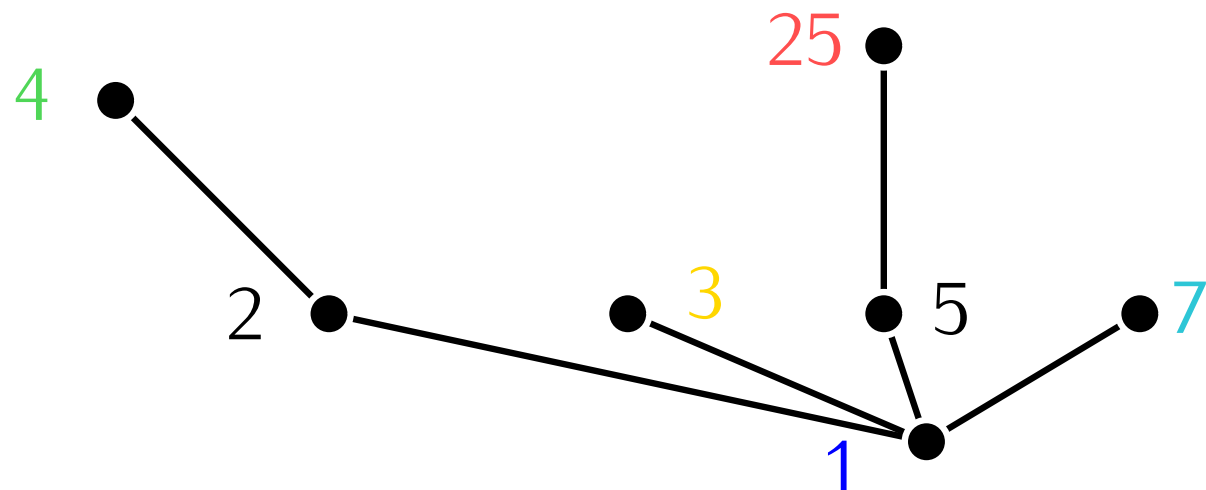
$$25 = 3 \times 7 + 4$$

$$7 = 1 \times 4 + 3$$

$$4 = 1 \times 3 + 1$$

$$3 = 3 \times 1 + 0$$

remainders = (25, 7, 4, 3, 1, 0)



```
def euclid(a,b):
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On input $a = 7, b = 25$:

$$25 = 3 \times 7 + 4$$

$$7 = 1 \times 4 + 3$$

$$4 = 1 \times 3 + 1$$

$$3 = 3 \times 1 + 0$$

$$\text{remainders} = (25, 7, 4, 3, 1, 0)$$

Remark. The algorithm only calls `divmod`.
It would work for any “thing” that also has `divmod`.

Things to do when we see an algorithm:

- Is it **correct**?
- Is it **fast**?

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```

Theorem. For any $a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0$, the number e given by `euclid` is $\gcd(a, b)$.

Two things to prove:

- e divides a and b
- every d that divides a and b also divides e

Lemma. If d divides a and b , then d divides every element of remainder.

Proof by induction: property is true for r_0 and r_1

$$r_i = q \cdot r_{i+1} + r_{i+2}$$

divisible by d
 $r_i = d \cdot x$

divisible by d
 $(r_{i+1} = d \cdot y)$

So $r_{i+2} = d \cdot (x - qy)$ is divisible by d . □

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Two things to prove:

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- every d that divides a and b also divides e

Lemma. e divides a and b .

$b = q_2 \times a + r_2$	e divides b	
$a = q_3 \times r_2 + r_3$	e divides a	
$r_2 = q_4 \times r_3 + r_4$	e divides r_2	
$\vdots$		
$r_{k-2} = q_k \times r_{k-1} + r_k$	e divides r_{k-2}	
$r_{k-1} = q_{k+1} \times r_k + 0$	e divides r_{k-1}	

this is e

```
def euclid(a,b):
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```

Runtime of Euclid's algorithm

How many times does the while loop run?

remainders = (25, 7, 4, 3, 1, 0)



