

Foundations of Computer Science

Lecture 25

Context Free Grammars (CFGs)

Solving a Problem by “Listing Out” the Language

Rules for CFGs

Parse Trees

Pushdown Automata

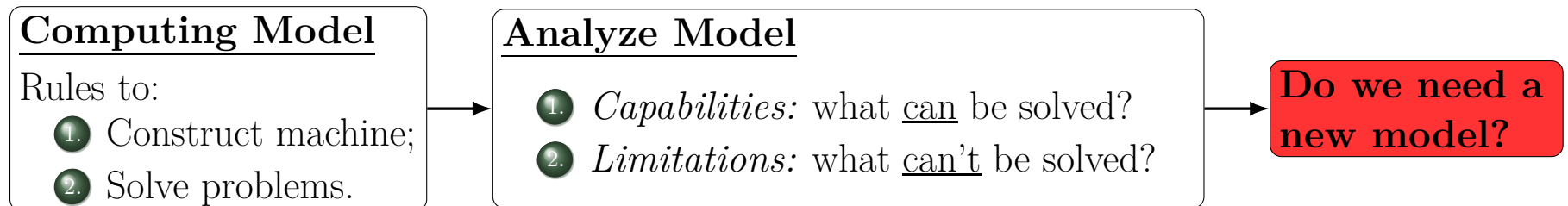


Last Time

DFAs: State transitioning machines which can be implemented using basic technology.

Powerful: can solve any regular expression.

(Finite sets, complement, union, intersection, concatenation, Kleene-star).

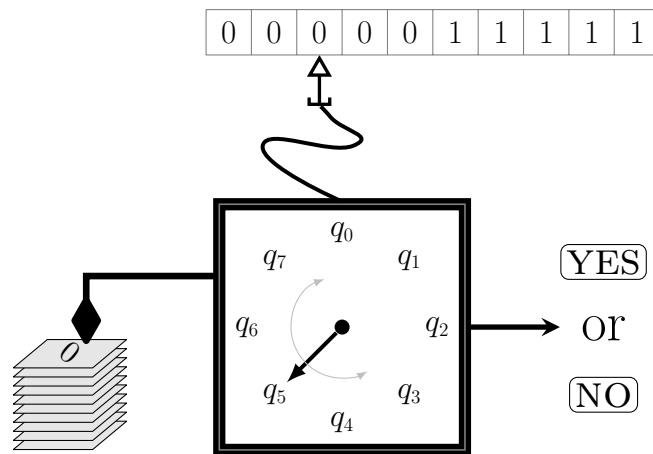


DFAs fail at so simple a problem as equality.

- That's not acceptable.
- We need a more powerful machine.

Adding Memory

DFA's have no scratch paper. It's hard to compute entirely in your head.



Stack Memory. Think of a file-clerk with a stack of papers.
The clerk's capabilities:

- see the top sheet;
- remove the top sheet (*pop*)
- *push* something new onto the top of the stack.
- no access to inner sheets without removing top.

DFA with a stack is a *pushdown automaton (PDA)*

How does the stack help to solve $\{0^n 1^n \mid n \geq 0\}$?

- 1: When you read in each 0, write it to the stack.
- 2: For each 1, pop the stack. At the end if the stack is empty, ACCEPT.

The memory allows the automaton to “remember” n .

Today: Context Free Grammars (CFGs)

- 1 Solving a problem by listing out the language.
- 2 Rules for Context Free Grammars (CFG).
- 3 Examples of Context Free Grammars.
 - English.
 - Programming.
- 4 Proving a CFG solves a problem.
- 5 Parse Trees.
- 6 Pushdown Automata and non context free languages.

Recursively Defined Language: Listing a Language.

$$\mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n} = \{0^n 1^n \mid n \geq 0\}$$

① $\varepsilon \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n}.$

[basis]

② $x \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n} \rightarrow 0 \bullet x \bullet 1 \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n}.$

[constructor rule]

③ Nothing else is in $\mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n}.$

[minimality]

To test if $0010 \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n}$: generate strings in order of length and test each for a match:

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A Context Free Grammar is like a recursive definition.

$$1: S \rightarrow \varepsilon \quad \left(\varepsilon \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n} \right)$$

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A Context Free Grammar is like a recursive definition.

$$\begin{array}{l} 1: S \rightarrow \varepsilon \\ 2: S \rightarrow 0S1 \end{array} \quad \left(\begin{array}{l} \varepsilon \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n} \\ x \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n} \rightarrow 0 \bullet x \bullet 1 \in \mathcal{L}_{0^n 1^n} \end{array} \right)$$

Rules for Context Free Grammars (CFGs)

Production rules of the CFG:

$$1: S \rightarrow \varepsilon$$

$$2: S \rightarrow 0S1$$

Each production rule has the form

variable	\rightarrow	expression
\uparrow		\uparrow
P, Q, R, S, T, \dots		string of variables and terminals

