

Lecture 6: Backtracking

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bit.ly/cs3000syllabus

Business

Homework 1 should have been turned in last night before midnight

- If you did not ask for any extension, none will be granted

Homework 2 is released

- Due **Next Tuesday 5/19 at 11:59PM Boston Time**
- First 3 problems can be worked out after this lecture
- Problem 4 will be solvable after tomorrow

I owe a couple of people emails from this morning, will do so tonight

Slides (including reading assignment) are on the course website

- If they are not, I will stop and fix this

General point on homework

Do not wait until the last minute to read the questions

If you are struggling, ask questions early!

- Rule of thumb: If you spend more than 30 minutes on a problem and make little or no progress, ask a question on Piazza
- If you can't ask a question without giving away part of the solution, ask privately to the instructors on Piazza
- If you don't know how to start, ask a private question **where you give some thoughts on how you could maybe approach the problem**
 - We can't help if you just say "I don't get it", we need somewhere to start!

There is a LaTeX tag on Piazza. Ask questions if you are having problems with LaTeX.

Today

Backtracking

N Queens

SubsetSum

Text Segmentation

Backtracking

- So far, we have seen cases where the next recursive call is clear
 - In MergeSort, we need both left and right subarrays to be sorted
 - In MOMSelect and BinarySearch, we guarantee the value we are looking for is in a specific subarray
- What if we can't tell from the start which decision to make?
- Enter *backtracking*: When we are not sure what to do, try one small step in both directions and evaluate all outcomes.

N Queens

Problem statement: Given an $n \times n$ dimensional chessboard, place n queens on the board such that none can attack each other.

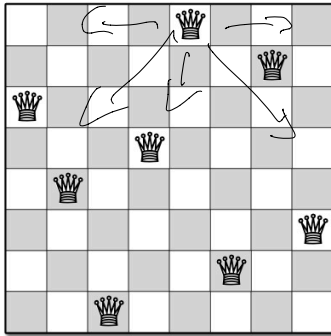


Figure 2.1. Gauss's first solution to the 8 queens problem, represented by the array [5, 7, 1, 4, 2, 8, 6, 3]

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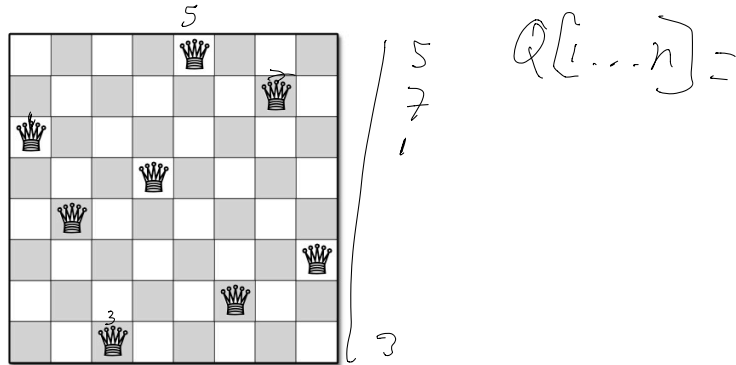
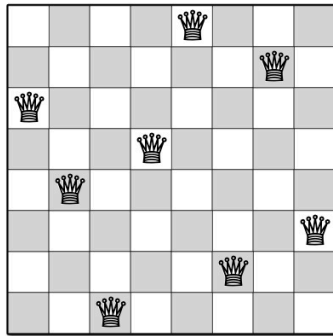


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Given an arbitrary n , how can we decide where to place queens?

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Idea: Incrementally build a solution by placing one queen at a time!

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Given an arbitrary n , how can we decide where to place queens?

N Queens

$n \times n$
 4×4

Idea: Incrementally build a solution by placing one queen at a time!

```
PlaceQueens(Q[1..n], r):  
  If r = n+1:  
    print Q[1..n]  
  Else:  
    for j ← 1 to n: — columns  
      legal ← True  
      for i ← 1 to r-1: previous rows  
        if (Q[i]=j) or  
           (Q[i]=j+r-i) or  
           (Q[i] = j - r):  
          legal ← False  
      if legal:  
        Q[r] ← j  
        PlaceQueens(Q[1..n], r+1)
```

