Forward Chaining and backward chaining in AI

In artificial intelligence, forward and backward chaining is one of the important topics, but before understanding forward and backward chaining let's first understand that from where these two terms came.

Inference engine:

The inference engine is the component of the intelligent system in artificial intelligence, which applies logical rules to the knowledge base to infer new information from known facts. The first inference engine was part of the expert system. Inference engine commonly proceeds in two modes, which are:

a.   **Forward chaining**

b.   **Backward chaining**

Horn Clause and Definite clause:

Horn clause and definite clause are the forms of sentences, which enables knowledge base to use a more restricted and efficient inference algorithm. Logical inference algorithms use forward and backward chaining approaches, which require KB in the form of the **first-order definite clause**.

Definite clause: A clause which is a disjunction of literals with **exactly one positive literal** is known as a definite clause or strict horn clause.

Horn clause: A clause which is a disjunction of literals with **at most one positive literal** is known as horn clause. Hence all the definite clauses are horn clauses.

Example: (¬ p V ¬ q V k). It has only one positive literal k.

It is equivalent to $p \wedge q \rightarrow k$.

A. Forward Chaining

Forward chaining is also known as a forward deduction or forward reasoning method when using an inference engine. Forward chaining is a form of reasoning which start with atomic sentences in the knowledge base and applies inference rules (Modus Ponens) in the forward direction to extract more data until a goal is reached.

The Forward-chaining algorithm starts from known facts, triggers all rules whose premises are satisfied, and add their conclusion to the known facts. This process repeats until the problem is solved.

Properties of Forward-Chaining:

- o It is a down-up approach, as it moves from bottom to top.
- o It is a process of making a conclusion based on known facts or data, by starting from the initial state and reaches the goal state.
- o Forward-chaining approach is also called as data-driven as we reach to the goal using available data.
- o Forward -chaining approach is commonly used in the expert system, such as CLIPS, business, and production rule systems.

Consider the following famous example which we will use in both approaches:

Example:

"As per the law, it is a crime for an American to sell weapons to hostile nations. Country A, an enemy of America, has some missiles, and all the missiles were sold to it by Robert, who is an American citizen."

Prove that **"Robert is criminal."**

To solve the above problem, first, we will convert all the above facts into first-order definite clauses, and then we will use a forward-chaining algorithm to reach the goal.

Facts Conversion into FOL:

- o It is a crime for an American to sell weapons to hostile nations. (Let's say p, q, and r are variables)
  American (p) $\wedge$ weapon(q) $\wedge$ sells (p, q, r) $\wedge$ hostile(r) $\rightarrow$ Criminal(p)   ...(1)
- o Country A has some missiles. **?p Owns(A, p) $\wedge$ Missile(p)**. It can be written in two definite clauses by using Existential Instantiation, introducing new Constant T1.
  Owns(A,   T1)   ......(2)
  Missile(T1)   ....(3)
- o All of the missiles were sold to country A by Robert.
  ?p Missiles(p) $\wedge$ Owns (A, p) $\rightarrow$ Sells (Robert, p, A)   ......(4)
- o Missiles are weapons.
  Missile(p) $\rightarrow$ Weapons (p)   ....(5)
- o Enemy of America is known as hostile.
  Enemy(p, America) $\rightarrow$Hostile(p)   ....(6)

- ○ Country A is an enemy of America. **Enemy (A, America)** ....(7)
- ○ Robert is American **American(Robert).** ....(8)

Forward chaining proof:

Step-1:

In the first step we will start with the known facts and will choose the sentences which do not have implications, such as: **American(Robert), Enemy(A, America), Owns(A, T1), and Missile(T1)**. All these facts will be represented as below.

| American (Robert)	Missile (T1)	Owns (A,T1)	Enemy (A, America)

Step-2:

At the second step, we will see those facts which infer from available facts and with satisfied premises.

Rule-(1) does not satisfy premises, so it will not be added in the first iteration.

Rule-(2) and (3) are already added.

Rule-(4) satisfy with the substitution {p/T1}, **so Sells (Robert, T1, A)** is added, which infers from the conjunction of Rule (2) and (3).

