Downloading a Billion Files in Python

A case study in multi-threading, multi-processing, and asyncio

James Saryerwinnie

@jsaryer

Our Task

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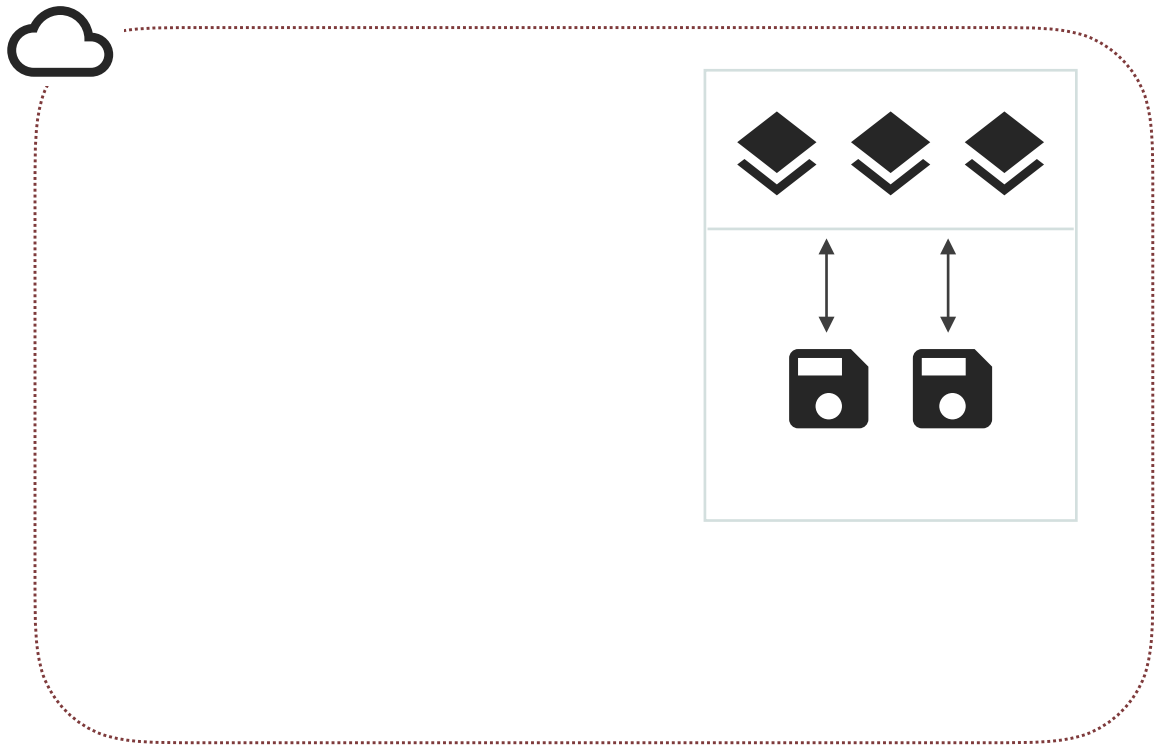
There is a remote server that stores files



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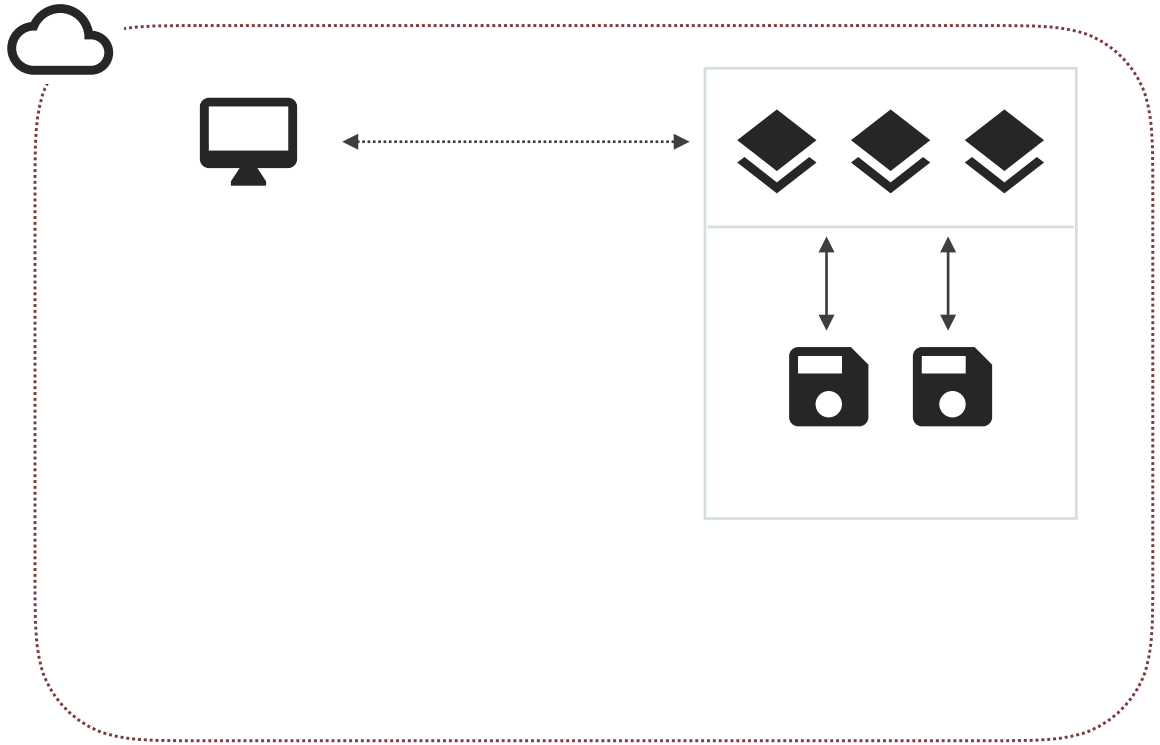

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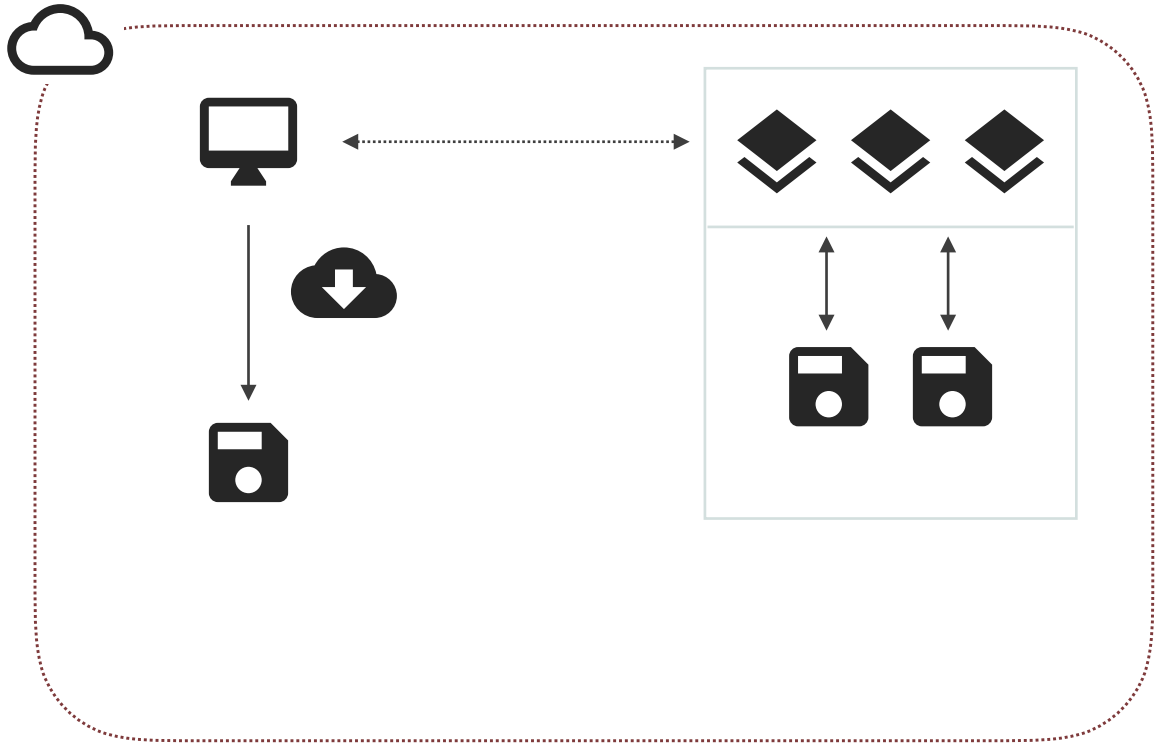
The files can be accessed through a REST API

Our task is to download all the files on the remote server to our client machine



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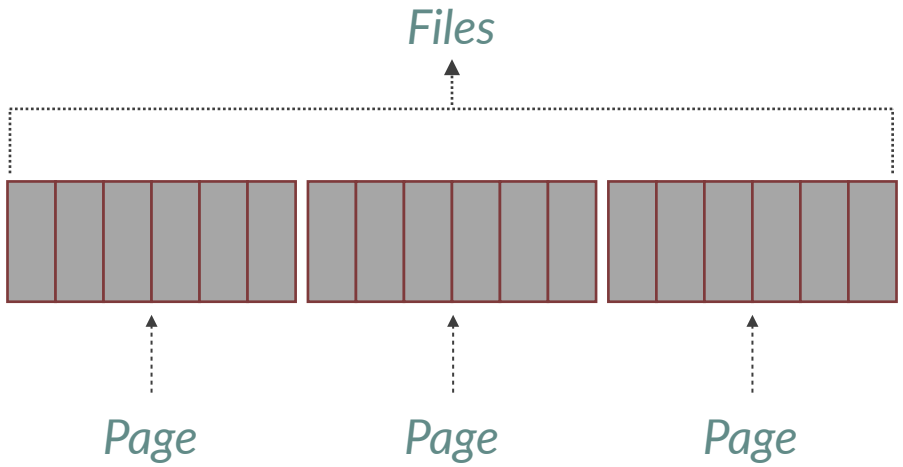
When do you need this done?

Please have this done as soon as possible

File Server Rest API



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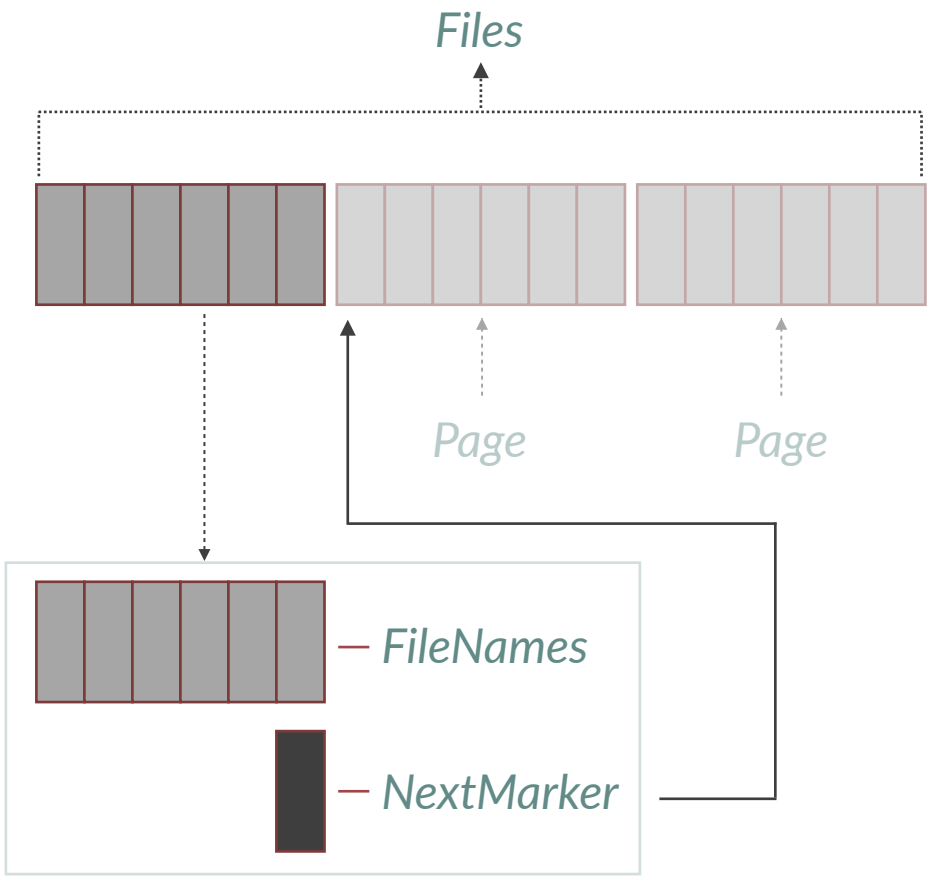

