

# CMPN206: Multimedia



## Lecture 2: Entropy and Huffman Coding

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# Agenda

- Compression
- Self Information and Entropy
- Coding and Prefix Codes
- Huffman Coding
- Applications

**Acknowledgments:** Most slides are adapted from Richard Ladner and from Li and Drew.

# Compression

The process of coding that will effectively reduce the total number of *bits* needed to represent certain information.

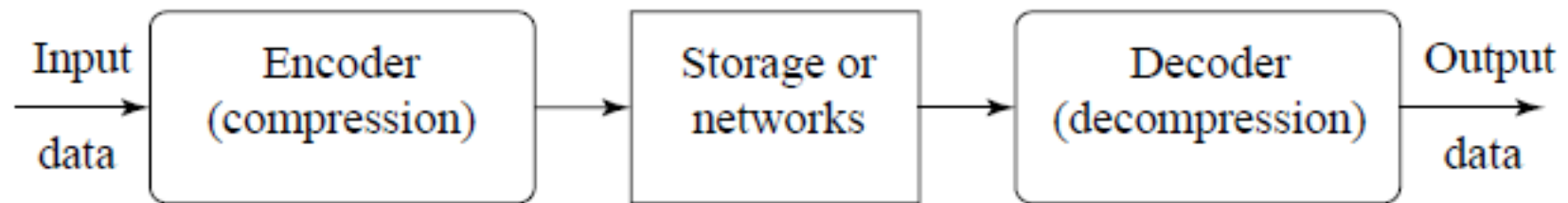


Fig. 7.1: A General Data Compression Scheme.

# Lossless vs. Lossy

- **Lossless**: no information loss in the compression and decompression process

$$\hat{x} = x$$

- **Lossy**: some information is lost in the compression and decompression process

$$\hat{x} \neq x$$

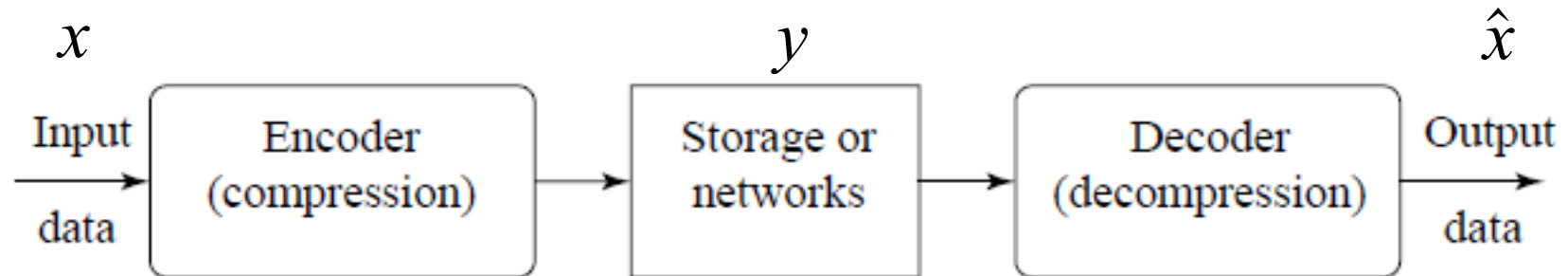


Fig. 7.1: A General Data Compression Scheme.

# Compression Ratio

- **Compression Ratio:**  $\frac{|x|}{|y|}$

$|x|$  is the number of bits *before* compression

$|y|$  is the number of bits *after* compression

- Will focus first on *lossless* compression.

# Why Compression?

- Save storage: less bits to store
- Reduce transmission bandwidth and time
- Progressive transmission: some techniques send the most important information first giving a low resolution version before receiving the full quality version

# Lossless Compression

- No data loss: important for
  - text compression
  - binary files
  - databases
- Statistical techniques
  - Huffman coding
  - Arithmetic coding
- Dictionary Based techniques
  - LZW, LZ77
- Available in many standards
  - gzip, bzip, GIF, Lossless JPEG ... etc

# How is Compression Possible?

The keyword is: *Redundancy*

- There is more data than there is information
- Squeezing out the excess data results in compression
- Example:
  - The binary string **0000 0001 1111 0000 0000**
  - How many bits does it take?
  - How can we compress that?
  - Using the idea of **Run Length Coding**, for example write how many consecutive zeros and ones we have:  
**7 5 8** which can be coded as: **111 101 1000**
  - Compression ratio?



# Digital Data

- Finite set of symbols  $S = \{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_m\}$  called the alphabet where individual symbols are called letters
- Data represented as sequences (strings) of letters
- Example
  - $S = \{a, b, c, d\}$
  - sequence = *abbcaabcdddcab*
- Another Example
  - $S =$  set of ASCII symbols
  - sequence = “Hello Information Theory!”

# Binary

- $S = \{0, 1\}$
- Sequences are strings of 0's and 1's
- All digital information is represented using **binary strings**
- We can represent other **alphabets** using binary strings
- This is called *coding*

# Coding

The assignment of *binary* sequences to letters of an alphabet

- The set of binary sequences is called a *code*
- The individual members are called *codewords*
- Example:
  - $S = \{a, b, c, d\}$  has a this **fixed-length** representation

symbol	a	b	c	d
binary	00	01	10	11

- 2 bits per symbol
- How many bits per symbol are needed to represent an alphabet of  $n$  symbols in a fixed-length binary representation?  
 $\lceil \log_2 n \rceil$

# Information Theory

- Developed in the 1940's and 1950's by Claude Shannon
- Attempts to explain the limits of communication, especially the ultimate channel capacity and the ultimate compression rate
- Useful in many other fields e.g. computer science
- Quantifies the notion of *information* ( or *surprise*) in a mathematical way

# Self Information

- Suppose we have a *source* that emits symbols from an alphabet  $S = \{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_m\}$
- Let  $P(a_i)$  = the probability of emitting symbol  $a_i$
- The self information for symbol  $a_i$  is defined as

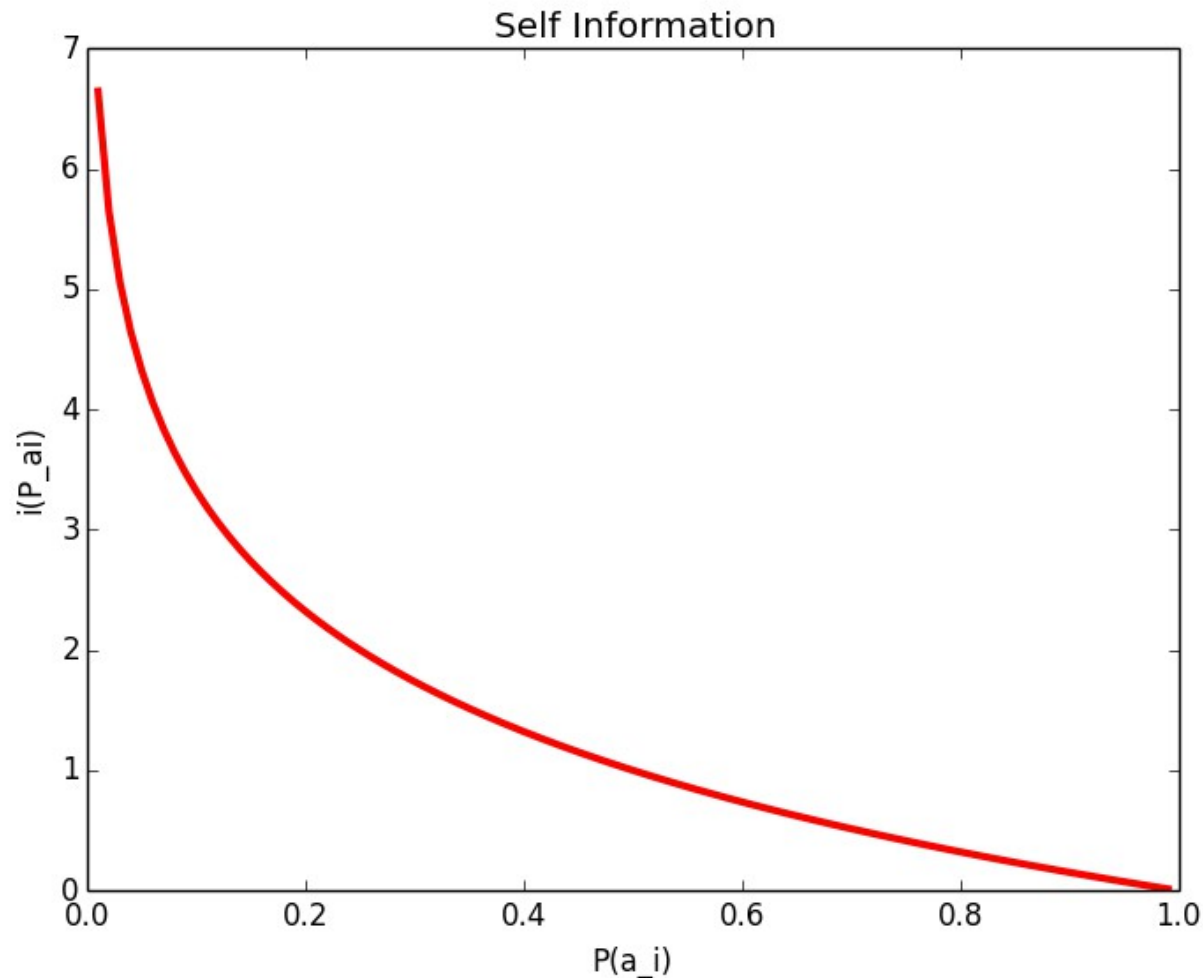
$$i(a_i) = \log_2 \frac{1}{P(a_i)} = -\log_2 P(a_i)$$

and is measured in *bits*.

