

# On the Turing Completeness of Recurrent Neural Networks

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# Motivations

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- ▶ Natural-language processing
- ▶ In general, all perceptual tasks

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# Why Turing completeness

From a theory-of-computation standpoint:

- ▶ It would be nice to know that neural networks are as powerful as Turing machines (TMs)
- ▶ So as to ensure that any **effectively calculable** function is computable by a neural network (Church–Turing thesis)

# The result

As it turns out, given a TM, we can build a **recurrent** neural network (RNN) with **rational weights and biases** that computes the same function as the TM

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  - ▶ Explicit separation of control (state) and memory (tape)
  - ▶ If-then conditionals used for updates
- ▶ **“Neural”** computation (RNNs):
  - ▶ Continuous values
  - ▶ No intrinsic separation of state vs memory
  - ▶ No intrinsic Boolean logic

## Our contribution



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- ▶ The article dates back to 1992

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  - ▶ And providing a Python implementation of such example
- ▶ Most importantly, giving a more detailed and (hopefully) pleasant structure to the proof itself
  - ▶ Which, in our experience, was pretty frustrating to make sense of

# Preliminaries

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- ▶ And, actually, instead of considering a TM, we will start from a **double-stack pushdown automaton** (double-stack PDA)
- ▶ This is not a problem, since double-stack PDAs can be proven to be computationally equivalent to single-tape TMs
  - ▶ That is, a function is computable by a double-stack PDA if and only if it is computable by a single-tape TM

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- ▶ We choose the following encoding, where  $a_i \in \{0, 1\}$ :

$a_1$
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$\vdots$
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$$\longrightarrow q = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{2a_i + 1}{4^i} \in \mathbb{Q}$$



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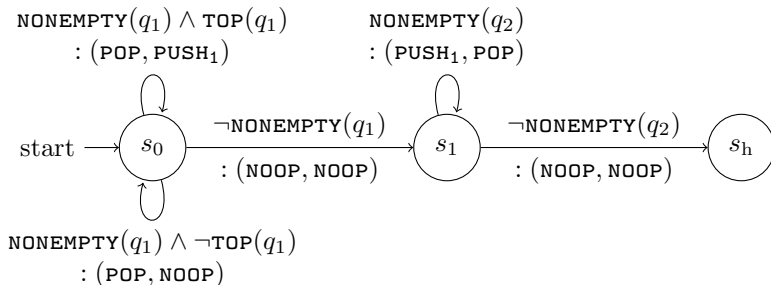
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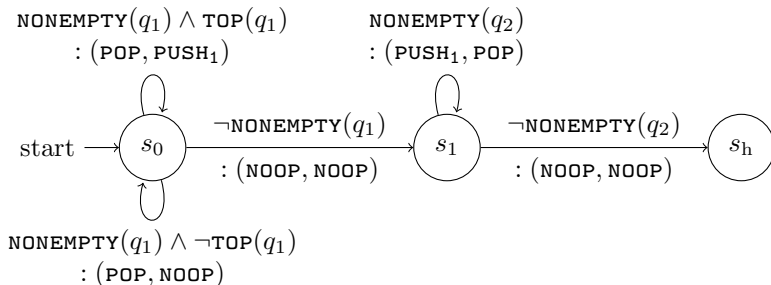
- ▶  $q \in [0, 1)$ 
  - ▶ So, it might be a good candidate for a neuron activation ...

