

CS103
WINTER 2026



Lecture 10:

Graph Theory (Part 2 of 3)

Graphs

Part 2

1. Recap from Last Time
2. Preliminary Definition: Adjacency
3. Walks, Paths, and Other Journeys
4. Announcements
5. Sending Messages through LANs
6. Shaping LANs (and a Proof on Graphs)
7. Spanning Tree Protocol (STP)
8. Recap and What's Next?

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Graphs and Digraphs

- A **graph** is a pair $G = (V, E)$ of a set of nodes V and set of edges E .
 - Nodes can be anything.
 - Edges are **unordered pairs** of nodes. If $\{u, v\} \in E$, then there's an edge from u to v .
- A **digraph** is a pair $G = (V, E)$ of a set of nodes V and set of directed edges E .
 - Each edge is represented as the ordered pair (u, v) indicating an edge from u to v .

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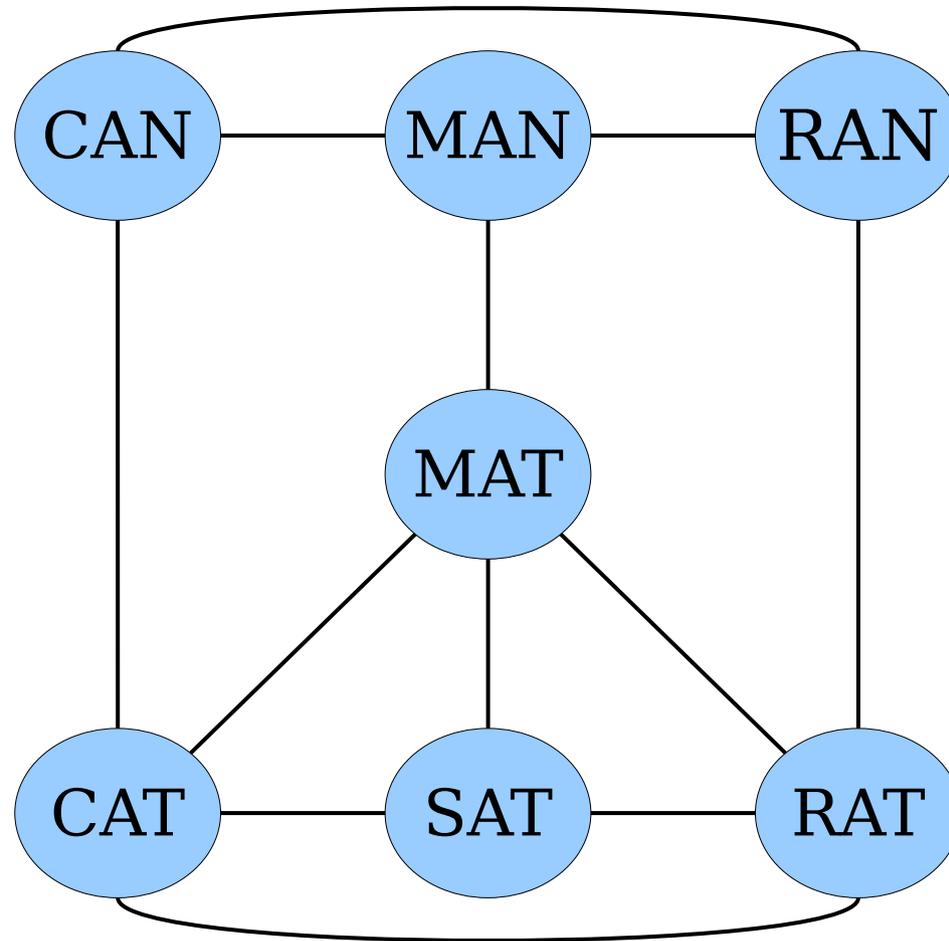
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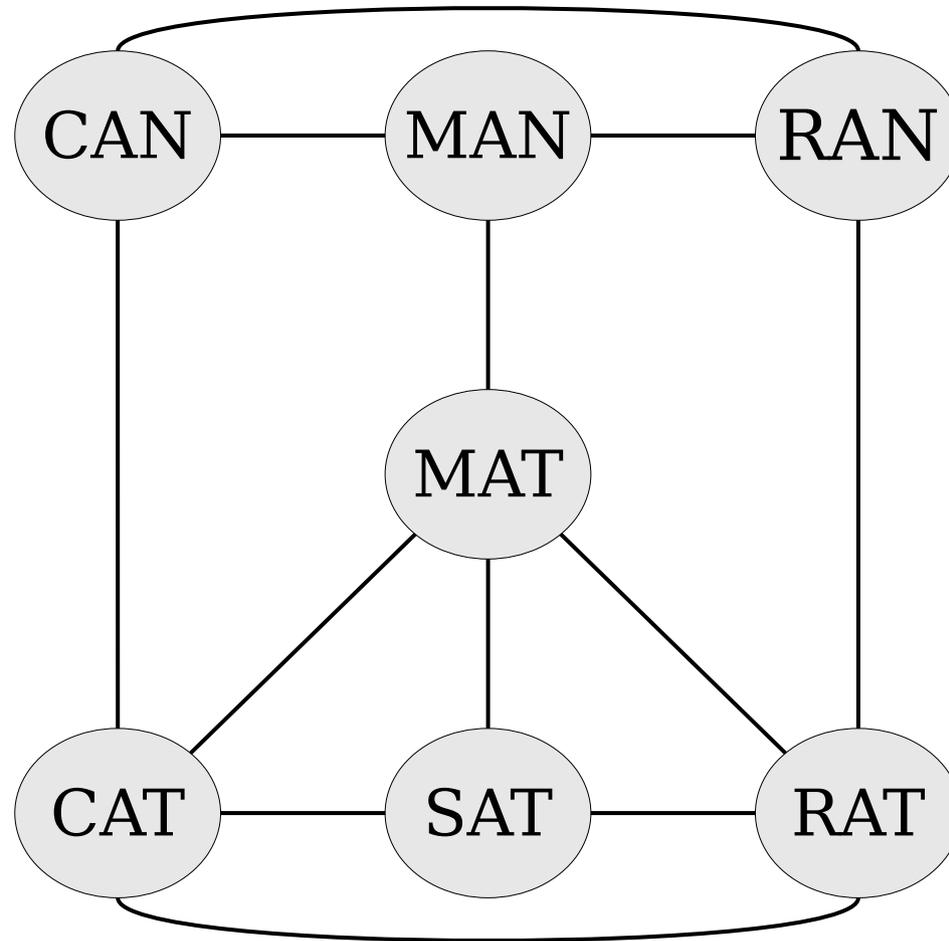
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Adjacency



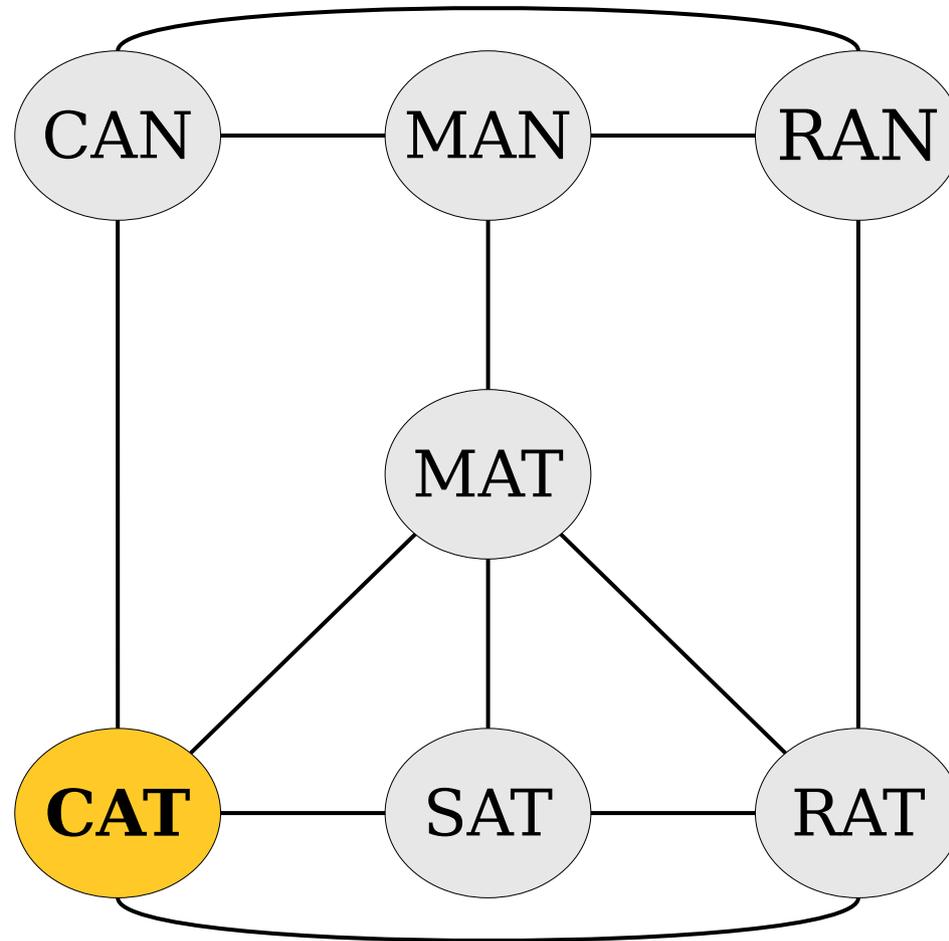
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Adjacency



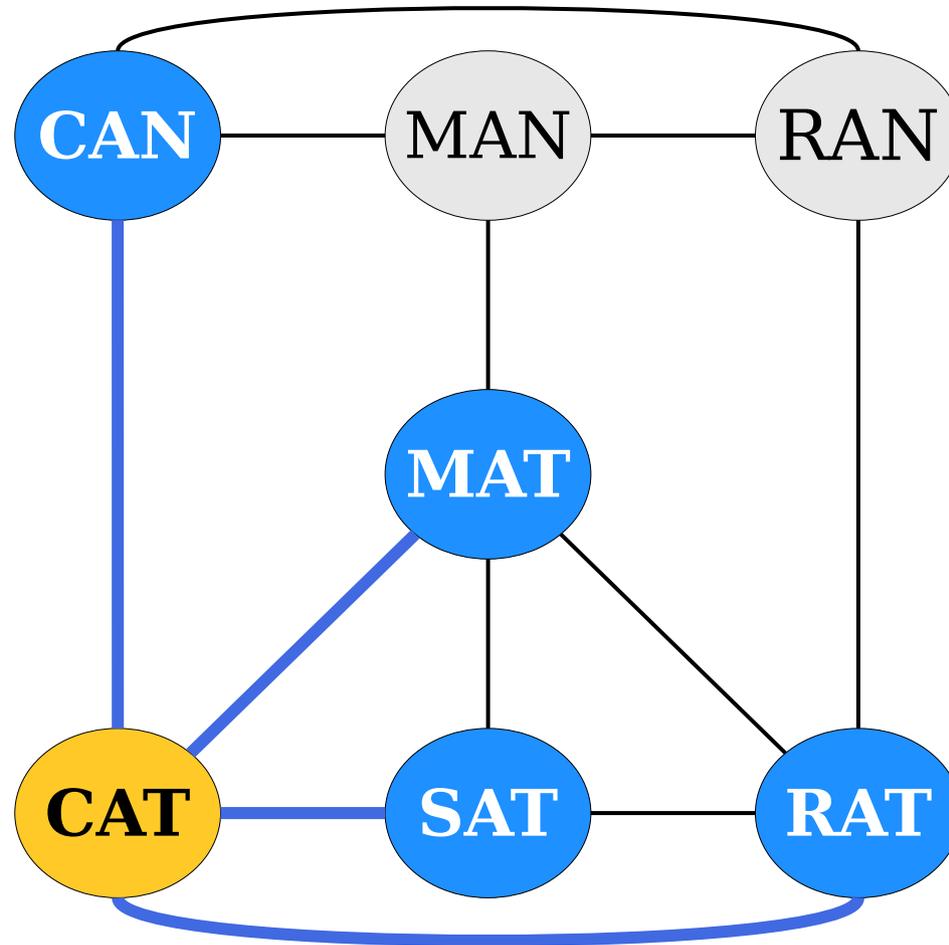
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Adjacency



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Adjacency



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Adjacency

- Let $G = (V, E)$ be an (undirected) graph.
- Intuitively, two nodes are adjacent if they're linked by an edge.
- Formally speaking, we say that two nodes $u, v \in V$ are **adjacent** if we have $\{u, v\} \in E$.
- There isn't an analogous notion for directed graphs. We usually just say "there's an edge from u to v " as a way of reading $(u, v) \in E$ aloud.

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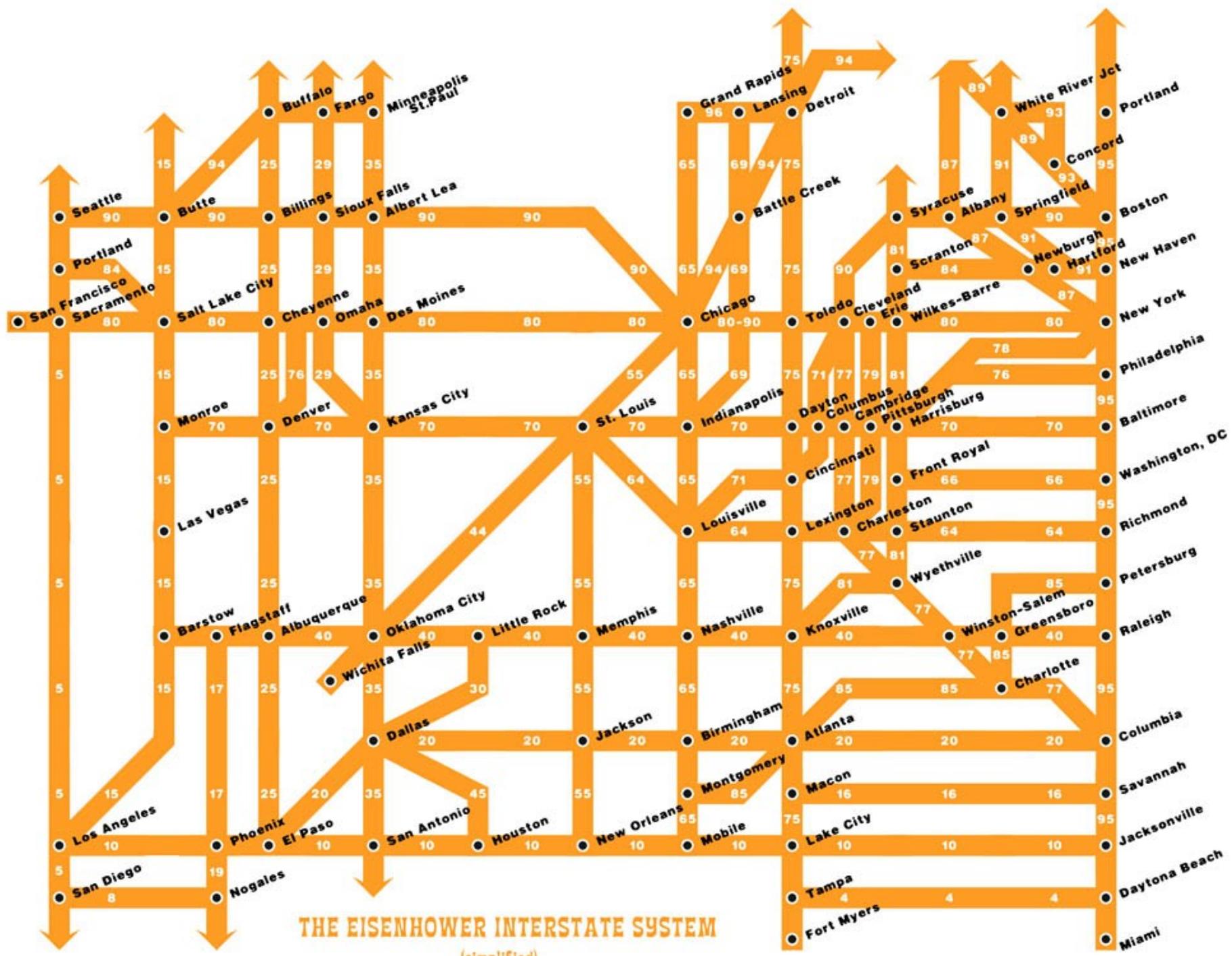
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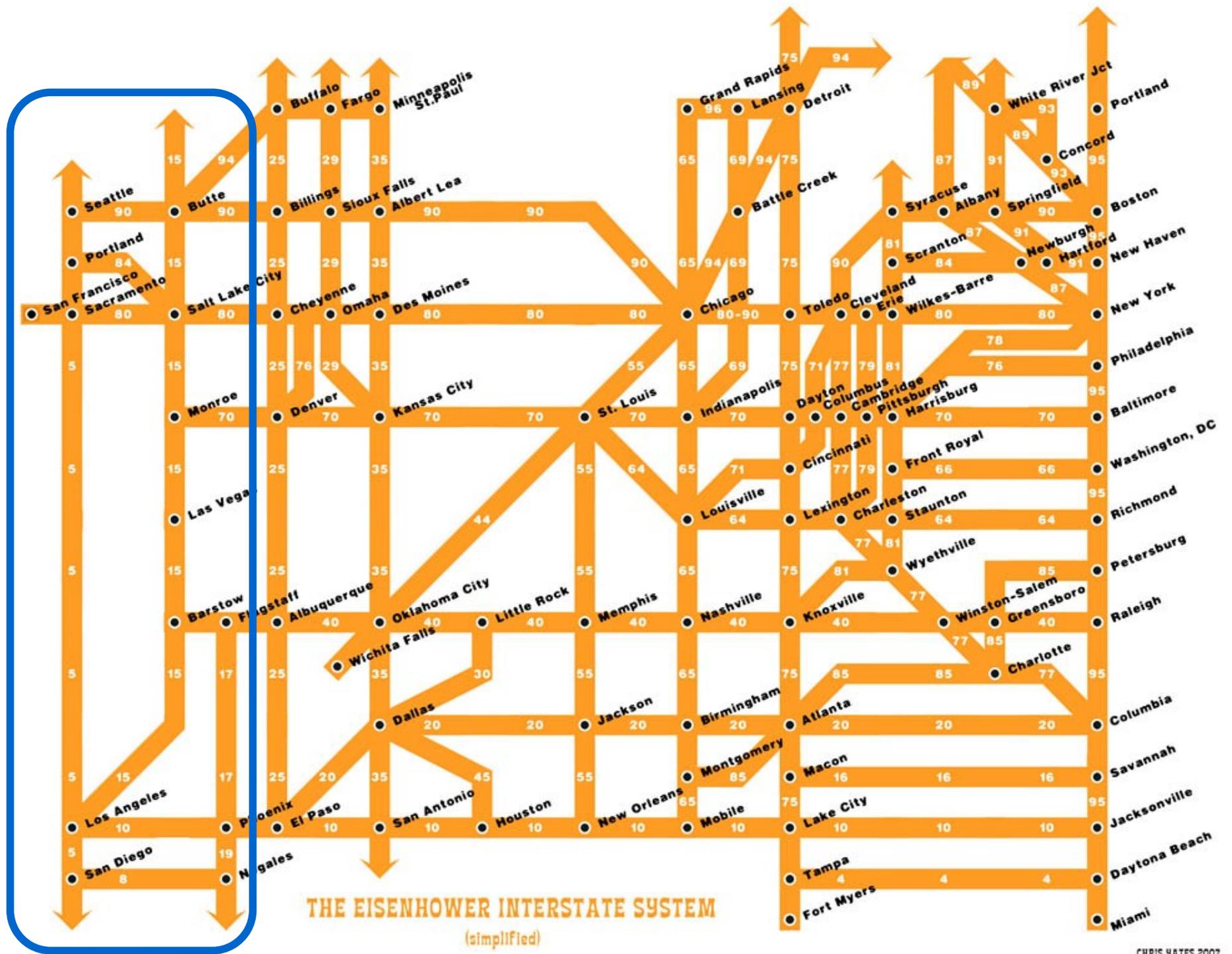
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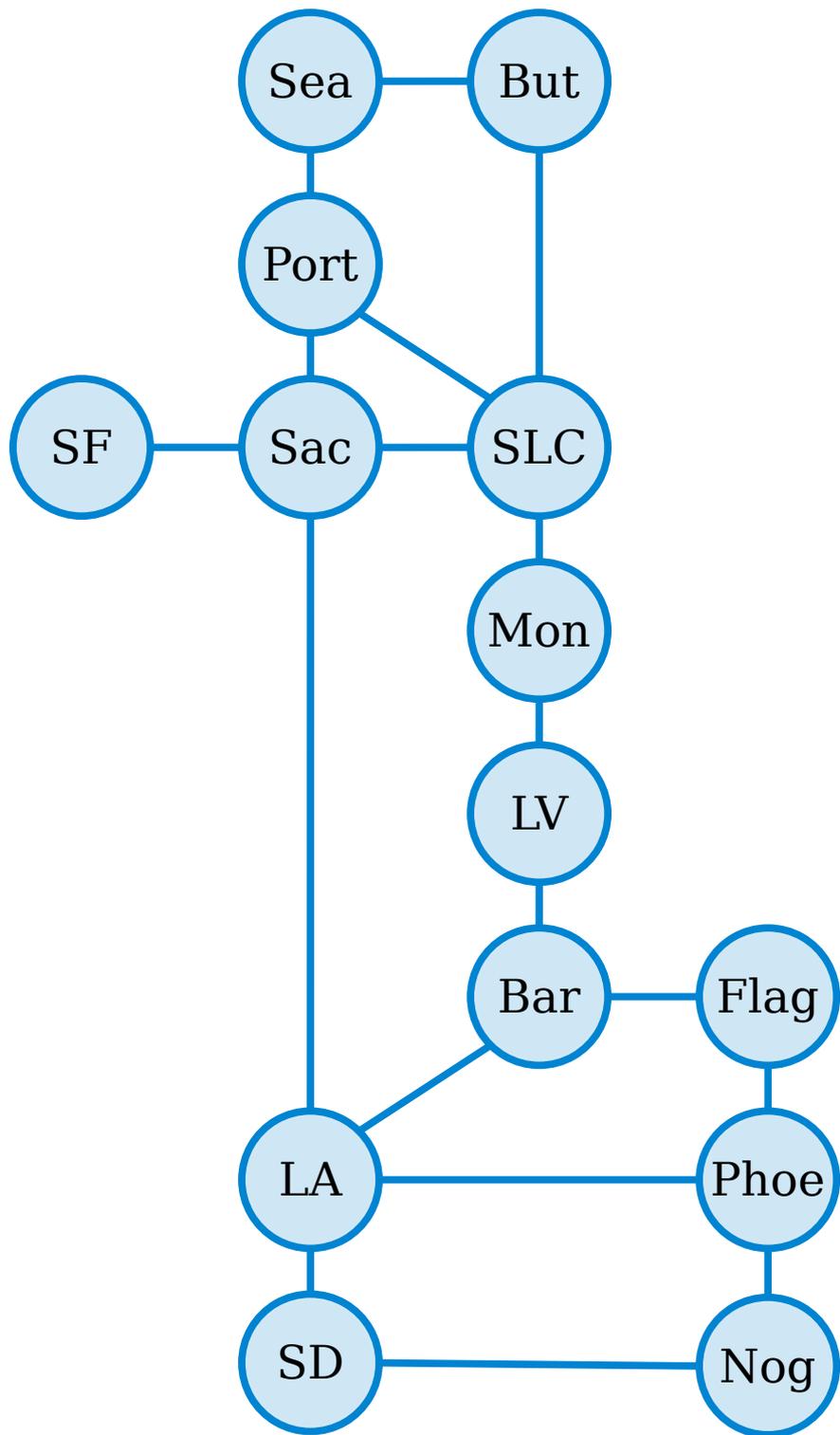
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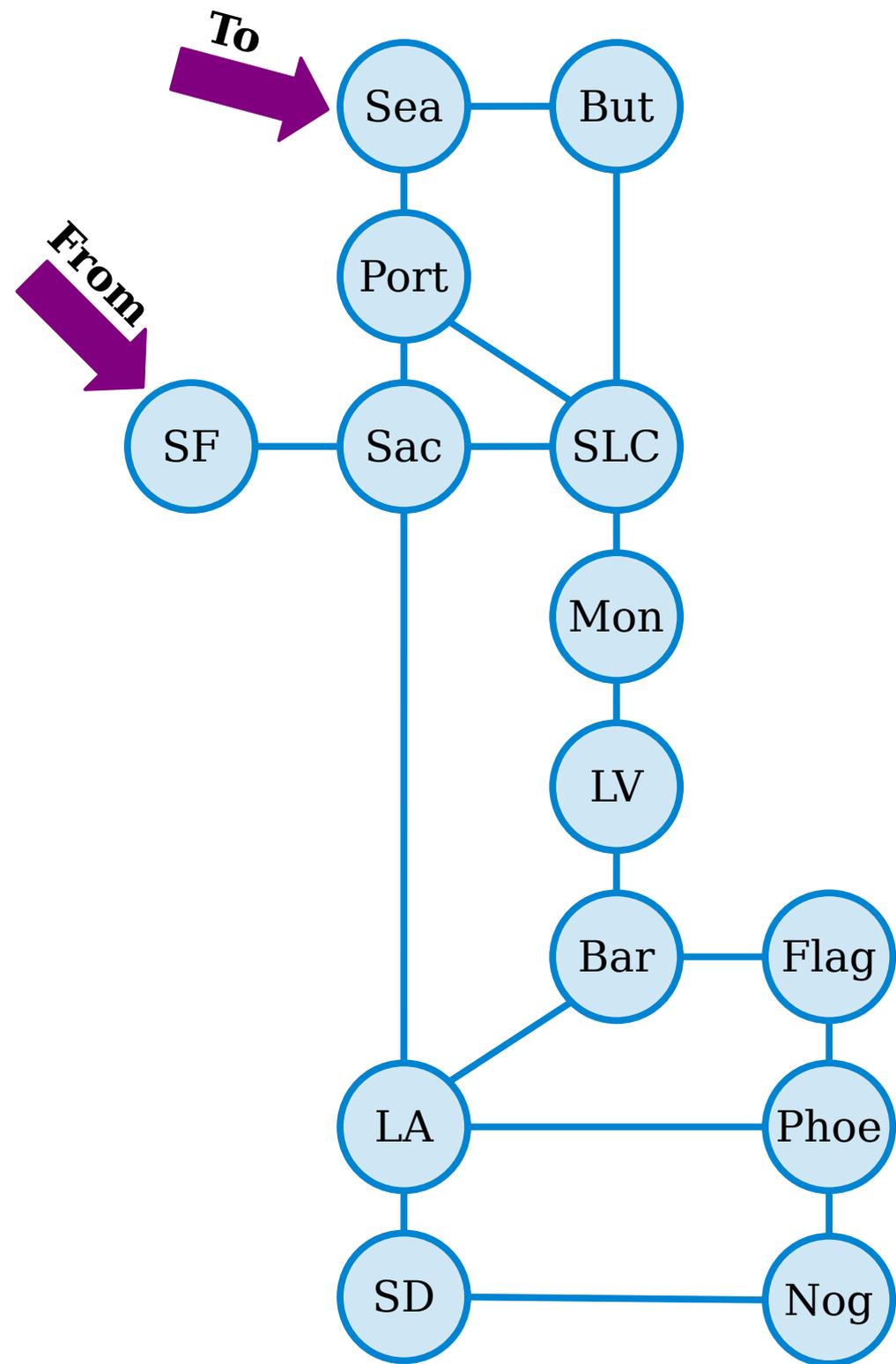
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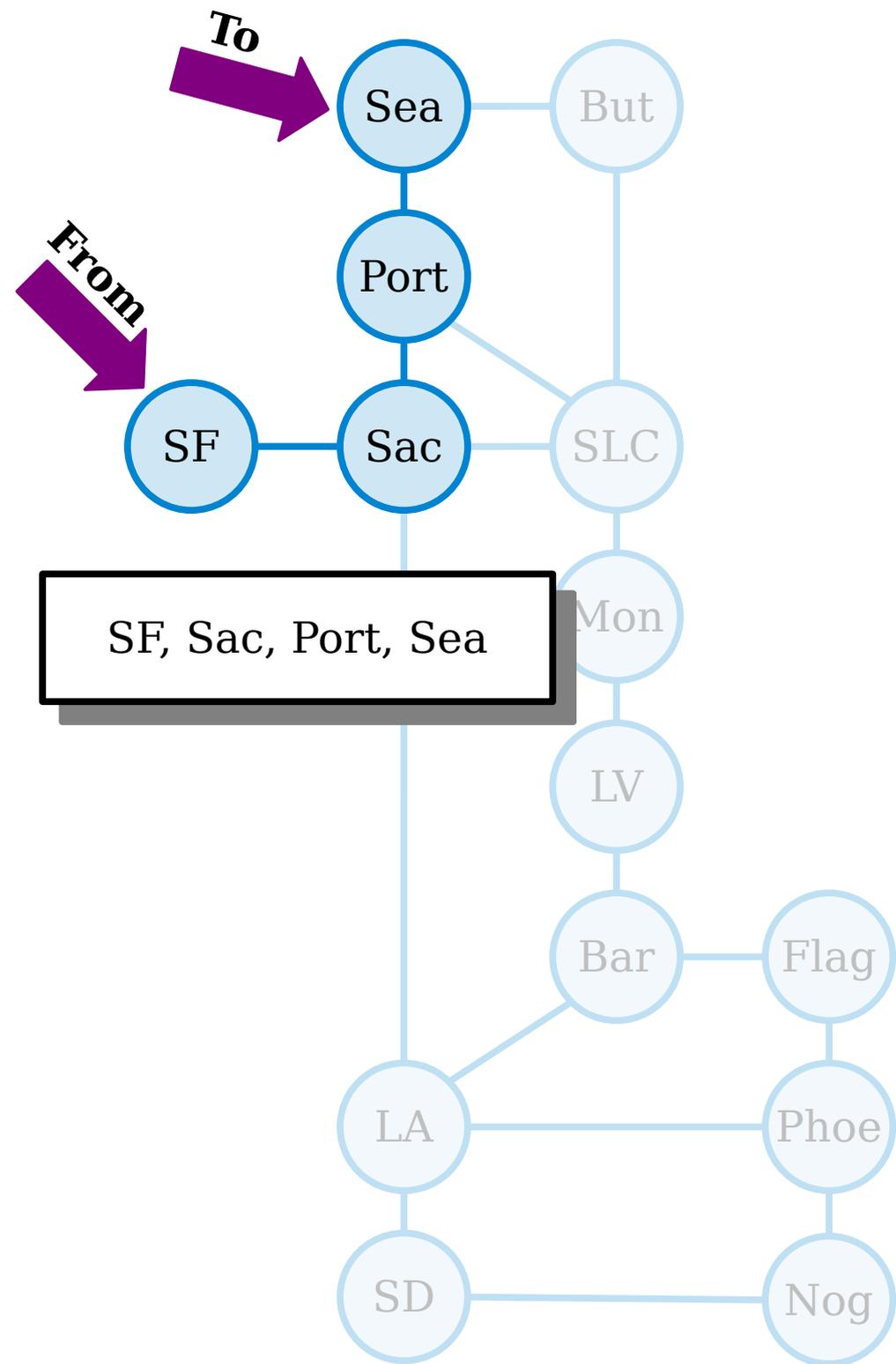




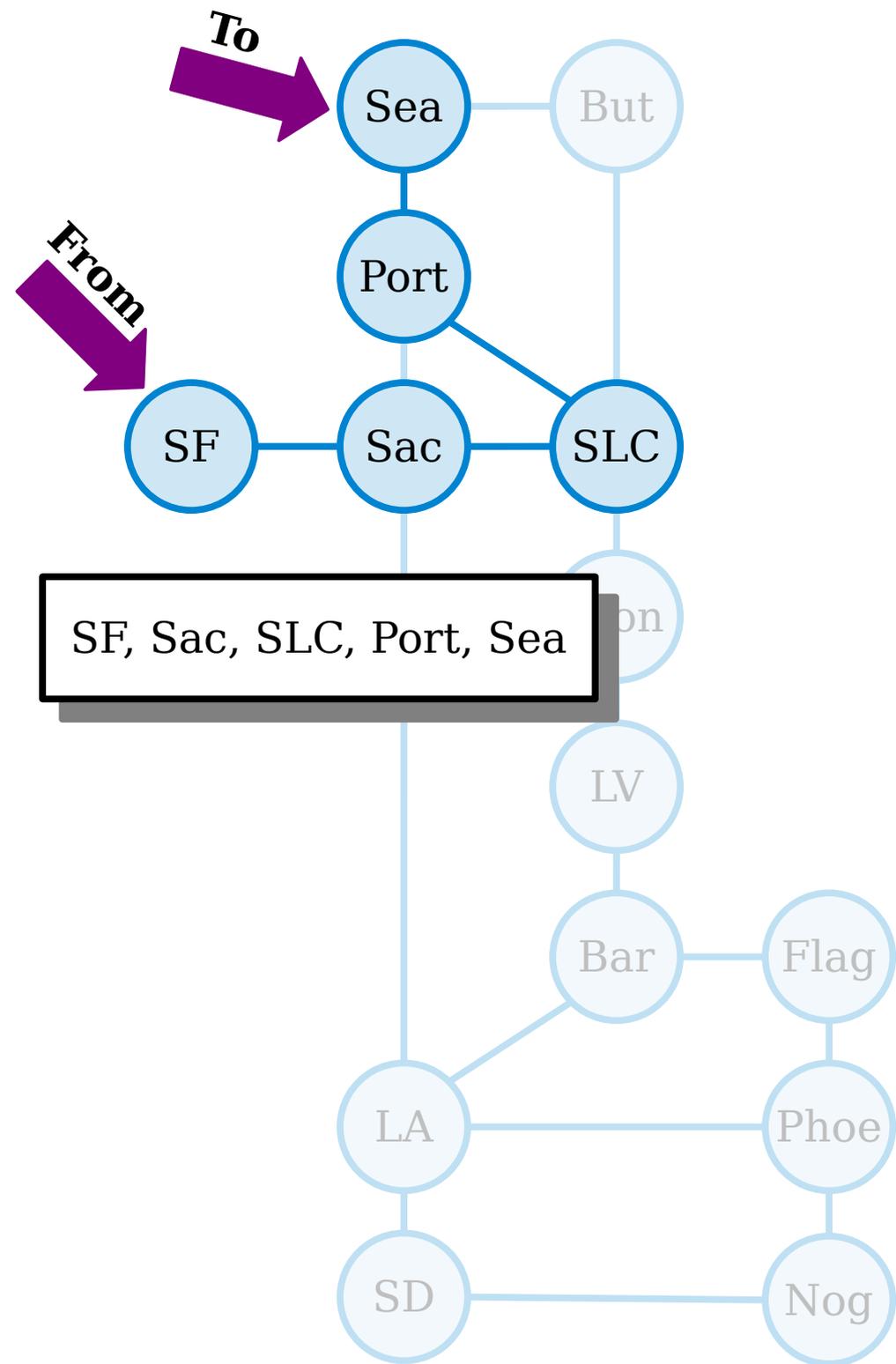
Road Trip!



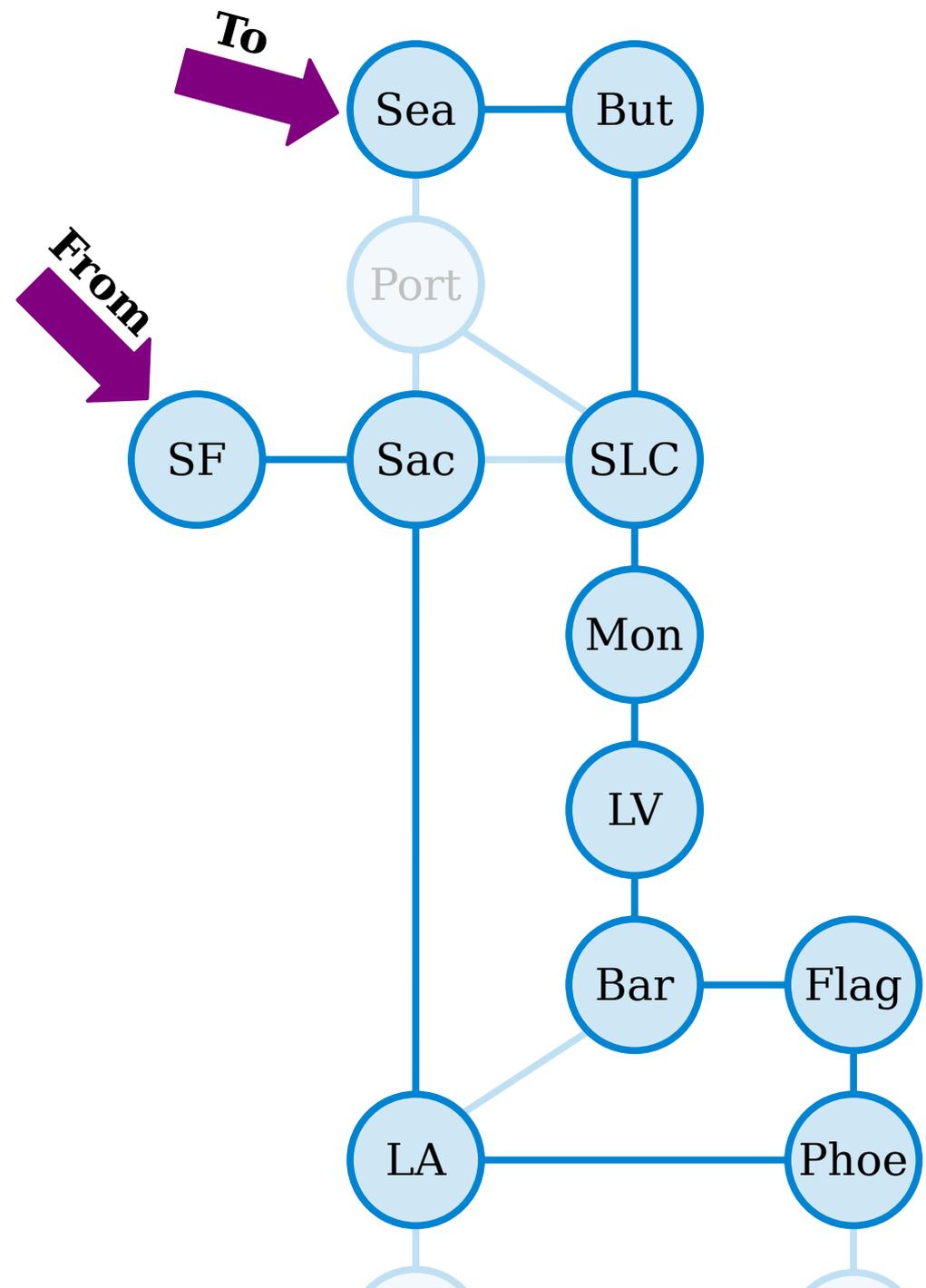
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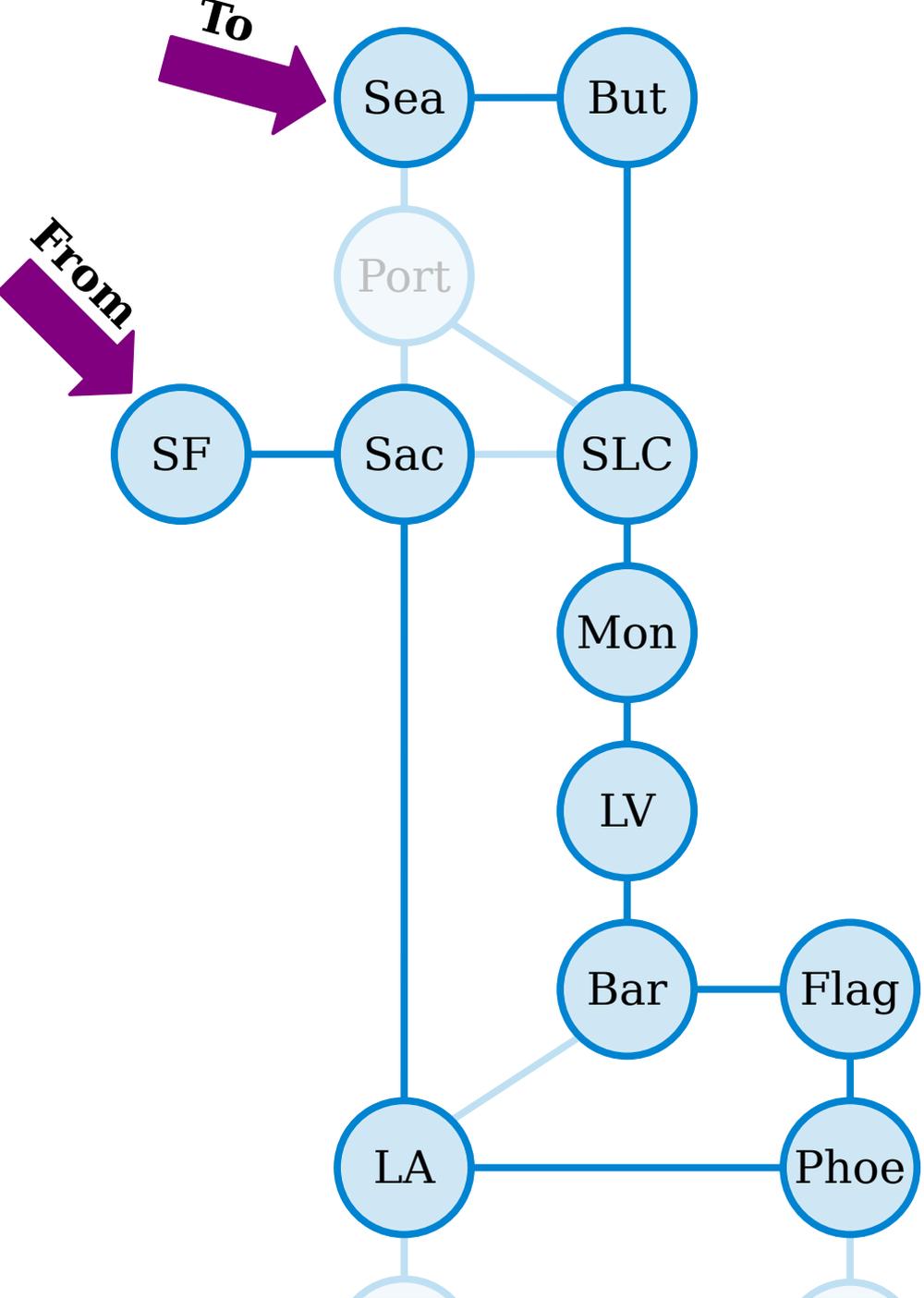
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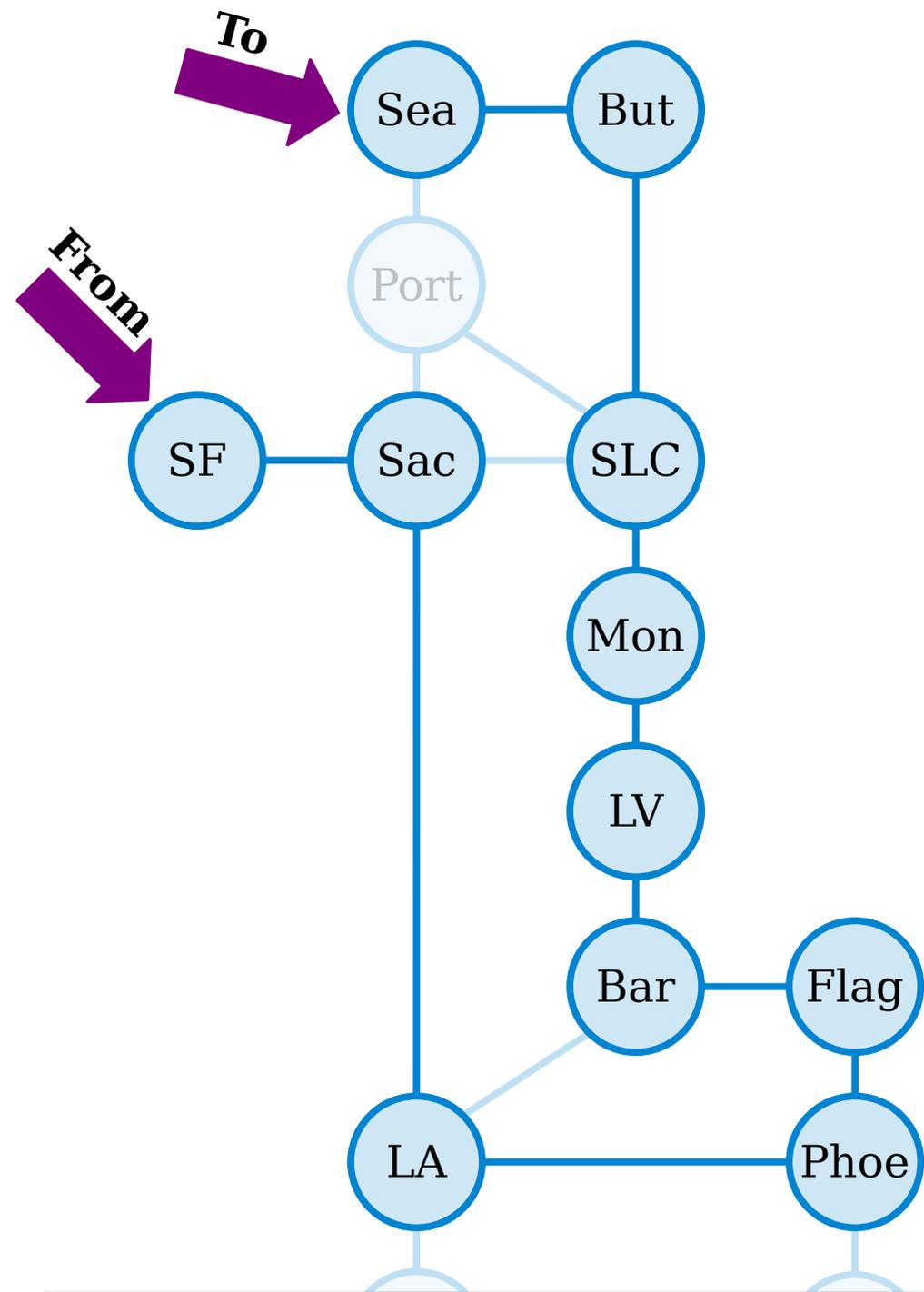
Road Trip!

