

# Overview and comparison of three techniques for inverted index compression

Golomb coding, Binary Interpolative Coding, and Simple-9

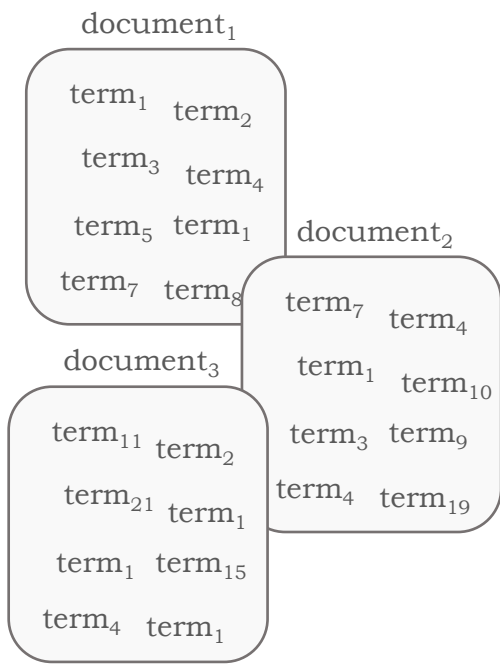
Silvia Imeneo

Information Retrieval A.Y. 2023-2024  
Data Science and Scientific Computing

A series of four horizontal lines in orange, green, yellow, and orange colors spanning the width of the slide at the bottom.

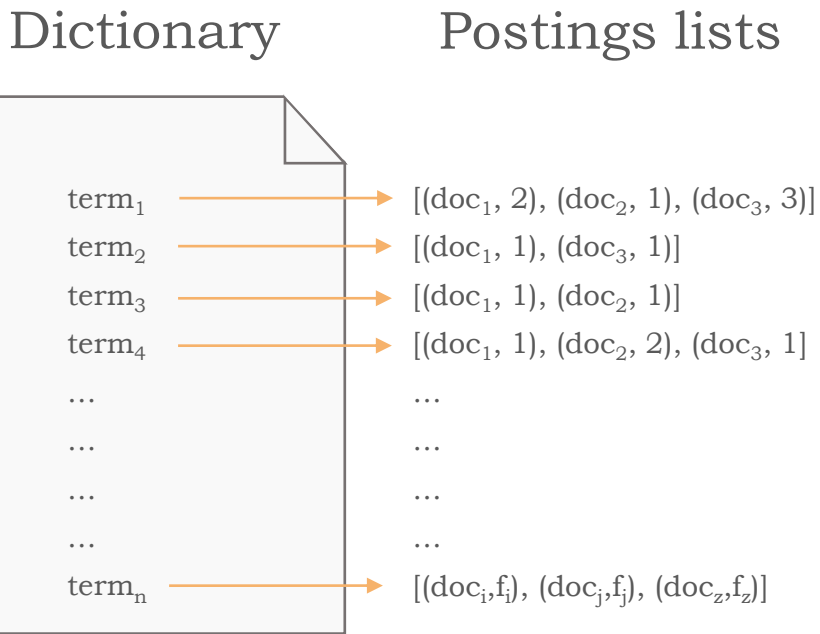
# RECAP ON THE INVERTED INDEX

Collection of textual data



To retrieve information

## Inverted index

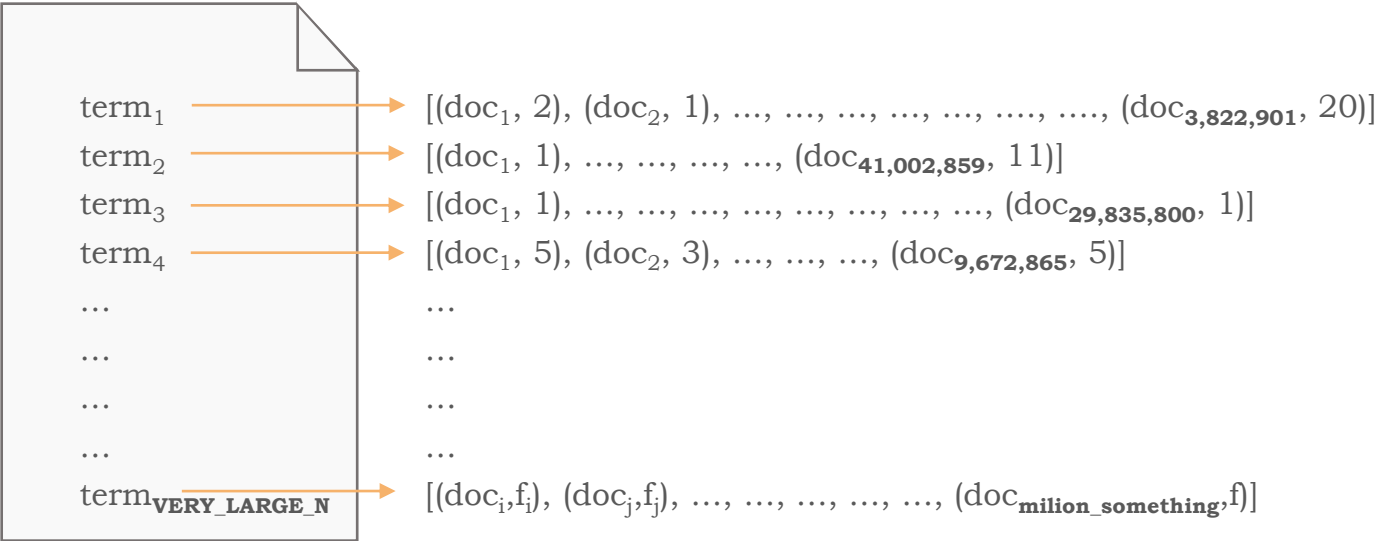


# PROBLEM!

## Inverted index

Dictionary

Postings lists



In moder large-scale search engines, an inverted index indexes **millions** of documents



**billions** of integers to store

# BENEFITS OF COMPRESSION

- Less disk space needed to store the inverted index
- More info fits into main memory = higher use of caching
- Faster query processing

# TYPES OF COMPRESSION

- | **Lossless**: all information is preserved
- | **Lossy**: some information is discarded
  
- | Compression of **dictionary**
- | Compression of **postings lists**

We'll see 3 **lossless**  
techniques to compress  
**postings lists**

# GOLOMB CODING



# GOLOMB CODING

Encodes a postings list by encoding **each integer individually**

Example:

We have a postings list  $S = [4, 10, 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 28, 29]$

We compute the  $d$ -gaps  $D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1]$

We encode each integer individually

- encode 4
- encode 6
- encode 1
- etc...

# GOLOMB CODING

How to

1. Start with the integer to compress

**X**

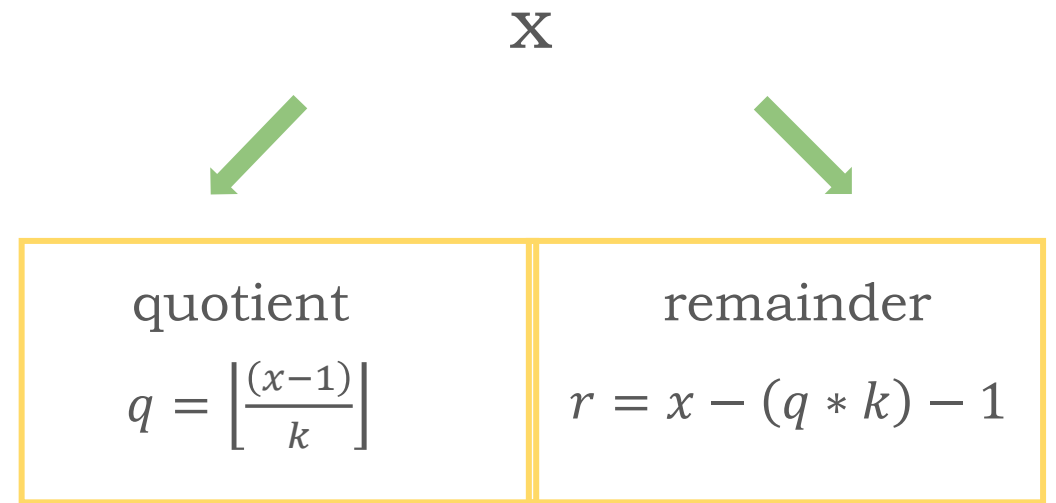


# GOLOMB CODING

How to

1. Start with the integer to compress

2. Represent it as two parts



# GOLOMB CODING

## How to

1. Start with the integer to compress

**X**



2. Represent it as two parts

quotient

$$q = \left\lfloor \frac{(x-1)}{k} \right\rfloor$$

remainder

$$r = x - (q * k) - 1$$

3. Compute two auxiliary quantities

$$b = \lfloor \log_2(k) \rfloor$$

$$p = 2^{b+1} - k$$

# GOLOMB CODING

**k** is the base of the Golomb code

It depends on the distribution of the integers in the postings list → they are assumed to follow a Bernoulli model

An estimated value is  $k \approx 0.69 \times \text{mean}(\text{array\_of\_integers})$

3. Compute two auxiliary quantities

x

quotient

$$q = \left\lfloor \frac{(x-1)}{k} \right\rfloor$$

remainder

$$r = x - (q * k) - 1$$

$$b = \lfloor \log_2(k) \rfloor$$

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# GOLOMB CODING

How to (cont.)

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{quotient} \\ q = \left\lfloor \frac{(x-1)}{k} \right\rfloor \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{remainder} \\ \mathbf{r} = x - (q * k) - 1 \end{array}$$

$$b = \lfloor \log_2(k) \rfloor$$

$$\mathbf{p} = 2^{b+1} - k$$

4. Based on those four quantities:

# GOLOMB CODING

How to (cont.)

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{quotient} \\ q = \left\lfloor \frac{(x-1)}{k} \right\rfloor \end{array}$$

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$$b = \lfloor \log_2(k) \rfloor$$

$$\mathbf{p} = 2^{b+1} - k$$

4. Based on those four quantities:

4a. If  $\mathbf{r} < \mathbf{p}$ , the Golomb code is:

$q$   
in **unary** code

concat.

$r$   
in **binary** code

# GOLOMB CODING

How to (cont.)

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{quotient} \\ q = \left\lfloor \frac{(x-1)}{k} \right\rfloor \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{remainder} \\ \mathbf{r} = x - (q * k) - 1 \end{array}$$

$$b = \lfloor \log_2(k) \rfloor$$

$$\mathbf{p} = 2^{b+1} - k$$

4. Based on those four quantities:

4a. If  $\mathbf{r} < \mathbf{p}$ , the Golomb code is:

$q$   
in **unary** code

concat.

$r$   
in **binary** code

4b. If  $\mathbf{r} \geq \mathbf{p}$ , the Golomb code is:

$q$   
in **unary** code

concat.

