ARI2101

Fundamentals of Automated Planning

Assignment 2024/2025



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Part 1:

Programming Language: Java 17.0.13

**State Implementation**

This state class encapsulates the board configuration, movement history, and heuristic information.

The board configuration is held in a one-dimensional integer array of length nine, with the integers ranging from 0 to 8, and 0 being the empty tile. To track the position of the empty tile an emptyTileIndex variable is maintained. This reduces constant looping through the board to find the empty tile, improving time to calculate possible moves and tile swapping.

Maintaining a reference to its parent state, null in the case of the initial state, enables retracing after a search concludes.

Maintaining move type, represented by a characters (1, u, r, or d), representing left, up, right, down respectively. This is used to represent the move done to reach the state from its parent state. This character is used during the plan validation step to validate a generated plan.

To support heuristic-based search algorithms, distance costs are maintained including cost to from initial state to state (gCost), heuristic estimate to goal state (hCost), and total estimated cost (fCost(), which is simply gCost + hCost).

The state class also provides a children method to generate all valid successor states. Successors are generated based on the precondition: if the empty tile has an inbounds neighbour. For each valid neighbour a child state is created where the neighbouring tile and empty tile are swapped using the Swap helper function. The child state’s parent reference is set to the current state and the action performed to generate the child is recorded accordingly.

By overriding equals and hashCode, the class ensures that comparisons and hash codes are computed based on the board configuration alone, ignoring differences in other attributes like parent reference or move done. This allows for states to be accurately identified and managed in data structures such as hash sets.

**Result Implementation**

Duration of search is done within the search algorithm and does not include time taken to validate, generate and print out results.

Unique states visited is calculated by summating the number of the states in the closed hash set, and the number of states in the edge states data structure.

The retrace step traverses the path taken from the final state to the initial state, through parent references until parent is null. At each parent actions taken is incremented, the parent’s board is pushed onto a stack, and using stack’s first in last out order to reverse the plan. This correctly describes the plan as going from the initial state to the final state.

By the same logic moves are also pushed onto a stack but the last move is ignored, null.

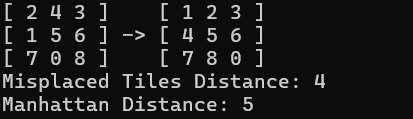
After plan is in correct order, a plan validation step is executed to validate if a plan correctly reached the goal. This is done by peeking the initial board and simulating all the moves in order and if the board matches the goal board then the plan is marked as valid.

**Distance Functions Implementation**

Manhattan - Compute a lookup table for the destination tiles, mapping each tile value to its index. For every tile value in the start state, find its corresponding index in the destination state using the lookup table. Calculate the tile's 2D position by using the modulus operator to determine the x-coordinate and integer division to determine the y-coordinate for both the start and destination positions. Compute the absolute differences between the x and y coordinates, and sum these values to derive the total Manhattan distance.

Misplaced Tiles - Checks weather the tile values match at a specific index, if not increment cost.

Testing using Figure 2, gives expected heuristic values



**Search Algorithms Implementation**

State Space is 9!/2 as inverted boards cannot be accessed.   
A state is at most 31 moves away from an initial state.

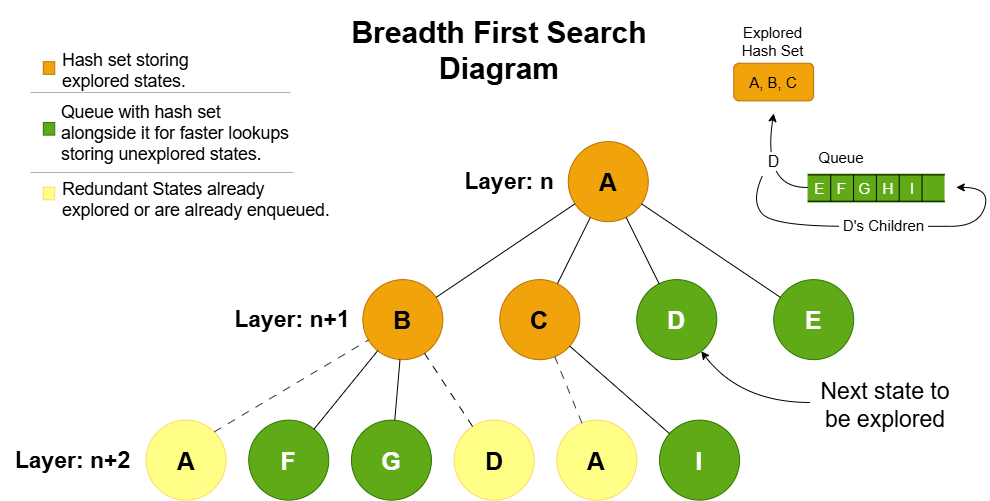
Initial test case 1:

Initial test case 2:

**Breadth First Search**

The Breadth first search implementation employs a queue to hold unexplored states. This ensures that layer is exhaustively explored while enqueuing layer. Alongside the queue is a hash set used to speed up state lookups from Oto O. Since layers grow exponentially with depth and lookups happen multiple times per state dequeue, lookup speed is an important consideration.  
A hash set is maintained to hold explored states since its lookup and add times are both constant.

