

The Frobenius number for sequences of binomial coefficients

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Frobenius coin problem

- ▶ Given relatively prime positive integers a_1, \dots, a_n , $n \geq 2$, find a formula to compute the largest integer that is not representable as a non-negative integer linear combination of a_1, \dots, a_n .
- ▶ $F(a_1, \dots, a_n)$ (the **Frobenius number of the set** $\{a_1, \dots, a_n\}$) denotes the solution of the previous problem.
- ▶ $F(a_1, a_2) = a_1 a_2 - a_1 - a_2$.
- ▶ Frobenius problem is open for $n \geq 3$.
 - * Curtis: it is impossible to find a polynomial formula that computes the Frobenius number if $n = 3$.
 - * Ramírez Alfonsín: the problem is NP-hard for n variables.

Particular cases

- ▶ Arithmetic and almost arithmetic sequences (A. Brauer; M. Lewin; J. B. Roberts; E. S. Selmer),
- ▶ Fibonacci sequences (J. M. Marín, J. L. Ramírez Alfonsín and M. P. Revuelta),
- ▶ geometric sequences (D. C. Ong and V. Ponomarenko),
- ▶ Mersenne, repunit, and Thabit sequences (J. C. Rosales, M. B. Branco, D. Torrão),
- ▶ squares and cubes sequences (M. Lepilov, J. O'Rourke and I. Swanson; A. Moscariello),
- ▶ ...

Particular cases: motivations (i)

- ▶ Brauer:

$$F(n, n+1, \dots, n+k-1) = \left(\left\lfloor \frac{n-2}{k-1} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) n - 1.$$

- ▶ Baker (conjecture):

If T_n is the n th triangular (or triangle) number, then

$$F(T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}) = \begin{cases} \frac{6n^3 + 18n^2 + 12n - 8}{8} & \text{if } n \text{ is even;} \\ \frac{6n^3 + 12n^2 - 6n - 20}{8} & \text{if } n \text{ is odd.} \end{cases}$$

Equivalently,

$$F(T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}) = \frac{6n^3 + 3(5 + (-1)^n)n^2 + 3(1 + 3(-1)^n)n - (14 - 6(-1)^n)}{8}.$$

Particular cases: motivations (ii)

- ▶ Sequences of binomial coefficients (or combinatorial numbers).

$$* \{n, n+1, \dots, n+k-1\} = \left\{ \binom{n}{1}, \binom{n+1}{1}, \dots, \binom{n+k-1}{1} \right\}$$

$$* \{T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}\} = \left\{ \binom{n+1}{2}, \binom{n+2}{2}, \binom{n+3}{2} \right\}$$

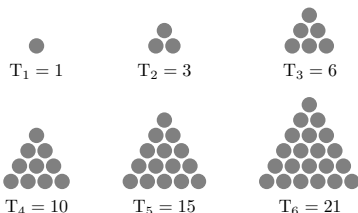


Figure: First six triangular numbers.

Purposes

- ▶ Prove the Baker's conjecture.
- ▶ Find formulas for other binomial coefficients sequences.
 - * Tetrahedral (or triangular pyramidal) numbers: $TH_n = \binom{n+2}{3}$.

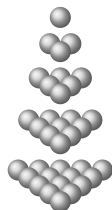


Figure: Tetrahedral number TH_5 (by layers).

- * Pentatope (or 4-Hypertetrahedral or 4-dimensional triangular pyramidal) numbers: $P_n = \binom{n+3}{4}$.

Tools (i)

- ▶ Johnson's formula: if a_1, a_2, a_3 are relatively prime numbers and $\gcd\{a_1, a_2\} = d$, then

$$F(a_1, a_2, a_3) = dF\left(\frac{a_1}{d}, \frac{a_2}{d}, a_3\right) + (d-1)a_3.$$

- ▶ Generalization by Brauer and Shockley: if a_1, \dots, a_n are relatively prime numbers and $d = \gcd\{a_1, \dots, a_{n-1}\}$, then

$$F(a_1, \dots, a_n) = dF\left(\frac{a_1}{d}, \dots, \frac{a_{n-1}}{d}, a_n\right) + (d-1)a_n.$$

- ▶ Telescopic sequences.

