

Lesson 5. Turing machines

CSIE 3110 – Formal Languages and Automata Theory

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Task: Output True, if there is a path from s to t in the graph G .
Otherwise, output False.

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For such problem, we may write a piece of program in some well-known programming languages such as C++ or pseudo-codes in some acceptable format.

We can rightly call such codes/pseudo-codes “algorithms.”

Turing machines and algorithms – continued

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Turing machines and algorithms – continued

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- The definition should not depend on any programming languages. Such languages are ever changing and depend on their “design.”
- It must not be ambiguous.
Pseudo-codes are often “ambiguous” on what constitutes “basic instructions.” For example, “sorting” may/may not be regarded as a basic instruction.

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Every “algorithm” is equivalent to a Turing machine.

(Note) **Turing machine** is not the only mathematical definition of algorithm. There are other models such as **λ -calculus**, **recursive functions**, etc, but they are all equivalent.

The formal definition of Turing machines

We reserve a special symbol \sqcup called *the blank symbol* and \triangleleft called *the left-end symbol*.

(Def.) A *Turing machine* (TM) is a system $\mathcal{M} = \langle \Sigma, \Gamma, Q, q_0, q_{\text{acc}}, q_{\text{rej}}, \delta \rangle$:

- Σ is a finite alphabet, called *the input alphabet*, where $\sqcup, \triangleleft \notin \Sigma$.
- Γ is a finite alphabet, called *the tape alphabet*, where $\Sigma \subseteq \Gamma$ and $\sqcup, \triangleleft \in \Gamma$.
- Q is a finite set of states and $q_0 \in Q$ is *the initial state*.
- $q_{\text{acc}}, q_{\text{rej}} \in Q$ are two special states called the *accept* and *reject* states, respectively.
- $\delta : Q - \{q_{\text{acc}}, q_{\text{rej}}\} \times \Gamma \rightarrow Q \times \Gamma \times \{\text{Left}, \text{Right}\}$ is *the transition function*, whose elements are written in the form:

$$(p, a) \rightarrow (q, b, \alpha)$$

where $p, q \in Q$, $a, b \in \Gamma$ and $\alpha \in \{\text{Left}, \text{Right}\}$.

What does a Turing machine $\mathcal{M} = \langle \Sigma, \Gamma, Q, q_0, q_{\text{acc}}, q_{\text{rej}}, \delta \rangle$ have?

Assume $\Sigma = \{0, 1\}$ and $\Gamma = \{\triangleleft, 0, 1, x, \#, \sqcup\}$.

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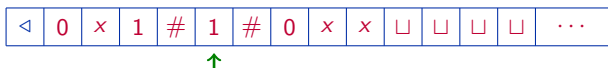
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- It has one head reading one cell at a time.

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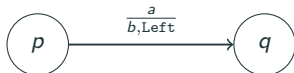


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The transitions also specify where **the head moves to** and **what symbol it writes** onto the tape.

- It **stops** when it is in q_{acc} or q_{rej} .

Illustration of a transition $(p, a) \rightarrow (q, b, \text{Left})$



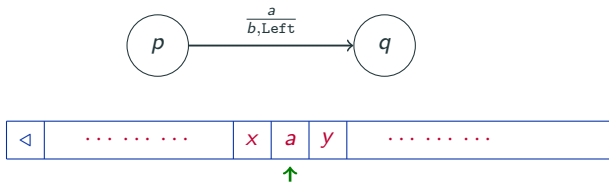
(The intuitive meaning) If:

- the TM is in **state p** ,
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then:

- it **writes symbol b** (on top of a),
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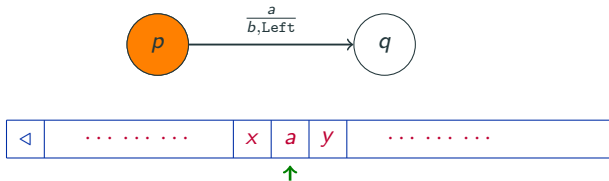
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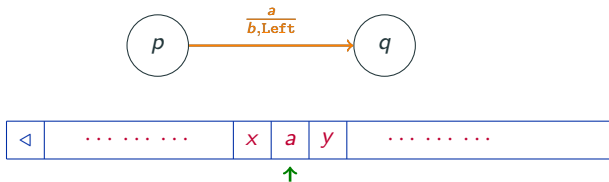
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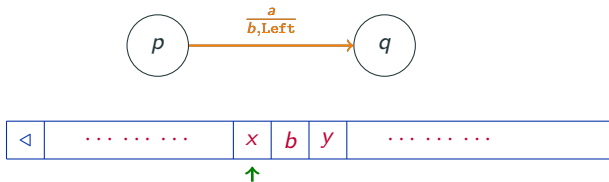
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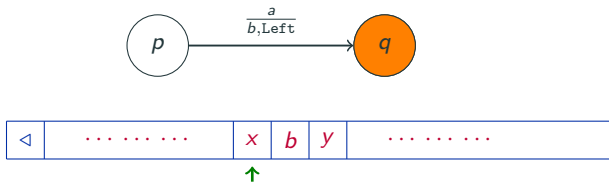
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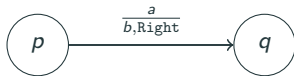
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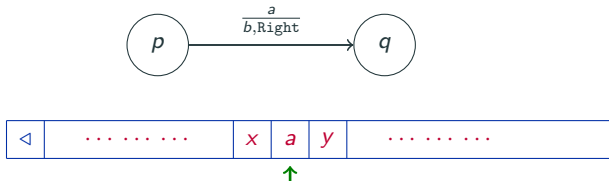
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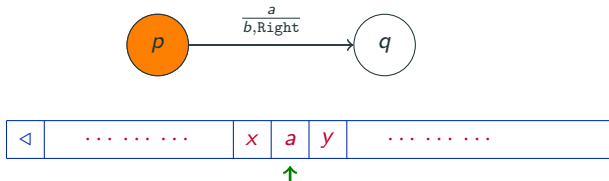
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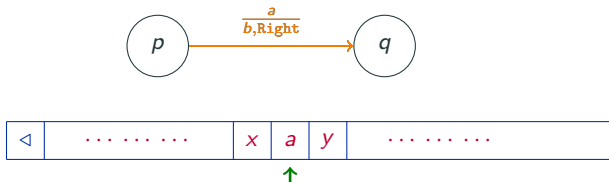
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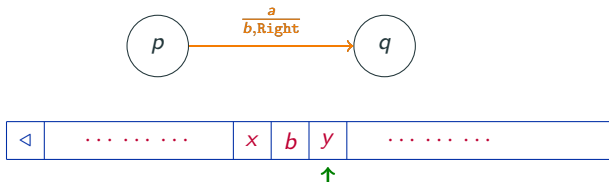
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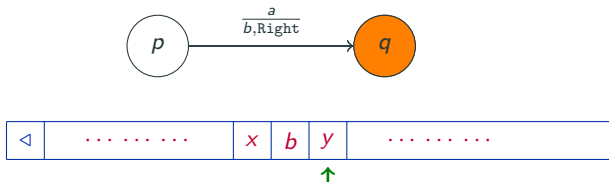
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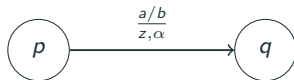
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Some conventions in depicting transitions – part 1



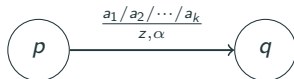
This means if:

- the TM is in **state p** ,
- the head **reads a or b** ,

then:

- the head **writes z** ,
- moves according to **$\alpha \in \{\text{Left}, \text{Right}\}$** ,
- the TM enters **state q** .

Some conventions in depicting transitions – part 2



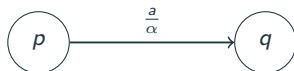
This means if:

- the TM is in state p ,
- the head reads a_1 or a_2 or \dots or a_k ,

then:

- the head writes z ,
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Some conventions in depicting transitions – part 3



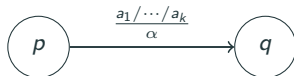
We don't specify the symbol it writes. This means if:

- the TM is in **state p** ,
- the head **reads a** ,

then:

- the head **writes a** (i.e., the same symbol it reads),
- moves according to $\alpha \in \{\text{Left}, \text{Right}\}$,
- the TM enters **state q** .

Some conventions in depicting transitions – part 4



This means if:

- the TM is in **state p** ,
- the head **reads a_1 or a_2 or \dots or a_k** ,

then:

- the head **writes the same symbol** it reads,
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Some conventions in depicting transitions – part 5

q_{rej} is not depicted explicitly in a Turing machine.

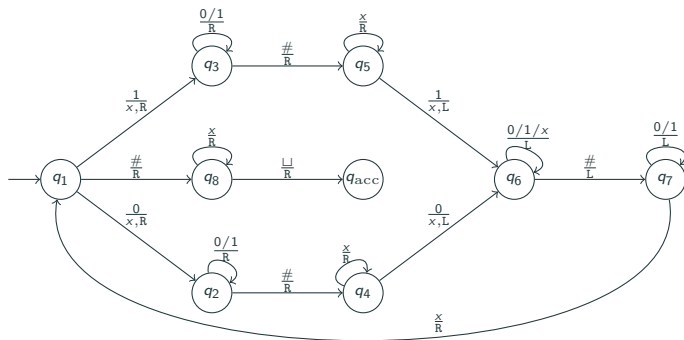
Any transition not depicted is assumed to enter q_{rej} .

We assume that the head always **moves right** when it reads \triangleleft (the left-end marker).

The moves **Left** and **Right** are often abbreviated as **L** and **R**.

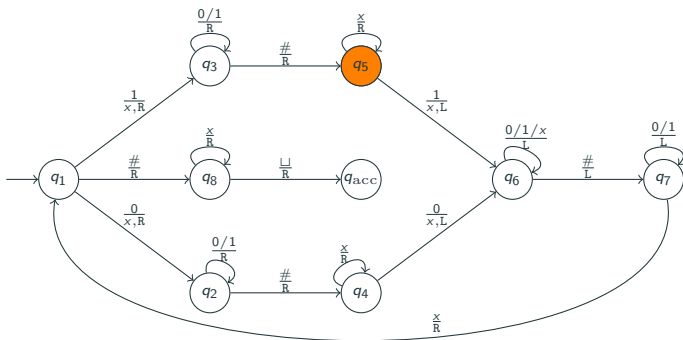
An example of a Turing machine where $\Gamma = \{\triangleleft, 0, 1, x, \#, \sqcup\}$

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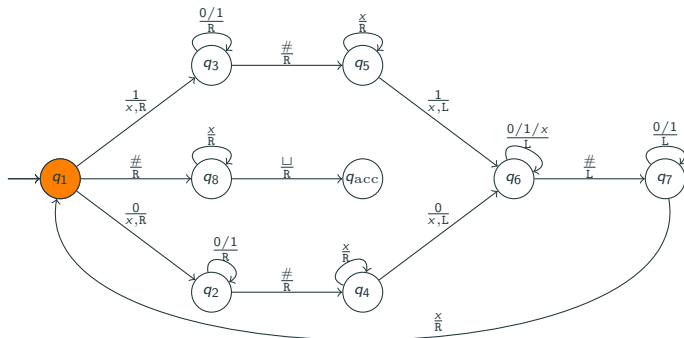
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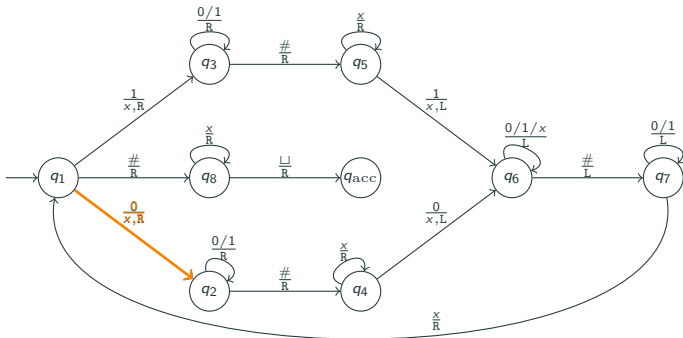
Note, for example, we do not depict the transition when it is in state q_5 and the head reads symbol 0.

This means the TM enters q_{rej} .

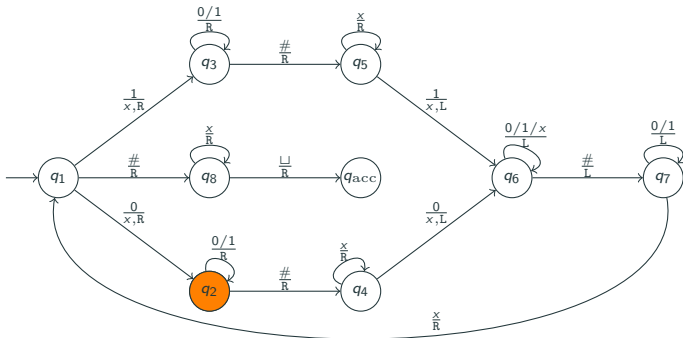
An example of a Turing machine on input 01101#01101



