

10MA 2025: WEEK 1

SEARCHING, SORTING & ASYMPTOTICS

SRIRKANTH SRINIVASAN

Algorithms & Complexity Section

DIKV

sysr@di.lcu.dk

Searching & Sorting

→ Data indexed by numbers / names.

↳ Items in a warehouse indexed by ID.
↳ Books in a library indexed by title.

→ Want to:

↳ Search & find item in sorted data.

↳ Sort data for efficient search.

Searching

Input: An array A of sorted numbers
 $A[1] \leq A[2] \leq \dots$

& a number x

Output: An i such that $A[i] = x$.
(if it exists)

Ex. $A =$

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

Simple algorithm

Go through array elements one-by-one
until x found.

```
i := -1  
j := 1  
while (i < 0 and j ≤ n)  
  if (A[j] == x)  
    i := j  
  j = j + 1  
return i
```

$x = 9$:

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 14 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

Running time:

steps executed

Depends on:

→ Array length n

→ Input numbers

Simple algorithm

Go through array elements one-by-one until x found.

```
i := -1
j := 1
while (i < 0 and j ≤ n)
  if (A[j] == x)
    i := j
  j := j + 1
return i
```

$x = 9$:

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 14 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

Worst-case Running

time:

max # steps on

array of length n

$$= 2 + 9n + 1$$

$$= 3 + 9n = \Theta(n)$$

3, 9 - "constants"

Θ notation (Informal)

Running time is $\Theta(f(n))$ means that the worst-case running time is $f(n)$ "up to constant factors".

Why ignore constants?

- Usually are not too big!
- For large input sizes n , $f(n)$ determines the running time.

Linear Search

Go through array elements one-by-one until x or $y > x$ found.

```
i := -1
j := 1
while (i < 0 & j ≤ n & A[j] ≤ x)
  if (A[j] == x)
    i := j
  j := j + 1
return i
```

$x = 8$:

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 14 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

Worst-case Running

Time:

$O(n + 4)$

"

$\Theta(1) (n)$

Binary Search

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

→ Start at mid point: index $\left[\frac{1+10}{2} \right] = 5$

→ If middle element is x , we found x & we can stop.

→ If middle element less than x , then x cannot be in left half.

→ If — " — greater than x , then
— " — right half.

→ Repeat on the correct half!

Binary Search

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 20 | |

Example:

$$X = 10$$

$$mid_1 = \left\lfloor \frac{1+10}{2} \right\rfloor = 5, A[5] = 9$$

$$mid_2 = \left\lfloor \frac{6+10}{2} \right\rfloor = 8, A[8] = 14$$

$$mid_3 = \left\lfloor \frac{6+7}{2} \right\rfloor = 6, A[6] = 10$$



$$X = 6$$

$$mid_1 = 5, A[5] = 9$$

$$mid_2 = 2, A[2] = 4$$

$$mid_3 = 3, A[3] = 5$$

$$mid_4 = 4, A[4] = 7$$



Pseudo code for Binary Search

Binary-Search(A, x, lo, hi) \rightarrow Start with $lo=1$ $hi=n$

if ($lo > hi$)

return -1

Correctness?

Running time?

else

$mid = \lfloor \frac{lo + hi}{2} \rfloor$

if ($A[mid] == x$)

return mid

“ Recursion “

else if ($A[mid] > x$)

return Binary-Search($A, x, lo, mid-1$)

else return Binary-Search($A, x, mid+1, hi$)

Correctness via Invariants

Invariant: Statement that is

- True before execution (Initialization)
- Maintained during execution (Maintenance)
- Shows that output is correct at the end of execution - (Termination)

Pseudo code for Binary Search

```
Binary-Search(A, x, lo, hi)
    if (lo > hi)
        return -1
    else
        mid =  $\lfloor \frac{lo + hi}{2} \rfloor$ 
        if (A[mid] == x)
            return mid
        else if (A[mid] > x)
            return Binary-Search(A, x, lo, mid-1)
        else
            return Binary-Search(A, x, mid+1, hi)
```

Invariant:

"If x is in A , then it lies between lo & hi "

→ Initially, $lo = 1$, $hi = n$

→ Maintenance: Sorted-

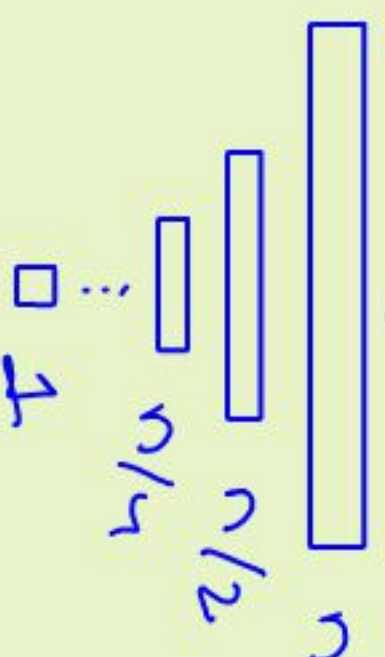
-ness.

