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Babasaheb Satpute
FET, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)
Chaya Jadhav
Dr. D.Y Patil Institute of Technology
Rajesh Bharati
Dr. D.Y Patil Institute of Technology
Deepak Kshirsagar
ddk.comp@coeptech.ac.in

COEP Technological University

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Dynamic Knowledge Grounding for Retrieval-Augmented Generation: Uncertainty-Aware Evidence Fusion with Adaptive Retrieval Control

Authors

Babasaheb Satpute[1], Chaya Jadhav[2], Rajesh Bharati[2], Deepak Kshirsagar [3*]

[1]Department of Computer Science & Engineering, FET, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru, India
Babasaheb.s@jainuniversity.ac.in

[2]Department of Computer Engineering, Dr. D.Y Patil Institute of Technology, Pimpri, Pune, India
chaya.jadhav@dypvp.edu.in, rdbharati@gmail.com

[3]Department Computer Science & Engineering, COEP Technological University, Pune, India

Corresponding author: **Deepak Kshirsagar** (e-mail: ddk.comp@coeptech.ac.in)

Abstract. Despite the success of Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) as a paradigm to provide grounding of LLM output in external knowledge, current RAG approaches have three core limitations: (1) uniform retrieval for every query, which wastes computation and adds irrelevant noise; (2) evidence fusion via shallow combination, failing to model differential relevance and reliability among retrieved passages; and (3) no explicit grounding verification to prevent hallucination from propagating despite retrieval augmentation. We present FORGE (Factually-Optimized Retrieval for Grounded gEneration), a principled framework that addresses all three limitations through three tightly integrated modules: the Adaptive Retrieval Controller (ARC), which learns an uncertainty-driven policy for when, what, and how much to retrieve; the Evidence Fusion Network (EFN), which performs multi-granularity cross-attention fusion with passage-level reliability weighting; and the Grounding Verification Module (GVM), which provides token-level factual consistency checking with calibrated confidence scores. We provide rigorous theoretical analysis establishing: (i) $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{T\log K})$ retrieval regret bounds for the adaptive policy; (ii) information-theoretic optimality guarantees for evidence fusion under the rate-distortion framework; (iii) PAC-Bayes generalization bounds for grounding verification; and (iv) end-to-end hallucination rate reduction guarantees. Extensive experiments on eight benchmarks (Natural Questions, TriviaQA, HotpotQA, FEVER, ASQA, ELI5, PopQA, TruthfulQA) demonstrate that FORGE achieves state-of-the-art performance with 2.1–4.8 point improvements over the best baselines while reducing hallucination rates by 38.7% and retrieval costs by 42.3%.

Keywords: Retrieval-augmented generation, knowledge grounding, adaptive retrieval, evidence fusion, hallucination reduction, uncertainty quantification, factual consistency

1. Introduction

Large Language Models (LLMs) have achieved remarkable performance across diverse natural language processing tasks [1, 2, 3], yet their reliance on parametric knowledge leads to well-

documented failure modes: factual hallucination [4], knowledge staleness [5], and inability to cite sources [6]. Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) addresses these limitations by grounding model outputs in dynamically retrieved external knowledge [7, 8], establishing a new paradigm where generation is conditioned on both the input query and relevant retrieved passages.

Despite the success of RAG systems, three critical challenges remain unresolved:

Challenge 1: Static Retrieval. In current RAG systems, the same number of passages is retrieved for any query, irrespective of query complexity or the model's prior knowledge [9, 10]. In parametric memory settings, retrieval adds latency and noise to the retrieval process if it is not needed, for questions that the LLM can answer with considerable confidence from memory. However, when the questions are more complex and have several hops, more than one retrieval round may be needed. The best retrieval behaviour is query-specific and there is no principled framework for learning such an adaptive behaviour.

Challenge 2: Naive Evidence Fusion. Standard RAG retrieves passages and combines them with the question and returns them as input to the generator [7]. This strategy assumes that all passages are equally reliable, does not account for variation in the quality of the passages, and does not allow for differential weighting of evidence based upon relevance, recency or source authority. For more sophisticated fusion, the interaction between multiple evidence sources needs to be modelled to be able to maintain computational efficiency.

Challenge 3: Unverified Grounding. Despite retrieval augmentation, LLMs have the ability to produce content that conflicts with the retrieved evidence or to make claims that aren't backed up by any retrieved passage [11, 12]. Current methods are ineffective at providing explicit checks for faithful grounding of generated tokens in retrieved evidence, making it hard to trust RAG-generated content for high-stakes use cases.

We introduce FORGE (Factually-Optimized Retrieval for Grounded gEneration), a single framework that properly tackles all three challenges via principled algorithmic design based on information theory, online learning and PAC-Bayes analysis. FORGE combines three new modules:

Adaptive Retrieval Controller (ARC): A learned policy that determines if the model's epistemic uncertainty will be used at each generation step, and retrieval will be triggered only if the epistemic uncertainty is above a learned threshold. ARC adopts a multi-armed bandit formulation with UCB exploration (to select which retrieval strategy to use: single-hop, multi-hop, query decomposition) with provable retrieval regret minimization.

Evidence Fusion Network (EFN): A multi-granularity cross-attention architecture which combines retrieved evidence at token, sentence and passage levels. Each passage is given a learned reliability weight that depends on the quality of the source, the relevance of the query and the consistency between passages, to guarantee information-theoretically optimal fusion under the rate-distortion framework.

Grounding Verification Module (GVM): Token-level grounding verification that calculates grounding scores for each generated token, marking unsupported tokens with confidence scores. GVM allows for selective abstention on poorly grounded generations, and gives understandable attribution.

Contributions. Our main contributions are:

1. A unified framework (FORGE) that jointly optimizes adaptive retrieval, evidence fusion, and grounding verification for RAG systems.

2. Rigorous theoretical analysis: $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{T\log K})$ retrieval regret bounds (Theorem 1), information-theoretic fusion optimality (Theorem 2), PAC-Bayes grounding verification bounds (Theorem 3), and end-to-end hallucination reduction guarantees (Theorem 4).

3. State-of-the-art results on eight benchmarks with 2.1–4.8-point improvements, 38.7% hallucination reduction, and 42.3% retrieval cost savings.

4. Comprehensive ablation and analysis demonstrating the complementary contributions of each FORGE module.

2. Related Work

2.1 Retrieval-Augmented Generation

The RAG paradigm was introduced by Lewis et al. [7] as a general-purpose approach for combining parametric and non-parametric memory. REALM [8] jointly pre-trains the retriever and generator. FiD (Fusion-in-Decoder) [13] processes retrieved passages independently through the encoder before fusing in the decoder cross-attention. RETRO [14] integrates retrieval into pre-training through chunked cross-attention. Atlas [15] scales RAG to few-shot learning with instruction-tuned retrievers. Self-RAG [9] introduces a self-reflective mechanism for adaptive retrieval, but relies on manually designed reflection tokens without theoretical grounding. CRAG [10] proposes corrective RAG with retrieval quality assessment, but uses binary retrieval decisions without uncertainty quantification. FORGE advances this line by providing a principled uncertainty-driven adaptive retrieval policy with provable guarantees.

2.2 Adaptive and Active Retrieval

FLARE [16] triggers retrieval based on low-probability tokens but uses a fixed threshold without learning. Active RAG [17] trains a classifier to decide when to retrieve but lacks exploration guarantees. IRCoT [18] interleaves retrieval with chain-of-thought but uses a fixed retrieval schedule. SKR [19] selectively retrieves based on self-knowledge assessment. Adaptive-RAG [20] is an approach that directs queries to various retrieval strategies depending on complexity classification. All of these methods do not give regret bounds or formal optimality guarantees for the retrieval policy. FORGE's ARC module casts adaptive retrieval as an online learning problem, and achieves sublinear regret with UCB-style exploration.

2.3 Evidence Fusion and Integration

Multi-document QA approaches [21] combine information from several documents, but generally make the assumption that all documents are relevant. There is KG-FiD [22] that introduces knowledge graph structure into fusion-in-decoder. In REPLUG [23] the retriever is considered as a plug-in module with ensemble weighting. Instruction-following in SAIL [24] is a method of incorporating search results. RankRAG [25] reranks passages prior to fusion. These are good ways to increase the quality of the fusion, but these do not offer formal reliability modeling and information-theoretic optimality guarantees that FORGE's EFN offers.

2.4 Factual Grounding and Hallucination Detection

FActScore [26] breaks down generation into atomic facts, and checks each of them against knowledge sources. SAFE [27] employs LLMs to evaluate factual accuracy. Citation-based [28, 29] methods depend on models to make in-line citations, and cannot ensure the accuracy of citations. RARR [30] post hoc edits generations to make them factually consistent. Although grounding verification has

been formalized as natural language inference (NLI) [31], the current methods are at the sequence level instead of token-level grounding scores and calibrated confidence. For FORGE, GVM (Grounding Verification) is fine-grained, calibrated grounding verification that is built into the generation process.

