

Theory of Computation Notes

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1 October 3

1.1 Turing Machines

”If you want to learn anything about automata you can just ask chatGPT”

A Turing machine is a General Model of Computation

- **Algorithms have been around since dawn of time.**
 - Long addition, multiplication, division.
 - Compass and straightedge constructions
 - Euclid’s greatest common divisor algorithm
 - Quadratic formula: finding roots of polynomials
- Traditionally, algorithms were understood as a human construct. No precise mathematical definition.

Already saw a limited notion of algorithms (DFA). Using the pumping lemma, we proved that there are some problems that are not computable in this model.

1.1.1 David Hilbert’s Decision Problem

In 1928, David Hilbert asked for an ”algorithm” that takes as input a mathematical statement and decides whether the statement is true or false.

During the years 1931-1936, a series of works showed there is no algorithm for the decision problem.

Each of these works included a different definition of a ”general algorithm”.

- Kurt Godel relied on recursive functions.
- Alonzo Church developed λ -calculus.
- Alan Turing developed the Turing Machine.

All of these definitions turn out to be equivalent.

Turing Machines are perhaps the most intuitive. They provided inspiration for a general computer, the Von Neumann Architecture

Turing Machines cont.

Our Plan

- Define Turing Machines (TM). See how they work.
- Convince ourselves that TMs are powerful enough to implement any "reasonable algorithm".

A TM is like a DFA with infinite memory tape. Information can be saved and accessed using the tape instead of the DFA's state space.

- Initially, tape contains the input, followed by "blanks". The tape head is at the left-most position.
- In each step, the machine can overwrite the symbol under the tape-head and move the tape left or right.
 - The tape head cannot move left of the start.
 - TMs can use additional symbols to write to tape.
- At any point in time, the machine can halt the computation and accept or reject. (If there is no decision edge at the state the head is on, also reject)
- This is implemented via states and transitions like a DFA

Definition 1. A *Turing Machine* consists of a tuple:

$M = (Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_{start}, q_{accept}, q_{reject})$ Where

- Q is a finite set called the states.
- Σ is an input alphabet.
- Γ is the tape alphabet such that $\Sigma \subseteq \Gamma$ and Γ contains a special blank symbol ' \sqcup ' that is not in Σ .
- $q_{start} \in Q$ is the start state.
- $q_{accept} \in Q$ is the accept state, q_{reject} is the reject state.
- $\delta : Q' \times \Gamma \rightarrow Q \times \Gamma \times \{L, R\}$ is the transition function.
Where $Q' = Q \setminus \{q_{accept}, q_{reject}\}$

2 October 7

2.1 Building a Turing Machine

Definition 2. Configuration *encodes all information about a particular step in the computation of a turing machine.*

All information:

- *Current state*
- *Content on the tape*
- *Tape-head position*

Let $M = (Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_{start}, q_{accept}, q_{reject})$ be a Turing Machine.

- A **configuration** of M is a tuple $C = (u, q, v)$ such that $u, v \in \Gamma^*$ and $q \in Q$. Can write $C = uqv$ without commas.
- A configuration C **yields** C' if M goes from C to C' in 1 step.
 - $C = (u, q, bw)$ yields $C' = (ub', q', w)$ if $\delta(q, b) = (q', b', R)$
 - $C = (ua, q, bw)$ yields $C' = (u, q', ab'w)$ if $\delta(q, b) = (q', b', L)$
 - $C = (q, bw)$ yields $C' = (q', b'w)$ if $\delta(q, b) = (q', b', L)$ (don't fall off)
- A start configuration of M on input W is $q_{start}W$
- An accepting (resp. rejecting) configuration is one where the state is q_{accept} (resp. q_{reject}).

M accepts (resp. rejects) w if there is a sequence of configurations C_1, C_2, \dots, C_n such that:

- C_1 is the start configuration of M on input w .
- C_i yields C_{i+1} for $i = 1, \dots, n - 1$.
- C_n is an accepting (resp. rejecting) configuration.

This is a way to save your current state for later.

