



Animal Linear Search

Educator's Guide

Overview

CS Hands-On is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit teaching computational thinking skills through technology-free lessons and activities. This curriculum is built to teach fundamental computer science concepts in an engaging, hands-on way. In this mission, students will learn how to use linear search to search through a list of animals.

- **Prerequisite Knowledge**

Student should have completed the A-Maze-ing Mazes activity, which introduces the concept of algorithms.

- **Lesson Details**

At Algorithpoly, students will learn to create effective algorithms with Ansel. In this lesson, students will learn the importance of linear search and everyday examples of when we use linear search. Then, students will use linear search to sort through a list of animals to find a specific animal.

This lesson was developed for students ages 6 to 13, and can be modified for students of all skills and ages. This lesson takes roughly 30 minutes.

Learning Objectives

- **Key Question**

How can we use linear search to search through a list?

- **Key Terms**

Linear Search: The simplest search algorithm which checks each item in a list from beginning to end until a certain item is found.

- **Curriculum Standards**

Students should be able to...

- Explain the importance and use of linear search (Algorithms)
- Read, write, and interpret linear search (Literacy)
- Search through a list of animals using linear search (Creative Arts)

[View standards addressed here](#)



Lesson Plan

• Materials

- A-Maze-ing Mazes worksheet (per student)

• Setup

- Hand out a Time to Dance worksheet to each student
- Set up your classroom to form students in groups of 2

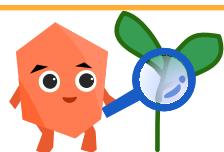
ANSWER KEY & LESSON ANNOTATIONS

Name: _____ Date: _____

Animal Linear Search

Detective Mode

Are you ready to be a detective for the day? Join Ansel on a mission to search through information with the linear search algorithm!



What is a Linear Search?

In computer science, a linear search is the **simplest** algorithm to search for something in a list. The search begins by checking each item in a list from **beginning to end** until a certain item is found.

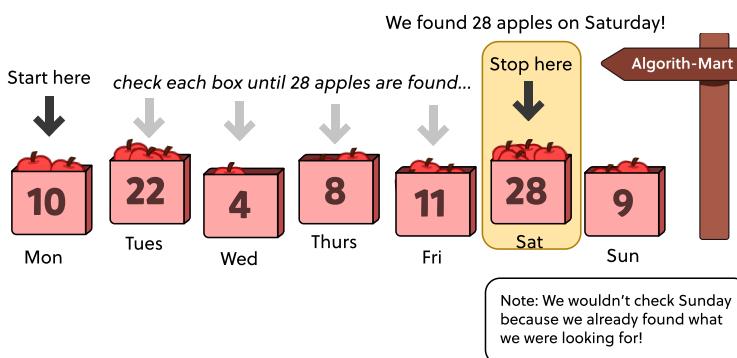
Reflect

More likely than not, students have been using linear search in their everyday lives! What are typical examples of this?

Examples could include finding a specific book in a library and looking for chips in a snack aisle.

Take a Walk to Algorithm-Mart!

Let's take a look at an example. Below is a list of apples sold at Algorithm-Mart last week, where Ansel wants to find the day they sold 28 apples. Using linear search, we start on 10 apples sold from Monday and go down the list until we find 45 apples sold on Saturday!





Why is Linear Search Important?

As shown in Algorith-Mart, we can use linear searches to **sort through a list of information** in a simple way. For instance, we may want to find a specific food item in a grocery list. Or, we may want to find the highest number of soccer goals made in a match!

Animal Search

Below is a list of 10 animals. Fill in the star next to **only one** of the animals. That animal will be the one you are searching for!

Eli the Eagle		Belle the Bear	
Dixie the Dog		Sal the Snail	
Rex the Rabbit		Ben the Beaver	
Leo the Lion		Coco the Cat	
Will the Whale		Paris the Pig	

Next, cut out the ten animal labels below and place them in a cup. Have a friend choose a random animal from the pile until they draw the animal with a star!

Perform 3 trials and record how many draws you took.

Trial #1	Trial #2	Trial #3
Draws taken: _____	Draws taken: _____	Draws taken: _____

Reflect

Evaluate the draws taken for the three trials. Is there a similarity between the numbers?

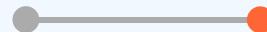
With linear search, the number of draws taken can range anywhere from 1 to 10. In a random setting, our average number of draws taken should round to about half the number of items in our list, 5.



Reflection

Fantastic job, you just performed linear search by drawing each animal one by one until selecting the starred animal! Based on your experience, brainstorm 2-3 advantages and disadvantages of linear search in the table below.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to use• Simple and efficient algorithm for smaller lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can take a lot of time to use for a large list• Continues to increase time at the same rate as we increase items



Wrap up & reflect

Group students into pairs and have them discuss the following reflection questions. Afterwards, have students share their ideas as a class.

- Why do you think searching with linear search was more efficient than using no algorithms at all?
Ex. Linear search provided us with an organized way of searching for an item. If we were to search randomly, it would likely take us much longer.
- What are two other scenarios in which we could use linear search to find items?
Ex. Finding a card from a deck of cards and finding a name on a roster.