# Asymptotic Notation, Recurrences



## Asymptotic growth rates

Let $g : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{R}$.

$O$-notation: $O(g)$ is the set of all functions $f : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{R}$ for which there are constants $c > 0$ and $n_0 \geq 0$ such that

$$0 \leq f(n) \leq c \cdot g(n), \quad \text{for all } n \geq n_0.$$

*"Rate of change of $f(n)$ is at most that of $g(n)$"*

$\Omega$-notation: $\Omega(g)$ is the set of all functions $f : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{R}$ for which there are constants $c > 0$ and $n_0 \geq 0$ such that

$$0 \leq c \cdot g(n) \leq f(n), \quad \text{for all } n \geq n_0.$$

*"Rate of change of $f(n)$ is at least that of $g(n)$"*

$\Theta$-notation: $\Theta(g)$ is the set of all functions $f : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{R}$ for which there are constants $c_1, c_2 > 0$ and $n_0 \geq 0$ such that

$$0 \leq c_1 \cdot g(n) \leq f(n) \leq c_2 \cdot g(n), \quad \text{for all } n \geq n_0.$$

*"Rate of change of $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ are about the same"*



## Examples

- Let $f(n) = 0.01 \cdot n^2$ and $g(n) = n$. Then $g = O(f)$.
- Let $f(n) = \ln(n)$ and $g(n) = n$. Then $g = \Omega(f)$.
- Let $f(n) = 10n + \ln(n)$ and $g(n) = n$. Then $g = \Theta(f)$.

*Sometimes $O(\ldots)$ appears within a formula, rather than simply forming the right hand side of an equation. We make sense of this by thinking of $O(\ldots)$ as standing for some anonymous (but fixed) function from the set of the same name.*
*For example, $h(n) = 2^{O(n)}$ means $\exists c > 0$, $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$ such that*

$$h(n) \leq 2^{cn} \text{ for all } n > n_0.$$



## Consequences

Suppose $f(n) = O(g(n))$ AND $g(n) = O(f(n))$. What can we say?

What if $f(n) = O(g(n))$ AND $f(n) = \Omega(g(n))$?

Various consequences of the above conventions:

$$\begin{aligned} \Theta(n) \times \Theta(n^2) &= \Theta(n^3), \\ \Theta(n) + \Theta(n^2) &= \Theta(n^2), \\ \Theta(n) + \Theta(n) &= \Theta(n). \end{aligned}$$

## Reminder of INSERTIONSORT

**Algorithm** INSERTION-SORT($A$)

1. **for** $j \leftarrow 2$ **to** *length*$[A]$ **do**
2.     *key* $\leftarrow A[j]$
       *(now insert* $A[j]$ *into the sorted sequence* $A[1 \dots j-1]$*)*
3.     $i \leftarrow j - 1$
4.     **while** $i > 0$ and $A[i] > key$ **do**
5.         $A[i+1] \leftarrow A[i]$
6.         $i \leftarrow i - 1$
7.     $A[i+1] \leftarrow key$

Array $A$ is indexed from $j = 1$ to $n = length[A]$ (different from Java).



## running-time of INSERTIONSORT

- The for-loop on line 1 is iterated $n - 1$ times
- For each execution of the for, the while does $\leq j$ iterations;
- Each of the comparisons/assignments requires only $O(1)$ basic steps;
- Therefore the total number of steps (=time) is at most

$$O(1) \sum_{j=1}^{n} j = O(1) \frac{n(n+1)}{2} = O(n^2).$$

- This is essentially tight - sorting the list $n, n-1, n-2, \dots, 3, 2, 1$ takes $\Omega(n^2)$ time. **BOARD**.



## reminder of MERGESORT

*Input:* A list $A$ of natural numbers, $p, r : 1 \leq p \leq r \leq n$.
*Output:* A sorted (increasing order) permutation of $A[p \dots r]$.

