

41080 Theory of Computing Science

Week 3 Tutorial Class

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- **Tutorial:** how to do the powerset construction for an NFA
- **Review:** regular languages and regular expressions
- **Recipe:** conversion between regular expressions and NFAs

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The relationship between DFAs and NFAs

Definition (DFA)

A deterministic finite automaton (DFA) is a five tuple $(Q, \Sigma, q_0, F, \delta)$:

- 1 Q : a set of states;
- 2 Σ : an alphabet set;
- 3 $q_0 \in Q$: the start state;
- 4 $F \subseteq Q$: a set of accept states;
- 5 $\delta : Q \times \Sigma \rightarrow Q$: a transition function.

Definition (NFA)

A non-deterministic finite automaton (NFA) is a five tuple $(Q, \Sigma, Q_0, F, \delta)$:

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DFAs are actually a special form of NFAs.

- This basically means: given an arbitrary DFA, we can always treat it as an NFA.
- So, it is natural to wonder the converse: given an arbitrary NFA, can we always construct a DFA that recognises the same language as the original NFA does?
- The answer is YES, through the powerset construction.

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Tutorial: powerset construction

Definition (ε -closure)

For any state $q \in Q$, the ε -closure of q is defined as

$$\varepsilon(q) = \{q\} \cup \{q' \in Q : q' \text{ is reachable from } q \text{ by } \varepsilon\text{-transitions.}\}.$$



What's the ε -closure for each state?

