

# Number of States for DFAs and NFAs

# Goal

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**Compare the sizes of smallest DFA and NFA for some language. (Size is number of states.)**

## First Language We Consider

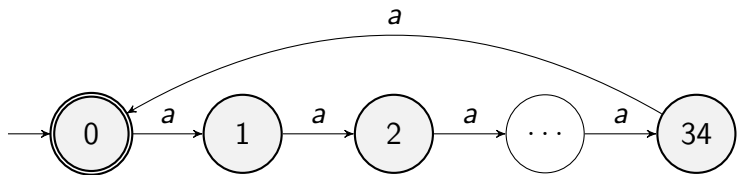
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Next slide has DFA for it.

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Hence  $a^{33}$  is accepted. This is the contradiction.

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General Proof may be on a  $2^{\{HW, MID, FINAL\}}$

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Contradiction.



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Note



## NFA for $L_2 = \{a^i : i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$

Note

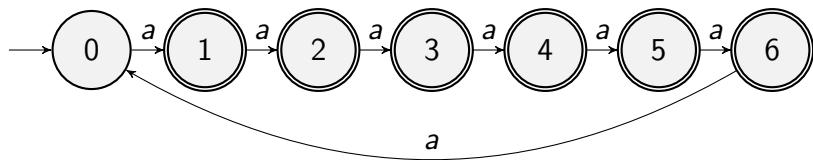
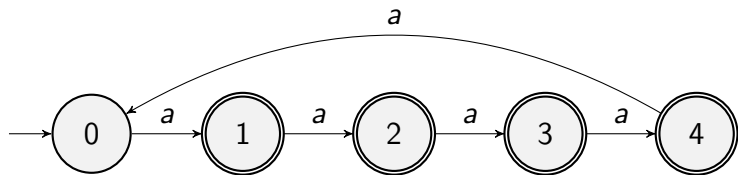
1. If  $i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  then  $a^i \in L_2$  (Since  $35 \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$ .)

## NFA for $L_2 = \{a^i : i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$

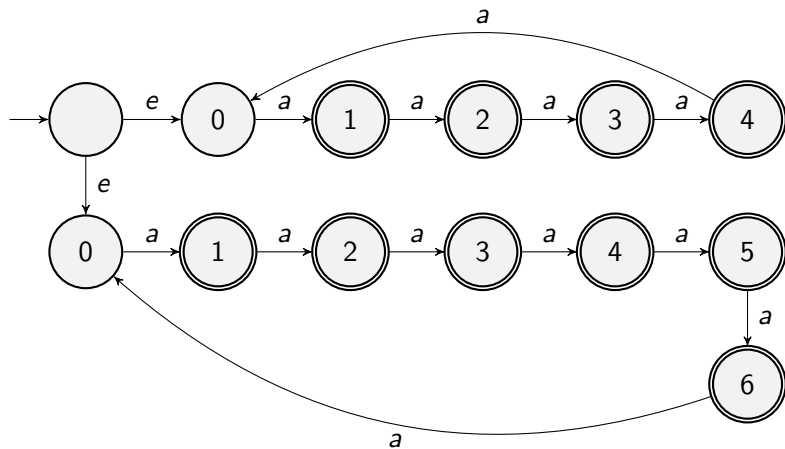
### Note

1. If  $i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  then  $a^i \in L_2$  (Since  $35 \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$ .)
2. If  $i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{7}$  then  $a^i \in L_2$  (Since  $35 \equiv 0 \pmod{7}$ .)

## Two Helpful DFAs



NFA for  $L_2 = \{a^i : i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$



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**Pf** We prove contrapositive.



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There exists  $x$  such that  $i = 5x$

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Since 5,7 have no common factors 5 divides  $y$ .

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$5x = 7y$ . So 5 divides  $7y$ .

Since 5,7 have no common factors 5 divides  $y$ .

