

Lecture Notes for INF281 Basics of Bioinformatics Sequence Analysis

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Part I

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Molecular Biology

Molecular biology is the study of biology focusing on organisms and cells at the molecular level.

Five essential facts about cells

1. Two primary types of cells - eukaryotes and prokaryotes

- Eukaryote: animals & plants
- Prokaryote: bacteria & archaea

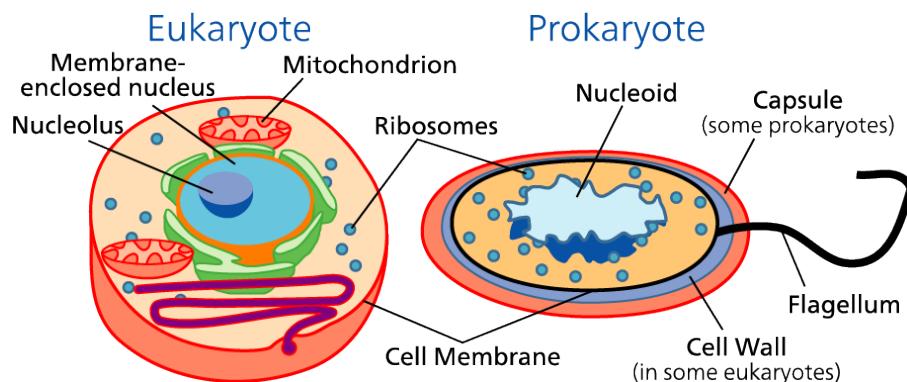


Figure 1.1: Eukaryotic and prokaryotic cells (source: Science Primer, Wikimedia Commons)

2. Cell size - around 1 to 100 micrometers

- Cell Size and Scale: <http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/cells/scale>

3. The number of cells

- Prokaryotes: 1 cell
- Human: Estimate of 15 trillion cells

4. An animal cell and cell organelles

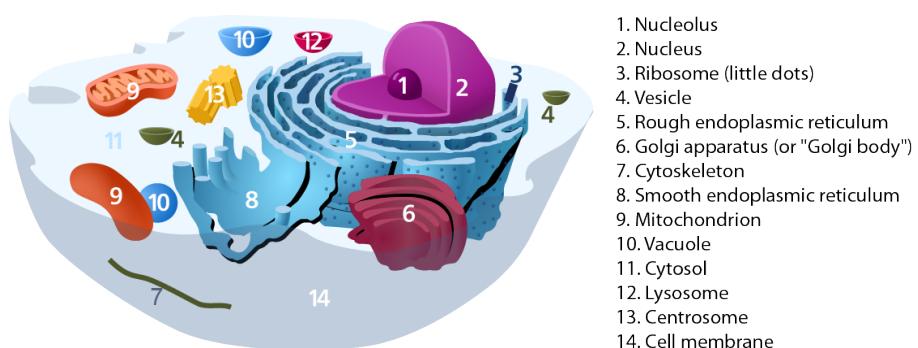


Figure 1.2: An animal cell and organelles (source: Kelvinsong, Wikimedia Commons)

5. Cellular processes

- Cell growth, cell development, cell signaling,
- Example: <http://www.nature.com/nrg/multimedia/rnai>

Central dogma of molecular biology

It describes the information flow within a cell.

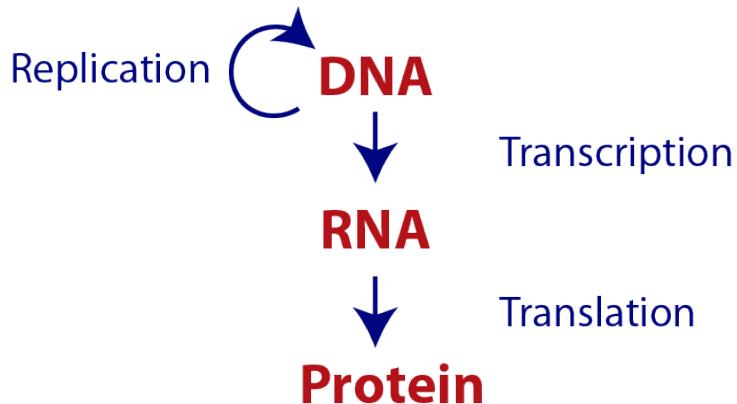


Figure 1.3: Central dogma of molecular biology

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid)

DNA stores genetic information. It has four different bases: cytosine (C), guanine (G), adenine (A), and thymine (T).

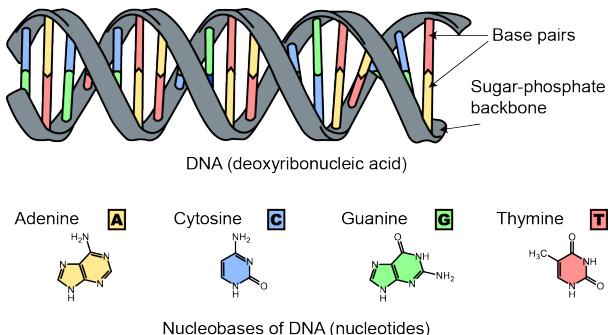


Figure 1.4: DNA double helix and base pairs
(modified from the original version by Sponk, Wikimedia Commons)

Base pair matching (Watson-Crick base pair)

Adenine (A) pairs with thymine (T), whereas cytosine (C) pairs with guanine (G).

DNA strand1: ACGT
||||
DNA strand2: TGCA

RNA (Ribonucleic acid)

RNA has various biological roles and several sub-classes. Messenger RNAs (mRNAs) convey genetic information. It has four different bases: cytosine (C), guanine (G), adenine (A), and uracil (U).

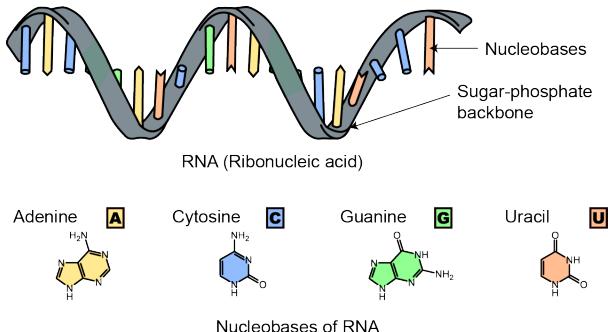


Figure 1.5: Single strand RNA
(modified from the original version by Sponk, Wikimedia Commons)

Transcription: mRNAs are transcribed from DNAs

DNA: ACGT -----> RNA: ACGU
Transcription

Protein

Proteins are large molecules consisting of amino acids. There are 20 common amino acids.

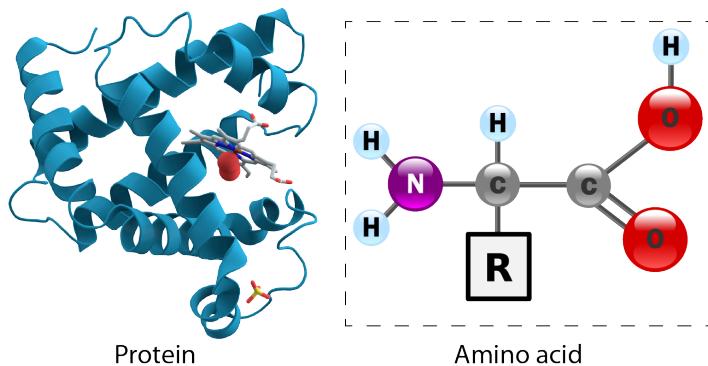


Figure 1.6: Protein 3D structure and amino acids
(sources: AzaToth, Wikimedia Commons, YassineMrabet, Wikimedia Commons)

Translation: Amino-acids are translated from mRNAs

mRNA: GUC -----> AA: Valine
Translation

Universal genetic code

A codon consists of three nucleic acids. Single-letter or three-letter names can be used for amino acids.

Gentic code				
2nd base				
	U	C	A	
3rd base in each row	U	UCU (Ser/S) Serine	UAU (Tyr/Y) Tyrosine	UGU (Cys/C) Cysteine
	UUC (Phe/F) Phenylalanine	UCC (Ser/S) Serine	UAC (Tyr/Y) Tyrosine	UGC (Cys/C) Cysteine
	UUA (Leu/L) Leucine	UCA (Ser/S) Serine	UAA Ochre (Stop)	UGA Opal (Stop)
	UUG (Leu/L) Leucine	UCG (Ser/S) Serine	UAG Amber (Stop)	UGG (Trp/W) Tryptophan
1st base	C	CUU (Leu/L) Leucine	CCU (Pro/P) Proline	CAU (His/H) Histidine
	CUC (Leu/L) Leucine	CCC (Pro/P) Proline	CAC (His/H) Histidine	CGU (Arg/R) Arginine
	CUA (Leu/L) Leucine	CCA (Pro/P) Proline	CAA (Gln/Q) Glutamine	GCG (Arg/R) Arginine
	CUG (Leu/L) Leucine	CCG (Pro/P) Proline	CAG (Gln/Q) Glutamine	CGA (Arg/R) Arginine
A	AUU (Ile/I) Isoleucine	ACU (Thr/T) Threonine	AAU (Asn/N) Asparagine	AGU (Ser/S) Serine
	AUC (Ile/I) Isoleucine	ACC (Thr/T) Threonine	AAC (Asn/N) Asparagine	AGC (Ser/S) Serine
	AUA (Ile/I) Isoleucine	ACA (Thr/T) Threonine	AAA (Lys/K) Lysine	AGA (Arg/R) Arginine
	AUG (Met/M) Methionine	ACG (Thr/T) Threonine	AAG (Lys/K) Lysine	AGG (Arg/R) Arginine
G	GUU (Val/V) Valine	GCU (Ala/A) Alanine	GAU (Asp/D) Aspartic acid	GGU (Gly/G) Glycine
	GUC (Val/V) Valine	GCC (Ala/A) Alanine	GAC (Asp/D) Aspartic acid	GGC (Gly/G) Glycine
	GUA (Val/V) Valine	GCA (Ala/A) Alanine	GAA (Glu/E) Glutamic acid	GGA (Gly/G) Glycine
	GUG (Val/V) Valine	GCG (Ala/A) Alanine	GAG (Glu/E) Glutamic acid	GGG (Gly/G) Glycine

Figure 1.7: Universal genetic code
(modified from the original version by Häggström, Wikimedia Commons)

Cellular functions of proteins

- Enzymes: catalyze chemical reaction
- Cell signaling: hormone (e.g. insulin), antibodies,
- Structural: collagen, cartilage, keratin,

Exercises 1.1

1. Draw a simple diagram of the central dogma of molecular biology and briefly explain the information flow of the molecules.

