

Rational numbers vs. Irrational numbers

by

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in cooperation with

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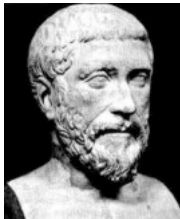
and the assistance of Ghina El Jannoun, MS and Dania Sheaib, MS

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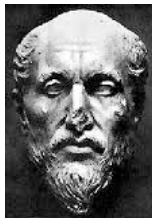
“The ultimate Nature of Reality is Numbers”

A quote from Pythagoras (570-495 BC)



**“Wherever there is
number, there is
beauty”**

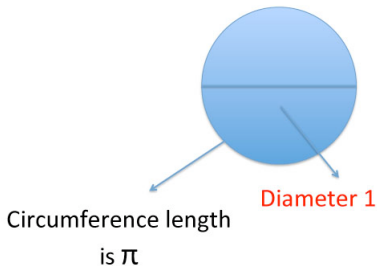
A quote from Proclus (412-485 AD)



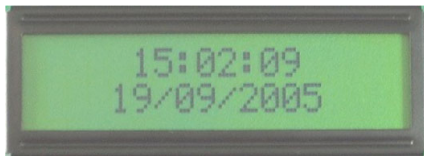
Traditional Clock plus Circumference



$$1 \text{ min} = \frac{1}{60} \text{ of 1 hour}$$



An Electronic Clock plus a Calendar



Hour : Minutes : Seconds
dd/mm/yyyy

$$1 \text{ month} = \frac{1}{12} \text{ of 1 year}$$

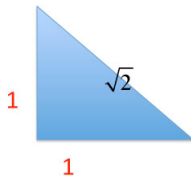
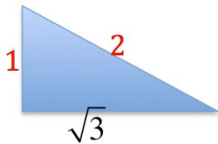
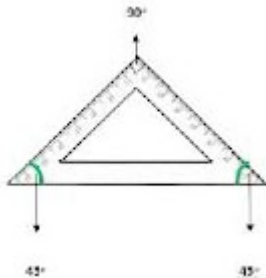
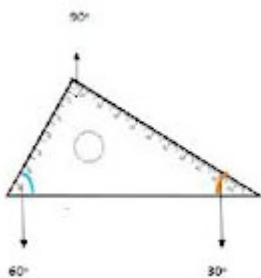
$$1 \text{ day} = \frac{1}{365} \text{ of 1 year (normally)}$$

$$1 \text{ hour} = \frac{1}{24} \text{ of 1 day}$$

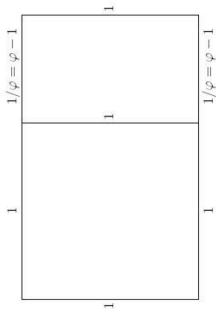
$$1 \text{ min} = \frac{1}{60} \text{ of 1 hour}$$

$$1 \text{ sec} = \frac{1}{60} \text{ of 1 min}$$

TSquares: Use of Pythagoras Theorem



Golden number φ and Golden rectangle

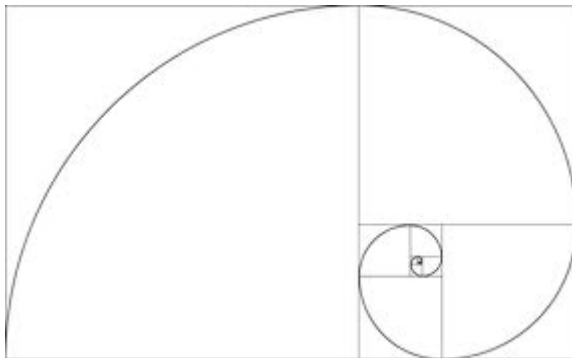


Roots of $x^2 - x - 1 = 0$ are $\varphi = \frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2}$ and $-\frac{1}{\varphi} = \frac{1 - \sqrt{5}}{2}$

