

Automating string processing in spreadsheets using input-output examples

Junliang Yan

Spreadsheets

	A	B	C
1	Name	City	Phone
2	A	Nanjing	12345678910
3	B	Yangzhou	10987654321
4	C	Zhenjiang	11111111111
5	D	Suzhou	22222222222
6	E	Changzhou	33333333333
7	F	Wuxi	66666666666
8	G	Nantong	99999999999

Collect cities of residence

Name	Adress	City	
A	Jiangsu, nanjing, nju		
B	Hubei, wuhan, hust		
C	Shandong, jinan, sdu		
D	Hunan, changsha, csu		

Copy-Paste one by one?

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✓ Flashfill using input-output example!

Flashfill using input-output examples

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- String Manipulation Language

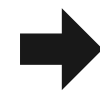
```
SubStr2(  
    Address,  
    TokenSeq(AlphaToken),  
    2  
)
```

Program

Flashfill using input-output examples

- String Manipulation Language
- **Synthesize** a program with **input-output examples**

1 Address	Output
Jiangsu, A nanjing, nanjing nju	Synthesize



```
SubStr2(  
    Address,  
    TokenSeq(AlphaToken),  
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)
```

Input-output examples

Program

String Manipulation Language

Construct Output Strings

Trace

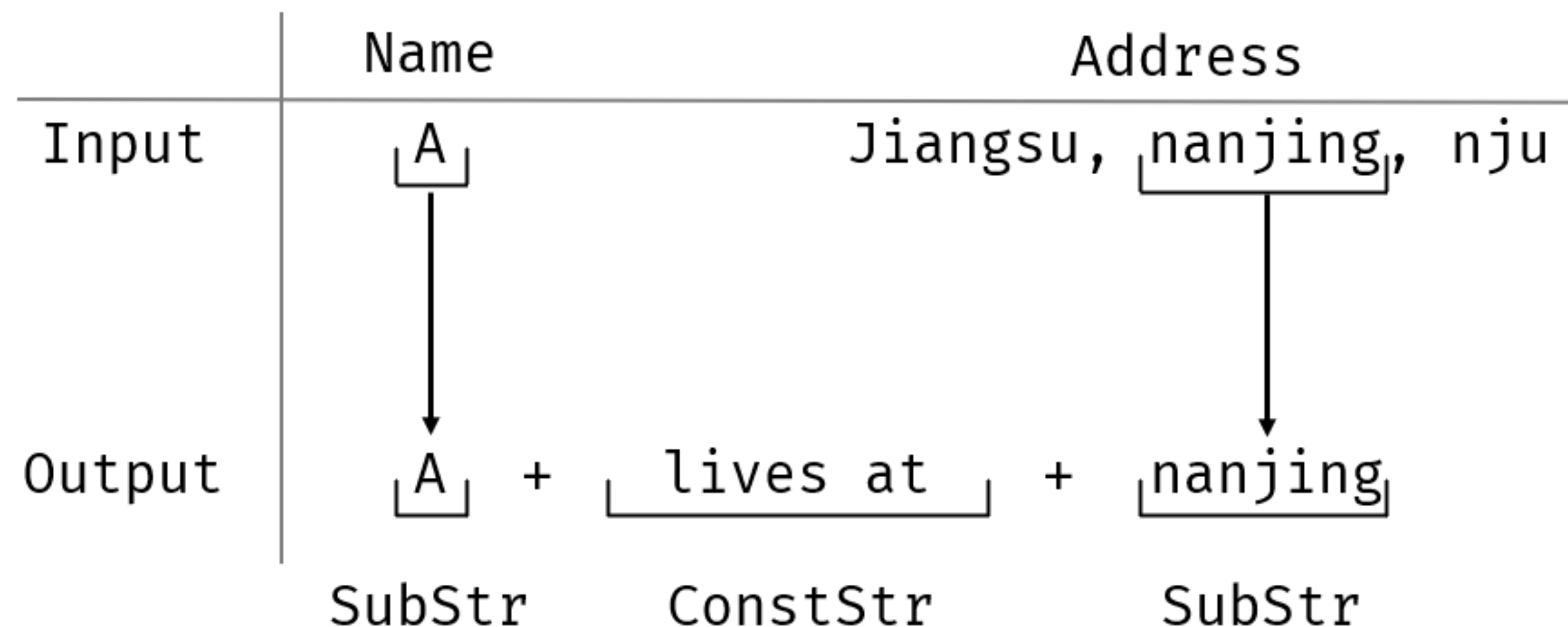
Trace(ConstStr(...), SubStr(...), ...)

