

# 000 001 002 003 004 005 DELTA-CODE: HOW RL UNLOCKS AND TRANSFERS 006 NEW PROGRAMMING ALGORITHMS IN LLMS 007 008 009

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## ABSTRACT

032 It remains an open question whether LLMs can acquire or generalize *genuinely*  
033 *new reasoning strategies*, beyond the sharpened skills encoded in their parameters  
034 during pre-training or post-training. To attempt to answer this debate, we introduce  
035 **DELTA-Code** —Distributional Evaluation of Learnability and Transferrability in  
036 Algorithmic **Coding**, a controlled benchmark of synthetic coding problem families  
037 designed to probe two fundamental aspects: *learnability*—can LLMs, through rein-  
038 forcement learning (RL), solve problem families where pretrained models exhibit  
039 failure with large enough attempts (pass@K=0)?—and *transferability*— if learn-  
040 ability happens, can such skills transfer systematically to out-of-distribution (OOD)  
041 test sets? Unlike prior public coding datasets, DELTA isolates reasoning skills  
042 through templated problem generators and introduces fully OOD problem families  
043 that demand novel strategies rather than tool invocation or memorized patterns. Our  
044 experiments reveal a striking **grokking** phase transition: after an extended period  
045 with near-zero reward, RL-trained models abruptly climb to near-perfect accuracy.  
046 To enable learnability on previously unsolvable problem families, we explore key  
047 training ingredients such as staged warm-up with dense rewards, experience re-  
048 play, curriculum training, and verification-in-the-loop. Beyond learnability, we  
049 use DELTA to evaluate transferability or generalization along *exploratory*, *compo-*  
050 *nitional*, and *transformative* axes, as well as cross-family transfer. Results show  
051 solid gains within families and for recomposed skills, but persistent weaknesses on  
052 transformative cases. DELTA thus offers a clean testbed for probing the limits of  
053 RL-driven reasoning and for understanding how models can move beyond existing  
054 priors to acquire new algorithmic skills.  
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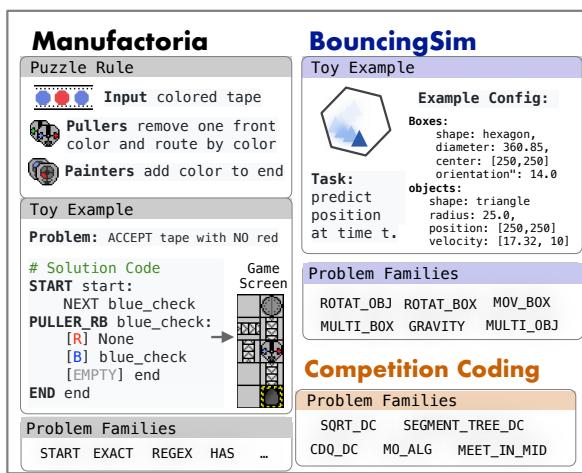
## 1 INTRODUCTION

056 A central question for RL on language models is whether it merely sharpens latent skills or enables  
057 genuinely new reasoning. Some argue RL only refines existing heuristics embedded in the model’s  
058 parameters (Yue et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2025), while others see it as a way to unlock emergent problem-  
059 solving (Liu et al., 2025b;a). We make this debate testable using two criteria: *learnability*, which  
060 asks if RL can instill a procedure the model could not previously execute; and *generalization*, which  
061 asks if that procedure transfers to diverse Out-of-distribution (OOD) cases rather than memorized  
062 patterns. Addressing these questions requires a dataset with tightly controlled train–test splits that  
063 can systematically probe both properties.  
064

065 **Why controlled problem families matter?** Uncontrolled open benchmarks in math/coding (e.g.,  
066 *Numina-Math* (Li et al., 2024), *DeepMath* (He et al., 2025), *OpenCodeReasoning* (NVIDIA, 2025))  
067 mix topics and difficulty, blurring the line between capability sharpening and genuine acquisition.  
068 Controlled synthetic families remove these confounds: we can precisely vary distributions and  
069 difficulty, attribute gains to specific skills, detect phase transitions, and systematically test transfer to  
070 OOD variants.  
071

072 **Why programming problems?** GRPO/PPO pipelines typically rely on a pass/fail reward: a perfect  
073 solution earns +1, anything else earns 0 Guo et al. (2025). This sparsity can stall learning on hard  
074 families. In math, grading intermediate steps is expensive and hard to scale. Programming, however,  
075 naturally supplies fine-grained feedback through test cases, which act as dense rewards. A practical  
076 approach is to start training with test-case-based rewards to encourage partial progress, then transition  
077 to a binary outcome reward to lock in exact solutions. This staged scheme is crucial for helping LLMs  
078 acquire genuinely new procedural strategies, and while coding offers a uniquely scalable setting, the  
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070 Synthetic Coding Problem Scope/Families  
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072 Figure 1: Overview of DELTA with controlled RL studies. *Left*: Synthetic Programming Problem families—Manufactoria with custom syntax and puzzle-like rules, BounceSim with physical simulation, etc. *Right*: Controlled RL experiments. *Top*: Learnability shows grokking, where RL shifts from long exploration to sudden convergence, uncovering strategies beyond reference models. *Bottom*: Generalization extends OMEGA (Sun et al., 2025) across four axes—Exploratory, Compositional, Transformative, and Domain-level—testing adaptation to harder or recombined tasks.

077 underlying insight of using intermediate signals before enforcing strict correctness may apply to other  
078 reasoning-heavy domains such as math or formal logic.

080 To address this need, we introduce **DETA**, a controlled yet diverse benchmark for programming  
081 problems. DETA consists of synthetic problem families drawn from different domains, each  
082 generated from templated problem generators, allowing us to study phenomena such as difficulty  
083 scaling, knowledge transfer, and learnability in a clean and isolated setting.

084 **RL Learnability Study.** We reveal an underexplored **grokking** phenomenon during RL training.  
085 While recent works argue that RL cannot exceed the limits of its reference model (Yue et al., 2025;  
086 Wu et al., 2025), our evidence suggests otherwise. On hard problems where the base model achieves  
087 pass@K = 0<sup>1</sup>, standard RL with binary rewards collapses due to the absence of positive signals. By  
088 contrast, a staged regime—warming up with fine-grained proxy rewards before switching to strict  
089 pass/fail—first guides exploration into a region where full solutions become reachable, then sharpens  
090 these into verified completions, producing a long exploratory plateau followed by sudden grokking to  
091 near-perfect accuracy (Figure 1, top-right).

092 **RL Generalization Study.** DETA extends OMEGA’s controlled tests along three axes aligned  
093 with Boden’s creativity typology (Boden, 1998): (1) *Exploratory*—extend known skills within a  
094 family (e.g., hexagon to octagon); (2) *Compositional*—combine previously separate skills (e.g.,  
095 bouncing ball with both rotating obstacles and boxes); (3) *Transformative*—discover unconventional  
096 solutions (e.g., special initial states that guarantee periodicity). Our results show that RL-trained  
097 models generalize to harder and composed variants, but performance drops with complexity, and  
098 transformative cases remain the most challenging.

099 **Main contributions.** 1) **A controlled dataset (DETA):** We design a suite of synthetic programming  
100 problem families that isolate reasoning skills, enabling clean tests of learnability (can RL unlock  
101 procedures absent in the base model) and generalization (do these procedures transfer systematically  
102 to OOD cases). Unlike prior coding or math datasets, DETA introduces fully OOD problems  
103 (Manufactoria) and richly graded rewards, avoiding tool-based shortcuts and data confounds.

104 2) **Sharpening or discovery, depending on setup:** We provide clear evidence that RL is not  
105 limited to sharpening existing abilities in reference models. On hard families where base models fail

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107 <sup>1</sup>Here pass@K refers to a large value of K (e.g., 128). Thus, pass@K = 0 indicates that the model fails to  
solve the task even after many sampled attempts.

(pass@K=0), staged training with dense-to-binary rewards produces a grokking phase transition — a sudden leap from failure to mastery — showing that RL can indeed discover strategies the base model could not execute. At the same time, in easier regimes or with weaker setups, RL primarily sharpens existing skills. Which outcome emerges depends critically on the reward design, data mix, task hardness, and training recipes.

3) **Three-axis generalization analysis:** We evaluate how these learned strategies transfer along exploratory, compositional, and transformative axes. Results show strong generalization in exploratory and recomposed cases, but persistent failures in transformative shifts, highlighting both the promise and limits of RL-driven reasoning and the generalization challenges we must work on.

## 2 BACKGROUND

**Goal of the RL learnability study.** A central open question in post-training research is whether reinforcement learning (RL) can endow language models with *genuinely new* reasoning capabilities beyond those supported by the base model: (a) **The skeptical view.** Yue et al. (2025) argue that although RLVR-trained models may outperform their base models at small  $k$  (e.g.,  $k=1$ ), the advantage disappears when evaluating pass@ $k$  at larger  $k$ , where the base model often matches or exceeds RLVR performance. Their coverage and perplexity analyses suggest that RL does not expand the underlying support of the model’s reasoning distribution. (b) **The optimistic view.** In contrast, Liu et al. (2025b) report that ProRL can push models beyond base-model capabilities on certain structured reasoning tasks, such as the letter-shaped 2D puzzles in Reasoning Gym (Stojanovski et al., 2025). However, because their training mix combines heterogeneous tasks with varying difficulty and domain structure, it is difficult to pinpoint what specific skills the model actually acquires. **Our goal** is therefore to construct a *pure*, tightly controlled OOD testbed which the reference model fails consistently (pass@K = 0) across all attempts. If RL can succeed on such tasks despite the base model’s deterministic failure, this would provide conclusive evidence that RL can induce novel reasoning abilities rather than merely reshaping existing ones.

**Goal of the RL generalization study.** OMEGA Sun et al. (2025) provides controlled tests along three axes aligned with Boden’s creativity typology (Boden, 1998): (1) *Exploratory*—assessing whether models can apply known problem-solving skills to more complex instances within the same problem domain. ; (2) *Compositional*—evaluating their ability to combine distinct reasoning skills, previously learned in isolation, to solve novel problems that require integrating these skills in new and coherent ways; and (3) *Transformative*—testing whether models can adopt unconventional strategies by moving beyond familiar approaches to solve problems more effectively. **Our goal** is to systematically show whether RL-trained models generalize to harder and composed variants.

## 3 DELTA: CONTROLLED PROGRAMMING PROBLEM FAMILIES

We operationalize *learnability* and *generalization* with **DELTA**, a controlled suite of synthetic programming families.

**From OMEGA to DELTA.** OMEGA (Sun et al., 2025) offers 40 synthesizable math families to study exploratory, compositional, and transformative generalization in the spirit of Boden (Boden, 1998). DELTA complements this by shifting to programming, where templated generators yield automatically verifiable tasks with tunable difficulty and clean distributional controls. Compared to OMEGA, DELTA further provides unique benefits and improvements: a) **Novel OOD problem family.** Math tasks in OMEGA remain within familiar domains (e.g., algebra, geometry), which can plausibly appear in pretraining corpora. In contrast, DELTA includes a hand-crafted out-of-distribution (OOD) problem scope called *Manufactoria*, which uses entirely novel program syntax and problem-solving strategies. b) **Harder to shortcut with tools.** Many synthetic math items can be solved by executing Python (e.g., computing a matrix rank). In DELTA, the target is the program itself: models must synthesize a correct solution rather than delegate computation to external tools. c) **Rich reward signal.** Programming enables cheap, graded feedback via per-test case pass rates, which supports staged training (dense reward then binary full-pass reward).

In DELTA, we design problems from five major scopes, illustrated in Figure 1. We next introduce the problem families in detail.

