CSE373: Data Structures & Algorithms
Lecture 14: Hash Collisions

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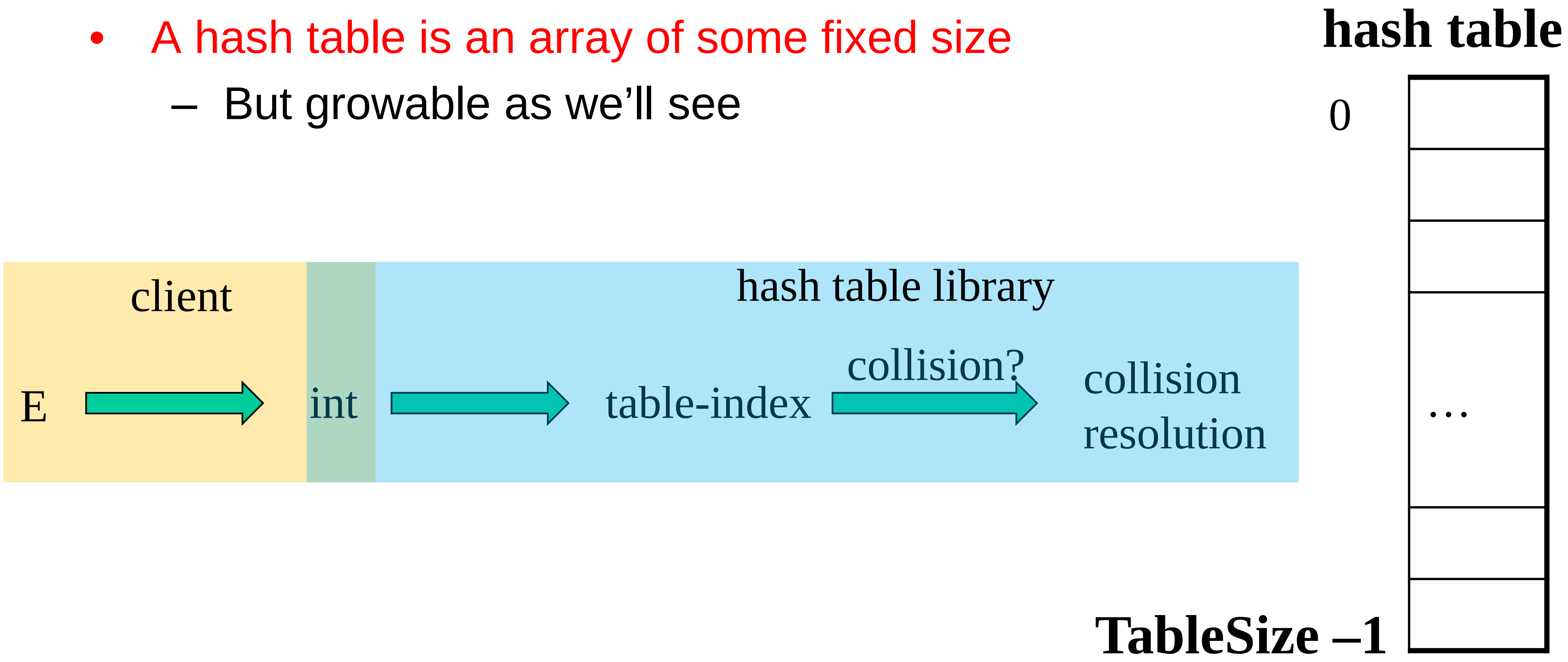
Winter 2015

Announcements

- Wednesday: Review List and go over answers to HW 4. It may not be turned in later than 2:30 Wednesday.

Hash Tables: Review

- Aim for constant-time (i.e., *O*(1)) **`find`**, **`insert`**, and **`delete`**
  - "On average" under some reasonable assumptions
- A hash table is an array of some fixed size
  - But growable as we'll see



Collision resolution

Collision:

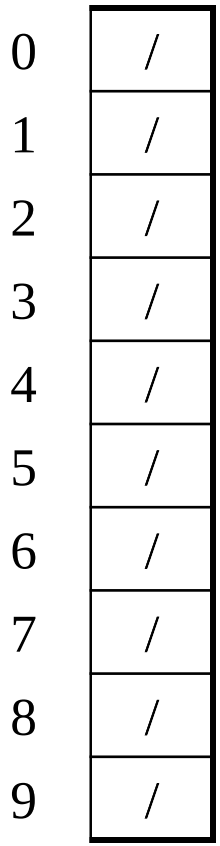
When two keys map to the same location in the hash table

We try to avoid it, but number-of-keys exceeds table size

So hash tables should support collision resolution

- Ideas?

