

# Proof by Induction

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How do I prove an infinite family of statements? Luckily, mathematicians have devised a way to do so. It is called "induction." It relies on the premise that such statements are countably infinite. In other words, we may attach a number to every such statements. It is common to name the statement after the number we associate with it. For example, we may say the 1st statement is  $P(1)$

So if we want to actually wish to implement induction, we require to show that  $P(1)$  holds and that whenever  $P(k)$  holds, we have that  $P(k + 1)$  also holds. Here's an example of induction in action.

Prove that  $P(n) = "1 + 2 + 3 + \dots n = \frac{n(n+1)}{2}."$

Proof (by induction):

Base case: Consider  $n = 1$ , we then have:

$$1 = \frac{1*(1+1)}{2}$$

$$1 = 1$$

We then proceed with the inductive step.

Assume that  $P(k)$  holds, that is:

$$1 + 2 + 3 + \dots k = \frac{k(k+1)}{2}$$

We wish to show that from  $P(k)$ ,  $P(k + 1)$  holds.

We know add both sides by  $k + 1$  to obtain:

$$1 + 2 + 3 + \dots k + (k + 1) = \frac{k(k+1)}{2} + (k + 1)$$

$$1 + 2 + 3 + \dots k + (k + 1) = \frac{k(k+1)}{2} + \frac{2k+2}{2}$$

$$1 + 2 + 3 + \dots k + (k + 1) = \frac{k^2+3k+2}{2}$$

$$1 + 2 + 3 + \dots k + (k + 1) = \frac{(k+1)(k+2)}{2}$$

We have verified that  $P(k + 1)$  holds.