Observation 1: the sequence is decreasing

Observation 2: $r_{i+2} < r_i/2$

If true: the sequence divides by 2 every 2 steps

$\leadsto 2 \log_2(b)$ steps at most

```
[In [9]: mygcd(46368, 75025)
Out[9]:
[75025,
 46368,
 28657,
 17711,
 10946,
 6765,
 4181,
 2584,
 1597,
 987,
 610,
 377,
 233,
 144,
 89,
 55,
 34,
 21,
 13,
 8,
 5,
 3,
 2,
 1,
 0]
```



Runtime of Euclid's algorithm

How many times does the while loop run?

remainders = (25, 7, 4, 3, 1, 0)

Observation 1: the sequence is decreasing

Observation 2: $r_{i+2} < r_i/2$

If true: the sequence divides by 2 every 2 steps
 $\rightsquigarrow 2 \log_2(b)$ steps at most

Theorem. Let $(r_0, r_1, \dots, r_k, 0)$ be the sequence of remainders computed by euclid.

Then $r_{i+2} < r_i/2$ holds for all $i \in \{0, \dots, k-1\}$.

$r_i = q \times r_{i+1} + r_{i+2}$ with $r_{i+2} \in \{0, \dots, r_{i+1} - 1\}$

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```

Theorem (Bézout). For all $a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0$, there exists $u, v \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $u \cdot a + v \cdot b = \gcd(a, b)$.

Goal. Find $u, v \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $25u + 7v = 1$.

$$\begin{array}{lcl}
 25 = 3 \times 7 + 4 & \longrightarrow & 4 = 25 - 3 \times 7 \\
 7 = 1 \times 4 + 3 & \longrightarrow & 3 = 7 - 1 \times 4 \\
 4 = 1 \times 3 + 1 & \longrightarrow & 1 = 4 - 1 \times 3 \\
 3 = 3 \times 1 + 0 & & \\
 \text{remainders} = (25, 7, 4, 3, 1, 0) & &
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= 4 - 1 \times (7 - 1 \times 4) \\
 &= -1 \times 7 + 2 \times 4 \\
 &= -1 \times 7 + 2 \times (25 - 3 \times 7) \\
 &= 2 \times 25 - 7 \times 7
 \end{aligned}$$

But.. why?

- Any common divisor of $\{7, 25\}$ must divide every number of the form $25u + 7v$.
- So if there exist u, v such that $25u + 7v = 1$, the gcd **must** be 1!
- We will soon want to compute the **modular inverse** of some numbers.

Computing inverses = computing Bézout coefficients

Theorem (Bézout). For all $a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0$, there exists $u, v \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $u \cdot a + v \cdot b = \gcd(a, b)$.

```
def extended_euclid(a,b):
    if a > b:
        a,b = b,a # swap a and b
    if a == 0:
        return b

    remainders = [b,a]
    u = [0,1]
    v = [1,0]
    while remainders[-1] != 0:
        b = remainders[-2]
        a = remainders[-1]
        q,r = divmod(b,a)
        remainders.append(r)
        u.append(u[-2] - q*u[-1])
        v.append(v[-2] - q*v[-1])

    return remainders[-2],u[-2],v[-2]
```

$$\begin{aligned}
 4 &= 25 - 3 \times 7 \\
 3 &= 7 - 1 \times 4 \\
 1 &= 4 - 1 \times 3 \\
 &= 4 - 1 \times (7 - 1 \times 4) \\
 &= -1 \times 7 + 2 \times 4 \\
 &= -1 \times 7 + 2 \times (25 - 3 \times 7) \\
 &= 2 \times 25 - 7 \times 7
 \end{aligned}$$

Theorem (Bézout). For all $a, b \in \mathbb{N}_0$, there exists $u, v \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $u \cdot a + v \cdot b = \gcd(a, b)$.

