

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
 $39x + 54y = 120$.

Using Euclid's algorithm

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We've developed techniques to find *one* solution. Euclid's algorithm gives us that

$\text{gcd}(54, 39)$

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

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$$39 \times 7 + 54 \times (-5) = 3,$$

and we multiply both sides by 40 to get

$$39 \times 280 + 54 \times (-200) = 120,$$

or in other words, that $x = 280$, $y = -200$ gives a solution.
Now, you might wonder whether this is the *only* solution.

Other solutions?

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There's a way of analysing this. Suppose we have two solutions:

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Dividing out by the greatest common divisor, we get

$$13(x - x') + 18(y - y') = 0,$$

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This means that, as 18 divides the right-hand side, then we also have $18 \mid 13(x - x')$.

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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.

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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 $x - x' = 18k$.

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$$13(x - x') = -18(y - y').$$

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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Hence the general solution is

$$x = 280 - 18k, \quad y = 13k - 200.$$

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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 $\text{gcd}(0, 0) = 0$. This was undefined previously.

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- ▶ odd numbers;
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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.