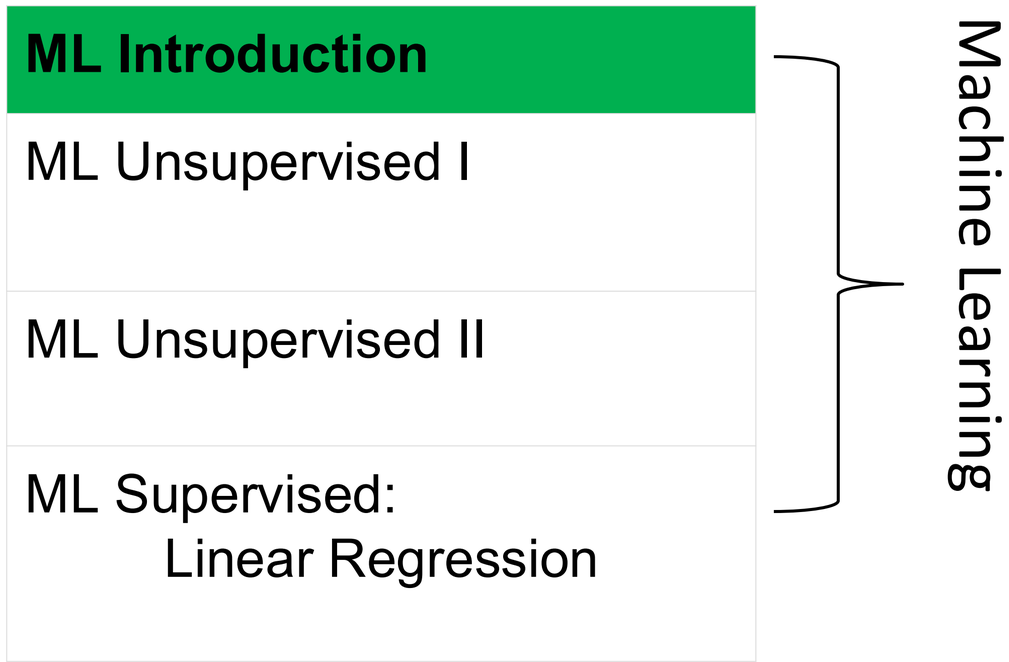
CS 540 Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
Machine Learning Overview

University of Wisconsin–Madison
Fall 2025, Section 3
September 22, 2025

Announcements

- **HW2 due on Friday, September 26th at 11:59 PM**

Class roadmap:

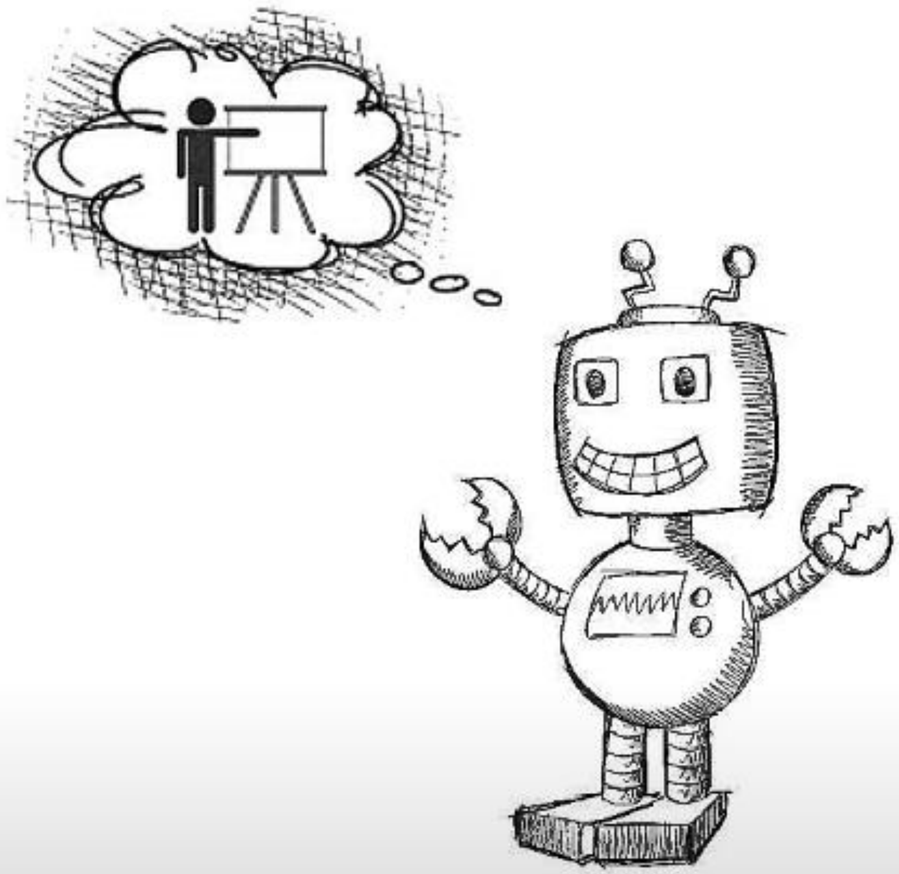


Today’s outline

- What is machine learning?
- Supervised Learning
  - Classification
  - Regression
- Unsupervised Learning
  - Clustering
  - Self-Supervised Learning
- Reinforcement Learning

Part I: What is machine learning?

HUMANS LEARN FROM
PAST EXPERIENCES

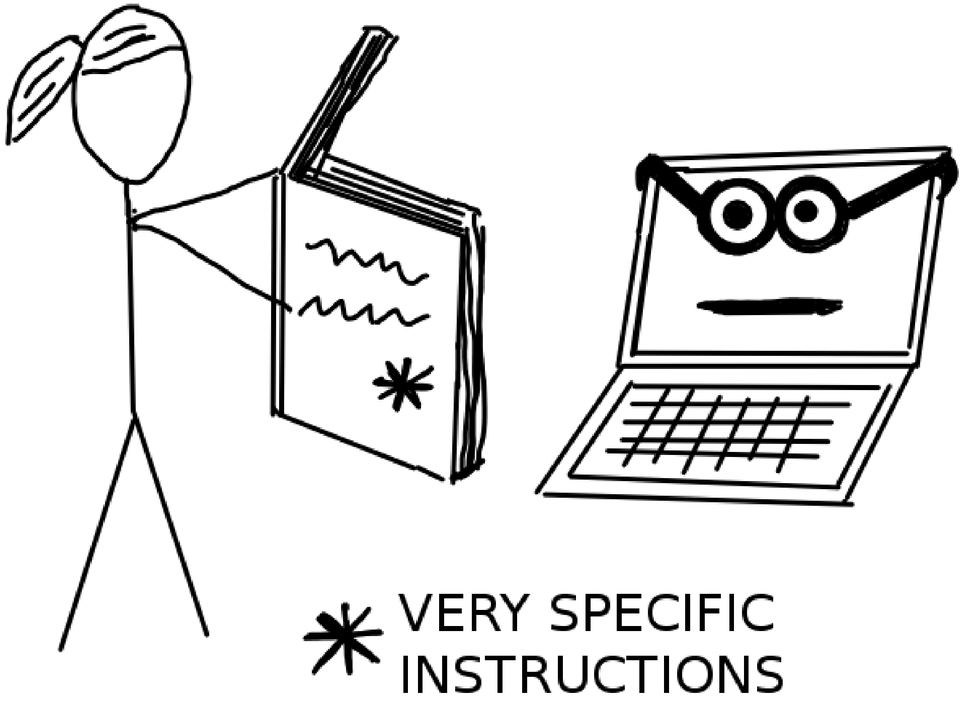


MACHINES FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS
GIVEN BY HUMANS

What is machine learning?

- Arthur Samuel (1959): Machine learning is the field of study that gives the computer the ability to learn **without being explicitly programmed**.

Without Machine Learning



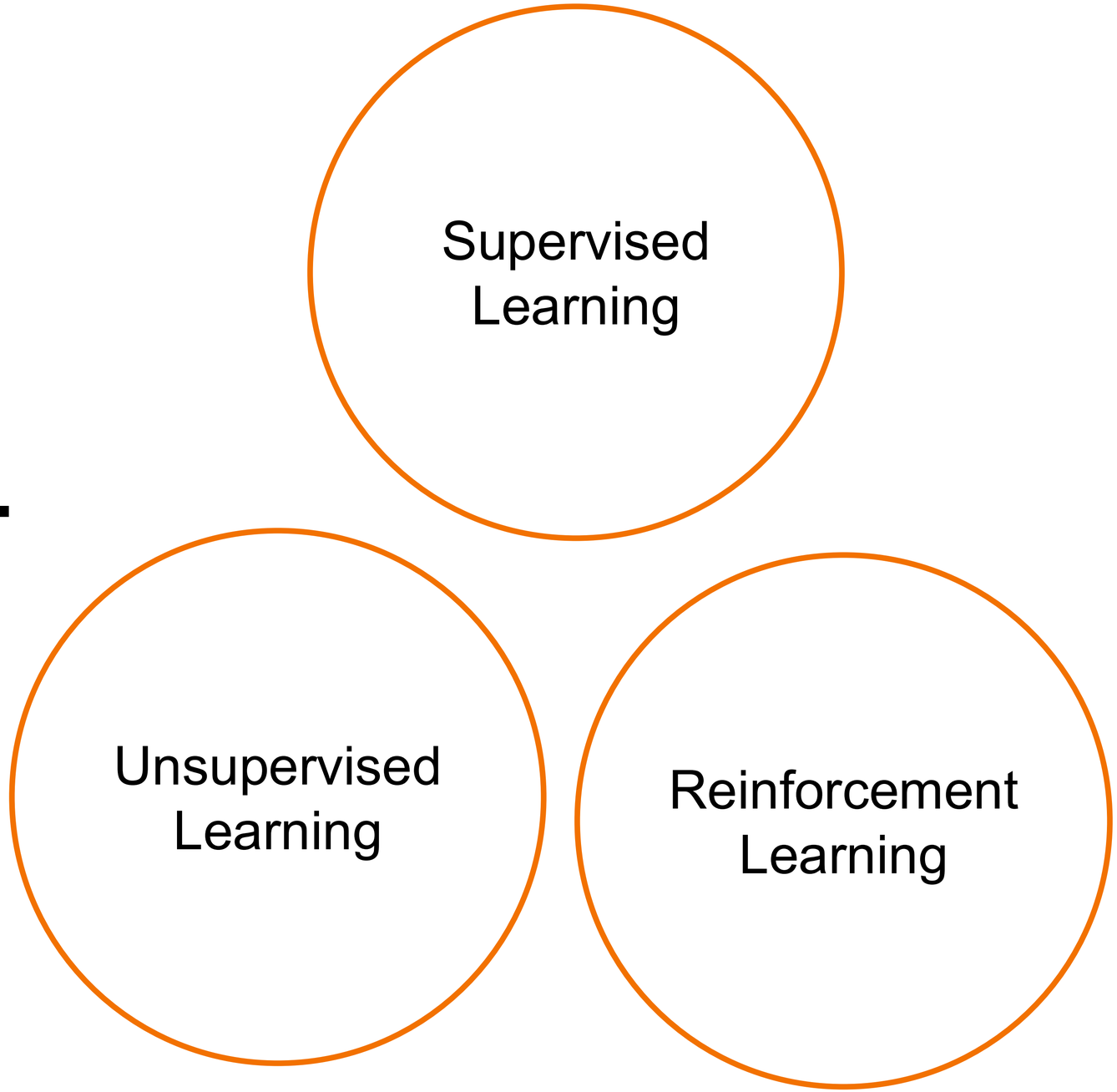
With Machine Learning

https://tung-dn.github.io/programming.html

What is machine learning?

- Arthur Samuel (1959): Machine learning is the field of study that gives the computer the ability to learn **without being explicitly programmed**.
- Tom Mitchell (1997): A computer program is said to learn from **experience E** with respect to some class of **tasks T** and **performance measure P**, if its performance at tasks in T as measured by P, improves with experience E.

