

# Nonstandard Analysis and Combinatorial Number Theory

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**Day Three: Easy Applications to Combinatorics**

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## OUTLINE:

- 1 Nonstandard Versions of Densities
- 2 By-one-get-one-free Thesis
- 3 Plünnecke's Inequalities

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An apparent reason why nonstandard analysis should be a useful tool for other fields of mathematics is that a limit process which involves rank 3 objects in  $\mathcal{V}$  such as the limit of a sequence or a function with real values can be changed to an infinitesimal argument with rank 0 objects such as infinitesimals in  ${}^*\mathcal{V}$ . So, good candidates for the applications of nonstandard analysis should be something involving limit processes. This may be why the density problems receive attention from nonstandard analysts. The densities introduced in this section are Shnirel'man density, lower and upper (asymptotic) density, and lower and upper Banach density.

For two sets  $A, B \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ , let  
 $A + B := \{a + b \mid a \in A \text{ and } b \in B\}$ . If  $A = \{a\}$  we write  $a + B$  instead of  $\{a\} + B$  for simplicity. If  $r, r' \in {}^*\mathbb{R}$ , we write  $r \gtrsim r'$  for  $r > r'$  or  $r \approx r'$  and  $r \lesssim r'$  for  $r < r'$  or  $r \approx r'$ .

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## Definition (3.1)

Let  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ . The *Shnirel'man density*  $\sigma(A)$ , *lower density*  $\underline{d}(A)$ , *upper density*  $\overline{d}(A)$ , *upper Banach density*  $\overline{BD}(A)$ , and *lower Banach density*  $\underline{BD}(A)$  of  $A$  are defined by

$$\textcircled{1} \quad \sigma(A) := \inf_{n \geq 1} \frac{|A \cap (1 + [n])|}{n};$$

$$\textcircled{2} \quad \underline{d}(A) := \liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{|A \cap [n]|}{n};$$

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## Remark (3.2)

- 1 In the definition of  $\sigma(A)$ , we have  $1 + [n] = \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$ . Hence, 0, in or not in  $A$ , does not play any role. If  $\sigma(A) > 0$ , then  $1 \in A$ ;
- 2 If  $\underline{d}(A) = \overline{d}(A)$ , we say that the (asymptotic) density of  $A$  exists and is denoted by  $d(A)$ ;
- 3 If  $\underline{BD}(A) = \overline{BD}(A)$ , we say that the Banach density of  $A$  exists and is denoted by  $BD(A)$ ;
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The following Proposition is direct consequences of the definition.

### Proposition (3.3)

For any  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  we have

$$0 \leq \min\{\sigma(A), \underline{BD}(A)\} \leq \max\{\sigma(A), \underline{BD}(A)\} \\ \leq \underline{d}(A) \leq \overline{d}(A) \leq \overline{BD}(A) \leq 1.$$

### Lemma (3.4)

Let  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ . Then,  $\overline{BD}(A)$  is the largest real  $\alpha$  in  $[0, 1]$  such that there exist  $k_m, n_m \in \mathbb{N}$  with  $n_m \rightarrow \infty$  as  $m \rightarrow \infty$  such that

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- ①  $\underline{d}(A) \geq \alpha$  iff  $\frac{|^*A \cap [N]|}{N} \approx \alpha$  for any hyperfinite integer  $N$ ;
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*Proof.* Part 1. " $\Rightarrow$ ": Let  $N$  be an arbitrary hyperfinite integer. Since for each  $\epsilon > 0$ , there exists an  $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$  such that

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Part 1. “ $\Leftarrow$ ”: Suppose  $\underline{d}(A) < \alpha$ . Let  $\alpha' = (\alpha + \underline{d}(A))/2$ , then there is an increasing sequence  $n_1 < n_2 < \dots$  such that  $\forall i \in \mathbb{N} \left( \frac{|A \cap [n_i]|}{n_i} < \alpha' \right)$ . By the transfer principle the sentence  $\forall i \in {}^*\mathbb{N} \left( \frac{|{}^*A \cap [n_i]|}{n_i} < \alpha' \right)$  is true in  ${}^*\mathcal{V}$ .

