

# Chapter 7

## Homomorphisms and the Isomorphism Theorems

### 7.1 Homomorphisms

Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups. Recall that  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is an isomorphism if and only if  $\phi$

- (a) is one-to-one,
- (b) is onto, and
- (c) satisfies the homomorphic property.

We say that  $G_1$  is isomorphic to  $G_2$  and write  $G_1 \cong G_2$  if such a  $\phi$  exists. Loosely speaking, two groups are isomorphic if they have the “same structure.” What if we drop the one-to-one and onto requirement?

**Definition 7.1.** Let  $(G_1, *)$  and  $(G_2, \odot)$  be groups. A function  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a **homomorphism** if and only if  $\phi$  satisfies the homomorphic property:

$$\phi(x * y) = \phi(x) \odot \phi(y)$$

for all  $x, y \in G_1$ . At the risk of introducing ambiguity, we will usually omit making explicit reference to the binary operations and write the homomorphic property as

$$\phi(xy) = \phi(x)\phi(y).$$

Group homomorphisms are analogous to linear transformations on vector spaces that one encounters in linear algebra.

Figure 7.1 captures a visual representation of the homomorphic property. We encountered this same representation in Figure 3.9. If  $\phi(x) = x'$ ,  $\phi(y) = y'$ , and  $\phi(z) = z'$  while  $z' = x' \odot y'$ , then the only way  $G_2$  may respect the structure of  $G_1$  is for

$$\phi(x * y) = \phi(z) = z' = x' \odot y' = \phi(x) \odot \phi(y).$$

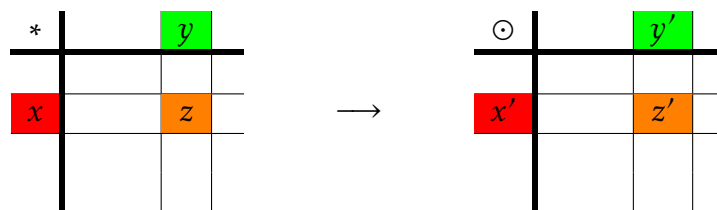


Figure 7.1

**Problem 7.2.** Define  $\phi : \mathbb{Z}_3 \rightarrow D_3$  via  $\phi(k) = r^k$ . Prove that  $\phi$  is a homomorphism and then determine whether  $\phi$  is one-to-one or onto. Also, try to draw a picture of the homomorphism in terms of Cayley diagrams.

**Problem 7.3.** Let  $G$  and  $H$  be groups. Prove that the function  $\phi : G \times H \rightarrow G$  given by  $\phi(g, h) = g$  is a homomorphism. This function is an example of a **projection map**.

There is always at least one homomorphism between two groups.

**Theorem 7.4.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups. Define  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  via  $\phi(g) = e_2$  (where  $e_2$  is the identity of  $G_2$ ). Then  $\phi$  is a homomorphism. This function is often referred to as the **trivial homomorphism** or the **0-map**.

Back in Section 3.3, we encountered several theorems about isomorphisms. However, at the end of that section we remarked that some of those theorems did not require that the function be one-to-one and onto. We collect those results here for convenience.

**Theorem 7.5.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism.

- (a) If  $e_1$  and  $e_2$  are the identity elements of  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ , respectively, then  $\phi(e_1) = e_2$ .
- (b) For all  $g \in G_1$ , we have  $\phi(g^{-1}) = [\phi(g)]^{-1}$ .
- (c) If  $H \leq G_1$ , then  $\phi(H) \leq G_2$ , where

$$\phi(H) := \{y \in G_2 \mid \text{there exists } h \in H \text{ such that } \phi(h) = y\}.$$

Note that  $\phi(H)$  is called the **image** of  $H$ . A special case is when  $H = G_1$ . Notice that  $\phi$  is onto exactly when  $\phi(G_1) = G_2$ .

The following theorem is a consequence of Lagrange's Theorem.

**Theorem 7.6.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups such that  $G_2$  is finite and let  $H \leq G_1$ . If  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism, then  $|\phi(H)|$  divides  $|G_2|$ .

The next theorem tells us that under a homomorphism, the order of the image of an element must divide the order of the pre-image of that element.

**Theorem 7.7.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism. If  $g \in G_1$  such that  $|g|$  is finite, then  $|\phi(g)|$  divides  $|g|$ .

Every homomorphism has an important subset of the domain associated with it.

**Definition 7.8.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism. The **kernel** of  $\phi$  is defined via

$$\ker(\phi) := \{g \in G_1 \mid \phi(g) = e_2\}.$$

The kernel of a homomorphism is analogous to the null space of a linear transformation of vector spaces.

**Problem 7.9.** Identify the kernel and image for the homomorphism given in Problem 7.2.

**Problem 7.10.** What is the kernel of a trivial homomorphism (see Theorem 7.4).

**Theorem 7.11.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism. Then  $\ker(\phi) \trianglelefteq G_1$ .

**Theorem 7.12.** Let  $G$  be a group and let  $H \trianglelefteq G$ . Then the map  $\gamma : G \rightarrow G/H$  given by  $\gamma(g) = gH$  is a homomorphism with  $\ker(\gamma) = H$ . This map is called the **canonical projection map**.

The upshot of Theorems 7.11 and 7.12 is that kernels of homomorphisms are always normal and every normal subgroup is the kernel of some homomorphism. It turns out that the kernel can tell us whether  $\phi$  is one-to-one.

