Treewidth

- Treewidth: a notion of “treelike” graphs.
- Some combinatorial properties.
- Algorithmic results.
  - Algorithms on graphs of bounded treewidth.
  - Applications for other problems.
The Party Problem

**Party Problem**

**Problem:** Invite some colleagues for a party.

**Maximize:** The total fun factor of the invited people.

**Constraint:** Everyone should be having fun.

---

A tree with weights on the vertices.

Task: Find an independent set of maximum weight.
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**Input:** A tree with weights on the vertices.
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Solving the Party Problem

**Dynamic programming paradigm:**
We solve a large number of subproblems that depend on each other. The answer is a single subproblem.

**Subproblems:**
- $T_v$: the subtree rooted at $v$.
- $A[v]$: max. weight of an independent set in $T_v$
- $B[v]$: max. weight of an independent set in $T_v$ that does not contain $v$

**Goal:** determine $A[r]$ for the root $r$. 
Solving the Party Problem

**Subproblems:**

- $T_v$: the subtree rooted at $v$.
- $B[v]$: max. weight of an independent set in $T_v$ that does not contain $v$.

**Recurrence:**

Assume $v_1, \ldots, v_k$ are the children of $v$. Use the recurrence relations:

\[
B[v] = \sum_{i=1}^{k} A[v_i]
\]

\[
A[v] = \max\{B[v], w(v) + \sum_{i=1}^{k} B[v_i]\}
\]

The values $A[v]$ and $B[v]$ can be calculated in a bottom-up order (the leaves are trivial).
Treewidth
Generalizing trees

How could we define that a graph is “treelike”? 

1. Number of cycles is bounded.
2. Removing a bounded number of vertices makes it acyclic.
Generalizing trees

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Treewidth — a measure of “tree-likeness”

**Tree decomposition**: Vertices are arranged in a tree structure satisfying the following properties:

1. If $u$ and $v$ are neighbors, then there is a bag containing both of them.
2. For every $v$, the bags containing $v$ form a connected subtree.
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**Width of the decomposition:** largest bag size $-1$.

**Treewidth:** width of the best decomposition.
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Width of the decomposition: largest bag size \(-1\).

treewidth: width of the best decomposition.

Each bag is a separator.
**Treewidth — a measure of “tree-likeness”**

**Tree decomposition:** Vertices are arranged in a tree structure satisfying the following properties:

1. If $u$ and $v$ are neighbors, then there is a bag containing both of them.
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**Width of the decomposition:** largest bag size $-1$.

**treewidth:** width of the best decomposition.

A subtree communicates with the outside world only via the root of the subtree.
Treewidth

**Fact:** treewidth = 1 ⇐⇒ graph is a forest

![Tree decomposition example](image)

**Exercise:** A cycle cannot have a tree decomposition of width 1.
Finding tree decompositions

**Hardness:**

**Theorem** [Arnborg, Corneil, Proskurowski 1987]

It is NP-hard to determine the treewidth of a graph (given a graph $G$ and an integer $w$, decide if the treewidth of $G$ is at most $w$).

**Fixed-parameter tractability:**

**Theorem** [Bodlaender 1996]

There is a $2^{O(w^3)} \cdot n$ time algorithm that finds a tree decomposition of width $w$ (if exists).

**Consequence:**

If we want an FPT algorithm parameterized by treewidth $w$ of the input graph, then we can assume that a tree decomposition of width $w$ is available.
Finding tree decompositions — approximately

Sometimes we can get better dependence on treewidth using approximation.

**FPT approximation:**

**Theorem [Robertson and Seymour]**

There is a $O(3^{3w} \cdot w \cdot n^2)$ time algorithm that finds a tree decomposition of width $4w + 1$, if the treewidth of the graph is at most $w$.

**Polynomial-time approximation:**

**Theorem [Feige, Hajiaghayi, Lee 2008]**

There is a polynomial-time algorithm that finds a tree decomposition of width $O(w \sqrt{\log w})$, if the treewidth of the graph is at most $w$. 
**Weighted Max Independent Set and treewidth**

**Theorem**

Given a tree decomposition of width \( w \), **Weighted Max Independent Set** can be solved in time \( O(2^w \cdot w^{O(1)} \cdot n) \).

