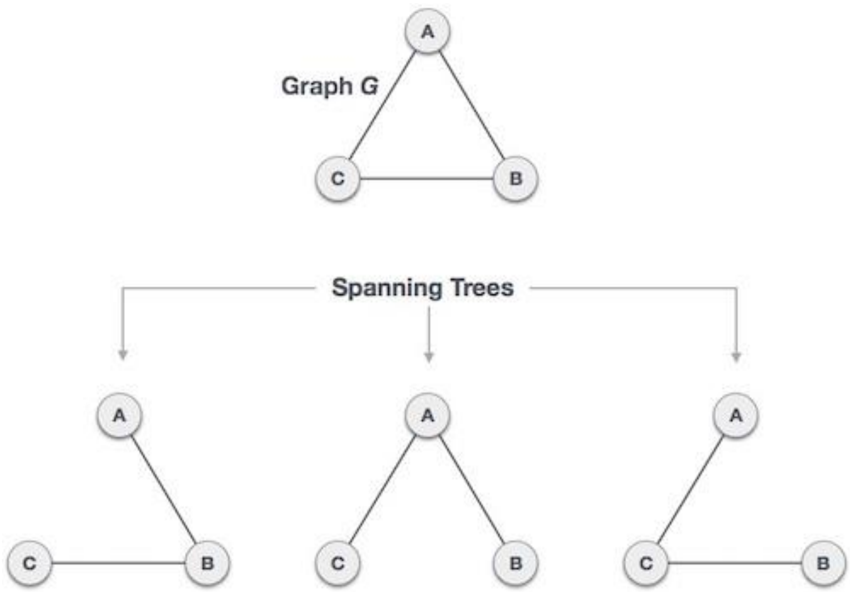
SPANNING TREE:

A spanning tree is a subset of Graph G, which has all the vertices covered with minimum possible number of edges. Hence, a spanning tree does not have cycles and it cannot be disconnected..

By this definition, we can draw a conclusion that every connected and undirected Graph G has at least one spanning tree. A disconnected graph does not have any spanning tree, as it cannot be spanned to all its vertices.



We found three spanning trees off one complete graph. A complete undirected graph can have maximum $\mathbf{n}^{n-2}$ number of spanning trees, where **n** is the number of nodes. In the above addressed example, **n is 3,** hence $\mathbf{3}^{3-2}$ **= 3** spanning trees are possible.

General Properties of Spanning Tree

We now understand that one graph can have more than one spanning tree. Following are a few properties of the spanning tree connected to graph G −

- A connected graph G can have more than one spanning tree.
- All possible spanning trees of graph G, have the same number of edges and vertices.
- The spanning tree does not have any cycle (loops).
- Removing one edge from the spanning tree will make the graph disconnected, i.e. the spanning tree is **minimally connected**.
- Adding one edge to the spanning tree will create a circuit or loop, i.e. the spanning tree is **maximally acyclic**.

Mathematical Properties of Spanning Tree

- Spanning tree has **n-1** edges, where **n** is the number of nodes (vertices).
- From a complete graph, by removing maximum **e - n + 1** edges, we can construct a spanning tree.
- A complete graph can have maximum $\mathbf{n^{n-2}}$ number of spanning trees.

Thus, we can conclude that spanning trees are a subset of connected Graph G and disconnected graphs do not have spanning tree.

Application of Spanning Tree

Spanning tree is basically used to find a minimum path to connect all nodes in a graph. Common application of spanning trees are −

- **Civil Network Planning**
- **Computer Network Routing Protocol**
- **Cluster Analysis**

Let us understand this through a small example. Consider, city network as a huge graph and now plans to deploy telephone lines in such a way that in minimum lines we can connect to all city nodes. This is where the spanning tree comes into picture.

Minimum Spanning Tree (MST)

In a weighted graph, a minimum spanning tree is a spanning tree that has minimum weight than all other spanning trees of the same graph. In real-world situations, this weight can be measured as distance, congestion, traffic load or any arbitrary value denoted to the edges.

How many edges does a minimum spanning tree has?
A minimum spanning tree has (V – 1) edges where V is the number of vertices in the given graph.

