
Evaluating Privacy Leakage From In-Context Learning

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Abstract

In-context Learning (ICL) is a promising approach for adapting pre-trained Large Language Models (LLMs) to a downstream task by providing relevant exemplars into a prompt. However, a recent concern is that these exemplars can contain privacy-sensitive information that can be unintentionally leaked/regurgitated through the LLM’s output. Prior work has demonstrated this privacy vulnerability through Membership Inference Attacks. Despite this, there lacks a systematic evaluation of the factors that contribute to unintended privacy leakage from ICL. In this work, we introduce ICLInf, a metric for measuring the potential privacy leakage of ICL exemplars that is inspired by the analysis of data-dependent differential privacy (DP) and counterfactual influence. Our experimental results demonstrate that potential privacy leakage can be exacerbated by certain factors, such as parametric knowledge, model size, and exemplar position. Moreover, we show that ICLInf can be used to provide a tight privacy audit for DP sample-based ICL methods (exponential mechanism) up to $\epsilon = 10$.

1 Introduction

Large Language Models (LLMs) have been shown to adapt to downstream stream tasks without fine-tuning by leveraging task-relevant exemplars into a prompt [3, 20]. This approach, known as In-context Learning (ICL) avoids modifying the model parameters, enabling a cost-effective alternative to fine-tuning. However, ICL raises concerns about unintentional privacy leakage of the exemplars since LLMs willingly regurgitate prompt data [29]. Indeed, prior work has shown that Membership Inference Attacks (MIAs) [24] can leak privacy of ICL exemplars [10, 31], motivating privacy-preserving solutions for ICL [1, 25, 32].

Although prior work has established that ICL is vulnerable to MIAs and differential privacy (DP) can mitigate these vulnerabilities, there lacks a systematic evaluation of the factors that influence unintended privacy leakage of ICL exemplars. For example, prior work observed that larger models leak less privacy from ICL exemplars [10]. Whereas, our results suggest a convex relationship between model size and privacy leakage, with leakage peaking in moderately sized models (3-7B parameters). Hence, this highlights the need for a more thorough investigation into how these factors influence privacy leakage. Such an investigation can provide useful insights and accurate privacy assessments that are crucial for practical deployments of LLMs equipped with ICL exemplars.

MIAs are an effective tool for evaluating privacy leakage [24] and have been recently applied to ICL to evaluate privacy leakage [10, 31]. However, the efficacy of this privacy evaluation relies on the strength of the instantiated MIA attack. Our work seeks to complement MIAs by precisely analyzing privacy leakage of ICL demonstrations rather than proposing attacks. To this end, we propose ICLInf, a novel approach for evaluating the privacy leakage of in-context learning (ICL) that follows the analysis of data-dependent DP [22, 23] and counterfactual influence [33]. The main concept is to evaluate how each exemplar in the prompt influences an LLM’s output. If the output changes substantially when removing an exemplar from the prompt, then the potential privacy leakage must be high. This is aligned with prior work that also utilized data-dependent DP for analyzing the privacy leakage of context data augmented to prompts [14].

Using ICLInf, we experimentally evaluate various factors that can exacerbate unintended privacy leakage of ICL exemplars. Moreover, we demonstrate that ICLInf can be used for tightly auditing DP sample-based ICL solutions.

2 Preliminaries

In-context Learning (ICL). Let \mathbf{x} be an input query and θ be the LLM parameters. Define $p_\theta(\cdot)$ to be an output distribution of the LLM. Hence, one can generate an output \mathbf{y} for \mathbf{x} by sampling from an LLM’s zero-shot output distribution $p_\theta(\mathbf{y}|\mathbf{x})$ conditioned on the input query \mathbf{x} .

Additionally, one can improve the output \mathbf{y} by including n number of exemplars for the LLM to learn the relevant input-output mapping. Let $D\{(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{y}_i)\}_{i=1}^n$ be a set of input-output exemplars. Then we can obtain \mathbf{y} by sampling from the few-shot output distribution $p_\theta(\mathbf{y}|D, \mathbf{x})$ [3].

Differential Privacy (DP) [11, 12] is widely-accepted privacy notion that guarantees a bound on the amount of information about a private dataset that the output of an algorithm can leak. Let $D^{-i} = D \setminus \{(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{y}_i)\}$ be the set of exemplars where the i -th input-output exemplar is removed.

Definition 2.1 (Pure Differential Privacy (DP) [13]). A randomized algorithm \mathcal{A} satisfies ϵ -DP if for all datasets D , $i \in [n]$ and all measurable sets E , it holds that

$$\Pr[\mathcal{A}(D) \in E] \leq e^\epsilon \Pr[\mathcal{A}(D^{-i}) \in E], \text{ and } \Pr[\mathcal{A}(D^{-i}) \in E] \leq e^\epsilon \Pr[\mathcal{A}(D) \in E]. \quad (1)$$

While achieving ϵ -DP for an algorithm provides a strong privacy guarantee, the privacy loss bound ϵ is not informative about the privacy loss incurred to individual input-output exemplars, which we are interested in. So instead we use data-dependent DP which gives us a privacy loss for a specific set of exemplars.

