LaTeX Basics

Dylan Yu

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What is LaTeX?

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LaTeX (pronounced *LAY-tek* or *LAH-tek*) is a tool used to create professional-looking documents. It is based on the WYSIWYM (what you see is what you mean) idea, meaning you only have focus on the contents of your document and the computer will take care of the formatting.

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   - You'll see examples of nicely presented articles later

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Note: a valid reason to learn LaTeX is to make your documents look better, but don't rewrite everything you've ever made in LaTeX; that's pointless. I also don't think you should learn it (or at least anything beyond the basics) if you're solely typing math equations.

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(The difference is that the equation is centered here.)

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There are reasons to use one over the other: for smaller equations, there's no need to use display math mode, but larger equations should be centered.

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- Fractions:

`$\frac{x+y}{2}$`	$\frac{x+y}{2}$

Math Expressions

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Remember to use **curly braces**:

`$2^2021$ v.s. $2^{2021}$`	2^2021 v.s. 2^{2021}

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- Dots:

`$\cdots$, $\ldots$, $\vdots$`	$\cdots, \ldots, \vdots$

- Sums and products:

`$\sum_{i=0}^n a_i + \prod_{j=1}^k b_j$`	$\sum_{i=0}^{n} a_i + \prod_{j=1}^{k} b_j$

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`$\text{It is } 6 \text{ p.m.}$`	It is 6 p.m.

- I won't talk about aligning and numbering equations; look into that by yourself.

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Preamble

There aren't that many necessary parts to a very basic LaTeX document.

```
\documentclass{article}
\begin{document}
The solution to \[\sqrt{x} = 5\] is \[x=25.\]
\end{document}
```

The part before `\begin{document}` is called the preamble. We usually put packages (similar to importing things in Java) there, among other things that we'll discuss later.

Title page

Pretty self explanatory:

```
\documentclass{article}
\title{An example document} % The title
\author{John Doe} % Author's name
\date{\today} % The date; you can choose a specific date
\begin{document}
\maketitle % Creates the title

The solution to \[\sqrt{x} = 5\] is \[x=25.\]
\end{document}
```

Table of Contents

Bold, italics, and underline

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`\textbf{Bold}`	**Bold**

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`\textit{Italics}`	*Italics*

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- Underline:

`\underline{Underline}`	Underline

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- Underline:

`\underline{Underline}`	<u>Underline</u>

For emphasis, it is not recommended you use the above; instead, redefine the command `\emph` (which is usually italics) to your liking. I usually use `\vocab` for highlights, but `\alert` is also a good name.

Comments

You might've noticed the percent symbol before; these are called comments. Some languages (like Java) use // for comments. LaTeX uses %.

```
% The solution to
    \[\sqrt{x} = 5\] is
    \[x=25.\]
```

There's no display because it's a comment.

Images

Inserting images is easy:

```
\includegraphics{images/latex-thonk.png}
```

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Centering them, adjusting them, etc. are a bit harder, but still manageable:

Figure: Thonk

Lists

With numbers:

1. One

Without numbers:

- Dot

Sections

In math articles, we usually like to outline our topic. They work as "headers."

```
\section{A section}
Divide your topic into smaller parts.
\subsection{A subsection}
Even smaller.
\subsubsection{A subsubsection}
\textit{Even smaller.}
\paragraph{A paragraph} Gives a title to a paragraph.
```

You can use `\tableofcontents` to display the table of contents (duh).

Tables and figures

Take a look at the example below; don't worry too much about the [H] for now.

```
\begin{figure}[H]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{c|c}
\textbf{Kanye} &
    \textbf{Drake}\\
\hline
MBDTF & IYRTITL\\
CD & TML
\end{tabular}
\caption{A table inside
    a figure
    environment.}
\end{figure}
```

Kanye	**Drake**
MBDTF	IYRTITL
CD	TML

Figure: A table inside a figure environment.

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\newcommand

Defining new commands with \newcommand is like creating a method in Java. You give it some name, and insert a few parameters, and output something.

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\newcommand{\introduce}[1]{Hi my name is #1.}
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The first part, \introduce, is the name of the command. The second part, [1] is the number of parameters. Unlike with many other languages, there's no need for data types. The third part is what the command should output, where the first parameter (if there is one) is denoted with #1, the second (if there is one) is denoted with #2, etc.

