

Transactions

Lecture 14



Outline

1. Why Transactions are Important
 - Recovery
 - Concurrency
2. Transaction Support in SQL
 - Isolation Levels
3. DBMS Theory & Implementation
 - Schedule Characterization
 - Concurrency Control via Two-Phase Locking



Transactions So Far

A transaction is a logical sequence of database operations (reads/writes)

- In SQL, starts with BEGIN, ends with either COMMIT or ROLLBACK

Desirable properties...

- **Atomicity:** all or nothing
- **Consistency:** start/end with all constraints met
- **Isolation:** appear as though independent of others
- **Durability:** changes via committed transactions persist

So what does a DBMS have to do in order to support correct and efficient transaction processing?



Issues Related to Recovery

- Various kinds of failures can occur
 - System crash, error (e.g. divide by zero), hardware failure, external failure (e.g. power)
 - Local error detected by transaction (e.g. insufficient funds)
- Atomicity: undo all actions for rollback/err
- Durability: redo actions after err for commit

Note: more detail in the next lecture :)



Issues Related to Concurrency

- Multiple users (or one user with multiple requests) submit transactions at about the same time
 - Isolation: shouldn't affect one another
 - Consistency: committed effects might cause rollback
- One approach to transaction processing: one transaction gets to execute at a time
 - Pro: simple, correct
 - Con: slow :(
- This **serial** schedule is our baseline for correctness



Checkup

- Suppose users Alice and Bob are issuing transactions to a common database
 - Alice issues transaction A1, then A2
 - At about the same time ...
 - Bob issues transaction B1, then B2
- What are the possible serial schedules in this scenario?



Answer

- A1, A2, B1, B2
- A1, B1, A2, B2
- A1, B1, B2, A2
- B1, A1, A2, B2
- B1, A1, B2, A2
- B1, B2, A1, A2



Interleaving Operations

- The core question for a DBMS: how can we improve resource utilization to efficiently process transactions while maintaining correct results
- Stated another way...
 - To what extent can we interleave transactions without introducing errors?



Example Scenario

- Consider a flight reservation system
 - Need to keep track of reserved seats per flight
- $T1(X, M)$: reserve M seats on flight X
 - a) **UPDATE reservations**
SET seats=seats+M
WHERE flight=X
- $T2(X, Y, N)$: transfer N seats from flight X to Y
 - a) **UPDATE reservations**
SET seats=seats-N
WHERE flight=X
 - b) **UPDATE reservations**
SET seats=seats+N
WHERE flight=Y

Start with seats on $X=10$, $Y=20$

If the following requests are made at about the same time, what are final values?

$T1(X, 2); T2(X, Y, 5)$



Modeling Transactions

Let's break up the transactions into primitive operations: reading into memory (r), performing computations in memory, and writing (w) results to disk (or at least a log)

T1(X, M)

- $r(X)$
- $X = X + M$
- $w(X)$


T2(X, Y, N)

- $r(X)$
- $X = X - N$
- $w(X)$
- $r(Y)$
- $Y = Y + N$
- $w(Y)$



What Could Go Wrong?

Lost Update


Time	T1(X, M)	T2(X, Y, N)
	$r(X)$	
	$X = X + M$	
		$r(X)$
		$X = X - N$
	$w(X)$	
		$w(X)$
		$r(Y)$
		$Y = Y + N$
		$w(Y)$

Start with seats on $X=10, Y=20$
 Final Values for... T1(X, 2); T2(X, Y, 5)



What Could Go Wrong?

Dirty Read


Time	T1(X, M)	T2(X, Y, N)
		r(X)
		$X = X - N$
		w(X)
	r(x)	
	$X = X + M$	
	w(x)	
		r(Y)
		ROLLBACK

Start with seats on $X=10$, $Y=20$
 Final Values for... T1(X, 2); T2(X, Y, 5)



What Could Go Wrong?


Incorrect Summary

Time	SUM()	T2(X, Y, N)
	SUM = 0	
		r(X)
		X = X - N
		w(X)
	r(X)	
	SUM = SUM + X	
	r(Y)	
	SUM = SUM + Y	
		r(Y)
		Y = Y + N
		w(Y)



What Could Go Wrong?