Minimum Spanning-Tree Algorithm

We shall learn about two most important spanning tree algorithms here −

- Kruskal's Algorithm
- Prim's Algorithm

Both are greedy algorithms.

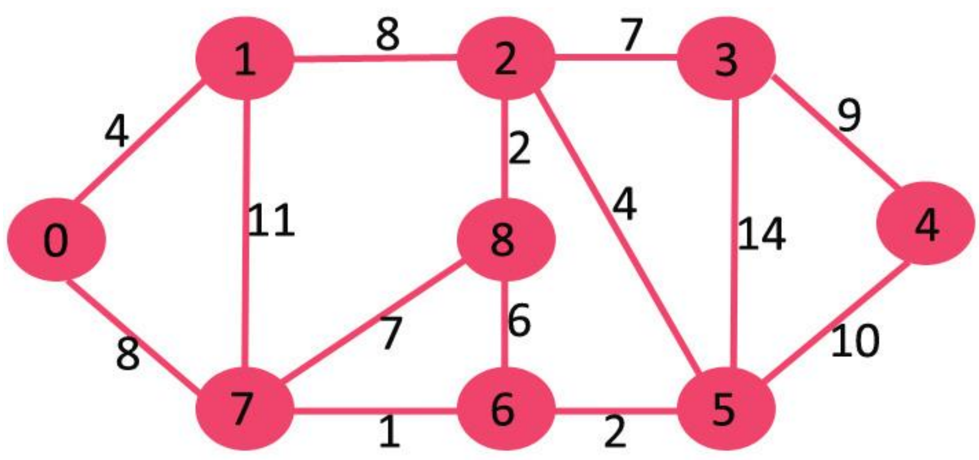
PRIM’S ALGORITHM:

How does Prim’s Algorithm Work? The idea behind Prim’s algorithm is simple, a spanning tree means all vertices must be connected. So the two disjoint subsets of vertices must be connected to make a *Spanning* Tree. And they must be connected with the minimum weight edge to make it a *Minimum* Spanning Tree.

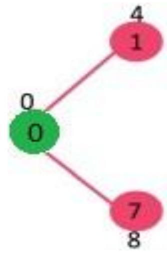
Algorithm
1) Create a set *mstSet* that keeps track of vertices already included in MST.
2) Assign a key value to all vertices in the input graph. Initialize all key values as INFINITE. Assign key value as 0 for the first vertex so that it is picked first.
3) While mstSet doesn’t include all vertices
….**a)** Pick a vertex *u* which is not there in *mstSet* and has minimum key value.
….**b)** Include *u* to mstSet.
….**c)** Update key value of all adjacent vertices of *u*. To update the key values, iterate through all adjacent vertices. For every adjacent vertex *v*, if weight of edge *u-v* is less than the previous key value of *v*, update the key value as weight of *u-v*

The idea of using key values is to pick the minimum weight edge from `cut`. The key values are used only for vertices which are not yet included in MST, the key value for these vertices indicate the minimum weight edges connecting them to the set of vertices included in MST.

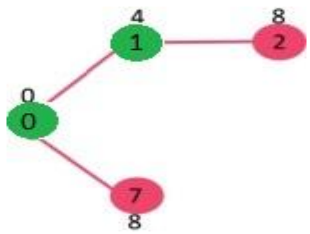
Example: Let us understand with the following example:



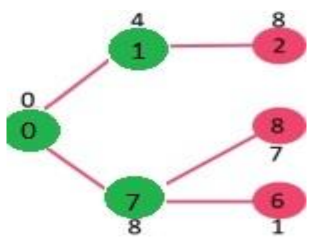
The set *mstSet* is initially empty and keys assigned to vertices are {0, INF, INF, INF, INF, INF, INF, INF} where INF indicates infinite. Now pick the vertex with the minimum key value. The vertex 0 is picked, include it in *mstSet*. So *mstSet* becomes {0}. After including to *mstSet*, update key values of adjacent vertices. Adjacent vertices of 0 are 1 and 7. The key values of 1 and 7 are updated as 4 and 8. Following subgraph shows vertices and their key values, only the vertices with finite key values are shown. The vertices included in MST are shown in green color.



