

In short, the reason to use downsampling is to reduce the number of feature-map coefficients to process, as well as to induce spatial-filter hierarchies by making successive convolution layers look at increasingly large windows (in terms of the fraction of the original input they cover).

Note that max pooling isn't the only way you can achieve such downsampling. As you already know, you can also use strides in the prior convolution layer. And you can use average pooling instead of max pooling, where each local input patch is transformed by taking the average value of each channel over the patch, rather than the max. But max pooling tends to work better than these alternative solutions. The reason is that features tend to encode the spatial presence of some pattern or concept over the different tiles of the feature map (hence the term *feature map*), and it's more informative to look at the *maximal presence* of different features than at their *average presence*. The most reasonable subsampling strategy is to first produce dense maps of features (via unstrided convolutions) and then look at the maximal activation of the features over small patches, rather than looking at sparser windows of the inputs (via strided convolutions) or averaging input patches, which could cause you to miss or dilute feature-presence information.

At this point, you should understand the basics of convnets—feature maps, convolution, and max pooling—and you should know how to build a small convnet to solve a toy problem such as MNIST digits classification. Now let's move on to more useful, practical applications.

8.2 Training a convnet from scratch on a small dataset

Having to train an image-classification model using very little data is a common situation, which you'll likely encounter in practice if you ever do computer vision in a professional context. A "few" samples can mean anywhere from a few hundred to a few tens of thousands of images. As a practical example, we'll focus on classifying images as dogs or cats in a dataset containing 5,000 pictures of cats and dogs (2,500 cats, 2,500 dogs). We'll use 2,000 pictures for training, 1,000 for validation, and 2,000 for testing.

In this section, we'll review one basic strategy to tackle this problem: training a new model from scratch using what little data you have. We'll start by naively training a small convnet on the 2,000 training samples, without any regularization, to set a baseline for what can be achieved. This will get us to a classification accuracy of about 70%. At that point, the main issue will be overfitting. Then we'll introduce *data augmentation*, a powerful technique for mitigating overfitting in computer vision. By using data augmentation, we'll improve the model to reach an accuracy of 80–85%.

In the next section, we'll review two more essential techniques for applying deep learning to small datasets: *feature extraction with a pretrained model* (which will get us to an accuracy of 97.5%) and *fine-tuning a pretrained model* (which will get us to a final accuracy of 98.5%). Together, these three strategies—training a small model from scratch, doing feature extraction using a pretrained model, and fine-tuning a pretrained

model—will constitute your future toolbox for tackling the problem of performing image classification with small datasets.

8.2.1 *The relevance of deep learning for small-data problems*

What qualifies as “enough samples” to train a model is relative—relative to the size and depth of the model you’re trying to train, for starters. It isn’t possible to train a convnet to solve a complex problem with just a few tens of samples, but a few hundred can potentially suffice if the model is small and well regularized and the task is simple. Because convnets learn local, translation-invariant features, they’re highly data-efficient on perceptual problems. Training a convnet from scratch on a very small image dataset will yield reasonable results despite a relative lack of data, without the need for any custom feature engineering. You’ll see this in action in this section.

What’s more, deep learning models are by nature highly repurposable: you can take, say, an image-classification or speech-to-text model trained on a large-scale dataset and reuse it on a significantly different problem with only minor changes. Specifically, in the case of computer vision, many pretrained models (usually trained on the ImageNet dataset) are now publicly available for download and can be used to bootstrap powerful vision models out of very little data. This is one of the greatest strengths of deep learning: feature reuse. You’ll explore this in the next section.

Let’s start by getting our hands on the data.

8.2.2 *Downloading the data*

The Dogs vs. Cats dataset that we will use isn’t packaged with Keras. It was made available by Kaggle as part of a computer vision competition in late 2013, back when convnets weren’t mainstream. You can download the original dataset from www.kaggle.com/c/dogs-vs-cats/data (you’ll need to create a Kaggle account if you don’t already have one—don’t worry, the process is painless). You can also use the Kaggle API to download the dataset in Colab (see the “Downloading a Kaggle dataset in Google Colaboratory” sidebar).

