34.4-7

Let 2-CNF-SAT be the set of satisfiable boolean formulas in CNF with exactly 2 literals per clause. Show that 2-CNF-SAT $\in$ P. Make your algorithm as efficient as possible. (*Hint:* Observe that $x \vee y$ is equivalent to $\neg x \rightarrow y$. Reduce 2-CNF-SAT to a problem on a directed graph that is efficiently solvable.)

34.5 NP-complete problems

NP-complete problems arise in diverse domains: boolean logic, graphs, arithmetic, network design, sets and partitions, storage and retrieval, sequencing and scheduling, mathematical programming, algebra and number theory, games and puzzles, automata and language theory, program optimization, biology, chemistry, physics, and more. In this section, we shall use the reduction methodology to provide NP-completeness proofs for a variety of problems drawn from graph theory and set partitioning.

Figure 34.13 outlines the structure of the NP-completeness proofs in this section and Section 34.4. Each language in the figure is proved NP-complete by reduction from the language that points to it. At the root is CIRCUIT-SAT, which we proved NP-complete in Theorem 34.7.

34.5.1 The clique problem

A ***clique*** in an undirected graph $G = (V, E)$ is a subset $V' \subseteq V$ of vertices, each pair of which is connected by an edge in E. In other words, a clique is a complete subgraph of G. The ***size*** of a clique is the number of vertices it contains. The ***clique problem*** is the optimization problem of finding a clique of maximum size in a graph. As a decision problem, we ask simply whether a clique of a given size k exists in the graph. The formal definition is

$$\text{CLIQUE} = \{\langle G, k\rangle : G \text{ is a graph with a clique of size } k\} .$$

A naive algorithm for determining whether a graph $G = (V, E)$ with $|V|$ vertices has a clique of size k is to list all k-subsets of V, and check each one to see whether it forms a clique. The running time of this algorithm is $\Omega(k^2\binom{|V|}{k})$, which is polynomial if k is a constant. In general, however, k could be near $|V|/2$, in which case the algorithm runs in superpolynomial time. As one might suspect, an efficient algorithm for the clique problem is unlikely to exist.

Theorem 34.11

The clique problem is NP-complete.

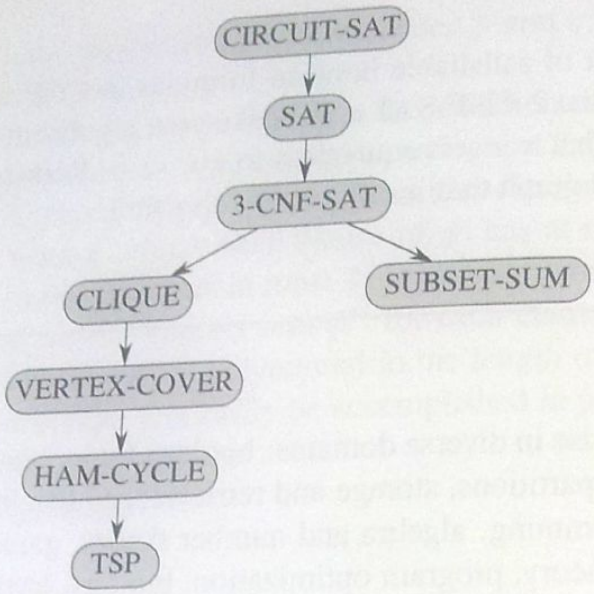

Figure 34.13 The structure of NP-completeness proofs in Sections 34.4 and 34.5. All proofs ultimately follow by reduction from the NP-completeness of CIRCUIT-SAT.

Proof To show that CLIQUE $\in$ NP, for a given graph $G = (V, E)$, we use the set $V' \subseteq V$ of vertices in the clique as a certificate for G. Checking whether V' is a clique can be accomplished in polynomial time by checking whether, for each pair $u, v \in V'$, the edge (u, v) belongs to E.

We next prove that 3-CNF-SAT $\leq_P$ CLIQUE, which shows that the clique problem is NP-hard. That we should be able to prove this result is somewhat surprising, since on the surface logical formulas seem to have little to do with graphs.

The reduction algorithm begins with an instance of 3-CNF-SAT. Let $\phi = C_1 \wedge C_2 \wedge \cdots \wedge C_k$ be a boolean formula in 3-CNF with k clauses. For $r = 1, 2, \ldots, k$, each clause C_r has exactly three distinct literals l_1^r, l_2^r, and l_3^r. We shall construct a graph G such that ϕ is satisfiable if and only if G has a clique of size k.