Separate Chaining



Chaining:

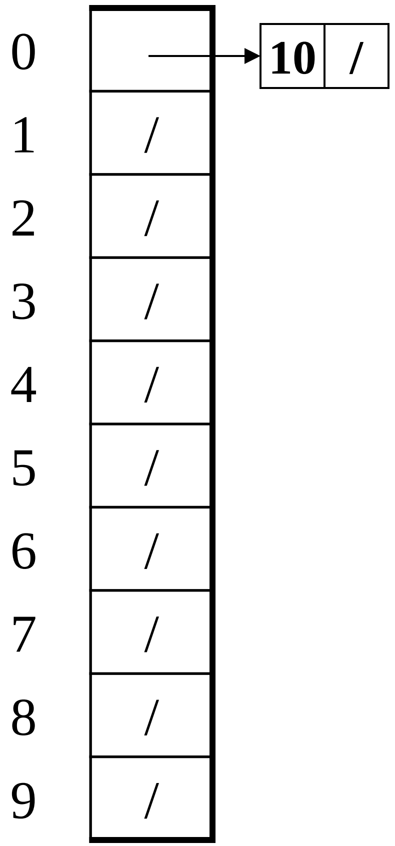
All keys that map to the same table location are kept in a list (a.k.a. a “chain” or “bucket”)

As easy as it sounds

Example:

insert 10, 22, 107, 12, 42 with mod hashing and **`TableSize`** = 10

Separate Chaining



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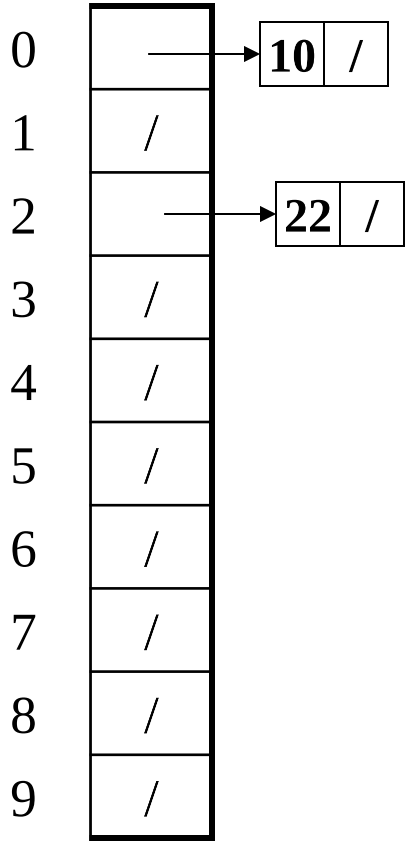

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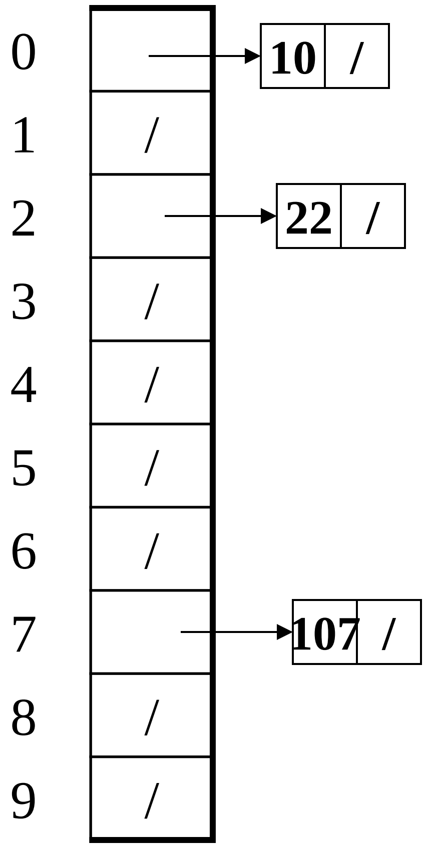

