#### **Data-Intensive Distributed Computing**

CS 451/651 (Fall 2025)



# Batch Processing I

Week 3: September 18, 2025

Jimmy Lin
David R. Cheriton School of Computer Science
University of Waterloo



These slides are available at https://lintool.github.io/cs451-2025f/

# **Key Questions**

What's MapReduce and how does it work with HDFS?

What challenges do communication and skew present in scaling out?

Why is local aggregation important?

Immutable Truth #1: At scale, you must distribute work across multiple machines.

Immutable Truth #2: At scale, computing components break all the time.

How do you write a program that runs across 100 machines?

#### **Implications**

Must create higher levels of abstraction

Must think about fault tolerance from the beginning

The essence of abstraction is preserving information that is relevant in a given context, and forgetting information that is irrelevant in that context.

computer scientist John V. Guttag

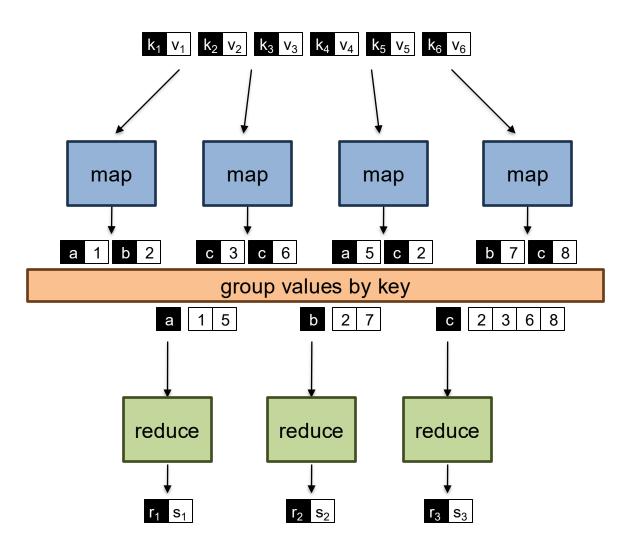


### MapReduce

#### Programmer specifies two functions:

```
map (k_1, v_1) \rightarrow List[(k_2, v_2)]
reduce (k_2, List[v_2]) \rightarrow List[(k_3, v_3)]
```

All values with the same key are sent to the same reducer





# "Hello World" MapReduce: Word Count

```
def map(key: Long, value: String) = {
  for (word <- tokenize(value)) {
    emit(word, 1)
  }
}

def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Int]) = {
  for (value <- values) {
    sum += value
  }
  emit(key, sum)
}</pre>
```

## MapReduce

#### Programmer specifies two functions:

```
map (k_1, v_1) \rightarrow List[(k_2, v_2)]
reduce (k_2, List[v_2]) \rightarrow List[(k_3, v_3)]
```

All values with the same key are sent to the same reducer

The "runtime" handles everything else...

# MapReduce "Runtime"

Handles scheduling
Assigns workers to map and reduce tasks

Handles "data distribution"

Moves processes to data

Handles coordination
Groups and shuffles intermediate data

Handles errors and faults

Detects worker failures and restarts

Immutable Truth #1: At scale, you must distribute work across multiple machines.

Immutable Truth #2: At scale, computing components break all the time.

How do you write a program that runs across 100 machines?

#### **Implications**

Must create higher levels of abstraction

Must think about fault tolerance from the beginning

tl;dr - MapReduce takes care of it!



# More? Why do you care?

The essence of abstraction is preserving information that is relevant in a given context, and forgetting information that is irrelevant in that context.

- computer scientist John V. Guttag

- I. All abstractions are leaky
- 2. Important to develop intuitions
- 3. What do you want to be?
- 4. Curiosity

You don't have to be an engineer to be be a racing driver, but you do have to have mechanical sympathy

Formula One driver Jackie Stewart

### MapReduce

#### Programmer specifies two functions:

```
map (k_1, v_1) \rightarrow List[(k_2, v_2)]
reduce (k_2, List[v_2]) \rightarrow List[(k_3, v_3)]
```

All values with the same key are sent to the same reducer

That's it?

Not quite...

Immutable Truth #1: At scale, you must distribute work across multiple machines.

#### Ideal scaling characteristics:

Twice the data, twice the running time
Twice the resources, half the running time

#### Why can't we achieve this?

- I. Communication is unavoidable
  - 2. Skew creates idle workers

# Ideal Scaling: Why not?

#### Communication is unavoidable

Workers need to share intermediate results...
Which requires communication across machines...
Which requires synchronization...
Which kills performance.

