

## 2.1 ELEMENTARY SORTS

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- ▶ *rules of the game*
- ▶ *selection sort*
- ▶ *insertion sort*
- ▶ *shellsort*
- ▶ *shuffling*

# Algorithms

ROBERT SEDGEWICK | KEVIN WAYNE

<http://algs4.cs.princeton.edu>

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# Sorting problem

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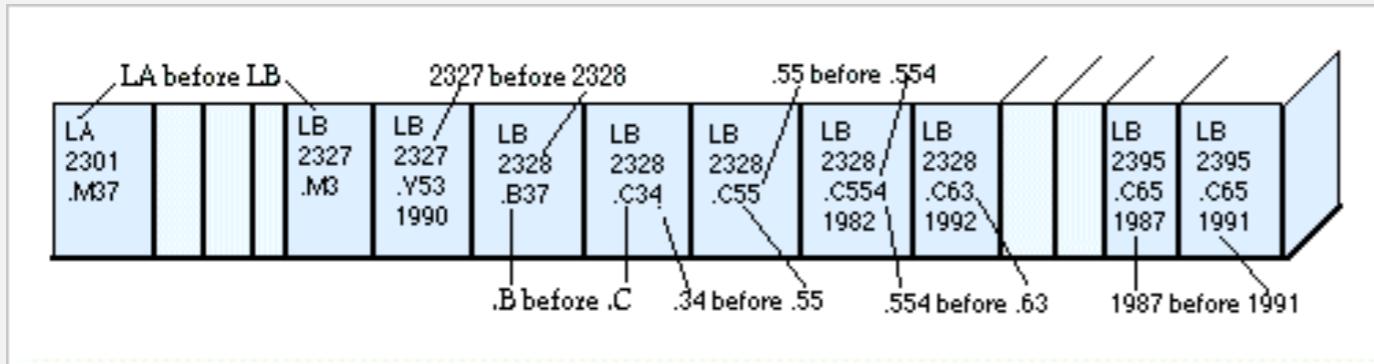
Ex. Student records in a university.

item →	Chen	3	A	991-878-4944	308 Blair
	Rohde	2	A	232-343-5555	343 Forbes
	Gazsi	4	B	766-093-9873	101 Brown
	Furia	1	A	766-093-9873	101 Brown
key →	Kanaga	3	B	898-122-9643	22 Brown
	Andrews	3	A	664-480-0023	097 Little
	Battle	4	C	874-088-1212	121 Whitman

Sort. Rearrange array of  $N$  items into ascending order.

Andrews	3	A	664-480-0023	097 Little
Battle	4	C	874-088-1212	121 Whitman
Chen	3	A	991-878-4944	308 Blair
Furia	1	A	766-093-9873	101 Brown
Gazsi	4	B	766-093-9873	101 Brown
Kanaga	3	B	898-122-9643	22 Brown
Rohde	2	A	232-343-5555	343 Forbes

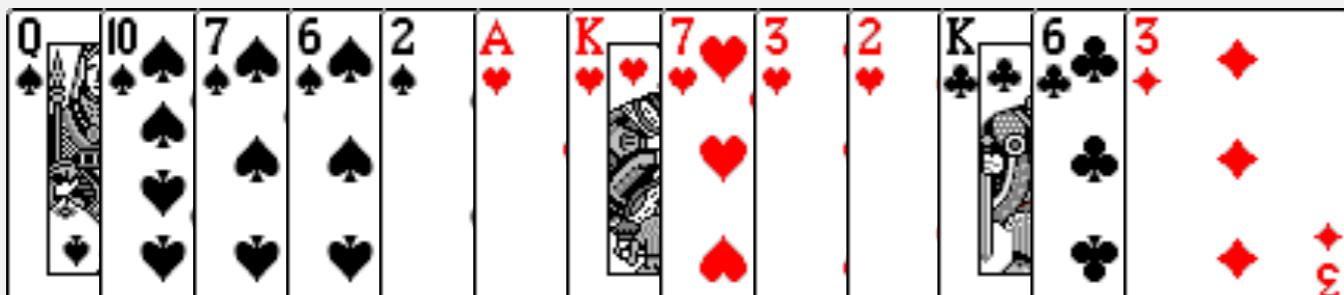
# Sorting applications



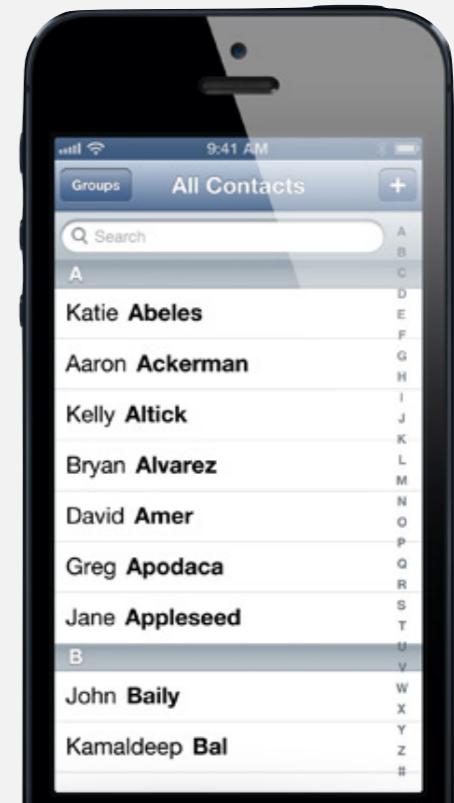
Library of Congress numbers



FedEx packages



playing cards



contacts



Hogwarts houses

# Sample sort client 1

Goal. Sort **any** type of data.

Ex 1. Sort random real numbers in ascending order.

seems artificial (stay tuned for an application)

```
public class Experiment
{
    public static void main(String[] args)
    {
        int N = Integer.parseInt(args[0]);
        Double[] a = new Double[N];
        for (int i = 0; i < N; i++)
            a[i] = StdRandom.uniform();
        Insertion.sort(a);
        for (int i = 0; i < N; i++)
            StdOut.println(a[i]);
    }
}
```

```
% java Experiment 10
0.08614716385210452
0.09054270895414829
0.10708746304898642
0.21166190071646818
0.363292849257276
0.460954145685913
0.5340026311350087
0.7216129793703496
0.9003500354411443
0.9293994908845686
```

## Sample sort client 2

---

Goal. Sort **any** type of data.

Ex 2. Sort strings in alphabetical order.

```
public class StringSorter
{
    public static void main(String[] args)
    {
        String[] a = StdIn.readAllStrings();
        Insertion.sort(a);
        for (int i = 0; i < a.length; i++)
            StdOut.println(a[i]);
    }
}
```

```
% more words3.txt
bed bug dad yet zoo ... all bad yes
```

```
% java StringSorter < words3.txt
all bad bed bug dad ... yes yet zoo
[suppressing newlines]
```

## Sample sort client 3

---

Goal. Sort **any** type of data.

Ex 3. Sort the files in a given directory by filename.

```
import java.io.File;

public class FileSorter
{
    public static void main(String[] args)
    {
        File directory = new File(args[0]);
        File[] files = directory.listFiles();
        Insertion.sort(files);
        for (int i = 0; i < files.length; i++)
            StdOut.println(files[i].getName());
    }
}
```

```
% java FileSorter .
Insertion.class
Insertion.java
InsertionX.class
InsertionX.java
Selection.class
Selection.java
Shell.class
Shell.java
ShellX.class
ShellX.java
```

# Total order

---

Goal. Sort **any** type of data (for which sorting is well defined).

A **total order** is a binary relation  $\leq$  that satisfies:

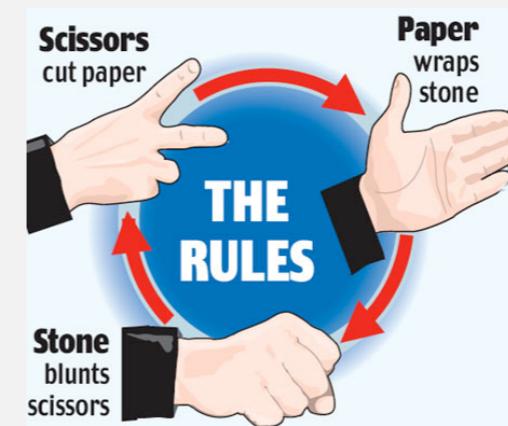
- Antisymmetry: if both  $v \leq w$  and  $w \leq v$ , then  $v = w$ .
- Transitivity: if both  $v \leq w$  and  $w \leq x$ , then  $v \leq x$ .
- Totality: either  $v \leq w$  or  $w \leq v$  or both.

Ex.

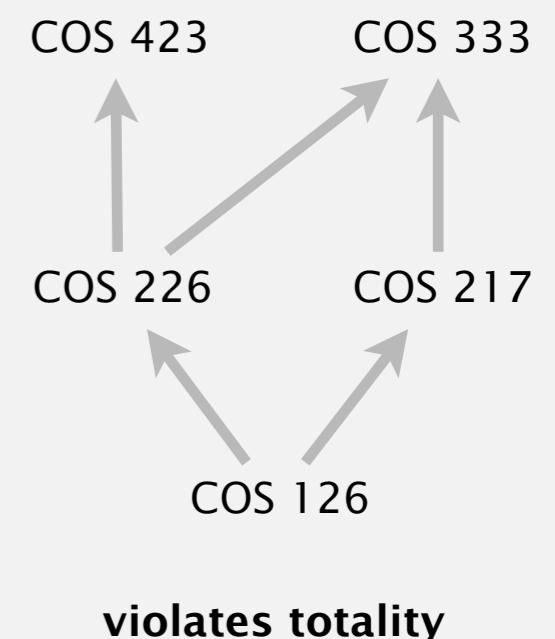
- Standard order for natural and real numbers.
- Chronological order for dates or times.
- Alphabetical order for strings.

No transitivity. Rock-paper-scissors.

No totality. PU course prerequisites.



violates transitivity



violates totality

# Callbacks

---

Goal. Sort **any** type of data (for which sorting is well defined).

Q. How can sort() know how to compare data of type Double, String, and java.io.File without any information about the type of an item's key?

Callback = reference to executable code.