Definition 2.2 (Data-Dependent Differential Privacy (DP) [22]). A randomized algorithm \mathcal{A} satisfies $\epsilon(D)$ -DP if for all $i \in [n]$ and measurable sets E , it holds that

$$\Pr[\mathcal{A}(D) \in E] \leq e^{\epsilon(D)} \Pr[\mathcal{A}(D^{-i}) \in E], \text{ and } \Pr[\mathcal{A}(D^{-i}) \in E] \leq e^{\epsilon(D)} \Pr[\mathcal{A}(D) \in E]. \quad (2)$$

3 Method

We now introduce ICLInf. The core idea is to calculate the average data-dependent privacy loss from Equation 2 over a test set. This involves iterating through all neighboring prompts by removing one exemplar from the prompt then calculating the log-likelihood difference for each query.

Definition 3.1 (ICL Influence). Define $D_{\text{train}} = \{(\mathbf{x}_j, \mathbf{y}_j)\}_{j=1}^n$ to be a downstream dataset, S be a set of ICL exemplars randomly sampled from D_{train} , and $D_{\text{test}} = \{\mathbf{x}_j\}_{j=1}^m$ be a set of queries. Let \mathcal{A} be an algorithm that maps a set of ICL exemplars S and a query \mathbf{x}' to a probability distribution over possible tokens \mathcal{V} . Then

$$\text{ICLInf} = \mathbb{E}_{\substack{S \subset D_{\text{train}} \\ \mathbf{x}' \in D_{\text{test}}}} \left[\overbrace{\max_{(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \in S} \left\{ \max_{y \in \mathcal{V}} \left\{ \log \Pr[\mathcal{A}(S, \mathbf{x}') = y] - \log \Pr[\mathcal{A}(S \setminus \{(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})\}, \mathbf{x}') = y] \right\} \right\}}^{\text{Data-dependent DP privacy loss}} \right]. \quad (3)$$

output probability
with exemplars
output probability
without i-th exemplar

For Section 4.2, $\mathcal{A}(S, x)$ is the output distribution from the LLM $p_\theta(S, x)$, but renormalized such that only the class labels have nonzero probability. In other words, $p_\theta(y|S, x) = 0$ if $y \notin Y$ where Y

is the downstream class labels. For Section 5, $A(S, x)$ is the output distribution returned by a DP algorithm. To satisfy the DP requirement of a randomized algorithm, A must be sampling-based decoding, not greedy decoding algorithms such as argmax.

The expectation in Equation 3 can be empirically estimated by sampling a set of ICL exemplars S_j of equal size $|S_j| = n_{\text{shots}}$ for each query \mathbf{x}'_j with $j \in [m]$. Then we take the average privacy loss over the sampled exemplars and test set:

$$\widehat{\text{ICLInf}} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{j=1}^m \left(\max_{(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \in S_j} \max_{y \in \mathcal{V}} \{ |\log \Pr[A(S_j, \mathbf{x}'_j) = y] - \log \Pr[A(S_j \setminus \{(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})\}, \mathbf{x}'_j) = y]| \} \right). \quad (4)$$

If there is a large difference between including an exemplar or not, i.e. $\widehat{\text{ICLInf}}$ is large, then we consider this downstream dataset to have a large privacy leakage on the downstream tasks.

4 Factors That Influence ICL Privacy Leakage

For systematically assessing ICL exemplar privacy leakage risks during inference from LLMs, we present experiments designed to answer crucial questions about various factors that can affect $\widehat{\text{ICLInf}}$. Section 4.1 describes the experimental setup, then Section 4.2 details the questions and the corresponding experimental results to answer these questions. For the rest of the paper, we use $\widehat{\text{ICLInf}}$ and Privacy Loss interchangeably.

4.1 Experiment setup

Datasets & Models We evaluate our methodology on three text classification benchmark datasets, AG_News[35], DBpedia_14[34], and trec[28]. We experiment with three causal language models Gemma-2-9b-it[26], Llama-3.1-8B-Instruct[15], and Qwen-2.5-7B-Instruct[27].

Hyperparameter and evaluation For classification task, we perform 4-shot In-Context Learning on text classification task over 500 test queries. For each test query, the 4 shot examples are resampled independently without replacement from the training set. We apply our method on the sampling algorithm A from described in 3, where the output space is set as the *label* distribution by masking out non-label tokens and taking renormalization. Detailed prompt formatting is provided in appendix D.1.

Metrics For classification task, we report the accuracy score on the text-classification label set as well as the data-dependent privacy loss. The privacy result is aggregated in the form of mean \pm standard deviation across the test group.

4.2 Experimental Results

RQ 1: How does the parametric knowledge affect the privacy leakage of ICL exemplars?

Table 1: Accuracy (%) and data-dependent privacy loss (mean \pm std) on three datasets.

Model	AG News		DBpedia-14		TREC	
	Acc.	Priv. Loss	Acc.	Priv. Loss	Acc.	Priv. Loss
Gemma-2-9b-it	70.20	2.13 \pm 1.43	83.60	2.29 \pm 1.39	48.40	3.68 \pm 2.03
Llama-3.1-8B-Instruct	75.60	2.01 \pm 0.88	77.60	2.20 \pm 0.94	42.80	1.96 \pm 0.82
Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct	81.00	3.66 \pm 1.61	88.00	3.44 \pm 1.45	71.40	3.48 \pm 1.57

The accuracy scores from classification tasks and data-dependent privacy losses are presented in Table 1. We observe that privacy loss varies over different models and datasets, and we hypothesize that, when a model’s parametric knowledge fits the specific task domain well, the ICL exemplars likely contribute more trivial marginal evidence, leading to lower $\widehat{\text{ICLInf}}$. As a data-dependent metric, however, it does not necessarily reflect the model’s general privacy preserving guarantee, since the influence of parametric knowledge can vary by task.