Taxonomy of ML



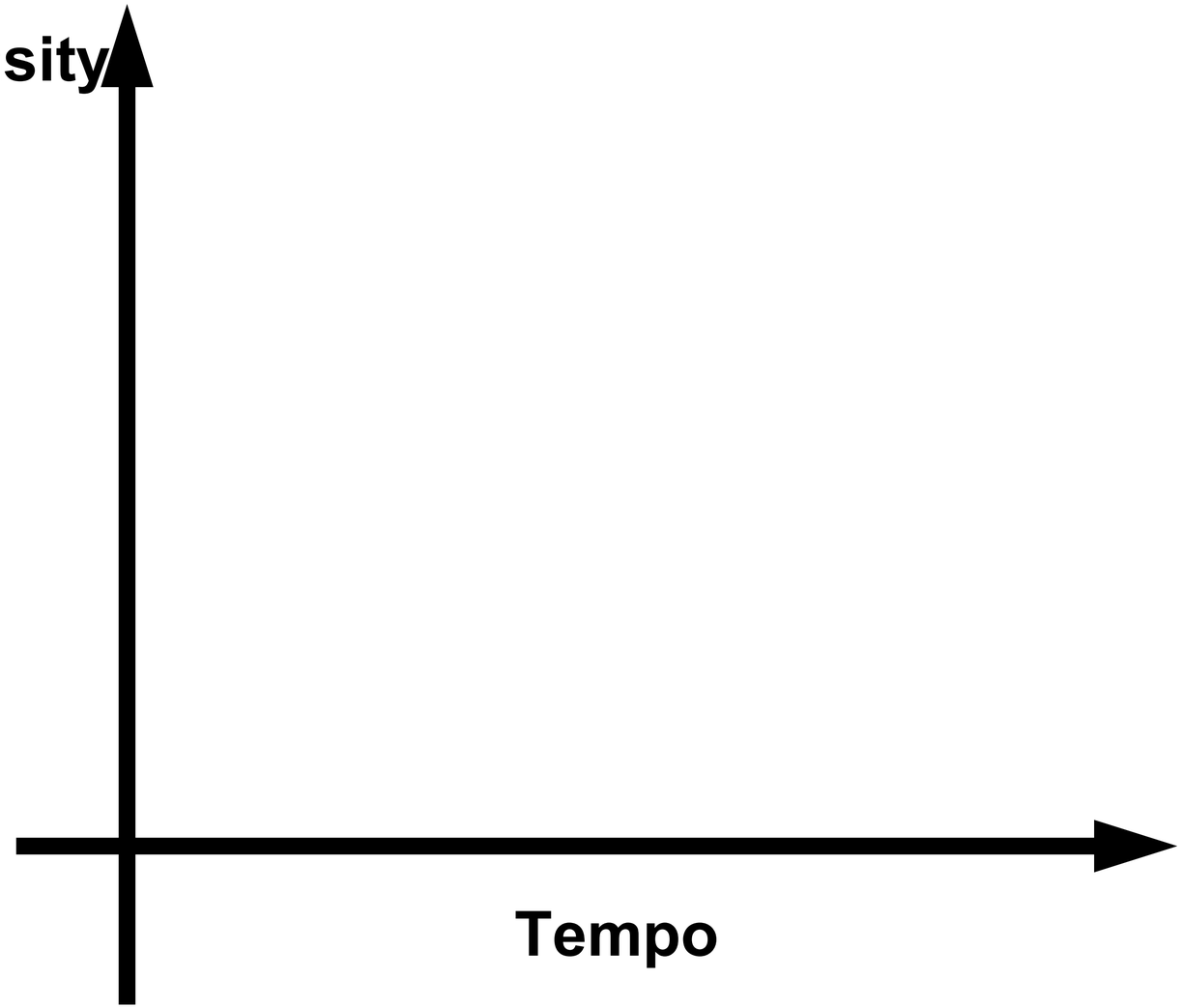
Part II: Supervised Learning

Example 1: Predict whether a user likes a song or not

model

Example 1: Predict whether a user likes a song or not

User Sharon

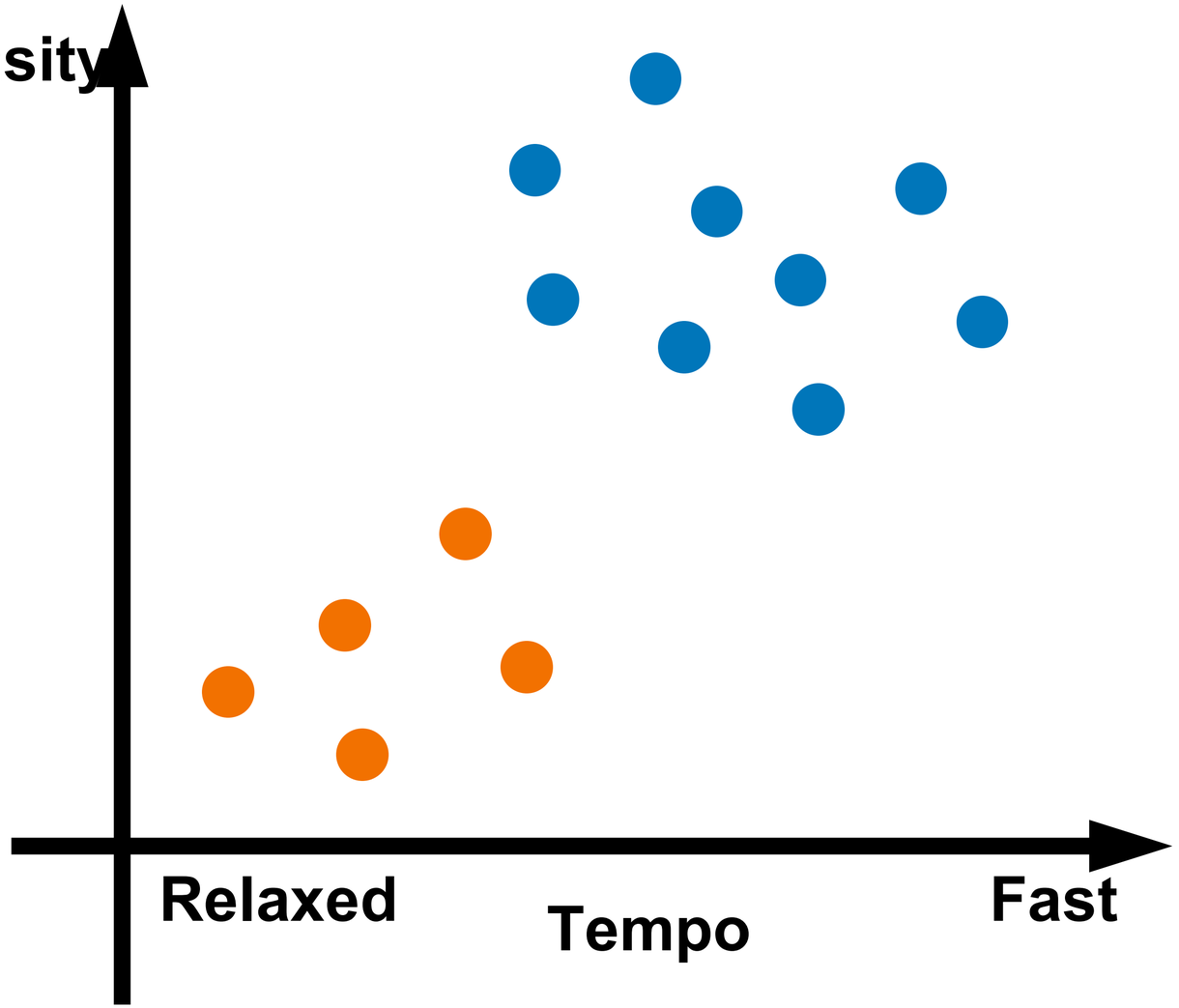


Example 1: Predict whether a user likes a song or not

User Sharon

Dislike

Like



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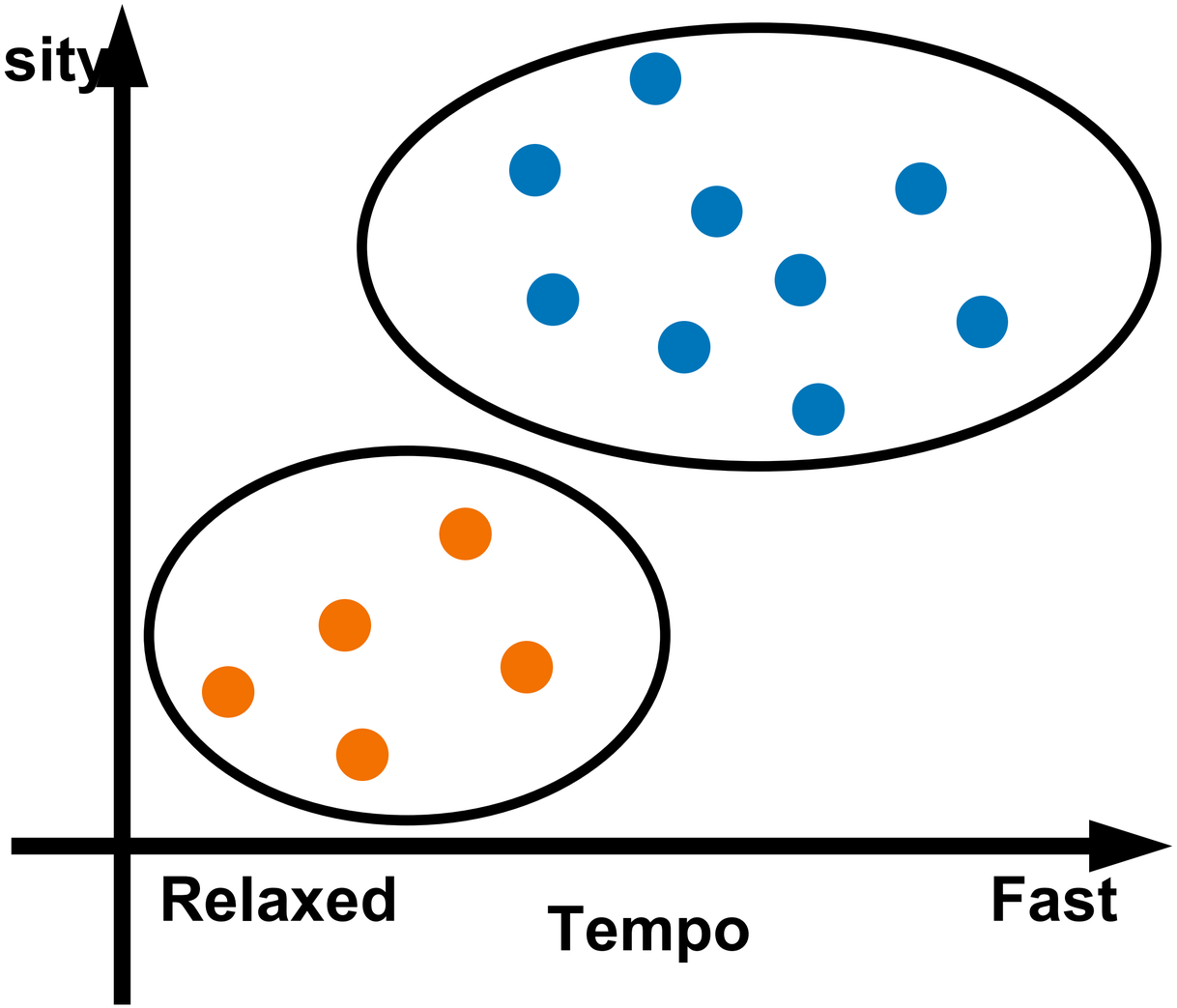

