

What is a bit?

CS143: lecture 13

Byron Zhong, July 17

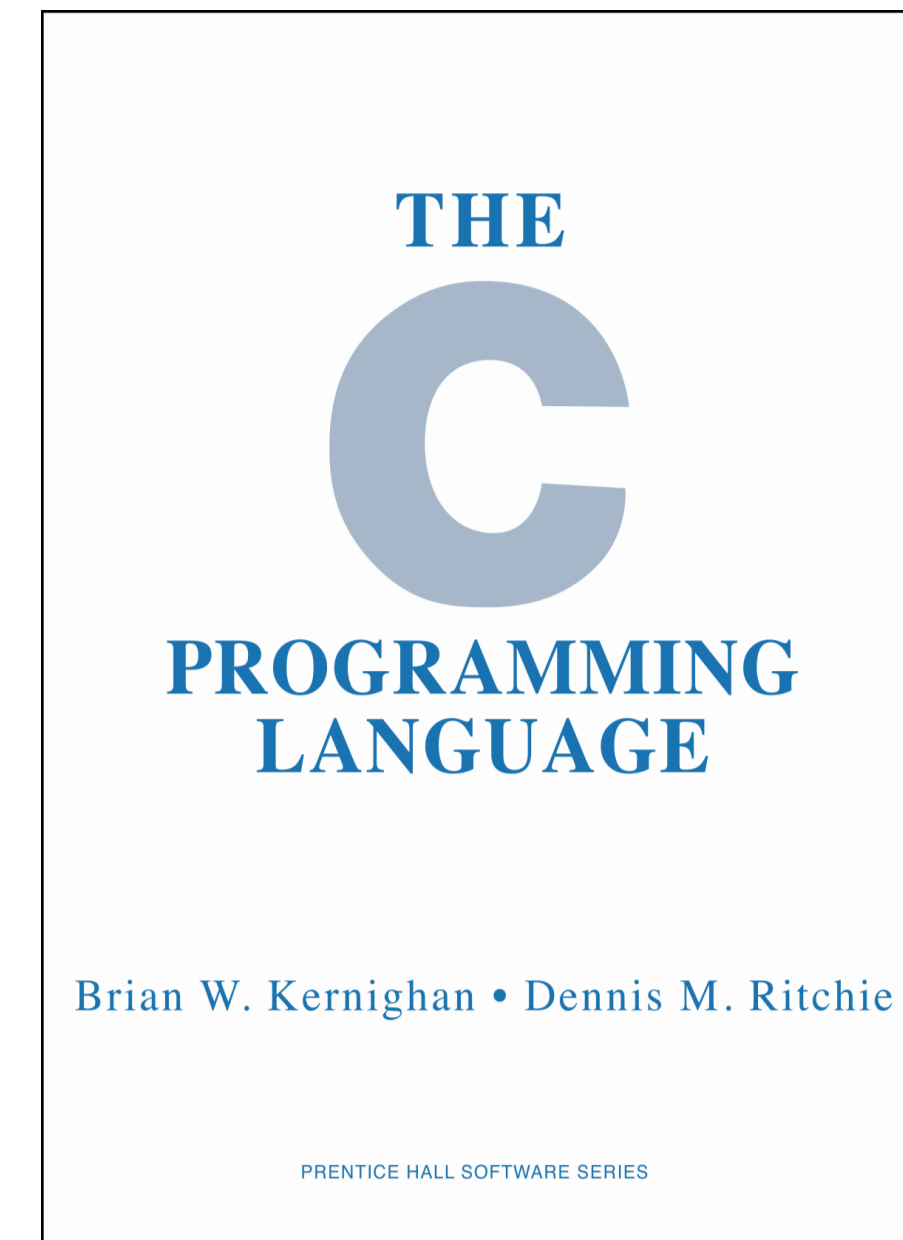
Information

Which one contains more information?

The Joseph Regenstein Library



This book:



Information

How about...

Eckhart Library



The John Crerar Library



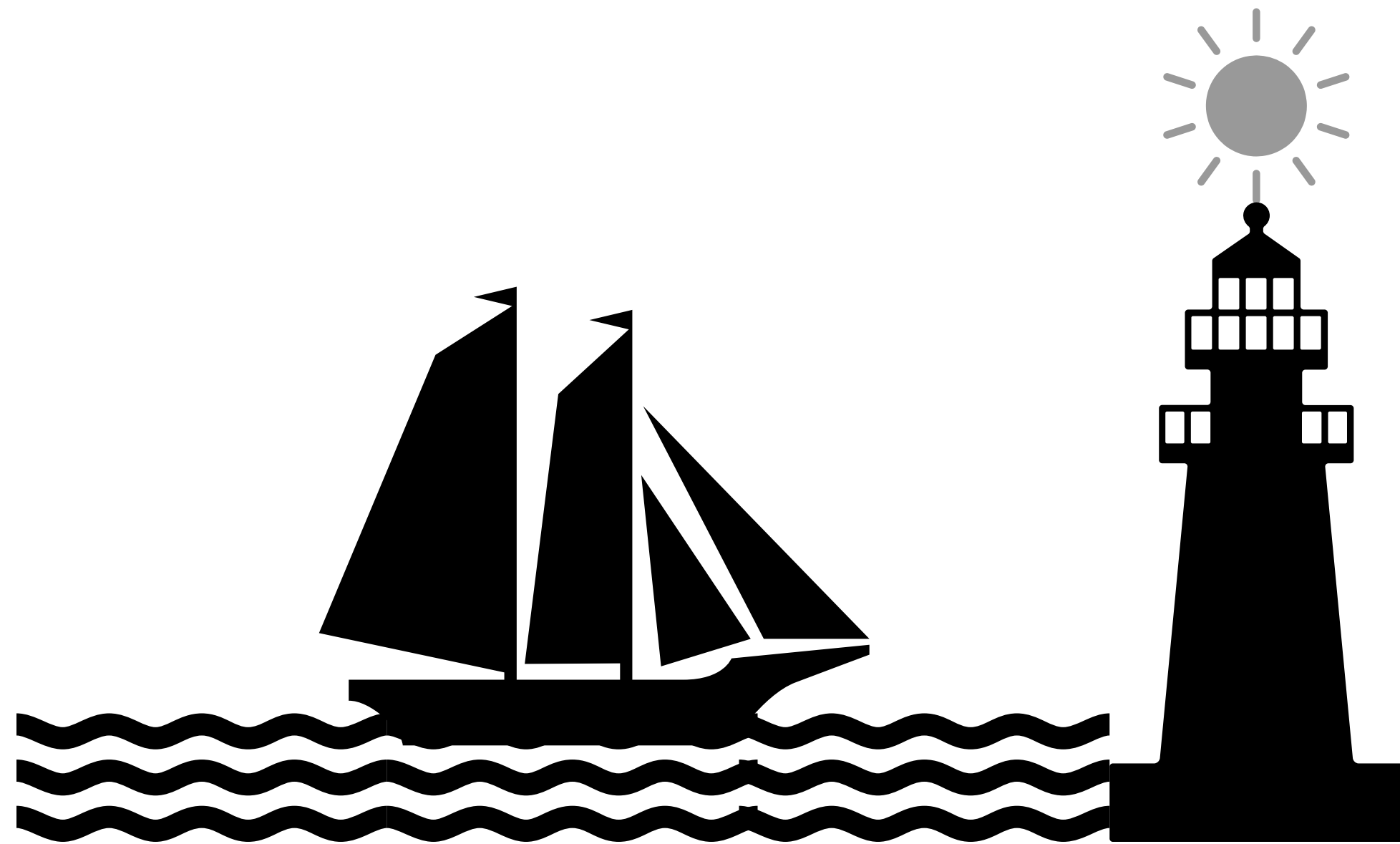
Information

- We can weigh objects
- We can determine the volume of solid objects or liquids
- We can measure the height of walls in this room

- Can we measure information?
- Can we distinguish more information from less?
- What is the unit of information?

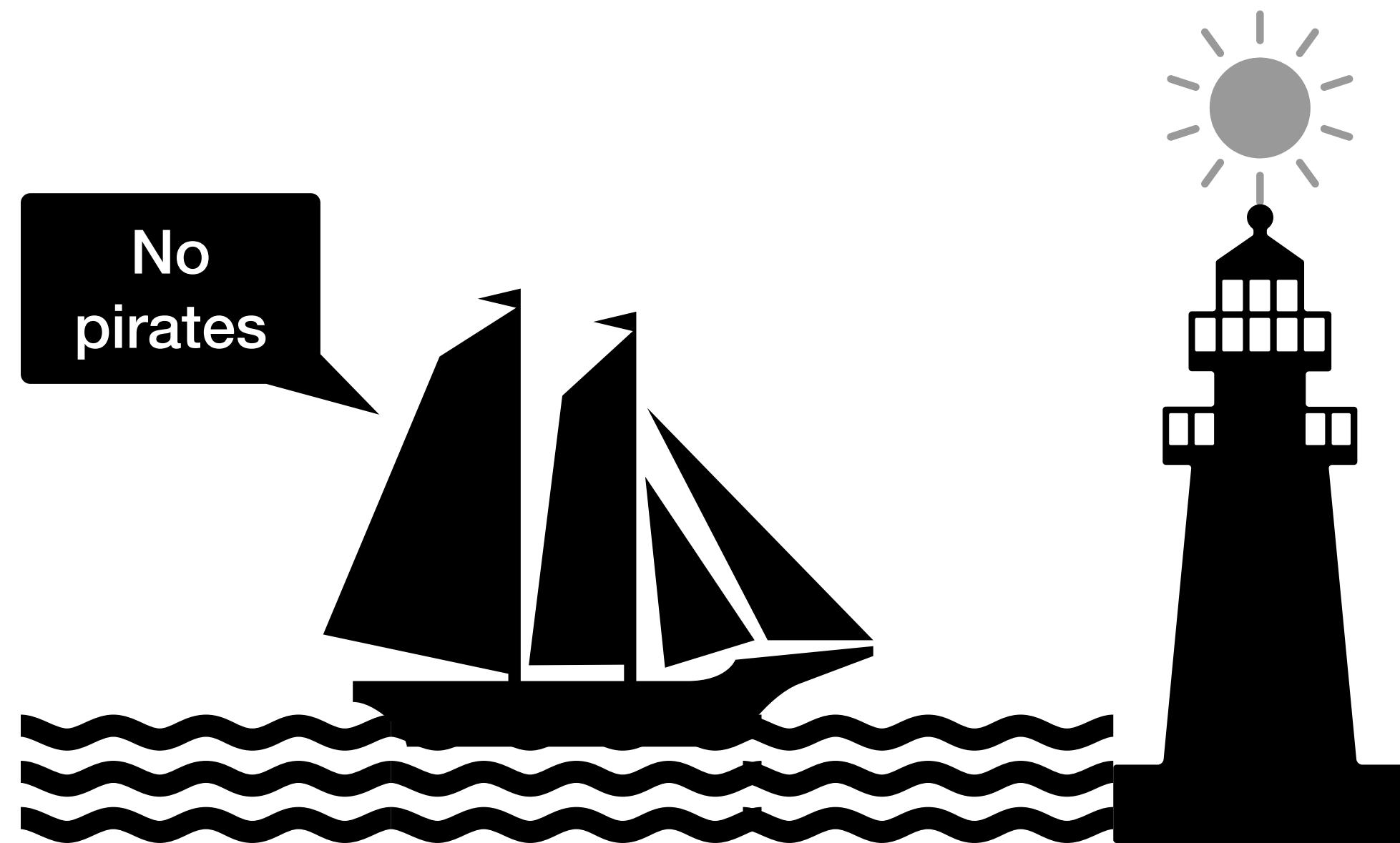
Information

- Example: a lighthouse operator and the captain wanted to communicate if there are pirates ahead. What is the shortest message the lighthouse can send?



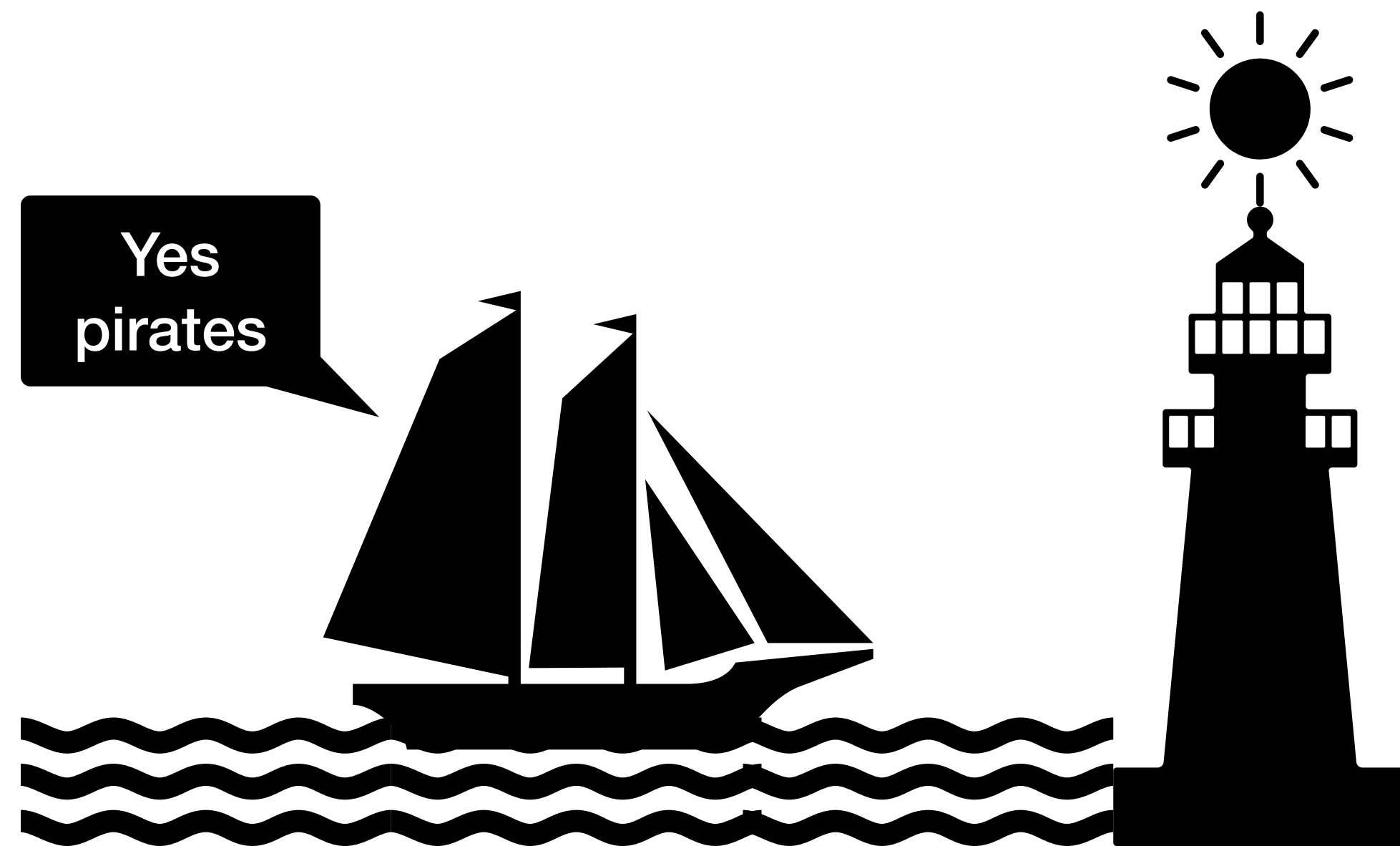
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- They agree ahead of time:
 - light off -> no pirates



