

Generating Functions

Def Given a sequence $a_0, a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n, \dots$, the generating function for this sequence is defined by

$$\begin{aligned} A(x) &= a_0 + a_1x + a_2x^2 + \dots + a_nx^n + \dots \\ &= \sum_{n \geq 0} a_n x^n. \end{aligned}$$

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Remark

1. $A(x) = \sum_{n \geq 0} a_n x^n$ is a "formal" power series.
2. We ignore the convergence issues of $A(x)$.
3. $A(z) = \sum_{n \geq 0} a_n z^{-n}$ is usually called the z transform of $\{a_n\}$.

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Example Find the generating function for $a_n = \binom{m}{n}$, $n=0, \dots, m$

$$\begin{aligned} A(x) &= \sum_{n=0}^m a_n x^n \\ &= \sum_{n=0}^m \binom{m}{n} x^n \\ &= (1+x)^m \end{aligned}$$

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Example $a_n = \lambda^n, n \geq 0$

$$\begin{aligned}
 A(x) &= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \lambda^n x^n = 1 + \lambda x + \lambda^2 x^2 + \dots \\
 &= \frac{1}{1-\lambda x} \quad (\text{sum of the geometric series})
 \end{aligned}$$

Or $A(x) = 1 + \lambda x + \lambda^2 x^2 + \dots$
 $A(x) - 1 = \lambda x + \lambda^2 x^2 + \dots = \lambda x (1 + \lambda x + \lambda^2 x^2 + \dots)$

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$$= \lambda x A(x)$$

$$\Rightarrow (1 - \lambda x) A(x) = 1$$

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Def The formal derivative of $A(x) = \sum_{n \geq 0} a_n x^n$ is defined as $A'(x) = \sum_{n \geq 1} n a_n x^{n-1}$.

Remark The usual rules for derivatives still hold for formal derivatives.

$$(f + g)' = f' + g'$$

$$(fg)' = f'g + fg'$$

$$\left(\frac{f}{g}\right)' = \frac{f'g - fg'}{g^2}$$

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Example $a_n = n \lambda^n$, $n \geq 0$

Find the corresponding generating function.

$$A(x) = 0 + \lambda x + 2\lambda^2 x^2 + 3\lambda^3 x^3 + \dots$$

$$\text{consider } B(x) = 1 + \lambda x + \lambda^2 x^2 + \lambda^3 x^3 + \dots$$

$$\begin{aligned} \Rightarrow B'(x) &= \lambda + 2\lambda^2 x + 3\lambda^3 x^2 + \dots \\ &= \frac{\lambda x + 2\lambda^2 x^2 + 3\lambda^3 x^3 + \dots}{x} \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow B'(x) = \lambda + 2\lambda^2 x + 3\lambda^3 x^2 + \dots$$

$$= \frac{\lambda x + 2\lambda^2 x^2 + 3\lambda^3 x^3 + \dots}{x}$$

$$= \frac{A(x)}{x}$$

$$\therefore A(x) = x B'(x)$$

Since $B(x) = \frac{1}{1-\lambda x}$, $B'(x) = \frac{\lambda}{(1-\lambda x)^2}$.

Therefore, $A(x) = \frac{\lambda x}{(1-\lambda x)^2}$.

$$\therefore n\lambda^n \Rightarrow \frac{\lambda x}{(1-\lambda x)^2}$$

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In general,

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{l} a_n \iff A(x) \\ n a_n \iff x A'(x) \end{array}}$$

Example

Suppose $c_n = a_0 b_n + a_1 b_{n-1} + \dots + a_n b_0$

$$= \sum_{k=0}^n a_k b_{n-k}$$

(convolution of two sequences a_n and b_n)

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 $= \sum_{k=0}^n a_k b_{n-k}$
 (convolution of two sequences a_n and b_n)

If the generating function for a_n is $A(x)$
 and the generating function for b_n is $B(x)$,
 then $G(x) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} c_n x^n$
 $= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left(\sum_{k=0}^n a_k b_{n-k} \right) x^n$
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In general, $a_n \iff A(x)$
 $n a_n \iff x A'(x)$

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$$\begin{aligned}
&= \sum_{k \geq 0} \sum_{n \geq k} a_k b_{n-k} x^n \\
&= \sum_{k \geq 0} a_k x^k \sum_{n \geq k} b_{n-k} x^{n-k} \\
&= \left(\sum_{k \geq 0} a_k x^k \right) \left(\sum_{k' \geq 0} b_{k'} x^{k'} \right) \quad (k' = n-k) \\
&= A(x) B(x).
\end{aligned}$$

Example Suppose the generating function for c_n is $\frac{1}{(1-x)^2}$.
 Find c_n .