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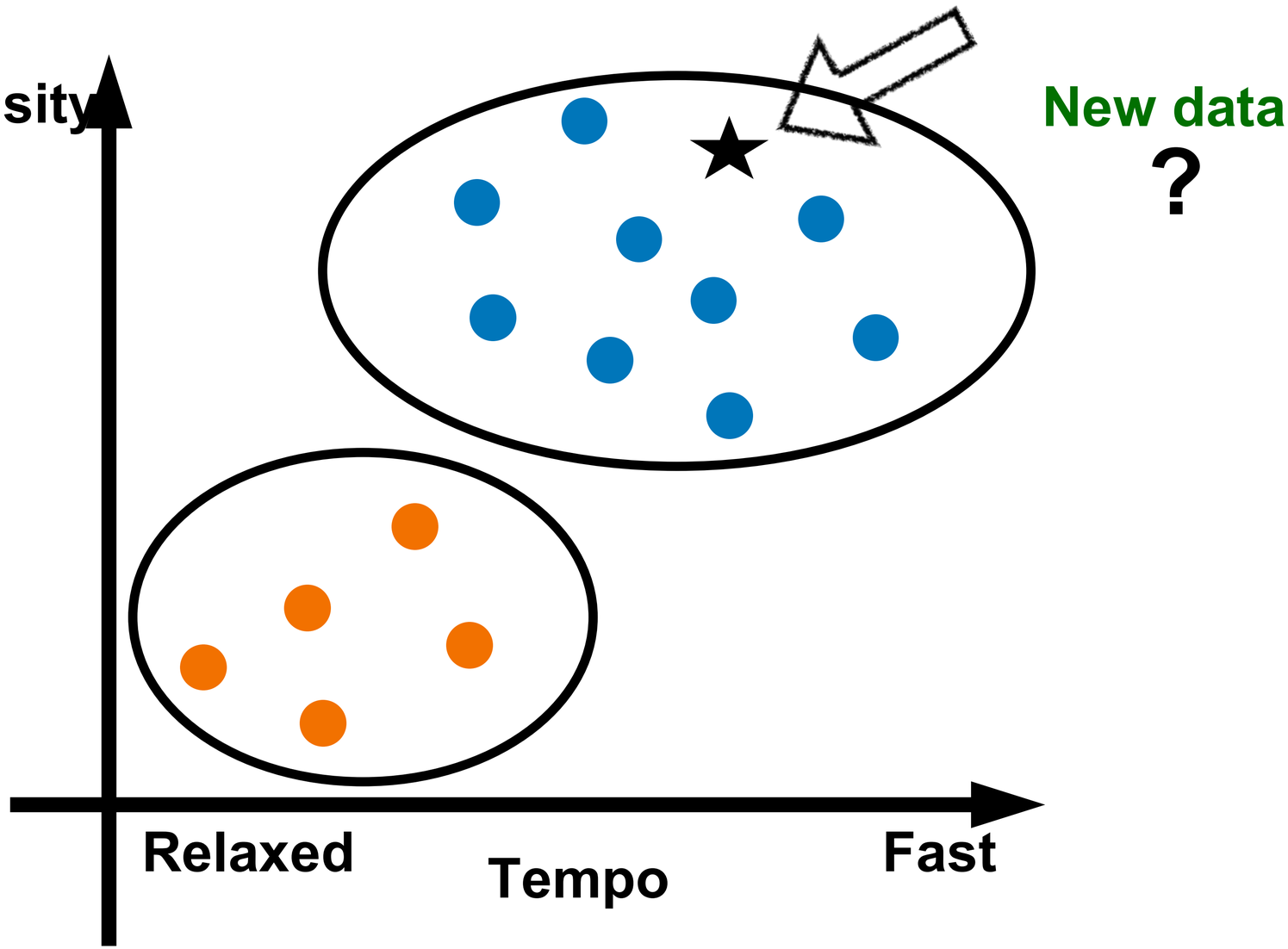

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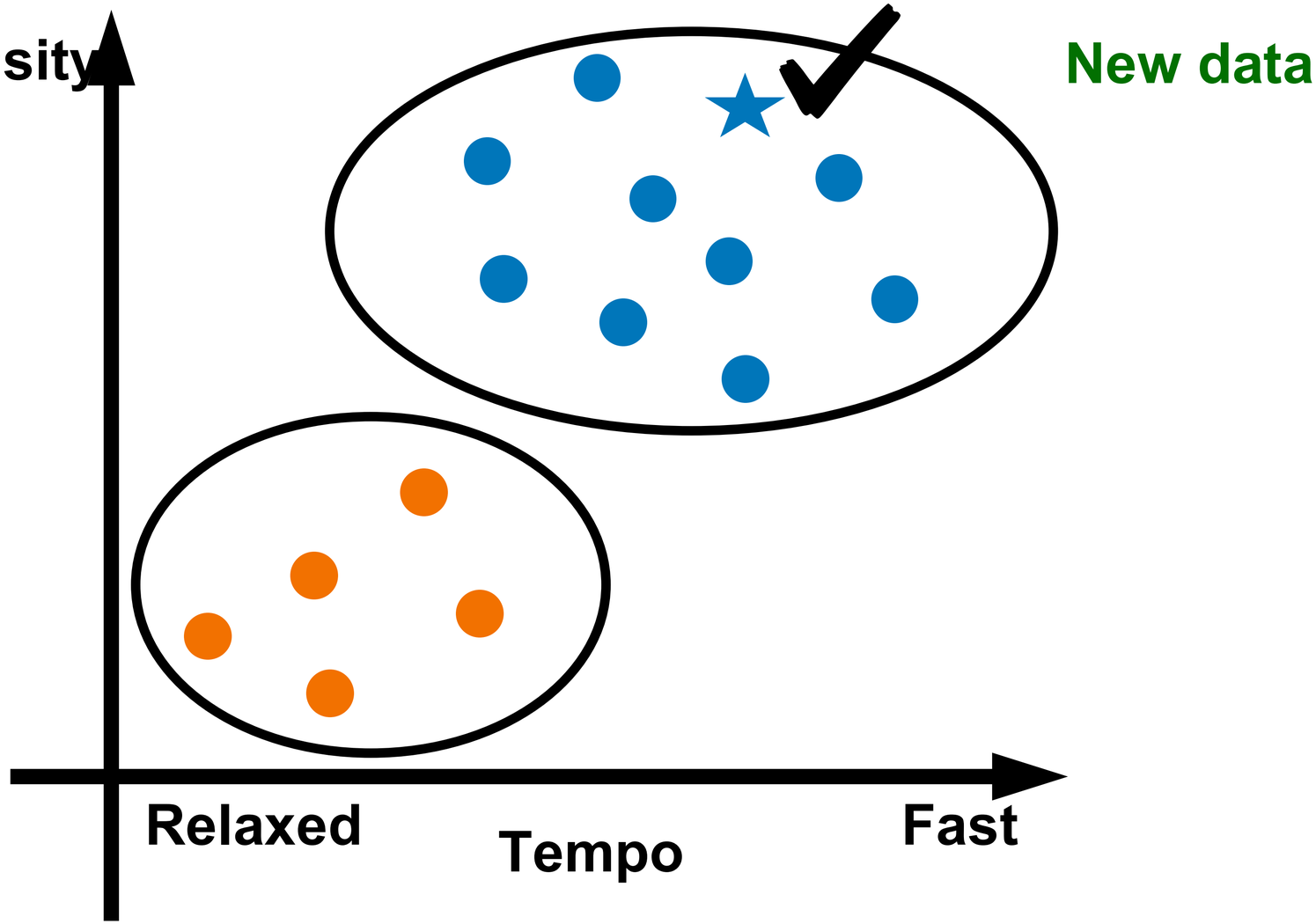
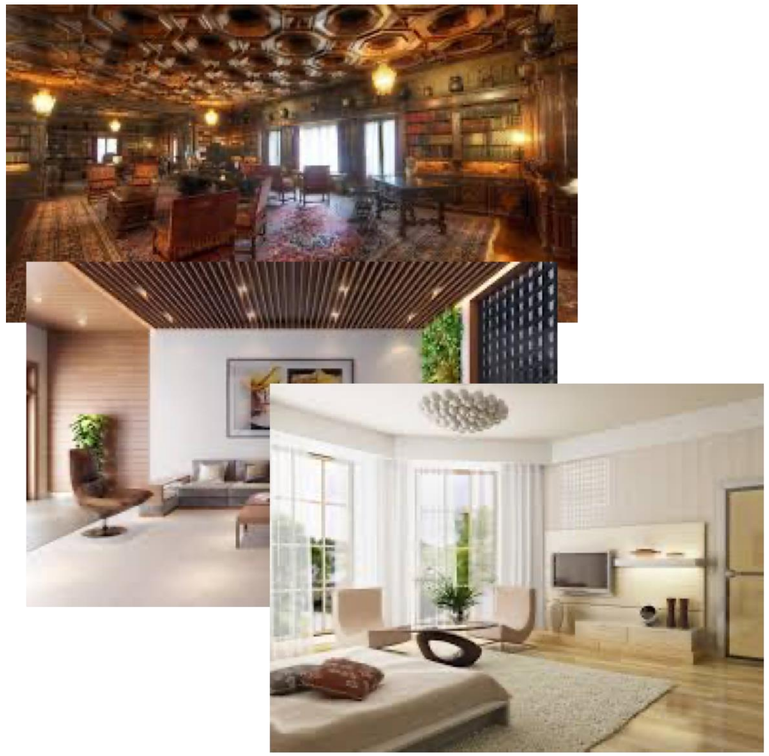


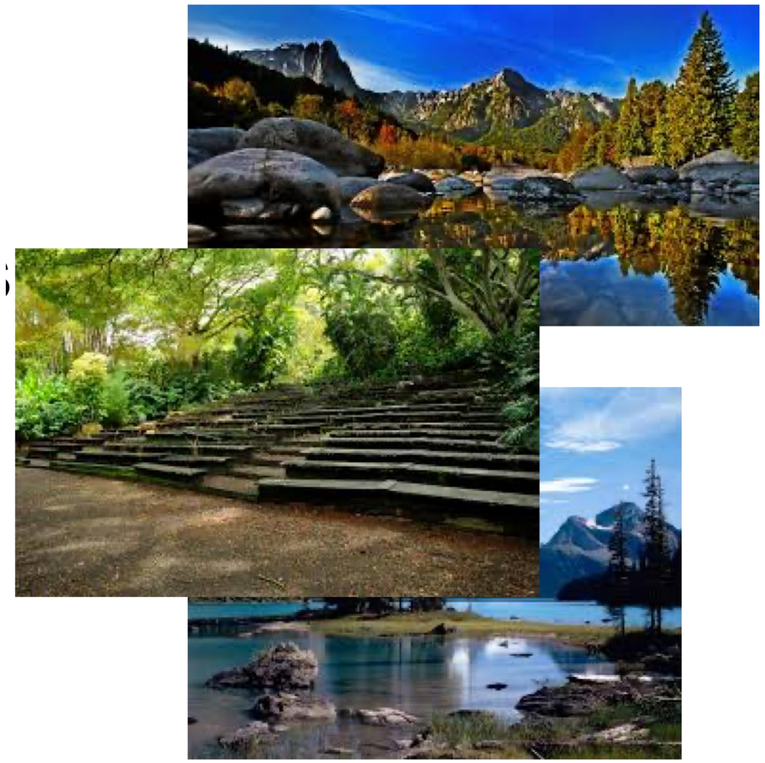
Example 2: Classify Images

http://www.image-net.org/

Example 2: Classify Images

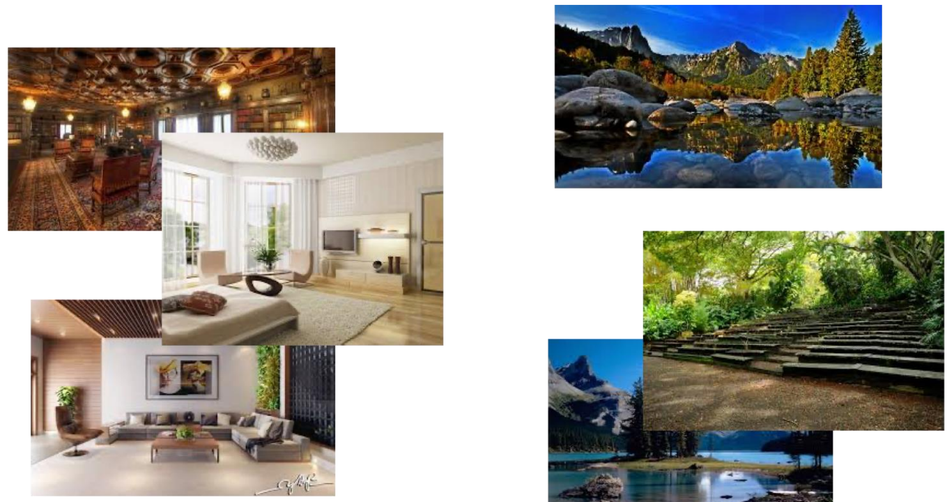


indoor



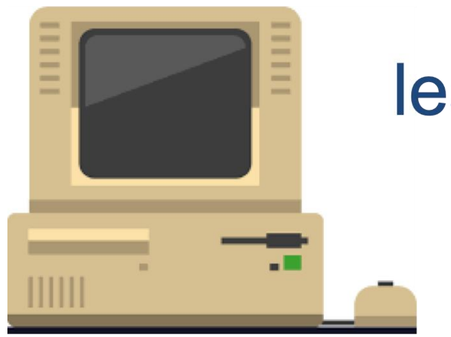
outdoor

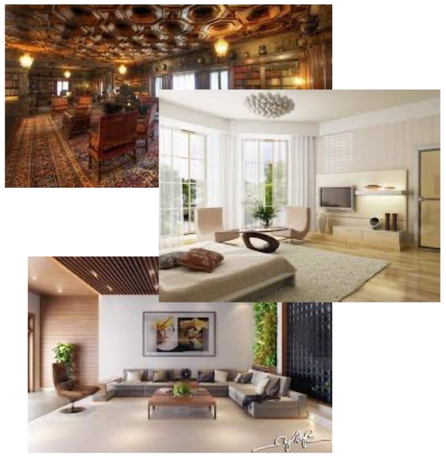
Example 2: Classify Images



Training data

learning (i.e.,training)



