



# 75. Sort Colors

Hint 

Medium

 15.4K

 545



 Companies

Given an array `nums` with `n` objects colored red, white, or blue, sort them **in-place** so that objects of the same color are adjacent, with the colors in the order red, white, and blue.

We will use the integers `0`, `1`, and `2` to represent the color red, white, and blue, respectively.

You must solve this problem without using the library's sort function.

**Example 1:**

**Input:** `nums = [2,0,2,1,1,0]`

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

**Example 2:**

**Input:** `nums = [2,0,1]`

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

**Constraints:**

- `n == nums.length`
- `1 <= n <= 300`
- `nums[i]` is either `0`, `1`, or `2`.

**Follow up:** Could you come up with a one-pass algorithm using only constant extra space?

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Approach 1:

Sort

$O(n \log n)$

Approach 2:

Using three frequency variables

0	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	2
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Red - 0

white = 0

Blue = 0

Scan the array once and accordingly increase the variable values.

After scanning the array,

Red = 3

white = 4

Blue = 3

now just run 3 while loops and fill the array with required no. of 0's, 1's & 2's.  
i.e.  $i = 0$

while (Red--)  $nums[i++] = 0$

while (white--)  $nums[i++] = 1$

while (Blue--)  $nums[i++] = 2$

$O(n)$  but  
requires two passes on  
the array.

### Approach 3:

in two passes

1<sup>st</sup> pass: make all 2's to come to end.

2<sup>nd</sup> pass: make all 1's to come to end.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	2
$i$									$j$

1<sup>st</sup> pass: while ( $i \leq j$ )  
if ( $nums[i] == 0$  //  $nums[i] == 1$ )  $i++$

else swap(nums[i], nums[j--])

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	<del>1</del>	1	0	1	<del>1</del>	0	<del>2</del>	<del>2</del>	<del>2</del>
					j	i			

2<sup>nd</sup> pass:

i = 0  
 while(i ≤ j)  
   if(nums[i] == 0) i++;  
   else swap(nums[i], nums[j--])

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	0	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>2</del>	<del>2</del>	<del>2</del>
i		j	i						

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2

$O(n)$  but  
 requires two passes.

Approach 4:

Using 3 pointers and in single pass.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	2
i									k

while(j ≤ k)  
 if(nums[j] == 0)  
   swap(nums[j], nums[i])  
   i++  
   j++

```

        swap(nums[i++], nums[j++])
    else if (nums[j] == 1)
        j++
    else
        swap(nums[i], nums[k--])

```

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<del>0</del> <sub>0</sub>	<del>2</del> <sub>1</sub>	<del>1</del> <sub>0</sub>	<del>0</del> <sub>1</sub>	1	<del>2</del> <sub>1</sub>	<del>0</del> <sub>1</sub>	<del>1</del> <sub>2</sub>	<del>1</del> <sub>2</sub>	<del>2</del> <sub>2</sub>
<del>i</del>	<del>j</del>	<del>j</del>	<del>i</del>				k	k	k
<del>j</del>	<del>i</del>	<del>i</del>	<del>j</del>	<del>i</del>	<del>j</del>	<del>j</del>	<del>i</del>		

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2

$O(n)$  and in  
Single pass