Let  $N'$  be a hyperfinite integer and  $N := n_{N'}$ . Then,  $N$  is hyperfinite and  $\frac{|{}^*A \cap [N]|}{N} \lesssim \alpha' < \alpha$ . Hence, the right side of Part 1 is false.

The proof of Part 2 is left to the reader. □

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## Proposition (3.6)

Let  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  and  $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ . Then

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*Proof.* We prove Part 2. The proof of Part 1 is left to the reader.

Part 2. “ $\Rightarrow$ ”: Given  $m \in \mathbb{N}$ , there exist  $k_m \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $n_m > m$  such that

$$\frac{|A \cap (k_m + [n_m])|}{n_m} > \alpha - \frac{1}{m}.$$

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### Theorem (3.7)

If  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  and  $\overline{BD}(A) = \alpha$ , then there is an  $k \in {}^*\mathbb{N}$  and a hyperfinite integer  $N$  such that for  $\mu_\Omega$ -almost all  $n \in k + [N]$  where  $\mu_\Omega$  is the Loeb measure on  $\Omega := k + [N]$ , we have  $\underline{d}({}^*A - n) \cap \mathbb{N} = \alpha$ .

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To present short proofs of Theorem 3.7 and Theorem 3.8 we borrow the following Birkhoff's Ergodic Theorem.

### Theorem (3.9, Birkhoff's Ergodic Theorem)

*Let  $(\Omega, \Sigma, \mu)$  be a probability space and  $T$  be a measure-preserving transformation from  $\Omega$  to  $\Omega$ . For every  $f \in L_1(\Omega)$ , there exists a  $T$ -invariant  $\bar{f} \in L_1(\Omega)$  such that for  $\mu$ -almost all  $x \in \Omega$ ,*

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Since  $\bar{f}(n) > \alpha$  implies  $d((^*A - n) \cap \mathbb{N}) > \alpha$  which implies  $\overline{BD}(A) > \alpha$  by the first part, we have that  $\bar{f}(n) \leq \alpha$  for all  $n \in \Omega$ .

Since

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we conclude that  $\bar{f}(n) = \alpha$  for  $\mu_{\Omega}$ -almost all  $n \in \Omega$ . Hence,  $d((^*A - n) \cap \mathbb{N}) = \alpha$  for  $\mu_{\Omega}$ -almost all  $n \in \Omega$ .  $\square$

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*Proof of Theorem 3.8:* By Theorem 3.7 we can find  $k \in {}^*\mathbb{N}$  such that  $\underline{d}({}^*A - k) \cap \mathbb{N} = \alpha$ .

For each  $m \in \mathbb{N}$  let

$$n_m := \max\{n \in \mathbb{N} \mid |({}^*A - k) \cap [n_m]| \leq \alpha - 1/m\}.$$

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By Proposition 2.8 we can find a hyperfinite integer  $N$  such that  $|({}^*A - k - n_N) \cap [n]|/n > \alpha - 1/N$  for any  $n \in 1 + [N]$ . This implies that  $\sigma({}^*A - k - n_N) \cap \mathbb{N} \geq \alpha$ .

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*Let  $A, B \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  and  $0 \in A \cap B$ . Then*

$$\sigma(A + B) \geq \min\{\sigma(A) + \sigma(B), 1\}.$$

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## Definition (3.12)

Let  $B \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ . For a positive integer  $h \in \mathbb{N}$ , let

$$hB := \{b_1 + b_2 + \cdots + b_h \mid b_i \in B \text{ for } i = 1, 2, \dots, h\}.$$

- (1) The set  $B$  is a *basis* if  $hB = \mathbb{N}$  for some  $h \in \mathbb{N}$ . The least such  $h$  is called the *order* of  $B$ . Clearly, a basis must contain 0;
- (2) Suppose  $B$  is a basis of order  $h$ . For each  $m \geq 1$  let  $h(m) := \min\{h' \in \mathbb{N} \mid m \in h'B\}$ . Then, the number

