

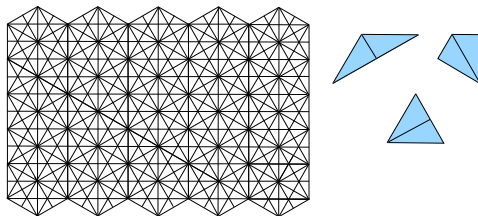
# Proof of Blum's Conjecture on Hexagonal Dungeons.

Tri Lai

Combinatorics Seminar, Indiana University, October 14, 2013

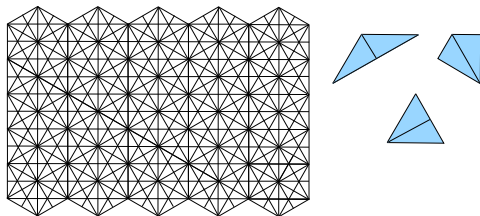
# Terminology

- A lattice divides the plane into elementary regions, called **cells**. A (lattice) **region** is a connected union of cells.



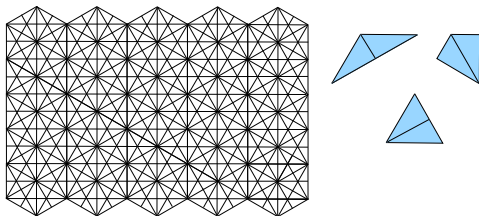
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- A **tile** is a union of two cells that share an edge.



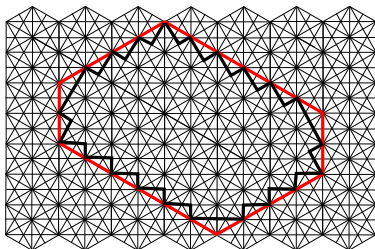
# Terminology

- A lattice divides the plane into elementary regions, called **cells**. A (lattice) **region** is a connected union of cells.
- A **tile** is a union of two cells that share an edge.
- A **tiling** of a region is a covering of the region by tiles so that there are no gaps or overlaps. Denote by  $M(R)$  the number of tilings of the region  $R$ .



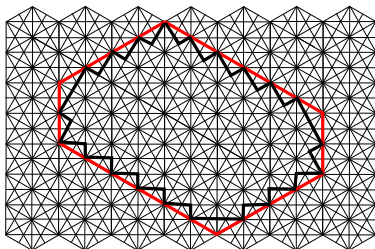
# Hexagonal region: Region definition

- Consider the lattice obtained from the triangular lattice by drawing in all the altitudes in all the unit triangles



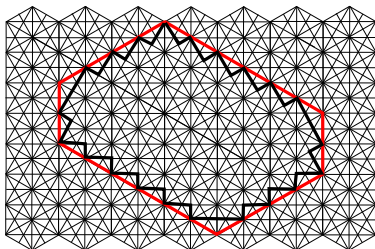
# Hexagonal region: Region definition

- Consider the lattice obtained from the triangular lattice by drawing in all the altitudes in all the unit triangles
- Hexagonal contour of side-lengths  $a$ ,  $2a$ ,  $b$ ,  $a$ ,  $2a$ ,  $b$ .



# Hexagonal region: Region definition

- Consider the lattice obtained from the triangular lattice by drawing in all the altitudes in all the unit triangles
- Hexagonal contour of side-lengths  $a, 2a, b, a, 2a, b$ .
- Hexagonal dungeon of sides  $a, 2a, b, a, 2a, b$ , denoted by  $HD_{a,2a,b}$ .



# Blum's Conjecture

## Conjecture (Matt Blum 1999)

*Assume that  $a$  and  $b$  are two positive integers so that  $b \geq 2a$ .  
Then the number of tilings of the hexagonal dungeon  $HD_{a,2a,b}$  is  
 $13^{2a^2} 14^{\lfloor \frac{a^2}{2} \rfloor}$ .*



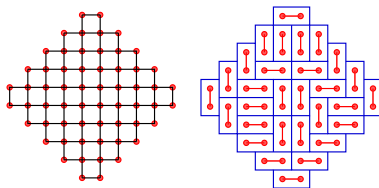
# Perfect matchings and dual graph

- A **perfect matching** of  $G$  is a set of edges such that each vertex is adjacent to exactly one selected edge.
- Denote by  $M(G)$  the number of perfect matchings of the graph  $G$ .

