

# Probabilistically Bounded Staleness

How Eventual is Eventual Consistency?

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BashoChats 002, 28 February 2012

# PBS

what: consistency prediction

why: weak consistency is fast

how:

- measure latencies
- use WARS model

1. Fast
2. Scalable
3. Available

solution:

replicate for

1. capacity
2. fault-tolerance



# keep replicas in sync

keep replicas in sync

slow

keep replicas in sync

slow

alternative: sync later

keep replicas in sync

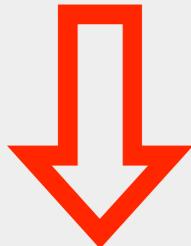
slow

alternative: sync later

inconsistent

 consistency,  latency

contact more replicas,  
read more recent data

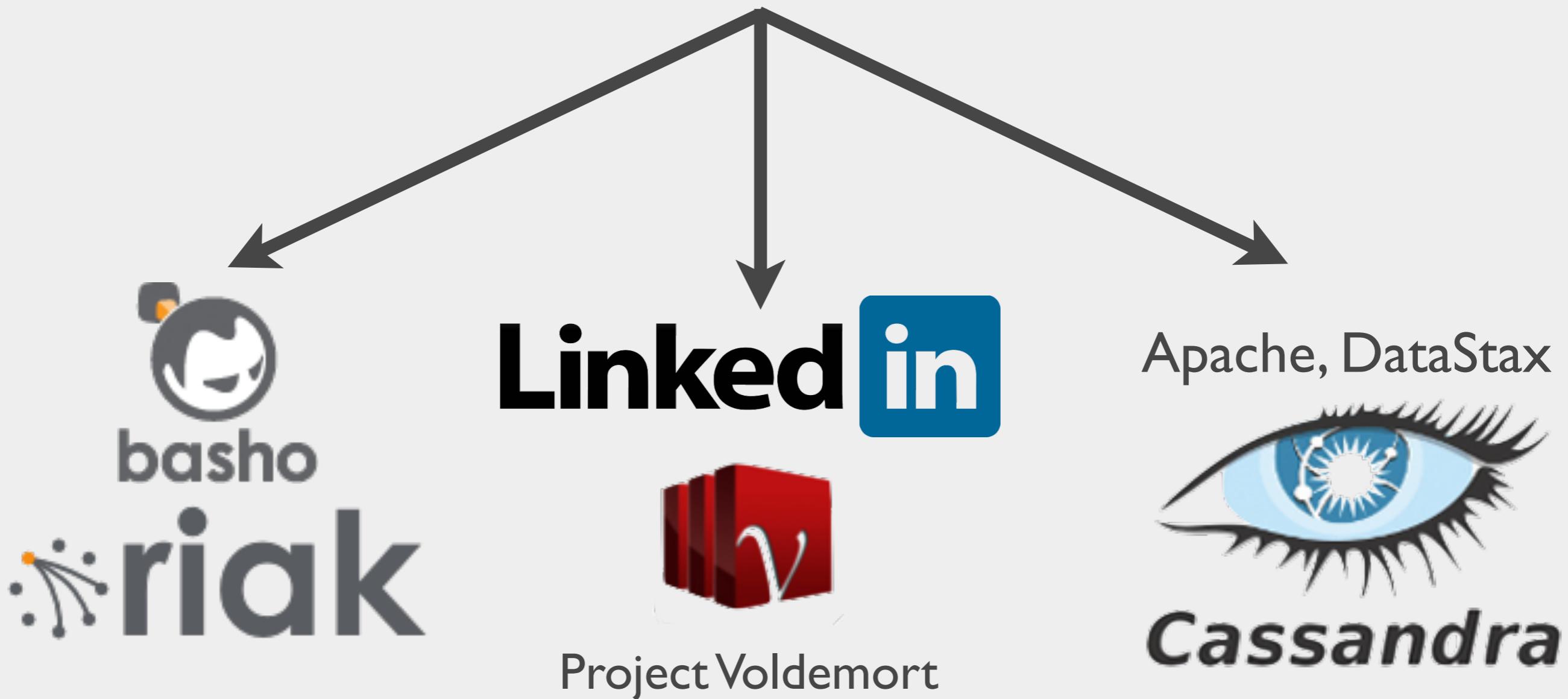
 consistency,  latency

contact fewer replicas,  
read less recent data

# Dynamo:

Amazon's Highly Available Key-value Store

SOSP 2007



$N = 3$  replicas

R1 ("key", I)

R2 ("key", I)

R3 ("key", I)

read

**$R=3$**

Coordinator

client



$N = 3$  replicas

R1 ("key", I)

R2 ("key", I)

R3 ("key", I)

read  
 $R=3$

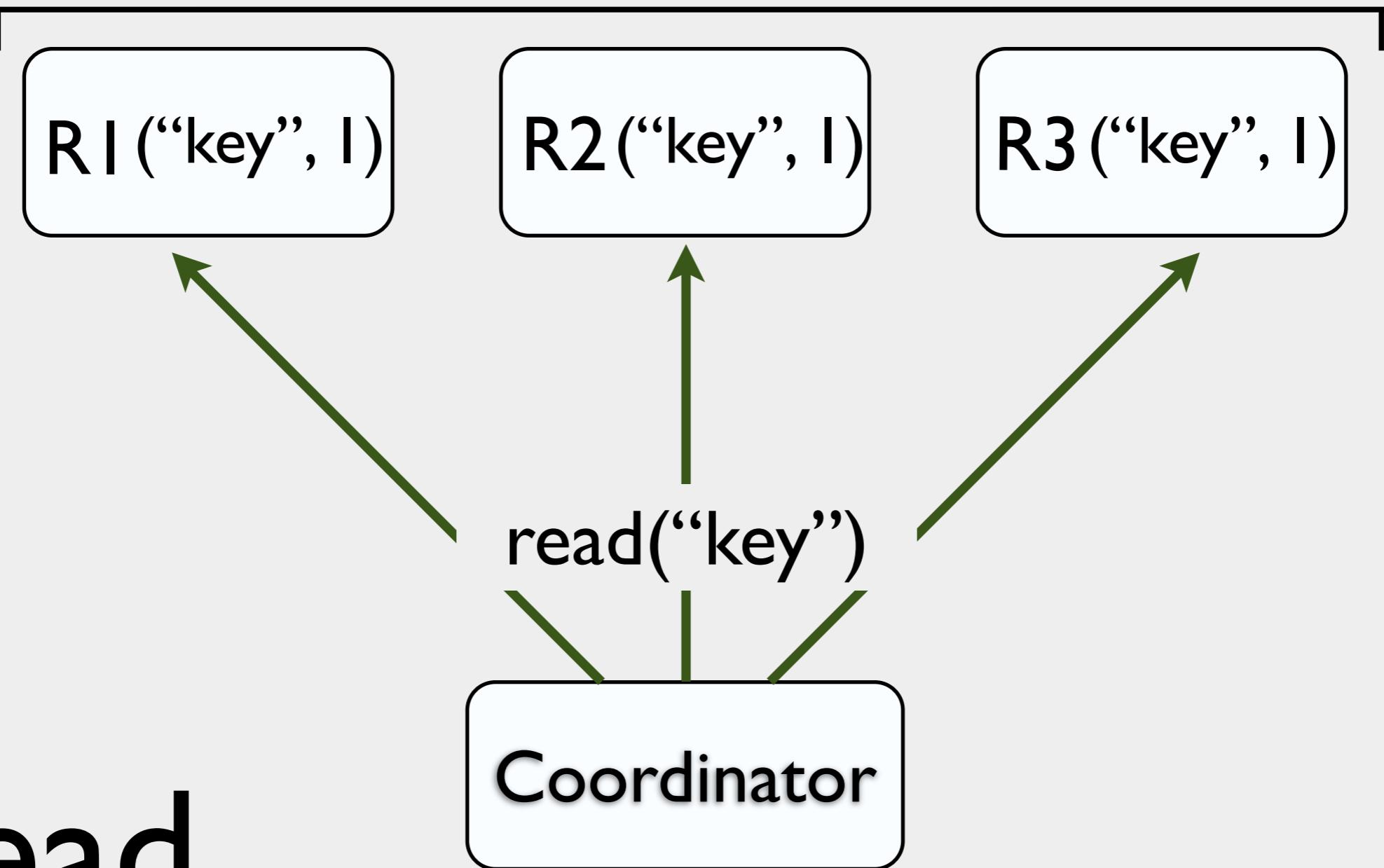
Coordinator

read("key")

client



$N = 3$  replicas



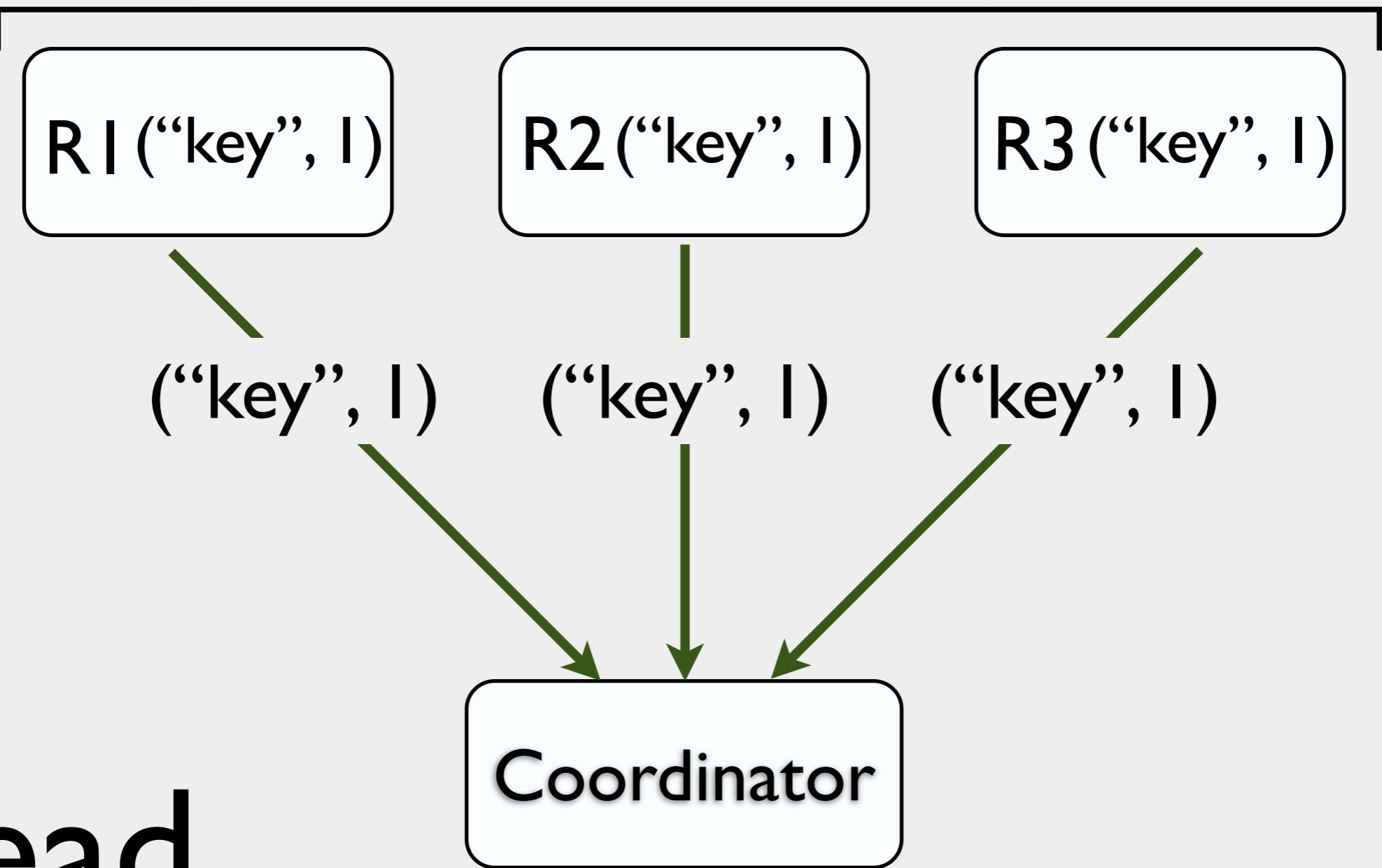
read

$R=3$

client



$N = 3$  replicas



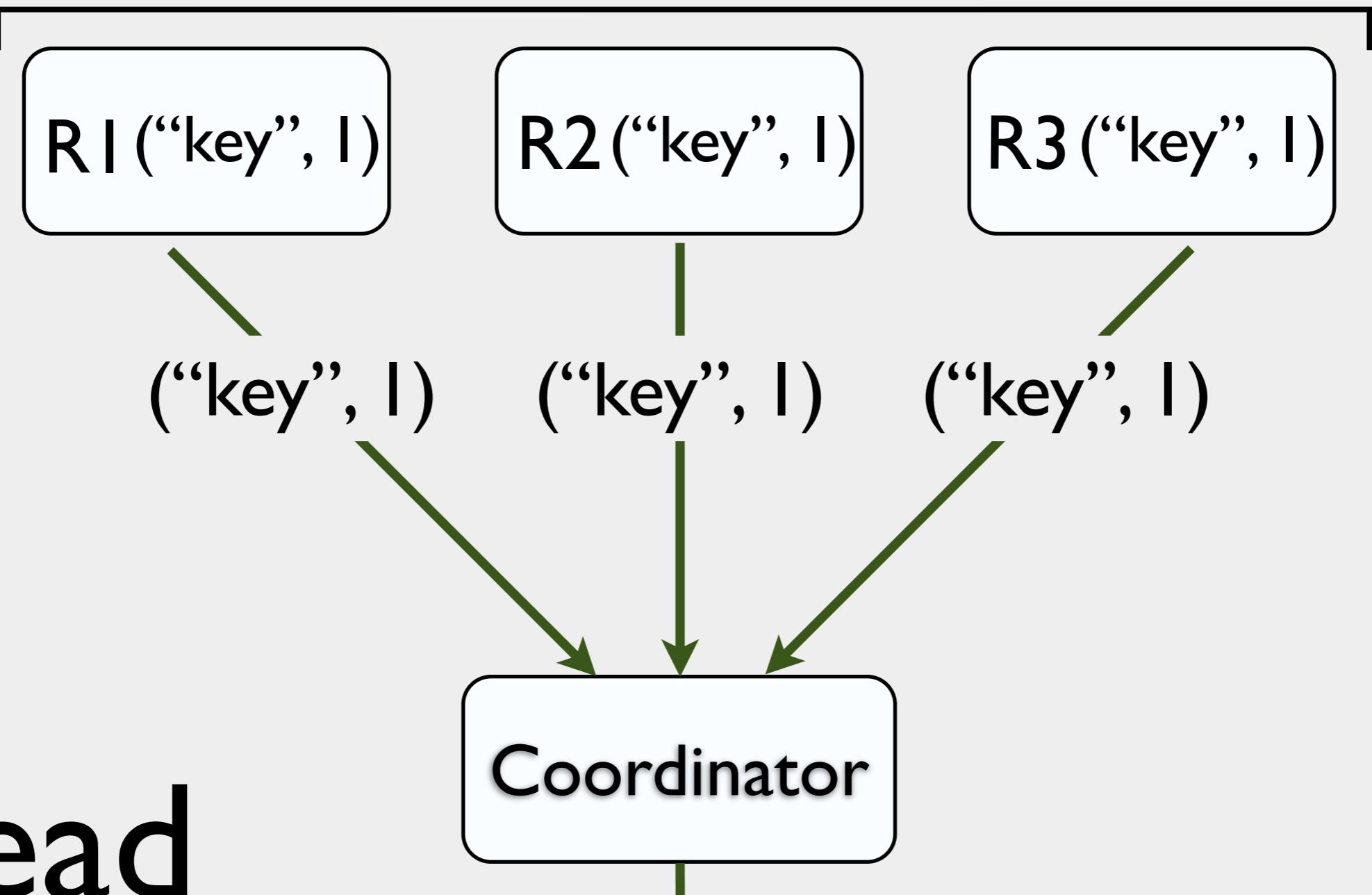
read

$R=3$

client



$N = 3$  replicas



read

$R=3$



client

$N = 3$  replicas

R1 ("key", I)

R2 ("key", I)

R3 ("key", I)

read

**$R=3$**

Coordinator

client



$N = 3$  replicas

R1 (“key”, I)

R2 (“key”, I)

R3 (“key”, I)

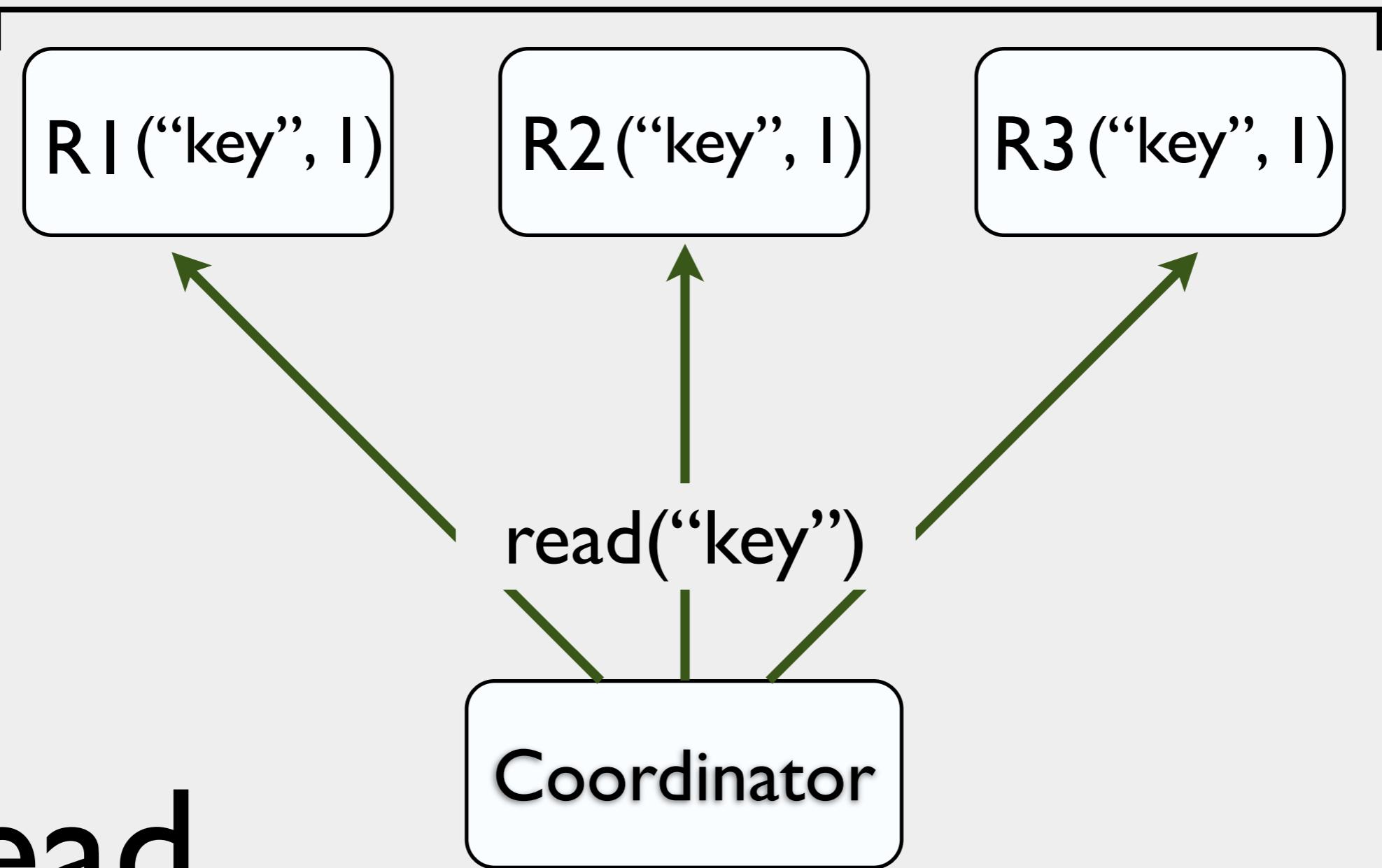
read  
 $R=3$

Coordinator

read(“key”)  
client



$N = 3$  replicas



read

$R=3$



client

$N = 3$  replicas

R1 (“key”, I)

R2 (“key”, I)

R3 (“key”, I)

(“key”, I)

Coordinator

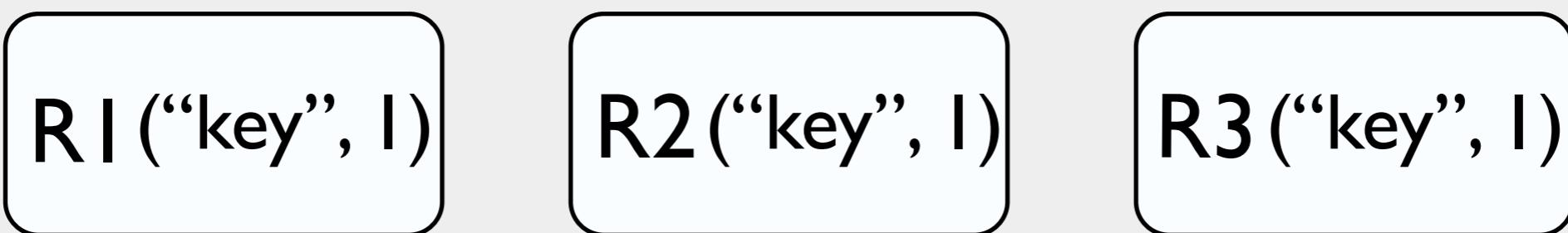
read

$R=3$

client



$N = 3$  replicas



("key", l)

("key", l)

Coordinator

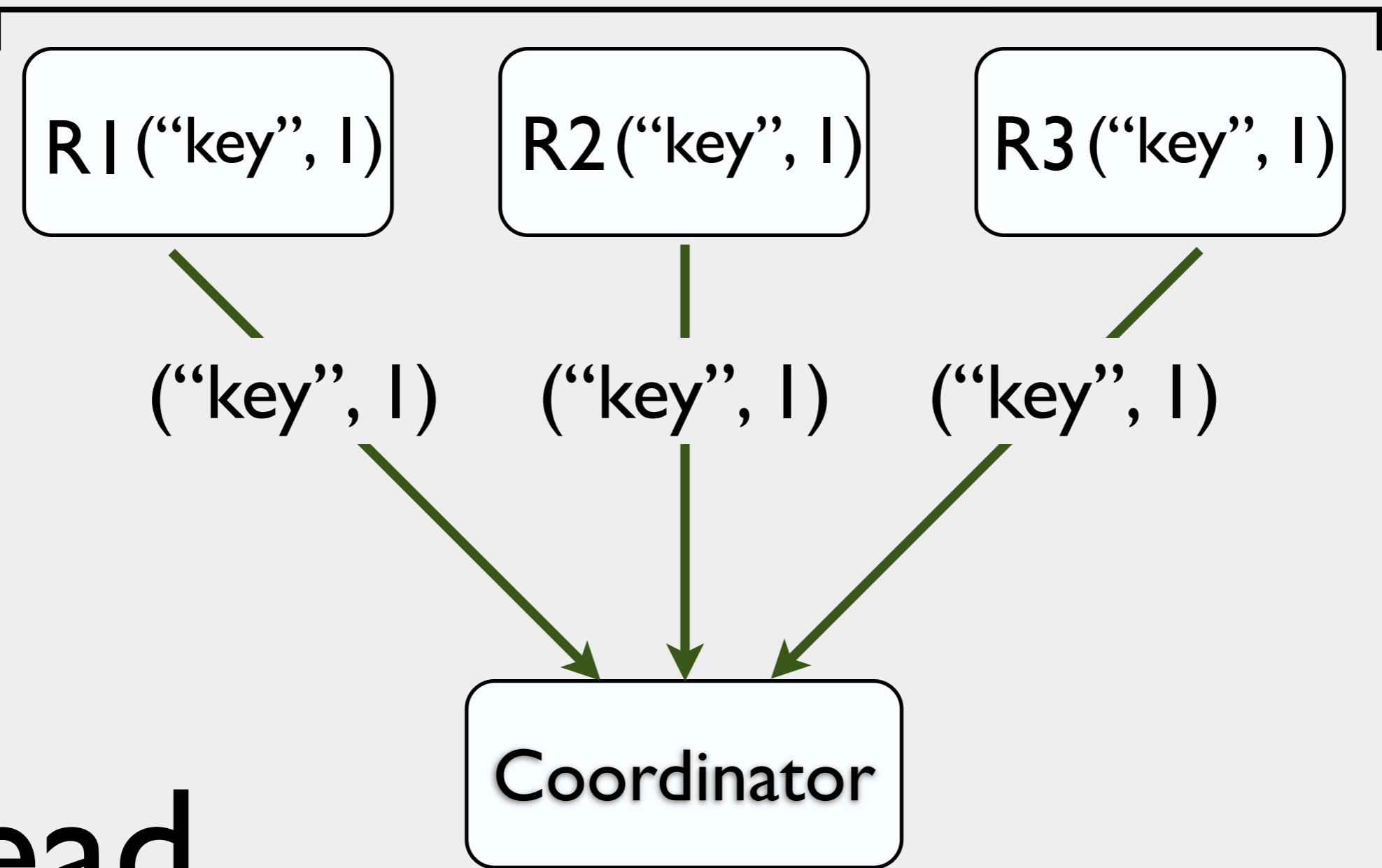
read

$R=3$

client



$N = 3$  replicas



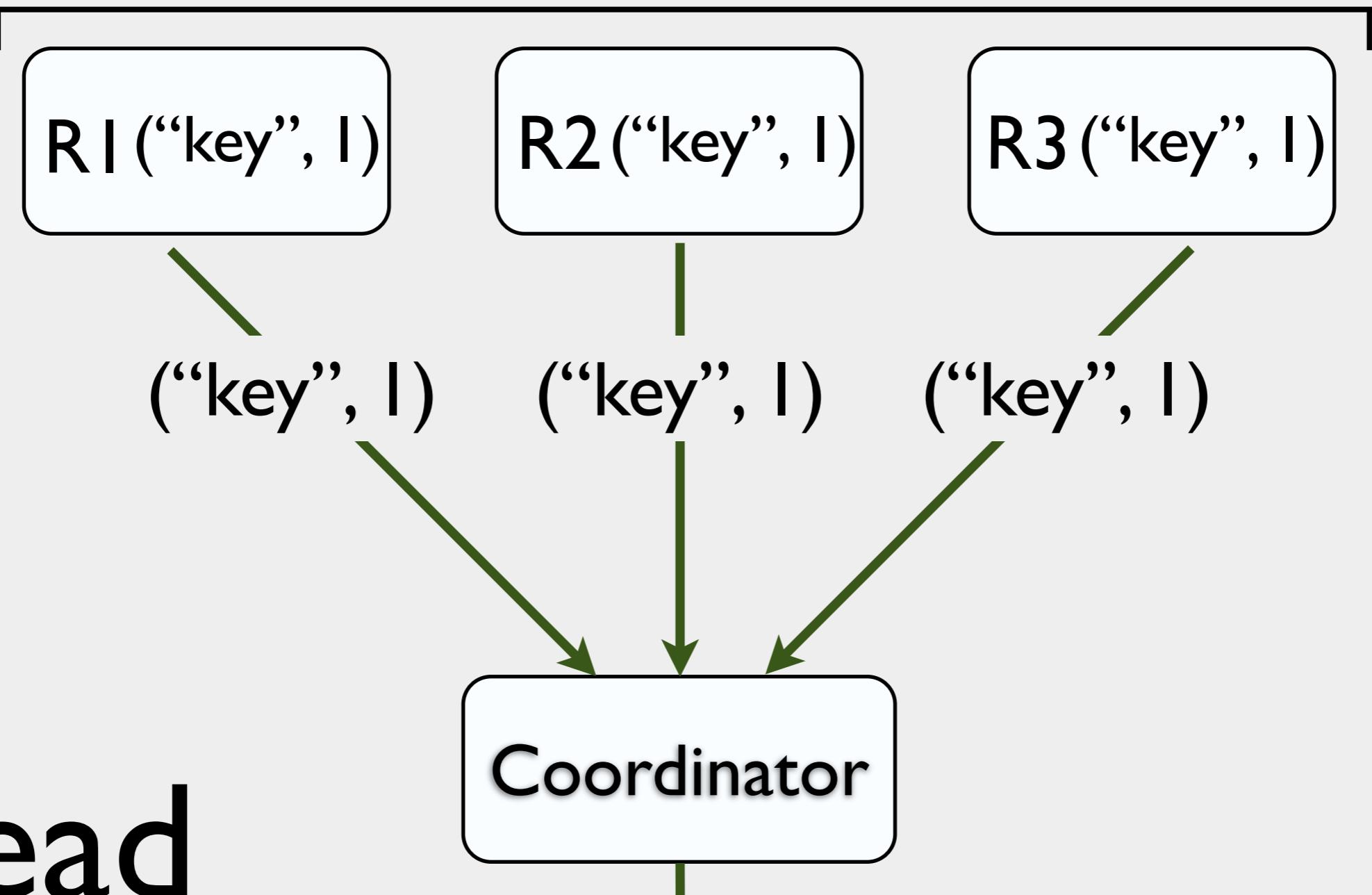
read

$R=3$

client



$N = 3$  replicas



read

$R=3$



("key", I)  
↓  
client

$N = 3$  replicas

R1 ("key", I)

R2 ("key", I)

R3 ("key", I)

read

$R=1$

Coordinator

client



$N = 3$  replicas

R1 (“key”, I)

R2 (“key”, I)