\( B_x \): vertices appearing in node \( x \).

\( V_x \): vertices appearing in the subtree rooted at \( x \).

Generalizing our solution for trees:

Instead of computing 2 values \( A[v], B[v] \) for each **vertex** of the graph, we compute \( 2^{|B_x|} \leq 2^{w+1} \) values for each bag \( B_x \).

\( M[x, S] \):

the max. weight of an independent set \( I \subseteq V_x \) with \( I \cap B_x = S \).
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Generalizing our solution for trees:

Instead of computing 2 values $A[v], B[v]$ for each vertex of the graph, we compute $2^{|B_x|} \leq 2^{w+1}$ values for each bag $B_x$.

**$M[x, S]$**: the max. weight of an independent set $I \subseteq V_x$ with $I \cap B_x = S$.

How to determine $M[x, S]$ if all the values are known for the children of $x$?
Nice tree decompositions

Definition

A rooted tree decomposition is nice if every node $x$ is one of the following 4 types:

- **Leaf**: no children, $|B_x| = 1$
- **Introduce**: 1 child $y$ with $B_x = B_y \cup \{v\}$ for some vertex $v$
- **Forget**: 1 child $y$ with $B_x = B_y \setminus \{v\}$ for some vertex $v$
- **Join**: 2 children $y_1, y_2$ with $B_x = B_{y_1} = B_{y_2}$
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Theorem
A tree decomposition of width $w$ and $n$ nodes can be turned into a nice tree decomposition of width $w$ and $O(wn)$ nodes in time $O(w^2 n)$. 
Weighted Max Independent Set
and nice tree decompositions

- **Leaf**: no children, $|B_x| = 1$
  Trivial!

- **Introduce**: 1 child $y$ with $B_x = B_y \cup \{v\}$ for some vertex $v$

\[
M[x, S] = \begin{cases} 
M[y, S] & \text{if } v \notin S, \\
M[y, S \setminus \{v\}] + w(v) & \text{if } v \in S \text{ but } v \text{ has no neighbor in } S, \\
-\infty & \text{if } S \text{ contains } v \text{ and its neighbor.}
\end{cases}
\]

Forget Join Introduce Leaf

$u, v, w$

$u, v, w$

$u, w$

$u, v, w$

$u, v, w$

$u, w$

$u, v, w$

$u, v, w$

$u, v, w$

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**Weighted Max Independent Set**
and nice tree decompositions

- **Forget**: 1 child $y$ with $B_x = B_y \setminus \{v\}$ for some vertex $v$

  $$M[x, S] = \max\{M[y, S], M[y, S \cup \{v\}]\}$$

- **Join**: 2 children $y_1$, $y_2$ with $B_x = B_{y_1} = B_{y_2}$

  $$M[x, S] = M[y_1, S] + M[y_2, S] - w(S)$$
Weighted Max Independent Set
and nice tree decompositions

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  $$M[x, S] = M[y_1, S] + M[y_2, S] - w(S)$$

There are at most $2^{w+1} \cdot n$ subproblems $M[x, S]$ and each subproblem can be solved in $w^{O(1)}$ time

(assuming the children are already solved).

\[ \Downarrow \]

Running time is $O(2^w \cdot w^{O(1)} \cdot n)$. 13
Theorem

Given a tree decomposition of width $w$, 3-Coloring can be solved in $O(3^w \cdot w^{O(1)} \cdot n)$.

$B_x$: vertices appearing in node $x$.
$V_x$: vertices appearing in the subtree rooted at $x$.

For every node $x$ and coloring $c : B_x \rightarrow \{1, 2, 3\}$, we compute the Boolean value $E[x, c]$, which is true if and only if $c$ can be extended to a proper 3-coloring of $V_x$. 
3-Coloring and tree decompositions

**Theorem**

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How to determine $E[x, c]$ if all the values are known for the children of $x$?
3-Coloring and nice tree decompositions

- **Leaf**: no children, $|B_x| = 1$
  Trivial!
3-COLORING and nice tree decompositions

- **Leaf:** no children, $|B_x| = 1$
  
  - **Trivial**!

