



## Markov Decision Processes

- $\otimes$  A Markov decision process is an MRP with decisions:  $\langle S, A, P, R, \gamma \rangle$ 
  - ► A set of states  $S = \{s_1, s_2, ..., s_n\}$
  - ightharpoonup A set of actions  $A = \{a_1, a_2, ..., a_m\}$
  - ► Transition function  $P: S \times A \to S$ ,  $P_{SS'}^a = \mathbb{P}[S_{t+1} = s' | S_t = s, A_t = a]$
  - ▶ Reward function  $R: S \times A \to \mathbb{R}$ ,  $R_S^a = \mathbb{E}[R_{t+1}|S_t = s, A_t = a]$
  - ▶ Discount factor  $\gamma \in [0,1]$

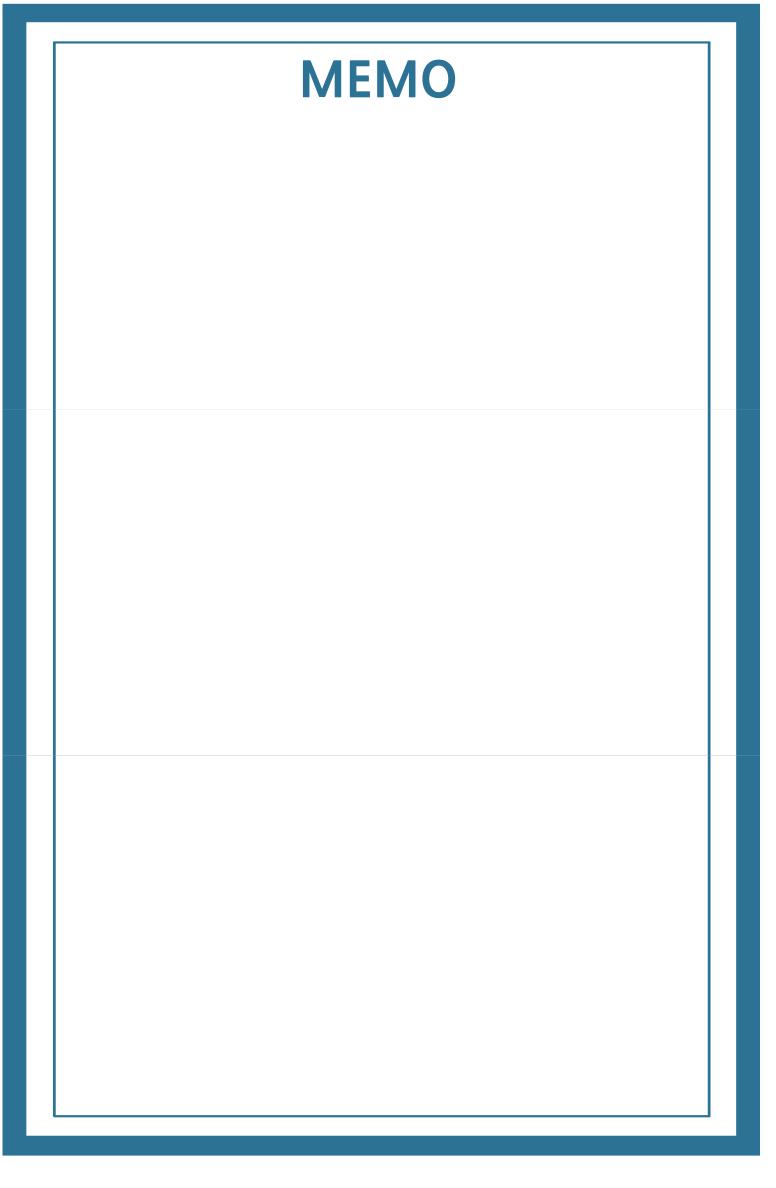


## Markov Decision Processes

# $\otimes$ A policy $\pi$ is a distribution over actions given states

$$\pi(a|s) = P[A_t = a|S_t = s]$$

- ► MDP policies depend on the current state (not the history)
- ▶ Policies are stationary (time-independent)  $A_t \sim \pi(\cdot | S_t)$ ,  $\forall t > 0$





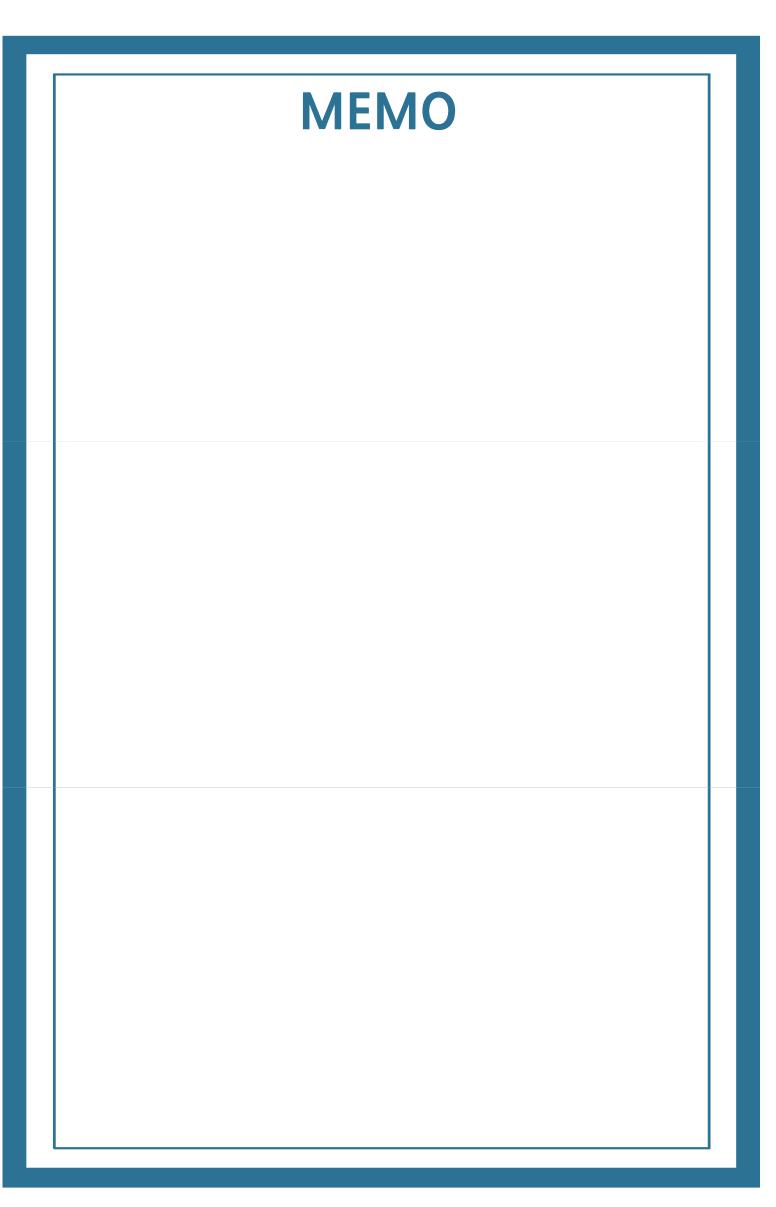
## Value Functions

@ The state-value function  $V_{\pi}(s)$  is the expected return starting from state s, under a policy  $\pi$ 

$$V_{\pi}(s) = \mathbb{E}_{\pi} \left[ G_t | S_t = s \right]$$

The action-value function  $Q_{\pi}(s,a)$  is the expected return starting from state s, taking action a, under a policy  $\pi$ 

