

PROBLEM SOLVING

[BACK](#)

Polya's approach to problem-solving



image source: <http://doi.org/10.3932/ethz-a-000099441>

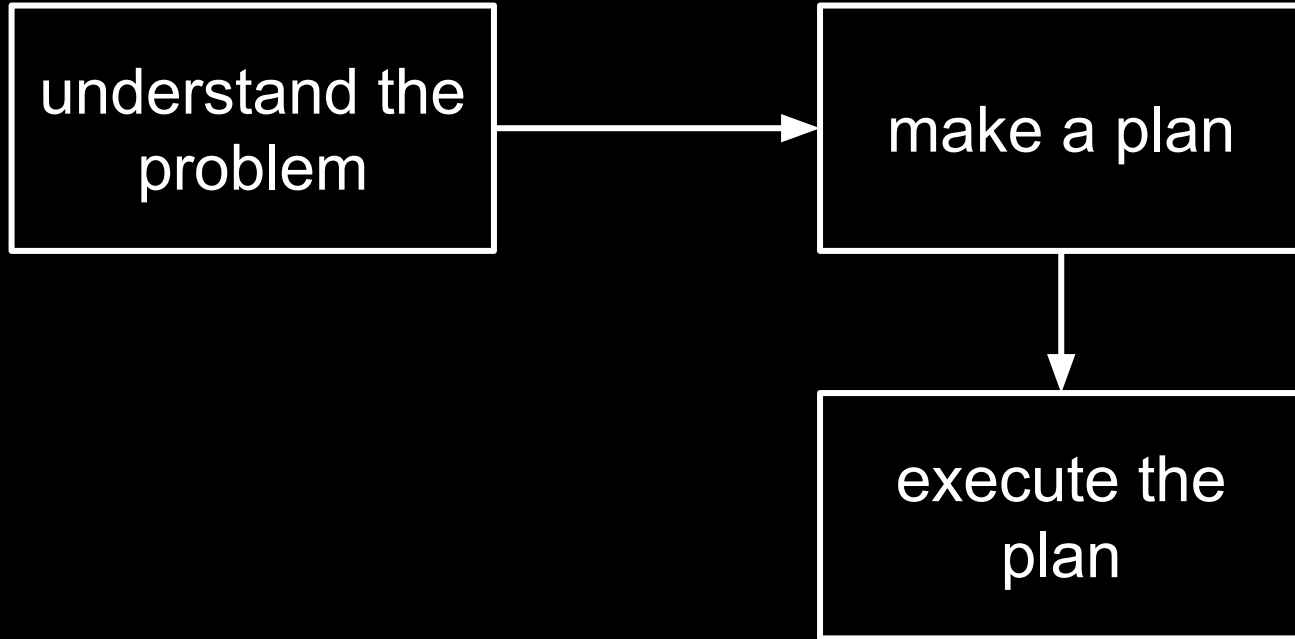
Polya's approach to problem-solving

understand the
problem

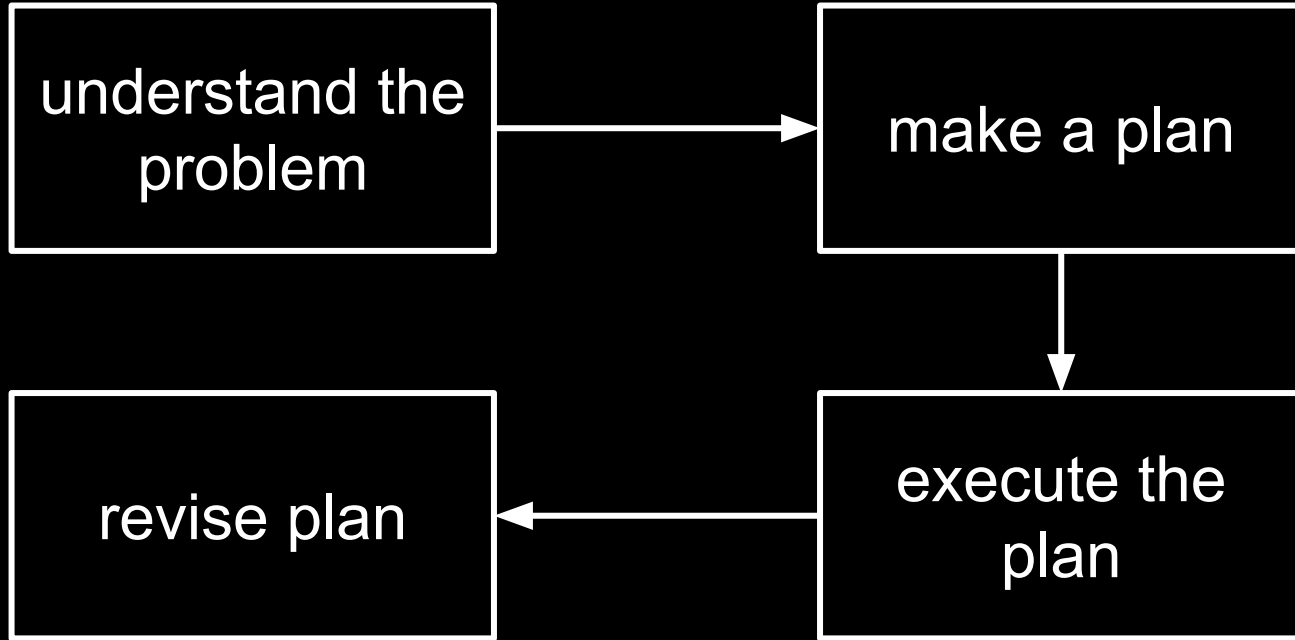
Polya's approach to problem-solving