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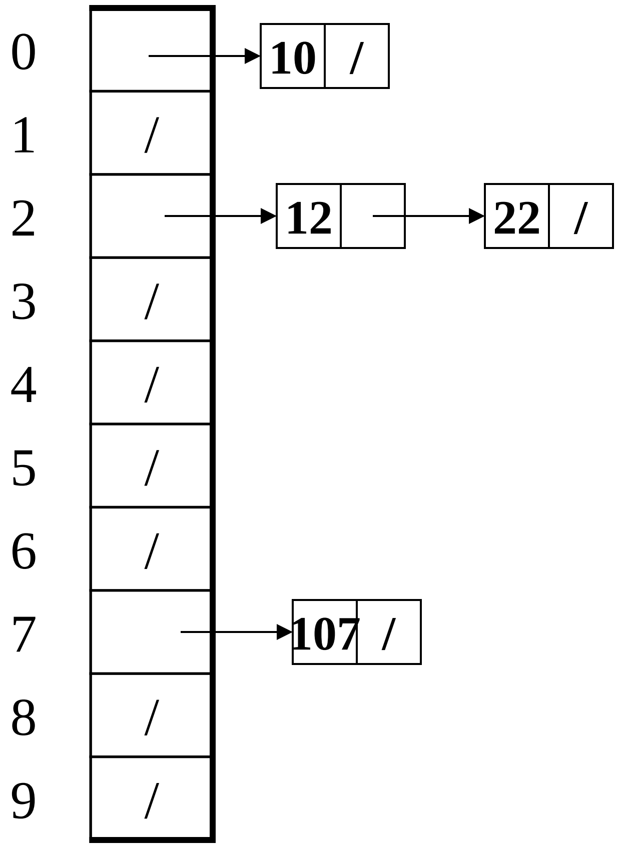

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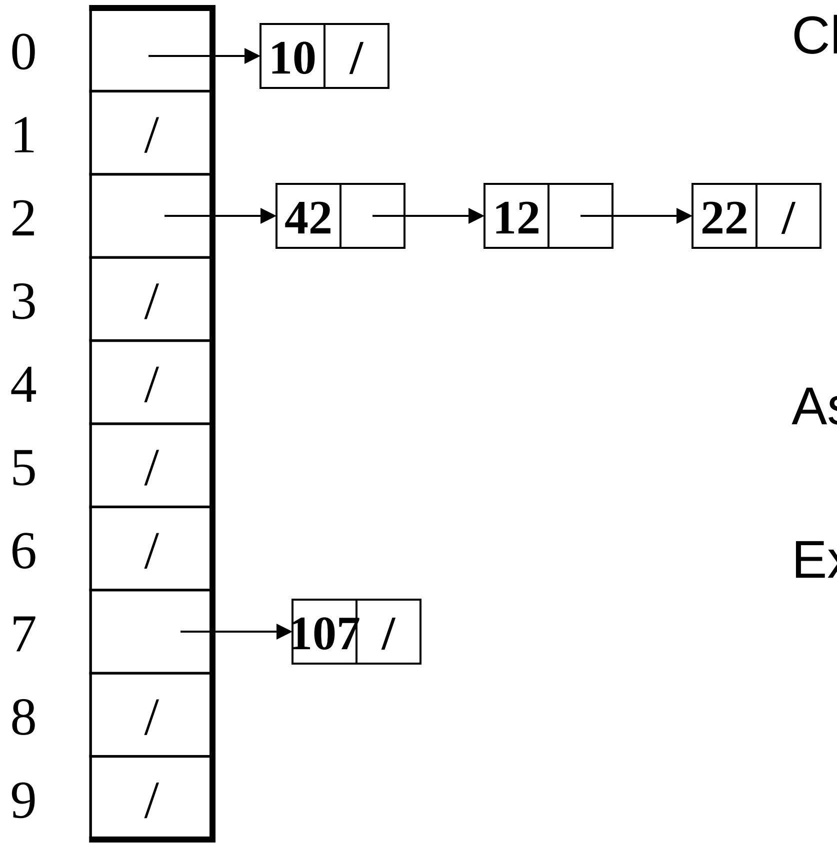