Unrepeatable Read

Time	T3(X)	T2(X, Y, N)
	r(X)	
	...	
		r(X)
		$X = X - N$
		w(X)
	r(X)	
	...	
		r(Y)
		$Y = Y + N$
		w(Y)



Transactions in SQL

- By default, according to SQL-92, transaction execution...
is defined to be an execution of the operations of concurrently executing SQL-transactions that produces the same effect as some serial execution of those same SQL-transactions. A serial execution is one in which each SQL-transaction executes to completion before the next SQL-transaction begins.
- You have two knobs at your disposal to improve performance
 - Access Mode (default: **READ WRITE**)
 - If **READ ONLY**, SELECT allowed, might be faster
 - Isolation Level (default: **SERIALIZABLE**)
 - If other, allows certain kinds of isolation violations for potential speed improvement



Isolation Levels in SQL

Isolation Level	Type of Violation		
	Dirty Read	Nonrepeatable Read	Phantom
READ UNCOMMITTED	Yes	Yes	Yes
READ COMMITTED	No	Yes	Yes
REPEATABLE READ	No	No	Yes
SERIALIZABLE	No	No	No

- Dirty Read
 - Can read values uncommitted by other transactions
 - Think issues with ROLLBACK
- Nonrepeatable Read
 - Can read values changed by other committed transactions
 - Values in T1 can change in subsequent reads
- Phantom:
 - A row that did not exist at the start of a transaction, but then visible



DBMS Theory & Implementation

- Now that we understand some of the issues of transactions, we'll more formally characterize interleaved operations
- Then we'll look at one mechanism by which RDBMSs efficiently support correct transaction processing




Schedules of Transactions

- A **schedule**, S , of n transactions T_1, T_2, \dots, T_n is an ordering of the operations of the transactions
- Operations of interest, with shorthand...
 - Read= r , Write= w
 - Commit= c , Rollback= a (abort)




Example A

Time	T1(X, M)	T2(X, Y, N)
	$r(X)$	
	$X = X + M$	
		$r(X)$
		$X = X - N$
	$w(X)$	
		$w(X)$
		$r(Y)$
		$Y = Y + N$
		$w(Y)$

$S_A: r_1(X), r_2(X), w_1(X), w_2(X), r_2(Y), w_2(Y)$



Example B

Time	T1(X, M)	T2(X, Y, N)
		$r(X)$
		$X = X - N$
		$w(X)$
	$r(x)$	
	$X = X + M$	
	$w(x)$	
		$r(Y)$
		ROLLBACK

$S_B: r_2(X), w_2(X), r_1(X), w_1(X), r_2(Y), a_2$



Characterizing Recoverability

- Some schedules allow for easy recovery; others are difficult or impossible
- We now look to characterize these levels
- These distinctions don't tell us how the DBMS implements recovery/scheduling, but at least defines the expected outputs



Defining Recoverability

- To satisfy durability, once a transaction is committed, it should never have to be rolled back
- A schedule that satisfies this criterion is **recoverable**
- A schedule S is recoverable if ...
 - No transaction T in S commits until ...
 - All transactions T' that have written some item X that T reads have committed



Recoverable?

S: $r_1(X)$, $w_1(X)$, $r_2(X)$, $r_1(Y)$, $w_2(X)$, c_2

- This schedule is NOT recoverable because...
 - T2 reads X after T1 wrote it
 - AND T2 commits before T1
- SO, if T1 rolls back, so too must T2...
 - But T2 has already committed!!???
- Corrected, either...
 - $r_1(X)$, $w_1(X)$, $r_2(X)$, $r_1(Y)$, $w_2(X)$, c_1 , c_2
 - $r_1(X)$, $w_1(X)$, $r_2(X)$, $r_1(Y)$, $w_2(X)$, a_1 , a_2



Avoiding Cascade

- We have defined a baseline for a recoverable schedule (i.e. one that supports durability)
- However, some recoverable schedules lead to **cascading rollbacks**: where T1 needs to rollback because T2 did
 - This is expensive!
- A schedule is **cascadeless** if every transaction reads only items that were written by committed transactions



Characterize

S: $r_1(X)$, $w_1(X)$, $r_2(X)$, $r_1(Y)$, $w_2(X)$, c_1 , c_2

- This schedule is recoverable
 - T2 reads X after T1 wrote it
 - AND T2 commits after T1
- This schedule is not cascadeless
 - T2 reads X after T1 wrote it, but before T1 has committed



Strict Schedules

- The most restrictive type is **strict**: transactions can neither read nor write X until the last transaction that wrote X has committed/rolled back
- Makes recovery very easy
 - Can store “before image”, or old value, of each changed variable
- Strict -> Cascadeless -> Recoverable



