

# Foundations of Artificial Intelligence

## 8. State-Space Search: Data Structures for Search Algorithms

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## 8.1 Introduction

## 8.2 Search Nodes

## 8.3 Open Lists

## 8.4 Closed Lists

## 8.5 Summary

## State-Space Search: Overview

### Chapter overview: state-space search

- ▶ 5.–7. Foundations
- ▶ 8.–12. Basic Algorithms
  - ▶ 8. Data Structures for Search Algorithms
  - ▶ 9. Tree Search and Graph Search
  - ▶ 10. Breadth-first Search
  - ▶ 11. Uniform Cost Search
  - ▶ 12. Depth-first Search and Iterative Deepening
- ▶ 13.–19. Heuristic Algorithms

## 8.1 Introduction

## Search Algorithms

- ▶ We now move to **search algorithms**.
- ▶ As everywhere in computer science, suitable **data structures** are a key to good performance.
  - ↪ **common** operations must be **fast**
- ▶ Well-implemented search algorithms process up to  $\sim 30,000,000$  states/second on a single CPU core.
  - ↪ bonus materials (Burns et al. paper)

this chapter: some **fundamental data structures** for search

## Preview: Search Algorithms

- ▶ **next chapter**: we introduce search algorithms
- ▶ **now**: short **preview** to motivate data structures for search

## Example: Search Algorithm

- ▶ Starting with **initial state**,
- ▶ repeatedly **expand** a state by **generating** its **successors**.
- ▶ Stop when a **goal state** is expanded
- ▶ or **all reachable states** have been considered.

German: expandieren, erzeugen

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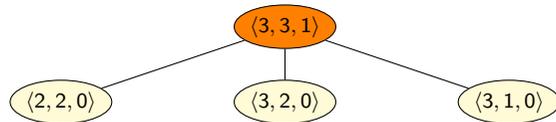
German: expandieren, erzeugen

(3, 3, 1)

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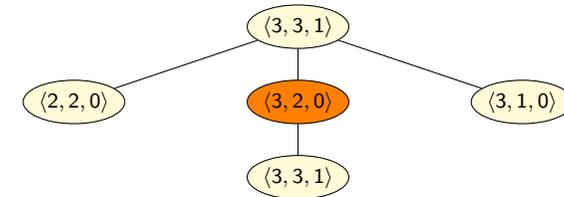
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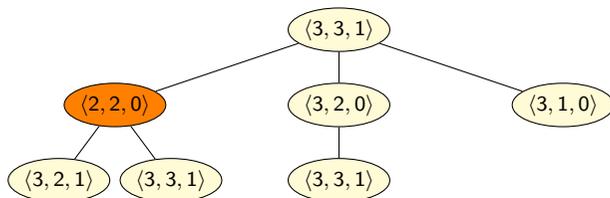
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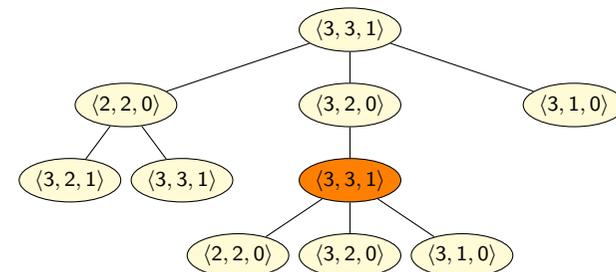
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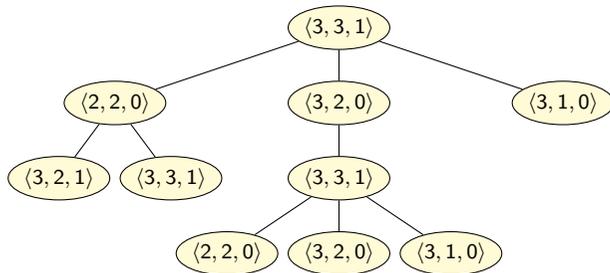
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... and so on (expansion order depends on search algorithm used)

## Fundamental Data Structures for Search

We consider three abstract data structures for search:

- ▶ **search node**: stores a state that has been reached, how it was reached, and at which cost
  - ↪ nodes of the example search tree
- ▶ **open list**: efficiently organizes leaves of search tree
  - ↪ set of leaves of example search tree
- ▶ **closed list**: remembers expanded states to avoid duplicated expansions of the same state
  - ↪ inner nodes of a search tree

German: Suchknoten, Open-Liste, Closed-Liste

Not all algorithms use all three data structures, and they are sometimes implicit (e.g., in the CPU stack)

## 8.2 Search Nodes

### Search Nodes

#### Search Node

A **search node** (**node** for short) stores a state that has been reached, how it was reached, and at which cost.

Collectively they form the so-called **search tree** (**Suchbaum**).

