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For example, assume we use ϵ -**greedy** method for $\pi_{behavior}$. Q-Learning updates Q-value greedily with regard to Q-value. In other words, Q-Learning uses **greedy** method for π_{target} . Thus, Q-Learning is an off-policy method because it uses **both behavior policy and target policy**.

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In many cases, Q-Learning and Sarsa perform the same way. However, when $S = S'$ (present-state and next-state are the same) two methods operate differently. Let's consider each flow from timestep t to timestep $t + 1$. (S_t is already determined and $S_t = S_{t+1}$)

Sarsa

Select $A_t = \arg \max_a Q(S_t, a)$

Update $Q(S_{t-1}, A_{t-1})$

Take action A_t

Observe R_{t+1}, S_{t+1}

Select

$$\begin{aligned} A_{t+1} &= \arg \max_a Q(S_{t+1}, a) \\ &= \arg \max_a Q(S_t, a) \\ &= A_t \end{aligned}$$

Sequence:

$$\begin{aligned} &S_t, A_t, R_{t+1}, S_{t+1}, A_{t+1} \\ &= S_t, A_t, R_{t+1}, S_t, A_t \end{aligned}$$

Q-Learning

Select $A_t = \arg \max_a Q(S_t, a)$

Update $Q(S_t, A_t) (\rightarrow Q'(S_t, A_t))$

Take action A_t

Observe R_{t+1}, S_{t+1}

Select

$$\begin{aligned} A_{t+1} &= \arg \max_a Q'(S_{t+1}, a) \\ &= \arg \max_a Q'(S_t, a) \\ &\neq A_t \end{aligned}$$

Sequence:

$$\begin{aligned} &S_t, A_t, R_{t+1}, S_{t+1}, A_{t+1} \\ &= S_t, A_t, R_{t+1}, S_t, A_{t+1} \end{aligned}$$