Downloading a Kaggle dataset in Google Colaboratory

Kaggle makes available an easy-to-use API to programmatically download Kaggle-hosted datasets. You can use it to download the Dogs vs. Cats dataset to a Colab notebook, for instance. This API is available as the `kaggle` package, which is preinstalled on Colab. Downloading this dataset is as easy as running the following command in a Colab cell:

```
!kaggle competitions download -c dogs-vs-cats
```

However, access to the API is restricted to Kaggle users, so in order to run the preceding command, you first need to authenticate yourself. The `kaggle` package will look for your login credentials in a JSON file located at `~/kaggle/kaggle.json`. Let’s create this file.

First, you need to create a Kaggle API key and download it to your local machine. Just navigate to the Kaggle website in a web browser, log in, and go to the My Account page. In your account settings, you'll find an API section. Clicking the Create New API Token button will generate a `kaggle.json` key file and will download it to your machine.

Second, go to your Colab notebook, and upload the API's key JSON file to your Colab session by running the following code in a notebook cell:

```
from google.colab import files
files.upload()
```

When you run this cell, you will see a Choose Files button appear. Click it and select the `kaggle.json` file you just downloaded. This uploads the file to the local Colab runtime.

Finally, create a `~/.kaggle` folder (`mkdir ~/.kaggle`), and copy the key file to it (`cp kaggle.json ~/.kaggle/`). As a security best practice, you should also make sure that the file is only readable by the current user, yourself (`chmod 600`):

```
!mkdir ~/.kaggle
!cp kaggle.json ~/.kaggle/
!chmod 600 ~/.kaggle/kaggle.json
```

You can now download the data we're about to use:

```
!kaggle competitions download -c dogs-vs-cats
```

The first time you try to download the data, you may get a "403 Forbidden" error. That's because you need to accept the terms associated with the dataset before you download it—you'll have to go to www.kaggle.com/c/dogs-vs-cats/rules (while logged into your Kaggle account) and click the I Understand and Accept button. You only need to do this once.

Finally, the training data is a compressed file named `train.zip`. Make sure you uncompress it (`unzip`) silently (`-qq`):

```
!unzip -qq train.zip
```

The pictures in our dataset are medium-resolution color JPEGs. Figure 8.8 shows some examples.

Unsurprisingly, the original dogs-versus-cats Kaggle competition, all the way back in 2013, was won by entrants who used convnets. The best entries achieved up to 95% accuracy. In this example, we will get fairly close to this accuracy (in the next section), even though we will train our models on less than 10% of the data that was available to the competitors.

This dataset contains 25,000 images of dogs and cats (12,500 from each class) and is 543 MB (compressed). After downloading and uncompressing the data, we'll create a new dataset containing three subsets: a training set with 1,000 samples of each class,



Figure 8.8 Samples from the Dogs vs. Cats dataset. Sizes weren't modified: the samples come in different sizes, colors, backgrounds, etc.

a validation set with 500 samples of each class, and a test set with 1,000 samples of each class. Why do this? Because many of the image datasets you'll encounter in your career only contain a few thousand samples, not tens of thousands. Having more data available would make the problem easier, so it's good practice to learn with a small dataset.

The subsampled dataset we will work with will have the following directory structure:

```

cats_vs_dogs_small/
...train/
.....cat/
.....dog/
...validation/
.....cat/
.....dog/
...test/
.....cat/
.....dog/

```

← Contains 1,000 cat images
← Contains 1,000 dog images
← Contains 500 cat images
← Contains 500 dog images
← Contains 1,000 cat images
← Contains 1,000 dog images

Let's make it happen in a couple calls to `shutil`.

Listing 8.6 Copying images to training, validation, and test directories

```

import os, shutil, pathlib
original_dir = pathlib.Path("train")
new_base_dir = pathlib.Path("cats_vs_dogs_small")

```

← Path to the directory where the original dataset was uncompressed
← Directory where we will store our smaller dataset

```

def make_subset(subset_name, start_index, end_index):
    for category in ("cat", "dog"):
        dir = new_base_dir / subset_name / category
        os.makedirs(dir)
        fnames = [f"{category}.{i}.jpg"
                  for i in range(start_index, end_index)]
        for fname in fnames:
            shutil.copyfile(src=original_dir / fname,
                            dst=dir / fname)

make_subset("train", start_index=0, end_index=1000)
make_subset("validation", start_index=1000, end_index=1500)
make_subset("test", start_index=1500, end_index=2500)

```

Utility function to copy cat (and dog) images from index start_index to index end_index to the subdirectory new_base_dir/{subset_name}/cat (and /dog). The "subset_name" will be either "train", "validation", or "test".

