Czech Technical University in Prague, Faculty of Information Technology

MIE-PDB: **Advanced Database Systems**

http://www.ksi.mff.cuni.cz/~svoboda/courses/2016-2-MIE-PDB/

Lecture 11

Graph Databases: Neo4j

Martin Svoboda

svoboda@ksi.mff.cuni.cz

12. 5. 2017

Charles University, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics

NDBI040: **Big Data Management and NoSQL Databases**

Lecture Outline

Neo4j

- Data model: **property graphs**
- **Traversal framework**
- **Cypher** query language
  - Read, write and general clauses

Neo4j Graph Database

Neo4j

Graph database

- https://neo4j.com/
- Features
  - Open source, massively scalable (billions of nodes), high availability, fault-tolerant, master-slave replication, **ACID transactions**, embeddable, …
  - Expressive graph query language (**Cypher**), **traversal framework**
- Developed by **Neo Technology**
- Implemented in Java
- Operating systems: cross-platform
- Initial release in 2007

Data Model

Database system structure

Instance $\rightarrow$ single **graph**

Property graph = directed labeled multigraph

- Collection of vertices (nodes) and edges (relationships)

Graph **node**

- Has a unique (internal) **identifier**
- Can be associated with a **set of labels**
  - Allow us to categorize nodes
- Can also be associated with a **set of properties**
  - Allow us to store additional data together with nodes

Data Model

Graph **relationship**

- Has a unique (internal) **identifier**
- Has a **direction**
  - Relationships are equally well traversed in either direction!
  - Directions can be ignored when querying
- Always has a **start** and **end node**
  - Can be recursive (i.e. loops are allowed)
- Is associated with **exactly one type**
- Can also be associated with a **set of properties**

Data Model

Node and relationship **property**

- **Key-value pair**
  - Key is a string
  - Value is an **atomic value** of any primitive data type, or an **array of atomic values** of one primitive data type

Primitive **data types**

- `boolean` – **boolean** values `true` and `false`
- `byte`, `short`, `int`, `long` – **integers** (1B, 2B, 4B, 8B)
- `float`, `double` – **floating-point numbers** (4B, 8B)
- `char` – one Unicode character
- `String` – sequence of **Unicode characters**

Sample Data

Sample graph with **movies and actors**

```
(m1:movie { id: "vratnelahve", title: "Vratné lahve", year: 2006 })
(m2:movie { id: "samotari", title: "Samotáři", year: 2000 })
(m3:movie { id: "medvidek", title: "Medvídek", year: 2007 })
(m4:movie { id: "stesti", title: "Štěstí", year: 2005 })
```

```
(a1:actor { id: "trojan", name: "Ivan Trojan", year: 1964 })
(a2:actor { id: "machacek", name: "Jiří Macháček", year: 1966 })
(a3:actor { id: "schneiderova", name: "Jitka Schneiderová", year: 1973 })
(a4:actor { id: "sverak", name: "Zdeněk Svěrák", year: 1936 })
```

```
(m1)-[c1:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Robert Landa" }]->(a2)
(m1)-[c2:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Josef Tkaloun" }]->(a4)
(m2)-[c3:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Ondřej" }]->(a1)
(m2)-[c4:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Jakub" }]->(a2)
(m2)-[c5:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Hanka" }]->(a3)
(m3)-[c6:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Ivan" }]->(a1)
(m3)-[c7:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Jirka", award: "Czech Lion" }]->(a2)
```

Traversal Framework

Traversal framework

- Allows us to express and execute graph traversal queries
- Based on callbacks, executed lazily

Traversal description

- **Defines rules and other characteristics of a traversal**

Traverser

- Initiates and **manages a particular graph traversal** according to…
  - the provided traversal description, and
  - graph node / set of nodes where the traversal starts
- Allows for the **iteration over the matching paths**, one by one

Traversal Framework

Components of a **traversal description**

- **Expanders**
  - What relationships should be considered
- **Order**
  - Which graph traversal algorithm should be used
- **Uniqueness**
  - Whether nodes / relationships can be visited repeatedly
- **Evaluators**
  - When the traversal should be terminated
  - What paths should be included in the query result

Traversal Framework

Traversal Description

Path expanders

Being at a given node…
what relationships should next be followed?

