



Explanation


A **classic Python gotcha**. While these two lines look similar, they behave **very differently** because of how Python handles **list multiplication** and object references.

Code 1 — Correct and Independent Sublists:

```
freq_bucket = [[] for _ in range(m+1)]
```

- This creates a **new empty list** `[]` for each iteration.
- So, each element of `freq_bucket` is a **separate list object**.
- Modifying one sublist will **not** affect the others.

Example:

```
freq_bucket[0].append(1)
print(freq_bucket[0]) # [1]
print(freq_bucket[1]) # []  different list
```

Code 2 — Shared References:

```
freq_bucket = [[]] * (m+1)
```

- This creates **one empty list** `[]` and **copies the reference** `m+1` times.
- All sublists point to the **same list object**.
- Modifying one sublist will affect **all of them**.

✗ Example:

```
freq_bucket[0].append(1)
print(freq_bucket[0]) # [1]
print(freq_bucket[1]) # [1] ✗ same list!
```



Visual Summary

Statement	Separate Lists?	Safe to Modify Individually?
<code>[] for _ in range(m+1)</code>	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
<code>[] * (m+1)</code>	✗ No (shared)	✗ No

✓ Use Case Recommendation

Always use:

```
[] for _ in range(m+1)
```

when you want to initialize a list of independent sublists (e.g., for **bucket sort**, **grouping**, or **adjacency lists**).