# CSE 431/531: Analysis of Algorithms Introduction and Syllabus

Lecturer: Shi Li

Department of Computer Science and Engineering University at Buffalo

### Outline

- Syllabus
- 2 Introduction
  - What is an Algorithm?
  - Example: Insertion Sort
  - Analysis of Insertion Sort
- Asymptotic Notations
- 4 Common Running times

# CSE 431/531: Analysis of Algorithms

- Course webpage: http://www.cse.buffalo.edu/~shil/courses/CSE531/
- Please sign up the course on Piazza: http://piazza.com/buffalo/fall2016/cse431531

# CSE 431/531: Analysis of Algorithms

- Time and locatiion:
  - MoWeFr, 9:00-9:50am
  - Cooke 121
- Lecturer:
  - Shi Li, shil@buffalo.edu
  - Office hours: TBD
- TAs
  - Di Wang, dwang45@buffalo.edu
  - Minwei Ye, minweiye@buffalo.edu
  - Alexander Stachnik, ajstachn@buffalo.edu

#### You should know:

- Mathematical Tools
  - Mathematical inductions
  - Probabilities and random variables
- Data Structures
  - Stacks, queues, linked lists
- Some Programming Experience
  - E.g., C, C++ or Java

#### You may know:

- Asymptotic analysis
- Simple algorithm design techniques such as greedy, divide-and-conquer, dynamic programming

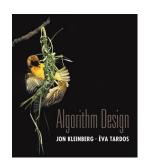
### You Will Learn

- Classic algorithms for classic problems
  - Sorting
  - Shortest paths
  - Minimum spanning tree
  - Network flow
- How to analyze algorithms
  - Correctness
  - Running time (efficiency)
  - Space requirement
- Meta techniques to design algorithms
  - Greedy algorithms
  - Divide and conquer
  - Dynamic programming
  - Reductions
- NP-completeness

### **Textbook**

#### Required Textbook:

 Algorithm Design, 1st Edition, by Jon Kleinberg and Eva Tardos



#### Other Reference Books

 Introduction to Algorithms, Third Edition, Thomas Cormen, Charles Leiserson, Rondald Rivest, Clifford Stein

# Grading

- 20% for homeworks
  - 5 homeworks, each worth 4%
- 20% for projects
  - 2 projects, each worth 10%
- 30% for in-class exams
  - 2 in-class exams, each worth 15%
- 30% for final exam
  - If to your advantage: each in-class exam is worth 5% and final is worth 50%

# For Homeworks, You Are Allowed to

- Use course materials (textbook, reference books, lecture notes, etc)
- Post questions on Piazza
- Ask me or TAs for hints
- Collaborate with classmates
  - Think about each problem for enough time before discussing
  - Must write down solutions on your own, in your own words
  - Write down names of students you collaborated with

## For Homeworks, You Are Not Allowed to

- Use external resources
  - Can't Google or ask questions online for solutions
  - Can't read posted solutions from other algorithm courses
- Copy solutions from other students

If you are not following the rules, you will get an "F" for the course.

# **Projects**

- Need to implement an algorithm for each of the two projects
- Can not copy codes from others or the Internet

If you are not following the rules, you will get an "F" for the course.

# Late policy

- You have one late credit.
- turn in a homework or a project late for three days using the late credit
- no other late submissions will be accepted

#### **Exams**

- Closed-book
- Can bring one A4 handwritten sheet

If you are caught cheating in exams, you will get an "F" for the course.

Questions?

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# What is an Algorithm?

- Donald Knuth: An algorithm is a finite, definite effective procedure, with some input and some output.
- Computational problem: specifies the input/output relationship.
- An algorithm solves a computational problem if it produces the correct output for any given input.