$r + p$   
in **binary** code

# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

The integer to compress is  $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{9}$

We choose as base  $\mathbf{k} = \mathbf{3}$

# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

The integer to compress is  $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{9}$

We choose as base  $\mathbf{k} = \mathbf{3}$

1. We compute the quotient  $q = \left\lfloor \frac{(9-1)}{3} \right\rfloor = 2$

quotient $q = \left\lfloor \frac{(x-1)}{k} \right\rfloor$	



# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

The integer to compress is  $\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{9}$

We choose as base  $\mathbf{k} = \mathbf{3}$

1. We compute the quotient  $q = \left\lfloor \frac{(9-1)}{3} \right\rfloor = 2$

2. We compute the remainder  $r = 9 - (2 * 3) - 1 = 2$

quotient $q = 2$	remainder $r = x - (q * k) - 1$

# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

The integer to compress is  $\mathbf{x} = 9$

We choose as base  $\mathbf{k} = 3$

1. We compute the quotient  $q = \left\lfloor \frac{(9-1)}{3} \right\rfloor = 2$
2. We compute the remainder  $r = 9 - (2 * 3) - 1 = 2$
3. We compute  $b = \lfloor \log_2(3) \rfloor = 1$

quotient $q = 2$	remainder $r = 2$
$b = \lfloor \log_2(k) \rfloor$	

# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

The integer to compress is  $\mathbf{x} = 9$

We choose as base  $\mathbf{k} = 3$

1. We compute the quotient  $q = \left\lfloor \frac{(9-1)}{3} \right\rfloor = 2$

2. We compute the remainder  $r = 9 - (2 * 3) - 1 = 2$

3. We compute  $b = \lfloor \log_2(3) \rfloor = 1$

4. We compute  $p = 2^{1+1} - 3 = 1$

quotient $q = 2$	remainder $r = 2$
$b = 1$	$p = 2^{b+1} - k$

# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

Since  $\mathbf{r} > \mathbf{p}$

$$q = 2$$

$$r = 2$$

$$b = 1$$

$$p = 1$$

# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

Since  $\mathbf{r} > \mathbf{p}$

the Golomb code is:

$q$   
in **unary** code

concat.

$r + p$   
in **binary** code

$$q = 2$$

$$r = 2$$

$$b = 1$$

$$p = 1$$

# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

Since  $\mathbf{r} > \mathbf{p}$

the Golomb code is:

$q$   
in **unary** code

concat.

$r + p$   
in **binary** code



2  
in unary code

concat.

$2 + 1 = 3$   
in binary code

$$q = 2$$

$$r = 2$$

$$b = 1$$

$$p = 1$$

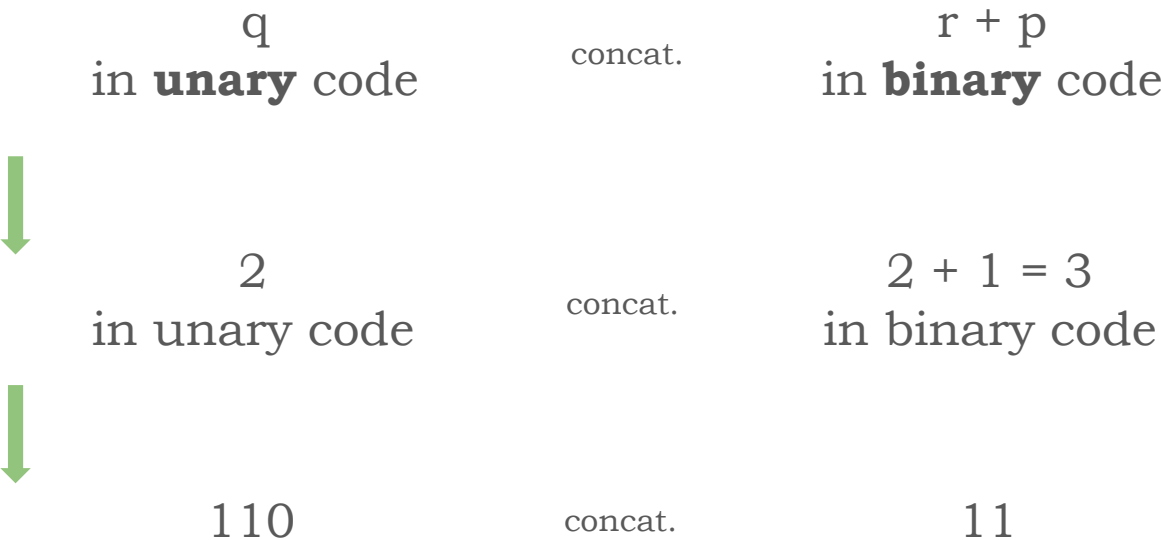
# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

Since  $r > p$

the Golomb code is:

$q = 2$	$r = 2$
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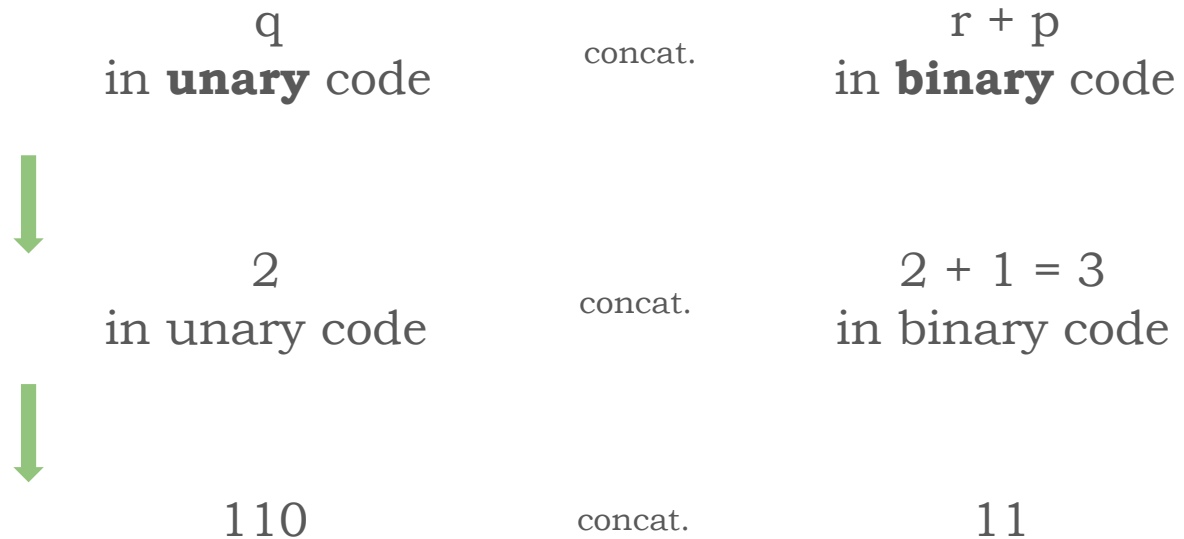
# GOLOMB CODING

## Example

Since  $\mathbf{r} > \mathbf{p}$

the Golomb code is:

$q = 2$	$r = 2$
$b = 1$	$p = 1$



$$G_3(9) = 110 \ 11$$



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

Encodes elements in a postings list **by using the already-encoded ones**

- ! The encoding of an integer  $x$  is not fixed

- ! The same integer may be encoded differently over different postings lists

Recursive algorithm

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

We have a sequence  $S = [s_1, s_2, s_3, \dots, s_m, \dots, s_n]$

For it we always know the parameters:

- $n$       **number** of elements in  $S$
- $low$     **lower-bound** to the **lowest value** in the sequence
- $hi$       **upper-bound** to the **highest value** in the sequence
- $m$       the index of the **middle** element of the sequence

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

$$S = [s_1, s_2, \dots, s_m, \dots, \dots, s_n]$$

At the **first iteration**:

- $n = |S|$
- $low = 0$
- $hi = s_n$
- $m = \frac{(n+1)}{2}$

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

$$S = [s_1, s_2, \dots, s_m, \dots, \dots, s_n]$$

At the first iteration:

- $n = |S|$
- $low = 0$
- $hi = s_n$
- $m = \frac{(n+1)}{2}$

These parameters are  
recomputed at each  
iteration

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

How to

$$S = [s_1, s_2, \dots, \mathbf{s_m}, \dots, \dots, s_n]$$

1. The first value that we encode is  $s_m$ , the one at position  $m$
- ! 2. Instead of encoding  $s_m$  itself we encode  $\mathbf{s_m - low - m + 1}$
3. We then **split the sequence** at  $s_m$  in left and right sub-sequences
4. We **iterate** the algorithm on both subsequences:
  - Recompute the parameters
  - Find the value in the middle
  - Encode is has  $s_m - low - m + 1$
  - Split the sequence in two halves

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

[3, 4, 7, 11, 13, 15, 21, 25, 36, 38, 54]



Our postings list

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

[3, 4, 7, 11, 13, 15, 21, 25, 36, 38, 54]  
(**m** = 6; **n** = 11; **low** = 0; **hi** = 54)

We compute the initial parameters

- $n = |S| = 11$
- $low = 0$
- $hi = s_n = 54$
- $m = \frac{(n+1)}{2} = 6$



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

[3, 4, 7, 11, 13, **15**, 21, 25, 36, 38, 54]  
(m = 6; n = 11; low = 0; hi = 54)

We retrieve the value in the middle,  **$s_m$**

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

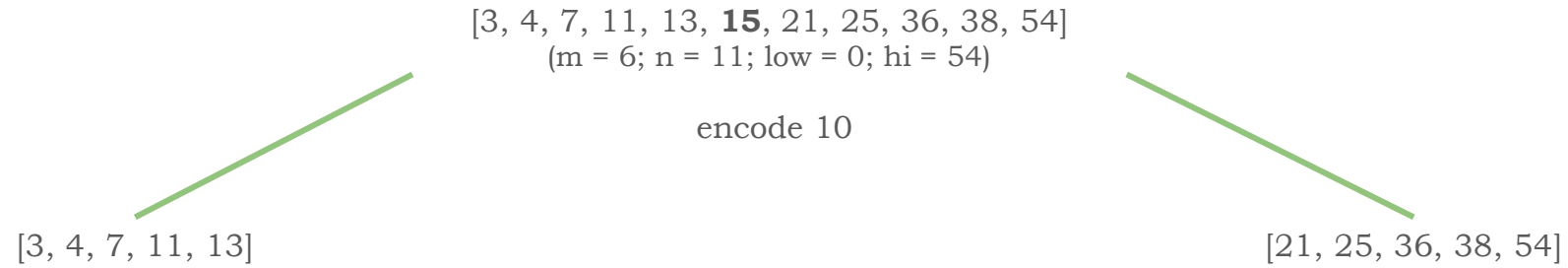
[3, 4, 7, 11, 13, **15**, 21, 25, 36, 38, 54]  
(m = 6; n = 11; low = 0; hi = 54)

