

An Infinite Number of Proofs of the Reciprocal Theorem

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Abstract

The reciprocal theorem is the following: for all but a finite number of n there exists n distinct reciprocals that sum to 1. We give an infinite number of proofs of this theorem. Twice.

1 Introduction

The following was problem number 2 (out of 5) on the *The University of Maryland High School Mathematics Competition* in 2010.

(a) The equations $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{6} = 1$ and $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{7} + \frac{1}{42} = 1$ express 1 as the sum of three (respectively four) distinct positive integers. Find five distinct positive integers $a < b < c < d < e$ such that $\frac{1}{a} + \frac{1}{b} + \frac{1}{c} + \frac{1}{d} + \frac{1}{e} = 1$.

(b) Prove that for any integer $m \geq 3$ there exists m positive integers $d_1 < d_2 < \dots < d_m$ such that $\frac{1}{d_1} + \dots + \frac{1}{d_m} = 1$.

The third author graded the 188 students who attempted this problem. 188 got Part a correct. We list all of those answer in the appendix. 160 got Part b correct. There were four different correct solutions. We will present their proofs in Section 2.

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Since the students came up with four proofs the question arises: how many proofs are there? We use the following terminology:

Def 1.1 A nice n -sequence of natural numbers is a sequence $d_1 < \dots < d_n$ such that $\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{d_i} = 1$.

We consider the following weaker version which we refer to as *The Reciprocal Theorem*:

For all but a finite number of n there exists a nice n -sequence

We will sometimes need the following well known result (look up Egyptian Fractions).

Lemma 1.2

1. If $\alpha \in \mathbf{Q}^{>0}$ then there exists n and $2 \leq a_1 < \dots < a_n$ such that $\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{a_i} = \alpha$
2. If $x \in \mathbf{N}$ then there exists a nice sequence where every element is divisible by x . (This follows from Item 1 since you can multiply $\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{a_i} = x$ by $\frac{1}{x}$.)

2 Four Correct Submitted Solutions

Theorem 2.1 Let $P(n)$ be the statement: There exists a nice n -sequence. Then $(\forall n \geq 3)[P(n)]$.

Proof: We sketch the four correct solutions submitted. All were by induction on n .

Let Base3 and Base4 be the following equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{6} &= 1 \\ \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{7} + \frac{1}{42} &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

They will be used as base cases.

SOLUTION ONE: Base3 is the base case. For $n \geq 4$ use

$$\frac{1}{d} = \frac{1}{d+1} + \frac{1}{d(d+1)}$$

to go from $P(n - 1)$ to $P(n)$.

133 students submitted this solution which was by far the most common.

SOLUTION TWO: Base3 and Base4 are the base cases. Use

$$\frac{1}{d} = \frac{1}{2d} + \frac{1}{3d} + \frac{1}{6d}$$

to go from $P(n - 1)$ to $P(n + 1)$.

21 students submitted this solution.

SOLUTION THREE: Base3 is the base case. Load the induction hypothesis with the additional assumption that d_n is even.

Use

$$\frac{1}{d} = \frac{1}{(3d/2)} + \frac{1}{3d}$$

to go from $P(n - 1)$ to $P(n)$.

4 students submitted this solution.

SOLUTION FOUR: Base3 is the base case.

Use

$$\frac{1}{d_1} + \dots + \frac{1}{d_{n-1}} = 1 \Rightarrow \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2d_1} + \dots + \frac{1}{2d_{n-1}} = 1$$

to go from $P(n - 1)$ to $P(n)$.

4 students submitted this solution.

■

3 An Infinite Number of Proofs Based on SOLUTION ONE

We rewrite SOLUTION ONE with an eye towards modifying it. We call this SOLUTION ONE-1. It will look a bit odd since some parts of it that generalize are not strictly needed here.

SOLUTION ONE-1: We prove $(\forall n \geq 3)[P(n)]$. Base3 is the base case. Let $f_1(x) = \frac{x(x-1)}{1}$. Load the induction hypothesis with the additional assumptions that

- $d_{n-1} \equiv 0 \pmod{1}$ (this is always true).

- $d_{n-2} < d_{n-1}$ (this is always true)
- $d_n = f(d_{n-1})$.
- $d_{n-1} \geq 2$.

Use

$$\frac{1}{d_{n-2}} + \frac{1}{d_{n-1}} + \frac{1}{f_1(d_{n-1})} =$$

$$\frac{1}{d_{n-2}} + \frac{1}{d_{n-1}} + \frac{1}{d_{n-1}(d_{n-1} - 1) + 1} + \frac{1}{f_1(d_{n-1}(d_{n-1} - 1) + 1)}$$

to go from $P(n-1)$ to $P(n)$. Use $d_{n-1} \geq 2$ to show

$$d_{n-1} < d_{n-1}(d_{n-1} - 1) + 1$$

We now produce SOLUTION ONE-2:

SOLUTION ONE-2: We prove $(\forall n \geq 4)[P(n)]$. Base4 is the base case. Let $f_2(x) = \frac{x(x-2)}{2}$. Load the induction hypothesis with the additional assumptions that

- $d_{n-1} \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$,
- $d_{n-2} < d_{n-1} - 1$.
- $d_n = f(d_{n-1})$.
- $d_{n-1} \geq 3$.

