

# Leetcode 15. 2 Sum & 3 Sum

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## Problem Description - 2 Sum

Given an array of integers `nums` and an integer `target`, return indices of the two numbers such that they add up to `target`.

You may assume that each input would have exactly one solution, and you may not use the same element twice.

You can return the answer in any order.

### Example 1:

Input: `nums = [2,7,11,15]`, `target = 9`

Output: `[0,1]`

Explanation:

Because `nums[0] + nums[1] == 9`, we return `[0, 1]`.

### Example 2:

Input: `nums = [3,2,4]`, `target = 6`

Output: `[1,2]`

### Example 3:

Input: `nums = [3,3]`, `target = 6`

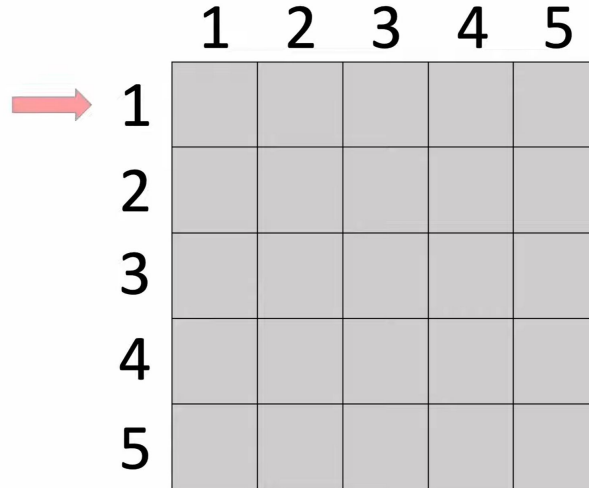
Output: `[0,1]`

# 1

## 2 Sum (Brute Force)

### [Approach 1] Brute Force Solution:

Simply calculate every single combination until you find the right answer.



	1	2	3	4	5
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

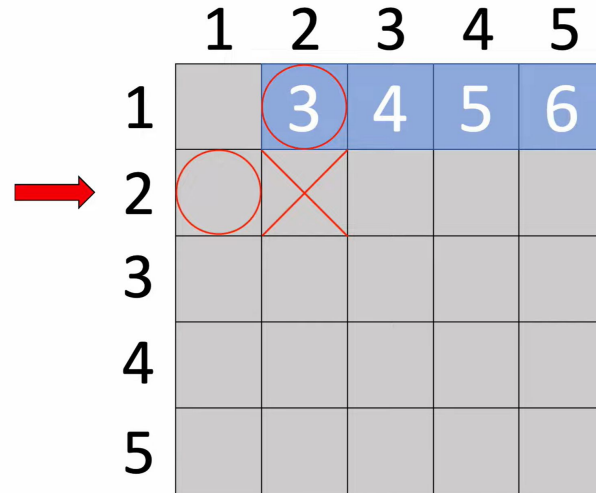
# 1

## 2 Sum (Brute Force)

### [Approach 1] Brute Force Solution:

Simply calculate every single combination until you find the right answer.

\*We cannot use the same number twice.



	1	2	3	4	5
1		3	4	5	6
2		<del></del>	<del></del>	<del></del>	<del></del>
3					
4					
5					

## 1

## 2 Sum (Brute Force)

**[Approach 1] Brute Force Solution:**

It's simple and it does work, but this solution runs in  $O(n^2)$  time.

Following the same logic....

	1	2	3	4	5
1		3	4	5	6
2			5	6	7
3				7	8
4					9
5					

$$\sum_{k=1}^n k = \frac{n(n+1)}{2} = \frac{n^2 + n}{2}$$

**Time complexity:**  $O(n^2)$  times

# 2

## 2 Sum (Using Stack & Hash Table)

### [Approach 2] Using Stack & Hash Table:

Instead of thinking as “ $x + y = \text{target}$ ”,

Since we already know what the target is, think as...

$$y = \text{target} - x$$

**Time complexity:**  $O(n)$  times,  
since we now only have to traverse the array once.

# 2

## 2 Sum (Using Stack & Hash Table)

[Approach 2] Using Stack & Hash Table:

Input:

nums = [2,4,9,6, 5]  
target = 10

2	4	9	6	5
0	1	2	3	4

# 2

## 2 Sum (Using Stack & Hash Table)

$i$   
↓

2	4	9	6	5
0	1	2	3	4

diff

8

seen (num) index)

{

}

Key: num  
Value: index

Input:

nums = [2,4,9,6, 5]

target = 10

```
✓ def twoSum(nums, target):  
    seen = {}  
    for i in range(len(nums)):  
        diff = target - nums[i]  
        if diff in seen:  
            return [seen[diff], i]  
        else:  
            seen[nums[i]] = i
```



2

## 2 Sum (Using Stack & Hash Table)

$i$   
↓

2	4	9	6	5
0	1	2	3	4

diff

8

seen (num) index)

