# Segment Trees in Algorithmic Problems

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#### Abstract

This document provides an overview of segment trees. In the first place I will describe some algebraic topics which are necessary for better understanding how and why segment trees works. This knowledge will be useful for reading the rest of the paper where We will dive into different kinds of trees. For each structure, I will explain how it work and how to apply it to problems. Then, I will look at each structure's time complexity and space complexity.

## 1 Foundations of Segment Trees

A segment tree is a binary tree used for storing information about segments. To efficiently retrieve or update informations about elements stored in segment tree we can perform various operations most common of which are query/update on point or range. One of the examples can be maximum value of elements in given range or sum of elements in given range.

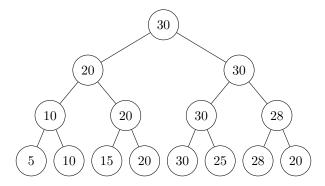


Figure 1: Example of a segment tree with maximum value of elements in given range.

#### 1.1 Segment Tree with point update and range query

To ilustrate use case of segment tree we will construct tree with max value on segment. Let's say we are given an array A = [5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 25, 28, 20] of length n = 8. For now let's assume that the input array is of size  $n = 2^k$  where k is integer (for different sizes of input we will fill input array with neutral elements (see section 2) to make it's length a power of 2). The height of tree is  $h = \log_2 n$ . Let's define dep(i) as depth of node i in our tree. We can see that dep(root) = 0 and dep(leaf) = h. We want to be able to perform the following operations:

#### • Build structure

We will create a segment tree from an array. To build a segment tree, we need to create a binary tree where each node will store the maximum value of elements in its subtree.

#### Algorithm 1 Build Segment Tree for Maximum on Segment (Iterative)

#### • Point update

Now let's update single value in the array and update the tree. We will change the value of A[1] from 10 to 35. To update the tree we need to

change the value of the leaf node and then update all the parent nodes up to the root.

#### Algorithm 2 Point Update on Segment Tree

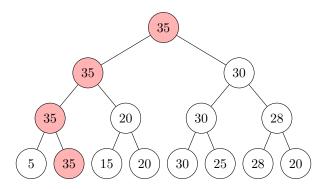


Figure 2: Example of point update.

#### • Range query

Now let's say we want to find the maximum value in the range A[2:7]. To do this we need to traverse the tree from the root to the leaves and find nodes that are in the range. Then we will get max the values of these nodes to get the final result. To get the result for range A[2:7] we call RangeQuery(seg, 1, 1, 8, 2, 7).

#### Algorithm 3 Range Maximum Query on Segment Tree (Recursive)

```
1: procedure RANGEQUERY(seg, index, l, r, a, b)
                                                                               ⊳ index: current node
    index in seg \triangleright [l, r]: segment represented by current node \triangleright [a, b]: query
     range
 2:
         if b < l or a > r then
              \mathbf{return}\ -\infty
                                                                                           ▷ No overlap
 3:
         else if a \le l and r \le b then
 4:
              return seg[index]
                                                                                        ▶ Total overlap
 5:
 6:
         else
              \begin{aligned} & mid \leftarrow \left\lfloor \frac{l+r}{2} \right\rfloor \\ & left \leftarrow \text{RangeQuery(seg, } 2 \cdot index, \ l, \ mid, \ a, \ b) \end{aligned}
 7:
 8:
              right \leftarrow \text{RANGEQUERY(seg, } 2 \cdot index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b)
 9:
              return \max(left, right)
10:
11:
         end if
12: end procedure
```

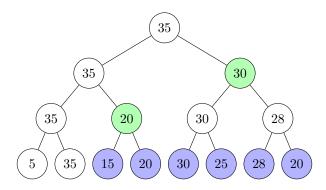


Figure 3: Example of range query. Blue leafs represents subarray A[2:7]. Green nodes represents nodes where ranges totally overlap and we can get max value. The result of the query is 30.

### 1.2 Segment Tree with range update and range query

A Little more complex version of segment tree is a segment tree with range update and range query which require **lazy propagation**. We will consider a segment tree with sum of elements in given range. Apart form values in tree we will also store lazy values in each node. The lazy value is used to delay the update of a node until it is needed.

• Build structure Only difference form previus example is initializing the lazy value for all nodes

#### Algorithm 4 Build Segment Tree for Sum on Segment (Iterative)

#### • Range update

In this case lazy value is a value that we want to add to all elements in the range. Another way to think about this is that we want to add lazy value to all elenets in arrary which are represented by all leaves in subtree of given node.