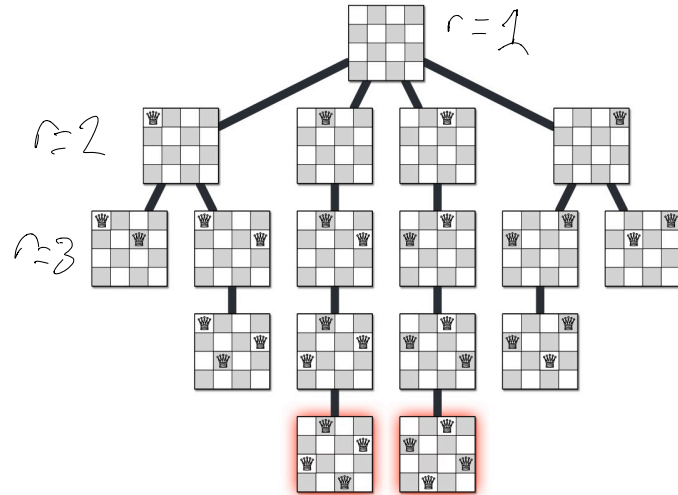


Figure 2.3. The complete recursion tree of Gauss and Laquière's algorithm for the 4 queens problem.

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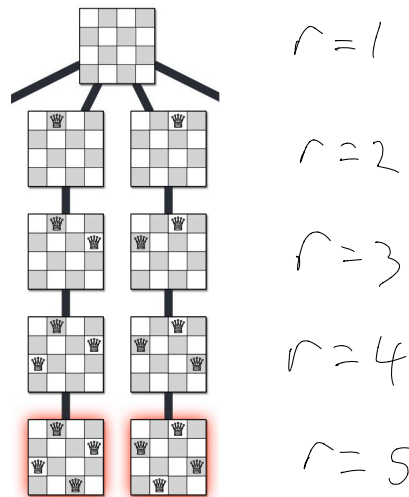


Figure 2.3. The complete recursion tree of Gauss and Laquière's algorithm for the 4 queens problem.

N Queens Wrap And Backtracking pattern

Idea: Incrementally build a solution by placing one queen at a time!

- Appropriate when a sequence of incremental decisions can enumerate solutions
 - Solution is often itself a sequence, e.g. $Q[1..n]$ is a sequence of queens placed in rows $1..n$
- Exactly 1 decision is made at every step
 - We usually need some information about previous decisions, but this should be as small as possible
- Problem is solved by *recursive brute force*, meaning we do not “prune” decisions that are obviously bad (leaves in the tree)

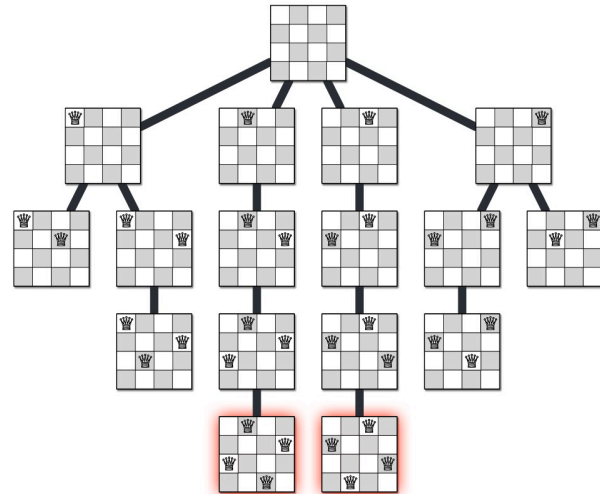


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Subset Sum

We are given a set of n positive integers $X = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$ and a target integer value T . We want to find a subset $Y \subseteq X$ such that the sum of the elements $\sum_{x_i \in Y} x_i = T$.

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Our problem: For a given T and X , does such a Y exist?

$$X = \{8, 6, 7, 5, 3, 10, 9\}, T = 15$$

$$\{8, 7\}$$

$$\{7, 5, 3\}$$

$$\{10, 5\}$$

$$\{9, 6\}$$

True

Subset Sum

We are given a set of n positive integers $X = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$ and a target integer value T . We want to find a subset $Y \subseteq X$ such that the sum of the elements $\sum_{x_i \in Y} x_i = T$.

Our problem: For a given T and X , does such a Y exist?

$$X = \{11, 6, 5, 1, 7, 13, 12\}, T = 15$$

False

Start Search (A, t)

Binary Search

(l=1, r=n)

n=3

Subset Sum Solution and Example

We are given a set of n positive integers $X = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$ and a target integer value T . We want to find a subset $Y \subseteq X$ such that the sum of the elements $\sum_{x_i \in Y} x_i = T$.

