

ITC8190
Mathematics for Computer Science
Congruences

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Two integers a and b are said to be **congruent modulo n** if n divides their difference. In other words, $n|a - b$.

Since congruence is an equivalence relation on the set of integers, any two congruent integers fall in the same equivalence class.

$$a \equiv b \pmod{n} \iff n|a - b \iff \exists k \in \mathbb{Z} : a = b + kn .$$

I.e.,

$$-1 \equiv 2 \pmod{3} , \quad 7 \equiv 1 \pmod{3} , \quad 2 \equiv 12 \pmod{5} .$$

We can define addition \oplus and multiplication \otimes in number domain \mathbf{Z}_m by

$$\begin{aligned}a \oplus b &= (a + b) \bmod m , \\a \otimes b &= (a \cdot b) \bmod m .\end{aligned}$$

I.e., in \mathbb{Z}_3 , it holds that

$$2 \oplus 2 = 2 \otimes 2 = 1 , \quad 1 \oplus 2 = 0 ,$$

and in \mathbb{Z}_5 :

$$2 \oplus 3 = 0 , \quad 3 \oplus 3 = 3 \otimes 2 = 1 , \quad 3 \otimes 4 = 2 .$$

$\text{mod } m$ may be viewed as a function $\text{mod } m : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_m$.
with the following properties:

- $\text{mod } m$ is idempotent: $(a \text{ mod } m) \text{ mod } m = a \text{ mod } m$.

$$\begin{aligned}(a \text{ mod } m) \text{ mod } m &= (a + \alpha m) \text{ mod } m \\ &= (a + \alpha m) + \beta m = a + (\alpha + \beta)m \\ &= a \text{ mod } m .\end{aligned}$$

- $\text{mod } m$ preserves operations (i.e. is a ring homomorphism):

$$\begin{aligned}a \text{ mod } m + b \text{ mod } m &= a + \alpha m + b + \beta m \\ &= a + b + (\alpha + \beta)m \\ &= (a + b) \text{ mod } m ,\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}a \text{ mod } m \cdot b \text{ mod } m &= (a + \alpha m)(b + \beta m) \\ &= ab + \underbrace{(a\beta + \alpha b + \alpha\beta m)}_{\in \mathbb{Z}} \\ &= (a \cdot b) \text{ mod } m .\end{aligned}$$

Conclusion 1

When computing

$$a + (b \cdot (c + (d \cdot (e + f)) \dots))$$

we can reduce mod m whenever we like, the result will not change.

Conclusion 2

Operations \oplus and \otimes are somewhat similar to usual addition $+$ and multiplication \times in \mathbb{Z} .

Despite \oplus and \otimes differ from $+$ and \times , we will use the usual notation $+$ and \times whenever appropriate, if it will not cause confusion.

The following properties hold in \mathbb{Z}_m :

- Associativity: $a + (b + c) = (a + b) + c$, as well as $a \cdot (b \cdot c) = (a \cdot b) \cdot c$
- Commutativity: $a + b = b + a$, and $a \cdot b = b \cdot a$
- Distributivity: $(a + b) \cdot c = (a \cdot c) + (b \cdot c)$
- Zero: $a + 0 = 0 + a$ (0 is the additive identity)
- Unit: $a \cdot 1 = 1 \cdot a$ (1 is the multiplicative identity)
- Additive inverse $-a$ of element $a \in \mathbb{Z}_m$ is $m - a \in \mathbb{Z}_m$, because

$$a + (-a) = a + m - a = m \equiv 0 \pmod{m} .$$

The following properties hold in \mathbb{Z}_m :

- Zero divisors: the product of two non-zero elements can be zero. I.e.,

$$2 \cdot 3 \equiv 0 \pmod{6}, \quad 3 \cdot 4 \equiv 0 \pmod{6} .$$

- The sum of two non-zero elements can be zero. I.e.,

$$2 + 3 \equiv 0 \pmod{5}, \quad 5 + 7 \equiv 0 \pmod{12} .$$

- Not every element a has a multiplicative inverse $a^{-1} \in \mathbb{Z}_m$ such that $a \cdot a^{-1} = 1$. I.e., $2^{-1} = 3$ in \mathbb{Z}_5 , since

$$2 \cdot 3 = 6 \equiv 1 \pmod{5},$$

but 2 is not invertible in \mathbb{Z}_6 .