Create the training subset with the first 1,000 images of each category.

Create the validation subset with the next 500 images of each category.

Create the test subset with the next 1,000 images of each category.

We now have 2,000 training images, 1,000 validation images, and 2,000 test images. Each split contains the same number of samples from each class: this is a balanced binary-classification problem, which means classification accuracy will be an appropriate measure of success.

8.2.3 Building the model

We will reuse the same general model structure you saw in the first example: the convnet will be a stack of alternated Conv2D (with relu activation) and MaxPooling2D layers.

But because we're dealing with bigger images and a more complex problem, we'll make our model larger, accordingly: it will have two more Conv2D and MaxPooling2D stages. This serves both to augment the capacity of the model and to further reduce the size of the feature maps so they aren't overly large when we reach the Flatten layer. Here, because we start from inputs of size 180 pixels \times 180 pixels (a somewhat arbitrary choice), we end up with feature maps of size 7×7 just before the Flatten layer.

NOTE The depth of the feature maps progressively increases in the model (from 32 to 256), whereas the size of the feature maps decreases (from 180×180 to 7×7). This is a pattern you'll see in almost all convnets.

Because we're looking at a binary-classification problem, we'll end the model with a single unit (a Dense layer of size 1) and a sigmoid activation. This unit will encode the probability that the model is looking at one class or the other.

One last small difference: we will start the model with a Rescaling layer, which will rescale image inputs (whose values are originally in the $[0, 255]$ range) to the $[0, 1]$ range.

Listing 8.7 Instantiating a small convnet for dogs vs. cats classification

```

from tensorflow import keras
from tensorflow.keras import layers

```

The model expects RGB images of size 180 × 180.

```
inputs = keras.Input(shape=(180, 180, 3))
x = layers.Rescaling(1./255)(inputs)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=32, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=64, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=128, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=256, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=256, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.Flatten()(x)
outputs = layers.Dense(1, activation="sigmoid")(x)
model = keras.Model(inputs=inputs, outputs=outputs)
```

Rescale inputs to the [0, 1] range by dividing them by 255.

Let's look at how the dimensions of the feature maps change with every successive layer:

```
>>> model.summary()
Model: "model_2"
```

Layer (type)	Output Shape	Param #
input_3 (InputLayer)	[(None, 180, 180, 3)]	0
rescaling (Rescaling)	(None, 180, 180, 3)	0
conv2d_6 (Conv2D)	(None, 178, 178, 32)	896
max_pooling2d_2 (MaxPooling2)	(None, 89, 89, 32)	0
conv2d_7 (Conv2D)	(None, 87, 87, 64)	18496
max_pooling2d_3 (MaxPooling2)	(None, 43, 43, 64)	0
conv2d_8 (Conv2D)	(None, 41, 41, 128)	73856
max_pooling2d_4 (MaxPooling2)	(None, 20, 20, 128)	0
conv2d_9 (Conv2D)	(None, 18, 18, 256)	295168
max_pooling2d_5 (MaxPooling2)	(None, 9, 9, 256)	0
conv2d_10 (Conv2D)	(None, 7, 7, 256)	590080
flatten_2 (Flatten)	(None, 12544)	0
dense_2 (Dense)	(None, 1)	12545

=====
Total params: 991,041
Trainable params: 991,041
Non-trainable params: 0
=====

For the compilation step, we'll go with the RMSprop optimizer, as usual. Because we ended the model with a single sigmoid unit, we'll use binary crossentropy as the loss (as a reminder, check out table 6.1 in chapter 6 for a cheat sheet on which loss function to use in various situations).

Listing 8.8 Configuring the model for training

```
model.compile(loss="binary_crossentropy",
              optimizer="rmsprop",
              metrics=["accuracy"])
```

8.2.4 Data preprocessing

As you know by now, data should be formatted into appropriately preprocessed floating-point tensors before being fed into the model. Currently, the data sits on a drive as JPEG files, so the steps for getting it into the model are roughly as follows:

- 1 Read the picture files.
- 2 Decode the JPEG content to RGB grids of pixels.
- 3 Convert these into floating-point tensors.
- 4 Resize them to a shared size (we'll use 180×180).
- 5 Pack them into batches (we'll use batches of 32 images).

It may seem a bit daunting, but fortunately Keras has utilities to take care of these steps automatically. In particular, Keras features the utility function `image_dataset_from_directory()`, which lets you quickly set up a data pipeline that can automatically turn image files on disk into batches of preprocessed tensors. This is what we'll use here.