2. What are the DNA sequences of the opposite strand for the following DNA sequences?

Seq1 CCGATT
Seq2 TTACGC
Seq3 ACGCGC

3. What are the mRNA sequences transcribed from the following DNA sequences?

4. What are the polypeptide sequences translated from the following mRNA sequences?
Answer them with both one-letter and three letter names.

Seq1 AUGUUUUAA
Seq2 GCAGCAAAAA

1.2 Introduction to Biotechnology

Biotechnology is the use of laboratory techniques to study living organism and cells.

Applications of biotechnology

Branches of biotechnology can be explained with different colors.

- Red: medical processes
- Green: agricultural processes
- White: industrial processes
- Blue: marine and aquatic applications

Laboratory tools and equipment



Figure 1.8: Pipette, centrifuge, thermal cycler, and DNA sequencer
(sources: Domain, Manske, Rrror, RE73 via Wikimedia Commons)

Human genome project

It was a large-scale international research project to determine the whole DNA sequences of human.

- 1990 - 2003
- \$2.7 billion

Next generation sequencing

Sequence technologies have been rapidly advanced since the human genome project.

Example: sequence a whole human genome with Illumina HiSeq X Ten.

- One day
- \$1000

Protein sequencing

Proteins are generally more studied than DNAs and RNAs, but the whole proteome is generally harder to analyze than the whole genome. MS (mass-spectrometry) based technologies are widely used to sequence proteins.



Figure 1.9: Orbitrap mass spectrometer (source: Wiòrkiewicz, Wikimedia Commons)

1.3 Bioinformatics

Bioinformatics uses computational approaches to solve problems in life sciences. It is based on computer science.

Similar or almost equivalent disciplines

- Biostatistics
- Biophysics
- Systems biology
- Computational biology

Not much related with bioinformatics

- Health informatics
- Forensic science

Scope of INF281

We mainly cover the following fields of bioinformatics in this course.

- Pairwise alignment
- Database search
- Statistical evaluation
- Multiple alignment
- Phylogenetic tree
- Scoring scheme
- Sequence patterns

Popular bioinformatics programs

BLAST and ClustalW are popular tools for sequence analysis.

- BLAST: a program for database search
URL: <http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
- ClustalW: a program for multiple alignments
URL: <http://www.ch.embnet.org/software/ClustalW.html>

Rank	Title	Times cited
1	Protein measurement with the folin phenol reagent	305148
2	Cleavage of structural proteins during the assembly of the head of bacteriophage T4	213005
3	A rapid and sensitive method for the quantitation of microgram quantities of protein utilizing the principle of protein-dye binding	155530
4	DNA sequencing with chain-terminating inhibitors	65335
5	Single-step method of RNA isolation by acid guanidinium thiocyanate-phenol-chloroform extraction	60397
6	Electrophoretic transfer of proteins from polyacrylamide gels to nitrocellulose sheets: procedure and some applications	53349
7	Development of the Colle-Salvetti correlation-energy formula into a functional of the electron density	46702
8	Density-functional thermochemistry. III. The role of exact exchange	46145
9	A simple method for the isolation and purification of total lipides from animal tissues	45131
10	Clustal W: improving the sensitivity of progressive multiple sequence alignment through sequence weighting, position-specific gap penalties and weight matrix choice	40289
11	Nonparametric estimation from incomplete observations	38600
12	Basic local alignment search tool	38380
13	A short history of SHELX	37978
14	Gapped BLAST and PSI-BLAST: A new generation of protein database search programs	36410
15	A revised medium for rapid growth and bio assays with tobacco tissue cultures	36132

Table 1.1: The 15 most cited papers of all time
(The top 100 papers, Van Noorden, Maher, and Nuzzo, *Nature*, 2014)

Part II

2 Global pairwise alignment

2.1 Pairwise alignment

A pairwise alignment is a basic sequence structure that consists of two sequences. A global alignment stretches to the whole part of two sequences, whereas a local alignment usually contains only part of the sequences.

Components of pairwise alignment

We name two sequences as database or d and query or q through this course. They may represent sequences from two different species or organisms.

Identical sequences.

q: ACGT
d: ACGT

One mismatch.

q: ACGT
d: ACGA

The '-' symbol represents a blank. A single or a set of multiple blanks further represents a gap, which is an indication of insertion or deletion in the course of evolution between two organisms.

q: ACGT
d: A-GT

N.B. A gap cannot be aligned with another gap.

Example of a simple scoring scheme

- Match: 1
- Mismatch: 0
- Gap penalty: 1 (use -1 for the actual calculation)

We may use the following notation.

- $R_{ab} = 1$ for $a = b$
- $R_{ab} = 0$ for $a \neq b$
- $g = 1$

Exercise 2.1

Use the simple scoring scheme above and calculate the scores of the following two alignments.

Alignment 1

q: GCA-GCA
d: GA-TG-A

Alignment 2

q: GCA-GCA
d: G-ATG-A

2.2 Alignment by brute-force

A brute-force approach finds the alignment with the highest score by simply considering all possible alignments and calculates the score for each of them.

An example of brute-force approach

We find the optimal alignment for the following sequences by using the scoring scheme below.

Sequences:

q: AG, d: ACG

Scoring scheme:

$R_{ab} = 1$ for $a = b$
 $R_{ab} = 0$ for $a \neq b$
 $g = 1$

1. The length of alignment

- Maximum length: $\text{length}(q) + \text{length}(d)$
- Minimum length: $\max(\text{length}(q), \text{length}(d))$

2. All possible alignments when length = 5

---AG	A---G	A--G-	AG---	--A-G
ACG--	-ACG-	-AC-G	--ACG	AC-G-
--AG-	-AG--	-A--G	-A-G-	A-G--
AC--G	A--CG	A-CG-	A-C-G	-A-CG

3. All possible alignments when length = 4

A--G	A-G-	AG--	A--G	-A-G	-AG-
ACG-	AC-G	A-CG	-ACG	ACG-	AC-G
-AG-	A-G-	--AG	--AG	-A-G	AG--
A-CG	-ACG	ACG-	AC-G	A-CG	-ACG

4. All possible alignments when length = 3

-AG	A-G	AG-
ACG	ACG	ACG

5. Alignment with the best score

ACG
A-G

Score: 1

Search space size of the brute-force approach

The search space size is the number of all possible alignments. It is 25 ($10 + 12 + 3$) for the example above.

Rapid growth of search space size

Example 1

q: ACGACG, d: AGAG

Search space size: 1289

Example 2

q: ACGACGACGACG, d: AGAGAGAG

Search space size: 4,673,345

Exercise 2.2

Find the alignment with the best score for the sequences. Use the simple scoring scheme below.

Sequences:

q: A, d: AC

Scoring scheme:

$$R_{ab} = 1 \text{ for } a = b$$

$$R_{ab} = 0 \text{ for } a \neq b$$

$$g = 1$$

1. What are the maximum and minimum lengths of the alignment?
2. Identify all possible alignments.
3. What is the best score?
4. What is the search space size when the brute-force approach is used?

2.3 Table representation of alignment

Several data structures can be used to represent an alignment. The table representation is frequently used and also makes the process clear when we combine it with dynamic programming (DP) later.

Data structures and algorithms

It is important to consider the following aspects before solving computational problems.

1. Identify and analyze the problem you want to solve
2. Pick up an algorithm that can efficiently solve the problem
3. Decide a data structure that works with the algorithm of your choice

We use a table format (2D array) to solve global alignments by dynamic programming.

Example of table format

Alignment:

q: -AG-
d: A-CG

1. Initial setup

1. Make a table with the size of $(1 + \text{length}(q))$ by $(1 + \text{length}(d))$
2. Add the database sequence as column labels
3. Add the query sequence as row labels

q/d		A	C	G
A	S			
G				E

2. Add arrows

We use three types of arrows to form an alignment.

- Move diagonally: add the letters from q and d to the alignment
- Move vertically: add - and the letter from d to the alignment
- Move horizontally: add the letter from q and - to the alignment

It should start from S and stop at E.

q/d		A	C	G
A	S →			
		↓	↘	→ E
G				

Exercise 2.3

Find the corresponding alignments for Table 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1

q/d		A	C	G
A	S ↘			
		↖	→ E	
G				

Table 2

q/d		A	C	G
A	S →	→	→	↓
				↓
G				

Table 3

q/d		A	C	G
A	S ↓			
		→	→	→ E
G				

2.4 Global alignment with DP

Dynamic programming (DP) provides a solution for a multi-stage decision process, in which larger decisions recursively nest smaller decisions.

Memorize the best score in a table cell

For global alignment, the core procedure of DP is updating a cell with the highest score from the three different scores calculated from its adjacent cells. DP ends when the entire table is updated.

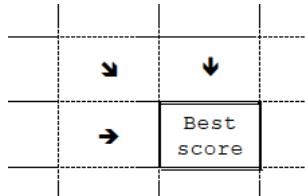
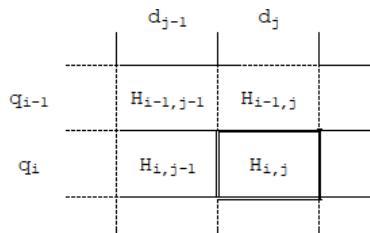


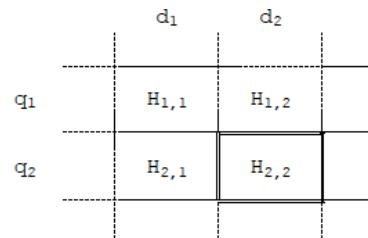
Table notation and indices

$H_{i,j}$ represents the score of the cell for the current update. $H_{i-1,j}$, $H_{i,j-1}$, and $H_{i-1,j-1}$ are the scores of the adjacent cells.