Tools (ii)

Definition

- ▶ Let (a_1, \dots, a_n) be a sequence of positive integers such that $\gcd\{a_1, \dots, a_n\} = 1$ (where $n \geq 2$).
- ▶ Let $d_i = \gcd\{a_1, \dots, a_i\}$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$.
- ▶ Then (a_1, \dots, a_n) is a **telescopic sequence** if, for each $i = 2, \dots, n$, $\frac{a_i}{d_i}$ is representable as a non-negative integer linear combination of $\frac{a_1}{d_{i-1}}, \dots, \frac{a_{i-1}}{d_{i-1}}$.

Remark

- ▶ If (a_1, \dots, a_n) is a telescopic sequence, then
 - * $(\frac{a_1}{d_1}, \dots, \frac{a_i}{d_i})$ is also a telescopic sequence for $i = 2, \dots, n-1$;
 - * $F(a_1, \dots, a_n) = d_{n-1} F\left(\frac{a_1}{d_{n-1}}, \dots, \frac{a_{n-1}}{d_{n-1}}\right) + (d_{n-1} - 1)a_n$.

Examples

Example: (8,14,19)

- ▶ $d_1 = \gcd\{8\} = 8$; $d_2 = \gcd\{8, 14\} = 2$; $d_3 = \gcd\{8, 14, 19\} = 1$.
- ▶ $\frac{14}{2} = 7 \cdot \frac{8}{8}$; $\frac{19}{1} = 3 \cdot \frac{8}{2} + 1 \cdot \frac{14}{2}$.
- ▶ (8, 14, 19) is a telescopic sequence.
- ▶ $F(8, 14, 19) = 2 \cdot F\left(\frac{8}{2}, \frac{14}{2}\right) + (2-1) \cdot 19 = 2 \cdot F(4, 7) + 19 = 2 \cdot 17 + 19 = 53$.

Example: (8,14,17)

- ▶ $d_1 = \gcd\{8\} = 8$; $d_2 = \gcd\{8, 14\} = 2$; $d_3 = \gcd\{8, 14, 17\} = 1$.
- ▶ $\frac{14}{2} = 7 \cdot \frac{8}{8}$; $\frac{17}{1} \neq \alpha_1 \cdot \frac{8}{2} + \alpha_2 \cdot \frac{14}{2}$, for all $\alpha_1, \alpha_2 \in \mathbb{N} = \{0, 1, 2, \dots\}$.
- ▶ (8, 14, 17) is not a telescopic sequence.
- ▶ $F(8, 14, 17) = ?$

Triangular numbers sequences

$$T_n = \binom{n+1}{2} = \frac{n(n+1)}{2}, \quad n \geq 1.$$

Lemma

$$\triangleright \gcd\{T_n, T_{n+1}\} = \begin{cases} \frac{n+1}{2} & \text{if } n \text{ is odd;} \\ n+1 & \text{if } n \text{ is even.} \end{cases}$$

Lemma

$$\triangleright \gcd\{T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}\} = 1.$$

Proof

$$* \gcd\{T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}\} = \gcd\{\gcd\{T_n, T_{n+1}\}, \gcd\{T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}\}\}.$$

Triangular numbers sequences

Proposition

- ▶ (T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}) and (T_{n+2}, T_{n+1}, T_n) are telescopic sequences.

Proof

- ▶ Let n be an odd integer.
- ▶ $d_1 = \gcd\{T_n\} = \frac{n(n+1)}{2}$; $d_2 = \gcd\{T_n, T_{n+1}\} = \frac{n+1}{2}$;
 $d_3 = \gcd\{T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}\} = 1$.
- ▶ $\frac{T_{n+1}}{\frac{n+1}{2}} = (n+2) \cdot \frac{T_n}{\frac{n(n+1)}{2}}$; $\frac{T_{n+2}}{1} = 0 \cdot \frac{T_n}{\frac{n(n+1)}{2}} + \frac{n+3}{2} \cdot \frac{T_{n+1}}{\frac{n+1}{2}}$.
- ▶ (T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}) is a telescopic sequence if n is odd.
- ▶ The proofs for the other three cases are similar.