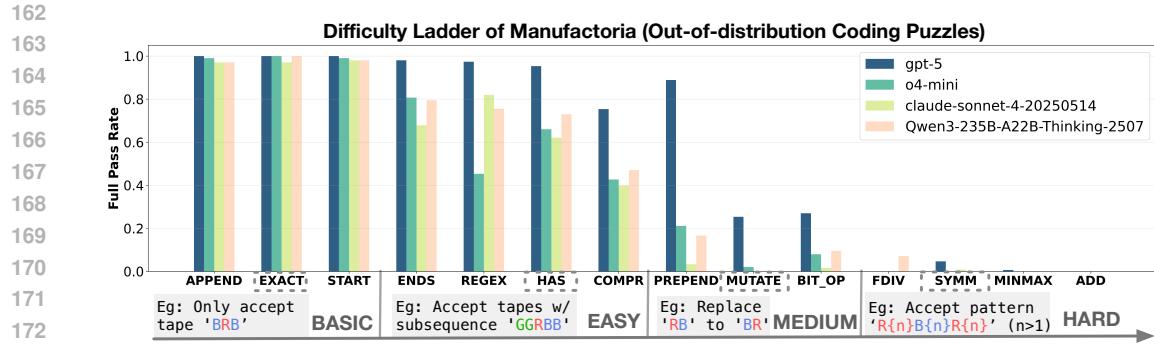


Figure 2: The Manufactoria difficulty ladder. 14 problem families are grouped into Basic, Easy, Medium, and Hard levels according to average performance across four popular LLMs. Each test split contains 20–50 problems, and *full pass rate* are averaged over 4 independent runs.

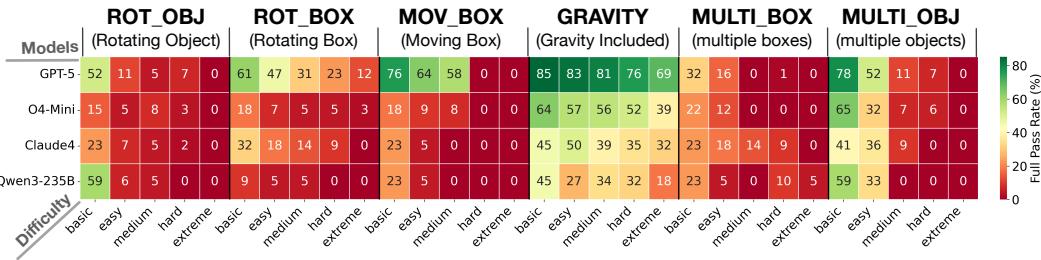


Figure 3: Full-pass rate (%) on *BouncingSim* by model, family (ROT\_OBJ, ROT\_BOX, MOV\_BOX, GRAVITY, MULTI\_BOX, MULTI\_OBJ), and difficulty tier (BASIC→EXTREME). Warmer colors denote higher accuracy; cell values are mean full-pass rates per split over 4 runs on 50 test problems each.

### 3.1 MANUFACTORIA (OUT-OF-DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS FOR LEARNABILITY STUDY)

*Manufactoria* is a classic Flash game (2010) in which players build automated factories to sort robots based on their colored tape patterns. The underlying logic resembles constructing finite-state automata or tag systems using two special node types (*puller*, *painter*). While the original game is implemented in 2D space, we re-formalize it into a custom programmatic syntax, as illustrated in Figure 1. Details are provided in Appendix A.1.

**Justified OOD-ness.** This task is OOD for several reasons: a) The original game solutions were stored only as images on legacy websites. Our converted program syntax is entirely novel and unavailable to any LLM during pretraining; b) We do not reuse existing game challenges. Instead, we design new problem families inspired by the mechanics but synthesized by the authors, and these are entirely unseen to LLMs; c) The puzzle strategies are qualitatively different from conventional programming or Turing-machine tasks. With only two available node types with limited functionality, solving requires distinctive reasoning patterns not captured by standard coding strategies.

**A scalable difficulty ladder.** In total, we construct 14 synthetic problem families. For example, the family tagged HAS (Figure 2) requires accepting tapes that contain a subsequence such as GGRBB, which can be synthesized by using arbitrary color strings. *Manufactoria* is organized into BASIC → EASY → MEDIUM → HARD tiers, enabling matched studies across model scales. BASIC/EASY families (e.g., START, EXACT) suit small models (e.g., 1.5B, 4B) for learnability, while MEDIUM/HARD families require more advanced insight and are appropriate for probing SOTA systems (e.g., GPT-5-class). Because the syntax and families are novel, *Manufactoria* also serves as an OOD benchmark for open LLMs, enabling apples-to-apples comparisons with SOTA LLMs on truly novel tasks. Medium tasks expose a larger gap: only GPT-5 achieves non-trivial success, while other models collapse near zero. Hard families remain unsolved across the board, underscoring the sharp transition in difficulty and the limits of the current model.

### 3.2 BOUNCINGSIM (2D SIMULATION PROGRAMMING TASKS FOR GENERALIZATION STUDY)

We include a widely used community test—a 2D bouncing-ball simulation program—often treated as a proxy for geometry-aware reasoning in LLMs (Wiggers, 2025). The goal is to synthesize a

216 program that simulates elastic collisions in polygonal containers and returns the exact object state at  
 217 a queried timestamp; strong solutions require precise collision detection/response and numerically  
 218 stable integration.

219 **Task design.** To replace informal, visually judged demos with a rigorous benchmark, we make  
 220 the task: (a) *verifiable*—each prompt specifies a deterministic initial state (positions, velocities,  
 221 container geometry); the program must output the object’s location at a target time and is scored  
 222 against an oracle; (b) *synthesizable*—instances are generated by varying the configuration in Figure 1,  
 223 with ground-truth trajectories produced by *Box2D*<sup>2</sup>; (c) *composable*—single-skill families (e.g.,  
 224 ROT\_BOX, ROT\_OBJ) can be combined into multi-skill families (e.g., ROT\_BOX\_OBJ); and (d)  
 225 *difficulty-controlled*—we vary polygon vertex counts, object speeds, box motion, gravity, and the  
 226 number of objects/boxes to create BASIC→EASY→MEDIUM→HARD→EXTREME tiers. Detailed  
 227 configurations are provided in Appendix A.

228 **Generalization axes.** To align explicitly with the three generalization axes defined in OMEGA (Sun  
 229 et al., 2025), as exemplified in Figure 1: a) *Exploratory generalization*: Training problems feature  
 230 standard box sizes with relatively sparse collisions, while test problems use smaller containers that  
 231 induce denser and more frequent collisions. b) *Compositional generalization*: Training isolates  
 232 distinct skills—handling rotating boxes (ROT\_BOX) and rotating objects (ROT\_OBJ). Testing  
 233 then evaluates the combined scenario (ROT\_BOX\_OBJ), where both the box and the object rotate  
 234 simultaneously, requiring the model to integrate the two skills. c) *Transformative generalization*:  
 235 Training covers common variants such as ROT\_BOX, but testing introduces qualitatively different  
 236 dynamics—for example, special initial conditions that yield perfectly periodic bouncing trajectories  
 237 (e.g., an object oscillating vertically with no horizontal drift). Further examples and details of these  
 238 generalization setups are provided in Appendix A.

239 **Evaluation results.** Figure 3 summarizes full-pass rates across six families—ROT\_OBJ, ROT\_BOX,  
 240 MOV\_BOX, GRAVITY, MULTI\_BOX, MULTI\_OBJ—and five difficulty tiers for four representative  
 241 models. GPT-5 leads overall, but accuracy degrades with difficulty and composition: MULTI\_BOX is  
 242 challenging even at BASIC (~30%), and MULTI\_OBJ drops sharply—from ~80% at BASIC to ~10%  
 243 by MEDIUM. Other LLMs trail substantially—typically  $\leq$ 30–40% on the easy-to-medium tiers and  
 244 near-zero on HARD/EXTREME and most compositional settings. Overall, *BouncingSim* represent  
 245 a valuable testbed for understanding what these models can and cannot do; whether they reinforce  
 246 existing skills or discover new ones; by enabling systematic study of learnability and generalization.

### 247 3.3 COMPETITION CODING PROBLEM FAMILIES

248 We add competitive programming, which serve as a real-world domain. Although not strictly OOD  
 249 (given their online popularity), they remain challenging (e.g., *gpt-5-high* reaches only 2% on hard-tier  
 250 LiveCodeBench-Pro (Zheng et al., 2025)). We include them in DELTA to expand seed problems into  
 251 fully controlled families that support learnability and generalization studies. A brief construction  
 252 overview appears in the main text. Specifically, Each family groups problems sharing the same  
 253 core algorithm (e.g., *Mo’s algorithm*, *CDQ divide-and-conquer*), and is named after that algorithm.  
 254 For each family, we: (1) gather 5–7 seed tasks verified to use the target algorithm; (2) perturb their  
 255 contexts by relying on an expert-provided solution strategy and background, then use LLM to change  
 256 narrative surface while preserving the solution; and (3) filter and verify by requiring a brute-force  
 257 solution to pass all tests, ensuring perturbation consistency. We release 5 families (~500 items each)  
 258 with details in Appendix A.3.

## 259 4 LEARNABILITY STUDY: CAN RL UNCOVER NEW STRATEGIES AND HOW 260 TO ACCELERATE IT?

262 A central debate in recent research concerns whether reinforcement learning (RL) can endow models  
 263 with reasoning abilities beyond those of their base model.

264 **The skeptical view.** Yue et al. (2025) argue that although RLVR-trained models outperform their base  
 265 models at small  $k$  (e.g.,  $k = 1$ ), the base models achieve equal or superior pass@ $k$  performance when  
 266  $k$  is large. Their coverage and perplexity analyses suggest that reasoning capabilities are ultimately  
 267 bounded by the base model’s support. Similarly, Wu et al. (2025) provide a theoretical argument that  
 268 RLVR cannot extend beyond the base model’s representational limits.

269 <sup>2</sup><https://box2d.org/>

270  
 271 **The optimistic view.** In contrast, Liu et al. (2025b) demonstrates that ProRL can expand reasoning  
 272 boundaries on tasks where the base model performs poorly—specifically in letter-formed 2D puzzles  
 273 from Reasoning Gym (Stojanovski et al., 2025).

274 **Our contribution: a clean testbed and clear evidence for RL  
 275 enable grokking in LLMs.** Existing evidence in favor of RL’s generalization  
 276 often comes from large, heterogeneous training corpora.  
 277 This makes it difficult to isolate why and how RL might discover  
 278 novel strategies. To address this, DELTA offers a controlled environment:  
 279 synthetic problem families that are both out-of-distribution (requiring novel strategies) and internally consistent (free of data  
 280 confounds). We focus on the *Manufactoria-HAS* family (742  
 281 training / 100 test instances), where the reference model *Qwen3-4B-  
 282 Instruct-2507* achieves **0% full pass rate at pass@128**. As shown  
 283 in Figure 4, our staged RL training strategies enables the model to  
 284 fully solve this family, achieving 100% full pass rate. Next, we detail  
 285 how this is made possible.

286 4.1 BASIC SETUP  
 287

288 Unless otherwise specified, the reference model is *Qwen3-4B-  
 289 Instruct*. Training and testing datasets are drawn from single or  
 290 combined problem families introduced in Section 3. By default, each training step consists of 48  
 291 prompts with 16 rollouts. The learning rate is set to  $5 \times 10^{-7}$ . For code training, the default reward  
 292 signal is *full pass*, a binary indicator of whether a program passes all test cases. In later experiments,  
 293 we also consider *per-test pass rate* as the reward signal, measuring the fraction of test cases passed.  
 294 A more detailed experiment setup parameter descriptions are included in Appendix B. We also  
 295 provide complementary experiments with alternative model families, sizes, and problem domains in  
 296 Appendix C.1.

297 4.2 HOW TO SOLVE “PASS@K=0” TASKS WITH RL?  
 298

299 The skeptical position that RL cannot exceed the boundaries of the base model is understandable  
 300 for a simple reason: GRPO (Guo et al., 2025) depends on reward differences across rollouts. If no  
 301 rollout ever succeeds (as in “pass@K=0” tasks), there is no gradient signal to learn from. Indeed, as  
 302 Figure 5(a) shows, naïve GRPO training stagnates. Thus, the central challenge is:

303 *If no rollout achieves a full pass, how can RL propagate a meaningful learning signal?*

305 **Per-test pass rate training.** One solution is to exploit partial credit. Instead of the all-or-nothing full  
 306 pass rate (reward = 1 only if all test cases pass), we use a finer-grained per-test pass rate, a continuous  
 307 reward in  $[0, 1]$ . As Figure 5(b) shows, this signal provides initial learning traction. However, it  
 308 quickly saturates after  $\sim 100$  steps, and the full-pass rate remains negligible ( $< 0.01\%$ ).

309 **Warm-up phase.** Even though it can not serve as a full surrogate loss, we find that the per-test pass  
 310 rate can serve as an important warm-up stage that pushes the model out of the all-zero region. As  
 311 shown in Figure 5(a), this signal allows the model to move beyond the all-zero region: although the  
 312 full-pass rate remains  $< 1\%$ , the model begins to accumulate positive gradients.