Method 1: Let $A(x) = \frac{1}{1-x}$ and $B(x) = \frac{1}{1-x}$.
 Then $a_n = 1^n$ and $b_n = 1^n$.
 We have $c_n = \sum_{k=0}^n a_k b_{n-k}$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= \sum_{k=0}^n \lambda^k \lambda^{n-k} \\
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Method 2: Recall $a_n \iff A(x)$
 $na_n \iff xA'(x)$

$$\lambda^n \iff \frac{1}{1-\lambda x}$$

$$n\lambda^n \iff \frac{\lambda x}{(1-\lambda x)^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \therefore \frac{\lambda x}{(1-\lambda x)^2} &= 0 + \lambda x + 2\lambda^2 x^2 + 3\lambda^3 x^3 + \dots \\ &= \lambda x (1 + 2\lambda x + 3\lambda^2 x^2 + \dots) \end{aligned}$$

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$$\Rightarrow \frac{1}{(1-\lambda x)^2} = 1 + 2\lambda x + 3\lambda^2 x^2 + \dots$$

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Extended Binomial Theorem

Theorem $(1+x)^{-m} = \sum_{r \geq 0} (-1)^r \binom{m+r-1}{r} x^r$

Proof We first consider

$$(1-x)^{-m} = \underbrace{(1-x)^{-1} (1-x)^{-1} \dots (1-x)^{-1}}_m$$

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$$= (1+x+x^2+x^3+\dots) (1+x+x^2+x^3+\dots) \dots (1+x+x^2+x^3+\dots)$$

For example, $m=3$ and 4

$$(1-x)^{-3} = (1+x+x^2+x^3+\dots) (1+x+x^2+x^3+\dots) (1+x+x^2+x^3+\dots)$$

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$x^4 = x^2 \cdot x \cdot x$

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

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Then the coefficient of x^r in $(1-x)^{-m}$ is equal to the number of unordered selections, with repetition, of r things from a set of size m .

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And the number is $\binom{m+r-1}{r}$

Finally, by replacing x by $-x$, we get the desired result.

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Example $\frac{1}{(1-\lambda x)^m} = (1-\lambda x)^{-m}$

$$= \sum_{r \geq 0} (-1)^r \binom{m+r-1}{r} (-\lambda)^r x^r$$

$$= \sum_{r \geq 0} \binom{m+r-1}{r} \lambda^r x^r$$

$\therefore \binom{m+n-1}{n} \lambda^n \iff \frac{1}{(1-\lambda x)^m}$

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$\therefore \binom{m-1}{m-1} \lambda^0 \iff \frac{1}{(1-\lambda x)^m}$

$\binom{m+r-1}{m-1}$

Def Let α be a real number and r be a nonnegative integer.

$$\binom{\alpha}{r} \triangleq \begin{cases} \frac{\alpha(\alpha-1)\dots(\alpha-r+1)}{r!}, & \text{if } r > 0 \\ 1, & \text{if } r = 0 \end{cases}$$

extended binomial coefficient

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1.001 ... consider

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example

$$\begin{aligned} \binom{-m}{r} &= \frac{(-m)(-m-1)\dots(-m-r)}{r!} \\ &= (-1)^r \frac{(m+r-1)(m+r-2)\dots m}{r!} \\ &= (-1)^r \binom{m+r-1}{r} \end{aligned}$$

Hence $(1+x)^{-m} = \sum_{r \geq 0} \binom{-m}{r} x^r$

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Theorem (Extended Binomial Theorem)

Let x be a real number with $|x| < 1$ and α be a real number. Then

$$(1+x)^\alpha = \sum_{r \geq 0} \binom{\alpha}{r} x^r$$

Proof Recall the Maclaurin series in calculus:

$$f(x) = \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \frac{f^{(r)}(0)}{r!} x^r.$$

Let $f(x) = (1+x)^\alpha$. We have

$$f^{(r)}(x) = \alpha(\alpha-1)\dots(\alpha-r+1)(1+x)^{\alpha-r}$$

$$\text{Hence } \frac{f^{(r)}(0)}{r!} = \frac{\alpha(\alpha-1)\dots(\alpha-r+1)}{r!} = \binom{\alpha}{r}.$$

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extended
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Therefore, $(1+x)^\alpha = \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \binom{\alpha}{r} x^r$ ■

Example $(1+x)^{-\frac{1}{2}}$

$$\begin{aligned} &= 1 - \frac{1}{2}x + \frac{-\frac{1}{2}(-\frac{1}{2}-1)}{2!}x^2 + \frac{-\frac{1}{2}(-\frac{1}{2}-1)(-\frac{1}{2}-2)}{3!}x^3 + \dots \\ &= 1 - \frac{1}{2}x + \frac{3}{8}x^2 - \frac{5}{16}x^3 + \dots \\ &= \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^r}{2^{2r}} \binom{-\frac{1}{2}}{r} x^r \end{aligned}$$