

## Zigzag Conversion

For solving the Zigzag Conversion problem, the goal is to simulate writing characters in a zigzag pattern and then reading them row by row.

Core Idea: Simulate the zigzag by filling characters into rows going down and then up diagonally repeatedly.

Use: A vector <string> to store characters for each row.

A row index and a direction flag to determine movement between rows.

Algorithm:

1. If  $\text{numRows} = 1$  → return  $s$  directly (zigzag isn't needed)
2. Initialize a vector of empty strings:  $\text{vector<string> rows(numRows)}$
3.  $\text{row} = 0$ , and  $\text{direction} = -1$
4. Loop through characters in  $s$ :
  - Append to  $\text{rows}[\text{row}]$
  - If a top or bottom row, reverse direction
  - Move  $\text{row} += \text{direction}$
5. After loop, concatenate all strings in rows

Time Complexity:  $O(n)$  where  $n = s.length()$  — each character is processed once.  
•  $O(n)$  space for storing rows.

Example: "PAYPALISHIRING",  $\text{numRows} = 4$

Row 0: P            I            N

Row 1: A        L S        I G

Row 2: Y A       H R

Row 3: P            I

Concatenate: "PINALSIGYAHRPI"