R3 (“key”, I)

read

**$R=1$**

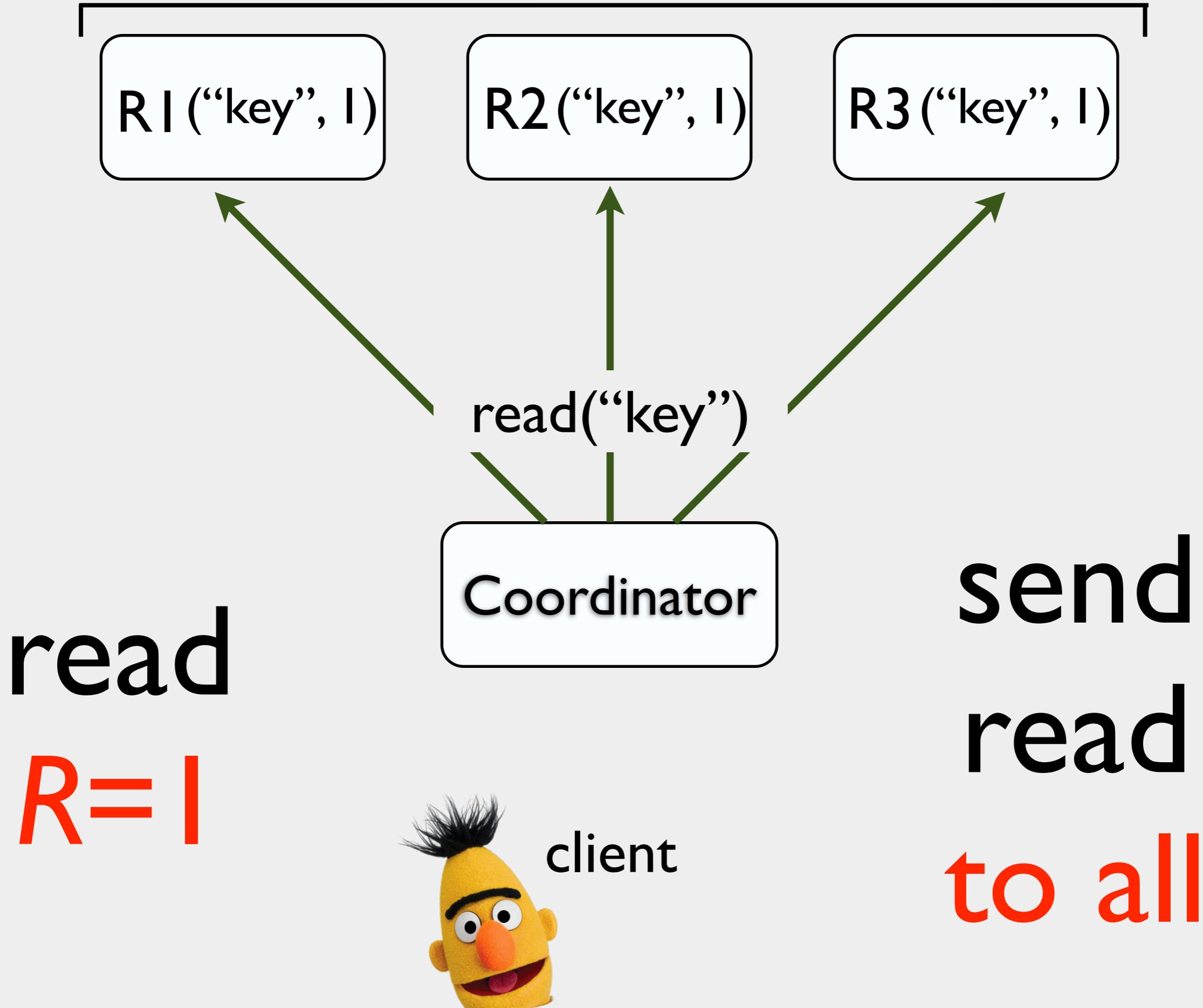
Coordinator

read(“key”)

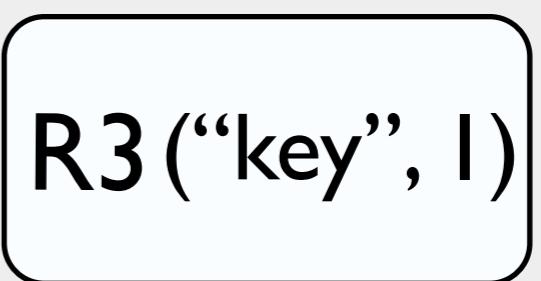
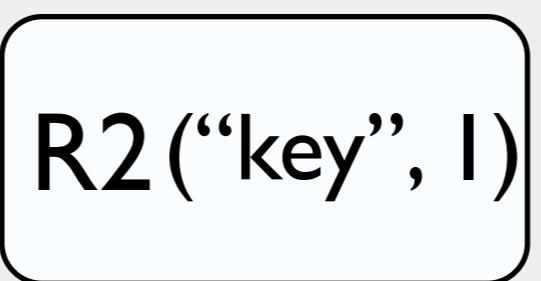
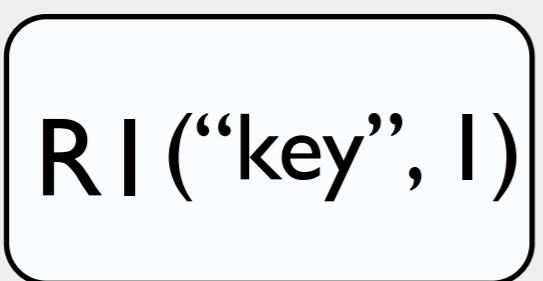
client



$N = 3$  replicas



$N = 3$  replicas



(“key”, I)



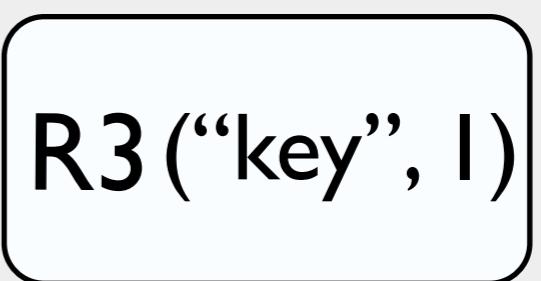
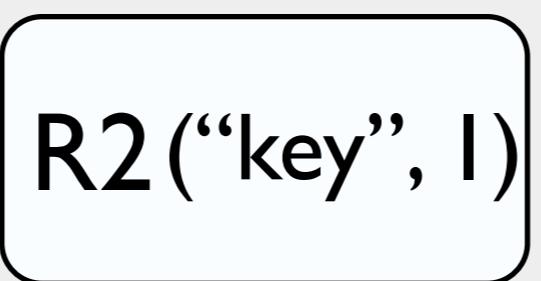
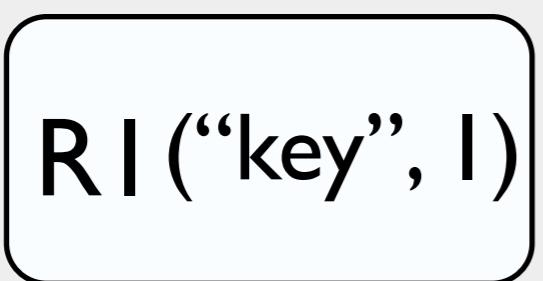
read

$R=1$



send  
read  
to all

$N = 3$  replicas



(“key”, I)



(“key”, I)

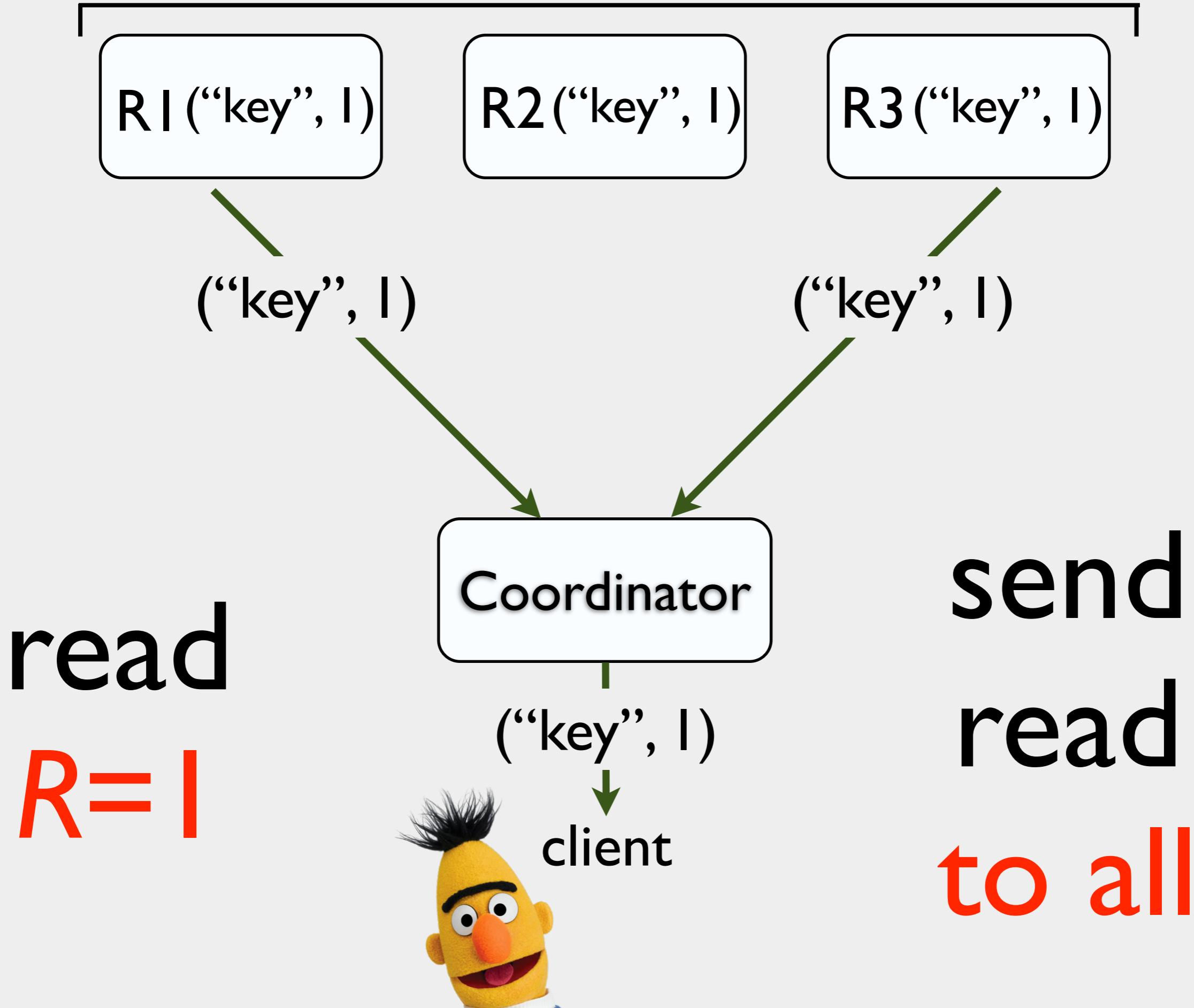
client

read

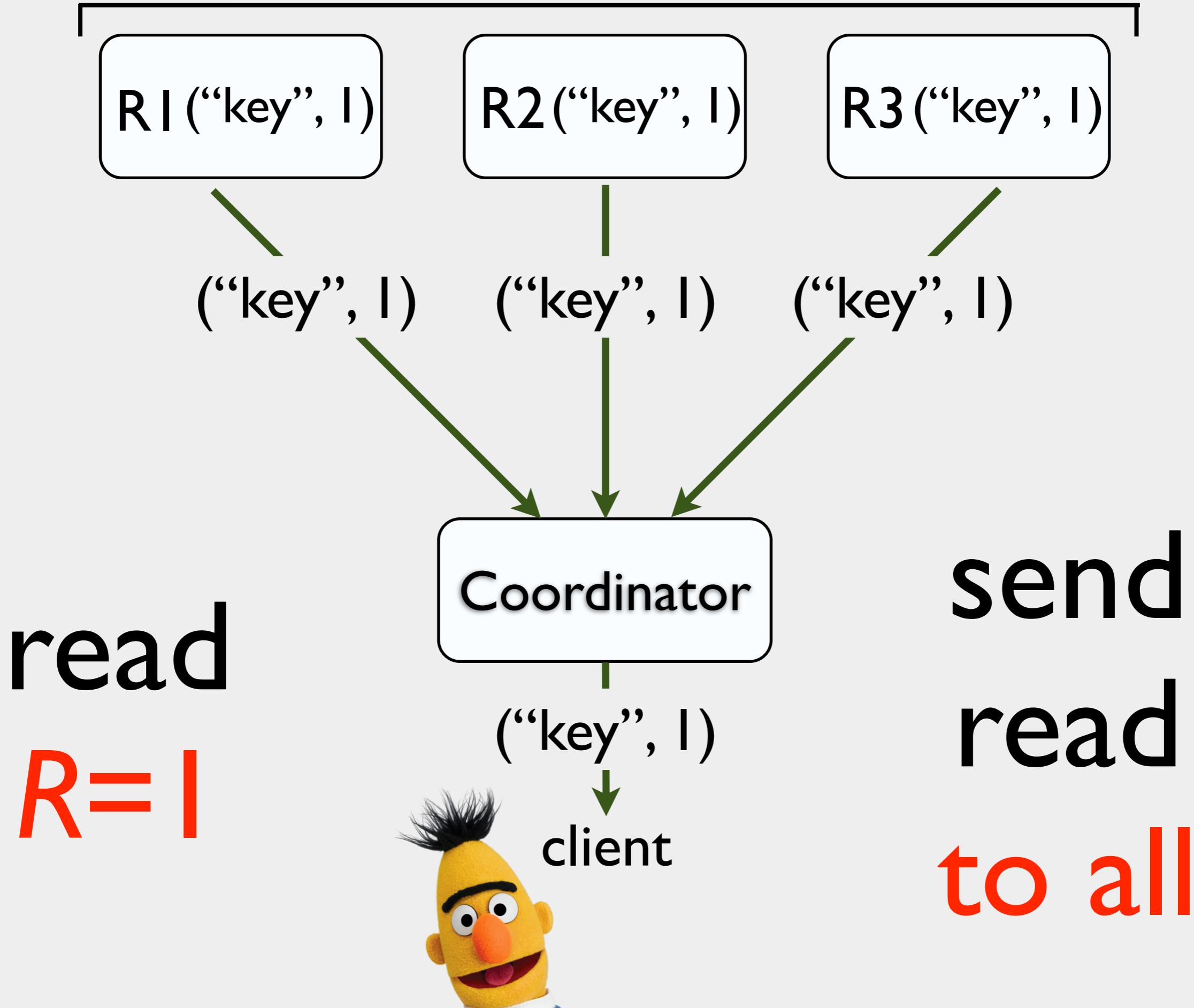
$R=1$

send  
read  
to all

$N = 3$  replicas



$N = 3$  replicas



$N$  replicas/key

read: wait for  $R$  replies

write: wait for  $W$  acks

R1 (“key”, I)

R2 (“key”, I)

R3 (“key”, I)

**Coordinator**

**W=I**



R1 (“key”, I)

R2 (“key”, I)

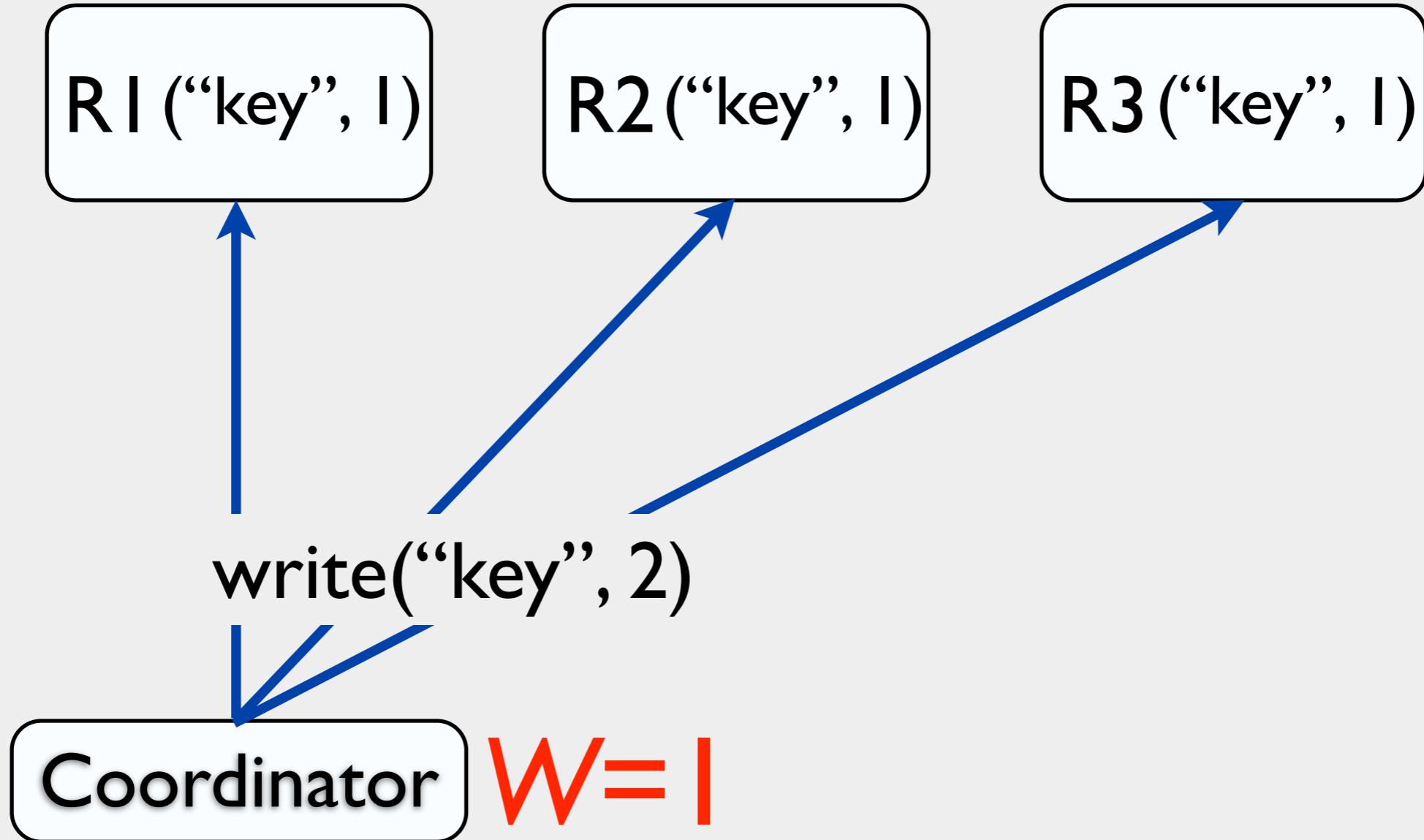
R3 (“key”, I)

**Coordinator**

**W=I**

write(“key”, 2)





R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

ack(“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W=1$



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

ack(“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)

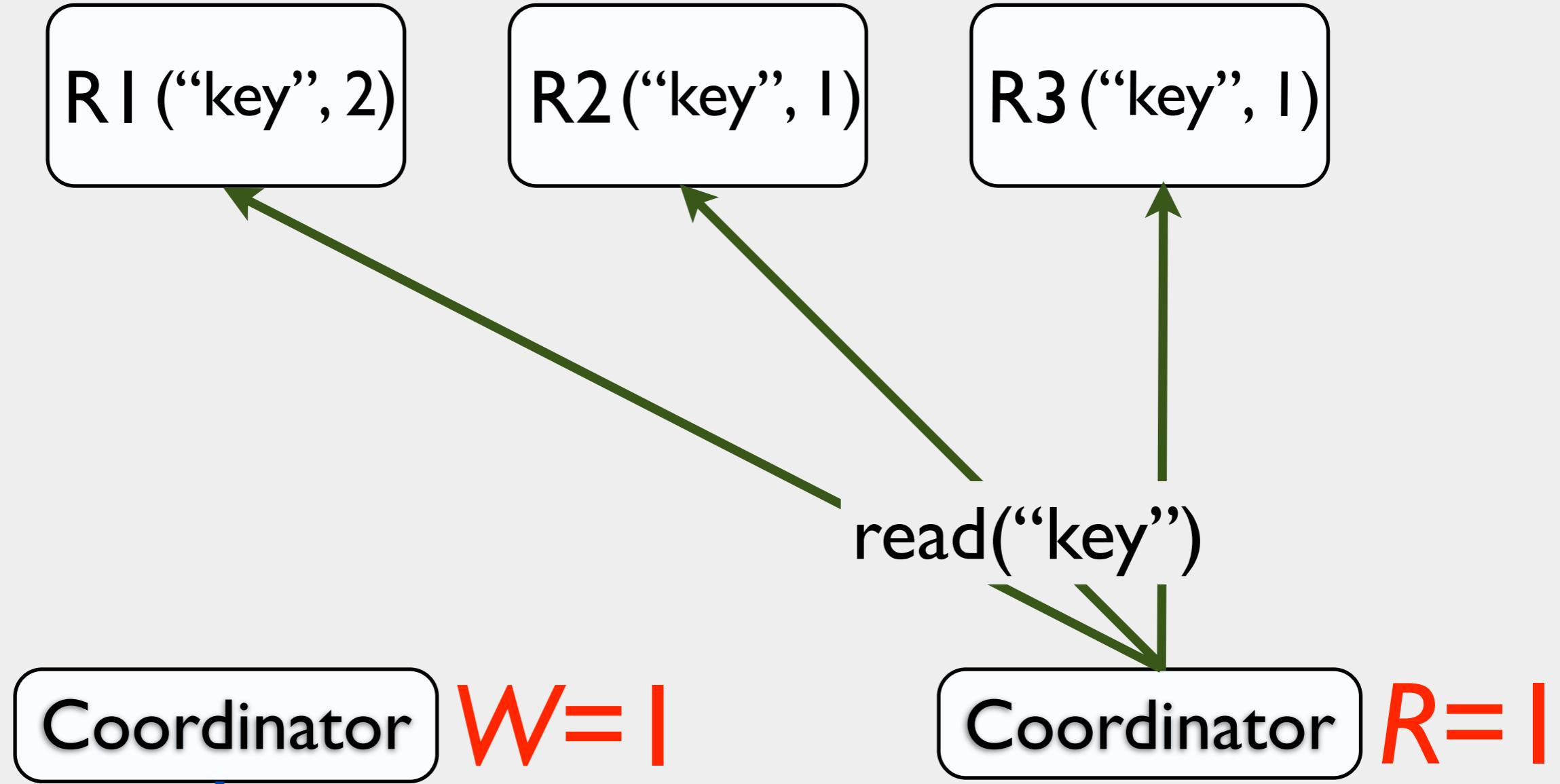


Coordinator

$R=1$

read(“key”)





ack("key", 2)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

(“key”, 1)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R=1$



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R=1$

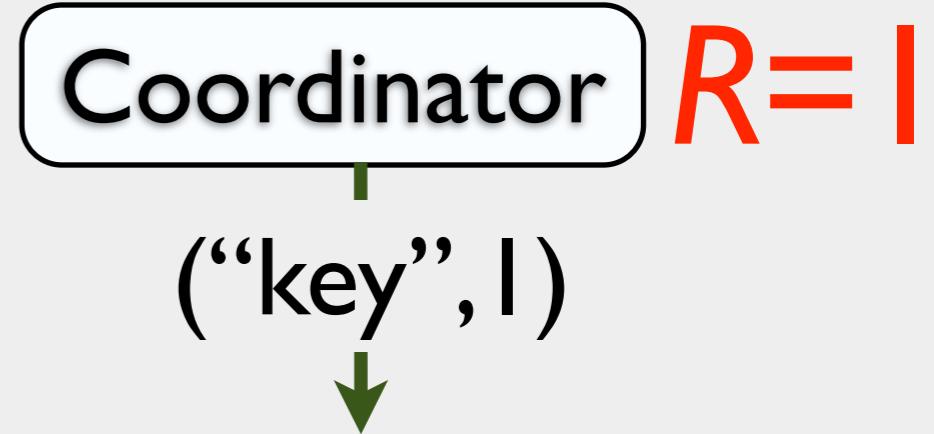
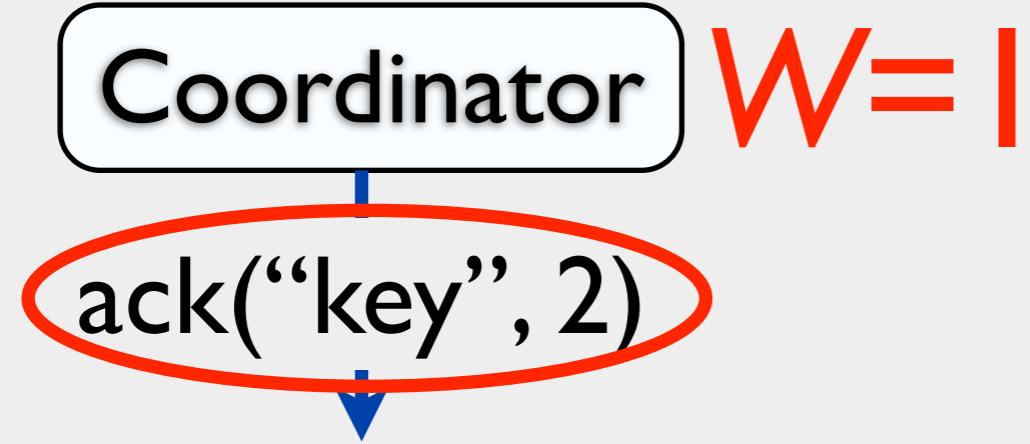
(“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

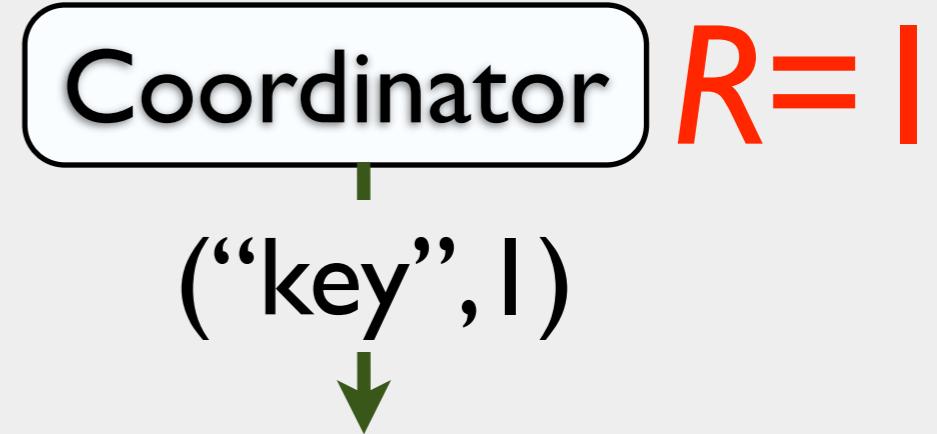
R3 (“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

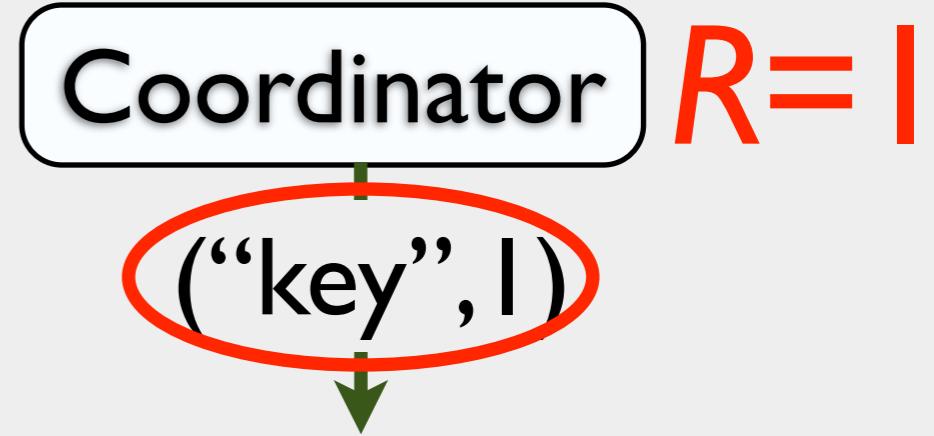
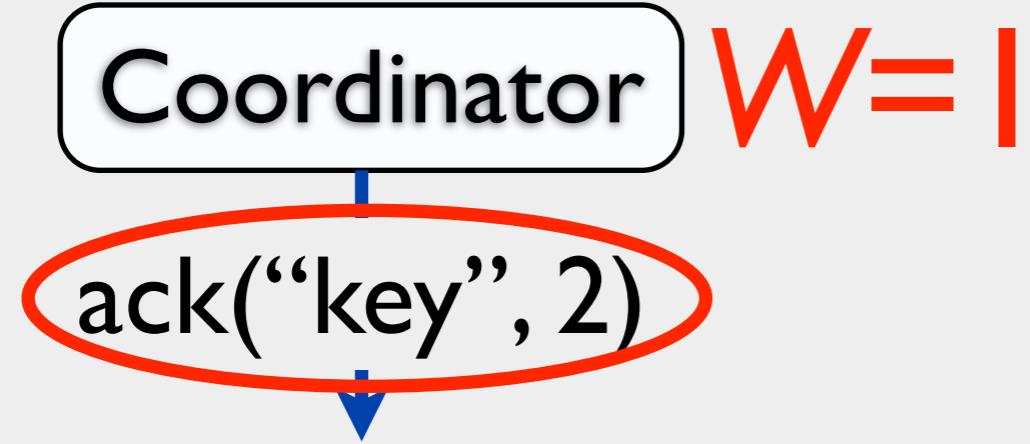
R3 (“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 2)

R3 (“key”, 1)

ack(“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R=1$

(“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 2)

R3 (“key”, 2)

ack(“key”, 2)

ack(“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$R=1$

(“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 2)

R3 (“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W = 1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R = 1$

(“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 2)

R3 (“key”, 2)

(“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R=1$

(“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 2)

R3 (“key”, 2)

(“key”, 2)      (“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R=1$

(“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 2)

R3 (“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W = 1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R = 1$

(“key”, 1)



if:

$$W > \lceil N/2 \rceil$$

$$R + W > N$$

then:

read (at least) last committed version

else:

• eventual consistency

# eventual consistency

“If no new updates are made to the object,  
**eventually** all accesses will return the last updated value”

# How eventual?

How long do I have to wait?

# How consistent?

What happens if I don't wait?

# Riak Defaults

$N=3$

$R=2$

$W=2$

# Riak Defaults

$N=3$

$R=2$

$W=2$

$2+2 > 3$

# Riak Defaults

$N=3$

$R=2$

$W=2$

$2+2 > 3$

*Phew, I'm safe!*

# Riak Defaults

$N=3$

$R=2$

$w=2$

$2+2 > 3$

*Phew, I'm safe!*

*...but what's my*

*latency cost?*

# Riak Defaults

$N=3$

$R=2$

$w=2$

$2+2 > 3$

*Phew, I'm safe!*

*...but what's my*

*latency cost?*

Should I change?





strong consistency



strong consistency  
low latency

# Cassandra:

R=W=1, N=3

by default

(1+1 ≠ 3)

"In the **general case**, we typically use [Cassandra's] consistency level of [R=W=1], which provides

**maximum performance. Nice!"**

--D.Williams,

“HBase vs Cassandra: why we moved”

February 2010

**reddit**

PROGRAMMING

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↑ [\[-\] ketralnis \[S\]](#) 13 points 1 year ago

↓ We have a memcached (not memcachedb) in front of it which gives us the atomic operations that we need, so it can take as long as it needs to replicate behind the scenes. If we didn't, we'd use CL-ONE reads/writes for most things except the operations that needed to be atomic, where we'd do CL-QUORUM. But most of our data doesn't need atomic reads/writes.

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If we didn't, we'd use CL-ONE reads/writes for most things except the operations that needed to be atomic, where we'd do CL-QUORUM. But most of our data doesn't need atomic reads/writes.

# Low Value Data



$n = 2, r = 1, w = 1$

# Low Value Data



$n = 2, r = 1, w = 1$

# Mission Critical Data



$n = 5, r = 1, w = 5, dw = 5$

# Mission Critical Data



n = 5, r = 1, w = 5, dw = 5

# Voldemort @ LinkedIn

“very low latency and high availability”:

$R=W=1, N=3$

$N=3$  not required, “some consistency”:

$R=W=1, N=2$

Anecdotally, EC  
“**worthwhile**” for  
many kinds of data

Anecdotally, EC  
“**worthwhile**” for  
many kinds of data

How eventual?  
How consistent?

Anecdotally, EC  
“worthwhile” for  
many kinds of data

How eventual?

How consistent?  
“eventual and consistent enough”

# Can we do better?

Can we do better?

Probabilistically  
Bounded Staleness

can't make promises  
can give expectations

# PBS is:

a way to **quantify**  
latency-consistency

trade-offs

what's the latency cost of consistency?  
what's the consistency cost of latency?