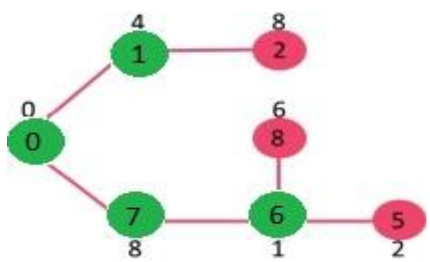
Pick the vertex with minimum key value and not already included in MST (not in mstSET). The vertex 1 is picked and added to mstSet. So mstSet now becomes {0, 1}. Update the key values of adjacent vertices of 1. The key value of vertex 2 becomes 8.



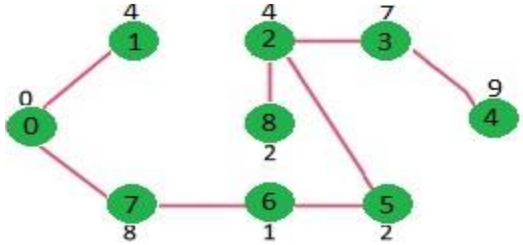
Pick the vertex with minimum key value and not already included in MST (not in mstSET). We can either pick vertex 7 or vertex 2, let vertex 7 is picked. So mstSet now becomes {0, 1, 7}. Update the key values of adjacent vertices of 7. The key value of vertex 6 and 8 becomes finite (1 and 7 respectively).



Pick the vertex with minimum key value and not already included in MST (not in mstSET). Vertex 6 is picked. So mstSet now becomes {0, 1, 7, 6}. Update the key values of adjacent vertices of 6. The key value of vertex 5 and 8 are updated.



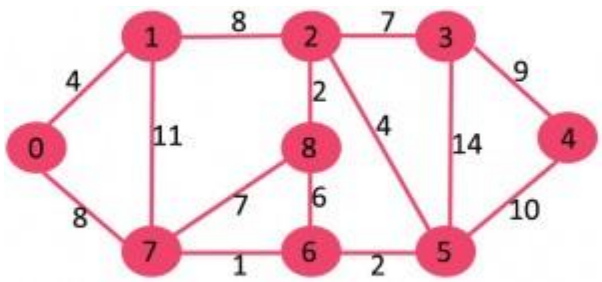
We repeat the above steps until *mstSet* includes all vertices of given graph. Finally, we get the following graph.



Kruskal's Algorithm:

1. *Sort all the edges in non-decreasing order of their weight.*
2. *Pick the smallest edge. Check if it forms a cycle with the spanning tree formed so far. If cycle is not formed, include this edge. Else, discard it.*
3. *Repeat step#2 until there are (V-1) edges in the spanning tree.*

Example: Consider the below input graph.



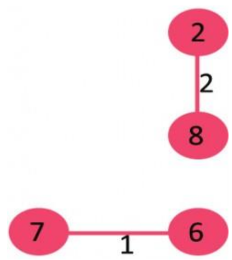
The graph contains 9 vertices and 14 edges. So, the minimum spanning tree formed will be having (9 – 1) = 8 edges.

After sorting:

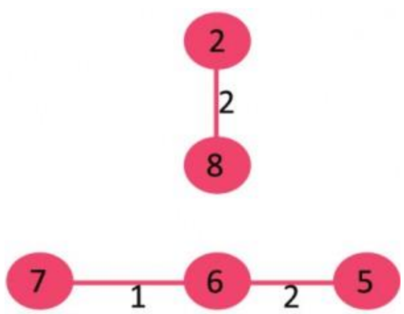
Weight	Src	Dest
1	7	6
2	8	2
2	6	5
4	0	1
4	2	5
6	8	6
7	2	3
7	7	8
8	0	7
8	1	2
9	3	4
10	5	4
11	1	7
14	3	5

Now pick all edges one by one from sorted list of edges
1. *Pick edge 7-6:* No cycle is formed, include it.