**Algorithm** MERGE-SORT($A, p, r$)

**if** $p < r$ **then**
    $q \leftarrow \lfloor \frac{p+r}{2} \rfloor$
    MERGE-SORT($A, p, q$)
    MERGE-SORT($A, q+1, r$)
    MERGE($A, p, q, r$)



## reminder of MERGE

(recall that $A[p \dots q]$ and $A[q+1 \dots r]$ both come (individually) sorted)

**Algorithm** MERGE($A, p, q, r$)

$n \leftarrow r - p + 1$, $n_1 \leftarrow q - p + 1$, $n_2 \leftarrow r - q$
create an array $B$ of length $n$
$i \leftarrow p$, $j \leftarrow q + 1$, $k \leftarrow 1$
**while** $((i \leq q) \parallel (j \leq r))$
    **if** $((j > r) \parallel ((i \leq q)$ && $(A[i] \leq A[j])))$
        $B[k] \leftarrow A[i]$
        $i \leftarrow i + 1$
    **else**
        $B[k] \leftarrow A[j]$
        $j \leftarrow j + 1$
    $k \leftarrow k + 1$
**for** $i = 1$ **to** $n$
    $A[(p-1) + i] \leftarrow B[i]$

## Analysis of MERGE

We have $n = (r-p)+1$, $n_1 = (q-p)+1$, $n_2 = r-q$ (note $n = n_1+n_2$).
MERGE carries out the following steps:

- Initialisation/maintenance work in steps 1., 2., 3., uses $3+n+3$ operations ($n$ for setting up $B$).
- Over all $n$ iterations of **while**, line 4. will carry out between $n$ and $n+n_2$ index comparisons
- Over all $n$ iterations of **while**, line 5 will carry out between $n$ and $n+n_1$ index comparisons and between $n_1$ and $n$ key comparisons.
- Over all $n$ iterations of **while**, lines 6.-11. will carry out $2n$ index updates and $n$ copy operations (keys being copied into $B$)
- Lines 12.-13. take $2n$ steps.

Therefore the running-time of MERGE satisfies the following:

$$8n + n_1 + 6 \le T_{\mathrm{MERGE}}(n : n_1, n_2) \le 10n + n_1 + n_2 + 6$$

We can express a neater bound as

$$8n \le T_{\mathrm{MERGE}}(n : n_1, n_2) \le 14n.$$



## Running-time of MERGESORT

$n = r - p + 1$.
Running time $T_{\mathrm{MS}}(n)$ satisfies:

$$T_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) = \begin{cases} \Theta(1) & \text{if } n = 1, \\ T_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lceil n/2 \rceil) + T_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor n/2 \rfloor) + \Theta(n) & \text{if } n > 1. \end{cases}$$

The $\Theta(n)$ is from analysis of MERGE on the previous slide. Analysis of MERGESORT gives $\lfloor \frac{n+1}{2} \rfloor$ and $\lceil \frac{n-1}{2} \rceil$ as the subarray sizes - these are same as $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor$ and $\lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$.



## Solving recurrences

Methods for deriving/verifying solutions to recurrences:

**Induction** Guess the solution and verify by induction on $n$.

Lovely if your recurrence is "NICE" enough that you can guess-and-verify. Rare.

**Unfold and sum** "Unfold" the recurrence by iterated substitution on the "neat" values of $n$ (often power of 2 case). At some point a pattern emerges. The "solution" is obtained by evaluating a sum that arises from the pattern.
Since the pattern is just for the "neat" $n$, the method is rigorous only if we verify the solution (e.g., by a direct induction proof).

Often the only way to do the PROOF neatly is to RELATE to "neat" values of $n$ ... sometimes powers-of-2

**"Master Theorem"** Match the recurrence against a template. Read off the solution from the Master Theorem.



## Upper bounds by first principles

Proof by "first principles"
*When working from first principles, need to replace "extra work" terms ($\Theta(n)$ for MERGESORT) by terms with explicit constants.*
So we check slide 10 again.

$$T_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \le \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n = 1, \\ T_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lceil n/2 \rceil) + T_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor n/2 \rfloor) + 14n & \text{if } n > 1. \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

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Unfold-and-sum will give a "guess" for the upper bound:

$$T_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq 14n\lg(n) + n.$$



## Upper bound for $\textsc{MergeSort}$ ($n$ a power-of-2)

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Induction Step: Now consider $n = 2^k$ and apply the recurrence:

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AS REQUIRED.

## Upper bounds for general $n$

Three steps for turning a "proof for the neat case" into a "proof for all $n$".

- STEP 1: Prove an exact expression for "neat" $n$ for an equality version $T'(\cdot)$ of the recurrence.

  Done for $T'_{\text{MS}}(n)$ (the proof for $T'_{\text{MS}}(n)$ on slide 14). "Neat" was powers-of-2.