#### Skew creates idle workers

Tasks are never divided perfectly evenly...

And even if they are, processing times can be unpredictable...

Which leads to idle workers.

# Storage Hierarchy

Remote Machine

Different Datacenter

Remote Machine Different Rack

Remote Machine Same Rack

Local Machine cache, memory, SSD, magnetic disks capacity, latency, bandwidth

### tl;dr – communication is costly

So let's reduce the amount of data shuffling! How? Aggregate intermediate results locally!

## MapReduce

Programmer specifies two functions:

map 
$$(k_1, v_1) \rightarrow List[(k_2, v_2)]$$
  
reduce  $(k_2, List[v_2]) \rightarrow List[(k_3, v_3)]$ 

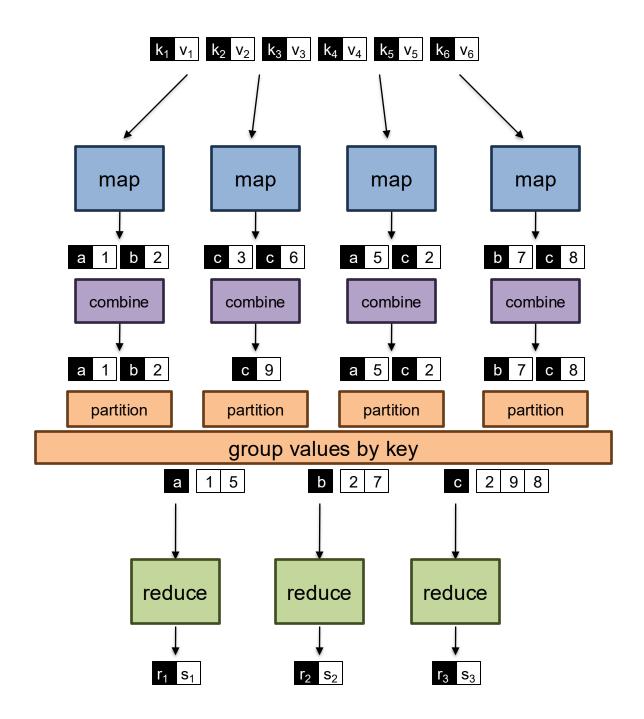
All values with the same key are sent to the same reducer

partition  $(k', p) \rightarrow 0 \dots p-1$ 

Often a simple hash of the key, e.g., hash(k') mod n Divides up key space for parallel reduce operations

combine  $(k_2, List[v_2]) \rightarrow List[(k_2, v_2)]$ 

Mini-reducers that run in memory after the map phase Used as an optimization to reduce the amount of data shuffling



### Word Count: Baseline

```
class Mapper {
  def map(key: Long, value: String) = {
    for (word <- tokenize(value)) {</pre>
      emit(word, 1)
class Reducer {
  def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Int]) = {
    for (value <- values) {</pre>
      sum += value
    emit(key, sum)
```

What's the impact of combiners?

# Word Count: Mapper Histogram

```
class Mapper {
  def map(key: Long, value: String) = {
    val counts = new Map()
    for (word <- tokenize(value)) {
       counts(word) += 1
    }

  for ((k, v) <- counts) {
       emit(k, v)
    }
  }
}</pre>
```

Are combiners still needed?

# Ideal Scaling: Why not?

#### Communication is unavoidable

Workers need to share intermediate results...

Which requires communication across machines...

Which requires synchronization...

Combiners help here! Which kills performance.