Start Subset (X, T)

SubsetSum(x, n, T)

Our problem: For a given T and X , does such a Y exist?

```
SubsetSum(X[1..n], i, T):
```

```
  If T = 0:
```

```
    return True
```

```
  ElseIf T < 0 or i = 0:
```

```
    return False
```

```
  Else:
```

```
    with ← SubsetSum(X, i-1, T - X[i])
```

```
    wout ← SubsetSum(X, i-1, T)
```

```
    return with OR wout
```

$X = [1, 2, 3], T = 3$

SubsetSum($X, i = 3, T = 3$)

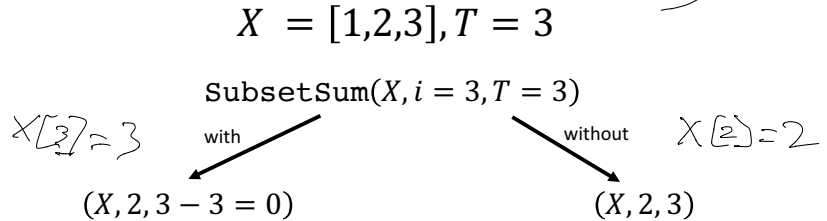
Subset Sum Example

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Our problem: For a given T and X , does such a Y exist?

$$X = \{3\}$$

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  ElseIf T < 0 or i = 0:  
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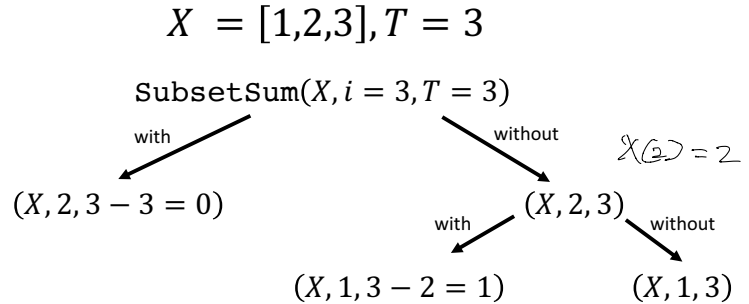


Subset Sum Example

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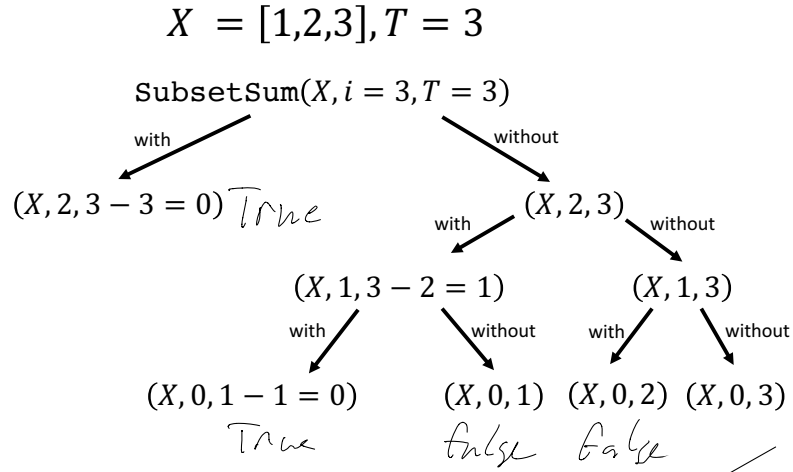


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```



Subset Sum Correctness

```
SubsetSum(X[1..n], i, T):  
  If T = 0:  
    return True  
  ElseIf T < 0 or i = 0:  
    return False  
  Else:  
    with ← SubsetSum(X, i-1, T - X[i])  
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    return with OR wout
```

Trivially works for base cases:

- $T = 0 \rightarrow$ Always true (empty subset)
- $T < 0 \rightarrow$ Always false (our integers are > 0)
- $n = 0$ (X is empty) \rightarrow Always false (no subset can add to any T)

Otherwise, if there is a subset that sums to T, it either contains $X[i]$ or it doesn't. Both of these possibilities are evaluated by the recursion fairy.

Subset Sum Running Time

```
SubsetSum(X[1..n], i, T):  
  If T = 0:  
    return True  
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Recurrence Relation?

$$T(n) = 2T(n-1) + O(1)$$

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Recurrence Relation?

$$T(n) = 2T(n - 1) + O(1) \leq O(2^n)$$

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Recurrence Relation?

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(You can show with a recursion tree)

Subset Sum Wrap

```
SubsetSum(X[1..n], i, T):  
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    return False  
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$$T(n) = 2T(n - 1) + O(1) \leq O(2^n)$$

- Our algorithm tells us whether such a subset exists, but does not return the subset
 - Relatively straightforward modifications to return the subset
- Our algorithm is not scalable
 - We will see later this week how to use *dynamic programming* to speed it up by solving subproblems in a smart order and storing the solutions for reuse

Text Segmentation

Problem: Given an array $A[1..n]$ representing a sequence of n characters without spaces, determine whether the array can be subdivided into a sequence of *words*.