Calling `image_dataset_from_directory(directory)` will first list the subdirectories of `directory` and assume each one contains images from one of our classes. It will then index the image files in each subdirectory. Finally, it will create and return a `tf.data.Dataset` object configured to read these files, shuffle them, decode them to tensors, resize them to a shared size, and pack them into batches.

Listing 8.9 Using `image_dataset_from_directory` to read images

```
from tensorflow.keras.utils import image_dataset_from_directory

train_dataset = image_dataset_from_directory(
    new_base_dir / "train",
    image_size=(180, 180),
    batch_size=32)
validation_dataset = image_dataset_from_directory(
    new_base_dir / "validation",
    image_size=(180, 180),
    batch_size=32)
test_dataset = image_dataset_from_directory(
    new_base_dir / "test",
    image_size=(180, 180),
    batch_size=32)
```

Understanding TensorFlow Dataset objects

TensorFlow makes available the `tf.data` API to create efficient input pipelines for machine learning models. Its core class is `tf.data.Dataset`.

A `Dataset` object is an iterator: you can use it in a `for` loop. It will typically return batches of input data and labels. You can pass a `Dataset` object directly to the `fit()` method of a Keras model.

The `Dataset` class handles many key features that would otherwise be cumbersome to implement yourself—in particular, asynchronous data prefetching (preprocessing the next batch of data while the previous one is being handled by the model, which keeps execution flowing without interruptions).

The `Dataset` class also exposes a functional-style API for modifying datasets. Here's a quick example: let's create a `Dataset` instance from a NumPy array of random numbers. We'll consider 1,000 samples, where each sample is a vector of size 16:

```
import numpy as np
import tensorflow as tf
random_numbers = np.random.normal(size=(1000, 16))
dataset = tf.data.Dataset.from_tensor_slices(random_numbers)
```

The `from_tensor_slices()` class method can be used to create a `Dataset` from a NumPy array, or a tuple or dict of NumPy arrays.

At first, our dataset just yields single samples:

```
>>> for i, element in enumerate(dataset):
>>>     print(element.shape)
>>>     if i >= 2:
>>>         break
(16,)
(16,)
(16,)
```

We can use the `.batch()` method to batch the data:

```
>>> batched_dataset = dataset.batch(32)
>>> for i, element in enumerate(batched_dataset):
>>>     print(element.shape)
>>>     if i >= 2:
>>>         break
(32, 16)
(32, 16)
(32, 16)
```

More broadly, we have access to a range of useful dataset methods, such as

- `.shuffle(buffer_size)`—Shuffles elements within a buffer
- `.prefetch(buffer_size)`—Prefetches a buffer of elements in GPU memory to achieve better device utilization.
- `.map(callable)`—Applies an arbitrary transformation to each element of the dataset (the function `callable`, which expects to take as input a single element yielded by the dataset).

The `.map()` method, in particular, is one that you will use often. Here's an example. We'll use it to reshape the elements in our toy dataset from shape `(16,)` to shape `(4, 4)`:

```
>>> reshaped_dataset = dataset.map(lambda x: tf.reshape(x, (4, 4)))
>>> for i, element in enumerate(reshaped_dataset):
>>>     print(element.shape)
>>>     if i >= 2:
>>>         break
(4, 4)
(4, 4)
(4, 4)
```

You're about to see more `map()` action in this chapter.

Let's look at the output of one of these `Dataset` objects: it yields batches of 180×180 RGB images (shape `(32, 180, 180, 3)`) and integer labels (shape `(32,)`). There are 32 samples in each batch (the batch size).

Listing 8.10 Displaying the shapes of the data and labels yielded by the Dataset

```
>>> for data_batch, labels_batch in train_dataset:
>>>     print("data batch shape:", data_batch.shape)
>>>     print("labels batch shape:", labels_batch.shape)
>>>     break
data batch shape: (32, 180, 180, 3)
labels batch shape: (32,)
```

Let's fit the model on our dataset. We'll use the `validation_data` argument in `fit()` to monitor validation metrics on a separate `Dataset` object.

