

# Assignment 1 — Sorting Algorithms and Running Times - Group 10

## Introduction

This report presents the solutions to **Assignment 1**, which focuses on the analysis of sorting algorithms and divide-and-conquer recurrences. The assignment combines **empirical evaluation** (through implementation and experiments) with **theoretical analysis** (using asymptotic notation, the Master Theorem, and substitution method).

The work was carried out as a **group assignment** by:

- **Janani Raghu**
- **Dilhani Jayawickrama**
- **Parneet Kaur**

The implementations for Task 1 (step counting) and Task 2 (execution-time comparison in Python and C), along with experiment scripts, plots, and raw results, are maintained in a public GitHub repository to ensure reproducibility and conciseness of this report.

**GitHub Repository (source code and experiments):**

<https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo>

The report itself focuses on methodology, results, and analysis, while detailed code listings are referenced externally.

## Task 1 — Counting the Steps

### Objective

The objective of this task is to implement four sorting algorithms, vary the input size ( $n$ ), count the number of elementary steps, and verify that the observed growth matches the theoretical asymptotic running times.

The algorithms considered are:

- Insertion Sort
- Merge Sort
- Heap Sort
- Quick Sort

### Method

All algorithms were implemented in Python with explicit counters for:

- element comparisons

- array writes/swaps

The total number of steps is defined as the sum of comparisons and writes.

Worst-case inputs were used for algorithms whose running time depends on input order:

- **Insertion sort:** reverse-sorted input
- **Quick sort:** already sorted input with last-element pivot

Merge sort and heap sort were evaluated using random inputs, since their asymptotic complexity is independent of input ordering.

### Code reference (Task 1):

The full Python implementations for step counting, input generation, and plotting are available in the GitHub repository:

<https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo/task1.ipynb>

## Experimental Results

The figure below shows the total number of counted steps (comparisons + writes) as a function of the input size ( $n$ ) for all four algorithms.

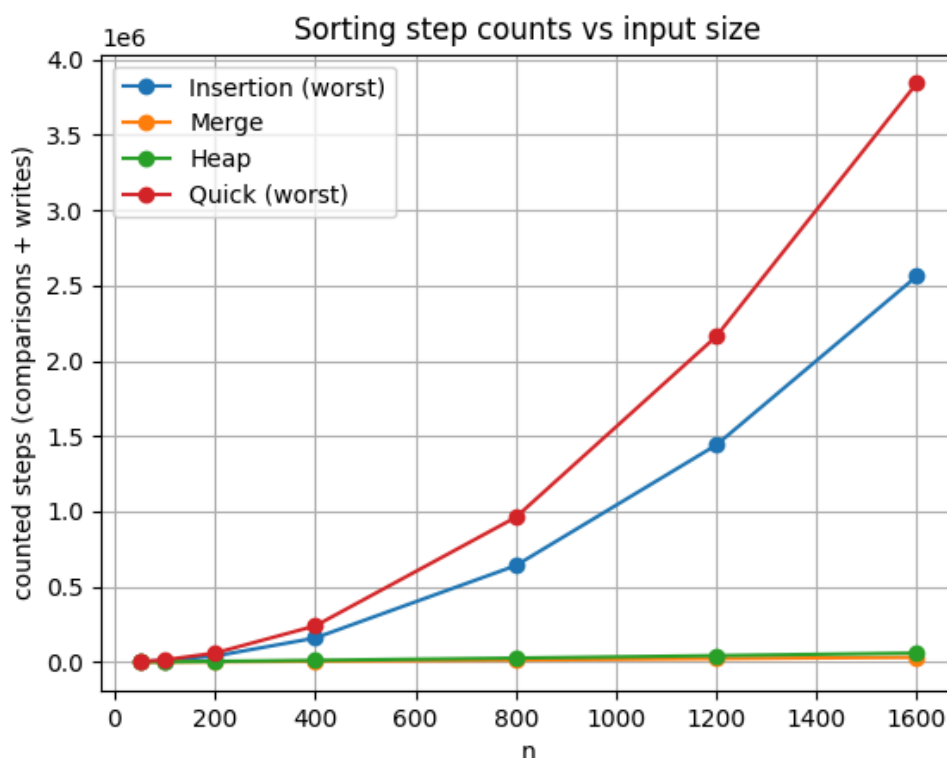


Figure 1: Step count growth as a function of input size ( $n$ ), confirming the theoretical asymptotic running times.