**encode 10**

We encode  $\mathbf{s_m - low - m + 1 =}$   
 $= 15 - 0 - 6 + 1 = 10$

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

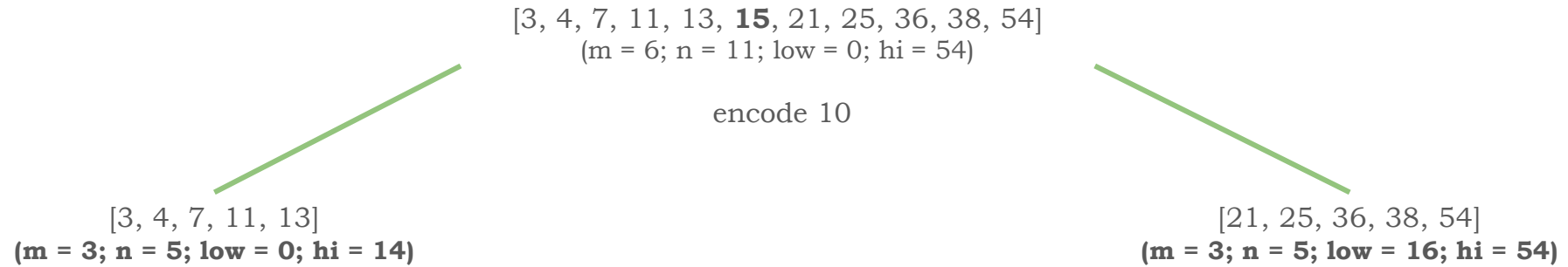
## Example



We split the initial sequence  
into a left and a right  
subsequence

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example



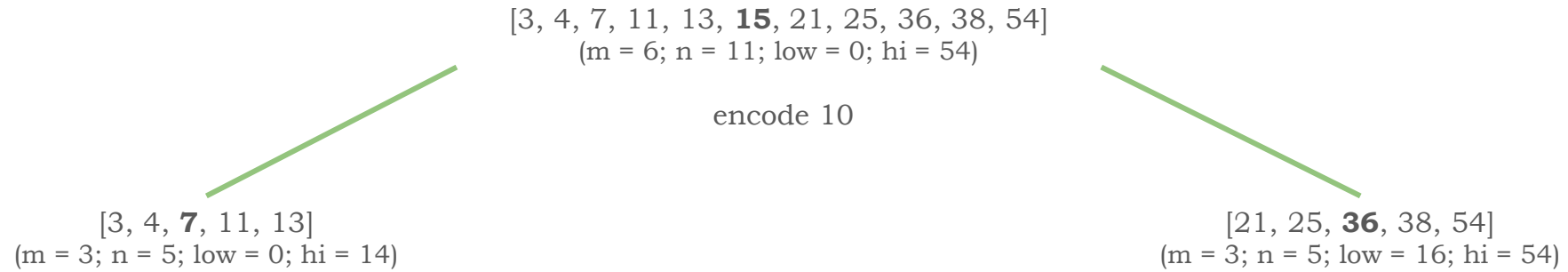
We recompute the parameters

$n_{left}$     $low_{left}$     $hi_{left}$     $m_{left}$

$n_{right}$     $low_{right}$     $hi_{right}$     $m_{right}$

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

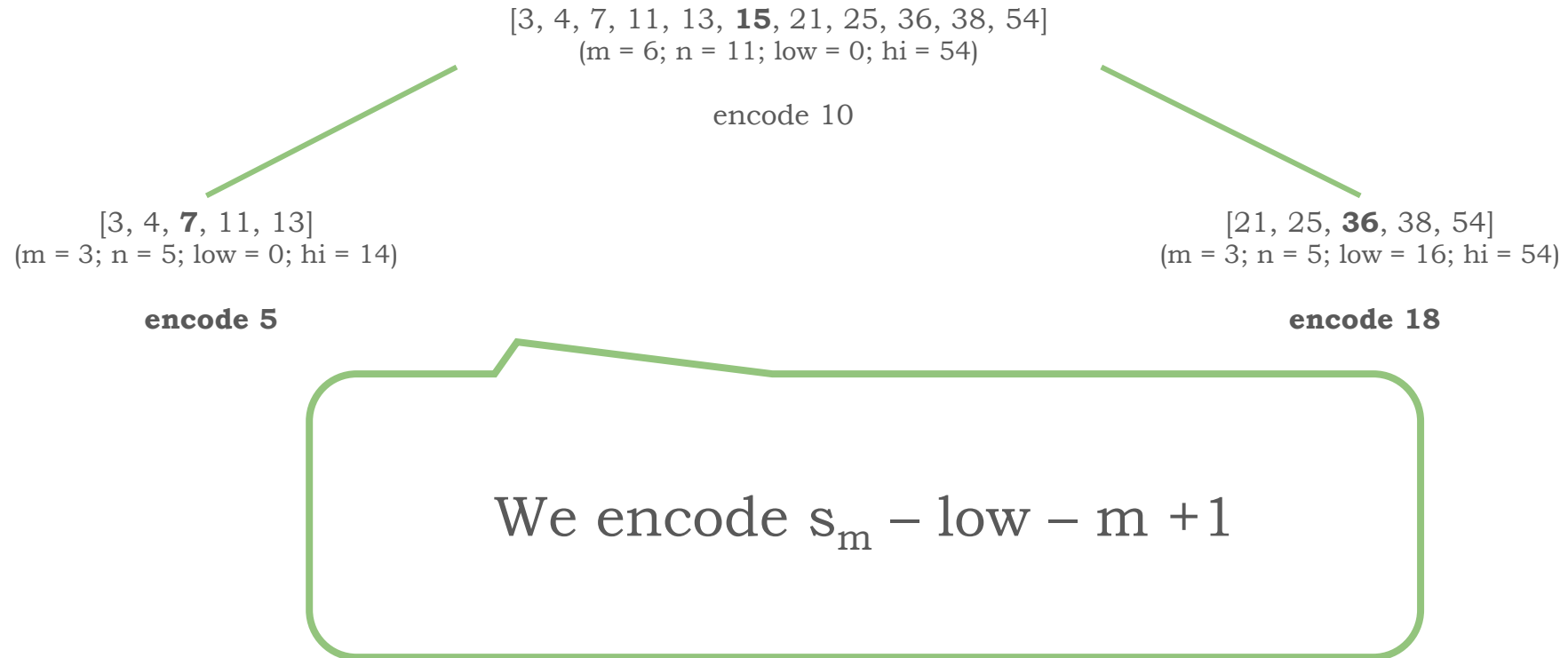
## Example



We retrieve the value in the middle

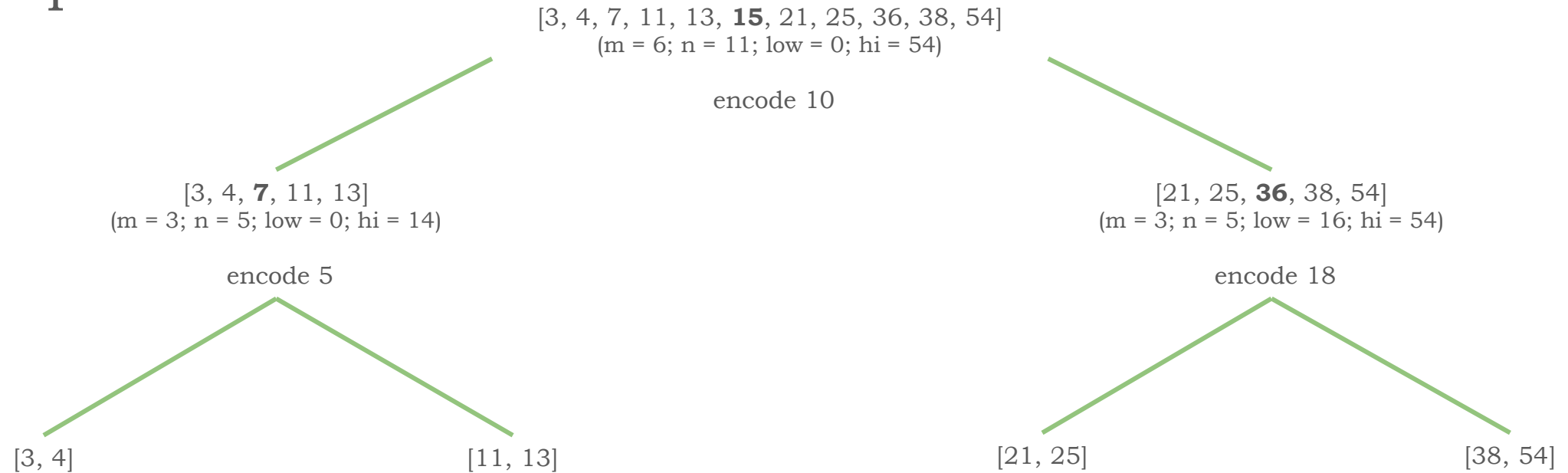
# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

