

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

NOTES

**COSC 3340**  
**Intro. to Automata and Computability**

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# 1 Formal Languages

## 1.1 Introduction

**Definition 1.1.1.** An **Alphabet** is a finite, non-empty set of atomic symbols.

**Definition 1.1.2.** A **word** or **string** is any finite sequence of symbols from an alphabet.

**Definition 1.1.3.** The **length** of a string,  $s$ , denoted  $|s|$ , is the number of symbols in  $s$ .

**Definition 1.1.4.** Given strings  $s = s_1s_2 \dots s_n$  and  $t = t_1t_2 \dots t_m$ , their **concatenation** is defined

$$s \cdot t = s_1s_2 \dots s_nt_1t_2 \dots t_m$$

We denote by  $\varepsilon$  the **empty string**, the unique string of 0 characters.

**Definition 1.1.5.** Let  $A$  be any alphabet. The **Kleene Closure** of  $A$ , denoted  $A^*$ , is the set of all strings of any length over  $A$ .

**Theorem 1.1.1.** Let  $A$  be any finite set. Then  $A^*$  is countably infinite.

*Proof.* That  $A^*$  is infinite is straightforward: since  $A$  is non-empty, take  $a \in A$ . Then  $\{a, aa, aaa, \dots\} \subseteq A^*$ .

To see that it is countable, we first write  $|A| = n$ . Now, consider the set of all strings of length 0. This is simply  $\{\varepsilon\}$ . Moreover, there are  $n$  strings of length 1,  $n^2$  strings of length 2,  $n^3$  strings of length 3, and so on. Thus, we map  $\varepsilon$  to 0, the strings of length 1 to  $1, 2, \dots, n$ , the strings of length 2 to  $n+1, n+2, \dots, n+n^2$ , the strings of length 3 to  $n+n^2+1, n+n^2+2, \dots, n+n^2+n^3$ , and so on. This is a bijection from  $A^*$  to  $\mathbb{N}$ , which completes the proof.  $\square$

**Definition 1.1.6.** Given an alphabet  $A$ , a **formal language** or simply **language**  $L$  is any subset of  $A^*$ .

**Theorem 1.1.2.** Given an alphabet  $A$ , the set of languages over  $A$  is uncountable.

*Proof.* Suppose, by way of contradiction, that the set of languages were countable, i.e., that we can enumerate the set as  $\{L_1, L_2, L_3, \dots\}$ . Consider the set of all strings  $\{s_1, s_2, s_3, \dots\}$ . Let  $L$  be the language defined as follows:

$$s_i \in L \text{ if and only if } s_i \notin L_i$$

To see that  $L$  is not in the above list, consider  $s_i$ . If  $s_i$  is in  $L$ , then  $s_i$  is not in  $L_i$ , by construction, and  $L \neq L_i$ . Similarly, if  $s_i$  is not in  $L$ , then  $s_i$  must be in  $L_i$ , by construction, and  $L \neq L_i$ . In other words, for all  $i$ ,  $L \neq L_i$ . Then  $L$  is not in the above list, which is a contradiction. Hence, the set of languages is uncountable.  $\square$

All set operations, such as union, intersection, complement, set-difference, etc. can be applied to languages, since languages are simply subsets of a Kleene Closure of an alphabet.

**Definition 1.1.7.** Given two languages  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ , the concatenation  $L_1 \cdot L_2$  is given by

$$L_1 \cdot L_2 = \{s \cdot t | s \in L_1 \text{ and } t \in L_2\}$$

Clearly, we have

$$\begin{aligned} L \cdot \emptyset &= \emptyset = \emptyset \cdot L \\ L \cdot \{\varepsilon\} &= L = \{\varepsilon\} \cdot L \end{aligned}$$

Note that  $L_1 \cdot L_2$  is not the same as  $L_1 \times L_2$ . Let  $L_1 = L_2 = \{\varepsilon, 0, 00\}$ . Then

$$L_1 \times L_2 = \{(\varepsilon, \varepsilon), (\varepsilon, 0), (\varepsilon, 00), (0, \varepsilon), (0, 0), (0, 00), (00, \varepsilon), (00, 0), (00, 00)\}$$

whereas

$$L_1 \cdot L_2 = \{\varepsilon, 0, 00, 000, 0000\}$$

**Definition 1.1.8.** Given a language  $L$ , the **Kleene Closure** of  $L$ ,  $L^*$ , is

$$L^* = \bigcup_{i=0}^{\infty} L^i$$

where

$$L^i = \begin{cases} \{\varepsilon\} & \text{if } i = 0 \\ L \cdot L^{i-1} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Note that, while  $0^0$  is normally left undefined, we define  $\emptyset^0 = \{\varepsilon\}$ .

**Theorem 1.1.3.**  $L^*$  is finite if and only if  $L = \emptyset$  or  $L = \{\varepsilon\}$ .

*Proof.* If  $L = \emptyset$ , then  $L^i = \emptyset^i = \emptyset$  for  $i > 0$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} \emptyset^* &= \bigcup_{i=0}^{\infty} \emptyset^i \\ &= \emptyset^0 \cup \bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} \emptyset^i \\ &= \{\varepsilon\} \cup \bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} \emptyset \\ &= \{\varepsilon\} \end{aligned}$$

Similarly, if  $L = \{\varepsilon\}$ , then  $L^i = \{\varepsilon\}$  for all  $i$ , and

$$\begin{aligned} \{\varepsilon\}^* &= \bigcup_{i=0}^{\infty} \{\varepsilon\}^i \\ &= \bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} \{\varepsilon\} \\ &= \{\varepsilon\} \end{aligned}$$