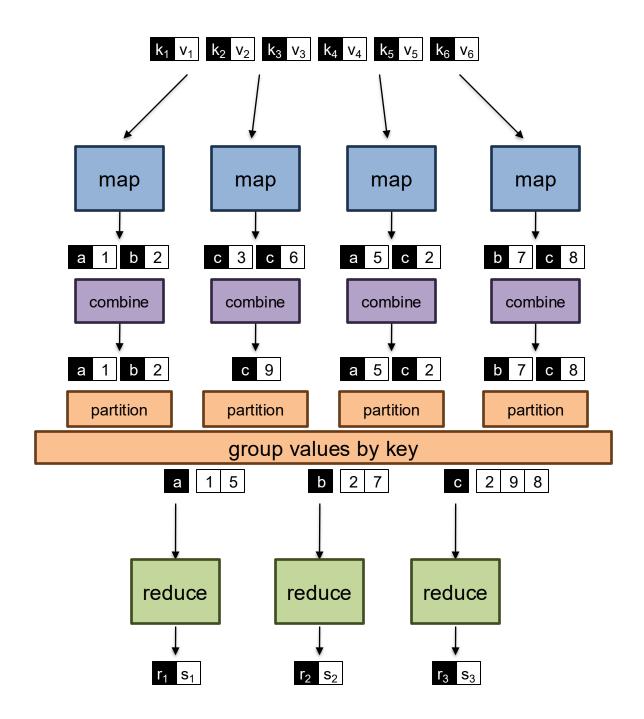
#### Skew creates idle workers

Tasks are never divided perfectly evenly...

And even if they are, processing times can be unpredictable...

Which leads to idle workers.

What about partitioners?



# MapReduce That's it!

Programmer specifies two functions:

map 
$$(k_1, v_1) \rightarrow List[(k_2, v_2)]$$
  
reduce  $(k_2, List[v_2]) \rightarrow List[(k_3, v_3)]$ 

All values with the same key are sent to the same reducer

partition  $(k', p) \rightarrow 0 \dots p-1$ 

Often a simple hash of the key, e.g., hash(k') mod n Divides up key space for parallel reduce operations

combine  $(k_2, List[v_2]) \rightarrow List[(k_2, v_2)]$ 

Mini-reducers that run in memory after the map phase Used as an optimization to reduce the amount of data shuffling

### Which means...

You have limited control over data and execution flow!

All algorithms must be expressed in m, r, c, p

#### You don't know:

Where mappers and reducers run
When a mapper or reducer begins or finishes
Which input a particular mapper is processing
Which intermediate key a particular reducer is processing

. . .

### **Abstractions**

#### **Pros**

You don't have to worry about it.

You don't need to know what's going on.

#### Cons

You can't worry about it (even if you wanted to).
You don't know what's going on (even if you wanted to).

Recap, why combiners?

# Combiner Design

#### Combiners and reducers share same method signature

Sometimes, reducers can serve as combiners Often, not...

#### Combiner are optional optimizations

Should not affect algorithm correctness May be run 0, 1, or multiple times

#### Can reducers be used as combiners?

Example: find average of integers associated with the same key

# Computing the Mean: Version I

```
class Mapper {
  def map(key: String, value: Int) = {
    emit(key, value)
class Reducer {
  def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Int]) {
    for (value <- values) {</pre>
      sum += value
      cnt += 1
    emit(key, sum/cnt)
```

Why can't we use reducer as combiner?

# Computing the Mean: Version 2

```
class Mapper {
  def map(key: String, value: Int) =
    context.write(key, value)
class Combiner {
  def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Int]) = {
    for (value <- values) {</pre>
      sum += value
      cnt += 1
    emit(key, (sum, cnt))
class Reducer {
  def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Pair]) = {
    for ((s, c) <- values) {
      sum += s
      cnt += c
    emit(key, sum/cnt)
                                     Why doesn't this work?
```

# Computing the Mean: Version 3

```
class Mapper {
  def map(key: String, value: Int) =
    context.write(key, (value, 1))
class Combiner {
  def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Pair]) = {
    for ((s, c) <- values) {
      sum += s
      cnt += c
    emit(key, (sum, cnt))
class Reducer {
  def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Pair]) = {
    for ((s, c) <- values) {
      sum += s
      cnt += c
                                              Fixed? No!
    emit(key, sum/cnt)
```

## Another Example

Term co-occurrence matrix for a text collection

 $M = N \times N$  matrix (N = vocabulary size)

 $M_{ij}$ : number of times *i* and *j* co-occur in some context (for concreteness, let's say context = sentence)

Why?

# Large Counting Problems

Term co-occurrence matrix for a text collection = specific instance of a large counting problem

A large event space (number of terms)
A large number of observations (the collection itself)
Goal: keep track of interesting statistics about the events

#### Basic approach

Mappers generate partial counts Reducers aggregate partial counts

How do we aggregate partial counts efficiently?

# First Try: "Pairs"

Each mapper takes a sentence:

Generate all co-occurring term pairs For all pairs, emit  $(a, b) \rightarrow count$ 

Reducers sum up counts associated with these pairs Use combiners!