RQ 2: How does the position of the ICL exemplar affect its privacy leakage?

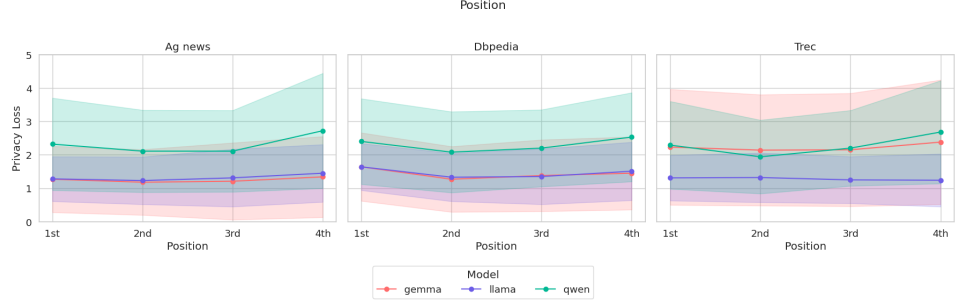


Figure 1: Privacy loss over positions in few-shot prompt

Figure 1 shows a *U-shape* pattern of ICLInf on individual positions of removed exemplar (before taking the max), where we observe higher loss at the *first* and *last* positions. We attribute this to the fact that the first exemplar initiates the LLM to the downstream tasks, so likely the models relies on it more than the second and third exemplars, which consequently have smaller influence. On the other hand, the last exemplar has high privacy leakage due to recency bias [36]. This highlights that the first and last exemplars require additional considerations with regards to potential privacy leakage.

RQ 3: How does the size of model affect its privacy leakage?

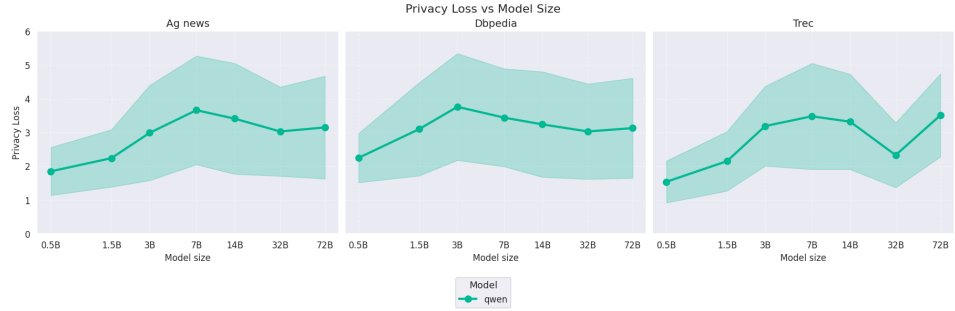


Figure 2: Privacy loss across different sizes of Qwen model

We compare ICLInf across Qwen variants with increasing parameter count, presented in Figure 2. The results show that the privacy loss starts low at 0.5B parameters, then peaks at around 7B. After 7B, the privacy loss decreases but then slightly rises again. We hypothesize that smaller models are not capable enough to utilize the ICL exemplars, while larger models are more capable but have more pre-training knowledge to rely on. Hence, increasing the model size increases model capability and pre-training memorization, which are confounders for measuring privacy leakage of ICL exemplars.

RQ 4: How does the number of ICL exemplars affect their privacy leakage?

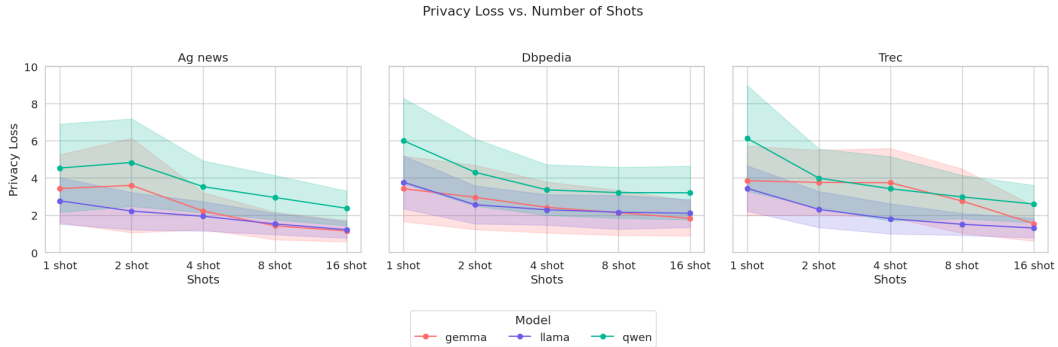


Figure 3: Privacy loss across different number of demonstrations in ICL

Figure 3 presents ICLInf across different numbers of in-context demonstrations on all three datasets. Generally, the privacy loss decreases as the number of demonstration increases, occurring most dramatically between 2-4 exemplars. This is due to the increased number of ICL exemplars diminishing the impact of any single exemplar on the LLM’s prediction, as shown in the mathematical construction of ICLInf. These results suggests that increasing the number of ICL exemplars can be an effective method for reducing the ICL privacy leakage.

RQ 5: How does the addition of calibration affect ICL privacy leakage?