Triangular numbers sequences

Proposition

$$\triangleright F(T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}) = \begin{cases} \frac{3n^3+6n^2-3n-10}{4} & \text{if } n \text{ is odd;} \\ \frac{3n^3+9n^2+6n-4}{4} & \text{if } n \text{ is even.} \end{cases}$$

Proposition

$$\triangleright F(T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}) = \left\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \right\rfloor (T_n + T_{n+1} + T_{n+2} - 1) - 1.$$

Triangular numbers sequences: obstacles

- ▶ Two consecutive triangular numbers are not relatively prime.
- ▶ If $n = 4$ or $n \geq 6$, then

$$\left(\binom{n+1}{2}, \binom{n+2}{2}, \binom{n+3}{2}, \binom{n+4}{2} \right)$$

is not a telescopic sequence (of four consecutive relatively prime triangular numbers).

- * In fact, none of its permutations is telescopic.

Tetrahedral numbers sequences

$$\text{TH}_n = \binom{n+2}{3} = \frac{n(n+1)(n+2)}{6}, \quad n \geq 1.$$

Lemma

- $\gcd\{\text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_{n+2}, \text{TH}_{n+3}\} = 1.$

Proof

* $(\text{TH}_{n+1} - \text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+2} - \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_{n+3} - \text{TH}_{n+2}) = (T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2}).$

* Fact

- Let (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n) be a sequence of positive integers.
- Let $d_1 = \gcd\{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n\}$ and $d_2 = \gcd\{a_2 - a_1, \dots, a_n - a_{n-1}\}.$
- Then $d_1 | d_2.$ In particular, if $d_2 = 1,$ then $d_1 = 1.$

Tetrahedral numbers sequences

Lemma

$$\triangleright \gcd\{\text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+1}\} = \begin{cases} (6k+1)(3k+1) & \text{if } n = 6k; \\ (3k+1)(2k+1) & \text{if } n = 6k+1; \\ (2k+1)(3k+2) & \text{if } n = 6k+2; \\ (3k+2)(6k+5) & \text{if } n = 6k+3; \\ (6k+5)(k+1) & \text{if } n = 6k+4; \\ (k+1)(6k+7) & \text{if } n = 6k+5. \end{cases}$$

Lemma

$$\triangleright \gcd\{\text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_{n+2}\} = \begin{cases} 3k+1 & \text{if } n = 6k; \\ 2k+1 & \text{if } n = 6k+1; \\ 3k+2 & \text{if } n = 6k+2; \\ 6k+5 & \text{if } n = 6k+3; \\ k+1 & \text{if } n = 6k+4; \\ 6k+7 & \text{if } n = 6k+5. \end{cases}$$

Tetrahedral numbers sequences

Proposition

- ▶ $(TH_n, TH_{n+1}, TH_{n+2}, TH_{n+3})$ is telescopic if and only if $n \equiv r \pmod{6}$ with $r \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$.

Proposition

- ▶ $(TH_{n+3}, TH_{n+2}, TH_{n+1}, TH_n)$ is telescopic if and only if $n \equiv r \pmod{6}$ with $r \in \{4, 5\}$.

Proposition

- ▶ $F(TH_n, TH_{n+1}, TH_{n+2}) = \begin{cases} \frac{n-3}{3}TH_{n+1} + nTH_{n+2} + \frac{n}{2}TH_{n+3} - TH_n & \text{if } n = 6k; \\ (n-1)TH_{n+1} + \frac{n-1}{2}TH_{n+2} + \frac{n-1}{3}TH_{n+3} - TH_n & \text{if } n = 6k+1; \\ (n-1)TH_{n+1} + \frac{n-2}{3}TH_{n+2} + \frac{n}{2}TH_{n+3} - TH_n & \text{if } n = 6k+2; \\ \frac{n-3}{3}TH_{n+1} + \frac{n-1}{2}TH_{n+2} + (n+1)TH_{n+3} - TH_n & \text{if } n = 6k+3; \\ \frac{n+2}{3}TH_{n+2} + \frac{n+2}{2}TH_{n+1} + (n+2)TH_n - TH_{n+3} & \text{if } n = 6k+4; \\ (n+4)TH_{n+2} + \frac{n+1}{3}TH_{n+1} + \frac{n+1}{2}TH_n - TH_{n+3} & \text{if } n = 6k+5. \end{cases}$

