

Phylogenetic Methods

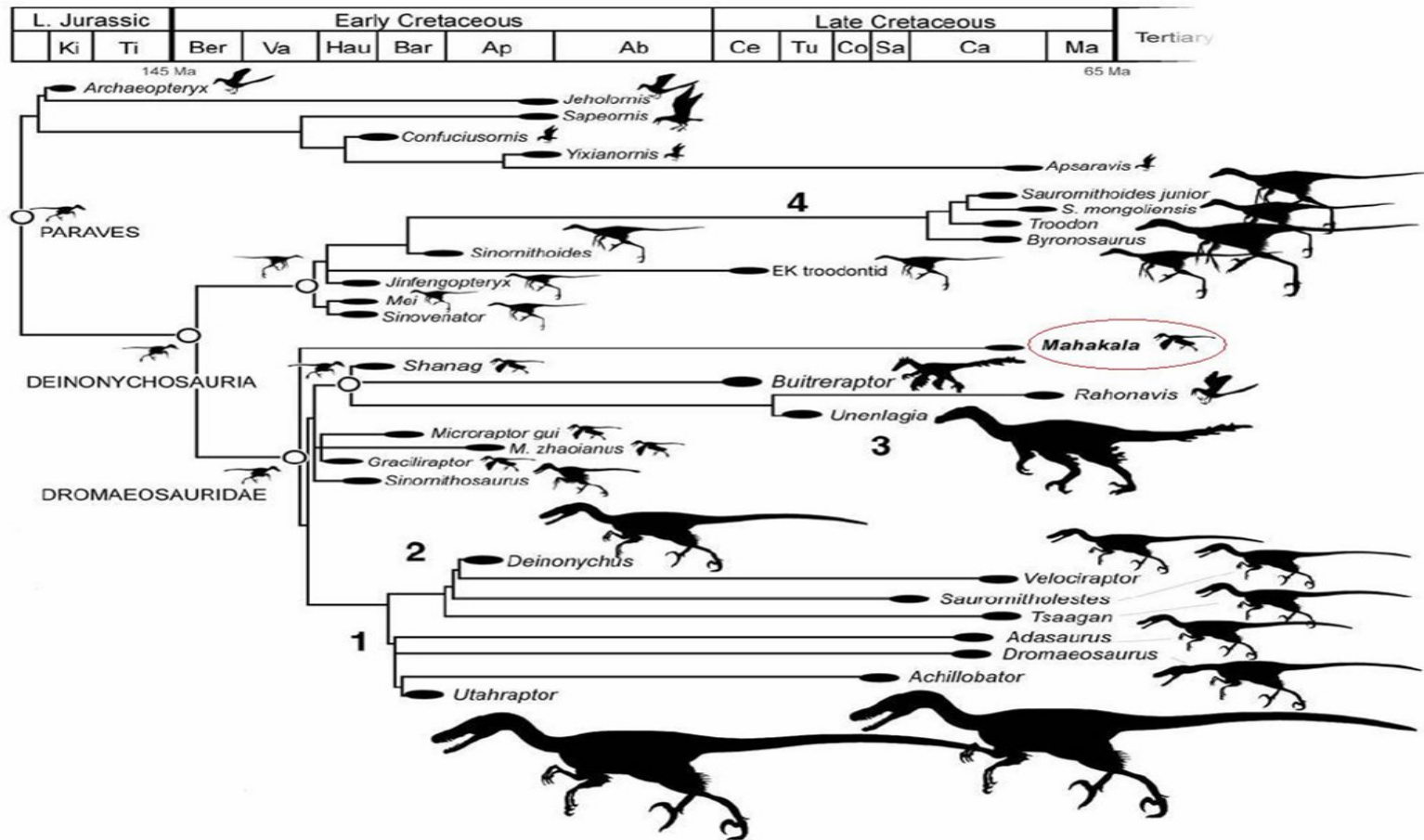
9 December 2024

Slides courtesy of
Mark Craven
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Background

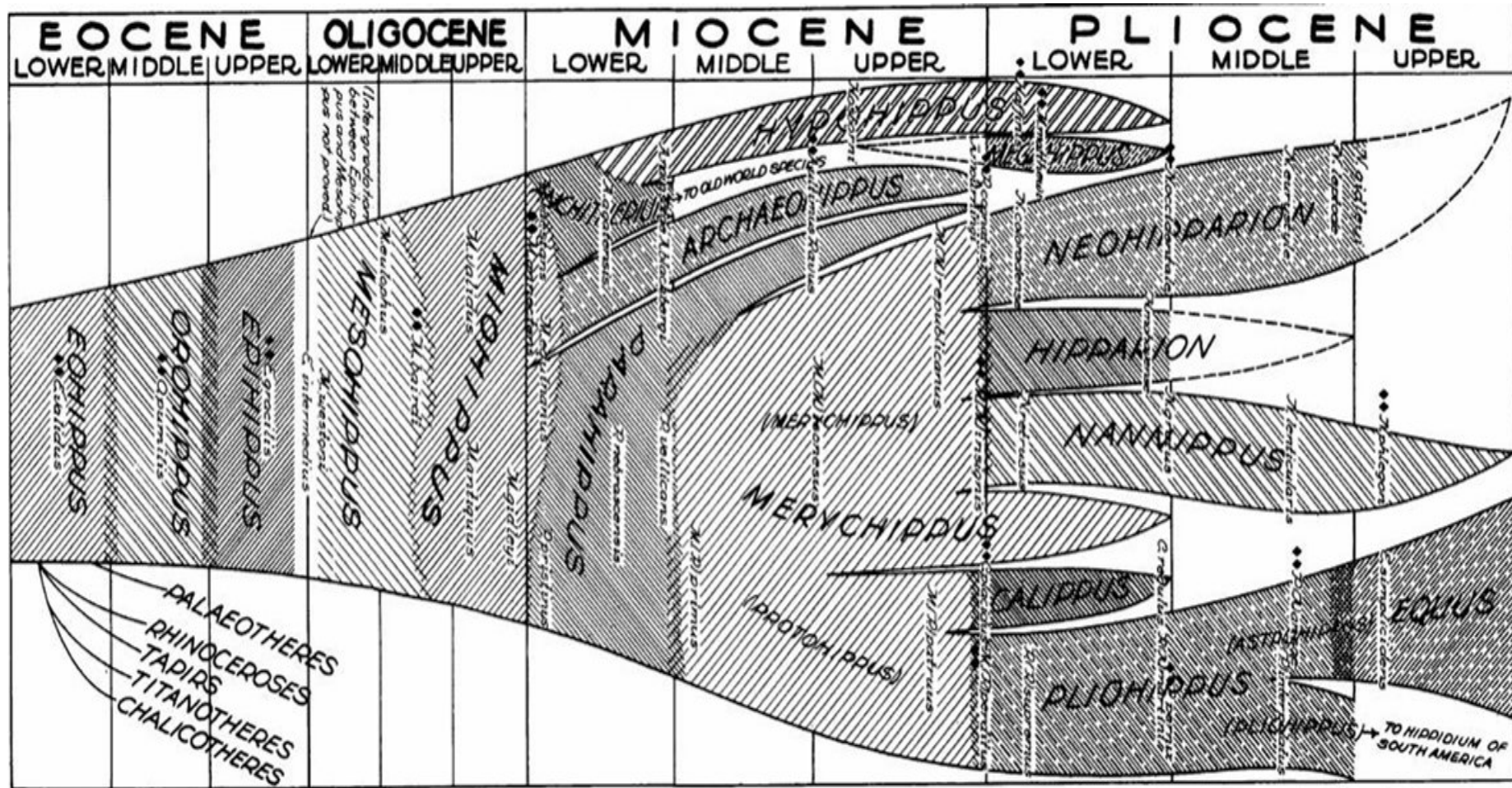
- **Phylogenetic tree:** diagram showing evolutionary lineages of species/sequences/genes
- **Why construct trees?**
 - to try to explain the evolutionary history of species
 - to understand the lineage of various species
 - to understand how various functions evolved
 - to inform multiple alignments

Dinosaurs



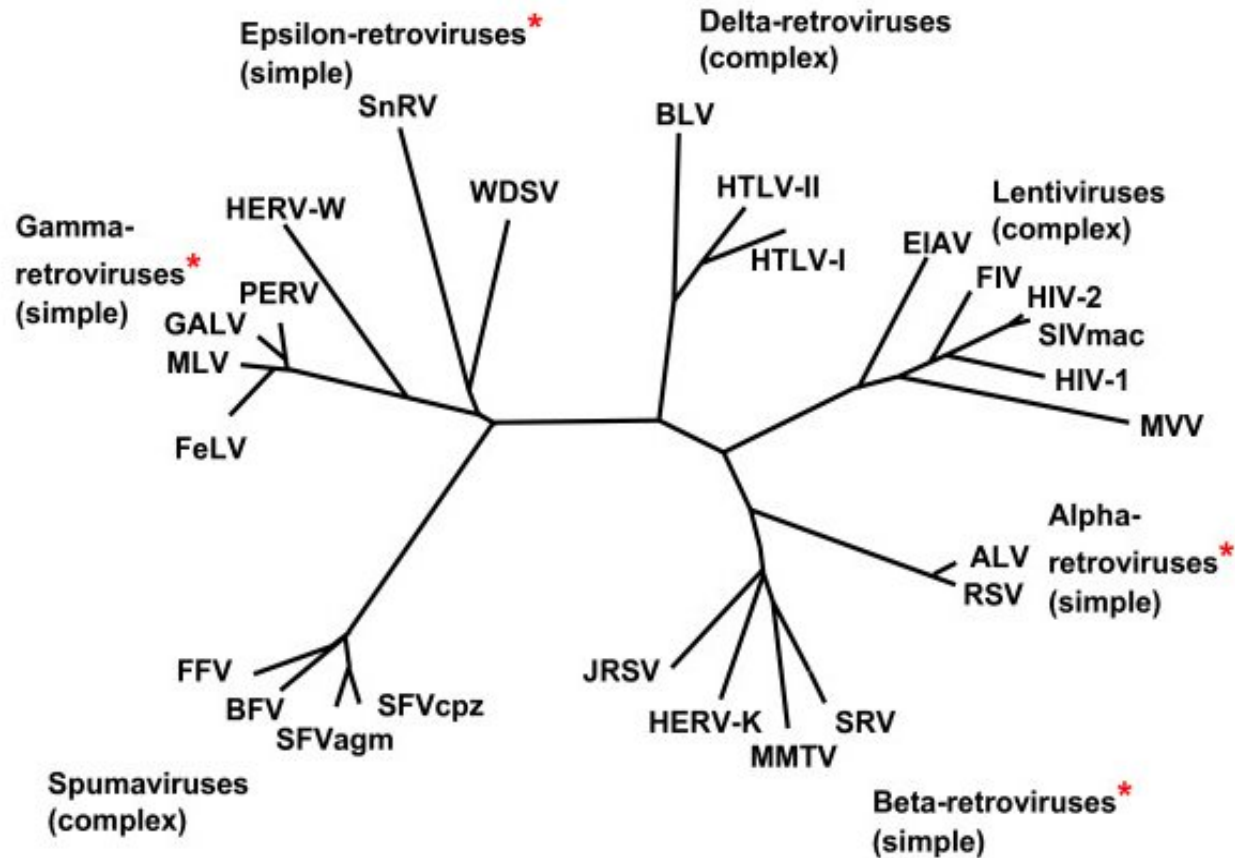
Turner, A.H. et al. "A Basal Dromaeosaurid and Size Evolution Preceding Avian Flight" *Science* 317, 1378 (2007)

