

PROBLEMS IN REPRESENTATION THEORY

In Problems 1–10, k is a field and A is a unital, associative algebra over k .

Problem 1. [10 points] Let V be a representation of A .

- (a) Prove that V is irreducible if, and only if, for every non-zero $v \in V$, we have: $A \cdot v = V$. Here, $A \cdot v := \{a \cdot v : a \in A\}$.
- (b) We say that V is co-cyclic if there exists $0 \neq v \in V$ such that $v \in U$ for every non-zero subrepresentation $U \subset V$. Prove that every co-cyclic representation is indecomposable.
- (c) Let $A = \mathbb{C}[x, y]/(x^2, xy, y^2)$. Prove that A is indecomposable (as A -representation) and A is not co-cyclic. Consider $\rho : A \rightarrow \text{End}_{\mathbb{C}}(\mathbb{C}^3)$ given by:

$$\rho(x) = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \rho(y) = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Show that ρ a co-cyclic (hence indecomposable) representation of A .

Problem 2. [15 points] Let K be an extension of k (i.e., k is a subfield of K), and let $f_1, \dots, f_m : A \rightarrow K$ be m distinct homomorphisms of k -algebras. Prove that f_1, \dots, f_m are linearly independent over K .

Problem 3. [10 points] Assume that k is algebraically closed in this problem. Let V be a finite-dimensional representation of A . Prove that V is semisimple if, and only if, for every subrepresentation $U \subset V$, there exists a subrepresentation $W \subset V$ such that $V \cong U \oplus W$.

Problem 4. [10 points] Show that the following representations are irreducible.

- (a) $A = \text{Mat}_{n \times n}(k)$, $V = k^n$.
- (b) $A = \mathbb{C}\langle X, D \rangle / (DX - XD - 1)$, $V = \mathbb{C}[x]$ with the action given by $X \cdot f(x) = xf(x)$ and $D \cdot f(x) = f'(x)$ (derivative of f).

Problem 5. [10 points] (Idempotent decomposition) Assume that there exist $e_1, \dots, e_n \in A$ such that

$$1 = e_1 + \dots + e_n, \quad e_i e_j = \delta_{ij} e_i, \quad \forall 1 \leq i, j \leq n.$$

Prove that for any A -representation V , we have a direct sum decomposition of vector spaces: $V \cong \bigoplus_{i=1}^n e_i \cdot V$.

Problem 6. [10 points] (Tensor-Hom adjointness) Let V and W be two vector spaces over k . Write the natural map $\alpha_{V,W} : W \otimes V^* \rightarrow \text{Hom}_k(V, W)$. Prove that this map is an isomorphism, assuming V is finite-dimensional. Here, $V^* = \text{Hom}_k(V, k)$ is the dual vector space.

Problem 11. [15 points] Let G be a finite group acting on a finite set X via group homomorphism $\alpha : G \rightarrow S_X$ (here, S_X is the group of permutations of elements of X). Let V be the vector space (over \mathbb{C}) of all complex-valued functions on X . We view V as a G -representation, $\rho : G \rightarrow \text{GL}(V)$, by:

$$(\rho(g)(f))(x) := f(\alpha(g)^{-1}(x)), \text{ for every } g \in G, f \in V, x \in X.$$

- (1) Prove that $\dim(V^G) = |X/G|$ (number of G -orbits in X).
- (2) For $g \in G$, show that $\text{Tr}(\rho(g)) = |X^g|$. Here, $X^g := \{x \in X : \alpha(g)(x) = x\}$.
- (3) Consider the averaging operator $P = \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} \rho(g)$, acting on V . Show that $\text{Tr}(P) = \dim(V^G)$. Hence we obtain *Burnside's orbit counting formula*

$$|X/G| = \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} |X^g|.$$

Problem 12. [10 points] Let G be a finite group and V a finite-dimensional G -representation over \mathbb{C} . Assume that $\chi_V(g) = 0$ for every $g \in G \setminus \{e\}$. Prove that $\dim(V)$ is divisible by $|G|$.

Problem 13. [20 points] Let D_n be the dihedral group (symmetries of regular n -gon, thus $|D_n| = 2n$). In the problems below, the representations of D_n are over \mathbb{C} .

- (1) Count the number of conjugacy classes in D_n .
- (2) Show that D_n has exactly two 1-dimensional representations, if n is odd; and exactly four 1-dimensional representations, if n is even.
- (3) Let V be an irreducible representation of D_n . Show that $\dim(V) \leq 2$.
- (4) Give explicit description of all irreducible D_n -representations.

