

20 Jan 2026

Asymptotics

worst-case

runtime of binary search $\Theta(\log n)$

"logarithmic time"

↑ "counting" how many steps

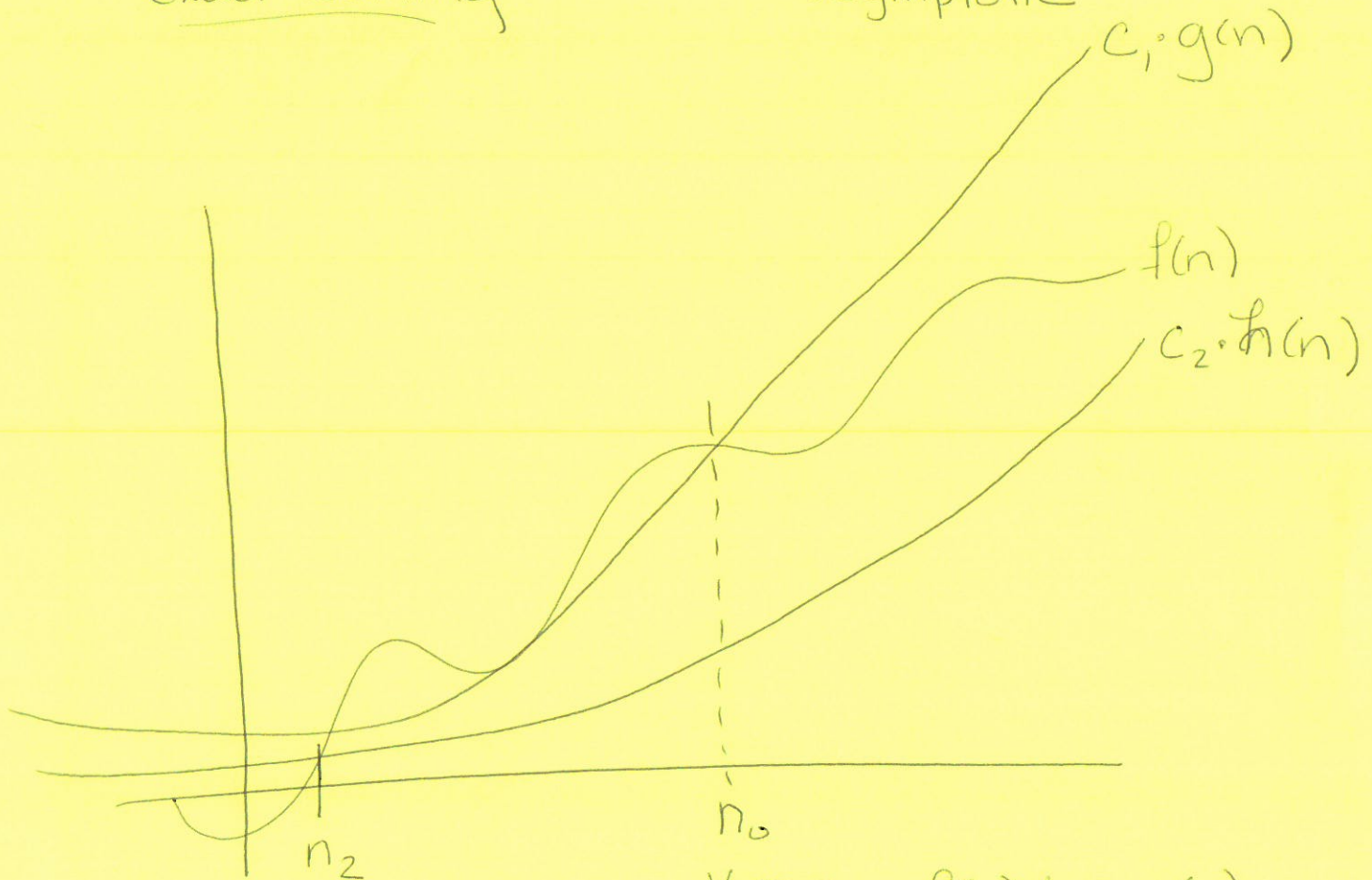
precise ans
maybe looks like

$$7 \log n + 32$$

exact counting

$$\Theta(\log n)$$

asymptotic



$$\forall n \geq n_2,$$

$$f(n) \geq c_2 \cdot h(n)$$

$$\Leftrightarrow f(n) \text{ is } \Omega(h(n))$$



$$h(n) \text{ is } O(f(n))$$

$$\forall n \geq n_0, f(n) \leq c \cdot g(n)$$

$$\Leftrightarrow f(n) \text{ is } O(g(n))$$



$$g(n) \text{ is } \Omega(f(n))$$

①

What can $f(n)$ represent?

