

# CS 341: Algorithms

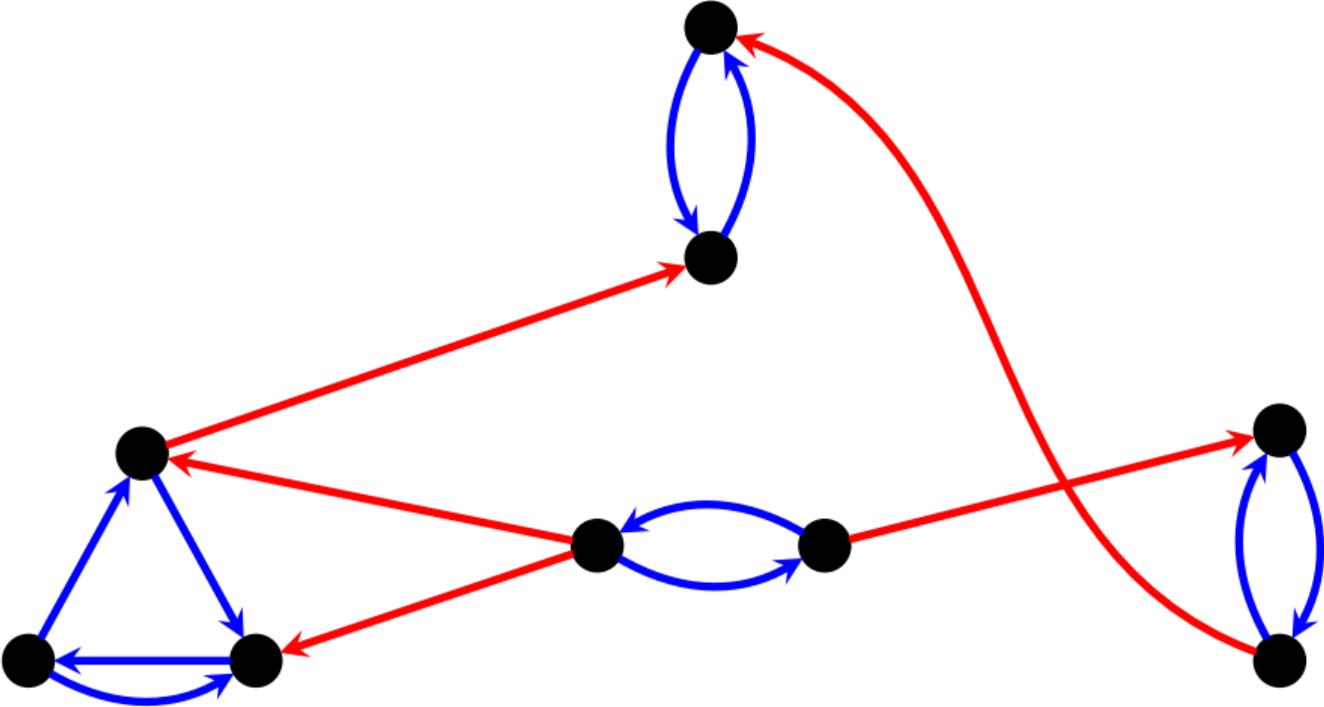
## Lecture 13: Minimum spanning trees

Slides due to Éric Schost and based on lecture notes by many other CS341 instructors

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Winter 2026

# Kosaraju Example (SCC)



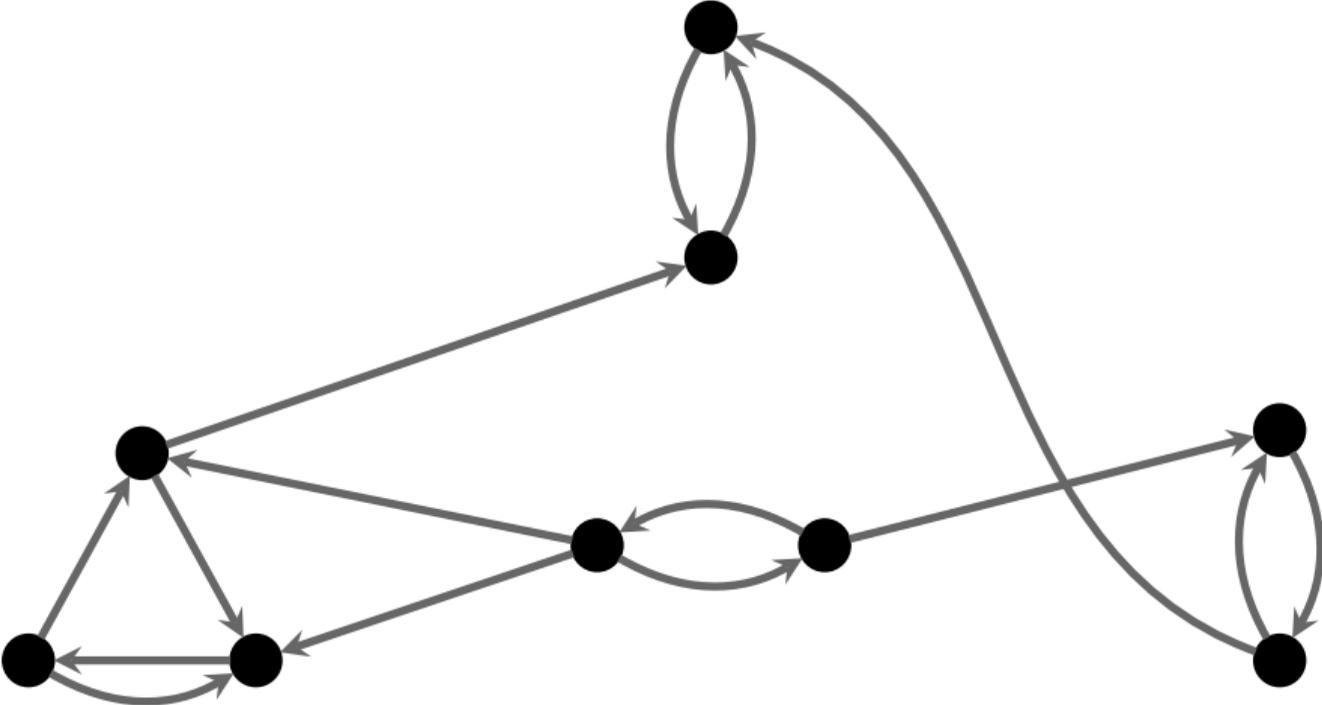
## Kosaraju's algorithm for strongly connected components

**SCC**( $G$ )

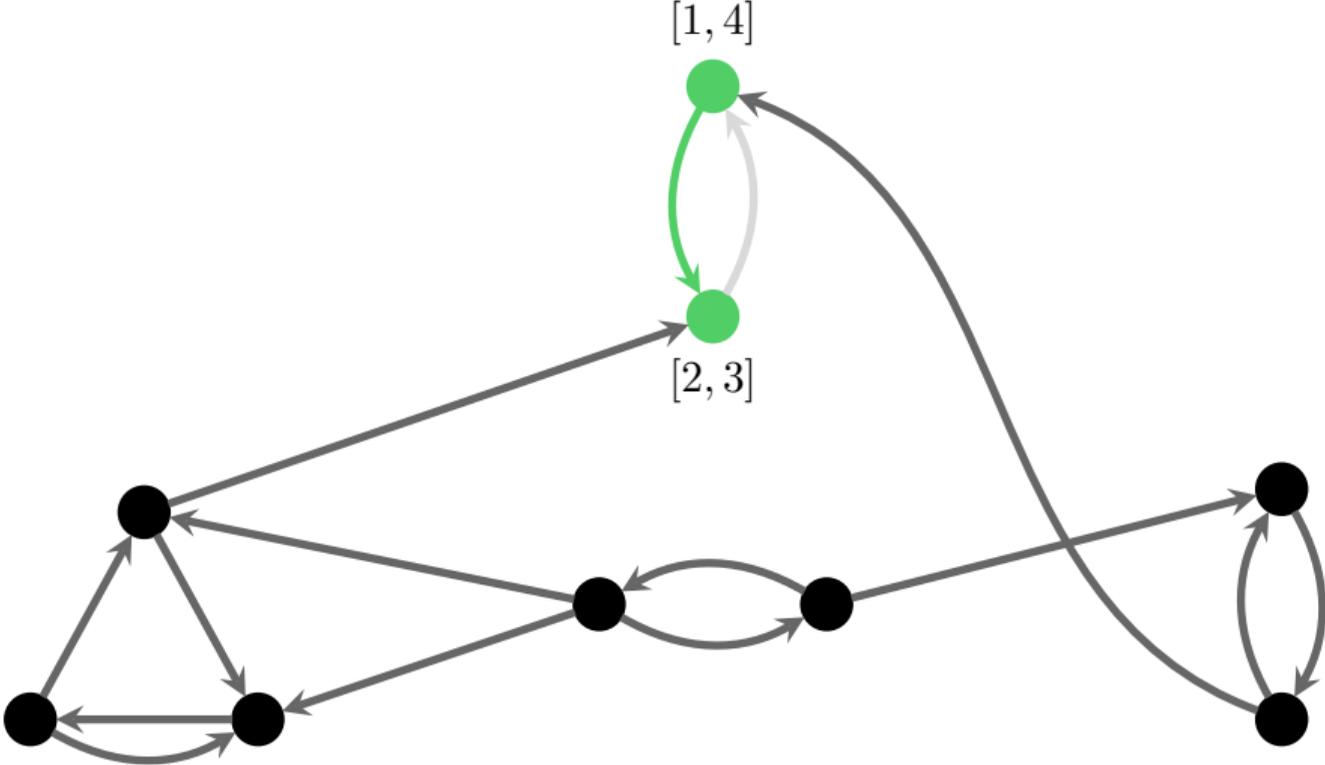
1. run a DFS on  $G$  and record finish times
2. run a DFS on  $G^T$ , with vertices ordered in **decreasing finish time**
3. return the trees in the DFS forest of  $G^T$