Cell $H_{i,j}$ and its adjacent cells



Example



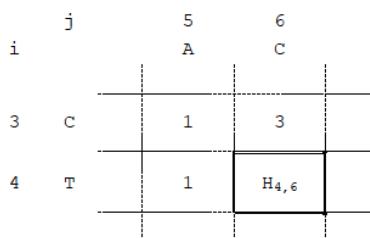
Calculation of three candidate scores

$H_{i,j}^{(0)}$, $H_{i,j}^{(1)}$, and $H_{i,j}^{(2)}$ represent the three candidate scores of $H_{i,j}$. They are respectively calculated as:

$$\begin{aligned} H_{i,j}^{(0)} &= H_{i-1,j} - g && \text{(vertical)} \\ H_{i,j}^{(1)} &= H_{i,j-1} - g && \text{(horizontal)} \\ H_{i,j}^{(2)} &= H_{i-1,j-1} + R_{a,b} && \text{(diagonal)} \end{aligned}$$

Exercise 2.4

Calculate the scores of $H_{4,6}^{(0)}$, $H_{4,6}^{(1)}$, and $H_{4,6}^{(2)}$ first and then update $H_{4,6}$.



Scoring scheme:

$$R_{ab} = 1 \text{ for } a = b$$

$$R_{ab} = 0 \text{ for } a \neq b$$

$$g = 1$$

Initialization

The first row and the first column can be calculated independently from the adjacent cells.

$$H_{0,j} : j * -1 * g$$

$$H_{i,0} : i * -1 * g$$

Example

		j	0	1	2
		i	A	C	
		0	0	-1	-2
0	G	-1			
1	T	-2			

Exercise 2.5

Update all cells of Table 1 and 2. Use the scoring scheme in Exercise 2.4.

Table 1

		A	C
G			

Table 2

		A
G		
T		

Sub-solutions

In DP, larger decisions recursively nest smaller decisions. For instance, Table S is included in Table L.

Table S

		A
A	H _{0,0}	H _{0,1}
	H _{1,0}	H _{1,1}

Table L

		A	G
A	H _{0,0}	H _{0,1}	H _{0,2}
	H _{1,0}	H _{1,1}	H _{1,2}
C	H _{2,0}	H _{2,1}	H _{2,2}

Pseudo-code of updating DP table for global alignment

Algorithm 2.1: Update dynamic programming table for global alignment

$H_{i,j}$: Dynamic programming table
 $R_{a,b}$: Match/mismatch scores
 g : Gap penalty

```
// Initialization
for i ← 0 to m do
    |  $H_{i,0} \leftarrow i * -1 * g;$ 
end
for j ← 1 to n do
    |  $H_{0,j} \leftarrow j * -1 * g;$ 
end

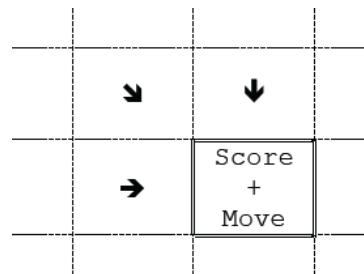
// Main loop for table update
for i ← 1 to m do
    for j ← 1 to n do
        |  $H_{i,j} \leftarrow \max(H_{i-1,j} - g, H_{i,j-1} - g, H_{i-1,j-1} + R_{a,b});$ 
    end
end
```

2.5 Backtracking

Backtracking is a post-processing procedure to find the alignments that have yielded the best score.

Store movement in cells

A table cell can be used for storing the movement.

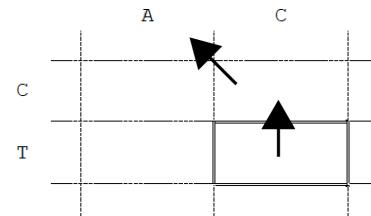


Example

Cells with scores and directions

	A	C
C	Score:1 Move:V	Score:3 Move:D
T	Score:0 Move:V	Score:2 Move:V

Use arrows to indicate backtracking



Exercise 2.6

Complete the DP table with scores and directions. What is the alignment with the best score?

	A	C
A		

Scoring scheme:

$$R_{ab} = 1 \text{ for } a = b$$

$$R_{ab} = 0 \text{ for } a \neq b$$

$$g = 1$$

Re-calculate candidate scores

Re-calculating the three candidate scores also reveals the movement.

$$H_{i,j}^{(0)} = H_{i-1,j} - g \quad (\text{vertical})$$

$$H_{i,j}^{(1)} = H_{i,j-1} - g \quad (\text{horizontal})$$

$$H_{i,j}^{(2)} = H_{i-1,j-1} + R_{a,b} \quad (\text{diagonal})$$

Example

	A	C
C	1	3
T	1	2

$$H_{i,j}^{(0)} = 3 - 1 = 2 = H_{i,j} \quad \checkmark \text{ (vertical)}$$

$$H_{i,j}^{(1)} = 1 - 1 = 0 \neq H_{i,j} \quad \text{(horizontal)}$$

$$H_{i,j}^{(2)} = 1 + 0 = 1 \neq H_{i,j} \quad \text{(diagonal)}$$

Common mistake with backtracking

For the re-calculation approach, it is not to find $\max(H_{i-1,j}, H_{i,j-1}, H_{i-1,j-1})$. You must re-calculate the candidates and then $\max(H_{i,j}^{(0)}, H_{i,j}^{(1)}, H_{i,j}^{(2)})$ to find the actual direction.

Implementation with recursive call

Recursive calls are usually used to implement DP backtracking.

Algorithm 2.2: DP backtracking

S_q : Sequence q
 S_d : Sequence d
 $H_{i,j}$: Dynamic programming table
 $R_{a,b}$: Match/mismatch scores
 g : Gap penalty

```

proc backTrack(i, j,  $A_q$ ,  $A_d$ , k)
  i : Index of sequence q
  j : Index of sequence d
   $A_q$  : q part of alignment (stored in reverse order)
   $A_d$  : d part of alignment (stored in reverse order)
  k : Index for  $A_q$  and  $A_d$ 

  //
  // Need to implement recursion termination here
  // ...
  //

  if  $H_{i,j} = H_{i-1,j} - g$  then                                // vertical
     $A_{q,k} \leftarrow S_{q,i};$ 
     $A_{d,k} \leftarrow '-';$ 
    backTrack(i - 1, j,  $A_q$ ,  $A_d$ , k + 1);
  end

  if  $H_{i,j} = H_{i,j-1} - g$  then                                // horizontal
     $A_{q,k} \leftarrow '-';$ 
     $A_{d,k} \leftarrow S_{d,i};$ 
    backTrack(i, j - 1,  $A_q$ ,  $A_d$ , k + 1);
  end

  if  $H_{i,j} = H_{i-1,j-1} + R_{S_{q,i},S_{d,i}}$  then          // diagonal
     $A_{q,k} \leftarrow S_{q,i};$ 
     $A_{d,k} \leftarrow S_{d,i};$ 
    backTrack(i - 1, j - 1,  $A_q$ ,  $A_d$ , k + 1);
  end
end
    
```

Exercise 2.7

Find the alignment with the best score.

	A	C
G		
T		

Scoring scheme:

$$\begin{aligned}
 R_{ab} &= 1 \text{ for } a = b \\
 R_{ab} &= 0 \text{ for } a \neq b \\
 g &= 1
 \end{aligned}$$

2.6 Needleman-Wunsch algorithm

The method of using DP to solve global pairwise alignment is called the Needleman-Wunsch algorithm in the field of bioinformatics.

Complexity

- Time: $O(nm)$
- Space: $O(nm)$

Comparisons with other algorithms

The Needleman-Wunsch algorithm is similar to several algorithms.

Divide and conquer algorithms

Sub-solutions must be independent with divide and conquer.

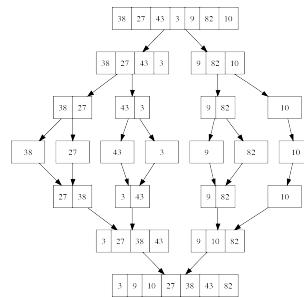


Figure 2.1: Merge sort (source: VineetKumar, Wikimedia Commons)

Dijkstra's algorithm

Worst-case performance of Dijkstra: $O(|E| + |V| \log |V|)$

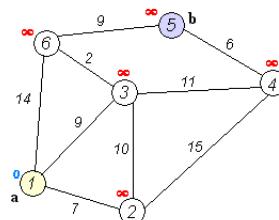


Figure 2.2: Dijkstra's algorithm (source: Ibmua, Wikimedia Commons)

3 Extension of global alignment

3.1 Homology at the sequence level

Constructing alignments can be useful to understand homology among different species. Finding homologies is important to reveal a common evolutionary ancestor.

Evolution and homology

All species are derived from a common ancestor at some point during the course of evolution.

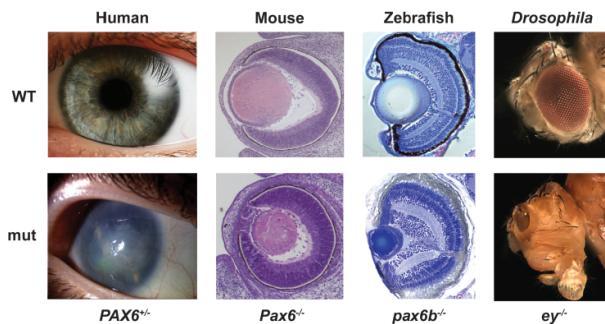


Figure 3.1: PAX6 alterations result in similar changes to eye morphology
(source: Washington et al, doi: 10.1371/journal.pbio.1000247 via Wikimedia Commons)

Homologous and analogous

It is useful to check similarity at the molecular level because there are cases that analogous structures may not indicate homologous.