SF, Sac, LA, Phoe, Flag, Bar, LV, Mon, SLC, But, Sea

A **walk** in a graph $G = (V, E)$ is a sequence of one or more nodes $v_1, v_2, v_3, \dots, v_n$ such that any two consecutive nodes in the sequence are adjacent.



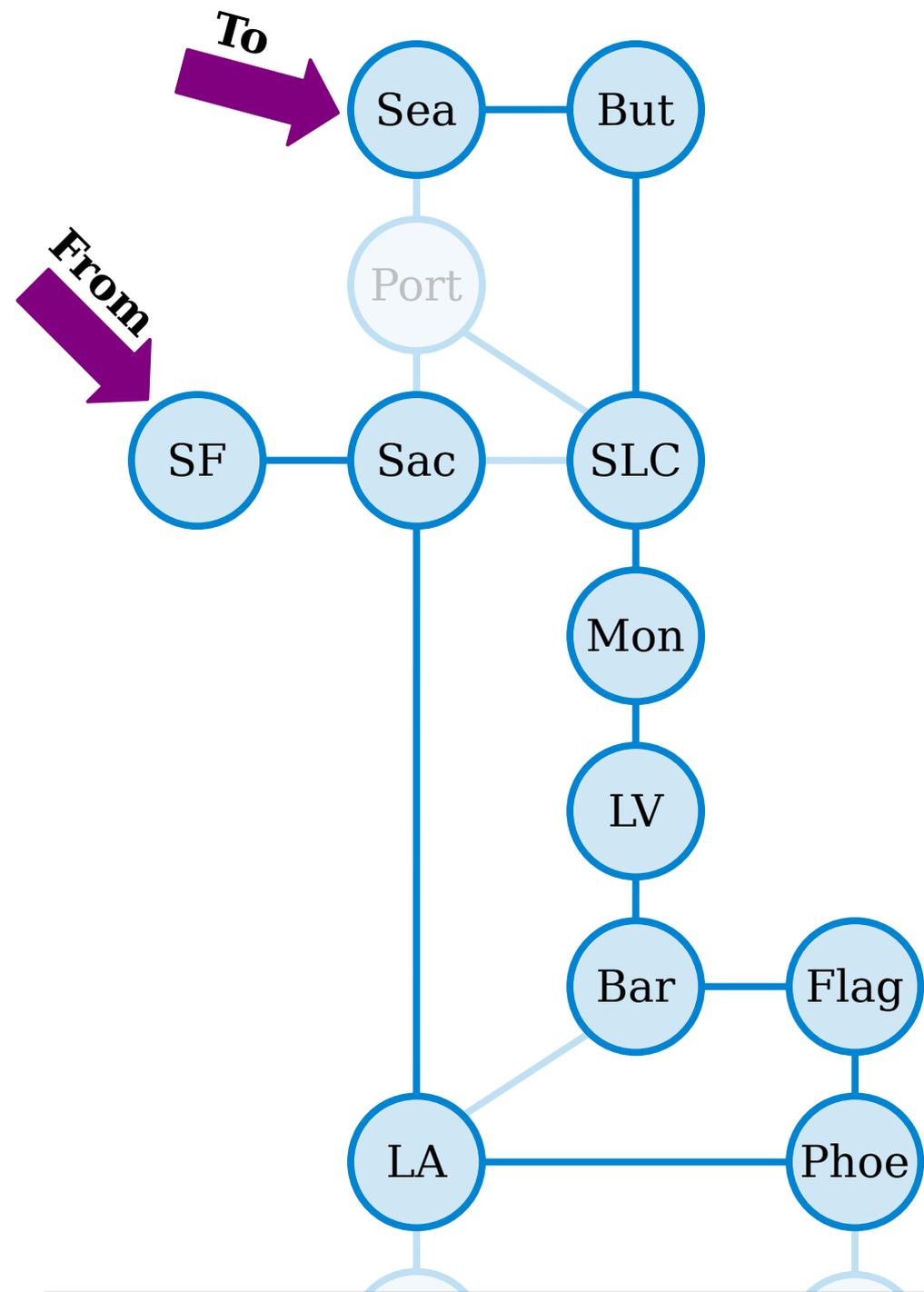
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SF, Sac, LA, Phoe, Flag, Bar, LV, Mon, SLC, But, Sea

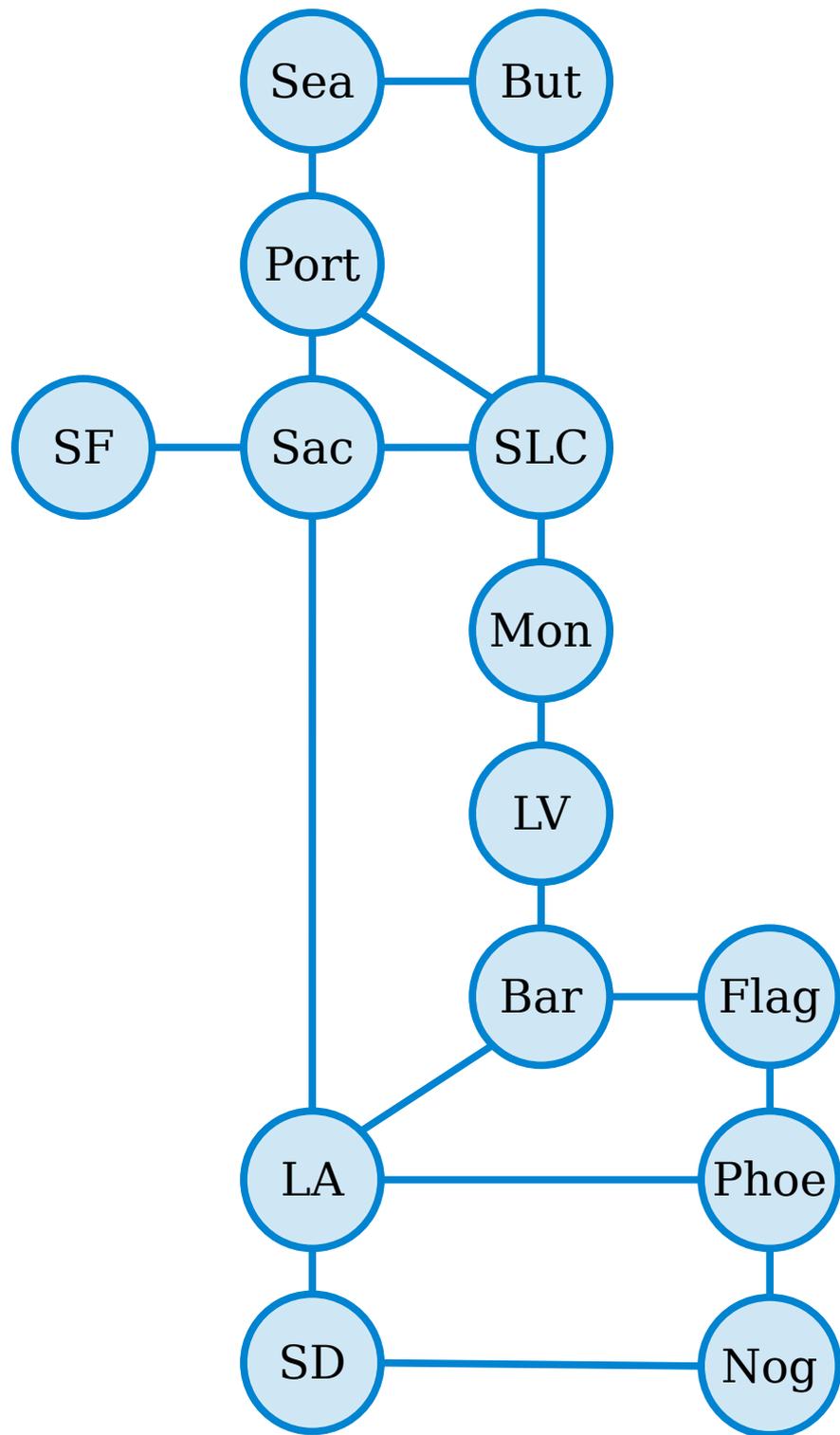


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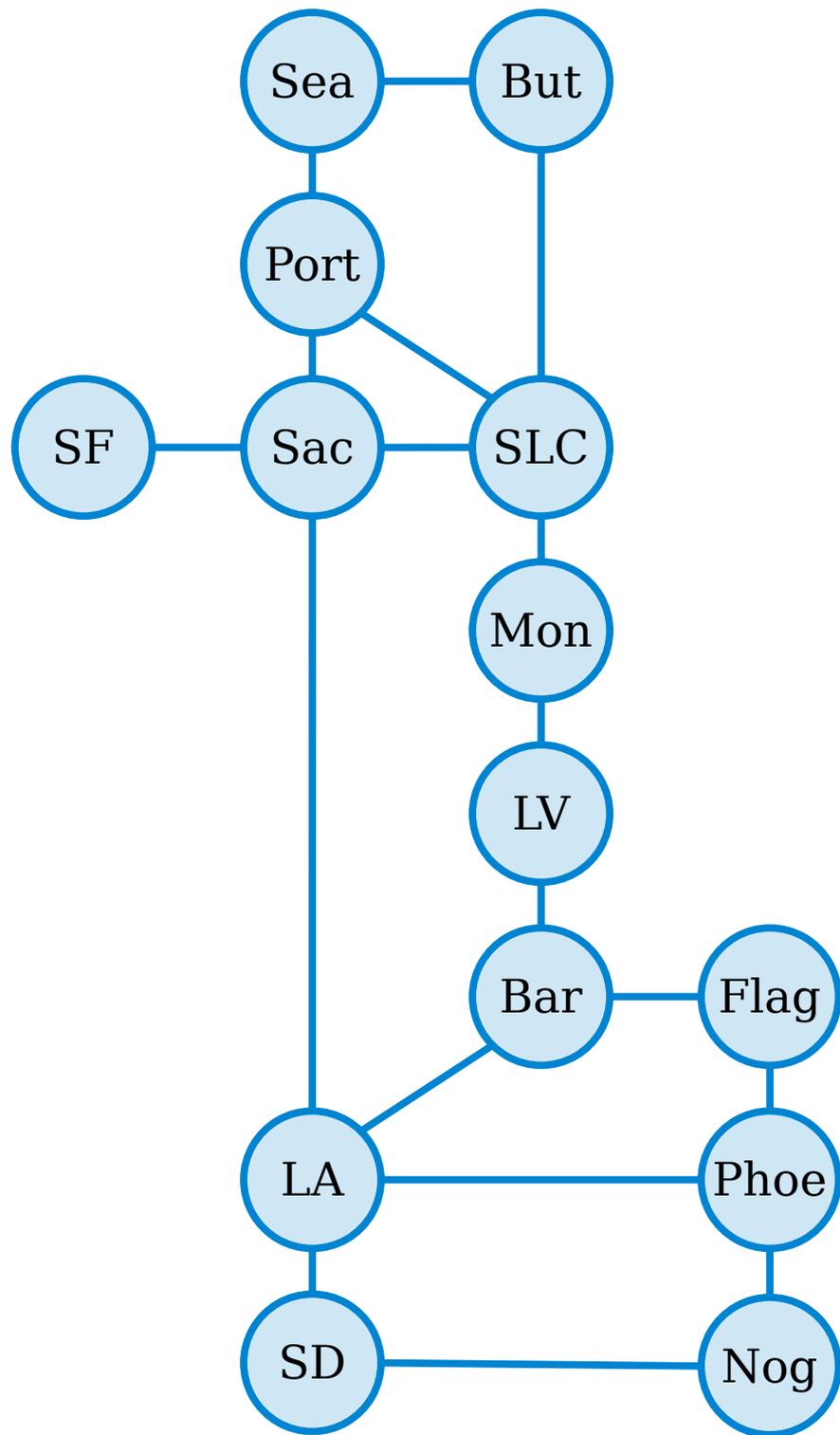
(This walk has length 10, but visits 11 cities.)

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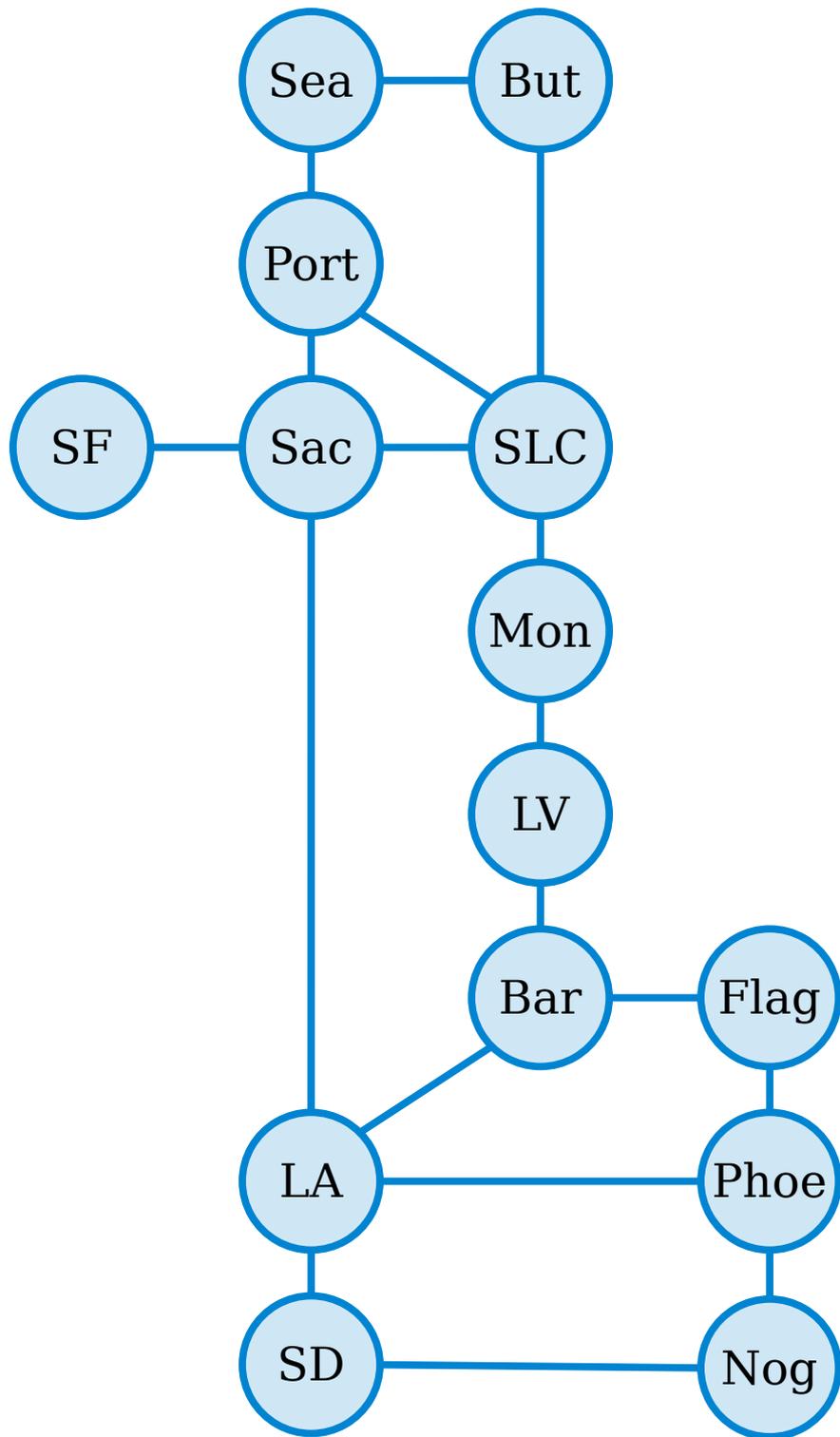
The **length** of the walk v_1, \dots, v_n is $n - 1$.

Which of these are walks in this graph?

- SF
- SF, Sac
- SF, Sac, SF

Answer at

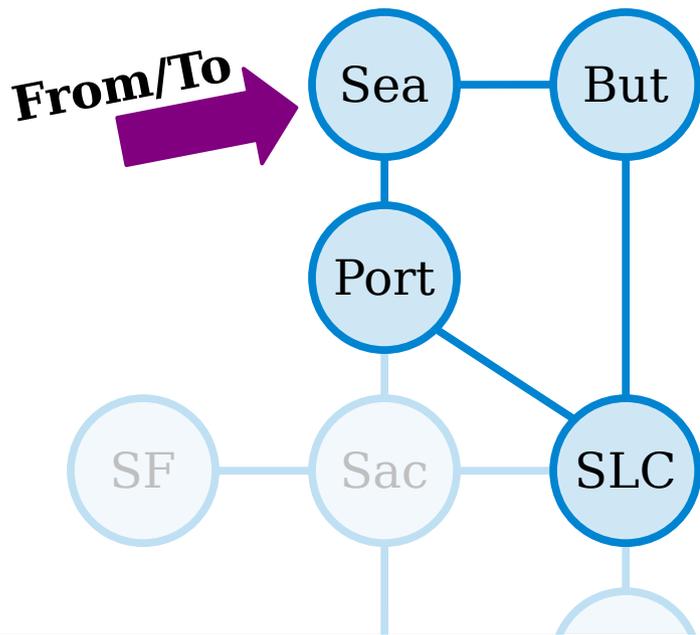
<https://cs103.stanford.edu/pollev>



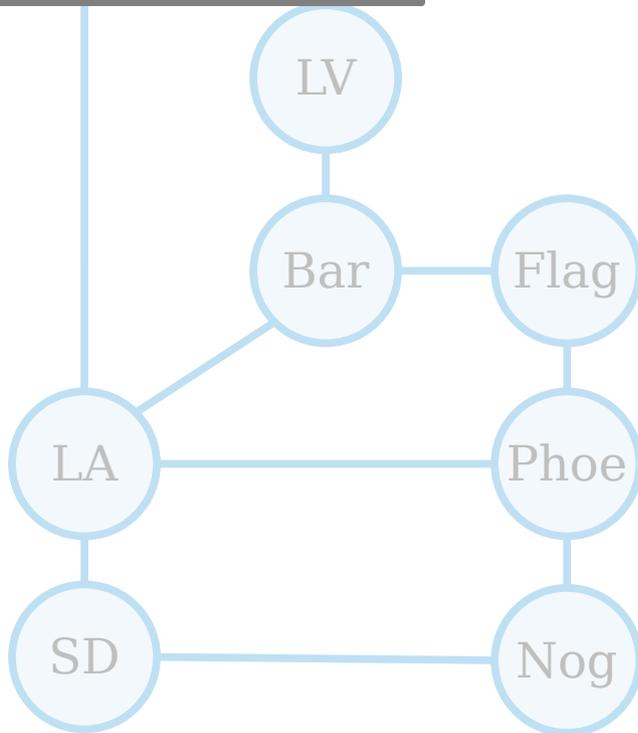
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Another road trip!
But let's get back home this time.



Sea, But, SLC, Port, Sea

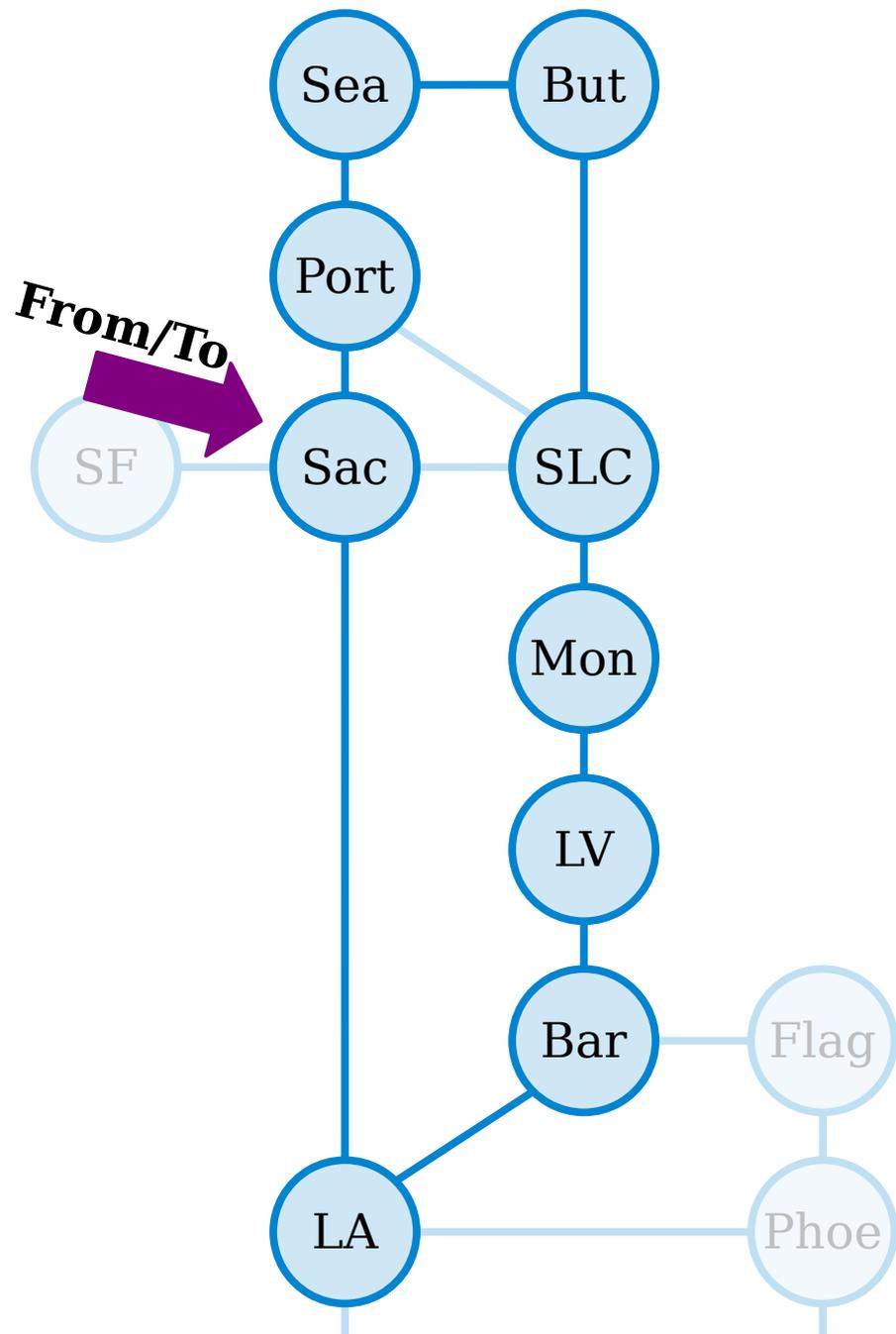


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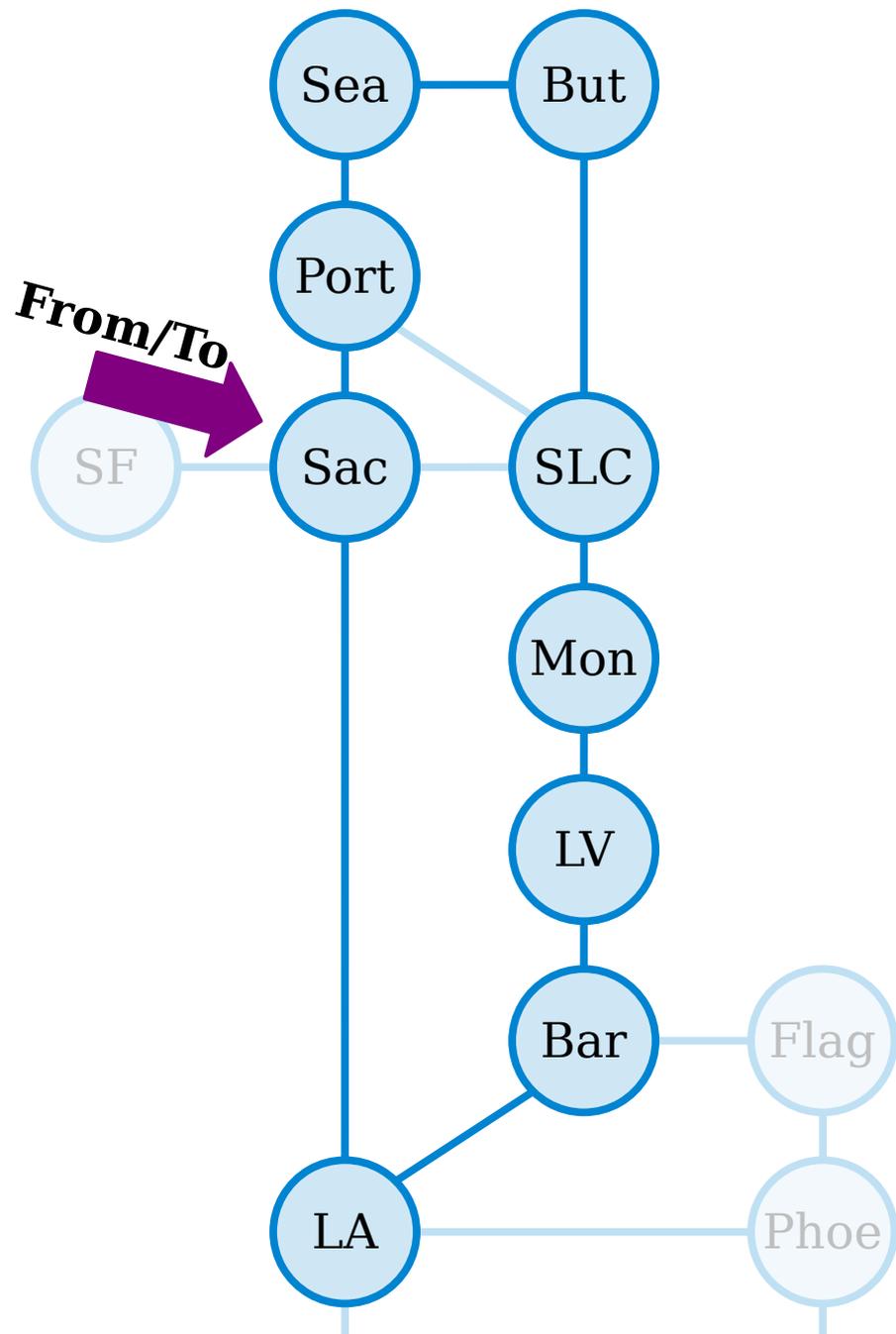


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Another road trip!
But let's get back home this time.

Sac, Port, Sea, But, SLC, Mon, LV, Bar, LA, Sac

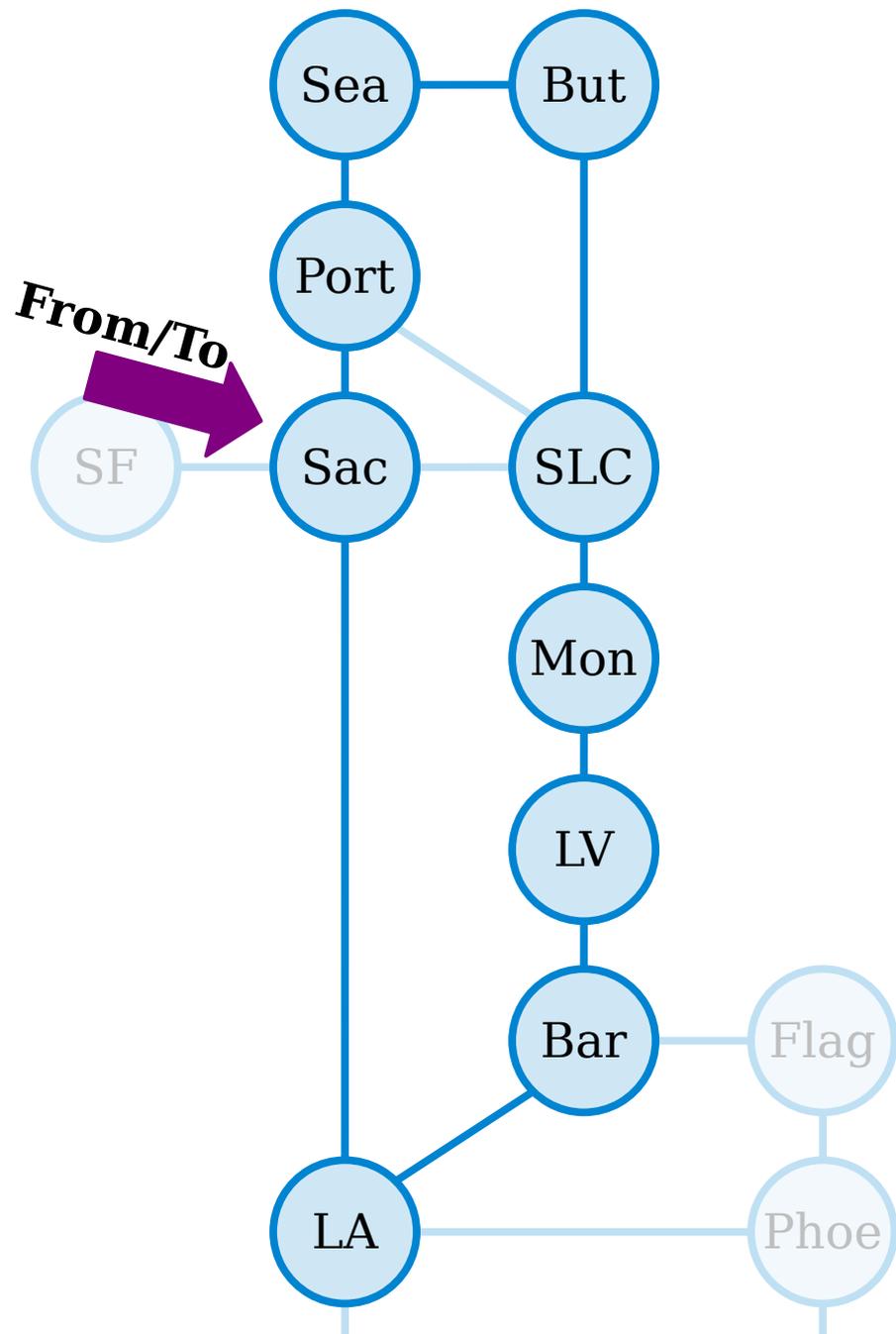


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A **closed walk** in a graph is a walk from a node back to itself. (By convention, a closed walk cannot have length zero.)

Sac, Port, Sea, But, SLC, Mon, LV, Bar, LA, Sac



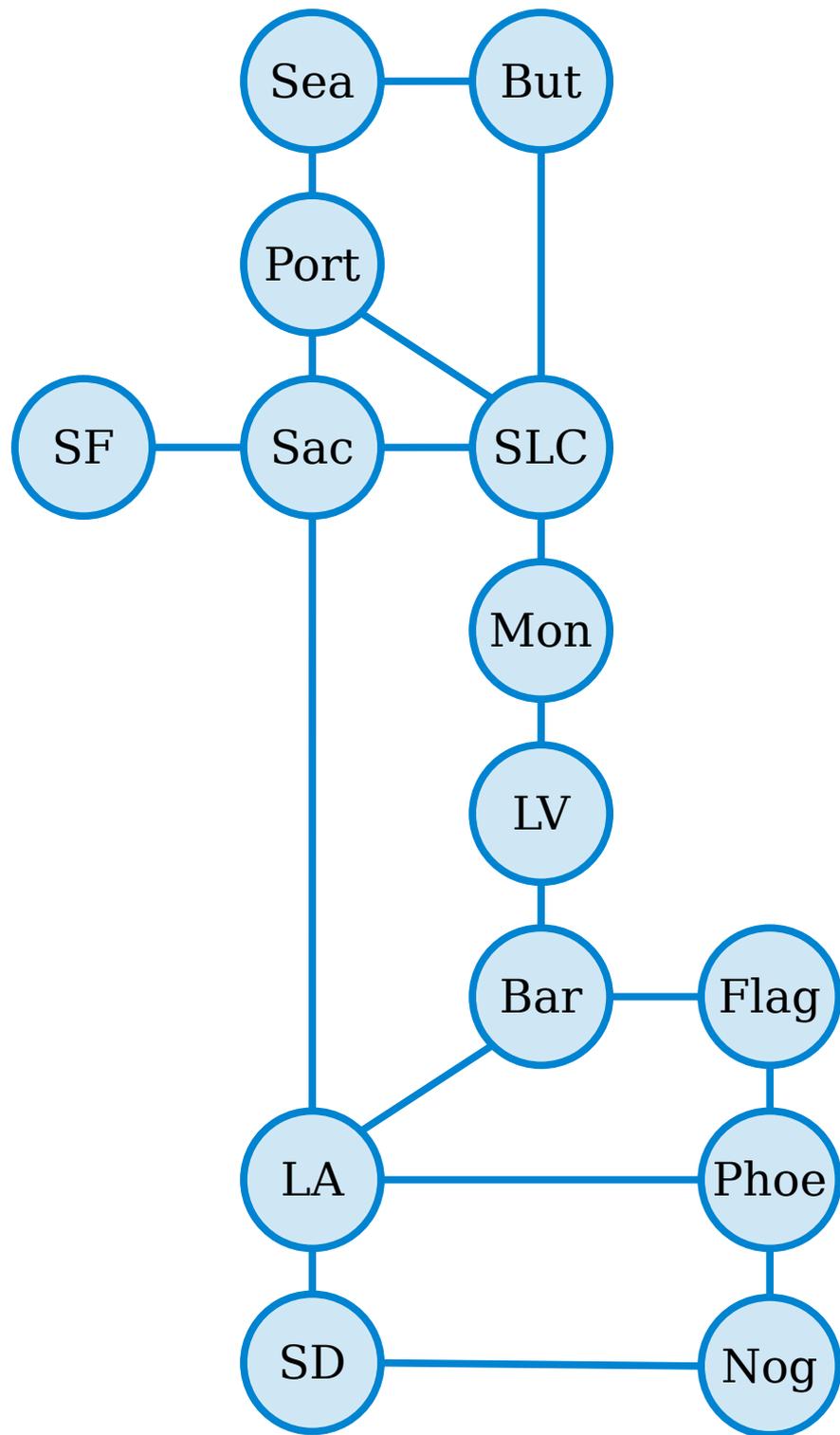
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(This closed walk has length nine and visits nine different cities.)

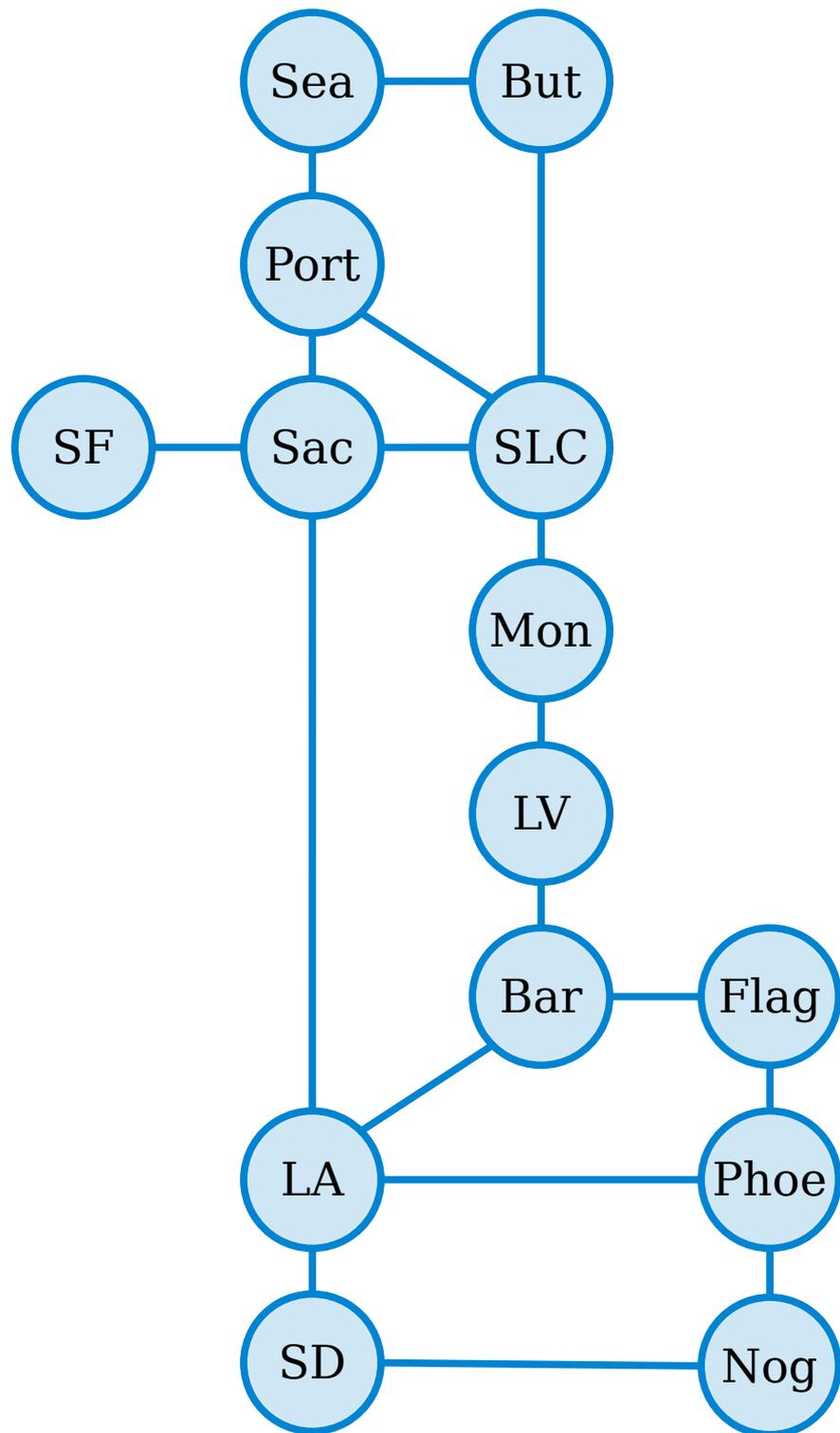
Sac, Port, Sea, But, SLC, Mon, LV, Bar, LA, Sac



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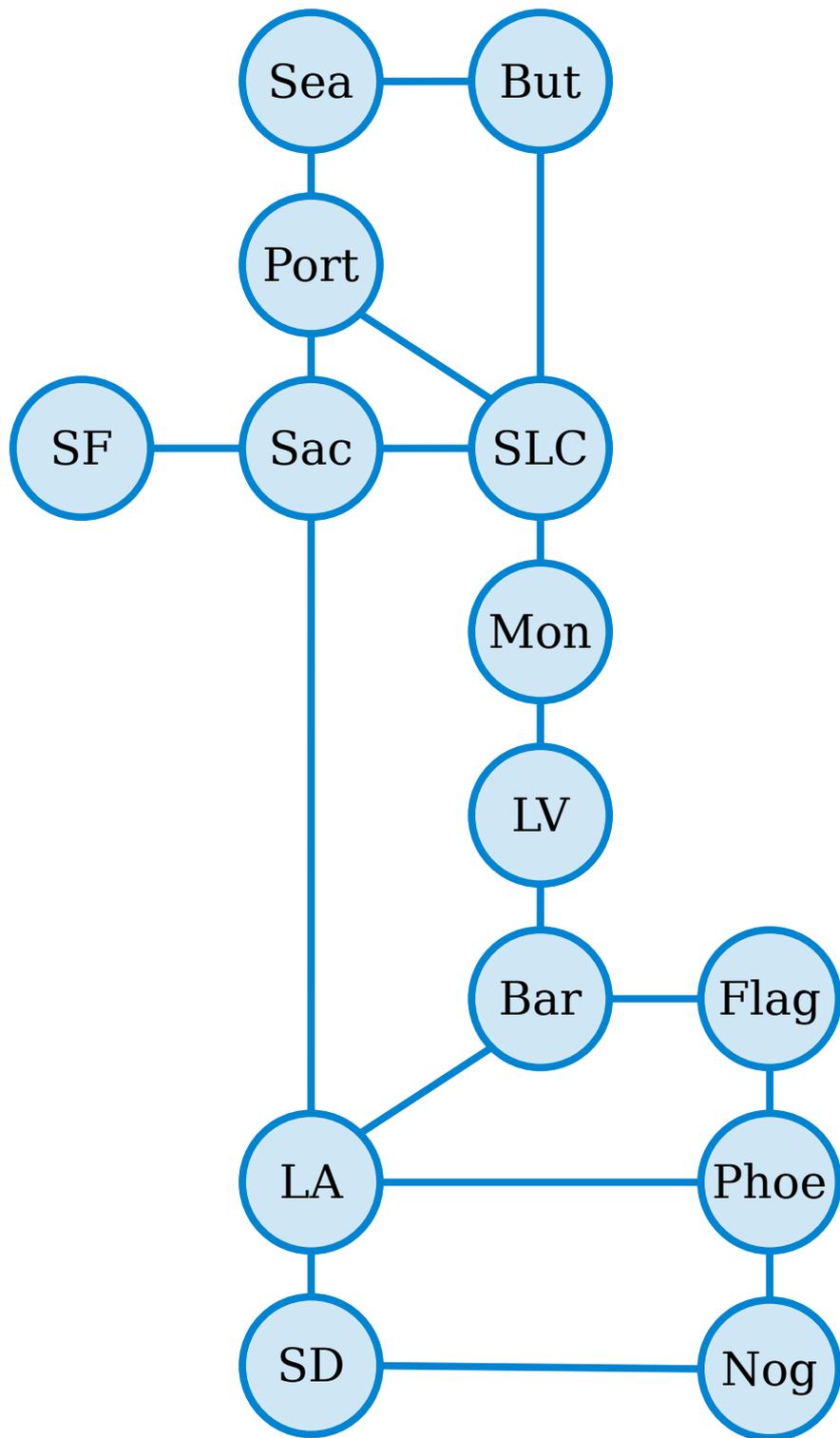
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Which of these are closed walks?

