

Big-O, Big-Omega, and Big-Theta Notations

Overview

Asymptotic notations are used to describe the performance of algorithms in terms of time and space as input size grows.

1. Big-O Notation (O)

Big-O represents the **worst-case** time or space complexity of an algorithm. It defines an upper bound on the growth rate.

Example:

A loop that runs n times has time complexity $O(n)$.

2. Big-Omega Notation (Ω)

Big-Omega represents the **best-case** time or space complexity. It defines a lower bound on the growth rate.

Example:

Accessing the first element in an array is $\Omega(1)$.

3. Big-Theta Notation (Θ)

Big-Theta represents the **average or exact bound**. It means the algorithm grows at the same rate in both best and worst cases.

Example:

A loop that always runs n times is $\Theta(n)$.

Comparison Summary

$O(n)$ → Worst case

$\Omega(n)$ → Best case

$\Theta(n)$ → Tight bound

Why These Notations Matter

They help developers choose efficient algorithms and compare performance independently from hardware or programming language.