- Client passes array of objects to sort() function.
- The sort() function calls object's compareTo() method as needed.

Implementing callbacks.

- Java: interfaces.
- C: function pointers.
- C++: class-type functors.
- C#: delegates.
- Python, Perl, ML, Javascript: first-class functions.

# Callbacks: roadmap

## client

```
public class StringSorter
{
    public static void main(String[] args)
    {
        String[] a = StdIn.readAllStrings();
        Insertion.sort(a);
        for (int i = 0; i < a.length; i++)
            StdOut.println(a[i]);
    }
}
```

## data-type implementation

```
public class String
    implements Comparable<String>
{
    ...
    public int compareTo(String b)
    {
        ...
        return -1;
        ...
        return +1;
        ...
        return 0;
    }
}
```

## Comparable interface (built in to Java)

```
public interface Comparable<Item>
{
    public int compareTo(Item that);
}
```

key point: no dependence  
on String data type

## sort implementation

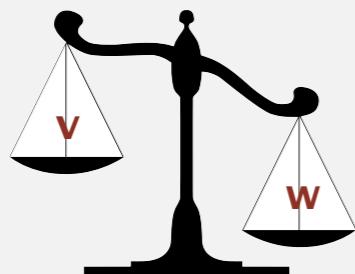
```
public static void sort(Comparable[] a)
{
    int N = a.length;
    for (int i = 0; i < N; i++)
        for (int j = i; j > 0; j--)
            if (a[j].compareTo(a[j-1]) < 0)
                exch(a, j, j-1);
            else break;
}
```

# Comparable API

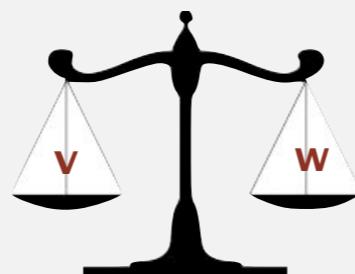
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Implement `compareTo()` so that `v.compareTo(w)`

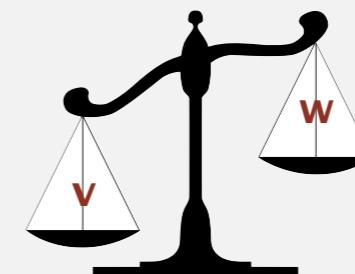
- Defines a total order.
- Returns a negative integer, zero, or positive integer if  $v$  is less than, equal to, or greater than  $w$ , respectively.
- Throws an exception if incompatible types (or either is null).



less than (return -1)



equal to (return 0)



greater than (return +1)

Built-in comparable types. Integer, Double, String, Date, File, ...

User-defined comparable types. Implement the Comparable interface.

# Implementing the Comparable interface

Date data type. Simplified version of java.util.Date.

```
public class Date implements Comparable<Date>
{
    private final int month, day, year;

    public Date(int m, int d, int y)
    {
        month = m;
        day   = d;
        year  = y;
    }

    public int compareTo(Date that)
    {
        if (this.year < that.year) return -1;
        if (this.year > that.year) return +1;
        if (this.month < that.month) return -1;
        if (this.month > that.month) return +1;
        if (this.day   < that.day)  return -1;
        if (this.day   > that.day)  return +1;
        return 0;
    }
}
```

only compare dates  
to other dates

# Algorithms

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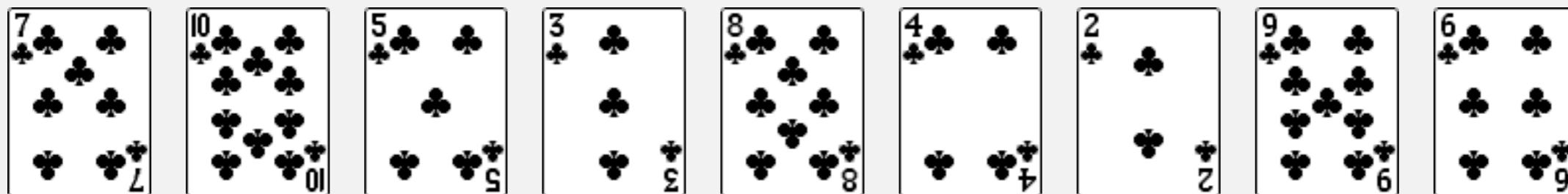
---

- ▶ *rules of the game*
- ▶ ***selection sort***
- ▶ *insertion sort*
- ▶ *shellsort*
- ▶ *shuffling*

# Selection sort demo

---

- In iteration  $i$ , find index  $\text{min}$  of smallest remaining entry.
- Swap  $a[i]$  and  $a[\text{min}]$ .



initial



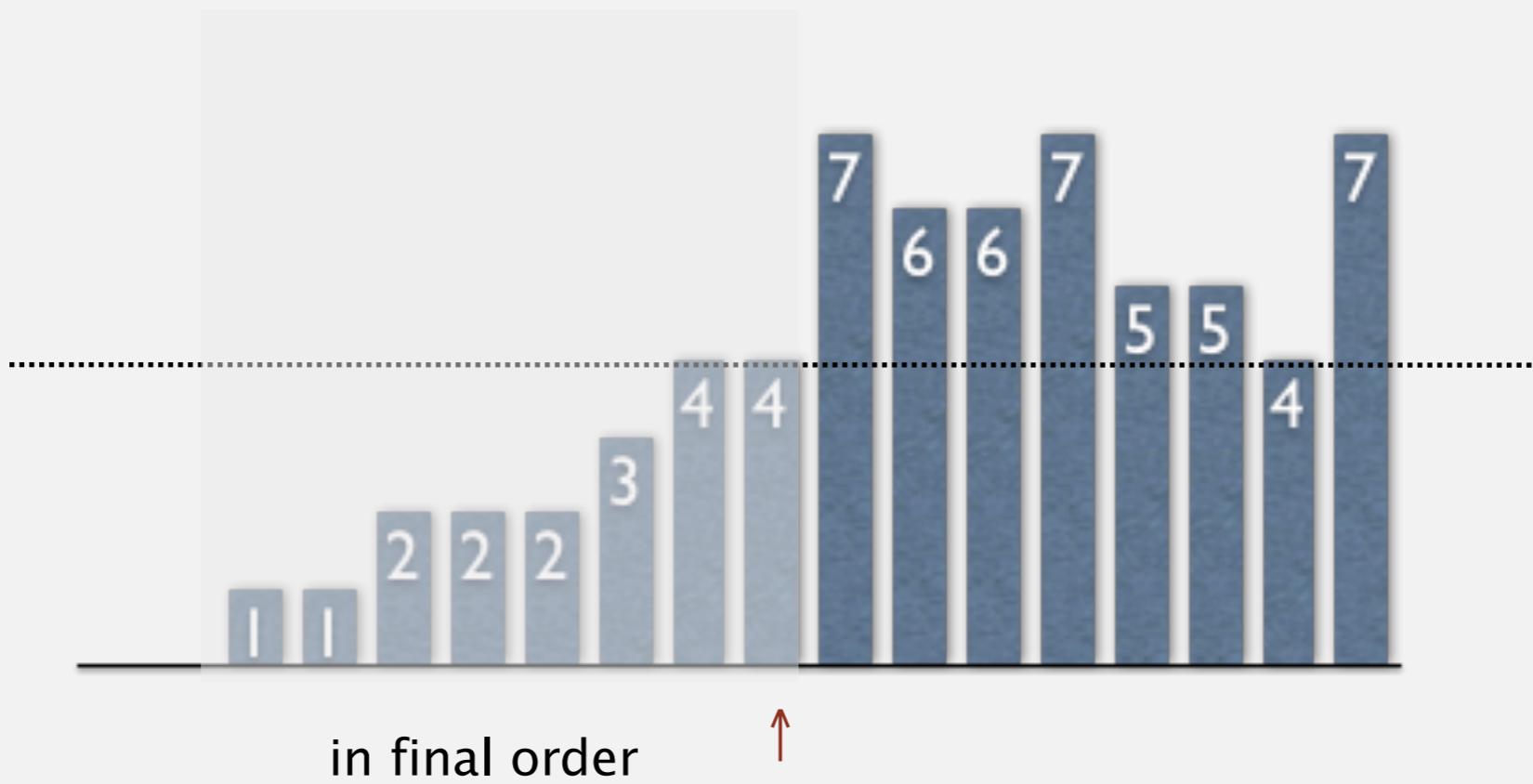
# Selection sort

---

Algorithm.  $\uparrow$  scans from left to right.

Invariants.

- Entries to the left of  $\uparrow$  (including  $\uparrow$ ) fixed and in ascending order.
- No entry to right of  $\uparrow$  is smaller than any entry to the left of  $\uparrow$ .



## Two useful sorting abstractions

---

**Helper functions.** Refer to data through compares and exchanges.

**Less.** Is item  $v$  less than  $w$ ?

```
private static boolean less(Comparable v, Comparable w)
{   return v.compareTo(w) < 0; }
```

**Exchange.** Swap item in array  $a[]$  at index  $i$  with the one at index  $j$ .

```
private static void exch(Comparable[] a, int i, int j)
{
    Comparable swap = a[i];
    a[i] = a[j];
    a[j] = swap;
}
```

# Selection sort inner loop

To maintain algorithm invariants:

- Move the pointer to the right.

```
i++;
```



- Identify index of minimum entry on right.

```
int min = i;
for (int j = i+1; j < N; j++)
    if (less(a[j], a[min]))
        min = j;
```



- Exchange into position.

```
exch(a, i, min);
```



## Selection sort: Java implementation

---

```
public class Selection
{
    public static void sort(Comparable[] a)
    {
        int N = a.length;
        for (int i = 0; i < N; i++)
        {
            int min = i;
            for (int j = i+1; j < N; j++)
                if (less(a[j], a[min]))
                    min = j;
            exch(a, i, min);
        }
    }

    private static boolean less(Comparable v, Comparable w)
    { /* as before */ }

    private static void exch(Comparable[] a, int i, int j)
    { /* as before */ }
}
```

