

Homework #1

Due: 2025-3-20 23:59 | 8 Questions, 105 Pts

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Note: The total points of this homework is 100 + 10, with 10 points being the *Challenge Problem*.

Question 1 (10') (Von Neumann Trick). Given a coin with probability p of getting “head” where $p \in (0, 1)$. In this problem, we are going to use this coin to generate fair results in $\{0, 1\}$. When $p = 1/2$, it’s quite simple. However, it may not be so trivial for general p . John von Neumann gave the following procedure:

1. Toss the coin twice.
2. If two results are the same, start over, forgetting both results.
3. If two results are different, give 0 when the first result is “head”, and 1 otherwise.

- a. (3') Prove that, the procedure can generate uniform random results in $\{0, 1\}$.
- b. (7') Calculate the expectation for the number of throws. Express the answer as a function of p .

Answer. a). In each throw round, there are 3 cases:

$$\Pr[\text{results are the same}] = p^2 + (1 - p)^2$$

$$\Pr[\text{terminated, output 0}] = \Pr[\text{terminated, output 1}] = p(1 - p).$$

And for the whole procedure, we have

$$\Pr[\text{output 0}] = \sum_{t=1}^{\infty} (p^2 + (1 - p)^2)^{t-1} \cdot p(1 - p) = p(1 - p) \cdot \frac{1}{2p(1 - p)} = \frac{1}{2}.$$

Similarly, we have $\Pr[\text{output 1}] = 1/2$. Thus, the procedure can generate uniform random results in $\{0, 1\}$.

b). Denote the number of throws as X . Then we have

$$\Pr(X = k) = [p^2 + (1 - p)^2]^{k-1} \cdot 2p(1 - p).$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[X] &= 2 \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k \cdot 2p(1 - p) \cdot [p^2 + (1 - p)^2]^{k-1} \\ &= 4p(1 - p) \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k \cdot [p^2 + (1 - p)^2]^{k-1}. \end{aligned}$$

Let $g(p) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (2p^2 - 2p + 1)^k = \frac{1}{2p(1-p)}$, then

$$\begin{aligned} g'(p) &= -\frac{(1 - 2p)}{2p^2(1 - p)^2} = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k(4p - 2)(2p^2 - 2p + 1)^{k-1} \\ \implies \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k(2p^2 - 2p + 1)^{k-1} &= \frac{1}{4p^2(1 - p)^2} \implies \mathbb{E}[X] = \frac{4p(1 - p)}{4p^2(1 - p)^2} = \frac{1}{p(1 - p)}. \end{aligned}$$

Q.E.D.

Question 2 (15') (Refined Error Bound for Schwartz–Zippel Algorithm). In this question, you will reflect on the error bound of Schwartz–Zippel Algorithm.

- a. (3') Show the error bound in Schwartz–Zippel Algorithm is tight by giving an example. For convenience, assume $n = 3$ and $S = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$. Give two distinct polynomials $P(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ and $Q(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ where the degree of $P - Q$ is 3, such that Schwartz–Zippel Algorithm fails with probability *exactly* $3/5$.
- b. (12') Let $f_0(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$ be a multivariate polynomial over \mathbb{R} . For each $1 \leq i \leq n$, we inductively define d_i to be the maximum exponent of x_i in f_{i-1} , and $f_i(x_{i+1}, \dots, x_n)$ to be the coefficient of $x_i^{d_i}$ in f_{i-1} . Assume $S_1, S_2, \dots, S_n \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ be arbitrary finite subsets. For $r_i \in S_i$ chosen independently and uniformly at random, show that

$$\Pr[f_0(r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n) = 0 | f_0 \not\equiv 0] \leq \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{d_i}{|S_i|}.$$

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Answer. a). Let $P(x_1, x_2, x_3) = (x_1 - 1)(x_1 - 2)(x_1 - 3) + x_1x_2x_3$ and $Q(x_1, x_2, x_3) = x_1x_2x_3$. then

$$R := P - Q = (x_1 - 1)(x_1 - 2)(x_1 - 3), \text{ whose degree is 3.}$$

Therefore, the probability of failure is

$$\Pr[R(r_1, r_2, r_3) = 0 | R \not\equiv 0] = \frac{3 \cdot 5^2}{5^3} = \frac{3}{5}.$$

- b). Prove the statement by induction on n .

Base case. When $n = 1$, f_0 is a single variable polynomial with at most d_1 roots in S_1 . Thus,

$$\Pr[f_0(r_1) = 0 | f_0 \not\equiv 0] = \frac{d_1}{|S_1|}.$$

Induction hypothesis. Assume the statement holds for all multivariate polynomial with at most $k - 1$ variables.