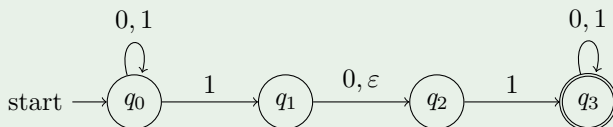
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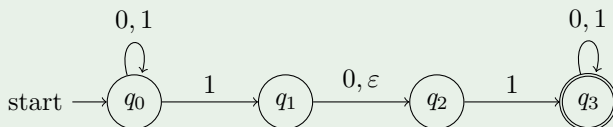
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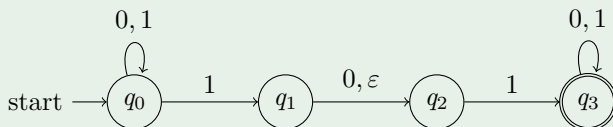
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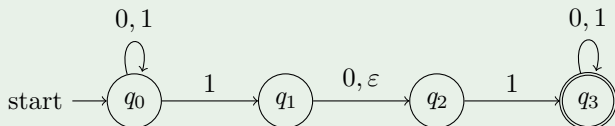
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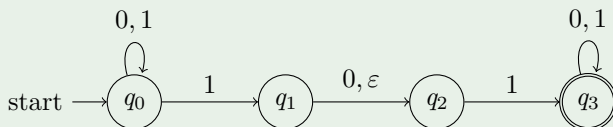
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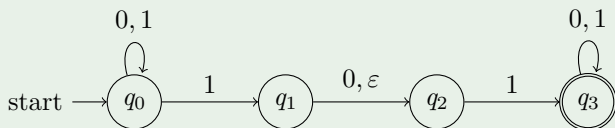
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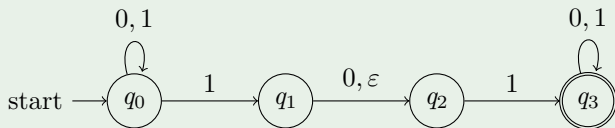
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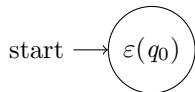
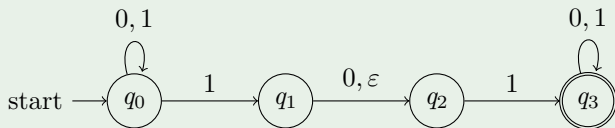
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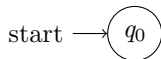
