

Topic 10:

Indirect (“Contra”) Proofs of $p \rightarrow q$

Indirect Proofs – CSc 144 v1.1 (McCann) – p. 1/12

Review of Direct Proofs

To prove a conjecture of the form $p \rightarrow q$ by using a Direct Proof, we:

Assume that p is true, and

Show that q 's truth logically follows.

Reminders:

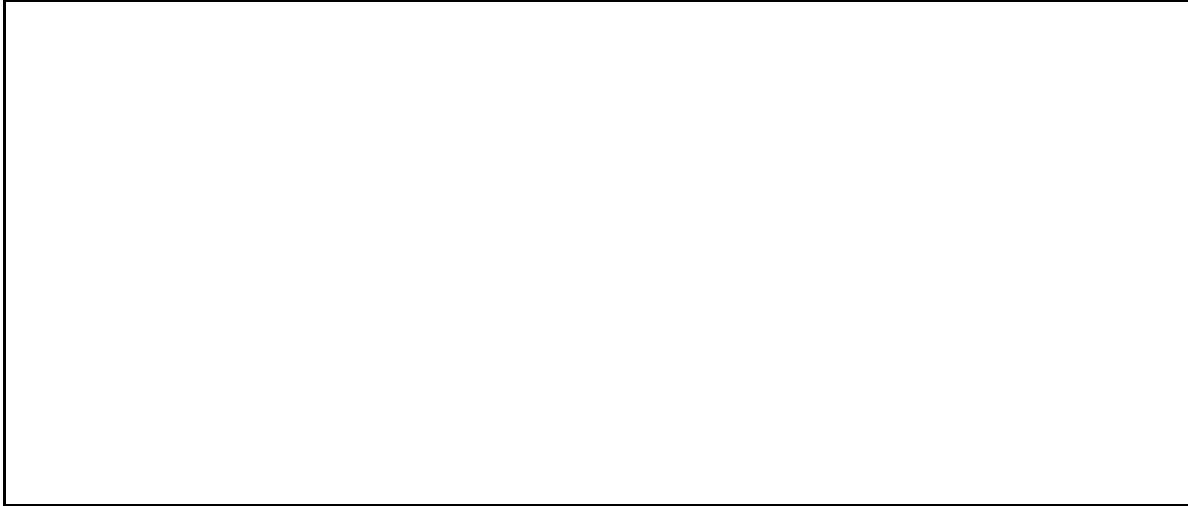
- If p is *actually* true, the proof is a sound argument.
- If p is only *assumed* true, the argument is merely valid.

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“Indirect” Proofs

We can replace $p \rightarrow q$ with logically equivalent forms to create additional “indirect” proof techniques.

Example(s):



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Proof by Contraposition

(a.k.a. Proof of the Contrapositive)

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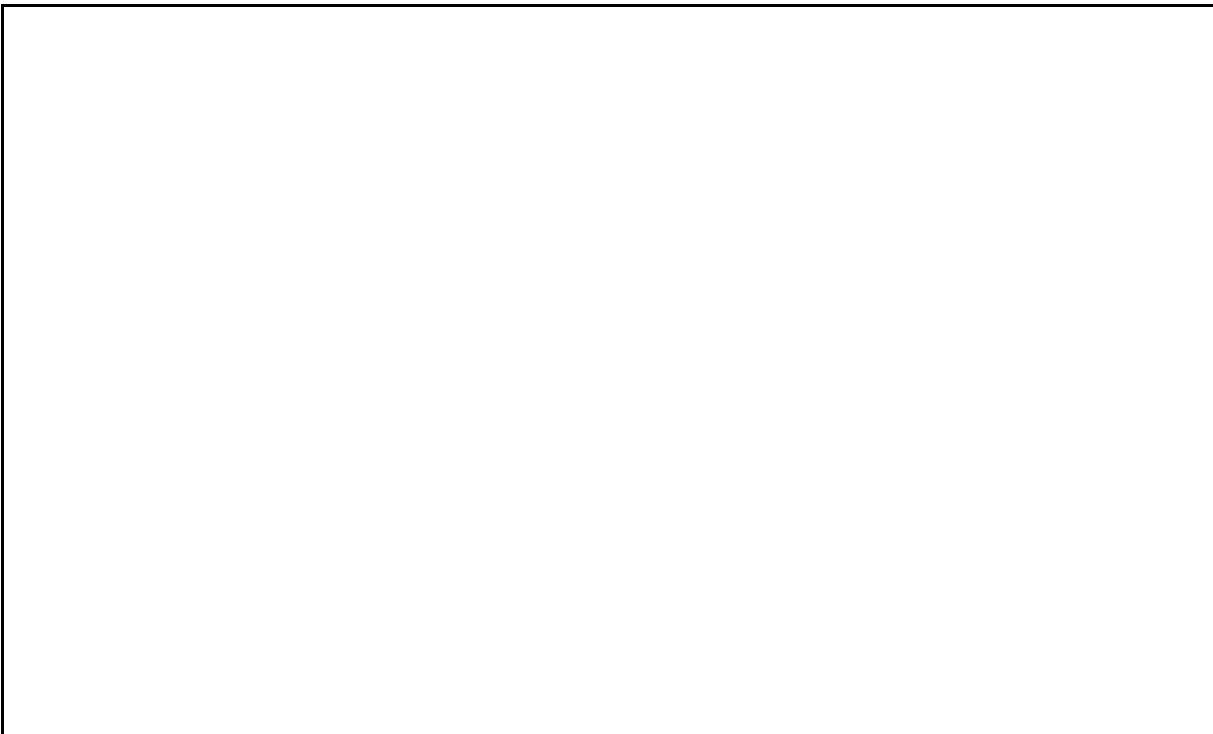
Example #1: Proof by Contraposition

Conjecture: If $ac \leq bc$, then $c \leq 0$, when $a > b$.