313 **Exploration and grokking.** From this warm-up checkpoint, we switch to RL with the binary full-pass  
 314 reward. Figure 5(b) illustrates the dynamics: For  $\sim 450$  steps, the model remains in an *exploration*  
 315 *phase*, with full-pass rate still  $< 1\%$ . After a sudden **grokking moment**, the model discovers the  
 316 key strategy to solve the family. Training then enters a *convergence phase*, where RL sharpens and  
 317 consistently reinforces the successful reasoning path. At convergence, the RL-trained model achieves  
 318 nearly a 100% absolute improvement in pass@k compared to the reference model (Figure 4). We  
 319 also observe this phenomena with other model families, sizes, and problem domains in Appendix C.1

321 4.3 ATTEMPTS TO ACCELERATE RL GROKKING  
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323 A natural follow-up question is how to shorten the exploration phase and enable grokking to emerge  
 324 earlier. We examine the following strategies:

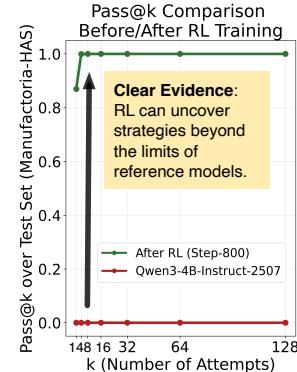


Figure 4: Pass@k comparison before and after RL training on the *Manufactoria-HAS*.

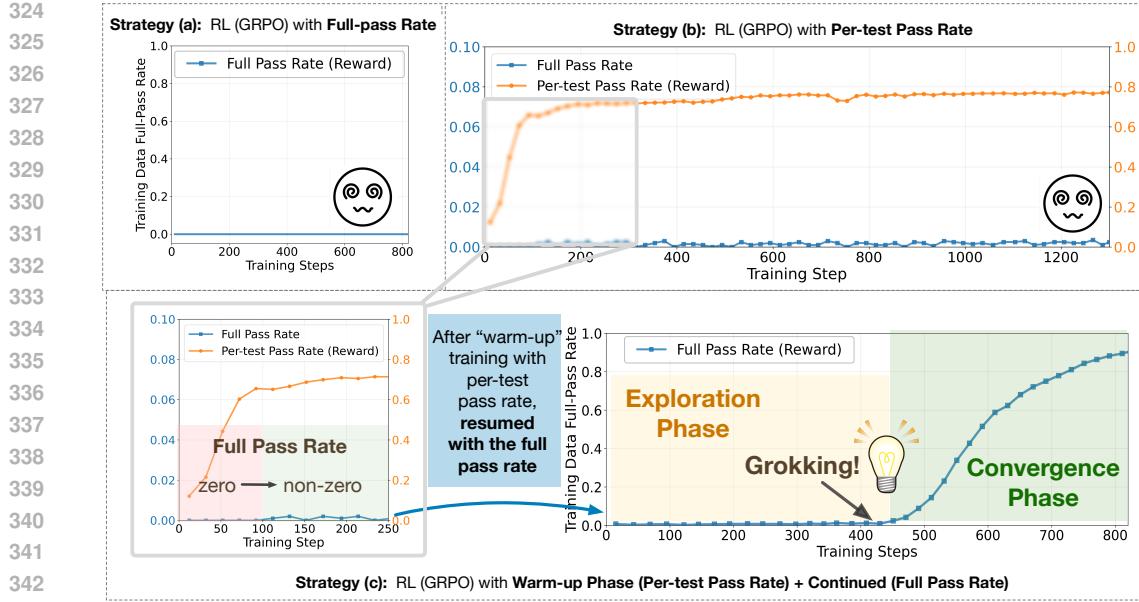


Figure 5: Comparison of strategies solving “pass@K=0” tasks. (a) Directly optimizing for full-pass rate under GRPO fails. (b) Training with a per-test pass rate provides a smoother reward but quickly saturates. (c) A two-phase training—warming up with per-test pass rate, then switching to full-pass reward. All training is performed on Manufactoria-HAS family and the reference model *Qwen-3-4B-Instruct-2507*.

**Experience replay.** The long exploration phases mainly stem from the sparsity of positive reward signals. A natural way to alleviate this is to retain successful reasoning traces and reinsert them into future rollouts—a technique known as experience replay (Zhang et al., 2025), closely related to expert iteration (Anthony et al., 2017). In our experiments, we log successful traces in each sampling round and, when the same query reappears, append up to three of the most recent successful traces to the rollout. As shown in Figure 6, experience replay does help the model grok at an earlier stage. However, its convergence speed is still slower than the baseline GRPO algorithm, likely because the reused traces are off-policy.

**Feedback-in-the-loop.** Another plausible strategy is to directly include failure feedback in the generation process, encouraging the model to improve its full pass rate earlier. We achieve this by replacing the EOS token with feedback (e.g., failure test cases) and letting the model continue generating. As shown in Figure 6, applying this feedback-in-the-loop once can indeed expedite the grokking moment. However, it also reduces training stability, likely due to the off-policy injection of feedback tokens. A common failure case is that the model, even after receiving explicit feedback, persists in its original (incorrect) solution.

#### 4.4 MORE INVESTIGATION INTO THE WARM-UP PHASE

**Selective curriculum learning as an alternative.** A natural question is whether the warm-up effect can be achieved through curriculum learning across problem families. To explore this (Figure 7), we designed a three-stage curriculum training. After training on basic families (START/APPEND/EXACT), models were exposed either to Stage 2-REGEX or Stage 2-COMPR before transferring to the target HAS tasks. These two problem families have similar difficulty levels according to Figure 2. Despite similar difficulty, the outcomes diverge: the REGEX curriculum leads to successful transfer and near-complete mastery of HAS at final RL stage, while the COMPR curriculum fails to progress beyond low pass rates. This difference can be traced to task compatibil-

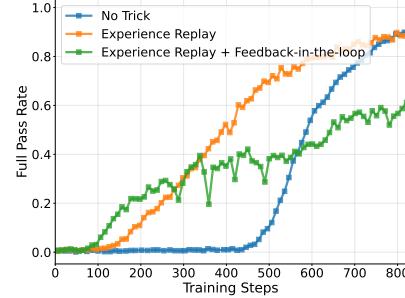


Figure 6: Comparison of training strategies for accelerating RL grokking. “No Trick” denotes the standard training setup as in Figure 5(b), “Experience Replay” logs and reuses successful traces, and “Experience Replay + Feedback-in-the-loop” further injects verifier’s feedback into the inference.

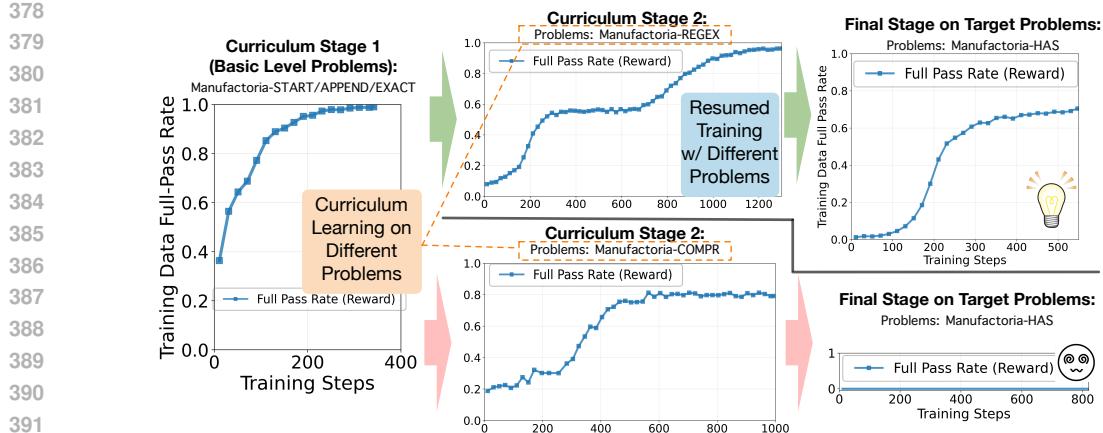


Figure 7: Contrast of the two-stage curriculum learning for Manufactoria-HAS. Models first train on basic problems (START/APPEND/EXACT) before branching into one of two intermediate curricula: (i) Stage 2–REGEX, which leads to successful transfer and high pass rates on the target HAS family, or (ii) Stage 2–COMPR, which fails to transfer and plateaus at low performance.

ity—both REGEX and HAS revolve around detecting or matching subpatterns (e.g., “accept tapes with pattern  $(BRB)^+(RR)^*$ ” vs. “accept tapes with subsequence GGRBB”), whereas COMPR emphasizes numerical interpretation and branching tests (e.g., “treat color B as 1 and R as 0, accept if the number  $\geq 27$ ”). These results suggest that effective curricula must not only control difficulty but also align structurally with the target family. While curriculum learning can thus be highly effective, its success depends on finding suitably related families to bridge the reasoning gap—something that is not always feasible. In contrast, warm-up training with dense rewards remains broadly useful as it does not require additional family design or mixing.

**Warm-up Helps Beyond the “pass@k=0” Regime** Even when the base model exhibits a small but non-zero success rate ( $pass@k=\epsilon > 0$ ), a brief per-test-reward warm-up improves stability and speed. Empirically, we observe faster and smoother convergence compared to training full-pass from scratch (see Appendix C.2).

**Limitation.** It is important to note that not every problem family can be “unlocked” by warm-up training. For instance, as shown in Figure 8, even when using per-test pass rate rewards, the model fails to escape the all-zero regime on the harder Manufactoria-PREPEND family. The per-test signal rises modestly but quickly saturates, while the full-pass rate remains stuck at zero throughout training. This suggests that warm-up with per-test pass rate training is not a universal recipe: its effectiveness depends on the model’s capacity and difficulty of the target family.

## 5 GENERALIZATION STUDY

**Setup.** We study how far the learned programmatic skills transfer beyond the training distribution. Unless noted, the reference model is *Qwen3-4B-Instruct*. We train on a Basic-level mixture of six single-skill families—ROT\_OBJ, ROT\_BOX, MOV\_BOX, GRAVITY, MULTI\_BOX, MULTI\_OBJ—with 1k instances per family (6k total). Because the base model has non-zero full-pass on some basic instances, we directly optimize a *binary full-pass reward* (all tests pass) for 300 gradient steps; all other hyperparameters follow Section 4. Evaluation spans three axes—*explorative*, *compositional*, and *transformative*—and reports *full pass rate* (fraction of prompts for which the synthesized program exactly matches the oracle on all unit tests). For explorative generalization we consider four difficulty tiers (Basic=ID, Easy/Medium/Hard=OOD) crossed with the six families; each bar in Figure 9 aggregates. More detailed setup is in Appendix B.

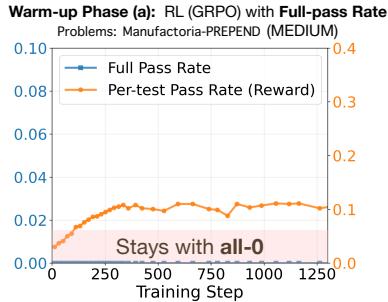


Figure 8: Warm-up training on the harder Manufactoria-PREPEND family.

