

# CMPSC 465: LECTURE VI

QuickSort  
Selection

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September 10, 2025

# QuickSort

Input: 8,1,9,2,8,4,6,5

Idea: divide and conquer

- |   |                        |                     |
|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Split input by a pivot | < pivot >           |
| 2 | Sort each part         | 1,2,4   5   8,9,6,8 |
| 3 | TADA!                  | 1,2,4,5,6,8,8,9     |

QuickSort( $A, st, ed$ )

**if**  $st < ed$  **then**

$p = \text{Partition}(A, st, ed)$

    QuickSort( $A, st, p - 1$ )

    QuickSort( $A, p + 1, ed$ )

How to do Partition **in place**, namely, with  $O(1)$  extra space?

## Partition around pivot

Idea: check elements one by one against the pivot and maintain a  $< \text{pivot}$  region and a  $\geq \text{pivot}$  region

8    1    9    2    8    4    6    5

Partition( $A, st, ed$ )

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pivot =  $A[ed]$   
 $bd = st - 1$   
for  $cur = st$  to  $ed - 1$  do  
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return  $bd + 1$ 
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↓ last element in the  $<$  pivot region

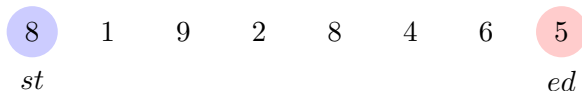
|           |   |   |   |   |   |   |           |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| 8         | 1 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 5         |
| <i>st</i> |   |   |   |   |   |   | <i>ed</i> |

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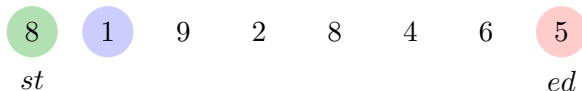


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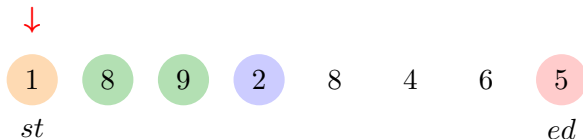


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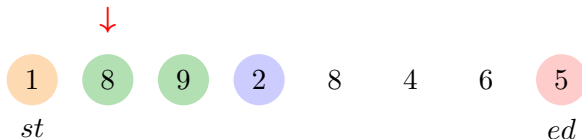


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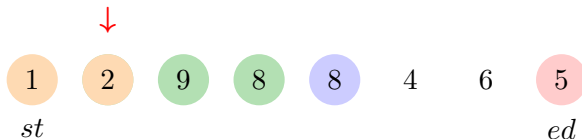


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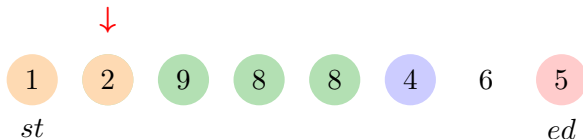


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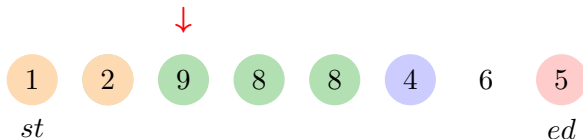


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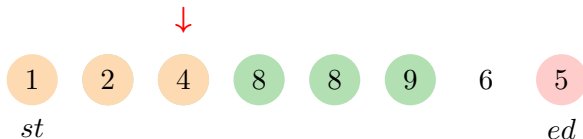


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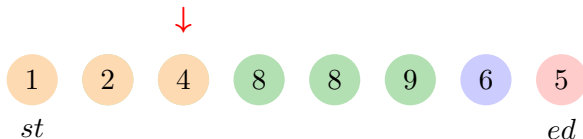
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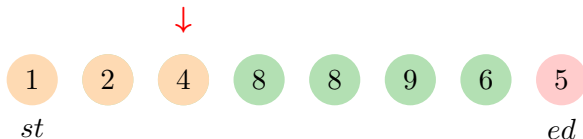


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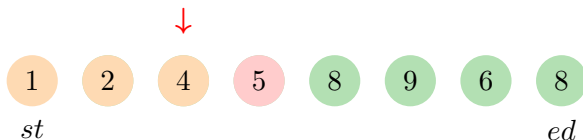


Partition( $A$ ,  $st$ ,  $ed$ )

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$pivot = A[ed]$

$bd = st - 1$

**for**  $cur = st$  **to**  $ed - 1$  **do**

**if**  $A[cur] < pivot$  **then**

$bd = bd + 1$

        swap  $A[bd]$  with  $A[cur]$

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**return**  $bd + 1$

Time complexity?  $\Theta(n)$

Space complexity?  $\Theta(1)$

# QuickSort

QuickSort( $A, st, ed$ )

**if**  $st < ed$  **then**

$p = \text{Partition}(A, st, ed)$

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Time complexity?