Figure 3.2: Homologous and analogous structures
(source: John Romanes, 1892, Darwin and after Darwin via Wikimedia Commons)

Sequence homology

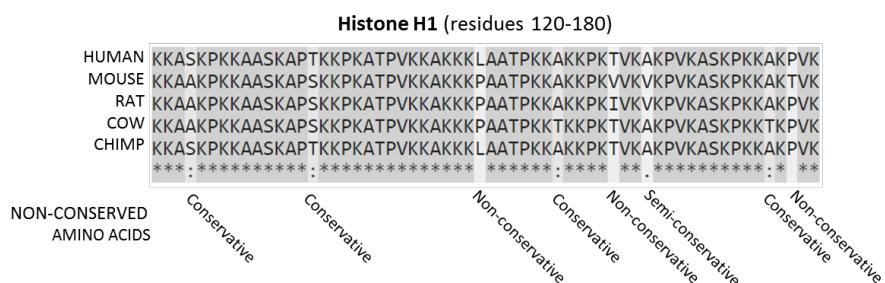


Figure 3.3: Multiple sequence alignment of histone sequences
(source: Shafee, Wikimedia Commons)

Evolution at the sequence level

Sequence differences in DNA

- Substitution (a mismatch in alignment)
- Insertion (a gap in alignment)
- Deletion (a gap in alignment)
- Inversion

Sources of variations

- Mutation
- Recombination
- Insertional mutagenesis
- ...

A mutation of the third nucleotide in a codon often does not affect which amino acid is synthesized.

- GCU → Ala (Alanine)
- GCC → Ala (Alanine)
- GCA → Ala (Alanine)
- GCG → Ala (Alanine)

An amino acid can be replaced by a different amino acid that has similar properties in some cases.

- AUU, AUC, AUA → Ile (Isoleucine)
- CUU, CUC, CUA → Leu (Leucine)

Extension of global alignment with DP

- Score matrix
DNA, RNA, and protein
- Gap penalty
Linear, affine, and constant

3.2 Introduction of score matrix

We will expand our simple scoring scheme to score matrices. This expansion allows us to solve general alignment problems with DNA, RNA, and protein sequences.

Extension of a scoring scheme to a score matrix

The matrix below is equivalent with match: 1 and mismatch: 0.

	a	b
a	1	0
b	0	1

Example of a DNA score matrix

The matrix below is equivalent with match: 5 and mismatch: -4.

	A	T	G	C
A	5	-4	-4	-4
T		5	-4	-4
G			5	-4
C				5

Applications of score matrix

Score matrices are more flexible than the simple scoring scheme. For instance, they can be used for the following cases.

- DNA pairs
- RNA pairs
- Similarity of protein sequences by amino acid properties

DNA pairs (Watson-Crick pairs)

A thymine pairs with an adenine, and a cytosine pairs with a guanine.

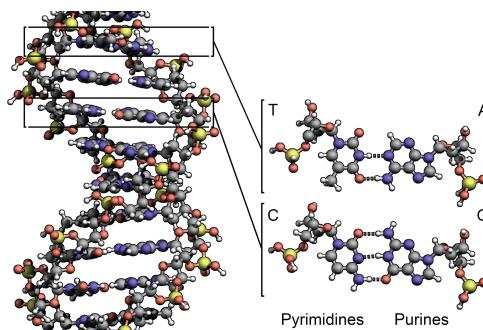


Figure 3.4: Watson-Crick pairs (source: Zephyris, Wikimedia Commons)

Example of score matrix for DNA pairs

The matrix reflects the differences of hydrogen bonds.

	A	T	G	C
A	-3	4	-3	-3
T		-3	-3	-3
G			-3	5
C				-3

Example of DP for DNA pairs

You can use DP to find a DNA alignment with Watson-Crick pairs. For instance, the DP table below is used to solve the optimal alignment for two DNA sequences: $q = AC$ and $d = GT$ with gap penalty $g = 4$.

DP table:

q/d		G	T
		0	-4
A	-4	-3	0
	-8	1	-3

Alignment:

q: AC-
d: -GT

RNA pairs

A single stand of RNA can form a 3D structure that has a biological function. The secondary structure of RNA is a two-dimensional representation of the structure.

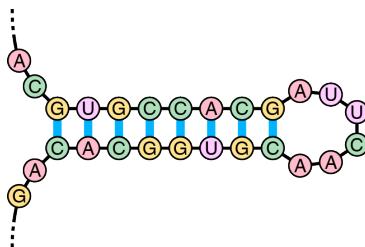


Figure 3.5: RNA stem-loop (source: Sakurambo, Wikimedia Commons)

Wobble pairs

Wobble pairs are not canonical Watson-Crick pairs, but they can still form hydrogen bonds.

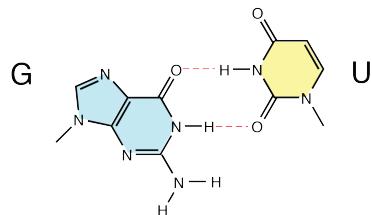


Figure 3.6: GU wobble pairs

(modified from the original version by Fdardel, Wikimedia Commons)

Example of score matrix for RNA pairs

The matrix takes GU wobbles into consideration.

	A	U	G	C
A	-3	5	-3	-3
U		-3	2	-3
G			-3	5
C				-3

Example of DP for RNA pairs

You can form the following DP table for two RNA sequences: q = AU and d = UGA with gap penalty g = 9.

DP table:

q/d	U	G	A
0	-9	-18	-27
A	-9	5	-4
U	-18	-4	7

Alignment:

q: A-U
d: UGA

Similarity of protein sequences

Amino acids can be categorized into several groups by their properties. Proteins alignments often need to take these properties into consideration.

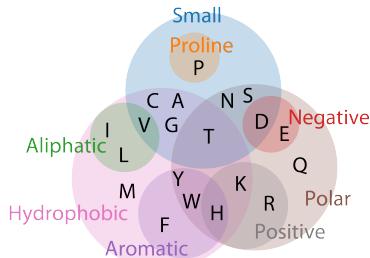


Figure 3.7: Venn diagram of amino acid properties

Example of a protein score matrix

It can be used to compare the similarity between two protein sequences.

	A	R	N	D	C	Q	E	G	H	I	L	K	M	F	P	S	T	W	Y	V
A	13	6	9	9	5	8	9	12	6	8	6	7	7	4	11	11	11	2	4	9
R	3	17	4	3	2	5	3	2	6	3	2	9	4	1	4	4	3	7	2	2
N	4	4	6	7	2	5	6	4	6	3	2	5	3	2	4	5	4	2	3	3
D	5	4	8	11	1	7	10	5	6	3	2	5	3	1	4	5	5	1	2	3
C	2	1	1	1	52	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	4	2
Q	3	5	5	6	1	10	7	3	7	2	3	5	3	1	4	3	3	1	2	3
E	5	4	7	11	1	9	12	5	6	3	2	5	3	1	4	5	5	1	2	3
G	12	5	10	10	4	7	9	27	5	5	4	6	5	3	8	11	9	2	3	7
H	2	5	5	4	2	7	4	2	15	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	2
I	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	10	6	2	6	5	2	3	4	1	3	9
L	6	4	4	3	2	6	4	3	5	15	34	4	20	13	5	4	6	6	7	13
K	6	18	10	8	2	10	8	5	8	5	4	24	9	2	6	8	8	4	3	5
M	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	6	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	
F	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	6	1	4	32	1	2	2	4	20	3
P	7	5	5	4	3	5	4	5	5	3	3	4	3	2	20	6	5	1	2	4
S	9	6	8	7	7	6	7	9	6	5	4	7	5	3	9	10	9	4	4	6
T	8	5	6	6	4	5	5	6	4	6	4	6	5	3	6	8	11	2	3	6
W	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	55	1	0
Y	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	2	15	1	2	2	3	31	2
V	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	15	10	4	10	5	5	5	72	4	17	

Table 3.1: Mutation probability matrix for the evolutionary distance of 250 PAMs (in percentage) (Chapter 22: A model of evolutionary change in proteins, Dayhoff and Schwartz, Atlas of Protein Sequence and Structure, 1978)

Exercise 3.1

1. Use the DNA score matrix below with $g = 10$ and find the optimal alignment for $q = \text{TG}$ and $d = \text{TCG}$.

	A	T	G	C
A	5	-4	-4	-4
T		5	-4	-4
G			5	-4
C				5

2. The 250 PAM mutation matrix above can not directly be used for global alignments. Explain what kind of matrix you need for calculating alignment scores.

3.3 Extension of gap penalties

Types of gap penalties

Three types of gap penalties can be considered when creating an alignment. They treat a gap penalty differently depending on the gap length.

- Linear
- Affine
- Constant

Gap penalty notation

- g : single gap penalty
- l : length of a gap
- g_l : gap penalty of length l
- g_{open} : initial gap penalty
- g_{extend} : extended gap penalty

Linear gap penalty

It is the same as our simple scoring scheme. It treats a gap with multiple blanks as a result of several mutations. A gap of length l can be calculated as: $g_l = g * l$.

Example of a gap of length 2

q: ACCCGT
d: AC--GT

The score of the gap (only the gap part) is 10 when $g = 5$.

Affine gap penalty

It treats a gap with multiple blanks as a result of a single mutation. A gap with length l can be calculated as: $g_l = g_{open} + (l1) * g_{extend}$.

Example of a gap of length 2

q: ACCCGT
d: AC--GT

The score of the gap (only the gap part) is 5.5 when g_{open} and g_{extend} are 5 and 0.5 respectively.

Constant gap penalty

It is similar to the affine gap penalty, but the score is independent from the gap length. A gap with length l can be calculated as: $g_l = g$

Example of a gap of length 2

q: ACCCGT
d: AC--GT

The score of the gap (only the gap part) for the alignment above is 5 when $g = 5$.