Tetrahedral numbers sequences

Proposition

$$\blacktriangleright F(\text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_{n+2}) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{36}(11n^4 + 90n^3 + 265n^2 + 258n - 36) & \text{if } n = 6k; \\ \frac{1}{36}(11n^4 + 70n^3 + 133n^2 - 22n - 228) & \text{if } n = 6k + 1; \\ \frac{1}{36}(11n^4 + 74n^3 + 169n^2 + 82n - 132) & \text{if } n = 6k + 2; \\ \frac{1}{36}(11n^4 + 102n^3 + 373n^2 + 570n + 252) & \text{if } n = 6k + 3; \\ \frac{1}{36}(11n^4 + 70n^3 + 133n^2 - 22n - 228) & \text{if } n = 6k + 4; \\ \frac{1}{36}(11n^4 + 98n^3 + 349n^2 + 526n + 228) & \text{if } n = 6k + 5. \end{cases}$$

Proposition

$$\blacktriangleright F(\text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_{n+2}) = \begin{cases} 396k^4 + 540k^3 + 265k^2 + 43k - 1 & \text{if } n = 6k; \\ 396k^4 + 684k^3 + 409k^2 + 83k - 1 & \text{if } n = 6k + 1; \\ 396k^4 + 972k^3 + 877k^2 + 333k + 41 & \text{if } n = 6k + 2; \\ 396k^4 + 1404k^3 + 1885k^2 + 1125k + 249 & \text{if } n = 6k + 3; \\ 396k^4 + 1476k^3 + 2029k^2 + 1203k + 253 & \text{if } n = 6k + 4; \\ 396k^4 + 1908k^3 + 3469k^2 + 2811k + 853 & \text{if } n = 6k + 5. \end{cases}$$

Pentatope numbers sequences

$$P_n = \binom{n+3}{4} = \frac{n(n+1)(n+2)(n+3)}{24}, \quad n \geq 1.$$

Lemma

- $\gcd\{P_n, P_{n+1}, P_{n+2}, P_{n+3}, P_{n+4}\} = 1$.

Proposition

- $(P_n, P_{n+1}, P_{n+2}, P_{n+3}, P_{n+4})$ is telescopic if and only if $n \equiv r \pmod{6}$ with $r \in \{0, 1, 2\}$ (and $n \geq 1$).
- $(P_{n+4}, P_{n+3}, P_{n+2}, P_{n+1}, P_n)$ is telescopic if and only if $n \equiv r \pmod{6}$ with $r \in \{3, 4, 5\}$ (and $n \geq 9$).
- If $n \in \{3, 4, 5\}$, then $(P_n, P_{n+1}, P_{n+2}, P_{n+3}, P_{n+4})$ and $(P_{n+4}, P_{n+3}, P_{n+2}, P_{n+1}, P_n)$ are telescopic.

General binomial coefficients sequences

Remark

- All possible permutations of

$$\left(\binom{12}{5}, \binom{13}{5}, \binom{14}{5}, \binom{15}{5}, \binom{16}{5}, \binom{17}{5} \right) =$$

$$(792, 1287, 2002, 3003, 4368, 6188)$$

are not telescopic.