Rule-(6) is satisfied with the substitution(p/A), so Hostile(A) is added and which infers from Rule-(7).
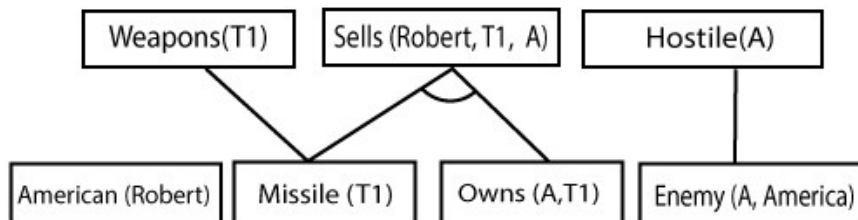
Step-3:

At step-3, as we can check Rule-(1) is satisfied with the substitution **{p/Robert, q/T1, r/A}, so we can add Criminal(Robert)** which infers all the available facts. And hence we reached our goal statement.
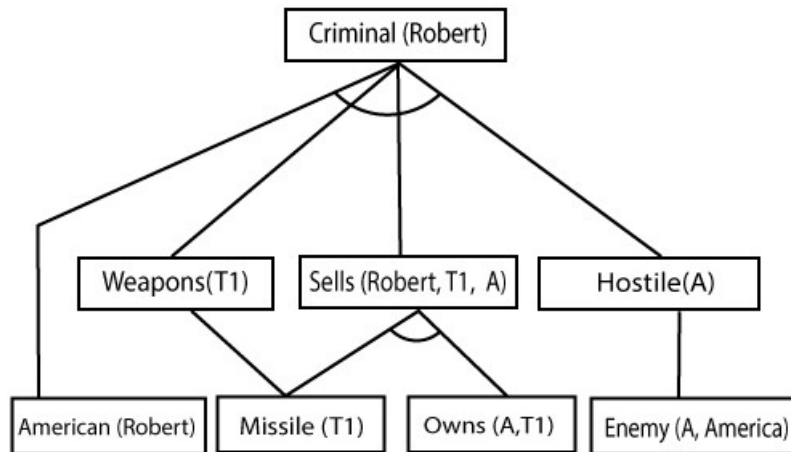
Hence it is proved that Robert is Criminal using forward chaining approach.

B. Backward Chaining:

Backward-chaining is also known as a backward deduction or backward reasoning method when using an inference engine. A backward chaining algorithm is a form of reasoning, which starts with the goal and works backward, chaining through rules to find known facts that support the goal.

Properties of backward chaining:

- o It is known as a top-down approach.
- o Backward-chaining is based on modus ponens inference rule.
- o In backward chaining, the goal is broken into sub-goal or sub-goals to prove the facts true.
- o It is called a goal-driven approach, as a list of goals decides which rules are selected and used.
- o Backward -chaining algorithm is used in game theory, automated theorem proving tools, inference engines, proof assistants, and various AI applications.
- o The backward-chaining method mostly used a **depth-first search** strategy for proof.

Example:

In backward-chaining, we will use the same above example, and will rewrite all the rules.

- o **American (p) ∧ weapon(q) ∧ sells (p, q, r) ∧ hostile(r) → Criminal(p) ...(1)**
  Owns(A, T1)   ....(2)
- o **Missile(T1)**
- o **?p Missiles(p) ∧ Owns (A, p) → Sells (Robert, p, A)   ......(4)**
- o **Missile(p) → Weapons (p)   ....(5)**
- o **Enemy(p, America) →Hostile(p)   ....(6)**
- o **Enemy (A, America)   ....(7)**
- o **American(Robert).   ....(8)**

Backward-Chaining proof:

In Backward chaining, we will start with our goal predicate, which is **Criminal(Robert)**, and then infer further rules.

Step-1:

At the first step, we will take the goal fact. And from the goal fact, we will infer other facts, and at last, we will prove those facts true. So our goal fact is "Robert is Criminal," so following is the predicate of it.

Criminal (Robert)

Step-2:

At the second step, we will infer other facts form goal fact which satisfies the rules. So as we can see in Rule-1, the goal predicate Criminal (Robert) is present with substitution {Robert/P}. So we will add all the conjunctive facts below the first level and will replace p with Robert.