Text Segmentation

Problem: Given an array $A[1..n]$ representing a sequence of n characters without spaces, determine whether the array can be subdivided into a sequence of *words*.

Assume we are given a function $IsWord(i, j)$. This function assumes A is a global variable and returns True if the subarray $A[i..j]$ is a word in the language of the sequence.

- This allows us to avoid passing subarrays as arguments to functions.

Text Segmentation Example

Does a valid
segmentation exist?

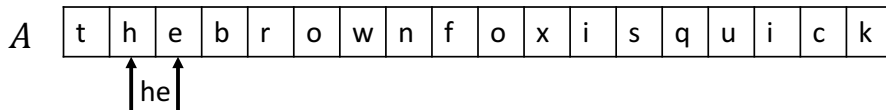
A

t	h	e	b	r	o	w	n	f	o	x	i	s	q	u	i	c	k
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

The sentence: "the brown fox is quick"

Where are there potential problems for $IsWord(i, j)$?

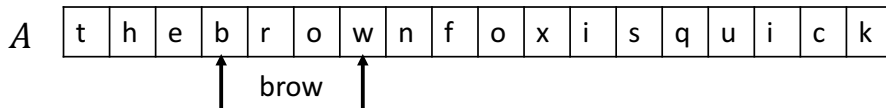
Text Segmentation Example



The sentence: “the brown fox is quick”

Where are there potential problems for $IsWord(i, j)$?

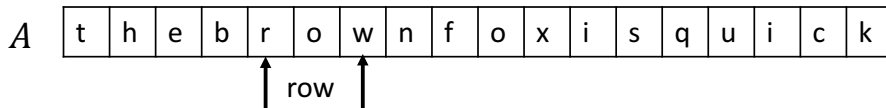
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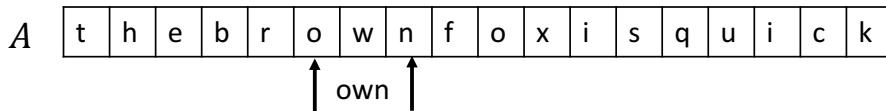
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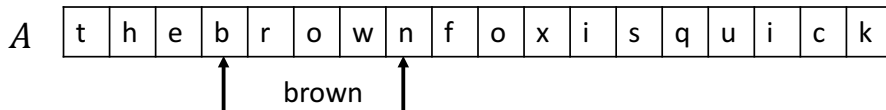
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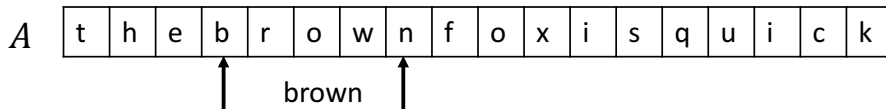
Text Segmentation Example



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Text Segmentation Example



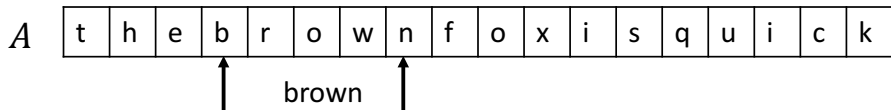
The sentence: “the brown fox is quick”

Where are there potential problems for $IsWord(i, j)$?

Recall the pattern from earlier:

- Sequence of decisions made 1 at a time
 - “Does $A[i..j]$ belong in my sequence of words?”

Text Segmentation Example



The sentence: “the brown fox is quick”

Where are there potential problems for $IsWord(i, j)$?

Recall the pattern from earlier:

- Sequence of decisions made 1 at a time
 - “Does $A[i..j]$ belong in my sequence of words?”
- Recursive brute force
 - Check every possible word, even if there might be a way to prune!