# **Examples**

#### **Greatest Common Divisor**

**Input:** two integers a, b > 0

**Output:** the greatest common divisor of a and b

#### Example:

• Input: 210, 270

• Output: 30

• Algorithm: Euclidean algorithm

•  $gcd(270, 210) = gcd(210, 270 \mod 210) = gcd(210, 60)$ 

•  $(270,210) \rightarrow (210,60) \rightarrow (60,30) \rightarrow (30,0)$ 

# **Examples**

#### Sorting

**Input:** sequence of n numbers  $(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n)$ 

**Output:** a permutation  $(a'_1, a'_2, \cdots, a'_n)$  of the input sequence such that  $a'_1 \leq a'_2 \leq \cdots \leq a'_n$ 

#### Example:

• Input: 53, 12, 35, 21, 59, 15

• Output: 12, 15, 21, 35, 53, 59

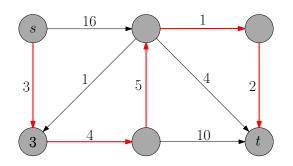
• Algorithms: insertion sort, merge sort, quicksort, ...

# **Examples**

#### Shortest Path

**Input:** directed graph G = (V, E),  $s, t \in V$ 

**Output:** a shortest path from s to t in G



• Algorithm: Dijkstra's algorithm

# Algorithm = Computer Program?

- Algorithm: "abstract", can be specified using computer program, English, pseudo-codes or flow charts.
- Computer program: "concrete", implementation of algorithm, associated with a particular programming language

#### Pseudo-Code

Pseudo-Code:

#### Euclidean(a, b)

- while b > 0
- $(a,b) \leftarrow (b,a \bmod b)$
- $\odot$  return a

```
C++ program:
    int Euclidean(int a, int b){
        int c;
        while (b > 0){
            c = b;
            b = a % b;
            a = c;
        }
}
```

return a:

• }

# Theoretical Analysis of Algorithms

- Main focus: correctness, running time (efficiency)
- Sometimes: memory usage
- Not covered in the course: engineering side
  - readability
  - extensibility
  - user-friendliness
  - . . .
- Why is it important to study the running time (efficiency) of an algorithm?
  - feasible vs. infeasible
  - use efficiency to pay for user-friendliness, extensibility, etc.
  - fundamental
  - it is fun!

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#### Sorting Problem

**Input:** sequence of n numbers  $(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n)$ 

**Output:** a permutation  $(a'_1, a'_2, \dots, a'_n)$  of the input sequence such that  $a'_1 < a'_2 < \dots < a'_n$ 

#### Example:

 $\bullet \ \, \mathsf{Input:} \ \, 53,12,35,21,59,15$ 

• Output: 12, 15, 21, 35, 53, 59

#### Insertion-Sort

ullet At the end of j-th iteration, make the first j numbers sorted.

```
iteration 1: 53, 12, 35, 21, 59, 15
iteration 2: 12, 53, 35, 21, 59, 15
iteration 3: 12, 35, 53, 21, 59, 15
iteration 4: 12, 21, 35, 53, 59, 15
iteration 5: 12, 21, 35, 53, 59, 15
iteration 6: 12, 15, 21, 35, 53, 59
```

#### Example:

- Input: 53, 12, 35, 21, 59, 15
- Output: 12, 15, 21, 35, 53, 59

#### insertion-sort(A, n)

- for  $j \leftarrow 2$  to n
- $key \leftarrow A[i]$
- $i \leftarrow j-1$
- 4 while i > 0 and A[i] > key
- $A[i+1] \leftarrow A[i]$ 5
- $i \leftarrow i 1$ 6
- $A[i+1] \leftarrow key$

- j = 6
- key = 15
- 12 15 21 35 53 59



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# Analysis of Insertion Sort

- Correctness
- Running time

### Correctness of Insertion Sort

• Invariant: after iteration j of outer loop, A[1..j] is the sorted array for the original A[1..j].

```
after j=1:53,12,35,21,59,15

after j=2:12,53,35,21,59,15

after j=3:12,35,53,21,59,15

after j=4:12,21,35,53,59,15

after j=5:12,21,35,53,59,15

after j=6:12,15,21,35,53,59
```

# Analyze Running Time of Insertion Sort

- Q: Size of input?
- A: Running time as function of size
- possible definition of size: # integers, total length of integers, # vertices in graph, # edges in graph
- Q: Which input?
- A: Worst-case analysis:
  - Worst running time over all input instances of a given size
- Q: How fast is the computer?
- Q: Programming language?
- A: Important idea: asymptotic analysis
  - Focus on growth of running-time as a function, not any particular value.