# Selection sort: animations

## 20 random items



## ▲ algorithm position

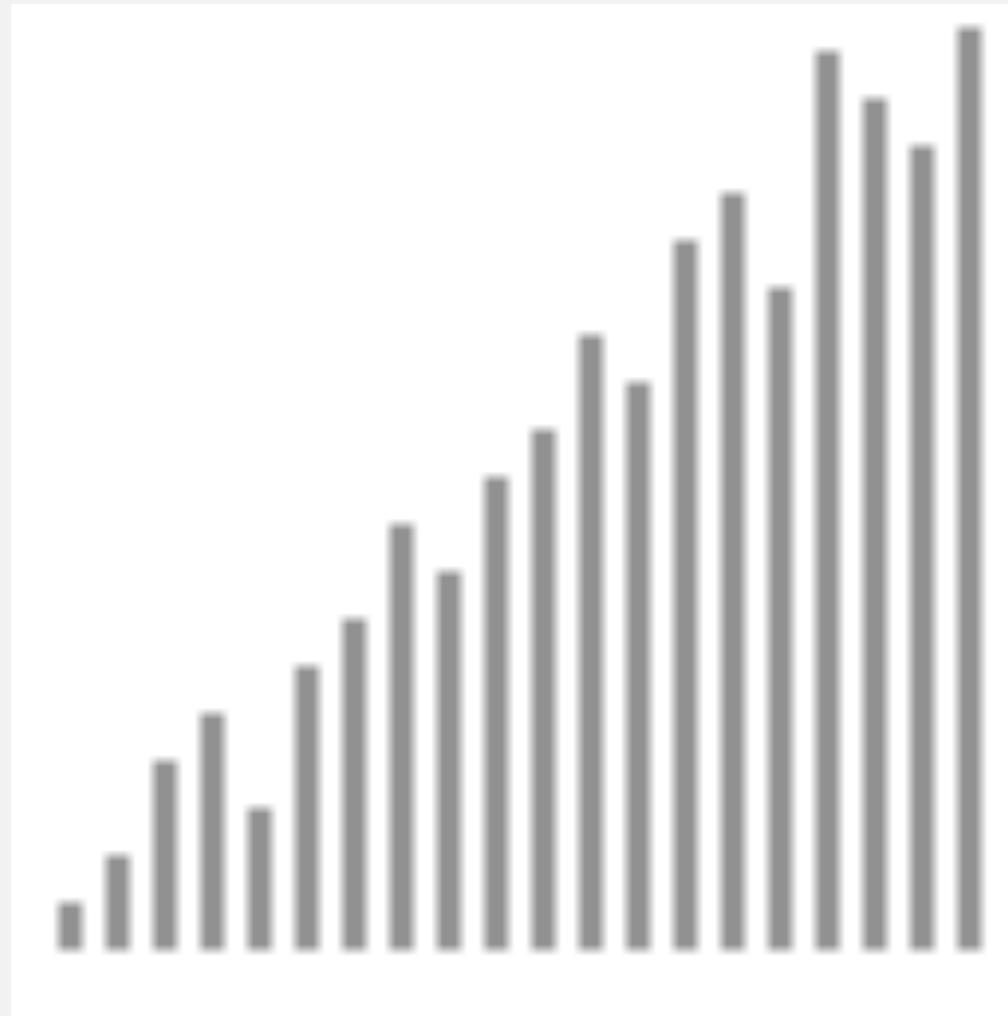
**[REDACTED]** in final order

 not in final order

<http://www.sorting-algorithms.com/selection-sort>

## Selection sort: animations

## 20 partially-sorted items



<http://www.sorting-algorithms.com/selection-sort>

## Selection sort: mathematical analysis

**Proposition.** Selection sort uses  $(N-1) + (N-2) + \dots + 1 + 0 \sim N^2/2$  compares and  $N$  exchanges.

		a[]										
i	min	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		S	O	R	T	E	X	A	M	P	L	E
0	6	S	O	R	T	E	X	A	M	P	L	E
1	4	A	O	R	T	E	X	S	M	P	L	E
2	10	A	E	R	T	O	X	S	M	P	L	E
3	9	A	E	E	T	O	X	S	M	P	L	R
4	7	A	E	E	L	O	X	S	M	P	T	R
5	7	A	E	E	L	M	X	S	O	P	T	R
6	8	A	E	E	L	M	O	S	X	P	T	R
7	10	A	E	E	L	M	O	P	X	S	T	R
8	8	A	E	E	L	M	O	P	R	S	T	X
9	9	A	E	E	L	M	O	P	R	S	T	X
10	10	A	E	E	L	M	O	P	R	S	T	X
		A	E	E	L	M	O	P	R	S	T	X

Trace of selection sort (array contents just after each exchange)

**Running time insensitive to input.** Quadratic time, even if input is sorted.  
**Data movement is minimal.** Linear number of exchanges.

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## 2.1 ELEMENTARY SORTS

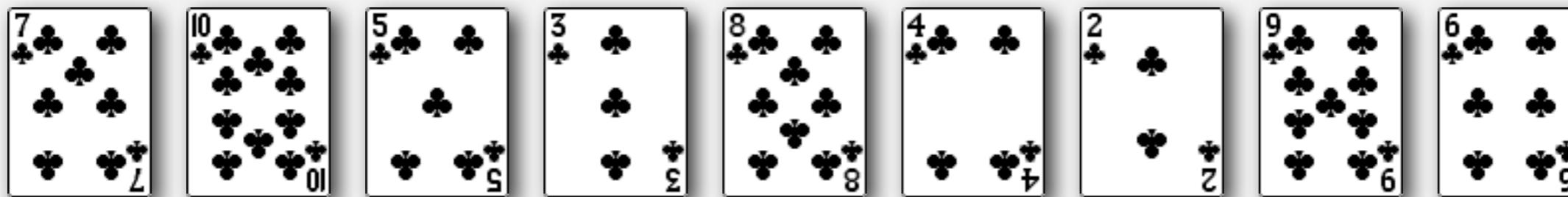
---

- ▶ *rules of the game*
- ▶ *selection sort*
- ▶ *insertion sort*
- ▶ *shellsort*
- ▶ *shuffling*

## Insertion sort demo

---

- In iteration  $i$ , swap  $a[i]$  with each larger entry to its left.



# Insertion sort

---

Algorithm.  $\uparrow$  scans from left to right.

## Invariants.

- Entries to the left of  $\uparrow$  (including  $\uparrow$ ) are in ascending order.
- Entries to the right of  $\uparrow$  have not yet been seen.



# Insertion sort inner loop

To maintain algorithm invariants:

- Move the pointer to the right.

```
i++;
```



- Moving from right to left, exchange  $a[i]$  with each larger entry to its left.

```
for (int j = i; j > 0; j--)  
    if (less(a[j], a[j-1]))  
        exch(a, j, j-1);  
    else break;
```



## Insertion sort: Java implementation

---

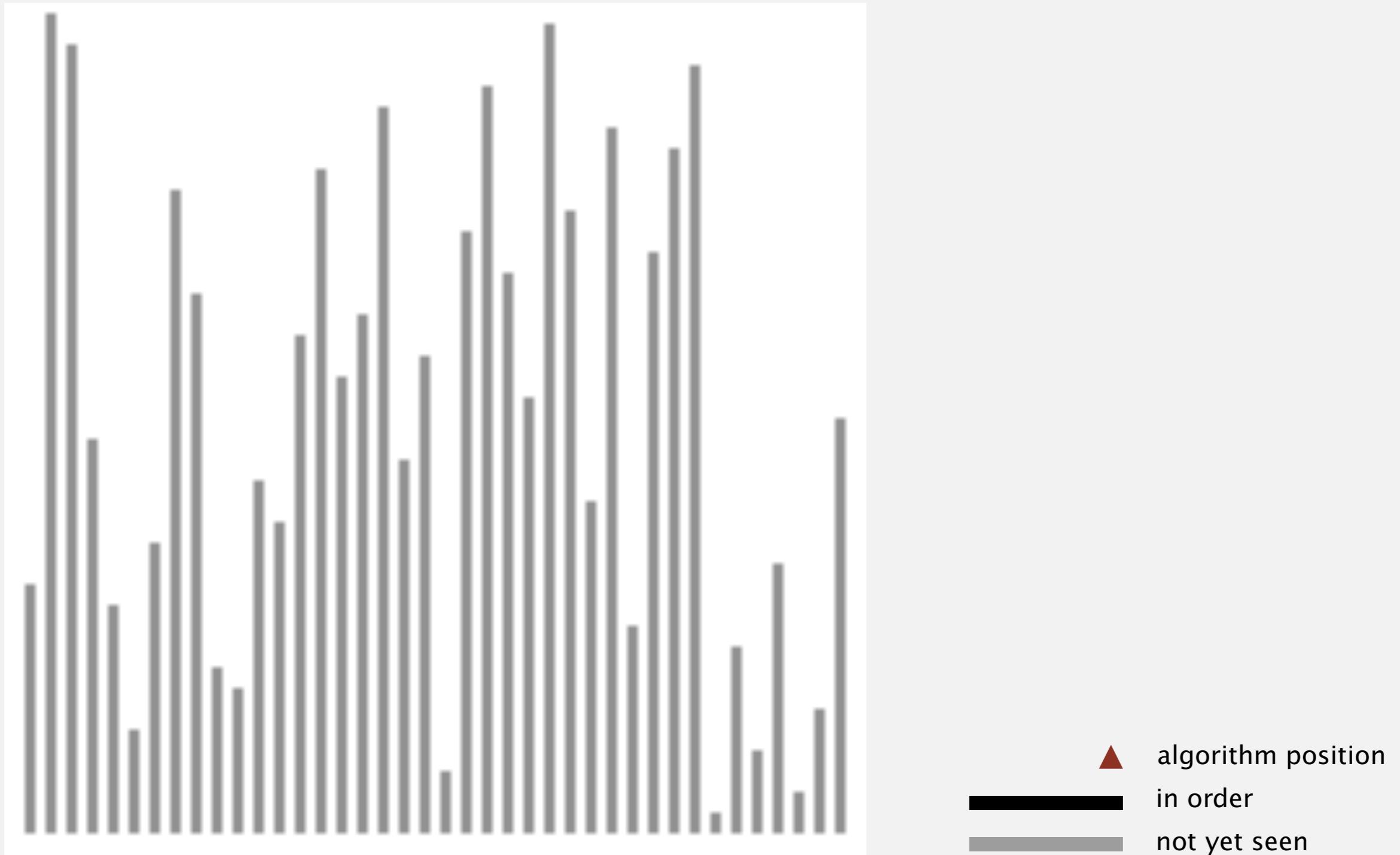
```
public class Insertion
{
    public static void sort(Comparable[] a)
    {
        int N = a.length;
        for (int i = 0; i < N; i++)
            for (int j = i; j > 0; j--)
                if (less(a[j], a[j-1]))
                    exch(a, j, j-1);
                else break;
    }

    private static boolean less(Comparable v, Comparable w)
    { /* as before */ }

    private static void exch(Comparable[] a, int i, int j)
    { /* as before */ }
}
```

