

Combinatorics (Part I)

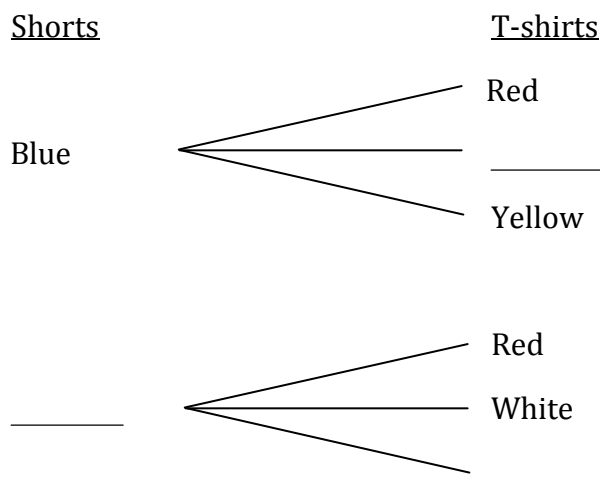
BEGINNERS 02/01/2015

Combinatorics is the study of the methods of counting.

Part I: Multiplication Principle

1. If you have two pairs of shorts, one blue and one black, and three T-shirts, red, white and yellow, how many outfits can you make?

Let's see how many different *combinations* of T-shirts and shorts we can have. Fill in the blanks.



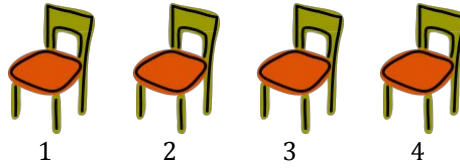
We see that we can have

1. Blue shorts and _____ T-shirt
2. Blue shorts and _____ T-shirt
3. Blue shorts and _____ T-shirt
4. Black shorts and _____ T-shirt
5. Black shorts and _____ T-shirt
6. Black shorts and _____ T-shirt

This is 6 outfits, or 6 *combinations*, in all.

But sometimes, we can't list out all the possible ways. Let us look at a similar problem.

2. If there are four chairs and four students – Ashley, Benjamin, Caitlyn and Daniel – in a classroom, in how many ways can the students be seated on the chairs?



- i. How many different students have the option of sitting on the first chair? ____
- ii. If one of them sits on the first chair, how many can sit on the second? ____
- iii. Now, how many can sit on the third chair? ____
- iv. How many can sit on the fourth chair? ____

So, let's see how many total ways of arranging the students on the chairs there are.

For each choice of the student who sits on the first chair (4 in total), we can then consider all the choices of who can sit on the second (3 in total).

This gives us $4 \times 3 =$ ____ different arrangements for the first two chairs.

Then, for all the possible choices of who can sit on the first and the second chairs, we can consider all the choices of who can sit on the third chair (2 in total).

So, we can have $4 \times 3 \times 2 =$ ____ arrangements for the first three chairs.

Then, for the different possible arrangements of students sitting on the first three chairs, we can consider how many students can sit on the last chair.

This gives us _____ total arrangements for the four chairs.

So, there are ____ ways in which the all students can be seated on the four chairs.

It looks like we just multiplied the different number of ways to fill each individual other.

Now go back to the first question and see what we did there. What can we multiply together to get the number of all possible outfits?

We can generalize:

If a process can be broken down into a number of steps, and all the steps are independent of each other like we saw above (choosing a particular pair of shorts does not affect your choice of T-shirt), then the total number of outcomes of the process is the number of possibilities in the first step times the number of possibilities in the second step times the number of possibilities in each step until the last one. This is called the *Multiplication Principle* of combinatorics.

Practice Problems

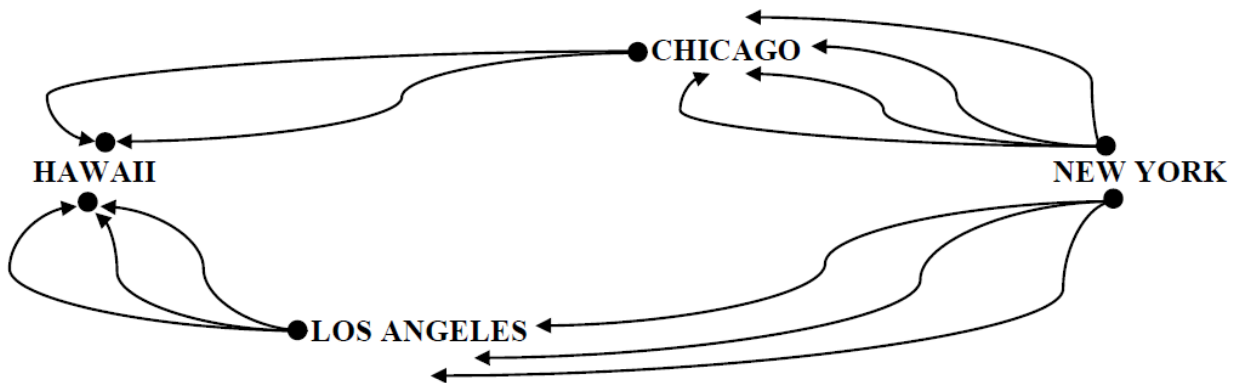
1. There are four fiction books and seven science books in a bookstore. In how many ways can you buy a fiction and a science book?
2. A sweater has to be knitted with three different colors of yarn: one for the left sleeve, one for the right sleeve and one for the body. If we have nine differently colored yarns available, how many different kinds of sweaters can be made?
3. A store carries 7 styles of pants. For each style, there are 10 different waist sizes, 8 different length options and 2 color choices. How many different pairs of pants does the store sell?
4. There are three ways of going from New York to Los Angeles: by train, by plane and by teleportation. And there are three ways of going from Los Angeles to Hawaii: by plane, by teleportation and by sea. How many ways are there to go from New York to Hawaii via Los Angeles?

