A pair of glasses with a dark frame and light-colored lenses is resting on a piece of white paper. The background is a soft, out-of-focus yellow and orange gradient.

Data Structures

Chapter 1

1. Recursion

- Recursion
- Mergesort

2. Performance Analysis

3. Asymptotic Analysis

Recursion

- See Recursion

TOP DEFINITION

recursion

See recursion.

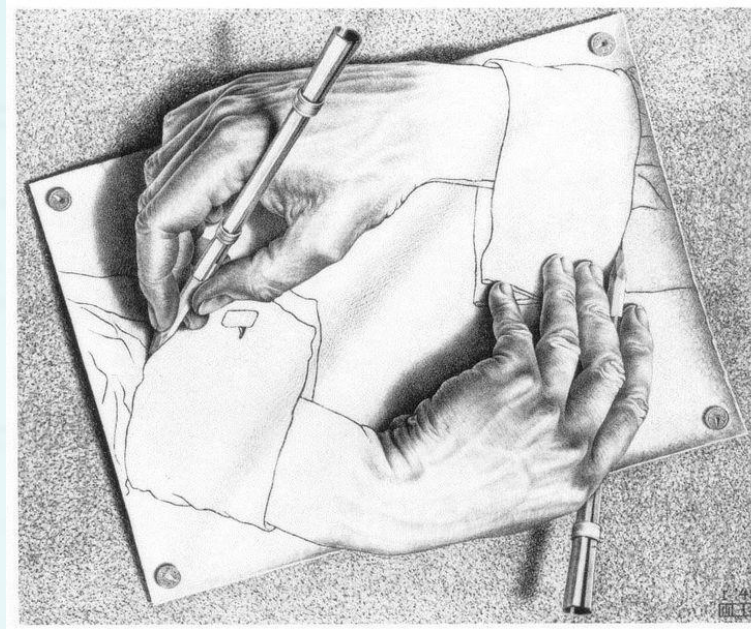
by [Anonymous](#) December 05, 2002

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Very descriptive definition

Recursion

- See Recursion
- Recursion is when a function calls itself
- Recursion simplifies program structure at a cost of function calls
- Recursion vs. Leap of faith



***recursion is
when a function calls itself***

Example 1: BunnyEars

- What is the output of the function `bunnyEars()`?
- What is the output of the function `main()`?
- How many times does two returns execute, respectively?

```
int bunnyEars(int n) {  
    cout << n << endl;  
    if (n > 0)  
        return bunnyEars(n - 1) + 2;  
    return 0;  
}
```

```
int main() {  
    cout << bunnyEars(4) << endl;  
}
```

1	bunnyEars(4)	
2	cout << 4	
3	bunnyEars(3)	
4	cout << 3	
5	bunnyEars(2)	
6	cout << 2	
7	bunnyEars(1)	
8	cout << 1	
9	bunnyEars(0)	
10	cout << 0	return 0

Example 1: BunnyEars

- What is the output of the function `bunnyEars()`?
- What is the output of the function `main()`?
- How many times does two returns execute, respectively?

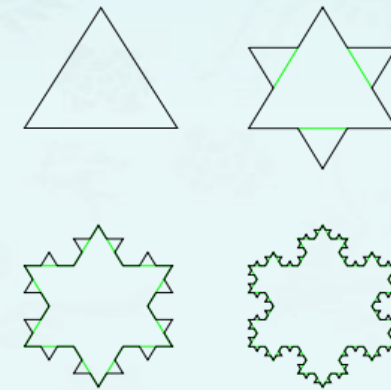
```
int bunnyEars(int n) {  
    cout << n << endl;  
    if (n > 0)  
        return bunnyEars(n - 1) + 2;  
    return 0;  
}
```

```
int main() {  
    cout << bunnyEars(4) << endl;  
}
```

1	bunnyEars(4)	
2	cout << 4	return f(3) + 2
3	bunnyEars(3)	
4	cout << 3	return f(2) + 2
5	bunnyEars(2)	
6	cout << 2	return f(1) + 2
7	bunnyEars(1)	
8	cout << 1	return f(0) + 2
9	bunnyEars(0)	
10	cout << 0	

Recursion

- **Recursion** is a method where the solution to a problem depends on solutions to **smaller** instances of the same problem (as opposed to iteration).
- **Recursive algorithm** is expressed in terms of
 1. **base case(s)** for which the solution can be stated **non-recursively**,
 2. **recursive case(s)** for which the solution can be expressed in terms of a **smaller version of itself**.