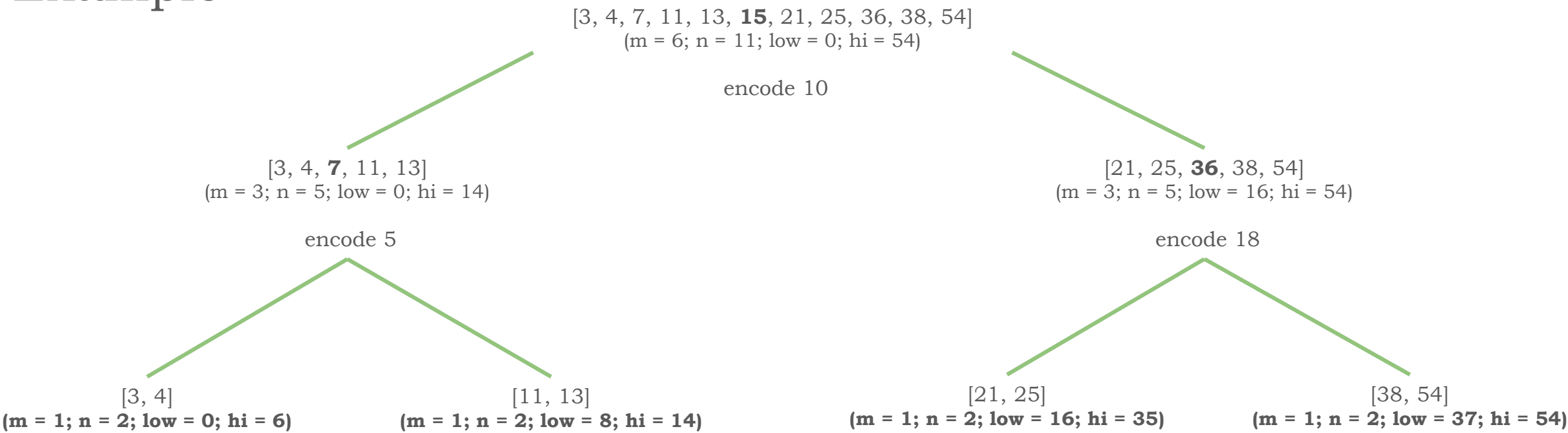
## Example



Split the sub-sequences

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

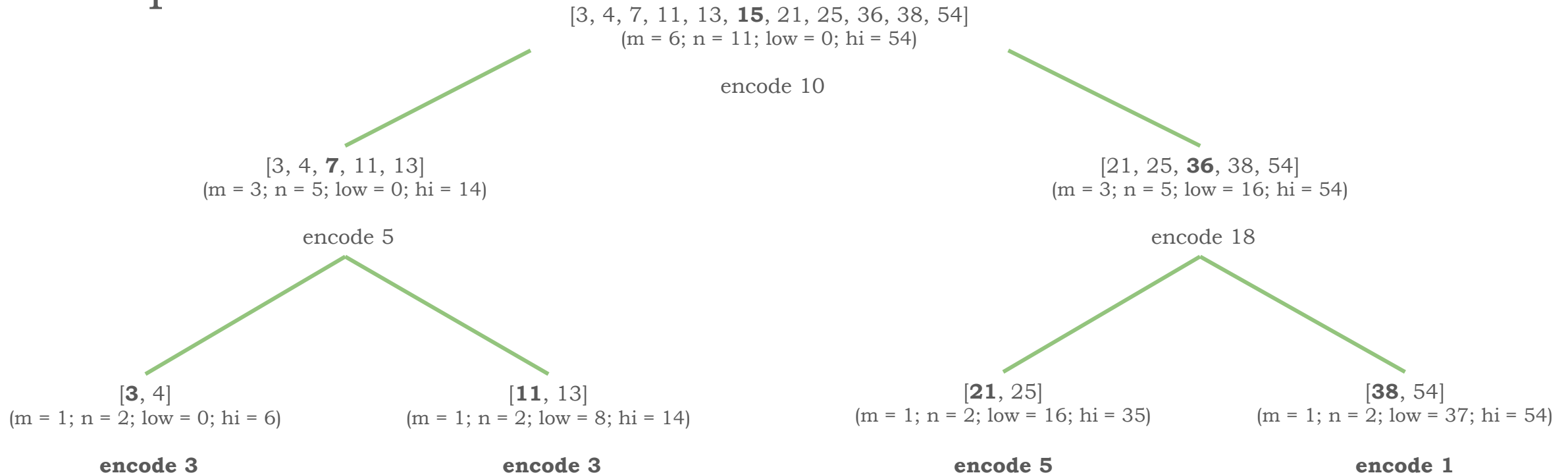


Recompute the parameters



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

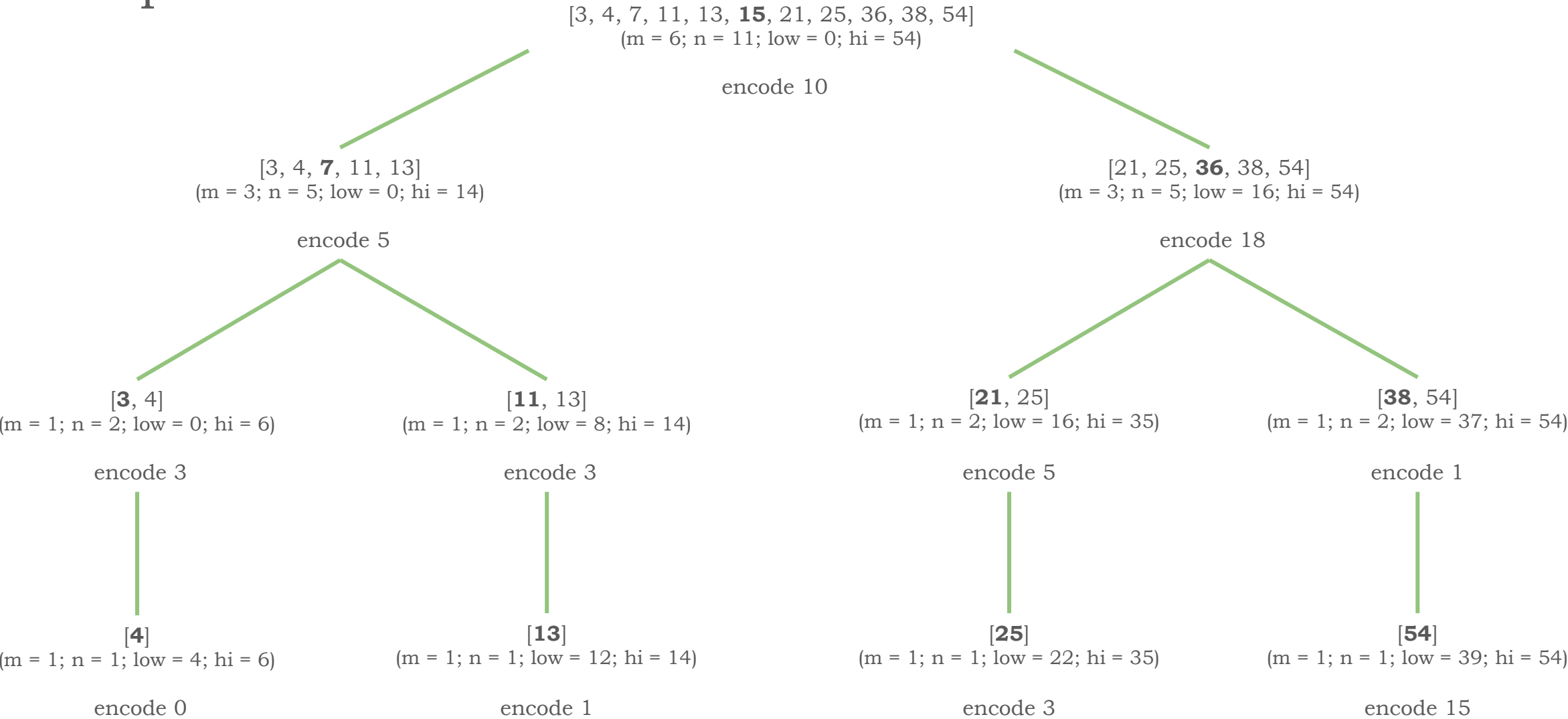
## Example



find  $s_m$  and encode  $s_m - \text{low} - m + 1$

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

Space needed for encoding

The encoding happens using  $\lceil \log_2(hi - low - n + 1) \rceil$  bits, the logarithm of the interval in which the middle value lies

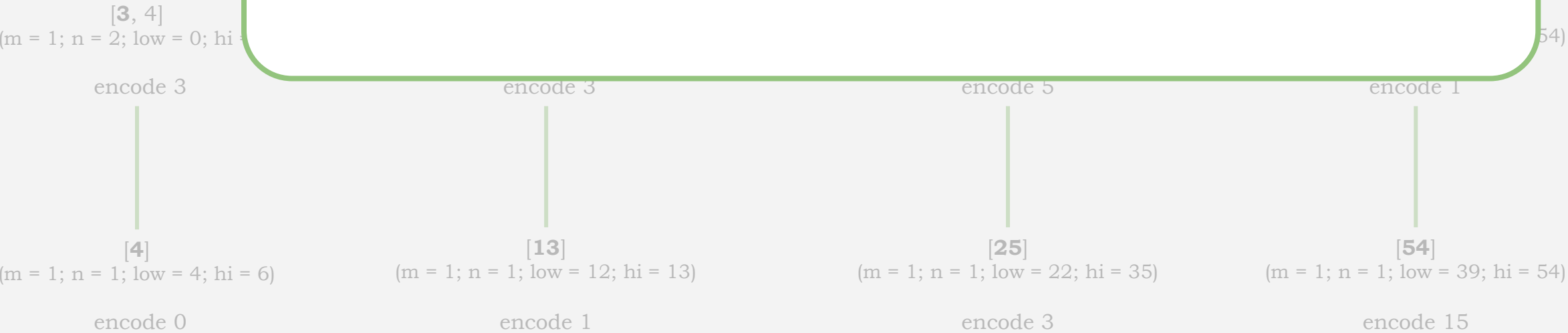
# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

[3, 4, 7, 11, 13, **15**, 21, 25, 36, 38, 54]  
(m = 6; n = 11; low = 0; hi = 54)  
encode 10

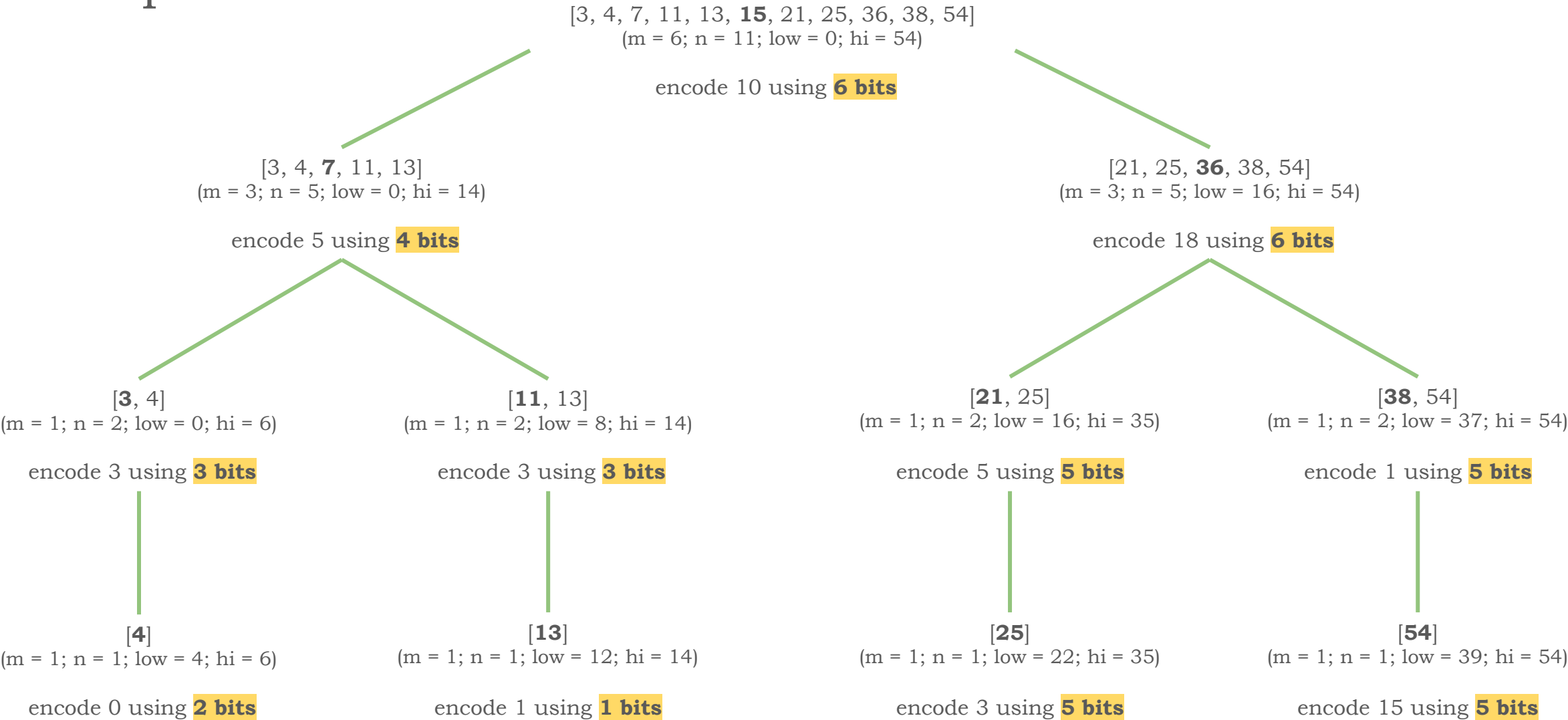
[3, 4, **7**, 11, 13] (m = 3) [21, 25, **36**, 38, 54] (m = 3)