Inductive step. Consider the polynomial $f_0(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_k)$, then we can write

$$f_0(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_k) = f_1(x_2, \dots, x_k)x_1^{d_1} + N(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_k).$$

Assume r_2, r_3, \dots, r_k are fixed, denote Ω as the event that $f_1(r_2, r_3, \dots, r_k) = 0$. Then

- When Ω happens, by the induction hypothesis,

$$\Pr[\Omega] \leq \sum_{i=2}^k \frac{d_i}{|S_i|}$$

- When Ω does not happen, fix r_2, r_3, \dots, r_k , then $f_0(r_1, r_2, \dots, r_k)$ is a single variable polynomial with at most d_1 roots in S_1 . Thus,

$$\Pr[f_0(r_1, r_2, \dots, r_k) = 0 | \neg\Omega] \leq \frac{d_1}{|S_1|}$$

Combine the two cases, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\Pr[f_0(r_1, \dots, r_k) = 0 | f_0 \neq 0] &= \Pr[\Omega] \Pr[f_0(r_1, \dots, r_k) = 0 | \Omega] + \Pr[\neg\Omega] \Pr[f_0(r_1, \dots, r_k) \neq 0 | \neg\Omega] \\ &\leq \sum_{i=2}^k \frac{d_i}{|S_i|} + \frac{d_1}{|S_1|} = \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{d_i}{|S_i|}.\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the statement holds for all $n \in \mathbb{N}^+$.

Q.E.D.

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Question 3 (20') (Schwartz–Zippel is More General). Our course begins with two examples of randomized algorithms: checking matrix multiplication and checking associativity. It turns out that both can be tackled using Schwartz–Zippel’s algorithm. In this problem, you will give equal or better error bounds by constructing polynomials for the two problems.

- a. (10') Given a binary operator \circ on a set X of size n , we wish to decide if \circ is associative. In our class, we defined operator \circ on 2^X to check the associativity on $X = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$. Similarly we can define operator \circ on p^X where $p \geq 5$ is a given prime. In other words, every element in p^X are in the form of $\sum_{i=1}^n r_i x_i$ with $r_i \in \mathbb{F}_p$.

Base on this, please design a randomized algorithm similar to the one in class. However, this time, you may want to analyze its error bound by applying Schwartz–Zippel Lemma to a polynomial, rather than inclusive-exclusive argument. (You do not need to prove the equivalence to associativity. Schwartz–Zippel Lemma also works for finite fields, provided the size of field is larger than the degree of polynomial — you do not need to prove this, either.)

[Hint: Construct multivariate polynomials $F_1(\cdot), \dots, F_n(\cdot)$ such that $\sum_{i=1}^n F_i(\cdot)x_i \equiv 0$ iff \circ is associative over p^X .]

- b. (10') Design a randomized algorithm that finds a counterexample when \circ is not associative over X . Analyze the time complexity of your algorithm.

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Answer. a). The algorithm is as follows:

Algorithm 1 Check Associativity

Input: A binary operator \circ on a set X of size n .

Output: Whether \circ is associative over p^X

- 1: Randomly sample $\{r_i\}_{i=1}^n, \{s_j\}_{j=1}^n, \{t_k\}_{k=1}^n$ from \mathbb{F}_p independently and uniformly.
 - 2: $R \leftarrow \sum_{i=1}^n r_i x_i, S \leftarrow \sum_{j=1}^n s_j x_j, T \leftarrow \sum_{k=1}^n t_k x_k$.
 - 3: **if** $(R \circ S) \circ T \neq R \circ (S \circ T)$ **then**
 - 4: **return** False
 - 5: **else**
 - 6: **return** True
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Let $F(x) = (R \circ S) \circ T - R \circ (S \circ T)$, and denote $F_i(\cdot)$ as the coefficient of x_i in $F(x)$. Then we have $F(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n F_i(\cdot)x_i$. And it’s easy to verify that $F(x) \equiv 0$ iff \circ is associative over p^X . Note that $\deg(F(x)) \leq 3$. By Schwartz-Zippel Lemma, the error bound of this algorithm is

$$\Pr[R \circ S \circ T = R \circ (S \circ T) | \circ \text{ is not associative}] \leq \frac{3}{|\mathbb{F}_p|} = \frac{3}{p}.$$

- b). Repeat **Algorithm 1** until a counterexample is found. Each iteration costs $O(n^2)$ time, and the expected number of iterations is at most $p/3$. Therefore, the time complexity of this algorithm is $O(n^2 p)$.

Q.E.D.

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Question 4 (15') (More on Tutte Matrix). In this problem, we consider Tutte Matrix and matching in more general problems.

- a. (7') Given a *bipartite graph* $G = (U, V, E)$, define its Tutte Matrix $A(G)$ as

$$A(G)_{ij} := \begin{cases} x_{ij} & \text{if } (u_i, v_j) \in E; \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Show that the maximum size of a matching in G is exactly equal to the rank of $A(G)$.

- b. (8') Given a *simple graph* $G = (V, E)$, define its Tutte matrix $B(G)$ as

$$B(G)_{ij} := \begin{cases} x_{ij} & \text{if } (v_i, v_j) \in E \text{ and } i < j; \\ -x_{ij} & \text{if } (v_i, v_j) \in E \text{ and } i > j; \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Show that G has a perfect matching $\Leftrightarrow \det B(G) \neq 0$.

[Hint: You can find some hints on the lecture notes.]

[TA's Note: This actually gives a $O(n^3)$ algorithm for solving general matching on a graph with n nodes. You're encouraged to find it out.]