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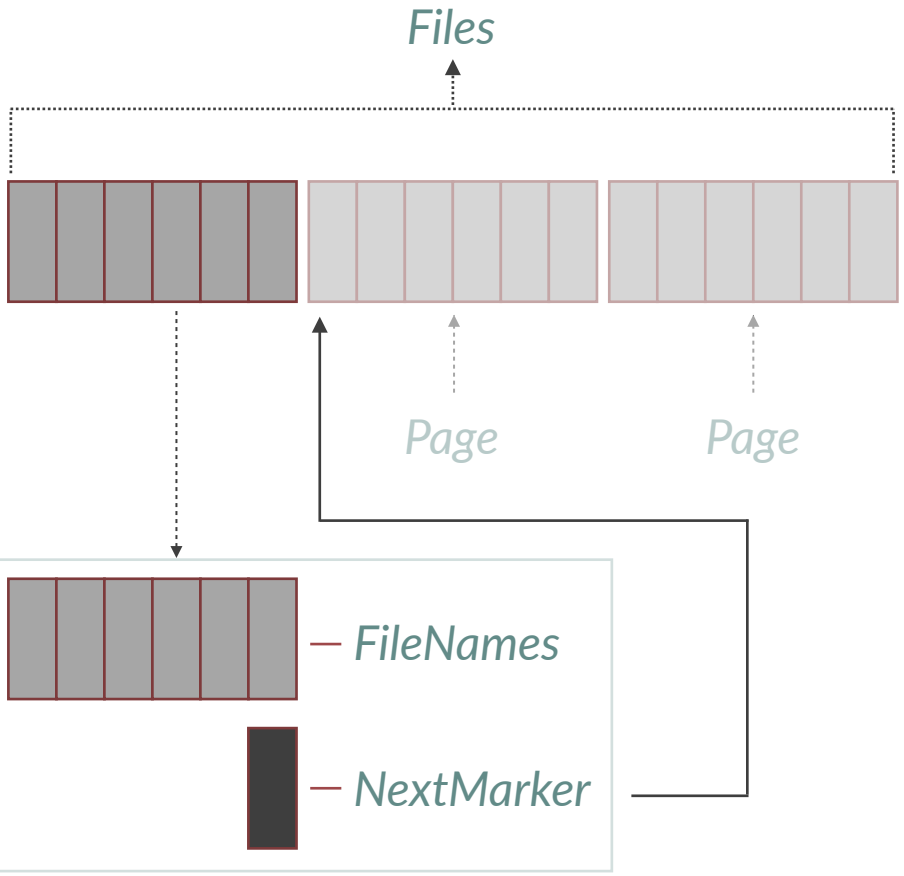


```
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File Server Rest API

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GET /list?next-marker=token
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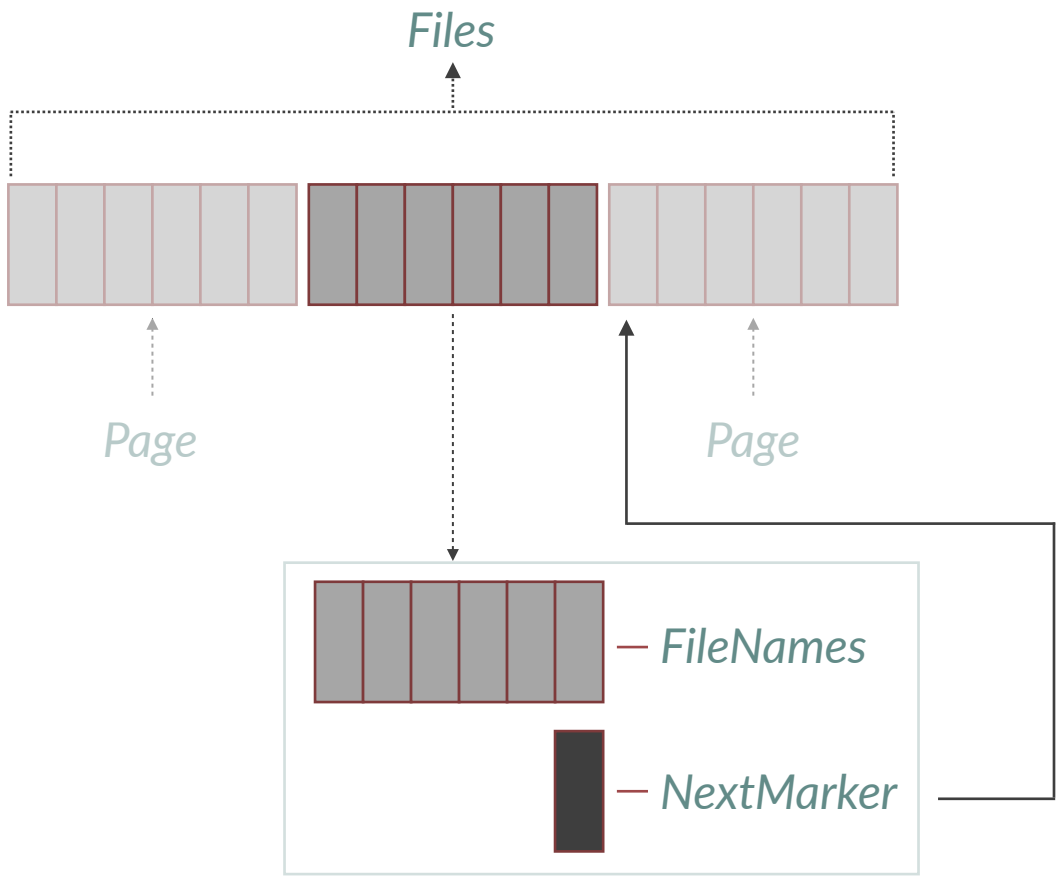

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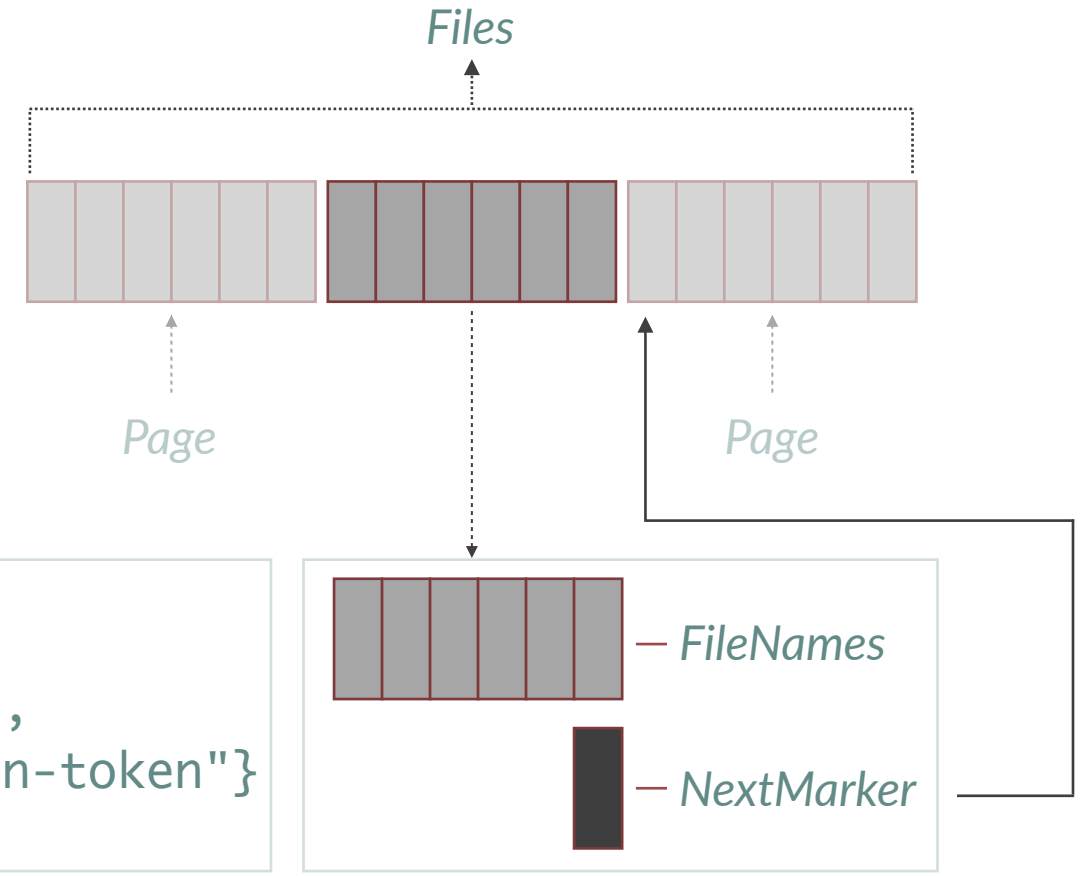


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File Server Rest API

`GET /list`	`{"FileNames": ["file1", "file2", ...]}`
`GET /list?next-marker={token}`	`{"FileNames": ["file1", "file2", ...], "NextMarker": "pagination-token"}`
`GET /get/{filename}`	(File blob content)

Caveats

This is a simplified case study.

The results shown here don't necessarily generalize.

Not an apples to apples comparison, each approach does things slightly different

Sometimes concrete examples can be helpful

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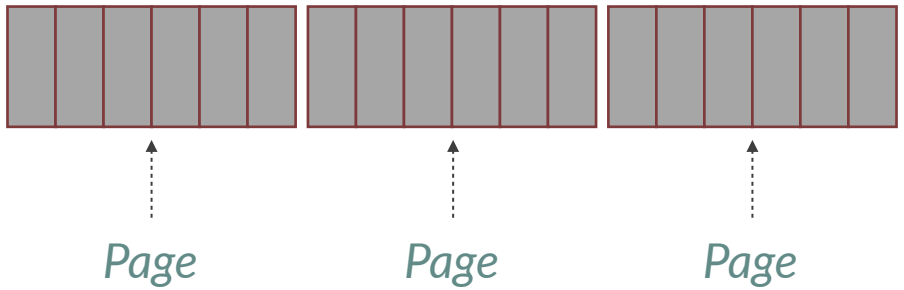
Always profile and test for yourself

Synchronous Version

Simplest thing that could possibly work.

Synchronous



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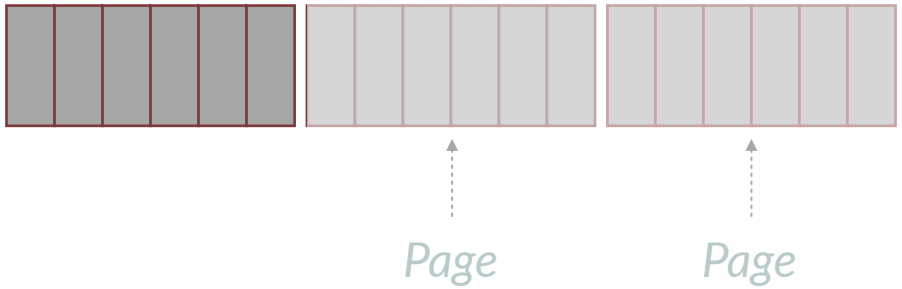

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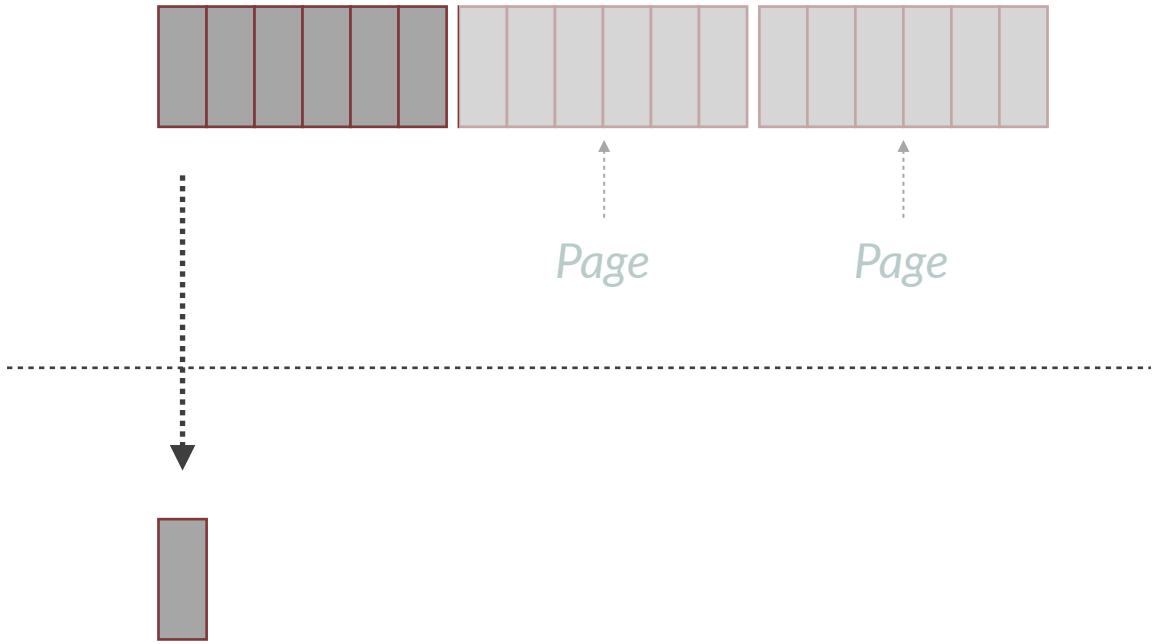

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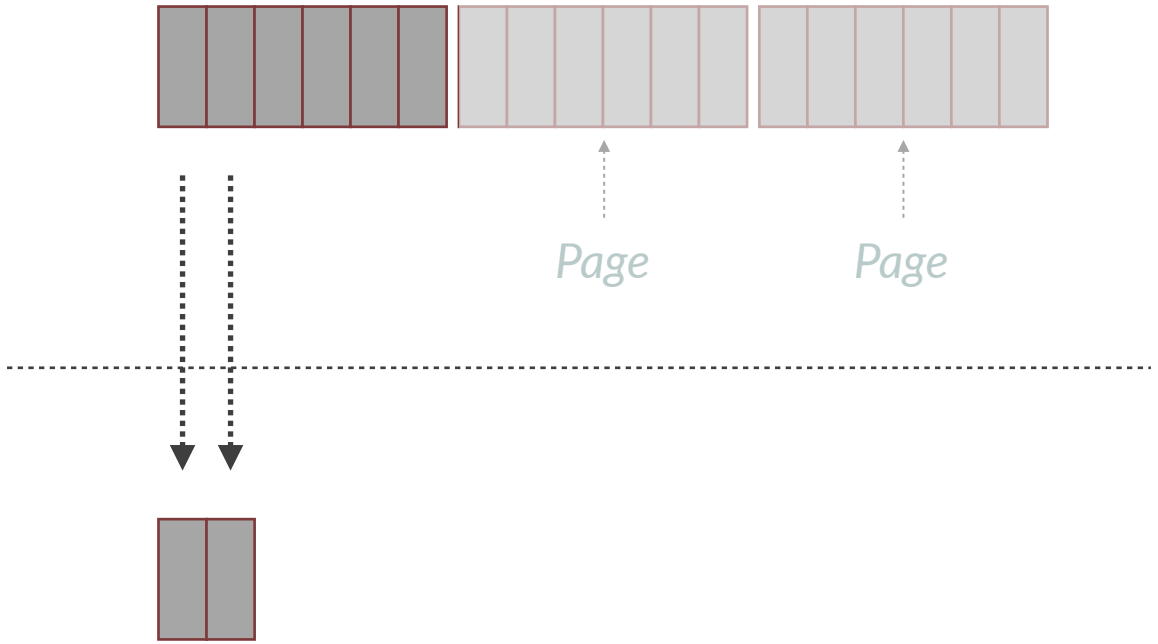

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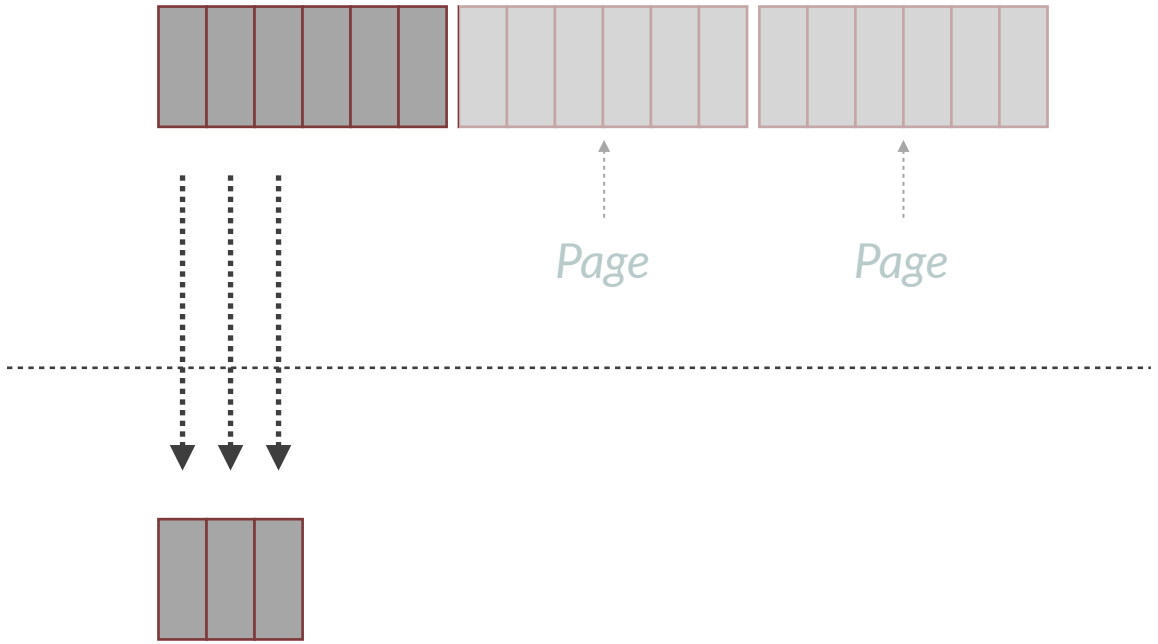

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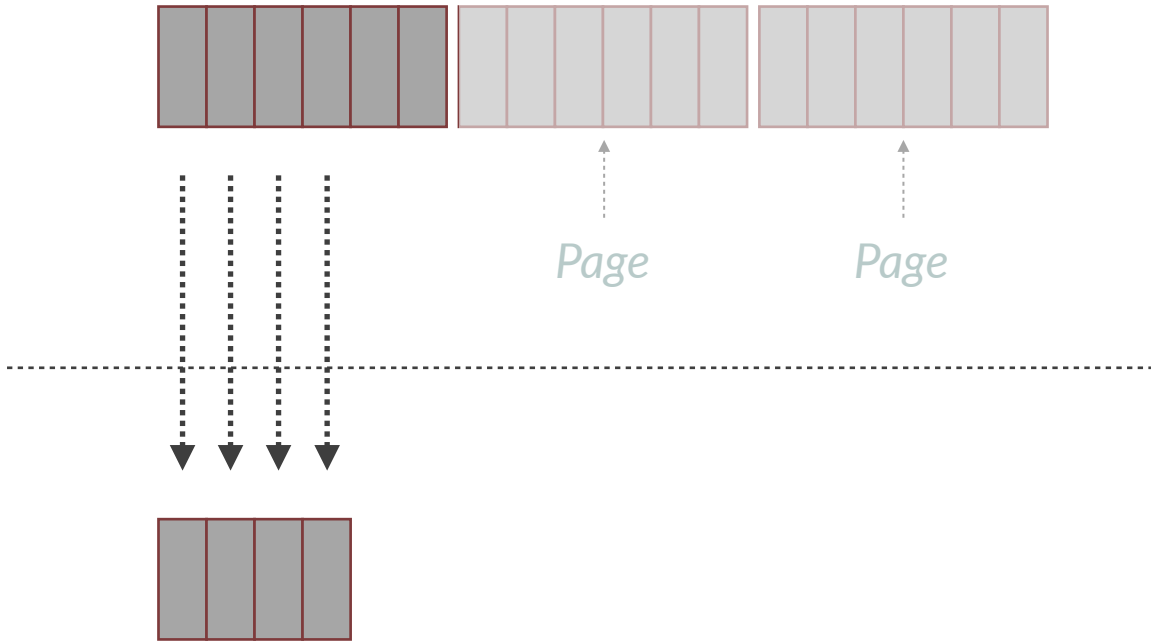

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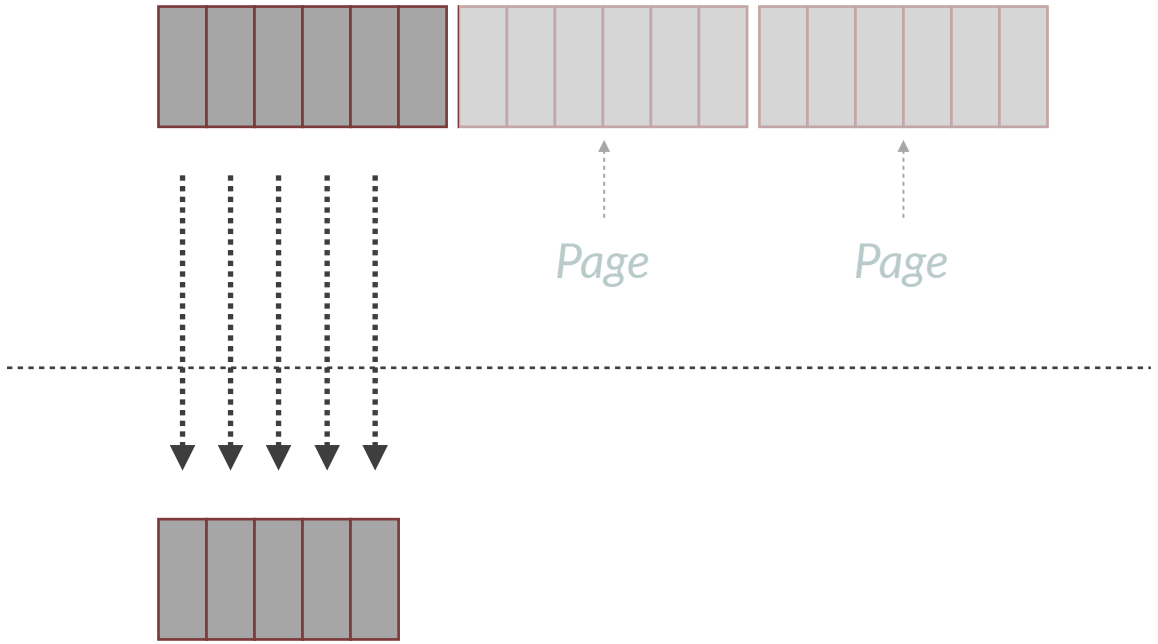

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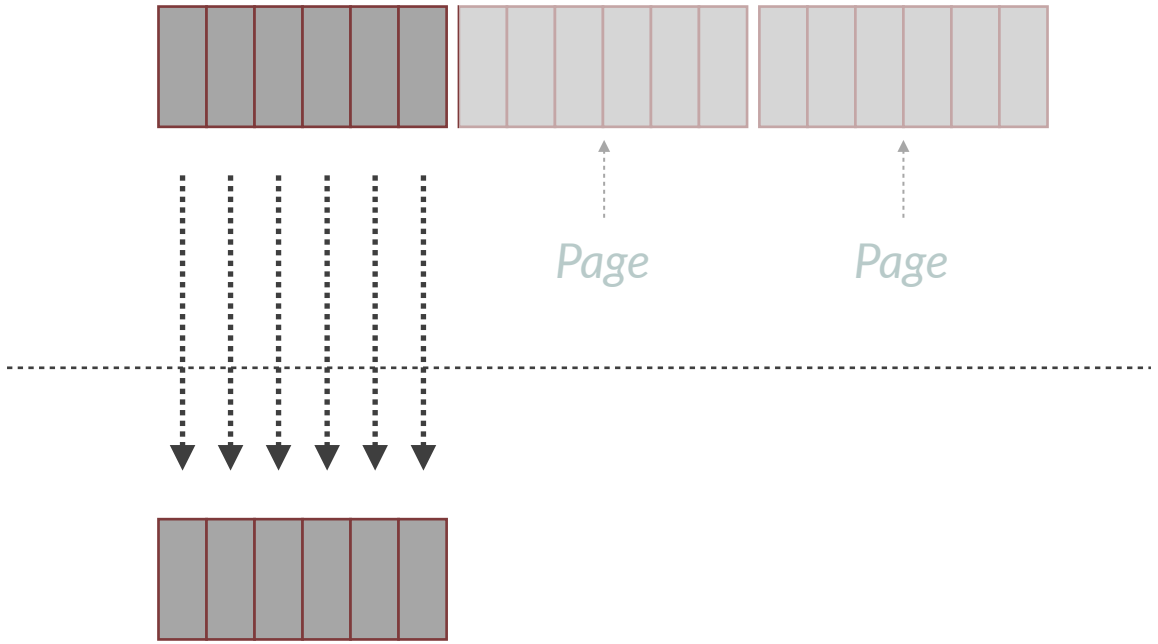

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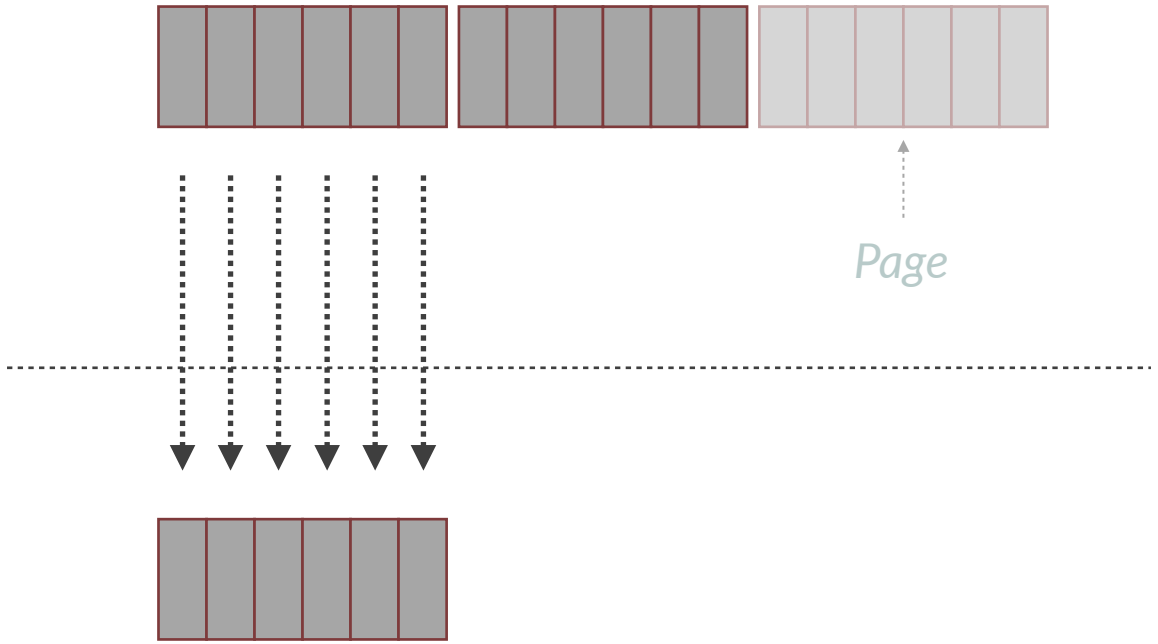

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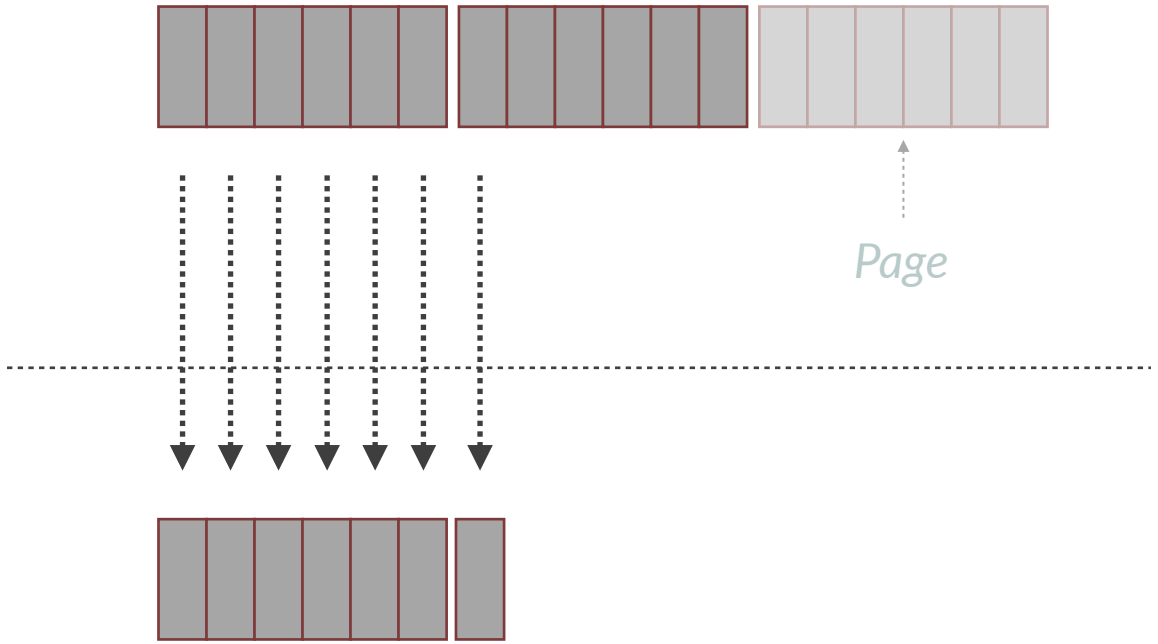

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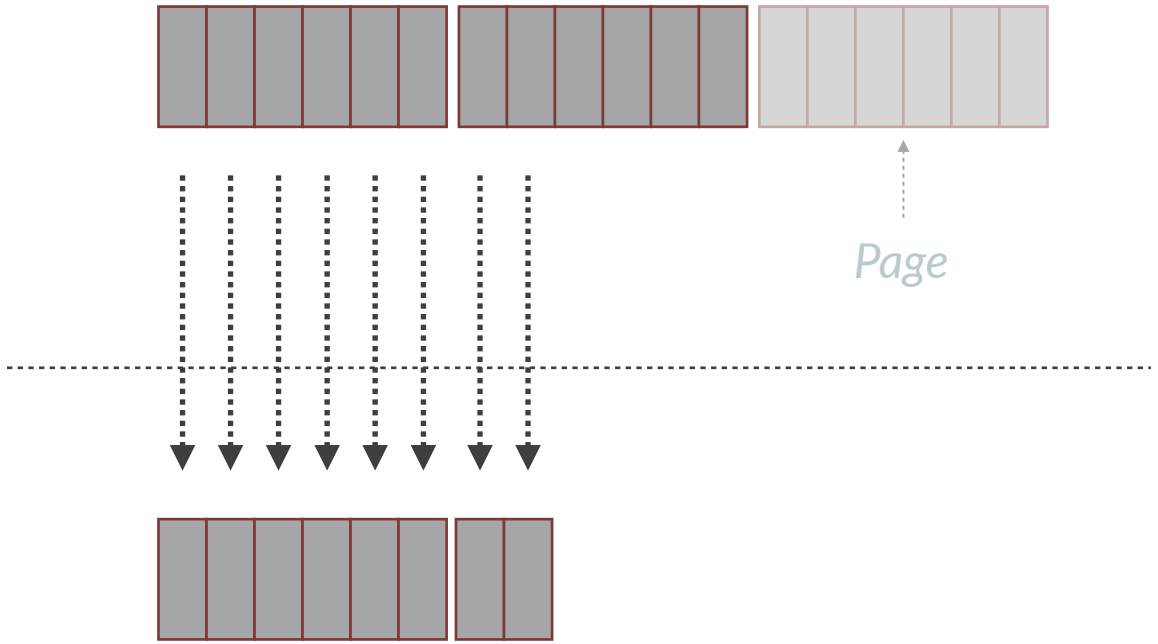

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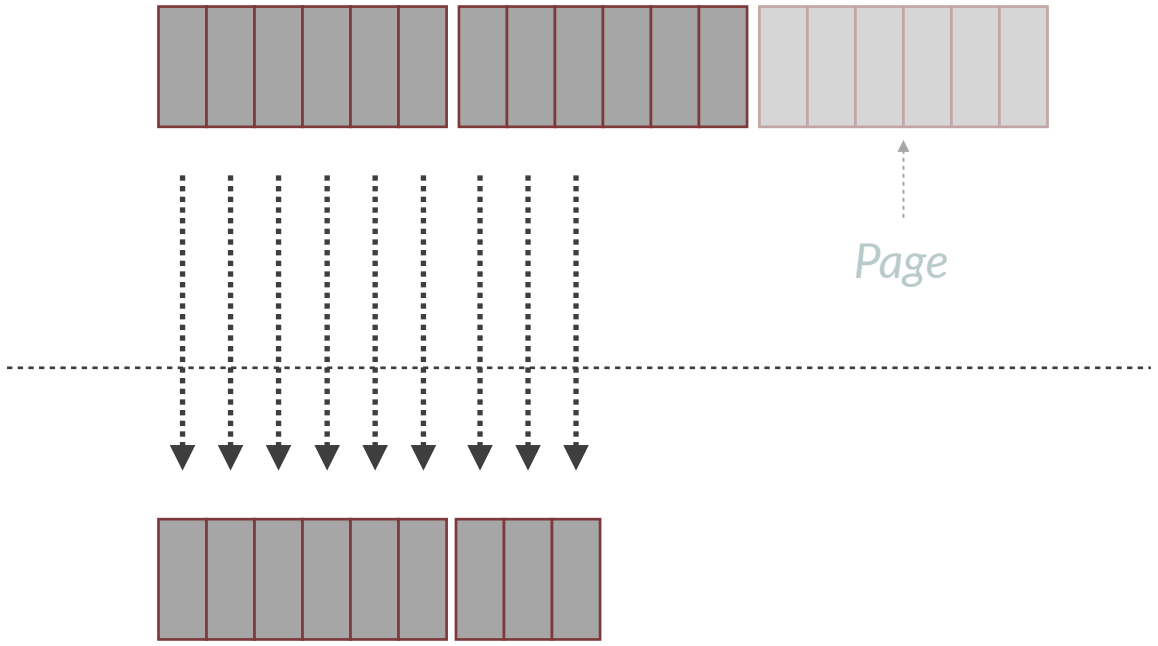

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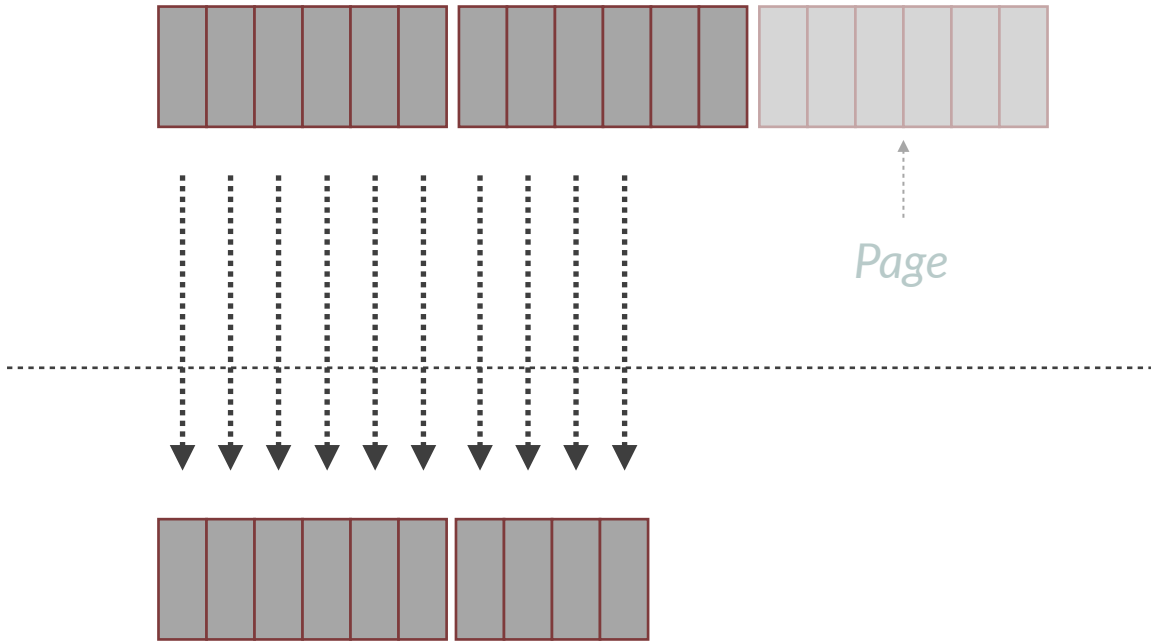

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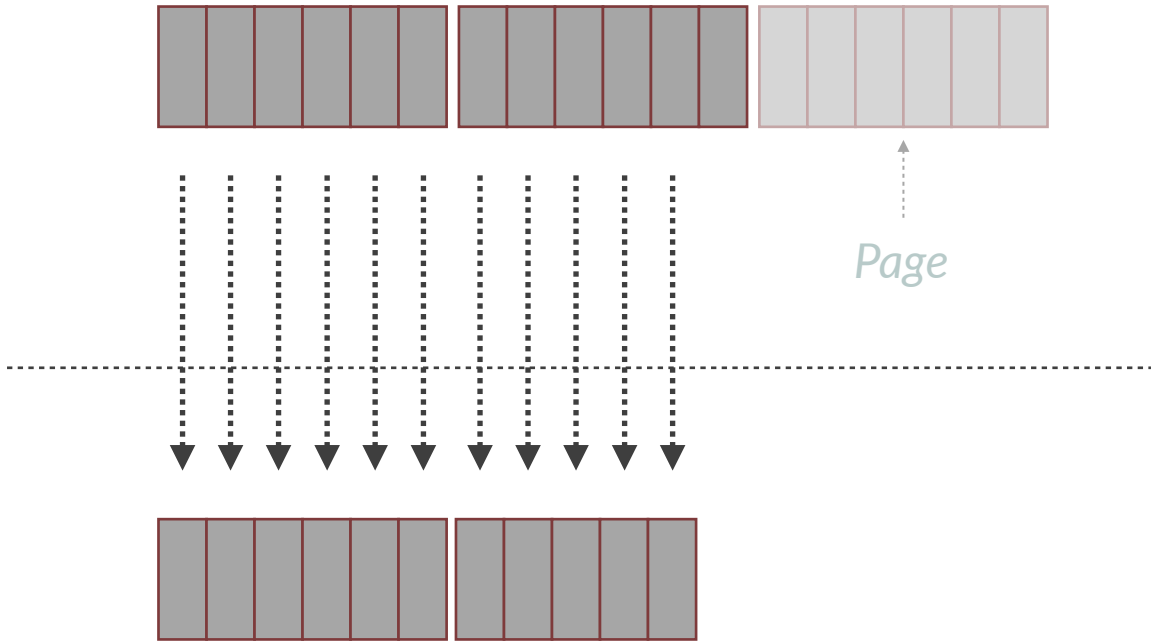

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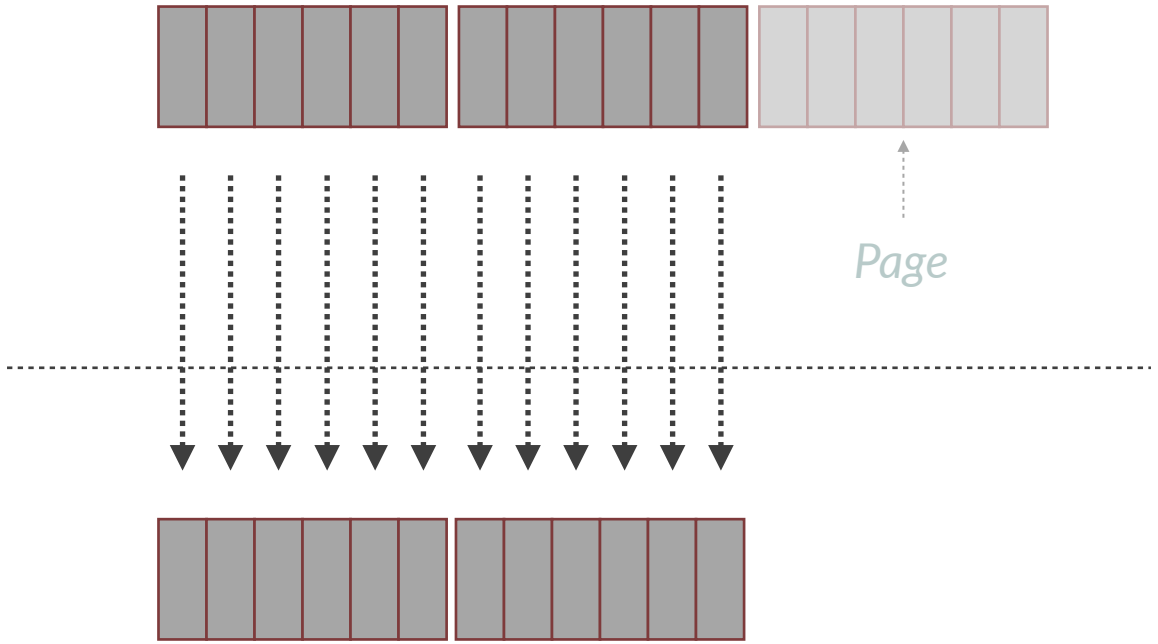

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def download_files(host, port, outdir):
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    list_url = f'{hostname}/list'
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    response = requests.get(list_url)
    response.raise_for_status()
    content = json.loads(response.content)
    while True:
        for filename in content['FileNames']:
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```
def download_file(remote_url, local_filename):
    response = requests.get(remote_url)
    response.raise_for_status()
    with open(local_filename, 'wb') as f:
        f.write(response.content)
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Synchronous Results

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One request	0.003 seconds

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queue.Queue

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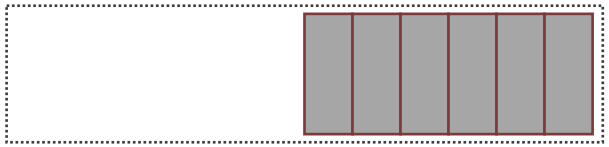

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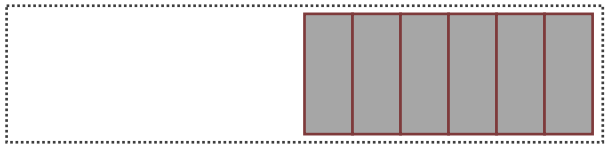

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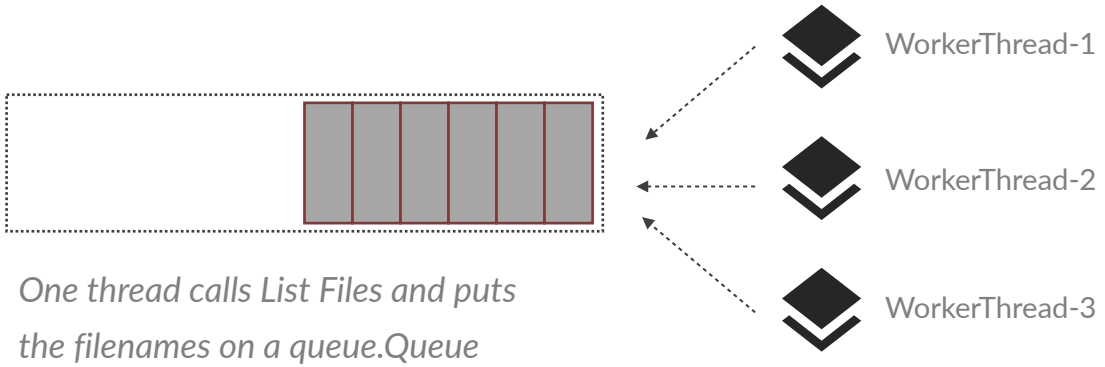

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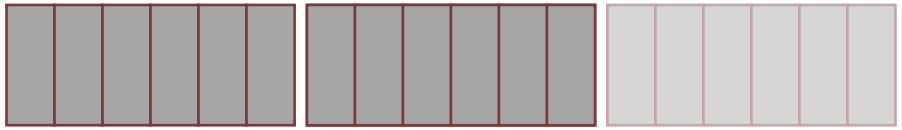

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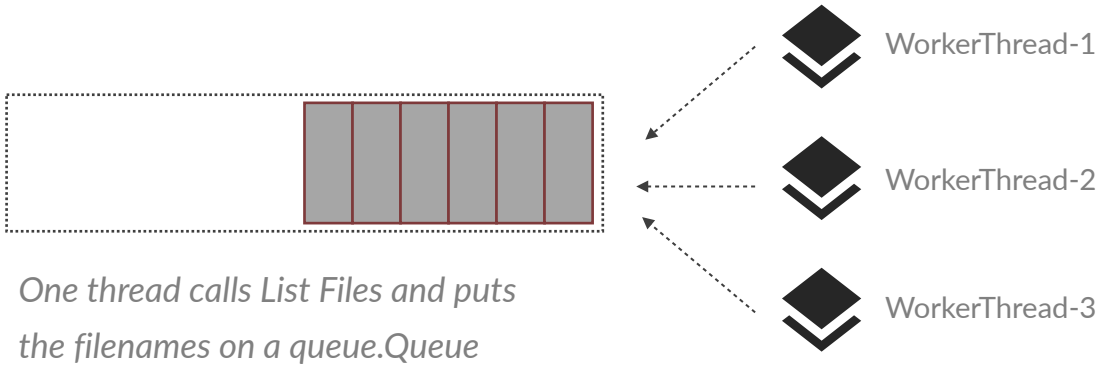

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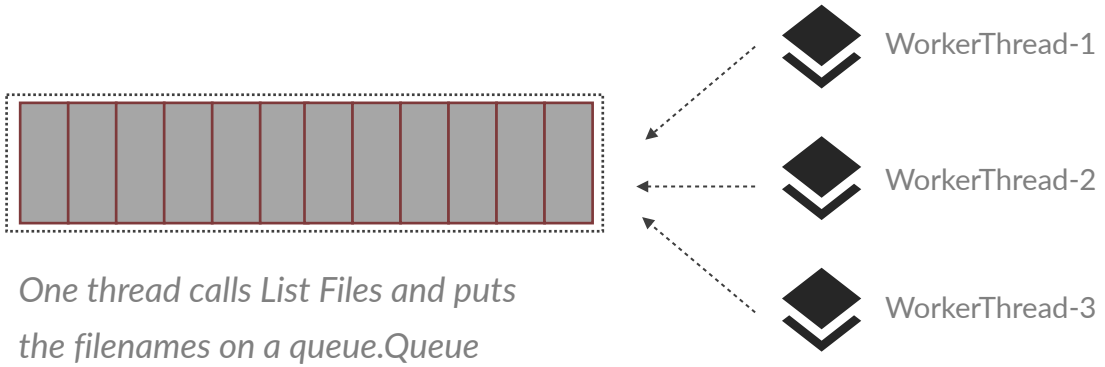

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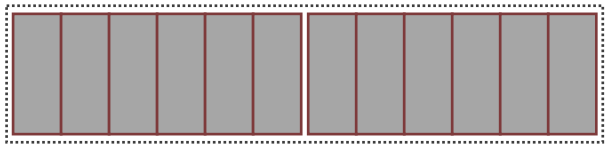
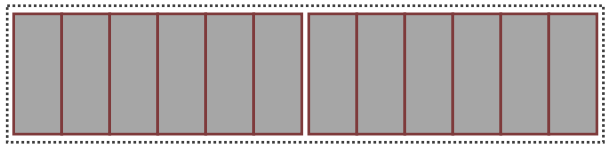


Results Queue



One thread calls List Files and puts the filenames on a queue.Queue

Result thread prints progress, tracks overall results, failures, etc.

