

## Discrete Structures I: Proofs: Proof by Contradiction, Proof by Contrapositive

Textbooks: Ensley & Crawley: Chapter 2.1, 2.5

Johnsonbaugh: Chapter 2.2

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**Instructions:** In-class exercises are meant to introduce you to a new topic and provide some practice with the new topic. **Work in a team of up to 4 people to complete this exercise.** You can work simultaneously on the problems, or work separate and then check your answers with each other. **Turn in one copy of the exercise per group.**

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**Names:**

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## Proofs: Proof by Contradiction, Proof by Contrapositive

### Review: Direct proofs

With a Direct Proof, you take a statement like, “*The sum of  $n$  times  $n + 1$  is an even number.*” and replace the variables with definitions for the relevant type:  $n$  becomes  $2k + 1$  and we can write  $(2k + 1)(2k + 1 + 1)$ . From there, we simplify until we get the form of the definition of an even integer (per this example’s statement.)

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### Question 1

Prove the following statement using a direct proof.

“*For all integers  $a$  and  $b$ , if  $a$  is even and  $b$  is odd, then  $a + b$  is odd.*”

Start with  $a = 2k$  and  $b = 2j + 1$ .

### Hint!

Remember that we’re not doing proof by contradiction. We start with equations for  $a$  and  $b$ , plug these equations into  $a + b$ , and then simplify and factor into the definition for an odd number.

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### Proof by Contrapositive

Given some statement,  $p \rightarrow q$ , the contrapositive,  $\neg q \rightarrow \neg p$  is **logically equivalent**. We can take advantage of this to perform proofs.

**Example:** Prove that, for all integers  $n$ , if  $n^2$  is even, then  $n$  is even. <sup>a</sup>

The contrapositive here would be, “if  $n$  is not even, then  $n^2$  is not even.” Then we can solve as a direct proof...

1.  $n$  is odd:  $n = 2k + 1$ .
2.  $n^2 \equiv (2k + 1)^2$ , then simplify...
3.  $(2k + 1)^2 = 4k^2 + 4k + 1$ , and factor into the form of an odd number...
4.  $\boxed{= 2(2k^2 + 2k) + 1}$ .

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<sup>a</sup>Discrete Mathematics, Ensley and Crawley, p 94-95

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**Question 2**

Prove the following with proof by contrapositive...

“If  $x$  and  $y$  are two integers whose product is odd, then both must be odd.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Write out the hypothesis  $p$ , in English:

*Hint:  $p$  doesn't include “if”!*

2. Write out the conclusion  $q$ , in English:

3. Write out the contrapositive  $\neg q \rightarrow \neg p$ , in English:

4. Give an equation for  $\neg q$  (in the contrapositive):

5. Give an equation for  $\neg p$  (in the contrapositive):

6. Solve:

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<sup>1</sup>From <http://zimmer.csufresno.edu/larryc/proofs/proofs.contrapositive.html>

### Proof by Contradiction

We can also prove statements by disproving the *negation* of that statement. If we can disprove the negation, when we are proving the original statement.

**Example:** Prove that, if  $n^2$  is even, then  $n$  is even.

Remember that the negation of  $p \rightarrow q$  is  $p \wedge \neg q$ . Here, our negation would be  $n^2$  is even and  $n$  is not even. Then, we can “translate” this into symbols:

- $n^2$  is even:  $n^2 = 2k$  (some even integer.)
- $n$  is not even:  $n = 2j + 1$  (some odd integer.)

As we solve, if we run into a **contradiction**, then we cannot prove the negation, and this shows the proof for the original statement.

$$\begin{array}{ll} (2j + 1)^2 = 2k & n = 2j + 1, \text{ so squaring it should give us } n^2, \text{ or some even integer.} \\ \Rightarrow 4j^2 + 4j + 1 = 2k & \text{FOILING } (2j + 1)^2 \\ \Rightarrow 1 = 2k - 4j^2 - 4j & \text{Move constants to one side} \\ \Rightarrow 1 = 2(k - 2j^2 - 2j) & \text{Pull out common factor} \\ \Rightarrow \boxed{\frac{1}{2} = k - 2j^2 - 2j} & \text{Divide both sides} \end{array}$$

Since  $k$  and  $j$  are both integers, through the closure property of integers ( $+$ ,  $-$ , and  $\times$  results in an integer), we can show that  $k - 2j^2 - 2j$  results in something that is *not an integer* – this is a contradiction. It shows that our counter-example is **false**, and no counter-example can exist.

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**Question 3**

Prove the following with proof by contradiction...

“If  $n$  is an odd integer, then  $n^2 + n$  is even.”<sup>2</sup>

1. Write out the hypothesis  $p$ :
2. Write out the conclusion  $q$ :
3. Write out the negation  $p \wedge \neg q$ :
4. Give an equation for  $p$  (in the negation):
5. Give an equation for  $\neg q$  (in the negation):
6. Solve:

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<sup>2</sup>Discrete Mathematics, Ensley and Crawley, pg 133