# Asymptotic Analysis: *O*-notation

- Ignoring lower order terms
- Ignoring leading constant

• 
$$3n^3 + 2n^2 - 18n + 1028 \Rightarrow 3n^3 \Rightarrow n^3$$

• 
$$3n^3 + 2n^2 - 18n + 1028 = O(n^3)$$

• 
$$2^{n/3+100} + 100n^{100} \Rightarrow 2^{n/3+100} \Rightarrow 2^{n/3}$$

$$2^{n/3+100} + 100n^{100} = O(2^{n/3})$$

# Asymptotic Analysis: *O*-notation

- Ignoring lower order terms
- Ignoring leading constant

O-notation allows us to

- ignore architecture of computer
- ignore programming language

# Asymptotic Analysis of Insertion Sort

### $\mathsf{insertion}\text{-}\mathsf{sort}(A,n)$

- $extit{eq} key \leftarrow A[j]$
- $i \leftarrow j-1$
- while i > 0 and A[i] > key
- $i \leftarrow i 1$
- $\bullet$   $A[i+1] \leftarrow key$ 
  - Worst-case running time for iteration j in the outer loop? Answer: O(j)
  - Total running time =  $\sum_{j=2}^{n} O(j) = O(n^2)$  (informal)

# Computation Model

- $\bullet$  Random-Access Machine (RAM) model: read A[j] takes O(1) time.
- Basic operations take O(1) time: addition, subtraction, multiplication, etc.
- Each integer (word) has  $c \log n$  bits,  $c \ge 1$  large enough
- Precision of real numbers?
   In most scenarios in the course, assuming real numbers are represented exactly
- Can we do better than insertion sort asymptotically?
- Yes: merge sort, quicksort, heap sort, ...

• Remember to sign up for Piazza.

Questions?

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# Asymptotically Positive Functions

**Def.**  $f: \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{R}$  is an asymptotically positive function if:

- ullet  $\exists n_0>0$  such that  $\forall n>n_0$  we have f(n)>0
- ullet In other words, f(n) is positive for large enough n.
- $n^2 n 30$  Yes
- $2^n n^{20}$  Yes
- $100n n^2/10 + 50$ ?
- We only consider asymptotically positive functions.

## O-Notation: Asymptotic Upper Bound

 $O ext{-}\mathbf{Notation}$  For a function g(n),

$$O(g(n)) = \{ \text{function } f : \exists c > 0, n_0 > 0 \text{ such that}$$
  
$$f(n) \le cg(n), \forall n \ge n_0 \}.$$

- In other words,  $f(n) \in O(g(n))$  if  $f(n) \le cg(n)$  for some c and large enough n.
- Informally, think of it as " $f \leq g$ ".
- $3n^2 + 2n \in O(n^3)$
- $3n^2 + 2n \in O(n^2)$
- $n^{100} \in O(2^n)$
- $n^3 \notin O(n^2)$

## Conventions

- We use "f(n) = O(g(n))" to denote " $f(n) \in O(g(n))$ "
- $3n^2 + 2n = O(n^3)$
- $4n^3 + 3n^2 + 2n = 4n^3 + O(n^3)$ 
  - There exists a function  $f(n) \in O(n^3)$ , such that  $4n^3 + 3n^2 + 2n = 4n^3 + f(n)$ .
- $n^2 + O(n) = O(n^2)$ 
  - For every function  $f(n) \in O(n)$ , there exists a function  $g(n) \in O(n^2)$ , such that  $n^2 + f(n) = g(n)$ .
- Rule: left side  $\rightarrow \forall$ , right side  $\rightarrow \exists$

## Conventions

- $3n^2 + 2n = O(n^3)$
- $\bullet$   $4n^3 + 3n^2 + 2n = 4n^3 + O(n^3)$
- $n^2 + O(n) = O(n^2)$
- "=" is asymmetric! Following statements are wrong:
  - $O(n^3) = 3n^2 + 2n$
  - $\bullet 4n^3 + O(n^3) = 4n^3 + 3n^2 + 2n$
  - $O(n^2) = n^2 + O(n)$
- Chaining is allowed:

$$4n^3 + 3n^2 + 2n = 4n^3 + O(n^3) = O(n^3) = O(n^4)$$

## $\Omega$ -Notation: Asymptotic Lower Bound

$$\begin{aligned} O\text{-Notation} \ \ &\text{For a function} \ g(n), \\ O(g(n)) &= \big\{ \text{function} \ f: \exists c>0, n_0>0 \ \text{such that} \\ &f(n) \leq cg(n), \forall n \geq n_0 \big\}. \end{aligned}$$

$$\Omega$$
-**Notation** For a function  $g(n)$ , 
$$\Omega(g(n)) = \{ \text{function } f : \exists c > 0, n_0 > 0 \text{ such that } f(n) \ge cg(n), \forall n \ge n_0 \}.$$

- In other words,  $f(n) \in \Omega(g(n))$  if  $f(n) \ge cg(n)$  for some c and large enough n.
- ullet Informally, think of it as " $f \geq g$ ".

## $\Omega$ -Notation: Asymptotic Lower Bound

- Again, we use "=" instead of  $\in$ .
  - $4n^2 = \Omega(n)$
  - $3n^2 n + 10 = \Omega(n^2)$
  - $\Omega(n^2) + n = \Omega(n^2) = \Omega(n)$

**Theorem**  $f(n) = O(g(n)) \Leftrightarrow g(n) = \Omega(f(n)).$ 

# ⊖-Notation: Asymptotic Tight Bound

$$\Theta\text{-Notation} \quad \text{For a function } g(n), \\ \Theta(g(n)) = \big\{ \text{function } f: \exists c_2 \geq c_1 > 0, n_0 > 0 \text{ such that} \\ c_1 g(n) \leq f(n) \leq c_2 g(n), \forall n \geq n_0 \big\}.$$

- $f(n) = \Theta(g(n))$ , then for large enough n, we have " $f(n) \approx g(n)$ ".
- ullet Informally, think of it as "f=g".
- $\bullet \ 3n^2 + 2n = \Theta(n^2)$
- $2^{n/3+100} = \Theta(2^{n/3})$

**Theorem** 
$$f(n) = \Theta(g(n))$$
 if and only if  $f(n) = O(g(n))$  and  $f(n) = \Omega(g(n))$ .

#### Exercise

For each pair of functions f,g in the following table, indicate whether f is  $O,\Omega$  or  $\Theta$  of g.

$\underline{\hspace{1cm}}$	g	0	Ω	Θ
$\lg^{10} n$	$n^{0.1}$	Yes	No	No
$2^n$	$2^{n/2}$	No	Yes	No
$\sqrt{n}$	$n^{\sin n}$	No	No	No
$n^2 - 100n$	$5n^2 + 30n$	Yes	Yes	Yes

#### Trivial Facts on Comparison Relations

- $f \le g \Leftrightarrow g \ge f$
- $f = g \Leftrightarrow f \leq g \text{ and } f \geq g$
- $f \leq g$  or  $f \geq g$

#### **Correct Analogies**

- $f(n) = O(g(n)) \Leftrightarrow g(n) = \Omega(f(n))$
- $\bullet \ f(n) = \Theta(g(n)) \ \Leftrightarrow \ f(n) = O(g(n)) \ \text{and} \ f(n) = \Omega(g(n))$

### **Incorrect Analogy**

• f(n) = O(g(n)) or g(n) = O(f(n))

#### **Incorrect Analogy**

• 
$$f(n) = O(g(n))$$
 or  $g(n) = O(f(n))$ 

$$f(n) = n^2$$
 
$$g(n) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n \text{ is odd} \\ 2^n & \text{if } n \text{ is even} \end{cases}$$

## Recall: informal way to define *O*-notation

- ignoring lower order terms:  $3n^2 10n 5 \rightarrow 3n^2$
- ignoring leading constant:  $3n^2 \rightarrow n^2$
- Thus  $3n^2 10n 5 = O(n^2)$
- Indeed,  $3n^2 10n 5 = \Omega(n^2), 3n^2 10n 5 = \Theta(n^2)$

Formally: if n > 10, then  $n^2 < 3n^2 - 10n - 5 < 3n^2$ . So,  $3n^2 - 10n - 5 \in \Theta(n^2)$ .

### o and $\omega$ -Notations

o-Notation For a function 
$$g(n)$$
, 
$$o(g(n)) = \big\{ \text{function } f: \forall c > 0, \exists n_0 > 0 \text{ such that} \\ f(n) \leq cg(n), \forall n \geq n_0 \big\}.$$

$$ω$$
-**Notation** For a function  $g(n)$ , 
$$ω(g(n)) = \{ \text{function } f : \forall c > 0, \exists n_0 > 0 \text{ such that } f(n) \geq cg(n), \forall n \geq n_0 \}.$$

#### Example:

- $3n^2 + 5n + 10 = o(n^2 \lg n)$ .
- $3n^2 + 5n + 10 = \omega(n^2/\lg n)$ .

Asymptotic Notations	O	Ω	Θ	0	$\omega$
Comparison Relations	$\leq$	$\geq$	=	<	>

# Questions?

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# O(n) (Linear) Running Time

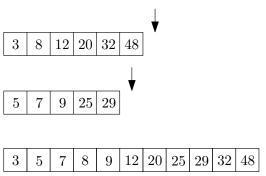
Computing the sum of n numbers

## sum(A, n)

- 2 for  $i \leftarrow 1$  to n
- $\mathbf{3} \qquad S \leftarrow S + A[i]$
- lacktriangledown return S

# O(n) (Linear) Running Time

Merge two sorted arrays



# O(n) (Linear) Running Time

```
\mathsf{merge}(B,C,n_1,n_2) \qquad \backslash \backslash \ B \ \mathsf{and} \ C \ \mathsf{are} \ \mathsf{sorted}, \ \mathsf{with} \ \mathsf{length} \ n_1 and n_2
```

- $\bullet \quad A \leftarrow []; i \leftarrow 1; j \leftarrow 1$
- ② while  $i \leq n_1$  and  $j \leq n_2$
- $\bullet$  if  $(B[i] \leq C[j])$  then
- append B[i] to A;  $i \leftarrow i+1$
- else
- $\bullet$  if  $i \leq n_1$  then append  $B[i..n_1]$  to A
- $\bullet$  if  $j \leq n_2$  then append  $C[j..n_2]$  to A
- $oldsymbol{0}$  return A

Running time = O(n) where  $n = n_1 + n_2$ .

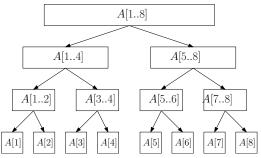
# $O(n \lg n)$ Running Time

#### merge-sort(A, n)

- $\bullet$  if n=1 then
- $\bullet$  return A
- else
- $\bullet \quad B \leftarrow \mathsf{merge-sort}\Big(A\big[1..\lfloor n/2\rfloor\big],\lfloor n/2\rfloor\Big)$
- $\qquad \qquad C \leftarrow \mathsf{merge\text{-}sort}\Big(A\big[\lfloor n/2 \rfloor + 1..n\big], n \lfloor n/2 \rfloor\Big)$
- return  $merge(B, C, \lfloor n/2 \rfloor, n \lfloor n/2 \rfloor)$

# $O(n \lg n)$ Running Time

Merge-Sort



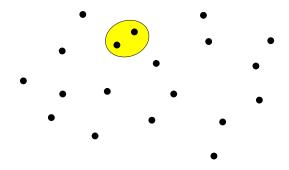
- Each level takes running time O(n)
- There are  $O(\lg n)$  levels
- Running time =  $O(n \lg n)$

# $O(n^2)$ (Quardatic) Running Time

#### Closest Pair

**Input:** n points in plane:  $(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2), \cdots, (x_n, y_n)$ 

Output: the pair of points that are closest



# $O(n^2)$ (Quardatic) Running Time

#### Closest Pair

**Input:** n points in plane:  $(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2), \cdots, (x_n, y_n)$ 

Output: the pair of points that are closest

## closest-pair(x, y, n)

- $d \leftarrow \sqrt{(x[i] x[j])^2 + (y[i] y[j])^2}$
- $\bullet$  if d < best d then
- $besti \leftarrow i, bestj \leftarrow j, bestd \leftarrow d$
- $\bigcirc$  return (besti, bestj)

Closest pair can be solved in  $O(n \lg n)$  time!

# $O(n^3)$ (Cubic) Running Time

Multiply two matrices of size  $n \times n$ 

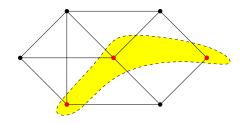
### matrix-multiplication(A, B, n)

- $C \leftarrow \text{matrix of size } n \times n$ , with all entries being 0

- of for  $k \leftarrow 1$  to n
- $C[i,k] \leftarrow C[i,k] + A[i,j] \times B[j,k]$
- $\bullet$  return C

# $O(n^k)$ Running Time for Integer $k \geq 4$

**Def.** An independent set of a graph G=(V,E) is a subset  $S\subseteq V$  of vertices such that for every  $u,v\in S$ , we have  $(u,v)\notin E.$ 



### Independent set of size k

**Input:** graph G = (V, E), an integer k

**Output:** whether there is an independent set of size k

# $O(n^k)$ Running Time for Integer $k \ge 4$

## Independent Set of Size k

**Input:** graph G = (V, E)

**Output:** whether there is an independent set of size k

### independent-set(G = (V, E))

- $\bullet \ \, \text{for every set} \,\, S \subseteq V \,\, \text{of size} \,\, k$
- 2  $b \leftarrow \mathsf{true}$
- if  $(u,v) \in E$  then  $b \leftarrow$  false
- $\bullet$  if b return true
- return false

Running time =  $O(\frac{n^k}{k!} \times k^2) = O(n^k)$  (assume k is a constant)

# Beyond Polynomial Time: $O(2^n)$

### Maximum Independent Set Problem

**Input:** graph G = (V, E)

Output: the maximum independent set of  ${\cal G}$ 

## max-independent-set(G = (V, E))

- $\textbf{ 2} \ \text{ for every set } S \subseteq V$
- $b \leftarrow \mathsf{true}$
- if  $(u, v) \in E$  then  $b \leftarrow$  false
- $oldsymbol{o}$  return R

Running time =  $O(2^n n^2)$ .

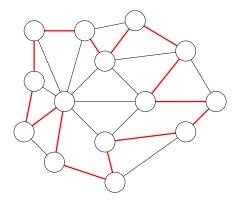
# Beyond Polynomial Time: O(n!)

#### Hamiltonian Cycle Problem

**Input:** a graph with n vertices

**Output:** a cycle that visits each node exactly once,

or say no such cycle exists



# Beyond Polynomial Time: n!

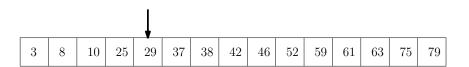
## $\mathsf{Hamiltonian}(G = (V, E))$

- for every permutation  $(p_1, p_2, \cdots, p_n)$  of V
- $b \leftarrow true$
- if  $(p_i, p_{i+1}) \notin E$  then  $b \leftarrow$  false
- if  $(p_n, p_1) \notin E$  then  $b \leftarrow$  false
- **6** $if b then return <math>(p_1, p_2, \cdots, p_n)$
- return "No Hamiltonian Cycle"

Running time =  $O(n! \times n)$ 

# $O(\lg n)$ (Logarithmic) Running Time

- Binary search
  - Input: sorted array A of size n, an integer t;
  - Output: whether t appears in A.
- E.g, search 35 in the following array:



# $O(\lg n)$ (Logarithmic) Running Time

### Binary search

- Input: sorted array A of size n, an integer t;
- ullet Output: whether t appears in A.

## binary-search(A, n, t)

- $1 i \leftarrow 1, j \leftarrow n$
- ② while  $i \leq j$  do
- if A[k] = t return true
- return false

Running time =  $O(\lg n)$ 

## Compare the Orders

- Sort the functions from asymptotically smallest to asymptotically largest (informally, using "<" and "=")  $n^{\sqrt{n}}$ ,  $\lg n$ , n,  $n^2$ ,  $n\lg n$ , n!,  $2^n$ ,  $e^n$ ,  $\lg(n!)$ ,  $n^n$
- $\lg n < n^{\sqrt{n}}$
- $\lg n < \frac{n}{n} < n^{\sqrt{n}}$
- $\lg n < n < \frac{n^2}{n^2} < n^{\sqrt{n}}$
- $\lg n < n < \frac{n}{\lg n} < n^2 < n^{\sqrt{n}}$
- $\lg n < n < n \lg n < n^2 < n^{\sqrt{n}} < n!$
- $\lg n < n < n \lg n < n^2 < n^{\sqrt{n}} < 2^n < n!$
- $\lg n < n < n \lg n < n^2 < n^{\sqrt{n}} < 2^n < e^n < n!$
- $\lg n < n \lg n = \lg(n!) < n^2 < n^{\sqrt{n}} < 2^n < e^n < n!$
- $\lg n < n < n \lg n = \lg(n!) < n^2 < n^{\sqrt{n}} < 2^n < e^n < n! < \frac{n^n}{n}$

## **Terminologies**

When we talk about upper bounds:

- Logarithmic time:  $O(\lg n)$
- Linear time: O(n)
- Quadratic time  $O(n^2)$
- Cubic time  $O(n^3)$
- Polynomial time:  $O(n^k)$  for some constant k
- Exponential time:  $O(c^n)$  for some c > 1
- Sub-linear time: o(n)
- Sub-quadratic time:  $o(n^2)$

When we talk about lower bounds:

- Super-linear time:  $\omega(n)$
- Super-quadratic time:  $\omega(n^2)$
- Super-polynomial time:  $\bigcap_{k>0} \omega(n^k)$

#### Goal of Algorithm Design

- Design algorithms to minimize the order of the running time.
- Using asymptotic analysis allows us to ignore the leading constants and lower order terms
- Makes our life much easier! (E.g., the leading constant depends on the implementation, complier and computer architecture of computer.)

## **Q:** Does ignoring the leading constant cause any issues?

• e.g, how can we compare an algorithm with running time  $0.1n^2$  with an algorithm with running time 1000n?

#### A:

- Sometimes yes
- However, when n is big enough,  $1000n < 0.1n^2$
- For "natural" algorithms, constants are not so big!
- ullet For reasonable n, algorithm with lower order running time beats algorithm with higher order running time.