# Self Information

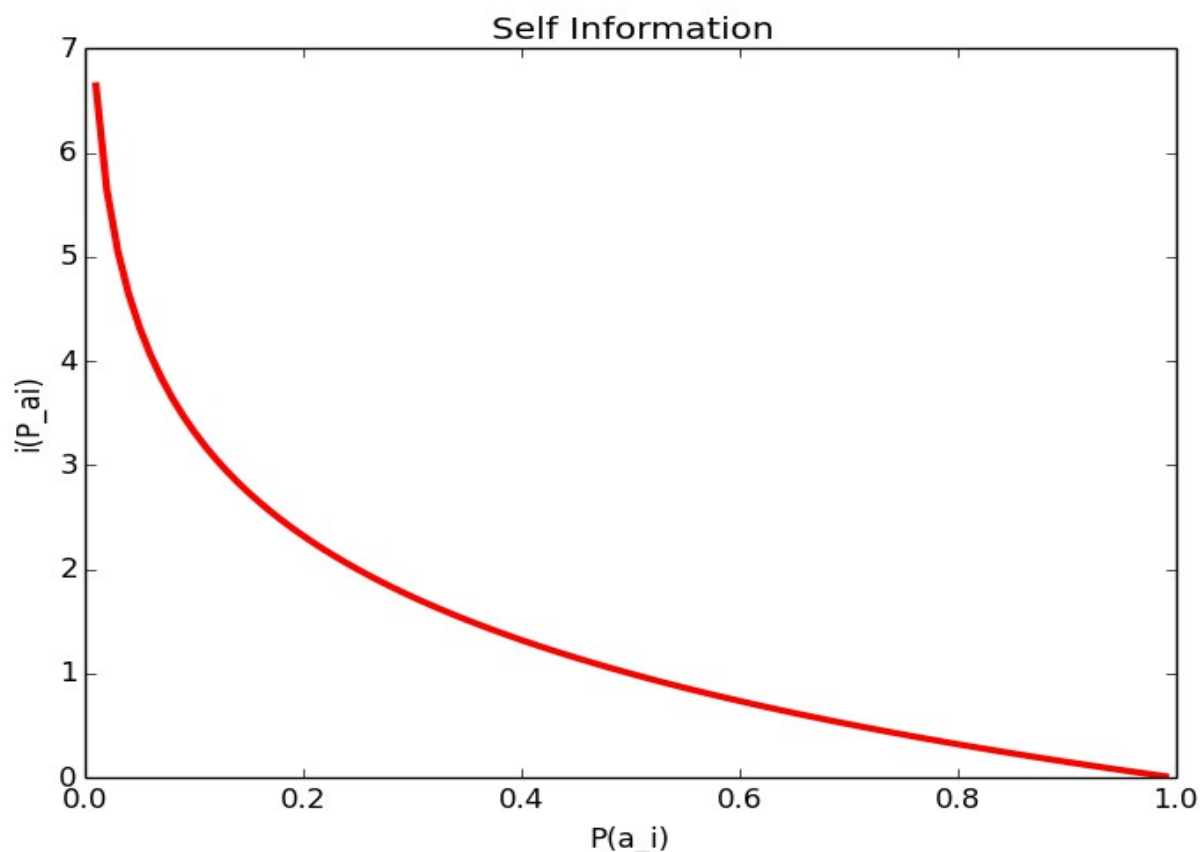
- The self information for symbol  $a_i$  is defined as

$$i(a_i) = \log_2 \frac{1}{P(a_i)} = -\log_2 P(a_i)$$



# Properties of Self Information

- The information is *low* when  $P(a_i)$  is high i.e. frequent symbols have *less* information (less surprise)
- The information is *high* when  $P(a_i)$  is low i.e. rare symbols have *more* information (more surprise)



# Properties of Self Information

- The self information contained in two independent symbols is the *sum* of their self information

$$\begin{aligned}i(a_i a_j) &= -\log_2 P(a_i a_j) \\ &= -\log_2 P(a_i) P(a_j) \\ &= -\log_2 P(a_i) - \log_2 P(a_j) \\ &= i(a_i) + i(a_j)\end{aligned}$$



# Example

- $S = \{a, b, c\}$  with  $P(a) = 1/8$ ,  $P(b) = 1/4$ ,  $P(c) = 5/8$ 
  - $i(a) = \log_2(8) = 3$
  - $i(b) = \log_2(4) = 2$
  - $i(c) = \log_2(8/5) = .678$
- Receiving  $a$  more information than  $b$  or  $c$  because it's the rarest

$$i(a_i) = \log_2 \frac{1}{P(a_i)} = -\log_2 P(a_i)$$

# Entropy

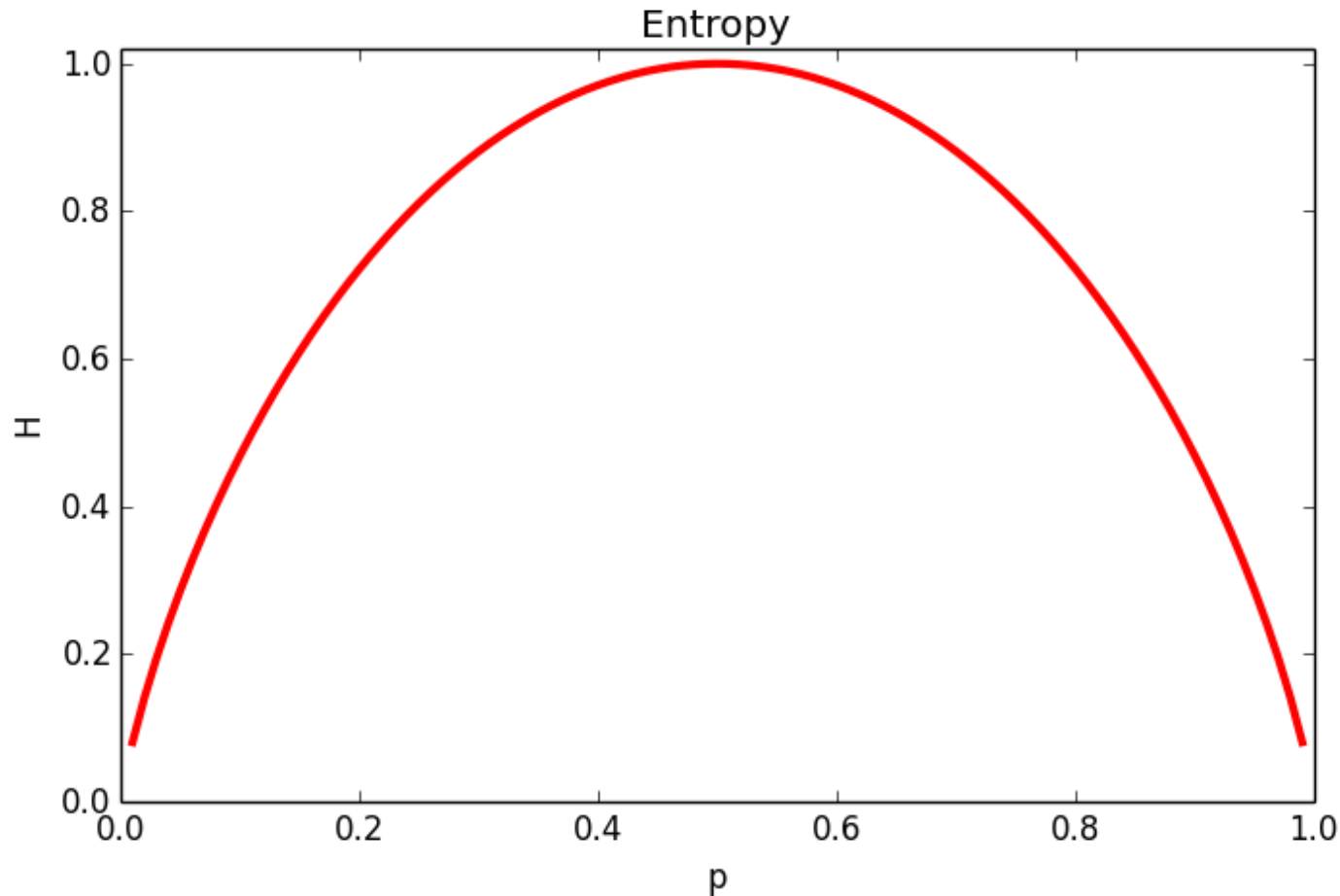
- The **entropy** of an alphabet  $S = \{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_m\}$  with probabilities  $P(a_i)$  is

$$H = \sum_{i=1}^m P(a_i) \log_2 \frac{1}{P(a_i)} = - \sum_{i=1}^m P(a_i) \log_2 P(a_i)$$