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        remainders.append(r)
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    return remainders[-2],u[-2],v[-2]
```

$$25 = 1 \times 25 + 0 \times 7$$

$$7 = 0 \times 25 + 1 \times 7$$

$$4 = 25 - 3 \times 7$$

$$3 = -1 \times 25 + 4 \times 7$$

$$1 = 2 \times 25 - 7 \times 7$$

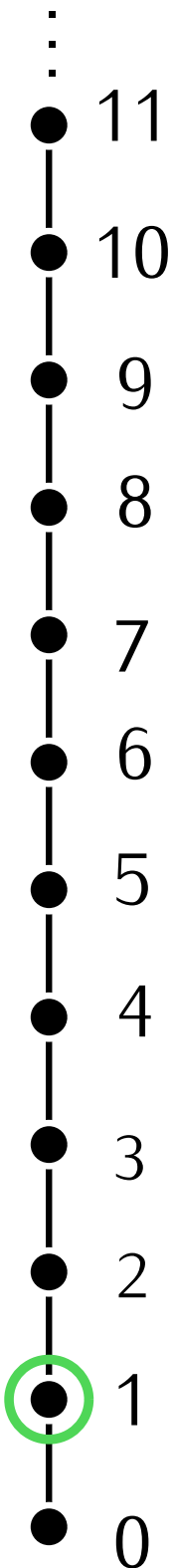
Invariant (property that remains true for every i):

$$r_i = u_i \cdot a + v_i \cdot b$$

$R = \{(n, m) \in \mathbb{N}_0^2 \mid n \leq m\}$

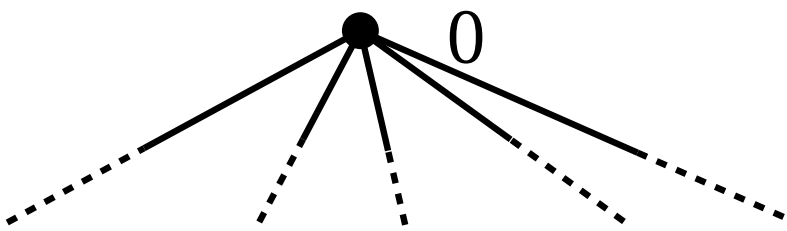
- Linear
- Minimal elements: 0
- Maximal elements: None
