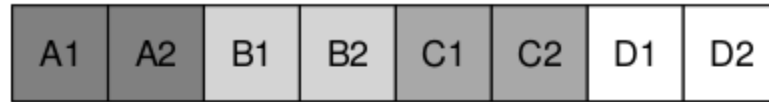


1. Fragmentation

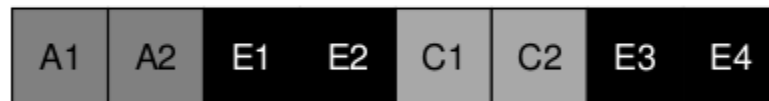
For example, imagine the following data block region, which contains four files (A, B, C, and D), each of size 2 blocks:



If B and D are deleted, the resulting layout is:



As you can see, the free space is fragmented into two chunks of two blocks, instead of one nice contiguous chunk of four. Let's say you now wish to allocate a file E, of size four blocks:



You can see what happens: E gets spread across the disk, and as a result, when accessing E, you don't get peak (sequential) performance from the disk. Rather, you first read E1 and E2, then seek, then read E3 and E4. This fragmentation problem happened all the time in the old UNIX file system, and it hurt performance. A side note: this problem is exactly what disk **defragmentation** tools help with; they reorganize on-disk data to place files contiguously and make free space for one or a few contiguous regions, moving data around and then rewriting inodes and such to reflect the changes.