Text Segmentation Solution

t	h	e	b	r	o	w	n	f	o	x	i	s	q	u	i	c	k
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

$i = 0$ ↑

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):  
          return True  
  
  return False
```

Text Segmentation Solution

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  If  $i > n$ :
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```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
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     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

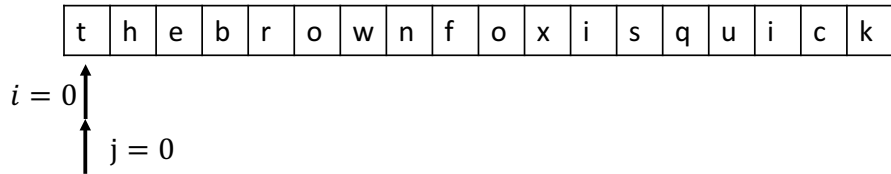
```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
         $j \leftarrow j + 1$ 
```

```
  return False
```



Text Segmentation Solution

t	h	e	b	r	o	w	n	f	o	x	i	s	q	u	i	c	k
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

$i = 0$ ↑ ↑ $j = 1$

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```

is this a word?

Text Segmentation Solution

t	h	e	b	r	o	w	n	f	o	x	i	s	q	u	i	c	k
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

$i = 0$ ↑ ↑ $j = 2$ *Splittable*($A[1..n], j + 1 = 2$)

```
Splittable( $A[1..n], i$ ):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable( $A[1..n], j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```

Text Segmentation Solution

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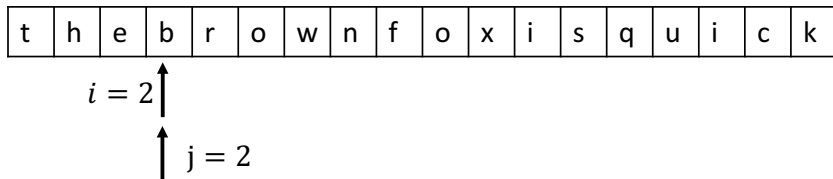
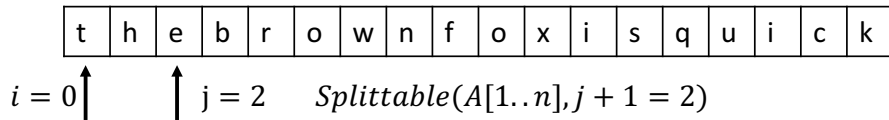
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  return False
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Text Segmentation Solution

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---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

$i = 0 \uparrow$ $\uparrow j = 2$ *Splittable*(A[1..n], $j + 1 = 2$)

t	h	e	b	r	o	w	n	f	o	x	i	s	q	u	i	c	k
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

$i = 2 \uparrow$ $\uparrow j = 3$

Text Segmentation Solution

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
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    return True
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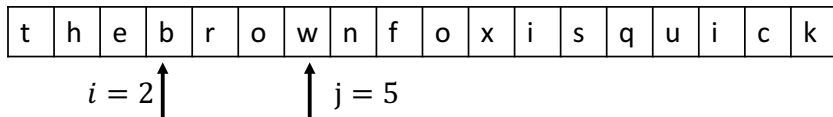
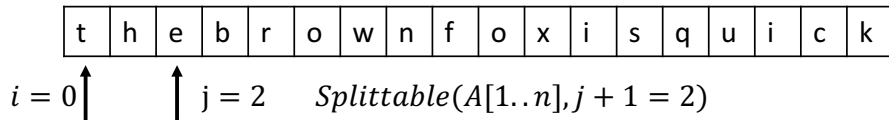
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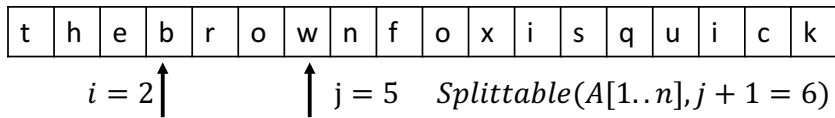
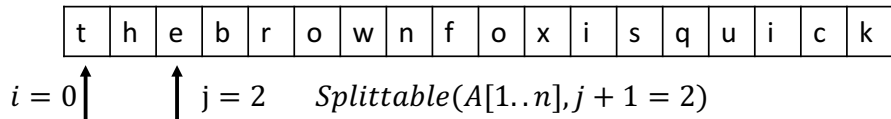
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        If Splittable(A[1..n], $j + 1$ ):
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          return True
```

```
  return False
```



What is going to happen?

Text Segmentation Solution

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

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```
  Else:
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     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

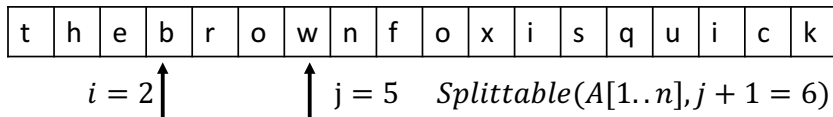
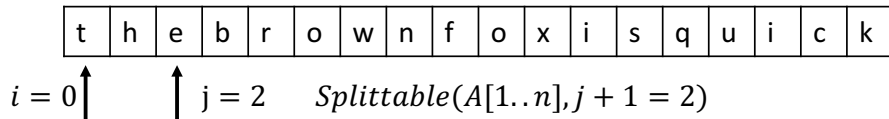
```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```



What is going to happen?