- ▶ Worst-case is when each partition results in sizes ( $0, 1, n-1$ ).

$$T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(n - 1)$$

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$$T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(n-1) \rightsquigarrow T(n) = O(n^2).$$

- ▶ Can you find an input that achieves this worst-case performance?
- ▶ Why is it called QuickSort then?



# QuickSort

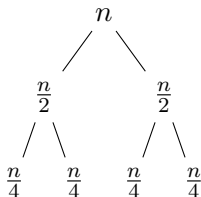
Why do we use QuickSort if it is not asymptotically optimal?

- ▶ Its average-case time complexity is  $O(n \log n)$ : more precisely, the expected running time on a random permutation of  $n$  numbers is  $O(n \log n)$ .

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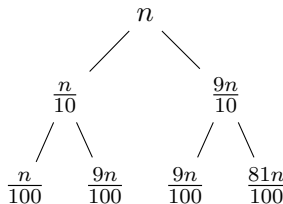
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- ▶ Intuitively, even “quite unbalanced” splits, such as 10% – 90% at each level, still yield a  $O(n \log n)$  running time.



Perfect split, depth =  $\log n$

$$T(n) = \Theta(n) + 2T(n/2)$$



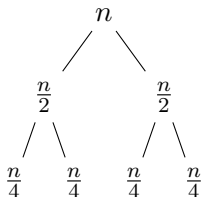
Good split, depth =  $\log_{\frac{10}{9}} n \approx 7 \log n$

$$T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(n/10) + T(9n/10)$$

## QuickSort

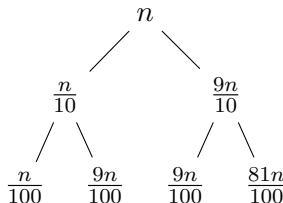
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- ▶ Partition is efficient: small hidden constants and runs in place.

# Selection problem

- ▶ Recall the selection problem: Given a list of  $n$  numbers and a target  $k$ , select the  $k$ -th smallest number.

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- ▶ Recall the selection problem: Given a list of  $n$  numbers and a target  $k$ , select the  $k$ -th smallest number.
- ▶ We have argued a  $\Omega(n)$  lower bound on this task.
- ▶ Is there an algorithm that can achieve a matching running time  $O(n)$ ?

## Randomized selection

Input: 8, 1, 9, 2, 8, 4, 6, 5     $k = 5$

Idea: divide-and-conquer

1 Split input by a random pivot    1,2,4 | 5 | 8, 9, 6, 8     $k = 5$

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Idea: divide-and-conquer

- 1 Split input by a random pivot     1,2,4 | 5 | 8, 9, 6, 8      $k = 5$
- 2 Decide which side to recurse on     1,2,4 | 5 | 8, 9, 6, 8      $k = 1$