There exists  $z$ ,  $y = 5z$ , so  $i = 7y = 35z$ .

$$L_2 = \{a^i : i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$$

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DFA for  $L_2$  requires 35 states.



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DFA for  $L_2$  requires 35 states.

NFA for  $L_2$  can be done with  $1 + 5 + 7 = 13$  states.

## NFA for $L_2 = \{a^i : i \equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$

$L_2$  can be done by an NFA with 13 states.

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**$\exists$  NFA for  $L_2$  with  $\leq 12$  states?**

NFA for  $L_2 = \{a^i : i \equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$

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**$\exists$  NFA for  $L_2$  with  $\leq 12$  states?**

VOTE

NFA for  $L_2 = \{a^i : i \equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$

$L_2$  can be done by an NFA with 13 states.

**$\exists$  NFA for  $L_2$  with  $\leq 12$  states?**

VOTE

1. Bill knows an NFA for  $L_2$  with  $\leq 12$  states.

## NFA for $L_2 = \{a^i : i \equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$

$L_2$  can be done by an NFA with 13 states.

**$\exists$  NFA for  $L_2$  with  $\leq 12$  states?**

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1. Bill knows an NFA for  $L_2$  with  $\leq 12$  states.
2. Bill can prove all NFA's for  $L_2$  have  $\geq 13$  states.

## NFA for $L_2 = \{a^i : i \equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$

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1. Bill knows an NFA for  $L_2$  with  $\leq 12$  states.
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## Third Language We Consider

$$L_3 = \{a^{1000}\}$$

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This is similar to  $L_1 = \{a^i : i \equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$ .

1. There is a DFA for  $L_3$  that has 1000 states.
2. Any DFA for  $L_3$  has  $\geq 1000$  states.
3. There is an NFA for  $L_3$  that has 1000 states.
4. Any NFA for  $L_3$  has  $\geq 1000$  states.

$$L_3 = \{a^{1000}\}$$

This is similar to  $L_1 = \{a^i : i \equiv 0 \pmod{35}\}$ .

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4. Any NFA for  $L_3$  has  $\geq 1000$  states.

Might be on a  $2^{\{HW, MID, FINAL\}}$ .

## Fourth Language We Consider

$$L_4 = \{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$$

DFA for  $L_4 = \{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$

## DFA for $L_4 = \{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$

1. There is a DFA for  $L_4$  that has 1000 states.
2. Any DFA for  $L_3$  has  $\geq 1000$  states.

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Work in groups to see if you can do better.

**Is there an NFA for  $L_4$  with  
 $\leq 999$  states?**

## NFA for $L_4 = \{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$

There is an NFA for  $L_4$  that has 1000 states.

Work in groups to see if you can do better.

**Is there an NFA for  $L_4$  with  
< 999 states?**

VOTE

## NFA for $L_4 = \{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$

There is an NFA for  $L_4$  that has 1000 states.

Work in groups to see if you can do better.

**Is there an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $\leq 999$  states?**

VOTE

1. Bill knows an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $\leq 999$  states.

## NFA for $L_4 = \{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$

There is an NFA for  $L_4$  that has 1000 states.

Work in groups to see if you can do better.

**Is there an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $< 999$  states?**

VOTE

1. Bill knows an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $\leq 999$  states.
2. Bill can prove all NFA's for  $L_4$  have  $\geq 1000$  states.

## NFA for $L_4 = \{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$

There is an NFA for  $L_4$  that has 1000 states.

Work in groups to see if you can do better.

**Is there an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $\leq 999$  states?**

VOTE

1. Bill knows an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $\leq 999$  states.
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Bill knows an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $\leq 999$  states.

## How Small?

**How Small is the NFA for  $L_4$**

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VOTE. Let  $s$  be numb states in smallest NFA for  $L_4$  that Bill knows.