# Perfect matchings and dual graph

- A **perfect matching** of  $G$  is a set of edges such that each vertex is adjacent to exactly one selected edge.
- Denote by  $M(G)$  the number of perfect matchings of the graph  $G$ .
- The **dual graph**  $G$  of a region  $R$  is the graph whose vertices are cells in  $R$  and whose edges connect two adjacent cells.

# Bijection between tilings and perfect matchings



We have a bijection between the tilings of  $R$  and the perfect matchings of  $G$

# Graph Splitting Lemma

## Lemma

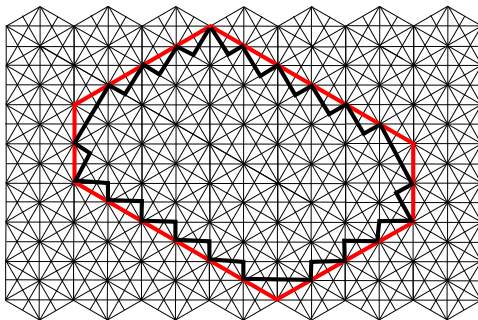
Let  $G = (V_1, V_2, E)$  be a bipartite graph. Color the vertices in  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  by black and white respectively. Assume that the induced subgraph  $H$  of  $G$  satisfies following two conditions:

- ① *Separating Condition: There are no edges of  $G$  connecting black vertex in  $H$  and white vertex in  $G - H$ .*
- ② *Balancing Condition: The numbers of black and white vertices in  $H$  are equal.*

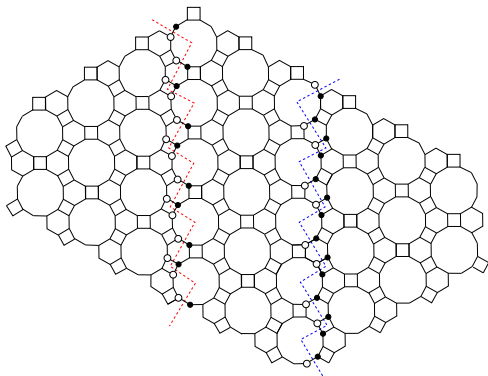
Then

$$M(G) = M(H) M(G - H) \quad (1)$$

# Blum's Conjecture: Refinement

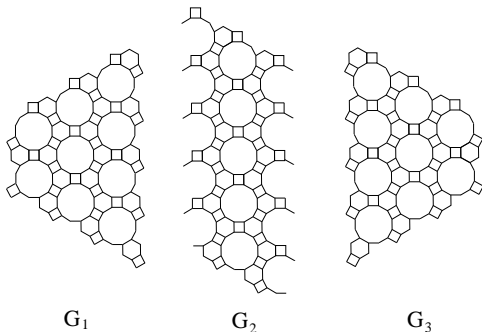


# Blum's Conjecture: Refinement



# Blum's Conjecture: Refinement

$$M(G) = M(G_1)M(G_2)M(G_3) = M(G_1)^2 = 13^{2a^2} 14^{\lfloor \frac{a^2}{2} \rfloor}.$$



# Blum's Conjecture: Refinement

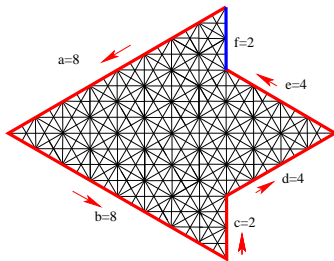
Conjecture (Blum's conjecture: Refined)

$$M(G_1) = 13^{a^2} 14^{\lfloor \frac{a^2}{4} \rfloor}$$



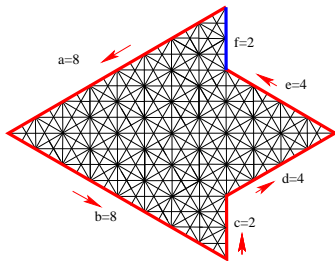
# Main result: Definition of regions

- $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  are nonnegative integers.  $\mathcal{C}(a, b, c)$  is a six-sided lattice contour



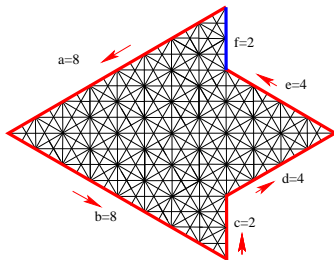
# Main result: Definition of regions

- $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  are nonnegative integers.  $\mathcal{C}(a, b, c)$  is a six-sided lattice contour
- $a$  units southwest,  $b$  units southeast,  $c$  units north,  $d$  units northeast, and  $e$  units northwest.