PDA  $\rightarrow$  RNN

# Double-stack PDA computing unary addition

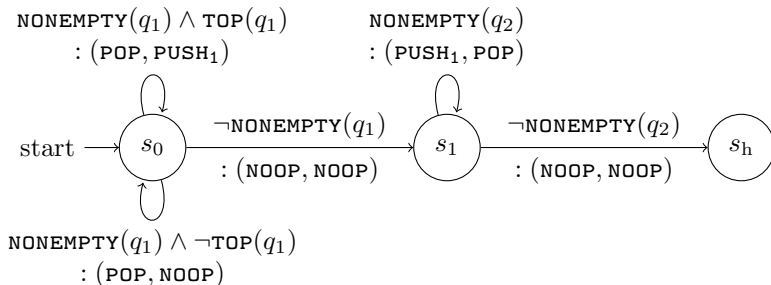


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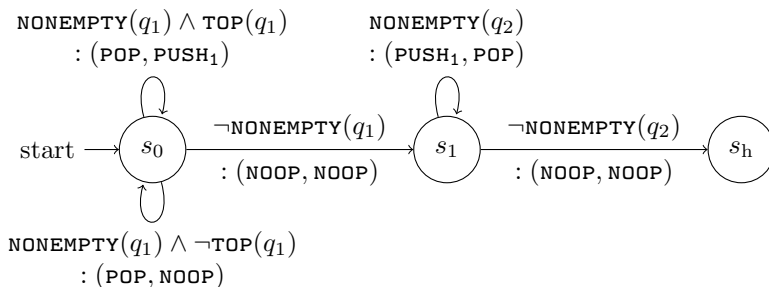
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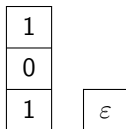
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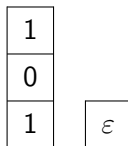
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► E.g.  $1 + 1 \longrightarrow$



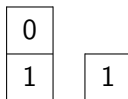
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Start





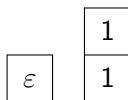
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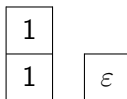


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Halt



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  - ▶  $q_{1,2} \in [0, 1)$  is the rational encoding of the content of stack 1, 2
- ▶ Therefore,  $(x_0, x_1, x_h, q_1, q_2)$  will be the **input layer** of the neural network we are building



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- ▶ Namely, something like  $\sigma(Wa + b)$ , where:
  - ▶  $\sigma$  is a **sigmoid function**
  - ▶  $W$  is a matrix
  - ▶  $a$  and  $b$  are vectors

- ▶ Yes, it is!

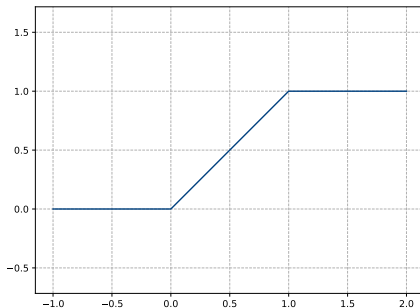


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$$x_0^+ = \sigma(x_0^+)$$

where  $\sigma$  is

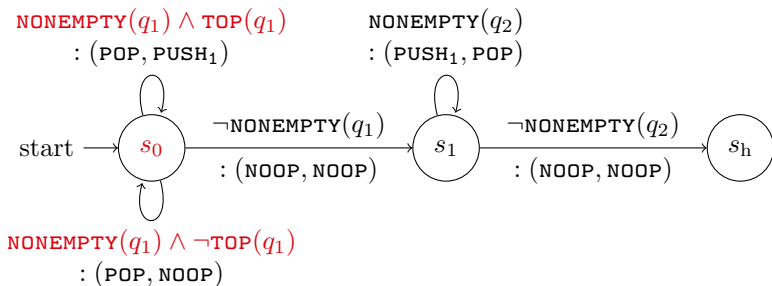


(remember that  $x_0^+ \in \{0, 1\}$ )

- Yes, it is!
- Let us start from  $x_0^+$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 x_0^+ &= \sigma(x_0^+) \\
 &= \sigma(x_0 \cdot \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) \cdot \text{TOP}(q_1) + \\
 &\quad x_0 \cdot \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) \cdot \neg \text{TOP}(q_1))
 \end{aligned}$$

since



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 &= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) + \text{TOP}(q_1) - 2) + \\
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 \end{aligned}$$

because of the following lemma:

### Lemma

Let  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_k \in \{0, 1\}$ . Then

$$a_1 a_2 \dots a_k = \sigma(a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k - k + 1)$$

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 &= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) + \sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 2) + \\
 &\quad \sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) + 1 - \sigma(q_1 - 2) - 2))
 \end{aligned}$$

because of the following theorem:

## Theorem

*Let  $q$  be the rational encoding of a stack content. Then*

$$\text{TOP}(q) = \sigma(4q - 2), \quad \text{NONEMPTY}(q) = \sigma(4q)$$

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 \end{aligned}$$

## Input layer $\rightarrow$ output layer

- We did it! We computed  $x_0^+$  using only  $\sigma$  and linear combinations of input-layer activations  $(x_0, x_1, x_h, q_1, q_2)$

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  - ▶ In particular, we used  $x_0$  and  $q_1$