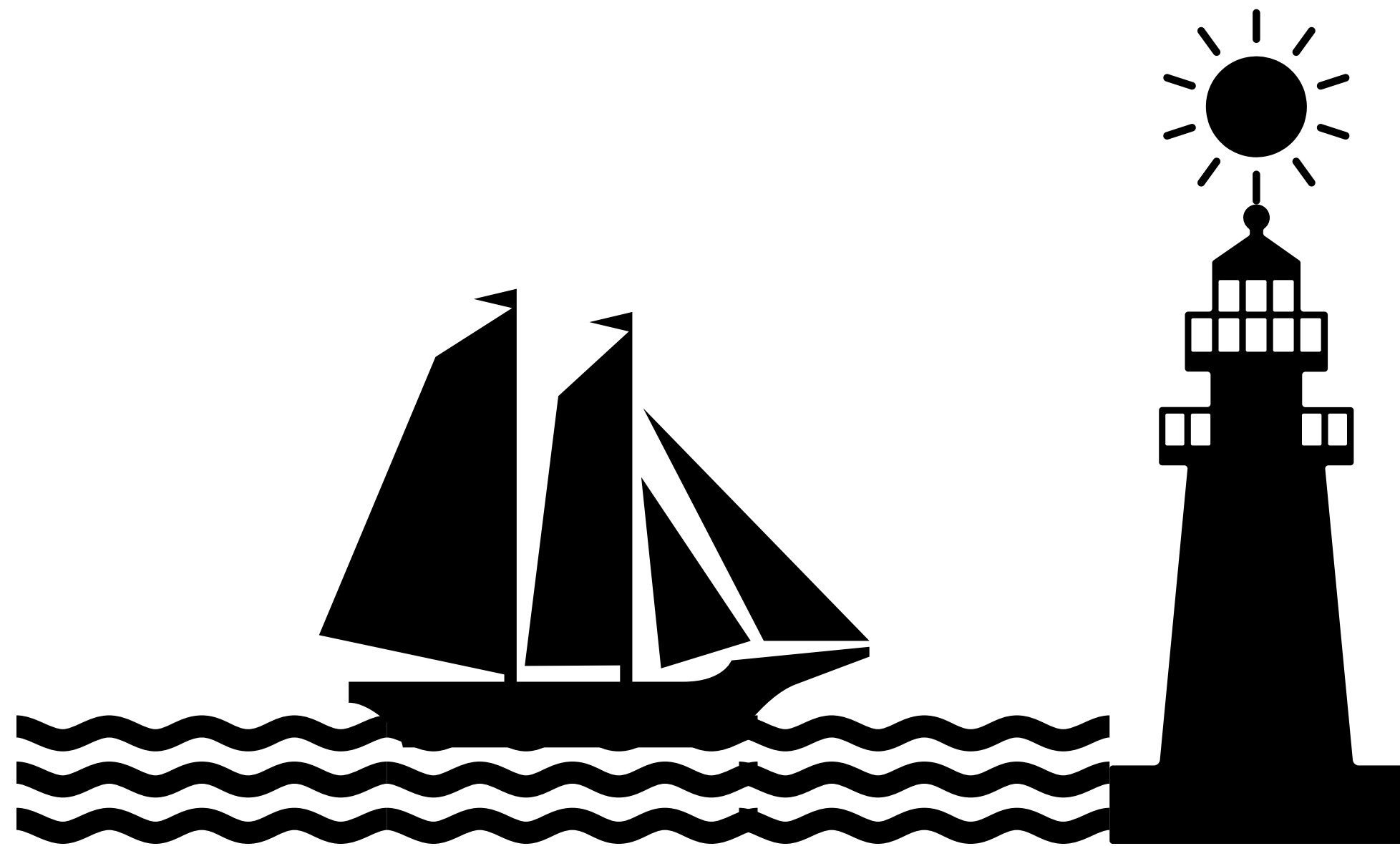
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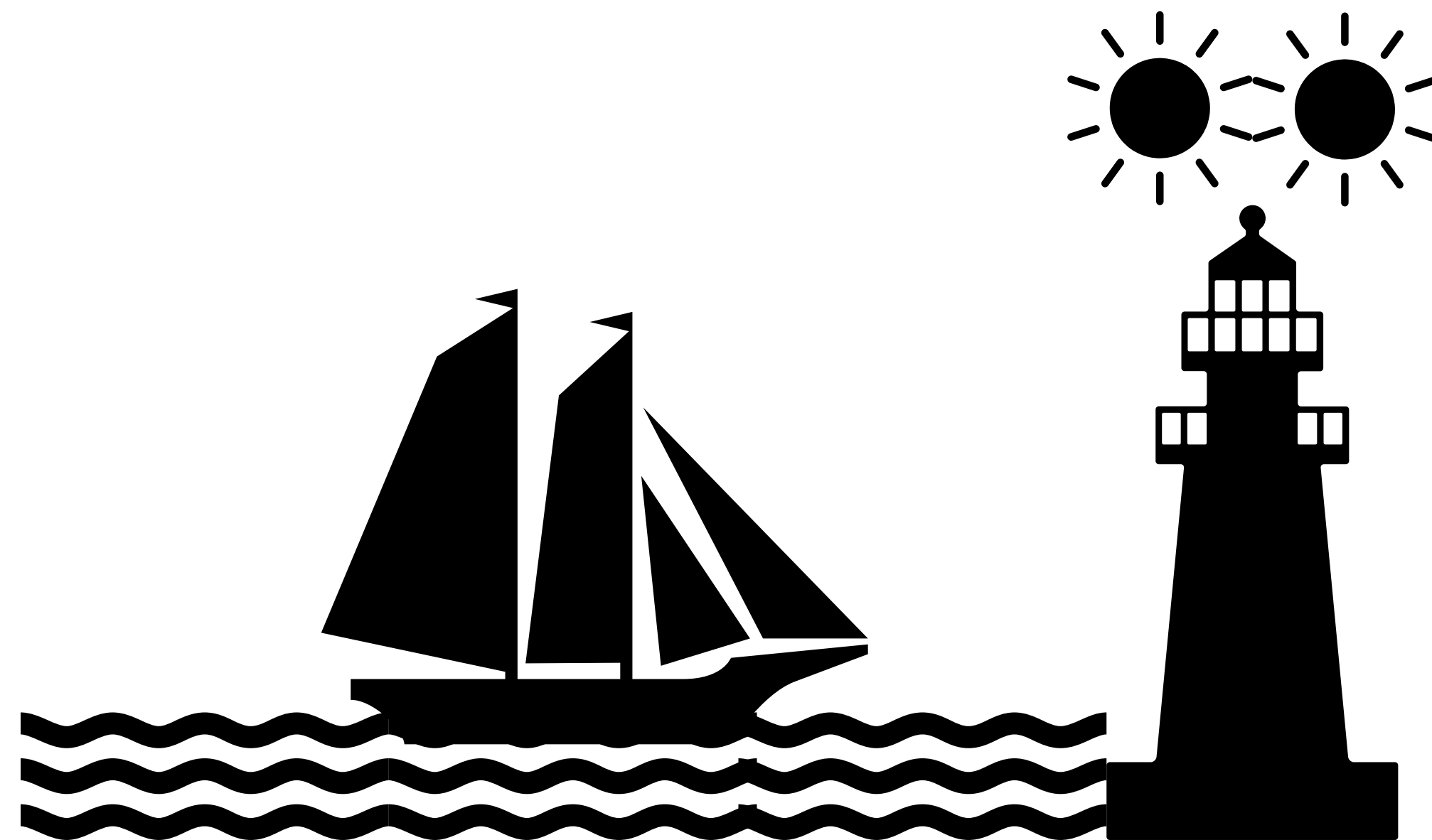
Information

- Example: a lighthouse operator and the captain wanted to communicate if there are pirates ahead *and if there is an iceberg.*



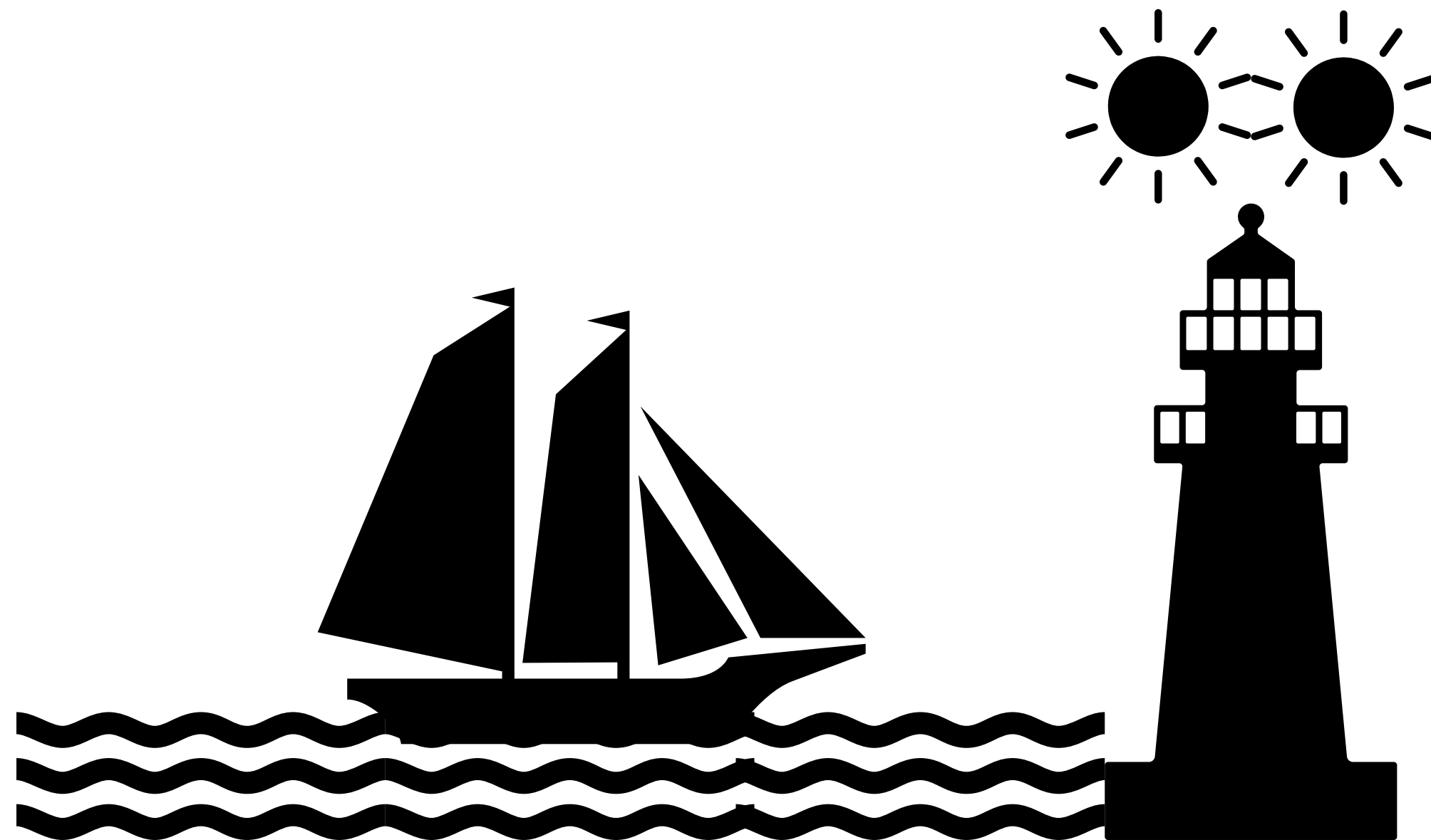
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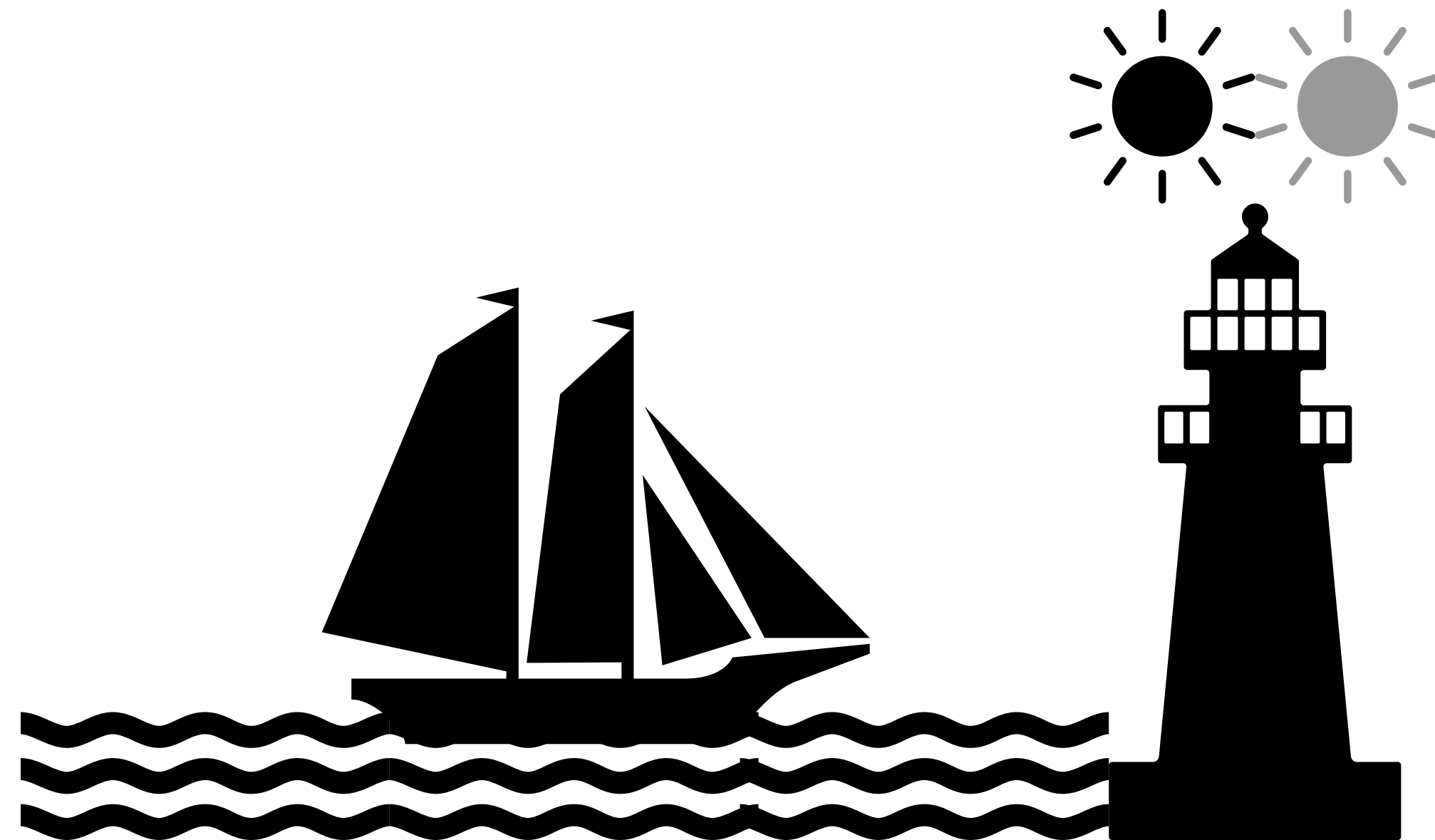
Information

- Example: a lighthouse operator and the captain wanted to communicate if there are pirates ahead *and if there is an iceberg.*
- Agree in advance:
 - On, On -> pirates and icebergs