Exercise 3.2

Calculate all three types of gap penalties for the gap in alignment 1 & 2.

- $g: 5$
- $g_{open}: 5$
- $g_{extend}: 0.5$

Alignment 1

q: CCCGG
d: CC-CG

Alignment 2

q: CCCGG
d: C---G

3.4 Affine gap penalties with a single DP table

DP for general gap penalty

We need to modify DP so that extra cells are checked to find the optimal score of a cell.

Cell update rule of general gap penalty

$$H_{i,j} = \max \left[H_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j}, \max_{1 \leq l \leq j} (H_{i,j-l} - g_l), \max_{1 \leq l \leq i} (H_{i-l,j} - g_l) \right]$$

Example of cell update

Sequences:

$q: AG$, $d: ACG$

Scoring scheme:

$$\begin{aligned}g_{open} &= 1 \\g_{extend} &= 0.1 \\R_{ab} &= 1 \text{ for } a = b \\R_{ab} &= 0 \text{ for } a \neq b\end{aligned}$$

Update $H_{2,1}$

		A	C	T	T	
		0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
A	0	-1	1			
	-1	1				
T	-1.1	0				

- vertical: $\max(1 - 1, -1 - 1 - 0.1) = 0$
- horizontal: $-1.1 - 1 = -2.1$
- diagonal: $-1 - 0 = -1$

Update $H_{1,2}$

		A	C	T	T	
		0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
A	0	-1	1	0		
	-1	1	0			
T	-1.1	0				

- vertical: $-1.1 - 1 = -2.1$
- horizontal: $\max(1 - 1, -1 - 1 - 0.1) = 0$
- diagonal: $-1 - 0 = -1$

Update $H_{1,3}$

		A	C	T	T	
		0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
A	0	-1	1	0	-0.1	
	-1	1	0	-0.1		
T	-1.1	0	1			

- vertical: $-1.2 - 1 = -2.2$
- horizontal: $\max(0 - 1, 1 - 1 - 0.1, -1 - 1 - 0.1 - 0.1) = -0.1$
- diagonal: $-1.1 - 0 = -1.1$

Exercise 3.3

Complete the DP table below.

Sequences:

$q: AT, d: ACTT$

Scoring scheme:

$$\begin{aligned} g_{open} &= 1 \\ g_{extend} &= 0.1 \\ R_{ab} &= 1 \text{ for } a = b \\ R_{ab} &= 0 \text{ for } a \neq b \end{aligned}$$

		A	C	T	T	
		0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
		-1	1	0	-0.1	
A	T	-1.1	0	1		

3.5 Affine gap penalties with three DP tables

DP can effectively solve affine gap penalties with three tables.

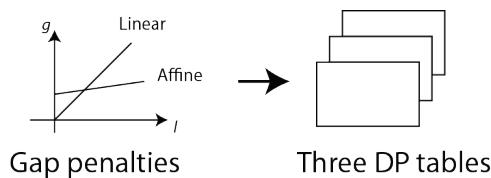


Figure 3.8: Affine gap penalties and three tables

Three DP tables

We need to modify DP so that extra cells are checked to find the optimal score of a cell.

- $E_{i,j}$: alignment ending with a gap extend (vertical)
- $F_{i,j}$: alignment ending with a gap extend (horizontal)
- $G_{i,j}$: alignment ending with a match/mismatch (diagonal)

Cell update rule of the three tables

$$\begin{aligned} E_{i,j} &= \max(E_{i-1,j} - g_{extend}, F_{i-1,j} - g_{open}, G_{i-1,j} - g_{open}) \\ F_{i,j} &= \max(E_{i,j-1} - g_{open}, F_{i,j-1} - g_{extend}, G_{i,j-1} - g_{open}) \\ G_{i,j} &= \max(E_{i-1,j-1} + R_{qid_j}, F_{i-1,j-1} + R_{qid_j}, G_{i-1,j-1} + R_{qid_j}) \end{aligned}$$

You can calculate H only in the last cell.

$$H_{m,n} = \max(E_{m,n}, F_{m,n}, G_{m,n})$$

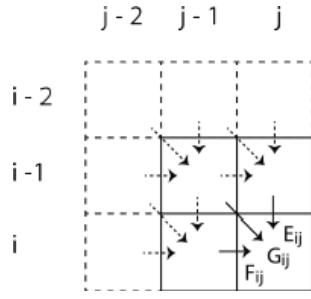


Figure 3.9: Update a cell with E, F, and G

Recurrence rules when $i = 0$ and $j = 0$

	$i > 1, j > 1$	$i = 1$	$j = 1$
$E_{i,j}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{extend}} \\ F_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{open}} \\ G_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{open}} \end{cases}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{open}} \\ F_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{open}} \\ G_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{open}} \end{cases}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{extend}} \\ F_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{open}} \\ G_{i-1,j} - g_{\text{open}} \end{cases}$
$F_{i,j}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{open}} \\ F_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{extend}} \\ G_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{open}} \end{cases}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{open}} \\ F_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{extend}} \\ G_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{open}} \end{cases}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{open}} \\ F_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{extend}} \\ G_{i,j-1} - g_{\text{open}} \end{cases}$
$G_{i,j}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \\ F_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \\ G_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \end{cases}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \\ F_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \\ G_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \end{cases}$	$\max \begin{cases} E_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \\ F_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \\ G_{i-1,j-1} + R_{q_i d_j} \end{cases}$

Example of updating DP tables with affine gaps

Sequences:

q: AT, d: ACTT

Scoring scheme:

$$g_{\text{open}} = 1$$

$$g_{\text{extend}} = 0.1$$

$$R_{ab} = 1 \text{ for } a = b$$

$$R_{ab} = 0 \text{ for } a \neq b$$

Initialization

		E				F				
		A	C	T	T	A	C	T	T	
		0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2
A	A	-1					-1			
T	T	-1.1					-1.1			

		G				
		A	C	T	T	
		0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
A	A	-1				
T	T	-1.1				

Update the first row

E						F					
	A	C	T	T		A	C	T	T		
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3	
A	-1	-2	-2.1	-2.2	-2.3	-1	-2	0	-0.1	-0.2	
T	-1.1					-1.1					

G					
	A	C	T	T	
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
A	-1	1	-1	-1.1	-1.2
T	-1.1	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2

Update the second row

E						F					
	A	C	T	T		A	C	T	T		
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3	
A	-1	-2	-2.1	-2.2	-2.3	-1	-2	0	-0.1	-0.2	
T	-1.1	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.1	-2.1	-1	0	0	

G						H					
	A	C	T	T		A	C	T	T		
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3						
A	-1	1	-1	-1.1	-1.2						
T	-1.1	-1	1	1	0.9						

Update H

A						C					
	A	C	T	T		A	C	T	T		
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3	
A	-1	-2	-2.1	-2.2	-2.3	-1	-2	0	-0.1	-0.2	
T	-1.1	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.1	-2.1	-1	0	0	

A						C					
	A	C	T	T		A	C	T	T		
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3						
A	-1	1	-1	-1.1	-1.2						
T	-1.1	-1	1	1	0.9						

Backtrack

	A	C	T	T	
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
	-1	-2	-2.1	-2.2	-2.3
T	-1.1	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2

	A	C	T	T	
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
	-1	-2	0	-0.1	-0.2
T	-1.1	-2.1	-1	0	0

	A	C	T	T	
A	0	-1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
	-1	1	-1	-1.1	-1.2
T	-1.1	-1	1	1	0.9

	A	C	T	T	
A					
T					0.9

Optimal alignment

q: A--T Score: 0.9
d: ACTT

Constant gap penalty

DP with constant gap penalty can be solved in the same way as the affine gap penalty.

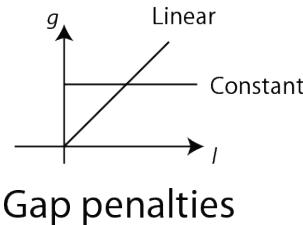


Figure 3.10: Constant gap penalty

3.6 Sequence distance

Distances can be also used to indicate the similarity of an alignment.

Edit distance

The Levenshtein distance is one of the most commonly used edit distances in computer science.

Insertion :	$AC \rightarrow AGC$	$(\varepsilon \rightarrow G)$
Deletion :	$ATC \rightarrow AC$	$(T \rightarrow \varepsilon)$
Substitution :	$AAA \rightarrow ATA$	$(A \rightarrow T)$

Scoring scheme for Levenshtein distance

- $R_{ab} = 0$ for $a = b$
- $R_{ab} = -1$ for $a \neq b$
- $g = 1$

Distance from DP score

Given the best score T from DP, the edit distance d is $-T$.

Example of edit distance with DP

	A	T	C
A	0	-1	-2
C	-1	0	-1
	-2	-1	-1

$T = -1$
 $d = 1$

Metric space

The edit distance constitutes a metric space.

- $d_{xy} = 0$ for $x = y$
- $d_{xy} > 0$ for $x \neq y$
- $d_{xy} = d_{yx}$
- $d_{xy} \leq d_{xz} + d_{zy}$ for any z (the triangle inequality)

Mutation and distance

Mutations may occur several times on the same position.

Example of single mutations

$ACGT \rightarrow AGT \rightarrow ACT \rightarrow AGT \rightarrow AGCT$

Four mutations have occurred, but the edit distance is 2.

Distance per column

It indicates the number of mutations per column (nucleotide/amino acid).

$$D = d / (\text{length of the longest sequence})$$

Correction of distance

The distance can be adjusted. Below is a simple correction approach for protein sequences.

$$K = -\ln(1 - D - 1/5D^2)$$

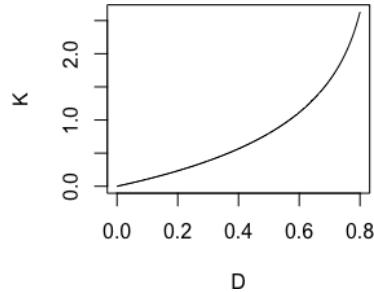


Figure 3.11: Correction of distance D

Example of distance correction

$$D = 0.5$$

$$K = -\ln(1 - 0.5 - 1/5 \times 0.25) = -\ln(0.45) \approx 0.8$$

4 Local alignment

4.1 Local alignments

Local pairwise alignments are aligned pairs of sub-sequences that have certain level of similarities.

