CENG 4480
L10 Memory 2

Bei Yu

Reference:

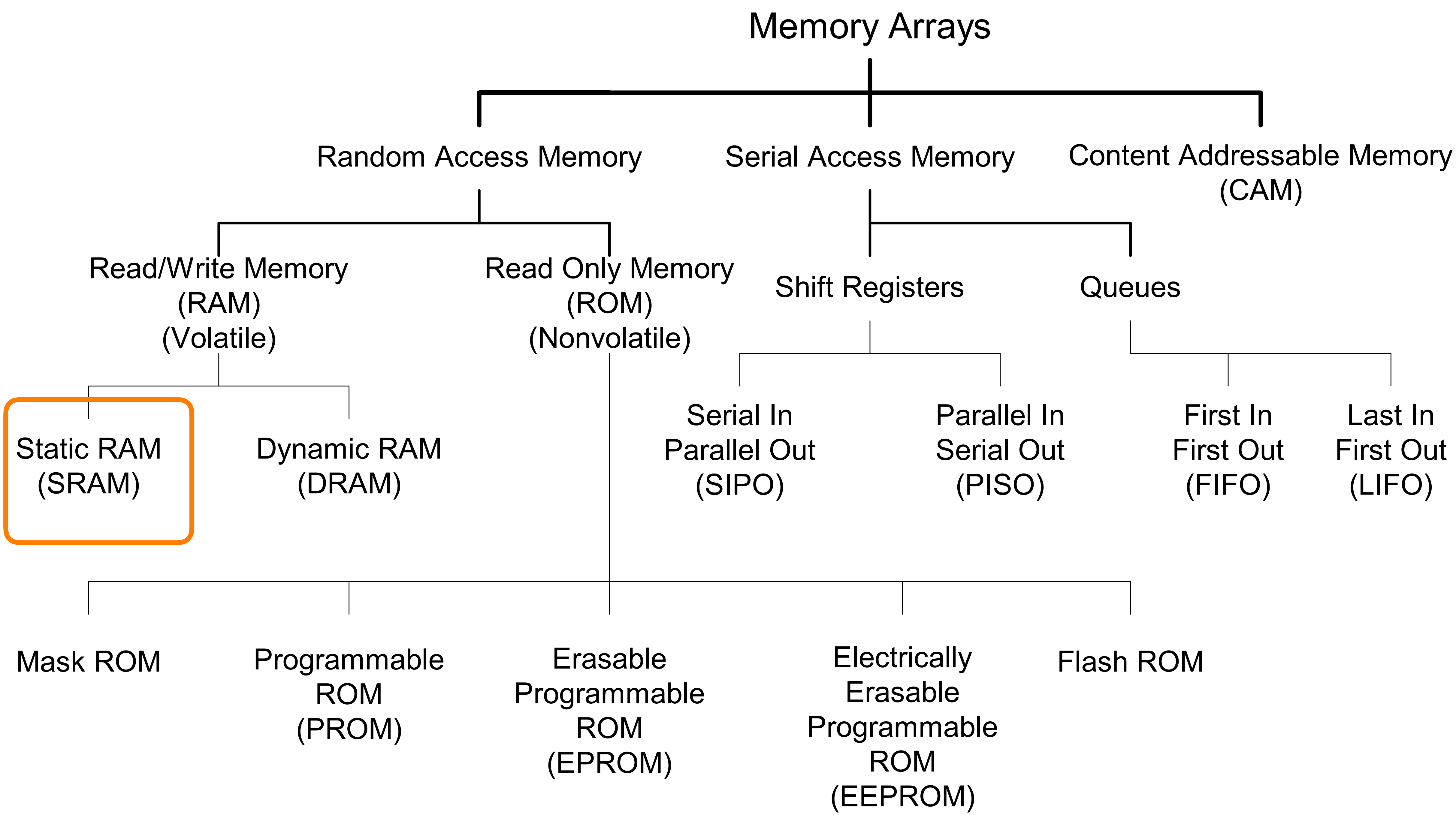
- Chapter 11 Memories
- **CMOS VLSI Design—A Circuits and Systems Perspective**
- by H.E.Weste and D.M.Harris

CENG4480 v.s. CENG3420

- CENG3420:
  - architecture perspective
  - memory coherent
  - data address

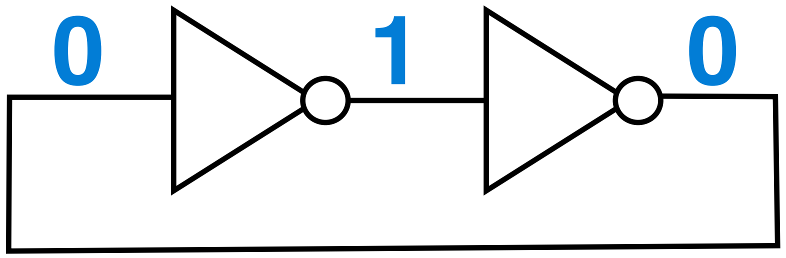
- CENG4480: more details on how data is stored

Memory Arrays

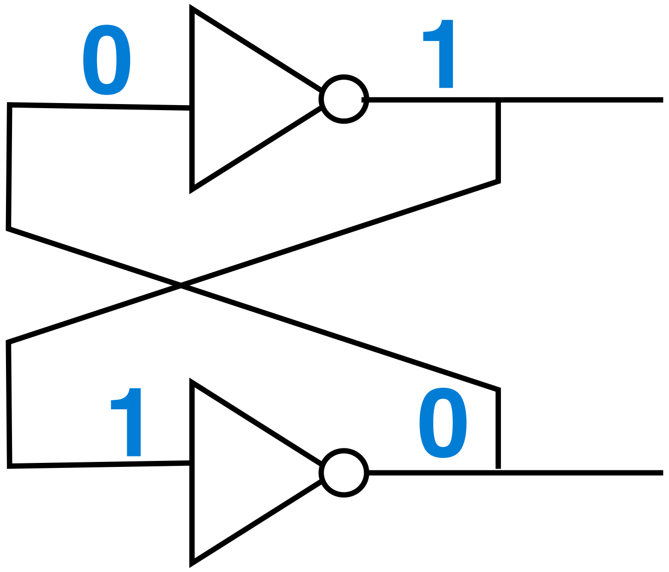

Memory Arrays
Random Access Memory
Serial Access Memory
Content Addressable Memory (CAM)
Read/Write Memory (RAM) (Volatile)
Read Only Memory (ROM) (Nonvolatile)
Shift Registers
Queues
Static RAM (SRAM)
Dynamic RAM (DRAM)
Serial In Parallel Out (SIPO)
Parallel In Serial Out (PISO)
First In First Out (FIFO)
Last In First Out (LIFO)
Mask ROM
Programmable ROM (PROM)
Erasable Programmable ROM (EPROM)
Electrically Erasable Programmable ROM (EEPROM)
Flash ROM

Storage based on Feedback

- What if we add feedback to a pair of inverters?



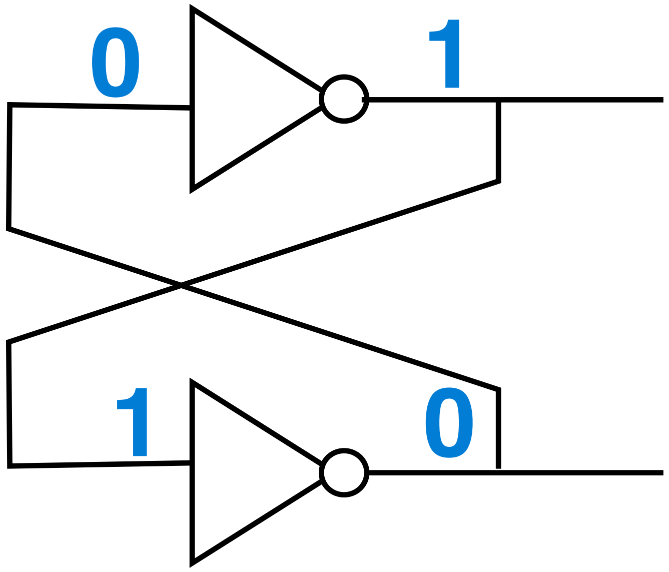
- Usually drawn as a ring of cross-coupled inverters
- Stable way to store one bit of information (w. power)

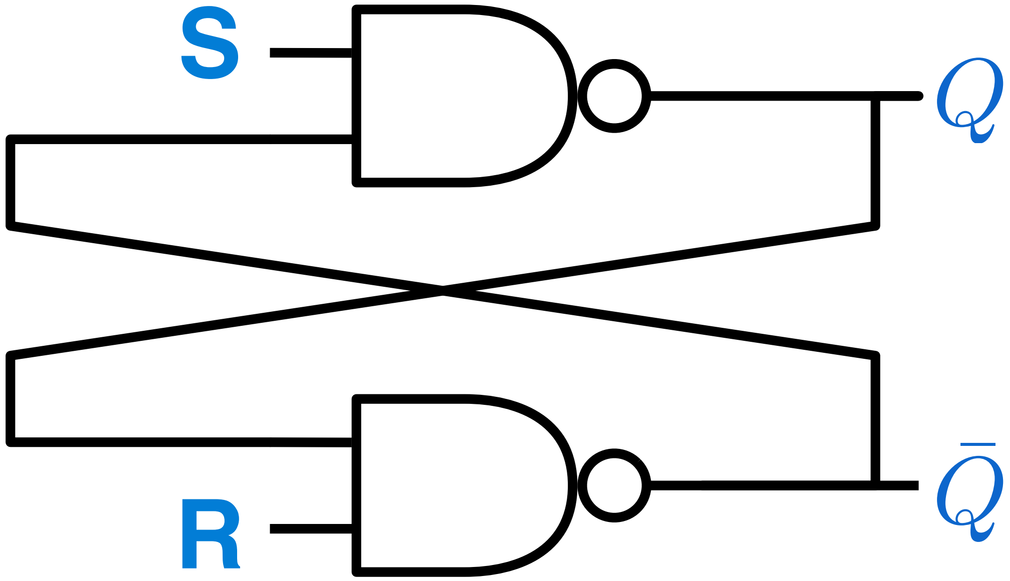


How to change the value stored?

- Replace inverter with NAND gate
- RS Latch

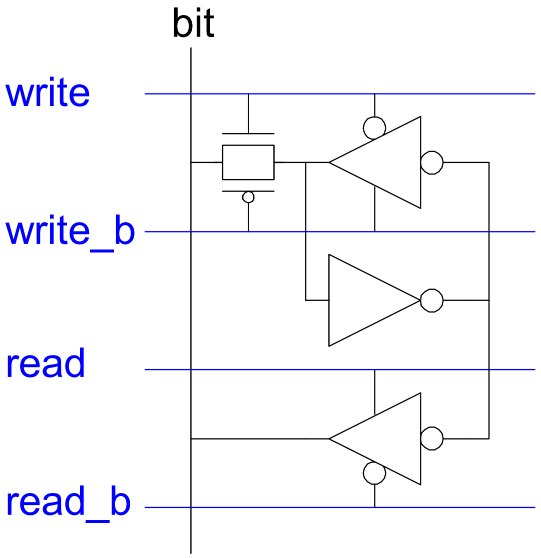
A	B	A nand B
0	0	1
0	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	0

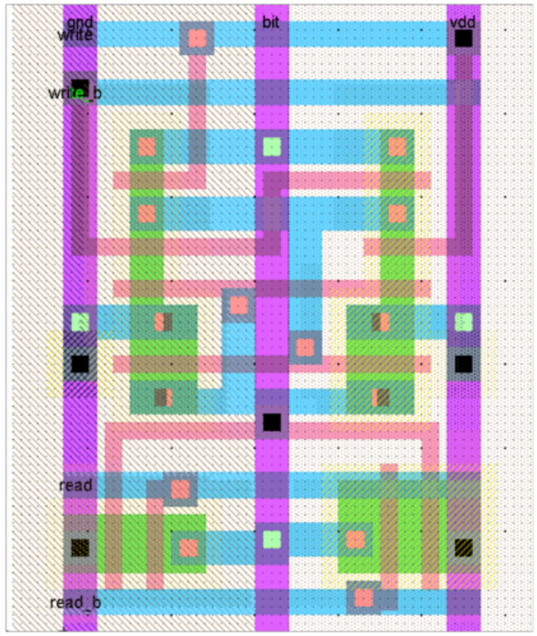




12T SRAM Cell

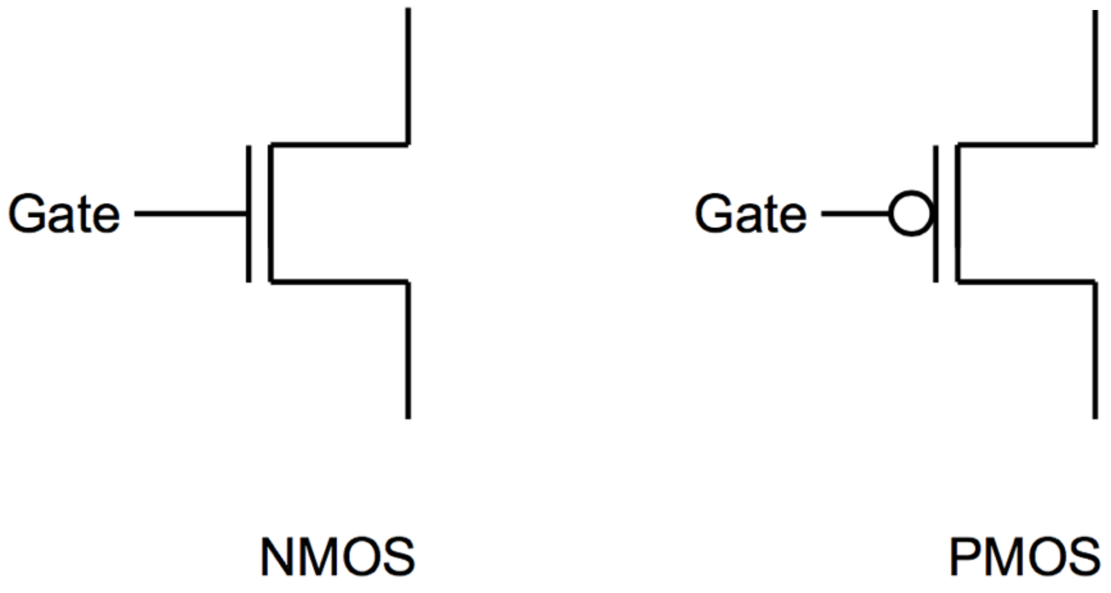
- Basic building block: SRAM Cell
  - ✦ Holds one bit of information, like a latch
  - ✦ Must be read and written
- 12-transistor (**12T**) SRAM cell
  - ✦ Use a simple latch connected to bitline
  - ✦ 46 x 75 λ unit cell



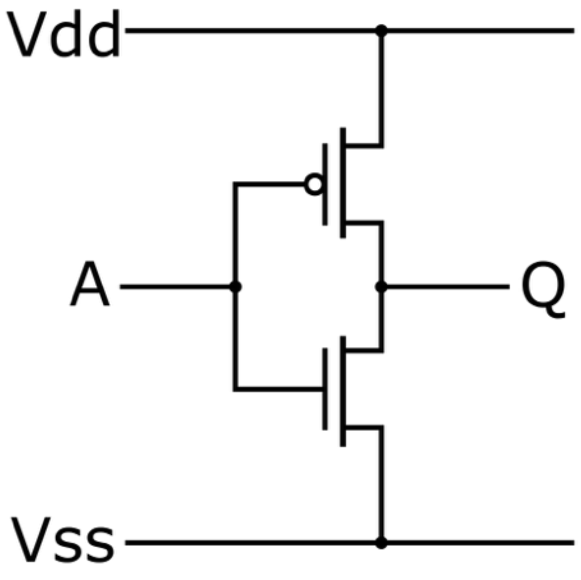


nMOS, pMOS, Inverter

- nMOS:
  - Gate = 1, transistor is ON
  - Then electric current path
- pMOS:
  - Gate = 0, transistor is ON
  - Then electric current path