{

2 : 0

}

Key: num  
Value: index

### Input:

nums = [2,4,9,6, 5]

target = 10

```
✓ def twoSum(nums, target):  
    seen = {}  
    for i in range(len(nums)):  
        diff = target - nums[i]  
        if diff in seen:  
            return [seen[diff], i]  
        else:  
            seen[nums[i]] = i
```

2

## 2 Sum (Using Stack &amp; Hash Table)

	$i$ ↓				
2	4	9	6	5	
0	1	2	3	4	

diff

6

seen (num index)

{

2 : 0

4 : 1

}

Key: num  
Value: index

Input:

nums = [2,4,9,6, 5]

target = 10

```
✓ def twoSum(nums, target):  
    seen = {}  
    for i in range(len(nums)):  
        diff = target - nums[i]  
        if diff in seen:  
            return [seen[diff], i]  
        else:  
            seen[nums[i]] = i
```

2

## 2 Sum (Using Stack & Hash Table)

$i$   
↓

2	4	9	6	5
0	1	2	3	4

diff

1

seen (num index)

```
{  
  2 : 0  
  4 : 1  
  9 : 2  
}
```

Key: num  
Value: index

### Input:

nums = [2,4,9,6, 5]

target = 10

```
✓ def twoSum(nums, target):  
    seen = {}  
    for i in range(len(nums)):  
        diff = target - nums[i]  
        if diff in seen:  
            return [seen[diff], i]  
        else:  
            seen[nums[i]] = i
```

2

## 2 Sum (Using Stack & Hash Table)

			i	
			↓	
2	4	9	6	5
0	1	2	3	4

diff

4

seen (num index)

```
{  
  2 : 0  
  4 : 1  
  9 : 2  
}
```

Key: num  
Value: index

Input:

nums = [2,4,9,6, 5]

target = 10

```
✓ def twoSum(nums, target):  
    seen = {}  
    for i in range(len(nums)):  
        diff = target - nums[i]  
        if diff in seen:  
            return [seen[diff], i]  
        else:  
            seen[nums[i]] = i
```

→ return [1, 3]



## Problem Description - 3 Sum

Given an integer array `nums`, return all the triplets `[nums[i], nums[j], nums[k]]` such that `i != j`, `i != k`, and `j != k`, and `nums[i] + nums[j] + nums[k] == 0`.

Notice that the solution set must not contain duplicate triplets.

### Example 1:

Input: `nums = [-1,0,1,2,-1,-4]`

Output: `[[-1,-1,2],[-1,0,1]]`

Explanation:

`nums[0] + nums[1] + nums[2] = (-1) + 0 + 1 = 0.`

`nums[1] + nums[2] + nums[4] = 0 + 1 + (-1) = 0.`

`nums[0] + nums[3] + nums[4] = (-1) + 2 + (-1) = 0.`

The distinct triplets are `[-1,0,1]` and `[-1,-1,2]`.

Notice that the order of the output and the order of the triplets does not matter.

### Example 2:

Input: `nums = [0,1,1]`

Output: `[]`

Explanation:

The only possible triplet does not sum up to 0.

### Example 3:

Input: `nums = [0,0,0]`

Output: `[[0,0,0]]`

Explanation:

The only possible triplet sums up to 0.

# 1

## 3 Sum (Differences compared to 2 Sum)

Given an integer array `nums`, return all the triplets `[nums[i], nums[j], nums[k]]` such that `i != j`, `i != k`, and `j != k`, and `nums[i] + nums[j] + nums[k] == 0`.

Notice that the solution set must not contain duplicate triplets.

- Brute Force Solution:  $O(n^3)$
- Sum up three values to 0
- Return array values to 0
- There can be multiple solutions, and we must return all of them.

## 1

## 3 Sum (Differences compared to 2 Sum)

```
def twoSum(nums, target):  
    seen = {}  
    for i in range(len(nums)):  
        diff = target - nums[i]  
        if diff in seen:  
            return [seen[diff], i]  
        else:  
            seen[nums[i]] = i
```

```
def threeSum(nums, target):  
    # Add an outer loop to iterate over each element in the array  
    for i in range(len(nums) - 2):  
        # Adjusted two-sum logic  
        seen = {}  
        for j in range(i + 1, len(nums)):  
            diff = target - nums[i] - nums[j]  
            if diff in seen:  
                return [nums[i], nums[seen[diff]], nums[j]]  
            else:  
                seen[nums[j]] = j
```