Four stages in the construction of a **Koch snowflake**. The stages are obtained via a recursive definition.

Example 3: Factorial

$$\text{fact}(n) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n = 0 \\ n \cdot \text{fact}(n - 1) & \text{if } n > 0 \end{cases}$$

factorial(n)

function factorial

input: integer n such that $n \geq 0$

output: $[n \times (n-1) \times (n-2) \times \dots \times 1]$

1. if n is 0, **return** 1

2. otherwise, **return** $[n \times \text{factorial}(n-1)]$

end factorial

factorial ($n = 4$)

$$\begin{aligned} f_4 &= 4 * f_3 \\ &= 4 * (3 * f_2) \\ &= 4 * (3 * (2 * f_1)) \\ &= 4 * (3 * (2 * (1 * f_0))) \\ &= 4 * (3 * (2 * (1 * 1))) \\ &= 4 * (3 * (2 * 1)) \\ &= 4 * (3 * 2) \\ &= 4 * 6 \\ &= 24 \end{aligned}$$

Example 3: Factorial

$$\text{fact}(n) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n = 0 \\ n \cdot \text{fact}(n - 1) & \text{if } n > 0 \end{cases}$$

factorial(n)

function factorial

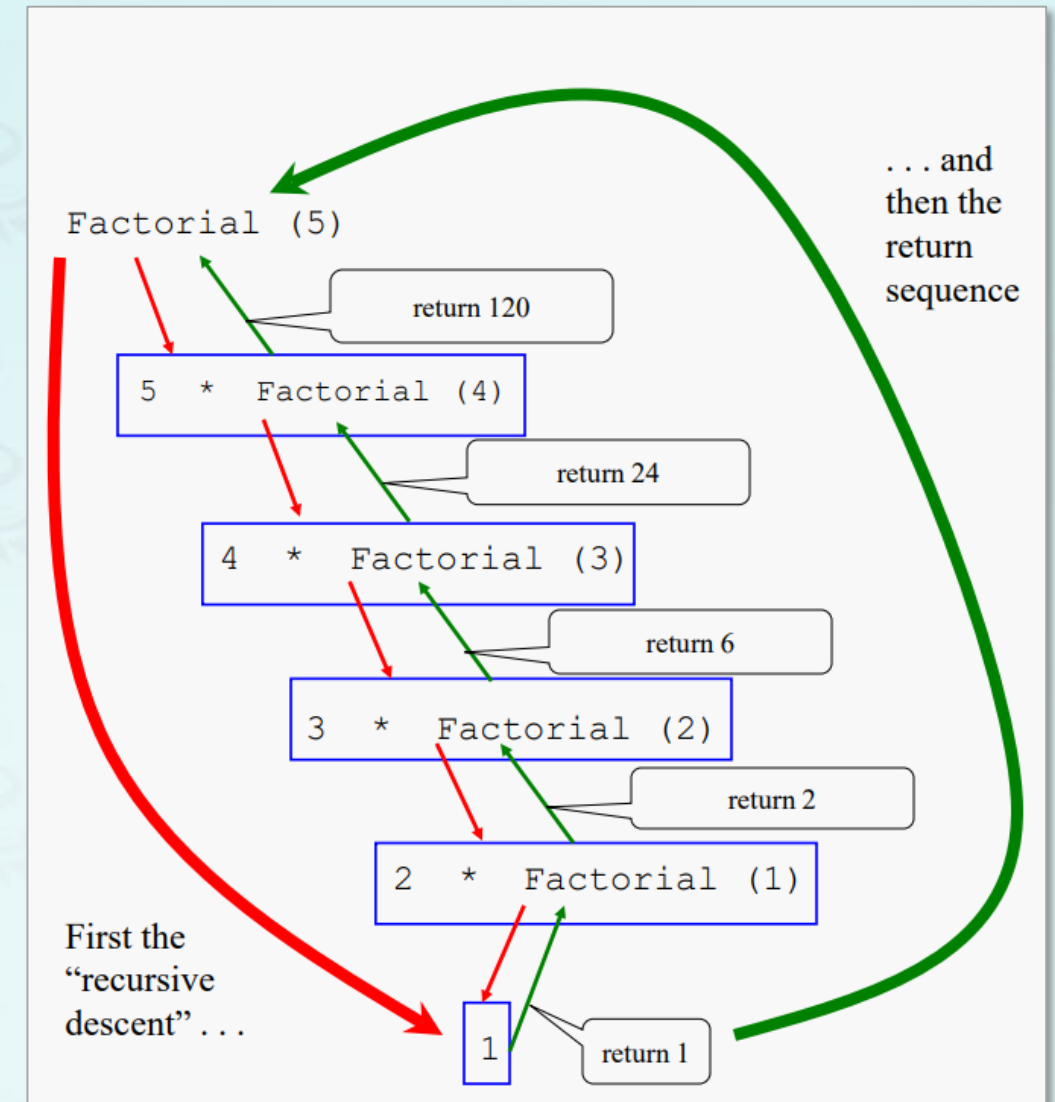
input: integer n such that $n \geq 0$

output: $[n \times (n-1) \times (n-2) \times \dots \times 1]$

1. if n is 0, **return** 1

2. otherwise, **return** $[n \times \text{factorial}(n-1)]$

end factorial



Example 4: GCD

- Compute **GCD** recursively with $\text{gcd}(x=259, y=111) = ?$

$$\text{gcd}(x, y) = \begin{cases} x & \text{if } y = 0 \\ \text{gcd}(y, \text{remainder}(x, y)) & \text{if } y > 0 \end{cases}$$

$\text{gcd}(x, y)$

function gcd

input: integer x, y such that $x \geq y, y > 0$

output: gcd of x and y

1. if y is 0, **return** x

2. otherwise, **return** [gcd (y, $x \% y$)]

end gcd

$\text{gcd}(x=259, y=111)$

gcd(259, 111)