## Insertion sort: animation

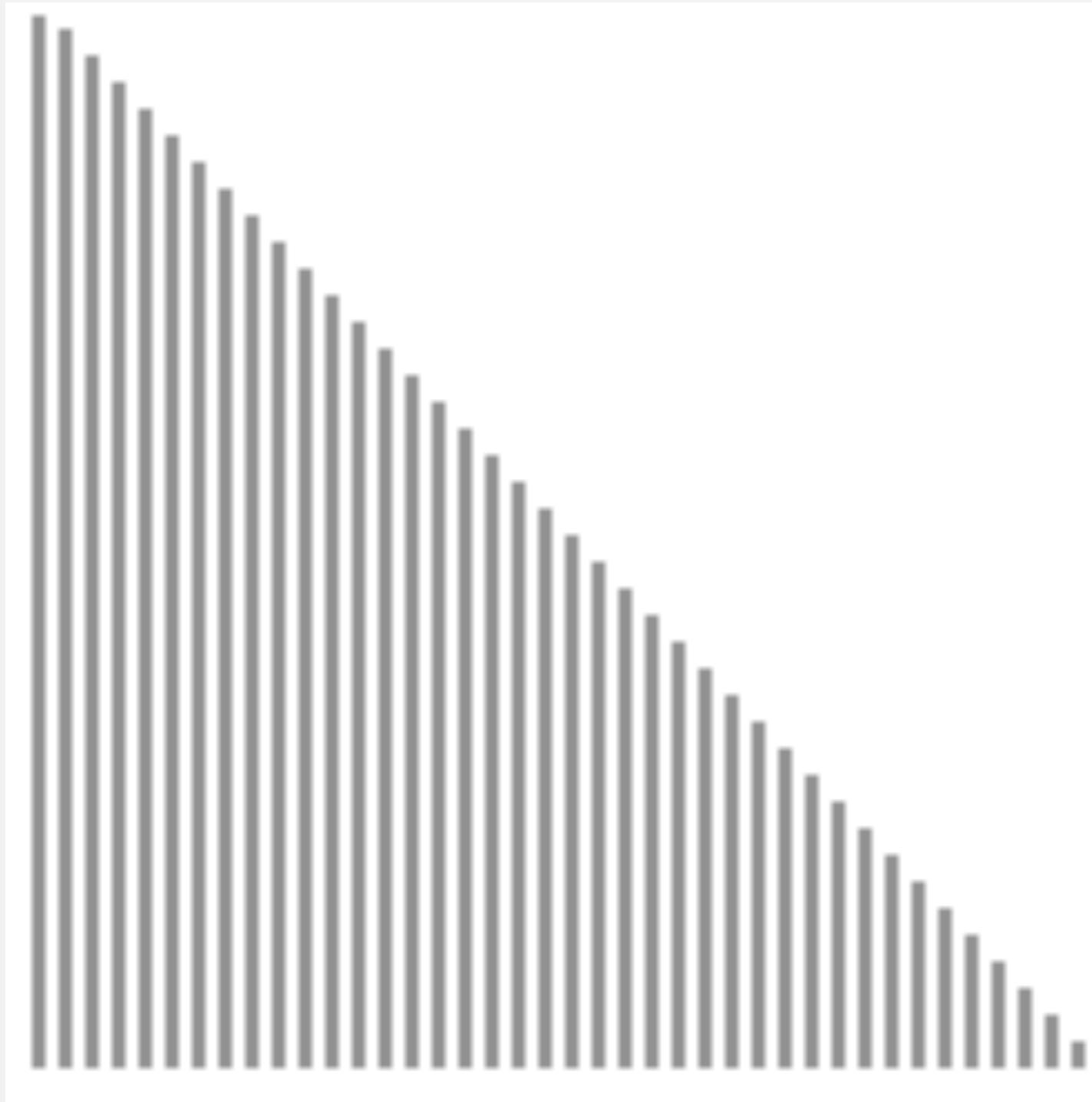
## 40 random items



<http://www.sorting-algorithms.com/insertion-sort>

# Insertion sort: animation

## 40 reverse-sorted items

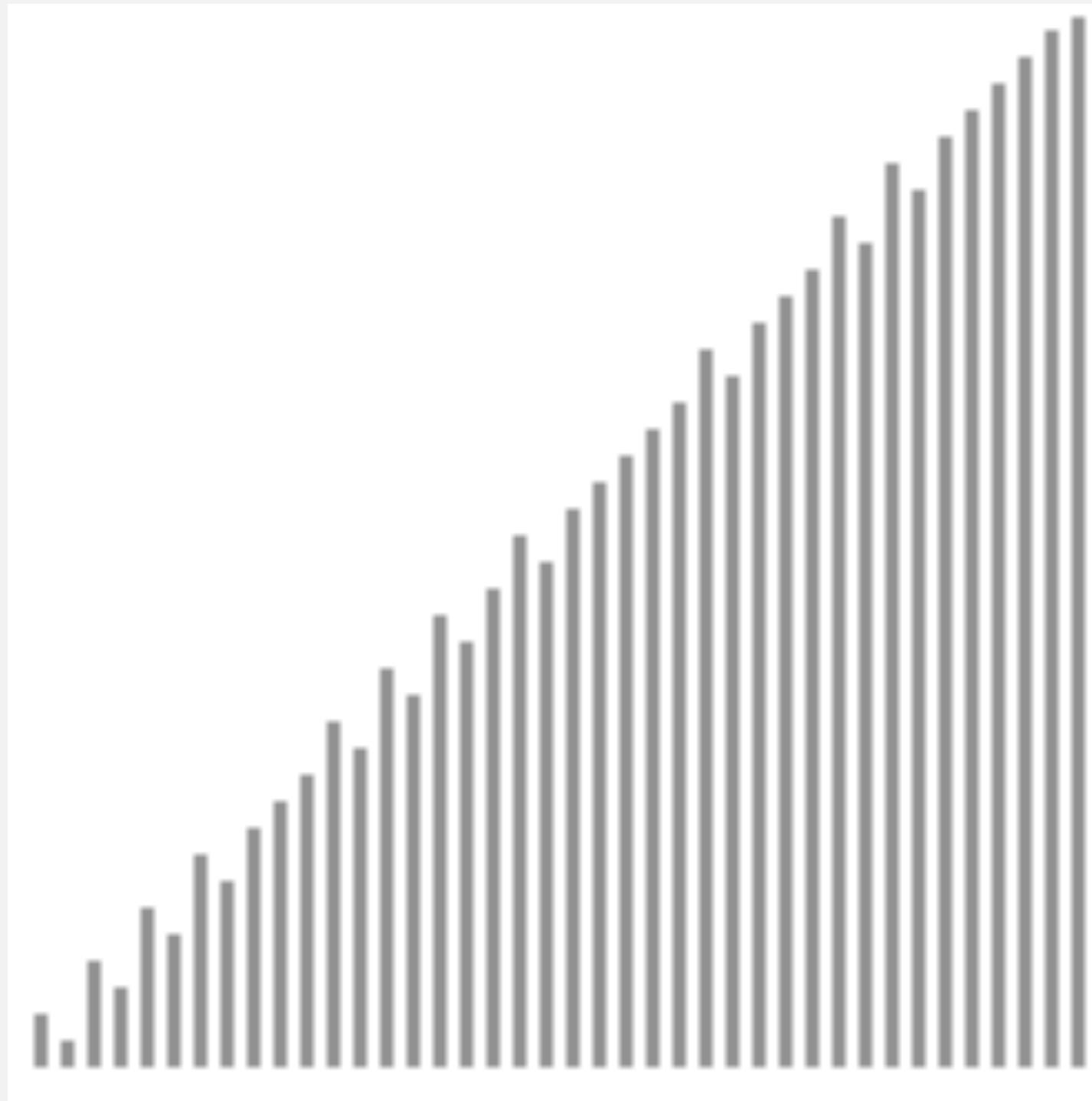


<http://www.sorting-algorithms.com/insertion-sort>

algorithm position  
in order  
not yet seen

## Insertion sort: animation

## 40 partially-sorted items



<http://www.sorting-algorithms.com/insertion-sort>

- ▲ algorithm position
- ▬ in order
- ▬ not yet seen

# Insertion sort: mathematical analysis

**Proposition.** To sort a randomly-ordered array with distinct keys, insertion sort uses  $\sim \frac{1}{4} N^2$  compares and  $\sim \frac{1}{4} N^2$  exchanges on average.