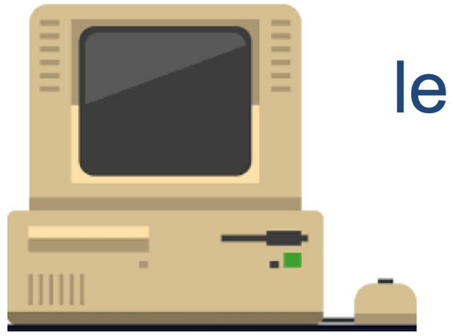


Training data

Label: outdoor

Label: indoor

Test data



learning (i.e.,training)

testing

performance

How to represent data?

input data

$x \in \mathbb{R}^d$

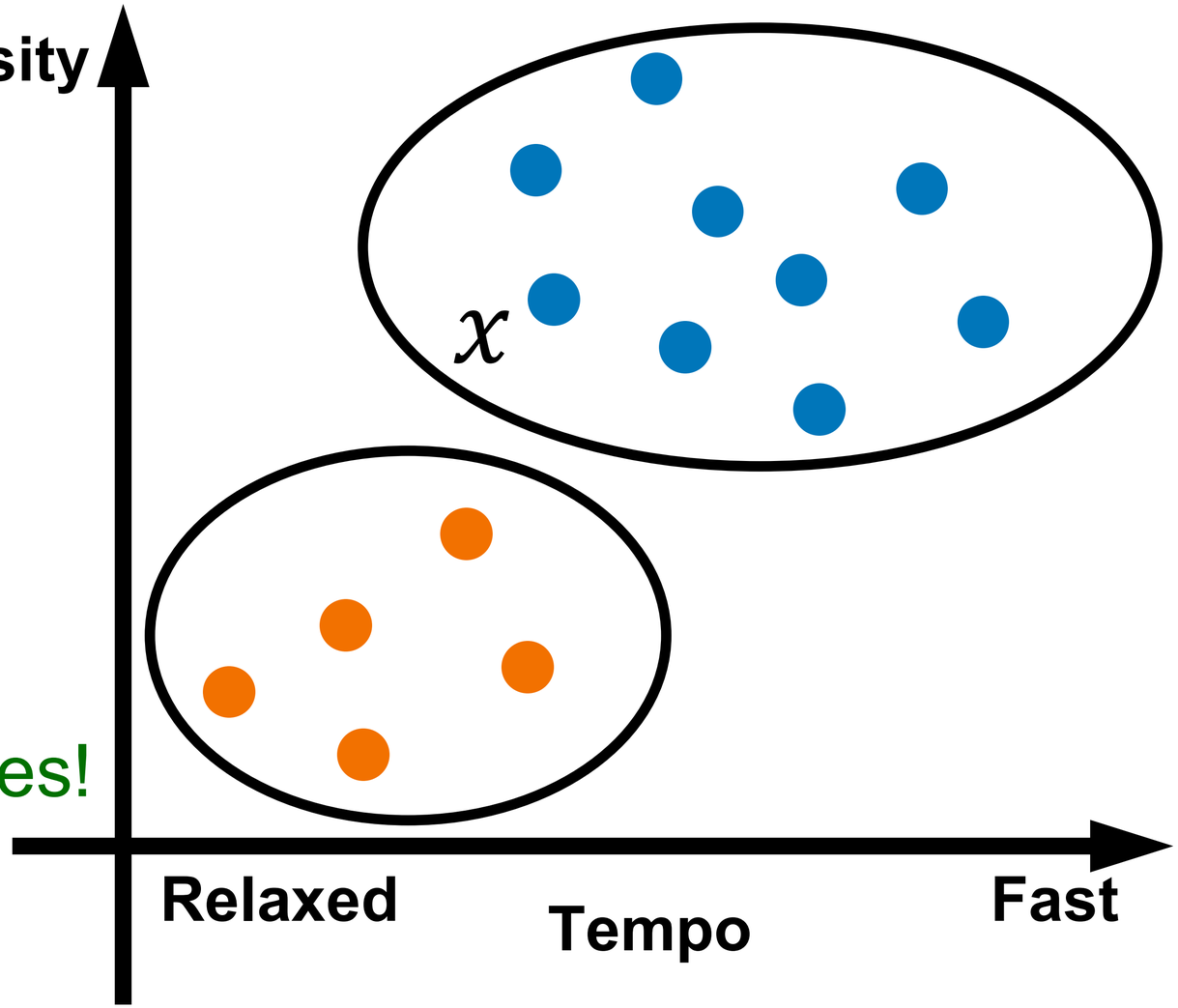
d : feature dimension

$$x = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

x_1 Tempo

x_2 Intensity

There can be many features!

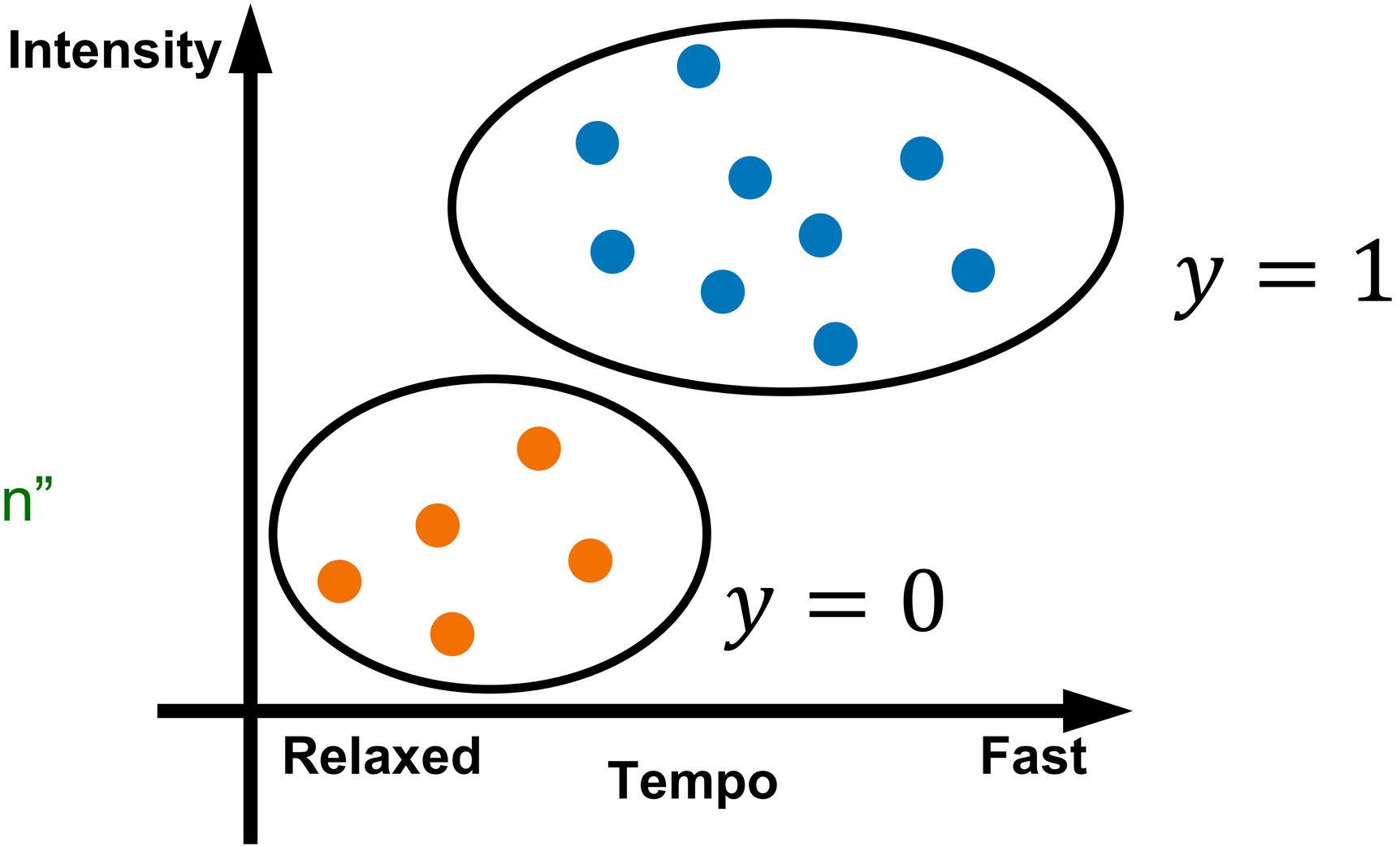


How to represent data?

Label

$y \in \{0,1\}$

Where “supervision” comes from



Represent various types of data

- Image
  - Pixel values

- Bank account
  - Credit rating, balance, # deposits in last day, week, month, year, #withdrawals