Characterize

S: $w_1(X)$, $w_2(X)$

- This schedule is recoverable
 - No reading between transactions
- This schedule is cascadeless
 - No reading between transactions
- This schedule is NOT strict
 - T2 writes X before T1 commits
 - Imagine T1 rollback
 - If $X=10$ before, can't simply restore 10
 - We'd lose T2's version

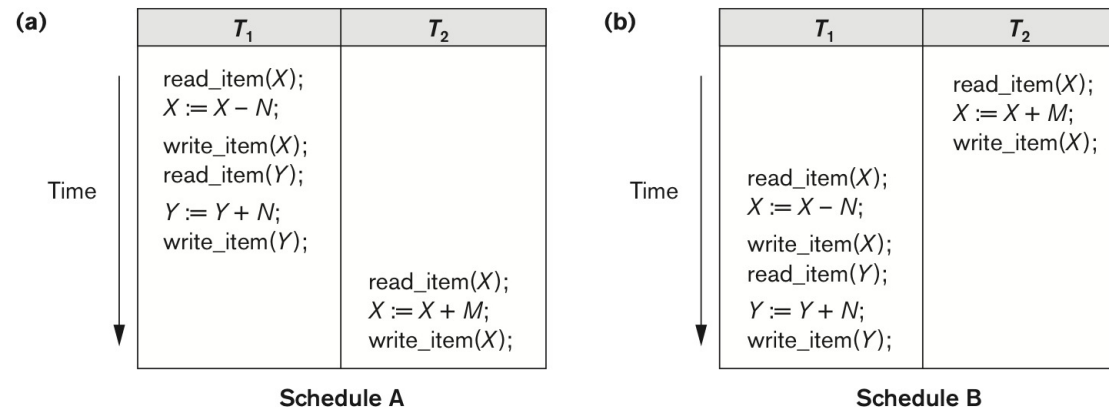


Characterizing Serializability

- We now shift to characterizing correctness of concurrent transactions
- Recall: schedule S is **serial** if, for every transaction T participating in the schedule, all operations of T are executed consecutively in the schedule



Example Serial Schedules



Serializable

- Serial scheduling is typically too slow for real-world use
- A schedule is **serializable** if it is “equivalent” to some serial schedule
 - Note: related to, but not the same as SQL
- We will focus on one definition of how to compare two schedules, **conflict serializability**, which involves the idea of **conflicting** operations



Conflicting Operations

Two operations in a schedule are said to **conflict** if they satisfy all three of the following conditions...

1. They belong to different transactions
2. They access the same item (e.g. X)
3. At least one is a write operation



Checkup

- List all conflicts in the following schedule

$S_A: r_1(X), r_2(X), w_1(X), w_2(X), r_2(Y), w_2(Y)$



Answer

Read-Write

- $r_1(X), w_2(X)$
- $r_2(X), w_1(X)$

Write-Write

- $w_1(X), w_2(X)$

$S_A: r_1(X), r_2(X), w_1(X), w_2(X), r_2(Y), w_2(Y)$



Conflict Serializability

- Two schedules are **conflict equivalent** if the relative order of any two conflicting operations is the same in both schedules
 - Another view: two schedules are said to be conflict equivalent when one can be transformed to another by swapping non-conflicting operations
- A schedule is **conflict serializable** if it is conflict equivalent to a serial schedule



Example

Are the following schedules conflict equivalent?

$S_A: r_1(X), w_1(X), r_1(Y), w_1(Y), r_2(X), w_2(X)$

$S_D: r_1(X), w_1(X), r_2(X), w_2(X), r_1(Y), w_1(Y)$

Yes: swap $r_1(Y)/r_2(X)$, $w_1(Y)/w_2(X)$

- Alternatively...

$$r_1(X) < w_2(X)$$

$$w_1(X) < r_2(X)$$

$$w_1(X) < w_2(X)$$



Testing for Conflict Serializability

Construct a **precedence/serialization** graph

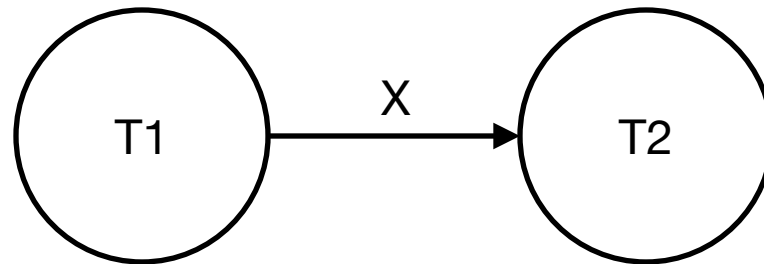
1. Create nodes for every transaction
2. Draw an edge from node J to K if a pair of conflicting operations exist in T_J and T_K and the conflicting operation in T_J appears in the schedule before the conflicting operation in T_K