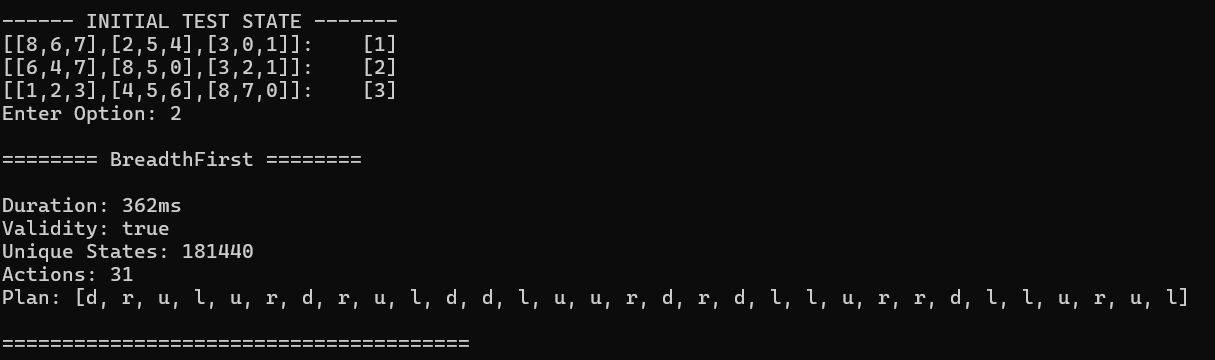
Redundant states are prevented by maintaining hash sets that store both explored and unexplored states. Before a generated child is checked against both sets



This search algorithm ensures the shortest path to the goal state by exploring all states layer by layer. However this exhaustive search has a significant drawback in that it generates all states up to the goal state’s depth. Since all states are at most 31 moves away, the entire state space is generated as seen when testing with initial test states 1 and 2 which are 31 moves away from their goal.

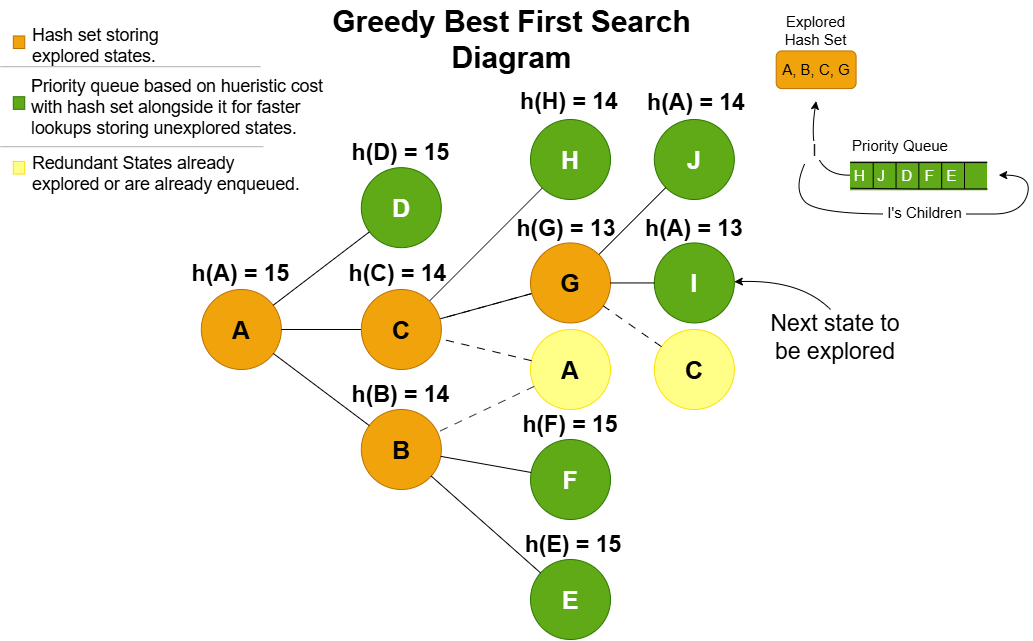
Furthermore if a goal state is at layer and layer exists, layer will be partially explored. The percentage of layer to be generated grows as distance m grows. ( being the distance from the initial state of a layer).

This makes the BFS impractical for problems with deeper state spaces or higher branching factors.





