Chapter 4

Greedy Algorithms
Intro: Coin Changing
Coin Changing

Goal. Given currency denominations: 1, 5, 10, 25, 100, give change to customer using \textit{fewest} number of coins.

Ex: 34¢.

Cashier's algorithm. At each iteration, give the \textit{largest} coin valued \leq the amount to be paid.

Ex: $2.89.
Observation. Greedy algorithm is sub-optimal for US postal denominations: 1, 10, 21, 34, 70, 100, 350, 1225, 1500.

Counterexample. 140¢.
- Greedy: 100, 34, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1.
- Optimal: 70, 70.

Algorithm is “Greedy”, but also short-sighted – attractive choice now may lead to dead ends later.

Correctness is key!
Outline & Goals

“Greedy Algorithms”
what they are

Pros
intuitive
often simple
often fast

Cons
often incorrect!

Proofs are crucial. 3 (of many) techniques:
stay ahead
structural
exchange arguments
4.1 Interval Scheduling

Proof Technique 1: “greedy stays ahead”
Interval Scheduling

Interval scheduling.
- Job $j$ starts at $s_j$ and finishes at $f_j$.
- Two jobs compatible if they don’t overlap.
- Goal: find maximum subset of mutually compatible jobs.
Interval Scheduling: Greedy Algorithms

Greedy template. Consider jobs in some order. Take each job provided it’s compatible with the ones already taken.

- What order?
- Does that give best answer?
- Why or why not?
- Does it help to be greedy about order?
Interval Scheduling: Greedy Algorithms

**Greedy template.** Consider jobs in some order. Take each job provided it's compatible with the ones already taken.

- **[Earliest start time]** Consider jobs in ascending order of start time $s_j$.
- **[Earliest finish time]** Consider jobs in ascending order of finish time $f_j$.
- **[Shortest interval]** Consider jobs in ascending order of interval length $f_j - s_j$.
- **[Fewest conflicts]** For each job, count the number of conflicting jobs $c_j$. Schedule in ascending order of conflicts $c_j$. 
**Interval Scheduling: Greedy Algorithms**

**Greedy template.** Consider jobs in some order. Take each job provided it's compatible with the ones already taken.

- Breaks earliest start time
- Breaks shortest interval
- Breaks fewest conflicts
Interval Scheduling: *Earliest Finish First* Greedy Algorithm

**Greedy algorithm.** Consider jobs in *increasing order of finish time.* Take each job provided it’s compatible with the ones already taken.

```
Sort jobs by finish times so that \( f_1 \leq f_2 \leq \ldots \leq f_n \).

\text{jobs selected}
A \leftarrow \emptyset
for j = 1 to n {
    if (job j compatible with A)
        A \leftarrow A \cup \{j\}
}
return A
```

**Implementation.** \( O(n \log n) \).
- Remember job \( j^* \) that was added last to \( A \).
- Job \( j \) is compatible with \( A \) if \( s_j \geq f_{j^*} \).
Interval Scheduling

![Diagram of interval scheduling with tasks A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H plotted on a timeline from 0 to 11. Each task is represented by a colored bar starting at its respective time and ending at its completion time.]

- Task A starts at 1 and ends at 6.
- Task B starts at 3 and ends at 4.
- Task C starts at 4 and ends at 5.
- Task D starts at 5 and ends at 7.
- Task E starts at 6 and ends at 7.
- Task F starts at 7 and ends at 9.
- Task G starts at 8 and ends at 9.
- Task H starts at 10 and ends at 11.
Interval Scheduling

Time

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

A B C D E F G H

B C

B C
Interval Scheduling
Interval Scheduling

The diagram illustrates the scheduling of intervals on a timeline. Each horizontal bar represents an interval, and the vertical axis represents time. The intervals are labeled A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H. The scheduling aims to maximize the number of intervals that can be accommodated without overlapping.
Interval Scheduling

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H

Time

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
Interval Scheduling
Interval Scheduling

Time

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

B C A D E F G H

B E H
Theorem. *Earliest Finish First* Greedy algorithm is optimal.

**Pf.** ("greedy stays ahead")

Let $i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_k$ be jobs picked by greedy, $j_1, j_2, \ldots, j_m$ those in some optimal solution. Show $f(i_r) \leq f(j_r)$ by induction on $r$.

- **Basis:** $i_1$ chosen to have min finish time, so $f(i_1) \leq f(j_1)$
- **Ind:** $f(i_r) \leq f(j_r) \leq s(j_{r+1})$, so $j_{r+1}$ is among the candidates considered by greedy when it picked $i_{r+1}$, & it picks min finish, so $f(i_{r+1}) \leq f(j_{r+1})$

Similarly, $k \geq m$, else $j_{k+1}$ is among (nonempty) set of candidates for $i_{k+1}$.
4.1 Interval Partitioning

Proof Technique 2: “Structural”
Interval Partitioning

Interval partitioning.

- Lecture j starts at $s_j$ and finishes at $f_j$.
- Goal: find minimum number of classrooms to schedule all lectures so that no two occur at the same time in the same room.

Ex: This schedule uses 4 classrooms to schedule 10 lectures.
Interval Partitioning as Interval Graph Coloring

Vertices = classes;
edges = conflicting class pairs;
different colors = different assigned rooms

Note: graph coloring is very hard in general, but graphs corresponding to interval intersections are a much simpler special case.
Interval Partitioning

Interval partitioning.

- Lecture \( j \) starts at \( s_j \) and finishes at \( f_j \).
- Goal: find minimum number of classrooms to schedule all lectures so that no two occur at the same time in the same room.

**Ex:** This schedule uses only 3.
Interval Partitioning: A “Structural” Lower Bound on Optimal Solution

Def. The **depth** of a set of open intervals is the maximum number that contain any given time.

Key observation. Number of classrooms needed $\geq$ depth.

Ex: Depth of schedule below = 3 $\Rightarrow$ schedule below is optimal.

Q. Does there always exist a schedule equal to depth of intervals?
Interval Partitioning: Earliest Start First Greedy Algorithm

Greedy algorithm. Consider lectures in increasing order of start time: assign lecture to any compatible classroom.

Sort intervals by starting time so that $s_1 \leq s_2 \leq \ldots \leq s_n$.

\[
d \leftarrow 0 \quad \text{number of allocated classrooms}
\]

for $j = 1$ to $n$ {
    \[
    \text{if (lect j is compatible with some classroom } k, 1 \leq k \leq d)\\
    \quad \text{schedule lecture j in classroom } k
    \]
    else
    allocate a new classroom $d + 1$
    schedule lecture j in classroom $d + 1$
    \[
    d \leftarrow d + 1
    \]
}

Implementation? Run-time?

Exercises
Interval Partitioning: Greedy Analysis

**Observation.** Earliest Start First Greedy algorithm never schedules two incompatible lectures in the same classroom.

**Theorem.** Earliest Start First Greedy algorithm is optimal.

**Pf (exploit structural property).**
- Let \( d \) = number of classrooms that the greedy algorithm allocates.
- Classroom \( d \) is opened because we needed to schedule a job, say \( j \), that is incompatible with all \( d-1 \) previously used classrooms.
- Since we sorted by start time, all these incompatibilities are caused by lectures that start no later than \( s_j \).
- Thus, we have \( d \) lectures overlapping at time \( s_j + \varepsilon \), i.e. depth \( \geq d \).
- “Key observation” \( \Rightarrow \) all schedules use \( \geq \) depth classrooms, so \( d = \) depth and greedy is optimal.
4.2 Scheduling to Minimize Lateness

Proof Technique 3: “Exchange” Arguments
Scheduling to Minimize Lateness

Minimizing lateness problem.
- Single resource processes one job at a time.
- Job $j$ requires $t_j$ units of processing time and is due at time $d_j$.
- If $j$ starts at time $s_j$, it finishes at time $f_j = s_j + t_j$.
- Lateness: $\ell_j = \max \{ 0, f_j - d_j \}$.
- Goal: schedule all jobs to minimize maximum lateness $L = \max \ell_j$.

Ex:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>j</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$t_j$</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$d_j$</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lateness: $\ell_j = \max \{ 0, f_j - d_j \}$.

Max lateness = 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$d_3 = 9$</th>
<th>$d_2 = 8$</th>
<th>$d_6 = 15$</th>
<th>$d_1 = 6$</th>
<th>$d_5 = 14$</th>
<th>$d_4 = 9$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minimizing Lateness: Greedy Algorithms

**Greedy template.** Consider jobs in some order.

**[Shortest processing time first]**

Consider jobs in ascending order of processing time $t_j$.

**[Earliest deadline first]**

Consider jobs in ascending order of deadline $d_j$.

**[Smallest slack]**

Consider jobs in ascending order of slack $d_j - t_j$. 
Minimizing Lateness: Greedy Algorithms

Greedy template. Consider jobs in some order.

[Shortest processing time first] Consider jobs in ascending order of processing time $t_j$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$t_j$</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$d_j$</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

counterexample

[Smallest slack] Consider jobs in ascending order of slack $d_j - t_j$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$t_j$</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$d_j$</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

counterexample
Minimizing Lateness: Greedy Algorithm

Greedy algorithm. Earliest deadline first.

Sort $n$ jobs by deadline so that $d_1 \leq d_2 \leq ... \leq d_n$

$t \leftarrow 0$

for $j = 1$ to $n$
  // Assign job $j$ to interval $[t, t + t_j]$:
  $s_j \leftarrow t$, $f_j \leftarrow t + t_j$
  $t \leftarrow t + t_j$

output intervals $[s_j, f_j]$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$t_j$</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$d_j$</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
   | d_1 = 6 | d_2 = 8 | d_3 = 9 | d_4 = 9 | d_5 = 14 | d_6 = 15 |
\end{array}$

$0 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 7 \quad 8 \quad 9 \quad 10 \quad 11 \quad 12 \quad 13 \quad 14 \quad 15$

max lateness = 1
Minimizing Lateness: No Idle Time

**Observation.** There exists an optimal schedule with no idle time.

![Diagram showing time frames](image)

**Observation.** The greedy schedule has no idle time.
Minimizing Lateness: Inversions

**Def.** An *inversion* in schedule $S$ is a pair of jobs $i$ and $j$ such that: deadline $i < j$ but $j$ scheduled before $i$.

**Observation.** Greedy schedule has no inversions.

**Observation.** If a schedule (with no idle time) has an inversion, it has one with a pair of inverted jobs scheduled consecutively. (If $j$ & $i$ aren’t consecutive, then look at the job $k$ scheduled right after $j$. If $d_k < d_j$, then $(j,k)$ is a consecutive inversion; if not, then $(k,i)$ is an inversion, & nearer to each other - repeat.)

**Observation.** Swapping *adjacent* inversion reduces # inversions by 1 (exactly)
Def. An *inversion* in schedule $S$ is a pair of jobs $i$ and $j$ such that: deadline $i < j$ but $j$ scheduled before $i$.

Claim. *Swapping* two consecutive, inverted jobs reduces the number of inversions by one and does not increase the max lateness.

Pf. Let $\ell$ be the lateness before the swap, and let $\ell'$ be it afterwards.

- $\ell'_k = \ell_k$ for all $k \neq i, j$
- $\ell'_i \leq \ell_i$
- If job $j$ is now late:
  \[
  \ell'_j = f'_j - d_j \quad \text{(definition)} \\
  = f_i - d_j \quad \text{(j finishes at time $f_i$)} \\
  \leq f_i - d_i \quad \text{(since $d_i \leq d_j$)} \\
  = \ell_i \quad \text{(definition)}
  \]

(j had later deadline, so is less tardy than $i$ was)

only $j$ moves later, but it’s no later than $i$ was, so max not increased
**Minimizing Lateness: No Inversions**

Claim. All inversion-free schedules \( S \) have the same max lateness.

Pf. If \( S \) has no inversions, then deadlines of scheduled jobs are monotonically nondecreasing, i.e., they increase (or stay the same) as we walk through the schedule from left to right.

Two such schedules can differ only in the order of jobs with the same deadlines. Within a group of jobs with the same deadline, the max lateness is the lateness of the last job in the group - order within the group doesn’t matter.
Minimizing Lateness: Correctness of Greedy Algorithm

**Theorem.** Greedy schedule $S$ is optimal

**Pf.** Let $S^*$ be an optimal schedule with the fewest number of inversions

Can assume $S^*$ has no idle time.

If $S^*$ has an inversion, let $i-j$ be an adjacent inversion

Swapping $i$ and $j$ does not increase the maximum lateness and
strictly decreases the number of inversions

This contradicts definition of $S^*$

So, $S^*$ has no inversions. But then $\text{Lateness}(S) = \text{Lateness}(S^*)$
Greedy Analysis Strategies

**Greedy algorithm stays ahead.** Show that after each step of the greedy algorithm, its solution is at least as “good” as any other algorithm's. (Part of the cleverness is deciding what’s “good.”)

**Structural.** Discover a simple "structural" bound asserting that every possible solution must have a certain value. Then show that your algorithm always achieves this bound. (Cleverness here is usually in finding a useful structural characteristic.)

**Exchange argument.** Gradually transform any solution to the one found by the greedy algorithm without hurting its quality.
4.3 Optimal Caching

1. **cache**
   - Pronunciation: 'kash
   - Function: noun
   - Etymology: French, from *cacher* to press, hide
   - a hiding place especially for concealing and preserving provisions or implements

2. **cache**
   - Function: transitive verb
   - to place, hide, or store in a cache

- Webster’s Dictionary
Optimal Offline Caching

**Caching.**
- Cache with capacity to store k items.
- Sequence of m item requests $d_1, d_2, \ldots, d_m$.
- Cache hit: item already in cache when requested.
- Cache miss: item not already in cache when requested: must bring requested item into cache, and evict some existing item, if full.

**Goal.** Eviction schedule that minimizes number of cache misses.

**Ex:** $k = 2$, initial cache = ab,

requests: a, b, c, b, c, a, a, b.

Optimal eviction schedule: 2 cache misses.
Optimal Offline Caching: Farthest-In-Future

Farthest-in-future. Evict item in the cache that is not requested until farthest in the future.

current cache:    \[a \ b \ c \ d \ e \ f\]

future queries: \[g \ a \ b \ c \ e \ d \ a \ b \ b \ a \ c \ d \ e \ a \ f \ a \ d \ e \ f \ g \ h \ldots\]

\[\uparrow\quad \text{cache miss}\quad \uparrow\quad \text{eject this one}\]

Theorem. [Bellady, 1960s] FF is optimal eviction schedule.

Pf. Algorithm and theorem are intuitive; proof is subtle.

Motivation: “Online” problem is typically what’s needed in practice - decide what to evict without seeing the future. How to evaluate such an alg? Fewer misses is obviously better, but how few? FF is a useful benchmark - best online alg is unknown, but it’s no better than FF, so online performance close to FF’s is the best you can hope for.
4.4 Shortest Paths in a Graph

You’ve seen this in prerequisite courses, so this section and next two on min spanning tree are review. I won’t lecture on them, but you should review the material. Both, but especially shortest paths, are common problems, having many applications.
Shortest Path Problem

Shortest path network.
- Directed graph $G = (V, E)$.
- Source $s$, destination $t$.
- Length $\ell_e = \text{length of edge } e$.

Shortest path problem: find shortest directed path from $s$ to $t$.

Cost of path $s-2-3-5-t$  
$= 9 + 23 + 2 + 16  
= 48.$
Dijkstra's Algorithm

Dijkstra's algorithm.

- Maintain a set of explored nodes $S$ for which we have determined the shortest path distance $d(u)$ from $s$ to $u$.
- Initialize $S = \{s\}$, $d(s) = 0$.
- Repeatedly choose unexplored node $v$ which minimizes

$$
\pi(v) = \min_{e = (u,v): u \in S} d(u) + \ell_e,
$$

add $v$ to $S$, and set $d(v) = \pi(v)$.

\[\text{shortest path to some } u \text{ in explored part, followed by a single edge } (u, v)\]
Dijkstra's Algorithm

Dijkstra's algorithm.

- Maintain a set of explored nodes $S$ for which we have determined the shortest path distance $d(u)$ from $s$ to $u$.
- Initialize $S = \{ s \}$, $d(s) = 0$.
- Repeatedly choose unexplored node $v$ which minimizes

$$\pi(v) = \min_{e = (u,v) : u \in S} d(u) + \ell_e,$$

add $v$ to $S$, and set $d(v) = \pi(v)$.

- Shortest path to some $u$ in explored part, followed by a single edge $(u, v)$.