String Algorithms and Data Structures

Introduction and Pattern Matching

CS 199-225

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Computer Science

Who am I?

Brad Solomon

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Thursdays, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

… or by appointment

https://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs225/info/office-hours/

Who are you?

Take a moment to introduce yourself to your neighbor!

(Your name, a hobby you enjoy, and one thing you hope to get out of this class)

Piazza Sign up Link: https://piazza.com/illinois/spring2026/cs199225

What is this class about?

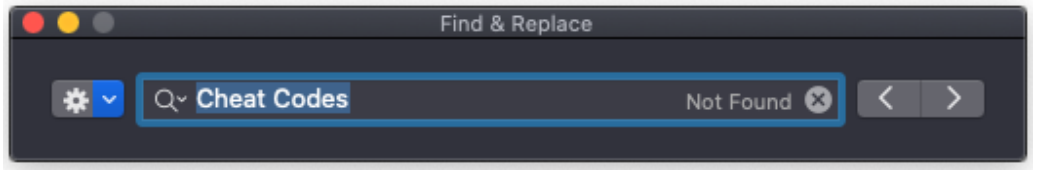
Foundational

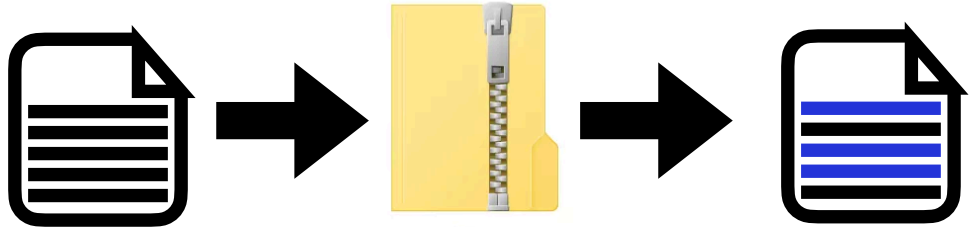
String Algorithms and Data Structures

Exact string matching

Compressed self-indexes

Inexact pattern matching





```
Query: 161 atatcaccacgtcaaaggtgactccaactcca---ccactccattttgtt
           ||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||  |     | |   || ||||
Sbjct: 481 atatcaccacgtcaaaggtgactccaact-tattgatagtgttttatgtt
```

What is this class about?

Foundational

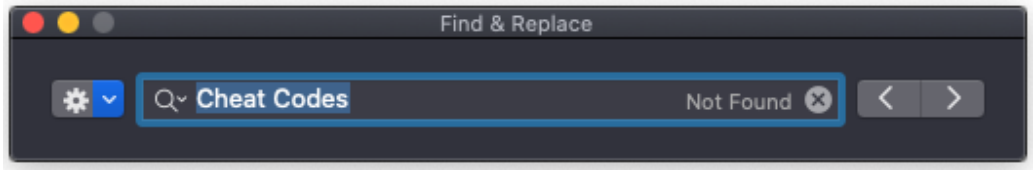
String Algorithms and Data Structures

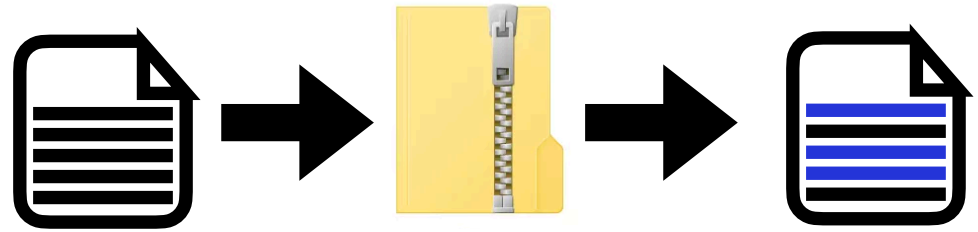
plus cool stuff chosen by you!

Exact string matching

Compressed self-indexes

Inexact pattern matching





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           ||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||  |     | |   || ||||
Sbjct: 481 atatcaccacgtcaaaggtgactccaact-tattgatagtgttttatgtt
```

What will you get out of this class?

Understand fundamental string algorithms

Experience applying data structures, algorithms, and algorithm design principles to real world problems

Justify implementation choices based on theoretical or practical considerations

Build a foundation for future data science projects

6 - 8 weeks on exact pattern matching

Course Webpage

https://courses.grainger.illinois.edu/cs225/sp2026/pages/honors.html

All course information and links can be found here!

Mediaspace recordings

Piazza

Syllabus

Syllabus

Please read — many important topics:

- Course Goals & Topics
- Course Expectations
- Grading
- Commitments to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
- Commitments to Mental Health
- Ethics and Academic Integrity Policies

Course Expectations

Weekly assignments (11 total):

- Small assignments (~ 1-3 hours / week)
- Must pass at least 8 of them (80% is passing)
- Must submit your own work
- One week extensions for 80% credit

Course Expectations

Class participation:

No attendance grades

Ask questions (synchronously or asynchronously)

Participate in breakout rooms and polls

Mental Health

This class should be low-stress, light work-load.

UIUC offers a variety of confidential services:

Counseling Center: 217-333-3704

610 East John Street Champaign, IL 61820

McKinley Health Center: 217-333-2700

1109 South Lincoln Avenue, Urbana, Illinois 61801

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

"If you witness or experience racism, discrimination, micro-aggressions, or other offensive behavior, you are encouraged to bring this to the attention of…"

Staff (CAs and TAs for CS 225)

Faculty (Brad Solomon)

Kendall

Campus Belonging Office (Link)

The Office of Student Conflict Resolution (Link)

CS CARES (Link)

Learning Objectives

Review fundamentals of strings

Introduce exact pattern matching problem

↳ Discussions

What is a string?

String S is a finite sequence of characters

Characters are drawn from alphabet Σ, usually assumed finite

Nucleic acid alphabet: { A, C, G, T }

English: { A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L,M,N,O,P,Q,R,S,T,U,V,W,X,Y,Z }

What are some other alphabets we could use?

↳ Numeric!

↳ Unicode

↳ ASCII 256 512

↳ Binary Alphabet ⇔ hex or any other base values

What is a string… in C++?

***char*:** 1-byte (8-bit) character encoding [ASCII 256]

***std::string*:** uses *char* alphabet (by default), has significant operation support

string_main.cpp