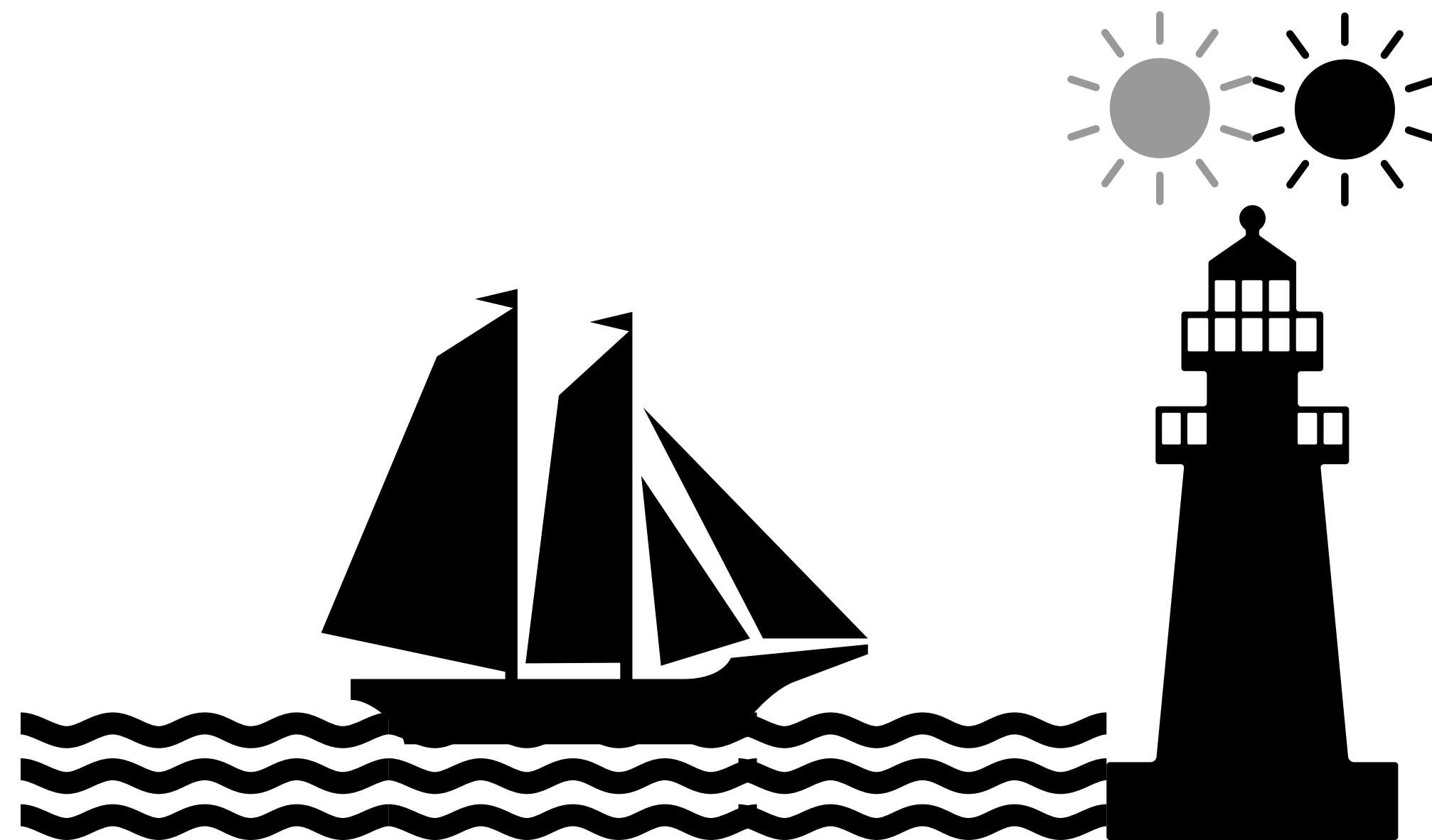
Information

- Example: a lighthouse operator and the captain wanted to communicate if there are pirates ahead *and if there is an iceberg*.
- Agree in advance:
 - On, On -> pirates and icebergs
 - On, Off -> only pirates



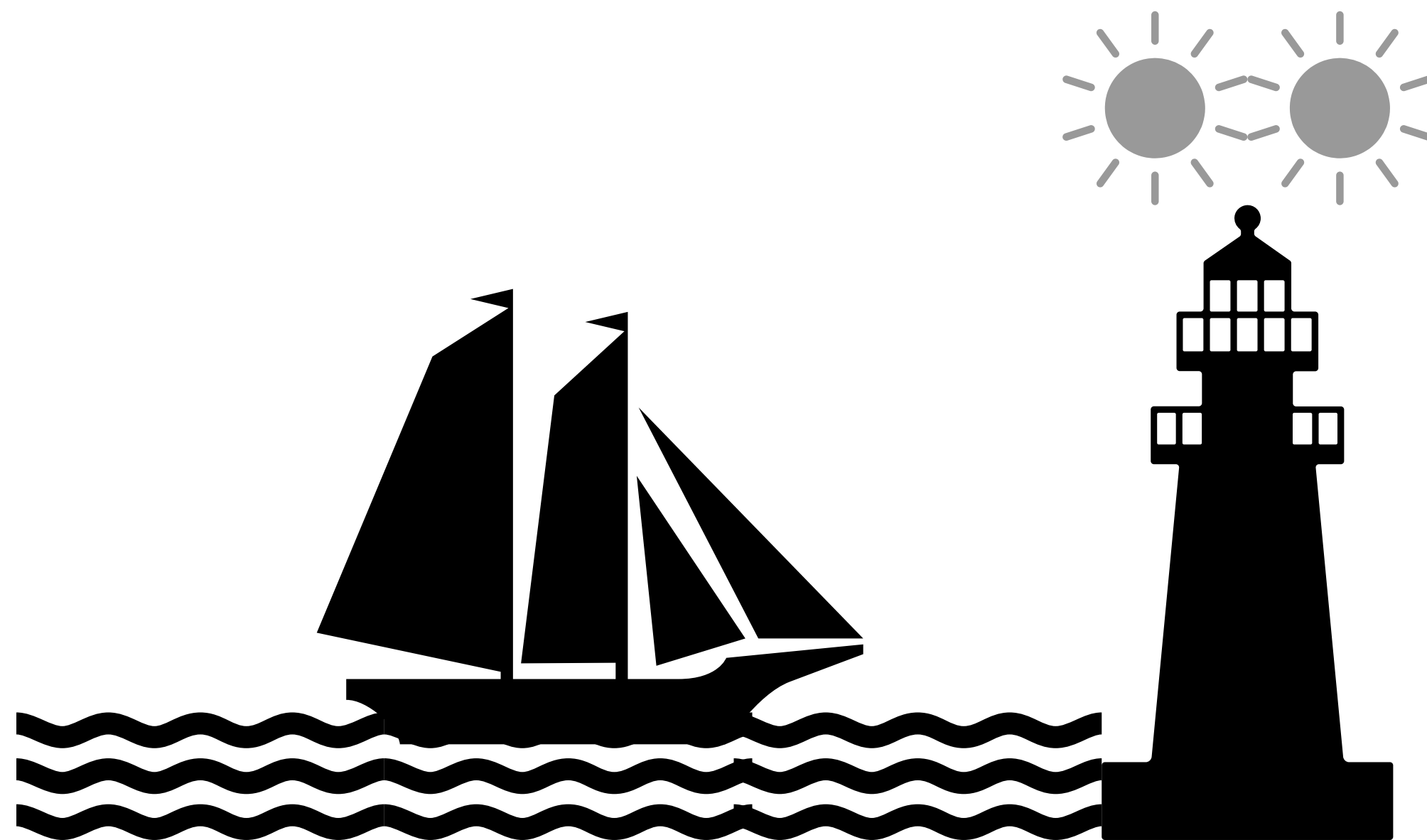
Information

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 - On, On -> pirates and icebergs
 - On, Off -> only pirates
 - Off, On -> only iceberg

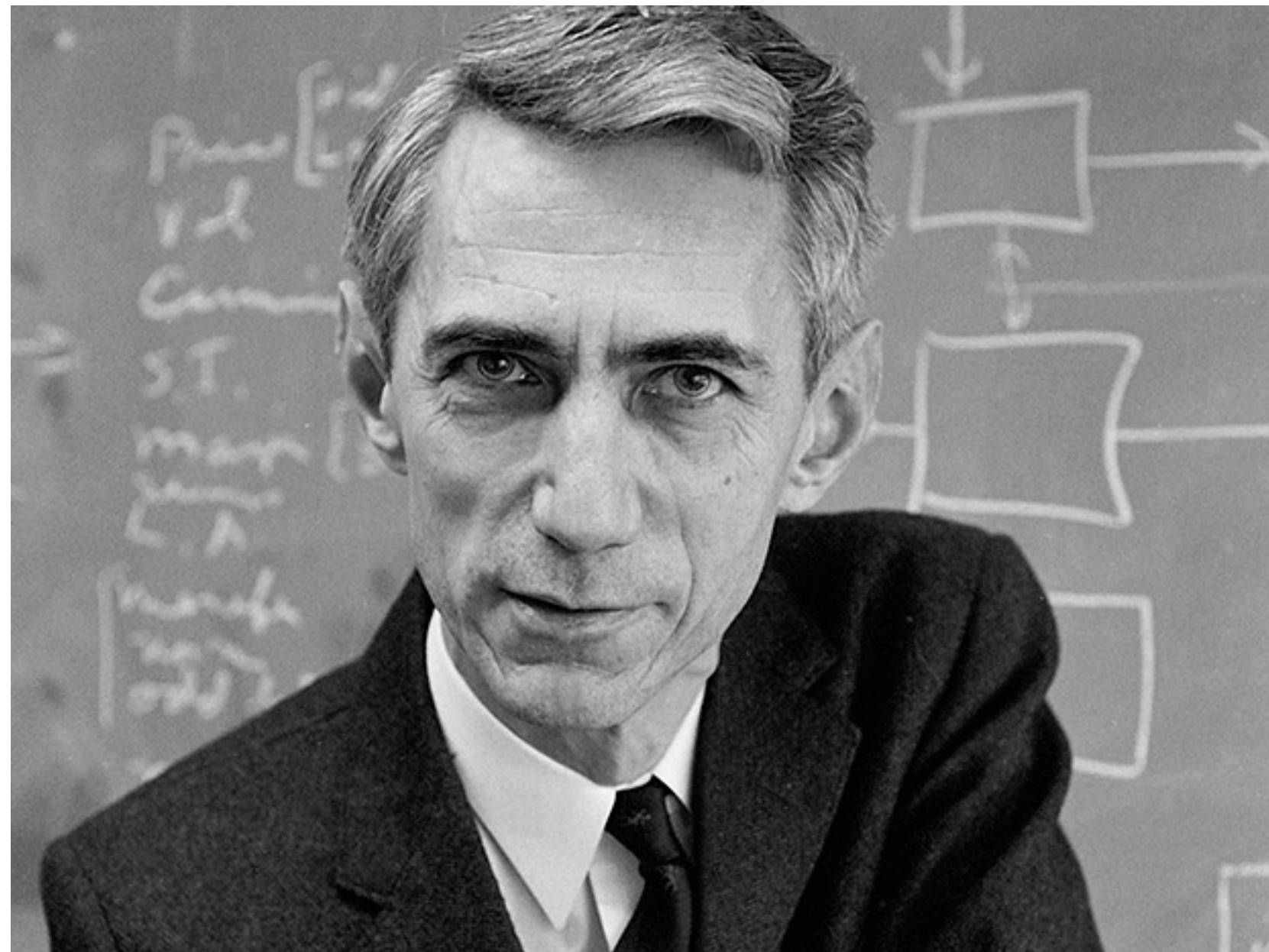


Information

- Example: a lighthouse operator and the captain wanted to communicate if there are pirates ahead *and if there is an iceberg*.
- Agree in advance:
 - On, On -> pirates and icebergs
 - On, Off -> only pirates
 - Off, On -> only iceberg
 - Off, Off -> neither



Information



- Claude Shannon (1916 - 2001):
- *A Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1948)

Information

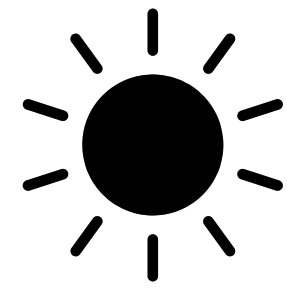
- Insight: whenever two parties communicate, each message is answering one or more **yes-or-no** questions.
- We call each answer *a bit*.
- Information can be measured in bits.
- This is quite profound: communication is choosing among possibilities!

Information

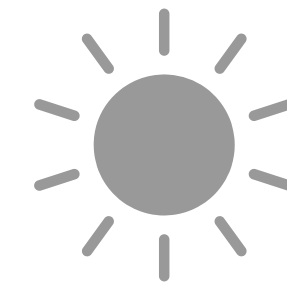
- Just saying "yes" or "no" isn't enough
 - We don't know what *questions* they answer
- We have to agree ahead of time what the choices are.
- The more choices we have to make, the more answers we'll have to communicate.

Information

Why "yes" or "no"?



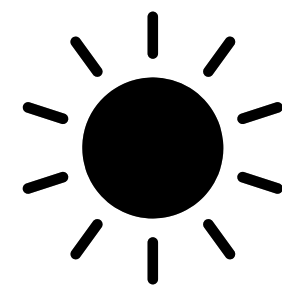
Yes



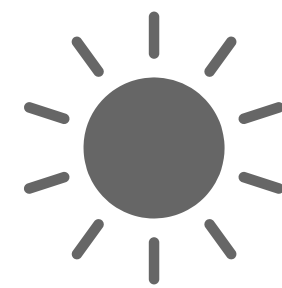
No

Information

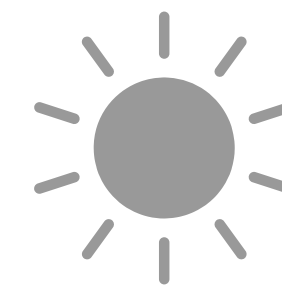
Why "yes" or "no"?



Yes



Maybe?

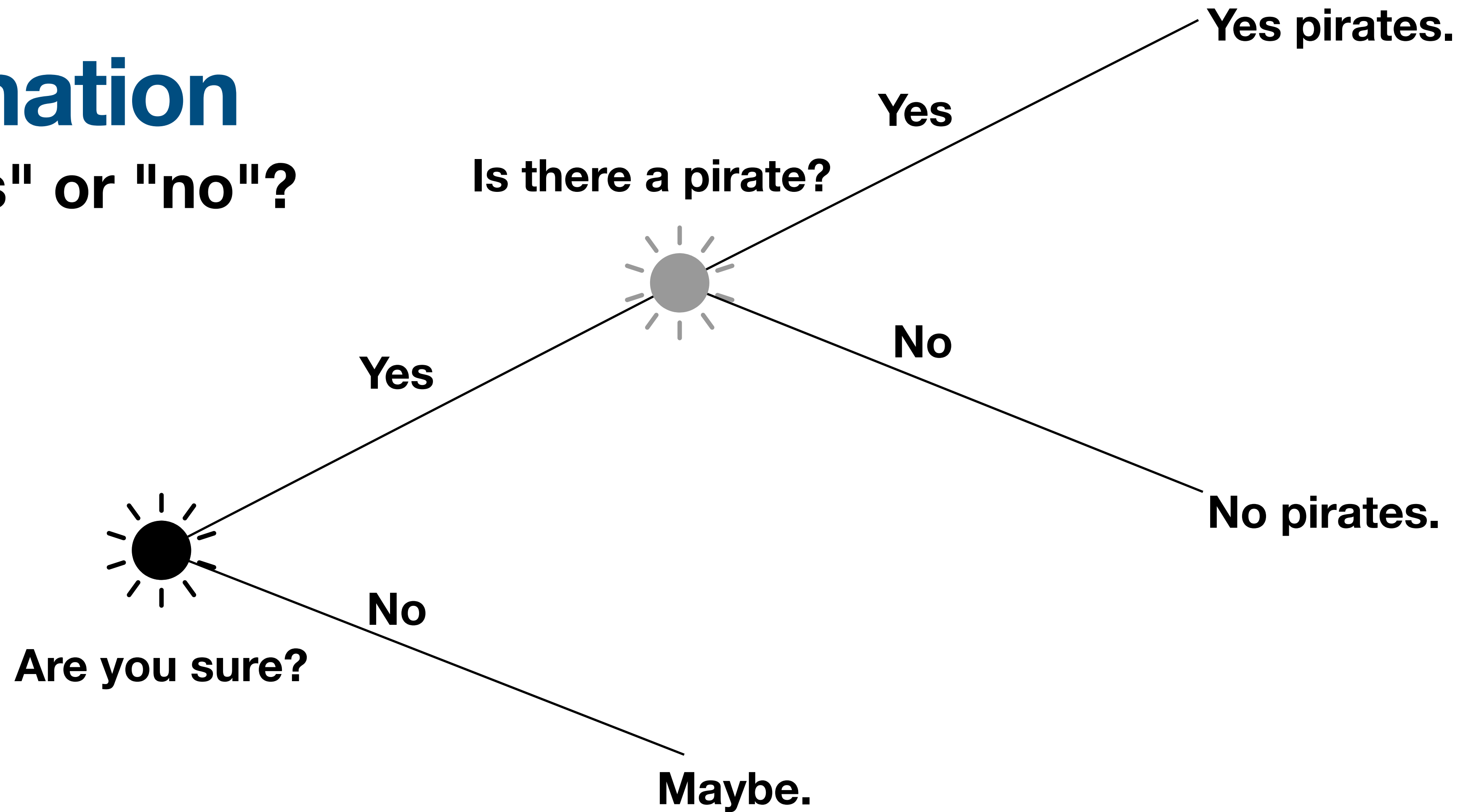


No

- CS answer: "yes" or "no" is the most reduced form.