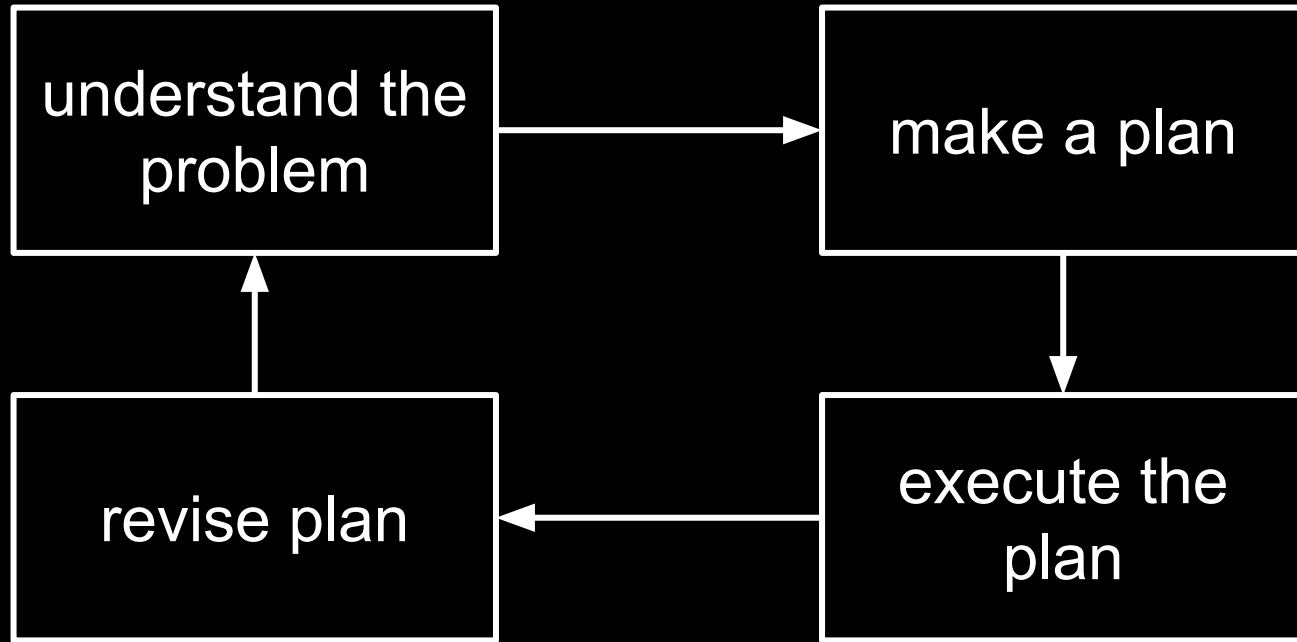
Polya's approach to problem-solving



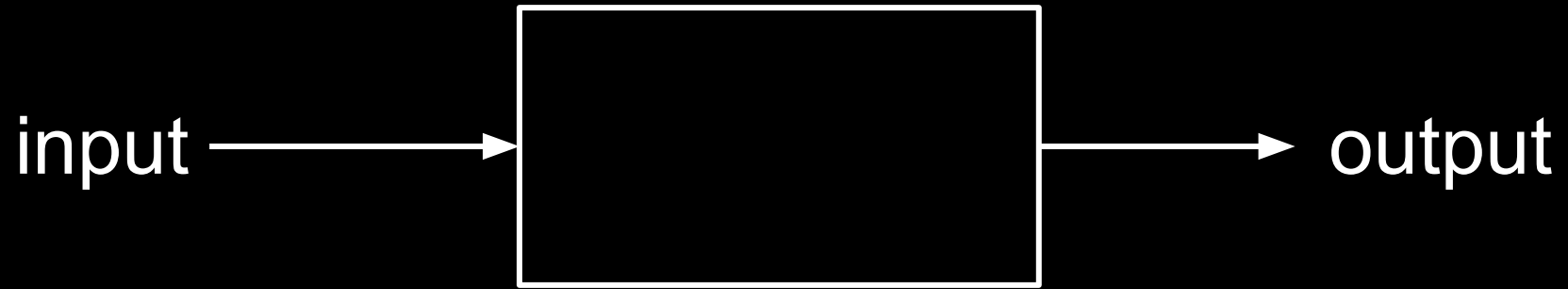
Polya's approach to problem-solving



Polya's approach to problem-solving



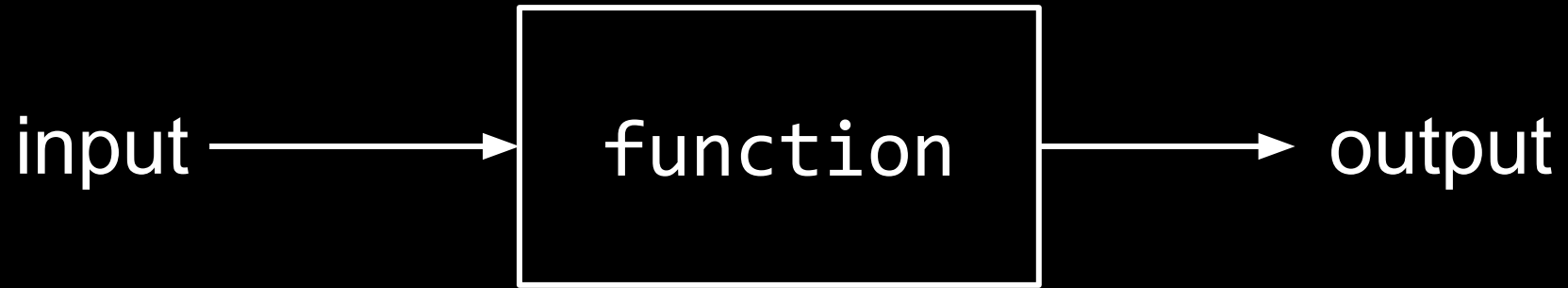
a model to represent problems



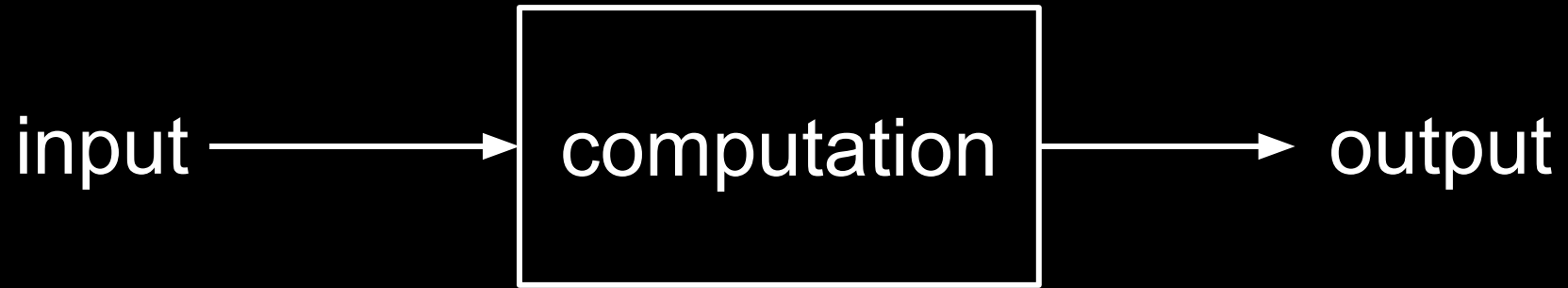
