

Show that, for any fixed integer $n \geq 1$, the sequence

$$2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, 2^{2^{2^2}}, \dots \pmod{n}$$

is eventually constant.

[The tower of exponents is defined by $a_1 = 2$, $a_{i+1} = 2^{a_i}$. Also $a_i \pmod{n}$ means the remainder which results from dividing a_i by n .]

FTSOL, let "a" be the minimum value of "n" such that

$$2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, \dots \pmod{a} \text{ is not constant.}$$

Since $2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, \dots \pmod{a}$ is not constant, let "k" be the period of the sequence.

$$\therefore 1 \leq k \leq a-1 < a \text{ holds.}$$

Because $2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, \dots \pmod{a}$ is periodic, $1, 2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, \dots \pmod{k}$ must also be periodic.

Therefore, $1, 2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, \dots \pmod{k}$ is not constant,

As a result, $2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, \dots \pmod{k}$ is also not constant.

However, $k < a$ and "a" was assumed to be the least value of "n" such that $2, 2^2, 2^{2^2}, \dots \pmod{n}$ is not constant. Thus, contradiction is present.

□