

note: the problem actually asks the number of pairs of substrings from  $s$  and  $t$  (as shown in the examples).

1. enumerate the different character in both  $s$  and  $t$ , then compute LCP on the left and right in  $O(1)$  time.  $O(n^2)$ .

2. We call  $s[i..i + \ell - 1]$  and  $t[j..j + \ell - 1]$  a *maximally matched pair* iff  $s[i..i + \ell - 1] = t[j..j + \ell - 1]$ ,  $s[i - 1] \neq t[j - 1]$  and  $s[i + \ell] \neq t[j + \ell]$ . For a pair of substrings in  $s$  and  $t$  that differs by a single character, the different character must be the left (symmetrically, right) endpoint of a maximally matched pair (i.e. at index  $i - 1$ ). The right endpoint of the substring must lie in the maximally matched pair.

Let  $L$  be a parameter to be set later. We can find all maximally matched pairs with length  $\geq L$  in  $O(\frac{n^2}{L})$  time: for each fixed  $\delta = i - j$ , we repeatedly use LCP in  $O(1)$  time to find the next maximally matched pair with length  $\geq L$ , and this requires  $O(\frac{n}{L})$  steps for each  $\delta$ . Then we can compute the number of solutions adjacent to at least one maximally matched pair with length  $\geq L$ .

The remaining case is solutions with the different character adjacent to two maximally matched pair with length  $< L$ , and this implies the total length of the matched substring is  $O(L)$ . Use hashing to count the number of solutions for each substring with length  $< 2L$  (there are  $O(nL)$  of them), enumerate the position of the different character in  $O(L)$  time for each substring, and we can solve this case in  $O(nL^2)$  time. (easy to prevent double counting in the first case.)

Set  $L = O(n^{1/3})$ , the total running time is  $O(n^{5/3})$ .

## References