If $C = (ua, q, bv)$, $\delta(a, b) = (q', c, L)$, then $C' = (u, q', acv)$

If $\delta(a, b) = (q', C, R)$ then $C' = (uac, q', v)$

3 October 10

3.1 Language of a TM

- A TM M on input w can either accept, reject, or loop
- For a TM M , we define $L(M) = \{w \mid M \text{ accepts } w\}$
- If TM M and a language L satisfies "for any $x \in L$, M accepts x ", we cannot say "M recognizes L ". We must prove that $L(M) = \{w \mid M \text{ accepts } w\}$
- Do this using \subseteq (M accepts any string in L) and \supseteq (If a string is accepted by M , the string is in L).
- We say the M **decides** L if
 - M accepts $w \in L$ and M rejects $w \notin L$.
 - equivalently: M recognizes L and M always halts.
- A language L is **recognizable** (resp. **decidable**) if there is some TM that recognizes (resp. decides) L .
- The set of all languages decided by turing machines is a subset of all languages recognized by turing machines.

3.2 Specifying a Turing Machine

Instead of drawing a state diagram, we give a "tape-head" level description that abstracts out the states/transitions via pseudocode.

- Imagine tape-head has small local memory which is "fixed" and cannot grow with input size (states of TM).
- Describe how the tape-head should **walk across the tape** and **what it should write**.

Example 1. $L = \{a^{2n} \mid n \geq 0\}$ all powers of 2.

Walk tape-head from left to right and cross out any other a .

- If tape contained a single 0, accept.
- Else if number of 0s was odd, reject.
- Else return to the left-hand end of tape, repeat.

Example 2. $L = \{w\#w : w \in (0,1)^*\}$

- Check input is of form $\{0,1\}^*\#\{0,1\}^*$ and reject otherwise.
-

3.3 Beyond Boolean Functions

We can also consider TM's that output more than just "accept/reject"

Idea: define the output of a TM as the contents of its tape when it enters a halt state.

A TM M computes a function $f : \Sigma^* \rightarrow \Sigma^*$ if on every input $w \in \Sigma^*$ the TM **halts** and its tape contains $f(w)$.

Definition 3. We say that f is **computable** if some TM M computes it.

Example 3. $f : \{0,1\}^* \rightarrow \{0,1\}^*$: $f(\text{binary rep of } n) = \text{binary rep of } n + 1$. f is the binary successor function.

Show that this is computable.

Given any input string such as '01101101111':

Move to the end of the string and continue left until the beginning. Flip all 1's until the first 0, flip the first 0.

To prevent crashing off the beginning of the tape if all ones: convert first character to a # if it is a 1 and add a zero on the end if it is reached.

4 October 14 - Turing Machine Variants

Multi-Tape TM

A TM with one input tape and multiple work tapes. Transition function is defined by $\delta = Q' \times T \rightarrow Q \times T \times \{L, R\}$. $\delta(g, w) = (g', w, L/R)$.

- You can concatenate multiple tapes to one tape and separate their contents by #.
- Remember tape-head positions by storing an underlined version of tape symbols.
- Each step of multi-tape TM is simulated by scanning entire tape of single-tape TM.
- If you run out of space on the tapes, shift all elements to the right. (halting problem)

Tape-Head Level Description:

$f(a, b) = a + b$. Input (binary interpretations of two integers separated by a #)

- Reverse each input and copy each one to a different tape and clear main tape.
- Return all tape heads to the left. Store 1-bit carry as 0
- Add two bits under each tape head (using 0 if one head is empty) and carry bit:
 - Write result mod 2 to the main tape.
 - Move all tape heads 1 right.
 - Repeat until both heads are empty.
- Reverse main tape.

Random Access TM

Can read/write to arbitrary locations in memory without scanning a tape. Memory modeled as infinite array R.

- In addition to the standard tape that contains the input the TM has location and value tapes.
- There is a special write transition which sets $R[\text{location}] = \text{value}$ using the content of the tapes.
- There is a read transition which sets the contents of the values tape to $R[\text{location}]$

Compiling to normal TM:

We use a multi-tape machine (which can be converted to a single-tape)

- Store contents of array R on a tape as tuples $(\text{location}_n, \text{value}_n)$.
- To simulate a read, scan R until find a location that matches content of location tape. Write the value on the value tape. Put a blank if no such value is found.
- To simulate a write, scan R until you find location that matches content of location tape. Update value. If none found, append $(\text{location}, \text{value})$ to end of R.

