

There is a handy matrix formula for adding up powers of successive integers. For example

$$1^4 + 2^4 + \dots + n^4 = \begin{bmatrix} \binom{n}{1} & \binom{n}{2} & \binom{n}{3} & \binom{n}{4} & \binom{n}{5} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & -2 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 3 & -3 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & -4 & 6 & -4 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1^4 \\ 2^4 \\ 3^4 \\ 4^4 \\ 5^4 \end{bmatrix}$$

Do you see Pascal's triangle in the matrix above? There are different ways of putting Pascal's Triangle into a matrix, and curious connections between them. For example,

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & -2 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 3 & -3 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & -4 & 6 & -4 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 2 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 3 & 3 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 4 & 6 & 4 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^{-1} \quad \text{and} \quad \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 2 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 3 & 3 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 4 & 6 & 4 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 3 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\ 1 & 3 & 6 & 10 & 15 \\ 1 & 4 & 10 & 20 & 35 \\ 1 & 5 & 15 & 35 & 70 \end{bmatrix}$$

Fibonacci Numbers $1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, \dots, F_n, \dots$ are given by the equation

$$F_n = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}^n \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

This leads to the remarkable equation

$$F_n = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \left[\left(\frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2} \right)^n - \left(\frac{1 - \sqrt{5}}{2} \right)^n \right].$$

Matrices provide a unified method for solving all quadratic, cubic, and quartic polynomial equations. For quadratics this rederives the quadratic formula. For cubics it leads to the *cubic* formula for a root of $x^3 + ax + b = 0$:

$$\sqrt[3]{\frac{-b}{2} + \sqrt{\frac{b^2}{4} + \frac{a^3}{27}}} + \sqrt[3]{\frac{-b}{2} - \sqrt{\frac{b^2}{4} + \frac{a^3}{27}}}$$