#### Algorithm 5 Range Update on Segment Tree

```
procedure QUERYUPDATE(seg, lazy index, l, r, a, b, value) ▷ Value: value
we wanted to add to each element in array
    size = r - l + 1
   if b < l or a > r then
       return
    else if a \leq l and r \leq b then
       seg[index] \leftarrow seg[index] + value * size
       lazy[index] \leftarrow lazy[index] + value
       return
    else
       seg[index*2] \leftarrow seg[index*2] + value*size
                                                                ▶ Update left child
       lazy[index*2] \leftarrow lazy[index*2] + value
                                                          ▶ Push lazy to left child
       seg[index*2+1] \leftarrow seg[index*2+1] + value*size > Same to right
       lazy[index*2+1] \leftarrow lazy[index*2+1] + value
       lazy[index] \leftarrow 0
                                              ▶ Reset lazy value for current node
       mid \leftarrow \left| \frac{l+r}{2} \right|
       left \leftarrow QUERYUPDATE(seg, 2 \cdot index, l, mid, a, b, value)
       right \leftarrow \text{QUERYUPDATE}(\text{seg}, 2 \cdot index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b, value)
       seg[index] \leftarrow seg[index*2] + seg[index*2+1] + lazy[index]*size
▶ Update current node after lazy propagation
    end if
end procedure
```

How this algorithm works:

1. If the current node is fully in range update the sum of the node and set the lazy value. Sum - value \* size where size is the number of

- array elements (leafs) in the range of this node, Lazy is equal to value, which we will later push down to child nodes.
- 2. If not fully in range push the lazy value down to the child nodes and update their sum and also reset the lazy value for the current node.
- 3. Call the function recursively for the left and right child nodes.
- 4. Finally update the sum of the current node with the sum of its children.

On the following example we will update the range A[0:5] by adding 10 to all elements in this range where initial array is A = [5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 25, 20, 20].

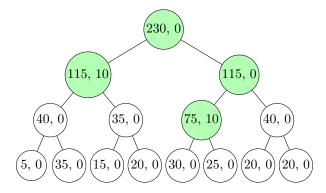


Figure 4: This is state of the tree after range update. Green nodes were changed during the update.

• Range query We will try to retrieve the sum of some given range. The algorithm for this will be similar to the one for range update. First we will check if the current node is fully in range. If it is we add the sum of this node, propagating lazy values along the way.

#### Algorithm 6 Range Query on Segment Tree

```
procedure RANGEQUERY(seg, lazy, index, l, r, a, b, value)
   if b < l or a > r then
       return 0
   else if a \leq l and r \leq b then
       return seg[index]
   else
       size = r - l + 1
       seg[index*2] \leftarrow seg[index*2] + value*size
                                                             ▶ Update left child
       lazy[index*2] \leftarrow lazy[index*2] + value
                                                      ▶ Push lazy to left child
       seg[index*2+1] \leftarrow seg[index*2+1] + value*size > Same to right
       lazy[index*2+1] \leftarrow lazy[index*2+1] + value
       lazy[index] \leftarrow 0
                                            ▶ Reset lazy value for current node
       result=0
       mid \leftarrow \lfloor \frac{l+r}{2} \rfloor
       result + = RangeQuery(seg, 2 \cdot index, l, mid, a, b, value)
       result + = RangeQuery(seg, 2 \cdot index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b, value)
       seg[index] \leftarrow seg[index*2] + seg[index*2+1] + lazy[index]*size
       return result
   end if
end procedure
```

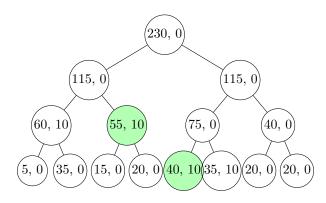


Figure 5: This is state of the tree after range query on range [2: 4]. Green nodes were we took values form to the sum. Result of query is 95.

## 2 A mathematical approach to segment trees

In this section we will try to understand how segment trees work and why they are so efficient. In order to do this we will need to understand some basic algebra that is used in segment trees.

#### 2.1 Monoids

A monoid (S, \*, e) is a set equipped with an associative binary operation  $S \times S \to S$  and an identity element e.

• Associativity

For all  $a, b, c \in S$ , (a \* b) \* c = a \* (b \* c).