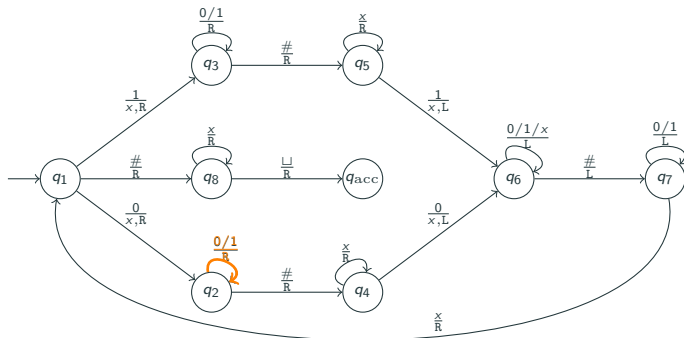
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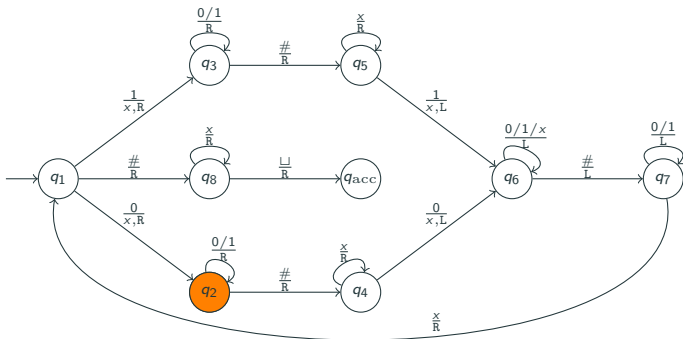
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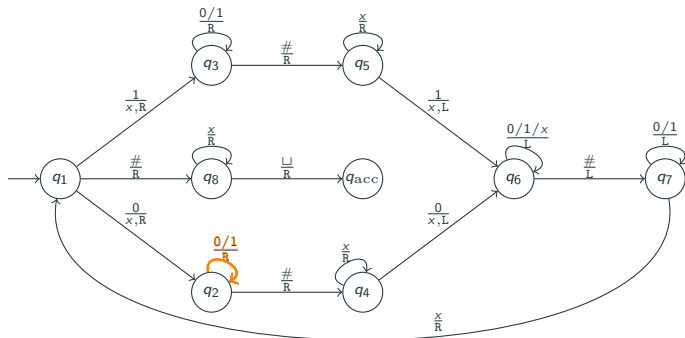
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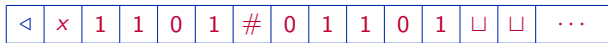
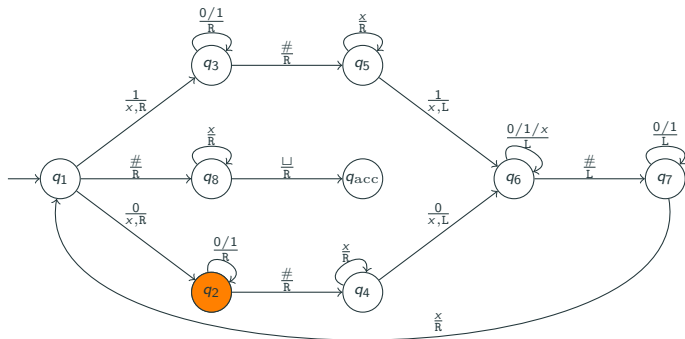
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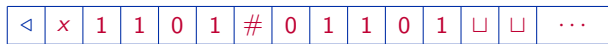
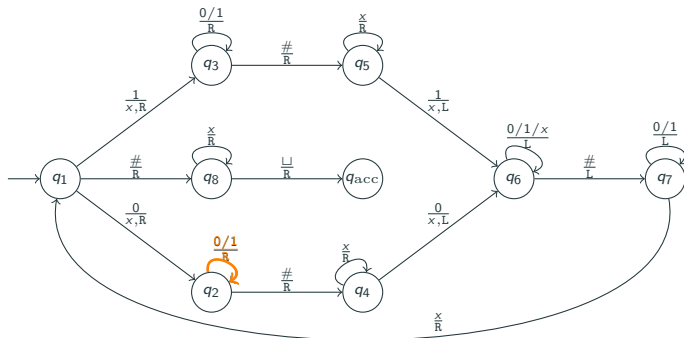
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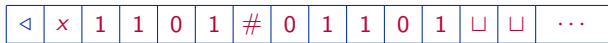
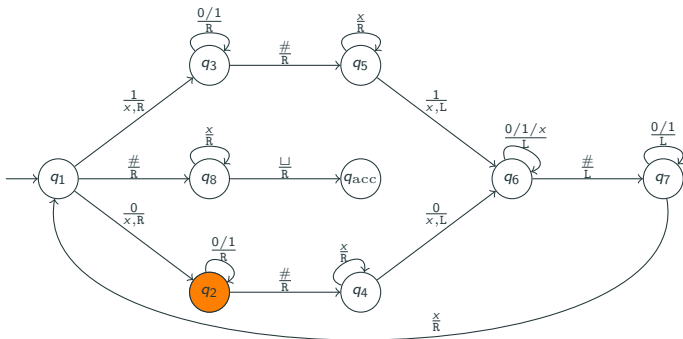
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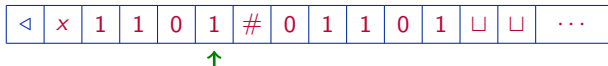
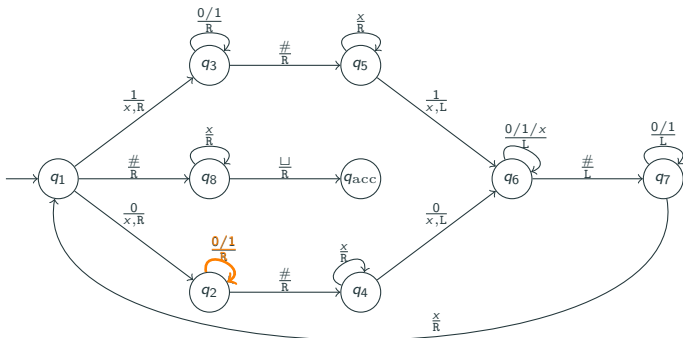
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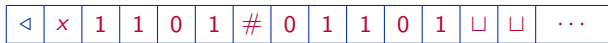
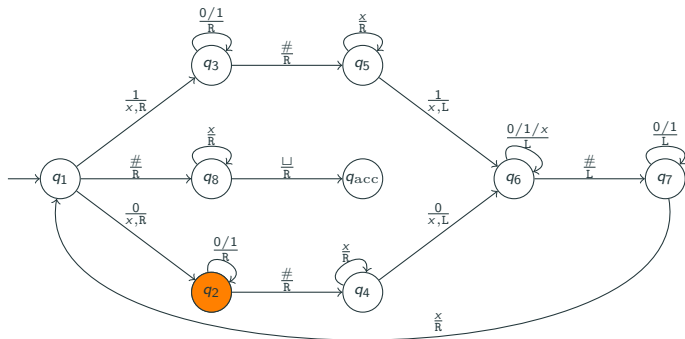
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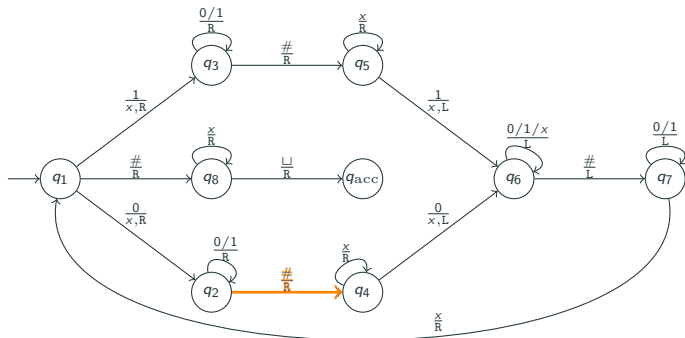
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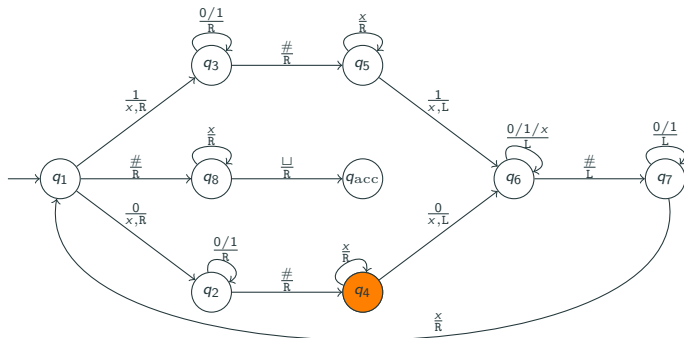
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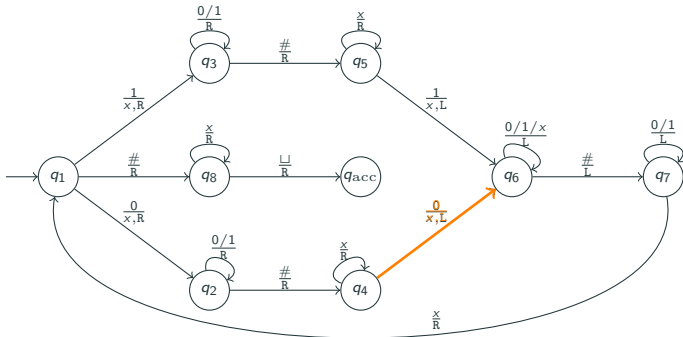
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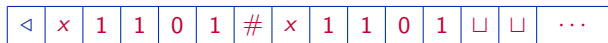
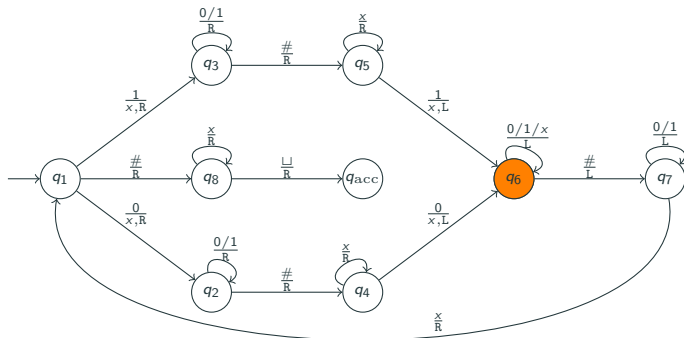
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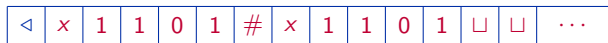
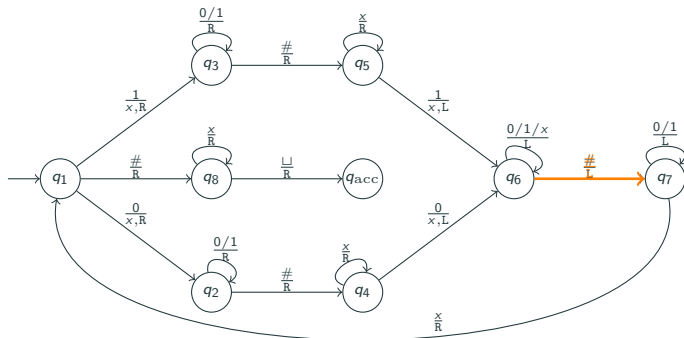
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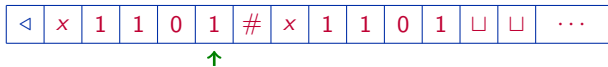
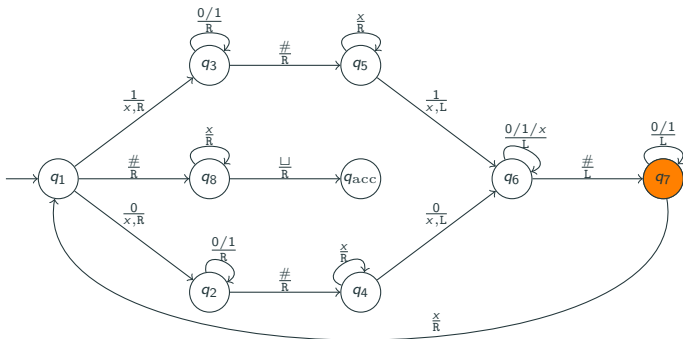
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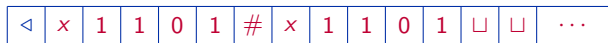
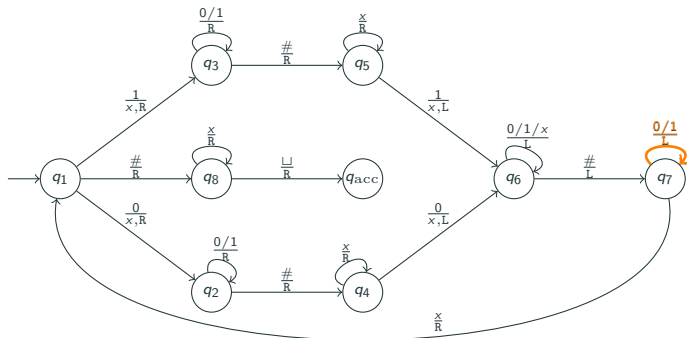
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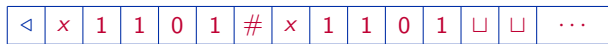
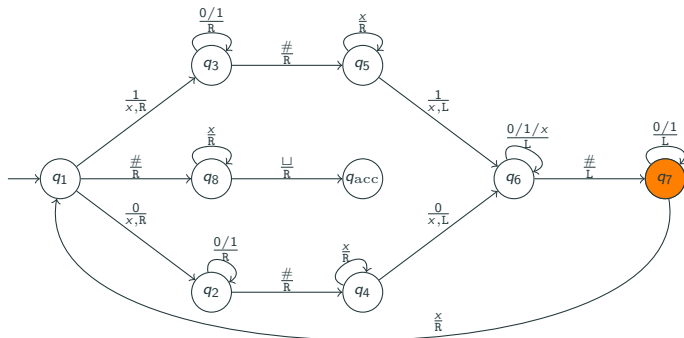
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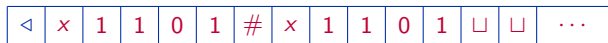
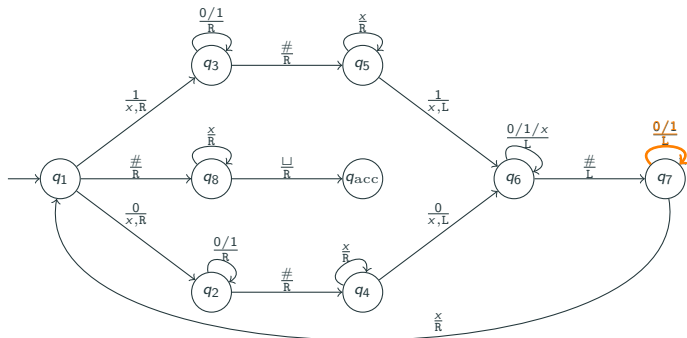
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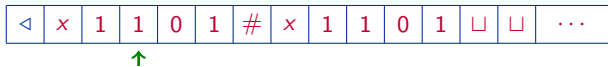
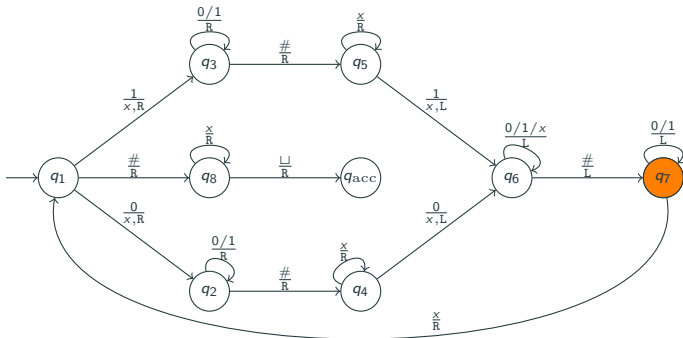
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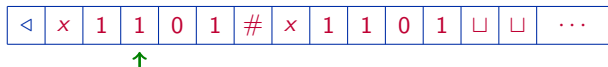
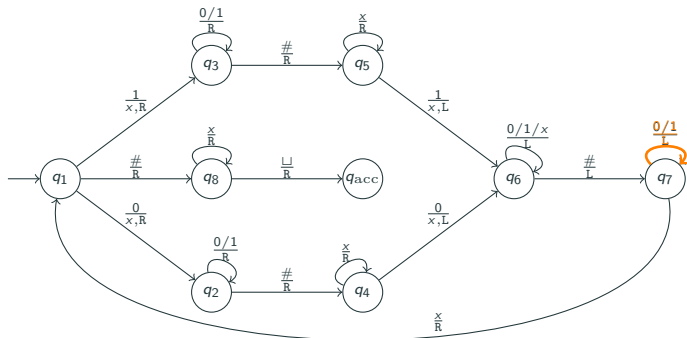
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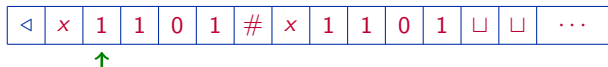
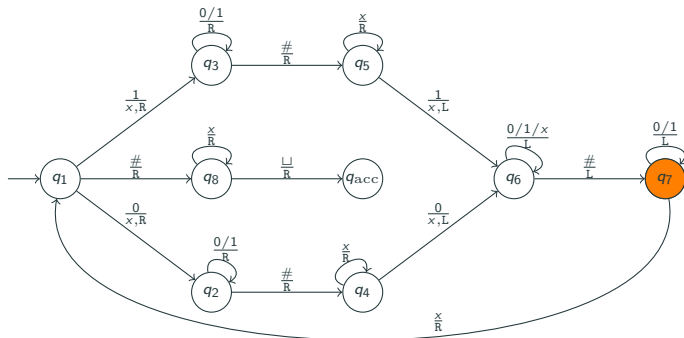
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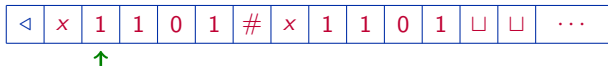
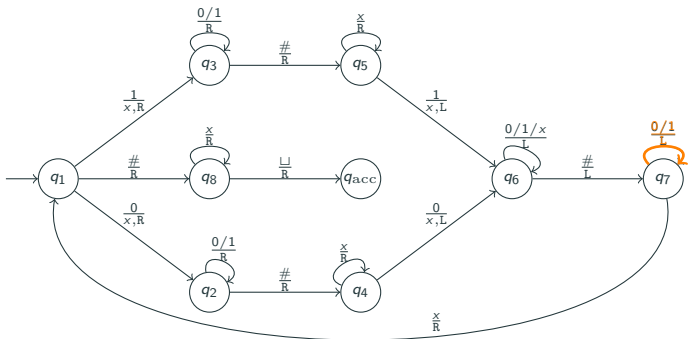
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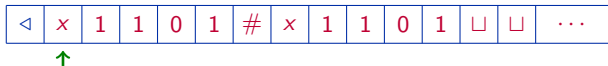
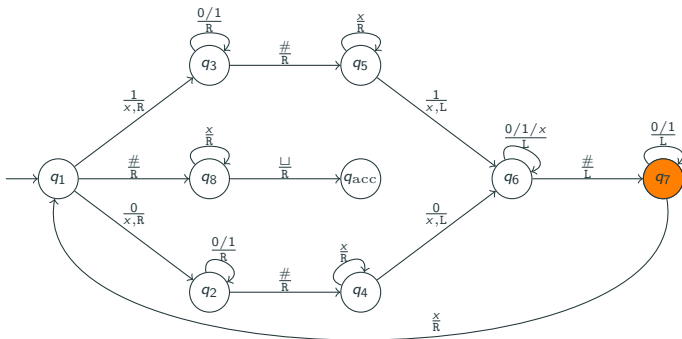
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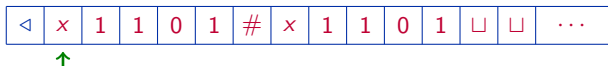
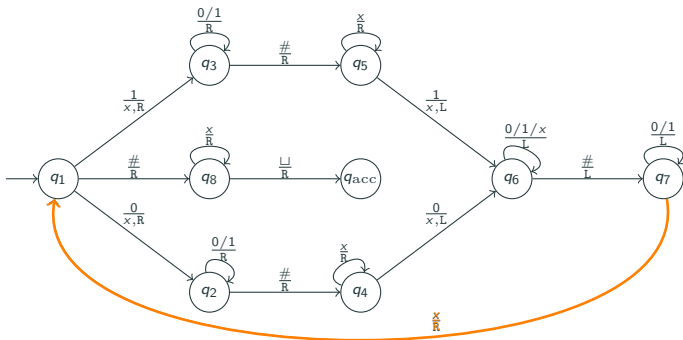
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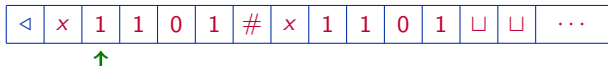
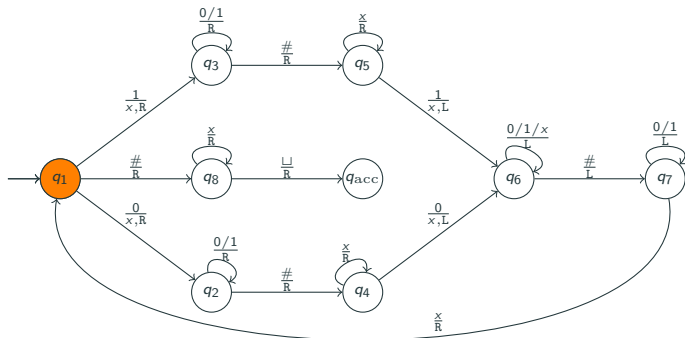
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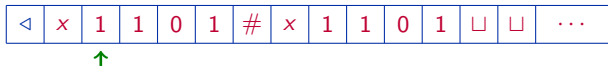
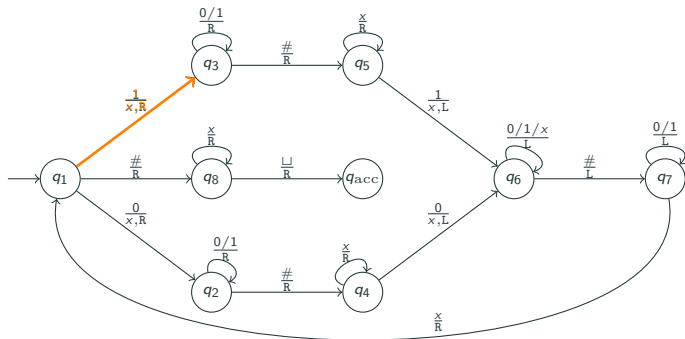
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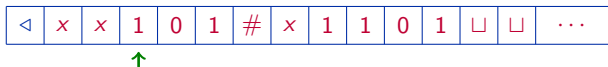
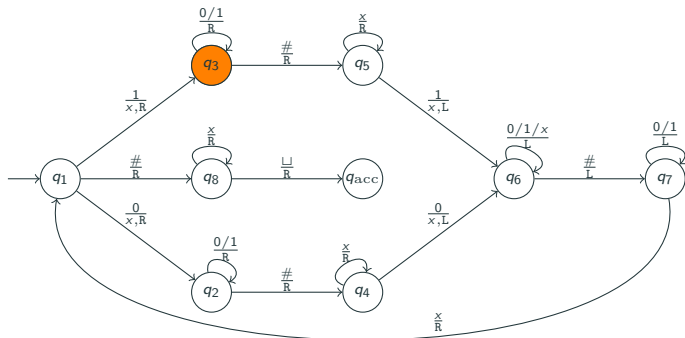
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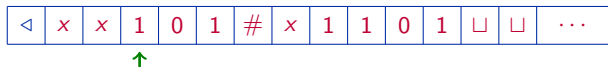
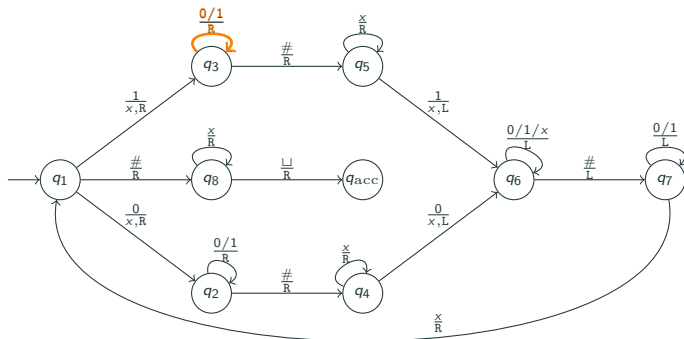
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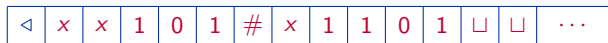
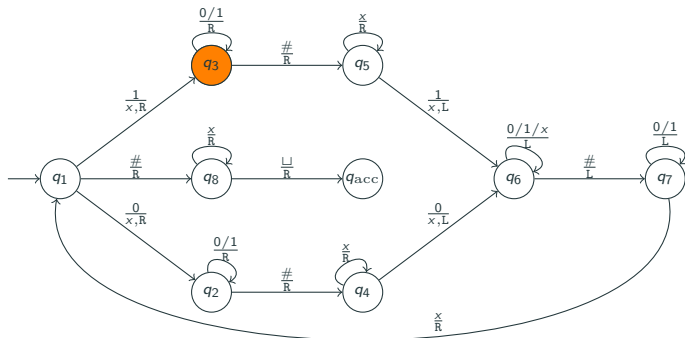
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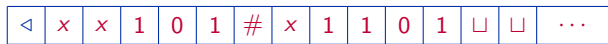
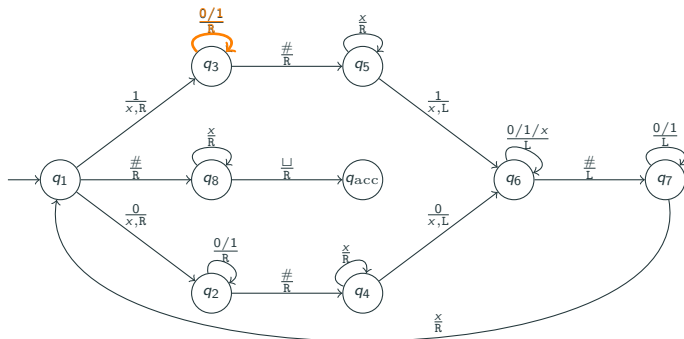
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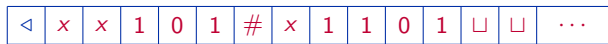
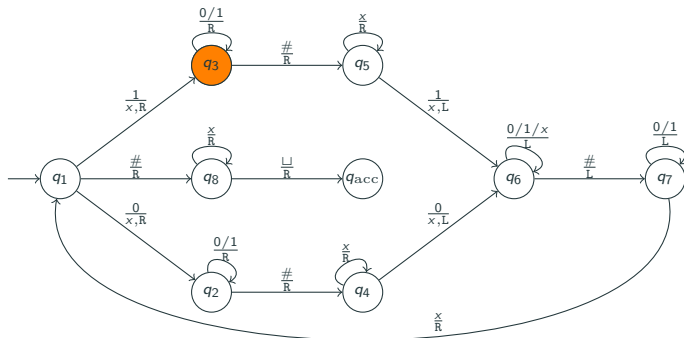
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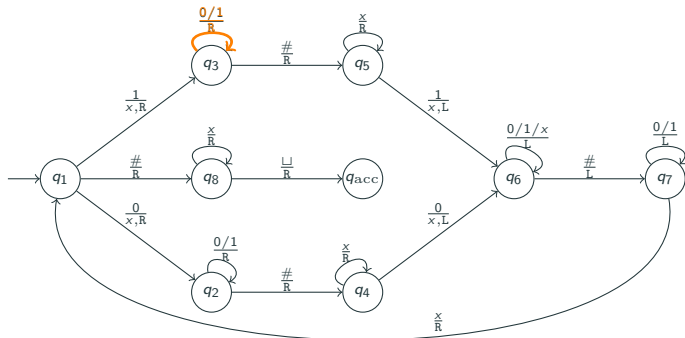
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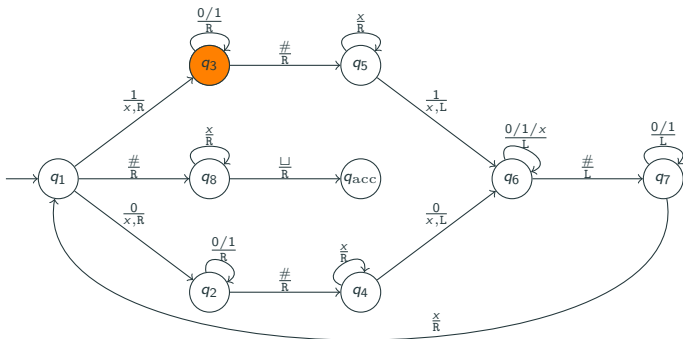
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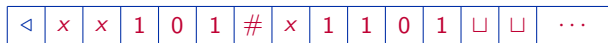
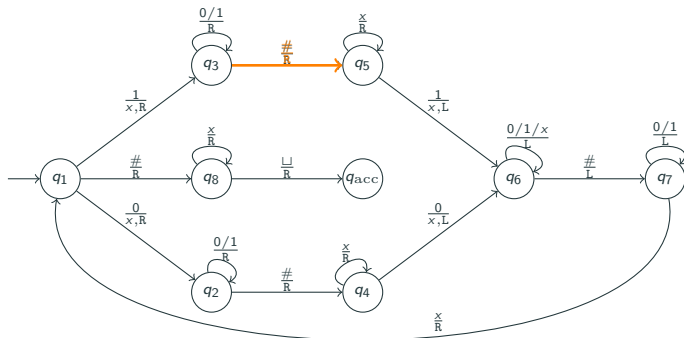
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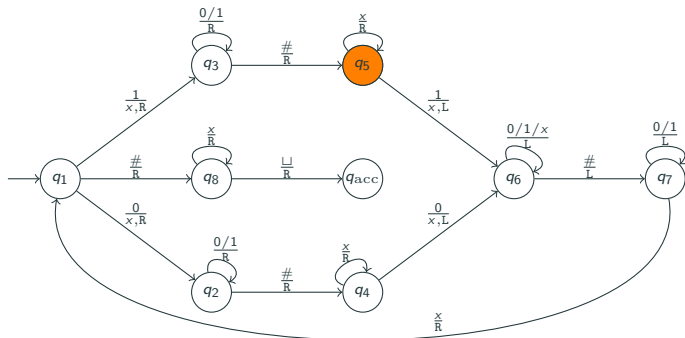