SF
 SF, Sac
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Answer at

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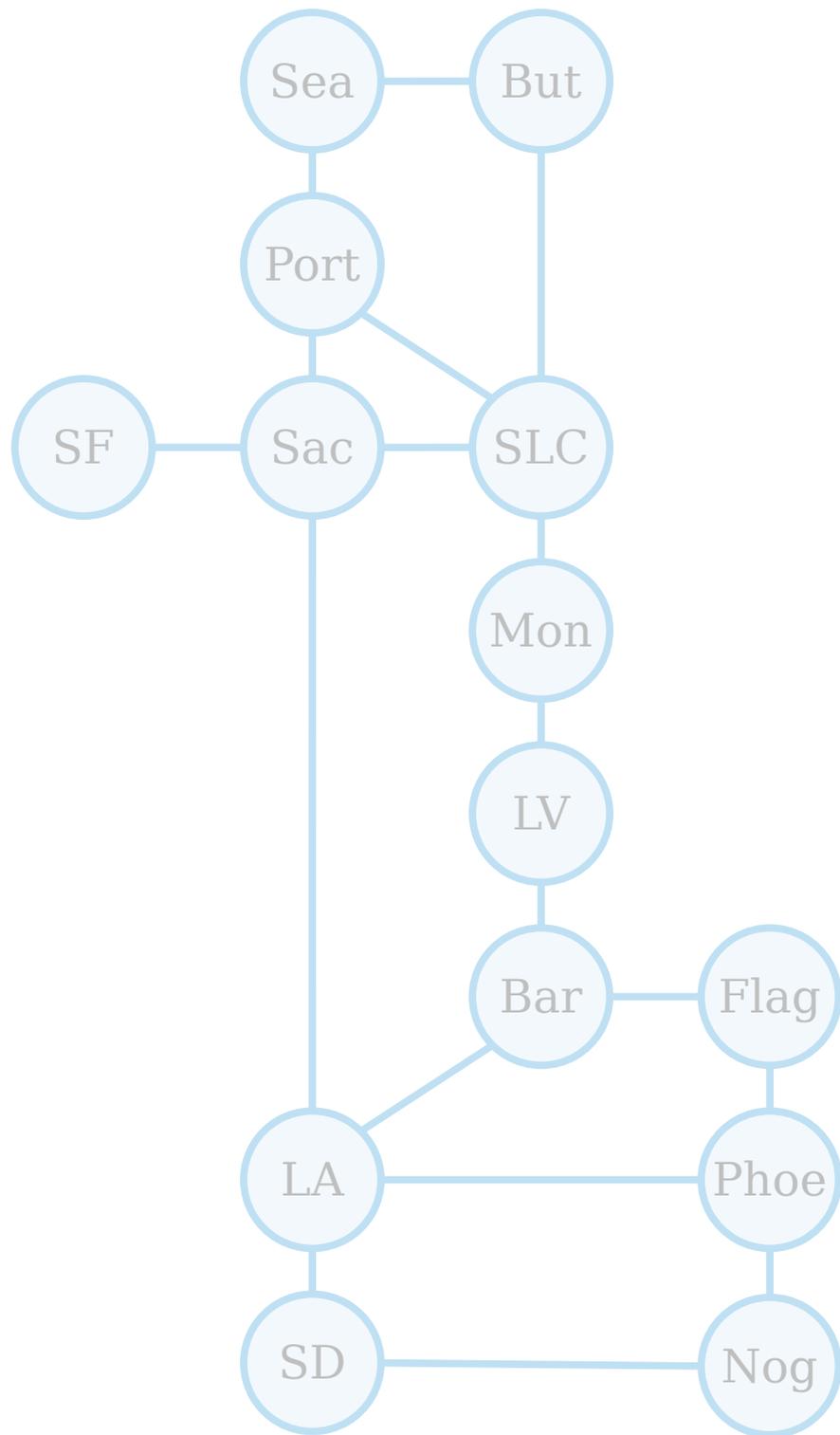
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Let's move to a new city.

... and road trip from there!



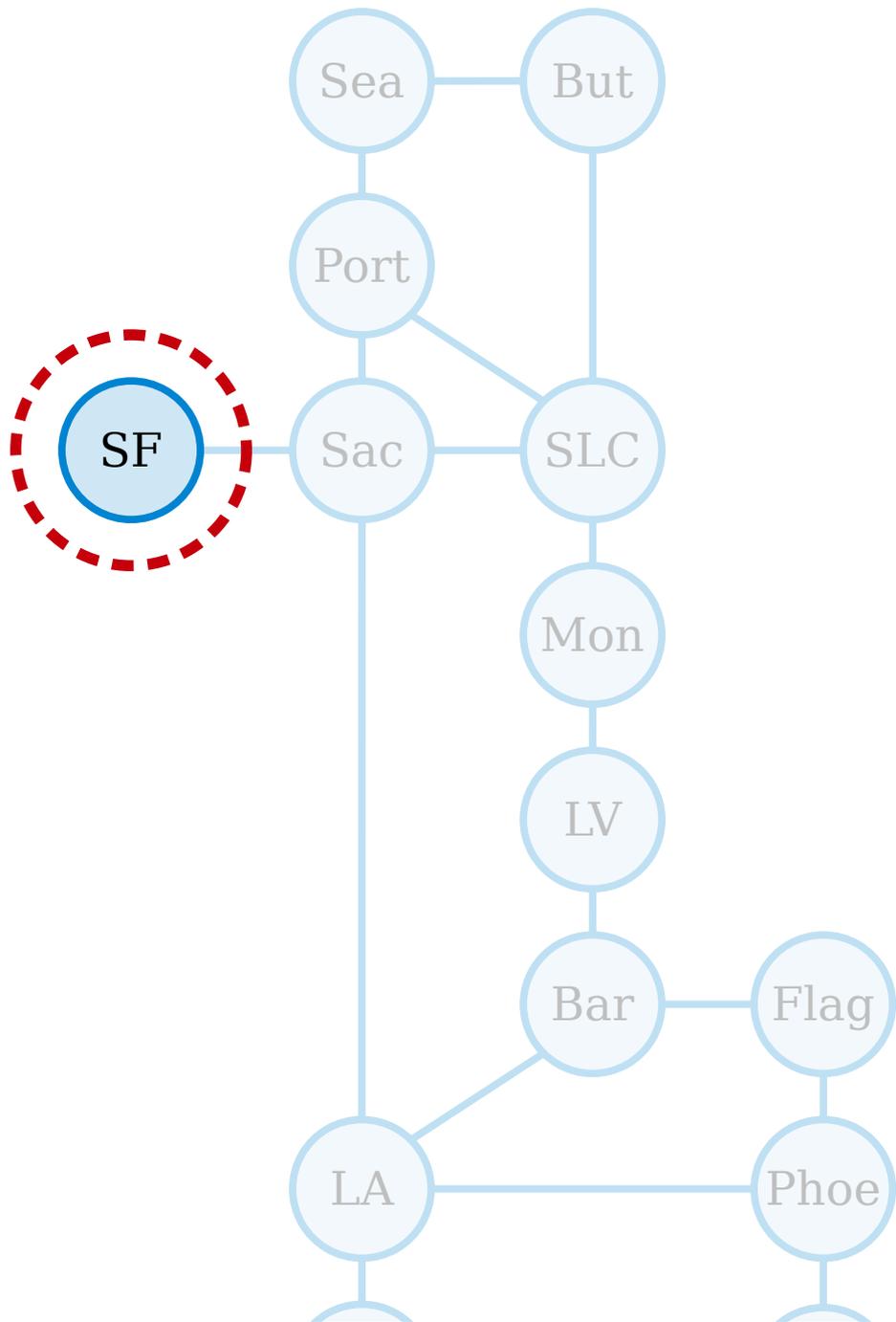
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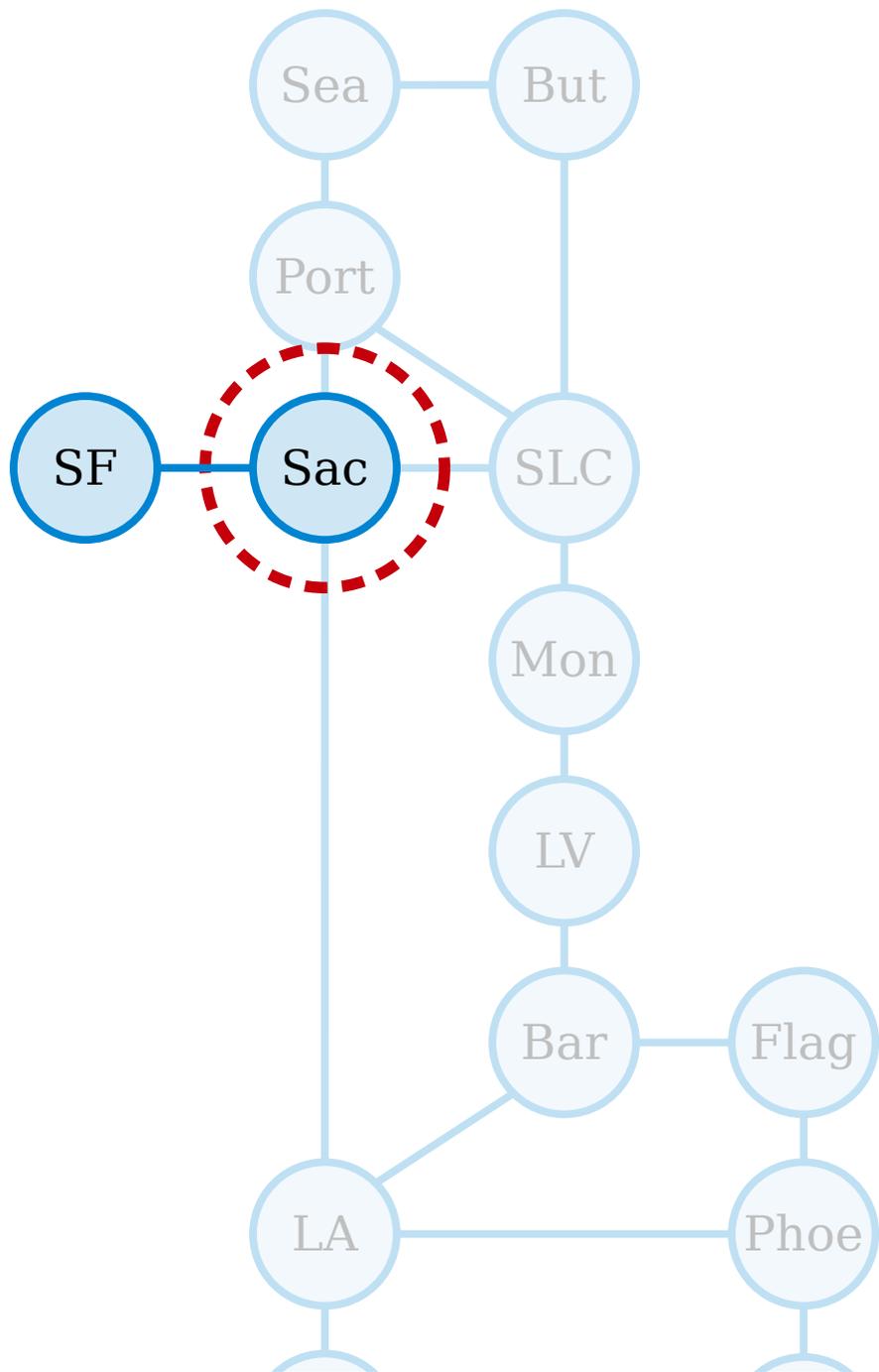
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SF



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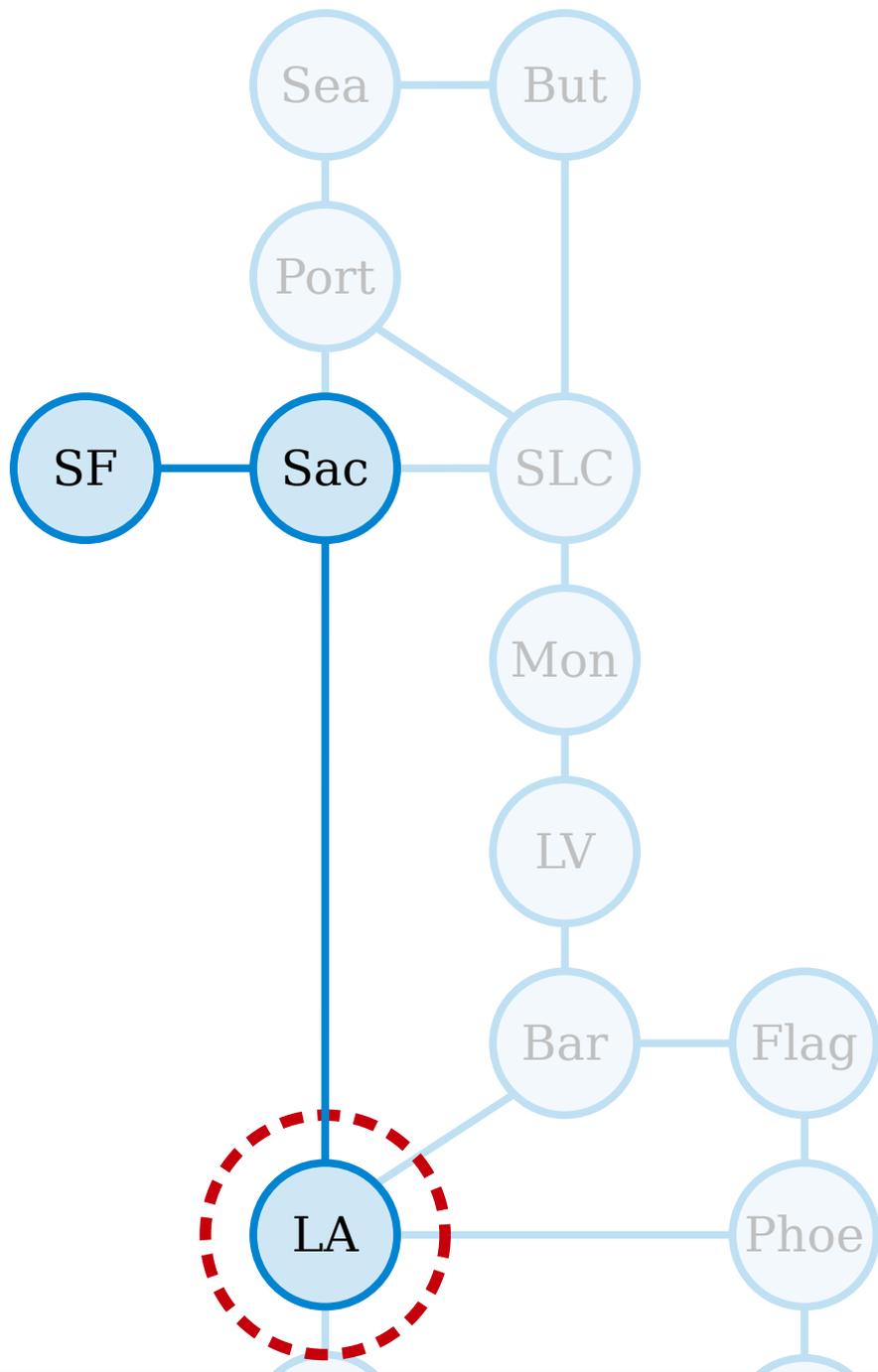
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SF, Sac



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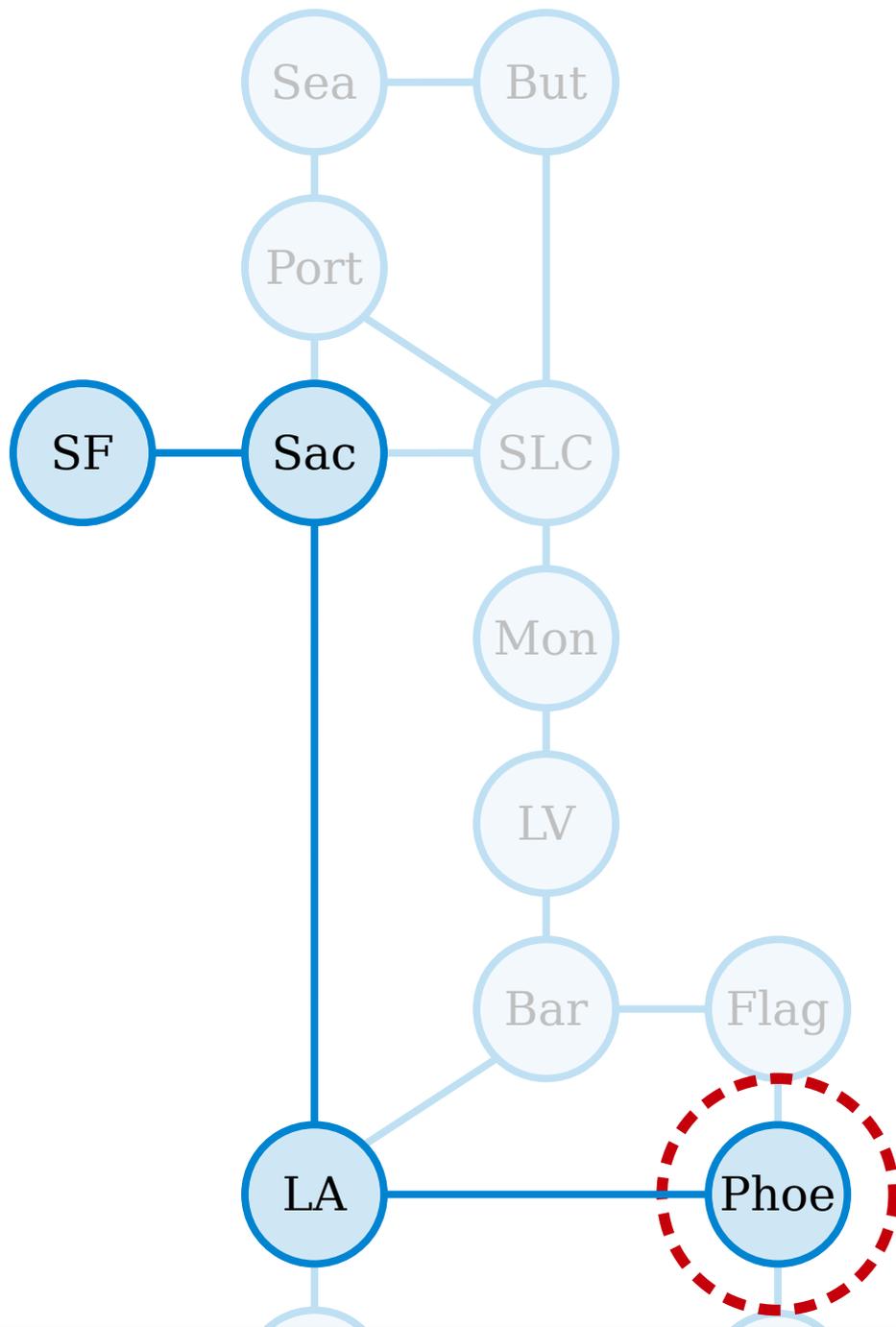
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SF, Sac, LA



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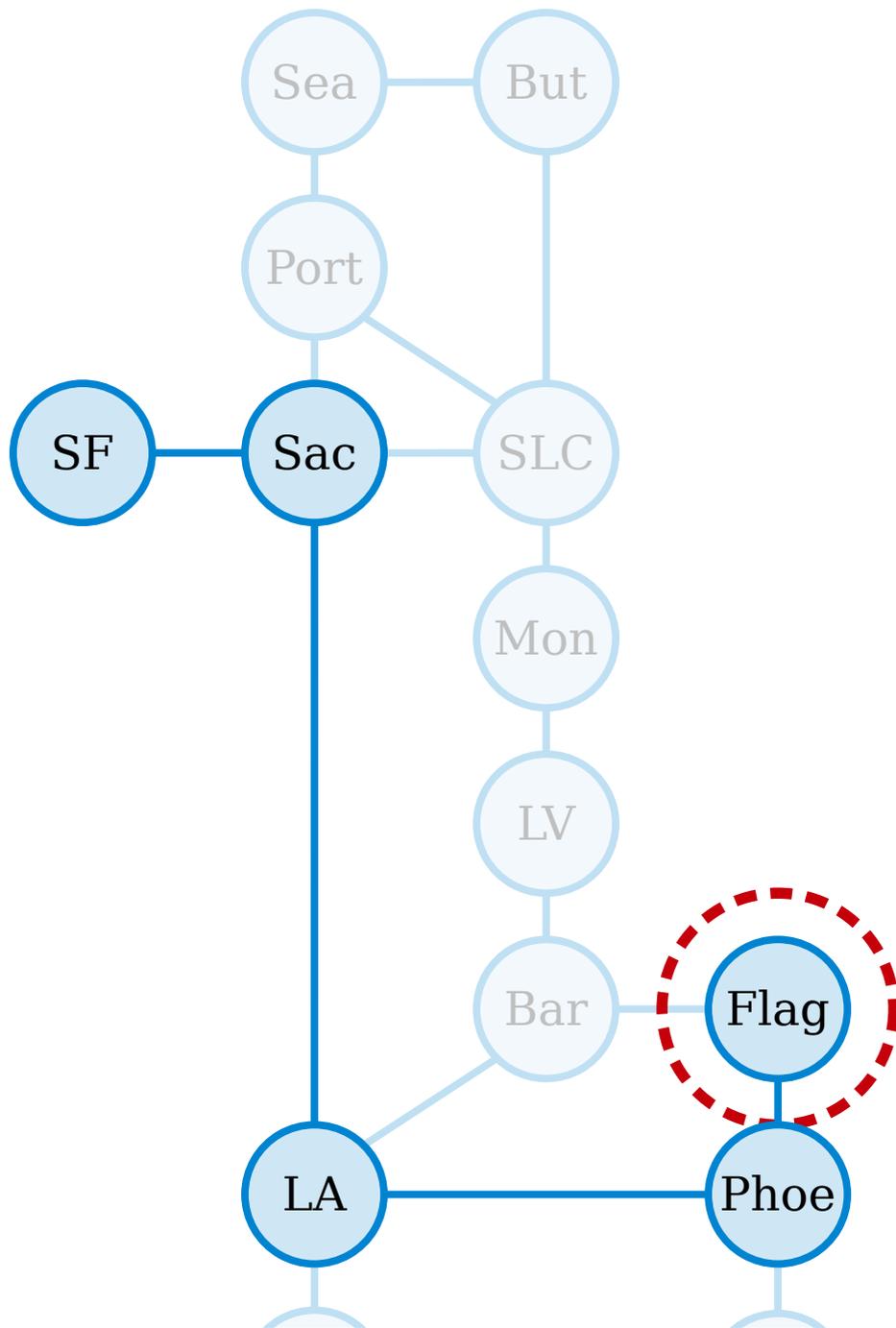
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SF, Sac, LA, Phoe



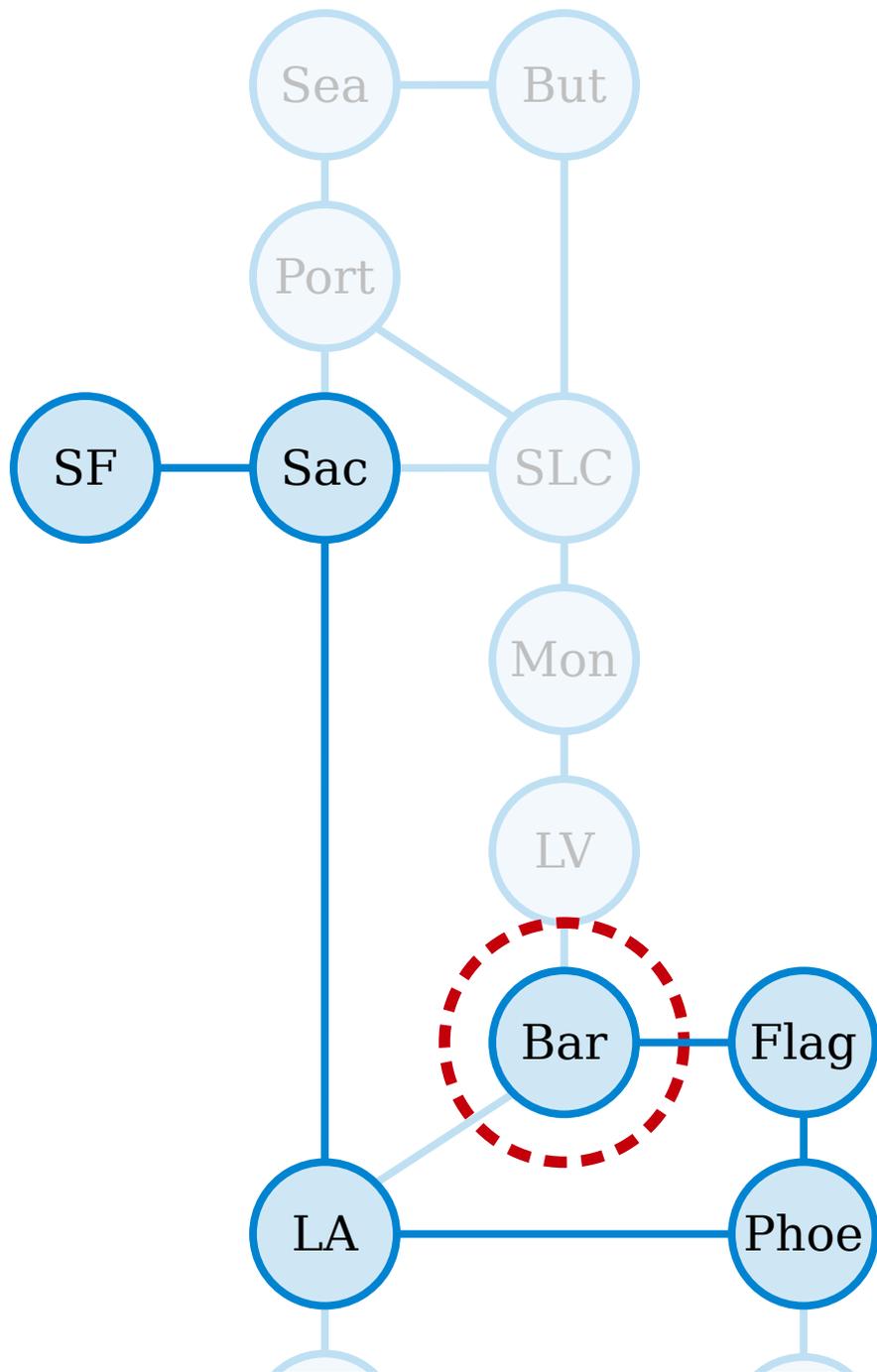
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SF, Sac, LA, Phoe, Flag



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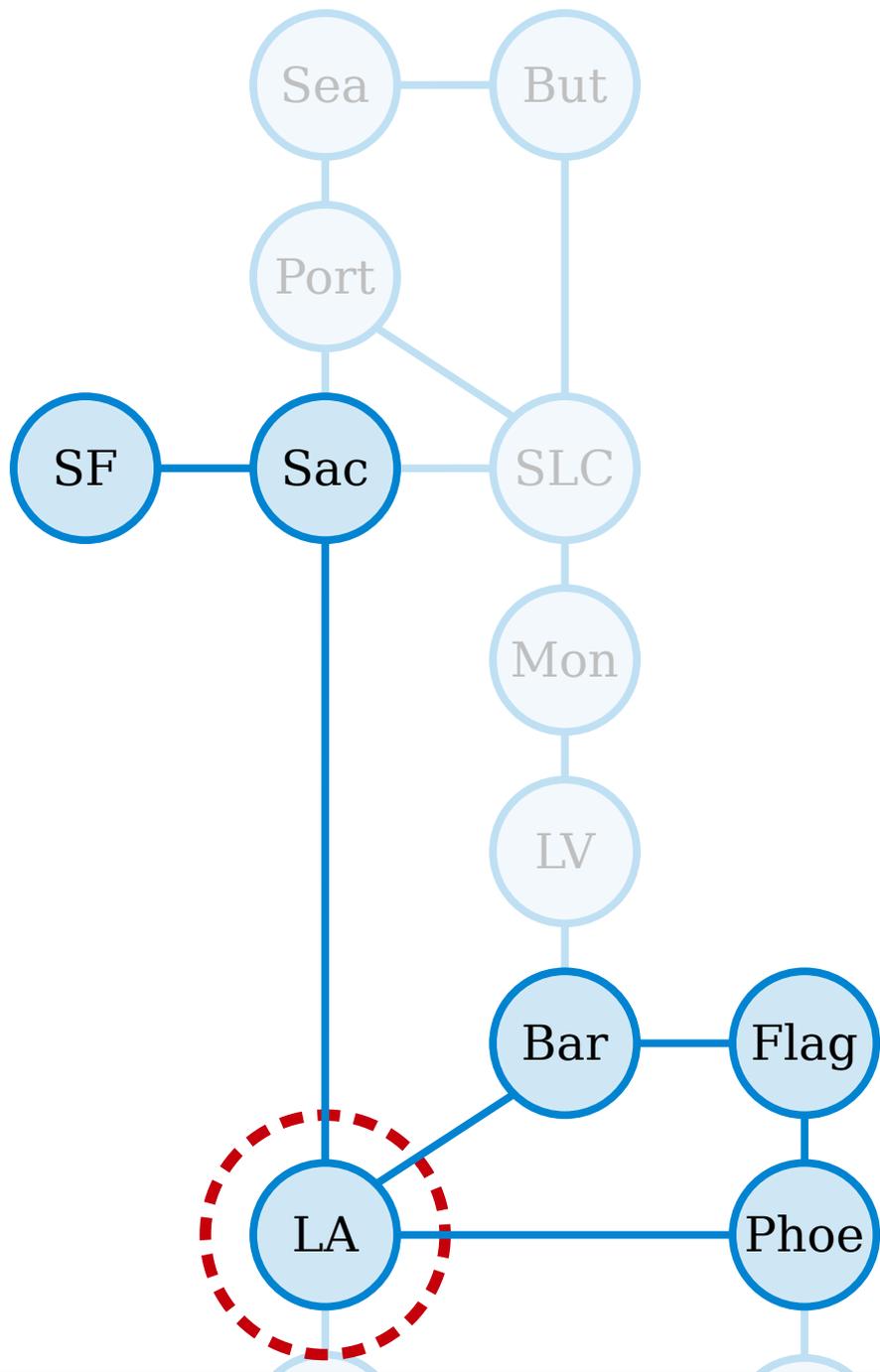
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SF, Sac, LA, Phoe, Flag, Bar



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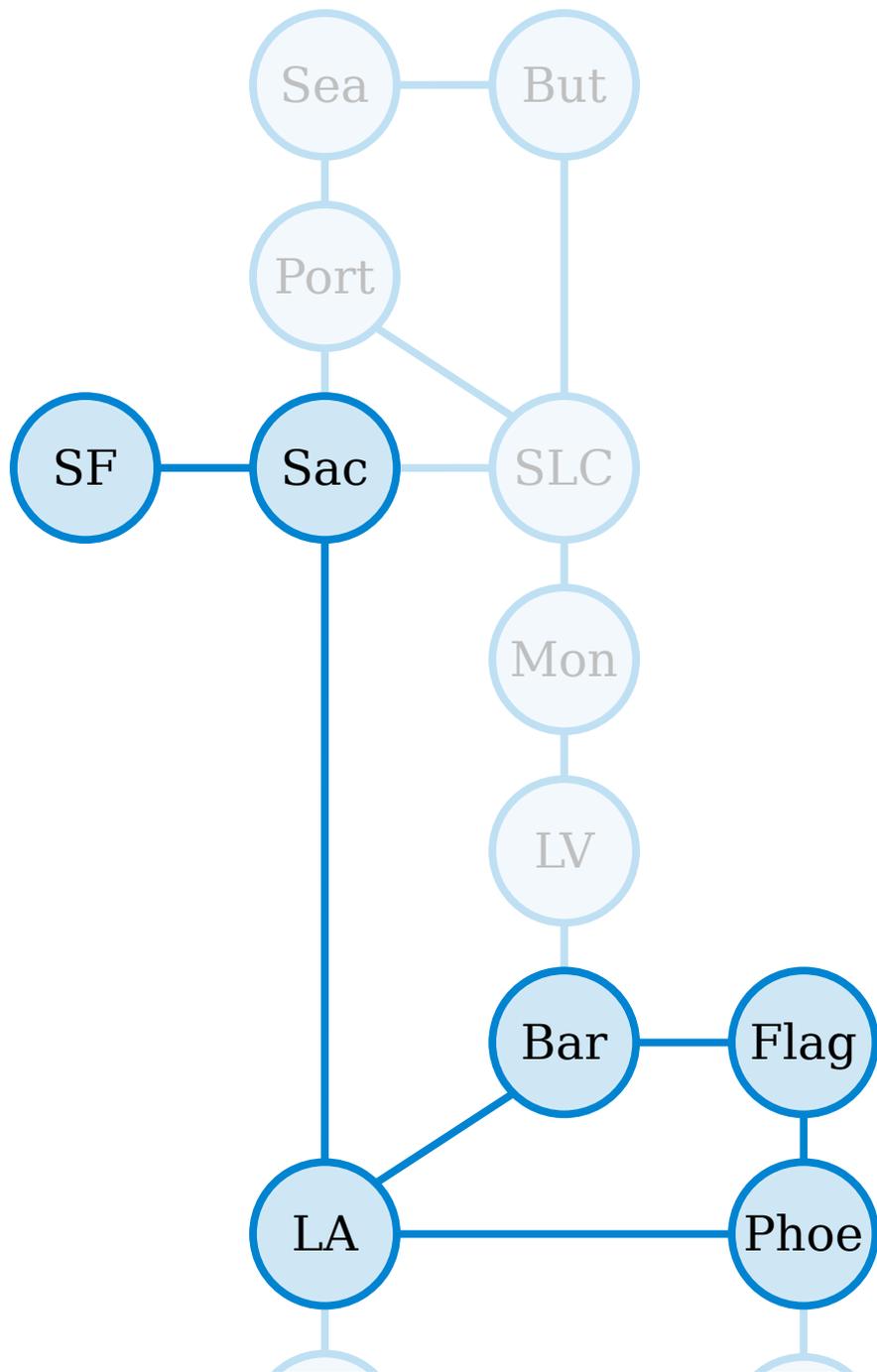
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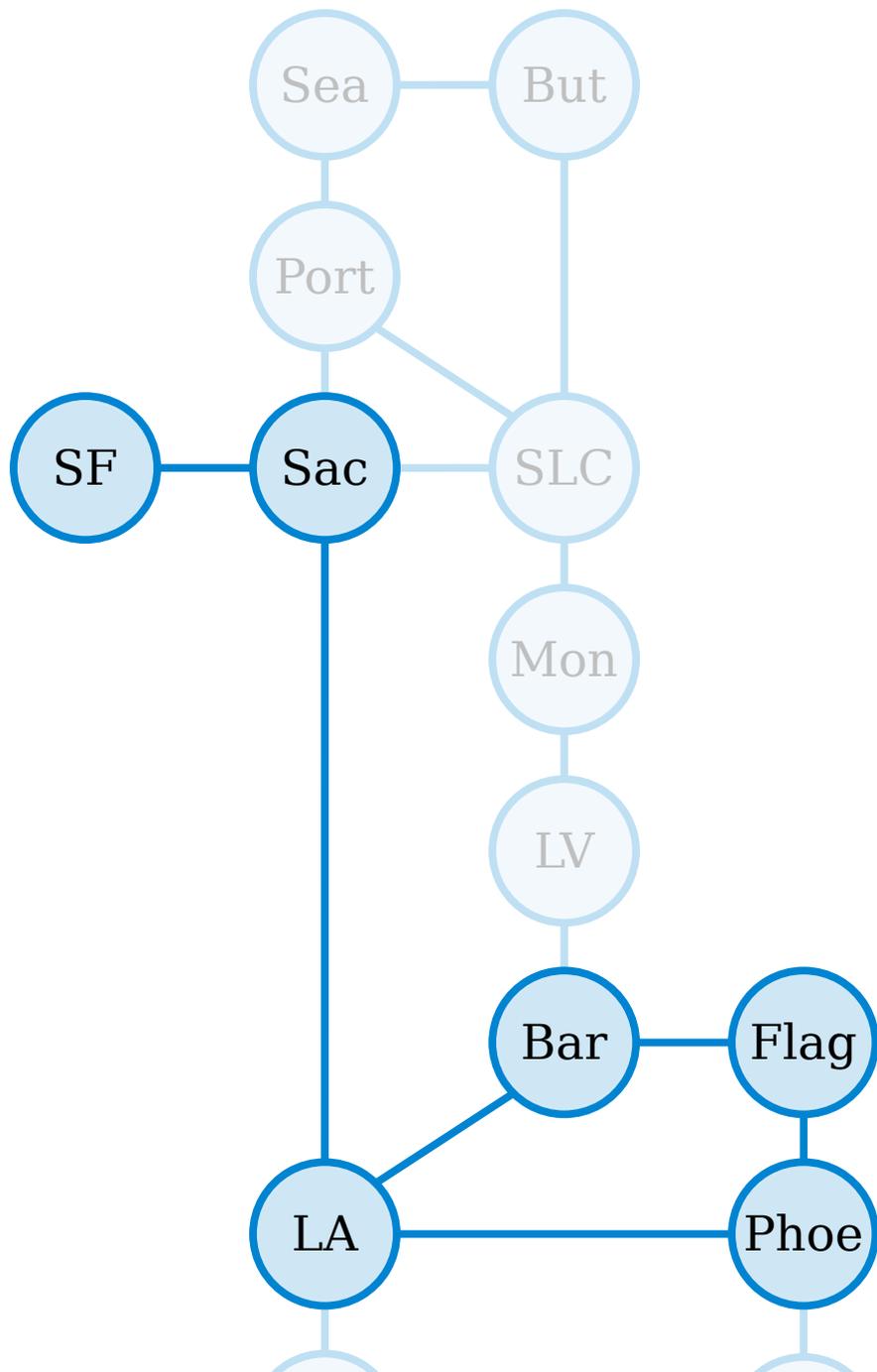
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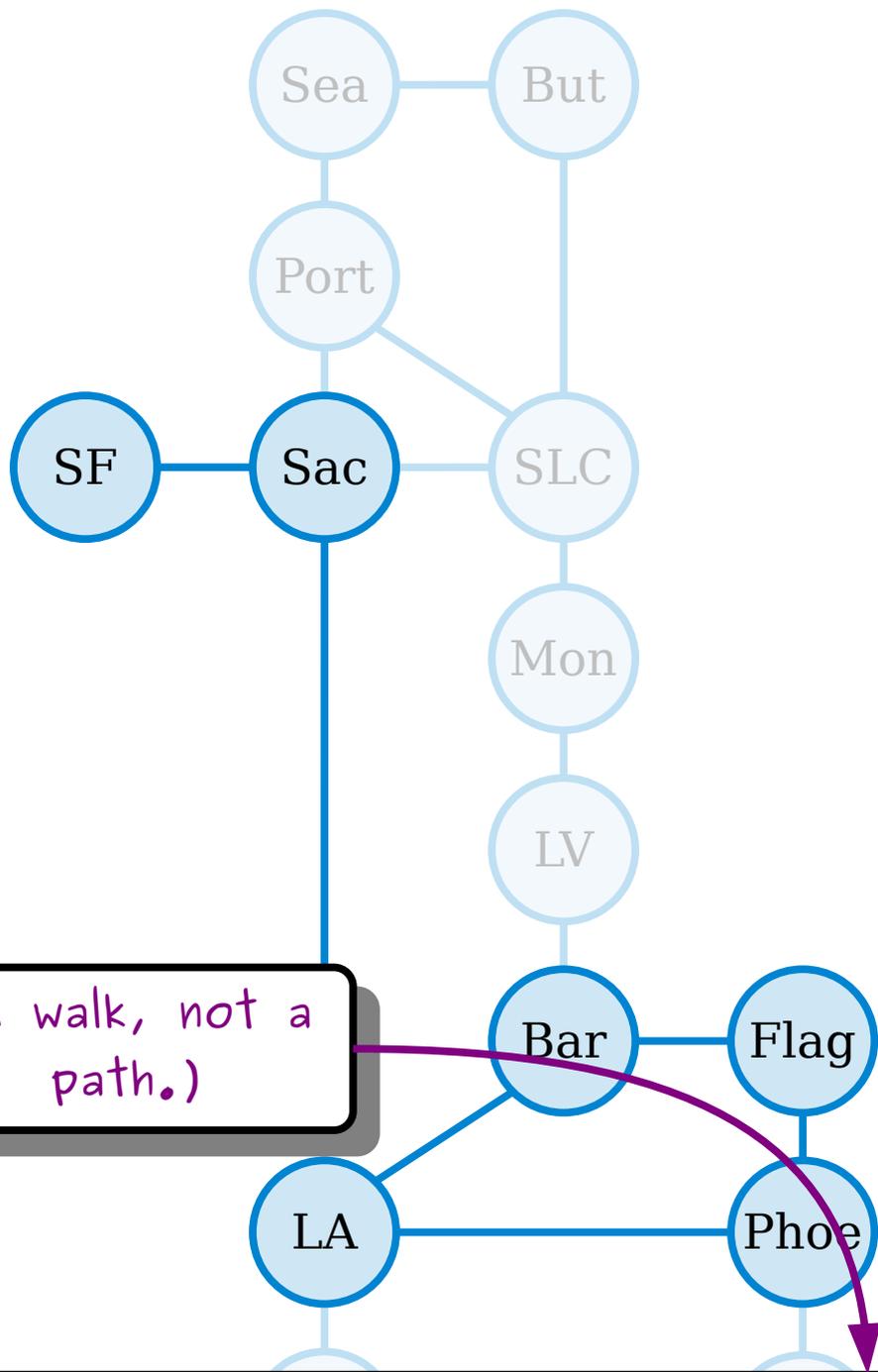
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A **path** in a graph is a walk that does not repeat any nodes.

SF, Sac, LA, Phoe, Flag, Bar, LA



(A walk, not a path.)

