

Recurrence relation for the second partial sums of m-th powers

By Luciano Ancora

We build with Excel the table that calculates, for successive additions, the partial sums of powers of natural numbers:

n	n^m	1 th sums	2 th sums
1
2	d
3	...	b	e
4	a	c	f
5
6

We want to obtain the recurrence relation for the second sums, that is, a formula for calculating the n-th term in the column "2th sums" as a function of the previous terms.

The formula that we seek is obtained by analyzing the data in the table as follows:

$$c = a + b$$

$$e = b + d$$

$$f = c + e = a + b + e = a + e - d + e = 2e - d + a$$

Indicating with $a(n)$ the n-th term of the sequence, we therefore have:

$$a(n) = 2 \cdot a(n-1) - a(n-2) + n^m$$

This recurrence relation is valid, by *induction*, for each (n, m) and for each order of the partial sums.