Information

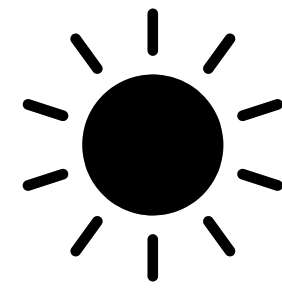
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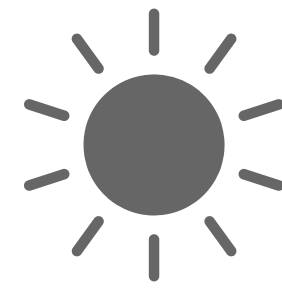
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Information

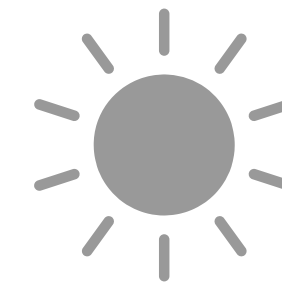
Why "yes" or "no"?



Yes



Maybe?

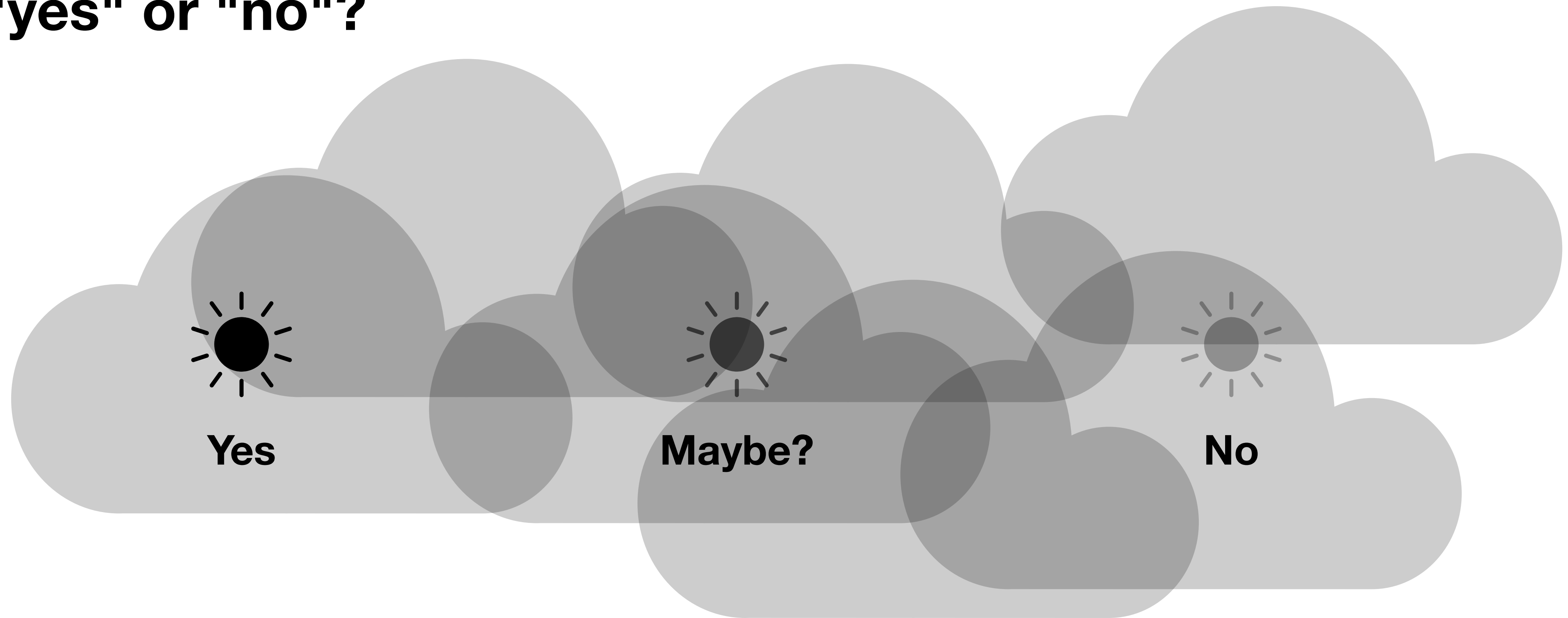


No

- EE answer: the two options can survive a lot of noise.

Information

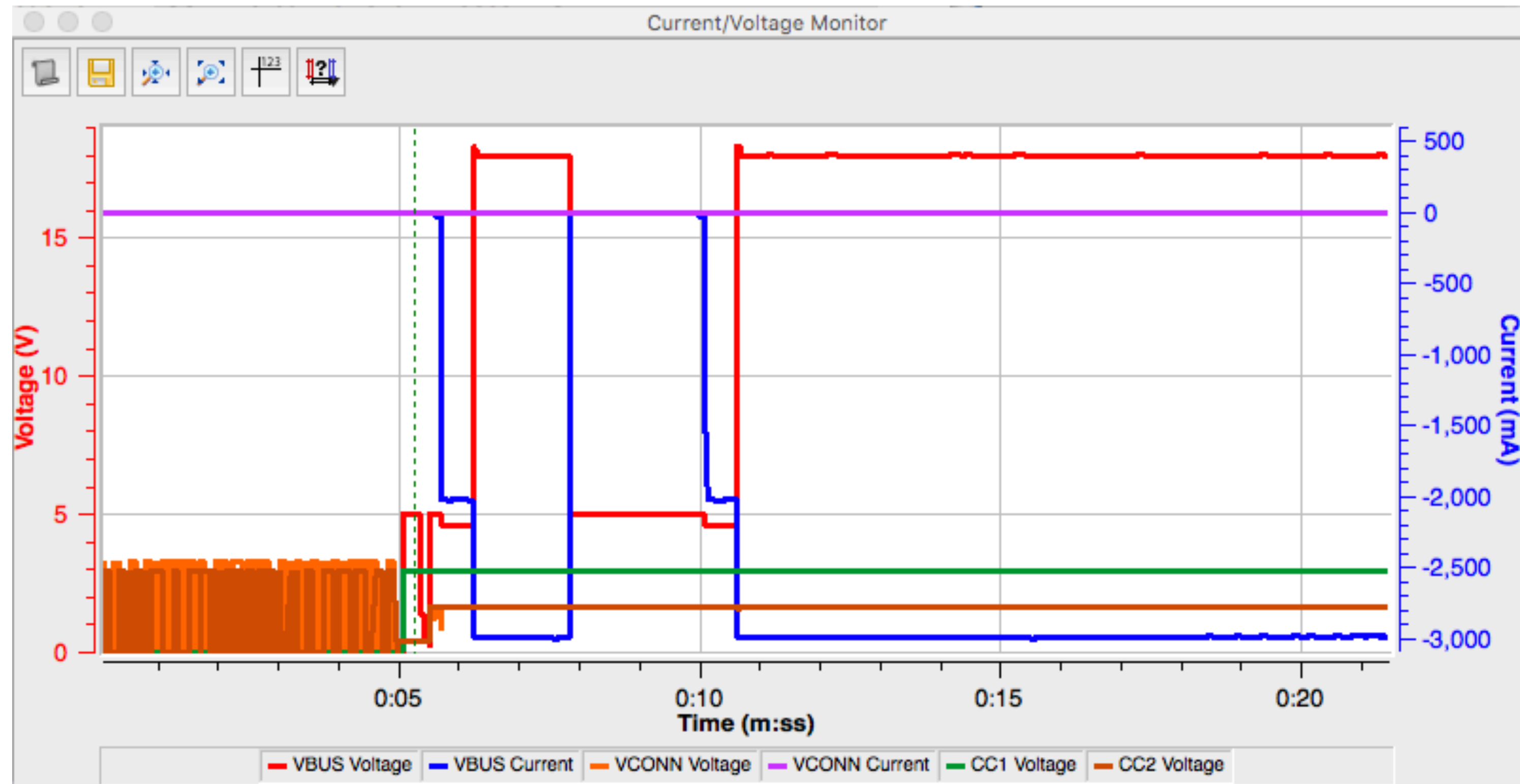
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Information

Why "yes" or "no"?

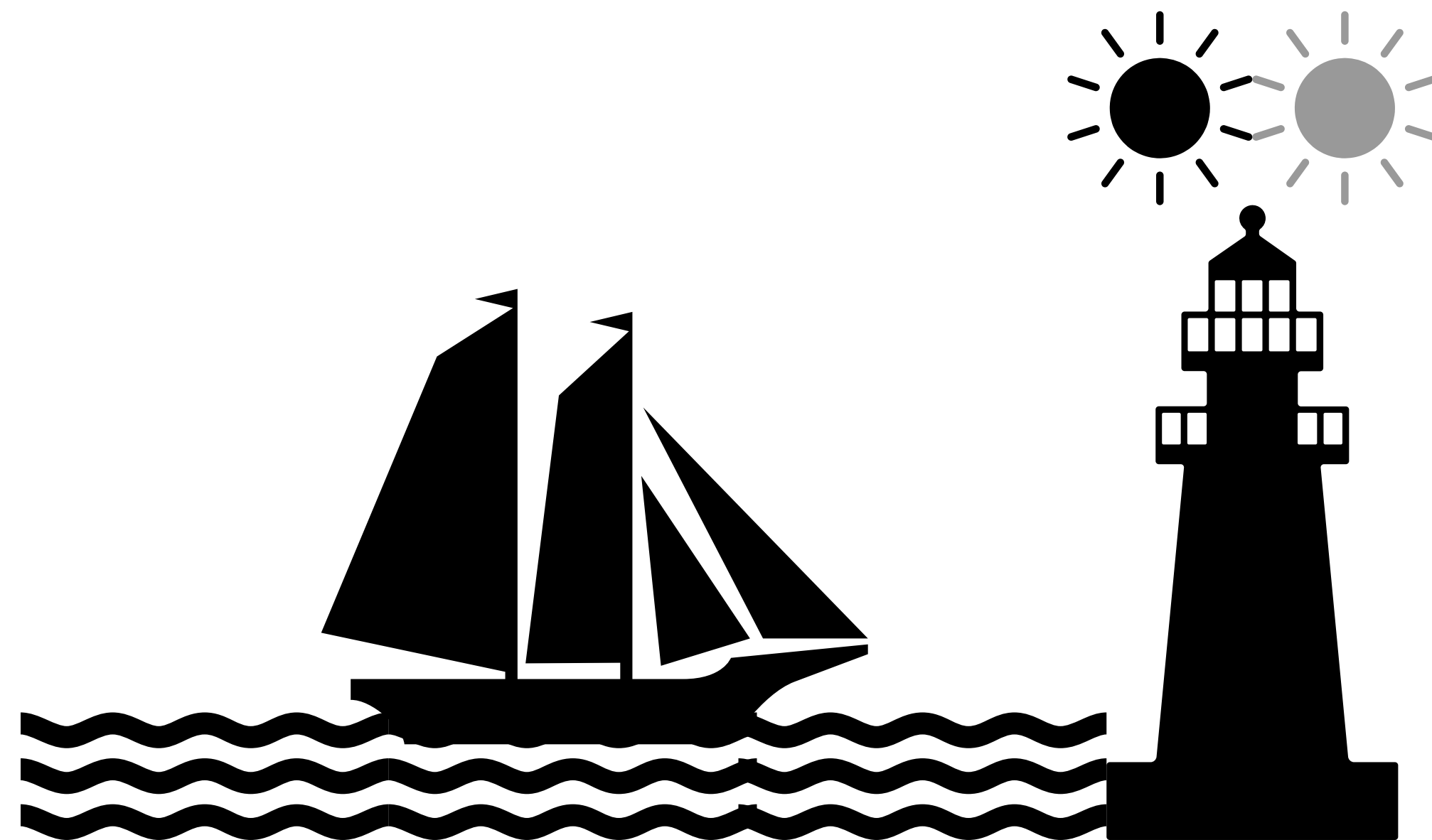


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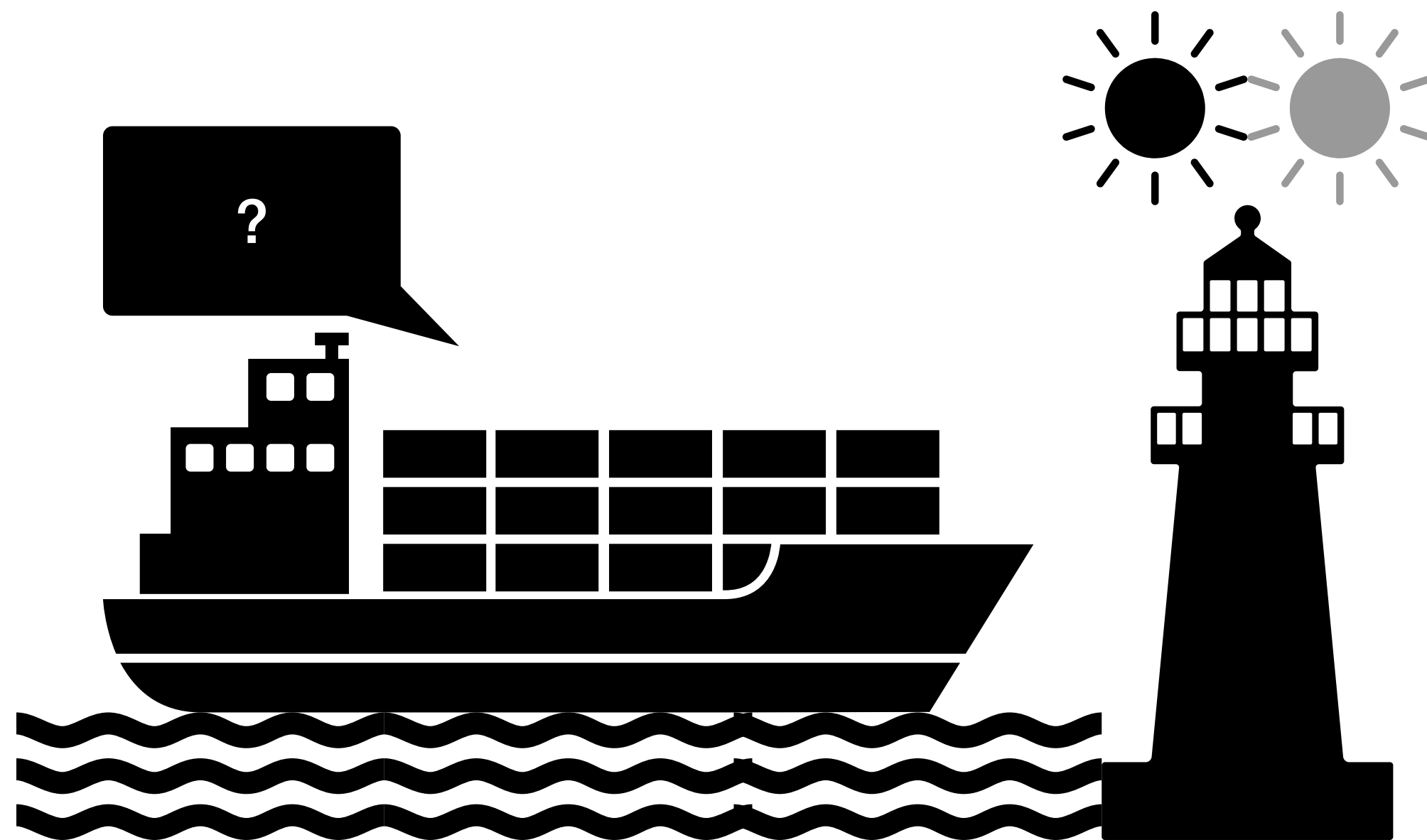
Protocol

- The captain and the lighthouse *must* agree on the choices in advance.
 - How many choices?
 - Which light answers which?