**Greedy Best First Search**

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**A\* Search**

**Enforced Hill Climb Search**

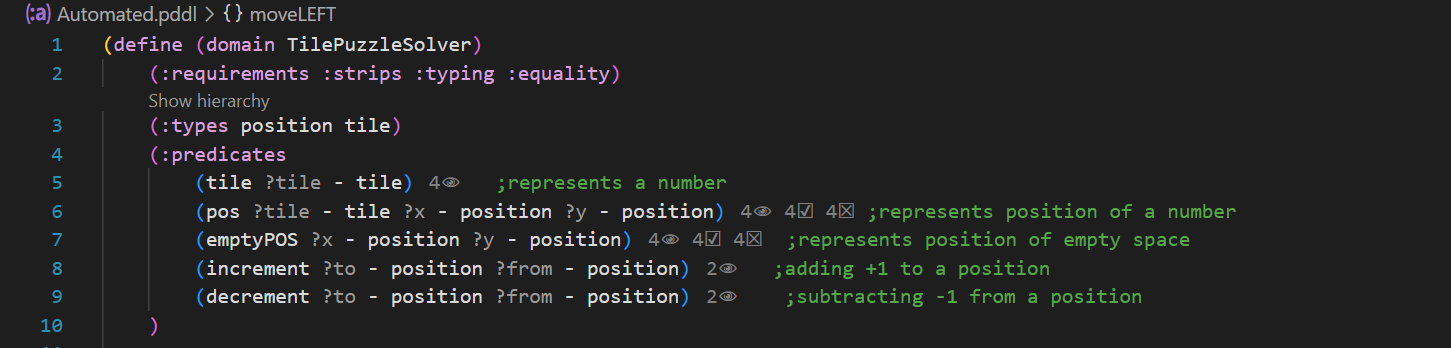
**Part 2: PDDL Implementation**

PDDL provides the ability of separating a planning problem into a planning domain and problem instances. This is great for representing planning problems due to generalization of a solution plan and also for easy problem instance creation. PDDL supports STRIPS (Stanford Research Institute Problem Solver) which provides a number of useful components to plan out a solution. These include:

* Predicates – facts which describe the environment of the space.
* Actions -
  + Preconditions – some actions have certain requirements to execute.
  + Add/delete effects – changing of facts when going through an action.
* Initial state - set of facts which hold for the beginning of the planning process.
* Goal state – provides the facts required to reach final state.

PDDL is useful especially in our case since our scenario is fully deterministic, meaning all tiles and positions on the grid are visible. For our project, we must present a domain about a 3 by 3 grid with numbers from 1 to 8 randomly allocated and 1 empty position.

