

Restriction To a subgroup

In this lecture we study the restriction of a representation of G to a subgroup $H \leq G$. In particular, we focus on the case in which H is a normal subgroup of G of index 2.

Introduction

Let G be a finite group and let $H \leq G$ be a subgroup. Every representation ρ of G in V restricts to a representation ρ_H of H on the same space V :

$$\rho_H = \text{Res}_H^G \rho : H \rightarrow \text{GL}(V), h \mapsto \rho(h).$$

We call ρ_H the restriction of ρ from G to H .

For every $h \in H$, $\chi_{\rho_H}(h) = \text{trace}(\rho(h)) = \chi_{\rho}(h)$. So the character of ρ_H is obtained from the character of ρ by restriction to H .

Remark Let ρ be an irreducible representation of G . The restriction ρ_H of ρ to H is not necessarily irreducible.

A Trivial example: Suppose that ρ is an irreducible representation of G of degree ≥ 2 , and that H is an abelian subgroup of G . The restriction of ρ to H is necessarily reducible (because every irreducible representation of an abelian group has degree 1).

A less Trivial example: Let $G = S_4$ and $H = S_3$ (we realize S_3 as a subgroup of S_4 in the obvious way: S_3 consists of

all the permutations of $\{1,2,3,4\}$ that fix 4).

Recall the character table of S_4 :

S_4	1	(12)	(123)	(1234)	(12)(34)
ρ_1	1	1	1	1	1
ρ_2	1	-1	1	-1	1
ρ_3	3	1	0	-1	-1
ρ_4	3	-1	0	1	-1
ρ_5	2	0	-1	0	2

Restriction to S_3 gives:

S_3	1	(12)	(123)
$\text{Res}_{S_3}^{S_4}(\rho_1)$	1	1	1
$\text{Res}_{S_3}^{S_4}(\rho_2)$	1	-1	1
$\text{Res}_{S_3}^{S_4}(\rho_3)$	3	1	0
$\text{Res}_{S_3}^{S_4}(\rho_4)$	3	-1	0
$\text{Res}_{S_3}^{S_4}(\rho_5)$	2	0	-1

A comparison with the character table of S_3

S_3	1	(12)	(123)
U	1	1	1
U'	1	-1	1
V	2	0	-1

shows that only ρ_1, ρ_2 and ρ_5 remain irreducible when restricted to S_3 . Moreover

- $\text{Res}_{S_3}^{S_4}(\rho_3) = U \oplus V$

- $\text{Res}_{S_3}^{S_4}(\rho_4) = U' \oplus V$

General problem: Given an irreducible representation ρ of G and given a subgroup H of G , understand whether $\rho_H = \text{Res}_H^G \rho$ is irreducible. If ρ_H is reducible, find a decomposition of ρ_H as a direct sum of isotypic components of irreducible representations of H .

$$\rho_H = (\mu_1^{\oplus d_1}) \oplus (\mu_2^{\oplus d_2}) \oplus \dots \oplus (\mu_k^{\oplus d_k}).$$

Notations - If μ_i is an irreducible representation of H and $d_i > 0$, we say that μ_i is a constituent of $\rho_H = \text{Res}_H^G \rho$, and that d_i is the multiplicity of μ_i in ρ_H .

Recall that $d_i = \dim_{\mathbb{C}} [\text{Hom}_H(\mu_i, \rho_H)] = \langle \chi_{\mu_i}, \chi_{\rho_H} \rangle =$

$$= \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in H} \overline{\chi_{\mu_i}(h)} \chi_{\rho}(h).$$

The following proposition shows that every irreducible representation of H is a constituent of some irreducible representation of G .

Proposition - Let μ be an irreducible representation of H . Then there exists an irreducible representation ρ of G s.t. $\langle \chi_{\mu}, \chi_{\text{Res}_H^G \rho} \rangle > 0$.

