

First Missing Positive

This problem is requiring $O(n)$ time and $O(1)$ extra space; we will use the index placement (cyclic sort / hashing in-place) approach.

Key Insight:

The smallest missing positive must lie in range $[1, \dots, n+1]$ where $n = \text{nums.length}$:

- If all numbers $1 \dots n$ exist, answer is $n+1$.

- Otherwise, answer is the smallest missing in $1 \dots n$.

Steps:

1. Place each number x in its correct index $x-1$:

- While $1 \leq \text{nums}[i] \leq n$ and $\text{nums}[i] \neq \text{nums}[\text{nums}[i]-1]$.

- Swap $\text{nums}[i]$ with $\text{nums}[\text{nums}[i]-1]$.

2. Find first missing positive;

- Iterate array; first index i where $\text{nums}[i] \neq i+1 \rightarrow$ return $i+1$.

3. If all correct \rightarrow return $n+1$.

Complexity:

- Time: $O(n)$ (each number placed at most once).

- Space: $O(1)$ (in place)