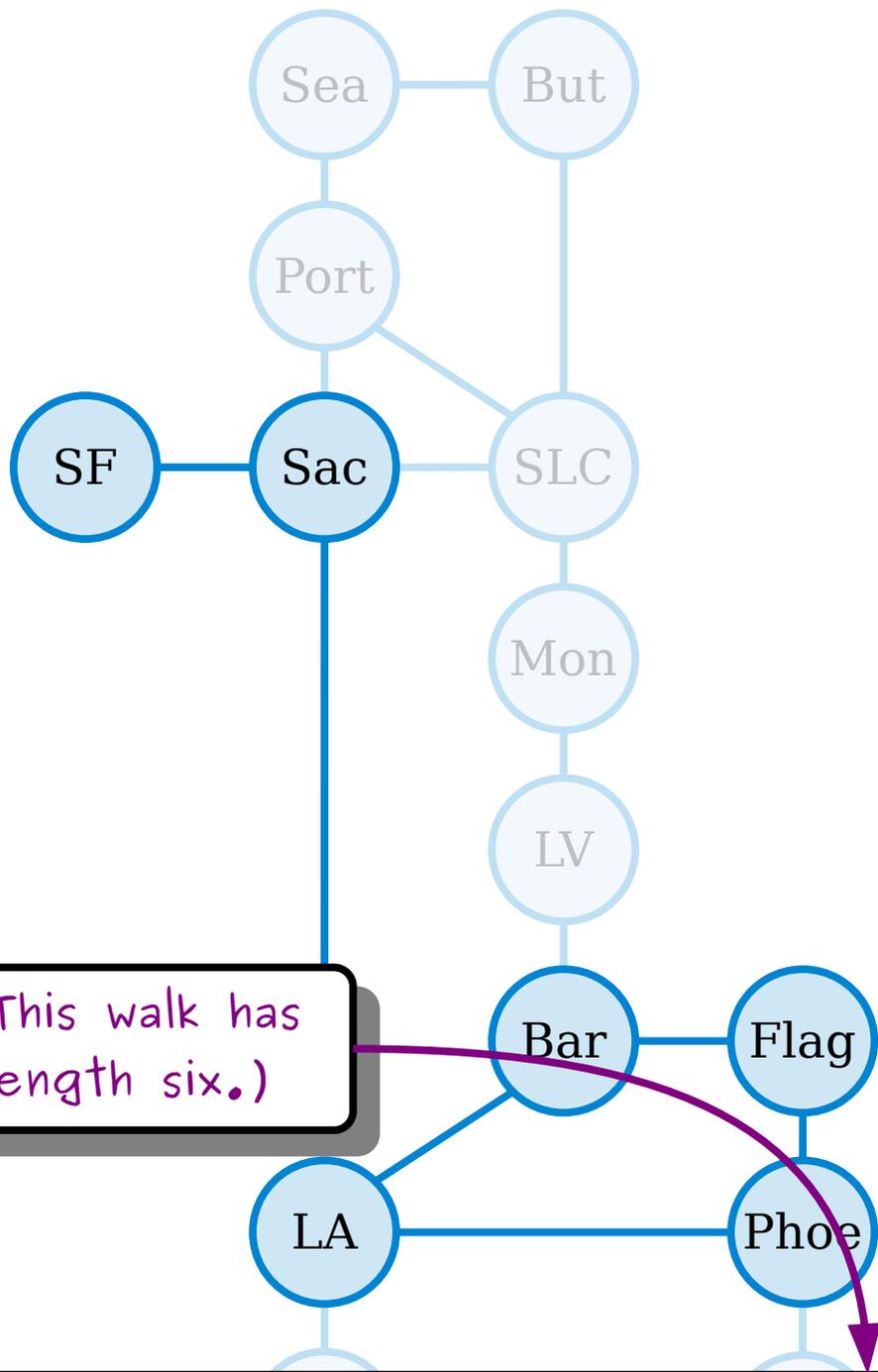
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(This walk has length six.)

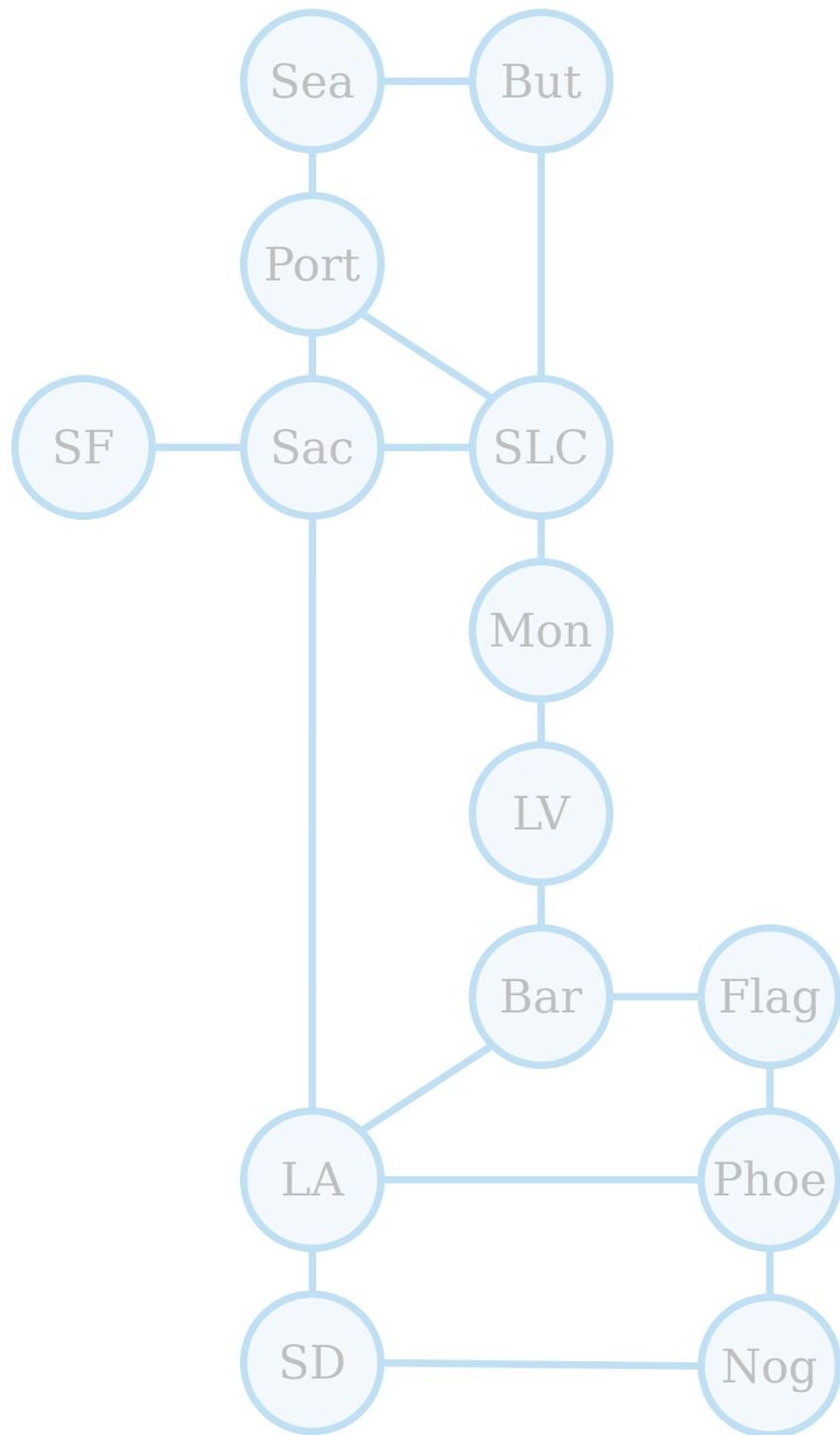
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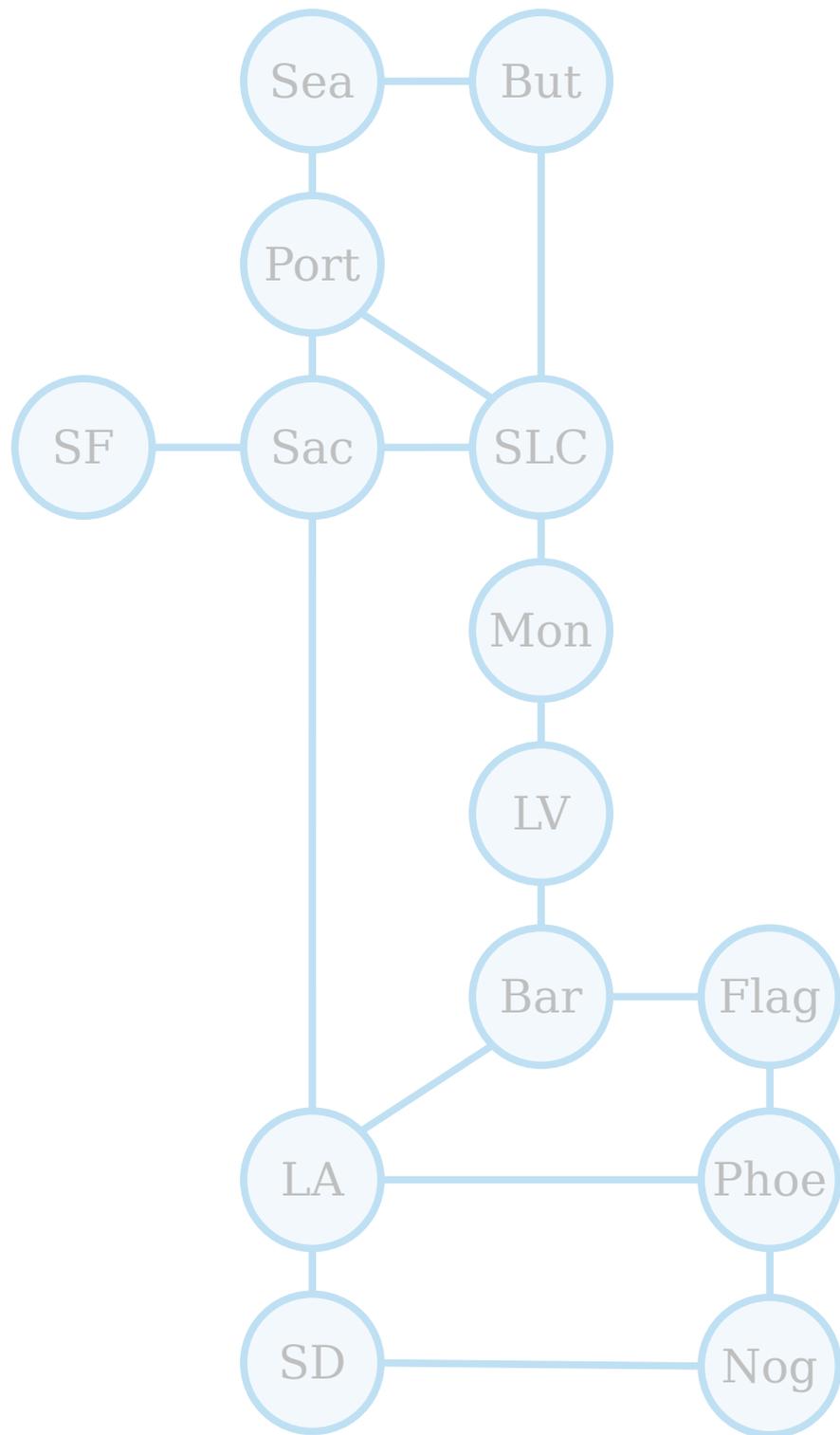


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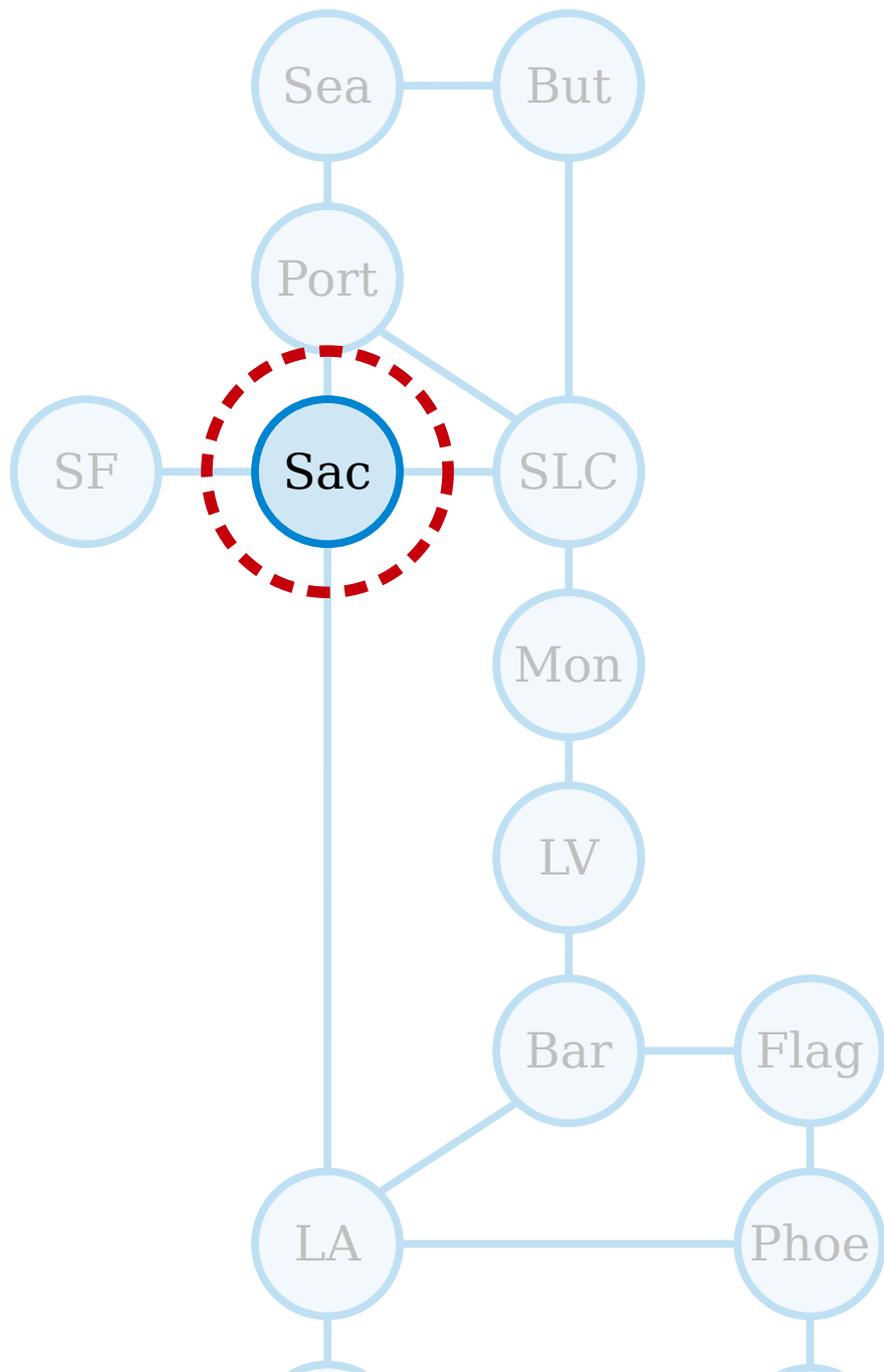
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A tragic road trip...



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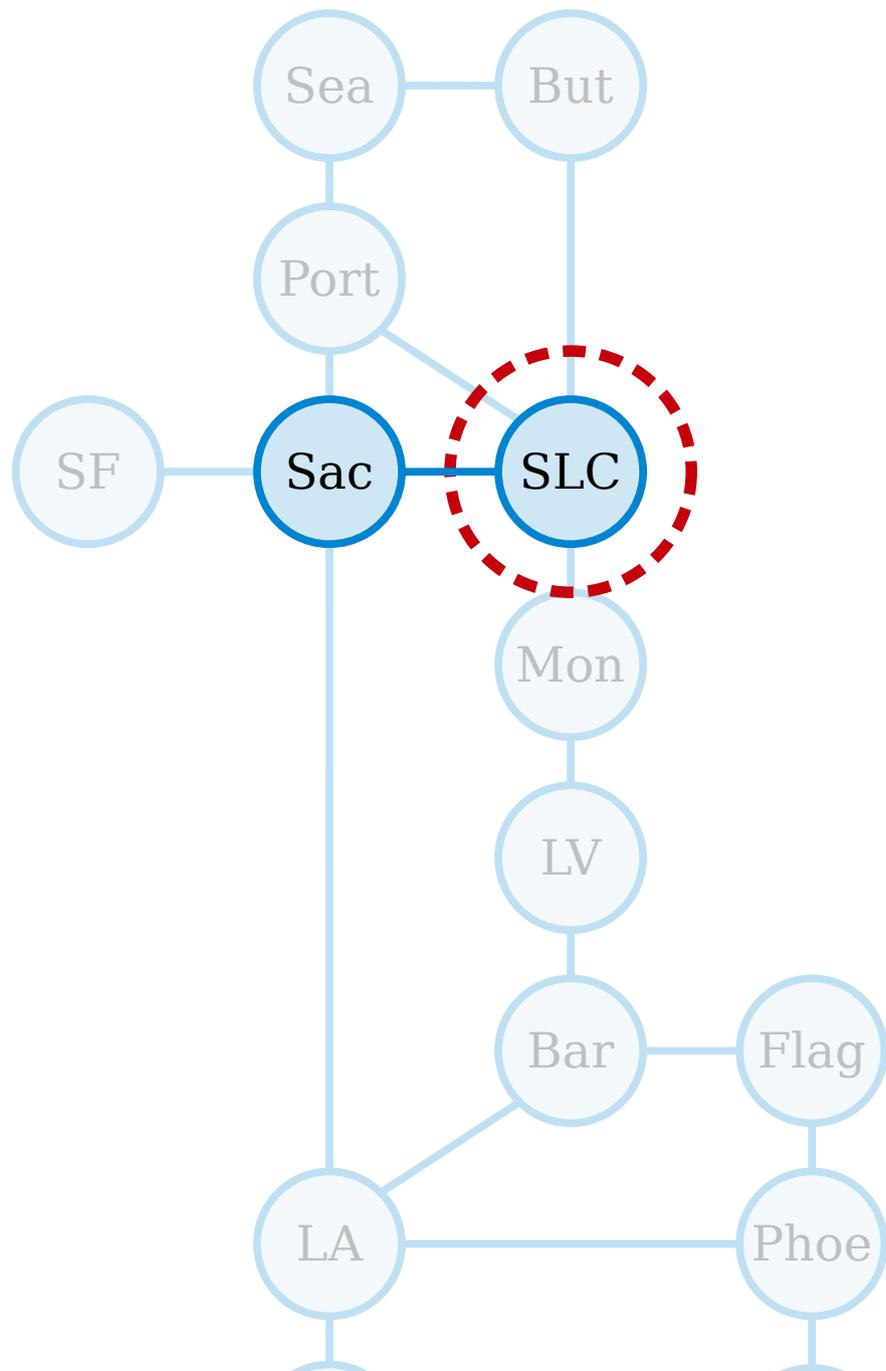
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A tragic road trip...

Sac



Sac, SLC

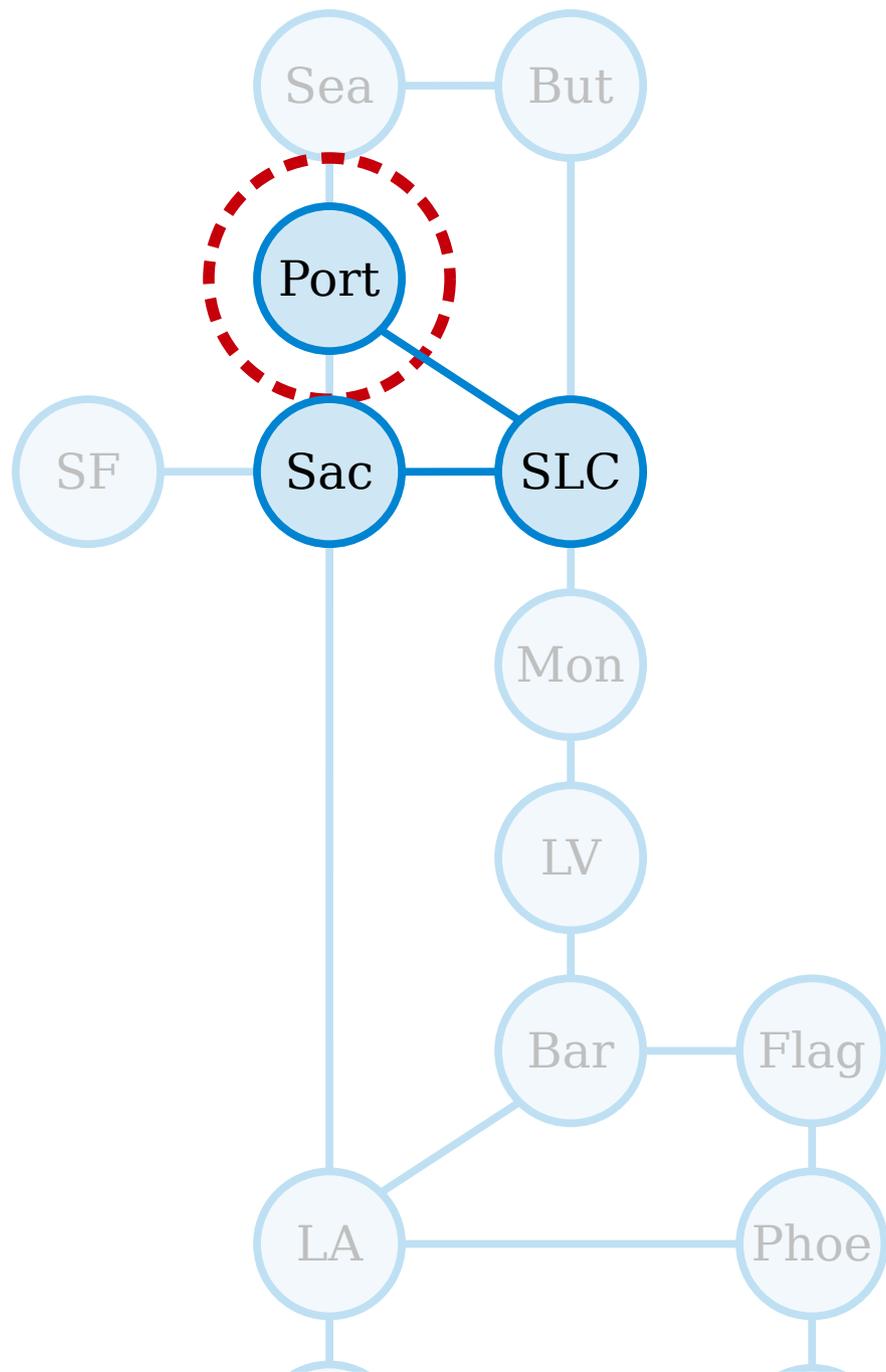
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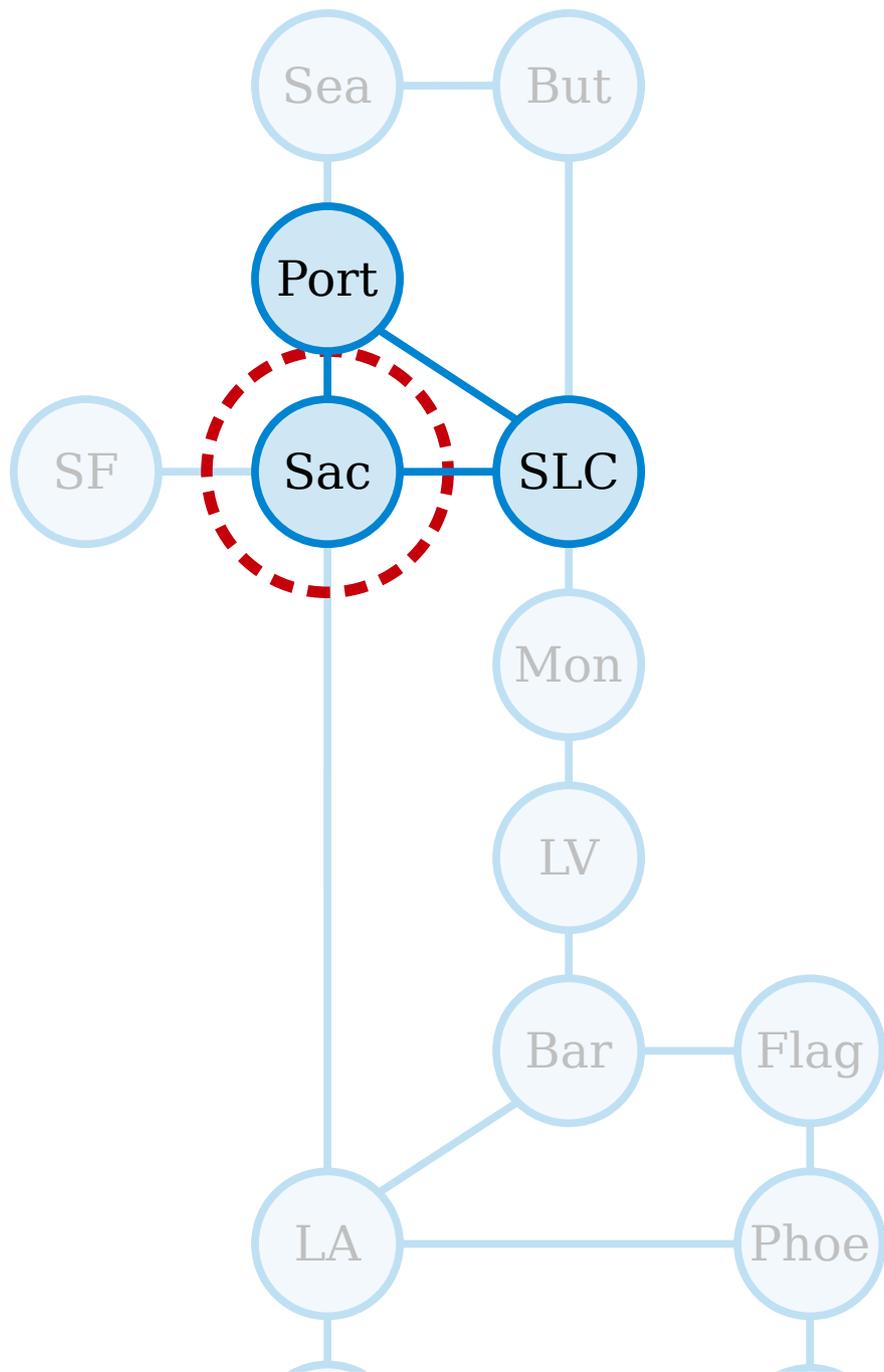
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Sac, SLC, Port



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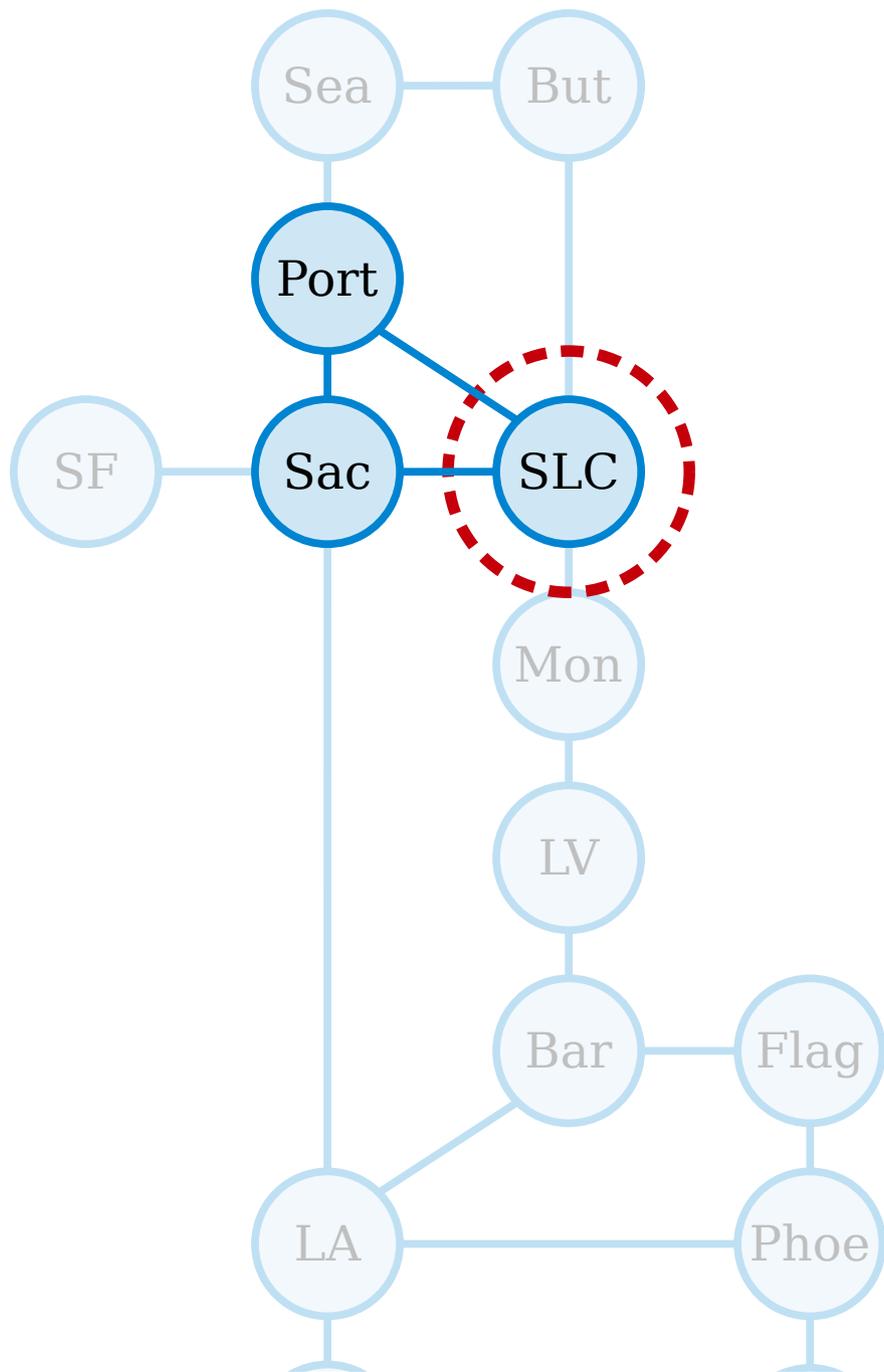
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Sac, SLC, Port, Sac

A tragic road trip...



Sac, SLC, Port, Sac, SLC

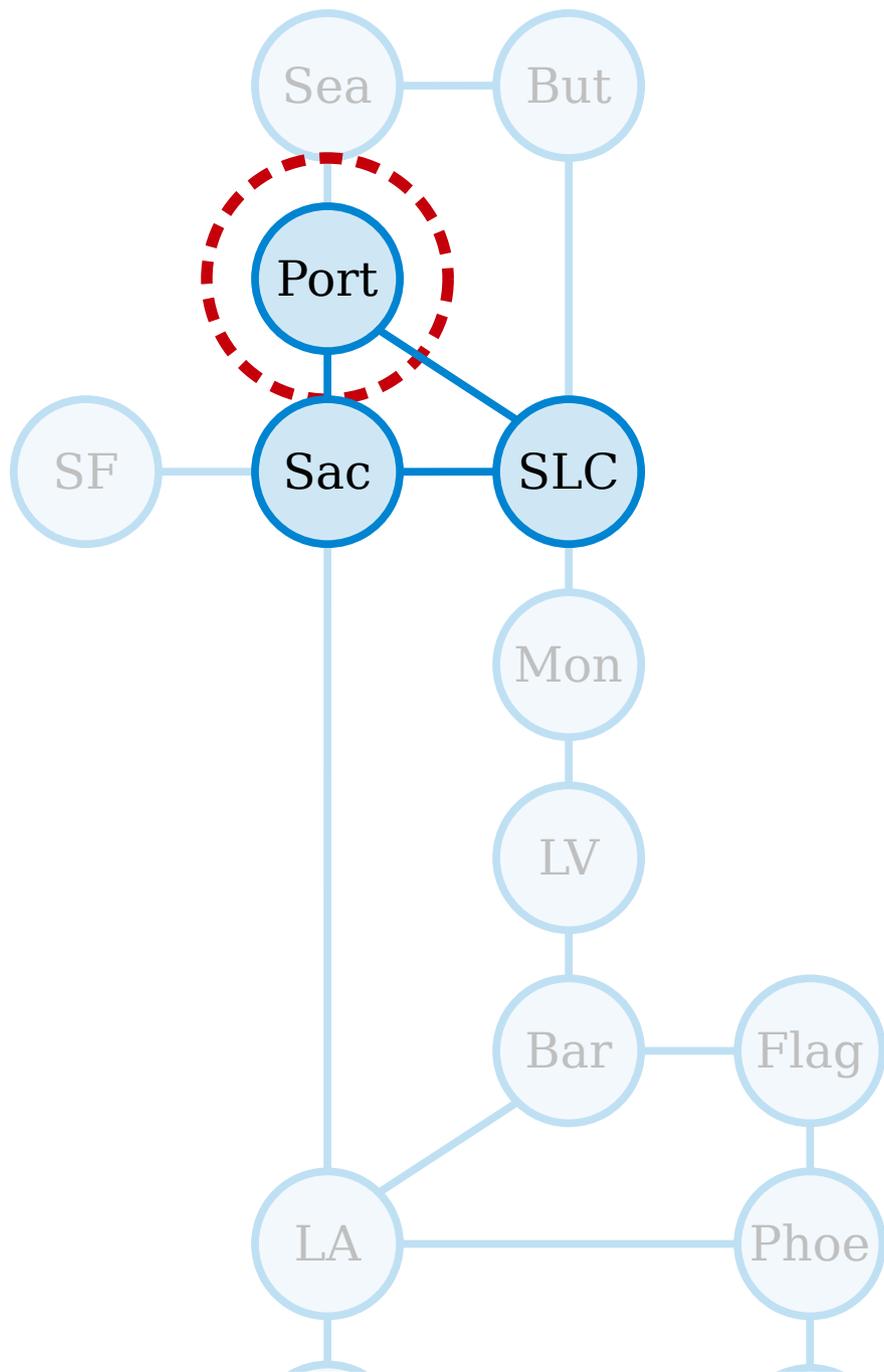
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Sac, SLC, Port, Sac, SLC, Port

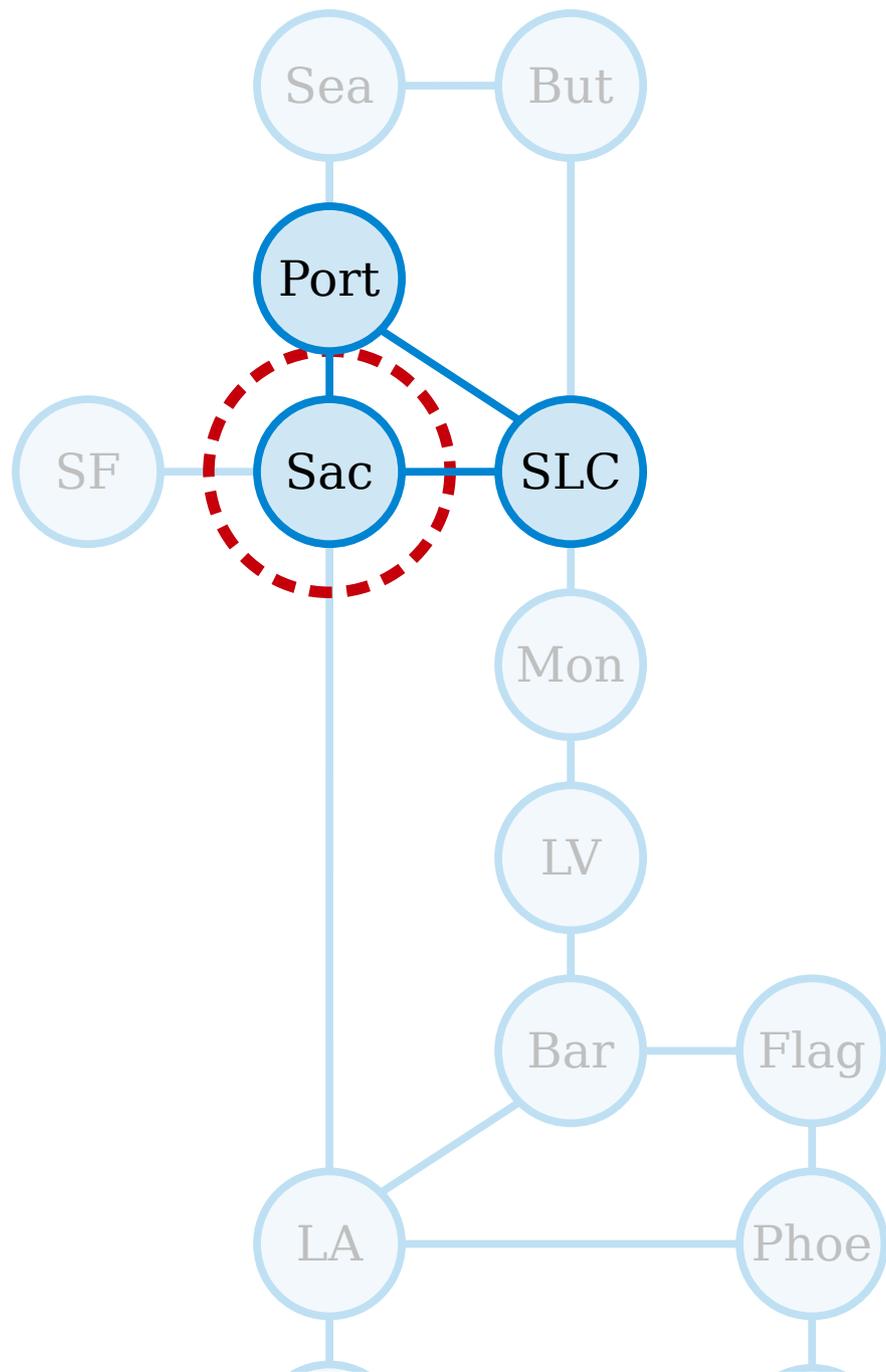
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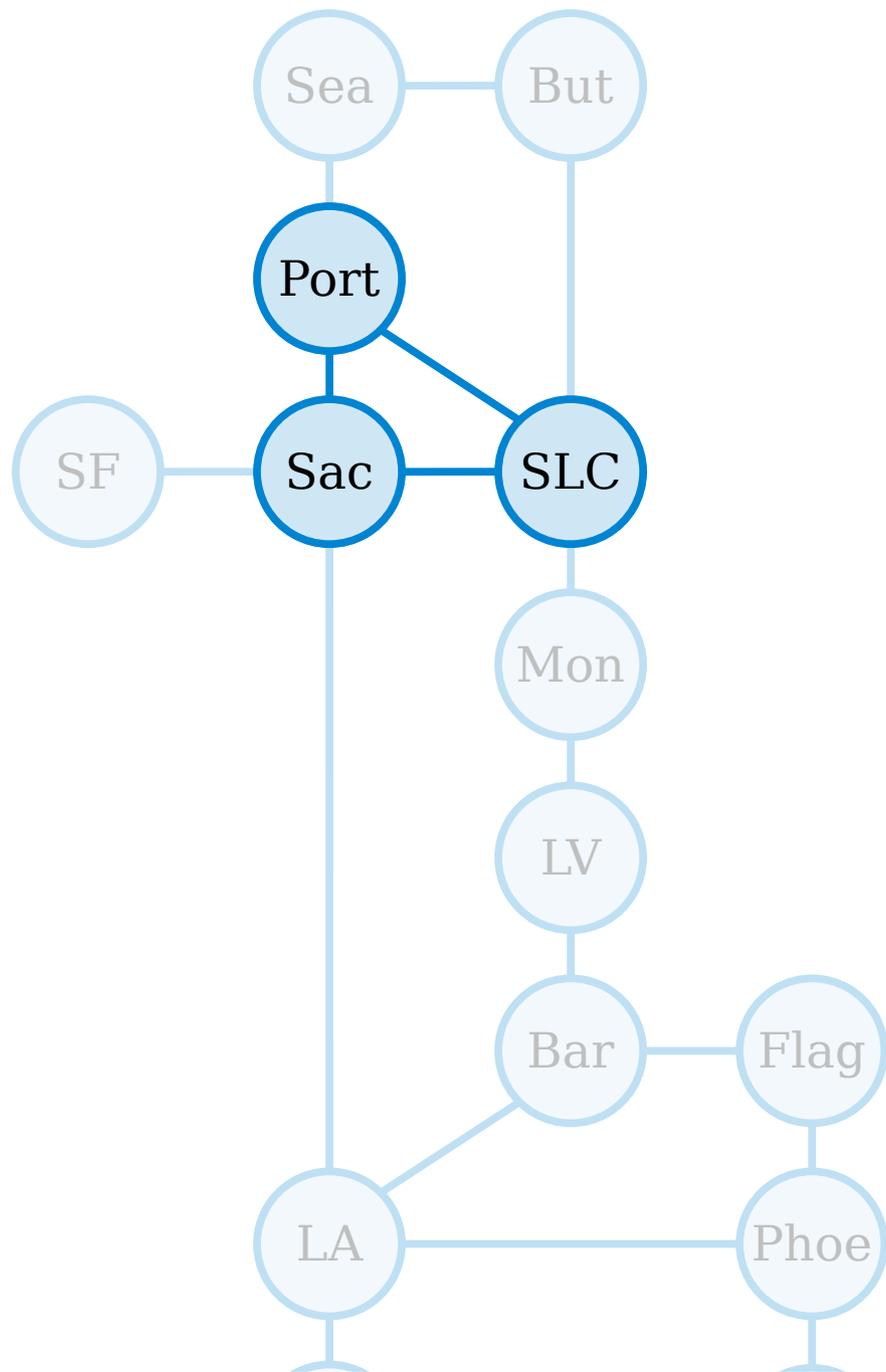
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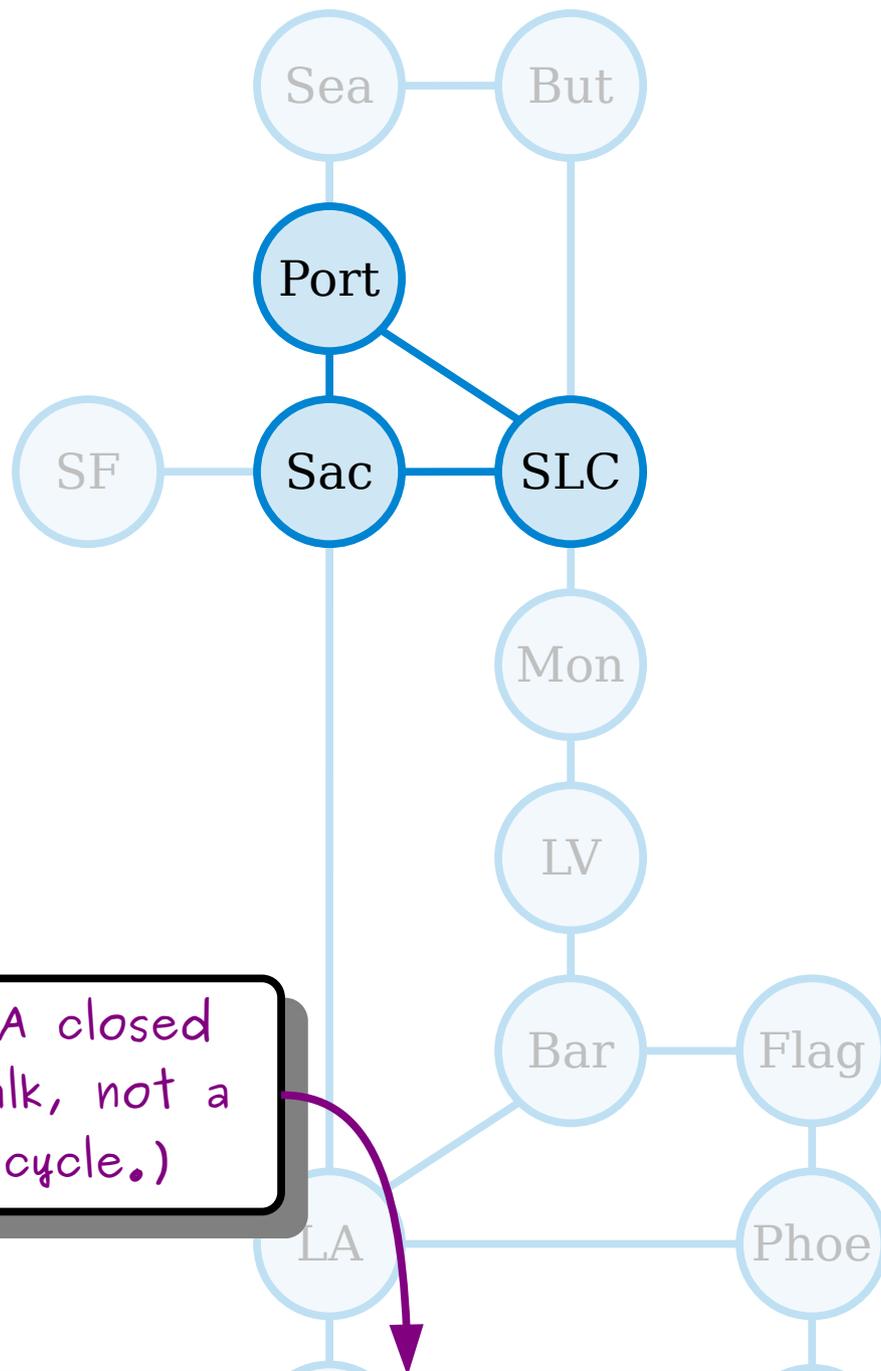
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A **cycle** in a graph is a closed walk that does not repeat any nodes or edges except the first/last node.