Proof - Because the regular representation of G contains every irreducible (with multiplicity equal to its dimension).

sion) and because

4

$$\langle \chi_\mu, \chi_{\text{Res}_H^G(\text{REGULAR})} \rangle = \langle \chi_\mu, \sum_{\substack{\text{all irred.} \\ \text{reps of } G}} (\dim) \chi_{\text{Res}_H^G(g)} \rangle =$$

$$= \sum_{\substack{\text{all irred.} \\ \text{reps of } G}} (\dim) \langle \chi_\mu, \chi_{\text{Res}_H^G(g)} \rangle$$

$\uparrow > 0$ $\uparrow > 0$

it is clearly enough to show that $\langle \chi_\mu, \chi_{\text{Res}_H^G(\text{REGULAR})} \rangle$ is strictly greater than zero, i.e. μ is a constituent of the restriction to H of the regular representation of G .

this is easy to do:

$$\langle \chi_\mu, \chi_{\text{Res}_H^G(\text{REGULAR})} \rangle = \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in H} \overline{\chi_\mu(h)} \chi_{\text{REGULAR REP. OF } G}(h) =$$

$$= \frac{1}{|H|} \chi_\mu(e_G) |G| = (\text{degree of } \mu) \cdot [G:H] > 0.$$

□

Recall that

$$\chi_{\text{REG. OF } G}(g) = \begin{cases} |G| & \text{if } g = e_G \\ 0 & \text{o.w.} \end{cases}$$

So if we look inside the restriction to H of the various irreducible representations of G , we find ALL the irreducible representations of H !!!

can we estimate the number of

NEXT QUESTION: how many constituents of the restriction to H of an irreducible representation of G ?

Proposition - Let g be an irreducible representation of G , and let [5]

$$g_H = (\mu_1 \oplus d_1) \oplus \dots \oplus (\mu_k \oplus d_k)$$

be the decomposition of $g_H = \text{Res}_H^G(g)$ into irreducible representations of H . then

$$\sum_{i=1}^k d_i^2 \leq [G:H].$$

Proof - We first show that

$$\sum_{i=1}^k d_i^2 = \langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle$$

and then prove that $\langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle \leq [G:H]$.

STEP 1 $\langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle = \langle \sum_{i=1}^k d_i \chi_{\mu_i}, \sum_{j=1}^k d_j \chi_{\mu_j} \rangle =$
 $\uparrow$
 $g_H = \bigoplus_{i=1}^k (\mu_i \oplus d_i)$

$$= \sum_{i,j=1 \dots k} d_i d_j \langle \chi_{\mu_i}, \chi_{\mu_j} \rangle = \sum_{i=1}^k d_i^2. \checkmark$$

$\langle \chi_{\mu_i}, \chi_{\mu_j} \rangle = \delta_{ij}$
 because the $\{\mu_j\}$'s are
 distinct irreducible ...

STEP 2 $\langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle = \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in H} \overline{\chi_{g_H}(h)} \chi_{g_H}(h) =$

$$= \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in H} |\chi_{g_H}(h)|^2 = \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in H} |\chi_g(h)|^2 \leq \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{g \in G} |\chi_g(g)|^2 =$$

$$= \frac{|G|}{|H|} \langle \chi_g, \chi_g \rangle \stackrel{g \text{ is an irreducible representation of } G}{=} \frac{|G|}{|H|} \cdot 1 = \frac{|G|}{|H|} = [G:H]. \checkmark$$

This
complete
The proof
□

When H is a normal subgroup of G , we can say more:
every constituent of ρ_H has the same dimension! [6]

Theorem - If $H \trianglelefteq G$, Then for every irreducible representation ρ of G there exists an irreducible representation W of H st. $\rho_H = \sum_{g \in G} \rho(g)W$.

proof - Suppose that W is a subspace of V stable under H . Because H is normal, The subspace $\rho(g)W$ is also H -stable, $\forall g \in G$. Indeed $\forall w \in W$ we can write:

$$\rho(h)\rho(g)w = \rho(g)\rho(\underbrace{g^{-1}hg}_{h_1 \in H})w = \rho(g)\rho(\underbrace{h_1}_{w_1 \in W})w = \rho(g)w,$$

Consider the subspace

$$U = \sum_{g \in G} \rho(g)W \subseteq V.$$

[The sum is not a direct sum, for instance $\rho(h)W = W$ $\forall h \in W$. In general, $\rho(g_1)W$ might be equal to $\rho(g_2)W$ even if $g_1 \neq g_2$.]