However, if  $L$  is neither  $\emptyset$  nor  $\{\varepsilon\}$ , then there exists a string  $s \in L$  with length at least 1. Then  $s, ss, sss, \dots$ , are in  $L^*$ , hence  $L^*$  is infinite.  $\square$

## 1.2 Regular Languages

### 1.2.1 Finite Automata

**Definition 1.2.1.** A **Deterministic Finite-State Automata** (DFA) or **Finite-State Machine** is a quintuple  $(A, Q, \tau, q_0, \mathcal{F})$  where

- $A$  is the **alphabet**
- $Q$  is a finite, non-empty **set of states**
- $\tau : Q \times A \rightarrow Q$  is the **transition function**
- $q_0$  is the **initial state**
- $\mathcal{F} \subseteq Q$  is the set of **final states**

We can extend  $\tau$  as follows:

$$\tau^* : Q \times A^* \rightarrow Q$$

$$\tau^*(q, s) = \begin{cases} q & \text{if } s = \varepsilon \\ \tau^*(\tau(q, s_0), s') & \text{if } s = s_0 \cdot s' \end{cases}$$

We proceed informally and use  $\tau$  to refer to  $\tau^*$ .

Consider the following DFA:



The figure indicates that we begin at state  $q_0$ . The double-circles for states  $q_1$  and  $q_2$  indicate that they are accepting or final states. An arrow indicates the state to move to after receiving an input. For example, if we receive the input string  $abba$ , we begin at state  $q_0$  and receive  $a$ , so we move to state  $q_1$ . We then receive  $b$  and stay in  $q_1$ . We repeat this for the next symbol,  $b$ , and then move to  $q_2$  upon receiving the final  $a$ . Since  $q_2$  is a final state, we say that this DFA **accepts** the string  $abba$ .

We can represent the above DFA using a table, as follows:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$	0
$q_1$	$q_2$	$q_1$	1
$q_2$	$q_3$	$q_2$	1
$q_3$	$q_0$	$q_3$	0

The first column indicates the states, while the first row indicates the symbols. The final column indicates whether a state is accepting: 0 refers to a non-final state, 1 to a final state. The remaining values indicate the transition function  $\tau$ , e.g.  $\tau(q_0, a) = q_1$ , indicated by the entry corresponding to row  $q_0$  and column  $a$ . Finally, the arrow pointing to  $q_0$  indicates that it is the starting position.

**Definition 1.2.2.** Let  $\tilde{D}$  be some DFA. Then  $L(\tilde{D})$ , the language accepted by the DFA, is

$$\{s \in A^* \mid \tau(q_0, s) \in \mathcal{F}\}$$

**Definition 1.2.3.** A language is **regular** if and only if there exists a DFA that accepts it.

**Definition 1.2.4.** A **Non-Deterministic Finite-State Automata** (NFA) is a quintuple  $(A, Q, \tau, q_0, \mathcal{F})$  where

- $A$  is the **alphabet**
- $Q$  is a finite, non-empty **set of states**
- $\tau : Q \times A \rightarrow 2^Q$  is the **transition function**
- $q_0$  is the **initial state**
- $\mathcal{F} \subseteq Q$  is the set of **final states**

We can extend  $\tau$  as follows:

$$\tau^* : 2^Q \times A^* \rightarrow 2^Q$$

$$\tau^*(P, s) = \begin{cases} P & \text{if } s = \varepsilon \\ \tau^* \left( \bigcup_{q \in P} \tau(q, s_0), s' \right) & \text{if } s = s_0 \cdot s' \end{cases}$$

We proceed informally and use  $\tau$  to refer to  $\tau^*$ . Consider the following NFA:



The diagrams for an NFA and DFA follow the same notation. However, the notation for the table differs slightly:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$	0
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$	1
$q_2$	$q_3$	$q_2$	1
$q_3$	$q_0$	$q_3$	0

The values of the transition function are now sets. We informally refer to the set  $\{q_0\}$  by  $q_0$ , and similarly the set  $\{q_2, q_3\}$  by  $q_2q_3$ . In some cases, to avoid ambiguity, we will use commas, e.g. we may represent  $\{q_2, q_3\}$  as  $q_2, q_3$ . We similarly say, given a string  $s$ , if there exists a path through an NFA that ends in a final state, we say that the NFA **accepts**  $s$ .

Similarly, we define the set of languages accepted by an NFA  $N$ ,  $L(N)$ , as

$$L(N) = \{s \in A^* \mid \tau(q_0, s) \cap \mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset\}$$

It should be clear that each DFA is an NFA, but the reverse is not true. However, we can convert an NFA to a DFA on the powerset  $2^Q$  by using the **subset construction**: begin with the initial state and traverse the NFA, adding unseen states to the left-most column until all paths have been exhausted. For example, with our NFA above, we begin with:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$	0

$q_0$  has already been seen, so we ignore it.  $q_1$  is new, so we add it to the table:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$	
$q_1$			

We now visit the corresponding states of  $q_1$ , which are  $q_2q_3$  and  $\emptyset$ , both of which have not yet been visited.

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$	
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$	
$q_2q_3$			
$\emptyset$			

When  $q_2$  receives  $a$ , it transitions to state  $q_3$ . When  $q_3$  receives  $a$ , it transitions to state  $q_0$ , so  $q_2q_3$  transitions to  $q_0q_3$ . Similarly,  $q_2q_3$  transitions to state  $q_2q_3$  when it receives  $b$ .

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$	
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$	
$q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$	$q_2q_3$	
$\emptyset$			

The empty set transitions to the empty set, by definition.