Problem 14. [10 points] Let S_n be the group of permutations of n letters. Let \mathbb{C}^n be the standard n -dimensional S_n -representation (i.e., in a basis e_1, \dots, e_n of \mathbb{C}^n : $\sigma \cdot e_i = e_{\sigma(i)}$, for every $\sigma \in S_n$ and $1 \leq i \leq n$). Show that \mathbb{C}^n is a direct sum of two irreducible S_n -representations. Give a basis of each of these subrepresentations of \mathbb{C}^n .

Notations for Problems 15 and 16: Let G be a finite group, $\mathbb{C}[G]$ its group algebra over \mathbb{C} . Recall the convolution product, for $f_1, f_2 \in \mathbb{C}[G]$:

$$(f_1 * f_2)(g) = \sum_{\sigma \in G} f_1(\sigma) f_2(\sigma^{-1}g).$$

We defined a symmetric, bilinear form $\beta : \mathbb{C}[G] \times \mathbb{C}[G] \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ by:

$$\beta(f_1, f_2) = \frac{1}{|G|} (f_1 * f_2)(e) = \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} f_1(g^{-1}) f_2(g).$$

Let $\mathbb{C}[G]_{\text{class}}$ denote the (commutative) subalgebra of functions constant on conjugacy classes of G (abbreviated to $\text{Conj}(\cdot)(G)$).

Let $\{V_\lambda : \lambda \in P(G)\}$ be the set of isomorphism classes of finite-dimensional, irreducible G -representations. Let ρ_λ denote the group homomorphism $G \rightarrow \text{GL}(V_\lambda)$, or the corresponding algebra homomorphism $\mathbb{C}[G] \rightarrow \text{End}(V_\lambda)$. Also, let χ_λ denote the character of the

representation V_λ .

Problem 15. [10 points] Write the change of bases formulae for the following three bases for $\mathbb{C}[G]_{\text{class}}$: (i) $\{\delta_C : C \in \text{Conj}(G)\}$, (ii) $\{\chi_\lambda : \lambda \in P(G)\}$, and (iii) $\{P_\lambda : \lambda \in P(G)\}$, where

$$P_\lambda := \frac{\dim(V_\lambda)}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} \chi_\lambda(g^{-1}) \delta_g \in \mathbb{C}[G]_{\text{class}}.$$

Problem 16. [15 points] *Plancherel formula.* For $f_1, f_2 \in \mathbb{C}[G]$, show that:

$$\beta(f_1, f_2) = \frac{1}{|G|^2} \sum_{\lambda \in P(G)} \dim(V_\lambda) \text{Tr}(\rho_\lambda(f_1 * f_2)).$$

Problem 17. [15 points] Consider the following isomorphisms:

$$\psi : \mathbb{C}[G] \rightarrow \bigoplus_{\lambda \in P(G)} \text{End}(V_\lambda), \quad \varphi : \bigoplus_{\lambda \in P(G)} V_\lambda \otimes V_\lambda^* \rightarrow \bigoplus_{\lambda \in P(G)} \text{End}(V_\lambda).$$

- (1) Show that ψ and φ are $G \times G$ -intertwiners.
- (2) For $v \in V_\lambda$ and $\xi \in V_\lambda^*$, consider the following function on G (called *matrix coefficient*): $c_{v,\xi}(g) = \xi(g^{-1} \cdot v)$.

$$\text{Show that } \psi^{-1}(\varphi(v \otimes \xi)) = \frac{\dim(V_\lambda)}{|G|} c_{v,\xi}.$$

Problem 18. [10 points] Let G, H be two finite groups. Prove that irreducible, finite-dimensional $G \times H$ -representations are precisely $V \otimes W$, where V and W are irreducible, finite-dimensional representations of G and H respectively.

Problem 19. [20 points] Compute the character table of S_5 .

Problem 20. [15 points] Let $f(t) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} f_n \frac{t^n}{n!}$ and $g(t) = \sum_{\ell=1}^{\infty} g_\ell t^\ell$ be two formal power series with coefficients from an arbitrary commutative algebra over \mathbb{Q} . Note that $g(0) = 0$. Prove that:

$$f(g(t)) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} f_n \frac{g(t)^n}{n!} = f_0 + \sum_{N=1}^{\infty} t^N \left(\sum_{k=1}^N f_k \left(\sum_{\substack{\lambda \vdash N \\ \ell(\lambda)=k}} \frac{g_\lambda}{\prod_{i \geq 1} \ell_i!} \right) \right),$$

where $\ell_i = |\{r : \lambda_r = i\}|$ and $g_\lambda = g_{\lambda_1} \cdots g_{\lambda_k}$.