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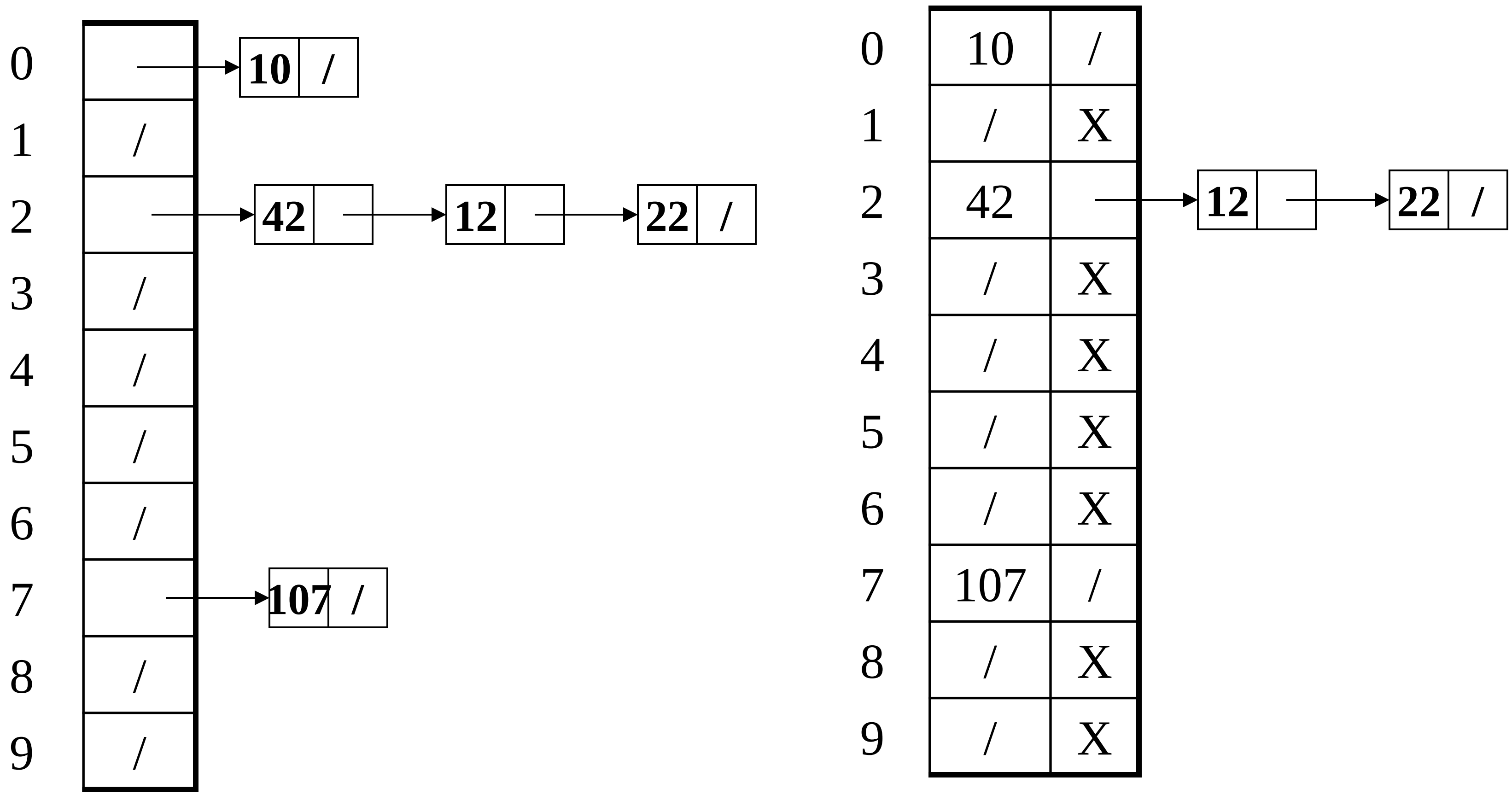
Thoughts on chaining

- Worst-case time for **`find`**?
  - Linear
  - But only with really bad luck or bad hash function
  - So not worth avoiding (e.g., with balanced trees at each bucket)

- Beyond asymptotic complexity, some "data-structure engineering" may be warranted
  - Linked list vs. array vs. tree
  - Move-to-front upon access
  - Maybe leave room for 1 element (or 2?) in the table itself, to optimize constant factors for the common case
    - A time-space trade-off…

Time vs. space (constant factors only here)