	$a$	$b$
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$
$q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$	$q_2q_3$
$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$

$q_0q_3$  has not yet been visited, so we add it to the left-most column:

	$a$	$b$
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$
$q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$	$q_2q_3$
$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$
$q_0q_3$		

Then we visit its corresponding states:

	$a$	$b$
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$
$q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$	$q_2q_3$
$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$
$q_0q_3$	$q_0q_1$	$q_0q_3$

Continuing, we end with the following DFA:

	$a$	$b$
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$
$q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$	$q_2q_3$
$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$
$q_0q_3$	$q_0q_1$	$q_0q_3$
$q_0q_1$	$q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0$
$q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_2q_3$	$q_2q_3$
$q_0q_2q_3$	$q_0q_1q_3$	$q_0q_2q_3$
$q_0q_1q_3$	$q_0q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$
$q_0q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_2q_3$

However, we need to include the accepting states. The accepting states of the NFA are  $q_1$  and  $q_2$ , and thus any state including either state is accepting:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$q_0$	0
$q_1$	$q_2q_3$	$\emptyset$	1
$q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$	$q_2q_3$	1
$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	0
$q_0q_3$	$q_0q_1$	$q_0q_3$	0
$q_0q_1$	$q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0$	1
$q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_2q_3$	$q_2q_3$	1
$q_0q_2q_3$	$q_0q_1q_3$	$q_0q_2q_3$	1
$q_0q_1q_3$	$q_0q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_3$	1
$q_0q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_1q_2q_3$	$q_0q_2q_3$	1

Note that an NFA does not necessarily admit a DFA with as many states. Consider the following example:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow 0$	$\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$	0	0
1	2	1	0
2	3	2	0
$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$
$i$	$i + 1$	$i$	0
$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$
$n - 1$	$n$	$n - 1$	0
$n$	1	$n$	1

The NFA above admits the following DFA:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow 0$	$\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$	0	0
$\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$	$\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$	$\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$	1

The above DFA contains only 2 states, despite the NFA containing  $n + 1$  states.

That every NFA admits a DFA which accepts the same language shows that the class of languages denoted by DFAs,  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{DFA}}$ , is the same as the class of languages denoted by NFAs,  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{NFA}}$ , i.e, that

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{DFA}} = \mathcal{L}_{\text{NFA}}$$

For an NFA, there is no guarantee of a unique smallest NFA which accepts the same strings. However, for a DFA, such a notion exists.

Consider two states,  $p$  and  $q$ , and corresponding  $L_p$  and  $L_q$ , where  $L_p$  has initial state  $p$  and  $L_q$  has initial state  $q$ . We say that  $p$  and  $q$  are distinguishable if there exists a string  $s$  such that  $s$  is in  $L_p$  and not in  $L_q$ , or vice-versa. We use this notion to **reduce** a DFA.

Begin with a partition of  $Q$  into subsets  $\mathcal{F}$  and  $Q - \mathcal{F}$ , i.e., the accepting and rejecting states. For a pair of states  $p, q$  if the result of transitioning  $p$  and  $q$  falls into different partitions, we partition the subset and continue.

For example, given the following DFA:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow 0$	1	2	0
1	2	3	1
2	3	4	0
3	0	5	1
4	5	6	0
5	6	7	1
6	7	0	0
7	4	1	1

We have two partitions:

Rejecting	Accepting
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5, 7

Now, 0 gets sent to the accepting partition by  $a$  and to the rejecting partition by  $b$ . Similarly, 2, 4, and 6 get sent to the accepting partition by  $a$  and to the rejecting partition by  $b$ . Thus, they belong to the same partition.

In the same vein, 1 gets sent to the rejecting partition by  $a$  and to the accepting partition by  $b$ . Similarly, 3, 5, and 7 get sent to the rejecting partition by  $a$  and to the accepting partition by  $b$ . Thus, our next partition is

Rejecting	Accepting
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5, 7
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5, 7



That our row is the same as the preceding one indicates that we have finished, and now have a minimal DFA. Call the first subset  $p$  and the second  $q$ . When an element in  $p$  receives  $a$ , it is sent to  $q$ . When it receives  $b$ , it is sent to  $p$ . Similar logic for  $q$  gives our new DFA:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow p$	$q$	$p$	0
$q$	$p$	$q$	1

Recall that  $p$  began as a subset of the rejecting elements and  $q$  the accepting elements, which informs the last column of the above table.

Not all DFAs can be reduced. An obvious example is the above reduced DFA. For a less trivial example, consider the following DFA:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow 0$	1	2	0
1	2	3	1
2	3	4	0
3	0	5	1
4	5	6	0
5	6	7	1
6	7	0	0
7	4	2	1

Begin, as in the previous problem, with two partitions:

Rejecting	Accepting
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5, 7

As in the previous problem, 0, 2, 4, and 6 get sent to the same partition under  $a$  and  $b$ , respectively. Under  $a$ , 1, 3, 5, and 7 go to the rejecting partition. However, under  $b$ , 7 goes to the rejecting partition while 1, 3, and 5 go to the accepting partition, which means we must create a new partition for 7.