# PBS is:

a way to **quantify**  
latency-consistency  
trade-offs

what's the latency cost of consistency?  
what's the consistency cost of latency?

a **SLA** for consistency

# How eventual?

*t*-visibility: consistent reads  
with probability  $p$  after  
after  $t$  seconds

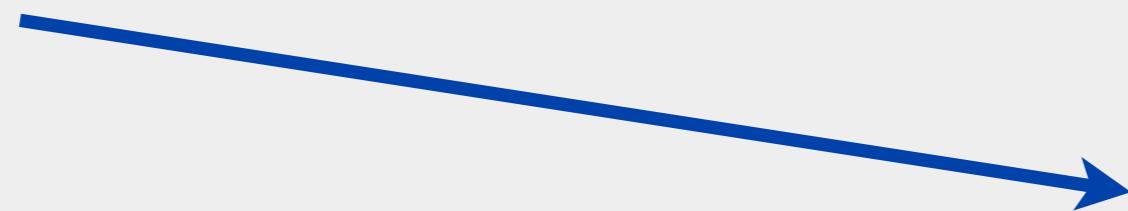
(e.g., 99.9% of reads will be consistent after 10ms)

Coordinator   *once per replica*   Replica

Coordinator   *once per replica*

Replica

**write**

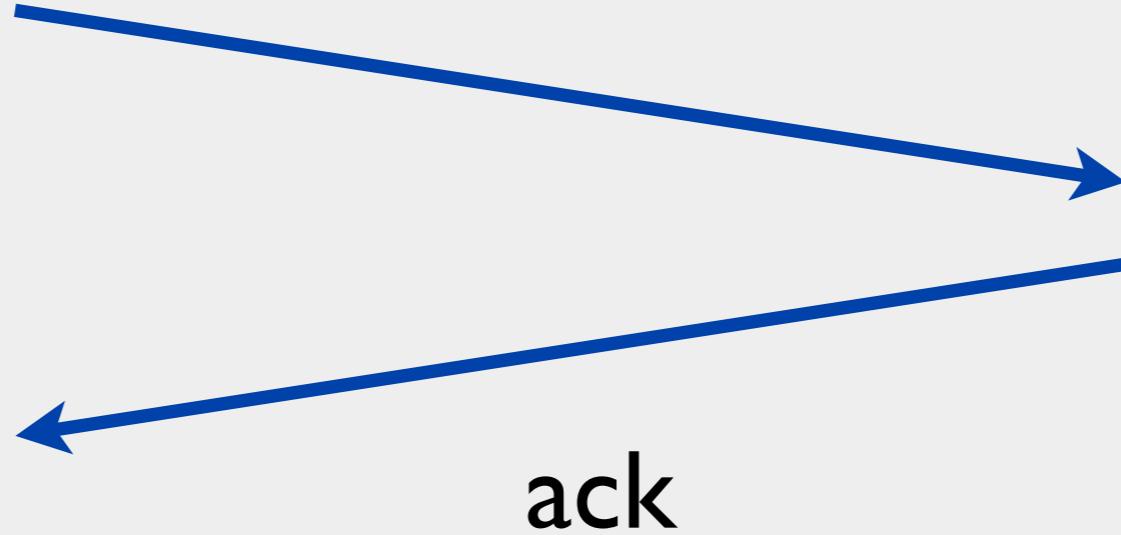


Coordinator

*once per replica*

Replica

write



Coordinator

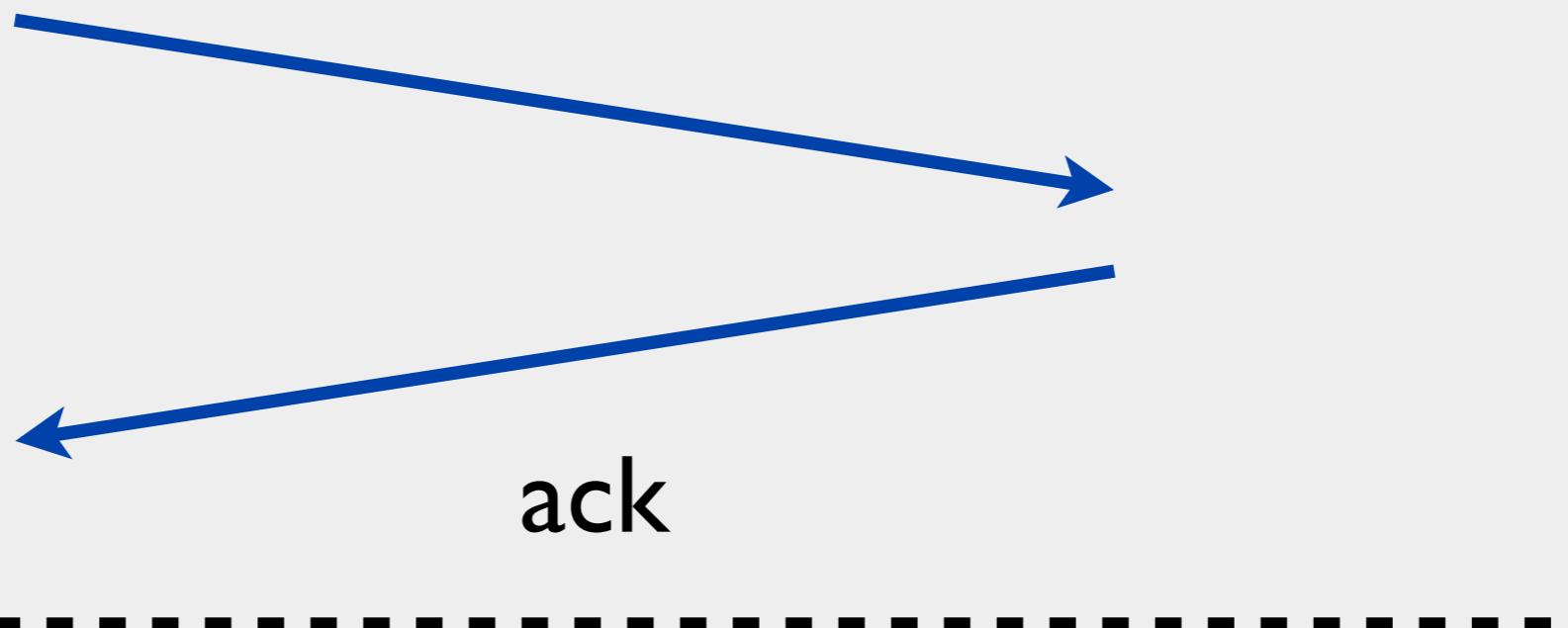
*once per replica*

Replica

**write**

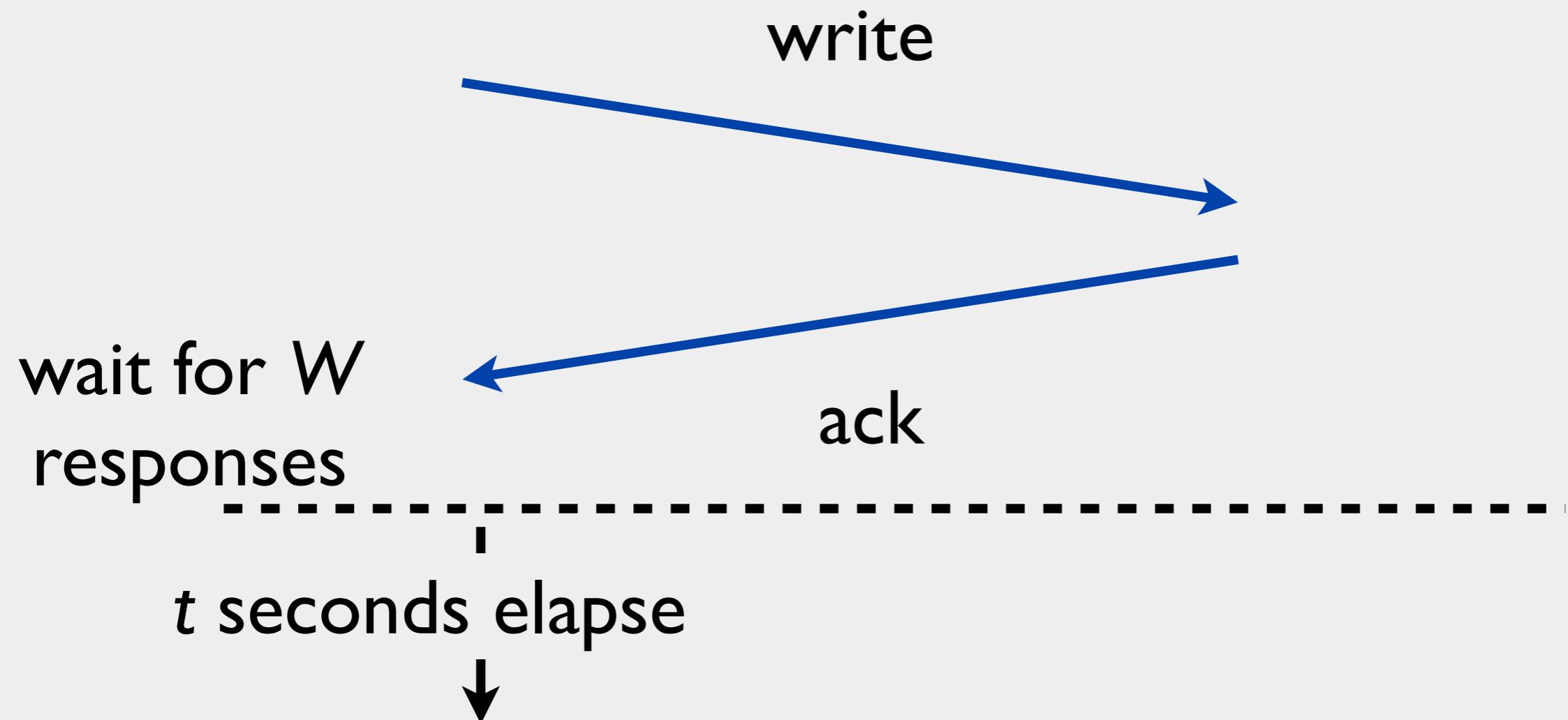
**wait for W  
responses**

**ack**



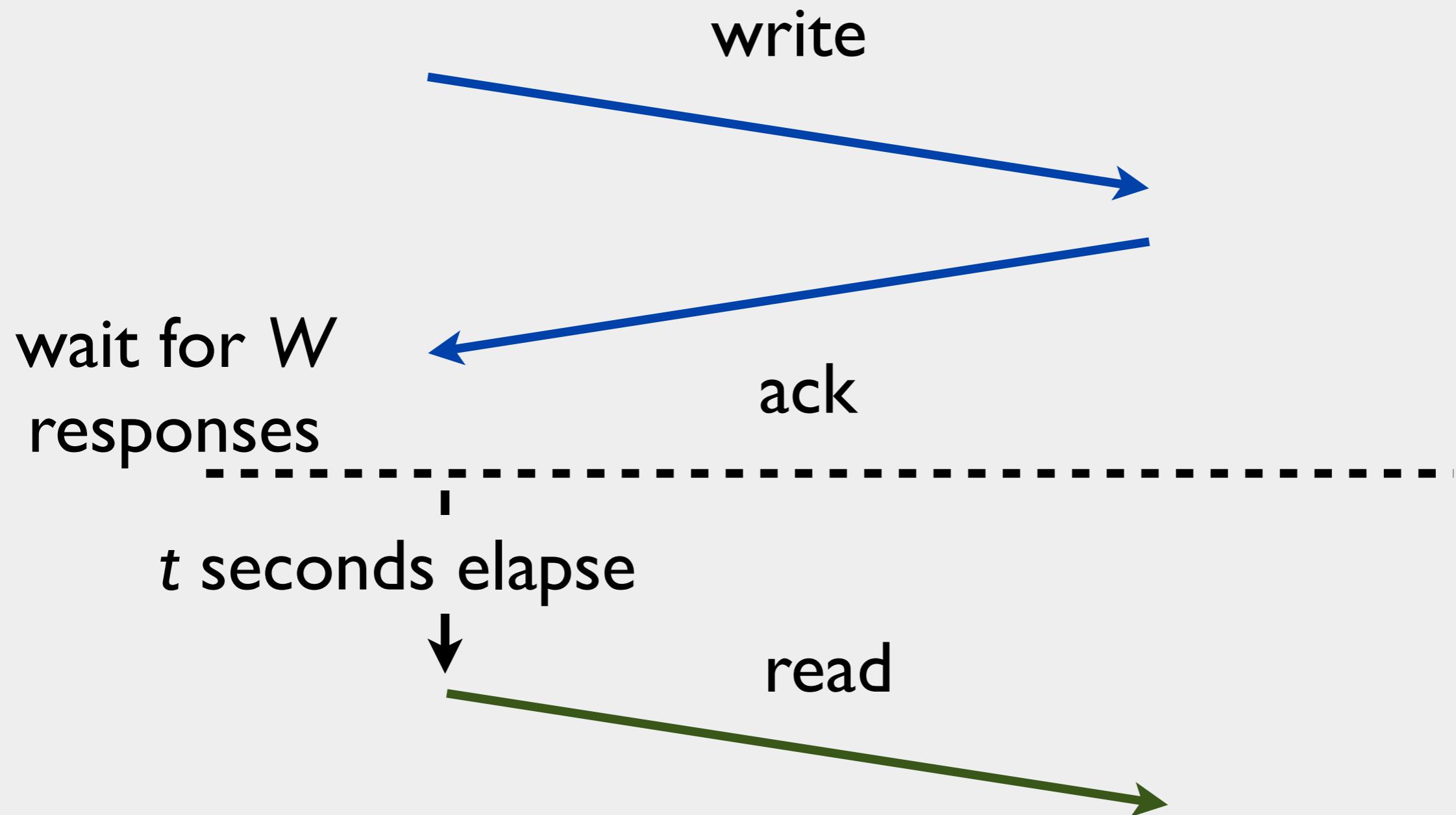
Coordinator    *once per replica*

Replica



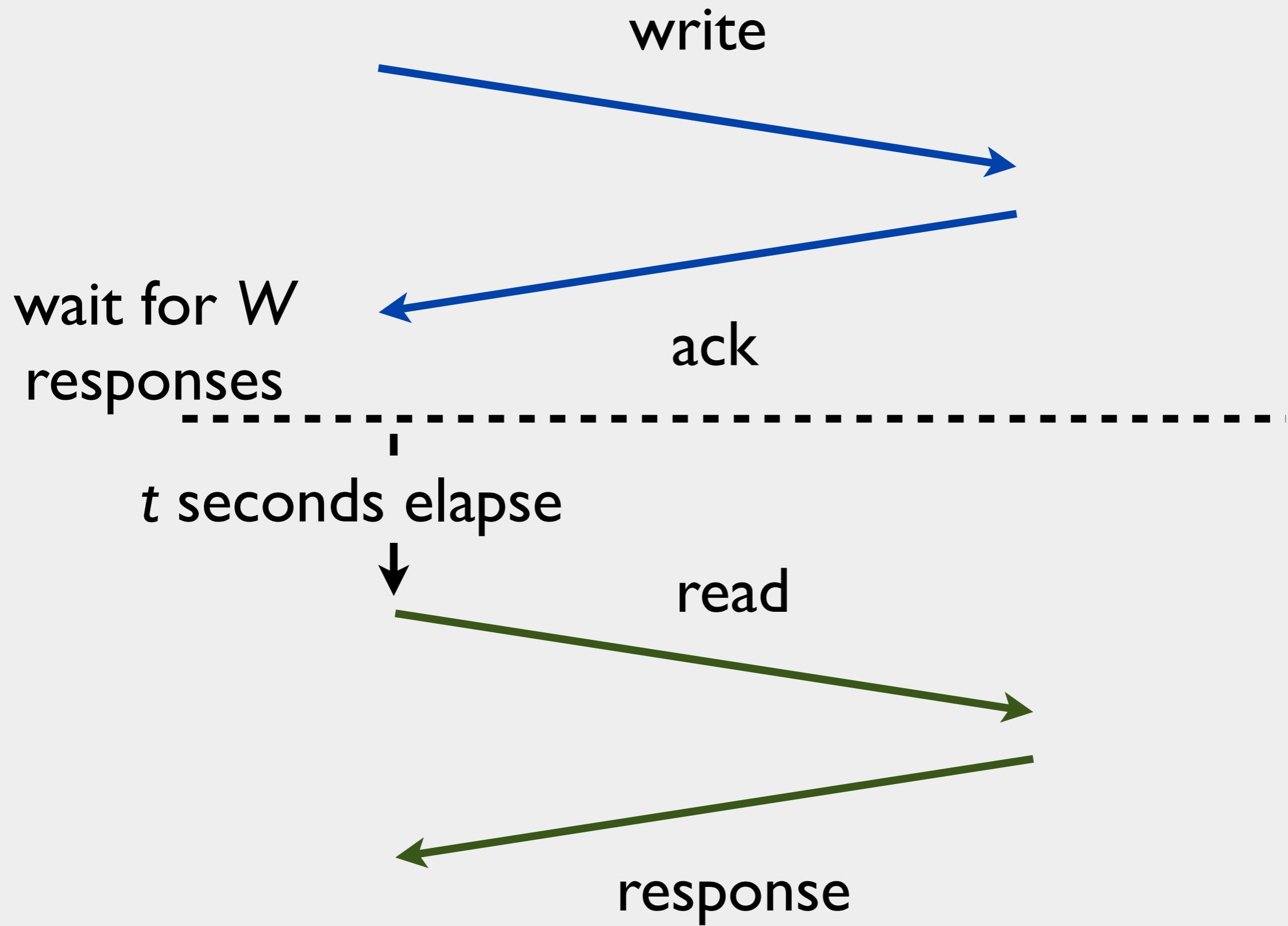
Coordinator    *once per replica*

Replica



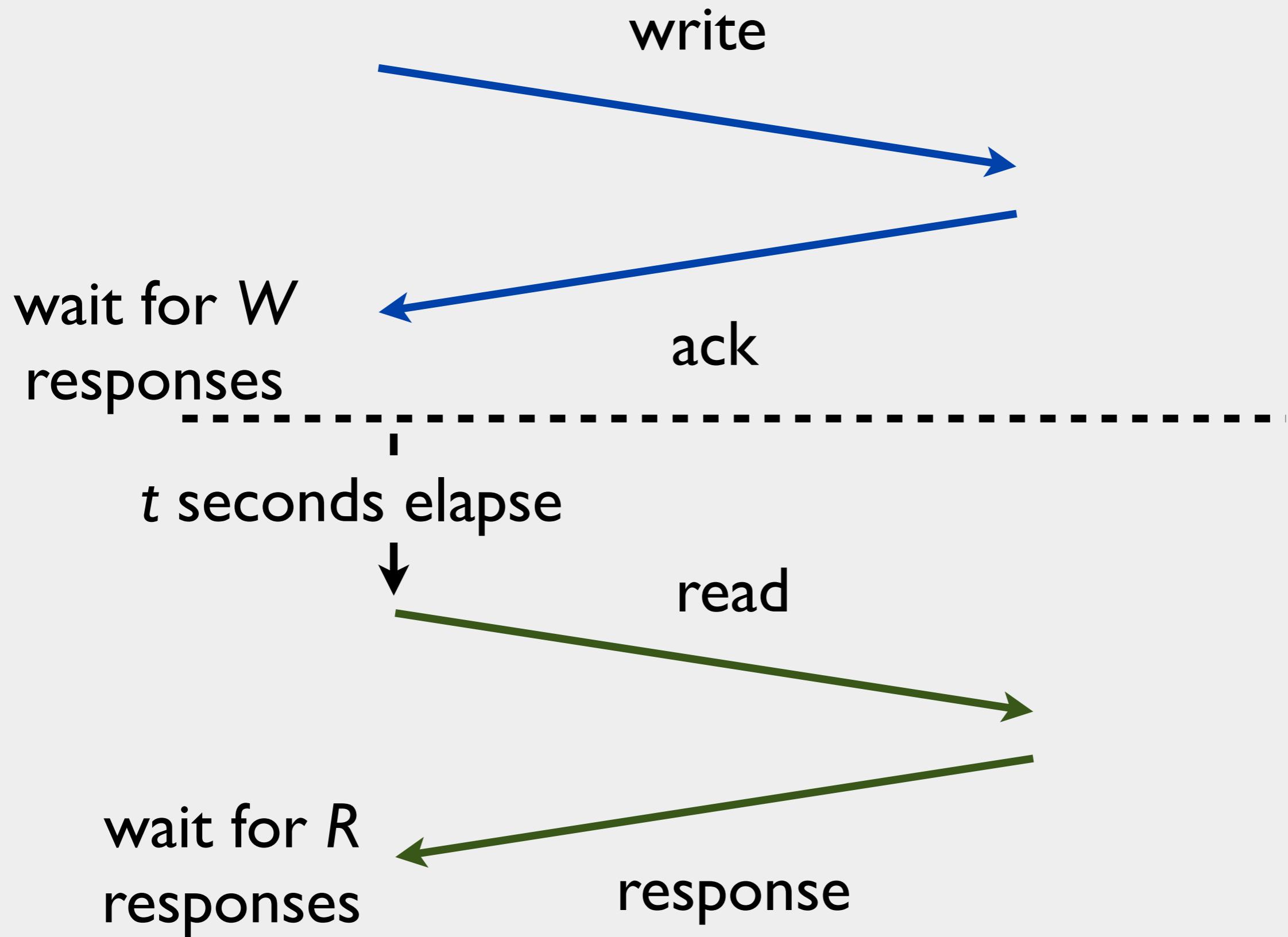
Coordinator    *once per replica*

Replica



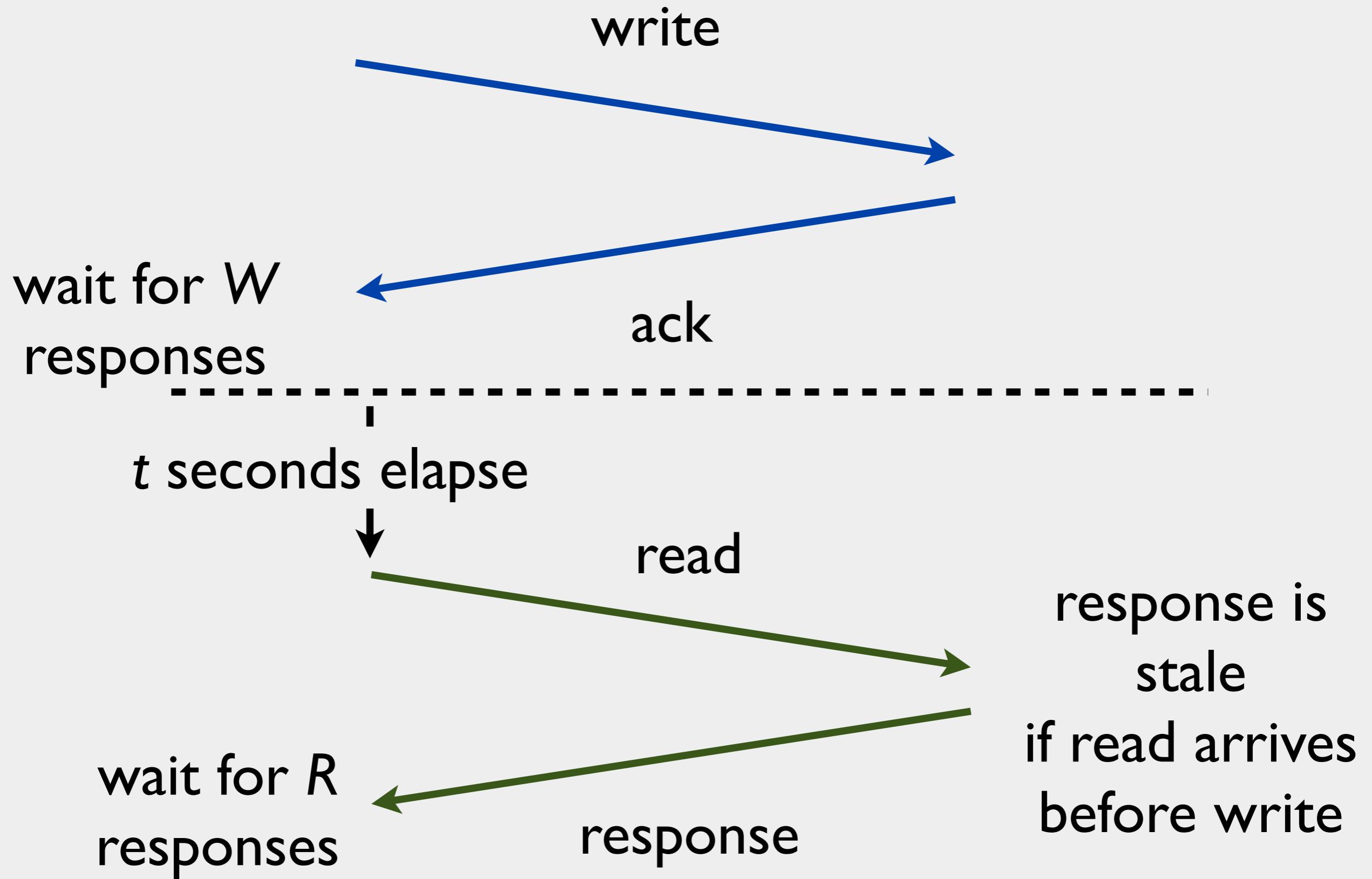