Note that we'll also use a `ModelCheckpoint` callback to save the model after each epoch. We'll configure it with the path specifying where to save the file, as well as the arguments `save_best_only=True` and `monitor="val_loss"`: they tell the callback to only save a new file (overwriting any previous one) when the current value of the `val_loss` metric is lower than at any previous time during training. This guarantees that your saved file will always contain the state of the model corresponding to its best-performing training epoch, in terms of its performance on the validation data. As a result, we won't have to retrain a new model for a lower number of epochs if we start overfitting: we can just reload our saved file.

Listing 8.11 Fitting the model using a Dataset

```
callbacks = [
    keras.callbacks.ModelCheckpoint(
        filepath="convnet_from_scratch.keras",
        save_best_only=True,
        monitor="val_loss")
]
```

```

history = model.fit(
    train_dataset,
    epochs=30,
    validation_data=validation_dataset,
    callbacks=callbacks)

```

Let's plot the loss and accuracy of the model over the training and validation data during training (see figure 8.9).

Listing 8.12 Displaying curves of loss and accuracy during training

```

import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
accuracy = history.history["accuracy"]
val_accuracy = history.history["val_accuracy"]
loss = history.history["loss"]
val_loss = history.history["val_loss"]
epochs = range(1, len(accuracy) + 1)
plt.plot(epochs, accuracy, "bo", label="Training accuracy")
plt.plot(epochs, val_accuracy, "b", label="Validation accuracy")
plt.title("Training and validation accuracy")
plt.legend()
plt.figure()
plt.plot(epochs, loss, "bo", label="Training loss")
plt.plot(epochs, val_loss, "b", label="Validation loss")
plt.title("Training and validation loss")
plt.legend()
plt.show()

```

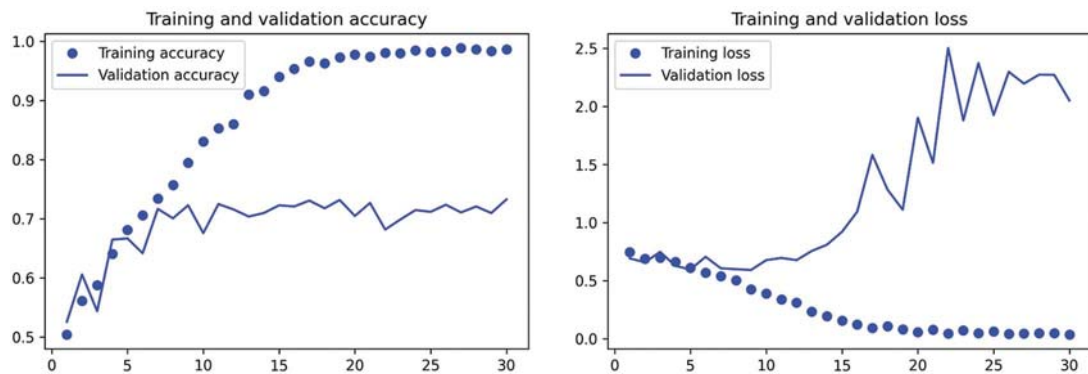


Figure 8.9 Training and validation metrics for a simple convnet

These plots are characteristic of overfitting. The training accuracy increases linearly over time, until it reaches nearly 100%, whereas the validation accuracy peaks at 75%. The validation loss reaches its minimum after only ten epochs and then stalls, whereas the training loss keeps decreasing linearly as training proceeds.

Let's check the test accuracy. We'll reload the model from its saved file to evaluate it as it was before it started overfitting.

Listing 8.13 Evaluating the model on the test set

```
test_model = keras.models.load_model("convnet_from_scratch.keras")
test_loss, test_acc = test_model.evaluate(test_dataset)
print(f"Test accuracy: {test_acc:.3f}")
```

We get a test accuracy of 69.5%. (Due to the randomness of neural network initializations, you may get numbers within one percentage point of that.)

Because we have relatively few training samples (2,000), overfitting will be our number one concern. You already know about a number of techniques that can help mitigate overfitting, such as dropout and weight decay (L2 regularization). We're now going to work with a new one, specific to computer vision and used almost universally when processing images with deep learning models: *data augmentation*.

8.2.5 Using data augmentation

Overfitting is caused by having too few samples to learn from, rendering you unable to train a model that can generalize to new data. Given infinite data, your model would be exposed to every possible aspect of the data distribution at hand: you would never overfit. Data augmentation takes the approach of generating more training data from existing training samples by *augmenting* the samples via a number of random transformations that yield believable-looking images. The goal is that, at training time, your model will never see the exact same picture twice. This helps expose the model to more aspects of the data so it can generalize better.