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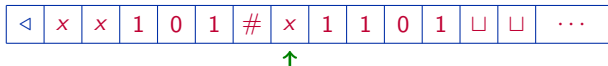
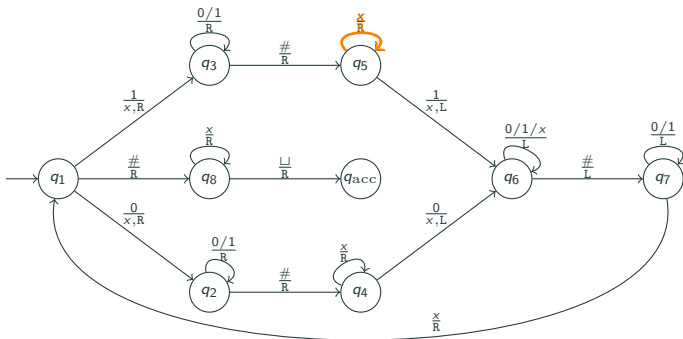
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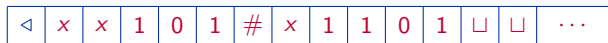
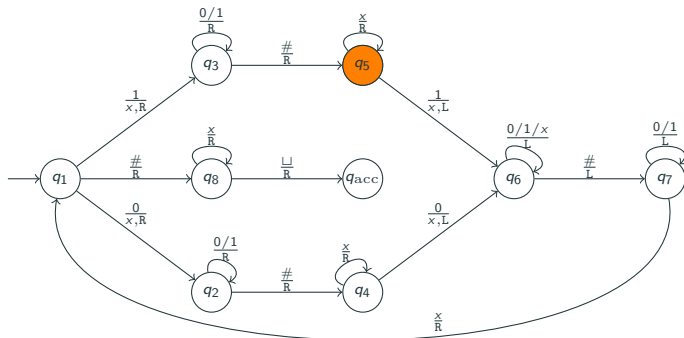
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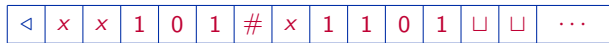
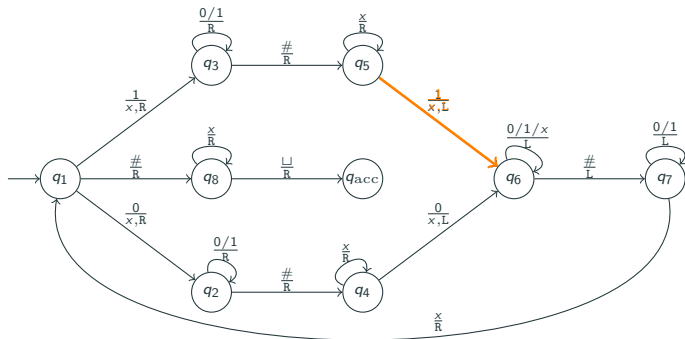
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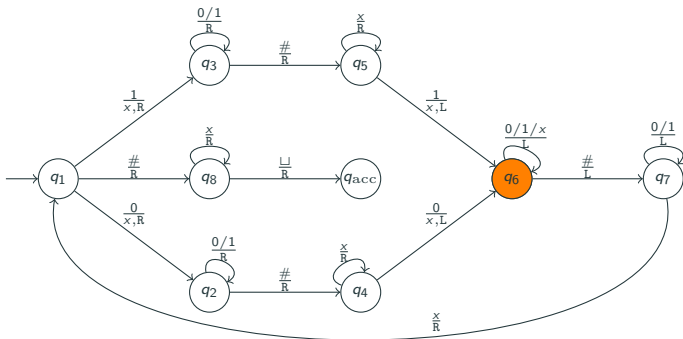
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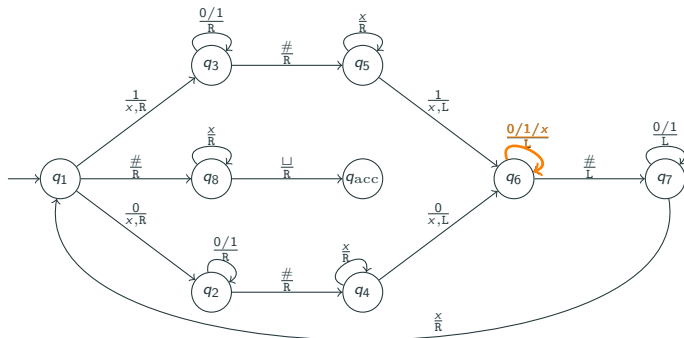
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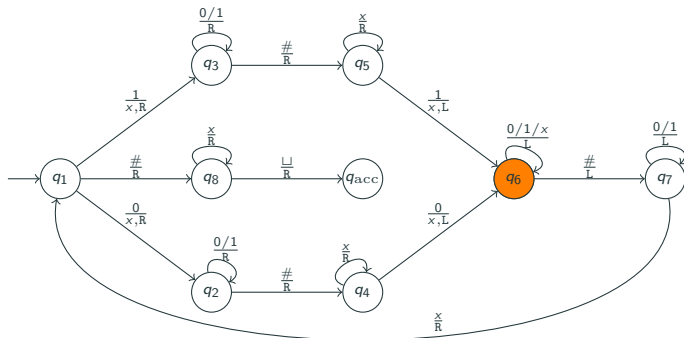
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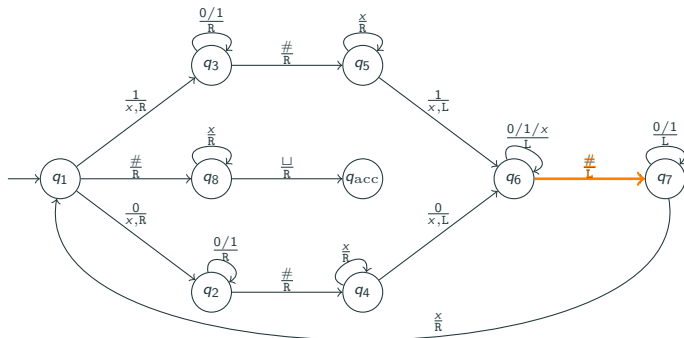
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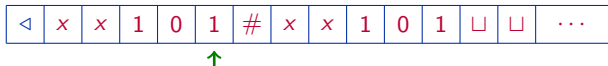
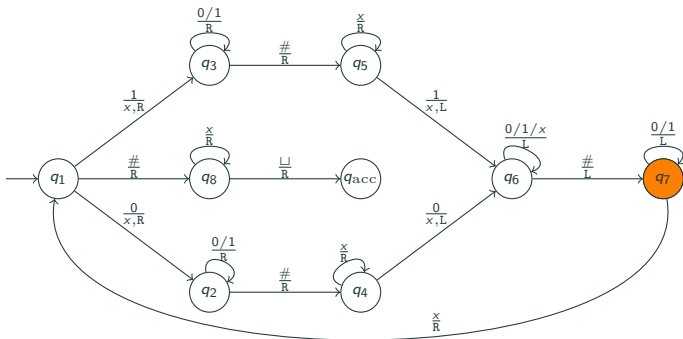
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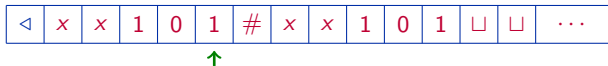
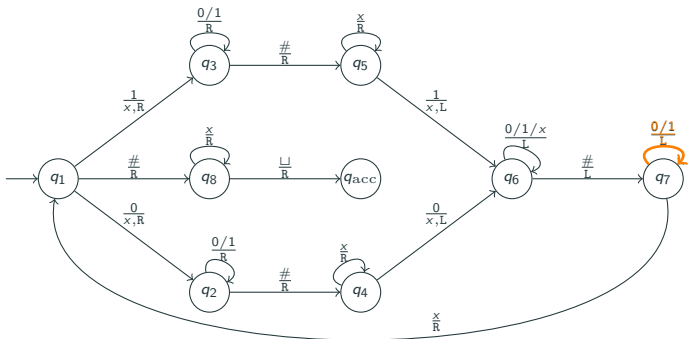
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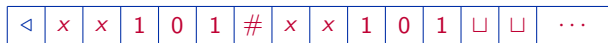
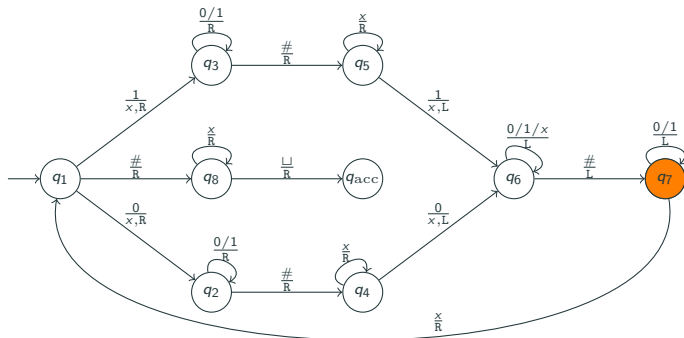
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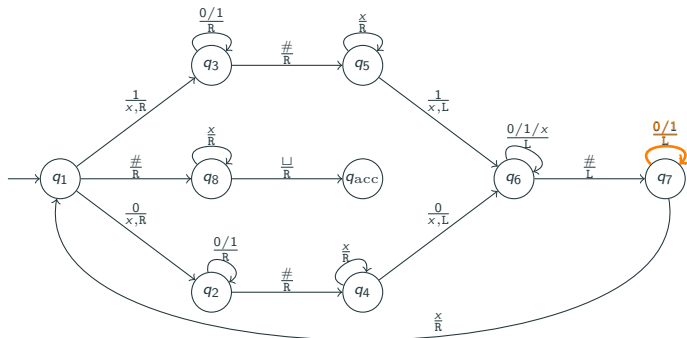
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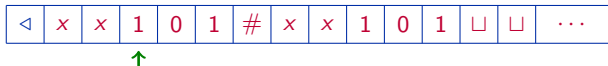
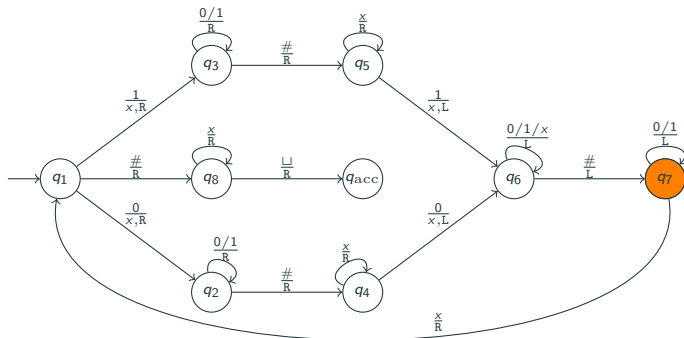
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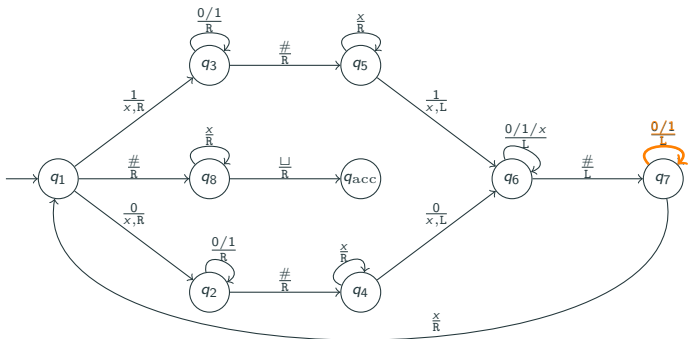
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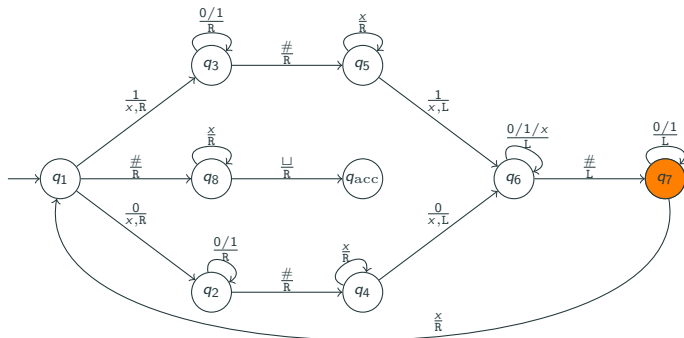
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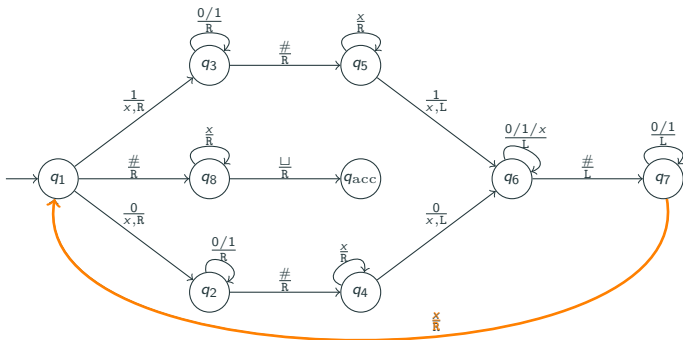
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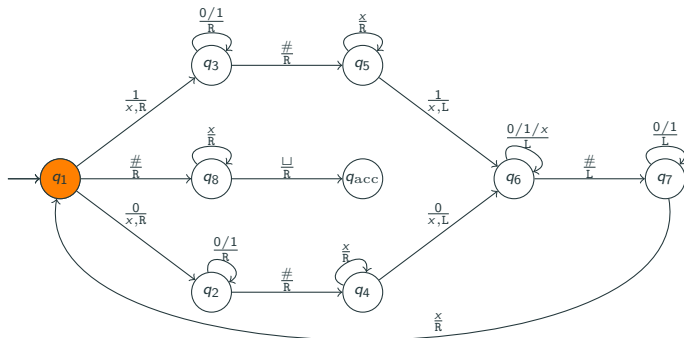
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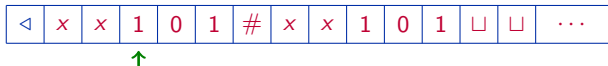
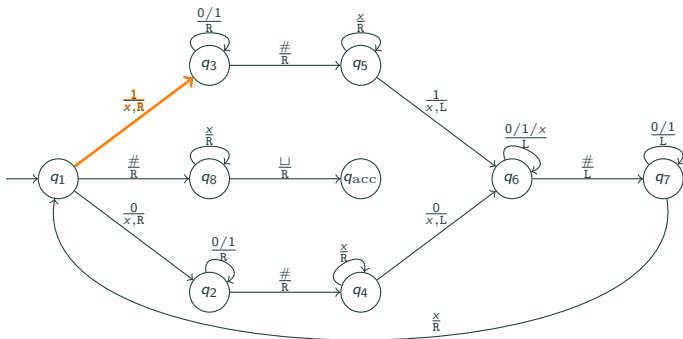
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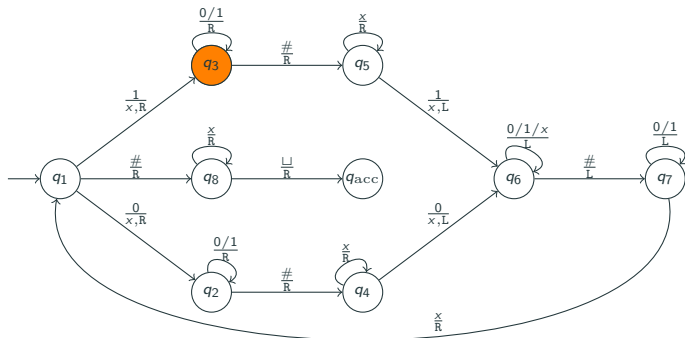
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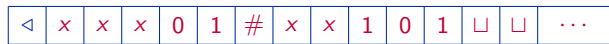
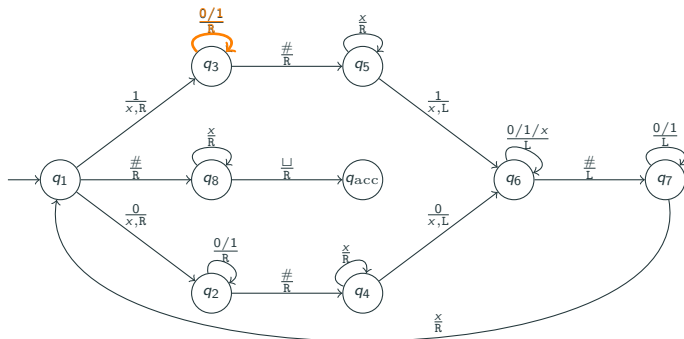
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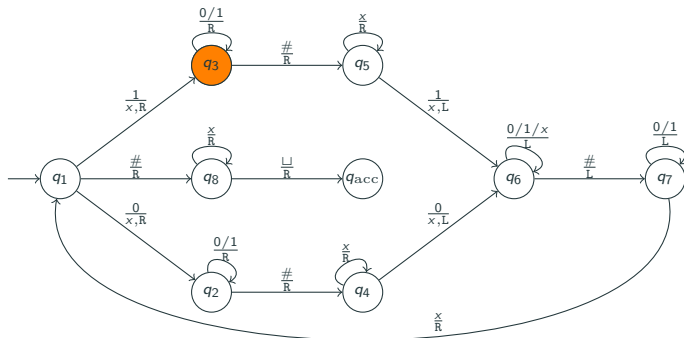
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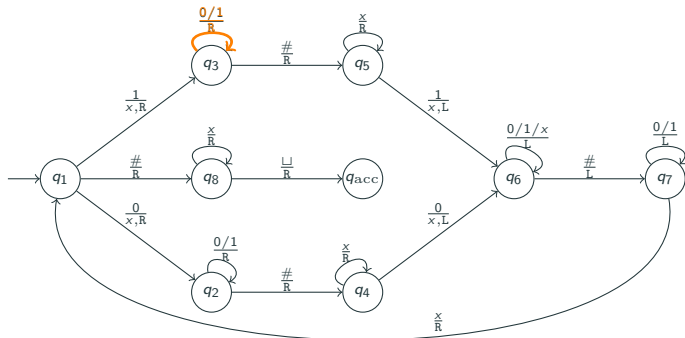
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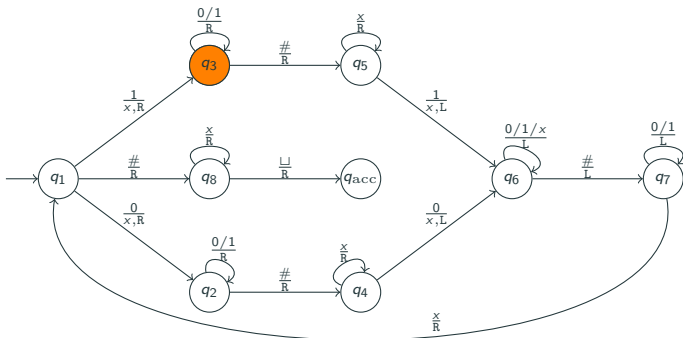
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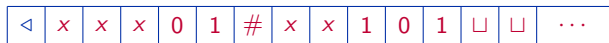
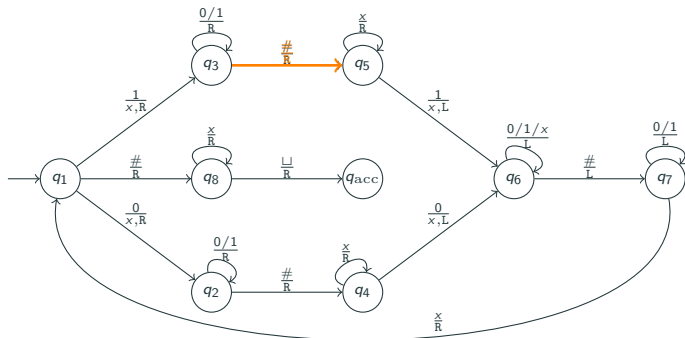
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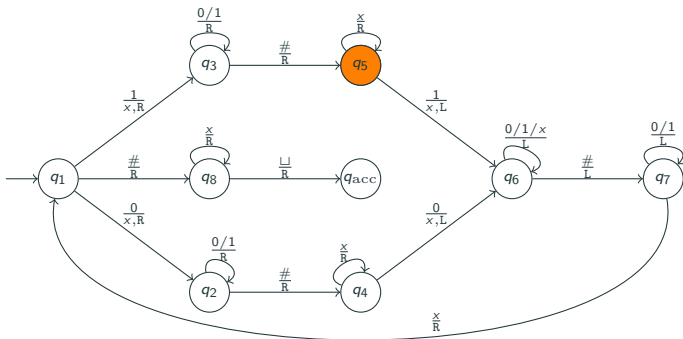
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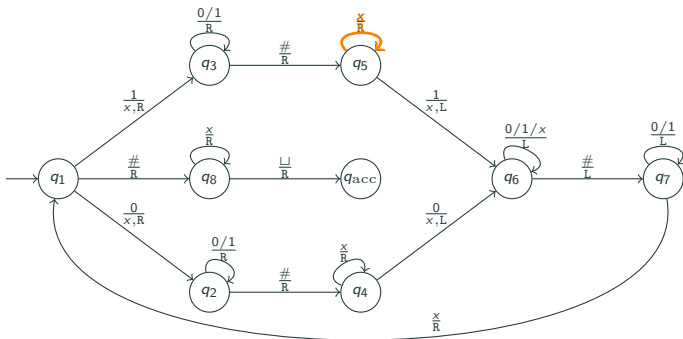
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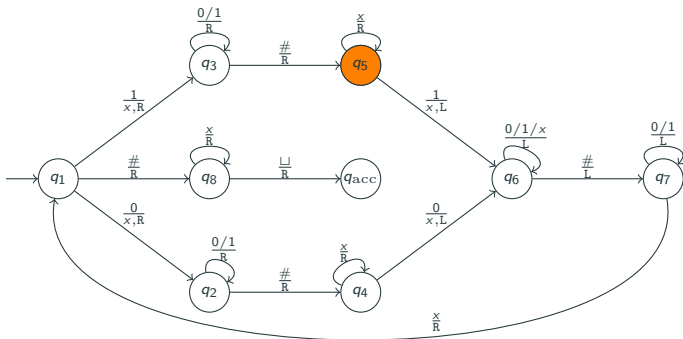
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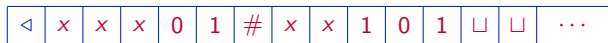
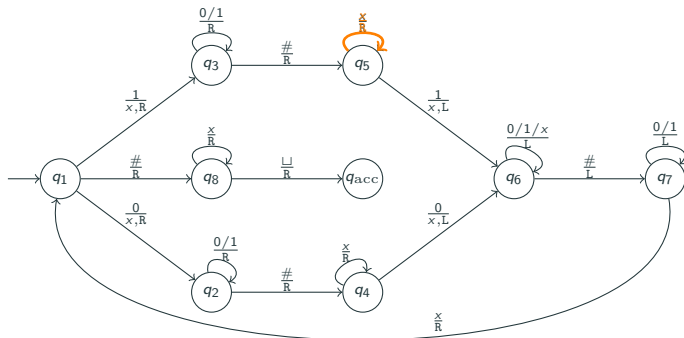
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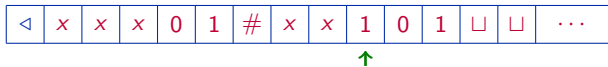
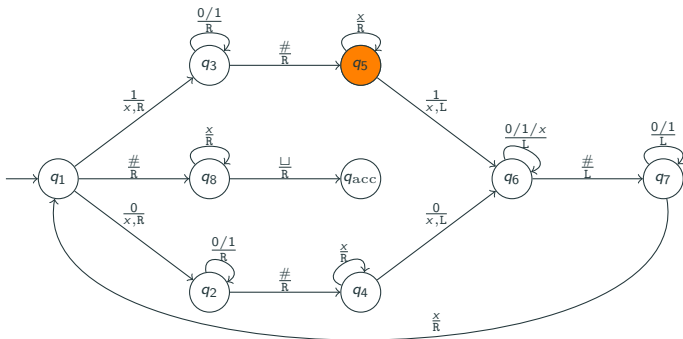
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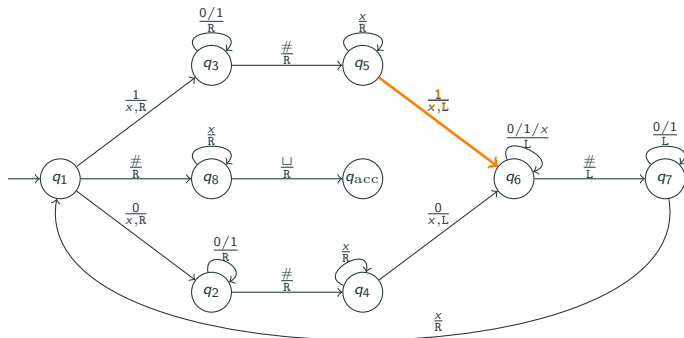
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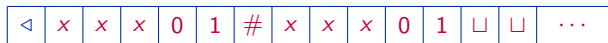
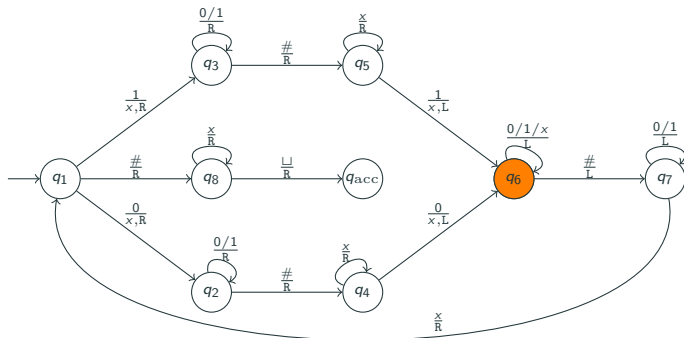
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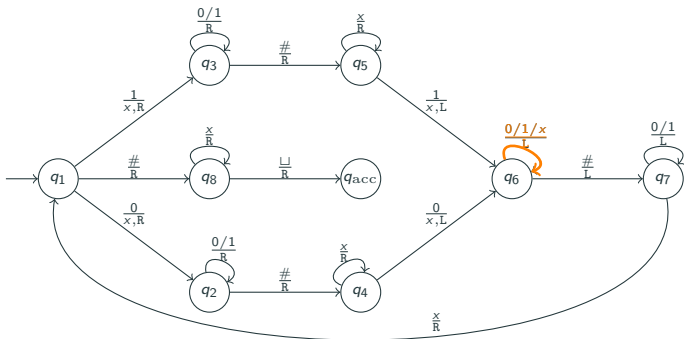
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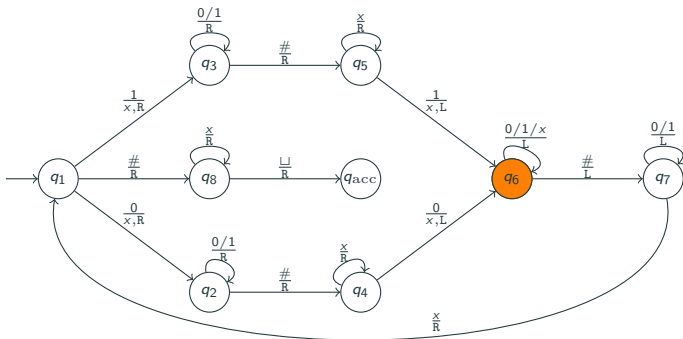
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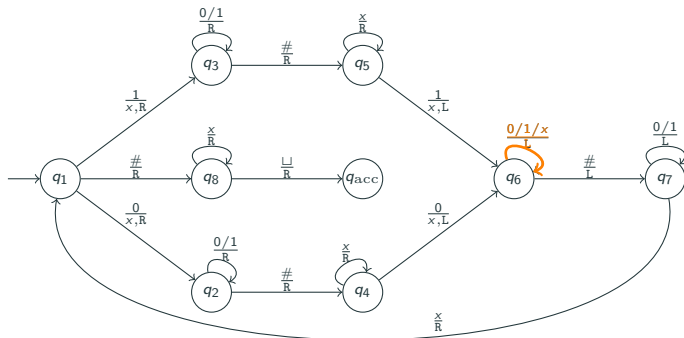
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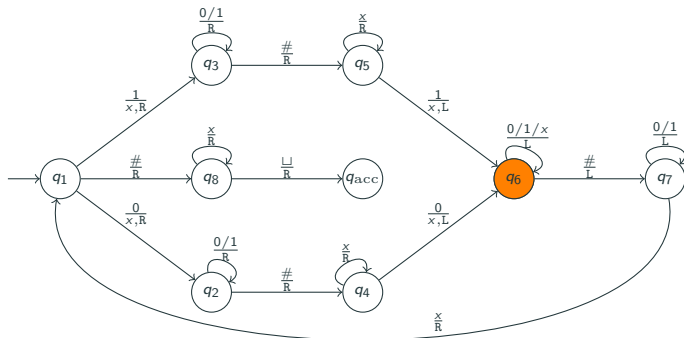
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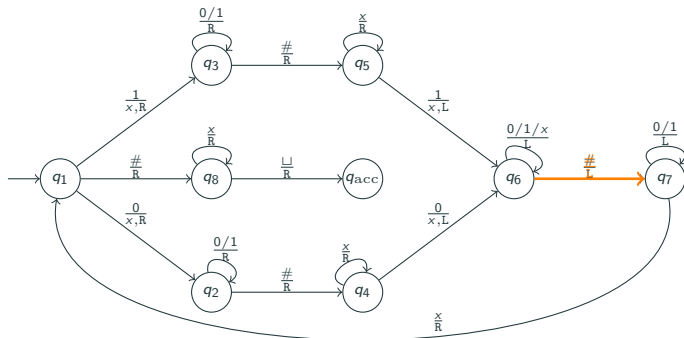
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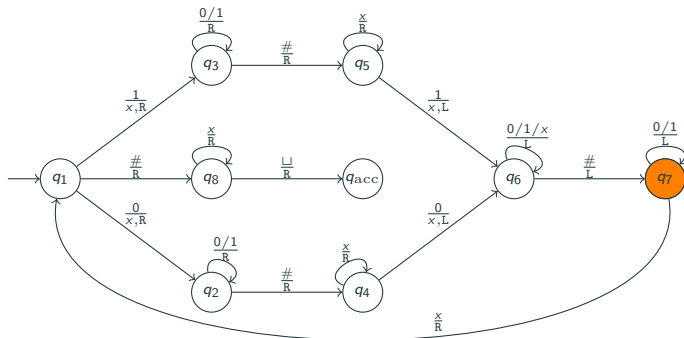
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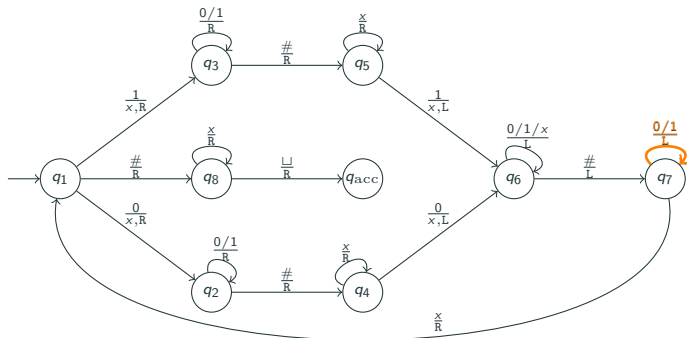
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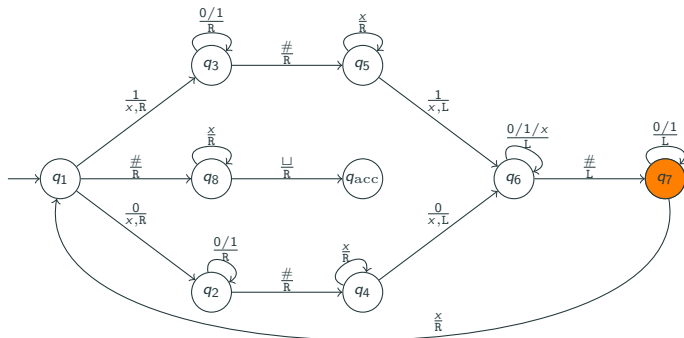
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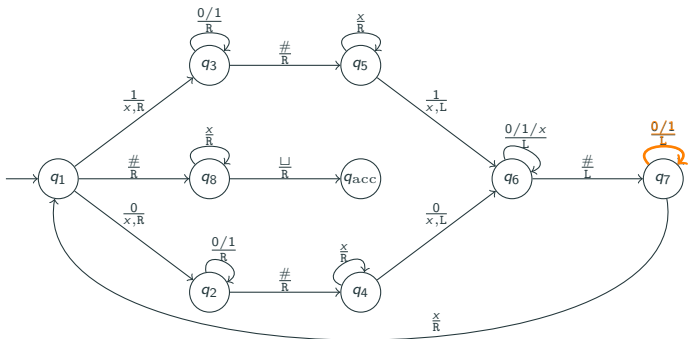
An example of a Turing machine on input 01101#01101