Difference between global and local alignments

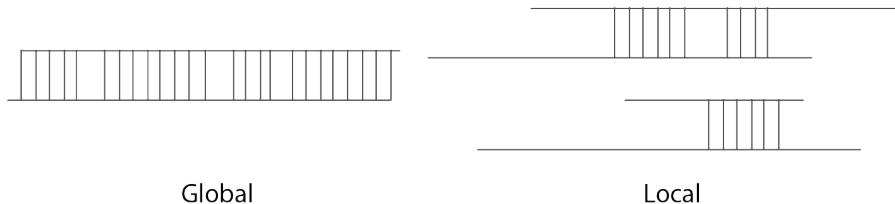


Figure 4.1: Global and local alignments

Elements of local alignment

- Segment: a substring of a sequence
- Segment pair: a pair of segments
- Local alignment: an alignment of a segment pair

Elements of local alignment

- Dynamic programming (Smith–Waterman)
- Dot matrix

Applications

- Sequence motifs
- Conserved regions
- Inverted repeats

4.2 Local alignment with DP

Dynamic programming can be used to find local alignments.

Requirements

- Find all local alignments between two sequences
- Assign scores to all local alignments

Modification of DP for local alignments

- The minimum alignment score must be 0
- Some entries of the score matrix should be negative
- Backtracking also needs to be modified

Update rule of DP cells

$$\begin{aligned}
 H_{i,j}^{(0)} &= H_{i-1,j} - g && (\text{vertical}) \\
 H_{i,j}^{(1)} &= H_{i,j-1} - g && (\text{horizontal}) \\
 H_{i,j}^{(2)} &= H_{i-1,j-1} + R_{a,b} && (\text{diagonal}) \\
 H_{i,j}^{(2)} &= 0 && (\text{minimum score})
 \end{aligned}$$

Example of cell update

	A	C	
C	0.1	0.4	
T	0.2	0	

Scoring scheme:
Match: 0.5
Mismatch: -0.3
Gap penalty: 0.5

$$\begin{aligned}
 H_{i,j}^{(0)} &= -0.1 && (\text{vertical}) \\
 H_{i,j}^{(1)} &= -0.3 && (\text{horizontal}) \\
 H_{i,j}^{(2)} &= -0.2 && (\text{diagonal}) \\
 H_{i,j}^{(2)} &= 0 && \checkmark (\text{minimum score})
 \end{aligned}$$

Backtracking for local alignments

It starts from the cells with the maximum score instead of the right bottom cell.

- Start cells: cells with the maximum score
- End cells: cells with 0

N.B. the end cell with score 0 should not be included in the alignment.

Example of backtracking

	A	C	G	C
C	0	0	0	0
G	0	0	0.5	0
A	0	0.5	0	0.5
			1	0.5
				0.7

Local alignment
q: 2 CG 3
d: 2 CG 3

Pseudo-code of updating DP table for local alignment

The cells in the first row and the first column are initialized with 0.

Algorithm 4.1: Update dynamic programming table for global alignment

$H_{i,j}$: Dynamic programming table
 $R_{a,b}$: Match/mismatch scores
 g : Gap penalty

```
// Initialization
for i ← 0 to m do
    |  $H_{i,0} \leftarrow 0$ ;
end
for j ← 1 to n do
    |  $H_{0,j} \leftarrow 0$ ;
end

// Main loop for table update
for i ← 1 to m do
    for j ← 1 to n do
        |  $H_{i,j} \leftarrow \max(0, H_{i-1,j} - g, H_{i,j-1} - g, H_{i-1,j-1} + R_{a,b})$ ;
    end
end
```

Exercise 4.1

Use DP to find a local alignment.

q/d	A	G	C	C
A				
G				
C				

Scoring scheme:
Match: 0.2
Mismatch: -0.2
Gap penalty: 0.2

4.3 Dot matrix

Using a dot matrix is an effective and easy way to find local similarities.

Basic concept

It uses an $m \times n$ binary matrix from two sequences.

- A dot: match
- Empty: mismatch

Example of dot matrix

q: ACATTAG, d: CATTAGG

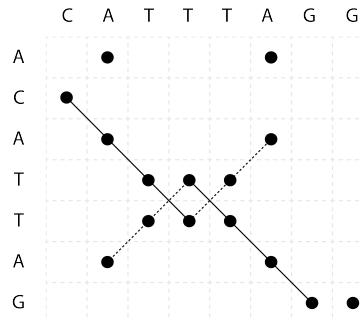


Figure 4.2: Dot matrix of 7×8

It is easy to find segment pairs with a dot matrix. Contiguous dots along diagonals indicate local alignments. It is also easy to find other similarities. For instance, contiguous dots along anti-diagonals indicate reversed substrings.

Filtering of dot matrix

Dot matrices usually get noisy with too many dots. Overlapping windows are usually applied to reduce the noise.

Example of filtering

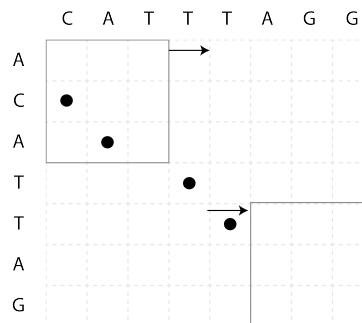


Figure 4.3: Filtered dot matrix with window size 3 and threshold 3.

Exercise 4.2

Find local similarities between two DNA sequences, q: GATTACA and d: GGATTTAC.

1. Create a dot matrix for the two sequences.
2. Filter dots with overlapping windows size 3 and threshold 3.

5 Database search

5.1 Biological databases

Biological databases contain biological information, mainly collected from molecular biology experiments, life science literature, and bioinformatics analyses.

Categories of databases

Annual Nucleic Acids Research database issue includes the following database categories.

- Nucleotide Sequence Databases
- RNA sequence databases
- Protein sequence databases
- Structure Databases
- Proteomics Resources
- Human and other Vertebrate Genomes
- Genomics Databases (non-vertebrate)
- Plant databases
- Human Genes and Diseases
- Metabolic and Signaling Pathways
- Immunological databases
- Microarray Data and other Gene Expression Databases
- Cell biology
- Organelle databases
- Other Molecular Biology Databases

GenBank

- A comprehensive database of publicly available nucleotide sequences
- Produced and maintained by NCBI (National Center for Biotechnology Information, URL: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>)

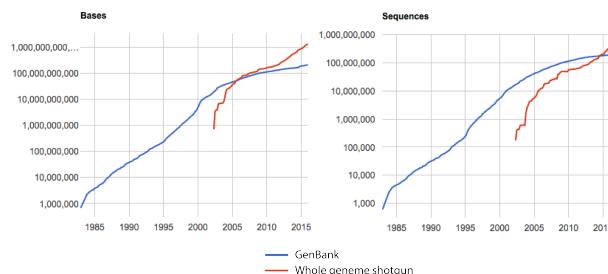


Figure 5.1: Growth of GenBank and WGS (source: NCBI)

UniProt

- A central repository of protein data from Swiss-Prot, TrEMBL, and PIR-PSD databases
- Maintained by the UniProt consortium

Sequence data

- Identifier
- Sequence

Data format of sequence data

FASTA is the most popular format for sequence data.

```
>gi|31563518|ref|NP_852610.1| microtubule-associated proteins 1A/1B light chain 3A isoform b
MKMRRFSSPCGKAAVDPADRCKEVQQIRDQHPSKIPVIIERYKGEKQLPVLDTKFLVPDHVNMSLVKI
IRRLQLNPTQAFFLLVNQHSMVSVSTPIADIYEQEKGDEDFLYMVYASQETFGFIRENE
```

Annotation data

Sequences databases usually contain annotations in addition to sequences.

- Notes and descriptions of important regions and components
- Meta data

Data format of annotation data

Annotation data can be downloaded in many different formats. GFF is one of the popular file formats for storing genomic features.

```
0 ##gff-version 3.2.1
1 ##sequence-region ctg123 1 1497228
2 ctg123 . gene      1000 9000  . + . ID=gene00001;Name=EDEN
3 ctg123 . TF_binding_site 1000 1012  . + . ID=tfbs00001;Parent=gene00001
4 ctg123 . mRNA     1050 9000  . + . ID=mRNA00001;Parent=gene00001;Name=EDEN.1
5 ctg123 . mRNA     1050 9000  . + . ID=mRNA00002;Parent=gene00001;Name=EDEN.2
6 ctg123 . exon     1050 1500  . + . ID=exon00002;Parent=mRNA00001,mRNA00002
7 ctg123 . CDS      1201 1500  . + 0 ID=cds00001;Parent=mRNA00001;Name=edenprotein.1
```

Tools

Many database tools are available for various purposes.

Search tools for sequence databases

- BLAST at NCBI (<http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>)
- BLAT/BLAST at Ensembl (<http://www.ensembl.org/Multi/Tools/Blast>)

Data browsing tools of annotation and sequence data

- UCSC Genome Browser (<https://genome.ucsc.edu>)
- Ensemble Genome Browser (<http://www.ensembl.org>)

Data download tools for annotation and sequence data

- UCSC Table Browser (<http://genome.ucsc.edu/cgi-bin/hgTables>)
- Ensemble BioMart (<http://www.ensembl.org/biomart>)

Tools for protein data

- UniProt (<https://www.uniprot.org>)

5.2 Search in sequence databases

Since biological databases contain a large number of sequences, heuristics search methods are usually applied to database search.