Information Protocol

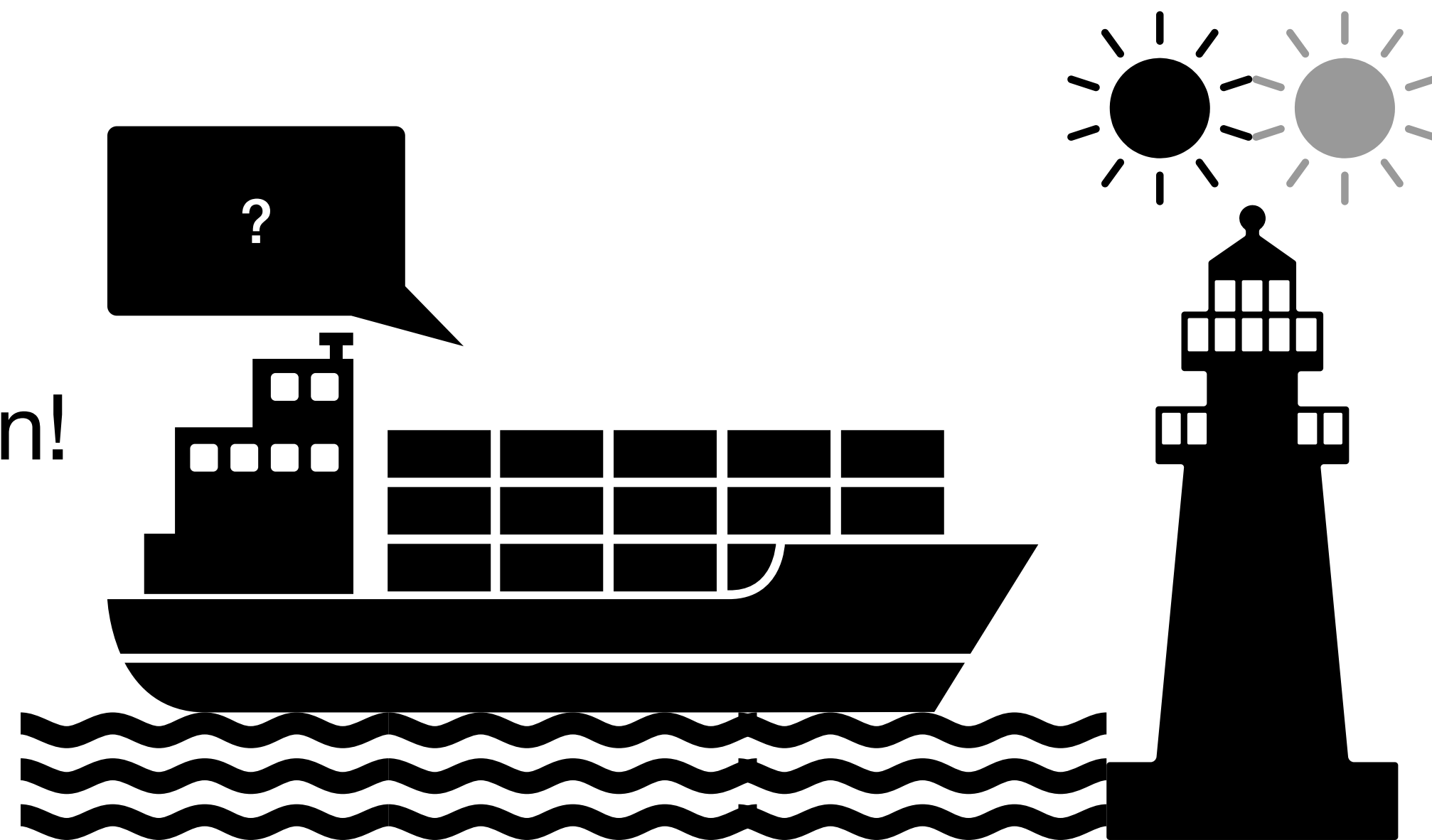
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 - Which light answers which?



Information

Protocol

- The captain and the lighthouse *must* agree on the choices in advance.
 - How many choices?
 - Which light answers which?
- If you don't know the context, you don't know what the bits mean!
- This is why we need file format, types, protocols, ...



Information

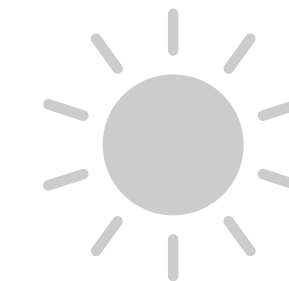
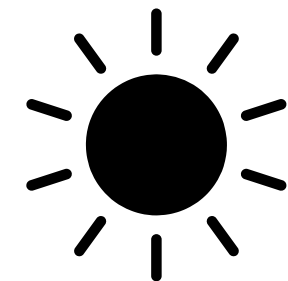
How many bits do you need to send Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up*?



It depends on how many choices there are!

Information

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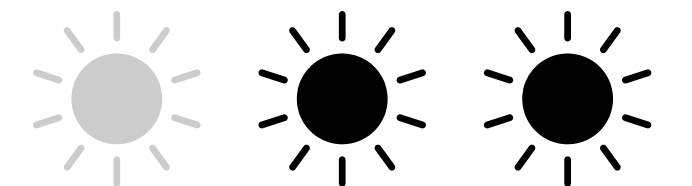
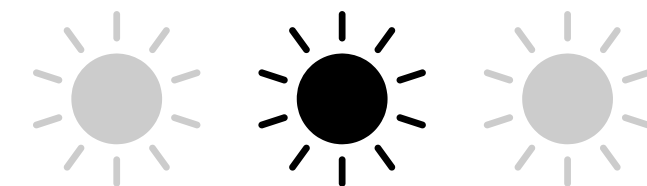
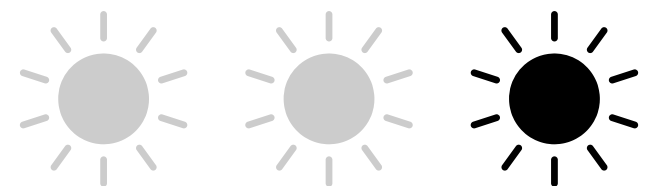
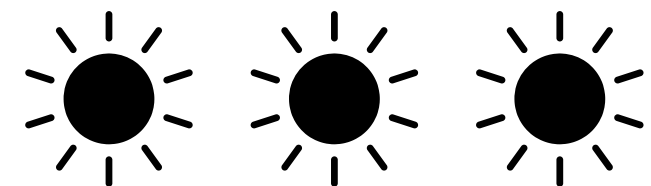
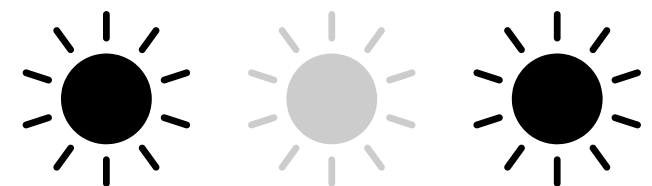
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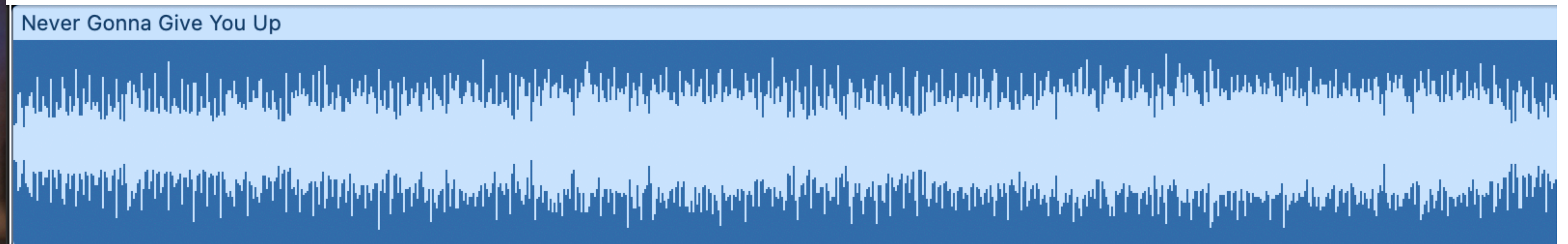
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What if you want to choose between all music?

Information

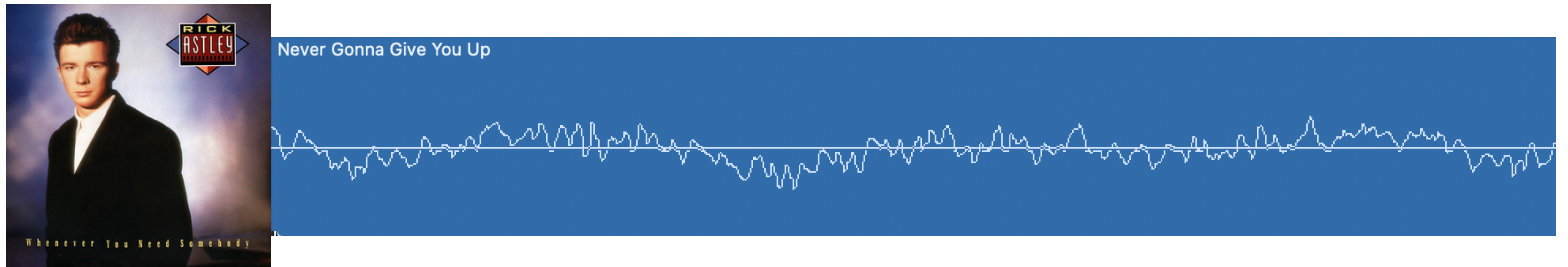
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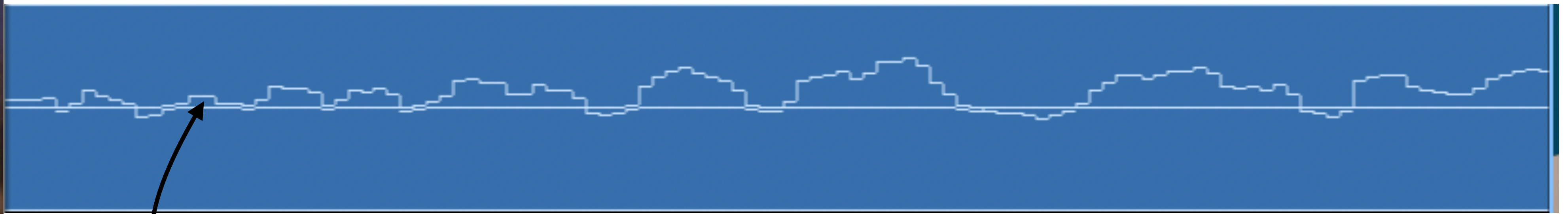
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What if you want to choose between all music?

Information

How many bits do you need to send Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up*?



The microphone samples the current sound wave many times a second

What if you want to choose between all music?

Information

How many bits do you need to send Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up*?



Each sample is one of several choices of magnitude

What if you want to choose between all music?

Information

How many bits do you need to send Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up*?



- CD quality:
 - 16 bit per sample (65536 choices of magnitudes!)
 - 44100 Hz from 2 channels.
 - $16 * 44100 * 2 = 1,411,200$ bits/second
- Length: 214 seconds
 - 301,996,800 bits!

What if you want to choose between all music?

Information

Bits

- A bit is an answer to a yes-no question
- We can model information as a series of yes-no questions
- In order to communicate in bits, we must know:
 - what the questions are;
 - which bit answers which question.
- If we have n bits, we have 2^n choices to communicate.
- If we have n choices to communicate, we need $\lceil \log_2 n \rceil$ bits.

Binary

Let's talk numbers

- To communicate numbers, just like other information, we can encode numbers as bits!



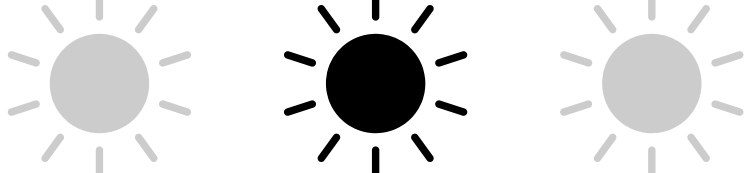
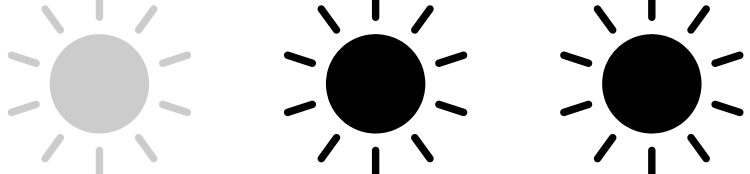


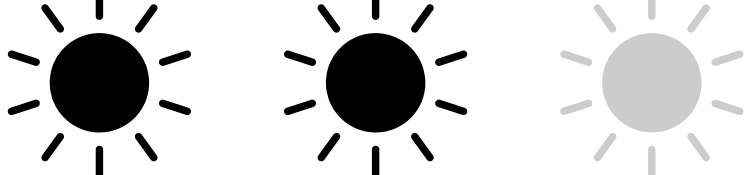
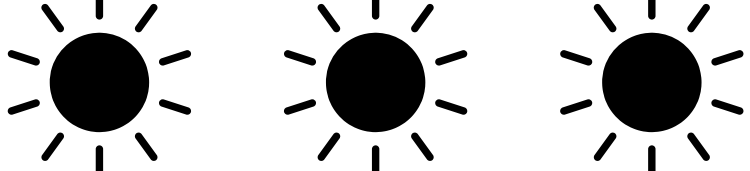
Binary

Let's talk numbers

Number	Encoding
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Binary

Let's talk numbers

Number	Encoding
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Binary

Let's talk numbers

Number	Encoding
0	[no, no, no]
1	[no, no, yes]
2	[no, yes, no]
3	[no, yes, yes]
4	[yes, no, no]
5	[yes, no, yes]
6	[yes, yes, no]
7	[yes, yes, yes]

Binary

Let's talk numbers

Wait, we already have math behind this!

Number	Encoding
0	[0, 0, 0]
1	[0, 0, 1]
2	[0, 1, 0]
3	[0, 1, 1]
4	[1, 0, 0]
5	[1, 0, 1]
6	[1, 1, 0]
7	[1, 1, 1]

Binary

Decimal number with harder math

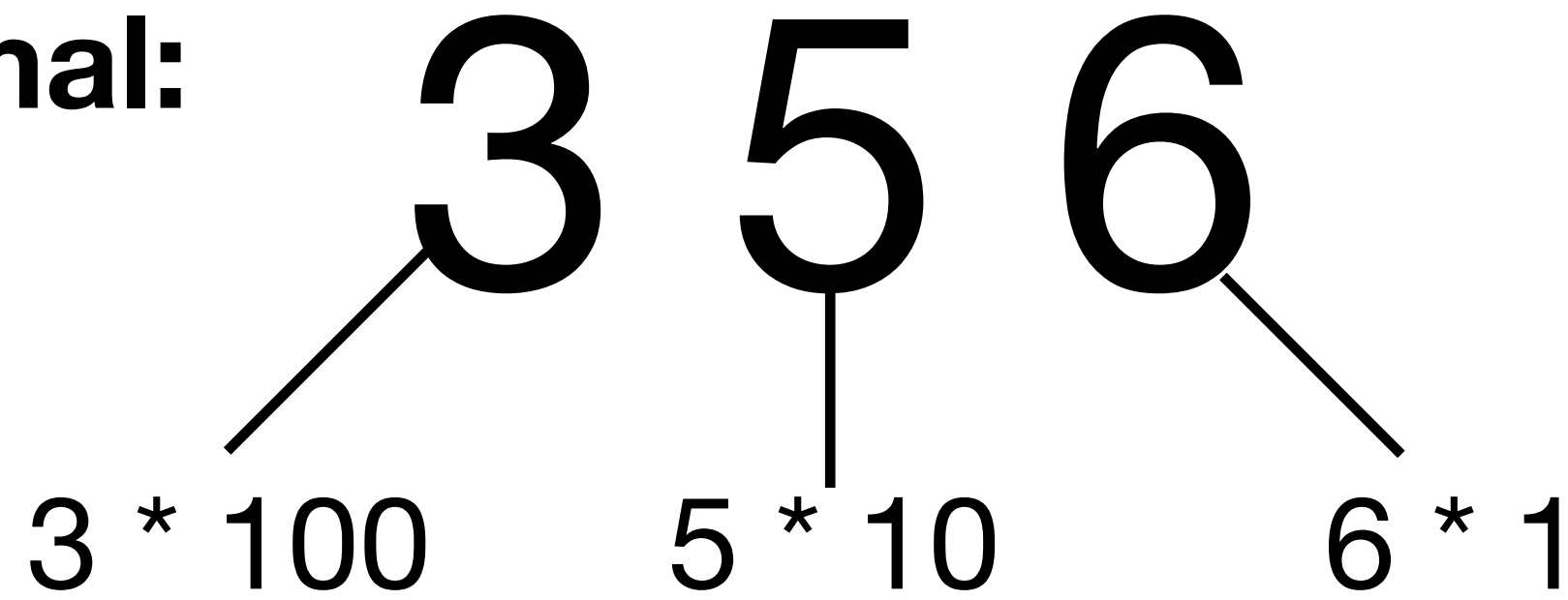
Decimal:

3 5 6

Binary

Decimal number with harder math

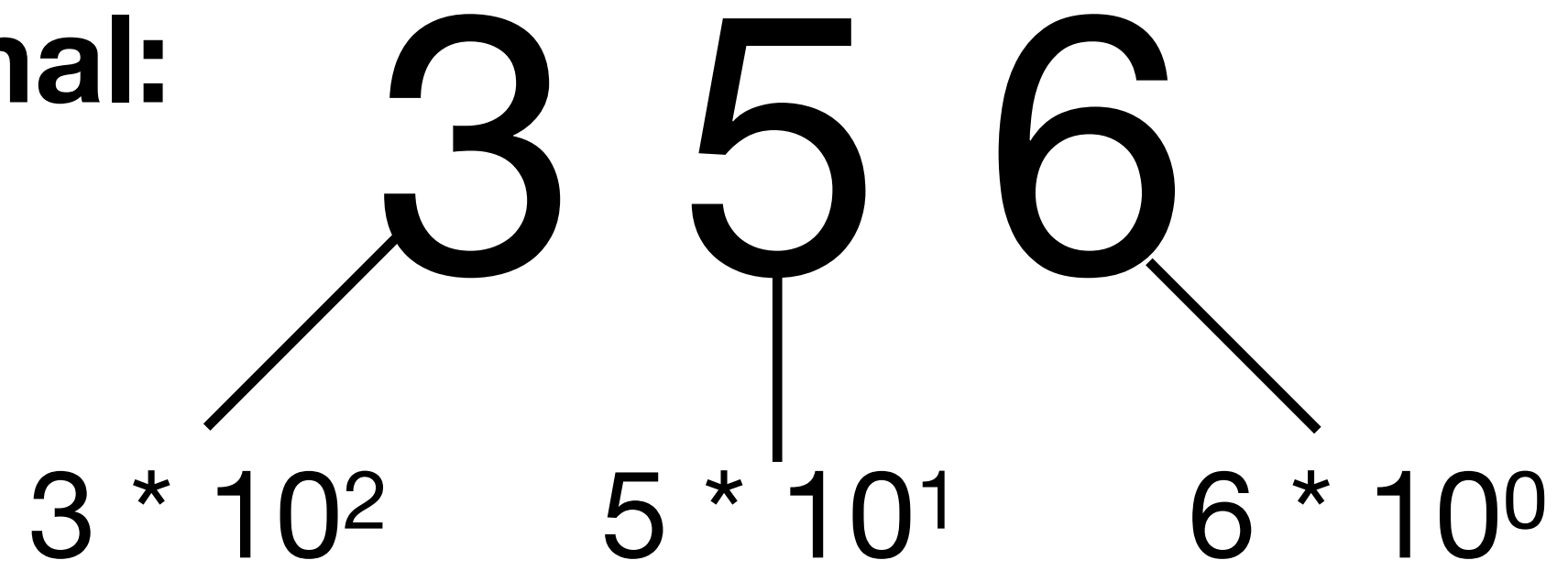
Decimal:



Binary

Decimal number with harder math

Decimal:



Binary

Decimal number with harder math

- 10 choices per digit
- every time we add one to the tens, we use up all 10 choices

Decimal:

$3 \cdot 10^2$ $5 \cdot 10^1$ $6 \cdot 10^0$

Binary

Decimal number with harder math

- 2 choices per digit
- every time we add one to the tens, we use up all 2 choices

Binary:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & & \mathbf{1} & \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{1} & & \\ & \swarrow & & | & \swarrow & & \\ 1 * 2^2 & & & 0 * 2^1 & & 1 * 2^0 & = 5 \end{array}$$

Binary

Binary-searching the list of choices

Binary:

1 0 1

7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Binary

Binary-searching the list of choices

Binary:

1 0 1

Left or right?

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Binary

Binary-searching the list of choices

Binary:

1 0 1

Left or right?

7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Binary

Binary-searching the list of choices

Binary:

1 0 1

Left or right?

7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Binary

Two ways

Binary:

1 0 1

$1 * 2^2$

$0 * 2^1$

$1 * 2^0$

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

Binary

How about texts?

Variables

American Standard Code for Information Interchange

Dec	Char	Dec	Char	Dec	Char	Dec	Char
0	NUL	32	SPACE	64	@	96	`
1	SOH	33	!	65	A	97	a
2	STX	34	"	66	B	98	b
3	ETX	35	#	67	C	99	c
4	EOT	36	\$	68	D	100	d
5	ENQ	37	%	69	E	101	e
6	ACK	38	&	70	F	102	f
7	BEL	39	'	71	G	103	g
8	BS	40	(	72	H	104	h
9	TAB	41	)	73	I	105	i
10	LF	42	*	74	J	106	j
11	VT	43	+	75	K	107	k
12	FF	44	,	76	L	108	l
13	CR	45	-	77	M	109	m
14	SO	46	.	78	N	110	n
15	SI	47	/	79	O	111	o
16	DLE	48	0	80	P	112	p
17	DC1	49	1	81	Q	113	q
18	DC2	50	2	82	R	114	r
19	DC3	51	3	83	S	115	s
20	DC4	52	4	84	T	116	t
21	NAK	53	5	85	U	117	u
22	SYN	54	6	86	V	118	v
23	ETB	55	7	87	W	119	w
24	CAN	56	8	88	X	120	x
25	EM	57	9	89	Y	121	y
26	SUB	58	:	90	Z	122	z
27	ESC	59	;	91	[	123	{
28	FS	60	<	92	\	124	|
29	GS	61	=	93	]	125	}
30	RS	62	>	94	^	126	~
31	US	63	?	95	_	127	DEL

Digitalization

- Software structures model *real world* objects and concepts:
 - Numbers
 - Texts
 - Images
 - Sound recordings
 - Students
 - Bank statements
 - etc.
- These aren't bits, but we agree on which choices we care about and which bit patterns to present them

Bits

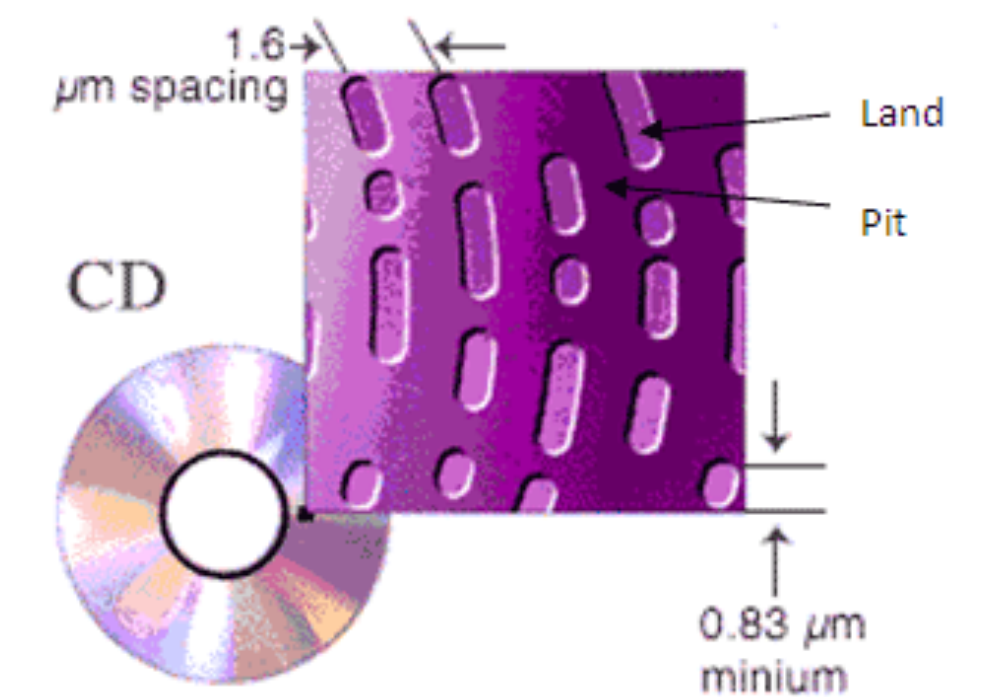
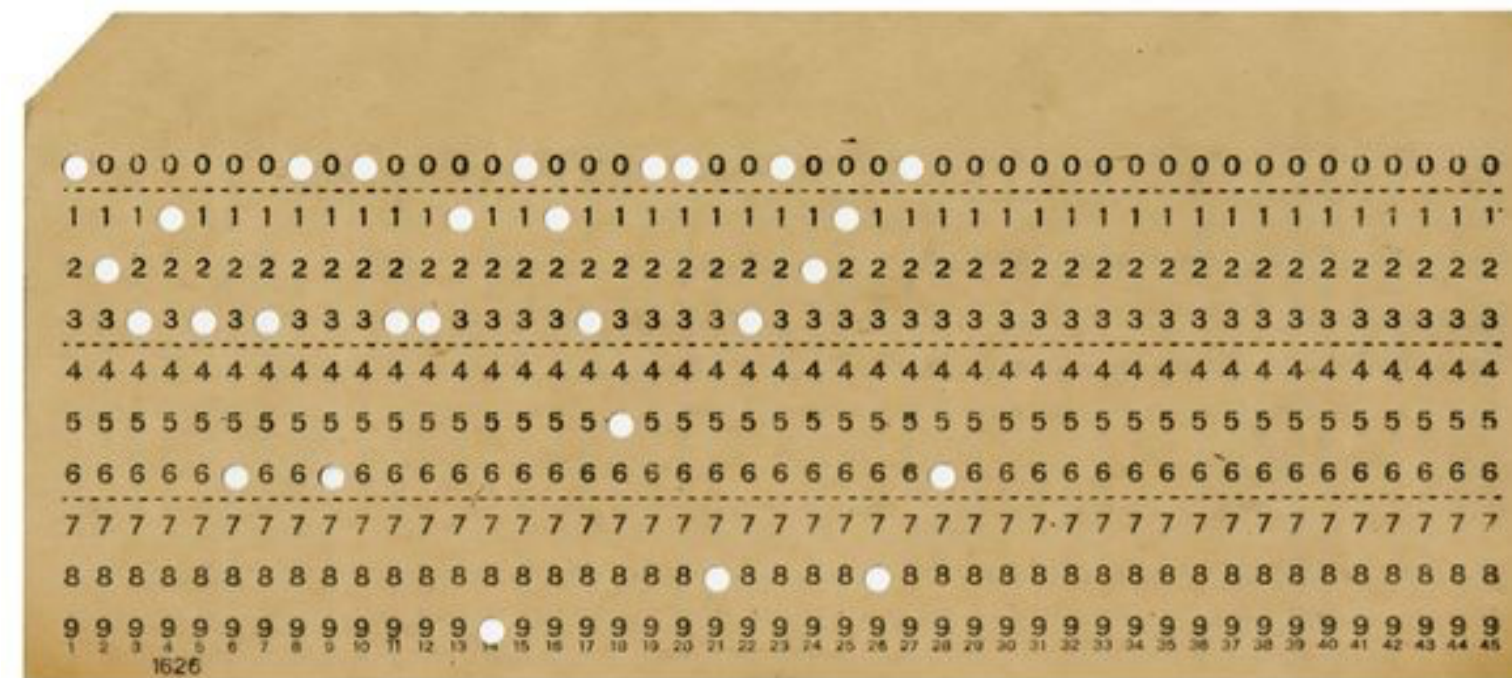
In your machine

- We need hardware that can be one of two states

10001011011001010000111100000011010010

Relays
Punch cards
Tape
Optical disc (CD, DVD)
Transistors

...



Bits

In your machine

- Can we get a pointer to a single bit?

```
1000101101100101000011110000001101001011
```

Bits

In your machine

- Can we get a pointer to a single bit? *NO!*

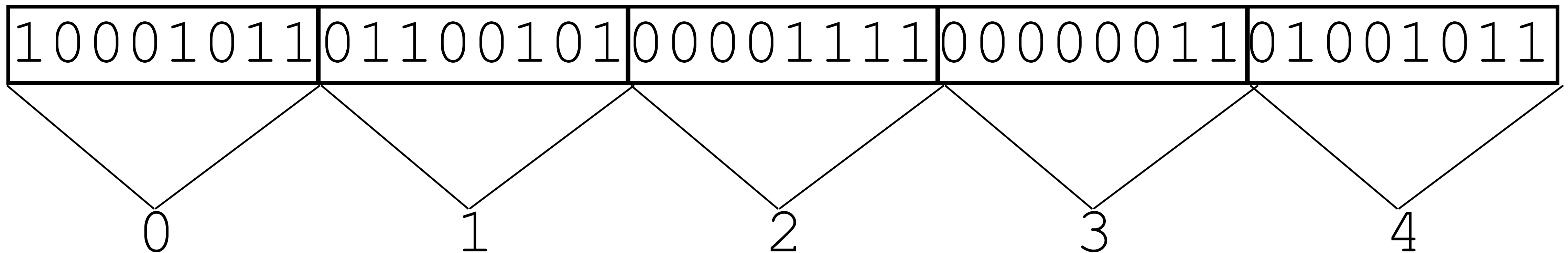
1000101101100101000011110000001101001011

- Too many addresses -- pointer sizes will be massive
- With some cleverness, you can retrieve a single bit (later!)

Bits

In your machine

- Can we get a pointer to a single bit? *NO!*

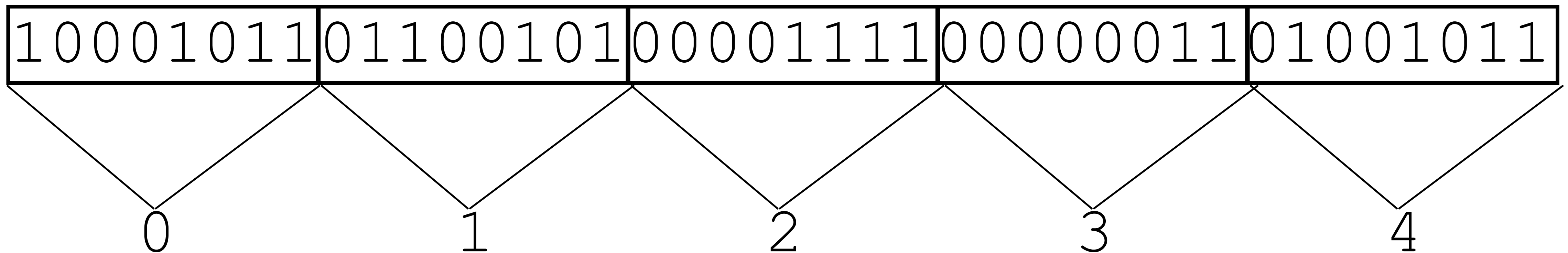


- 8 bits is a *byte*.
- Memory is *byte-addressable*.

Bits

In your machine

- Why 8 bits?