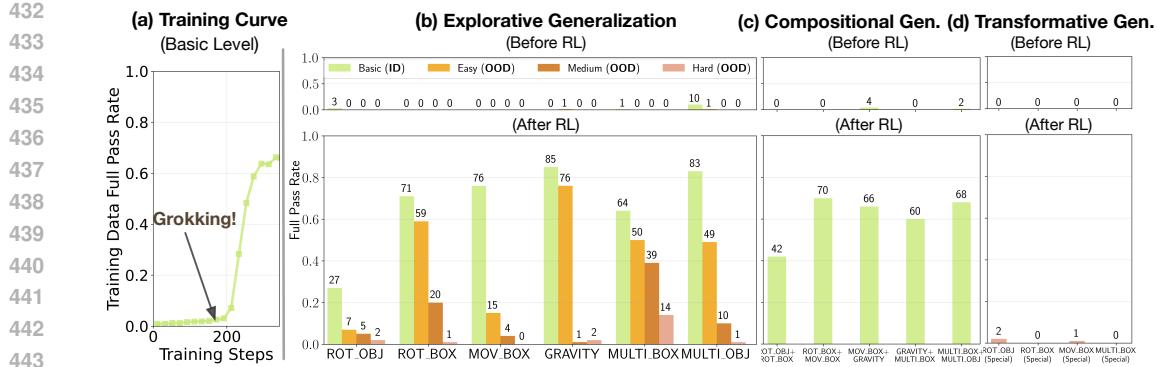


Figure 9: **Generalization Study on BOUNCINGSIM.** (a) Training full-pass rate on the Basic-level mixture (6 families, 1k each) for *Qwen3-4B-Instruct* with binary full-pass reward shows a sharp *grokking* jump near step 200. (b) *Explorative generalization*: Before RL (top) the model rarely solves any OOD cases; after RL (bottom) it transfers to Easy/Medium/Hard variants with diminishing gains as difficulty increases (bars aggregate 6 families  $\times$  4 tiers; 100 prompts per cell, averaged over 4 runs). (c) *Compositional generalization*: Zero-shot composition of skills. (d) *Transformative generalization*: Qualitatively new dynamics (e.g., special periodic trajectories) remain near zero after RL. Results are averaged over 4 runs.

**Training dynamics (Fig. 9a).** We again observe a sharp *grokking* phase transition: after a long plateau of near-zero reward, performance on the training mixture jumps around the step 200 to 0.7 full pass rate, indicating the emergence of stable simulation code that handles elastic collisions.

**Generalization results (Fig. 9b-d).** RL-trained models transfer beyond the training distribution, but with varying success across axes. In *explorative generalization*, performance is strong on Basic (ID, 70–85%) and carries over to Easy (50–75%), though gains shrink on Medium (15–50%) and nearly vanish on Hard (single digits). For *compositional generalization*, the model demonstrates surprising skill integration: unseen combinations such as ROT\_BOX+MOV\_BOX, MOV\_BOX+GRAVITY, and MULTI\_BOX+MULTI\_OBJ achieve 60–70% full-pass (vs. near-zero before RL), in contrast to the weak compositional transfer reported in OMEGA (Sun et al., 2025). We attribute this to coding tasks composing *structurally* (merging simulation modules) rather than *strategically* (inventing new reasoning steps). Finally, in *transformative generalization*, models remain near zero on qualitatively novel dynamics such as perfectly periodic or degenerate trajectories, which demand the discovery of new invariants and align with the persistent difficulty of transformative math generalization.

**Takeaways.** RL discovers executable simulators that (i) transfer well to parametric shifts and (ii) compose across skills, but (iii) struggle when the test distribution demands qualitatively different solution schemas. Coding tasks appear more amenable to structural composition than symbolic math, yet transformative “schema creation” remains an open challenge. Figure 9 summarizes these trends.

## 6 RELATED WORK

**Coding benchmarks and synthetic datasets.** Human written or collected coding benchmarks like APPS (Hendrycks et al., 2021), CodeContests (Li et al., 2022), HumanEval (Chen et al., 2021), MBPP (Austin et al., 2021) and TACO (Li et al., 2023) established functional-correctness evaluation with tests. Synthetic datasets like KodCode (Xu et al., 2025) introduced a large-scale synthetic coding dataset with LLM spanning simple exercises to advanced algorithmic challenges. DELTA builds on this trend on a more fine-grained level, generating families of coding problems to isolate specific reasoning strategies and to test learnability and generalization under controlled distribution.

**Study on grokking.** Grokking (Power et al., 2022) is when a model memorizes small algorithmic training sets and only later suddenly generalizes after prolonged training. Explanations span train–test loss-landscape mismatch Liu et al. (2022), double-descent via pattern-learning speeds Davies et al. (2023), and gradient-spectrum splits between slow generalization and fast memorization Lee et al. (2024). Beyond traditional neural network settings, small transformers also grok on synthesized graph-based tasks (Wang et al., 2024; Abramov et al., 2025). Yet most work targets supervised, toy datasets; whether grokking occurs in RL on difficulty reasoning tasks remains unclear. To our knowledge, DELTA is the first to show that, under suitable training, grokking can emerge during RL fine-tuning of large language models.

486 7 REPRODUCIBILITY STATEMENT  
487488 Appendix A details all prompts, generators, and curated splits for *Manufactoria*, *BouncingSim*,  
489 competition coding, along with fixed seeds and JSONL artifacts (instances, metadata, and test  
490 assertions). RL training is conducted using the public Open-Instruct repository. Appendix B  
491 documents the core shell commands, hyperparameters, and evaluation protocols needed to reproduce  
492 our runs. Together, these materials provide a complete, end-to-end recipe for replication.  
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594 **A DATASET DETAILS**  
595596 **A.1 MANUFACTORIA**  
597598 *Manufactoria* is a classic Flash game (2010) in which players build automated factories to sort  
599 robots based on their colored tape patterns. The underlying logic resembles constructing finite-state  
600 automata or tag systems using two special node types (puller, painter). While the original  
601 game is implemented in 2D space, we re-formalize it into a custom programmatic syntax, as the  
602 syntax defined as a prompt below.  
603604 **Prompt Template of Manufactoria Problems**  
605606 **# Manufactoria Solution DSL**607 A Domain Specific Language for describing Manufactoria puzzle solutions  
608 in text format.  
609610 **## Overview**

611

612 Manufactoria is a puzzle game where you build automated factories  
613 to sort robots based on their colored tape patterns. Robots enter your  
614 factory carrying sequences of colored tape, and you must route them  
615 to the correct destinations based on the given criteria.616 **## Game Mechanics**617 **### Robots and Tape**

- **\*\*Robots\*\***: Each robot carries a sequence of colored tapes
- **\*\*Tape Colors\*\***: Primary colors are Blue (B) and Red (R), with additional Yellow (Y) and Green (G) for advanced puzzles
- **\*\*Tape Representation\*\***: Sequences are represented as strings (e.g., `RBRR`, `BBR`, or empty string `""`)

625 **### Operations**

- **\*\*Pull\*\***: Remove tape from the front of the robot's sequence
- **\*\*Paint\*\***: Add colored tape to the end of the robot's sequence
- **\*\*Route\*\***: Direct robots through the factory based on their current tape state

629 **### Objective**630 Route robots to the correct destinations based on their final tape  
631 configuration and the puzzle requirements:

- **\*\*Accepted\*\***: Robot reaches the END node
- **\*\*Rejected\*\***: Robot is routed to the NONE node, or caught in an infinite  
634 loop, or robot reaches the END node but fails to meet the puzzle's  
635 acceptance criteria

636

637 **## DSL Syntax**

638

639 **### Program Structure**

640

Every solution must start with a `START` directive and end with an  
641 `END` directive, wrapped in `'''manufactoria ...'''`:

642

643 `'''manufactoria`644 `START start:`645 `NEXT <next_node_id>`

646

647 `# Factory logic goes here`

```

648 END end
649 ``
650
651 ### Node Types
652
653 #### 1. Puller Nodes
654
655 Pullers remove specific colors from the front of the robot's tape sequence
656 and route based on the current front color.
657
658 **Red/Blue Puller:**
659
660 ``
661 PULLER_RB <node_id>:
662     [R] <next_node_id>      # Route and remove color if front tape is Red
663     [B] <next_node_id>      # Route and remove color if front tape is Blue
664     [EMPTY] <next_node_id>  # Route if no tape or front tape is neither R nor B
665 ``
666
667 **Yellow/Green Puller:**
668
669 ``
670 PULLER_YG <node_id>:
671     [Y] <next_node_id>      # Route and remove color if front tape is Yellow
672     [G] <next_node_id>      # Route and remove color if front tape is Green
673     [EMPTY] <next_node_id>  # Route if no tape or front tape is neither Y nor G
674 ``
675
676 **Note**: Unspecified branches default to `NONE`, which rejects the robot.
677
678 #### 2. Painter Nodes
679
680
681 PAINER_RED <node_id>:
682     NEXT <next_node_id>
683
684 PAINER_BLUE <node_id>:
685     NEXT <next_node_id>
686
687 PAINER_YELLOW <node_id>:
688     NEXT <next_node_id>
689
690 PAINER_GREEN <node_id>:
691     NEXT <next_node_id>
692 ``
693 ## Syntax Rules
694
695 1. **Node IDs**: Must be unique identifiers (alphanumeric characters
696 and underscores only)
697 2. **Comments**: Lines starting with `#` are comments (single-line only)
698 3. **Indentation**: Use consistent spaces or tabs for route definitions
699 4. **Case Sensitivity**: Colors must be uppercase (R, B, Y, G)
700 5. **Termination**:
701     - Robots routed to `NONE` are rejected
702     - Robots routed to the END node are accepted{objective_clause}

```

702     **6. \*\*Code Blocks\*\*:** Final factory code should be wrapped in triple  
 703     backticks with ``` markers  
 704

705     **## Example**  
 706

707     Here's a simple example that accepts robots with exactly one red tape  
 708     (ending tape should be empty):  
 709

```
710     ```manufactoria
711     START start:
712         NEXT entry
713
714     PULLER_RB entry:
715         [R] end
716
717     END end
718
719
720     # Task
721     Your task is to design a factory with code with following functionality:
722
723     {criteria}
```

---

**The End of Prompt**

---

727     The criteria are defined in the Table 1 with different problem families.  
 728

729 <b>Problem Family</b>	730 <b>Difficulty</b>	731 <b>Criteria Examples</b>
730     APPEND	731     BASIC	731     Accept any input and append the sequence RBR to the end of the 732     tape.
732     EXACT	732     BASIC	732     Accept if the tape is exactly RBB.
733     START	733     BASIC	733     Accept if the tape starts with BR.
734     ENDS	734     EASY	734     Accept if the tape ends with BB.
735     REGEX	735     EASY	735     Accept if the tape matches the regex pattern (RBR) + (B) ? ex- 736     actly.
737     HAS	737     EASY	737     Accept if the tape contains the substring RYY (must be consecu- 738     tive).
739     COMPR	739     EASY	739     Treat Blue as 1 and Red as 0. Accept if the binary number is 740     greater than or equal to 13.
741     PREPEND	741     MEDIUM	741     Put BR at the beginning of the tape.
742     MUTATE	742     MEDIUM	742     Change all RB to BR sequentially.
743     BIT_OP	743     MEDIUM	743     Treat Blue as 1 and Red as 0. Apply bitwise OR with 16 to the 744     binary number.
745     FDIV	745     HARD	745     Treat Blue as 1 and Red as 0. Apply floor division by 4 to the 746     binary number.
747     SYMM	747     HARD	747     Accept strings that match the pattern R{ $n$ }B{ $n+1$ } for any $n \geq$ 748     1.
749     MINMAX	749     HARD	749     Treat Blue as 1 and Red as 0. Output the maximum of 11 and 750     input.
751     ADD	751     HARD	751     Treat Blue as 1 and Red as 0. Apply add 8 to the binary number.

752     Table 1: `Manufactoria` Problem families with difficulty levels and acceptance criteria.  
 753

754     We synthesize each problem family by starting from a parameterized template (alphabet, tape  
 755     operation(s), acceptance predicate, and any numeric thresholds) and then perturbing those parameters

756 within a constrained search space. Discrete knobs (e.g., start/end substrings, regex subpatterns, token  
 757 rewrites) are toggled or swapped with near neighbors, while numeric knobs (e.g., bitwise constants,  
 758 comparison thresholds, additive offsets, division factors) are jittered by small deltas drawn from a  
 759 valid set (e.g.,  $\pm 1, \pm 2$ , powers of two), with guards to keep the task well-posed and nontrivial.  
 760

### 761 A.1.1 EXAMPLE TRACES COMPARISON OF A MANUFACTORIA-HAS PROBLEM

762 Here is one example response of *Qwen3-4B-Instruct* on a problem in MANUFACTORIA-HAS: “Ac-  
 763 cept if the tape contains the substring BRRR (must be consecutive”).  
 764

#### 765 **Failure Case**

766 To design a **\*\*Manufacturer solution\*\*** that **accepts** robots whose tape  
 767 contains the substring 'BRRR' (consecutive), and **rejects otherwise**,  
 768 we need to carefully build a factory that:  
 769

- 770 - **\*\*Detects\*\*** the presence of the sequence 'BRRR' in the robot's tape.
- 771 - Only accepts robots when this exact pattern appears **\*\*somewhere\*\*** in  
 772 their tape.
- 773 - Rejects all others (including those with 'BRR', 'BR<sup>RR</sup>', but not full  
 774 'B<sup>RRR</sup>', or other combinations).