```
def download_files(host, port, outdir, num_threads):
    #  ... same constants as before ...

    work_queue = queue.Queue(MAX_SIZE)
    result_queue = queue.Queue(MAX_SIZE)

    threads = []
    for i in range(num_threads):
        t = threading.Thread(
            target=worker_thread, args=(work_queue, result_queue))
        t.start()
        threads.append(t)
    result_thread = threading.Thread(target=result_poller,
                                     args=(result_queue,))
    result_thread.start()
    threads.append(result_thread)

    # ...
```

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    # ...
```

```
response = requests.get(list_url)
response.raise_for_status()
content = json.loads(response.content)
while True:
    for filename in content['FileNames']:
        remote_url = f'{get_url}/{filename}'
        outfile = os.path.join(outdir, filename)
        work_queue.put((remote_url, outfile))
    if 'NextFile' not in content:
        break
    response = requests.get(
        f'{list_url}?next-marker={content["NextFile"]}')
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```
def worker_thread(work_queue, result_queue):
    while True:
        work = work_queue.get()
        if work is _SHUTDOWN:
            return
        remote_url, outfile = work
        download_file(remote_url, outfile)
        result_queue.put(_SUCCESS)
```

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        work = work_queue.get()
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            return
        remote_url, outfile = work
        download_file(remote_url, outfile)
        result_queue.put(_SUCCESS)
```

Multithreaded Results - 10 threads

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One request	0.0036 seconds

Multithreaded Results - 10 threads

One request	0.0036 seconds
One billion requests	3,600,000 seconds
	1000.0 hours
	41.6 days

Multithreaded Results - 100 threads

Multithreaded Results - 100 threads

One request	0.0042 seconds

Multithreaded Results - 100 threads

One request	0.0042 seconds
One billion requests	4,200,000 seconds
	1166.67 hours
	48.6 days

Why?

Not necessarily IO bound due to low latency and small file size

GIL contention, overhead of passing data through queues

Things to keep in mind

The real code is more complicated, ctrl-c, graceful shutdown, etc.

Debugging is much harder, non-deterministic

The more you stray from stdlib abstractions, more likely to encounter race conditions

Can't use `concurrent.futures` `map()` because of large number of files

Multiprocessing

Our Task (the details)

What client machine will this run on?

We have one machine we can use, 16 cores, 64GB memory

What about the network between the client and server?

Our client machine is on the same network as the service with remote files

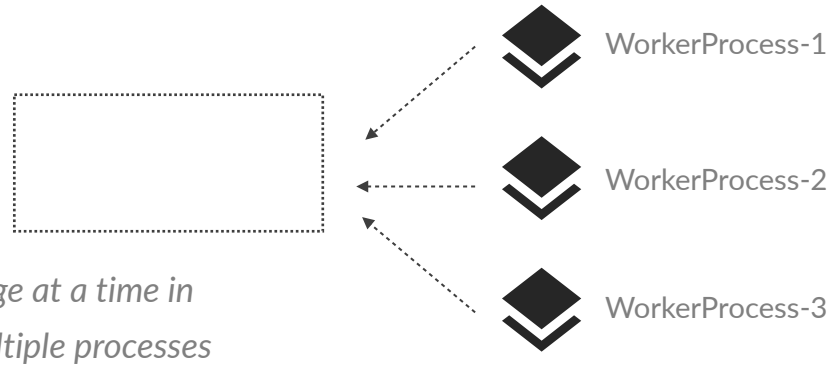
How many files are on the remote server?

Approximately one billion files, 100 bytes per file

When do you need this done?

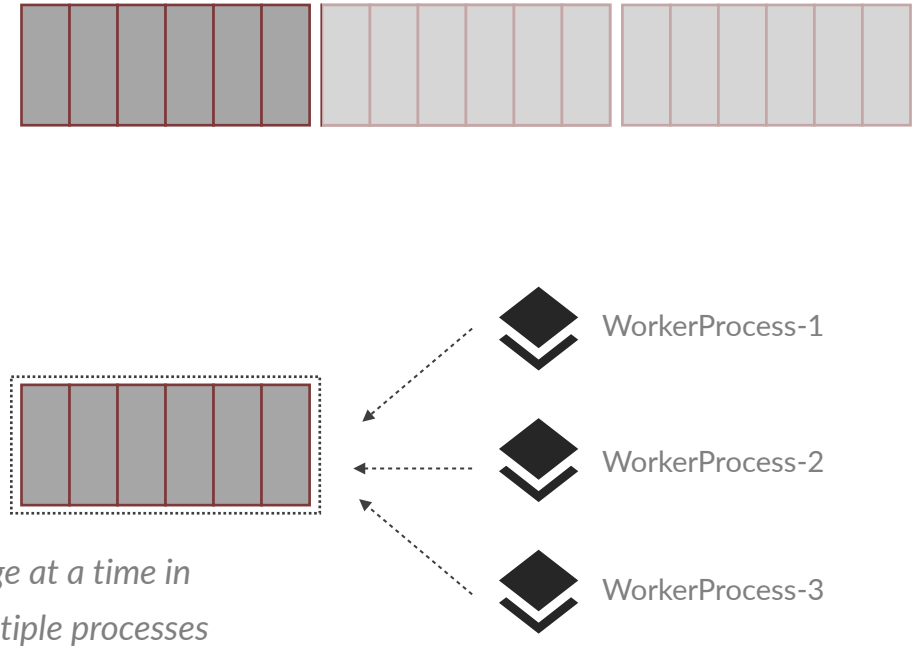
Please have this done as soon as possible

Multiprocessing



Download one page at a time in parallel across multiple processes

Multiprocessing



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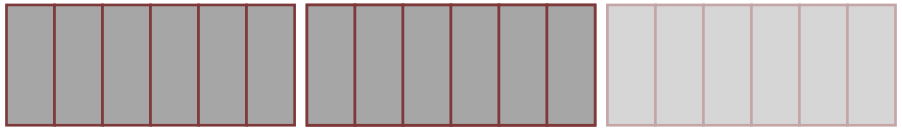

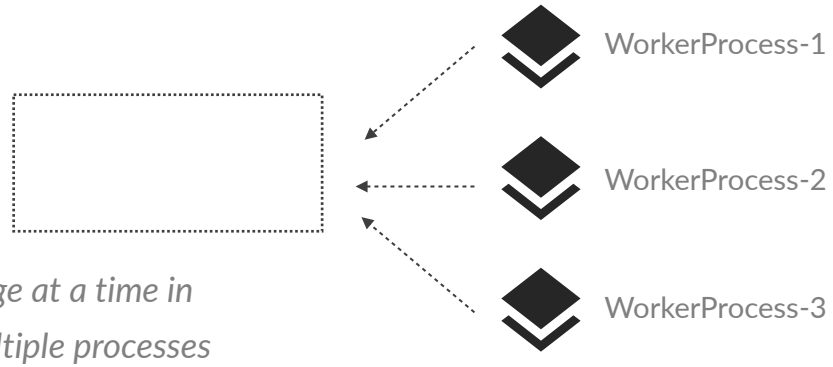

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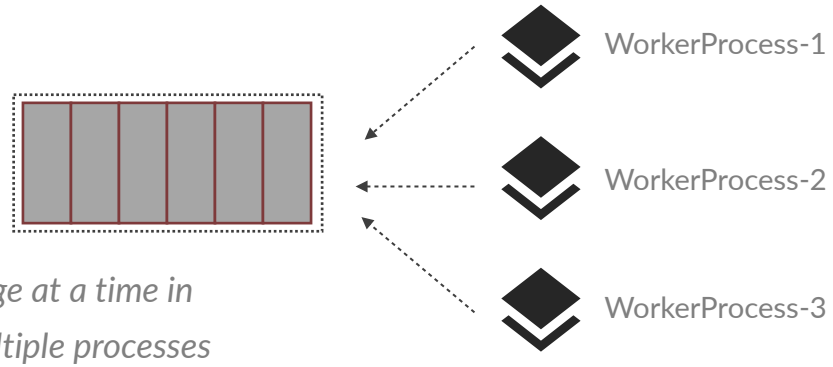

Download one page at a time in parallel across multiple processes