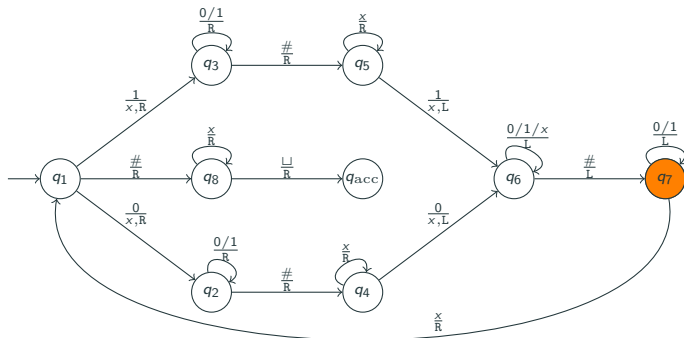
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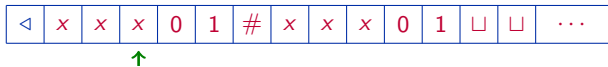
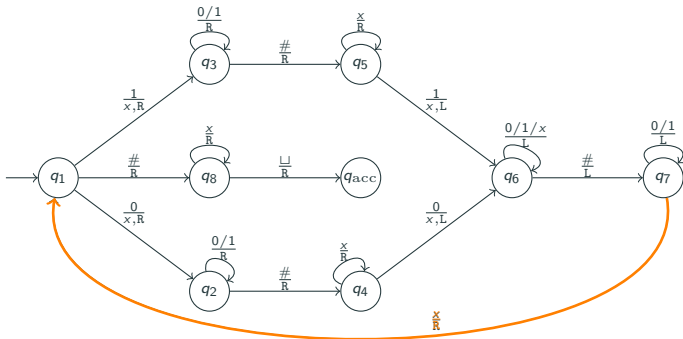
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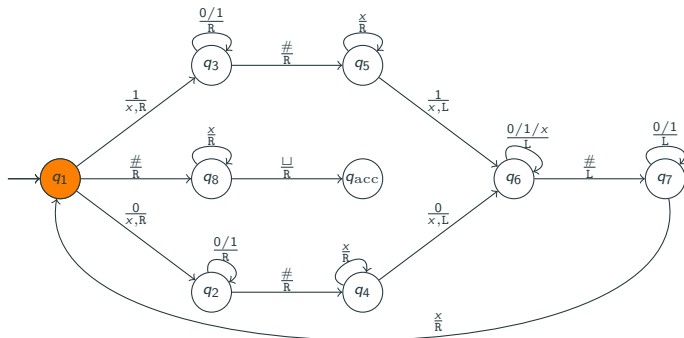
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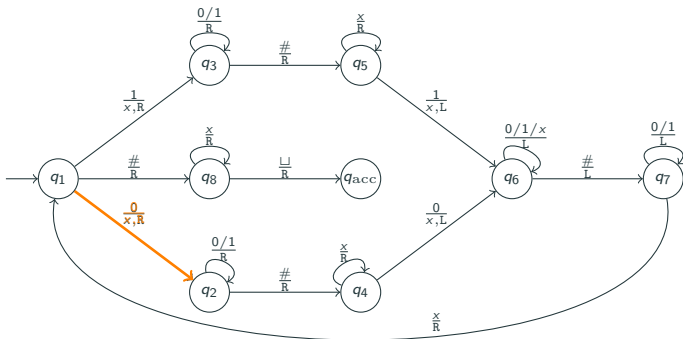
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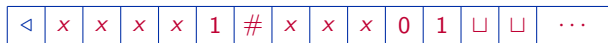
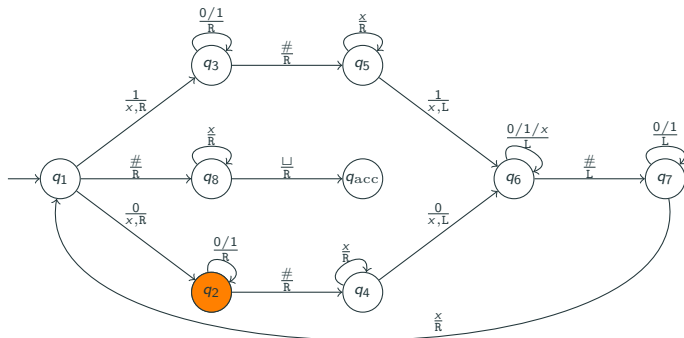
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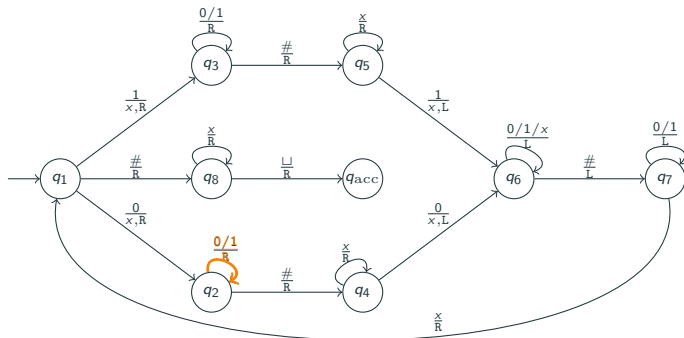
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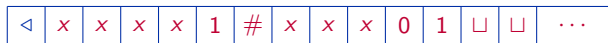
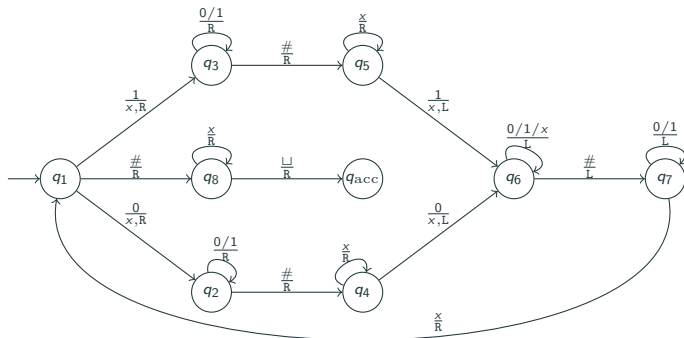
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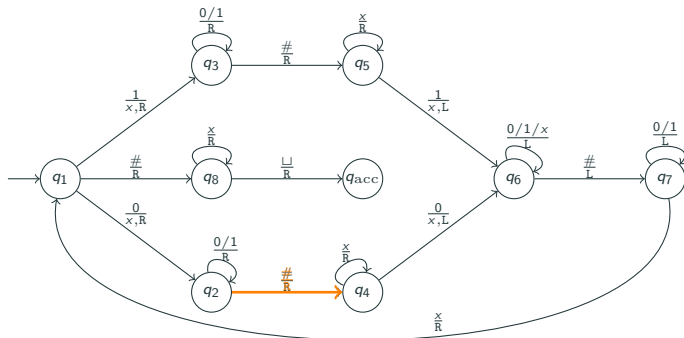
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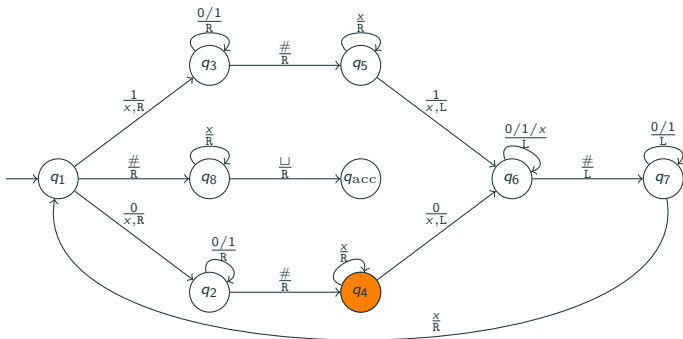
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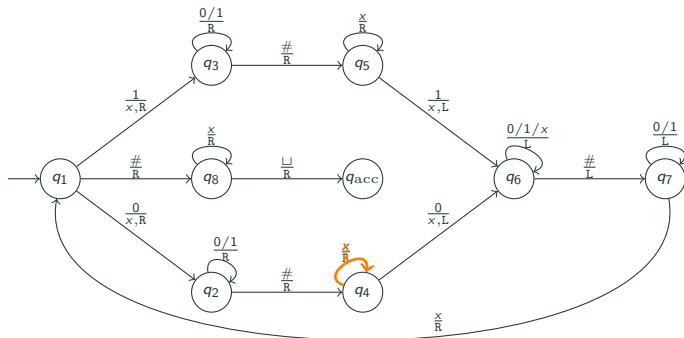
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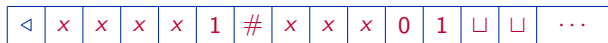
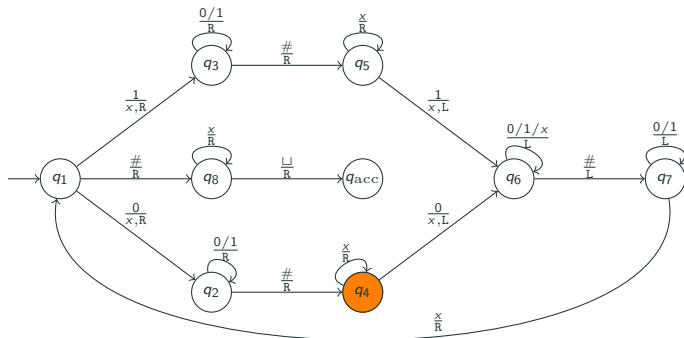
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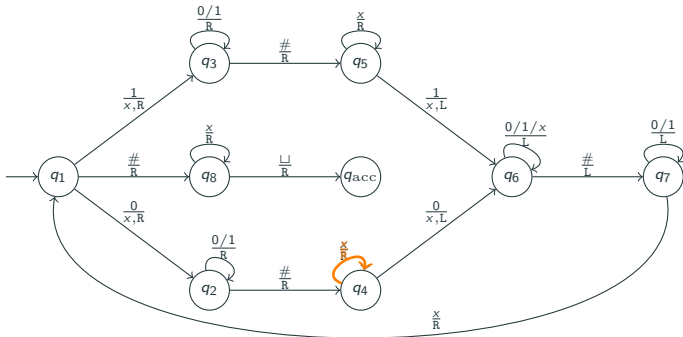
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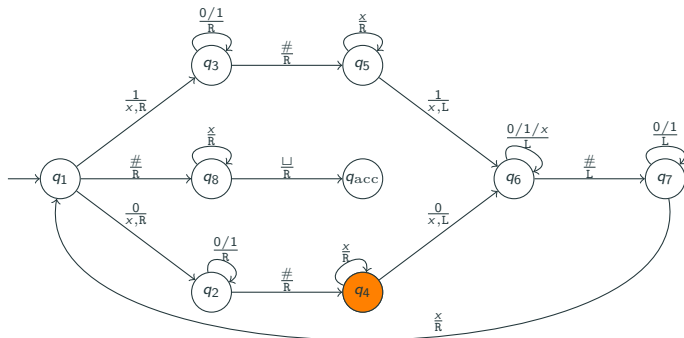
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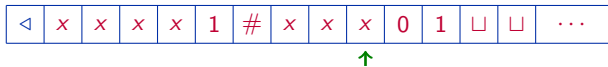
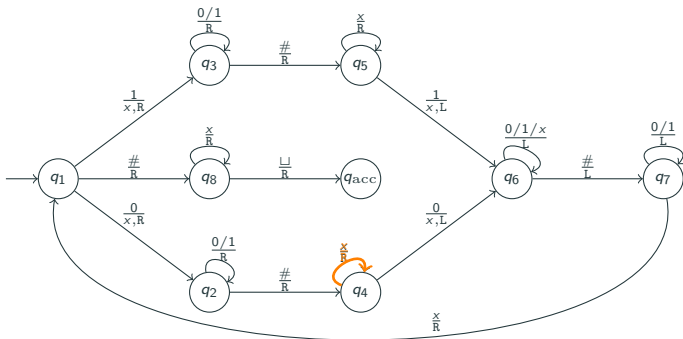
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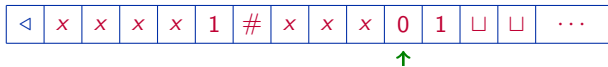
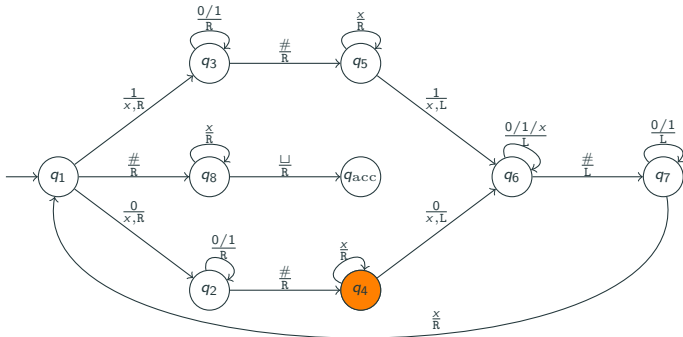
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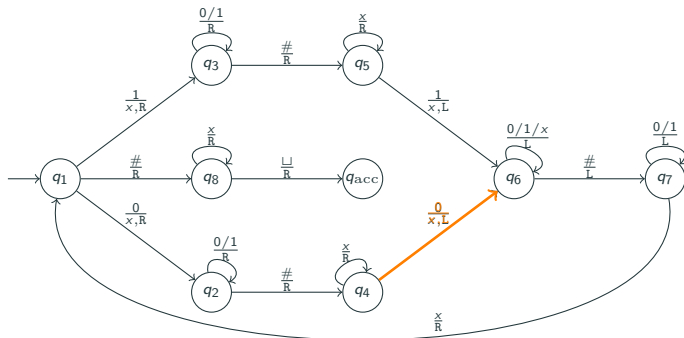
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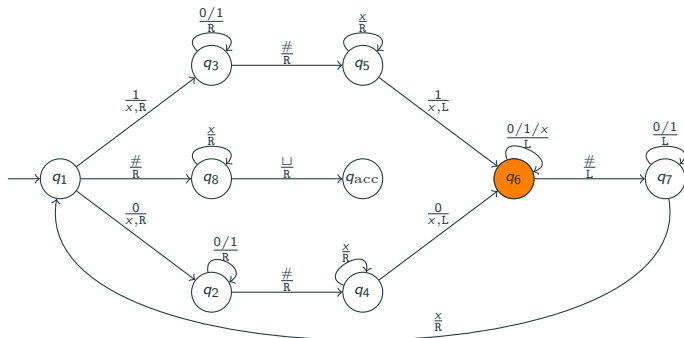
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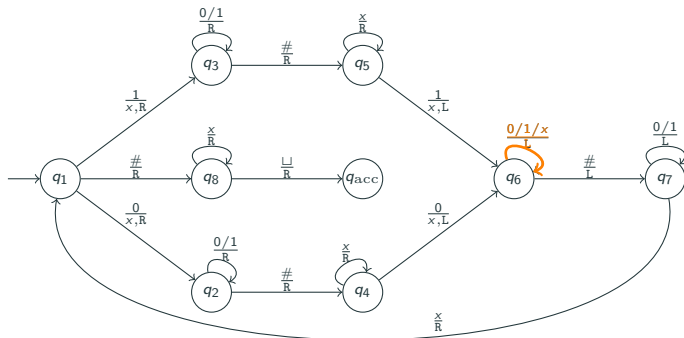
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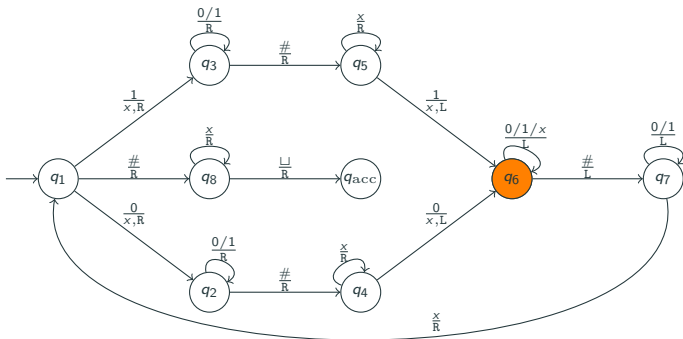
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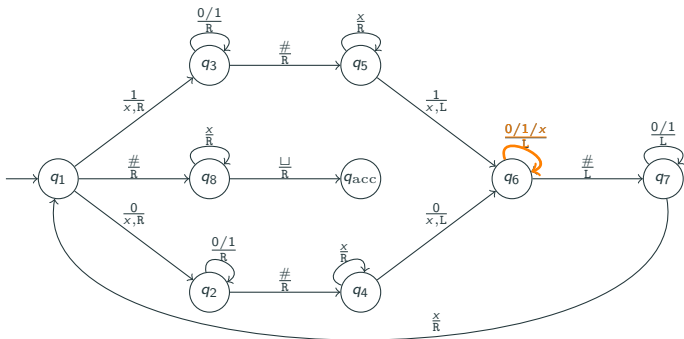
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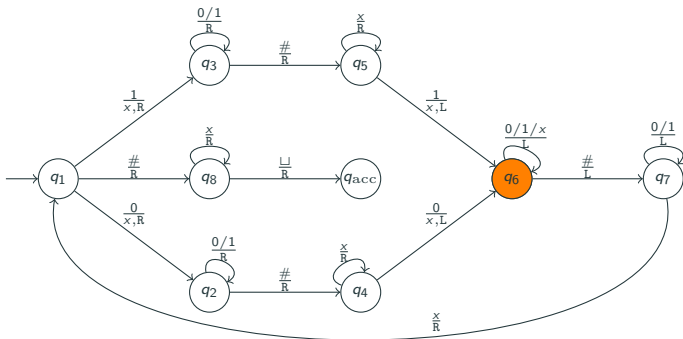
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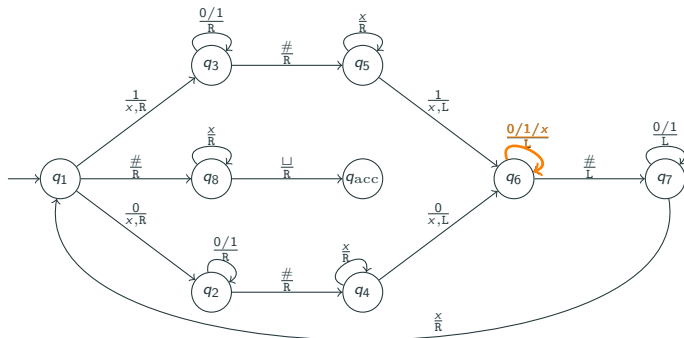
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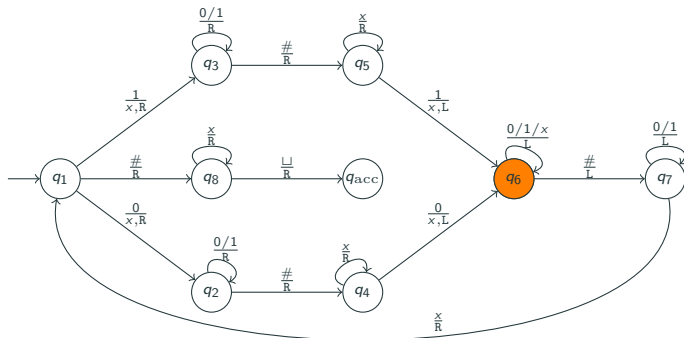
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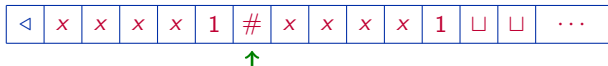
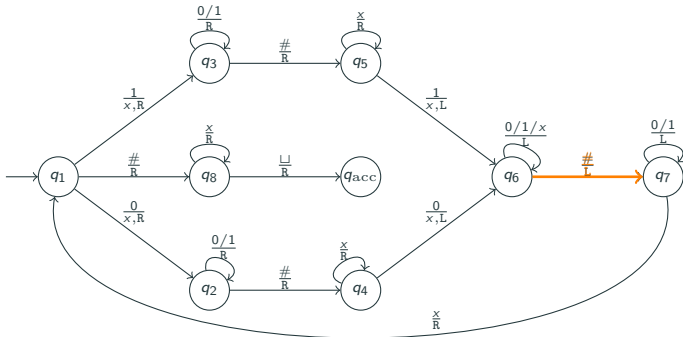
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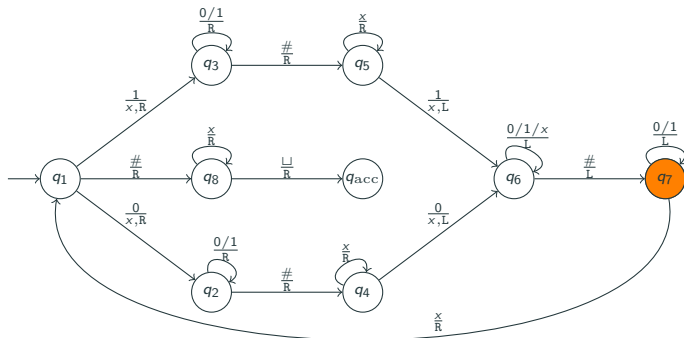
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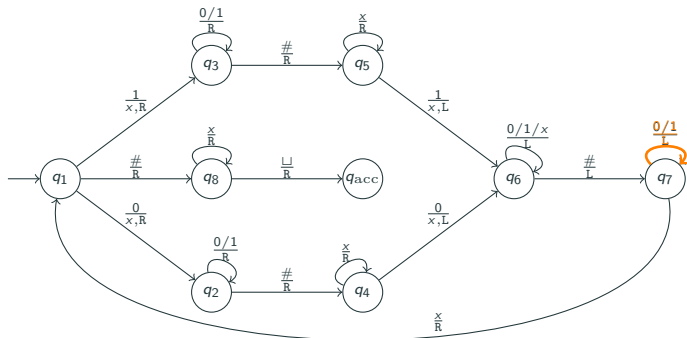
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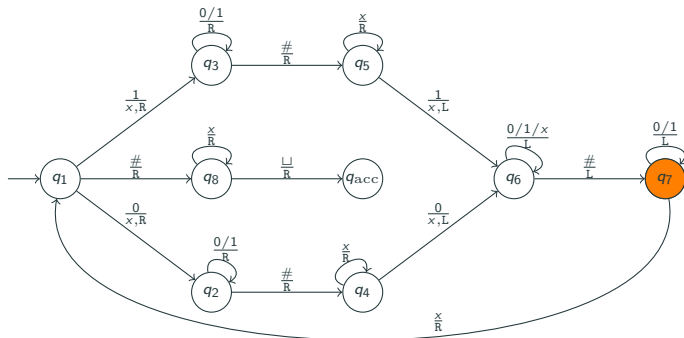
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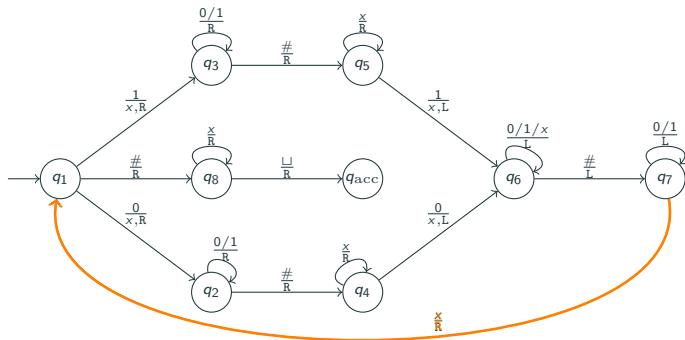
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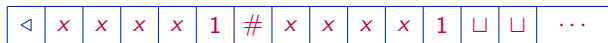
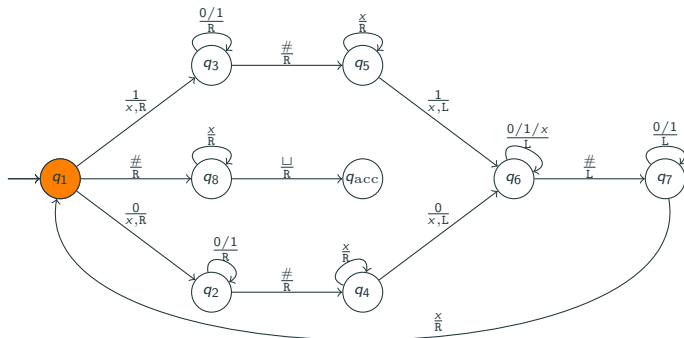
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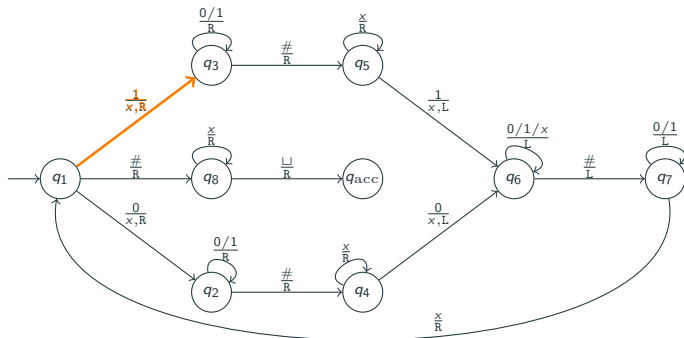
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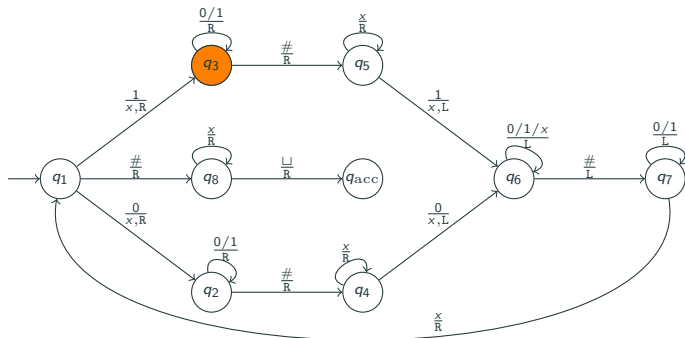
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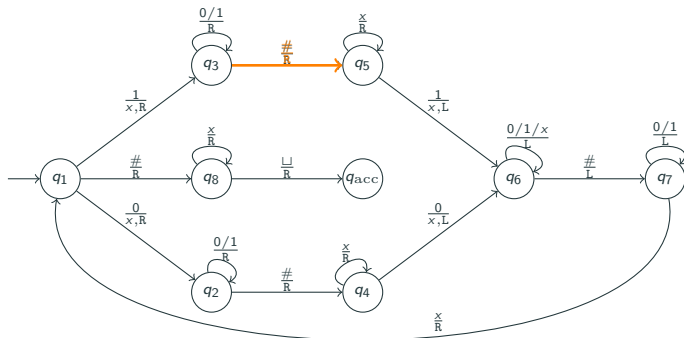
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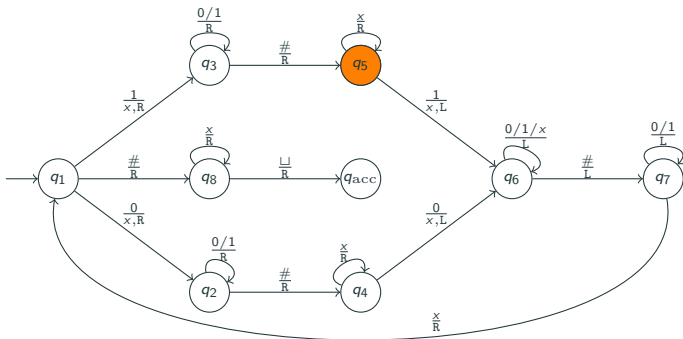
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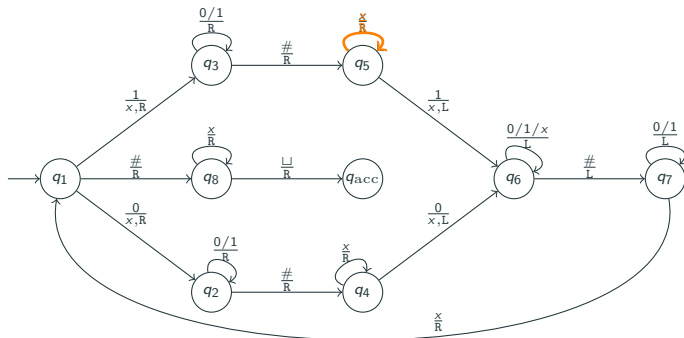
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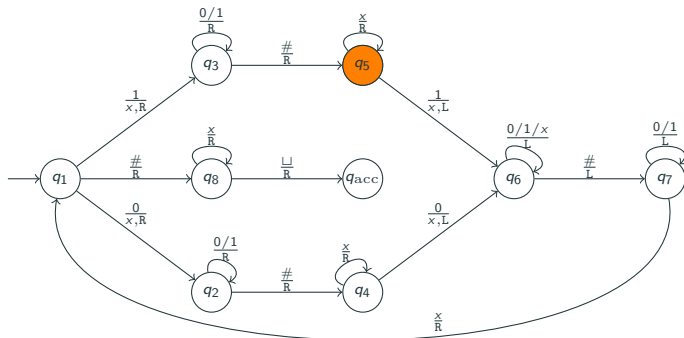