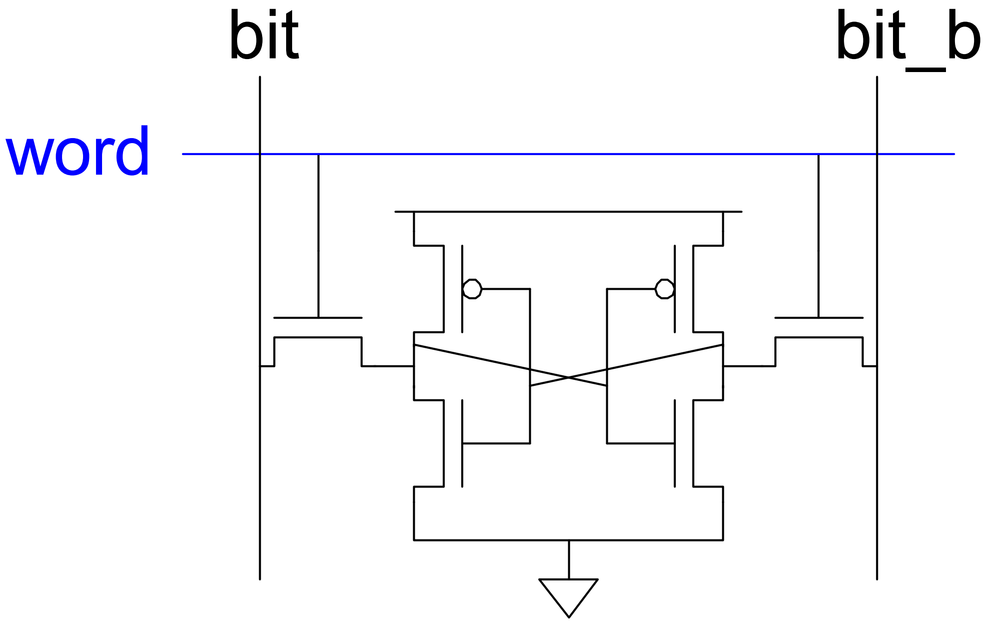


- Inverter:
  - Q = NOT (A)



6T SRAM Cell

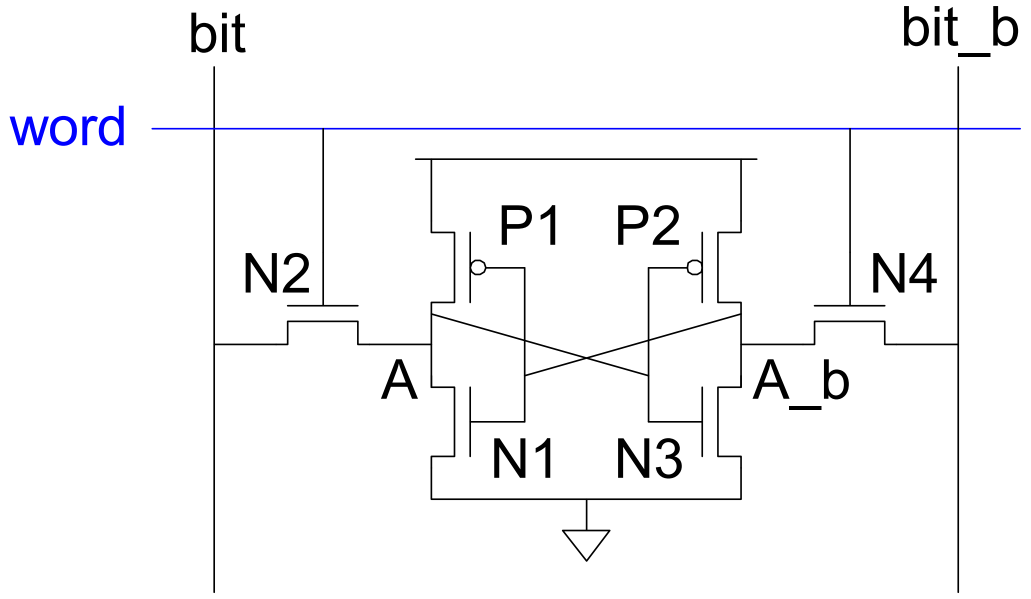
- Used in most commercial chips
- A pair of weak cross-coupled inverters
- Data stored in cross-coupled inverters
- Compared with 12T SRAM, 6T SRAM:
  - (+) reduce area
  - (-) much more complex control

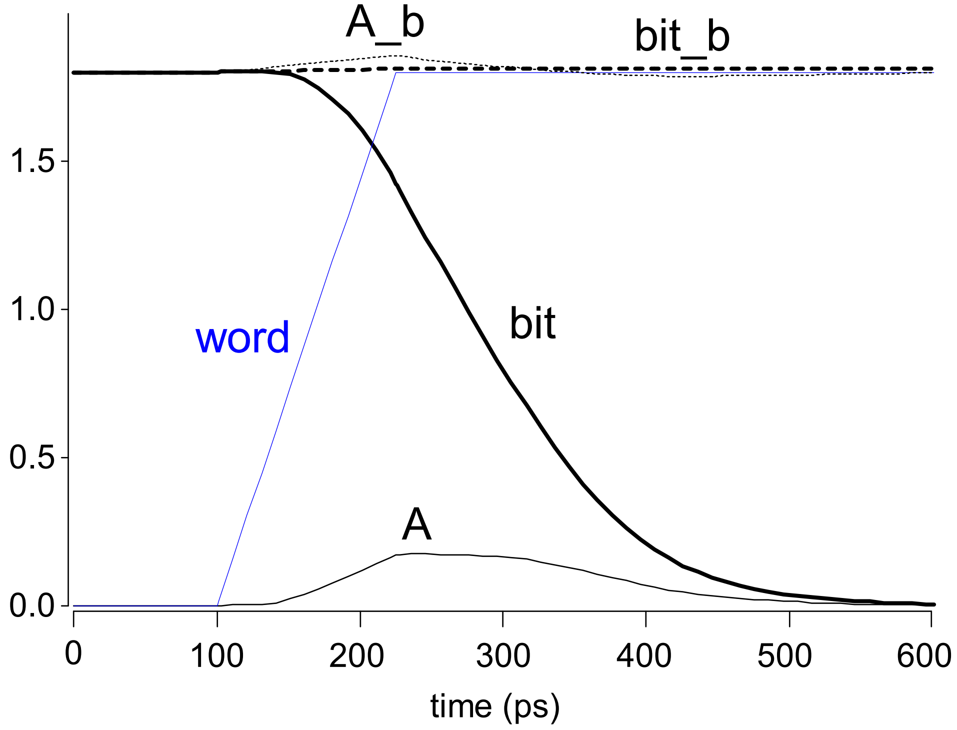


6T SRAM Read

- Precharge both bitlines high
- Then turn on wordline
- One of the two bitlines

  will be pulled down by the cell
- **Read stability**
  - A must not flip
  - N1 >> N2

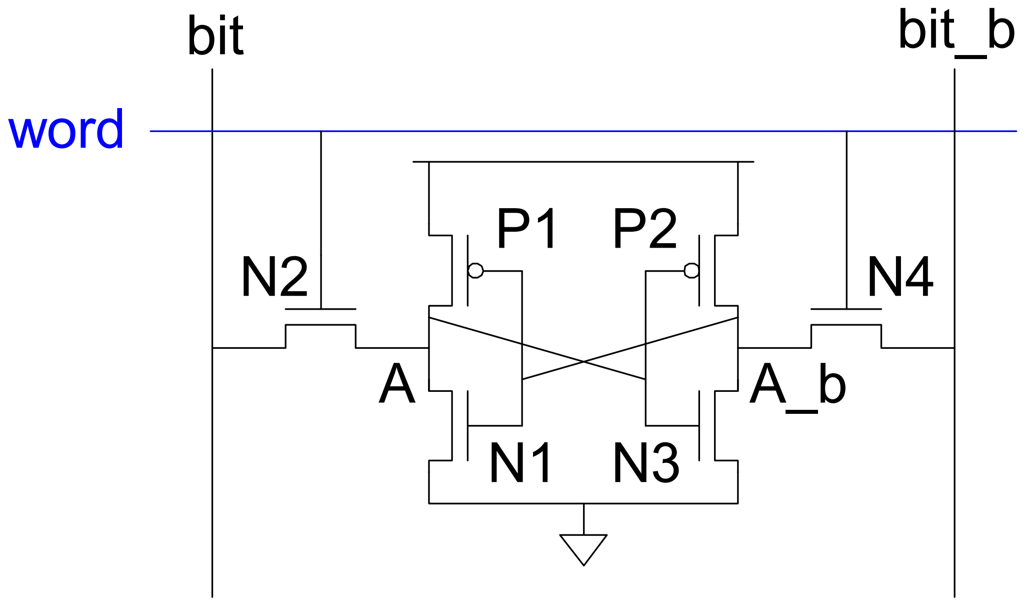




EX: 6T SRAM Read

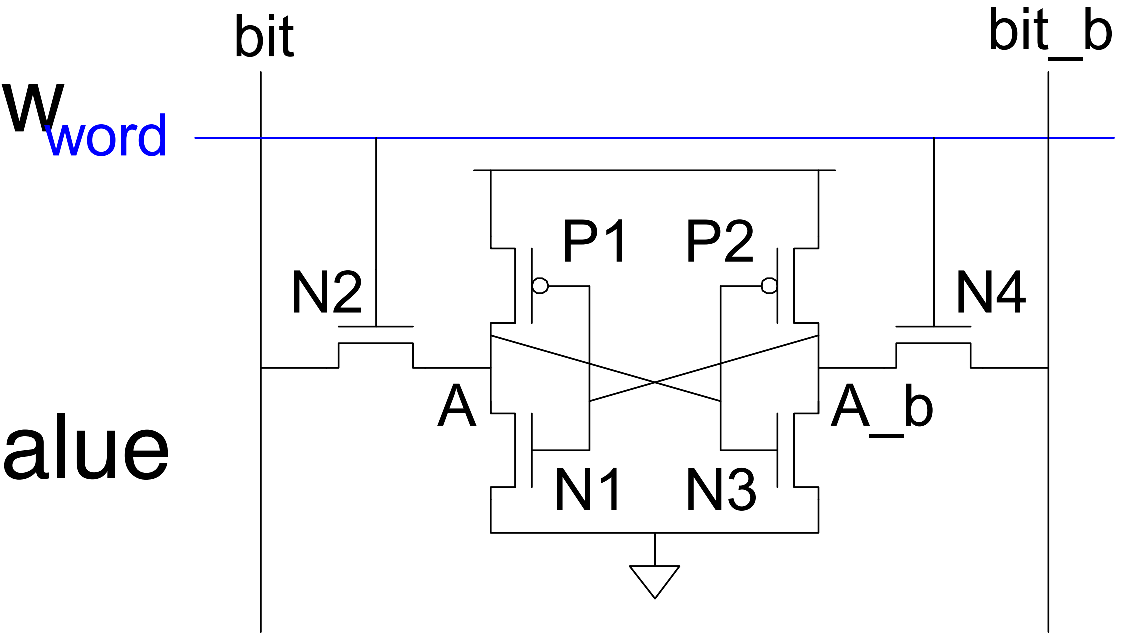
- **Question 1**: A = 0, A_b = 1, discuss the behavior:

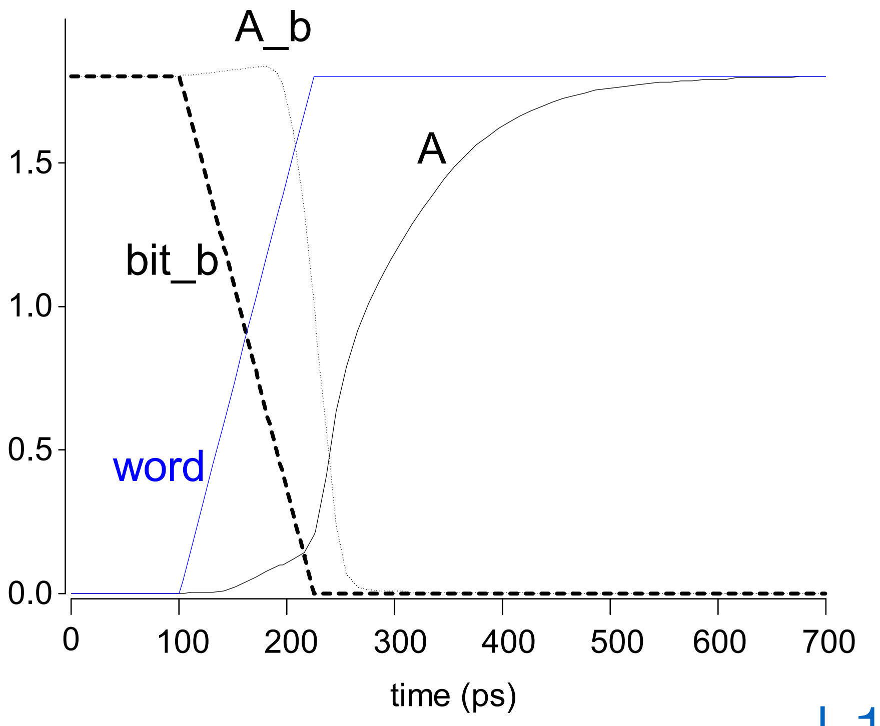
- **Question 2**: At least how many bit lines to finish read?



6T SRAM Write

- Drive one bitline high, the other low
- Then turn on wordline
- Bitlines overpower cell with new value
- **Writability**
  - Must overpower feedback inverter
  - N4 >> P2
  - N2 >> P1 (symmetry)





EX: 6T SRAM Write

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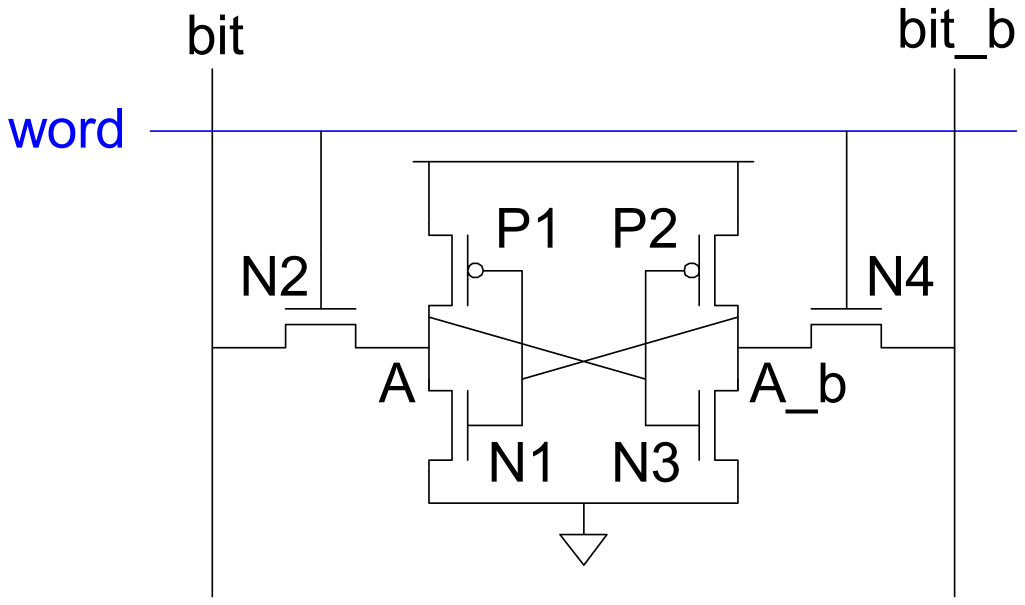
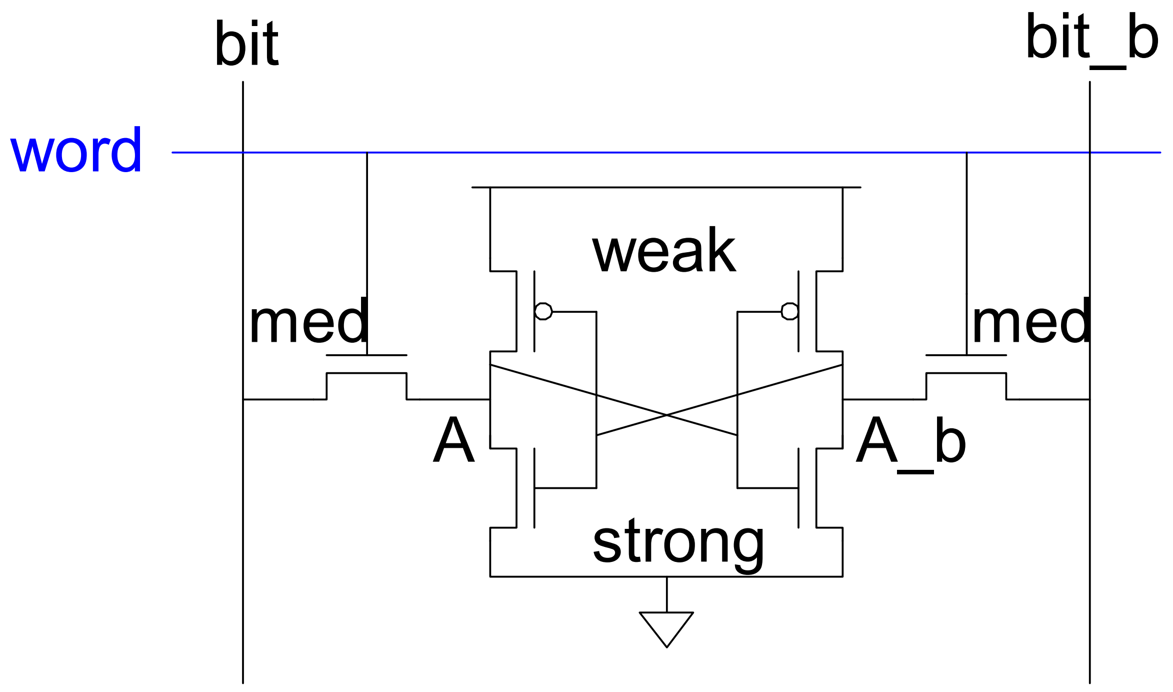
- **Question 2**: At least how many bit lines to finish write?