```
from concurrent import futures


def download_files(host, port, outdir):
    hostname = f'http://{host}:{port}'
    list_url = f'{hostname}/list'

    all_pages = iter_all_pages(list_url)
    downloader = Downloader(host, port, outdir)
    with futures.ProcessPoolExecutor() as executor:
        for page in all_pages:
            future_to_filename = {}
            for filename in page:
                future = executor.submit(downloader.download,
                                         filename)
                future_to_filename[future] = filename
            for future in futures.as_completed(future_to_filename):
                future.result()
```

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Start parallel downloads

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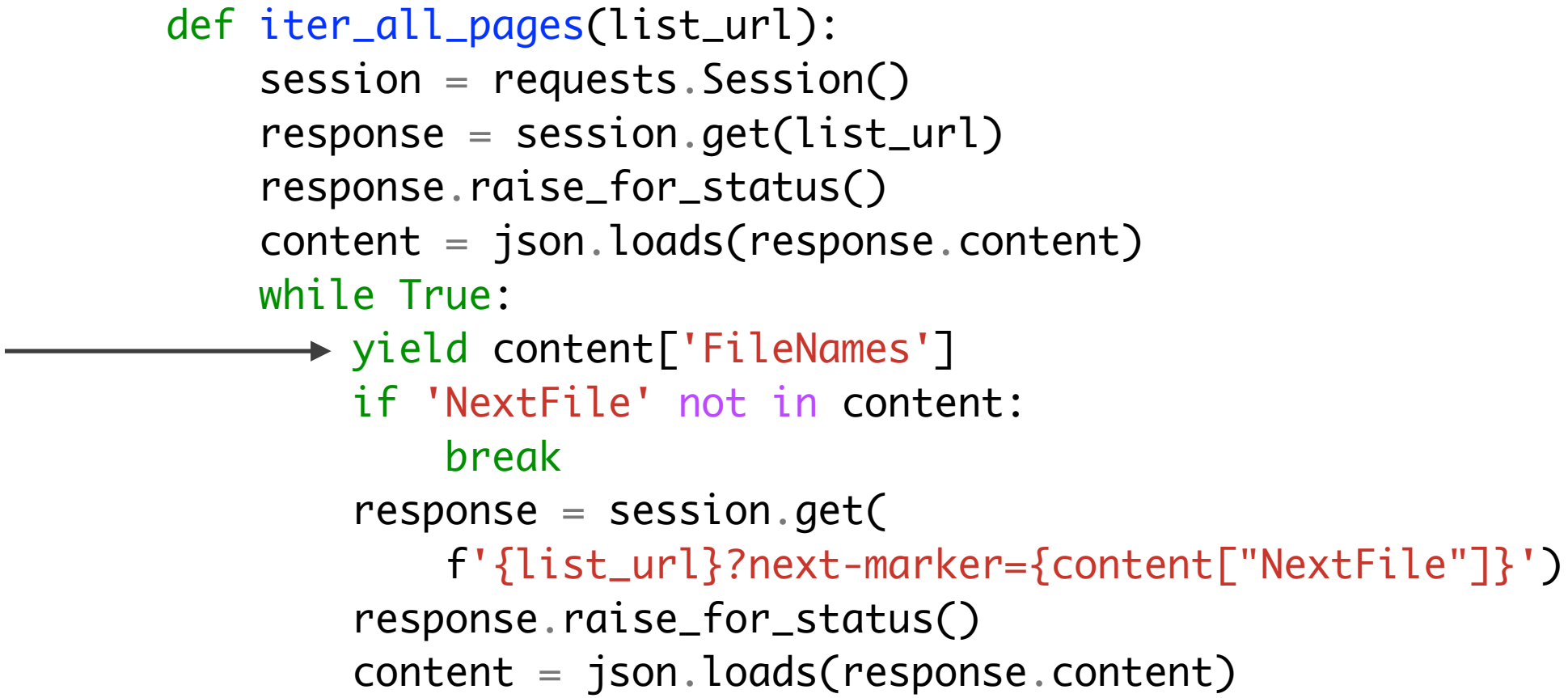
Wait for downloads to finish


def iter_all_pages(list_url):
session = requests.Session()
response = session.get(list_url)
response.raise_for_status()
content = json.loads(response.content)
while True:
yield content['FileNames']
if 'NextFile' not in content:
break
response = session.get(
f'{list_url}?next-marker={content["NextFile"]}')
response.raise_for_status()
content = json.loads(response.content)

```
class Downloader:
    # ...