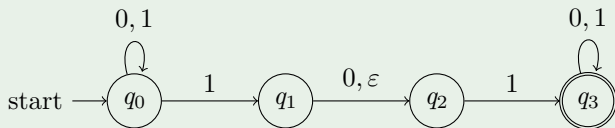
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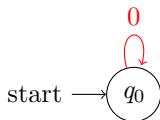
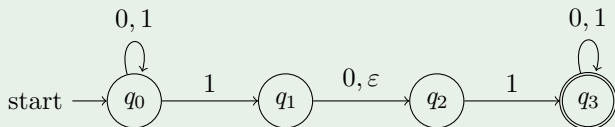
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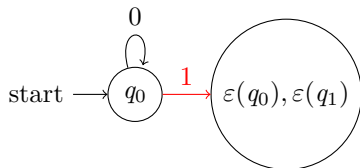
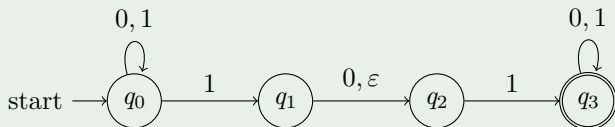
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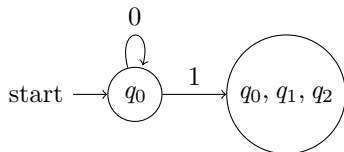
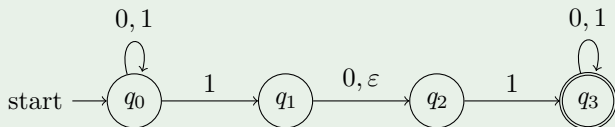
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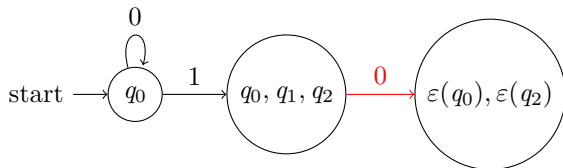
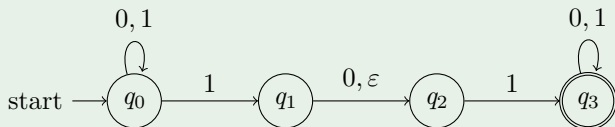
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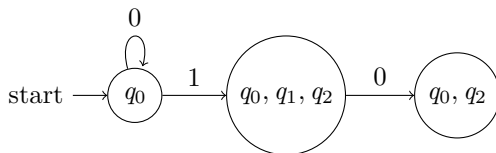
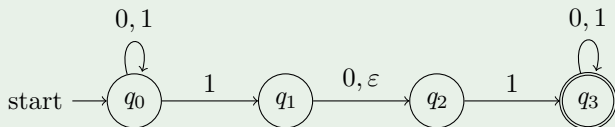
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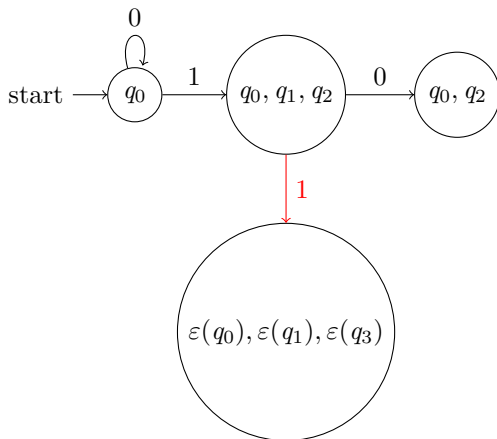
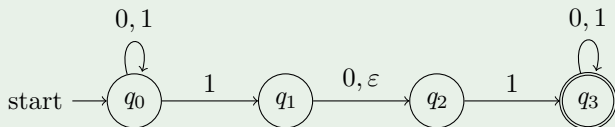