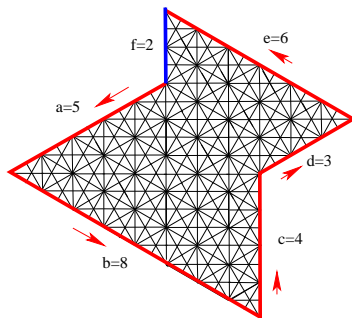


# Main result: Definition of regions

- $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  are nonnegative integers.  $\mathcal{C}(a, b, c)$  is a six-sided lattice contour
- $a$  units southwest,  $b$  units southeast,  $c$  units north,  $d$  units northeast, and  $e$  units northwest.
- Choose  $e$  so that the ending point is on the same vertical lattice line as the starting point.  $a + e = b + d$ .

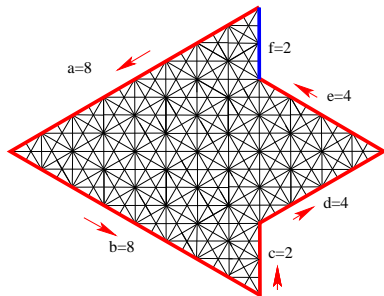


# Main result: Definition of regions



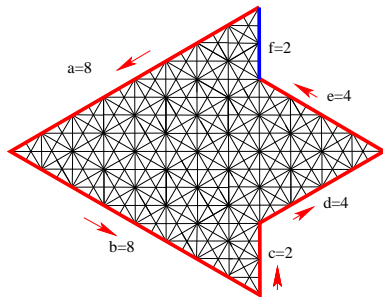
# Main result: Definition of regions

- If  $e$  above the initial point, then it requires  $a + b = 2c + d + e + 2f$  to close the contour.



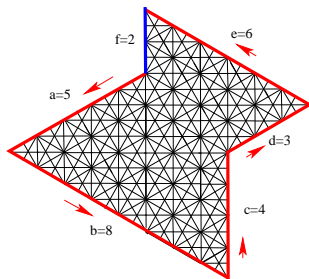
# Main result: Definition of regions

- If  $e$  above the initial point, then it requires  $a + b = 2c + d + e + 2f$  to close the contour.
- Since  $e = b + d - a$ , we get  $f = a - c - d$ .



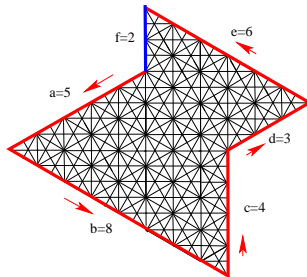
# Main result: Definition of regions

- If  $e$  below the initial point, then it requires  $a + b = 2c + d + e - 2f$  to close the contour.



# Main result: Definition of regions

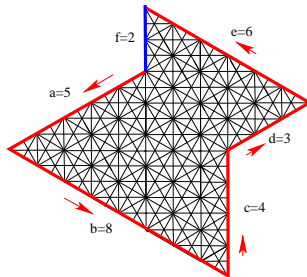
- If  $e$  below the initial point, then it requires  $a + b = 2c + d + e - 2f$  to close the contour.
- Since  $e = b + d - a$ , we get  $f = -a + c + d$ . So  $f = |a - c - d|$ .





# Main result: Definition of regions

- If  $e$  below the initial point, then it requires  $a + b = 2c + d + e - 2f$  to close the contour.
- Since  $e = b + d - a$ , we get  $f = -a + c + d$ . So  $f = |a - c - d|$ .
- Moreover,  $d = 2b - a - 2c$ .