## Conclusion

The measured step counts confirm the expected worst-case asymptotic behavior:

- Insertion sort and worst-case quicksort exhibit quadratic growth  $\Theta((n^2))$ .
- Merge sort and heap sort exhibit  $(n \log n)$  growth.

## Task 2 — Comparing True Execution Time

### Objective

The objective of this task is to compare the actual execution time of sorting algorithms implemented in two different programming languages.

### Method

Merge sort and quicksort were implemented in:

- **Python**
- **C** (compiled with `gcc -O2`)

Execution time was measured for increasing input sizes ( $n$ ). Each experiment was repeated multiple times, and the **minimum observed execution time** was recorded to reduce noise from system effects. Identical randomly generated inputs were used across languages to ensure a fair comparison.

#### Code reference (Task 2):

The Python and C implementations used for execution-time comparison, including benchmark scripts and raw timing outputs, are available in the GitHub repository:

- C benchmark implementation:  
[https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo/sort\\_benchmark.c](https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo/sort_benchmark.c)
- Python benchmark implementation:  
[https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo/sort\\_benchmark.py](https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo/sort_benchmark.py)
- Comparison between C and Python:  
[https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo/task2\\_plot\\_time\\_c\\_vs\\_python.ipynb](https://github.com/Jananir27/Group-10-Algo/task2_plot_time_c_vs_python.ipynb)

### Results

The measured execution times show that:

- The **C implementations consistently outperform Python** for all tested input sizes.
- Both languages exhibit the same asymptotic growth trends, matching theoretical expectations.
- Merge sort shows stable scaling, while quicksort performance is sensitive to pivot selection.

### Experimental Results

The figure below shows the execution time as a function of the input size ( $n$ ) for Python and C implementations of the sorting algorithms.

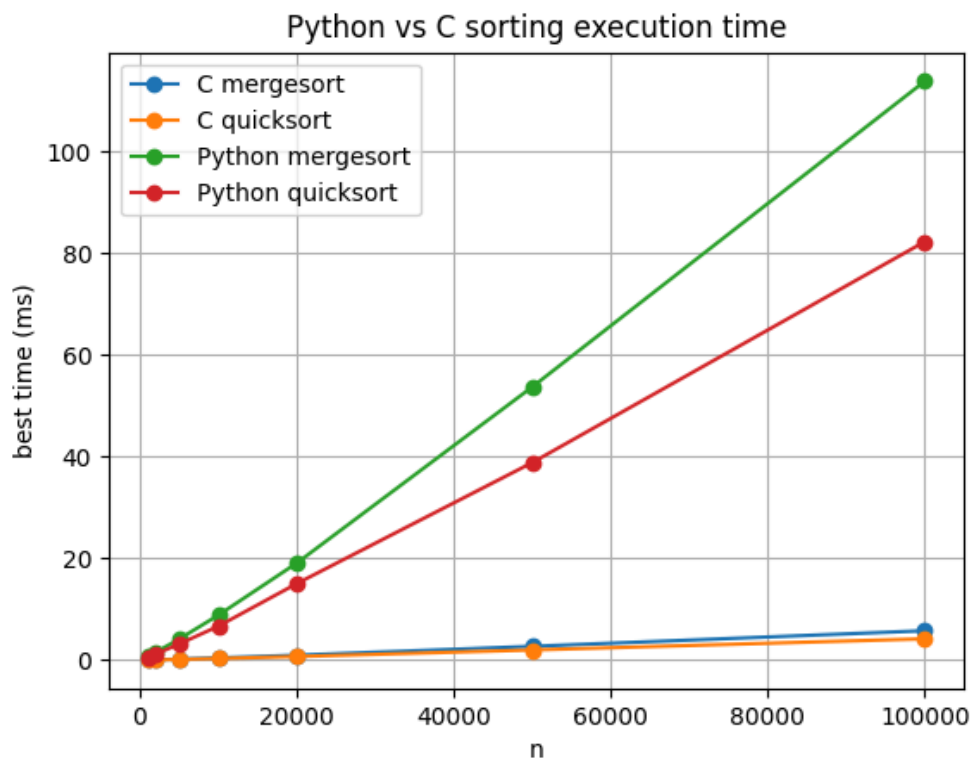


Figure 2: Execution time comparison of sorting algorithms implemented in Python and C for increasing input sizes.

## Discussion

Although asymptotic analysis predicts similar growth rates, the constant factors differ significantly between languages. Python incurs additional overhead due to interpretation, dynamic typing, and memory management, whereas C executes compiled machine code with lower per-operation cost.

## Conclusion

This experiment demonstrates that asymptotic complexity describes long-term growth behavior, but real execution time strongly depends on implementation language and constant factors.