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`\introduce{Dylan}`	Hi my name is Dylan.

\newenvironment

We use \newenvironment when we have something larger (e.g. with paragraphs) as a parameter.

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\newenvironment{boldquote}{My quote is:\newline}
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`\begin{boldquote}`
`I am cool.`
`\end{boldquote}`
	My quote is:
	I am cool.
	— *Me.*

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Asymptote

As you'd expect, code-generated figures are generated by. . . code.

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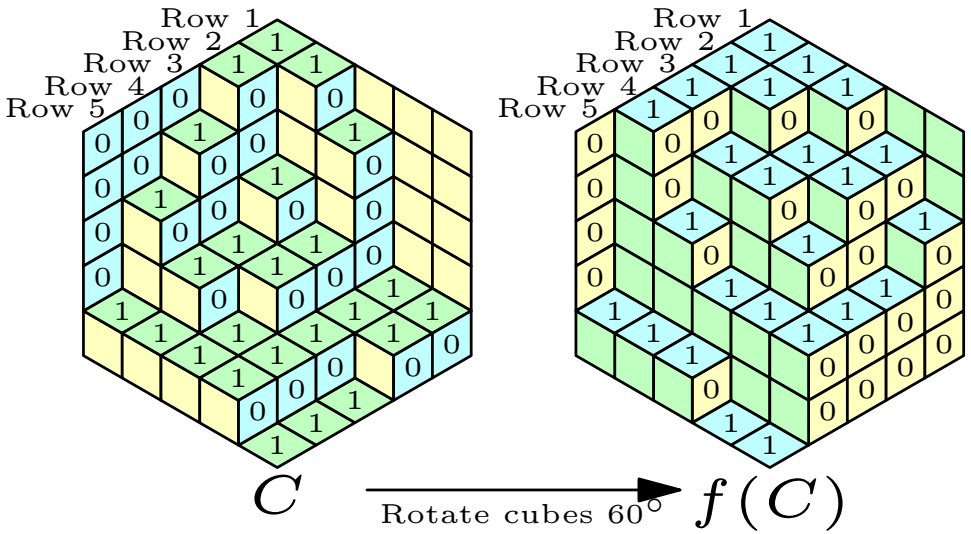

Figure: USA TST 2013/3

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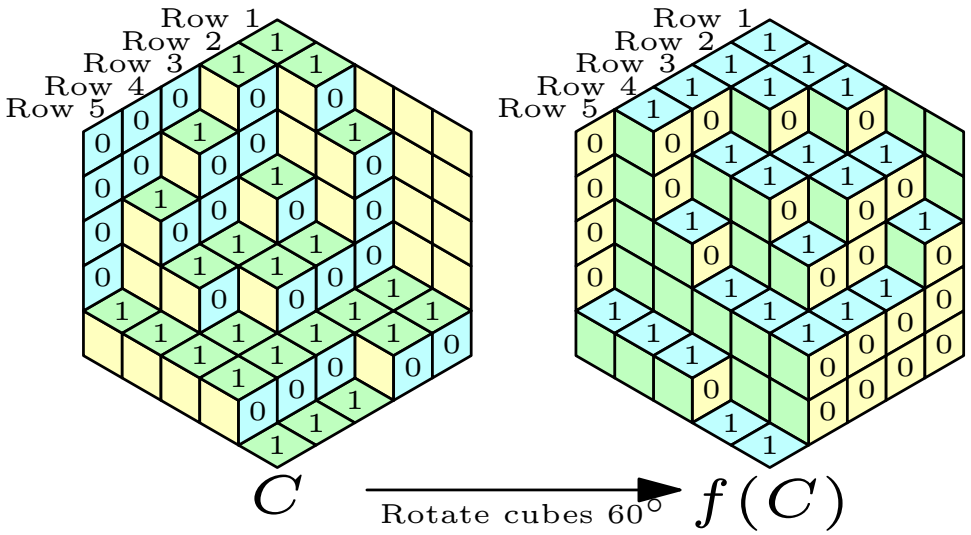

Figure: USA TST 2013/3

A lot of people who do olympiad math use Asymptote (because it is compatible with AoPS).