- **Introduce:** 1 child $y$ with $B_x = B_y \cup \{v\}$ for some vertex $v$
  If $c(v) \neq c(u)$ for every neighbor $u$ of $v$, then $E[x, c] = E[y, c']$, where $c'$ is $c$ restricted to $B_y$.

---

Leaf: $v$

Introduce: $u, v, w$

Forget: $u, w$

Join: $u, v, w$
3-COLORING and nice tree decompositions

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- **Forget:** 1 child $y$ with $B_x = B_y \setminus \{v\}$ for some vertex $v$
  - $E[x, c]$ is true if $E[y, c']$ is true for one of the 3 extensions of $c$ to $B_y$. 

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**Diagram:**

- **Leaf:** $v$
- **Introduce:** $u, v, w$ (with $u, w$)
- **Forget:** $u, w$
- **Join:** $u, v, w$ (with $u, v, w$)

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3-COLORING and nice tree decompositions

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  $E[x, c] = E[y_1, c] \land E[y_2, c]$

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Introduce: $u, v, w$

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3-COLORING and nice tree decompositions

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  \( E[x, c] \) is true if \( E[y, c'] \) is true for one of the 3 extensions of \( c \) to \( B_y \).
- **Join**: 2 children \( y_1, y_2 \) with \( B_x = B_{y_1} = B_{y_2} \)
  \( E[x, c] = E[y_1, c] \land E[y_2, c] \)

There are at most \( 3^{w+1} \cdot n \) subproblems \( E[x, c] \) and each subproblem can be solved in \( w^{O(1)} \) time (assuming the children are already solved).

\[ \Rightarrow \] Running time is \( O(3^w \cdot w^{O(1)} \cdot n) \).

\[ \Rightarrow \] **3-COLORING** is FPT parameterized by treewidth.
**Vertex coloring**

More generally:

**Theorem**

Given a tree decomposition of width $w$, $c$-\text{Coloring} can be solved in time $c^w \cdot n^{O(1)}$.

**Exercise:** Every graph of treewidth at most $w$ can be colored with $w + 1$ colors.

**Theorem**

Given a tree decomposition of width $w$, \text{Vertex Coloring} can be solved in time $O^*(w^w)$.

$\Rightarrow$ \text{Vertex Coloring} is FPT parameterized by treewidth.
Dominating Set and treewidth

**Dominating Set**: Given $G$ and $k$, find a set $S$ of $k$ vertices such that every vertex of $G$ is in $S$ or has a neighbor in $S$.

$B_x$: vertices appearing in node $x$.

$V_x$: vertices appearing in the subtree rooted at $x$.

What would be the subproblems for **Dominating Set** at node $x$?
**Dominating Set** and treewidth

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What would be the subproblems for **Dominating Set** at node $x$?

First try:

$M[x, S]$: size of the smallest set $D \subseteq V_x$ such that
- Every vertex in $V_x$ is dominated by $D$.
- $D \cap B_x = S$. 
Dominating Set and treewidth

**Dominating Set:** Given $G$ and $k$, find a set $S$ of $k$ vertices such that every vertex of $G$ is in $S$ or has a neighbor in $S$.

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**Problem:** vertices in $B_x$ can be dominated by vertices outside $V_x$. 

![Diagram of a tree with vertices labeled a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, and nodes c, d, f, b, c, f, d, f, g, and g, h.](image)
**Dominating Set and treewidth**

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What would be the subproblems for **Dominating Set** at node $x$?

Second try:

$M[x, S_1, S_2]$: size of the smallest set $D \subseteq V_x$ such that

- $D \cap B_x = S_1$.
- $D$ dominates every vertex of $S_2$.
- Every vertex in $V_x \setminus B_x$ is dominated by $D$.

$\Rightarrow 3^{w+1}$ subproblems at each node $x$. 
**Dominating Set and treewidth**

\[ M[x, S_1, S_2] \]: size of the smallest set \( D \subseteq V_x \) such that

- \( S \cap B_x = S_1 \).
- \( D \) dominates every vertex of \( S_2 \).
- Every vertex in \( V_x \setminus B_x \) is dominated by \( D \).