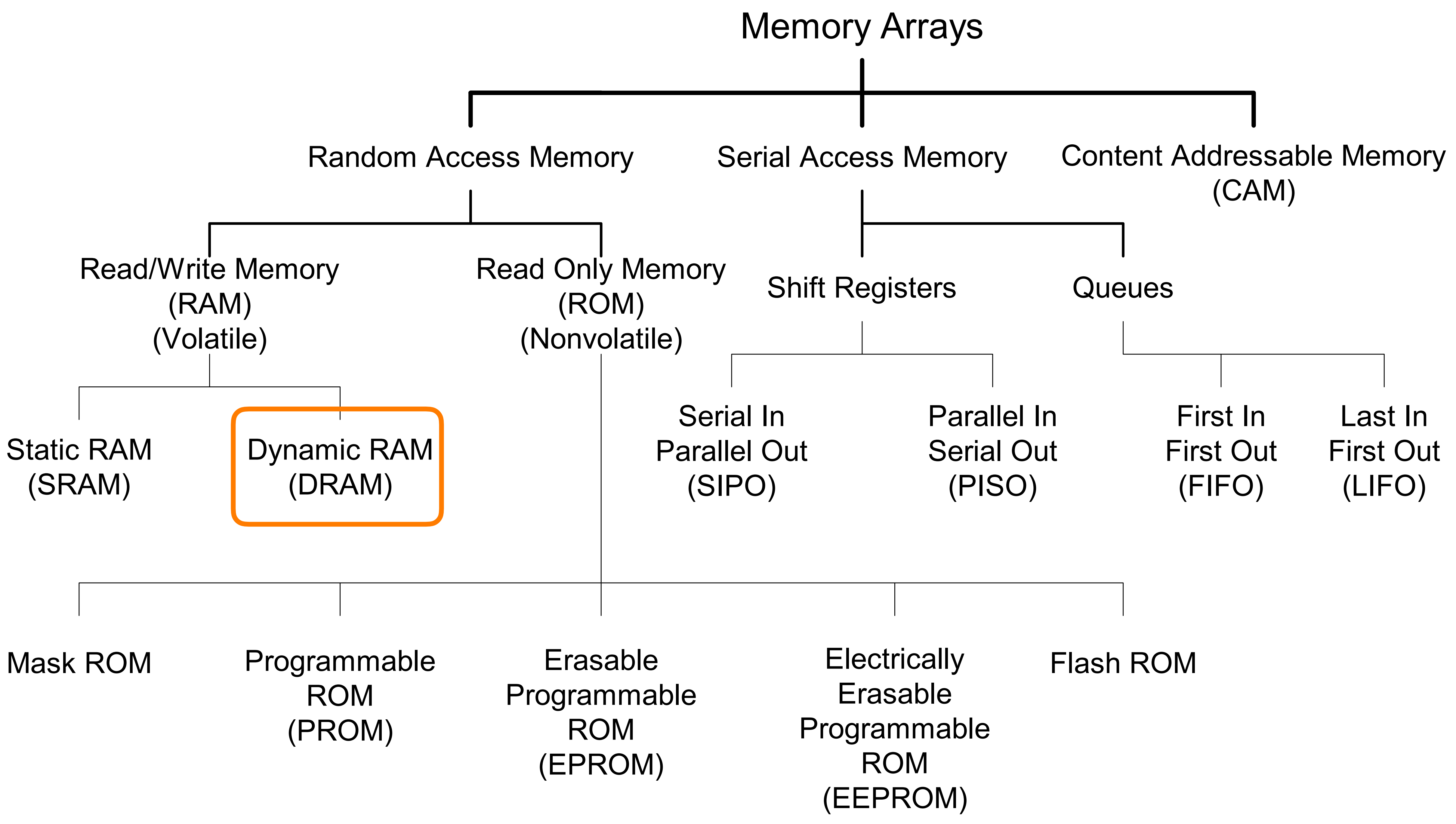


6T SRAM Sizing

- High bitlines must not overpower inverters during reads
- But low bitlines must write new value into cell



Memory Arrays



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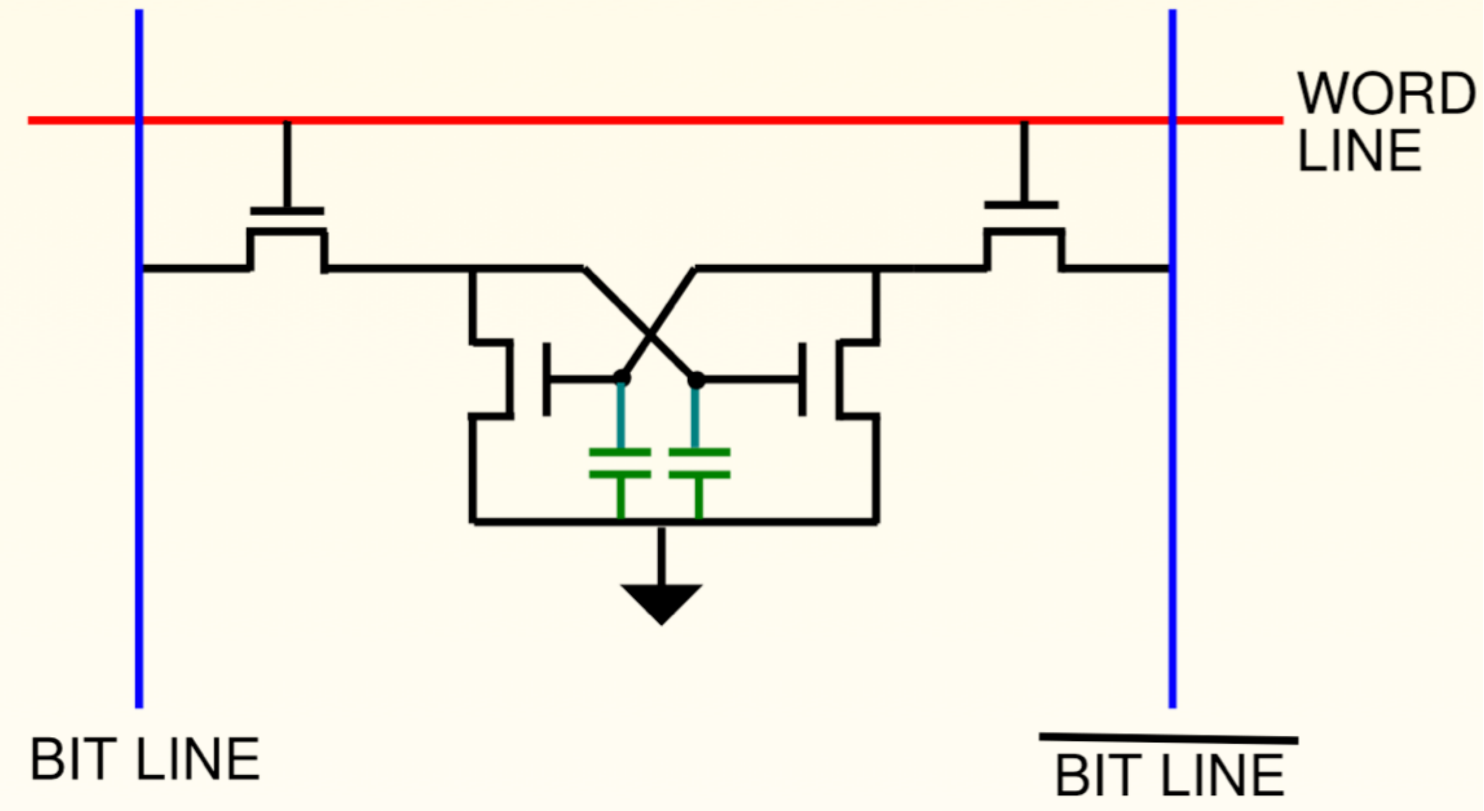
Flash ROM

Dynamic RAM (DRAM)

- Basic Principle: Storage of information on capacitors
- Charge & discharge of capacitor to change stored value
- Use of transistor as “switch” to:
  - Store charge
  - Charge or discharge

4T DRAM Cell

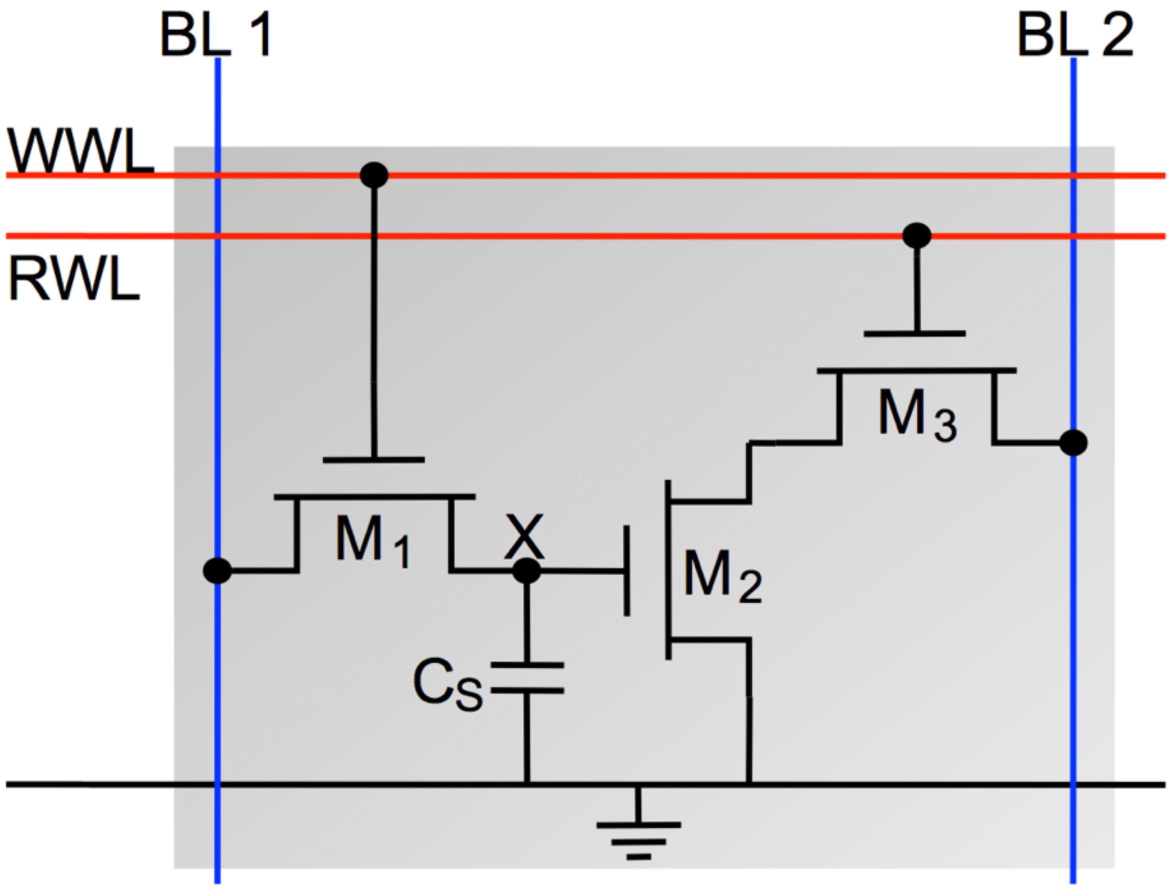
Remove the two p-MOS transistors from static RAM cell, to get a four-transistor dynamic RAM cell.

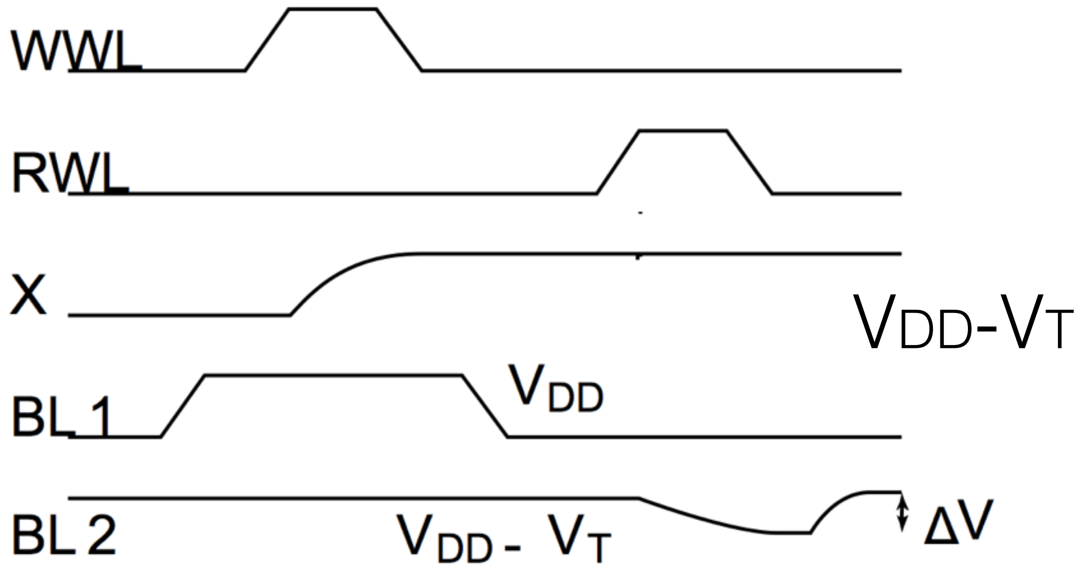


- Data must be refreshed regularly
- Dynamic cells must be designed very carefully
- Data stored as charge on gate capacitors (complementary nodes)