A cycle indicates non-serializability



Example A

$S_A: r_1(X), w_1(X), r_1(Y), w_1(Y), r_2(X), w_2(X)$

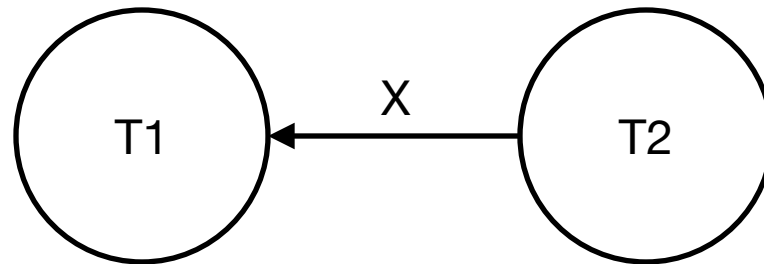


Conflict Serializable: $\{(T1, T2)\}$



Example B

$S_B: r_2(X), w_2(X), r_1(X), w_1(X), r_1(Y), w_1(Y)$

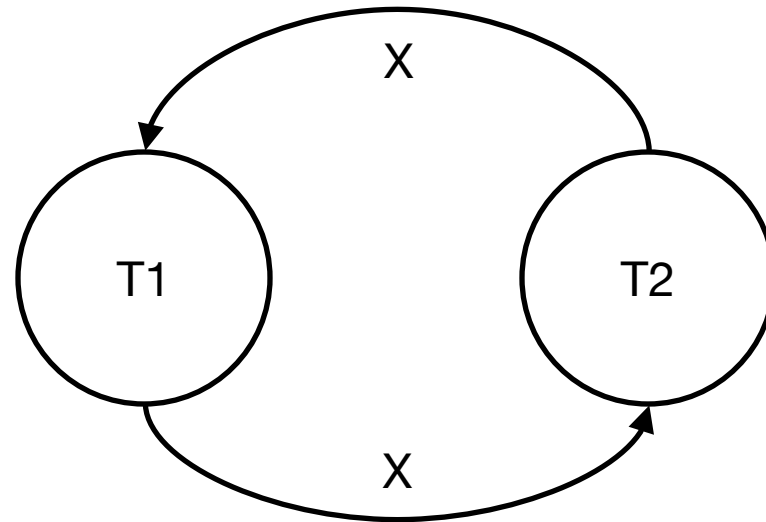


Conflict Serializable: $\{(T2, T1)\}$



Example C

$S_C: r_1(X), r_2(X), w_1(X), r_1(Y), w_2(X), w_1(Y)$

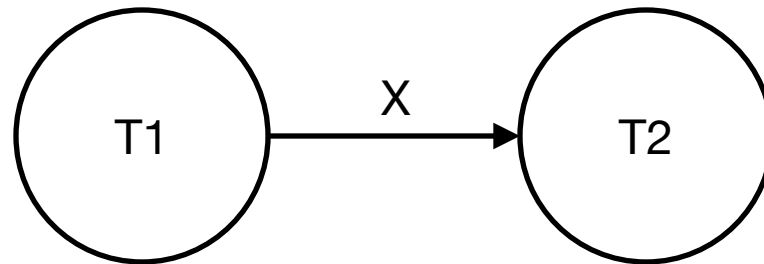


Conflict Serializable: $\{\}$



Example D

$S_D: r_1(X), w_1(X), r_2(X), w_2(X), r_1(Y), w_1(Y)$

