Introduction

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Sliding Window

A Sum Problem

Problem description
Write a program that, given an integer array of size N, finds the contiguous subarray of size K with the highest sum.

Input description
Input consist of two lines. The first line contains two space separated integers N, the size of the array, where $1 \leq N \leq 10^6$, and K, the size of the subarrays to consider, where $1 \leq K \leq N$. Then second line contains N space separated integers, the values of the array. Each value in the array is between -10^9 and 10^9.

Output description
Output one line, the sum of the highest valued contiguous subarray of size K.

A Sum Problem

Sample input	Sample output
10 4 17 20 0 1 5 24 8 2 4 1	39

Straightforward Solution

```python
n, k = map(int, input().split())
arr = list(map(int, input().split()))
highest = float('-inf')
for start in range(n-k+1):
    end = start + k
    total = 0
    for i in range(start, end):
        total += arr[i]
    highest = max((highest, total))
print(highest)
```

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- This solution constructs all size K contiguous subarrays.

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- What is the time complexity?

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- There are N starting points, each construction takes K steps, so $\mathcal{O}(NK)$.

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- Too slow!

Wasted Operations

- The subarray starting at index i has the sum $a_i + a_{i+1} + \cdots + a_{i+k-1}$.

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- A shift from the subarray starting at i to the subarray starting at $i+1$ takes $\mathcal{O}(1)$ time.

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- We add a_{i+k}.
- A shift from the subarray starting at i to the subarray starting at $i+1$ takes $\mathcal{O}(1)$ time.
- This is known as the sliding window technique, in this case with a fixed window size.

Sliding Window Solution

```
n, k = map(int, input().split())
arr = list(map(int, input().split()))
total = 0
for i in range(k):
    total += arr[i]
highest = total
for i in range(n - k):
    total -= arr[i]
    total += arr[i+k]
    highest = max((highest, total))
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- What is the time complexity?
- This solution constructs the first size K contiguous subarray.

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- This solution constructs the first size K contiguous subarray.
- Then, $N - K$ times, an element is removed and another added.

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- This solution constructs the first size K contiguous subarray.
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- This solution constructs the first size K contiguous subarray.
- Then, $N - K$ times, an element is removed and another added.
- Subtracting and adding numbers is constant time so $\mathcal{O}(N)$.
- Fast enough!

A Substring Problem

Problem description
Write a program that, give a string of size N, finds the longest substring with K distinct elements.

Input description
Input consist of two lines. The first line contains two space separated integers N, the size of the string, where $1 \leq N \leq 10^6$, and K, the number of distinct elements the substring must have, where $1 \leq K \leq 26$. Then second line contains a string of length N consisting of English lowercase characters.

Output description
Output one line, the longest substring with K distinct elements. If no such string exists, output "`DOES NOT EXIST`", without quotations.

A Substring Problem

Sample input	Sample output
`14 3` bacdcbcbcbabdb	cdcbcbcb

General Framework

```python
from string import ascii_lowercase
n, k = map(int, input().split())
s = input()

best_ind, best_len = distinct_k(n, k, s)

if best_len == -1:
  print("DOES NOT EXIST")
else:
  print(s[best_ind:best_ind + best_len])
```

Straightforward Solution

```
def distinct_k(n, k, s):
  best_ind, best_len = -1, -1
  for start in range(n):
    for end in range(start, n+1):
      substring = s[start:end]
      distinct = 0
      for symbol in ascii_lowercase:
        if symbol in substring:
          distinct += 1
      cur_len = len(substring)
      if distinct == k and cur_len > best_len:
        best_ind = start
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  return best_ind, best_len
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- Way too slow!

Constant optimization

```
def distinct_k(n, k, s):
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  for start in range(n):
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        present[ord(symbol) - ord('a')] = True
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  start, end, distinct = 0, 0, 0
  count = [0 for _ in range(26)]
  while start < n:
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      c = ord(s[end]) - ord('a')
      if distinct == k and count[c] == 0:
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      count[c] += 1
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      distinct = sum(x > 0 for x in count)
    cur_len = end - start
    if distinct == k and cur_len > best_len:
      best_ind = start
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    count[ord(s[start]) - ord('a')] -= 1
    start += 1
    distinct = sum(x > 0 for x in count)
  return best_ind, best_len
```

- What is the time complexity?
- It may seem quadratic at first
- Each element gets added once, and removed once, so the number of operations is $\mathcal{O}(N)$.

Sliding Window Improved

```python
def distinct_k(n, k, s):
  best_ind, best_len = -1, -1
  start, end, distinct = 0, 0, 0
  count = [0 for _ in range(26)]
  while start < n:
    while end < n:
      c = ord(s[end]) - ord('a')
      if distinct == k and count[c] == 0:
        break
      if count[c] == 0:
        distinct += 1
      count[c] += 1
      end += 1
    cur_len = end - start
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- Now adding/removing an element is $\mathcal{O}(1)$.

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- Now adding/removing an element is $\mathcal{O}(1)$.
- The time complexity is now $\mathcal{O}(N + C)$.

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- Usually you want the maximal or the minimal window fulfilling a certain condition.

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- Step 3: Perform `remove` and go to step 1.
- Time complexity is $\mathcal{O}(N \cdot (X + Y))$ where X and Y are the cost of `add` and `remove`, respectively.