Rejecting	Accepting
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5, 7
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5   7

We continue the process, noting that there is no need to consider singletons, i.e., the partition  $\{7\}$  is already in its finale state. Under  $a$ , 0, 2, and 4 get sent to the  $\{1, 3, 5\}$  partition. Under  $b$ , they get sent to the  $\{0, 2, 4, 6\}$  partition. However, 6 gets sent to the  $\{7\}$  partition, and so it must be partitioned separately. Similarly, 1 and 3 get sent to the  $\{0, 2, 4, 6\}$  partition under  $a$ , and to the  $\{1, 3, 5\}$  partition under  $b$ . 5, on the other hand, gets sent to the  $\{7\}$  partition, and must be partitioned separately. In total, we have:

Rejecting	Accepting
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5, 7
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5   7
0, 2, 4   6	1, 3   5   7

We continue:

Rejecting	Accepting
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5, 7
0, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 5   7
0, 2, 4   6	1, 3   5   7
0, 2   4   6	1   3   5   7
0   2   4   6	1   3   5   7

Notice that the reduced DFA has 8 states, like the original! This means that the original DFA is already reduced, and cannot be reduced further.

### 1.2.2 Regular Expressions

**Definition 1.2.5.** Given an alphabet  $A$ , we define a **regular expression**

- (a)
  - $a \in A$  is a regular expression denoting the language  $\{a\}$
  - $\varepsilon$  is a regular expression denoting  $\{\varepsilon\}$
  - $\emptyset$  is a regular expression denoting  $\emptyset$
- (b) If  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are regular expressions denoting the languages  $L(\alpha)$  and  $L(\beta)$ , respectively, then
  - $\alpha \cup \beta$  denotes  $L(\alpha) \cup L(\beta)$
  - $\alpha \cdot \beta$  denotes  $L(\alpha) \cdot L(\beta)$
  - $\alpha^*$  denotes  $L(\alpha)^*$

By convention, we define precedence of the operations  $\cup$ ,  $\cdot$ , and  $*$  in that order. Thus,

$$b \cdot a^* \cup c = (b \cdot (a^*)) \cup c$$

A regular expression  $\alpha$  over an alphabet  $A$  denotes the set of languages which accept  $\alpha$ . Thus, we would like to construct an NFA  $\tilde{N}$  such that  $L(\tilde{N}) = L(\alpha)$ .

The following NFA rejects all strings but  $a$ :

	$a$	$b \neq a$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$\emptyset$	0
$q_1$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	1

An NFA for only  $\varepsilon$  would appear as:

	$c \in A$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$\emptyset$	1

And finally, an NFA for only  $\emptyset$  is:

	$c \in A$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$\emptyset$	0

Now, suppose we have an NFA for  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . We wish to determine NFAs for  $\alpha \cup \beta$ ,  $\alpha \cdot \beta$ , and  $\alpha^*$ .

We define

$$\begin{aligned} N_{\tilde{\alpha}} &= (A, Q_{\alpha}, \tau_{\alpha}, q_0, \mathcal{F}_{\alpha}) \\ N_{\tilde{\beta}} &= (A, Q_{\beta}, \tau_{\beta}, q_0, \mathcal{F}_{\beta}) \end{aligned}$$

such that

$$\begin{aligned} L(N_{\tilde{\alpha}}) &= L(\alpha) \\ L(N_{\tilde{\beta}}) &= L(\beta) \\ Q_{\alpha} \cap Q_{\beta} &= \{q_0\} \end{aligned}$$

and clarify that these automata are non-returning, i.e., that  $q_0 \notin \tau(q_0, s)$  for any  $s$  of length 1 or greater.

We construct the **Union**

$$N_{\tilde{\alpha \cup \beta}} = (A, Q_{\alpha \cup \beta}, \tau_{\alpha \cup \beta}, q_0, \mathcal{F}_{\alpha \cup \beta})$$

where  $Q_{\alpha \cup \beta} = Q_{\alpha} \cup Q_{\beta}$ ,  $\mathcal{F}_{\alpha \cup \beta} = \mathcal{F}_{\alpha} \cup \mathcal{F}_{\beta}$  and, for all  $q \in Q_{\alpha \cup \beta}$  and  $a \in A$

$$\tau_{\alpha \cup \beta}(q, a) = \begin{cases} \tau_{\alpha}(q_0, a) \cup \tau_{\beta}(q_0, a) & \text{if } q = q_0 \\ \tau_{\alpha}(q, a) & \text{if } q \in Q_{\alpha} - \{q_0\} \\ \tau_{\beta}(q, a) & \text{if } q \in Q_{\beta} - \{q_0\} \end{cases}$$

The **Concatenation** is constructed

$$N_{\alpha\beta} = (A, Q_{\alpha\beta}, \tau_{\alpha\beta}, q_0, \mathcal{F}_{\alpha\beta})$$

where  $Q_{\alpha\beta} = Q_\alpha \cup Q_\beta$ ,

$$\mathcal{F}_{\alpha\beta} = \begin{cases} \mathcal{F}_\beta & \text{if } q_0 \notin \mathcal{F}_\beta \\ \mathcal{F}_\alpha \cup (\mathcal{F}_\beta - \{q_0\}) & \text{if } q_0 \in \mathcal{F}_\beta \end{cases}$$

and, for all  $q \in Q_{\alpha\beta}$  and  $a \in A$

$$\tau_{\alpha\beta}(q, a) = \begin{cases} \tau_\alpha(q, a) \cup \tau_\beta(q_0, a) & \text{if } q \in \mathcal{F}_\alpha \\ \tau_\alpha(q, a) & \text{if } q \in Q_\alpha - \mathcal{F}_\alpha \\ \tau_\beta(q, a) & \text{if } q \in Q_\beta - \{q_0\} \end{cases}$$