= gcd(111, $259 \% 111$)

= **gcd(111, 37)**

= gcd(37, $111 \% 37$)

= **gcd(37, 0)**

= 37

- Exercise: gcd(91, 52)

Reminder

- **Recursion** is a method where the solution to a problem depends on solutions to **smaller** instances of the same problem (as opposed to iteration).

Example 5: Recursive binary search

- Binary search is an efficient algorithm for finding an item from **a sorted list** of items.
 - It works by repeatedly **dividing in half the portion of the list** that could contain the item,
 - until you've **narrowed down the possible locations to just one.**

key=23

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

Example 5: Recursive binary search

- For instance, we want to search "23" from the array. If we find it, we return its array index; otherwise, -1 or something else.

key=23	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

key > mi 23 > 16	lo=0	1	2	3	mi=4	5	6	7	8	hi=9
	2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

key < mi 23 < 56	0	1	2	3	4	lo=5	6	mi=7	8	hi=9
	2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

key = mi 23 = 23	0	1	2	3	4	mi=5 lo=5	hi=6	7	8	9
	2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

```
int binarySearch(int list[], int key,
                 int lo, int hi) {
    if (lo > hi) return -1;

    mi = (lo + hi)/2;
    if (key == list[mi]) return mi;
    if (key < list[mi])
        return binarySearch(list, key, lo, mi-1);
    else
        return binarySearch(list, key, mi+1, hi);
}
```

Example 5: Recursive binary search

- For instance, we want to search "23" from the array. If we find it, we return its array index; otherwise, -1 or something else.