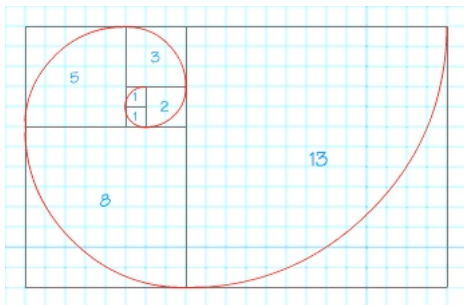


Golden number φ and Inner Golden spiral

Drawn with up to 10 golden rectangles



Outer Golden spiral and L. Fibonacci (1175-1250) sequence



$$\mathcal{F} = \left\{ \underbrace{1}_{f_1}, \underbrace{1}_{f_2}, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, \dots, f_n, \dots \right\} : f_n = f_{n-1} + f_{n-2}, n \geq 3$$

$$f_n = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \left(\varphi^n + (-1)^{n-1} \frac{1}{\varphi^n} \right)$$

Euler's Number e



$$s_3 = 1 + \frac{1}{1!} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3!} = 2.6666\dots66\dots$$

$$s_4 = 1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3!} + \frac{1}{4!} = 2.70833333\dots333\dots$$

$$s_5 = 1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3!} + \frac{1}{4!} + \frac{1}{5!} = 2.7166666666\dots66\dots$$

.....

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left\{ 1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3!} + \frac{1}{4!} + \frac{1}{5!} + \dots + \frac{1}{n!} \right\} = e = 2.718281828459\dots$$

e is an irrational number discovered by L. Euler (1707-1783), a limit of a sequence of rational numbers.

Definition of Rational and Irrational numbers

- ▶ A **Rational number** r is defined as:

$$r = \frac{m}{n}$$

where m and n are integers with $n \neq 0$.

- ▶ Otherwise, if a number cannot be put in the form of a ratio of 2 integers, it is said to be an **Irrational number**.

Distinguishing between rational and irrational numbers

Any number x , (rational or irrational) can be written as:

$$x = I + f$$

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- I is its integral part;
- $0 \leq f < 1$ is its fractional part.

Examples

- $\frac{48}{25} = 1 + 0.92$
- $\frac{8}{3} =$
- $\frac{17}{7} =$
- $\sqrt{2} =$
- $\pi =$
- $\varphi = \frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2} =$

Answers to Examples

- $\frac{48}{25} = 1 + 0.92$
- $\frac{8}{3} = 2 + 0.6666666\dots$
- $\frac{17}{7} = 2 + 0.4285714285714\dots$
- $\sqrt{2} = 1 + 0.4142135623731\dots$
- $\pi = 3 + 0.14159265358979\dots$
- $\varphi = 1 + 0.6180339887499\dots$

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1. As $x = I + f$, I : Integer; $0 < f < 1$: Fractional.
2. \implies Distinction between rational and irrational can be restricted to fraction numbers f between $0 < f < 1$.

Position of the Problem

$$\mathcal{R} = \{\text{Rational Numbers } f, 0 < f < 1\}$$

$$\mathcal{I} = \{\text{Irrational Numbers } f, 0 < f < 1\}$$

The segment following segment \mathcal{S} represents all numbers between 0 and 1:



$$\mathcal{S} = \mathcal{R} \cup \mathcal{I} \text{ with } \mathcal{R} \cap \mathcal{I} = \Phi \text{ empty set.}$$

- **Basic Question:**

Position of the Problem

$$\mathcal{R} = \{\text{Rational Numbers } f, 0 < f < 1\}$$

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The segment following segment \mathcal{S} represents all numbers between 0 and 1:



$$\mathcal{S} = \mathcal{R} \cup \mathcal{I} \text{ with } \mathcal{R} \cap \mathcal{I} = \Phi \text{ empty set.}$$

- **Basic Question:**
- If we pick a number f **at random** between 0 and 1, what is the probability that this number be rational: $f \in \mathcal{R}$?

The Decimal Representation of a number

Any number $f : 0 < f < 1$ has the following decimal representation:

$$f \stackrel{\text{Notation}}{=} 0.d_1d_2d_3\dots d_k\dots$$

$$d_i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9\}$$

$$f = d_1\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_2\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^k}\right) + \dots$$

with at least one of the d_i 's $\neq 0$.

Main Theorem about Rational Numbers

The number $0 < f < 1$ is rational, that is

$$f = \frac{m}{n}, \quad m < n,$$

if and only if

its decimal representation:

$$\begin{aligned} f &= 0.d_1d_2d_3\dots d_k\dots \\ &= d_1\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_2\left(\frac{1}{10^2}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{10^3}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^k}\right) + \dots \end{aligned}$$

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takes one of the following forms:

f is either **Terminating**: $d_i = 0$ for $i > l \geq 1$

or f is **Non-Terminating** with a repeating pattern.