Turing Completeness

Theorem 1. *Church-Turing Thesis: Any algorithm (in an informal sense) can be computed by a TM.*

Proof Outline:

Design a compiler that converts Java program into a TM.

- All programming languages are already compiled to "assembly code" for modern CPUs
- Assembly code instructions can be implemented on a Random-Access TM.

5 October 21

For each object O , let $\langle O \rangle$ be a string that encodes O .

- If i is an integer $\langle i \rangle$ can be its representation
- If O is a string, then $\langle O \rangle$ is just O itself.
- If G is a graph $\langle G \rangle$ can be defined in many ways; such as vertex lists, etc
- If M is a TM, we can define $\langle M \rangle$ by writing down the formal definition. $M = (Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_{start}, q_{accept}, q_{reject})$

Now we will consider more complex languages, i.e. primes, graphs, etc.

5.1 Universal Turing Machine

- There is a Turing Machine M_{UNIV} that can run any other TM.
- $M_{UNIV}(\langle M \rangle, w)$. Takes as input a description of any TM M and any string W . Runs M on w .
 - If M accepts w , then $M_{UNIV}(\langle M \rangle, w)$ accepts.
 - If M rejects w , then $M_{UNIV}(\langle M \rangle, w)$ rejects.
 - If M loops on w , then $M_{UNIV}(\langle M \rangle, w)$ also loops.
- TMs are algorithms and a universal TM is a general purpose computer.

5.2 Non-deterministic TM

- Multiple possible actions the TM can take at any point in time.
- Transition function is $\delta : Q \times \Gamma \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(Q \times \Gamma \times \{L, R\})$
- TM accepts if there exists some way to run the computation that ends in an accept state.
- TM rejects if all computations reject.

Compiler: NDTM to TMs

- Think of computation of a non-deterministic TM as a tree of TM configurations.
- Using a deterministic TM, explore this tree using a breadth-first search. If it finds an accepting configuration, accept. If all branches reject, reject.
- If the NDTM runs for N steps, what's the run-time of the above algorithm.

6 October 28

Goal: Show some languages are not decidable.

6.1 Comparing Infinities

There are many infinite sets:

- \mathbb{N} - Natural numbers
- Even numbers
- \mathbb{Q} - Rationals

Some infinite sets are bigger than others. We can show that one set A is larger than another B if a one-to-one map exists between B and A .

If there is a one-to-one function in both directions, B is the same size as A .

Natural numbers are the "smallest" infinite set, if A is infinite: $|\mathbb{N}| \leq |A|$. An infinite set A is countable if $|A| = |\mathbb{N}|$. We can also show $|A| \leq |\mathbb{N}|$ as there is no set $|S| < |\mathbb{N}|$.

6.2 Uncountability

To show A is uncountable, it is enough to show some set $|B| \leq |A|$ where B is uncountable.

Proof: Because of the transitivity of the \leq operator,

- The real numbers \mathbb{R} are uncountable: $|\mathbb{S}| \leq |\mathbb{R}|$. The one-to-one function $f : \mathbb{S} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ defined by: $f(s) = .a_1a_2.a_3\dots$ (in decimal) where $s = a_1, a_2, a_3\dots$
- The set \mathbb{P} PowerSet(\mathbb{N}) is uncountable: $|\mathbb{S}| \leq |\mathbb{P}|$. One-to-one function $f : \mathbb{S} \rightarrow \mathbb{P}$ is defined by $f(s) = \{i : a_i = 1\}$ where $s = a_1, a_2, a_3\dots$

6.3 Undecidability

We know:

- The set \mathbb{L} of all languages is uncountable.
- The set \mathbb{M} of all TM's are countably infinite.

Because of the previous proof, we know that $|\mathbb{M}| \leq |\mathbb{L}|$

We will show $A_{TM} = \{\langle M, w \rangle : M \text{ is a TM that accepts } w\}$ is undecidable.

Given a description of a TM M and a string w :

1. Decide if M accepts w . (this is A_{TM})
2. Decide if M halts on the input w .
3. Decide if M halts on empty input ε
4. Decide if $L(M) = \emptyset$

6.4 The TM Self-Acceptance Problem

Take the turing machine $SA_{TM} = \{\langle M \rangle : M \text{ is a TM that accepts } \langle M \rangle\}$

The complement of this: $SU_{TM} = \{\langle M \rangle : M \text{ is a TM that does not accept } \langle M \rangle\}$

1. A TM is "self-accepting" if it accepts the string $\langle M \rangle$ denoting its own description
2. To decide the language SA_{TM} , you need to design an algorithm that gets $\langle M \rangle$ and decides M is self-accepting.
3. SA_{TM} , SU_{TM} are complements of each other (assume every string denotes some TM). One is decidable \iff the other is.