a model to represent problems



a model to represent problems

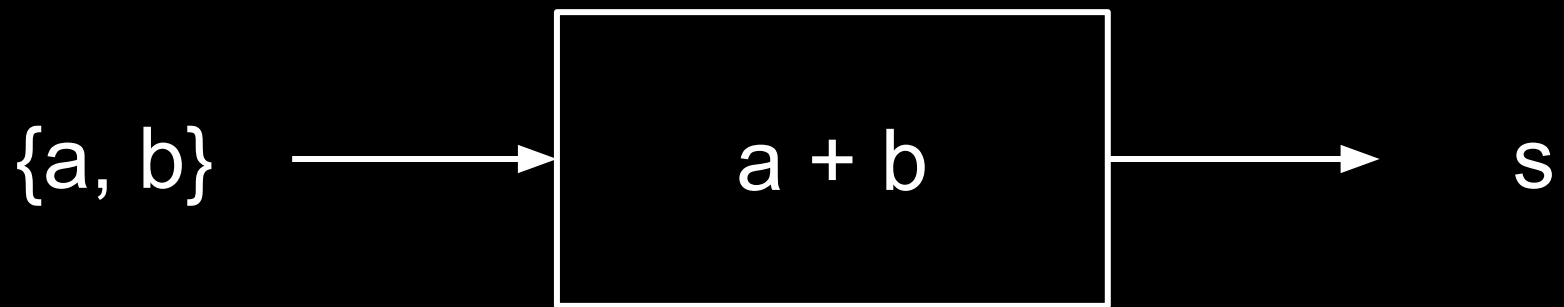


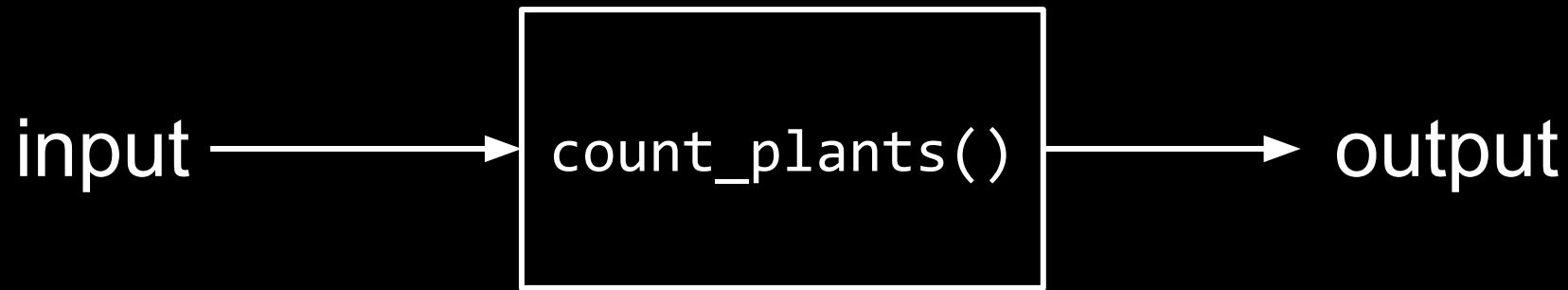
a model to represent problems



the rainbow experiment as an
input - processing - output - problem

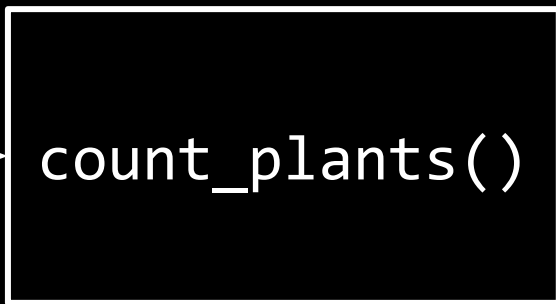






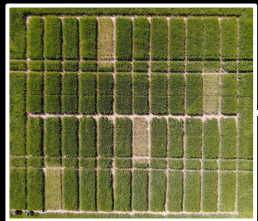


output



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processing of
information



`count_plants()`

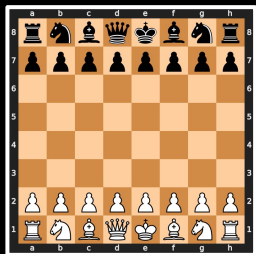
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representation of
information



next_move()