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  - ▶ In particular, we used  $x_0$  and  $q_1$
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$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{input} & & \text{input} & & \text{input} & & \text{input} & & \text{input} & & \text{input} & & \text{input} \\ \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow & & \uparrow \\ x_0^+ = & \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + & \underbrace{\sigma(4q_1)}_{\ell_1} + & \underbrace{\sigma(4q_1 - 2)}_{\ell_1} - 2) & + & \sigma(x_0 + & \underbrace{\sigma(4q_1)}_{\ell_1} - & \underbrace{\sigma(4q_1 - 2)}_{\ell_1} - 1)) \\ & \underbrace{\hspace{10em}}_{\ell_2} & & \underbrace{\hspace{10em}}_{\ell_2} & & & & & & & & & \\ & \underbrace{\hspace{15em}}_{\text{output}} & & & & & & & & & & & \end{array}$$

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- Let us skip the calculations (which are similar to those we have already seen anyway) and just show the final results:

$$x_1^+ = \dots = \sigma(\sigma(x_0 - \sigma(4q_1)) + \sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 1))$$

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$$\begin{aligned} q_2^+ = \dots = & \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + \tfrac{1}{4}q_2 - \tfrac{9}{4}) + \\ & \sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + q_2 - 2) + \\ & \sigma(x_0 - \sigma(4q_1) + q_2 - 1) + \\ & \sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 2\sigma(4q_2 - 2) + 4q_2 - 3) + \\ & \sigma(x_1 - \sigma(4q_2) + q_2 - 1)) \end{aligned}$$

- We are done: we built a neural network whose input layer is the description of the PDA at time  $t$ , namely,

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- ▶ Let us look at its graphical depiction:

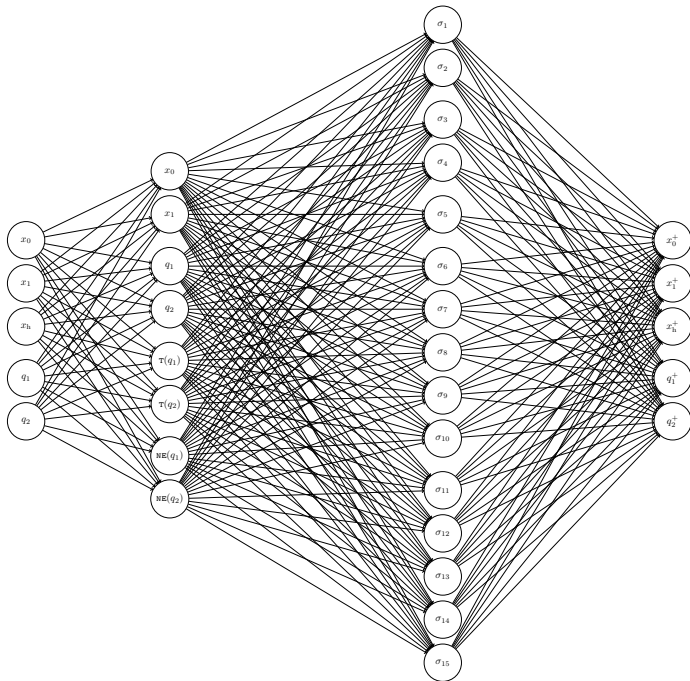


Input layer

Layer 1

Layer 2

Layer 3 (output)



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If  $x_h^+ = 1$ , then  $q_{1,2}^+$  is the rational encoding of the content of stack 1, 2 at the end of the PDA execution

# Implementation (Python 3 + NumPy)

## Fragment of class Network

```
def __init__(self):
    self.weights = [
        numpy.array(...), # matrix W1
        numpy.array(...), # matrix W2
        numpy.array(...)  # matrix W3
    ]
    self.biases = [
        numpy.array(...), # vector b1
        numpy.array(...), # vector b2
        numpy.array(...)  # vector b3
    ]
```