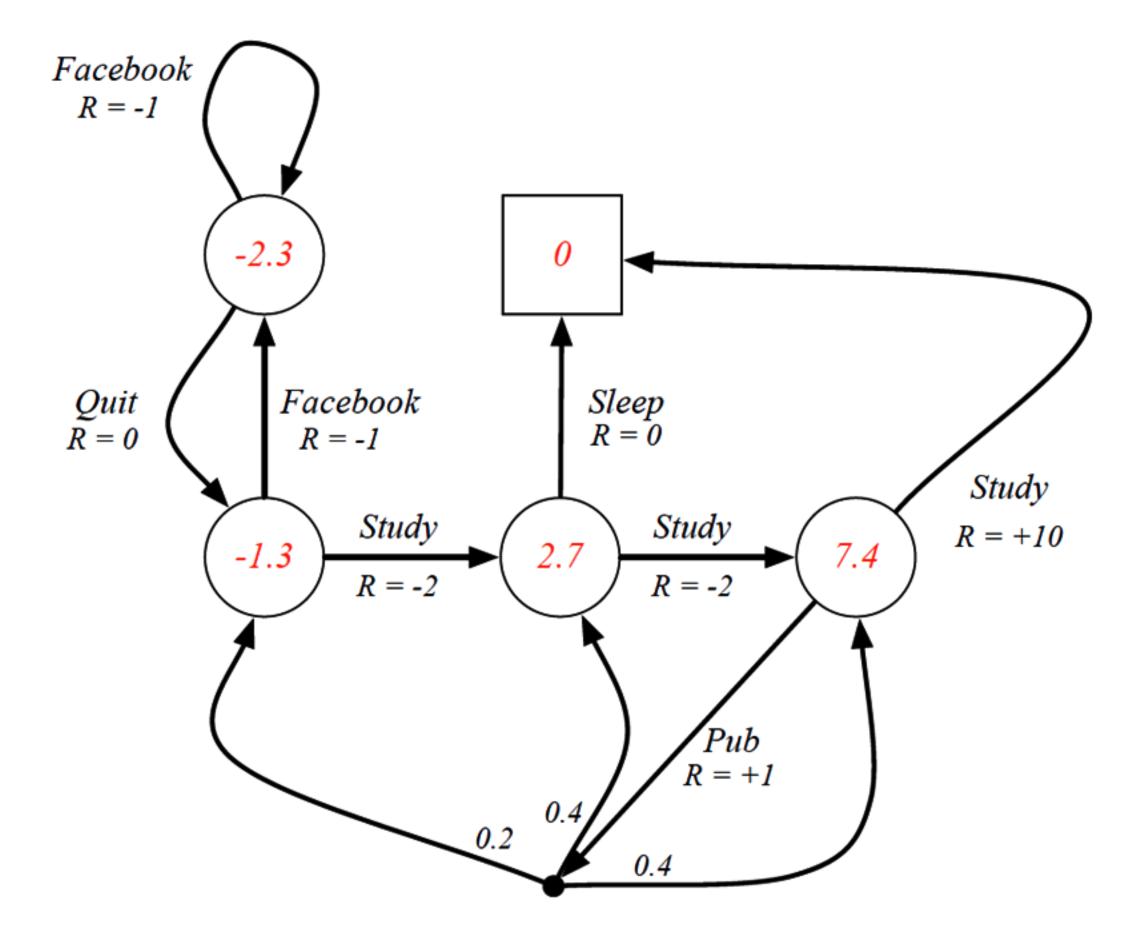
$$Q_{\pi}(s,a) = \mathbb{E}_{\pi}[G_t|S_t = s, A_t = a]$$





# $\otimes$ Random policy with $\gamma=1$

 $V_{\pi}(s) \text{ for } \pi(a|s) = 0.5$ 





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# Bellman Expectation Equation for MDPs

## The value function can be decomposed into two parts:

- ightharpoonup Immediate reward  $R_{t+1}$
- ▶ Discounted value of successor state  $\gamma V(s_{t+1})$

#### The state-value function can be decomposed

$$V_{\pi}(s) = \mathbb{E}_{\pi}[G_{t}|s_{t} = s]$$

$$= \mathbb{E}_{\pi}[R_{t+1} + \gamma R_{t+2} + \gamma^{2} R_{t+3} + \cdots | s_{t} = s]$$

$$= \mathbb{E}_{\pi}[R_{t+1} + \gamma (R_{t+2} + \gamma R_{t+3} + \cdots) | s_{t} = s]$$

$$= \mathbb{E}_{\pi}[R_{t+1} + \gamma G_{t+1} | s_{t} = s]$$

$$= \mathbb{E}_{\pi}[R_{t+1} + \gamma V_{\pi}(s_{t+1}) | s_{t} = s]$$



- The value function can be decomposed into two parts:
  - ▶ Immediate reward  $R_{t+1}$
  - ▶ Discounted value of successor state  $\gamma V(s_{t+1})$
- The state-value function can be decomposed

$$V_{\pi}(s) = \mathbb{E}_{\pi} \left[ R_{t+1} + \gamma V(S_{t+1}) | S_t = s \right]$$

The action-value function can be decomposed

$$Q_{\pi}(s, a) = \mathbb{E}_{\pi}[R_{t+1} + \gamma Q_{\pi}(S_{t+1}, A_{t+1}) | S_t = s, A_t = a]$$

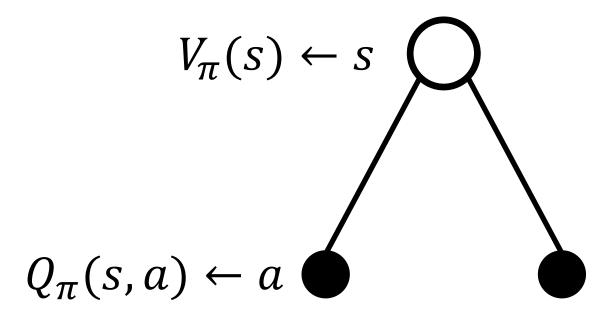




# Bellman Equation for $V_{\pi}$ and $Q_{\pi}$

## $\otimes$ Bellman expectation equation for $V_{\pi}$

$$V_{\pi}(s) = \sum_{a \in A} \pi(a|s)Q_{\pi}(s,a)$$



## Bellman expectation equation for $Q_{\pi}$

$$Q_{\pi}(s,a) = R_s^a + \gamma \sum_{s' \in S} P_{ss'}^a V_{\pi}(s') \qquad Q_{\pi}(s,a) \leftarrow s, a$$

