

## Proof that a relation is an equivalence relation if and only if it is both reflexive and circular

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Like I said in the last post, this post will prove that a binary relation  $R$  on a set  $S$  is an equivalence relation if and only if it is both reflexive and circular. So, assume  $R$  is an equivalence relation. We have to prove that  $R$  is both reflexive and circular. Since reflexivity is one of the conditions of being an equivalence relation, we only really have to prove that  $R$  is circular. Let  $x, y, z$  be elements of  $S$ , and assume that  $xRy \wedge yRz$ . We have to show that  $zRx$ . By transitivity,  $xRz$ , and then by symmetry,  $zRx$ , so we are done. Now, for the other direction, assume  $R$  is both reflexive and circular. We have to prove  $R$  is an equivalence relation. We already have reflexivity, so we have to prove that  $R$  is both symmetric and transitive. I will prove this by first proving symmetry, and then using symmetry to prove transitivity. So, for the proof of symmetry, assume  $xRy$ . We have to show that  $yRx$ . Since  $R$  is reflexive, we know that  $xRx$ . By circularity, we have  $yRx$ , so we are done. Now, for transitivity, assume  $xRy \wedge yRz$ . We have to show that  $xRz$ . By circularity,  $zRx$ , and then by the symmetry that was just proved,  $xRz$ , so we are done. The proof is complete.