

ROMANIAN MATHEMATICAL MAGAZINE

If $a, b, c \in [0, 4]$ and $a + b + c = 6$, then prove that :

$$a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca \leq 28$$

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$$\begin{aligned} \text{Case 1 } b \geq 2 \text{ (} b \leq 4 \text{) and then : } & a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca \\ = b(b + a + c) + a^2 + c^2 + ca & \stackrel{a+b+c=6}{=} 6b + (c + a)^2 - ca \stackrel{a+b+c=6}{=} \\ 6b + (6 - b)^2 - ca & \stackrel{-ca \leq 0}{\leq} b^2 - 6b + 36 = 28 + b^2 - 6b + 8 \\ = 28 + (b - 2)(b - 4) & \leq 28 \because 2 \leq b \leq 4 \Rightarrow (b - 2)(b - 4) \leq 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\therefore a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca \leq 28$$

Case 2 $b \leq 2$ ($b \geq 0$) and if $c, a < 2$, then : $c + a < 4 \stackrel{a+b+c=6}{\Rightarrow} 6 - b < 4$
 $\Rightarrow b > 2$, a contradiction \therefore when $b \leq 2$, then, at least one of c, a must be ≥ 2

• When $a \geq 2$ ($a \leq 4$), then : $a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca = a(a + b + c)$
 $+ b^2 + c^2 + bc \stackrel{a+b+c=6}{=} 6a + (b + c)^2 - bc \stackrel{a+b+c=6}{=} 6a + (6 - a)^2 - bc$
 $\stackrel{-bc \leq 0}{\leq} a^2 - 6a + 36 = 28 + a^2 - 6a + 8 = 28 + (a - 2)(a - 4) \leq 28 \because 2 \leq a \leq 4$
 $\Rightarrow (a - 2)(a - 4) \leq 0 \therefore a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca \leq 28$

• When $c \geq 2$ ($c \leq 4$), then : $a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca = c(c + b + a)$
 $+ a^2 + b^2 + ab \stackrel{a+b+c=6}{=} 6c + (a + b)^2 - ab \stackrel{a+b+c=6}{=} 6c + (6 - c)^2 - ab$
 $\stackrel{-ab \leq 0}{\leq} c^2 - 6c + 36 = 28 + c^2 - 6c + 8 = 28 + (c - 2)(c - 4) \leq 28 \because 2 \leq c \leq 4$

$\Rightarrow (c - 2)(c - 4) \leq 0 \therefore a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca \leq 28$ and so,
 combining all scenarios, $a^2 + b^2 + c^2 + ab + bc + ca \leq 28$

$$\forall a, b, c \in [0, 4] \mid a + b + c = 6, " = " \text{ iff } (a = 0, b = 2, c = 4)$$

$$\text{or } (a = 0, b = 4, c = 2) \text{ or } (b = 0, c = 2, a = 4) \text{ or } (b = 0, c = 4, a = 2)$$

$$\text{or } (c = 0, a = 2, b = 4) \text{ or } (c = 0, a = 4, b = 2) \text{ (QED)}$$