Use

$$\frac{1}{d_{n-2}} + \frac{1}{d_{n-1}} + \frac{1}{f_2(d_{n-1})} =$$

$$\frac{1}{d_{n-2}} + \frac{1}{d_{n-1} - 1} + \frac{1}{(d_{n-1} - 1)(d_{n-1} - 2) + 2} + \frac{1}{f_2((d_{n-1} - 1)(d_{n-1} - 2) + 2)}$$

to go from $P(n-1)$ to $P(n)$. Use $d_{n-1} \geq 3$ to prove

$$d_{n-1} - 1 < (d_{n-1} - 1)(d_{n-1} - 2) + 2.$$

Def 3.1 Let $a \in \mathbf{N}$. Let $f_a(x) = \frac{x(x-a)}{a}$.

Lemma 3.2 Let $a \geq 1$ and $b, d, x \in \mathbf{N}$.

1.

$$\frac{1}{d} + \frac{1}{f_a(d)} = \frac{1}{d-a}$$

2.

$$\frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{x(x-1)+a} + \frac{1}{f_a(x(x-1)+a)} = \frac{1}{x-1}$$

3.

$$\frac{1}{d-a+1} + \frac{1}{(d-a+1)(d-a)+a} + \frac{1}{f_a((d-a+1)(d-a)+a)} = \frac{1}{d-a}$$

(This follows from item 2 with $x = d - a + 1$.)

4.

$$\frac{1}{b} = \frac{1}{b+1} + \frac{1}{b(b+1)+a} + \frac{1}{f_a(b(b+1)+a)}$$

(This follows from item 2 with $x = b + 1$. We use b to be consistent with a later use.)

5.

$$\frac{1}{d} + \frac{1}{f_a(d)} = \frac{1}{d-a+1} + \frac{1}{(d-a+1)(d-a)+a} + \frac{1}{f_a((d-a+1)(d-a)+a)}$$

(This follows from items 1 and 2)

Proof:

1)

$$\frac{1}{d} + \frac{a}{d(d-a)} = \frac{d-a}{d(d-a)} + \frac{a}{d(d-a)} = \frac{d}{d(d-a)} = \frac{1}{d-a}$$

2) We use the following:

$$\frac{1}{f_a(x(x-1)+a)} = \frac{a}{(x(x-1)+a)(x(x-1))} = \frac{1}{x(x-1)} - \frac{1}{x(x-1)+a}$$

Note that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{x(x-1)+a} + \frac{1}{f_a(x(x-1)+a)} &= \\ \frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{x(x-1)+a} + \frac{1}{x(x-1)} - \frac{1}{x(x-1)+a} &= \\ \frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{x(x-1)} = \frac{x-1}{x(x-1)} + \frac{1}{x(x-1)} = \frac{x}{x(x-1)} = \frac{1}{x-1}. \end{aligned}$$

■

Def 3.3 Let $a \geq 1$, $n \geq 3$. A *nice* (n, a) -sequence is a nice n -sequence (d_1, \dots, d_n) such that:

1. $d_{n-1} \equiv 0 \pmod{a}$
2. $d_{n-2} < d_{n-1} - a + 1$
3. $d_n = f_a(d_{n-1})$
4. $d_{n-1} \geq a + 1$.

Lemma 3.4 Let $a \geq 1$, $n \geq 3$. If there exists a nice n -sequence (b_1, \dots, b_n) such that $b_n \equiv 0 \pmod{a}$ and $b_{n-1} \geq a + 1$ then there exists a nice $(n+3, a)$ -sequence.

Proof: Assume there exists a nice n -sequence (b_1, \dots, b_n) such that $b_n \equiv 0 \pmod{a}$. Let k be such that $b_n = ak$. Using this and Lemma 3.2.3: we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{b_n} &= \frac{1}{b_{n+1}} + \frac{1}{b_n(b_{n+1})+a} = \frac{1}{b_{n+1}} + \frac{1}{ak(b_{n+1})+a} \\ &= \frac{1}{b_{n+1}} + \frac{1}{a(k(b_{n+1})+1)} + \frac{1}{f_a(a(k(b_{n+1})+1))} \end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$\frac{1}{b_1} + \dots + \frac{1}{b_{n-1}} + \frac{1}{b_n+1} + \frac{1}{a(k(b_n+1)+1)} + \frac{1}{f_a(a(k(b_n+1)+1))} = 1$$

Take $d_1 = b_1, \dots, d_{n-1} = b_{n-1}, d_n = b_n + 1, d_{n+1} = a(k(b_n + 1) + 1), d_{n+2} = f_a(a(k(b_n + 1) + 1))$.

