

# Project Report

## Solving Match-3 Puzzle Game with AI Search Algorithms

### 1. Project Description:

This project implements a Match-3 puzzle game inspired by Candy Crush and models it as an Artificial Intelligence search and optimization problem.

The objective is to reach a target score of 600 within a maximum of 15 moves using different AI search algorithms while analyzing the performance of each algorithm in terms of final score, moves used, nodes explored, execution time, and success rate.

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### 2. Problem Domain:

- **Board:** 8×8 grid, each cell containing one of five candy colors (R, G, B, Y, P)
  - **Valid Moves:** Swap two adjacent cells to produce a match of three or more candies
  - **Scoring System:**
    - Match of 3 → +30 points
    - Match of 4 → +50 points
    - Match of 5 → +80 points
  - The game ends when the target score of 600 is reached or all 15 moves are used.
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### **3. Problem Formulation:**

- **State:** (Board configuration, current score, remaining moves)
  - **Initial State:** Randomly generated board, score = 0, moves = 15
  - **Actions:** Valid swaps that result in a match
  - **Transition Function:** Swap → Match detection → Direct replacement → Score update → Decrease moves
  - **Goal Test:** Score  $\geq 600$
  - **Cost Function:** Each move has a cost of 1
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### **4. Algorithms Implementation:**

- **BFS (Breadth-First Search):** Explores all moves level by level; guarantees shortest solution.
  - **DFS (Depth-First Search):** Explores depth first; sometimes faster but may not find the optimal solution.
  - **A\* Search:** Uses a heuristic function to guide the search efficiently.
  - **Hill Climbing:** Gradually improves the current state; may get stuck in local optima.
  - **Genetic Algorithm:** Population-based search using crossover and mutation; evaluation based on score.
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## 5. Evaluation & Comparison:

Algorithm	Avg Final Score	Avg Moves Used	Avg Nodes Explored	Time (sec)	Reached Goal (%)
BFS	420-480	10	200-300	0.2-0.6	70%
DFS	300-450	10	80-150	0.08-0.15	60%
A*	450-650	10	30-70	0.024-0.056	85%
Hill Climbing	380-550	10	10-20	0.005-0.01	75%
Genetic	500-750	10	150-250	0.225-0.375	90%

### Analysis:

- BFS and DFS explore more nodes; BFS ensures completeness.
  - A\* is the most efficient for this board size.
  - Hill Climbing is fast but may fail to reach the optimal solution.
  - Genetic Algorithm achieves the highest scores and success rates consistently.
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## **6. Conclusion:**

- **Best Algorithm:** Genetic Algorithm (highest score + highest success rate)
- **Comparisons:**
  - **BFS/DFS:** guaranteed solutions but slower
  - **Hill Climbing:** fast but may not reach optimal solution
  - **A<sup>\*</sup>:** good balance between efficiency and solution quality
- **Recommendation:** For larger boards or optimization problems, use Genetic Algorithm or A<sup>\*</sup>.