

Meg Noah's Undergraduate Proof of Fermat's Theorem

There's probably something wrong with this proof, but it was the best I could do as an undergraduate...

Proof that if $c^n = a^n + b^n$ then a , b , and c can't all be integers. This proof shows that the contrary assumption leads to contradiction. Proof is to show that equations would only hold if a , b , and c (integers) had a common integer factor k and therefore the equation can't be satisfied because k could be factored out so that a , b , and c no longer satisfied the condition of having a common factor.

$$c < a + b$$

$$c^3 = a^3 + b^3$$

$$(a + b)^3 = a^3 + b^3 + 3ab(a + b)$$

$$(a + b)^3 - c^3 = 3ab(a + b) \quad \text{equation (A)}$$

$$(a + b)^3 - c^3 = 3z$$

z is also an integer.

When is the difference between two integer cubes an integer multiple of 3?

$$c < a + b$$

$$c^3 = a^3 + b^3$$

$$(c + 1)^3 = c^3 + 1^3 + 3c(c + 1) \text{ doesn't work}$$

$$(c + 2)^3 = c^3 + 2^3 + 3c(c + 2) \text{ doesn't work}$$

$$(c + 3)^3 = c^3 + 3^3 + 3c(c + 3) \text{ works!}$$

so

$$(a + b) = (c + 3f)$$

$$(c + 3f)^3 = c^3 + 3^3 f^3 + 3c3f(c + 3f)$$

$$(a + b)^3 = a^3 + b^3 + 3ab(a + b)$$

$$\cancel{a^3 + b^3} + 3ab(a + b) = \cancel{c^3} + 3^3 f^3 + 3c3f(c + 3f)$$

$$3ab(a + b) = 3^3 f^3 + 3c3f(c + 3f)$$

$$ab(a + b) = 3^2 f^3 + 3cf(c + 3f)$$

\therefore either a, b , or $a + b$ have to be a factor of 3

If $(a + b)$ is a factor of 3, then c is a factor of $c = (a + b) - 3f$ is a factor of 3 and equation A can not be satisfied.

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If a is a factor of 3, then the difference between

$$a = 3g$$

$$c^3 = (3g)^3 + b^3$$

$$c = b + ?$$

$$(b + ?)^3 = b^3 + (3g)^3$$

$$(b + 1)^3 = b^3 + 1^3 + 3b(b + 1) \text{ doesn't work}$$

$$(b + 2)^3 = b^3 + 2^3 + 3b(b + 2) \text{ doesn't work}$$

$$(b + 3)^3 = b^3 + 3^3 + 3b(b + 3) \text{ works!}$$

$$\therefore c = b + 3h$$

$$a + b = c + 3f$$

$$3g + b = b + 3h + 3f$$

$$\therefore b = 3i$$

$$\therefore c = b + 3h = 3i + 3h = 3j$$

Since in order to satisfy the equation a , b , and c all have to be factors of 3, the equation can't be satisfied by integers.

Finally, use pascal's triangle to solve for general n since

$$c < a + b$$

$$c^n = a^n + b^n$$

$$(a + b)^n = a^n + b^n + nab\{\dots\}$$

to show that n would have to be a common factor of a , b , and c to satisfy the

$$c^n = a^n + b^n \text{ relation.}$$