Theorem 2. Claim: SU_{TM} is an undecidable language.

Proof: By contradiction, Assume we have a decider D (a TM that always halts for SU_{TM}). D accepts $\langle M \rangle \iff M$ does not accept $\langle M \rangle$.

This can be rewritten as D accepts $\langle D \rangle \iff D$ does not accept $\langle D \rangle$, hence we arrive at a contradiction.

6.5 Undecidability as Diagonalization

Because the set of all TMs are countable, we can create the matrix $[M_i \times \langle M_i \rangle]$ where the diagonals of the row show when the TM accepts (resp. rejects) itself.

We can use this to directly prove undecidability of self-acceptance.

Suppose by contradiction there exists a decider D for $SA_{TM} = \{\langle M \rangle \mid M \text{ accepts } \langle M \rangle\}$.

We can construct $M^*(\langle M \rangle)$: Outputs $\neg D(\langle M \rangle)$

Consider $M^*(\langle M^* \rangle)$ (the diagonal position in our matrix). This would result in $M^*(\langle M^* \rangle)$ accepts $\iff D(\langle M^* \rangle)$ rejects $\iff \neg(M^*(\langle M^* \rangle)$ accepts). This results in a contradiction and therefore a counterexample.

6.6 Reductions in Undecidability

The TM Acceptance problem: $A_{TM} = \{\langle M, w \rangle : M \text{ is a TM that accepts } w\}$.

We previously showed that $SA_{TM} = \{\langle M \rangle \mid M \text{ accepts } \langle M \rangle\}$ is undecidable. If we had a decider D_A for A_{TM} , we could construct a decider D_S for SA_{TM} .

$D_S(\langle M \rangle) \{ \text{Output } D_A(\langle M, M \rangle) \}$

Use reduction to solve problems. Reduce problem A to B - show how to solve A given a way to solve B.

If A and B are languages, than we reduce A to B by constructing decider D_B as a subroutine.

By reducing A to B, we show:

- If B is decidable then A is decidable. (algorithms)
- If A is undecidable then B is undecidable. (this course)

6.6.1 Halting Problem

Consider the TM $H = \{\langle M, w \rangle : M \text{ is a TM and } M \text{ halts on } w\}$

Theorem 3. Claim: H is undecidable.

Proof: Reduce A_{TM} to H .

Construct decider D_{ATM} using decider D_H as a subroutine.

$D_{ATM}(\langle M, w \rangle) \{$
 Run $D_H(\langle M, w \rangle)$ and if it rejects, output reject;
 Else run $M(w)$ and output whatever it outputs;
 $\}$

Because we know that D_H is a decider D_{ATM} always halts.

$\forall \langle M, w \rangle, \langle M, w \rangle \in A_{TM} \iff D_{ATM}(\langle M, w \rangle) \text{ accepts} \iff M \text{ accepts } w \iff$

7 November 7

7.1 Proof Systems

By Russel's Paradox, sets "cannot" be non-wellfounded.

Corollary 1. *There is no "proof system" in Number Theory*

- *Soundness: No false statement ϕ has a valid proof π .*
- *Completeness: Every true statement ϕ has a valid proof π .*
- *Decidability: Can decide if π is a valid proof for ϕ*

We generally give up soundness for completeness.

Proof. If there was a proof system for number theory, then we could decide number theory.

- Given ϕ try all valid strings π one-by-one:
 - Check if π is a valid proof of ϕ . If so, accept.
 - Check if π is a valid proof of $\neg\phi$. If so, reject.

□

7.2 Gödel's Sentence

We want to construct a statement in a proof system that is true and unprovable.
Take proposition $p(x) = "p(x) \text{ is unprovable}."$

1. Proving $p(x)$ is true: $\neg p(x) \implies p(x)$ is provable $\implies p(x)$ by the property of soundness in proof systems. This is clearly a contradiction.
2. If $p(x)$ is true, it must also be unprovable.