• Identity element

There exists an element  $e \in S$  such that for all  $a \in S$ , a \* e = e \* a = a.

Commutativity

Monoid is called **commutative** if for all  $a, b \in S$ , a \* b = b \* a.

Examples of monoids:

• Natural numbers under addition,  $(\mathbb{N}, +, 0)$ 

In this simple example we can see that addition is associative and commutative. Adding 0 (neutral element) to any of the numbers will not change the result of the operation.

• Strings over an alphabet,  $(\Sigma^*, \cdot, \epsilon)$ 

 $\Sigma^*$  - set of all strings over an alphabet  $\Sigma$ 

- · concatenation of strings
- $\epsilon$  empty string

This is a example of non-commutative monoid. Concatenation of strings is associative but not commutative as we can see in the following example.

$$abc \cdot def = abcdef \neq defabc = def \cdot abc$$
 (1)

#### 2.2 Homomorphism

A homomorphism is a structure-preserving map between two algebraic structures. In this section we will look at homomorphisms between monoids. Let (S,\*,e) and  $(T,\cdot,\theta)$  be two monoids. A function  $f:S\to T$  is a homomorphism if:

• Preserves the operation

For all  $a, b \in S$ ,  $f(a * b) = f(a) \cdot f(b)$ .

• Preserves the identity element  $f(e) = \theta$ .

Let's consider a simple example of homomorphism between two monoids. Let  $S = (\mathbb{N}, +, 0)$  and  $T = (\mathbb{N}, \cdot, 1)$ . Let  $f : S \to T$  be defined as  $f(x) = 2^x$ . We can see that:

- $f(a+b) = 2^{a+b} = 2^a \cdot 2^b = f(a) \cdot f(b)$
- $f(0) = 2^0 = 1$

### 2.3 Endomorphism

A special case of homomorphism is an endomorphism. This is a homomorphism from a monoid to itself. Lets consider a simple example of endomorphism. Let  $S = (\mathbb{N}, +, 0)$  and  $f : S \to S$  be defined as f(x) = x + 1. We can see that:

- f(a+b) = a+b+1 = (a+1)+(b+1) = f(a)+f(b)
- f(0) = 0 + 1 = 1

Interesing property of endomorphisms is that a Set of all endomorphisms of a monoid is also a monoid. Let's consider a set of all endomorphisms of a monoid S. Let  $S = (\mathbb{N}, +, 0)$  and let E be a set of all endomorphisms of S. We can define a binary operation on E as follows:

$$f * g = h \text{ where } h(x) = f(g(x))$$
 (2)

We can see that this operation is associative and has an identity element e(x) = x.

#### 2.4 Application of Monoids to Segment Trees

How does this all relate to segment trees? First of all we can see that segment trees requires the properties of monoids to work. The associativity of the operation is required to be able to combine the results of the operations on the segments. The identity element is required when we ask for the result of the operation on an empty segment or when we want extend our initial array to a power of 2. Since all segment trees must preserve monoid properties, we can think more generic approach to the implementation. We will try to create a generic segment tree that can be used for any monoid for range queries and point updates. Let  $\ast$  be a binary operation on a monoid S and let e be the identity element of the monoid.

#### **Algorithm 7** Build Segment Tree over a Monoid (S, \*, e)

```
1: procedure BUILDTREE(A, seg, e)
 2:
        n \leftarrow \text{next power of two greater than or equal to } |A|
        for i = 0 to |A| - 1 do
 3:
            seg[n+i] \leftarrow A[i]
                                                                ▶ Insert original values
 4:
        end for
 5:
 6:
        for i = |A| to n - 1 do
            seg[n+i] \leftarrow e
 7:
                                                ▶ Pad remaining leaves with identity
        end for
 8:
        for i = n - 1 downto 1 do
 9:
           seg[i] \leftarrow seg[2 \times i] * seg[2 \times i + 1]
10:
11:
        end for
12: end procedure
```

#### **Algorithm 8** Generic Point Update in a Segment Tree over a Monoid (S, \*, e)

```
1: procedure UPDATE(arr, index, value)
       index \leftarrow index + n
                                                              ▶ Move to the leaf node
       arr[index] \leftarrow value
                                                      \triangleright Set the new value at the leaf
3:
       while index > 1 do
4:
           index \leftarrow |index/2|
                                                                      ▷ Move to parent
5:
           arr[index] \leftarrow arr[2 \times index] * arr[2 \times index + 1]
6:
       end while
7:
8: end procedure
```