Problem 21. [15 points] Recall the definition of elementary, complete and power sum symmetric polynomials, in N variable. Convention: $e_0 = h_0 = 1$.

$$e_r := \sum_{1 \leq i_1 < \dots < i_r \leq N} x_{i_1} \cdots x_{i_r}, \quad p_r := \sum_{i=1}^N x_i^r, \quad h_r := \sum_{1 \leq i_1 \leq \dots \leq i_r \leq N} x_{i_1} \cdots x_{i_r}.$$

Consider the generating series:

$$E(t) = \sum_{r=0}^N e_r t^r, \quad H(t) = \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} h_r t^r, \quad P(t) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} p_n \frac{t^n}{n}.$$

- (a) Show that $H(t)E(-t) = 1$ and $H(t) = \exp(P(t))$.
 (b) Prove *Newton's identities*:

$$nh_n = \sum_{r=1}^n p_r h_{n-r}, \quad ne_n = \sum_{r=1}^n (-1)^{r-1} p_r e_{n-r}.$$

Problem 22. [10 points] Let $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 2}$ and $\lambda \vdash n$. Let V_λ be the finite-dimensional, irreducible representation of the symmetric group S_n , labelled by λ , as in Frobenius' theorem. Let $w = (1 \ 2 \ \dots \ n) \in S_n$. Prove that

$$\text{Trace}(w \text{ acting on } V_\lambda) = \begin{cases} (-1)^k, & \text{if } \lambda = (n-k, 1, \dots, 1), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Problem 23. [10 points] Let $\lambda, \mu \vdash n$. Recall the notation:

$$X_\lambda = \left\{ (I_1, \dots, I_\ell) : \{1, \dots, n\} = \bigsqcup_{i=1}^{\ell} I_i \text{ and } |I_j| = \lambda_j, \forall j \right\}$$

- (a) Show that X_λ is in bijection with S_n/S_λ , where $S_\lambda = S_{\lambda_1} \times \dots \times S_{\lambda_\ell} < S_n$.
 (b) Show that there is a bijection between the following three sets:
 (1) $(X_\lambda \times X_\mu)/S_n$,
 (2) $X_\mu^{S_\lambda} := \{a \in X_\mu : w \cdot a = a, \forall w \in S_\lambda\}$,
 (3) $\{A = (a_{ij}) \in M_{n \times n}(\mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}) : \sum_j a_{ij} = \lambda_i, \forall i \text{ and } \sum_i a_{ij} = \mu_j, \forall j\}$.

Problem 24. [15 points] Recall the definition of (\cdot, \cdot) on $\Lambda_n = \mathbb{Z}[x_1, \dots, x_N]_{\deg=n}^{S_N}$.

- (1) For $\lambda \vdash n$, let $h_\lambda = h_{\lambda_1} \cdots h_{\lambda_\ell}$ and $e_\lambda = e_{\lambda_1} \cdots e_{\lambda_\ell}$, where h_r and e_r are defined above (Problem 21). Show that (h_λ, e_μ) is the number of matrices with 0, 1 entries whose row sums equal λ and column sums equal μ .

$$(h_\lambda, e_\mu) = \left| \left\{ A = (a_{ij}) : a_{ij} \in \{0, 1\} \forall i, j \text{ and } \sum_j a_{ij} = \lambda_i, \forall i; \sum_i a_{ij} = \mu_j, \forall j \right\} \right|$$

- (2) Let s_λ be the Schur polynomial, and m_μ be the monomial symmetric polynomial. Let $\rho = (N-1, N-2, \dots, 0)$. Show that:

$$(s_\lambda, m_\mu) = \sum_{\substack{w \in S_N: \\ \lambda + \rho - w(\rho) \in S_N \cdot \mu}} \varepsilon(w)$$

Problem 25. [10 points] Let $\mu \vdash (n-1)$. Prove the following (*Pieri's rule*):

$$s_\mu s_{(1)} = \sum s_\lambda,$$

where the sum is over all $\lambda \vdash n$ which can be obtained from μ by adding exactly one box (i.e., $\exists j : \lambda_i = \mu_i, \forall i \neq j$, and $\lambda_j = \mu_j + 1$).

Problem 26. [10 points] Let G be a finite group, $H < G$ a subgroup and let $\mathbf{1}$ denote the one dimensional, trivial representation of H . Prove that:

$$\chi_{\text{Ind}_H^G \mathbf{1}}(g) = |(G/H)^g| = \frac{|C \cap H| \cdot |Z_G(g)|}{|H|},$$

where $C = \{xgx^{-1} : x \in G\}$ is the conjugacy class containing g , and $Z_G(g) = \{x \in G : xg = gx\}$ is its centralizer.