    def download(self, filename):
        remote_url = f'{self.get_url}/{filename}'
        response = self.session.get(remote_url)
        response.raise_for_status()
        outfile = os.path.join(self.outdir, filename)
        with open(outfile, 'wb') as f:
            f.write(response.content)
```

Multiprocessing Results - 16 processes

Multiprocessing Results - 16 processes

One request	0.00032 seconds

Multiprocessing Results - 16 processes

One request	0.00032 seconds
One billion requests	320,000 seconds
	88.88 hours

Multiprocessing Results - 16 processes

One request	0.00032 seconds
One billion requests	320,000 seconds
	88.88 hours
	3.7 days

Things to keep in mind

Speed improvements due to truly running in parallel

Debugging is much harder, non-deterministic, pdb doesn't work out of the box

IPC overhead between processes higher than threads

Tradeoff between entirely in parallel vs. parallel chunks

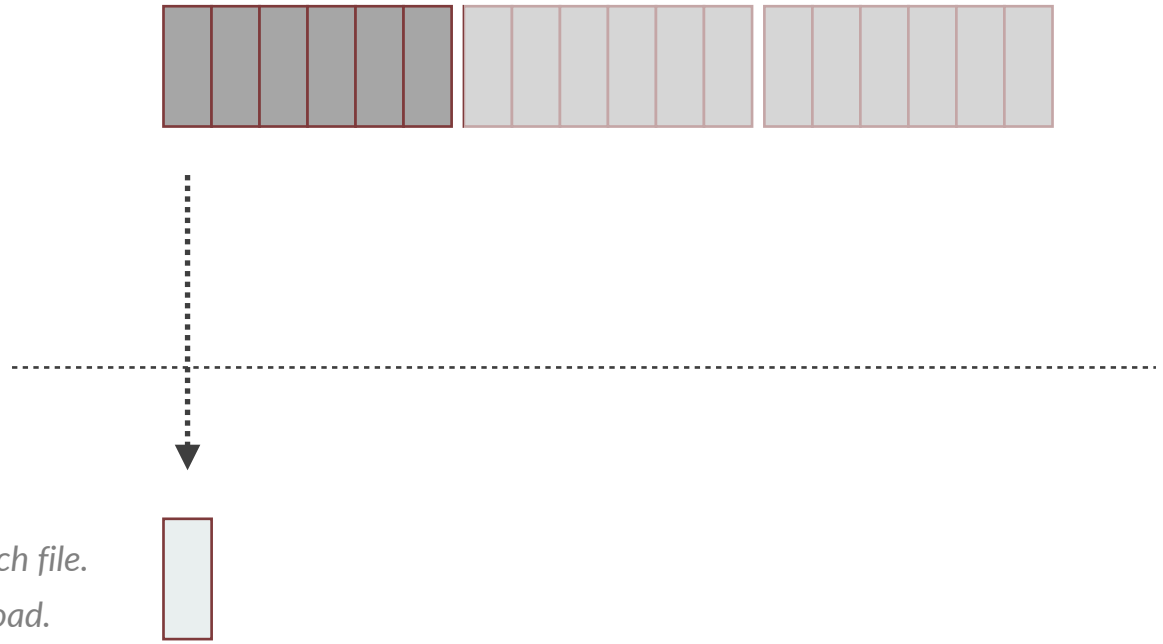
Asyncio

Asyncio

Create an `asyncio.Task` *for each file.*

This immediately starts the download.

Asyncio



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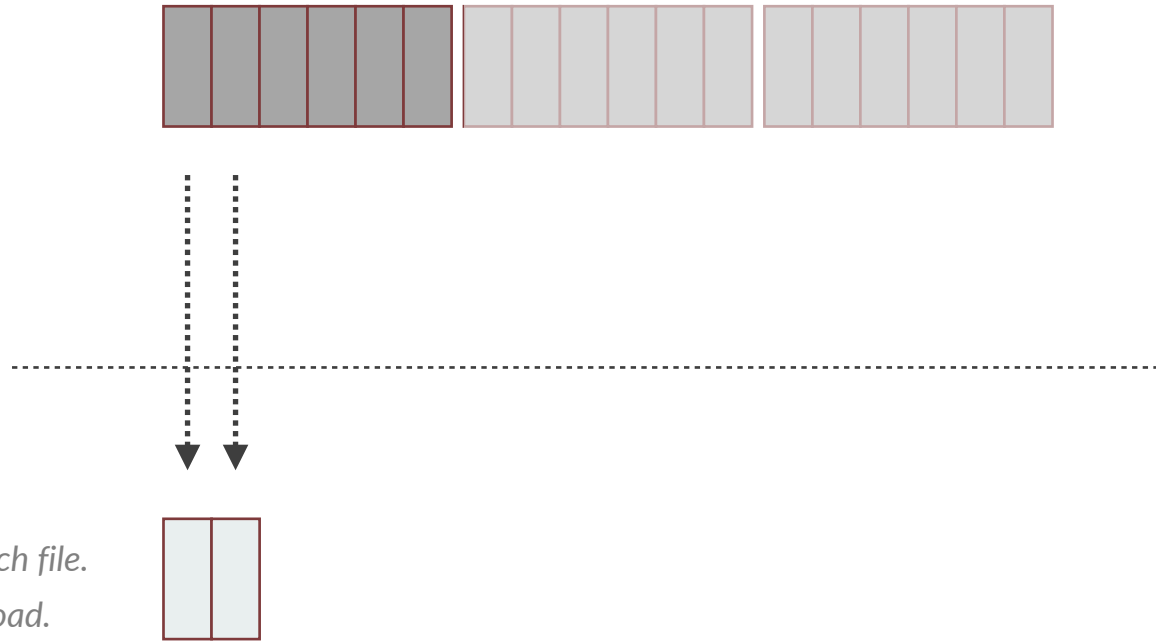

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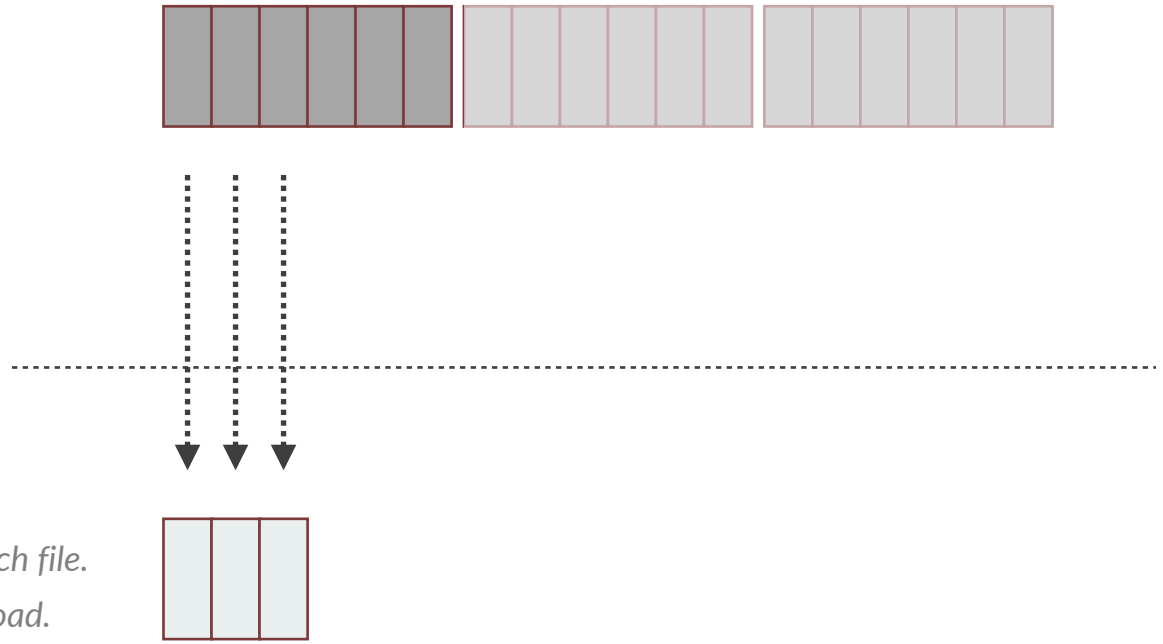

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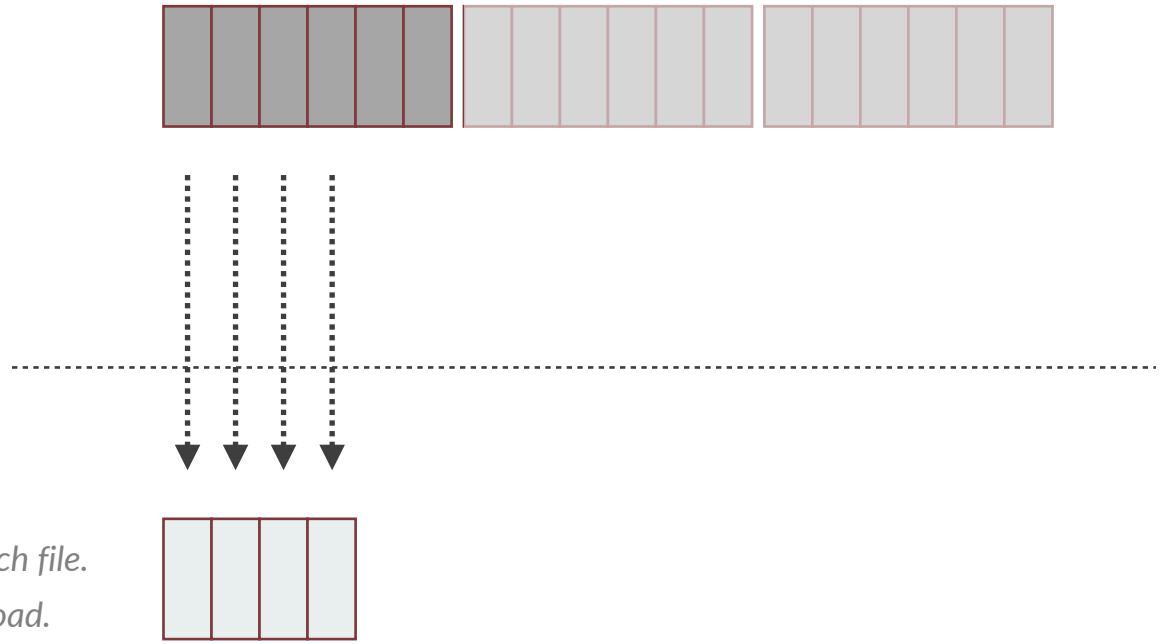

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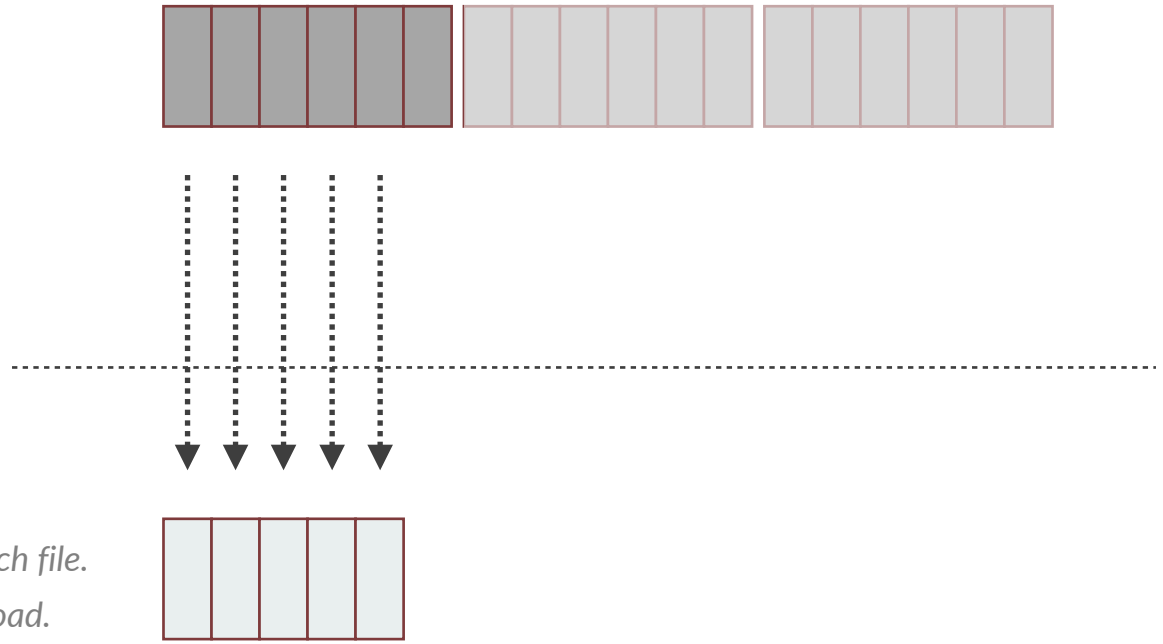

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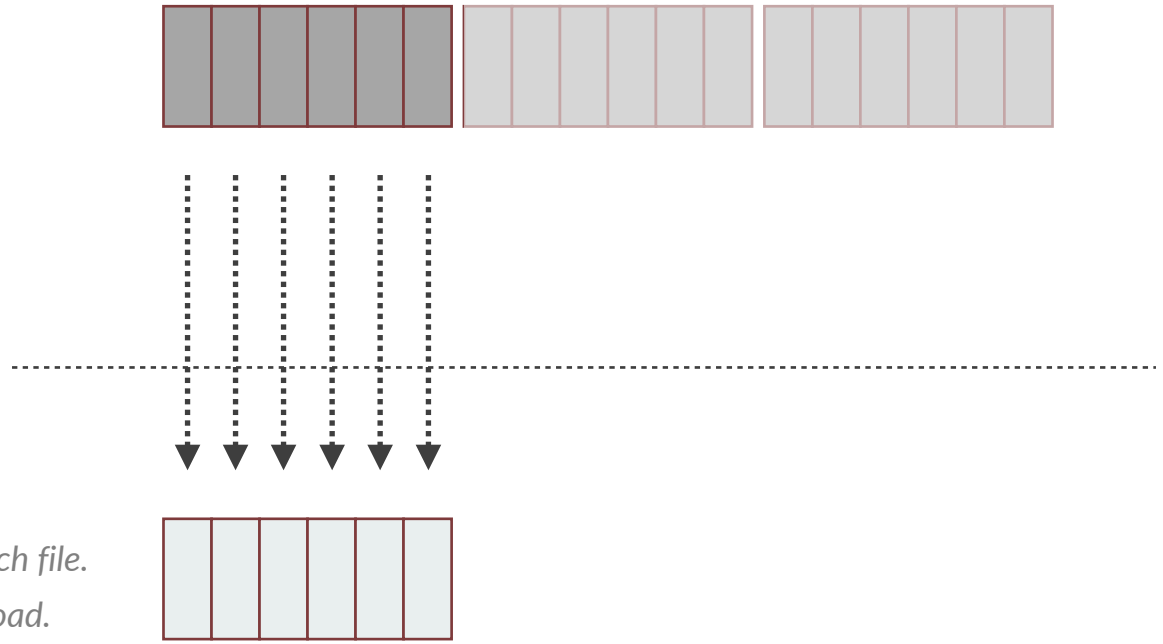