Conditions 1,3,4 are clearly true. Condition 2 holds by easy algebra ■

Theorem 3.5 *Let $a \geq 1$, $n \geq 3$. For all but a finite number of n there exists a nice (n, a) -sequence*

Proof: We prove this by induction on n . We do not know what the base case is; however, one can use our proof of the base case to find it.

Base Case: By Lemma 1.2.2 there exists $m \in \mathbf{N}$ and a nice m -sequence where the last term (in fact all terms, though we do not need that) are composite. By Lemma 3.4 there exists a nice $(m + 3, a)$ -sequence.

Induction Step: Assume $(d_1, \dots, d_{n-1}, d_n)$ is a nice (n, a) -sequence. Let $d_{n-1} = d$. Note that $d \equiv 0 \pmod{a}$ and $d_n = f(d)$. By Lemma 3.2.5:

$$\frac{1}{d_{n-2}} + \frac{1}{d_{n-1}} + \frac{1}{f_a(d_{n-1})} =$$

$$\frac{1}{d_{n-2}} + \frac{1}{d_{n-1} - a + 1} + \frac{1}{(d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a} + \frac{1}{f_a((d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a)}$$

We claim that

$$(d_1, \dots, d_{n-2}, d_{n-1} - a + 1, (d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a, f_a((d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a))$$

is a nice $(n + 1, a)$ -sequence.

We first just prove that it's a nice n -sequence. Clearly the sum of the reciprocals adds to 1. Clearly $d_1 < \dots < d_{n-2}$ inductively. We have $d_{n-2} < d_{n-1} - a + 1$ inductively since that is condition 2 for nice (n, a) -sequences. By algebra

$$d_{n-1} - a + 1 < (d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a < f_a((d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a)$$

We now prove the conditions for being a nice (n, a) -sequence. Since (the old) $d_{n-1} \equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, $d_{n-1} - a \equiv 0 \pmod{a}$ and hence

$$(d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a \equiv 0 \pmod{a}.$$

We need $(d_{n-1} - a + 1) < ((d_{n-1} - a + 1)(d_{n-1} - a) + a) - a + 1$. This is true by algebra.

We need $d_{n+1} = f(d_n)$. This is clearly true. \blacksquare

The proof of Theorem 3.5 gives no bound on n_0 . The following alternative proof does.

Theorem 3.6 *Let $a \in \mathbf{N}$. For all $n \geq a^{O(a)}$ there exists a nice (n, a) -sequence .*

Proof:

We need to find a $(a^{(a+o(1))a}, n)$ -sequence for our base case. After that we use the induction step as in the proof of Theorem 3.5.

Claim 1: For all primes p there exists a nice sequence of length $\leq p^{O(p)}$ such that p divides the last term.

Proof of Claim 1:

We define operations on nice sequences. These operations will do most of the work for us.

1. Assume (c_1, \dots, c_n) and (d_1, \dots, d_m) are nice. We define

$$M(c_1, \dots, c_n, d_1, \dots, d_m) = (c_1, \dots, c_{n-1}, c_n d_1, c_n d_2, \dots, c_n d_m).$$

It is easy to see that the output of M is a nice $(n + m - 1)$ -sequence.

2. Assume (c_1, \dots, c_n) is n -nice. We define

$$E(c_1, \dots, c_n) = (c_1, \dots, c_{n-1}, c_n + 1, c_n(c_n + 1)).$$

It is easy to see that the output of E is a nice $(n + 1)$ -sequence.

3. Assume \vec{c} is nice and ends with t . Assume p does not divide t . Let

$$\vec{d} = E(\vec{c})$$

$$\vec{c}_2 = M(\vec{c}, \vec{d})$$

$$(\forall i \geq 3)[\vec{c}_i = M(\vec{c}_{i-1}, \vec{c})].$$

Let $F(\vec{c}) = \vec{c}_{p-1}$. It is easy to see that $F(\vec{c})$ is a nice $(p(n-1) - n + 3)$ -sequence (we will later just bound this by pn). The last term of $F(\vec{c})$ is $t^{p-1}(t+1)$. Since p does not divide t , by Fermat's little theorem, the last term is $\equiv t + 1 \pmod{p}$.

4. Assume \vec{c} is nice and ends with a number that is $\equiv t \pmod{p}$. Assume p does not divide t . Then $F^{(i)}(\vec{c})$ is a nice $\leq (pn)^i$ -sequence whose last term is $\equiv t + i \pmod{p}$.