```
1  #include <string>
2  #include <iostream>
3
4  int main() {
5
6    char c[] = "Hello World";
7
8    std::string str = "Hello World";
9
10   return 0;
11 }
```

Fundamental operations

Math

+

—

/

%

*

Strings

Append

concation

Substring

length

Removal

Find

duplicate

split

equals

Big list!

Lets discuss a subset

Fundamental string operations

"How efficient is my algorithm at searching for a given pattern P?"

"How much memory do I need to allocate for this text file?"

Fundamental string operations

Size of *S*, |*S*|: The number of characters in *S*.

Join Code: 225

S = “How big?”

|S| = 7 8 9

Fundamental string operations

Size of *S*, |*S*|: The number of characters in *S*.

S = "How big?"

|S| = **8**

9 including null

C not C++

we will use C++ convention

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H	o	w	_	b	i	g	?

space

?

Fundamental string operations

Size of *S*, |*S*|: The length of *S* (in terms of bytes).

`S.length()`

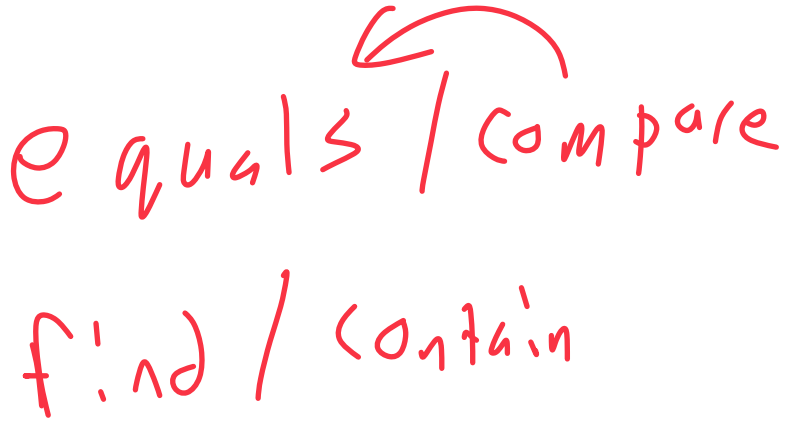
size.cpp

```
 1  #include <string>
 2  #include <iostream>
 3
 4  int main() {
 5    std::string S = "Is this a string?";
 6    std::string T = "No, this is Patrick.";
 7
 8    std::cout << S.length() << std::endl;
 9    std::cout << T.length() << std::endl;
10
11    return 0;
12  }
13
14
```

17
20

Fundamental string operations

“Is this book about data structures?”



“Is this student enrolled at UIUC?”

Fundamental string operations

S ***equals*** T if each character, in order, is the same

S == T

equals.cpp

```
1  #include <string>
2  #include <iostream>
3
4  int main() {
5    std::string S = "Thing 1";
6    std::string T = "Thing 1";
7
8    if (S == T){
9      std::cout << "S == T" << std::endl;
10   } else {
11     std::cout << "S != T" << std::endl;
12   }
13  return 0;
14 }
```

Fundamental string operations

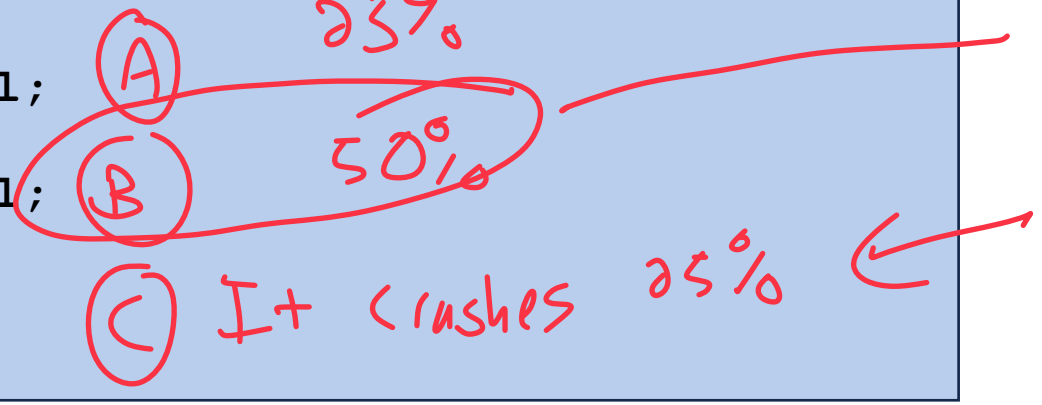
S ***equals*** T if each character, in order, is the same

Join Code: 225

S == T

char_equals.cpp