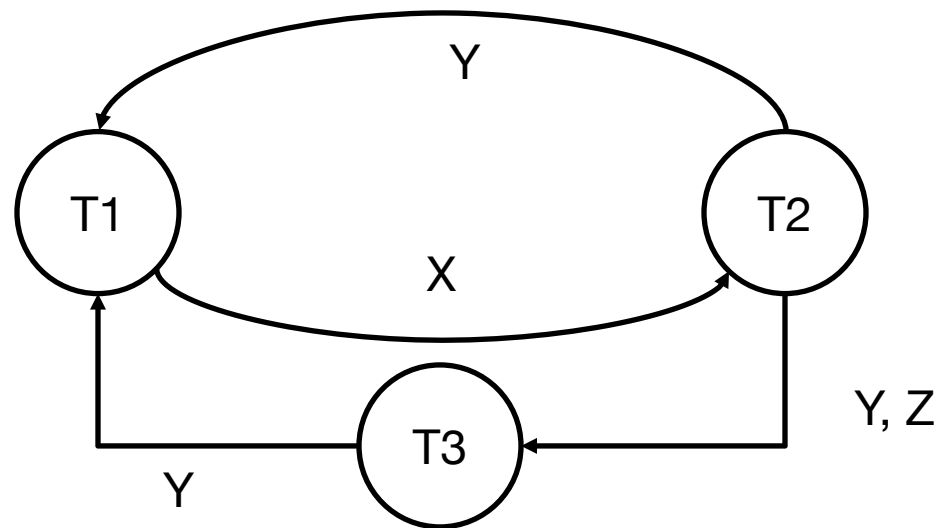


Conflict Serializable: $\{(T1, T2)\}$



Example E

$S_E: r_2(Z), r_2(Y), w_2(Y), r_3(Y), r_3(Z), r_1(X), w_1(X),$
 $w_3(Y), w_3(Z), r_2(X), r_1(Y), w_1(Y), w_2(X)$

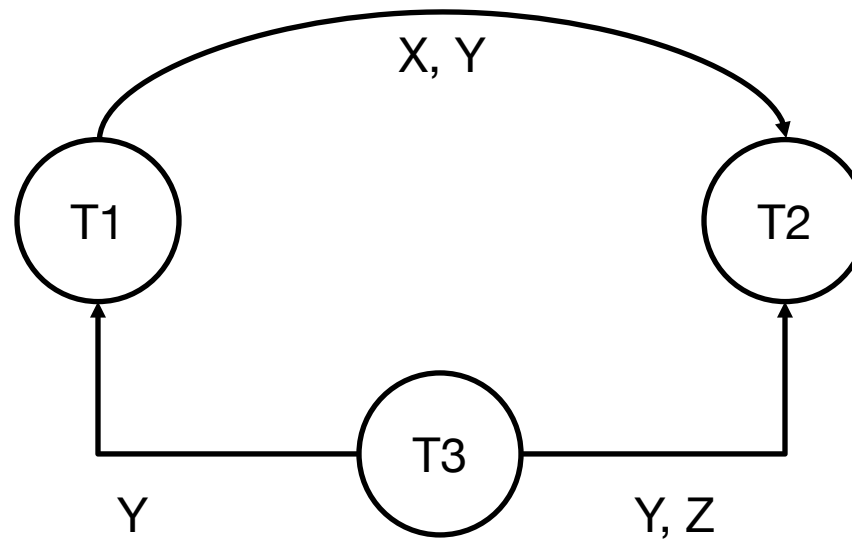


Conflict Serializable: {}



Example F

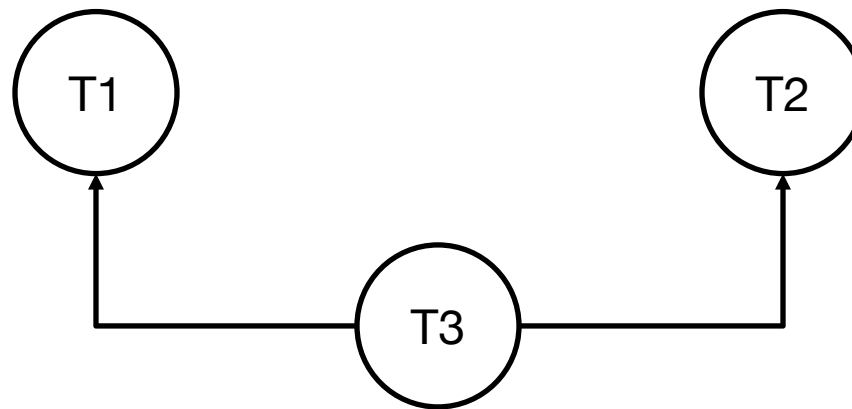
S_F : $r_3(Y)$, $r_3(Z)$, $r_1(X)$, $w_1(X)$, $w_3(Y)$, $w_3(Z)$, $r_2(Z)$,
 $r_1(Y)$, $w_1(Y)$, $r_2(Y)$, $w_2(Y)$, $r_2(X)$, $w_2(X)$



Conflict Serializable: $\{(T3, T1, T2)\}$



Conflict Serializable?