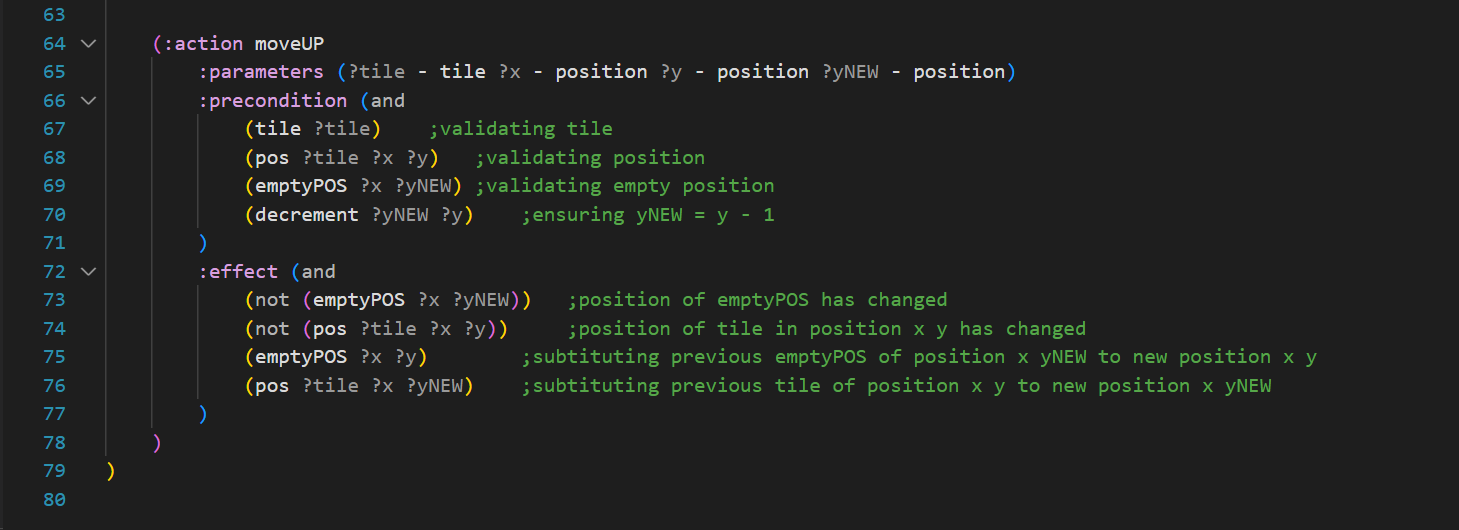
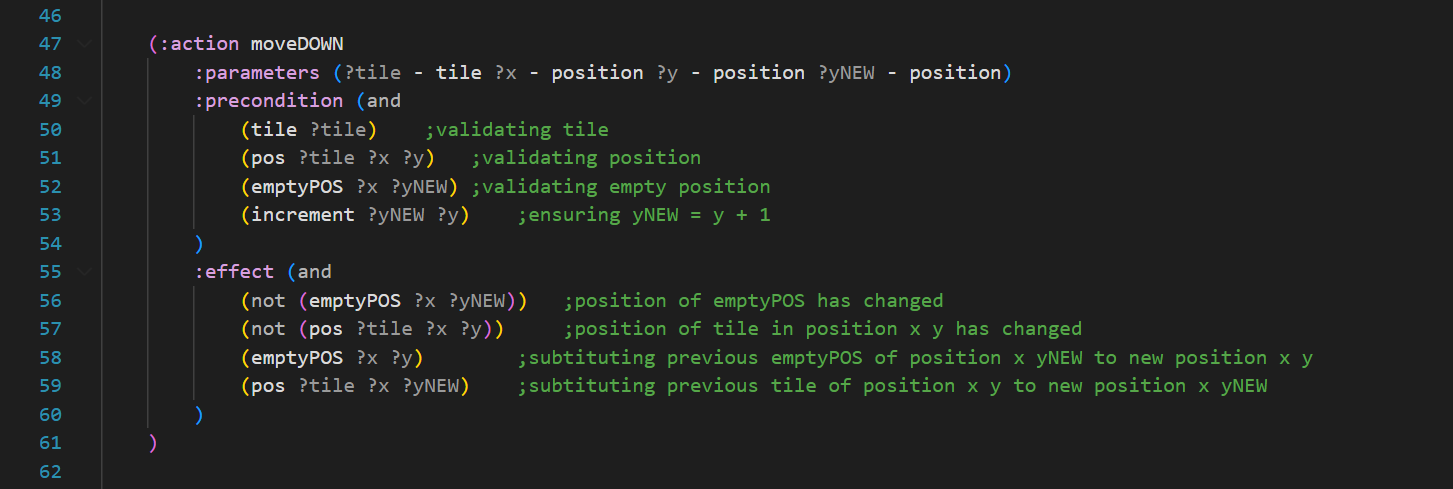
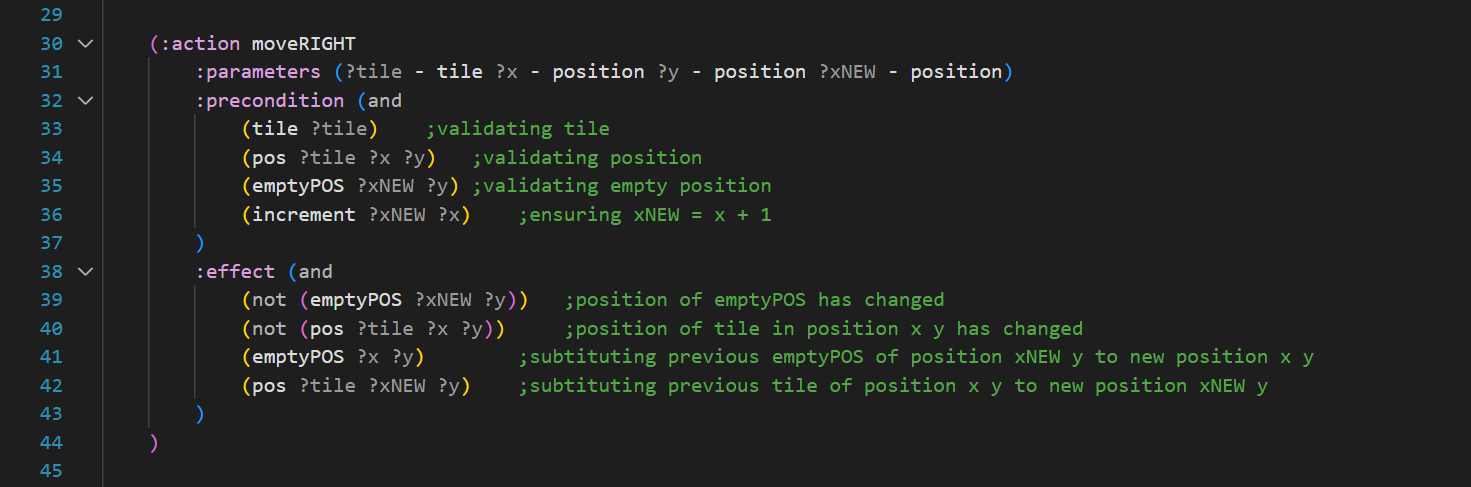
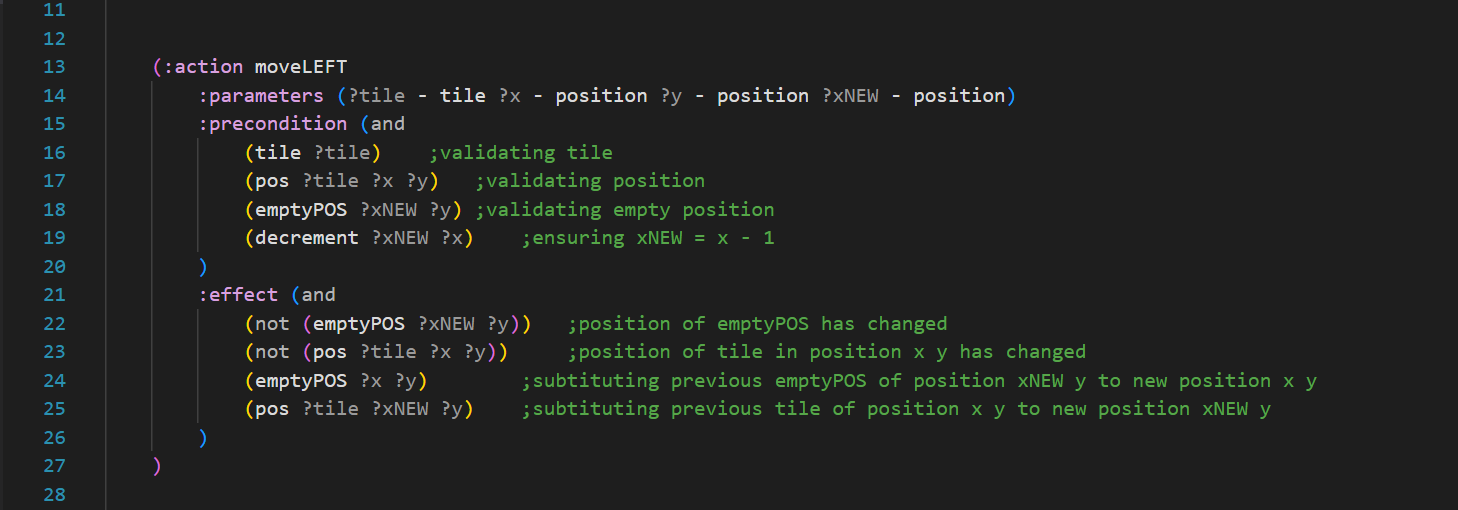
Domain file: Automated.pddl