- **Expander specifies one allowed**…
  - relationship **type** and **direction**
    - `Direction.INCOMING`
    - `Direction.OUTGOING`
    - `Direction.BOTH`
- Multiple expanders can be specified at once
  - When none is provided,
    then all the relationships are permitted
- Usage: td.`relationships`(type, direction)

Traversal Framework

Traversal Description

Order

Which graph traversal algorithm should be used?

- Standard **depth-first** or **breadth-first** methods can be selected
  or
  specific branch ordering policies can also be implemented
- Usage:
  td.`breadthFirst`()
  td.`depthFirst`()

Traversal Framework

Traversal Description

Uniqueness

Can particular nodes / relationships be revisited?

- Various **uniqueness levels** are provided
  - `Uniqueness.NONE` – no filter is applied
  - `Uniqueness.NODE_PATH`
    `Uniqueness.RELATIONSHIP_PATH`
    - Nodes / relationships within a current path must be distinct
  - `Uniqueness.NODE_GLOBAL` (default)
    `Uniqueness.RELATIONSHIP_GLOBAL`
    - No node / relationship may be visited more than once
  - …
- Usage: td.`uniqueness`(level)

Traversal Framework

Traversal Description

Evaluators

Considering a particular path…
should this path be included in the result?
should the traversal further continue?

- Available **evaluation actions**
  - `Evaluation.INCLUDE_AND_CONTINUE`
    `Evaluation.INCLUDE_AND_PRUNE`
    `Evaluation.EXCLUDE_AND_CONTINUE`
    `Evaluation.EXCLUDE_AND_PRUNE`
- Meaning of these actions
  - `INCLUDE` / `EXCLUDE` = whether to include the path in the result
  - `CONTINUE` / `PRUNE` = whether to continue the traversal

Traversal Framework

Traversal Description

Evaluators

- **Predefined evaluators**
  - `Evaluators.all()`
    - Never prunes, includes everything
  - `Evaluators.excludeStartPosition()`
    - Never prunes, includes everything except the starting positions
  - `Evaluators.atDepth(depth)`
    `Evaluators.toDepth(maxDepth)`
    `Evaluators.fromDepth(minDepth)`
    `Evaluators.includingDepths(minDepth, maxDepth)`
    - Includes only positions within the specified interval of depths
  - …

Traversal Framework

Traversal Description

Evaluators

- Usage: td.`evaluator`(evaluator)
- Note that evaluators are **applied even for the starting nodes**!
- When multiple evaluators are provided…
  - then they must all agree on each of the two questions

Traversal Framework

Path

- Well-formed **sequence of interleaved nodes and relationships**

Traverser

- Allows us to perform a particular graph traversal
  - with respect to a given traversal description
  - starting at a given node / nodes
- Usage: t = td.`traverse`(node, ...)
  - `for (Path p : t) { ... }`
    - Iterates over all the paths
  - `for (Node n : t.nodes()) { ... }`
    - Iterates over all the paths, returns their end nodes
  - `for (Relationship r : t.relationships()) { ... }`
    - Iterates over all the paths, returns their last relationships

Examples

Find all the actors that played in *Medvídek* movie

```
TraversalDescription td = db.traversalDescription()
  .breadthFirst()
  .relationships(Types.HAS_ACTOR, Direction.OUTGOING)
  .evaluator(Evaluators.atDepth(1));

Node s = db.findNode(Label.label("movie"), "id", "medvidek");
Traverser t = td.traverse(s);

for (Path p : t) {
  Node n = p.endNode();
  System.out.println(
    n.getProperty("name")
  );
}
```

```
Ivan Trojan
Jiří Macháček
```

Examples

Find all the actors that played with *Zdeněk Svěrák*

```
TraversalDescription td = db.traversalDescription()
  .depthFirst()
  .uniqueness(Uniqueness.NODE_GLOBAL)
  .relationships(Types.HAS_ACTOR)
  .evaluator(Evaluators.atDepth(2))
  .evaluator(Evaluators.excludeStartPosition());

Node s = db.findNode(Label.label("actor"), "id", "sverak");
Traverser t = td.traverse(s);

for (Node n : t.nodes()) {
  System.out.println(
    n.getProperty("name")
  );
}
```

```
Jiří Macháček
```