# Main result: Definition of regions

- $d = 2b - a - 2c.$

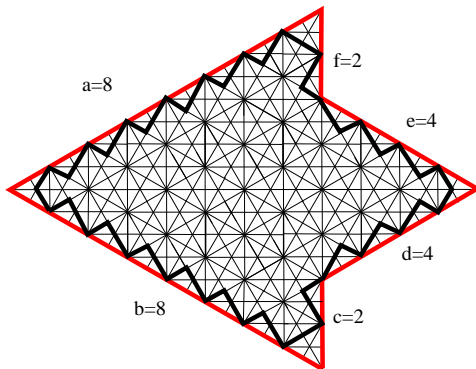
# Main result: Definition of regions

- $d = 2b - a - 2c.$
- $e = b + d - a = 3b - 2a - 2c$

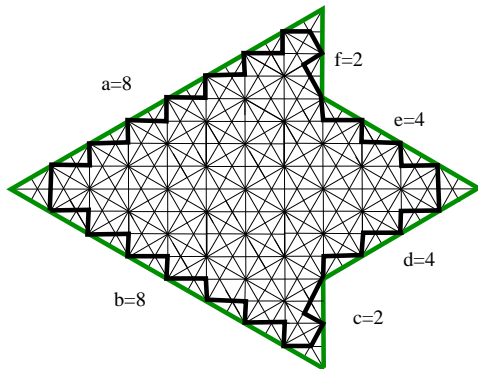
# Main result: Definition of regions

- $d = 2b - a - 2c.$
- $e = b + d - a = 3b - 2a - 2c$
- $f = |a - c - d| = |2b - 2b + c|$

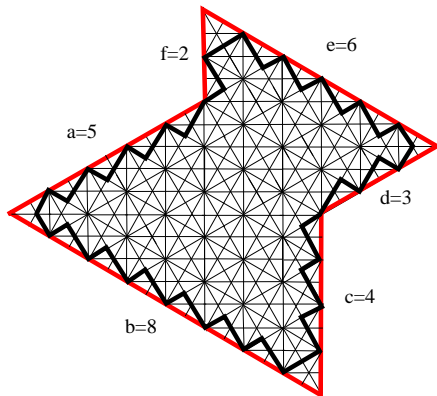
Main result: Definition of region  $D_{a,b,c}$  when  $a > c + d$ .



Main result: Definition of region  $E_{a,b,c}$  when  $a > c + d$ .

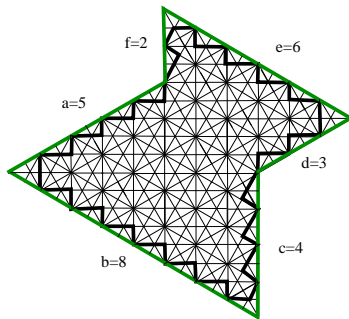


Main result: Definition of region  $D_{a,b,c}$  when  $a \leq c + d$ .



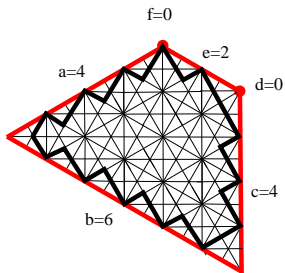
# Main result: Definition of region $E_{a,b,c}$ when $a \leq c + d$ .

The balancing condition between the cells classes of the region  $D_{a,b,c}$  and  $E_{a,b,c}$  requires  $d = 2b - a - 2c$ .

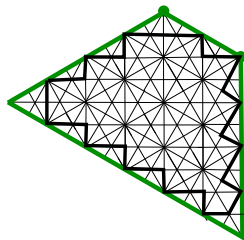




# Main result: Definition of regions when $d = f = 0$ .



(a)



(b)

# Main result: Definition of function $\phi(a, b, c)$

Define two functions  $\phi$  by setting

$$\phi(a, b, c) := h(a, b, c) 13^{g(a,b,c)} 14^{f(a,b,c)} \quad (2)$$

where

$$g(a, b, c) = (b - a)(b - c) + \left\lfloor \frac{(a - c)^2}{3} \right\rfloor, \quad (3)$$

$$f(a, b, c) = \left\lfloor \frac{(a - b + c)^2}{4} \right\rfloor, \quad (4)$$

$$h(a, b, c) = \begin{cases} 2 & \text{if } 3b + a - c \equiv 4 \pmod{6} \\ 3 & \text{if } 3b + a - c \equiv 1 \pmod{6} \\ 5 & \text{if } 3b + a - c \equiv 5 \pmod{6} \\ 1 & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases} \quad (5)$$

# Main result: Definition of function $\psi(a, b, c)$

Define

$$\psi(a, b, c) := p(a, b, c)13^{g(a,b,c)}14^{f(a,b,c)}, \quad (6)$$

where

$$p(a, b, c) = \begin{cases} 2 & \text{if } 3b + a - c \equiv 2 \pmod{6} \\ 3 & \text{if } 3b + a - c \equiv 5 \pmod{6} \\ 5 & \text{if } 3b + a - c \equiv 1 \pmod{6} \\ 1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