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# How Small is the NFA for $L_4$

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1.  $700 \leq s \leq 999$

## How Small?

# How Small is the NFA for $L_4$

VOTE. Let  $s$  be numb states in smallest NFA for  $L_4$  that Bill knows.

1.  $700 \leq s \leq 999$
2.  $400 \leq s \leq 699$

## How Small?

# How Small is the NFA for $L_4$

VOTE. Let  $s$  be numb states in smallest NFA for  $L_4$  that Bill knows.

1.  $700 \leq s \leq 999$
2.  $400 \leq s \leq 699$
3.  $100 \leq s \leq 399$

## How Small?

# How Small is the NFA for $L_4$

VOTE. Let  $s$  be numb states in smallest NFA for  $L_4$  that Bill knows.

1.  $700 \leq s \leq 999$
2.  $400 \leq s \leq 699$
3.  $100 \leq s \leq 399$
4.  $s \leq 99$

Bill knows an NFA for  $L_4$  with  $\leq 99$  states.

$$L_4 = \{a^n : n \neq 1000\}$$

**Answer** This can be done with 70 states.  
This will take a few slides.

$$L_4 = \{a^n : n \neq 1000\}$$

**Answer** This can be done with 70 states.

This will take a few slides.

And there will be an **important moral to the story**.

# Overall Method

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Two NFA's:



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NFA A:

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NFA A:

- ▶ Does NOT accept  $a^{1000}$ .

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- ▶ Accepts all words longer than 1000.

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# Overall Method

Two NFA's:

NFA A:

- ▶ Does NOT accept  $a^{1000}$ .
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- ▶ Do not care about words shorter than 1000.

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- ▶ Does NOT accept  $a^{1000}$ .

# Overall Method

Two NFA's:

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Two NFA's:

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# Overall Method

Two NFA's:

NFA A:

- ▶ Does NOT accept  $a^{1000}$ .
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NFA B:

- ▶ Does NOT accept  $a^{1000}$ .
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Create the union of NFA's A and B.

# NFA A

# Sums of 32's and 33's

**Thm**

# Sums of 32's and 33's

## Thm

1. For all  $n \geq 992$  there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $n = 32x + 33y$ .

# Sums of 32's and 33's

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1. For all  $n \geq 992$  there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $n = 32x + 33y$ .
2. There does not exist  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $991 = 32x + 33y$ .

# Sums of 32's and 33's

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**Write down this theorem!** Will prove on next few slides and you need to know what I am proving.

# Sums of 32's and 33's

## Thm

1. For all  $n \geq 992$  there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $n = 32x + 33y$ .
2. There does not exist  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $991 = 32x + 33y$ .

**Write down this theorem!** Will prove on next few slides and you need to know what I am proving.

We will prove this by induction.

**Base Case**  $992 = 32 \times 31 + 33 \times 0$ .

$$(\forall n \geq 992)(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n = 32x + 33y]$$

**Inductive Hypothesis**  $n \geq 993$  and  
 $(\exists x', y')[n - 1 = 32x' + 33y']$ .



$$(\forall n \geq 992)(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n = 32x + 33y]$$

**Inductive Hypothesis**  $n \geq 993$  and

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**Intuition** Want to swap coins in and out to increase by 1. Can swap out a 32-coin and put in a 33-coin

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**Intuition** Want to swap coins in and out to increase by 1. Can swap out a 32-coin and put in a 33-coin if I HAVE a 32-coin.

**Case 1**  $x' \geq 1$ . Then  $n = 32(x' - 1) + 33(y' + 1)$ .

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**Intuition** What to do if  $x' = 0$ . Need to remove some 33's and add some 32's. Use that

$32 \times 32 - 31 \times 33 = 1024 - 1023 = 1$ . Can swap out 31 33-coins and put in 32 32-coins

$(\forall n \geq 992)(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n = 32x + 33y]$

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**Case 2**  $y' \geq 31$ . Then  $n = 32(x' + 32) + 33(y' - 31)$ .

$$(\forall n \geq 992)(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n = 32x + 33y]$$

**Inductive Hypothesis**  $n \geq 993$  and

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$32 \times 32 - 31 \times 33 = 1024 - 1023 = 1$ . Can swap out 31 33-coins and put in 32 32-coins if I HAVE 31 33-coins.