How can we solve subproblem \( M[x, S_1, S_2] \) when \( x \) is a join node?
**Dominating Set** and treewidth

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How can we solve subproblem \( M[x, S_1, S_2] \) when \( x \) is a join node?
- Consider \( 3^{|S_2|} \) cases: each vertex of \( S_2 \) is dominated from the left child, right child, or both \( \Rightarrow O(9^w \cdot n) \) time.

Consider 5 subproblems: in the solution/not dominated/dominated from left/dominated from right/dominated from both \( \Rightarrow O(5^w \cdot n) \) time.

Renaming “not dominated” to “don’t care” can improve to \( O(4^w \cdot n) \) time.

Fast subset convolution: \( O(3^w \cdot n) \) time.
**Dominating Set** and treewidth

$M[x, S_1, S_2]$: size of the smallest set $D \subseteq V_x$ such that

- $S \cap B_x = S_1$.
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- Every vertex in $V_x \setminus B_x$ is dominated by $D$.

How can we solve subproblem $M[x, S_1, S_2]$ when $x$ is a join node?

- Consider $3^{|S_2|}$ cases: each vertex of $S_2$ is dominated from the left child, right child, or both $\Rightarrow O(9^w \cdot n)$ time.

- Consider $5^{|B_x|}$ subproblems: in the solution/not dominated/dominated from left/dominated from right/dominated from both $\Rightarrow O(5^w \cdot n)$ time.
**Dominating Set** and treewidth

\( M[x, S_1, S_2] \): size of the smallest set \( D \subseteq V_x \) such that

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- Renaming “not dominated” to “don’t care” can improve to \( O(4^w \cdot n) \) time.
**Dominating Set and treewidth**

\[ M[x, S_1, S_2] : \text{size of the smallest set } D \subseteq V_x \text{ such that } \]
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How can we solve subproblem \( M[x, S_1, S_2] \) when \( x \) is a join node?

- Consider \( 3^{|S_2|} \) cases: each vertex of \( S_2 \) is dominated from the left child, right child, or both \( \Rightarrow O(9^w \cdot n) \) time.
- Consider \( 5^{|B_x|} \) subproblems: in the solution/not dominated/dominated from left/dominated from right/dominated from both \( \Rightarrow O(5^w \cdot n) \) time.
- Renaming “not dominated” to “don’t care” can improve to \( O(4^w \cdot n) \) time.
- Fast subset convolution: \( O(3^w \cdot n) \) time.
Theorem

Given a tree decomposition of width $w$, Hamiltonian cycle can be solved in time $w^{O(w)} \cdot n$.

$B_x$: vertices appearing in node $x$.
$V_x$: vertices appearing in the subtree rooted at $x$.

If $H$ is a Hamiltonian cycle, then the subgraph $H[V_x]$ is a set of paths with endpoints in $B_x$.

What are the important properties of $H[V_x]$ “seen from outside”?
Hamiltonian cycle and treewidth

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Given a tree decomposition of width $w$, **Hamiltonian cycle** can be solved in time $w^{O(w)} \cdot n$.

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If $H$ is a Hamiltonian cycle, then the subgraph $H[V_x]$ is a set of paths with endpoints in $B_x$.

What are the important properties of $H[V_x]$ "seen from outside"?

- The subsets $B^0_x, B^1_x, B^2_x$ of $B_x$ having degree 0, 1, and 2.

- The matching $M$ of $B^1_x$.

No. of subproblems $(B^0_x, B^1_x, B^2_x, M)$ for node $x$: at most $3^w \cdot w^w$.

For each subproblem, we have to determine if there is a set of paths with this pattern.
Other problems

There are other problems where the natural DP needs to keep track of \( w^{O(w)} \) possibilities of a partition.

**Theorem**

Given a tree decomposition of width \( w \), there are \( w^{O(w)} \cdot n \) time algorithms for

- **Hamiltonian cycle**
- **Steiner Tree**
- **Cycle Packing**
- \( \ldots \)
Treewidth — a measure of “tree-likeness”

**Tree decomposition:** Vertices are arranged in a tree structure satisfying the following properties:

1. If $u$ and $v$ are neighbors, then there is a bag containing both of them.
2. For every $v$, the bags containing $v$ form a connected subtree.