(A closed walk, not a cycle.)

Sac, SLC, Port, Sac, SLC, Port, Sac

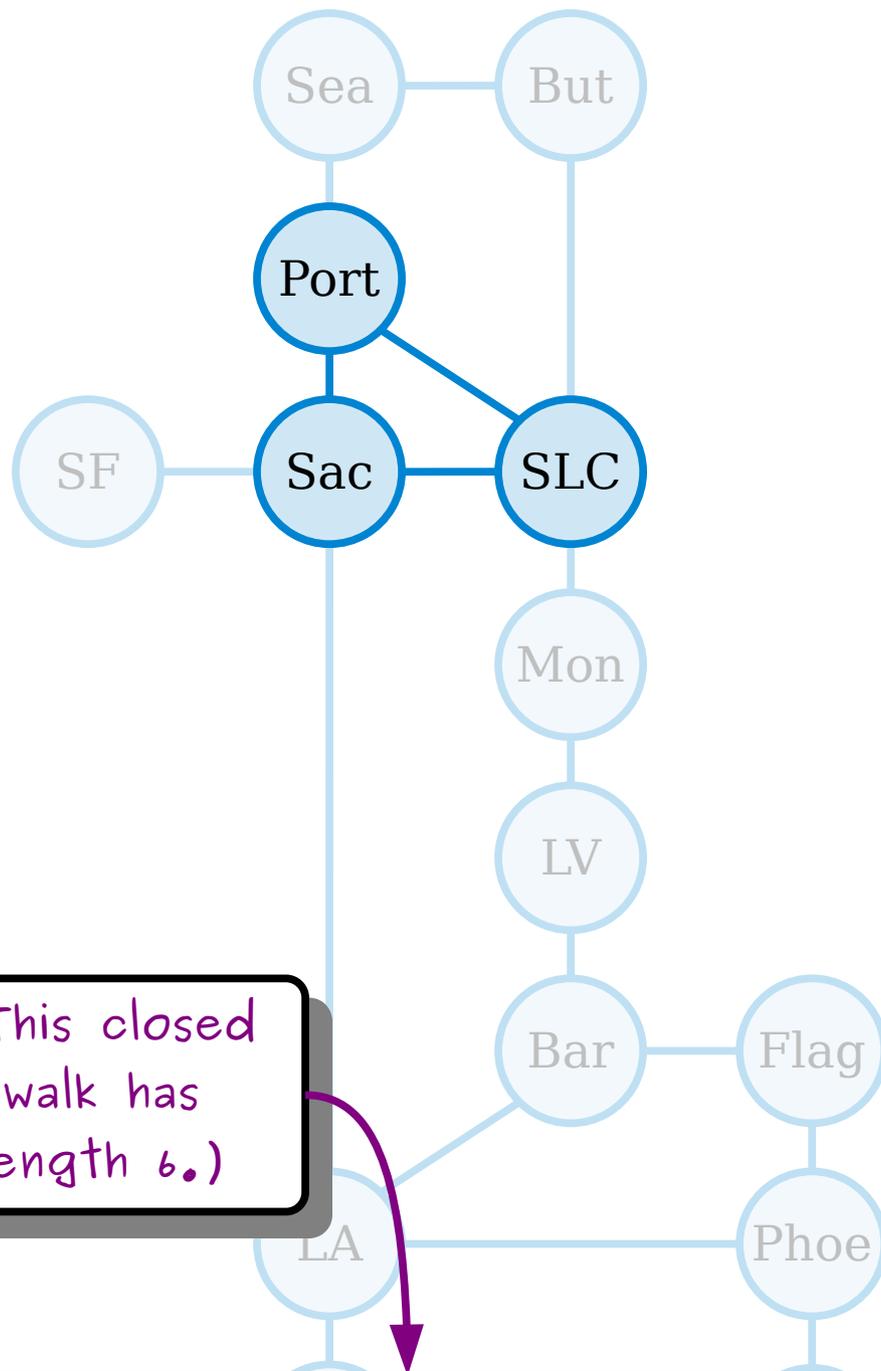
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(This closed walk has length 6.)

Sac, SLC, Port, Sac, SLC, Port, Sac

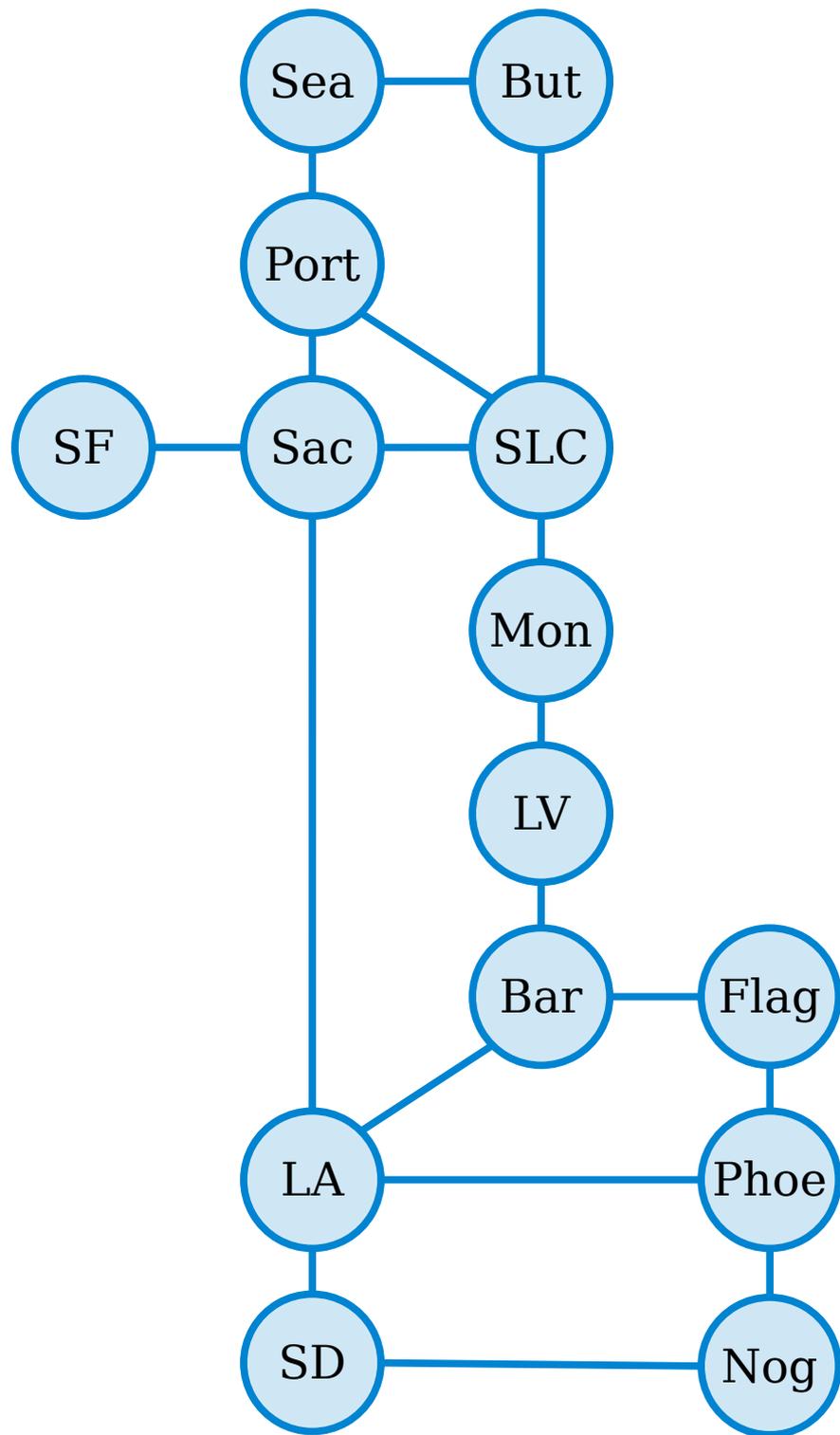
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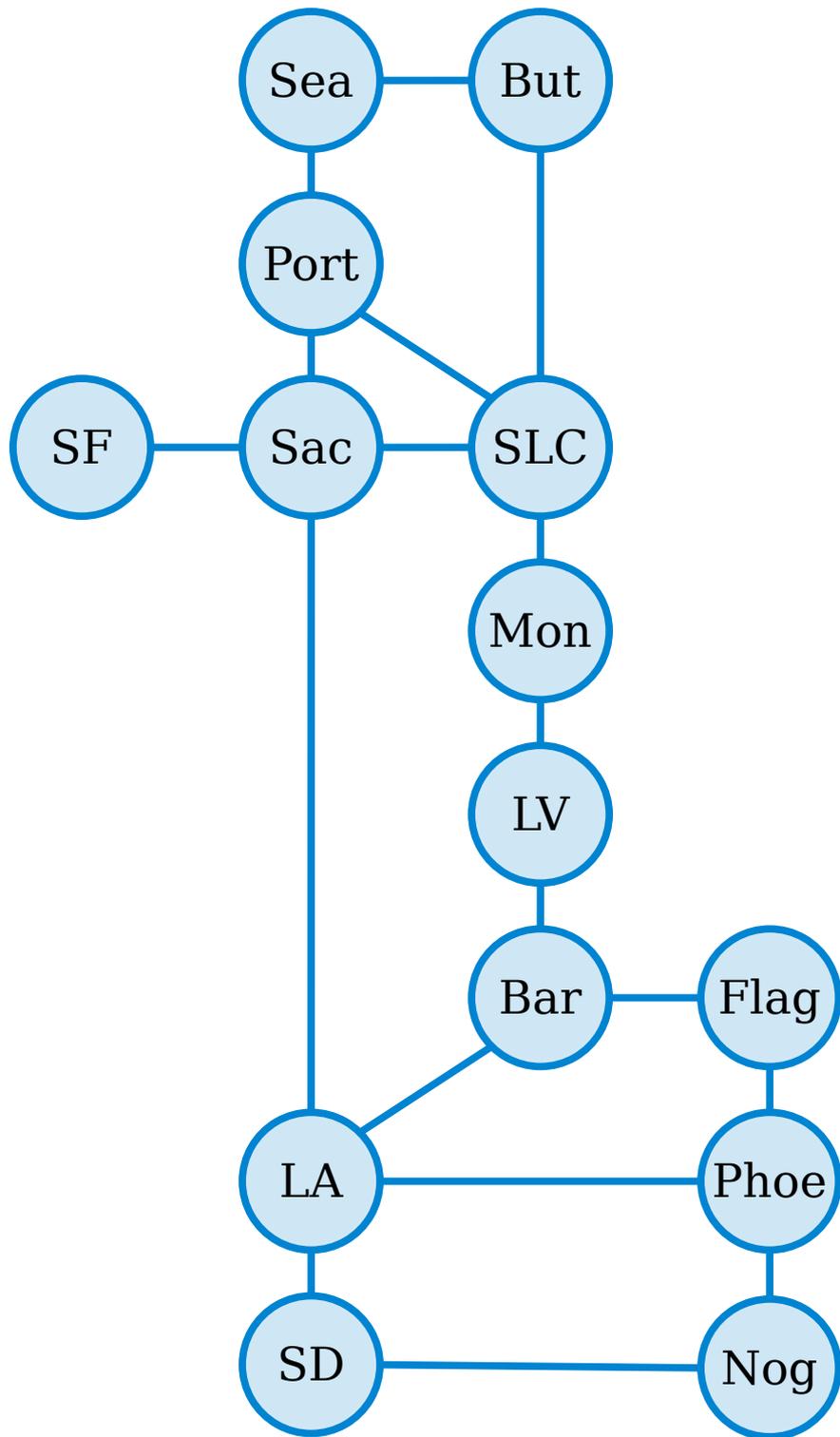
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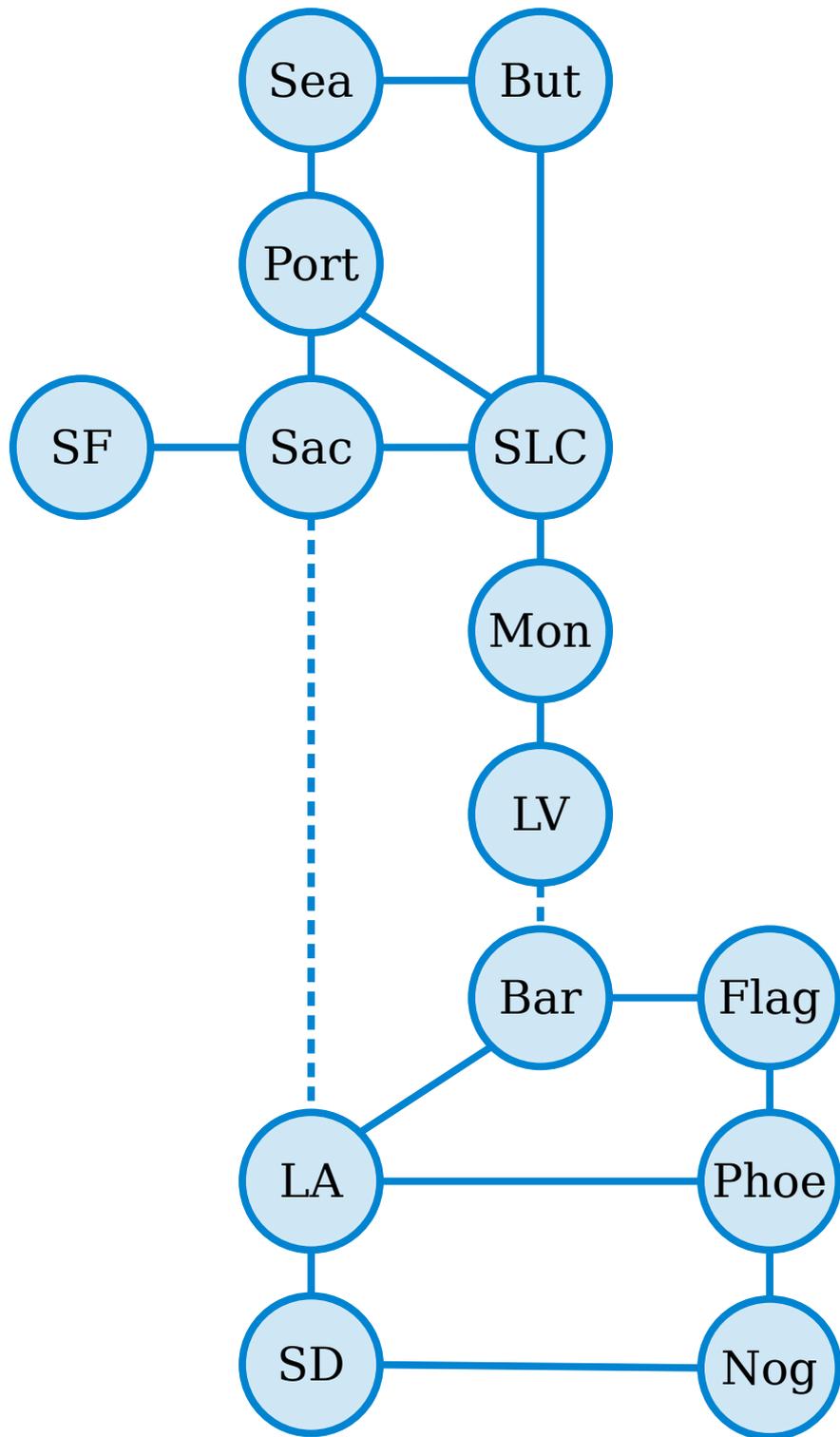
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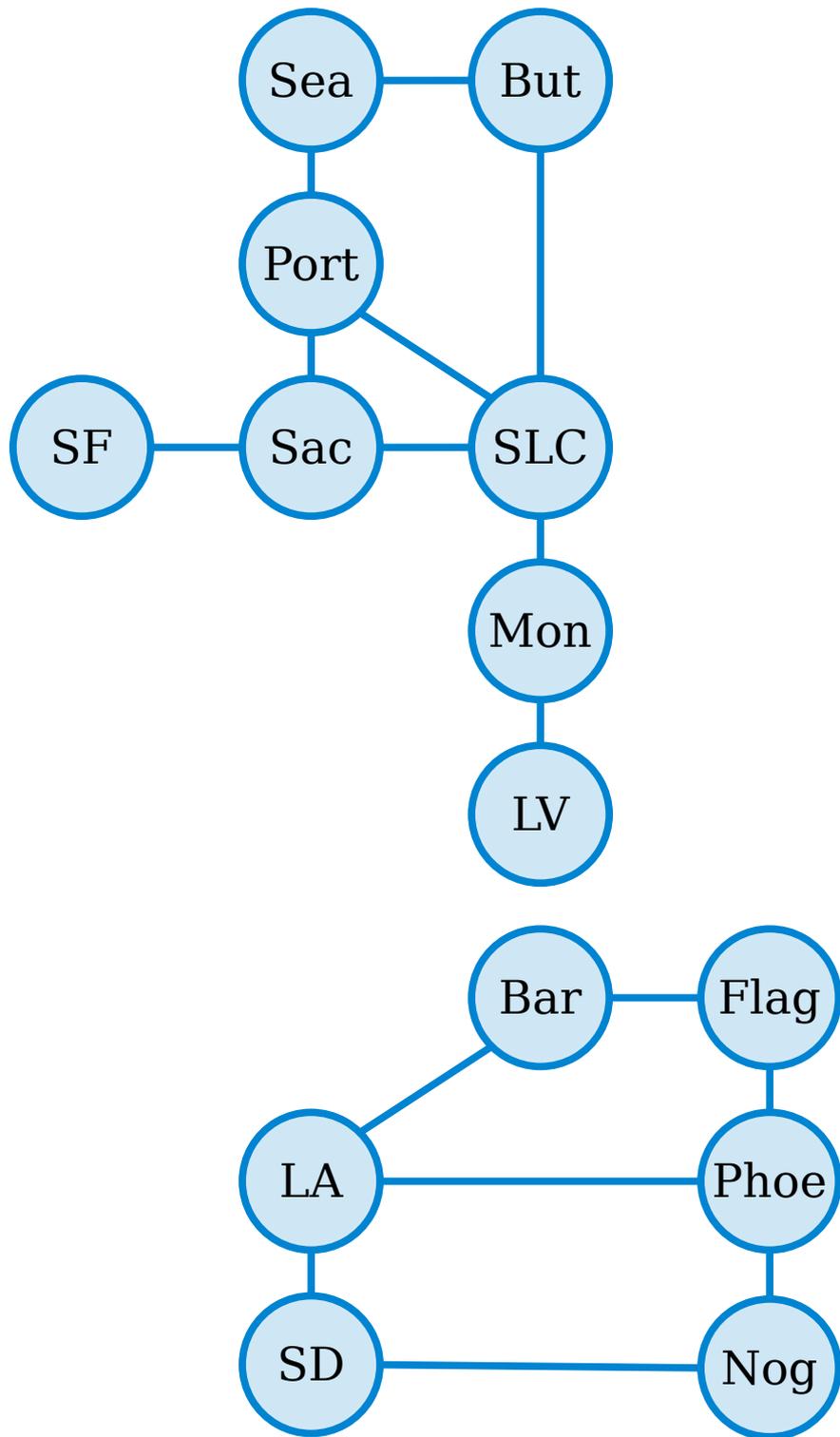
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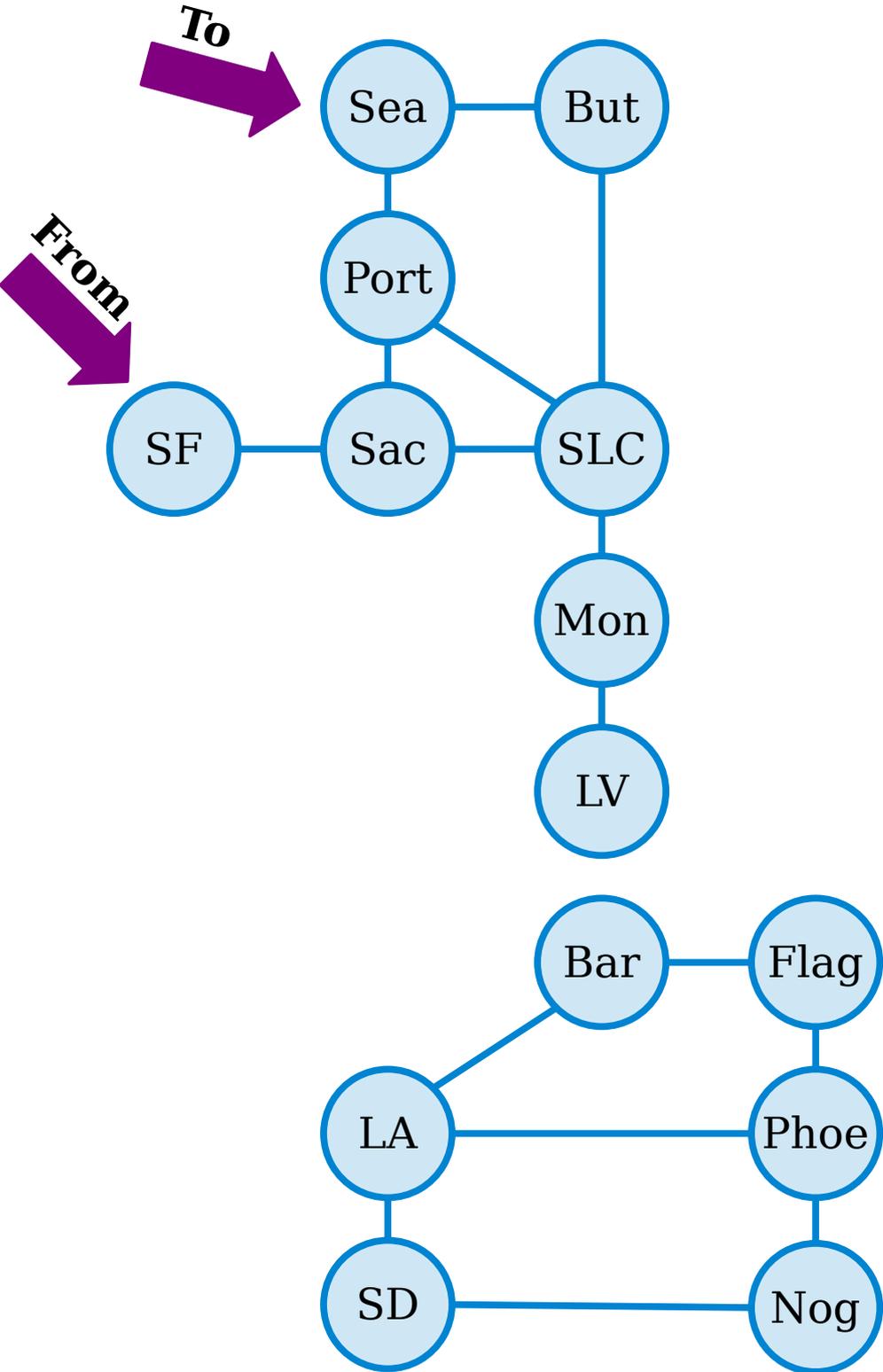
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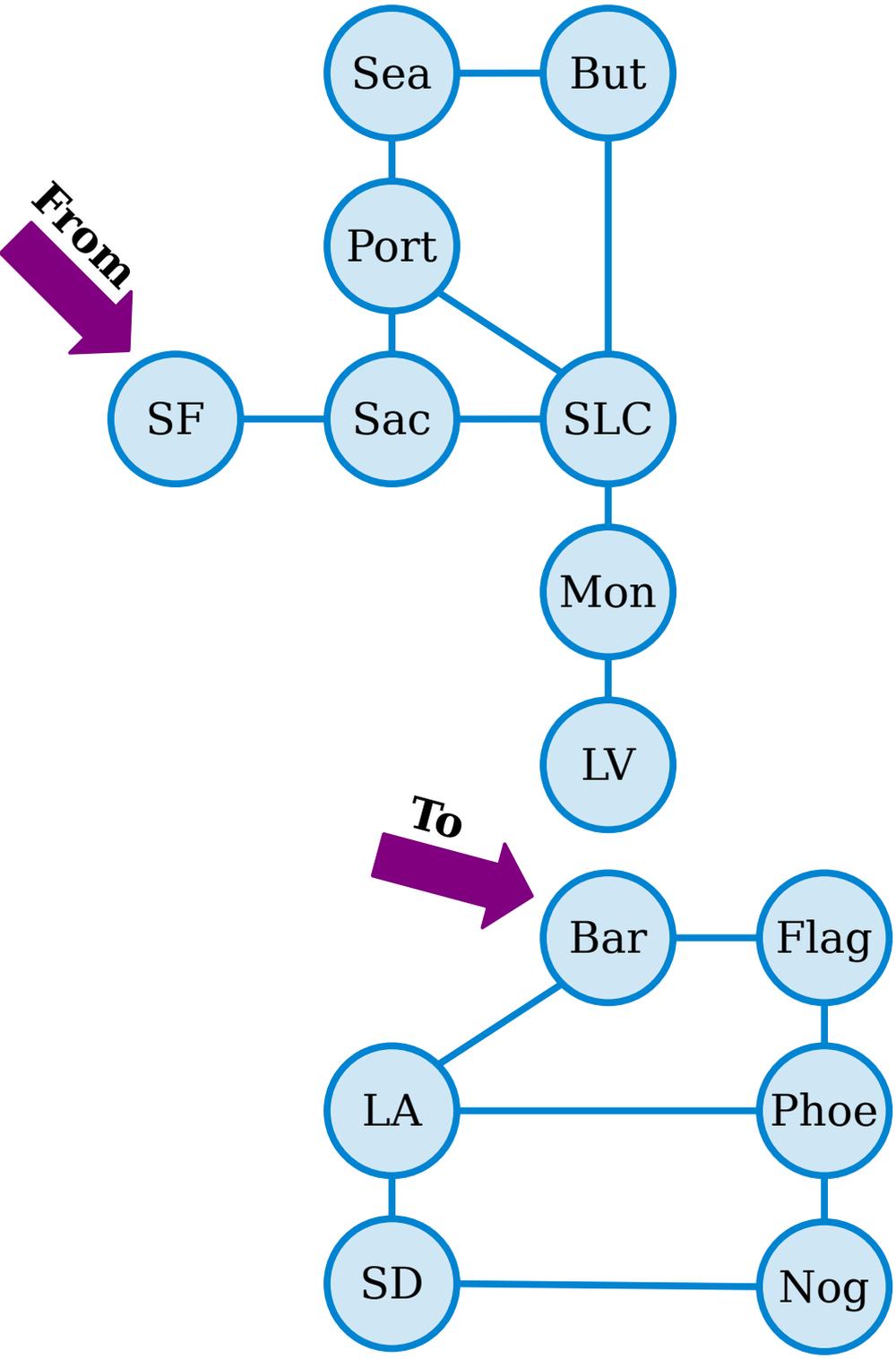
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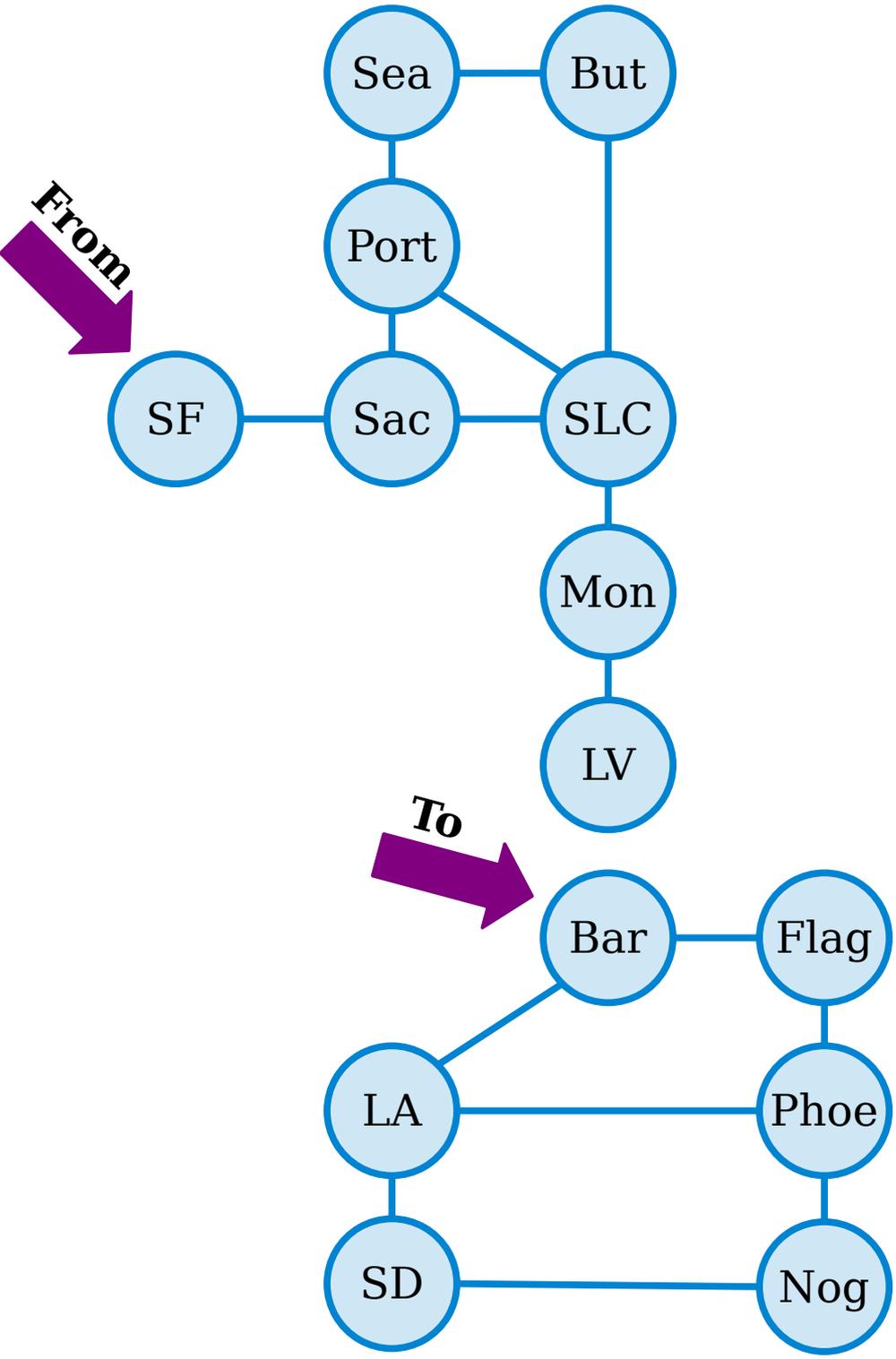
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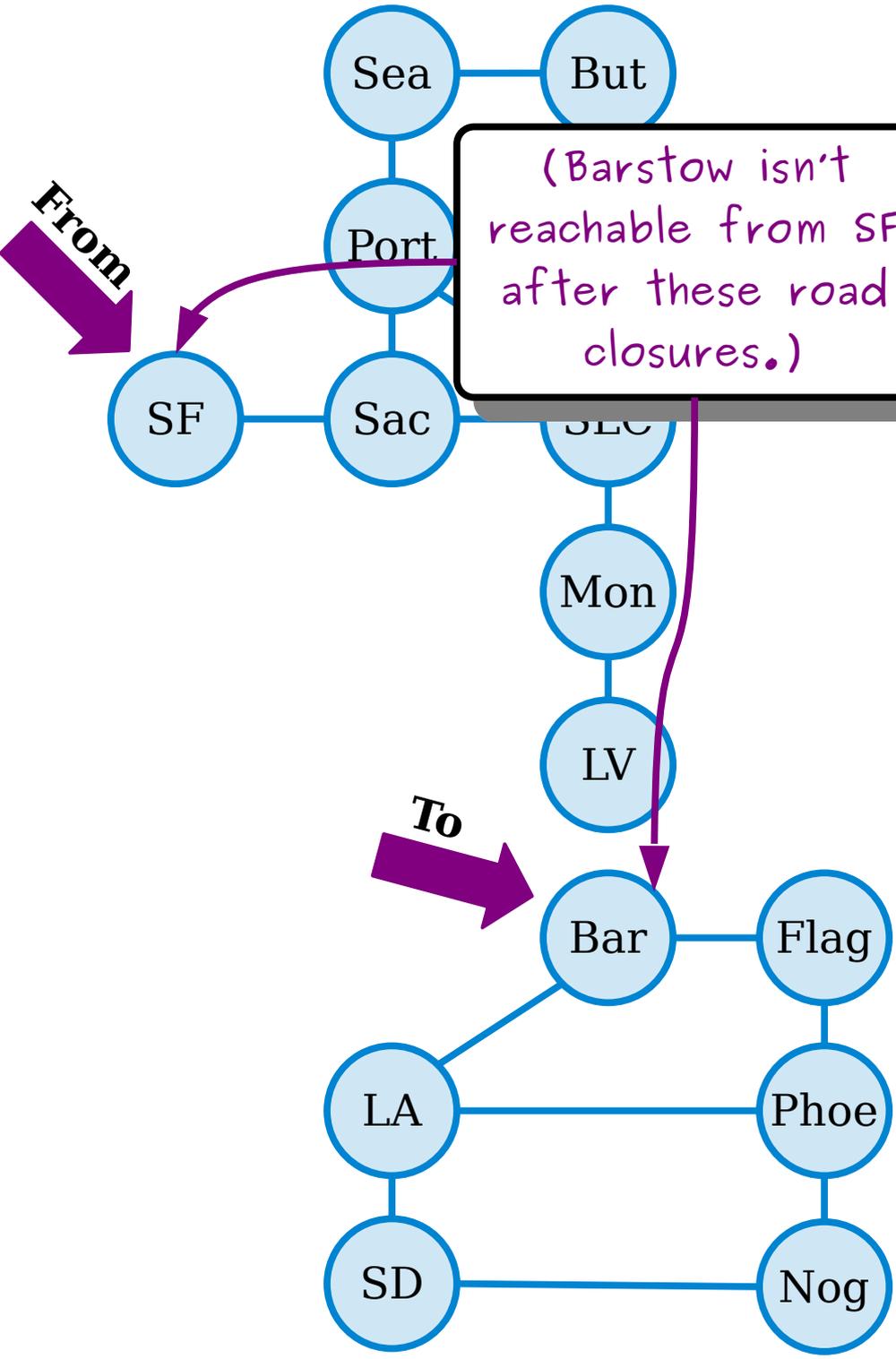
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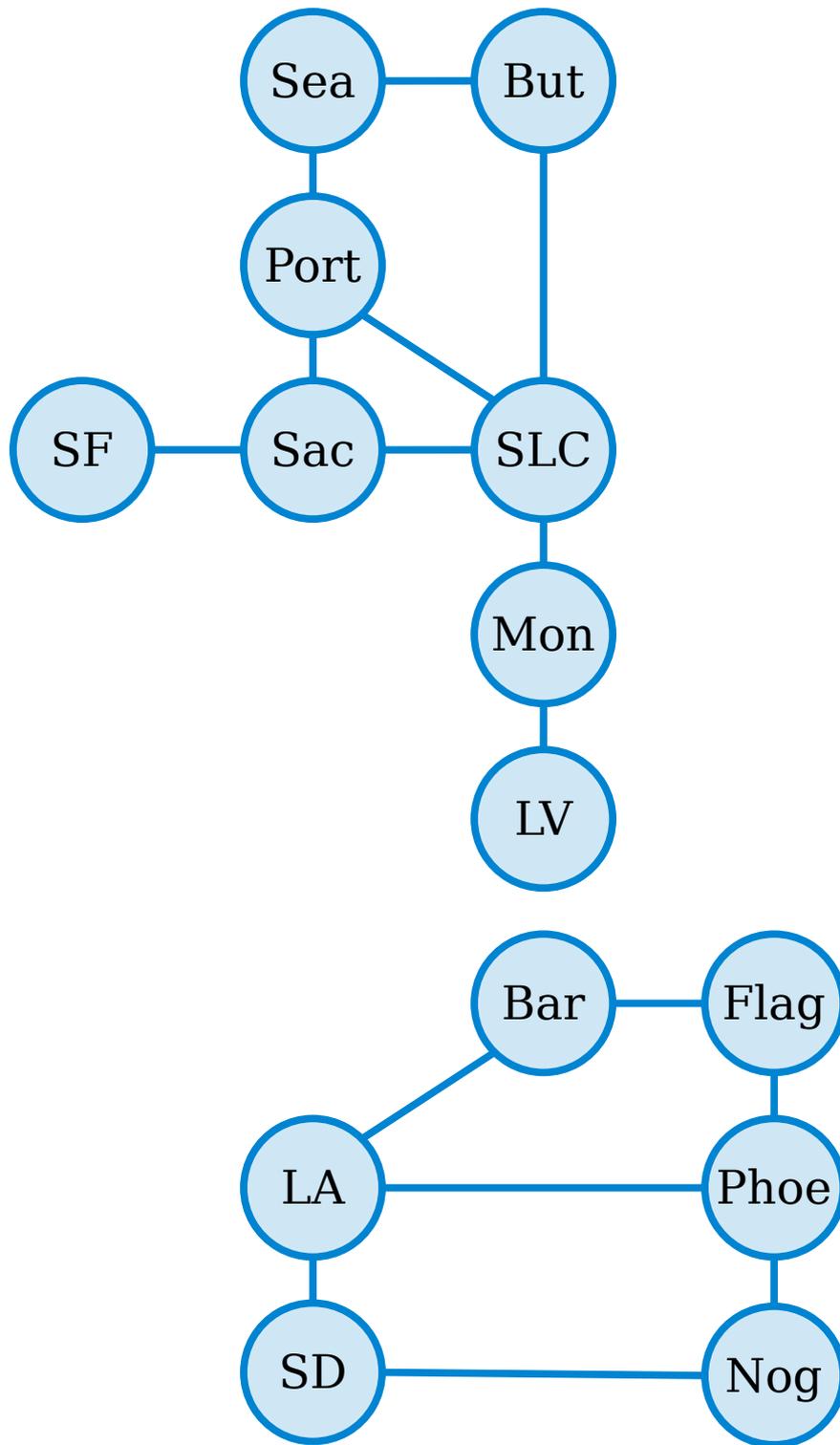
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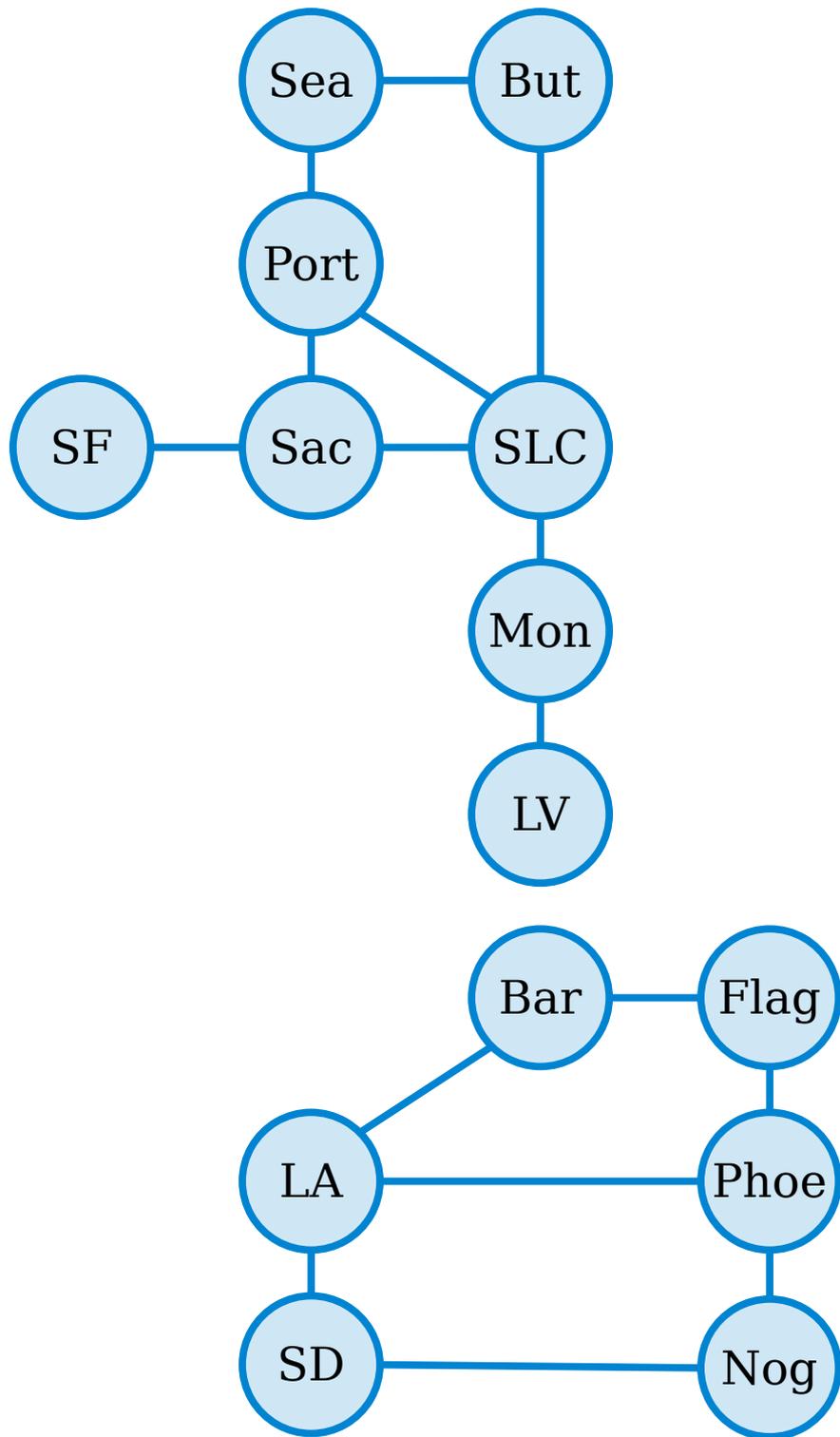


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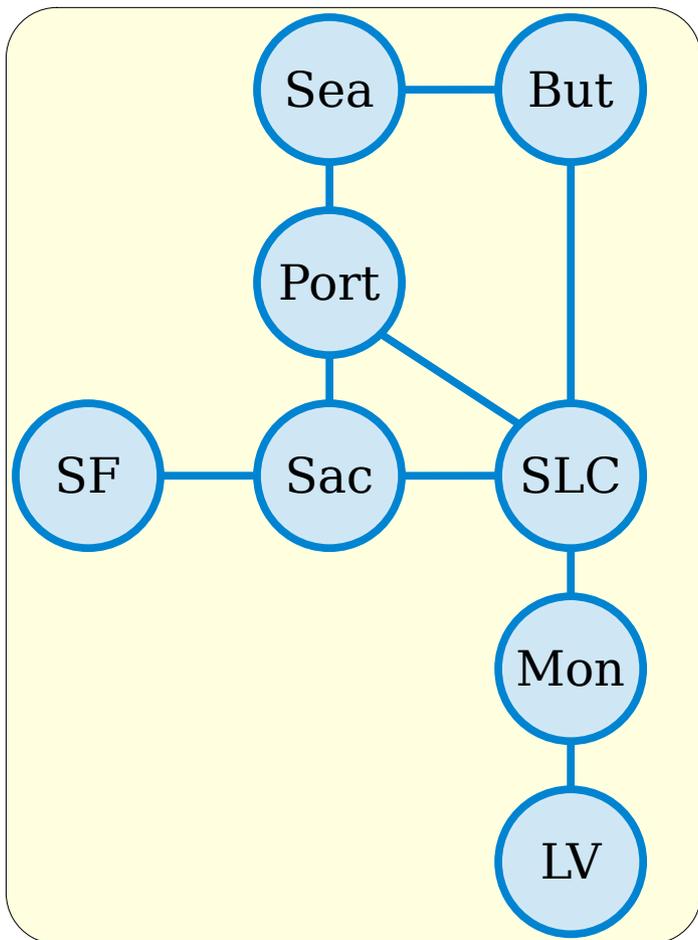
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(This graph is not connected.)

