

Writing Assignment 2: Due Wednesday, February 6

Problem 1: Write a careful proof showing that for all $a \in \mathbb{Z}$, the number $a^2 + 5a$ is even.

Hint: Do a proof by cases.

Problem 2: In Proposition 1.4.9, we showed that every odd integer can be written as the difference of two perfect squares. In this problem, we show that every integer that is evenly divisible by 4 can be written as the difference of two perfect squares. That is, you will prove the following:

“For all $a \in \mathbb{Z}$, if there exists $k \in \mathbb{Z}$ with $a = 4k$, then there exists $b, c \in \mathbb{Z}$ with $a = b^2 - c^2$ ”.

However, we will do it in stages:

- a. Write down some examples of integers that satisfy the hypothesis, i.e. some examples of integers a for which there exists $k \in \mathbb{Z}$ with $a = 4k$. For each of these, find examples of b and c with $a = b^2 - c^2$.
- b. Looking at your examples, make a guess as to a general pattern. In other words, if we have $a, k \in \mathbb{Z}$ with $a = 4k$, what do you guess will work for b and c ?
- c. Now write up a careful proof of the statement.