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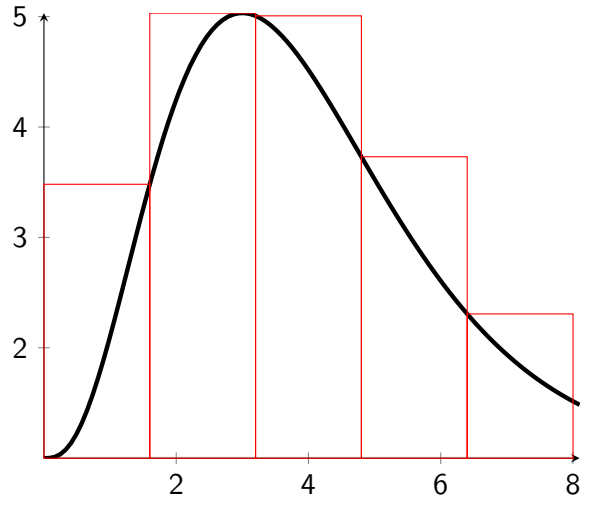

Figure: The right Riemann sum of $3e^{-x}x^3 + 1$.

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Handouts

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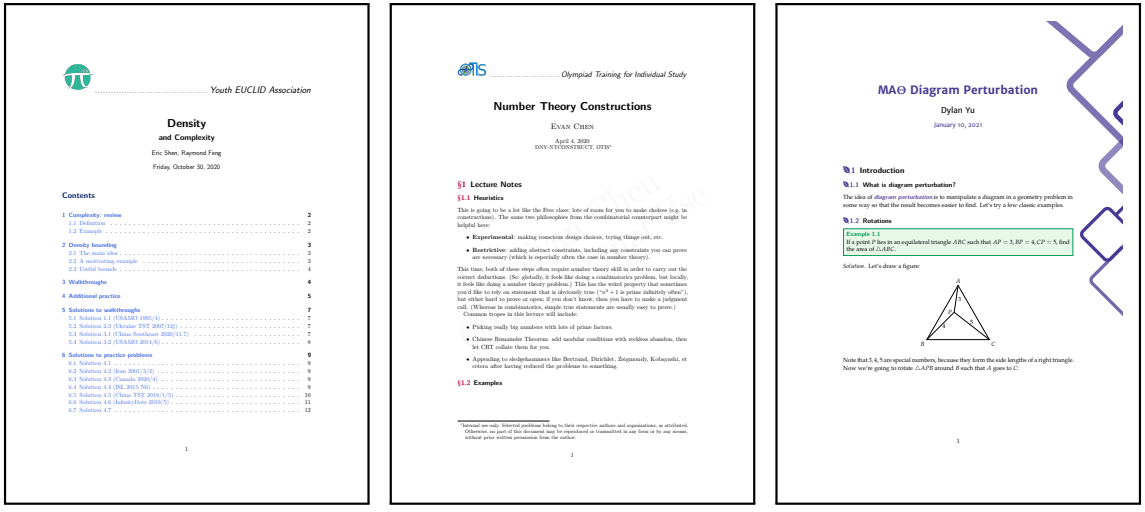

Figure: The first handout is by Raymond Feng and Eric Shen; the second handout is by Evan Chen; the third is by me.

Style files

There are many pretty style files, which are basically just custom-made designs that act like a "template" for your article. Some nice ones are evan.sty by Evan Chen (he doesn't have an example document so this is just one of his handouts),

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Oh and for fun take a look at my dark mode.