Horses



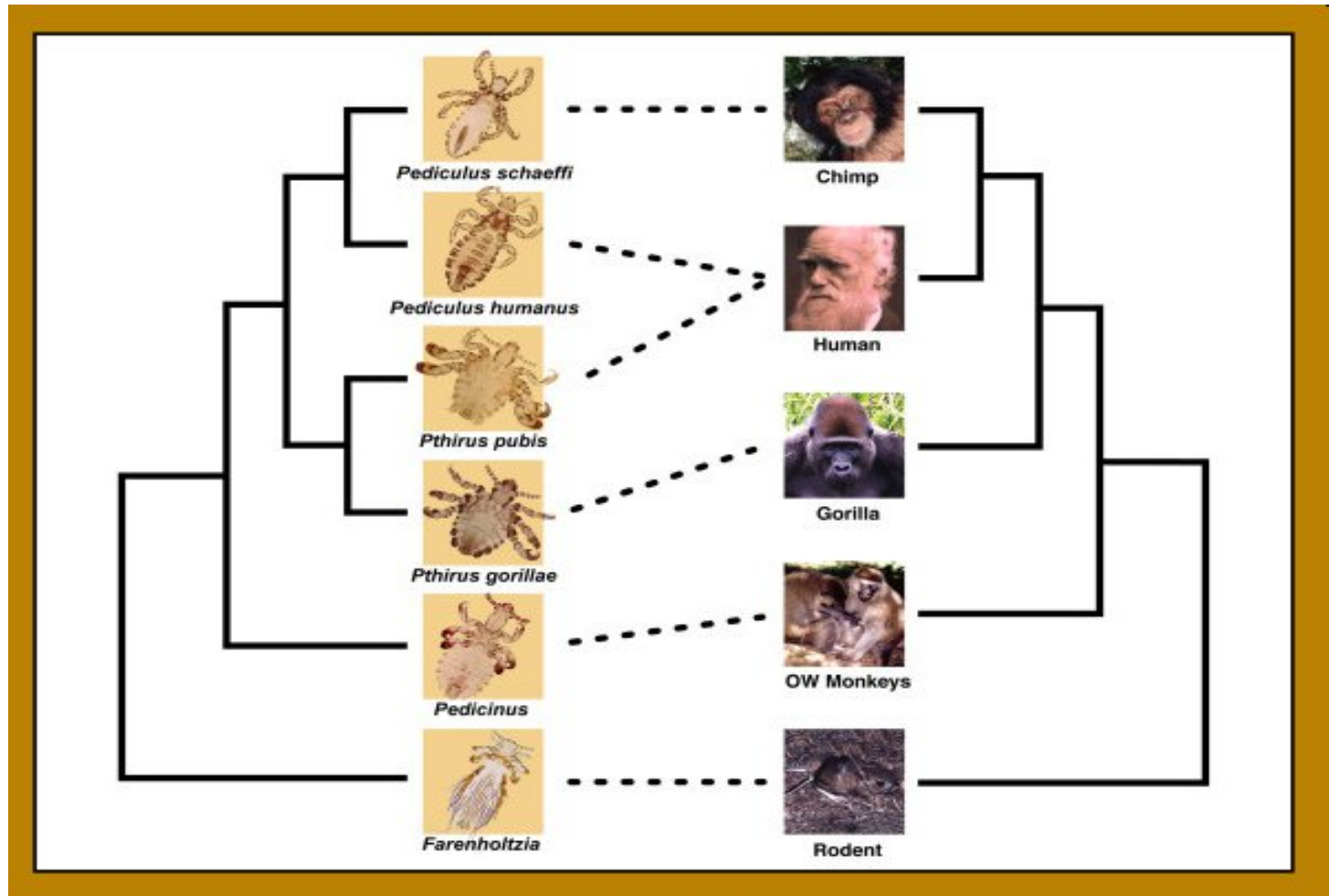
Stirton, R. A. 1940. "Phylogeny of North American Equidae". *Bull. Dept. Geol. Sci., Univ. California* 25(4): 165-198.

Retroviruses



Weiss *Retrovirology* 2006 3:67 doi:10.1186/1742-4690-3-67

Two phylogenies



Reed *et al.* *BMC Biology* 2007 **5**:7 doi:10.1186/1741-7007-5-7

Evolution

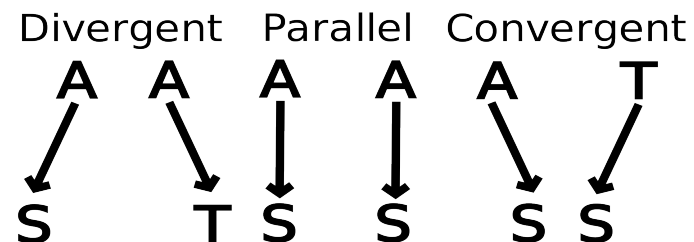
- A phylogeny explains partially the evolutionary history of species
- Associated with a model of evolution
- **Phylogenetic tree**: leaves are associated with today's species and internal nodes associated with their hypothetical ancestors
- Trees are built from **taxa** associated with species: characters, morphology, DNA sequences, protein sequences, order of genes, repetitions and motifs, etc.

Phylogenetic Tree

- **Binary tree**
- **Leaves** represent *elements*, called **taxa**, corresponding to **species** being compared and clustered
- **Internal nodes** are hypothetical ancestral units
- In a **rooted** tree, path from root to a node represents an evolutionary path
- An **unrooted** tree specifies relationships among things, but not evolutionary paths; it represents clusters of species

Character states

- Character examples: #legs; nucleotide at some location; etc. corresponding states: 2, 4, 8; A, C, G, T; etc.
- Intention: species that share common character states are genetically close
- **Common hypotheses:**
 - **independence**: characters are evolving independently
 - **neither convergence** (parallel evolution leading the same state)
 - **nor reversal** (character turns back to previous state)



Phylogenetic Tree

- **character-based:** the topology of the tree describes branching events associated with the **character**

(beak shape, #fingers, wings, presence of a given gene/protein/motif, etc.)

	2 legs	6 legs	wings	venom
human	1	0	0	0
bird	1	0	1	0
bee	0	1	1	1
spider	0	0	0	1

- **distance-based:** distance between nodes estimates the **evolution time** between hypothetical or real species (e.g. based on sequence distance)

	A	B	C	D	E
A	0	8	8	5	3
B		0	3	8	8
C			0	8	8
D				0	5
E					0

Data for building trees

Trees can be constructed from various types of data

- **character-based**: morphological features (e.g. #legs), DNA/protein sequences
- **distance-based**: measures of distance between species/genes/sequences
- **gene-order**: linear order of orthologous genes in given genomes
- etc.

Phylogenetic Tree Approaches

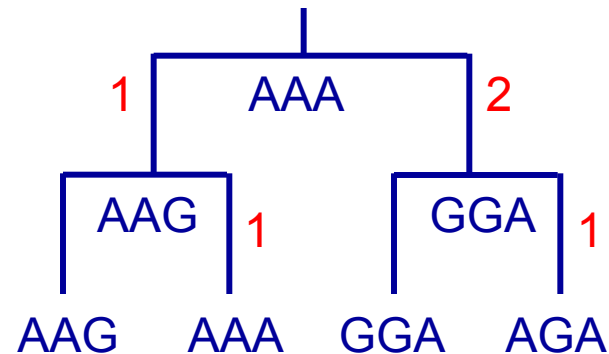
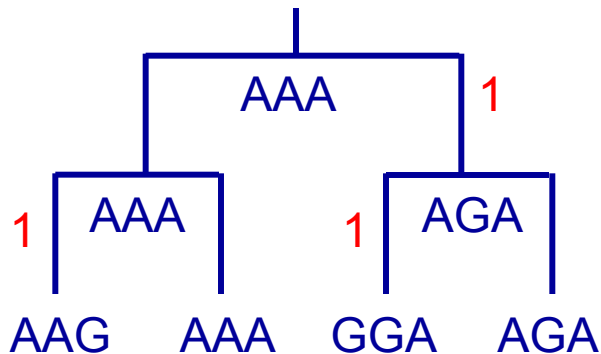
Three general types of methods

- **parsimony**: find the tree that requires the **minimum** number of changes (mutations) to explain the data (Fitch's algorithm)
- **distance**: find tree that accounts for **estimated** evolutionary distances (UPGMA and NJ algorithms)
- **maximum likelihood**: find the tree that maximizes the likelihood of the data (not discussed today)

Parsimony-based approaches

Parsimony Based Approaches

- **given:** character-based data, e.g. sequences
- **do:** find tree that explains the data with a minimal number of changes



- Parsimony prefers the first tree because it requires the fewest substitution events