**Case 2**  $y' \geq 31$ . Then  $n = 32(x' + 32) + 33(y' - 31)$ .

**Case 3**  $x' \leq 0$  and  $y' \leq 30$ . Then  $n = 32x' + 33y' \leq 33 \times 30 = 990 < 993$ , so cannot occur.

There is no  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  with  $991 = 32x + 33y$

**Pf by contradiction.**



There is no  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  with  $991 = 32x + 33y$

**Pf by contradiction.**

Assume there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that

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There is no  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  with  $991 = 32x + 33y$

**Pf by contradiction.**

Assume there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that

$$991 = 32x + 33y$$

Then

$$991 \equiv 32x + 33y \pmod{32}$$

There is no  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  with  $991 = 32x + 33y$

**Pf by contradiction.**

Assume there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that

$$991 = 32x + 33y$$

Then

$$991 \equiv 32x + 33y \pmod{32}$$

$$31 \equiv 0x + 1y \pmod{32}$$

There is no  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  with  $991 = 32x + 33y$

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Assume there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that

$$991 = 32x + 33y$$

Then

$$991 \equiv 32x + 33y \pmod{32}$$

$$31 \equiv 0x + 1y \pmod{32}$$

$$31 \equiv y \pmod{32} \text{ So } y \geq 31$$

There is no  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  with  $991 = 32x + 33y$

**Pf by contradiction.**

Assume there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that

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Then

$$991 \equiv 32x + 33y \pmod{32}$$

$$31 \equiv 0x + 1y \pmod{32}$$

$$31 \equiv y \pmod{32} \text{ So } y \geq 31$$

$$991 = 32x + 33y \geq 32x + 33 \times 31 \geq 1023 \text{ **Contradiction!**}$$

# Sums of 32's and 33's and ONE 9

## Thm

1) For all  $n \geq 1001$  there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $n = 32x + 33y + 9$ .

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## Pf

1) If  $n \geq 1001$  then  $n - 9 \geq 992$  so by prior Thm

$$(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n - 9 = 32x + 33y]$$

# Sums of 32's and 33's and ONE 9

## Thm

1) For all  $n \geq 1001$  there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $n = 32x + 33y + 9$ .

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$$(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n - 9 = 32x + 33y]$$

$$(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n = 32x + 33y + 9]$$

2) Assume, by way of contradiction,

$$(\exists x, y)[1000 = 32x + 33y + 9]$$

# Sums of 32's and 33's and ONE 9

## Thm

1) For all  $n \geq 1001$  there exists  $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $n = 32x + 33y + 9$ .

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1) If  $n \geq 1001$  then  $n - 9 \geq 992$  so by prior Thm

$$(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n - 9 = 32x + 33y]$$

$$(\exists x, y \in \mathbb{N})[n = 32x + 33y + 9]$$

2) Assume, by way of contradiction,

$$(\exists x, y)[1000 = 32x + 33y + 9]$$

$$(\exists x, y)[992 = 32x + 33y]$$

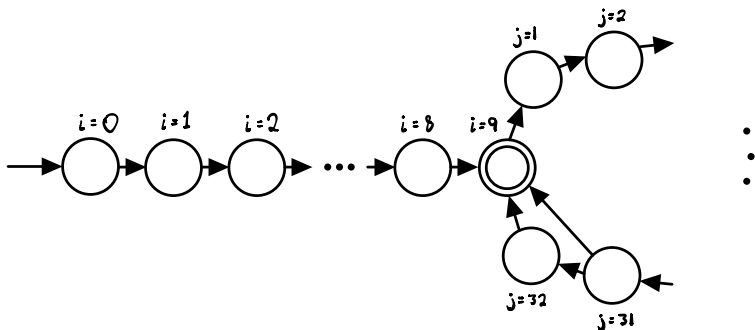
This contradicts prior Thm.