**Pf.** Expect each entry to move halfway back.

		a[]										
i	j	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		S	O	R	T	E	X	A	M	P	L	E
1	0	<b>0</b>	S	R	T	E	X	A	M	P	L	E
2	1	0	<b>R</b>	S	T	E	X	A	M	P	L	E
3	3	0	R	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	E	X	A	M	P	L	E
4	0	<b>E</b>	0	R	S	T	X	A	M	P	L	E
5	5	E	0	R	S	T	<b>X</b>	A	M	P	L	E
6	0	<b>A</b>	E	0	R	S	T	X	M	P	L	E
7	2	A	E	<b>M</b>	0	R	S	T	X	P	L	E
8	4	A	E	M	0	<b>P</b>	R	S	T	X	L	E
9	2	A	E	<b>L</b>	M	0	P	R	S	T	X	<b>E</b>
10	2	A	E	<b>E</b>	L	M	0	P	R	S	T	X
		A	E	E	L	M	0	P	R	S	T	X

Trace of insertion sort (array contents just after each insertion)

## Insertion sort: trace

## Insertion sort: analysis

---

**Best case.** If the array is in ascending order, insertion sort makes  $N-1$  compares and 0 exchanges.

A E E L M O P R S T X

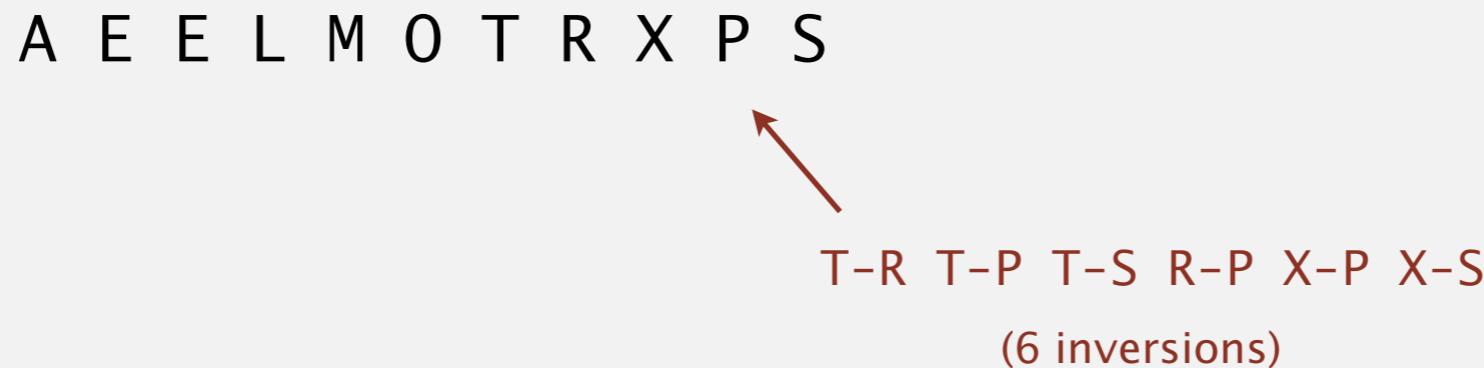
**Worst case.** If the array is in descending order (and no duplicates), insertion sort makes  $\sim \frac{1}{2} N^2$  compares and  $\sim \frac{1}{2} N^2$  exchanges.

X T S R P O M L F E A

## Insertion sort: partially-sorted arrays

---

Def. An **inversion** is a pair of keys that are out of order.



Def. An array is **partially sorted** if the number of inversions is  $\leq c N$ .

- Ex 1. A sorted array has 0 inversions.
- Ex 2. A subarray of size 10 appended to a sorted subarray of size  $N$ .

**Proposition.** For partially-sorted arrays, insertion sort runs in linear time.

**Pf.** Number of exchanges equals the number of inversions.

$$\text{number of compares} = \text{exchanges} + (N - 1)$$

↑

## Insertion sort: practical improvements

---

**Half exchanges.** Shift items over (instead of exchanging).

- Eliminates unnecessary data movement.
- No longer uses only `less()` and `exch()` to access data.

A C H H I M N N P Q X Y K B I N A R Y

**Binary insertion sort.** Use binary search to find insertion point.

- Number of compares  $\sim N \lg N$ .
- But still a quadratic number of array accesses.

A C H H I M N N P Q X Y K B I N A R Y

binary search for first key > K

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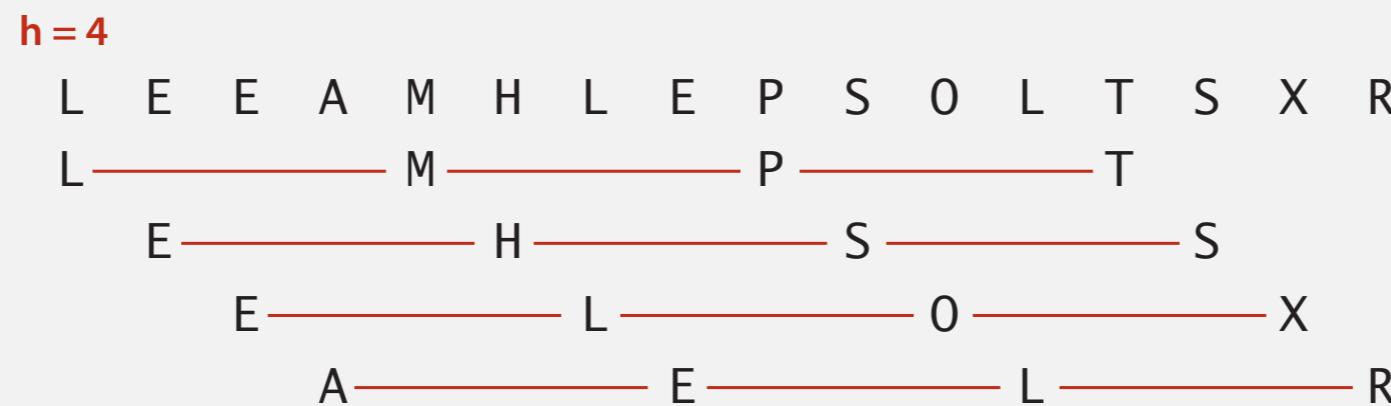
- ▶ *rules of the game*
- ▶ *selection sort*
- ▶ *insertion sort*
- ▶ ***shellsort***
- ▶ *shuffling*

# Shellsort overview

---

Idea. Move entries more than one position at a time by *h*-sorting the array.

an h-sorted array is h interleaved sorted subsequences



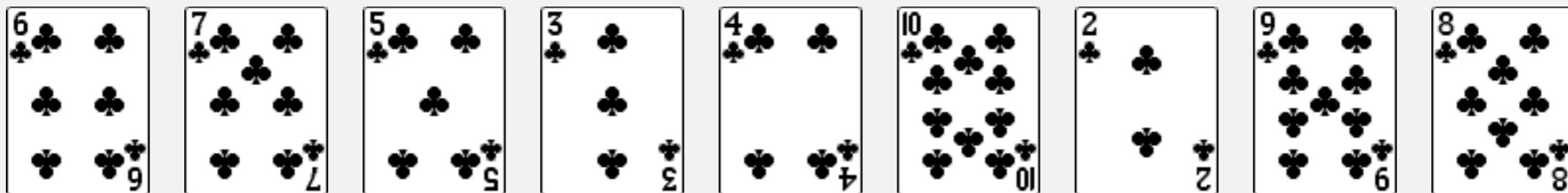
Shellsort. [Shell 1959] *h*-sort array for decreasing sequence of values of *h*.

input	S	H	E	L	L	S	O	R	T	E	X	A	M	P	L	E
13-sort	P	H	E	L	L	S	O	R	T	E	X	A	M	S	L	E
4-sort	L	E	E	A	M	H	L	E	P	S	O	L	T	S	X	R
1-sort	A	E	E	E	H	L	L	L	M	O	P	R	S	S	T	X

# h-sorting demo

---

In iteration  $i$ , swap  $a[i]$  with each larger entry  $h$  positions to its left.



# **h**-sorting

---

How to  $h$ -sort an array? Insertion sort, with stride length  $h$ .

## 3-sorting an array

M	O	L	E	E	X	A	S	P	R	T
E	O	L	M	E	X	A	S	P	R	T
E	E	L	M	0	X	A	S	P	R	T
E	E	L	M	0	X	A	S	P	R	T
A	E	L	E	0	X	M	S	P	R	T
A	E	L	E	0	X	M	S	P	R	T
A	E	L	E	0	P	M	S	X	R	T
A	E	L	E	0	P	M	S	X	R	T
A	E	L	E	0	P	M	S	X	R	T
A	E	L	E	0	P	M	S	X	R	T

## Why insertion sort?

- Big increments  $\Rightarrow$  small subarray.
- Small increments  $\Rightarrow$  nearly in order. [stay tuned]

# Shellsort example: increments 7, 3, 1

---

**input**

S O R T E X A M P L E

**7-sort**

S O R T E X A M P L E  
 M O R T E X A S P L E  
 M O R T E X A S P R L E  
 M O L T E X A S P R E  
 M O L E E X A S P R T

**3-sort**

M O L E E X A S P R T  
 E O L M E X A S P R T  
 E E L M O X A S P R T  
 E E L M O X A S P R T  
 A E L E O X M S P R T  
 A E L E O X M S P R T  
 A E L E O P M S X R T  
 A E L E O P M S X R T  
 A E L E O P M S X R T

**1-sort**

A E L E O P M S X R T  
 A E L E O P M S X R T  
 A E L E O P M S X R T  
 A E L E O P M S X R T  
 A E L E O P M S X R T  
 A E L O P M S X R T  
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 A E E L O P M S X R T  
 A E E L M O P S X R T  
 A E E L M O P S X R T  
 A E E L M O P R S X T  
 A E E L M O P R S T X