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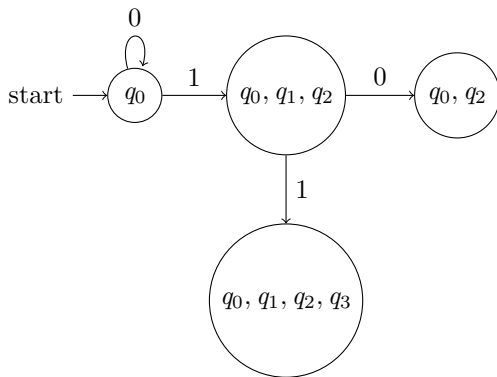
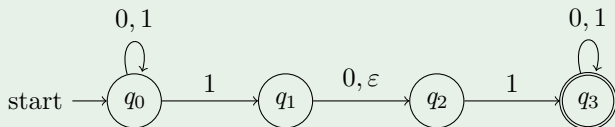
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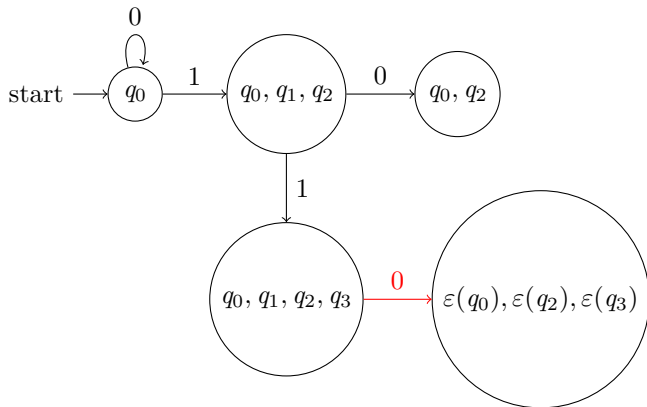
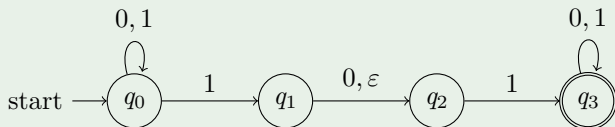
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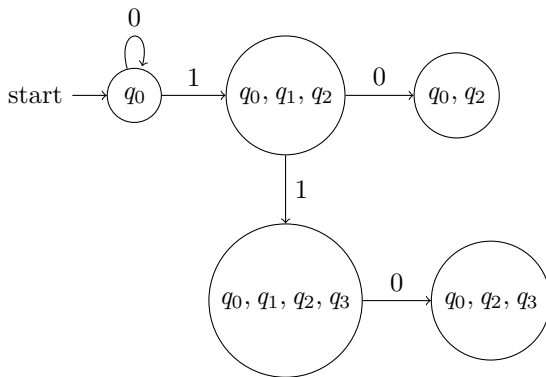
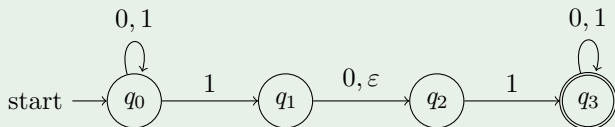
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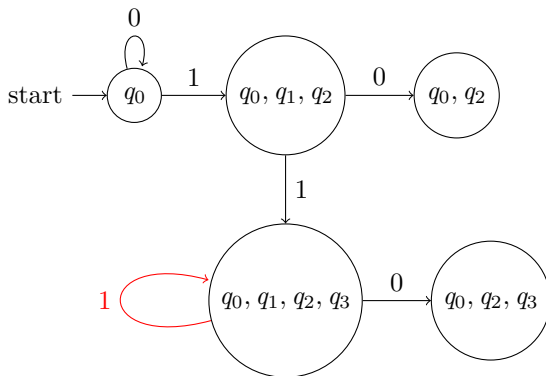
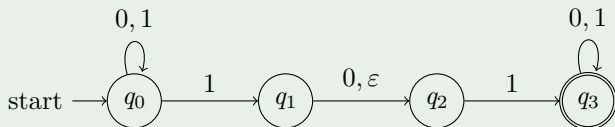
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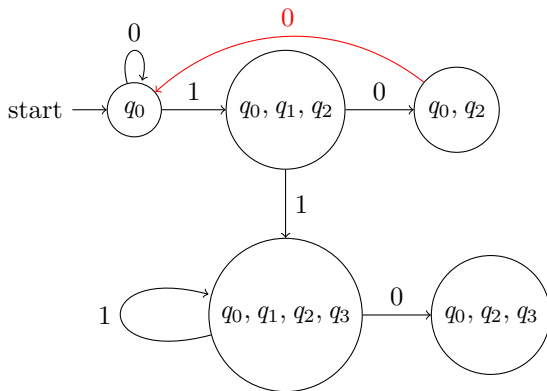
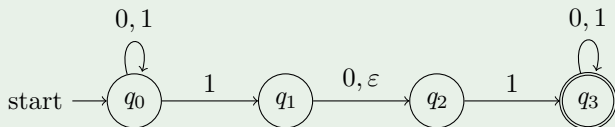
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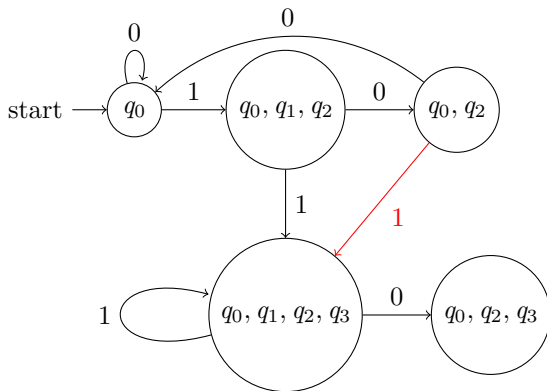
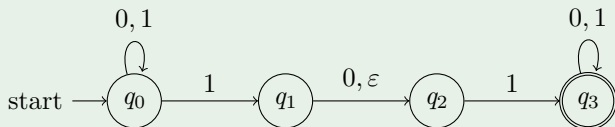