Problem 27. [10 points] Let $\lambda \vdash n$ and let ι_λ is the character of the induced representation U_λ of S_n . Let $\mu \vdash n$ be another partition and let $r_i = |\{j : \mu_j = i\}|$. Use the previous exercise to prove the following formula:

$$\iota_\lambda(\mu) = \sum_{(s_{ij})} \prod_{i \geq 1} \frac{r_i!}{\prod_j s_{ij}!},$$

where the sum is over all matrices with $\mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$ entries such that $\sum_j s_{ij} = r_i$ and $\sum_i i s_{ij} = \lambda_i$.

Problem 28. [10 points] (Reciprocity formula) Let G be a finite group and $H < G$ a subgroup. Let $\phi \in \mathbb{C}[G]_{\text{class}}$ and $\psi \in \mathbb{C}[H]_{\text{class}}$. Prove that

$$(\text{Res}_H^G \phi, \psi)_H = (\phi, \text{Ind}_H^G \psi)_G.$$

Problem 29. [10 points] Let $m \in \mathbb{Z}_{>2}$. Prove directly that, for any $r \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$, $\text{Sym}^r(\mathbb{C}^m)$ is an irreducible representation on $\text{GL}_m(\mathbb{C})$.

Problem 30. [10 points] Let $\{R_1, \dots, R_N\}$ be finite-dimensional representations of a group G . Show that these are pairwise non-isomorphic, irreducible representations of G if, and only if, the matrix coefficients of R_1, \dots, R_N are linearly independent.

Problem 31. [15 points] Recall that, for a graded vector space $U = \bigoplus_{n=0}^{\infty} U[n]$, such that $\dim(U[n]) < \infty$, for every $n \geq 0$, we define:

$$\text{(Hilbert polynomial)} \quad P(U; t) = \sum_{n \geq 0} \dim(U[n]) t^n.$$

Let V be a finite-dimensional vector space, and let $T^\bullet(V) = \bigoplus_{n \geq 0} T^n(V)$, and similarly $\text{Sym}^\bullet(V), \wedge^\bullet(V)$. Prove that:

$$P(T^\bullet(V); t) = \frac{1}{1 - \dim(V)t}, \quad P(\text{Sym}^\bullet(V); t) = \frac{1}{(1-t)^{\dim(V)}},$$

$$P(\wedge^\bullet(V); t) = (1+t)^{\dim(V)}.$$

Problem 32. [10 points] Let $\lambda = (\lambda_1 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_\ell)$ be a partition, and let $m \geq \ell$. Show that we have an isomorphism of $\text{GL}_m(\mathbb{C})$ -representations:

$$L_{\lambda+(1^\ell)} \cong L_\lambda \otimes \wedge^\ell(\mathbb{C}^m).$$

Problem 33. [15 points] *Branching rule for general linear group.* Let λ be a partition of length ℓ , and $m \geq \ell$. Let $L_\lambda^{(m)}$ denote the corresponding representation of $\text{GL}_m(\mathbb{C})$. Consider

$GL_{m-1}(\mathbb{C})$ as the subgroup of $GL_m(\mathbb{C})$ via $g \mapsto \begin{bmatrix} g & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$. Show that:

$$L_\lambda^{(m)} \Big|_{GL_{m-1}(\mathbb{C})} \cong \bigoplus_{\mu} L_\mu^{(m-1)},$$

where the direct sum is over all $\mu = (\mu_1 \geq \dots \geq \mu_\ell \geq 0)$ satisfying the interlacing condition:

$$\lambda_1 \geq \mu_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \mu_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_\ell \geq \mu_\ell.$$

In other words, the Young diagram of μ is contained in the Young diagram of λ and its complement consists entirely of horizontal strips.

Problem 34. [10 points] Let $m \geq \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 2}$ and assume that $\{d_n\}_{n=1}^\infty \subset \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$ are defined by the following identity:

$$(1 - mt) = \prod_{n=1}^\infty (1 - t^n)^{d_n}.$$

Show that $d_n = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{d|n} \mu(d) m^{\frac{n}{d}}$. Here $\mu : \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1} \rightarrow \{0, \pm 1\}$ is the Möbius function defined

as: $\mu(1) = 1$, $\mu(r) = 0$ if there is a prime p such that p^2 divides r , and for distinct primes p_1, \dots, p_k , we have $\mu(p_1 \cdots p_k) = (-1)^k$.