**Width of the decomposition:** largest bag size $-1$.

**treewidth:** width of the best decomposition.
Monadic Second Order Logic

Extended Monadic Second Order Logic (EMSO)

A logical language on graphs consisting of the following:

- Logical connectives $\land$, $\lor$, $\to$, $\neg$, $\equiv$, $\neq$
- Quantifiers $\forall$, $\exists$ over vertex/edge variables
- Predicate $\text{adj}(u, v)$: vertices $u$ and $v$ are adjacent
- Predicate $\text{inc}(e, v)$: edge $e$ is incident to vertex $v$
- Quantifiers $\forall$, $\exists$ over vertex/edge set variables
- $\in$, $\subseteq$ for vertex/edge sets

Example:
The formula
\[
\exists C \subseteq V \left( \exists v \in V \land \forall v \in C \exists u_1, u_2 \in C (u_1 \neq u_2 \land \text{adj}(u_1, v) \land \text{adj}(u_2, v)) \right)
\]
is true on graph $G$ if and only if ...
Monadic Second Order Logic

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- Quantifiers $\forall$, $\exists$ over vertex/edge set variables
- $\in$, $\subseteq$ for vertex/edge sets

Example:
The formula

$$\exists C \subseteq V (\exists v \in V \land \forall v \in C \exists u_1, u_2 \in C (u_1 \neq u_2 \land \text{adj}(u_1, v) \land \text{adj}(u_2, v)))$$

is true on graph $G$ if and only if $G$ has a cycle.
Courcelle’s Theorem

If a graph property can be expressed in EMSO, then for every fixed $w \geq 1$, there is a linear-time algorithm for testing this property on graphs having treewidth at most $w$. Note: The constant depending on $w$ can be very large (double, triple exponential etc.), therefore a direct dynamic programming algorithm can be more efficient.
Courcelle’s Theorem

There exists an algorithm that, given a width-$w$ tree decomposition of an $n$-vertex graph $G$ and an EMSO formula $\phi$, decides whether $G$ satisfies $\phi$ in time $f(w, |\phi|) \cdot n$. If we can express a property in EMSO, then we immediately get that testing this property is FPT parameterized by the treewidth $w$ of the input graph.

Note: The constant depending on $w$ can be very large (double, triple exponential etc.), therefore a direct dynamic programming algorithm can be more efficient.
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Using Courcelle’s Theorem

Can we express 3-COLORING and HAMILTONIAN CYCLE in EMSO?
Using Courcelle’s Theorem

Can we express **3-Coloring** and **Hamiltonian Cycle** in EMSO?

**3-Coloring**

$$\exists C_1, C_2, C_3 \subseteq V \ (\forall v \in V \ (v \in C_1 \lor v \in C_2 \lor v \in C_3)) \land (\forall u, v \in V \ \text{adj}(u, v) \rightarrow (\neg (u \in C_1 \land v \in C_1) \land \neg (u \in C_2 \land v \in C_2) \land \neg (u \in C_3 \land v \in C_3)))$$
Using Courcelle’s Theorem

Can we express **3-Coloring** and **Hamiltonian Cycle** in EMSO?

### 3-Coloring

$$\exists C_1, C_2, C_3 \subseteq V \left( \forall v \in V \left( v \in C_1 \lor v \in C_2 \lor v \in C_3 \right) \right) \land \left( \forall u, v \in V \ \text{adj}(u, v) \rightarrow \neg(u \in C_1 \land v \in C_1) \land \neg(u \in C_2 \land v \in C_2) \land \neg(u \in C_3 \land v \in C_3) \right)$$

### Hamiltonian Cycle

$$\exists H \subseteq E \left( \text{spanning-connected}(H) \land \left( \forall v \in V \ \text{degree2}(H, v) \right) \right)$$

$\text{degree2}(H, v) := \exists e_1, e_2 \in H \left( (e_1 \neq e_2) \land \text{inc}(e_1, v) \land \text{inc}(e_2, v) \land \left( \forall e_3 \in H \ \text{inc}(e_3, v) \rightarrow (e_1 = e_3 \lor e_2 = e_3) \right) \right)$