## **Algorithm 9** Range Query on Segment Tree over Monoid (S, \*, e)

```
1: procedure RangeQuery(seg, index, l, r, a, b, e) \Rightarrow index: current node
     in segment tree
                                  \triangleright [l, r]: range covered by node
                                                                                    \triangleright [a, b]: query range
         if b < l or a > r then
 2:
              \mathbf{return}\ e
                                                                                              ▷ No overlap
 3:
         else if a \leq l and r \leq b then
 4:
 5:
              return seg[index]
                                                                                           ▷ Total overlap
         else
 6:
              \begin{aligned} & mid \leftarrow \left\lfloor \frac{l+r}{2} \right\rfloor \\ & left \leftarrow \text{RangeQuery}(seg, \, 2 \cdot index, \, l, \, mid, \, a, \, b, \, e) \end{aligned}
 7:
 8:
              right \leftarrow \text{RangeQuery}(seg, 2 \cdot index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b, e)
 9:
              return left * right
10:
         end if
11:
12: end procedure
```

Now we can replace this generic monoid with some specific one. For example we can use a segment tree for sum of elements in given range. In this case we will use \* as addition and e as 0. Another example can be a segment tree for maximum value in given range. In this case we will use \* as maximum and e as  $-\infty$ . We can see that using this generic approach we can create a segment tree for any monoid.

## 2.5 Application of Endomorphisms to Segment Trees

In this section we will try to implement a generic segment tree for range update and range query. In order to do this we will need to use endomorphisms and their properties. Let's consider what happens when we update a range of elements in the segment tree. What we acctually do is application of endomorphism on some range of elements. This operation doesn't break the structure of the segment tree, because endomorphism is a function that doesn't change the structure of the monoid. Making multiple updates (that is applying multiple endomorphisms) on the same range of elements also doesn't break the structure of the segment tree. This statement follows form the fact which we showed erlier that the set of all endomorphisms of a monoid is also a monoid. Multiple updates are just composition of endomorphisms. Let's consider a simple example:

We have a segment tree that can add some value to a range of elements and query the sum of elements in a range. Let's say we updated some range of elements by adding 1 to them, we can look at this as applying an endomorphism  $f_1(x) = x + 1$  to the range of elements. We also updated the same range of elements by adding 5 to them, (again endomorphism  $f_5(x) = x + 5$ ). In result we apply composition of both endomorphisms to the range of elements. The result of this operation is the same as applying endomorphism  $f_6(x) = x + 6$  to the range of elements. We can see that composition of endomorphisms is also an endomorphism (endomorphisms are monoid). Now we will try to implement a generic segment tree for range update and range query. Let \* be a binary operation on a monoid S and let e be the identity element of the monoid. Let e(x) = x be a identity element for monoid of endomorphisms

**Algorithm 10** Build Segment Tree for Range Update and Range Query over Monoid (S, \*, e)

```
1: procedure BUILDTREE(A, seg, lazy, n, e)
       for i = 0 to 2n - 1 do
 2:
           seg[i] \leftarrow e
                                    ▷ Initialize segment tree with identity element
 3:
           lazy[i] \leftarrow e
                                       ▶ Initialize lazy array with identity element
 4:
       end for
 5:
       for i = 0 to n - 1 do
 6:
           seg[n+i] \leftarrow A[i] \Rightarrow Copy array values to leaves of the segment tree
 7:
       end for
 8:
       for i = n - 1 downto 1 do
                                               ▶ Build the tree from bottom to top
 9:
           seg[i] \leftarrow *(seg[2 \times i], seg[2 \times i + 1])
10:
                                                              ▷ Combine child nodes
       end for
12: end procedure
```