E2 → E4



1: 0R	9: 0P	57: 1R
2: 0N	10: 0P	58: 1N
3: 0B	11: 0P	59: 1B
4: 0K	12: 0P	60: 1K
5: 0Q	13: 0P	61: 1Q
6: 0B	14: 0P	62: 1B
7: 0N	15: 0P	63: 1N
8: 0R	16: 0P	64: 1R

...

representation of information



problem solving strategies

problem decomposition

large and complex problem

less complex
subproblem

less complex
subproblem

less complex subproblem

less complex
subproblem

less complex
subproblem

less complex subproblem

less complex subproblem

less complex subproblem

divide and conquer

large and complex problem of type A

smaller problem
of type A

smaller problem
of type A

smaller problem
of type A

smaller problem
of type A

even smaller problem of type A	even smaller problem of type A
even smaller problem of type A	even smaller problem of type A
even smaller problem of type A	even smaller problem of type A
even smaller problem of type A	even smaller problem of type A

sorted list +
element



search()



yes / no

is 67 a prime number?

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

linear search



2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

linear search



2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

linear search



2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

linear search



2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

linear search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

↑

19 steps... can't we do better?

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, ~~13~~, 17, ~~19~~, ~~23~~, ~~29~~, ~~31~~, ~~37~~, ~~41~~,
~~43~~, ~~47~~, ~~53~~, ~~59~~, ~~61~~, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

↑

large and complex
problem

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

large and complex
problem

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

smaller
problem

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41

smaller
problem

43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

binary search

67 != 41



2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, ~~41~~,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

binary search

67 > 41



2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, ~~41~~,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

binary search

67 > 41



2, 3, 5, 7, ~~11~~, ~~13~~, 17, 19, ~~23~~, ~~29~~, 31, 37, ~~41~~,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97



67 != 71

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97



67 != 71

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97



$67 < 71$

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97



67 != 59

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
~~43~~, 47, ~~53~~, 59, 61, 67, ~~71~~, ~~73~~, 79, ~~83~~, ~~89~~, 97



67 > 59

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41,
~~43~~, ~~47~~, ~~53~~, ~~59~~, 61, 67, ~~71~~, ~~73~~, ~~79~~, ~~83~~, ~~89~~, 97



67 = 67

binary search

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, ~~13~~, 17, 19, ~~23~~, ~~29~~, 31, 37, 41,
~~43~~, 47, ~~53~~, 59, ~~61~~, 67, ~~71~~, ~~73~~, 79, ~~83~~, ~~89~~, 97



67 = 67

3 splits → much better

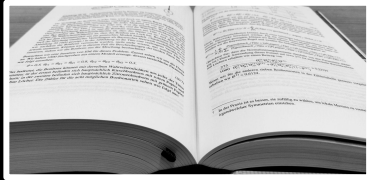
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$$67 = 67$$



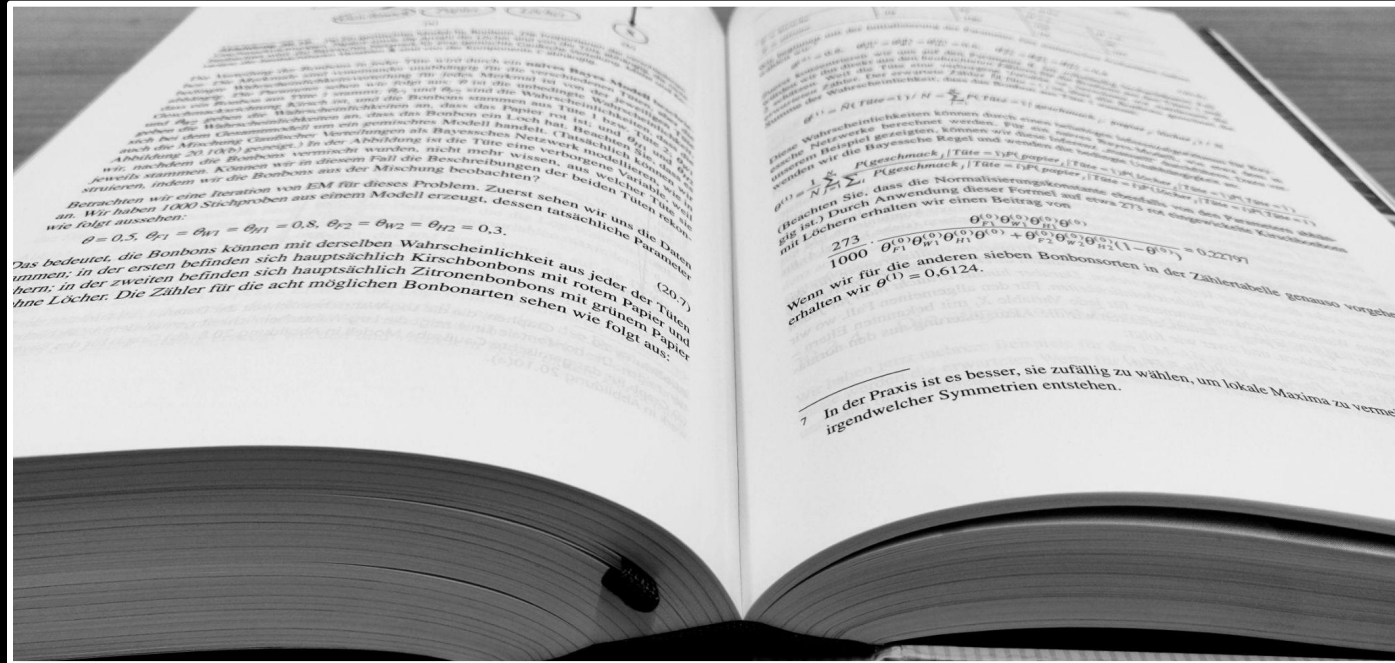
how efficient are linear and
binary search in general?