- $H$  represents the average number of bits required to code up the symbols in the alphabet if we know their probabilities
- It represents the **lower bound** on the average number of bits required to code a symbol in this *source model* i.e. the best a lossless compression algorithm can do!

# Example

- $S = \{a, b\}$  with  $P(a) = p$ ,  $P(b) = 1 - p$   
$$H = -p \log_2(p) - (1 - p) \log_2(1 - p)$$
- Maximum  $H = 1$  at  $p = 0.5$  (equally probable) and *zero* at  $p = 0$  or  $1$  (no uncertainty)



# More Examples

- $S = \{a, b, c\}$  with  $P(a) = 1/8, P(b) = 1/4, P(c) = 5/8$

$$H = \frac{1}{8} \times 3 + \frac{1}{4} \times 2 + \frac{5}{8} \times 0.678 = 1.3 \text{ bits/symbol}$$

- $S = \{a, b, c\}$  with  $P(a) = 1/3, P(b) = 1/3, P(c) = 1/3$

$$H = 3 \times \frac{1}{3} \times \log_2 3 = 1.6 \text{ bits/symbol}$$

this is the worst case. Why?

- How many bits per symbol are required in a fixed-length coding?
- 2 bits/symbol

symbol	a	b	c
binary code	00	01	10

# Goals of Coding

Represent any alphabet in binary codewords while:

- Minimizing the **average number of bits per symbol**, called the *rate* of the code
- Allowing the **receiver** to be able to correctly *decode* the codewords and retrieve the original symbols sent. These codes are called *uniquely decodable codes*

# Example

$S = \{a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4\}$  with  $P(a_1) = 1/2, P(a_2) = 1/4, P(a_3) = P(a_4) = 1/8$

- How much is the entropy  $H$ ?

$$H = \frac{1}{2} \log_2 2 + \frac{1}{4} \log_2 4 + \frac{2}{8} \log_2 8 = 1.75 \text{ bits/symbol}$$

- Consider the codes below:

Letters	Prob.	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
$a_1$	0.5	0	0	0	0
$a_2$	0.25	0	1	10	01
$a_3$	0.125	1	00	110	011
$a_4$	0.125	10	11	111	0111
Average Length					

- Average Length for a code =  $\sum_i P(a_i) l_i$

where  $l_i$  is the length of the codeword for letter  $a_i$

# Example

$$H = \frac{1}{2} \log_2 2 + \frac{1}{4} \log_2 4 + \frac{2}{8} \log_2 8 = 1.75 \text{ bits/symbol}$$

- Code 1
  - Is it uniquely decodable?
    - No. Why?
    - Two symbols have the same codeword
  - What's the average length?  $= 0.5 + 0.25 + 0.125 + 0.125 \times 2 = 1.125$

Letters	Prob.	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
$a_1$	0.5	0	0	0	0
$a_2$	0.25	0	1	10	01
$a_3$	0.125	1	00	110	011
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Average Length					

# Example

$$H = \frac{1}{2} \log_2 2 + \frac{1}{4} \log_2 4 + \frac{2}{8} \log_2 8 = 1.75 \text{ bits/symbol}$$

- Code 2
  - Is it uniquely decodable?
    - No. Why?
    - Though no two codewords are the same, but consider the sequence 100, it can be decoded as either  $a_2 a_3$  or  $a_2 a_1 a_1$

Letters	Prob.	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
$a_1$	0.5	0	0	0	0
$a_2$	0.25	0	1	10	01
$a_3$	0.125	1	00	110	011
$a_4$	0.125	10	11	111	0111
Average Length		1.125	1.25		



# Example

$$H = \frac{1}{2} \log_2 2 + \frac{1}{4} \log_2 4 + \frac{2}{8} \log_2 8 = 1.75 \text{ bits/symbol}$$

- Code 3
  - Is it uniquely decodable?
    - Yes!
  - Each codeword ends with a 0 except the last one.
  - **Decoding**: accumulate bits until you see a 0 or you see three 1's

Letters	Prob.	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
$a_1$	0.5	0	0	0	0
$a_2$	0.25	0	1	10	01
$a_3$	0.125	1	00	110	011
$a_4$	0.125	10	11	111	0111
Average Length		1.125	1.25	1.75	

# Example

$$H = \frac{1}{2} \log_2 2 + \frac{1}{4} \log_2 4 + \frac{2}{8} \log_2 8 = 1.75 \text{ bits/symbol}$$

- Code 4
  - Is it uniquely decodable?
    - Yes!
  - Each codeword starts with a 0 except the last one.
  - **Decoding**: accumulate bits until you see a 0. The 0 starts the new codeword.

Letters	Prob.	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
$a_1$	0.5	0	0	0	0
$a_2$	0.25	0	1	10	01
$a_3$	0.125	1	00	110	011
$a_4$	0.125	10	11	111	0111
Average Length		1.125	1.25	1.75	1.875

# Instantaneous Codes

A code where the **decoder** knows the moment a **codeword** is complete without having to examine bits from the *next* codeword.

- Which of Codes 3 and 4 is *instantaneous*?
- Code 3, because in Code 4 the decoder has to see the 0 of the following codeword to know it finished the current codeword. Code 4 is a *near*-instantaneous code.

Letters	Prob.	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
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Average Length		1.125	1.25	1.75	1.875

# Prefix Codes

A code where no codeword is a *prefix* of another.

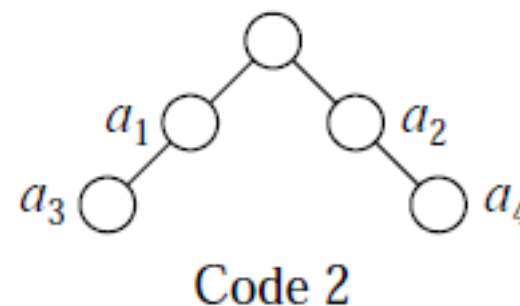
- Which of Codes 3 and 4 is a *prefix code*?
- Code 3, because in Code 4 we have codeword **0** a prefix of all the other codewords ...
- **Prefix Codes** are guaranteed to be *uniquely decodable*

Letters	Prob.	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
$a_1$	0.5	0	0	0	0
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Average Length		1.125	1.25	1.75	1.875

# Prefix Codes

- How to check if a given code is a *prefix code*?
- Draw the rooted binary tree corresponding to the code.
- From each node draw a *left* branch if the bit is a 0 and a *right* branch if a bit is a 1.
- Mark any node with the codeword it represents
- If all the codewords are at the *leaves*, then it's a *prefix code*

Letters	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
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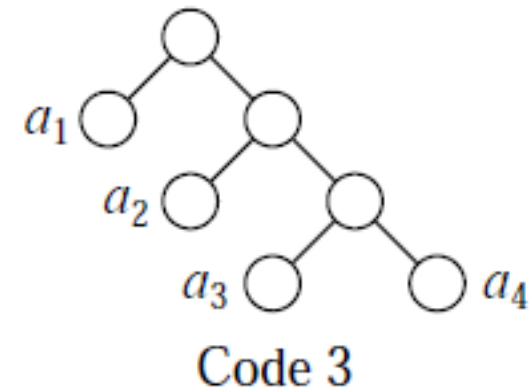