$$Q_{\pi}(s,a) \leftarrow s,a$$

$$r$$

$$V_{\pi}(s') \leftarrow s'$$



# Bellman Equation for $V_{\pi}$ and $Q_{\pi}$

## $\otimes$ Bellman expectation equation for $V_{\pi}$ (2)

$$V_{\pi}(s)$$

$$= \sum_{a \in A} \pi(a|s)(R_s^a + \gamma \sum_{s' \in S} P_{ss'}^a V_{\pi}(s'))$$

$$V_{\pi}(s) \leftarrow s$$

$$V_{\pi}(s') \leftarrow s'$$

$$V_{\pi}(s') \leftarrow s'$$

 $\otimes$  Bellman expectation equation for  $Q_{\pi}$  (2)

$$Q_{\pi}(s,a) \qquad Q_{\pi}(s,a) \leftarrow s,a$$

$$= R_{s}^{a} + \gamma \sum_{s' \in S} P_{ss'}^{a} \left( \sum_{a' \in A} \pi(a'|s') Q_{\pi}(s',a') \right) \qquad r$$

$$Q_{\pi}(s',a') \leftarrow a'$$

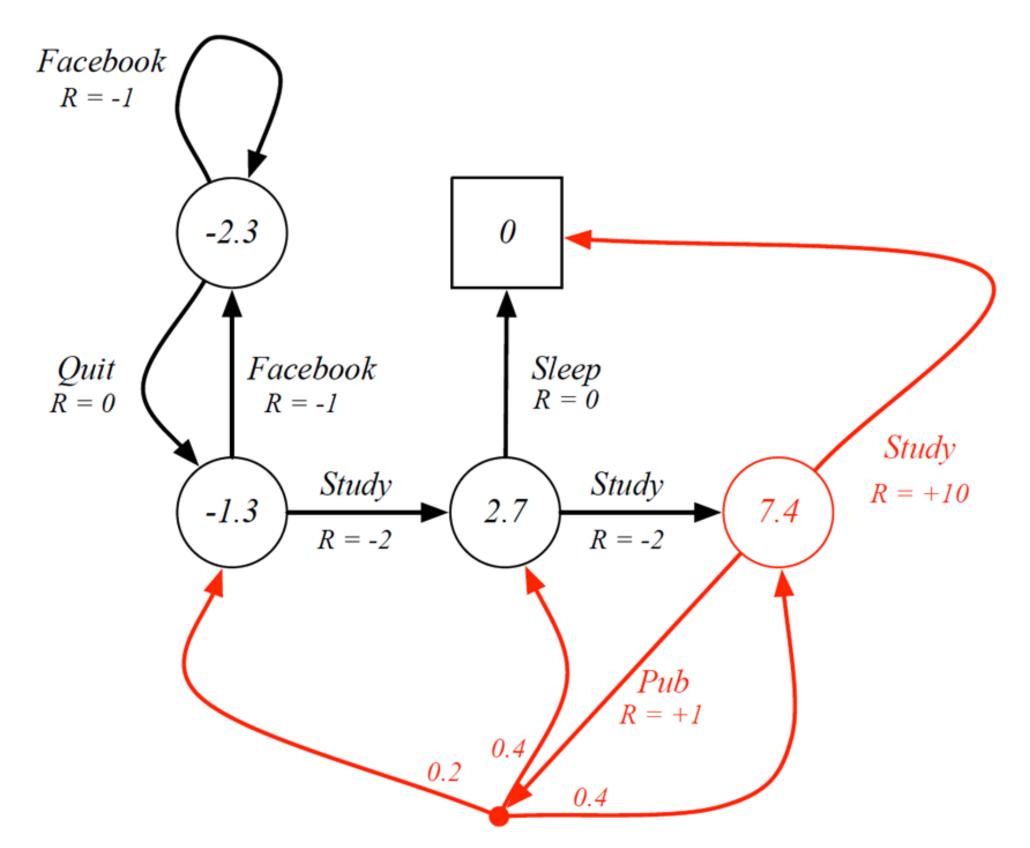
$$Q_{\pi}(s',a') \leftarrow a'$$



# Bellman Equation in Student MDP

$$V_{\pi}(s) = \sum_{a \in A} \pi(a|s) (R_s^a + \gamma \sum_{s' \in S} P_{ss'}^a V_{\pi}(s'))$$

$$V_{\pi}(s) = 0.5 * (1 + 0.2 * (-1.3) + 0.4 * 2.7 + 0.4 * 7.4) + 0.5 * 10 = 7.4$$





# Bellman Expectation Equation (Matrix Form)

#### © Can be expressed concisely in a matrix form

$$V_{\pi} = R^{\pi} + \gamma P^{\pi} V_{\pi}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} V_{\pi}(s_1) \\ \dots \\ V_{\pi}(s_n) \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} R_1^{\pi} \\ \dots \\ R_n^{\pi} \end{bmatrix} + \gamma \begin{bmatrix} P_{11}^{\pi} & \dots & P_{1n}^{\pi} \\ \dots & \dots \\ P_{n1}^{\pi} & \dots & P_{nn}^{\pi} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} V_{\pi}(s_1) \\ \dots \\ V_{\pi}(s_n) \end{bmatrix}$$

#### It is a linear equation, so solved by

$$V_{\pi} = (I - \gamma P^{\pi})^{-1} R^{\pi}$$

- ▶ Computational complexity is  $O(n^3)$  for n states
- ► Other approach? Dynamic programming, Monte-Carlo evaluation, Temporal-Difference learning