U is stable under H (because each $\rho(g)W$ is H -stable) but it's also stable under G :

$$\rho(g)\rho(g_1)w = \rho(gg_1)w \in \sum_{\tilde{g} \in G} \rho(\tilde{g})W, \forall w \in W, \forall g, g_1 \in G$$

But V is an irreducible representation of G , and

U is non-zero, so it follows that $V = U$.

$$V = \sum_{g \in G} \rho(g)W.$$

Notice that, as vector spaces, all the subspaces $g(g)W$ are isomorphic to W . In particular, they all have the same dimension.

Choose representatives $g_1, g_2, \dots, g_r$ s.t.

$$V = \sum_{g \in G} g(g)W = \sum_{i=1}^r g(g_i)W$$

and $g(g_i)W \neq g(g_j)W \quad \forall i, j = 1 \dots r$.

then $V = \bigoplus_{i=1}^r g(g_i)W$. [Two subspaces of the same dimension are equal or they have zero intersection].

For all $i = 1 \dots r$, $g(g_i)W$ is a representation of H . Notice that, as an H -representation, $g(g_i)H$ needs not

to be isomorphic to $g(g_j)W$ if $i \neq j$.

Still, $g(g_i)W$ and $g(g_j)W$ have the same dimension.

$\Rightarrow g_H$ decomposes as a direct sum of irreducible representations of the same dimension.

EXAMPLE Suppose that $H \trianglelefteq G$, and that g is an irreducible representation of G of dimension p , with p a prime. then χ_{g_H} is either irreducible, or g_H is the sum of p linear characters of H .

Indeed, if $g_H = \bigoplus_{i=1}^k g(g_i)W$ then $p = \dim(g) = k \dim W$, so both k and $\dim W$ must divide p . Notice that the latter can occur only if $p \leq [G:H]$.

Corollary If H is a normal subgroup of index 2, ~~then~~ and $[8]$ is any ~~for every~~ irreducible representation ρ of G , The restriction ρ_H of ρ to H is either irreducible or The ^{direct} sum of two irreducible inequivalent representations of H of the same dimension.

[Indeed, if $\sum_{i=1}^k d_i^2 \leq [G:H] = 2$, Then either $k=1$ and $d_1=1$ (ie ρ_H is irreducible) or $k=2$ and $d_1=d_2=1$ (ie. ρ_H is of the form $\rho_H = W_1 \oplus W_2$, with $W_1 \not\cong W_2$. Notice that $\dim W_1 = \dim W_2$ by the previous Theorem].

From now on, H will always be a (normal) subgroup of G of index 2.

Remark: If $H \trianglelefteq G$ has index 2, every irreducible representation of G of odd dimension has an irreducible restriction to H .

Question: How can we predict if The restriction of an even dimensional representation is reducible or irreducible?

We will show That This question has a really simple answer: if The character of ρ is identically zero on $G-H$, Then ρ_H is reducible. If there exists a $g \in G$, with $g \notin H$, st. $\chi_\rho(g) \neq 0$, Then ρ_H is irreducible.

Before proving This Theorem, we need To introduce some

notations. Because H is a normal subgroup of index 2, the quotient group G/H is a well defined abelian group of order 2, and it has 2 characters: $\chi_1: G/H \rightarrow \mathbb{C}^*$ trivial, $\chi_2: G/H \rightarrow \mathbb{C}^*$ with $\chi_2(gH) = -1$ if $g \notin H$.