Since some elements are not invertible in \mathbb{Z}_n , some congruence equations with non-invertible coefficients are not solvable. I.e.,

$$2 \cdot x \equiv 5 \pmod{7}$$

is solvable, and the solution is $x = 6$ because

$$2 \cdot 6 = 12 \equiv 5 \pmod{7} ,$$

but, the equation

$$2 \cdot x \equiv 5 \pmod{6}$$

is not solvable.

Which elements are invertible in \mathbb{Z}_m ?

Theorem 1

An element $a \in \mathbb{Z}_m$ is invertible iff $\gcd(a, m) = 1$.

Proof.

Let $a \in \mathbb{Z}_m$ be such that $\gcd(a, m) = 1$. Then, by the Bézout identity, there exist integers α and β such that

$$1 = \gcd(a, b) = \alpha a + \beta m \equiv \alpha a \pmod{m},$$

which means that $a^{-1} \equiv \alpha \pmod{m}$.

Let a be an invertible element of \mathbb{Z}_m . Then there exists $a^{-1} \in \mathbb{Z}_m$ such that $a \cdot a^{-1} \equiv 1 \pmod{m}$. Then $a \cdot a^{-1} + \beta m = 1$ for some $\beta \in \mathbb{Z}$, and by the Bézout identity, it means that $\gcd(a, m) = 1$. □

Theorem 2

Zero divisors are not invertible in \mathbb{Z}_m .

Proof.

Let $a \in \mathbb{Z}_m$, $a \neq 0$ be a zero divisor, i.e. there exists $b \in \mathbb{Z}_m$, $b \neq 0$ such that $ab \equiv 0 \pmod{m}$. Assume a is invertible, i.e. there exists $a^{-1} \in \mathbb{Z}_m$ such that $a \cdot a^{-1} \equiv 1 \pmod{m}$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} ab \equiv 0 \pmod{m} &\implies a^{-1}ab \equiv a^{-1} \cdot 0 \pmod{m} \\ &\implies b \equiv 0 \pmod{m}, \end{aligned}$$

a contradiction. □

Theorem 3

The equation $ax \bmod n = c$ with $a, c \in \mathbb{Z}_n$ is solvable iff $\gcd(a, n) \mid c$.

Proof.

If the equation is solvable and $\gcd(a, n) = d$, then there exist integers $\alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $a = \alpha d$ and $n = \beta d$, and hence $d \mid c$, because

$$c = ax \bmod n = ax + kn = \alpha dx + \beta dk = (\alpha x + \beta k)d ,$$

If $d = \gcd(a, n)$ and $d \mid c$, then $\gcd\left(\frac{a}{d}, \frac{n}{d}\right) = 1$, and hence $\frac{a}{d}$ is invertible modulo $\frac{n}{d}$, and the equation $\frac{a}{d}x \bmod \frac{n}{d} = \frac{c}{d}$ is solvable, i.e. $\exists k \in \mathbb{Z}$:

$$\frac{a}{d}x + k\frac{n}{d} = \frac{c}{d} \implies ax + kn = c \implies ax = c \pmod{n} .$$



How many invertible elements are there in \mathbb{Z}_n ?

The **Euler's phi function** (a.k.a. **Euler's totient function**) for any given $n > 0$ returns the number of integers in the range $0, \dots, n - 1$ that are co-prime to n . Let $n = p_1^{e_1} \cdot p_2^{e_2} \cdots p_k^{e_k}$. Then

$$\varphi(n) = n \cdot \prod_{p|n} \left(1 - \frac{1}{p}\right) .$$

This formula works in all cases. However, if n is some prime p , then the formula takes its simplified form

$$\varphi(p) = p - 1 .$$

If $n = n_1 \cdot n_2$, such that $\gcd(n_1, n_2) = 1$, then

$$\varphi(n_1 \cdot n_2) = \phi(n_1) \cdot \phi(n_2) .$$

$$\varphi(36) = \phi(2^2 \cdot 3^2) = 36 \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{2}\right) \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{3}\right) = 36 \cdot \frac{1}{2} \cdot \frac{2}{3} = 12 ,$$

$$\varphi(6) = \phi(2 \cdot 3) = \phi(2) \cdot \phi(3) = (2 - 1)(3 - 1) = 2 ,$$

$$\varphi(12) = \varphi(2^2 \cdot 3) = \varphi(2^2) \cdot (3 - 1) = 4 \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{2}\right) \cdot 2 = 4 .$$

Indeed, only two integers are co-prime to 6, they are 1 and 5. Integers co-prime to 12 are $\{1, 5, 7, 11\}$, 4 of them in total.