Two Types of Supervised Learning Algorithms

Classification

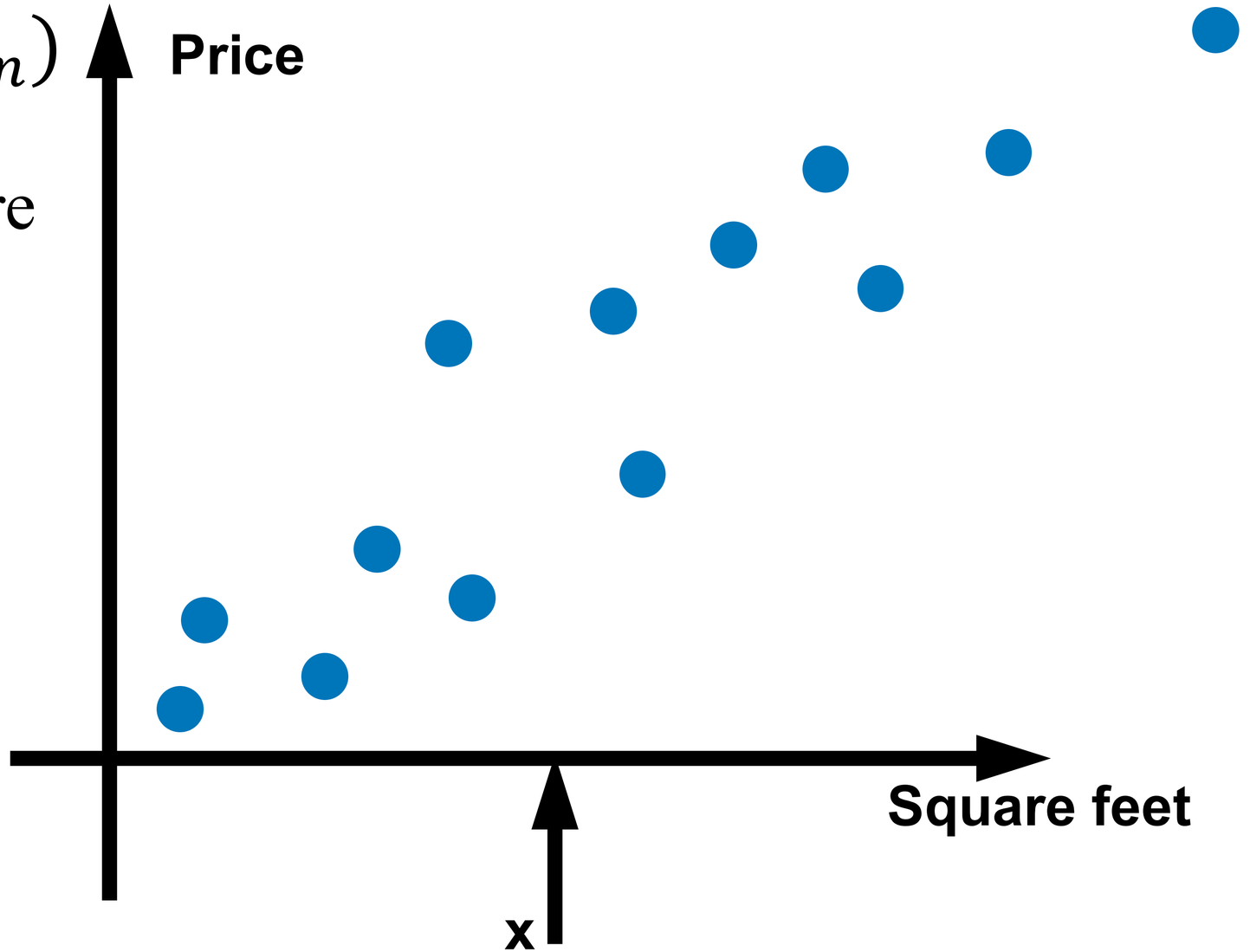
Regression

Example of regression: housing price prediction

Given: a dataset that contains n samples

$(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2), \ldots, (x_n, y_n)$

Task: if a residence has **x** square feet, predict the price



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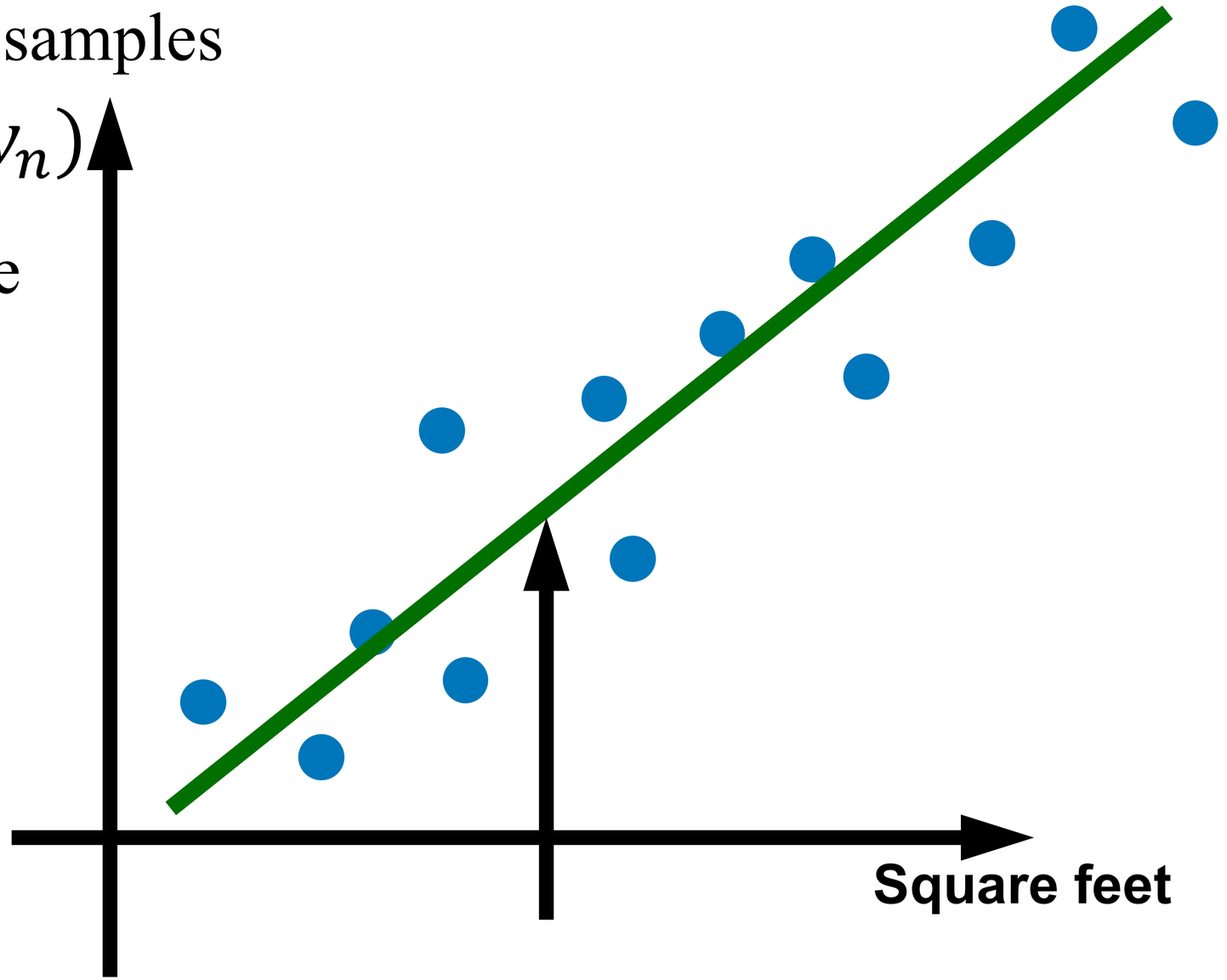
$$y \in \mathbb{R}$$



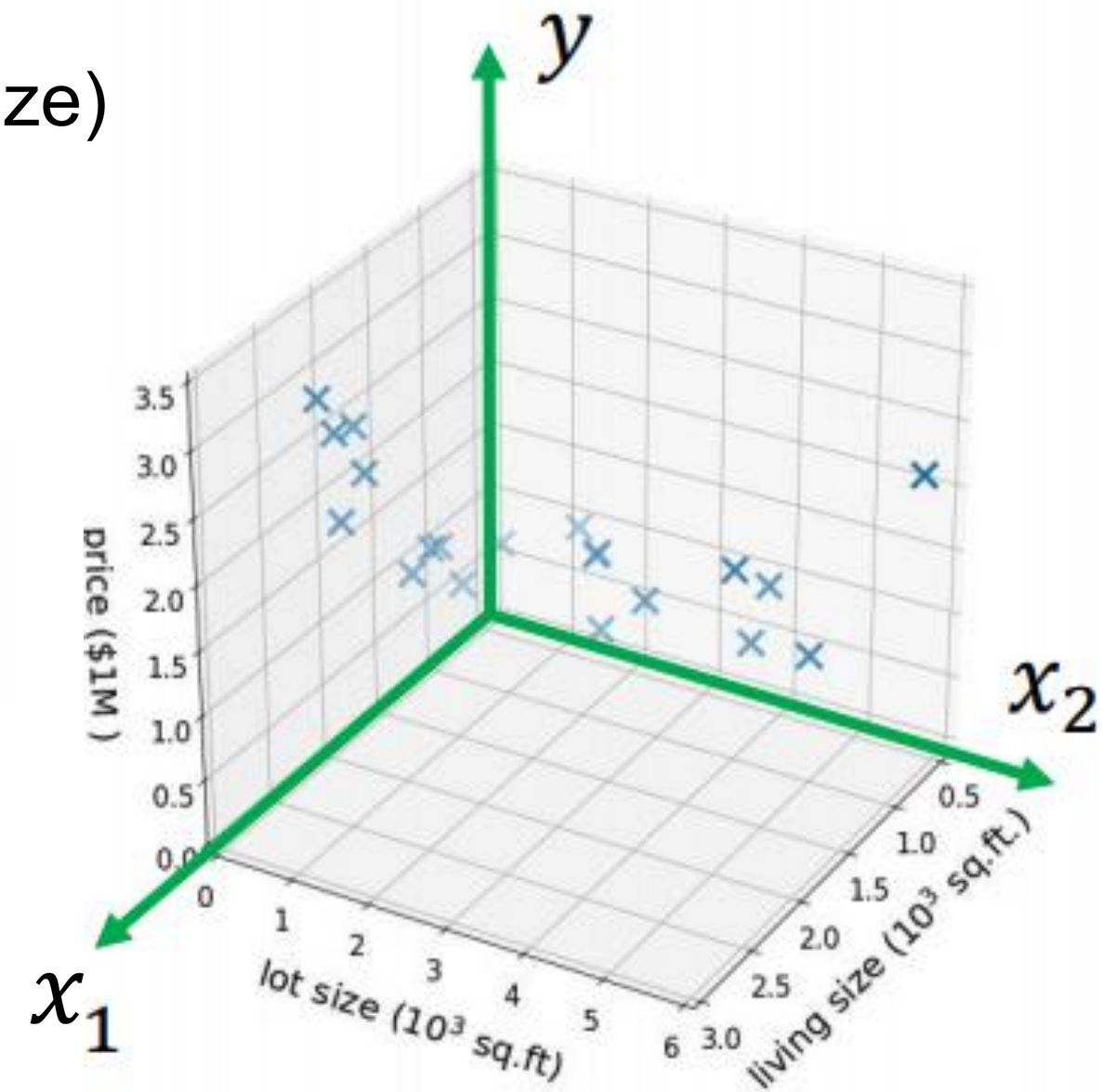
Example of regression: housing price prediction

Input with more features (e.g., lot size)

(size, lot size) → price

features/input
$x \in \mathbb{R}^2$

label/output
$y \in \mathbb{R}$

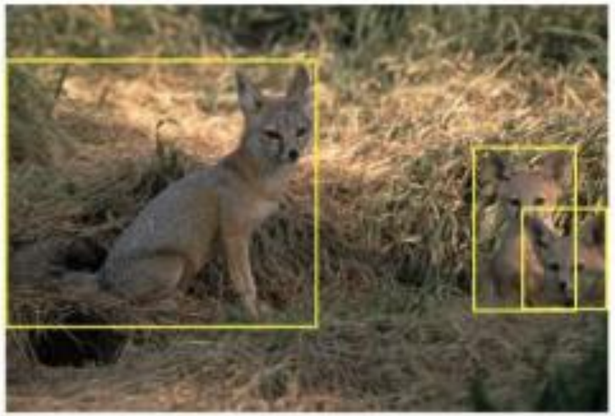


(credit: stanford CS229)

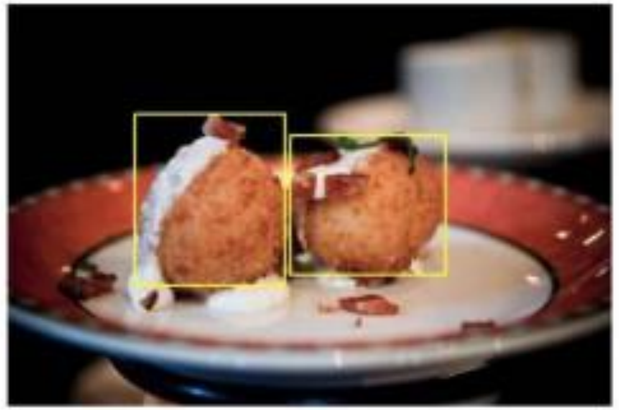
Supervised Learning: More examples

x = raw pixels of the image

y = bounding boxes



kit fox



croquette

airplane

frog

Russakovsky et al. 2015

Two Types of Supervised Learning Algorithms

Classification

- the label is a **discrete** variable

$$y \in \{1,2,3,\ldots,K\}$$

Regression

- the label is a **continuous** variable

$$y \in \mathbb{R}$$

Training Data for Supervised Learning

Training data is a collection of input instances to the learning algorithm:

$$(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2), (x_3, y_3), \ldots, (x_n, y_n)$$

input label

The training data is the "**experience**" given to a learning algorithm

Goal of Supervised Learning

Given training data

$$(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2), (x_3, y_3), \ldots, (x_n, y_n)$$

Learn a function mapping $f : X \rightarrow Y$, such that $f(x)$ predicts the label y on **future** data x (not in training data)

Goal of Supervised Learning

Training set error

- 0-1 loss for classification $\ell = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} 1\{f(\mathbf{x}_i) \neq y_i\}$
- Squared loss for regression: $\ell = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (f(\mathbf{x}_i) - y_i)^2$

A learning algorithm optimizes the training objective

$$f^* = \text{argmin } \mathbb{E}_{(x,y)} \ell(f(x), y)$$

Details in upcoming lectures :)

Quiz Break

Q1-1: Which is true about feature vectors?

A. Feature vectors can have at most 10 dimensions
B. Feature vectors have only numeric values
C. The raw image can also be used as the feature vector
D. Text data don’t have feature vectors

Quiz Break

Q1-1: Which is true about feature vectors?

A. Feature vectors can have at most 10 dimensions
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D. Text data don’t have feature vectors

A. Feature vectors can be high dimensional
B. Some feature vectors can have other types of values like strings
D. Bag-of-words is a type of feature vector for text

Quiz Break

Q1-2: Which of the following is not a common task of supervised learning?

