

First Sets of Non-Terminals N

#	Rules
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2	$S \rightarrow EFGH\$$
3	$S \rightarrow H\$$
4	$B \rightarrow b$
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Write a sentence from the language of this grammar. . .

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What terminals of the grammar ($\Sigma = \{b, c, e, g, h\}$) can a sentential form β begin with?¹

How is this different than the previous question? **We just want the first terminal**, and we are interested in **all possible sentences** of the language.

¹Recall a **sentential form** is $S \Rightarrow^* \beta$ and $\beta \in (N \cup \Sigma)^*$

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Congratulations (I hope), you've just found (**most of**) the **First Set** of S :

$$First(S) \approx \{b, c, e, g, h\}$$

What is the **First Set** of E ?

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$$First(E) = \{e\}$$

Why isn't c in $First(E)$? Notice that $E \rightarrow \lambda$ and rules 2, 7, 9 and 6 permit

$$(2) \quad S \rightarrow EFGH\$$$

$$(7) \quad S \rightarrow \lambda FGH\$$$

$$(9) \quad S \rightarrow CEFGH\$$$

$$(6\&7) \quad S \rightarrow c\lambda GH\$$$

$$S \rightarrow cGH\$$$

so can't c begin an E ?

It's time for a formal definition of $First(\alpha)\dots$

First Sets of α (Formal Definition)

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$$First(\alpha) = \{t \in \Sigma_{\$} \mid \alpha \Rightarrow^* t \beta\} \quad \alpha \in N, \quad \beta \in (N \cup \Sigma)^*$$

Notice: we aren't interested in **sentential forms**, ie: all the rules containing α in the RHS. $First(\alpha)$ is just the terminals that can **begin** the RHS of a derivation **with α on the LHS**.

We also permit ourselves to say $t \Rightarrow t$, even though t is a terminal (or even $\$$) and does not exist on the LHS of any production rule; what is easy about $First(\alpha)$ when $\alpha \in \Sigma_{\$}$?

First Sets of α (Computational Definition)

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$$First(\alpha) = \begin{cases} \{\alpha\} & \text{if } \alpha \in \Sigma_{\$} \\ \bigcup_{(\alpha \rightarrow \chi_i \beta_i) \in P} First(\chi_i \beta_i) & \text{if } \alpha \in N \end{cases}$$

$$First(\alpha_1 \alpha_2 \cdots \alpha_n) = \bigcup_{j=1}^n First(\alpha_j) \text{ if } \alpha_i \Rightarrow^* \lambda \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, j-1$$

$First(\lambda) = \emptyset$. The first set of a terminal is itself, the first set of a non-terminal is the union of the first sets of its production rules' LHSs, and the first set of a sequence is the union of its element's first sets **from left to right** up to and including **the first symbol that cannot derive to λ** .

Notice that first sets are from $\Sigma_{\$}$, the complete $First(S)$ is actually $\{b, c, e, g, h, \$\}$, because $\{\$\} \subset First(EFGH\$) \cup First(H\$) = \{h, \$\}$.

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What symbols from $\Sigma_\$$ might **follow** the rewrite of $B \rightarrow b$ in a derivation using rule 4?

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What symbols from $\Sigma_{\$}$ might **follow** the rewrite of $B \rightarrow b$ in a derivation using rule 4?

B is in the RHS of only rule 1 (which makes things simpler), **in this case** the “follow set” of $B \equiv First(C\$)$ because $C\$$ comes after B in rule 1.

$$Follow(B) = First(C\$) = \{c, \$\}$$

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A little more nuanced: what is the follow set of E ?

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A little more nuanced: what is the follow set of E ?

E is in the RHS of rules 2 and 9,

- ▶ from rule 2, $Follow(E)$ gets a contribution from $First(FGH\$) = \{c, e, g\}$
- ▶ from rule 9, $Follow(E)$ gets a contribution from $Follow(F)$, since E is at the end of the rewrite rule for F .
Fortuitously, the $Follow(F)$ is straightforward in this case:
 $Follow(F) = First(GH\$) = \{g\}$

$$Follow(E) = First(FGH\$) \cup Follow(F) = \{c, e, g\}$$

Follow Sets of A (Definition)

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$$Follow(A) = \{t \in \Sigma_{\$} \mid S \Rightarrow^{+} \alpha A t \beta\}$$

$A \in N \quad \alpha, \beta \in (N \cup \Sigma)^*$

In this case, we are interested in **only sentential forms** of the language. (S is on the LHS of the set conditional.)

There is no difference between calculating $Follow(t \in \Sigma)$ vs $Follow(A \in N)$, it turns out we will be interested in only the follow sets of **non-terminals** from the grammar.

Follow Sets of A (Computational Definition)

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$$Follow(A) = \{t \in \Sigma_{\$} \mid S \Rightarrow^{+} \alpha A t \beta\}$$

$A \in N \quad \alpha, \beta \in (N \cup \Sigma)^*$

- i. Set $Follow(A) = \emptyset$
- ii. For each instance of A in a production $X \rightarrow \alpha A \beta$,
 - a. Add $First(\beta)$ to $Follow(A)$
 - b. If $\beta \Rightarrow^* \lambda$, add $Follow(X)$ to $Follow(A)$