Finite automata are a very restricted model (mostly because of their finite memory). We are interested in a computational model that is more similar to modern computers.\footnote{Note however that historically Turing machine was prior to the computers. In some sense it was a theoretical foundation of computers.}

Idea: add infinite memory to a finite automaton. The memory is implemented as infinite tape.

This computational model is called Turing machine. Turing machine:

- writes and reads information to/from the tape;
- the read&write head can move both to the left and to the right;
- the tape is (one-side) infinite;
- the machine has a state that is not a part of the tape;
- there are special states “accept” and “reject”. Once the machine enters one of these states, it accepts or rejects, respectively.
Definition. Turing machine is a 7-tuple \((Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_0, q_{acc}, q_{rej})\), where

- \(Q\) is a finite set of states;
- \(\Sigma\) is finite input alphabet, blank symbol \(\_\) \(\in\) \(\Sigma\);
- \(\Gamma \supseteq \Sigma\) is finite tape alphabet, blank symbol \(\_\) \(\in\) \(\Gamma\);
- \(\delta: Q \times \Gamma \rightarrow Q \times \Gamma \times \{L, R\}\) is the transition function;
- \(q_0 \in Q\) is start state;
- \(q_{acc} \in Q\) is accept state;
- \(q_{rej} \in Q\) is reject state, \(q_{rej} \neq q_{acc}\).

Notes:

- Blank symbol \(\_\) denotes the end of the input on the tape.
- Turing machine operates as follows. If it is in the state \(q_i\), head is over the symbol \(c \in \Gamma\) on the tape (whatever coordinate of this position on the tape is) and \(\delta(q, c) = (q_j, d, \text{dir})\), then the machine writes \(d \in \Gamma\) into cell under the head, moves according to \(\text{dir}\) (i.e. one cell to the left or to the right) and changes its state to \(q_j\).
- If the machine tries to move its head to the left of the left-most cell, the head stays at the same place.

Initial configuration of the Turing machine:

- head is in the left-most position;
- machine is in the state \(q_0\);
- blank symbols fill the tape from the end of input and until infinity.

At every moment configuration of the machine could be described as (current state \(q\), tape contents, head location). We denote this as \(uqv\), where \(q\) is current state, \(u\) is a string written on the tape to the left from current position and \(v\) is a string written on the tape from current position to the end of the contents of the tape. For instance, the configuration
is denoted as $u_1u_2 \ldots u_mq_1v_1v_2 \ldots v_n$. 

We say that configuration $C_1$ yields configuration $C_2$ if the Turing machine can legally move from $C_1$ to $C_2$ in one step.

Formally, for leftward move $uaq_i bv$ yields $uq_j acv$ if and only if 

$$\delta(q_i, b) = (q_j, c, L);$$

and for rightward move $uaq_i bv$ yields $uacq_j v$ if and only if 

$$\delta(q_i, b) = (q_j, c, R).$$

Accept configuration: the state is $q_{\text{acc}}$.

Reject configuration: the state is $q_{\text{rej}}$.

Accept and reject configurations are halting configurations, i.e. after them Turing machine stops execution.

**Definition.** The set of strings that the Turing machine $M$ accepts is the language of $M$, or the language recognised by $M$. A language is Turing-recognisable if there is a Turing machine that recognises this language.

**Note.** It is important to highlight that if TM $M$ recognises a language $L$ then for any string $w \notin L$, $M$ either rejects input $w$ or $M$ never halts on input $w$. In other words, $M$ never “lies”: it either says a correct statement about input (“$w \in L$” or “$w \notin L$”) or gives no answer.

Contrary to finite automata, Turing machine can potentially never stop, i.e. not reach halting state in finite time. This is reflected in the following definition.

**Definition.** Turing machine decides the language if it always arrives to either $q_{\text{acc}}$ or $q_{\text{rej}}$ and it recognises that language. The language is Turing-decidable if there is a Turing machine that decides the language.

In other words, Turing machine $M$ decides language $L$ if and only if on any finite input string $w$ the machine can tell in finite time if $w$ belongs to $L$ or not.

If $M$ decides language $L$ then $M$ also recognises it. The opposite is not always true.
Example 1. Let

\[ L = \{w\#w \mid w \in \Sigma^*, \Sigma = 0, 1\}. \]

Design Turing machine \( M \) that decides \( L \).

On input string \( s \) the machine \( M \) does the following.

1. Move across the tape to corresponding cells on either side of the \# symbol to check if these cells contain the same symbol. If they do not, or if no \# symbol is found, reject. Mark all the symbols that were checked to keep track of the corresponding symbols.

2. When all the cells to the left from \# were marked, check for any remaining unmarked cells to the right from \#. If any unmarked cells remain, reject. Otherwise accept.

Let us see how the machine works on input 0110\#0110.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
0 & 1 & 1 & 0 & \# & 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 & \ldots \\
\times & 1 & 1 & 0 & \# & 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 & \ldots \\
\times & 1 & 1 & 0 & \# & \times & 1 & 1 & 0 & \ldots \\
\times \times & 1 & 0 & \# & \times & 1 & 1 & 0 & \ldots \\
\times \times & 1 & 0 & \# & \times & \times & 1 & 0 & \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times & \# & \times \times \times & 0 & \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times & \# & \times \times \times \times & \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times & \# & \times \times \times \times & \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times & \# & \times \times \times \times & \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times & \# & \times \times \times \times & \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times \times \times \times \times \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times \times \times \times \times \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times \times \times \times \times \ldots \\
\times \times \times \times \times \times \times \times \ldots \\
\end{array}
\]

accepts

We can describe Turing machines in complete details by giving \( \delta \)-functions for all possible configurations. See the state diagram:
Here $\Sigma = \{0, 1\}$, $\Gamma = \{0, 1, \times, \_\}$. The machine moves to $q_{rej}$ if there is no input consistent with the diagram.