

MATH 6 PERMUTATIONS AND FACTORIALS

One common problem in Math is counting in how many different ways things can be ordered or arranged. In cases in which we do not have repeated objects and the order in which we arrange them matters, we call this a **permutation**.

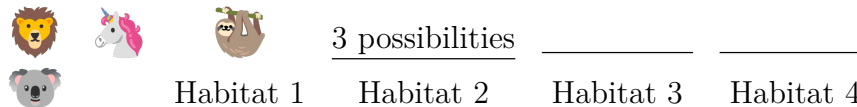
Imagine, for example, that we are in charge of a natural reserve with four habitats and we have four different animals that we have to assign to each habitat: lion, unicorn, koala, sloth. We want to count in how many different ways we could arrange them.



An easy way to think about this is to first consider how many different possibilities you have for assigning an animal in the first habitat. Since there are four animals, we have four possibilities:



Suppose that we do not want the sloth to walk so much, so we assign it the first habitat. Then, we need to fill the second habitat, but now we will only have three possibilities, since there are three animals left:



As we keep making choices, the number of possible choices for the next case will decrease by one.



Finally, we only have one possibility for the missing animal:



To find the total number of possibilities in which we can arrange the animals, we **multiply** the different possibilities that we had for each habitat:

$$\underline{\quad 4 \quad} \times \underline{\quad 3 \quad} \times \underline{\quad 2 \quad} \times \underline{\quad 1 \quad} = 24$$

Imagine that instead of having 4 animals and 4 habitats, we have n animals and n habitats (where n could be any number). In this case, we have n possibilities for the first choice, $n - 1$ for the second, and so on, leaving a total of

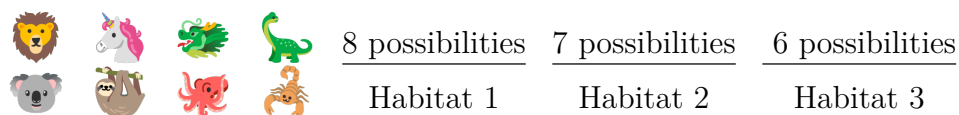
$$n \times (n - 1) \times (n - 2) \times \dots \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 \text{ possibilities}$$

This multiplication is so common, that there was a function defined to represent it called the **factorial**. This is written as $n!$ and it is defined as:

$$n! \equiv n \times (n - 1) \times (n - 2) \times \dots \times 3 \times 2 \times 1$$

By convention, we define $0! = 1$.

Imagine that now we have 8 animals, but only three habitats. In this case, we will have the following:



In this case, we will have $8 \times 7 \times 6 = 336$ possibilities.

In general, if we are choosing k objects from a collection of n so that a) order matters and b) no repetitions are allowed, then this is referred to as a *permutation* of k objects from the collection of n , the number of ways to make such a selection of permutations is called ${}_n P_k$, and

$${}_n P_k = n \times (n - 1) \times \dots \times (n - k + 1) \quad (k \text{ factors})$$

Using factorials, we can give a simpler formula for ${}_k P_n$:

$${}_n P_k = \frac{n!}{(n - k)!}$$

For example:

$${}_6 P_4 = 6 \cdot 5 \cdot 4 \cdot 3 = \frac{6 \cdot 5 \cdot 4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1}{2 \cdot 1} = \frac{6!}{2!}$$

HOMEWORK

1. In this problem, you have to express your answer as a simplified exponent (you do not have to compute numerically the expressions that you find). Simplify the expressions below using the power laws: $(a \times b)^n = a^n \times b^n$, $(a^n)^m = a^{n \times m}$, $a^n a^m = a^{n+m}$, $a^n / a^m = a^{n-m}$, $a^{-n} = 1/a^n$ and $a^0 = 1$.
 - (a) $\frac{2^5 4^4}{2^7}$
 - (b) $6^5 \times 3^{-4}$
 - (c) $\frac{5^{-2}}{5^{-4}}$
2. You have 4 shirts and 4 ties colored red, yellow, blue and green. How many shirt and tie combinations are there if you refuse to wear a shirt and a tie of the same color?

3. A sly elementary school teacher decides to play favorites without telling anyone. If they have 15 students in their class, in how many ways can they choose a favorite student, a second favorite student, and a third favorite student?
4. Compute $\frac{5!}{4!}$, $5! - 4!$, ${}_3P_2$, ${}_3P_3$
5. (a) How many ways are there to draw 3 cards from a 52-card deck? (Order matters: drawing first king of spades, then queen of hearts is different from drawing them in opposite order).
 - (b) How many ways are there to draw 3 cards from a 52-card deck if after each drawing we record the card we got, then return the card to the deck and reshuffle the deck? (As before, order matters.)
 - (c) We draw 3 cards from a 52-card deck, and after each drawing we record the card we got, then return the card to the deck and reshuffle the deck.
6. Polly is talking parrot who speaks in 3-word sentences. A Polly's sentence always starts with a pronoun, which is followed by a verb, and then by a noun. Polly knows:
 - 2 pronouns: I and WE
 - 3 verbs: LOVE, WANT, and COOK,
 - 4 nouns: FOOD, CRACKER, FRIEND, and SHMOLLAR
 Polly's friend Dolly the parrot can talk as well. A Dolly's sentence always starts with an adjective, which is followed by a noun, and then by a verb:
 - 3 adjectives: HAPPY, HUNGRY, and LONELY,
 - 2 nouns: PARROT and CROCODILE,
 - 3 verbs: SINGS, CRIES, and WORKS.
 - (a) How many different phrases can Polly the parrot say?
 - (b) How many different sentences can Dolly the parrot say?
 - (c) Polly and Dolly are creating a two-phrase story. Each parrot contributes a sentence. How many different stories can they come up with?
7. I want to make a necklace with six beads - I have one bead each in purple, blue, violet, and mauve, and two red beads. I care about the order in which the colors are arranged - how many ways are there to arrange the beads into an order for the necklace? (Assume that the two red beads are identical.)
8. Going back to the example with the animal habitats, how many different possible arrangements can you have if you have 6 animals and 15 habitats?
9. (a) How many 5s are there in the prime factorization of the number 100! ? How many 2s?
 - * (b) In how many zeroes does the number 100! end?