Consequences on numerical semigroups

- ▶ Let $(\mathbb{N}, +)$ be the additive monoid of non-negative integers.
- ▶ We say that S is a **numerical semigroup** if it is an additive submonoid of \mathbb{N} such that $0 \in S$ and $\mathbb{N} \setminus S$ is a finite set.
- ▶ Let $X = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ be a non-empty subset of $\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}$. We define

$$\langle X \rangle = \{\lambda_1 x_1 + \dots + \lambda_n x_n \mid \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n \in \mathbb{N}\}.$$

- ▶ Let S be submonoid of $(\mathbb{N}, +)$. Then there exists a unique X such that $S = \langle X \rangle$ and $S \neq \langle Y \rangle$ for any $Y \subsetneq X$.

In such a case, X is the **minimal system of generators** of S .

- ▶ X is the minimal system of generators of a numerical semigroup S if and only if $\gcd(X) = 1$.

The cardinality of X is the **embedding dimension** of S .

Free numerical semigroups

Definition

- S is a **free numerical semigroup** if there exists a telescopic sequence (a_1, \dots, a_n) such that $S = \langle a_1, \dots, a_n \rangle$.

Example

- $\mathcal{T}_n = \langle T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2} \rangle$, $n \geq 3$, are free numerical semigroups with embedding dimension equal to 3.
- $\mathcal{TH}_n = \langle TH_n, TH_{n+1}, TH_{n+2}, TH_{n+3} \rangle$, $n \geq 4$, are free numerical semigroups with embedding dimension equal to 4.

Preliminaries (i)

Definition

- ▶ Let S be a numerical semigroup.
- ▶ Let $\{n_1, \dots, n_e\}$ be a minimal system of generators of S .
- ▶ Then we define

$$c_i^* = \min \{k \in \mathbb{N} \mid kn_i \in \langle n_1, \dots, n_{i-1} \rangle\} \text{ for every } i \in \{2, \dots, e\}.$$

Lemma

- ▶ Let S be a numerical semigroup.
- ▶ Let $\{n_1, \dots, n_e\}$ be the minimal system of generators of S .
- ▶ Then S is free (for the arrangement $\{n_1, \dots, n_e\}$) if and only if $n_1 = c_2^* \cdots c_e^*$.

Preliminaries (ii)

Lemma

- ▶ Let S be a free numerical semigroup.
- ▶ Let $\{n_1, \dots, n_e\}$ be the minimal system of generators of S .
- ▶ Assume that $c_j^* n_j = a_{j_1} n_1 + \dots + a_{j_{i-1}} n_{i-1}$ for some $a_{i_1}, \dots, a_{i_{j-1}} \in \mathbb{N}$.
- ▶ Then
 - * $\{(c_j^* x_j, a_{i_1} x_1 + \dots + a_{i_{j-1}} x_{i-1}) \mid i \in \{2, \dots, e\}\}$ is a **minimal presentation** of S ;
 - * $c_j^* n_j, i \in \{2, \dots, e\}$, are the **Betti elements** of S ;
 - * $\text{Ap}(S, n_1)$ (that is, the **Apéry set of n_1** in S) is equal to $\{\lambda_2 n_2 + \dots + \lambda_e n_e \mid \lambda_j \in \{0, \dots, c_j^* - 1\} \text{ for all } j \in \{2, \dots, e\}\}$.

Triangular case (i)

$$\mathcal{T}_n = \langle T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2} \rangle, n \geq 3.$$

Lemma

- ▶ $c_2^* = n$ and $c_3^* = \frac{n+1}{2}$ if n is odd;
- ▶ $c_2^* = \frac{n}{2}$ and $c_3^* = n + 1$ if n is even.

Proposition

- ▶ A minimal presentation of $\mathcal{T}_n = \langle T_n, T_{n+1}, T_{n+2} \rangle$ is
 - * $\left\{ \left(\frac{n+1}{2}x_3, \frac{n+3}{2}x_2 \right), (nx_2, (n+2)x_1) \right\}$ if n is odd;
 - * $\left\{ \left((n+1)x_3, (n+3)x_2 \right), \left(\frac{n}{2}x_2, \frac{n+2}{2}x_1 \right) \right\}$ if n is even.

Triangular case (ii)

Corollary

- ▶ The Betti elements of \mathcal{T}_n are
 - * $\frac{3}{2} \binom{n+3}{3}$ and $\frac{3}{1} \binom{n+2}{3}$ if n is odd;
 - * $\frac{3}{1} \binom{n+3}{3}$ and $\frac{3}{2} \binom{n+2}{3}$ if n is even.