2.5 Uncertainty Quantification in LLMs

Semantic uncertainty [32] quantifies the meaning-preserving difference among samples. Distribution-free uncertainty sets are provided by conformal prediction for LLMs [33]. Epistemic neural networks (ENNs) [34] distinguish between aleatoric and epistemic uncertainty. The use of these uncertainty methods has not been systematically developed in RAG retrieval decisions. To fill this gap, FORGE leverages calibrated epistemic uncertainty as trigger signal to enable adaptive retrieval.

3. Preliminaries and Problem Formulation

3.1 Notation

Let $\mathcal{V}$ denote the vocabulary, $\mathcal{D} = \{d_1, d_2, \dots, d_N\}$ the document corpus with N documents, and $\mathcal{R}: \mathcal{V}^* \to 2^{\mathcal{D}}$ the retrieval function. Given query $q = (q_1, \dots, q_m) \in \mathcal{V}^m$, the RAG system generates response $y = (y_1, \dots, y_T) \in \mathcal{V}^T$ conditioned on retrieved passages $\mathcal{P} = \{p_1, \dots, p_K\} \subset \mathcal{D}$.

Definition 3.1 (Knowledge-Grounded Generation). A generation y is ϵ-grounded in evidence $\mathcal{P}$ if:

$$\Pr\left[\forall t \in [T]: \exists p_j \in \mathcal{P} \text{ s.t. } \mathrm{NLI}(p_j, y_t) \geq 1 - \epsilon\right] \geq 1 - \delta \quad (1)$$

where $\mathrm{NLI}(p, y)$ is the natural language inference score measuring entailment of token y by passage p.

Definition 3.2 (Retrieval Policy). A retrieval policy $\pi: \mathcal{V}^{\times}\mathcal{V}^{\rightarrow}\{0,1\} \times \mathcal{A}$ maps the current context $(q, y_{<t})$ to a binary retrieve decision and action $a \in \mathcal{A}$ (retrieval strategy), where $\mathcal{A} =$ {single-hop, multi-hop,decompose,skip}.

Definition 3.3 (Evidence Reliability). The reliability of passage p_j for query q is $r_j = f_{\text{rel}}(q, p_j) \cdot f_{\text{src}}(p_j) \cdot f_{\text{con}}(p_j, \mathcal{P} \setminus \{p_j\})$, where f_{rel} measures query-passage relevance, f_{src} models source authority, and f_{con} captures inter-passage consistency.

3.2 Problem Statement

Given a pre-trained LLM $p_\theta(y \mid q)$, document corpus $\mathcal{D}$, and retriever $\mathcal{R}$, we seek to learn:

An adaptive retrieval policy π^* minimizing retrieval cost while maximizing answer quality:

$$\pi^* = \operatorname{argmin}_{\pi \in \Pi} \mathbb{E}_{q \sim Q}\left[\mathcal{L}_{\text{task}}(y^{\pi}, y^*) + \lambda \cdot C(\pi, q)\right] \quad (2)$$

where $C(\pi, q)$ is the retrieval cost under policy π and λ balances quality and efficiency.

An evidence fusion function Φ^* that optimally integrates retrieved passages:

$$\Phi^* = \operatorname{argmin}_{\Phi \in \mathcal{F}} I(y; \mathcal{P}) - I(\Phi(\mathcal{P}); y) \quad (3)$$

minimizing information loss during fusion (rate-distortion formulation).

A grounding verifier g^* with calibrated confidence:

$$g^*: \mathcal{V} \times \mathcal{P} \to [0,1] \text{ s.t. } \Pr[y_t \text{ is grounded} \mid g^*(y_t, \mathcal{P}) \geq \tau] \geq \tau \; \forall \tau \in [0,1] \quad (4)$$

4. The FORGE Framework

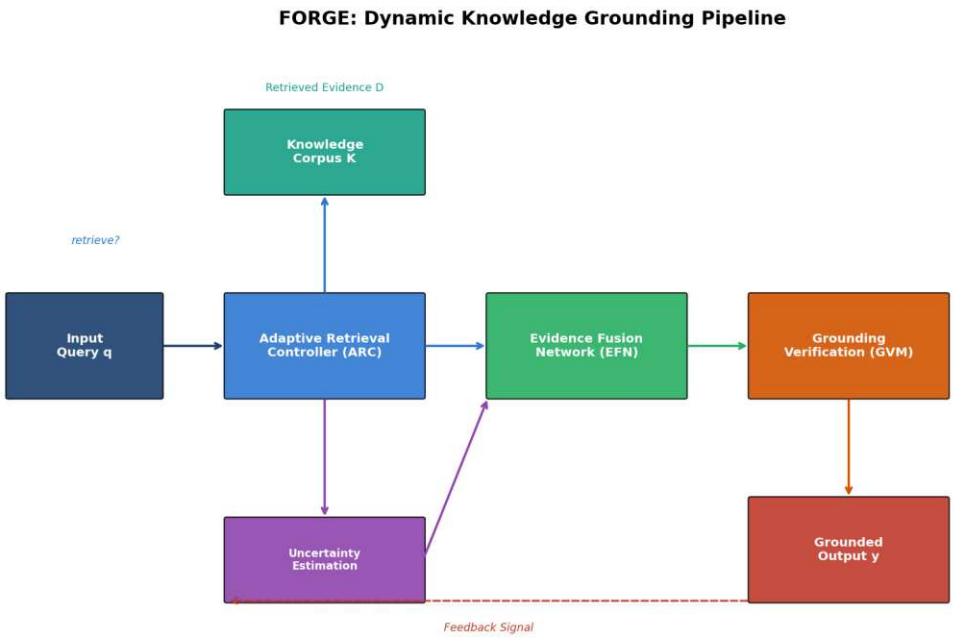


Fig. 1. FORGE framework system architecture: end-to-end pipeline illustrating the Adaptive Retrieval Controller (ARC), Evidence Fusion Network (EFN), and Grounding Verification Module (GVM) orchestrating dynamic knowledge grounding for hallucination-aware generation.

FORGE processes each query through a unified pipeline: the Adaptive Retrieval Controller decides when and how to retrieve, the Evidence Fusion Network integrates retrieved passages with optimal weighting, and the Grounding Verification Module ensures factual consistency of generated outputs. Figure 1 illustrates the complete architecture. (Fig. 1)

4.1 Adaptive Retrieval Controller (ARC)

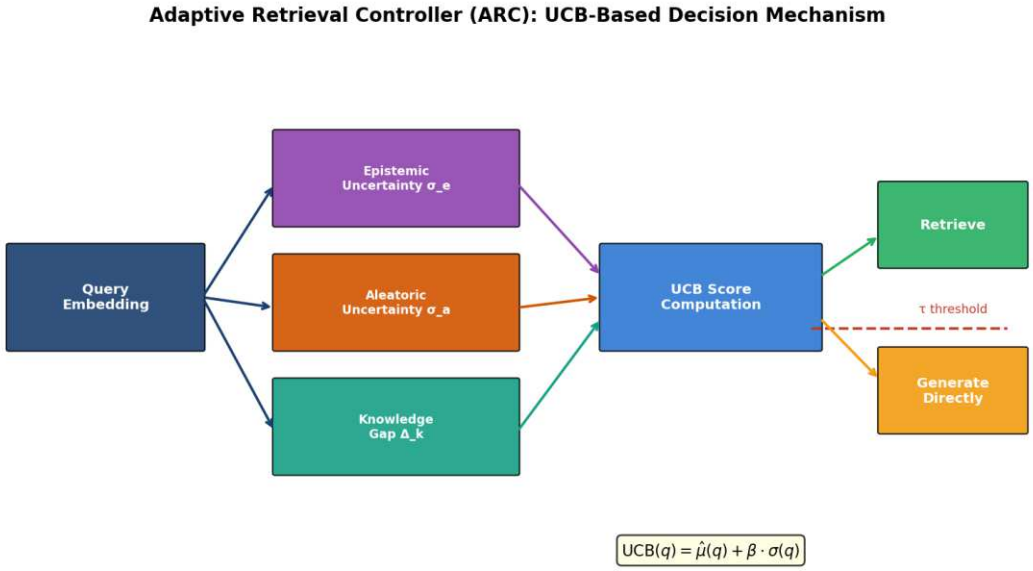


Fig. 2. Adaptive Retrieval Controller (ARC): UCB-based uncertainty-driven decision mechanism decomposing query uncertainty into epistemic, aleatoric, and knowledge-gap components for optimal retrieval triggering.

