

Caltech Harvey Mudd Mathematics Competition

Tiebreaker Solutions

February 20, 2010

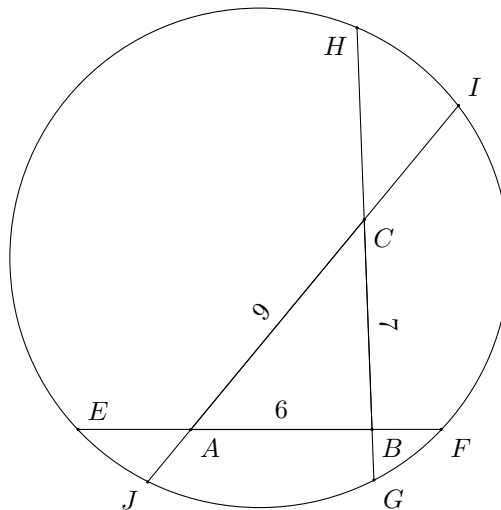
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1. The monic polynomial f has rational coefficients and is irreducible over the rational numbers. If $f(\sqrt{5} + \sqrt{2}) = 0$, compute $f(f(\sqrt{5} - \sqrt{2}))$. (A polynomial is *monic* if its leading coefficient is 1. A polynomial is *irreducible* over the rational numbers if it cannot be expressed as a product of two polynomials with rational coefficients of positive degree. For example, $x^2 - 2$ is irreducible, but $x^2 - 1 = (x+1)(x-1)$ is not.)

Solution: Let $x = \sqrt{5} + \sqrt{2}$. Then $x^2 = 5 + 2 + 2\sqrt{10}$, so $(x^2 - 7)^2 - 40 = 0$. Thus $f(x) = (x^2 - 7)^2 - 40$ is a monic polynomial such that $f(\sqrt{5} + \sqrt{2}) = 0$. One can notice that if $y = \sqrt{5} - \sqrt{2}$, then $y^2 = 7 - 2\sqrt{10}$, so $0 = (y^2 - 7)^2 - 40 = f(y)$. Thus $f(\sqrt{5} - \sqrt{2}) = 0$, and so $f(f(\sqrt{5} - \sqrt{2})) = f(0) = (0^2 - 7)^2 - 40 = \boxed{9}$.

There are several ways to check that f is irreducible. If we could factor f as a product of polynomials of positive degree with rational coefficients, then one of the factors would be a linear or quadratic polynomial. We can notice that the four roots of f are $\sqrt{5} + \sqrt{2}$, $\sqrt{5} - \sqrt{2}$, $-\sqrt{5} + \sqrt{2}$, and $-\sqrt{5} - \sqrt{2}$. Each of these roots is irrational, so it can't be the root of a linear polynomial with rational coefficients. It is also not hard to check that none of these roots are roots of a quadratic polynomial with rational coefficients, so we get a contradiction.

2. In the following diagram, points $E, F, G, H, I,$ and J lie on a circle. The triangle ABC has side lengths $AB = 6, BC = 7,$ and $CA = 9$. The three chords have lengths $EF = 12, GH = 15,$ and $IJ = 16$. Compute $6 \cdot AE + 7 \cdot BG + 9 \cdot CI$.



Solution: We use the Power of a Point Theorem three times at $A, B,$ and C to obtain the equations $AE \cdot AF = AI \cdot AJ, BG \cdot BH = BE \cdot BF,$ and $CI \cdot CJ = CG \cdot CH$. Since we know the lengths of the chords, we can rewrite these equations just in terms of $AE, BG,$ and CI :

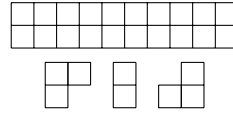
$$\begin{aligned} AE(12 - AE) &= (9 + CI)(7 - CI) \\ BG(15 - BG) &= (6 + AE)(6 - AE) \\ CI(16 - CI) &= (7 + BG)(8 - BG) \end{aligned}$$

Adding these three equations together and simplifying, we find that

$$12AE + 15BG + 16CI - (AE)^2 - (BG)^2 - (CI)^2 = 155 - 2CI + BG - (AE)^2 - (BG)^2 - (CI)^2$$

We conclude that $12AE + 14BG + 18CI = 155$, so $6AE + 7BG + 9CI = \boxed{\frac{155}{2}}$.

3. Compute the number of ways of tiling the 2×10 grid below with the three tiles shown. There is an infinite supply of each tile, and rotating or reflecting the tiles is not allowed.



Solution: Call the three tiles a Γ -tile, an I-tile, and a J-tile, respectively. It is easy to see that each Γ -tile must be paired with a J-tile to create a 2×3 rectangle. Thus we'd like to tile a 2×10 rectangle with 2×3 rectangles and 2×1 rectangles. We can therefore reduce the problem to tiling a 1×10 rectangle with 1×3 rectangles and 1×1 squares.

We can compute the number of ways to tile this rectangle using recursion. Let T_n be the number of tiling a $1 \times n$ rectangle with 1×3 and 1×1 tiles. We can tile a $1 \times n$ rectangle by first placing either a 1×1 or a 1×3 tile on the left. If we place a 1×1 tile, then the number of ways of tiling the remaining $n - 1$ squares is T_{n-1} . If we place a 1×3 tile, then the number of ways of tiling the remaining $n - 3$ squares is T_{n-3} . Thus $T_n = T_{n-1} + T_{n-3}$. Using $T_0 = T_1 = T_2 = 1$, we can use this recursive formula to compute T_n :

n	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
T_n	1	1	1	2	3	4	6	9	13	19	28

Thus there are $\boxed{28}$ ways of tiling the rectangle.

4. Compute the number of positive divisors of 2010.

Solution: We can factor $2010 = 2 \cdot 3 \cdot 5 \cdot 67$. A divisor of 2010 is the product of a subset of $\{2, 3, 5, 67\}$. There are $2^4 = 16$ such subsets, so 2010 has $\boxed{16}$ divisors.