#### **Algorithm 11** Range Update on Segment Tree over Monoid (S, \*, e)

```
1: procedure RANGEUPDATE(seg, lazy, index, l, r, a, b, value, e)
 2:
        Call: PushDown(index, l, r, lazy, e)
        if b < l or a > r then
 3:
            return
                                                               ▷ No overlap, do nothing
 4:
        else if a \leq l and r \leq b then
 5:
 6:
            seg[index] \leftarrow *(seg[index], (r-l+1) \times value)
            lazy[index] \leftarrow *(lazy[index], value)
 7:
        else
 8:
            mid \leftarrow \left| \frac{l+r}{2} \right|
 9:
            RangeUpdate(seg, lazy, 2 \times \text{index}, l, mid, a, b, value, e)
10:
            RangeUpdate(seg, lazy, 2 \times index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b, value, e)
11:
            seg[index] \leftarrow *(seg[2 \times index], seg[2 \times index + 1])
12:
13:
        end if
14: end procedure
   procedure PushDown(index, l, r, lazy, e)
        if lazy[index] \neq e then
16:
            seg[index] \leftarrow *(seg[index], lazy[index])
17:
            if l \neq r then
18:
                lazy[2 \times index] \leftarrow *(lazy[2 \times index], lazy[index])
19:
                lazy[2 \times index + 1] \leftarrow *(lazy[2 \times index + 1], lazy[index])
20:
            end if
21:
                                            ▷ Clear lazy value after pushing it down
            lazy[index] \leftarrow e
22:
23:
        end if
24: end procedure
```

#### **Algorithm 12** Range Query on Segment Tree over Monoid (S, \*, e)

```
1: procedure RangeQuery(seg, lazy, index, l, r, a, b, e)
        Call: PushDown(index, l, r, lazy, e)
 2:
        if b < l or a > r then
 3:
 4:
            return e
                                                 ▷ No overlap, return identity element
        else if a \leq l and r \leq b then
 5:
            return seg[index] 
ightharpoonup Total overlap, return the current node's value
 6:
 7:
        else
            mid \leftarrow \left| \frac{l+r}{2} \right|
 8:
            left \leftarrow \texttt{\~RANGEQUERY}(seg, \, lazy, \, 2 \times index, \, l, \, mid, \, a, \, b, \, e)
 9:
            right \leftarrow \text{RangeQuery}(seg, lazy, 2 \times index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b, e)
10:
                                          ▷ Combine results from left and right child
            return *(left, right)
11:
    using *
        end if
12:
13: end procedure
14: procedure PushDown(index, l, r, lazy, e)
        if lazy[index] \neq e then
15:
            seg[index] \leftarrow *(seg[index], lazy[index])
16:
            if l \neq r then
17:
                lazy[2 \times index] \leftarrow *(lazy[2 \times index], lazy[index])
18:
                lazy[2 \times index + 1] \leftarrow *(lazy[2 \times index + 1], lazy[index])
19:
            end if
20:
            lazy[index] \leftarrow e
                                             ▷ Clear lazy value after pushing it down
21:
        end if
22:
23: end procedure
```

Using this generic approach we can simply replace the monoid with some specific one and set endomorphism as some function that we want to apply to the range of elements.

## 3 Binsearch on Segment Tree

In this section we will see that we can use segment trees not only for queries and updates but also for binary search. Let's consider the following problem:

Given an array a[1...n], answer a query Q(i, j, x): What is the smallest index k so that  $a[k] \ge x$  in subarray a[i...j]?

We want to be able to answer this query in  $O(\log n)$  time. We can create a segment tree with max value in given range but this is not enough. We need to upgrade our segment tree with binsearch operation, which goes as follows:

- Traverse recursively the tree to find the nodes that are in the range of the query (just like in range query). Always go to the left child first.
- For every nodes perform a binary search on the subtree.
- Binsearch
  - if right child's value is less than x, return -1 (no such index)
  - if left child's value is greater than x, go to left child
  - else go to right child
- Because we traverse the tree from left to right, we can be sure that the first binsearch that returns index different than -1 is the answer to the query.
- if no such index was found, return -1.

#### **Algorithm 13** Find First Index With Value Greater Than x in Range [a, b]

```
1: procedure QUERY(segTree, index, l, r, a, b, x)
                                                               ⊳ index: current node
    index \triangleright [l, r]: segment represented by current node \triangleright [a, b]: query range
       if b < l or a > r then
2:
3:
           return -1
                                                                         ▶ No overlap
       else if a \leq l and r \leq b then
4:
           return BinarySearch(segTree, index, x)
5:
       else
6:
           mid \leftarrow \left| \frac{l+r}{2} \right|
7:
           left \leftarrow QUERY(segTree, 2 \cdot index, l, mid, a, b, x)
8:
9:
           if left \neq -1 then
               return left
10:
           end if
11:
           return Query(segTree, 2 \cdot index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b, x)
12:
       end if
13:
14: end procedure
15:
16: procedure BINARYSEARCH(tree, index, x)
       while index * 2 < tree.size do
17:
           left \leftarrow tree[index*2]
18:
           if left > x then
19:
               index \leftarrow index * 2
20:
           else
21:
22:
               index \leftarrow index * 2 + 1
           end if
23:
       end while
24:
       if tree[index] > x then
25:
           return index
26:
27:
       else
           return -1
                                                                    ▷ No index found
28:
       end if
29:
30: end procedure
```

Let's consider the following example:

We have an array A = [5, 8, 2, 7, 1, 11, 13, 12, 19, 14, 15, 0, 15, 10, 15, 4] and we want to find the smallest index k such that  $A[k] \ge 14$  in the range A[5:12].