Finally, the **Kleene Closure** is constructed

$$N_{\alpha^*} = (A, Q_{\alpha^*}, \tau_{\alpha^*}, q_0, \mathcal{F}_{\alpha^*})$$

where  $Q_{\alpha^*} = Q_\alpha$ ,  $\mathcal{F}_{\alpha^*} = \mathcal{F}_\alpha \cup \{q_0\}$  and, for all  $q \in Q_{\alpha^*}$  and  $a \in A$

$$\tau_{\alpha^*}(q, a) = \begin{cases} \tau_\alpha(q, a) \cup \tau_\alpha(q_0, a) & \text{if } q \in \mathcal{F}_\alpha \\ \tau_\alpha(q, a) & \text{if } q \in Q_\alpha - \mathcal{F}_\alpha \end{cases}$$

This allows us to construct NFAs from a regular expression. Suppose we have a regular expression  $ab$  over  $\{a, b\}$ . Then we have

NFA for $a$			
	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$\emptyset$	0
$q_1$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	1

NFA for $b$			
	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$\emptyset$	$q_2$	0
$q_2$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	1

Applying the above construction for concatenation gives

NFA for $ab$			
	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$\emptyset$	0
$q_1$	$\emptyset$	$q_2$	0
$q_2$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	1

### 1.2.3 Solutions of Certain Language Equations

Given a regular expression, we can form an NFA which admits the same language by solving **Language Equations**. We show the following lemma before proceeding to examples:

**Lemma 1.** If  $X = L \cdot X \cup M$  then  $X = L^* \cdot M$  is a solution, and is unique if  $\varepsilon \notin L$ .

*Proof.* Clearly,  $L^* \cdot M$  is a solution, since

$$L^* \cdot M = L \cdot (L^* \cdot M) \cup M$$

. To prove uniqueness, suppose  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  are distinct solutions. There must exist a shortest-length string in  $s_1$ , say  $s$ .  $\square$

Consider the following NFA:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow 1$	2	1, 3	0
2	$\emptyset$	3	0
3	2, 3	1	1

This admits the following set of equations

$$X_1 = aX_2 \cup bX_1 \cup bX_3 \quad (1)$$

$$X_2 = bX_3 \quad (2)$$

$$X_3 = aX_2 \cup aX_3 \cup bX_1 \cup \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

We substitute (2) into (1) and (3):

$$X_1 = abX_3 \cup bX_1 \cup bX_3$$

$$X_3 = abX_3 \cup aX_3 \cup bX_1 \cup \varepsilon$$

which we rewrite as

$$X_1 = (ab \cup b)X_3 \cup bX_1$$

$$X_3 = (ab \cup a)X_3 \cup bX_1 \cup \varepsilon$$

We now apply our lemma to the equation for  $X_3$

$$X_1 = (ab \cup b)X_3 \cup bX_1$$

$$X_3 = (ab \cup a)^*(bX_1 \cup \varepsilon)$$

We substitute  $X_3$  into the equation for  $X_1$

$$\begin{aligned} X_1 &= (ab \cup b)(ab \cup a)^*(bX_1 \cup \varepsilon) \cup bX_1 \\ &= ((ab \cup b)(ab \cup a)^* \cup b) X_1 \cup (ab \cup b)(ab \cup a)^* \cup bX_1 \\ &= ((ab \cup b)(ab \cup a)^* \cup b) X_1 \cup (ab \cup b)(ab \cup a)^* \\ &= ((ab \cup b)(ab \cup a)^* \cup b)^* (ab \cup b)(ab \cup a)^* \end{aligned}$$

Consider the example:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow 1$	2	3	0
2	2	3	0
3	2	3	1

This admits the following system of equations:

$$X_1 = aX_2 \cup bX_3$$

$$X_2 = aX_2 \cup bX_3$$

$$X_3 = aX_2 \cup bX_3 \cup \varepsilon$$

From our lemma, we have  $X_2 = a^*bX_3$ :

$$X_1 = aa^*bX_3 \cup bX_3$$

$$X_3 = aa^*bX_3 \cup bX_3 \cup \varepsilon$$

which can be simplified:

$$X_1 = (aa^*b \cup b)X_3$$

$$X_3 = (aa^*b \cup b)X_3 \cup \varepsilon$$

Applying our lemma to  $X_3$ , we have

$$X_3 = (aa^*b \cup b)^*$$

Substituting into  $X_1$  gives

$$X_1 = (aa^*b \cup b)(aa^*b \cup b)^*$$

One final example:

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow 1$	$\emptyset$	$1, 2$	$1$
$2$	$1$	$\emptyset$	$1$

$$X_1 = bX_1 \cup bX_2 \cup \varepsilon$$

$$X_2 = aX_1 \cup \varepsilon$$

Substituting our equation for  $X_2$  into  $X_1$  gives

$$\begin{aligned} X_1 &= bX_1 \cup b(aX_1 \cup \varepsilon) \cup \varepsilon \\ &= (b \cup ba)X_1 \cup b \cup \varepsilon \\ &= (b \cup ba)^*(b \cup \varepsilon) \end{aligned}$$

### 1.2.4 Regular Grammars

Suppose we have a DFA

$$\tilde{D} = (A, Q, \tau, q_0, \mathcal{F})$$

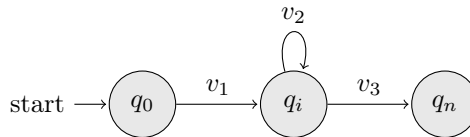
with  $|Q| = n$ . Consider the following set of equations

$$\begin{aligned} q_1 &= \tau(q_0, a_1) \\ q_2 &= \tau(q_1, a_2) \\ &\vdots \\ q_i &= \tau(q_{i-1}, a_i) \\ &\vdots \\ q_{n-1} &= \tau(q_{n-2}, a_{n-1}) \\ q_n &= \tau(q_{n-1}, a_n) \end{aligned}$$

Notice that we have  $n + 1$  states above, but only  $n$  states in  $Q$ . Then, by the Pidgeonhole Principle, there must be some state  $q_i$  that is visited twice. In other words, there exist an  $i, j$  with  $i < j$  such that  $q_i = q_j$ . We then consider a string  $s = a_1a_2 \dots a_n$ . Let  $v_1 = a_1a_2 \dots a_i$ ,  $v_2 = a_{i+1}a_{i+2} \dots a_j$ , and  $v_3 = a_{j+1}a_{j+2} \dots a_n$ . We see that

$$\tau(q_0, s) = \tau(q_0, v_1v_2^kv_3)$$

for all  $k \geq 0$ .