“nfoxisquick” is not a word, so:

- i never becomes greater than n

Text Segmentation Solution

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

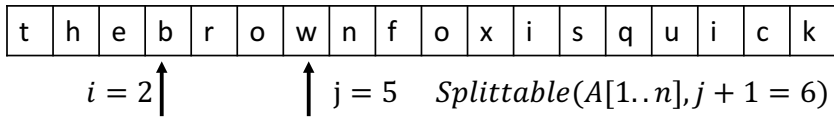
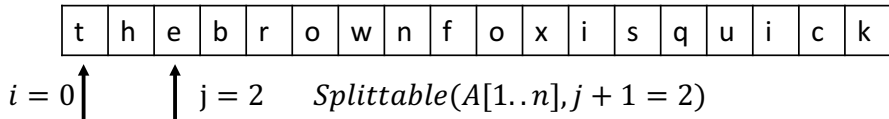
```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
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```



What is going to happen?

“nfoxisquick” is not a word, so:

- i never becomes greater than n
- *IsWord*(i, j) is never true

Text Segmentation Solution

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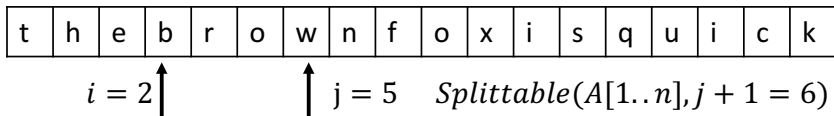
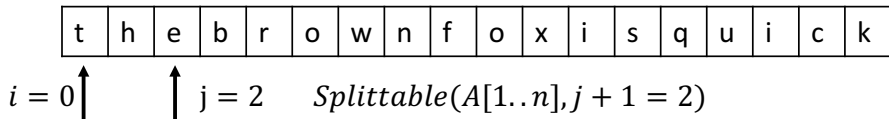
```
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```
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```
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  return False
```



What is going to happen?

“nfoxisquick” is not a word, so:

- i never becomes greater than n
- *IsWord*(i, j) is never true
- *Splittable*(A[1..n], $j + 1 = 6$) returns False

Text Segmentation Solution

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
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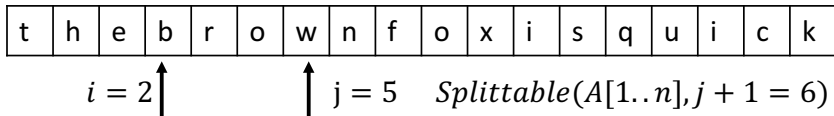
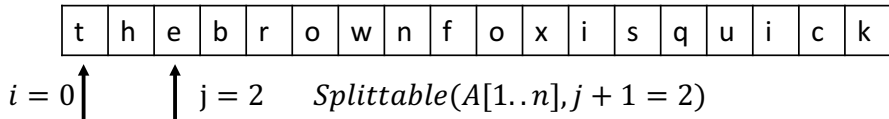
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“nfoxisquick” is not a word, so:

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- *Splittable*(A[1..n], $j + 1 = 6$) returns False
- We go back to the loop!

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  Else:
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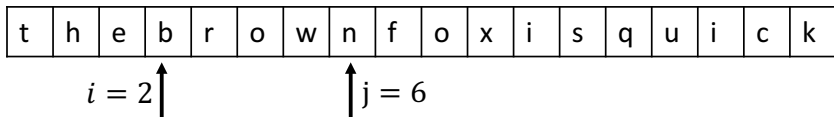
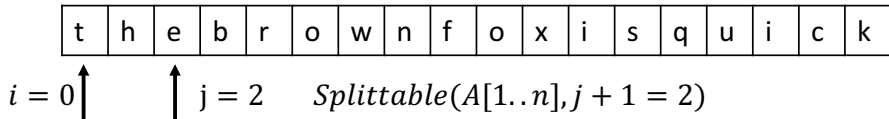
```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
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Text Segmentation Solution