# NFA A

**Idea** Start state, then 8 states, then a loop of size 33 with a shortcut at 32.

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Total number of states:  $9 + 33 = 42$ .

# NFA B

# Still Need NFA B

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**Idea**

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$1000 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$  SO want to accept  $\{a^i : i \not\equiv 0 \pmod{2}\}$ .  
2-state DFA.

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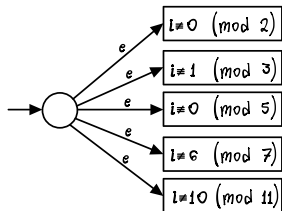
$1000 \equiv 6 \pmod{7}$  SO want to accept  $\{a^i : i \not\equiv 6 \pmod{7}\}$ .  
7-state DFA.

$1000 \equiv 10 \pmod{11}$  SO want to accept  $\{a^i : i \not\equiv 10 \pmod{11}\}$ .  
11-state DFA.

Could go on to 13,17, etc. But we will see we can stop here.

# Machine B

# Machine B



# NFA for $\{a^i : i \leq 999\}$ AND More, but NOT $a^{1000}$

**Thm** Let  $M$  be the NFA from the last slide.

$M(a^{1000})$  is rejected. This is obvious.

For all  $0 \leq i \leq 999$ ,  $M(a^i)$  is accepted.

**Pf** We show that if  $M(a^i)$  is rejected then  $i \geq 1000$ . Assume  $M(a^i)$  rejected. Then

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Continued on next slide

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$$i \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$$

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Hence  $i \equiv 4 \pmod{6}$ .

# NFA for $\{a^i : i \leq 999\}$ AND More, but NOT $a^{1000}$

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$$i \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$$

$$i \equiv 6 \pmod{7}$$

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$$i \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$$

Hence  $i \equiv 4 \pmod{6}$ .

$$i \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$$

$$i \equiv 6 \pmod{7}$$

Hence  $i \equiv 20 \pmod{35}$ .

# NFA for $\{a^i : i \leq 999\}$ AND More, but NOT $a^{1000}$

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Hence  $i \equiv 4 \pmod{6}$ .

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$$i \equiv 10 \pmod{11}$$

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Hence  $i \equiv 20 \pmod{35}$ .

$$i \equiv 10 \pmod{11}$$

So we have

$$i \equiv 4 \pmod{6}$$

$$i \equiv 20 \pmod{35}$$

$$i \equiv 10 \pmod{11}.$$

Continued on next slide



# NFA for $\{a^i : i \leq 999\}$ AND More, but NOT $a^{1000}$ ?

From:

$$i \equiv 4 \pmod{6}$$

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One can show

$$i \equiv 1000 \pmod{6 \times 35 \times 11}$$

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One can show

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So

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Hence  $i \geq 1000$ .

**Recap** If  $a^i$  is rejected then  $i \geq 1000$ .

**Hence** If  $i \leq 999$  then  $a^i$  is accepted.

How Many States for  $\{a^i : i \leq 999\}$  AND More, but NOT  $a^{1000}$ ?

$2 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 11 = 28$  states.  
Plus the start state, so 29.

# NFA for $\{a^i : i \neq 1000\}$

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Take NFA of union using  $\epsilon$ -transitions for an NFA and do not count start state twice, so have

$$42 + 29 - 1 = 70 \text{ states.}$$



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# Interesting Problem, Profound Moral

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2. Every year almost everyone thinks **The NFA requires  $\sim n$  states.**
3. Why is this? They did not know the trick.
4. **Moral Lesson** Lower bounds are hard! You have to rule out that someone does not have a very clever trick that you just had not thought of.