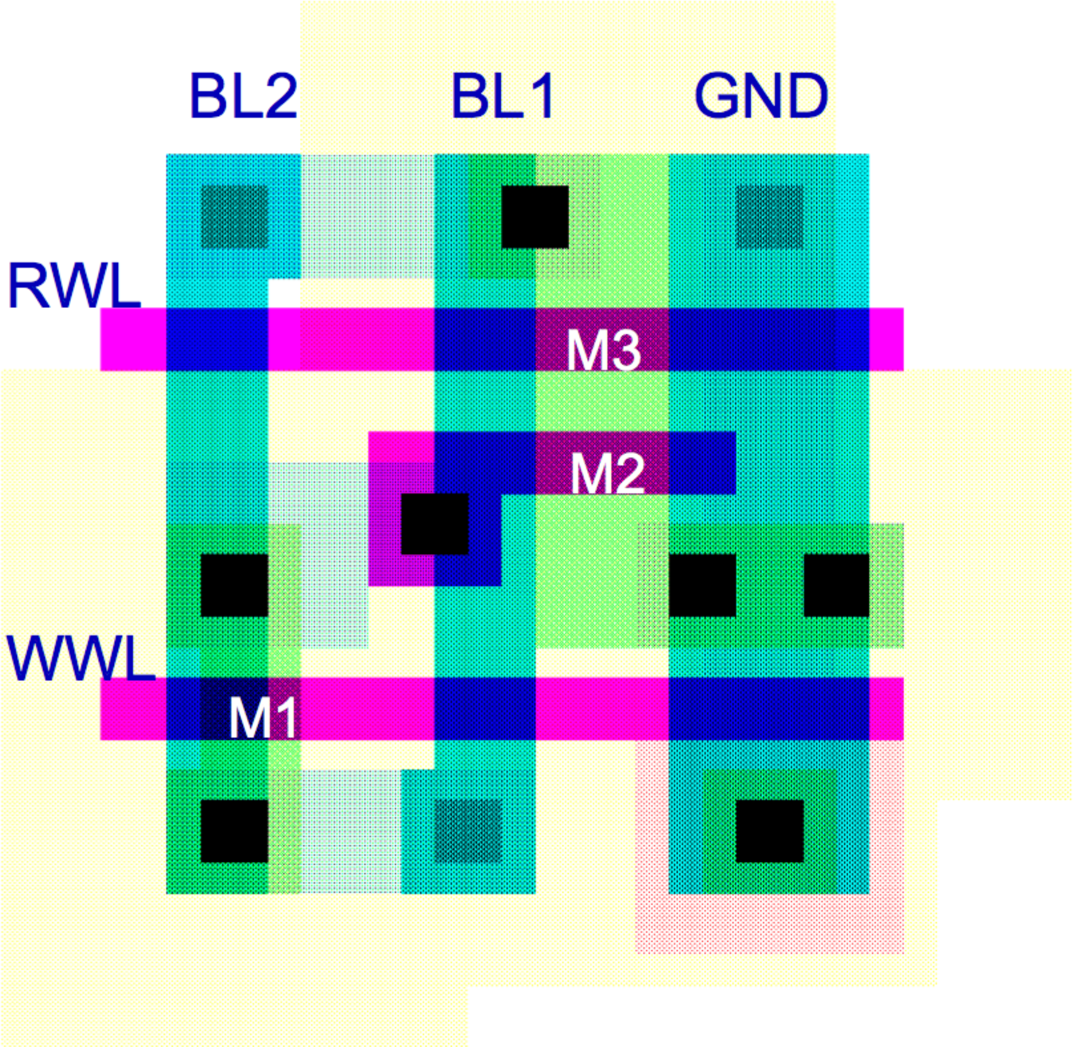
3T DRAM Cell

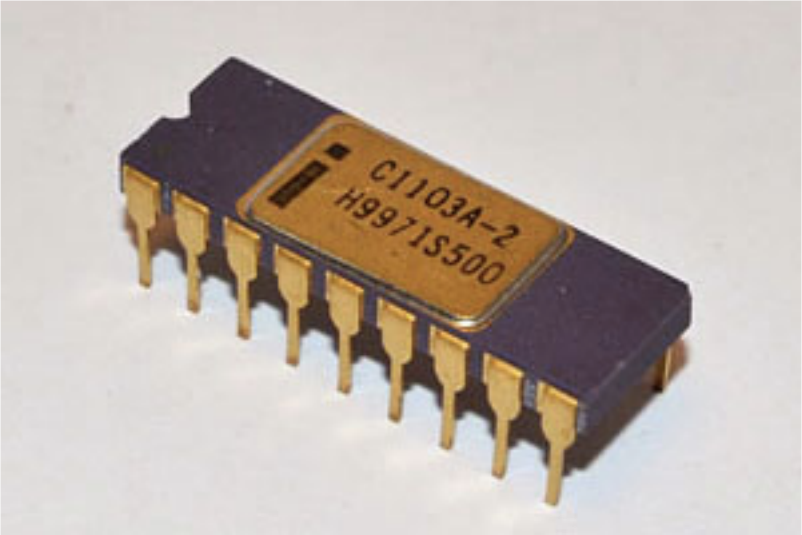
- No constraints on device ratios
- Reads are non-destructive
- Value stored at node X when writing a “1” = V_{DD}-V_T





3T DRAM Layout

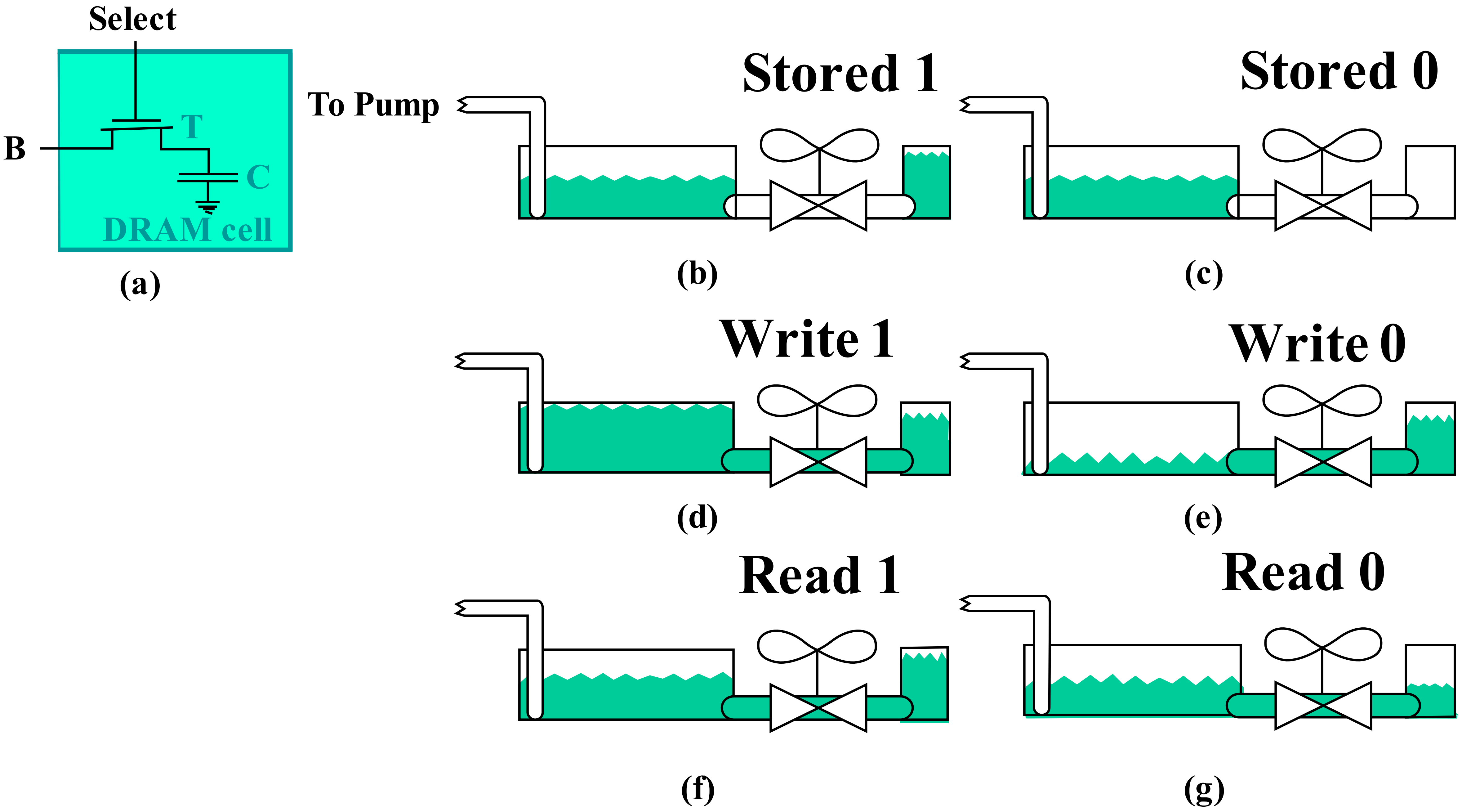




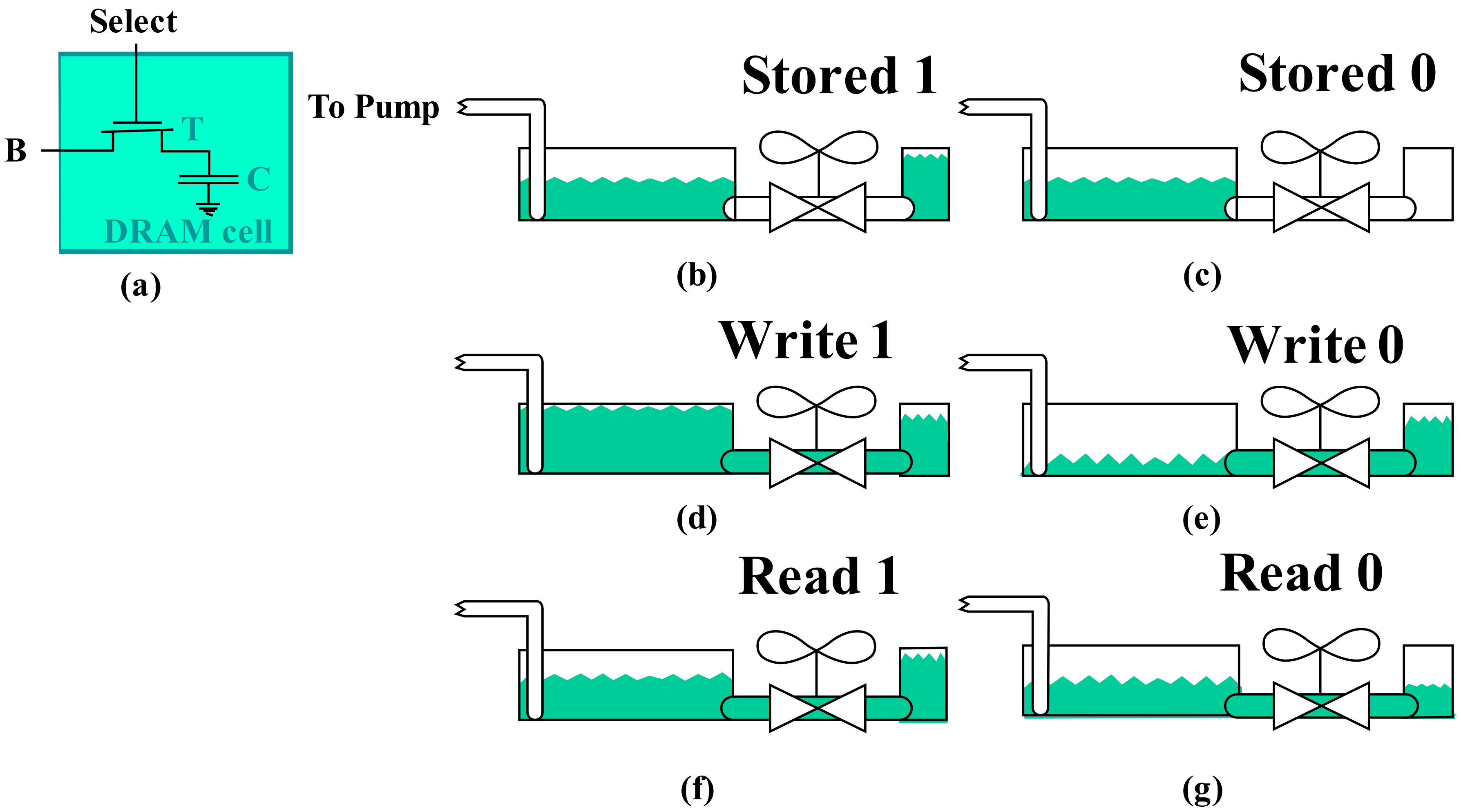
[1970: Intel 1003]

- 576 λ 3T DRAM v.s. 1092 λ 6T SRAM
- Further simplified

1T DRAM Cell



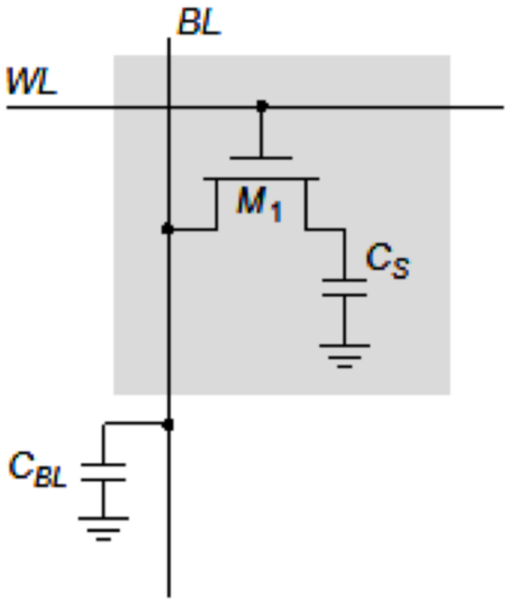
- Need sense amp helping reading

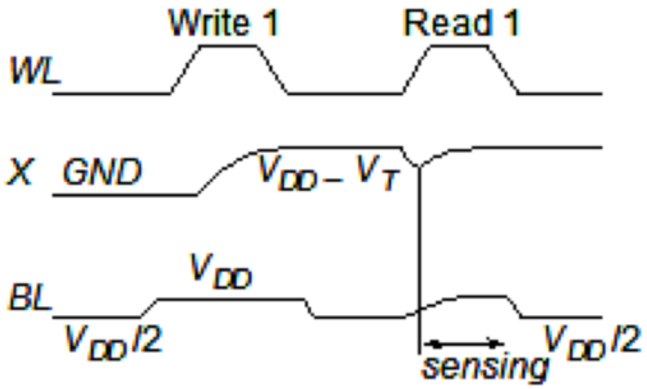


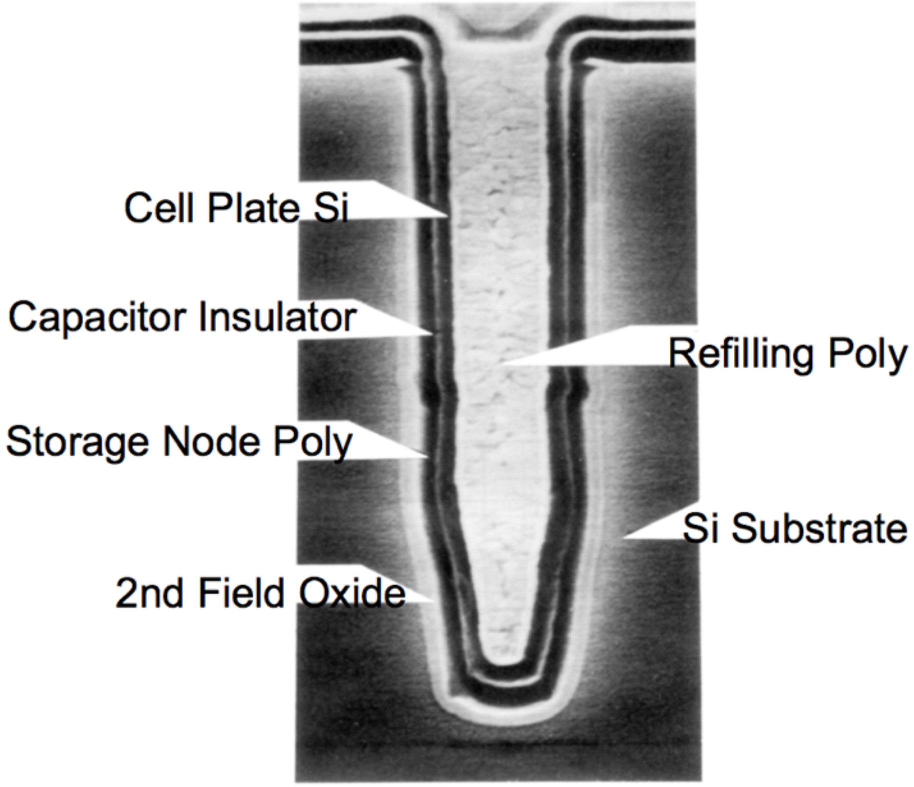
- Read:
  - Pre-charge large tank to VDD/2
  - If Ts = 0, for large tank : VDD/2 - V1
  - If Ts = 1, for large tank: VDD/2 + V1
  - V1 is very insignificant
  - Need sense amp