A. Object detection (predicting bounding box from raw images)
B. Classification
C. Regression
D. Dimensionality reduction

Quiz Break

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A. Object detection (predicting bounding box from raw images)
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Part II: Unsupervised Learning (no teacher)

Unsupervised Learning

- Given: dataset contains **no label** $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n$
- **Goal:** discover interesting patterns and structures in the data

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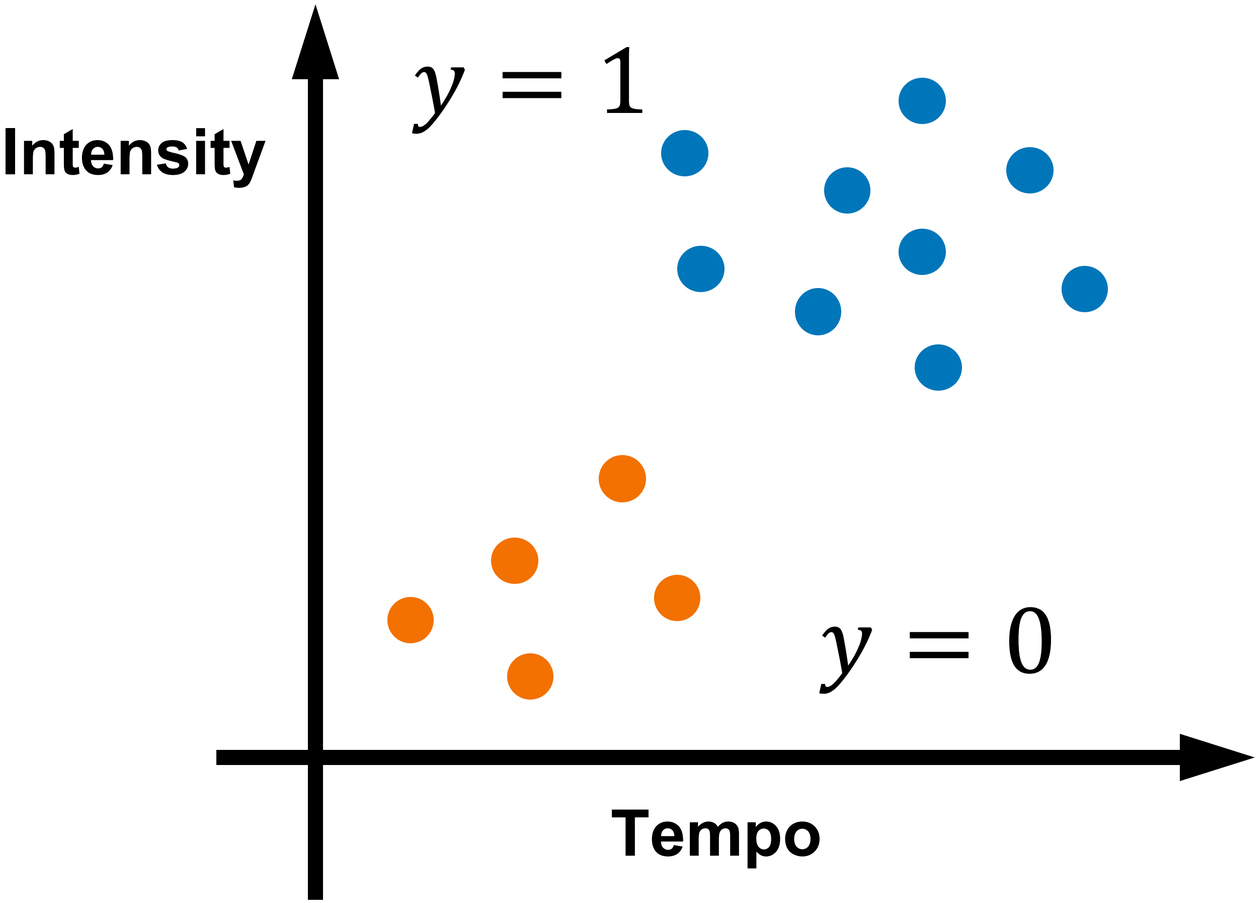

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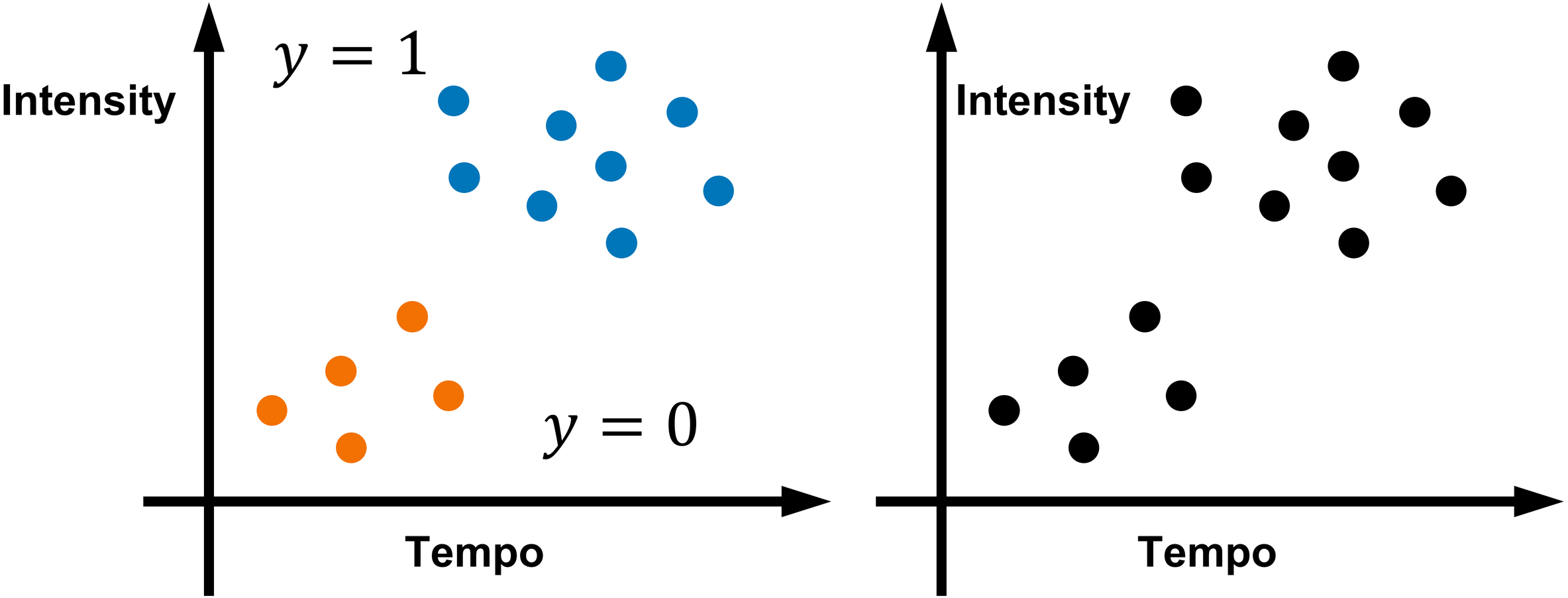
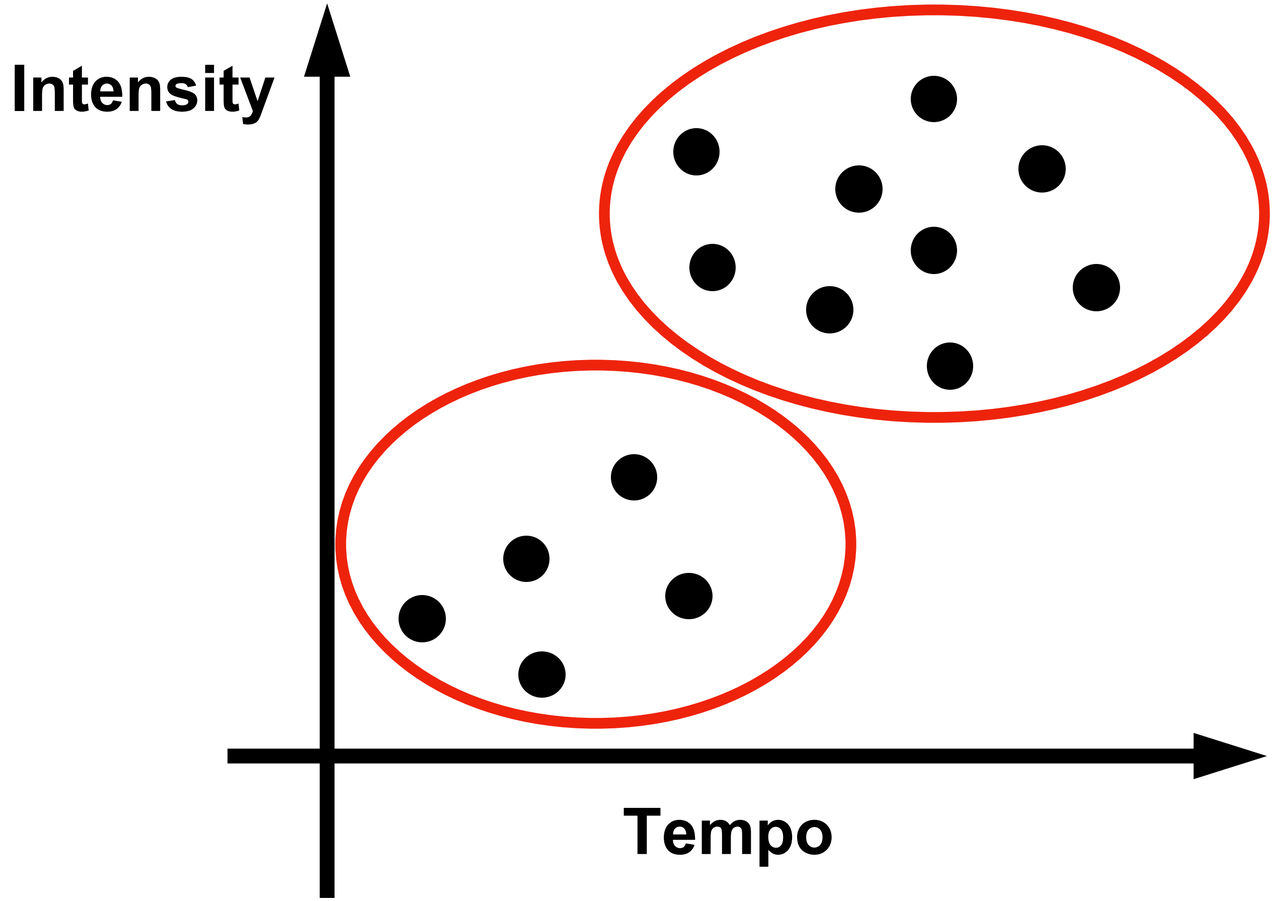
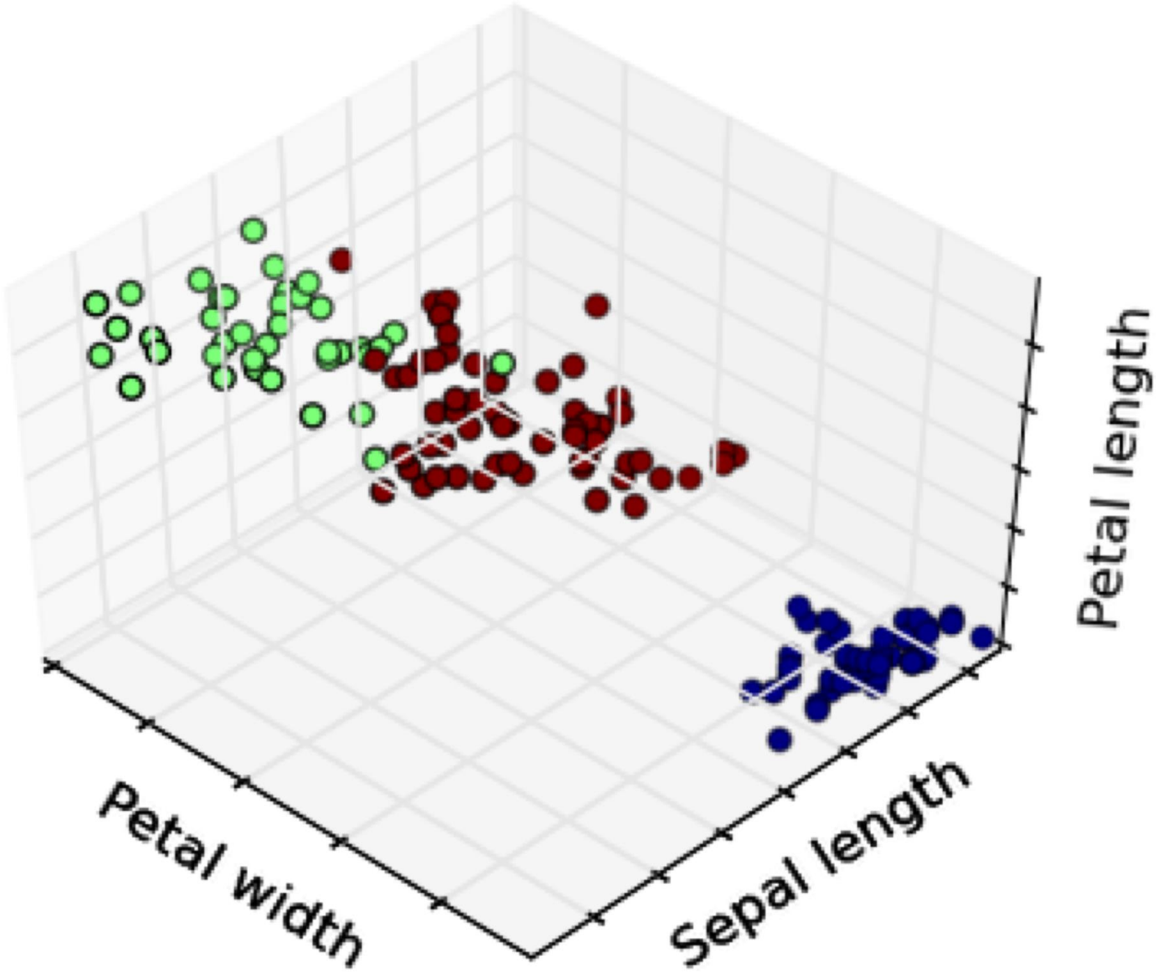