Notations: The following problems are about representation theory of \mathfrak{sl}_2 (over \mathbb{C}). Recall that for every $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$, L_n denotes the irreducible $n + 1$ -dimensional representation of \mathfrak{sl}_2 described explicitly as follows. L_n has a basis $\{v_0, \dots, v_n\}$ such that:

$$h \cdot v_\ell = (n - 2\ell)v_\ell, \quad e \cdot v_\ell = (n - \ell + 1)v_{\ell-1}, \quad f \cdot v_\ell = (\ell + 1)v_{\ell+1},$$

with the understanding that $v_{-1} = v_{n+1} = 0$.

Problem 39. [10 points] Prove that $L_n \otimes L_1 \cong L_{n+1} \oplus L_{n-1}$ as \mathfrak{sl}_2 -representations.

Problem 40. [50 points] Exercise 2.15.1 of Pasha's book.

Problem 41. [30 points] Exercise 2.16.4 of Pasha's book. Classify all finite-dimensional, irreducible representations of \mathfrak{sl}_2 over an algebraically closed field of characteristic $p > 2$.

Problem 42. [30 points] Exercise 2.16.5 of Pasha's book.

Problem 43. [20 points] Note that the action of e and f on L_n is nilpotent. For any nilpotent operator X , the following is a well-defined invertible operator:

$$\exp(X) = 1 + X + \frac{X^2}{2!} + \dots$$

Let $\mathfrak{s} := \exp(e) \exp(-f) \exp(e)$, considered as an operator on L_n . Show that:

$$\mathfrak{s} \cdot v_\ell = (-1)^{n-\ell} v_{n-\ell}.$$

Problem 44. [20 points] For any $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$, define M_λ to be (infinite-dimensional) \mathfrak{sl}_2 -representation as follows: M_λ has a basis $\{m_r : r \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}\}$ with \mathfrak{sl}_2 -action given by (with the understanding that $m_{-1} = 0$):

$$h \cdot m_\ell = (\lambda - 2\ell)m_\ell, \quad e \cdot m_\ell = (\lambda - \ell + 1)m_{\ell-1}, \quad f \cdot m_\ell = (\ell + 1)m_{\ell+1}.$$

Show that M_λ is irreducible for $\lambda \notin \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$. For $\lambda \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$, show that M_λ has a subrepresentation isomorphic to $M_{-\lambda-2}$, so that we have the following non-split short exact sequence of \mathfrak{sl}_2 -representations:

$$0 \rightarrow M_{-\lambda-2} \rightarrow M_\lambda \rightarrow L_\lambda \rightarrow 0.$$

Problems 45 and 46 are inspired by the following beautiful paper by Etingof and Varchenko: Dynamical Weyl group and applications, Advances in Mathematics, 167 (2002) pp. 74–127.

Problem 45. [30 points] Let $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$ and $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$. Let M_λ be the Verma module (see Problem 44) with basis denoted by $\{m_r^{(\lambda)} : r \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}\}$. Let L_n be the $n + 1$ -dimensional irreducible representation of \mathfrak{sl}_2 , with basis denoted by $\{v_0, \dots, v_n\}$. Let $0 \leq k \leq n$.

Show that, for all but finitely many $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$, there is a unique \mathfrak{sl}_2 -intertwiner:

$$\Psi_\lambda^{(n,k)} : M_\lambda \rightarrow M_\mu \otimes L_n$$

where $\mu = \lambda - (n - 2k)$, whose value on $m_0^{(\lambda)}$ is of the following form, for uniquely determined $c_r \in \mathbb{C}$:

$$\Psi_\lambda^{(n,k)} : m_0^{(\lambda)} \mapsto m_0^{(\mu)} \otimes v_k + \sum_{r=1}^k c_r m_r^{(\mu)} \otimes v_{k-r}.$$

Deduce that we have the following isomorphism (generically in λ):

$$\mathrm{Hom}_{\mathfrak{sl}_2}(M_\lambda, M_\mu \otimes V) \rightarrow V[\lambda - \mu]$$

sending an intertwiner ψ to the coefficient of $m_0^{(\mu)}$ in $\psi(m_0^{(\lambda)})$.

Problem 46. [30 points] (continued from Problems 44, 45). Now assume that $\lambda \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$ and $\lambda \gg 0$. Let n, k and $\Psi_\lambda^{(n,k)}$ be as in Problem 45 above. Show that:

$$\Psi_\lambda^{(n,k)} \left(m_{\lambda+1}^{(\lambda)} \right) = m_{\mu+1}^{(\mu)} \otimes (a(\lambda)v_{n-k}) + \sum_{r \geq 1} b_r(\lambda) m_{\mu+1+r}^{(\mu)} \otimes v_{n-k-r}$$

for some $a(\lambda), b_r(\lambda)$. Compute $a(\lambda)$ explicitly.