→ Could simply modify twoSum function by adding an outer loop

**Problem: It doesn't account for multiple solution**

1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

We need to avoid duplicates

→ First **sort** the array and perform **two pointers approach**



## 1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

Start iterating i

-4	-2	-1	-1	0	3	5
----	----	----	----	---	---	---

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

↑  
i

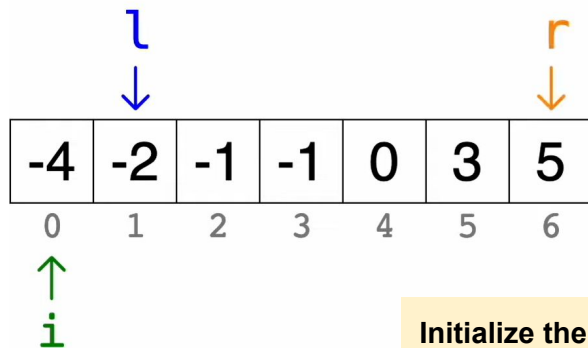
answer

[  
]

```
def threeSum(nums, target):  
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach  
    nums.sort()  
    answer = []  
  
    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up  
        if nums[i] > 0:  
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i  
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates  
            continue  
        l = i + 1  
        r = len(nums) - 1  
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)  
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r  
            # three possibilities  
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger  
                l += 1  
            elif total > 0:  
                r -= 1  
            else:  
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list  
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]  
                answer.append(triplet)  
  
                # check 2 extra things:  
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:  
                    l += 1  
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:  
                    r -= 1  
        return answer
```

1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)



Initialize the two pointers

answer

[  
]

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

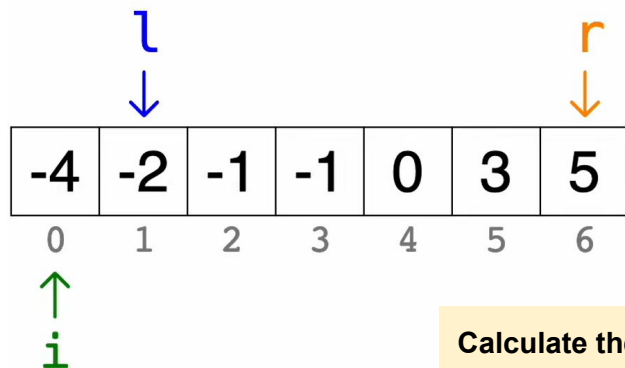
    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)



Calculate the total

answer

[	
]	

total

-1

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

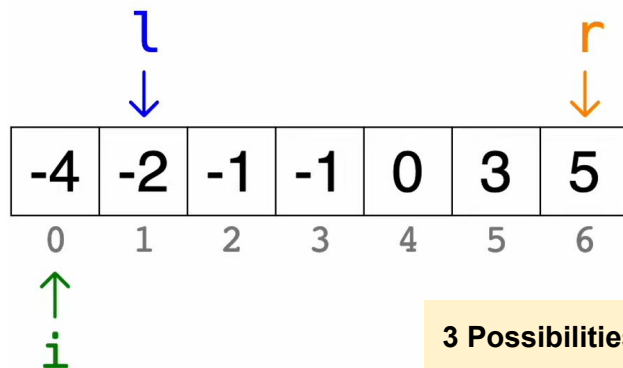
    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)



3 Possibilities of total

answer

```
[
]
```

total

-1

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

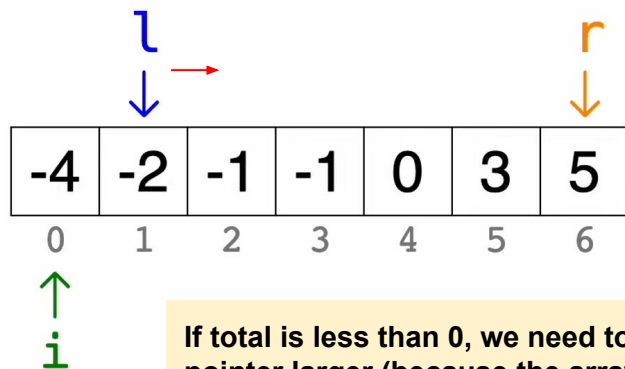
    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)



If total is less than 0, we need to make the left pointer larger (because the array is sorted)

answer

```
[
]
```

total

-1

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

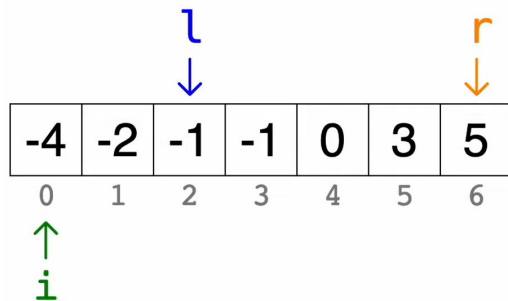
                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

After moving the left pointer,  
Calculate the total again,  
And since total == 0, we append it  
to our answer stack



answer

```
[
  [-4, -1, 5]
]
```

total

0

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

            # check 2 extra things:
            while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                l += 1
            while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                r -= 1