1T DRAM Cell

- **Write**: Cs is charged or discharged by asserting WL and BL
- **Read**: Charge redistribution takes place between bit line and storage capacitance
- Voltage swing is small; typically around 250 mV







Trench-capacitor cell [Mano87]

EX. 1T DRAM Cell

- **Question**: V_{DD}=4V, C_S=100pF, C_{BL}=1000pF. What's the voltage swing value?
- Note: $\Delta V = \frac{V_{DD}}{2} \cdot \frac{C_S}{C_S + C_{BL}}$

SRAM v.s. DRAM

Static (SRAM)

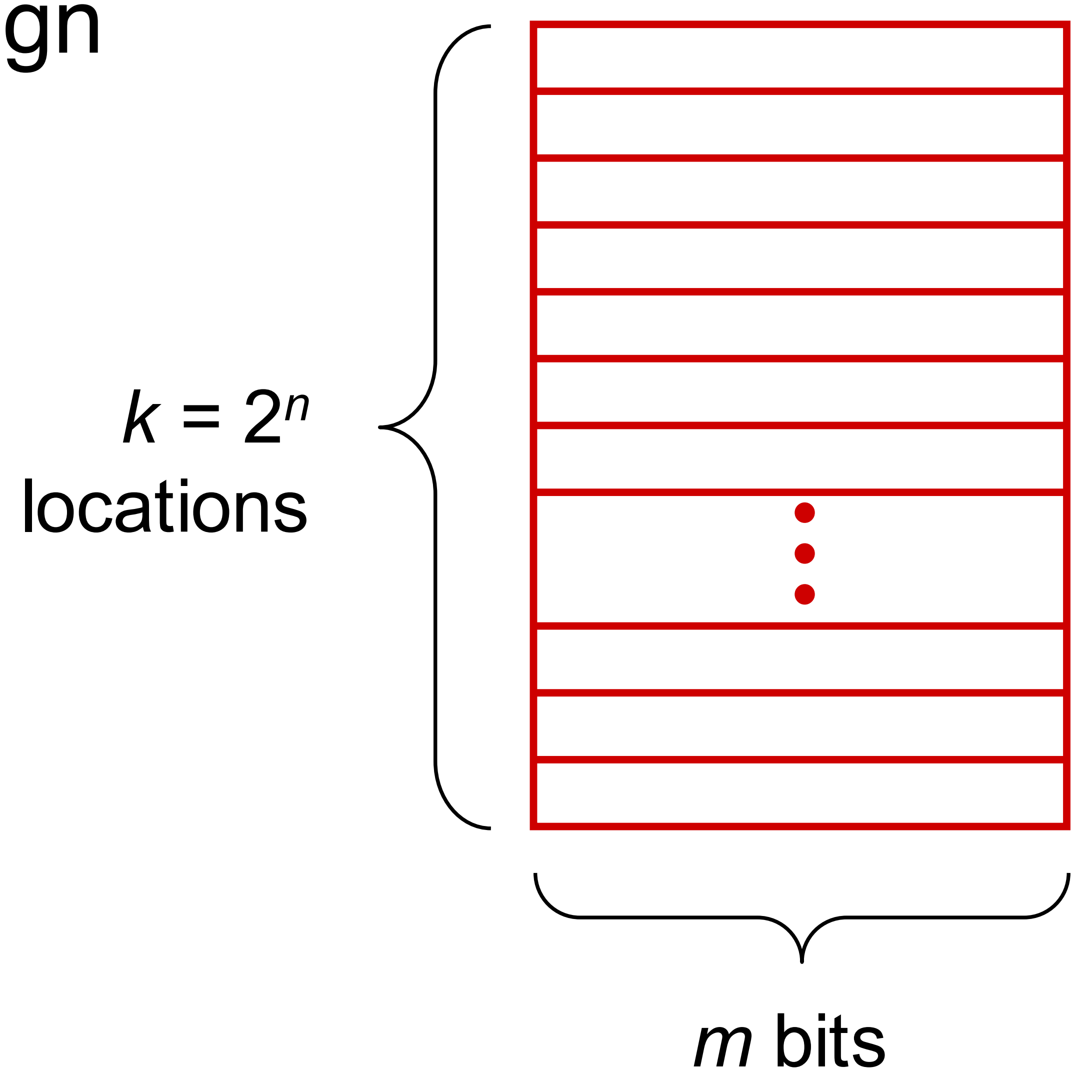
- Data stored as long as supply is applied
- Large (6 transistors/cell)
- Fast
- Compatible with current CMOS manufacturing

Dynamic (DRAM)

- Periodic refresh required
- Small (1-3 transistors/cell)
- Slower
- Require additional process for trench capacitance

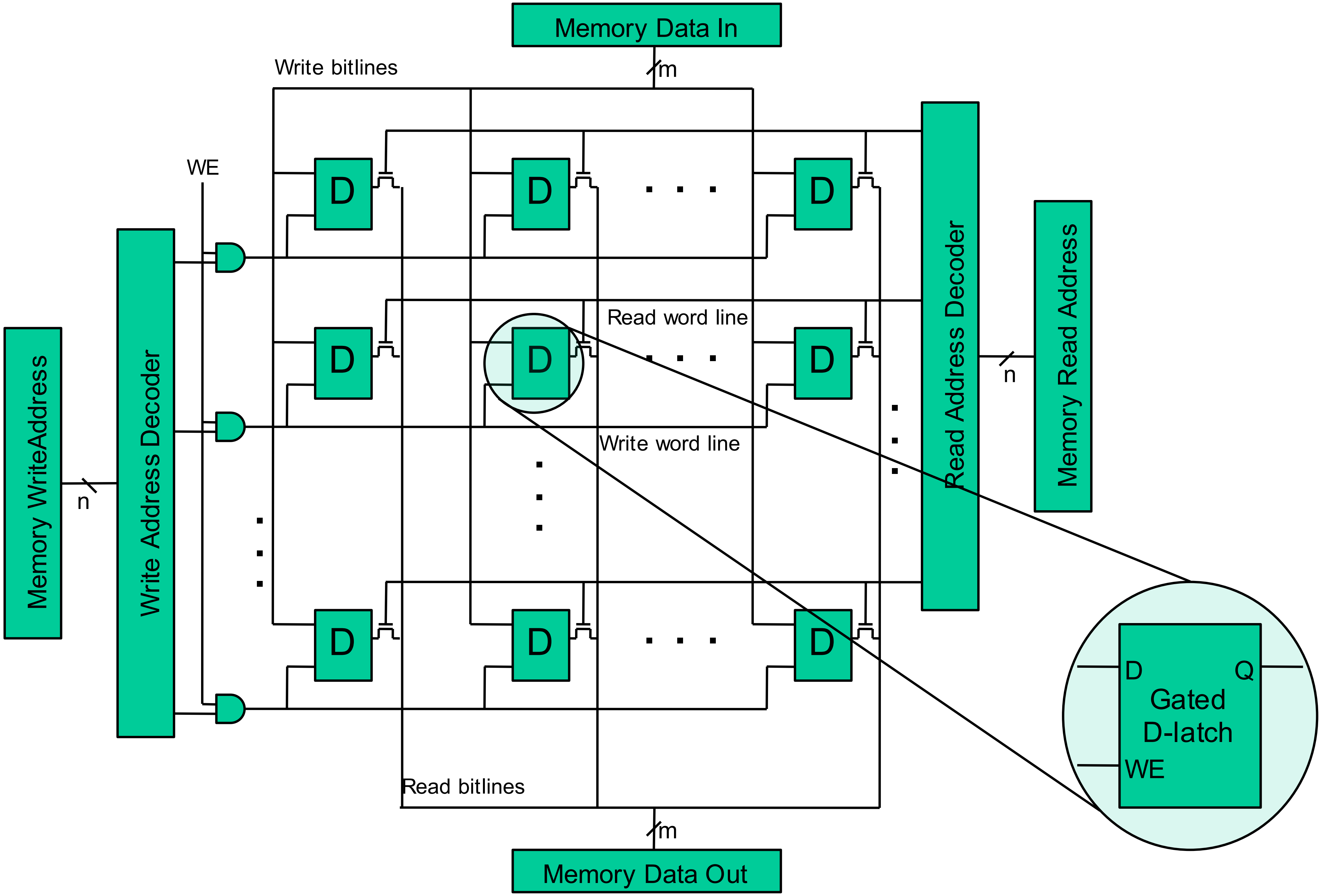
Array Architecture

- 2^n words of 2^m bits each
- Good regularity – easy to design



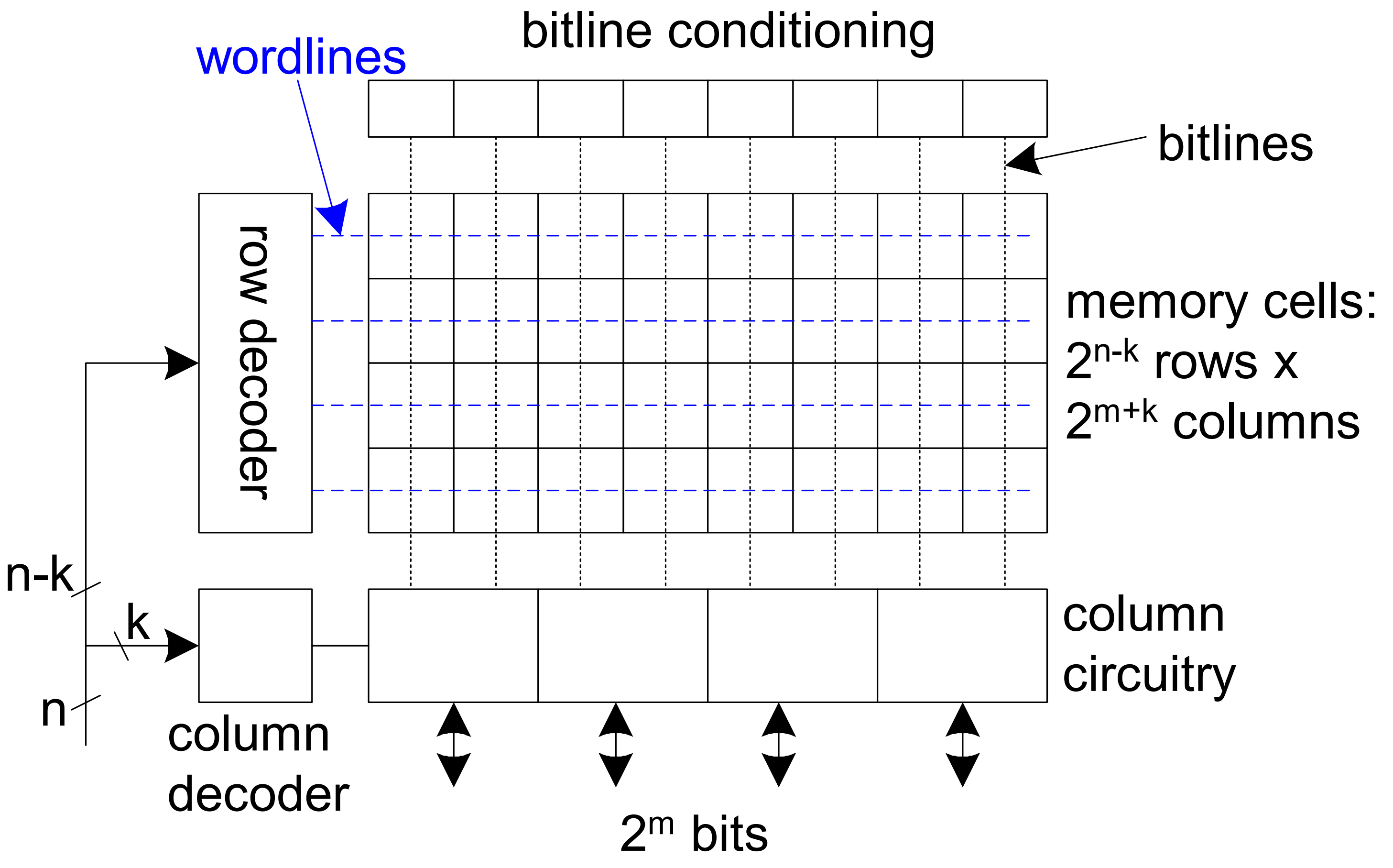
SRAM Memory Structure

- Latch based memory



Array Architecture

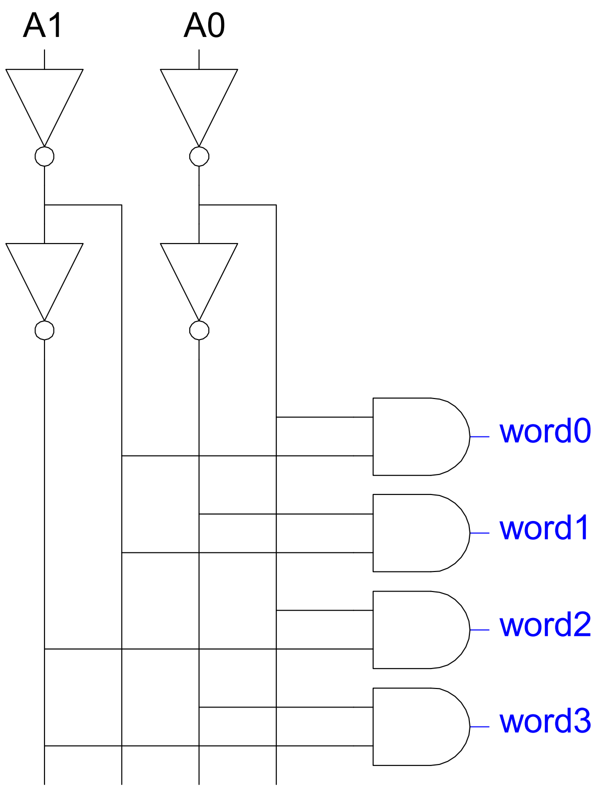
- 2^n words of 2^m bits each
- How to design if n >> m?
- Fold by 2k into fewer rows of more columns



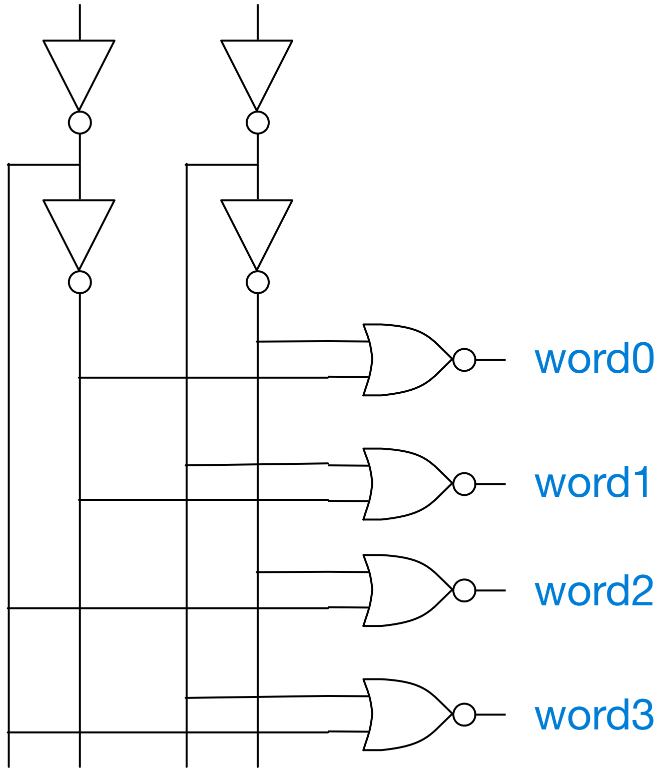
Decoders

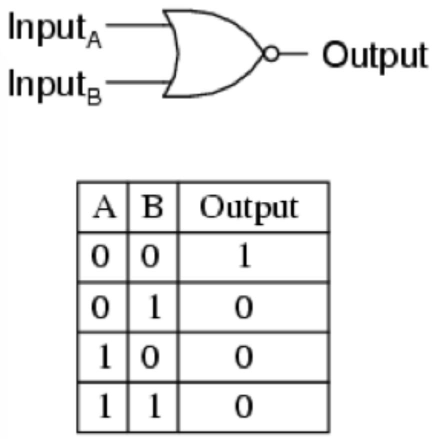
- n:2^n decoder consists of 2^n n-input AND gates
  - One needed for each row of memory
  - Build AND with NAND or NOR gates

