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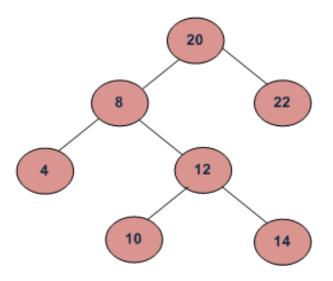
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Find k-th smallest element in BST (Order Statistics in BST)

Given root of binary search tree and K as input, find K-th smallest element in BST.

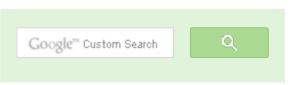
For example, in the following BST, if k = 3, then output should be 10, and if k = 5, then output should be 14.



Method 1: Using Inorder Traversal.

Inorder traversal of BST retrieves elements of tree in the sorted order. The inorder traversal uses stack to store to be explored nodes of tree (threaded tree avoids stack and recursion for traversal, see this post). The idea is to keep track of popped elements which participate in the order statics. Hypothetical algorithm is provided below,

Time complexity: O(n) where n is total nodes in tree..





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Algorithm:

```
/* initialization */
pCrawl = root
set initial stack element as NULL (sentinal)

/* traverse upto left extreme */
while(pCrawl is valid )
    stack.push(pCrawl)
    pCrawl = pCrawl.left

/* process other nodes */
while( pCrawl = stack.pop() is valid )
    stop if sufficient number of elements are popped.
    if( pCrawl.right is valid )
        pCrawl = pCrawl.right
        while( pCrawl is valid )
        stack.push(pCrawl)
        pCrawl = pCrawl.left
```

Implementation:

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>

#define ARRAY_SIZE(arr) sizeof(arr)/sizeof(arr[0])

/* just add elements to test */
/* NOTE: A sorted array results in skewed tree */
int ele[] = { 20, 8, 22, 4, 12, 10, 14 };

/* same alias */
typedef struct node_t node_t;

/* Binary tree node */
struct node_t
{
   int data;
   node t* left;
```

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Lowest Common Ancestor in a BST.

Check if a binary tree is BST or not

Sorted Linked List to Balanced BST

```
node t* right;
};
/* simple stack that stores node addresses */
typedef struct stack t stack t;
/* initial element always NULL, uses as sentinal */
struct stack t
    node t* base[ARRAY SIZE(ele) + 1];
             stackIndex;
    int
};
/* pop operation of stack */
node t *pop(stack t *st)
    node t *ret = NULL;
    if( st && st->stackIndex > 0 )
        ret = st->base[st->stackIndex];
        st->stackIndex--;
    return ret;
/* push operation of stack */
void push(stack t *st, node t *node)
    if( st )
        st->stackIndex++;
        st->base[st->stackIndex] = node;
/* Iterative insertion
   Recursion is least preferred unless we gain something
node t *insert node(node t *root, node t* node)
    /* A crawling pointer */
    node t *pTraverse = root;
    node t *currentParent = root;
    // Traverse till appropriate node
```



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```
while (pTraverse)
        currentParent = pTraverse;
        if( node->data < pTraverse->data )
            /* left subtree */
            pTraverse = pTraverse->left;
        else
            /* right subtree */
            pTraverse = pTraverse->right;
    /* If the tree is empty, make it as root node */
    if(!root)
        root = node;
    else if( node->data < currentParent->data )
        /* Insert on left side */
        currentParent->left = node;
    else
        /* Insert on right side */
        currentParent->right = node;
    return root;
/* Elements are in an array. The function builds binary tree */
node t* binary search tree(node t *root, int keys[], int const size)
    int iterator;
    node t *new node = NULL;
    for(iterator = 0; iterator < size; iterator++)</pre>
        new node = (node t *)malloc( sizeof(node t) );
        /* initialize */
        new node->data
                         = keys[iterator];
```





Recent Comments

affiszerv Your example has two 4s on row 3, that's why it...

Backtracking | Set 7 (Sudoku) · 43 minutes ago

RVM Can someone please elaborate this Qs from above...

Flipkart Interview | Set 6 · 1 hour ago

Vishal Gupta I talked about as an Interviewer in general,...

Software Engineering Lab, Samsung Interview | Set

2 1 hour ago

@meya Working solution for question 2 of 4f2f round....