→ Termination: Must end when $lo = hi = mid$

Pseudo code for Binary Search

```
Binary-Search (A, x, lo, hi)
    if (lo > hi)
        return -1
    else
        mid =  $\lfloor \frac{lo + hi}{2} \rfloor$ 
        if (A[mid] == x)
            return mid
        else if (A[mid] > x)
            return Binary-Search(A, x, lo, mid-1)
        else
            return Binary-Search(A, x, mid+1, hi)
```

Running time $\Theta(\log n)$



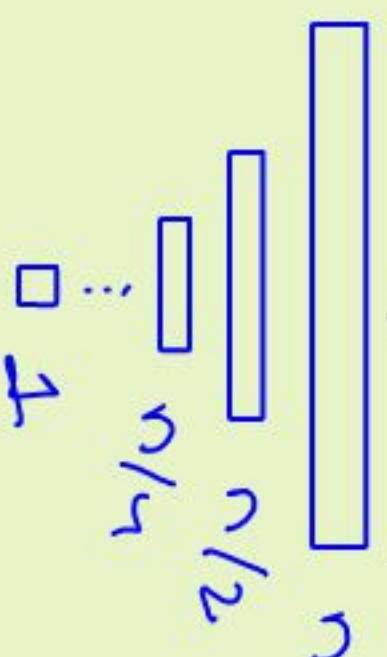
$\rightarrow R$ calls

$n \geq 2^R \Rightarrow R \leq \log_2 n$

Pseudo code for Binary Search

```
Binary-Search(A, x, lo, hi)
    if (lo > hi)
        return -1
    else
        mid =  $\lfloor \frac{lo + hi}{2} \rfloor$ 
        if (A[mid] == x)
            return mid
        else if (A[mid] > x)
            return Binary-Search(A, x, lo, mid-1)
        else
            return Binary-Search(A, x, mid+1, hi)
```

Running time $\Theta(\log n)$



→ Running time =

$$\Theta(n) = \Theta(\log n)$$

Linear VS. Binary Search

| n | $\log_2 n$ |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1.000 | ≈ 10 |
| 1.000.000 | ≈ 20 |
| 1.000.000.000 | ≈ 30 |

Sorting

Input: Array A of numbers.

Output: The numbers in sorted order.

Two algorithms:

→ Insertion Sort $\Theta(n^2)$

→ Merge Sort $\Theta(n \log n)$

Insertion Sort

Idea: Sort array from left to right

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 11 | 16 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 9 | 11 | 16 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|---|----|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 9 | 11 | 16 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|---|---|----|----|---|----|---|---|----|----|

⋮

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

Pseudocode

Insertion-Sort(A)

for ($i := 2$ to n)

$j := i$

 while ($j > 1$ & $A[j-1] > A[j]$)

$temp := A[j-1]$

$A[j-1] := A[j]$

$A[j] := temp$

$j := j - 1$

Correctness in variant

At beginning of for loop

$A[1, \dots, i-1]$ is sorted.

→ Initialization

→ Maintenance

→ Termination

Pseudocode

Insertion-Sort (A)

for ($i := 2$ to n)

$j := i$

while ($j > 1$ & $A[j-1] > A[j]$)

$temp := A[j-1]$

$A[j-1] := A[j]$

$A[j] := temp$

$j := j - 1$

Running time

$$\leq c + \underbrace{2c}_{i=2} + \underbrace{3c}_{i=3} + \dots + \underbrace{(n-1)c}_{i=n}$$

$$= c \cdot (1 + 2 + \dots + (n-1))$$

$$= \Theta(n^2)$$

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|

| | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
|----|----|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|

| | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 20 |
|---|---|----|----|----|

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

"Merge"

Merge Algorithm

Merge (L, R, M)

$n = \text{length}(L)$

$m = \text{length}(R)$

Check that $\text{length}(M) = n+m$

$L[n+1], R[m+1] := \infty$

$i, j := 1$

for ($k = 1$ to $n+m$)

if ($L[i] \leq R[j]$)