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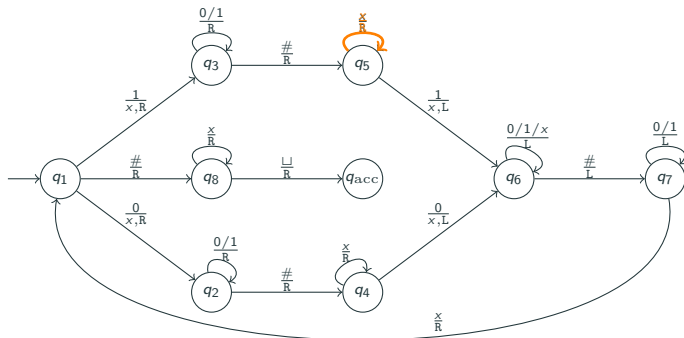
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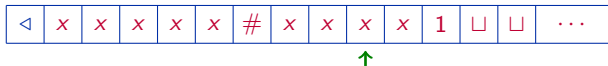
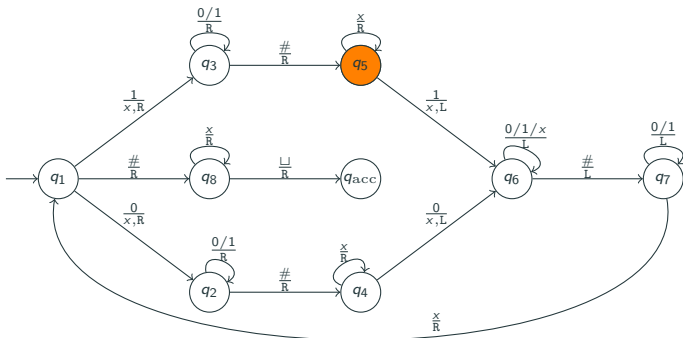
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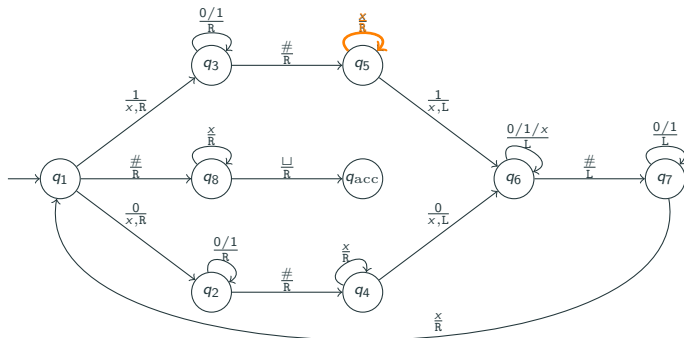
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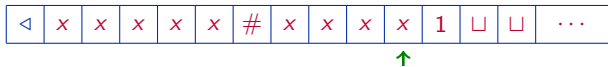
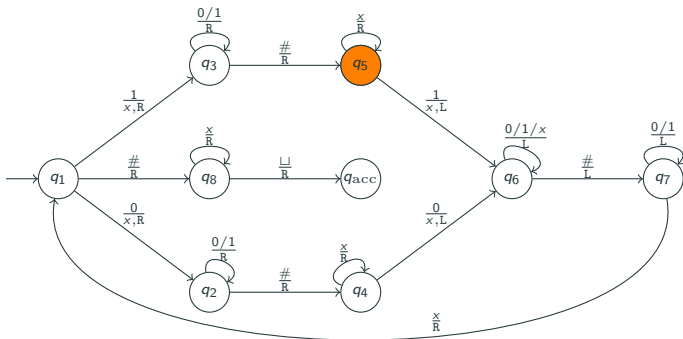
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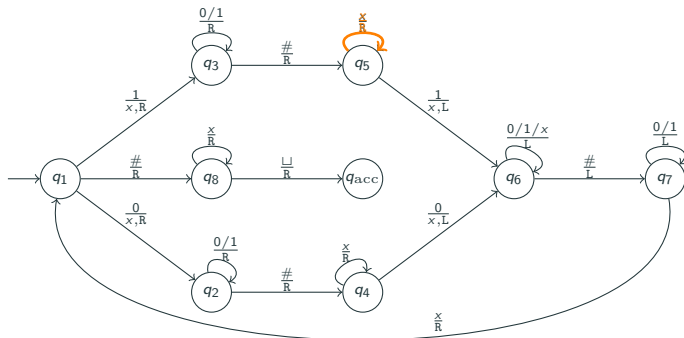
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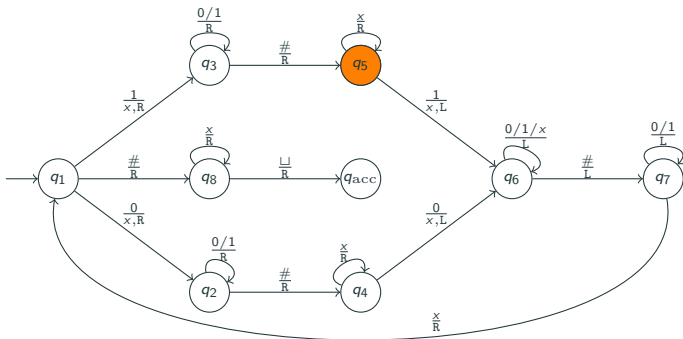
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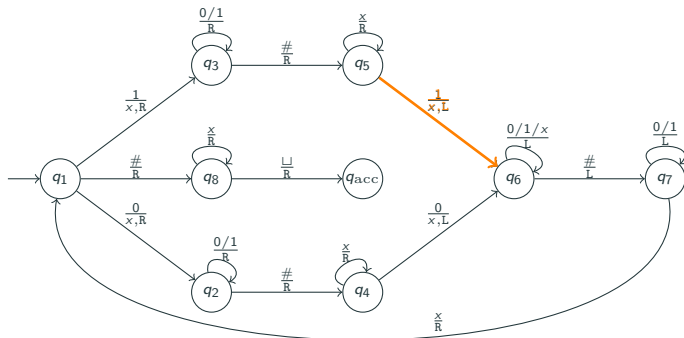
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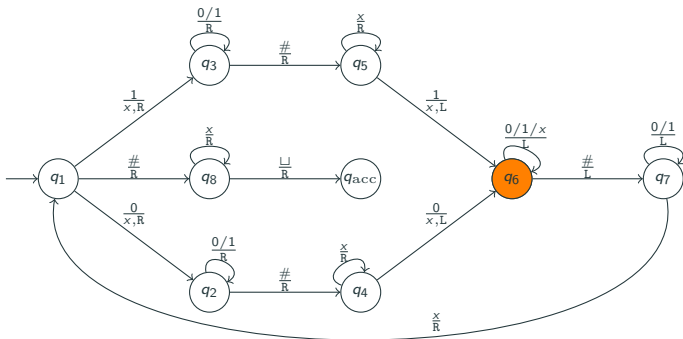
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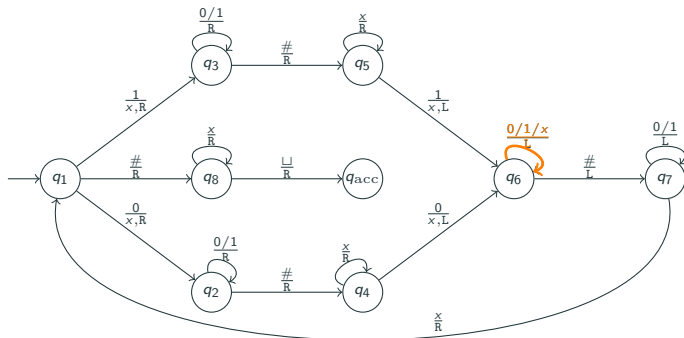
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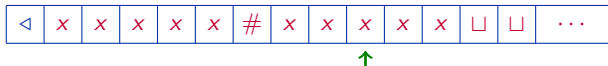
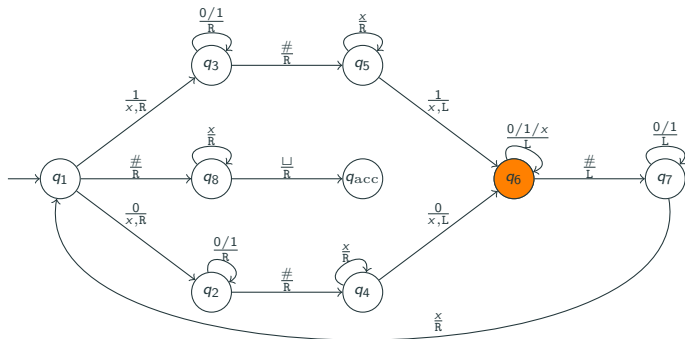
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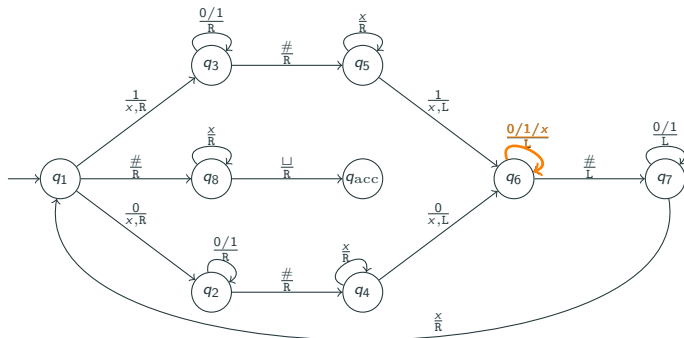
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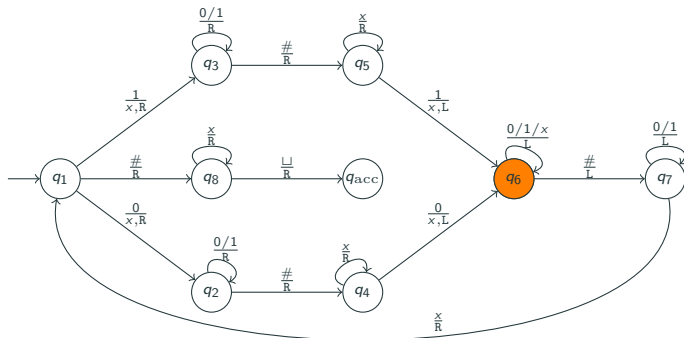
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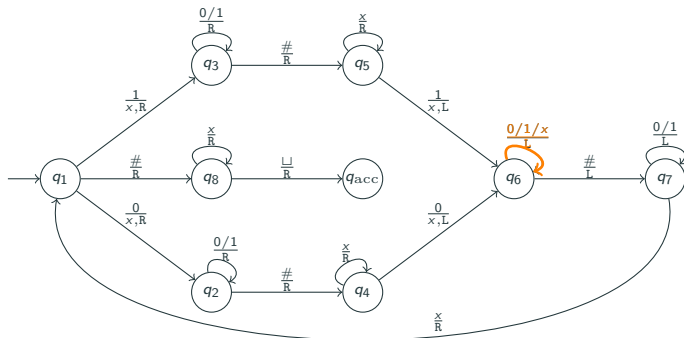
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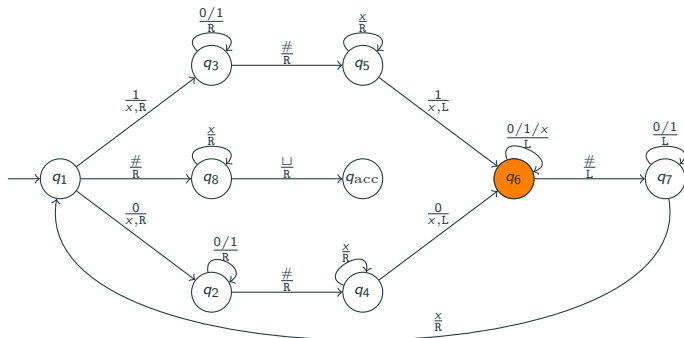
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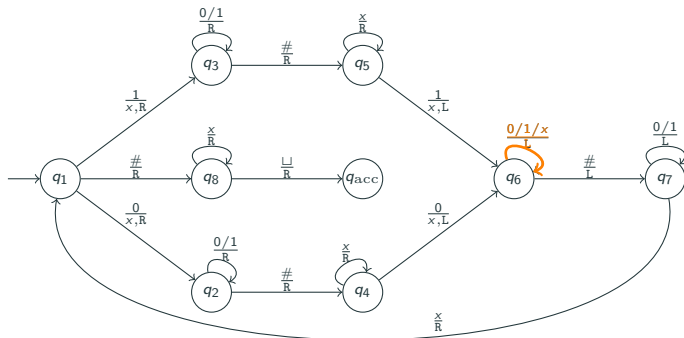
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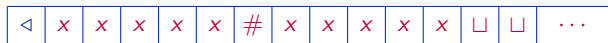
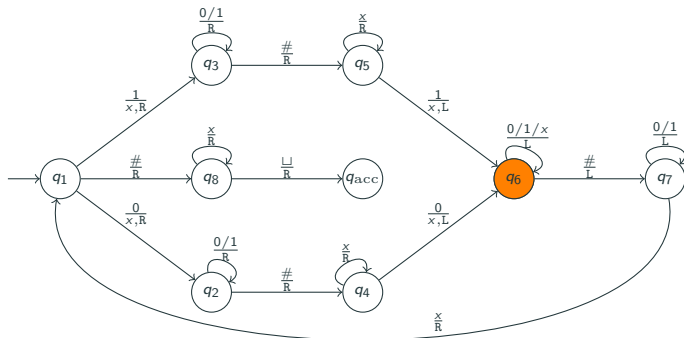
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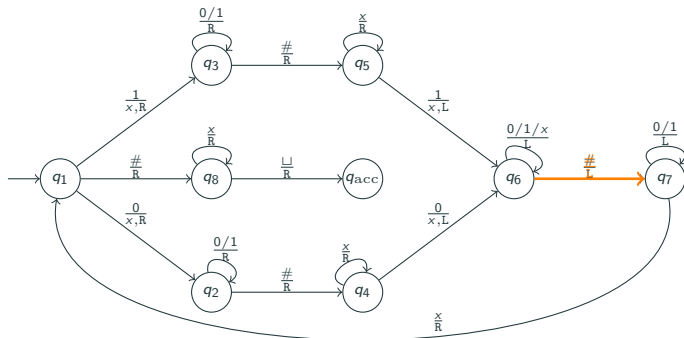
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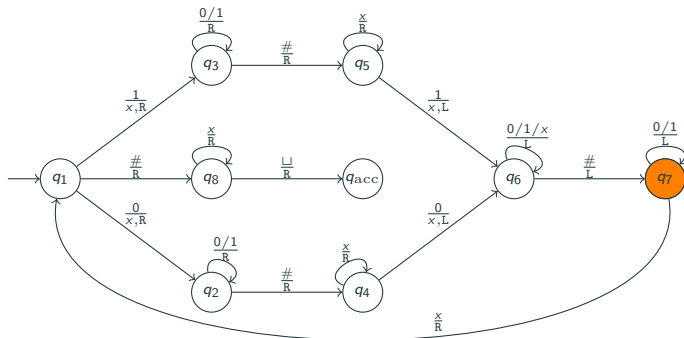
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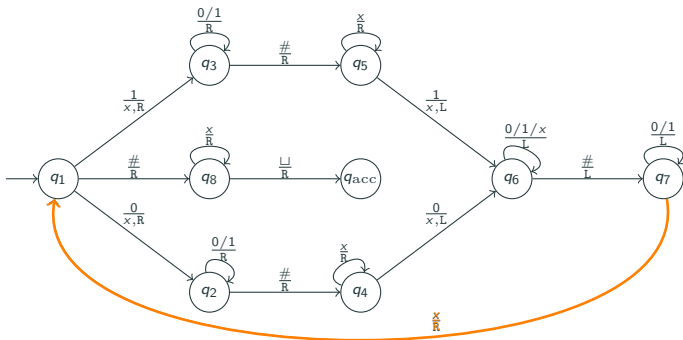
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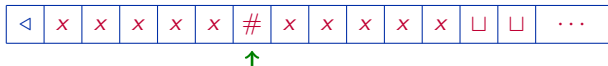
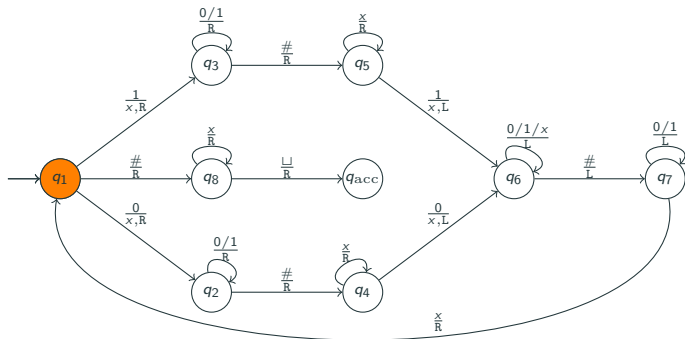
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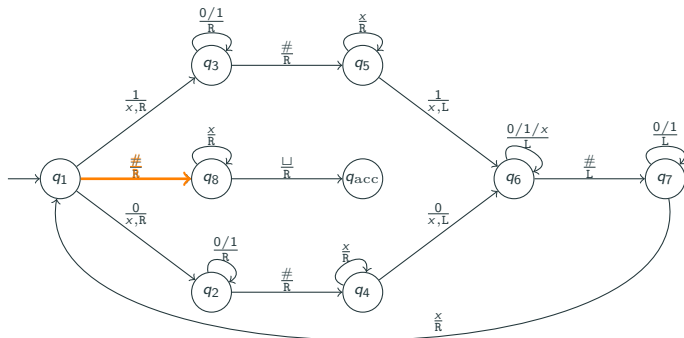
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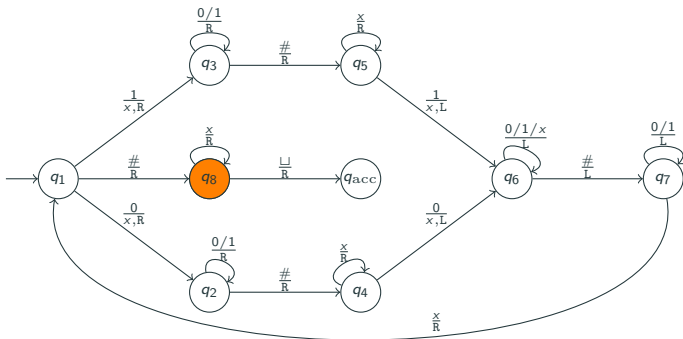
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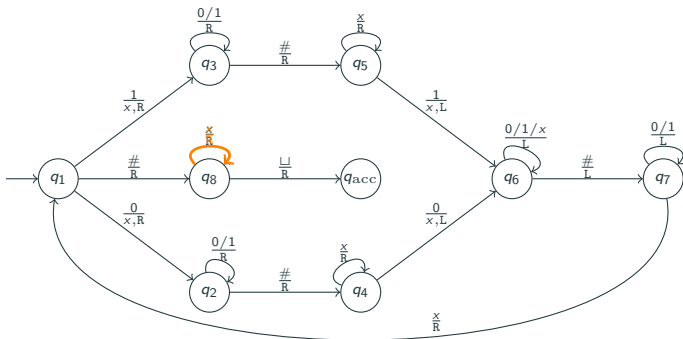
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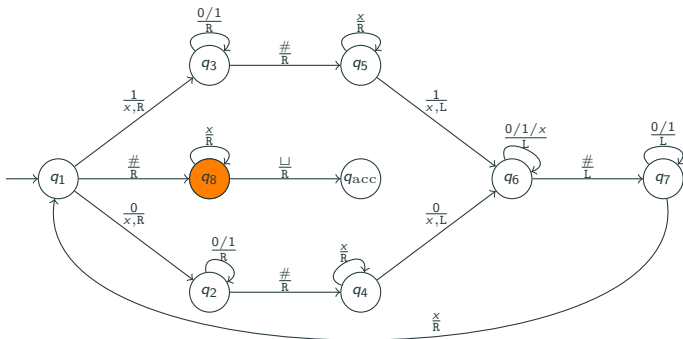
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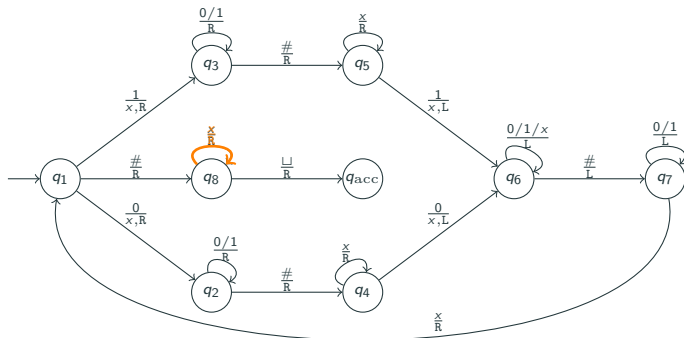
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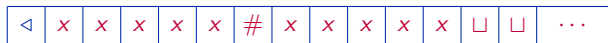
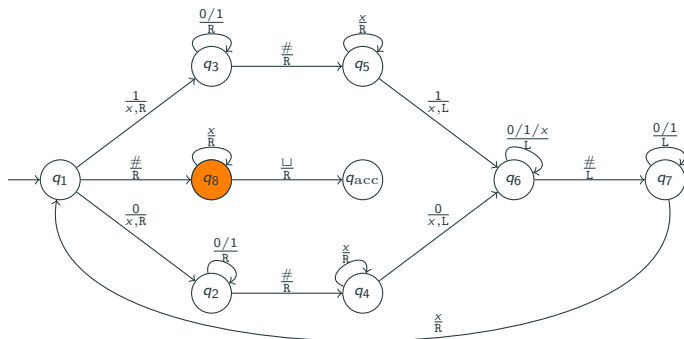
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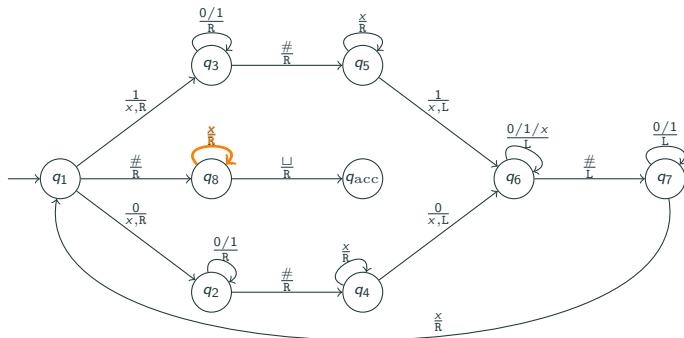
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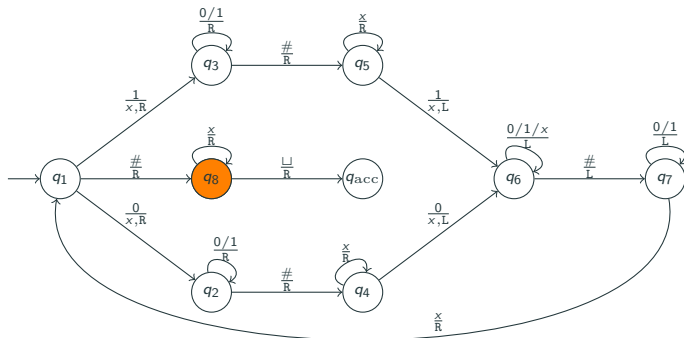
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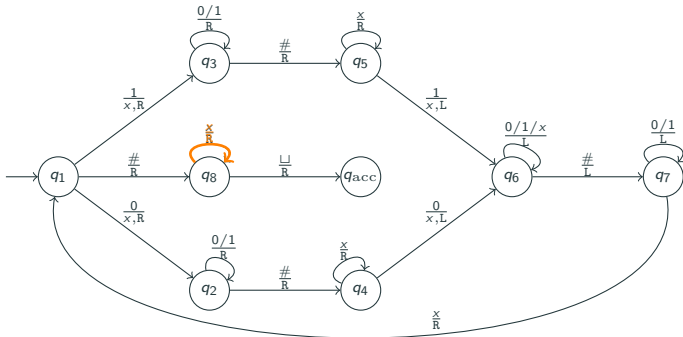
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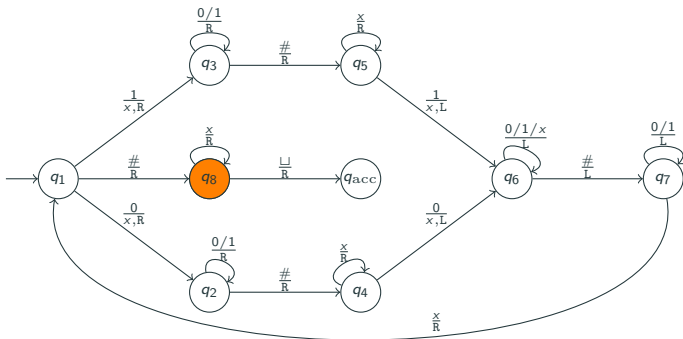
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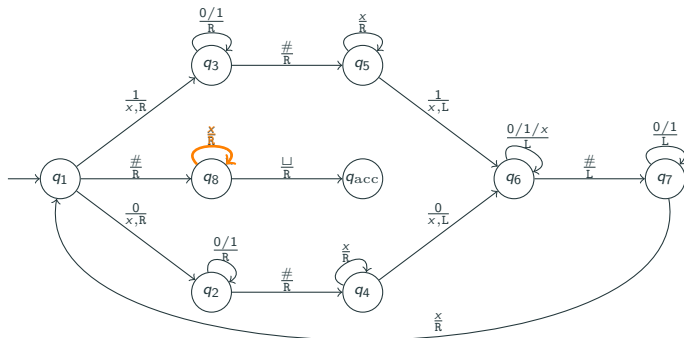
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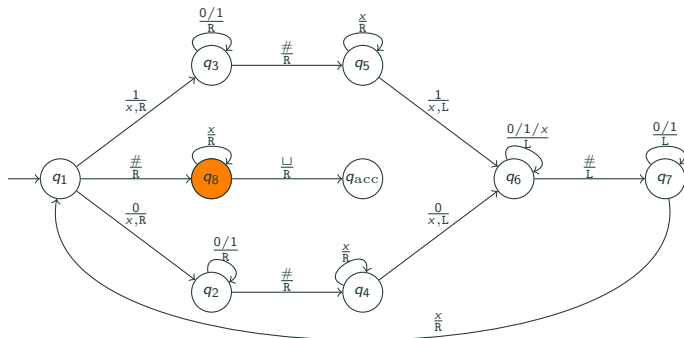
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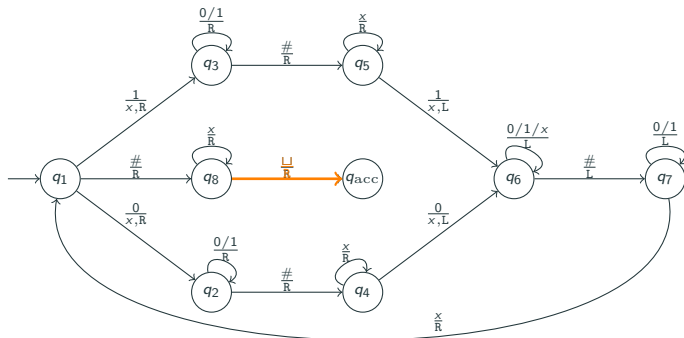
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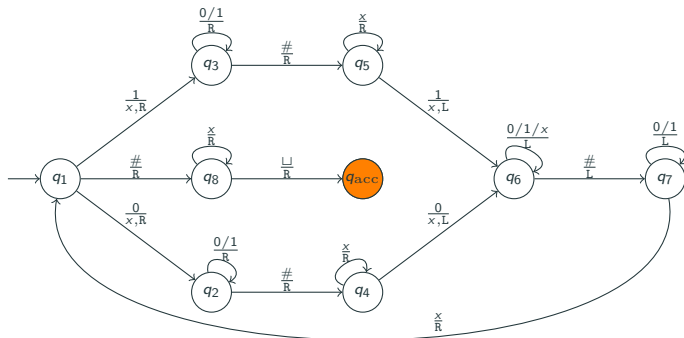
An example of a Turing machine on input 01101#01101