775 ---

#### 776 **## Understanding the Requirement**

777 We are looking for **\*\*consecutive\*\*** 'BRRR' | that is, the letters B  
 778 followed by three R's in a row.  
 779

780 We can't just look for 'B' and then three 'R's as separate steps |  
 781 since the robot has a sequence, and we must detect **\*\*this exact substring\*\***.  
 782

783 ---

#### 784 **## Strategy**

785 We will use **\*\*state-based pattern matching\*\*** using **\*\*pullers\*\*** to  
 786 simulate a finite state machine.  
 787

788 We'll define states that track how close we are to matching "BRRR":  
 789

790   State	791   Meaning
792   `S0`	793   Start: looking for the first 'B'
794   `S1`	795   After seeing 'B': now expecting R
796   `S2`	797   After seeing 'R': now expecting R
798   `S3`	799   After seeing RR: now expecting R (final match)
800   `S4`	801   Match found: accept (go to END)
802   `S5`	803   Failed to match (hit any invalid character or didn't complete) → reject

804 We'll use **\*\*PULLER\_RB\*\*** nodes (since only R and B are used) to process  
 805 the tape from front to back.  
 806

807 We want to **\*\*build a machine that scans\*\*** the robot's tape until it  
 808 finds 'BRRR'.  
 809

810 Once the substring is found, we route the robot to the **\*\*END\*\***.  
 811

812 If it fails, we route it to a **\*\*rejection node\*\*** (via 'NONE').  
 813

```

810
811  ---
812 ## Design Steps
813
814 1. **Start** node sends to a scanning state.
815 2. Use a series of pullers to detect:
816   - If the front is 'B', go to next state ('S1')
817   - If the front is 'R', stay in current state or fail.
818   - If the tape is empty or neither, reject (fail).
819 3. After each 'R', advance state.
820 4. If we ever get 'BRRR', go to 'END'.
821 5. If we see anything else (e.g., 'G', 'Y', or a non-R after 'B'), reject.
822 > Because the only tape colors in this puzzle are **B** and **R**, we
823 **do not need** yellow or green.
824 > So we only need **PULLER_RB**.
825
826  ---
827
828 ## Implementation
829
830 ```manufactoria
831 START start:
832   NEXT s0
833
834 s0:
835   [B] s1
836   [R] s5
837   [EMPTY] s5
838
839 s1:
840   [R] s2
841   [B] s5
842   [EMPTY] s5
843
844 s2:
845   [R] s3
846   [B] s5
847   [EMPTY] s5
848
849 s3:
850   [R] end
851   [B] s5
852   [EMPTY] s5
853
854 s5:
855   NONE
856
857 END end
858 ```
859
860  ---
861
862 ## Explanation
863
864 | State | Action |
865 | -----|-----|
866 | 's0': Start | Wait for 'B' → go to 's1'. If 'R' or empty → reject ('s5'). |
867 | 's1': After 'B' | Expect R → go to 's2'. If 'B' or empty → fail → reject. |

```

```

864 | `s2`: After 'RR' | Expect another R → go to `s3`. Any other → fail. |
865 | `s3`: After 'BRR' | If next is `R`, we have `BRRR`, go to **END**. Otherwise fail.
866 | `s5`: Failure state | All invalid or wrong transitions → `NONE` → **rejected** |
867
868 > **No alternative paths** are accepted.
869 > This correctly **only passes robots with "BRRR" in their tape**, and rejects:
870 > - `BRR` (missing last R)
871 > - `BBRR` (fails at 'B' after 'B')
872 > - `BRBR` (breaks the sequence)
873 > - Any tape with 'B' not followed by at least three 'R's
874 > - Empty or non-matching tapes
875
876 ---
877 ## Example Test Cases
878
879 | Input Tape | Accepted? | Why |
880 |-----|-----|-----|
881 | `BRRR` | Yes | Found `BRRR` → reaches `end` |
882 | `BBRRR` | Yes | First 'B' → goes to `s1`, then 'R' → `s2`, 'R' → `s3`, 'R' → `end` |
883 | `BRBR` | No | After 'B', then 'R', then 'B' → fails (not 'R') → reject |
884 | `BRR` | No | No final 'R' → rejected |
885 | `RRB` | No | No 'B' at start → rejected |
886 | `~~` (empty) | No | Empty → rejects |
887 | `RBR` | No | No 'B' at start, so never starts sequence → reject |
888 > Works as required.
889
890 ---
891
892 ## Final Solution
893
894 ```manufatoria
895 START start:
896     NEXT s0
897
898 s0:
899     [B] s1
900     [R] s5
901     [EMPTY] s5
902
903 s1:
904     [R] s2
905     [B] s5
906     [EMPTY] s5
907
908 s2:
909     [R] s3
910     [B] s5
911     [EMPTY] s5
912
913 s3:
914     [R] end
915     [B] s5
916     [EMPTY] s5
917
918 s5:
919     NONE

```

```
918     END end
919     ``
920
921     This solution correctly accepts robots with the substring **'BRRR'** and
```

## The End of Trace

Here is another example response (partial) of *Qwen3-4B-Instruct after RL training* with grokking (as in Figure 6 (c)) on a test problem in MANUFACTORIA-HAS: “Accept if the tape contains the substring BRRR (must be consecutive)”.

## Success Trace

We are tasked with designing a factory in the **\*\*Manufactoria DSL\*\*** that:

- **Accepts** robots whose tape contains the substring **BRRR** (four consecutive characters: B, R, R, R)
- **Rejects** all others.

This is a **\*\*string matching\*\*** problem via finite automata. Since the tape is processed from left to right (front to back), and we are only allowed to use pullers (which remove from the front), we must simulate a finite state machine (FSM) that tracks progress toward detecting "BRRR".

We can't assume the input is long or ordered | so we have to detect the exact substring **\*\*"BRRR"\*\*** in the input sequence, **\*\*anywhere\*\***, and accept if and only if it appears.

We must design an **\*\*automaton\*\*** that:

- Keeps track of how much of "BRRR" it has matched so far
- When it sees a match, it goes to an accepting state
- Otherwise, it continues scanning, possibly resetting or continuing partial matches

We do **\*\*not\*\*** allow adding tape (painting), only pulling (removing from front) and routing based on the current front character.

## ## Step 2: Define state transitions

We will build the automaton with states:

- `'s0'` → initial state
- `'s1'` → after matching B
- `'s2'` → after matching BR
- `'s3'` → after matching BRR
- `'s4'` → matched BRRR → ACCEPT

```

972 Now, what about the tape that is exactly `BRRR`?
973
974 - s0 → B → s1
975 - s1 → R → s2
976 - s2 → R → s3
977 - s3 → R → go to `end`
978
979 What about if the tape is `R`?
980
981 - s0 → R → s0 → then R → s0 → forever → never reaches end → rejected → correct.
982
983 What about `B`?
984
985 - s0 → B → s1 → then if next is R → s2 → etc.
986
987 So yes.
988
989 What about `BBR`?
990
991 - B → s1
992 - B → s1
993 - R → s2 → then if no more, it stops → never accepts → correct,
because BRRR not present.

994 But what about `BBRRR`? → yes, after seeing second B → s1 → then
995 R → s2 → R → s3 → R → end → Accepted
996
997 So it works.
998
999 Are there any **missing** cases?
1000
1001 What if the tape starts with Y?
1002
1003 - s0 → Y → goes to yg0 → Y → s0 → same → so eventually if B comes,
we can proceed.
1004
1005 Eventually, if "BRRR" appears later, we will catch it.
1006
1007 What if "BRRR" appears in the middle? Like `X BRRR Y`?
1008
1009 - X → if R → s0 → then B → s1 → R → s2 → R → s3 → R → end
1010
1011 Perfect.
1012
1013 We never require the tape to start with B | just that BRRR appears anywhere.
1014
1015 So it's correct.
1016
1017 ---
1018 ## Final Answer
1019
1020 ````manufactoria
1021 START start:
1022     NEXT s0
1023
1024 PULLER_RB s0:
1025     [R] s0
1026     [B] s1

```

```

1026      [EMPTY] yg0
1027
1028  PULLER_YG yg0:
1029      [Y] s0
1030      [G] s0
1031      [EMPTY] s0
1032
1033  PULLER_RB s1:
1034      [R] s2
1035      [B] s1
1036      [EMPTY] yg1
1037
1038  PULLER_YG yg1:
1039      [Y] s0
1040      [G] s0
1041      [EMPTY] s0
1042
1043  PULLER_RB s2:
1044      [R] s3
1045      [B] s1
1046      [EMPTY] yg2
1047
1048  PULLER_YG yg2:
1049      [Y] s0
1050      [G] s0
1051      [EMPTY] s0
1052
1053  PULLER_RB s3:
1054      [R] end
1055      [B] s1
1056      [EMPTY] yg3
1057
1058  PULLER_YG yg3:
1059      [Y] s0
1060      [G] s0
1061      [EMPTY] s0
1062
1063  END end
1064  ``
1065
1066  This factory accepts any robot whose tape contains the substring
1067  ` "BRRR" ` (consecutive), and rejects otherwise.
1068
1069  _____ The End of Trace _____
1070
1071
1072
1073
1074
1075
1076
1077
1078
1079

```

1080 A.2 BOUNCINGSIM  
10811082 We include a widely used community test—a 2D bouncing-ball simulation program—often treated  
1083 as a proxy for geometry-aware reasoning in LLMs (Wiggers, 2025). The goal is to synthesize a  
1084 program that simulates elastic collisions in polygonal containers and returns the exact object state at  
1085 a queried timestamp; strong solutions require precise collision detection/response and numerically  
1086 stable integration.1087 **Prompt design.** We provide a prompt example of the bouncing ball coding problems in ROT\_BOX  
1088 problem family below.1089  
1090

---

Prompt Template of BouncingSim Problems

---

1091

**## Polygon Dynamics Prediction**1092 In this task, you will implement a single function `predict_position(t)`  
1093 that computes the 2D positions of all balls at an arbitrary future time  
1094  $t$  under idealized mechanics. The function parses the scene configuration  
1095 (containers, balls, and physics/meta), reconstructs the motions, detects  
1096 and handles boundary collisions with finite-size treatment, and returns  
1097 a list where each element is the  $[x, y]$  position (rounded to 2 decimals)  
1098 of a ball at time  $t$ . Each evaluation of  $t$  must be computed directly from  
1099 initial conditions and scene mechanics with no hidden state or  
1100 accumulation across calls. Rendering, animation, and explanatory text  
1101 are out of scope; prefer closed-form reasoning and avoid coarse time-  
1102 stepping except where narrowly required for collision resolution.

1103

**### Mechanics (General)**1104 

- 1105 - Kinematics: Use closed-form equations under constant acceleration:  
 $x(t) = x_0 + v_{x0} * t + 0.5 * a_{x0} * t^2$ ,  $y(t) = y_0 + v_{y0} * t + 0.5 * a_{y0} * t^2$ .
- 1106 - Collisions: Perfectly elastic. Reflect velocity using  $v' = v - 2 \cdot \dot{v} \cdot n \cdot n$ , where  $n$  is the inward unit normal at the contact.
- 1107 - Finite size: Use polygon{polygon contact}. Derive regular shapes from  
('sides', 'radius', 'center', 'rotation'); irregular convex polygon balls  
1108 use provided vertices.
- 1109 - Geometry: Irregular convex polygons (if present) are simple (non self-  
1110 intersecting). Ball finite size must be respected in all interactions.
- 1111 - Units: Positions in meters; time in seconds; angles in radians;  
1112 velocities in m/s; accelerations in m/s<sup>2</sup>.
- 1113 - Cartesian Axes: +X is right, +Y is up.

1115

**### Constraints**1116 

- 1117 - Implement only `predict_position(t)`; no other entry points will be called.
- 1118 - No global variables; no variables defined outside the function.
- 1119 - Do not import external libraries (except math); do not perform I/O; do  
1120 not print; do not use randomness.
- 1121 - Numerical output must be `round(value, 2)`; normalize -0.0 to 0.0.

1122

**### Verification and output contract**1123 

- 1124 - Return a list of positions per ball for the provided  $t$ :  $[[x_1, y_1], [x_2, y_2], \dots]$ .
- 1125 - Each call must be computed independently (no state carry-over between calls).
- 1126 - You should assume that the ball will hit the wall and bounce back,  
1127 which will be verified in test cases.