**result**

A E E L M O P R S T X

# Shellsort: Java implementation

```
public class Shell
{
    public static void sort(Comparable[] a)
    {
        int N = a.length;

        int h = 1;
        while (h < N/3) h = 3*h + 1; // 1, 4, 13, 40, 121, 364, ...
        ← 3x+1 increment sequence

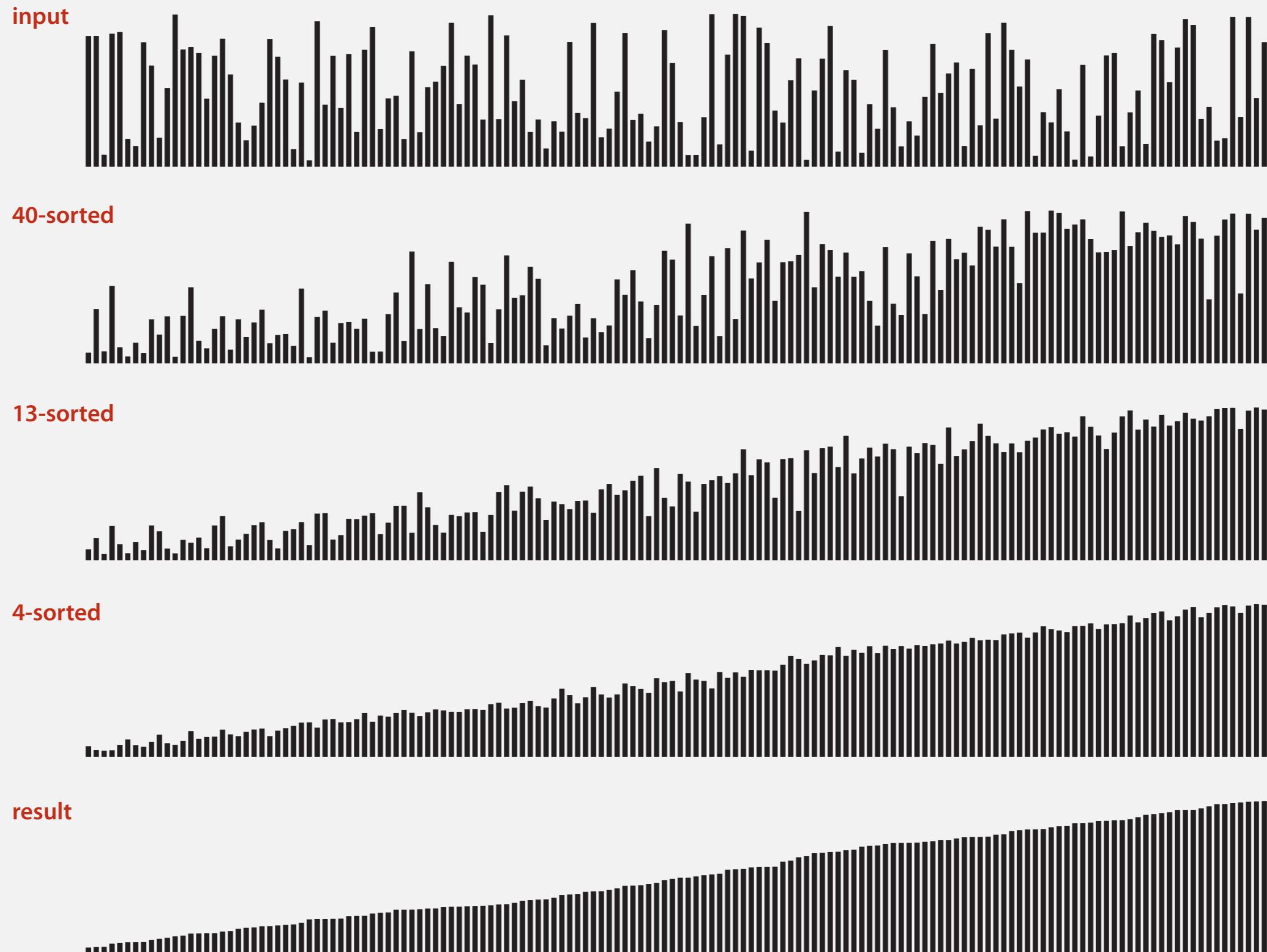
        while (h >= 1)
        { // h-sort the array.
            for (int i = h; i < N; i++)
            {
                for (int j = i; j >= h && less(a[j], a[j-h]); j -= h)
                    exch(a, j, j-h);
            }
            ← insertion sort

            h = h/3;
        }
        ← move to next increment
    }

    private static boolean less(Comparable v, Comparable w)
    { /* as before */ }
    private static void exch(Comparable[] a, int i, int j)
    { /* as before */ }
}
```

# Shellsort: visual trace

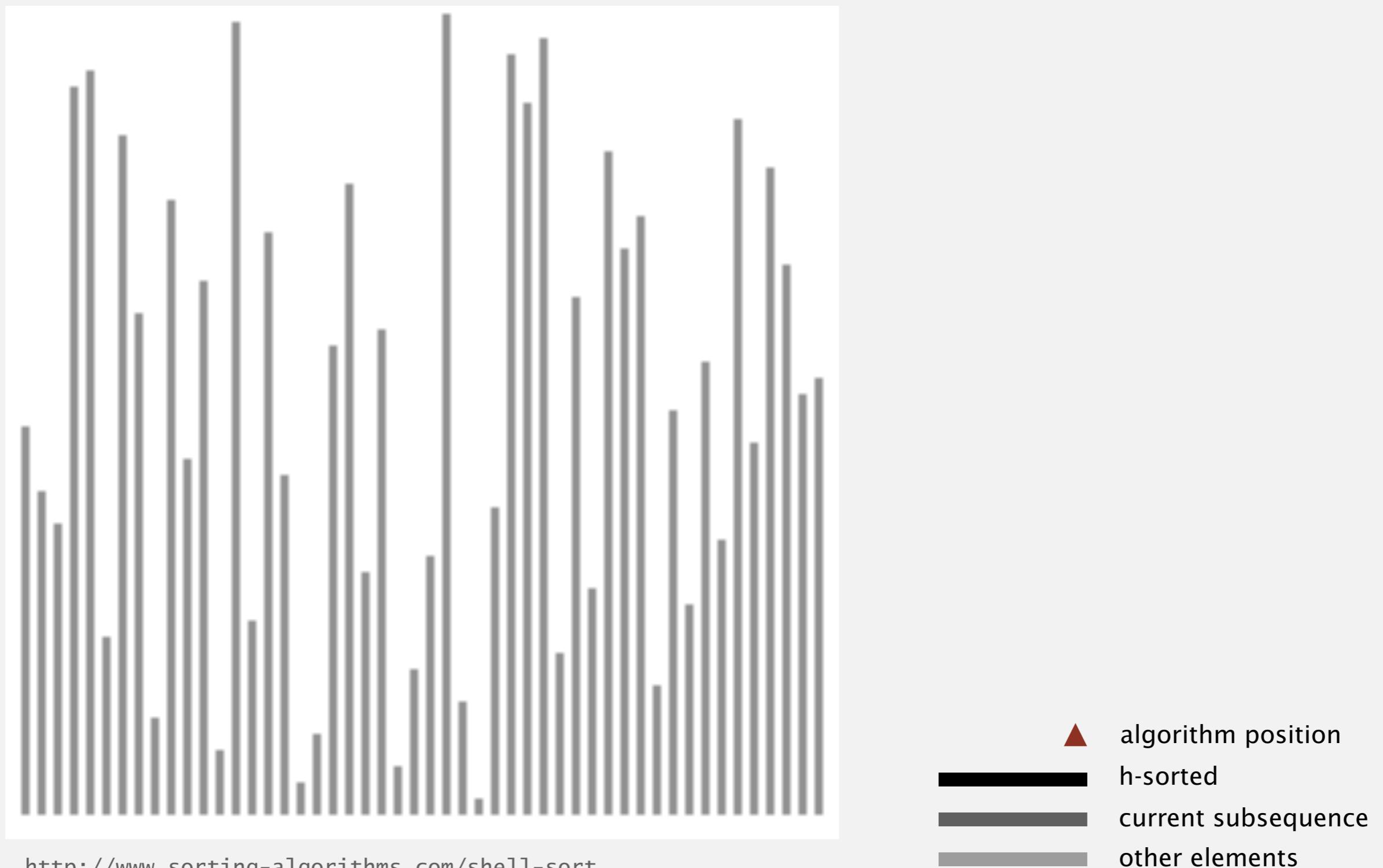
---



# Shellsort: animation

---

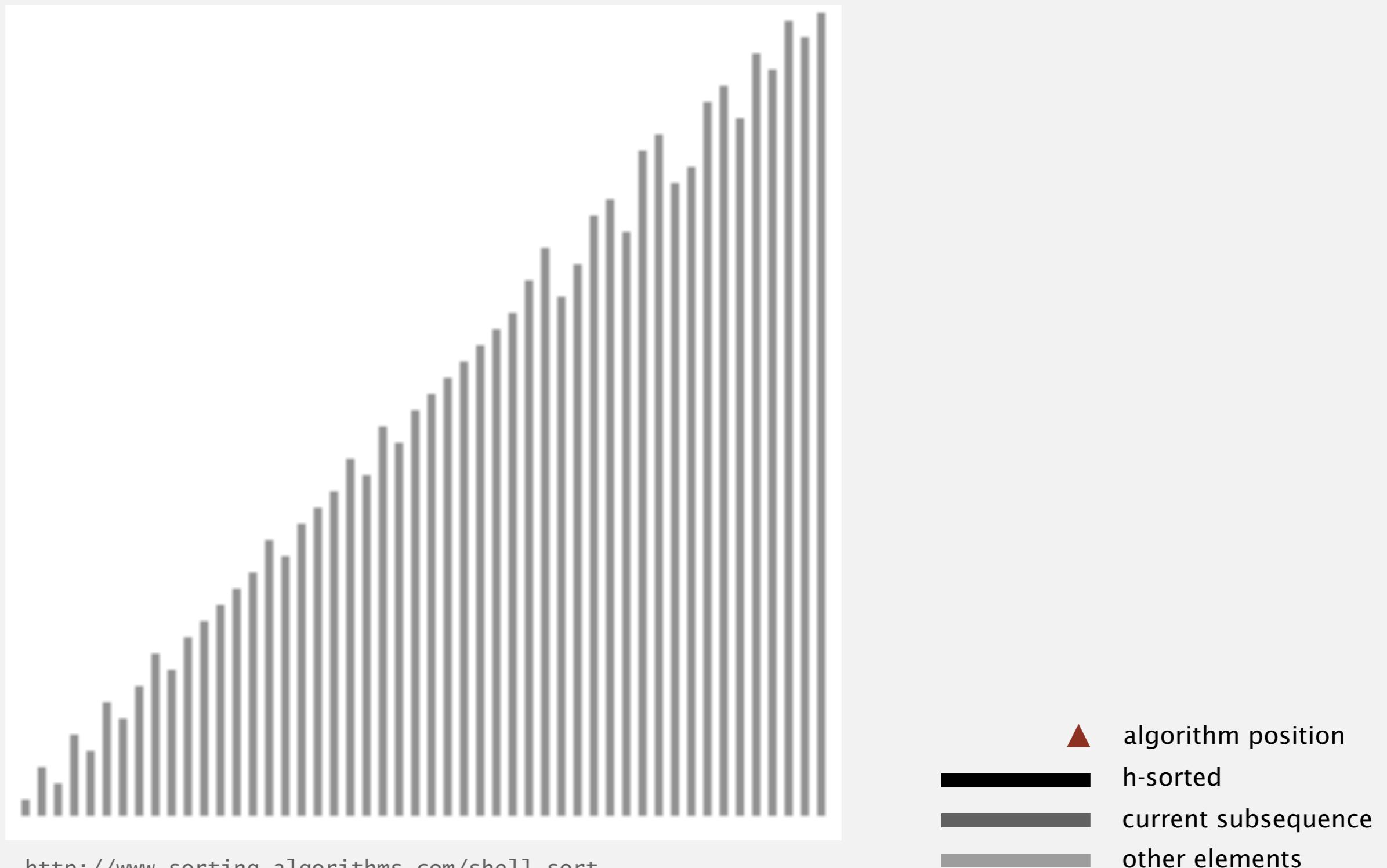
50 random items



<http://www.sorting-algorithms.com/shell-sort>

# Shellsort: animation

# 50 partially-sorted items



## Shellsort: which increment sequence to use?

---

Powers of two. 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, ...