**Runtime:**  $O(n + m)$  (don't forget the time to reverse  $G$ )

# Kosaraju Example (First DFS)

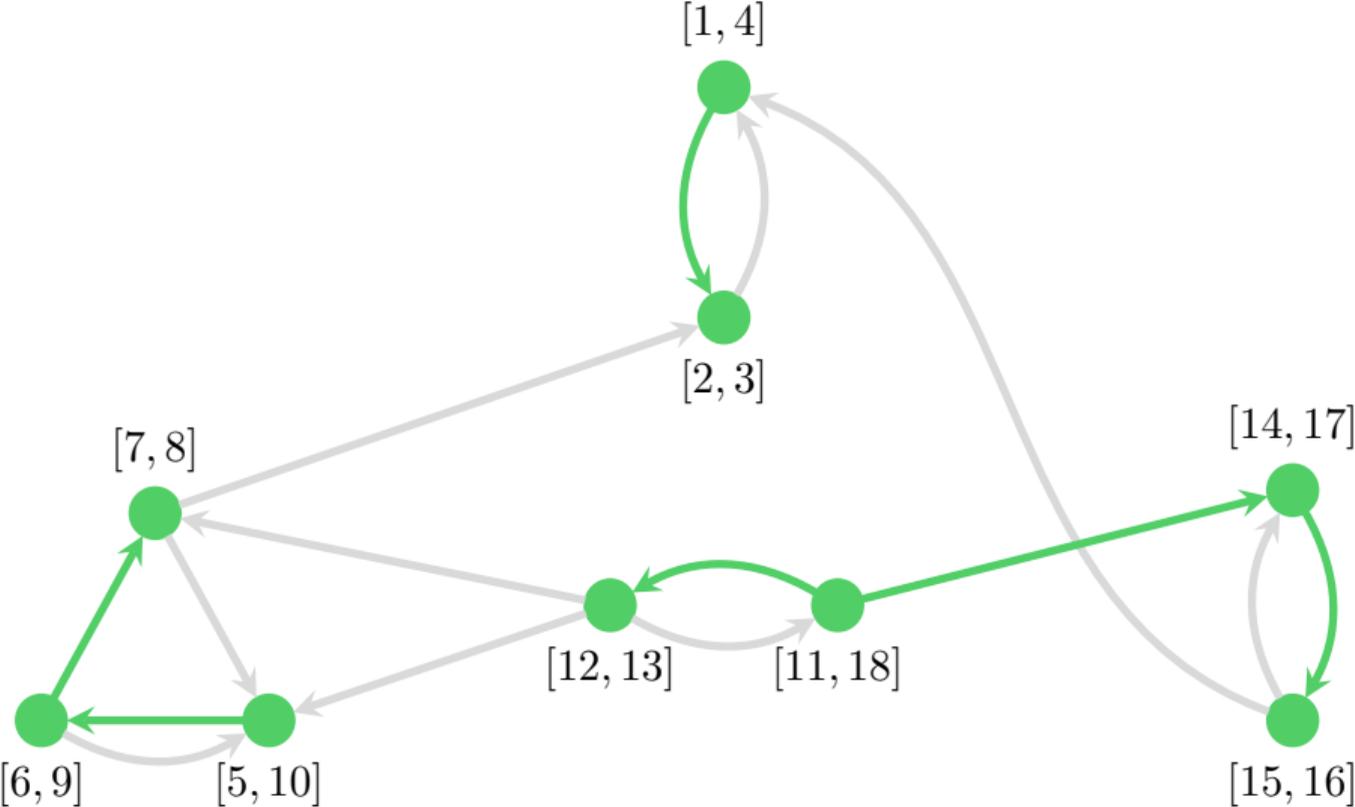


# Kosaraju Example (First DFS)

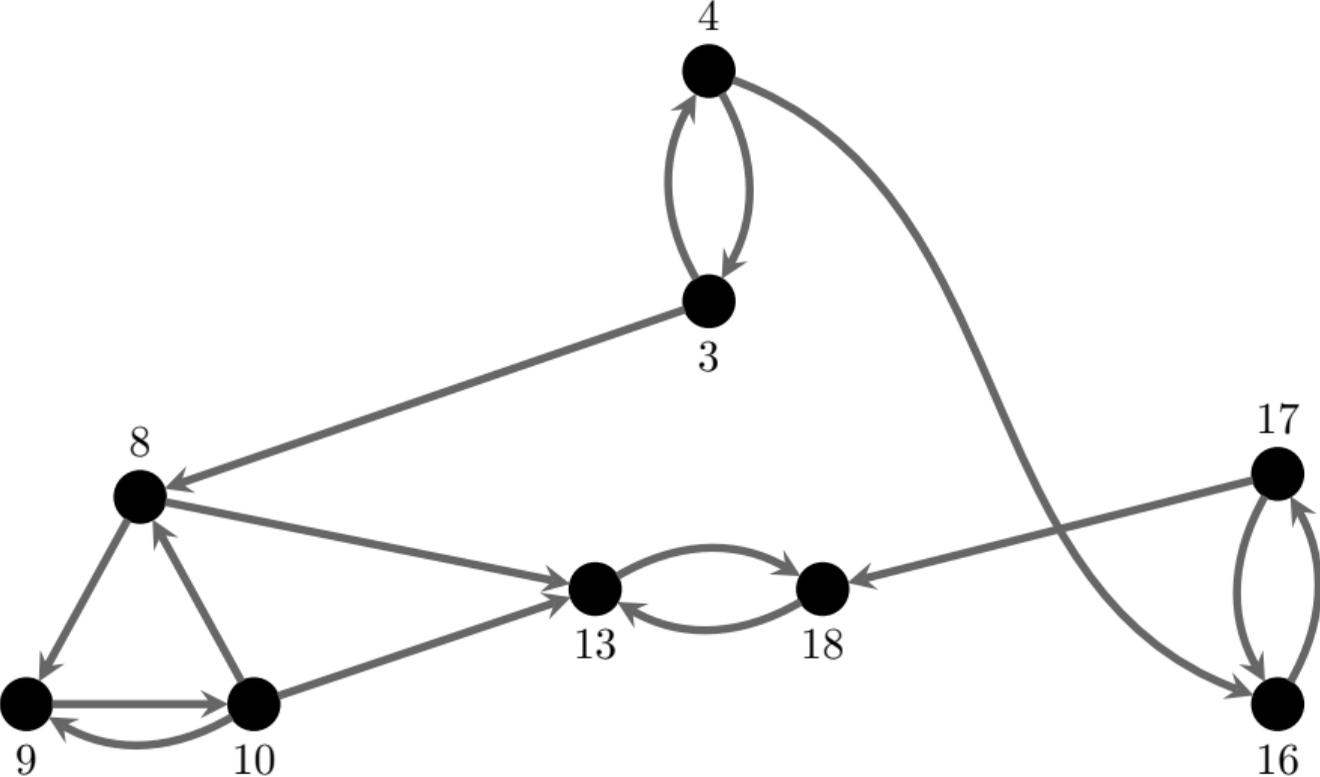




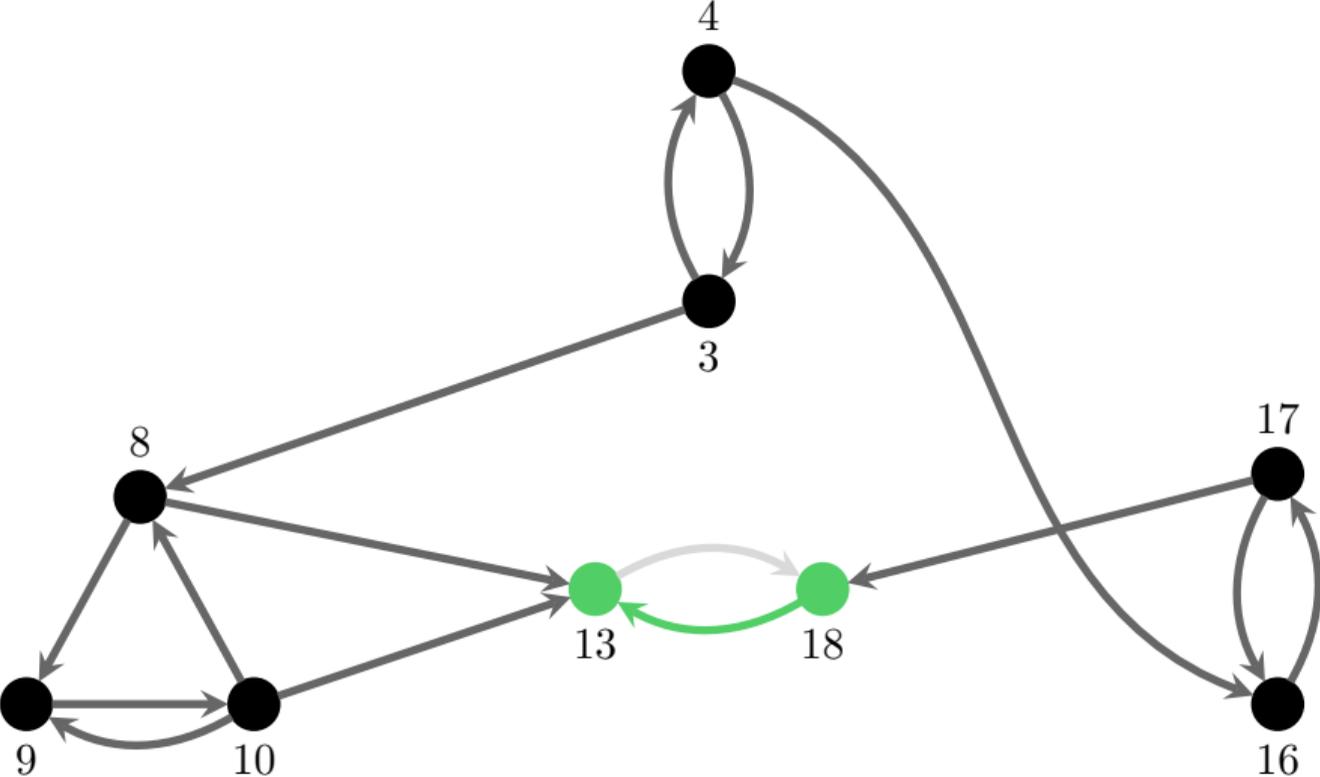
# Kosaraju Example (First DFS)



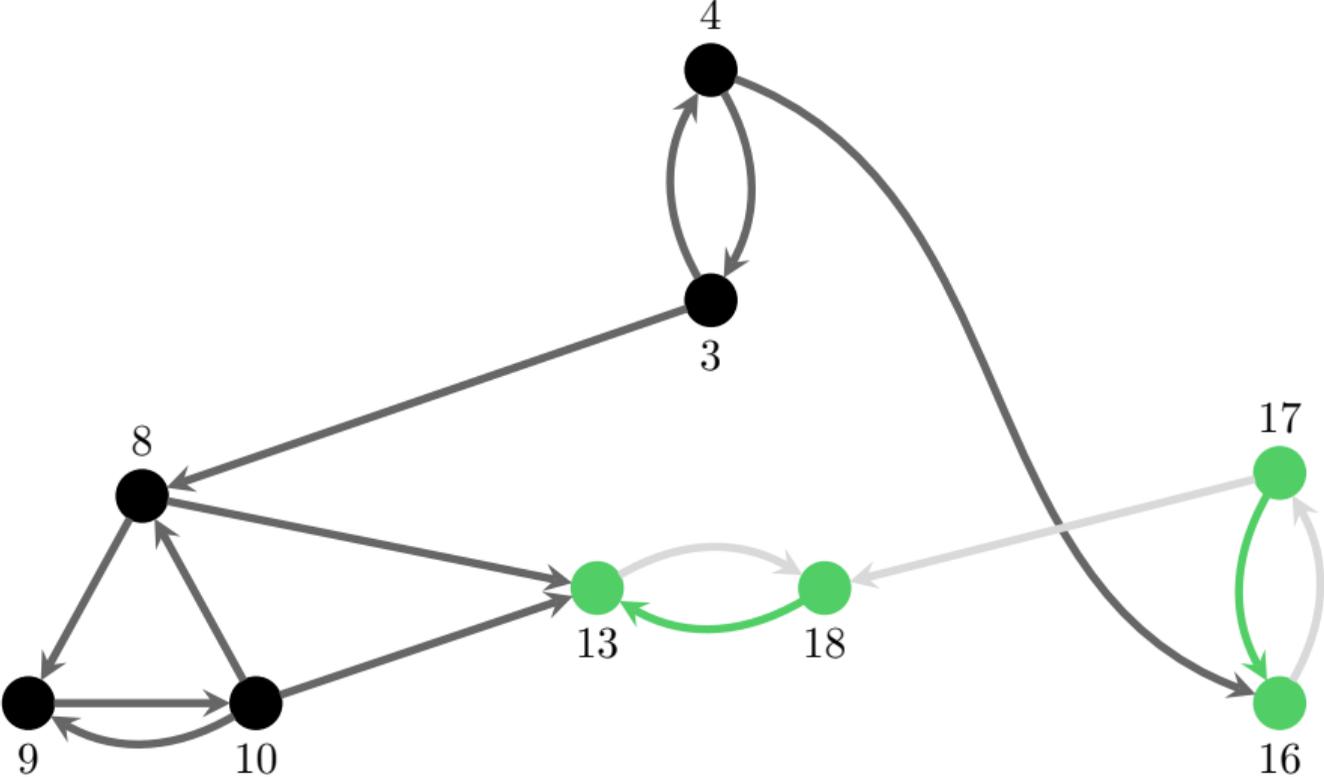
# Kosaraju Example (Second DFS)



