

What is 0^0 , and who decides, and why does it matter?:

The role of definitions in mathematics

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STEM Education Research Seminar

University of Texas at El Paso

November 13, 2020

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 - ▶ But I will try to stick to high school and middle school-level

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- ▶ Dependent (taxes)

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- ▶ “That one slide justified having you on the project”

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- ▶ Cody Patterson on Facebook: “I think that in his first 100 days President Biden should issue an executive order stipulating that 0^0 is defined to be 1, and the exponential rule for limits (that $\lim_{x \rightarrow a} b^x = b^a$) only holds when $b > 0$ ”

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- ▶ This was a choice, to make a theorem nicer to state

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- ▶ sets of conditions that work well together, that come up often, become definitions
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- ▶ Example that there is some choice in which conditions to include in a definition.

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- ▶ No cancellation: $\infty + 5 = \infty + 3$, but $5 \neq 3$.

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- ▶ Negative bases cause all sorts of trouble and exceptions

Defining exponentiation

- ▶ Some choices are forced
- ▶ Why is $b^{1/2} = \sqrt{b}$?
- ▶ Start with $b^{n+m} = (b^n) \times (b^m)$
 - ▶ For integers n, m
 - ▶ For any n, m
- ▶ $b = b^{1/2+1/2} = (b^{1/2}) \times (b^{1/2})$
 - ▶ We also need that square root exists and is unique, by showing x^2 is an invertible function.
- ▶ Define rational exponents
- ▶ Define real exponents with limits
- ▶ Negative bases cause all sorts of trouble and exceptions
 - ▶ $\sqrt[3]{-64}$ exists, but $\sqrt{-64}$ does not

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- ▶ (In polynomial factorization, all the non-zero numbers are units)

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- ▶ False hypothesis makes implication true!

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- ▶ Is 5 a polynomial?
- ▶ Yes, so for instance the sum of two polynomials is always a polynomial

Matrix multiplication

- Why is matrix multiplication defined the way it is?

"Dot Product"

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} 7 & 8 \\ 9 & 10 \\ 11 & 12 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 58 & \\ & \end{bmatrix}$$

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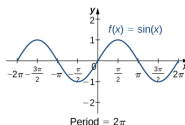
- ▶ Why is matrix multiplication defined the way it is?
- ▶ To guarantee $(AB)v = A(Bv)$, where v is a vector
- ▶ So the equation comes first, then the definition, not the other way around!

"Dot Product"

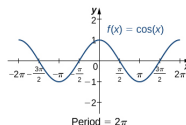
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Range of inverse trig functions

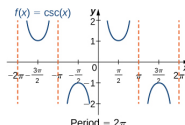
- ▶ Trig functions are not 1-1



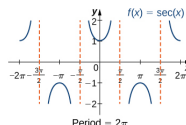
Period = 2π



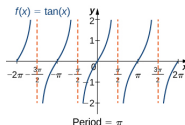
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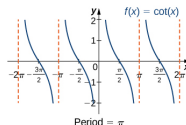
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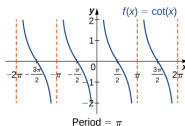
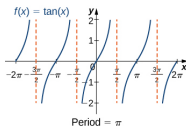
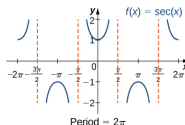
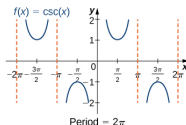
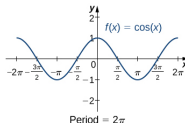
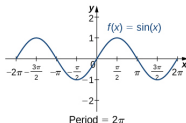
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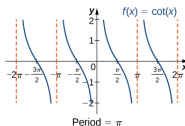
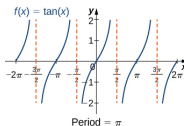
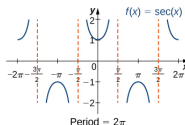
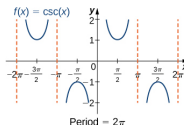
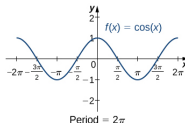
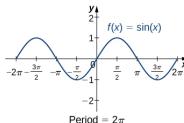
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- ▶ We should not hide all this from students!