Trace Expr is a concatenation of atom expression, which is a substring of input or a constant string.

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Output: A lives at nanjing

SubString

SubStr (,)

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SubStr (Input, ,)

Input : **Index**, which input string is used.

SubString

SubStr(Input, Left, Right)

Input : **Index**, which input string is used.

Left, Right: **Position Expressions**, the range of substring.

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`SubStr(Address, CPos(9), CPos(-6))`

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Name	Address	City
A	Jiangsu, nanjing , nju	nanjing

✗ `SubStr(Address, CPos(9), CPos(-6))`

✓ `SubStr(Address, Pos(ϵ , RE, 2), Pos(RE, ϵ , 2))`

where `RE = TokenSequence(LowercaseTokens)`

Regular Expressions

TokenSequence(Tokens, . . .)

Only use a **small subset of regular expressions**.

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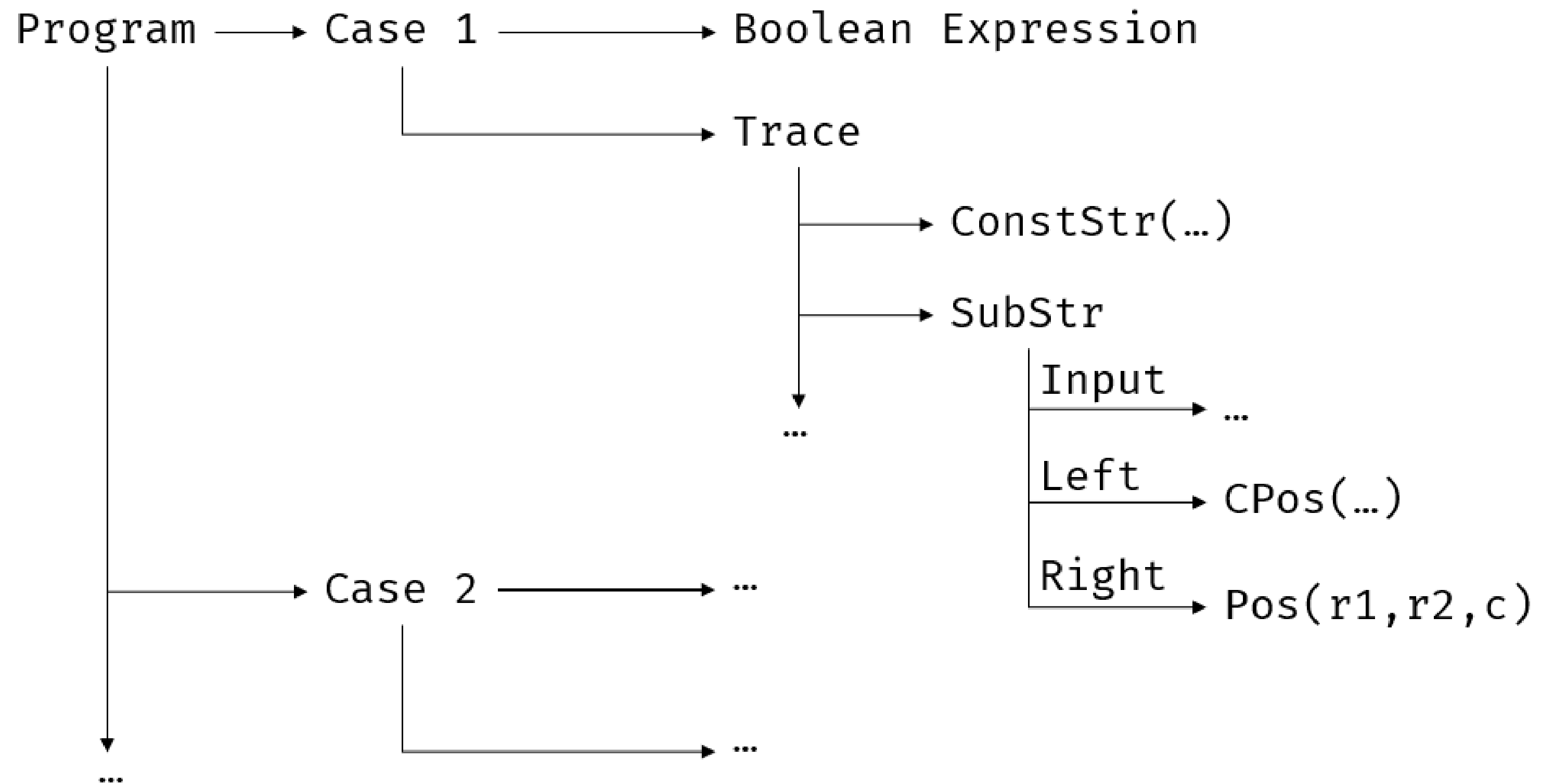
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➔ **Efficient Algorithm**