Part II: Addition Principle

Let us look at a new idea now.

Max wants to go from New York to Hawaii. He has two options. One, he can go from New York to LA and then to Hawaii, like we did above. Or, he can go from New York to Chicago, where his grandmother lives, and then to Hawaii. There are four ways to get from New York to Chicago: by train, by car, by teleportation or by plane. And there are two ways to get from Chicago to Hawaii: by plane and by teleportation. In how many ways can Max get to Hawaii from New York?

We can break this down as follows:



How many ways are there to go from New York to Hawaii via Chicago?

How many ways are there to go from New York to Hawaii via LA?

How many ways are there to go from New York to Hawaii in all?

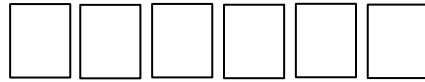
It is easy to see that you add the number of ways in both travel plans to get the total number of ways. This is the *Addition Principle* of combinatorics: When you have a choice of methods for performing a procedure (like, via Chicago or via Los Angeles), then the number of ways of performing the procedure is found by adding the number of ways for all the methods individually.

Practice Problems

1. Angie has to draw one card from a deck with 52 playing cards. In how many ways can she choose a king or a queen?
2. If a bookstore sells five fiction books, four science books and three children's books, in how many ways can you buy two books of different kinds?
3. A college acting troupe has 6 junior women, 8 junior men, 5 senior women and 4 senior men. In how many ways can the teacher select a senior couple or a junior couple to play the roles of Romeo and Juliet?
4. In a movie rental store, there are five different English movies, three French movies, two Russian movies and four Hindi movies. How many ways are there to rent three movies in different languages?

Part III: Multiple Independent Events

A natural number is odd-looking if all its digits are odd. How many odd-looking six-digit numbers are there?



- i. How many different odd digits are there? _____
- ii. How many different digits can appear in the first box? _____
- iii. How many different digits can appear in the second box? _____
- iv. How many different digits can appear in the third box? _____
- v. How many different digits can appear in the fourth box? _____
- vi. How many different digits can appear in the fifth box? _____
- vii. How many different digits can appear in the sixth box? _____

How many odd-looking six-digit numbers are possible? Write the answer as a product.

Which principle of combinatorics did you use?

Let's see if there is another way to write the answer.

$5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5$ can also be written as 5^6 , which is read as "5 to the 6th power." It means that we are multiplying 5 by itself six times.

Therefore, there are $5^6 = 15,625$ odd-looking six-digit numbers possible. That's a big number!

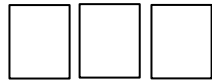
Practice Problems

1. If you toss a coin, how many different outcomes can you get?
2. If you now toss two coins – a nickel and a dime – how many different outcomes can you get? Remember that a heads on the nickel is different from a heads on the dime.
3. If you then toss three coins, a penny, a nickel and a dime, how many different outcomes can you get?
4. Each box in a 3×3 square can be colored using one out of three colors. How many different colorings of the grid are there?
5. The alphabet of a tribal language contains 4 letters. A word in this language can be formed by any combination of these letters and the words can have between 1 and 5 letters. How many words are there in this language? You may leave your answer in the form of powers. (*Hint: Calculate separately the number of one-letter, two-letter, three- letter, four-letter and five-letter words in this language.*)

Permutations are arrangements that can be made by placing different objects in a row. Like we did for the question of students on the chairs in the beginning, the order in which you **place** these objects is important.

1. How many three-digit numbers can be made using the digits 2, 4 and 6 only once each?

In the case of numbers, the order of how the digits are arranged matters. Of course, the number 24 is different from 42; 246 is different from 264 and 426, and so on.



- i. In how many ways can you fill the hundred's place box? _____
- ii. In how many ways can you fill the ten's place box? _____
- iii. In how many ways can you fill the one's place box? _____

How many permutations are possible in all?

Which principle of combinatorics did you use?

2. In how many ways can we award gold, silver and bronze medals among eight contestants?

The order matters. One of the *permutations* "gold, bronze, silver" is different from the other permutation of "gold, silver, bronze."

- i. How many students can you give the gold medal to? _____
- ii. How many students are left to receive the silver medal? _____
- iii. How many students are left to receive the bronze medal? _____

How many permutations are possible in all?

Which principle of combinatorics did you use?

What is different between example 1 and example 2?

How many four-digit numbers can you make using the digits 2, 4, 6 and 8? $_ \times _ \times _ \times _$

How many five-digit numbers can you make using the digits 0, 2, 4, 6 and 8? $_ \times _ \times _ \times _ \times _$

Both of these involve the product of decreasing whole numbers. These are known as factorials, written in math as $n!$

It is generally helpful to write these out in descending order.

$$8! = 8 \times 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1$$

$$7! = 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1$$

$$6! = _ \times _ \times _ \times _ \times _ \times _$$

$$5! = _ \times _ \times _ \times _ \times _$$

Practice Problems

1. How many permutations are there of the set {red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange}?

2. How many permutations are there of a set of n distinct elements?

Challenge Yourself!

1. There are five books on a shelf. In how many ways can you create unique piles of books using some (or all) books? Remember that you need at least two books to create a pile.

2. Cory has 24 students out of which he needs to call out 6, one after the other to solve 6 questions on the board. In how many ways can he do that?

3. License plates contain one digit, then three letters, then three more digits. What is the maximum number of cars that can be registered?

4. (Math Kangaroo) A pizza parlor sells small, medium, and large pizzas. Each pizza is made with cheese, tomatoes, and at least one of the following toppings: mushroom, onion, peppers and olives. How many different pizzas are possible?