# Main result

## Theorem

*Assume that  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  are three nonnegative integers satisfying  $b \geq 2$ ,  $d = 2b - a - 2c \geq 0$  and  $e = 3b - 2a - 2c \geq 0$ . Then*

$$M(D_{a,b,c}) = \phi(a, b, c); \quad M(E_{a,b,c}) = \psi(a, b, c) \quad (8)$$

# Corollary

## Corollary

Assume that  $a$  and  $b$  are two positive integers so that  $b \geq 2a$ . Then the number of tilings of the hexagonal dungeon  $HD_{a,2a,b}$  is  $13^{2a^2} 14^{\lfloor \frac{a^2}{2} \rfloor}$ .

## Proof.

As the refinement, we need to show  $M(G_1) = 13^{a^2} 14^{\lfloor \frac{a^2}{4} \rfloor}$ . However,  $G_1$  is isomorphic to the dual graph of  $D_{2a,3a,2a}$ . Thus,  $M(G_1) = \phi(2a, 3a, 2a) = 13^{a^2} 14^{\lfloor \frac{a^2}{4} \rfloor}$ , since  $h(2a, 3a, 2a) = 1$ ,  $g(2a, 3a, 2a) = a^2$ ,  $f(2a, 3a, 2a) = \lfloor \frac{a^2}{4} \rfloor$ . □

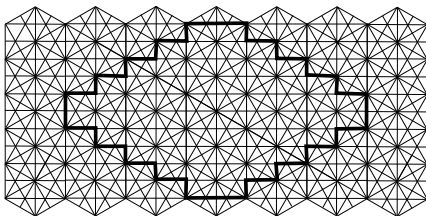
# Corollary

## Corollary (Ciucu 2001)

*The number of tilings of an Aztec Dungeon is always a power of 13 or twice a power of 13.*

## Proof.

Aztec Dungeon of order  $n$  is  $E_{n+1,n+1,0}$ . □



# Recurrence 1

## Lemma

*Let  $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  be nonnegative integers so that  $b \geq 5$  and  $c \geq 2$ . Let  $d = 2b - a - 2c$ , and assume in addition that  $a \geq c + d + 1$ . Then*

$$M(D_{a,b,c}) M(D_{a-3,b-3,c-2}) = M(D_{a-2,b-1,c}) M(D_{a-1,b-2,c-2}) \\ + M(D_{a-1,b-1,c-1}) M(D_{a-2,b-2,c-1}),$$

$$M(E_{a,b,c}) M(E_{a-3,b-3,c-2}) = M(E_{a-2,b-1,c}) M(E_{a-1,b-2,c-2}) \\ + M(E_{a-1,b-1,c-1}) M(E_{a-2,b-2,c-1}).$$

## Kuo's Graphical Condensation

Combinatorial interpretation of *Desnanot-Jacobi identity* in determinant of matrices.

$$\det(M) \det(M_{1,k}^{1,k}) = \det(M_1^1) \det(M_k^k) - \det(M_1^k) \det(M_k^1).$$

### Theorem (Kuo 2004)

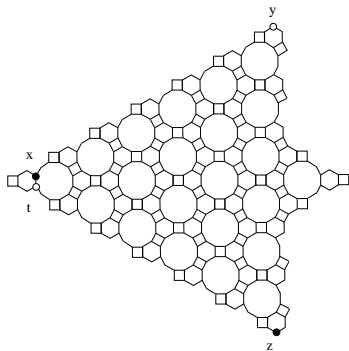
*Let  $G$  be a planar bipartite graph, and let  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  be the two vertex classes. Assume that  $|V_1| = |V_2|$ . Let  $x, y, z$  and  $t$  be four vertices appear in a cyclic order on a face of  $G$ . Assume in addition that  $x, z \in V_1$  and  $y, t \in V_2$ . Then*

$$\begin{aligned} M(G) M(G - \{x, y, z, t\}) &= M(G - \{x, y\}) M(G - \{z, t\}) \\ &\quad + M(G - \{t, x\}) M(G - \{y, z\}). \end{aligned}$$



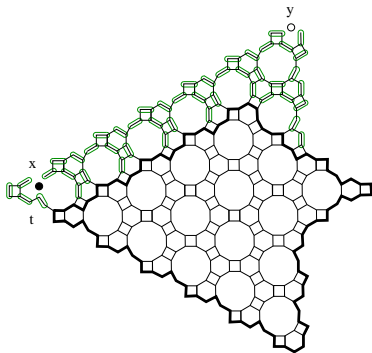
# Proof of Recurrence 1

Let  $G$  is the dual graph of  $D_{a,b,c}$ , apply Kuo's condensation to  $G$  with the four vertices  $x, y, z, t$ .