Static CMOS



Using NOR gates

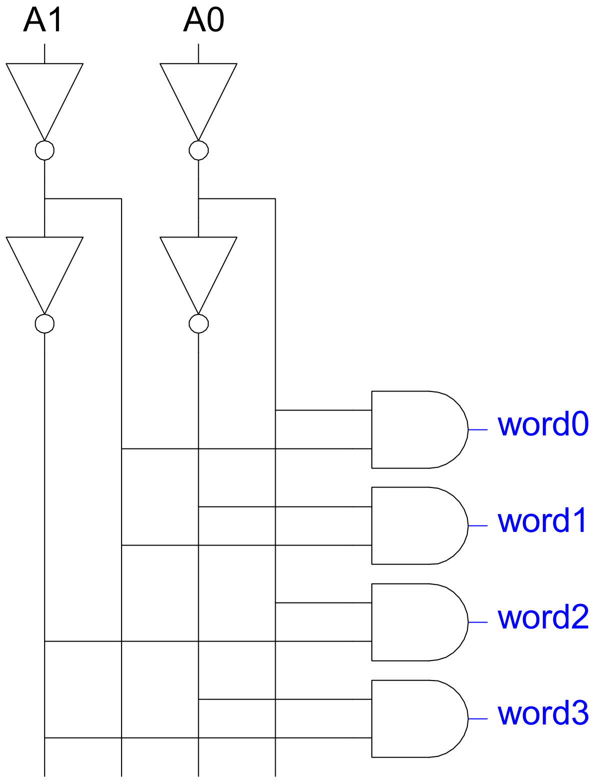




A	B	Output
0	0	1
0	1	0
1	0	0
1	1	0

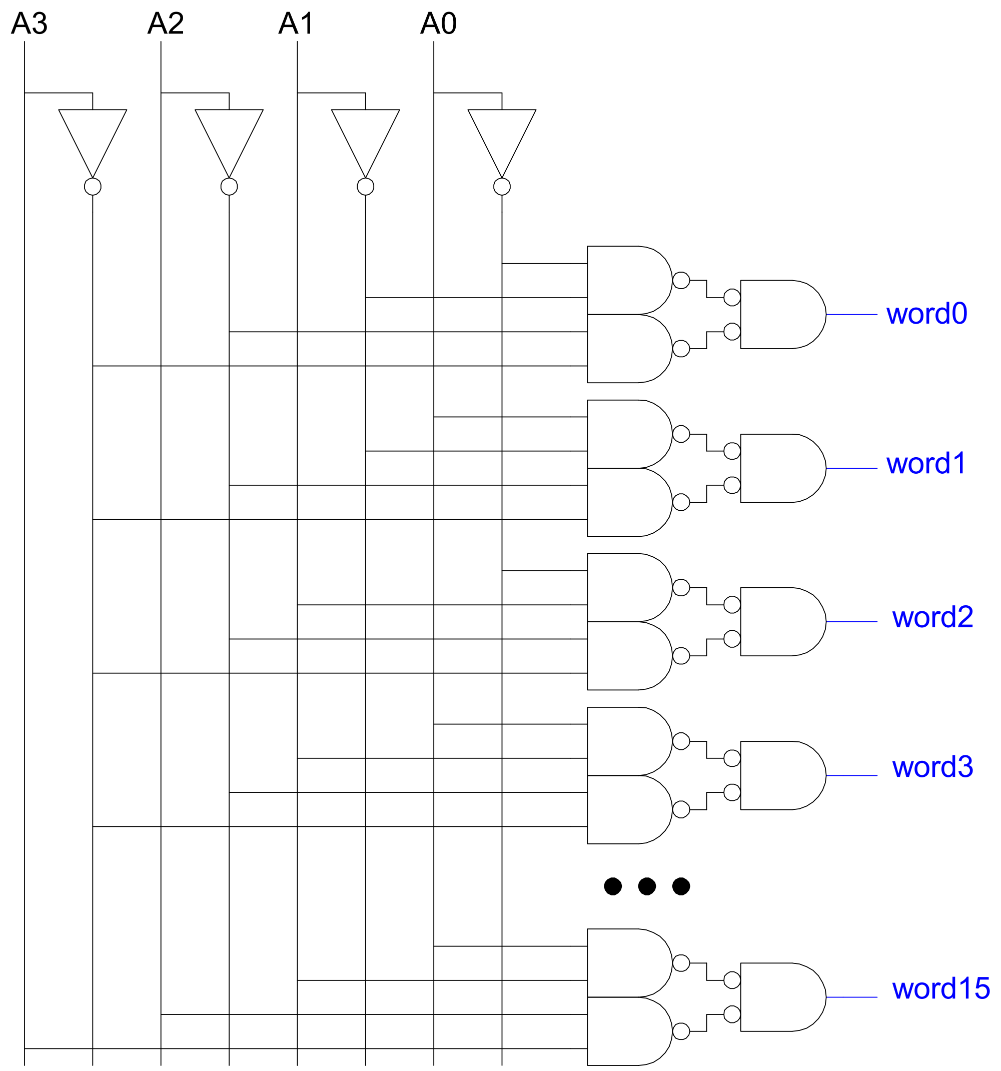
EX. Decoder

- **Question**: AND gates => NAND gate structure



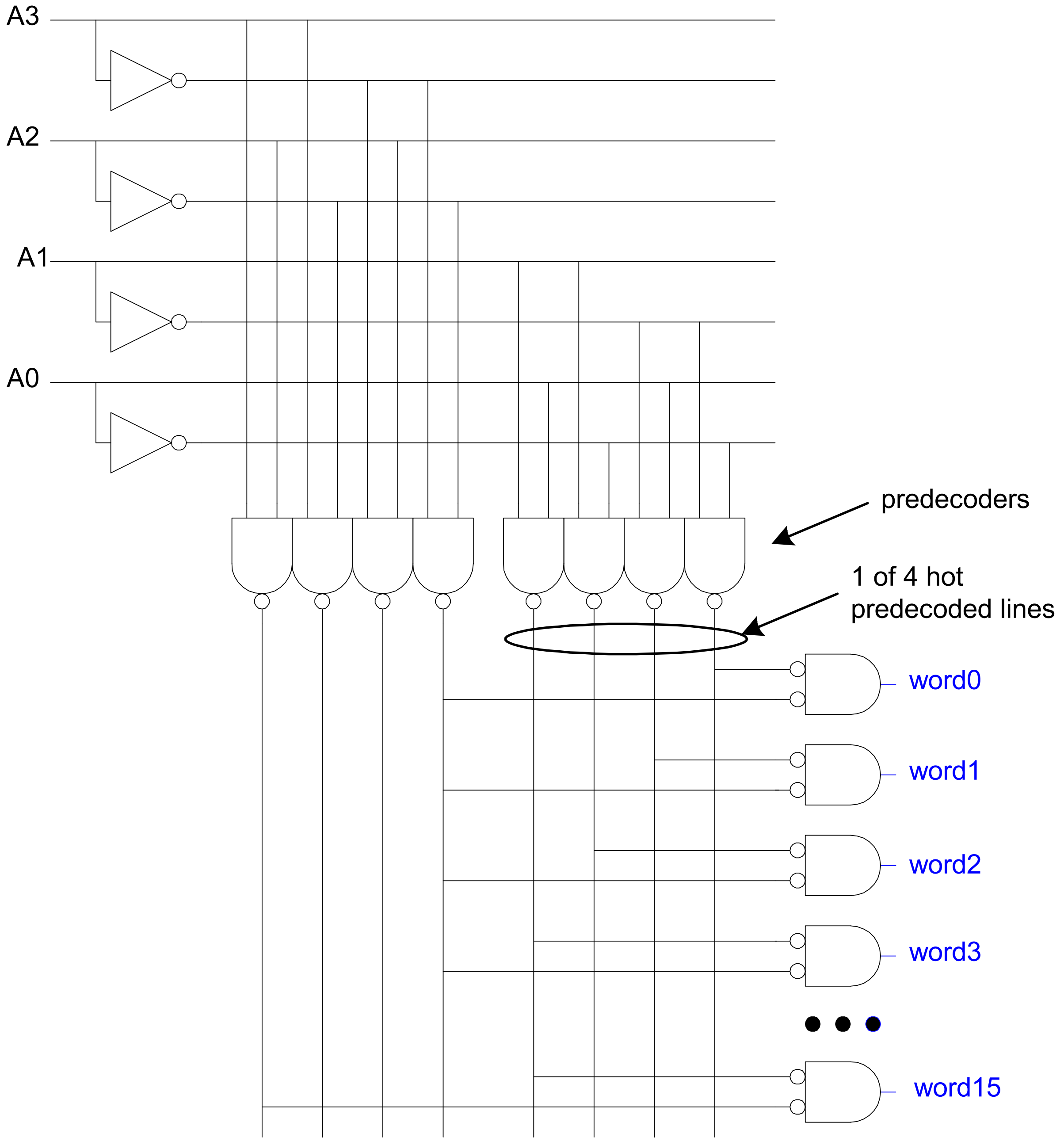
Large Decoders

- For n > 4, NAND gates become slow
  - Break large gates into multiple smaller gates



Predecoding

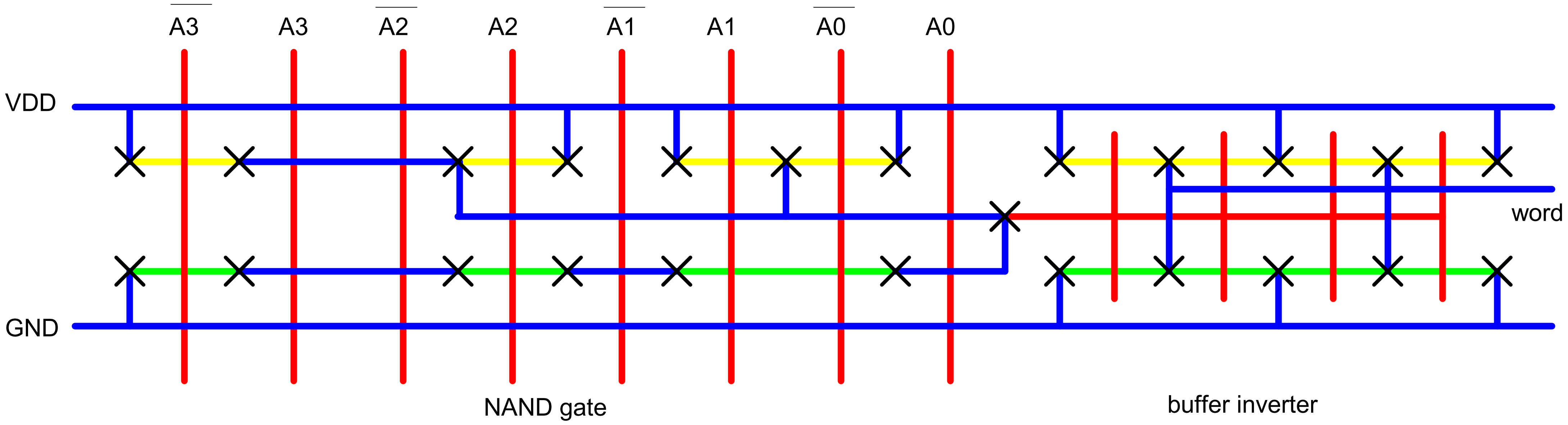
- Many of these gates are redundant
  - Factor out common gates
  - => Predecoder
  - Saves area
  - Same path effort



- **Question**: How many NANDs can be saved?

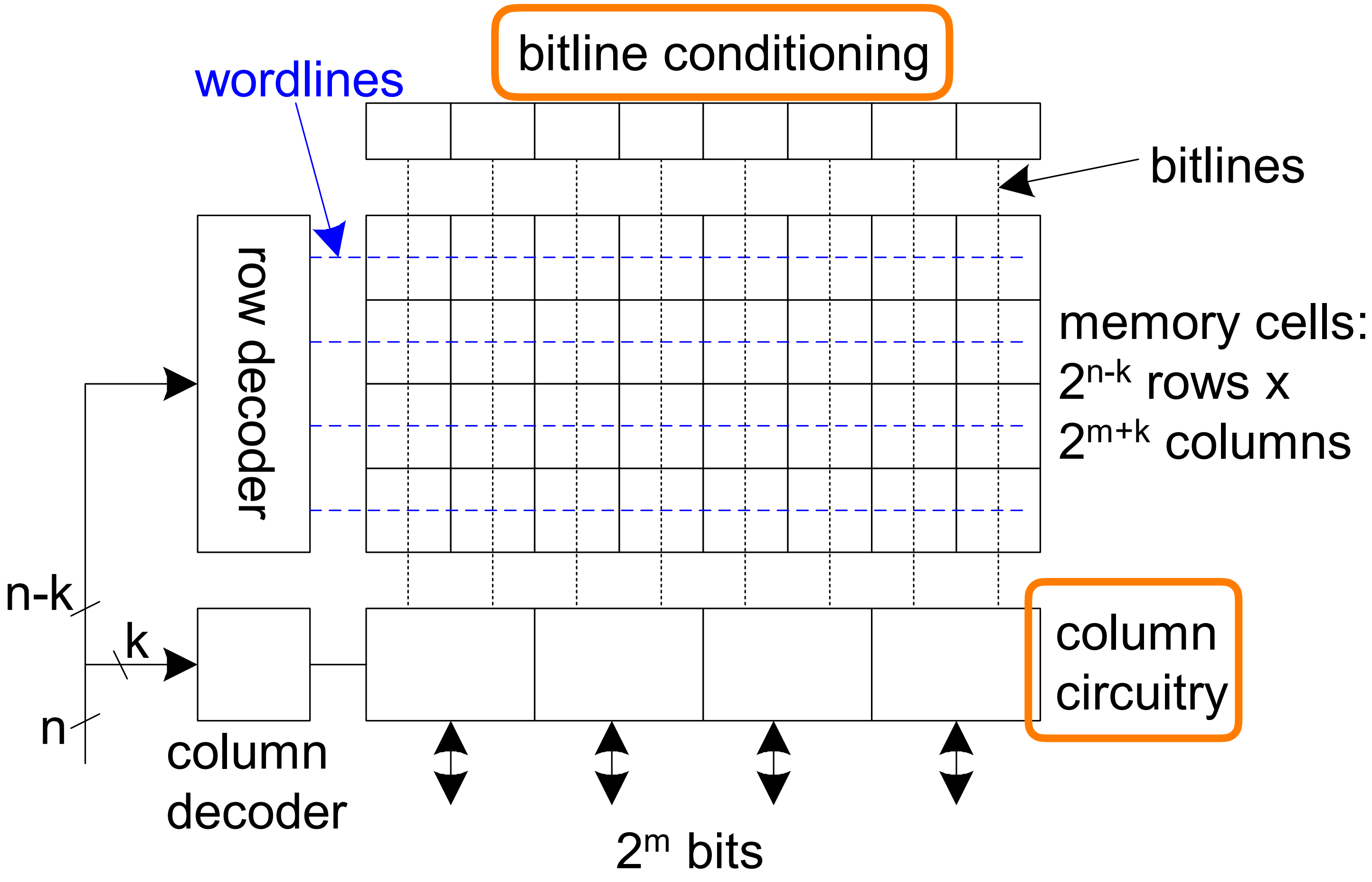
*Decoder Layout

- Decoders must be pitch-matched to SRAM cell
  - Requires very skinny gates



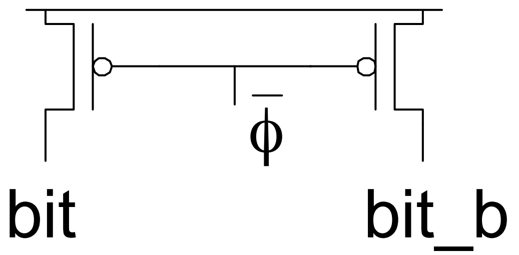
*Column Circuitry

- Some circuitry is required for each column
  - Bitline conditioning
  - Column multiplexing
  - *Sense amplifiers (DRAM)