Cypher

Cypher

- Declarative **graph query language**
  - Allows for expressive and efficient querying and updates
  - Inspired by SQL (query clauses) and SPARQL (pattern matching)
- **OpenCypher**
  - Ongoing project aiming at Cypher standardization
  - http://www.opencypher.org/

Clauses

- E.g. `MATCH`, `RETURN`, `CREATE`, …
- Clauses are (almost arbitrarily) **chained together**
  - Intermediate result of one clause is passed to a subsequent one

Cypher Clauses

Read clauses and sub-clauses

- `MATCH` – specifies graph patterns to be searched for
  - `WHERE` – adds additional filtering constraints
- …

Write clauses and sub-clauses

- `CREATE` – creates new nodes or relationships
- `DELETE` – deletes nodes or relationships
- `SET` – updates labels or properties
- `REMOVE` – removes labels or properties
- …

Cypher Clauses

General clauses and sub-clauses

- `RETURN` – defines what the query result should contain
  - `ORDER BY` – describes how the query result should be ordered
  - `SKIP` – excludes certain number of solutions from the result
  - `LIMIT` – limits the number of solutions to be included
- `WITH` – allows query parts to be chained together
- …

Sample Query

Find names of all the actors that played in *Medvídek* movie

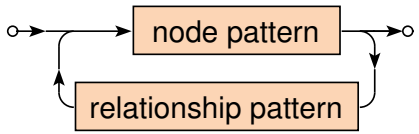
```
MATCH (m:movie)-[r:HAS_ACTOR]->(a:actor)
  WHERE m.title = "Medvídek"
RETURN a.name, a.year
  ORDER BY a.year
```

a.name	a.year
Ivan Trojan	1964
Jiří Macháček	1966

Path Patterns

Path **pattern** expression

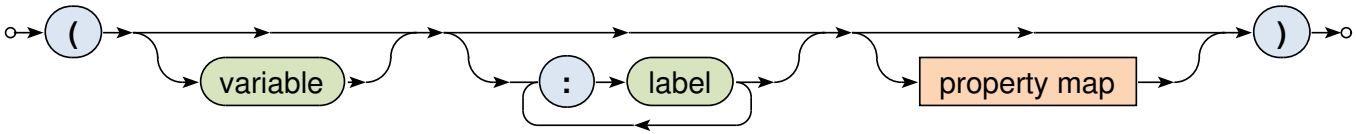
- ASCII-Art inspired syntax
  - Circles `()` for nodes
  - Arrows `<--`, `--`, `-->` for relationships
- Describes a single path pattern (not a general subgraph)



Path Patterns

Node pattern

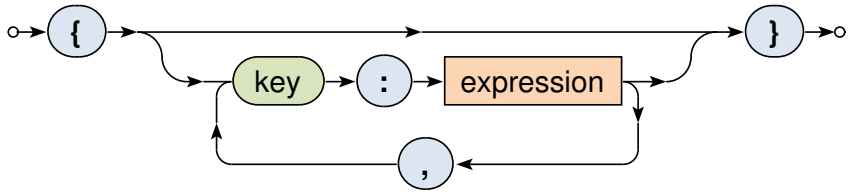
- Matches one data node



- **Variable**
  - Used to access a given query node later on
- Set of **labels**
  - Data node must have **all the specified labels** to be matched
- **Property** map
  - Data node must have **all the requested properties** (including their values) to be matched (the order is unimportant)