No.

Powers of two minus one. 1, 3, 7, 15, 31, 63, ...

Maybe.

→ 3x + 1. 1, 4, 13, 40, 121, 364, ...

OK. Easy to compute.

Sedgewick. 1, 5, 19, 41, 109, 209, 505, 929, 2161, 3905, ...

Good. Tough to beat in empirical studies.



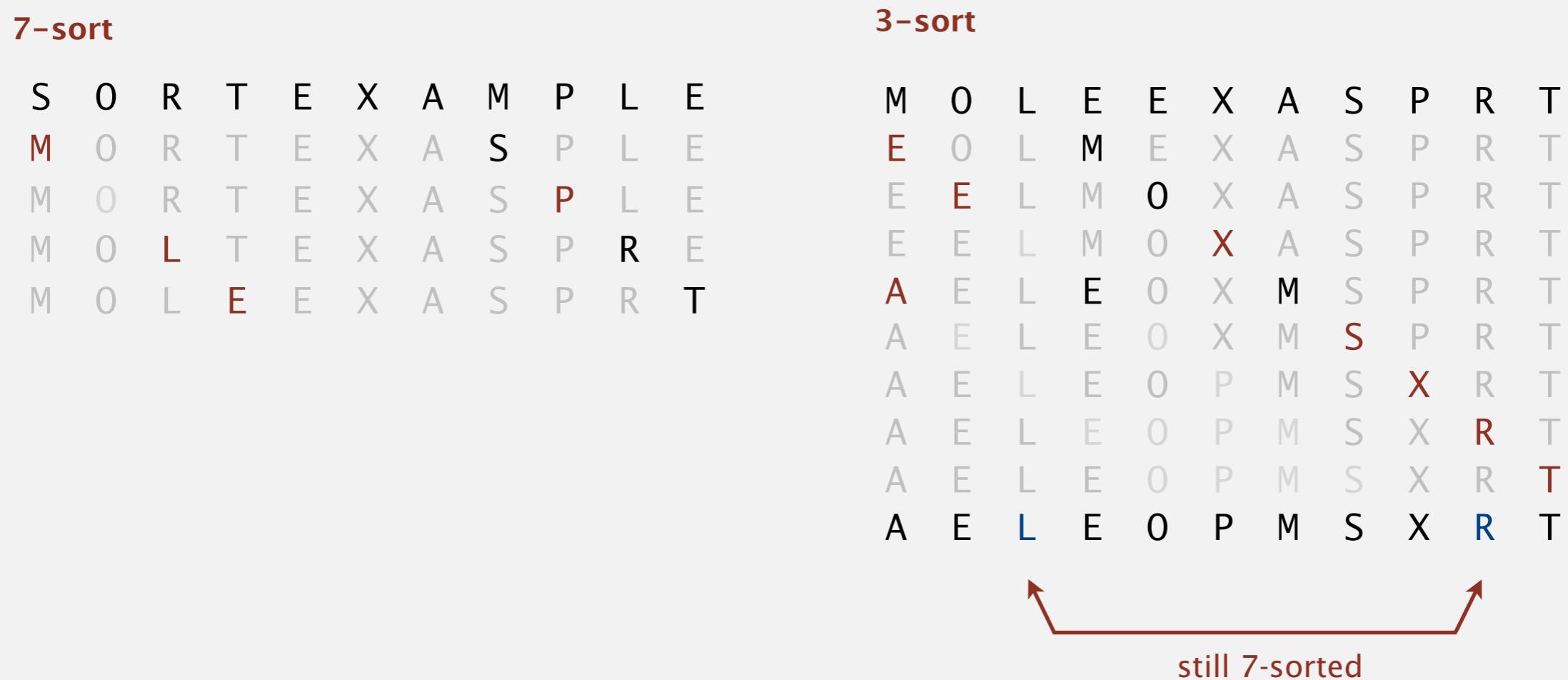
merging of  $(9 \times 4^i) - (9 \times 2^i) + 1$

and  $4^i - (3 \times 2^i) + 1$

# Shellsort: intuition

---

Proposition. An  $h$ -sorted array remains  $h$ -sorted after  $g$ -sorting it.



Challenge. Prove this fact—it's more subtle than you'd think!

## Shellsort: analysis

---

**Proposition.** The order of growth of the worst-case number of compares used by shellsort with the  $3x+1$  increments is  $N^{3/2}$ .

**Property.** The expected number of compares to shellsort a randomly-ordered array using  $3x+1$  increments is....

N	compares	$2.5 N \ln N$	$0.25 N \ln^2 N$	$N^{1.3}$
5,000	93K	106K	91K	64K
10,000	209K	230K	213K	158K
20,000	467K	495K	490K	390K
40,000	1022K	1059K	1122K	960K
80,000	2266K	2258K	2549K	2366K

**Remark.** Accurate model has not yet been discovered (!)

# Why are we interested in shellsort?

---

Example of simple idea leading to substantial performance gains.

Useful in practice.

- Fast unless array size is huge (used for small subarrays).
- Tiny, fixed footprint for code (used in some embedded systems).
- Hardware sort prototype.

R, bzip2, /linux/kernel/groups.c



uClibc

Simple algorithm, nontrivial performance, interesting questions.

- Asymptotic growth rate?
- Best sequence of increments? ← open problem: find a better increment sequence
- Average-case performance?

Lesson. Some good algorithms are still waiting discovery.

# Elementary sorts summary

---

Today. Elementary sorting algorithms.

algorithm	best	average	worst
<b>selection sort</b>	$N^2$	$N^2$	$N^2$
<b>insertion sort</b>	$N$	$N^2$	$N^2$
<b>Shellsort (3x+1)</b>	$N \log N$	?	$N^{3/2}$
goal	$N$	$N \log N$	$N \log N$

**order of growth of running time to sort an array of  $N$  items**

Next week.  $N \log N$  sorting algorithms (in worst case).

# Algorithms

ROBERT SEDGEWICK | KEVIN WAYNE

<http://algs4.cs.princeton.edu>

## 2.1 ELEMENTARY SORTS

---

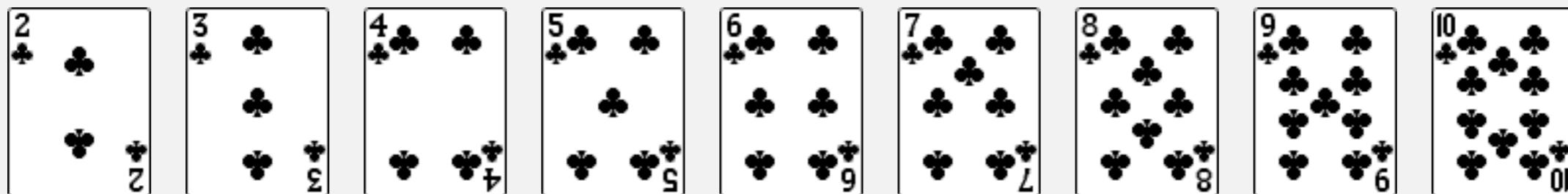
- ▶ *rules of the game*
- ▶ *selection sort*
- ▶ *insertion sort*
- ▶ *shellsort*
- ▶ ***shuffling***

# How to shuffle an array

---

Goal. Rearrange array so that result is a uniformly random permutation.

all permutations  
equally likely

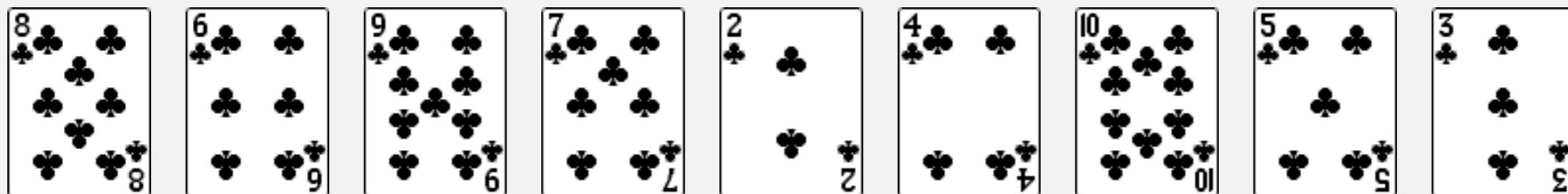


# How to shuffle an array

---

Goal. Rearrange array so that result is a uniformly random permutation.

all permutations  
equally likely

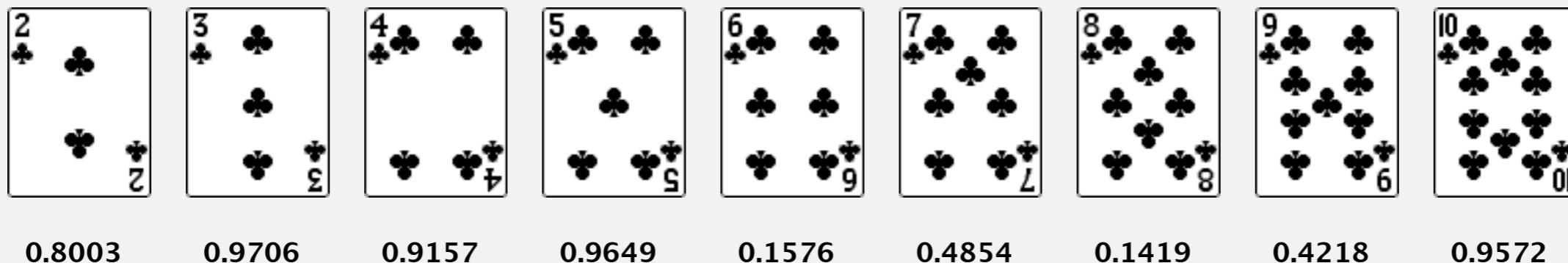


# Shuffle sort

---

- Generate a random real number for each array entry.
- Sort the array.