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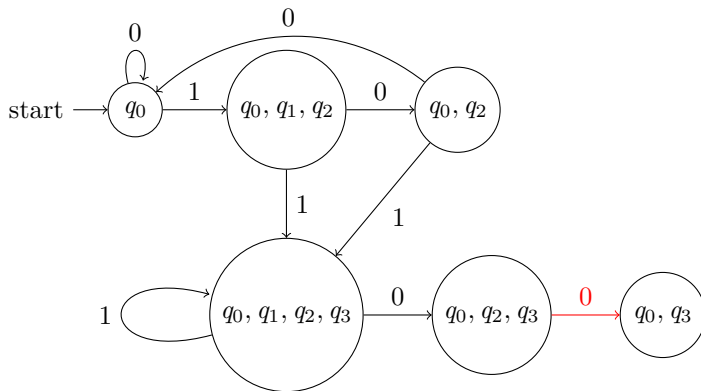
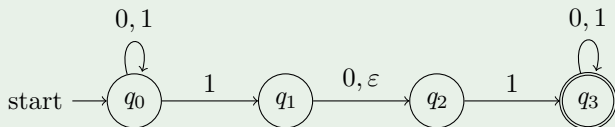
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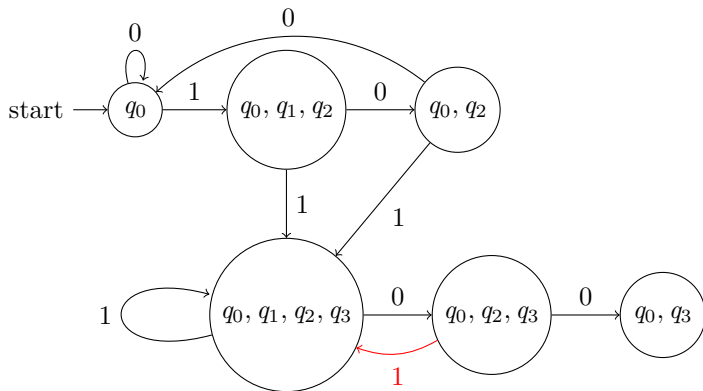
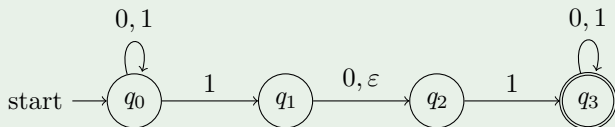
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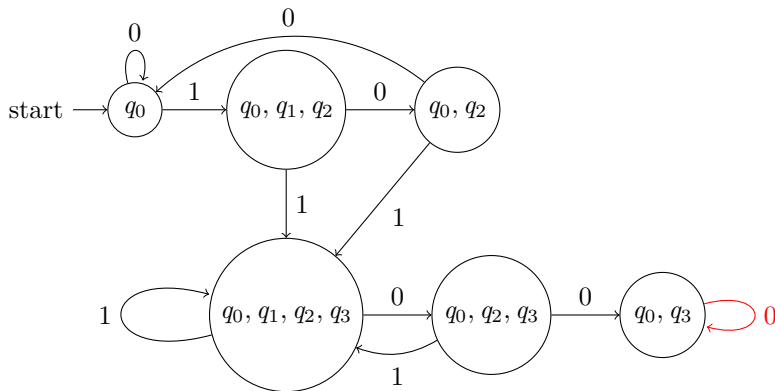
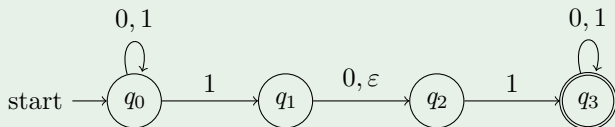
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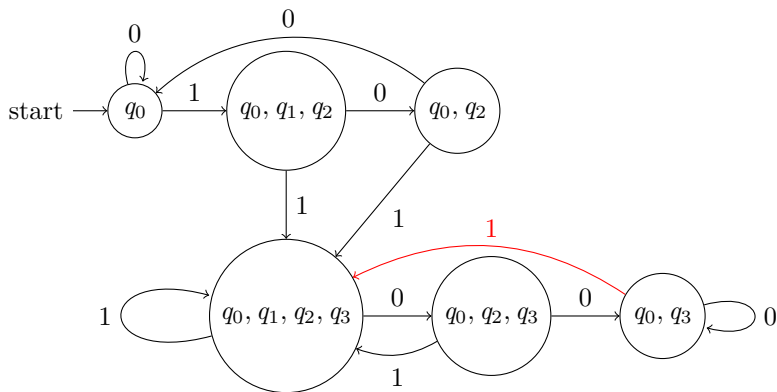
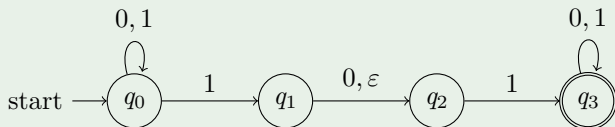
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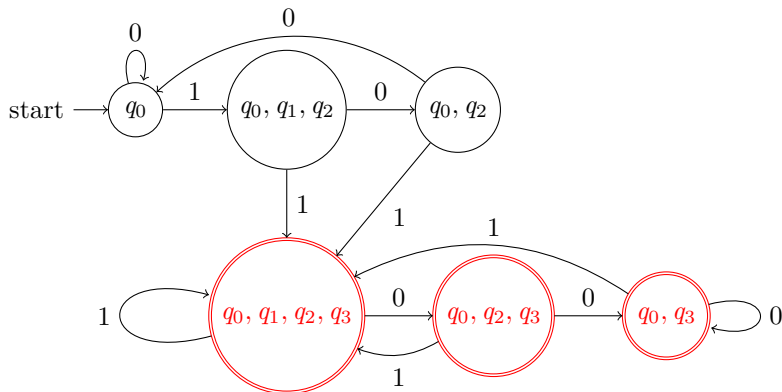
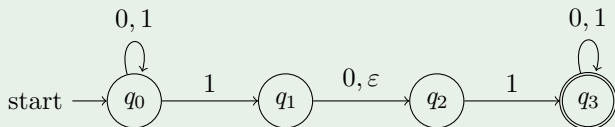
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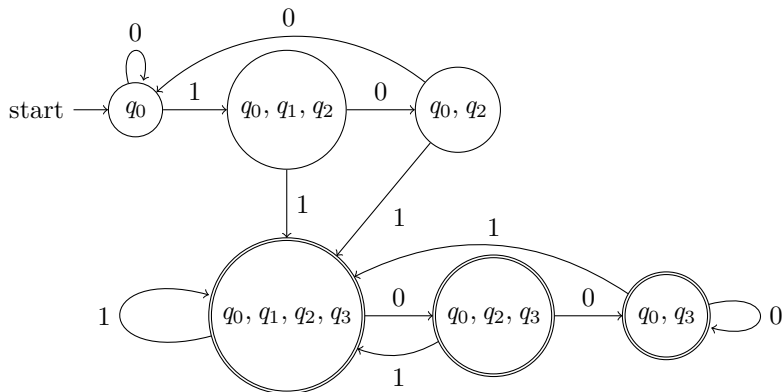
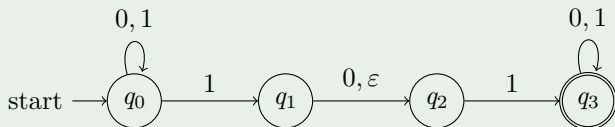
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What is a regular language?