Aims of searching in sequence databases

- Find homologies
- Find segments with important functionality

Main procedures of sequence search

- Perform local pairwise alignments
- Evaluate the alignments statistically

Estimated computational time for dynamic programming (DP)

Table 5.1: Estimated computational time of DP for the three cases 1ms, 10ms, and 1sec

Time of one alignment	Database size		
	1000	1,000,000	1,000,000,000
1 ms	1 sec	16 min	2.6 h
10 ms	10 sec	2.6 h	11 days
1 sec	16 min	11 days	31 years

Heuristic approach

- Need to search billions of entries
- Tradeoff between accuracy/precision and speed
- Use n-gram based search
- BLAST (Basic Local Alignment Search Tool)
- BLAT (BLAST-like alignment tool)

5.3 BLAST

BLAST (Basic Local Alignment Search Tool) is the most popular tool to find homologous sequences in large-scale sequence databases.

Methods

- Generate n-grams from query sequence
- Find n-gram hits in database
- Expand n-gram hits to HSP
- Increase HSP scores
- Introducing gaps
- Give the expect values (E-values) to HSPs

N-gram hits to HSP

- Connect multiple n-gram hits
- Increase HSP score

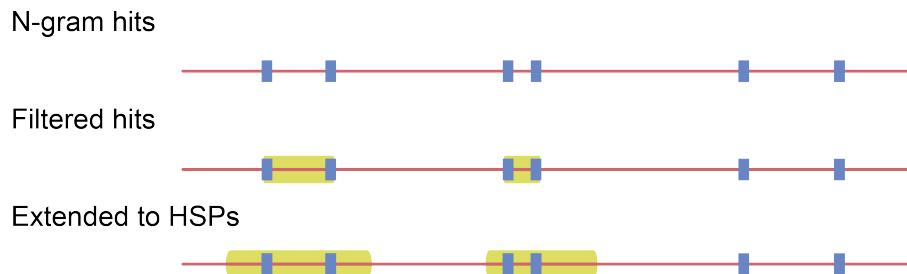


Figure 5.2: N-gram hits to HSPs

Increase HSP score

BLAST changes the length of HSP by shortening or extending in order to increase the score.

Example

Query sequence: R P P Q G L F
Database sequence: D P P E G V V
Score: -2 7 7 2 6 1 -1
Optimal accumulated score = 7+7+2+6+1 = 23

↳ Exact match is scanned.
↳ HSP

Figure 5.3: HSP extension process (source: DISP, Wikimedia Commons)

Introducing gaps

Banded dynamic programming is used to introduce gaps to an HSP.

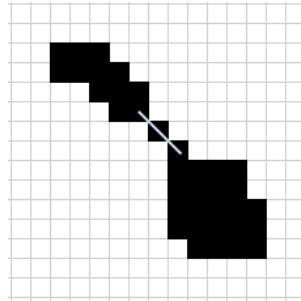


Figure 5.4: Banded DP with the starting seed pair

E-value

“The Expect value (E) is a parameter that describes the number of hits one can expect to see by chance when searching a database of a particular size”

– BLAST Frequently Asked questions (<http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>)

5.4 N-gram based search

Using n-grams is a useful method to find segment pairs.

Equivalent or related concepts to n-gram

- q-gram
- n-letter word
- n-tuple
- n-mer

Create n-grams

Decomposing a given sequence into n-letter words creates a list of n-grams.

Example

q: ACGATT

Word size: 2
AC, CG, GA, AT, TT

Word size: 3
ACG, CGA, GAT, ATT

Find segment pairs in database sequences

N-grams can be used to find segment pairs.

Example

q: ACGATT

2-gram: AC, CG, GA, AT, TT

d1: CTAAG

0 hits

d2: CGTAT

2 hits

d3: ATAGA

2 hits

5.5 Lookup table of matching n-grams

A lookup table can be used for effectively finding n-gram matches.

Terminology

- Indices: positions in q
- Matching n-grams: Possible matching n-grams by threshold score T

Example of creating a lookup table

q: ACGTAC

2-gram: AC, CG, GT, TA, AC

T: 3

Score matrix:

	A	T	G	C
A	2	-2	1	-2
T		2	-2	1
G			2	-2
C				2

Step 1. Index of q

Add indices to all n-grams.

Index	N-gram
1	AC
2	CG
3	GT
4	TA
5	AC

Step 2. Scores of segment pairs and matching n-grams

Calculate scores between the first n-gram AC and all its matching n-grams.

N-gram	Matching n-gram	Score
AC	AA	$2 + (-2) = 0$
AC	AC	$2 + 2 = 4$
AC	AG	$2 + (-2) = 0$
AC	AT	$2 + 1 = 3$
AC	CA	$(-2) + (-2) = -4$
AC	CC	$(-2) + 2 = 0$
AC	CG	$(-2) + (-2) = -4$
AC	CT	$(-2) + 1 = -1$
AC	GA	$1 + (-2) = -1$
AC	GC	$1 + 2 = 3$
AC	GG	$1 + (-2) = -1$
AC	GT	$1 + 1 = 2$
AC	TA	$(-2) + (-2) = -4$
AC	TC	$(-2) + 2 = 0$
AC	TG	$(-2) + (-2) = -4$
AC	TT	$(-2) + 1 = -1$

Use threshold $T = 3$.

N-gram	Matching n-grams	Scores
AC	AC, AT, GC	4, 3, 3

Repeat the same procedure for all n-grams of q and add their indices.

Index	N-gram	Matching n-grams	Scores
1	AC	AC, AT, GC	4, 3, 3
2	CG	CG, TG, CA	4, 3, 3
3	GT	GT, AT, GC	4, 3, 3
4	TA	TA, CA, TG	4, 3, 3
5	AC	AC, GC, AT	4, 3, 3

Step 3. Lookup table of matching n-grams

Transform the table above to create a lookup table of matching n-grams.

Matching n-gram	Indices of q	Scores of segment pairs
AC	1, 5	4, 4
GC	1, 3, 5	3, 3, 3
AT	1, 3, 5	3, 3, 3
CG	2	4
TG	2, 4	3, 3
CA	2, 4	3, 3
GT	3	4
TA	4	4

Step 4. Search

d1: AAAGTG

```
2 hits
GT index: 3, score: 4
TG index: (2, 4), score: (3, 3)
```

Exercise 5.1

Create a lookup table of 2-grams with the indices of q and the scores of segment pairs. Use the threshold T and pre-calculated scores of 2-gram segment pairs.

q: CATG
T: 3

The table below shows pre-calculated scores of 2-gram segment pairs.

Matching n-gram	N-gram		
	CA	AT	TG
AA	0	0	-1
AC	-4	3	-4
AG	-1	0	0
AT	-4	4	-4
CA	4	-4	2
CC	0	-1	-1
CG	3	-4	3
CT	0	0	-1
GA	0	-1	-1
GC	-4	2	-4
GG	-1	-1	0
GT	4	3	-4
TA	3	-4	3
TC	-1	-1	0
TG	2	-4	4
TT	-1	0	0

5.6 Finite-state machine with n-grams

Finite-state machine enables efficient database search by expanding the basic n-gram based search.

Number of potential matching n-grams

The number of potential n-grams increases by the alphabet size and the word size.

DNA

$$C = \{A, C, G, T\}$$

$$\text{Word size } 2 \rightarrow 4^2 = 16$$

Word size 3 $\rightarrow 4^3 = 64$

Word size 12 $\rightarrow 4^{12} = 16,777,216$

Protein

C = {A, R, N, D, C, Q, E, G, H, I, L, M, F, P, S, T, W, Y, V}

Word size 2 $\rightarrow 20^2 = 400$

Word size 3 $\rightarrow 20^3 = 8000$

Finite-state machine

A finite-state machine can be used to scan database sequences instead of using a lookup table. Finite-state machines are usually faster than lookup tables.

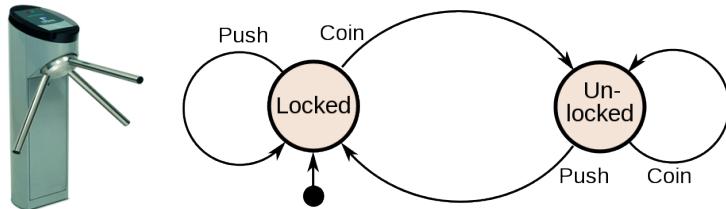


Figure 5.5: Finite-state machine for coin-operated turnstile
(sources: Chetvorno and Sebasgui via Wikimedia Commons)

Example of creating a finite-state machine

q: ACGTAC, Word size: 2, T: 3

Lookup table

Matching n-gram	Indices of q	Scores of segment pairs
AC	1, 5	4, 4
GC	1, 3, 5	3, 3, 3
AT	1, 3, 5	3, 3, 3
CG	2	4
TG	2, 4	3, 3
CA	2, 4	3, 3
GT	3	4
TA	4	4

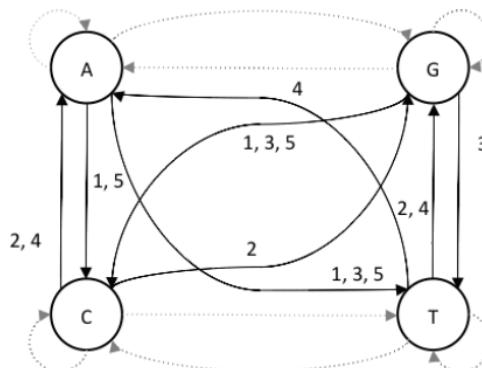


Figure 5.6: Finite-state machine to output the indices of 2-grams

d1: AAAGTG

```
2 hits
GT index: 3
TG index: (2, 4)
```

Exercise 5.2

Create a finite-state machine and use it to find a segment pair.

1. Create a finite-state machine for the lookup table for q: ACGTAC. Add both indices and scores to the edges.

Lookup table

Matching n-gram	Indices of q	Scores of segment pairs
AC	1, 5	2, 2
CG	2	4
GT	3	2
TA	4	0

2. Use the finite-state machine and find a segment pair between q and d: AAAGTG.

6 Evaluation of alignment scores

6.1 Statistical analysis

Statistical tests are performed to give an explanation to observed alignment scores.

