



Computational Thinking

Exercise 1

1 Towers of Hanoi

The Towers of Hanoi is a mathematical puzzle. Here are the rules, from Wikipedia:

The game consists of three rods and a number of disks of different sizes, which can slide onto any rod. The puzzle starts with the disks in a neat stack in ascending order of size on one rod, the smallest at the top. The objective of the puzzle is to move the entire stack to another rod, obeying the following simple constraints:

- Only one disk can be moved at a time.
- Each move consists of taking the upper disk from one of the stacks and placing it on top of another stack or on an empty rod.
- No larger disk may be placed on top of a smaller disk.

How can you solve this puzzle using recursive functions?

2 Nim Game

Part 1

You are playing with a friend a variant of the Nim game. There are initially 21 sticks on the table. Players take turns. In a turn, they can either remove 1 or 3 sticks from the table. Also, if there is an even number of remaining sticks, they can remove half of them. If a player cannot remove any stick, they lose.

You can assume that both players play optimally. How can you model this as a recursion problem? Do you want to start, or make your friend start?

Part 2

We now play the same game with a new set of rules. There are now 3 stacks of sticks, with respectively 13, 21 and 42 sticks, and any player can only remove sticks from one chosen stack. Also, if at any time all the stacks have the same number of sticks, the last player having made a move loses.

Again, model and solve this problem as a recursion problem.