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[` pairwise_dot_score() `](../../docs/package_reference/util.html#sentence_transformers.util.pairwise_dot_score)

*

[` pairwise_euclidean_sim() `](../../docs/package_reference/util.html#sentence_transformers.util.pairwise_euclidean_sim)

*

[` pairwise_manhattan_sim() `](../../docs/package_reference/util.html#sentence_transformers.util.pairwise_manhattan_sim)

__[Sentence Transformers](../../index.html)

* [(../../index.html)

* Cross-Encoders

*

[

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on

GitHub](https://github.com/UKPLab/sentence-transformers/blob/master/examples/applications/cross-encoder/README.md)

* * *

Cross-Encoders¶

SentenceTransformers also supports to load Cross-Encoders for sentence pair scoring and sentence pair classification tasks.

Bi-Encoder vs. Cross-Encoder¶

First, it is important to understand the difference between Bi- and Cross-Encoder.

Bi-Encoders produce for a given sentence a sentence embedding. We pass to a BERT independently the sentences A and B, which result in the sentence embeddings u and v . These sentence embedding can then be compared using cosine similarity:

![[BiEncoder]](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/UKPLab/sentence-transformers/master/docs/img/Bi_vs_Cross-Encoder.png)

In contrast, for a **Cross-Encoder**, we pass both sentences simultaneously to the Transformer network. It produces then an output value between 0 and 1 indicating the similarity of the input sentence pair:

A **Cross-Encoder** does not produce a sentence embedding. Also, we are not able to pass individual sentences to a Cross-Encoder.

As detailed in our [paper](<https://arxiv.org/abs/1908.10084>), Cross-Encoder achieve better performances than Bi-Encoders. However, for many application they are not practical as they do not produce embeddings we could e.g. index or efficiently compare using cosine similarity.

When to use Cross- / Bi-Encoders?¶

Cross-Encoders can be used whenever you have a pre-defined set of sentence pairs you want to score. For example, you have 100 sentence pairs and you want to get similarity scores for these 100 pairs.

Bi-Encoders (see [Computing Sentence Embeddings](./computing-embeddings/README.html)) are used whenever you need a sentence embedding in a vector space for efficient comparison. Applications are for example Information Retrieval / Semantic Search or Clustering. Cross-Encoders would be the wrong choice for these application: Clustering 10,000 sentence with CrossEncoders would require computing similarity scores for about 50 Million sentence combinations, which takes about 65 hours. With a Bi-Encoder, you compute the embedding for each sentence, which takes only 5 seconds. You can then perform the clustering.

Cross-Encoders Usage

Using Cross-Encoders is quite easy:

```
from sentence_transformers.cross_encoder import CrossEncoder

model = CrossEncoder("model_name_or_path")

scores = model.predict(["My first", "sentence pair"], ["Second text", "pair"])
```

You pass to `model.predict`` a list of sentence ****pairs****. Note, Cross-Encoder do not work on individual sentence, you have to pass sentence pairs.

As model name, you can pass any model or path that is compatible with Hugging Face `[AutoModel]`(https://huggingface.co/transformers/model_doc/auto.html)
class

For a full example, to score a query with all possible sentences in a corpus see `[cross-encoder_usage.py]`(https://github.com/UKPLab/sentence-transformers/tree/master/examples/applications/cross-encoder/cross-encoder_usage.py).

Combining Bi- and Cross-Encoders

Cross-Encoder achieve higher performance than Bi-Encoders, however, they do not scale well for large datasets. Here, it can make sense to combine Cross- and Bi-Encoders, for example in Information Retrieval / Semantic Search scenarios: First, you use an efficient Bi-Encoder to retrieve e.g. the top-100 most similar sentences for a query. Then, you use a Cross-Encoder to re-rank these 100 hits by computing the score for every (query, hit) combination.

For more details on combining Bi- and Cross-Encoders, see `[Application - Information Retrieval]`([../retrieve_rerank/README.html](https://github.com/UKPLab/sentence-transformers/tree/master/examples/applications/cross-encoder/cross-encoder_usage.py)).

Training Cross-Encoders

See `[Cross-Encoder Training]`([../training/cross-encoder/README.html](https://github.com/UKPLab/sentence-transformers/tree/master/examples/applications/cross-encoder/cross-encoder_usage.py)) how to

train your own Cross-Encoder models.

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