More rigorous chaining analysis

Definition: The load factor, λ, of a hash table is

$$\lambda = \frac{\text{N}}{\text{TableSize}}$$

← **number of elements**

Under chaining, the average number of elements per bucket is ___

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So if some inserts are followed by *random* finds, then on average:

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So if some inserts are followed by *random* finds, then on average:

- Each unsuccessful **`find`** compares against λ items
- Each successful **`find`** compares against _____ items

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Under chaining, the average number of elements per bucket is λ

So if some inserts are followed by *random* finds, then on average:

- Each unsuccessful **`find`** compares against λ items
- Each successful **`find`** compares against $\lambda / 2$ items

So we like to keep λ fairly low (e.g., 1 or 1.5 or 2) for chaining

Alternative: No lists; Use empty space in the table

- Another simple idea: If **`h(key)`** is already full,
  - try **`(h(key) + 1) % TableSize`**. If full,
  - try **`(h(key) + 2) % TableSize`**. If full,
  - try **`(h(key) + 3) % TableSize`**. If full…

- Example: insert 38, 19, 8, 109, 10

0	/
1	/
2	/
3	/
4	/
5	/
6	/
7	/
8	38
9	/

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2	10
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Probing hash tables

Trying the next spot is called probing (also called open addressing)

- We just did linear probing
  - **`i`**th probe was **`(h(key) + i) % TableSize`**
- In general have some probe function **`f`** and use **`h(key) + f(i) % TableSize`**

Open addressing does poorly with high load factor λ

- So want larger tables
- Too many probes means no more $O(1)$

Other operations

`insert` finds an open table position using a probe function

What about `find`?

- Must use same probe function to "retrace the trail" for the data
- Unsuccessful search when reach empty position

What about `delete`?

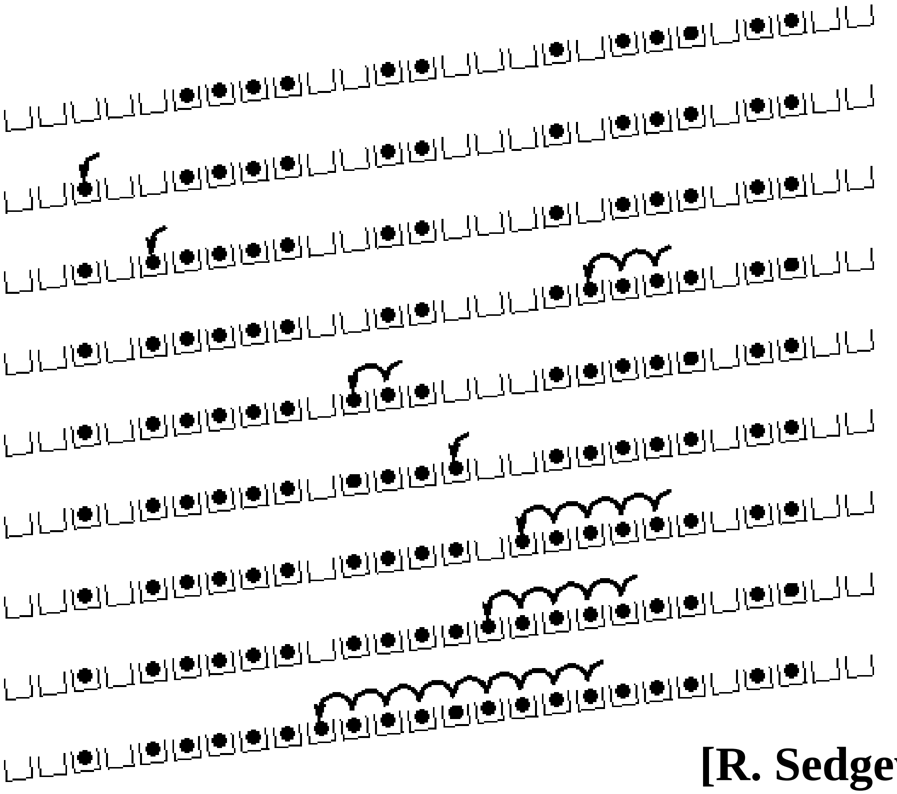
- ***Must*** use "lazy" deletion. Why?
  - Marker indicates "no data here, but don't stop probing"
- Note: `delete` with chaining is plain-old list-remove

(Primary) Clustering

It turns out linear probing is a *bad idea*, even though the probe function is quick to compute (which is a good thing)