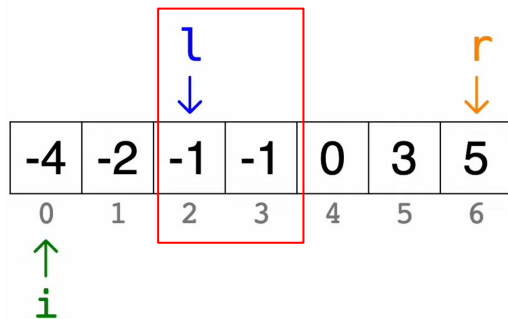
    return answer
```

## 1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

Check for duplicate solution.

→ increment l pointer until it points to the different number



answer

```
[
  [-4, -1, 5]
]
```

total

0

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

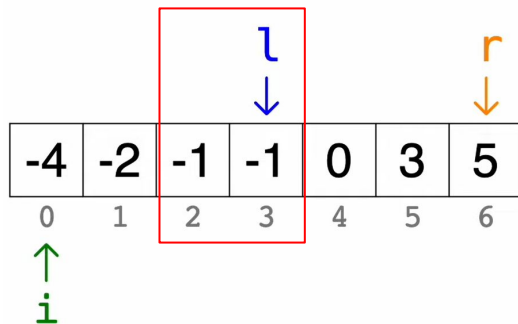


## 1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

Check for duplicate solution.

→ increment l pointer until it points to the different number



answer

```
[
  [-4, -1, 5]
]
```

total

0

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

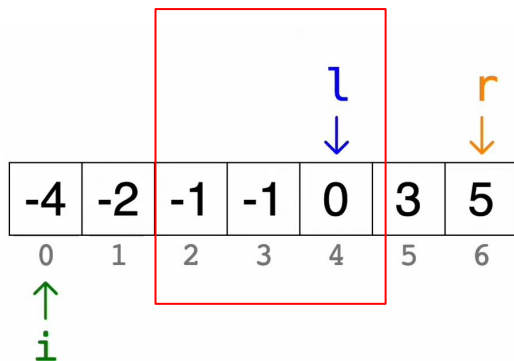
    return answer
```



## 1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

Finally *l* is pointing to the different number! Now, check for the *r* pointer.



answer

```
[
  [-4, -1, 5]
]
```

total

0

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

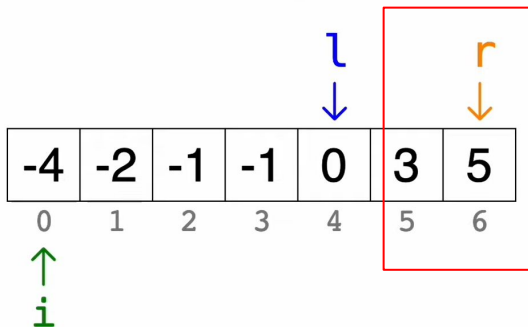
                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

## 1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

Check if r is pointing to the different number



answer

```
[
  [-4, -1, 5]
]
```

total

0

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

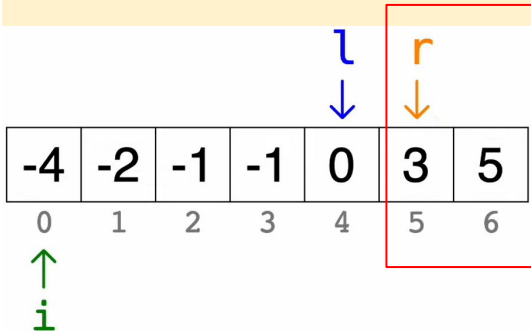
                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

## 1

## 3 Sum (New Approach)

Decrement  $r$  until it points to the different number.  
After that, we can finally calculate the new total.



answer

```
[
  [-4, -1, 5]
]
```

total

```
0
```

```
def threeSum(nums, target):
    # sorts the array and use two pointer approach
    nums.sort()
    answer = []

    for i in range(len(nums) - 2): # since we need at least 3 numbers to sum up
        if nums[i] > 0:
            break # since we know that i is the smallest among l, r, i
        if i > 0 and nums[i] == nums[i - 1]: # to avoid duplicates
            continue
        l = i + 1
        r = len(nums) - 1
        while l < r: # inner loop (using 2 pointers)
            total = nums[i] + nums[l] + nums[r] # calculate the total i, l, r
            # three possibilities
            if total < 0: # bc we need to make the total larger
                l += 1
            elif total > 0:
                r -= 1
            else:
                # if we found a solution, add it to our answer list
                triplet = [nums[i], nums[l], nums[r]]
                answer.append(triplet)

                # check 2 extra things:
                while l < r and nums[l] == triplet[1]:
                    l += 1
                while l < r and nums[r] == triplet[2]:
                    r -= 1

    return answer
```

감사합니다!

THANK YOU