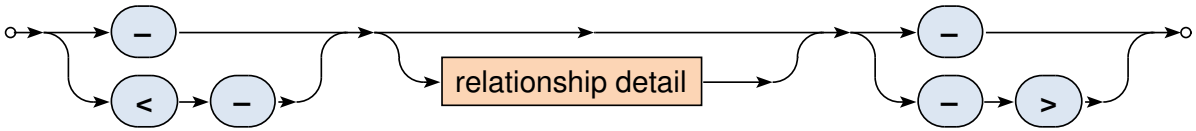
Path Patterns

Property map



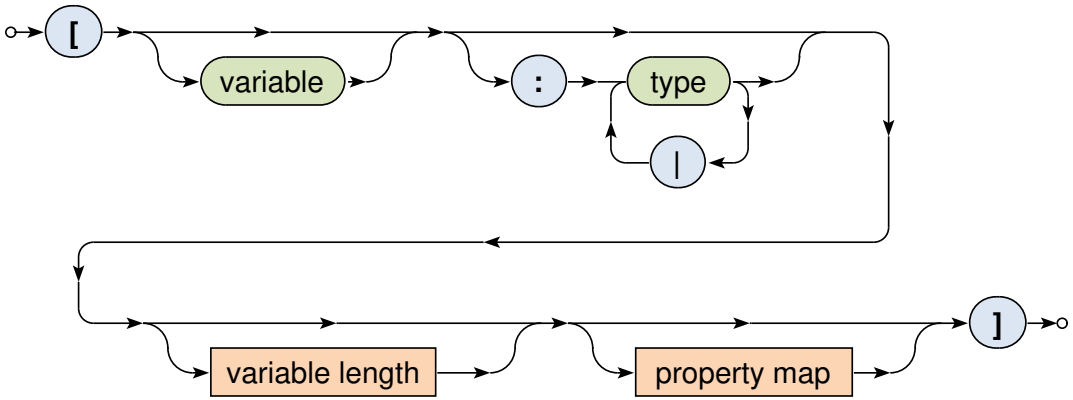
Relationship pattern

- Matches one data relationship



Path Patterns

Relationship pattern

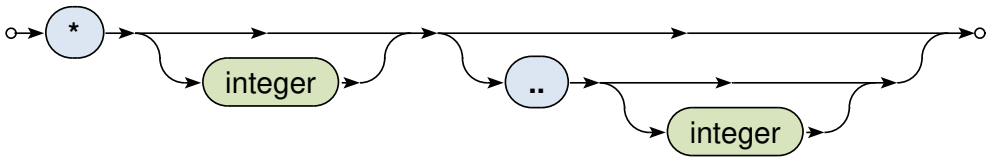


- **Variable**
  - Used to access a given query relationship later on
- Set of **types**
  - Data relationship must be of **one of the allowed types** to be matched

Path Patterns

Relationship pattern

- …
- **Property** map
  - Data relationship must have **all the requested properties**
- Variable path **length**
  - Allows us to describe **paths of arbitrary lengths** (not just one relationship)



  - I.e. matches a general path, not just a single relationship

Path Patterns

Examples

```
()
```

```
(x)--(y)
```

```
(m:movie)-->(a:actor)
```

```
(:movie)-->(a { name: "Ivan Trojan" })
```

```
()<-[r:HAS_ACTOR]-()
```

```
(m)-[:HAS_ACTOR { role: "Ivan" }]->()
```

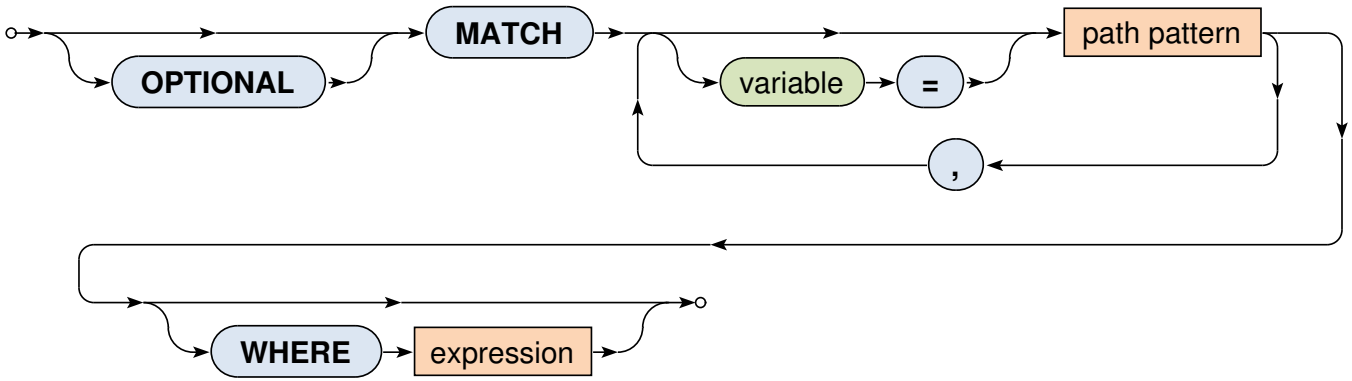
```
(:actor { name: "Ivan Trojan" })-[:KNOWS *2]->(:Actor)
```

```
()-[:KNOWS *5..]->(f)
```