1128

1129

**### Scene description**

1130

**#### Containers**1131 

- 1132 - Container 1: regular polygon with 3 sides, radius 225.00m, center at  
(750, 750); initial orientation 0.000 rad; constant angular velocity 0.170 rad/s

1133

**#### Objects**

```
1134 - Ball 1: regular polygon (3 sides), radius 40.0m, initial position
1135 (750, 750), initial velocity (-220.61, 6.21) m/s
1136
1137 ### Physics
1138 - no effective gravity (treated as zero).
1139
1140 ### Dynamics
1141 - No additional time-varying mechanisms.
1142
1143 ### Conventions for this scene
1144 - Containers are convex regular polygons (parameters: 'sides', 'radius',
1145 'center'), unless otherwise specified.
1146 - Angle baseline: By default, the initial orientation is 0.000 rad,
1147 pointing to the first vertex along +X (standard Cartesian axes);
1148 positive angles rotate CCW about the container center.
1149 - Polygon vertices (if provided) are CCW and form a simple convex polygon.
1150 - Container 'radius' denotes the circumradius (meters).
1151 - For balls: irregular convex polygons rely on provided vertices (no
1152 radius mentioned); regular polygons may be derived from
1153 'sides/radius/center/rotation'.
1154 - Containers are kinematic (infinite mass, prescribed motion); impacts
1155 do not alter container motion.
1156
1157 ### Task
1158 - Number of balls: 1
1159 - Your should think step by step and write python code.
1160 - The final output should be in the following format:
1161 [Your thinking steps here ...](optional)
1162 ``python
1163 [Your Python code here]
1164 ```
1165 - Define predict_position(t) returning a list of length n_balls; each
1166 element is [x_i, y_i] (rounded to 2 decimals) for Ball i at time t (seconds)
1167
1168 ### Output
```

## The End of Prompt

We construct a large-scale dataset for elastic collisions of polygonal objects in polygonal containers, designed to probe geometry-aware reasoning and numerically stable simulation in code-generating models (Wiggers, 2025). Each instance provides a fully specified physical scene and a programmatic task: predict the exact object state at one or more queried timestamps. Below we detail our scene taxonomy, generation and validation pipeline, prompt/evaluation protocol, and the difficulty schedule.

### A.2.1 SCENE TAXONOMY

We factor the space of scenes into orthogonal “axes” that control distinct physical effects or composition, allowing systematic sampling and compositional generalization:

- ROT\_OBJ (Inner rotation): the ball (modeled as a convex polygon) has nonzero angular velocity; collisions remain perfectly elastic.
- ROT\_BOX (Outer rotation): the container rotates; optionally, time-varying angular speed is injected via a sinusoidal envelope.
- MOV\_BOX (Outer translation): the container follows a prescribed path (sinusoidal or Lissajous), inducing moving-boundary reflections.
- GRAVITY: gravity can be tiny/small/large, tilted, or chaotic (random direction with time variation).

- MULTI\\_BOX (Multi-container): multiple non-overlapping polygonal containers are placed; a single ball is spawned in the first container unless otherwise specified.
- MULTI\\_OBJ (Multi-object): multiple balls are spawned in a single container with non-overlapping initial placement.

All containers and balls are convex polygons; collisions use a perfectly elastic model (restitution 1.0) with finite-size handling (ball centers are constrained by the container’s incircle).

### A.2.2 PARAMETERIZATION AND PLACEMENT

Scenes are defined in a global, display-agnostic metric space. The workspace size is fixed to 1500 m  $\times$  1500 m with a baseline container diameter of 300 m. Difficulty scales the geometry (e.g., container diameter factor), polygon arity (number of sides), ball radii, speeds, and multiplicities. Objects are sampled and placed under strict feasibility constraints:

- Non-overlap: initial ball-ball overlap is rejected by a circle-approximation test; multi-container layouts must respect a minimum center-to-center gap.
- Feasible incircle: ball centers are sampled inside the container’s incircle minus a safety margin; scenes violating this bound are rejected.
- Units: positions in meters; time in seconds; angles in radians; velocities and accelerations in SI units. All randomization is seeded and stored in scene metadata for reproducibility.

### A.2.3 GENERATION AND VALIDATION PIPELINE

The dataset is produced in three stages, repeated for every requested problem family combination and difficulty level:

**(1) Scene synthesis.** Given a target problem family set (e.g., ROT\\_BOX) and difficulty, we draw parameters from problem-family-specific ranges (polygon arity, speeds, rotation rates, translation amplitudes, gravity modes) and write a normalized JSON scene: container(s), ball(s), physics (including time-varying profiles), and comprehensive metadata (difficulty name, seed, key timestamps, etc.). Difficulty levels scale geometry (container factor, polygon arity), ball radii, kinematics (linear and angular speeds), gravity complexity, and multiplicity (containers/balls) as shown in Table 2.

**(2) Numerical sanity check.** Each synthesized scene is validated for step-size stability before acceptance. We simulate the scene at a small set of reference timestamps under two integrators/time-steps (a validation baseline vs. the ground-truth step) and require the maximum screen-space deviation to remain below a tight threshold (15 px). Scenes that exceed this threshold or violate geometric feasibility (overlap or outside-incircle) are discarded and resampled up to a retry budget.

**(3) Dataset assembly.** For every accepted scene we choose evaluation timestamps and compute ground-truth positions using the higher-fidelity integrator. We then construct a task prompt and serialize a JSONL entry containing: messages (the task), a list of test assertions (per timestamp), the instance id, difficulty index, the explicit timestamp list, and an error tolerance tag (default 50px) used during automated checking.

### A.2.4 SPLITS AND COMPOSITION

We design three complementary splits to probe distinct generalization properties. Each split is parameterized by which axes, difficulties, and timestamp regimes are exposed during training vs. evaluation.

**Design principles.** (1) Factorized skills. Axes isolate orthogonal mechanics (inner vs. outer rotation, moving boundaries, gravity, multiplicity, periodicity). (2) Controlled distribution shifts. Difficulty scales geometry, multiplicity, and dynamics; OOD splits increase complexity without changing the core mechanics.

1242 Table 2: Problem-by-difficulty configurations (aggregated from generator defaults). Abbreviations: f  
1243 = container diameter factor (relative to 300m base); out/in = outer/inner polygon sides; r = ball radius  
1244 (m); v = linear speed range (m/s);  $\omega$  = angular speed (rad/s); amp = translation amplitude (m); g =  
1245 gravity mode; cts = number of boxes; n = number of balls.

Problem family	Basic (0)	Easy (1)	Medium (2)	Hard (3)	Extreme (4)
ROT_OBJ	f 1.5; out 3–4; in 3–4; r 40; $\omega$ 0.1–0.2; v 200–400	f 1.4; out 3–5; in 5–6; r 35; $\omega$ 0.2–0.5; v 400–600	f 1.3; out 3–6; in 6–7; r 30; $\omega$ 0.5–1.0; v 600–800	f 1.2; out 3–7; in 7–8; r 30; $\omega$ 1.0–2.0 (tv); v 600–800	f 1.0; out 3–7; in 8; r 30; $\omega$ 2.0–2.5 (tv); v 600–800
ROT_BOX	f 1.5; out 3–4; in 3–4; $\omega$ 0.1–0.2; v 200–400	f 1.4; out 5–6; in 5–6; $\omega$ 0.2–0.5; v 400–600	f 1.3; out 6–7; in 6–7; $\omega$ 0.5–1.0; v 600–800	f 1.2; out 7–8; in 7–8; $\omega$ 1.0–1.5 (tv); v 800–1000	f 0.8; out 8–10; in 8–10; $\omega$ 2.0–3.0 (tv); v 1000–1200
MOV_BOX	f 1.5; out 3–4; amp 0–10; sin1d (0.1); v 200–400	f 1.4; out 5–6; amp 20–40; sin1d (0.5); v 400–600	f 1.3; out 6–7; amp 40–60; sin1d (1.0); v 600–800	f 1.2; out 7–8; amp 60–90; Lissajous; v 800–1000	f 1.0; out 8–10; amp 90–120; Lissajous (chaotic); v 1000–1200
GRAVITY	f 1.5; out 3–4; g = tiny; v 200–400	f 1.4; out 5–6; g = small; v 400–600	f 1.3; out 6–7; g = large; v 600–800	f 1.2; out 7–8; g = tilted; v 800–1000	f 1.0; out 8–10; g = tilted; v 1000–1200
MULTI_BOX	cts 2; f 1.5; out 3–4; r 40; v 200–400	cts 2; f 1.4; out 5–6; r 35; v 400–600	cts 3; f 1.3; out 6–7; r 30; v 600–800	cts 4; f 1.2; out 7–8; r 25; v 800–1000	cts 6; f 1.0; out 8–10; r 20; v 1000–1200
ROT_BALL	n 2; f 2.5; out 3–6; in 3–6; r 20; v 200–400	n 3; f 2.5; out 3–6; r 20; v 400–600	n 4–5; f 2.5; out 3–6; r 20; v 600–800	n 5–6; f 2.5; out 3–6; r 20; v 800–1000	n 7–9; f 2.5; out 3–6; r 20; v 1000–1200

1262 **Explorative generalization (within-family difficulty shift).** This split tests robustness to increased  
1263 geometric/dynamic complexity while keeping the same “skill”. We train on single-family scenes at  
1264 Basic difficulty and evaluate on the same family at higher difficulties.

- 1265 • Train: single-family scenes at Basic (0). We generate 1000 examples in such a split.
- 1266 • Test (ID): single-family scenes at Basic (0). We generate 100 additional examples in such a split.
- 1267 • Test (OOD): Easy–Extreme (1–4) at the same family; We generate 100 additional examples in each  
1268 difficulty.
- 1269 • Rationale: isolates the effect of tighter geometry (smaller containers, more sides), higher velocities,  
1270 stronger/tilted gravity, and larger multiplicity (more containers/balls), while holding the family-  
1271 specific mechanics fixed.

1274 **Compositional generalization (skill composition).** This split probes whether models learned  
1275 modular skills that compose. Concretely, we exemplify by composing inner and outer rotations at  
1276 test time after training on them in isolation.

- 1277 • Train: ROTAT\_BOX (outer rotation only) and ROTAT\_OBJ (inner rotation only), both at Basic  
1278 difficulty. We generate 1000 examples in each family.
- 1279 • Test (OOD composition): ROTAT\_BOX\_OBJ = (outer+inner rotation simultaneously) at Basic (0)  
1280 level. Container angular velocity and object spin are drawn independently at the current difficulty  
1281 level. We generate 100 additional examples in such a split.
- 1282 • Rationale: assesses whether learned collision handling in a rotating frame combines with inner-spin  
1283 kinematics without interference.

1285 **Transformative generalization (qualitative strategy change).** Here the test-time data is qualita-  
1286 tively different from anything seen in training—for instance, perfectly periodic trajectories that arise  
1287 from special construction.

- 1289 • Train: single-family scenes at Basic (0). We generate 1000 examples in such a split.
- 1290 • Test (transformative OOD): periodic configurations (even-sided container, symmetry-aligned initial  
1291 velocity) using list-prompt mode with a fixed periodic grid; we evaluate cycle consistency and phase  
1292 accuracy over evenly spaced timestamps. We provide an example theorem below that supports  
1293 such a periodic case construction.
- 1294 • Rationale: measures whether models trained on generic dynamics can extrapolate to a qualitatively  
1295 different but mathematically structured regime (near-1D periodic motion in polygonal symmetry).

1296 **Periodic Construction (transformative setting).** We exploit a closed-form condition that yields  
 1297 perfectly periodic, normal “shuttle” trajectories between two concentric, co-rotating regular polygons.  
 1298 This result underpins the periodic test cases in our `ROT_BOX` transformative split and provides an  
 1299 analytical knob to dial the fundamental period via the angular velocity.

1300 **Theorem 1** (Periodic bounce between two concentric regular  $n$ -gons). **Setup.** Let  $P_o$  and  $P_i$  be two  
 1301 concentric regular  $n$ -gons ( $n \geq 3$ ) with circumradii  $R_o > R_i > 0$ . Both polygons rotate rigidly with  
 1302 the same constant angular velocity  $\omega$  about their common center. At time  $t = 0$  a point mass (“ball”)  
 1303 is placed on the inward normal to a side of  $P_o$  and moves with speed  $v > 0$  along that normal toward  
 1304  $P_i$ . Collisions with sides are perfectly elastic, and motion is confined to the annular region between  
 1305 the polygons. The initial pose has one vertex on the  $+x$ -axis.