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

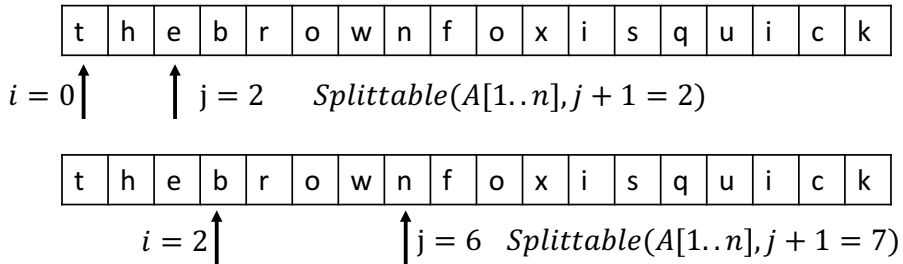
```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```



What is going to happen?

“nfoxisquick” is not a word, so:

- i never becomes greater than n
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- *Splittable*(A[1..n], $j + 1 = 6$) returns False
- We go back to the loop!

Text Segmentation Solution

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

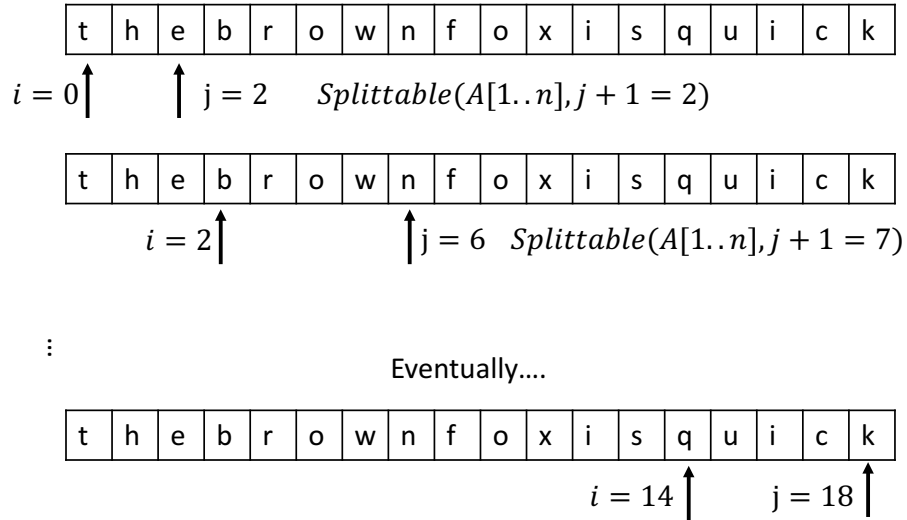
```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```



Text Segmentation Solution

The brown fox is quick

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If  $IsWord(i, j)$ :
```

```
        If  $Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1)$ :
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```

t h e b r o w n f o x i s q u i c k
 $i = 0 \uparrow$ $\uparrow j = 2$ $Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1 = 2)$

t h e b r o w n f o x i s q u i c k
 $i = 2 \uparrow$ $\uparrow j = 6$ $Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1 = 7)$

⋮

Eventually....

t h e b r o w n f o x i s q u i c k
 $i = 14 \uparrow$ $\uparrow j = 18$
 $Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1 = 19)$

Text Segmentation Solution

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

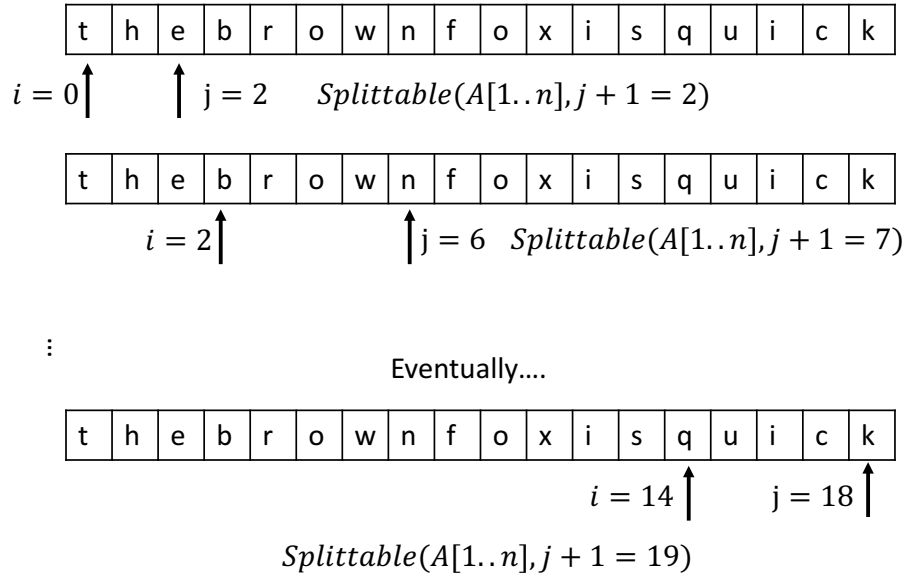
```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```



$19 > n$, returns True!

Text Segmentation Correctness

$A = [z]$

$A = [I]$

$i = 1$ for
the first

step

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):
```

```
  If  $i > n$ :
```

```
    return True
```

```
  Else:
```

```
     $j \leftarrow i$ 
```

```
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :
```

```
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):
```

```
        If Splittable(A[1.. $n$ ],  $j + 1$ ):
```

```
          return True
```

```
  return False
```