- STEP 2: Prove that the equality version of the recurrence is monotone increasing; ie, that we have $T'(n) \leq T'(m)$ for all $n, m$ with $n < m$ (not just for "neat" $n, m$).

  *This step is why we need to introduce an "equality version" (to prove STEP 2 we will need to work with $T'(n) =$, $T'(m) =$).*

- STEP 3: For "not-neat $n$", choose a close-by "neat $\widehat{n}$" (for proving $O(\cdot)$ bounds, $\widehat{n}$ should be larger; for $\Omega(\cdot)$ bounds, $\widehat{n}$ should be smaller).

  Then apply monotonicity (STEP 2) to show a relationship between $T'(n)$ and $T'(\widehat{n})$, and then substitute the exact expression (from STEP 1) to $T'(\widehat{n})$ to work out an upper bound for $T'(n)$.



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Induction Hypothesis (IH): Claim holds for all $n = 1, \ldots, h$ (with any $m > n$).

Base Case ($h = 1$):
$T'_{\text{MS}}(1) = 1$.
For $m \geq 2$, $T'_{\text{MS}}(m) \geq 14m \geq 28$, and $28 > T'_{\text{MS}}(1)$, as needed.

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STEP 2 cont'd.

Induction Step ($n$): Suppose true for all $n \in \mathbb{N}, n = 1, \ldots, h$. Consider $n = h+1$.
We know $n \geq 2$, so the recurrence for $n$ is



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$n \geq 2$ implies $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor = \lfloor \frac{h+1}{2} \rfloor < n$ (need strict $<$) so $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor \in \{1, \ldots h\}$. So the (IH) can be applied to $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor$ with appropriate $m$-values. $m > n$ implies $\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor \geq \lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor$, so

- either $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor = \lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor$, and hence $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor) = T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor)$.
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Same argument goes through with $\lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$. Hence the (IH) shows that each of the first two terms for $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n)$ are $\leq$ than the corresponding terms for $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(m)$.



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$n \geq 2$ implies $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor = \lfloor \frac{h+1}{2} \rfloor < n$ (need strict $<$) so $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor \in \{1, \ldots h\}$. So the (IH) can be applied to $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor$ with appropriate $m$-values. $m > n$ implies $\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor \geq \lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor$, so

- either $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor = \lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor$, and hence $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor) = T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor)$.
- or else $\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor > \lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor$ and taking this together with $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor \leq h$, the (IH) implies that $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor) < T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor)$.

Same argument goes through with $\lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$. Hence the (IH) shows that each of the first two terms for $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n)$ are $\leq$ than the corresponding terms for $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(m)$.
But also $14n < 14m$, so $\ldots \Rightarrow T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) < T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(m)$.



## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 2 cont'd.

Induction Step ($n$): Suppose true for all $n \in \mathbb{N}, n = 1, \ldots, h$. Consider $n = h+1$. We know $n \geq 2$, so the recurrence for $n$ is

$$T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \quad = \quad T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lceil n/2 \rceil) + T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor n/2 \rfloor) + 14n. \tag{3}$$

We are considering $m > n$ (so definitely $m \geq 2$), and the recurrence for $m$ is

$$T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(m) \quad = \quad T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lceil m/2 \rceil) + T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor m/2 \rfloor) + 14m.$$

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- either $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor = \lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor$, and hence $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor) = T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor)$.
- or else $\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor > \lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor$ and taking this together with $\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor \leq h$, the (IH) implies that $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \rfloor) < T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\lfloor \frac{m}{2} \rfloor)$.

Same argument goes through with $\lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$. Hence the (IH) shows that each of the first two terms for $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n)$ are $\leq$ than the corresponding terms for $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(m)$.
But also $14n < 14m$, so $\ldots \Rightarrow T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) < T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(m)$.
Hence by Induction, $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) < T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(m)$ for all $n$, for all $m > n$.

## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.



## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.



## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.
- So define $\widehat{n} = 2^{\lceil \lg(n) \rceil}$ (this will be "$m$").



## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.
- So define $\widehat{n} = 2^{\lceil \lg(n) \rceil}$ (this will be "$m$").
- We know $n \leq \widehat{n}$ but $\widehat{n} < 2n$.

## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.
- So define $\widehat{n} = 2^{\lceil \lg(n) \rceil}$ (this will be "$m$").
- We know $n \leq \widehat{n}$ but $\widehat{n} < 2n$.
- Monotonicity property from STEP 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n})$



## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.
- So define $\widehat{n} = 2^{\lceil \lg(n) \rceil}$ (this will be "$m$").
- We know $n \leq \widehat{n}$ but $\widehat{n} < 2n$.
- Monotonicity property from STEP 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n})$
- Proof of Upper bound for POWERS OF 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n}) \leq 14\widehat{n}\lg(\widehat{n}) + \widehat{n}$.



## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.
- So define $\widehat{n} = 2^{\lceil \lg(n) \rceil}$ (this will be "$m$").
- We know $n \leq \widehat{n}$ but $\widehat{n} < 2n$.
- Monotonicity property from STEP 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n})$
- Proof of Upper bound for POWERS OF 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n}) \leq 14\widehat{n}\lg(\widehat{n}) + \widehat{n}$.
- By $\widehat{n} < 2n$, we get

$$T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n}) \leq 14\widehat{n}(\lg(\widehat{n})) + \widehat{n} < 14(2n)\lg(2n) + 2n = 28n\lg(n) + 30n.$$



## Upper bound for MergeSort (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.
- So define $\widehat{n} = 2^{\lceil \lg(n) \rceil}$ (this will be "$m$").
- We know $n \leq \widehat{n}$ but $\widehat{n} < 2n$.
- Monotonicity property from STEP 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n})$
- Proof of Upper bound for POWERS OF 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\widehat{n}) \leq 14\widehat{n}\lg(\widehat{n}) + \widehat{n}$.
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So for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq 28n\lg(n) + 30n$.

## Upper bound for MERGESORT (general $n$) cont'd.

STEP 3: Choose a "power of 2" to relate to $n$.

- Want an upper bound, so need a power of 2 *greater than* $n$.
- So define $\hat{n} = 2^{\lceil \lg(n) \rceil}$ (this will be "$m$").
- We know $n \leq \hat{n}$ but $\hat{n} < 2n$.
- Monotonicity property from STEP 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\hat{n})$
- Proof of Upper bound for POWERS OF 2 tells us $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\hat{n}) \leq 14\hat{n}\lg(\hat{n}) + \hat{n}$.
- By $\hat{n} < 2n$, we get

$$T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(\hat{n}) \leq 14\hat{n}(\lg(\hat{n})) + \hat{n} < 14(2n)\lg(2n) + 2n = 28n\lg(n) + 30n.$$

So for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$ we have $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) \leq 28n\lg(n) + 30n$.

Hence $T'_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) = O(n\lg(n))$, and (of course) $T_{\mathrm{MS}}(n) = O(n\lg(n))$.



## Proving a lower bound

The "first principles" proof is essentially a *direct* proof of a sub-case of the Master Theorem.



## Proving a lower bound

The "first principles" proof is essentially a *direct* proof of a sub-case of the Master Theorem.

Slide 15 described the usual structure of proving $O(\cdot)$ bounds for general $n \in \mathbb{N}$. When wanting to instead give a "first principles" proof of $\Omega(\cdot)$ for a recurrence $T(n)$, there are slight differences:

- (different) Consider an equality version $T'(\cdot)$ of the recurrence $T(\cdot)$ such that $T(n) \geq T'(n)$ holds *for all* $n \in \mathbb{N}$.
- (same) STEP 1: Prove an exact expression for $T'$ for the "NEAT" case (power-of-2 here, but would be power-of-$d$ if $\lfloor n/d \rfloor, \lceil n/d \rceil$ was involved)
- (same) STEP 2: Prove $T'(n)$ is monotonically increasing with $n$ for general $n$.
- (different) STEP 3: Consider the closest power-of-$d$ *less than* $n$, say $\hat{n}$, for a non-neat $n \in \mathbb{N}$. Then exploit $T(n) \geq T'(n)$ (by definition), $T'(n) \geq T'(\hat{n})$ (from STEP 2), and then substitute in the exact expression for $T'(\hat{n})$ (because $\hat{n}$ is "NEAT") and work from there.



## Reading and Working

**Reading Assignment**

Inf2B ADS Lecture Notes 2 and 8.

[CLRS] Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 (of 3rd or 2nd edition). Also Section 3.1 (omitting the bits on the little-o and little-$\omega$ notation at the end).

(all this material should be familiar from Inf2B and your math classes)