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RandomizedSelect( $A, st, ed, k$ )

```
if  $st == ed$  then return  $A[st]$ 
//  $p$  is the index of the random pivot
 $p = \text{Partition}(A, st, ed)$ 
 $rank = p - st + 1$                                 // rank of the pivot
if  $k == rank$  then return  $A[p]$ 
else if  $k < rank$  then
    return RandomizedSelect( $A, st, p - 1, k$ )
else return RandomizedSelect( $A, p + 1, ed, k - rank$ )
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# Randomized selection

Time complexity?

► Worst-case:  $T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(?)$

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Time complexity?

- ▶ Worst-case:  $T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(n-1)$   $\rightsquigarrow$



We may as well do sorting!

# Randomized selection

## Time complexity?

- ▶ Worst-case:  $T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(n-1) \rightsquigarrow T(n) = O(n^2)$
- ▶ Can you find an input that force the worst-case performance?

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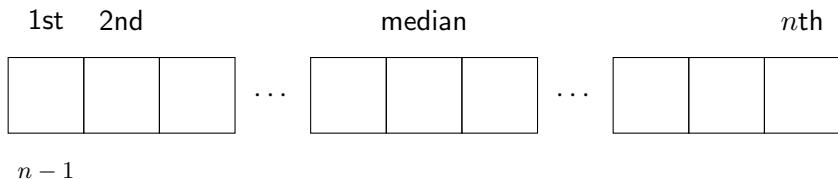




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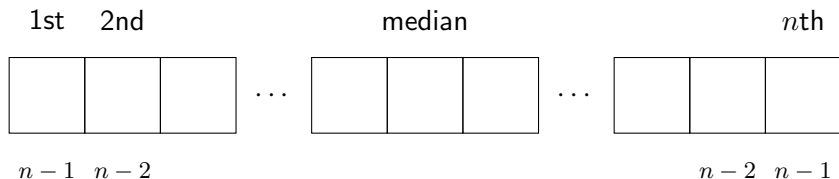




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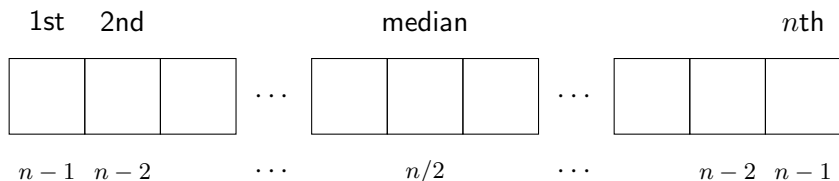
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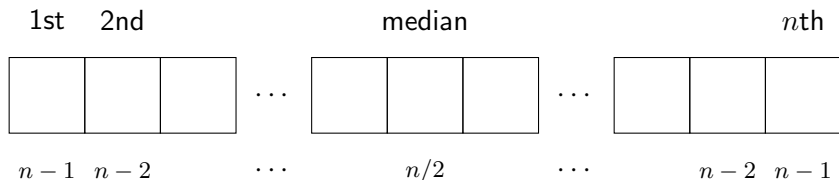
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- ▶ Can you find an input that force the worst-case performance?
- ▶ Average-case: what's the expected input size for the recursive call?



Each number has an equal chance of  $1/n$  to be the pivot, so the expected input size is:

$$((n-1) + (n-2) + \dots + n/2 + \dots + (n-2) + (n-1))/n \approx 3n/4.$$

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Time complexity?

- ▶ Worst-case:  $T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(n-1) \rightsquigarrow T(n) = O(n^2)$ .
- ▶ Average-case:  $T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(3n/4) \rightsquigarrow T(n) = O(n)$ .

Can we do better?

# Randomized selection

## Time complexity?

- ▶ Worst-case:  $T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(n-1) \rightsquigarrow T(n) = O(n^2)$ .
- ▶ Average-case:  $T(n) = \Theta(n) + T(3n/4) \rightsquigarrow T(n) = O(n)$ .

## Can we do better?

Can we do selection in **worst-case linear** time?

## Median of medians as pivot

Select( $A$ ,  $k$ ):

1. Divide the input  $A$  into groups of 5.
2. Find the median of each group.
3. Recursively find the median  $m$  of all these  $n/5$  medians.
4. Partition  $A$  with pivot  $m$ .
5. Do recursive call as in RandomizedSelect.

## Median of medians as pivot

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5. Do recursive call as in RandomizedSelect.

Time complexity?

► Worst-case:  $T(n) =$

## Median of medians as pivot

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1. Divide the input  $A$  into groups of 5.
2. Find the median of each group. ←
3. Recursively find the median  $m$  of all these  $n/5$  medians.
4. Partition  $A$  with pivot  $m$ .
5. Do recursive call as in RandomizedSelect.

Time complexity?

- Worst-case:  $T(n) = c \cdot n/5 +$

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5. Do recursive call as in RandomizedSelect.

Time complexity?

- Worst-case:  $T(n) = c \cdot n/5 + T(n/5) +$

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4. Partition  $A$  with pivot  $m$ . ←
5. Do recursive call as in RandomizedSelect.

Time complexity?

- Worst-case:  $T(n) = c \cdot n/5 + T(n/5) + \Theta(n) +$

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5. Do recursive call as in RandomizedSelect. ←

Time complexity?

- Worst-case:  $T(n) = c \cdot n/5 + T(n/5) + \Theta(n) + T(?)$