## 1.3 Accepted by Turing Machines

### 1.4 Exercise Set 1

**Exercise 1:** Construct DFAs for the following NFAs using the subset construction:

(a)		$a$		(b)		$a$	$b$	$c$		(c)		$a$	$b$	$c$	
	$\rightarrow 1$	2	0		$\rightarrow 1$	2	2	2	1		$\rightarrow 1$	2	2	2	1
	2	3	0		2	3	1	1, 2	1		2	3	1	2, 3	1
	3	4	0		3	4	3	$\emptyset$	1		3	4	3	$\emptyset$	1
	4	5	0		4	5	4	4	1		4	5	4	4	1
	5	6	0		5	1	5	5	1		5	1	5	5	1
	6	7	0												
	7	1, 2	1												

**Solution.**

(a)		$a$		(b)		$a$	$b$	$c$	
	$\rightarrow 1$	2	0		$\rightarrow 1$	2	2	2	1
	2	3	0		2	3	1	1, 2	1
	3	4	0		3	4	3	$\emptyset$	1
	4	5	0		1, 2	2, 3	1, 2	1, 2	1
	5	6	0		4	5	4	4	1
	6	7	0		$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	0
	7	1, 2	1		2, 3	3, 4	1, 3	1, 2	1
	1, 2	2, 3	0		5	1	5	5	1
	2, 3	3, 4	0		3, 4	4, 5	3, 4	4	1
	3, 4	4, 5	0		1, 3	2, 4	2, 3	2	1
	4, 5	5, 6	0		4, 5	1, 5	4, 5	4, 5	1
	5, 6	6, 7	0		2, 4	3, 5	1, 4	1, 2, 4	1
	6, 7	1, 2, 7	1		1, 5	1, 2	2, 5	2, 5	1
	1, 2, 7	1, 2, 3	1		3, 5	1, 4	3, 5	5	1
	1, 2, 3	2, 3, 4	0		1, 4	2, 5	2, 4	2, 4	1
	2, 3, 4	3, 4, 5	0		1, 2, 4	2, 3, 5	1, 2, 4	1, 2, 4	1
	3, 4, 5	4, 5, 6	0		2, 5	1, 3	1, 5	1, 2, 5	1
	4, 5, 6	5, 6, 7	0		2, 3, 5	1, 3, 4	1, 3, 5	1, 2, 5	1
	5, 6, 7	1, 2, 6, 7	1		1, 2, 5	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 5	1, 2, 5	1
	1, 2, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 7	1		1, 3, 4	2, 4, 5	2, 3, 4	2, 4	1
	1, 2, 3, 7	1, 2, 3, 4	1		1, 3, 5	1, 2, 4	2, 3, 5	2, 5	1
	1, 2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4, 5	0		1, 2, 3	2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	1, 2	1
	2, 3, 4, 5	3, 4, 5, 6	0		2, 4, 5	1, 3, 5	1, 4, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	1
	3, 4, 5, 6	4, 5, 6, 7	0		2, 3, 4	3, 4, 5	1, 3, 4	1, 2, 4	1
	4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 5, 6, 7	1		1, 4, 5	1, 2, 5	2, 4, 5	2, 4, 5	1
	1, 2, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	1		1, 2, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	1
	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 7	1		3, 4, 5	1, 4, 5	3, 4, 5	4, 5	1
	1, 2, 3, 4, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1		1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2, 5	1
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	0		1, 2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 4	1
	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	0		2, 3, 4, 5	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	1
	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7	1		1, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	2, 3, 4, 5	2, 4, 5	1
	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	1						
	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7	1						
	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	1						
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1						
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	0						
	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1						
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1						

(c)		$a$	$b$	$c$	
	$\rightarrow 1$	2	2	2	1
	2	3	1	2, 3	1
	3	4	3	$\emptyset$	1
	2, 3	3, 4	1, 3	2, 3	1
	4	5	4	4	1
	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	0
	3, 4	4, 5	3, 4	4	1
	1, 3	2, 4	2, 3	2	1
	5	1	5	5	1
	4, 5	1, 5	4, 5	4, 5	1
	2, 4	3, 5	1, 4	2, 3	1
	1, 5	6	2, 5	2, 5	1
	3, 5	1, 4	3, 5	5	1
	1, 4	2, 5	2, 4	2, 4	1
	6	2, 3	1, 2	2, 3	1
	2, 5	1, 3	1, 5	2, 3, 5	1
	2, 3, 5	1, 3, 4	1, 3, 5	2, 3, 5	1
	1, 3, 4	2, 4, 5	2, 3, 4	2, 4	1
	1, 4, 5	1, 2, 4	2, 4, 5	2, 4, 5	1
	2, 4, 5	1, 3, 5	1, 4, 5	2, 3, 4, 5	1
	2, 3, 4	3, 4, 5	1, 3, 4	2, 3, 4	1
	1, 2, 4	2, 3, 5	1, 2, 4	2, 3, 4	1
	1, 3, 5	1, 2, 4	2, 3, 5	2, 5	1
	2, 3, 4, 5	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 3, 4, 5	2, 3, 4, 5	1
	3, 4, 5	1, 4, 5	3, 4, 5	4, 5	1
	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	2, 3, 4, 5	2, 4, 5	1
	1, 2, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2, 4, 5	2, 3, 4, 5	1
	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 5	2, 3, 5	1
	1, 2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4	1