- worst-case runtime
- space complexity
- Average-case runtime
(or expected runtime)

✗ asymptotics
are not just
for runtimes! ✗

$$\mathbb{N} = \{0, 1, 2, \dots\}$$

$$\mathbb{Z}_+ = \{1, 2, 3, \dots\}$$

Q: How do we prove $f(n)$ is $O(n^2)$?

need $\exists n_0 \in \mathbb{N}, c \in \mathbb{R}_+$ such that

$$\boxed{\forall n \geq n_0, f(n) \leq cn^2}^*$$

Step 1: Find n_0 & c that work

Step 2: Prove $*$ by induction

$$f(n) = n^2 - 2 \text{ is } O(n^2)$$

Try: $n_0 = 0$ $c = 1$ $\uparrow$ $g(n) = n^2$

~~Base case: Prove $f(n_0)$ is $O(n^2)$~~

Base case: Prove: ~~$f(n_0) \leq c \cdot g(n_0)$~~

WTS: $f(n_0) \leq c \cdot g(n_0)$ ← what I want to show
 $n_0^2 - 2 \leq 1 \cdot n_0^2$ Start here in scratch work.

$\uparrow$
 n_0^2

End here in a proof

Proof: $f(n_0) = n_0^2 - 2$ by defn ← start w/ known things

$$\leq n_0^2 \text{ by adding}$$

$$= 1 \cdot n_0^2$$

$$= c \cdot g(n_0)$$

$$\therefore f(n_0) \leq c \cdot g(n_0) \leftarrow \text{end w/ new stuff} \quad (3)$$

$f(n) = n^2 + 2$ is $O(n^2) \rightarrow g(n) = n^2$
 $\hookrightarrow$ use $n_0 = 1$ and $c = 3$

Base case ^{prove} $f(n_0) \leq c \cdot g(n_0)$

Every Proof
 1. Claim/Set it up
 2. Prove it
 3. Conclude

Inductive assumption: Let $n \geq 1$,
 assume $f(n) \leq c \cdot g(n)$:
 $\Leftrightarrow n^2 + 2 \leq 3(n^2)$

Inductive step: We need to show that } WTS
 $f(n+1) \leq c \cdot g(n+1)$
 $(n+1)^2 + 2$ } $3 \cdot (n+1)^2$
 $n^2 + 2n + 1 + 2$ } $3n^2 + 6n + 3$
 $f(n) + 2n + 1$ } $3g(n) + 3(2n+1)$
 $\uparrow$ $\uparrow$
 $f(n) + 3(2n+1)$ $\uparrow$ $1A.$

Proof: $f(n+1) = (n+1)^2 + 2$ by def of f
 $= n^2 + 2n + 1 + 2$ by expanding
 $= f(n) + 2n + 1$ by defn of f
 $\leq f(n) + 3(2n+1)$ by adding a pos #
 $\leq 3 \cdot g(n) + 3(2n+1)$ by def of g
 $\leq c \cdot g(n+1)$, as desired $\square$

(4)

Q5: $\Theta(n)$ defines an equiv. relation.

Def'n Equivalence relation: a binary relation[~] on a set X that satisfies

- ① reflexive $a \sim a \quad \forall a \in X$
 - ② symmetric $a \sim b \Leftrightarrow b \sim a$
 - ③ transitive $a \sim b \text{ and } b \sim c \Rightarrow a \sim c$
-

X = the set of all fns $\mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

eg $f(n) = n^2 - 2$ is $\Theta(n^2 - 2)$

$f(n) = n^2 + 3$ is $\Theta(n^2) \Leftrightarrow f(n) = n^2$ is $\Theta(n^2 + 3)$

$$\Theta(n^2) = \Theta(n^2 - 2) = \Theta(60n^2 + 10)$$

↑ preferred way to write it