We can lift ϵ_2 to a character of G (by composing with the linear projection $G \rightarrow G/H$). The result is a non trivial character of G , that we denote by λ , which is trivial on H and has the value -1 on $G-H$:

$$\lambda(g) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } g \in H \\ -1 & \text{if } g \notin H. \end{cases}$$

Let χ_g be the character of g . Because χ_g is irreducible and λ is linear, $\chi_g \cdot \lambda$ is also an irreducible character of G . There are two possibilities:

$$\textcircled{1} \quad \chi_g \cdot \lambda = \chi_g \iff \chi_g|_{G-H} \equiv 0$$

$$\textcircled{2} \quad \chi_g \cdot \lambda \neq \chi_g \iff \exists g \in G, g \notin H \text{ st } \chi_g(g) \neq 0.$$

The claim is that g_H is reducible if $\textcircled{1}$ occurs, and irreducible if $\textcircled{2}$ occurs.

Proposition Let $H \trianglelefteq G$ be a normal subgroup of G of index 2. Let g be an irreducible representation of G . The following two conditions are equivalent:

$$(i) \quad \text{Res}_H^G g = g_H \text{ is reducible, i.e. } \langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle \geq 2$$

$$(ii) \quad \chi_g \cdot \lambda = \chi_g, \text{ i.e. } \forall g \in G-H : \chi_g(g) = 0.$$

Proof - To test the reducibility of g_H we compute the inner product $\langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle$:

$$\langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle = \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in G} \overline{\chi_{g_H}(h)} \chi_{g_H}(h) = \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in G} \overline{\chi_g(h)} \chi_g(h) =$$

$$= \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in G} |\chi_g(h)|^2 = \frac{|G|}{|H|} \left(\frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} |\chi_g(g)|^2 - \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G-H} |\chi_g(g)|^2 \right) =$$

$[G:H] = 2$ $\langle \chi_g, \chi_g \rangle = 1$

$$= 2 \left[1 - \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G-H} |\chi_g(g)|^2 \right] = 2 - \underbrace{\frac{2}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G-H} |\chi_g(g)|^2}_{\geq 0}$$

So, because χ_H is reducible if and only if $\langle \chi_{g_H}, \chi_{g_H} \rangle > 2$ we see that

$$\boxed{\chi_H \text{ reducible}} \Leftrightarrow \boxed{\frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{g \in G-H} |\chi_g(g)|^2 = 0} \Leftrightarrow \boxed{\chi|_{G-H} \equiv 0}$$

□

This proposition shows that, when $H \trianglelefteq G$ of index 2, we can predict from the character Table which irreducible characters of G will restrict irreducibly to H .

As an example, we look at the character Table of A_4 .

Set $G = S_4$, $H = A_4$.

[A_4 has index 2 in S_4 , so the theory applies...]



	H	$G-H$	H	$G-H$	H
S_4	1	(12)	(123)	(1234)	(12)(34)
g_1	1	1	1	1	1
g_2	1	-1	1	-1	1
g_3	3	1	0	-1	-1
g_4	3	-1	0	1	-1
g_5	2	0	-1	0	2

understand which conjugacy classes have a representative in H

(1)



focus the attention on These 2 columns (corresponding to conjugacy classes in $G-H$).

Recall that g_H is irreducible $\Leftrightarrow \chi_g|_{G-H} \neq 0$.

We immediately tell that g_1, g_2, g_3, g_4 have an irreducible restriction to $H = A_4$, while g_5 splits into the direct sum of two ^{inequivalent} irreducible representations of A_4 (of equal dimension): $g_5|_{A_4} = \alpha + \beta$, $\dim \alpha = \dim \beta = 1$.

the character Table of A_4 is therefore given by:

notice that (123) does not commute with any odd permutation. So the S_4 -conjugacy class of (123) splits into 2 A_4 -conjugacy classes

A_4	1	(123)	(132)	(12)(34)
Res g_1	1	1	1	1
Res g_2	1	1	1	1
Res g_3	3	0	0	-1
Res g_4	3	0	0	-1
α	1	?	?	?
β	1	?	?	?

constituents of Res(g_5)

We know That

12

A_4	1	(123)	(132)	(12)(34)
α	1	?	?	?
β	1	?	?	?
$\alpha + \beta$	2	-1	-1	2

How can we guess the missing entries?
 α and β are linear characters, (12)(34) has order 2,
 so $\alpha((12)(34))$ and $\beta((12)(34))$ must be +1 or -1.
 Because their sum is equal to 2, they must both
 be equal to +1.