Amazon Interview | Set 53 (For SDE-1) · 1 hour ago sandeep void rearrange(struct node *head)

{...

Given a linked list, reverse alternate nodes and append at the end · 3 hours ago

Neha I think that is what it should return as, in...

Find depth of the deepest odd level leaf node · 3 hours ago

AdChoices [>

- ► Element XML
- ► Element Java
- ▶ Data Element

AdChoices D

```
new node->left = NULL;
        new node->right = NULL;
        /* insert into BST */
        root = insert node(root, new node);
    return root;
node t *k smallest element inorder(stack t *stack, node t *root, int k
    stack t *st = stack;
    node t *pCrawl = root;
    /* move to left extremen (minimum) */
    while( pCrawl )
        push(st, pCrawl);
        pCrawl = pCrawl->left;
    /* pop off stack and process each node */
    while( pCrawl = pop(st) )
        /* each pop operation emits one element
           in the order
        * /
        if (!--k)
            /* loop testing */
            st->stackIndex = 0;
            break;
        /* there is right subtree */
        if( pCrawl->right )
            /* push the left subtree of right subtree */
            pCrawl = pCrawl->right;
            while( pCrawl )
                push(st, pCrawl);
                pCrawl = pCrawl->left;
            /* pop off stack and repeat */
```

Administra (5

- ▶ Data Element
- ► C Element
- ▶ Element Seven

AdChoices [>

- ▶ Binary Tree
- ➤ XML Tree Viewer
- ► Root Tree

```
/* node having k-th element or NULL node */
    return pCrawl;
/* Driver program to test above functions */
int main(void)
    node t* root = NULL;
    stack t stack = \{ \{0\}, 0 \};
    node t *kNode = NULL;
    int k = 5;
    /* Creating the tree given in the above diagram */
    root = binary search tree(root, ele, ARRAY SIZE(ele));
    kNode = k smallest element inorder(&stack, root, k);
    if ( kNode )
        printf("kth smallest elment for k = %d is %d", k, kNode->data)
    else
        printf("There is no such element");
    getchar();
    return 0;
```

Method 2: Augmented Tree Data Structure.

The idea is to maintain rank of each node. We can keep track of elements in a subtree of any node while building the tree. Since we need K-th smallest element, we can maintain number of elements of left subtree in every node.

Assume that the root is having N nodes in its left subtree. If K = N + 1, root is K-th node. If K < N, we will continue our search (recursion) for the Kth smallest element in the left subtree of root. If K > N + 1, we continue our search in the right subtree for the (K - N - 1)-th smallest element. Note that we need the count of elements in left subtree only.

Time complexity: O(n) where n is total nodes in tree.

Algorithm:

```
start:
if K = root.leftElement + 1
   root node is the K th node.
   goto stop
else if K > root.leftElements
   K = K - (root.leftElements + 1)
   root = root.right
   goto start
else
   root = root.left
   goto srart
stop:
```

Implementation:

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#define ARRAY SIZE(arr) sizeof(arr)/sizeof(arr[0])
typedef struct node t node t;
/* Binary tree node */
struct node t
    int data;
    int lCount;
    node t* left;
    node t* right;
};
/* Iterative insertion
   Recursion is least preferred unless we gain something
node t *insert node(node t *root, node t* node)
```

```
/* A crawling pointer */
    node t *pTraverse = root;
    node t *currentParent = root;
    // Traverse till appropriate node
    while (pTraverse)
        currentParent = pTraverse;
        if( node->data < pTraverse->data )
            /* We are branching to left subtree
               increment node count */
            pTraverse->lCount++;
            /* left subtree */
            pTraverse = pTraverse->left;
        else
            /* right subtree */
            pTraverse = pTraverse->right;
    /* If the tree is empty, make it as root node */
    if(!root)
        root = node;
    else if( node->data < currentParent->data )
        /* Insert on left side */
        currentParent->left = node;
    else
        /* Insert on right side */
        currentParent->right = node;
    return root;
/* Elements are in an array. The function builds binary tree */
node t* binary search tree(node t *root, int keys[], int const size)
    int iterator;
```