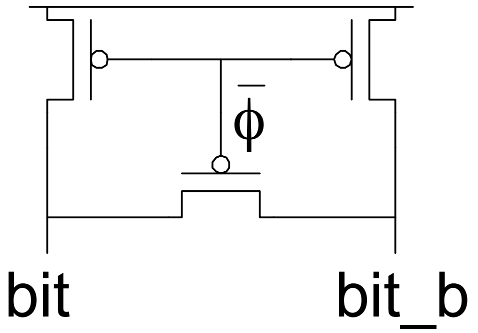


*Bitline Conditioning

- Precharge bitlines high before reads

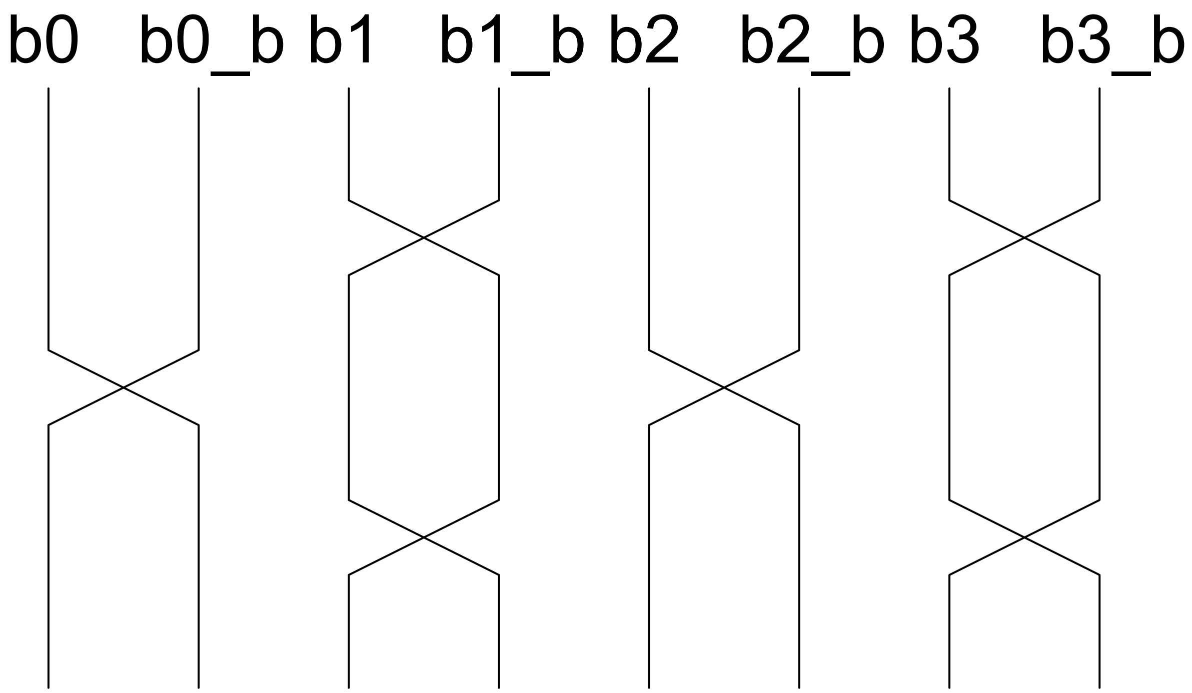


- Equalize bitlines to minimize voltage difference when using sense amplifiers



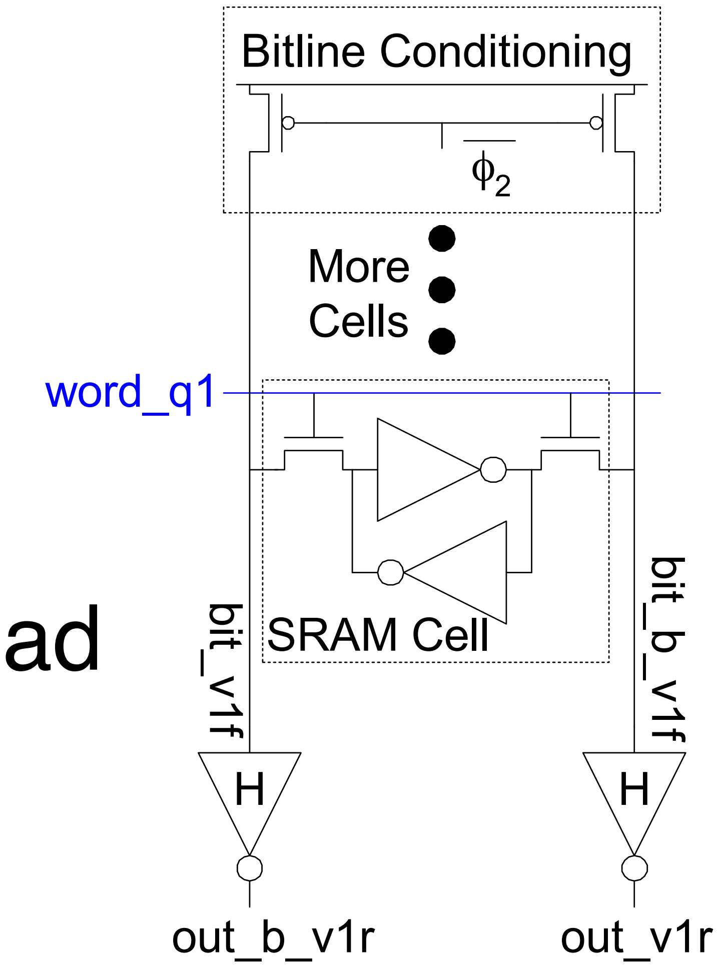
*Twisted Bitlines

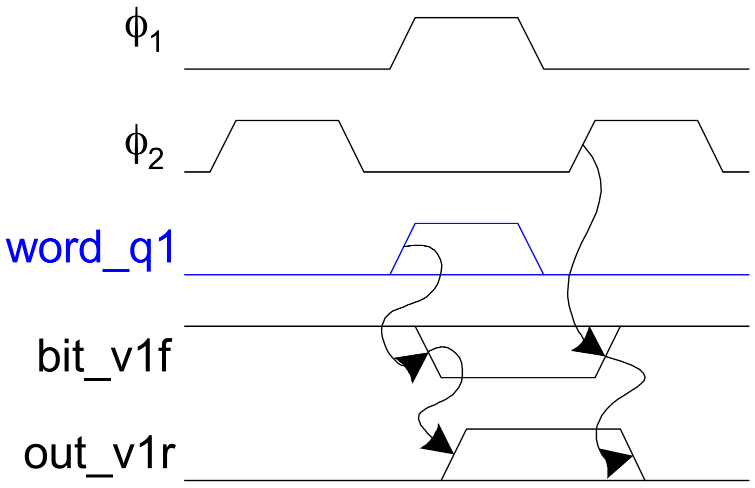
- Sense amplifiers also amplify noise
  - Coupling noise is severe in modern processes
  - Try to couple equally onto bit and bit_b
  - Done by *twisting* bitlines



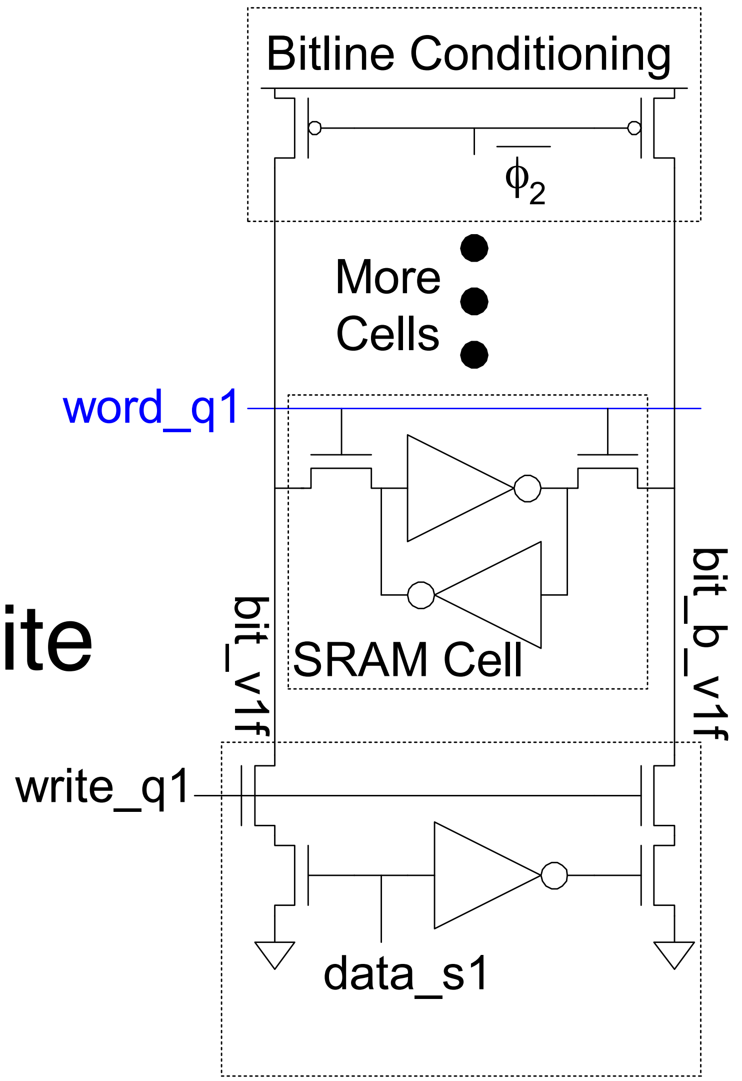
*SRAM Column Example

Read





Write

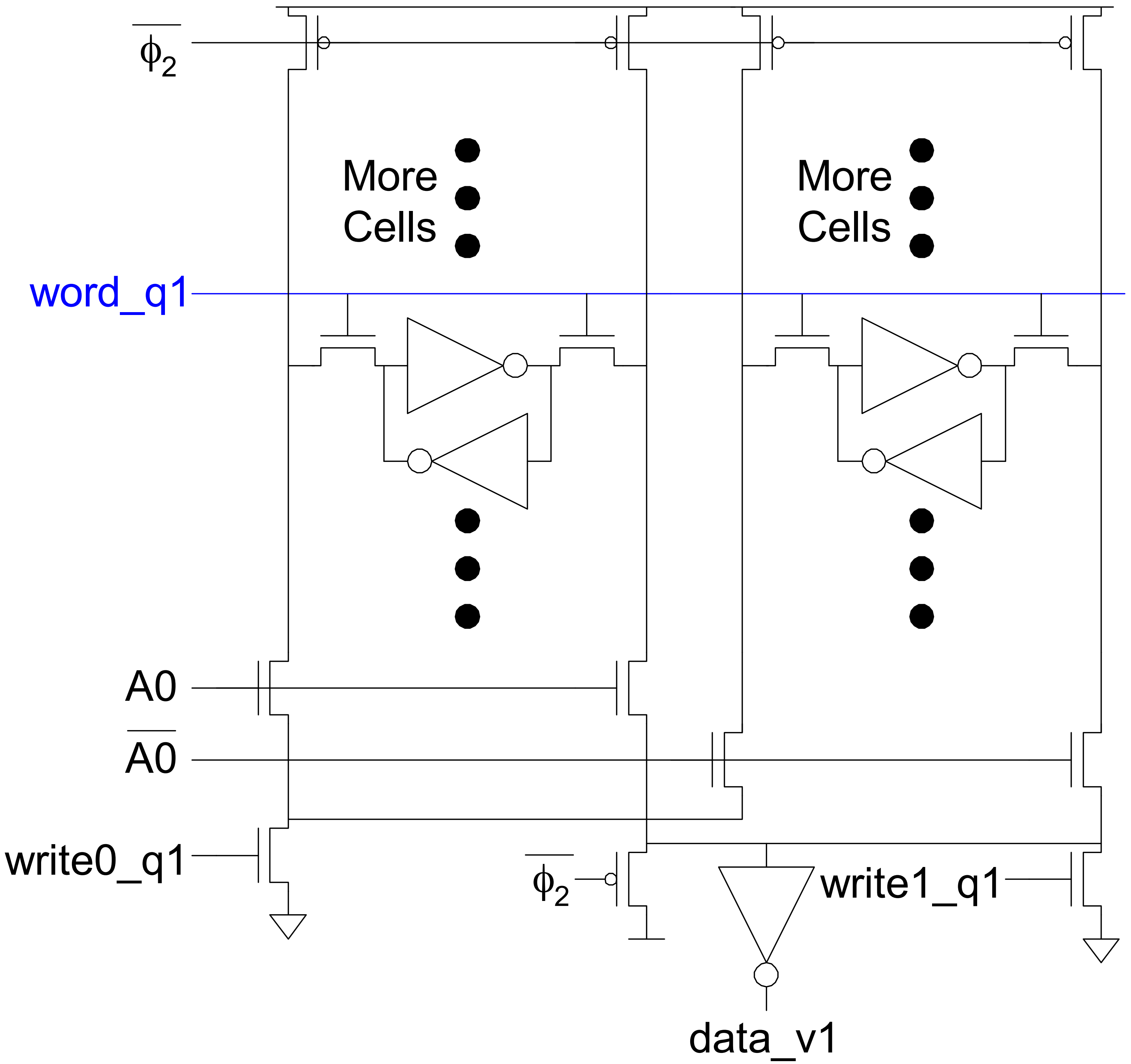


*Column Multiplexing

- Recall that array may be folded for good aspect ratio

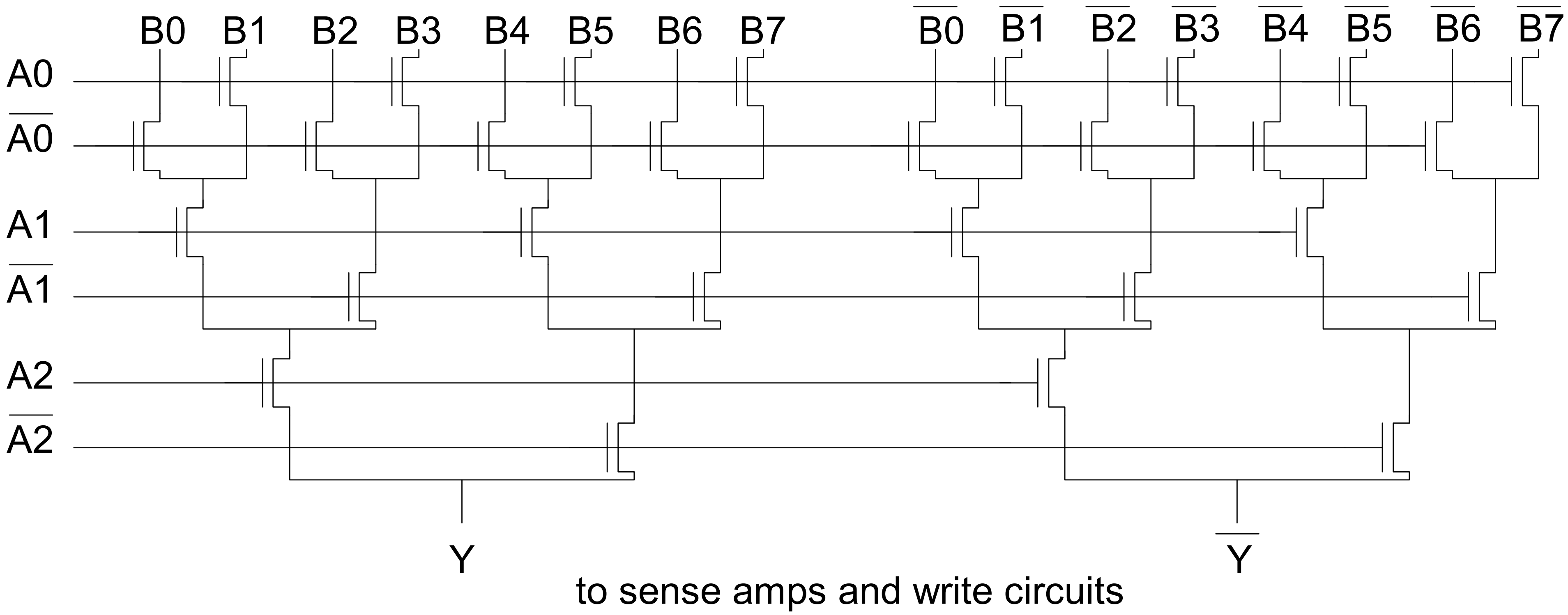
- Ex: 2 kword x 16 folded into 256 rows x 128 columns
  - Must select 16 output bits from the 128 columns
  - Requires 16 8:1 column multiplexers

