

YOU & MATHS Two different numbers are chosen at random from the set $\{0, 1, 2, 3, 4\}$. What is the probability that their sum is greater than their product?

(CAN Canadian Open Mathematics Challenge, COMC, 2003)

The sample space S is given by all the couples of numbers that can be chosen from the set $\{0, 1, 2, 3, 4\}$:

$$S = \{(0; 1), (0; 2), (0; 3), (0; 4), (1; 2), (1; 3), (1; 4), (2; 3), (2; 4), (3; 4)\}.$$

From this list, we pick the couples of numbers whose sum is greater than their product, which are:

$$A = \{(0; 1), (0; 2), (0; 3), (0; 4), (1; 2), (1; 3), (1; 4)\}.$$

Thus the probability of choosing at random two numbers whose sum is greater than their product is

$$p = \frac{\text{number of events in } A}{\text{number of events in } S} = \frac{7}{10}.$$