

C.2. Recurrence Tree Method – Example 2

$$t_n = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{for } n = 1 \\ t_{n-1} + a & \text{for } n > 1 \end{cases}$$

Using the recurrence – tree method, determine the final asymptotic complexity of the tree for $a = 1$ and $a = n$.

Solution:

When $a = 1$ the recurrence equation is as follows :

$$t_n = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{for } n = 1 \\ t_{n-1} + 1 & \text{for } n > 1 \end{cases}$$

Therefore, the recurrence tree for this recurrence equation would be shown below:

<i>Level</i>	<i>No. of problems</i>	<i>Problem Size</i>	<i>Work done = Problem Size \times No. of Problems</i>	
0	1	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$	1
1	1	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$	1
2	1	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$	1
.	.	.	.	1
.	.	.	.	
$n - 1$	1	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$	1

One can observe that the work done at every level is 1 and the size of the problem is reduced by a factor of 1 at every level .

Therefore, at the level $n - 1$, the problem size and work done would be 1. The total number of levels is n (as the level of the root is 0). Therefore, the final cost can be estimated as follows:

$$\text{Total Cost} = \sum_{i=1}^n 1 = 1 + 1 + 1 + \cdots n \text{ times} = 1 \times n = n.$$

Therefore, the asymptotic complexity would be $\Theta(n)$. Problems such as `Towers of Hanoi` and `Handshake Problem` can be expressed using this type of a recurrence equation.

When $a = n$, the recurrence equation would be as follows:

$$t_n = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{for } n = 1 \\ t_{n-1} + n & \text{for } n > 1 \end{cases}$$

The recurrence tree is shown below:

<i>Level</i>	<i>No. of problems</i>	<i>Problem Size</i>	<i>Work done = Problem Size \times No. of Problems</i>	
0	1	n	$1 \times n = n$	n
1	1	$n - 1$	$1 \times (n - 1) = n - 1$	$n - 1$
2	1	$n - 2$	$1 \times (n - 2) = n - 2$	$n - 2$
.	.	.	.	
$n - 1$	1	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$	1

We can observe that at entry level the work done is reduced by 1 from previous term from total `n` terms.

The work done is given as: $n + (n - 1) + (n - 2) + \dots + 1$.

The total number of levels is n (from 0 to $n - 1$).

As there are `n` levels, the total cost can be estimated as follows:

$$\textit{Total Cost} = \sum_{i=1}^n i = \frac{n(n+1)}{2} = \Theta(n^2)$$