```
1  #include <string>
2  #include <iostream>
3
4  int main() {
5    char S[] = "Thing 1";
6    char T[] = "Thing 1";
7
8    if (S == T){
9      std::cout << "S == T" << std::endl;
10   } else {
11     std::cout << "S != T" << std::endl;
12   }
13  return 0;
14 }
```



Fundamental string operations

S ***equals*** T if each character, in order, is the same

S == T

char_equals.cpp

```
substring.cpp:8:9: warning: array comparison always evaluates to false [-Wtautological-compare]
  if (S == T){
      ^
```

```
1  int main() {
2    char S[] = "Thing 1";
3    char T[] = "Thing 1";
4
5    if (S == T){
6      std::cout << "S == T" << std::endl;
7    } else {
8      std::cout << "S != T" << std::endl;
9    }
10  return 0;
11 }
```

==

.equals

Fundamental string operations

Substring (find)
concatenation

Reads

GTATGCACGCGATAG	TATGTCGCAGTATCT	CACCCTATGTCGCAG	GAGACGCTGGAGCCG
TAGCATTGCGAGACG	GGTATGCACGCGATA	TGGAGCCGGAGCACC	CGCTGGAGCCGGAGC
TGTCTTTGATTCCTG	CGCGATAGCATTGCG	GCATTGCGAGACGCT	CCTATGTCGCAGTAT
GACGCTGGAGCCGGA	GCACCCTATGTCGCA	GTATCTGTCTTTGAT	CCTCATCCTATTATT
TATCGCACCTACGTT	CAATATTCGATCATG	GATCACAGGTCTATC	ACCCTATTAACCACT
CACGGGAGCTCTCCA	TGCATTTGGTATTTT	CGTCTGGGGGGTATG	CACGCGATAGCATTG
GTATGCACGCGATAG	ACCTACGTTCAATAT	TATTTATCGCACCTA	CCACTCACGGGAGCT
GCGAGACGCTGGAGC	CTATCACCCTATTAA	CTGTCTTTGATTCCT	ACTCACGGGAGCTCT
CCTACGTTCAATATT	GCACCTACGTTCAAT	GTCTGGGGGGTATGC	AGCCGGAGCACCCTA
GACGCTGGAGCCGGA	GCACCCTATGTCGCA	GTATCTGTCTTTGAT	CCTCATCCTATTATT
TATCGCACCTACGTT	CAATATTCGATCATG	GATCACAGGTCTATC	ACCCTATTAACCACT
CACGGGAGCTCTCCA	TGCATTTGGTATTTT	CGTCTGGGGGGTATG	CACGCGATAGCATTG

Build one overlap string

Genome

CGTCTGGGGGGTATGCACGCGATAGCATTGCGAGACGCTGGAGCCGGAGCACCCTATGTCGCAGTATCTGTCTTTGATTCCTG

concatenation but how do we know what to concat?

Fundamental string operations

Concatenation of *S* and *T*: characters of *S* followed by characters of *T*

S = “Beep” T = “Boop”

What is the string *ST* ? BeepBoop

What is the string *T$S* ? Boop$Beep

Fundamental string operations

Concatenation of *S* and *T*: characters of *S* followed by characters of *T*

S + T

concat.cpp

```
1  #include <string>
2  #include <iostream>
3
4  int main() {
5    std::string S = "Beep";
6    std::string T = "Boop";
7
8    std::cout << S + T << std::endl;
9    std::cout << T + S << std::endl;
10
11   std::cout << S + '$' + T << std::endl;
12   std::cout << T + '$' + S << std::endl;
13 }
14
```

Fundamental string operations

“Is this book about data structures?”

find()

substring()

S: `Data Structures`

1.1 Why Compact Data Structures?

T:

Google’s stated mission, “to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful,” could not better capture the immense ambition of modern society for gathering all kinds of data and putting them to use to improve our lives. We are collecting not only huge amounts of data from the physical world (astronomical, climatological, geographical, biological), but also human-generated data (voice, pictures, music, video, books, news, Web contents, emails, blogs, tweets) and society-based behavioral data (markets, shopping, traffic, clicks, Web navigation, likes, friendship

Fundamental string operations

S is a ***substring*** of *T* if there exists (possibly empty) strings *u* and *v* such that T = *uSv*

A ***substring*** is a sequence of characters (a string) contained within another string

S: `p e p p e r`

T: `I _ l i k e _ p e p p e r o n i _ p i z z a`

Fundamental string operations

A ***substring*** of *S* is a string occurring inside *S*

```
S.substr(size_t pos, size_t len)
```

substring.cpp

```
 1  #include <string>
 2  #include <iostream>
 3
 4  int main() {
 5    std::string T = "Hello my name is ";
 6
 7    std::cout << T.substr(1,4) << std::endl;
 8
 9    return 0;
10  }
```

Fundamental string operations

A ***substring*** of *S* is a string occurring inside *S*

```
S.substr(size_t pos, size_t len)
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substring.cpp

```
1  #include <string>
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4  int main() {
5    std::string T = "Hello my name is ";
6
7    std::cout << T.substr(1,4) << std::endl;
8
9    return 0;
10 }
```

