

FIGURE 6 The n -cube Q_n , $n = 1, 2, 3$.

Bipartite Graphs



Sometimes a graph has the property that its vertex set can be divided into two disjoint subsets such that each edge connects a vertex in one of these subsets to a vertex in the other subset. For example, consider the graph representing marriages between men and women in a village, where each person is represented by a vertex and a marriage is represented by an edge. In this graph, each edge connects a vertex in the subset of vertices representing males and a vertex in the subset of vertices representing females. This leads us to Definition 5.

DEFINITION 6

A simple graph G is called *bipartite* if its vertex set V can be partitioned into two disjoint sets V_1 and V_2 such that every edge in the graph connects a vertex in V_1 and a vertex in V_2 (so that no edge in G connects either two vertices in V_1 or two vertices in V_2). When this condition holds, we call the pair (V_1, V_2) a *bipartition* of the vertex set V of G .

In Example 9 we will show that C_6 is bipartite, and in Example 10 we will show that K_3 is not bipartite.

EXAMPLE 9

C_6 is bipartite, as shown in Figure 7, because its vertex set can be partitioned into the two sets $V_1 = \{v_1, v_3, v_5\}$ and $V_2 = \{v_2, v_4, v_6\}$, and every edge of C_6 connects a vertex in V_1 and a vertex in V_2 . ▶

EXAMPLE 10

K_3 is not bipartite. To verify this, note that if we divide the vertex set of K_3 into two disjoint sets, one of the two sets must contain two vertices. If the graph were bipartite, these two vertices could not be connected by an edge, but in K_3 each vertex is connected to every other vertex by an edge. ▶

EXAMPLE 11

Are the graphs G and H displayed in Figure 8 bipartite?

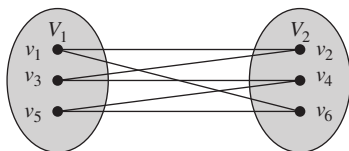


FIGURE 7 Showing That C_6 Is Bipartite.

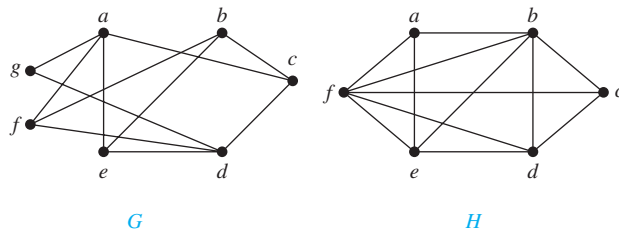


FIGURE 8 The Undirected Graphs G and H .