□

**Exercise 2:** Reduce the following DFAs:

(a)		$a$	$b$	
	$\rightarrow 1$	2	3	0
	2	3	2	1
	3	4	5	0
	4	1	8	1
	5	6	7	0
	6	7	6	1
	7	8	1	0
	8	5	4	1

(b)		$a$	$b$	
	$\rightarrow 1$	2	3	0
	2	3	2	1
	3	4	5	0
	4	1	8	1
	5	6	7	0
	6	7	6	1
	7	8	1	0
	8	5	5	1

(c) Your result of 1(b).

(d) Your result of 1(c).

**Solution.**

(a)	Rejecting	Accepting
	1, 3, 5, 7	2, 4, 6, 8
	1, 3, 5, 7	2, 4, 6, 8

Setting  $p = \{1, 3, 5, 7\}$  and  $q = \{2, 4, 6, 8\}$ :

	$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow p$	$q$	$p$	0
$q$	$p$	$q$	1

(b)	Rejecting	Accepting
	1, 3, 5, 7	2, 4, 6, 8
	1, 3, 5, 7	2, 4, 6   8
	1, 3, 5   7	2, 6   4   8
	1   3   5   7	2   6   4   8

The DFA is already reduced.

(c) We will rename the states for simplicity:

	$a$	$b$	$c$	
$\rightarrow 1$	2	2	2	1
2	3	1	6	1
3	4	3	0	1
6	7	6	6	1
4	5	4	4	1
0	0	0	0	0
7	8	9	6	1
5	1	5	5	1
8	10	8	4	1
9	1	7	2	1
10	12	10	10	1
11	13	14	15	1
12	6	16	16	1
13	14	13	5	1
14	16	11	11	1
15	17	15	15	1
16	9	12	18	1
17	19	20	18	1
18	21	18	18	1
19	22	23	11	1
20	15	17	16	1
21	23	21	6	1
22	20	24	25	1
23	26	19	15	1
24	18	22	22	1
25	27	25	25	1
26	24	26	10	1
27	28	27	18	1
28	29	28	15	1
29	30	30	25	1
30	25	29	22	1

Rejecting	Accepting									
0	1, 2, 3, ..., 30									
0	1, 2, 4, 5, ..., 30								2	3
0	1, 4, 5, ..., 30								2	3
0	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, ..., 30						1	9	2	3
0	4, 6, 8, 10, ..., 30	13	16	7	5	1	9	2	3	

□

**Exercise 3:** Construct NFAs for the following regular expressions using the construction given in class; then find the corresponding DFAs; then reduce them:

(a)  $(a^2 \cup a^3 \cup a^5)^*$  over  $\{a\}$

(c)  $(abc \cup ab)^*aa^*(ab)^*$  over  $\{a, b, c\}$

(b)  $(a^2)^*(a^3)^*(a^5)^*$  over  $\{a\}$

(d)  $0^*(00 \cup 11)^*(01 \cup 10)^*1^*$  over  $\{0, 1\}$

**Solution.**

(a) NFA for  $a$

	$a$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	0
$q_1$	$\emptyset$	1

NFA for  $a$

	$a$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_2$	0
$q_2$	$\emptyset$	1

Concatenate these to get  $a^2$



NFA for $a^2$		
	$a$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	0
$q_1$	$q_2$	0
$q_2$	$\emptyset$	1

Similarly, we have

NFA for $a^3$		
	$a$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_3$	0
$q_3$	$q_4$	0
$q_4$	$q_5$	0
$q_5$	$\emptyset$	1

NFA for $a^5$		
	$a$	
$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_6$	0
$q_6$	$q_7$	0
$q_7$	$q_8$	0
$q_8$	$q_9$	0
$q_9$	$\emptyset$	1

(b)

□

**Exercise 4:** Construct regular expressions for the languages accepted by the following automata:

(a)

		$a$	$b$	$c$	
$\rightarrow$	1	2	2	2	1
	2	3	1	2, 3	1
	3	4	3	$\emptyset$	1
	4	1	4	4	1

(b)

		$a$	$b$	
$\rightarrow$	$A$	$B$	$C$	0
	$B$	$A$	$C$	0
	$C$	$B$	$A$	1

**Solution.** (a)

$$\begin{aligned}
X_1 &= aX_2 \cup bX_2 \cup cX_2 \cup \varepsilon \\
X_2 &= aX_3 \cup bX_1 \cup c(X_2 \cup X_3) \cup \varepsilon \\
X_3 &= aX_4 \cup bX_3 \cup \varepsilon \\
X_4 &= aX_1 \cup bX_4 \cup cX_4 \cup \varepsilon
\end{aligned}$$

Solving for  $X_4$

$$\begin{aligned}
X_4 &= aX_1 \cup bX_4 \cup cX_4 \cup \varepsilon \\
&= aX_1 \cup (b \cup c)X_4 \cup \varepsilon \\
&= (b \cup c)X_4 \cup aX_1 \cup \varepsilon \\
&= (b \cup c)^* \cup aX_1 \cup \varepsilon \\
&= (b \cup c)^*(\varepsilon \cup aX_1) \\
&= (b \cup c)^* \cup (b \cup c)^*aX_1
\end{aligned}$$