$M[k] := L[i]$

$i := i+1$

else $M[k] := R[j]$

$j := j+1$

Correctness:

Suitable invariant

(see CLRS)

Running time:

$\Theta(n+m)$

Merge Sort

MergeSort(A)

if ($\text{length}(A) > 1$)

mid = $\lfloor (1 + \text{length}(A)) / 2 \rfloor$

L := new array of length mid
 R := new array of length $\text{length}(A) - \text{mid}$

for ($i = 1$ to mid)

$L[i] := A[i]$

for ($i = 1$ to $\text{length}(A) - \text{mid}$)

$R[i] := A[\text{mid} + i]$

MergeSort(L)

MergeSort(R)

Merge(L, R, A)

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
|----|----|---|---|---|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
|----|----|---|---|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 16 | 11 |
|----|----|



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | 4 |
|---|---|---|

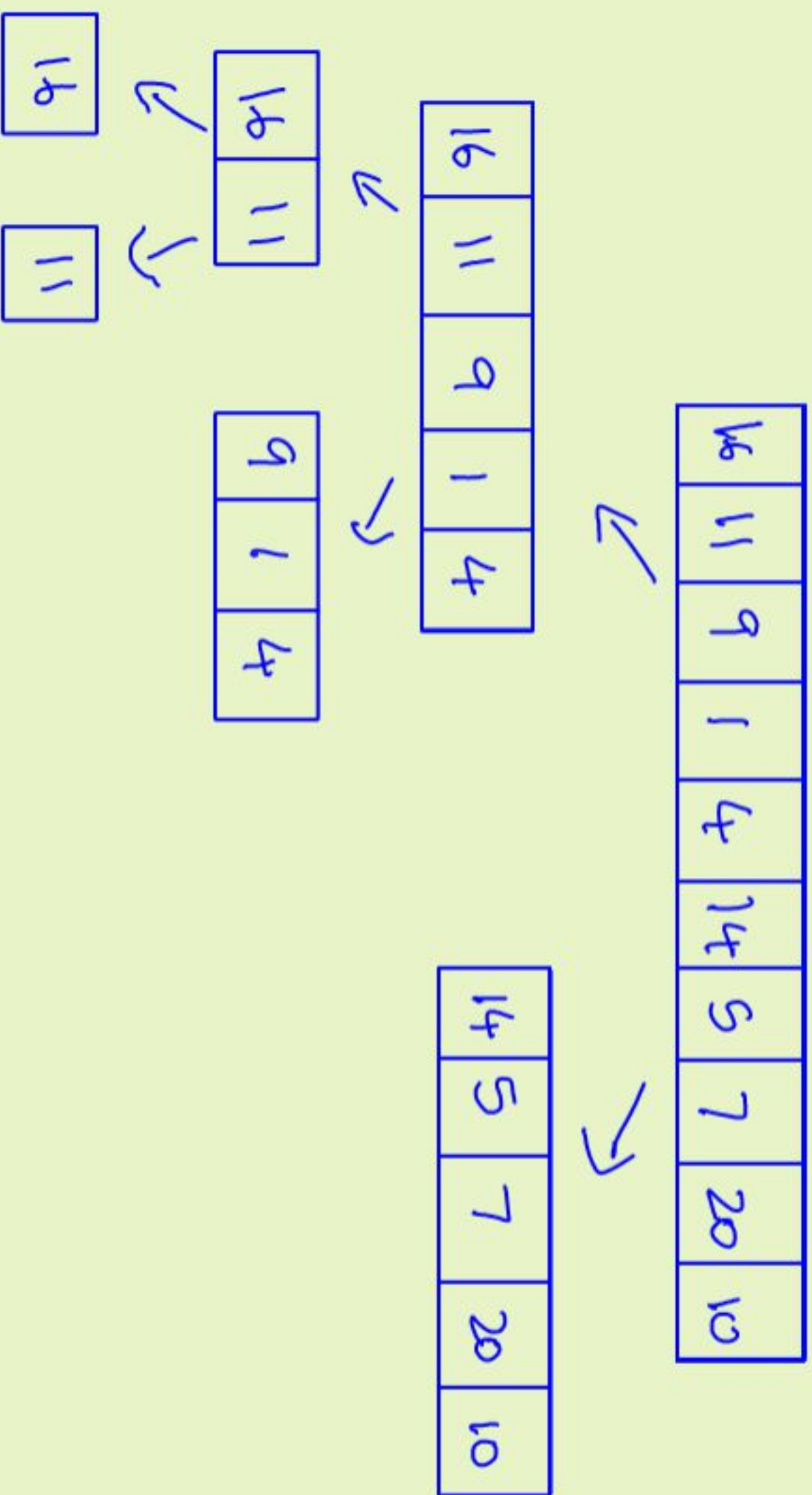


| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

...