In Keras, this can be done by adding a number of *data augmentation layers* at the start of your model. Let's get started with an example: the following Sequential model chains several random image transformations. In our model, we'd include it right before the Rescaling layer.

Listing 8.14 Define a data augmentation stage to add to an image model

```
data_augmentation = keras.Sequential(
    [
        layers.RandomFlip("horizontal"),
        layers.RandomRotation(0.1),
        layers.RandomZoom(0.2),
    ]
)
```

These are just a few of the layers available (for more, see the Keras documentation). Let's quickly go over this code:

- `RandomFlip("horizontal")`—Applies horizontal flipping to a random 50% of the images that go through it
- `RandomRotation(0.1)`—Rotates the input images by a random value in the range `[-10%, +10%]` (these are fractions of a full circle—in degrees, the range would be `[-36 degrees, +36 degrees]`)

- `RandomZoom(0.2)`—Zooms in or out of the image by a random factor in the range `[-20%, +20%]`

Let's look at the augmented images (see figure 8.10).

Listing 8.15 Displaying some randomly augmented training images

```
plt.figure(figsize=(10, 10))
for images, _ in train_dataset.take(1):
    for i in range(9):
        augmented_images = data_augmentation(images)
        ax = plt.subplot(3, 3, i + 1)
        plt.imshow(augmented_images[0].numpy().astype("uint8"))
        plt.axis("off")
```

Apply the augmentation stage to the batch of images.

We can use `take(N)` to only sample `N` batches from the dataset. This is equivalent to inserting a break in the loop after the `N`th batch.

Display the first image in the output batch. For each of the nine iterations, this is a different augmentation of the same image.



Figure 8.10 Generating variations of a very good boy via random data augmentation

If we train a new model using this data-augmentation configuration, the model will never see the same input twice. But the inputs it sees are still heavily intercorrelated

because they come from a small number of original images—we can't produce new information; we can only remix existing information. As such, this may not be enough to completely get rid of overfitting. To further fight overfitting, we'll also add a Dropout layer to our model right before the densely connected classifier.

One last thing you should know about random image augmentation layers: just like Dropout, they're inactive during inference (when we call `predict()` or `evaluate()`). During evaluation, our model will behave just the same as when it did not include data augmentation and dropout.

Listing 8.16 Defining a new convnet that includes image augmentation and dropout

```
inputs = keras.Input(shape=(180, 180, 3))
x = data_augmentation(inputs)
x = layers.Rescaling(1./255)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=32, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=64, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=128, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=256, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.MaxPooling2D(pool_size=2)(x)
x = layers.Conv2D(filters=256, kernel_size=3, activation="relu")(x)
x = layers.Flatten()(x)
x = layers.Dropout(0.5)(x)
outputs = layers.Dense(1, activation="sigmoid")(x)
model = keras.Model(inputs=inputs, outputs=outputs)

model.compile(loss="binary_crossentropy",
              optimizer="rmsprop",
              metrics=["accuracy"])
```

Let's train the model using data augmentation and dropout. Because we expect overfitting to occur much later during training, we will train for three times as many epochs—one hundred.

Listing 8.17 Training the regularized convnet

```
callbacks = [
    keras.callbacks.ModelCheckpoint(
        filepath="convnet_from_scratch_with_augmentation.keras",
        save_best_only=True,
        monitor="val_loss")
]
history = model.fit(
    train_dataset,
    epochs=100,
    validation_data=validation_dataset,
    callbacks=callbacks)
```

Let's plot the results again: see figure 8.11. Thanks to data augmentation and dropout, we start overfitting much later, around epochs 60–70 (compared to epoch 10 for