Match Clause

`MATCH` **clause**

- Allows to search for **sub-graphs of the data graph** that match the provided path pattern / patterns (all of them)
  - **Query result** (table) = unordered **set of solutions**
  - One solution (row) = set of **variable bindings**
- Each variable has to be bound



Match Clause

`WHERE` **sub-clause** may provide additional constraints

- These constraints are **evaluated directly during the matching phase** (i.e. not after it)
- Typical usage
  - Boolean expressions
  - Comparisons
  - Path patterns – `true` if at least one solution is found
  - …

Uniqueness requirement

- One data node may match several query nodes, but one data relationship may not match several query relationships

Match Clause

Example

Find names of actors who played with *Ivan Trojan* in any movie

```
MATCH (:actor { name: "Ivan Trojan" })
        <-[:HAS_ACTOR]-(:movie)-[:HAS_ACTOR]->
      (a:actor)
RETURN a.name
```

```
MATCH (i:actor)<-[:HAS_ACTOR]-(:movie)-[:HAS_ACTOR]->(a:actor)
  WHERE (i.name = "Ivan Trojan")
RETURN a.name
```

a.name
Jiří Macháček
Jitka Schneiderová
Jiří Macháček

Match Clause

`OPTIONAL MATCH`

- Attempts to find matching data sub-graphs as usual…
- but **when no solution is found**,
  one specific solution with **all the variables bound to** `NULL`
  is generated
- Note that
  either the whole pattern is matched, or nothing is matched

Match Clause

Example

Find all the movies filmed in *2005* or earlier,
return names of all their actors as well (if any)

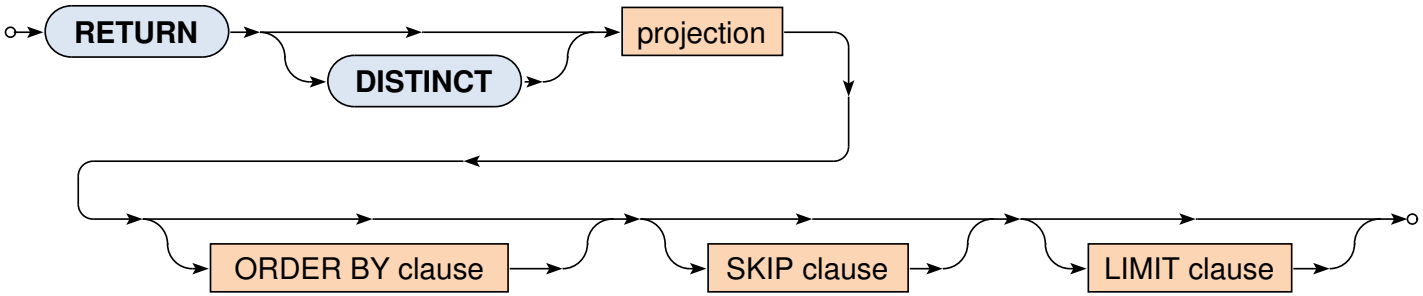
```
MATCH (m:movie)
  WHERE (m.year <= 2005)
OPTIONAL MATCH (m)-[:HAS_ACTOR]->(a:actor)
RETURN m.title, a.name
```

m.title	a.name
Samotáři	Ivan Trojan
Samotáři	Jiří Macháček
Samotáři	Jitka Schneiderová
Štěstí	NULL