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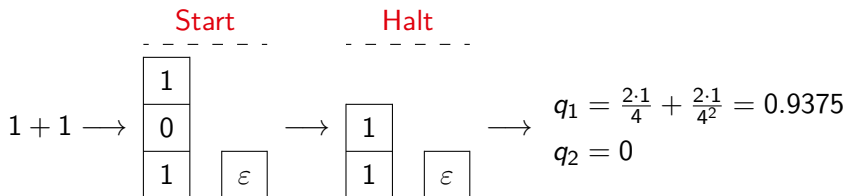
```
def execute(self, stack1):

    def feedforward(a):
        if a[2] == 1:
            return a[3], a[4]
        for w, b in zip(self.weights, self.biases):
            a = sigmoid(numpy.dot(w, a) + b)
        return feedforward(a)

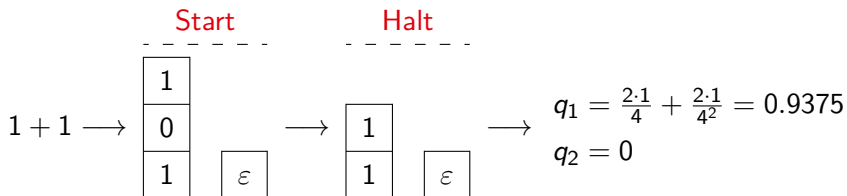
    a = numpy.array(
        [1, 0, 0, Stack(stack1).encoding, Stack([]).encoding]
    )
    return feedforward(a)
```

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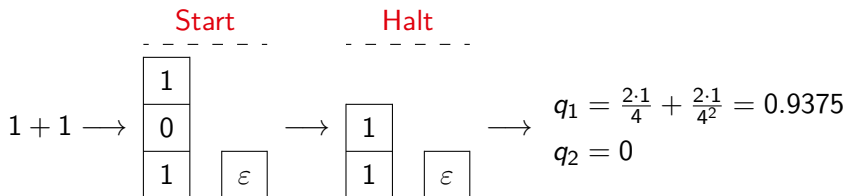


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- What to expect:



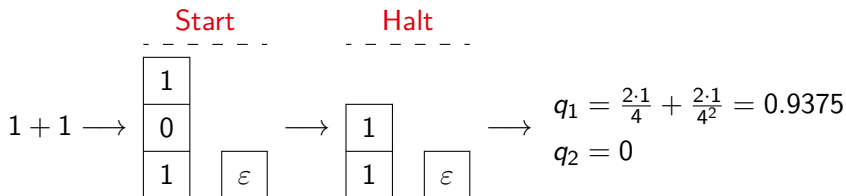
- What we get:

Test

```
>>> Network().execute([1, 0, 1])
```



- What to expect:



- What we get:

Test

```
>>> Network().execute([1, 0, 1])
(0.9375, 0.0)
```

# Conclusions

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  - ▶ And it comes up because we encoded stack contents as rational numbers but we didn't put a limit on stack size
- ▶ In the example we saw, the derivation of the network was carried on “**by hand**”, and the implementation needed **precomputed** weight matrices and bias vectors
  - ▶ One might think of automating the construction by devising a program that derives the weight matrices and bias vectors from any given double-stack PDA, and then runs a simulation



# Bibliography



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On the Computational Power of Neural Nets

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Siegelmann & Sontag's "On the Computational Power of Neural Nets"

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Michael A. Nielsen

Neural Networks and Deep Learning

Determination Press, 2015

<http://neuralnetworksanddeeplearning.com>

## Lemma (Properties of $q$ )

Let  $a_1 a_2 \dots a_n \in \{0, 1\}^*$  and  $q = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{2a_i + 1}{4^i} \in \mathbb{Q}$ . Then

- ①  $q \in [0, 1)$
- ②  $q = 0 \iff \omega = \varepsilon$  ( $\varepsilon$  is the empty string)
- ③  $q \in \left[\frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{2}\right) \iff a_1 = 0$
- ④  $q \in \left[\frac{3}{4}, 1\right) \iff a_1 = 1$

## Theorem (stack-operation encodings)

- ①  $\text{TOP}(q) = \sigma(4q - 2)$
- ②  $\text{NONEMPTY}(q) = \sigma(4q)$
- ③  $\text{PUSH}_0(q) = \frac{q}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$
- ④  $\text{PUSH}_1(q) = \frac{q}{4} + \frac{3}{4}$
- ⑤  $\text{POP}(q) = 4q - 2\sigma(4q - 2) - 1$
- ⑥  $\text{NOOP}(q) = q$