Answer. a). Notice that each possible matching $(I, J, E_{I,J})$ in G corresponds to a minor of $A(G)$, denoted as $A(G)_{I,J}$ where $I \subseteq U, J \subseteq V$ and $|I| = |J|$. Apply the similar argument in the notes to $A(G)_{I,J}$, we have

$$\det A(G)_{I,J} \neq 0 \quad \text{iff} \quad (I, J, E_{I,J}) \text{ contains a perfect matching.}$$

Suppose the maximum size of a matching in G is k , then there exists a set of k rows and k columns in $A(G)$ such that the corresponding minor is non-zero, and any minor of G with size $k + 1$ is zero. Therefore, the rank of $A(G)$ is exactly equal to the maximum size of a matching in G .

b).



Question 5 (20') (Checking Commutativity). Let G be a finite group. In this question we want to check if G is abelian, i.e., whether

$$x \circ y = y \circ x$$

holds for all $x, y \in G$. We assume G is presented as a set of *generators* $\{g_1, g_2, \dots, g_k\}$ (i.e., every element of G can be written as a product of various g_i) together with a black box which returns any desired product $g_i \circ g_j$ in unit time.

There is a randomized algorithm making use of a *random product* $h = g_1^{b_1} \circ g_2^{b_2} \circ \dots \circ g_k^{b_k}$, where $b_i \in \{0, 1\}$ are independent fair coin flips. It runs as follows

1. Let h, h' be two independent *random products*.
2. If $h \circ h' \neq h' \circ h$, then output “not abelian”; otherwise output “abelian”.

Plainly this algorithm runs in $O(k)$ time, and is always correct when G is abelian. Here are the questions.

- a. (10') Suppose H is any *proper* subgroup of G . For a random product h , show that

$$\Pr[h \notin H] \geq \frac{1}{2}.$$

[Hint: Construct $h' \notin H$ from any $h \in H$.]

- b. (10') Show that when G is not abelian, the algorithm reports a correct answer with probability at least $1/4$.

[Hint: Consider the elements of G that commute with all elements of G .]

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Answer. a). $H < G$ implies that there exists $a \in G$ such that $a \notin H$. Therefore, for any random $h \in H$, $h \circ a \notin H$. And for any $h_1, h_2 \in H$, $h_1 \neq h_2$, it's easy to verify that $h_1 \circ a \neq h_2 \circ a$. Then for any random product h , we have

$$1 = \Pr[h \in H] + \Pr[h \notin H] \leq 2\Pr[h \notin H] \implies \Pr[h \notin H] \geq \frac{1}{2}.$$

b).

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Question 6 (20') (New Pattern Matching). In this question we use a different fingerprinting technique for pattern matching. The idea is to map bit string s into a 2×2 matrix $M(s)$ as follows:

- For empty string ϵ , $M(\epsilon) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$.
- $M(0) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$, $M(1) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$.
- For non-empty strings x, y , $M(xy) = M(x)M(y)$.

Here are the questions.

- (10') Show that this fingerprint function has the following properties.
 - (2') $M(x)$ is well-defined for all $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$.
 - (8') $M(x) = M(y) \implies x = y$.
- (10') By considering the matrices modulo a suitable prime p , show an efficient randomized algorithm for pattern matching. Analyze the error bound of your algorithm.



Question 7 (10') (Things Get Real). This question is a simplified version of a competitive programming problem, appeared in *CCPC 2022 Final*, where *CCPC* is short for *China Collegiate Programming Contest*. **You only need to give a solution, without proving it.**

Little Cyan Fish has devised a new game:

- The game is played with a string $s = s_1s_2 \cdots s_n$ composed of the digits 0,1 and 2 .
- The game proceeds as follows:
 1. The player selects an index $i(1 \leq i < n)$ such that $s_i = s_{i+1}$. Notably, if no such i exists, the game ends immediately.
 2. The characters s_i and s_{i+1} are then removed, and the player returns to step 1 .
- If the player can completely erase the string (leaving an empty string), he wins the game. If not, he loses.

Keen to challenge Little Cyan Fish, Big Flower Letter presents him with a string $s = s_1s_2 \cdots s_n$ of length n . She then proposes q queries of the following type:

- l, r : Assuming $t = s[l \cdots r] = s_ls_{l+1} \cdots s_{r-1}s_r$, Little Cyan Fish needs to determine if the player can win the game if they were to play it using the string t .

Can you help Little Cyan Fish respond to all the queries?

Your algorithm should have time complexity of $O((n + q) \log n)$.

[TA's Note: You can assume that, if you can give the right answer to all queries with probability $\geq .9$, you will get *Accepted* in this question.]

Here is an example:

Let $n = 8, s = 01221220$.

The answer to query 1,8 is *Yes*, since $01221220 \rightarrow 011220 \rightarrow 0220 \rightarrow 00 \rightarrow \emptyset$.

The answer to query 2,5 is *Yes*, since $1221 \rightarrow 11 \rightarrow \emptyset$.

The answer to query 3,7 is *No*, since $22122 \rightarrow 122 \rightarrow 1$ is not an empty string.

The answer to query 5,8 is *No*, since $1220 \rightarrow 10$ is not an empty string. ◀