If $p = 2$ or $p = 3$ then we use the sequence $(2, 3, 6)$. Assume $p \geq 5$. Let $\vec{c} = (2, 3, 6)$. Let t be such that $6 \equiv t \pmod{p}$. Then $F^{(p-t)}(\vec{c})$ is a nice $(3p)^{p-t}$ -sequence with last term $\equiv t + (p-t) \equiv 0 \pmod{p}$. Note that $(3p)^{p-t} \leq p^{O(p)}$.

End of Proof of Claim 1

Let $a = p_1^{e_1} \cdots p_L^{e_L}$. By Claim 1 we can create, for each $1 \leq i \leq L$, a nice $(p_i)^{O(p_i)}$ -sequence.

\vec{c}_i whose last term is divisible by p_i .

If \vec{c} is a nice n_1 -sequence with last term $\equiv 0 \pmod{p}$ and \vec{d} is a nice n_2 -sequence with last term $\equiv 0 \pmod{q}$ then $M(\vec{p}, \vec{q})$ is a nice $(n_1 + n_2 - 1)$ -sequence with last term $\equiv 0 \pmod{pq}$. Hence

$$M(\vec{c}_1, \vec{c}_1, \dots, \vec{c}_1, \vec{c}_2, \dots, \vec{c}_2, \dots, \vec{c}_n)$$

(where we take each c_i e_i times) is a nice sequence of length

$$\sum_{i=1}^L e_i (p_i)^{O(p_i)}$$

Since $e_i \leq \log a$, $L \leq \log a$, and $p_i \leq a$, this sum is

$$\leq (\log a)^2 a^{O(a)} \leq a^{O(a)}.$$

The last term is divisible by a . Since $a^{O(a)} + 3 \leq a^{O(a)}$ by Lemma 3.4, we have a nice $a^{O(a)}$ -sequence. ■

The proof of Theorem 3.6 gives the bound $n_0 \leq a^{O(a)}$, a . In the appendix we give empirical evidence that indicates $n_0 \leq O(\log a)$.

4 Another Infinite Number of Proofs

We first give two proofs that a high school student taking the exam could have given but just happened not to.

Theorem 4.1 *For all $n \geq 3$, $P(n)$ holds.*

Proof: We use base3 for the base case. We load the induction hypothesis with the assumption that $d_n \equiv 0 \pmod{6}$.

SOLUTION FIVE-a: Assume (d_1, \dots, d_n) is a nice sequence. Assume $d_n = 6d$. Then since $\frac{1}{6d} = \frac{1}{9d} + \frac{1}{18d}$ $(d_1, \dots, d_{n-1}, 9d, 18d)$ is a nice sequence.

SOLUTION FIVE-b: Assume (d_1, \dots, d_n) is a nice sequence. Assume $d_n = 6d$. Then since $\frac{1}{6d} = \frac{1}{8d} + \frac{1}{24d}$ $(d_1, \dots, d_{n-1}, 8d, 24d)$ is a nice sequence.

■

The next theorem generates an infinite number of proofs using the idea of Theorem 4.1.

Theorem 4.2

1. *If there exists a nice sequence of length n_0 with its last term composite then, for all $n \geq n_0$, $P(n)$.*
2. *There exists an infinite number of nice sequence of last term composite.*

Proof:

1) Let (c_1, \dots, c_{n_0}) be the nice sequence with last term composite. Let e be a nontrivial factor of c_{n_0} . Note that:

- $\frac{1}{c_{n_0}} = \frac{1}{c_{n_0}(e+1)/e} + \frac{1}{c_{n_0}(e+1)}$ (note that since e divides c_{n_0} we are writing $\frac{1}{c_{n_0}}$ as the sum of two reciprocals), and
- $c_{n_0}(e+1)/e < c_{n_0}(e+1)$.

We prove that, for all $n \geq n_0$, there exists a nice sequence of length n with last term divisible by c_{n_0} .

Base Case: Use (c_1, \dots, c_{n_0}) .

Induction Step: Assume that there is a nice sequence of length n , (d_1, \dots, d_n) with $d_n \equiv 0 \pmod{c_{n_0}}$. Let $d_n = c_{n_0}x$. Then $\frac{1}{d_n} = \frac{1}{c_{n_0}x} = \frac{1}{c_{n_0}x(e+1)/e} + \frac{1}{c_{n_0}x(e+1)}$. Hence $(d_1, \dots, d_{n-1}, c_{n_0}x(e+1)/e, c_{n_0}x(e+1))$ is a nice sequence of length $n+1$ with last term divisible by c_{n_0} .