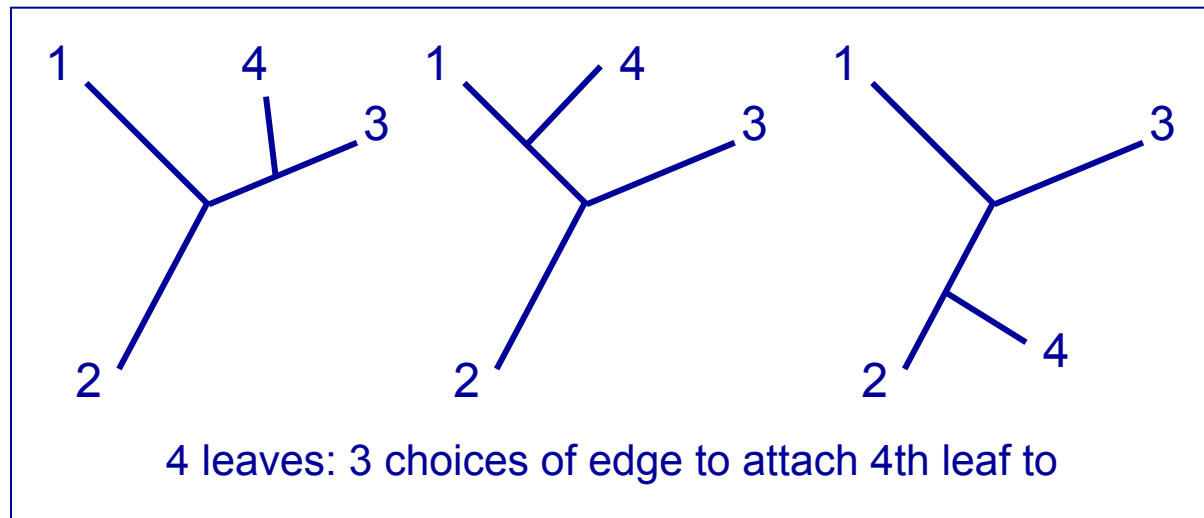
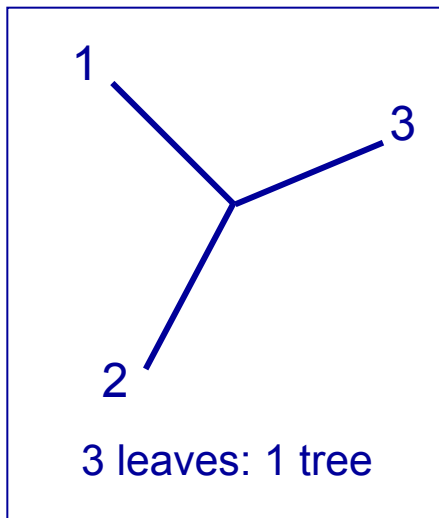
Parsimony Based Approaches

- Usually involve two separate components
 - a **search** through the space of trees
 - a procedure to find the **minimum number of changes/mutations** needed to explain the data (for a given tree topology)
- Search with a **branch and bound** algorithm based on criteria adapted to the problem
- Explore **branches** of tree representing subsets of solution set
- Branch is checked against upper and lower **bounds**
- Requires an efficient algorithm to label a given tree

Number of possible trees

For $n > 2$ leaves, there are:

- $u_n = 1 \cdot 3 \cdot \dots \cdot (2n - 7) \cdot (2n - 5)$ possible unrooted trees



- $r_n = (2n - 3) \cdot u_n$ possible rooted trees:
place the root on one of the $2n - 3$ edges in the unrooted tree

Number of possible trees

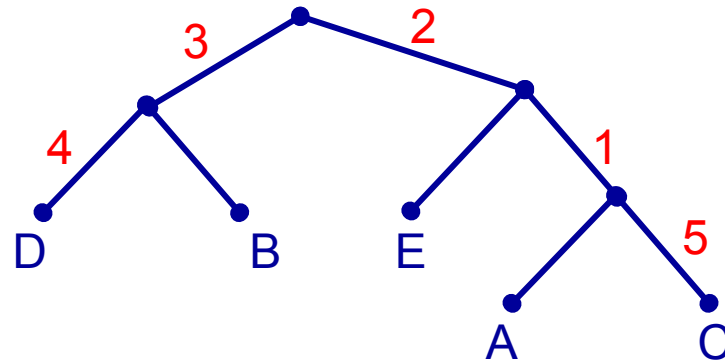
n	u_n	r_n
3	1	3
4	3	15
5	15	105
6	105	945
8	10 395	135 135
10	2 027 025	34 459 425

Impossible to generate them all and filter the appropriate trees for a given set of species!

Binary-character tree

- Binary-characters: states are 0 or 1
- n objects, m binary-char. matrix M , phylogenetic tree:
 - objects label leaves (1-to-1)
 - each character labels exactly one edge
 - state-1 characters of an object are along the path from the root to the object

	1	2	3	4	5
A	1	1	0	0	0
B	0	0	1	0	0
C	1	1	0	0	1
D	0	0	1	1	0
E	0	1	0	0	0



Perfect phylogeny

- A **phylogenetic tree is perfect** if, for any taxon f , the characters labeling the edges along the unique path from the root to leaf f specify all characters that f possesses (neither convergence nor reversal hypotheses)
- **problem:** n objects, m binary-characters, is there a perfect phylogeny of the objects?

C and E have the same traits

	1	2	3	4	5
A	1	1	0	0	0
B	0	0	1	0	1
C	1	1	0	0	1
D	0	1	1	1	0
E	1	1	0	0	1

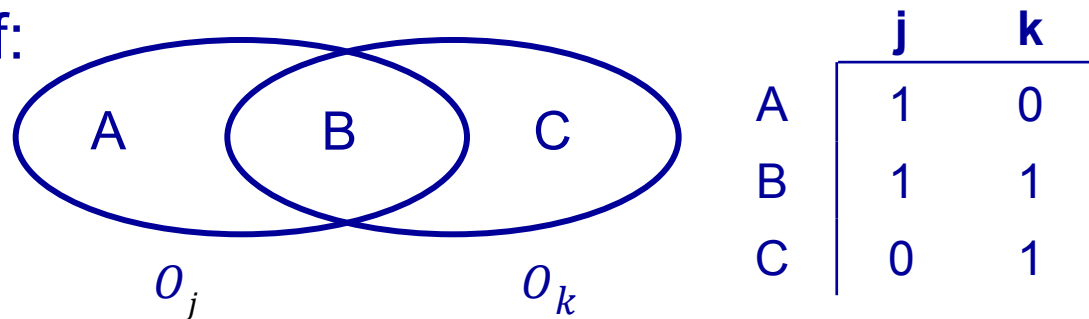
NO

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	0	0	0	1	1	0
B	1	1	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	1	1	1
D	1	0	1	0	0	0
E	0	0	0	1	0	0

YES

Perfect phylogeny

- Let O_j be the set of objects having state 1 for character j
- lemma:** the binary-character matrix M admits a perfect phylogeny if and only if for all O_j, O_k : either $O_j \cap O_k = \emptyset$ or $O_j \subseteq O_k$ or $O_k \subseteq O_j$ (either disjoint or comparable)
- Sketch of proof:



impossible because A, B should be in the same subtree without C, and B, C should be in the same subtree without A

Testing perfect phylogeny

- **Algorithm:**

- sort columns of M in decreasing order of their number of 1s, which gives M'
- compute new matrix L from M'

Find the max k less than j where M_{ik} is 1

$$L_{ij} = \begin{cases} \max k < j : M'_{ik} = 1 & \text{if } M'_{ij} = 1 \\ -1 & \text{if no } k \\ 0 & \text{if } M'_{ij} \neq 1 \end{cases}$$

- if in each column of L , the non-zero elements are all the same, then we have a perfect phylogeny

Running test

M	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	0	0	0	1	1	0
B	1	1	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	1	1	1
D	1	0	1	0	0	0
E	0	0	0	1	0	0

sorting columns
by number of 1s →

	4	5	1	2	6	3
M'	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	1	1	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	1	1	0	0
C	1	1	0	0	1	0
D	0	0	1	0	0	1
E	1	0	0	0	0	0

L	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	-1	1	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	-1	3	0	0
C	-1	1	0	0	2	0
D	0	0	-1	0	0	3
E	-1	0	0	0	0	0

←
same non-zero
numbers in columns →

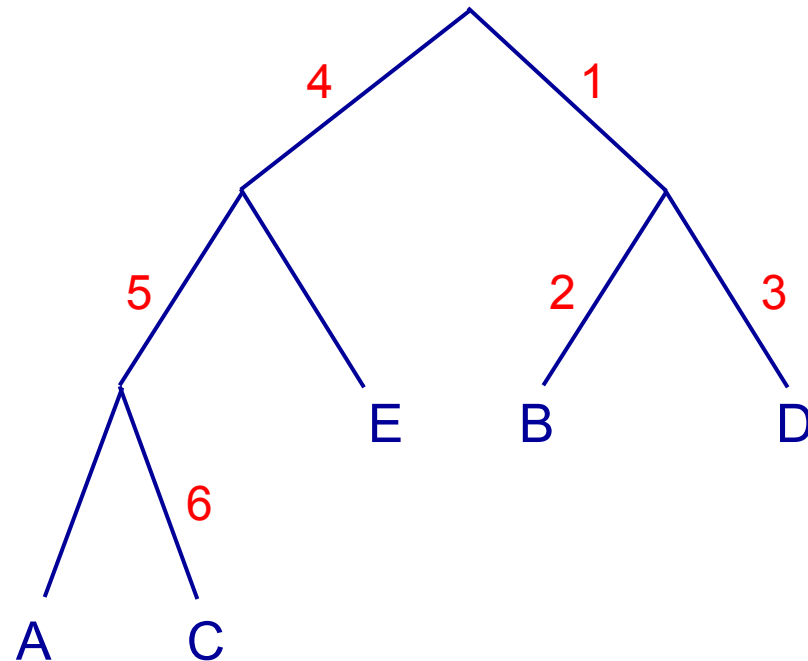
All -1s, all 1s, all 3s, etc.

perfect phylogeny
exists

Output perfect phylogeny

M	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	0	0	0	1	1	0
B	1	1	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0	1	1	1
D	1	0	1	0	0	0
E	0	0	0	1	0	0

L	4	5	1	2	6	3
A	-1	1	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	-1	3	0	0
C	-1	1	0	0	2	0
D	0	0	-1	0	0	3
E	-1	0	0	0	0	0



running time:
 $O(mn)$

Complexity

- **unordered characters**, all state changes possible
NP-complete
- **ordered characters** (cladistic model), changes are restricted, linear order, partial order (e.g. $A \rightarrow T \rightarrow C \rightarrow G$)
polynomial solutions
- **binary characters** (above algorithm)
 $O(mn)$

Minimum Changes for a Given Tree

- We are given the tree's topology and a mapping of taxa to the tree's leaves
- Our goal is to label internal nodes, minimizing the total number of changes
- Fitch's algorithm [1971]
 - assumes any state (e.g. nucleotide, amino acid) can convert to any other state
 - assumes positions are independent
 - processes sequences position per position

Fitch's Algorithm

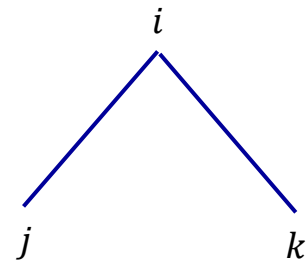
- Two steps (per position on sequences)
 - **bottom-up:** traverse tree from leaves to root determining a set of possible states (e.g. nucleotides) for each internal node
 - **top-down:** traverse tree from root to leaves picking ancestral states for internal nodes

Fitch's Algorithm: bottom-up

- Set of possible states for internal node i : R_i
- Compute R_i s during a post-order (from leaves to root) traversal of the tree with formula:

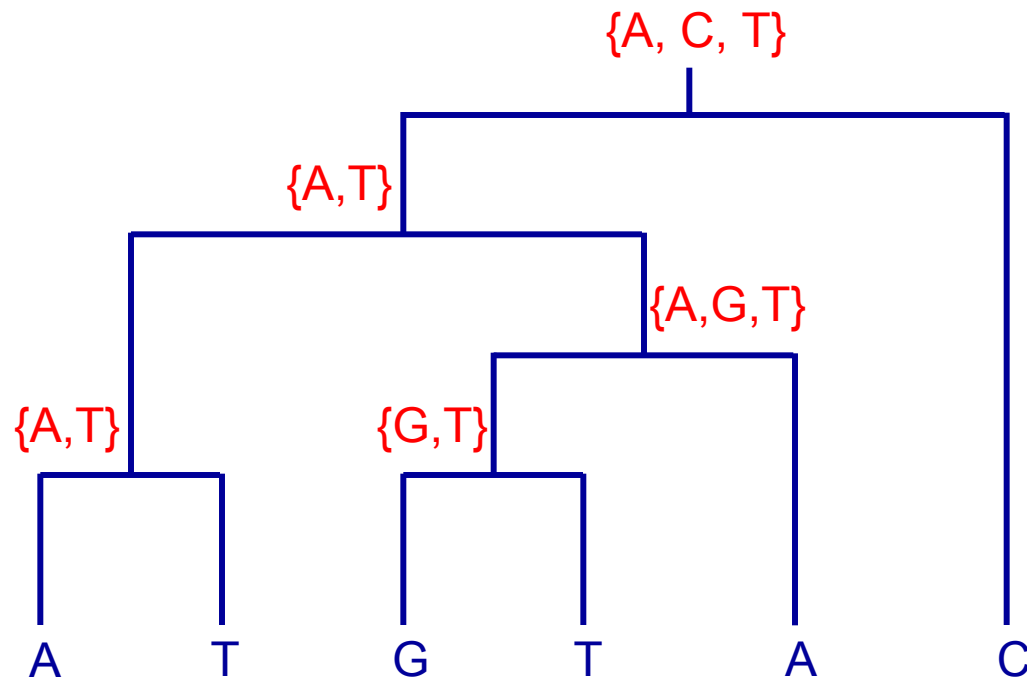
$$R_i = \begin{cases} R_j \cap R_k & R_j \cap R_k \neq \emptyset \\ R_j \cup R_k & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

for internal node i with children j and k



Fitch's Algorithm: bottom-up

- Computing sets R_i



Fitch's Algorithm: top-down

- Selected states for internal node i : $r_i \in R_i$
- Compute r_i s during a pre-order (from root to leaves) traversal of the tree with formula:

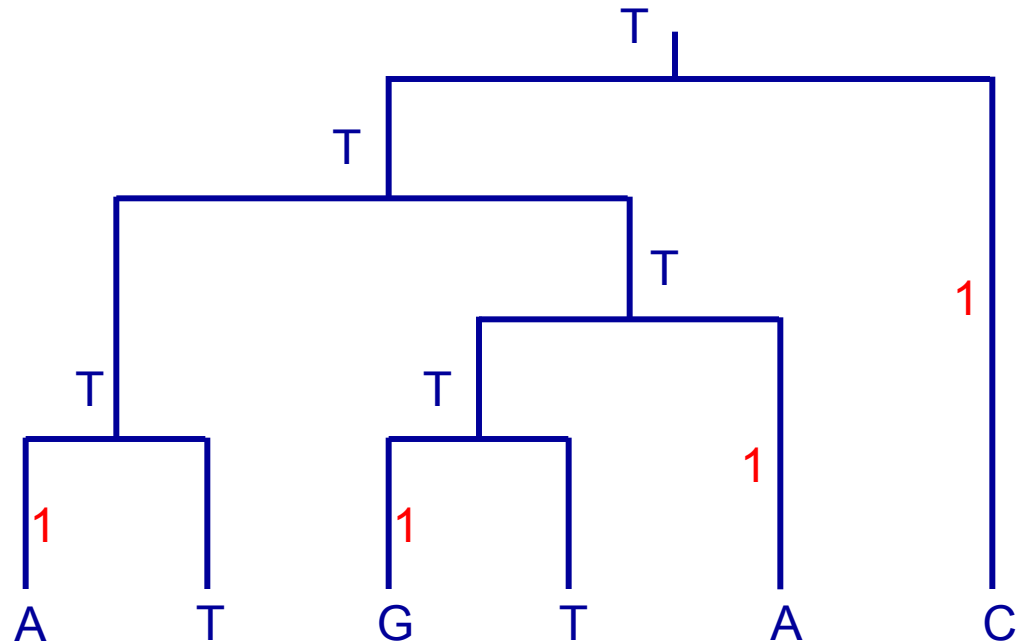
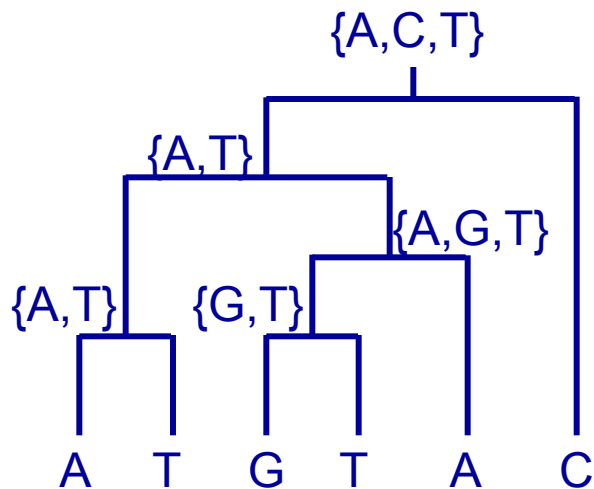
$$r_j = \begin{cases} r_i & \text{if } r_i \in R_j \\ \text{arbitrary state in } R_j & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

for node j with parent i

i
|
 j

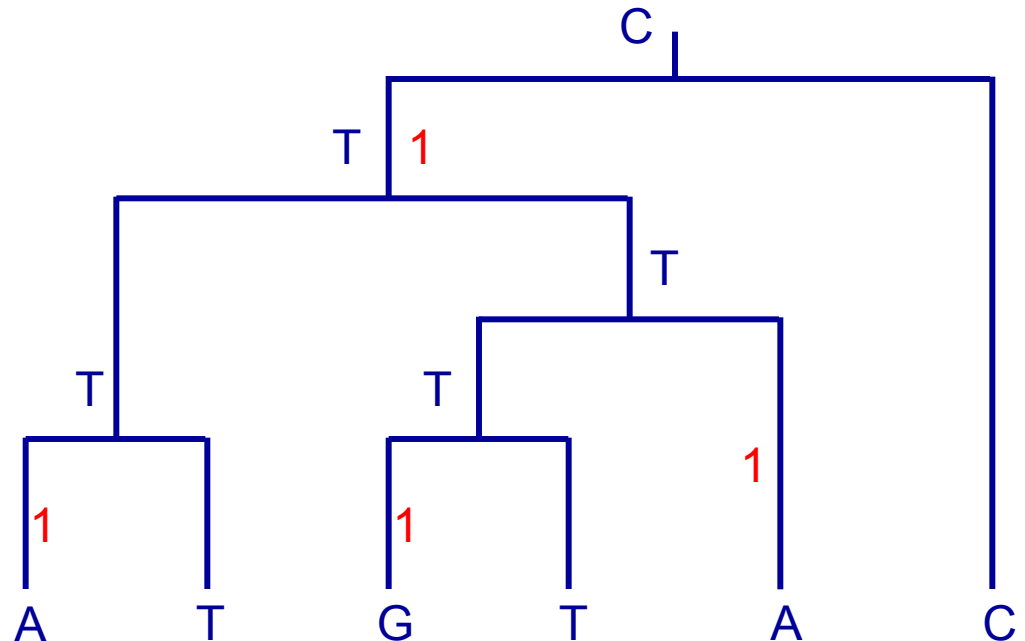
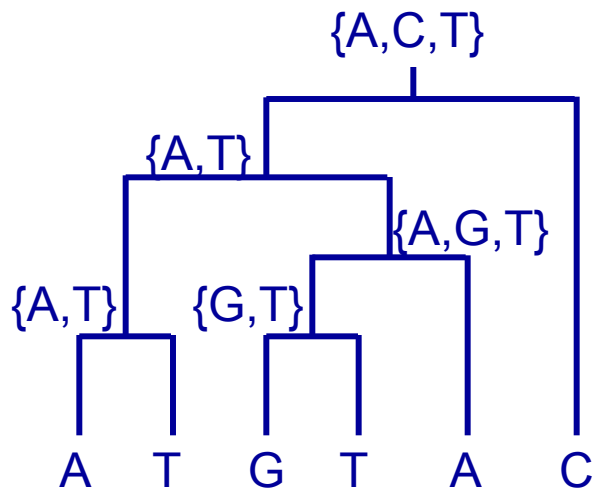
Fitch's Algorithm: top-down

- Selecting states r_i (first choice T): 4 mutations



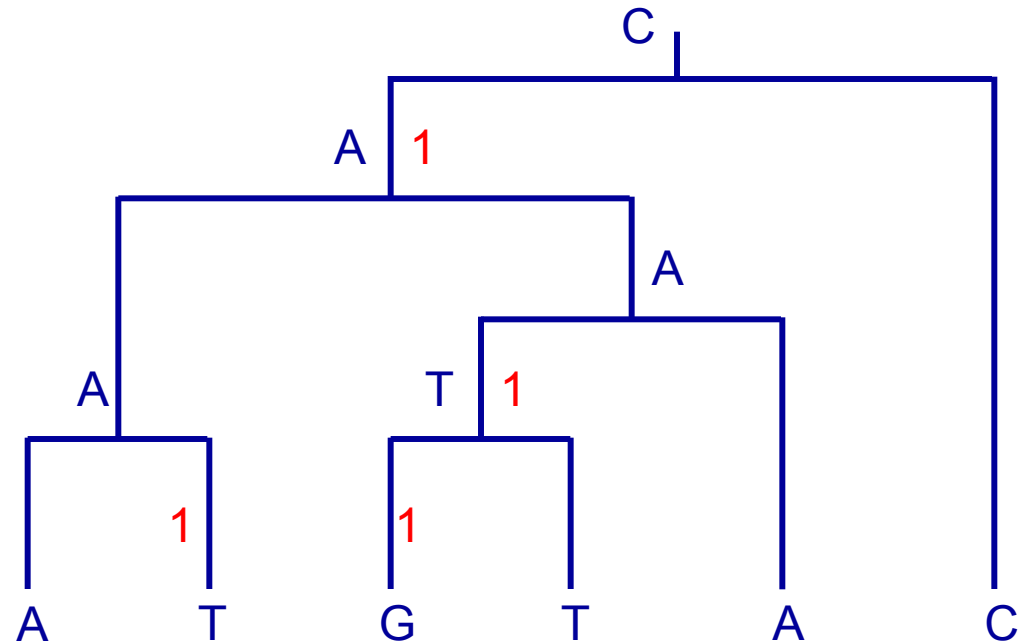
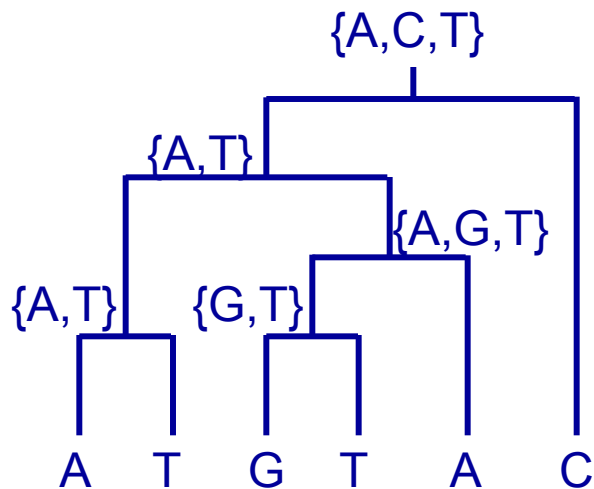
Fitch's Algorithm: top-down