Proof of the Main Theorem about Rational Numbers

Theorem

The number $0 < f < 1$ is rational, that is $f = \frac{m}{n}$, $m < n$, **if and only if** its decimal representation:

$$f = 0.d_1d_2d_3\dots d_k\dots$$

is either **Terminating** ($d_i = 0$ for $i > l \geq 1$) or is **Non-Terminating** with a repeating pattern.

Proof of the only if part of Main Theorem about Rational Numbers

Proof.



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1. If f has a terminating decimal representation, then f is rational.



Proof of the only if part of Main Theorem about Rational Numbers

Proof.

1. If f has a terminating decimal representation, then f is rational.
2. If f has a non-terminating decimal representation with a repeating pattern, then f is rational.



Proof of the first Statement of only if part

Statement 1: If f has a terminating decimal representation, then f is rational. **Consider:**

$$f = d_1\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_2\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^k}\right)$$

then:

$$10^k f = d_1 10^{k-1} + d_2 10^{k-2} + \dots + d_k.$$

implying:

$$f = \frac{m}{10^k} \text{ with } m = d_1 10^{k-1} + d_2 10^{k-2} + \dots + d_k$$

Example

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$$0.625 = \frac{625}{1,000} = \frac{125 \times 5}{125 \times 8}$$

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$$0.625 = \text{after simplification: } \frac{5}{8}$$

Proof of the second Statement of only if part

Statement 2: If f has a non terminating decimal representation with repeating pattern, then f is rational.

Without loss of generality, consider:

$$f = 0.\overline{d_1d_2d_3\dots d_k} = 0.d_1d_2d_3\dots d_kd_1d_2d_3\dots d_kd_1d_2d_3\dots d_k\dots$$

$$f = d_1\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_2\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^k}\right) + \frac{1}{10^k}\left[d_1\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_2\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^k}\right)\right] + \frac{1}{10^{2k}}[\dots]$$

then:

$$10^k f = \underbrace{d_1 10^{k-1} + d_2 10^{k-2} + \dots + d_k}_{m: \text{Integer}} + f.$$

implying:

$$\underbrace{(10^k - 1)}_{n: \text{Integer}} f = m \iff f = \frac{m}{n}$$

Example on Proof of the second Statement

$$f = 0.\overline{428571} = 0.428571428571428571\dots$$

$$f = 4\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + 2\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + 8\left(\frac{1}{10^3}\right) + 5\left(\frac{1}{10^4}\right) + 7\left(\frac{1}{10^5}\right) + 1\frac{1}{10^6} + \frac{1}{10^6}(f)$$

$$10^6 \times f = 4 \times 10^5 + 2 \times 10^4 + 8 \times 10^3 + 5 \times 10^2 + 7 \times 10 + 1 + f$$

$$(10^6 - 1) \times f = 428,571$$

$$f = \frac{428,571}{10^6 - 1} = \frac{428,571}{999,999}$$

After simplification:

$$f = \frac{428,571}{999,999} = \frac{3 \times 142,857}{7 \times 142,857} = \frac{3}{7}$$

Proof of the “IF PART”

$$f = 0.d_1d_2d_3\dots d_k\dots \in \mathcal{R}$$



f has a terminating representation,

or

f has a non-terminating representation with a repeating pattern.

Tools for Proof of the if part of Main Theorem about Rational Numbers

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Two tools to prove this result:

1. **Euclidean Division Theorem**
2. **Pigeon Hole Principle**

First Tool: Euclidean Division Theorem

$M \geq 0$ and $N \geq 1$.

Then, there exists a unique pair of integers (d, r) , such that:

$$M = d \times N + r,$$

or equivalently:

$$\frac{M}{N} = d + \frac{r}{N}$$

$d \geq 0$ is the quotient of the division, and $r \in \{0, 1, \dots, N - 1\}$ is the remainder.