Return Clause

`RETURN` **clause**

- Defines what to include in the query result
  - Projection of variables, accessing properties via dot notation, aggregation functions, …
- Optional `ORDER BY`, `SKIP` and `LIMIT` sub-clauses



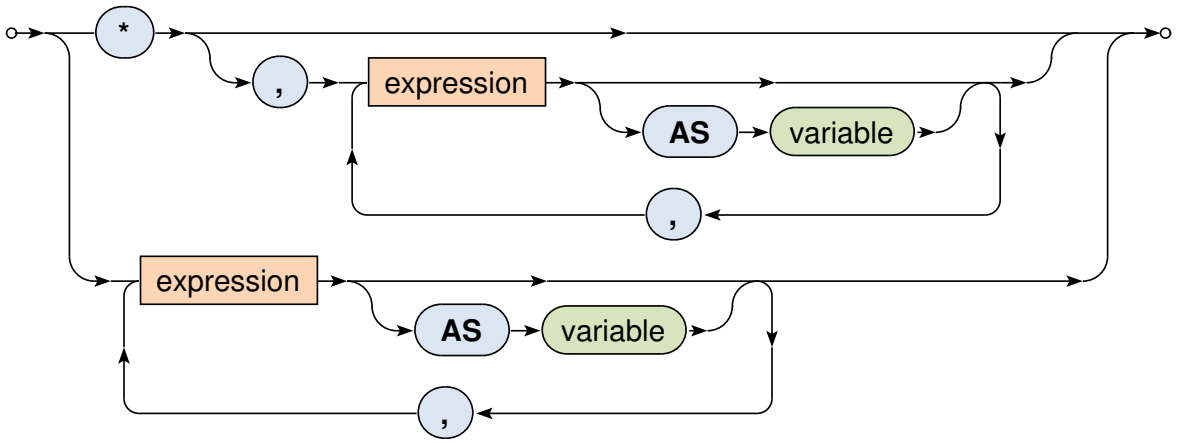
`RETURN DISTINCT`

- Duplicate solutions (rows) are removed

Return Clause

Projection

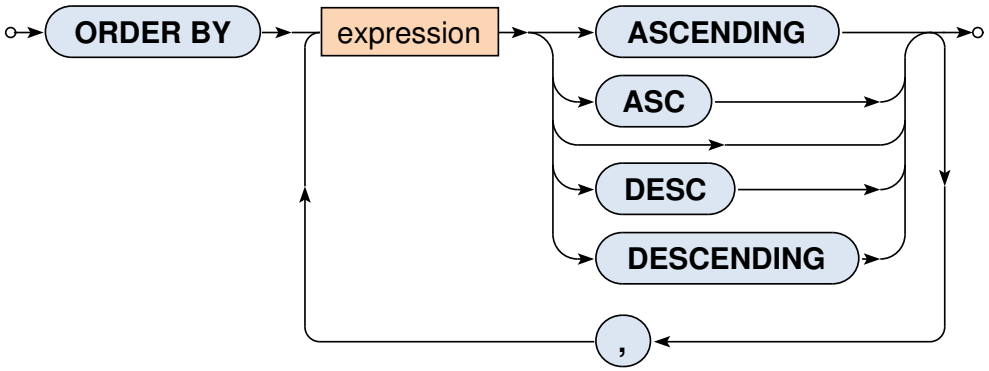
- `*` = **all the variables**
  - Can only be specified as the very first item
- `AS` allows to **explicitly (re)name** output records



Return Clause

`ORDER BY` **sub-clause**

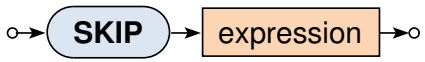
- Defines the **order of solutions** within the query result
  - Multiple criteria can be specified
  - Default direction is `ASC`
- The order is undefined unless explicitly defined
- Nodes and relationships as such cannot be used as criteria



