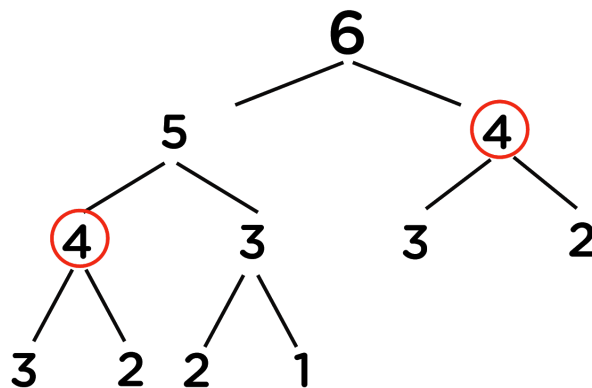




$$(2^0 + 2^1 + 2^2 + \dots + 2^{n-1}) * k \approx 2^n k$$

- Hence, it means time complexity will be  **$O(2^n)$** .
- We need to improve this complexity. Let's look at the example below for finding the 6<sup>th</sup> Fibonacci number.



## Important Observation:

- We can observe that there are repeating recursive calls made over the entire program.
- As in the above figure, for calculating  $f(5)$ , we need the value of  $f(4)$  (first recursive call over  $f(4)$ ), and for calculating  $f(6)$ , we again need the value of  $f(4)$  (second similar recursive call over  $f(4)$ ).
- Both of these recursive calls are shown above in the outlining circle.
- Similarly, there are many other values for which we are repeating the recursive calls.
- Generally, while recursing, there are repeated recursion calls, which increases the time complexity of the program.

To overcome this problem, we will store the output of previously encountered values (preferably in arrays as these are most efficient to traverse and extract data). Next time whenever we will be making the recursive calls over these values, we will

directly consider their already stored outputs and then use these in our calculations instead of calculating them over again.

This way, we can improve the running time of our code. This process of storing each recursive call's output and then using them for further calculations preventing the code from calculating these again is called **Memoization**.

- To achieve this in our example we will simply take an answer array, initialized to -1.
- Now while making a recursive call, we will first check if the value stored in this answer array corresponding to that position is -1 or not.
- If it is -1, it means we haven't calculated the value yet and need to proceed further by making recursive calls for the respective value.
- After obtaining the output, we need to store this in the answer array so that next time, if the same value is encountered, it can be directly used from this answer array.

Now in this process of memoization, considering the above Fibonacci numbers example, it can be observed that the total number of unique calls will be at most **(n+1)** only.