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H	e	l	l	o	_	m	y	_	n	a	m	e	_	i	s	_

Fundamental string operations

S is a ***prefix*** of *T* if there exists a string *v* such that *T* = *Sv*

A ***prefix*** is a substring *T=uSv* where *u=“”*

T: **G T T A T A G C T G A T**

G T T A T A G C T G A T

S *v*

Some substring that starts at position 0

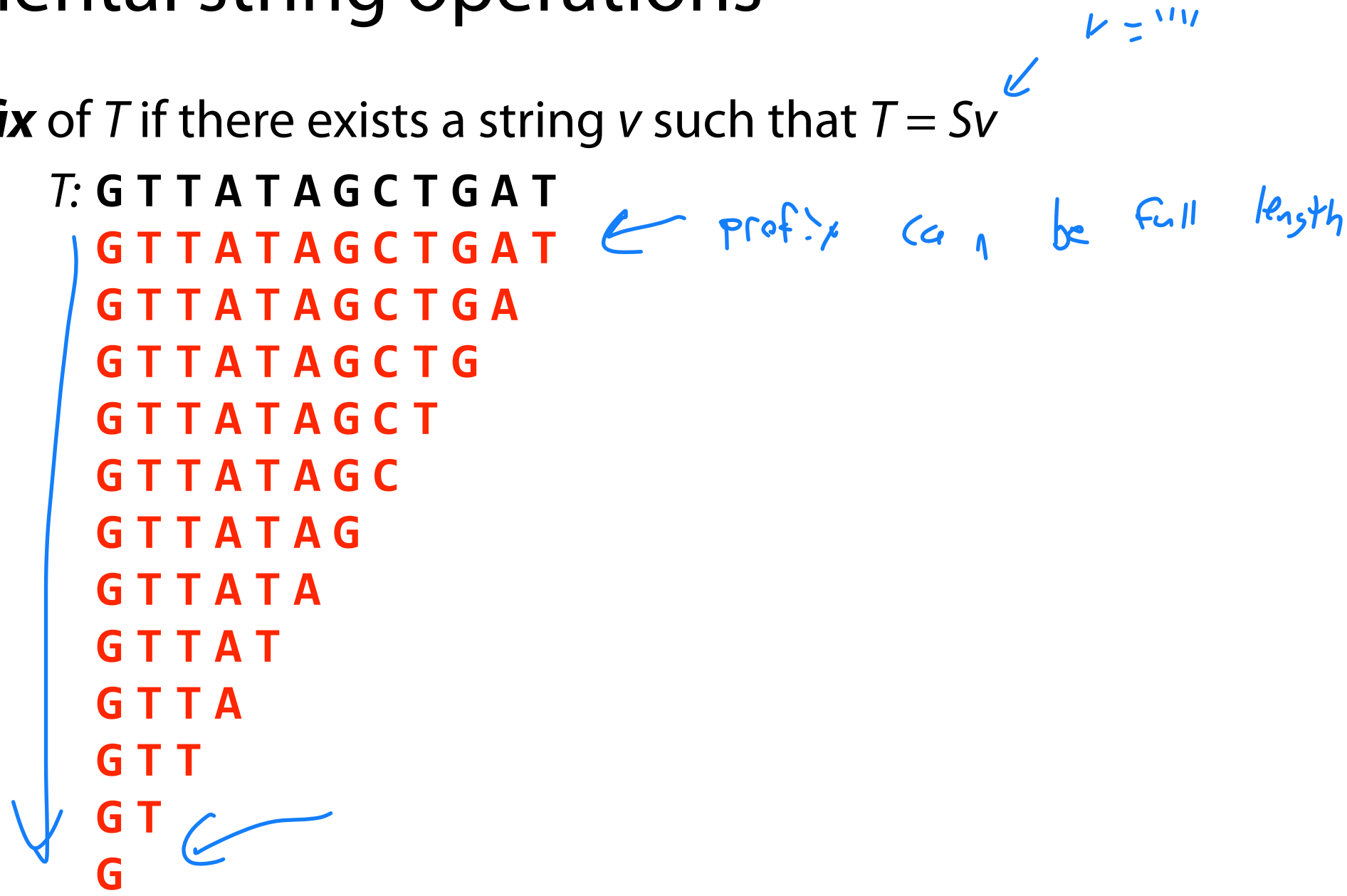
Fundamental string operations

S is a ***prefix*** of *T* if there exists a string *v* such that *T* = *Sv*

T: **G T T A T A G C T G A T**

Fundamental string operations

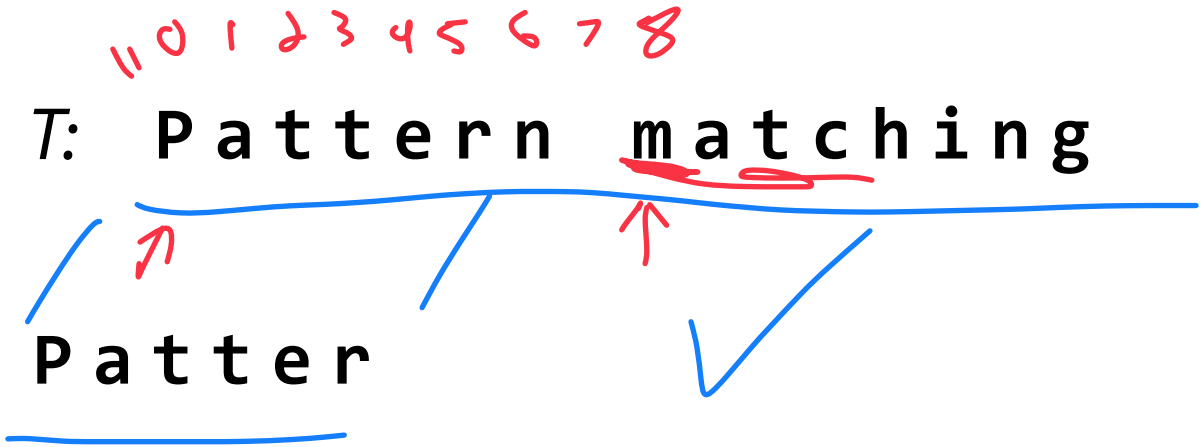
S is a ***prefix*** of *T* if there exists a string *v* such that $T = Sv$



Fundamental string operations

Join Code: 225

S is a ***prefix*** of *T* if there exists a string *v* such that *T* = *Sv*



matching 20%

greatest common prefix

Pat|rick

Fundamental string operations

S is a ***prefix*** of *T* if there exists a string *v* such that *T* = *Sv*

T: `Pattern matching`

`Patter` 

`matching` 

`Patrick` 

Fundamental string operations

S is a ***suffix*** of *T* if there exists a string *u* such that $T = uS$

A ***suffix*** is a substring $T=uSv$ where $v=$“”

T: G T T A T A G C T G A T

G T T A T A G C T G A T

u *S*

↑ can be “”

