Set Theory

Rosen 6th ed., §2.1-2.2

Introduction to Set Theory

- A *set* is a structure, representing an *unordered* collection (group, plurality) of zero or more *distinct* (different) objects.
- Set theory deals with operations between, relations among, and statements about sets.

Basic notations for sets

- For sets, we'll use variables S, T, U, …
- We can denote a set S in writing by listing all of its elements in curly braces:
  - {a, b, c} is the set of whatever 3 objects are denoted by a, b, c.
- *Set builder notation*: For any proposition $P(x)$ over any universe of discourse, $\{x|P(x)\}$ is *the set of all x such that P(x)*.

  e.g., $\{x \mid x \text{ is an integer where } x>0 \text{ and } x<5\}$

Basic properties of sets

- Sets are inherently *unordered*:
  - No matter what objects a, b, and c denote, $\{a, b, c\} = \{a, c, b\} = \{b, a, c\} = \{b, c, a\} = \{c, a, b\} = \{c, b, a\}$.
- All elements are *distinct* (unequal); multiple listings make no difference!
  - $\{a, b, c\} = \{a, a, b, a, b, c, c, c, c\}$.
  - This set contains at most 3 elements!

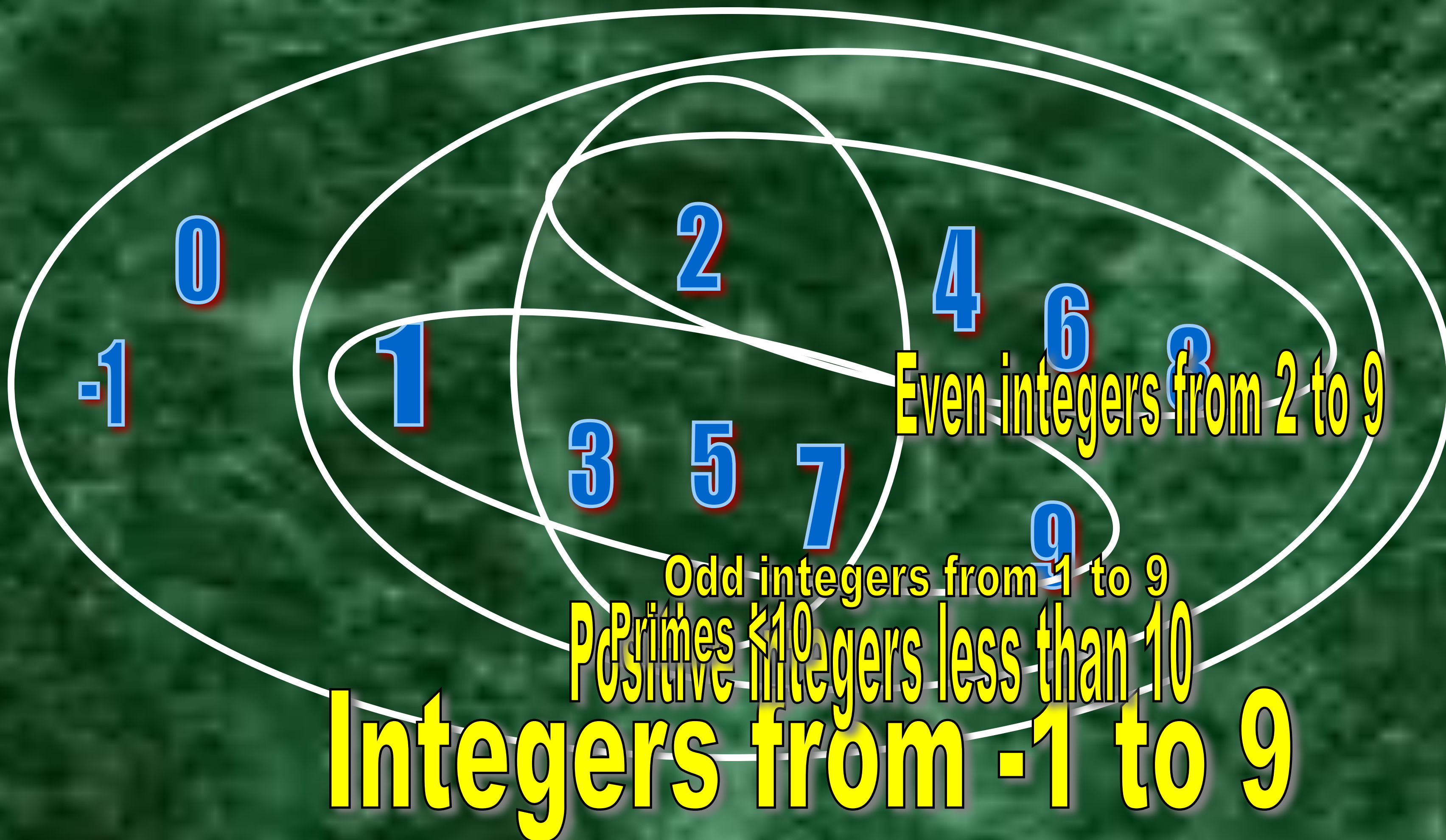
Definition of Set Equality

- Two sets are declared to be equal *if and only if* they contain exactly the same elements.
- In particular, it does not matter *how the set is defined or denoted.*
- For example: The set $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ =
  $\{x \mid x$ is an integer where $x>0$ and $x<5\}$ =
  $\{x \mid x$ is a positive integer whose square is >0 and $<25\}$

Infinite Sets

- Conceptually, sets may be *infinite* (*i.e.*, not *finite*, without end, unending).
- Symbols for some special infinite sets:
  N = {0, 1, 2, …}   The **n**atural numbers.
  Z = {…, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, …} The integers.
  R = The "**r**eal" numbers, such as 374.1828471929498181917281943125…
- Infinite sets come in different sizes!

Venn Diagrams



Basic Set Relations: Member of

- $x \in S$ ("x is in S") is the proposition that object x is an $\in$*lement* or *member* of set S.
  - *e.g.* $3 \in \mathbf{N}$, "a" $\in \{x \mid x$ is a letter of the alphabet$\}$
- Can define <u>set equality</u> in terms of $\in$ relation:
  $\forall S,T{:}\ S=T \leftrightarrow (\forall x{:}\ x \in S \leftrightarrow x \in T)$
  "Two sets are equal **iff** they have all the same members."
- $x \notin S :\equiv \neg(x \in S)$ "x is not in S"

The Empty Set

- $\varnothing$ ("null", "the empty set") is the unique set that contains no elements whatsoever.
- $\varnothing = \{\} = \{x \mid \textbf{False}\}$
- No matter the domain of discourse, we have the axiom

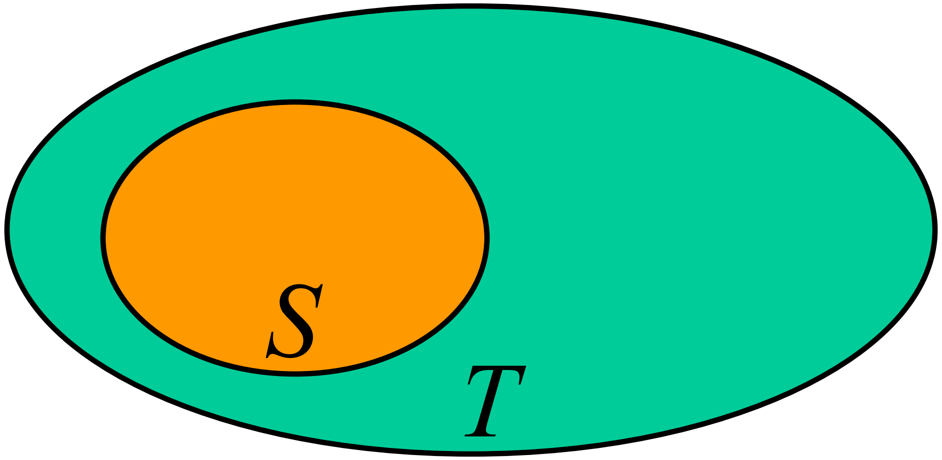
$$\neg \exists x: x \in \varnothing.$$

Subset and Superset Relations

- $S \subseteq T$ ("S is a subset of T") means that every element of S is also an element of T.
- $S \subseteq T \Leftrightarrow \forall x\ (x \in S \rightarrow x \in T)$
- $\varnothing \subseteq S$, $S \subseteq S$.
- $S \supseteq T$ ("S is a superset of T") means $T \subseteq S$.
- Note $S=T \Leftrightarrow S \subseteq T \wedge S \supseteq T$.
- $S \nsubseteq T$ means $\neg(S \subseteq T)$, *i.e.* $\exists x(x \in S \wedge x \notin T)$

Proper (Strict) Subsets & Supersets

- $S \subset T$ ("S is a proper subset of T") means that $S \subseteq T$ but $T \not\subseteq S$. Similar for $S \supset T$.