The above represents the fundamentals aspects of the domain file;

* Requirements:
  + strips to define actions and preconditions
  + typing to introduce object types
  + equality for logical comparing
* Types:
  + Tile – represents a puzzle tile of the grid
  + Position – represents the coordinates on the grid of a specific tile or empty space.
* Predicates:
  + Tile – validates a tile variable
  + Pos – describes the coordinates of a tile
  + emptyPos - describes the current position of where there is no tile (empty space/ 0)
  + increment – to represent a +1 addition to a previous position
  + decrement – to represent a -1 subtraction to a previous position

After gathering the fundamentals of the domain, then we create the possible actions. Each action will have its own unique requirements(preconditions) and own effects.



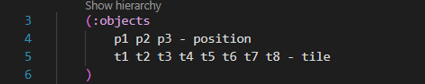
Actions:

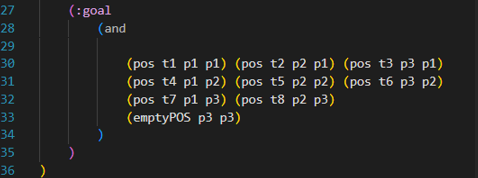
* moveLEFT:
  + preconditions – checks and validates all called parameters and ensures a decrement between variables.
  + effects – states that the previous positions are no longer valid and swaps the empty position with the tile in position x y.
* moveRIGHT:
  + preconditions – checks and validates all called parameters and ensures an increment between variables.
  + effects – states that the previous positions are no longer valid and swaps the empty position with the tile in position x y.
* moveUP:
  + preconditions – checks and validates all called parameters and ensures a decrement between variables.
  + effects – states that the previous positions are no longer valid and swaps the empty position with the tile in position x y.
* moveDOWN:
  + preconditions – checks and validates all called parameters and ensures an increment between variables.
  + effects – states that the previous positions are no longer valid and swaps the empty position with the tile in position x y.

Problem Definitions:

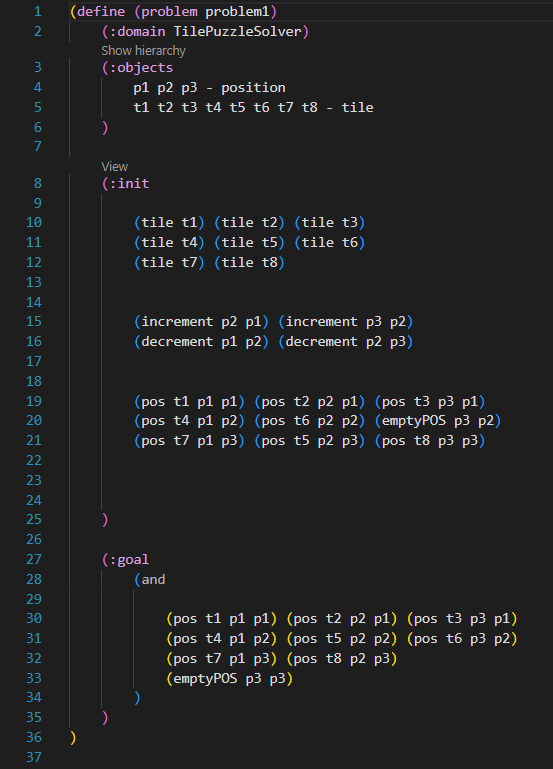
Our program ranges 6 different problem, 1-4 are solved within 2 to 3 moves while 5 and 6 are longer and have deeper state searching to solve.