Fundamental string operations

S is a ***suffix*** of *T* if there exists a string *u* such that $T = uS$

T: **G T T A T A G C T G A T**

Fundamental string operations

S is a ***suffix*** of *T* if there exists a string *u* such that $T = uS$

Fundamental string operations

Join Code: 225

S is a ***suffix*** of *T* if there exists a string *u* such that $T = uS$

T: `Pattern matching`

`ing`

`tern`

`ring`

Fundamental string operations

S is a ***suffix*** of *T* if there exists a string *u* such that $T = uS$

T: `P a t t e r n  m a t c h i n g`

`i n g` 

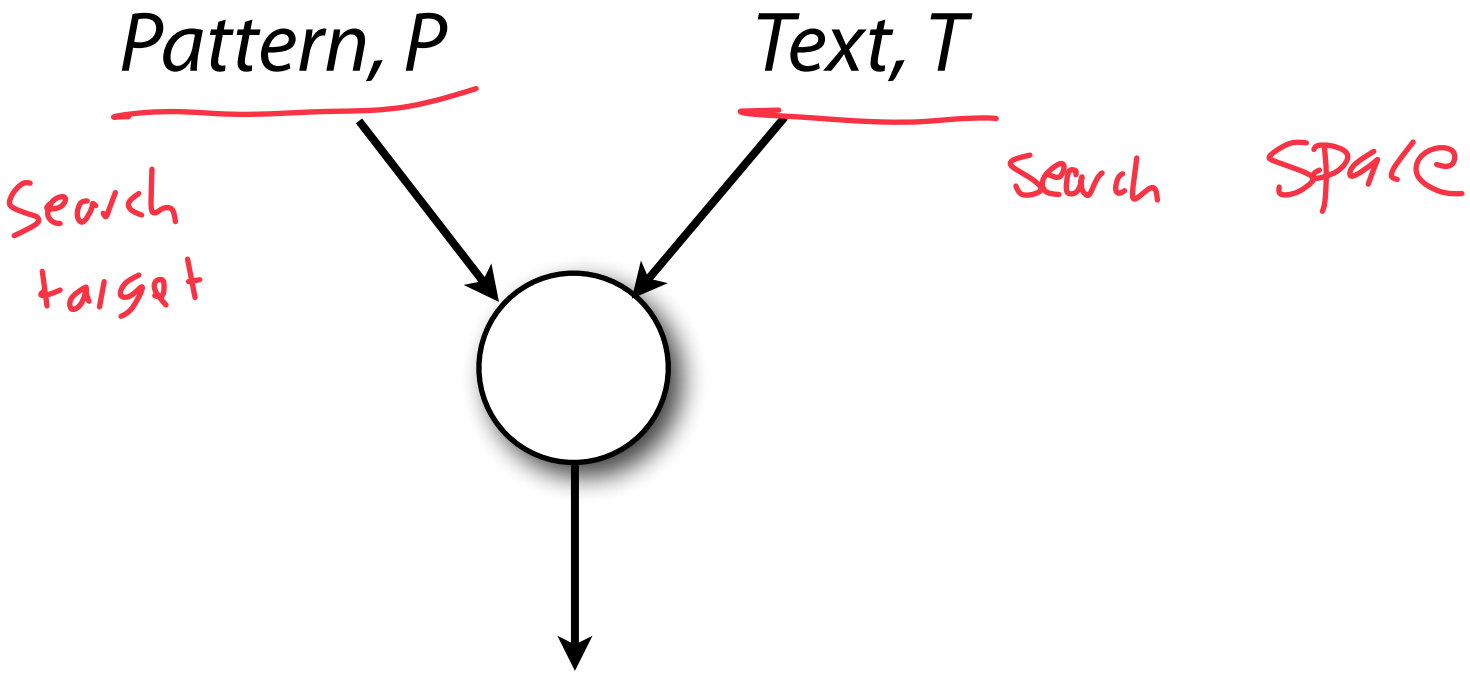
`t e r n` 

`r i n g` 

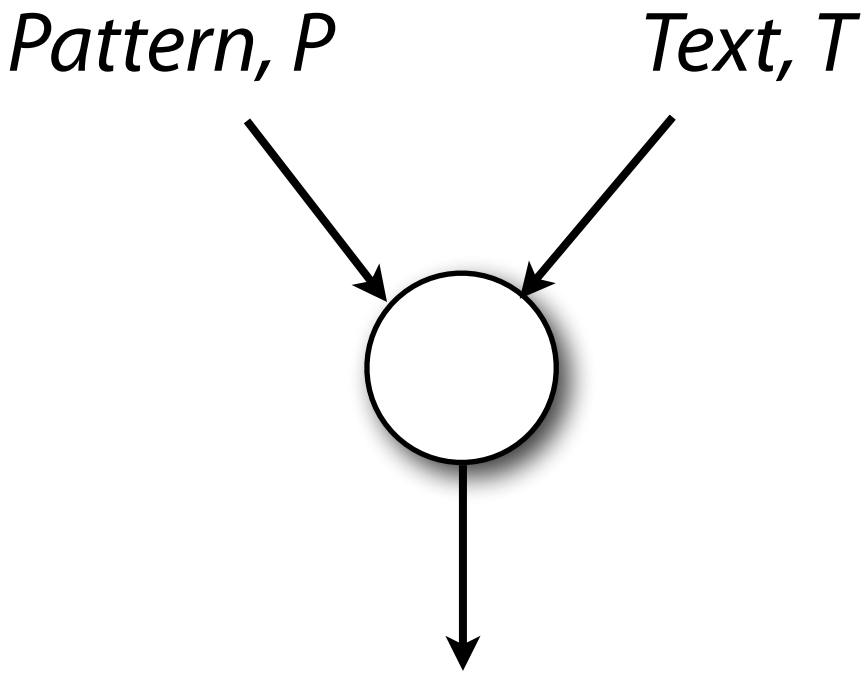
