



# Find the Duplicate Number (easy)

We'll cover the following



- Problem Statement
- Try it yourself
- Solution
- Code
  - Time complexity
  - Space complexity
- Similar Problems

## Problem Statement #

We are given an unsorted array containing 'n+1' numbers taken from the range 1 to 'n'. The array has only one duplicate but it can be repeated multiple times. **Find that duplicate number without using any extra space.** You are, however, allowed to modify the input array.

### Example 1:

Input: [1, 4, 4, 3, 2]  
Output: 4

### Example 2:

Input: [2, 1, 3, 3, 5, 4]  
Output: 3

### Example 3:



Input: [2, 4, 1, 4, 4]

Output: 4

## Try it yourself #

Try solving this question here:

Java	Python3	JS	C++	
<pre>1 def find_duplicate(nums): 2     # TODO: Write your code here 3     return -1 4</pre>				

## Solution #

This problem follows the **Cyclic Sort** pattern and shares similarities with Find the Missing Number

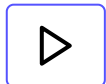
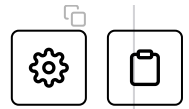
(<https://www.educative.io/collection/page/5668639101419520/5671464854355968/5319932059320320/>). Following a similar approach, we will try to place each number on its correct index. Since there is only one duplicate, if while swapping the number with its index both the numbers being swapped are same, we have found our duplicate!

## Code #

Here is what our algorithm will look like:

Java	Python3	C++	JS
1			

```
1
2 def find_duplicate(nums):
3     i = 0
4     while i < len(nums):
5         if nums[i] != i + 1:
6             j = nums[i] - 1
7             if nums[i] != nums[j]:
8                 nums[i], nums[j] = nums[j], nums[i] # swap
9             else: # we have found the duplicate
10                return nums[i]
11        else:
12            i += 1
13
14    return -1
15
16
17 def main():
18     print(find_duplicate([1, 4, 4, 3, 2]))
19     print(find_duplicate([2, 1, 3, 3, 5, 4]))
20     print(find_duplicate([2, 4, 1, 4, 4]))
21
22
23 main()
24
```



## Time complexity #

The time complexity of the above algorithm is  $O(n)$ .

## Space complexity #

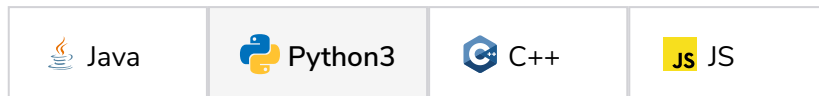
The algorithm runs in constant space  $O(1)$  but modifies the input array.

## Similar Problems #

**Problem 1:** Can we solve the above problem in  $O(1)$  space and without modifying the input array?

**Solution:** While doing the cyclic sort, we realized that the array will have a cycle due to the duplicate number and that the start of the cycle will always point to the duplicate number. This means that we can use the fast & the slow pointer method to find the duplicate number or the start of the cycle similar to Start of LinkedList Cycle

(<https://www.educative.io/collection/page/5668639101419520/5671464854355968/6360082440781824/>).



```
def find_duplicate(arr):
    slow, fast = arr[0], arr[arr[0]]
    while slow != fast:
        slow = arr[slow]
        fast = arr[arr[fast]]

    # find cycle length
    current = arr[arr[slow]]
    cycleLength = 1
    while current != arr[slow]:
        current = arr[current]
        cycleLength += 1

    return find_start(arr, cycleLength)

def find_start(arr, cycleLength):
    pointer1, pointer2 = arr[0], arr[0]
    # move pointer2 ahead 'cycleLength' steps
    while cycleLength > 0:
        pointer2 = arr[pointer2]
        cycleLength -= 1

    # increment both pointers until they meet at the start of the cycle
    while pointer1 != pointer2:
        pointer1 = arr[pointer1]
        pointer2 = arr[pointer2]

    return pointer1

def main():
    print(find_duplicate([1, 4, 4, 3, 2]))
    print(find_duplicate([2, 1, 3, 3, 5, 4]))
    print(find_duplicate([2, 4, 1, 4, 4]))

main()
```



The time complexity of the above algorithm is  $O(n)$  and the space complexity is  $O(1)$ .

[← Back](#)[Next →](#)

Find all Missing Numbers (easy)

Find all Duplicate Numbers (easy)



Mark as Completed

Report  
an Issue

Ask a Question

([https://discuss.educative.io/tag/find-the-duplicate-number-easy\\_\\_pattern-cyclic-sort\\_\\_grokking-the-coding-interview-patterns-for-coding-questions](https://discuss.educative.io/tag/find-the-duplicate-number-easy__pattern-cyclic-sort__grokking-the-coding-interview-patterns-for-coding-questions))