Coordinator    *once per replica*

Replica



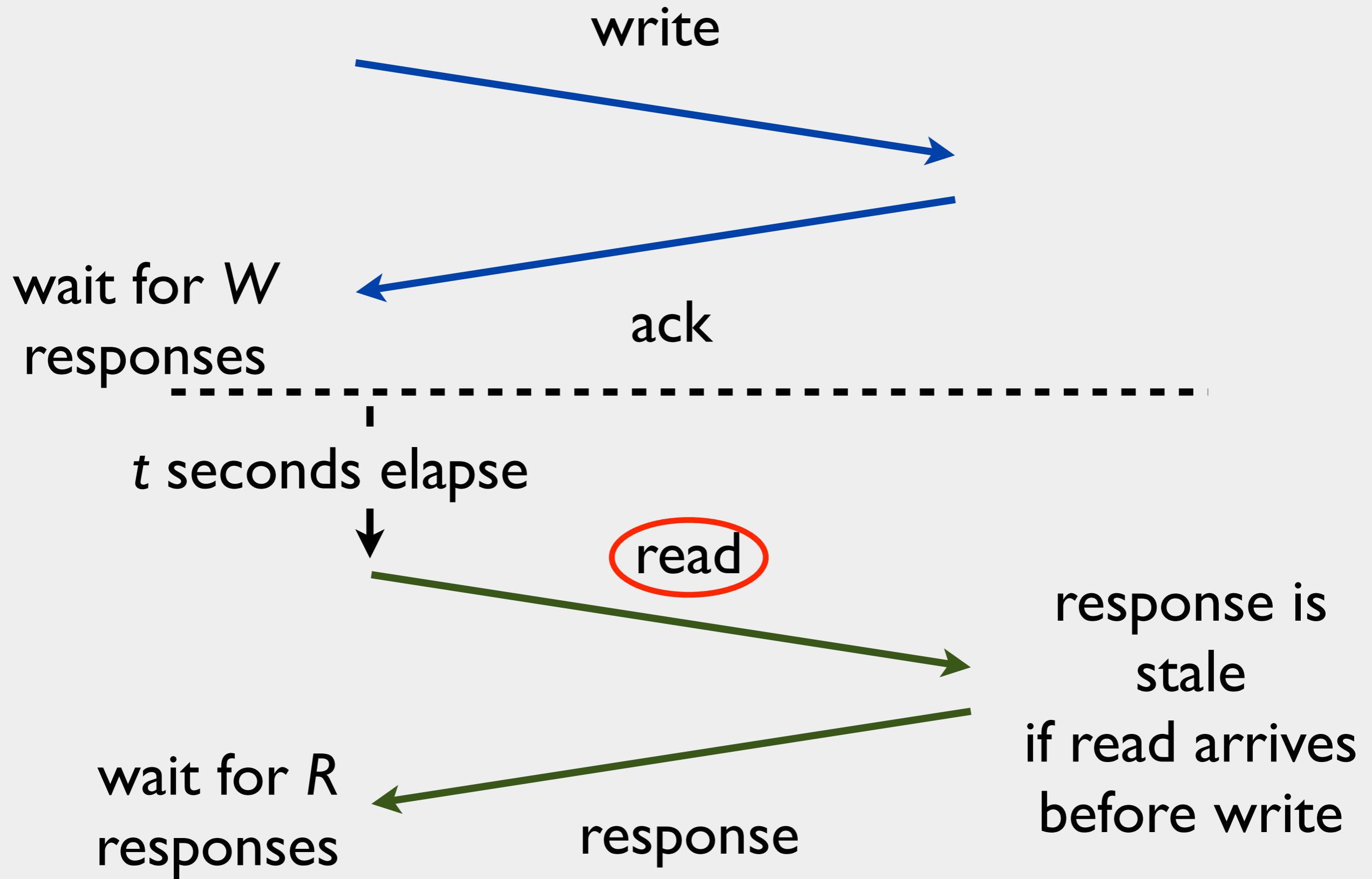
Coordinator    *once per replica*

Replica

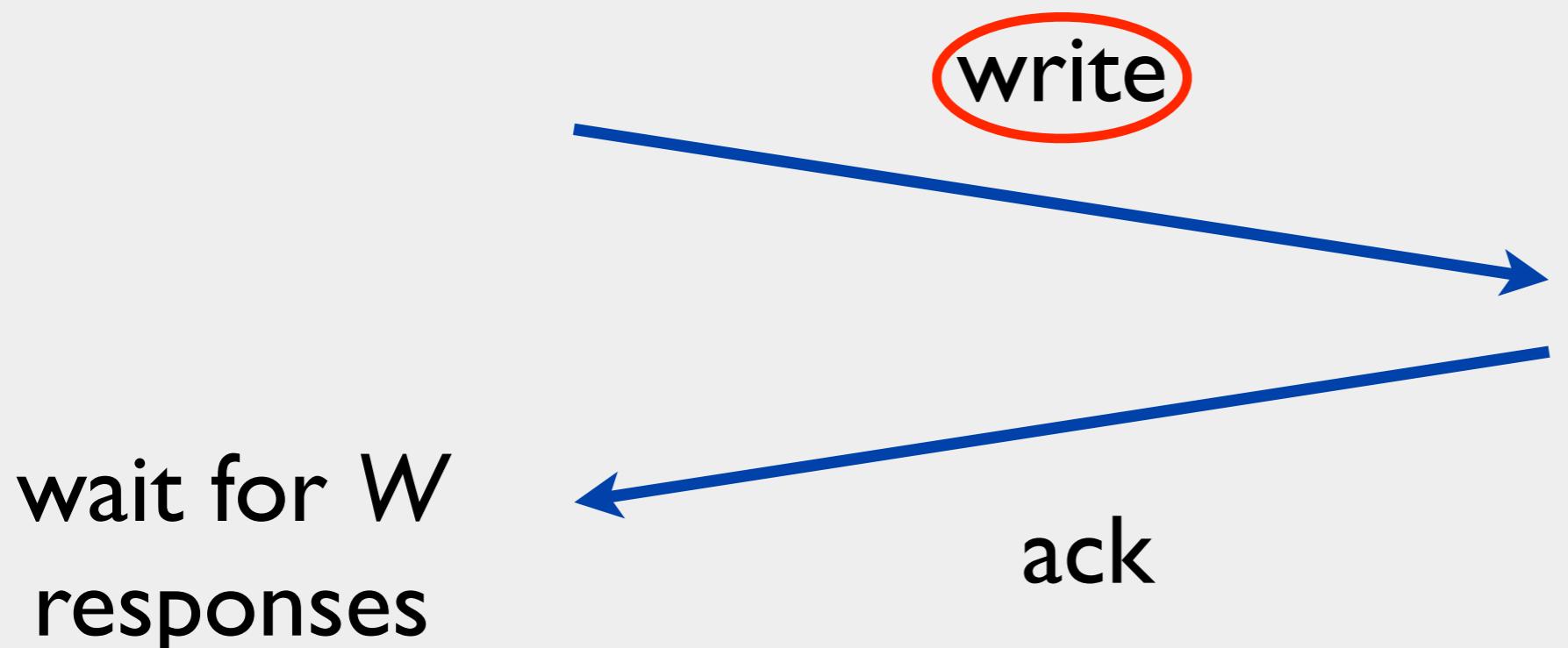


Coordinator    *once per replica*

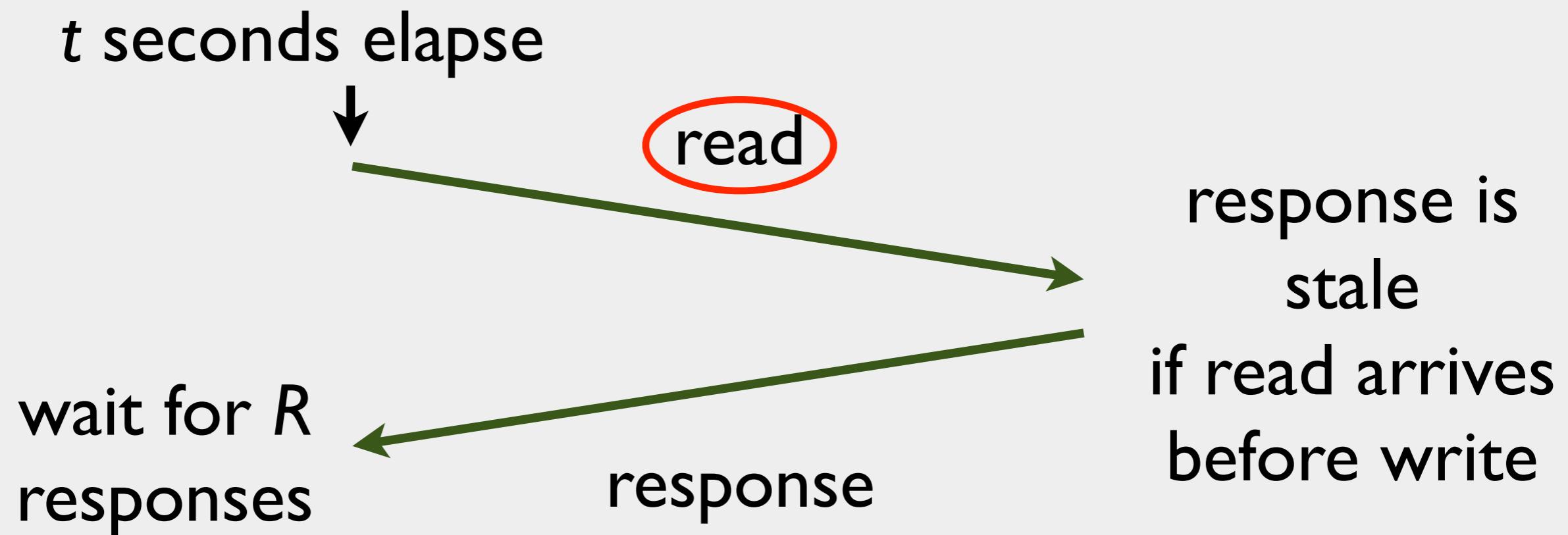
Replica



Coordinator    *once per replica*



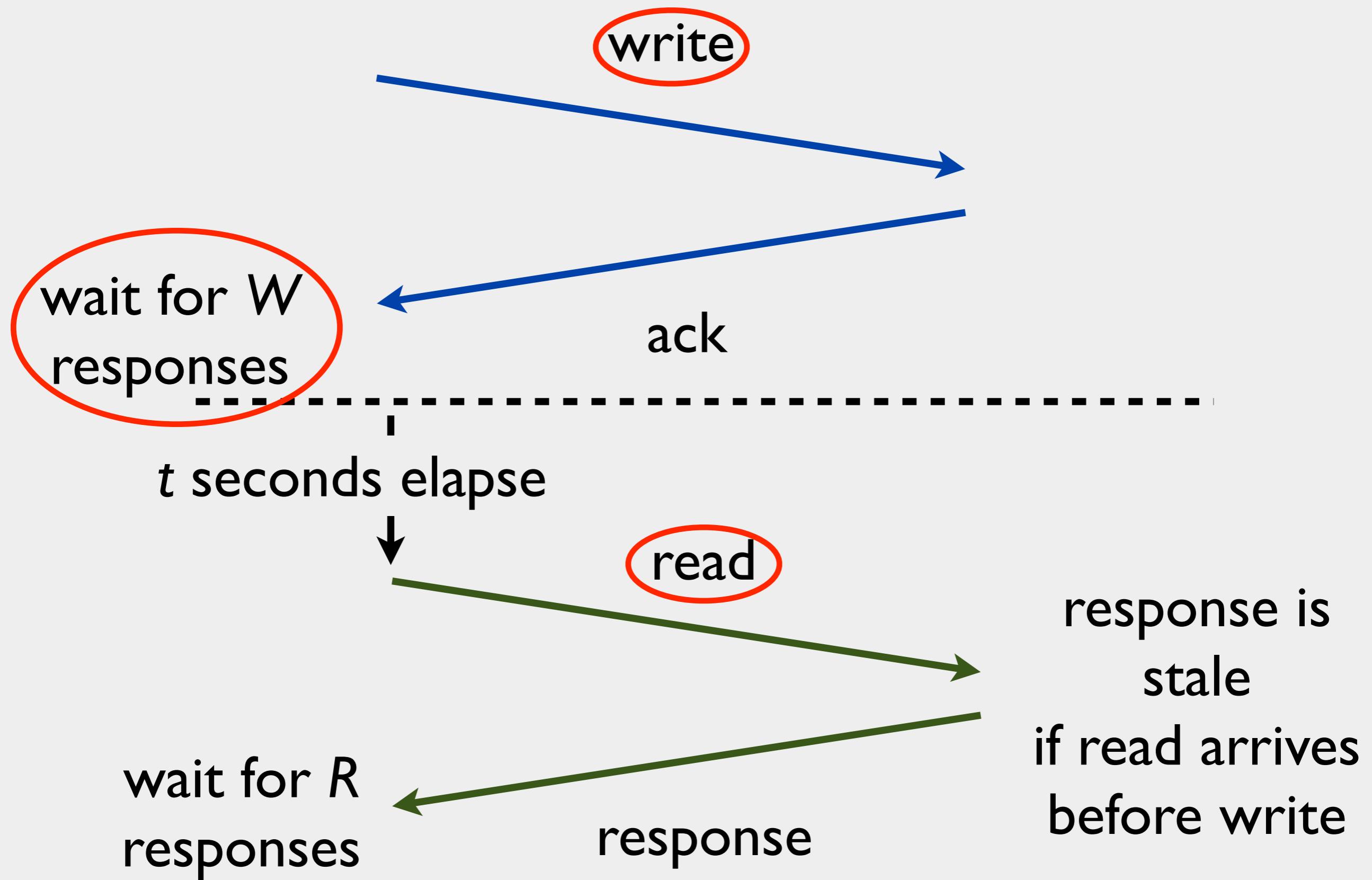
Replica



# Coordinator

once per replica

# Replica



T  
I  
M  
E



N=2

T  
I  
M  
E

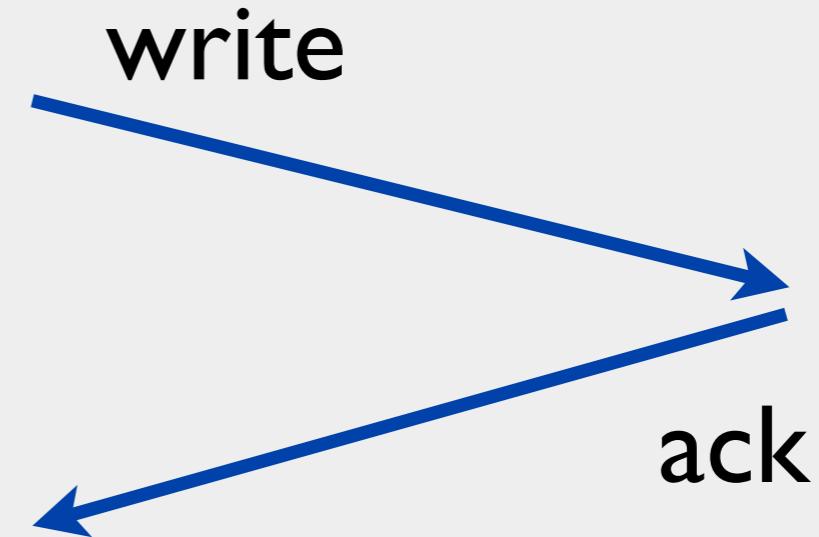
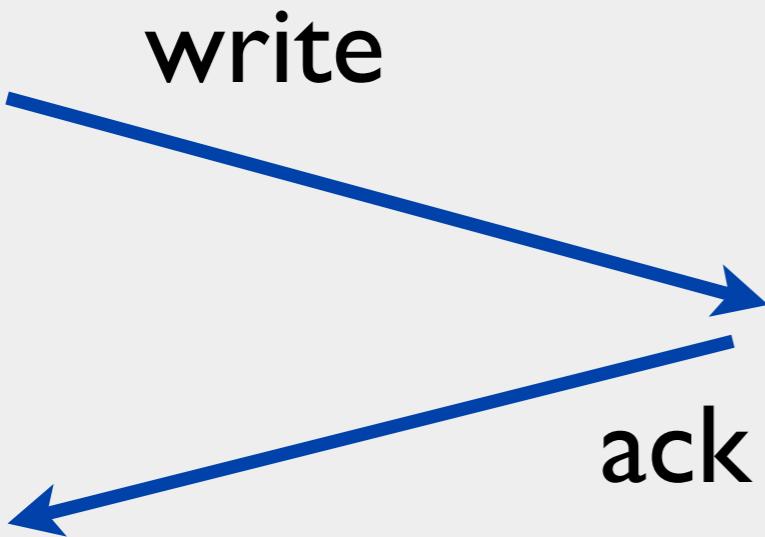
write

write



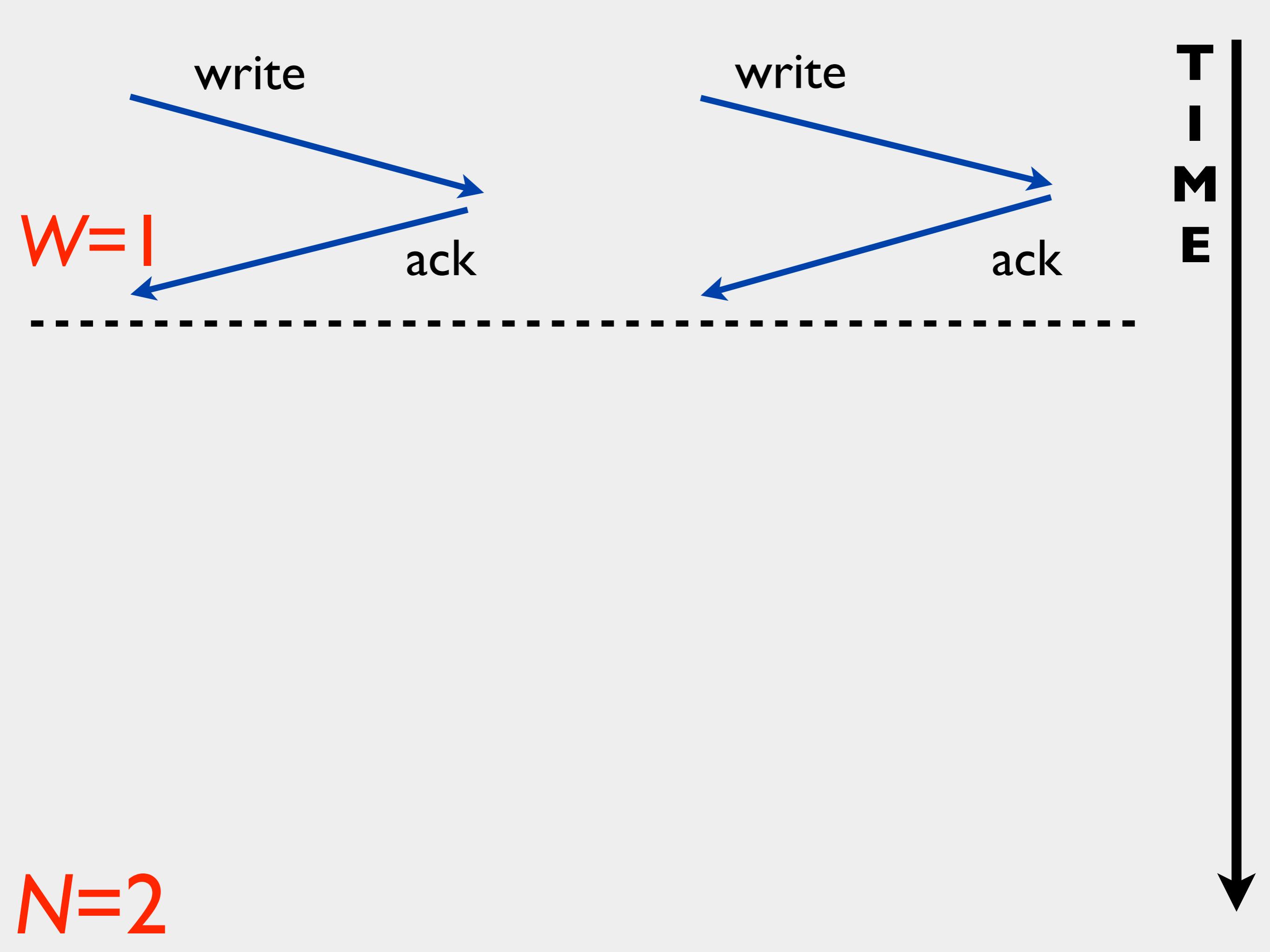
N=2

T  
I  
M  
E



N=2

T  
I  
M  
E



write

$W=1$

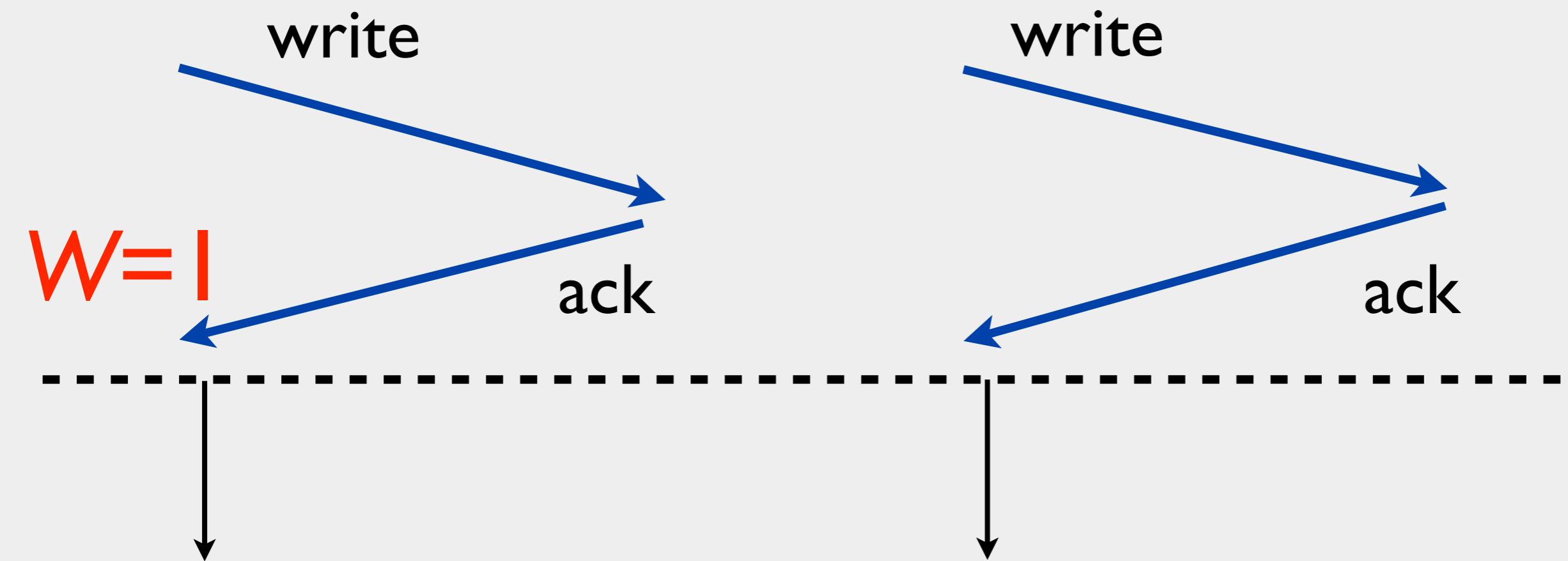
ack

write

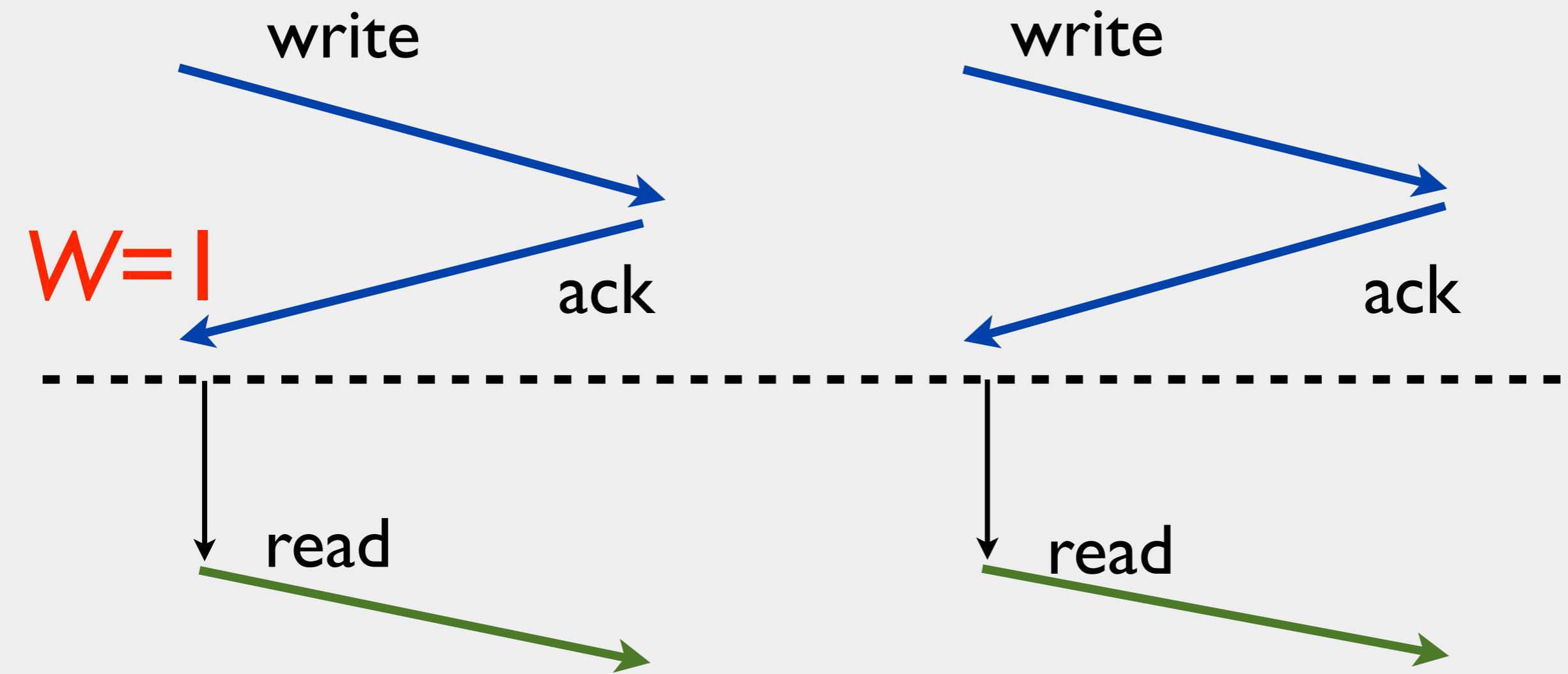
ack

$N=2$

TIME

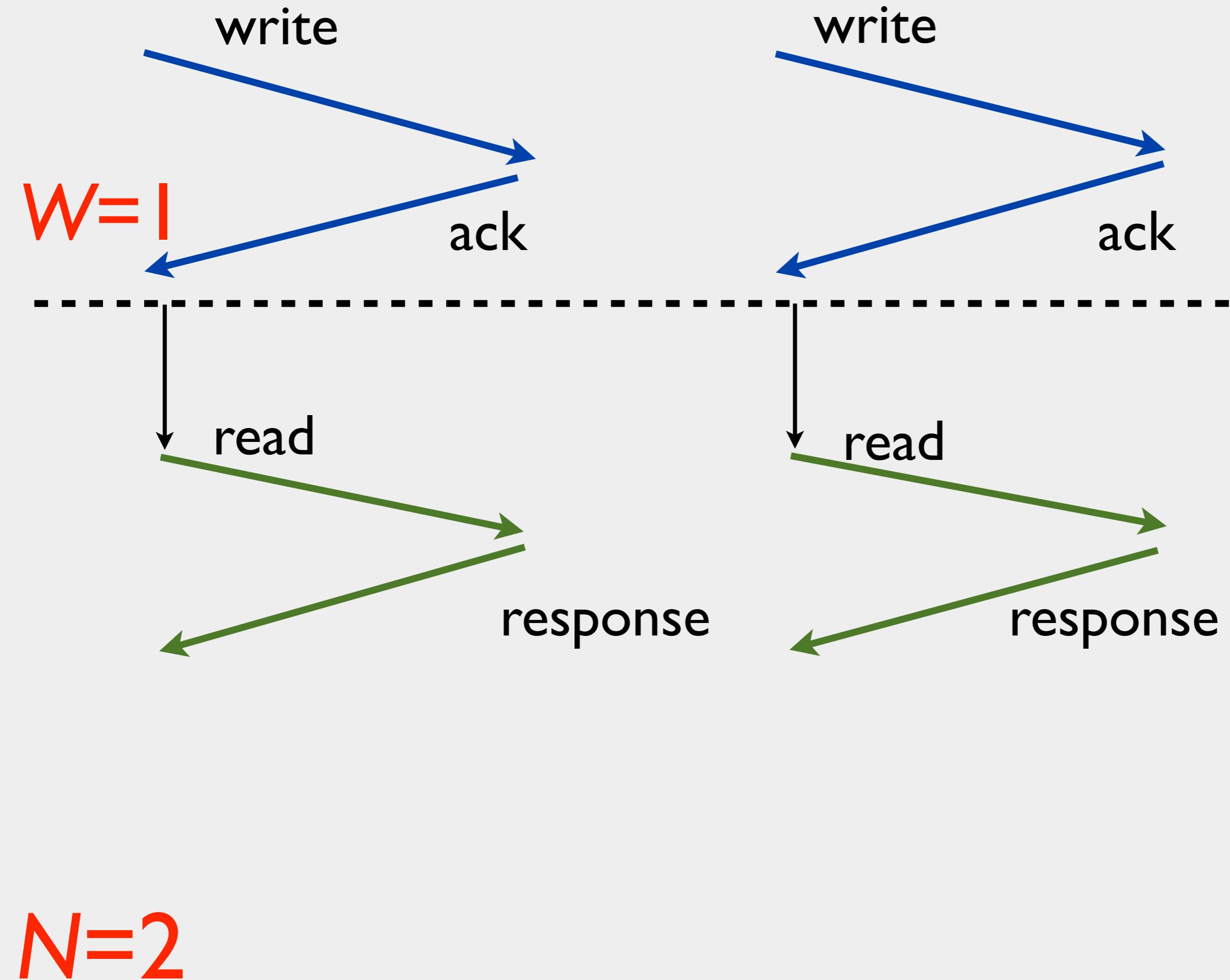


TIME



N=2

T  
I  
M  
E



T  
I  
M  
E

A sequence diagram illustrating two parallel operations over time. The timeline is indicated by a vertical arrow on the right labeled 'TIME'. The diagram shows two sets of interactions between two entities.