*not a prefix code*

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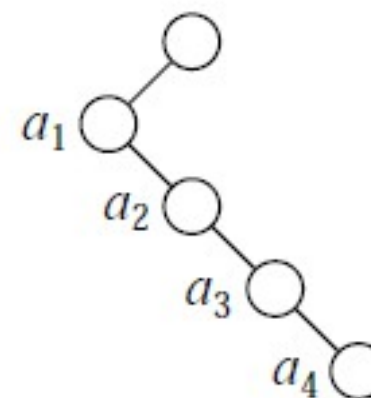


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Code 4

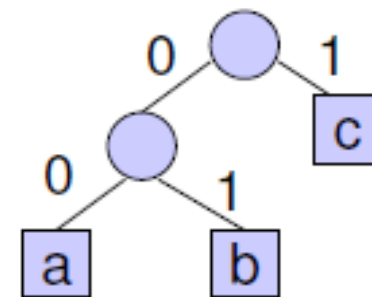
*not a prefix code*

# Encoding Prefix Codes

```
repeat:  
  if there is input  
    report codeword for input symbol  
until end of the code
```

Input: ccab

Output:

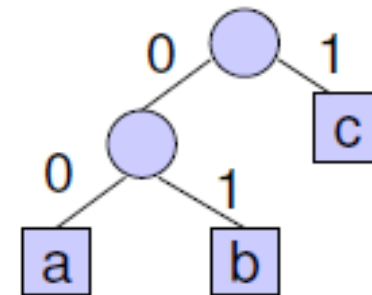




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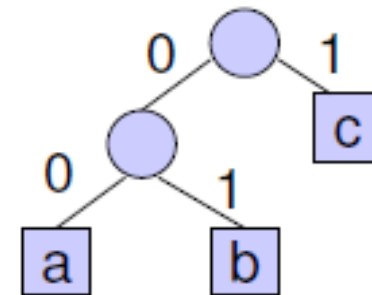
Input: **c**cab  
Output: 1



# Encoding Prefix Codes

```
repeat:  
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```

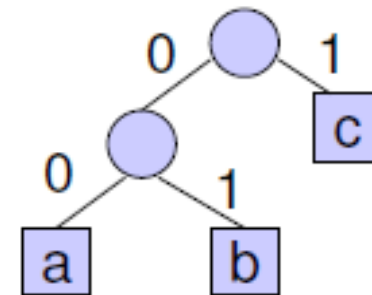
Input: ccab  
Output: 11



# Encoding Prefix Codes

```
repeat:  
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    report codeword for input symbol  
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```

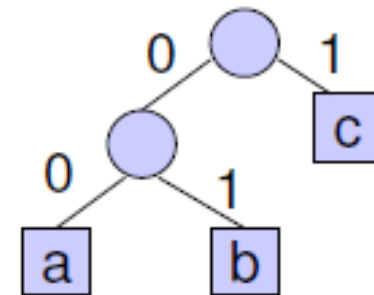
Input: cc**a**b  
Output: 1100



# Encoding Prefix Codes

```
repeat:  
  if there is input  
    report codeword for input symbol  
until end of the code
```

Input: cca**b**  
Output: 110001

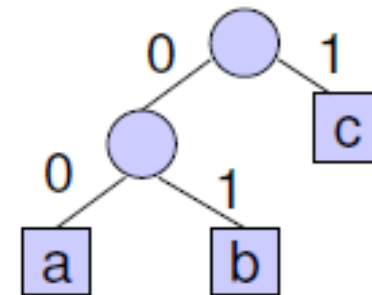


# Encoding Prefix Codes

```
repeat:  
  if there is input  
    report codeword for input symbol  
until end of the code
```

Input: ccabccca

Output: 110001111100

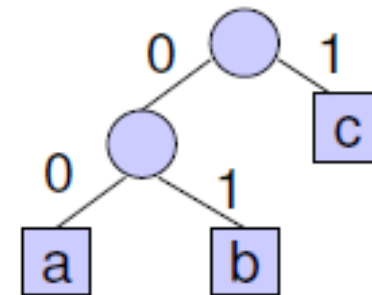


# Decoding Prefix Codes

```
repeat:  
  start at root of tree  
  repeat:  
    if read bit = 1 then go right  
    else go left  
  until node is a leaf  
  report leaf  
until end of the code
```

Input: 11000111100

Output:

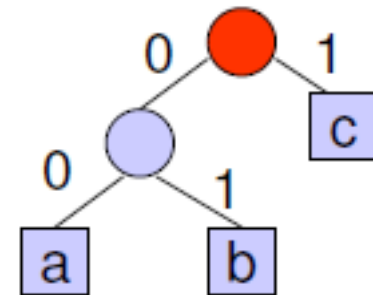


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Input: 11000111100

Output:

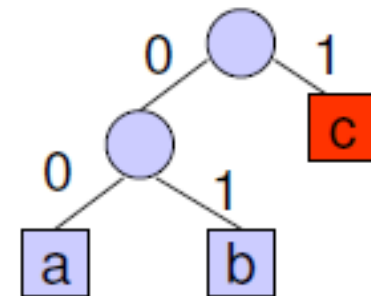


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```

Input: 11000111100

Output: c



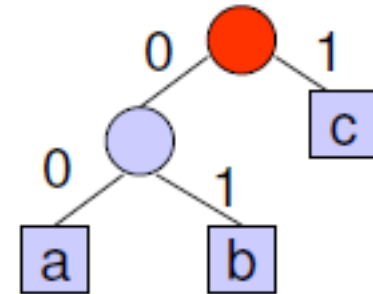


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until end of the code
```

Input: 11000111100

Output: c

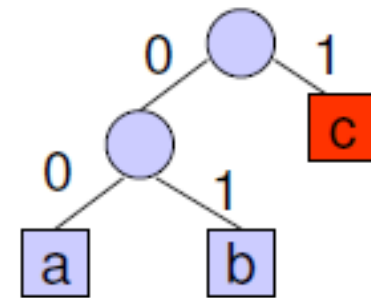


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```

Input: 11000111100

Output: cc

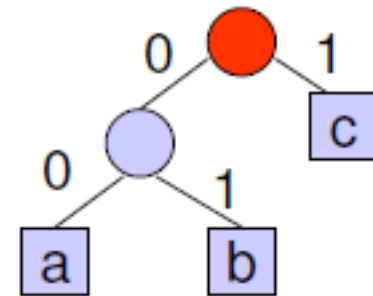


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Input: 11000111100

Output: cc

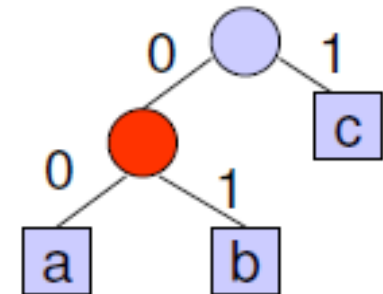


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until end of the code
```

Input: 1100111100

Output: cc

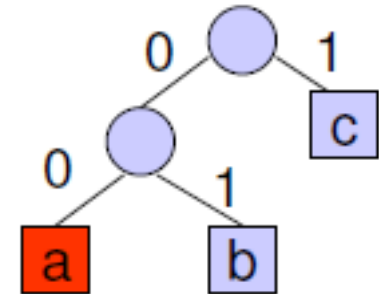


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until end of the code
```

Input: 1100111100

Output: cca

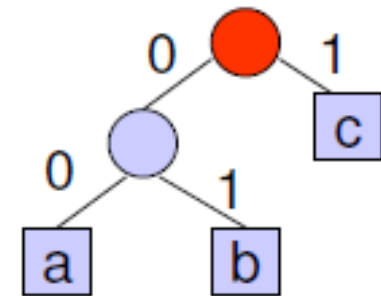


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  report leaf  
until end of the code
```