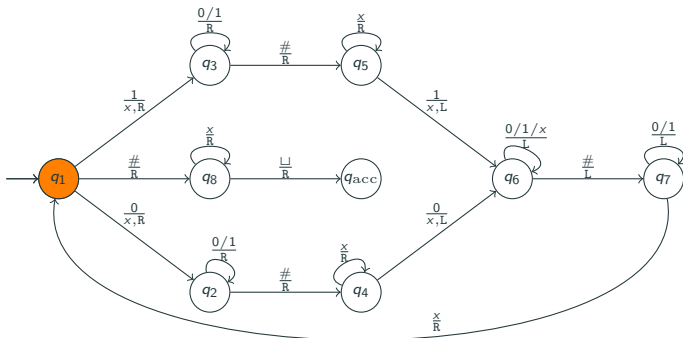
An example of a Turing machine on input 01101#01101



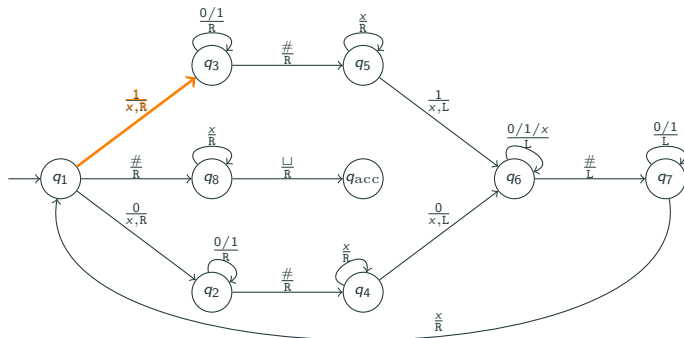
An example of a Turing machine on input 01101#01101



