

## 287. Find the Duplicate Number (Floyd Cycle Detection)

Problem: Given  $n+1$  integers in range  $[1, n]$ , find the duplicate without modifying array and using  $O(1)$  space. Approach: Treat array as linked list and apply Floyd's Cycle Detection. Algorithm: 1. Use  $slow = nums[0]$ ,  $fast = nums[0]$ . 2. Move  $slow = nums[slow]$ ,  $fast = nums[nums[fast]]$  until they meet. 3. Reset  $slow = nums[0]$ . 4. Move both one step until they meet again. 5. That meeting point is the duplicate. Code (C++):

```
class Solution {
public:
    int findDuplicate(vector<int>& nums) {
        int slow = nums[0];
        int fast = nums[0];
        do {
            slow = nums[slow];
            fast = nums[nums[fast]];
        } while (slow != fast);

        slow = nums[0];
        while (slow != fast) {
            slow = nums[slow];
            fast = nums[fast];
        }
        return slow;
    }
};
```

Dry Run:  $nums = [1, 3, 4, 2, 2]$   $slow = 1$ ,  $fast = 1$   $slow = 3$ ,  $fast = 2$   $slow = 2$ ,  $fast = 2$  (meet) Reset  $slow = 1$   $slow = 3$ ,  $fast = 4$   $slow = 2$ ,  $fast = 2 \rightarrow duplicate = 2$

Time Complexity:  $O(n)$  Space Complexity:  $O(1)$