Tends to produce *clusters*, which lead to long probing sequences

- Called primary clustering
- Saw this starting in our example



[R. Sedgewick]

Analysis of Linear Probing

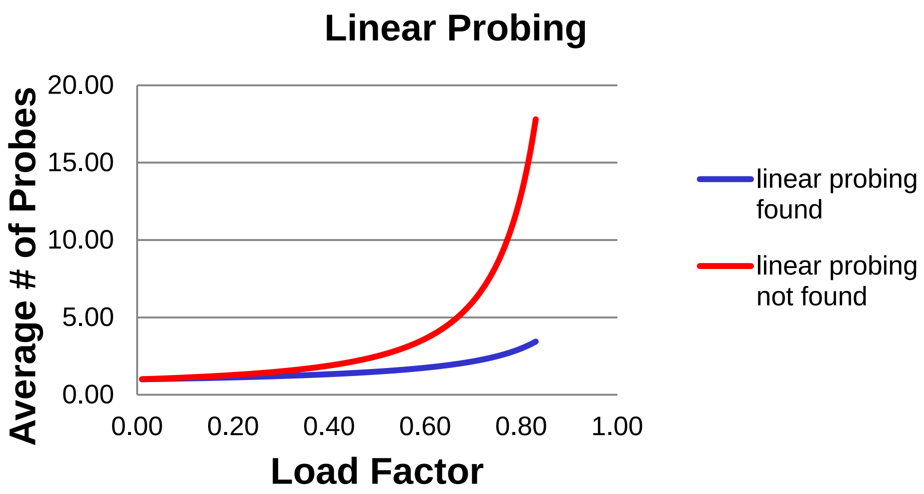
- Trivial fact: For any $\lambda < 1$, linear probing will find an empty slot
  - It is "safe" in this sense: no infinite loop unless table is full

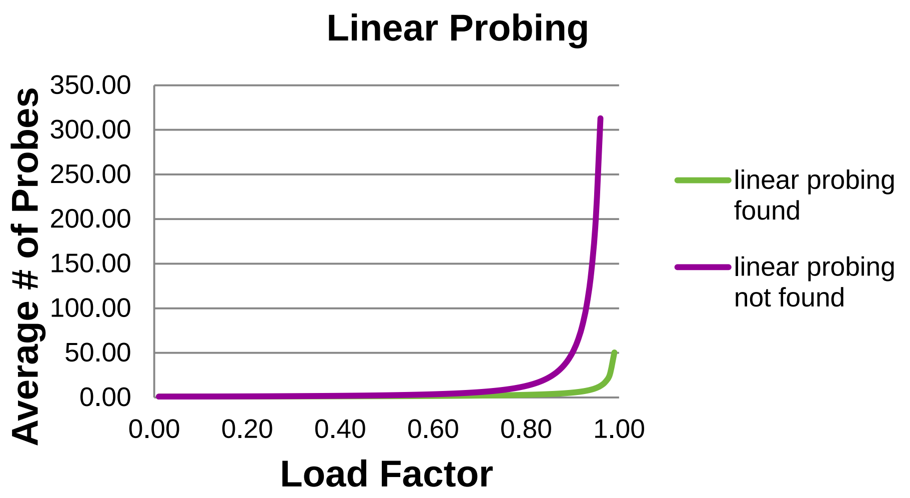
- Non-trivial facts we won't prove:
  Average # of probes given λ (in the limit as **`TableSize`** $\rightarrow \infty$)
  - Unsuccessful search: $$\frac{1}{2}\left(1+\frac{1}{(1-\lambda)^2}\right)$$
  - Successful search: $$\frac{1}{2}\left(1+\frac{1}{(1-\lambda)}\right)$$

- This is pretty bad: need to leave sufficient empty space in the table to get decent performance (see chart)

In a chart

- Linear-probing performance degrades rapidly as table gets full
  - (Formula assumes “large table” but point remains)





- By comparison, chaining performance is linear in λ and has no trouble with $\boldsymbol{\lambda>1}$

Quadratic probing

- We can avoid primary clustering by changing the probe function

  `(h(key) + f(i)) % TableSize`

- A common technique is quadratic probing:

  `f(i) = i²`

  – So probe sequence is:
    - 0^{th} probe: **`h(key) % TableSize`**
    - 1^{st} probe: **`(h(key) + 1) % TableSize`**
    - 2^{nd} probe: **`(h(key) + 4) % TableSize`**
    - 3^{rd} probe: **`(h(key) + 9) % TableSize`**
    - …
    - i^{th} probe: **`(h(key) + i²) % TableSize`**

- Intuition: Probes quickly “leave the neighborhood”

Quadratic Probing Example

0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

TableSize=10

Insert:

89

18

49

58

79

Quadratic Probing Example

0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	89

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Insert:
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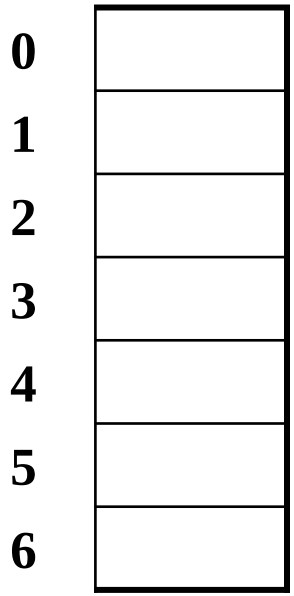
Another Quadratic Probing Example



TableSize = 7

Insert:

76 (76 % 7 = 6)
40 (40 % 7 = 5)
48 (48 % 7 = 6)
5 (5 % 7 = 5)
55 (55 % 7 = 6)
47 (47 % 7 = 5)

Another Quadratic Probing Example

0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
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TableSize = 7

Insert:

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Doh!: For all *n*, **`((n*n) +5) % 7 is 0, 2, 5, or 6`**

- Excel shows takes “at least” 50 probes and a pattern
-

From Bad News to Good News

- Bad news:
  - Quadratic probing can cycle through the same full indices, never terminating despite table not being full

- Good news:
  - If **`TableSize`** is *prime* and λ < ½, then quadratic probing will find an empty slot in at most **`TableSize/2`** probes
  - So: If you keep λ < ½ and **`TableSize`** is *prime*, no need to detect cycles

Clustering reconsidered

- Quadratic probing does not suffer from primary clustering: no problem with keys initially hashing to the same neighborhood

- But it's no help if keys initially hash to the same index
  - Called secondary clustering

- Can avoid secondary clustering with a probe function that depends on the key: double hashing…

Double hashing

Idea:

- Given two good hash functions *h* and *g*, it is very unlikely that for some *key*, **`h(key) == g(key)`**
- So make the probe function **`f(i) = i*g(key)`**

Probe sequence:

- 0th probe: **`h(key) % TableSize`**
- 1st probe: **`(h(key) + g(key))   % TableSize`**
- 2nd probe: **`(h(key) + 2*g(key)) % TableSize`**
- 3rd probe: **`(h(key) + 3*g(key)) % TableSize`**
- …
- ith probe: **`(h(key) + i*g(key)) % TableSize`**

Detail: Make sure **`g(key)`** cannot be **`0`**

Double-hashing analysis

- Intuition: Because each probe is "jumping" by **`g(key)`** each time, we "leave the neighborhood" *and* "go different places from other initial collisions"

- But we could still have a problem like in quadratic probing where we are not "safe" (infinite loop despite room in table)
  - It is known that this cannot happen in at least one case:
    - **`h(key) = key % p`**
    - **`g(key) = q – (key % q)`**
    - **`2 < q < p`**
    - **p** and **q** are prime

Rehashing

- As with array-based stacks/queues/lists, if table gets too full, create a bigger table and copy everything

- With chaining, we get to decide what "too full" means
  - Keep load factor reasonable (e.g., < 1)?
  - Consider average or max size of non-empty chains?

- For probing, half-full is a good rule of thumb

- New table size
  - Twice-as-big is a good idea, except that won't be prime!
  - So go *about* twice-as-big
  - Can have a list of prime numbers in your code since you won't grow more than 20-30 times

Summary

- Hashing gives us approximately O(1) behavior for both insert and find.
- Collisions are what ruin it.
- There are several different collision strategies.
  - Chaining just uses linked lists pointed to by the hash table bins.
  - Probing uses various methods for computing the next index to try if the first one is full.
  - Rehashing makes a new, bigger table.
  - If the table is kept reasonably empty (small load factor), and the hash function works well, we will get the kind of behavior we want.