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Time complexity?

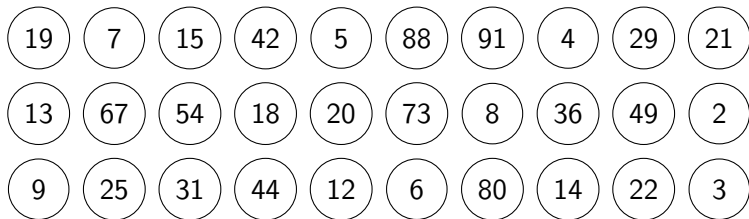
► Worst-case:  $T(n) = c \cdot n/5 + T(n/5) + \Theta(n) + T(?)$   
 $= T(n/5) + T(?) + \Theta(n).$

## How good is MoM?

Select( $A, k$ ):

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$n = 30$



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$n = 30$

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19 | 7  | 15 | 42 | 5  | 88 | 91 | 4  | 29 | 21 |
| 13 | 67 | 54 | 18 | 20 | 73 | 8  | 36 | 49 | 2  |
| 9  | 25 | 31 | 44 | 12 | 6  | 80 | 14 | 22 | 3  |

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|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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# How good is MoM?

- $m \leq (n/5)/2 = n/10$  medians ; also  $\geq n/10$  medians .

$n = 30$ ,  $m = 20$

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19 | 7  | 15 | 42 | 5  | 88 | 91 | 4  | 29 | 21 |
| 13 | 67 | 54 | 18 | 20 | 73 | 8  | 36 | 49 | 2  |
| 9  | 25 | 31 | 44 | 12 | 6  | 80 | 14 | 22 | 3  |

## How good is MoM?

- ▶  $m \leq (n/5)/2 = n/10$  medians ; also  $\geq n/10$  medians .
- ▶ For each median  $\leq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\leq m$ .

$n = 30$ ,  $m = 20$

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19 | 7  | 15 | 42 | 5  | 88 | 91 | 4  | 29 | 21 |
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## How good is MoM?

- ▶  $m \leq (n/5)/2 = n/10$  medians ; also  $\geq n/10$  medians .
- ▶ For each median  $\leq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\leq m$ .
- ▶ For each median  $\geq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\geq m$ .

$n = 30$ ,  $m = 20$

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19 | 7  | 15 | 42 | 5  | 88 | 91 | 4  | 29 | 21 |
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- ▶  $m \leq (n/5)/2 = n/10$  medians ; also  $\geq n/10$  medians .
- ▶ For each median  $\leq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\leq m$ .
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|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
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## How good is MoM?

- ▶  $m \leq (n/5)/2 = n/10$  medians ; also  $\geq n/10$  medians .
- ▶ For each median  $\leq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\leq m$ .
- ▶ For each median  $\geq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\geq m$ .
- ▶ In total, we can guarantee  $3n/10$  numbers  $\leq m$ ; also  $3n/10$  numbers  $\geq m$ .

$n = 30$ ,  $m = 20$

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
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## How good is MoM?

- ▶  $m \leq (n/5)/2 = n/10$  medians ; also  $\geq n/10$  medians .
- ▶ For each median  $\leq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\leq m$ .
- ▶ For each median  $\geq m$ , there are at least 2 more in its group  $\geq m$ .
- ▶ In total, we can guarantee  $3n/10$  numbers  $\leq m$ ; also  $3n/10$  numbers  $\geq m$ .

$n = 30$ ,  $m = 20$ , 15 numbers  $\leq m$ , 15 numbers  $\geq m$

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 19 | 7  | 15 | 42 | 5  | 88 | 91 | 4  | 29 | 21 |
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Time complexity?

- Worst-case:  $T(n) = T(n/5) + T(?) + \Theta(n)$

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- Worst-case:  $T(n) = T(n/5) + T(n-3n/10) + \Theta(n)$

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► Worst-case:  $T(n) = T(n/5) + T(n-3n/10) + \Theta(n)$

$$= T(n/5) + T(7n/10) + \Theta(n).$$

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- ▶ Worst-case:  $T(n) = T(n/5) + T(n-3n/10) + \Theta(n)$   
$$= T(n/5) + T(7n/10) + \Theta(n).$$
- ▶ (Exercise) Prove that  $T(n) = O(n)$ .
- ▶ (Exercise) What happens if we group by 3, or 7?