This encoding takes  $\lceil \log_2(hi - low - n + 1) \rceil = \lceil \log_2(54 - 0 - 11 + 1) \rceil = \mathbf{6 \text{ bits}}$



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

[3, 4, 7, 11, 13, **15**, 21, 25, 36, 38, 54]

encode 10 using **6 bits**

By *pre-order* visiting the tree, we can obtain:

- the sequence of values that we have encoded
- the associated bits needed for the encoding

[3,

encode 3 u

[4]

encode 0 using **2 bits**

[13]

encode 1 using **1 bits**

[25]

encode 3 using **5 bits**

[54]

encode 15 using **5 bits**

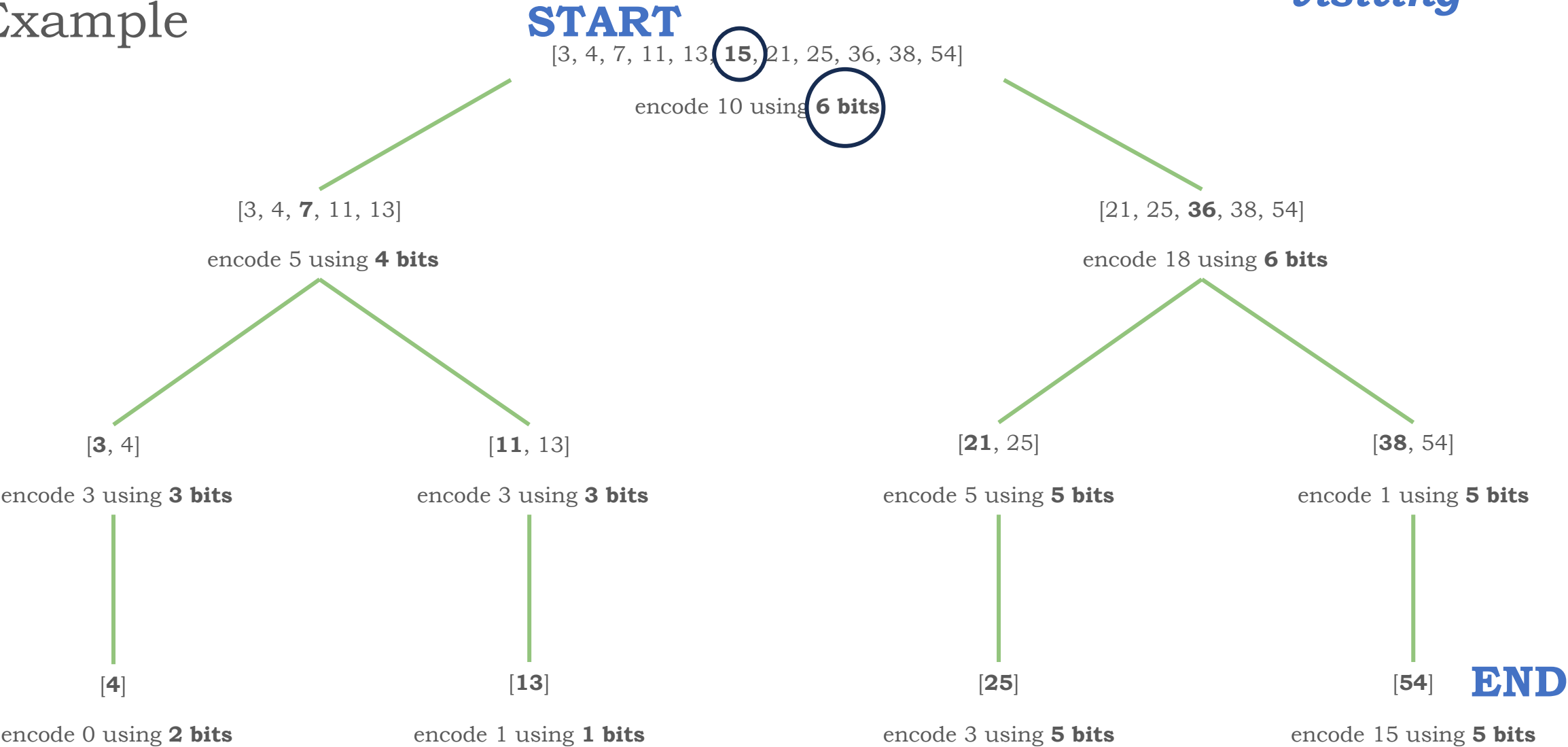
4]