Application of Euclidean Division Theorem on

$$f, 0 < f < 1$$

$$f = \frac{m}{n} = d_1\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_2\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^k}\right) + \dots$$

$$\frac{10m}{n} = d_1 + f_1 \text{ where } f_1 = d_2\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^{k-1}}\right) + \dots$$

$$10m = d_1n + r_1 \quad \frac{10m}{n} = d_1 + f_1 \quad f_1 = \frac{r_1}{n} = d_2\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots$$

$$10r_1 = d_2n + r_2 \quad \frac{10r_1}{n} = d_2 + f_2 \quad f_2 = \frac{r_2}{n} = d_3\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots$$

$$\vdots$$

$$10r_{k-1} = d_kn + r_k \quad \frac{10r_{k-1}}{n} = d_k + f_k \quad f_k = \frac{r_k}{n} = d_{k+1}\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots$$

$$\vdots$$

Each of $r_1, r_2, \dots, r_k, \dots \in \underbrace{\{0, 1, \dots, n-1\}}$

Application of Euclidean Division Theorem on

$$f, 0 < f < 1$$

$$f = \frac{m}{n} = d_1\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_2\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^k}\right) + \dots$$

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\vdots

Each of $r_1, r_2, \dots, r_k, \dots \in \underbrace{\{0, 1, \dots, n-1\}}$

The Algorithm of Successive Multiplications by 10 and Divisions by n

- ▶ Can this procedure terminate?

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- ▶ yes, when $r_k = 0$.

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- ▶ Can this procedure terminate?
- ▶ yes, when $r_k = 0$.
- ▶ If not, $\{d_i, r_i\}$ starts repeating.

Proof of Terminating Sequences using Successive Multiplications and Divisions

$$\frac{10m}{n} = d_1 + d_2\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^{k-1}}\right) + \dots$$

$$10m = d_1n + r_1 \quad \frac{10m}{n} = d_1 + f_1 \quad f_1 = \frac{r_1}{n} = d_1 + d_2\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots$$

$$10r_1 = d_2n + r_2 \quad \frac{10r_1}{n} = d_2 + f_2 \quad f_2 = \frac{r_2}{n} = d_2 + d_3\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots$$

⋮

$$10r_{k-1} = d_kn + 0 \quad \frac{10r_{k-1}}{n} = d_k + f_k \quad f_k = 0$$

Algorithm stops at k : $r_k = 0$ implies:

$$r_{k+1} = r_{k+2} = \dots = 0 \text{ and } d_{k+1} = d_{k+2} = \dots = 0.$$

$$\implies \frac{m}{n} = 0.d_1d_2\dots d_k.$$

Examples of fractions with terminating decimal representation

1. $\frac{m}{n} = \frac{1}{4}$, $m = 1$, $n = 4$

$$10 \times 1 = 2 \times 4 + 2 \Leftrightarrow \frac{10 \times 1}{4} = 2 + \frac{2}{4}, (d_1 = 2, r_1 = 2)$$

$$10 \times 2 = 5 \times 4 + 0 \Leftrightarrow \frac{10 \times 2}{4} = 5 + \frac{0}{4}, (d_2 = 5, r_2 = 0)$$

$r_2 = 0$ implies $\frac{1}{4} = 0.d_1d_2 = 0.25$

Examples of fractions with terminating decimal representation

2. $\frac{m}{n} = \frac{5}{8}, m = 5, n = 8$

Examples of fractions with terminating decimal representation

2. $\frac{m}{n} = \frac{5}{8}$, $m = 5$, $n = 8$

$$10 \times 5 = 6 \times 8 + 2 \Leftrightarrow \frac{10 \times 5}{8} = 6 + \frac{2}{8}, (d_1 = 6, r_1 = 2)$$

$$10 \times 2 = 2 \times 8 + 4 \Leftrightarrow \frac{10 \times 2}{8} = 2 + \frac{4}{8}, (d_2 = 2, r_2 = 4)$$

$$10 \times 4 = 5 \times 8 + 0 \Leftrightarrow \frac{10 \times 4}{8} = 5 + \frac{0}{8}, (d_3 = 5, r_3 = 0)$$

$r_3 = 0$ implies $\frac{5}{8} = 0.d_1d_2d_3 = 0.625$

Successive Multiplications and Divisions: Non Terminating Representations

$$\frac{10m}{n} = d_1 + d_2\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + d_3\left(\frac{1}{100}\right) + \dots + d_k\left(\frac{1}{10^{k-1}}\right) + \dots$$

$$\begin{aligned} 10m &= d_1n + r_1 && \Leftrightarrow && \frac{10m}{n} = d_1 + \frac{r_1}{n} = d_1 + d_2\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots \\ 10r_1 &= d_2n + r_2 && \Leftrightarrow && \frac{10r_1}{n} = d_2 + \frac{r_2}{n} = d_2 + d_3\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots \\ & && \vdots && \\ 10r_{k-1} &= d_kn + r_k && \Leftrightarrow && \frac{10r_{k-1}}{n} = d_k + \frac{r_k}{n} = d_k + d_{k+1}\left(\frac{1}{10}\right) + \dots \\ & && \vdots && \end{aligned}$$

Each of $r_1, r_2, \dots, r_k, \dots \in \overbrace{\{1, \dots, n-1\}}$ and $r_i \neq 0$ for all i .