Clustering

- Given: dataset contains **no label** $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n$
- **Output:** divides the data into clusters such that there are intra-cluster similarity and inter-cluster dissimilarity



Clustering

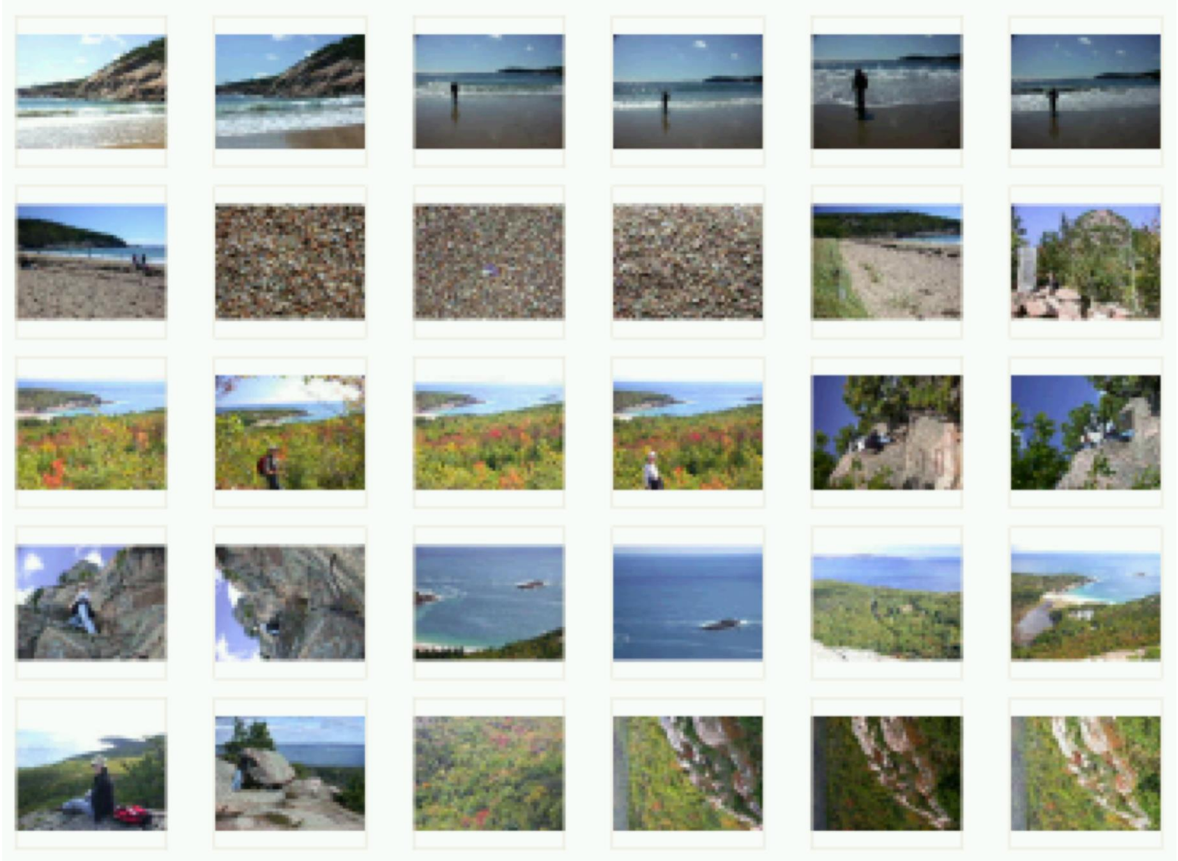


Clustering Irises using three different features

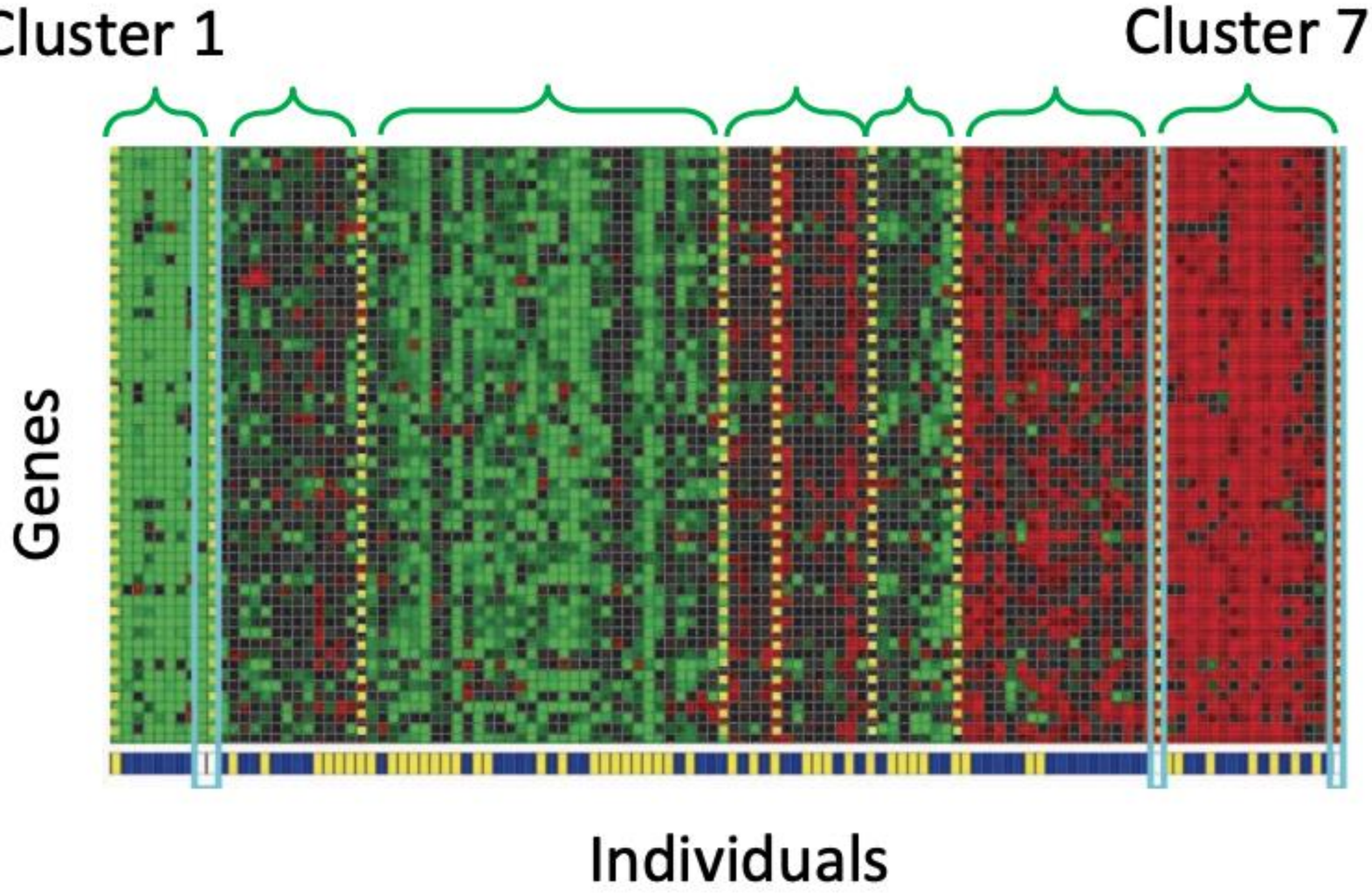
The colors represent clusters identified by the algorithm, **not** y's provided as input

Clustering

- You probably have >1000 digital photos stored on your phone
- After this class you will be able to organize them better (based on visual similarity)

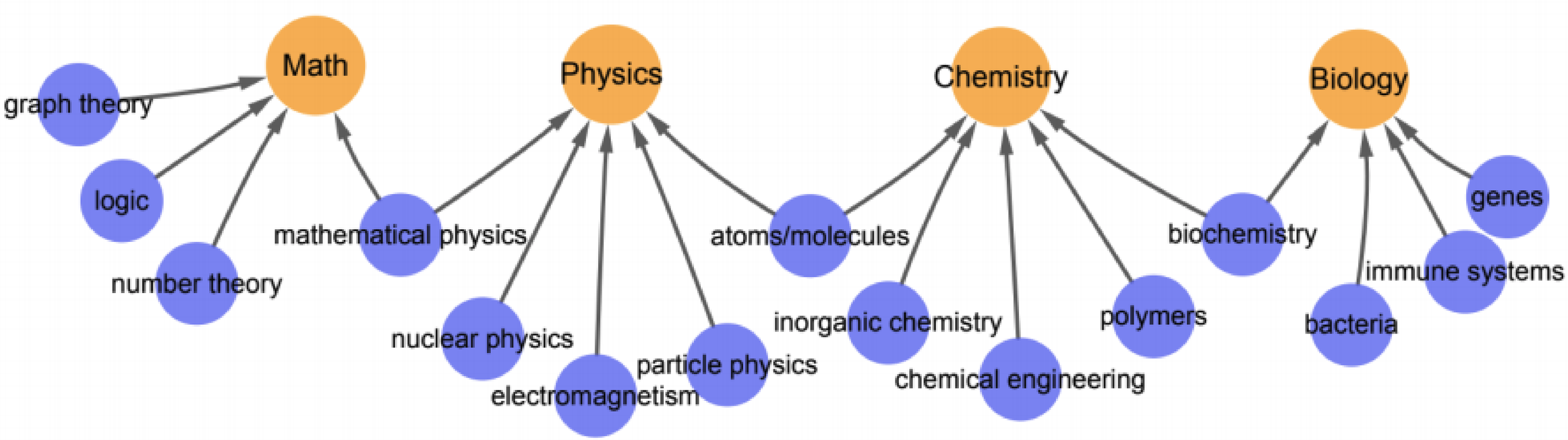


Clustering Genes



Identifying Regulatory Mechanisms using Individual Variation Reveals Key Role for Chromatin Modification. [Su-In Lee, Dana Pe'er, Aimee M. Dudley, George M. Church and Daphne Koller. '06]

Clustering Words with Similar Meanings



[Arora-Li-Liang-Ma-Risteski, TACL'17,18]

How do we perform clustering?

Many clustering algorithms.

We will look at the two most frequently used ones:

- *K-means clustering*: we specify the desired number of clusters, and use an iterative algorithm to find them
- *Hierarchical clustering*: we build a binary tree over the dataset

Quiz Break

Q2-1: Which is true about machine learning?

A. The process doesn’t involve human inputs
B. The machine is given the training and test data for learning
C. In clustering, the training data also have labels for learning
D. Supervised learning involves labeled data

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A. The labels are human inputs
B. The machine should not have test data for learning
C. No labels available for clustering

Quiz Break

Q2-2: Which is true about unsupervised learning?