Let's look at the memoization code for Fibonacci numbers below:

```
private static int fibo_helper(int n, int[] ans){
    if (n==0 || n==1)           //Base case
        return n;

    //check if output already exists
    if (ans[n] != -1){
        return ans[n];
    }

    // calculate output
    int a = fibo_helper(n-1, ans);
    int b = fibo_helper(n-2, ans);
}
```

```

    // save the output for future use
    ans[n] = a + b;

    // return the final output
    return ans[n];
}

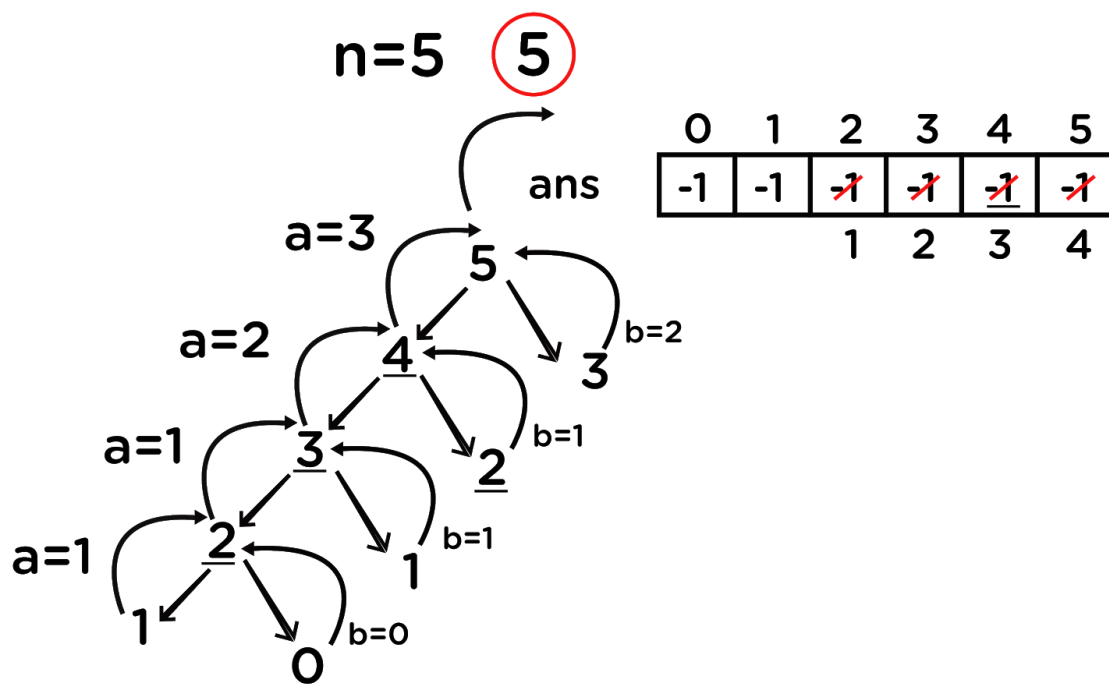
public static int fibbo_2(int n){
    int[] ans = new int[n+1];

    for(int i=0; i<=n; i++){
        ans[i] = -1;        // -1 represents that fibb for that
    }                       // index does not exist

    return fibbo_helper(n, ans);
}

```

Let's dry run for n = 5, to get a better understanding:



Again, if we observe carefully, we can see that for any number, we are not able to make a recursive call on the right side of it. This means that we can make at most  $5+1 = 6$  ( $n+1$ ) unique recursive calls which reduce the time complexity to  $O(n)$  which is highly optimized as compared to simple recursion.

## Summary

- Memoization is a **top-down approach**, where we save the previous answers so that they can be used to calculate future answers and improve the time complexity to a greater extent.
- Finally, what we are doing is making a recursive call to every index of the answer array and calculating the value for it using previous outputs stored.
- Recursive calls terminate over the base case, which means we are already aware of the answers that should be stored in the base case's indexes.
- In cases of Fibonacci numbers, these indexes are 0 and 1 as  $f(0) = 0$  and  $f(1) = 1$ . So we can directly allot these two values to our answer array and then use these to calculate  $f(2)$ , which is  $f(1) + f(0)$ , and so on for every other index.
- This can be simply done iteratively by running a loop from  $i = (2 \text{ to } n)$ .
- Finally, we will get our answer at the  $n^{\text{th}}$  index of the answer array as we already know that the  $i$ -th index contains the answer to the  $i$ -th value.

We are first trying to figure out the dependency of the current value on the previous values and then using them calculating our new value. Now, we are looking for those values which do not depend on other values, which means they are independent (the base case's values as these are the smallest problems about which we are already aware of). Finally, we will follow a **bottom-up approach** to reach the desired index. This approach of converting recursion into iteration is known as **Dynamic programming(DP)**.

Let us now look at the DP code for calculating the  $n^{\text{th}}$  Fibonacci number:

```
public static int fibo_3(int n){
    int[] ans = new int[n+1];

    ans[0] = 0;    // storing independent values in solution array
    ans[1] = 1;

    // following bottom-up approach to reach n
    for(int i=2; i<=n; i++){
        ans[i] = ans[i-1] + ans[i-2];
    }

    return ans[n];    // final answer
}
```

**Note:** Generally, memoization is a recursive approach, and DP is an iterative approach.

For all further problems, we will do the following:

1. Figure out the most straightforward approach for solving a problem using recursion.
2. Now, try to optimize the recursive approach by storing the previous answers using memoization.
3. Finally, replace recursion by iteration using dynamic programming. (It is preferred to be done in this manner because recursion generally has an increased space complexity as compared to iteration methods.)

