

# A Simple guide to text embedding with BERT for the first time

American Soldier in WWII Project Team

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## A few quick notes

- This is a guide that will show how to use BERT to obtain embeddings of text. We will cover everything from the initial installation of BERT, to showing how the model works and finally being able to embed our own pieces of text.
- This guide will be done using Anaconda and assumes that you already have it installed with some familiarity with it. It is also required that you are running a version of Python that is 3.5 or newer and have a fundamental understanding of the Python programming language.

*Optional: it is encouraged that you have some experience using word2vec before proceeding with this guide as that will build basic intuition as to how word embedding works*

## Getting started(Installation)

### 1. Tensorflow:

We will require Tensorflow for this. From our experience, we will not be installing the most recent version of Tensorflow as we have had some issues. Instead we will be using the most recent version of Tensorflow 1 which is 1.15. This can be installed by entering the following command into the Anaconda prompt:

```
pip install --upgrade tensorflow==1.15
```

### 2. Pytorch

There are multiple ways to install and set up BERT. For the first part of this guide, we will be using the pytorch pretrained BERT model that is available from the people at Huggingface. The link to their repo is at the end of this document and we encourage you check it out. You can install pytorch for your machine here: <https://pytorch.org/>

### 3. BERT

Now that we have other necessary thing, let's get BERT installed. This can be done with the following command in the Anaconda prompt:

```
pip install pytorch-pretrained-bert
```

## Testing some basic features

A lot of the information in this section is inspired by a notebook that was presented during an NLSea meetup in August of 2019. This is the link to that github repository [https://github.com/tobyatgithub/bert\\_tutorial](https://github.com/tobyatgithub/bert_tutorial)

Before we get into looking at code, it is important to note the steps that are being taken by BERT to go from a word or sentence to an embedding. Starting with the sentence, we first need to tokenize it, then we will be able to change the tokens into IDs which will then be able to be put into the model so we can extract an embedding out of it. Those steps look like this:

words → tokens → IDs → hidden states → embedding

Now that we have done the necessary installations and intuition, let's start looking at some code that shows us how this thing can be loaded and used.

1. To get this started, we need to load our necessary packages

```
In [1]: import torch
        from pytorch_pretrained_bert import BertTokenizer, BertModel
```

2. Then we will load in the tokenizer which will be what turns our sentences into a sequence of tokens

```
In [2]: tokenizer = BertTokenizer.from_pretrained('bert-base-uncased')
```

3. For the tokenizer to work properly we need to add some tokens of our own. One being "[CLS]" which marks the beginning of a text entry and the other being "[SEP]" which is the token that we put in between sentences within the same text entry. So let's put together the following text. "We are learning something very cool right now. Pay attention". After we put the tokens in the right places we get the following:

```
In [14]: sample_text = "[CLS] We are learning something very cool right now about embedding [SEP] Pay attention"
```

4. Now we can tokenize this sentence with the following code:

```
In [15]: tokens = tokenizer.tokenize(sample_text)
        print(tokens)

['[CLS]', 'we', 'are', 'learning', 'something', 'very', 'cool', 'right', 'now', 'about', 'em', '##bed', '##ding', '[SEP]', 'pay', 'attention']
```

Notice in this output that the word "embedding" is broken into 3 tokens. A lot of words will do this especially root words that have prefixes or suffixes on them.

5. We also want to keep in mind the space character that is separating the "[CLS]" and the "[SEP]" tokens from the text. Omitting the space between these tokens and the text is going to result in the following tokenization.

```
In [13]: tokens = tokenizer.tokenize(sample_text)
        print(tokens)

['[', 'cl', '##s', ']', 'we', 'are', 'learning', 'something', 'very', 'cool', 'right', 'now', 'about', 'em', '##bed', '##ding', '[', 'sep', ']', 'pay', 'attention']
```

In this output, we see that the CLS and SEP tokens themselves are being broken into multiple sections which is incorrect.