- NFAs are as powerful as DFAs.
- The range of languages that can be recognised by all NFAs is the same as that by all DFAs.
- A language can be recognised by a DFA if and only if it can be recognised by an NFA.

Definition (Regular languages)

A language is regular if there exists a DFA (or equivalently, an NFA) that recognises it.

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Theorem (Closure properties)

Regular languages are closed under the following operations:

- 1 *Union:* $L_1 \cup L_2 = \{w \in \Sigma^* : w \in L_1 \text{ or } w \in L_2\}$.
- 2 *Intersection:* $L_1 \cap L_2 = \{w \in \Sigma^* : w \in L_1 \text{ and } w \in L_2\}$.
- 3 *Complement:* $\neg L_1 = \{w \in \Sigma^* : w \notin L_1\}$.
- 4 *Reverse:* $L_1^R = \{a_k \dots a_1 \in \Sigma^* : a_1 \dots a_k \in L_1 \text{ for each } a_i \in \Sigma\}$.
- 5 *Concatenation:* $L_1 \circ L_2 = \{w_1 w_2 \in \Sigma^* : w_1 \in L_1 \text{ and } w_2 \in L_2\}$.
- 6 *Kleene star:* $L_1^* = \{w_1 \dots w_k \in \Sigma^* : w_i \in L_1\} \cup \{\varepsilon\}$.

These three are crucial for understanding the notion of regular expressions!

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What is a regular expression?

A regular expression is a compact and precise way to describe a regular language.

Definition (Regular expressions)

Let Σ be an alphabet. A regular expression is defined inductively as follows:

- Base case: Any single symbol $a \in \Sigma \cup \{\varepsilon\}$ is a regular expression.
- Inductive case: If R_1 and R_2 are regular expressions, then $(R_1 R_2)$, $(R_1 + R_2)$, and $(R_1)^*$ are regular expressions.

Note that $(R_1 R_2)$ refers to the concatenation and $(R_1 + R_2)$ refers to the union.

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Exercise 1

What does the regular expression $(10^*) + (01^*)$ mean?

The set of strings that either start with 1 and followed by any number of 0s, or start with 0 and followed by any number of 1s.

Exercise 2

What is a regular expression of $L_1 = \{w \in \{a, b\}^* \mid w \text{ contains at least two } as\}$?

aa

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- Does a regular expression always represent a **regular** language?
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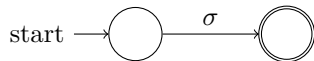
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From regular expression to NFA

Base case:



The NFA recognising a single symbol $\sigma \in \Sigma$.



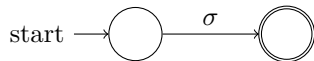
The NFA recognising a single ϵ .



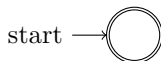
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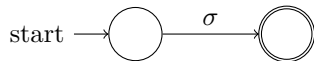
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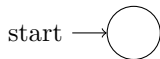
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From regular expression to NFA

Inductive case:

- How to deal with the **star** operation on an NFA:
 - ① Use ε -transition(s) to connect the accept state(s) to the start state.
 - ② Draw a new start state and use an ε -transition to connect it to the original start state. Also make the new start state acceptable.
- How to deal with the **concatenation** of two NFAs:
 - ① Use ε -transition(s) to connect the accept state(s) in the first NFA to the start state in the second NFA.
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- How to deal with the **union** of two NFAs:
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From regular expression to NFA

Recipe (how to deal with the star operation)

- 1. Use ϵ -transition(s) to connect the accept state(s) to the start state.
- 2. Draw a new start state and use an ϵ -transition to connect it to the original start state. Also make the new start state acceptable.