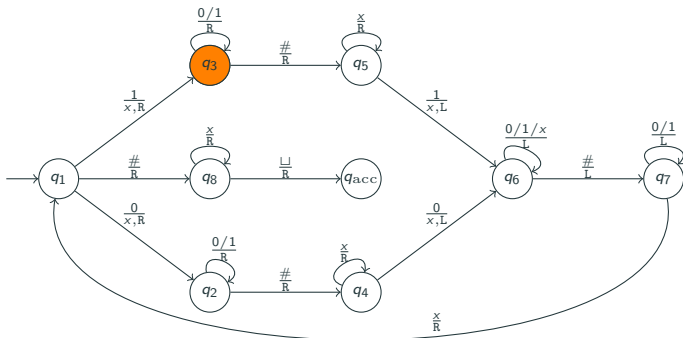
An example of a Turing machine on input 10#00



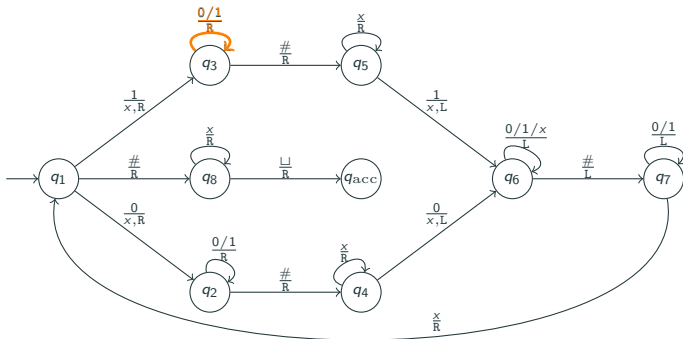
An example of a Turing machine on input 10#00



