

Problem Statement:
We are given three set of colors that we wish to sort on order.

TIP: 3 colors means n-1 number mapping starting from 0 that is 0,1,2.

Sort colors

↳ Red, green, blue
↓ ↓ ↓
0 1 2

We are given colors mapped to a number which needs to be sorted and then presented as an output

{ [1, 1, 0, 2, 0, 2] ← Input (Given Input)
 [0, 0, 1, 1, 2, 2] ← output (Expected Output)

1) MergeSort/QuickSort

↳ $\Theta(n \log n)$

Optimized approach

2) Two pointers

$P_0 \rightarrow$ to store 0's in extreme left

$P_2 \rightarrow$ to store 2's in extreme right

$P_0 = 0$ (index value)

$P_2 = 5$ (index value)

0 1 2 3 4 5
[2, 0, 2, 1, 1, 0]
↑

$n \rightarrow$ size of an array

$P_0, \text{cursor} = 0$

$P_2 = n - 1$

In 2 pointer since left pointer takes care of lowest number whereas right pointer takes care of highest number so, in the middle section the third value will be automatically placed since it does not have any other location to go.

$\Theta(n)$

while $\text{cursor} \leq P_2$:

traversing through the whole list from starting cursor at 0th index up to last index being pointed by P_2 initially.

if $\text{nums}(\text{cursor}) == 0$:

$\text{Swap}(\text{nums}(\text{cursor}), \text{nums}(P_0))$

$P_0 += 1$

$\text{cursor} += 1$

Please note that nums represent the list containing the respective integer color mapped value

Handling the lowest int color map at left extreme

Since only 1 while loop used that traverses through the whole list then time complexity is equivalent to $O(n)$

Handling the highest int color map at right extreme

→ elif nums[curr] == 2:
 swap(nums[curr], nums[p2])
 p2 -= 1

Handling the middle int color map at middle section

→ else:
 curr += 1

return nums