write

write

$W=1$

ack

ack

read

read

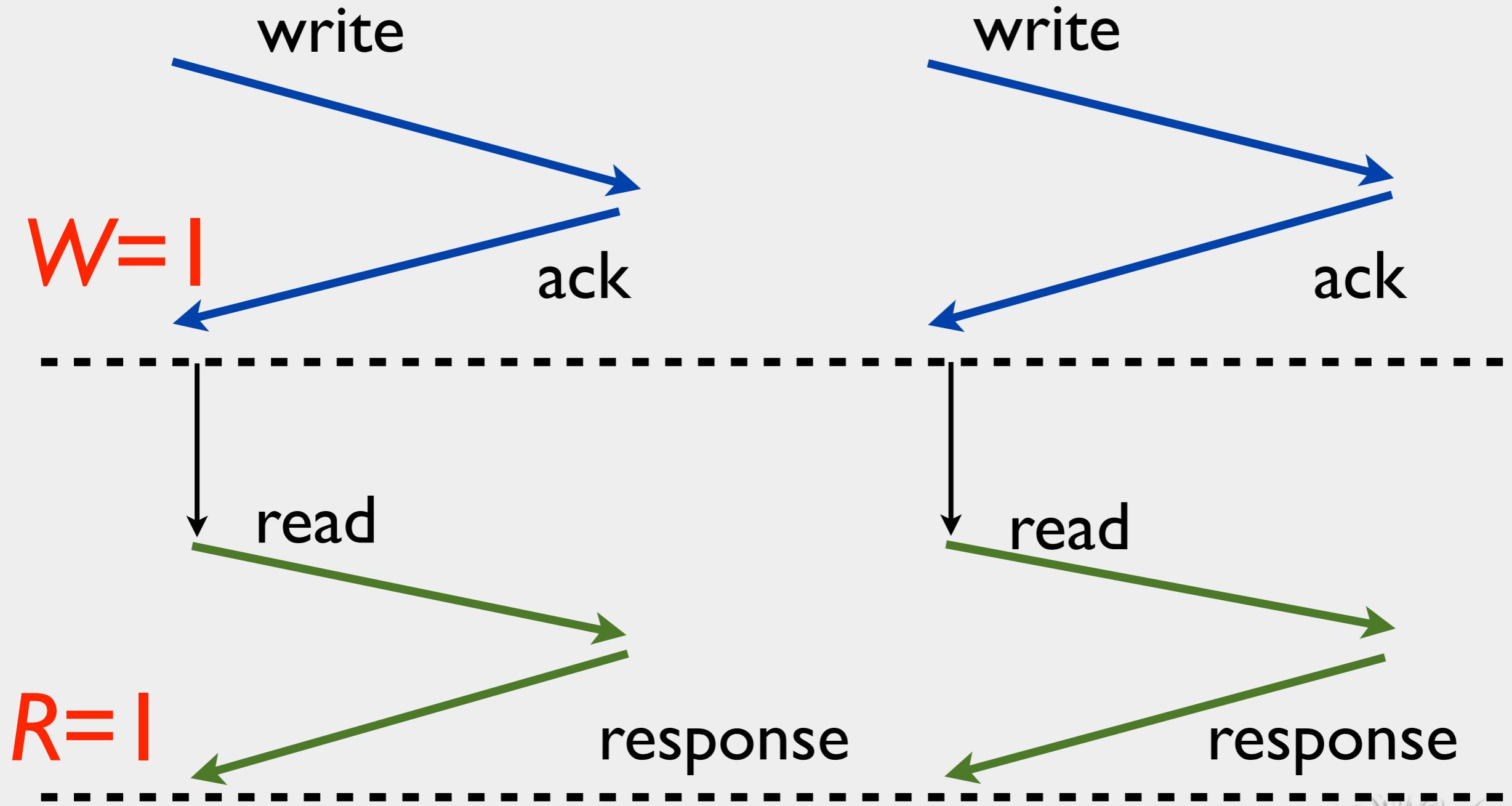
$R=1$

response

response

$N=2$

T  
I  
M  
E



$N=2$

T  
I  
M  
E



N=2

T  
I  
M  
E

write

write

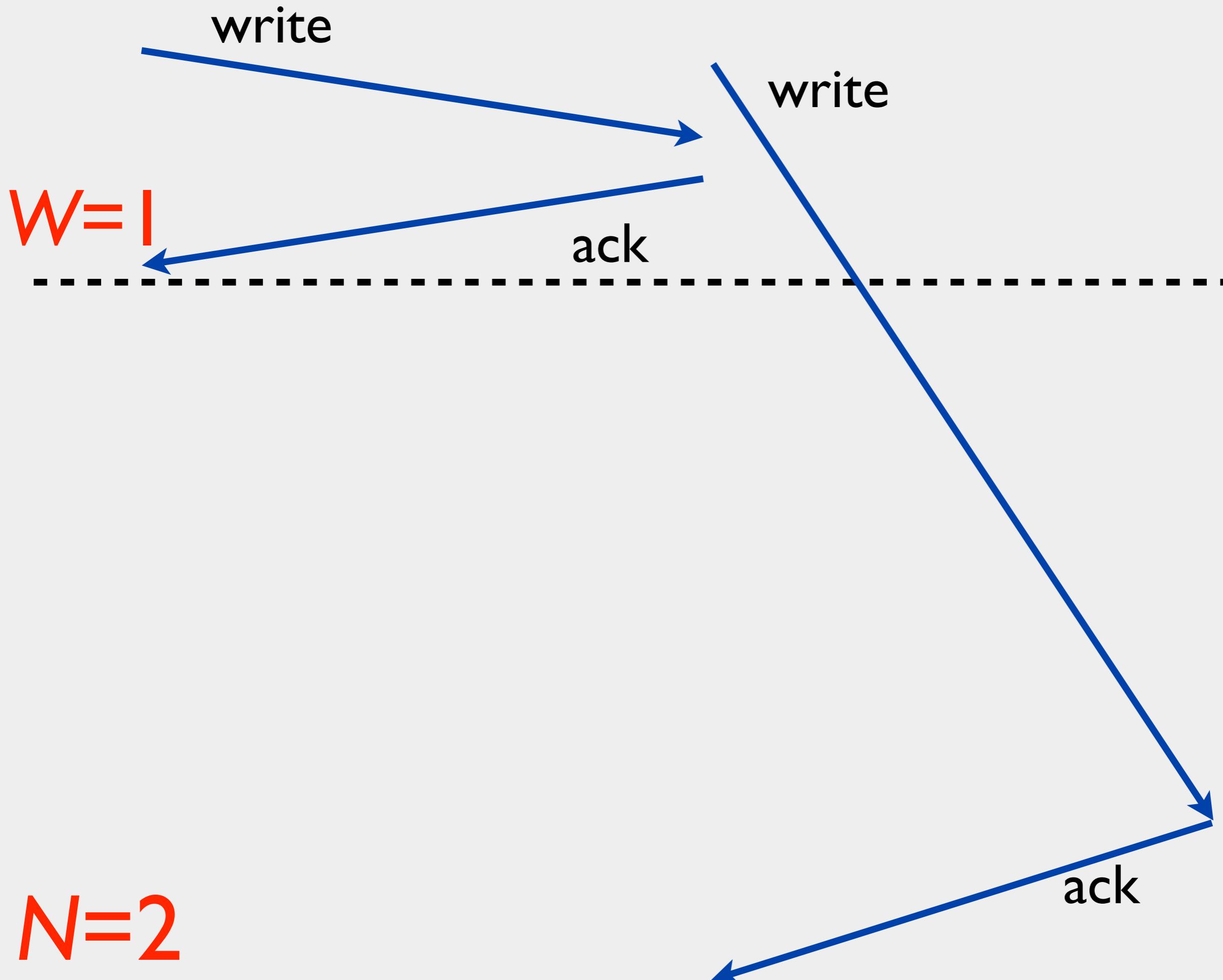
N=2

T  
I  
M  
E

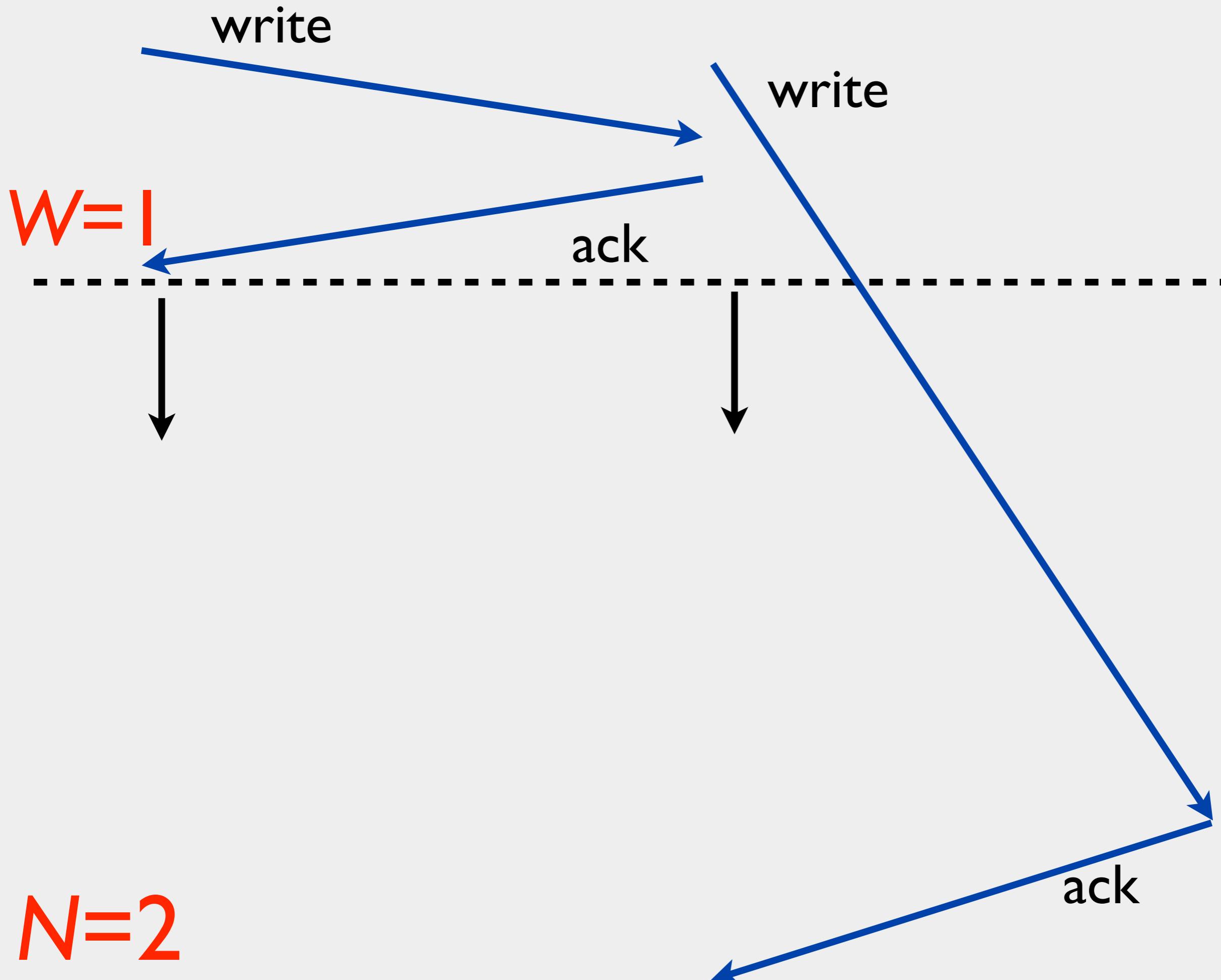
The diagram illustrates a sequence of events over time. It features a vertical black arrow on the right labeled 'TIME' pointing downwards, indicating the progression of time from top to bottom. Two horizontal blue arrows represent the flow of data. The first pair of arrows, located at the top left, consists of a downward-pointing arrow labeled 'write' and an upward-pointing arrow labeled 'ack'. The second pair of arrows, located at the bottom right, also consists of a downward-pointing arrow labeled 'write' and an upward-pointing arrow labeled 'ack'. The labels 'write' and 'ack' are in black text. The entire sequence is set against a light gray background.

N=2

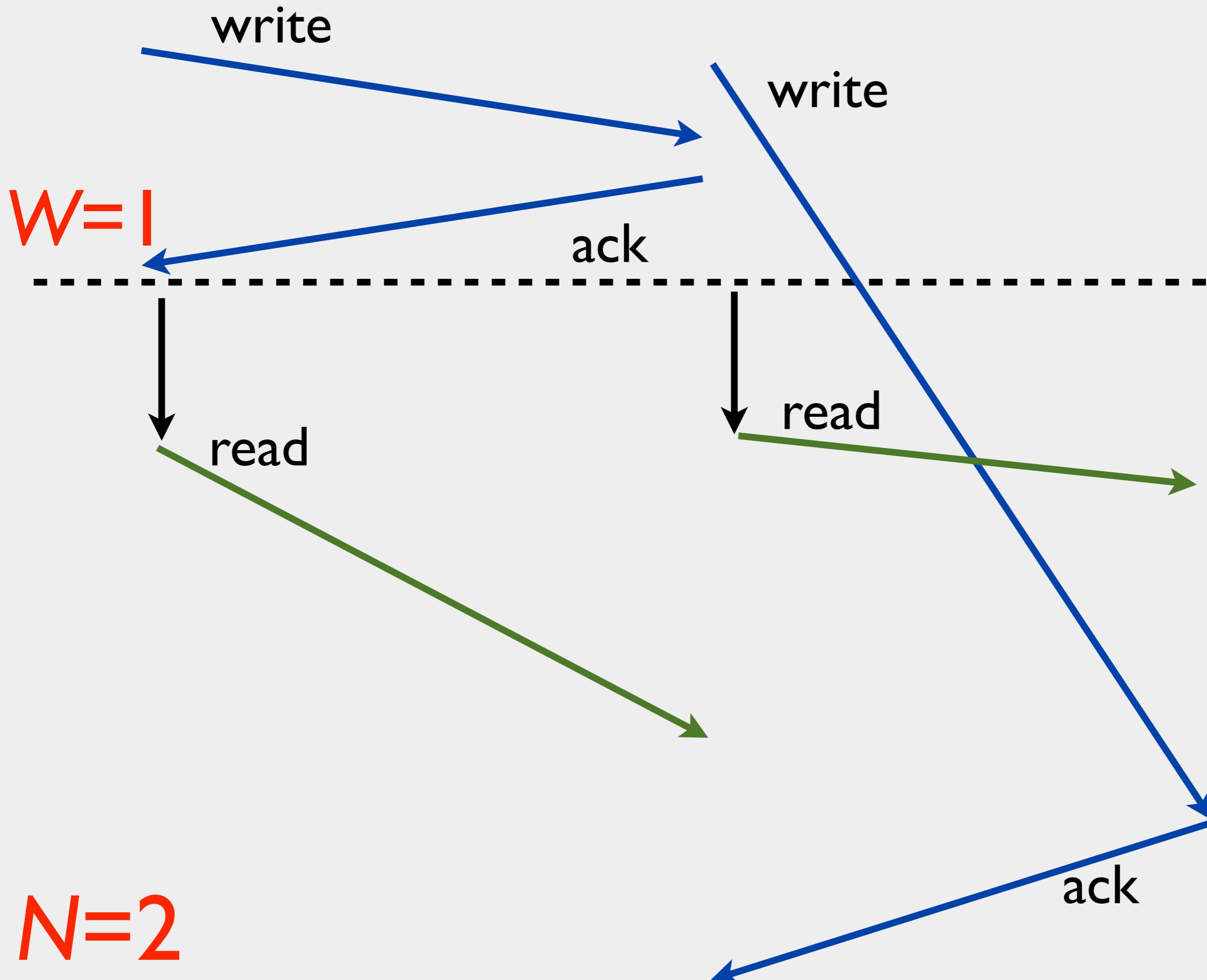
T  
I  
M  
E



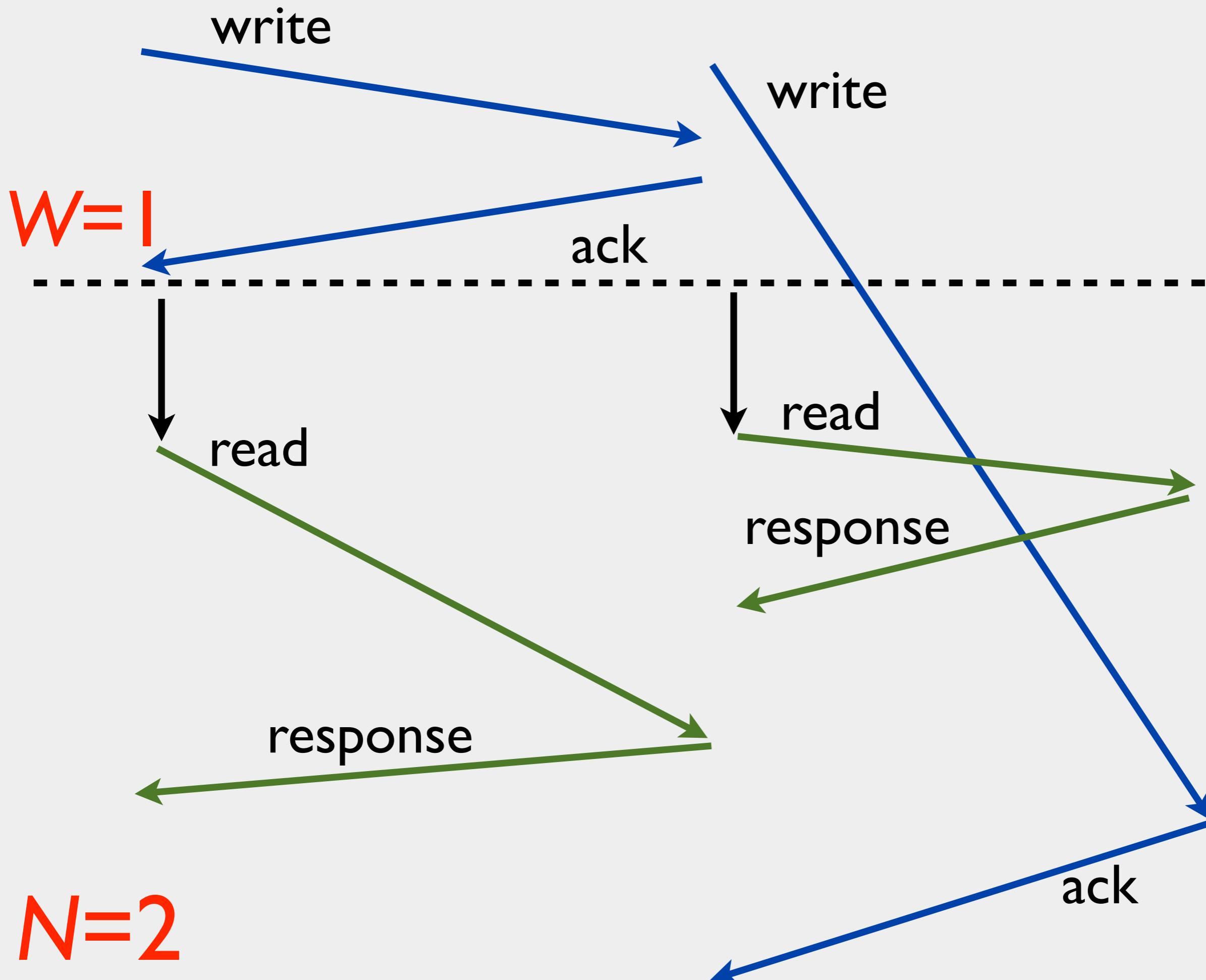
T  
I  
M  
E



T  
I  
M  
E



T  
I  
M  
E



T  
I  
M  
E

$W=1$

$R=1$

$N=2$

write

write

ack

read

read

response

response

ack

T  
I  
M  
E

$W=1$

write

ack

write

read

read

$R=1$

response

response

bad

ack

$N=2$



T  
I  
M  
E

$W=1$

write

ack

write

read

read

$R=1$

response

response

bad

ack

$N=2$



T  
I  
M  
E

$W=1$

write

ack

write

read

read

$R=1$

response

response

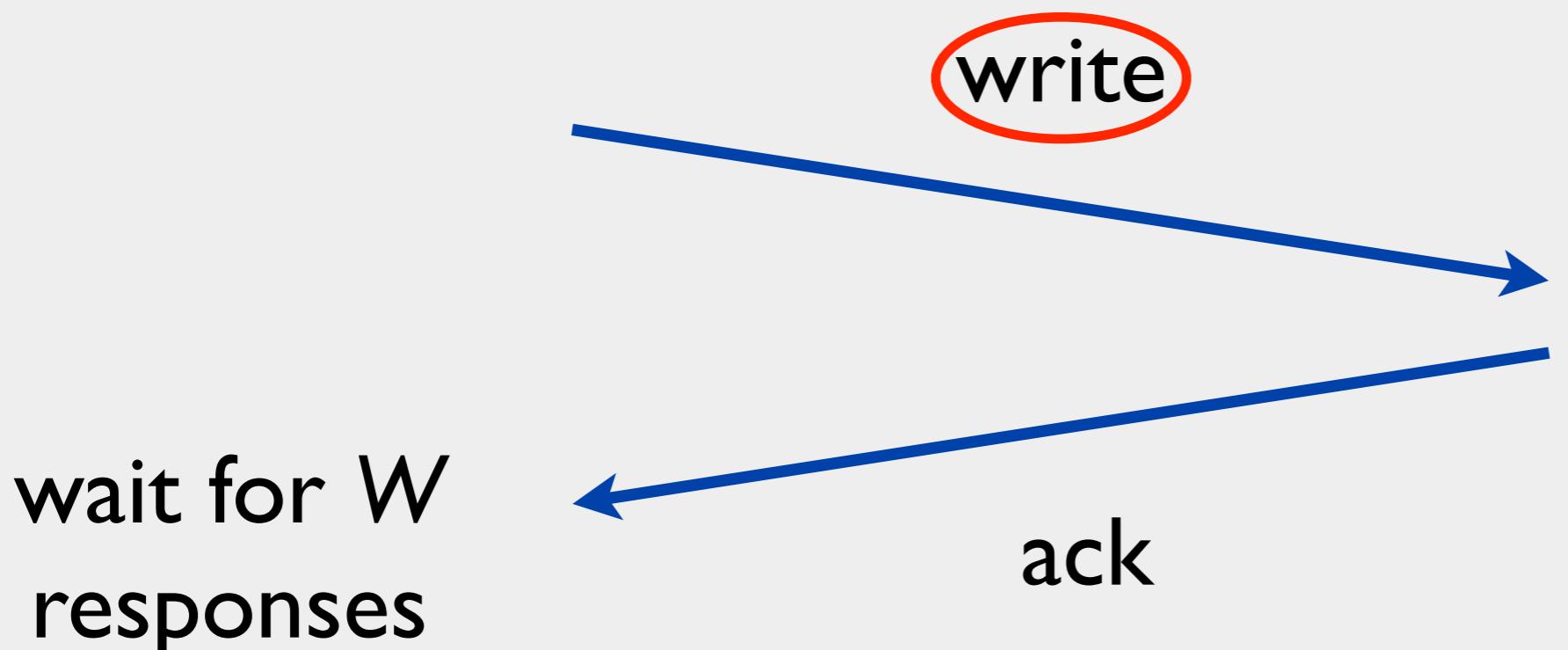
bad

$N=2$

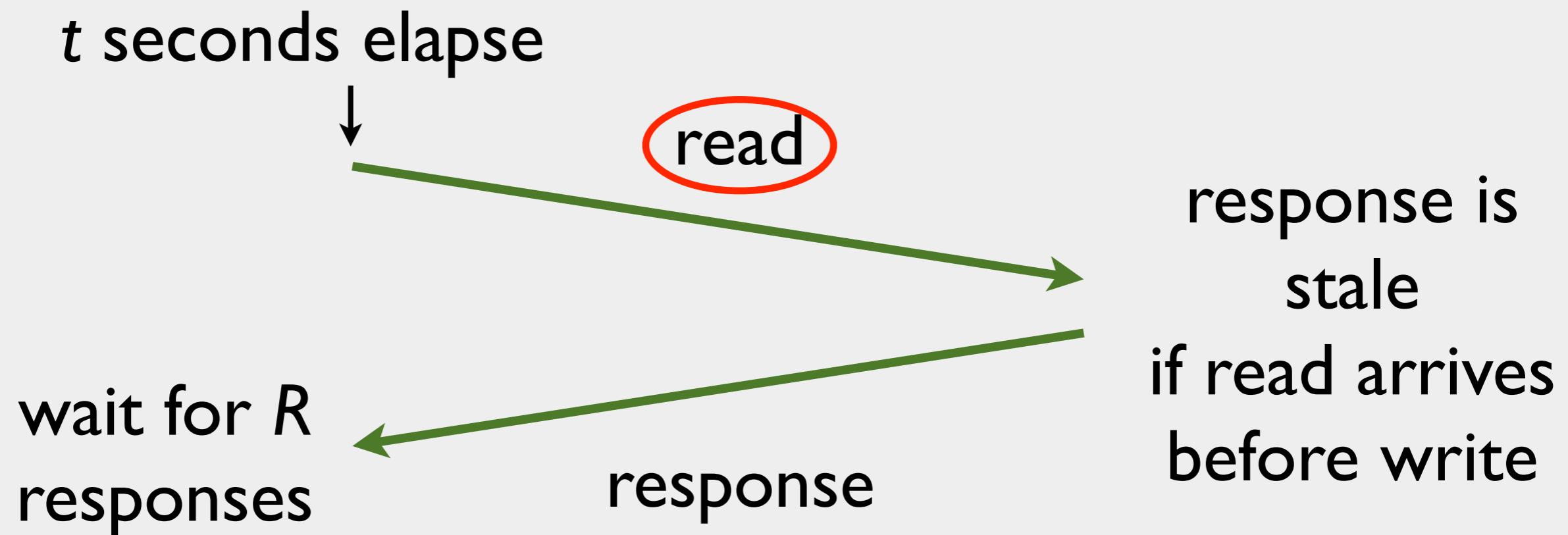
ack



Coordinator    *once per replica*



Replica



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R=1$



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

(“key”, 1)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



Coordinator

$R=1$

(“key”, 1)



R1 (“key”, 2)

R2 (“key”, 1)

R3 (“key”, 1)

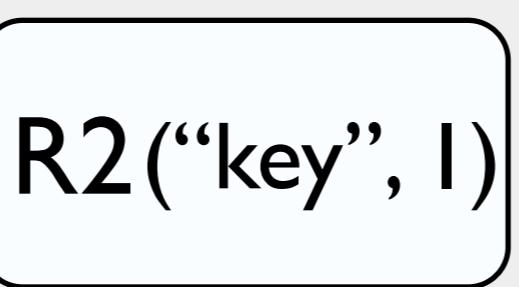
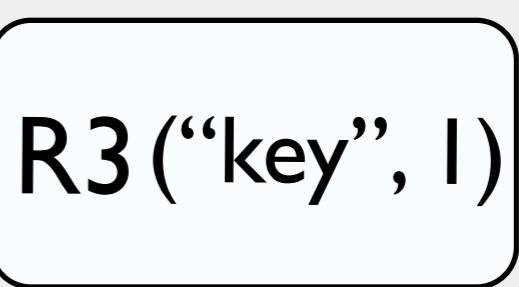
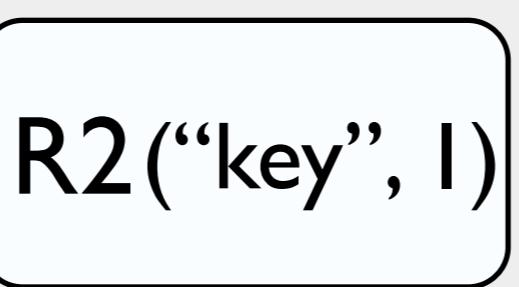
R3 replied before  
last write arrived!

write(“key”, 2)

Coordinator

$W=1$

ack(“key”, 2)



(“key”, 1)

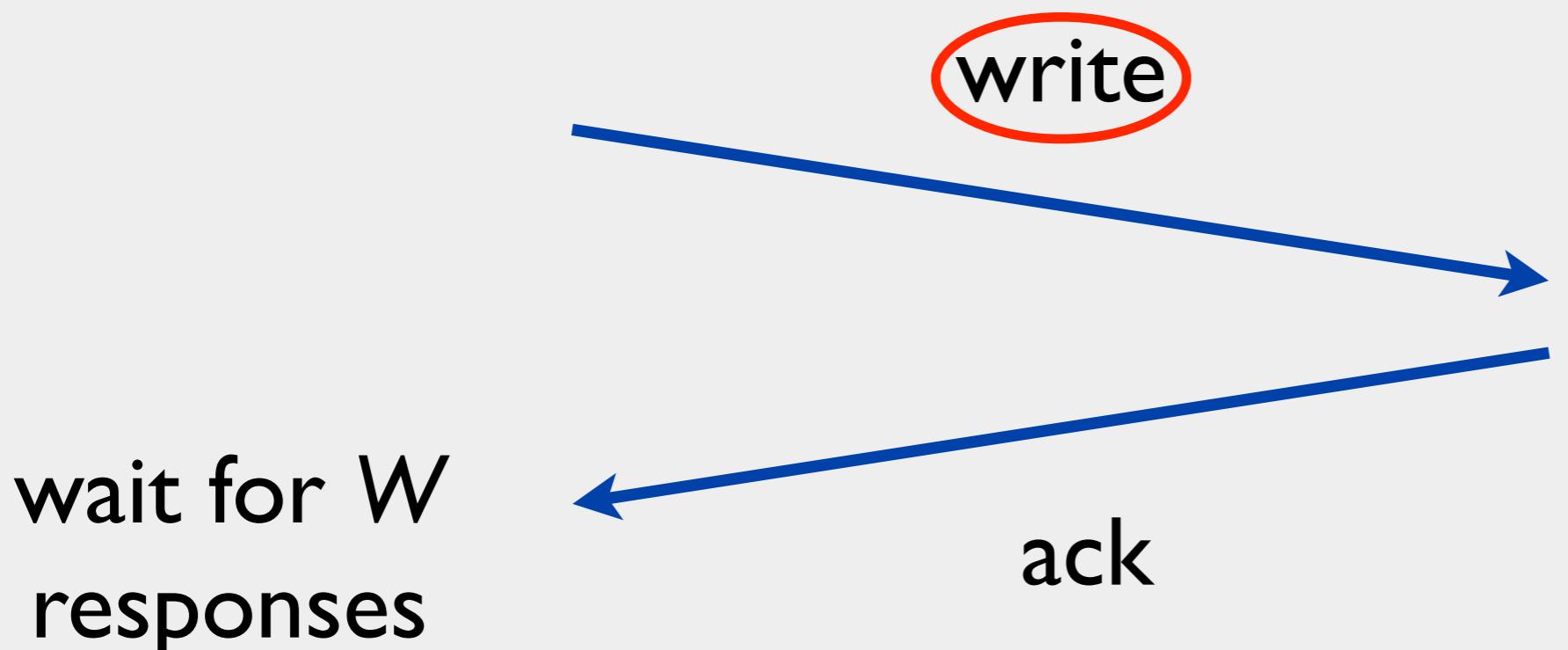
Coordinator

$R=1$

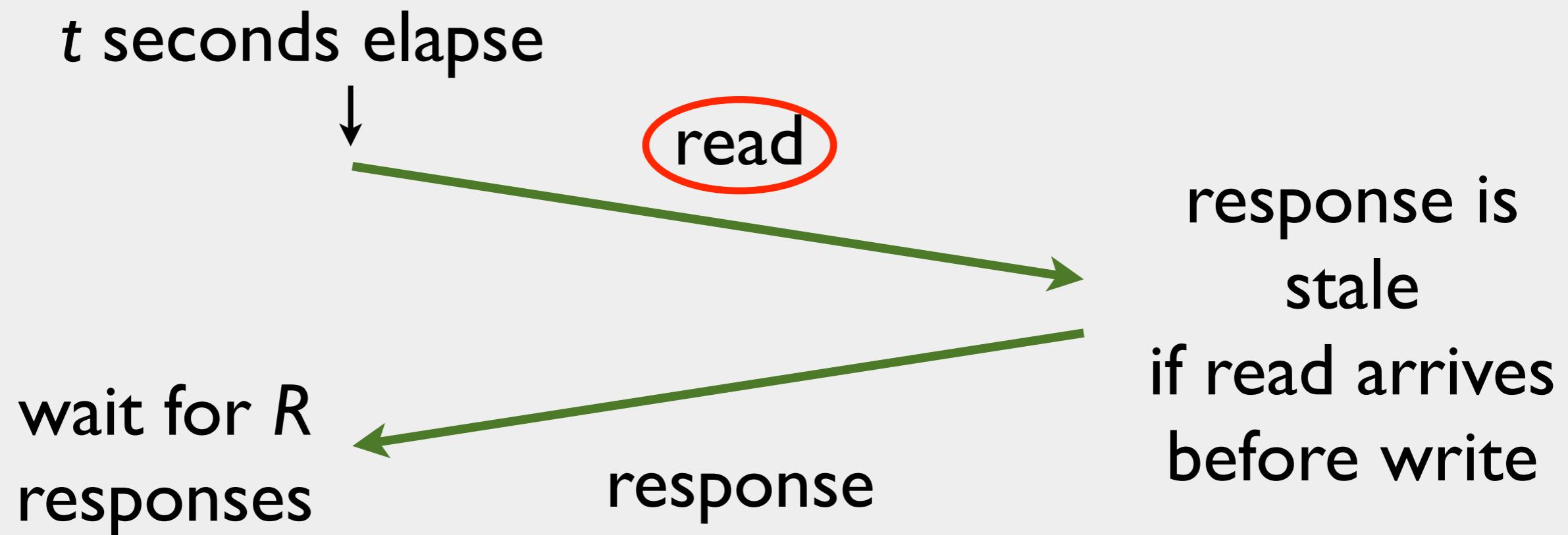
(“key”, 1)