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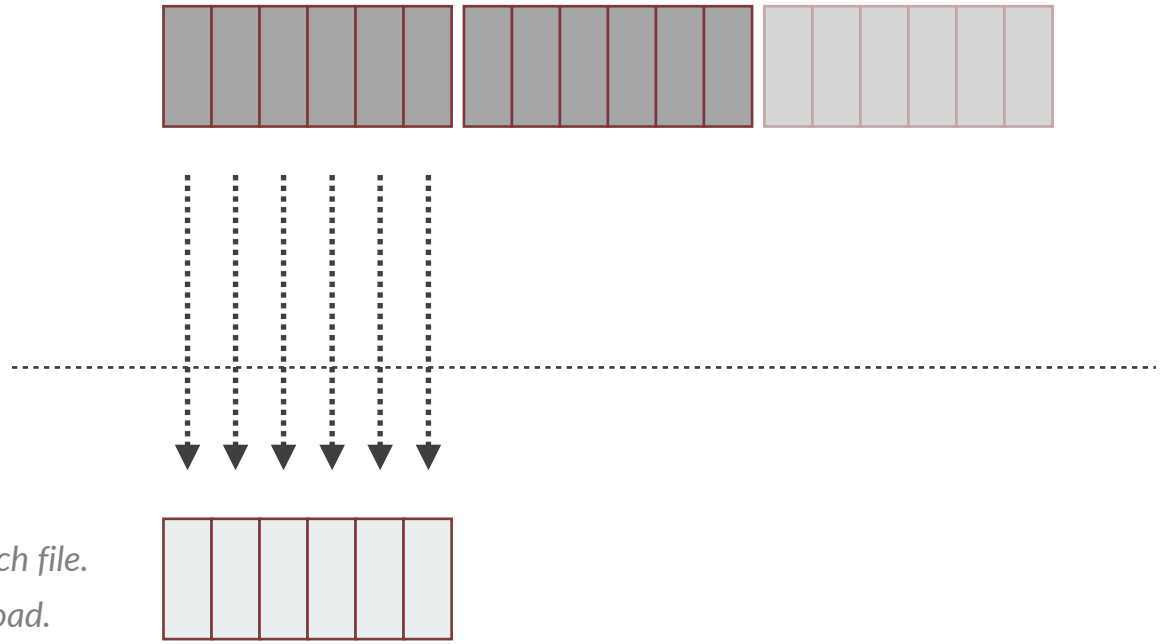

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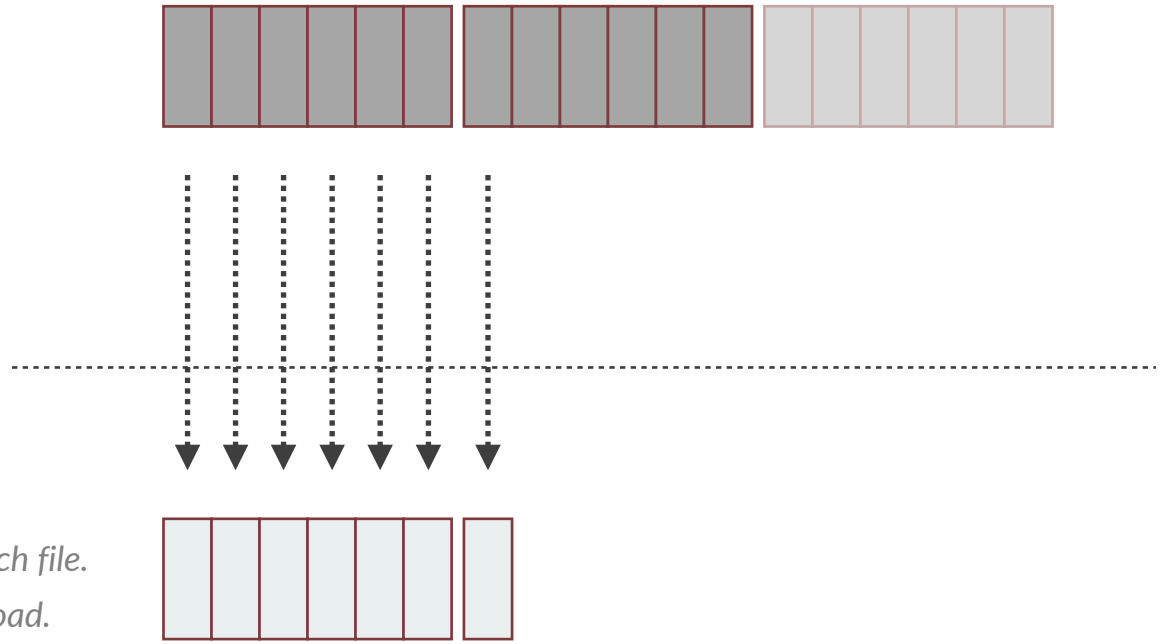

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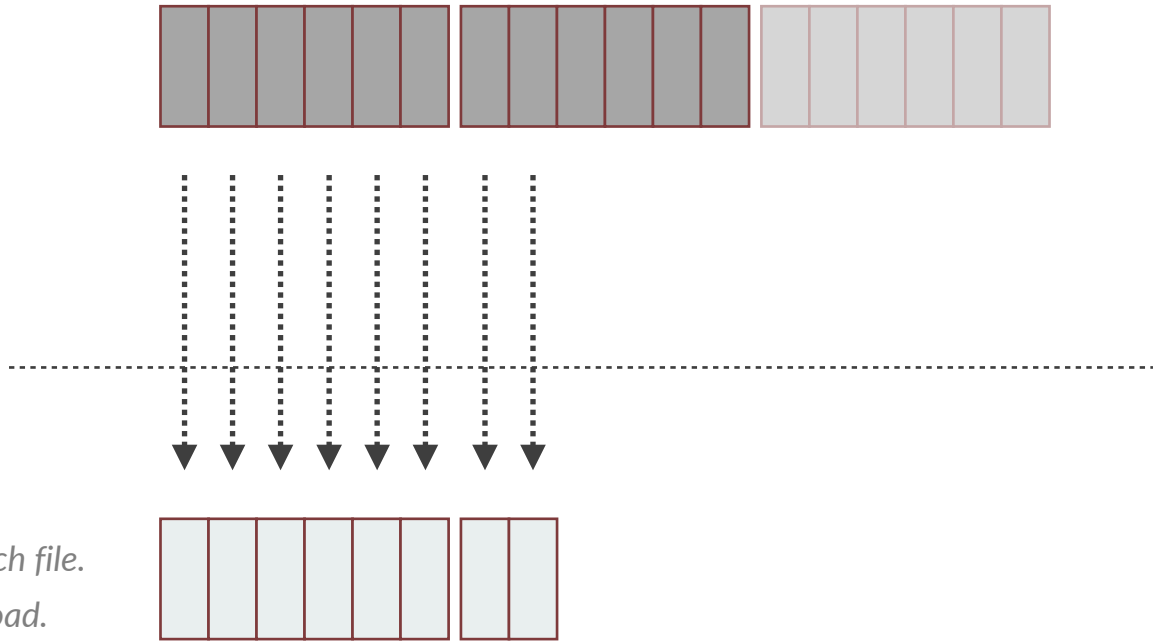

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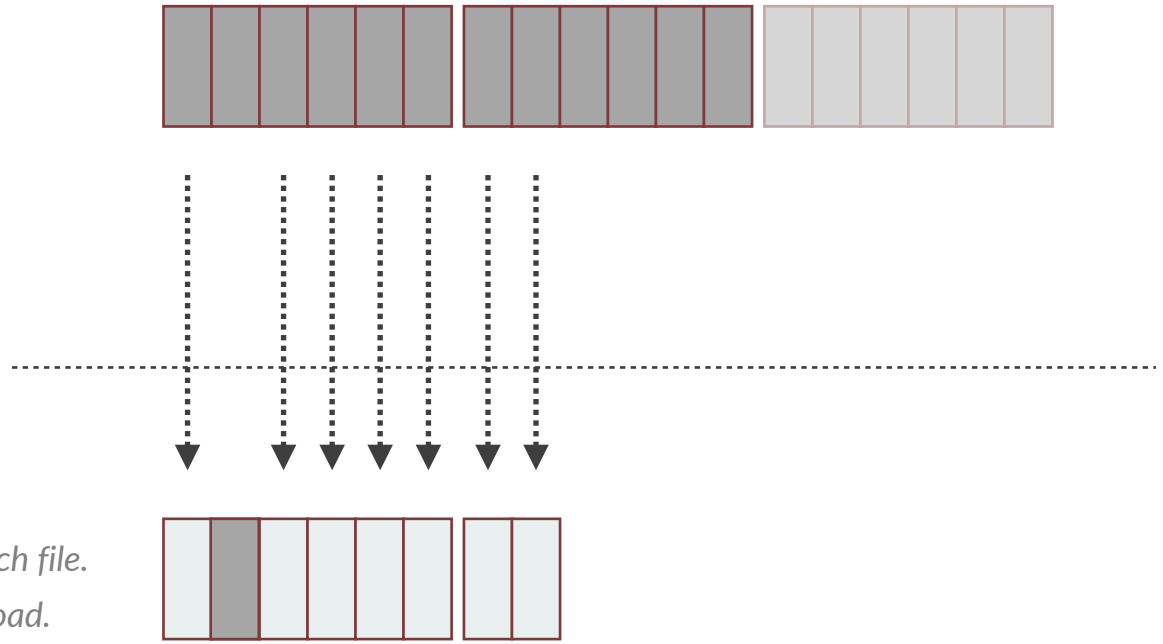

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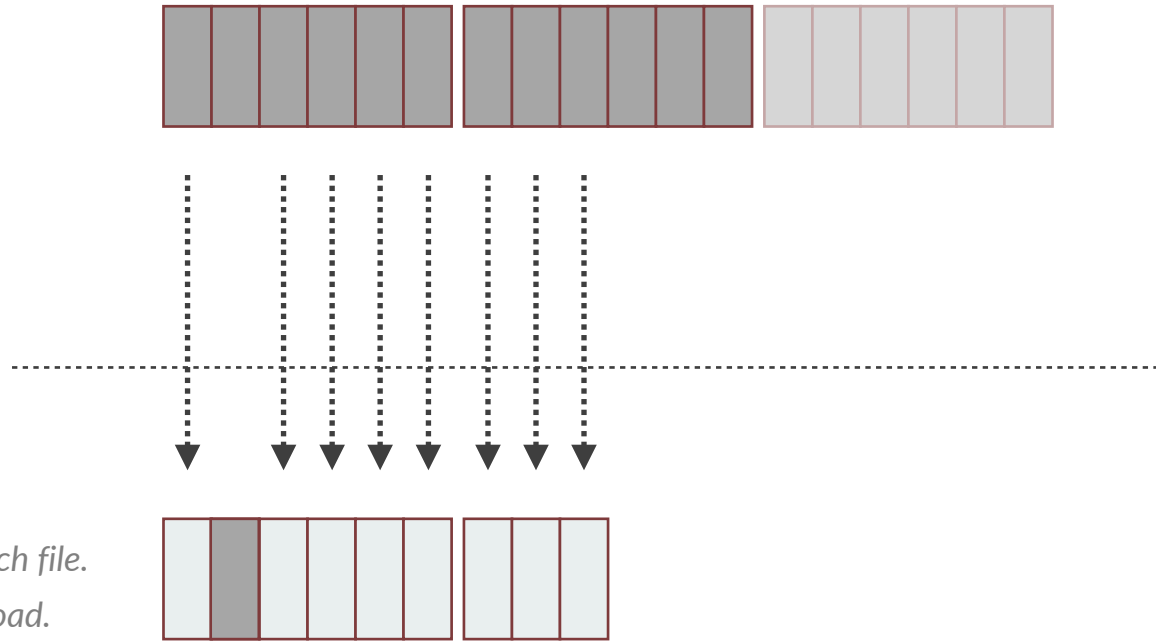

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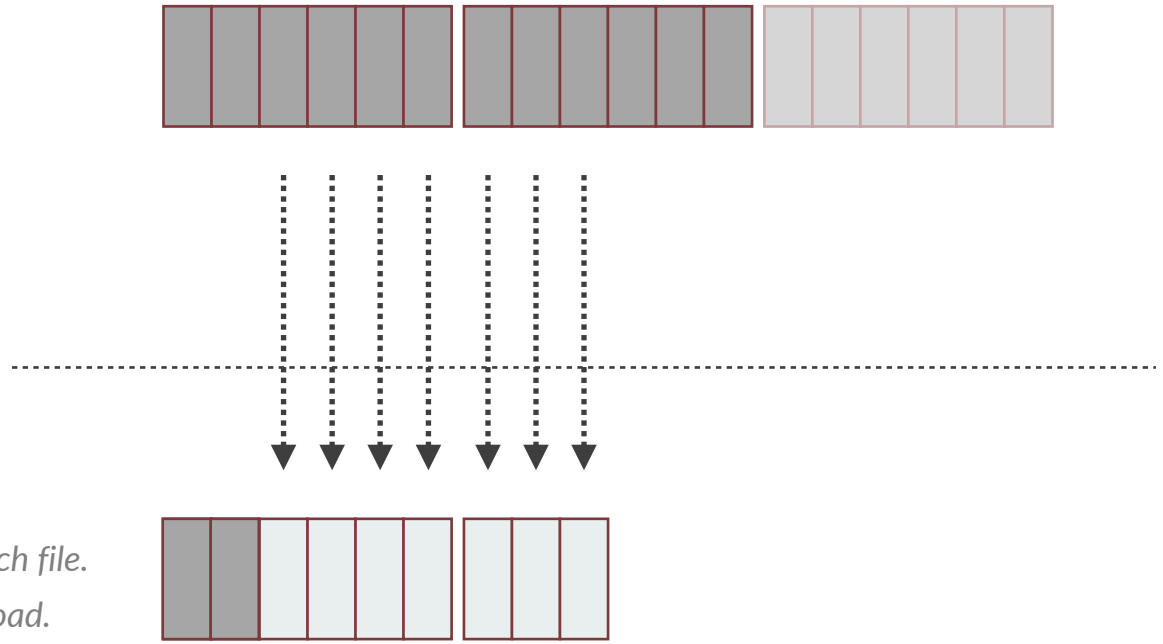

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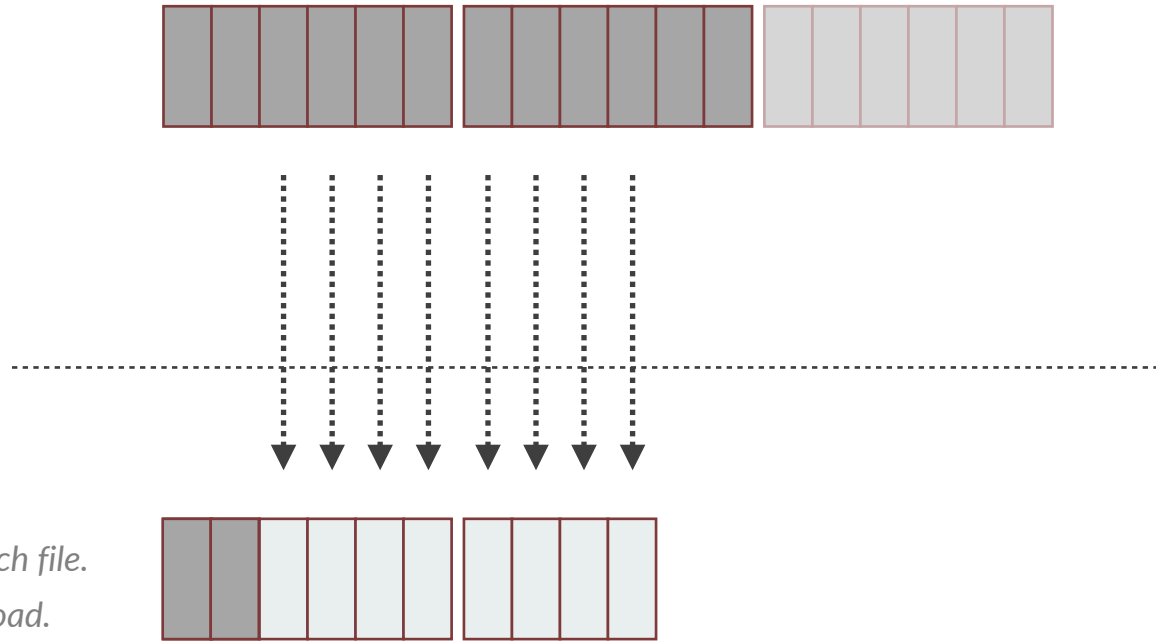

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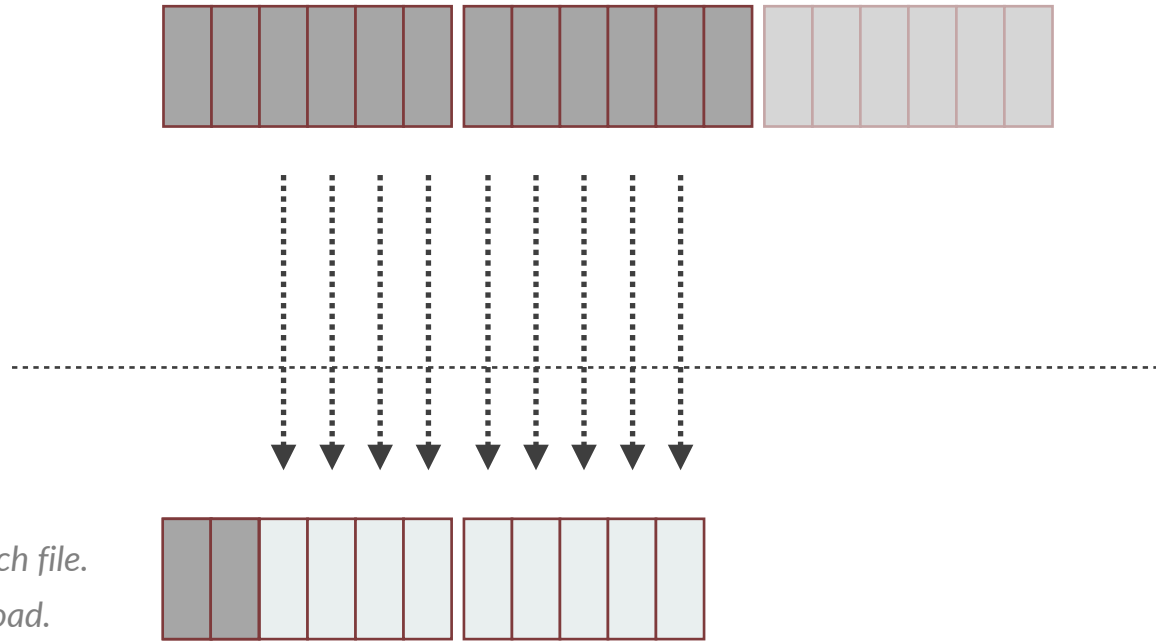

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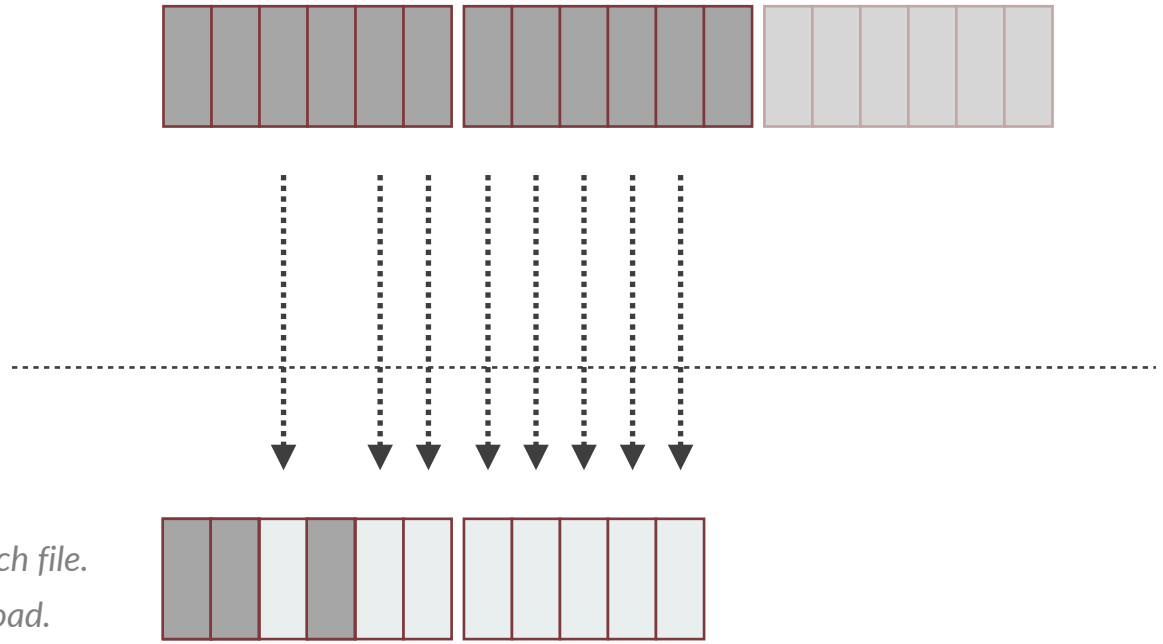

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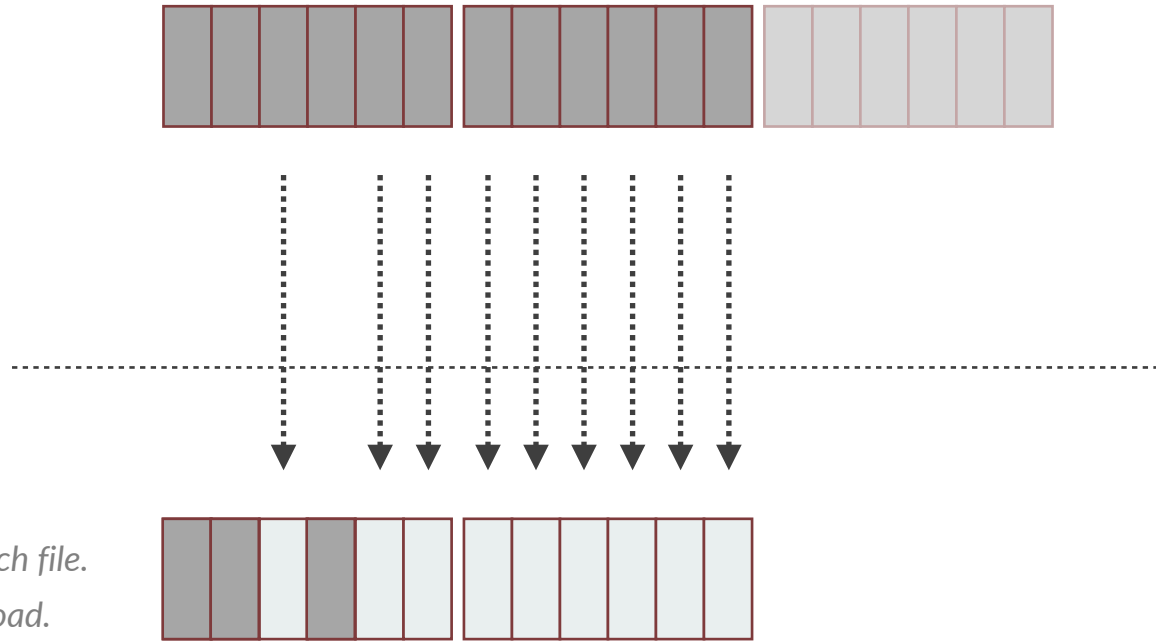

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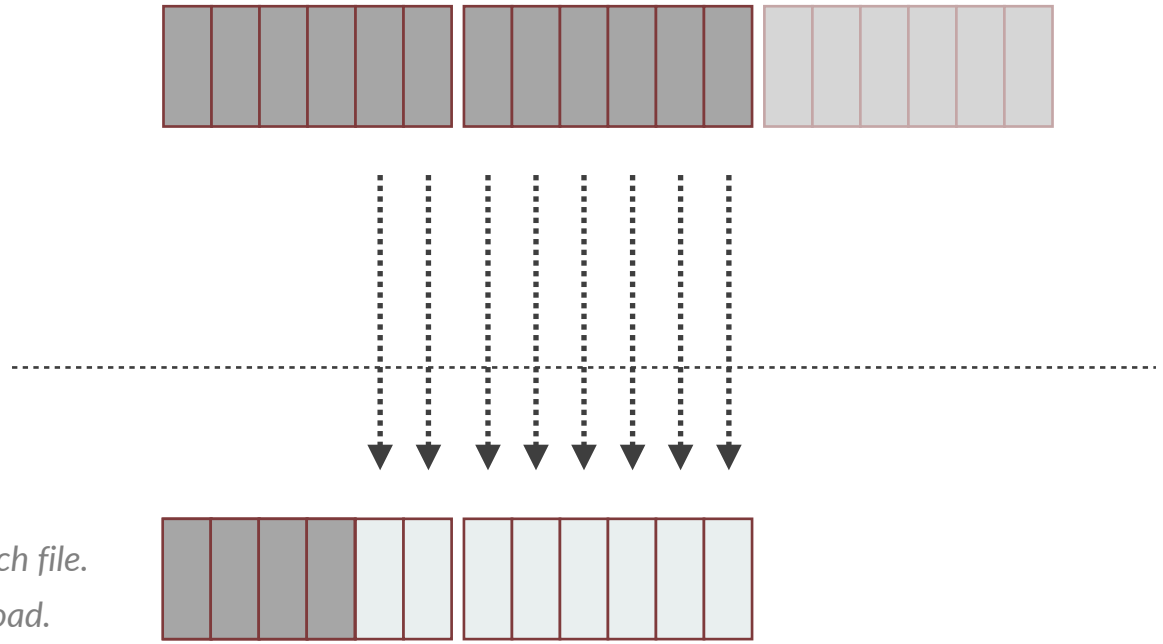

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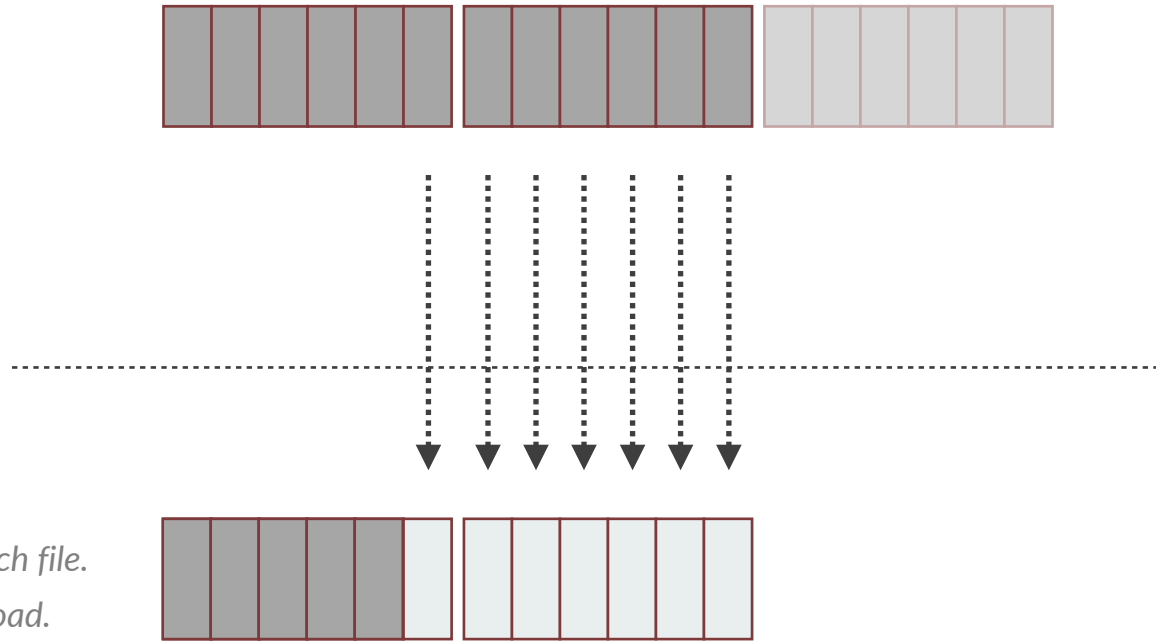

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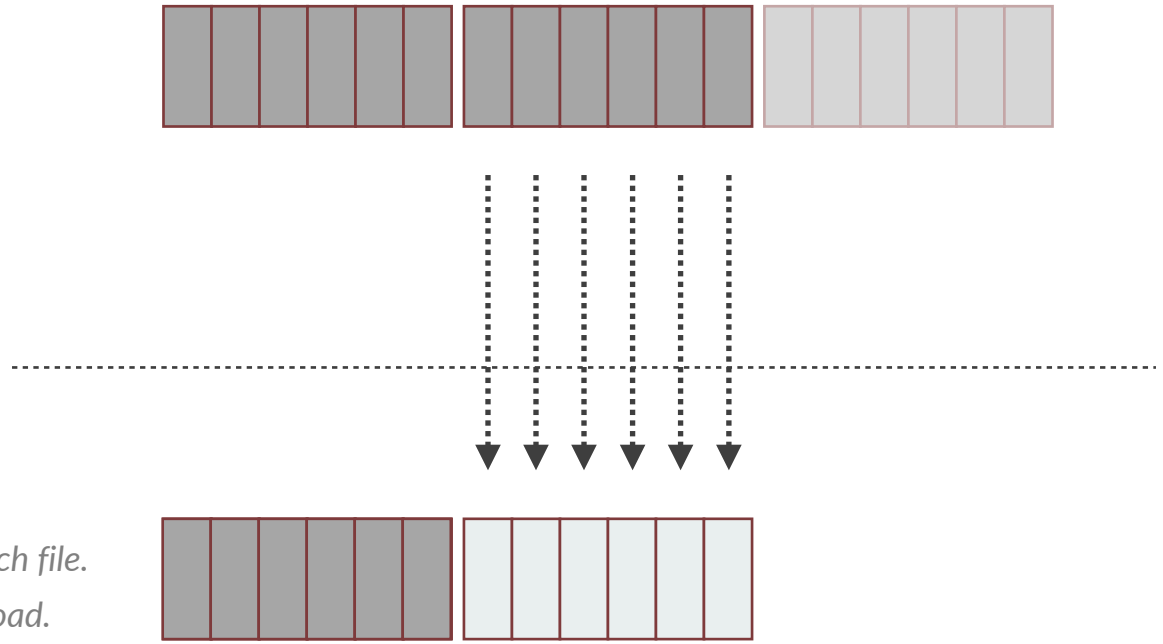

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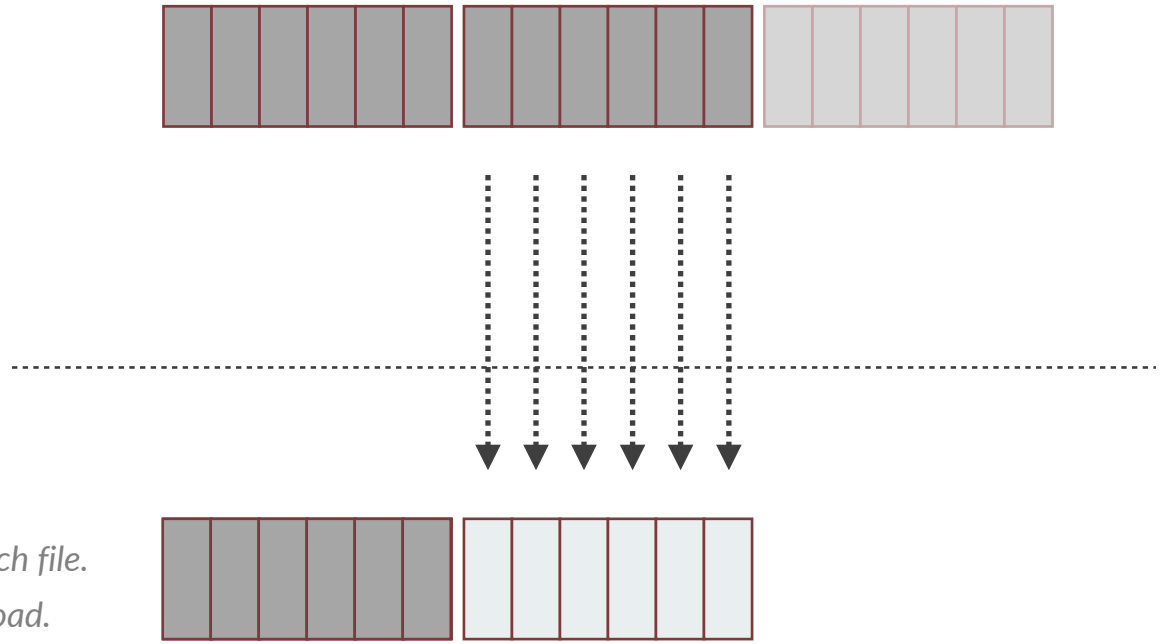

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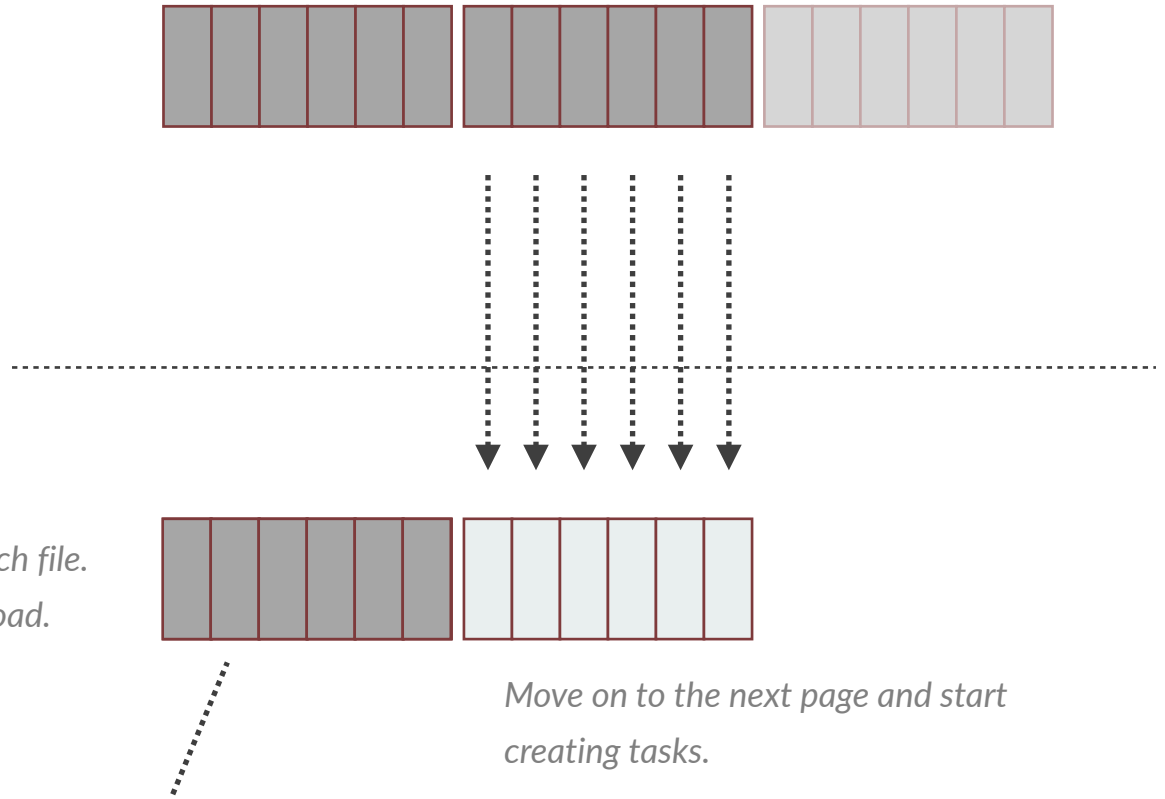

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All in a single process

All in a single thread

Switch tasks when waiting for IO

Should keep CPU busy