# **Optimal Value Functions**

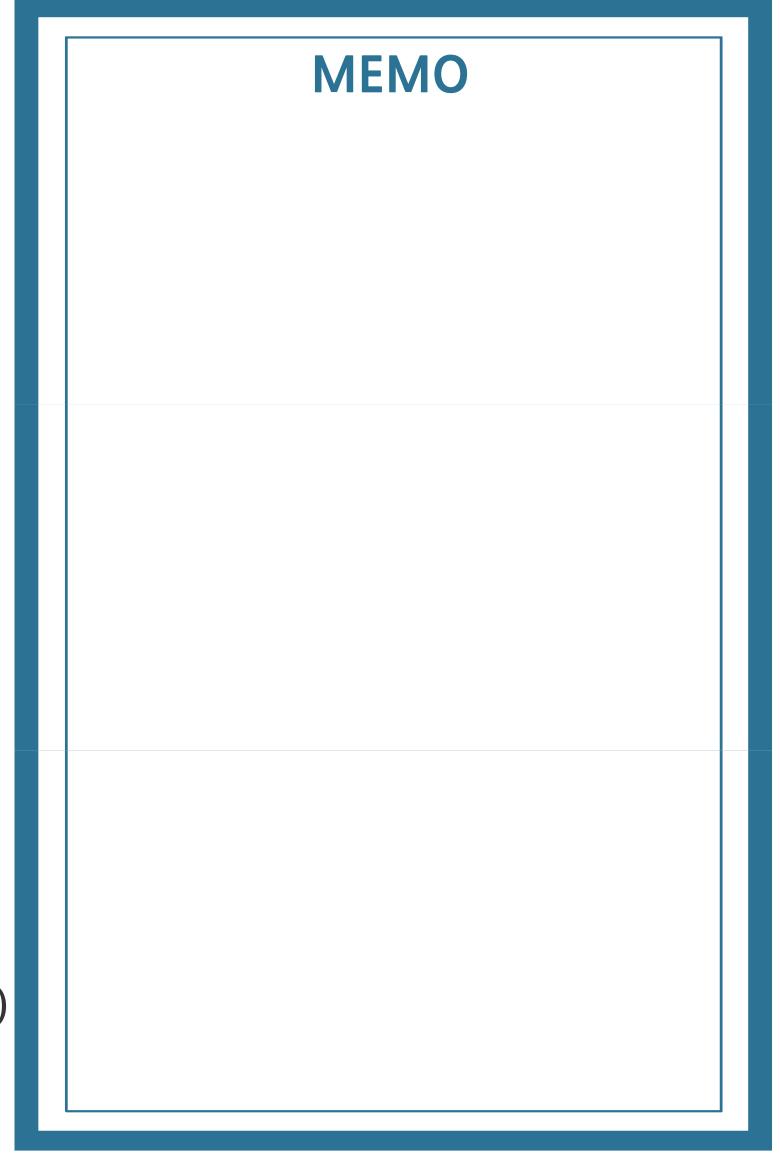
 $\otimes$  The optimal state value function  $V_*(s)$  is the max value function over all policies

$$V_*(s) = \max_{\pi} V_{\pi}(s)$$

@ The optimal action-value function  $Q_*(s,a)$  is the maximum action-value function over all policies

$$Q_*(s,a) = \max_{\pi} Q_{\pi}(s,a)$$

- Theorems: For any MDP
  - ▶ There exists an optimal policy  $\pi_* \ge \pi$ ,  $\forall \pi$
  - ► All optimal policies achieve the optimal state-value,  $V_{\pi_*}(s) = V_*(s)$
  - ► All optimal policies achieve the optimal action-value,  $Q_{\pi_*}(s,a) = Q_*(s,a)$



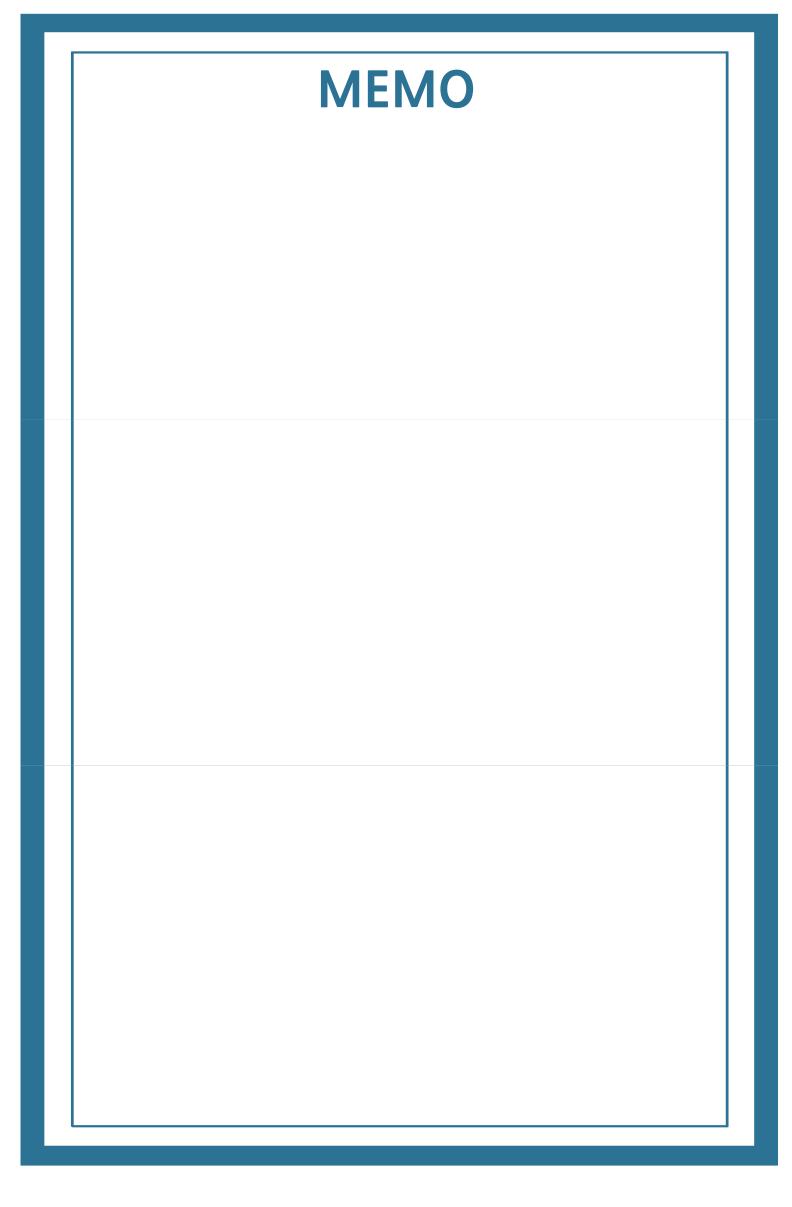


# Finding an Optimal Policy

 $\otimes$  An optimal policy can be found by maximizing over  $Q_*(s,a)$ 

$$\pi_*(a|s) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } a = \arg\max Q_*(s, a) \\ & a \in A \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