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- ▶ **Upshot** Lower bounds are hard to prove since they must rule out techniques you have not thought of.
- ▶ Respect the difficulty of lower bounds!



# Can We Do Better than 70 States?

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1. Bill knows an NFA with  $\leq 69$  states.

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### Vote:

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See next slide.

# The 59-state NFA for $L_4$

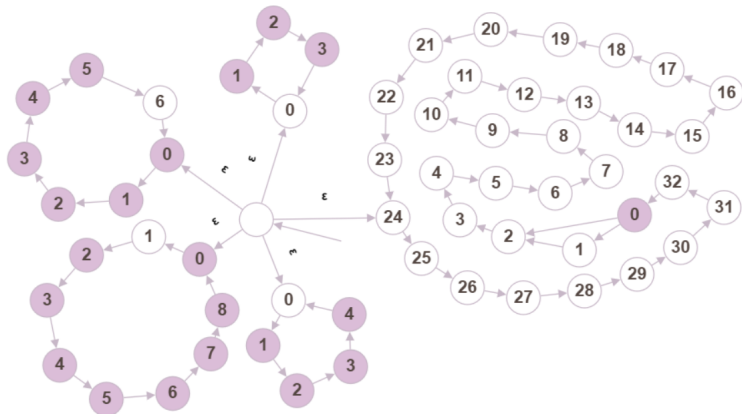


Figure: 59 State NFA for  $L_4$

## Two Tricks Used To Get it to 59 States

1. To get  $\{a^i : i \leq 999\}$ , we used DFAs that picked out specific values mod  $\{2, 3, 5, 7, 11\}$ .

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However, we could have instead made the 9th state of the loop accept, and have the shortcut go to the 9th state instead.

This would save us 8 states, because we still need a distinct start state.



# Can We Do Better than 59 States?

## Vote:

1. No, 59 is optimal
2. Yes, but not by much
3. Yes, substantially!
4. Unknown to science!

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**Answer:** Unknown to science.

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Frobenius Thm (aka The Chicken McNugget Thm)

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- ▶ For all  $z \geq xy - x - y + 1$  there exists  $c, d \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $z = cx + dy$ .
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This leads to loops and tail that are roughly  $\leq 2\sqrt{n}$  states.

## Math Needed for $\{a^i : i \neq n\}$ II

**Thm** Let  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ . Let  $q_1, \dots, q_k$  be rel prime such that  $\prod_{i=1}^k q_i \geq n$ . Then the set of all  $i$  such that  $i \not\equiv n \pmod{q_1}$ .

$\vdots$

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Contains  $\{1, \dots, n-1\}$  and **does not contain  $n$**



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Contains  $\{1, \dots, n-1\}$  and **does not contain  $n$**

Number theory tells us that can find such a  $q_1, \dots, q_k$  with

$$\sum_{i=1}^k q_i \leq (\log n)^2 \log \log n.$$

## Math Needed for $\{a^i : i \neq n\}$ II

**Thm** Let  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ . Let  $q_1, \dots, q_k$  be rel prime such that  $\prod_{i=1}^k q_i \geq n$ . Then the set of all  $i$  such that  $i \not\equiv n \pmod{q_1}$ .

$\vdots$

$i \not\equiv n \pmod{q_k}$ .

Contains  $\{1, \dots, n-1\}$  and **does not contain  $n$**

Number theory tells us that can find such a  $q_1, \dots, q_k$  with

$$\sum_{i=1}^k q_i \leq (\log n)^2 \log \log n.$$

So can use this to get NFA for  $\{a^i : i \leq n-1\}$  (and other stuff but not  $a^n$ ) with  $\leq (\log n)^2 \log \log n$  states.

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**Paper by Gasarch-Metz-Xu-Shen-Zbarsky.**



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**Is this interesting and/or important?**

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Determinism versus Nondeterminism.