Return Clause

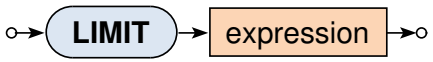
`SKIP` sub-clause

- Defines the **number of solutions to be skipped** in the query result



`LIMIT` sub-clause

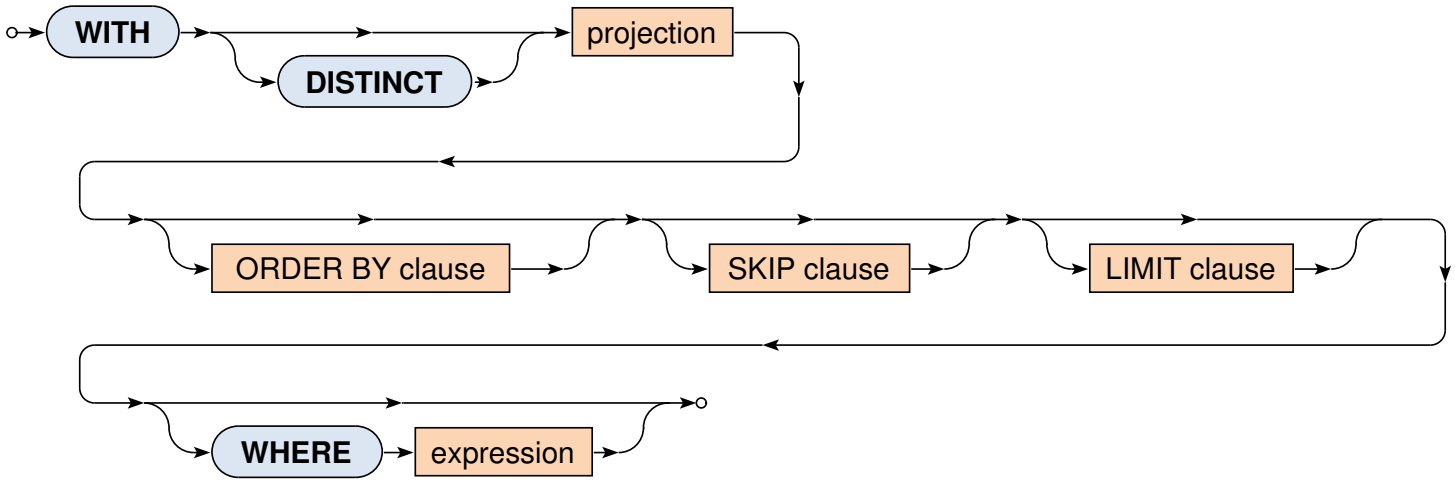
- Defines the **number of solutions to be included** in the query result



With Clause

`WITH` **clause**

- **Constructs intermediate result**
  - Behaves analogously to the `RETURN` clause
  - Does not output anything to the user, just forwards the current result to the subsequent clause
- Optional `WHERE` sub-clause can also be provided



Write Clauses

Query **clauses evaluation** in general

- `WITH` and `RETURN` clauses terminate individual **query parts**
- Within each query part…
  - **All the read clauses are evaluated first** (if any), **only then the write clauses are evaluated** (if any)
- **Read-only queries must return data** (i.e. must contain `RETURN` clause)

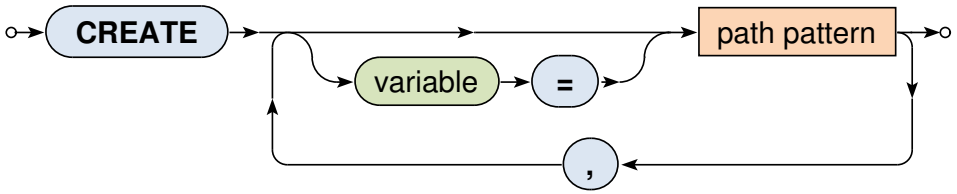
Write clauses and sub-clauses

- `CREATE` – creates new nodes or relationships
- `DELETE` – deletes nodes or relationships
- `SET` – updates labels or properties
- `REMOVE` – removes labels or properties