```
import asyncio
from aiohttp import ClientSession
import uvloop

async def download_files(host, port, outdir):
    hostname = f'http://{host}:{port}'
    list_url = f'{hostname}/list'
    get_url = f'{hostname}/get'
    semaphore = asyncio.Semaphore(MAX_CONCURRENT)
    task_queue = asyncio.Queue(MAX_SIZE)
    asyncio.create_task(results_worker(task_queue))
    async with ClientSession() as session:
        async for filename in iter_all_files(session, list_url):
            remote_url = f'{get_url}/{filename}'
            task = asyncio.create_task(
                download_file(session, semaphore, remote_url,
                              os.path.join(outdir, filename))
            )
            await task_queue.put(task)
```

```python
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```

```python
async def iter_all_files(session, list_url):
    async with session.get(list_url) as response:
        if response.status != 200:
            raise RuntimeError(f"Bad status code: {response.status}")
        content = json.loads(await response.read())
    while True:
        for filename in content['FileNames']:
            yield filename
        if 'NextFile' not in content:
            return
        next_page_url = f'{list_url}?next-marker={content["NextFile"]}'
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```
async def download_file(session, semaphore, remote_url, local_filename):
    async with semaphore:
        async with session.get(remote_url) as response:
            contents = await response.read()
            # Sync version.
            with open(local_filename, 'wb') as f:
                f.write(contents)
            return local_filename
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Asyncio Results

Asyncio Results

One request	0.00056 seconds

Asyncio Results

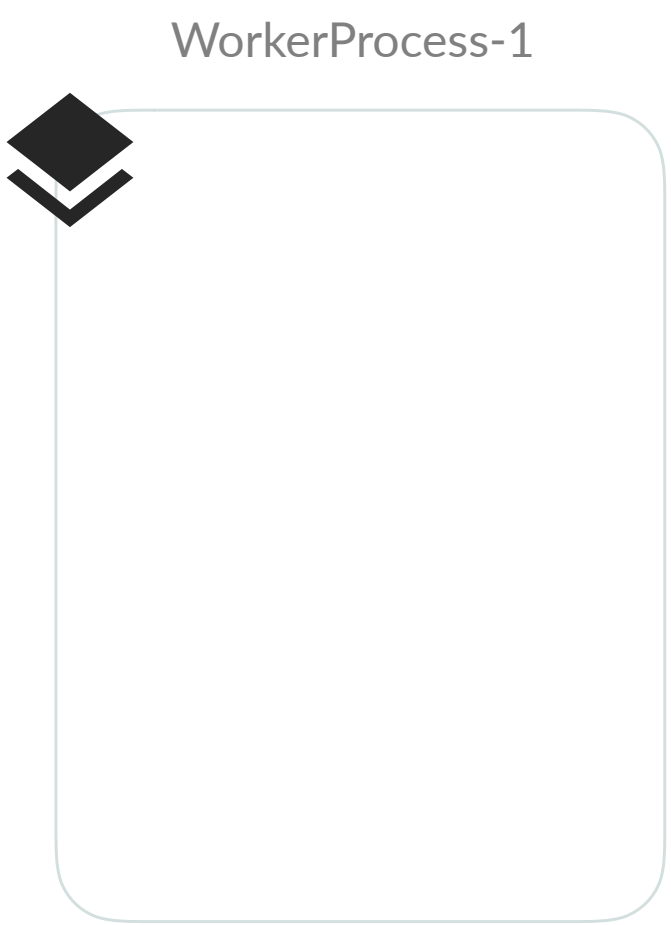
One request	0.00056 seconds
One billion requests	560,000 seconds
	155.55 hours
	6.48 days

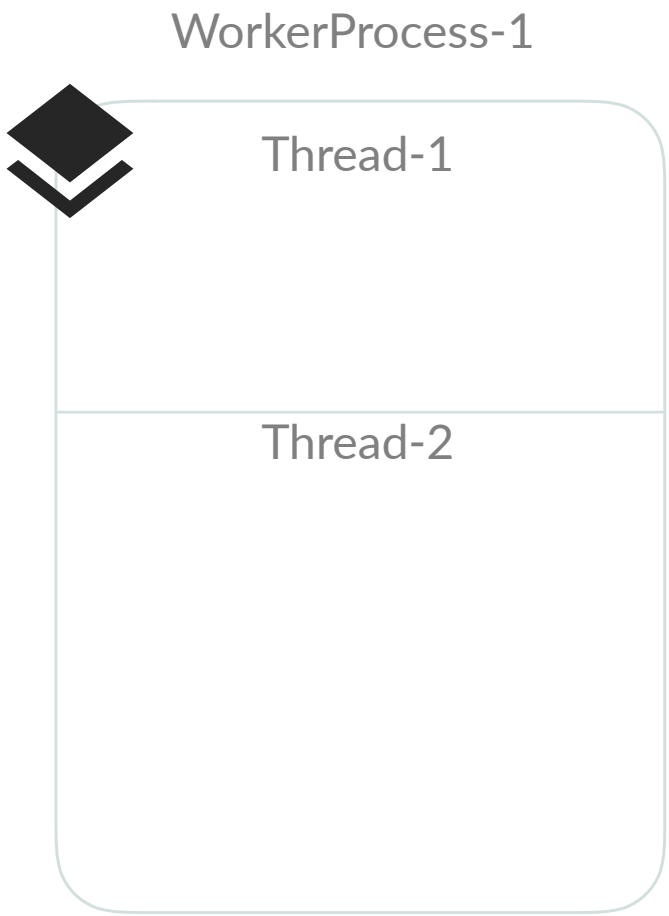
Summary

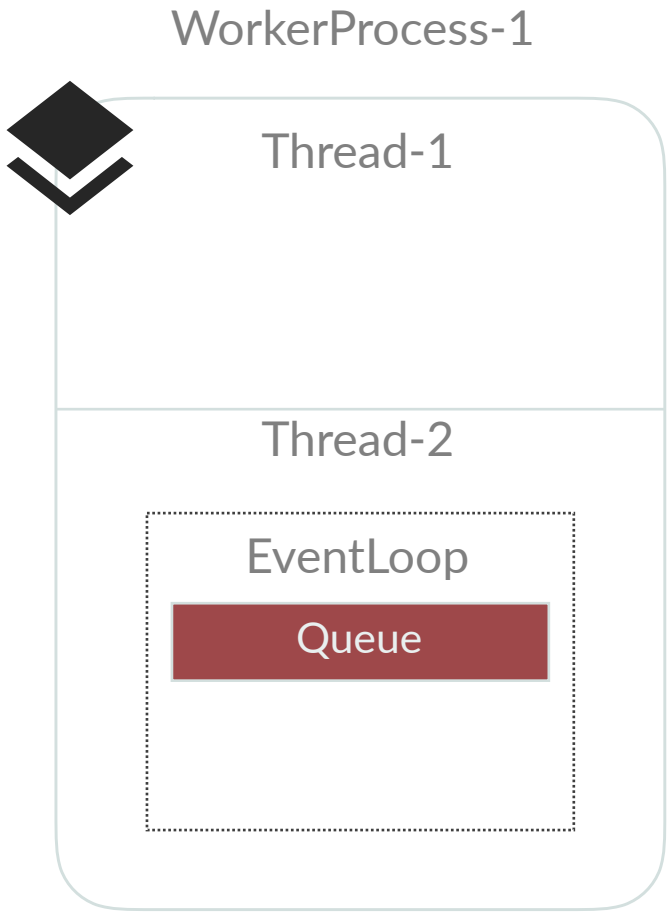
Approach	Single Request Time (s)	Days
Synchronous	0.003	34.7
Multithread	0.0036	41.6
Multiprocess	0.00032	3.7
Asyncio	0.00056	6.5

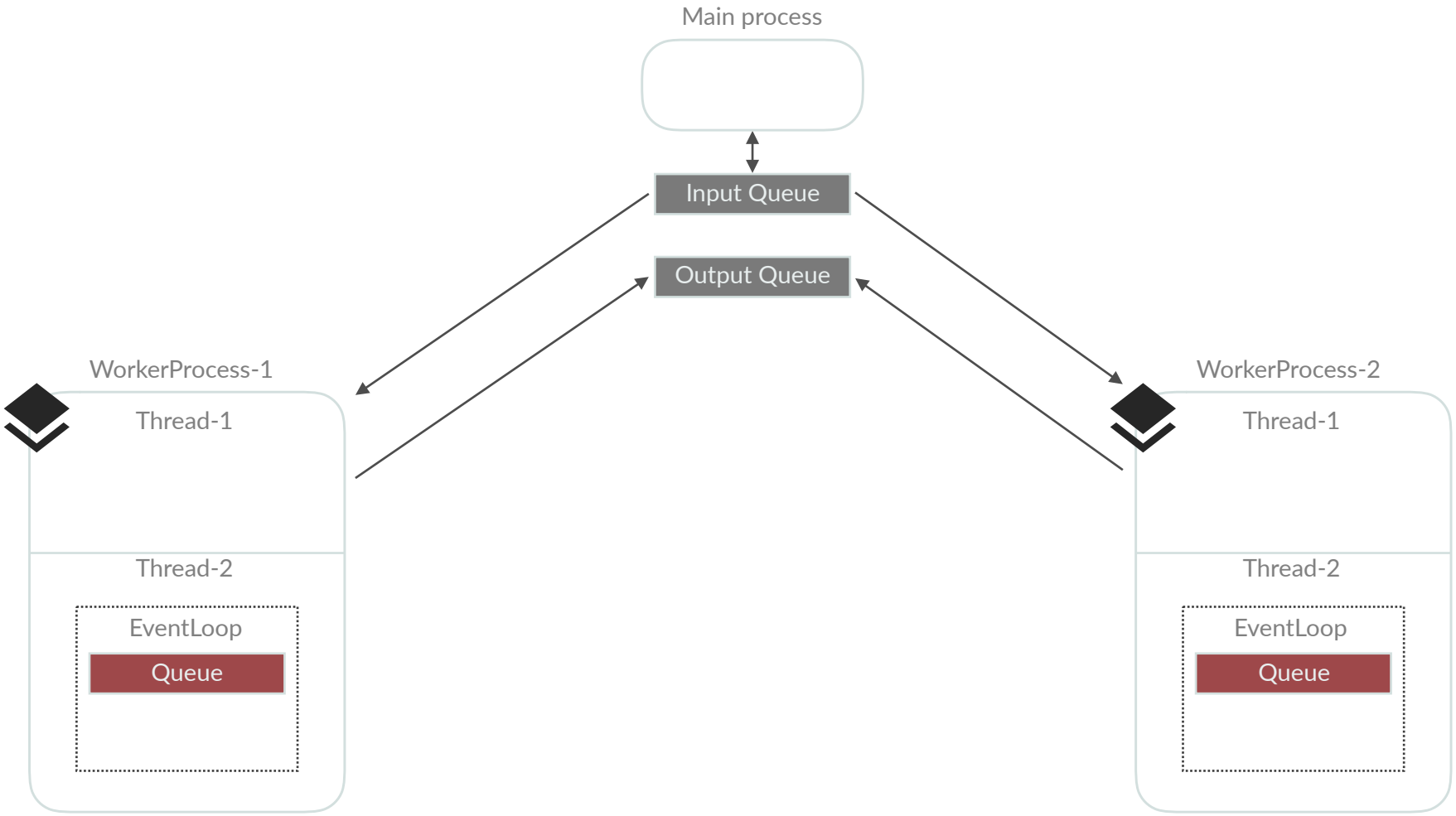
Asyncio and Multiprocessing

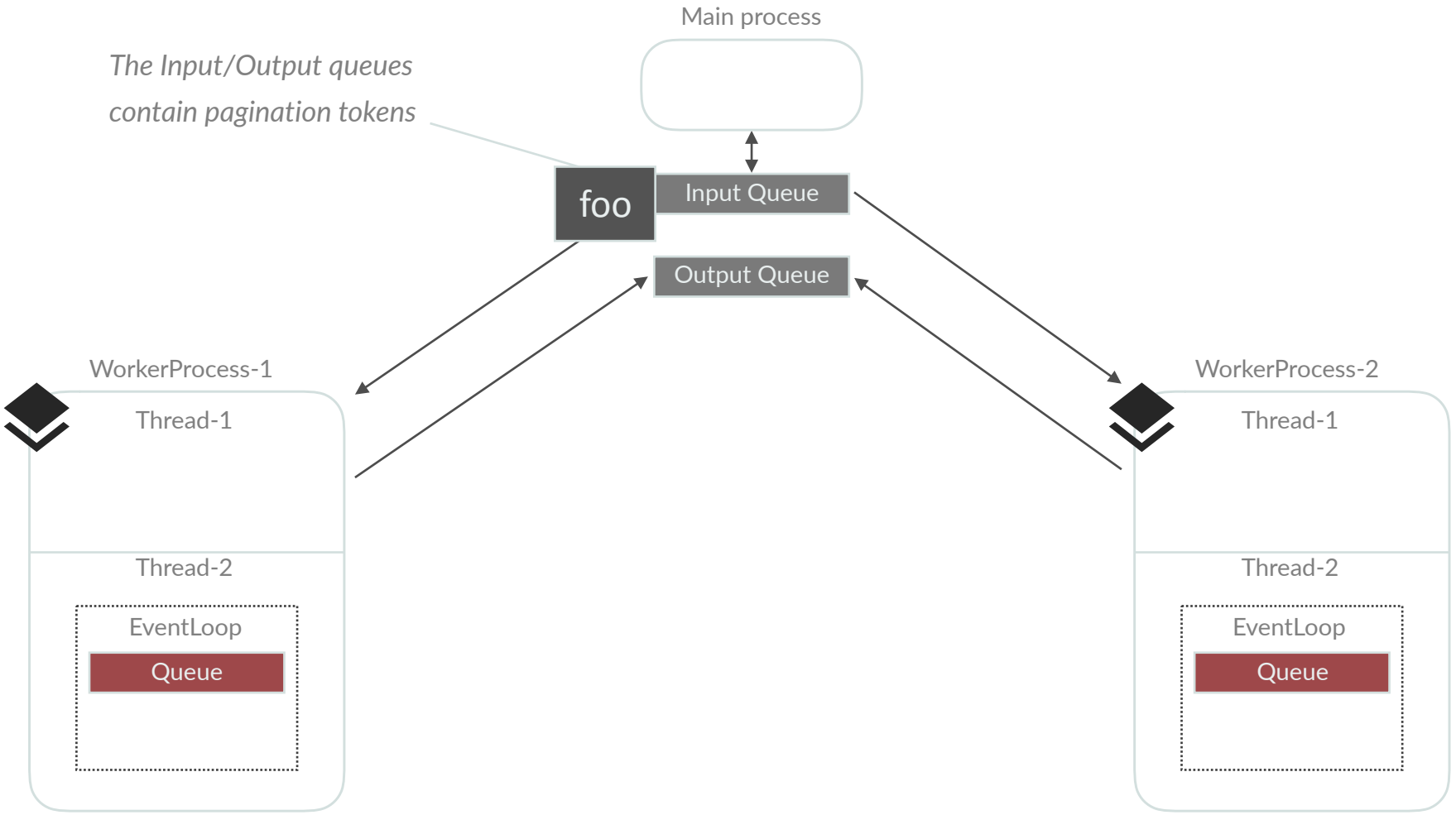
Asyncio and Multiprocessing and Multithreading

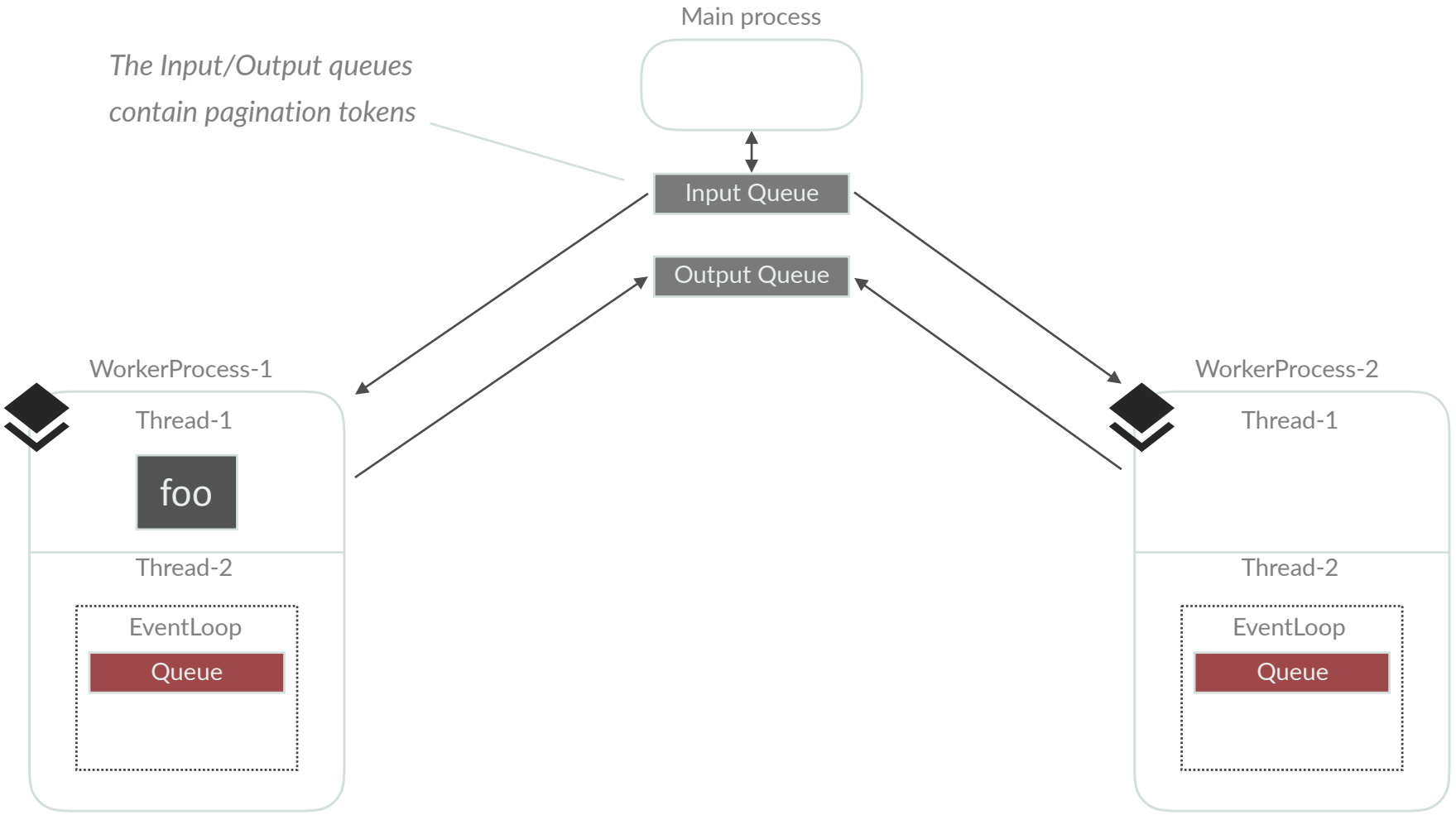

WorkerProcess-1

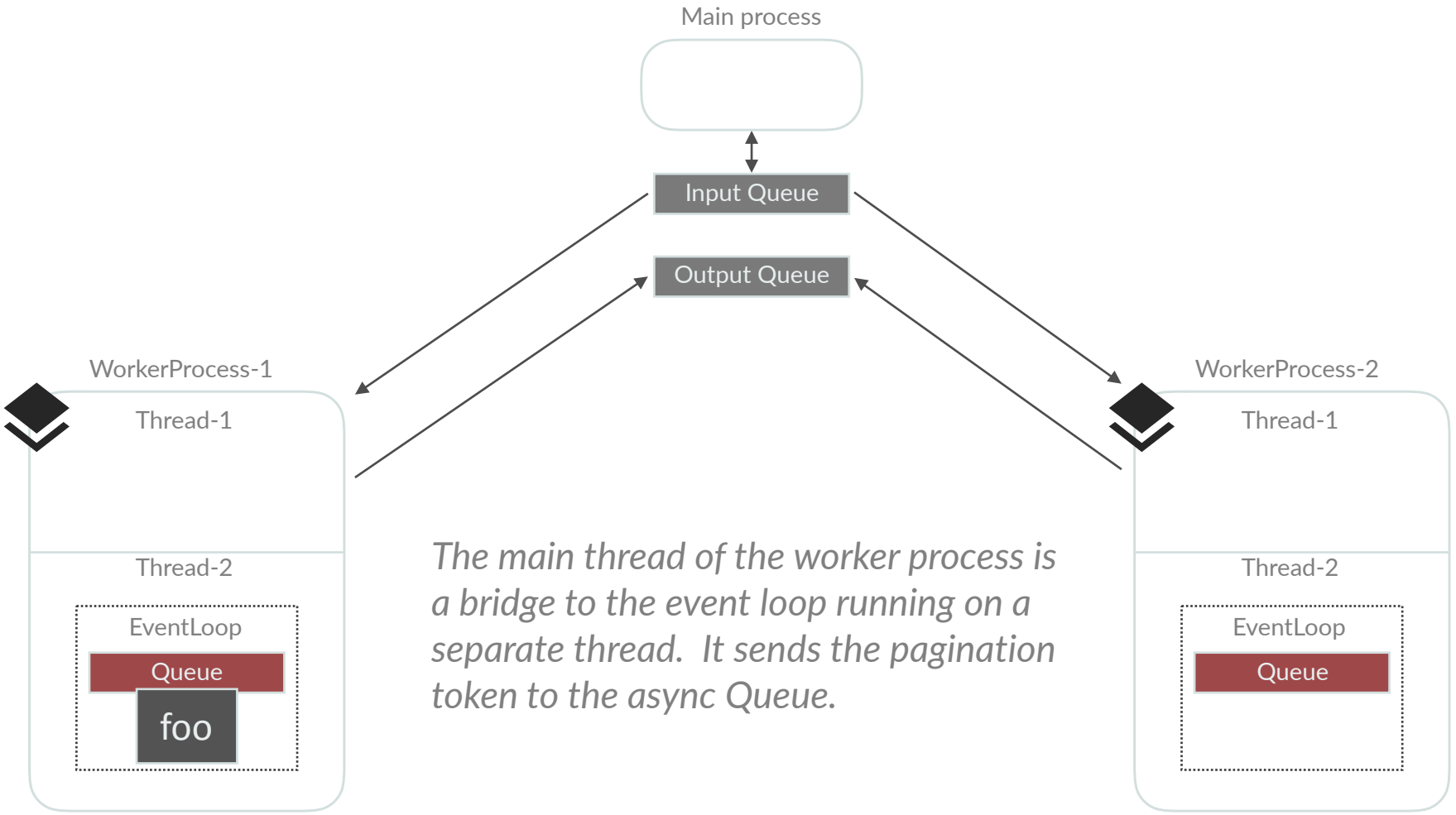

WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2

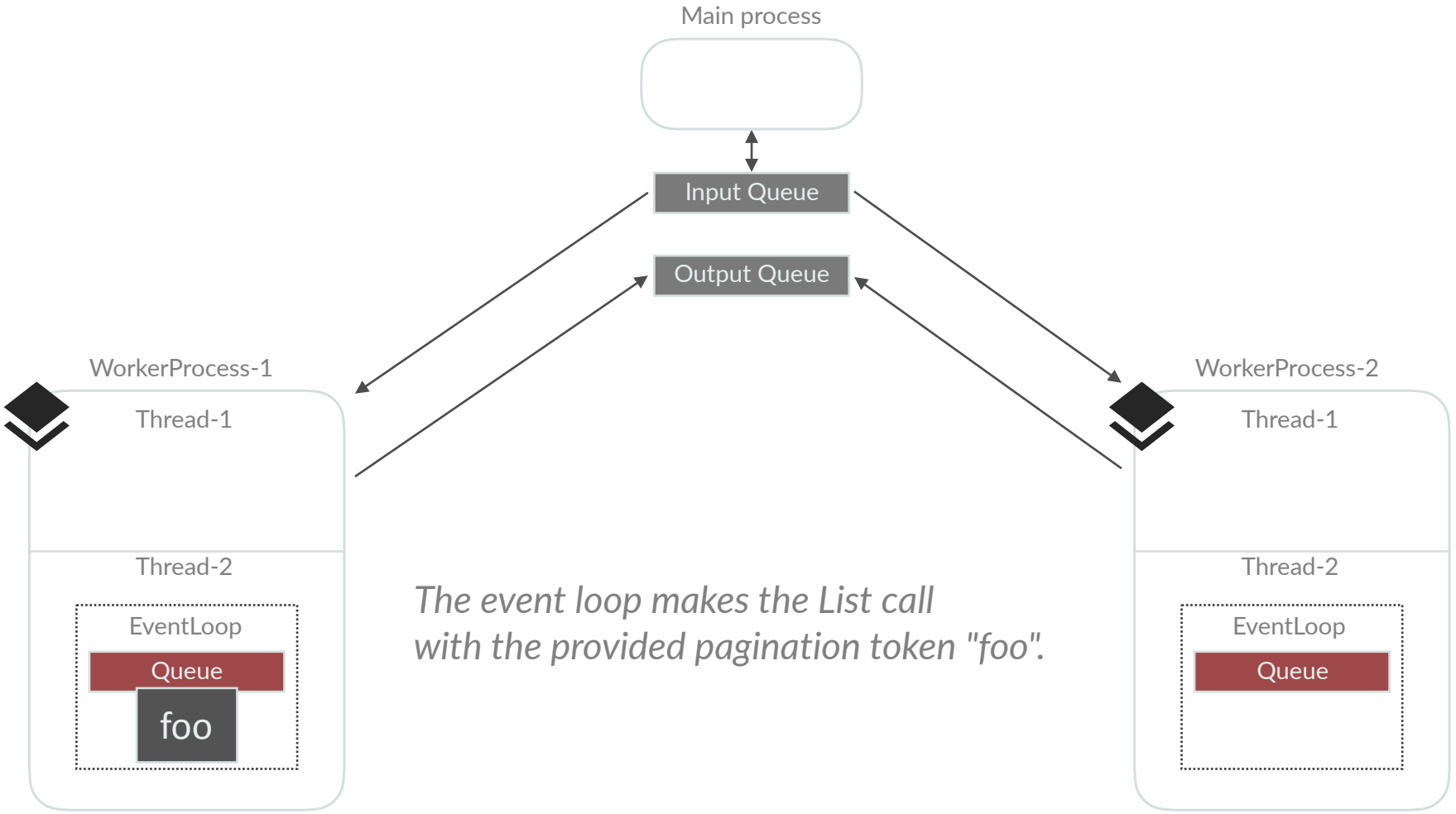

WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue

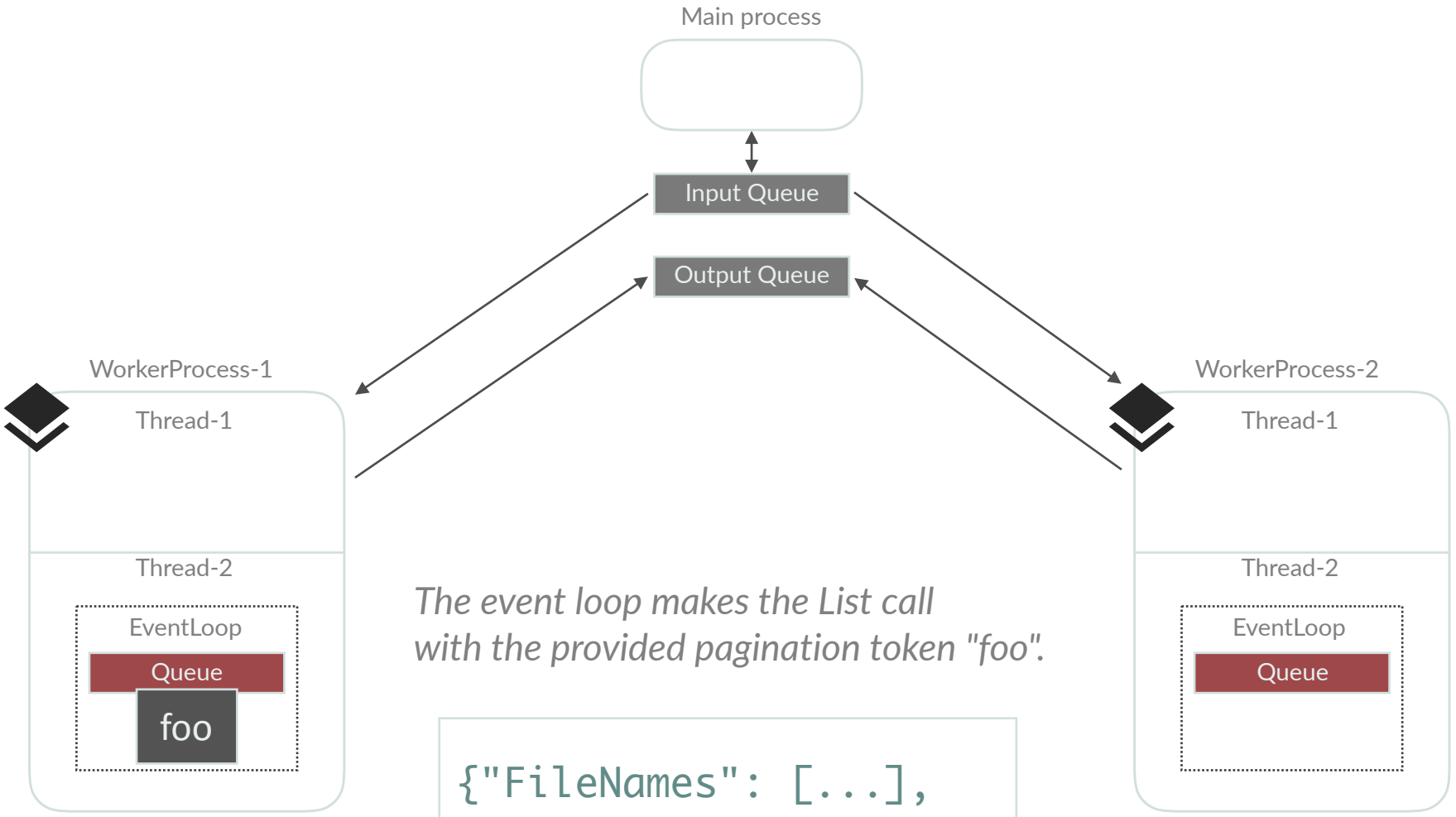

Main process
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue


Main process
The Input/Output queues
contain pagination tokens
foo
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue


Main process
The Input/Output queues
contain pagination tokens
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
foo
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue

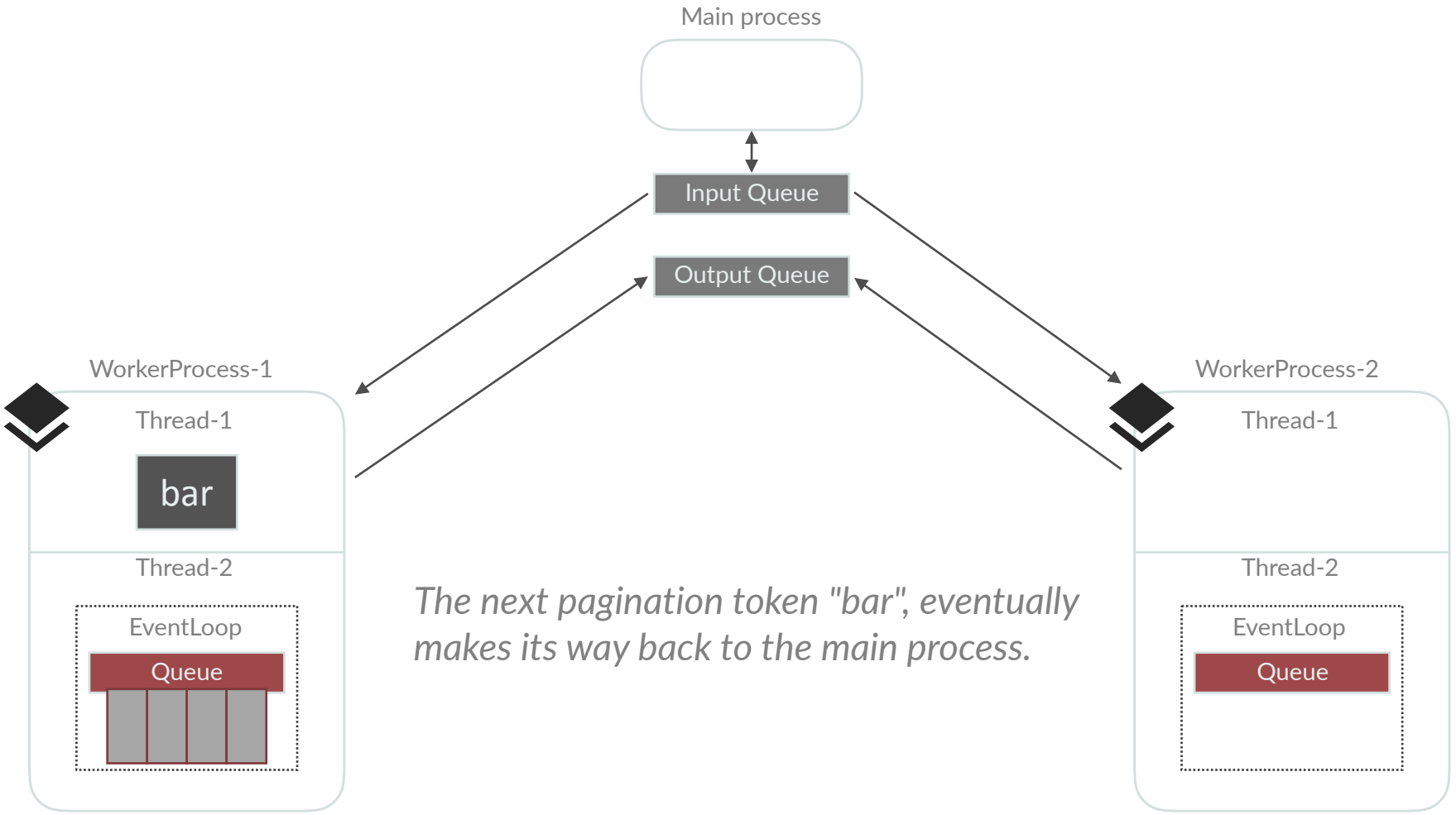

Main process
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
foo
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
The main thread of the worker process is a bridge to the event loop running on a separate thread. It sends the pagination token to the async Queue.

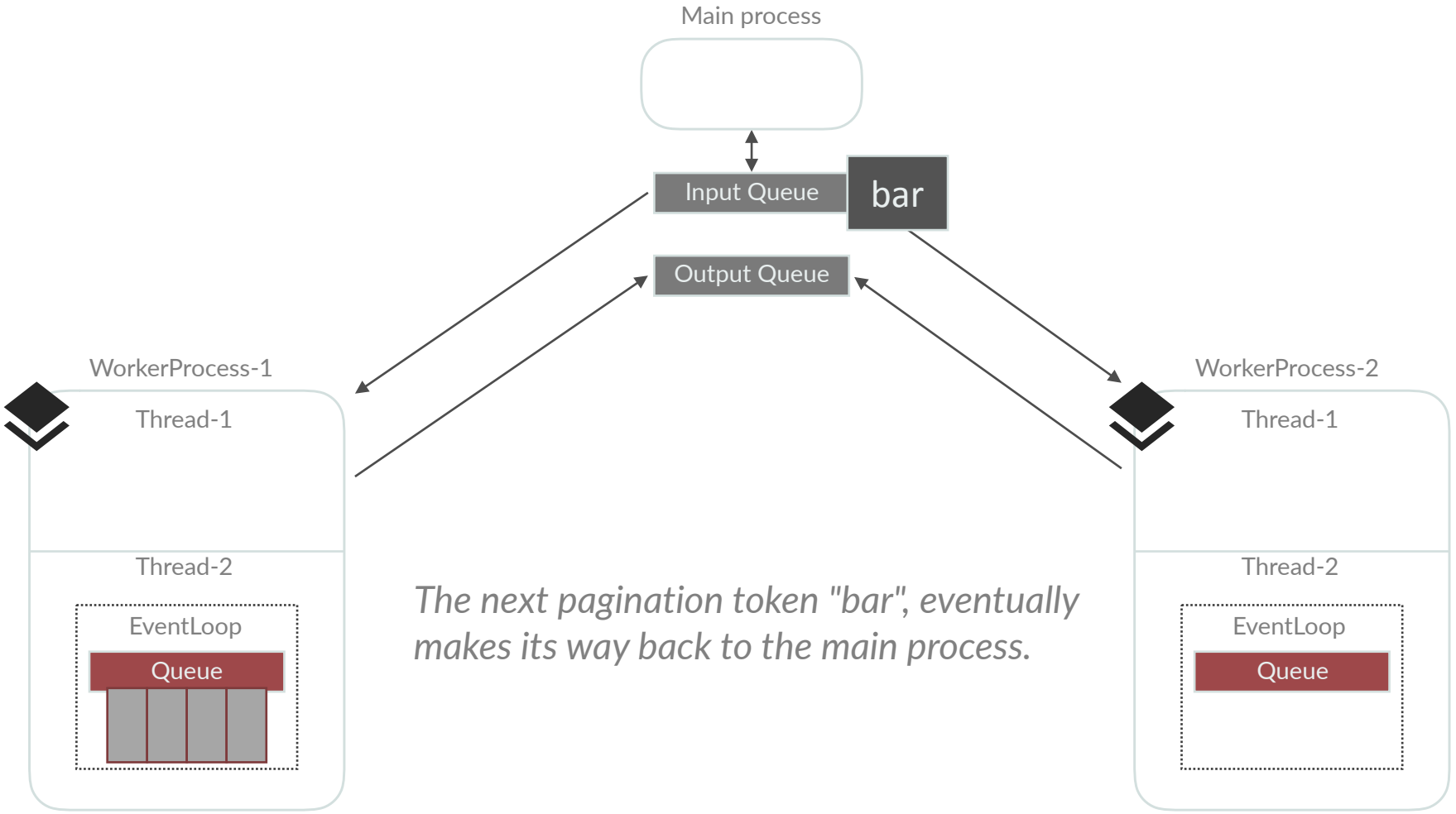

Main process
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
foo
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
The event loop makes the List call
with the provided pagination token "foo".

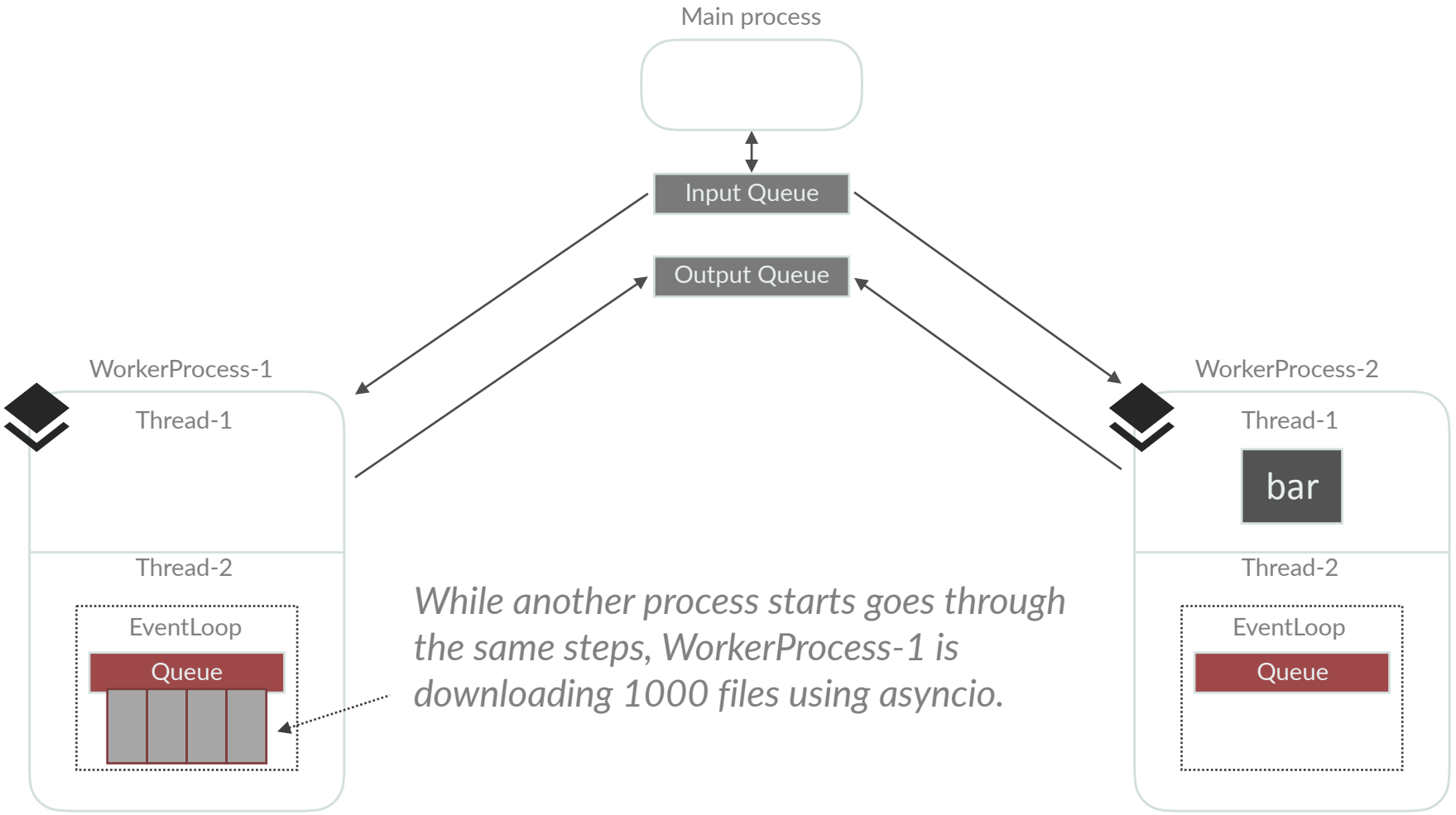


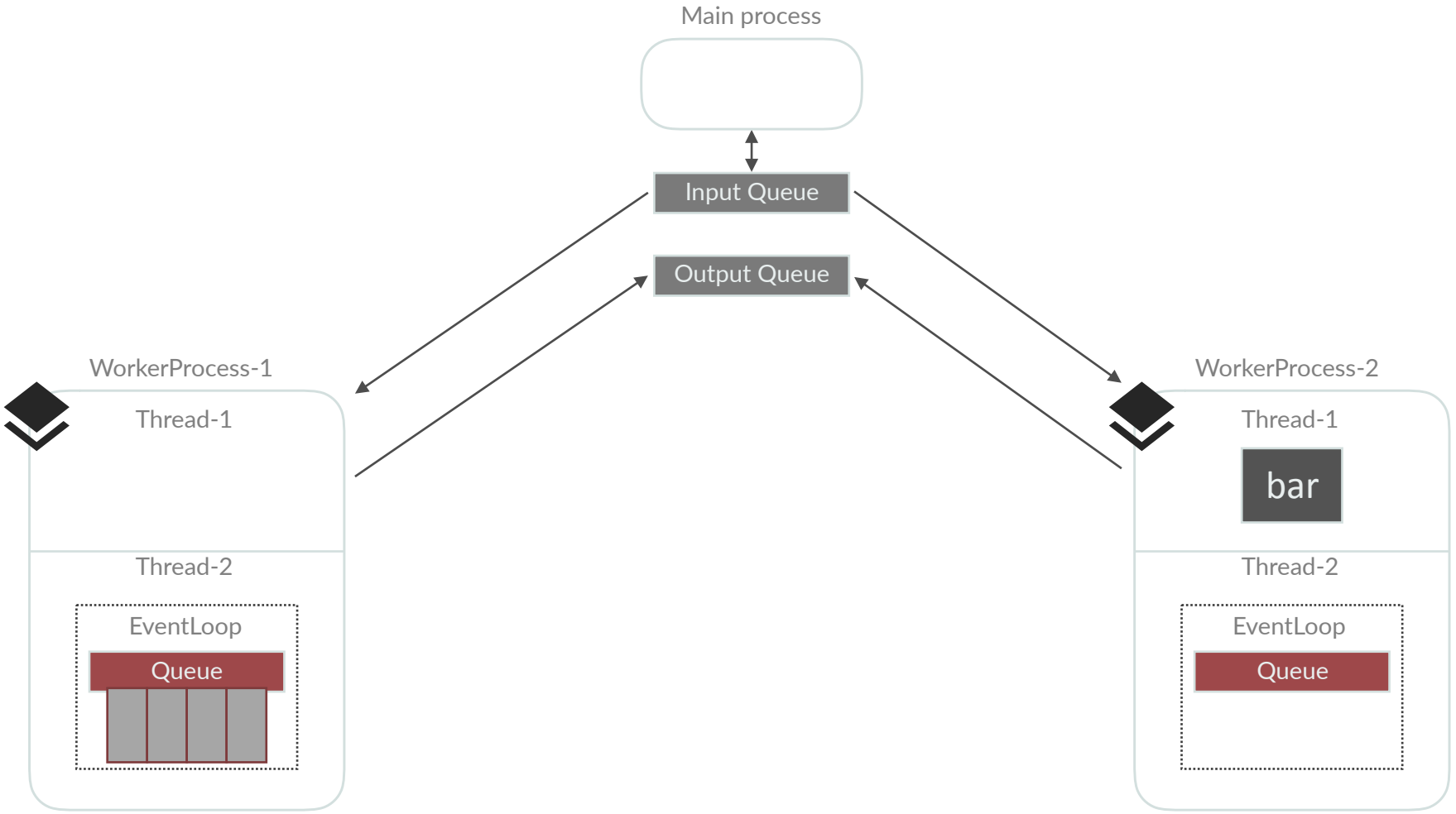
The event loop makes the List call with the provided pagination token "foo".