1306 Let  $a(R) := R \cos(\pi/n)$  denote the apothem of a regular  $n$ -gon with circumradius  $R$ , and define the  
 1307 normal gap

$$\Delta := a(R_o) - a(R_i) = (R_o - R_i) \cos\left(\frac{\pi}{n}\right).$$

1310 Thus  $\Delta$  is the (signed) distance between the parallel supporting lines of the corresponding side family  
 1311 in  $P_o$  and  $P_i$ .

1312 **Claim (closed-form condition).** The ball executes uniform periodic motion—bouncing back and forth  
 1313 at constant speed along a fixed set of parallel sides with a repeating impact pattern—if and only if  
 1314 there exists an integer  $k \in \mathbb{Z}$  such that

$$\boxed{\omega = \frac{k \cdot 2\pi v}{n(R_o - R_i) \cos\left(\frac{\pi}{n}\right)}}$$

1318 Equivalently, with the one-way flight time

$$1320 t_{\text{fly}} = \frac{\Delta}{v} = \frac{(R_o - R_i) \cos(\pi/n)}{v},$$

1322 the periodicity condition is

$$\boxed{\omega, t_{\text{fly}} = k \cdot \frac{2\pi}{n}}.$$

1325 When this holds, the fundamental bounce period and the orientation recurrence are

$$1327 T_{\text{bounce}} = 2, t_{\text{fly}} = \frac{2(R_o - R_i) \cos(\pi/n)}{v}, \quad T_{\text{orient}} = \frac{2\pi}{|\omega|} = \frac{n\Delta}{|k|v}.$$

1328 The minimal nonzero periodic rotation corresponds to  $|k| = 1$ .

1330 **Proof sketch.** (1) In a regular  $n$ -gon, opposite sides are parallel; the distance between their supporting  
 1331 lines is  $2a(R)$ . For concentric, co-oriented  $P_o, P_i$ , the normal gap between the corresponding  
 1332 supports is  $\Delta = a(R_o) - a(R_i)$ . (2) Launching exactly along a side normal produces specular  
 1333 reflections that preserve a straight, normal shuttle between parallel side families; the speed remains  
 1334  $v$ , so each one-way flight takes  $t_{\text{fly}} = \Delta/v$ . (3) During a one-way flight, the polygons rotate by  $\omega$ ,  $t_{\text{fly}}$ .  
 1335 For the next impact to occur on a side parallel to the previous one (so that the normal shuttle and  
 1336 impact geometry repeat), the side orientations must recur, which in a regular  $n$ -gon happens modulo  
 1337  $2\pi/n$ . Hence  $\omega, t_{\text{fly}} \equiv 0 \pmod{2\pi/n}$ , yielding the stated condition.

1338 **Construction recipe for `ROT_BOX` (periodic).** To instantiate periodic test scenes in the transforma-  
 1339 tive split

1. Choose  $n$  (even  $n$  makes the normal families align with diameters) and set circumradii  $(R_o, R_i)$   
 (or effective radii after finite-size shrink/expand).
2. Pick a speed  $v > 0$  and launch along a side normal of  $P_o$  (avoid vertex alignment by a tiny phase  
 offset).
3. Set the box angular velocity using  $|k| = 1$  in the closed form,  $\omega \leftarrow \frac{2\pi v}{n(R_o - R_i) \cos(\pi/n)}$ , and  
 co-rotate any inner boundary if present, or equivalently use  $\omega_{\text{rel}}$  for differential rotations.
4. The resulting shuttle has  $T_{\text{bounce}} = 2(R_o - R_i) \cos(\pi/n)/v$  and repeats in orientation every  
 $T_{\text{orient}} = n\Delta/v$ . For evaluation, sample timestamps on a uniform grid over several bounce  
 periods to probe phase stability.

1350 A.3 COMPETITION CODING  
1351

1352 *Competition Code* is a well-established domain where participants solve complex algorithmic prob-  
1353 lems. For a specified problem, the solver program is required to generate the correct output for  
1354 every input in the provided test suite. We curate 5 algorithmic families and collect several problems  
1355 per family from various well-known competitive programming platforms. We propose a phased  
1356 perturbation pipeline to create a comprehensive OOD dataset.

1357

1358 A.3.1 SEED FAMILIES AND COVERAGE  
1359

1360 We curate 3-5 seeds per algorithmic family. The current collection includes:

- 1361 • **Mo’s Algorithm (4):** *LuoguP1494, LuoguP4462, LuoguP4887, LuoguP5047*  
1362
- 1363 • **Segment Tree Decomposition (3):** *CF981E, CF1140F, LuoguP5787*  
1364
- 1365 • **CDQ D&C (3):** *CF848C, CF1045G, LuoguP4093.*  
1366
- 1367 • **Meet-in-the-Middle:** *CEOI2015-D2T1, LuoguP2962, SPOJ-ABCDEF,*  
*USACO2012USOpen-GoldP3*  
1368
- 1369 • **Square Root Decomposition (5):** *CF710D, CF797E, CF1207F, LuoguP3396, Lu-*  
*oguP8250.*  
1370

1371 Each seed problem is tagged with public problem code in websites like *CodeForces*, *AtCoder*, and  
1372 *Luogu*. Per seed, we target *5-10 perturbation strategies* (configurable; default 10). For narrative  
1373 coverage, we maintain a library of *20 background templates* (e.g., *Campus Life*, *Ancient Warfare*,  
1374 *Cyber Security*, *Energy Grid*, *Xuanhuan Fantasy*), and by default rewrite each perturbed seed into all  
1375 backgrounds.

1376 A.3.2 SYNTHESIS PIPELINE  
1377

1378 **Phase 1: Standardize seed problems.** This phase transforms heterogeneous problem statements  
1379 into a unified specification. First, the framework parses raw Markdown to extract core fields such as  
1380 the problem statement, input/output formats, constraints, and examples, and utilize LLMs to reduce  
1381 typographic ambiguities and make semantic clarifications.

1382 **Phase 2: Produce enumeration-based solutions for standardized seed problems.** This phase  
1383 generates a diverse set of feasible, though not necessarily optimal, reference implementations for  
1384 each standardized seed problem. Emphasis is placed on reliability rather than optimality, ensuring we  
1385 have correct solutions for small test cases.

1386 **Phase 3: Produce enumeration-based test case generators for standardized seed problems.** This  
1387 phase synthesizes test case generators grounded in original seed problems. By curating prompts for  
1388 LLMs, generators are designed to cover representative distributions and adversarial conditions.

1389 **Phase 4: Generate perturbation strategies.** This phase generates strategies how to perturb problems  
1390 systematically. Each strategy seed is curated by a human expert with at least 8 years of competitive  
1391 programming experience and designed for making a perturbation while keep the main solution  
1392 unchanged. These strategy seeds are standardized and extended to strategies with detailed instructions.

1393 **Phase 5-7: Generate perturbed problems, enumeration-based solutions and test case generators  
1394 according to strategies.** Phase 5 generates standardized perturbed problem statements, based on  
1395 perturbation strategies. Similar to phase 2 and phase 3, we generate corresponding solutions and test  
1396 case generators based on enumeration. When generating solutions, we provide the original problem  
1397 and solution to effectively improve the reliability.

1398 **Phase 8: Produce input constraint sanity check test case generators for standardized perturbed  
1399 problems.** To enhance the robustness of our evaluation, this phase produces input constraint sanity  
1400 check test case generators. Curated test case generators are designed for testing whether the solution  
1401 code can handle big test cases in a reasonable small time. Test case constraints are manually adapted  
1402 to the Python programming setting, guaranteeing no brute-force solutions can pass and all correct  
1403 Python solutions can be accepted.

1404  
 1405 **Phase 9: Produce background rewrites.** Finally, this phase provides an effective approach to  
 1406 generate OOD samples. By utilizing 20 background settings, the standardized perturbed seed  
 1407 problems are rewritten in different background stories, maintaining the same input/output formats  
 1408 and solutions. All these rewritten problems are final and ready to be involved in training.

1409 **A.3.3 EXAMPLE 1: SEGMENT TREE DECOMPOSITION – BIPARTITE OVER TIME**

1410 **Seed (excerpt).**

1411 “Given  $(n, m, k)$ . Each of the  $(m)$  edges is active on an interval  $([l, r])$  over the discrete  
 1412 timeline  $(1..k)$ . For each time  $(t)$ , determine whether the active subgraph is bipartite.”

1413 **Perturbation strategies (from Phase 2, sample).**

- 1414 • **Two-interval activation.** Replace each edge’s interval  $([l, r])$  with exactly two disjoint  
 1415 subintervals  $([l_1, r_1], [l_2, r_2])$ . The solver continues to use DSU-rollback over a segment tree  
 1416 covering time.
- 1417 • **Interval→Event rewrite.** Convert each interval to two explicit events: an add at  $(l)$ , a  
 1418 remove at  $(r+1)$ . Feed the event list unchanged into the segment-tree over time.
- 1419 • **Event-pair splitting.** Expand each add/remove into two sub-events (e.g., *prepare/apply*) to  
 1420 stress timeline density without changing the rollback design.

1421 **Before/After (Strategy-level variant).** *Before (seed):* time-varying edges with single intervals  $([l, r])$ .  
 1422 *After (strategy 1):* “Each edge is active exactly on two disjoint intervals  $([l_1, r_1])$  and  $([l_2, r_2])$ .  
 1423 For each  $(t)$  in  $(1..k)$ , is the subgraph bipartite?” Algorithmic essence and complexity remain the  
 1424 same: DSU with rollback over a segment tree on the time axis,  $O((n + m) \log k)$ .

1425 **A.3.4 EXAMPLE 2: SQUARE ROOT DECOMPOSITION – HASH-BUCKET GROUP SUMS**

1426 **Seed (excerpt).**

1427 “Given an array value. For many queries with modulus  $(p|n)$ , report the sum of numbers in  
 1428 bucket  $(x)$ , where index  $(k)$  belongs to bucket  $(k \bmod p)$ . Updates assign  $\text{value}_i \leftarrow y$ .”

1429 **Strategy-level perturbation (background-agnostic).** *Before:* group by  $(k \bmod p)$ . *After:*  
 1430 **Grouped Sequence Sum and Update Queries:**

1431 “Define  $H(i) = \sum_{k=0}^{K-1} S_k i^k \bmod M$ . Sum queries ask for the total over indices mapping  
 1432 to a given hash value  $(g)$ ; updates set  $A_i \leftarrow x$ .”

1433 This preserves the bucket-sum structure and the  $O(\cdot)$  behavior under small-(M) caching and updates,  
 1434 matching the seed’s enumeration profile while modestly changing the grouping function.

1435 **Background rewrite (Campus Life).** *Before (strategy-level):* abstract group sums under  $(H(i))$ .  
 1436 *After (background): Campus Club Scores:*

1437 “Student IDs  $(1..N)$  are assigned to clubs by a polynomial function  $(C(i))$ . Queries ask for  
 1438 the total score in club  $(g)$ ; updates change a student’s score.”

1439 Narrative terms shift (students/clubs/scores), but the formal mapping  $(C(i))$  and the I/O grammar  
 1440 remain intact so the variant’s enumerator and the background rewrite both agree on the 100-case  
 1441 oracle.

1442 **A.3.5 SUMMARY**

1443 By enumeration-first solutions and enforcing strategy-level clarity before rewriting, the pipeline makes  
 1444 large-scale, verifiable perturbation feasible. Standardization, deterministic test generation, and back-  
 1445 ground consistency checks together ensure that every variant—despite narrative diversity—remains  
 1446 faithful to the core algorithm and produces outputs consistent with the seed’s brute-force oracle. This  
 1447 methodology yields rich, well-structured families suitable for training, evaluation, and pedagogical  
 1448 use.

