

# Section 18.3 Learning Decision Trees

CS4811 - Artificial Intelligence

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# Outline

Attribute-based representations

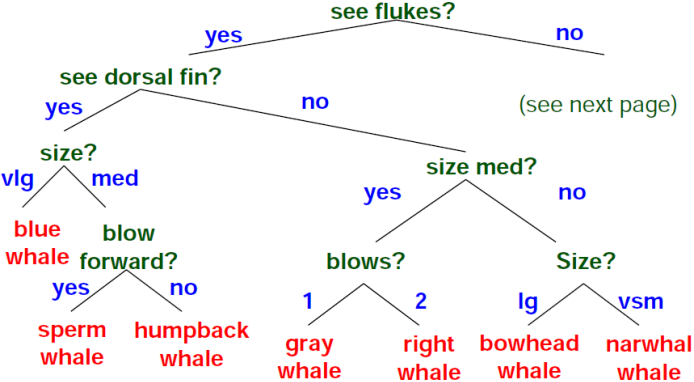
Decision tree learning as a search problem

A greedy algorithm

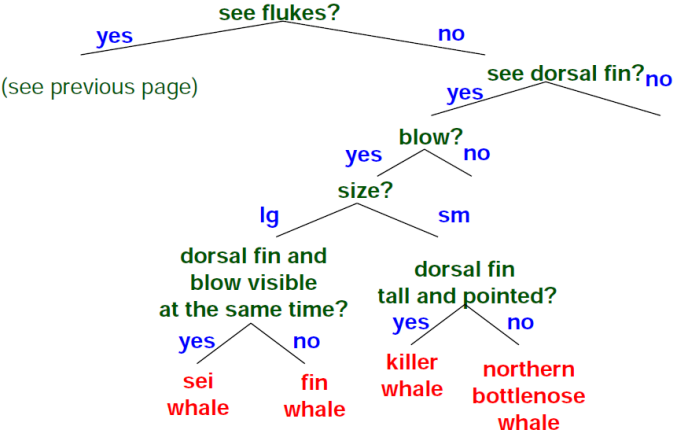
# Decision trees

- ▶ A *decision tree* allows a classification of an object by testing its values for certain properties.
- ▶ An example is the *20 questions game*.  
A player asks questions to an answerer and tries to guess the object that the answerer chose at the beginning of the game.
- ▶ The objective of *decision tree learning* is to learn a tree of questions which determines class membership at the leaf of each branch.
- ▶ Check out an online example at <http://www.aiinc.ca/demos/whale.shtml>

# Possible decision tree



# Possible decision tree (cont'd)



# What might the original data look like?

Place	Time	Group	Fluke	Dorsal fin	Dorsal shape	Size	Blow	...	Blow fwd	Type
Kaikora	17:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	small triang.	Very large	Yes		No	Blue whale
Kaikora	7:00	No	Yes	Yes	small triang.	Very large	Yes		No	Blue whale
Kaikora	8:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	small triang.	Very large	Yes		No	Blue whale
Kaikora	9:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	squat triang.	Medium	Yes		Yes	Sperm whale
Cape Cod	18:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Irregular	Medium	Yes		No	Hump-back whale
Cape Cod	20:00	No	Yes	Yes	Irregular	Medium	Yes		No	Hump-back whale
Newb. Port	18:00	No	No	No	Curved	Large	Yes		No	Fin whale
Cape Cod	6:00	Yes	Yes	No	None	Medium	Yes		No	Right whale
...										

# The search problem

This is an *attribute-based representation* where examples are described by *attribute values* (Boolean, discrete, continuous, etc.)

*Classification* of examples is positive (T) or negative (F).

Given a table of observable properties, search for a decision tree that

- ▶ correctly represents the data  
(for now, assume that the data is noise-free)
- ▶ is as small as possible

What does the search tree look like?

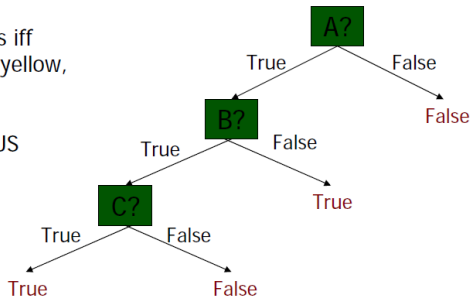
# Predicate as a decision tree

The predicate  $\text{CONCEPT}(x) \Leftrightarrow A(x) \wedge (\neg B(x) \vee C(x))$  can be represented by the following decision tree:

Example:

A mushroom is poisonous iff  
it is yellow and small, or yellow,  
big and spotted

- $x$  is a mushroom
- $\text{CONCEPT} = \text{POISONOUS}$
- $A = \text{YELLOW}$
- $B = \text{BIG}$
- $C = \text{SPOTTED}$
- $D = \text{FUNNEL-CAP}$
- $E = \text{BULKY}$



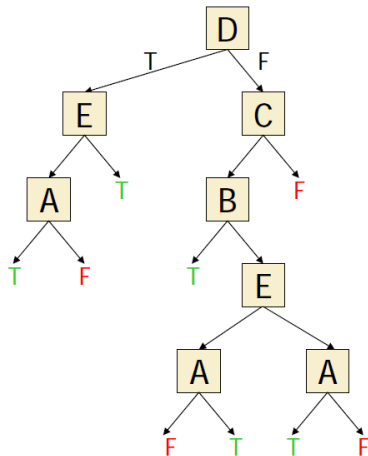


# The training set

Ex. #	A	B	C	D	E	CONCEPT
1	False	False	True	False	True	False
2	False	True	False	False	False	False
3	False	True	True	True	True	False
4	False	False	True	False	False	False
5	False	False	False	True	True	False
6	True	False	True	False	False	True
7	True	False	False	True	False	True
8	True	False	True	False	True	True
9	True	True	True	False	True	True
10	True	True	True	True	True	True
11	True	True	False	False	False	False
12	True	True	False	False	True	False
13	True	False	True	True	True	True

# Possible decision tree

Ex. #	A	B	C	D	E	CONCEPT
1	False	False	True	False	True	False
2	False	True	False	False	False	False
3	False	True	True	True	True	False
4	False	False	True	False	False	False
5	False	False	False	True	True	False
6	True	False	True	False	False	True
7	True	False	False	True	False	True
8	True	False	True	False	True	True
9	True	True	True	False	True	True
10	True	True	True	True	True	True
11	True	True	False	False	False	False
12	True	True	False	False	True	False
13	True	False	True	True	True	True



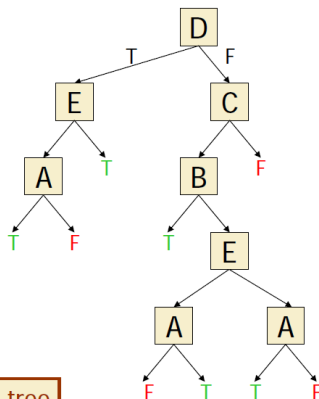
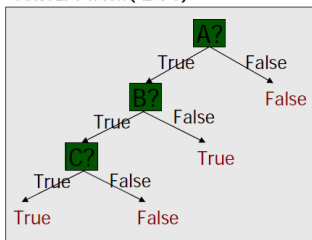
# Smaller decision tree

CONCEPT  $\leftrightarrow$

$$(D \wedge (\neg E \vee A)) \vee$$

$$(C \wedge (B \vee ((E \wedge \neg A) \vee A)))$$

CONCEPT  $\leftrightarrow A \wedge (\neg B \vee C)$



KIS bias  $\rightarrow$  Build smallest decision tree

Computationally intractable problem  $\rightarrow$  greedy algorithm

# Building the decision tree - getting started (1)

The distribution of the training set is:

True: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,13

False: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12

## Getting started (2)

The distribution of training set is:

True: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13

False: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12

Without testing any observable predicate, we could report that CONCEPT is False (majority rule) with an estimated probability of error  $P(E) = 6/13$

## Getting started (3)

The distribution of training set is:

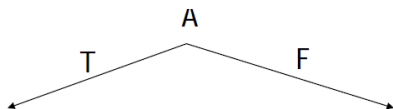
True: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13

False: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12

Without testing any observable predicate, we could report that CONCEPT is False (majority rule) with an estimated probability of error  $P(E) = 6/13$

Assuming that we will only include one observable predicate in the decision tree, which predicate should we test to minimize the probability of error?

## How to compute the probability of error (1)



True: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13

False: 11, 12

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

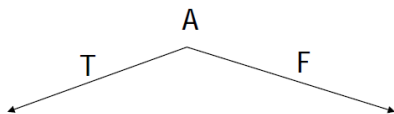
If we test only A, we will report that CONCEPT is True if A is True (majority rule) and False otherwise.

The estimated probability of error is:

$$\Pr(E) = (8/13) \times (2/8) + (5/13) \times (0/5) = 2/13$$

8/13 is the probability of getting True for A, and 2/8 is the probability that the report was incorrect (we are always reporting True for the concept).