The graph $G = (V, E)$ is constructed as follows. For each clause $C_r = (l_1^r \vee l_2^r \vee l_3^r)$ in ϕ, we place a triple of vertices v_1^r, v_2^r, and v_3^r into V. We put an edge between two vertices v_i^r and v_j^s if both of the following hold:

- v_i^r and v_j^s are in different triples, that is, $r \neq s$, and
- their corresponding literals are ***consistent***, that is, l_i^r is not the negation of l_j^s.

This graph can easily be computed from ϕ in polynomial time. As an example of this construction, if we have

$$\phi = (x_1 \vee \neg x_2 \vee \neg x_3) \wedge (\neg x_1 \vee x_2 \vee x_3) \wedge (x_1 \vee x_2 \vee x_3) ,$$

then G is the graph shown in Figure 34.14.

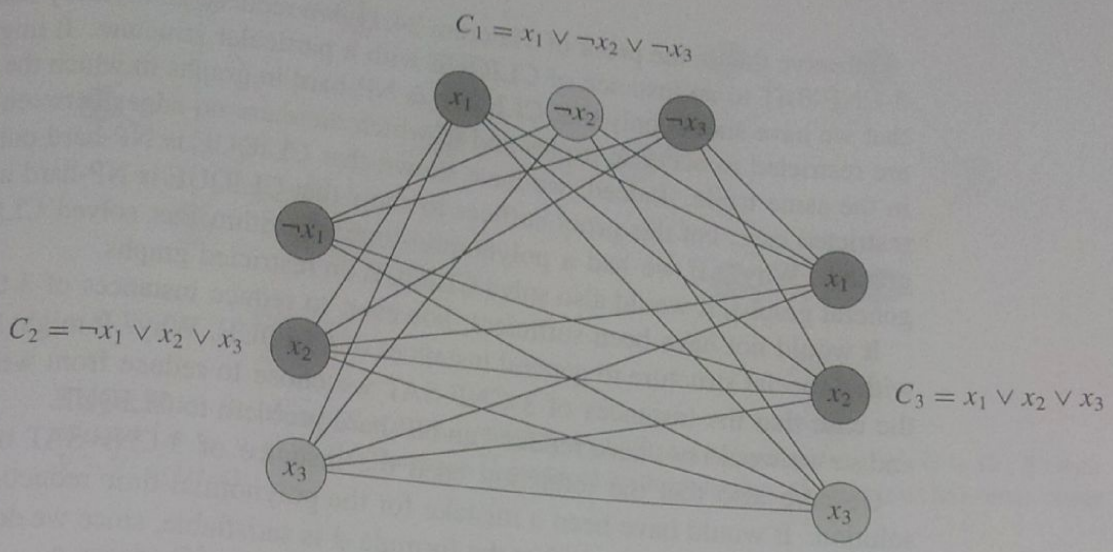

Figure 34.14 The graph G derived from the 3-CNF formula $\phi = C_1 \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3$, where $C_1 = (x_1 \vee \neg x_2 \vee \neg x_3)$, $C_2 = (\neg x_1 \vee x_2 \vee x_3)$, and $C_3 = (x_1 \vee x_2 \vee x_3)$, in reducing 3-CNF-SAT to CLIQUE. A satisfying assignment of the formula has $x_2 = 0$, $x_3 = 1$, and x_1 may be either 0 or 1. This assignment satisfies C_1 with $\neg x_2$, and it satisfies C_2 and C_3 with x_3, corresponding to the clique with lightly shaded vertices.

We must show that this transformation of ϕ into G is a reduction. First, suppose that ϕ has a satisfying assignment. Then each clause C_r contains at least one literal l_i^r that is assigned 1, and each such literal corresponds to a vertex v_i^r. Picking one such "true" literal from each clause yields a set V' of k vertices. We claim that V' is a clique. For any two vertices $v_i^r, v_j^s \in V'$, where $r \neq s$, both corresponding literals l_i^r and l_j^s are mapped to 1 by the given satisfying assignment, and thus the literals cannot be complements. Thus, by the construction of G, the edge (v_i^r, v_j^s) belongs to E.

Conversely, suppose that G has a clique V' of size k. No edges in G connect vertices in the same triple, and so V' contains exactly one vertex per triple. We can assign 1 to each literal l_i^r such that $v_i^r \in V'$ without fear of assigning 1 to both a literal and its complement, since G contains no edges between inconsistent literals. Each clause is satisfied, and so ϕ is satisfied. (Any variables that do not correspond to a vertex in the clique may be set arbitrarily.) ■

In the example of Figure 34.14, a satisfying assignment of ϕ has $x_2 = 0$ and $x_3 = 1$. A corresponding clique of size $k = 3$ consists of the vertices corresponding to $\neg x_2$ from the first clause, x_3 from the second clause, and x_3 from the third clause. Because the clique contains no vertices corresponding to either x_1 or $\neg x_1$, we can set x_1 to either 0 or 1 in this satisfying assignment.