ng **5 bits**

# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

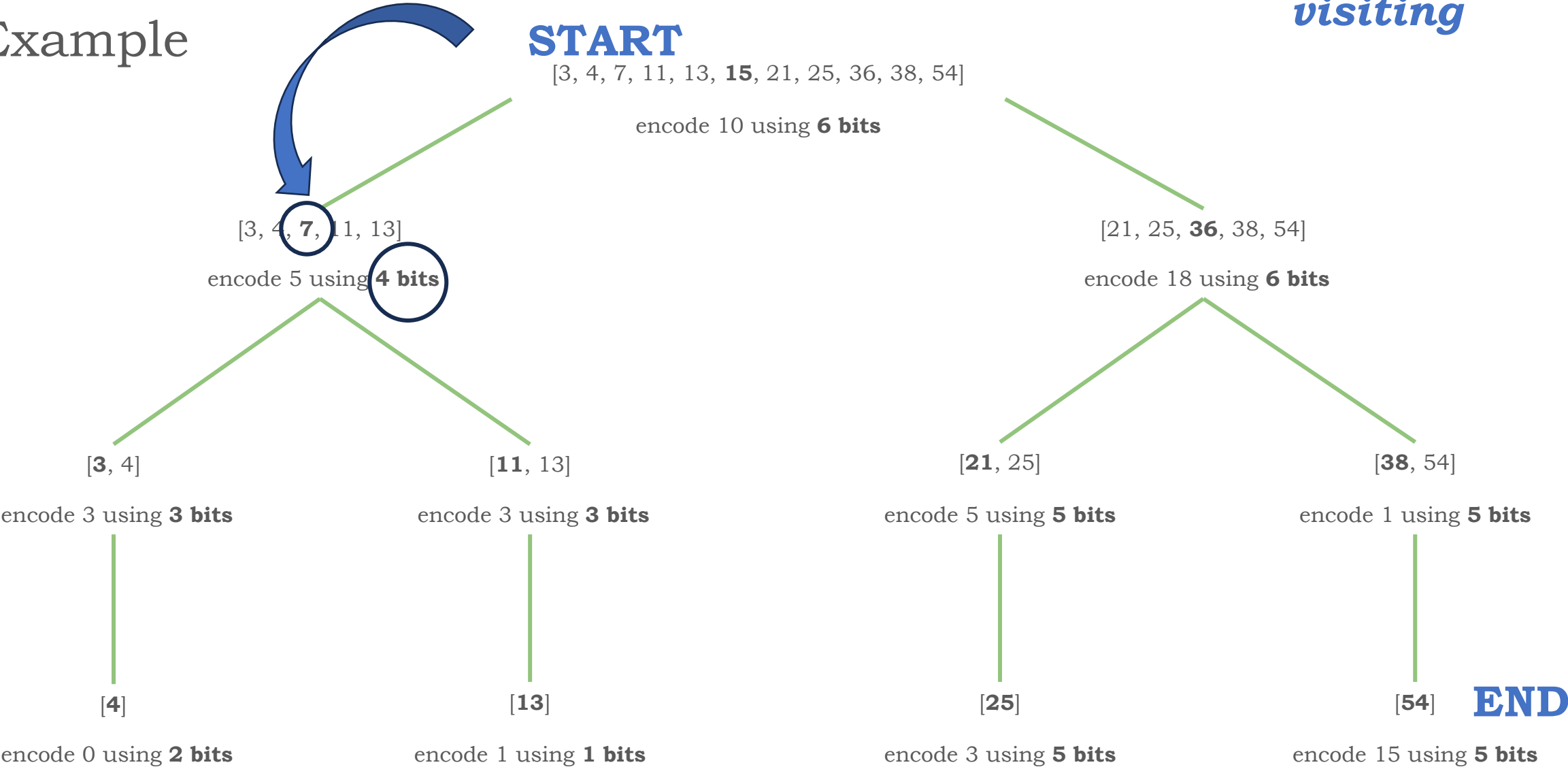
*pre-order  
visiting*



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

*pre-order  
visiting*

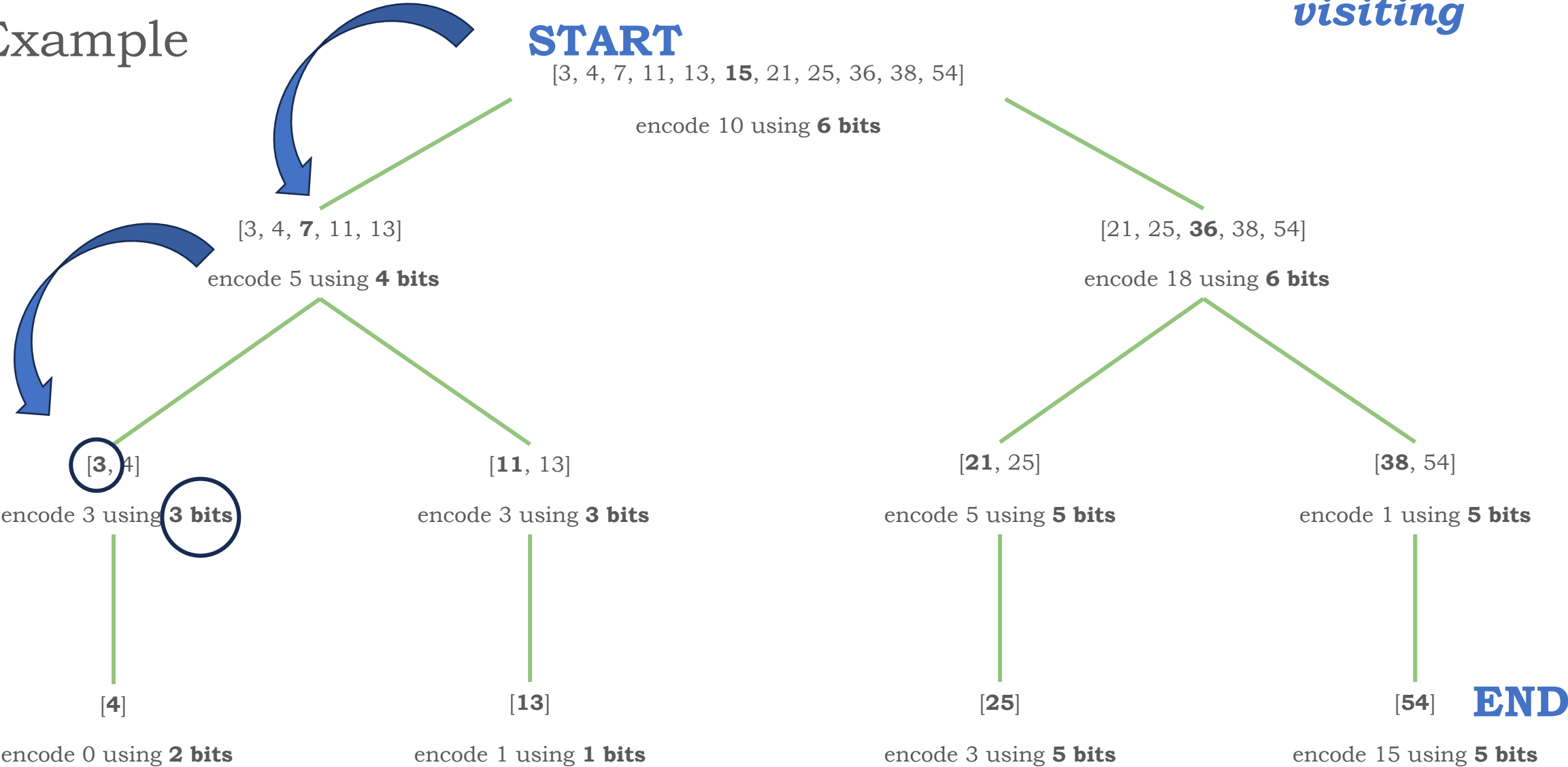




# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

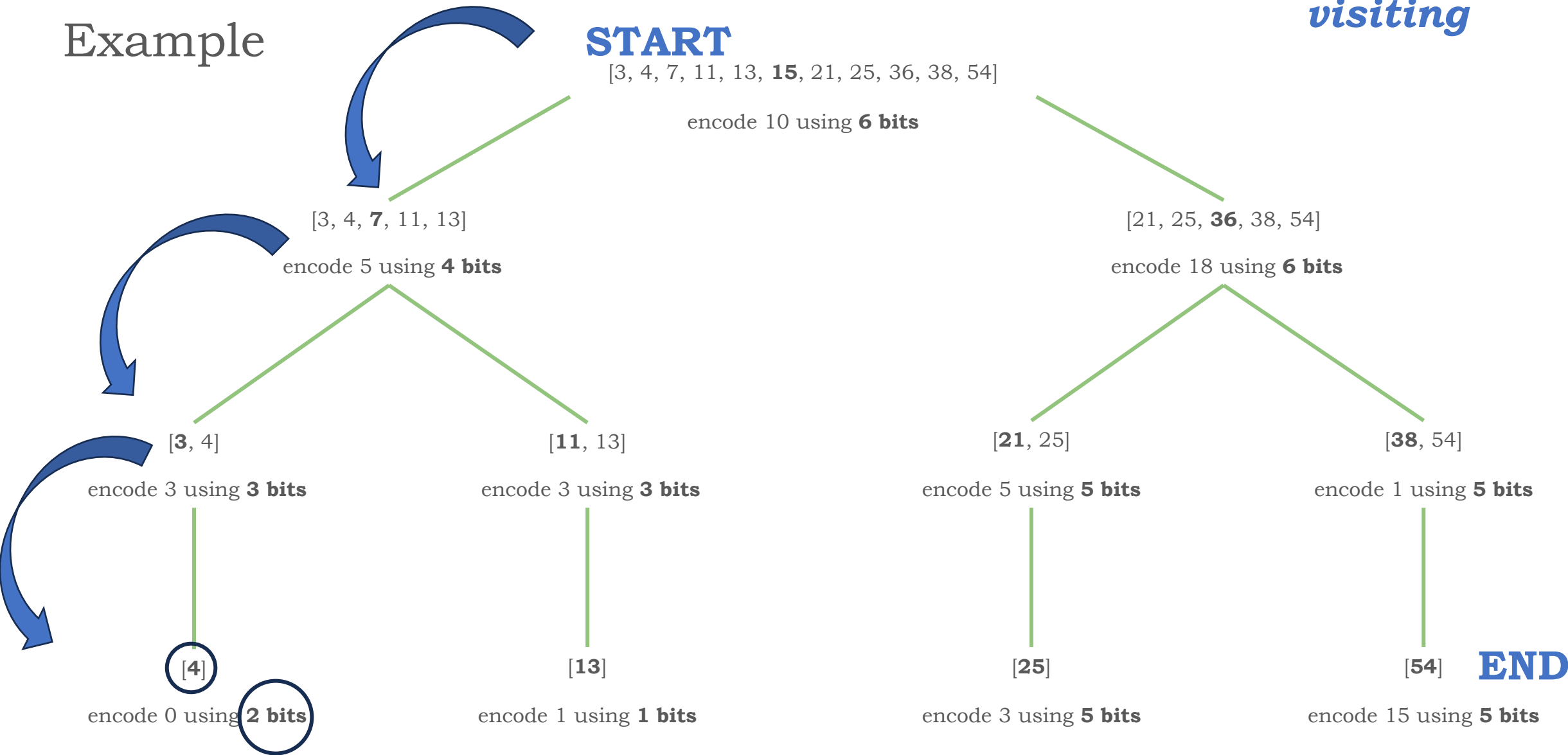
*pre-order  
visiting*



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

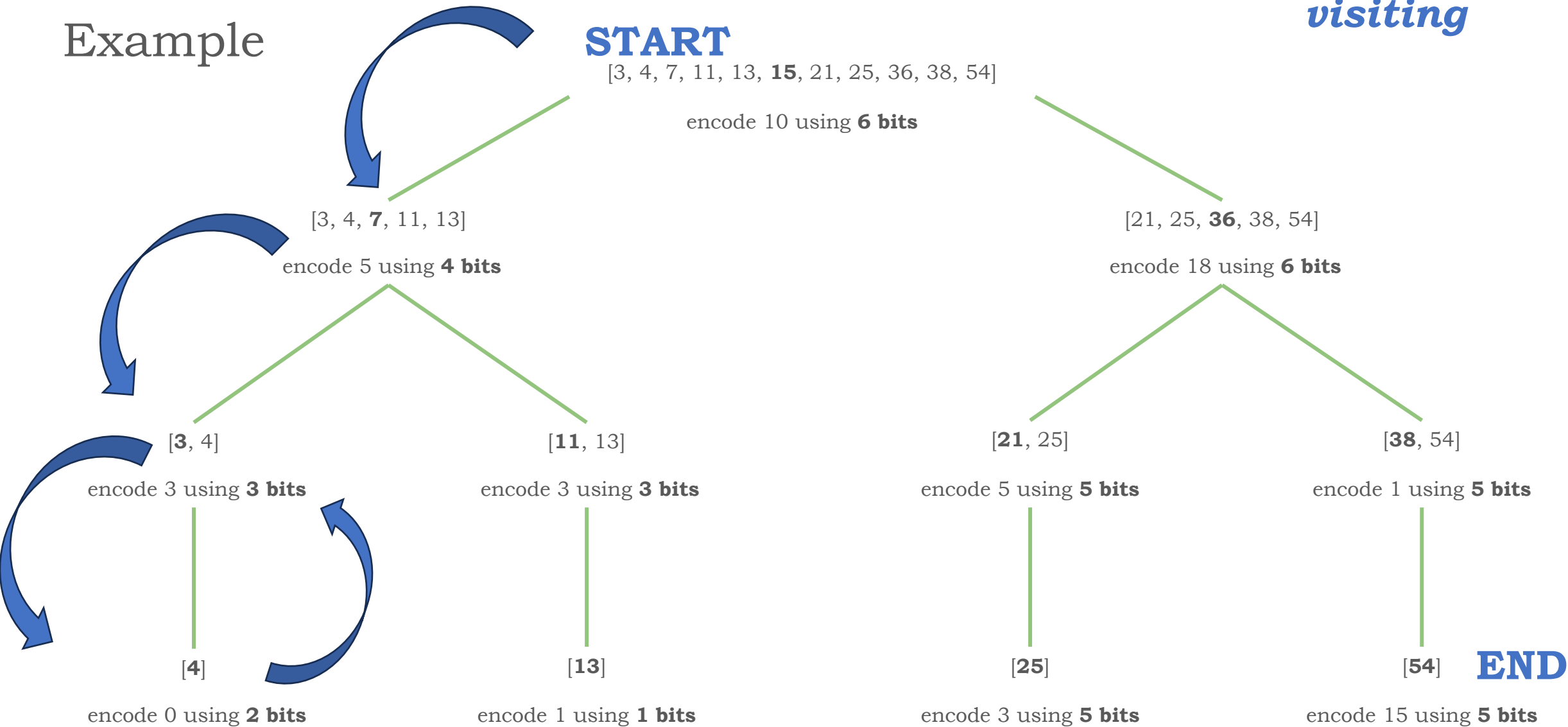
*pre-order  
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# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

## Example

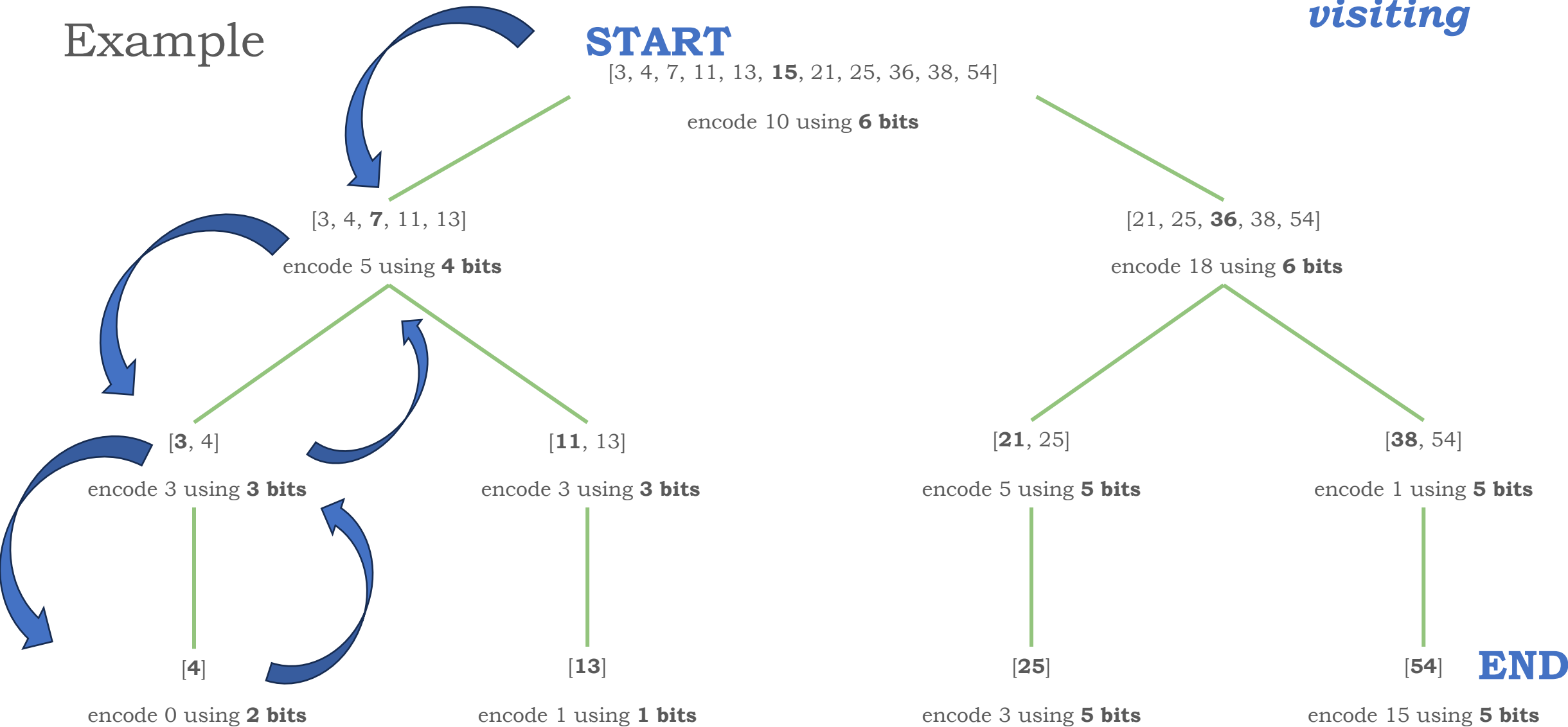
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# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