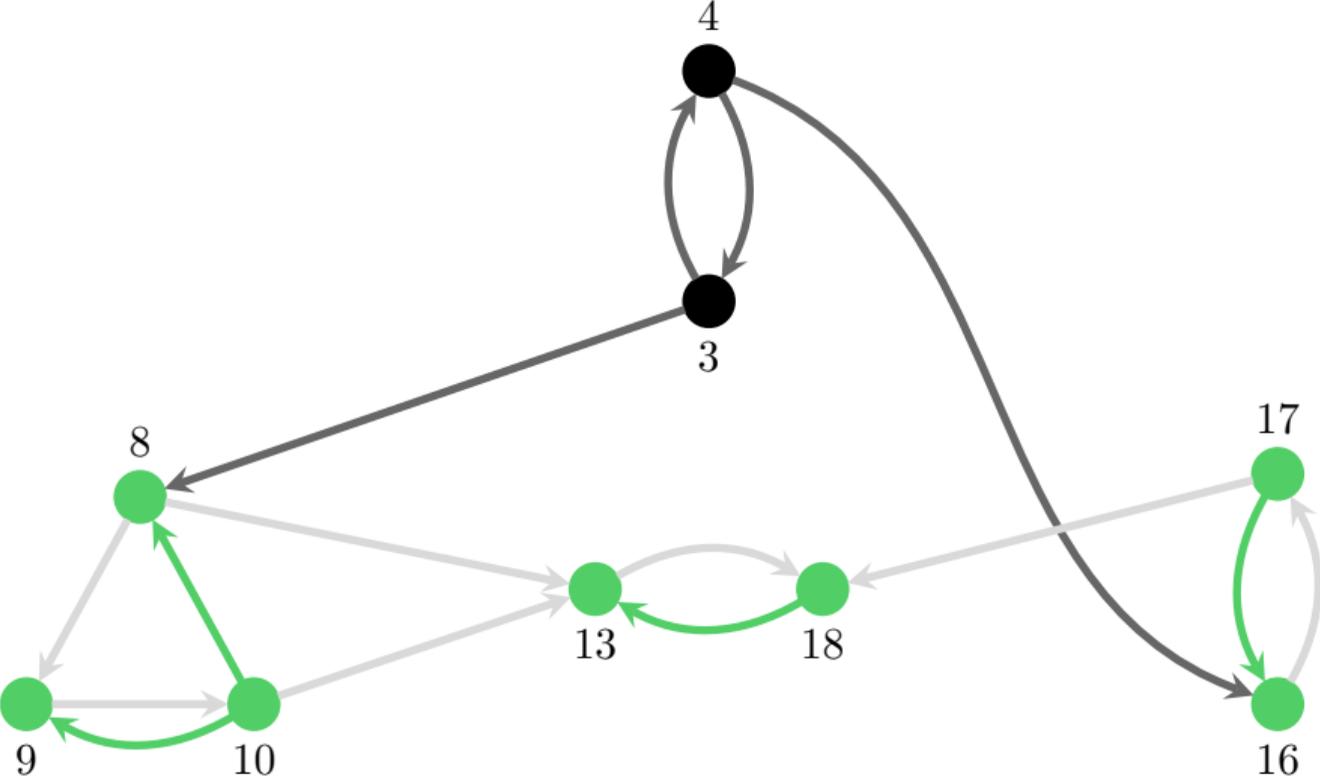
# Kosaraju Example (Second DFS)



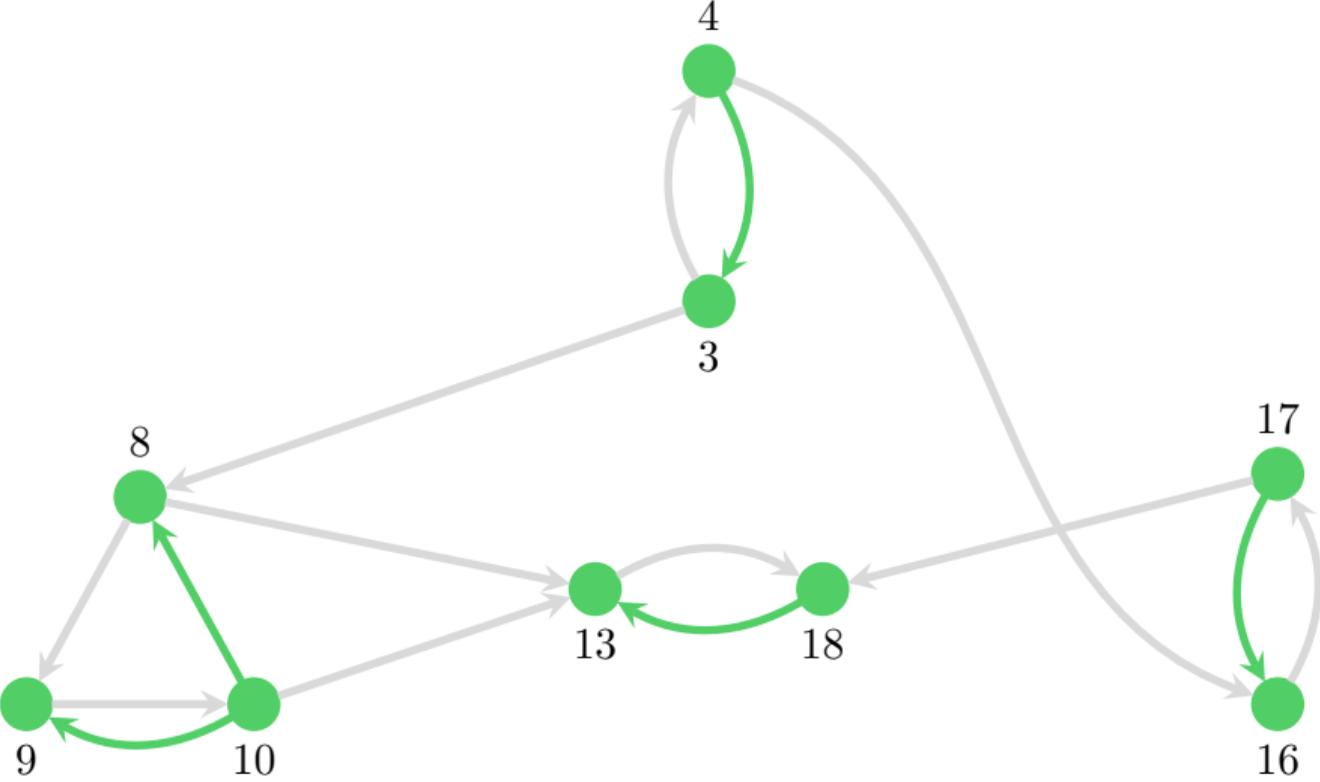
# Kosaraju Example (Second DFS)



# Kosaraju Example (Second DFS)



# Kosaraju Example (Second DFS)



## The idea behind the algorithm

### Claim

If  $S$  and  $T$  are two distinct SCCs of  $G$  and there is an edge  $T \rightarrow S$ ,  
**latest finish time in  $S$  < latest finish time in  $T$**

### Proof:

- if we visit a vertex in  $T$  first, all vertices in  $S$  will be its descendants
- if we visit a vertex in  $S$  first, we won't reach  $T$  before  $S$  is finished.

### Consequence:

- start second run from the last-finished vertex  $s$
- can prove: in  $G^T$ , every vertex reachable from  $s$  is in the same SCC
- continue

# Spanning trees

## Input and output:

- $G = (V, E)$  is a **weighted, connected undirected graph**
- edges have **weights**  $w(e_i)$
- a **spanning tree** is a tree with edges from  $E$  that covers all vertices
- examples: BFS tree, DFS tree

**Remark:** will assume  $w(e_i)$  distinct, using  $W(e_i) = [w(e_i), i]$  to break ties if needed

## Goal:

- a spanning tree with **minimal weight**
- notation:  $w(T) = \sum_{e \text{ edge in } T} w(e)$
- all weights fit in a word, unit cost model as usual

## Exercise

what about maximal weight spanning trees?

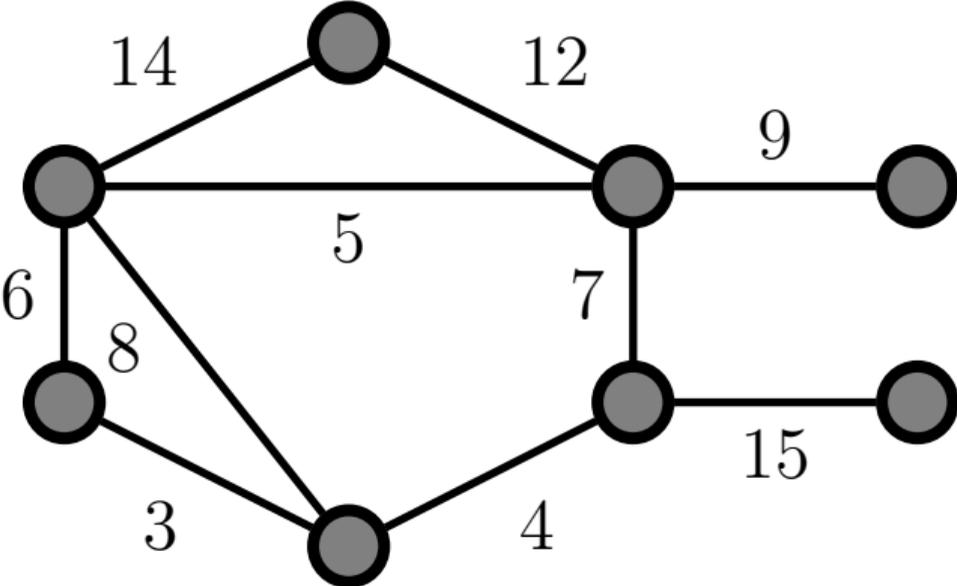
# Kruskal's algorithm

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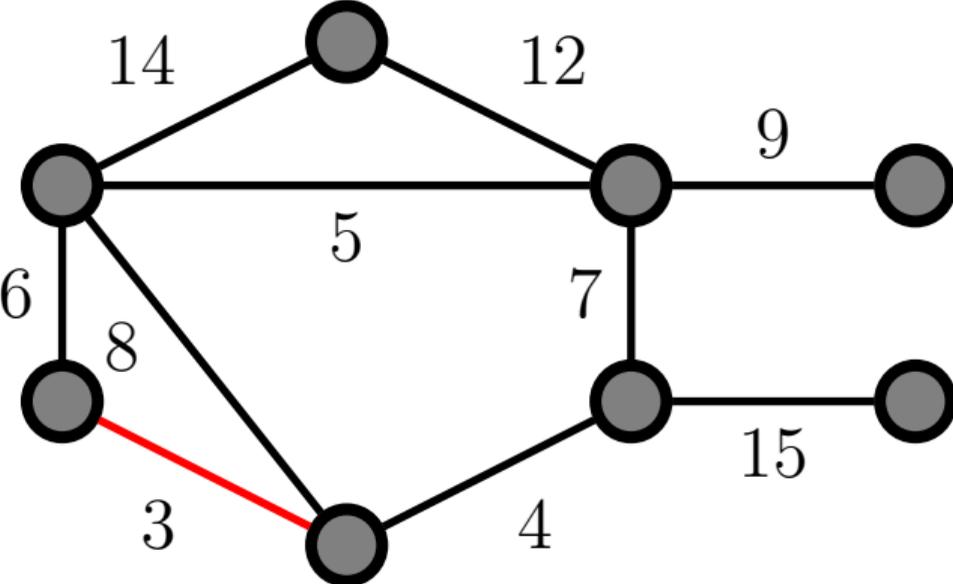
## **GreedyMST**( $G$ )