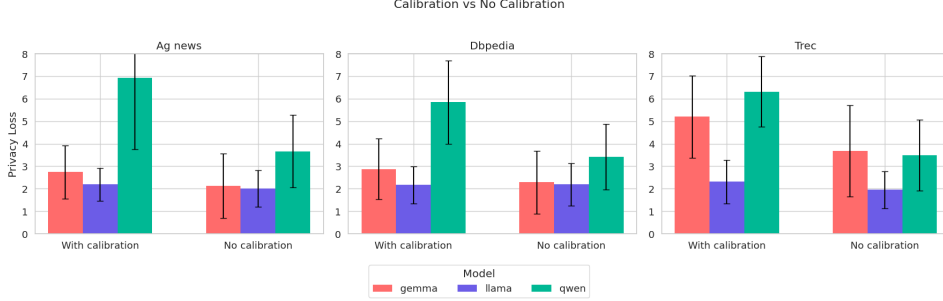


Figure 4: Privacy loss on label distribution with and without calibration

Figure 4 reports ICLInf with and without calibration across the three datasets. Overall, calibration consistently increases privacy loss for all models and datasets. Here the calibration is to rescale the output distribution by dividing a content-free baseline, in order to reduce the influence of model’s prior knowledge. It is reasonable that, after this process, the model depends more on in-context exemplars and thus incurs higher privacy loss. More detailed explanation on the calibration mechanism [36] is provided in Appendix B.

RQ6: How does ICL privacy leakage differ between pretrained and instruction-tuned models?

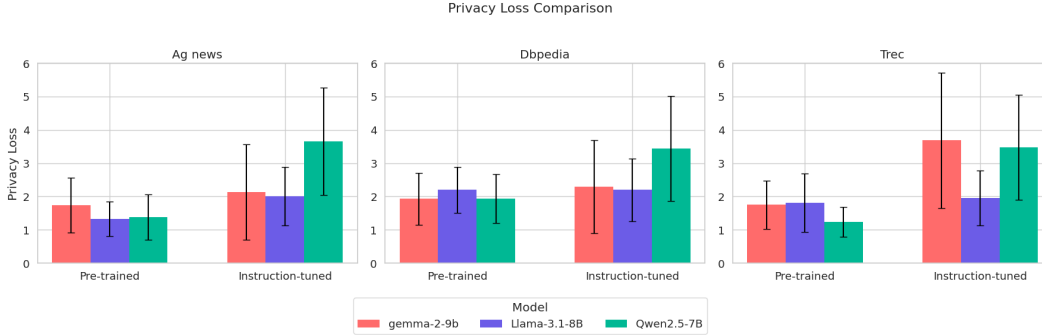


Figure 5: Privacy loss on pretrained models versus instruction-tuned models

Figure 5 compares ICLInf between pretrained and instruction-tuned models across the three datasets. We observe that instruction-tuned models always exhibit higher privacy loss than their pretrained counterparts (especially for Qwen model). This is reasonable since instruction tuning is training models to be more responsive to user prompts, which at the same time makes models more sensitive to contextual information, thus leading to higher privacy leakage.

5 Privacy Auditing

We demonstrate how we can use ICLInf audit a sampling-based DP ICL algorithm on synthetic text generation inspired from [1] (details in Appendix C.1). To apply ICLInf in this setting, we (1) sum the data-dependent privacy loss across inferences rather than average to account for composition of DP; And we perform the data-dependent privacy loss calculation using Renyi Divergence, shown in Eq. 7. Moreover, the algorithm output space is the full vocabulary distribution, rather than just the label output distribution from classification task.

5.1 Experimental Setup

We evaluate data-dependent privacy loss in synthetic text generation by constructing batches of one-shot prompts from AG_News that instruct example generation. In each batch, we apply a clipping-and-aggregation procedure on the output logits to obtain an averaged distribution, which is sampled for the next token. We create neighboring batches by systematically removing one prompt each time and recompute the output distribution. By comparing neighboring distributions against the original, we derive our data-dependent privacy loss.

The Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct model was used for the privacy auditing. A total of 50 synthetic examples was generated, each with max token length of $T = 40$. For the hyperparameters used in the DP synthetic generation algorithm, the number of one-shot prompts in a batch was set to $s=50$, and the logit clipping bound is $c=10$. We tune the temperature τ to meet the theoretical $\epsilon_{\text{theoretical}}$. We report $\epsilon_{\text{theoretical}}$ and data-dependent $\epsilon_{\text{empirical}}$ from our method. The experiment is repeated across a set of δ values, which is involved in the RDP-DP conversion. More details about the experimental setup can be found in Appendix C.

5.2 Results

The result is presented in Figure 6. We observe an evident pattern that our data-dependent privacy loss grows slower as theoretical privacy loss rises. The ratio of $\epsilon_{\text{empirical}}$ to the theoretical counterpart drops from roughly 97% to 24% as $\epsilon_{\text{theoretical}}$ rises from 1 to 100. For larger privacy budgets the RDP optimizer settles at the minimal Rényi Divergence order ($\alpha = 2$), which widens the gap between theoretical and empirical ϵ . Meanwhile, altering δ leads to different α in RDP-DP conversion, as reflected in the stage-like patterns of $\epsilon_{\text{empirical}}$. The result implies that ICLInf provides a tighter privacy bound on this ICL synthetic text generation algorithm for $\epsilon_{\text{theoretical}} \leq 10$, offering a more comprehensive assessment for applied privacy loss analysis.