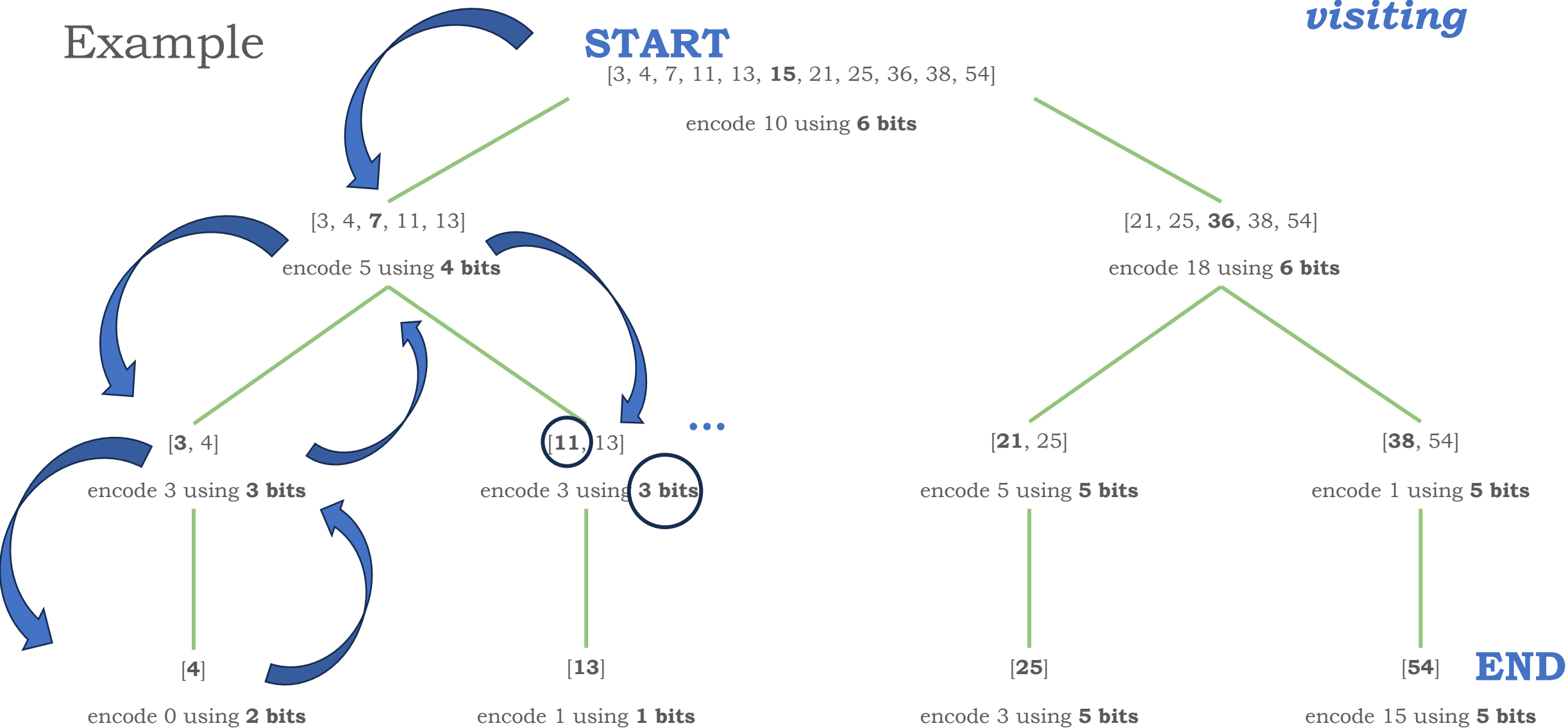
## Example

*pre-order  
visiting*



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

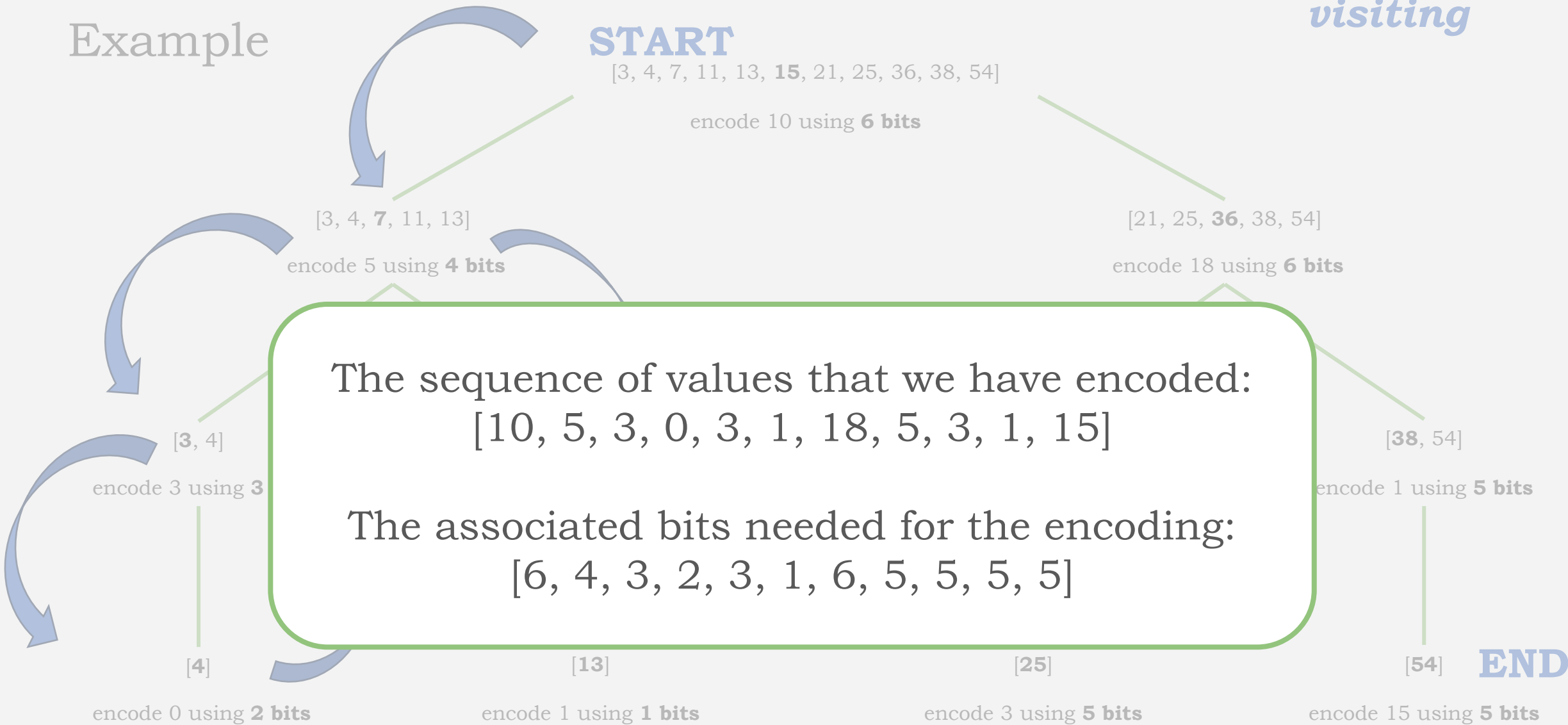
## Example



# BINARY INTERPOLATIVE CODING

Example

*pre-order  
visiting*



SIMPLE - 9

# SIMPLE - 9

- Encodes multiple elements **all at the same time**
- Works with  $d$ -gaps lists
- Uses **fixed memory units** → 32-bit units
- Packs as many integers as possible into each unit



# SIMPLE - 9

How to

Out of the 32 bits:

- 4 bits used for the *selector*
- 28 bits used to store data

The *selector* indicates the number of integers stored in the 28 bits assuming that **each integer takes the same number of bits.**

# SIMPLE - 9

## How to

9 possible ways of packing integers in 28 bits

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
0001	14	2	0
0010	9	3	1
0011	7	4	0
0100	5	5	3
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

# SIMPLE - 9

How to

9 possible ways of packing integers

4-bit selector	Integers
0000	28
0001	14
0010	9
0011	7
0100	5
0101	4
0110	3
0111	2
1000	1

- The  $d$ -gap list can be encoded using multiple 32-bit units
- Different memory units can follow a different *selector*
- In a single unit each integer takes the same amount of bits

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

1. Initial postings list:

$S=[4, 10, 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 28, 29, 42, 62, 63, 75, 95]$

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

1. Initial postings list:

$S = [4, 10, 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 28, 29, 42, 62, 63, 75, 95]$

2. Corresponding  $d$ -gap list:

$D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]$

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

1. Initial postings list:

$S = [4, 10, 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 28, 29, 42, 62, 63, 75, 95]$

2. Corresponding  $d$ -gap list:

$D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]$

$|D| = 14$  integers to encode **using 32-bit memory units**

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
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0101	4	7	0
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0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]

Option 1: we can pack 14 integers if each takes 2 bits

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
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# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

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1000	1	28	0

An integer takes 2 bits if its value is  $< 2^2 = 4$

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]

Option 1: we can pack 14 integers if each takes 2 bits

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0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

An integer takes 2 bits if its value is  $< 2^2 = 4$

We have many values that are not  $< 4$  

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [**4**, **6**, **1**, **1**, **3**, **5**, **1**, **7**, **1**, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]

~~Option 1: we can pack 14 integers if each takes 2 bits~~

Option 2: we can pack the first 9 integers if each takes 3 bits

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
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# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]

~~Option 1: we can pack 14 integers if each takes 2 bits~~

Option 2: we can pack the first 9 integers if each takes 3 bits

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0100	5	5	3
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

An integer takes 3 bits if its value is  $< 2^3 = 8$

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]