key=23

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

key>mi
23>16

lo=0	1	2	3	mi=4	5	6	7	8	hi=9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

key<mi
23<56

0	1	2	3	4	lo=5	6	mi=7	8	hi=9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

key=mi
23=23

0	1	2	3	4	mi=5 lo=5	hi=6	7	8	9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

```
int binarySearch(int list[], int key,
                 int lo, int hi) {
    if (lo > hi) return -1;

    mi = (lo + hi)/2;
    if (key == list[mi]) return mi;
    if (key < list[mi])
        return binarySearch(list, key, lo, mi - 1);
    else
        return binarySearch(list, key, mi + 1, hi);
}
```

Example 5: Recursive binary search

- How many times is the `binarySearch()` called in terms of n ?
- In one call to `binarySearch()`, we eliminate at least half the elements from consideration. Hence, it takes $\log_2 n$ (the base 2 logarithm of n) `binarySearch()` calls to compare down the possibilities to one. Therefore `binarySearch` takes time proportional to $\log_2 n$.

```
int binarySearch(int list[], int key, int lo, int hi) {  
    if (lo > hi) return -1;  
  
    mi = (lo + hi)/2;  
    if (key == list[mi]) return mi;           // base case  
    if (key < list[mi])                       // recursive case  
        return binarySearch(list, key, lo, mi - 1);  
    else  
        return binarySearch(list, key, mi + 1, hi);  
}
```


Example 6: Recursive binary search 100

- Given the numbers 1 to 100, what is the minimum number of guesses needed to find a specific number if you are given the hint 'higher' or 'lower' for each guess you make?
 - Since the numbers are sequential (or sorted), we can use **binary search**.
 - Look at the middle element: if it's after than the number we're looking for, search the first half. If it's before the number we're looking for, look at the second half.
 - Each check cuts the size of the list numbers in half; how many times can we do this?
 - If we think backwards, in terms of doubling the list, we'll need n doublings to generate a list of length $2^n = 100$. What is the value of n ?
 - Since $2^6 = 64$ and $2^7 = 128$ (or $\log_2 64 = 6$, $\log_2 128 = 7$), $n = 6.x$
Therefore $n = 7$ guesses will be enough.

Example 6: Recursive binary search 1000

- Given the numbers 1 to 1000, what is the minimum number of guesses needed to find a specific number if you are given the hint 'higher' or 'lower' for each guess you make?
 - For an array whose length is 1000, the closest lower power of 2 is 512, which is 2^9 .
 - We can thus estimate that $\log_2 1000$ is a number greater than 9 and less than 10, or use a calculator to see that its about 9.97. Adding one to that yields about 10.97.
 - In the case of a decimal number, we round down to find the actual number of guesses.
 - Therefore, for a 1000-element array, binary search would require at most **10 guesses**.

Reference: <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/complexity-analysis-of-binary-search/>

Example 5: Recursive binary search

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

lo=0	1	2	3	mi=4	5	6	7	8	hi=9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

0	1	2	3	4	lo=5	6	mi=7	8	hi=9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71

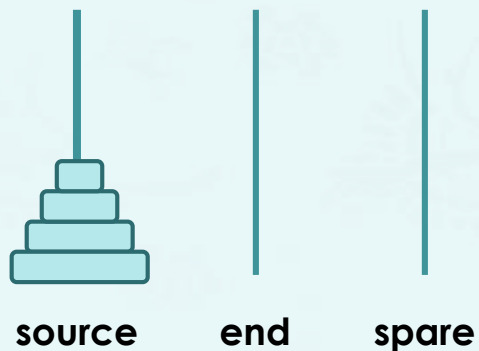
0	1	2	3	4	mi=5	lo=5	hi=6	7	8	9
2	5	8	9	16	23	31	56	62	71	

	Stack	Stack	Heap
search()	lo=5 hi=6 mi=5	key=23 list[.]	
search()	lo=5 hi=9 mi=7	key=23 list[.]	
search()	lo=0 hi=9 mi=4	key=23 list[.]	
search()	key=23	list[.]	[2 5 8 9 16 23 31 56 62 71]
main()		args[.]	args[]

Most operating systems give a program enough stack space for a few thousand stack frames. If you use a recursive procedure to walk through a million-node list, the program will try to create a million stack frames, and **the stack will run out of space**. The result is a run-time error.