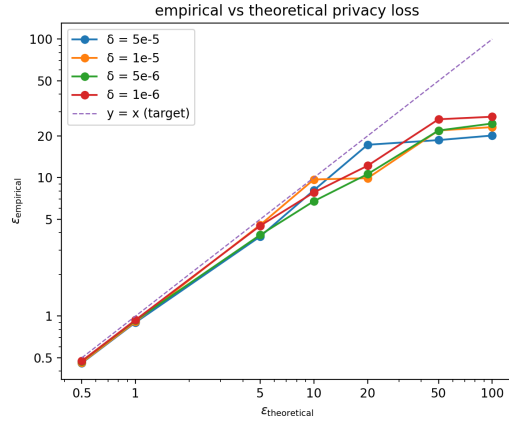


Figure 6: Target/theoretical $\epsilon(x)$ vs. empirical $\epsilon(y)$ across δ ($s = 50$, $C = 10$). Log-log plot (base-10).

6 Conclusion

In this work, we introduce ICLInf, a simple method for estimating the average privacy leakage of ICL exemplars during decoding. Using ICLInf, we demonstrated how various factors such as model size, number of exemplars, and exemplar position, can affect the privacy leakage. Furthermore, we showed how ICLInf can effectively privacy audit a sampling-based DP prediction algorithm for up to $\epsilon = 10$. We hope that ICLInf can be used by practitioners to better understand privacy leakage of downstream data when deploying ICL systems that utilize LLMs.

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A Related Works

Membership Inference Attacks. Analyzing the privacy risks of ICL exemplars during decoding is a crucial, but understudied problem. Membership Inference Attacks (MIAs) are an effective way to measure this privacy risk [24, 18, 19, 8, 5]. In particular, there are two main works that specifically focused on MIAs for ICL [10, 31]. In addition to proposing MIAs for ICL, they also looked into some factors that could influence leakage of ICL exemplars. Our work seeks to compliment these two works by reevaluating these factors, as well evaluate other unconsidered factors such as calibration and SFT vs pre-trained, to better understand their effects on privacy leakage of ICL exemplars. Specifically, [10] observed that larger models leak less privacy, whereas we found that moderately sized LLMs (3B-7B) leak the most. [31] measured membership inference for the first and last exemplar while varying the number of exemplars, while we measured privacy leakage across all exemplars when varying the number of exemplars. Additionally, [31] found that exemplars in the middle exhibit lower vulnerability compared to those in the beginning and end, which aligns with our results.

Privacy Auditing Privacy auditing is a useful tool for establishing an empirical lower bound of the privacy leakage of a DP algorithm [9, 16]. One line of work proposed privacy auditing for private prediction based DP algorithms. Chadha et al.[6] audited private prediction mechanisms (sample-aggregate/noisy-argmax) using Rényi-DP tests. Want et al.[30] explored the privacy leakage in the stochastic outputs of the DP prediction algorithm PATE via repeated test queries. Another line of work focused on DP In-Context Learning algorithms. Choi et al.[7] inserted unique canaries into exemplars and used targeted queries to test whether the canaries can be detected after private aggregation. Our method ICLInf follows this line but instead relies on contextual influence of individual exemplar to audit privacy leakage.

B Calibration

Let $\hat{\mathbf{p}}_{\text{cf}}$ be the model’s label distribution obtained from the same prompt template with the content left blank (the content-free input). Define the diagonal transform

$$\mathbf{W} = \text{diag}((\hat{\mathbf{p}}_{\text{cf}} + \epsilon)^{-1}),$$

with a small $\epsilon > 0$ for stability. Then we compute $\mathbf{W}\tilde{\mathbf{p}}$ to obtain the calibrated distribution of $\tilde{\mathbf{p}}$ and take argmax for prediction.

C Additional Details on Privacy Analysis for Privacy Auditing

C.1 Algorithm for auditing

We audit *Algorithm 2* of [1] (Appendix D.4), reproduced as Algorithm 1 below.

Algorithm 1 Private token generation

Input: Sensitive prompt dataset D , initial token sequence \mathbf{x}_0
Output: Token sequence $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}^*$

- 1: $\mathbf{x} \leftarrow \mathbf{x}_0$
- 2: $Z \leftarrow \{\text{logits}(\mathbf{p}\mathbf{x}) : \mathbf{p} \in D\}$
- 3: $\bar{\mathbf{z}} \leftarrow \ell(Z)$
- 4: $x \sim \text{softmax}(\bar{\mathbf{z}}/\tau)$
- 5: Append x to \mathbf{x}
- 6: **return** \mathbf{x} .

with

$$\ell(Z) = \frac{1}{s} \sum_{\mathbf{z} \in Z} \text{clip}_c(\mathbf{z}) \quad \text{clip}_c(\mathbf{z})_i = \max\{-c, \mathbf{z}_i - \max_j \{\mathbf{z}_j\} + c\}$$

C.2 Properties of DP and RDP in Algorithm 1 and ICLInf

Definition C.1. (Renyi Divergence) For two probability distributions P and Q defined over \mathcal{R} , the Renyi divergence of order $\alpha > 1$ is

$$D_\alpha(P||Q) = \frac{1}{\alpha - 1} \log \mathbb{E}_{x \sim Q} \left[\left(\frac{P(x)}{Q(x)} \right)^\alpha \right]. \quad (5)$$