**Here we can see American (Robert) is a fact, so it is proved here.**
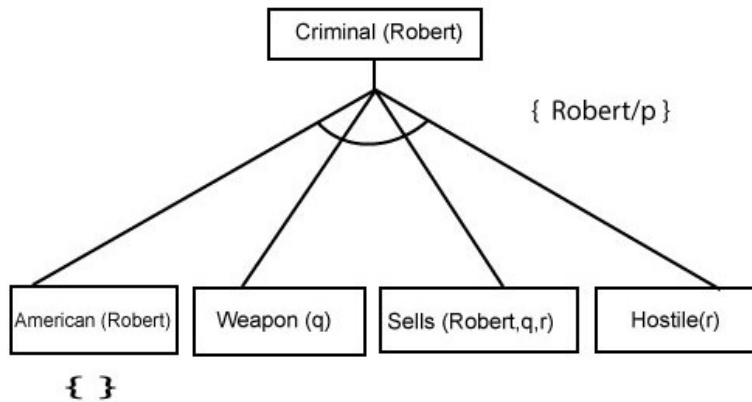
Step-3:t At step-3, we will extract further fact Missile(q) which infer from Weapon(q), as it satisfies Rule-(5). Weapon (q) is also true with the substitution of a constant T1 at q.
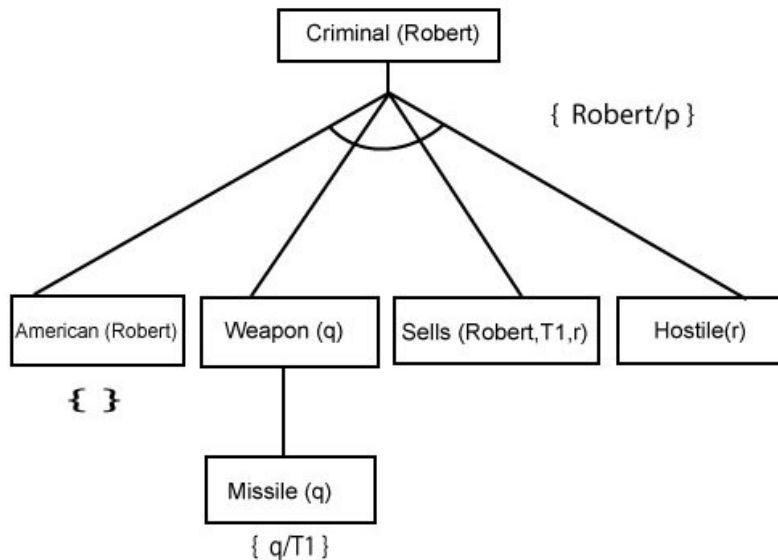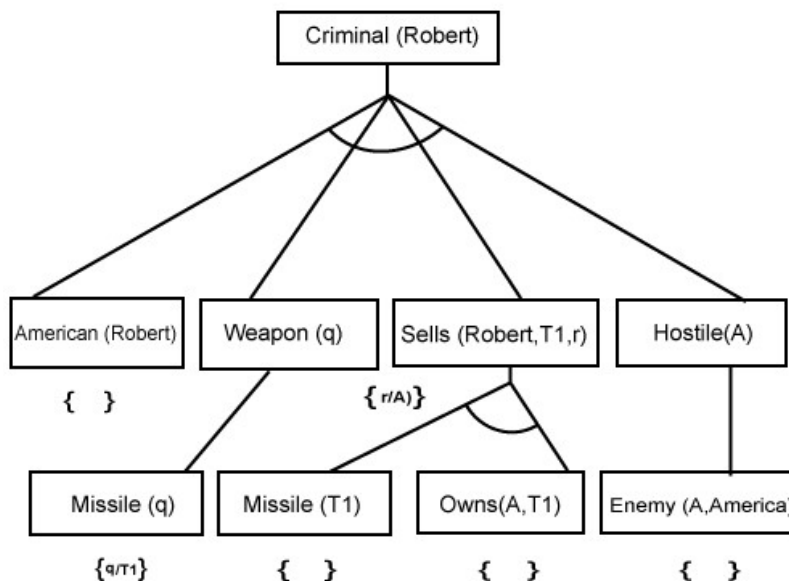

Step-4:

At step-4, we can infer facts Missile(T1) and Owns(A, T1) form Sells(Robert, T1, r) which satisfies the **Rule- 4**, with the substitution of A in place of r. So these two statements are proved here.
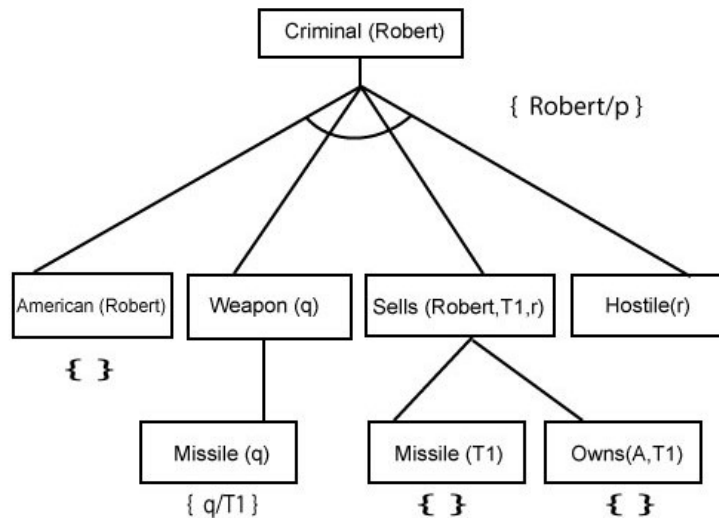
Step-5:

At step-5, we can infer the fact **Enemy(A, America)** from **Hostile(A)** which satisfies Rule- 6. And hence all the statements are proved true using backward chaining.

Difference between backward chaining and forward chaining

Following is the difference between the forward chaining and backward chaining:

- Forward chaining as the name suggests, start from the known facts and move forward by applying inference rules to extract more data, and it continues until it reaches to the goal, whereas backward chaining starts from the goal, move backward by using inference rules to determine the facts that satisfy the goal.
- Forward chaining is called a **data-driven** inference technique, whereas backward chaining is called a **goal-driven** inference technique.
- Forward chaining is known as the **down-up** approach, whereas backward chaining is known as a **top-down** approach.
- Forward chaining uses **breadth-first search** strategy, whereas backward chaining uses **depth-first search** strategy.
- Forward and backward chaining both applies **Modus ponens** inference rule.
- Forward chaining can be used for tasks such as **planning, design process monitoring, diagnosis, and classification**, whereas backward chaining can be used for **classification and diagnosis tasks**.
- Forward chaining can be like an exhaustive search, whereas backward chaining tries to avoid the unnecessary path of reasoning.
- In forward-chaining there can be various ASK questions from the knowledge base, whereas in backward chaining there can be fewer ASK questions.
- Forward chaining is slow as it checks for all the rules, whereas backward chaining is fast as it checks few required rules only.

S. No.	Forward Chaining	Backward Chaining
1.	Forward chaining starts from known facts and applies inference rule to extract more data unit it reaches to the goal.	Backward chaining starts from the goal and works backward through inference rules to find the required facts that support the goal.
2.	It is a bottom-up approach	It is a top-down approach
3.	Forward chaining is known as data-driven inference	Backward chaining is known as goal-driven technique as we start

	technique as we reach to the goal using the available data.	from the goal and divide into sub-goal to extract the facts.
4.	Forward chaining reasoning applies a breadth-first search strategy.	Backward chaining reasoning applies a depth-first search strategy.
5.	Forward chaining tests for all the available rules	Backward chaining only tests for few required rules.
6.	Forward chaining is suitable for the planning, monitoring, control, and interpretation application.	Backward chaining is suitable for diagnostic, prescription, and debugging application.
7.	Forward chaining can generate an infinite number of possible conclusions.	Backward chaining generates a finite number of possible conclusions.
8.	It operates in the forward direction.	It operates in the backward direction.
9.	Forward chaining is aimed for any conclusion.	Backward chaining is only aimed for the required data.

Types of Reasoning

In artificial intelligence, reasoning can be divided into the following categories:

- o Deductive reasoning
- o Inductive reasoning
- o Abductive reasoning
- o Common Sense Reasoning
- o Monotonic Reasoning
- o Non-monotonic Reasoning

Note: Inductive and deductive reasoning are the forms of propositional logic.

1. Deductive reasoning:

Deductive reasoning is deducing new information from logically related known information. It is the form of valid reasoning, which means the argument's conclusion must be true when the premises are true.

Deductive reasoning is a type of propositional logic in AI, and it requires various rules and facts. It is sometimes referred to as top-down reasoning, and contradictory to inductive reasoning.

In deductive reasoning, the truth of the premises guarantees the truth of the conclusion.

Deductive reasoning mostly starts from the general premises to the specific conclusion, which can be explained as below example.

Example:

Premise-1: All the human eats veggies

Premise-2: Suresh is human.

Conclusion: Suresh eats veggies.

The general process of deductive reasoning is given below:

2. Inductive Reasoning:

Inductive reasoning is a form of reasoning to arrive at a conclusion using limited sets of facts by the process of generalization. It starts with the series of specific facts or data and reaches to a general statement or conclusion.