2) This follows from by Lemma 1.2.2. ■

In the proof of Theorem 4.2 we write $\frac{1}{c_{n_0}}$, with the aid of a divisor e , as $\frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{y}$, where y divides c_{n_0} . In the table below we show what this sum looks like for $4 \leq c_{n_0} \leq 12$ and possible e .

| c_{n_0} | e | $e + 1$ | $y = \frac{c_{n_0}(e+1)}{e}$ | $\frac{1}{c_{n_0}} = \frac{1}{c_{n_0}(e+1)/e} + \frac{1}{c_{n_0}(e+1)}$ |
|-----------|-----|---------|------------------------------|---|
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 6 | $\frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{6} + \frac{1}{12}$ |
| 6 | 2 | 3 | 9 | $\frac{1}{6} = \frac{1}{9} + \frac{1}{18}$ |
| 6 | 3 | 4 | 8 | $\frac{1}{6} = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{24}$ |
| 8 | 2 | 3 | 12 | $\frac{1}{8} = \frac{1}{12} + \frac{1}{24}$ |
| 8 | 4 | 5 | 10 | $\frac{1}{8} = \frac{1}{10} + \frac{1}{40}$ |
| 9 | 3 | 4 | 12 | $\frac{1}{9} = \frac{1}{12} + \frac{1}{36}$ |
| 10 | 2 | 3 | 15 | $\frac{1}{10} = \frac{1}{15} + \frac{1}{30}$ |
| 10 | 5 | 6 | 12 | $\frac{1}{10} = \frac{1}{12} + \frac{1}{60}$ |
| 12 | 2 | 3 | 18 | $\frac{1}{12} = \frac{1}{18} + \frac{1}{36}$ |
| 12 | 3 | 4 | 16 | $\frac{1}{12} = \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{48}$ |
| 12 | 4 | 5 | 15 | $\frac{1}{12} = \frac{1}{15} + \frac{1}{60}$ |
| 12 | 6 | 7 | 14 | $\frac{1}{12} = \frac{1}{14} + \frac{1}{84}$ |

A The Students Answers to Part a

The students submitted 32 correct solutions to Part *a*. We list all correct submitted solutions in lexicographic order, along with how many students submitted each one. We also note which of SOLUTION ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE-a, FIVE-b would lead to the answer they gave. For example, since we gave $(2, 3, 6)$ and $(2, 3, 7, 42)$ as solutions, and SOLUTION ONE takes $(2, 3, 7, 42)$ and produces $(2, 3, 7, 43, 1886)$, that solution to Part *a* is linked to SOLUTION ONE to Part *b*.

| Solution | Numb | Comment |
|-----------------|------|---------------------------|
| (2,3,7,43,1806) | 91 | Linked to SOLUTION ONE. |
| (2,3,7,48,336) | 3 | |
| (2,3,7,56,168) | 1 | |
| (2,3,7,63,126) | 6 | Linked to SOLUTION THREE. |
| (2,3,7,70,105) | 1 | |
| (2,3,8,25,600) | 1 | |
| (2,3,8,30,120) | 1 | |
| (2,3,8,32,96) | 6 | Linked to SOLUTION FIVE-b |
| (2,3,8,36,72) | 5 | |
| (2,3,8,42,56) | 11 | |
| (2,3,9,21,126) | 2 | |
| (2,3,9,24,72) | 4 | |
| (2,3,9,27,54) | 3 | Linked to SOLUTION FIVE-a |
| (2,3,10,20,60) | 5 | |
| (2,3,11,22,33) | 1 | |
| (2,3,12,15,60) | 1 | |
| (2,3,12,16,48) | 1 | |
| (2,3,12,14,84) | 2 | Linked to SOLUTION FOUR. |
| (2,3,12,18,36) | 12 | Linked to SOLUTION TWO. |
| (2,4,5,25,100) | 3 | |
| (2,4,5,30,60) | 1 | |
| (2,4,6,14,84) | 3 | |
| (2,4,6,16,48) | 1 | |
| (2,4,6,18,36) | 2 | |
| (2,4,6,20,30) | 1 | |
| (2,4,7,12,42) | 4 | |
| (2,4,7,14,28) | 2 | |
| (2,4,8,12,24) | 6 | |
| (2,4,8,10,40) | 2 | |
| (2,5,6,10,30) | 1 | |
| (2,5,6,12,20) | 2 | |
| (3,4,5,6,20) | 3 | |

B For $1 \leq a \leq 149$ What is Smallest n_0 ?

In Theorem 3.5 and 3.6 we did, for each a , find an n_0 and a proof that for all $n \geq n_0$ there is a nice n -sequence. In Theorem 3.5 no bound on n_0 was given (though one could probably be derived), and in Theorem 3.6 we obtained $n_0 \leq 2^a a^{(1+o(1))a}$.

We wrote a program that would for $0 \leq a \leq 149$, find the first n_0 that works, and found how many nice (n_0, a) -sequences there are. In the table below we list the results. We include the sequence itself. We separate out the last three terms of each sequence since that is where the conditions apply.