We also define a short-hand notation

$$D_\alpha^{\leftrightarrow}(P||Q) = \max\{D_\alpha(P||Q), D_\alpha(Q||P)\}. \quad (6)$$

Theorem C.2 (zCDP of Algorithm 1, lemma 4 from [1]). *Let $A(D, x_0)$ be Algorithm 1 with clipping level $c > 0$, batch size $s \in \mathbb{N}$, and temperature $\tau > 0$. Then the mechanism $M : D \mapsto A(D, x_0)$ satisfies*

$$\rho\text{-zCDP with } \rho = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{c}{s\tau} \right)^2.$$

Theorem C.3 (Conversion from zCDP to RDP, Def. 1 from [4] & Def. 4 from [21]). *If a mechanism M satisfies ρ -zCDP, then for every order $\alpha > 1$ it satisfies $(\alpha, \varepsilon(\alpha))$ -RDP with*

$$\varepsilon(\alpha) = \rho \alpha.$$

Theorem C.4 (Exponential Mechanism (EM) privacy [12]). *The EM with sampling probability $\propto \exp(\frac{\varepsilon}{2\Delta_f} f(D, x))$ is $(\varepsilon, 0)$ -DP with*

$$\varepsilon = 2\Delta_f.$$

Theorem C.5 (DP and RDP bounds of exponential mechanism, theorem 8 from [32]). *The exponential mechanism is ε -DP, and $(\alpha, \varepsilon_{\text{EM}}(\alpha))$ -RDP s.t.*

$$\varepsilon_{\text{EM}}(\alpha) := \min \left(\frac{\alpha}{2} \varepsilon^2, \frac{1}{\alpha - 1} \log \left(\frac{\sinh(\alpha\varepsilon) - \sinh((\alpha - 1)\varepsilon)}{\sinh(\varepsilon)} \right) \right).$$

Theorem C.6 (Data-dependent RDP). *Fix an order $\alpha > 1$. Let $A(D, x_0)$ denote the output distribution of Algorithm 1 on dataset D with initial token x_0 . Let $A(D \setminus \{\mathbf{p}\}, x_0)$ is the output distribution under the remove-one neighboring batch. The data-dependent RD privacy loss of A at order α is*

$$\varepsilon_A(D; \alpha) = \max_{\mathbf{p} \in D} D_\alpha^{\leftrightarrow}(A(D, x_0) || A(D \setminus \{\mathbf{p}\}, x_0)), \quad (7)$$

Theorem C.7 (Composition [21]). *Let A_1 and A_2 satisfy (α, ε_1) -RDP and (α, ε_2) -RDP on the same dataset. Then their composition $A_1 \circ A_2$ satisfies*

$$(\alpha, \varepsilon_1 + \varepsilon_2)\text{-RDP}.$$

Theorem C.8 (RDP $\rightarrow (\varepsilon, \delta)$ conversion (BBGHS) [2]). *Let a mechanism satisfy $(\alpha, \varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha))$ -RDP for some $\alpha > 1$. Then, for any $\delta \in (0, 1)$, it is (ε, δ) -DP with*

$$\varepsilon = \varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha) + \log \frac{\alpha - 1}{\alpha} - \frac{\log \delta + \log \alpha}{\alpha - 1}.$$

Theorem C.9 (Bounded–Unbounded translation for pure DP [17]). *If a mechanism M is ε -DP under the **unbounded** (add/remove) adjacency, then it is 2ε -DP under the **bounded** (change-one) adjacency. Conversely, ε -DP under **bounded** implies $\varepsilon/2$ -DP under **unbounded**.*

C.3 Privacy Calculation

C.3.1 Theoretical privacy loss on Algorithm 1

By Theorem C.2 and C.3, Algorithm 1 satisfies RDP with

$$\varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha) = \frac{\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{c}{s\tau} \right)^2. \quad (8)$$

By lemma 3 from [1], Algorithm 1 is the exponential mechanism with sensitivity $\Delta = \frac{c}{s\tau}$. Then combining Theorem C.4, C.5, and equation 8, we derive that the theoretical RDP privacy loss of Algorithm 1 is bounded by

$$\varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha) := \min \left(\frac{\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{c}{s\tau} \right)^2, \frac{1}{\alpha - 1} \log \left(\frac{\sinh(\frac{2\alpha c}{s\tau}) - \sinh((\alpha - 1)\frac{2c}{s\tau})}{\sinh(\frac{2c}{s\tau})} \right) \right).$$

At each token-generation step, Algorithm 1 is invoked once. Thus by the RDP composition theorem (Theorem C.7), the total theoretical RDP for one experiment with N_{gen} sequences and at most T_{max} new tokens per sequence satisfies

$$\varepsilon_{\text{theoretical}}(\alpha) \leq N_{\text{gen}} T_{\text{max}} \varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha)$$

C.3.2 Matching $\varepsilon_{\text{theoretical}}(\alpha)$ to $\varepsilon_{\text{target}}$

Since the target ε 's for testing are defined in pure DP, we employ the following two algorithms to match $\varepsilon_{\text{theoretical}}(\alpha)$ to target ε . We first provide Algorithm 2 to convert RDP to Approximate DP based on Theorem C.8, which searches over the range of orders to find optimal $(\varepsilon^*, \alpha^*)$.