Theorem 4

If $n = p_1^{e_1} \cdot p_2^{e_2} \cdot \dots \cdot p_k^{e_k}$ is the prime decomposition of n and $n > 0$, then

$$\phi(n) = n \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_1}\right) \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_2}\right) \dots \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_k}\right) .$$

The proof uses inclusion-exclusion principle from counting theory.

Let P_1, P_2, \dots, P_k be the subsets of M . We want to count those elements of M that belong to none of P_n , i.e. we want to compute $|M \setminus \cup_n P_n|$.

If $k = 1$, then $|M \setminus \cup_n P_n| = |M| - |P_1|$.

If $k = 2$, then $|M \setminus \cup_n P_n| = |M| - |P_1| - |P_2| + |P_1 \cap P_2|$.

If $k = 3$, then:

$$\begin{aligned} |M \setminus \cup_n P_n| &= |M| - |P_1| - |P_2| - |P_3| \\ &\quad + |P_1 \cap P_2| + |P_2 \cap P_3| + |P_1 \cap P_3| - |P_1 \cap P_2 \cap P_3| . \end{aligned}$$

General case:

$$|M \setminus \cup_n P_n| = |M| - \Sigma_1 + \Sigma_2 - \Sigma_3 + \dots (-1)^i \Sigma_i + \dots ,$$

where

$$\Sigma_i = \sum_{j_1, \dots, j_i} \in c(i) |P_{j_1} \cap \dots \cap P_{j_i}| ,$$

and the summation is over the set $c(i)$ of all i -combinations of indices $1, 2, \dots, k$. There are $\binom{k}{i}$ of them.

Proof.

Let $M = \mathbb{Z}_m$, where $m = p_1^{e_1} \cdot p_2^{e_2} \cdot \dots \cdot p_k^{e_k}$. Let $P_n = \{x \in \mathbb{Z}_m : p_n | x\}$ be the set of elements in \mathbb{Z}_m divisible by p_n . Then $\phi(n) = |M \setminus \cup_n P_n|$.

This is because $a \in \mathbb{Z}_m$ is invertible if and only if none of p_1, p_2, \dots, p_k divides a .

$$|P_i| = \frac{m}{p_i} ,$$

$$|P_i \cap P_j| = \frac{m}{p_i p_j} ,$$

$$|P_{i_1} \cap \dots \cap P_{i_l}| = \frac{m}{p_{i_1} p_{i_2} \cdots p_{i_l}} .$$



And hence:

$$\begin{aligned}\phi(n) &= m - \frac{m}{p_1} - \frac{m}{p_2} - \dots - \frac{m}{p_k} + \frac{m}{p_1 p_2} + \dots + \frac{m}{p_1 p_k} + \dots + \frac{m}{p_2 p_k} - \dots - \frac{m}{p_1 p_2 p_k} - \dots \\ &= m \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_1} - \frac{1}{p_2} - \dots - \frac{1}{p_k} + \frac{1}{p_1 p_2} + \dots + \frac{1}{p_1 p_k} + \dots + \frac{1}{p_2 p_k} - \dots - \frac{1}{p_1 p_2 p_k} - \dots \right) \\ &= m \cdot \left[\left(1 - \frac{1}{p_2} - \dots - \frac{1}{p_k} + \dots + \frac{1}{p_2 p_k} + \dots \right) - \frac{1}{p_1} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_2} - \dots - \frac{1}{p_k} + \dots + \frac{1}{p_2 p_k} + \dots \right) \right] \\ &= m \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_1} \right) \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_2} - \dots - \frac{1}{p_k} + \dots + \frac{1}{p_2 p_k} + \dots \right) \\ &= m \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_1} \right) \left[\left(1 - \dots - \frac{1}{p_k} \right) - \frac{1}{p_2} \cdot \left(1 - \dots - \frac{1}{p_k} \right) \right] = m \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_1} \right) \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_2} \right) \dots \left(1 - \frac{1}{p_k} \right)\end{aligned}$$

□



THANK YOU
FOR
YOUR
ATTENTION
ANY QUESTIONS?