- Selecting states r_i (first choice C, then T): 4 mutations



Fitch's Algorithm: top-down

- Selecting states r_i (first choice C, then A): 4 mutations



Distance-based approaches

Distance-based Approaches

- **Input:** an $n \times n$ symmetric matrix M of pairwise distances between the objects
 - M_{ij} gives the distance between i and j
- **Output:** an edge-weighted tree such that the distance between leaves i and j is M_{ij}
- Two basic methods:
 - **UPGMA** produces a rooted tree under the molecular clock assumption if data is *ultrametric*
 - **NJ** produces an unrooted tree if data is *additive*

The UPGMA Method

Unweighted **P**air **G**roup **M**ethod using Arithmetic **A**verages

- basic idea:
 - iteratively pick two clusters and merge them
 - create a new node in tree for the merged cluster
 - update the distances between clusters and objects
- clusters are groups of objects sharing a common ancestor
- distance between two clusters C_i and C_j defined as:

$$d_{ij} = \frac{\sum_{p \in C_i} \sum_{q \in C_j} d_{pq}}{|C_i| \cdot |C_j|}$$

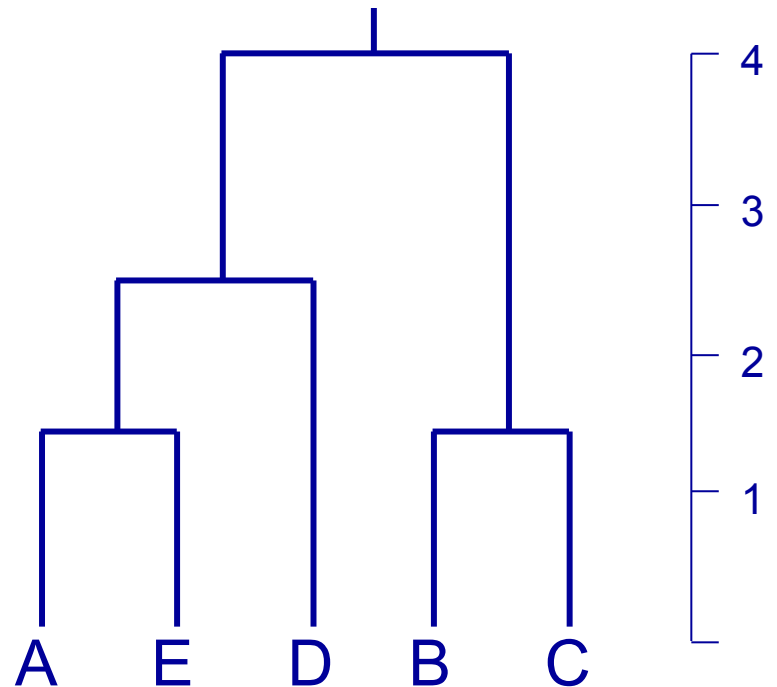
(avg. distance between pairs of elements from clusters)

The UPGMA Method

Input: matrix of distances

	A	B	C	D	E
A	0	8	8	5	3
B		0	3	8	8
C			0	8	8
D				0	5
E					0

Output: rooted tree



UPGMA Algorithm

Build a phylogenetic tree with UPGMA method

- define a leaf for each taxon/species
and place it at height 0
- make each leaf a cluster
- while there exists more than one cluster
 - find two clusters C_i, C_j with smallest d_{ij}
- define a new cluster $C_k = C_i \cup C_j$
 - define new node k with children i and j at height $\frac{1}{2}d_{ij}$
 - replace clusters C_i and C_j by C_k

New distance

How do we define the distance of C_f to the **new cluster** C_k ?

That is, how do we find d_{fk} from d_{fi} and d_{fj} for a given C_f ?

$$\begin{aligned} d_{fk} &= \frac{\sum_{q \in C_k}^{p \in C_f} d_{pq}}{|C_f| \cdot |C_k|} = \frac{\sum_{q \in C_i}^{p \in C_f} d_{pq} + \sum_{q \in C_j}^{p \in C_f} d_{pq}}{|C_f| \cdot |C_k|} \\ &= \frac{\frac{\sum_{q \in C_i}^{p \in C_f} d_{pq}}{|C_f|} + \frac{\sum_{q \in C_j}^{p \in C_f} d_{pq}}{|C_f|}}{|C_k|} = \frac{d_{fi} \cdot |C_i| + d_{fj} \cdot |C_j|}{|C_i| + |C_j|} \end{aligned}$$

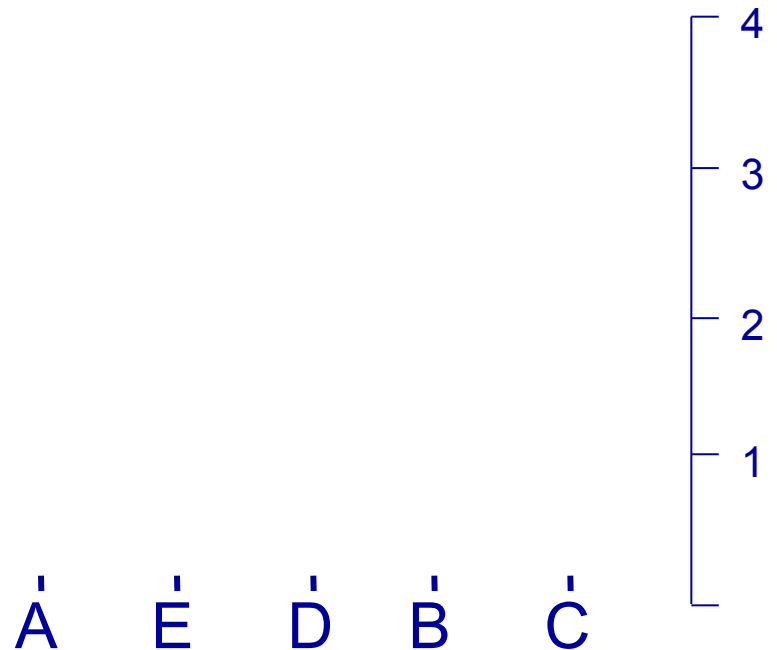
Now it only takes constant time to compute d_{fk} .

Running UPGMA algorithm (1)

Matrix of distances

	A	B	C	D	E
A	0	8	8	5	3
B		0	3	8	8
C			0	8	8
D				0	5
E					0

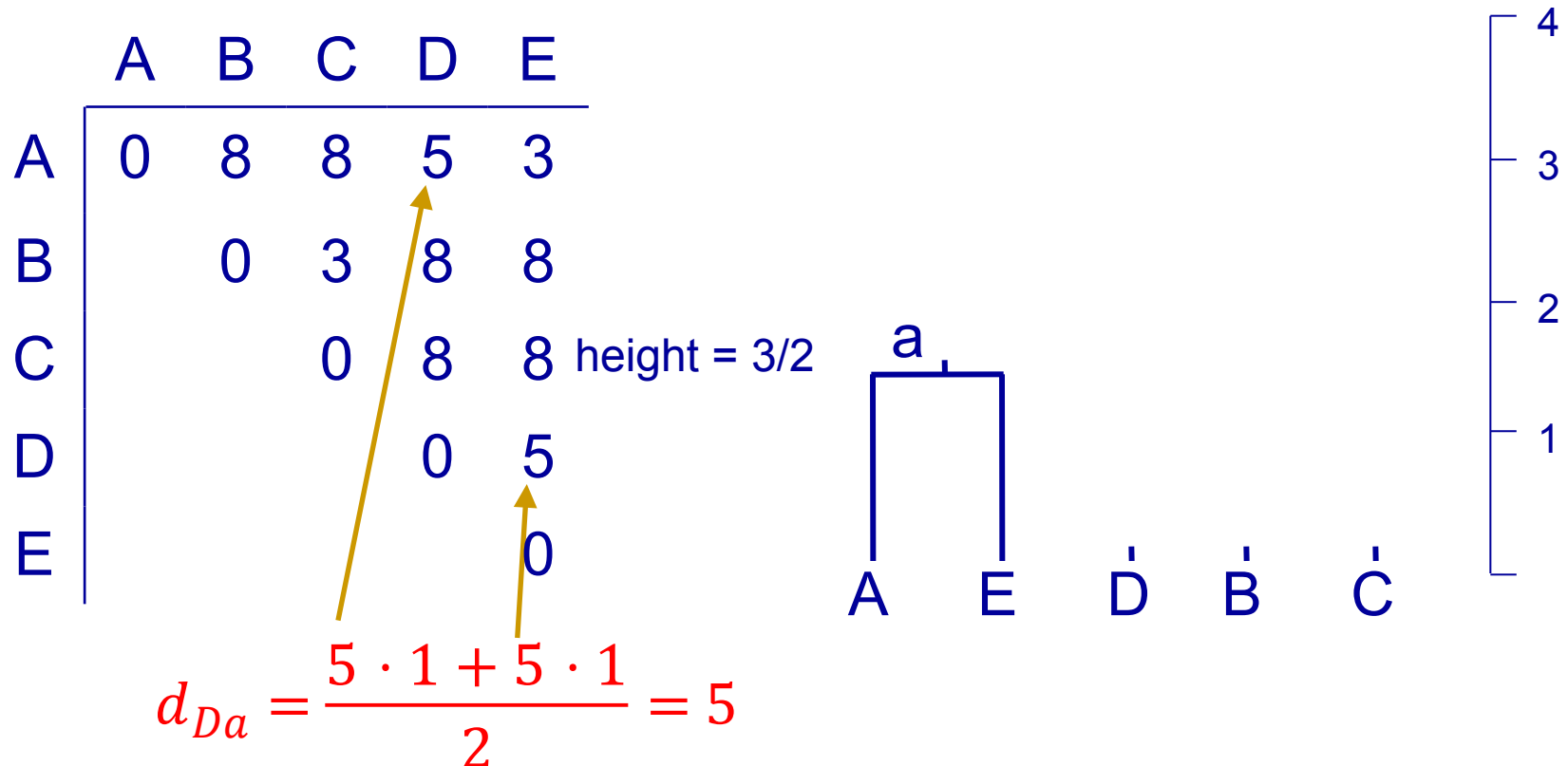
Tree



Running UPGMA algorithm (2)