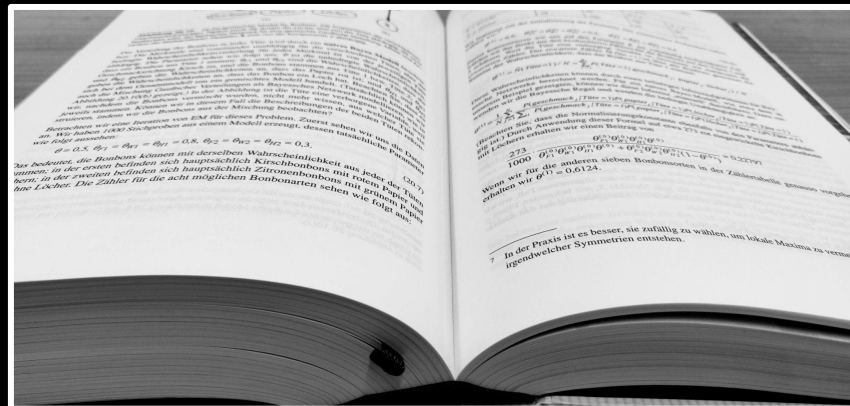
`count_words()`

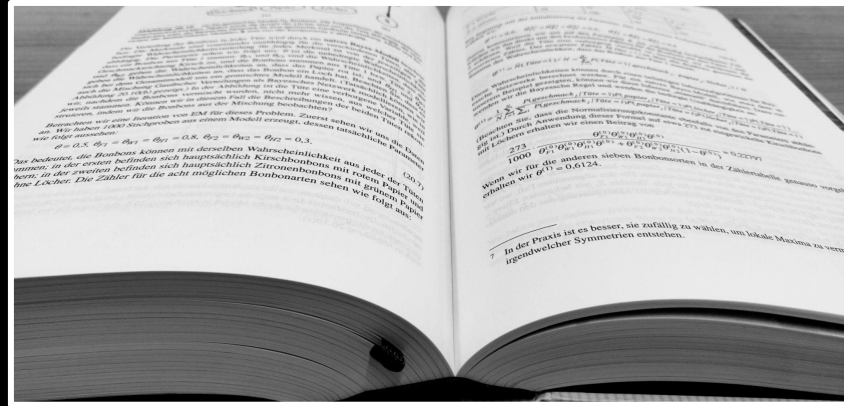
word count

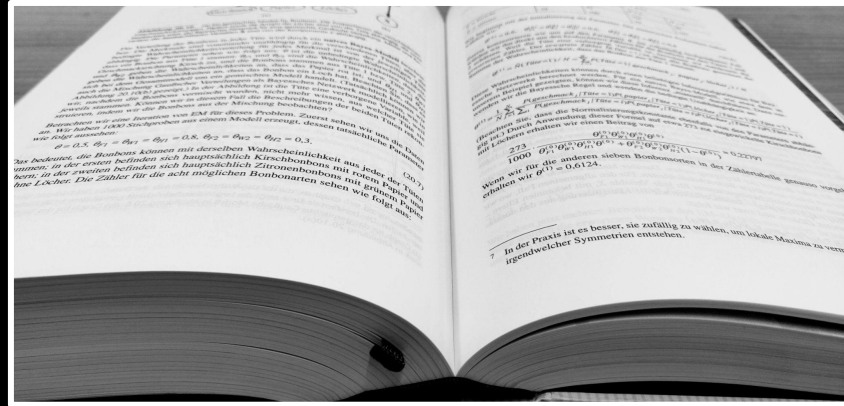
how many words are in the book?



strategies, anyone?