Coordinator    *once per replica*

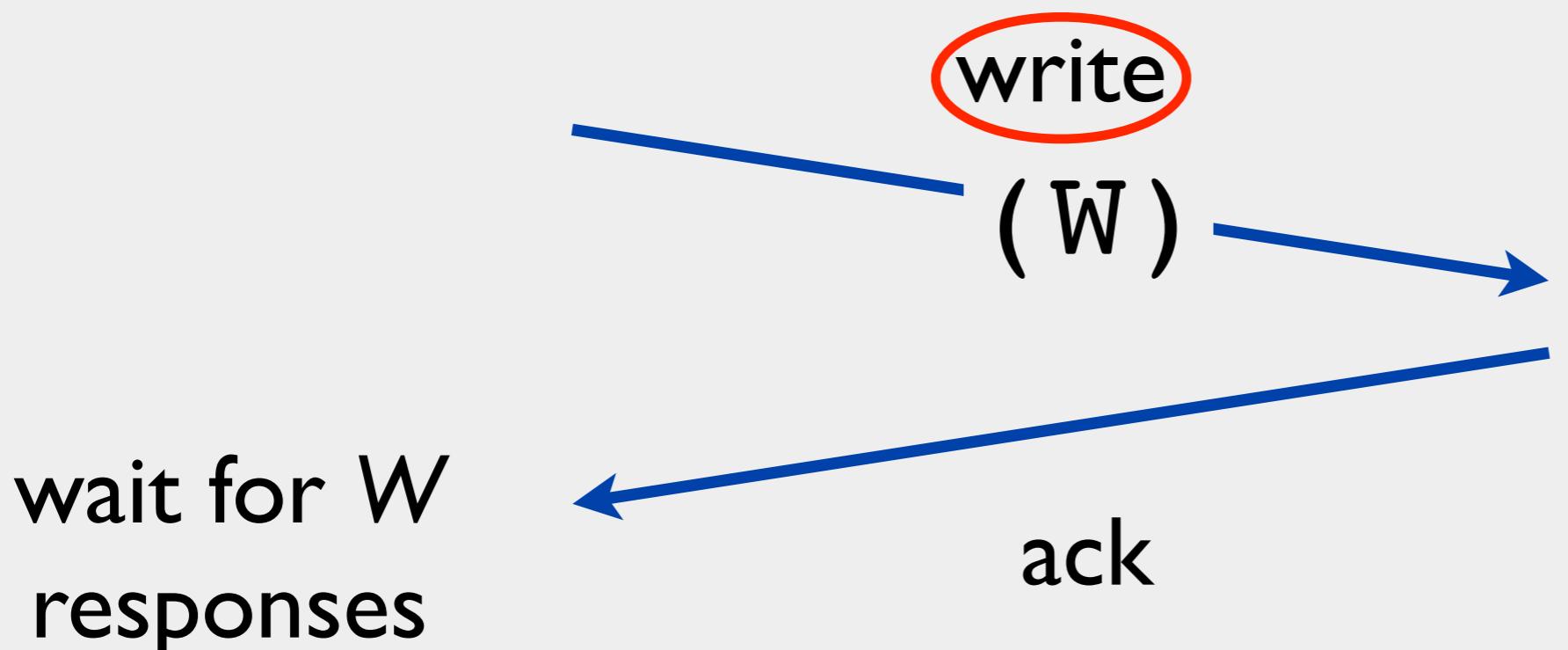


Replica



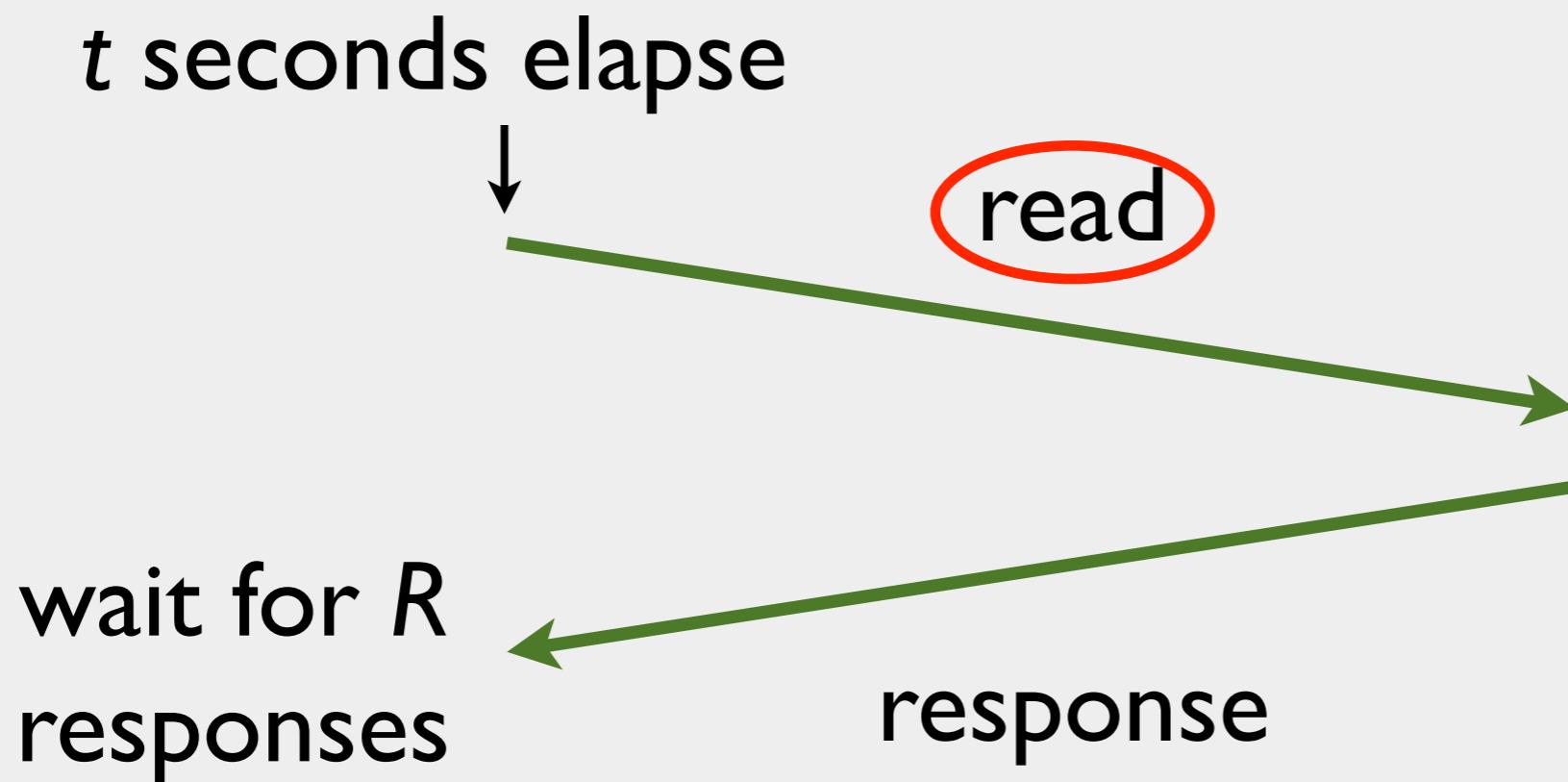
# Coordinator

once per replica



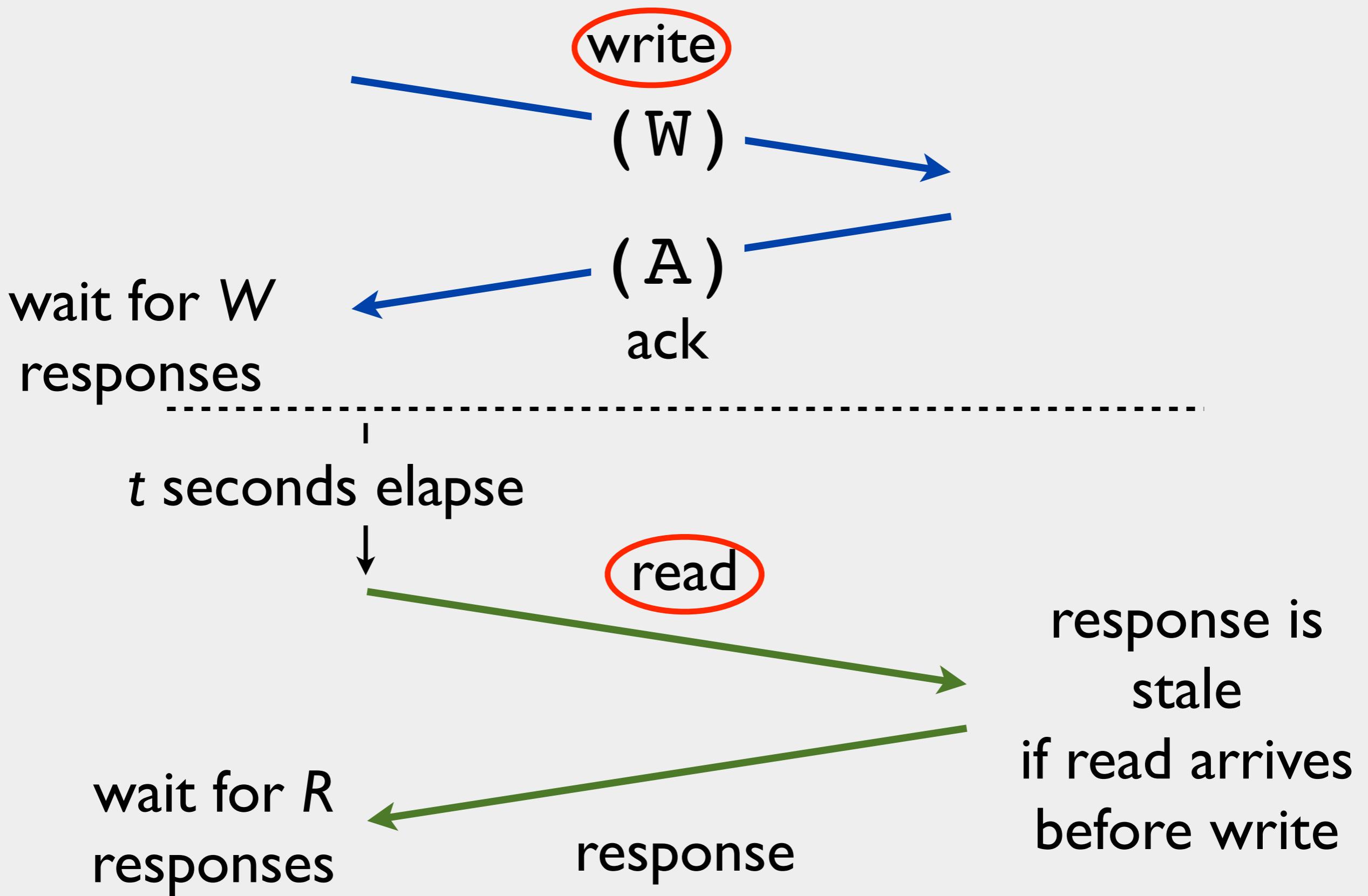
# Replica

response is stale  
if read arrives before write



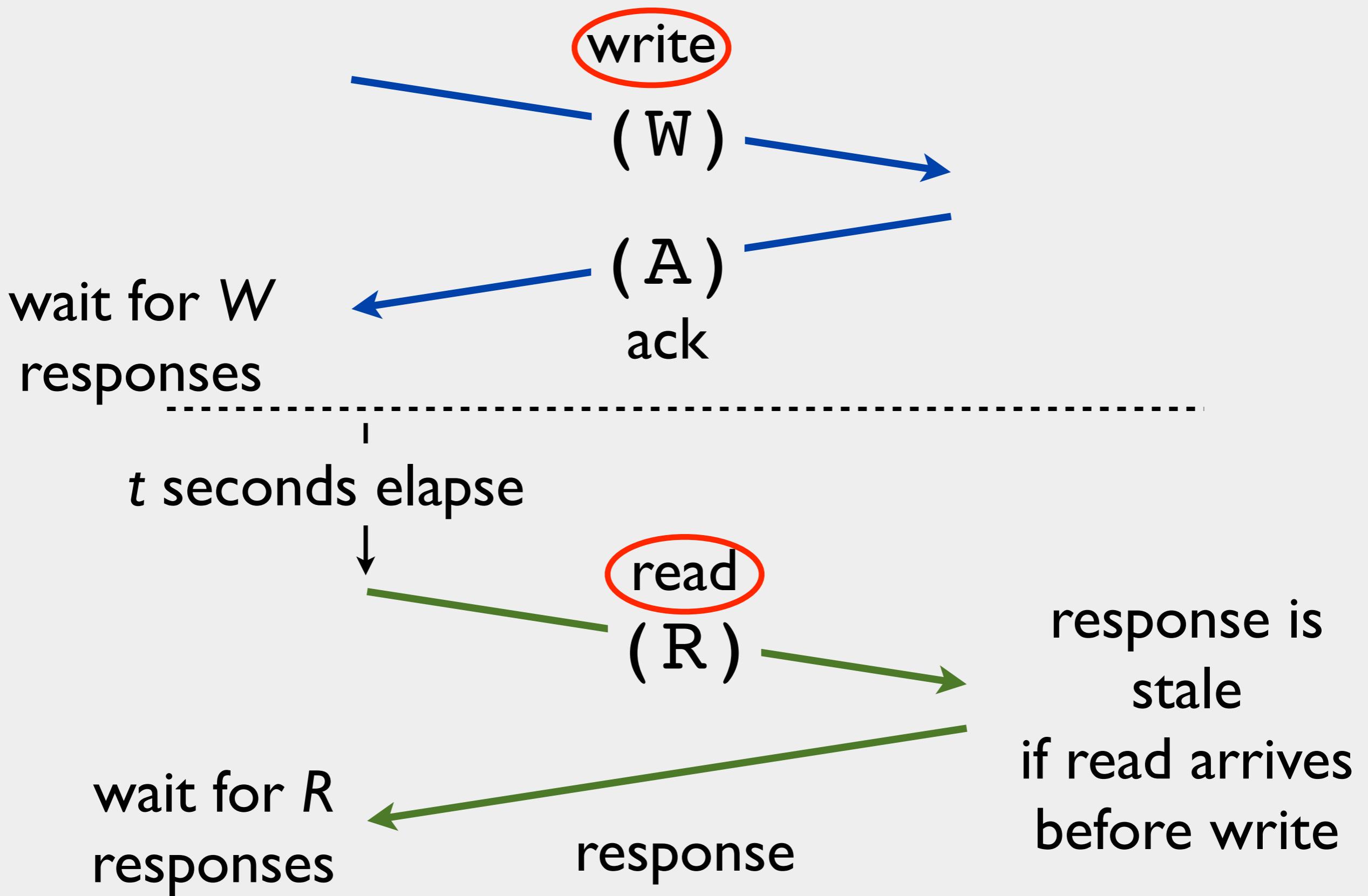
# Coordinator

once per replica



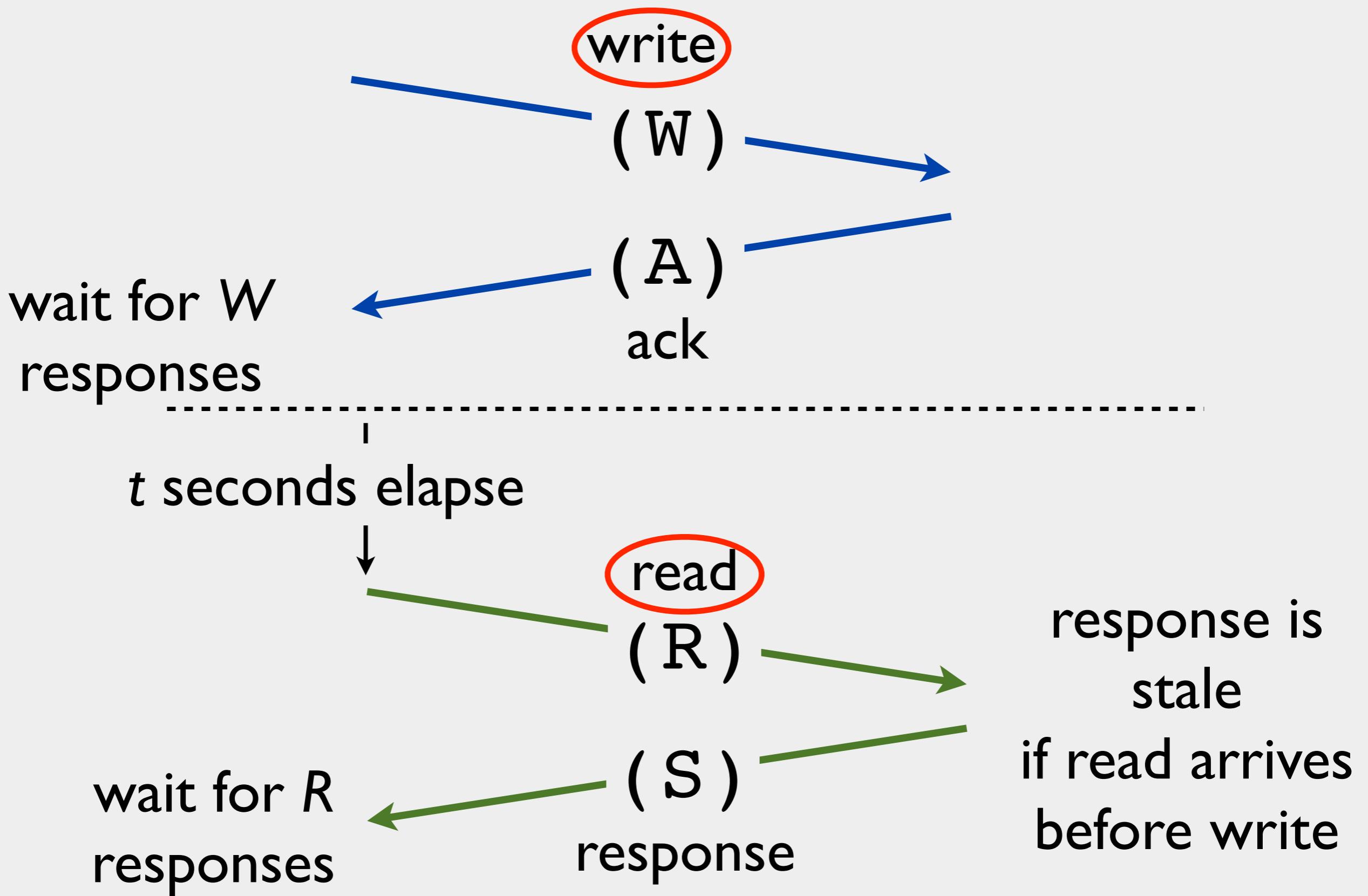
# Coordinator

once per replica



# Coordinator

once per replica



Solving WARS: hard  
Monte Carlo methods: **easy**

To use WARS:

gather latency data

run simulation

Cassandra implementation validated  
simulations; available on Github

# How eventual?

*t*-visibility: consistent reads  
with probability  $p$  after  
after  $t$  seconds

key: WARS model

need: latencies

# How consistent?

What happens if I don't wait?

Probability of reading later older than  $k$  versions is **exponentially reduced** by  $k$

$\Pr(\text{reading latest write}) = 99\%$

$\Pr(\text{reading one of last two writes}) = 99.9\%$

$\Pr(\text{reading one of last three writes}) = 99.99\%$

# Riak Defaults

$N=3$

$R=2$

$w=2$

$2+2 > 3$

*Phew, I'm safe!*

*...but what's my*

*latency cost?*

Should I change?

LinkedIn  
150M+ users  
built and uses Voldemort



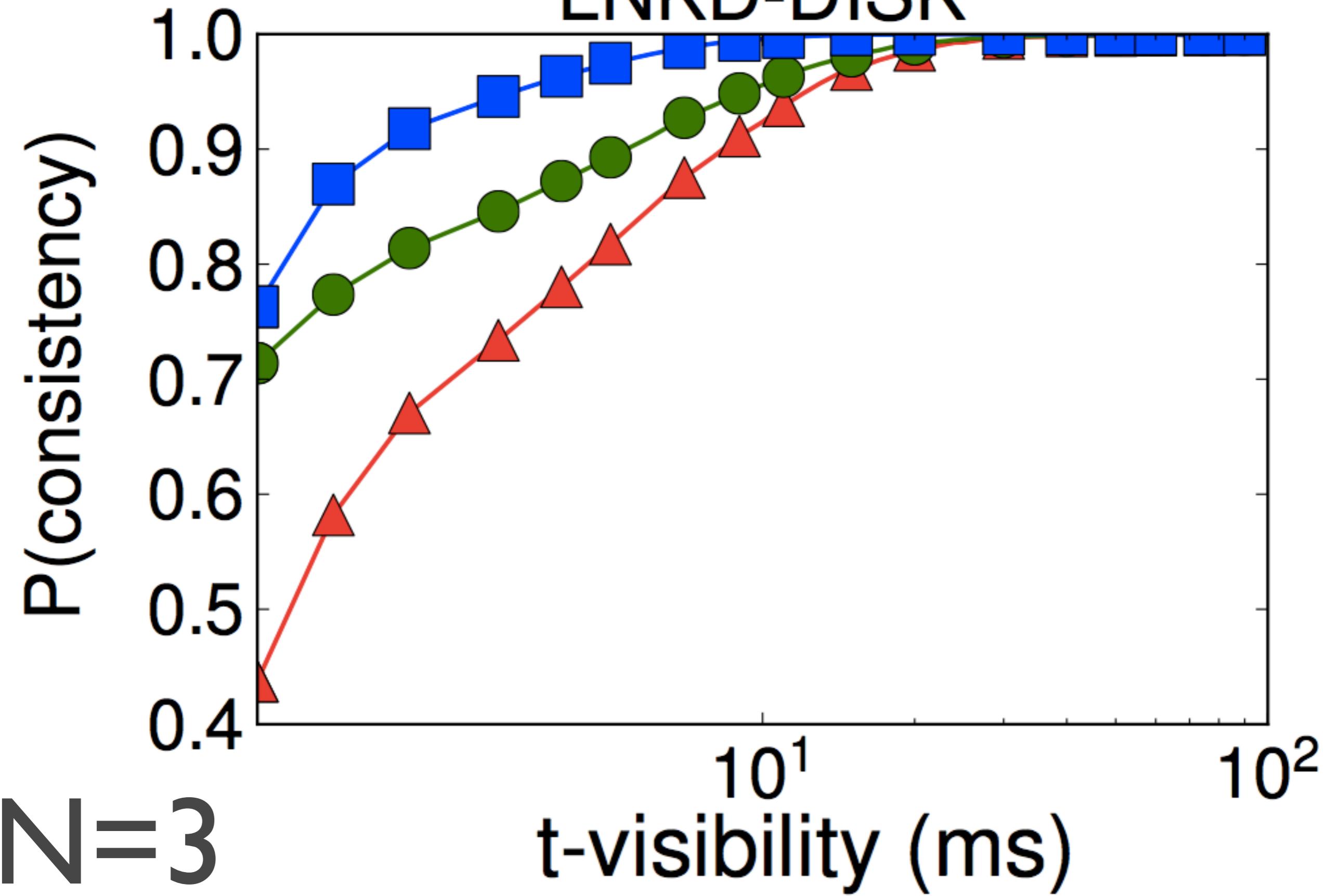
Yammer  
100K+ companies  
uses Riak



Thanks to @strlen and @coda:  
production latencies

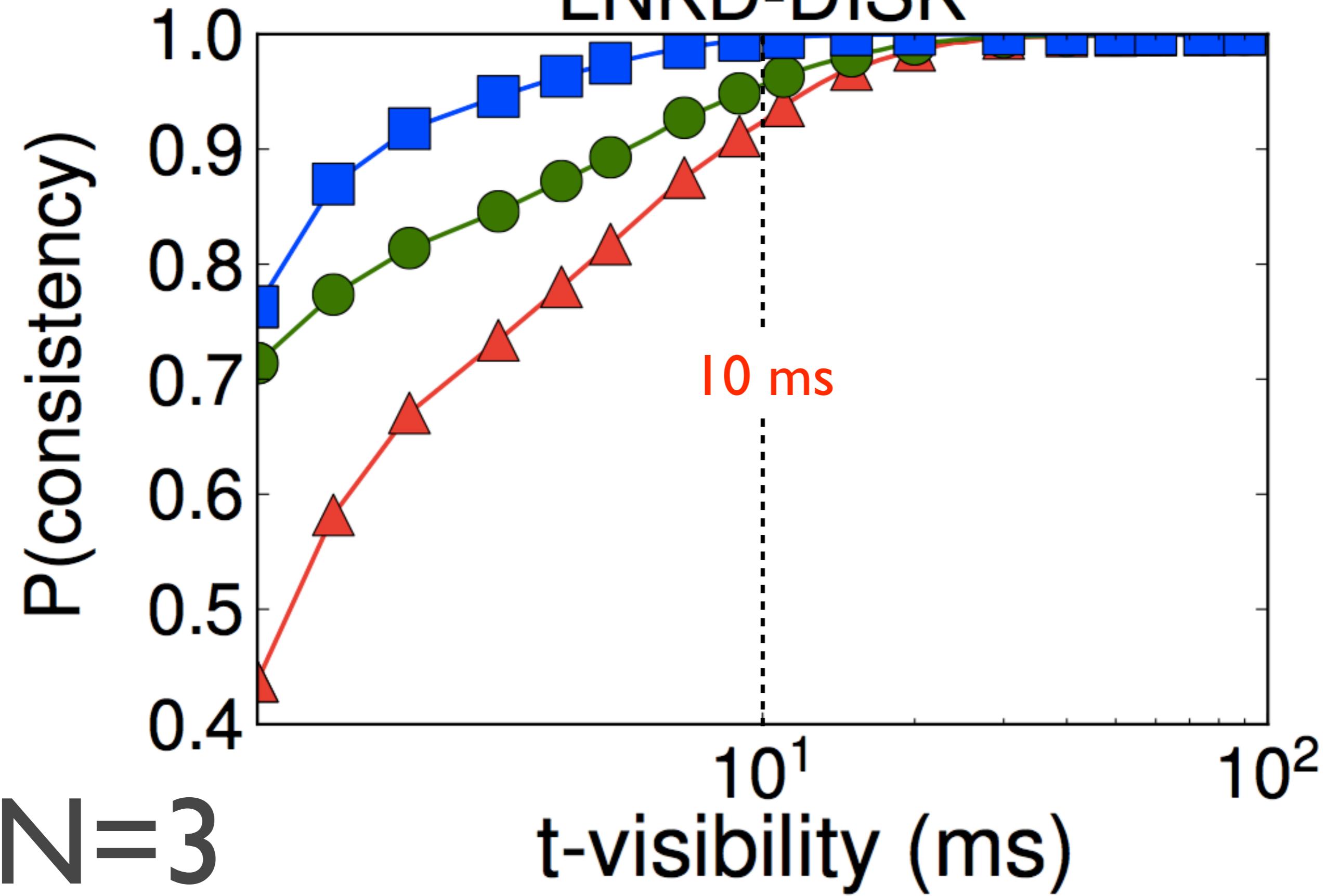
—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

# LNKD-DISK



—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

# LNKD-DISK



# LNKD-DISK

99.9% consistent reads:

R=2,W=1

**t = 13.6 ms**

Latency: 12.53 ms

100% consistent reads:

R=3,W=1

Latency: 15.01 ms

N=3

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

# LNKD-DISK

16.5%

faster

N=3

99.9% consistent reads:  
R=2,W=1

$t = 13.6 \text{ ms}$

Latency: 12.53 ms

100% consistent reads:

R=3,W=1

Latency: 15.01 ms

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

# LNKD-DISK

16.5%

faster

worthwhile?

N=3

99.9% consistent reads:  
 $R=2, W=1$

$t = 13.6 \text{ ms}$

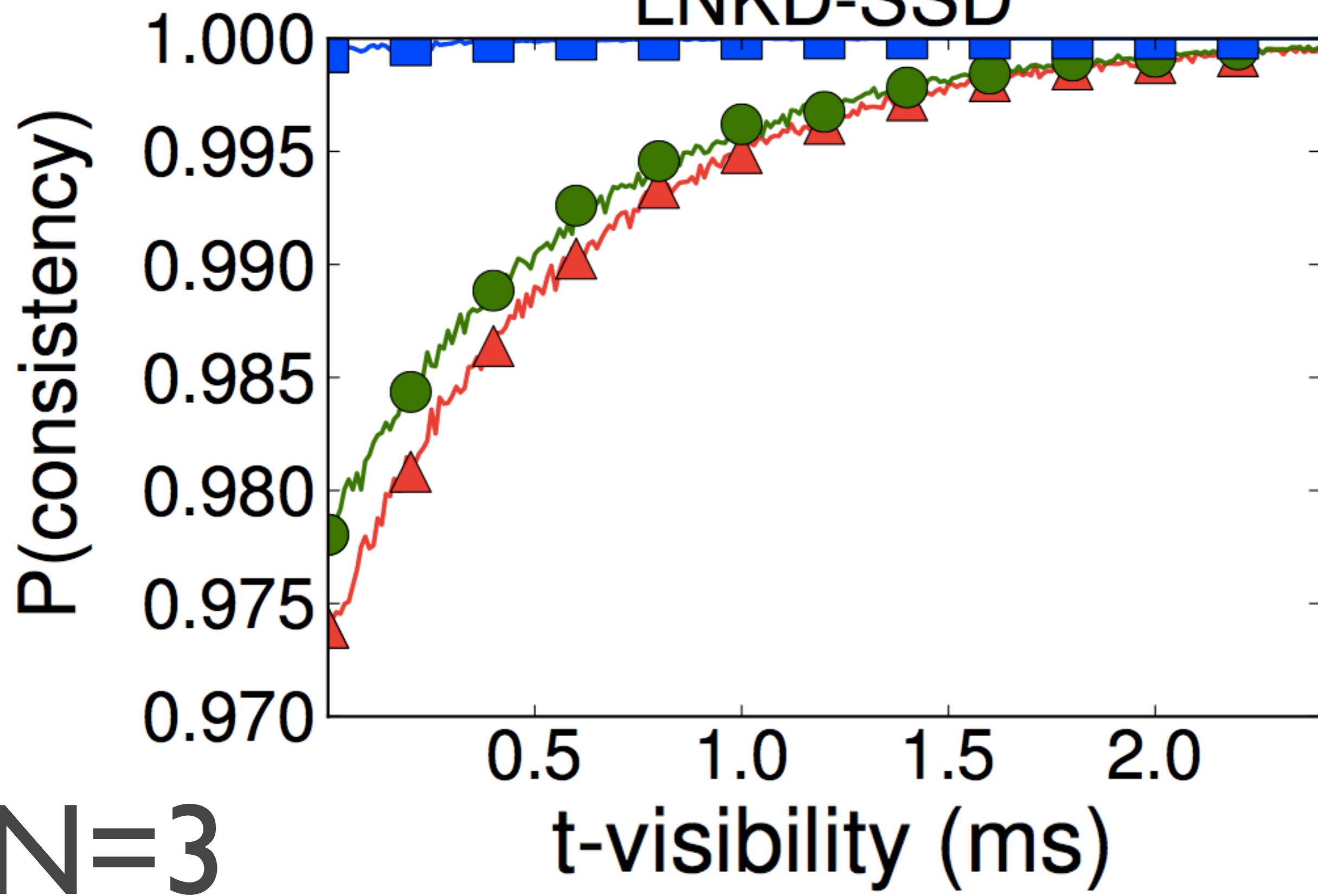
Latency: 12.53 ms  
100% consistent reads:  
 $R=3, W=1$

Latency: 15.01 ms

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

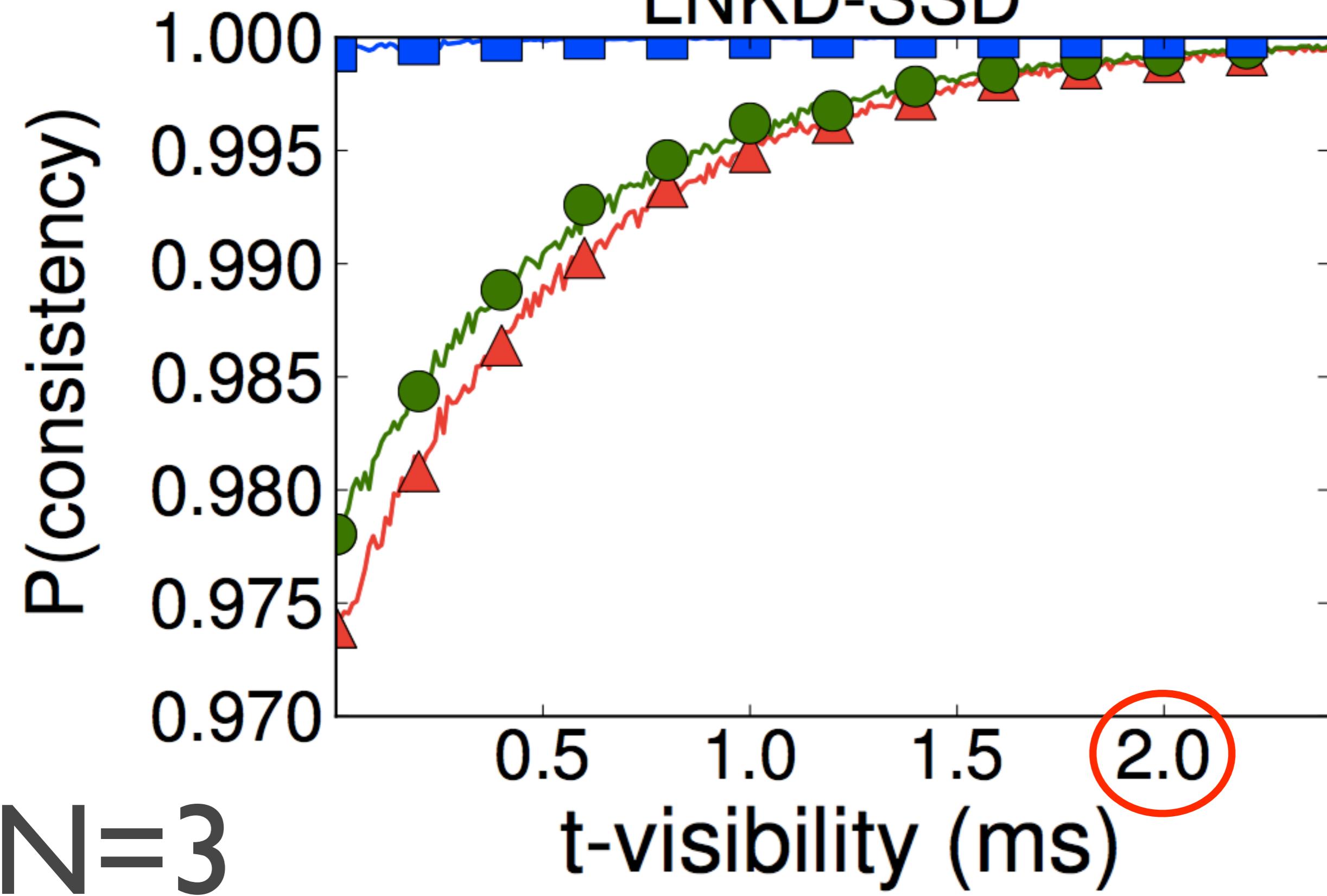
## LNKD-SSD



N=3

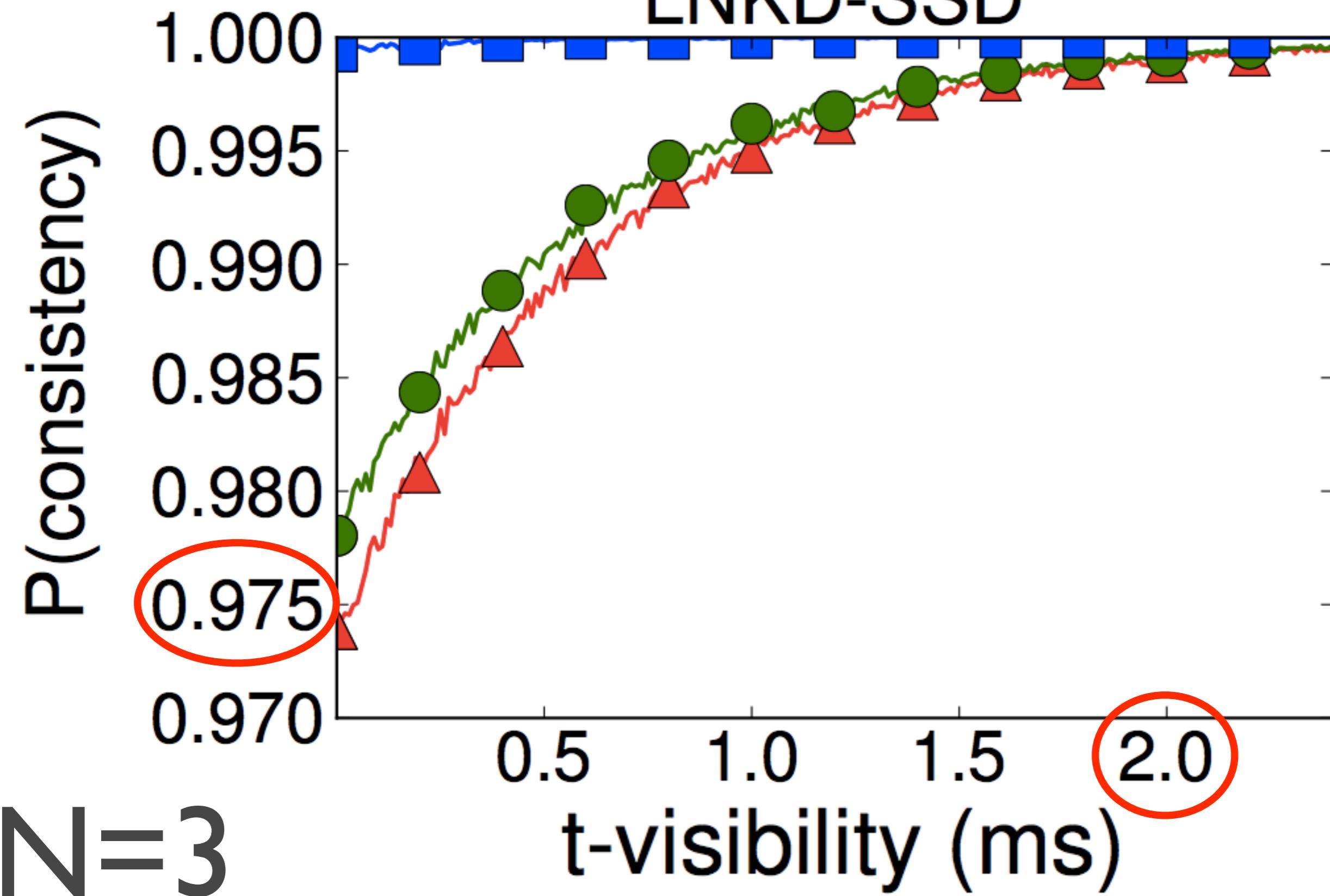
—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