Input: 1100**0**111100

Output: cca

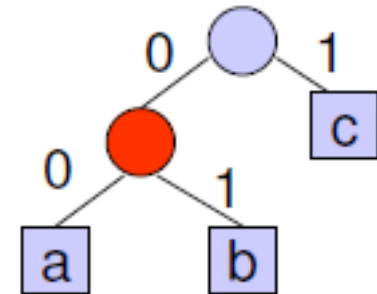


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Input: 11000**1**11100

Output: cca

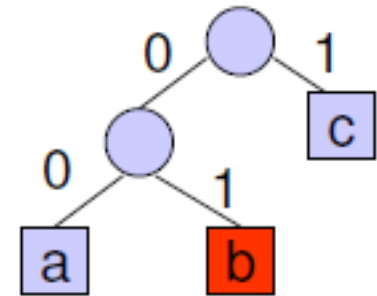


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Input: 11000**1**11100

Output: ccab



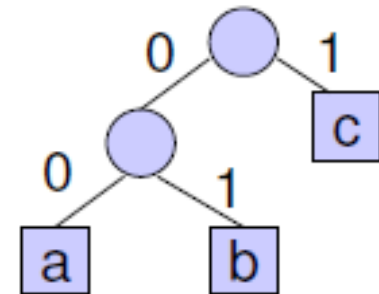


# Decoding Prefix Codes

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  report leaf  
until end of the code
```

Input: 11000**1**11100

Output: ccabccca



# Kraft McMillan Inequality

- Prefix codes are guaranteed to be uniquely decodable
- But, do we lose performance (i.e. having the shortest average codeword) by limiting ourselves to prefix codes?
- The answer is: No!
- This is proved using the Kraft-McMillan Inequality:

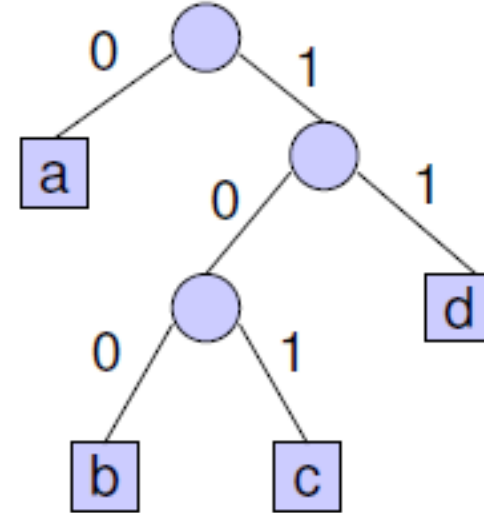
$$\sum_{i=1}^N 2^{-l_i} \leq 1$$

where  $l_i$  is the length of codeword  $i$  from  $N$  codewords.

- Proof: Section 2.4.3 [**IDC**].

# Exercise

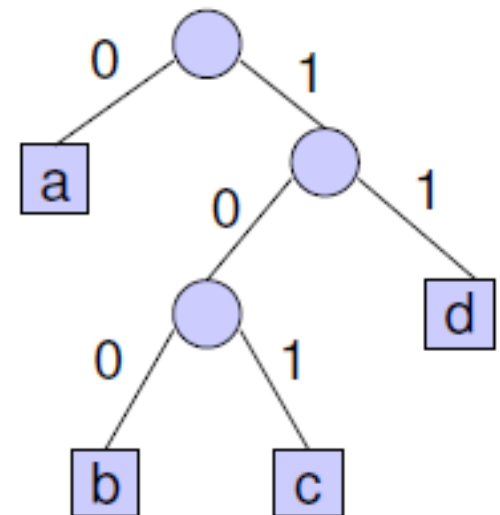
- Encode a symbol string
- Decode the symbol string
- Make sure they match!



# Huffman Coding

- Huffman in 1951
- Uses *probabilities* of symbols (or their *frequencies*) to build a *variable length prefix code*
  - Codewords have different lengths
  - Each symbol maps to a unique codeword
  - More frequent symbols have shorter codewords
  - No codeword is a prefix of another

<i>a</i>	0
<i>b</i>	100
<i>c</i>	101
<i>d</i>	11



# Cost of a Huffman Tree

- Let  $p_1, p_1, \dots, p_m$  be the probabilities for symbols  $a_1, a_1, \dots, a_m$
- The cost of a **Huffman Tree**  $T$  is defined as:

$$C(T) = \sum_{i=1}^m p_i l_i$$

where  $l_i$  is the length of the path from the root to  $a_i$  i.e. the length of the codeword for symbol  $a_i$

- $C(T)$  represents the *expected* (average) length of a codeword, and is the *bit rate* of the code
- **Huffman Trees** are *optimal* in the sense that they have the *minimum* cost among all trees

# Huffman Coding

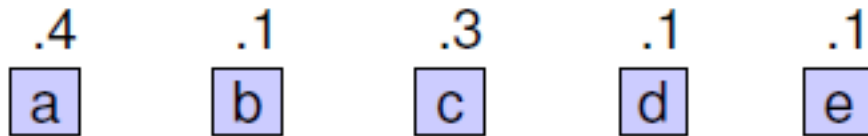
```
Form a node for each symbol  $a_i$  with probability  $p_i$ 
Insert the nodes into a priority queue  $Q$ 
while there nodes in  $Q$ 
     $min1 = \text{extract\_min}(Q)$ 
     $min2 = \text{extract\_min}(Q)$ 
    create a new node  $n$ 