## Proof.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{TOP}(q) = 0 &\implies q \in \left[\frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{2}\right) \\ &\implies 4q - 2 \in [-1, 0) \\ &\implies \sigma(4q - 2) = 0\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{TOP}(q) = 1 &\implies q \in \left[\frac{3}{4}, 1\right) \\ &\implies 4q - 2 \in [1, 2) \\ &\implies \sigma(4q - 2) = 1\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{NONEMPTY}(q) = 0 &\implies q = 0 \\ &\implies 4q = 0 \\ &\implies \sigma(4q) = 0\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{NONEMPTY}(q) = 1 &\implies q \neq 0 \\ &\implies q \in \left[\frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{2}\right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{4}, 1\right) \\ &\implies 4q \in [1, 2) \cup [3, 4) \\ &\implies \sigma(4q) = 1\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{PUSH}_0(q) &= \frac{q}{4} + \frac{2 \cdot 0 + 1}{4} \\ &= \frac{q}{4} + \frac{1}{4}\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{PUSH}_1(q) &= \frac{q}{4} + \frac{2 \cdot 1 + 1}{4} \\ &= \frac{q}{4} + \frac{3}{4}\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{POP}(q) &= 4q - (2\text{TOP}(q) + 1) \\ &= 4q - 2\sigma(4q - 2) - 1\end{aligned}$$



## Lemma (technical)

Let  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_k \in \{0, 1\}$  and  $q \in [0, 1]$ . Then

$$a_1 a_2 \dots a_k q = \sigma(a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k - k + q)$$

### Proof.

Case 1:  $\exists i : a_i = 0$

$$\implies a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k \leq k - 1$$

$$\implies a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k - k + q \leq k - 1 - k + q = q - 1 \in [-1, 0]$$

$$\implies \sigma(a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k - k + q) = 0 = a_1 a_2 \dots a_k q$$

Case 2:  $a_i = 1 \forall i$

$$\implies a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k = k$$

$$\implies a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k - k + q = k - k + q = q \in [0, 1]$$

$$\implies \sigma(a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_k - k + q) = q = a_1 a_2 \dots a_k q$$



$$\begin{aligned}
x_1^+ &= \sigma(x_1^+) \\
&= \sigma(x_0 \cdot \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) + x_1 \cdot \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) - 1) + \sigma(x_1 + \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2) - 1)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + 1 - \sigma(4q_1) - 1) + \sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 1)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 - \sigma(4q_1)) + \sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 1))
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
x_h^+ &= \sigma(x_h^+) \\
&= \sigma(x_1 \cdot \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_1 + \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2) - 1)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_1 + 1 - \sigma(4q_2) - 1)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_1 - \sigma(4q_2)))
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
q_1^+ &= \sigma(q_1^+) \\
&= \sigma(x_0 \cdot \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) \cdot \text{TOP}(q_1) \cdot \text{POP}(q_1) + \\
&\quad x_0 \cdot \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) \cdot \neg \text{TOP}(q_1) \cdot \text{POP}(q_1) + \\
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&\quad x_1 \cdot \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2) \cdot \text{NOOP}(q_1)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) + \text{TOP}(q_1) - 3 + \text{POP}(q_1)) + \\
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&\quad \sigma(x_0 + \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) - 2 + \text{NOOP}(q_1)) + \\
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&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) + \sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 3 + 4q_1 - 2\sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 1) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) + 1 - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 3 + 4q_1 - 2\sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 1) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 + 1 - \sigma(4q_1) - 2 + q_1) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 2 + \frac{1}{4}q_1 + \frac{3}{4}) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 + 1 - \sigma(4q_2) - 2 + q_1)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + 4q_1 - 4) + \\
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&\quad x_1 \cdot \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2) \cdot \text{NOOP}(q_2)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) + \text{TOP}(q_1) - 3 + \text{PUSH}_1(q_2)) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 + \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) + \neg \text{TOP}(q_1) - 3 + \text{NOOP}(q_2)) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 + \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_1) - 2 + \text{NOOP}(q_2)) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 + \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2) - 2 + \text{POP}(q_2)) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 + \neg \text{NONEMPTY}(q_2) - 2 + \text{NOOP}(q_2))) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) + \sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 3 + \frac{1}{4}q_2 + \frac{3}{4}) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) + 1 - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 3 + q_2) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 + 1 - \sigma(4q_1) - 2 + q_2) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 2 + 4q_2 - 2\sigma(4q_2 - 2) - 1) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 + 1 - \sigma(4q_2) - 2 + q_2)) \\
&= \sigma(\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + \frac{1}{4}q_2 - \frac{9}{4}) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + q_2 - 2) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_0 - \sigma(4q_1) + q_2 - 1) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 2\sigma(4q_2 - 2) + 4q_2 - 3) + \\
&\quad \sigma(x_1 - \sigma(4q_2) + q_2 - 1))
\end{aligned}$$