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm



Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
|----|----|---|---|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 11 | 16 |
|----|----|



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | 4 |
|---|---|---|



| |
|---|
| 9 |
|---|



| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 4 |
|---|---|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
|----|----|---|---|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 11 | 16 |
|----|----|



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | 4 |
|---|---|---|



| |
|---|
| 9 |
|---|



| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 4 |
|---|---|



| |
|---|
| 1 |
|---|



| |
|---|
| 4 |
|---|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
|----|----|---|---|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 16 | 11 |
|----|----|



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | 4 |
|---|---|---|



| |
|---|
| 9 |
|---|



| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 4 |
|---|---|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
|----|----|---|---|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 11 | 16 |
|----|----|



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 9 |
|---|---|---|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|



| | |
|----|---|
| 14 | 5 |
|----|---|



| | | |
|---|----|----|
| 7 | 20 | 10 |
|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|



| | |
|----|---|
| 14 | 5 |
|----|---|



| | | |
|---|----|----|
| 7 | 20 | 10 |
|---|----|----|



| |
|----|
| 14 |
|----|

| |
|---|
| 5 |
|---|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|



| | |
|---|----|
| 5 | 14 |
|---|----|



| | | |
|---|----|----|
| 7 | 20 | 10 |
|---|----|----|



| |
|---|
| 7 |
|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 20 | 10 |
|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|



| | |
|---|----|
| 5 | 14 |
|---|----|



| | | |
|---|----|----|
| 7 | 20 | 10 |
|---|----|----|



| |
|---|
| 7 |
|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 20 | 10 |
|----|----|



| |
|----|
| 20 |
|----|



| |
|----|
| 10 |
|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|



| | |
|---|----|
| 5 | 14 |
|---|----|



| | | |
|---|----|----|
| 7 | 20 | 10 |
|---|----|----|



| |
|---|
| 7 |
|---|



| | |
|----|----|
| 10 | 20 |
|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|----|---|---|----|----|
| 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|---|---|----|----|



| | |
|---|----|
| 5 | 14 |
|---|----|



| | | |
|---|----|----|
| 7 | 10 | 20 |
|---|----|----|

Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|
| 16 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 10 |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 16 |
|---|---|---|----|----|



| | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 20 |
|---|---|----|----|----|