### Pairs: Pseudo-Code

```
class Mapper {
  def map(key: Long, value: String) = {
    for (u <- tokenize(value)) {</pre>
      for (v <- neighbors(u)) {</pre>
        emit((u, v), 1)
class Reducer {
  def reduce(key: Pair, values: Iterable[Int]) = {
    for (value <- values) {</pre>
      sum += value
   emit(key, sum)
```

### Pairs: Pseudo-Code

One more thing...

```
class Partitioner {
  def getPartition(key: Pair, value: Int, numTasks: Int): Int = {
    return key.left % numTasks
  }
}
```

## "Pairs" Analysis

#### Advantages

Easy to implement, easy to understand

#### Disadvantages

Lots of pairs to sort and shuffle around (upper bound?) Fewer opportunities for combiners to work

# Another Try: "Stripes"

Idea: group together pairs into an associative array

```
(a, b) \rightarrow 1

(a, c) \rightarrow 2

(a, d) \rightarrow 5

(a, e) \rightarrow 3

(a, f) \rightarrow 2

(a, b) \rightarrow 1

a \rightarrow \{ b: 1, c: 2, d: 5, e: 3, f: 2 \}
```

#### Each mapper takes a sentence:

```
Generate all co-occurring term pairs For each term, emit a \to { b: count<sub>b</sub>, c: count<sub>c</sub>, d: count<sub>d</sub> ... }
```

Reducers perform element-wise sum of associative arrays

$$a \rightarrow \{ b: 1, d: 5, e: 3 \}$$
+  $a \rightarrow \{ b: 1, c: 2, d: 2, f: 2 \}$ 
 $a \rightarrow \{ b: 2, c: 2, d: 7, e: 3, f: 2 \}$ 

Key idea: data structure to bring together intermediate results

### Stripes: Pseudo-Code

```
class Mapper {
  def map(key: Long, value: String) = {
     for (u <- tokenize(value)) {</pre>
       val map = new Map()
        for (v <- neighbors(u)) {</pre>
          map(v) += 1
        emit(u, map)
                                  a \rightarrow \{ b: 1, c: 2, d: 5, e: 3, f: 2 \}
class Reducer {
  def reduce(key: String, values: Iterable[Map]) = {
     val map = new Map()
     for (value <- values) {
                                       a \rightarrow \{ b: 1, d: 5, e: 3 \}
       map += value
                                  a \rightarrow \{ b: 1, c: 2, d: 2, f: 2 \}
 a \rightarrow \{ b: 2, c: 2, d: 7, e: 3, f: 2 \}
     emit(key, map)
```

## "Stripes" Analysis

#### Advantages

Far less sorting and shuffling of key-value pairs

Can make better use of combiners

#### Disadvantages

More difficult to implement
Underlying object more heavyweight
Overhead associated with data structure manipulations
Fundamental limitation in terms of size of event space

### Stripes >> Pairs?

#### **Tradeoffs**

Developer code vs. framework CPU vs. RAM vs. disk vs. network

Number of key-value pairs: sorting and shuffling data across the network
Size and complexity of each key-value pair: de/serialization overhead
Cost of manipulating data structures
Opportunities for local aggregation

### **Tradeoffs**

#### Pairs:

Generates a lot more key-value pairs
Fewere combining opportunities
More sorting and shuffling
Simple aggregation at reduce

#### Stripes:

Generates fewer key-value pairs (but more complex values)

More opportunities for combining

Less sorting and shuffling

More complex (slower) aggregation at reduce

(At scale, stripes are faster)

### Hrm. Can we generalize?

(Yes, but next time...)

### Deep(-er) Dive: How does this all work?

Where do we place the data? Where do we place the compute?

Immutable Truth #1: At scale, you must distribute work across multiple machines.

Immutable Truth #2: At scale, computing components break all the time.

Where do we place the data?

Trick #1: Partition

Trick #2: Replicate

Answer: GFS! (circa 2003)

Remember: There are no solutions, only tradeoffs!

### **GFS:** Assumptions

Commodity hardware over "exotic" hardware Scale "out", not "up"

High component failure rates

Inexpensive commodity components fail all the time

"Modest" number of huge files Multi-gigabyte files are common, if not encouraged

Files are write-once, mostly appended to Logs are a common case

Large streaming reads over random access

Design for high sustained throughput over low latency

### GFS: Design Decisions

Files stored as chunks

Fixed size (64MB)

Reliability through replication

Each chunk replicated across 3+ chunkservers

Single master to coordinate access and hold metadata
Simple centralized management

No data caching

Little benefit for streaming reads over large datasets

Simplify the API: not POSIX!