Algorithm 2 RDP_TO_APPROXDP

```

1: Input: failure prob.  $\delta \in (0, 1)$ ; candidate orders  $\mathcal{A} \subset (2, 100)$ ; RDP function  $\varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha)$ 
2: Output: optimal  $(\varepsilon^*, \alpha^*)$  such that the mechanism is  $(\varepsilon^*, \delta)$ -DP
3:  $\varepsilon^* \leftarrow +\infty$ ,  $\alpha^* \leftarrow \perp$ 
4: for  $\alpha \in \mathcal{A}$  do
5:    $\varepsilon \leftarrow \varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha) + \log \frac{\alpha - 1}{\alpha} - \frac{\log \delta + \log \alpha}{\alpha - 1}$ 
6:   if  $\varepsilon < \varepsilon^*$  then
7:      $\varepsilon^* \leftarrow \varepsilon$ ;  $\alpha^* \leftarrow \alpha$ 
8:   end if
9: end for
10: return  $(\varepsilon^*, \alpha^*)$ 

```

We apply Algorithm 2 on the RDP function $\varepsilon_{\text{theoretical}}(\alpha)$ to obtain $\varepsilon_{\text{theoretical}}$, and we tune the temperature τ with (c, s) fixed so that $\varepsilon_{\text{theoretical}}$ matches to the target ε . We perform a binary search on τ ; at each binary step Algorithm 2 is invoked to obtain ε_τ at current τ , and it is compared against the $\varepsilon_{\text{target}}$ to shrink the search interval accordingly. In practice, $N = 22$ is sufficient to reduce the gap below a small tolerance. The detailed procedure is given in Algorithm 3.

Algorithm 3 Binary search over temperature τ

```

1: Input: target  $\varepsilon_{\text{target}}$ ; failure prob.  $\delta$ ; candidate orders  $\mathcal{A}$ ; bounds  $t_{\min} < t_{\max}$ ; iterations  $N$ ; RDP function  $\varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha; \tau)$ 
2: Output:  $(\tau^*, \alpha^*, \varepsilon^*)$  with  $(\varepsilon^*, \delta)$ -DP and  $\varepsilon^* \approx \varepsilon_{\text{target}}$ 
3:  $\ell \leftarrow t_{\min}$ ,  $h \leftarrow t_{\max}$ 
4: for  $i = 1$  to  $N$  do
5:    $\tau \leftarrow \frac{\ell + h}{2}$ 
6:    $(\varepsilon_\tau, \alpha_\tau) \leftarrow \text{RDP\_TO\_APPROXDP}(\delta, \mathcal{A}, \alpha \mapsto \varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha; \tau))$ 
7:   if  $\varepsilon_\tau \leq \varepsilon_{\text{target}}$  then
8:      $h \leftarrow \tau$ 
9:   else
10:     $\ell \leftarrow \tau$ 
11:   end if
12: end for
13:  $\tau^* \leftarrow \frac{\ell + h}{2}$ 
14:  $(\varepsilon^*, \alpha^*) \leftarrow \text{RDP\_TO\_APPROXDP}(\delta, \mathcal{A}, \alpha \mapsto \varepsilon_{\text{RDP}}(\alpha; \tau^*))$ 
15: return  $(\tau^*, \alpha^*, \varepsilon^*)$ 

```

C.3.3 Data-dependent privacy loss by ICLInf

We take the optimal order α^* returned by Algorithm 3. For token step t , the per-token data-dependent RDP is

$$\varepsilon_A^{(t)}(D; \alpha^*) = \max_{\mathbf{p} \in D} D_{\alpha^*}^{\leftrightarrow}(A_t(D, x_0) \parallel A_t(D \setminus \{\mathbf{p}\}, x_0))$$

By composition (Theorem C.7), the total data-dependent RDP is stacked over all generated tokens,

$$\varepsilon_A^{(1:T)}(D; \alpha^*) = \sum_{t=1}^T \varepsilon_A^{(t)}(D; \alpha^*).$$

Then we convert it back to approximate DP by Theorem C.8:

$$\varepsilon(\delta; \alpha^*) = \varepsilon_A^{(1:T)}(D; \alpha^*) + \log \frac{\alpha^* - 1}{\alpha^*} - \frac{\log \delta + \log \alpha^*}{\alpha^* - 1}.$$

Our data-dependent privacy loss is evaluated on unbounded adjacency (remove-one neighbors), while the theoretical privacy loss is defined on bounded adjacency, thus by Theorem C.9 we have the final privacy loss from ICLInf:

$$\varepsilon_{\text{empirical}} = 2\varepsilon(\delta; \alpha^*).$$

D Additional Experimental Setup

D.1 Classification Prompt Format

We report the prompt we used for classification task in Table 2, which are taken from table 5 of [36] with slight modification. The ellipsis refers to the rest of in-context demonstrations.

D.2 Synthetic Generation Prompt Format

We provide the prompt used for synthetic example generation task in Table 3. We follow the setup in the original paper of algorithm 1 [1] (Figure 4), where the one-shot private example and generated example should have the same label. For clarity, we fix the label to "Sports" in our experiment.

E Additional Experimental Results

E.1 Factors Affecting ICL Privacy Leakage

RQ: How does the pattern of ICL privacy leakage change when measured on the full logits distribution compared to the label-only distribution?