## Attributes of a Search Node

### Attributes of a Search Node $n$

- $n.state$  state associated with this node
- $n.parent$  search node that generated this node  
(**none** for the root node)
- $n.action$  action leading from  $n.parent$  to  $n$   
(**none** for the root node)
- $n.path\_cost$  cost of path from initial state to  $n.state$   
that result from following the parent references  
(traditionally denoted by  $g(n)$ )

... and sometimes additional attributes (e.g., **depth** in tree)

## Search Nodes: Java

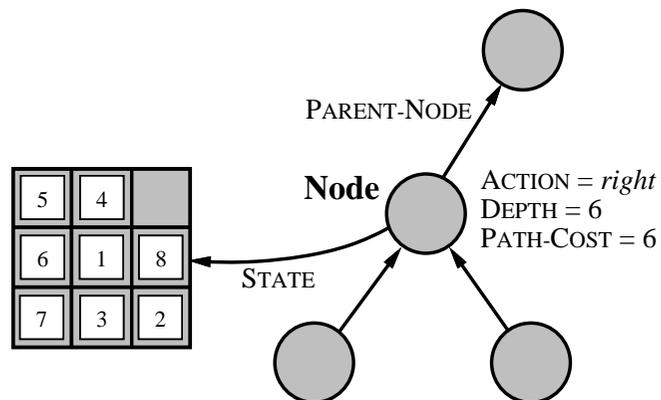
### Search Nodes (Java Syntax)

```
public interface State {
}

public interface Action {
}

public class SearchNode {
    State state;
    SearchNode parent;
    Action action;
    int pathCost;
}
```

## Node in a Search Tree



## Implementing Search Nodes

- ▶ **reasonable implementation** of search nodes is easy
- ▶ **advanced aspects:**
  - ▶ Do we need explicit nodes at all?
  - ▶ Can we use lazy evaluation?
  - ▶ Should we manually manage memory?
  - ▶ Can we compress information?

## Operations on Search Nodes: `make_root_node`

Generate root node of a search tree:

```
function make_root_node()
  node := new SearchNode
  node.state := init()
  node.parent := none
  node.action := none
  node.path_cost := 0
  return node
```

## Operations on Search Nodes: `make_node`

Generate child node of a search node:

```
function make_node(parent, action, state)
  node := new SearchNode
  node.state := state
  node.parent := parent
  node.action := action
  node.path_cost := parent.path_cost + cost(action)
  return node
```

## Operations on Search Nodes: `extract_path`

Extract the path to a search node:

```
function extract_path(node)
  path := ⟨ ⟩
  while node.parent ≠ none:
    path.append(node.action)
    node := node.parent
  path.reverse()
  return path
```

## 8.3 Open Lists

## Open Lists

### Open List

The **open list** (also: **frontier**) organizes the leaves of a search tree.

It must support two operations efficiently:

- ▶ determine and remove the next node to expand
- ▶ insert a new node that is a candidate node for expansion

**Remark:** despite the name, it is usually a very bad idea to implement open lists as simple **lists**.

## Open Lists: Modify Entries

- ▶ Some implementations support **modifying** an open list entry when a shorter path to the corresponding state is found.
- ▶ This complicates the implementation.
- ↔ We do not consider such modifications and instead use **delayed duplicate elimination** (↔ later)

## Interface of Open Lists

### Methods of an Open List *open*

***open.is\_empty()*** test if the open list is empty

***open.pop()*** removes and returns the next node to expand

***open.insert(*n*)*** inserts node *n* into the open list

- ▶ Different search algorithm use different strategies for the decision which node to return in ***open.pop***.
- ▶ The choice of a suitable data structure depends on this strategy (e.g., stack, deque, min-heap).

## 8.4 Closed Lists

## Closed Lists

### Closed List

The **closed list** remembers expanded states to avoid duplicated expansions of the same state.

It must support two operations efficiently:

- ▶ insert a node whose state is not yet in the closed list
- ▶ test if a node with a given state is in the closed list; if yes, return it

**Remark:** despite the name, it is usually a very bad idea to implement closed lists as simple **lists**. (*Why?*)

## Interface and Implementation of Closed Lists

### Methods of a Closed List *closed*

- closed.insert(*n*)*** insert node *n* into *closed*;  
if a node with this state already exists in *closed*,  
replace it
- closed.lookup(*s*)*** test if a node with state *s* exists in the closed list;  
if yes, return it; otherwise, return **none**

- ▶ Hash tables with states as keys can serve as efficient implementations of closed lists.

## 8.5 Summary

## Summary

- ▶ **search node:**  
represents states reached during search and associated information
- ▶ **node expansion:**  
generate successor nodes of a node by applying all actions applicable in the state belonging to the node
- ▶ **open list** or **frontier:**  
set of nodes that are currently candidates for expansion
- ▶ **closed list:**  
set of already expanded nodes (and their states)