Push many issues onto the client (e.g., data layout)

HDFS = GFS clone (same basic ideas)

### From GFS to HDFS

#### Terminology differences:

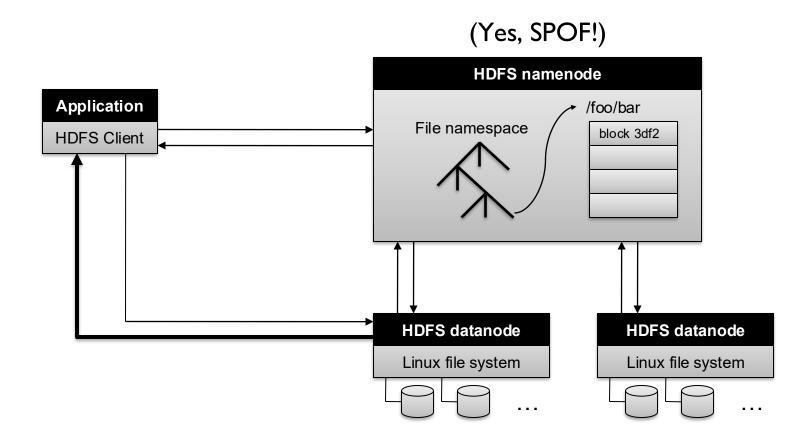
GFS master = Hadoop namenode GFS chunkservers = Hadoop datanodes

#### Implementation differences:

Different consistency model for file appends
Implementation language
Performance

For the most part, we'll use Hadoop terminology...

### HDFS Architecture



## Namenode Responsibilities

#### Managing the file system namespace

Holds file/directory structure, file-to-block mapping, metadata (ownership, access permissions, etc.)

#### Coordinating file operations

Directs clients to datanodes for reads and writes No data is moved through the namenode

#### Maintaining overall health

Periodic communication with the datanodes
Block re-replication and rebalancing
Garbage collection

### Deep(-er) Dive: How does this all work?

Where do we place the data? Where do we place the compute?

Immutable Truth #1: At scale, you must distribute work across multiple machines.

Immutable Truth #2: At scale, computing components break all the time.

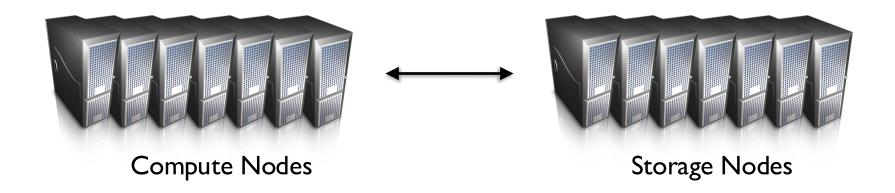
Where do we place the compute?

Trick #1: Partition

Trick #2: Replicate

Remember: There are no solutions, only tradeoffs!

### Compute meets Data!



Move data to compute? Move compute to data?

### Basic Cluster Components

Namenode (NN)

Holds HDFS metadata

Jobtracker (JT)

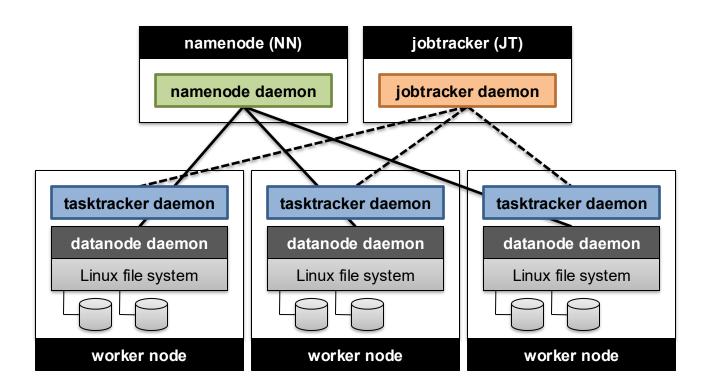
Coordinator for MapReduce jobs

On each of the worker machines:

Tasktracker (TT): contains multiple task slots

Datanode (DN): serves HDFS data blocks

### Putting everything together...



Key idea: align map tasks with HDFS blocks

