

Theorem: The series of reciprocal primes $\sum_{p \text{ prime}} \frac{1}{p}$ diverges.

Proof (adapted from Wikipedia)

1. Fix n . By unique prime factorization, each integer j from 1 to n has a unique factorization $j = ab^2$ where $a, b \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ and a is square-free, meaning it is the product of distinct primes. (a is the product of the primes that appear with odd powers in the prime factorization of j .)

2. Think of expanding the product

$$\prod_{p \leq n} \left(1 + \frac{1}{p}\right)$$

over all primes less than or equal n . We get all terms $1/a$ where a is square-free with all prime factors less than or equal n .

3. Multiply the product by the sum $\sum_{k=1}^n \frac{1}{k^2}$. By step 1 the terms $1/j$ for all j from 1 to n are included (plus more). Therefore

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \frac{1}{j} \leq \left(\sum_{k=1}^n \frac{1}{k^2}\right) \prod_{p \leq n} \left(1 + \frac{1}{p}\right)$$

4. Recall $\sum_{k=1}^n \frac{1}{k^2} \leq 1 + \int_1^n \frac{1}{t^2} dt \leq 2$ for all n , and $1 + x \leq e^x$ for all x .

Using $x = 1/p$, we get from step 3 that

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \frac{1}{j} \leq 2 \prod_{p \leq n} e^{1/p} = 2 \exp\left(\sum_{p \leq n} \frac{1}{p}\right).$$

It follows

$$\sum_{p \leq n} \frac{1}{p} \geq \log\left(\frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{1}{j}\right) \rightarrow \infty \quad \text{as } n \rightarrow \infty,$$

since the harmonic series diverges.