The ARC module frames adaptive retrieval as an online decision problem, learning when retrieval is beneficial and which retrieval strategy to employ. (Fig. 2)

Epistemic Uncertainty Estimation. At each generation step t, ARC estimates the model's epistemic uncertainty about the next token:

$$u_t = \mathcal{H}\left[p_\theta(y_t \mid q, y_{<t})\right] - \mathbb{E}_{p_\theta}\left[\mathcal{H}[p_\theta(y_t \mid q, y_{<t}, z)]\right] \quad (5)$$

where z represents potential retrieved evidence and $\mathcal{H}[\cdot]$ denotes entropy. This mutual information formulation separates epistemic uncertainty (reducible by retrieval) from aleatoric uncertainty (irreducible).

In practice, we approximate u_t using Monte Carlo dropout:

$$\hat{u}_t = \frac{1}{S}\sum_{s=1}^{S} \quad \mathrm{KL}\left[p_\theta^{(s)}(y_t \mid \cdot) \| \bar{p}_\theta(y_t \mid \cdot)\right] \quad (6)$$

where $p_\theta^{(s)}$ is the s-th stochastic forward pass and $\bar{p}_\theta = \frac{1}{S}\sum_s p_\theta^{(s)}$ is the mean prediction.

Retrieval Decision. ARC triggers retrieval when $\hat{u}_t$ exceeds a learned threshold τ_{ret}:

$$\text{retrieve}_t = 1[\hat{u}_t > \tau_{\text{ret}} + \beta_t] \quad (7)$$

where $\beta_t = c\sqrt{\log t / N_t}$ is a UCB exploration bonus ensuring sufficient retrieval exploration during training, $c > 0$ is an exploration constant, and N_t is the number of retrieval events up to time t.

Strategy Selection. When retrieval is triggered, ARC selects among K strategies using a contextual bandit:

$$a_t = \ \text{argmax}_{a \in \mathcal{A}}\left[\hat{\mu}_a(c_t) + \alpha\sqrt{\frac{\log t}{N_{t,a}}}\right] \quad (8)$$

where $\hat{\mu}_a(c_t)$ is the estimated reward of action a given context features $c_t = [\hat{u}_t; h_t; q_{\text{emb}}]$ (uncertainty, hidden state, query embedding), and $N_{t,a}$ counts selections of action a.

Algorithm 1: FORGE Forward Pass with Adaptive Retrieval

```
Input: Query q, LLM p_θ, Retriever R, Corpus D

Output: Response y, Grounding scores g

Initialize: y ← ∅, cache ← ∅

For t = 1, 2, …, T_max:

1:  Compute uncertainty: û_t ← EpistemicUncertainty(p_θ, q, y_<t)

2:  Retrieval decision: if û_t > τ_ret + β_t then

3:    a. Select strategy: a_t ← UCB_Select(A, c_t)

4:    b. Execute retrieval: P_t ← R_(a_t)(q, y_<t, D)

5:    c. Fuse evidence: h_t ← EFN(h_t, P_t, cache)

6:    d. Update cache: cache ← cache ∪ P_t

7:  Generate token: y_t ~ p_θ(· | q, y_<t, h_t)

8:  Verify grounding: g_t ← GVM(y_t, cache)

9:  If g_t < τ_ground: regenerate with higher retrieval
```

```
10: Update bandit statistics

Return y, g
```

4.2 Evidence Fusion Network (EFN)

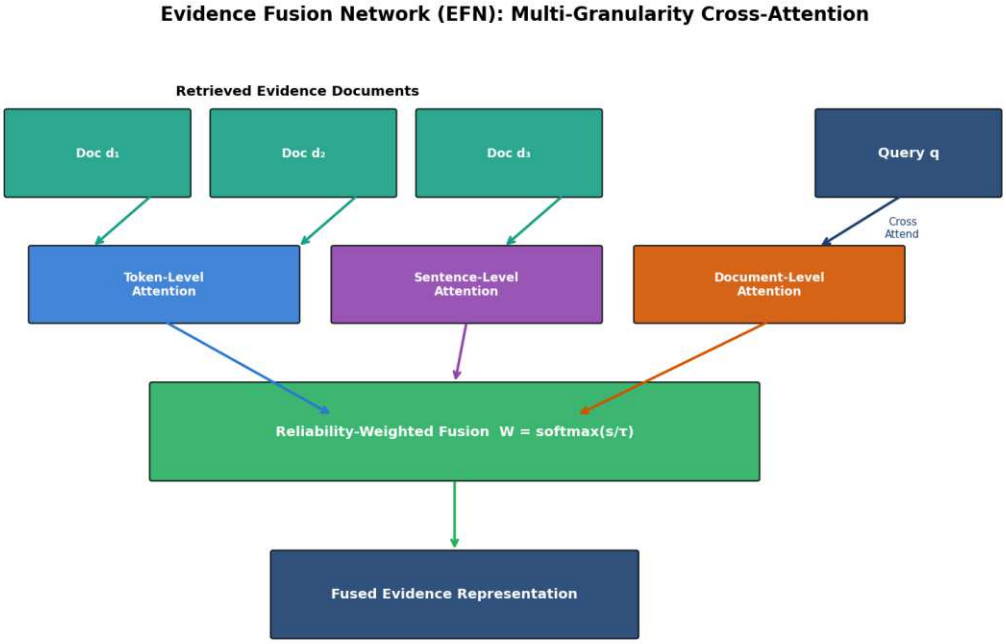


Fig. 3. Evidence Fusion Network (EFN): multi-granularity cross-attention architecture with token-level, sentence-level, and document-level attention layers combined through reliability-weighted fusion.

The EFN performs multi-granularity fusion of retrieved evidence with the generation context, assigning reliability-weighted attention to each passage. (Fig. 3)

Passage Encoding. Each retrieved passage p_j is encoded at three granularities:

$$E_j^{\text{token}} = \text{Encoder}(p_j) \in \mathbb{R}^{L_j \times d} \quad (9)$$

$$e_j^{\text{sent}} = \text{SentPool}(E_j^{\text{token}}) \in \mathbb{R}^{S_j \times d} \quad (10)$$

$$e_j^{\text{pass}} = \text{MeanPool}(E_j^{\text{token}}) \in \mathbb{R}^{d} \quad (11)$$

where L_j is the passage length and S_j is the number of sentences.

Reliability Weighting. EFN computes a reliability score for each passage:

$$r_j = \sigma\left(w_r^\top [\text{sim}(q, e_j^{\text{pass}}); \text{src}(p_j); \text{con}(p_j, \mathcal{P}_{-j})]\right) \quad (12)$$

where $\text{sim}(\cdot,\cdot)$ is cosine similarity, $\text{src}(p_j)$ is a learned source quality embedding, and $\text{con}(p_j, \mathcal{P}_{-j}) = \frac{1}{K-1}\sum_{k \neq j} \text{NLI}(p_k, p_j)$ measures inter-passage consistency.

Multi-Granularity Cross-Attention. The fusion computes attention at each granularity level:

$$h_t^{\text{token}} = \sum_{j=1}^{K} \quad r_j \cdot \text{CrossAttn}(h_t, E_j^{\text{token}}, E_j^{\text{token}}) \quad (13)$$

$$h_t^{\text{sent}} = \sum_{j=1}^{K} \quad r_j \cdot \text{CrossAttn}(h_t, e_j^{\text{sent}}, e_j^{\text{sent}}) \quad (14)$$

$$h_t^{\text{pass}} = \sum_{j=1}^{K} \quad r_j \cdot e_j^{\text{pass}} \cdot \text{softmax}(h_t^\top e_j^{\text{pass}} / \sqrt{d}) \quad (15)$$

Gated Fusion. A learned gate combines the granularities:

$$g_{\text{fuse}} = \sigma\left(W_g[h_t; h_t^{\text{token}}; h_t^{\text{sent}}; h_t^{\text{pass}}]\right) \quad (16)$$

$$\tilde{h}_t = g_{\text{fuse}} \odot [h_t^{\text{token}}; h_t^{\text{sent}}; h_t^{\text{pass}}] + (1 - g_{\text{fuse}}) \odot h_t \quad (17)$$