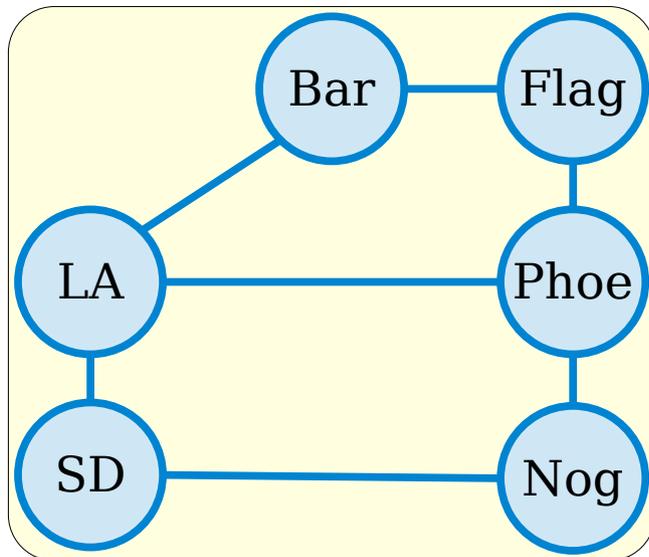


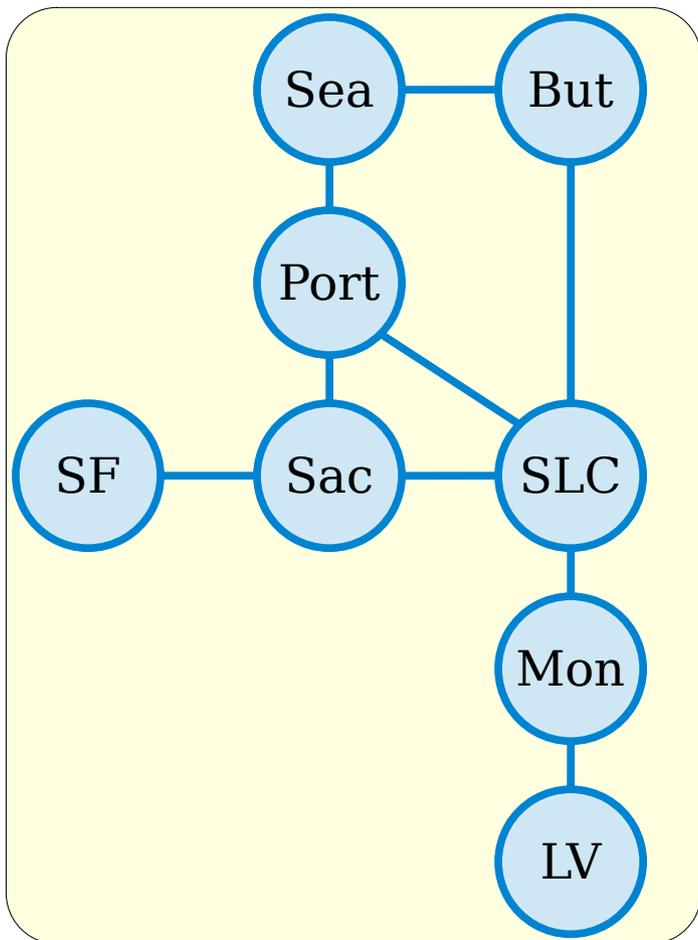
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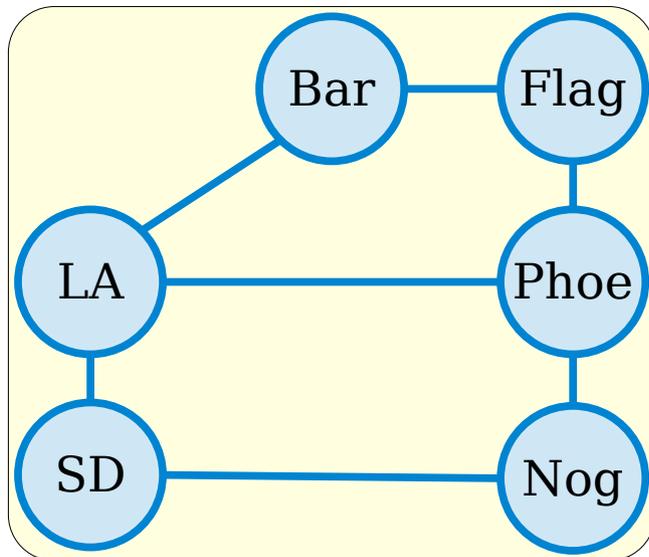
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A **connected component** (or **CC**) of G is a set consisting of a node and every node reachable from it.



Fun Facts

- Here's a collection of useful facts about graphs that you can take as a given.
 - **Theorem:** If $G = (V, E)$ is a (directed or undirected) graph and $u, v \in V$, then there is a path from u to v if and only if there's a walk from u to v .
 - **Theorem:** If G is an undirected graph and C is a cycle in G , then C 's length is at least three and C contains at least three nodes.
 - **Theorem:** If $G = (V, E)$ is an undirected graph, then every node in V belongs to exactly one connected component of G .
 - **Theorem:** If $G = (V, E)$ is a (directed or undirected) graph and $u, y_0, y_1, \dots, y_m, v$ is a walk from u to v and $v, z_0, z_1, \dots, z_n, x$ is a walk from v to x , then $u, y_0, y_1, \dots, y_m, v, z_0, z_1, \dots, z_n, x$ is a walk from u to x .
- Looking for more practice working with formal definitions? Prove these results!

Graphs

Part 2

1. Recap from Last Time
2. Preliminary Definition: Adjacency
- 3. Walks, Paths, and Other Journeys**
4. Announcements
5. Sending Messages through LANs
6. Shaping LANs (and a Proof on Graphs)
7. Spanning Tree Protocol (STP)
8. Recap and What's Next?

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Midterm Exam

- Our midterm exam is next ***Tuesday, February 3rd***, from ***7-10 PM***.
- Seating assignments are posted. You must take your exam in your assigned seat. Please write your seat number down in case the WiFi cuts out before the exam.
- The exam is closed-book, closed-computer, and limited-note. You can bring a double-sided, 8.5" × 11" sheet of notes with you to the exam, decorated however you'd like.
- Reminder: No electronic devices may be out at any time during the exam.

A Hodgepodge of Other Things

- Problem Set 3 was due at 1:00 PM. Feel free to use one of your late days if needed.
- Problem Set 4 is posted! This one is shorter than usual to account for the midterm exam.
- The study group bonus due on Monday covers material from the 3-4 preceding lectures.
- Deadline for attendance/participation opt-out is ***tonight (Friday) at 11:59 PM.***
- The magnolia trees are starting to bloom!

A Hodgenodge of Other Things

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There's one by the bike rack at the southeastern corner of STLC, near the northeastern corner of CoDa. Consider stopping by to enjoy the scent of the magnolia blooms!

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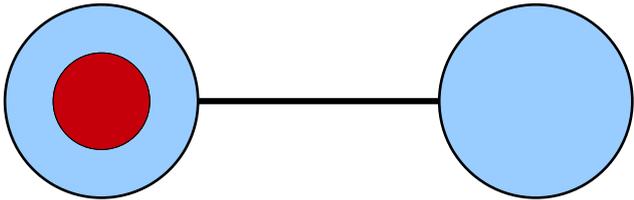
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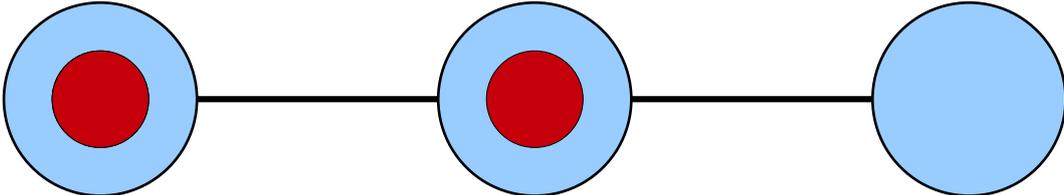
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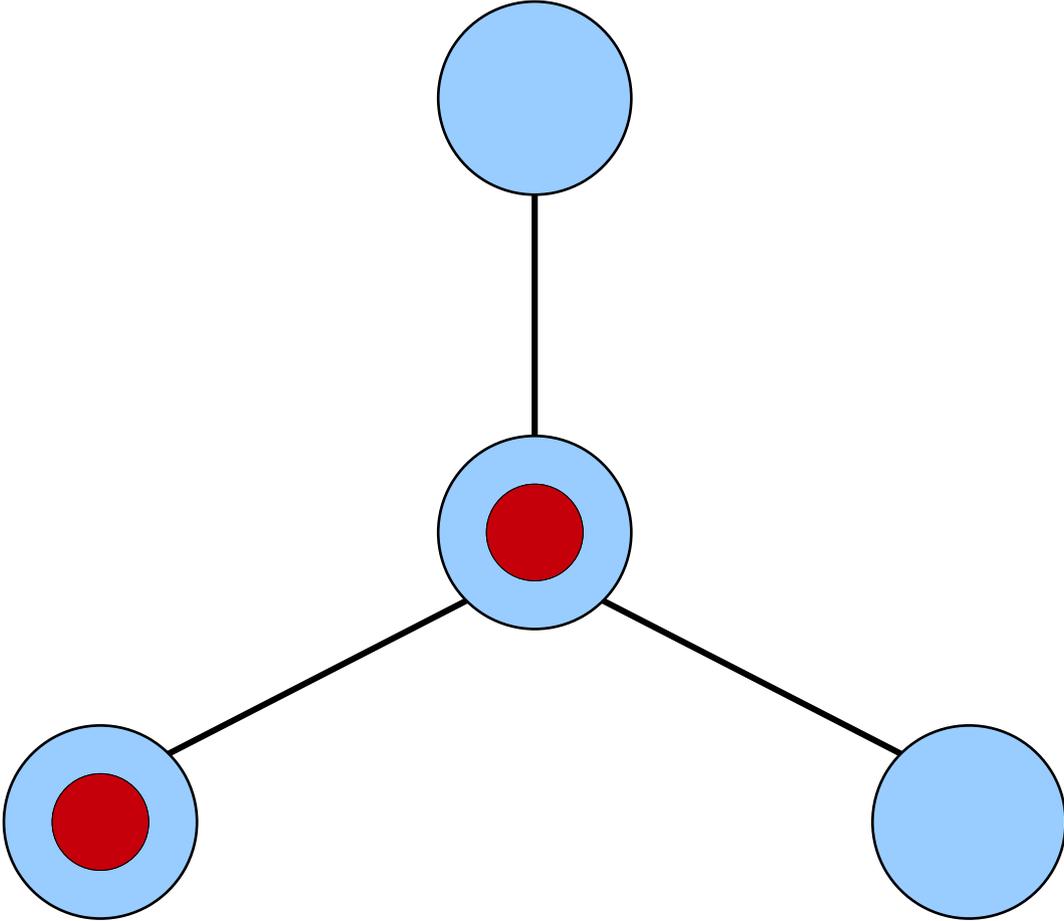
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The Internet and LANs

- The internet consists of several separate **local area networks (LANs)** that are “internetworked” together.
- Local area networks cover small areas – a single hallway in a dorm, an office building, a college campus, etc.
- The internet then links those smaller LANs into one giant network where everyone can talk to everyone.
- **Focus for today:** How do messages flow through a LAN?

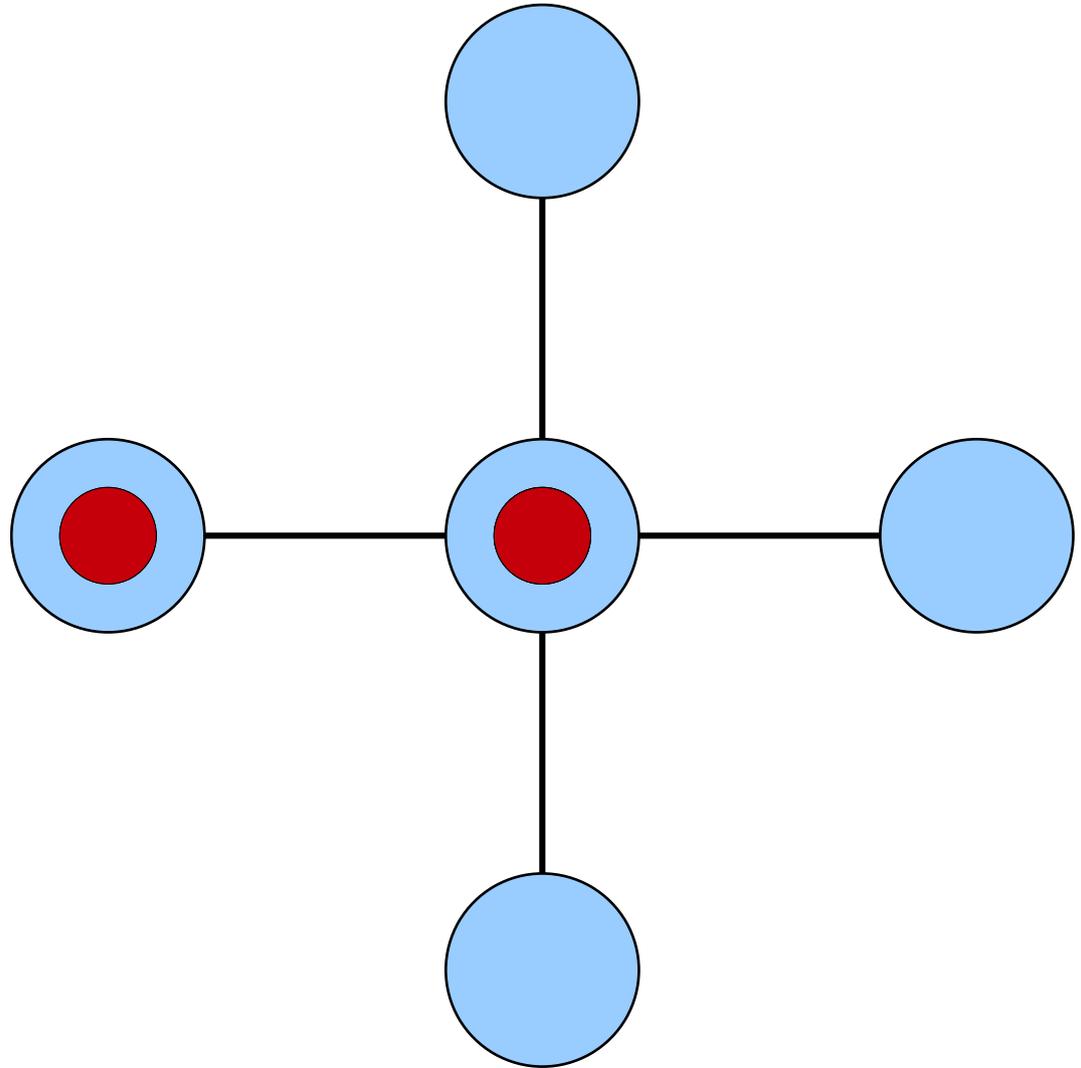


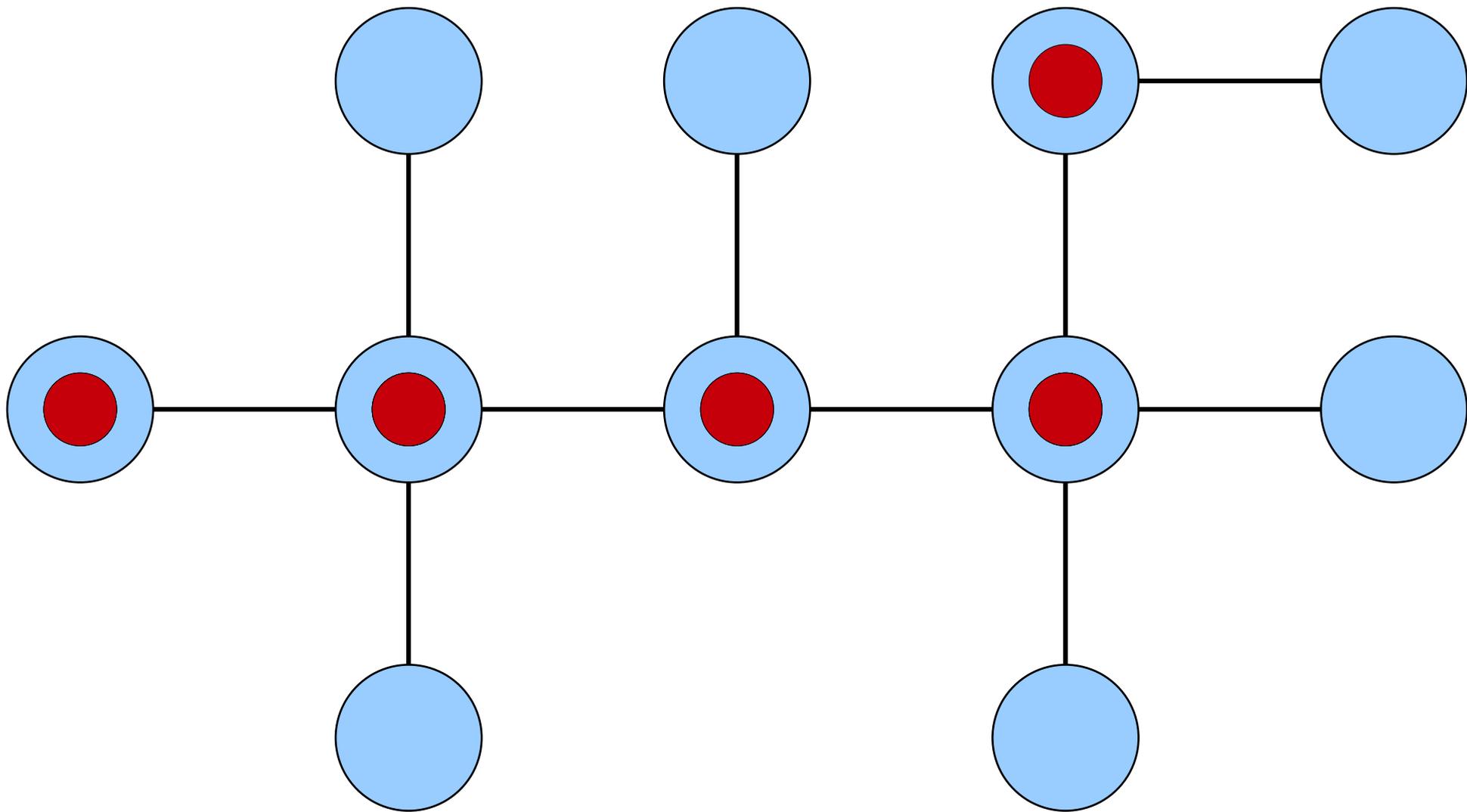




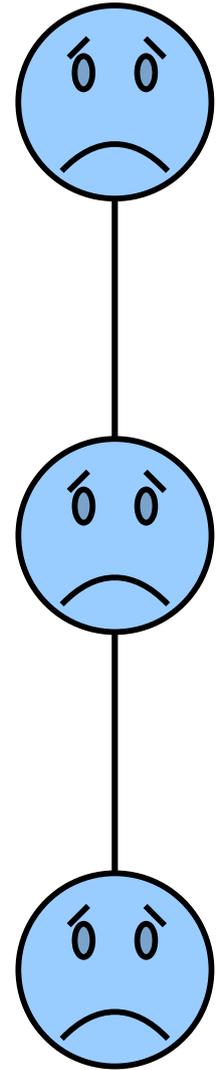
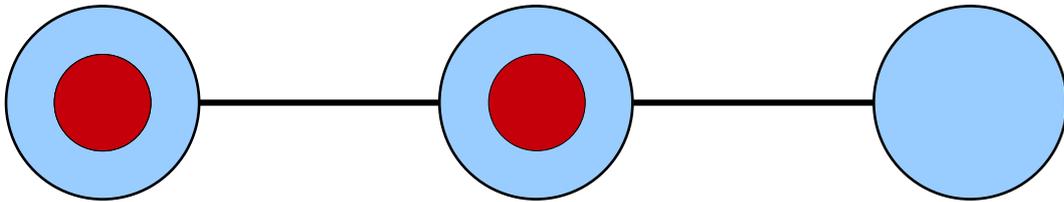
Message Movement

- When a computer receives a message, it repeats that message on all its links except the one it received the message on.
- The computers don't inspect the message contents or try to be clever – it's purely “came in on link X , goes out on all links but X .”

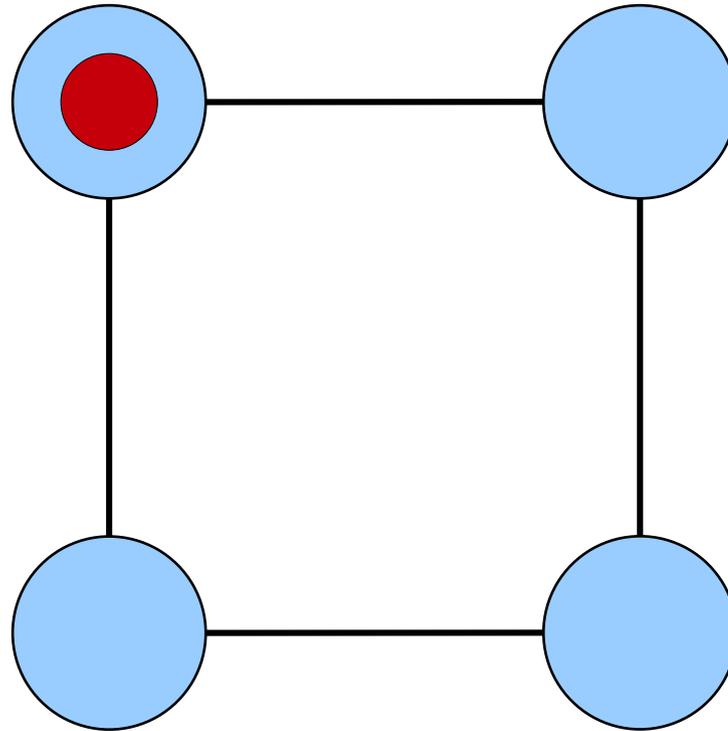




Two Pitfalls



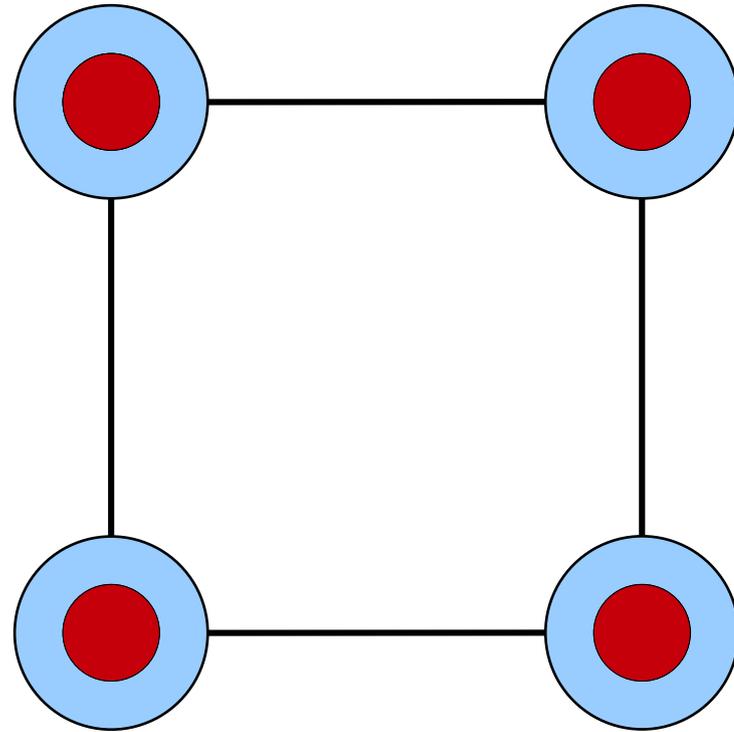
The network graph must be **connected**.

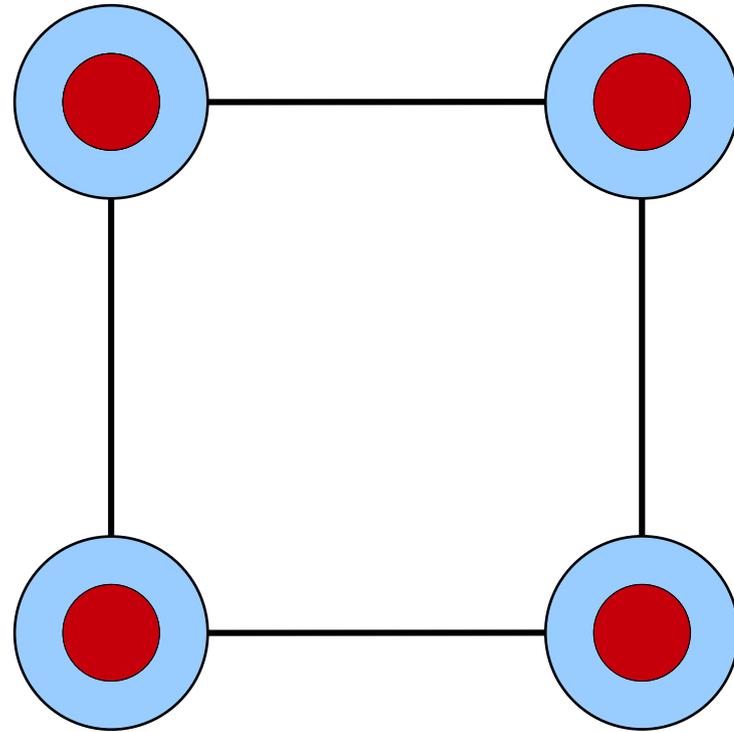


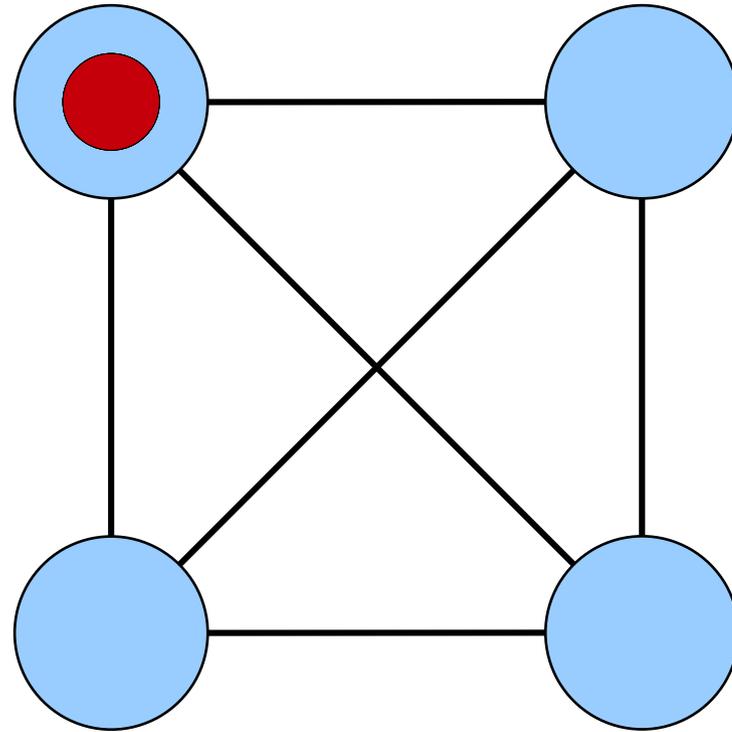
What will happen if this computer sends a message through the network?

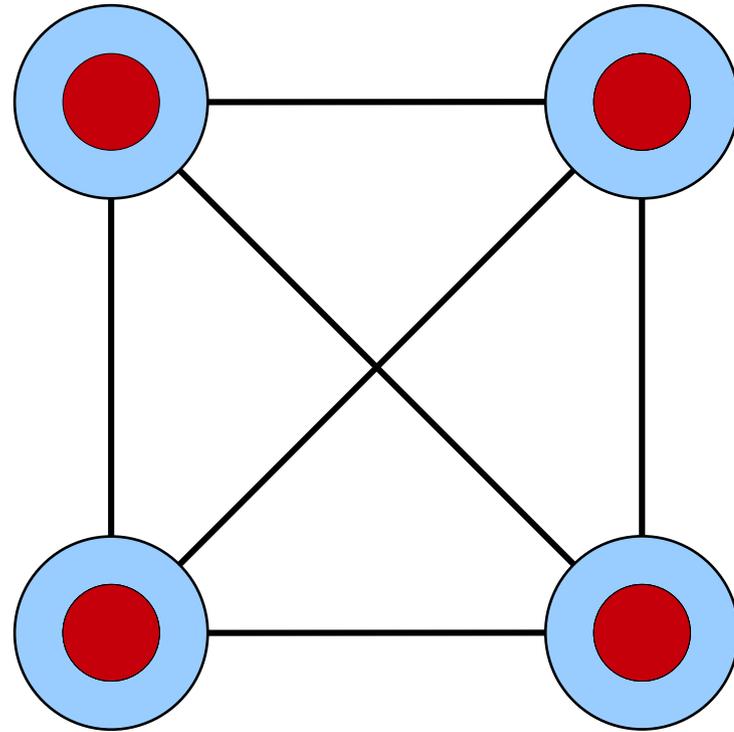
Answer at

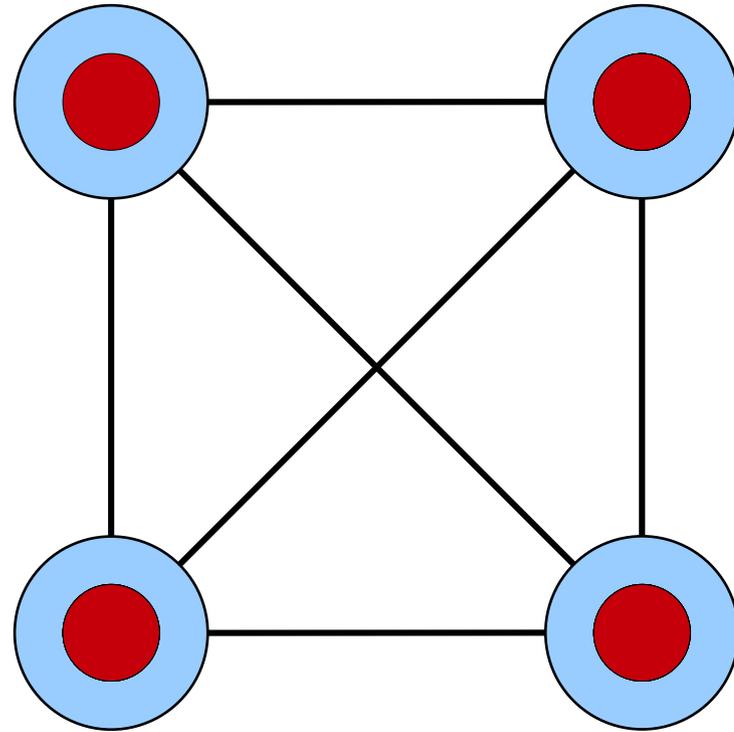
<https://cs103.stanford.edu/pollev>











Broadcast Storms

- A ***broadcast storm*** occurs when there's a cycle in the network graph.
- A single message can repeat forever, or exponentially amplify until the network fails.
- ***Solution:***

Broadcast Storms

- A ***broadcast storm*** occurs when there's a cycle in the network graph.
- A single message can repeat forever, or exponentially amplify until the network fails.
- ***Solution:*** Don't let the network graph have any cycles.
- A graph $G = (V, E)$ is called ***acyclic*** if it has no cycles.

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6. Shaping LANs (and a Proof on Graphs)
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8. Recap and What's Next?

Graphs

Part 2

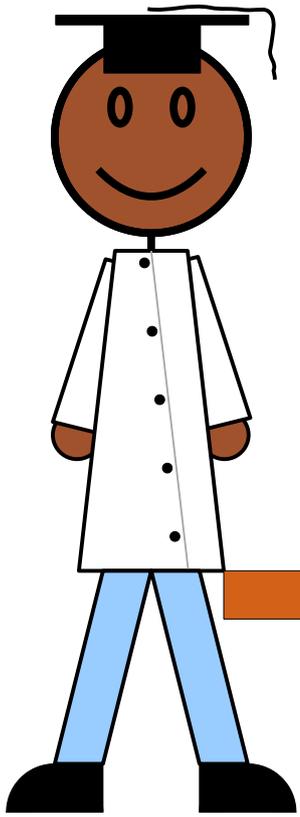
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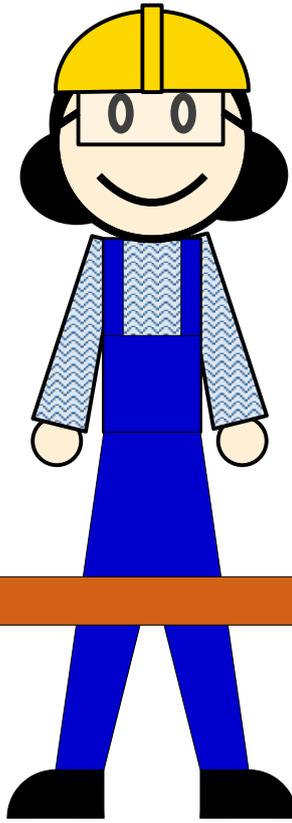
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You have a collection of computers that need to be wired up into a LAN. How should you choose the shape of the network?



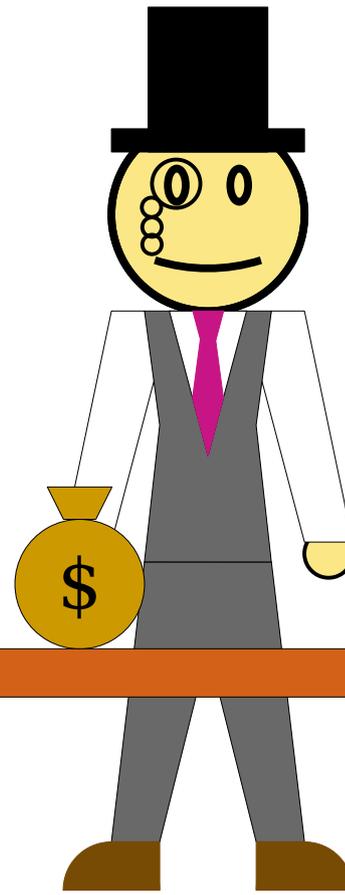
CTO

Connected,
No Cycles



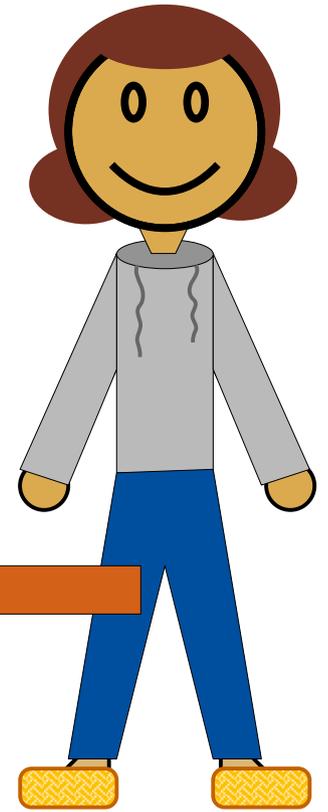
COO

Most Links,
No Cycles

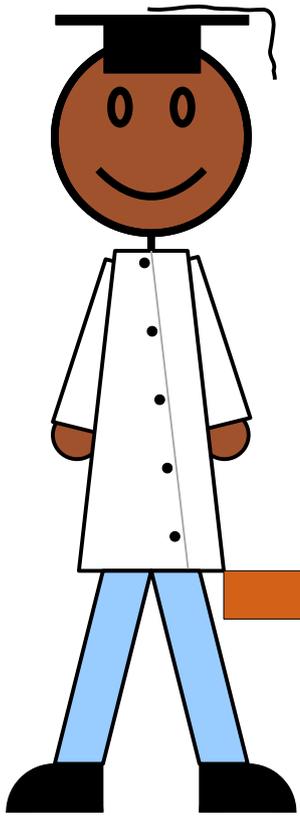


CFO

Fewest Links,
Connected

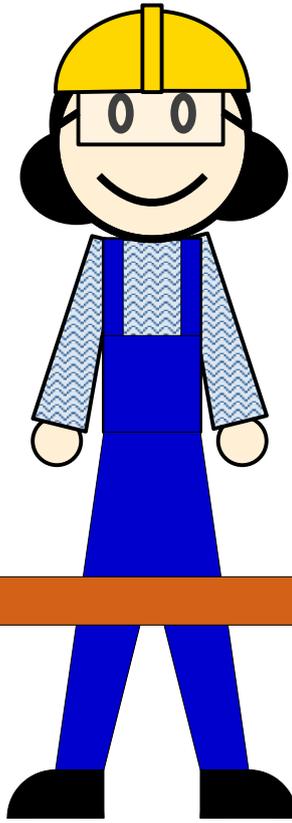


CEO



CTO

Connected,
No Cycles



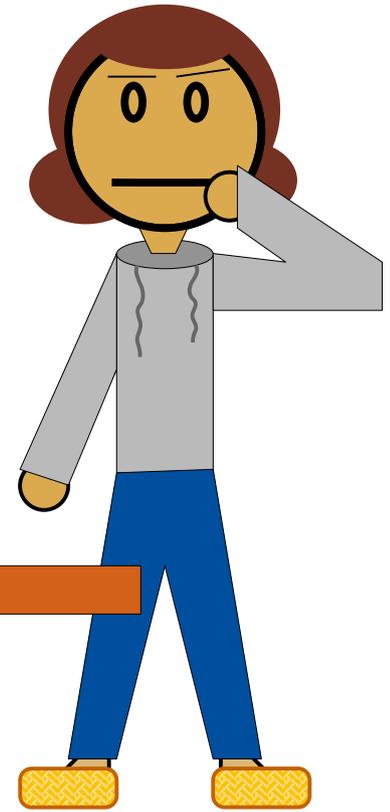
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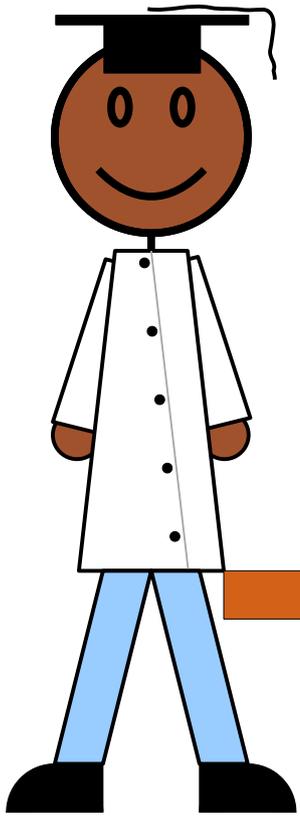


CFO

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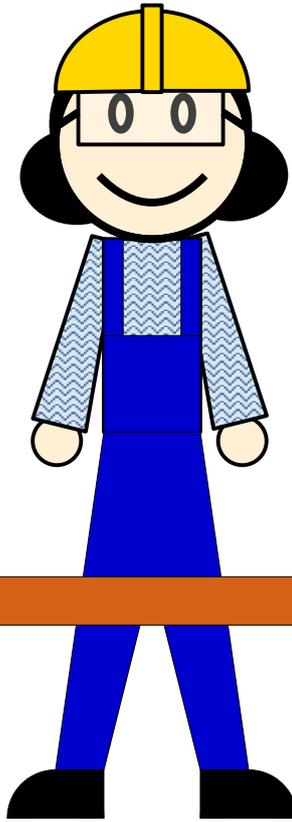


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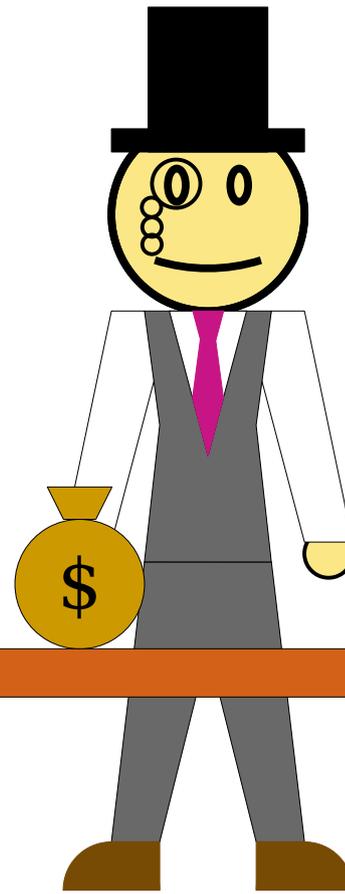
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**Connected,
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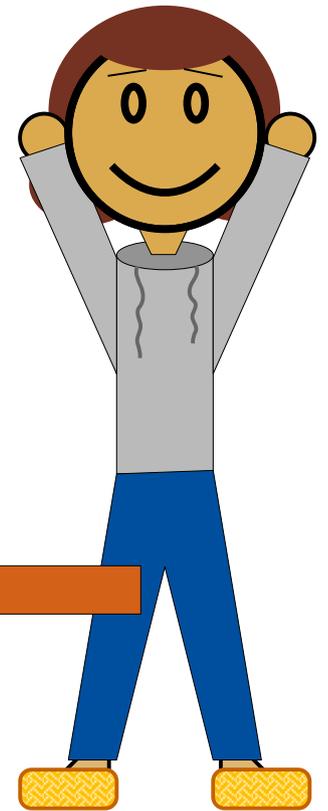
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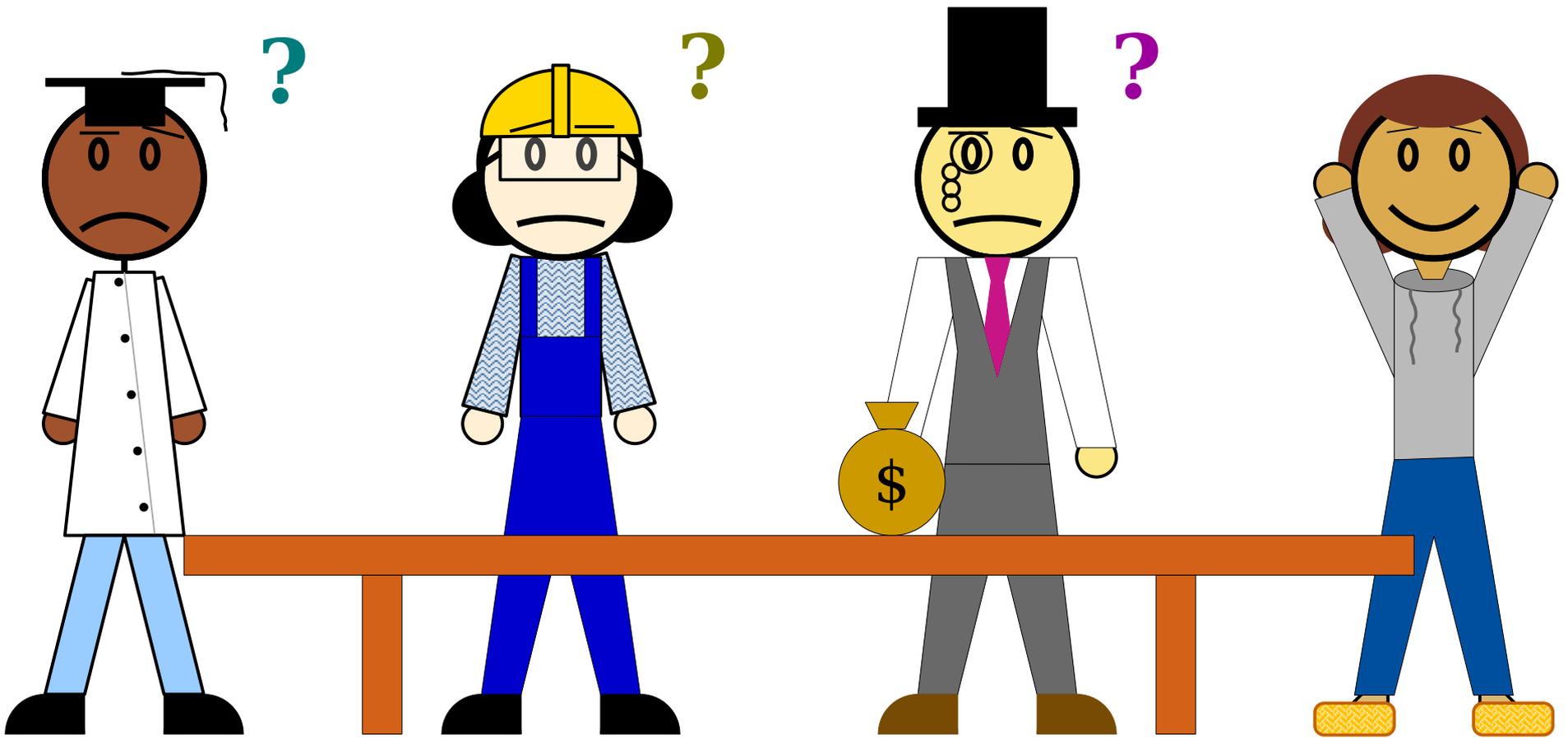
CFO

**Fewest Links,
Connected**



CEO

***Do all
three!***



CTO

**Connected,
No Cycles**

COO

**Most Links,
No Cycles**

CFO

**Fewest Links,
Connected**

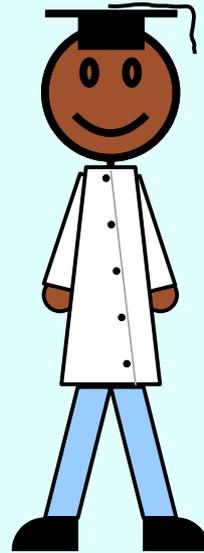
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Minimally Connected

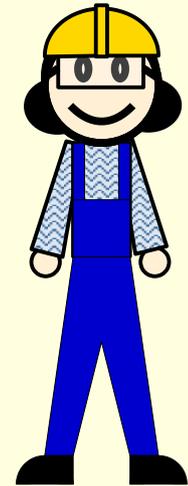
(Connected, but deleting any edge disconnects its endpoints.)



