



How to be MECE

In order of best to worst, the ways to be [MECE](#) are: algebraically, procedurally, conceptually, segmenting, and opposite words.

Algebraic

By definition, the variables are independent and together they fully describe the whole. Some trivial examples:

- $\text{Force} = \text{Mass} \times \text{Acceleration}$
- $\text{Profit} = \text{Revenue} - \text{Expenses}$
- $\text{Mass of Ants in an anthill} = \text{number of ants} \times \text{weight of each ant}$

Procedural

A step by step process flow from beginning to end. As an example, if you wanted to MECE the environmental impact from a car, you could account for it by looking at:

Gathering raw materials □ Manufacture □ Sale □ Operation & Maintenance □ Disposal

For projects, the chronology is:

Initiation □ Planning □ Execution □ Delivery □ Post Delivery (people always forget about this one!)

Conceptual

Sort of a roll your own MECE structure. There is usually no right MECE, but there can be wrong ones. Some examples:

- $\text{Security} = \text{Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability}$
- When dealing with people, seek first to understand, then be understood
- People's personalities can be broken down along: conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, extraversion

Segmenting

You take some population (of anything, not just humans), and divide it up along some attribute, like age, gender, or geography. Even though it is ranked fourth worst, in a way it is actually the worst because it is both unlikely to be un insightful and people seem to be unreasonably drawn to this MECE method over the others (probably because it requires so little thinking).

Opposite Words

Something is either this or that:

- Someone is open minded or closed minded
- The food is kosher or treif