$\{(T3, T1, T2), (T3, T2, T1)\}$



Implementing Transactions

- The characterizations presented thus far can be computationally expensive to use in practice
- Instead, DBMSs typically utilize **protocols** (sets of rules) that will ensure desired properties
- We focus on one: **Two-Phase Locking (2PL)**
 - Most common for concurrent processing
 - Others: see Ch. 21



Locking Primer

- A **lock** is a variable associated with a data item, used to describe item status w.r.t. some set of operations
 - “Data item” intentionally left vague (e.g. value, row, table, database)
- Simplest example: binary lock
 - Lock: I can read/write, no other can access
 - Attempts simply “wait”
 - Unlock: available for locking



Read/Write Lock

- Binary locks restrict access, but at too high a computational cost
- If we recognize that two transactions can safely read the same data item, we enter the idea of shared/exclusive locking
- So now reading requires a read lock, writing requires a write lock
 - Keep track of number of shared users



Using Locks \neq Serializability (1)

T_1	T_2
<pre>read_lock(Y); read_item(Y); unlock(Y); write_lock(X); read_item(X); X := X + Y; write_item(X); unlock(X);</pre>	<pre>read_lock(X); read_item(X); unlock(X); write_lock(Y); read_item(Y); Y := X + Y; write_item(Y); unlock(Y);</pre>

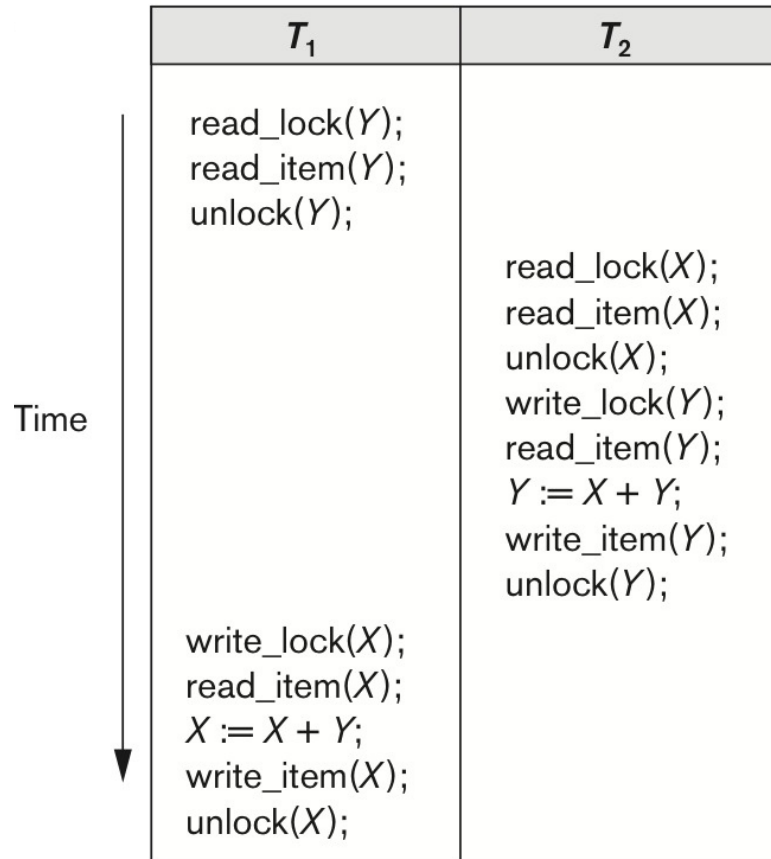
Initial values: $X=20$, $Y=30$

Result serial schedule T_1
followed by T_2 : $X=50$, $Y=80$

Result of serial schedule T_2
followed by T_1 : $X=70$, $Y=50$



Using Locks \neq Serializability (2)