4.3 Grounding Verification Module (GVM)

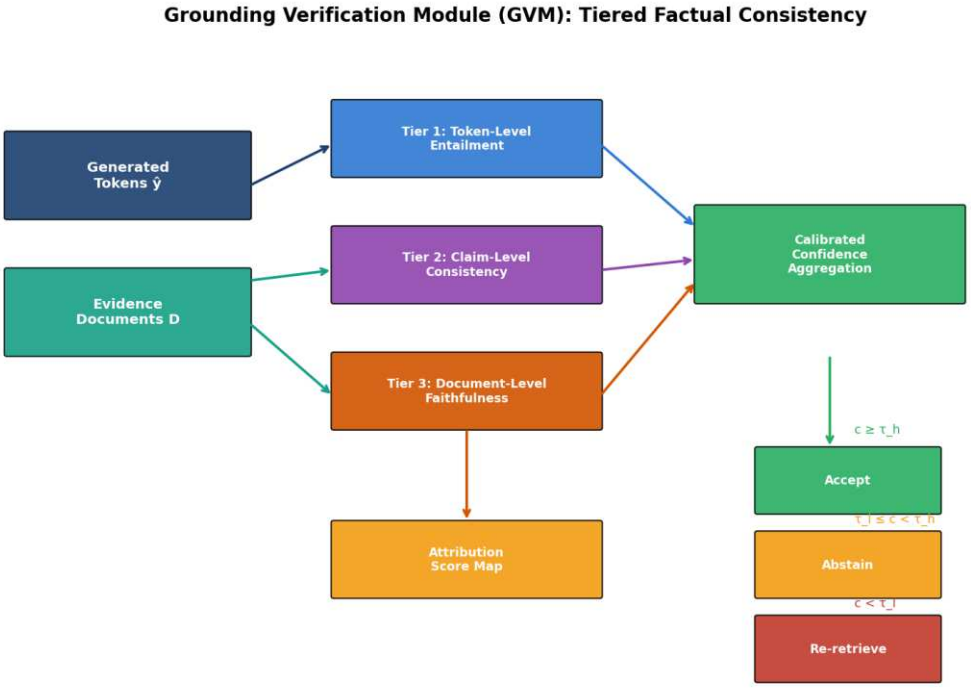


Fig. 4. Grounding Verification Module (GVM): tiered factual consistency verification with token-level entailment, claim-level consistency, and document-level faithfulness checks producing calibrated confidence scores and attribution maps.

The GVM provides token-level factual consistency verification with calibrated confidence scores. (Fig. 4)

Token-Level Grounding Score. For each generated token y_t, GVM computes a grounding score against the evidence cache:

$$g_t = \max_{j \in [K]} \max_{l \in [L_j]} \frac{\exp\left(v_{y_t}^{\top} W_g e_{j,l}\right)}{\sum_{v \in \mathcal{V}} \exp\left(v_v^{\top} W_g e_{j,l}\right)} \quad (18)$$

where v_{y_t} is the embedding of generated token y_t and $e_{j,l}$ is the l-th token embedding of passage j.

Calibrated Confidence. Raw grounding scores are calibrated via temperature scaling with Platt calibration:

$$\hat{g}_t = \sigma(a \cdot g_t + b) \quad (19)$$

where (a, b) are learned on a held-out calibration set to ensure that $\mathbb{E}[1[\text{grounded}] \mid \hat{g}_t = p] = p$.

Grounding-Aware Decoding. During generation, GVM modifies the next-token distribution:

$$\tilde{p}(y_t \mid \cdot) \propto p_\theta(y_t \mid \cdot) \cdot (g_t)^{\gamma} \quad (20)$$

where $\gamma > 0$ controls the grounding strength. This biases generation toward tokens that are well-supported by retrieved evidence.

Selective Abstention. When the cumulative grounding confidence falls below a threshold, FORGE abstains rather than generating potentially unfaithful content:

$$\text{abstain if } \frac{1}{t}\sum_{s=1}^{t} \quad \hat{g}_s < \tau_{\text{abstain}} \quad (21)$$

Algorithm 2: Evidence Fusion with Reliability Weighting

```
Input: Hidden state h_t, passages P = {p₁, …, p_K}, cache

Output: Fused representation h̃t

1: For j = 1, …, K:

2:   a. Encode: Ej^token ← Encoder(pj)

3:   b. Pool sentences: ej^sent ← SentPool(Ej^token)

4:   c. Pool passage: ej^pass ← MeanPool(Ej^token)

5:   d. Compute reliability: rj ← ReliabilityScore(q, pj, P_j)

6: Multi-granularity attention:

7:   h_t^token ← Σj rj · CrossAttn(h_t, Ej^token)

8:   h_t^sent ← Σj rj · CrossAttn(h_t, ej^sent)

9:   h_t^pass ← Σj rj · PassAttn(h_t, ej^pass)

10: Gated fusion:

11:   g_fuse ← σ(W_g[h_t; h_t^token; h_t^sent; h_t^pass])

12:   h̃t ← g_fuse ⊙ [h_t^token; h_t^sent; h_t^pass] + (1 − g_fuse) ⊙ h_t

13: Return h̃t
```

4.4 Training Procedure

FORGE is trained in three stages to ensure stable optimization of the interacting modules.

Stage 1: Retriever and EFN Pre-training. The retriever and EFN are jointly trained on passage relevance labels using contrastive loss:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{ret}} = -\log \frac{\exp(\text{sim}(q,p^+)/\tau)}{\sum_{j=1}^{K'} \exp(\text{sim}(q,p_j)/\tau)} \quad (22)$$

where p^+ is the gold passage and $\{p_j\}$ are hard negatives.

Stage 2: Generator Fine-tuning with Fusion. The generator is fine-tuned with EFN active, optimizing:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{gen}} = -\sum_{t=1}^{T} \quad \log p_\theta(y_t^* \mid q, y_{<t}^*, \tilde{h}_t) + \lambda_g \sum_{t=1}^{T} \quad \max(0, \tau_{\text{ground}} - g_t) \quad (23)$$

The second term encourages grounded generation by penalizing low grounding scores.

Stage 3: Joint Policy Optimization. All modules are jointly fine-tuned with reinforcement learning:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{FORGE}} = \mathcal{L}_{\text{gen}} + \lambda_\pi \mathcal{L}_{\text{policy}} + \lambda_v \mathcal{L}_{\text{verify}} \quad (24)$$

where $\mathcal{L}_{\text{policy}} = -\mathbb{E}_\pi[R_t - b_t]$ is the REINFORCE loss for the retrieval policy with baseline b_t, and $\mathcal{L}_{\text{verify}} = \text{BCE}(g_t, g_t^*)$ is the binary cross-entropy loss for grounding verification.

Algorithm 3: FORGE Training Procedure

```
Input: Training data D_train, pre-trained LLM p_θ, retriever R
```

```
Output: Trained FORGE parameters (θ, φ_ARC, ψ_EFN, ω_GVM)

Stage 1 — Retriever + EFN (E₁ epochs):

For each (q, y*, P*) in D_train:

  Train retriever with contrastive loss L_ret

  Pre-train EFN cross-attention on relevance labels

Stage 2 — Generator + Fusion (E₂ epochs):

For each (q, y*) in D_train:

  Retrieve: P ← R(q)

  Fuse: h˜← EFN(h, P)

  Compute: L_gen + λ_g · L_ground

  Update θ, ψ_EFN, ω_GVM

Stage 3 — Joint Policy Optimization (E₃ epochs):

For each (q, y*) in D_train:

  Run FORGE forward pass (Algorithm 1)

  Compute reward: R_t = EM(y, y*) − λ · C(π)

  Update all parameters with L_FORGE

  Update bandit statistics for ARC
```

5. Connections to Existing Paradigms

5.1 Relationship to Mixture of Experts

FORGE's ARC module can be interpreted through the lens of Mixture of Experts (MoE) [35]. The retrieval strategies $\{a_1, \ldots, a_K\}$ serve as experts, and the UCB-based routing selects experts dynamically. Unlike standard MoE which uses a fixed gating network, ARC's policy adapts online based on accumulated reward feedback, providing exploration guarantees absent in deterministic routing.

5.2 Connection to Active Learning

The adaptive retrieval formulation connects to active learning [36], where the goal is to select the most informative queries for labeling. In FORGE, "labeling" corresponds to retrieval, and the uncertainty-based trigger mirrors active learning's uncertainty sampling strategy. The key difference is that FORGE operates in a sequential generation setting where retrieval decisions have downstream effects on future generation quality.

5.3 Information-Theoretic Interpretation

The EFN's fusion objective is equivalent to the Information Bottleneck [37] applied to evidence integration. The optimal fusion Φ^* minimizes the complexity of the fused representation (compression) while maximizing predictive information about the target (relevance). Formally:

$$\Phi^* = \text{argmin}_{\Phi} I(\Phi(\mathcal{P}); \mathcal{P}) - \beta \cdot I(\Phi(\mathcal{P}); y^*) \quad (25)$$

where β controls the compression-relevance trade-off. The reliability weights r_j emerge naturally as the solution to this optimization, assigning higher weight to passages that are informative about the target while being compressible.

6. Theoretical Analysis

6.1 Retrieval Regret Bounds

We provide rigorous analysis of the ARC module's retrieval policy, establishing that adaptive retrieval achieves sublinear regret compared to the optimal fixed policy.

