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SCSI1013: Discrete Structures

CHAPTER 2 – Part 3

Recurrence Relation

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Definition

- A **recurrence relation** is an equation that defines a sequence $\{a_n, a_{n+1}, \dots\}$ based on a rule that gives the next term as a function of one or more of the previous term in the sequence for all integers n with $n \geq n_0$, (a_0, a_1, \dots)
- A sequence is called a **solution** of a recurrence relation if its terms satisfy the recurrence relation.

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Simple Recurrence Relation

The simplest form of a **recurrence relation** is the case where the next term depends only on the immediately previous term.

$$3, 8, 13, 18, 23, \dots$$

The above sequence shows a pattern, given initial condition, $a_1 = 3$:

$$3, 3+5, 8+5, 13+5, 18+5, \dots$$

$$a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, a_5, \dots$$

generated from an equation:

$$a_n = a_{n-1} + 5, \quad n \geq 2$$



n_{th} term of a sequence

Recurrence relation can be used to compute any n -th term of the sequence, given the initial condition, a_0 :

$$a_n = a_{n-1} + 5, \quad n \geq 2$$

$$3, 8, 13, 18, 23, \mathbf{28}, a_{n-1} + 5, \dots$$

$$a_2 = a_1 + 5, \quad 3 + 5 = 8$$

$$a_3 = a_2 + 5, \quad 8 + 5 = 13$$

$$a_4 = a_3 + 5, \quad 13 + 5 = 18$$

$$\vdots$$

$$a_6 = a_5 + 5, \quad 23 + 5 = 28$$

Example 1

Consider the following sequence:

$$3, 9, 27, 81, 243, \dots$$

The above sequence shows a pattern:

$$3^1, 3^2, 3^3, 3^4, 3^5, \dots$$

$$a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, a_5, \dots$$

Recurrence relation is defined by:

$$a_n = 3^n, n \geq 1$$

Example 2

Given initial condition, $a_0 = 1$ and recurrence relation:

$$a_n = 1 + 2a_{n-1}, n \geq 1$$

First few sequence are:

$$a_1 = 1 + 2(1) = 3$$

$$a_2 = 1 + 2(3) = 7$$

$$a_3 = 1 + 2(7) = 15$$

$$1, 3, 7, 15, 31, 63, \dots$$

Example 3

Given initial condition, $a_0 = 1$, $a_1 = 2$ and recurrence relation:

$$a_n = 3(a_{n-1} + a_{n-2}), \quad n \geq 2$$

First few sequence are:

$$a_2 = 3(2 + 1) = 9$$

$$a_3 = 3(9 + 2) = 33$$

$$a_4 = 3(33 + 9) = 126$$

1, 2, 9, 33, 126, 477, 1809, 6858, 26001, ...

Exercise

1) $a_n = 6a_{n-1} - 9a_{n-2}$, where $a_0 = 2$, $a_1 = 3$

2) $a_n = 2a_{n-1} - a_{n-2}$, where $a_0 = 5$, $a_1 = 3$

Example 4

For a photo shoot, the staff at a company have been arranged such that there are 10 people in the front row and each row has 7 more people than in the row in front of it. Find the recurrence relation and compute number of staff in the first 5 rows.

Example 4 -Solution

Notice that the difference between the number of people in successive rows is a constant amount.

This means that the n_{th} term of this sequence can be found using:

$$a_n = a_{n-1} + 7, \quad n \geq 2 \text{ with } a_1 = 10$$

Example 4 -Solution

Number of staff in the first 5 rows:

$$a_1 = 10 ,$$

$$a_2 = a_1 + 7, \quad 10 + 7 = 17$$

$$a_3 = a_2 + 7, \quad 17 + 7 = 24$$

$$a_4 = a_3 + 7, \quad 24 + 7 = 31$$

$$a_5 = a_4 + 7, \quad 31 + 7 = 38$$

10, 17, 24, 31, 38

Example 5

Find a recurrence relation and initial condition for

1, 5, 17, 53, 161, 485, ...

Solution:

Look at the differences between terms:

4, 12, 36, 108, ...

The differences in the sequence is growing by a factor of
3

Example 5 -Solution

However the original sequence is not.

$$1(3)=\mathbf{3}, 5(3)=\mathbf{15}, 17(3)=\mathbf{51}, \dots$$

$$\mathbf{1, 5, 17, 53, 161, 485, \dots}$$

It appears that we always end up with 2 less than the next term.

So, the recurrence relation is defined by:

$$\mathbf{a_n = 3(a_{n-1}) + 2, n \geq 1, \text{ with initial condition, } a_0 = 1}$$

Example 6

A depositor deposits RM 10,000 in a savings account at a bank yielding 5% per year with interest compounded annually. How much money will be in the account after 30 years? Let P_n denote the amount in the account after n years.

Example 6 - Solution

Derive the following **recurrence relation**:

$$P_n = P_{n-1} + 0.05P_{n-1} = 1.05P_{n-1}$$

Where, P_n = Current balance and P_{n-1} = Previous year balance and 0.05 is the compounding interest.

Example 6 - Solution

Initial condition, $P_0 = 10,000$. Then,

$$P_1 = 1.05P_0$$

$$P_2 = 1.05P_1 = (1.05)^2P_0$$

$$P_3 = 1.05P_2 = (1.05)^3P_0$$

...

$$P_n = 1.05P_{n-1} = (1.05)^n P_0,$$

now we can use this formula to calculate n_{th} term without iteration



Example 6 - Solution

Let us use this formula to find P_{30} under the initial condition $P_0 = 10,000$:

$$P_{30} = (1.05)^{30}(10,000) = 43,219.42$$

After 30 years, the account contains RM 43,219.42.



Exercise

Consider the following sequence:

1, 5, 9, 13, 17

Find the recurrence relation that defines the above sequence.



Exercise

A basketball is dropped onto the ground from a height of 15 feet. On each bounce, the ball reaches a maximum height 55% of its previous maximum height.

a) Write a recursive formula, a_n , that completely defines the height reached on the n_{th} bounce, where the first term in the sequence is the height reached on the ball's first bounce.

b) How high does the basketball reach after the 4_{th} bounce? Give your answer to two decimal places.