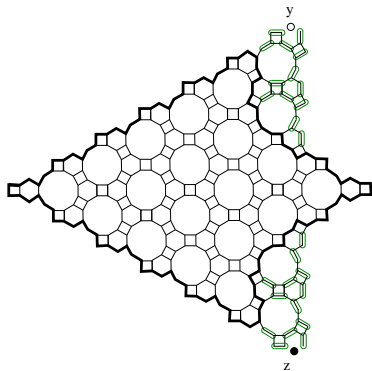
# Proof of Recurrence 1

$$M(G - \{x, y\}) = M(D_{a-2, b-1, c}). \quad (9)$$



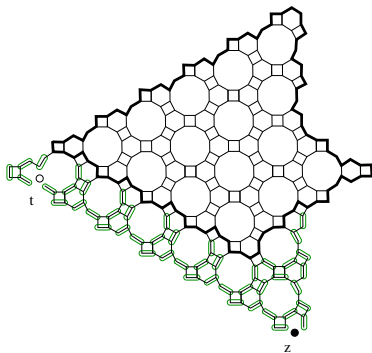
# Proof of Recurrence 1

$$M(G - \{y, z\}) = M(D_{a-1, b-1, c-1}) \quad (10)$$



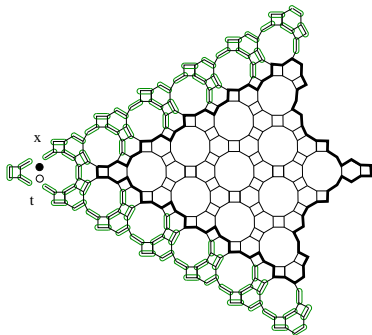
# Proof of Recurrence 1

$$M(G - \{z, t\}) = M(D_{a-1,b-2,c-2}) \quad (11)$$



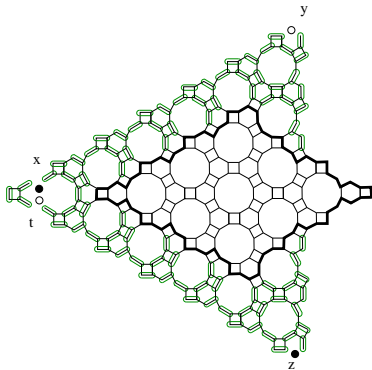
# Proof of Recurrence 1

$$M(G - \{t, x\}) = M(D_{a-2,b-2,c-1}) \quad (12)$$



# Proof of Recurrence 1

$$M(G - \{x, y, z, t\}) = M(D_{a-3, b-3, c-2}) \quad (13)$$



# Recurrence 2

## Lemma

Let  $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  be nonnegative integers satisfying  $a \geq 2$ ,  $b \geq 4$ ,  $2b - a - 2c \geq 2$ , and  $3b - 2a - 2c \geq 2$ .

(a). If  $c \geq 1$ , then

$$M(D_{a,b,c}) M(D_{a-2,b-2,c}) = M(D_{a-1,b-1,c})^2 + M(D_{a,b,c+1}) M(D_{a-2,b-2,c-1})$$

$$M(E_{a,b,c}) M(E_{a-2,b-2,c}) = M(E_{a-1,b-1,c})^2 + M(E_{a,b,c+1}) M(E_{a-2,b-2,c-1}).$$

## Recurrence 3

### Lemma

(b). *If  $c = 0$ , then*

$$M(D_{a,b,0}) M(D_{a-2,b-2,0}) = M(D_{a-1,b-1,0})^2 + M(D_{a,b,1}) M(D_{e,d,1})$$

$$M(E_{a,b,0}) M(E_{a-2,b-2,0}) = M(E_{a-1,b-1,0})^2 + M(E_{a,b,1}) M(E_{e,d,1}),$$

*where, as usual,  $d = 2a - b - 2c$  and  $e = 3a - 2b - 2c$ .*



# Recurrence 4

## Lemma

Assume that  $a, b, c$  are three nonnegative integers satisfying  $a \geq 2$ ,  $b \geq 5$  and  $c \geq 2$ . As usual, let  $d = 2b - a - 2c$ . Assume in addition that  $a \leq c + d$ .