Similarly,

$$\begin{aligned}
X_3 &= aX_4 \cup bX_3 \cup \varepsilon \\
&= a((b \cup c)^* \cup (b \cup c)^*aX_1) \cup bX_3 \cup \varepsilon \\
&= bX_3 \cup a((b \cup c)^* \cup (b \cup c)^*aX_1) \cup \varepsilon \\
&= b^*(a((b \cup c)^* \cup (b \cup c)^*aX_1) \cup \varepsilon) \\
&= b^*a(b \cup c)^* \cup b^*(b \cup c)^*aX_1 \cup b^*
\end{aligned}$$

Solving  $X_2$ :

$$\begin{aligned} X_2 &= aX_3 \cup bX_1 \cup c(X_2 \cup X_3) \cup \varepsilon \\ &= (a \cup c)X_3 \cup bX_1 \cup cX_2 \cup \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

Finally, solving for  $X_1$ :

$$\begin{aligned} X_1 &= aX_2 \cup bX_2 \cup cX_2 \cup \varepsilon \\ &= (a \cup b \cup c)X_2 \cup \varepsilon \\ &= (a \cup b \cup c)c^* \cup (a \cup c)(b^* \cup a(b \cup c)^* \cup a \cup \varepsilon) \cup \varepsilon \cup ((a \cup c)a^2 \cup b)X_1 \cup \varepsilon \\ &= ((a \cup c)a^2 \cup b)^* \cup (a \cup b \cup c)c^* \cup (a \cup c)(b^* \cup a(b \cup c)^* \cup a \cup \varepsilon) \end{aligned}$$

(b)

$$\begin{aligned} X_A &= aX_B \cup bX_C \\ X_B &= aX_A \cup bX_C \\ X_C &= aX_B \cup bX_A \cup \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

Plugging in the equation for  $X_C$  into  $X_B$

$$\begin{aligned} X_B &= aX_A \cup b(aX_B \cup bX_A \cup \varepsilon) \\ &= aX_A \cup baX_B \cup b^2X_A \cup b \\ &= baX_B \cup aX_A \cup b^2X_A \cup b \\ &= (ba)^* \cup aX_A \cup b^2X_A \cup b \\ &= (ba)^* \cup b \cup (a \cup b^2)X_A \end{aligned}$$

We substitute back into  $X_C$ :

$$\begin{aligned} X_C &= a((ba)^* \cup b \cup (a \cup b^2)X_A) \cup bX_A \cup \varepsilon \\ &= a(ba)^* \cup ab \cup (a^2 \cup ab^2)X_A \cup bX_A \cup \varepsilon \\ &= a(ba)^* \cup ab \cup (a^2 \cup ab^2 \cup b)X_A \cup \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

We now substitute the new equations for  $X_B$  and  $X_C$  into the equation for  $X_A$

$$\begin{aligned} X_A &= a((ba)^* \cup b \cup (a \cup b^2)X_A) \cup b(a(ba)^* \cup ab \cup (a^2 \cup ab^2 \cup b)X_A \cup \varepsilon) \\ &= a(ba)^* \cup ab \cup a^2 \cup ab^2 X_A \cup ba(ba)^* \cup bab \cup (ba^2 \cup bab^2 \cup b^2)X_A \cup b \\ &= (ab^2 \cup ba^2 \cup bab^2 \cup b^2)X_A \cup a(ba)^* \cup ab \cup a^2 \cup ba(ba)^* \cup bab \cup b \\ &= (ab^2 \cup ba^2 \cup bab^2 \cup b^2)^* \cup a(ba)^* \cup ab \cup a^2 \cup ba(ba)^* \cup bab \cup b \end{aligned}$$

□

## 2 Exam Cheatsheets

## 2.1 Exam 1

### 2.1.1 Converting an NFA to a DFA

Begin with the initial state. Apply the transitions and add any newly visited states. Stop when no new states can be visited.

### 2.1.2 Reducing a DFA

Partition all states into accepting vs rejecting. Apply all transitions to a “representative” from a partition, then apply the transitions to the remaining members of the partition. If a member differs, move it to a new partition.

### 2.1.3 Converting a Regular Expression to an NFA

NFA for $a$ :		$a$	$b \neq a$	
	$\rightarrow q_0$	$q_1$	$\emptyset$	0
		$q_1$	$\emptyset$	1

NFA for $\varepsilon$ :		$c \in A$	
	$\rightarrow q_0$	$\emptyset$	1

NFA for $\emptyset$ :		$c \in A$	
	$\rightarrow q_0$	$\emptyset$	0

#### Union

Union initial states, copy remaining states from  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . Final states are final states from  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ .

#### Concatenation

For final states of  $\alpha$ , union the state from  $\alpha$  with the initial state from  $\beta$ . Copy non-final states from  $\alpha$  and non-initial states from  $\beta$ . Final states:

If the initial state is rejecting in  $\beta$ , final states are final states from  $\beta$ .

If the initial state is accepting in  $\beta$ , final states are final states from  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , except the initial state in  $\beta$ .

#### Kleene Closure

Union final states with the initial state. Copy non-final states. Final states are final states from  $\alpha$  and the initial state.

### 2.1.4 Converting an NFA to a Regular Expression

Set up system of equations. Solve for equation corresponding to initial state. Remember the lemma: if

$$X = LX \cup M$$

then

$$X = L^*M$$