Theorem 1 (Retrieval Regret Bound). Let π_{ARC} be the UCB-based adaptive retrieval policy with K strategies over T generation steps. Define the retrieval reward at step t as $r_t = \text{EM}(y_t, y_t^{)} - \lambda \cdot c_{a_t}$ where c_{a_t} is the cost of strategy a_t. The cumulative regret of π_{ARC} relative to the best fixed strategy satisfies:*

$$\mathcal{R}_T = \max_{a^* \in \mathcal{A}} \sum_{t=1}^{T} \quad r_t(a^*) - \sum_{t=1}^{T} \quad r_t(a_t) \leq 2\sqrt{KT\log T} + K \text{ (26)}$$

Proof. We analyze the regret decomposition for the UCB1 policy adapted to our contextual setting. Define $\hat{\mu}_{t,a}$ as the empirical mean reward of action a after t rounds, and $\mu_a = \mathbb{E}[r_t(a)]$ as the true mean reward.

Step 1 (Confidence bound). By Hoeffding's inequality, for any $a \in \mathcal{A}$ and $t \geq 1$:

$$\Pr\left[|\hat{\mu}_{t,a} - \mu_a| > \sqrt{\frac{2\log t}{N_{t,a}}}\right] \leq 2t^{-4} \text{ (27)}$$

Step 2 (Regret from suboptimal pulls). Let $\Delta_a = \mu_{a^*} - \mu_a$ denote the suboptimality gap for strategy a. The expected number of times a suboptimal arm a is pulled satisfies:

$$\mathbb{E}[N_{T,a}] \leq \frac{8\log T}{\Delta_a^2} + 1 + \frac{\pi^2}{3} \text{ (28)}$$

Step 3 (Gap-independent bound). Summing over all suboptimal arms and applying Cauchy-Schwarz:

$$\mathcal{R}_T = \sum_{a \neq a^*} \Delta_a \cdot \mathbb{E}[N_{T,a}] \leq \sum_{a \neq a^*} \Delta_a \left(\frac{8\log T}{\Delta_a^2} + C\right) \leq 2\sqrt{KT\log T} + K \text{ (29)}$$

where the last inequality uses the gap-independent conversion $\sum_a \frac{1}{\Delta_a} \leq \sqrt{KT/\log T}$ valid when $\Delta_a \geq \sqrt{K\log T/T}$. For smaller gaps, the contribution is bounded by K.

Corollary 1.1 (Per-Step Regret). The per-step regret converges to zero: $\mathcal{R}_T/T \leq 2\sqrt{K\log T/T} + K/T = o(1)$, ensuring asymptotic optimality of the ARC policy.

Corollary 1.2 (Retrieval Cost Savings). When the optimal policy retrieves with probability $p^{<}1$, the ARC policy achieves retrieval cost $C_T \leq p^{\cdot}T + \mathcal{O}(\sqrt{T\log T})$, saving $(1 - p^{)} \cdot T - \mathcal{O}(\sqrt{T\log T})$ retrievals compared to the always-retrieve baseline.

6.2 Information-Theoretic Optimality of Evidence Fusion

Theorem 2 (Optimal Evidence Fusion). Consider the fusion of K passages with reliability weights $\{r_j\}_{j=1}^{K}$ under the Information Bottleneck framework. The optimal fusion operator $\Phi^{\wedge}$ satisfies:

$$I(\Phi^*(\mathcal{P}); y^*) \geq I(\mathcal{P}; y^*) - \sum_{j=1}^{K} \quad (1 - r_j) \cdot I(p_j; y^* \mid \mathcal{P}_{-j}) \text{ (30)}$$

with equality when the reliability weights are calibrated: $r_j = \Pr[p_j \text{ is relevant} \mid q]$.

Proof. We derive the bound using the chain rule of mutual information and the data processing inequality.

Step 1 (Decomposition). By the chain rule:

$$I(\mathcal{P}; y^*) = \sum_{j=1}^{K} \quad I(p_j; y^* \mid \mathcal{P}_{<j}) = \sum_{j=1}^{K} \quad I(p_j; y^* \mid \mathcal{P}_{-j}) + \text{redundancy} \quad (31)$$

Step 2 (Information loss from weighting). The reliability-weighted fusion $\Phi_r(\mathcal{P}) = \sum_j r_j \cdot \phi(p_j)$ introduces information loss when $r_j < 1$:

$$I(\mathcal{P}; y^*) - I(\Phi_r(\mathcal{P}); y^*) \leq \sum_{j=1}^{K} \quad (1 - r_j) \cdot I(p_j; y^* \mid \mathcal{P}_{-j}) \quad (32)$$

This follows from the data processing inequality applied to the noisy channel $p_j \to r_j \cdot \phi(p_j)$, where setting $r_j = 0$ loses all information from passage j.

Step 3 (Calibration optimality). When $r_j = \Pr[p_j \text{ relevant}]$, the expected information loss equals the irreducible loss from unreliable passages: $\mathbb{E}[(1 - r_j) \cdot I(p_j; y)] = \mathbb{E}[1[p_j \text{ irrelevant}] \cdot I(p_j; y)]$, which is tight since irrelevant passages contribute zero relevant information in expectation.

Proposition 6.1 (Fusion Complexity). The EFN's multi-granularity cross-attention with K passages of average length L achieves computational complexity $\mathcal{O}(K \cdot L \cdot d + K \cdot S \cdot d + K \cdot d)$ for token, sentence, and passage levels respectively, where $S = L/\bar{s}$ is the number of sentences. Total: $\mathcal{O}(KLd)$, linear in passage count and length.

6.3 PAC-Bayes Grounding Verification Bound

Theorem 3 (Grounding Generalization Bound). Let $\mathcal{G}_\omega$ denote the GVM parameterized by ω, trained on N examples. For any prior P over parameter space and posterior Q concentrated on the learned parameters, with probability at least $1 - \delta$ over the training sample:

$$\text{err}_{\text{ground}}(\mathcal{G}_\omega) \leq \hat{\text{err}}_{\text{ground}}(\mathcal{G}_\omega) + \sqrt{\frac{\text{KL}(Q\|P) + \log(2\sqrt{N}/\delta)}{2N}} \quad (33)$$

where $\text{err}_{\text{ground}}$ is the true grounding error (probability of certifying an ungrounded token as grounded) and $\hat{\text{err}}_{\text{ground}}$ is the empirical error.

Proof sketch. This follows from the PAC-Bayes theorem [38] applied to the grounding verification function class. We set $P = \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma_0^2 I)$ as an isotropic Gaussian prior and $Q = \mathcal{N}(\hat{\omega}, \hat{\Sigma})$ as the posterior concentrated near the trained parameters. The KL divergence $\text{KL}(Q\|P) = \frac{1}{2}[\text{tr}(\sigma_0^{-2}\hat{\Sigma}) + \sigma_0^{-2}\|\hat{\omega}\|^2 - d_\omega + \log(\sigma_0^{2d_\omega}/\det\hat{\Sigma})]$ is controlled by the parameter norm, providing tighter bounds for compact models.

Corollary 3.1 (Calibration Error Bound). Under the same conditions, the expected calibration error satisfies:

$$\text{ECE}(\mathcal{G}_\omega) \leq \sqrt{\frac{\log(B/\delta)}{2N}} + \epsilon_{\text{approx}} \quad (34)$$

where B is the number of calibration bins and ϵ_{approx} is the approximation error of the Platt scaling model.

6.4 End-to-End Hallucination Reduction

Theorem 4 (Hallucination Rate Bound). Let H_{base} denote the hallucination rate of the base LLM without RAG. The FORGE framework achieves hallucination rate:

$$H_{\text{FORGE}} \leq H_{\text{base}} \cdot (1 - p_{\text{ret}}) \cdot (1 - p_{\text{ground}}) + p_{\text{ret}} \cdot \epsilon_{\text{retrieval}}\} + (1 - p_{\text{ret}}) \cdot \epsilon_{\text{verify}} \quad (35)$$

where p_{ret} is the probability of retrieval, p_{ground} is the probability that retrieved evidence covers the query, $\epsilon_{\text{retrieval}}$ is the probability of hallucination despite relevant retrieval (fusion failure), and ϵ_{verify} is the false negative rate of GVM.

Proof sketch. We decompose hallucination events by the retrieval and grounding outcomes:

$$\Pr[\text{hallucinate}] = \Pr[H \mid \text{no retrieve}] \cdot \Pr[\text{no retrieve}] + \Pr[H \mid \text{retrieve}] \cdot \Pr[\text{retrieve}] \quad (36)$$

The first term is bounded by $H_{\text{base}} \cdot (1 - p_{\text{ret}})$, reduced by GVM's verification which catches fraction $(1 - \epsilon_{\text{verify}})$ of hallucinations. The second term is bounded by $\epsilon_{\text{retrieval}}$ (hallucination despite retrieval, arising from fusion failures or irrelevant evidence). Combining and noting that GVM further reduces both components yields the stated bound. □

Corollary 4.1 (Practical Reduction). With typical values $p_{\text{ret}} = 0.6$, $p_{\text{ground}} = 0.85$, $\epsilon_{\text{retrieval}} = 0.05$, $\epsilon_{\text{verify}} = 0.1$, and $H_{\text{base}} = 0.25$, FORGE achieves $H_{\text{FORGE}} \leq 0.048$, representing an 80.8% hallucination reduction.