**Theorem 7.13.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism. Then  $\phi$  is one-to-one if and only if  $\ker(\phi) = \{e_1\}$ , where  $e_1$  is the identity in  $G_1$ .

**Remark 7.14.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism. Given a generating set for  $G_1$ , the homomorphism  $\phi$  is uniquely determined by its action on the generating set for  $G_1$ . In particular, if you have a word for a group element written in terms of the generators, just apply the homomorphic property to the word to find the image of the corresponding group element.

**Problem 7.15.** Suppose  $\phi : Q_8 \rightarrow V_4$  is a group homomorphism satisfying  $\phi(i) = h$  and  $\phi(j) = v$ .

- Find  $\phi(1)$ ,  $\phi(-1)$ ,  $\phi(k)$ ,  $\phi(-i)$ ,  $\phi(-j)$ , and  $\phi(-k)$ .
- Find  $\ker(\phi)$ .
- What well-known group is  $Q_8/\ker(\phi)$  isomorphic to?

**Problem 7.16.** Find a non-trivial homomorphism from  $\mathbb{Z}_{10}$  to  $\mathbb{Z}_6$ .

**Problem 7.17.** Find all non-trivial homomorphisms from  $\mathbb{Z}_3$  to  $\mathbb{Z}_6$ .

**Problem 7.18.** Prove that the only homomorphism from  $D_3$  to  $\mathbb{Z}_3$  is the trivial homomorphism.

**Problem 7.19.** Let  $F$  be the set of all functions from  $\mathbb{R}$  to  $\mathbb{R}$  and let  $D$  be the subset of differentiable functions on  $\mathbb{R}$ . It turns out that  $F$  is a group under addition of functions and  $D$  is a subgroup of  $F$  (you do not need to prove this). Define  $\phi : D \rightarrow F$  via  $\phi(f) = f'$  (where  $f'$  is the derivative of  $f$ ). Prove that  $\phi$  is a homomorphism. You may recall facts from calculus without proving them. Is  $\phi$  one-to-one? Onto?

## 7.2 The Isomorphism Theorems

The next theorem is arguably the crowning achievement of the course.

**Theorem 7.20** (The First Isomorphism Theorem). Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism. Then

$$G_1/\ker(\phi) \cong \phi(G_1).$$

If  $\phi$  is onto, then

$$G_1/\ker(\phi) \cong G_2.$$

**Problem 7.21.** Let  $\phi : Q_8 \rightarrow V_4$  be the homomorphism described in Problem 7.15. Use the First Isomorphism Theorem to prove that  $Q_8/\langle -1 \rangle \cong V_4$ .

**Problem 7.22.** Define  $\phi : S_n \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_2$  via

$$\phi(\sigma) = \begin{cases} 0, & \sigma \text{ even} \\ 1, & \sigma \text{ odd.} \end{cases}$$

Use the First Isomorphism Theorem to prove that  $S_n/A_n \cong \mathbb{Z}_2$ .

**Problem 7.23.** Use the First Isomorphism Theorem to prove that  $\mathbb{Z}/6\mathbb{Z} \cong \mathbb{Z}_6$ . Attempt to draw a picture of this using Cayley diagrams.

**Problem 7.24.** Use the First Isomorphism Theorem to prove that  $(\mathbb{Z}_4 \times \mathbb{Z}_2)/(\{0\} \times \mathbb{Z}_2) \cong \mathbb{Z}_4$ .

The next theorem is a generalization of Theorem 7.7 and follows from the First Isomorphism Theorem together with Lagrange's Theorem.

**Theorem 7.25.** Let  $G_1$  and  $G_2$  be groups and suppose  $\phi : G_1 \rightarrow G_2$  is a homomorphism. If  $G_1$  is finite, then  $|\phi(G_1)|$  divides  $|G_1|$ .

We finish the chapter by listing a few of the remaining isomorphism theorems.

**Theorem 7.26** (The Second Isomorphism Theorem). Let  $G$  be a group with  $H \leq G$  and  $N \trianglelefteq G$ . Then

- (a)  $HN := \{hn \mid h \in H, n \in N\} \leq G$ ;
- (b)  $H \cap N \trianglelefteq H$ ;
- (c)  $H/(H \cap N) \cong HN/N$ .

**Theorem 7.27** (The Third Isomorphism Theorem). Let  $G$  be a group with  $H, K \trianglelefteq G$  and  $K \leq H$ . Then  $H/K \trianglelefteq G/K$  and

$$G/H \cong (G/K)/(H/K).$$

The last isomorphism theorem is sometimes called the *Lattice Isomorphism Theorem* or the *Correspondence Theorem*.

**Theorem 7.28** (The Fourth Isomorphism Theorem). Let  $G$  be a group with  $N \trianglelefteq G$ . Then there is a bijection from the set of subgroups of  $G$  that contain  $N$  onto the set of subgroups of  $G/N$ . In particular, every subgroup  $G$  is of the form  $H/N$  for some subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  containing  $N$  (namely, its pre-image in  $G$  under the canonical projection homomorphism from  $G$  to  $G/N$ .) This bijection has the following properties: for all  $H, K \subseteq G$  with  $N \subseteq H$  and  $N \subseteq K$ , we have

- (a)  $H \subset K$  if and only if  $H/N \subset K/N$
- (b) If  $H \subset K$ , then  $|K : H| = |K/N : H/N|$
- (c)  $\langle H, K \rangle / N = \langle H/N, K/N \rangle$
- (d)  $(H \cap K) / N = H/N \cap K/N$
- (e)  $H \trianglelefteq G$  if and only if  $H/N \trianglelefteq G/N$ .