Based on the data it looks like a bound of $n_0 \leq O(\log n)$ may be true. This quite far from our current theoretical bounds.

I HAVE COMMENTED OUT THE GRAPH FOR NOW SINCE I HAD A HARD TIME INTERFACING WITH IT AND YOU WILL BE CHANGING IT ANYWAY.

The above graph depicts the actual values of n_0 (minimum number of terms needed to have a base case in Theorem 3.6). The green curve is a graph of $5 + \log(a + 1)$; the orange curve represents $4 + \log(a)$ and gives a tighter bound. Note that the minimum number of terms for $a = 136$ has not yet been found, but is expected to be 8.

| a | n_0 | # distinct base cases | d_1, \dots, d_{n_0-3} | d_{n_0-2} | d_{n_0-1} | d_{n_0} |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 0 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 24 |
| | | | | 4 | 6 | 12 |
| 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 18 |
| 3 | 5 | 5 | 2, 3 | 8 | 28 | 168 |
| | | | 2, 3 | 12 | 16 | 48 |
| | | | 2, 4 | 5 | 24 | 120 |
| | | | 2, 4 | 6 | 16 | 48 |
| | | | 2, 4 | 8 | 12 | 24 |
| 4 | 5 | 2 | 2, 3 | 10 | 20 | 60 |
| | | | 2, 4 | 5 | 25 | 100 |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 2, 3 | 7 | 48 | 336 |
| | | | 2, 3 | 8 | 30 | 120 |
| | | | 2, 3 | 9 | 24 | 72 |
| | | | 2, 3 | 12 | 18 | 36 |
| | | | 2, 4 | 6 | 18 | 36 |
| 6 | 5 | 1 | 2, 3 | 7 | 49 | 294 |
| 7 | 5 | 1 | 2, 3 | 8 | 32 | 96 |
| 8 | 5 | 1 | 2, 3 | 9 | 27 | 54 |
| 9 | 5 | 1 | 2, 4 | 5 | 30 | 60 |
| 10 | 6 | 7 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 935 | 78540 |
| | | | 2, 3, 8 | 33 | 99 | 792 |
| | | | 2, 3, 9 | 22 | 110 | 990 |
| | | | 2, 3, 11 | 14 | 242 | 5082 |
| | | | 2, 3, 11 | 15 | 121 | 1210 |
| | | | 2, 3, 11 | 22 | 44 | 132 |
| | | | 2, 4, 5 | 22 | 231 | 4620 |
| 11 | 5 | 1 | 2, 3 | 8 | 36 | 72 |
| 12 | 6 | 4 | 2, 3, 7 | 78 | 104 | 728 |
| | | 4 | 2, 3, 8 | 26 | 325 | 7800 |
| | | 4 | 2, 3, 12 | 13 | 169 | 2028 |
| | | 4 | 2, 4, 6 | 13 | 169 | 2028 |
| 13 | 5 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 43 | 1820 | 234780 |

| a | n_0 | # distinct base cases | d_1, \dots, d_{n_0-3} | d_{n_0-2} | d_{n_0-1} | d_{n_0} |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 14 | 6 | 22 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 645 | 27090 |
| | | | 2, 3, 7 | 70 | 120 | 840 |
| | | | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 615 | 24600 |
| | | | 2, 3, 8 | 30 | 135 | 1080 |
| 15 | 6 | 6 | 2, 3, 7 | 48 | 352 | 7392 |
| 16 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 51 | 255 | 3570 |
| 17 | 6 | 15 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 648 | 22680 |
| 18 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 9 | 19 | 361 | 6498 |
| 19 | 6 | 19 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 650 | 20475 |
| 20 | 5 | 1 | 2, 3 | 7 | 63 | 126 |
| 21 | 6 | 4 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 946 | 39732 |
| 22 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 46 | 506 | 10626 |
| 23 | 6 | 17 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 948 | 36498 |
| 24 | 6 | 2 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 625 | 15000 |
| 25 | 6 | 4 | 2, 3, 7 | 91 | 104 | 312 |
| 26 | 5 | 3 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 657 | 15330 |
| 27 | 6 | 11 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 952 | 31416 |
| 28 | 7 | 63 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1827 | 157151 | 851444118 |
| 29 | 6 | 14 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 660 | 13860 |
| 30 | 7 | 55 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1953 | 24025 | 18595350 |
| 31 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 48 | 368 | 3864 |
| 32 | 6 | 3 | 2, 3, 8 | 32 | 128 | 384 |
| 33 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 51 | 272 | 1904 |
| 34 | 5 | 6 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 665 | 11970 |
| 35 | 6 | 5 | 2, 3, 8 | 27 | 252 | 1512 |
| 36 | 7 | 34 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1813 | 467791 | 5913813822 |
| 37 | 5 | 1 | 2, 3 | 9 | 380 | 3420 |
| 38 | 6 | 4 | 2, 3, 7 | 91 | 117 | 234 |
| 39 | 6 | 5 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 640 | 9600 |
| 40 | 7 | 28 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 738 | 4346 | 456330 |

