Outline

1. Function Composition
2. Recursion
3. Primitive Recursively Closed Classes
4. Building the Class of Primitive Recursive Functions
Definition

Let $f$ be a function of $k$ variables and let $g_1, \ldots, g_k$ be functions of $n$ variables. The function $h$ defined as

$$h(x_1, \ldots, x_n) = f(g_1(x_1, \ldots, x_n), \ldots, g_k(x_1, \ldots, x_n))$$

is said to be obtained from $f$ and $g_1, \ldots, g_k$ by composition.

The functions $f, g_1, \ldots, g_k$ need not be total. $h(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ is defined when all of $z_1 = g_1(x_1, \ldots, x_n), \ldots, z_k = g(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ are defined and $f(z_1, \ldots, z_n)$ is defined.
Theorem

If $h$ is obtained from the computable functions $f, g_1, \ldots, g_k$ by composition, then $h$ is computable.

Proof.

The following program computes $h$:

\[
\begin{align*}
Z_1 & \leftarrow g_1(X_1, \ldots, X_n) \\
\vdots \\
Z_k & \leftarrow g_k(X_1, \ldots, X_n) \\
Y & \leftarrow f(Z_1, \ldots, Z_k)
\end{align*}
\]
Example

We saw that the functions

\[ x, x + y, x \cdot y, x - y \]

are partially computable. Therefore, \( 2x = x + x \) and \( 4x^2 = (2x) \cdot (2x) \) are partially computable. So are \( 4x^2 + 2x \) and \( 4x^2 - 2x \). Note that \( 4x^2 - 2x \) is total although is obtained from a non-total function \( x - y \) by composition with \( 4x^2 \) and \( 2x \).
Recursion is a modality of constructing a new function from a given one.

**Definition**

Suppose that $g$ is a total function of two variables and $k$ is a fixed number, $k \in \mathbb{N}$.

The function $h : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ is obtained from $g$ by **primitive recursion** if

$$h(0) = k, h(t + 1) = g(t, h(t)).$$
Theorem

If $h$ is obtained from the computable function $g$ by primitive recursion, then $h$ is also computable.

Proof.

Note that the constant function $f(x) = k$ is computed by the program

\[
Y \leftarrow Y + 1 \\
Y \leftarrow Y + 1 \\
\vdots \\
Y \leftarrow Y + 1
\]

that contains $k$ lines.
Proof cont’d

Proof.

This shows that we can use the macro $Y \leftarrow k$. The following is a program that computed $h(x)$:

$$
\begin{align*}
Y & \leftarrow k \\
[A] & \text{ IF } X = 0 \text{ GOTO } E \\
Y & \leftarrow g(Z, Y) \\
Z & \leftarrow Z + 1 \\
X & \leftarrow X - 1 \\
& \text{GOTO } A
\end{align*}
$$

Note that if $Y$ has the value $h(z)$ before executing instruction labeled $A$, then it has the value $g(z, h(z)) = h(z + 1)$ after executing $Y \leftarrow g(Z, Y)$. 

A slightly more complicated kind of recursion

The function $h : \mathbb{N}^{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ is defined starting from the functions $f : \mathbb{N}^{n} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ and $g : \mathbb{N}^{n+2} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ as

$$h(x_1, \ldots, x_n, 0) = f(x_1, \ldots, x_n),$$
$$h(x_1, \ldots, x_n, t + 1) = g(t, h(x_1, \ldots, x_n, t), x_1, \ldots, x_n).$$

This modality of constructing $h$ is known as *primitive recursion*. The functions $f$ and $g$ are total.
Theorem

Let $f : \mathbb{N}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ and $g : \mathbb{N}^{n+2} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ be two computable functions. The function $h$ defined from $f$ and $g$ by primitive recursion is computable.
Proof.

The following program computes $h(x_1, \ldots, x_n, x_{n+1})$:

\[
Y \leftarrow f(X_1, \ldots, X_n) \\
[A] \quad \text{IF } X_{n+1} = 0 \text{ GOTO } E \\
Y \leftarrow g(Z, Y, X_1, \ldots, X_n) \\
Z \leftarrow Z + 1 \\
X_{n+1} \leftarrow X_{n+1} - 1 \\
\text{GOTO } A
\]
Definition

The set of *initial functions* consists of the following:

- the *successor function* \( s : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N} \) defined by \( s(x) = x + 1 \) for \( x \in \mathbb{N} \);
- the *null function* \( n : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N} \) defined by \( n(x) = 0 \) for \( x \in \mathbb{N} \);
- the *projection functions* \( u^n_i : \mathbb{N}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{N} \) given by \( u^n_i(x_1, \ldots, x_n) = x_i \) for \( 1 \leq i \leq n \).

Note that because the initial functions contain the projection functions, the class of initial functions contains an infinite number of functions.
Example

The *projection function* $u_2^5 : \mathbb{N}^5 \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ is given by

$$u_2^5(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5) = x_2$$

for $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5 \in \mathbb{N}$. 
Definition

A *primitive recursively closed class* (a PRC class) is a set of total functions $C$ that satisfies the following conditions:

1. the initial functions belong to $C$, and
2. a function obtained from functions belonging to $C$ by either composition or recursion belongs to $C$. 