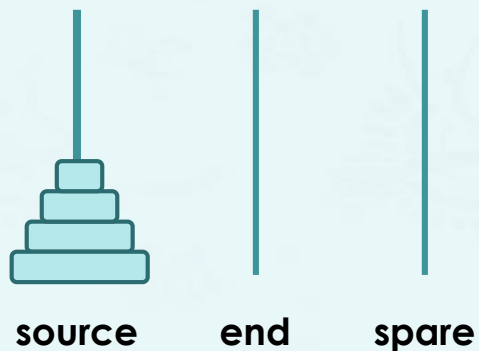
Example 6: Tower of Hanoi

- Given three pegs, one with a set of N disks of increasing size, determine the minimum (optimal) number of steps it takes to move all the disks from their initial position to a single stack on another peg *without placing a larger disk on top of a smaller one. Only one disk can be moved at any time.*



Example 6: Tower of Hanoi

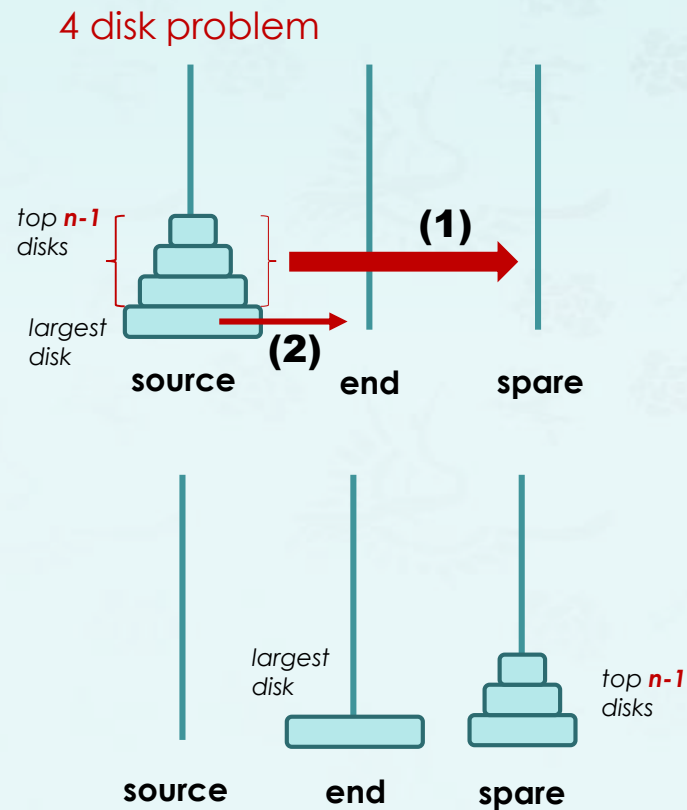
- Given three pegs, one with a set of N disks of increasing size, determine the minimum (optimal) number of steps it takes to move all the disks from their initial position to a single stack on another peg *without placing a larger disk on top of a smaller one*. Only one disk can be moved at any time.
- **Recursive algorithm:**
 - (1) Move the top **$n-1$** disks from **source** to **spare**.
 - (2) Move the remaining (**largest**) disk from **source** to **end**.
 - (3) Move the **$n-1$** disks from **spare** to **end**.