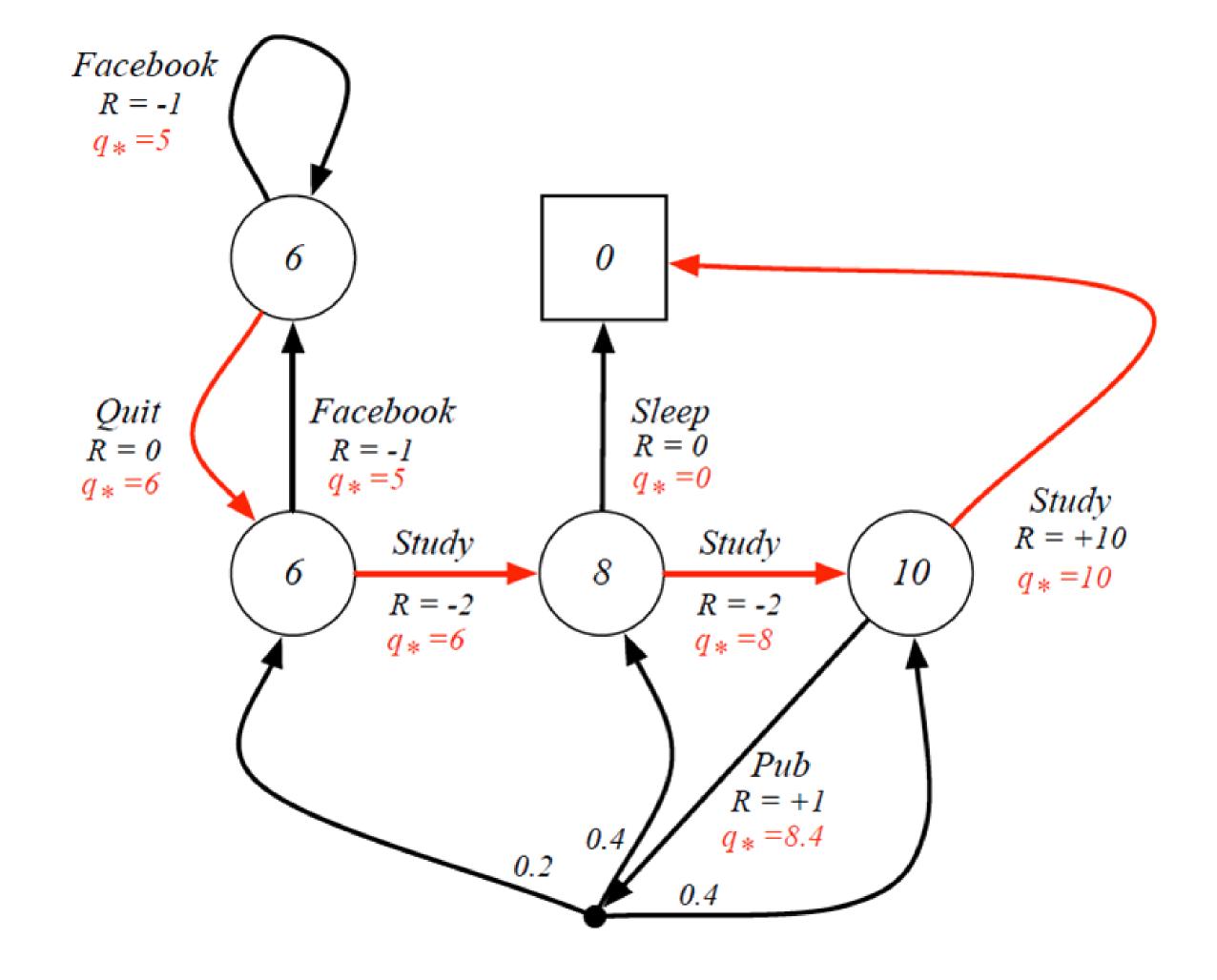
▶ If we know  $Q_*(s,a)$ , we immediately have the optimal policy