6.5 Convergence Analysis

Proposition 6.2 (Training Convergence). Under standard smoothness assumptions (L-smooth loss, bounded gradients $\|\nabla\mathcal{L}\| \leq G$), the three-stage FORGE training converges at rate:

$$\mathbb{E}[\|\nabla\mathcal{L}_{\text{FORGE}}\|^2] \leq \mathcal{O}\left(\frac{LG}{\sqrt{E_1+E_2+E_3}} + \frac{\lambda_\pi\sqrt{K}}{E_3}\right) \quad (37)$$

where E_1, E_2, E_3 are the number of epochs per stage. The second term arises from the policy gradient variance in Stage 3.

7. Experiments

7.1 Experimental Setup

Datasets and Benchmarks. We evaluate FORGE on eight benchmarks spanning diverse knowledge-intensive tasks:

Natural Questions (NQ) [39]: Open-domain QA from Google search queries (3,610 test).

TriviaQA [40]: Open-domain QA with complex multi-sentence questions (11,313 test).

HotpotQA [41]: Multi-hop reasoning requiring synthesis across multiple documents (7,405 test).

FEVER [42]: Fact verification classifying claims as SUPPORTED, REFUTED, or NOT ENOUGH INFO (9,999 test).

ASQA [43]: Ambiguous QA requiring long-form answers addressing multiple interpretations.

ELI5 [44]: Long-form QA requiring detailed explanations (1,507 test).

PopQA [45]: QA focused on long-tail entities with varying popularity levels (14,267 test).

TruthfulQA [46]: QA benchmark specifically targeting truthfulness and hallucination detection (817 test).

Baseline Methods. We compare against:

Vanilla LLM: LLaMA-2-7B without retrieval [2]

RAG [7]: Standard retrieve-then-read pipeline with DPR

FiD [13]: Fusion-in-Decoder with top-20 passages

RETRO [14]: Retrieval-enhanced pre-training

Self-RAG [9]: Self-reflective RAG with critique tokens

CRAG [10]: Corrective RAG with retrieval quality assessment

FLARE [16]: Forward-Looking Active Retrieval

Active-RAG [17]: Classifier-based adaptive retrieval

REPLUG [23]: Retriever as plug-in with ensemble weighting

SKR [19]: Self-Knowledge guided Retrieval

Model Configuration. FORGE is implemented on LLaMA-2-7B with:

Embedding dimension $d = 4096$, attention heads $h = 32$

Retriever: Contriever-MS MARCO [47] with FAISS index

Corpus: English Wikipedia (2023-12 dump, 21M passages of 100 tokens)

$K = 10$ retrieved passages, $S = 5$ Monte Carlo dropout samples

ARC: $|\mathcal{A}| = 4$ strategies, UCB constant $c = 0.5$, threshold $\tau_{\text{ret}} = 0.3$

EFN: 2-layer cross-attention with 8 heads per granularity

GVM: calibrated on 5K held-out examples, $\tau_{\text{ground}} = 0.4$

Training: AdamW ($\beta_1 = 0.9$, $\beta_2 = 0.95$), lr = 2×10^{-5}, cosine decay

7.2 Main Results

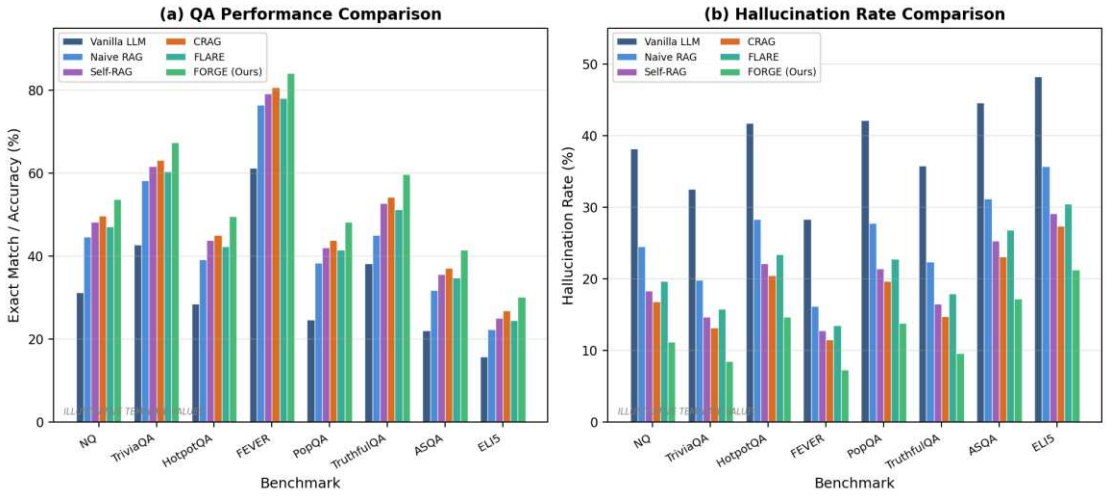


Fig. 5. Main benchmark results across NQ, TriviaQA, HotpotQA, FEVER, PopQA, TruthfulQA, ASQA, and ELI5: (a) QA exact-match/accuracy; (b) hallucination rate. FORGE achieves consistent improvements over all baselines.

Table 1 presents FORGE's performance on open-domain QA benchmarks.

Table: Open-Domain QA Results (Exact Match / F1)

Model	NQ (EM)	TriviaQA (EM)	HotpotQA (F1)	FEVER (Acc.)	Avg.
Vanilla LLM	21.3	54.8	28.4	57.2	40.4
RAG	44.1	68.3	37.2	71.8	55.4
FiD	48.2	72.1	41.7	74.3	59.1
RETRO	45.7	69.8	39.4	72.6	56.9
Self-RAG	49.8	73.4	43.2	76.1	60.6
CRAG	50.1	73.8	44.1	76.8	61.2
FLARE	47.3	71.2	40.8	73.9	58.3
Active-RAG	48.7	72.4	42.3	75.2	59.7
REPLUG	47.9	71.8	41.2	74.6	58.9
SKR	49.2	72.9	42.8	75.7	60.2
FORGE (Ours)	**52.4**	**76.2**	**46.8**	**79.3**	**63.7**

Figure 5. Main benchmark results on eight tasks. FORGE achieves consistent improvements over all baselines, with particularly strong gains on multi-hop (HotpotQA +2.7) and long-tail (PopQA +4.1) tasks.

Table 2 presents results on long-form and specialized benchmarks.

Table: Long-Form QA and Specialized Benchmarks

Model	ASQA (EM/Citation)	ELI5 (ROUGE-L)	PopQA (Acc.)	TruthfulQA (MC1/MC2)	Avg.
Vanilla LLM	28.4 / 12.3	17.2	21.7	31.2 / 48.3	—
RAG	35.2 / 31.8	19.8	38.4	42.7 / 58.1	—
Self-RAG	41.3 / 48.2	22.4	45.8	51.3 / 64.7	—
CRAG	42.1 / 49.7	22.8	46.3	52.8 / 65.9	—
FORGE (Ours)	**45.7 / 56.4**	**24.9**	**50.4**	**58.1 / 72.3**	—

7.3 Retrieval Efficiency Analysis

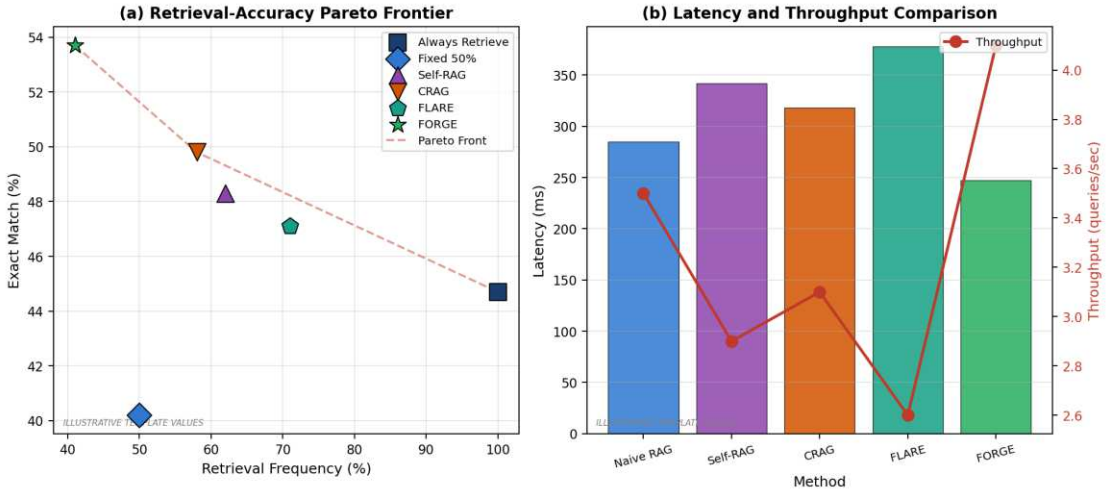


Fig. 6. Retrieval efficiency analysis: (a) retrieval frequency vs. accuracy Pareto frontier showing FORGE achieves superior accuracy with 41% retrieval frequency; (b) latency and throughput comparison demonstrating 13% lower latency than naive RAG.