## Problem Statement: Min steps to 1

**Given a positive integer  $n$ , find the minimum number of steps  $s$ , that takes  $n$  to 1. You can perform any one of the following three steps:**

1. Subtract 1 from it. ( $n = n-1$ ).
2. If its divisible by 2, divide by 2. (if  $n\%2 == 0$ , then  $n = n/2$  ).

3. If its divisible by 3, divide by 3. (if  $n \% 3 == 0$ , then  $n = n / 3$  ).

**Example 1:** For  $n = 4$ :

**STEP-1:**  $n = 4/2 = 2$

**STEP-2:**  $n = 2/2 = 1$

Hence, the answer is **2**.

**Example 2:** For  $n = 7$ :

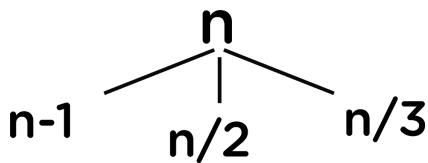
**STEP-1:**  $n = 7 - 1 = 6$

**STEP-2:**  $n = 6/3 = 2$

**STEP-3:**  $n = 2/2 = 1$

Hence, the answer is **3**.

**Approach:** We are only allowed to perform the above three mentioned ways to reduce any number to 1.



Let's start thinking about the brute-force approach first, i.e., recursion.

We will make a recursive call to each of the three steps keeping in mind that for dividing by 2, the number should be divisible by 2 and similarly for 3 as given in the question statement. After that take the minimum value out of the three obtained and simply add 1 to the answer for the current step itself. Thinking about the base case, we can see that on reaching 1, simply we have to return 0 as it is our destination value. Let's now look at the code:

```
public static int minSteps(int n){
    // base case
    if (n <= 1)
        return 0;

    int x = minSteps(n-1);           // Recursive call 1

    int y = Integer.MAX_VALUE;      // Initialise to infinity to check
    int z = Integer.MAX_VALUE;      // divisibility by 2 or 3

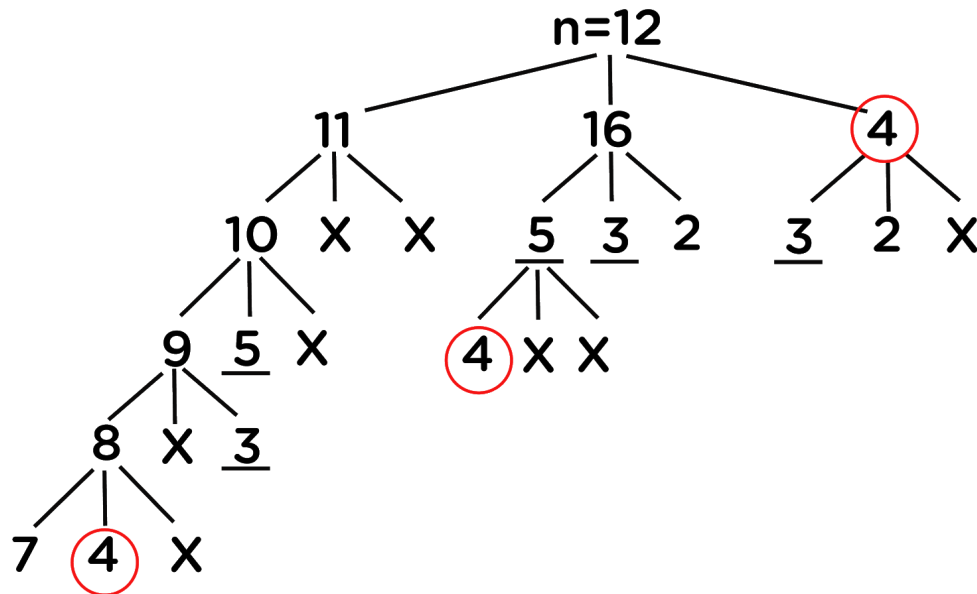
    if (n%2 == 0)
        y = minSteps(n/2);          //Recursive call 2
    if (n%3 == 0)
        z = minSteps(n/3);          //Recursive call 3

    // Calculating answer
    int ans = Math.min(x, Math.min(y, z)) + 1;
    return ans;
}
```

Now, we have to check if we can optimize the code that we have written. It can be done using memoization. But, for memoization to apply, we need to check if there are any overlapping sub-problems so that we can store the previous values to obtain the new ones. To check this let's dry run the problem for  $n = 12$ :

(Here X represents that the calls are not feasible as the number is not divisible by either of 2 or 3)





Here, if we blindly make three recursive calls at each step, then the time complexity will approximately be  $O(3^n)$ .