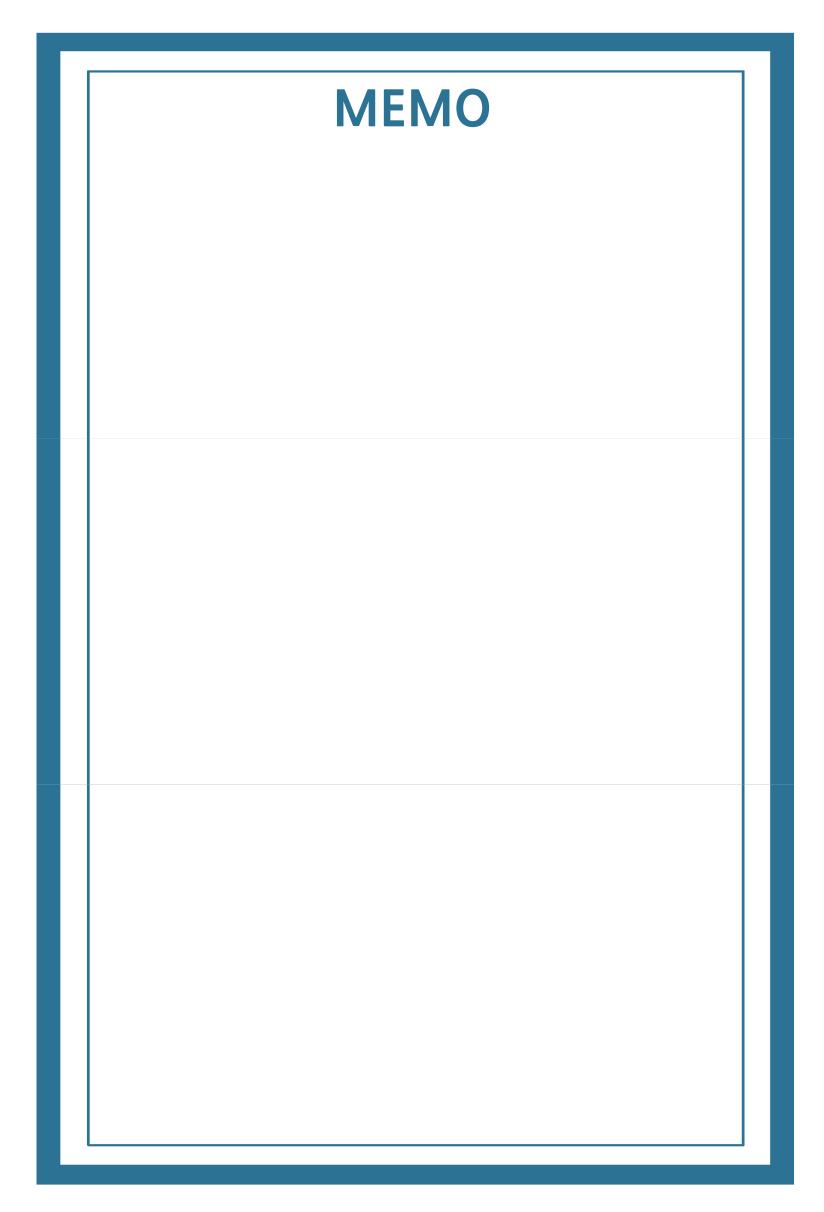


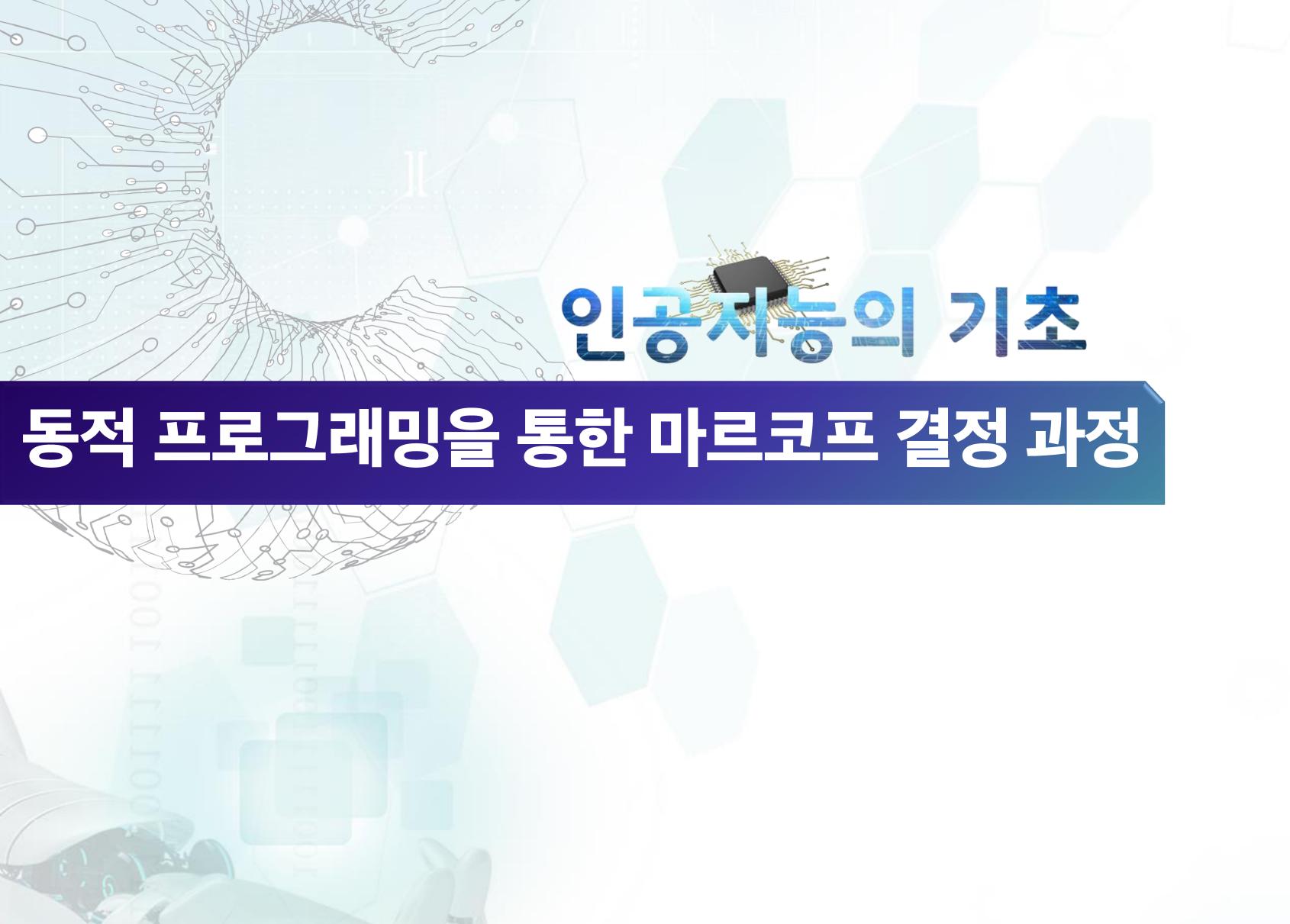
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# **Optimal Policy for Student MDP**

$$\pi_*(a|s)$$
 for  $\gamma=1$ 









# **Dynamic Programming**

A very general solution method for problems which have two properties

#### 1. Optimal substructure

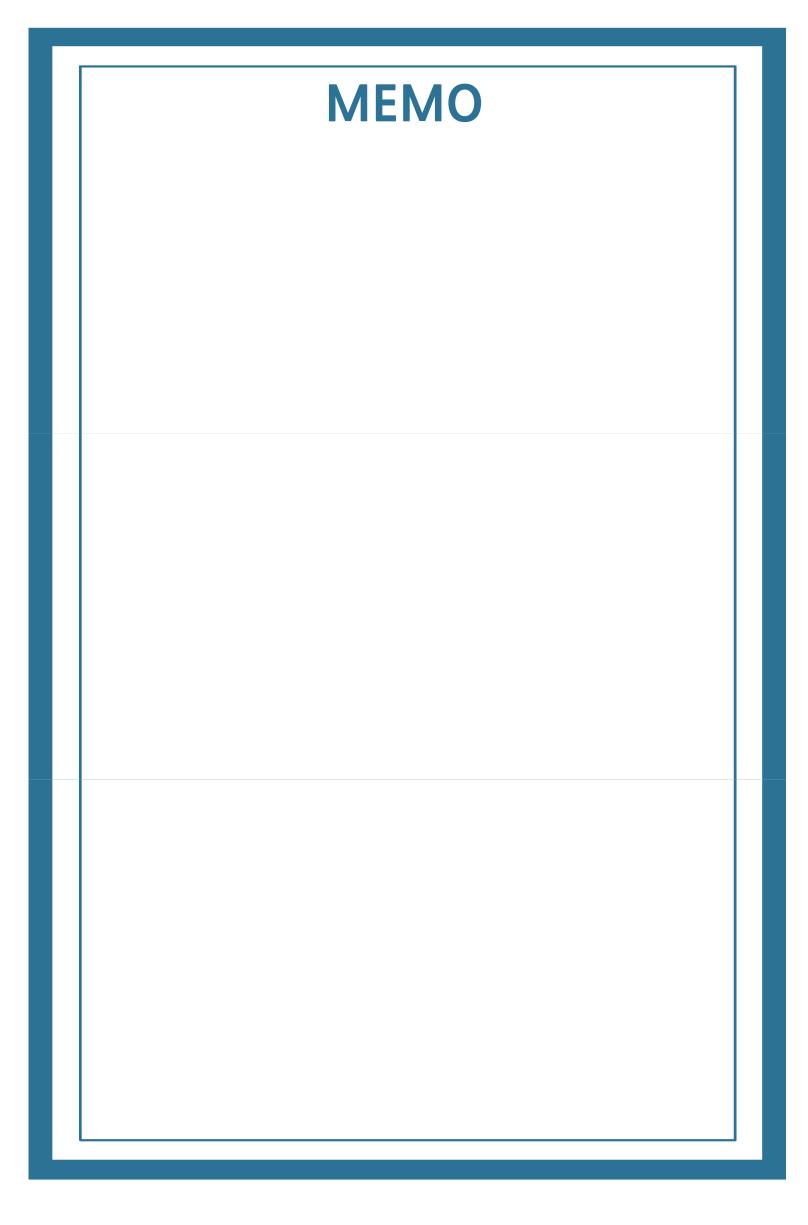
► Optimal solution can be decomposed into subproblems

#### 2. Overlapping subproblems

- ► Subproblems recur many times
- ► Solutions can be cached and reused

## Markov decision processes satisfy both properties

- ► Bellman equation gives recursive decomposition
- ► Value function stores and reuses solutions



## **Prediction and Control**

#### Prediction: evaluate the future

- ► Given an MDP  $\langle S, A, P, R, \gamma \rangle$  and a policy  $\pi$
- ▶ Output: a value function  $V_{\pi}$

Iterative policy evaluation!