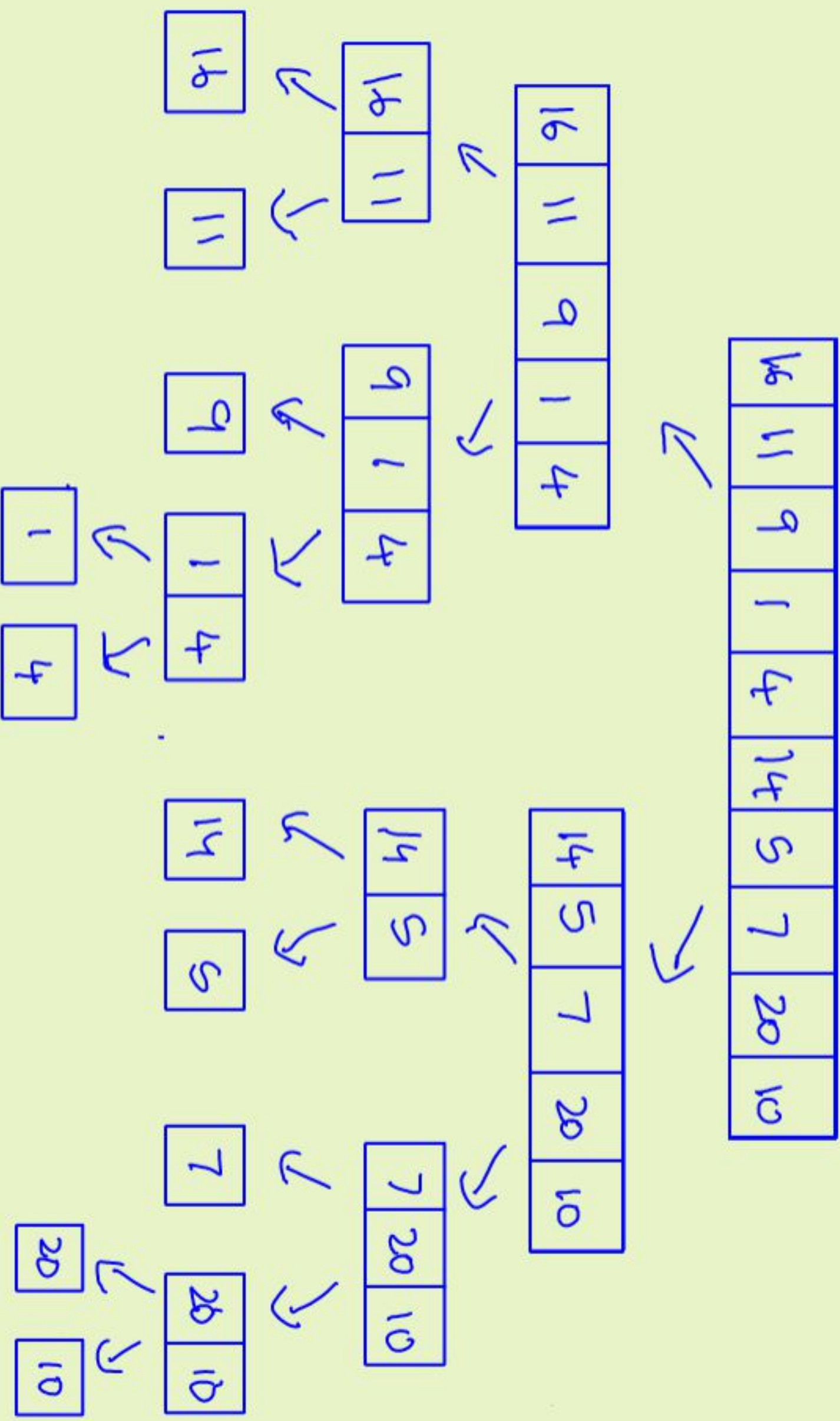
Merge Sort

Divide-and-conquer Paradigm

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|

Merge Sort

Recursion Tree



Merge Sort

MergeSort(A)

if ($\text{length}(A) > 1$)

$\text{mid} = \lfloor (1 + \text{length}(A)) / 2 \rfloor$

$L :=$ new array of length

$R :=$ new array of length $\text{length}(A) - \text{mid}$

 for ($i = 1$ to mid)

$L[i] := A[i]$

 for ($i = 1$ to $\text{length}(A) - \text{mid}$)

$R[i] := A[\text{mid} + i]$

 MergeSort(L)

