

QUESTION

Prove

(a) using the factorial definition,

(b) using the word definition

(i)  $\binom{n}{n-r} = \binom{n}{r}$

(ii)  $\binom{n+1}{r} = \binom{n}{r} + \binom{n}{r-1}$

ANSWER

(i) (a)  $\binom{n}{n-r} = \frac{n!}{(n-r)!(n-(n-r))!} = \frac{n!}{(n-r)!r!} = \binom{n}{r}$

(b)  $\binom{n}{r}$  is the number of ways of choosing  $r$  from  $n$ , each choice of  $r$  is effectively one different choice of  $n-r$  because  $n-r$  are left behind.

(ii) (a)

$$\begin{aligned} \binom{n}{r} + \binom{n}{r-1} &= \frac{n!}{(n-r)!r!} + \frac{n!}{(n-r+1)!(r-1)!} \\ &= \frac{n!}{(n-r+1)!r!} \{n-r+1+r\} \\ &= \frac{(n+1)!}{(n+1-r)!r!} = \binom{n+1}{r} \end{aligned}$$

(b) Consider  $n+1$  things.  $\underbrace{\times \times \times \times \dots \times}_n \underbrace{\text{O}}_1$

Choosing  $r$  from  $n+1$  is  $\binom{n+1}{r}$ . Each choice either included O in which case you need to choose  $r-1$  from  $n$ ,  $\binom{n}{r-1}$ , or excludes O, in which case we need to choose  $r$  from  $n$ ,  $\binom{n}{r}$ . Hence

$$\binom{n+1}{r} = \binom{n}{r} + \binom{n}{r-1}$$