```
node t *new node = NULL;
    for(iterator = 0; iterator < size; iterator++)</pre>
        new node = (node t *)malloc( sizeof(node t) );
        /* initialize */
        new node->data
                         = keys[iterator];
        new node->1Count = 0;
        new node->left
                         = NULL;
        new node->right = NULL;
        /* insert into BST */
        root = insert_node(root, new_node);
    return root;
int k smallest element(node t *root, int k)
    int ret = -1;
    if( root )
        /* A crawling pointer */
        node t *pTraverse = root;
        /* Go to k-th smallest */
        while (pTraverse)
            if((pTraverse->lCount + 1) == k)
                ret = pTraverse->data;
                break;
            else if( k > pTraverse->lCount )
                /* There are less nodes on left subtree
                    Go to right subtree */
                k = k - (pTraverse -> lCount + 1);
                pTraverse = pTraverse->right;
            else
                /* The node is on left subtree */
                pTraverse = pTraverse->left;
```

```
return ret;
/* Driver program to test above functions */
int main(void)
    /* just add elements to test */
    /* NOTE: A sorted array results in skewed tree */
    int ele[] = { 20, 8, 22, 4, 12, 10, 14 };
    int i;
    node t* root = NULL;
    /* Creating the tree given in the above diagram */
    root = binary search tree(root, ele, ARRAY SIZE(ele));
    /* It should print the sorted array */
    for(i = 1; i <= ARRAY SIZE(ele); i++)</pre>
        printf("\n kth smallest elment for k = %d is %d",
                 i, k smallest element(root, i));
    getchar();
    return 0;
```

Thanks to Venki for providing post. Please write comments if you find anything incorrect, or you want to share more information about the topic discussed above.



Related Tpoics:

- Print a Binary Tree in Vertical Order | Set 2 (Hashmap based Method)
- Print Right View of a Binary Tree
- Red-Black Tree | Set 3 (Delete)
- Construct a tree from Inorder and Level order traversals
- Print all nodes at distance k from a given node
- Print a Binary Tree in Vertical Order | Set 1
- Interval Tree
- Check if a given Binary Tree is height balanced like a Red-Black Tree



Writing code in comment? Please use ideone.com and share the link here.

79 Comments GeeksforGeeks

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AlienOnEarth • 4 days ago

Recursive Method in Java (Inorder Traversal):

private static int kthSmallest(BTNode root, int k) {

// base case

if(root == null)

return -1;

// simple inorder traversal

int left = kthSmallest(root.left, k);

count++;

if(count == k)

return root.data;

int right = kthSmallest(root.right, k);

if(left != -1)

return left;

else

return right;



opcoder • a month ago

```
THE DISTRICT OF THE TRIBUTE OFFICIAL DE
node * kth_smallest(node *root, int &k );
So according to this we should return node pointer of that node
my implementation:
node *kth_smallest(node *root, int &k)
if (!root)
return NULL;
node *left = kth_smallest(root->left, k);
if (!left){
if (--k == 0)
return root;
else
return left;
node *right = kth_smallest(root->right, k);
return right;
anon • 2 months ago
int getKthSmallest(struct Node *root, int *count)
if (root == NULL) return 0;
getKthSmallest (root->left, count);
(*count)++;
if (k == *count)
```

```
printf("\n %d Smalllest ellement %d", k, root->data);
getKthSmallest(root->right, count);
Mohaan • 2 months ago
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#define ARRAY_SIZE(arr) sizeof(arr)/sizeof(arr[0])
typedef struct node_t node_t;
static bool kthSmallestFound;
static int count = 0;
/* Binary tree node */
struct node_t
int data;
int ICount;
node_t* left;
node_t* right;
```

```
Nachiket • 2 months ago
public class TreeAllApplication {
public int printKthOrder(Tree root, int k, int temp) {
if (root == null)
return temp>0?temp:0;
temp = printKthOrder(root.getLeft(), k, temp);
temp++;
if (k == temp) {
System.out.println(root.getData());
return temp;
temp = printKthOrder(root.aetRiaht(), k. temp):
                                                     see more
pulikesi · 4 months ago
inorder(root,k)
static int count=0;
if(root==NULL)
return;
inorder(2*root+1,k);
```