Let's try to construct an NFA recognising 0^* !

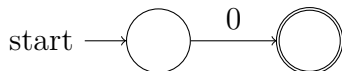
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First, we recall the base case that recognises a single 0.



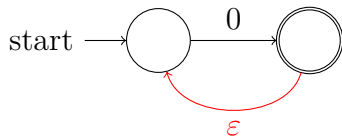
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Then, we follow the recipe of the star operation.



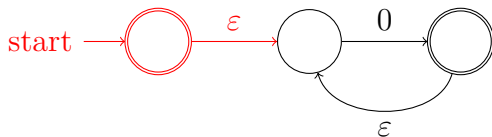
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From regular expression to NFA

Recipe (how to deal with the concatenation operation)

- ① Use ϵ -transition(s) to connect the accept state(s) in the first NFA to the start state in the second NFA.
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Let's try to construct an NFA recognising **10***!

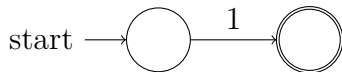
From regular expression to NFA

Recipe (how to deal with the concatenation operation)

- 1. Use ϵ -transition(s) to connect the accept state(s) in the first NFA to the start state in the second NFA.
- 2. Remove the accept state(s) in the second NFA, but change the accept state(s) in the first NFA to the general state(s).

Let's try to construct an NFA recognising 10^* !

First, we recall the base case that recognises a single 1.



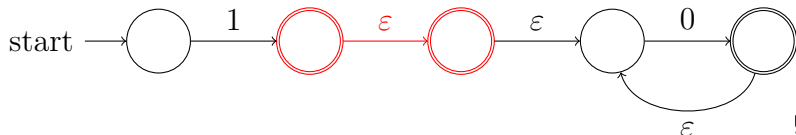
From regular expression to NFA

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Let's try to construct an NFA recognising 10^* !

Then, we follow the recipe of the concatenation operation.



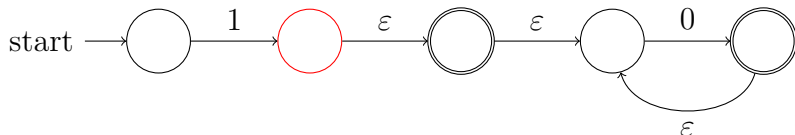
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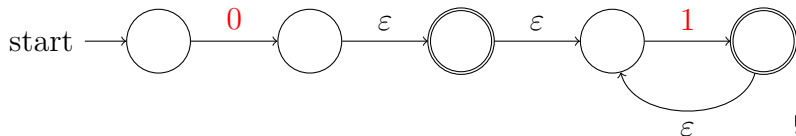
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Let's try to construct an NFA recognising 10^* !

Similarly, the NFA recognising 01^* would be



From regular expression to NFA

Recipe (how to deal with the union operation)

- 1 Draw a new start state and use ϵ -transitions to connect it to the original start states in the two NFAs.

Let's try to construct an NFA recognising $(10^*)+(01^*)!$

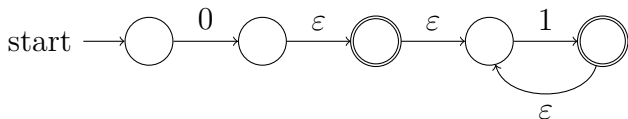
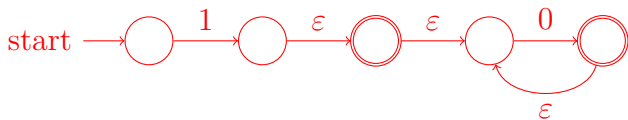
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First, we recall the NFAs that recognise 10^* and 01^* , respectively.