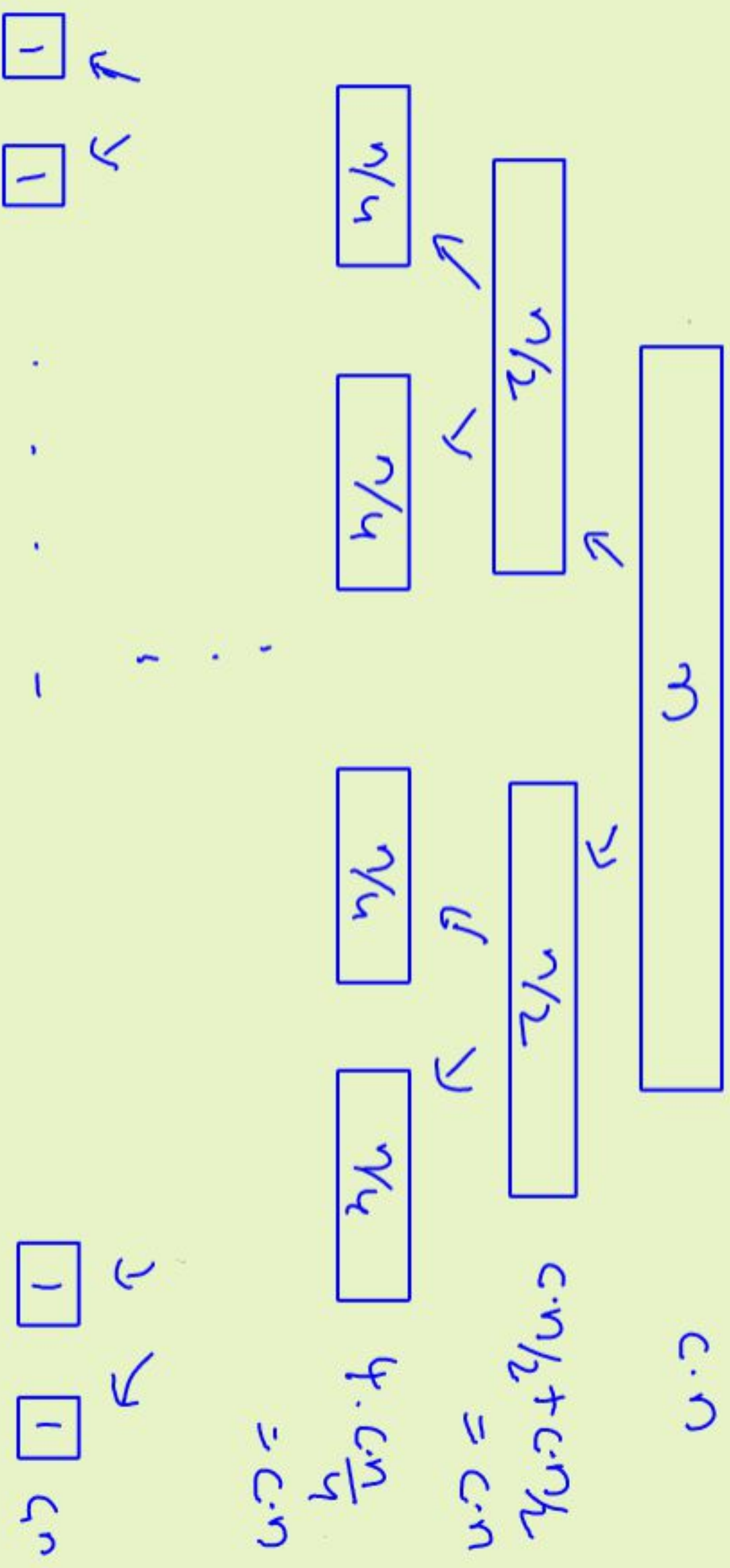
 MergeSort(R)

 Merge(L, R, A)

Correctness:

Induction

Running Time of Merge Sort



Running time $\leq C \cdot n \cdot \log n$

Asymptotics O , Ω , Θ

$\rightarrow T(n) = O(f(n))$ (also $T(n) \in O(f(n))$)

" $T(n)$ grows at most as fast as $f(n)$ ignoring constant factors."

Attempt 1 at : There is a constant k s.t.
definition $T(n) \leq k \cdot f(n)$ for all n

Is $n^2 = O((n-1)^2)$? No.

We are interested in what happens for
large n .

Asymptotics O, Ω, Θ

$\rightarrow T(n) = O(f(n))$ (also $T(n) \in O(f(n))$)
" $T(n)$ grows at most as fast as $f(n)$ ignoring constant factors. "

Definition: There are constants n_0, k s.t.
 $T(n) \leq k \cdot f(n)$ for all $n \geq n_0$

Is $n^2 = O((n-1)^2)$? Is $n^2 = O(n)$?

YES: $n_0=2, k=4$

Asymptotics O, Ω, Θ

$\rightarrow T(n) = \Omega(f(n))$ (also $T(n) \in \Omega(f(n))$)
" $T(n)$ grows at least as fast as $f(n)$
ignoring constant factors."

Definition: There are constants n_0, k s.t.
 $T(n) \geq k \cdot f(n)$ for all $n \geq n_0$

Is $n^2 - 3n = \Omega(n)$? Is $n^2 - 3n = \Omega(n^2)$?

YES: $n_0 = 5, k = \frac{1}{2}$

Asymptotics O, Ω, Θ

$\rightarrow T(n) = \Theta(f(n))$ (also $T(n) \in \Theta(f(n))$)
" $T(n)$ grows exactly as fast as $f(n)$
ignoring constant factors."

Definition: $T(n) = O(f(n))$ &

$$T(n) = \Omega(f(n))$$

$$Is \quad n^2 - 3n = \Theta(n)?$$

Limit definitions

(works often, but not always)

$$T(n), f(n) \geq 0$$

$$T(n) = O(f(n)) : \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{T(n)}{f(n)} \text{ exists \& not } \infty$$

$$T(n) = \Omega(f(n)) : \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f(n)}{T(n)} \text{ --- " ---}$$

Issue: limit may not exist

Informal use

→ "Running time is $O(n^2)$ " instead of
"Running time is $\Theta(n^2)$ "