```
if(count==k)
print root->data
inorder(2*root+2,k);
```



groomnestle • 5 months ago

You can init an array starting at index[1] and traverse the tree in-order and pus done, you can find kth smallest element at array[k].



Anon • 5 months ago

Why can't we straightaway do an inorder traversal, w/o recursion, using a stace And keep on traversing till we find the number, as soon as found, break the wh



Gaurav Ambast • 6 months ago

#include<stdio.h> #include<stdlib.h>

/* A binary tree tNode has data, pointer to left child and a pointer to right child */ struct node int data; struct node* left; struct node* right; **}**; int getnumber(struct node* root) if(root == NULL)

```
return 0;
return (getnumber(root->left) + getnumber(root->right) + 1);
}
see more

Reply • Share >
```



its_dark • 7 months ago

We can follow this approach also:

Keep a static variable and once you reach the minimum element, initialize that element, increment that variable and if it equals k, return the element.

see more

```
1 ^ | V • Reply • Share >
```



Raj · 7 months ago

```
static int i=0;
if(root == NULL)
return;
order(root->left,k);
j++;
if(i==k)
printf("%d",root->data);
order(root->right,k);
2 ^ Reply • Share >
Sumit Monga • 7 months ago
This solution is based upon traversing in inorder and using static variables to k
order:
#include<stdio.h>
#include<stdlib.h>
struct node
int data;
struct node * left, *right;
};
struct node * newNode(int data)
```



Rohit Rawat • 7 months ago GeeksforGeeks.

this solution works. please review it

```
void inorder(struct bst *p, int *n)
 {
     if(p == NULL)
        return;
     inorder(p->left, n);
     if(*n == 1)
        printf("%d", p->data);
     (*n)--;
     inorder(p->right, n);
```



```
int findk(TNode *root, int k, int *result)
 {
    if (root == NULL)
       return 0;
    /* l is the size of left subtree */
    int l = findk(root->left, k, result);
    if (k == 1+1)
       *result = root->data;
    /* r is size of right subtree */
    int r = findk(root->right, k-l-1, result);
    return 1+r+1;
```



```
JOBBINE JOSEPH • 8 months ago
int KthSmallestElement(struct TreeNode *Node,int k)
while(1)
if(!Node)
return 0;
if(k == Node->rank)
return (Node->data);
else if(k>Node->rank)
```

```
κ = κ - Νοσε->ranκ;
Node = Node->RChild;
}
else
{
Node = Node->LChild;
}
}
```



Prakhar Jain • 9 months ago

I think the augmented tree approach has order O(log n) for a balanced BST. But It is hard to implement a balanced BST with Icount parameter.

```
/* Paste your code here (You may delete these lines if not writing color of the second of the se
```



Soumya • 9 months ago How about this one?

```
int kthSmallestUtil(Tree *tree, int &k,bool &found)
{
    if(!tree)return -1;
    int p = kthSmallestUtil(tree->left,k,found);
    if(!found)
    {
        if(!--k)
        {
            found = true;
            return tree->data;
```

```
return kthSmallestUtil(tree->right, k, found);
     return p;
  }
  int kthSmallest(Tree *tree, int &k)
  {
     bool found = false;
     int p = k;
     return kthSmallestUtil(tree, p, found);
  }
pranjalgupta • 9 months ago
Awesome implementation @ Venki.
Pavan • 9 months ago
   void KthSmallestinBST(struct node* node , int k , int *kthmin)
      static int count =0;
      if (node == NULL)
           return ;
       else
      KthSmallestinBST(node->left,k,kthmin);
```

```
COULLTT,
if(count==k)
*kthmin=node->data;
KthSmallestinBST(node->right, k, kthmin);
return ;
}
```

see more

```
Pavan • 9 months ago
   int _KthSmallestinBST(struct node* node , int k , int *count)
       if (node == NULL)
            return 0;
        else
       int 1, m=0, n;
       l=_KthSmallestinBST(node->left,k,count);
       (*count)++;
       if(*count==k)
       m=node->data;
       n=_KthSmallestinBST(node->right, k, count);
       return (1|m|n);
 int KthSmallestinBST(struct node* node , int k)
  {
       int c = 0;
```