Venn Diagram equivalent of $S \subset T$

Example:
$\{1,2\} \subset \{1,2,3\}$

Sets Are Objects, Too!

- The objects that are elements of a set may *themselves* be sets.
- *E.g.* let $S=\{x \mid x \subseteq \{1,2,3\}\}$
  then $S=\{\varnothing,$
  $\{1\}, \{2\}, \{3\},$
  $\{1,2\}, \{1,3\}, \{2,3\},$
  $\{1,2,3\}\}$
- Note that $1 \neq \{1\} \neq \{\{1\}\}$!!!!

Very Important!

Cardinality and Finiteness

- $|S|$ (read "the *cardinality* of S") is a measure of how many different elements S has.
- *E.g.*, $|\varnothing|=0$, $|\{1,2,3\}| = 3$, $|\{a,b\}| = 2$,
  $|\{\{1,2,3\},\{4,5\}\}| = $ 2
- We say S is *infinite* if it is not *finite*.
- What are some infinite sets we've seen?

$\mathbb{N}$ $\mathbb{Z}$ $\mathbb{R}$

The *Power Set* Operation

- The *power set* P(S) of a set S is the set of all subsets of S. $P(S) = \{x \mid x \subseteq S\}$.
- *E.g.* $P(\{a,b\}) = \{\emptyset, \{a\}, \{b\}, \{a,b\}\}$.
- Sometimes P(S) is written $\mathbf{2}^S$.
  Note that for finite S, $|P(S)| = 2^{|S|}$.
- It turns out that $|P(\mathbf{N})| > |\mathbf{N}|$.
  There are different sizes of infinite sets!

Cartesian Products of Sets

- For sets A, B, their *Cartesian product* $A \times B :\equiv \{(a, b) \mid a \in A \wedge b \in B\}$.
- *E.g.* $\{a,b\} \times \{1,2\} = \{(a,1),(a,2),(b,1),(b,2)\}$
- Note that for finite A, B, $|A \times B| = |A||B|$.
- Note that the Cartesian product is ***not*** commutative: $\neg\forall AB\colon A \times B = B \times A$.
- Extends to $A_1 \times A_2 \times \ldots \times A_n$...

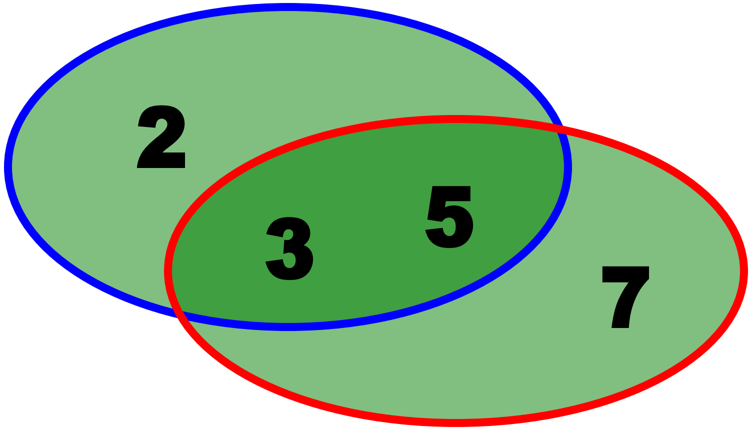
The Union Operator

- For sets A, B, their *union* $A \cup B$ is the set containing all elements that are either in A, **or** ("$\vee$") in B (or, of course, in both).
- Formally, $\forall A,B$: $A \cup B = \{x \mid x \in A \vee x \in B\}$.
- Note that $A \cup B$ contains all the elements of A **and** it contains all the elements of B: $\forall A, B$: $(A \cup B \supseteq A) \wedge (A \cup B \supseteq B)$