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```
Switch((Boolean Expr, Trace Expr), ...)
```

Overview / AST



Example

Num	Rev	Code	
123	321	case 123: return 321;	
456	654	case 456: return 654;	
147	741		
258	852		

```
Trace("case_", SubStr(Num, CPos(0), CPos(-1)),  
      ":", return_, SubStr(Rev, CPos(0), CPos(-1)),  
      ":",")
```

Alogrithom

Synthesize a program with input-output examples

Goal

Given some input-output examples $(i_1, o_1), \dots, (i_n, o_n)$,
Synthesize a program P such that $P(i_1) = o_1, \dots, P(i_n) = o_n$.

1.

2.

3.

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1. Synthesize n programs P_k such that

$$P_1(i_1) = o_1, P_2(i_2) = o_2, \dots, P_n(i_n) = o_n$$

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2. Intersect programs into non-empty partitions **greedily**

$$(P_1 \cap P_2, \{(i_1, o_1), (i_2, o_2)\}), (P_3 \cap \dots, \{(i_3, o_3), \dots\}), \dots$$

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3. Construct boolean classification for partitions

$$(\text{Boolean Expression}, P_1 \cap P_2), \dots$$

Generate Trace

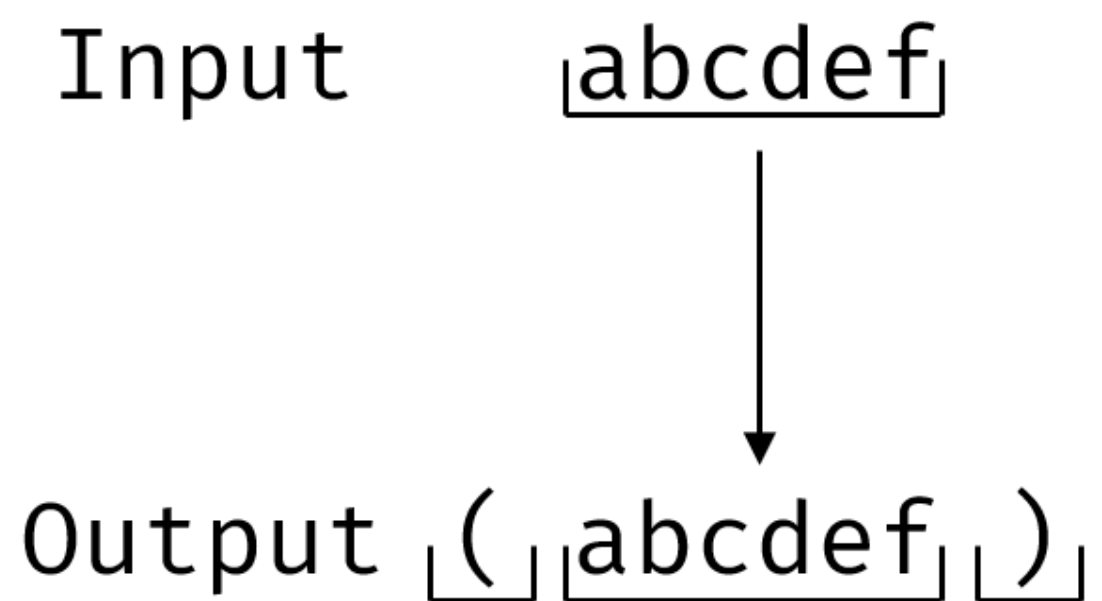
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Input abcdef



Output (abcdef)

Input a bcdef

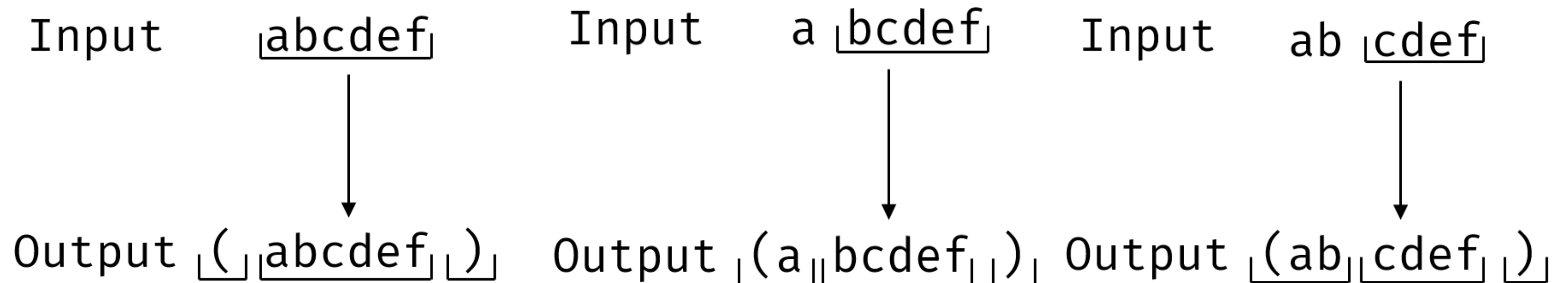


Output (a bcdef)

Generate Trace

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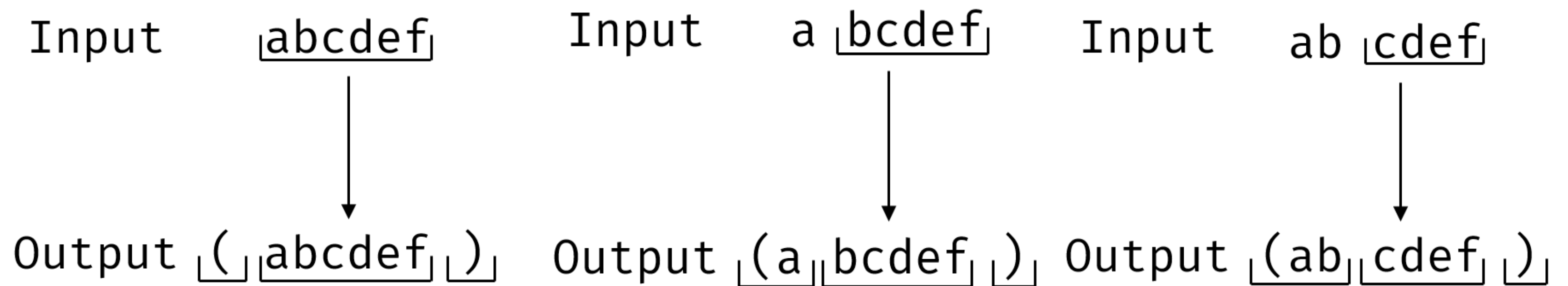
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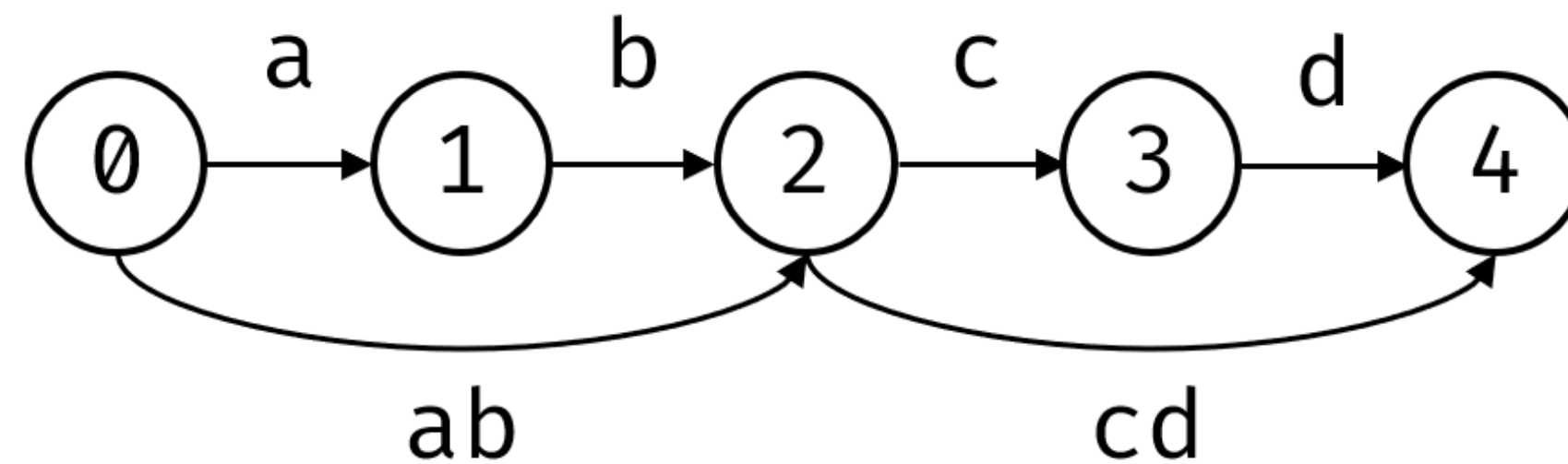


Iterate **all** possible trace expressions

DAG

Nodes = Each position in the output string.

Edges = Each substring (i, j) where $i < j$.

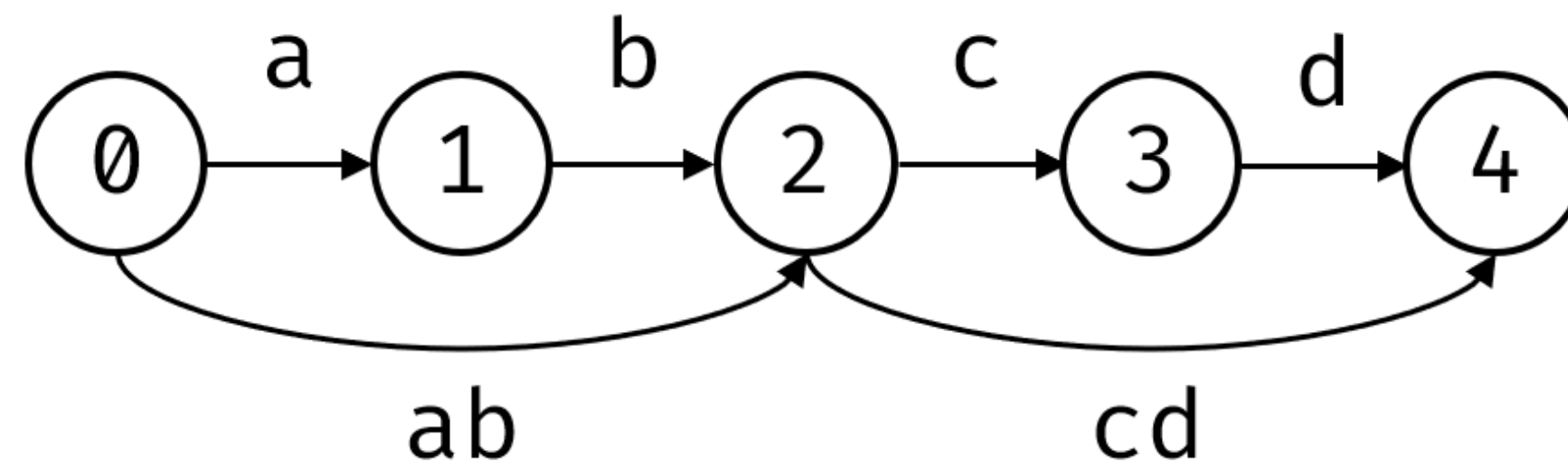


Example. $(0, 2) \rightarrow \mathbf{ab}$, $(2, 4) \rightarrow \mathbf{cd}$.

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Generate Substring

The origin **exponential** problem → Quadratic sub-problems

Goal. For each of n^2 substrings, find all possible **atom expressions** to generate it.

Input : Jiangsu, nanjing, nju

Program: `ConstStr("nanjing")`

`SubStr(Address, CPos(9), CPos(-6))`

`SubStr(Address, CPos(9), CPos(16))`

...

Generate Substring

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Goal. For each of n^2 substrings, find all possible **atom expressions** to generate it.

Input : Jiangsu, nanjing, nju

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...

Use Brute-force!

Partition & Boolean Classification

Goal-2. Intersect programs into non-empty partitions

$$(P_1 \cap P_2, \{(i_1, o_1), (i_2, o_2)\}), (P_3 \cap \dots, \{(i_3, o_3), \dots\}), \dots$$



Goal-3. Construct boolean classification for partitions

$$((\text{Predicate} \wedge \dots) \vee \dots, P_1 \cap P_2), \dots$$


where

$$\text{Predicate} := \text{Match}(\text{Input}, \text{RegExp}, \text{Times}) \mid \neg \text{Match}(\dots)$$



Output Program

Q & A

Item	Output	
Check-in: 2000 mora	2000 mora	
New character: 180 fate	180 fate	
Intertwined fate: 160 primogem		
New weapon: 240 fate		

Demo

Input 1	Output

Push Pop