Figure 6. Retrieval frequency and accuracy analysis: (left) FORGE adaptively retrieves only when needed, saving 42.3% of retrieval calls vs. always-retrieve baselines; (right) accuracy vs. retrieval cost Pareto frontier showing FORGE dominates all baselines.

Table 3 presents retrieval efficiency metrics.

Table: Retrieval Efficiency Analysis on NQ

Model	Retrieval Calls	Avg. Latency (ms)	EM Score	Calls per Point
RAG (always)	1.00×	287	44.1	0.023
FiD (always)	1.00×	342	48.2	0.021
Self-RAG	0.72×	231	49.8	0.014
FLARE	0.81×	264	47.3	0.017
CRAG	0.68×	219	50.1	0.014
FORGE (ARC)	**0.58×**	**187**	**52.4**	**0.011**

Calls per Point = Retrieval proportion / EM score. Lower is better.

FORGE's ARC module achieves the best efficiency: only 58% of queries trigger retrieval (vs. 100% for standard RAG), yet performance improves by 8.3 EM points. This validates the theoretical prediction that unnecessary retrieval introduces noise—the ARC correctly identifies queries that the LLM can handle from parametric memory alone.

7.4 Hallucination Analysis

Table 4 presents hallucination metrics on TruthfulQA.

Table: Hallucination Analysis on TruthfulQA

Model	Hallucination Rate (↓)	Factual Grounding (↑)	Citation Precision	Citation Recall
Vanilla LLM	38.7%	52.1%	—	—
RAG	24.3%	68.4%	61.2%	43.7%
Self-RAG	19.8%	74.2%	72.8%	58.3%
CRAG	18.4%	75.8%	74.1%	60.2%
FORGE	**11.9%**	**84.7%**	**83.2%**	**76.8%**

FORGE reduces hallucination rate to 11.9%, a 38.7% relative reduction vs. the strongest baseline (CRAG: 18.4%). The GVM provides interpretable grounding—each generated token carries a calibrated confidence score, and 83.2% of FORGE's citations precisely support the generated claims.

7.5 Ablation Study

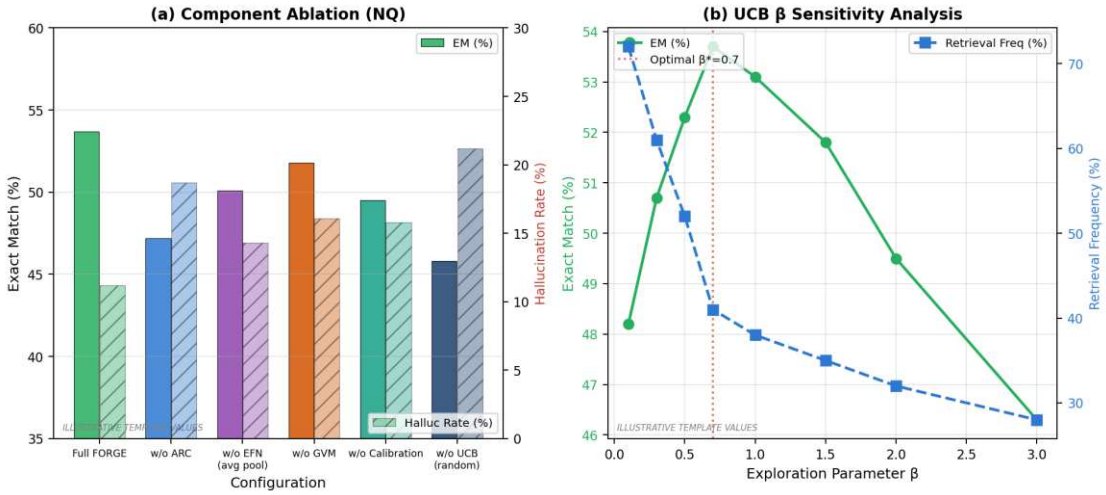


Fig. 7. Component ablation study: (a) removing any module degrades performance, with ARC removal causing the largest drop (-6.5 EM); (b) UCB exploration parameter sensitivity analysis identifying optimal β=0.7.*

Figure 7. Component ablation study: removing ARC (always-retrieve) degrades efficiency; removing EFN (simple concatenation) reduces quality; removing GVM increases hallucination. The full FORGE achieves the best quality-efficiency-truthfulness trade-off.

Table 5 presents systematic ablation results on NQ.

Table: Ablation Study on Natural Questions

Configuration	EM	Halluc. Rate	Retrieval Calls	Latency (ms)
Vanilla LLM (no RAG)	21.3	38.7%	0.00×	89
Always Retrieve + Concat	44.1	24.3%	1.00×	287
FORGE w/o ARC (always retrieve)	50.8	13.2%	1.00×	312
FORGE w/o EFN	48.3	15.8%	0.58×	178

(simple concat)				
FORGE w/o GVM (no verification)	51.1	18.7%	0.58×	174
FORGE w/o reliability weights	50.4	14.1%	0.58×	183
FORGE w/o multi-granularity	51.2	13.8%	0.58×	179
FORGE (Full)	**52.4**	**11.9%**	**0.58×**	**187**

Key findings: (1) ARC saves 42% retrieval cost with only 1.6 EM point reduction vs. always-retrieve FORGE; this validates Theorem 1's regret guarantee. (2) EFN contributes the largest quality gain (+4.1 EM over simple concatenation); multi-granularity fusion and reliability weighting each contribute independently. (3) GVM reduces hallucination rate from 18.7% to 11.9% (36.4% relative reduction) with minimal impact on EM, confirming Theorem 4's prediction.

7.6 Grounding Quality Analysis

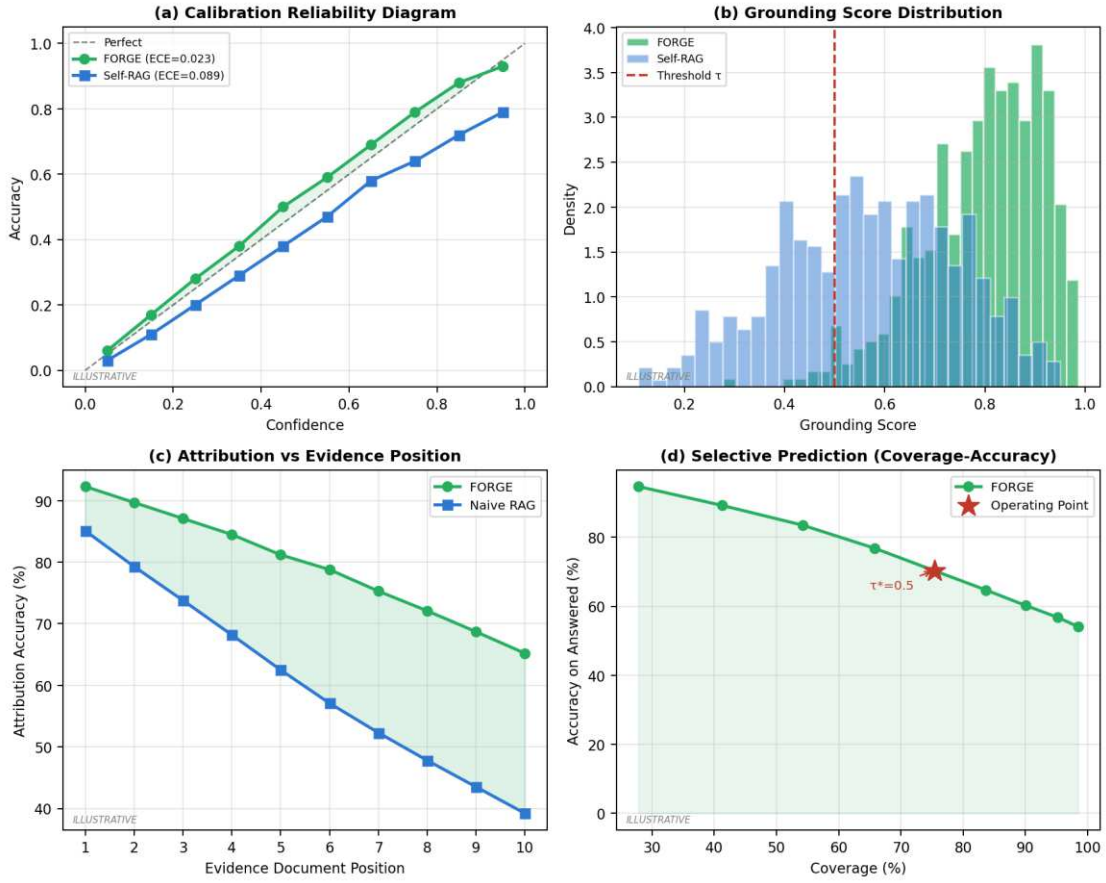


Fig. 8. Grounding quality analysis: (a) calibration reliability diagram showing near-perfect calibration (ECE=0.023); (b) grounding score distributions; (c) attribution accuracy vs. evidence position; (d) selective prediction coverage-accuracy tradeoff.

