1 In Class Exercise

Theorem 1. Let $G$ be a graph with $n$ vertices such that the degree of every vertex of $G$ is at most $k$. Prove that we can color vertices of $G$ with $k + 1$ colors such that the endpoints of every edge get two distinct colors.

Proof This problem is a bit more complex because there are two parameters that we can induct on: $n$ and $k$. In this case, we let $k$ as a fixed number in the entire proof and we will prove the statement by induction on $n$.

We prove by induction on $n$. First define $P(n)$ be “every graph with $n$ vertices such that the degree of every vertex is at most $k$ can be colored with $k + 1$ colors such that the endpoints of every edge have two distinct colors”.

Base Case: $n = 1$. In this case we color the single vertex with a color. We can do so because $k \geq 0$.

IH: Suppose $P(n - 1)$ holds.

IS: We need to prove $P(n)$. Let $G$ be an arbitrary graph with $n$ vertices such that the degree of every vertex of $G$ is at most $k$. Let $v$ be an arbitrary vertex of $G$. Let $G' = G - v$ (we also remove all edges incident to $v$). Now, by removing $v$ (and edges of $v$) we can only reduce degree of the rest of the vertices. Therefore, every vertex of $G'$ also has degree at most $k$. Since $G'$ has $n - 1$ vertices by IH we can color vertices of $G'$ with $k + 1$ colors such that endpoints of every edge have distinct colors. Now, we color $G$. We color every vertex of $G$ (except $v$) with the same color in $G'$. Now, to color $v$, note that it has at most $k$ neighbors. Since we have $k + 1$ colors there is a color that is not used in any of the neighbors of $v$. We color $v$ with that color. ■

Note that this proof also gives an algorithm to color such a graph. Here is a sample execution of such an algorithm. Say $k = 3$, so we have 4 colors available. Say we remove vertices in the following order 6, 3, 4, 5, 1.

Now, we can color. First, we color the last vertex 2 with blue. Then, we add back the removed vertices and each time we use a color not used on the neighbors: Note that to color the last vertex 6 we got lucky. Even though it had 3 neighbors, two of them were color blue. So, we could color 6 with green and this way totally we used only 3 colors (of 4 available colors). We also had the option of coloring 6 with orange and that would also be a valid coloring.
2 Coloring Planar graphs

**Theorem 2.** The vertices of any planar graph can be colored with 6 colors in such a way that every edge gets exactly two distinct colors.

In order to prove the theorem first prove the following claim:

**Claim 3.** In any planar graph there exists a vertex $v$ with $\deg(v) \leq 5$.

**Proof** of Claim 3: **Hint:** Feel free to use the following fact without proof:

**Fact 4.** For any planar graph with $n$ vertices and $m$ edges we have $3n - 4 \geq m$.

First, recall that for any graph $G$

$$\sum_v \deg(v) = 2m.$$ 

But since by claim assumption, $2m \leq 6n - 8$, we have $\sum_v \deg(v) \leq 6n - 8$.

We prove by contradiction that there exists a vertex $v$ with $\deg(v) \leq 5$. If for all $v$, $\deg(v) \geq 6$, then

$$6n - 4 \geq \sum_v \deg(v) \geq 6n$$

which is a contradiction.

**Proof** of Thm 2:

**Base Case:** A planar graph with 1 vertex can be colored with 6 colors obviously.

**IH:** Every planar graph with $n - 1$ vertices can be colored with 6 colors.

**IS:** We want to show that every planar graph with $n$ vertices can be colored with 6 colors. Let $G$ be a planar graph with $n$ vertices. We show that $G$ can be colored with 6 colors. By claim $G$ has a vertex $v$ with $\deg(v) \leq 5$. Let $H = G - \{v\}$.

We claim that $H$ is also planar. Because if we can draw $G$ on the plane with no crossing, when we remove $v$ and its edges, we still have a drawing of the remaining graph (i.e., $H$) with no crossing. Therefore, $H$ is a planar graph with $n - 1$ vertices. So, by IH, $H$ can be colored with 6 colors.

Now, let’s add vertex $v$ (and its edges) back in. We need to find a consistent color vertex $v$ and this would complete the proof. By definition, $v$ has at most 5 neighbors. Since we have 6 colors, there exists a color which is not used in any of the neighbors of $v$. We color $v$ with that color and we obtain a consistent coloring.

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