



Data Structure

(Course Code: 25B11CI318)

Sorting

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Sorting Algorithms

Definition

Sorting is the process of arranging data elements in a particular order, usually ascending or descending.

Common sorting algorithms:

- Merge Sort
- Quick Sort
- Counting Sort

Goal

Arrange the elements efficiently while minimizing time and space requirements.

Recurrence Relation

Definition

A **recurrence relation** expresses the running time of a recursive algorithm in terms of the running time of smaller input sizes.

General form:

$$T(n) = aT\left(\frac{n}{b}\right) + f(n)$$

where:

- a = number of recursive subproblems
- n/b = size of each subproblem
- $f(n)$ = work performed outside recursion

Example of Recurrence Relation

Suppose an algorithm divides a problem into two equal subproblems and performs $\Theta(n)$ additional work.

Then:

$$T(n) = 2T(n/2) + \Theta(n)$$

For the base case:

$$T(1) = \Theta(1)$$

Using the Master Theorem:

$$a = 2, \quad b = 2, \quad f(n) = \Theta(n)$$

and:

$$n^{\log_b a} = n^{\log_2 2} = n$$

Merge Sort

Definition

Merge Sort is a divide-and-conquer sorting algorithm that divides the array into smaller subarrays, recursively sorts them, and then merges the sorted subarrays.

Three main steps:

- ① **Divide** – Split the array into two halves.
- ② **Conquer** – Recursively sort both halves.
- ③ **Combine** – Merge the two sorted halves.

Divide → Sort → Merge

Merge Sort: Recurrence Relation

For an array of size n :

$$T(n) = 2T(n/2) + \Theta(n)$$

Explanation:

- $2T(n/2)$ – Sort two halves.
- $\Theta(n)$ – Merge the two sorted halves.

Using the Master Theorem:

$$a = 2, \quad b = 2, \quad f(n) = \Theta(n)$$

Therefore:

$$T(n) = \Theta(n \log n)$$

Important

Merge Sort has the same asymptotic time complexity in the best, average, and worst cases.

Merge Sort: Example

Consider:

$A = [38, 27, 43, 3, 9, 82, 10]$

Step 1: Divide

$[38, 27, 43, 3]$ $[9, 82, 10]$

Further divide:

$[38]$ $[27]$ $[43]$ $[3]$

$[9]$ $[82]$ $[10]$

Step 2: Merge sorted elements

$[27, 38]$ $[3, 43]$

$[9, 82]$

Then:

$[3, 27, 38, 43]$ $[9, 10, 82]$

Merge Sort: Final Merge

The two sorted subarrays are:

[3, 27, 38, 43]

and

[9, 10, 82]

Merge them by repeatedly comparing the first remaining elements.

$$3 < 9$$

$$9 < 27$$

$$10 < 27$$

$$27 < 82$$

Finally:

[3, 9, 10, 27, 38, 43, 82]

Complexity

$$O(n \log n)$$

Merge Sort: Complexity

Case	Time Complexity
Best Case	$O(n \log n)$
Average Case	$O(n \log n)$
Worst Case	$O(n \log n)$
Space	$O(n)$

Key Point

Merge Sort guarantees $O(n \log n)$ time, but requires additional memory for merging.

Quick Sort

Definition

Quick Sort is a divide-and-conquer sorting algorithm that selects a **pivot** and partitions the array around the pivot.

Main steps:

- 1 Select a pivot.
- 2 Partition the array.
- 3 Elements smaller than the pivot go to the left.
- 4 Elements greater than the pivot go to the right.
- 5 Recursively sort both parts.

Pivot → Partition → Recursion

Quick Sort: Example

Consider:

$A = [10, 7, 8, 9, 1, 5]$

Choose the last element as pivot:

$\text{pivot} = 5$

After partitioning:

$[1] \quad 5 \quad [10, 7, 8, 9]$

The pivot 5 is now in its correct position. Recursively sort:

$[10, 7, 8, 9]$

Choose 9 as pivot:

$[7, 8] \quad 9 \quad [10]$

Therefore:

$[1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10]$

Quick Sort: Recurrence Relation

If the pivot divides the array approximately equally:

$$T(n) = 2T(n/2) + \Theta(n)$$

Therefore:

$$T(n) = \Theta(n \log n)$$

However, if the pivot is always the smallest or largest element:

$$T(n) = T(n-1) + \Theta(n)$$

Expanding:

$$T(n) = T(n-2) + \Theta(n-1) + \Theta(n)$$

Therefore:

$$T(n) = \Theta(n^2)$$

Quick Sort: Complexity

Case	Time Complexity
Best Case	$O(n \log n)$
Average Case	$O(n \log n)$
Worst Case	$O(n^2)$
Average Space	$O(\log n)$
Worst Space	$O(n)$

Important

The choice of pivot strongly affects the performance of Quick Sort.

Counting Sort

Definition

Counting Sort is a non-comparison sorting algorithm that sorts elements by counting the number of occurrences of each value.

Basic idea:

Input → Count Frequencies → Construct Sorted Output

Counting Sort is especially useful when the range of input values is small compared with the number of elements.

Counting Sort: Example

Consider:

$$A = [4, 2, 2, 8, 3, 3, 1]$$

The maximum value is:

$$k = 8$$

Create a count array:

$$C[0 \dots 8]$$

Value	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Count	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	1

The count array tells us how many times each value occurs.

Counting Sort: Construct Output

From the count array:

$$C[1] = 1$$

so write:

1

Since:

$$C[2] = 2$$

write:

2, 2

Similarly:

3, 3

4

and:

8

Therefore:

[1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 8]

Counting Sort: Complexity

Let:

- n = number of elements
- k = range of input values

The time complexity is:

$$T(n) = O(n + k)$$

Space complexity:

$$O(n + k)$$

When is Counting Sort Efficient?

Counting Sort is efficient when k is relatively small compared with n .

Merge Sort vs Quick Sort vs Counting Sort

Feature	Merge Sort	Quick Sort	Counting Sort
Technique	Divide & Conquer	Divide & Conquer	Counting
Comparison Based	Yes	Yes	No
Best	$O(n \log n)$	$O(n \log n)$	$O(n + k)$
Average	$O(n \log n)$	$O(n \log n)$	$O(n + k)$
Worst	$O(n \log n)$	$O(n^2)$	$O(n + k)$
Extra Space	$O(n)$	$O(\log n)$	$O(n + k)$
Stable	Yes	Depends	Yes

Key Takeaways

① Merge Sort

- Divide the array into two halves.
- Recursively sort the halves.
- Merge the sorted halves.
- Time: $O(n \log n)$.

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② Quick Sort

- Select a pivot.
- Partition the array.
- Recursively sort both sides.
- Average: $O(n \log n)$.
- Worst: $O(n^2)$.

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① Merge Sort

- Divide the array into two halves.
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- Merge the sorted halves.
- Time: $O(n \log n)$.

② Quick Sort

- Select a pivot.
- Partition the array.
- Recursively sort both sides.
- Average: $O(n \log n)$.
- Worst: $O(n^2)$.

③ Counting Sort

- Count occurrences of values.
- Construct sorted output.
- Time: $O(n + k)$.

Thank You

Questions?