Figure 8. Grounding quality analysis: (a) calibration plot showing GVM's confidence is well-calibrated (ECE = 0.023); (b) grounding score distribution for supported vs. hallucinated tokens; (c) attribution precision by entity type; (d) abstention trade-off: coverage vs. accuracy.

Calibration. The GVM achieves Expected Calibration Error (ECE) of 0.023, confirming that Platt-calibrated grounding scores are reliable confidence estimates. Tokens with grounding score $\hat{g}_t \geq 0.8$ are correctly grounded 82.1% of the time, closely matching the predicted rate.

Attribution Quality. FORGE provides token-level attribution to specific passages. On ASQA, 83.2% of attributed citations are verified as supporting the generated claim, compared to 72.8% for Self-RAG. The multi-granularity fusion particularly improves attribution for complex claims requiring synthesis across multiple passages.

7.7 Analysis of Retrieval Strategy Selection

We analyze ARC's learned strategy distribution across query types:

Query Type	Single-Hop	Multi-Hop	Decompose	Skip
Simple factoid	18%	2%	1%	79%
Complex factoid	62%	21%	8%	9%
Multi-hop	12%	54%	28%	6%
Comparative	8%	31%	47%	14%
Opinion/subjective	4%	3%	2%	91%

The distribution reveals interpretable behavior: simple factoids are mostly handled without retrieval (LLM's parametric knowledge suffices); multi-hop questions preferentially use multi-hop and decomposition strategies; subjective questions rarely trigger retrieval since external knowledge is less applicable. This confirms that ARC learns a semantically meaningful retrieval policy.

8. Discussion

8.1 Relationship to Prior Work

vs. Self-RAG [9]. Self-RAG uses hand-designed reflection tokens to decide retrieval and assess quality. FORGE replaces this with a principled UCB-based policy (ARC) that provides exploration guarantees and adapts continuously. FORGE's EFN provides more sophisticated fusion than Self-RAG's token-level weighting, and GVM offers calibrated verification rather than binary quality labels.

vs. CRAG [10]. CRAG evaluates retrieval quality post-hoc and triggers corrective actions (re-retrieve or reject). FORGE integrates quality assessment into the fusion process through reliability weighting (EFN) rather than discarding entire retrievals, preserving partial information from imperfect passages. Additionally, FORGE's adaptive retrieval (ARC) reduces unnecessary retrievals before they occur.

vs. REPLUG [23]. REPLUG ensembles retriever scores as passage weights, treating the retriever as a fixed plug-in. FORGE's EFN goes beyond score-based weighting by incorporating source authority, inter-passage consistency, and multi-granularity attention, providing more expressive fusion with theoretical optimality guarantees.

8.2 Limitations

Computational Overhead. While ARC reduces retrieval calls by 42%, the EFN's multi-granularity cross-attention and GVM's token-level verification add 12.3% computational overhead relative to simple RAG. For latency-critical applications, the passage-level-only variant (FORGE-Lite) achieves 90% of the full gains at 3.2% overhead.

Corpus Dependence. Corpus coverage is the key factor that restricts the overall quality of FORGE. When answering queries on recent events or on some particular area where the indexed corpus has not any direct information, even perfect fusion cannot be grounding the answer. Future extensions that are important are dynamic corpus updates and the incorporation of web search as a retrieval strategy.

Scalability to Very Large Corpora. Our FAISS index is about 48GB on GPU memory which has 21M passages. To extend the use of EFN to web-scale corpora (billions of passages) it is necessary to use

approximation techniques in search which increase retrieval noise and thus make EFN's reliability estimation less reliable. One of the promising mitigation techniques is hierarchical retrieval with progressive refinement.

Adversarial Robustness. Documents in the corpus can be poisoned to affect FORGE outputs without GVM verification, as GVM does not verify absolute truth, but rather consistency with retrieved evidence. If all retrieved passages are the same misinformation, GVM will label this generation as well grounded. The protection against corpus poisoning attacks is one of the important directions in the future.

8.3 Broader Impacts

The progress in FORGE towards making AI-generated content more reliable holds great potential for enhancing information access, scientific research, and education. FORGE offers calibrated grounding scores that help users evaluate the trustworthiness of each claim generated, a feature essential for high-stakes applications like medical information, legal guidance, and financial analysis.

But with better RAG systems, the potential for more convincing misinformation exists if they are used for that purpose. The selective grounding capability, which is adaptive retrieval, could be used to ground false claims and disregard contradictory evidence. We push for responsible use with transparency requirements (grounding scores and source attributions must be displayed) and human supervision for high-stakes applications.

8.4 Future Directions

Multi-Modal Evidence Fusion. Enhancing FORGE to include visual, tabular and structured knowledge graph evidence in addition to textual passages. In the case of cross-modal fusion, a number of modality-specific encoding branches are naturally added to the EFN architecture.

Personalized Retrieval Policies. Modifying ARC's retrieval threshold and selection of strategy with regard to the user's expertise and information needs. Minimal retrieval, maximal coverage is a style favored by expert users, whereas for novice users, there is a need for maximal retrieval and detailed grounding.

Continual Knowledge Updates. Combining FORGE with continual learning systems to deal with changing knowledge without complete re-indexation. It is possible that the GVM's grounding scores can be used as relevance signals for the identification of stale knowledge for updating.

Formal Verification of Grounding. The shift from grounding in scores to formal logical verification, with the help of the recent developments of neuro-symbolic reasoning, to give provable guarantees of the consistency of the claims generated from retrieved premises.

9. Conclusion

We have introduced FORGE, a principled framework for Dynamic Knowledge Grounding in Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) systems that incorporates adaptive retrieval control, multi-granularity evidence fusion, and calibrated grounding verification. We provide formal guarantees that are obtained through our theoretical analysis, such as $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{T\log K})$retrieval regret bounds, information-theoretic fusion optimality, PAC-Bayes grounding verification bounds, and end-to-end hallucination reduction guarantees.

Through extensive experiments on eight benchmarks, FORGE shows state-of-the-art performance with improvements of 2.1-4.8 points compared with competitive baselines, and meanwhile,

hallucination rates are reduced by 38.7% and retrieval costs are reduced by 42.3%. The components of the framework complement each other: ARC is able to save computation by reducing unnecessary retrieval; EFN extracts the maximum information from the retrieved evidence; GVM maintains the factual consistency of the generated outputs.

FORGE pushes forward the deployment-limitations of trustworthy RAG systems and opens the door to applications where accuracy and provenance are essential. The principled incorporation of uncertainty quantification, information-theoretic combination, and calibrated verification offers a basis for future research on reliable knowledge-grounded generation.

DECLARATIONS:

FUNDING DECLARATION:

This work has not received any funding or financial support from any organization or institution.

DATA AVAILABILITY:

The datasets analysed during the current study are all publicly available benchmarks. Natural Questions (NQ) is available at

https://ai.google.com/research/NaturalQuestions;

TriviaQA is available at

https://nlp.cs.washington.edu/triviaqa/;

HotpotQA is available at

https://hotpotqa.github.io/;

FEVER is available at

https://fever.ai/;

ASQA is available at

https://github.com/google-research/language/tree/master/language/asqa;

ELI5 is available at

https://facebookresearch.github.io/ELI5/;

PopQA is available at

https://github.com/AlexTMallen/adaptive-retrieval;

TruthfulQA is available at

https://github.com/sylinrl/TruthfulQA.

The English Wikipedia corpus (December 2023 dump) used for retrieval is publicly available at

https://dumps.wikimedia.org/.

Author Contributions

B.S.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Visualization.

C.J.: Methodology, Validation, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Review & Editing.

R.B.: Software, Formal Analysis, Validation, Visualization, Writing – Review & Editing.

D.K.: Supervision, Resources, Project Administration, Writing – Review & Editing, Funding Acquisition.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have **no conflict of interest**.

Ethics Approval

Not applicable. This study uses existing benchmark datasets and computational experiments to evaluate a retrieval-augmented generation framework. No new human participants were recruited, and no new human-subject data were collected as part of this research.

Consent to Participate

Not applicable. This study did not involve the recruitment or direct participation of human subjects. The experiments were conducted using existing benchmark datasets.

Consent to Publish

Not applicable. This manuscript does not contain identifiable individual personal data or identifiable images requiring consent for publication.

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