Our problems are defined as following:

* object creation – initializing variables and setting their object type.
* Init – sets all puzzle tiles from t1 to t8, sets possible increments and decrements (1->2->3) and (3->2->1). Then the initial state of the puzzle board is created. Usually this is the only part of the file which differs from one problem file to another, since the object type declaration, variable creation, and goal state are kept the same.
* Goal – represents the state of facts which must be true for the algorithm to stop (Final state). The goal state is the same for every PDDL problem;

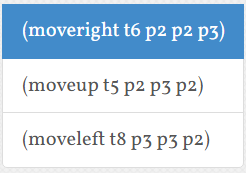


Problem 1: problem1.pddl

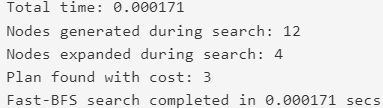




Initial state of problem 1:



Solution of problem 1:



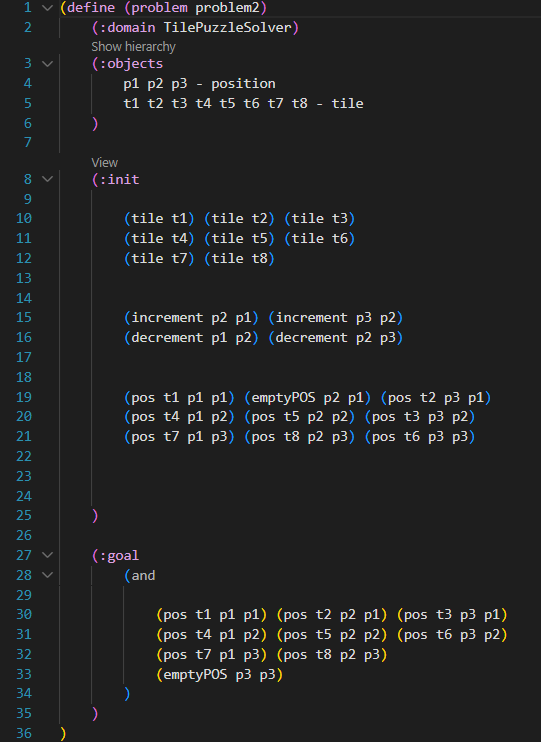
Plan length: 3

States expanded: 4

States discovered: 12

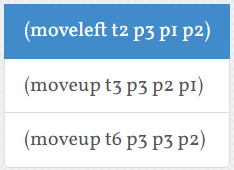
Time taken: 0.000171

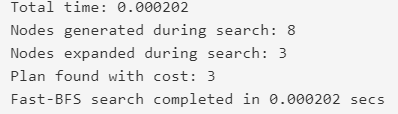
Problem 2: problem2.pddl





Initial state of problem 2:

Solution for problem 2:



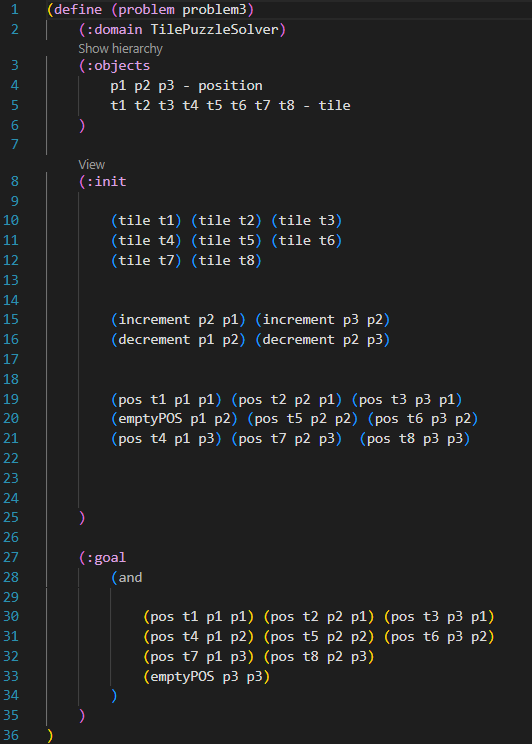
Plan length: 3

States expanded: 3

States discovered: 8

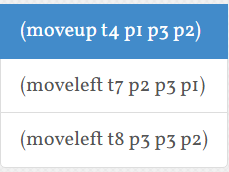
Time taken: 0.000202

Problem 3: problem3.pddl

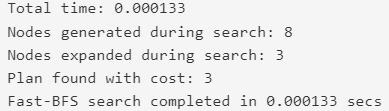




Initial state of problem 3:



Solution for problem 3:



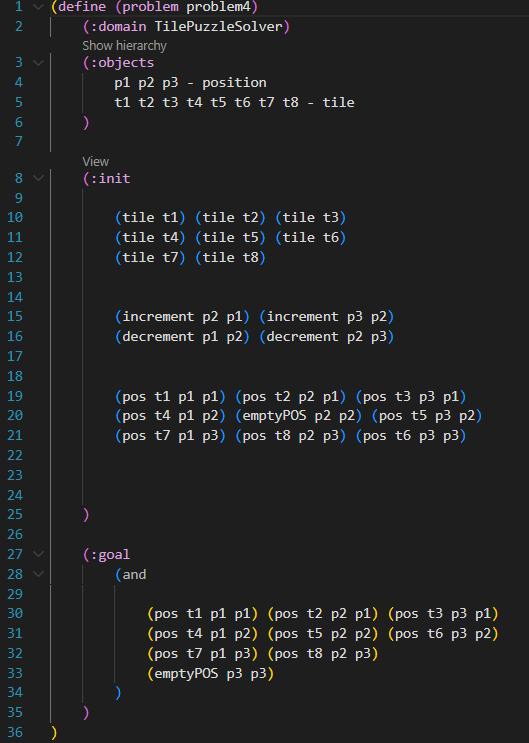
Plan length: 3

States expanded: 3

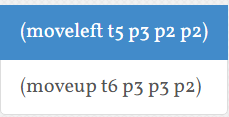
States discovered: 8

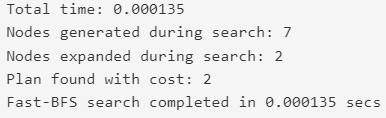
Time taken: 0.000133

Problem 4: problem4.pddl



Initial state for problem 4:

Solution for problem 4:



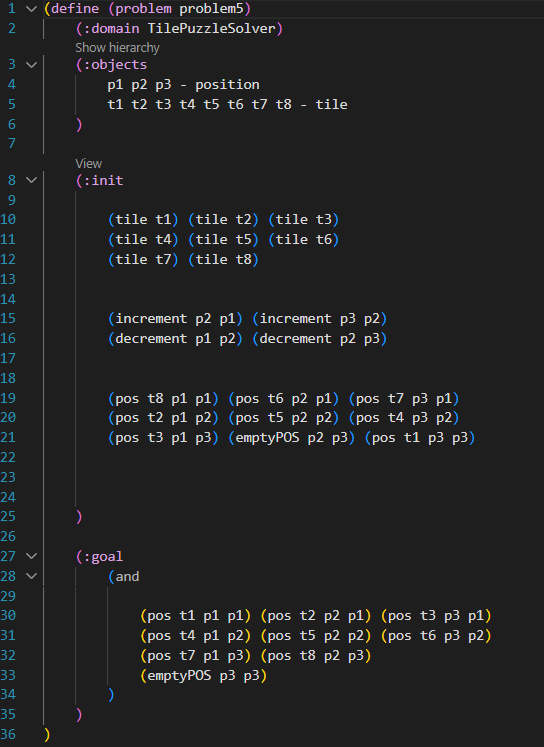
Plan length: 2

States expanded: 2

States discovered: 7

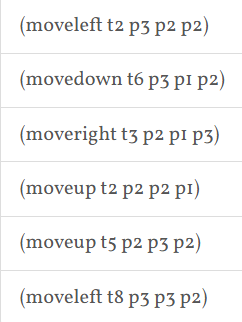
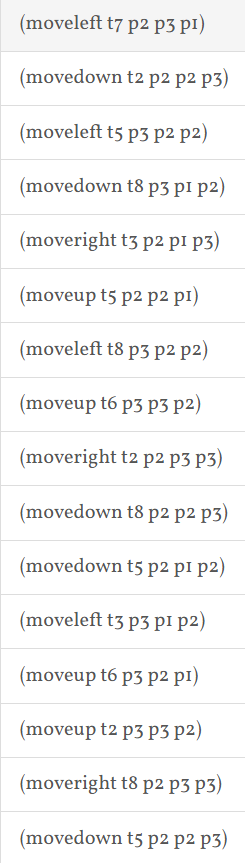
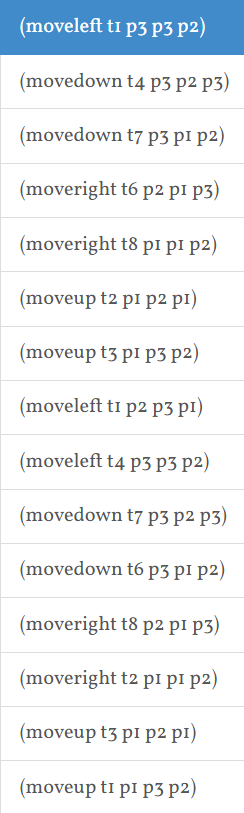
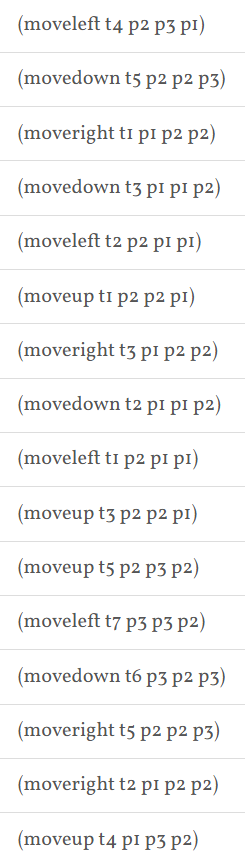
Time taken: 0.000135