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- (3) The set  $B$  is an *asymptotic basis* if  $\mathbb{N} \setminus h_a B$  is finite for some  $h_a \in \mathbb{N}$ . The least such  $h_a$  is called the *asymptotic order* of  $B$ ;
- (4) Suppose  $B$  is an asymptotic basis of order  $h_a \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $\mathbb{N} \setminus [n_0] \subseteq h_a B$  for some minimal  $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$ . For each  $m \geq n_0$  let  $h(m) := \min\{h' \in \mathbb{N} \mid m \in h'B\}$ . Then, the number

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$$k_n + ([m_n]) \subseteq h_p((B - k_n) \cap \mathbb{N}) + k_n$$

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- (6) The set  $B$  is a *piecewise asymptotic basis* if there is an  $h_{pa} \in \mathbb{N}$  such that one can find a sequence  $k_n + [m_n]$  with  $m_n \rightarrow \infty$  as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  and a number  $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$  satisfying

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## Definition (3.12)

(7) Suppose that  $B$  is a piecewise asymptotic basis of piecewise asymptotic order  $h_{pa}$ . Let  $\mathcal{I}$  be the sequence  $k_n + [m_n]$  and  $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $k_n + ([m_n] \setminus [n_0]) \subseteq h_{pa}((B - k_n) \cap \mathbb{N}) + k_n$  for every  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ . For each  $m \in k_n + ([m_n] \setminus [n_0])$  let  $h(m) := \min\{h' \in \mathbb{N} \mid m \in h'((B - k_n) \cap \mathbb{N}) + k_n\}$ . Let

$$h_n^* := \sup_{k_n + n_0 \leq m < k_n + m_n} \frac{1}{m_n - n_0} \sum_{i=k_n + n_0}^{k_n + m_n - 1} h(m) \text{ and}$$

$$h_{\mathcal{I}}^* := \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} h_n^*.$$

Then, the number

$$h_{pa}^* := \inf\{h_{\mathcal{I}}^* \mid \text{for all suitable } \mathcal{I}\}$$

is called a *piecewise asymptotic average order* of  $B$ .

### Theorem (3.13, Rohrbach's Theorem)

If  $B$  is an asymptotic basis of asymptotic average order  $h_a^*$ , then for any  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  we have

$$\underline{d}(A + B) \geq \underline{d}(A) + \frac{1}{2h_a^*} \underline{d}(A)(1 - \underline{d}(A)).$$

### Theorem (3.14, Upper Banach Density Version)

If  $B$  is a piecewise asymptotic basis of piecewise asymptotic average order  $h_{pa}^*$ , then for any  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  we have

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Rohrbach's Theorem is a generalization of Erdős' Theorem that if  $B$  is a basis of order  $h$ , then for any  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  it is true that

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Erdős' theorem is for the study of so-called essential component problems. A set  $B$  is called essential component if  $\sigma(A + B) > \sigma(A)$  for any  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  with  $0 < \sigma(A) < 1$ . Hence, a basis must be an essential component.

There is another generalization of Erdős' theorem, which is much more significant than Rohrbach's Theorem does. The following generalization of Erdős' Theorem used a completely different idea from Erdős'.



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## Theorem (3.15, Plünnecke's Theorem)

*Let  $B$  be a basis of order  $h$ . Then, for any  $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  we have*

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It is not too hard to show that

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The key component used in the proof of Plünnecke's Theorem is a version of Plünnecke's Inequality based on graph theoretic argument. The following lemma is a translation of an inequality from the language of graph theory to the language of additive number theory.

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### Lemma (3.16, Plünnecke's Inequality)

Let  $A, B \subseteq \mathbb{N}$  and  $h, n \geq 1$  be such that  $A \cap [n] \neq \emptyset$ . For each  $1 \leq i \leq h$  define

$$D_{A,B,n,i} = \min \left\{ \frac{|(A' + iB) \cap [n]|}{|A' \cap [n]|} : \emptyset \neq A' \subseteq A \cap [n] \right\}.$$

Then,  $D_{A,B,n,1} \geq (D_{A,B,n,2})^{1/2} \geq \cdots \geq (D_{A,B,n,h})^{1/h}$ .