Showing that a proposition can describe itself.

$\Phi^*(n)$:

1. parse n as $\langle\phi\rangle$
2. True, if \nexists proof for $\phi(n)$

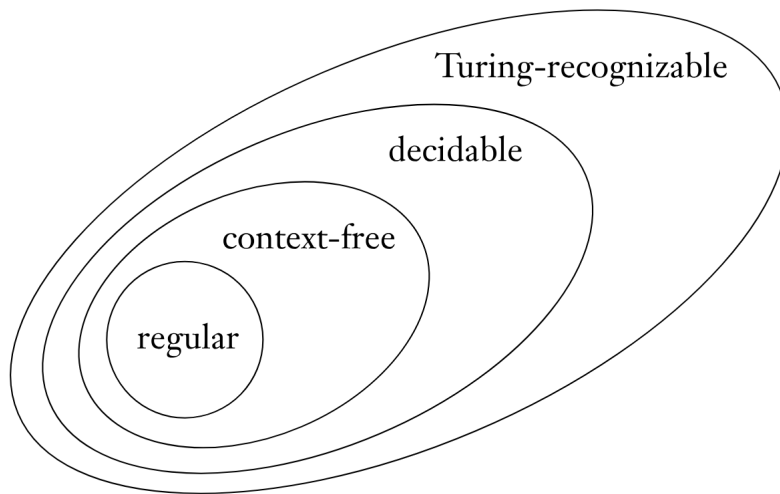
$\phi^*(n) := \nexists$ proof for $\phi(n)$ where $\langle\phi\rangle = n$.

Consider $\phi^*(\langle\phi^*\rangle)$

1. Proving $\phi^*(\langle\phi^*\rangle)$ is true: Suppose not, $\implies \exists$ proof for $\phi^*(\langle\phi^*\rangle)$. By soundness, we then know that $\phi^*(\langle\phi^*\rangle)$ is true.
2. Proving $\phi^*(\langle\phi^*\rangle)$ is unprovable: Suppose not, $\implies \phi^*(\langle\phi^*\rangle)$ is true which results in a contradiction.

We can use diagonalization to build a matrix where each row represents the mathematical equation ϕ and each column represents a natural number n . Each cell represents if there exists a proof for $\phi(n)$.

8 Exam 2 Prep November 13



- The set \mathbb{S} of all infinite binary sequences is uncountable. We can show a set is uncountable by proving it is larger than \mathbb{S}
- The TM Acceptance problem: $A_{TM} = \{\langle M, w \rangle : M \text{ is a TM that accepts } w\}$.
- A_{TM} is recognizable but not decidable. $\overline{A_{TM}}$ is not recognizable.
- A language is decidable \iff it is Turing-recognizable and co-Turing-recognizable.
- If A is reducible to B and B is decidable, A also is decidable. Equivalently, if A is undecidable and reducible to B, B is undecidable.
- By reducing A to B, we show if A is undecidable then B is undecidable.
- If $A \leq_m B$ and B is decidable, then A is decidable.
- If $A \leq_m B$ and A is decidable, then B is undecidable.
- The set of all Turing machines is countable, because every Turing machine has a finite, unique description.
- Any Turing-undecidable language is also non-regular, because its contrapositive is true: any regular language is decidable by Turing machines.
- Rice's theorem. Let P be any nontrivial property of the language of a Turing machine. Prove that the problem of determining whether a given Turing machine's language has property P is undecidable.

9 November 18 - Efficiency (P and NP)

Are there problems that can be computed, but cannot be computed efficiently? Proving they cannot be computed efficiently using reductions.

9.1 What is Efficiency?

If we could compute B efficiently then we could compute A efficiently.

Definition 4. The **run-time** of a TM M on input w is the number of steps the TM takes before it halts. This is a function

$$f(n) = \max\{\text{run-time of } M \text{ on } w : |w| = n\}$$

This is the worst-case runtime of M on input of length n .
Often we don't care about the exact runtime, but instead the asymptotic runtime.

Example 4. Primality Testing:

```
// decide whether q is prime
boolean IsPrime(q) {
    for (i = 2; i < q; i++) {
        if (q % i == 0) reject and halt
    }
    accept and halt
}
```

The runtime of *IsPrime* is exponential.

