

Theorem (Immerman-Szelepcsényi): For reasonable $s(n) \geq \log n$,

$$\text{NSPACE}(s(n)) = \text{co-NSPACE}(s(n)).$$

Let M be a nondeterministic machine using $s(n)$ space. We will create a nondeterministic machine N such that for all inputs x , $N(x)$ accepts if and only if $M(x)$ rejects.

Fix an input x and let $s = s(|x|)$. The total number of configurations of $M(x)$ can be at most c^s for some constant c . Let $t = c^s$. We can also bound the running time of $M(x)$ by t because any computation path of length more than t must repeat a configuration and thus could be shortened.

Let I be the initial configuration of $M(x)$. Let m be the number of possible configurations reachable from I on some nondeterministic path. Suppose we knew the value of m . We now show how $N(x)$ can correctly determine that $M(x)$ does not accept.

Let $r = 0$

For all nonaccepting configurations C of $M(x)$

 Try to guess a computation path from I to C

 If found let $r = r + 1$

If $r = m$ then accept o.w. reject

If $M(x)$ accepts then there is some accepting configuration reachable from I so there must be less than m non-accepting configurations reachable from I so $N(x)$ cannot accept. If $M(x)$ rejects then there is no accepting configurations reachable from I so $N(x)$ on some nondeterministic path will find all m nonaccepting paths and accept. The total space is at most $O(s)$ since we are looking only at one configuration at a time.

Of course we cannot assume that we know m . To get m we use an idea called *inductive counting*. Let m_i be the number of configurations reachable from I in at most i steps. We have $m_0 = 1$ and $m_t = m$. We show how to compute m_{i+1} from m_i . Then starting at m_0 we compute m_1 then m_2 all the way up to $m_t = m$ and then run the algorithm above.

Here is the algorithm to nondeterministically compute m_{i+1} from m_i .

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Let  $m_{i+1}=0$ 
For all configurations C
  Let  $b=0, r=0$ 
  For all configurations D
    Guess a path from I to D in at most i steps
    If found
      Let  $r=r+1$ 
      If  $D=C$  or D goes to C in 1 step
        Let  $b=1$ 
  If  $r < m_i$  halt and reject
Let  $m_{i+1}=m_{i+1}+b$ 
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The test that $r < m_i$ guarantees that we have looked at all of the configurations D reachable from I in i steps. If we pass the test each time then we will have correctly computed b to be equal to 1 if C is reachable from I in at most $i+1$ steps and b equals 0 otherwise.

We are only remembering a constant number of configurations and variables so again the space is bounded by $O(s)$. Since we only need to remember m_i to get m_{i+1} we can run the whole algorithm in space $O(s)$.