Connected, Acyclic

If *any* of these conditions hold, then *all* of these conditions hold.

A graph with any of these properties is called a ***tree***.



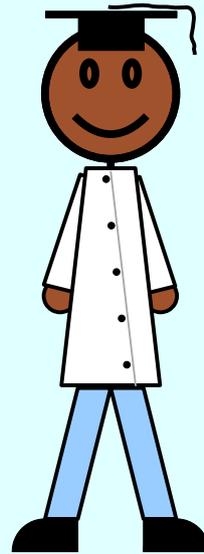
Maximally Acyclic

(Acyclic, but adding any missing edge creates a cycle.)

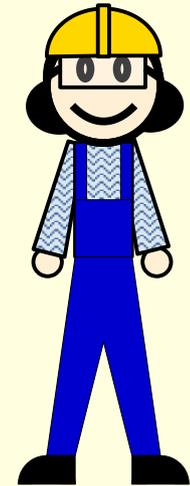


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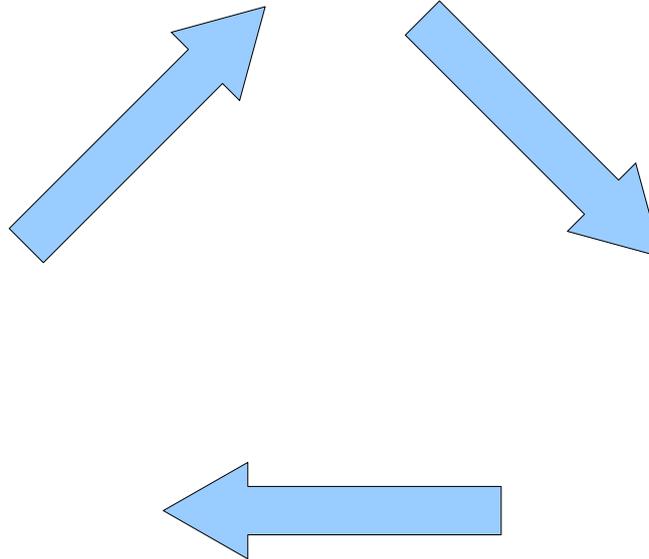


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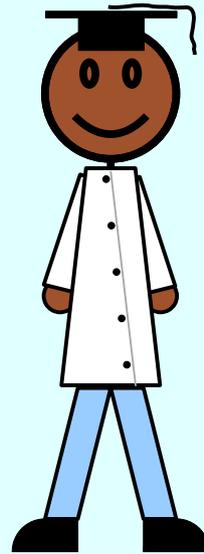
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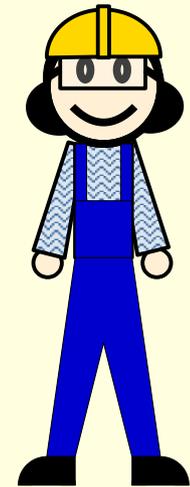


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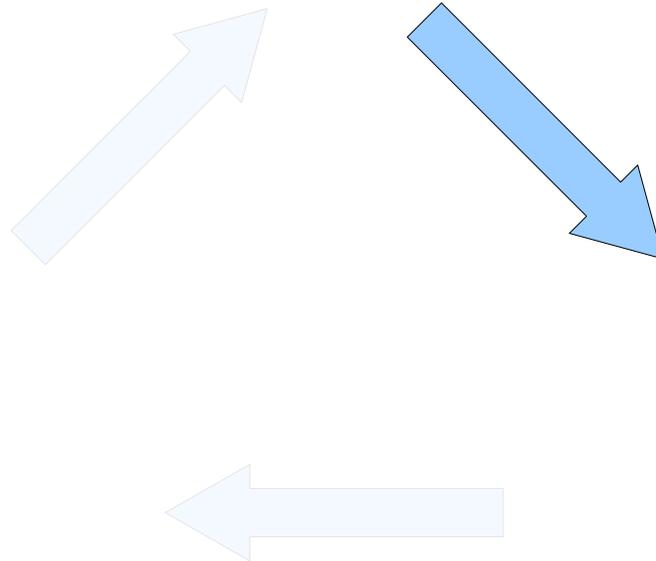


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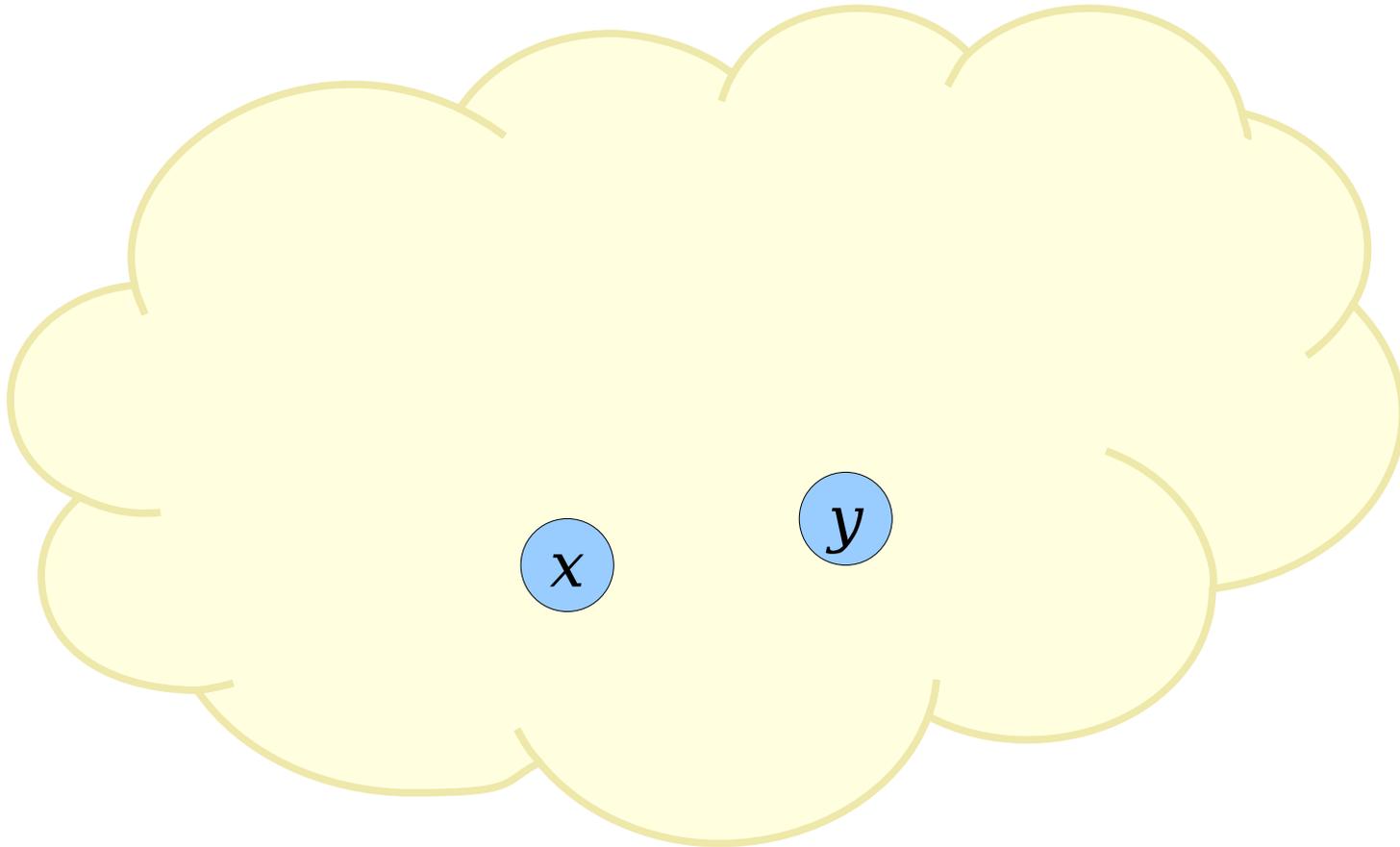
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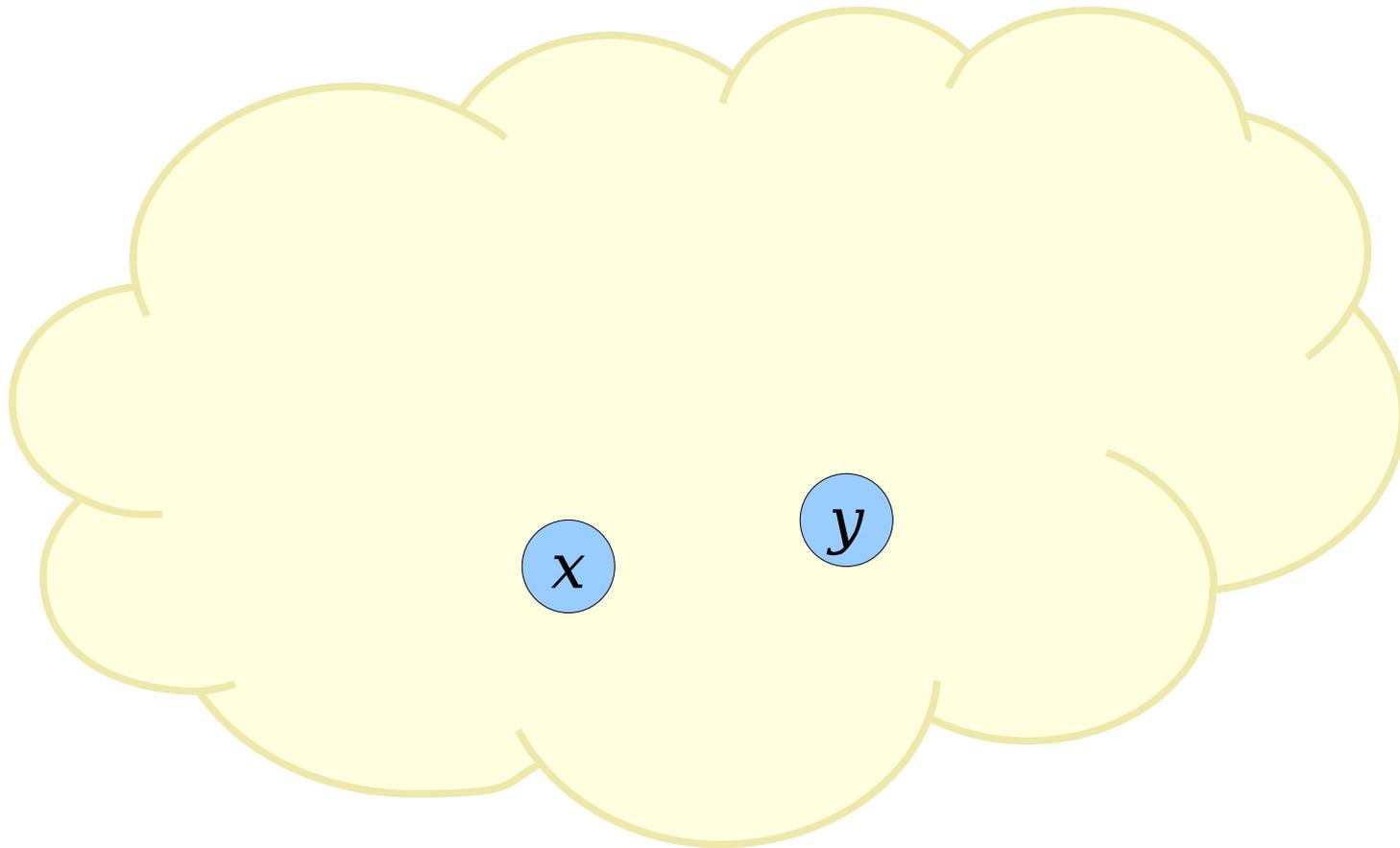
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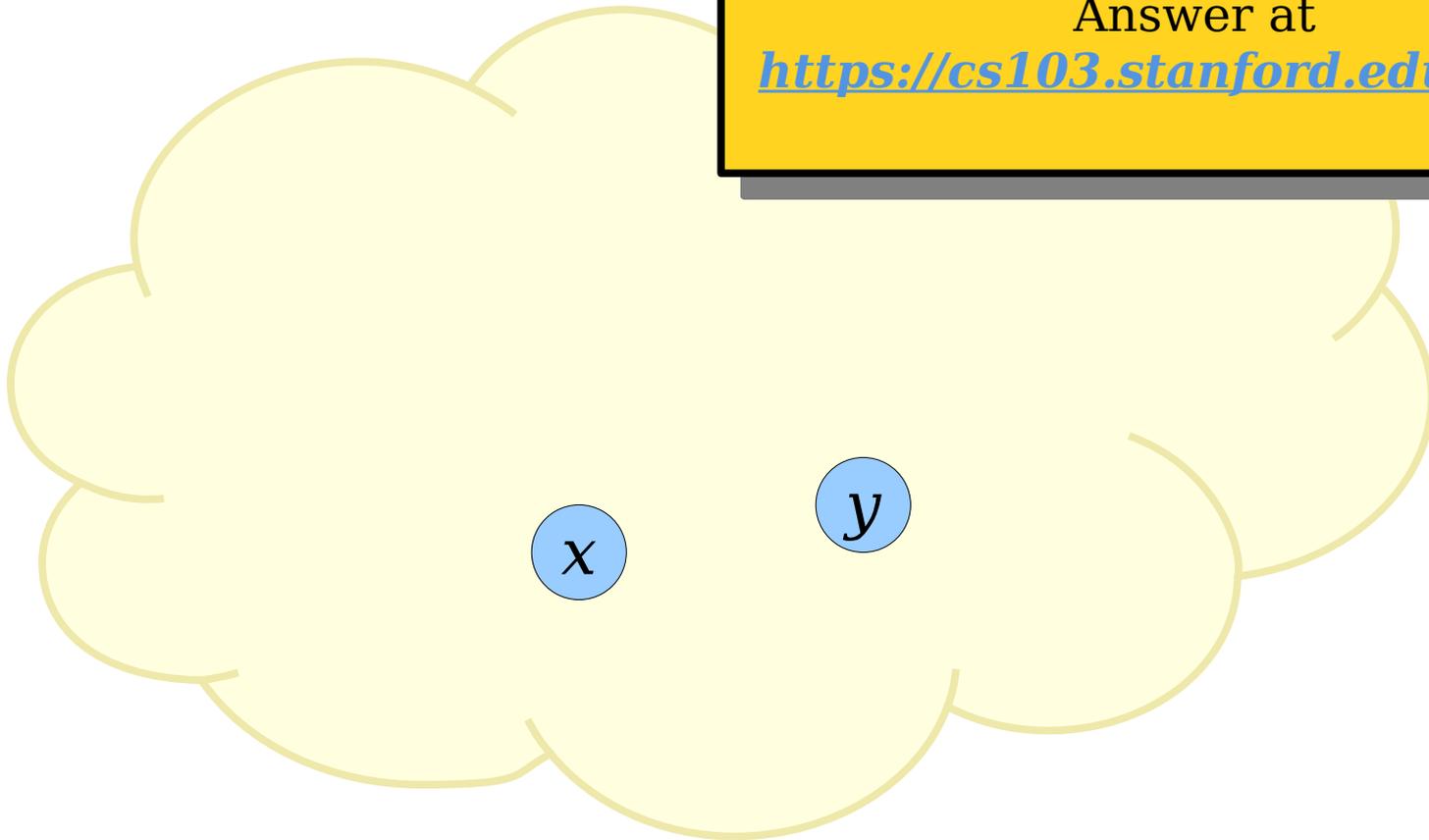
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What do we know about x and y given that T is connected?

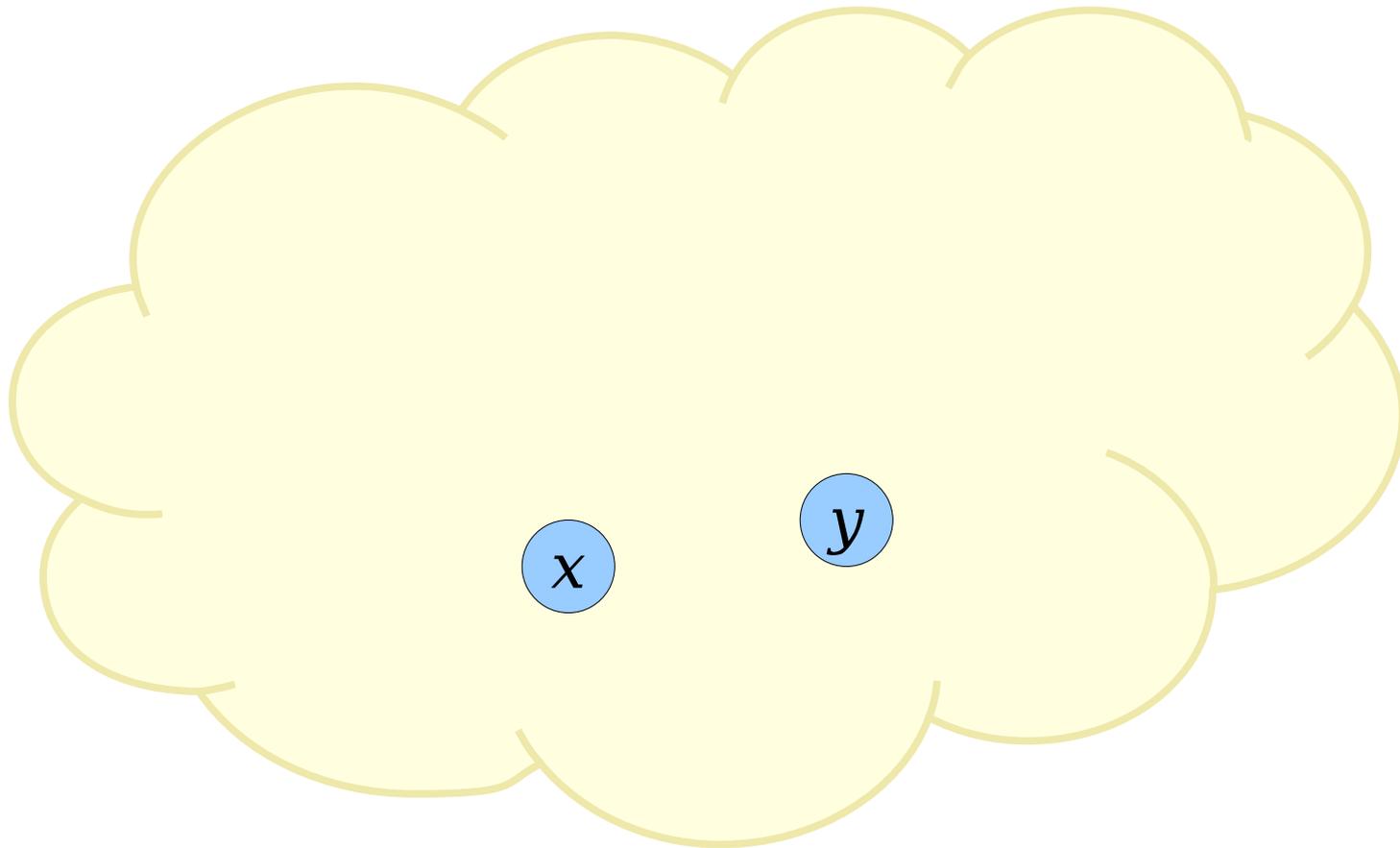
Answer at

<https://cs103.stanford.edu/pollev>



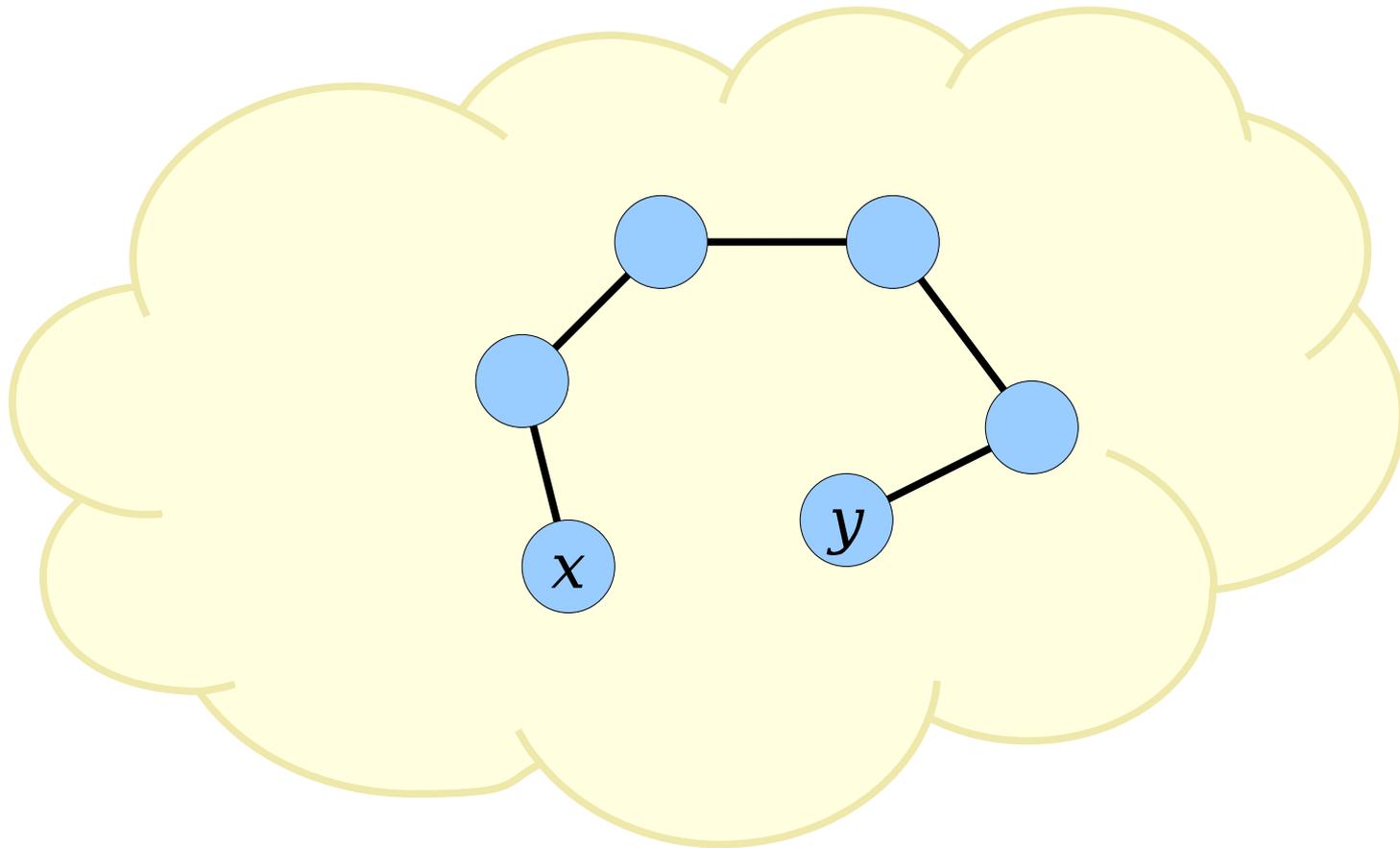
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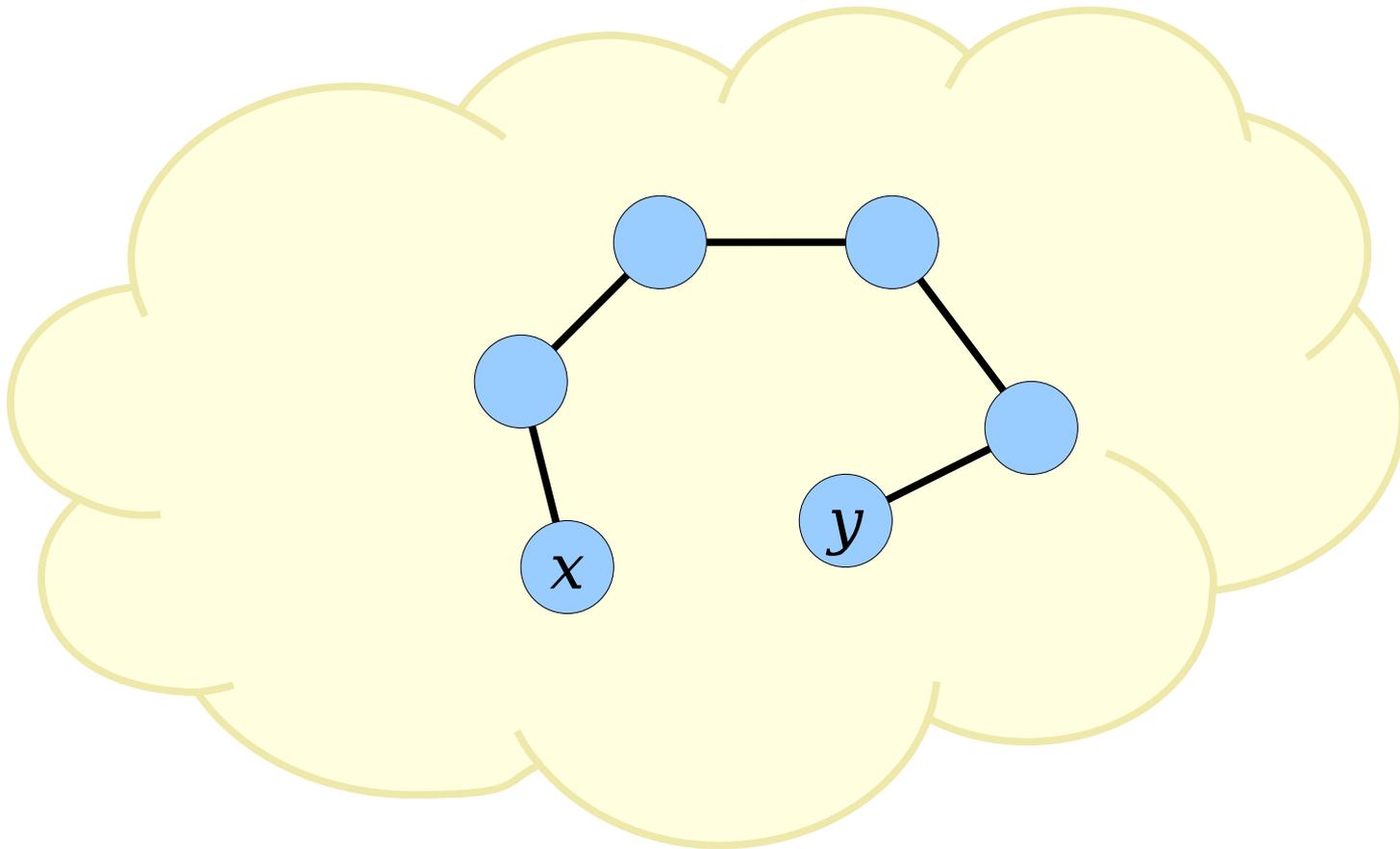
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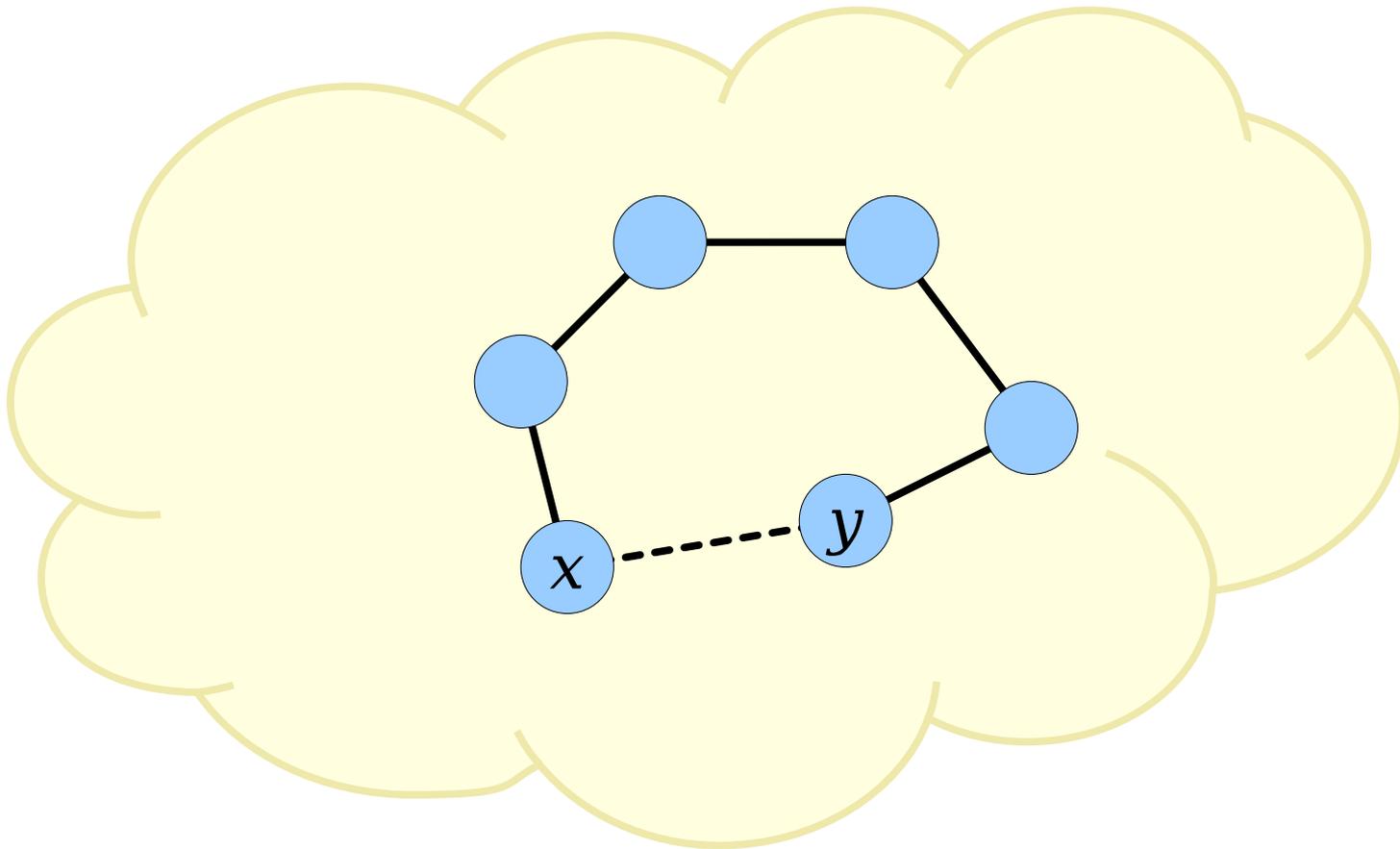
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- No edge appears twice:

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Thus adding $\{x, y\}$ to E closes a cycle, as required.

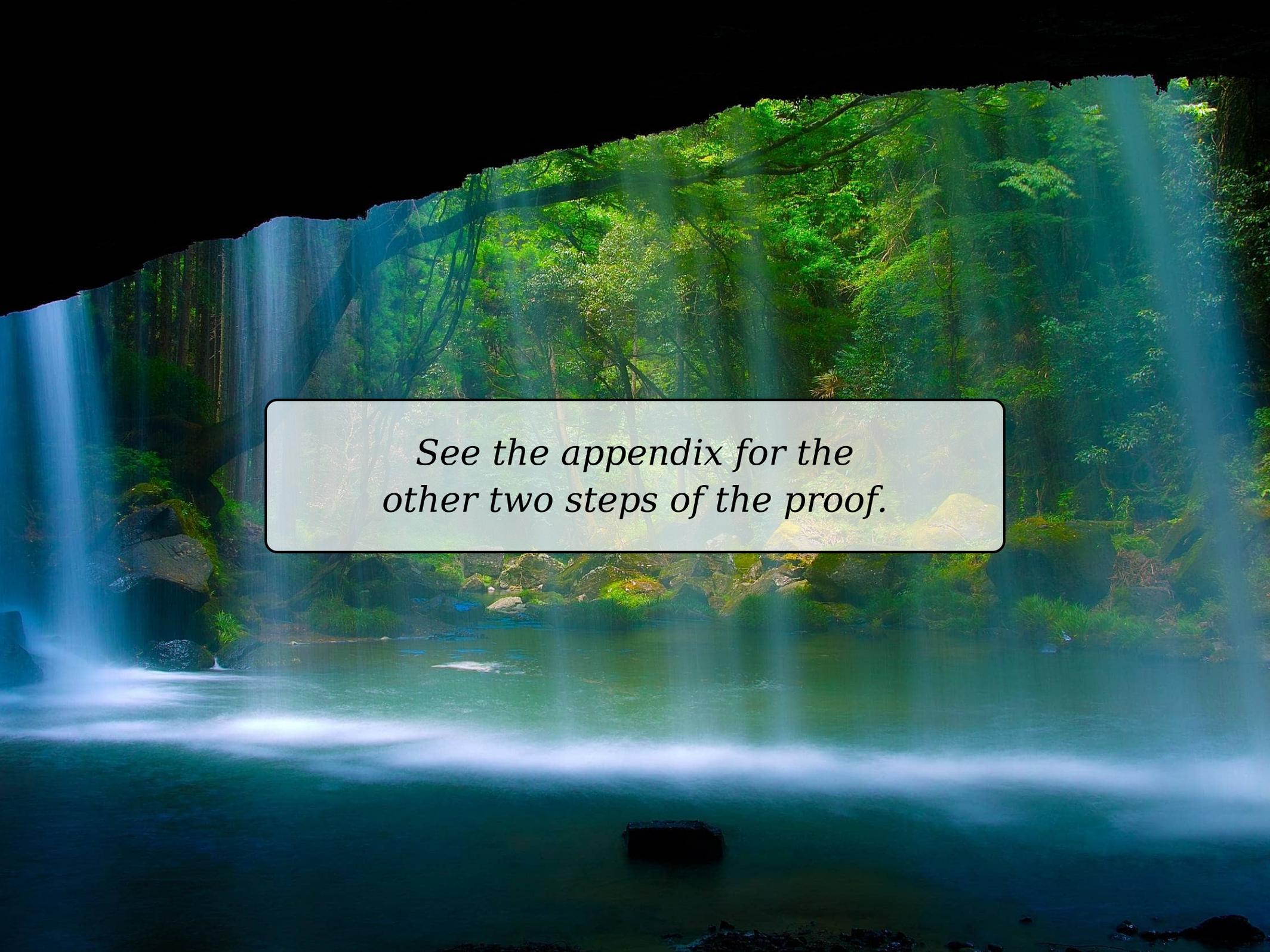
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*See the appendix for the
other two steps of the proof.*

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More to Explore

- A tree kind of seems like a bad way to design a network. (Why?)
- Actual local area networks allow for cycles. They use something called the ***spanning tree protocol (STP)*** to selectively disable links to form a tree.
- Routing through the full internet – not just within a LAN – is a fascinating topic in its own right.
- Take CS144 (networking) for details!
- If we have time, we'll explore more on network routing later in the quarter.

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Recap from Today

- ***Walks*** and ***closed walks*** represent ways of moving around a graph. ***Paths*** and ***cycles*** are “redundancy-free” walks and cycles.
- ***Trees*** are graphs that are connected and acyclic. They’re also minimally-connected graphs and maximally-acyclic graphs.
- Trees have applications throughout CS, including networking.

Next Time

- ***The Pigeonhole Principle***
 - A simple, powerful, versatile theorem.
- ***Graph Theory Party Tricks***
 - Applying math to graphs of people!
- ***A Little Movie Puzzle***
 - Who watched what?

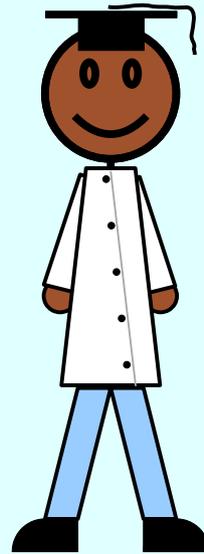


Appendix



Minimally Connected

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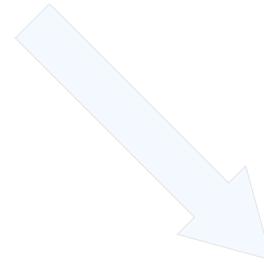
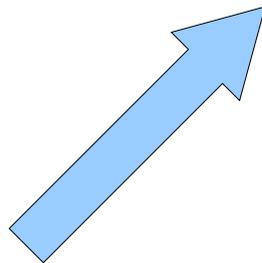


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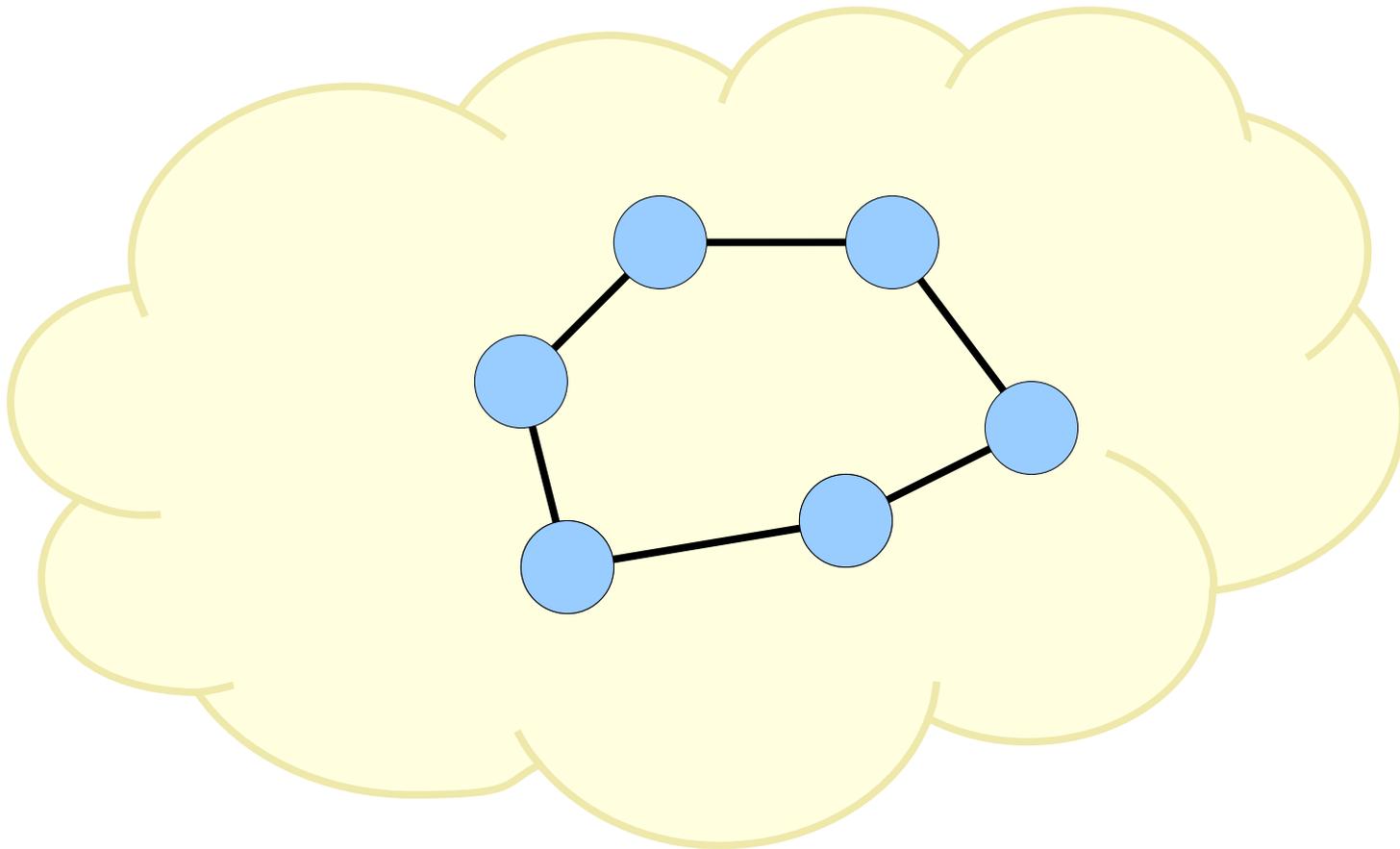
Proof: Assume T is minimally connected. We need to show that T is connected and acyclic.