(a). If  $d \geq 1$ , then

$$M(D_{a,b,c}) M(D_{a-2,b-3,c-2}) = M(D_{a-1,b-1,c}) M(D_{a-1,b-2,c-2}) \\ + M(D_{a-2,b-2,c-1}) M(D_{a,b-1,c-1})$$

$$M(E_{a,b,c}) M(E_{a-2,b-3,c-2}) = M(E_{a-1,b-1,c}) M(E_{a-1,b-2,c-2}) \\ + M(E_{a-2,b-2,c-1}) M(E_{a,b-1,c-1}).$$

## Recurrence 5

### Lemma

(b). *If  $d = 0$ , then*

$$T(D_{a,b,c}) M(D_{a-2,b-3,c-2}) = M(E_{c,b-1,a-1}) M(D_{a-1,b-2,c-2}) \\ + M(D_{a-2,b-2,c-1}) M(D_{a,b-1,c-1})$$

$$M(E_{a,b,c}) M(E_{a-2,b-3,c-2}) = M(D_{c,b-1,a-1}) M(E_{a-1,b-2,c-2}) \\ + M(E_{a-2,b-2,c-1}) M(E_{a,b-1,c-1}).$$

# Recurrences for $\phi(a, b, c)$ and $\psi(a, b, c)$

## Lemma

*Two functions  $\phi(a, b, c)$  and  $\psi(a, b, c)$  satisfy the Recurrences 1 – 5.*

## Base case

All  $D_{a,b,c}$  and  $E_{a,b,c}$  regions satisfying one of the following conditions:

- (i)  $\mathcal{P}(a, b, c) \leq 14$  (20 regions)
- (ii)  $b \leq 4$  (43 regions)
- (iii)  $c + d \leq 2$  (10 regions)

This cases can be verified by `vaxmacs` written by David Wilson.  
This software is available at <http://dbwilson.com/vaxmacs/>.

## Induction step

- 1 Assume that the statement is true for any  $D$ - and  $E$ -type regions with perimeter less than  $k$  ( $k \geq 16$ ).
- 2 We will show the statement is true for any  $D$ - and  $E$ -type region with perimeter  $k$ .
- 3 By the (ii) and (iii) in base cases, we can assume  $b \geq 5$  and  $c + d \geq 3$ .

## Induction step: Case I: $a \leq c + d$ and $a \geq 2$

Case  $c \geq 1$  and  $d \geq 2$ . Use the recurrence 2.

- 1  $\mathcal{P}(a - 2, b - 2, c)$ ,  $\mathcal{P}(a - 1, b - 1, c)$ ,  $\mathcal{P}(a, b, c + 1)$ ,  
 $\mathcal{P}(a - 2, b - 2, c - 1)$  are less than  $\mathcal{P}(a, b, c)$  by 8, 4, 4, and 4  
units, respectively.

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- 1  $\mathcal{P}(a - 2, b - 2, c), \mathcal{P}(a - 1, b - 1, c), \mathcal{P}(a, b, c + 1),$   
 $\mathcal{P}(a - 2, b - 2, c - 1)$  are less than  $\mathcal{P}(a, b, c)$  by 8, 4, 4, and 4  
 units, respectively.
- 2  $M(D_{a-2,b-2,c}) = \phi(a - 2, b - 2, c), M(D_{a-1,b-1,c}) =$   
 $\phi(a - 1, b - 1, c),$
- 3  $M(D_{a,b,c+1}) = \phi(a, b, c + 1), M(D_{a-2,b-2,c-1}) =$   
 $\phi(a - 2, b - 2, c - 1),$

## Induction step: Case I: $a \leq c + d$ and $a \geq 2$

Case  $c \geq 1$  and  $d \geq 2$ . Use the recurrence 2.