6. Now we can get the token IDs that we will be feeding into the pretrained BERT model

```
In [21]: input_ids = tokenizer.convert_tokens_to_ids(tokens)
         for i in range(0, 16):
             print(tuple((tokens[i], input_ids[i])))

(' [CLS]', 101)
('we', 2057)
('are', 2024)
('learning', 4083)
('something', 2242)
('very', 2200)
('cool', 4658)
('right', 2157)
('now', 2085)
('about', 2055)
('em', 7861)
('##bed', 8270)
('##ding', 4667)
(' [SEP]', 102)
('pay', 3477)
('attention', 3086)
```

Now we have that each token has its own numerical ID

- The next step is to actually load the BERT model that the previous information can be put into this is done with the following code:

```
In [29]: model = BertModel.from_pretrained('bert-base-uncased')
         model = model.cuda()

         model.eval()
```

The first two lines are loading the version of the model that we are looking for. We want the base, uncased model for this demonstration. The third line is putting the model in evaluation mode. You can explore the different versions of BERT in the official BERT github repository <https://github.com/google-research/bert>

- The next step is to go from the IDs to the hidden state vectors. We will not go into too much detail as to how these are working so we recommend looking at some of the tutorials in the NLSea repository that is linked in the beginning of this section. In short the code to achieve this is:

```
In [11]: with torch.no_grad():
         # ids -> hidden state vectors
         input_tensor = torch.LongTensor(input_ids).cuda().view(-1,1)
         input_mask = torch.LongTensor(input_mask).cuda().view(-1,1)
         input_type_ids = torch.LongTensor(input_type_ids).cuda().view(-1,1)

         encoded_layers, _ = model(input_tensor, token_type_ids=input_type_ids, attention_mask=input_mask)
```

There are 12 embedding layers in the base model of BERT. We want to sum the vectors of the last 4 layers:

```
In [14]: print(text_a, text_b)
         sum_last_four = torch.sum(torch.stack(encoded_layers[-4:]), dim=0)
         print(sum_last_four.shape)

[CLS] Seahorses dreamed about word embeddings and artificial intelligence [SEP] Seahorse is a smart animal [SEP]
torch.Size([30, 1, 768])
```

Note the shape of this object. We have 30 different embeddings each of which are of 768 dimensions. Each of these embeddings is representing a token in the original sentence that we used as an example. So these are word embeddings. To get the entire sentence embedding, all we need to do is average out all of the 30 token

embeddings:

```
In [43]: ▶ # Calculate the average of all 30 token vectors.  
sentence_embedding = torch.mean(sum_last_four, dim=0)
```

And there we have it! we have gone from a block of text all the way to an embedding. In the next section we will be able to cut down on the amount of work needed to run this model.

## BERT-As-Service

Now that we have the fundamental knowledge of how this model is working, lets use something that makes this process a little more repeatable. We will be using BERT-AS-Service. Just like before, we will go through the process from installing to getting an embedding for a block of text.

### 1. Installation

In order to use this, we need to install the BERT serving server and the BERT serving client. We can do that with the following few commands in the Anaconda prompt:

```
pip install bert-serving-server
```

```
pip install bert-serving-client
```

*Note: The requirements for the python and tensorflow versions remain the same as above.*

We also need to make sure that we have a BERT model downloaded. We are using the base uncased model for this demonstration which can be installed through the official BERT github repo linked above.

### 2. Running the Model

Now that we have the installations done, all we need to do now is run the service. This is done with the command:

```
bert-serving-start -model_dir [PATH TO MODEL] -num_worker=2 -max_seq_len 50
```

You can change the number of workers and the sequence length as you see fit. Make sure you have the exact path to where your BERT model is saved. As an example, here is the command I used

```
bert-serving-start -model_dir uncased_L-12_H-768_A-12/ -num_worker=2 -max_seq_len 50
```

### 3. Using the client

Now that we have the model running, all we need to do is call the service. Here is what that code looks like:

```
In [1]: ▶ from bert_serving.client import BertClient  
bc = BertClient()
```

Then we can just simply get an embedding for the sample text block that we were working with in the last section:

```
In [20]: ▶ sample = ["We are learning something very cool right now. Pay attention"]  
embedding = bc.encode(sample)  
len(embedding[0])
```

```
Out[20]: 768
```

And just like that we have a BERT embedding! We can also get separate embeddings for each sentence in this text block if we wish:

```
In [21]: sample = ["We are learning something very cool right now", "Pay attention"]
         embedding = bc.encode(sample)
         print(len(embedding[0]))
         print(len(embedding[1]))

768
768
```

Now we have two different embeddings. One for each of the sentences. Now we can start doing comparisons between these sentences through techniques like cosine similarity.