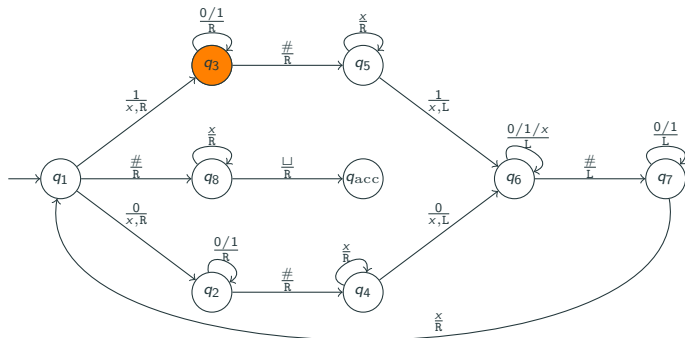
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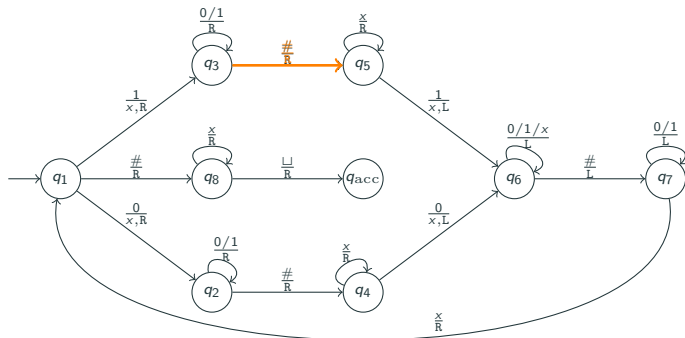
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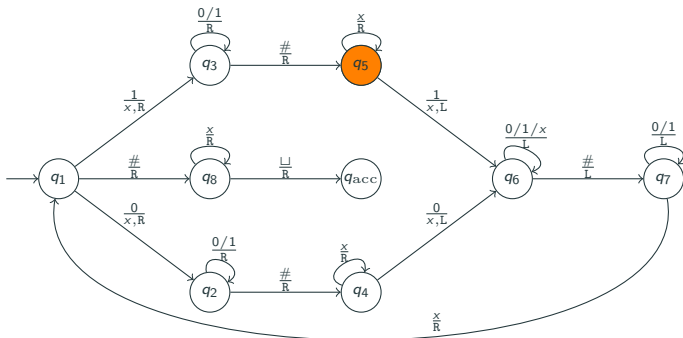
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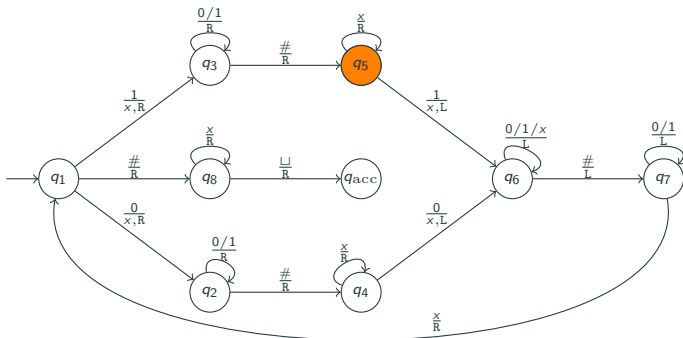
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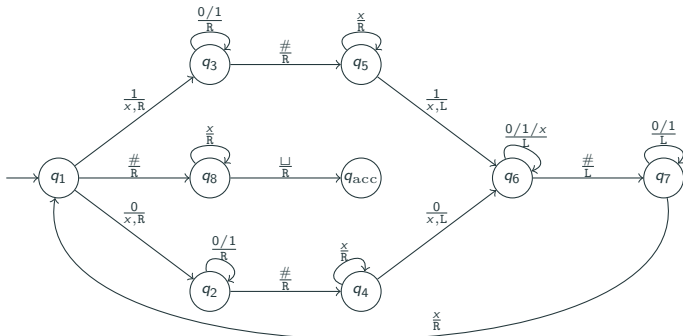


An example of a Turing machine on input 10#00



From state q_5 , it enters q_{rej} .

An example of a Turing machine



This TM accepts the input word iff it is of the form: $w \# w$ where $w \in \{0, 1\}^*$.

The algorithmic meaning of the TM

It works as follows:



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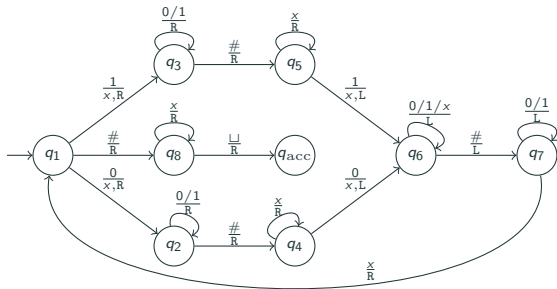
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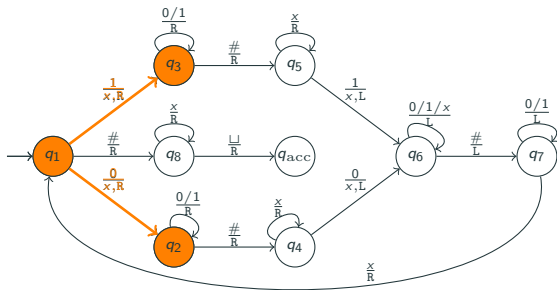
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Comparison between the Turing machine and the algorithm, part 1



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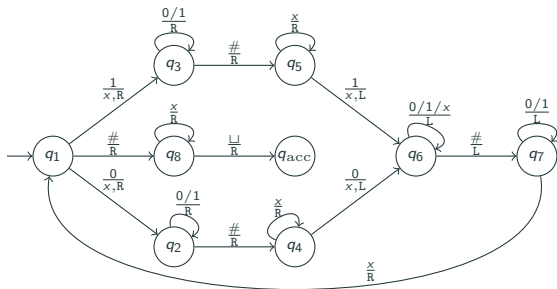


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It goes to q_2 to “remember” that the symbol is 0.

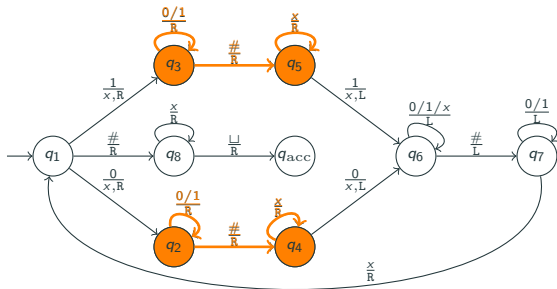
It goes to q_3 to “remember” that the symbol is 1.

Comparison between the Turing machine and the algorithm, part 2



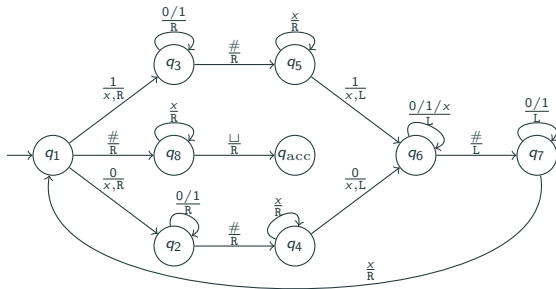
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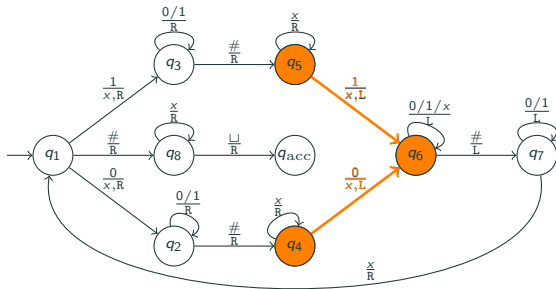
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Comparison between the Turing machine and the algorithm, part 3



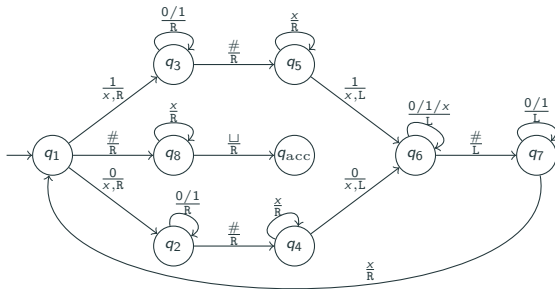
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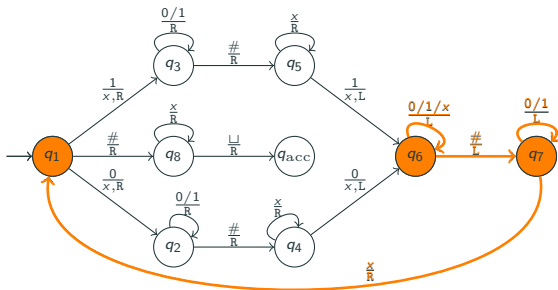
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Comparison between the Turing machine and the algorithm, part 4



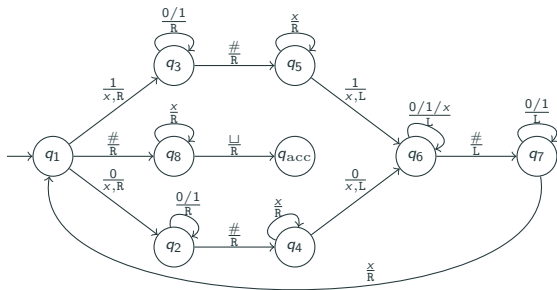
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Comparison between the Turing machine and the algorithm, part 4



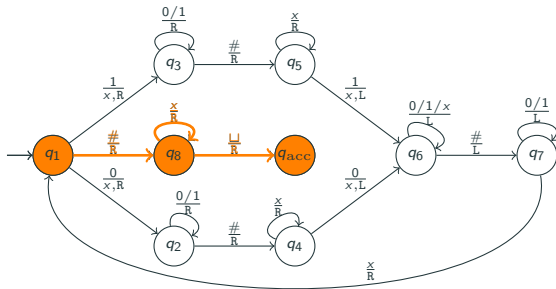
- Repeat until there is no more “unmarked” symbol on both sides.

Comparison between the Turing machine and the algorithm, part 5



- When there is no “unmarked” symbol on both sides, **accept**.

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To conclude:

Universally accepted convention

When we want to describe a Turing machine for a certain problem, it is sufficient to describe an algorithm in some “reasonable” format/pseudo-code.

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Usually we only use the formal definition of Turing machine to prove “negative” results, i.e., to prove that certain problems do not have algorithms.

We will see more about this in Lesson 6.

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Church-Turing thesis

Every “algorithm” is equivalent to a Turing machine.

Table of contents

1. Definitions and examples

2. Decidable and recognizable languages

The notion of “configuration” of a TM $\mathcal{M} = \langle \Sigma, \Gamma, Q, q_0, q_{\text{acc}}, q_{\text{rej}}, \delta \rangle$

(Def.) A **configuration** of \mathcal{M} is a string C over $Q \cup \Gamma$ which contains *exactly one symbol* from Q , i.e., a string of the form:

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(Note) We use the symbol p to indicate the state of the TM and the position of the head.

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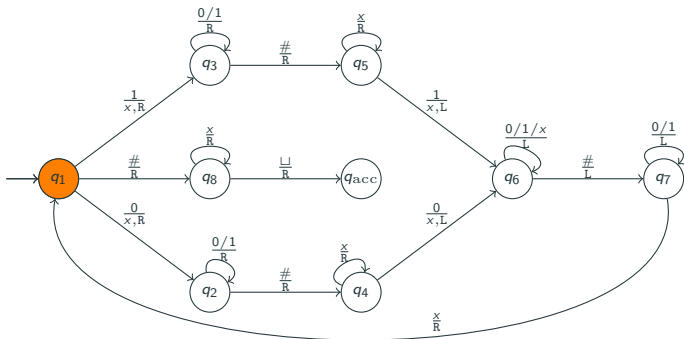
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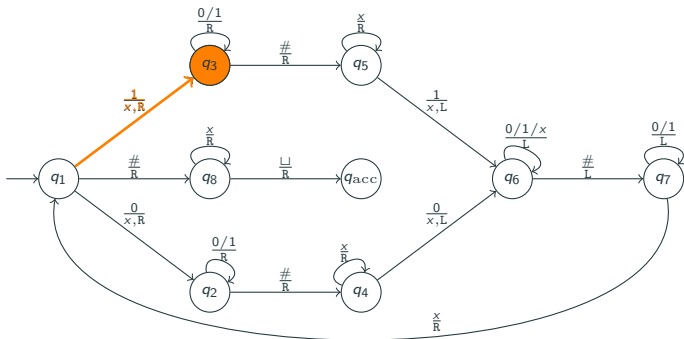
Example: The run of our TM on input 10#00



The run of \mathcal{M} on 10#00:

$\langle q_1 10\#00$

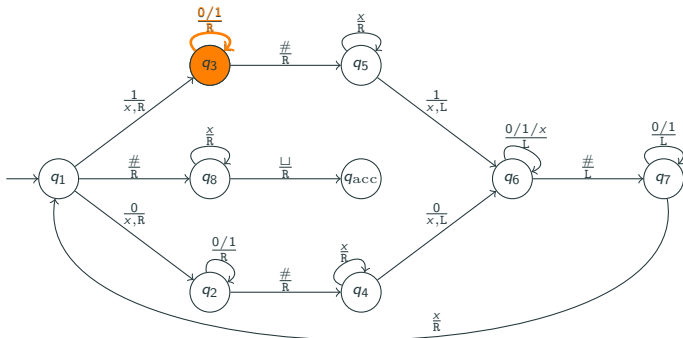
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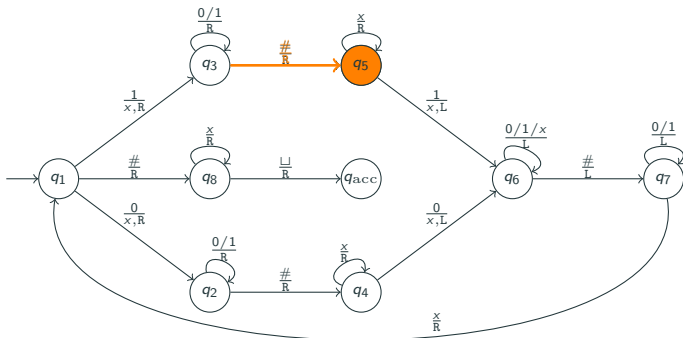
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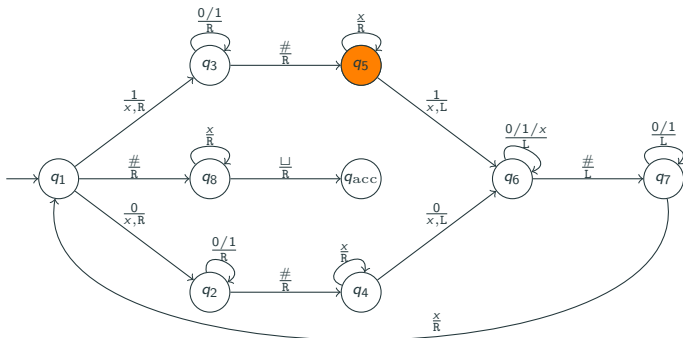
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The notion of acceptance and rejection by a Turing machine

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Recognizable languages

(Def.) We say that \mathcal{M} recognizes a language L , if for every input word w :

- if $w \in L$, then \mathcal{M} accepts w ,
- if $w \notin L$, then \mathcal{M} does not accept w .

Note that “ \mathcal{M} does not accept w ” have two meanings: either \mathcal{M} rejects w , or \mathcal{M} does not halt on w .

Recognizable languages

(Def.) We say that \mathcal{M} *recognizes a language* L , if for every input word w :

- if $w \in L$, then \mathcal{M} **accepts** w ,
- if $w \notin L$, then \mathcal{M} **does not accept** w .

Note that “ \mathcal{M} does not accept w ” have two meanings: either \mathcal{M} **rejects** w , or \mathcal{M} **does not halt** on w .

(Def.) A language L is *recognizable/recursively enumerable (r.e.)*, if there is a TM \mathcal{M} that recognizes L .

Decidable languages

(Def.) We say that \mathcal{M} *decides* a language L , if for every input word w :

- if $w \in L$, then \mathcal{M} **accepts** w ,
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Note that this implies \mathcal{M} **halts** on every word $w \in \Sigma^*$.

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(Def.) A language L is *decidable/recursive*, if there is a TM \mathcal{M} that decides L .

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(Remark) Every decidable language is a recognizable language, but there is a recognizable language that is not decidable. (We will see this language in the next few weeks.)

End of Lesson 5