1458 B EXPERIMENT DETAILS  
14591460 **Models.** We use *Qwen3-4B-Instruct* as the reference instruction-tuned model for all experiments in  
1461 this paper.  
14621463 **Training Details.** We fine-tune with GRPO (Guo et al., 2025) using the Open-Instruct framework<sup>3</sup>.  
1464 Unless otherwise noted, the key arguments are:  
1465

```

1465 --beta 0.0 \
1466 --num_unique_prompts_rollout 48 \
1467 --num_samples_per_prompt_rollout 16 \
1468 --kl_estimator k13 \
1469 --learning_rate 5e-7 \
1470 --max_token_length 12240 \
1471 --max_prompt_token_length 2048 \
1472 --response_length 10192 \
1473 --pack_length 12240 \
1474 --apply_verifiable_reward true \
1475 --non_stop_penalty True \
1476 --non_stop_penalty_value 0.0 \
1477 --temperature 1.0 \
1478 --total_episodes 1000000 \
1479 --deepspeed_stage 2 \
1480 --per_device_train_batch_size 1 \
1481 --num_mini_batches 1 \
1482 --num_learners_per_node 8 \
1483 --num_epochs 1 \
1484 --vllm_tensor_parallel_size 1 \
1485 --clip_higher 0.3 \
1486 --vllm_num_engines 8 \
1487 --lr_scheduler_type constant \
1488 --seed 1 \
1489 --gradient_checkpointing \
1490

```

1489 Across all experiments—including the multi-stage schedules in the paper—we vary only (i) the  
1490 train/eval datasets, (ii) the base/reference model, and (iii) the scoring mode (full-pass reward vs.  
1491 per-test reward) to match the setting.  
14921493 **Datasets for learnability (Section 4).** *Manufactoria-HAS*: 742 training and 100 test examples.  
1494 *Manufactoria-START/APPEND/EXACT*: 350 training examples in total across the three fam-  
1495 ilies. *Manufactoria-REGEX*: 560 training examples. *Manufactoria-COMPR*: 535 training  
1496 examples.  
14971498 **Datasets for generalization (Section 5).** Unless otherwise specified, for each curated problem family  
1499 and each difficulty, we sample 1,000 training problems (Appendix A.2.4). In the setup of Figure 9(a),  
1500 the training set contains six families at the *Basic* level, totaling 6,000 training samples. Evaluation  
1501 comprises:  
1502

- **In-distribution (ID):** 100 test samples from the same *Basic* difficulty as training.
- **Explorative (OOD):** 100 test samples per family at each higher difficulty (*Easy*, *Medium*,  
1503 *Hard*).
- **Compositional (OOD):** 100 test samples per composed family at *Basic* difficulty.
- **Transformational (OOD):** 100 test samples per setting.

1504 **Evaluation Protocol.** Evaluation uses the same sampling configuration as training. Each score is  
1505 averaged over 4 runs.  
15061507 **Compute Resources.** Each RL run uses 16 NVIDIA H100 GPUs across two nodes and completes in  
1508 ~3 days for 1,000 optimization steps.  
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<sup>3</sup><https://github.com/allenai/open-instruct>

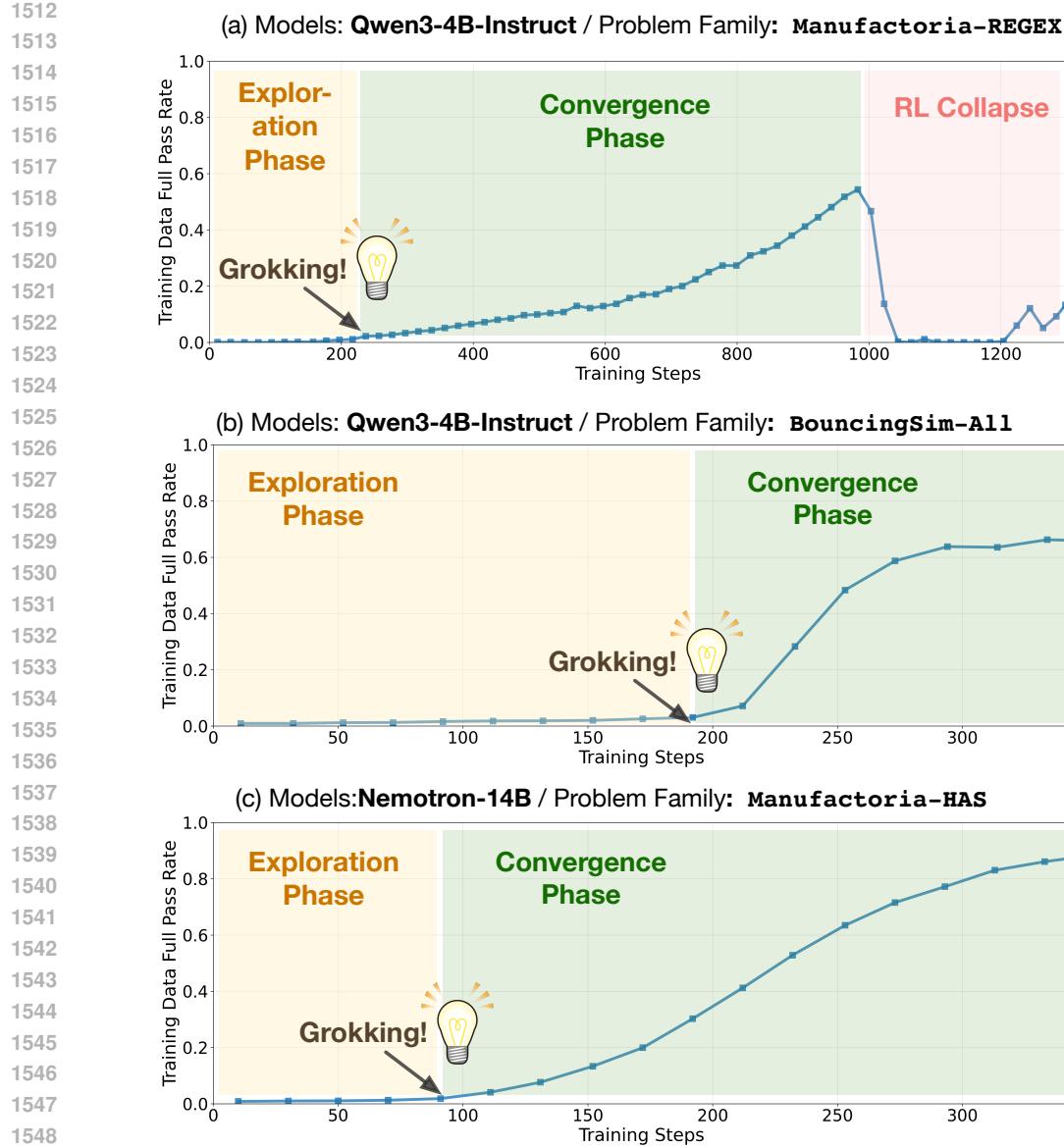


Figure 10: **Grokking across models and tasks.** (a) *Qwen3-4B-Instruct* on *Manufactoria-REGEX*; (b) *Qwen3-4B-Instruct* on *BouncingSim-All* (same training setup as in Figure 9); (c) *Nemotron-14B* on *Manufactoria-HAS*. Curves plot *training-data full pass rate* versus training steps. A consistent pattern emerges: a long exploration phase, an abrupt grokking transition, and a convergence regime; (a) also exhibits an RL collapse when training continues past convergence.

## C ADDITIONAL EXPERIMENTS

### C.1 GROKKING GENERALIZES ACROSS MODELS AND PROBLEM FAMILIES

Figure 10 demonstrates that the *RL grokking* phenomenon, an extended low-signal exploration phase followed by an abrupt phase transition and rapid convergence in training-data full-pass rate, can arise across (i) model sizes and families and (ii) distinct problem scopes.

Panel (a) shows *Qwen3-4B-Instruct* trained on *Manufactoria-REGEX*. After a long plateau, performance surges and subsequently enters a convergence regime. Continued training eventually triggers an *RL collapse*, highlighting the need for stabilization or early stopping once solutions consolidate. Panel (b) uses the same model on *BouncingSim-All*, a real-world ball-bouncing simulation

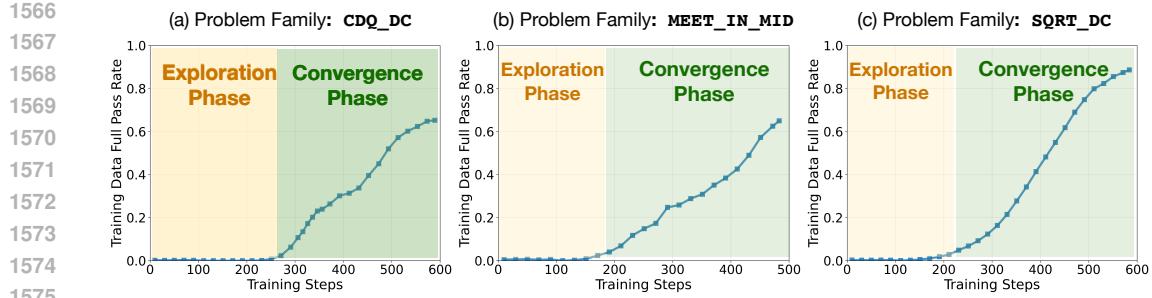


Figure 11: **Grokking across competition code tasks.** (a) *CDQ-DC*; (b) *MEET-IN-MID*; (c) *SQRT-DC*. Curves plot training data full pass rate versus training steps.

coding suite for real-world coding tasks. The same exploration to phase-transition to a convergence pattern appears. Panel (c) swaps the model family and scale to **Nemotron-14B** on *Manufactoria-HAS*, again reproducing the grokking phenomenon. We also provide additional experiments on the competition coding task problem families in Figure 11 that demonstrates the same trend.

Together, these results indicate that grokking is not an artifact of a particular backbone or a single synthetic family. It emerges with different parameter counts, across independent model lineages, and on tasks ranging from symbolic program synthesis to physics-driven simulation code. This supports the view that RL can *discover* new procedural strategies rather than merely sharpening pre-trained ones.

## C.2 WARM-UP BENEFITS BEYOND THE “PASS@K=0” PROBLEMS

Warm-up with per-test rewards is not only a rescue mechanism for tasks where the base policy never succeeds; it also helps when the initial success probability is small but non-zero ( $\text{pass}@k = \epsilon > 0$ ). In this regime the binary full-pass reward still provides a weak and high-variance signal, which can lead to slow or unstable improvement. A short warm-up phase with dense, per-test rewards (here: 100 steps) (i) accelerates discovery of partially correct behaviors, (ii) better stability, and (iii) delivers a more reliable starting point for the subsequent binary-reward phase. Empirically, we observe faster and steadier convergence with warm-up, whereas training that optimizes full-pass from scratch can remain sluggish and brittle, sometimes exhibiting late-stage regressions even after partial progress.

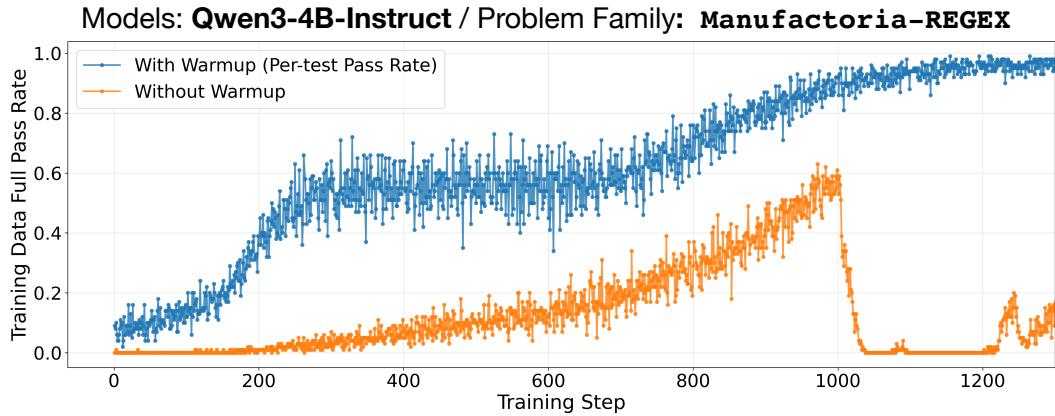


Figure 12: **Warm-up helps when  $\text{pass}@k$  is small but non-zero.** Training curves on *Manufactoria-REGEX* with *Qwen3-4B-Instruct*. The blue curve is trained **after a 100-step warm-up** using per-test rewards, then switched to the binary full-pass objective; it achieves faster and steadier gains. The orange curve trains full-pass from scratch and improves slowly with occasional regressions.

1620 **D USE OF LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL IN PAPER**  
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1622 LLM is only used for sentence polishing in the paper writing.  
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