1.  $F \leftarrow \{ \}$  ( $F$  is a set of edges)
2. sort edges by increasing weight
3. **for**  $k = 1, \dots, m$  **do**
4.     **if**  $e_k$  does not create a cycle in  $(V, F)$  **then**
5.         append  $e_k$  to  $F$
6. **return**  $A = (V, F)$

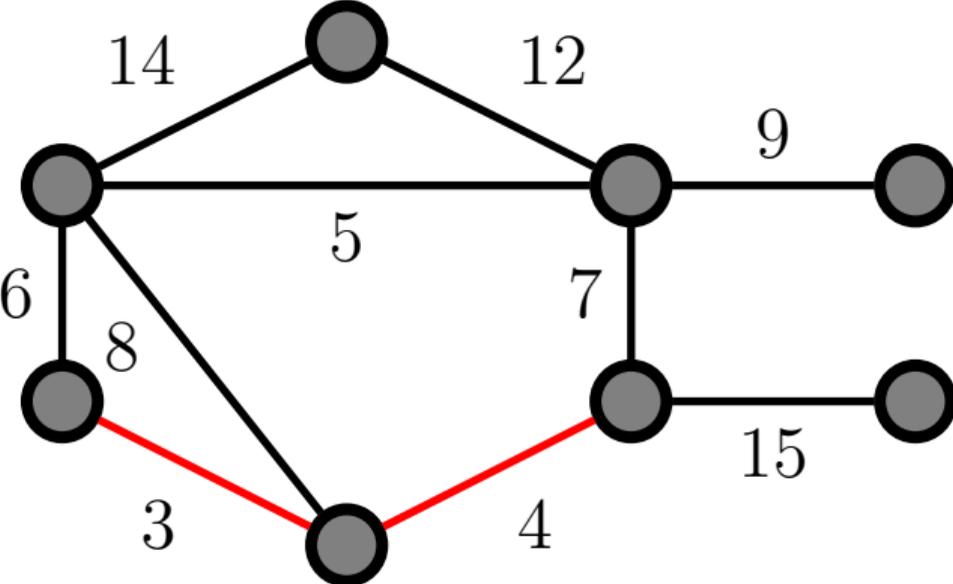
# Example



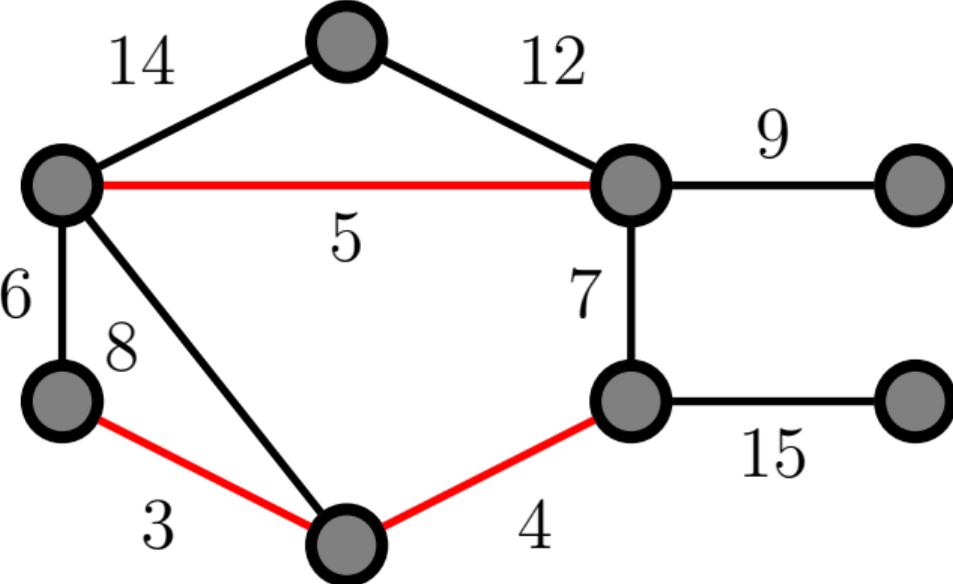
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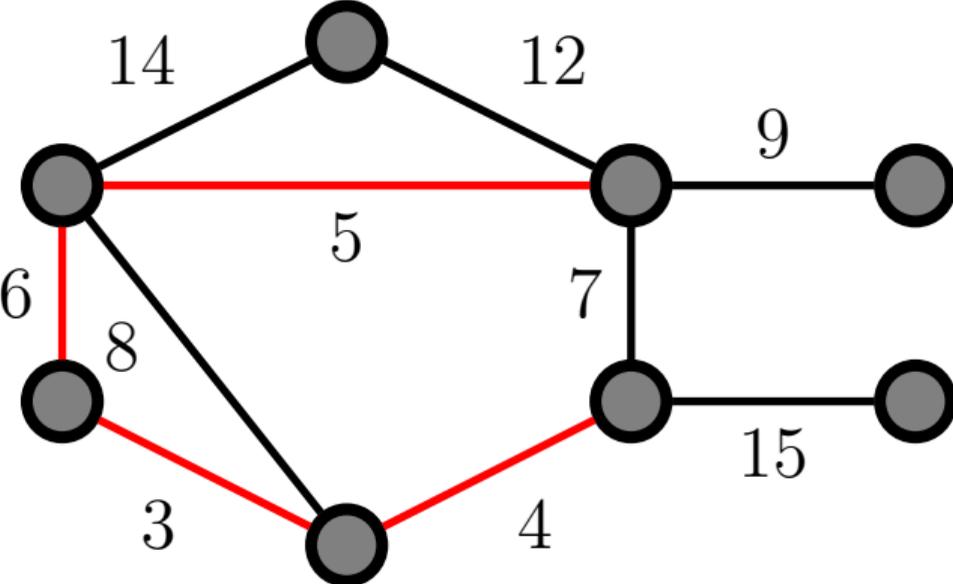
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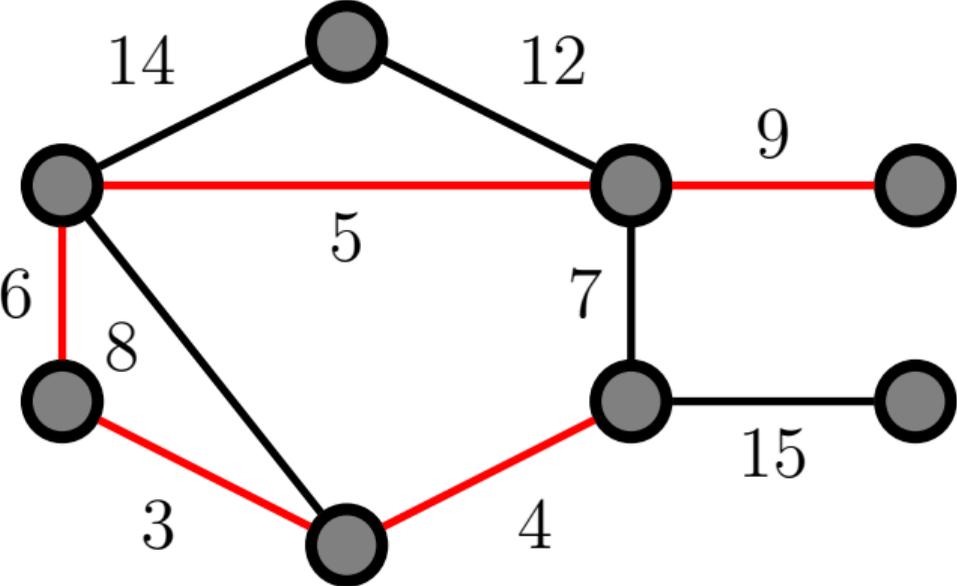
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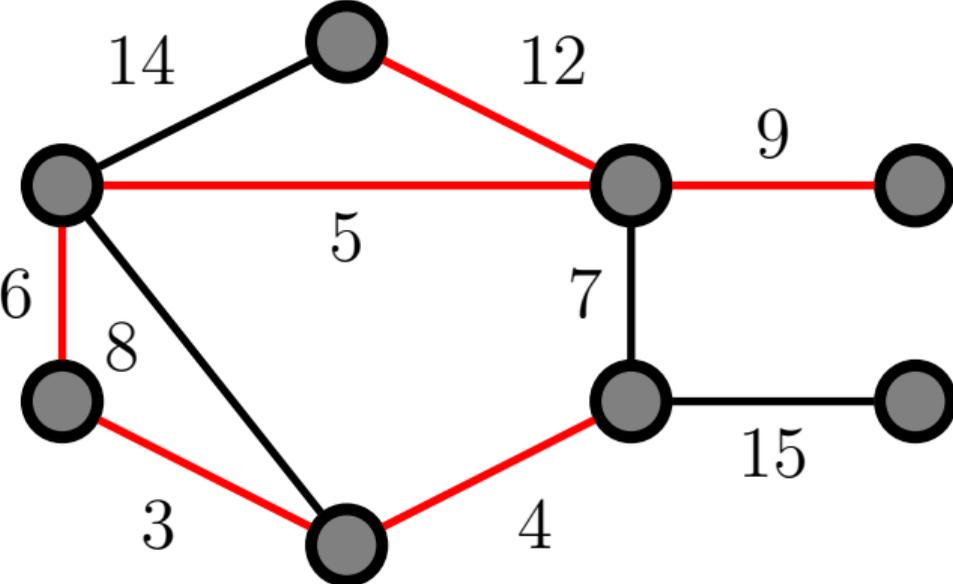
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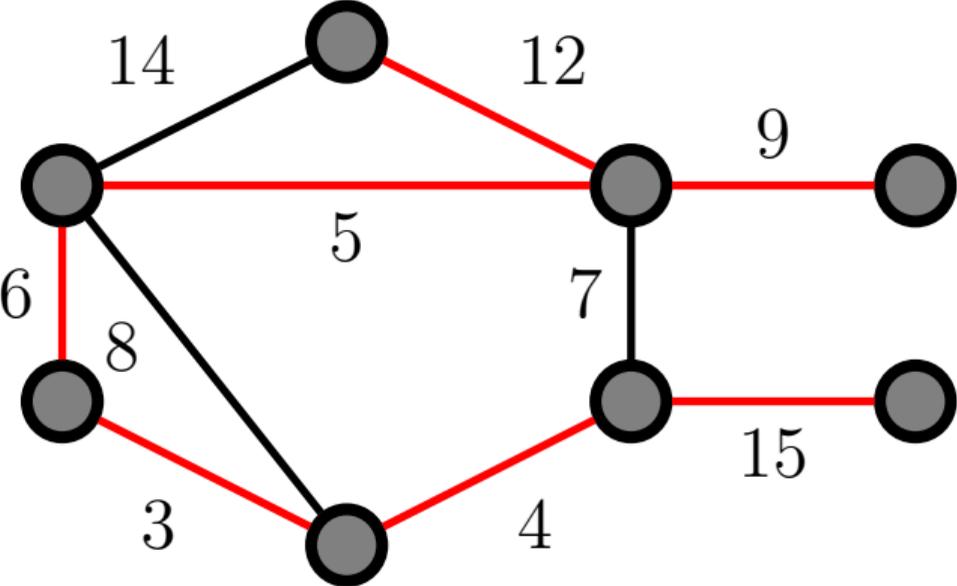
# Example