## Task 3 — Basic Proofs

### (a) Show that $n^2 \log n \notin o(n^2)$

By definition, a function  $f(n)$  is in  $o(g(n))$  if:

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} [f(n) / g(n)] = 0$$

Let

$$f(n) = n^2 \log n$$

$$g(n) = n^2$$

Then:

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} [ (n^2 \log n) / n^2 ] \\ &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \log n \\ &= \infty \end{aligned}$$

Since the limit is not equal to zero, it follows that:

$$n^2 \log n \notin o(n^2)$$


---

## (b) Show that $n^2 \notin o(n^2)$

Using the definition of little-o notation:

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} [ n^2 / n^2 ] = 1$$

Since the limit is a non-zero constant, we conclude that:

$$n^2 \notin o(n^2)$$

# Task 4 — Divide and Conquer Analysis

## (a) Master Theorem: R1

Given recurrence:  $T(n) = 16 T(n/4) + n$

Identify:  $a = 16$

$b = 4$

$f(n) = n$

Compute:  $\log_b(a) = \log_4(16) = 2$

So  $n^{\log_b(a)} = n^2$

Compare  $f(n)$  with  $n^{\log_b(a)}$ :  $f(n) = n = O(n^{(2 - \epsilon)})$  with  $\epsilon = 1$

This matches Master Theorem Case 1, therefore:

$$T(n) = \Theta(n^2)$$


---

## (b) Substitution Method: $T(n) = 4T(n/2) + n$

We determine the runtime and check which inductive hypotheses hold.

### Step 1: Expected runtime (intuition)

Here:  $a = 4$ ,  $b = 2$ ,  $f(n) = n$

$n^{\log_2(4)} = n^2$

Since  $f(n)$  grows slower than  $n^2$ , the solution is:

$$T(n) = \Theta(n^2)$$

Now we verify using substitution-style inequalities.

---

### Hypothesis 1: $T(n) \leq c n^2$ ( $c > 0$ )

$$\text{Assume: } T(n/2) \leq c (n/2)^2 = c n^2 / 4$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Then: } T(n) &= 4T(n/2) + n \\ &\leq 4 * (c n^2 / 4) + n \\ &= c n^2 + n \end{aligned}$$

This is NOT  $\leq c n^2$  because of the extra  $+n$  term.

So:

**Hypothesis 1 does not hold** (as stated).

---

### Hypothesis 2: $T(n) \geq c n^2$ ( $c > 0$ )

$$\text{Assume: } T(n/2) \geq c (n/2)^2 = c n^2 / 4$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Then: } T(n) &= 4T(n/2) + n \\ &\geq 4 * (c n^2 / 4) + n \\ &= c n^2 + n \\ &\geq c n^2 \end{aligned}$$

So:

**Hypothesis 2 holds.**

---

### Hypothesis 3: $T(n) \leq (c n^2 - b n)$ ( $c > 0, b > 0$ )

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Assume: } T(n/2) &\leq c (n/2)^2 - b (n/2) \\ &= c n^2 / 4 - b n / 2 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Then: } T(n) &= 4T(n/2) + n \\ &\leq 4 * (c n^2 / 4 - b n / 2) + n \\ &= c n^2 - 2 b n + n \\ &= c n^2 - (2b - 1) n \end{aligned}$$

To make this  $\leq c n^2 - b n$ , it is enough that:  $(2b - 1) \geq b \Leftrightarrow b \geq 1$

So:

**Hypothesis 3 holds for  $b \geq 1$**  (and for sufficiently large  $n$  with a valid base case).

---

## Conclusion for (b)

The recurrence grows as:

$$T(n) = \Theta(n^2)$$

Hypotheses:

- (1) does NOT hold
  - (2) holds
  - (3) holds (for  $b \geq 1$ )
- 

## Bonus Task — $T(n) = 2T(n/2) + n \log n$

Identify:  $a = 2$

$b = 2$

$f(n) = n \log n$

Compute:  $\log_b(a) = \log_2(2) = 1$

So  $n^{(\log_b(a))} = n$

Now compare:  $f(n) = n \log n = \Theta(n * \log^1(n))$

This matches the "complete" Master Theorem Case 2: If  $f(n) = \Theta(n^{(\log_b(a))} * \log^k(n))$  then  $T(n) = \Theta(n^{(\log_b(a))} * \log^{(k+1)}(n))$

Here  $k = 1$ , therefore:

$$T(n) = \Theta(n \log^2 n)$$