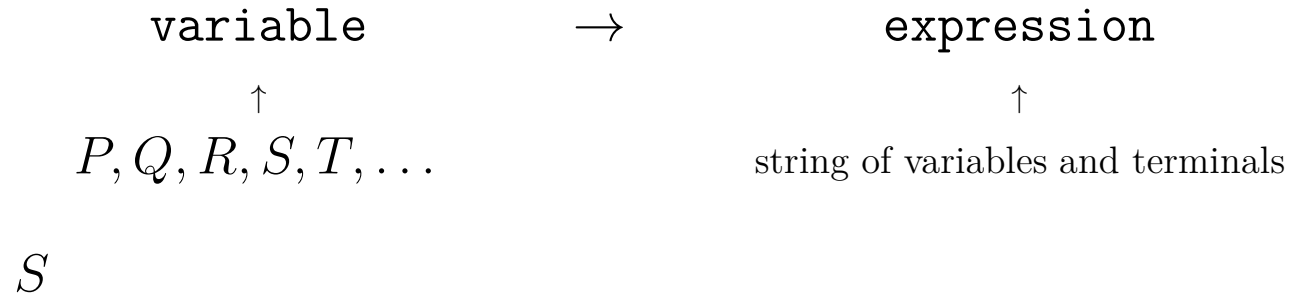
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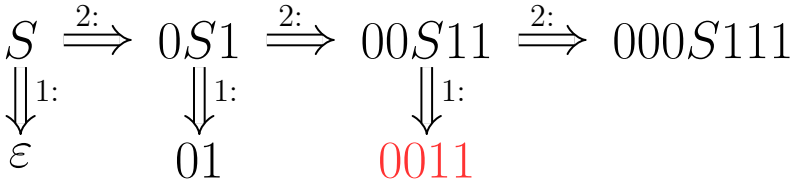
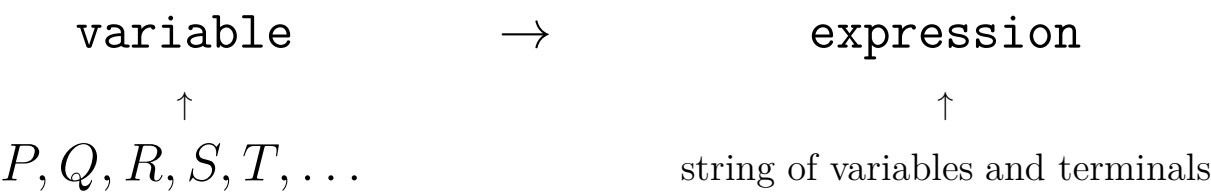
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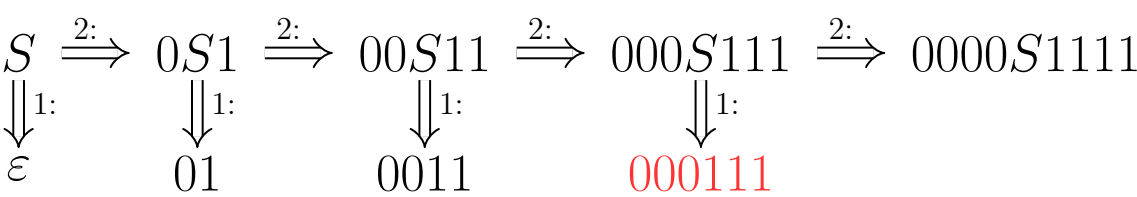
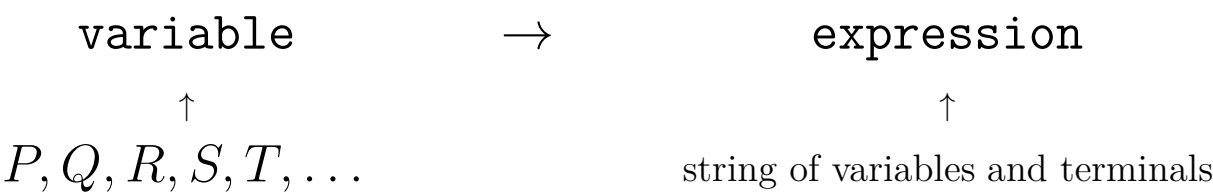
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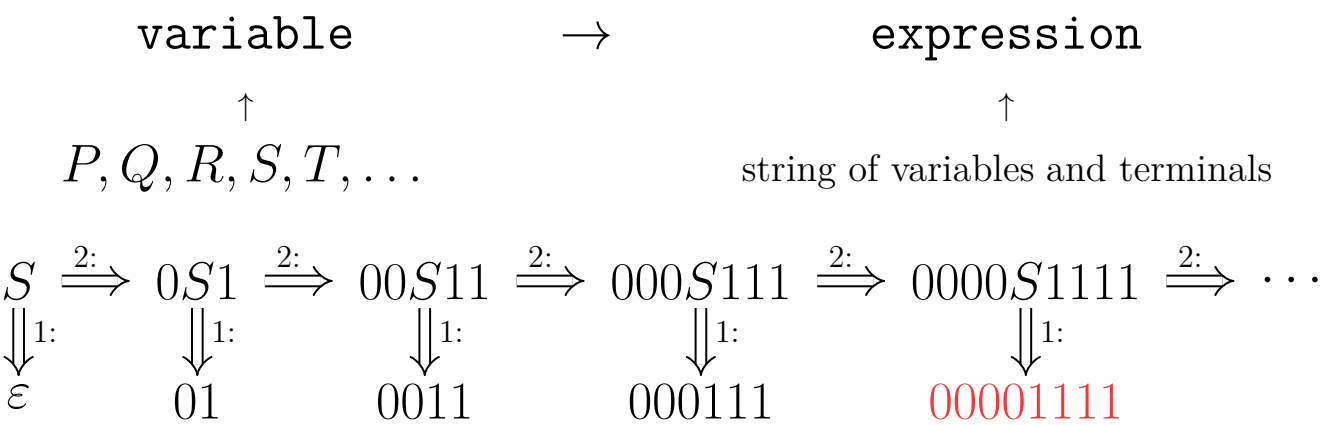
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Shorthand: $1: S \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid 0S1$