*Ex: 2-way Muxed SRAM

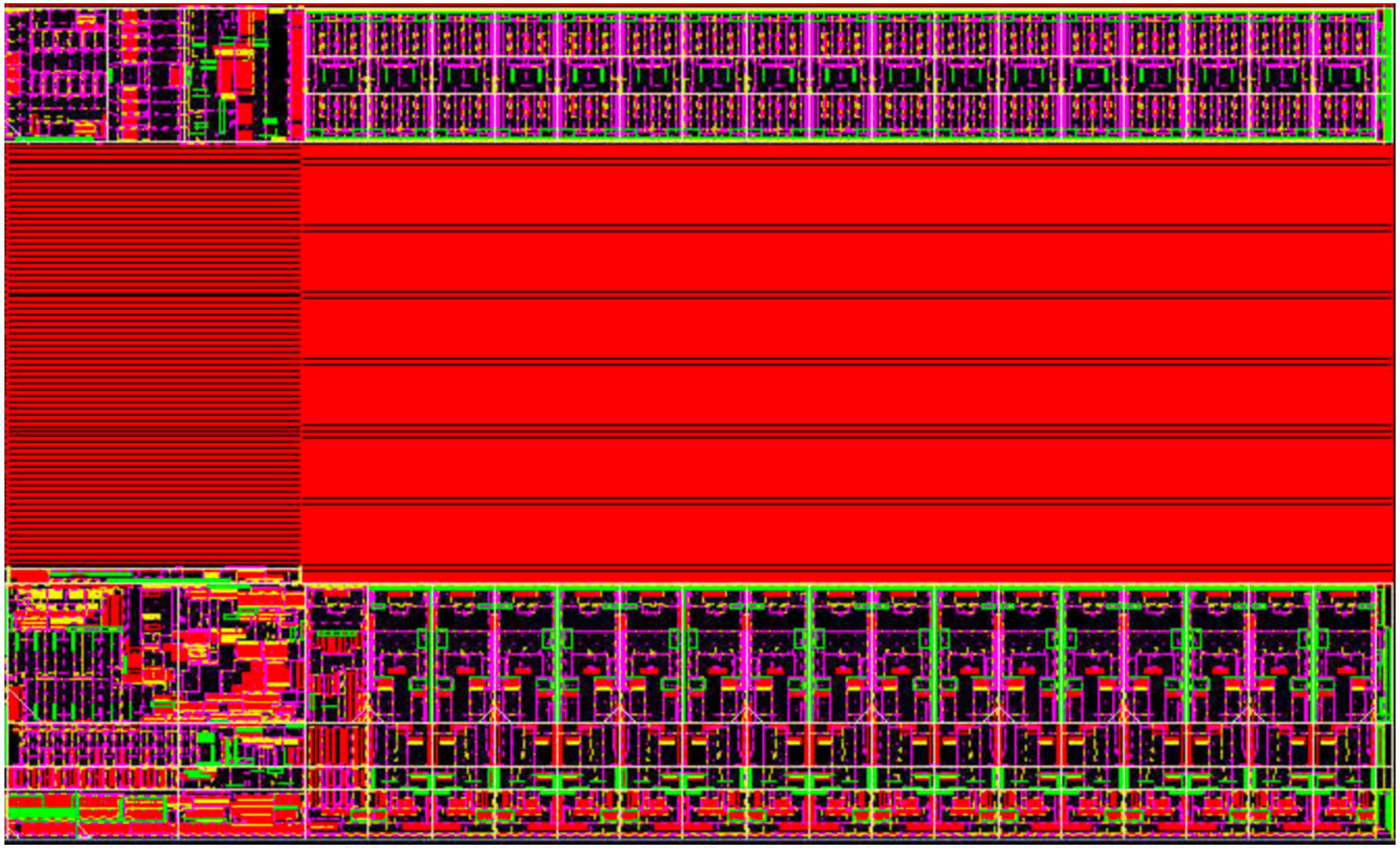


*Tree Decoder Mux

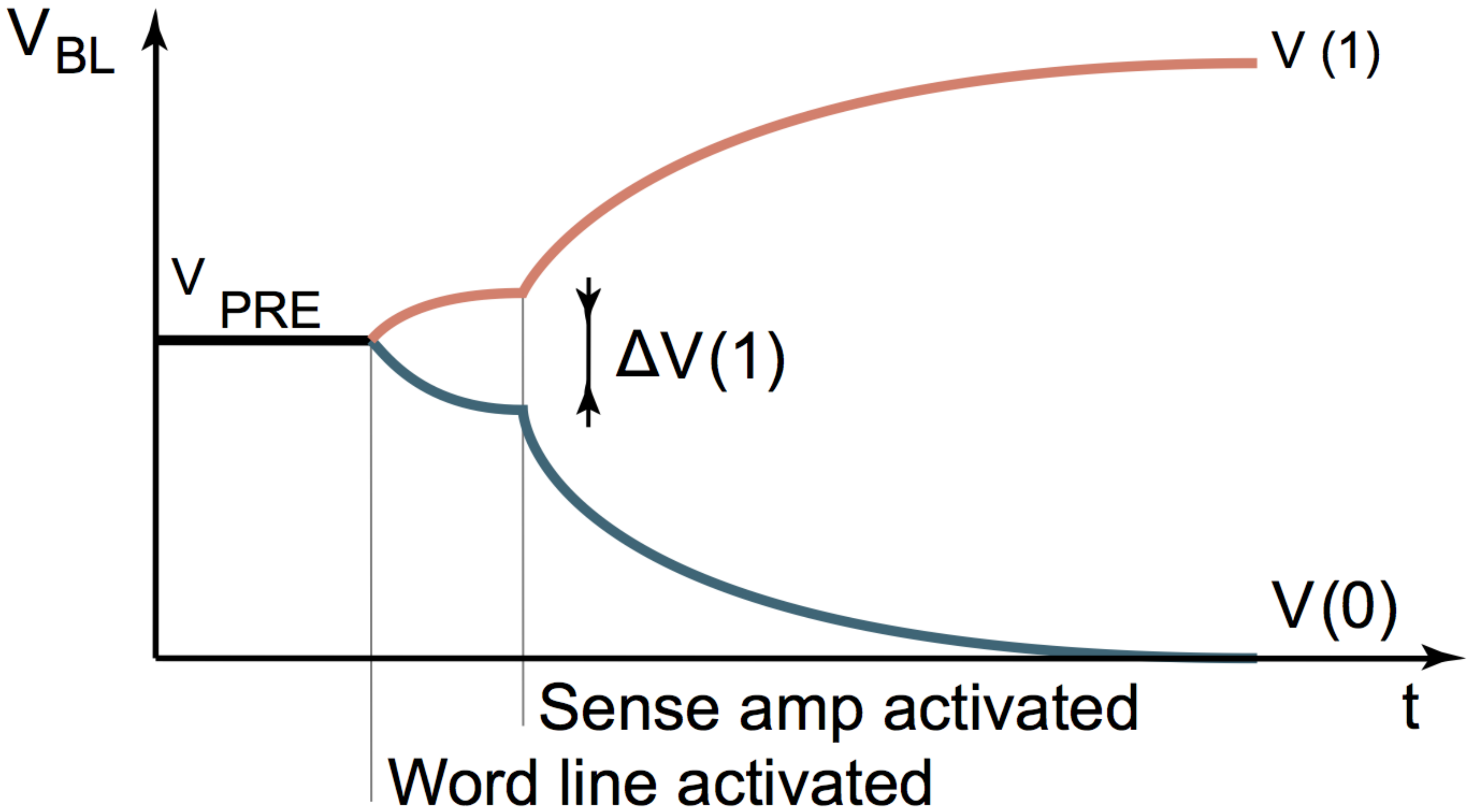
- Column mux can use pass transistors
  - Use nMOS only, precharge outputs
- One design is to use k series transistors for 2^k:1 mux
  - No external decoder logic needed



*SRAM from ARM



*Sense Amp Operation for 1T DRAM



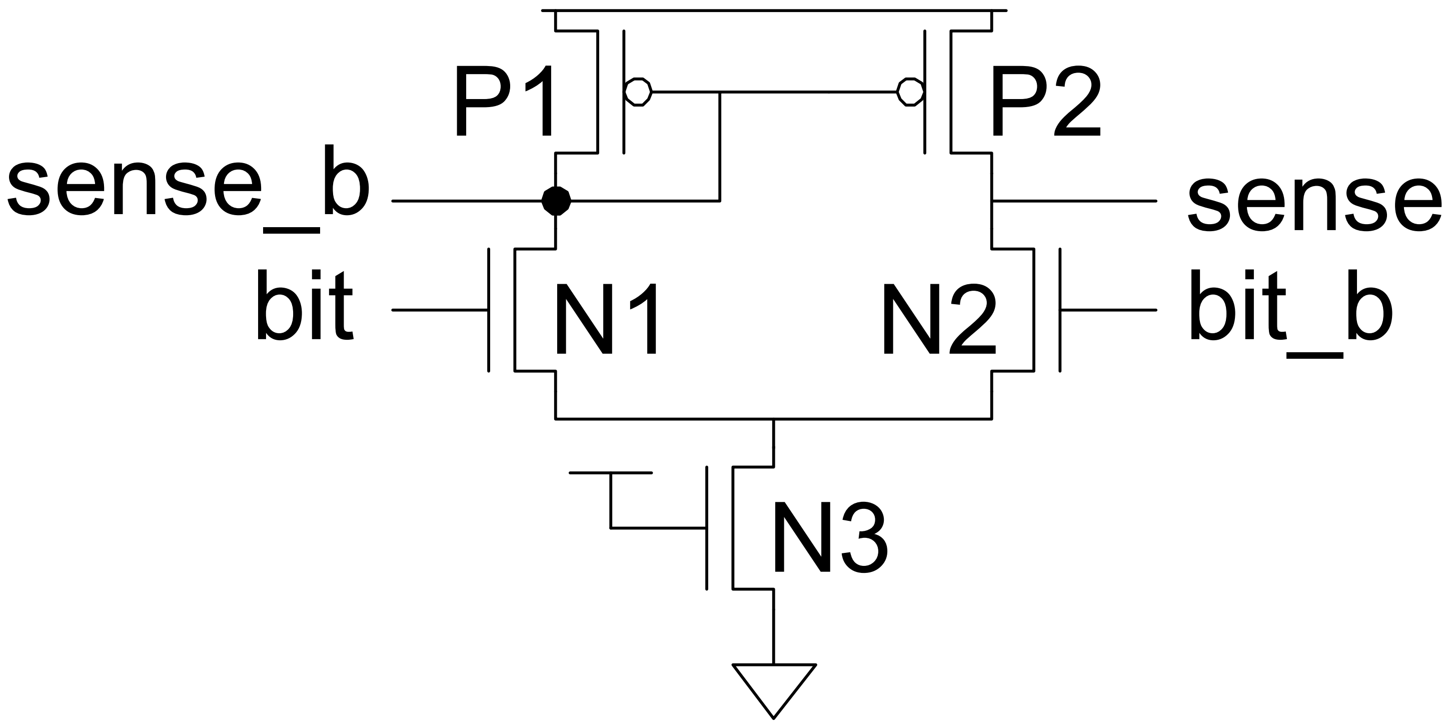
- 1T DRAM read is destructive
- Read and refresh for 1T DRAM

*Sense Amplifiers (DRAM)

- Bitlines have many cells attached
  - Ex: 32-kbit SRAM has 256 rows x 128 cols
  - 256 cells on each bitline
- **$t_{pd} \propto (C/I)\,\Delta V$**
  - Even with shared diffusion contacts, 64C of diffusion capacitance (big C)
  - Discharged slowly through small transistors (small I)
- Sense amplifiers are triggered on small voltage swing (reduce ΔV)

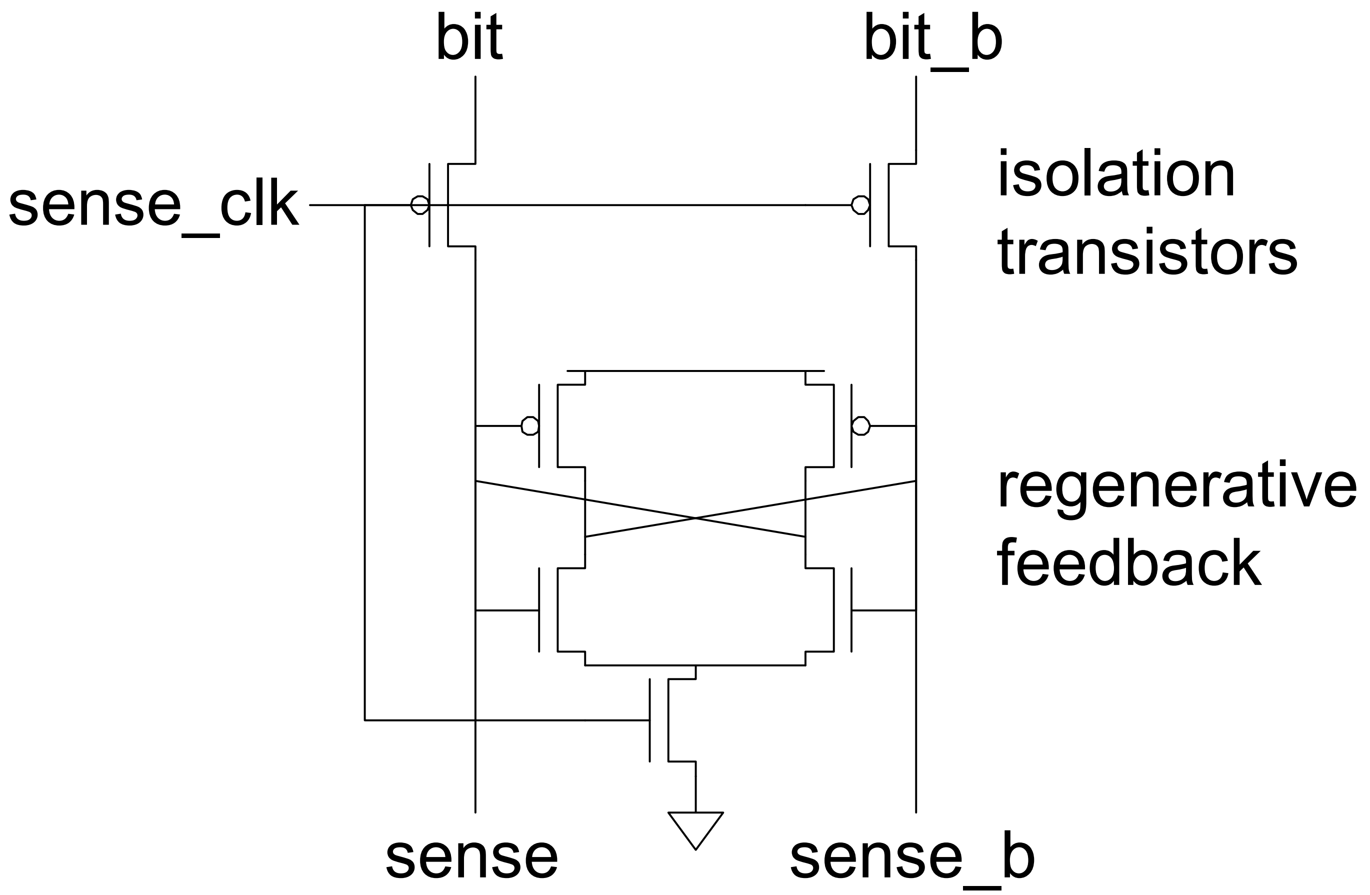
*Differential Pair Amp

- Differential pair requires no clock
- But always dissipates static power



*Clocked Sense Amp

- Clocked sense amp saves power
- Requires sense_clk after enough bitline swing
- Isolation transistors cut off large bitline capacitance



Thank You :-)