### © Control: optimize the future

- ► Given an MDP  $\langle S, A, P, R, \gamma \rangle$
- ▶ Output: optimal policy  $\pi_*$  (and optimal value function  $V_*$ )



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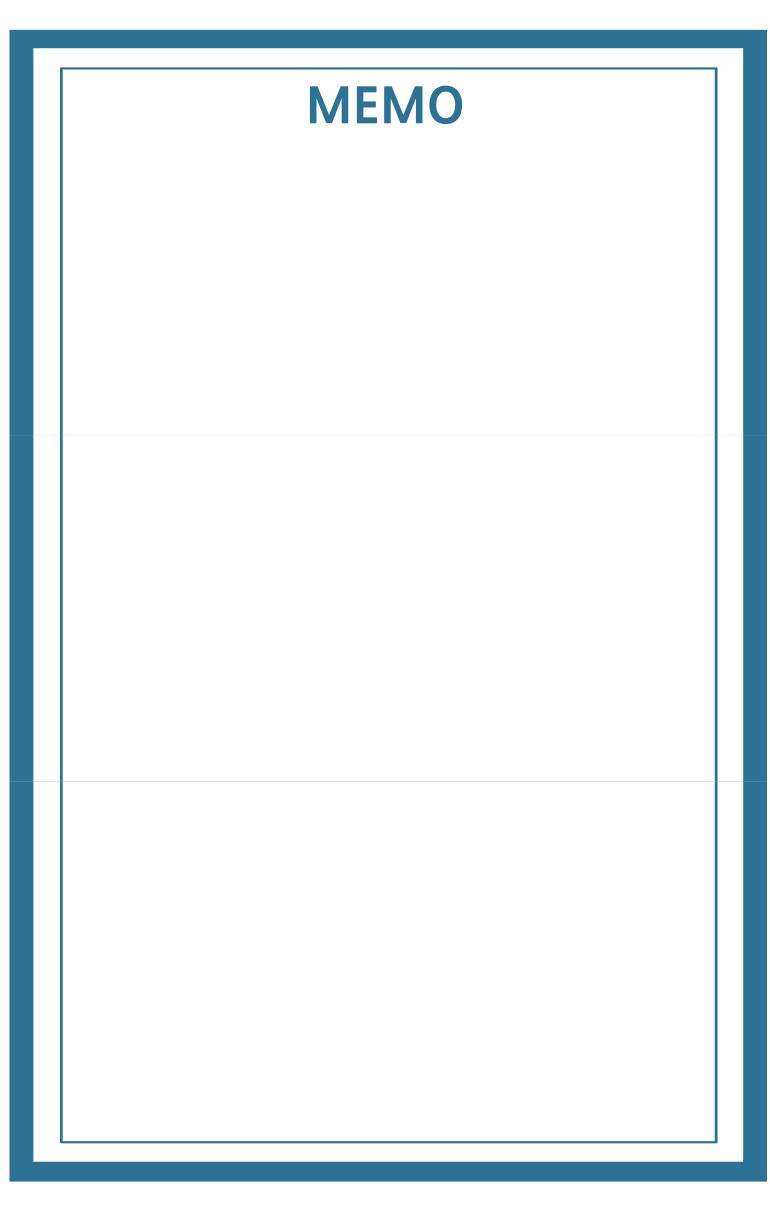
# Iterative Policy Evaluation

- $\otimes$  Problem: evaluate a given policy  $\pi$
- Solution: iteratively apply Bellman expectation backup
  - ► Converge to a real  $V_{\pi}$   $(V_1 \rightarrow V_2 \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow V_{\pi})$
  - ► At each iteration k + 1, for all states  $s \in S$ , update  $V_{k+1}(s)$  from  $V_k(s')$  where s' is a successor state of s
- Iteratively compute until convergence

$$V^{k+1} = R^{\pi} + \gamma P^{\pi} V^k$$

► Matrix form of Bellman expectation equation

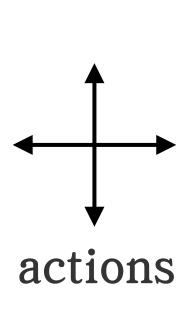
$$V_{\pi}(s) = \sum_{a \in A} \pi(a|s) (R_s^a + \gamma \sum_{s' \in S} P_{ss'}^a V_{\pi}(s'))$$





# Evaluating Random Policy in Small Gridworld

#### Problem setup



	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	

- ▶ Undiscounted episodic MDP ( $\gamma = 1$ )
- ► Terminal state: two shaded squares
- ► Actions leading out of the grid leave state unchanged
- ightharpoonup Reward is -1 until the terminal state is reached
- ► Agent follows uniform random policy

$$\pi(n|\cdot) = \pi(e|\cdot) = \pi(s|\cdot) = \pi(w|\cdot) = 0.25$$

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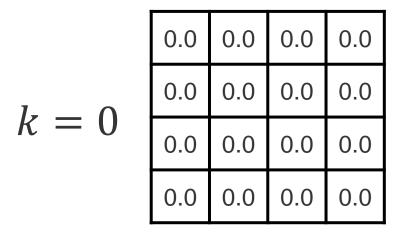
# Iterative Policy Estimation in Small Gridworld

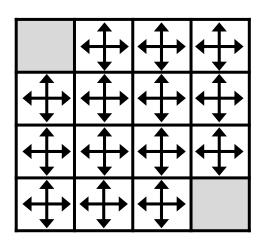
#### Problem setup

 $V^k$  for the random policy

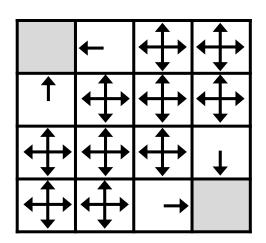
Greedy policy w.r.t.  $V^k$ 

Converged optimal policy





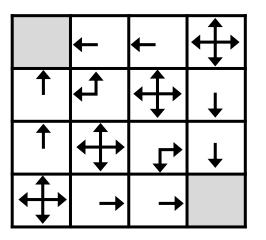
$$k = 1 \begin{bmatrix} 0.0 & -1.0 & -1.0 & -1.0 \\ -1.0 & -1.0 & -1.0 & -1.0 \\ -1.0 & -1.0 & -1.0 & -1.0 \\ -1.0 & -1.0 & -1.0 & 0.0 \end{bmatrix}$$