    // make the new node their parent
     $n.left = min1$ 
     $n.right = min2$ 

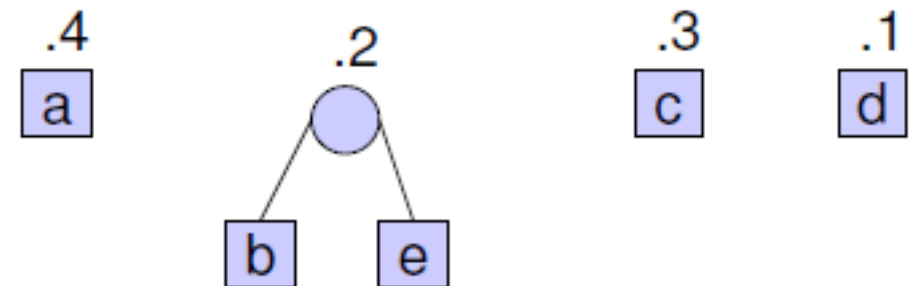
    // set its probability to the sum of their prob.
     $n.p = min1.p + min2.p$ 
     $\text{insert}(Q, n)$ 
return  $\text{extract\_min}(Q)$ 
```

# Example

Symbol	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$	$e$
Prob.	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1

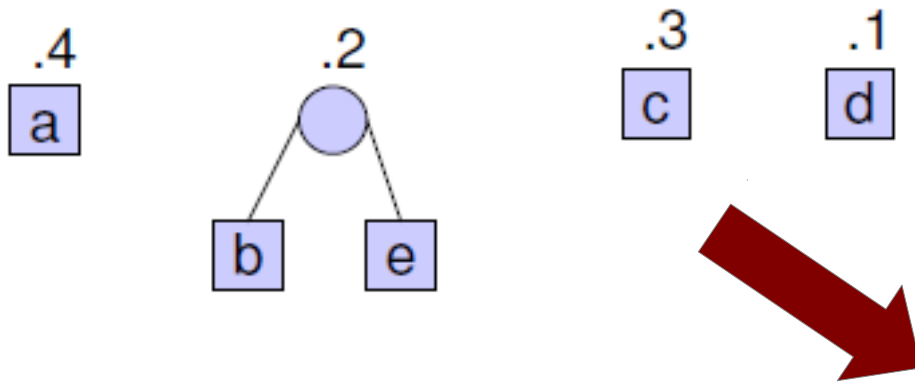


Combine  $b$  and  $e$   
into a new symbol  
with prob. = 0.2

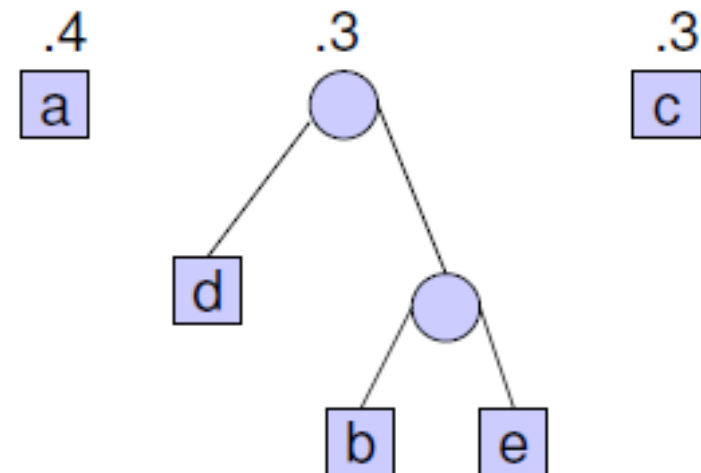


# Example

Symbol	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$	$e$
Prob.	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1



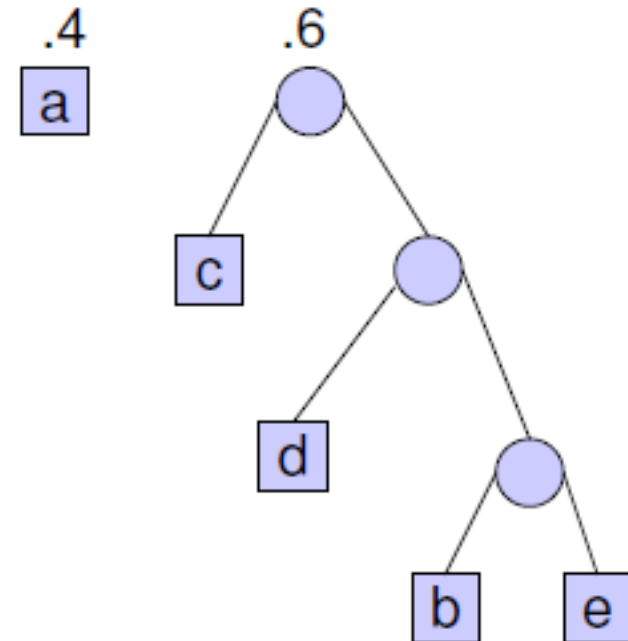
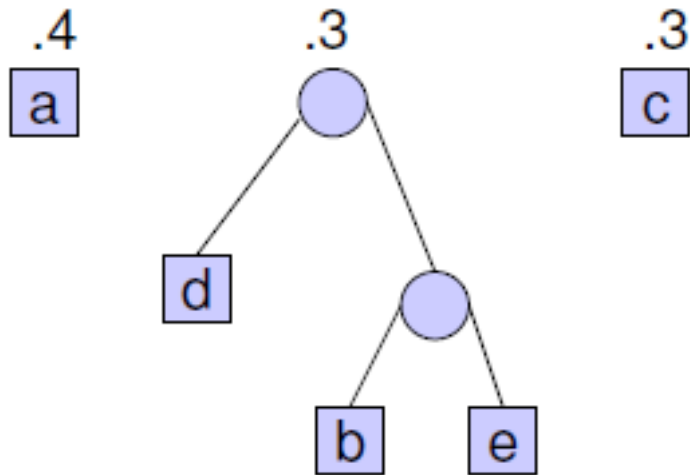
Combine ( $b$ ,  $e$ ) and  $d$  into a new symbol with prob. = 0.3





# Example

Symbol	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$	$e$
Prob.	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1

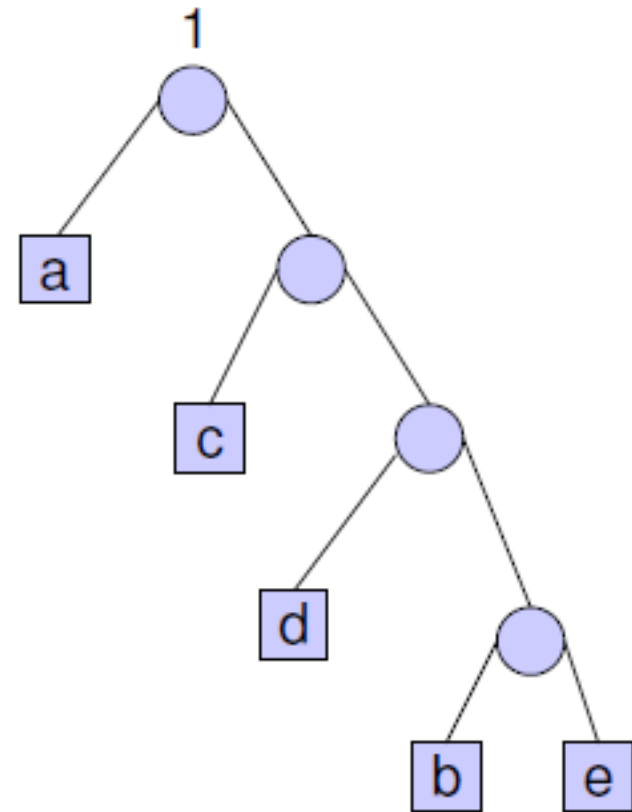
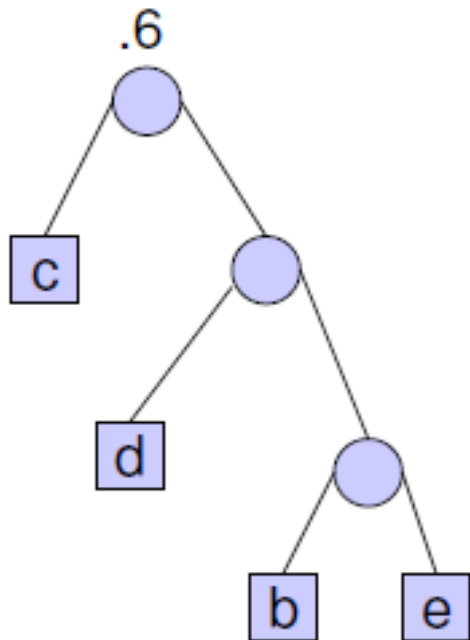


Combine ( $d, b, e$ ) and  $e$  into a new symbol with prob. = 0.6

# Example

Symbol	$a$	$b$	$c$	$d$	$e$
Prob.	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1

.4  
a



Combine  $(c, d, b, e)$  and  $a$   
into a new symbol  
with prob. = 1 and return the  
root of the tree

# Example

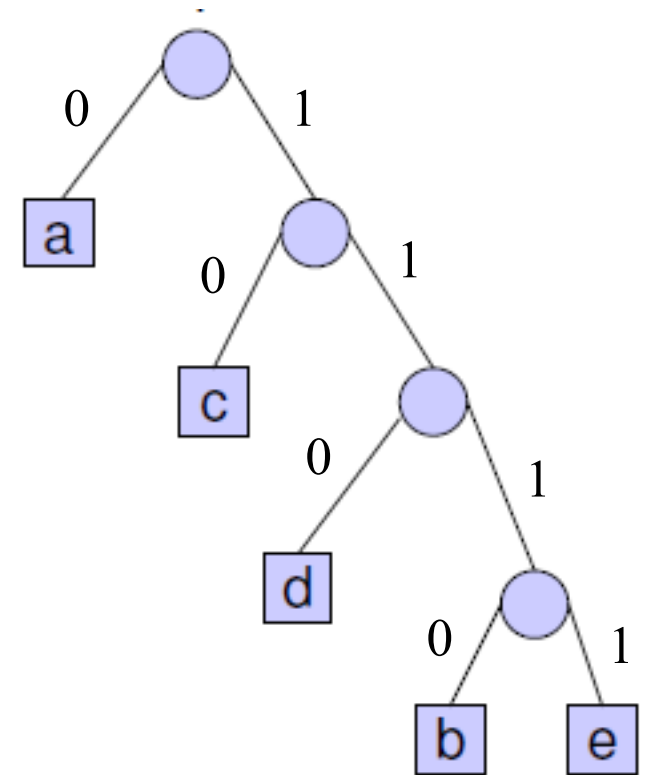
Symbol	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>
Prob.	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1
Code	0	1110	10	110	1111

Cost of the tree:

$$\begin{aligned}C(T) &= \sum_i P(a_i) l_i \\ &= 0.4 \times 1 + 0.1 \times 4 + 0.3 \times 2 + 0.1 \times 3 + 0.1 \times 4 \\ &= 2.1 \text{ bits/symbol}\end{aligned}$$

Entropy:

$$\begin{aligned}H &= \sum_i P(a_i) \log_2 \frac{1}{P(a_i)} \\ &= 2.05 \text{ bits/symbol}\end{aligned}$$

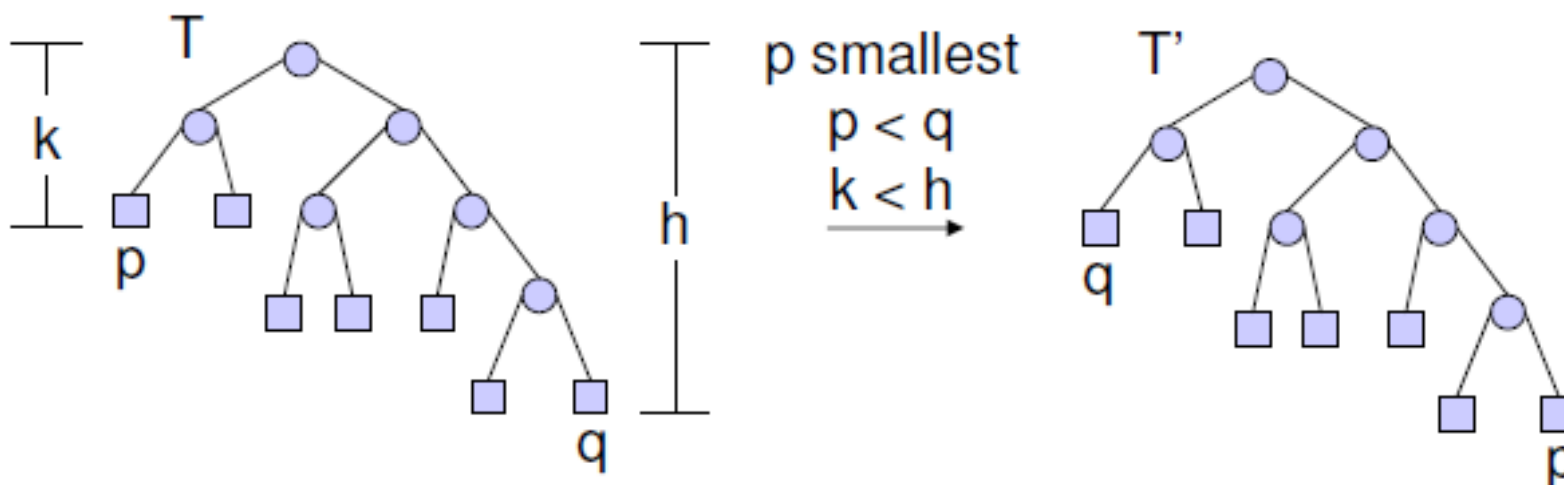


# Proof of Optimality I

In an **optimal tree**, the lowest probability symbol has the longest codeword i.e. the maximum distance from the root.

**Proof:**

If that's not the case, exchanging the lowest probability symbol with the one at maximum distance from the root will lower the cost of the tree. **Contradiction.**



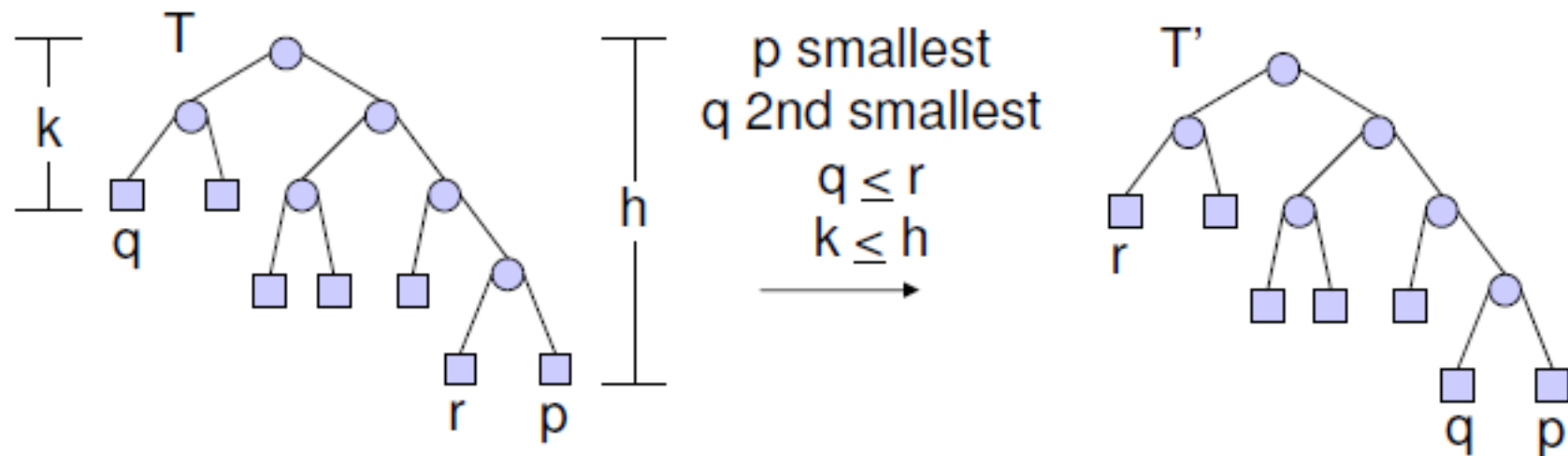
$$\begin{aligned}C(T') &= C(T) - (pk + qh) + (qk + ph) \\ &= C(T) - (q - p)(h - k) \\ &< C(T)\end{aligned}$$

# Proof of Optimality II

In some **optimal tree**, the second lowest probability symbol is a sibling of the lowest probability symbol.

**Proof:**

If that's not the case, exchanging the second lowest probability symbol with the sibling of the lowest probability one will not raise the cost.



$$\begin{aligned}