```
_KCHOMATTOOCTHDOT(HOUG / K / GO)/
 }
Pavan • 9 months ago
  #include <stdio.h>
 #include <stdlib.h>
 struct node
   int data;
   struct node *left;
   struct node *right;
 };
 struct node* newNode(int data)
  {
      struct node* node = (struct node*)
                                 malloc(sizeof(struct node));
      node->data = data;
      node->left = NULL;
      node->right = NULL;
```

return(node);



Pavan • 9 months ago

```
[sourcecode language="C"]
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
struct node
  int data;
  struct node *left;
  struct node *right;
};
struct node* newNode(int data)
{
     struct node* node = (struct node*)
                                  malloc(sizeof(struct node));
     node->data = data;
```

```
Pavan • 9 months ago
  #include <stdio.h>
 #include <stdlib.h>
 struct node
    int data;
   struct node *left;
   struct node *right;
 };
 struct node* newNode(int data)
  {
```

```
malloc(sizeof(struct node));
node->data = data;
node->left = NULL;
node->right = NULL;

return(node);

see more

**Reply * Share >

kritika * 9 months ago
#include
#include
#include
struct node
```

struct node * left,*right;

static int count=0;

inorder(root->left,k);

printf("%d",root->val); inorder(root->right,k);

void inorder(struct node * root,int k)

int val;

if(root)

count++;
if(count==k)



Ronny • 10 months ago

@GeeksforGeeks the link to the related post is broken.

Kindly update it



GeeksforGeeks → Ronny • 10 months ago

@Ronny: Thanks for pointing this out. The linked forum seems to be lo link.



geekfreak • 10 months ago

Do reverse inorder traversal. If you have passed through k nodes from last the

Himanshu • 10 months ago



```
/* we can use a static variable and use inorder traversal.First we re
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
struct node
    int data;
    struct node* left;
    struct node* right;
};
int count(struct node *root)
    if(root==NULL) return 0;
    else
        return count(root->left)+1+count(root->right);
void inorder(struct node *root, int *k)
```

```
sonali gupta • 10 months ago
simple approach
#include
#include
#include
typedef struct NODE
int info;
struct NODE *left,*right;
```

```
}i i∪u⊏,
node *temp;
node *getnode()
{return((node *)malloc(sizeof(node)));
node *newNode(int x)
temp=getnode();
temp->info=x;
```

```
zyzz • 10 months ago
```



this will take O(logN) on average

```
int size(node *root)
if(root==NULL)
return 0;
else
return (size(root->left)+1+sizeof(root->right));
}
int smallest(int k, node *root)
int count;
count=size(root->left)+1;
if(k==count)
return (root->data);
else if(k<count)</pre>
return smallest(k,root->left);
```

```
return smallest(k-count, root->right);
```



Kunaal • 11 months ago How about this? using a static count variable in inorder traversal O(n) and no extra data structure required.

```
/* Paste your code here (You may delete these lines if not writing co
#include<stdio.h>
#include<stdlib.h>
struct Node
        int val;
        struct Node *left;
        struct Node *right;
};
typedef struct Node node;
node * newnode(int val)
```

see more

```
2 ^ Reply · Share >
```



Jitendra.BITS → Kunaal • 10 months ago

This will have O(n) complexity right?





shek8034 · 11 months ago

An alternative could be:

Do inorder traversal and store the result in an array. Print kth element of array. Space complexity: O(n).



```
Ujjwal • 11 months ago
  Cant this work..??
 -Build a stack by traversing the node in Inorder.
 -Remove (n-k) elements from the stack, where 'n' is the total number (
 -Top of the stack will give you 'kth' minimum..
```



```
root ⋅ a year ago
   int kthsmallest(node *root,int count)
  static int i=0, val=0;
  if(root)
  kthsmallest(root->left,count);
  i++; if(i==count) val=root->data;
  kthsmallest(root->right,count);
  }
  return val;
```

```
∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share >
```



anon_user → root · 11 months ago I did it in similar way

```
int kthSmallest(struct node* node,int k)
     static int count=1;
     int a,c,b;
     if(node==NULL)
         return 0;
     a=kthSmallest(node->left,k);
     if(count==k)
         b= node->data;
     else
         b=0;
     count++;
     c=kthSmallest(node->right,k);
     return (a+b+c);
```



abhishek08aug • a year ago C++ code:

```
#IIICIUUC \IUSLI Calli>
#include <stdlib.h>
using namespace std;
class tree_node {
  private:
    int data;
    tree_node * left;
    tree_node * right;
  public:
    tree_node() {
      left=NULL;
      right=NULL;
    void set_data(int data) {
      this->data=data;
```



abhishek08aug → abhishek08aug ⋅ a year ago My solution is recursive.



aman1234 → abhishek08aug · 11 months ago

dude, have you done whole geeksforgeeks? i am wondering...



naveen.bobbili • a year ago

```
template<class T>
struct result {
  Tree<T>* node;
```

```
int data;
};

template<class T>
struct result<T> kthInorder(Tree<T>* root, int k) {
   if (root == NULL) {
      struct result<T> a;
      a.data = 0;
      a.node = NULL;
      return a;
   }

struct result<T> left = kthInorder(root->lchild(), k);
   if (left.node != NULL)
      return left;
```

```
rohit • a year ago
int ksmall(struct node*root,int *k)
{
  int a;
  if(root==NULL)
  return(0);
  {a=ksmall(root->left,k);
  if(a!=0)
  return(a);
  }
  (*k)--;
  if(!(*k))
  return(root->data);
```

```
a=ksmall(root->right,k);
return(a);
```



```
Nirdesh Mani Sharma. • a year ago
void findK(Node* p, int& k) {.
if(! p \parallel k < 0) return;.
findK(p->left, k);.
--k;.
if(k == 0) \{ print p-> data;.
return;.
findK(p->right, k);.
```

And one more observation:

To find the Nth smallest item, you only need to visit size of the left sub-tree. You tree iif you also wanted to be able to find the Nth largest item.



cyberWolf • a year ago

Kth smallest value in BST using Stack

```
int findKthSmallest(treeNode* x, int k)
       int count = 0;
      stack<treeNode*> s;
       s.push(x);
      while(!s.empty())
```

```
WIITTE ( X - >TELL !- NOLL)
        s.push(x->left);
        x=x->left;
x = s.top();
s.pop();
```



doingit • 2 years ago Isn't it a good solution

```
void Kthsmallest(node* root, int k){
   static int cnt = 0;
   if(root==NULL)
        return;
   Kthsmallest(root->left,k);
   cnt++;
   if(cnt == k)
        cout<<root->key<<" ";
   Kthsmallest(root->right,k);
}
```



ashu ⋅ 2 years ago code

```
void get3(node *root, int* ind, int* val, int k){
         if(root==NULL) return;
         get3(root->left,ind,val,k);
          *ind+=1;
         if(*ind==k) *val=root->data;
         get3(root->right,ind,val,k);
  }
 void kthSmall(node *root){
         int ind=0;
         int val=-1;
         int k=5;
         get3(root,&ind,&val,k);
         cout<<val<<"\n";
 }
Ashu · 2 years ago
   void get3(node *root,int* ind,int* val,int k){
         if(root==NULL) return;
         get3(root->left,ind,val,k);
          *ind+=1;
         if(*ind==k) *val=root->data;
         get3(root->right,ind,val,k);
 void KthNode(node *root){
         int ind=0;
         int val=-1;
         int k=5;
         get3(root,&ind,&val,k);
         cout<<val<<"\n";
```

```
naresh · 2 years ago
Without using any global variable or static variable.
Note: found is used as a indicator.
Using the Inorder tree property.
int kth(struct node *root, int k, int *found){
if(root == NULL)
return k;
k = kth(root->left, k, found);
if(k == 1 \&\& *found == 0){
printf("Kth =%d \n", root->data);
*found = 1;
return root->data;
if(*found == 0){
k--;
k = kth(root->right, k, found);
return k;

✓ • Reply • Share ›
huha • 2 years ago
   struct node *nthorder(struct node* root, int *n)
           struct node* ptr=(struct node*)malloc(sizeof(struct node));
           if(!root) return NULL;
```

```
if(ptr) return ptr;
       if((*n)==1)
       printf("nth is %d", root->data);
       return root;}
       (*n)--;
       ptr=nthorder(root->right,n);
       return ptr;
}
    ReplyShare
    naresh → huha · 2 years ago
    It giving segmentation fault.
```

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