RECURSION
Final exam

• Exam dates:
  January 6 at 12:15
  January 20 at 12:15

• Retake:
  January 27 at 12:15

• Quiz on the last part of the course (5 p)
• Task on the elements of programming (10 p)
• Programming task on recursion (5 p)
• Programming task on all aspects of the course (10 p)

There will be a sample exam in Moodle.
Recursive function

• A function that calls itself in its body is called recursive.
• In order for the sequence of calls to end, the function should contain branching according to the values of the arguments.
• The branch that doesn't contain recursive call is the base case.
• The branch that contains recursive call is the recursive step.
Examples of recursive functions

• Factorials
  
  ```python
def fact(n):
    if n == 0:
      return 1
    else:
      return n * fact(n - 1)
  ```

• Fibonacci numbers
  
  ```python
def fib(n):
    if n == 0:
      return 0
    elif n == 1:
      return 1
    else:
      return fib(n - 1) + fib(n - 2)
  ```
Using recursion

Always make sure that the recursion bottoms out.
• A recursive function must contain at least one base case.
• Sequence of recursive calls must eventually lead to the base case.
• Be careful not to create an infinite chain of function calls.

**Missing base case:**
```python
def fact(n):
    return n * fact(n - 1)
```

**Doesn't lead to the base case:**
```python
def fact(n):
    if n <= 1:
        return 1
    else:
        return n * fact(n + 1)
```
Recursive and non-recursive functions

Recursive solution can lead to very short and elegant code. Compare the iterative solution with the recursive solution:

**Iterative solution**

```python
def fact(n):
    prod = 1
    while n > 1:
        prod *= n
        n -= 1
    return prod
```

**Recursive solution**

```python
def fact(n):
    if n <= 1:
        return n
    else:
        return n * fact(n - 1)
```
Recursive and non-recursive functions

But sometimes the recursive solution can be very slow.

**Iterative solution**

```python
def fib(n):
    if n <= 1:
        return n
    else:
        a, b = 1
        for i in range(2, n):
            a, b = b, a + b
        return b
```

**Recursive solution**

```python
def fib(n):
    if n <= 1:
        return n
    else:
        return fib(n - 1) + fib(n - 2)
```
Summary

• Recursion is a way to decompose a task into smaller subtasks.
• Recursive step solves a smaller copy of the same task
• Base case of recursion corresponds to the trivial version of the task that can be solved directly.