Example #2: Proof by Contraposition

Conjecture: If n^2 is even, then n is even.



Proof by Contradiction

(a.k.a. *Reductio ad Absurdum*)

Recall the Law of Implication: $p \rightarrow q \equiv \neg p \vee q$

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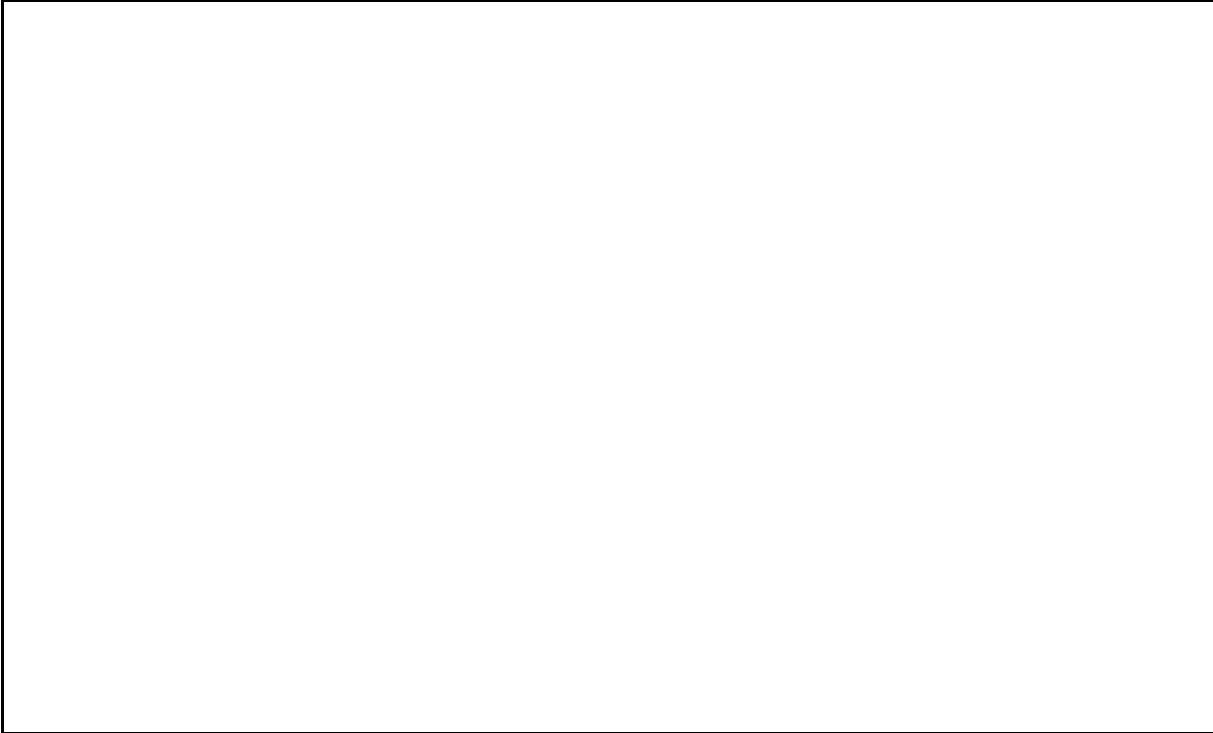
Example #1: Proof by Contradiction

Conjecture: If $3(n - 6)$ is odd, then n is odd.

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Example #2: Proof by Contradiction