- $n \wedge m$ always exists: $\min(n, m)$
- $n \vee m$ always exists: $\max(n, m)$

Theorem. Every number n can be written (uniquely!) as $1+1+1+\dots$

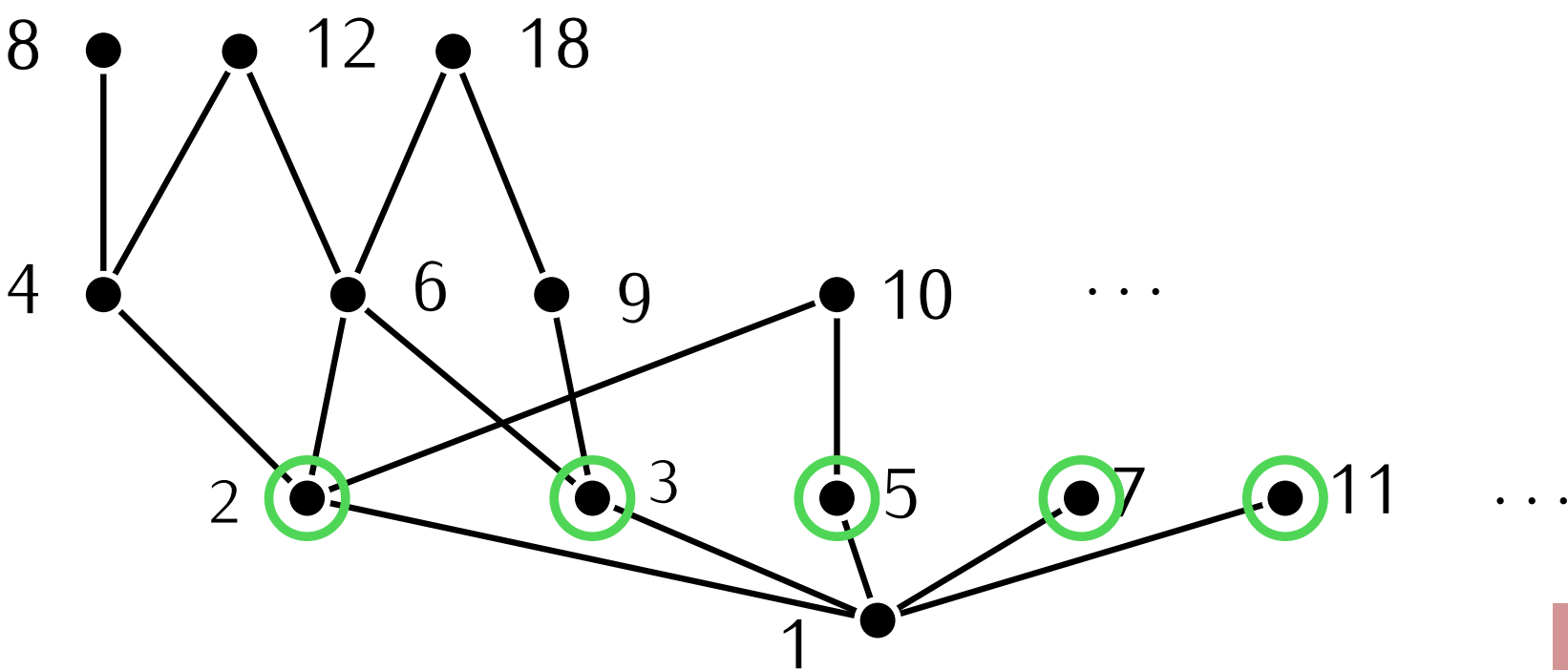


$R = \{(n, m) \in \mathbb{N}_0^2 \mid n \text{ divides } m\}$

- Not linear
- Minimal elements: 1
- Maximal elements: 0
- $n \wedge m$: gcd
- $n \vee m$: lcm

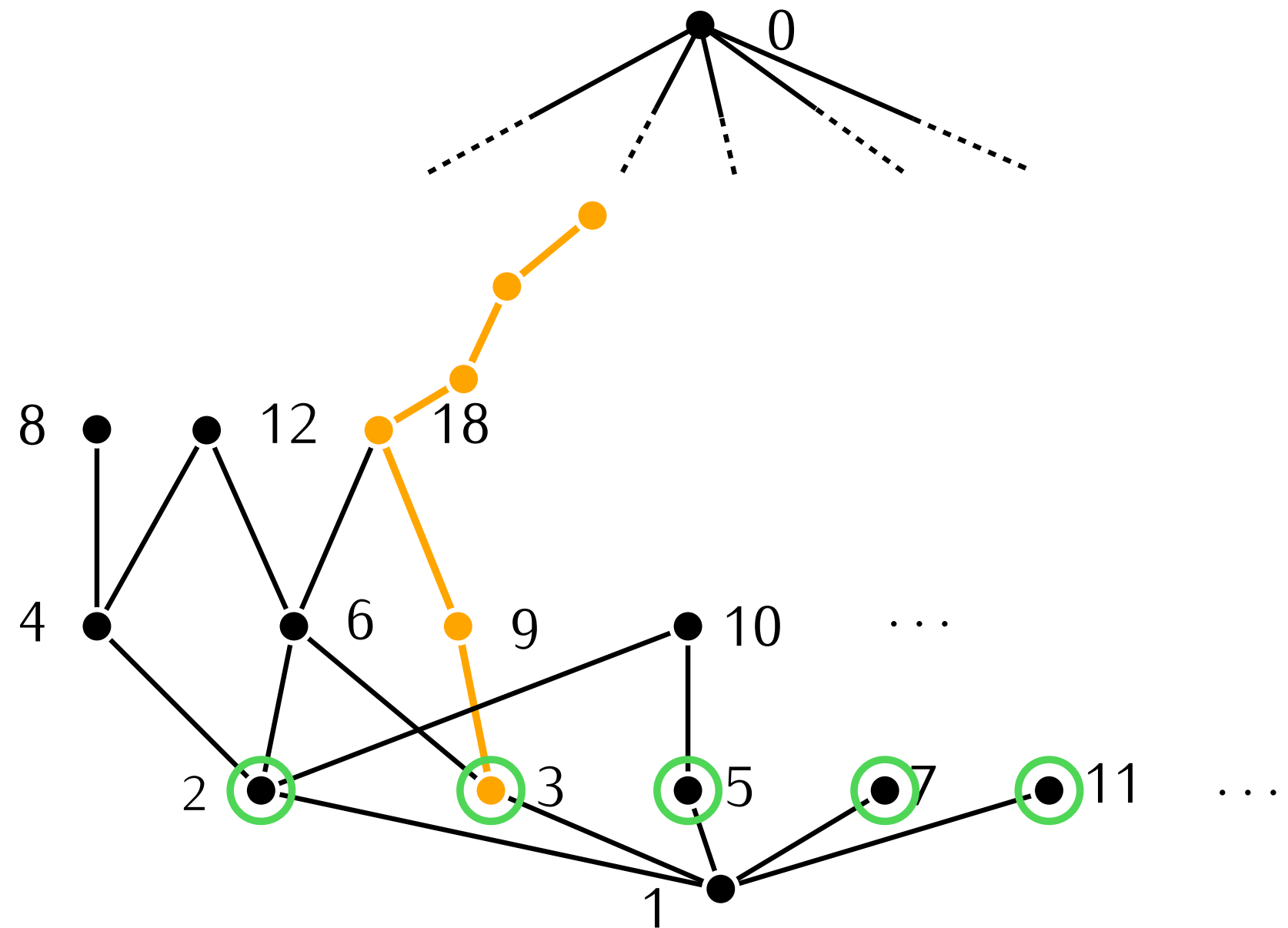


Theorem. Every number n can be written (uniquely!) as $2^{p_2} 3^{p_3} \dots$



Definition. A number $p \in \mathbb{N}_0$ is **prime** if it is > 1 and it is only divisible by 1 and itself.