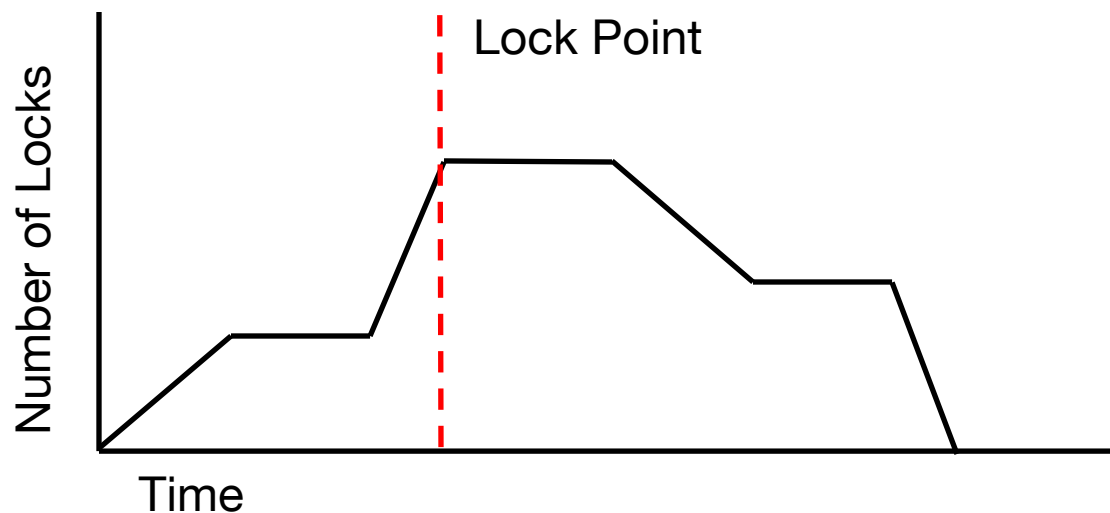
Initial values: $X=20, Y=30$

Result of schedule S:
 $X=50, Y=50$
 (nonserializable)



Two-Phase Locking (2PL)

- 2PL Protocol: all locking operations precede the first unlock
 1. Growing Phase
 2. Shrinking Phase



Checkpoint: 2PL?

T_1	T_2
<pre>read_lock(Y); read_item(Y); unlock(Y); write_lock(X); read_item(X); X := X + Y; write_item(X); unlock(X);</pre>	<pre>read_lock(X); read_item(X); unlock(X); write_lock(Y); read_item(Y); Y := X + Y; write_item(Y); unlock(Y);</pre>



Compare

T_1	T_2
<pre> read_lock(Y); read_item(Y); unlock(Y); write_lock(X); read_item(X); X := X + Y; write_item(X); unlock(X); </pre>	<pre> read_lock(X); read_item(X); unlock(X); write_lock(Y); read_item(Y); Y := X + Y; write_item(Y); unlock(Y); </pre>

T_1'
<pre> read_lock(Y); read_item(Y); write_lock(X); unlock(Y); read_item(X); X := X + Y; write_item(X); unlock(X); </pre>

T_2'
<pre> read_lock(X); read_item(X); write_lock(Y); unlock(X); read_item(Y); Y := X + Y; write_item(Y); unlock(Y); </pre>



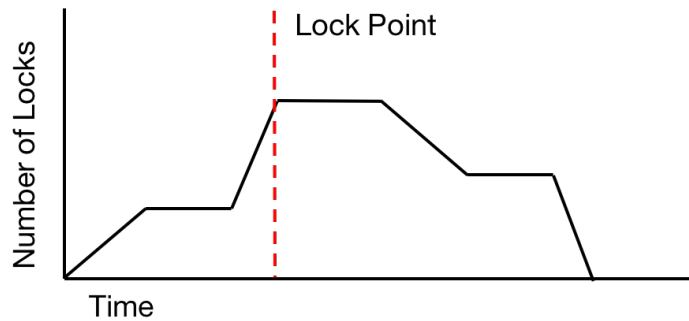
2PL = Serializability

- Following this “basic” 2PL protocol guarantees serializable schedules
 - Proof idea: think about what a cycle in the precedence graph implies about lock times
- A common **Strict 2PL** protocol also avoids cascading rollbacks
 - Hold all write locks till transaction end
 - The **Rigorous** or **Strong-Strict** (SS2PL) variant is easier to implement and holds for all locks