~~Option 1: we can pack 14 integers if each takes 2 bits~~

Option 2: we can pack the first 9 integers if each takes 3 bits

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0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

An integer takes 3 bits if its value is  $< 2^3 = 8$

All of our first 9 integers are  $< 8$



# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, 13, 20, 1, 12, 20]



Stored in **one** 32-bit unit as:

0010 011 101 000 000 010 100 000 110 0006

The 3<sup>rd</sup> selector  
4 bits

The 9 integers  
27 bits

1 unused bit

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
0001	14	2	0
<b>0010</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
0011	7	4	0
0100	5	5	3
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, **13, 20, 1, 12, 20**]

5 integers left

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
0001	14	2	0
0010	9	3	1
0011	7	4	0
0100	5	5	3
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, **13, 20, 1, 12, 20**]

5 integers left

Option 1: we can pack 5 integers if each takes 5 bits

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
0001	14	2	0
0010	9	3	1
0011	7	4	0
0100	5	5	3
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0



# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, **13, 20, 1, 12, 20**]

5 integers left

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4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
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0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

An integer takes 5 bits if its value is  $< 2^5 = 32$

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, **13, 20, 1, 12, 20**]

5 integers left

Option 1: we can pack 5 integers if each takes 5 bits

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
0001	14	2	0
0010	9	3	1
0011	7	4	0
0100	5	5	3
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

An integer takes 5 bits if its value is  $< 2^5 = 32$

All of our 5 integers are  $< 32$



# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, **13, 20, 1, 12, 20**]



Stored in another 32-bit unit as:

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
0001	14	2	0
0010	9	3	1
0011	7	4	0
<b>0100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

0100    01100 10011 00000 01011 10011

## The 5<sup>th</sup> selector

4 bits

The 5 integers

25 bits

3 unused bit

# SIMPLE - 9

## Example

D = [4, 6, 1, 1, 3, 5, 1, 7, 1, **13, 20, 1, 12, 20**]

4-bit selector	Integers	Bits per integer	Wasted bits
0000	28	1	0
0001	14	2	0
0010	9	3	1
0011	7	4	0
<b>0100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
0101	4	7	0
0110	3	9	1
0111	2	14	0
1000	1	28	0

- Total used space is **two 32-bit memory units**:
- One using the 3<sup>rd</sup> selector
  - One using the 5<sup>th</sup> selector

ed bit

# COMPARISON



# COMPARISON

Study from Moffat and Anh (2005)

Comparing the 3 methods over different size textual data collections:

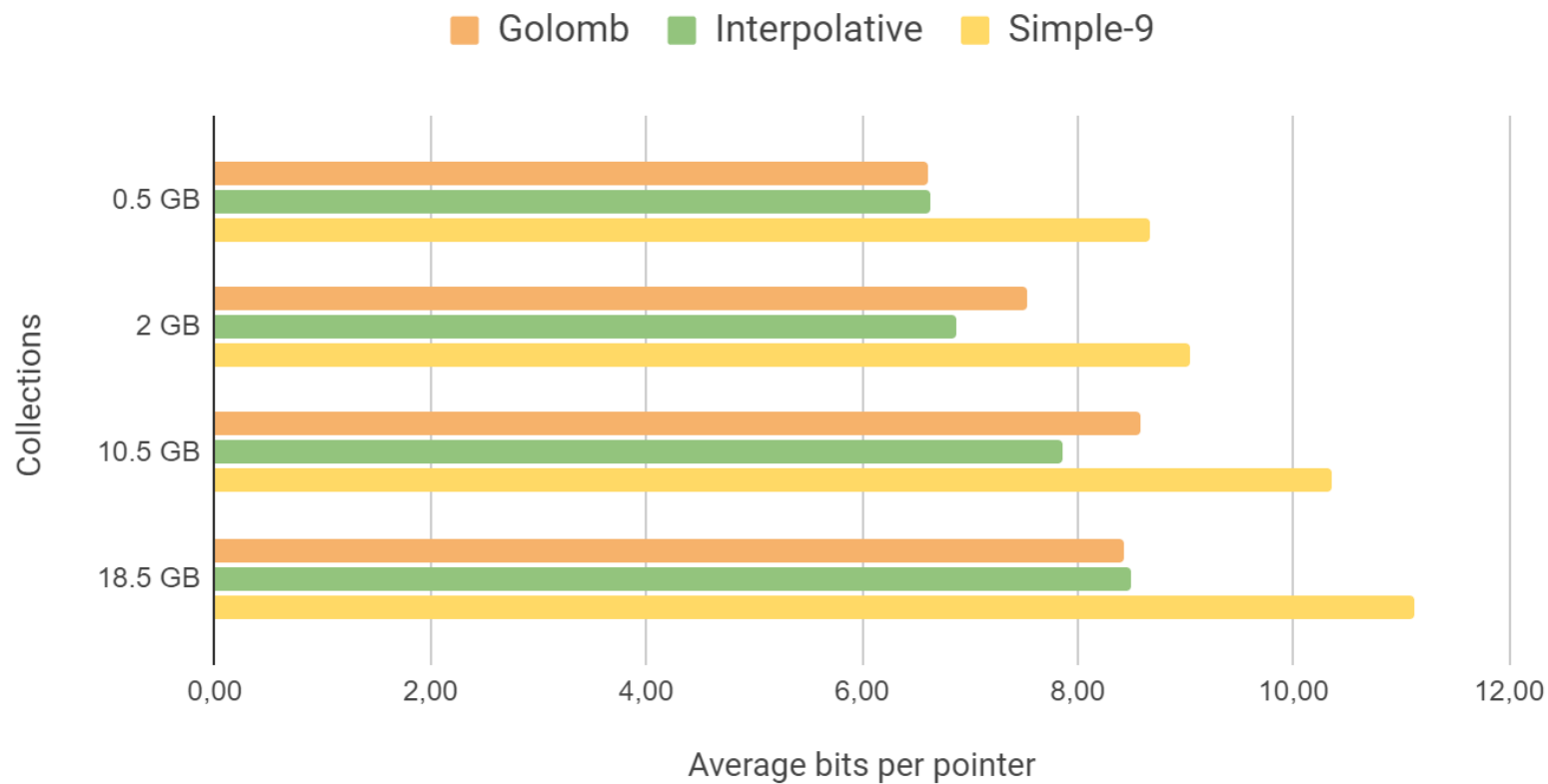
0.5GB    2GB    10.5GB    18.5GB

Object of the comparison:

- **Compression effectiveness** → **space**  
Measured as average number of bits per pointer
- **Query processing speed** → **time**  
Measured as average elapsed time between when:
  - 1) the query is received
  - 2) the result is output

# COMPARISON

## Compression effectiveness

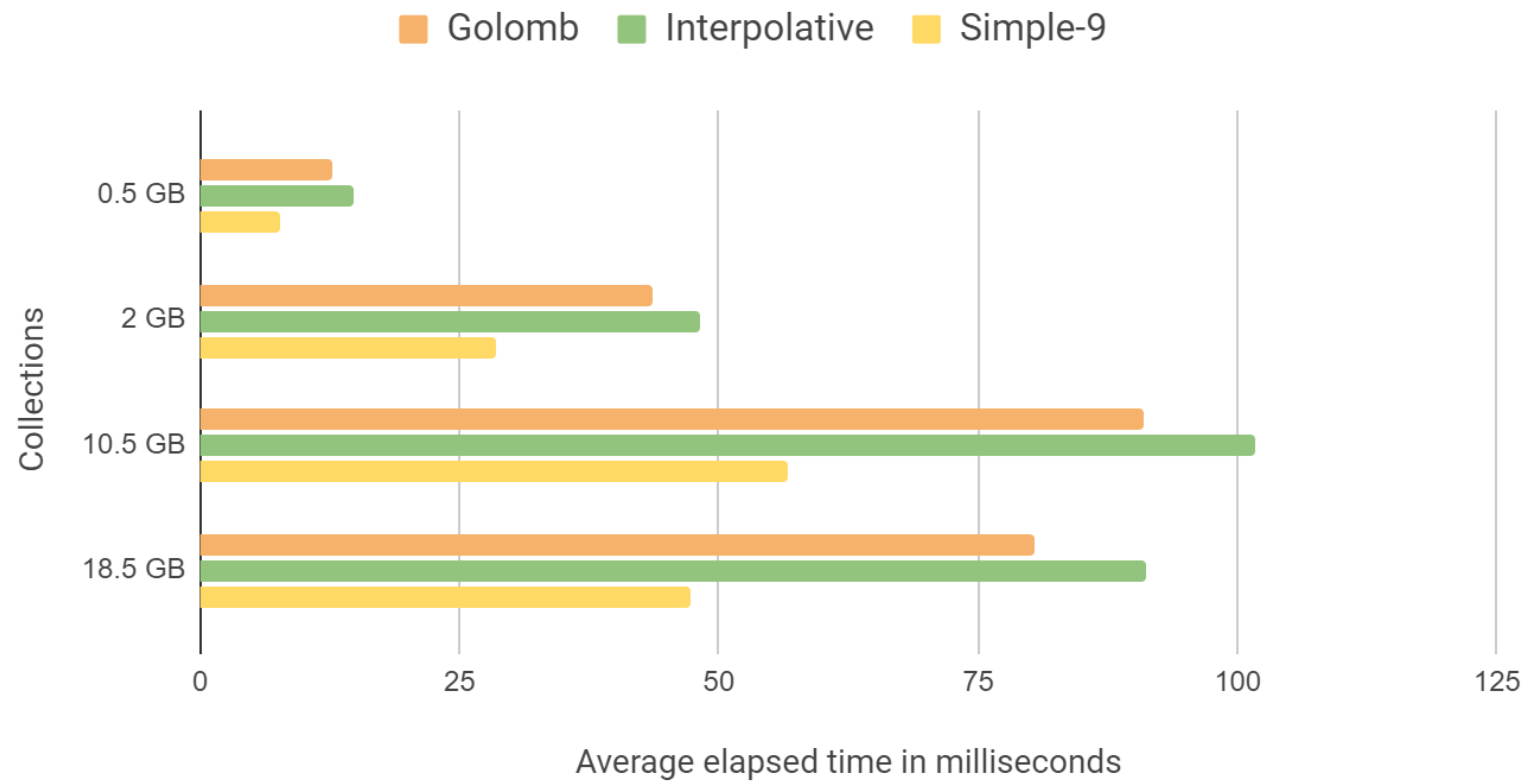


The Binary Interpolative Coding is the best one  
**least bits needed**

The Simple – 9 is the one that requires most space for the encoding

# COMPARISON

## Query processing speed



The Simple – 9 is by far the best one

**least processing time needed**

The Binary Interpolative Coding is the one that requires most time for query processing



# CONCLUSION

There is **no best** technique

Always consider **trade-off** between:

- saved space
- processing time → affected by decoding speed!

**Choose based on data that you have:**

- Golomb: optimal if documents are randomly scattered
- Binary Interpolative: optimal if documents are clustered
- Simple-9: optimal for long postings lists with small  $d$ -gaps

THANK YOU