Theorem. Every number $n \in \mathbb{N}$ that is not 1 is divisible by a prime number.



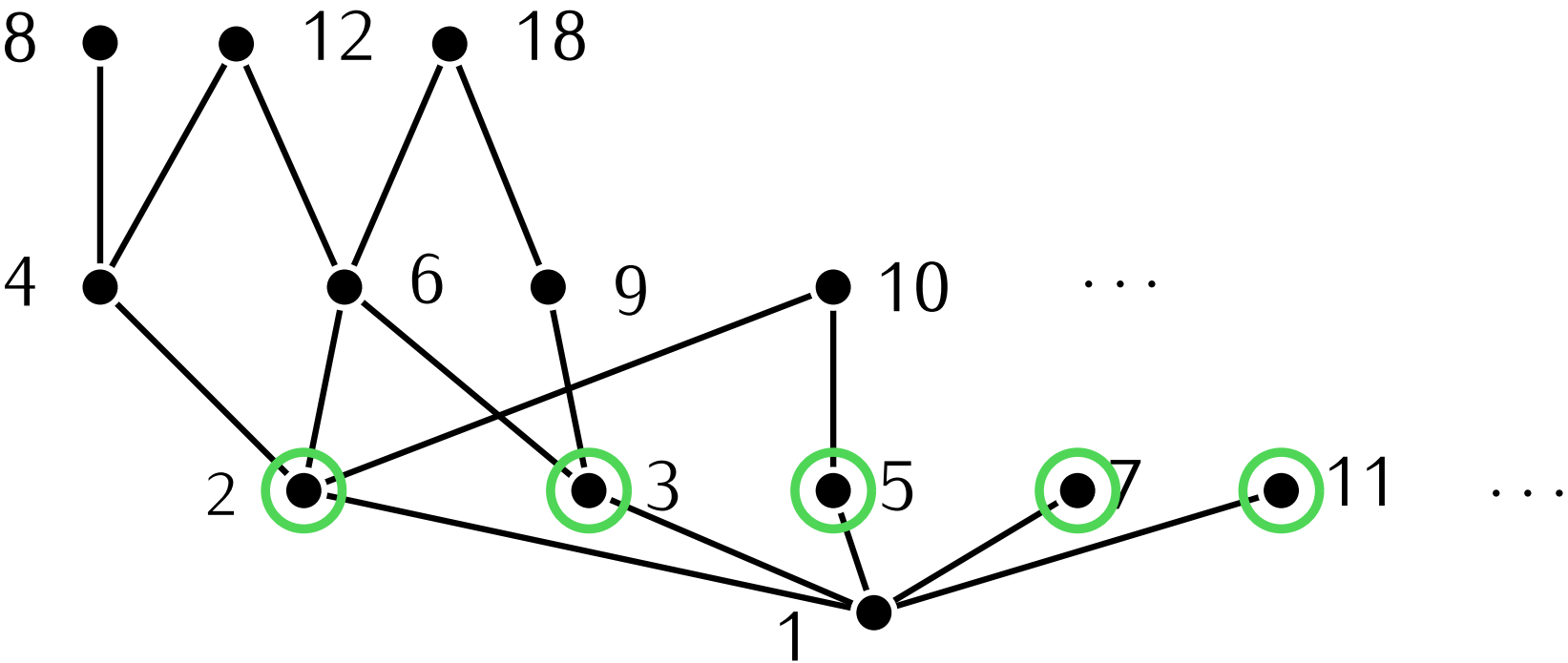
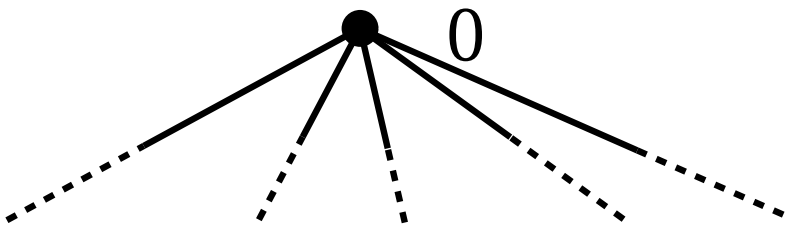
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Theorem. There are infinitely many prime numbers.

- Let $p_1, \dots, p_k$ be any list of prime numbers.
- Define $N = p_1 \dots p_k + 1$
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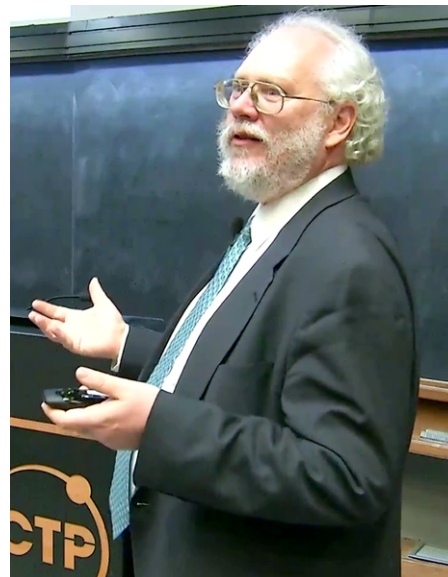
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- $N = (p_1 \dots p_{k-1})p_k + 1$ and $1 < p_k$, so p is not p_k
- Similarly for every $i \in \{1, \dots, k-1\}$, N is not divisible by p_i .
So $p \notin \{p_1, \dots, p_k\}$
- $p_1, \dots, p_k$ cannot be a list of **all** the primes □

Theorem. Let $n \in \mathbb{N}$ be such that $n \geq 2$.

There exist prime numbers $p_1 < \dots < p_k$ and $e_1, \dots, e_k \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $n = p_1^{e_1} \dots p_k^{e_k}$.

Moreover this decomposition is **unique**.

- Important in math (building blocks for all numbers)
- Important in crypto (RSA)
- It seems **hard** to compute $p_1, \dots, p_k$ if given $n \in \mathbb{N}$
- **Theoretically**, there is a **quantum** algorithm that can do this and **break RSA**.



Peter Shor