Write Clauses

`CREATE` clause

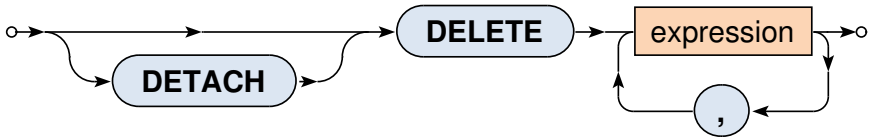
- **Inserts new nodes or relationships** into the data graph



Write Clauses

`DELETE` **clause**

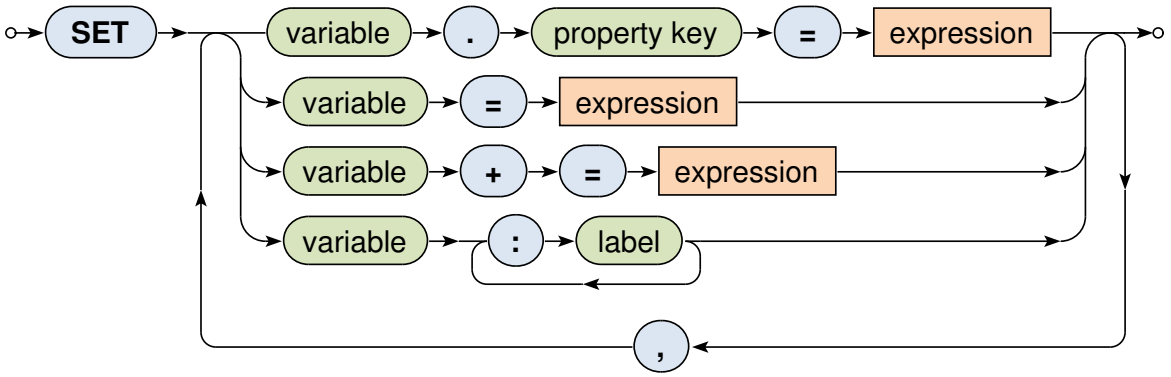
- **Removes nodes, relationships or paths** from the data graph
- Relationships must be removed before the nodes they are associated with
  - Unless the `DETACH` modifier is specified



Write Clauses

`SET` clause

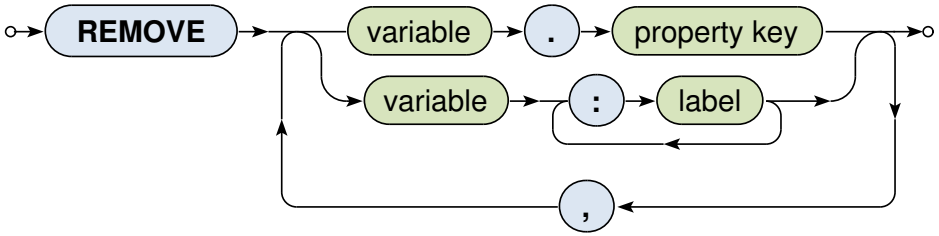
- Allows to…
  - **set a value for a particular property**
    - or remove a property when `NULL` is assigned
  - **replace all the current properties** with new ones
  - **add new properties** to the existing ones
  - **add labels** to nodes
- Cannot be used to set relationship types



Write Clauses

`REMOVE` clause

- Allows to…
  - **remove a particular property**
  - **remove labels** from nodes
- Cannot be used to remove relationship types



Expressions

Literal expressions

- Integers: decimal, octal, hexadecimal
- Floating-point numbers
- Strings
  - Enclosed in double or single quotes
  - Standard escape sequences
- Boolean values: `true`, `false`
- `NULL` value (cannot be stored in data graphs)

Other **expressions**

- Collections, variables, property accessors, function calls, path patterns, boolean expressions, arithmetic expressions, comparisons, regular expressions, predicates, …

Lecture Conclusion

Neo4j = graph database

- **Property graphs**
- **Traversal framework**
  - Path expanders, uniqueness, evaluators, traverser

Cypher = graph query language

- Read (sub-)clauses: `MATCH`, `WHERE`, …
- Write (sub-)clauses: `CREATE`, `DELETE`, `SET`, `REMOVE`, …
- General (sub-)clauses: `RETURN`, `WITH`, `ORDER BY`, `LIMIT`, …