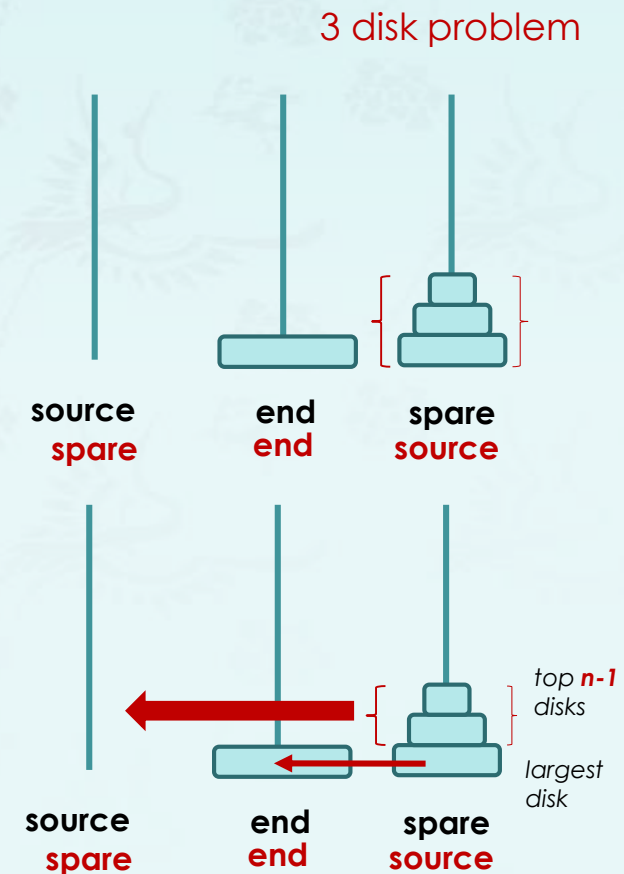
Example 6: Tower of Hanoi

- **Recursive algorithm:**

- (1) Move the top **$n-1$** disks from **source** to **spare**.
- (2) Move the remaining (**largest**) disk from **source** to **end**.
- (3) Move the **$n-1$** disks from **spare** to **end**.



(3) It becomes a **3 disk problem**.
Go back to step 1.
Treat the **spare** as **source** and
the **source** as **spare**.



Example 6: Tower of Hanoi

- **Recursive algorithm:**

- (1) Move the top ***n-1*** disks from **source** to **spare**.
- (2) Move the remaining (***largest***) disk from **source** to **end**.
- (3) Move the ***n-1*** disks from **spare** to **end**.

- **How do you program this to have the output as shown below?**

- (1) Disk 1 from A to C
- (2) Disk 2 from A to B
- (3) Disk 1 from C to B
- (4) Disk 3 from A to C
- (5) Disk 1 from B to A
- (6) Disk 2 from B to C
- (7) Disk 1 from A to C

```
void hanoi(int n, char source, char spare, char end) {  
    if (n == 1)  
        printf("Disk 1 from %c to %c\n", source, end);  
    else {  
        hanoi(n - 1, source, end, spare);  
        printf("Disk %d from %c to %c\n", n, source, end);  
        hanoi(n - 1, spare, source, end);  
    }  
}
```