Fundamental string operations

Size, $\|S\|$	`S.length()`
Equals, $S == T$	`S == T`
Concatenation, ST	`S + T`
Substring, uSv	`S.substr(pos, len)`

Exact Pattern Matching



Exact Pattern Matching



Find instances of *P* in *T*

'instances': An exact, full length copy

Exact Pattern Matching

Find places where *pattern P* occurs as a substring of *text T*. Each such place is an *occurrence* or *match*.

P: `word`

T: `There would have been a time for such a word`

Exact Pattern Matching

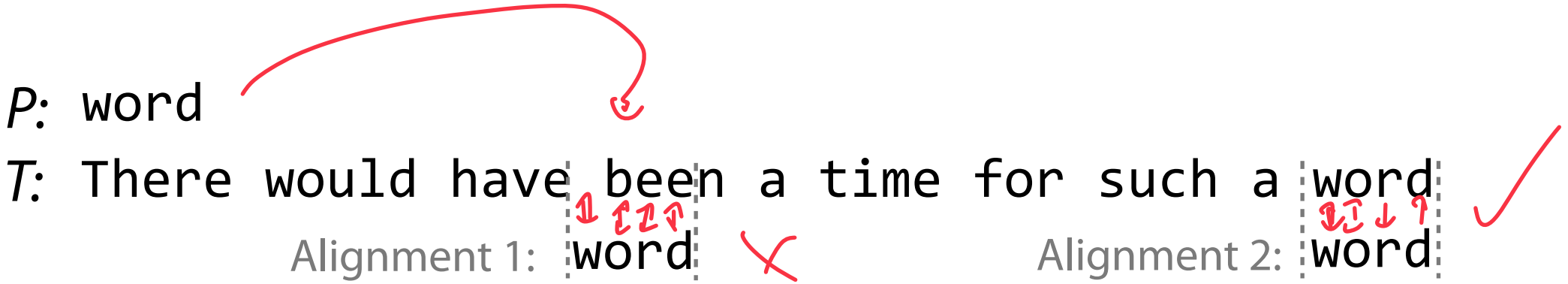
Find places where *pattern P* occurs as a substring of *text T*. Each such place is an *occurrence* or *match*.

