

FACING A PROGRAMMING CONTEST

A quick guide with some advices

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THE CONTEST?

There can be some different purposes:

- Solve as many challenges as you can within a limited amount of time (ProgramaMe)
 - *Every challenge has the same value*
- Get as many points as you can in a limited amount of time (Facebook HackerCup, Google CodeJam)
 - *Some challenges are more important than others*
- ...

IS IT A SINGLE CONTEST OR A GROUP CONTEST?

- **Single contest:** every programmer must solve his/her own challenges (Facebook HackerCup, Google CodeJam, Tuenti Contest...)
- **Group contest:** you can (must) work in groups of 2-3 people to solve the challenges (ProgramaMe)

GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Start with the challenge that is the easiest one for you
- Read carefully the challenges until you find “the chosen one”
- Don’t spend too much time trying a challenge if you have some more challenges pending
- If you are stuck on a challenge and you have solved some challenges previously, try to think in any of them that can be applied to the one you are trying to solve right now
- Some challenges ask you to avoid repeating a process unnecessarily
 - *For instance, exploring the elements of an array more than you actually need*

PROGRAMAME: GROUP STRATEGIES

1. Each member solves a challenge in his/her computer

- This can be a good idea that may lead you to solve three challenges at a time
- Particularly useful when everyone in the group knows how to solve a particular challenge
- Not valid in on-site finals (you only have one computer there)



PROGRAMAME: GROUP STRATEGIES

2. One member solves a challenge, and the other two members collaborate to solve another one

- Useful when a member is not good at programming, but he/she is good at thinking about a way to solve a problem
- Not valid in on-site finals (you only have one computer there)



PROGRAMAME: GROUP STRATEGIES

3. One member starts solving a challenge, the other one thinks how to solve another challenge, and the third one reads the rest of challenges to order them by difficulty

- Valid in on-site finals
- The one that sorts the challenges can try to solve the next one in the list, or help any other member
- You can only solve a challenge at a time