Union Examples

- $\{a,b,c\} \cup \{2,3\} = \{a,b,c,2,3\}$
- $\{2,3,5\} \cup \{3,5,7\} = \{2,3,5,3,5,7\} = \{2,3,5,7\}$

Required Form

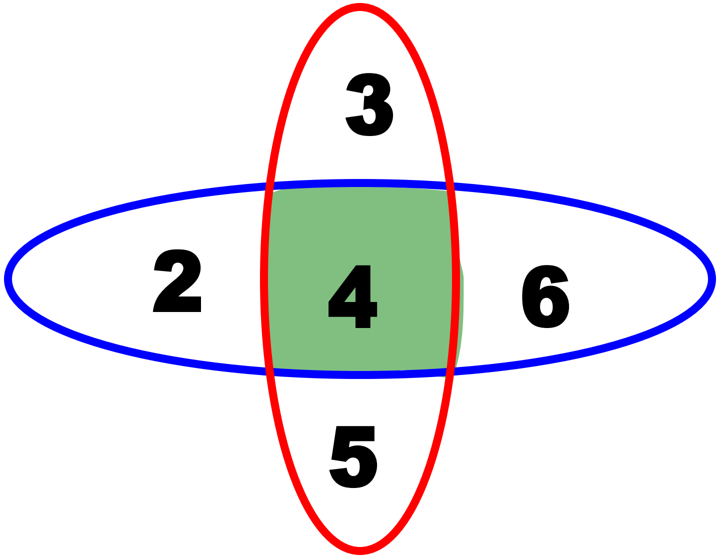


The Intersection Operator

- For sets A, B, their *intersection* $A \cap B$ is the set containing all elements that are simultaneously in A **and** ("$\wedge$") in B.
- Formally, $\forall A,B$: $A \cap B \equiv \{x \mid x \in A \wedge x \in B\}$.
- Note that $A \cap B$ is a subset of A **and** it is a subset of B:
  $\forall A, B$: $(A \cap B \subseteq A) \wedge (A \cap B \subseteq B)$

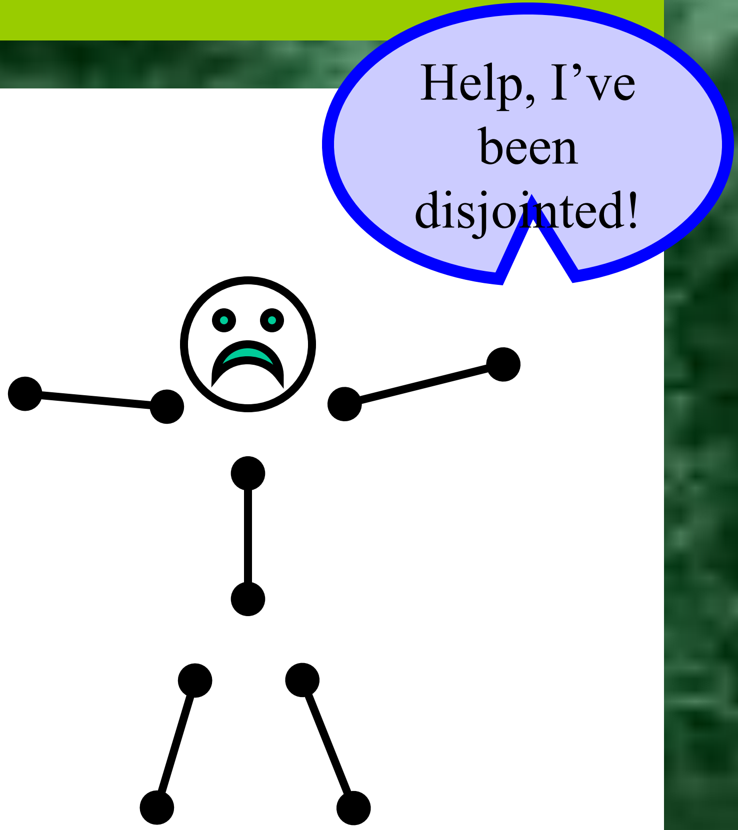
Intersection Examples

- $\{a,b,c\} \cap \{2,3\} = \underline{\ \emptyset\ }$
- $\{2,4,6\} \cap \{3,4,5\} = \underline{\ \{4\}\ }$



Disjointedness

- Two sets *A*, *B* are called *disjoint* (*i.e.*, unjoined) iff their intersection is empty. ($A \cap B = \varnothing$)
- Example: the set of even integers is disjoint with the set of odd integers.