 C(T') &= C(T) - (qk + rh) + (qh + rk) \\
 &= C(T) - (r - q)(h - k) \\
 &\leq C(T)
 \end{aligned}$$

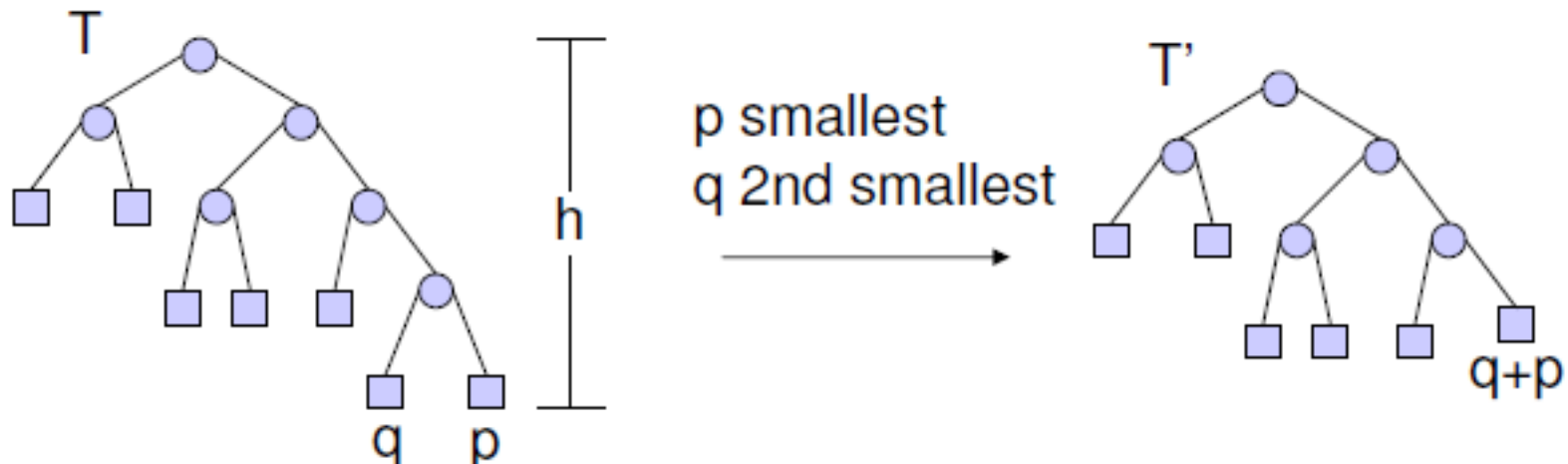
# Proof of Optimality III

In an **optimal tree**, if we replace the two lowest probability symbols by a node whose probability is the sum of their probabilities, the new tree  $T'$  is **optimal** for the reduced alphabet.

**Proof:**

If that's not the case, we can find another lower cost tree  $T''$  which can lead to a tree  $T'''$  with lower cost than  $T$ .

**Contradiction.**



$$C(T') = C(T) - (qh + ph) + (q + p)(h - 1) = C(T) - (p + q)$$

# Proof of Optimality III

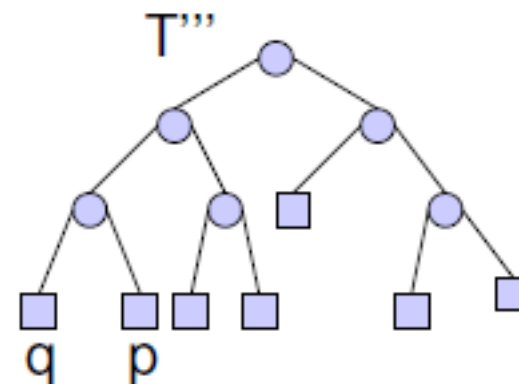
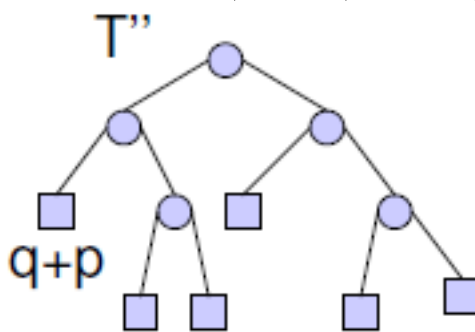
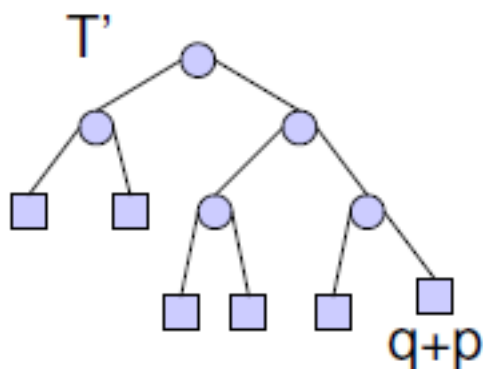
In an **optimal tree**, if we replace the two lowest probability symbols by a node whose probability is the sum of their probabilities, the new tree  $T'$  is **optimal** for the reduced alphabet.

**Proof:**

If that's not the case, we can find another lower cost tree  $T''$  which can lead to a tree  $T'''$  with lower cost than  $T$ .

**Contradiction.**

$$C(T'') < C(T')$$



$$C(T''') = C(T'') + (p+q) < C(T') + (p+q) = C(T)$$

$$C(T') = C(T) - (qh + ph) + (q+p)(h-1) = C(T) - (p+q)$$

# Quality of Huffman Coding

The *rate* of the Huffman Coding is within 1 bit of the entropy for the source alphabet i.e.

$$H \leq C(T) \leq H + 1$$

where  $H$  is the entropy and  $C(T)$  is the cost of the Huffman Tree (or the expected length of the codeword)

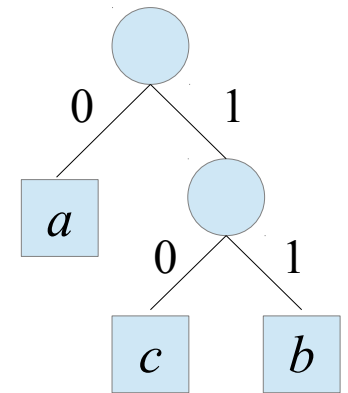


# Limitations

- Very efficient encoding/decoding
- Optimal codes if the probabilities are known
- Does not work well with smaller alphabets or when the probability distribution is *skewed*
- Example: Consider the following alphabet

Symbol	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>
Probability	0.8	0.02	0.18
Huffman Code	0	11	10

- $H = 0.816$  bits/symbol
- Huffman's rate = 1.2 bits/symbol
- An increase of 47% of the entropy!



# Extended Huffman Coding

- Instead of coding the alphabet symbols individually, create a new *extended* alphabet by grouping together symbols from the original alphabet, and run Huffman coding on that.
- If we group together  $n$  symbols, the bounds for the Huffman Coding on the new alphabet become

$$H \leq C(T) \leq H + \frac{1}{n}$$

i.e. by making the blocks bigger we can decrease the rate more

- **Drawback:** grouping  $n$  symbols increases the size of the alphabet *exponentially*

# Example

- Extend this alphabet by grouping *two* symbols together, and assume they are independent when computing their probability

Symbol	Prob.
<i>a</i>	0.8
<i>b</i>	0.02
<i>c</i>	0.18

$$P(ab) = P(a)P(b)$$

Symbol	Prob.	Code