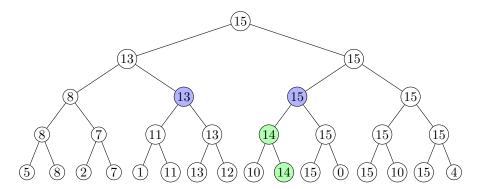


Figure 6: The blue nodes are the ones that we performed binsearch on. The green nodes are the ones that binsearch traversed. The result of the query is index 10. As we can see, the first binsearch (on node with value 13 returned -1)

## 4 Max prefix sum on Segment Tree

In this section we will take look at a little bit more complex query which will require a little bit more complex segment tree. Let's consider the following problem:

Given an array a[1...n], we want to be able to efficiently answer a query Q(i,j): What is the maximum prefix sum in subarray a[i...j]? While still beeing able to perform point updates on array.

What structure we can use to solve this problem? ...You guessed it, segment tree! This time nodes of our segment tree will store more information than just a single value. We will store a pair of values in each node:

$$(prefix, sum)$$
 (3)

Where prefix is the maximum prefix sum in the subtree of this node and sum is the sum of all elements in the subtree of this node. Before we construct the segment tree we need to define merge operation, that will be used to calculate the values in the parent node from the values in the child nodes.

#### Algorithm 14 Merge Two Segments in Segment Tree

- 1: **procedure** MERGE(seg, index)
- 2:  $seg[index].sum \leftarrow seg[2*index].sum + seg[2*index + 1].sum$
- 3:  $seg[index].prefix \leftarrow max(seg[2*index].prefix, seg[2*index].sum + seg[2*index + 1].prefix)$
- 4: end procedure

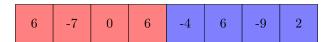


Figure 7: In this example the red blocks represent the subarray in left child and the blue blocks represent the subarray in right child. Max predfix sum is ether the max prefix sum in left child or the sum of left child plus max prefix sum in right child. In this example the max prefix (equal to 7) of parent node is sum of left child plus max prefix of right child as it is greater than max prefix of left child (equal to 6).

Now we can construct the segment tree and perform point updates (left as excercise) exactly like in previos exmaples only this time we use the merge operation defined above. Keeping in mind that when creating or updating the leaf node we need to set the prefix to the value of the element in the array.

Query operation on the other hand needs a little more modification. We traverse the tree and find the nodes in the range just like in range query. The result of the query is max prefix of some node plus sum of the nodes to the left we found during the traversal. In particular the result might be max prefix of leftmost node in range or sum of all nodes we found.

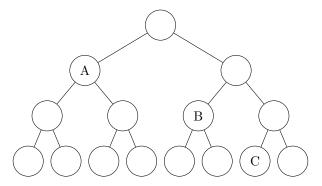


Figure 8: Let A, B, C be the nodes in the range of query. The result of this query would be max(prefix(A), sum(A) + prefix(B), sum(A) + sum(B) + prefix(C)).

Our range query, very similar to standard one, needs new variable sum, and a little modification when it finds a node in range:

#### Algorithm 15 Range Max Prefix Query

```
1: procedure RANGEQUERY(seg, index, l, r, a, b, sum)
                                                                      ⊳ sum: sum of all
    nodes in range to the left of current node
       if b < l or a > r then
2:
3:
           return 0
       else if a \leq l and r \leq b then
4:
           tmp\_sum \leftarrow sum
5:
           sum + = seg[index].sum
6:
           return seg[index].prefix + tmp\_sum
7:
       else
8:
           mid \leftarrow \left| \frac{l+r}{2} \right|
9:
           left \leftarrow \text{RangeQuery(seg, } 2 \cdot index, l, mid, a, b, sum)
10:
           right \leftarrow \text{RangeQuery(seg, } 2 \cdot index + 1, mid + 1, r, a, b, sum)
11:
           return \max(left, right)
12:
       end if
13:
14: end procedure
```