## How to compute the probability of error (2)



True: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13

False: 11, 12

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

If we test only A, we will report that CONCEPT is True if A is True (majority rule) and False otherwise.

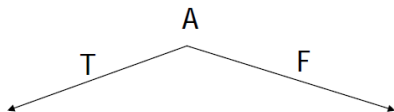
The estimated probability of error is:

$$\Pr(E) = (8/13) \times (2/8) + (5/13) \times (0/5) = 2/13$$

5/13 is the probability of getting False for A, and 0 is the probability that the report was incorrect (we are always reporting False for the concept).



## Assume it's A



True: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13

False: 11, 12

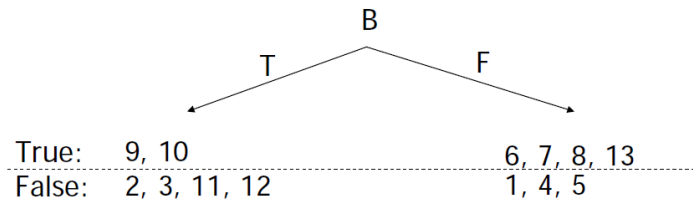
1, 2, 3, 4, 5

If we test only A, we will report that CONCEPT is True if A is True (majority rule) and False otherwise

The estimated probability of error is:

$$\Pr(E) = (8/13) \times (2/8) + (5/8) \times 0 = 2/13$$

## Assume it's B

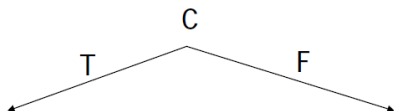


If we test only B, we will report that CONCEPT is False if B is True and True otherwise

The estimated probability of error is:

$$\Pr(E) = (6/13) \times (2/6) + (7/13) \times (3/7) = 5/13$$

## Assume it's C



True: 6, 8, 9, 10, 13

7

False: 1, 3, 4

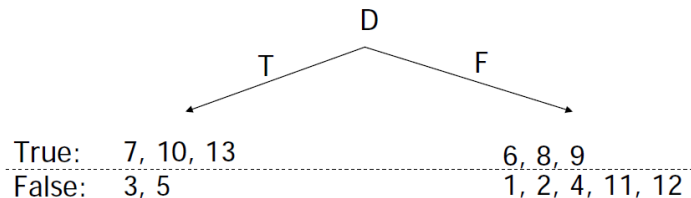
1, 5, 11, 12

If we test only C, we will report that CONCEPT is True if C is True and False otherwise

The estimated probability of error is:

$$\Pr(E) = (8/13) \times (3/8) + (5/13) \times (1/5) = 4/13$$

## Assume it's D

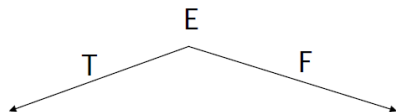


If we test only D, we will report that CONCEPT is True if D is True and False otherwise

The estimated probability of error is:

$$\Pr(E) = (5/13) \times (2/5) + (8/13) \times (3/8) = 5/13$$

## Assume it's E



True: 8, 9, 10, 13

6, 7

False: 1, 3, 5, 12

2, 4, 11

If we test only E we will report that CONCEPT is False, independent of the outcome

The estimated probability of error is:

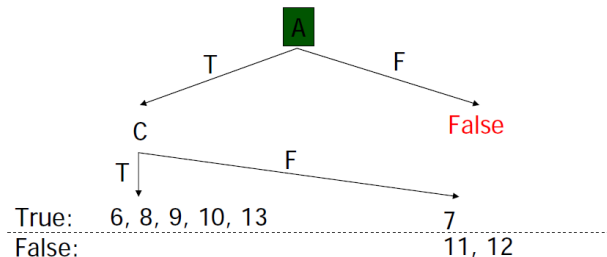
$$\Pr(E) = (8/13) \times (4/8) + (5/13) \times (2/5) = 6/13$$

