

Determine the number of odd binomial coefficients in the expansion of $(x + y)^{1000}$.

Theorem 0.1. *The number of odd entries in row n of Pascal's Triangle is 2 raised to the number of 1's in the binary expansion of n .*

Proof. The binomial theorem says that

$$(a + b)^n = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} a^{n-k} b^k.$$

So with $a = 1$ and $b = x$ we have

$$(1 + x)^n = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} x^k.$$

If we reduce the coefficients mod 2, then it's easy to show by induction on n that for $n \geq 0$,

$$(1 + x)^{2^n} \equiv (1 + x^{2^n}) \pmod{2}.$$

Thus:

$$(1+x)^{10} = (1+x)^8(1+x)^2 \equiv (1+x^8)(1+x^2) \pmod{2} = (1+x^2+x^8+x^{10}) \pmod{2}.$$

Since the coefficients of these polynomials are equal mod 2, using the binomial theorem we see that $\binom{n}{k}$ is odd for $k = 0, 2, 8, 10$, and it is even for all other k . Similarly, the product

$$(1 + x)^{11} \equiv (1 + x^8)(1 + x^2)(1 + x^1) \pmod{2}$$

is a polynomial containing $8 = 2^3$ terms, being the product of 3 factors with 2 choices in each.

In general, if n can be expressed as the sum of p distinct powers of 2, then $\binom{n}{k}$ will be odd for 2^p values of k . But p is just the number of 1's in the binary expansion of n , and $\binom{n}{k}$ are the numbers in the n^{th} row of Pascal's triangle. \square