

# MAS114: Lecture 12

James Cranch

<http://cranch.staff.shef.ac.uk/mas114/>

2021–2022

# Reading week: lectures etc

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I'll have an office hour as usual, or will be happy to make an alternative appointment (email me) if you want.

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From week 8 we'll be back to normal.

# The SoMaS take-home challenge

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The SoMaS take-home challenge has been released!

<http://roukema.staff.shef.ac.uk/challenge2021-2022/>

One question is due to me.

## Last time

We were talking about finding a general solution to  
 $39x + 54y = 120$ .

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$$\begin{aligned}3 &= 9 - 6 \\&= 9 - (15 - 9) = 2 \times 9 - 15 \\&= 2 \times (39 - 2 \times 15) - 15 = 2 \times 39 - 5 \times 15 \\&= 2 \times 39 - 5 \times (54 - 39)\end{aligned}$$

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or in other words, that  $x = 280$ ,  $y = -200$  gives a solution.

Now, you might wonder whether this is the *only* solution.

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This means that, as 18 divides the right-hand side, then we also have  $18 \mid 13(x - x')$ . But since 13 and 18 are coprime, we have  $18 \mid (x - x')$  by our remark earlier. So we can write  $x - x' = 18k$ . But then we can solve to get  $y - y' = -13k$ , and it's easy to check that any such  $k$  works.

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While I haven't stated (and certainly haven't proved) any theorems about it, this approach works perfectly well in general, as you can imagine.

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## Proposition

*Let  $a$  and  $b$  be positive integers. Any common divisor of  $a$  and  $b$  is a divisor of the greatest common divisor.*

## Proof.

If  $d \mid a$  and  $d \mid b$ , then  $d \mid (a - qb)$  for any  $q$ . Hence  $d$  is a divisor of the numbers obtained after every step of Euclid's algorithm, and so it is a divisor of the gcd. □

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As an unexpected advantage, if we think of the gcd as being defined in this way, then we can get that  $\gcd(0, 0) = 0$ . This was undefined previously.

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- ▶ remainders upon division;
- ▶ numbers of the form  $4n + 1$  or  $18k - 440$ , and so on.

All these things look pretty similar, and it's time we got ourselves a language for discussing these things better.