Language of Equality, CFG_{bal}

CFG_{bal}

$1: S \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid 0S1S \mid 1S0S$

$$\text{CFG}_{\text{bal}} \quad 1: S \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid 0S1S \mid 1S0S$$

A *derivation* of 0110 in CFG_{bal} (each step is called an inference).

$$S \xRightarrow{1:} 0S1S$$

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$$S \xRightarrow{1:} 0S1\textcolor{red}{S} \xRightarrow{1:} 0S1\textcolor{red}{1S0S}$$

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Notation:

$$S \xRightarrow{*} 0110 \quad (\xRightarrow{*} \text{ means "A derivation starting from } S \text{ yields 0110"})$$

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Distinguish S from a *mathematical* variable (e.g. x),

$$0S1S \quad \text{versus} \quad 0x1x$$

Two S 's are replaced independently. Two x 's must be the same, e.g. $x = 11$.

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Pop Quiz. Determine if each string can be generated and if so, give a derivation.

- Ⓐ 0011
- Ⓑ 0110
- Ⓒ 00011
- Ⓓ 010101

Give an informal description for the CFL of this CFG.

$$\begin{aligned} 1: S &\rightarrow \varepsilon \mid T_0T_1 \mid T_0A \\ 2: X &\rightarrow T_0T_1 \mid T_0A \\ 3: A &\rightarrow XT_1 \\ 4: T_0 &\rightarrow 0 \\ 5: T_1 &\rightarrow 1 \end{aligned}$$

A CFG for English

1: $S \rightarrow \langle \text{phrase} \rangle \langle \text{verb} \rangle$
2: $\langle \text{phrase} \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{article} \rangle \langle \text{noun} \rangle$
3: $\langle \text{article} \rangle \rightarrow A_{\square} \mid \text{The}_{\square}$
4: $\langle \text{noun} \rangle \rightarrow \text{cat}_{\square} \mid \text{dog}_{\square}$
5: $\langle \text{verb} \rangle \rightarrow \text{walks.} \mid \text{runs.} \mid \text{walks.}_{\square} S \mid \text{runs.}_{\square} S$

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Pop Quiz. Give a derivation for: $A_{\square} \text{cat}_{\square} \text{runs.}_{\square} \text{The}_{\square} \text{dog}_{\square} \text{walks.}$

A CFG for Programming

```
1:      S  → <stmt>;S | <stmt>;
2:      <stmt> → <assign> | <declare>
3:      <declare> → int_<variable>
4:      <assign> → <variable>=<integer>
5:      <integer> → <integer><digit> | <digit>
6:      <digit> → 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9
7:      <variable> → x | x<variable>
```

A CFG for Programming

- 1: $S \rightarrow \langle \text{stmt} \rangle ; S \mid \langle \text{stmt} \rangle ;$
- 2: $\langle \text{stmt} \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{assign} \rangle \mid \langle \text{declare} \rangle$
- 3: $\langle \text{declare} \rangle \rightarrow \text{int_} \langle \text{variable} \rangle$
- 4: $\langle \text{assign} \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{variable} \rangle = \langle \text{integer} \rangle$
- 5: $\langle \text{integer} \rangle \rightarrow \langle \text{integer} \rangle \langle \text{digit} \rangle \mid \langle \text{digit} \rangle$
- 6: $\langle \text{digit} \rangle \rightarrow 0 \mid 1 \mid 2 \mid 3 \mid 4 \mid 5 \mid 6 \mid 7 \mid 8 \mid 9$
- 7: $\langle \text{variable} \rangle \rightarrow x \mid x \langle \text{variable} \rangle$

Pop Quiz. Give derivations for these snippets of code.

- ☐ (a) `int_x;int_xx;x=22;xx=8;`
- ☐ (b) `x=8;int_x;`
- ☐ (c) `int_x;xx=8;`

Constructing a CFG to Solve a Problem

$\mathcal{L}_{\text{bal}} = \{\text{strings with an equal number of 1's and 0's}\}.$

001011010110

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001011010110 = 0 1

Constructing a CFG to Solve a Problem

$\mathcal{L}_{\text{bal}} = \{\text{strings with an equal number of 1's and 0's}\}.$

$$001011010110 = 0 \bullet \mathbf{0101} \bullet 1 \bullet \mathbf{010110}$$

$\begin{array}{cc} \uparrow & \uparrow \\ \text{in } \mathcal{L}_{\text{bal}} & \text{in } \mathcal{L}_{\text{bal}} \end{array}$

$$= 0S1S \quad (S \text{ represents "a string in } \mathcal{L}_{\text{bal}}")$$

Every large string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} can be obtained (recursively) from smaller ones.

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$$S \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid 0S1S \mid 1S0S.$$

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$$001011010110 = 0 \bullet \mathbf{0101} \bullet 1 \bullet \mathbf{010110}$$

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Every large string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} can be obtained (recursively) from smaller ones.

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We must *prove* that:

- ❶ Every string generated by this CFG is in \mathcal{L}_{bal} ?
- ❷ Every string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} can be derived by this grammar?

Proving a CFG Solves a Problem

$\mathcal{L}_{\text{bal}} = \{\text{strings with an equal number of 1's and 0's}\}$

$S \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid 0S1S \mid 1S0S$

(i) *Every derivation in CFG_{bal} generates a string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} .*

(ii) *Every string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} can be derived within CFG_{bal} .*

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Strong induction on the length of the derivation (number of production rules invoked).

Base Case. length-1 derivation gives ε .

(ii) *Every string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} can be derived within CFG_{bal} .*

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Base Case. length-1 derivation gives ε .

Induction. The derivation starts in one of two ways:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S \rightarrow 0 \underset{\substack{\Downarrow* \\ x}}{S} 1 \underset{\substack{\Downarrow* \\ y}}{S} \rightarrow \dots & \text{or} & S \rightarrow 1 \underset{\substack{\Downarrow* \\ x}}{S} 0 \underset{\substack{\Downarrow* \\ y}}{S} \rightarrow \dots \end{array}$$

The derivations of x and y are shorter.

(ii) *Every string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} can be derived within CFG_{bal} .*

Proving a CFG Solves a Problem

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{bal}} = \{\text{strings with an equal number of 1's and 0's}\}$$

$$S \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid 0S1S \mid 1S0S$$

(i) *Every derivation in CFG_{bal} generates a string in \mathcal{L}_{bal} .*

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By the induction hypothesis, $S \xRightarrow{*} w_1$ and $S \xRightarrow{*} w_2$, so $S \xRightarrow{*} w$.

Practice. Exercise 25.5.

Union, Concatenation, Kleene-star

$$\mathcal{L}_1 = \{0^n 1^n \mid n \geq 0\}$$

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$$\begin{array}{l} 1: S \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid SA \\ 2: A \rightarrow \varepsilon \mid 0A1 \end{array}$$

\leftarrow generates A^n

\leftarrow each A becomes a $0^n 1^n$

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Example 25.2. CFGs can implement DFAs, and so are strictly more powerful.

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Parse Trees

$$S \rightarrow \# \mid 0S1$$

Here is a derivation of 000#111,

$$S \Rightarrow 0S1 \Rightarrow 00S11 \Rightarrow 000S111 \Rightarrow 000\#111$$

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The *parse tree* gives more information than a derivation

$$S \Rightarrow$$

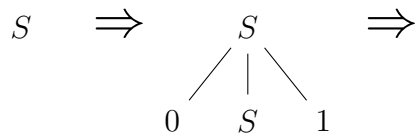
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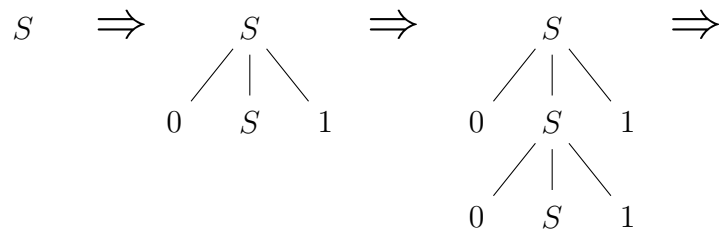
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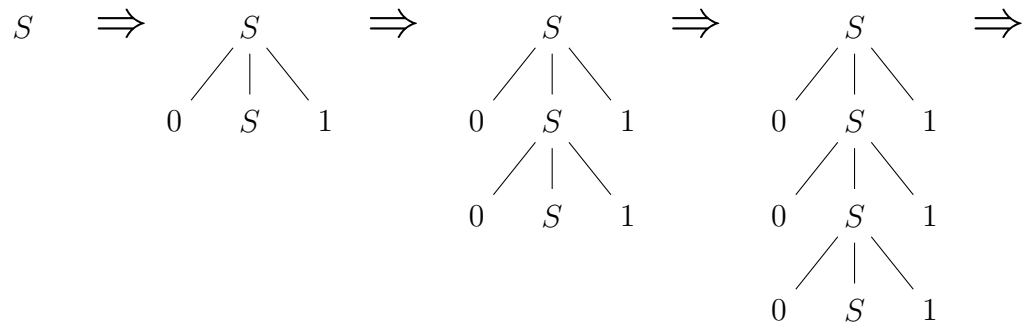
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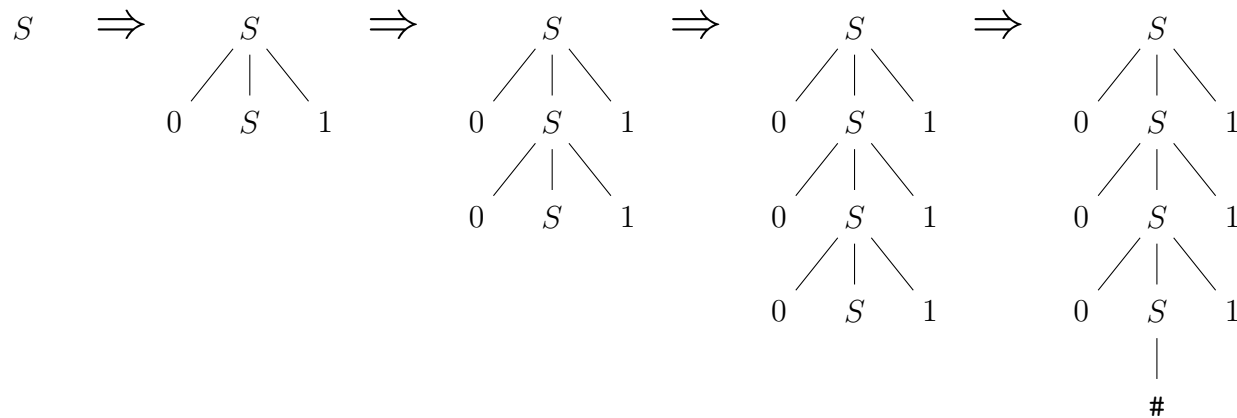
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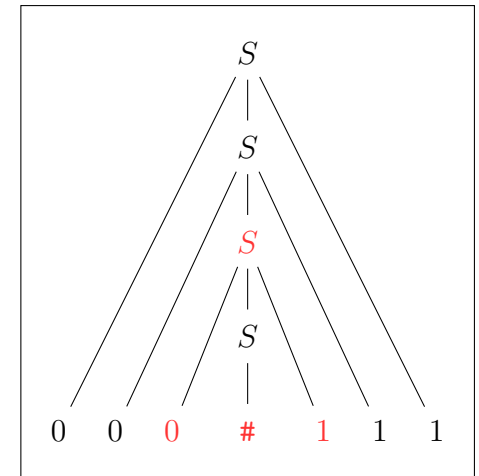
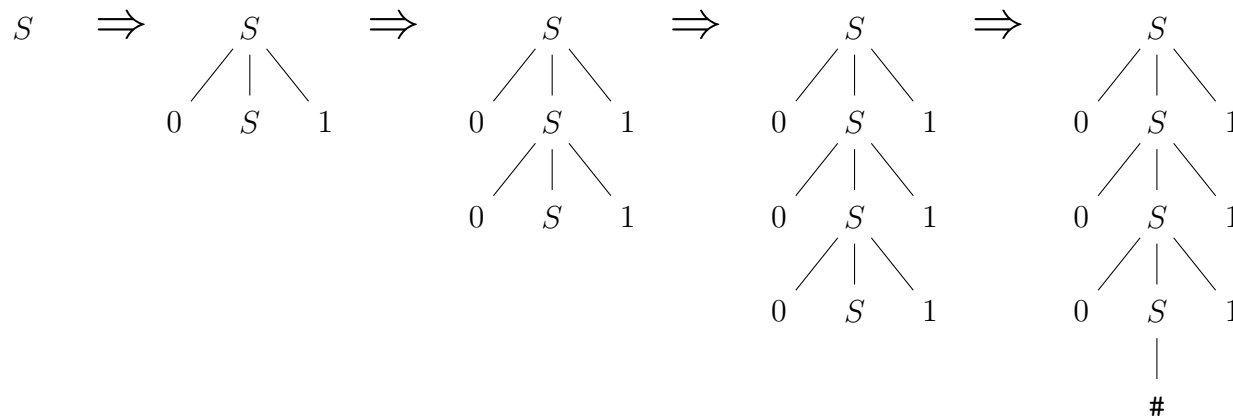
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Clearly shows how a substring belongs to the language of its parent variable.

CFG for Arithmetic

$$S \rightarrow S + S \mid S \times S \mid (S) \mid 2$$

(the terminals are $+$, \times , $($, $)$ and 2)

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Two derivations of $2 + 2 \times 2$ along with parse trees,

S

S

S

S

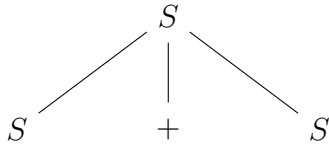
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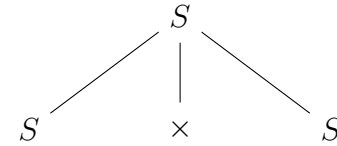
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Two derivations of $2 + 2 \times 2$ along with parse trees,

$$S \Rightarrow S + S$$



$$S \Rightarrow S \times S$$



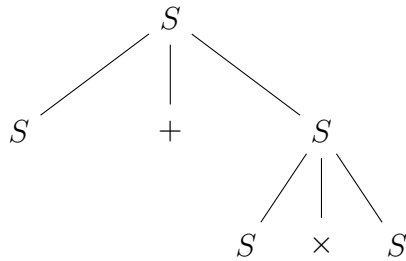
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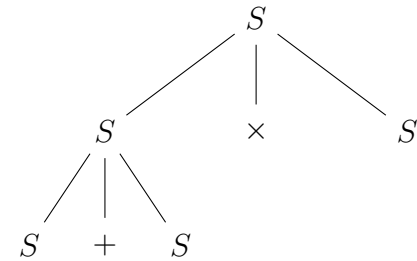
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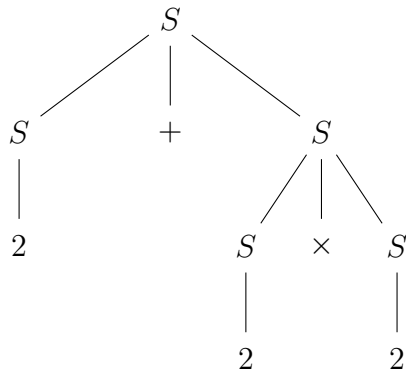
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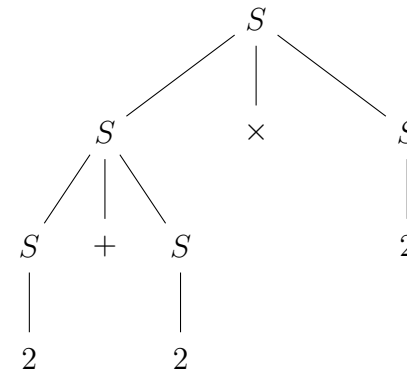
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$$S \Rightarrow S + S \Rightarrow S + S \times S \xRightarrow{*} 2 + 2 \times 2 \qquad S \Rightarrow S \times S \Rightarrow S + S \times S \xRightarrow{*} 2 + 2 \times 2$$



(multiply 2×2 and add to 2)



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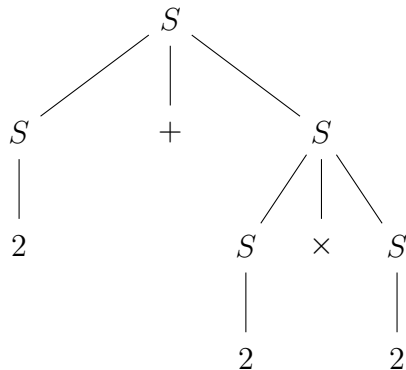
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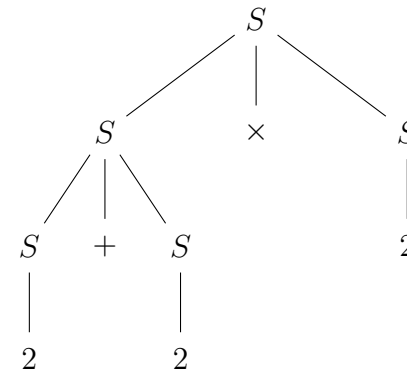
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- Parse tree \leftrightarrow How you interpret the string.
- Different parse trees \leftrightarrow different meanings.
- **BAD!** We want unambiguous meaning
programs, html-code, math, English, ...

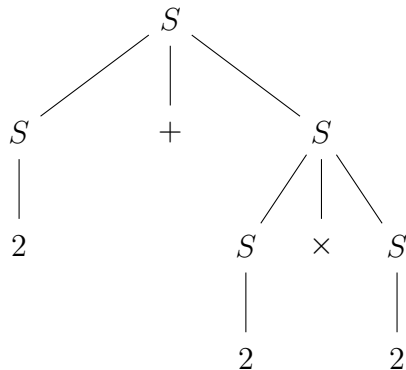
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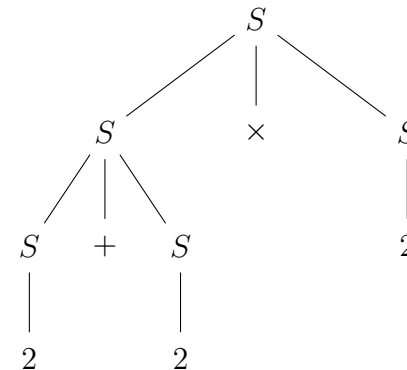
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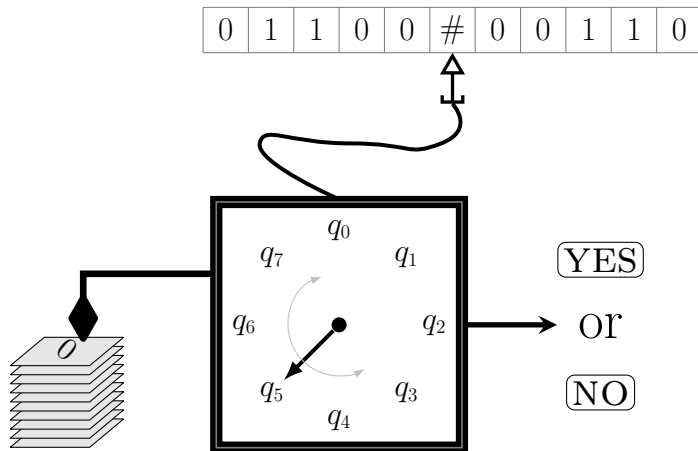
Unambiguous grammar

$$\begin{array}{ll} 1: & S \rightarrow P \mid S + P \\ 2: & P \rightarrow T \mid P \times T \\ 3: & T \rightarrow 2 \mid (S) \end{array}$$

Pushdown Automata: DFAs with Stack Memory

$$\mathcal{L} = \{w\#w^R \mid w \in \{0,1\}^*\}$$

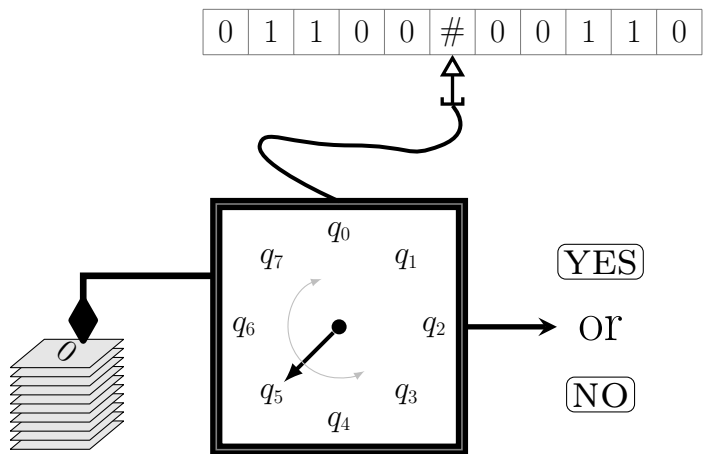
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DFA with stack memory (push, pop, read).

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DFA with stack memory (push, pop, read).

Push the first half of the string (before $\#$).
For each bit in the second half, pop the stack and compare.

DFAs with stack memory closely related to CFGs.

Non Context Free

$$\{w\#w\}$$

repetition

$$\{0^{\bullet n}1^{\bullet n}0^{\bullet n}\}$$

multiple-equality

$$\{0^{\bullet n^2}\}, \{0^{\bullet n}1^{\bullet n^2}\}$$

squaring

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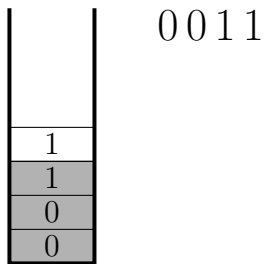
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$$\underline{w#w}$$

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0011 is pushed.



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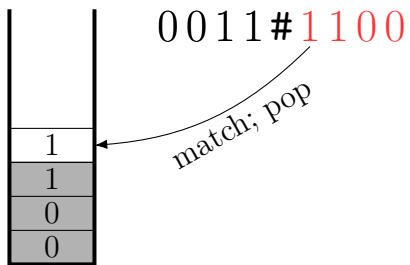
squaring

exponentiation

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$$\underline{w#w}$$

$$\underline{0^{\bullet n}1^{\bullet n}0^{\bullet n}}$$



0011 is pushed.

DFA matches 1100 by popping.

Non Context Free

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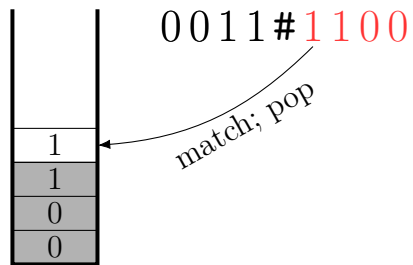
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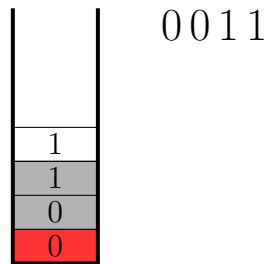
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$$\underline{w#w}$$



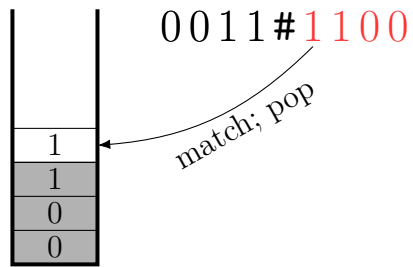
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Non Context Free

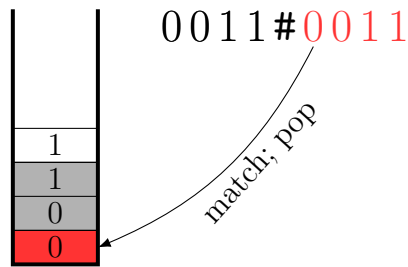
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$w#w^R$



0011 is pushed.
DFA matches 1100 by popping.

$w#w$



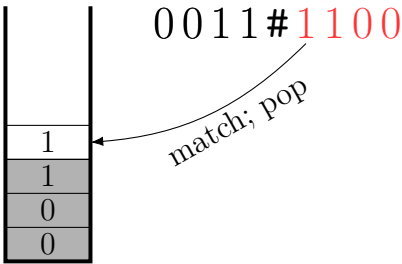
0011 is pushed.
DFA needs bottom-access to match.

$0^n 1^n 0^n$

Non Context Free

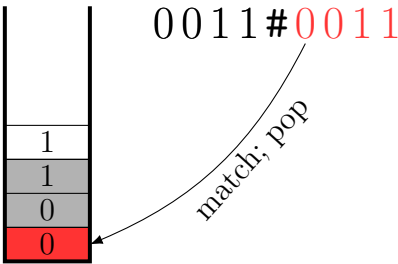
- $\{w#w\}$
- $\{0^n1^n0^n\}$
- $\{0^{n^2}\}, \{0^n1^{n^2}\}$
- $\{0^{2^n}\}, \{0^n1^{2^n}\}$
- repetition
- multiple-equality
- squaring
- exponentiation

$w#w^R$



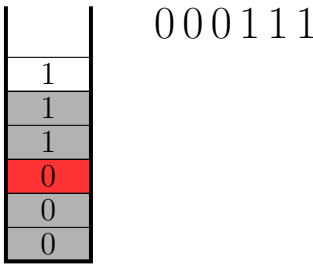
0011 is pushed.
DFA matches 1100 by popping.

$w#w$



0011 is pushed.
DFA needs bottom-access to match.

$0^n1^n0^n$



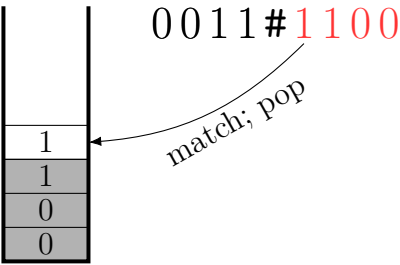
000111 is pushed.



Non Context Free

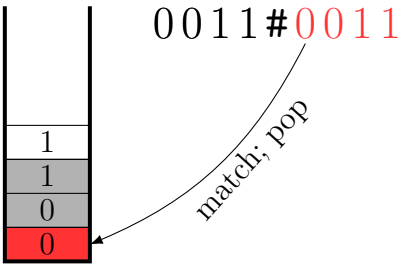
- $\{w#w\}$
 $\{0^n1^n0^n\}$
 $\{0^{n^2}\}, \{0^n1^{n^2}\}$
 $\{0^{2^n}\}, \{0^n1^{2^n}\}$
- repetition
multiple-equality
squaring
exponentiation

$w#w^R$



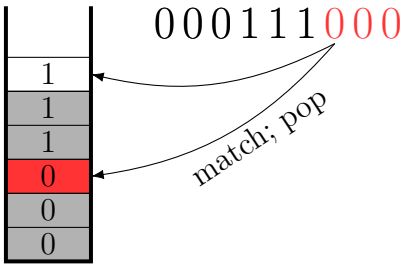
0011 is pushed.
DFA matches 1100 by popping.

$w#w$



0011 is pushed.
DFA needs bottom-access to match.

$0^n1^n0^n$



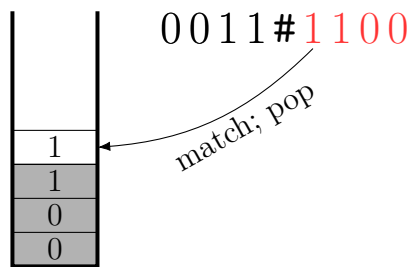
000111 is pushed.
DFA needs random access to match.



Non Context Free

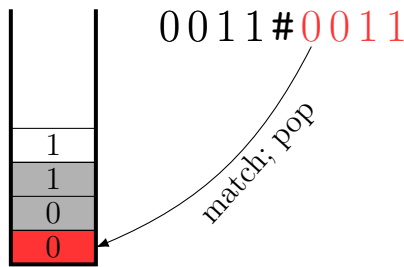
$\{w#w\}$ repetition
 $\{0^n 1^n 0^n\}$ multiple-equality
 $\{0^{n^2}\}, \{0^n 1^{n^2}\}$ squaring
 $\{0^{2^n}\}, \{0^n 1^{2^n}\}$ exponentiation

$w#w^R$



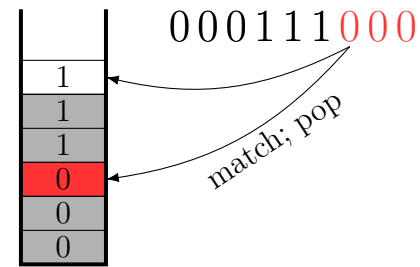
0011 is pushed.
DFA matches 1100 by popping.

$w#w$



0011 is pushed.
DFA needs bottom-access to match.

$0^n 1^n 0^n$



000111 is pushed.
DFA needs random access to match.

The file clerk who only has access to the top of his *stack* of papers has fundamentally less power than the file clerk who has a *filing cabinet* with access to all his papers.

We need a new model, one with Random Access Memory (RAM).