<i>aa</i>	0.64	0
<i>ab</i>	0.016	10101
<i>ac</i>	0.144	11
<i>ba</i>	0.016	101000
<i>bb</i>	0.0004	10100101
<i>bc</i>	0.0036	1010011
<i>ca</i>	0.1440	100
<i>cb</i>	0.0036	10100100
<i>cc</i>	0.0324	1011

- $H = 0.816$  bits/symbol
- Rate = 1.7228 bits/symbol in the extended alphabet
- Each such symbol contains two original symbols
- Actual rate = 0.8614 bits/symbol < 1.2 obtained previously!

# Alphabet Probabilities

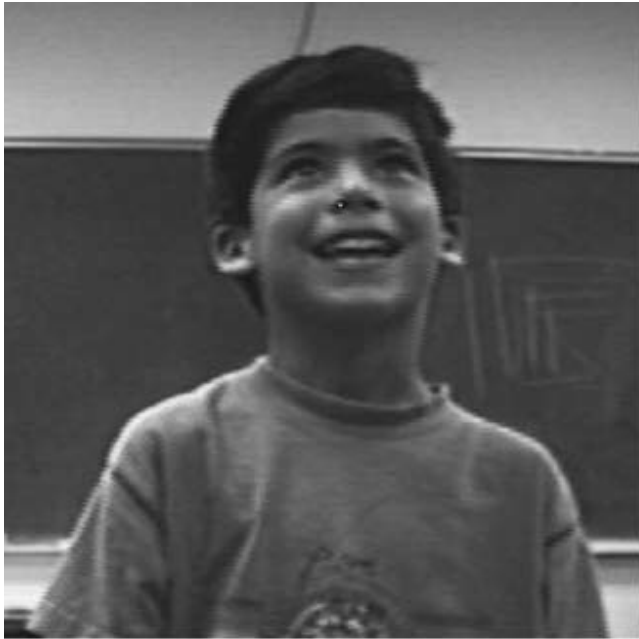
- If we know the alphabet probabilities beforehand, we can compute the **Huffman Tree** *once* and use it at the transmitter and receiver
- If we don't know the probabilities:
  - We can *estimate* them from the *frequency* of occurrence of each symbol. In that case, we need to:
    - transmit the Huffman Tree computed at the transmitter, or
    - perform two passes at the receiver, first to compute the frequencies then compute the Huffman Tree
  - Use **Adaptive Huffman Coding**, which performs one pass over the data and updates the tree as it scans the input

# Applications

- Huffman Coding is used in many applications:
  - Image compression
  - Text compression
  - Audio compression
- Usually used as a building block in compression standards e.g. lossless JPEG

# Example

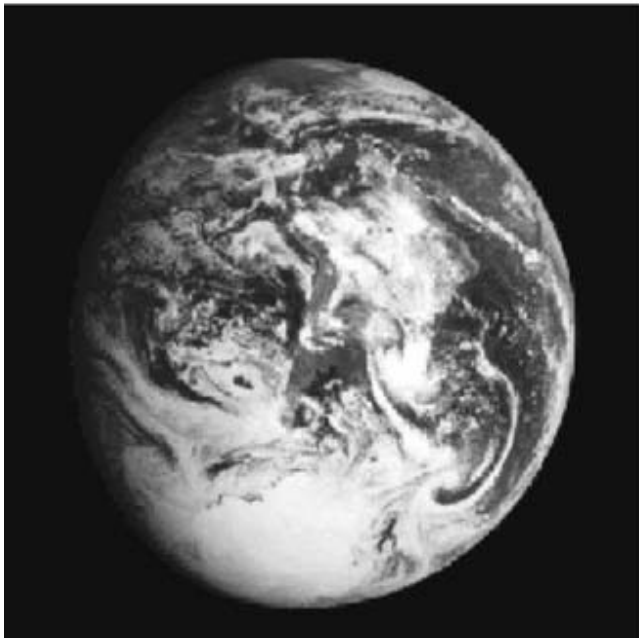
Sena



Sensin



Earth



Omaha



# Example

- Huffman Coding of the pixel values (statistics computed from the image)

**TABLE 3 . 23      Compression using Huffman codes on pixel values.**

Image Name	Bits/Pixel	Total Size (bytes)	Compression Ratio
Sena	7.01	57,504	1.14
Sensin	7.49	61,430	1.07
Earth	4.94	40,534	1.62
Omaha	7.12	58,374	1.12

- We can use the *correlation* between neighboring pixels by encoding some *difference* image e.g. encode the difference between a pixel and its left neighbor:

$$\hat{I}(i, j) = I(i, j - 1)$$

- The *receiver* can then reconstruct the image by adding the decoded value to its left neighbor

# Example

- Huffman Coding of the pixel values:

**TABLE 3 . 23      Compression using Huffman codes on pixel values.**

Image Name	Bits/Pixel	Total Size (bytes)	Compression Ratio
Sena	7.01	57,504	1.14
Sensin	7.49	61,430	1.07
Earth	4.94	40,534	1.62
Omaha	7.12	58,374	1.12

- Huffman Coding of the *residual* values:

**TABLE 3 . 24      Compression using Huffman codes on pixel difference values.**

Image Name	Bits/Pixel	Total Size (bytes)	Compression Ratio
Sena	4.02	32,968	1.99
Sensin	4.70	38,541	1.70
Earth	4.13	33,880	1.93
Omaha	6.42	52,643	1.24



# Recap

- Compression
- Self Information and Entropy
- Coding and Prefix Codes
- Huffman Coding
- Applications
- Next:
  - Run Length Coding
  - Arithmetic Coding
  - Dictionary Techniques
- More information: Chapters 2 and 3 [**IDC**]