Inclusion-Exclusion Principle

- How many elements are in $A \cup B$?

  $|A \cup B| = |A| + |B| - |A \cap B|$

Subtract out items in intersection, to compensate for double-countin

- Example:

$\{2,3,5\} \cup \{3,5,7\} = \{2,3,5,3,5,7\} = \{2,3,5,7\}$

Set Difference

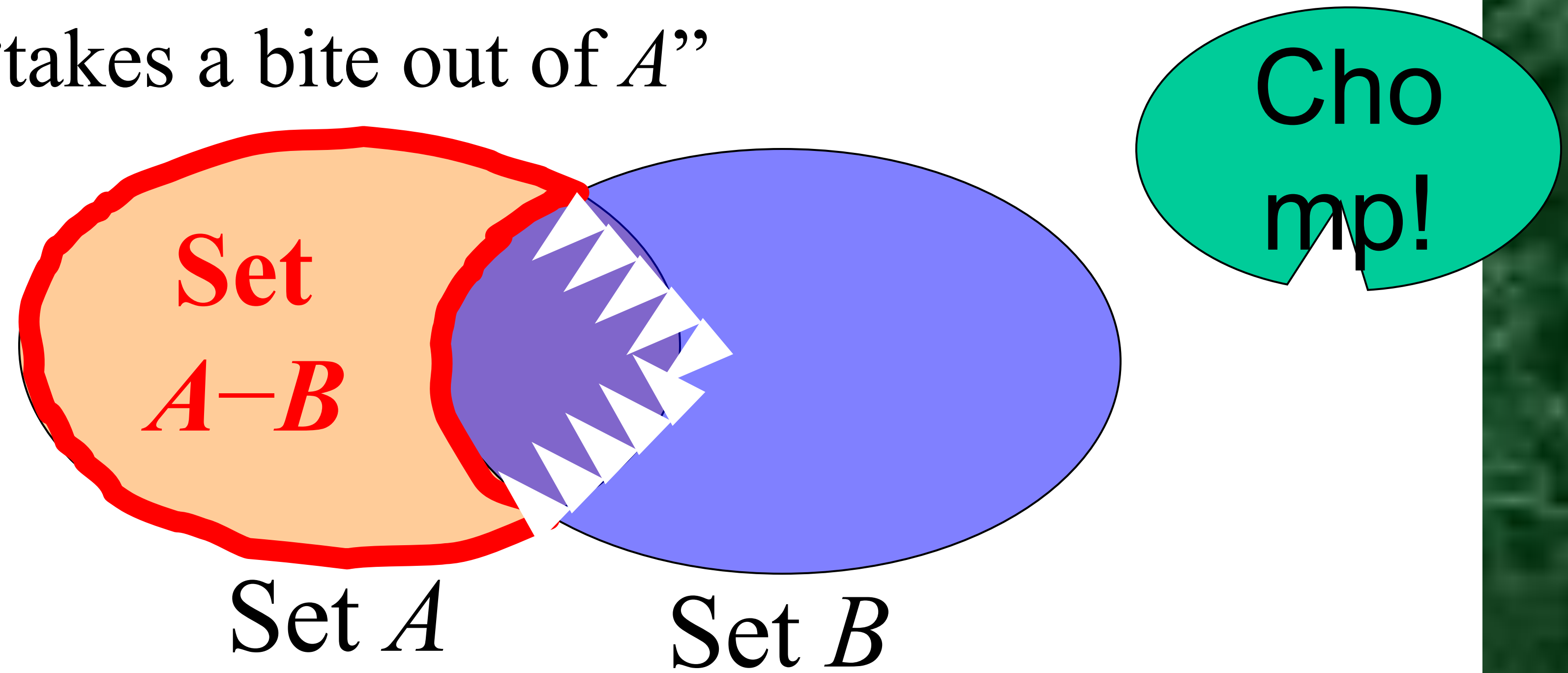
- For sets A, B, the *difference of A and B*, written $A-B$, is the set of all elements that are in A but not B.
- $A - B :\equiv \{x \mid x \in A \wedge x \notin B\}$
  $= \{x \mid \neg(x \in A \rightarrow x \in B) \}$
- Also called:
  The <u>*complement of B with respect to A*</u>.