A. There are only 2 unsupervised learning algorithms
B. Kmeans clustering is a type of hierarchical clustering
C. Kmeans algorithm automatically determines the number of clusters k
D. Unsupervised learning is widely used in many applications

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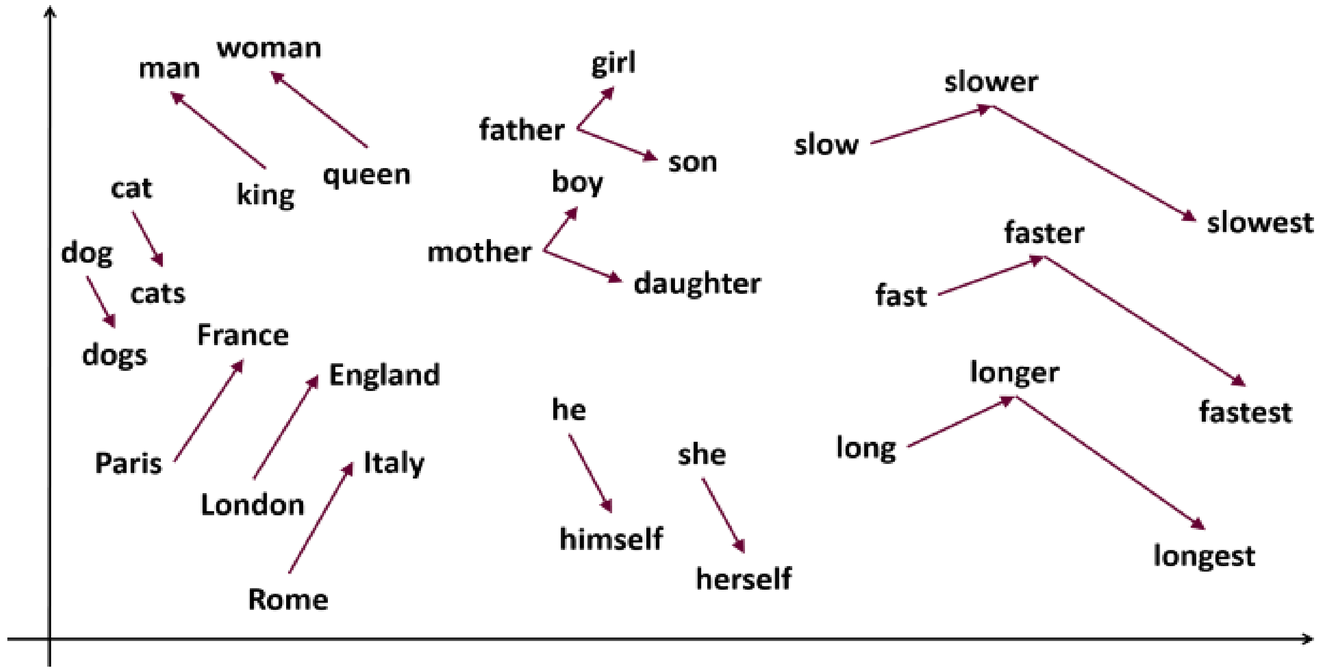
Self-Supervised Learning

- Given: dataset contains **no label** $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n$
- **Goal:** discover interesting patterns and structures in the data

- **Approach:** generate supervision signal from data.
  Solve a *pretext task*

Example: word embeddings



Saurabh Pal – Implementing Word2Vec in Tensorflow

Self-Supervised Learning for LLMs

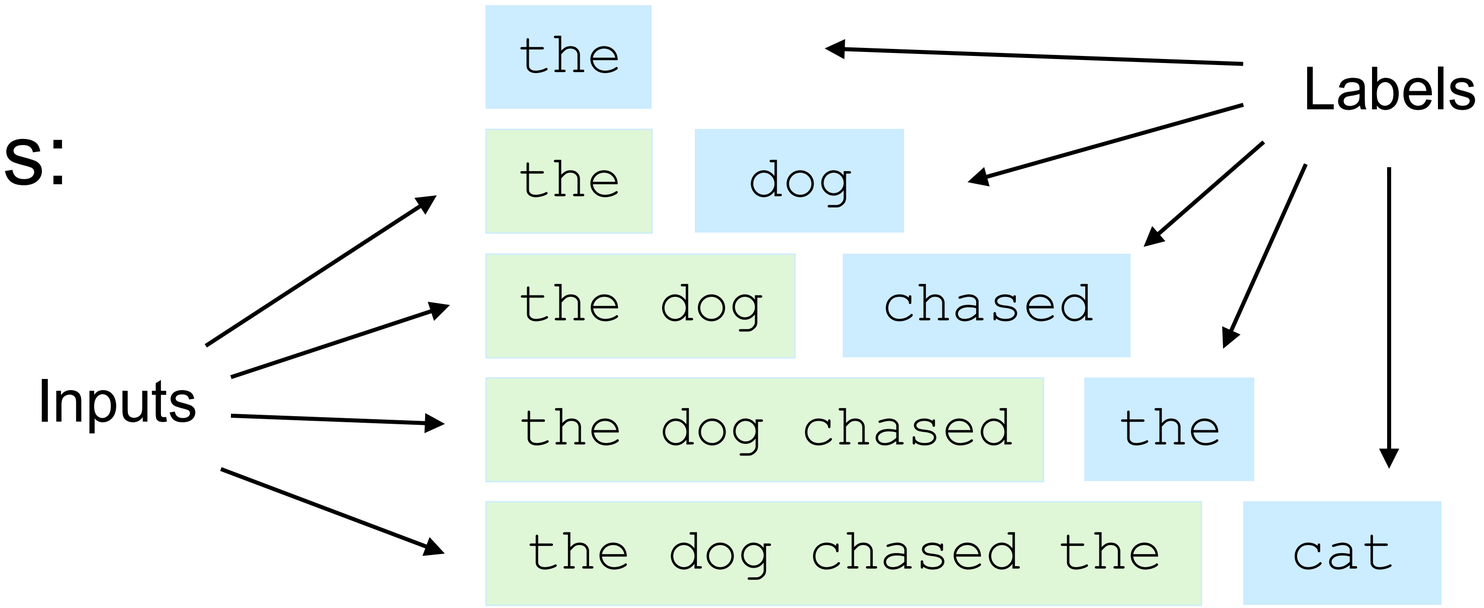
- Pretext task for large language models:

next-word prediction

- Original text:

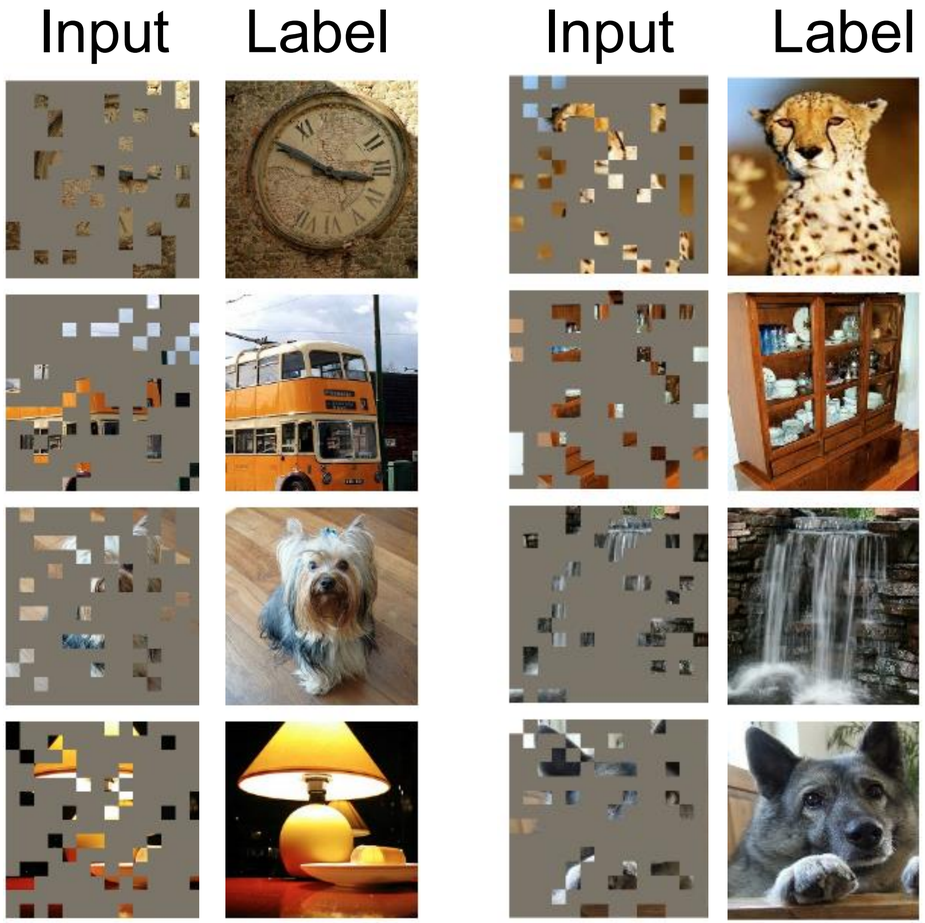
```
the dog chased the cat
```

- Split into five labeled problems:



Self-Supervised Learning in Vision

- Another common pretext task: **image inpainting**
- High-dimensional label!
- Type of **autoencoder**
  - “Auto-” = “self”

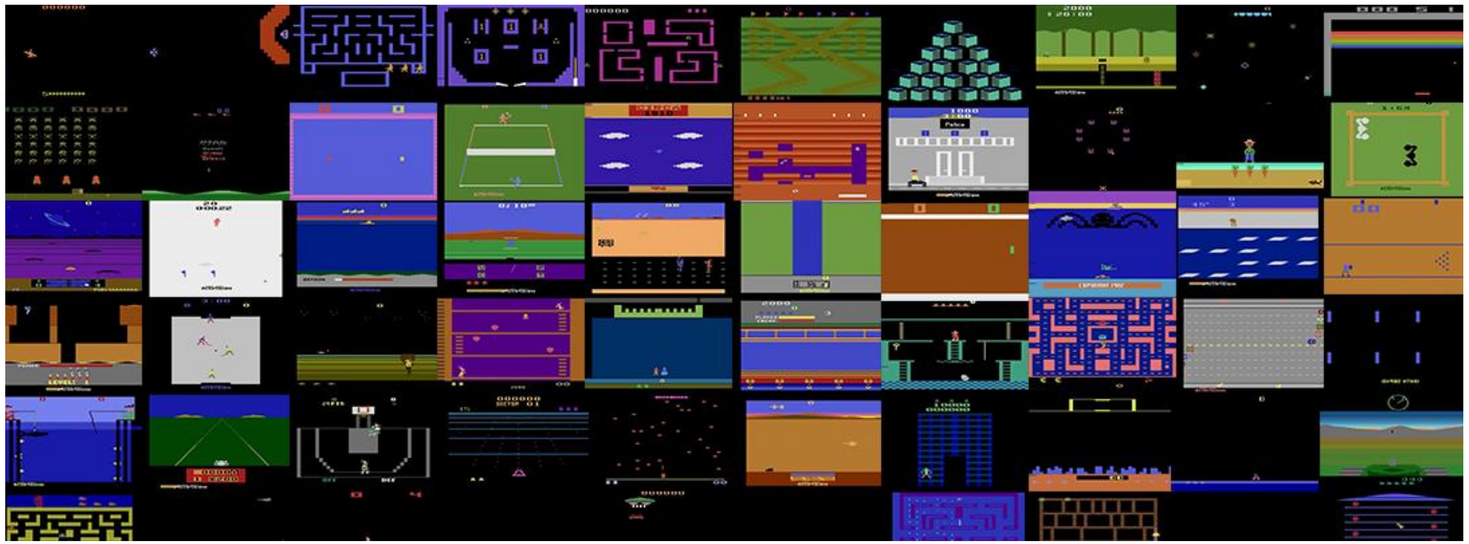


He et al. Masked autoencoders are scalable vision learners. 2021.

Part III: Reinforcement Learning (Learning from rewards)

Reinforcement Learning

- Given: an agent that can take **actions** and receive **rewards**
- **Goal:** learn to choose actions that maximize future reward total.

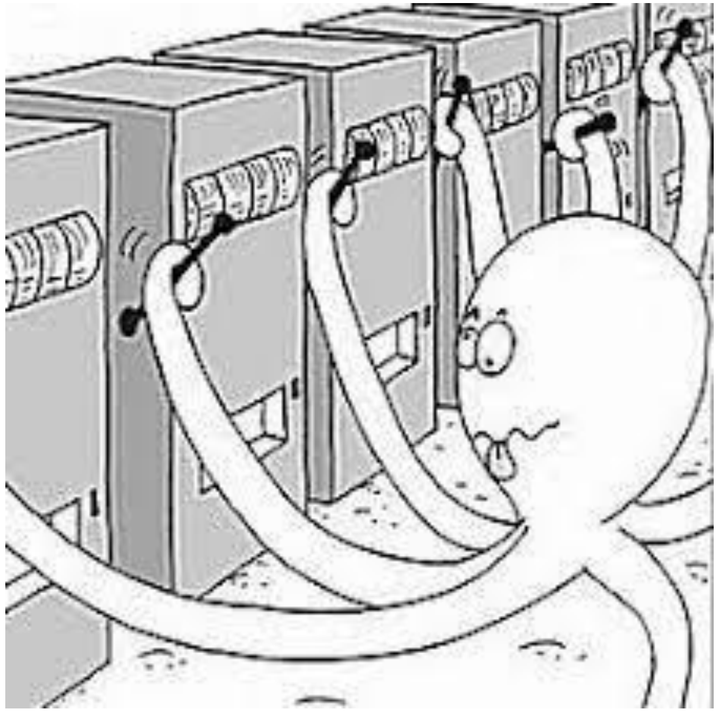


Google Deepmind

Reinforcement Learning Key Problems

1. Problem: actions may have delayed effects.
   - Requires credit assignment
2. Problem: maximal reward action is unknown
   - Exploration-exploitation trade-off

> "… it was formulated during the war, and efforts to solve it so sapped the energies and minds of Allied analysts that the suggestion was made that the problem be dropped over Germany, as the ultimate instrument of intellectual sabotage."
>
> - Peter Whittle, 1979



Multi-armed Bandit

Today’s recap

- What is machine learning?
- Supervised Learning
  - Classification
  - Regression
- Unsupervised Learning
  - Clustering
  - Self-Supervised Learning
- Reinforcement Learning

Thanks!