# Bounds on R(a, b)

# **Exposition by William Gasarch**

June 16, 2025

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We proved



We proved **Theorem**  $R(a, b) \leq R(a - 1, b) + R(a, b - 1)$ 

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We proved **Theorem**  $R(a, b) \le R(a - 1, b) + R(a, b - 1)$ Now lets use it

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## **Needed Notation**

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# **Needed Notation**

Some of you may know this, some don't, so for now take it as known.

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There are x people in a room.



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We want to form a committee of y of them.

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This is denoted 
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 and it is  $\frac{(x+y)!}{x!y!}$ .

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There are x people in a room.

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How many ways can we do this?

This is denoted  $\binom{x}{y}$  and it is  $\frac{(x+y)!}{x!y!}$ .  $\binom{x}{y}$  is pronounced **x** choose **y** 

Thm

$$\binom{a+b-1}{b} + \binom{a+b-1}{b-1} = \binom{a+b}{b}$$

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Thm

$$egin{pmatrix} \mathsf{a}+\mathsf{b}-1 \\ \mathsf{b} \end{pmatrix} + egin{pmatrix} \mathsf{a}+\mathsf{b}-1 \\ \mathsf{b}-1 \end{pmatrix} = egin{pmatrix} \mathsf{a}+\mathsf{b} \\ \mathsf{b} \end{pmatrix}$$

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RHS is numb of ways to choose b elts from a set of a + b elts.

Thm

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RHS is numb of ways to choose *b* elts from a set of a + b elts. We show LHS also solves that problem. Say there are a + b people.

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RHS is numb of ways to choose *b* elts from a set of a + b elts. We show LHS also solves that problem. Say there are a + b people. Ian is one of them.

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RHS is numb of ways to choose *b* elts from a set of a + b elts. We show LHS also solves that problem. Say there are a + b people. Ian is one of them. There are 2 ways to pick out *b* people.

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$$egin{pmatrix} \mathsf{a}+\mathsf{b}-1 \ \mathsf{b} \end{pmatrix} + egin{pmatrix} \mathsf{a}+\mathsf{b}-1 \ \mathsf{b}-1 \end{pmatrix} = egin{pmatrix} \mathsf{a}+\mathsf{b} \ \mathsf{b} \end{pmatrix}$$

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We showed that

$$\binom{a+b-1}{b} + \binom{a+b-1}{b-1} = \binom{a+b}{b}$$

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by finding a problem that they were both the answer for.

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If we had written the  $\binom{x}{y}$  in terms of factorials and showed they were equal that would be **An Algebraic Proof** 

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Combintorial proofs are better!

Thm For all  $a, b \ge 2$ ,  $R(a, b) \le {a+b \choose b}$ .



**Thm** For all  $a, b \ge 2$ ,  $R(a, b) \le {a+b \choose b}$ . We prove this by induction on a + b.

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**Thm** For all  $a, b \ge 2$ ,  $R(a, b) \le {a+b \choose b}$ . We prove this by induction on a + b. **Base** If a + b = 4 then a = b = 2.

**Thm** For all  $a, b \ge 2$ ,  $R(a, b) \le {\binom{a+b}{b}}$ . We prove this by induction on a + b. **Base** If a + b = 4 then a = b = 2. R(2, 2) = 1

Thm For all  $a, b \ge 2$ ,  $R(a, b) \le {\binom{a+b}{b}}$ . We prove this by induction on a + b. Base If a + b = 4 then a = b = 2. R(2,2) = 1 ${\binom{2+2}{2}} = {\binom{4}{2}} = 6$ .

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**IH** For all 
$$a', b'$$
 with  $a' + b' < a + b$ ,  $R(a', b') \leq \binom{a'+b'}{a'}$ .

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# IH For all a', b' with a' + b' < a + b, $R(a', b') \le {a'+b' \choose a'}$ . IS

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IS  
 $R(a, b) \le R(a - 1, b) + R(a, b - 1)$ 

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 $R(a, b) \le R(a - 1, b) + R(a, b - 1) \le {a+b-1 \choose b} + {a+b-1 \choose b-1}$ .  
Recall that we have  ${a+b-1 \choose b} + {a+b-1 \choose b-1} = {a+b \choose b}$ 

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Recall that we have  ${a+b-1 \choose b} + {a+b-1 \choose b-1} = {a+b \choose b}$   
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 $R(a, b) \le R(a - 1, b) + R(a, b - 1) \le {a+b-1 \choose b} + {a+b-1 \choose b-1} = {a+b \choose b}$ .

 $R(a,b) \leq {a+b \choose b}.$ 

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$$R(k) = R(k,k) \le \binom{2k}{k}$$

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$$R(k) = R(k,k) \le \binom{2k}{k}$$

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Using Stirling's approximation:  $n! \sim \sqrt{2\pi n} \left(\frac{n}{e}\right)^n$  one can show

$$R(k) = R(k,k) \le \binom{2k}{k}$$

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Using Stirling's approximation:  $n! \sim \sqrt{2\pi n} \left(\frac{n}{e}\right)^n$  one can show

$$\binom{2k}{k} \sim \frac{2^{2k}}{\sqrt{k}}.$$

$$R(k) = R(k,k) \le \binom{2k}{k}$$

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Using Stirling's approximation:  $n! \sim \sqrt{2\pi n} \left(\frac{n}{e}\right)^n$  one can show

 $\binom{2k}{k} \sim \frac{2^{2k}}{\sqrt{k}}.$ So we get  $R(k,k) \leq \sim \frac{2^{2k}}{\sqrt{k}} \sim \frac{4^k}{\sqrt{k}}.$ 

$$R(k) = R(k,k) \le \binom{2k}{k}$$

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**Best Known**  $R(k) \leq (4 - \epsilon)^k$  for a very small  $\epsilon$ .

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**Best Known**  $R(k) \leq (4 - \epsilon)^k$  for a very small  $\epsilon$ .

Proof is mathematically sophisticated- beyond the scope of this weeks mini-class on Ramsey Theory.

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