Base case: $n = 1$. Either:

- *IsWord*(1,1) returns False, in which case the loop ends and the algorithm returns False, or
- *IsWord*(1,1) returns True, in which case *Splittable*(*A*[1.. n], 2) returns True

Text Segmentation Correctness

```
Splittable( $A[1..n]$ ,  $i$ ):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):  
        If Splittable( $A[1..n]$ ,  $j + 1$ ):  
          return True  
  
  return False
```

Base case: $n = 1$. Either:

- *IsWord*(1,1) returns False, in which case the loop ends and the algorithm returns False, or
- *IsWord*(1,1) returns True, in which case *Splittable*($A[1..n]$, 2) returns True

Assuming *IsWord*(i, j) is correct and *Splittable*($A[1..k]$, 1) is correct for $1 \leq k \leq n$, we immediately see that it must be correct for *Splittable*($A[1..n+1]$, 1), since this runs the algorithm on inputs of maximum size $n - 1 < n$.

Text Segmentation Analysis

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):  
          return True  
  
  return False
```

Since we do not know the running time of *IsWord*(i, j), we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$

Text Segmentation Analysis

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):  
          return True  
  
  return False
```

Since we do not know the running time of *IsWord*(i, j), we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$

$f(n)$

Calling *IsWord*
for all n items

Text Segmentation Analysis

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If i > n:  
    return True  
  Else:  
    j ← i  
    for i to n:  
      If IsWord(i, j):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1):  
          return True  
  
return False
```

Since we do not know the running time of *IsWord*(*i*, *j*), we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$

Worst case: calling *Splittable* on every subsequence

Calling *IsWord* for all *n* items

Text Segmentation Analysis

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord(i, j):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1):  
          return True  
  
  return False
```

Since we do not know the running time of *IsWord*(i, j), we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$
$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + cn$$

Text Segmentation Analysis

Since we do not know the running time of $IsWord(i, j)$, we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

```
Splittable( $A[1..n], i$ ):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If  $IsWord(i, j)$ :  
        If  $Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1)$ :  
          return True  
  
return False
```

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + cn$$

$$T(n-1) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + c(n-1)$$

Text Segmentation Analysis

Since we do not know the running time of $IsWord(i, j)$, we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord(i, j):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1):  
          return True  
    return False
```

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + cn$$

$$T(n-1) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-2} T(i) + c(n-1)$$

$$T(n) - T(n-1) \leq T(n-1) + c$$

$$\sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) - \sum_{i=0}^{n-2} T(i)$$

$$T(n-1)$$

Text Segmentation Analysis

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord( $i, j$ ):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n],  $j + 1$ ):  
          return True  
  
  return False
```

Since we do not know the running time of *IsWord*(i, j), we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + cn$$

$$T(n-1) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-2} T(i) + c(n-1)$$

$$T(n) - T(n-1) \leq T(n-1) + c$$

$$T(n) = T(n-1) + T(n-1) + c = 2T(n-1) + c$$

Text Segmentation Analysis

$$T(n) - T(n-1) \\ \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) - \sum_{i=0}^{n-2} T(i)$$

Since we do not know the running time of $IsWord(i, j)$, we will instead express the running time as the number of calls we make to it.

```
Splittable(A[1..n], i):  
  If  $i > n$ :  
    return True  
  Else:  
     $j \leftarrow i$   
    for  $i$  to  $n$ :  
      If IsWord(i, j):  
        If Splittable(A[1..n], j + 1):  
          return True  
    return False
```

$$T(n) = 2T(n-1) + c \leq O(2^n)$$

(You can show with a recursion tree)

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + O(n)$$

$$T(n) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} T(i) + cn$$

$$T(n-1) \leq \sum_{i=0}^{n-2} T(i) + c(n-1)$$

$$T(n) - T(n-1) \leq T(n-1) + c$$

$$T(n) = T(n-1) + T(n-1) + c = 2T(n-1) + c$$

Wrap up

Homework 2 is out - read through it ASAP!

- Problem 4 is not solvable yet, the first 3 are after this lecture.

Next time:

- Dynamic Programming

Reading Assignment: Erickson Chapter 3 (for real this time)