

APT: Word Ladder I

Problem Statement

A *word ladder* is a sequence of words in which each word can be transformed into the next word by changing one letter. For example, the word ladder below changes 'lot' to 'log'.

lot dot dog log

This is not the shortest word-ladder between 'lot' and 'log' since the former can be immediately changed to the latter yielding a word ladder of length two:

lot log

The first and last words in a word ladder are the *anchor rungs* of the ladder. Any other words are *interior rungs*. For example, there are three interior rungs in the ladder below between 'smile' and 'evote'.

smile smite smote emote evote

In this problem you'll write a method that has parameters representing potential interior rungs: an array of strings (these may be nonsense or English words), and the anchor rungs --- two strings. Your code must determine whether there exists any ladder between the exterior rungs that uses at least one interior rung. If there is any ladder the method returns "ladder", otherwise it should return "none".

Class

```
public class WordLadder {  
    public String ladderExists(String[] words,  
                               String from, String to) {  
        // fill in code here  
    }  
}
```

Notes and Constraints

- The parameters `from` and `to` are the anchor rungs, they must be connected by at least one interior rung from `words` or there are no valid word ladders.
- `words` contains at most 50 words.
- All strings contain only lowercase, alphabetic characters.
- All strings in `word` are the same length and are the same length as `from` and `to`.

Examples

1.

```
words = [hot, dot, dog]
from = hit
to = cog
```

Returns "ladder"

The only ladder is hit hot dot dog cog which has length five.

2.

```
words = [hot, dot, dog, lot, log]
from = hit
to = cog
```

Returns "ladder"

Now there are two length-five ladders:

```
hit hot dot dog cog
hit hot lot log cog
```

3.

```
words = [rain, ruin, gain, grin, grit, main, pain, pair, pail, mail]
from = sail
to = ruip
```

Returns "ladder"

There are two ladders of length six and no shorter ladders.

```
sail mail main rain ruin ruip
sail pail pain rain ruin ruip
```

4.

```
words = [most, mist, fist, fish,]
from = lost
to = cost
```

Returns: "ladder"

Although `lost` is directly connected to `cost`, a valid word ladder must contain an interior rung so the shortest ladder is

```
lost most cost
```

```
5. words = [mist, fist, fish,]  
   from = lost  
   to = cost
```

Returns: "none"

Although `lost` is directly connected to `cost`, a valid word ladder must contain an interior rung so there is no valid ladder.



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