

Some intuition for loop invariants. When we are at the j th iteration of a loop, the inductive hypothesis states what the value of some variable is up to that point. We always assume what the results are just before we begin to compute the procedure at j . The inductive step is to prove what the results are just before the $j + 1$ st iteration, which means we must find the results after computing the procedure at j .

1. Let E be the expression $n - i$. With each iteration of the loop i increases by 1. Therefore $n - i$ decreases by 1 with each pass. Eventually E will be negative, and the loop will terminate. In particular, when $n - i \leq -1$.

We prove the following statement by induction on the value of the variable i .

STATEMENT $S(m)$: If we reach the loop test $i \leq n$ with the variable i having the value m , then the value of the variable sum is $m(m - 1)/2$.

BASIS. The basis is $m = 1$. When we first enter the loop we reach the test with i having value 1 and sum having value 0. We see that $1(1 - 1)/2 = 0$. So the basis is proven.

INDUCTION. Assume $S(m)$. We shall prove $S(m + 1)$.

We assume here that we are not entering the loop for the first time. If $m > n$, then when i has the value m we do not reach the loop test. Thus with i having the value $m + 1$, we do not reach the loop test. In that case $S(m + 1)$ is trivially true.

If $m \leq n$, then we consider what happens when we execute the body of the loop with i having the value m . By the inductive hypothesis, sum has value $m(m - 1)/2$ and i has value m (yes we repeat that i has value m again). After the body of the loop is executed, and when we reach the loop test, sum has the value $m(m - 1)/2 + m = m(m + 1)/2$ and i has the value $m + 1$. We have proven $S(m + 1)$, therefore $S(m)$ holds for $m \geq 1$.

We expressed earlier that the loop will terminate when $n - i \leq -1$. That is, when i has the value $n + 1$. Thus after the body terminates $S(n + 1)$ must hold, because we reach the test loop when i has at most the value $n + 1$. This statement says that sum has the value $m(m + 1)/2$, which is the desired result of the program.

♦

The basis gives us the result upon entering the loop, where i has value 1 and sum has value 0. Afterward, we know that when i takes on $n + 1$ we reach the loop test and fail. Hence when i has value m we know that we reach the loop test once when $m > n$ and fail. There is no point in this process where $m > n$ and we do not reach the loop test, so this can be omitted.

2. We prove the following statement by induction on the value of the variable i .

STATEMENT $S(m)$: If we reach the loop test $i < n$ with the value of variable i being m , then the variable sum has the value $\sum_{i=0}^{m-1} A[i]$ where A is an array of integers.

BASIS. The basis is $S(0)$. When we enter the loop i has the value 0 and sum is $\sum_{i=0}^{-1} A[i] = 0$. Thus the basis is true.

INDUCTION. Assume $m \geq 0$ and $S(j)$ is true for $0 \leq j \leq m$. We shall prove $S(m + 1)$.

Assume $m \geq 0$ and $m < n$. The inductive hypothesis states that **sum** has the value $\sum_{i=0}^{m-1} A[i]$. After executing the body of the loop, **sum** has value

$$\sum_{i=0}^{m-1} A[i] + A[m] = \sum_{i=0}^m A[i]$$

and **i** has value $m + 1$. This proves the inductive step.

The loop terminates when $m = n$. But we reach the loop test at this value. Hence $S(n)$ holds, and this statement claims that the value of **sum** is $\sum_{i=0}^{n-1} A[i]$ after executing the program. That is, **sum** has the value of the integers $A[0..n-1]$, which is the desired result. ♦