P: `word`

T: `There would have been a time for such a word`
`word`
`word`

Exact Pattern Matching

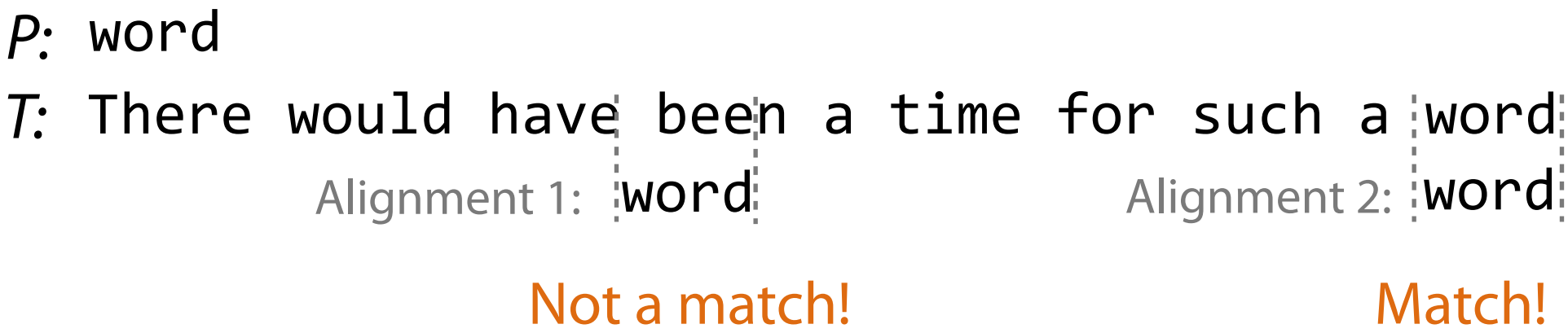
Find places where *pattern P* occurs as a substring of *text T*. Each such place is an *occurrence* or *match*.



Alignment: a way of putting *P's* characters opposite *T's*. May or may not correspond to a match.

Exact Pattern Matching

Find places where *pattern P* occurs as a substring of *text T*. Each such place is an *occurrence* or *match*.



Alignment: a way of putting *P's* characters opposite *T's*. May or may not correspond to a match.

Exact Pattern Matching

What's a simple algorithm for exact matching?

P: **word**

T: **There would have been a time for such a word**

for each alignment in text

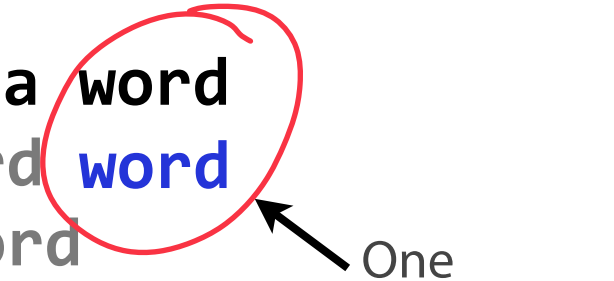
↳ check if pattern equals text's substring

Exact Pattern Matching

What's a simple algorithm for exact matching?

P: **word**

T: **There would have been a time for such a word**
word word word word word word word word **word**
word word word word word word word word word
word word word word word word word word word
word word word word word word word word word
word word word word word word word word word



Try all possible alignments. For each, check if it matches. This is the *naïve algorithm*.

Assignment 1: a_naive

Learning Objective:

Conceptualize exact pattern matching w/ naïve search

Demonstrate understanding of fundamental operations

Think about as you code: is naïve search a good solution?

Prefix & Suffix

End-of-class brainstorm

How can we improve the naïve algorithm?

End-of-class brainstorm

How can we improve the naïve algorithm?

O(1)

… if you have infinite space?

could make tree as faster encoding of text

↳ use hashing

Create a look up table for every string in the text &

its location

↳ preprocess data to speed up search

End-of-class brainstorm

How can we improve the naïve algorithm?