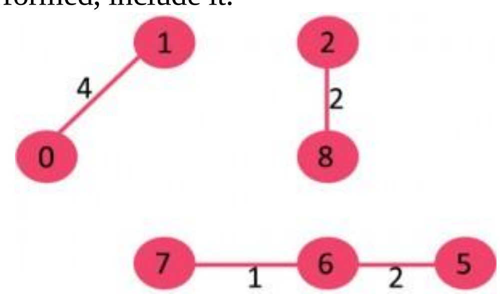
2. *Pick edge 8-2:* No cycle is formed, include it.



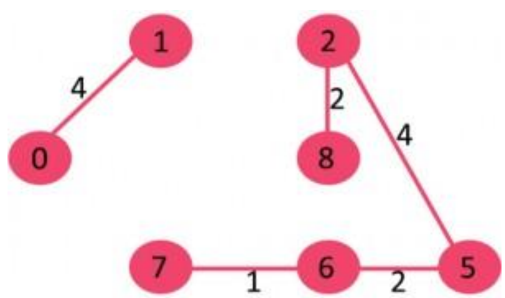
3. *Pick edge 6-5:* No cycle is formed, include it.



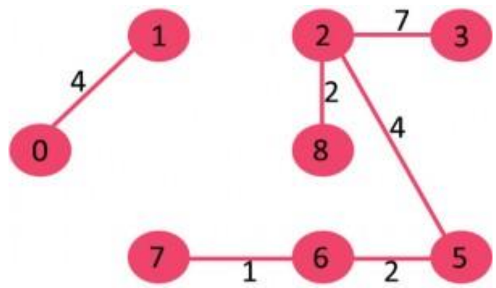
4. *Pick edge 0-1:* No cycle is formed, include it.



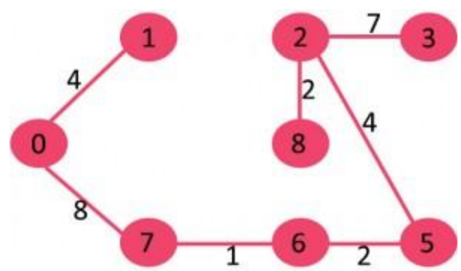
5. *Pick edge 2-5:* No cycle is formed, include it.



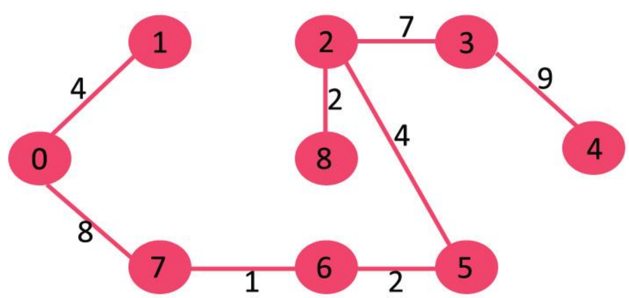
6. *Pick edge 8-6:* Since including this edge results in cycle, discard it.
7. *Pick edge 2-3:* No cycle is formed, include it.



8. *Pick edge 7-8:* Since including this edge results in cycle, discard it.
9. *Pick edge 0-7:* No cycle is formed, include it.



10. *Pick edge 1-2:* Since including this edge results in cycle, discard it.
11. *Pick edge 3-4:* No cycle is formed, include it.



Since the number of edges included equals (V – 1), the algorithm stops here.

Prim's Vs Kruskal's Algorithm:

PRIM'S ALGORITHM	KRUSKAL'S ALGORITHM
It starts to build the Minimum Spanning Tree from any vertex in the graph.	It starts to build the Minimum Spanning Tree from the vertex carrying minimum weight in the graph.
It traverses one node more than one time to get the minimum distance.	It traverses one node only once.
Prim's algorithm has a time complexity of $O(V^2)$, V being the number of vertices and can be improved up to O(E + log V) using Fibonacci heaps.	Kruskal's algorithm's time complexity is O(E log V), V being the number of vertices.
Prim's algorithm gives connected component as well as it works only on connected graph.	Kruskal's algorithm can generate forest(disconnected components) at any instant as well as it can work on disconnected components
Prim's algorithm runs faster in dense graphs.	Kruskal's algorithm runs faster in sparse graphs.