(123) has order 3, so $\alpha(123)$ and $\beta(123)$ must be
 cubic roots of unity: 1, $\omega = e^{2\pi i/3}$ and $\bar{\omega} = e^{-2\pi i/3}$.

$\alpha(123) + \beta(123)$ must be equal to -1. So, without
 loss of generality, we can assume that

$$\alpha(123) = \omega$$

$$\beta(123) = \bar{\omega}.$$

This gives: $\alpha(132) = \overline{\alpha(123)} = \bar{\omega}$
 $\beta(132) = \overline{\beta(123)} = \omega.$

The character Table of A_4 is therefore given by:

A_4	1	(123)	(132)	(12)(34)
$\text{Res } g_1$	1	1	1	1
$\text{Res } g_3$	3	0	0	-1
α	1	ω	$\bar{\omega}$	1
β	1	$\bar{\omega}$	ω	1

constituents
of $\text{Res}(g_3)$

this example shows that

- every irreducible representation of $H = A_4$ is a constituent of some irreducible representation of $G = S_4$
- if ρ is an ^{irred.} representation of G s.t. ρ_H is irreducible, then there exists exactly one other irreducible representation ρ' of G s.t. $\text{Res}_H^G(\rho) = \text{Res}_H^G(\rho')$.
- if ρ is an irred. representation of G s.t. ρ_H is reducible, then there exists no other ^{irred.} repres. ρ' of G s.t. $\text{Res}_H^G(\rho) = \text{Res}_H^G(\rho')$.

All of these properties generalize to any (normal) subgroup H of index 2 of any group G .

Theorem Let $H \trianglelefteq G$ of index 2. Let ρ be an irreducible representation of G . then

① If ρ_H is irreducible ($\Leftrightarrow \chi_\rho \neq \lambda \cdot \chi_\rho$) then

$\text{Res}_H^G \phi = \rho_H (= \text{Res}_H^G \rho)$ if and only if $\chi_\phi = \chi_\rho$ or $\chi_\rho \cdot \lambda$.

[So there is exactly one other irreducible repr. of G that has the same restriction to H .]

② If ρ_H is reducible ($\Leftrightarrow \chi_\rho = \lambda \cdot \chi_\rho$), and $\rho_H = \psi_1 \oplus \psi_2$, and Φ is an irreducible representation of G having

ψ_1 and/or ψ_2 as constituents, then $\Phi = \psi$.

[14]

Proof - ① Assume that ψ_H is irreducible. Then $\chi_\psi \neq \lambda \cdot \chi_\psi$.

Because

$$\lambda \cdot \chi_\psi(g) = \begin{cases} \chi_\psi(g) & \text{if } g \in H \\ -\chi_\psi(g) & \text{if } g \notin H \end{cases}$$

it's clear that $\lambda \cdot \chi_\psi|_H = \chi_\psi|_H$.

We need to show that if $\Phi_H = \psi_H$ for some ^{irred.} representation of G , then $\chi_\Phi = \chi_\psi$ or $\chi_\Phi = \lambda \cdot \chi_\psi$.

Because all of the representations involved are irreducible, this is equivalent to proving that

$$\langle \chi_\Phi, \chi_\psi + \lambda \cdot \chi_\psi \rangle = 1.$$

We can do this easily:

$$\langle \chi_\Phi, \chi_\psi + \lambda \cdot \chi_\psi \rangle = \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} \overline{\chi_\Phi(g)} [\underbrace{\chi_\psi(g) + (\lambda \cdot \chi_\psi)(g)}_{0'' \text{ if } g \in G-H}] =$$

$$= \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in H} \overline{\chi_\Phi(g)} 2 \chi_\psi(g) =$$

and
" $2 \chi_\psi(g)$ if $g \in H$

$$= \frac{|H|}{|G|} \frac{1}{|H|} 2 \sum_{h \in H} \overline{\chi_{\Phi_H}(h)} \chi_{\psi_H}(h) =$$

$$\stackrel{\frac{1}{2}}{=} \langle \chi_{\Phi_H}, \chi_{\psi_H} \rangle = 1 \quad \text{because } \psi_H \text{ is irreducible and } \Phi_H = \psi_H.$$

This completes the proof of part ①.

