what is state

that in the present
of that in the past
which affects that of the future

time

defining state

two problems:
- too little state
  elements missing from specification
  may be deliberate
e.g. dialogue level spec.
- too much state
  too many states, too complex state
  may be deliberate
  redundancy, extensibility

too little state

- forgotten elements
e.g. ‘typing’ flag for calculator
- checking:
  - dialogue state
can you work out current dialogue state?
  - action specification
does you have enough information?
  - implicit global variables (see also later)
suggest state missing

too much state

- unreachable states
too few actions (see later)
constraints

states are not orthogonal

- spare variables: constant/functional dependent
- dependent state
e.g. first point of line, number being typed
- indistinguishable states
  what is observable?

defining actions

- framing problems
  = too little in result state
- unreachable states
  = insufficient actions
- using ‘global’ variables
  implicit in operation definition
- beware extreme cases
  (e.g. empty document, cursor at end of line)