

Compositions with Descents at Odd Numbered Plus Signs

Ralph P. Grimaldi, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

For a positive integer n , a composition of n is an ordered sum $x_1 + x_2 + \dots + x_m$, where $m \leq n$, and each summand x_i , for $1 \leq i \leq m$, is a positive integer. There are 2^{n-1} compositions of n . Now, we are interested in the compositions of n , where, for $1 \leq i \leq \lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor$, $x_{2i-1} > x_{2i}$. So the consecutive summands at an odd numbered plus sign (as a composition is read from left to right) form a descent. If $n = 9$, for example, then of the 256 compositions of 9, only 34 satisfy this condition — three of them being $6 + 3$, $5 + 2 + 2$, and $4 + 2 + 3$. In general, the number of such compositions of n is given by the n th Fibonacci number.

For a given value of n , we derive and solve recurrence relations to determine the following for these compositions of n : (1) The total number of summands; (2) The numbers of summands in even and odd positions; (3) The sums of all the first, second, third, and fourth summands; (4) The number that have three and four summands; and, (5) The number of times 1 appears as a summand.

Keywords: composition, descent, Fibonacci number