

Question 2 (20 points)

Consider the following version of MergeSort:

Given an array of length n ,

1. Split the array into 3 equal parts (rather than 2)
2. Sort each of the parts recursively
3. Merge the three parts

[10 points] Explain how to implement the merge part in $O(n)$ time.

We will define an array `RET` of length n that will contain the resulting sorted array.

Each of the subarrays will have a pointer starting from the first element.

In each iteration we will compare the three pointers.

The minimum of the three will be moved to the `RET`, and the corresponding pointer will be incremented by 1 to the next index.

When one of the pointers reaches the end of its array, we continue with the remaining two arrays.

The runtime is clearly $O(n)$, because in each iteration we make at most 3 comparisons and move one of the elements to `RET`. Therefore, the total number of iterations will be n .

[10 points] What is the runtime of the algorithm on arrays of length n ?

Use big- O notation to express your answer. Explain your solution.

Denote the runtime of Merge-Sort by $T(n)$.

The algorithm makes 3 recursive calls on subarrays of size $n/3$ and calls the merging procedure, which runs in $O(n)$ time.

Therefore, $T(n) = 3T(n/3) + O(n)$.

By applying the Master Method, we get that $T(n) = O(n \log(n))$.