$$x_0^+ = \sigma(\underbrace{\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) + \sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 2)}_{=:\sigma_1} + \underbrace{\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) - 1)}_{=:\sigma_2})$$

$$x_1^+ = \sigma(\underbrace{\sigma(x_0 - \sigma(4q_1))}_{=:\sigma_3} + \underbrace{\sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 1)}_{=:\sigma_4})$$

$$x_h^+ = \sigma(\underbrace{\sigma(x_1 - \sigma(4q_2))}_{=:\sigma_5})$$

$$\begin{aligned}
q_1^+ = & \sigma \left( \underbrace{\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1)) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + 4q_1 - 4}_{=:\sigma_6} + \right. \\
& \underbrace{\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1)) - 3\sigma(4q_1 - 2) + 4q_1 - 3}_{=:\sigma_7} + \\
& \underbrace{\sigma(x_0 - \sigma(4q_1)) + q_1 - 1}_{=:\sigma_8} + \\
& \underbrace{\sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2)) + \frac{1}{4}q_1 - \frac{5}{4}}_{=:\sigma_9} + \\
& \left. \underbrace{\sigma(x_1 - \sigma(4q_2)) + q_1 - 1}_{=:\sigma_{10}} \right)
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
q_2^+ = & \sigma \left( \underbrace{\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + \frac{1}{4}q_2 - \frac{9}{4})}_{=:\sigma_{11}} \right) + \\
& \underbrace{\sigma(x_0 + \sigma(4q_1) - \sigma(4q_1 - 2) + q_2 - 2)}_{=:\sigma_{12}} + \\
& \underbrace{\sigma(x_0 - \sigma(4q_1) + q_2 - 1)}_{=:\sigma_{13}} + \\
& \underbrace{\sigma(x_1 + \sigma(4q_2) - 2\sigma(4q_2 - 2) + 4q_2 - 3)}_{=:\sigma_{14}} + \\
& \underbrace{\sigma(x_1 - \sigma(4q_2) + q_2 - 1)}_{=:\sigma_{15}})
\end{aligned}$$

$W^1$	$x_0$	$x_1$	$x_h$	$q_1$	$q_2$	$b^1$
$x_0$	1	0	0	0	0	0
$x_1$	0	1	0	0	0	0
$q_1$	0	0	0	1	0	0
$q_2$	0	0	0	0	1	0
$T(q_1)$	0	0	0	4	0	-2
$T(q_2)$	0	0	0	0	4	-2
$NE(q_1)$	0	0	0	4	0	0
$NE(q_2)$	0	0	0	0	4	0

**Table:** weights from input layer to layer 1 and biases of layer 1

$W^2$	$x_0$	$x_1$	$q_1$	$q_2$	$T(q_1)$	$T(q_2)$	$NE(q_1)$	$NE(q_2)$	$b^2$
$\sigma_1$	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	-2
$\sigma_2$	1	0	0	0	-1	0	1	0	-1
$\sigma_3$	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0
$\sigma_4$	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1
$\sigma_5$	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0
$\sigma_6$	1	0	4	0	-1	0	1	0	-4
$\sigma_7$	1	0	4	0	-3	0	1	0	-3
$\sigma_8$	1	0	1	0	0	0	-1	0	-1
$\sigma_9$	0	1	$\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	0	0	1	$-\frac{5}{4}$
$\sigma_{10}$	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	-1	-1
$\sigma_{11}$	1	0	0	$\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	1	0	$-\frac{9}{4}$
$\sigma_{12}$	1	0	0	1	-1	0	1	0	-2
$\sigma_{13}$	1	0	0	1	0	0	-1	0	-1
$\sigma_{14}$	0	1	0	4	0	-2	0	1	-3
$\sigma_{15}$	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	-1	-1

**Table:** weights from layer 1 to layer 2 and biases of layer 2

$W^3$	$\sigma_1$	$\sigma_2$	$\sigma_3$	$\sigma_4$	$\sigma_5$	$\sigma_6$	$\sigma_7$	$\sigma_8$	$\sigma_9$	$\sigma_{10}$	$\sigma_{11}$	$\sigma_{12}$	$\sigma_{13}$	$\sigma_{14}$	$\sigma_{15}$	$b^3$
$x_0^+$	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$x_1^+$	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$x_h^+$	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
$q_1^+$	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
$q_2^+$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0

**Table:** weights from layer 2 to layer 3 and biases of layer 3