② Now assume that ρ_H is reducible ($\Leftrightarrow \chi_\rho = \lambda \cdot \chi_\rho^{\omega}$ because $\chi_\rho|_{G-H} \equiv 0$). Suppose that $\rho_H = \varphi_1 \oplus \varphi_2$ and that ϕ is some irreducible representation of G st ϕ_H contains φ_1 and/or φ_2 .

We want to show that $\rho = \phi$. It's of course sufficient to prove that $\langle \chi_\rho, \chi_\phi \rangle > 0$.

By a direct computation:

$$\langle \chi_\phi, \chi_\rho \rangle = \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} \overline{\chi_\phi(g)} \chi_\rho(g) \stackrel{\chi_\rho|_{G-H} \equiv 0}{=} \uparrow$$

$$= \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in H} \overline{\chi_\phi(g)} \chi_\rho(g) =$$

$$= \frac{|H|}{|G|} \frac{1}{|H|} \sum_{h \in H} \overline{\chi_{\phi_H}(h)} \chi_{\rho_H}(h) = \frac{1}{2} \langle \chi_{\phi_H}, \chi_{\varphi_1} + \chi_{\varphi_2} \rangle =$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \left[\langle \chi_{\phi_H}, \chi_{\varphi_1} \rangle + \langle \chi_{\phi_H}, \chi_{\varphi_2} \rangle \right] > 0.$$

at least one of them is > 0
because φ_1 and/or φ_2 is a constituent of ϕ_H

This completes the proof. $\square$

I) We conclude this lecture on restricted representations with one final problem:



[16]

Problem - It is known that the complete list of degrees of the irreducible characters of S_7 is:

1, 1, 6, 6, 14, 14, 14, 14, 15, 15, 20, 21, 21, 35, 35.

Also, we know that A_7 has exactly 9 conjugacy classes. Find the complete list of degrees of the irreducible characters of A_7 .

► Let ρ be ^{one of the two} irreducible representation of S_7 of degree 1, or 15 or 21 or 35. Because ρ has odd dimension, ρ_{A_7} must be irreducible.

Notice that the other representation of S_7 of degree 1, 15, 21 or 35 gives rise to the same restriction to S_7 (the character is of the form $\lambda \cdot \chi_\rho \dots$).

We obtain 4 irred. reprs of A_7 of dimension 1, 15, 21, 35 coming from the 8 irred reprs of S_7 of dim. 1, 1, 15, 15, 21, 21, 35, 35.

Next we look at the restriction of the irred. reprs of S_7 of dimension 6, 6, 14, 14, 14, 14, 20.

If ρ is the 20-dimensional representation, then $\chi_\rho = \chi_\rho \cdot \lambda$ (or we would have another irred repr. of S_7 of dimension 20). So ρ_{A_7} must be reducible.

We obtain two irreducible (inequivalent) representations of A_7 of dimension 10.

● So far we got 6 irred. inequivalent reprs of A_7 , but A_7 has 9 conjugacy classes, so there are 3 missing representations...

They come from the 6 irred reprs of S_7 of dimension

6, 6, 14, 14, 14, 14.

The corresponding characters must be of the forms

$$\chi_{g_1}, \lambda \cdot \chi_{g_1}, \chi_{g_2}, \lambda \cdot \chi_{g_2}, \chi_{g_3}, \lambda \cdot \chi_{g_3}$$

for some irred. representations g_1, g_2, g_3 of dimension

6, 14 and 14. The restriction of g_1, g_2, g_3 to A_7 are irreducible. So we obtain 3 irreducible reprs.

of A_7 of dimension: 6, 14, 14.

The complete list of degrees of the irreducible characters of A_7 is:

1, 6, 10, 10, 14, 14, 15, 21, 35.