- ①  $\mathcal{P}(a - 2, b - 2, c)$ ,  $\mathcal{P}(a - 1, b - 1, c)$ ,  $\mathcal{P}(a, b, c + 1)$ ,  
 $\mathcal{P}(a - 2, b - 2, c - 1)$  are less than  $\mathcal{P}(a, b, c)$  by 8, 4, 4, and 4  
 units, respectively.
- ②  $M(D_{a-2,b-2,c}) = \phi(a - 2, b - 2, c)$ ,  $M(D_{a-1,b-1,c}) =$   
 $\phi(a - 1, b - 1, c)$ ,
- ③  $M(D_{a,b,c+1}) = \phi(a, b, c + 1)$ ,  $M(D_{a-2,b-2,c-1}) =$   
 $\phi(a - 2, b - 2, c - 1)$ ,
- ④  $M(D_{a,b,c})$  and  $\phi(a, b, c)$  satisfy the recurrence 2.





# Induction step: Case I. $a \leq c + d$ and $a \geq 2$

- 1 Case  $a \geq 2$ ,  $c = 0$  and  $d \geq 2$ . Use the recurrence 3.

## Induction step: Case I. $a \leq c + d$ and $a \geq 2$

- 1 Case  $a \geq 2$ ,  $c = 0$  and  $d \geq 2$ . Use the recurrence 3.
- 2 Case  $a \geq 2$ ,  $c \geq 2$  and  $d \geq 1$ . Use the recurrence 4.
- 3 Case  $a \geq 2$ ,  $c \geq 2$  and  $d \geq 1$ . Use the recurrence 5.

## Induction step: Case II. $a \leq c + d$ and $a \leq 1$

$$\textcircled{1} \quad f = c + d - a \geq 3 - 1 = 2$$

## Induction step: Case II. $a \leq c + d$ and $a \leq 1$

- 1  $f = c + d - a \geq 3 - 1 = 2$
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- 4  $E_{f,e,d}$  and  $D_{f,e,d}$  satisfy the condition of Case I.
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# Induction step: Case III. $a \geq c + d + 1$ and $e \geq d$

- 1 If  $c \geq 2$ , use recurrence 1.

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- 1 If  $c \geq 2$ , use recurrence 1.
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## Induction step: Case III. $a \geq c + d + 1$ and $e \geq d$

- 1 If  $c \geq 2$ , use recurrence 1.
- 2 If  $c = 1$ , use recurrence 3.
- 3 If  $c = 0$ , use recurrence 4.

## Induction step: Case IV. $a \geq c + d + 1$ and $d \geq e$

- 1 Reflect the regions  $D_{a,b,c}$  and  $E_{a,b,c}$  over the horizontal line passing the west vertex, we get  $D_{a,b,f}$  and  $E_{a,b,f}$ .

## Induction step: Case IV. $a \geq c + d + 1$ and $d \geq e$

- 1 Reflect the regions  $D_{a,b,c}$  and  $E_{a,b,c}$  over the horizontal line passing the west vertex, we get  $D_{a,b,f}$  and  $E_{a,b,f}$ .
- 2 If  $c \geq 1$ , then  $D_{a,b,f}$  and  $E_{a,b,f}$  satisfy the condition of Case III.

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- ④  $M(D(a, b, c)) = M(D(b, c, f)) = \phi(b, c, f) = \phi(a, b, c)$
- ⑤  $M(E(a, b, c)) = M(E(b, c, f)) = \psi(b, c, f) = \psi(a, b, c)$

# Conclusion

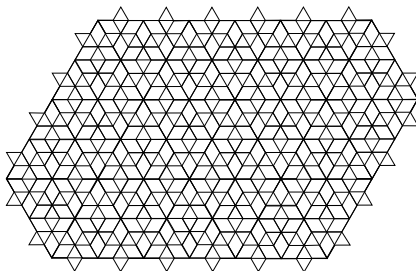
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# Conclusion

- Sometimes, it is easier to prove a generalization of a conjecture than a conjecture itself.
- The graphical condensation method does not work for the family of hexagonal dungeons (the family is too small), and we need to extend to the families of  $D_{a,b,c}$  and  $E_{a,b,c}$  regions

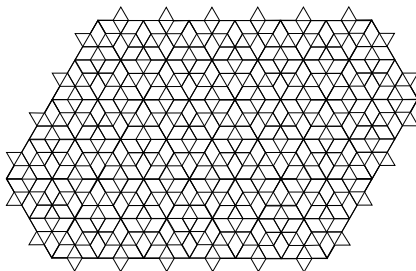
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- Consider the weighted version of the conjecture.
- Prove a conjecture about trimmed Aztec rectangle in the lattice.
- Consider several variants of the hexagonal dungeons.