```
{"FileNames": [...],
 "NextMarker": "bar"}
```

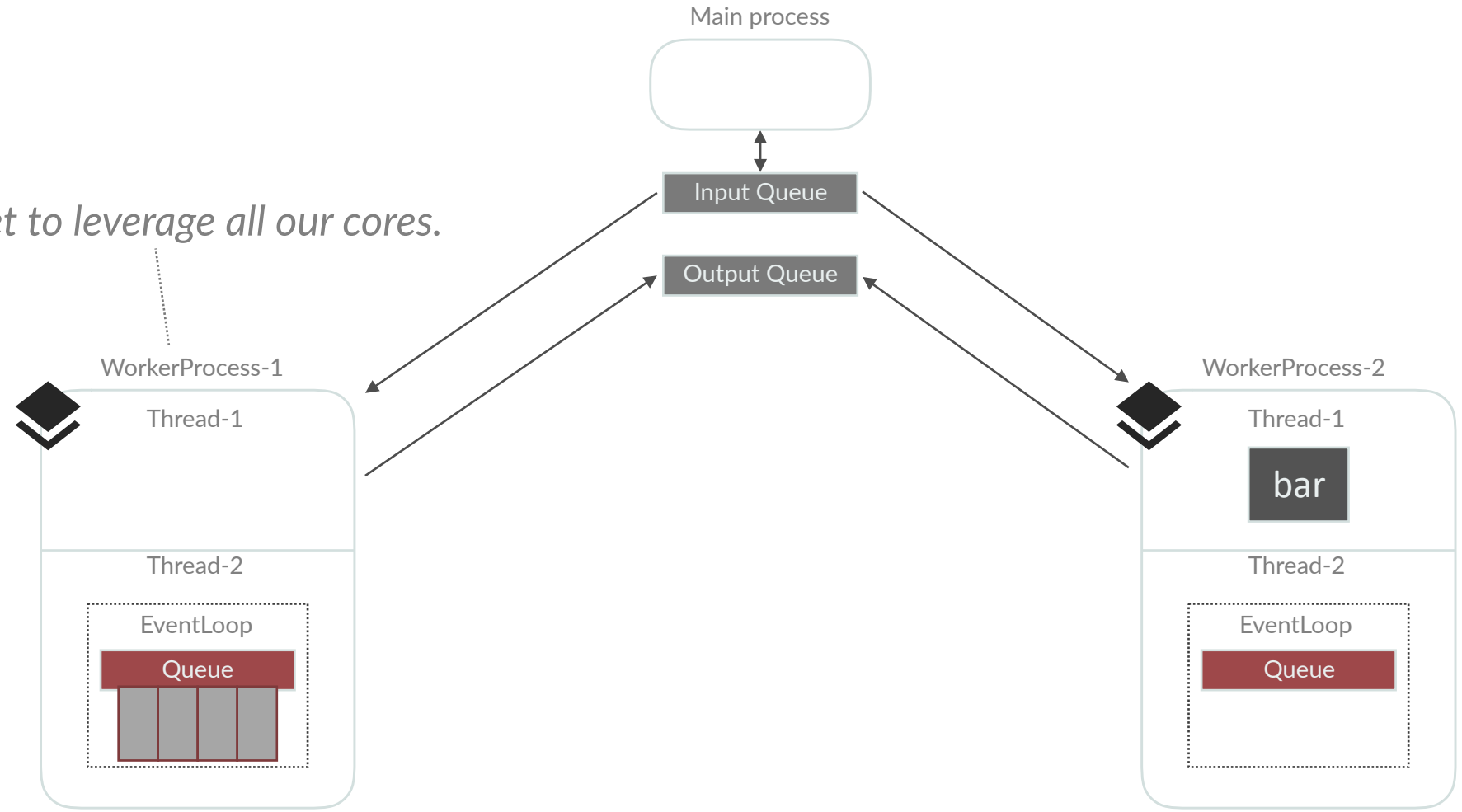

Main process
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
bar
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
The next pagination token "bar", eventually makes its way back to the main process.


Main process
Input Queue
bar
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
The next pagination token "bar", eventually makes its way back to the main process.

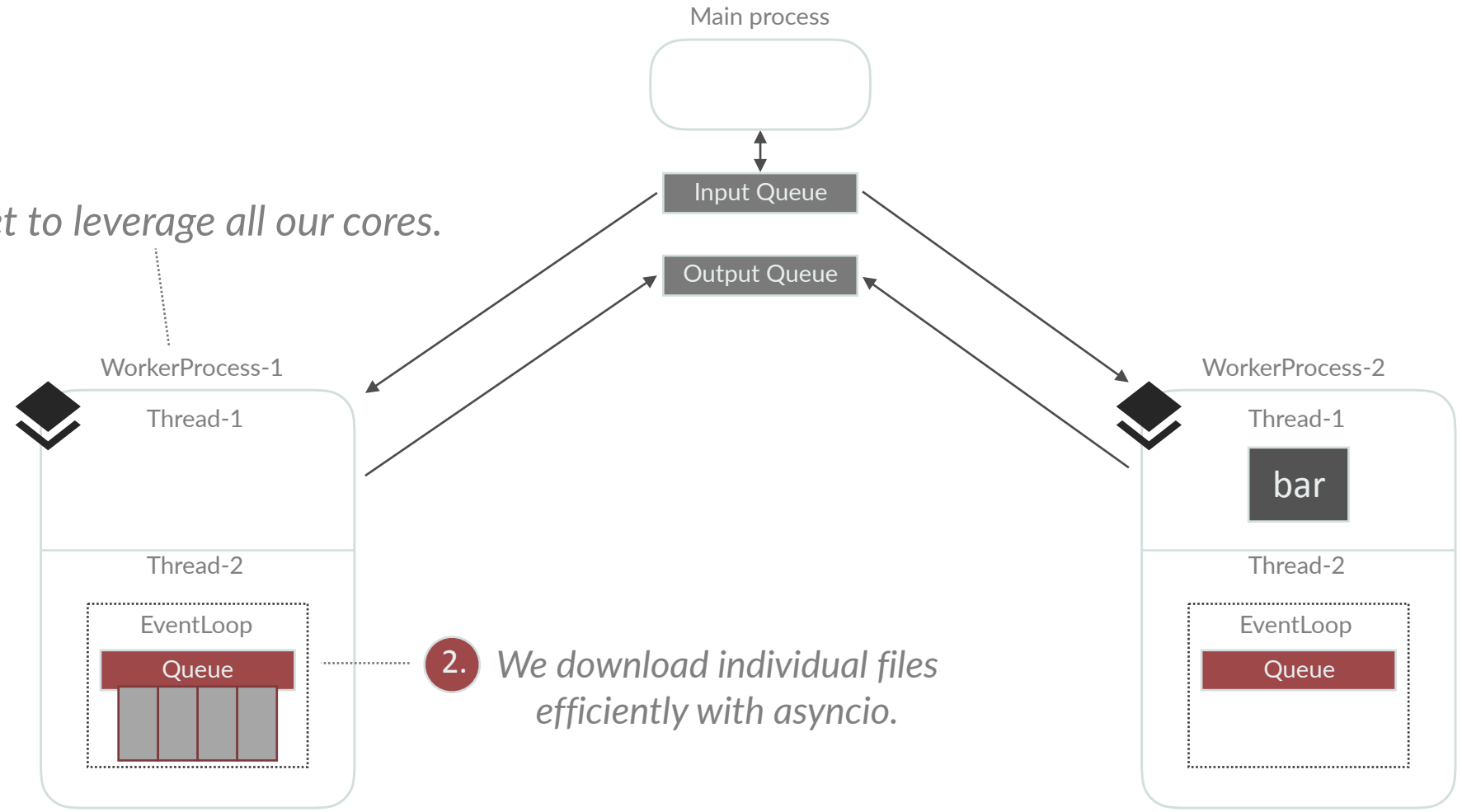

Main process
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
bar
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
While another process starts goes through the same steps, WorkerProcess-1 is downloading 1000 files using asyncio.


Main process
Input Queue
Output Queue
WorkerProcess-1
Thread-1
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue
WorkerProcess-2
Thread-1
bar
Thread-2
EventLoop
Queue

1. *We get to leverage all our cores.*

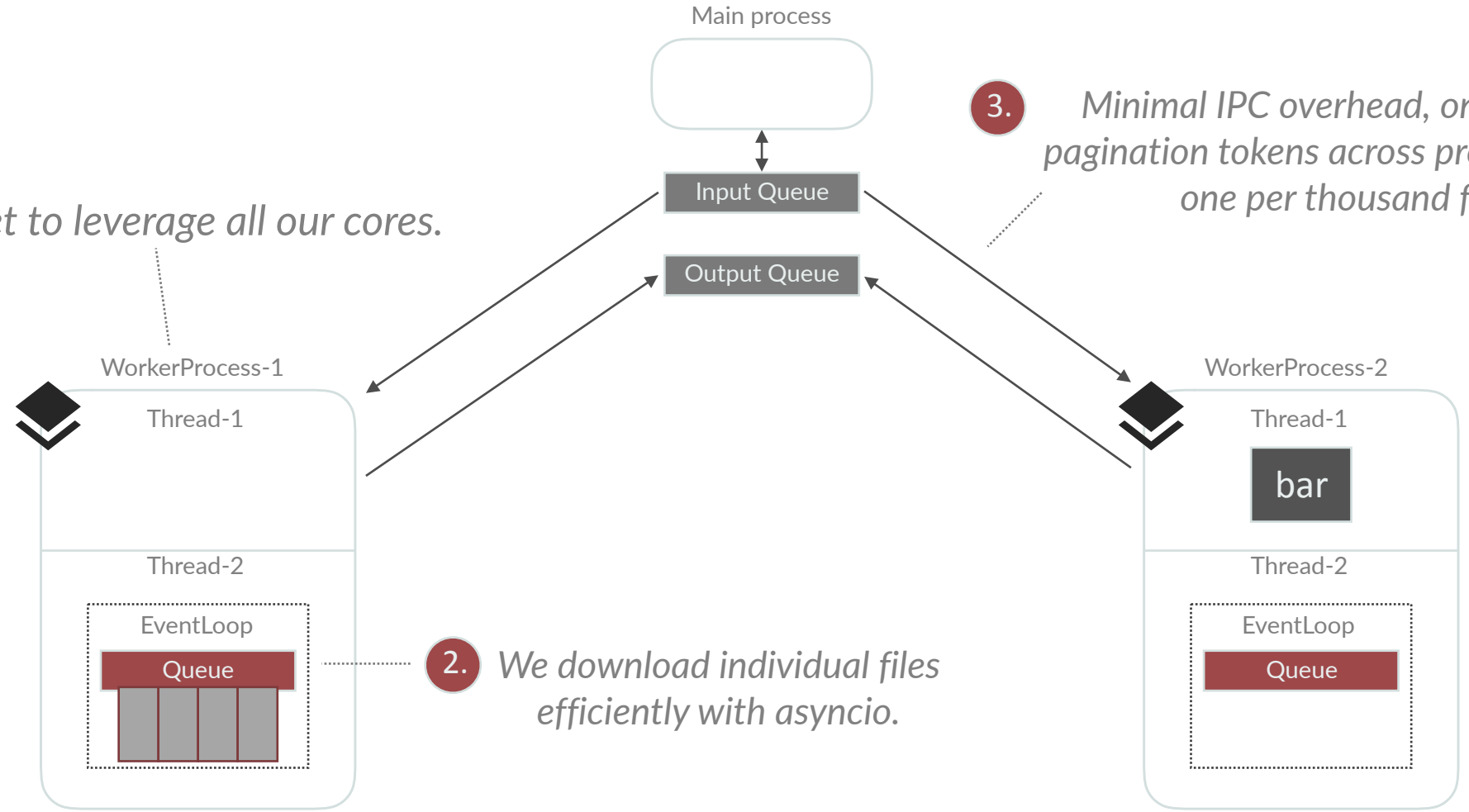


1. *We get to leverage all our cores.*



2. *We download individual files efficiently with asyncio.*

1. *We get to leverage all our cores.*



2. *We download individual files efficiently with asyncio.*

3. *Minimal IPC overhead, only passing pagination tokens across processes, only one per thousand files.*

Combo Results

Combo Results

One request	0.0000303 seconds

Combo Results

One request	0.0000303 seconds
One billion requests	30,300 seconds

Combo Results

One request	0.0000303 seconds
One billion requests	30,300 seconds 8.42 hours

Summary

Approach	Single Request Time (s)	Days
Synchronous	0.003	34.7
Multithread	0.0036	41.6
Multiprocess	0.00032	3.7
Asyncio	0.00056	6.5
Combo	0.0000303	0.35

Lessons Learned

Multiple orders of magnitude difference based on approach used

Tradeoff between simplicity and speed

Need to have max bounds when using queueing or any task scheduling

Thanks!

James Saryerwinnie

 @jsaryer