Hitting Set is in NP: Given an instance of the problem, and a proposed set H, we can check in polynomial time whether H has size at most k, and whether some member of each set S_i belongs to H.

Hitting Set looks like a covering problem, since we are trying to choose at most k objects subject to some constraints. We show that *Vertex Cover* $\leq_P$ *Hitting Set*. Thus, we begin with an instance of *Vertex Cover*, specified by a graph $G = (V, E)$ and a number k. We must construct an equivalent instance of *Hitting Set*. In *Vertex Cover*, we are trying to choose at most k nodes to form a vertex cover. In *Hitting Set*, we are trying to choose at most k elements to form a hitting set. This suggests that we define the set A in the *Hitting Set* instance to be the V of nodes in the *Vertex Cover* instance. For each edge $e_i = (u_i, v_i) \in E$, we define a set $S_i = \{u_i, v_i\}$ in the *Hitting Set* instance.

Now we claim that there is a hitting set of size at most k for this instance, if and only if the original graph had a vertex cover of size at most k. For if we consider a hitting set H of size at most k as a subset of the nodes of G, we see that every set is "hit," and hence every edge has at least one end in II: II is a vertex cover of G. Conversely, if we consider a vertex cover C of G, and consider C as a subset of A, we see that each of the sets S_i is "hit" by C.

[1] ex635.897.959