| a | n_0 | # distinct base cases | d_1, \dots, d_{n_0-3} | d_{n_0-2} | d_{n_0-1} | d_{n_0} |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 41 | 6 | 13 | 2, 3, 7 | 43 | 1848 | 79464 |
| 42 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 43 | 1849 | 77658 |
| 43 | 6 | 4 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 968 | 20328 |
| 44 | 6 | 3 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 675 | 9450 |
| 45 | 7 | 83 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1932 | 27738 | 16698276 |
| 46 | 7 | 27 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 940 | 54332 | 62753460 |
| 47 | 6 | 3 | 2, 3, 7 | 48 | 384 | 2688 |
| 48 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 49 | 343 | 2058 |
| 49 | 6 | 2 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 650 | 7800 |
| | | | 2, 4, 5 | 25 | 150 | 300 |
| 50 | 7 | 127 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1904 | 35139 | 24175632 |
| 51 | 6 | 3 | 2, 3, 8 | 26 | 364 | 2184 |
| 52 | 7 | 18 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1855 | 68423 | 88265670 |
| 53 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 8 | 27 | 270 | 1080 |
| 54 | 6 | 2 | 2, 3, 11 | 15 | 165 | 330 |
| | | | 2, 4, 5 | 22 | 275 | 1100 |
| 55 | 6 | 3 | 2, 3, 7 | 48 | 392 | 2352 |
| | | | 2, 3, 7 | 56 | 224 | 672 |
| | | | 2, 3, 8 | 28 | 224 | 672 |
| 56 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 9 | 19 | 399 | 2394 |
| 57 | 7 | 52 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1827 | 157180 | 425800620 |
| 58 | 7 | 11 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 826 | 2714 | 122130 |
| 59 | 6 | 7 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 660 | 6600 |
| 60 | 7 | 15 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 1708 | 2074 | 68442 |
| 61 | 7 | 52 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1953 | 24056 | 9309672 |
| 62 | 6 | 4 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 693 | 6930 |
| 63 | 7 | 48 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 2688 | 5568 | 478848 |
| 64 | 7 | 124 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1820 | 234845 | 848260140 |
| 65 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 990 | 13860 |
| 66 | 7 | 6 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1809 | 1089085 | 17701987590 |
| 67 | 7 | 100 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1904 | 35156 | 18140496 |
| 68 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 46 | 552 | 3864 |
| 69 | 6 | 4 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 700 | 6300 |
| 70 | 7 | 6 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 639 | 44801 | 28224630 |
| 71 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 8 | 27 | 288 | 864 |
| 72 | 7 | 11 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 1022 | 9709 | 1281588 |

| a | n_0 | # distinct base cases | d_1, \dots, d_{n_0-3} | d_{n_0-2} | d_{n_0-1} | d_{n_0} |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 73 | 7 | 28 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1813 | 467828 | 2957140788 |
| 74 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 675 | 5400 |
| 75 | 7 | 72 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1824 | 183084 | 440866272 |
| 76 | 6 | 2 | 2, 3, 7 2, 3, 11 | 44 14 | 1001 308 | 12012 924 |
| 77 | 6 | 3 | 2, 3, 8 | 26 | 390 | 1560 |
| 78 | 7 | 10 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 948 | 36577 | 16898574 |
| 79 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 10 | 16 | 320 | 960 |
| 80 | 7 | 24 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 972 | 18792 | 4340952 |
| 81 | 7 | 23 | 2, 3, 7, 46 | 492 | 26486 | 8528492 |
| 82 | 7 | 4 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 996 | 12865 | 1981210 |
| 83 | 6 | 5 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 1008 | 11088 |
| 84 | 7 | 70 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 3570 | 3740 | 160820 |
| 85 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 43 | 1892 | 39732 |
| 86 | 7 | 43 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1827 | 157209 | 283919454 |
| 87 | 7 | 116 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1848 | 79552 | 71835456 |
| 88 | 7 | 6 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1869 | 53667 | 32307534 |
| 89 | 6 | 2 | 2, 3, 7 2, 3, 9 | 45 20 | 720 270 | 5040 540 |
| 90 | 7 | 100 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1807 | 3263553 | 117036820446 |
| 91 | 7 | 50 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1932 | 27784 | 8362984 |
| 92 | 7 | 39 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1953 | 24087 | 6214446 |
| 93 | 7 | 19 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 987 | 14570 | 2243780 |
| 94 | 7 | 47 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 1045 | 8075 | 678300 |
| 95 | 7 | 90 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 928 | 214464 | 478898112 |
| 96 | 7 | 2 | 2, 3, 7, 45 2, 3, 8, 32 | 679 97 | 8827 9409 | 794430 903264 |
| 97 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 49 | 392 | 1176 |
| 98 | 7 | 87 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 927 | 285615 | 823713660 |
| 99 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 700 | 4200 |
| 100 | 7 | 5 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1818 | 273710 | 741480390 |
| 101 | 7 | 95 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1904 | 35190 | 12105360 |
| 102 | 7 | 2 | 2, 3, 7, 44 2, 3, 8, 25 | 927 618 | 285619 20703 | 791735868 4140600 |
| 103 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 8 | 26 | 416 | 1248 |
| 104 | 6 | 2 | 2, 3, 7 2, 4, 5 | 45 21 | 745 525 | 4410 2100 |
| 105 | 7 | 14 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1855 | 68476 | 44167020 |