Inductive reasoning is a type of propositional logic, which is also known as cause-effect reasoning or bottom-up reasoning.

In inductive reasoning, we use historical data or various premises to generate a generic rule, for which premises support the conclusion.

In inductive reasoning, premises provide probable supports to the conclusion, so the truth of premises does not guarantee the truth of the conclusion.

Example:

Premise: All of the pigeons we have seen in the zoo are white.

Conclusion: Therefore, we can expect all the pigeons to be white.
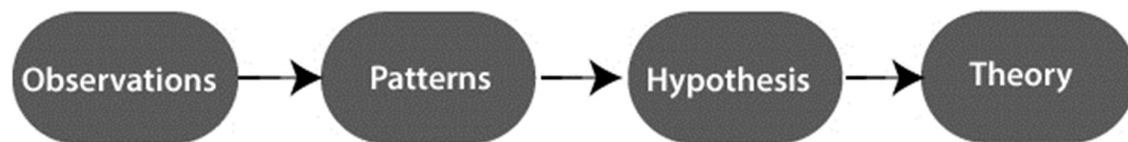
3. Abductive reasoning:

Abductive reasoning is a form of logical reasoning which starts with single or multiple observations then seeks to find the most likely explanation or conclusion for the observation.

Abductive reasoning is an extension of deductive reasoning, but in abductive reasoning, the premises do not guarantee the conclusion.

Example:

Implication: Cricket ground is wet if it is raining

Axiom: Cricket ground is wet.

Conclusion It is raining.

4. Common Sense Reasoning

Common sense reasoning is an informal form of reasoning, which can be gained through experiences.

Common Sense reasoning simulates the human ability to make presumptions about events which occurs on every day.

It relies on good judgment rather than exact logic and operates on **heuristic knowledge** and **heuristic rules**.

Example:

1. **One person can be at one place at a time.**
2. **If I put my hand in a fire, then it will burn.**

The above two statements are the examples of common sense reasoning which a human mind can easily understand and assume.

5. Monotonic Reasoning:

In monotonic reasoning, once the conclusion is taken, then it will remain the same even if we add some other information to existing information in our knowledge base. In monotonic reasoning, adding knowledge does not decrease the set of prepositions that can be derived.

To solve monotonic problems, we can derive the valid conclusion from the available facts only, and it will not be affected by new facts.

Monotonic reasoning is not useful for the real-time systems, as in real time, facts get changed, so we cannot use monotonic reasoning.

Monotonic reasoning is used in conventional reasoning systems, and a logic-based system is monotonic.

Any theorem proving is an example of monotonic reasoning.

Example:

o **Earth revolves around the Sun.**

It is a true fact, and it cannot be changed even if we add another sentence in knowledge base like, "The moon revolves around the earth" Or "Earth is not round," etc.

Advantages of Monotonic Reasoning:

- In monotonic reasoning, each old proof will always remain valid.
- If we deduce some facts from available facts, then it will remain valid for always.

Disadvantages of Monotonic Reasoning:

- We cannot represent the real world scenarios using Monotonic reasoning.
- Hypothesis knowledge cannot be expressed with monotonic reasoning, which means facts should be true.
- Since we can only derive conclusions from the old proofs, so new knowledge from the real world cannot be added.

6. Non-monotonic Reasoning

In Non-monotonic reasoning, some conclusions may be invalidated if we add some more information to our knowledge base.

Logic will be said as non-monotonic if some conclusions can be invalidated by adding more knowledge into our knowledge base.

Non-monotonic reasoning deals with incomplete and uncertain models.

"Human perceptions for various things in daily life, "is a general example of non-monotonic reasoning.

Example: Let suppose the knowledge base contains the following knowledge:

- **Birds can fly**
- **Penguins cannot fly**
- **Pitty is a bird**

So from the above sentences, we can conclude that **Pitty can fly**.

However, if we add one another sentence into knowledge base "**Pitty is a penguin**", which concludes "**Pitty cannot fly**", so it invalidates the above conclusion.

Advantages of Non-monotonic reasoning:

- o For real-world systems such as Robot navigation, we can use non-monotonic reasoning.
- o In Non-monotonic reasoning, we can choose probabilistic facts or can make assumptions.

Disadvantages of Non-monotonic Reasoning:

- o In non-monotonic reasoning, the old facts may be invalidated by adding new sentences.
- o It cannot be used for theorem **proving**.