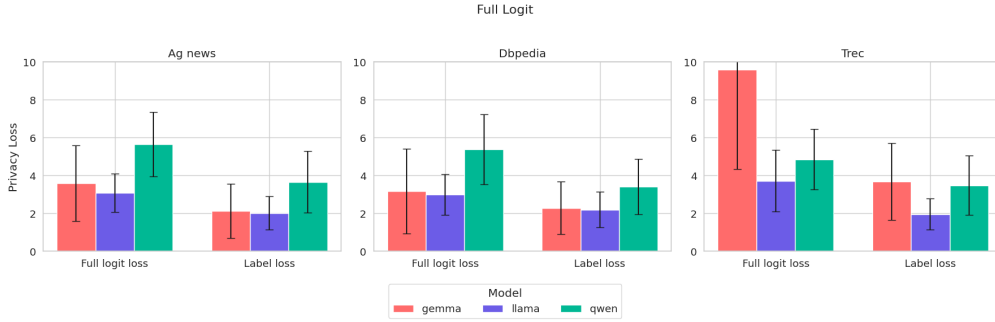


Figure 7: Privacy loss measured on full logits distribution versus label-only distribution

Figure 7 compares ICLInf measured on full logits distribution versus on label distribution (default setup) across all three datasets. In all cases, privacy loss is higher when computed over the full logits, with more substantial difference for Qwen and Gemma models. Mathematically, adding values for non-label tokens can typically increase the difference between output distributions, which reveals more information about the context, thus reducing the output space can greatly improve the privacy over keeping the entire output space.

E.2 Privacy Auditing

$\epsilon_{\text{theoretical}}$ is mainly determined by the clip threshold c , subsample size s , and temperature τ applied in softmax. In Algorithm 3, we vary τ to match a desired target ϵ , and we also developed similar

Table 2: The prompts used during ICL for text classification tasks

Task	Prompt	Labels
AGNews	<p>Classify the news articles into the categories of World, Sports, Business, and Technology. Output only the category name (no explanations or extra text) as the first token.</p> <p><i>Article:</i> Wall St. Bears Claw Back Into the Black NEW YORK (Reuters) - Short-sellers, Wall Street’s dwindling band of ultra-cynics, are seeing green again. <i>Answer:</i> Business</p> <p>...</p> <p><i>Article:</i> Rescuing an Old Saver If you think you may need to help your elderly relatives with their finances, don’t be shy about having the money talk – soon. <i>Answer:</i></p>	World, Sports, Business, Technology
DBPedia	<p>Classify the documents based on whether they are about one of Company, School, Artist, Athlete, Politician, Transportation, Building, Nature, Village, Animal, Plant, Album, Film, or Book. Output only the category name (no explanations or extra text) as the first token.</p> <p><i>Article:</i> Bergan Mercy Medical Center is a hospital located in Omaha Nebraska. It is part of the Alegent Health System. <i>Answer:</i> Company</p> <p>...</p> <p><i>Article:</i> Fargo Moorhead Metro Area Transit (popularly known as MAT or MATBUS) is a bus company serving the Fargo North Dakota and Moorhead Minnesota Metropolitan area. <i>Answer:</i></p>	Company, School, Artist, Athlete, Politician, Transportation, Building, Nature, Village, Animal, Plant, Album, Film, Book
TREC	<p>Classify the questions based on whether their answer type is a Number, Location, Person, Description, Entity, or Abbreviation. Output only the question type (no explanations or extra text) as the first token.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> How did serfdom develop in and then leave Russia? <i>Answer Type:</i> Description</p> <p>...</p> <p><i>Question:</i> When was Ozzy Osbourne born? <i>Answer Type:</i></p>	Number, Location, Person, Description, Entity, Abbreviation

Table 3: The prompts used during ICL for text generation tasks.

Task	Prompt	Labels
AGNews	<p>Given a label of news type, generate the chosen type of news accordingly.</p> <p><i>News Type:</i> Sports</p> <p><i>Text:</i> Galaxy, Crew Play to 0-0 Tie (AP)</p> <p>AP - Kevin Hartman made seven saves for Los Angeles, and Jon Busch had two saves for Columbus as the Galaxy and Crew played to a 0-0 tie Saturday night.</p> <p><i>News Type:</i> Sports</p> <p><i>Text:</i> ...</p>	Sports

versions of Algorithm 3 that search on c and s respectively. The results display consistent patterns, which are shown in Table 4, 5, 6.

Table 4: Privacy auditing results on varying temperature ($s = 50$, $c = 10$)

ϵ_{target}	Temperature	α	$\epsilon_{\text{empirical}}$	Ratio
0.5	68.58	32	0.462	0.924
1	36.18	18	0.910	0.910
5	8.53	5	4.556	0.911
10	4.80	3	9.698	0.970
20	2.81	3	9.900	0.495
50	1.42	2	21.892	0.438
100	0.94	2	23.158	0.232

Table 5: Privacy auditing on varying clip bound ($s = 50$, $\tau = 2$).

ϵ_{target}	Clip threshold	α	$\epsilon_{\text{empirical}}$	Ratio
1	0.55	18	0.916	0.916
5	2.34	5	4.526	0.905
10	4.16	3	9.65	0.965
50	14.12	2	20.782	0.416
100	21.20	2	20.774	0.208

Table 6: Privacy auditing on varying subset size ($c = 10$, $\tau = 2$).

ϵ_{target}	Subset size	$\epsilon_{\text{data-dep.}}$	$\epsilon_{\text{empirical}}$	Ratio
5	214	5	4.598	0.920
10	121	4	6.374	0.637
50	36	2	21.118	0.422
100	24	2	22.066	0.221