Matrix of distances

Tree

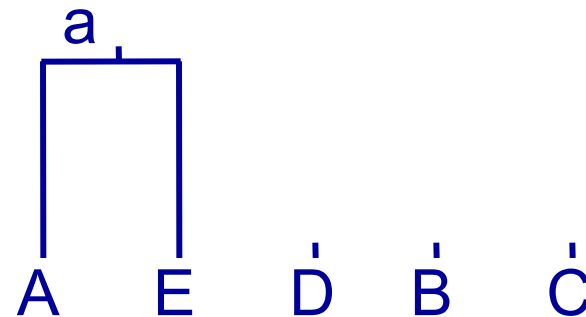


Running UPGMA algorithm (2)

Matrix of distances

	a	B	C	D
a	0	8	8	5
B		0	3	8
C			0	8
D				0

height = 3/2



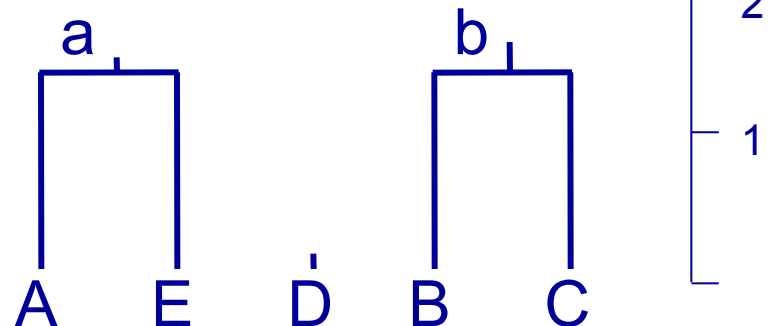
$$d_{Da} = \frac{5 \cdot 1 + 5 \cdot 1}{2} = 5$$

Running UPGMA algorithm (3)

Matrix of distances

	a	B	C	D
a	0	8	8	5
B		0	3	8
C			0	8
D				0

height = 3/2



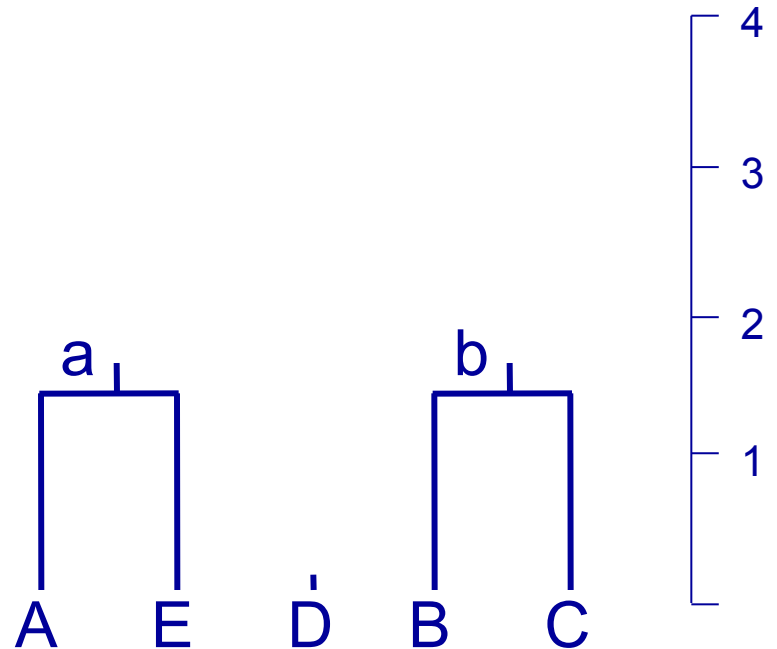
Running UPGMA algorithm (3)

Matrix of distances

	a	b	D
a	0	8	5
b		0	8
D			0

Tree

height = 3/2



Running UPGMA algorithm (4)

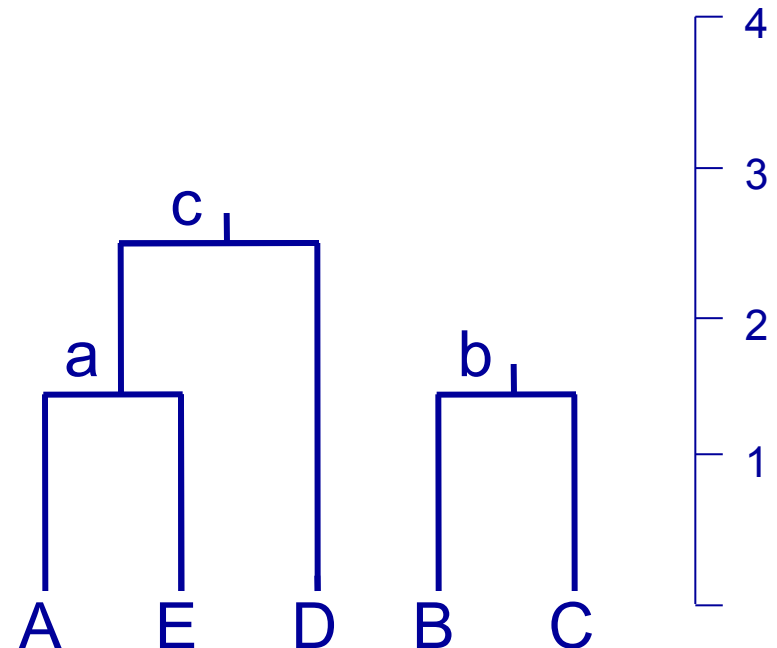
Matrix of distances

	a	b	D
a	0	8	5
b		0	8
D			0

height = 5/2

$$d_{bc} = \frac{8 \cdot 2 + 8 \cdot 1}{3} = 8$$

Tree

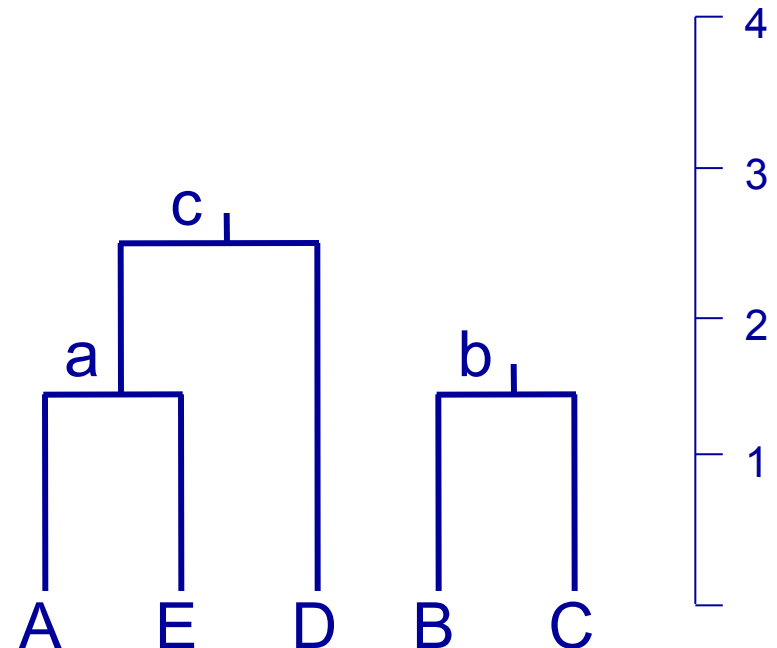


Running UPGMA algorithm (4)

Matrix of distances

	b	c
b	0	8
c		0

height = 5/2



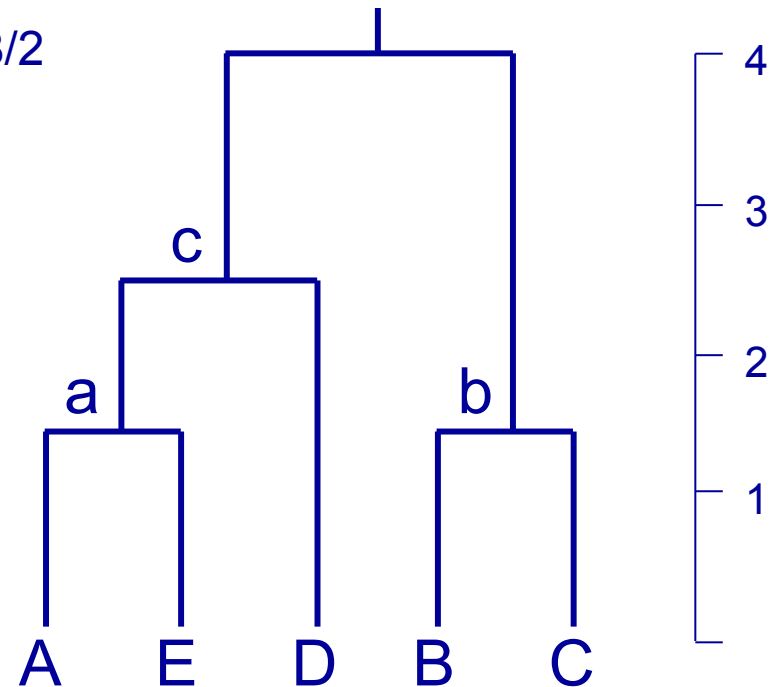
$$d_{bc} = \frac{8 \cdot 2 + 8 \cdot 1}{3} = 8$$

Running UPGMA algorithm (5)