From the above, it is visible that there are repeating sub-problems. Hence, this problem can be optimized using memoization.

Now, we need to figure out the number of unique calls, i.e., how many answers we are required to save. It is clear that we need at most  $n+1$  responses to be saved, starting from  $n = 0$ , and the final answer will be present at index  $n$ .

The code will be nearly the same as the recursive approach; just we will not be making recursive calls for already stored outputs. Follow the code and comments below:

```
private static int minStepsHelper(n, int[] memo){
    // base case
    if (n == 1)
        return 0;
```

```

    if (memo[n] != -1)
        return memo[n];

    int res = minStepsHelper(n-1, memo);

    if (n%2 == 0)
        res = Math.min(res, minStepsHelper(n/2, memo));
    if (n%3 == 0)
        res = Math.min(res, minStepsHelper(n/3, memo));

    // store memo[n] and return
    memo[n] = 1 + res;
    return memo[n];
}

public static int minSteps_2(int n){

    int[] memo = new int[n+1];

    // initialize memoized array with -1
    for (int i=0; i<=n; i++)
        memo[i] = -1;

    return minStepsHelper(n, memo);
}

```

Time complexity has been reduced significantly to **O(n)** as there are only **(n+1)** unique iterations. Now, try to code the DP approach by yourself, and for the code, refer to the solution tab.

## Problem Statement: Minimum Number of Squares

**Given an integer N, find and return the count of minimum numbers, the sum of whose squares is equal to N.**

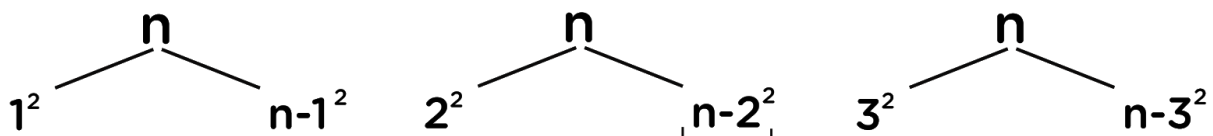
That is, if N is 4, then we can represent it as :  $\{1^2 + 1^2 + 1^2 + 1^2\}$  and  $\{2^2\}$ .  
The output will be 1, as 1 is the minimum count of numbers required. ( $x^y$  represents x raised to the power y.)

**Example:** For  $n = 12$ , we have the following ways:

- $1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1$
- $1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 2^2$
- $1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 1^1 + 2^2 + 2^2$
- $2^2 + 2^2 + 2^2$

Hence, the minimum count is obtained from the 4-th option. Therefore, the answer is equal to 3.

**Approach:** First-of-all, we need to think about breaking the problems into two parts, one of which will be handled by recursion and the other one will be handled by us(smaller sub-problem). We can break the problem as follows:



And so on...

- In the above figure, it is clear that in the left subtree we are making ourselves try over a variety of values that can be included as a part of our solution.
- The right subtree's calculation will be done by recursion.
- Hence, we will just handle the  $i^2$  part, and  $(n-i^2)$  will be handled by recursion.
- By now, we have got ourselves an idea of solving this problem, the only thinking left is the loop's range on which we will be iterating, i.e., the values of  $i$  for which we will be deciding to consider while solving or not.

- As the maximum value up to which  $i$  can be pushed, to reach  $n$  is  $\sqrt{n}$  as  $(\sqrt{n} * \sqrt{n} = n)$ . Hence, we will be iterating over the range **(1 to  $\sqrt{n}$ )** and do consider each possible way by sending  **$(n - i^2)$**  over the recursion.
- This way we will get different subsequences and as per the question, we will simply return the minimum out of it.

This problem is left for you to try out using all the three approaches and for code, refer to the solution tab of the same.