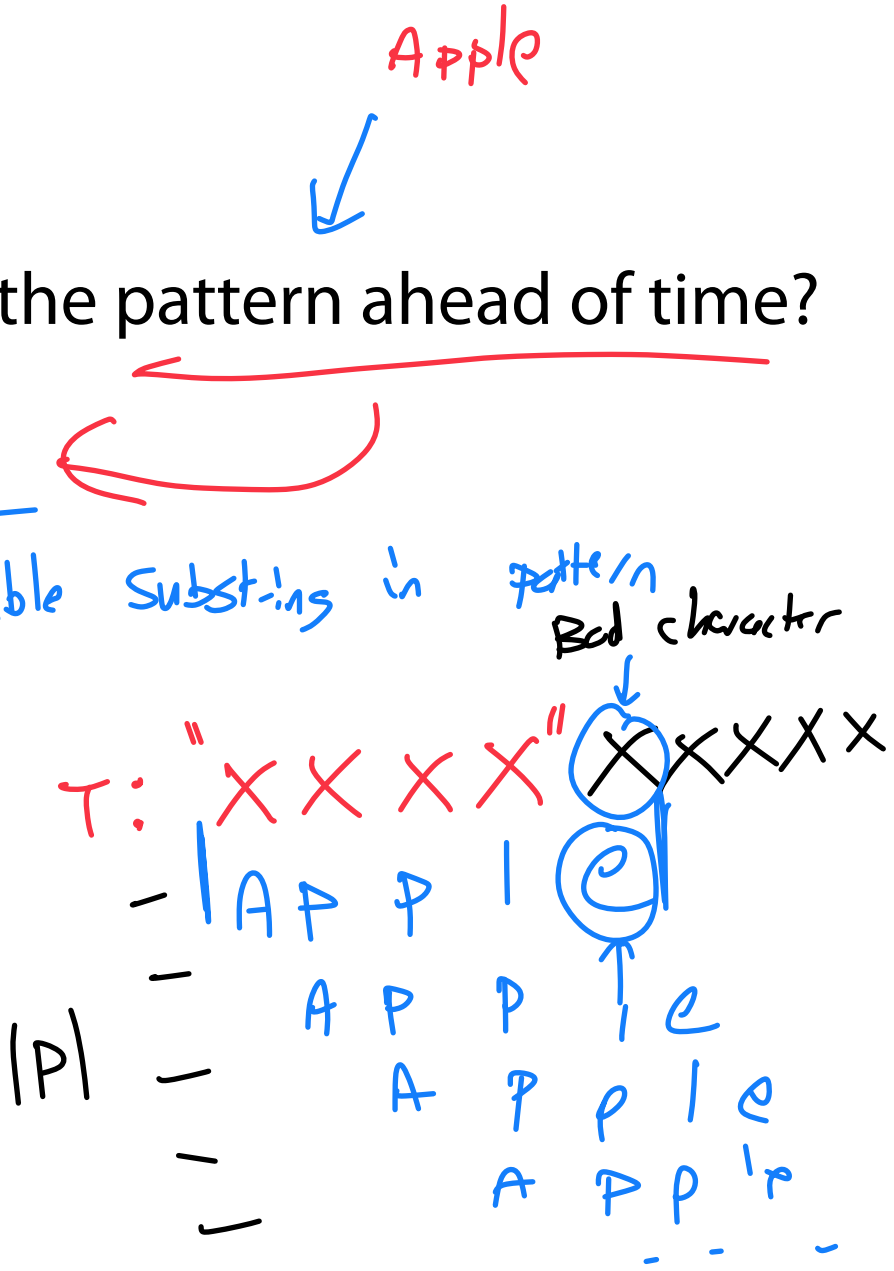
Boyer Moore

… if I tell you the pattern ahead of time?

check for first character in pattern

↳ check/preprocess every possible substring in pattern

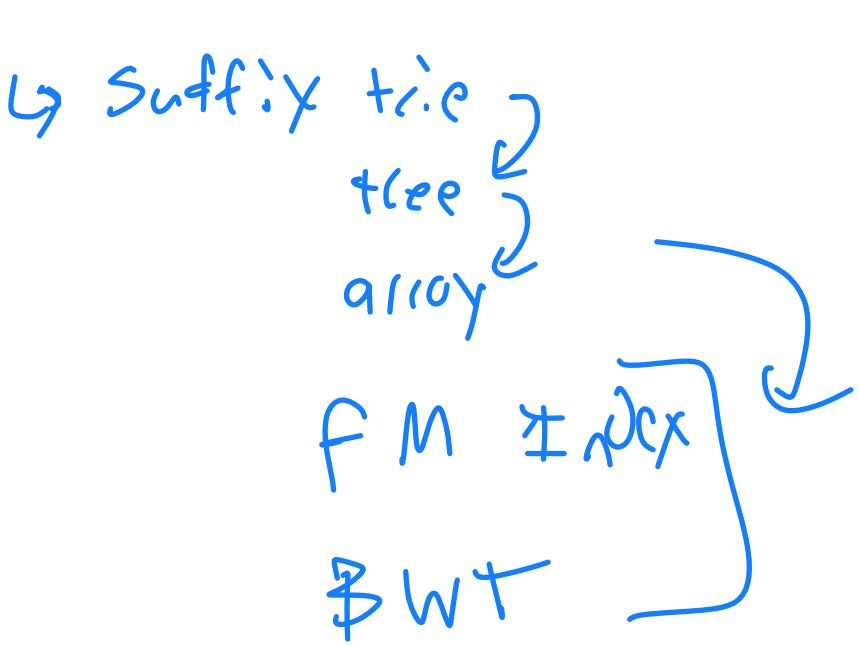
↳ Stop b/c Text too Small

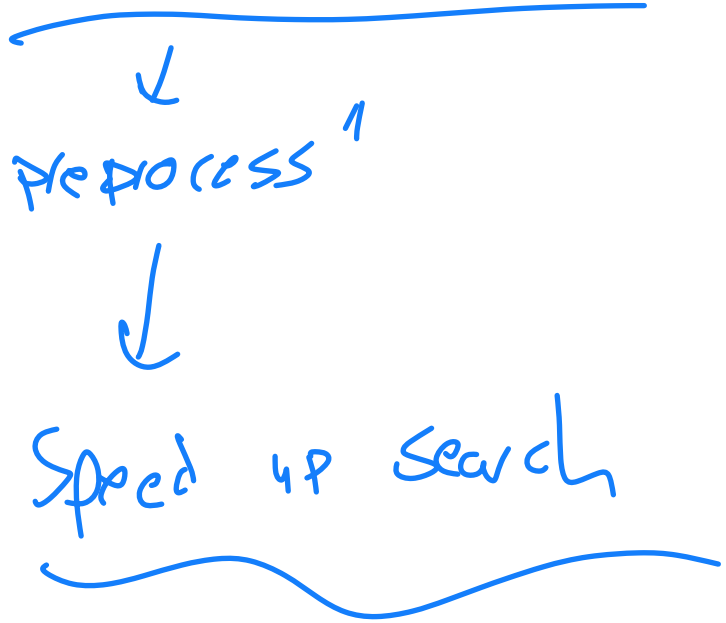


End-of-class brainstorm

How can we improve the naïve algorithm?

… if I tell you the text ahead of time?





End-of-class brainstorm

How can we improve the naïve algorithm?

… if you have infinite space?

… if I tell you the pattern ahead of time?

… if I tell you the text ahead of time?