Last step, joining b and c

Tree

height = $8/2$

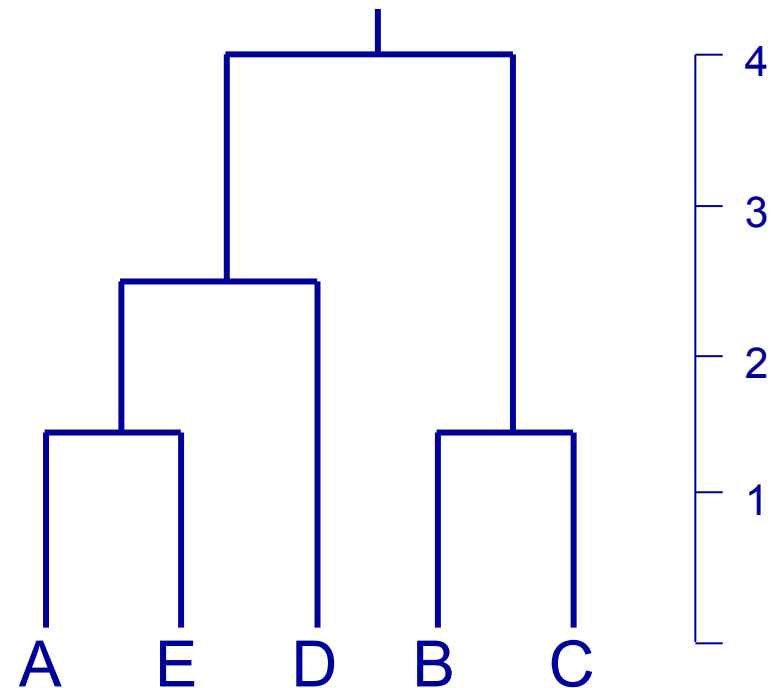


Running UPGMA algorithm (6)

Matrix of distances

	A	B	C	D	E
A	0	8	8	5	3
B		0	3	8	8
C			0	8	8
D				0	5
E					0

Tree



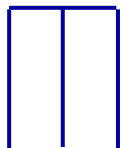
The Molecular Clock Assumption

- the molecular clock assumption: divergence of sequences/species assumed to occur at the **same rate** at all points in the tree
- generally not true due to: changes in the intensity of natural selection, change in function of the protein studied, species-specific differences, population size, changing generation times, etc.
- if it does hold, then the data is said to be **ultrametric**
- **UPGMA algorithm only works on ultrametric data**

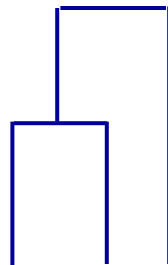
Ultrametric Data

- Ultrametric data: for every triplet of taxa, i, j, k , their distances are either all equal or two are equal and the remaining one is smaller

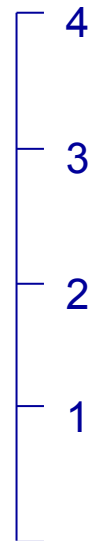
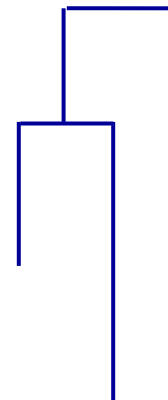
0	2	2
	0	2
		0



0	2	4
	0	4
		0



0	3	5
	0	4
		0



Neighbor Joining

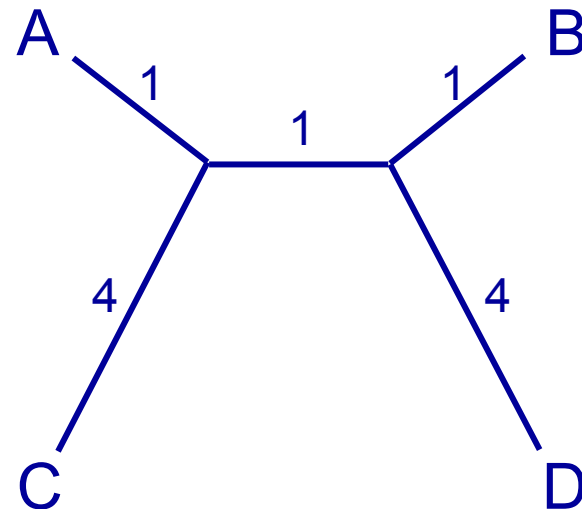
- Like UPGMA, constructs a tree by iteratively joining subtrees
- Unlike UPGMA
 - does not assume the molecular clock assumption
 - produces an unrooted tree
- More general assumption than ultrametricity: **additivity**

Neighbor Joining

Input: matrix of distances

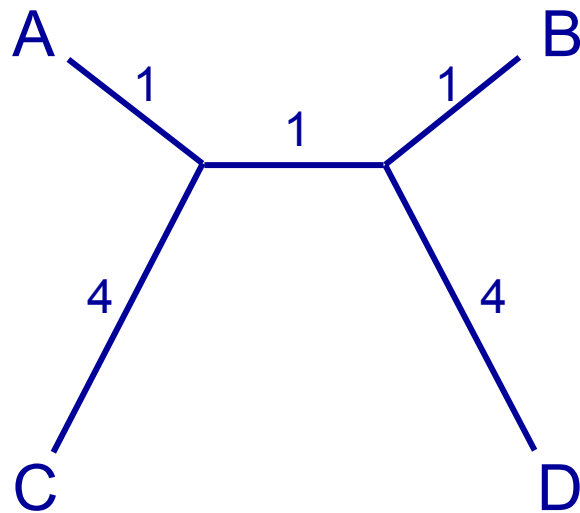
Output: unrooted tree

	A	B	C	D
A	0	3	5	6
B		0	6	5
C			0	9
D				0



Picking Pairs of Nodes to Join

- At each step, we pick a pair of nodes to join; should we pick pair with smallest d_{ij} ? **NO**
- Suppose the real tree looks like this and we're picking the first pair of nodes to join

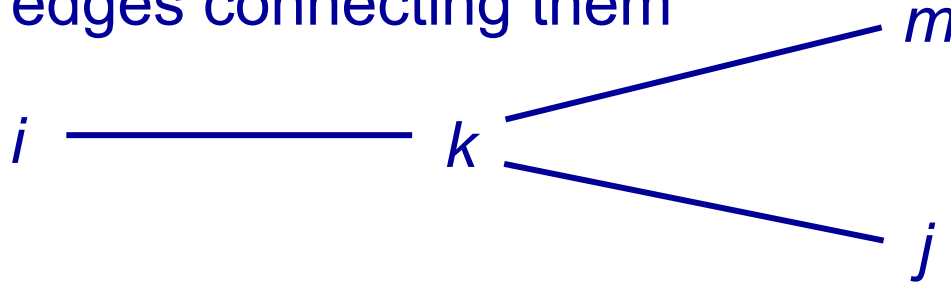


$d_{AB} = 3$ is the smallest distance between two taxa

- **Wrong decision: we will never get the tree**

Distances in Neighbor Joining

- Consider that we want to join i and j to a new node k
- The distance between any pair of leaves is the sum of lengths of edges connecting them



- We can thus compute the new distance from i to k as follows:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} d_{im} = d_{ik} + d_{km} \\ d_{jm} = d_{jk} + d_{km} \\ d_{ij} = d_{ik} + d_{kj} \end{array} \right\} d_{ik} = \frac{1}{2}(d_{ij} + d_{im} - d_{jm})$$

Distances in Neighbor Joining

- We now generalize the previous identity to account for the distance to all other leaves:

$$w_{ij} = \frac{1}{2}(d_{ij} + r_{ij} - r_{ji})$$

(w for weight) where

$$r_{ij} = \frac{\sum_{m \in L \setminus \{i,j\}} d_{im}}{|L| - 2}$$

and L is the set of leaves (avg. distance of i to all leaves except j)

- Beware:** w_{ij} not always equals w_{ji}

NJ Algorithm

Build a phylogenetic tree with NJ method

- define one leaf for each taxon/species
- while more than two remaining nodes
 - find ordered pair i and j with smallest weight w_{ij}
 - join i and j to a new node k with $d_{ik} = w_{ij}$
 - replace nodes i and j by k and update distances with $d_{km} = d_{im} - d_{ik}$ for every node $m \neq i$

Running NJ algorithm (1)

Find the smallest w_{ij}

	A	B	C	D
A	0	3	5	6
B		0	6	5
C			0	9
D				0

$$w_{AB} = \frac{1}{2} \left(3 + \frac{5+6}{2} - \frac{6+5}{2} \right) = 1.5$$

$$w_{AC} = \frac{1}{2} \left(5 + \frac{3+6}{2} - \frac{6+9}{2} \right) = \mathbf{1}$$

$$w_{AD} = \frac{1}{2} \left(6 + \frac{3+5}{2} - \frac{5+9}{2} \right) = 1.5$$

$$w_{BA} = \frac{1}{2} \left(3 + \frac{6+5}{2} - \frac{5+6}{2} \right) = 1.5$$

$$w_{BC} = \frac{1}{2} \left(6 + \frac{3+5}{2} - \frac{5+9}{2} \right) = 1.5$$

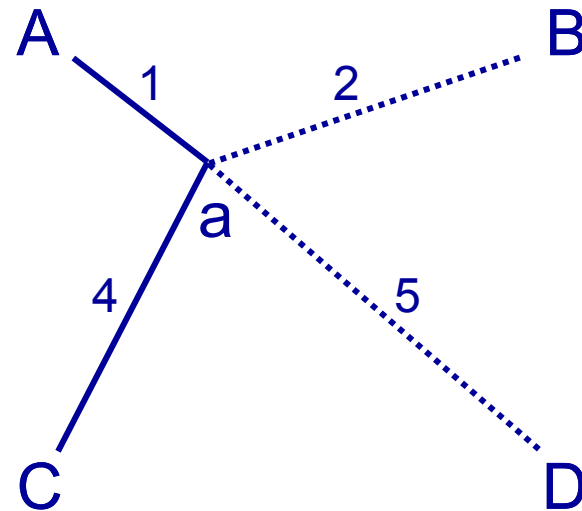
$$w_{BD} = \frac{1}{2} \left(5 + \frac{\begin{smallmatrix} \vdots \\ 3+6 \\ \vdots \end{smallmatrix}}{2} - \frac{6+9}{2} \right) = \mathbf{1}$$

Running NJ algorithm (2)

Matrix of distances

	A	B	C	D
A	0	3	5	6
B		0	6	5
C			0	9
D				0

Tree



nodes **A** and **C** with smallest weight $w_{AC} = 1$

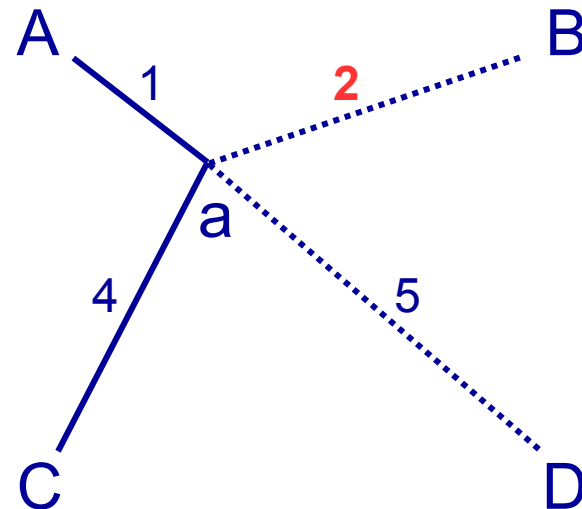
join **A** and **C** to a new node **a** with $d_{Aa} = w_{AC} = 1$