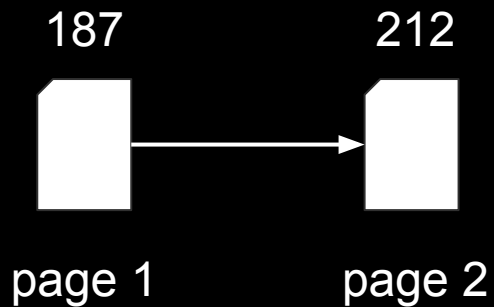
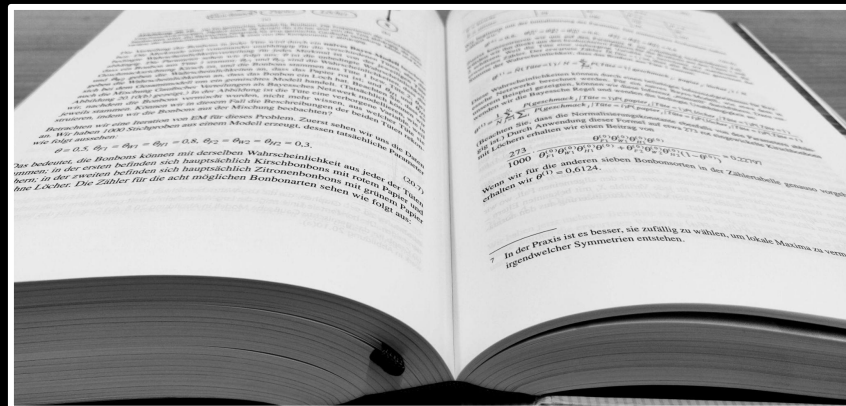


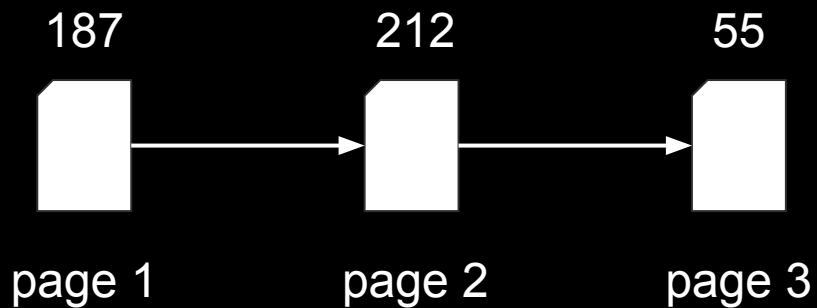
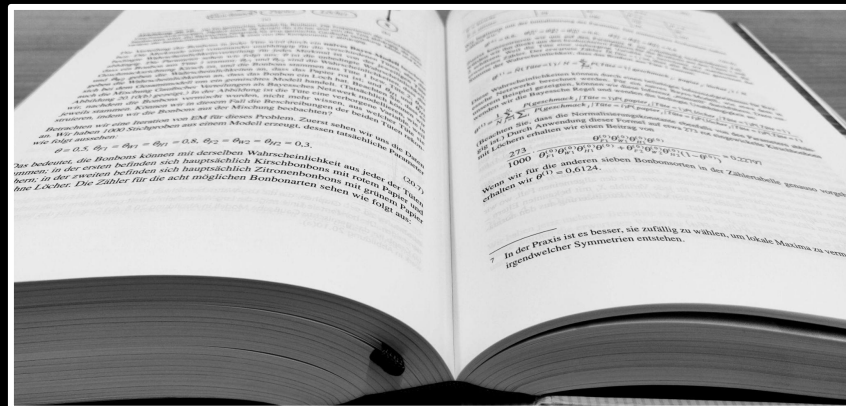