$\text{spanning-connected}(H) := \forall Z \subseteq V \left( \left( \exists v \in V : v \in Z \right) \land \left( \exists v \in V : v \notin Z \right) \right) \rightarrow \left( \exists e \in H \ \exists x \in V \ \exists y \in V : (x \in Z) \land (y \notin Z) \land \text{inc}(e, x) \land \text{inc}(e, y) \right)$
Using Courcelle’s Theorem

Three ways of using Courcelle’s Theorem:

1. The problem can be described by a single formula (e.g., 3-Coloring, Hamiltonian Cycle).

   ⇒ Problem can be solved in time $f(w) \cdot n$ for graphs of treewidth at most $w$, i.e., FPT parameterized by treewidth.
Using Courcelle’s Theorem

Three ways of using Courcelle’s Theorem:

1. The problem can be described by a single formula (e.g., 3-COLORING, HAMILTONIAN CYCLE).

   ⇒ Problem can be solved in time $f(w) \cdot n$ for graphs of treewidth at most $w$, i.e., FPT parameterized by treewidth.

2. The problem can be described by a formula for each value of the parameter $k$.

   Example: For each $k$, having a cycle of length exactly $k$ can be expressed as

   $$\exists v_1, \ldots, v_k \in V ((v_1 \neq v_2) \land (v_1 \neq v_3) \land \ldots (v_{k-1} \neq v_k))$$
   $$\land (\text{adj}(v_1, v_2) \land \text{adj}(v_2, v_3) \land \ldots \land \text{adj}(v_{k-1}, v_k) \land \text{adj}(v_k, v_1)).$$

   ⇒ Problem can be solved in time $f(k, w) \cdot n$ for graphs of treewidth $w$, i.e., FPT parameterized with combined parameter $k$ and treewidth $w$. 
Using Courcelle’s Theorem

Three ways of using Courcelle’s Theorem:

1. The problem can be described by a single formula (e.g., **3-Coloring**, **Hamiltonian Cycle**).
   
   \[ \Rightarrow \text{Problem can be solved in time } f(w) \cdot n \text{ for graphs of treewidth at most } w, \text{ i.e., FPT parameterized by treewidth.} \]

2. The problem can be described by a formula for each value of the parameter \( k \).

   **Example:** For each \( k \), having a cycle of length exactly \( k \) can be expressed as
   
   \[
   \exists v_1, \ldots, v_k \in V \left( (v_1 \neq v_2) \land (v_1 \neq v_3) \land \ldots (v_{k-1} \neq v_k) \right) \\
   \land \left( \text{adj}(v_1, v_2) \land \text{adj}(v_2, v_3) \land \cdots \land \text{adj}(v_{k-1}, v_k) \land \text{adj}(v_k, v_1) \right).
   \]

   \[ \Rightarrow \text{Problem can be solved in time } f(k, w) \cdot n \text{ for graphs of treewidth } w, \text{ i.e., FPT parameterized with combined parameter } k \text{ and treewidth } w. \]

3. Optimization version: find largest set \( X \) such that...
Subgraph Isomorphism

Input: graphs $H$ and $G$
Find: a subgraph of $G$ isomorphic to $H$. 
### Subgraph Isomorphism

**Input:** graphs $H$ and $G$

**Find:** a subgraph of $G$ isomorphic to $H$.

For each $H$, we can construct a formula $\phi_H$ that expresses “$G$ has a subgraph isomorphic to $H$” (similarly to the $k$-cycle on the previous slide).

⇒ By Courcelle’s Theorem, **Subgraph Isomorphism** can be solved in time $f(H, w) \cdot n$ if $G$ has treewidth at most $w$. 
**Subgraph Isomorphism**

Input: graphs $H$ and $G$
Find: a subgraph of $G$ isomorphic to $H$.

As there is only a finite number of simple $k$-vertex graphs, Subgraph Isomorphism can be solved in time $f(k, w) \cdot n$ if $H$ has $k$ vertices and $G$ has treewidth at most $w$.

