

$$\binom{pn}{n} / ((p-1)n+1) \pmod p$$

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Theorem 1 *If p is prime, $\binom{pn}{n} / ((p-1)n+1) \equiv 1 \pmod p$ if $n = (p^k - 1) / (p-1)$ for some k , and $\equiv 0 \pmod p$ otherwise.*

Proof After checking the case $n = 0$, consider the case $n \not\equiv 1 \pmod p$. Then $(p-1)n+1$ is invertible mod p , and it suffices to show that $\binom{pn}{n} \equiv 0 \pmod p$. Recall Kummer's theorem[1] on binomial coefficients: the p -adic order of $\binom{m}{n}$ is the number of carries when adding n to $m-n$ in base p . If d_j is the first nonzero base- p digit of n , the corresponding digit of pn is 0, so there is a carry in this position of the addition, and thus $\binom{pn}{n} \equiv 0 \pmod p$.

Now consider $n \equiv 1 \pmod p$. Since $(p-1)n+1 \equiv 0 \pmod p$, we use

$$\binom{pn}{n} / ((p-1)n+1) = \frac{(pn)!}{(p-1)n+1)! n!} = \binom{pn}{n-1} / n \equiv \binom{pn}{n-1} \pmod p$$

Let the base p representation of n be $d_k d_{k-1} \dots d_1 1$, where $d_k \neq 0$. The representation of pn is then $d_k d_{k-1} \dots d_1 10$, and that of $n-1$ is $d_k \dots d_1 0$. By Lucas's theorem[2],

$$\binom{pn}{n-1} \equiv \binom{1}{d_1} \binom{d_1}{d_2} \dots \binom{d_{k-1}}{d_k} \binom{d_k}{0} \pmod p$$

In order for none of these factors to be 0, we need $1 \geq d_1 \geq d_2 \geq \dots \geq d_k \geq 0$, i.e. all $d_j = 1$, which makes $n = \sum_{j=0}^k p^j = (p^{k+1} - 1) / (p-1)$, and in that case all the factors are 1.

References

- [1] Wikipedia, "Kumer's theorem", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kummer's_theorem
- [2] Wikipedia, "Lucas's theorem", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucas's_theorem