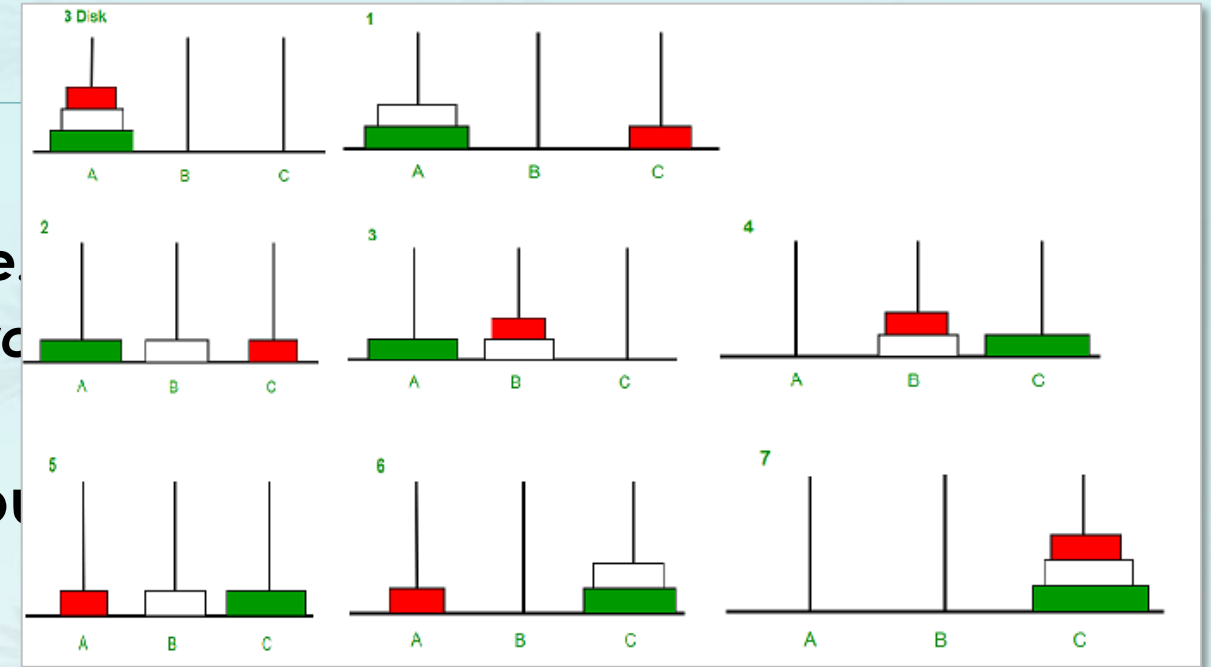
Example 6: Tower of Hanoi

- **Recursive algorithm:**

- (1) Move the top ***n-1*** disks from **source** to **spare**.
- (2) Move the remaining (***largest***) disk from **source** to **end**.
- (3) Move the ***n-1*** disks from **spare** to **end**.

- **How do you program this to have the output**

- (1) Disk 1 from A to C
- (2) Disk 2 from A to B
- (3) Disk 1 from C to B
- (4) Disk 3 from A to C
- (5) Disk 1 from B to A
- (6) Disk 2 from B to C
- (7) Disk 1 from A to C



```
void hanoi(int n, char source, char spare, char end) {  
    if (n == 1)  
        printf("Disk 1 from %c to %c\n", source, end);  
    else {  
        hanoi(n - 1, source, end, spare);  
        printf("Disk %d from %c to %c\n", n, source, end);  
        hanoi(n - 1, spare, source, end);  
    }  
}
```

Example 6: Time complexity of Tower of Hanoi - $O(2^n)$

$$\text{hanoi}(n) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n = 1 \\ 2 \cdot \text{hanoi}(n - 1) + 1 & \text{if } n > 1 \end{cases}$$

Exercise: How many years will it take to move 64 disks while assuming one move per pico second at the clock speed of a super fast machine?

- (1) $\text{hanoi}(1) = 1$
- (2) $\text{hanoi}(2) = 3$
- (3) $\text{hanoi}(3) = 7$
- (4) $\text{hanoi}(4) = 15$
- (5) $\text{hanoi}(5) = 31$
- (6) $\text{hanoi}(32) = 4,294,967,295$
- (7) $\text{hanoi}(64) = 18,446,744,073,709,600,000$

hanoi(n = 4)
$\text{hanoi}(4)$ $= 2 * \text{hanoi}(3) + 1$ $= 2 * (2 * \text{hanoi}(2) + 1) + 1$ $= 2 * (2 * (2 * \text{hanoi}(1) + 1) + 1) + 1$ $= 2 * (2 * (2 * 1 + 1) + 1) + 1$ $= 2 * (2 * (3) + 1) + 1$ $= 2 * (7) + 1 = 15$

Recursion

Q: Is the recursive version usually **faster**?

A: No -- it's usually slower (due to the overhead of maintaining the stack)

Q: Does the recursive version usually use **less memory**?

A: No -- it usually uses **more** memory (for the stack).

Q: *Then why* use recursion?

A: Sometimes it is much simpler to write the recursive version.