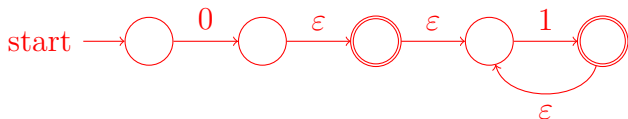
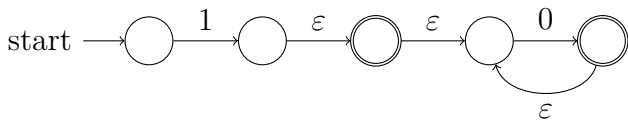
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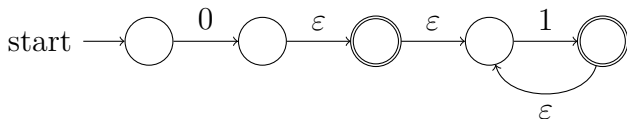
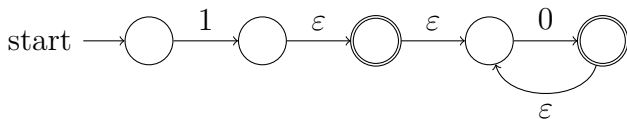
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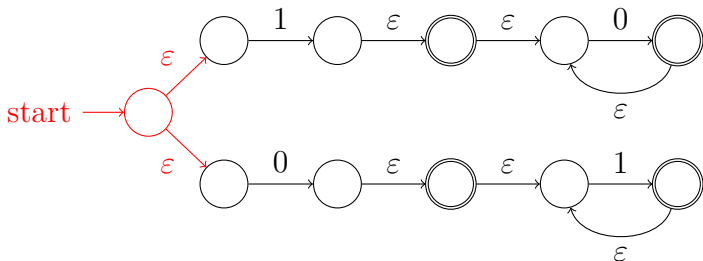
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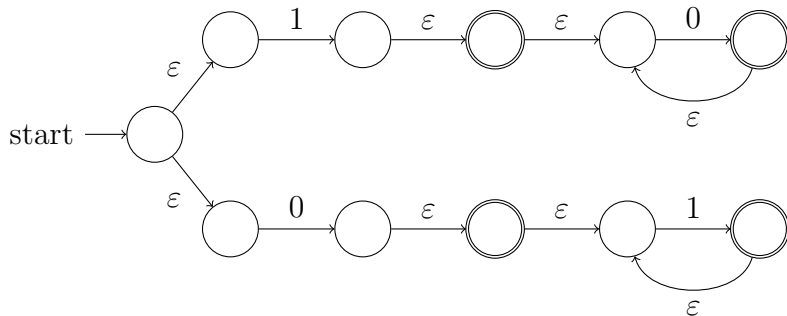


From regular expression to NFA

Exercise

Draw an NFA recognising the language represented by $(10^*) + (01^*)$.

Solution:



From NFA to regular expression

- Given a regular language, can we always find a regular expression that represents?
- The answer is also YES!
- Why: we can construct a generalised NFA that recognises the given language where the arrows can carry regular expressions.
- How: follow the recipe to eliminate the states one-by-one.

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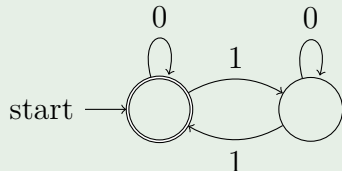
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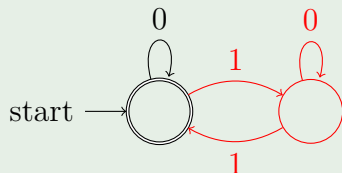
Exercise

Write a regular expression representing the language recognised by the following NFA.



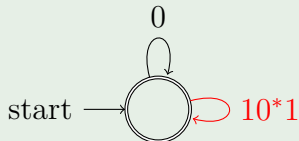
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Exercise

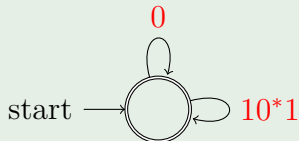
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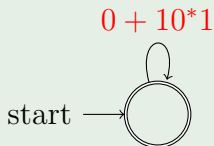
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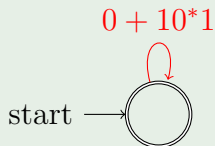
Exercise

Write a regular expression representing the language recognised by the following NFA.



Exercise

Write a regular expression representing the language recognised by the following NFA.



Solution: $(0 + 10^*1)^*$.