## Probability of error for each

- If A:  $2/13$
- If B:  $5/13$
- If C:  $4/13$
- If D:  $5/13$
- If E:  $6/13$

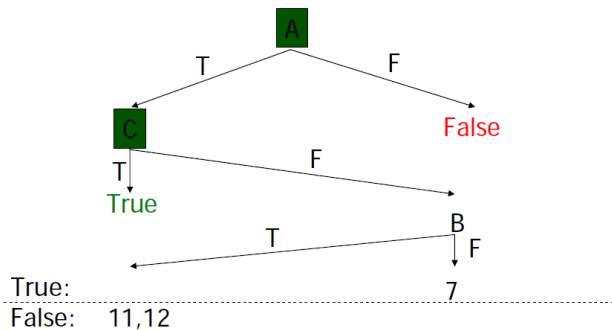
So, the best predicate to test is A

## Choice of second predicate



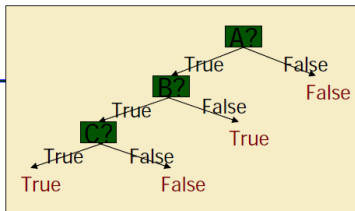
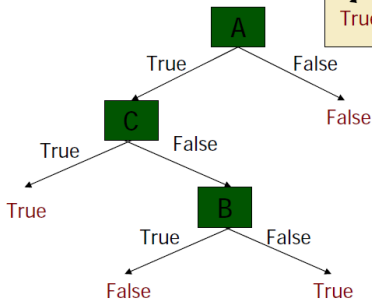
The majority rule gives the probability of error  $\Pr(E|A) = 1/8$   
and  $\Pr(E) = 1/13$

## Choice of third predicate





# Final Tree



$$L \equiv \text{CONCEPT} \Leftrightarrow A \wedge (C \vee \neg B)$$

# The decision tree learning algorithm

```
function DECISION-TREE-LEARNING (examples, attributes, parent-examples)
returns a tree
  if examples is empty then
    return PLURALITY-VALUE(parent-examples)
  else if all examples have the same classification then
    return the classification
  else if attributes is empty then
    return PLURALITY-VALUE(examples)
  else
     $A \leftarrow \operatorname{argmax}_{a \in \text{attributes}} \text{IMPORTANCE}(a, \text{examples})$ 
    tree  $\leftarrow$  a new decision tree with root test A
    for each value  $v_k$  of A do
       $\text{exs} \leftarrow \{ e : e \in \text{examples} \text{ and } e.A = v_k \}$ 
      subtree  $\leftarrow$  DECISION-TREE-LEARNING (exs, attributes-A, examples)
      add a branch to tree with label ( $A = v_k$ ) and subtree subtree
  return tree
```

# What happens if there is noise in the training set?

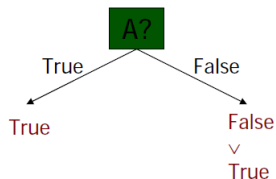
Consider a very small but inconsistent data set:

**A**      **classification**

T      T

F      F

F      T



## Issues in learning decision trees

- ▶ If data for some attribute is missing and is hard to obtain, it might be possible to *extrapolate* or use unknown.
- ▶ If some attributes have continuous values, *groupings* might be used.
- ▶ If the data set is too large, one might use *bagging* to select a sample from the training set. Or, one can use *boosting* to assign a weight showing importance to each instance. Or, one can *divide the sample set into subsets* and train on one, and test on others.

# How large is the hypothesis space?

How many decision trees with  $n$  Boolean attributes?

= number of Boolean functions

= number of distinct truth tables with  $2^n$  rows.

=  $2^{2^n}$

## Using information theory

- ▶ The “probability of error” is based on a measure of the *quantity of information* that is contained in the truth value of an observable predicate.
- ▶ Information answers questions: the more clueless we are about the answer initially, the more information is contained in the answer.
- ▶ The scale is to use *1 bit* to answer a Boolean question with prior  $\langle 0.5, 0.5 \rangle$ .
- ▶ The *entropy* of the prior is the information in an answer when the prior is  $\langle P_1, \dots, P_2 \rangle$ :

$$H(\langle P_1, \dots, P_2 \rangle) = \sum_{i=1}^n -P_i \log_2 P_i$$

# Summary

- ▶ Decision tree learning is a *supervised learning* paradigm.
- ▶ The *hypothesis* is a decision tree.
- ▶ The greedy algorithm uses *information gain* to decide which attribute should be placed at each node of the tree.
- ▶ Due to the greedy approach, the decision tree might not be optimal but the algorithm is fast.
- ▶ If the data set is complete and not noisy, then the learned decision tree will be accurate.

## Sources for the slides

- ▶ AIMA textbook (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)
- ▶ AIMA slides:  
<http://aima.cs.berkeley.edu/>
- ▶ Jean-Claude Latombe's CS121 slides  
<http://robotics.stanford.edu/~latombe/cs121>  
(Accessed prior to 2009)
- ▶ Wikipedia article for Twenty Questions  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty\\_Questions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty_Questions)  
(Accessed in March 2012)