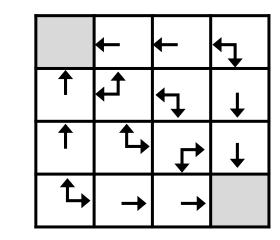


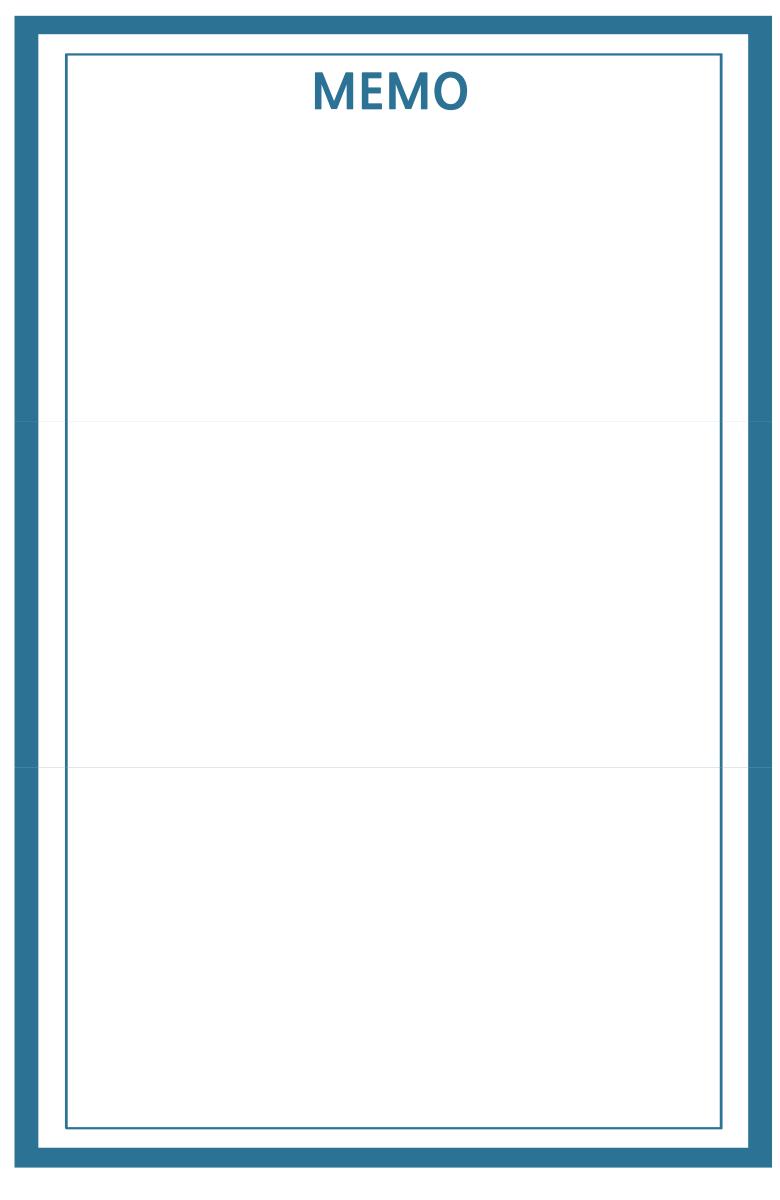
	0.0	-6.1	-8.4	-9.0
<i>l</i> 10	-6.1	-7.7	-8.4	-8.4
k = 10	-8.4	-8.4	-7.7	-6.1
	-9.0	-8.4	-6.1	0.0

	<b>↓</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>↓</b>
<b>↑</b>	Ţ	Ţ	<b>+</b>
<b>↑</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>↑</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>↑</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>→</b>	

$$k = 2 \begin{bmatrix} 0.0 & -1.7 & -2.0 & -2.0 \\ -1.7 & -2.0 & -2.0 & -2.0 \\ -2.0 & -2.0 & -2.0 & -1.7 \\ -2.0 & -2.0 & -1.7 & 0.0 \end{bmatrix}$$









- @ Now we know how to evaluate  $V_{\pi}$  for a given policy  $\pi$
- How to improve a policy?
  - ▶ Initialize a policy  $\pi$
  - ▶ Evaluate the policy  $\pi$  to compute  $V_{\pi}$
  - ightharpoonup Improve the policy by acting greedily with respect to  $V_{\pi}$

$$\pi' = \operatorname{greedy}(V_{\pi})$$

$$\pi'(s) = \operatorname{argmax} Q_{\pi}(s, a)$$

▶ This process of policy iteration always converges to  $\pi_*$ 

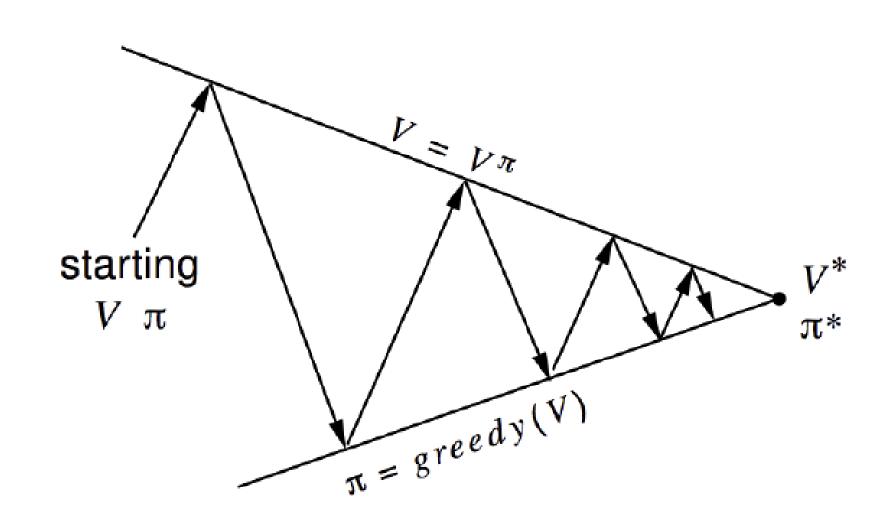


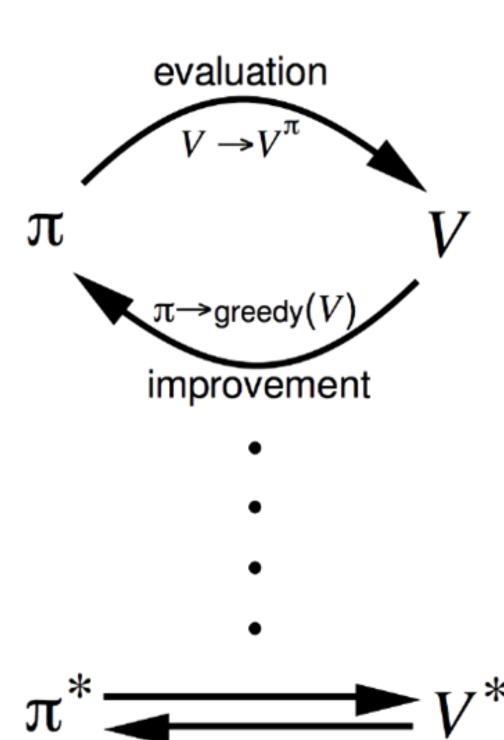
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# Policy Iteration

- $\otimes$  Policy evaluation: estimate  $V_{\pi}$ 
  - ► Iterative policy evaluation
- $\otimes$  Policy improvement: generate  $\pi' \geq \pi$ 
  - ▶ Greedy policy improvement





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# **DP Algorithms**

Problem	Bellman equation	Algorithm
Prediction	Bellman expectation equation	Iterative policy evaluation
Control	Bellman expectation equation + Greedy policy improvement	Policy iteration

- ► Algorithms are based on state-value function  $V_{\pi}(s)$  or  $V_{*}(s)$
- ► Complexity  $O(mn^2)$  per iteration, for m actions and n states
- ► Could also apply to action-value function  $Q_{\pi}(s,a)$  or  $Q_{*}(s,a)$
- ► Complexity  $O(m^2n^2)$  per iteration