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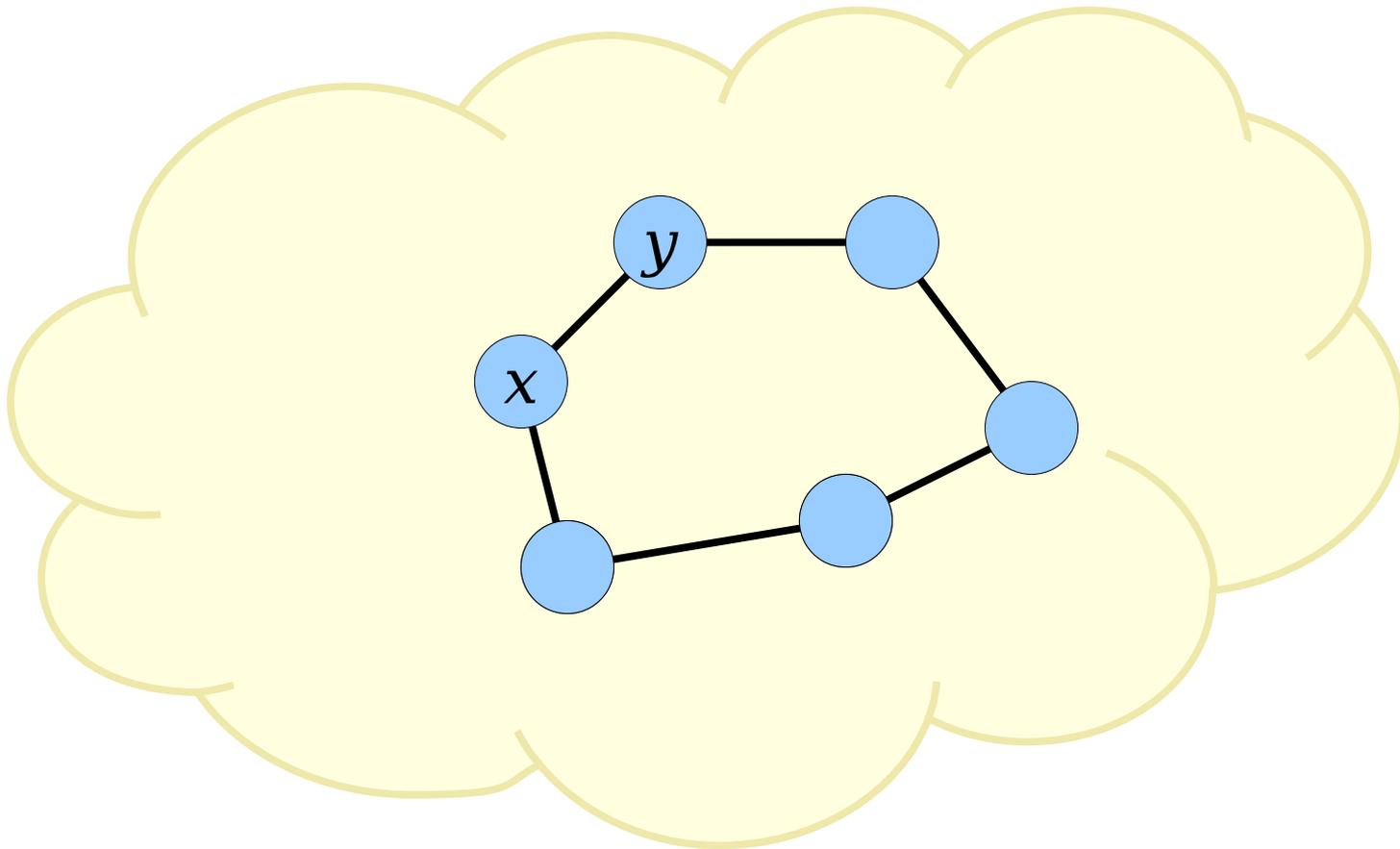
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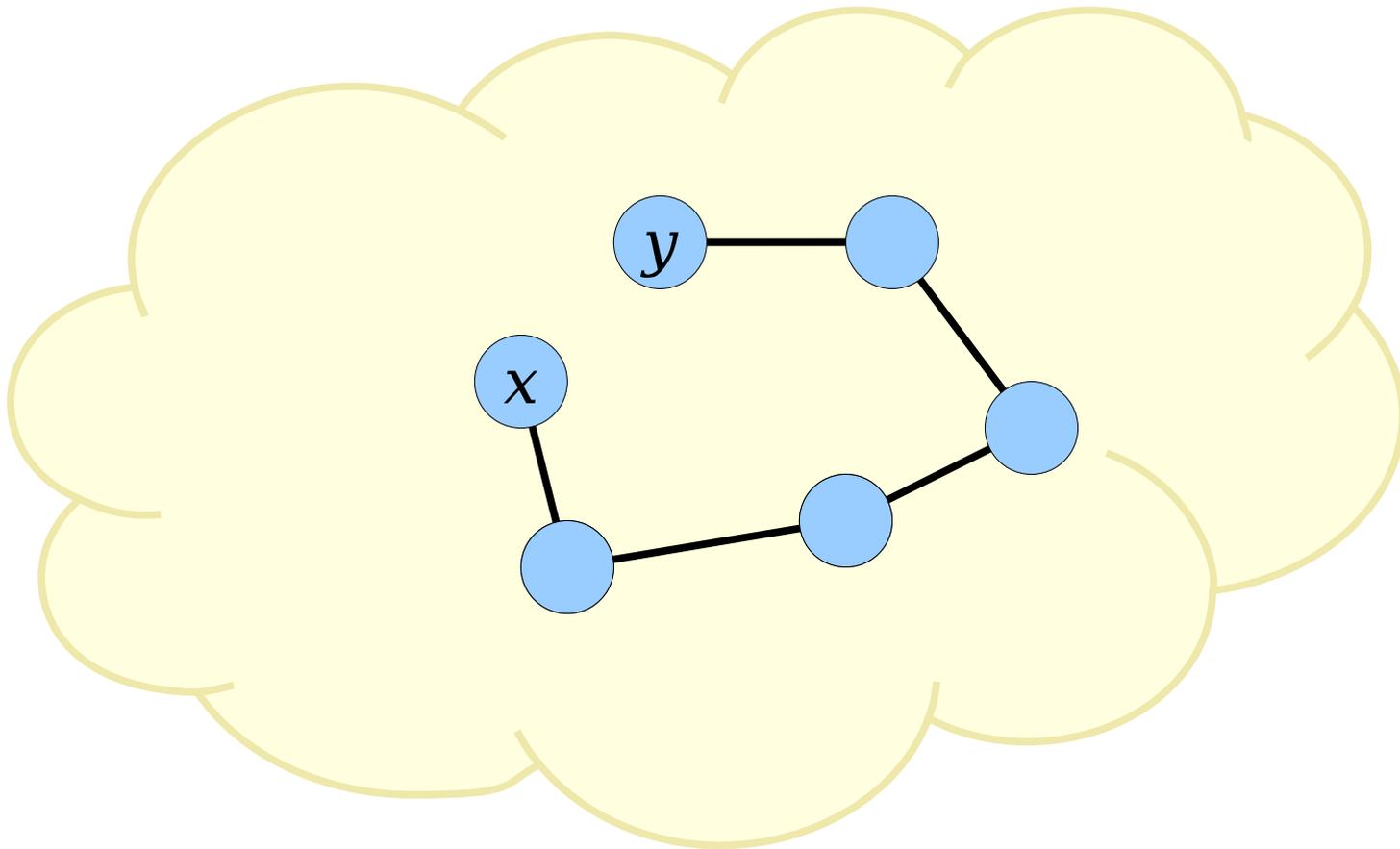
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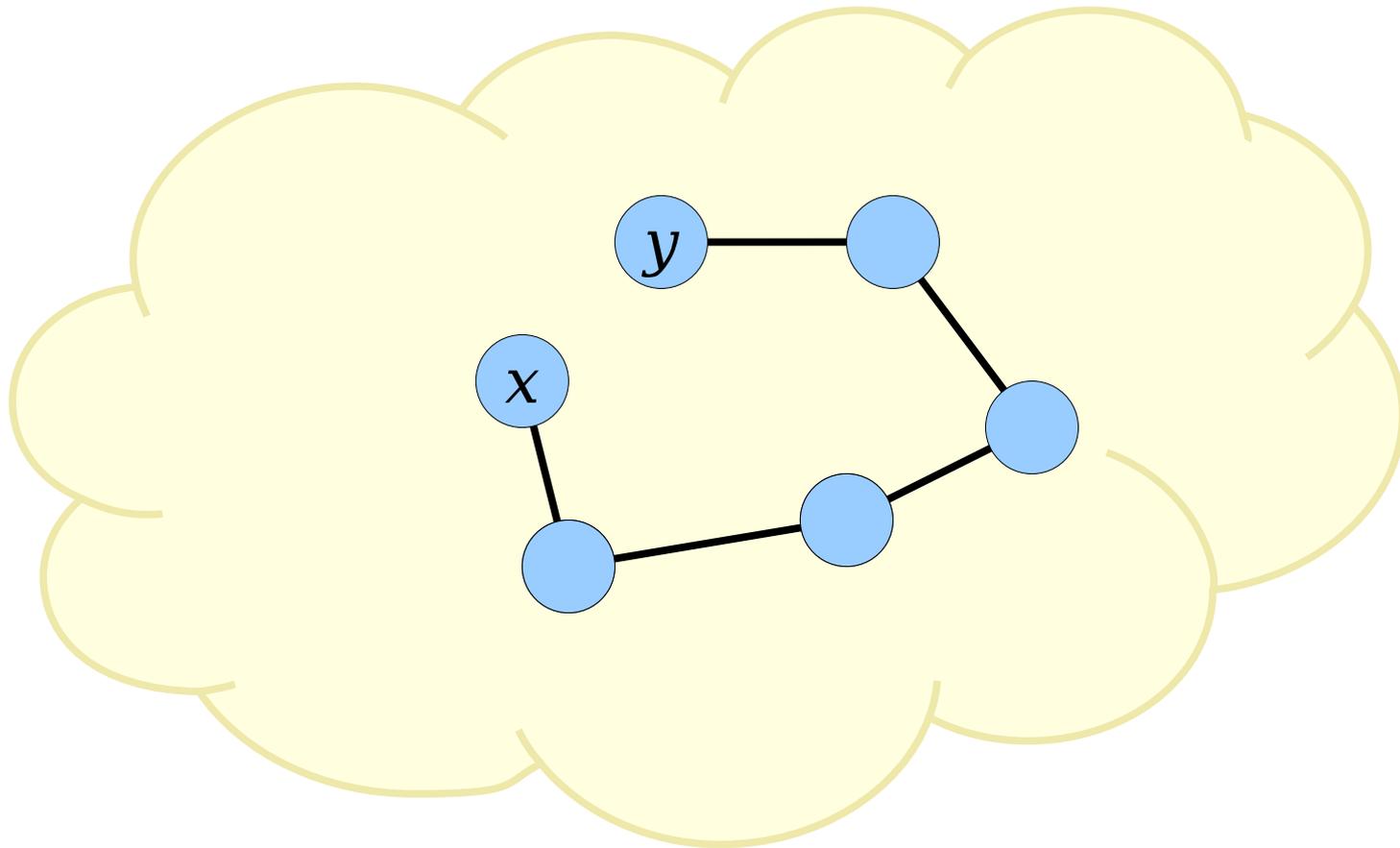
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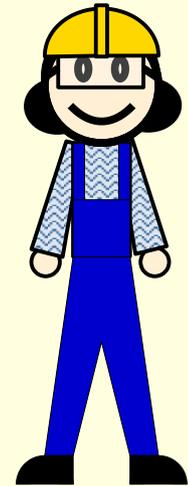


Minimally Connected

(Connected, but deleting any edge disconnects its endpoints.)

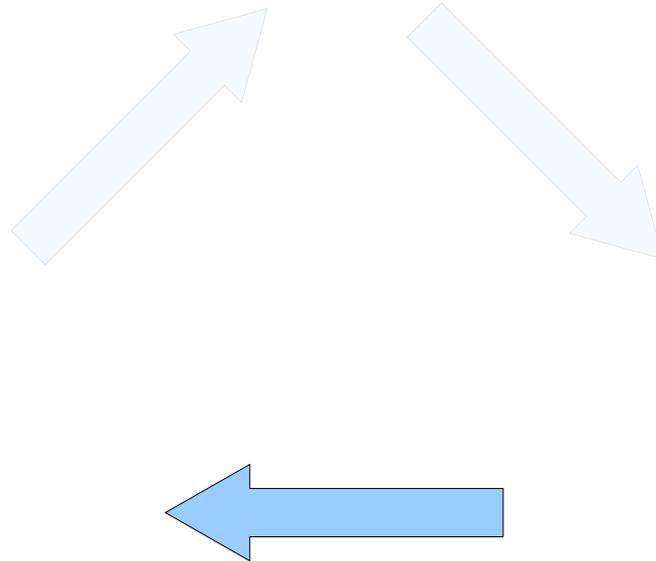


Connected, Acyclic



Maximally Acyclic

(Acyclic, but adding any missing edge creates a cycle.)



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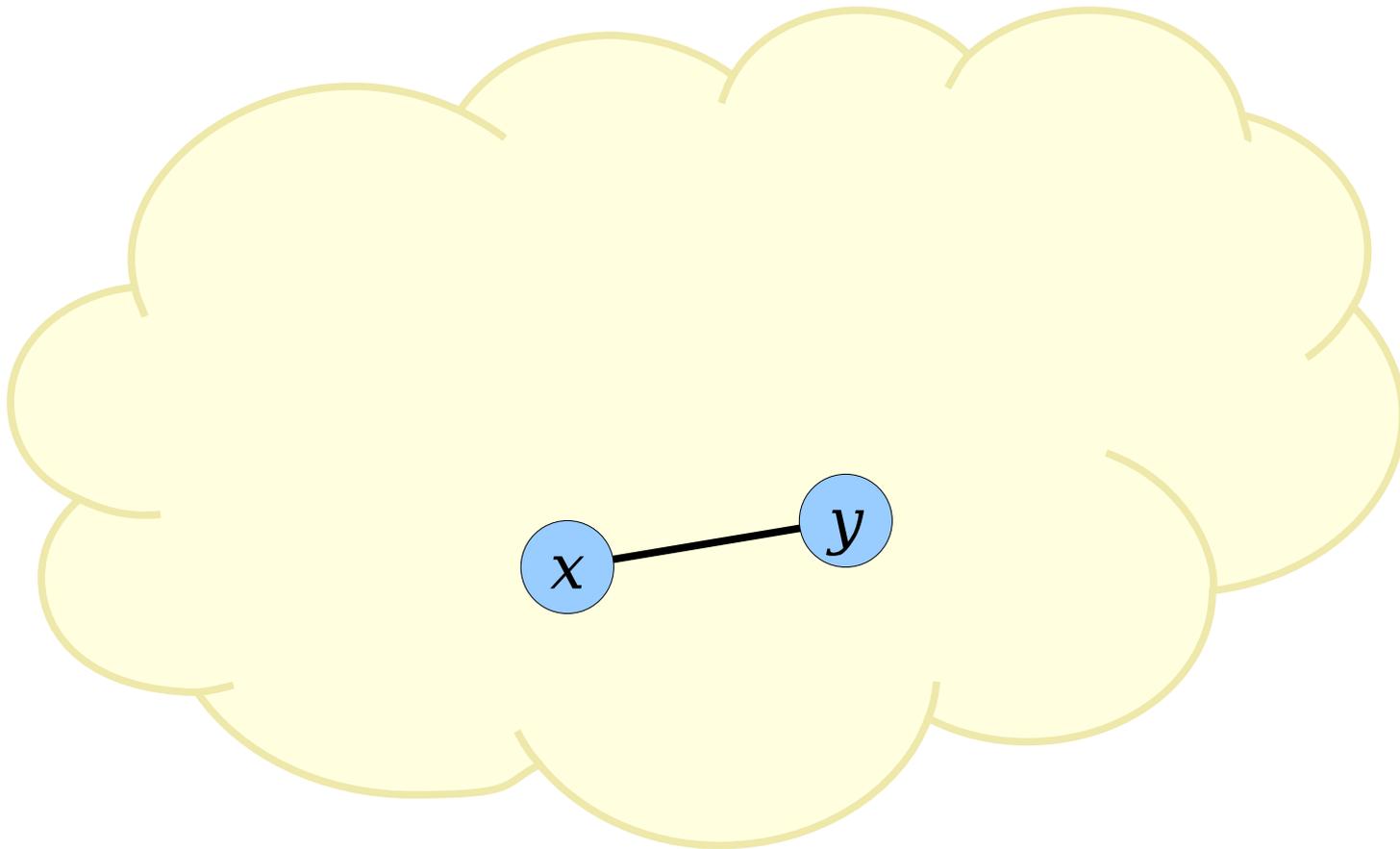
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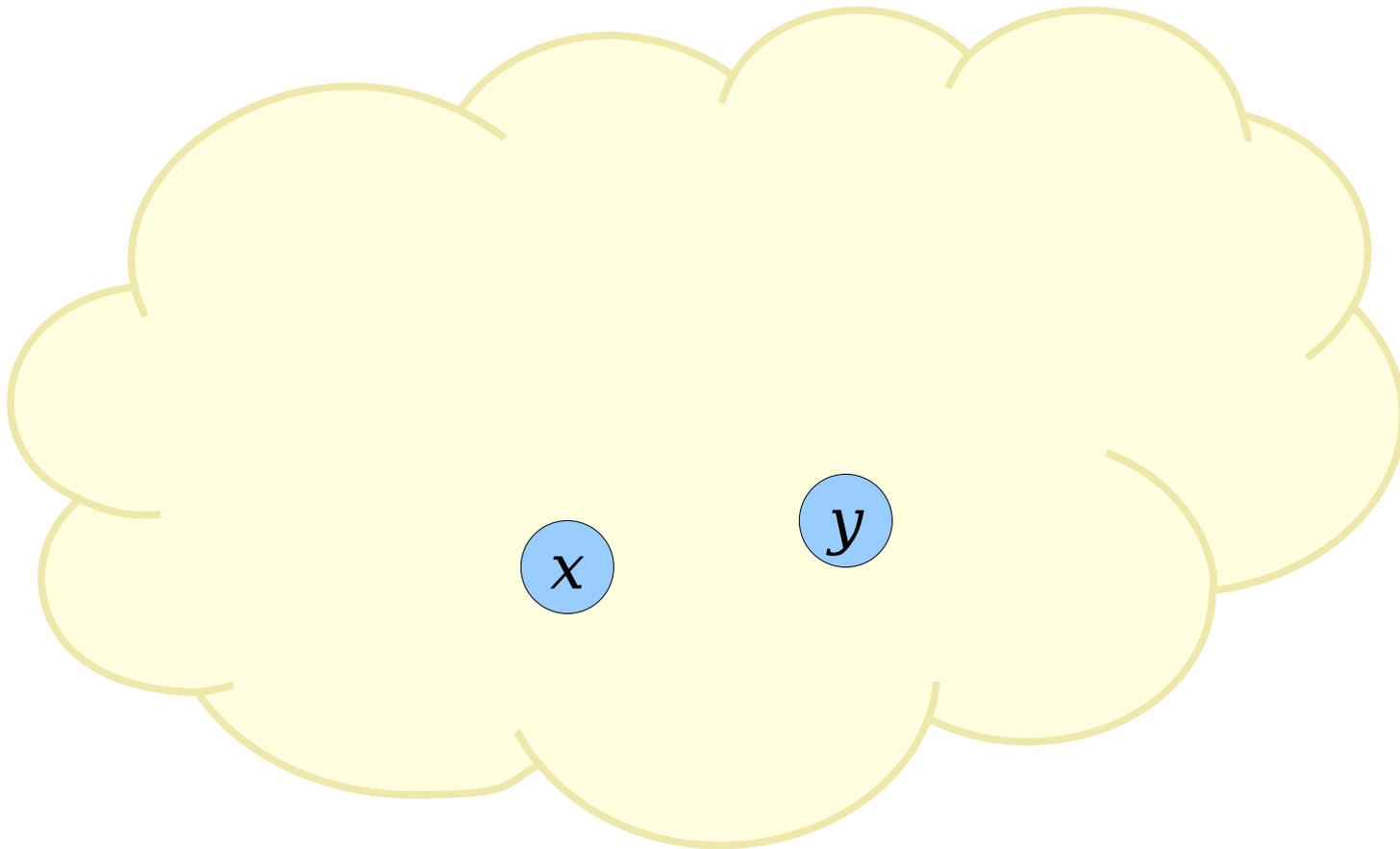
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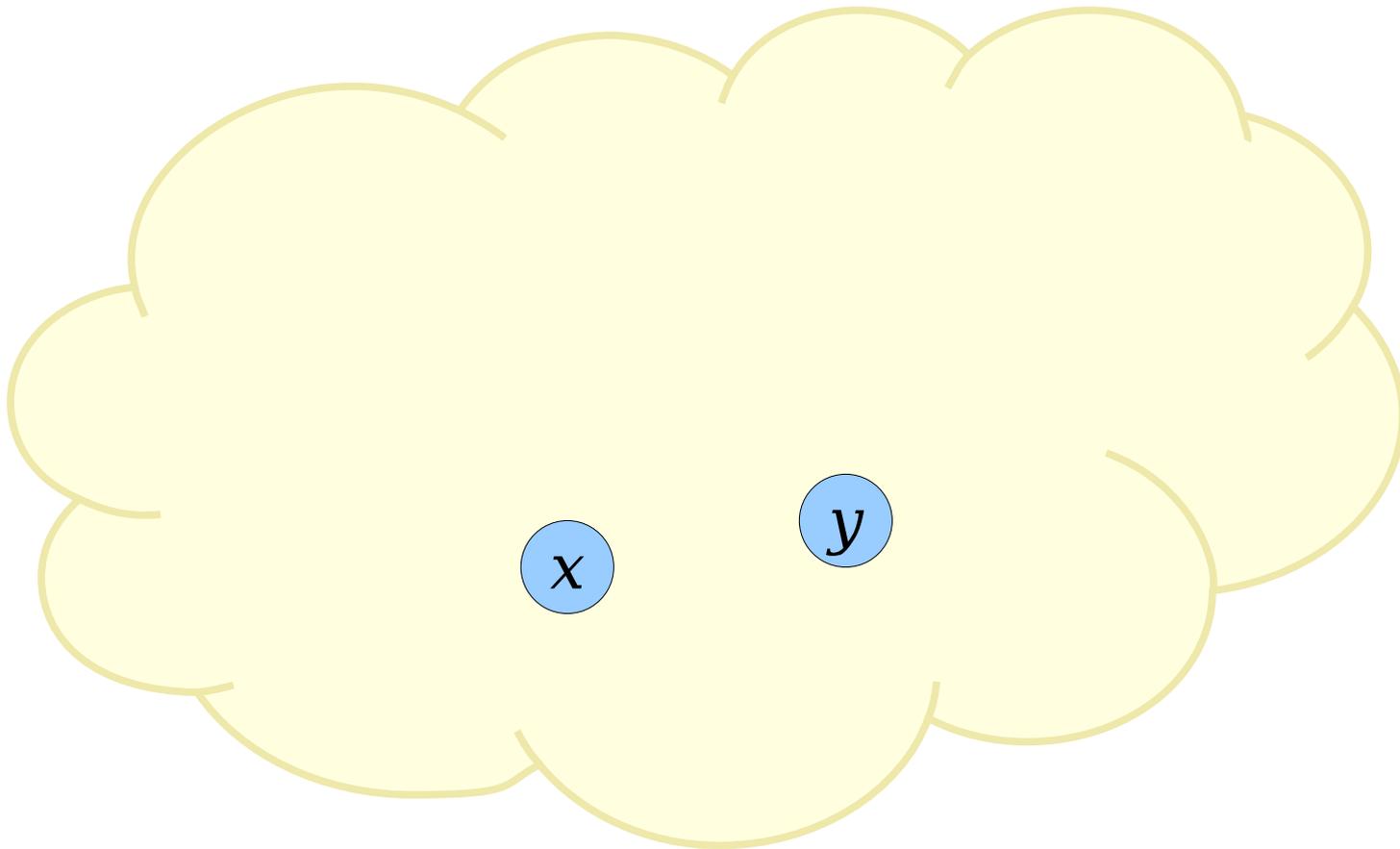
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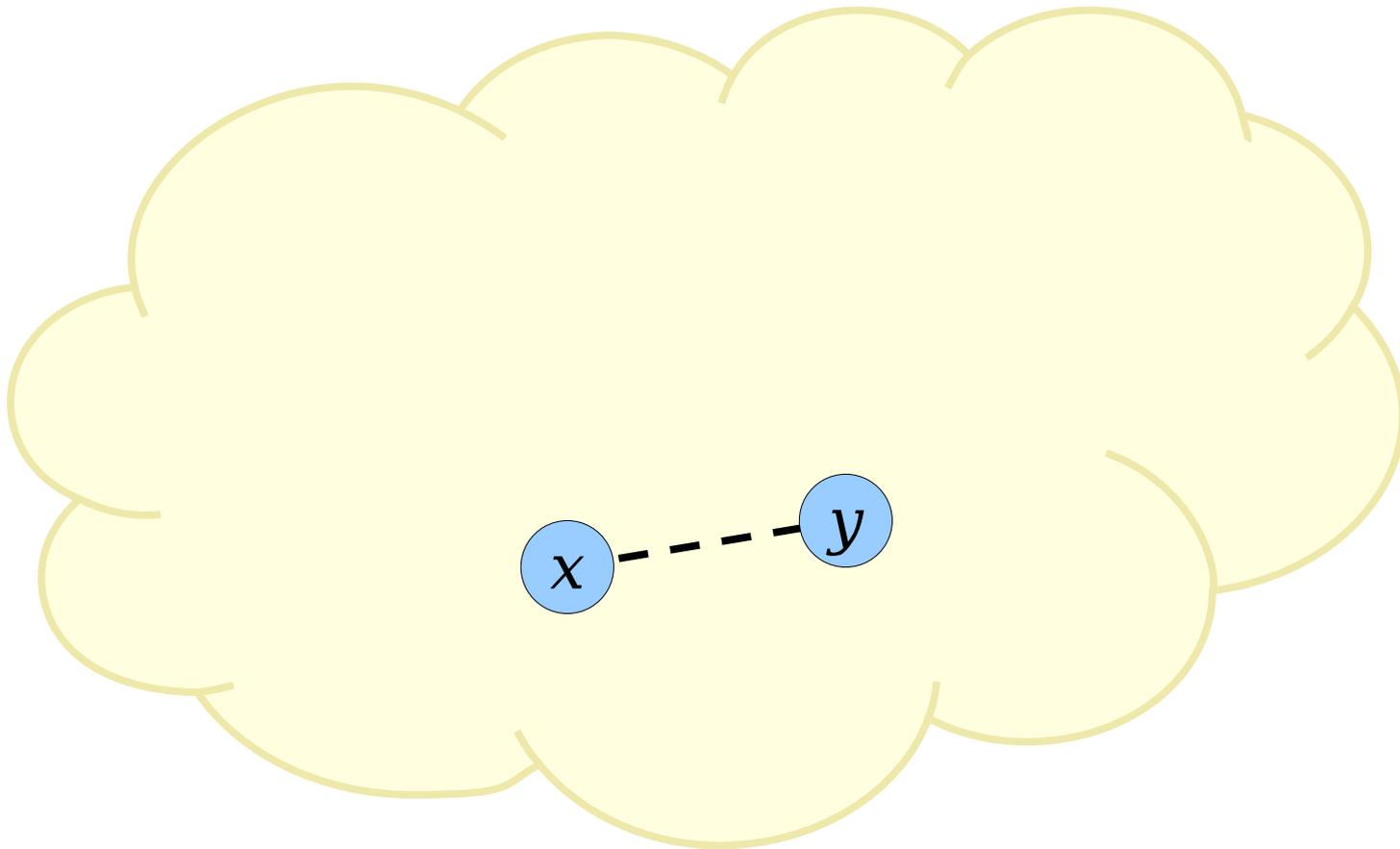
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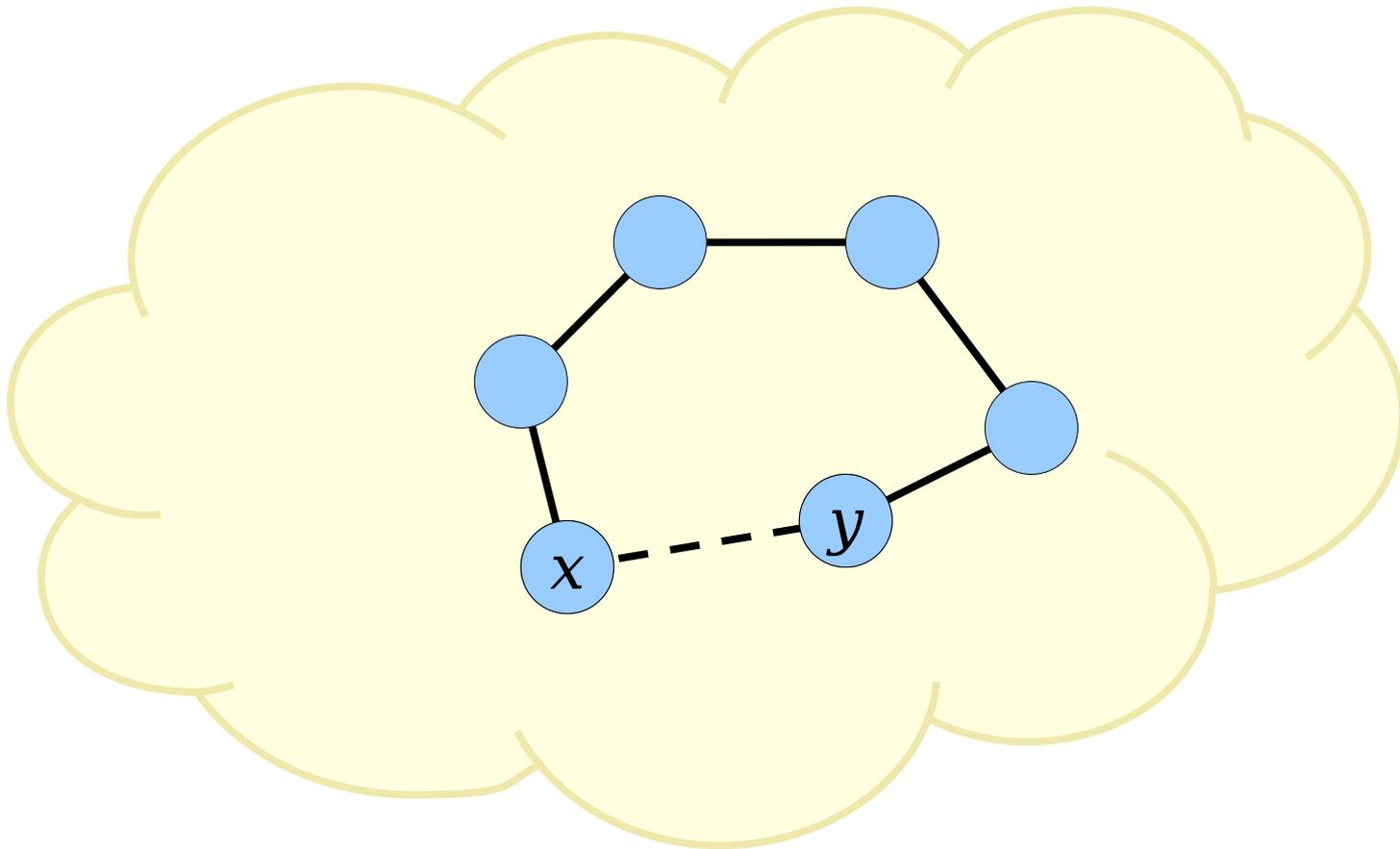
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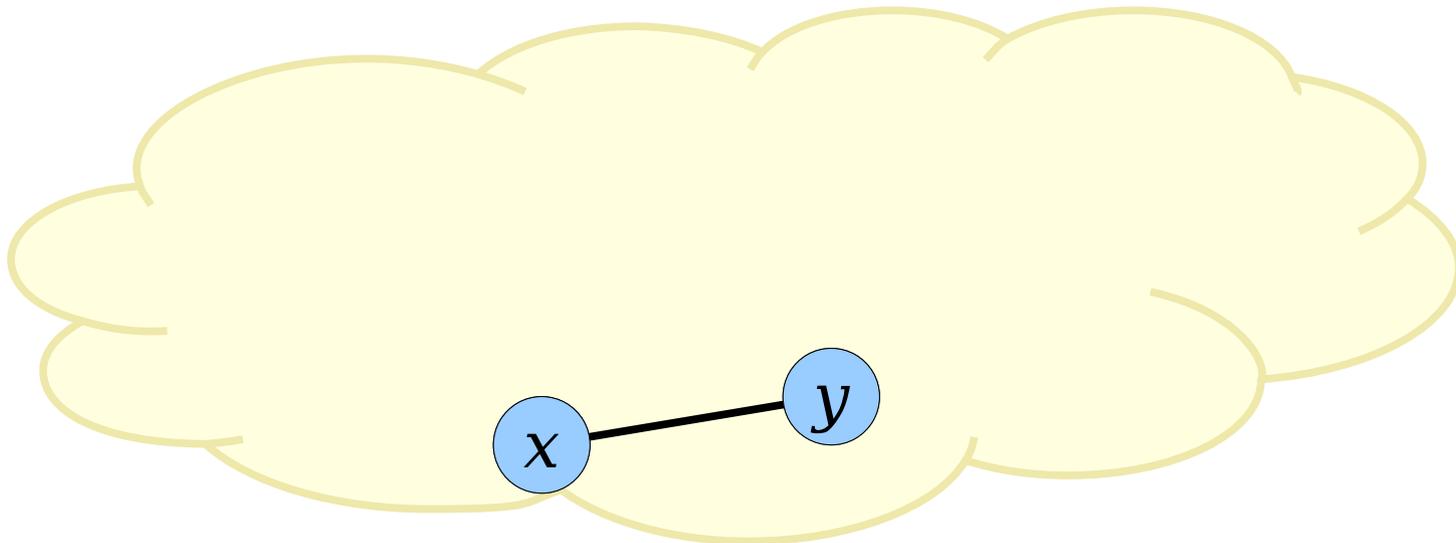
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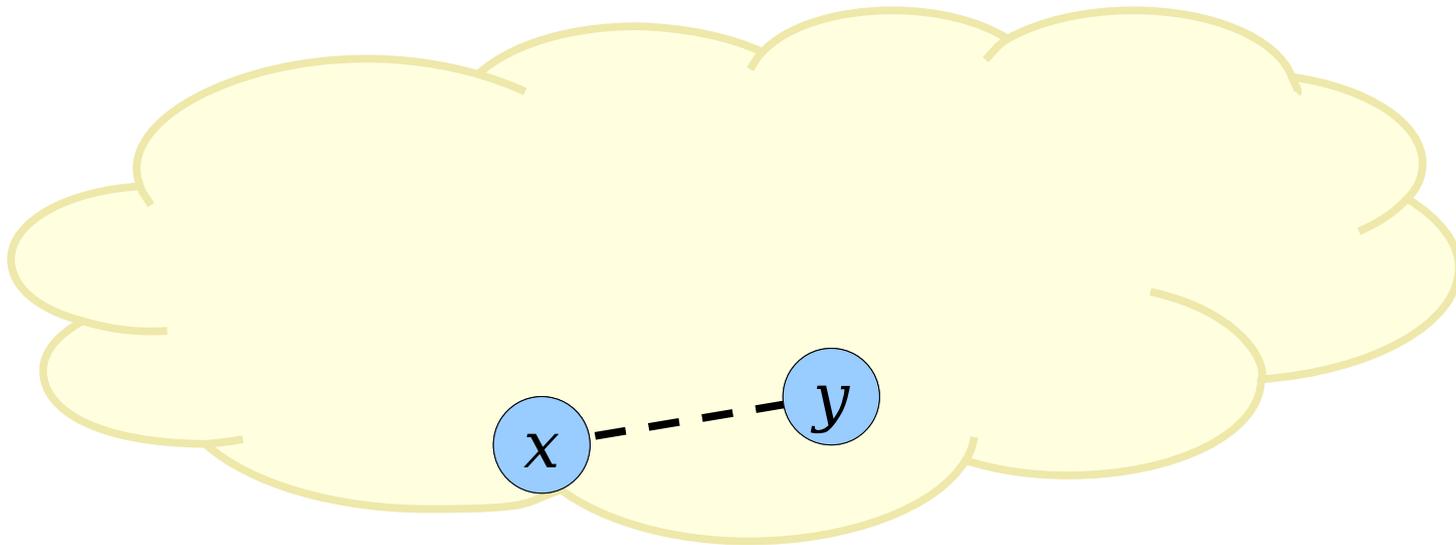
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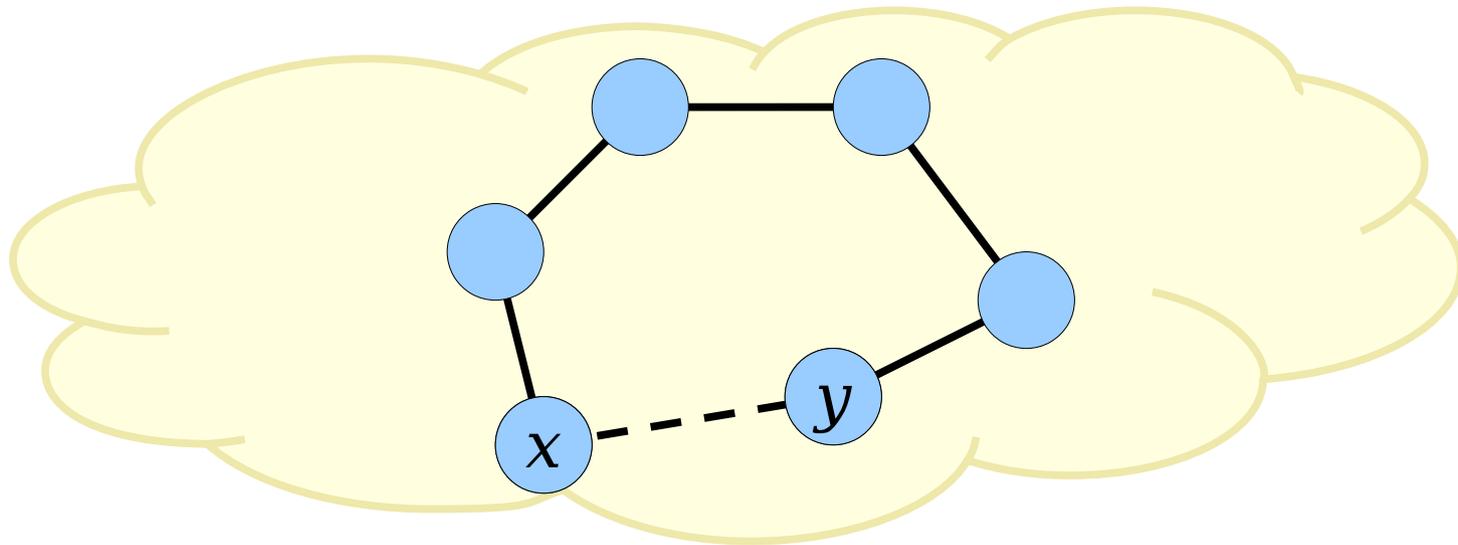
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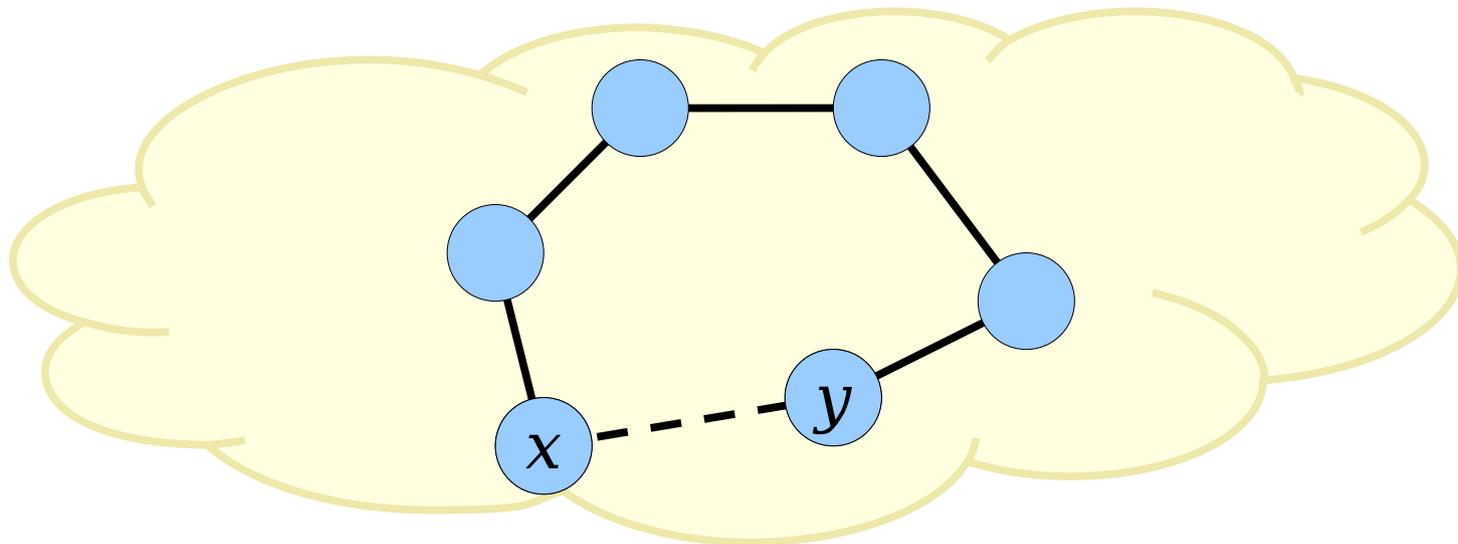
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