- Big enough for an English character
- 8 is a power of 2 (later)

Bits

Know your powers of 2

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

n	2^n
8	256
9	512
10	1024
11	2048
12	4096
13	8192
14	16384
15	32768

n	2^n
16	65,536
17	131,072
18	262,144
19	524,288
20	1,048,576
21	2,097,152
22	4,194,304
23	8,388,608

n	2^n
24	16,777,216
25	33,554,432
26	67,108,864
27	134,217,728
28	268,435,456
29	536,870,912
30	1,073,741,824
31	2,147,483,648

n	2^n
32	4,294,967,296
33	8,589,934,592
34	17,179,869,184
35	34,359,738,368
36	68,719,476,736
37	137,438,953,472
38	274,877,906,944
39	549,755,813,888
40	1,099,511,627,776
41	2,199,023,255,552
42	4,398,046,511,104
43	8,796,093,022,208
44	17,592,186,044,416
45	35,184,372,088,832
46	70,368,744,177,664
47	140,737,488,355,328
48	281,474,976,710,656
49	562,949,953,421,312
50	1,125,899,906,842,624
51	2,251,799,813,685,248
52	4,503,599,627,370,496
53	9,007,199,254,740,992
54	18,014,398,509,481,984
55	36,028,797,018,963,968
56	72,057,594,037,927,936
57	144,115,188,075,855,872
58	288,230,376,151,711,744
59	576,460,752,303,423,488
60	1,152,921,504,606,846,976
61	2,305,843,009,213,693,952
62	4,611,686,018,427,387,904
63	9,223,372,036,854,775,808
64	18,446,744,073,709,551,616

char

short

int, float

long, double, pointers

Bits

- Bits encode choices
- Bits have no inherent meanings; to read encoding, need to know the intended interpretation
- Bits can be stored in any devices that can be one of two states
- If the two states are 0 and 1, then binary number is an obvious encoding of integer numbers
- Modern machines has an address per byte (8 bits)

Number Conversions

Decimal: 199

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

$$128 + 71$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1							

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

7

128 + 64 +

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1						

Number Conversions

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

7

128 + 64 +

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0					

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

7

128 + 64 +

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0				

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

7

128 + 64 +

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0	0			

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

$$128 + 64 + 4 + 3$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0	0	1		

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

$$128 + 64 + 4 + 2 + 1$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 199

$$128 + 64 + 4 + 2 + 1$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1

Number Conversions

Decimal: 200

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 200

$$128 + 72$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1							

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 200

$$128 + 64 + 8$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1						

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal: 200

$$128 + 64 + 8 + 0$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0	1			

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

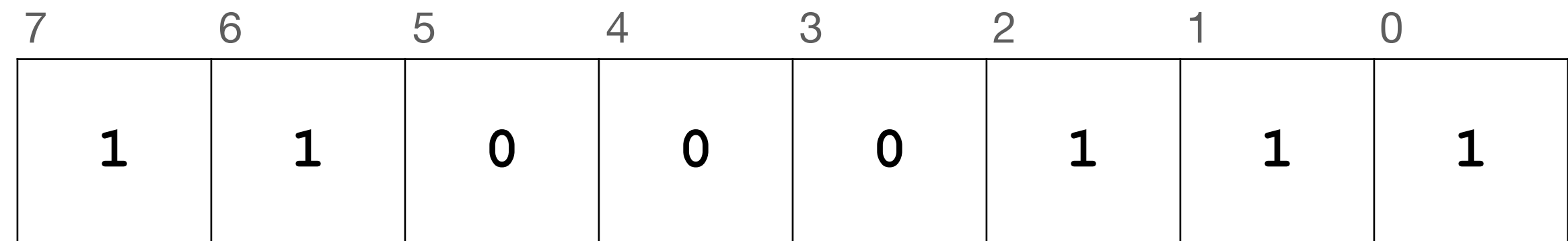
200

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

Number Conversions

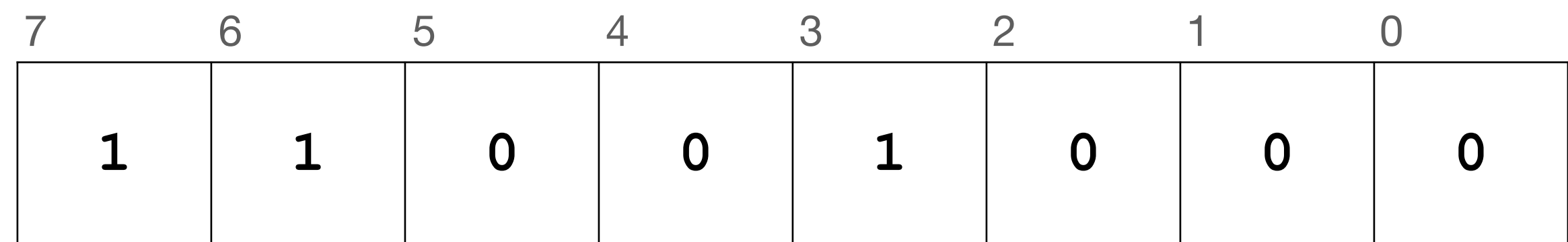
n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

199



+ 1

200



Number Conversions

Decimal:

20

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal:

20

$$16 + 4$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
0	0	0	1				

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal:

20

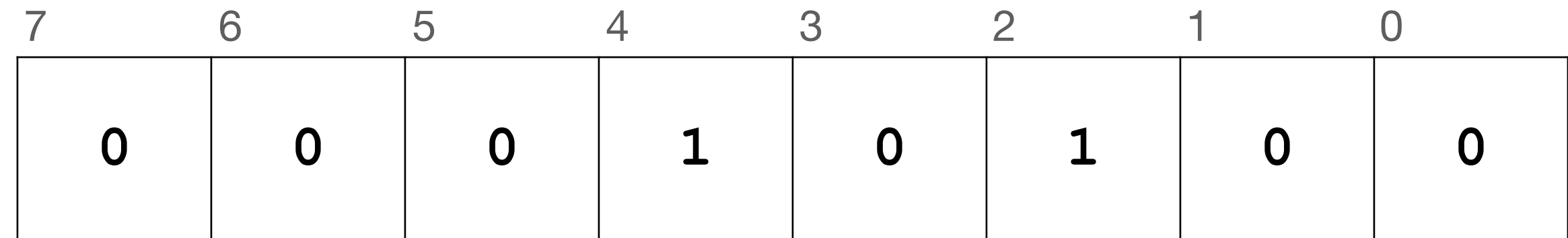
$$16 + 4$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0

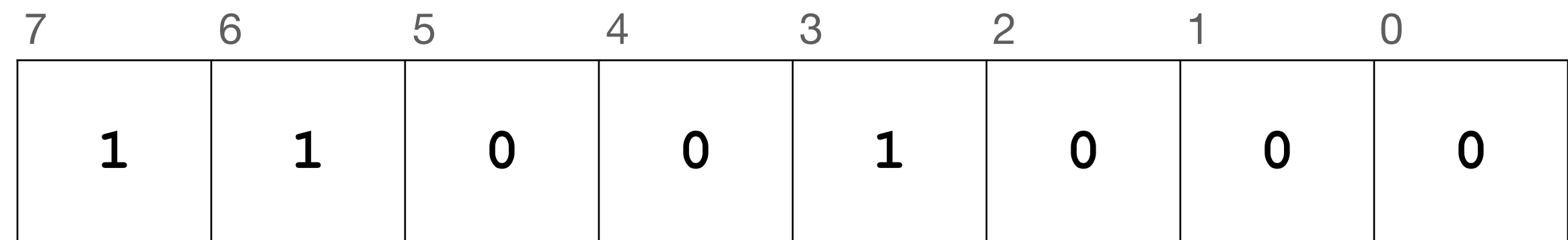
Number Conversions

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

20



200



- x 10 can't convert nicely

Number Conversions

Decimal:

40

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal:

40

$$32 + 8$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
0	0	1					

Number Conversions

n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

Decimal:

40

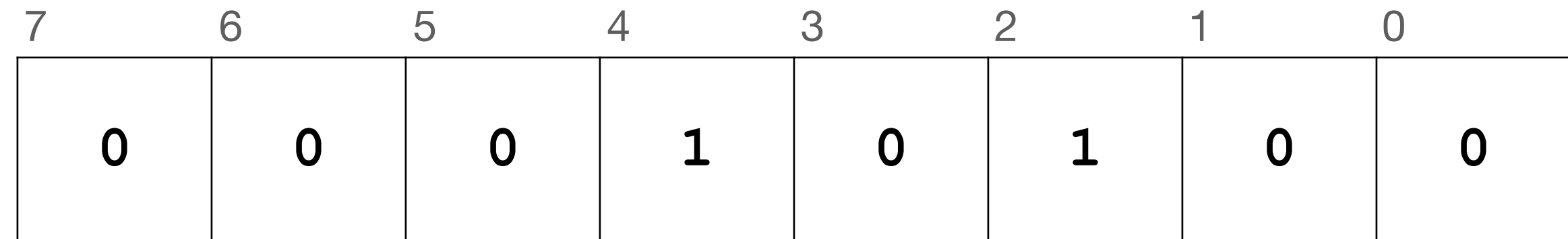
$$32 + 8$$

7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

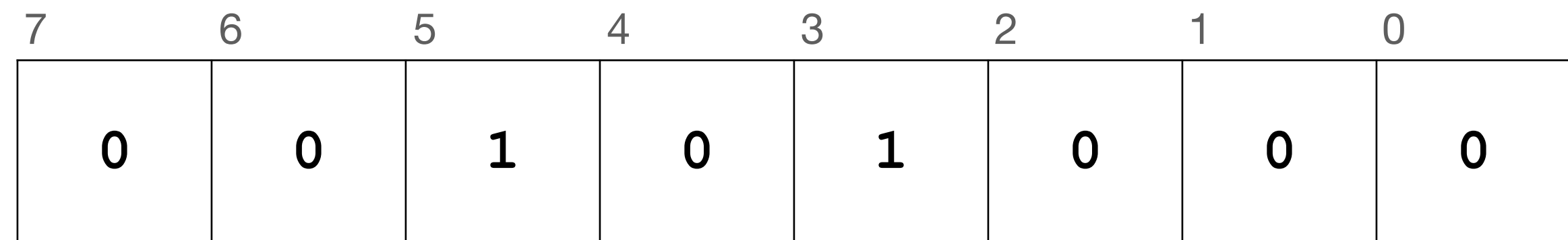
Number Conversions

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

20



40



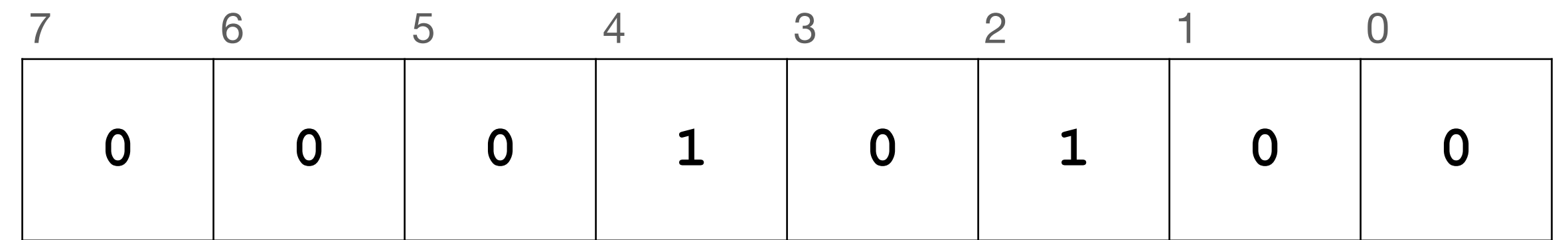
- x 2 is shifting everything to the left!

Number Conversions

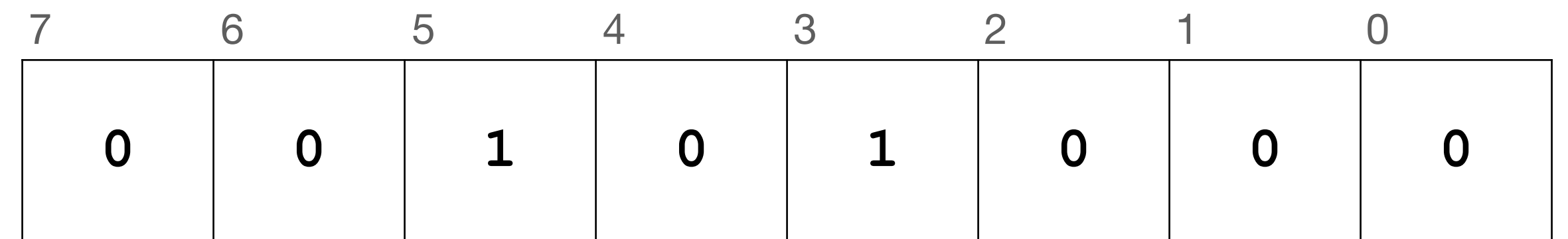
n	2 ⁿ
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

123
← x 10
1230

Decimal



← x 2

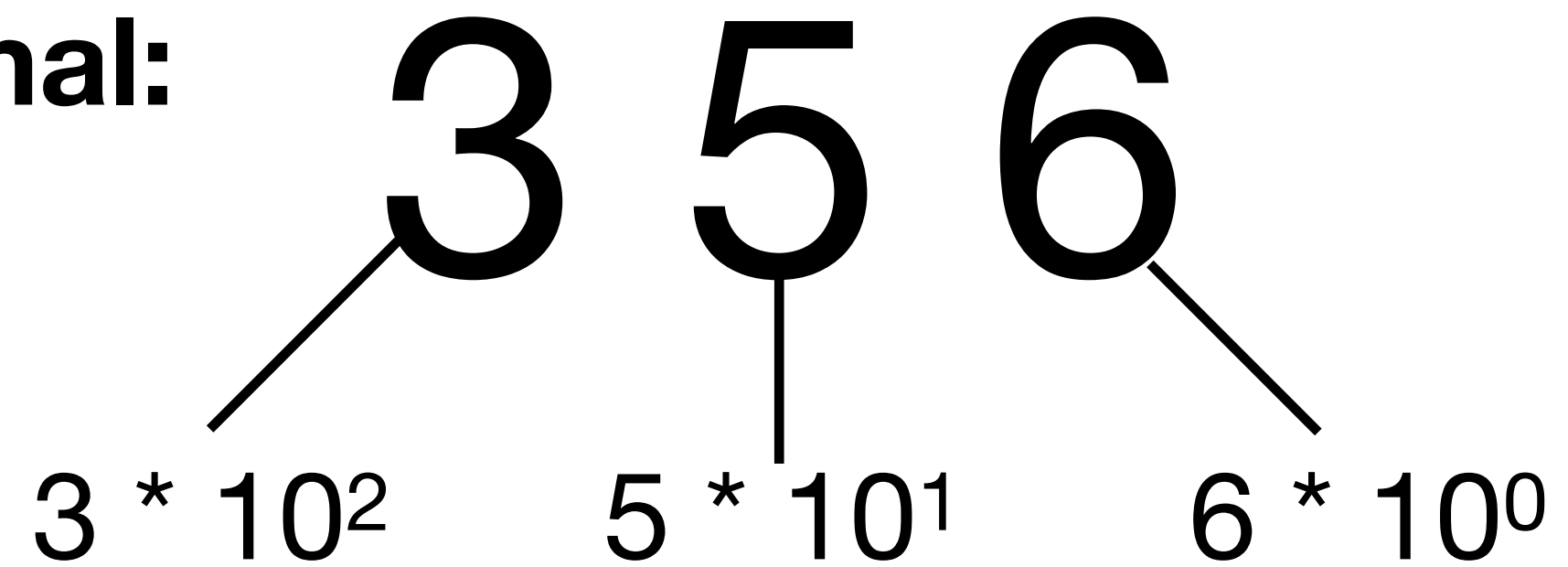


Binary

Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

Decimal:



Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

In hexadecimal, every digit has 16 choices.

Hexadecimal:

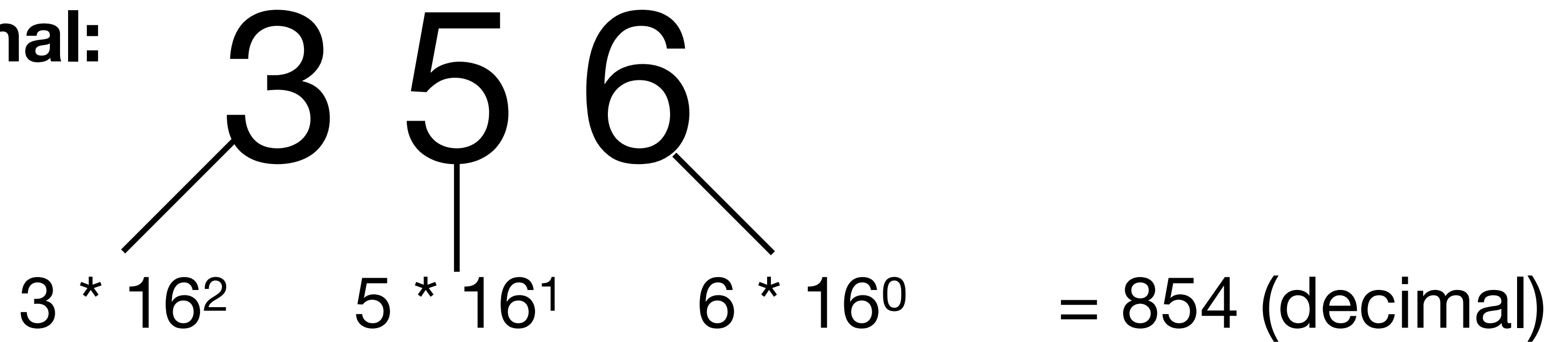
$$3 * 16^2 + 5 * 16^1 + 6 * 16^0 = 854 \text{ (decimal)}$$

Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

In hexadecimal, every digit has 16 choices.