Many interesting subsets of  $\mathbb{N}$  are not bases but asymptotic bases. For example,

$$P := \{p \in \mathbb{N} \mid p \text{ is a prime number}\},$$

$$C_k := \{n^k \mid n \in \mathbb{N}\} \text{ for } k \geq 1,$$

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We will prove Theorem 3.18 and Theorem 3.21. The arguments used in the proof of Theorem 3.15 deal with finite intervals of integers and are purely combinatorial. It becomes messy when the limit processes for  $\underline{d}$  or  $\overline{BD}$  are involved. Using nonstandard analysis, we can transfer the limit processes to combinatorial arguments on intervals of hyperfinite length, which simplify the proofs.



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*Proof of Theorem 3.18:* Let  $A$  and  $B$  be in Theorem 3.18 such that  $\underline{d}(A) = \alpha$  and  $\underline{d}(hB) = 1$ . Without loss of generality, we can assume  $0 < \alpha < 1$ . Let  $N$  be any hyperfinite integer. We want to show that

$$\frac{|(A + B) \cap [M]|}{N} = \frac{|(*A + *B) \cap [M]|}{N} \gtrsim \alpha^{1-\frac{1}{h}},$$

which implies Theorem 3.18 by Proposition 3.5. Choose hyperfinite integers  $N' < K < N$  such that  $(N - K)/N \approx 0$  and  $(K - N')/(N - N') \approx 0$  (for example  $K = N - \lfloor \sqrt{N} \rfloor$  and  $N' = K - \lfloor \sqrt[4]{N} \rfloor$  satisfy the requirements). Let  $C_0 = *A \cap [K]$ . Then  $(|C_0 \cap [M]|)/N \gtrsim \alpha$ . Next we want to trim  $C_0$  so that the density of the trimmed set in each interval  $\{x, x + 1, \dots, N - 1\}$  for every  $x \leq K$  would not be too large.

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which implies Theorem 3.18 by Proposition 3.5. Choose hyperfinite integers  $N' < K < N$  such that  $(N - K)/N \approx 0$  and  $(K - N')/(N - N') \approx 0$  (for example  $K = N - \lfloor \sqrt{N} \rfloor$  and  $N' = K - \lfloor \sqrt[4]{N} \rfloor$  satisfy the requirements). Let  $C_0 = *A \cap [K]$ . Then  $(|C_0 \cap [N]|)/N \gtrsim \alpha$ . Next we want to trim  $C_0$  so that the density of the trimmed set in each interval  $\{x, x + 1, \dots, N - 1\}$  for every  $x \leq K$  would not be too large.

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We define  $C_k$  inductively for  $k = 0, 1, \dots, N' - 1$  so that

$$C_0 \supseteq C_1 \supseteq \dots \supseteq C_{N'-1}, \quad \frac{|C_{N'-1} \cap [N]|}{N} \approx \alpha, \quad \text{and}$$

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for any  $x \leq K$ . Start with  $C_0$ . For each  $k < N' - 1$  let

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It is easy to see that  $C_0, C_1, \dots, C_{N'-1}$  has the desired properties.

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$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{|(A_0 + {}^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A_0 \cap [N]|} \\ & \geq D_{A_0, {}^*B, N, 1} \geq (D_{A_0, {}^*B, N, h})^{1/h} = \left( \frac{|(A' + h^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A' \cap [N]|} \right)^{1/h} \\ & \approx \left( \frac{|(z + h^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A' \cap [N]|} \right)^{1/h} \\ & \approx \left( \frac{|(h^*B) \cap [N - z]| / (N - z)}{|A' \cap \{z, z + 1, \dots, N - 1\}| / (N - z)} \right)^{1/h} \\ & \approx \left( \frac{1}{|A_0 \cap \{z, z + 1, \dots, N - 1\}| / (N - z)} \right)^{1/h} \approx \frac{1}{\alpha^{1/h}}, \end{aligned}$$

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Theorem 3.21 is trivially true if  $\overline{BD}(A) = 0$  or  $\overline{BD}(A) = 1$ . So, we can assume that  $0 < \alpha = \overline{BD}(A) < 1$ .