## LNKD-SSD



—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

## LNKD-SSD



# LNKD-SSD

99.9% consistent reads:

R=1,W=1

$t = 1.85 \text{ ms}$

Latency: 1.32 ms

100% consistent reads:

R=3,W=1

Latency: 4.20 ms

N=3

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

# LNKD-SSD

59.5%

faster

N=3

99.9% consistent reads:  
 $R=1, W=1$

$t = 1.85 \text{ ms}$

Latency: 1.32 ms  
100% consistent reads:  
 $R=3, W=1$

Latency: 4.20 ms

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

# LNKD-SSD

59.5%

faster

*better payoff!*

N=3

99.9% consistent reads:  
 $R=1, W=1$

$t = 1.85 \text{ ms}$

Latency: 1.32 ms  
100% consistent reads:

$R=3, W=1$

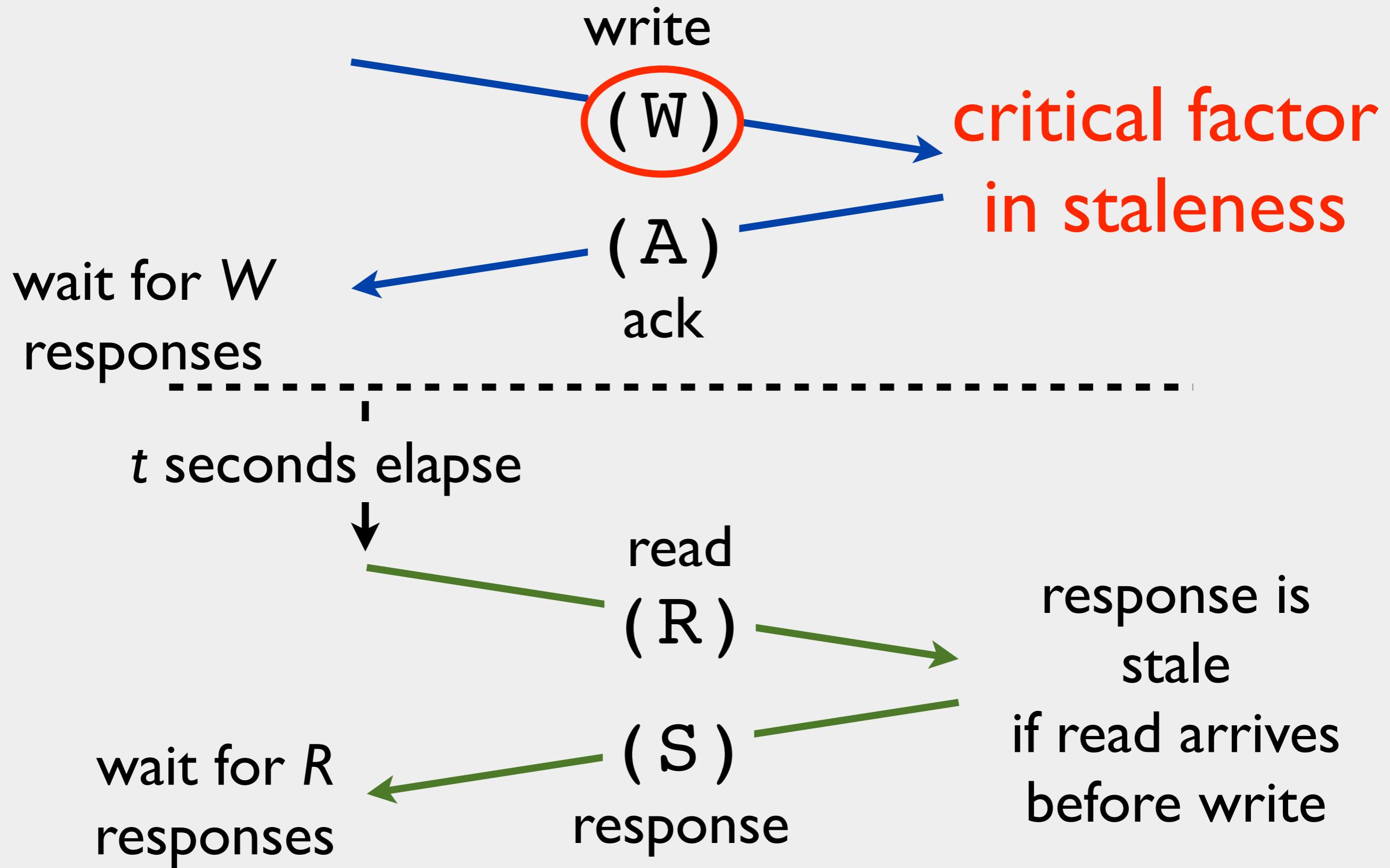
Latency: 4.20 ms

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

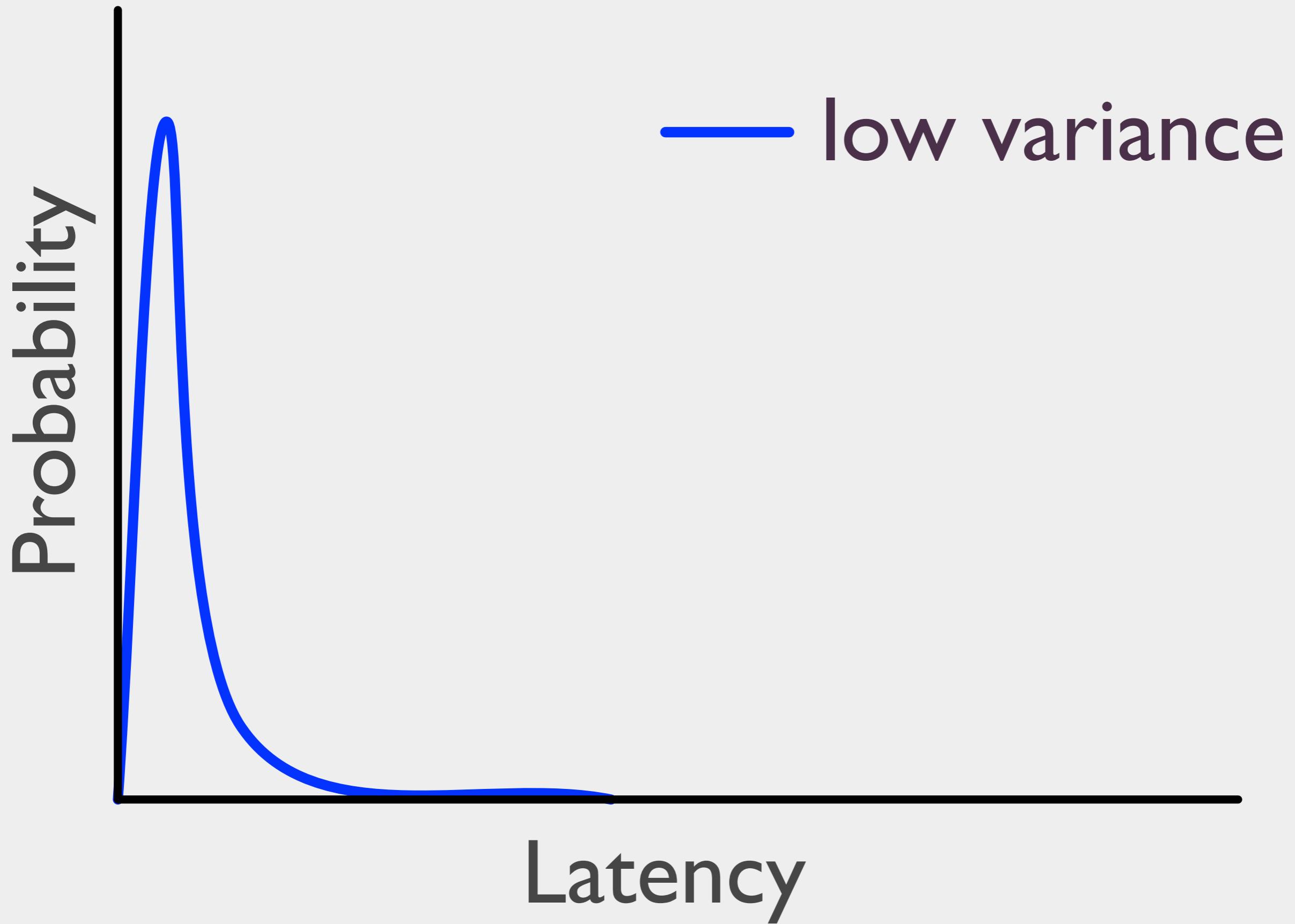
# Coordinator

once per replica

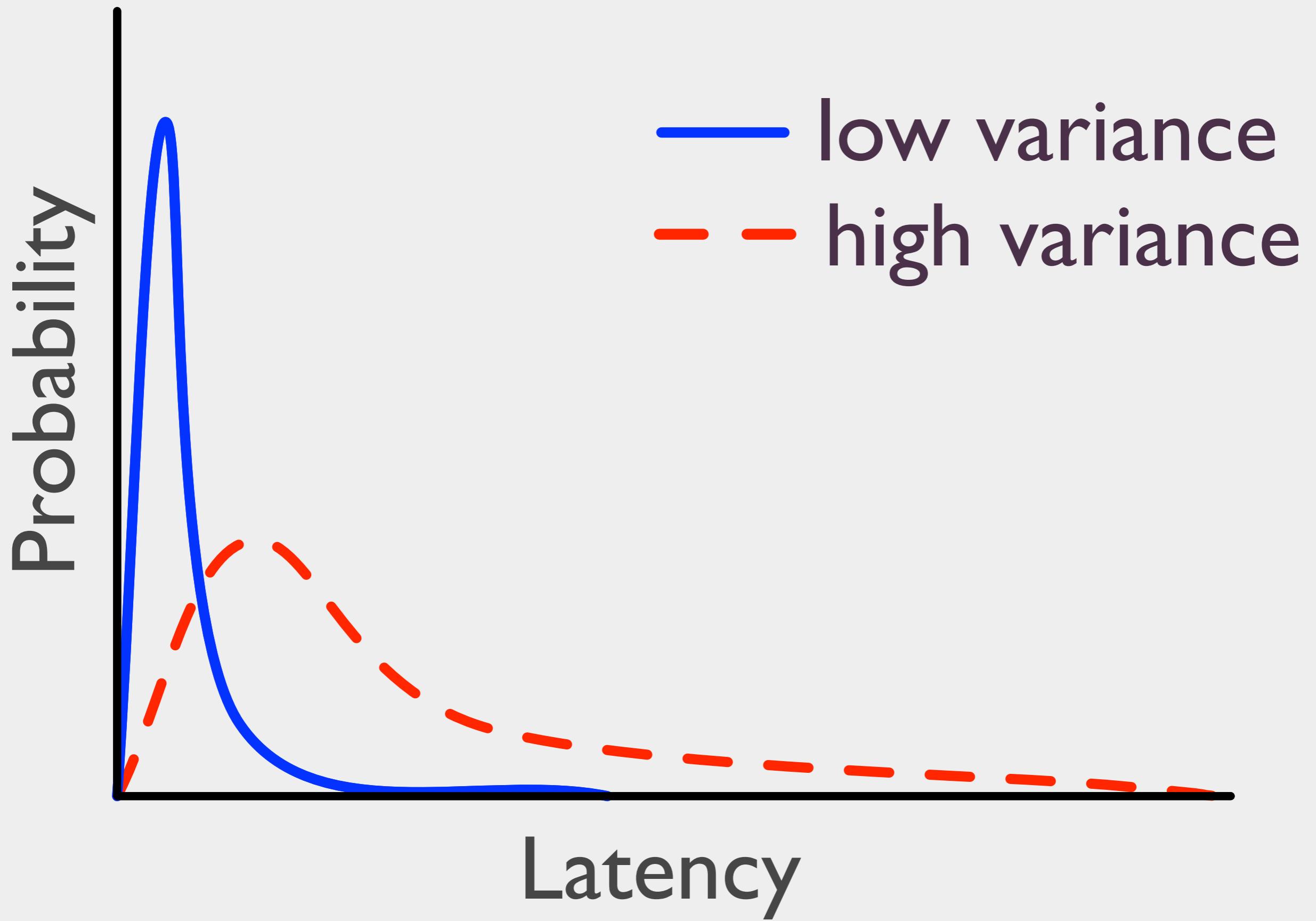
# Replica



# Probability Density Function



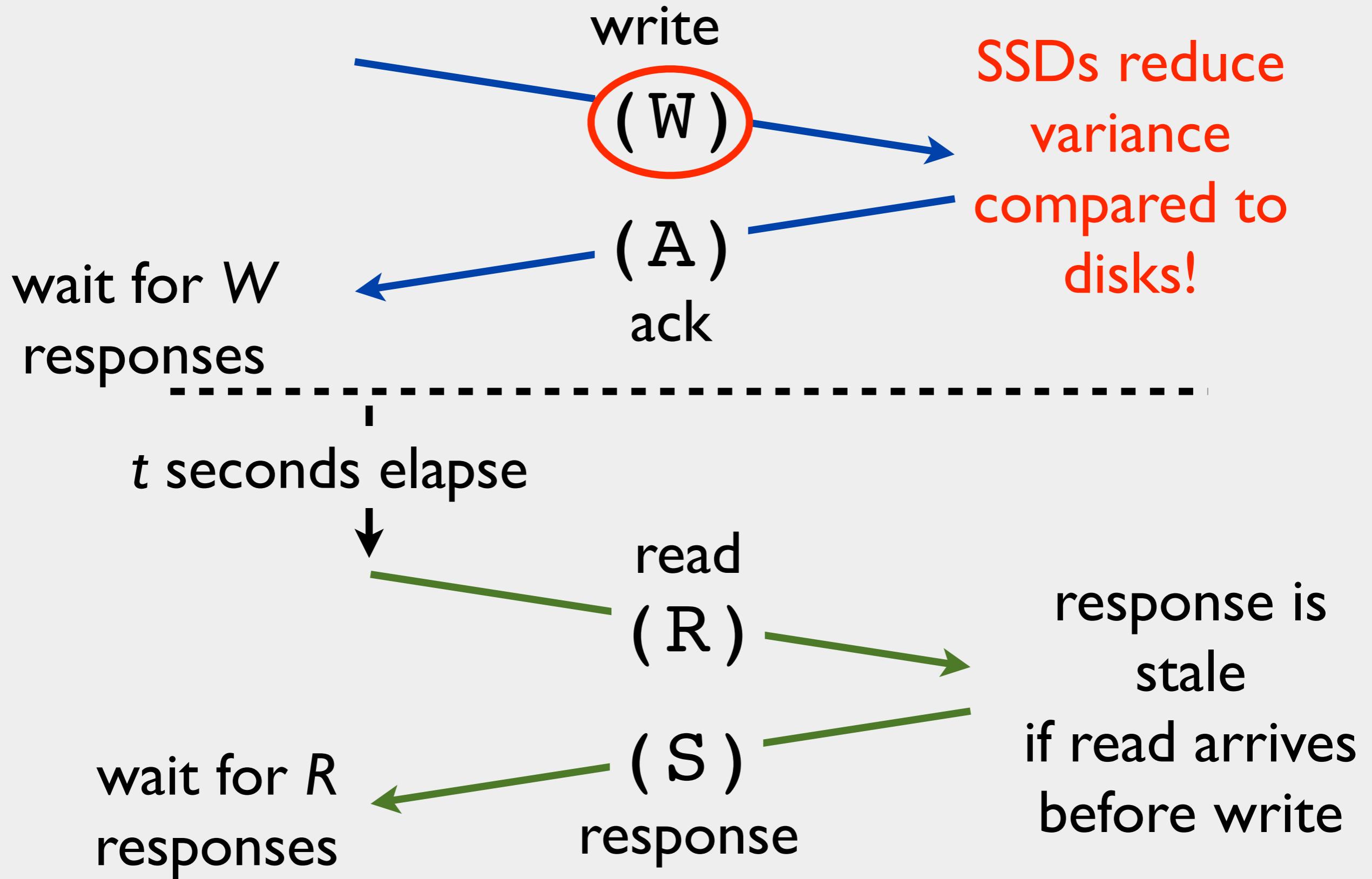
# Probability Density Function



# Coordinator

once per replica

# Replica



# YMMR

99.9% consistent reads:

R=1,W=1

$t = 202.0 \text{ ms}$

Latency: 43.3 ms

100% consistent reads:

R=3,W=1

Latency: 230.06 ms

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

N=3

# YMMR

81.1%

faster

N=3

99.9% consistent reads:  
 $R=1, W=1$

$t = 202.0 \text{ ms}$

Latency: 43.3 ms

100% consistent reads:

$R=3, W=1$

Latency: 230.06 ms

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

# YMMR

81.1%

faster

*even*

*better payoff!*

N=3

99.9% consistent reads:  
 $R=1, W=1$

$t = 202.0 \text{ ms}$

Latency: 43.3 ms  
100% consistent reads:

$R=3, W=1$

Latency: 230.06 ms

Latency is combined read and write latency at 99.9th percentile

# Riak Defaults

$N=3$

$R=2$

$w=2$

$2+2 > 3$

*Phew, I'm safe!*

*...but what's my*

*latency cost?*

Should I change?

# Is low latency worth it?

Is low latency worth it?

PBS can tell you.

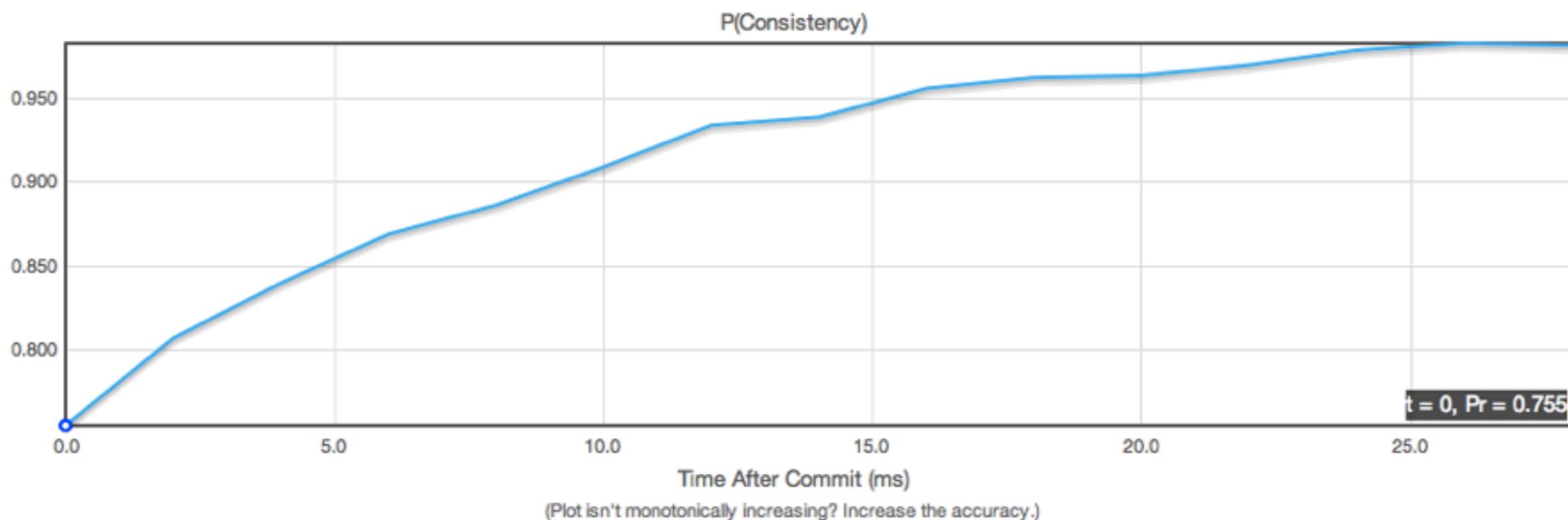
Is low latency worth it?

PBS can tell you.

*(and PBS is easy)*

# How Eventual is Eventual Consistency?

PBS in action under Dynamo-style quorums



You have at least a 74.8 percent chance of reading the last written version 0 ms after it commits.

You have at least a 92.2 percent chance of reading the last written version 10 ms after it commits.

You have at least a 99.96 percent chance of reading the last written version 100 ms after it commits.

#### Replica Configuration

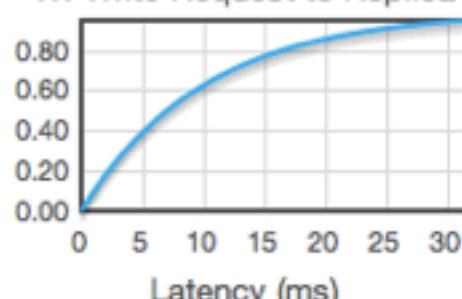
N:  3  
 R:  1  
 W:  1

Read Latency: Median 8.43 ms, 99.9th %ile 36.97 ms  
 Write Latency: Median 8.38 ms, 99.9th %ile 38.28 ms

#### Tolerable Staleness: 1 version

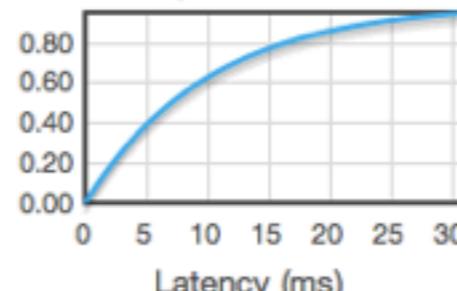
Accuracy: 2500 iterations/point

W: Write Request to Replica



#### Operation Latency: Exponentially Distributed CDFs

A: Replica Write Ack



R: Read Request to Replica



S: Replica Read Response



$\lambda$   0.100

$\lambda$   0.100

$\lambda$   0.100

$\lambda$   0.100

# Workflow

---

1. Metrics
2. Simulation
3. Set  $N, R, W$
4. Profit

# PBS

what: consistency prediction

why: weak consistency is fast

how:

- measure latencies
- use WARS model



strong consistency  
low latency



A close-up photograph of a young child's face, framed by a circular hatch or window. The child has dark hair and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a space station or a vehicle interior.

Be more



PBS

# PBS

latency vs. consistency trade-offs  
fast and simple modeling  
large benefits  
be more

[bailis.org/projects/pbs/#demo](http://bailis.org/projects/pbs/#demo)

@pbailis

VLDB 2012 early print

[tinyurl.com/pbspaper](http://tinyurl.com/pbspaper)

cassandra patch

[github.com/pbailis/cassandra-pbs](https://github.com/pbailis/cassandra-pbs)

# Extra Slides

PBS  
and  
apps

# staleness requires

either:

**staleness-tolerant** data structures

timelines, logs

cf. commutative data structures

logical monotonicity

**asynchronous compensation code**

detect violations after data is returned; see paper  
write code to fix any errors

cf. “Building on Quicksand”

memories, guesses, apologies

# asynchronous compensation

minimize:

(compensation cost) × (# of expected anomalies)

# Read only newer data? *(monotonic reads session guarantee)*

$$\frac{\text{# versions tolerable}}{\text{staleness}} = \frac{\text{client's read rate}}{\text{global write rate}}$$

(for a given key)

Failure?

Treat failures as  
latency  
spikes

How I ongoing

do partitions last?

# what time interval?

99.9% uptime/yr

⇒ 8.76 hours downtime/yr

8.76 consecutive hours down

⇒ bad 8-hour rolling average

# what time interval?

99.9% uptime/yr

⇒ 8.76 hours downtime/yr

8.76 consecutive hours down

⇒ bad 8-hour rolling average

hide in tail of distribution OR

continuously evaluate SLA, adjust

Give me  
(and academia)  
failure data!