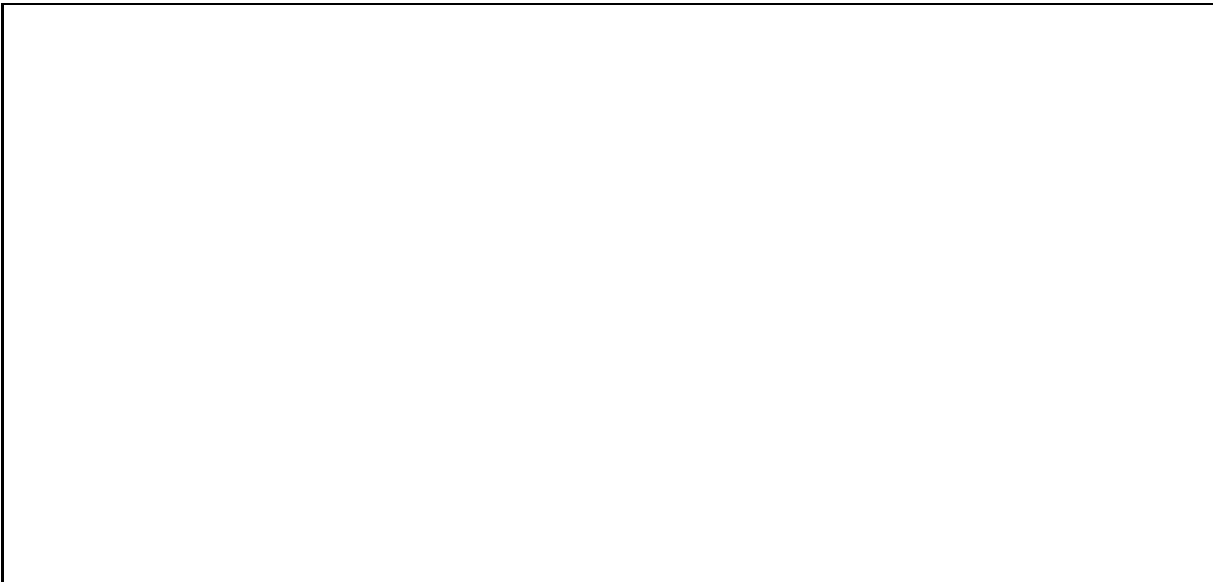
Conjecture: If $a \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}}$ and $b \in \mathbb{Q}$, then $a + b \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}}$.



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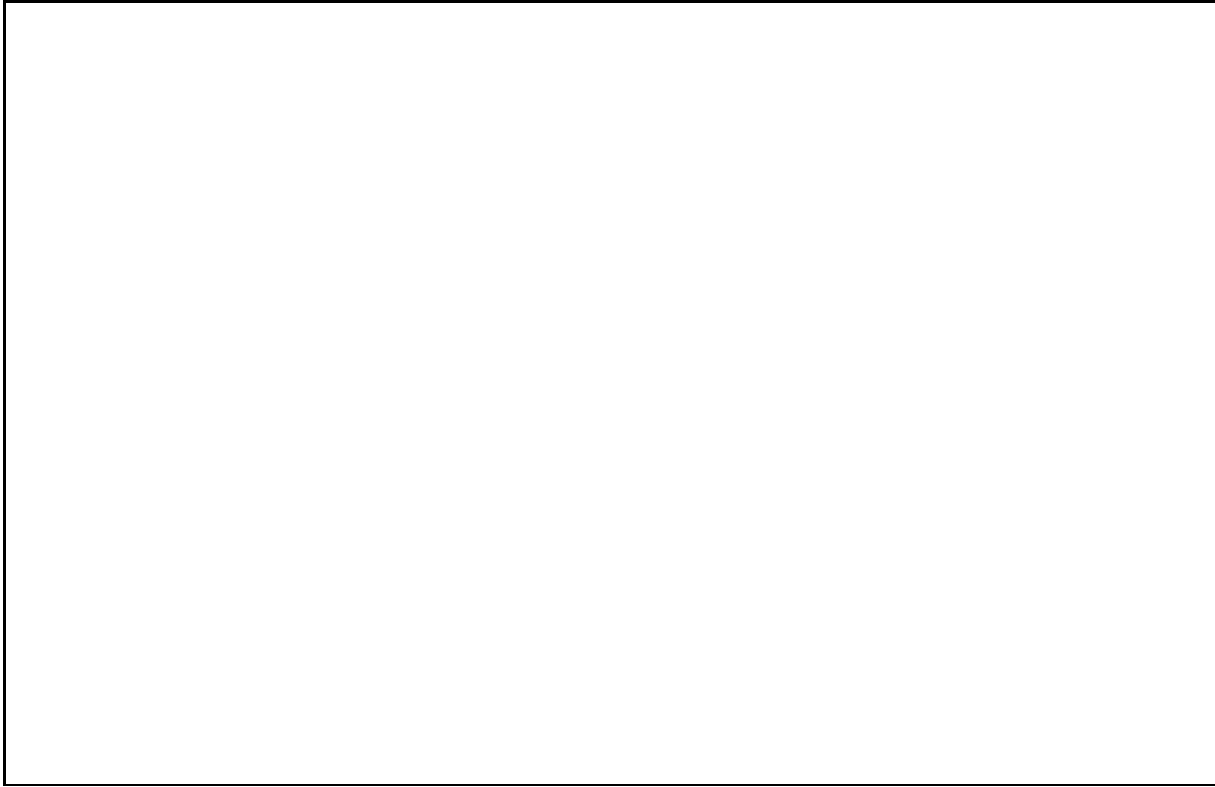
Example #3: Proof by Contradiction (1 / 2)

Conjecture: The sum of the squares of two odd integers is never a perfect square. (Or: If $n = a^2 + b^2$, then n is not a perfect square, where $a, b \in \mathbb{Z}^{odd}$.)



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Example #3: Proof by Contradiction (2 / 2)



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How To Prove Biconditional Expressions

(i.e., Conjectures Of The Form $p \leftrightarrow q$)

Example(s):



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