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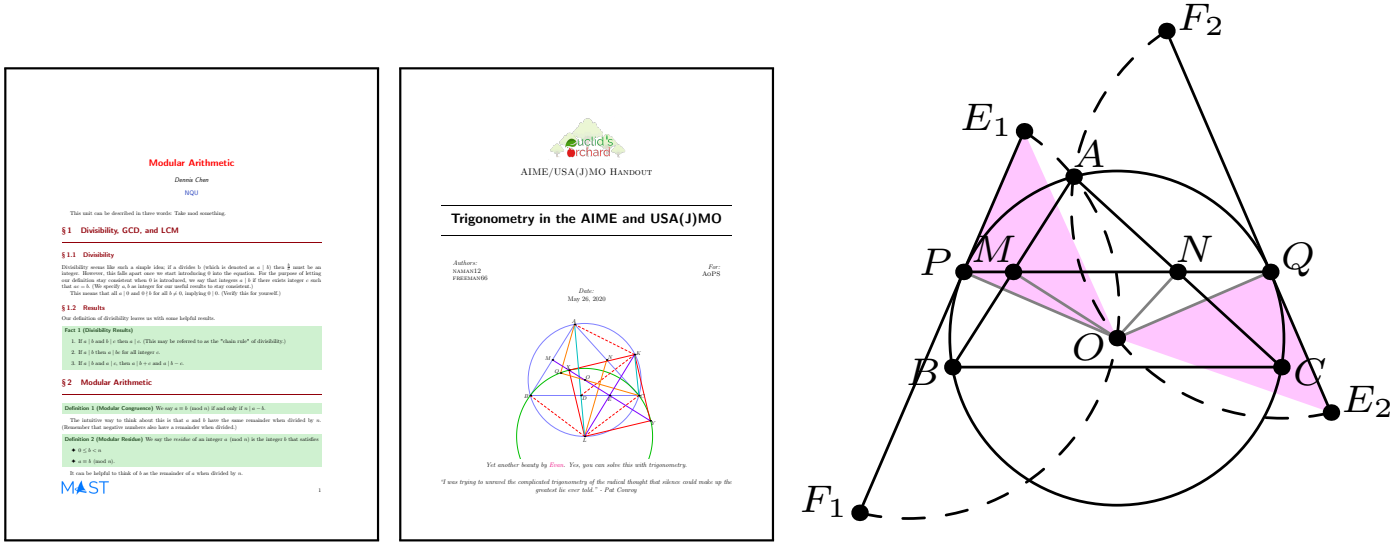

Figure: From left to right: a handout by Dennis Chen, a handout by Amol Rama and I, and a secret spiral similarity in USA TSTST 2018/5.

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As you can tell, Evan Chen loves LaTeX.

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Google is your best friend when it comes to learning LaTeX. If you are confused by something, Google it, and if you can't figure out what exactly you're trying to ask, join a LaTeX Discord server/TeX StackExchange (I prefer the former but the latter will yield better results) and ask the question there.

Further Reading

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4. Notes on Programming in TeX; I haven't read through the whole thing, but it should be pretty comprehensive for your everyday needs

Further Reading

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- optional parameters for `\newcommand` and `\newenvironment`

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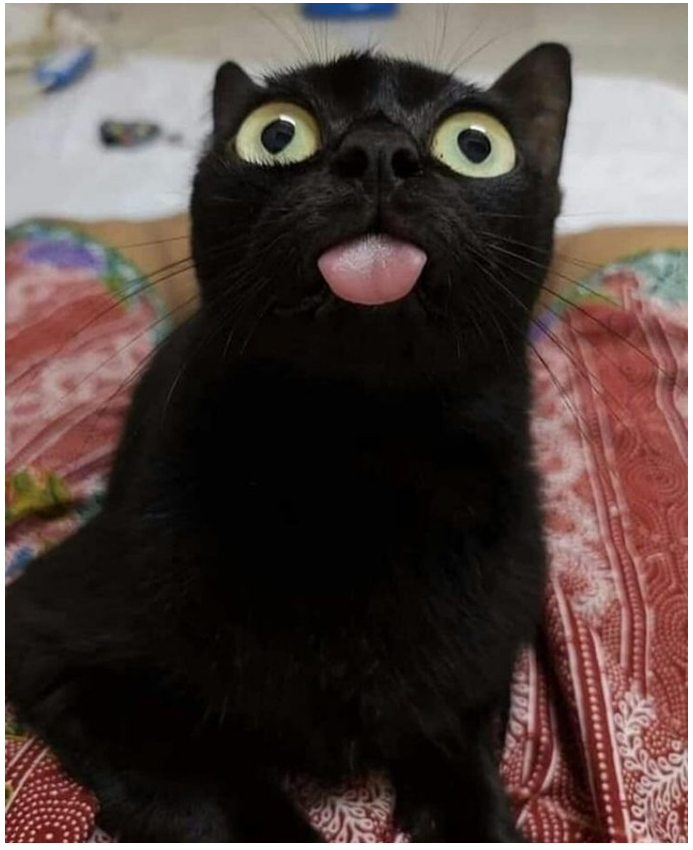
- converting to a local setup (download TeX Live, then some source code editor; please read these FAQ's on Evan's website)

Cat pic

idk



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