# In paper:

- Closed-form analysis
- Monotonic reads
- Staleness detection
- Varying  $N$
- WAN model
- Production latency data

[tinyurl.com/pbstpaper](http://tinyurl.com/pbstpaper)

*t*-visibility depends on:

- 1) message delays
- 2) background version exchange (anti-entropy)

# *t*-visibility depends on:

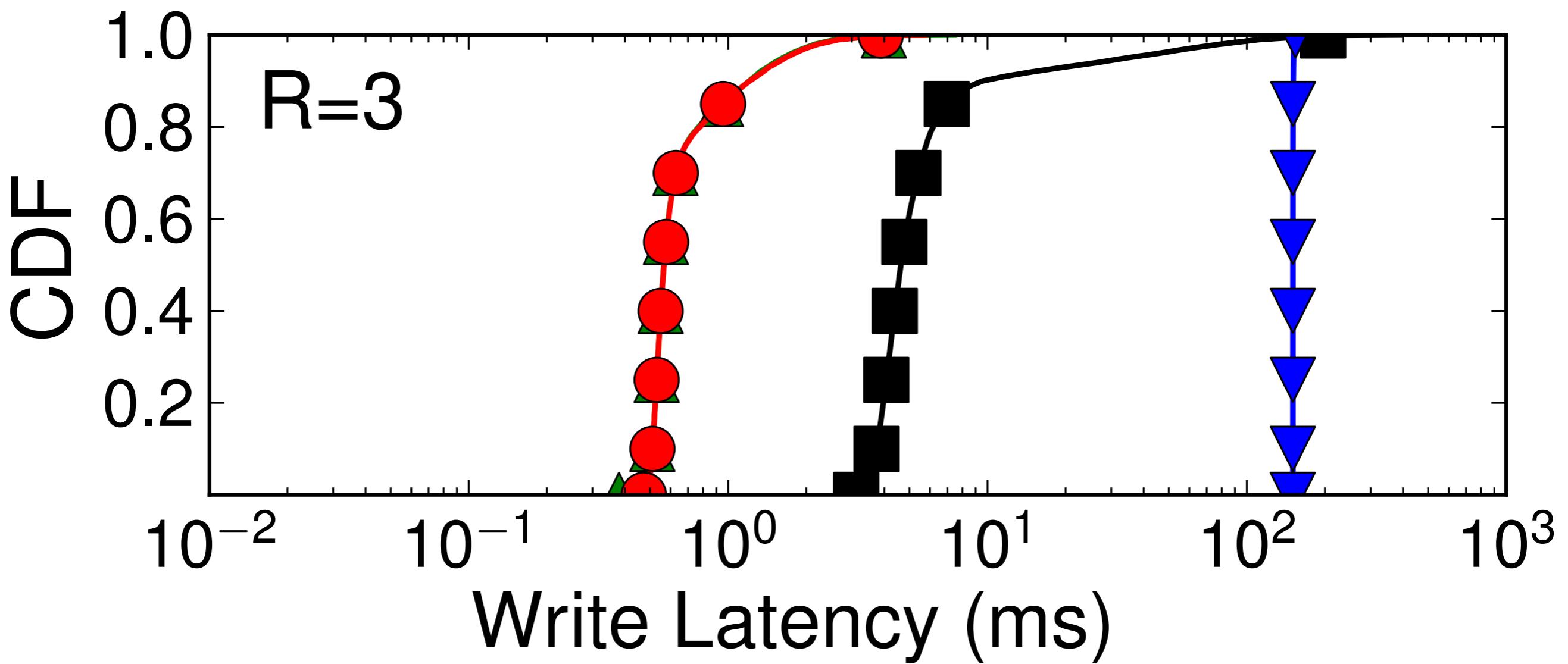
- 1) message delays
- ~~2) background version exchange (anti-entropy)~~

anti-entropy:

- only decreases staleness
- comes in many flavors
- hard to guarantee rate

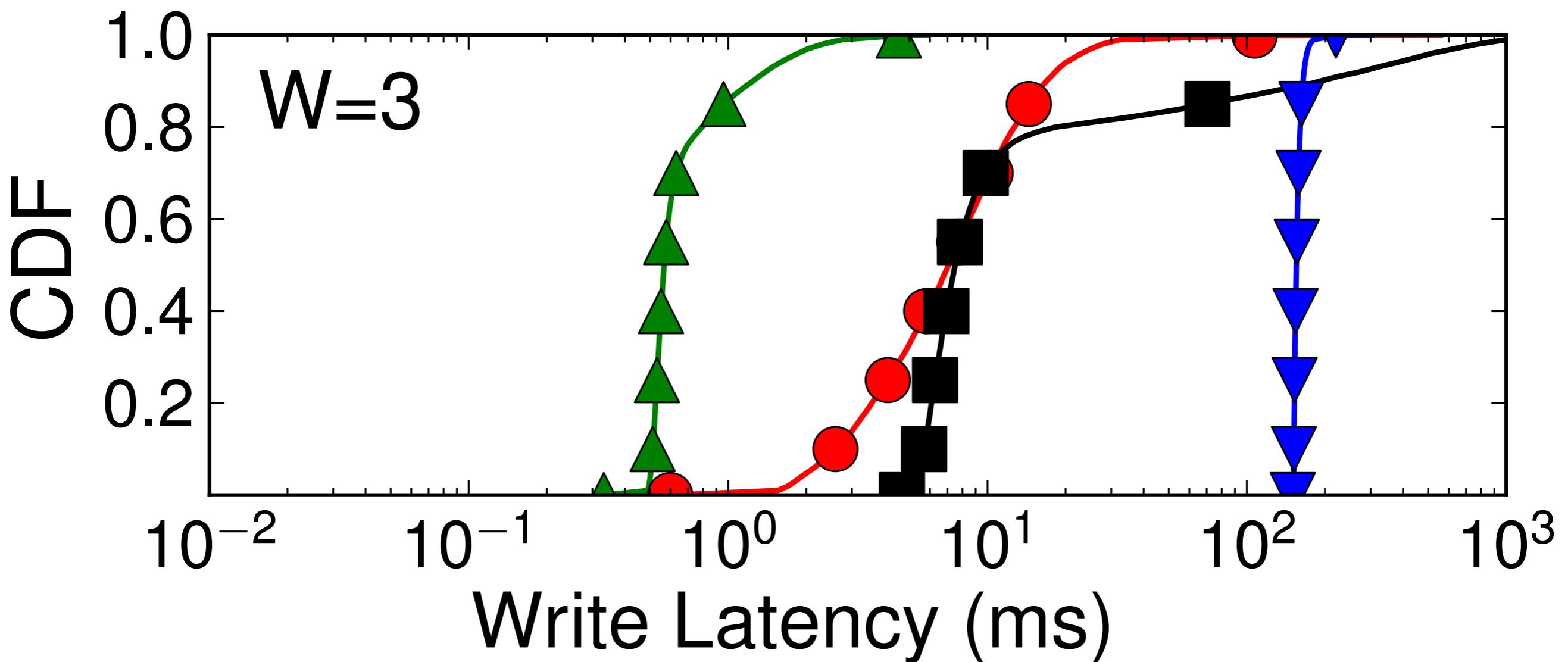
**Focus on message delays first**

▲ LNKD-SSD    ■ YMMR  
● LNKD-DISK    ▼ WAN



$N=3$     (*LNKD-SSD and LNKD-DISK identical for reads*)

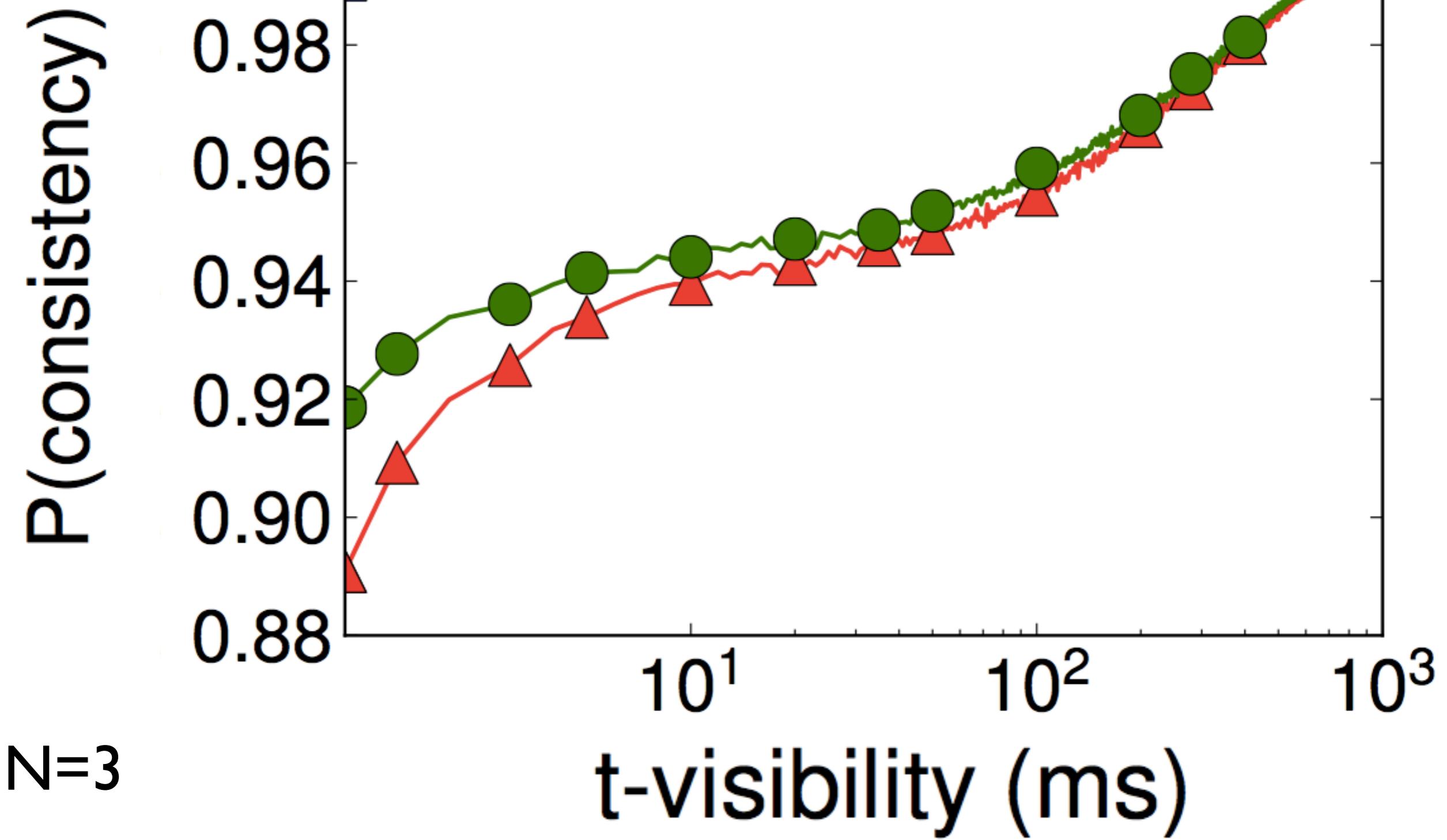
▲ LNKD-SSD    ■ YMMR  
● LNKD-DISK    ▼ WAN



$N=3$

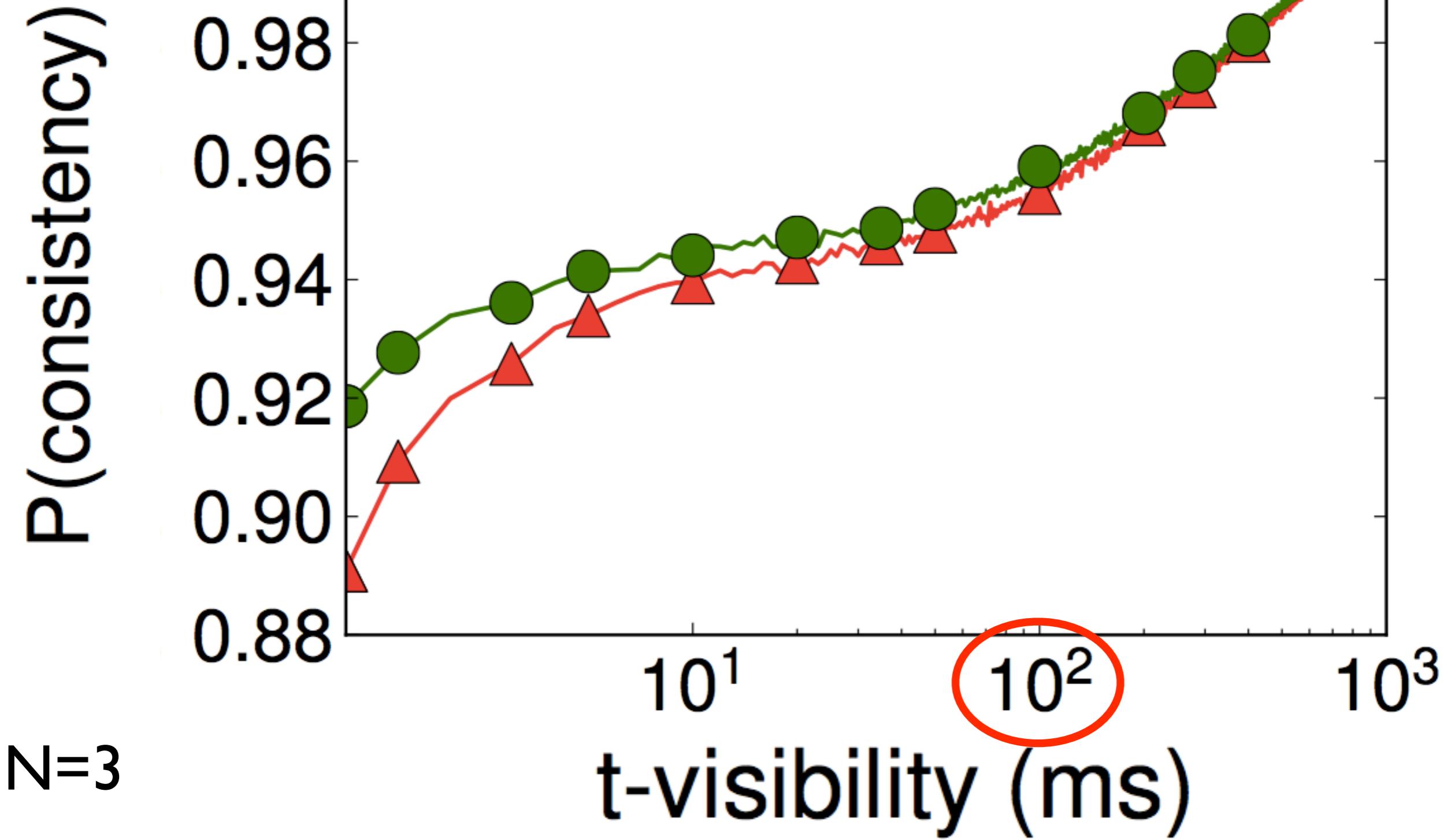
—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

YMMR



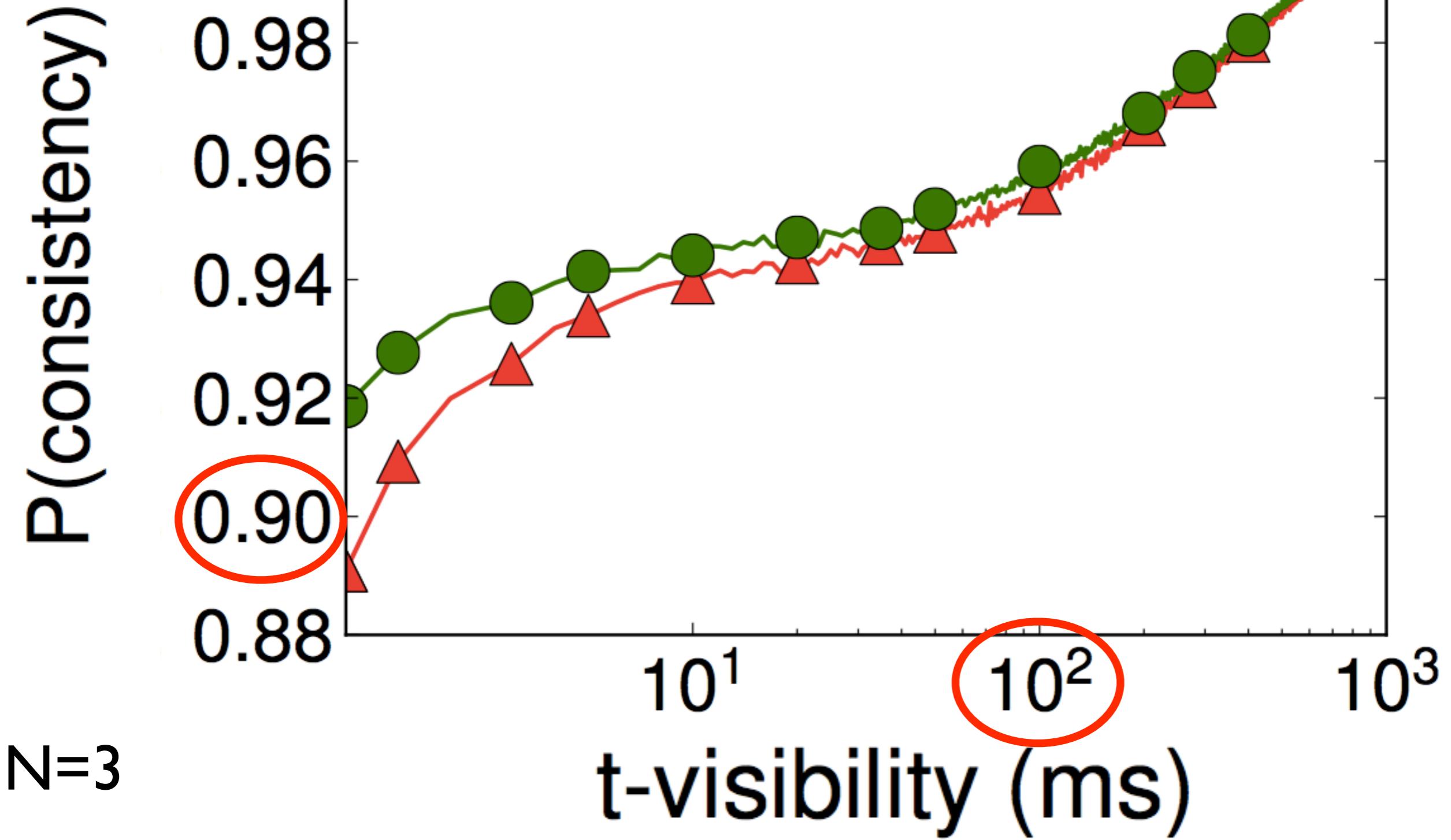
—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

YMMR

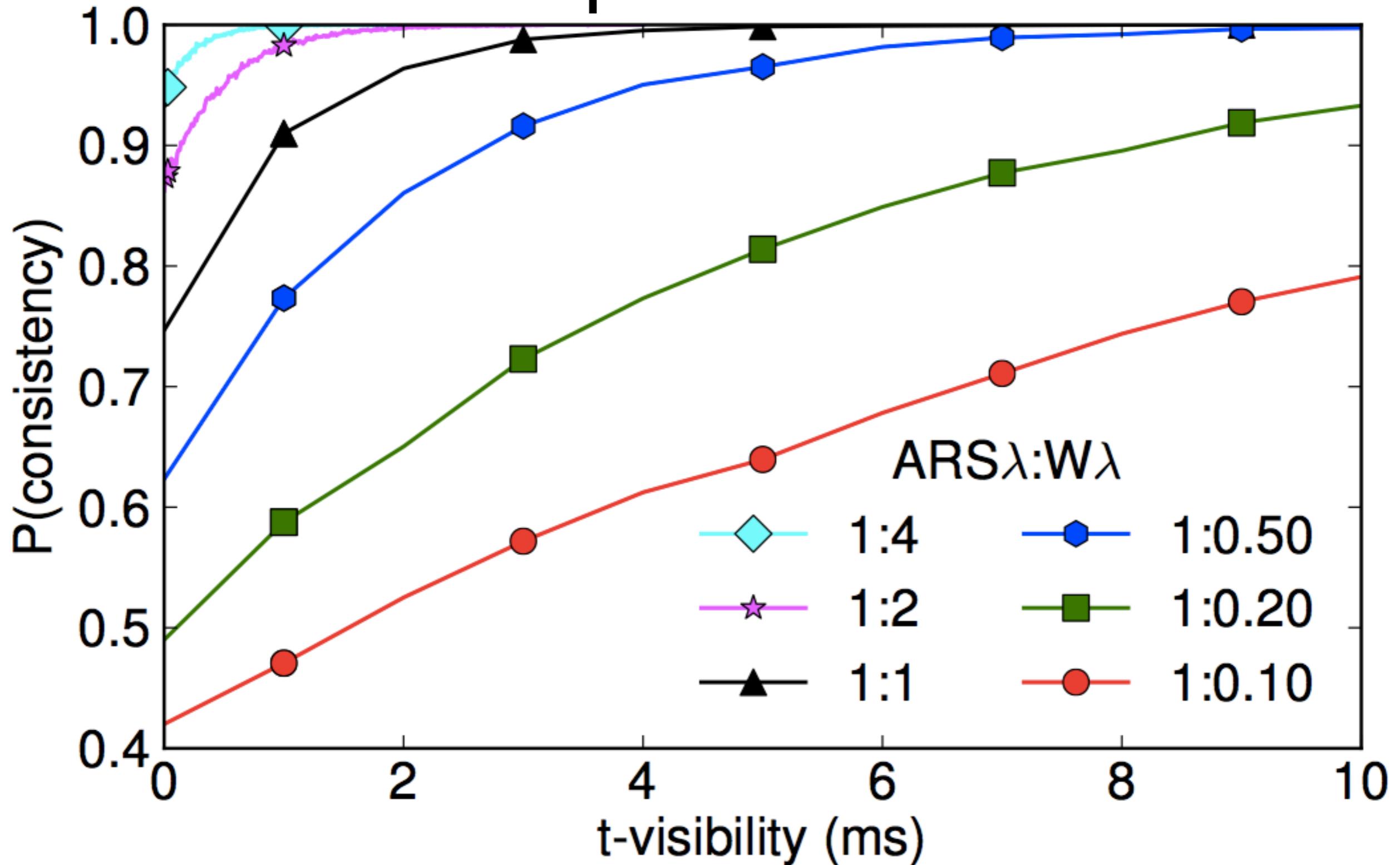


—▲— R=1 W=1    —●— R=1 W=2    —■— R=2 W=1

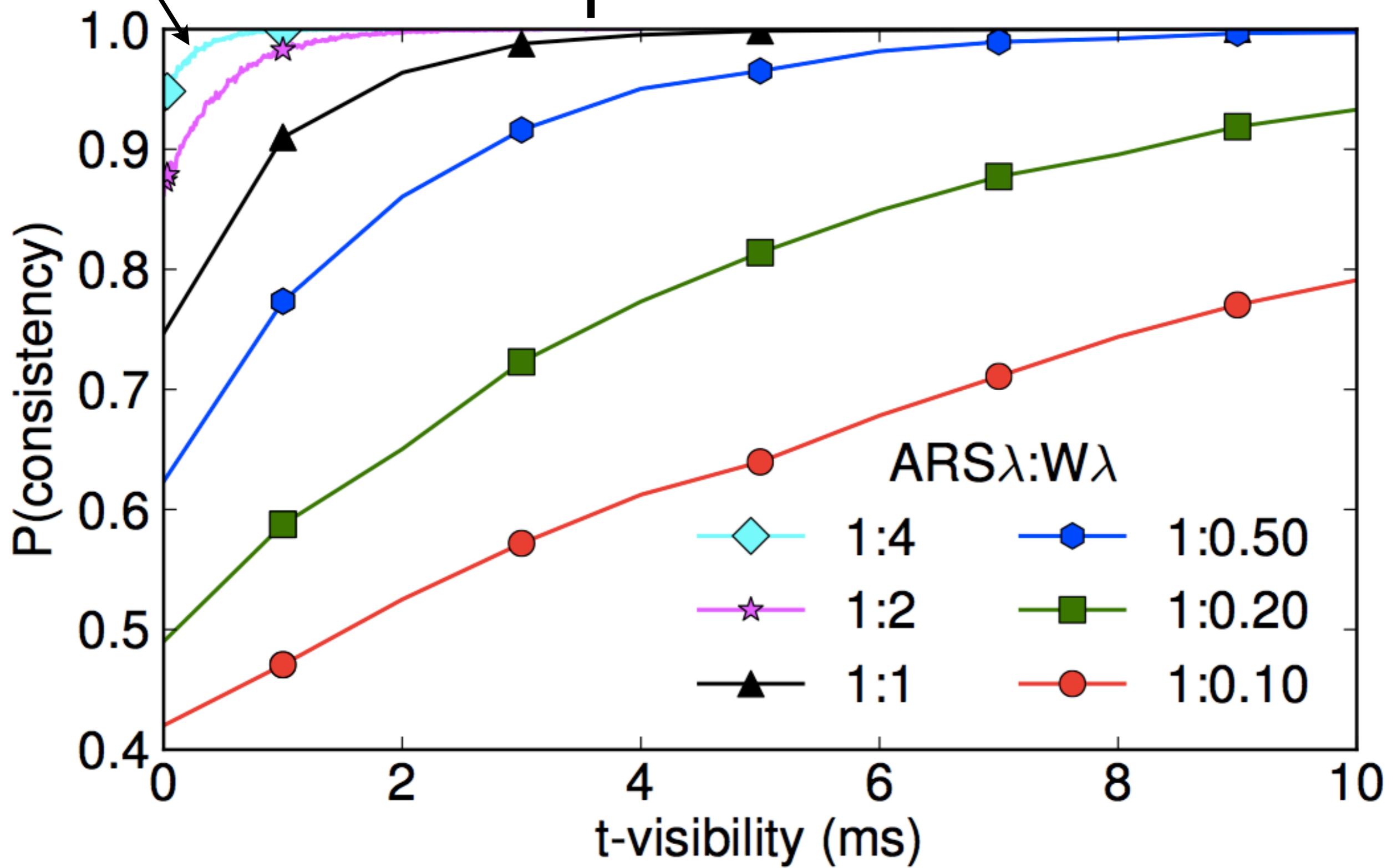
YMMR



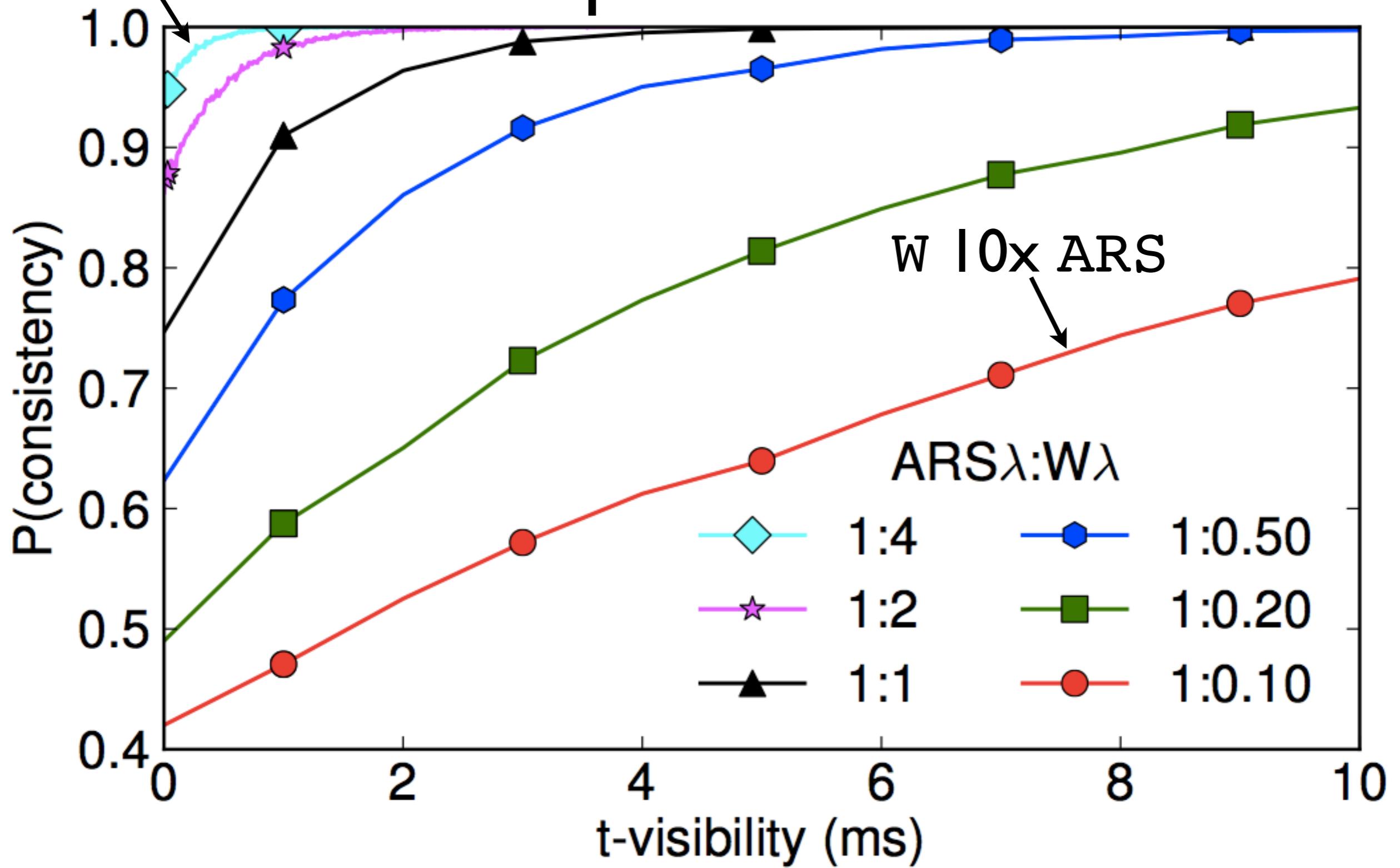
# Synthetic, Exponential Distributions



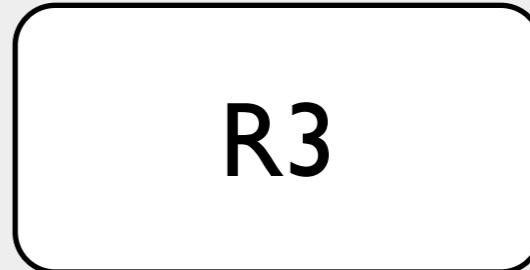
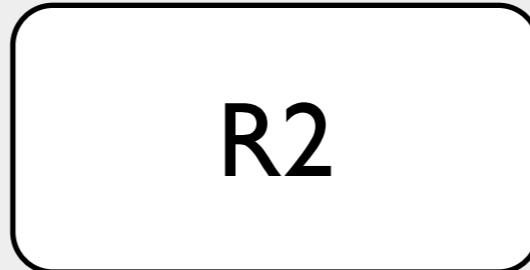
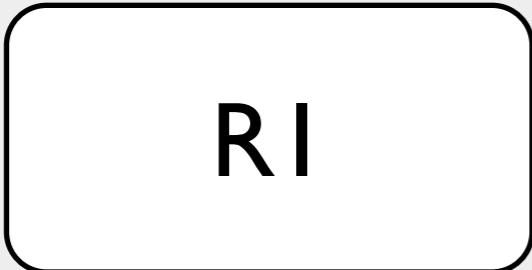
# Synthetic, Exponential Distributions



# Synthetic, Exponential Distributions

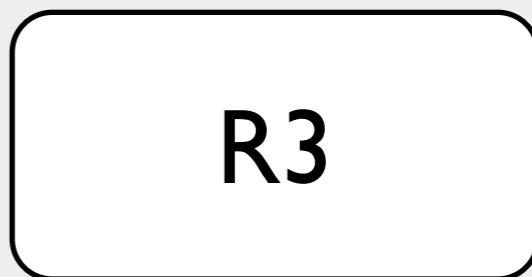
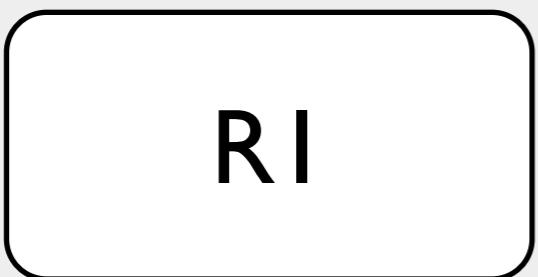


$N = 3$  replicas



Write to **W**, read from **R** replicas

$N = 3$  replicas



Write to  $W$ , read from  $R$  replicas

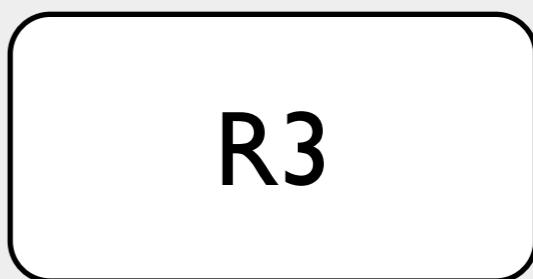
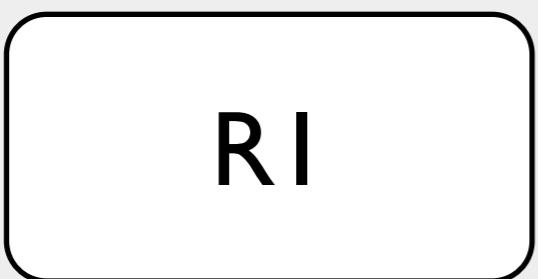
quorum system:

guaranteed  
intersection

$\left\{ \left\{ \boxed{\text{R1}} \boxed{\text{R2}} \boxed{\text{R3}} \right\} \right\}$   $R=W=3$  replicas

$\left\{ \left\{ \boxed{\text{R1}} \boxed{\text{R2}} \right\} \left\{ \boxed{\text{R2}} \boxed{\text{R3}} \right\} \left\{ \boxed{\text{R1}} \boxed{\text{R3}} \right\} \right\}$   $R=W=2$  replicas

$N = 3$  replicas



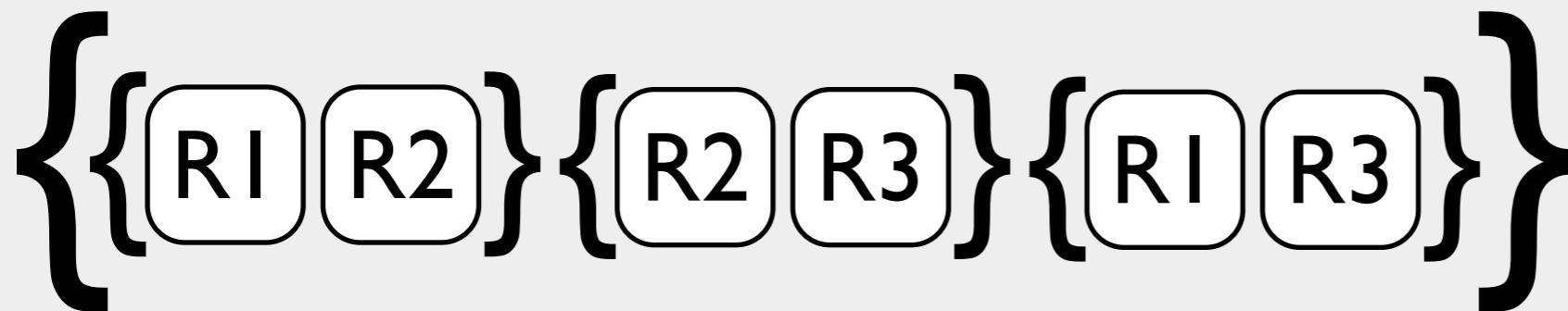
Write to  $W$ , read from  $R$  replicas

quorum system:

guaranteed  
intersection



$R=W=3$  replicas



$R=W=2$  replicas

partial quorum

system:

may not intersect



$R=W=1$  replicas