# Set Identities

**TABLE 1 Set Identities.**

| *Identity* | *Name* |
|---|---|
| $A \cap U = A$<br>$A \cup \emptyset = A$ | Identity laws |
| $A \cup U = U$<br>$A \cap \emptyset = \emptyset$ | Domination laws |
| $A \cup A = A$<br>$A \cap A = A$ | Idempotent laws |
| $\overline{(\overline{A})} = A$ | Complementation law |
| $A \cup B = B \cup A$<br>$A \cap B = B \cap A$ | Commutative laws |
| $A \cup (B \cup C) = (A \cup B) \cup C$<br>$A \cap (B \cap C) = (A \cap B) \cap C$ | Associative laws |
| $A \cup (B \cap C) = (A \cup B) \cap (A \cup C)$<br>$A \cap (B \cup C) = (A \cap B) \cup (A \cap C)$ | Distributive laws |
| $\overline{A \cap B} = \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$<br>$\overline{A \cup B} = \overline{A} \cap \overline{B}$ | De Morgan's laws |
| $A \cup (A \cap B) = A$<br>$A \cap (A \cup B) = A$ | Absorption laws |
| $A \cup \overline{A} = U$<br>$A \cap \overline{A} = \emptyset$ | Complement laws |

# Reading a Proof...

Prove that $\overline{A \cap B} = \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$.

*Solution:* We will prove that the two sets $\overline{A \cap B}$ and $\overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$ are equal by showing that each set is a subset of the other.

First, we will show that $\overline{A \cap B} \subseteq \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$. We do this by showing that if $x$ is in $\overline{A \cap B}$, then it must also be in $\overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$. Now suppose that $x \in \overline{A \cap B}$. By the definition of complement, $x \notin A \cap B$. Using the definition of intersection, we see that the proposition $\neg((x \in A) \land (x \in B))$ is true.

By applying De Morgan's law for propositions, we see that $\neg(x \in A)$ or $\neg(x \in B)$. Using the definition of negation of propositions, we have $x \notin A$ or $x \notin B$. Using the definition of the complement of a set, we see that this implies that $x \in \overline{A}$ or $x \in \overline{B}$. Consequently, by the definition of union, we see that $x \in \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$. We have now shown that $\overline{A \cap B} \subseteq \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$.

Next, we will show that $\overline{A} \cup \overline{B} \subseteq \overline{A \cap B}$. We do this by showing that if $x$ is in $\overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$, then it must also be in $\overline{A \cap B}$. Now suppose that $x \in \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$. By the definition of union, we know that $x \in \overline{A}$ or $x \in \overline{B}$. Using the definition of complement, we see that $x \notin A$ or $x \notin B$. Consequently, the proposition $\neg(x \in A) \lor \neg(x \in B)$ is true.

By De Morgan's law for propositions, we conclude that $\neg((x \in A) \land (x \in B))$ is true. By the definition of intersection, it follows that $\neg(x \in A \cap B)$. We now use the definition of complement to conclude that $x \in \overline{A \cap B}$. This shows that $\overline{A} \cup \overline{B} \subseteq \overline{A \cap B}$.

Because we have shown that each set is a subset of the other, the two sets are equal, and the identity is proved. ◀

Use set builder notation and logical equivalences to establish the first De Morgan law $\overline{A \cap B} = \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}$.

*Solution:* We can prove this identity with the following steps.

$$\begin{aligned}
\overline{A \cap B} &= \{x \mid x \notin A \cap B\} && \text{by definition of complement} \\
&= \{x \mid \neg(x \in (A \cap B))\} && \text{by definition of does not belong symbol} \\
&= \{x \mid \neg(x \in A \wedge x \in B)\} && \text{by definition of intersection} \\
&= \{x \mid \neg(x \in A) \vee \neg(x \in B)\} && \text{by the first De Morgan law for logical equivalences} \\
&= \{x \mid x \notin A \vee x \notin B\} && \text{by definition of does not belong symbol} \\
&= \{x \mid x \in \overline{A} \vee x \in \overline{B}\} && \text{by definition of complement} \\
&= \{x \mid x \in \overline{A} \cup \overline{B}\} && \text{by definition of union} \\
&= \overline{A} \cup \overline{B} && \text{by meaning of set builder notation}
\end{aligned}$$

Note that besides the definitions of complement, union, set membership, and set builder notation, this proof uses the second De Morgan law for logical equivalences. ◀