useful for shuffling  
columns in a spreadsheet

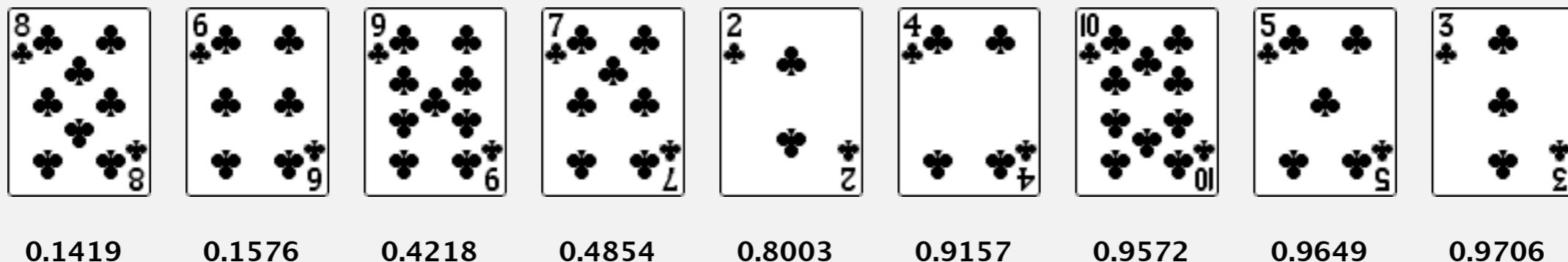


# Shuffle sort

---

- Generate a random real number for each array entry.
- Sort the array.

useful for shuffling  
columns in a spreadsheet

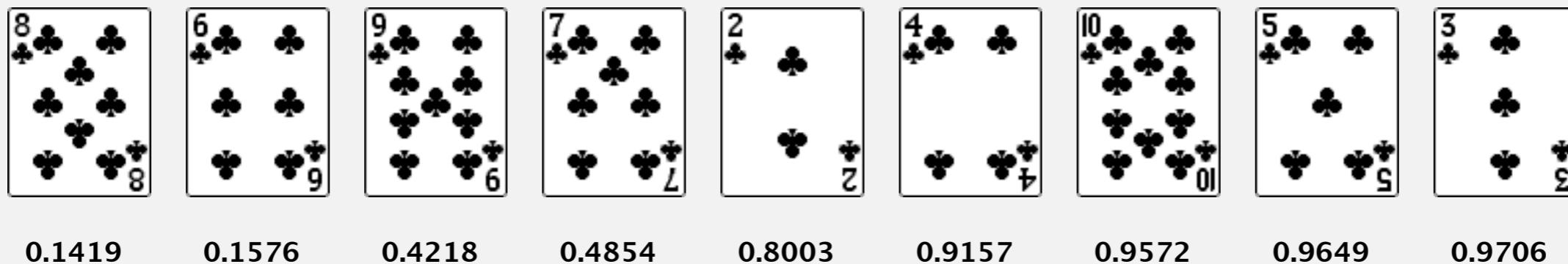


# Shuffle sort

---

- Generate a random real number for each array entry.
- Sort the array.

useful for shuffling  
columns in a spreadsheet



Proposition. Shuffle sort produces a uniformly random permutation.

assuming real numbers  
uniformly at random (and no ties)

# War story (Microsoft)

Microsoft antitrust probe by EU. Microsoft agreed to provide a randomized ballot screen for users to select browser in Windows 7.

<http://www.browserchoice.eu>

## Select your web browser(s)

 <b>Google chrome</b> A fast new browser from Google. Try it now!	 <b>Safari</b> Safari for Windows from Apple, the world's most innovative browser.	 <b>mozilla Firefox</b> Your online security is Firefox's top priority. Firefox is free, and made to help you get the most out of the	 <b>Opera™ browser</b> The fastest browser on Earth. Secure, powerful and easy to use, with excellent privacy protection.	 <b>Windows® Internet Explorer® 8</b> Designed to help you take control of your privacy and browse with confidence. Free from Microsoft.
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appeared last  
50% of the time

## War story (Microsoft)

---

Microsoft antitrust probe by EU. Microsoft agreed to provide a randomized ballot screen for users to select browser in Windows 7.

Solution? Implement shuffle sort by making comparator always return a random answer.

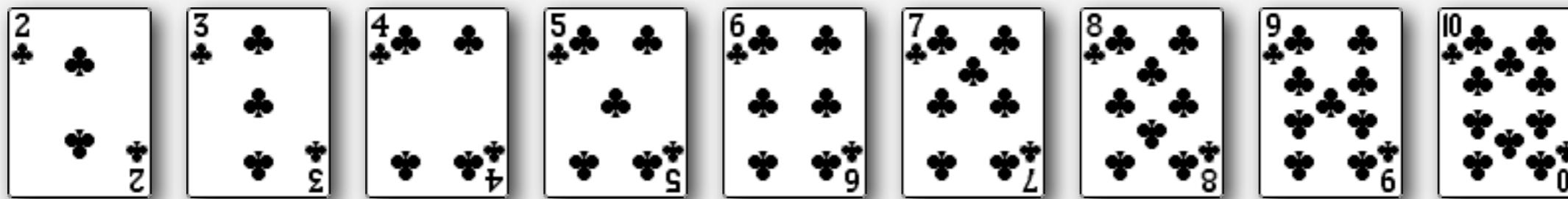
```
public int compareTo(Browser that)
{
    double r = Math.random();
    if (r < 0.5) return -1;
    if (r > 0.5) return +1;
    return 0;
}
```

← browser comparator  
(should implement a total order)

# Knuth shuffle demo

---

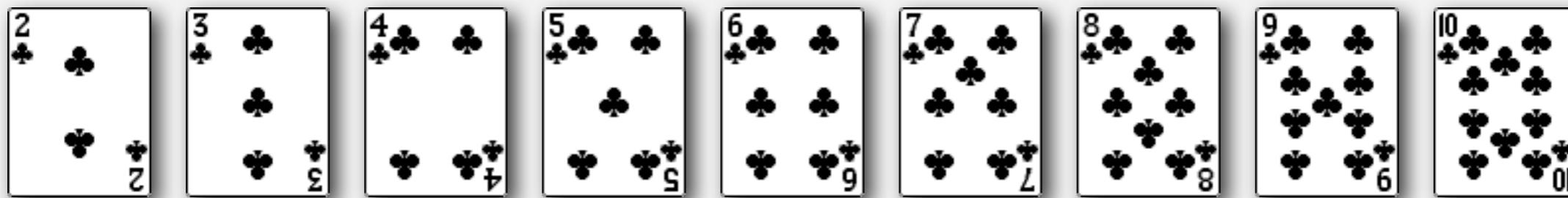
- In iteration  $i$ , pick integer  $r$  between 0 and  $i$  uniformly at random.
- Swap  $a[i]$  and  $a[r]$ .



# Knuth shuffle

---

- In iteration  $i$ , pick integer  $r$  between 0 and  $i$  uniformly at random.
- Swap  $a[i]$  and  $a[r]$ .



**Proposition.** [Fisher-Yates 1938] Knuth shuffling algorithm produces a uniformly random permutation of the input array in linear time.

→  
assuming integers  
uniformly at random

# Knuth shuffle

- In iteration  $i$ , pick integer  $r$  between 0 and  $i$  uniformly at random.
- Swap  $a[i]$  and  $a[r]$ .

common bug: between 0 and  $N - 1$   
correct variant: between  $i$  and  $N - 1$

```
public class StdRandom
{
    ...
    public static void shuffle(Object[] a)
    {
        int N = a.length;
        for (int i = 0; i < N; i++)
        {
            int r = StdRandom.uniform(i + 1);           ← between 0 and i
            exch(a, i, r);
        }
    }
}
```

# Broken Knuth shuffle

---

Q. What happens if integer is chosen between 0 and  $N-1$  ?

A. Not uniformly random!

instead of 0 and  $i$

permutation	Knuth shuffle	broken shuffle
A B C	1/6	4/27
A C B	1/6	5/27
B A C	1/6	5/27
B C A	1/6	5/27
C A B	1/6	4/27
C B A	1/6	4/27

probability of each result when shuffling { A, B, C }

# War story (online poker)

Texas hold'em poker. Software must shuffle electronic cards.



How We Learned to Cheat at Online Poker: A Study in Software Security

<http://www.datamation.com/entdev/article.php/616221>

# War story (online poker)

---

Shuffling algorithm in FAQ at [www.planetpoker.com](http://www.planetpoker.com)

```
for i := 1 to 52 do begin
    r := random(51) + 1; ← between 1 and 51
    swap := card[r];
    card[r] := card[i];
    card[i] := swap;
end;
```

- Bug 1. Random number r never 52  $\Rightarrow$  52<sup>nd</sup> card can't end up in 52<sup>nd</sup> place.
- Bug 2. Shuffle not uniform (should be between 1 and i).
- Bug 3. random() uses 32-bit seed  $\Rightarrow$   $2^{32}$  possible shuffles.
- Bug 4. Seed = milliseconds since midnight  $\Rightarrow$  86.4 million shuffles.

*“The generation of random numbers is too important to be left to chance.”*

— Robert R. Coveyou

# War story (online poker)

---

Best practices for shuffling (if your business depends on it).

- Use a hardware random-number generator that has passed both the FIPS 140-2 and the NIST statistical test suites.
- Continuously monitor statistic properties:  
hardware random-number generators are fragile and fail silently.
- Use an unbiased shuffling algorithm.



RANDOM.ORG

Bottom line. Shuffling a deck of cards is hard!