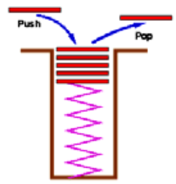
Pushdown Automata (PDA)

- Main Idea: Add a stack to an NFA
  - Stack provides potentially unlimited memory to an otherwise finite memory machine (finite memory = finite no. of states)
  - PDA = NFA + 

  - Stack is LIFO ("Last In, First Out")
  - Two operations:
    - "Push" symbol onto top of stack
    - "Pop" symbol from top of stack

6 Components of a PDA = (Q, Σ, Γ, δ, q_0, F)

- Q = set of states
- Σ = input alphabet
- **Γ = stack alphabet**
- q_0 = start state
- F ⊆ Q = set of accept states
- **Transition function δ: $Q \times \Sigma_\varepsilon \times \Gamma_\varepsilon \rightarrow Pow(Q \times \Gamma_\varepsilon)$**
  - **(current state, next input symbol, popped symbol) → {set of (next state, pushed symbol)}**
  - **Input/popped/pushed symbol can be ε**

New components!

When does a PDA accept a string?

- A PDA M accepts string $w = w_1 w_2 \ldots w_m$ if and only if there exists <u>at least one accepting computational path</u> i.e. a sequence of states $r_0, r_1, \ldots, r_m$ and strings $s_0, s_1, \ldots, s_m$ (denoting stack contents) such that:

  1. $r_0 = q_0$ and $s_0 = \varepsilon$ *(M starts in q_0 with empty stack)*
  2. $(r_{i+1}, b) \in \delta(r_i, w_{i+1}, a)$ *(States follow transition rules)*
  3. $s_i = at$ and $s_{i+1} = bt$ for some $a, b \in \Gamma_\varepsilon$ and $t \in \Gamma^*$
     (M pops "a" from top of stack and pushes "b" onto stack)
  4. $r_m \in F$ *(Last state in the sequence is an accept state)*

On-Board Examples

- PDA for $L = \{w\#w^R | \ w \in \{0,1\}^*\}$ (# acts as a "delimiter")
  - E.g. 0#0, 1#1, 10#01, 01#10, 1011#1101 $\in$ L
  - L is a CFL (what is a CFG for it?)
  - Recognizing L using a PDA:
    - Push each symbol of w onto stack
    - On reaching # (middle of the input), pop the stack – this yields symbols in w^R – and compare to rest of input
- PDA for $L_1 = \{ww^R | \ w \in \{0,1\}^*\}$
  - Set of all even length palindromes over {0,1}
- Recognizing L_1 using a PDA:
    - <u>Problem</u>: Don't know the middle of input string
    - <u>Solution</u>: Use nondeterminism (ε-transition) to guess!

Are context free grammars equivalent to PDAs?

(i.e. Are the languages generated by CFGs the same as the languages recognized by PDAs?)

Next Time: Equivalence of CFGs and PDAs

- Try: L is context free $\Rightarrow$ there exists a PDA that accepts it
- Proof idea:
  PDA "simulates" context-free grammar (CFG) for L by:
  1. Nondeterministically generating strings (in parallel) using rules of the CFG starting from the start symbol,
  2. Using the stack to store each intermediate string,
  3. Checking the generated part of each string with the input string in an "on-line" manner, and
  4. Going to the accept state if and only if all characters of the generated string match the input string.