# Example



# Example



## Properties of the output

### Claim

The output  $A = (V, F)$  is a **spanning tree**

### Proof:

- of course,  $A$  has no cycle: it is a **forest**
- suppose  $A$  is **not connected**. Then, there exists an edge  $e$  not in  $F$ , such that  $(V, F \cup \{e\})$  still has no cycle (join two connected components)
- when we checked  $e$ , we did not include it
- that's because that it created a cycle with some edges already in  $F$ : **impossible**.

# The cut property

## Definition

**cut:** a partition of the vertices into sets  $S$  and  $V - S$

**cutset:** the edges between  $S$  and  $V - S$

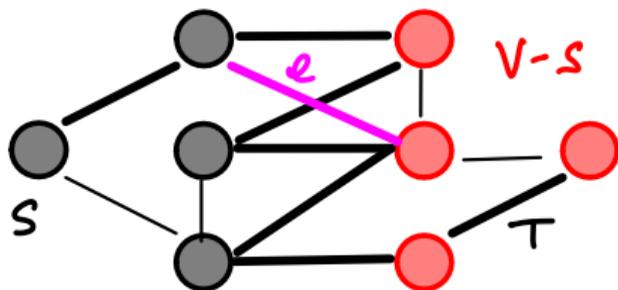
## Claim

For **any** cut, the minimal weight edge in the cutset is in **any** minimum spanning tree.

## Proof

For any cut, the minimal weight edge  $e$  in the cutset is in any minimum spanning tree.

- let  $T$  be a minimum spanning tree **that does not contain**  $e$
- adding  $e$  to  $T$  creates a cycle  $C$ , and there must be an edge  $e' \neq e$  in  $C$  connecting  $S$  and  $V - S$



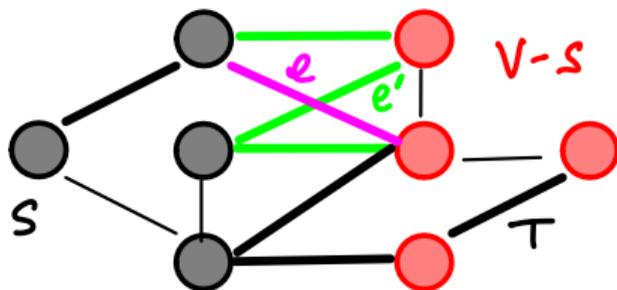
consider  $T' = T - \{e'\} \cup \{e\}$

- $w(T') < w(T)$
- but  $T'$  is still a spanning tree
  - $n - 1$  edges
  - connected: can replace edge  $e'$  by  $C - \{e'\}$  to connect vertices
- contradiction

## Proof

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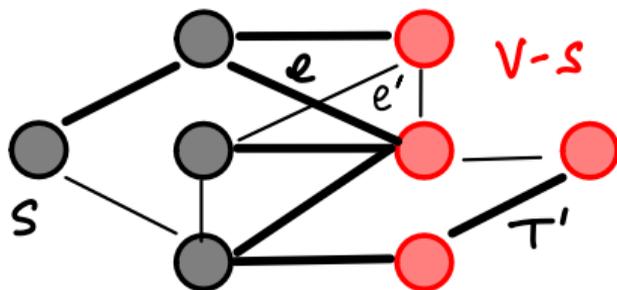
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  - $n - 1$  edges
  - connected: can replace edge  $e'$  by  $C - \{e'\}$  to connect vertices
- contradiction

## Kruskal is optimal

**Claim:** every edge we add to the output is in every minimal spanning tree

**Proof:** consider  $A = (V, F)$  the forest just before inserting  $e = \{u, v\}$ , let  $S$  be the vertices in the tree containing  $u$

**fact 1:**  $v$  is in  $V - S$  (otherwise, cycle), so  $e$  is in the cutset

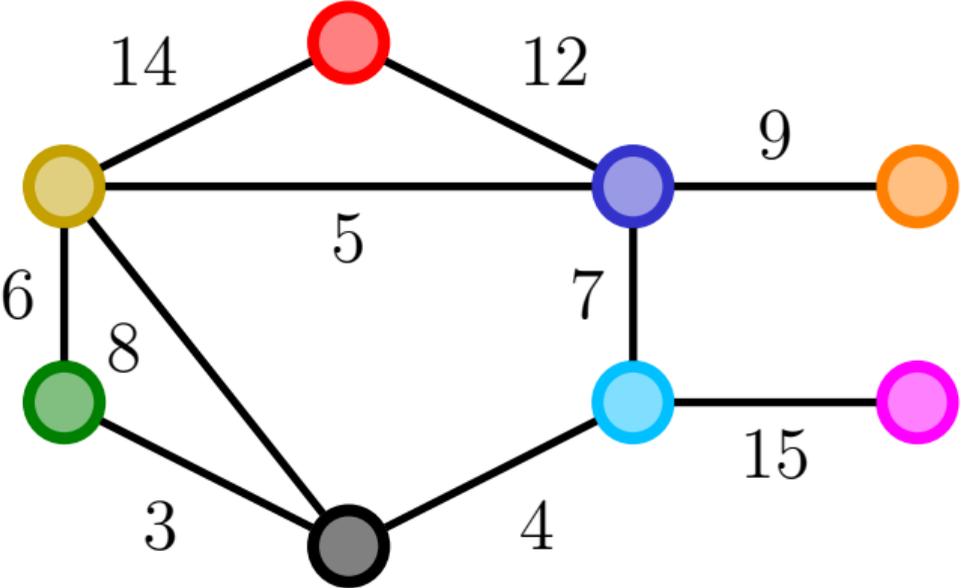
**fact 2:** if  $e'$  is another edge in the cutset:

- it has not been considered yet (does not create a cycle, so would have been accepted)
- so  $w(e) < w(e')$

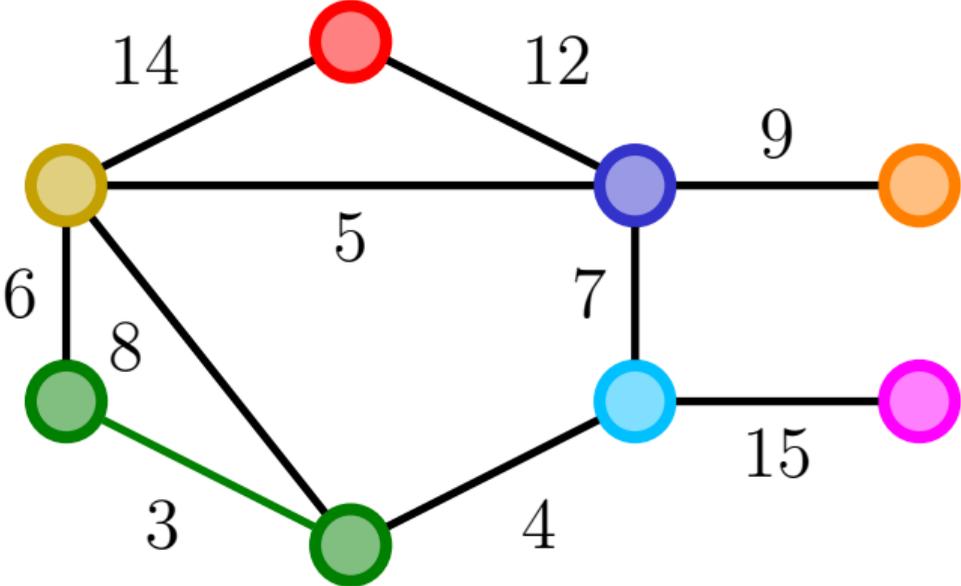
so  $e$  has **minimal weight in the cutset**, and it is in every minimal spanning tree