Set Difference Examples

- $\{1,2,3,4,5,6\} - \{2,3,5,7,9,11\} =$ $\underline{\qquad \{1,4,6\} \qquad}$
- $\mathbf{Z} - \mathbf{N} = \{\ldots\,, -1, 0, 1, 2, \ldots\,\} - \{0, 1, \ldots\,\}$
  $= \{x \mid x \text{ is an integer but not a nat. \#}\}$
  $= \{x \mid x \text{ is a negative integer}\}$
  $= \{\ldots\,, -3, -2, -1\}$

Set Difference - Venn Diagram

- *A*-*B* is what's left after *B* "takes a bite out of *A*"



Set Complements

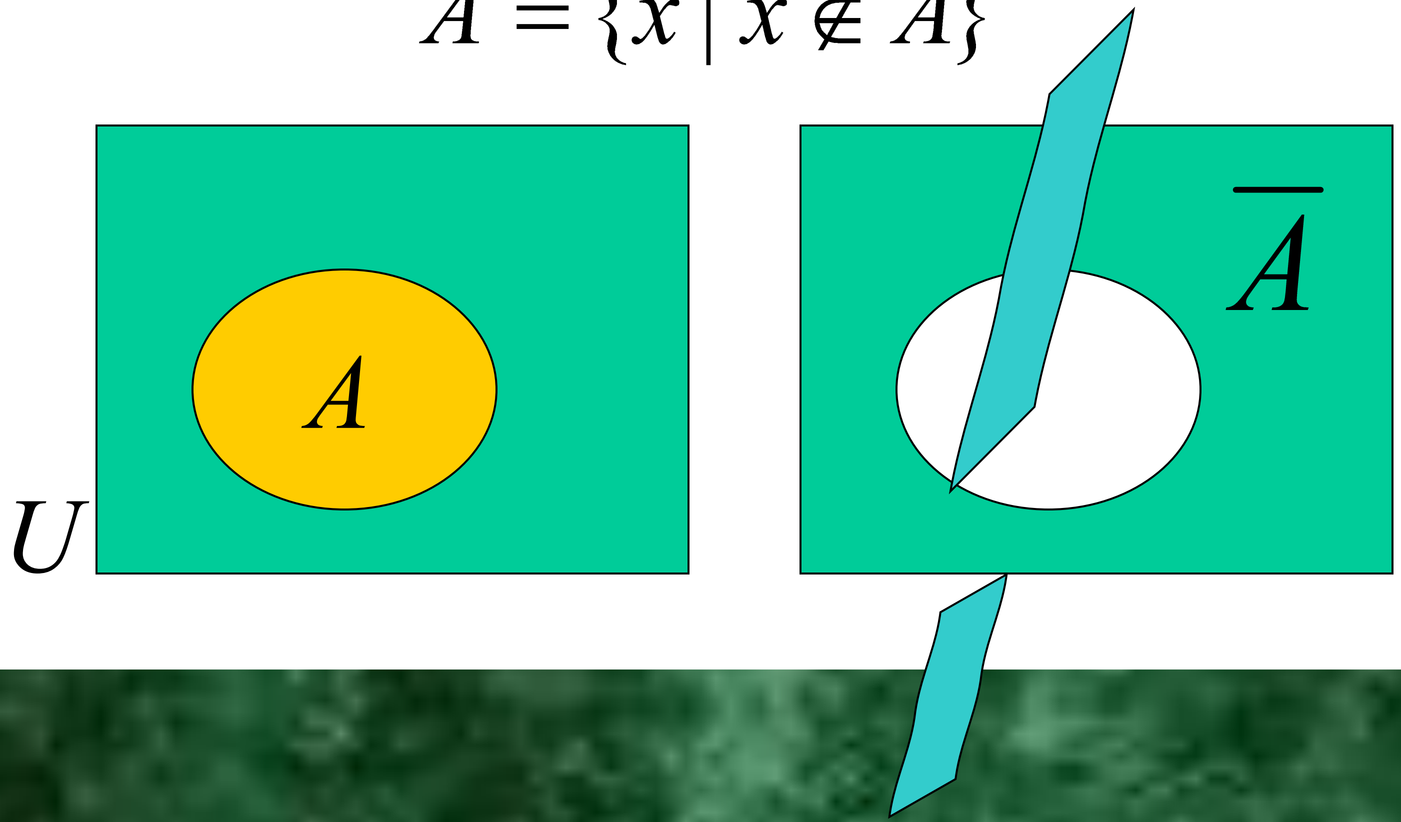
- The *universe of discourse* can itself be considered a set, call it U.
- The *complement* of A, written $\overline{A}$, is the complement of A w.r.t. U, *i.e.*, it is $U-A$.
- *E.g.*, If $U=\mathbf{N}$,