Let  $n \in {}^*\mathbb{N}$  and  $K$  be a hyperfinite integer such that  $n + [K] \subseteq (h * B)$ .

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Let  $A_0 = (*A \cap (m + [N - n - K])) - m$ . By the choice of  $N$  and  $A_0$  we have

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**Claim:**

$$\frac{|(A' + h * B) \cap [N]|}{|A' \cap [N]|} = D_{A_0, *B, H, h} \gtrsim \frac{1}{\alpha}.$$

*Proof of Claim:* Let  $H = \lfloor K/2 \rfloor$  and let  $I_i = iH + [H]$  for  $i = 0, 1, \dots, \lfloor N/H \rfloor - 1$ , and let

$$I_{\lfloor N/H \rfloor} = \lfloor N/H \rfloor \cdot H + [N - \lfloor N/H \rfloor \cdot H].$$

Denote

$$\mathcal{I} := \{I_i \mid i \in [\lfloor N/H \rfloor + 1] \text{ and } I_i \cap A' \neq \emptyset\}.$$

Then

$$|(A' + h * B) \cap [N]| \geq |\mathcal{I}| \cdot H$$

because  $H \leq K/2$ , every element in  $A'$  is less than or equal to  $N - n - K$ , and  $H + n + I_i \subseteq (A' + h * B) \cap [N]$  if  $A' \cap I_i \neq \emptyset$  for every  $i = 0, 1, \dots, \lfloor N/H \rfloor$ .

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Given a positive standard real  $\epsilon$ , we have

$$|A' \cap [N]| \leq |\mathcal{I}| \cdot (\alpha + \epsilon)H$$

because  $|A' \cap I_i|/|I_i| \lesssim \alpha$  when  $|I_i|$  is hyperfinite by Proposition 3.6. Because  $\epsilon$  is an arbitrary standard positive real number, we have that

$$\frac{|(A' + h^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A' \cap [N]|} \gtrsim \frac{|\mathcal{I}| \cdot H}{|\mathcal{I}| \cdot \alpha H} = \frac{1}{\alpha}.$$

This completes the proof of the claim.

We continue to prove Theorem 3.21. Combine the arguments above and Theorem 3.16 we now have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{|(A_0 + {}^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A_0 \cap [N]|} &\gtrsim D_{A_0, {}^*B, N, 1} \geq (D_{A_0, {}^*B, N, h})^{1/h} \\ &= \left( \frac{|(A' + h^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A' \cap [N]|} \right)^{1/h} \gtrsim \frac{1}{\alpha^{1/h}}. \end{aligned}$$

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$$\begin{aligned} \frac{|(A_0 + {}^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A_0 \cap [N]|} &\gtrsim D_{A_0, {}^*B, N, 1} \geq (D_{A_0, {}^*B, N, h})^{1/h} \\ &= \left( \frac{|(A' + h^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A' \cap [N]|} \right)^{1/h} \gtrsim \frac{1}{\alpha^{1/h}}. \end{aligned}$$

Given a positive standard real  $\epsilon$ , we have

$$|A' \cap [N]| \leq |\mathcal{I}| \cdot (\alpha + \epsilon)H$$

because  $|A' \cap I_i|/|I_i| \lesssim \alpha$  when  $|I_i|$  is hyperfinite by Proposition 3.6. Because  $\epsilon$  is an arbitrary standard positive real number, we have that

$$\frac{|(A' + h^*B) \cap [N]|}{|A' \cap [N]|} \gtrsim \frac{|\mathcal{I}| \cdot H}{|\mathcal{I}| \cdot \alpha H} = \frac{1}{\alpha}.$$

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Hence

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{|*(A + B) \cap [N]|}{N} &\stackrel{\approx}{\approx} \frac{|(A_0 + *B) \cap [N]|}{N} \\ &\stackrel{\approx}{\approx} \frac{|A_0 \cap [N]|}{N} \cdot \frac{1}{\alpha^{1/h}} \approx \alpha^{1-\frac{1}{h}}, \end{aligned}$$

which implies Theorem 3.21 by Proposition 3.6. □

Hence

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The End of Day Three  
Thank you for your attention.