**Remark:** this proves that the minimum spanning tree is unique

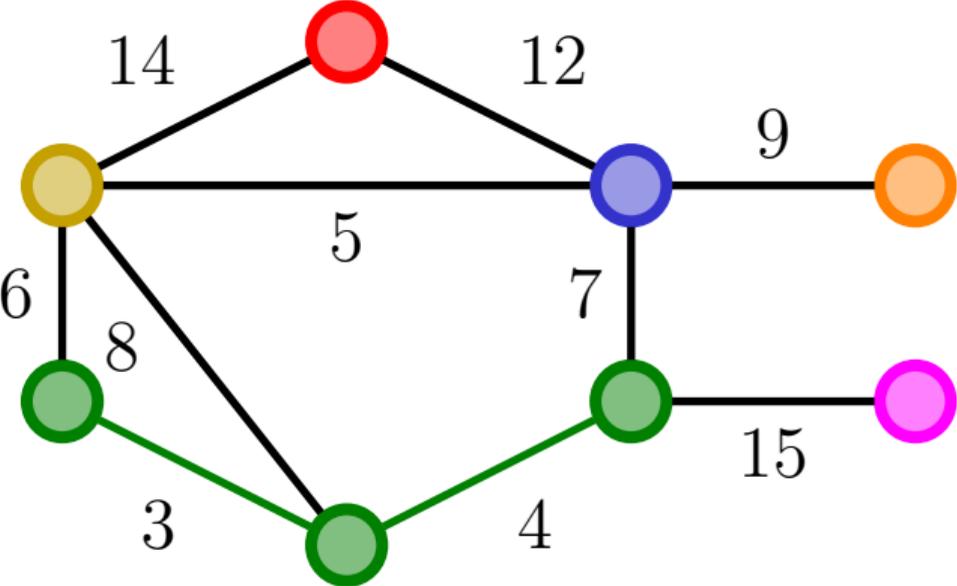
# Merging trees



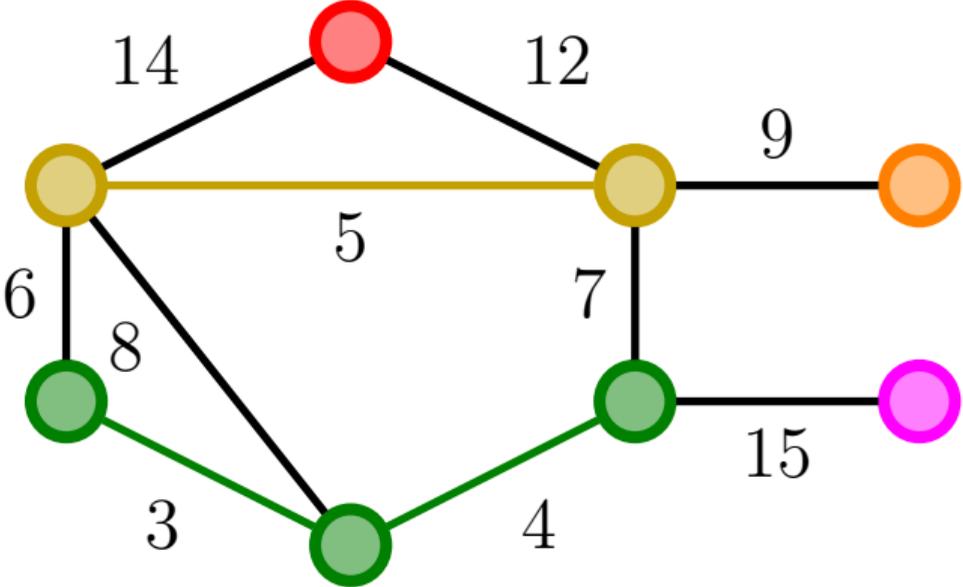
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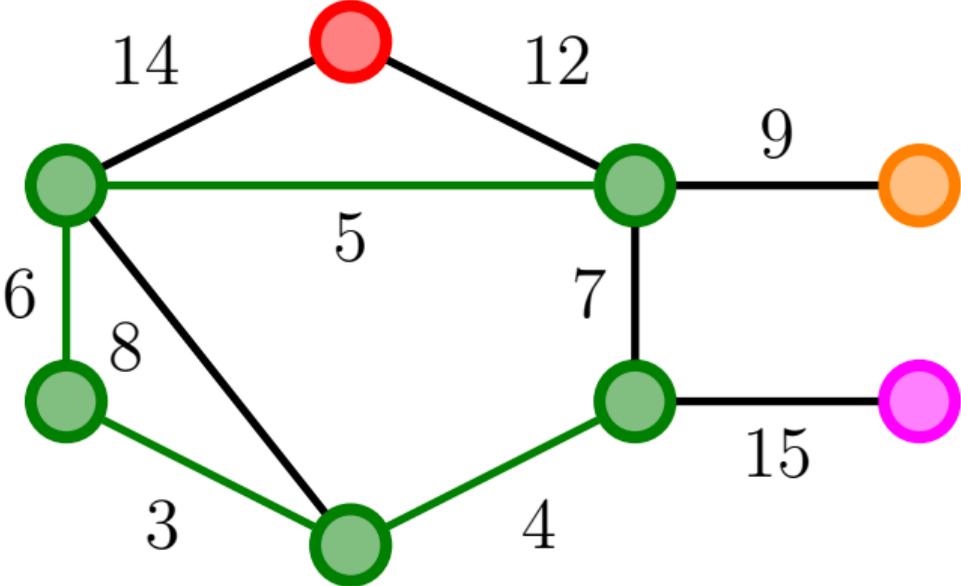
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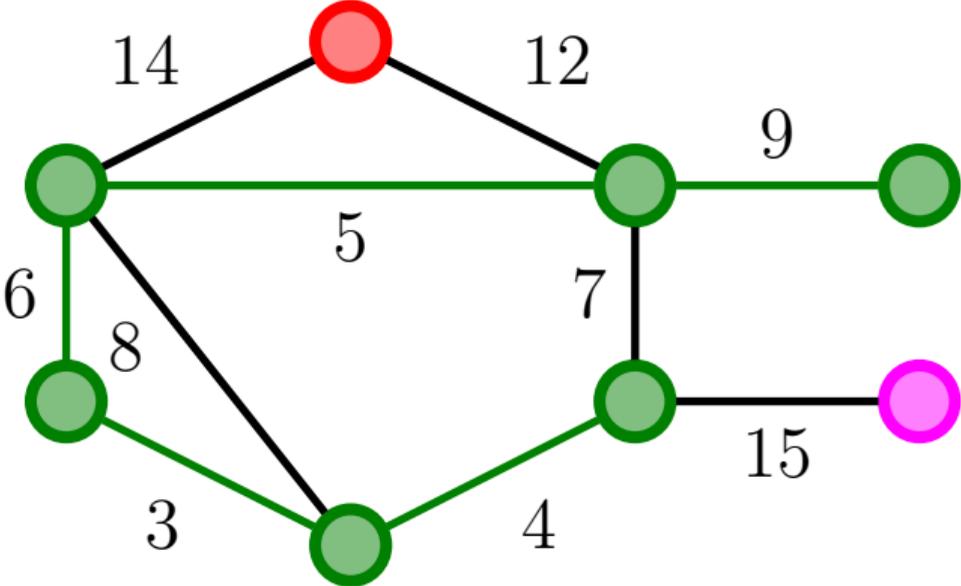
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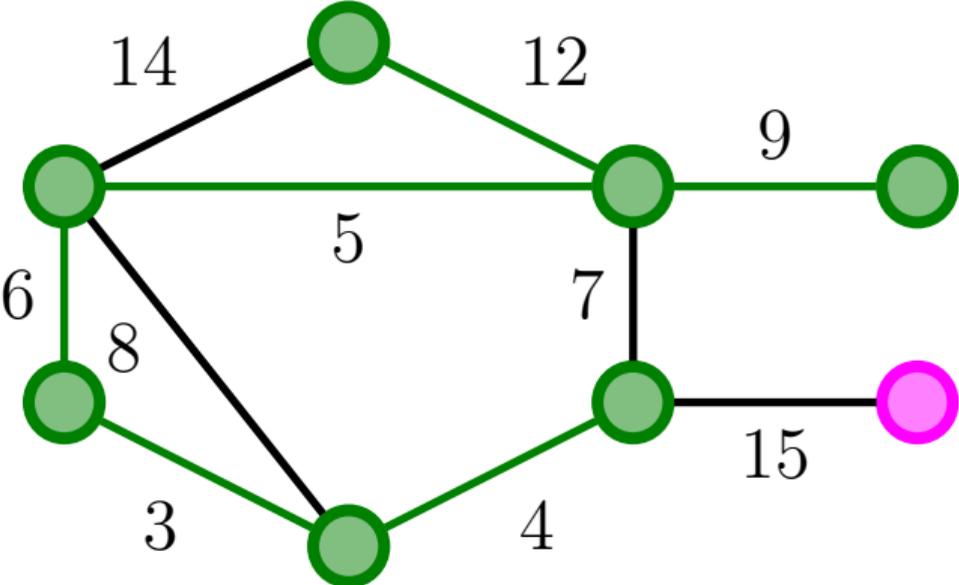
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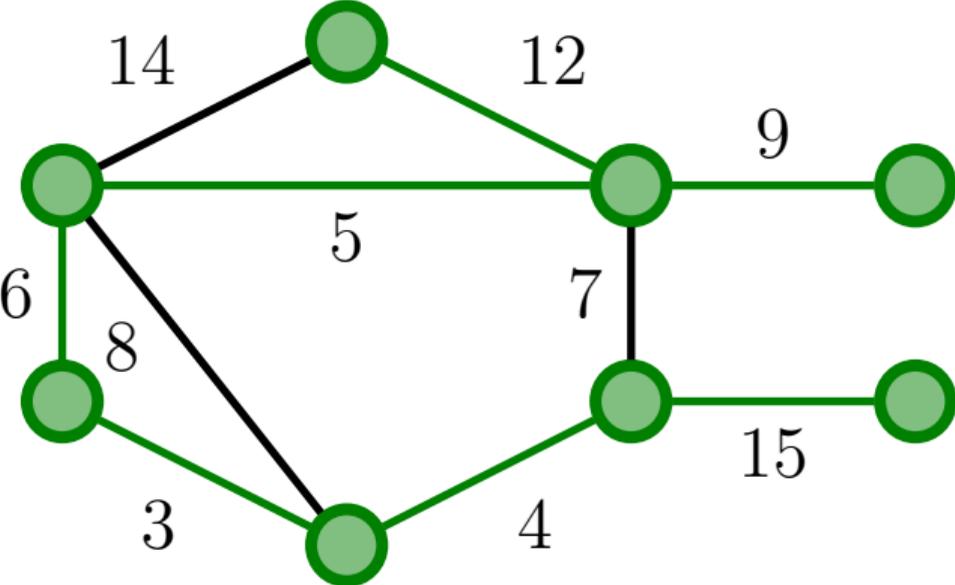
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# Data structures

Operations on **disjoint sets of vertices**:

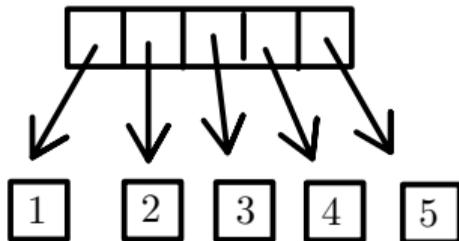
- **Find**: identify which set contains a given vertex
- **Union**: replace two sets by their union

## **GreedyMST\_UnionFind**( $G$ )

1.  $F \leftarrow \{\}$
2.  $S \leftarrow \{\{v_1\}, \dots, \{v_n\}\}$
3. sort edges by increasing weight
4. **for**  $k = 1, \dots, m$  **do**
5.     **if**  $\text{find}(S, e_k.1) \neq \text{find}(S, e_k.2)$  **then**
6.         **union**( $S, \text{find}(S, e_k.1), \text{find}(S, e_k.2)$ )
7.         append  $e_k$  to  $F$

## An OK solution

a data structure for union: an array  $U$  of **linked lists**

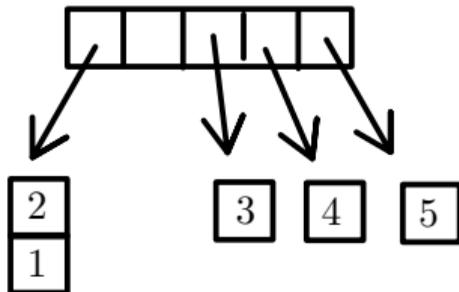


**union\_v1**( $U, s, t$ )

1. **while**  $U[s]$  not **NULL** **do**
2.      $U[t] \leftarrow$  new list( $U[s].value, U[t]$ )
3.      $U[s] \leftarrow U[s].next$

## An OK solution

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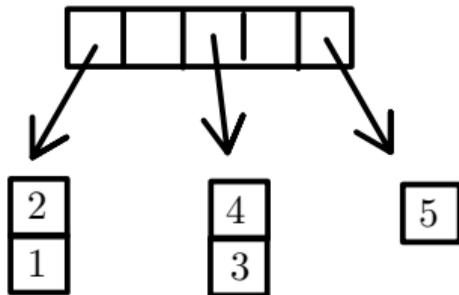
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**union\_v1**( $U, 2, 1$ )