Running NJ algorithm (2)

Matrix of distances

	a	B	D
a	0	2	5
B		0	5
D			0

Tree



update distance $d_{aB} = d_{AB} - d_{aA} = 3 - 1 = \mathbf{2}$

Running NJ algorithm (2)

Find the smallest w_{ij}

	a	B	D
a	0	2	5
B		0	5
D			0

$$w_{aB} = \frac{1}{2} \left(2 + \frac{5}{1} - \frac{5}{1} \right) = 1$$

$$w_{aD} = \frac{1}{2} \left(5 + \frac{2}{1} - \frac{5}{1} \right) = 1$$

$$w_{Ba} = \frac{1}{2} \left(2 + \frac{5}{1} - \frac{5}{1} \right) = 1$$

$$w_{BD} = \frac{1}{2} \left(5 + \frac{2}{1} - \frac{5}{1} \right) = 1$$

$$w_{Da} = \frac{1}{2} \left(5 + \frac{5}{1} - \frac{2}{1} \right) = 4$$

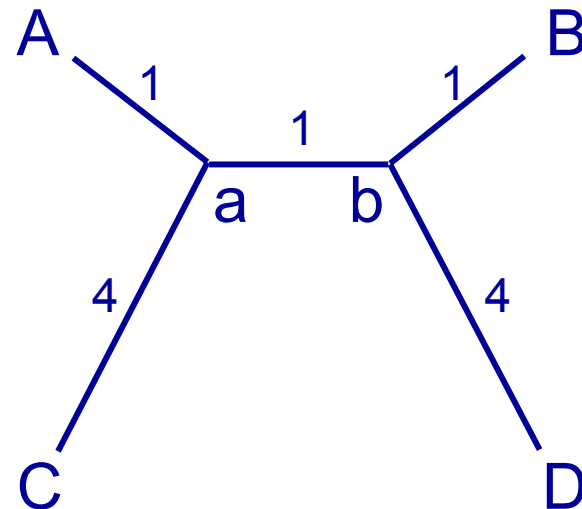
$$w_{DB} = \frac{1}{2} \left(5 + \frac{5}{1} - \frac{2}{1} \right) = 4$$

Running NJ algorithm (3)

Matrix of distances

	a	B	D
a	0	2	5
B		0	5
D			0

Tree

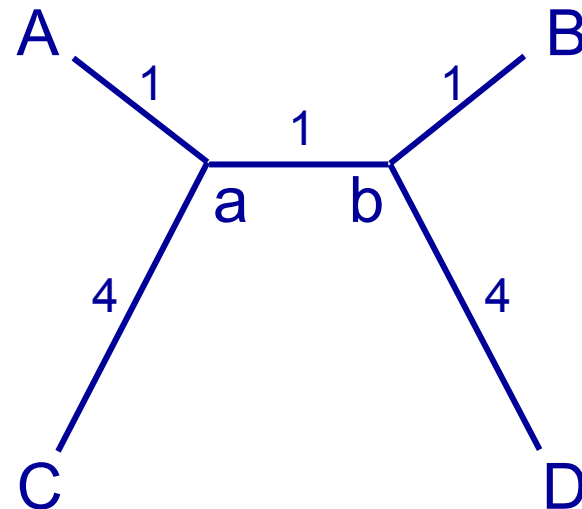


Running NJ algorithm (3)

Matrix of distances

	b	D
b	0	4
D		0

Tree

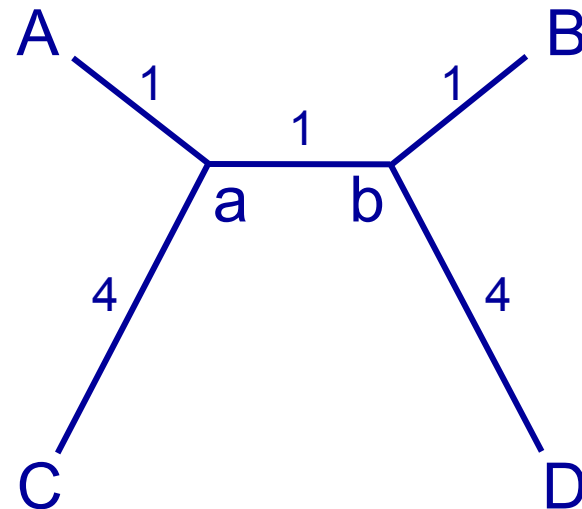


Running NJ algorithm (4)

Matrix of distances

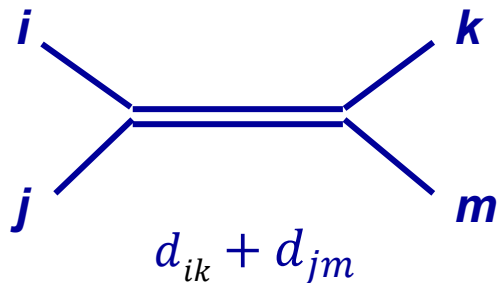
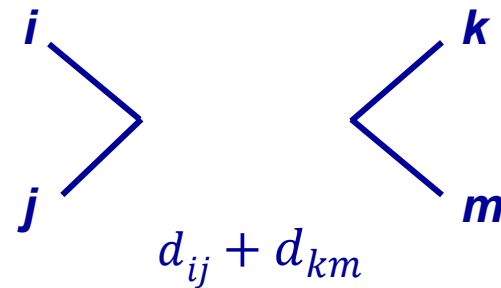
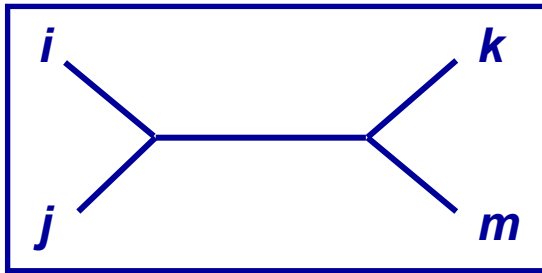
	A	B	C	D
A	0	3	5	6
B		0	6	5
C			0	9
D				0

Final tree

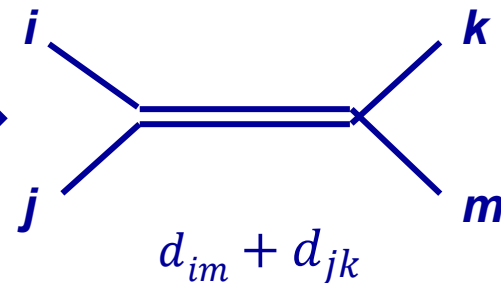


Testing for Additivity

- For every set of four leaves, i, j, k and m , two of the sums $d_{ij} + d_{km}$, $d_{ik} + d_{jm}$, $d_{im} + d_{jk}$ must be equal and larger than the third (triplet condition)

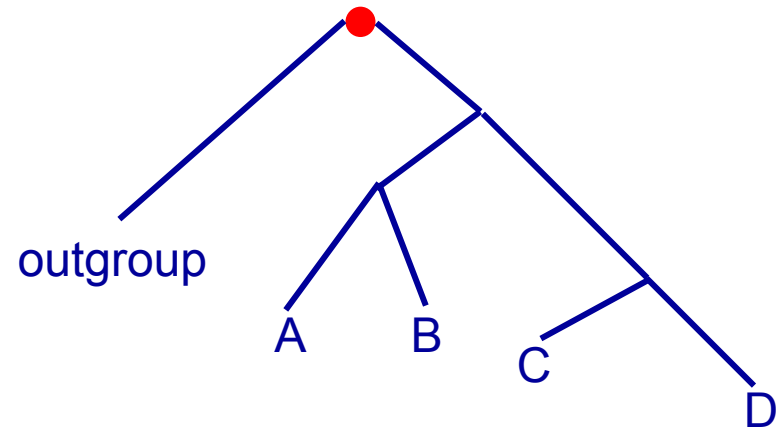
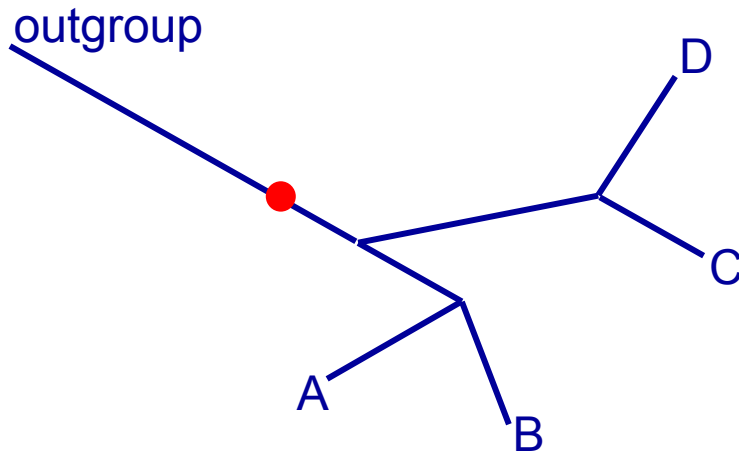


equal



Rooting Trees

- Finding a root in an unrooted tree is sometimes accomplished by using an **outgroup**
- Outgroup: a species known to be more distantly related to remaining species than they are to each other
- Best candidate for root position on the edge joining the outgroup to the rest of the tree



Comments on Distance Based Methods (1)

- If the given distance data is **ultrametric** (and these distances represent real distances), then UPGMA will identify the correct tree
- If the data is **additive** (and these distances represent real distances), then neighbor joining will identify the correct tree
- Otherwise, the methods may not recover the correct tree, but they may still be reasonable heuristics
- If the data is ultrametric, it is also additive

Comments on Distance Based Methods (2)

- Both UPGMA and NJ work by iteratively joining two "nearby" nodes and replacing them with the new node
- UPGMA can be implemented in $O(n^2 \log n)$ time using an efficient priority queue
- NJ can be implemented in $O(n^3)$ time
- NJ is slower because we need to recompute the weights after every iteration, whereas UPGMA allows quick dynamic updates

Conclusion

- finding the right tree structure is hard
- perfect phylogeny: each feature labels exactly one edge
- Fitch's algorithm minimizes the number of mutations for each character (maximum parsimony) given a tree
- distance-based methods
 - UPGMA requires ultrametric data, assuming the molecular clock assumption
 - NJ requires additive data, but produces an unrooted tree