Hypothesis testing

- Alternative hypothesis
- Null hypothesis

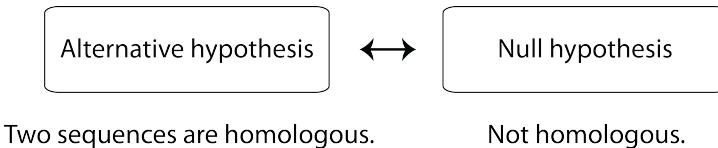


Figure 6.1: The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis

P-value

“The p-value is defined as the probability of obtaining a result equal to or more extreme than what was actually observed, assuming that the null hypothesis is true.”

– the p-value page on Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-value>)

Significance level (α)

The significance level should be chosen to indicate strong/weak evidence against the null hypothesis.

Significance levels 0.05 and 0.01 are often used in life sciences.

- Statistically significant: $\alpha = 0.05$
- Statistically highly significant: $\alpha = 0.01$

Common misunderstandings of p-value

“The p-value is not the probability that the null hypothesis is true or the probability that the alternative hypothesis is false.”

– the p-value page on Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-value>)

Underlying (background) score distributions

Table 6.1: Alignment methods and distributions

Method	Underlying distribution
Global alignment	Unknown
Local alignment (ungapped)	Gumbel

6.2 Evaluation of global alignment

The underlying distribution of global alignment scores is unknown.

Random generation of sequences

One needs to consider using the appropriate length and compositions of amino acids or nucleotides needs when creating randomised sequences.

Example

Input sequences

q: ACGT
d: AGTACC

Frequencies: $f_A = 0.2$, $f_C = 0.4$, $f_G = 0.1$, $f_T = 0.3$

Length: 6

d1: CCAGTC
d2: TCACCG
d3: CTTGAA
...
...

Frequency distributions

- Universal (e.g. the whole protein database)
- Global (e.g. protein super families)
- Local (e.g. query and database sequences)

Additional constraints

Constraints on sequences generation are often considered.

- Di-amino acid frequencies
- Sub-region specific frequencies

Non-parametric test and p-value

The simplest non-parametric test is calculating the rank of the score for the original alignment as the p-value.

$$p = (b + 1)/(n + 1)$$

where b is the number of randomly generated scores above the score of the original alignment, and n is the sample size.

N.B. n should be sufficiently large (e.g. >1000) to estimate an accurate p-value.

Example

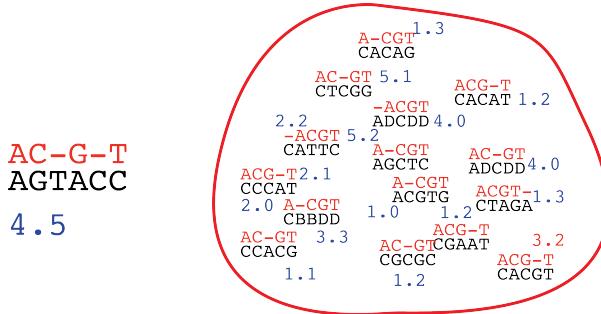


Figure 6.2: Randomly generated sequences and alignment scores

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.8	3	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.6	4.2	4.4	4.7	5.2

$$\text{p-value: } (2 + 1)/(20 + 1) = 0.1429$$

- Significance level $\alpha = 0.2$: reject the null hypothesis
- Significance level $\alpha = 0.05$: the null hypothesis is not rejected

Exercise 6.1

1. Calculate the frequencies of nucleotides from the four sequences below.

d1: CCAGC

d2: TCACG

d3: CTTAA

d4: AACAA

Frequencies: $\{f_A = \quad, f_C = \quad, f_G = \quad, f_T = \quad\}$

2. Calculate the p-value of the alignment below.

q: AACG

d: A-CG

Score: 40

Assume that the scores are pre-calculated for the alignments of the query sequence and nine randomly generated sequences as follows. Use them for the p-value calculation.

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Score	4	14	33	45	74	76	82	83	94

Using the normal distribution

The underlying distribution of global alignment scores is unknown, but the z-score is sometimes calculated.

The z-score is:

$$z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$

where:

μ is the mean of the population.

σ is the standard deviation of the population.

Mean and variance

The sample mean (\bar{x}) and the sample variance (s^2) are calculated as follows.

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i$$

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{n - 1}}$$

Example of z-score

- \bar{x} : 2.78
- s : 1.4964

$$z = \frac{4.5 - 2.78}{1.4964} = 1.1494$$

The p-value is 0.125196.

6.3 Evaluation of local alignment

The underlying distribution of local alignment scores is an extreme value distribution.

Gumbel distribution

The Gumbel distribution is a member of the extreme value distribution family.

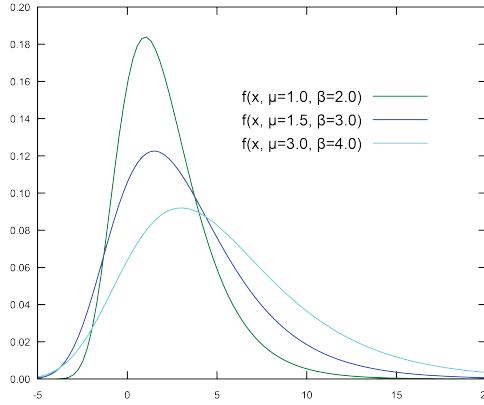


Figure 6.3: Gumbel distribution (source: Herr blaschke, Wikimedia Commons)

The cumulative distribution function (CDF) of the Gumbel distribution:

$$F_Y(y) = \exp[-e^{-\lambda(y-\mu)}]$$

Parameters

- μ : the modal value of the distribution, characteristic value
- λ : a measure of the variance, decay constant

Extreme value distribution

An extreme value distribution is a limiting distribution for the minimum or the maximum of a sufficiently large sample. Ungapped alignments with large sequence lengths are known to have this type of distribution.

Example (m and n are not large in this example)

	A	C	G	C	A	C	G
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.5
G	0	0	0	1	0.5	0.2	0
A	0	0.5	0	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.5

CG	CG	GC	AC
CG	CG	GA	...	CG	...
1	1	0.2		-0.6	

Parameter estimation

The p-value of the Gumbel distribution can be calculated as:

$$P[Y > y] = 1 - F_Y(y) = 1 - \exp[-e^{-\lambda(y-\mu)}]$$

The parameters μ and λ can be estimated from the arithmetic mean m_Y and the variance σ_Y^2 of the observed sample.

$$\lambda \approx 1.282/\sigma_Y$$

$$\mu \approx m_Y - 0.577/\lambda$$

Example of parameter estimation

Below is the optimal local alignment with the score between q:ACAGACTACTA and d:TCAGACTGGAACCE.

```
CAGACT
CAGACT
Score: 6
```

The mean and the variance of the alignment scores are estimated as follows from randomly generated sequences.

$$m_Y: 1.7221$$

$$\sigma_Y: 1.6025$$

Then, λ and μ are estimated from m_Y and σ_Y .

$$\lambda \approx 1.282/1.6025 = 0.8$$

$$\mu \approx 1.7221 - 0.577/0.8 \approx 1$$

The p-value is approximately 0.0181 when $\lambda = 0.8$ and $\mu = 1$. The test result is statistically significant ($\alpha = 0.05$), and therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion: The query and the database sequences are homologous (p-value: 0.0181).

6.4 Evaluation of database search

BLAST reports bit scores and e-values as search result. Bit score are calculated from raw scores, and e-values represent the expected numbers of database hits.

Example of BLAST output

- q: HSBGPG Human gene for bone gla protein (BGP)
- d: osteocalcin [Felis catus]
- Sequence ID: XP_003999760.1

	Score	Expect	Identities	Positives	Gaps
	38.5 bits (88)	3.5	19/25 (76%)	20/25 (80%)	0/25 (0%)
Query	677	TAFVSKQEGSEVVKRPRRYLYQWLG AFVSKQEGSEVV+R RRYL LG		751	
Sbjct	36	AAFVSKQEGSEVVRLRRYLAPGLG		60	

Karlin-Altschul statistics

- λ is a scalar parameter for score matrix
- K is a scalar parameter for search space size

BLAST pre-calculates both parameters in a search space independent manner.

Example of Karlin-Altschul statistics

- Matrix: BLOSUM62
- Lambda: 0.267
- K: 0.041

Sequence databases

The NCBI site provides several databases for BLAST search.

- Nucleotide collection (nr/nt)
- Non-redundant protein sequences (nr)

Example of database statistics

- Database: nr
- Number of letters: 41,667,927,126
- Number of sequences: 113,671,629

6.5 Bit score and e-value

BLAST reports bit-scores and e-values that can be used for evaluation on search results.

Bit score

Bit scores are normalized scores that have the same unit (bit). The scores can be comparable even when different scoring schemes are used.

$$S' = \frac{(\lambda S - \ln K)}{\ln 2}$$

$2^{S'}$ is the estimated number of alignments, and at least one alignment among them is estimated to have score S.

Example of bit score calculation

- Lambda (λ): 0.267
- K: 0.041
- Score: 88

$$S' = \frac{(\lambda S - \ln K)}{\ln 2} = \frac{(0.267 * 88 - \ln 0.041)}{\ln 2} = 38.506$$

$$2^{S'} = 2^{38.506} = 390,300,663,957$$

E-value

“The Expect value (E) is a parameter that describes the number of hits one can expect to see by chance when searching a database of a particular size”

- BLAST Frequently Asked questions (<http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>)

$$E(S) = Kmne^{-S} = \frac{mn}{2^{S'}}$$

Example of E-value calculation

- n: 25
- m: 41,667,927,126
- Lambda (λ): 0.267
- K: 0.041
- Score: 88

$$E(88) = Kmne^{-\lambda S} = \frac{41,667,927,126 \times 25}{2^{S'}} = 2.669$$

Exercise 6.2

- λ : 1.28
- K: 0.5
- m: 1000
- n: 100

Calculate $\exp(-1.28)$ as 0.28.

1. What is the e-value of the score 1?
2. Is the alignment with score 1 likely homologous?