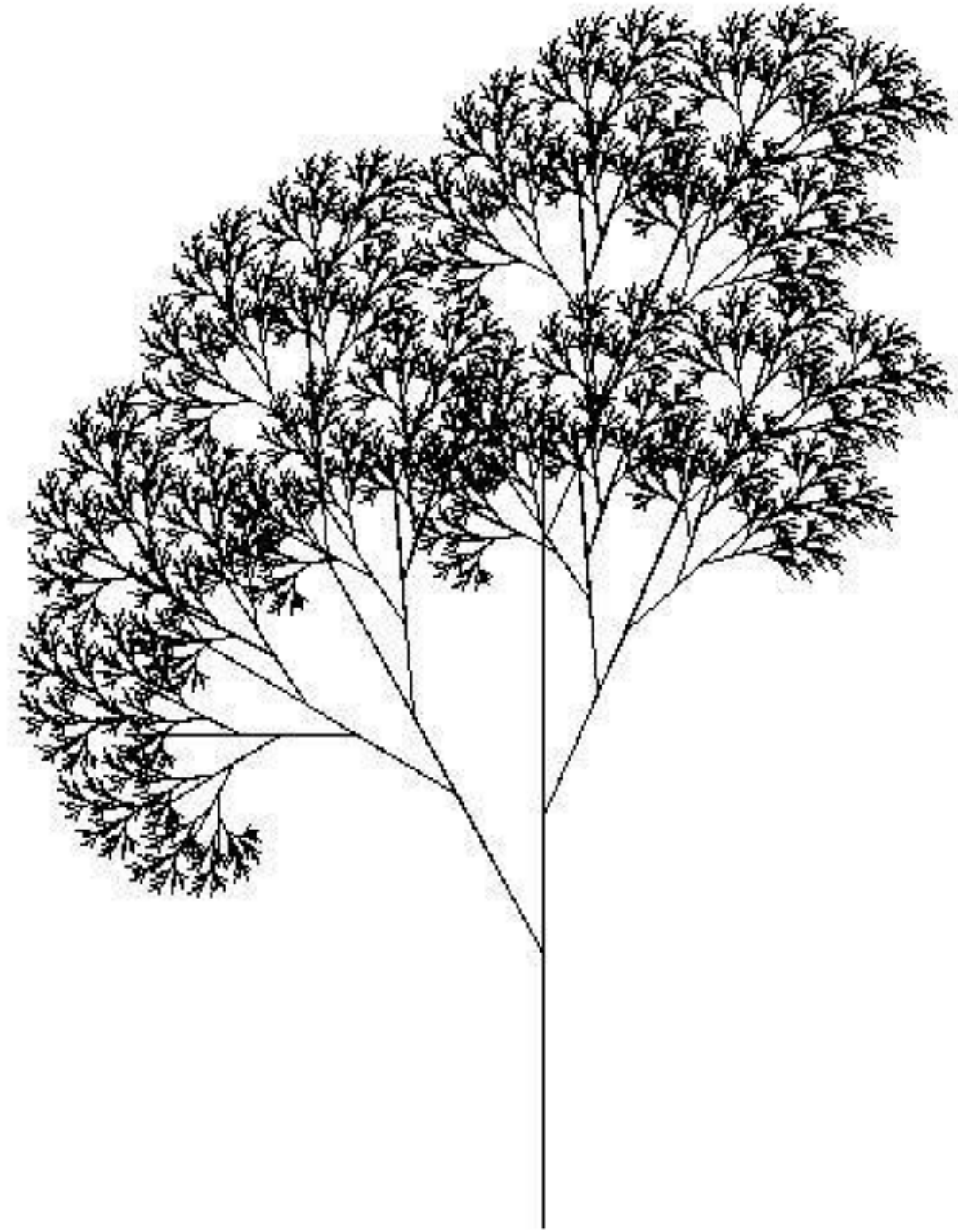
*Because the recursive version causes an **activation record** to be pushed onto the system stack for every call, it is also more limited than the iterative version (it will fail, with a "stack overflow" error), for large values of N.*




Sierpinski Triangle:
a confined recursion of triangles to
form a geometric lattice

Recursion

Recursion *see Recursion*



A pair of glasses with a dark frame and light-colored lenses is resting on a piece of white paper. The background is a soft, out-of-focus yellow and orange gradient.

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