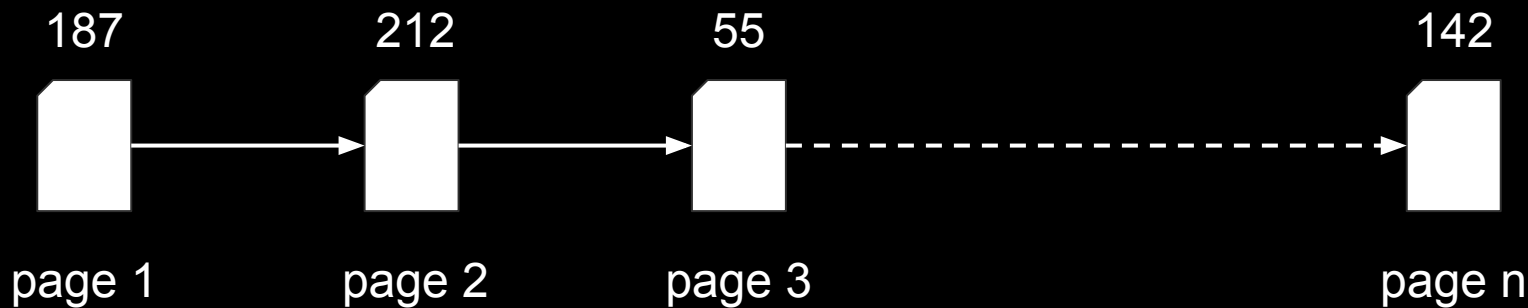
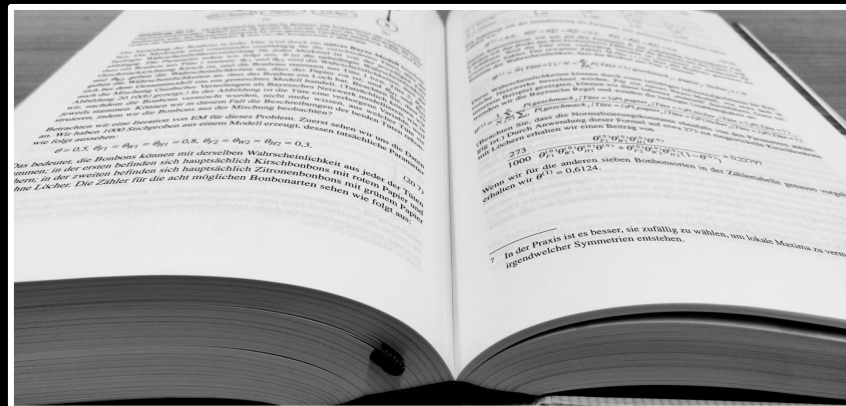
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page 1









n = 1327 pages

Ø 2:23 minutes per page

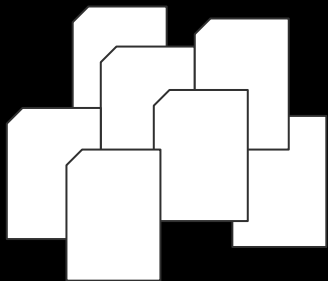
~ 52.34 hours

divide and conquer

+

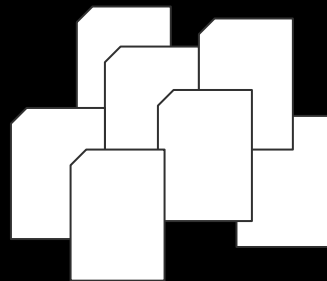
?

pages 1 - 700



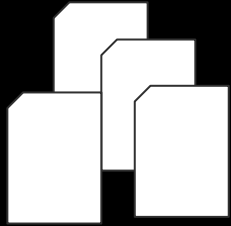
student 1

pages 701 - 1327



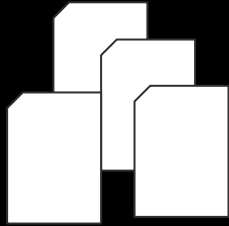
student 2

pages 1 - 350



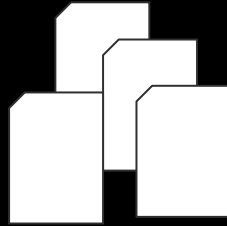
student 1

pages 351 - 700



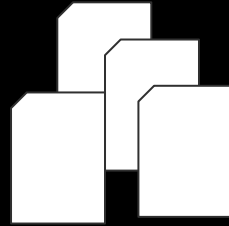
student 2

pages 701 - 1050



student 3

pages 1051- 1327



student 4

divide and conquer

+

distribution and parallelization