| a | n_0 | # distinct base cases | d_1, \dots, d_{n_0-3} | d_{n_0-2} | d_{n_0-1} | d_{n_0} |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 106 | 7 | 4 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 2247 | 9309 | 800574 |
| 107 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 8 | 27 | 324 | 648 |
| 108 | 7 | 2 | 2, 3, 8, 27 | 218 | 23653 | 5109048 |
| | | | 2, 4, 5, 21 | 436 | 11554 | 1213170 |
| 109 | 6 | 1 | 2, 4, 5 | 22 | 330 | 660 |
| 110 | 7 | 26 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1813 | 467865 | 1971583110 |
| 111 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 48 | 448 | 1344 |
| 112 | 7 | 2 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1813 | 467865 | 1971583110 |
| | | | 2, 3, 7, 48 | 339 | 38081 | 12795216 |
| 113 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 9 | 19 | 456 | 1368 |
| 114 | 7 | 50 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 644 | 29095 | 7331940 |
| 115 | 7 | 44 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 928 | 214484 | 396366432 |
| 116 | 7 | 69 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 936 | 72189 | 44468424 |
| 117 | 7 | 6 | 2, 3, 7, 48 | 354 | 6726 | 376656 |
| 118 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 51 | 357 | 714 |
| 119 | 6 | 2 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 720 | 3600 |
| | | | 2, 3, 10 | 16 | 360 | 720 |
| 120 | 7 | 14 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1815 | 364331 | 1096636310 |
| 121 | 7 | 14 | 2, 3, 7, 61 | 135 | 115412 | 109064340 |
| 122 | 7 | 18 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 738 | 4428 | 154980 |
| 123 | 7 | 36 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 930 | 143344 | 165562320 |
| 124 | 7 | 11 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 875 | 2375 | 42750 |
| 125 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 45 | 756 | 3780 |
| 126 | 7 | 3 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 635 | 80137 | 50486310 |
| 127 | 7 | 16 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 2688 | 5632 | 242176 |
| 128 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 43 | 1935 | 27090 |
| 129 | 7 | 90 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1820 | 234910 | 424247460 |
| 130 | 7 | 2 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1834 | 118424 | 106936872 |
| | | | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 655 | 16637 | 20962 |
| 131 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 44 | 1056 | 7392 |
| 132 | 7 | 48 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1824 | 183141 | 252002016 |
| 133 | 7 | 4 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1809 | 1089152 | 8851538304 |
| 134 | 7 | 67 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1890 | 40770 | 12271770 |
| 135 | 7 | 41 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1904 | 35224 | 9087792 |
| 136 | 8+ | | | | | |
| 137 | 7 | 42 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 966 | 21390 | 3294060 |
| 138 | 7 | 2 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 1807 | 3263581 | 76622354718 |
| | | | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 973 | 18487 | 2440284 |

| a | n_0 | # distinct base cases | d_1, \dots, d_{n_0-3} | d_{n_0-2} | d_{n_0-1} | d_{n_0} |
|-----|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 139 | 6 | 1 | 2, 4, 5 | 21 | 560 | 1680 |
| 140 | 7 | 18 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 940 | 54426 | 20954010 |
| 141 | 7 | 6 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 639 | 44872 | 14134680 |
| 142 | 7 | 27 | 2, 3, 7, 43 | 2002 | 18590 | 2398110 |
| 143 | 7 | 67 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 1008 | 11232 | 864864 |
| 144 | 7 | 14 | 2, 3, 7, 45 | 1218 | 1450 | 13050 |
| 145 | 7 | 9 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 1022 | 9782 | 645612 |
| 146 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 7 | 49 | 441 | 882 |
| 147 | 7 | 18 | 2, 3, 7, 44 | 925 | 854848 | 4936747200 |
| 148 | 7 | 1 | 2, 3, 7, 49 | 298 | 22052 | 3241644 |
| 149 | 6 | 1 | 2, 3, 8 | 25 | 750 | 3000 |