## An OK solution

a data structure for union: an array  $U$  of **linked lists**



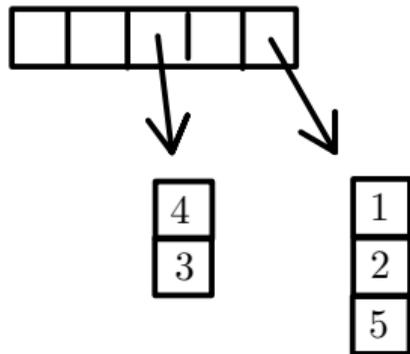
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**union\_v1**( $U, 2, 1$ ), **union\_v1**( $U, 4, 3$ )

## An OK solution

a data structure for union: an array  $U$  of **linked lists**



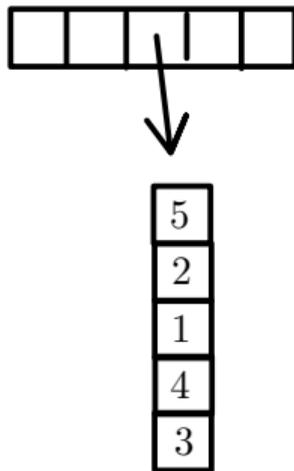
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**union\_v1**( $U, 2, 1$ ), **union\_v1**( $U, 4, 3$ ), **union\_v1**( $U, 1, 5$ )

## An OK solution

a data structure for union: an array  $U$  of **linked lists**



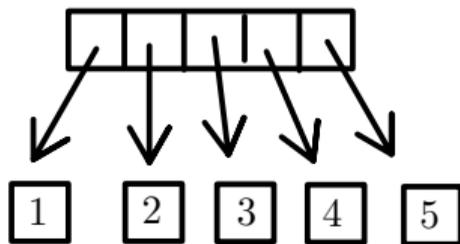
**union\_v1**( $U, s, t$ )

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**union\_v1**( $U, 2, 1$ ), **union\_v1**( $U, 4, 3$ ), **union\_v1**( $U, 1, 5$ ), **union\_v1**( $U, 5, 3$ )

## An OK solution

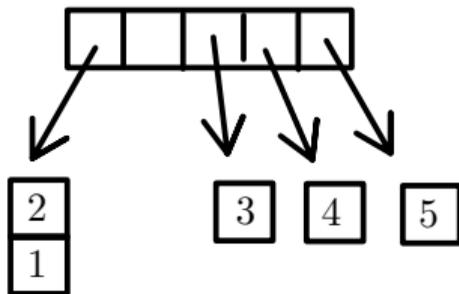
for **find**, use an **array of indices**,  $X[i]$  = index of the set that contains  $i$  (**find** returns  $X[i]$ )



$$X = [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]$$

## An OK solution

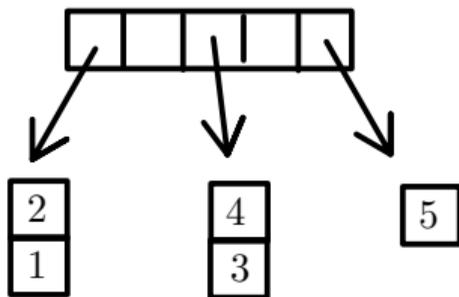
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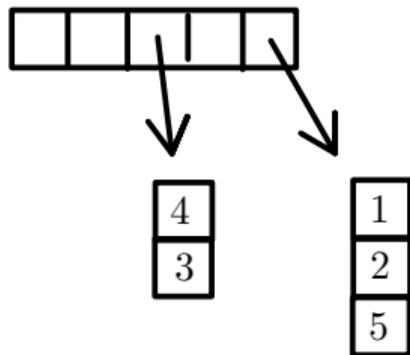
for **find**, use an **array of indices**,  $X[i]$  = index of the set that contains  $i$  (**find** returns  $X[i]$ )



$$X = [1, 1, 3, 3, 5]$$

## An OK solution

for **find**, use an **array of indices**,  $X[i] = \text{index of the set that contains } i$  (**find** returns  $X[i]$ )



$$X = [5, 5, 3, 3, 5]$$

## An OK solution

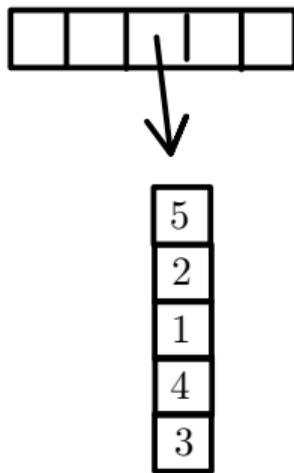
for **find**, use an **array of indices**,  $X[i] = \text{index of the set that contains } i$  (**find** returns  $X[i]$ )



$$X = [3, 3, 3, 3, 3]$$

## An OK solution

for **find**, use an **array of indices**,  $X[i] = \text{index of the set that contains } i$  (**find** returns  $X[i]$ )



```
union_v2( $X, U, s, t$ )
```

1. **while**  $U[s]$  not **NULL** **do**
2.      $U[t] \leftarrow \text{new list}(U[s].\text{value}, U[t])$
3.      $X[U[s].\text{value}] \leftarrow t$
4.      $U[s] \leftarrow U[s].\text{next}$

# Analysis

## Worst case:

- **find** is  $O(1)$
- **union traverses** one of the linked lists: worst case  $\Theta(n)$

## Kruskal's algorithm:

- sorting edges  $O(m \log(m))$
- $O(m)$  calls to **find**
- $O(n)$  calls to **union**

Worst case  $O(m \log(m) + n^2)$

# A simple heuristics for Union

## Modified Union

- each list in  $U$  keeps track of its size
- merge the **smaller list** into the **larger list**

**Key observation:** worst case for **one** union **still**  $\Theta(n)$ , but the amortized cost is better.

- for any vertex  $v$ , the size of the list containing  $v$  **at least doubles** when it moves to another list
- so  $v$  moves at most  $\log(n)$  times
- so the **total** cost of union **per vertex** is  $O(\log(n))$

**Conclusion:**  $O(n \log(n))$  for all unions and  $O(m \log(m))$  total

## Alternate amortized proof

$$\begin{aligned}\text{cost}(\text{all union operations}) &= \sum_{\text{union } u} \text{cost}(u) \\ &= \sum_{\text{union } u} \text{length}(\text{smaller set of } u) && \in \sum_{\text{union } u} O(n) \\ &= \sum_{\text{union } u} \sum_{\text{vertex } v} \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v \in \text{smaller set of } u \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \\ &= \sum_{\text{vertex } v} \sum_{\text{union } u} \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v \in \text{smaller set of } u \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \\ &\leq \sum_{\text{vertex } v} \log n \\ &\in O(n \log n)\end{aligned}$$

# Prim's algorithm (time permitting)

# The idea

## Goal

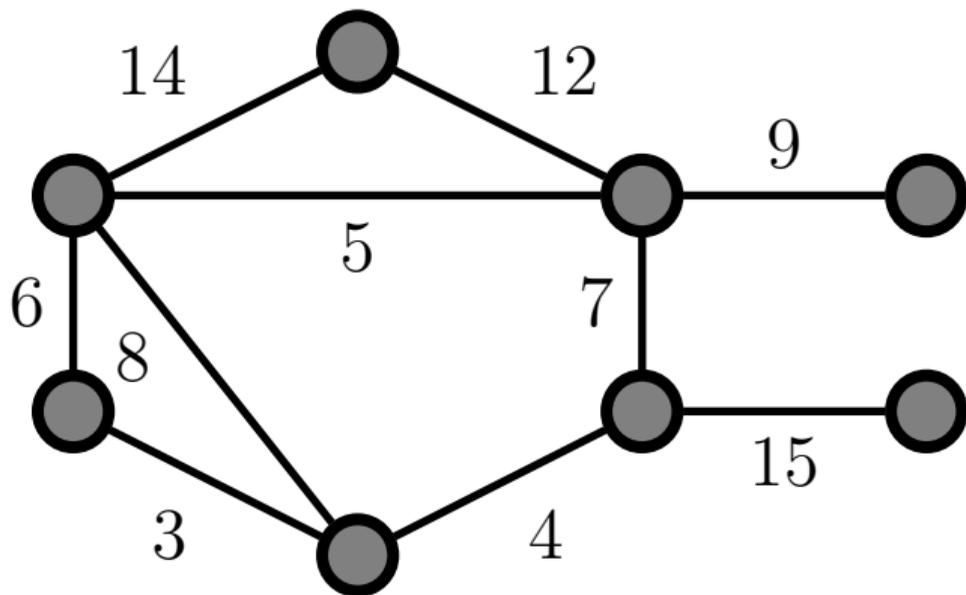
- $G$  is an undirected graph
- $w : E \rightarrow R$  a weight function
- as before, want a **minimum weight spanning tree**

## The idea:

- start from an **arbitrary source**
- **grow a tree** (connected, no cycle) edge-by-edge
- new edges chosen in a greedy manner

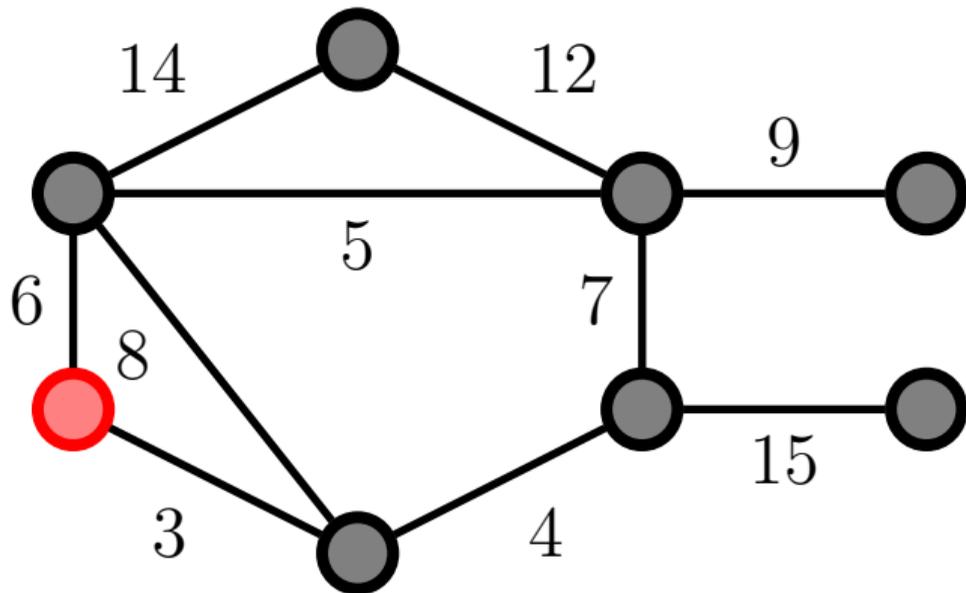
## Growing a tree

We grow  $A = (S, F)$  by adding the **minimal weight edge**  $S \leftrightarrow (V - S)$