Second tool: Use of Pigeon hole Principle in proving that Infinite representations for $\frac{m}{n}$ have repeating patterns

Statement:

If you have n pigeons



to occupy $n - 1$ holes:

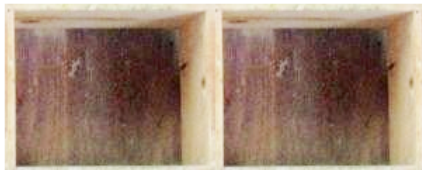


Then at least 2 pigeons must occupy the same hole.

Example 10 pigeons and 9 pigeon holes



Example of 3 pigeons and 2 pigeon holes



Solution of example of 3 pigeons and 2 pigeon holes

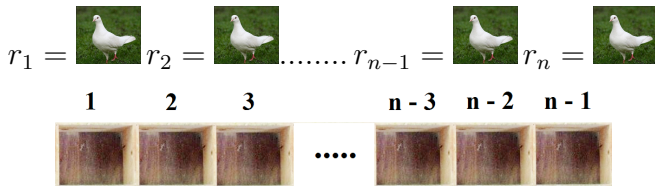


OR



Application of Pigeonhole Principle for non-terminating sequences

$$\begin{array}{lcl}
 10m = d_1n + r_1 & \Leftrightarrow & \frac{10m}{n} = d_1 + \frac{r_1}{n} \\
 10r_1 = d_2n + r_2 & \Leftrightarrow & \frac{10r_1}{n} = d_2 + \frac{r_2}{n} \\
 & & \vdots \\
 10r_{k-1} = d_kn + r_k & \Leftrightarrow & \frac{10r_{k-1}}{n} = d_k + \frac{r_k}{n} \\
 & & \vdots
 \end{array}$$



By Pigeonhole principle: At least 2 remainders r_j, r_k ,
 $1 \leq j < k \leq n: r_j = r_k$.

Applying the Pigeon hole Principle to obtain repeating sequences

Let $\{j, k\}$ be the first pair, such that:
 $1 \leq j < k \leq n$ and $r_j = r_k$ then:

$$10r_j = d_{j+1}n + r_{j+1} \text{ and } 10r_k = d_{k+1}n + r_{k+1}$$

\Downarrow

$$d_{j+1} = d_{k+1} \text{ and } r_{j+1} = r_{k+1} \dots$$

More generally,

$$d_{j+l} = d_{k+l} \text{ and } r_{j+l} = r_{k+l}, \quad 1 \leq l \leq k - j.$$

and therefore by recurrence:

$$\frac{m}{n} = 0.d_1d_2\dots d_j \overline{d_{j+1}\dots d_k}$$

Example

$$f = \frac{m}{n} = \frac{6}{7}$$

$$10 \times 6 = 8 \times 7 + 4 \quad d_1 = 8 \quad r_1 = 4$$

$$10 \times 4 = 5 \times 7 + 5 \quad d_2 = 5 \quad r_2 = 5$$

$$10 \times 5 = 7 \times 7 + 1 \quad d_3 = 7 \quad r_3 = 1$$

$$10 \times 1 = 1 \times 7 + 3 \quad d_4 = 1 \quad r_4 = 3$$

$$10 \times 3 = 4 \times 7 + 2 \quad d_5 = 4 \quad r_5 = 2$$

$$10 \times 2 = 2 \times 7 + 6 \quad d_6 = 2 \quad r_6 = 6$$

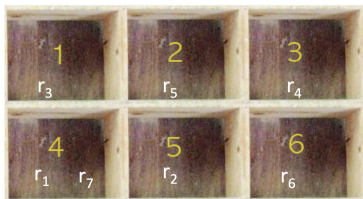
$$10 \times 6 = 8 \times 7 + 4 \quad d_7 = 8 \quad r_7 = 4$$

\vdots

Each of $r_1, r_2, r_3, r_4, r_5, \dots \in \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6\}$.