Problem 5: problem5-hard.pddl



Initial state for problem 5:

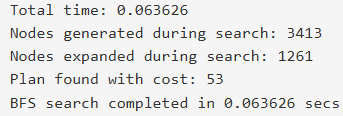
Solution for problem 5:



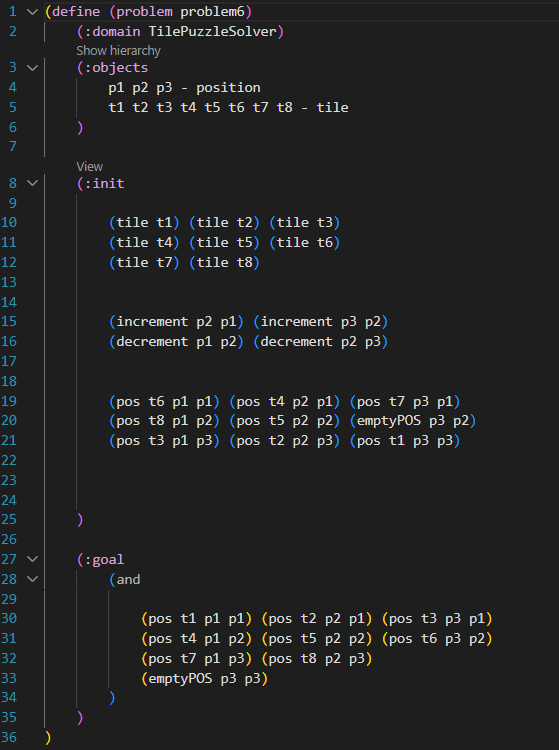
Plan length: 53

States expanded: 1261

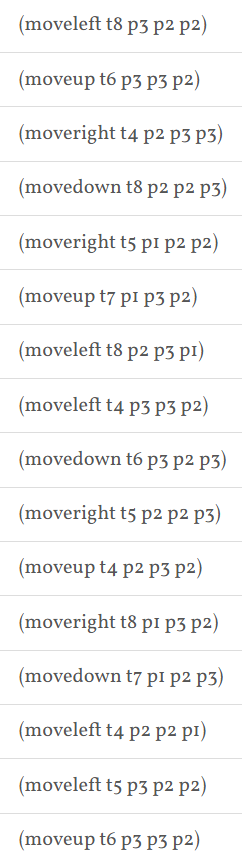
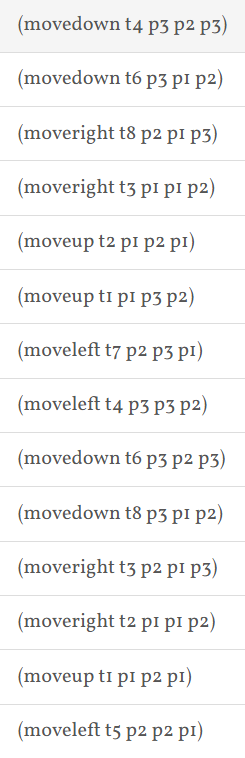
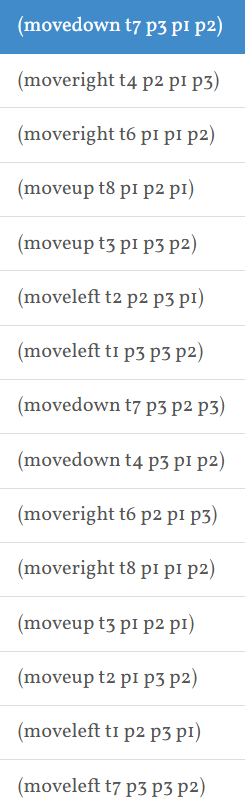
States discovered: 3413

Time taken: 0.063626

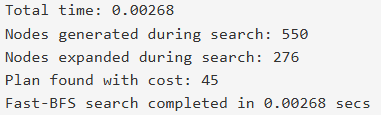
Problem 6: problem6-hard.pddl



Initial state for problem 6:



Solution for problem 6:



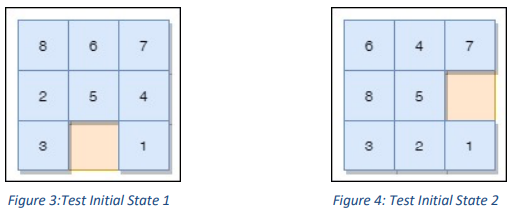
Plan length: 45

States expanded: 276

States discovered: 550

Time taken: 0.00268

Comparing results of Part 1 and Part 2:



References:

Distribution of Work: