

So far we've been dealing with regular languages exclusively, but if all languages were regular, we wouldn't bother specifying that they're regular. They would just be languages. In fact, we've run into a language already which is irregular.

$$- \{w \in \Sigma^* \mid \#(w, a) = \#(w, b)\} \quad (\Sigma = \{a, b\})$$

Other examples are easy to construct.

$$- \{0^p \mid p \text{ prime}\}$$

$$- \{w \in \Sigma^* \mid w \text{ is a palindrome}\}$$

$$- \{0^n 1^n \mid n \geq 0\}$$

$$- \{0^i 1^j \mid i \geq j\}$$

$$- \{0^n 1^m 2^n \mid n \geq 1\} \cup \{0^k (0|1)^* \mid k \neq 1\}$$

Intuitively, what makes a language irregular is a need to remember more than a constant amount of information. There are a few ways to formalize this notion (some better than others)

Thm (Pumping Lemma) If A is regular, then $\exists p \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $\forall w \in A$ of length at least p , w may be written as $w = xyz$ satisfying

$$1) \forall i \geq 0, xy^i z \in A$$

$$2) |y| > 0 \text{ (i.e. } y \neq \epsilon)$$

$$3) |xy| \leq p$$

Pf sketch) The idea is if we pick p to be the number of states, then any input string ^{in A} of length p visits $p+1$ states and thus (by the pigeon hole principle) must visit some state more than once. This, however, creates a cycle. We can extend this accepting path by taking the cycle as many (or as few) times as we like.

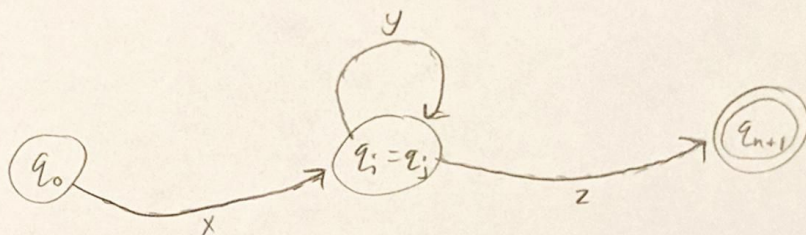
Pf) Let $D = (Q, \Sigma, \delta, q_0, F)$ be a DFA with $L(D) = A$ and pick $p = |Q|$.
If $\forall w \in A, |w| \leq p$, we're done.

Let $w = w_1 \dots w_n \in A$ be such that $n \geq p$.

Let q_1, \dots, q_{n+1} be the sequence of states D visits on input w .

Then since this sequence contains $n+1 \geq p+1 = |Q|+1$ states, it follows from the pigeon hole principle that there exists $0 \leq i < j \leq p+1$

such that $q_i = q_j$. But q_i, q_{i+1}, \dots, q_j forms a cycle, so we may also form an accepting path by removing the cycle or repeating it as many times as we wish.



Define $x = w_1 \dots w_{i-1}$, $y = w_i \dots w_{j-1}$, $z = w_j \dots w_{n+1}$.

Note that x, z may be ϵ but $y \neq \epsilon$, hence $|y| > 0$.

Moreover, $w = xyz$ and $xy^kz \in A$ for nonnegative integers k . Lastly, $|xy| \leq p$ by construction, since $j \leq p+1$.

This is all three conditions of the lemma, so we're done. \square

Ex) Prove $A = \{w \in \Sigma^* \mid \#(w, a) = \#(w, b)\}$ ($\Sigma = \{a, b\}$)

Pf) Suppose A is regular. Then $\exists p$ satisfying the pumping lemma.

We must find a way to break one of the three conditions of the pumping lemma to arrive at a contradiction.

We'll target the 3rd condition.

Pick $w = a^p b^p \in A$. Since $|xy| \leq p$, we have that $xy = a^p$ however we divide x and y . But then $\#(xy^2z, a) > \#(xy^2z, b)$ and the PL insists $xy^2z \in A$.

~~Thus~~ A is not regular. \square

Ex) ^{Prove} $B = \{0^p \mid p \text{ prime}\}$ is irregular.

Pf) Suppose B is regular, and let p' be such that p' satisfies the pumping lemma.

Pick p_0 prime such that $p_0 \geq p'$.

Then $0^{p_0} \in B$.

Then $y = 0^k$ for some $0 < k \leq p'$.

But $w_i = xy^i z$ for $i \geq 0$ has length $p_0 + (i-1)k$,

and most $|w_i|$ are not prime, yet the PL insists $w_i \in B$.

→←

∴ B is irregular.

□



Use the pumping lemma to complete the remaining four exercises.

1) Pumping breaks the palindrome condition.

2) Pump $0^p 1^p$. Since $|y| > 1$, we break the $0^n 1^n$ condition.

3) Pump $0^p 1^p$ down so that we end up with $0^k 1^p$ and $k < p$.

4) The pumping lemma does not apply to this language!
The second set is regular, and the first set can be written as $X = \epsilon$, $y = 0$ to pump into the second set (either up or down)