**Theorem**

Subgraph Isomorphism is FPT parameterized by combined parameter $k := |V(H)|$ and the treewidth $w$ of $G$. 
MSO on words

Theorem [Büchi, Elgot, Trakhtenbrot 1960]

If a language $L \subseteq \Sigma^*$ can be defined by an MSO formula $\phi$ using the relation $<$, then $L$ is regular.

Example: $a^*bc^*$ is defined by

$$\exists x : P_b(x) \land (\forall y : (y < x) \rightarrow P_a(y)) \land (\forall y : (x < y) \rightarrow P_c(y)).$$
MSO on words

Theorem [Büchi, Elgot, Trakhtenbrot 1960]
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We prove a more general statement for formulas $\phi(w, X_1, \ldots, X_k)$ and words over $\Sigma \cup \{0, 1\}^k$, where $X_i$ is a subset of positions of $w$.

Induction over the structure of $\phi$:

- FSM for $\neg \phi(w)$, given FSM for $\phi(w)$.
- FSM for $\phi_1(w) \land \phi_2(w)$, given FSMs for $\phi_1(w)$ and $\phi_2(w)$.
- FSM for $\exists X \phi(w, X)$, given FSM for $\phi(w, X)$.
- etc.
Theorem [Büchi, Elgot, Trakhtenbrot 1960]

If a language $L \subseteq \Sigma^*$ can be defined by an MSO formula $\phi$ using the relation $<$, then $L$ is regular.

Proving Courcelle’s Theorem:

- Generalize from words to trees.
- A width-$w$ tree decomposition can be interpreted as a tree over an alphabet of size $f(w)$.
- Formula $\Rightarrow$ tree automata.
**Depth-first search (DFS)**

**Fact:** Finding a cycle of length at least $k$ in a graph is FPT parameterized by $k$.

Let us start a depth-first search from an arbitrary vertex $v$. There are two types of edges: tree edges and back edges.

- If there is a back edge whose endpoints differ by at least $k - 1$ levels $\Rightarrow$ there is a cycle of length at least $k$.
- Otherwise, the graph has treewidth at most $k - 2$ and we can solve the problem by applying Courcelle's Theorem.
Depth-first search (DFS)

**Fact:** Finding a cycle of length at least $k$ in a graph is FPT parameterized by $k$.

Let us start a depth-first search from an arbitrary vertex $v$. There are two types of edges: tree edges and back edges.

- If there is a back edge whose endpoints differ by at least $k - 1$ levels $\Rightarrow$ there is a cycle of length at least $k$.
- Otherwise, the graph has treewidth at most $k - 2$ and we can solve the problem by applying Courcelle’s Theorem.

In the second case, a tree decomposition can be easily found: the decomposition has the same structure as the DFS spanning tree and each bag contains the vertex and its $k - 2$ ancestors.
Running times

We have seen:

- **Independent Set**: $2^w$
- **Vertex Cover**: $2^w$
- **Dominating Set**: $3^w$
- **3-Coloring**: $3^w$
- **Vertex Coloring**: $2^{O(w \log w)}$
- **Hamiltonian Cycle**: $2^{O(w \log w)}$

Can we improve on any of these running times?
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- **INDEPENDENT SET**: $2^w$
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- **DOMINATING SET**: $3^w$
- **3-COLORING**: $3^w$
- **VERTEX COLORING**: $2^{O(w \log w)}$
- **HAMILTONIAN CYCLE**: $2^{O(w \log w)}$

Can we improve on any of these running times?

**HAMILTONIAN CYCLE** can be improved to $2^{O(w)}$, but lower bounds show that the other algorithms are essentially optimal.
Algorithms — overview

- Algorithms exploit the fact that a subtree communicates with the rest of the graph via a single bag.
- Key point: defining the subproblems.
- Courcelle’s Theorem makes this process automatic for many problems.
Treewidth — a measure of “tree-likeness”

Tree decomposition: Vertices are arranged in a tree structure satisfying the following properties:

1. If $u$ and $v$ are neighbors, then there is a bag containing both of them.
2. For every $v$, the bags containing $v$ form a connected subtree.

Width of the decomposition: largest bag size $-1$.

treewidth: width of the best decomposition.