Example $f = \frac{m}{n} = \frac{6}{7}$

$$r_1 = 4 \text{ 🐦 } r_2 = 5 \text{ 🐦 } r_3 = 1 \text{ 🐦 } r_4 = 3 \text{ 🐦 } r_5 = 2 \text{ 🐦 } r_6 = 6 \text{ 🐦 } r_7 = 4 \text{ 🐦 }$$



$\{1, 7\}$ is the first pair, such that $r_1 = r_7$ then:

$$\frac{6}{7} = 0.d_1\overline{d_2d_3d_4d_5d_6d_7} = 0.8\overline{571428}$$

Length of pattern is 6.

Exercise

Find the decimal representation of

$$f = \frac{m}{n} = \frac{2}{3}$$

using Successive Multiplications and Divisions

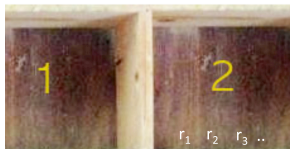
Solution of the exercise $f = \frac{m}{n} = \frac{2}{3}$

$$10 \times 2 = 6 \times 3 + 2 \quad d_1 = 6 \quad r_1 = 2$$

$$10 \times 2 = 6 \times 3 + 2 \quad d_2 = 6 \quad r_2 = 2$$

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\vdots



$\{1, 2\}$ is the first pair, such that $r_1 = r_2$ and therefore:

$$\frac{2}{3} = 0.d_1\overline{d_2} = 0.6\overline{6}$$

Length of pattern is 1

Answer to the Main question of Module

$$\mathcal{R} = \{\text{Rational Numbers } f, 0 < f < 1\}$$

$$\mathcal{I} = \{\text{Irrational Numbers } f, 0 < f < 1\}$$

$$\mathcal{S} = \mathcal{R} \cup \mathcal{I} \text{ with } \mathcal{R} \cap \mathcal{I} = \Phi \text{ empty set.}$$



Question: If we pick at random a number f between 0 and 1, what is the probability that this number be rational: $f \in \mathcal{R}$?

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- ▶ While if $f \in \mathcal{I}$: $f = 0.d_1d_2..d_k....$ (infinite representation with no specific pattern).
- ▶ Hence, “much more” ways to obtain elements in \mathcal{I} than in \mathcal{R} .

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$$\mathcal{R}_n = \left\{ \frac{m}{n+1} \mid m = 1, 2, \dots, n, \gcd(m, n+1) = 1 \right\}.$$

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- ▶ $\mathcal{R}_5 = \left\{ \frac{1}{6}, \frac{5}{6} \right\} = \{r_{10}, r_{11}\}$

- ▶ As a consequence, we can **enumerate** the elements of \mathcal{R} :

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- ▶ As a consequence, we can **enumerate** the elements of \mathcal{R} :

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- ▶ Implying:
Countable infinity of $\mathcal{R} \iff$ a one to one relation between \mathcal{R} and the natural integers:
 $\mathbb{N} = \{1, 2, 3, 4, \dots\}$

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- ▶ This follows from the fact that f is irrational **if and only if** its infinite representation $0.d_1d_2\dots d_k\dots$ has all its elements belonging **randomly** to the set $\{0, 1, 2, \dots, 9\}$.
- ▶ At that point, the proof of uncountability of \mathcal{I} can be obtained using Cantor's proof by contradiction.

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.....

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- ▶ Let $\bar{i} = 0.\bar{f}_{1,1}, \bar{f}_{2,2}, \dots, \bar{f}_{k,k}\dots$, such that the $\{\bar{f}_{i,i}\}$'s are randomly chosen with:

$$\bar{f}_{1,1} \neq f_{1,1}, \bar{f}_{2,2} \neq f_{2,2}, \dots, \bar{f}_{k,k} \neq f_{k,k}, \dots$$

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- ▶ Contradiction: $\bar{i} \in \mathcal{I}$ but \bar{i} different from each of the elements in $\{i_1, i_2, i_3, \dots\}$.

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$$\implies \text{Prob}(f \in \mathcal{R}) = \frac{\aleph_0}{\aleph_0 + \mathcal{C}} \approx \frac{\aleph_0}{\mathcal{C}} \approx 0.$$