(Observe that they are particular multiples of tetrahedral numbers.)

Corollary

- ▶ The Apéry set $\text{Ap}(\mathcal{T}_n, T_n)$ is equal to
 - * $\left\{ aT_{n+1} + bT_{n+2} \mid a \in \{0, \dots, n-1\}, b \in \left\{0, \dots, \frac{n-1}{2}\right\} \right\}$ if n is odd;
 - * $\left\{ aT_{n+1} + bT_{n+2} \mid a \in \left\{0, \dots, \frac{n-2}{2}\right\}, b \in \{0, \dots, n\} \right\}$ if n is even.

Tetrahedral case (i)

$$\mathcal{TH}_n = \langle \text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_{n+2}, \text{TH}_{n+3} \rangle$$

Lemma

- ▶ Let $\mathcal{TH}_n = \langle \text{TH}_n, \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_{n+2}, \text{TH}_{n+3} \rangle$, where $n \equiv r \pmod{6}$ with $r \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$. Then

$$* c_2^* = \frac{n}{3}, c_3^* = n + 1, \text{ and } c_4^* = \frac{n+2}{2} \text{ if } n = 6k;$$

$$* c_2^* = n, c_3^* = \frac{n+1}{2}, \text{ and } c_4^* = \frac{n+2}{3} \text{ if } n = 6k + 1;$$

$$* c_2^* = n, c_3^* = \frac{n+1}{3}, \text{ and } c_4^* = \frac{n+2}{2} \text{ if } n = 6k + 2;$$

$$* c_2^* = \frac{n}{3}, c_3^* = \frac{n+1}{2}, \text{ and } c_4^* = n + 2 \text{ if } n = 6k + 3.$$

Lemma

- ▶ Let $\mathcal{TH}_n = \langle \text{TH}_{n+3}, \text{TH}_{n+2}, \text{TH}_{n+1}, \text{TH}_n \rangle$, where $n \equiv r \pmod{6}$ with $r \in \{4, 5\}$. Then

$$* c_2^* = \frac{n+5}{3}, c_3^* = \frac{n+4}{2}, \text{ and } c_4^* = n + 3 \text{ if } n = 6k + 4;$$

$$* c_2^* = n + 5, c_3^* = \frac{n+4}{3}, \text{ and } c_4^* = \frac{n+3}{2} \text{ if } n = 6k + 5.$$

Tetrahedral case (ii)

Corollary

► The Betti elements of \mathcal{TH}_n are

$$* \frac{4}{2} \binom{n+5}{4}, \frac{4}{1} \binom{n+4}{4} \text{ and } \frac{4}{3} \binom{n+3}{4} \text{ if } n = 6k;$$

$$* \frac{4}{3} \binom{n+5}{4}, \frac{4}{2} \binom{n+4}{4} \text{ and } \frac{4}{1} \binom{n+3}{4} \text{ if } n = 6k + 1;$$

$$* \frac{4}{2} \binom{n+5}{4}, \frac{4}{3} \binom{n+4}{4} \text{ and } \frac{4}{1} \binom{n+3}{4} \text{ if } n = 6k + 2;$$











$$* \frac{4}{1} \binom{n+5}{4}, \frac{4}{2} \binom{n+4}{4} \text{ and } \frac{4}{3} \binom{n+3}{4} \text{ if } n = 6k + 3;$$

$$* \frac{4}{3} \binom{n+5}{4}, \frac{4}{2} \binom{n+4}{4} \text{ and } \frac{4}{1} \binom{n+3}{4} \text{ if } n = 6k + 4;$$

$$* \frac{4}{1} \binom{n+5}{4}, \frac{4}{3} \binom{n+4}{4} \text{ and } \frac{4}{2} \binom{n+3}{4} \text{ if } n = 6k + 5.$$

(Observe that they are particular multiples of pentatope numbers.)

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Thank you very much for your attention!!