Theorem

*The class of computable functions is a PRC class.*

Proof.

It suffices to show that the initial functions are computable. The function \( s(x) = x + 1 \) is computable by \( Y \leftarrow X + 1 \). \( n(x) \) is computed by the empty program, and \( u^n_i(x_1, \ldots, x_n) \) is computed by the program

\[
Y \leftarrow X_i
\]
A function is *primitive recursive* if it can be obtained from the initial functions by a finite number of applications of composition and recursion.

It is clear that the class of primitive recursive functions is a PRC class.
Theorem

A function is primitive recursive if and only if it belongs to every PRC class.

Proof.

If a function belongs to every PRC class then, in particular, it belongs to the class of primitive recursive functions. Conversely, let \( f \) be a primitive recursive function and let \( C \) be some PRC class.

Since \( f \) is primitive recursive, there is a list \( f_1, \ldots, f_n \) of functions such that \( f^n = f \) and each \( f_i \) is either an initial function or it can be obtained from preceding functions by composition or recursion. The initial functions belong to \( C \) and we saw that the application of composition of recursion to functions in \( C \) results in a function in \( C \). Hence any function in \( f_1, \ldots, f_n \) belongs to \( C \). In particular, \( f_n = f \in C \).
Corollary

*Every primitive recursive function is computable.*

Proof.

Every primitive recursive function belongs to the PRC class of computable functions.
Example

Let $f(x, y) = x + y$. We have

$$f(x, 0) = x = u_1^1(x),$$
$$f(x, y + 1) = f(x, y) + 1.$$  

The second equality can be written as

$$f(x, y + 1) = g(y, f(x, y), x),$$

where

$$g(x_1, x_2, x_3) = 1 + x_2 = s(u_2^3(x_1, x_2, x_3)).$$

Thus, $g$ is primitive recursive and $f$ is primitive recursive because it is obtained by primitive recursion from primitive recursive functions.
Example

Let \( h(x, y) = x \cdot y \). We have:

\[
\begin{align*}
    h(x, 0) &= 0, \\
    h(x, y + 1) &= h(x, y) + x,
\end{align*}
\]

or

\[
\begin{align*}
    h(x, 0) &= n(x), \\
    h(x, y + 1) &= g(y, h(x, y), x),
\end{align*}
\]

where

\[
g(x_1, x_2, x_3) = f(u_2^3(x_1, x_2, x_3), u_3^3(x_1, x_2, x_3)) = f(x_2, x_3),
\]

where \( f(x, y) = x + y \) was shown to be primitive recursive on Slide 19.
Example

Let $\ell : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ be defined as $\ell(x) = x!$. The recursion equations are $\ell(0) = 1$ and $\ell(x + 1) = \ell(x) \cdot s(x)$, which represent the equalities:

$$0! = 1 \text{ and } (x + 1)! = x!(x + 1).$$

Formally, we have:

$$\ell(0) = 1,$$
$$\ell(t + 1) = g(t, \ell(t)),$$

where $g(x_1, x_2) = s(x_1) \cdot x_2$. The function $g$ is primitive recursive because $g(x_1, x_2) = s(u_1^2(x_1, x_2)) \cdot u_2^2(x_1, x_2)$ and multiplication is already known to be primitive recursive.
Example

The exponentiation function $x^y$:

The recursion equations are

\[
\begin{align*}
x^0 &= 1, \\
x^{y+1} &= x^y \cdot x
\end{align*}
\]

Note that the for the “special case” $0^0$ we have $0^0 = 1$. 
Example

The *predecessor function* defined as

\[ p(x) = \begin{cases} 
  x - 1 & \text{if } x \neq 0, \\
  0 & \text{if } x = 0, 
\end{cases} \]

is primitive recursive because we have

\[ p(0) = 0, \]
\[ p(t + 1) = t. \]
The function $x \div y$ defined as

$$x \div y = \begin{cases} 
  x - y & \text{if } x \geq y \\
  0 & \text{if } x < y 
\end{cases}$$

should not be confused with the partial function $x - y$ which is undefined if $x < y$. The function $x \div y$ is a total function and is defined by

$$
\begin{align*}
  x \div 0 &= 0, \\
  x \div (t + 1) &= p(x \div t).
\end{align*}
$$

Note: the symbol $\div$ is read “monus”.

Example

The function $|x - y|$ is primitive recursive because

$$|x - y| = (x \div y) + (y \div x).$$
Example

The function $\alpha(x)$, where

$$\alpha(x) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } x = 0, \\ 0 & \text{if } \text{xnot} = 0, \end{cases}$$

is primitive recursive because $\alpha(x) = 1 ÷ x$.

Alternatively, we can write the recursion equations:

$$\alpha(0) = 1,$$

$$\alpha(t + 1) = 0.$$