$$\overline{\{3,5\}} = \{0,1,2,4,6,7,\ldots\}$$

More on Set Complements

- An equivalent definition, when U is clear:

$$\overline{A} = \{x \mid x \notin A\}$$



Set Identities

- Identity: $A \cup \varnothing = A \quad A \cap U = A$
- Domination: $A \cup U = U \quad A \cap \varnothing = \varnothing$
- Idempotent: $A \cup A = A = A \cap A$
- Double complement: $\overline{(\overline{A})} = A$
- Commutative: $A \cup B = B \cup A \quad A \cap B = B \cap A$
- Associative: $A \cup (B \cup C) = (A \cup B) \cup C$

  $A \cap (B \cap C) = (A \cap B) \cap C$

DeMorgan's Law for Sets

- Exactly analogous to (and derivable from) DeMorgan's Law for propositions.

$$\overline{A \cup B} = \overline{A} \cap \overline{B}$$

$$\overline{A \cap B} = \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$$

Proving Set Identities

To prove statements about sets, of the form $E_1 = E_2$ (where Es are set expressions), here are three useful techniques:

- Prove $E_1 \subseteq E_2$ and $E_2 \subseteq E_1$ separately.
- Use logical equivalences.
- Use a *membership table*.

Method 1: Mutual subsets

Example: Show $A\cap(B\cup C)=(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)$.

- Show $A\cap(B\cup C)\subseteq(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)$.
  - Assume $x\in A\cap(B\cup C)$, & show $x\in(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)$.
  - We know that $x\in A$, and either $x\in B$ or $x\in C$.
    - Case 1: $x\in B$. Then $x\in A\cap B$, so $x\in(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)$.
    - Case 2: $x\in C$. Then $x\in A\cap C$, so $x\in(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)$.
  - Therefore, $x\in(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)$.
  - Therefore, $A\cap(B\cup C)\subseteq(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)$.
- Show $(A\cap B)\cup(A\cap C)\subseteq A\cap(B\cup C)$. …

Method 3: Membership Tables

- Just like truth tables for propositional logic.
- Columns for different set expressions.
- Rows for all combinations of memberships in constituent sets.
- Use “1” to indicate membership in the derived set, “0” for non-membership.
- Prove equivalence with identical columns.

Membership Table Example

Prove $(A \cup B) - B = A - B$.

A	B	$A \cup B$	$(A \cup B) - B$	$A - B$
0	0	0	0	0
0	1	1	0	0
1	0	1	1	1
1	1	1	0	0

Membership Table Exercise

Prove $(A \cup B) - C = (A - C) \cup (B - C)$.

A	B	C	$A \cup B$	$(A \cup B) - C$	$A - C$	$B - C$	$(A - C) \cup (B - C)$
0	0	0					
0	0	1					
0	1	0					
0	1	1					
1	0	0					
1	0	1					
1	1	0					
1	1	1					

Generalized Union

- Binary union operator: $A \cup B$
- n-ary union:
  $A \cup A_2 \cup \ldots \cup A_n :\equiv ((\ldots((A_1 \cup A_2) \cup \ldots) \cup A_n)$
  (grouping & order is irrelevant)
- "Big U" notation: $\bigcup_{i=1}^{n} A_i$
- Or for infinite sets of sets: $\bigcup_{A \in X} A$

Generalized Intersection

- Binary intersection operator: $A\cap B$
- n-ary intersection:
  $A\cap A_2\cap\ldots\cap A_n\equiv((\ldots((A_1\cap A_2)\cap\ldots)\cap A_n)$
  (grouping & order is irrelevant)
- "Big Arch" notation: $\bigcap_{i=1}^{n} A_i$
- Or for infinite sets of sets: $\bigcap_{A\in X} A$