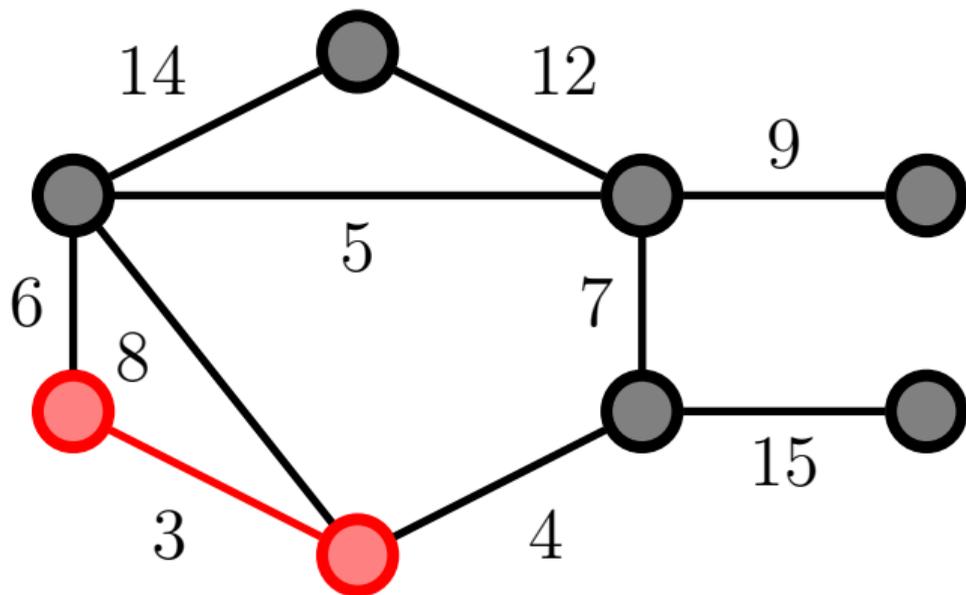
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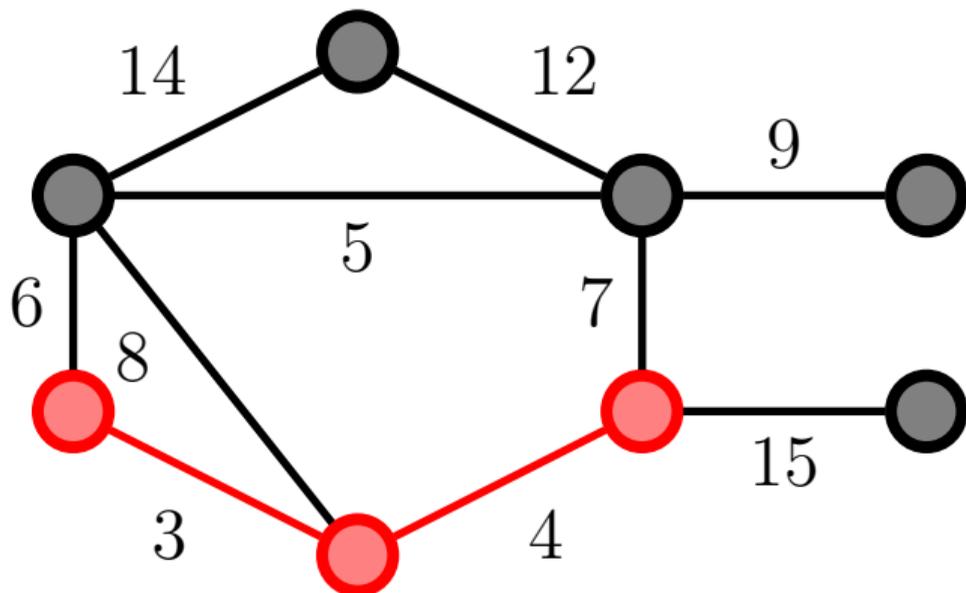
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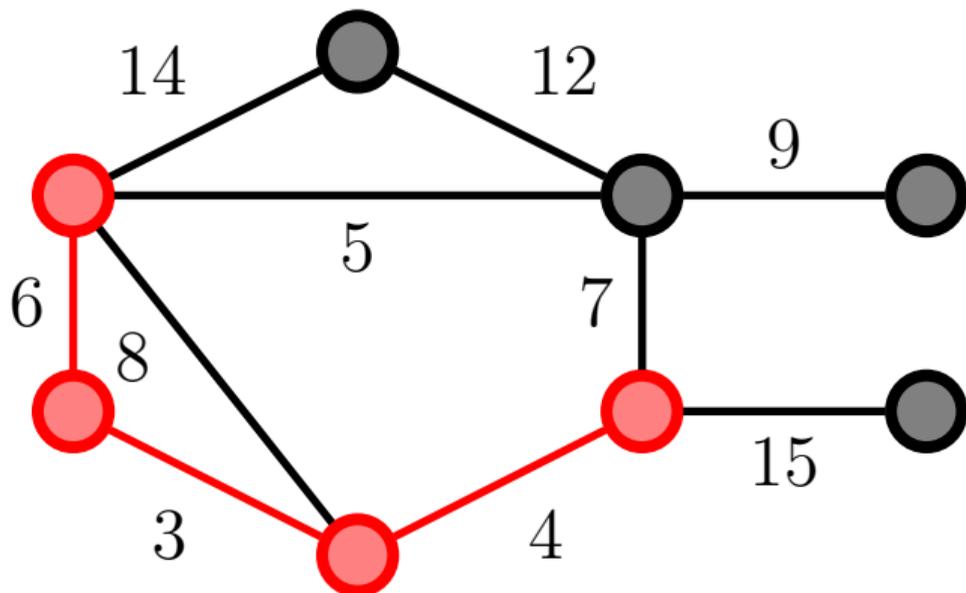
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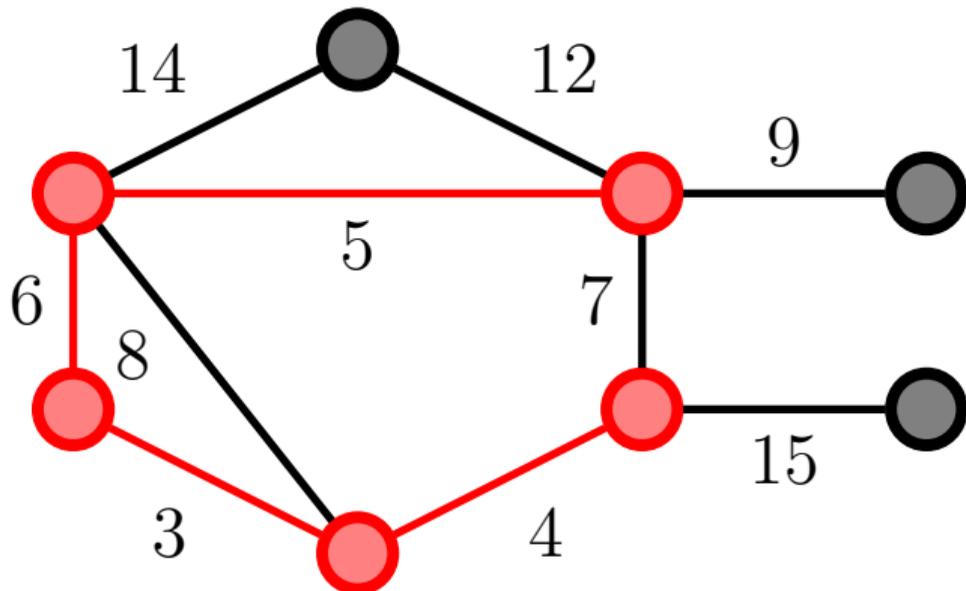
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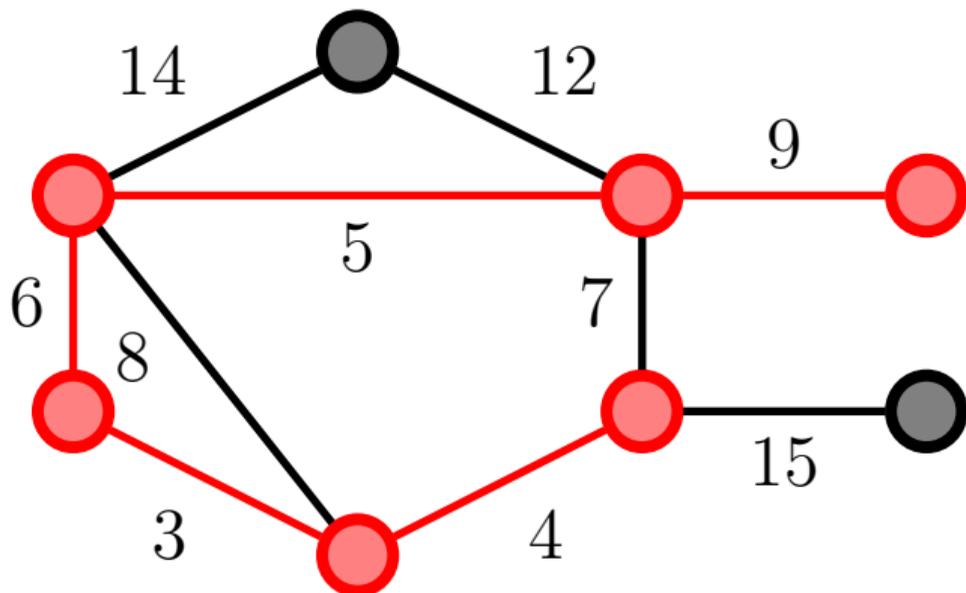
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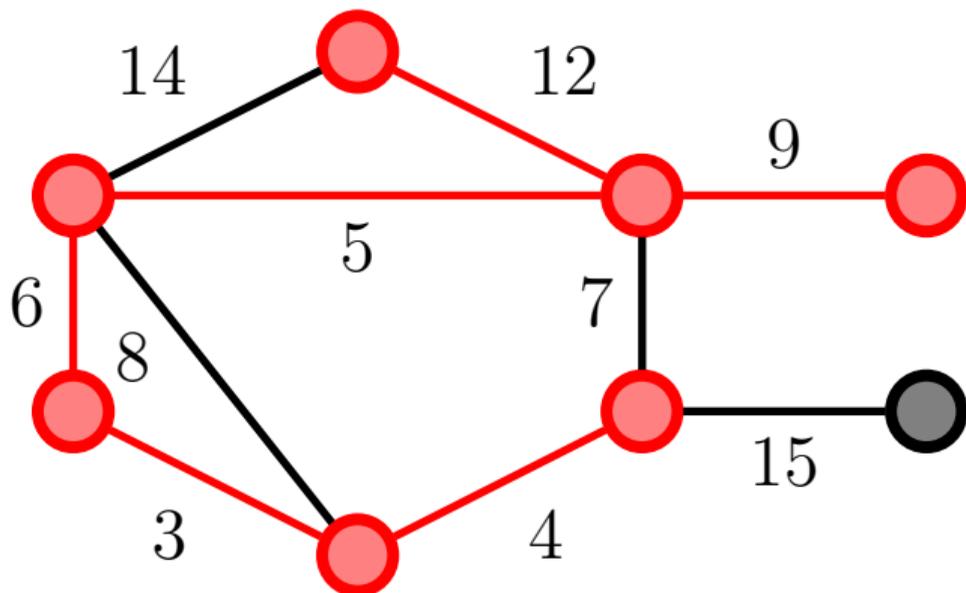
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