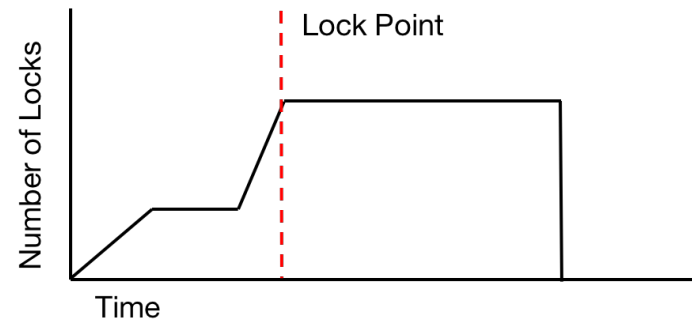


Compare

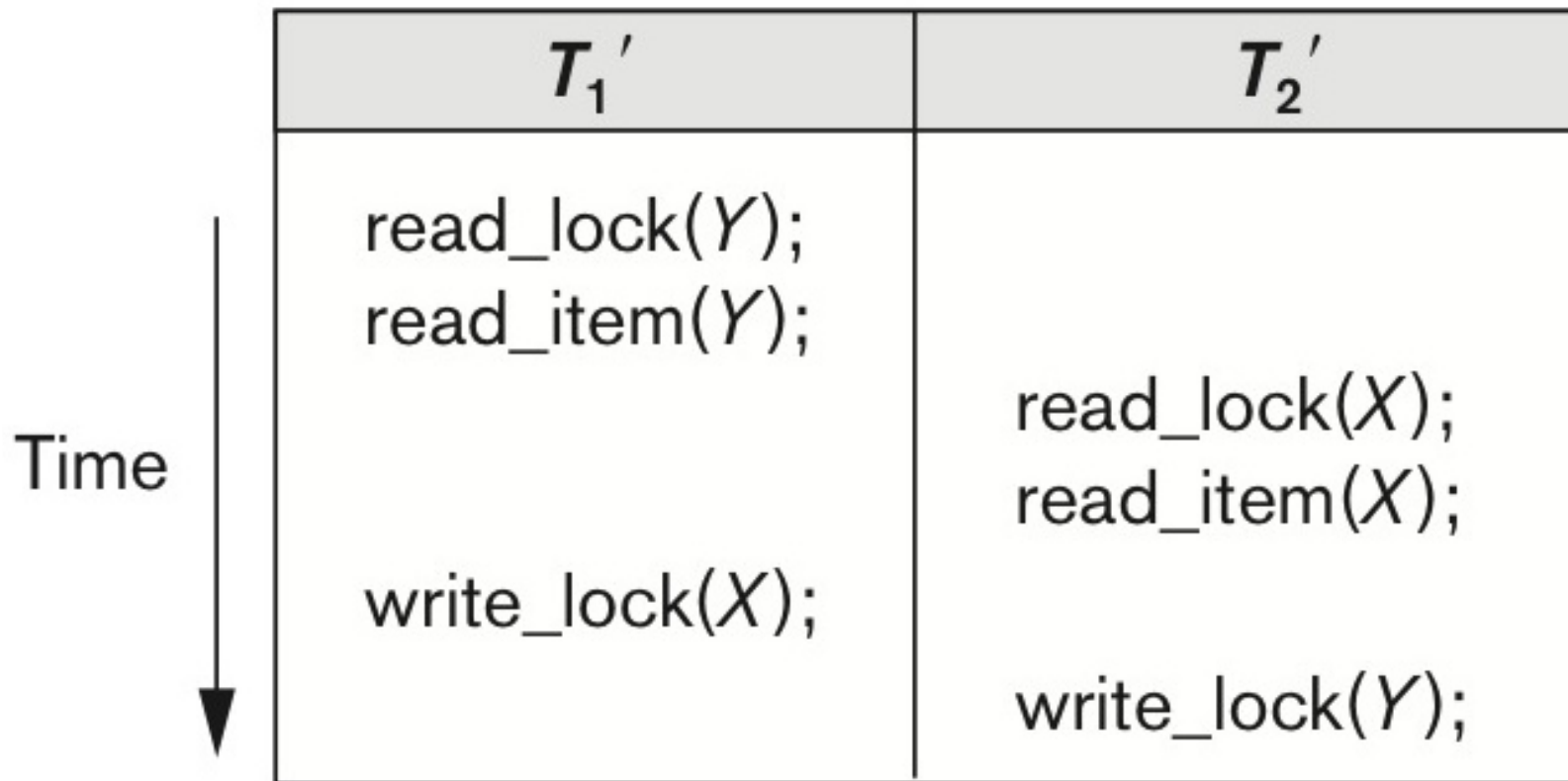
2PL



SS2PL



An Issue?



Dealing with Deadlocks

- A **deadlock** occurs when each transaction is waiting to lock an item that is locked by another transaction
- Typical approaches...
 - Detection via **wait-for graph**
 - But when to pay the cost?
 - Timeout
- Make sure to avoid **starvation** via a fair **victim-selection** policy