Hexadecimal:


$$3 \cdot 16^2 + 5 \cdot 16^1 + 6 \cdot 16^0 = 854 \text{ (decimal)}$$

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F

Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

- Why 16?
- Because 16 is 2^4 ! So every digit needs exactly 4 bits -- this will turn out to be very convenient
- Usually, we prefix hexadecimal numbers with $0x$

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ¹⁰A ¹¹B ¹²C ¹³D ¹⁴E ¹⁵F

Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

n	16^n
0	1
1	16
2	256
3	4096

0x A B

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F

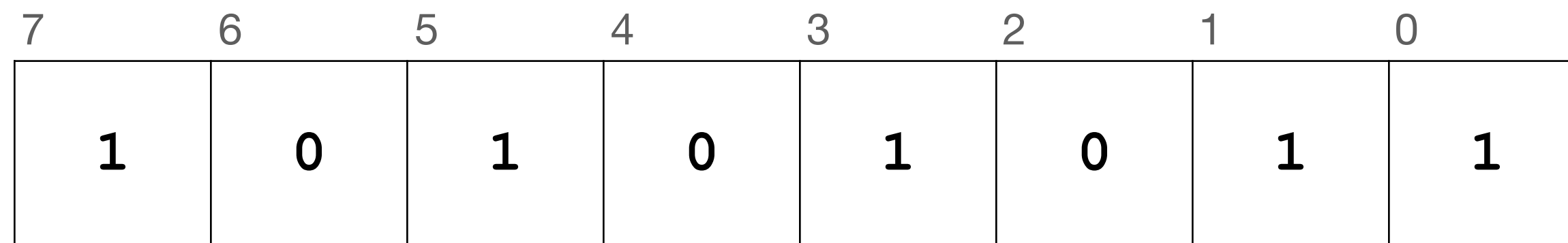
Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

n	16^n
0	1
1	16
2	256
3	4096

0x A B

$$10 * 16 + 11 * 1 = 171$$



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F

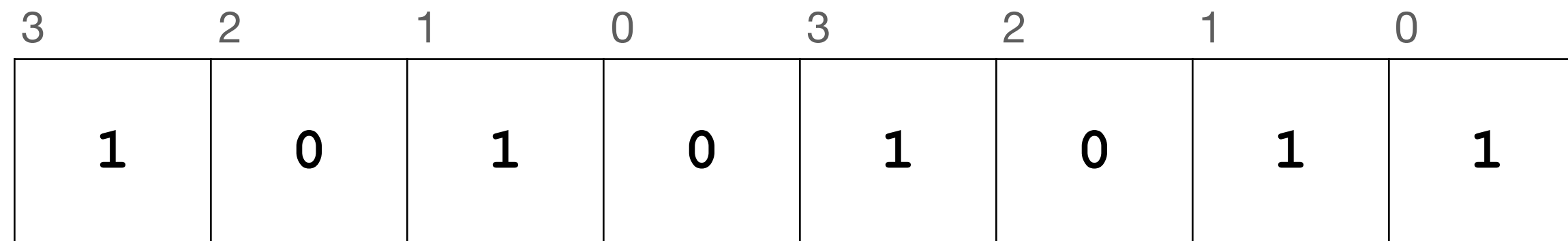
Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

0x A B

$$10 * 16 + 11 * 1 = 171$$



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F

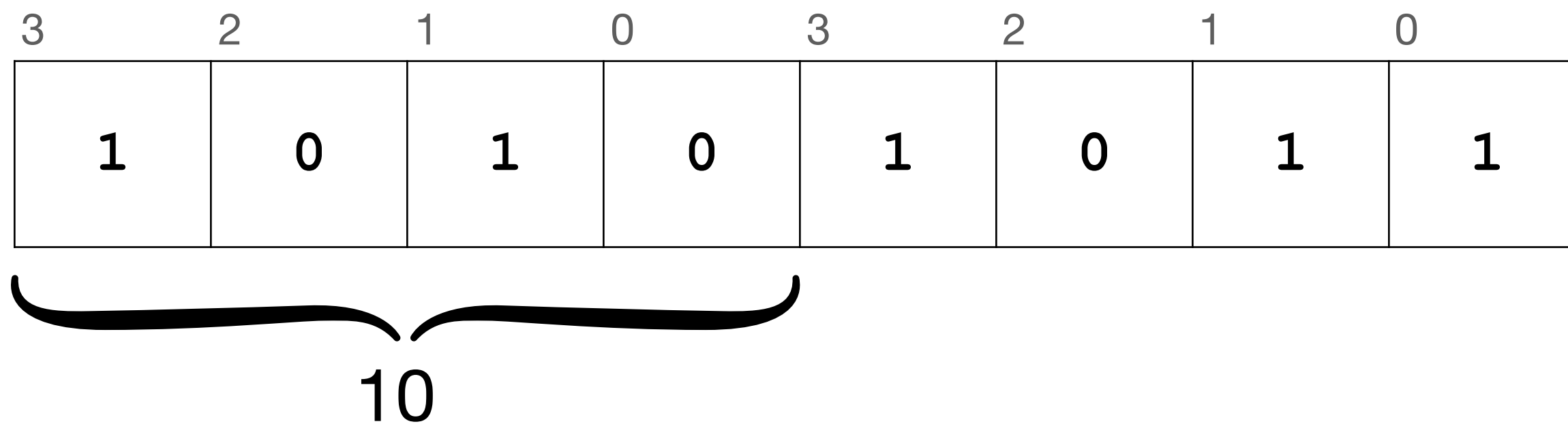
Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

0x A B

$$10 * 16 + 11 * 1 = 171$$



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F

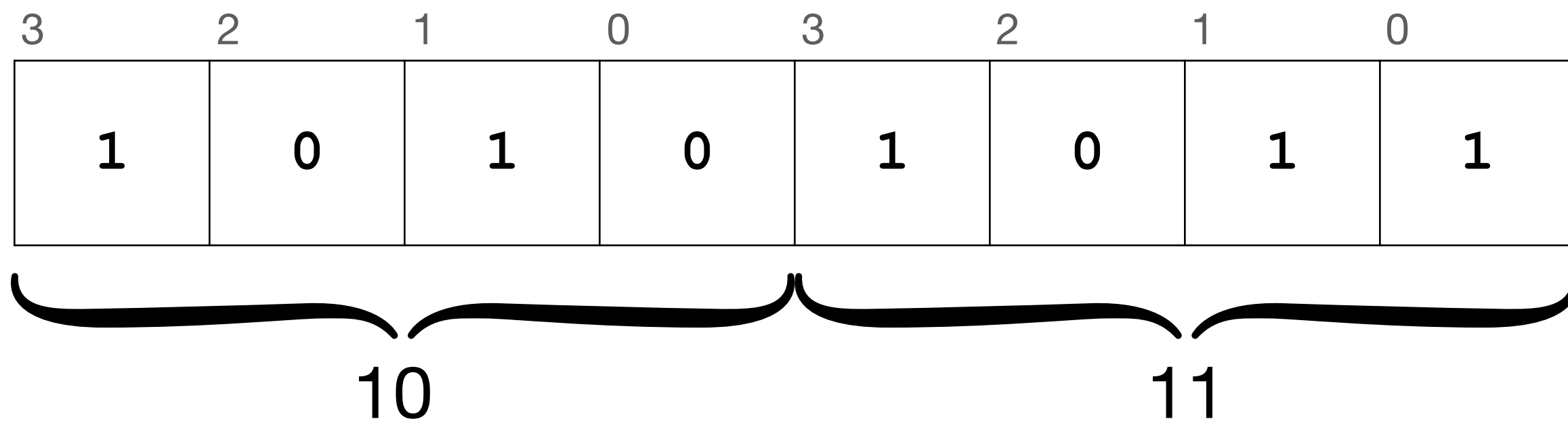
Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

0x A B

$$10 * 16 + 11 * 1 = 171$$



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F

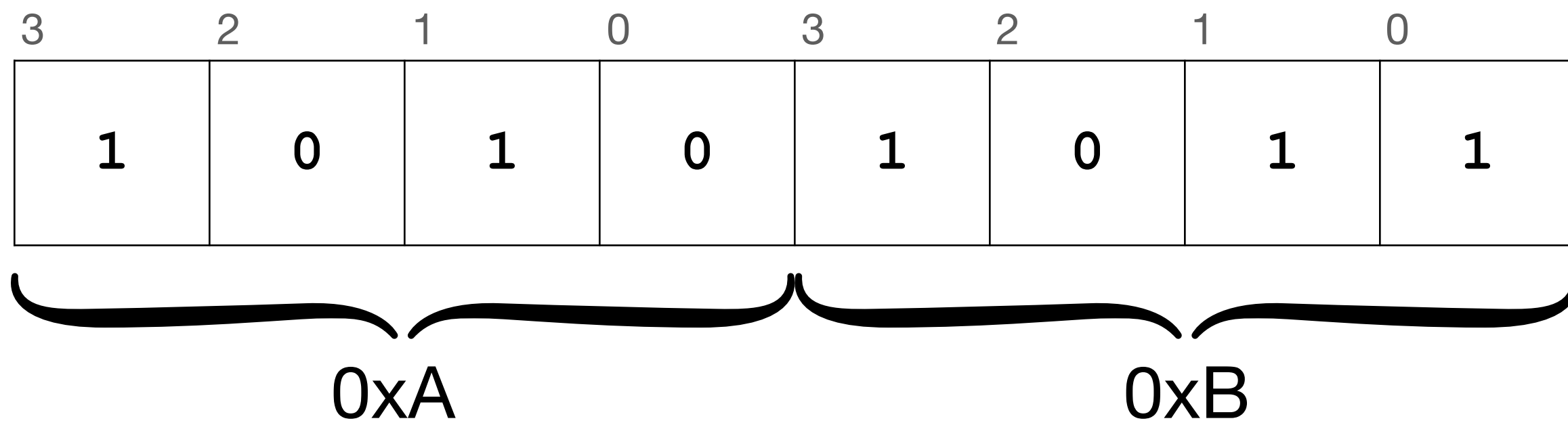
Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

n	2^n
0	1
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	128

0x A B

$$10 * 16 + 11 * 1 = 171$$



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **A B C D E F**

Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math

- Every hex digit corresponds to 4 binary digits
- We can convert 1 hex digit/4 binary digits at a time!
 - Can't do this with decimal digits

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ¹⁰A ¹¹B ¹²C ¹³D ¹⁴E ¹⁵F

Hexadecimal Numbers

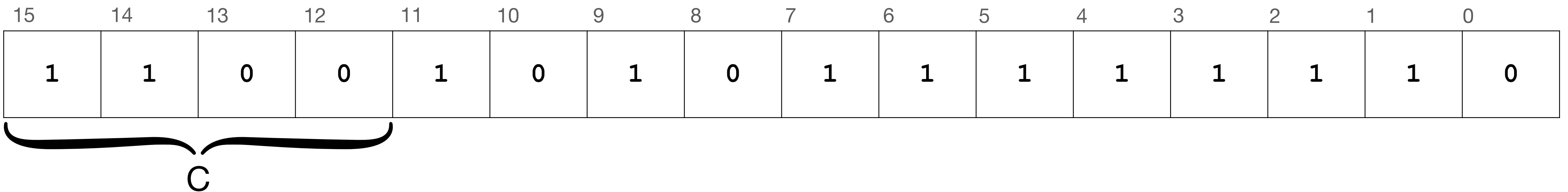
Numbers with even wackier math

15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F**

Hexadecimal Numbers

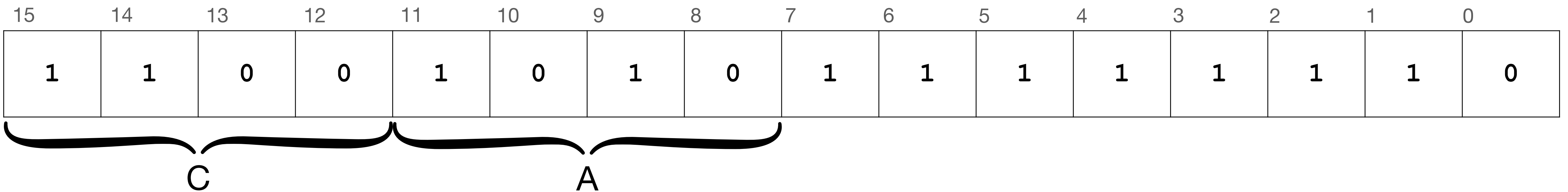
Numbers with even wackier math



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F**

Hexadecimal Numbers

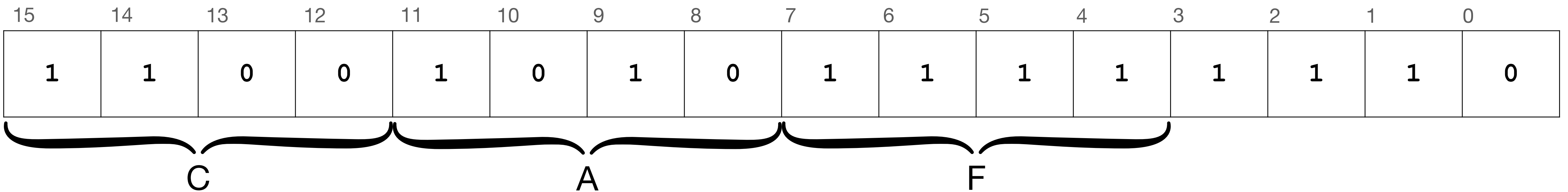
Numbers with even wackier math



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F**

Hexadecimal Numbers

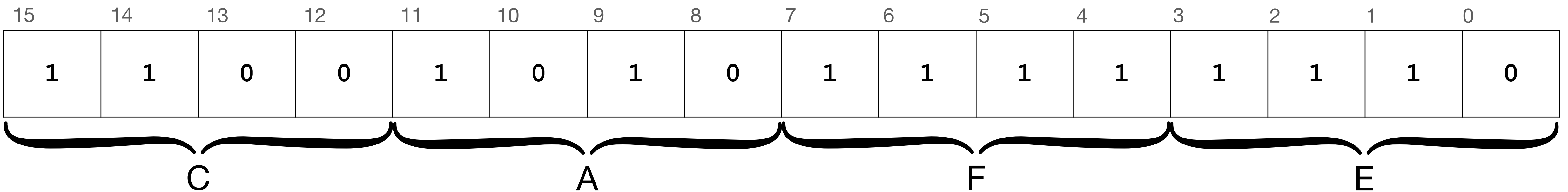
Numbers with even wackier math



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F

Hexadecimal Numbers

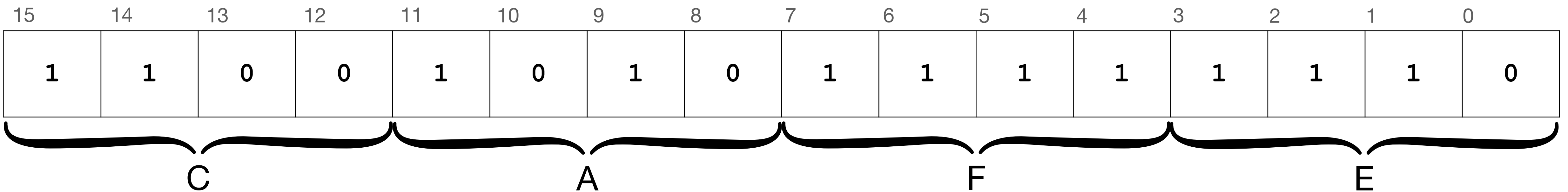
Numbers with even wackier math



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F**

Hexadecimal Numbers

Numbers with even wackier math



```
>>> hex(0b1100101011111110)
'0xcafe'
```

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F**

Hexadecimal Numbers

0x123

← x 16

0x1230

Hexadecimal

```
>>> bin(0x123)
'0b100100011'
>>> bin(0x1230)
'0b1001000110000'
```

Binary

Hexadecimal Numbers

Hex numbers are everywhere