9.2 Asymptotic Notation

- A function $g(n) = O(f(n))$ if there is some constant c such that for all large enough $n : g(n) \leq cf(n)$. Really $O(f(n))$ is a set of functions, $g(n) \in O(f(n))$
- Example: $2n^2 + 5n + 7 = O(n^2)$ O only gives an upper bound so this is also $O(n^3)$

We define a class of languages:

$TIME(t(n)) = \{L : \exists \text{ TM } M \text{ with runtime } O(t(n)), M \text{ decides } L\}$

Some observations:

- $REGULAR \subseteq TIME(n)$
- $TIME(2^n) \subseteq DECIDABLE$

This classification is reliant on the model used (i.e. a Java program might have $O(n)$ but a TM might be different). Though the difference aren't too big.

9.3 Polynomial Functions

- A **Polynomial function** $\text{poly}(n) = \cup_c O(n^c) = O(n) \cup O(n^2) \cup O(n^3) \dots$
- $g(n) = \text{poly}(n)$ if and only if there exist constants c, c' such that for all large enough $n : g(n) \leq cn^{c'}$

- Composition if $f(n), g(n) = \text{poly}(n)$ then $f(g(n)), f(n)g(n), (f(n))^p = \text{poly}(n)$
- If the runtime of a TM M is some function $t(n) = \text{poly}(n)$ then we say that M “runs in polynomial-time”.

The Class $P = \cup \text{TIME}(n^c)$ = the languages that can be decided in time $\text{poly}(n)$.

We think of P as the class of languages that can be decided “efficiently”.

The class P is the same if we use any model.

Extended Church-Turing thesis: the class P is the same in any “realistic” model of computation. This is more controversial as the definition of “realistic” is disputed.

Problems in P

- Regular languages
- Arithmetic: addition, multiplication, division, exponentiation, etc.
- Everything in algorithms class.

10 December 2

10.1 SUBSET-SUM

Theorem 4. $SUBSET-SUM \in P \implies 3SAT \in P$

Proof outline:

We give TM R that on input ϕ :

- computes numbers a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n, t such that

$$\phi \in 3SAT \iff (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n, t) \in SUBSET-SUM$$

We can use binary encoding of boolean values.

Example 5.

$$\phi = (x \vee y \vee z) \wedge (\neg x \vee \neg y \vee z) \wedge (x \vee y \vee \neg z)$$

3 variables + 3 clauses ($v = 3, c = 3$) \Rightarrow 6 digits for each number. For each clause in C , include two occurrences of $a_c = 1$ in C 's digit and 0 in others. Set $t = 1$ in the first v digits and 3 in the rest k digits

	x	y	z	1	2	3
$a_x^T =$	1	0	0	1	0	1
$a_x^F =$	1	0	0	0	1	0
$a_y^T =$	0	1	0	1	0	1
$a_y^F =$	0	1	0	0	1	0
$a_z^T =$	0	0	1	1	1	0
$a_z^F =$	0	0	1	0	0	1
$2 \cdot a_{c1} =$	0	0	0	1	0	0
$2 \cdot a_{c2} =$	0	0	0	0	1	0
$2 \cdot a_{c3} =$	0	0	0	0	0	1
$t =$	1	1	1	3	3	3

Proof. (\Rightarrow) suppose ϕ has satisfying assignment, pick a_x^T if x is true, else a_x^F . The sum of these numbers yield 1 in the first v digits because a_x^T, a_x^F have 1 in x 's digit and 0 in others, and 1, 2, 3 in the last k digits. \square

10.2 Optimization Problems

Example 6. *The knapsack problem: REDUCE SUB-SUM to knapsack List = $(value_1, weight_1), \dots, (value_n, weight_n)$*

Theorem 5. *Cook-Levin Theorem: $3SAT \in P \implies P = NP$.*

Lemma 6. *Every function $f : \{0, 1\}^m \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ can be represented by a CNF formula ϕ of size $\leq m \cdot 2^m$.*

Proof: *For each value that makes f evaluate to 0, add a clause to ensure variables can't take that value.*

Example 7. $f(x_1 = 1, x_2 = 0, x_3 = 1, \dots, x_m = 0) = 0$
Add the clause $(\neg x_1 \vee x_2 \vee \neg x_3 \vee \dots \vee x_m)$