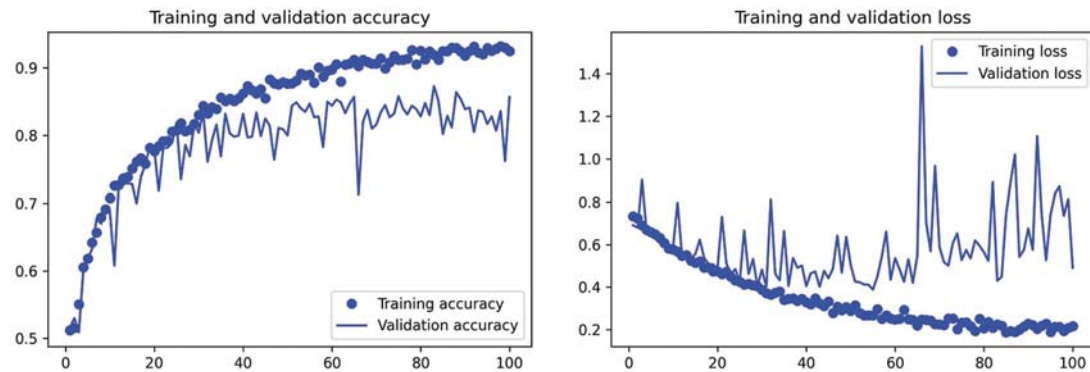


Figure 8.11 Training and validation metrics with data augmentation

the original model). The validation accuracy ends up consistently in the 80–85% range—a big improvement over our first try.

Let’s check the test accuracy.

Listing 8.18 Evaluating the model on the test set

```
test_model = keras.models.load_model(
    "convnet_from_scratch_with_augmentation.keras")
test_loss, test_acc = test_model.evaluate(test_dataset)
print(f"Test accuracy: {test_acc:.3f}")
```

We get a test accuracy of 83.5%. It’s starting to look good! If you’re using Colab, make sure you download the saved file (`convnet_from_scratch_with_augmentation.keras`), as we will use it for some experiments in the next chapter.

By further tuning the model’s configuration (such as the number of filters per convolution layer, or the number of layers in the model), we might be able to get an even better accuracy, likely up to 90%. But it would prove difficult to go any higher just by training our own convnet from scratch, because we have so little data to work with. As a next step to improve our accuracy on this problem, we’ll have to use a pre-trained model, which is the focus of the next two sections.

8.3 Leveraging a pretrained model

A common and highly effective approach to deep learning on small image datasets is to use a pretrained model. A *pretrained model* is a model that was previously trained on a large dataset, typically on a large-scale image-classification task. If this original dataset is large enough and general enough, the spatial hierarchy of features learned by the pretrained model can effectively act as a generic model of the visual world, and hence, its features can prove useful for many different computer vision problems, even though these new problems may involve completely different classes than those of the original task. For instance, you might train a model on ImageNet (where classes

are mostly animals and everyday objects) and then repurpose this trained model for something as remote as identifying furniture items in images. Such portability of learned features across different problems is a key advantage of deep learning compared to many older, shallow learning approaches, and it makes deep learning very effective for small-data problems.

In this case, let's consider a large convnet trained on the ImageNet dataset (1.4 million labeled images and 1,000 different classes). ImageNet contains many animal classes, including different species of cats and dogs, and you can thus expect it to perform well on the dogs-versus-cats classification problem.

We'll use the VGG16 architecture, developed by Karen Simonyan and Andrew Zisserman in 2014.¹ Although it's an older model, far from the current state of the art and somewhat heavier than many other recent models, I chose it because its architecture is similar to what you're already familiar with, and it's easy to understand without introducing any new concepts. This may be your first encounter with one of these cutesy model names—VGG, ResNet, Inception, Xception, and so on; you'll get used to them because they will come up frequently if you keep doing deep learning for computer vision.

There are two ways to use a pretrained model: *feature extraction* and *fine-tuning*. We'll cover both of them. Let's start with feature extraction.

8.3.1 Feature extraction with a pretrained model

Feature extraction consists of using the representations learned by a previously trained model to extract interesting features from new samples. These features are then run through a new classifier, which is trained from scratch.

As you saw previously, convnets used for image classification comprise two parts: they start with a series of pooling and convolution layers, and they end with a densely connected classifier. The first part is called the *convolutional base* of the model. In the case of convnets, feature extraction consists of taking the convolutional base of a previously trained network, running the new data through it, and training a new classifier on top of the output (see figure 8.12).

Why only reuse the convolutional base? Could we reuse the densely connected classifier as well? In general, doing so should be avoided. The reason is that the representations learned by the convolutional base are likely to be more generic and, therefore, more reusable: the feature maps of a convnet are presence maps of generic concepts over a picture, which are likely to be useful regardless of the computer vision problem at hand. But the representations learned by the classifier will necessarily be specific to the set of classes on which the model was trained—they will only contain information about the presence probability of this or that class in the entire picture. Additionally, representations found in densely connected layers no longer contain any

¹ Karen Simonyan and Andrew Zisserman, "Very Deep Convolutional Networks for Large-Scale Image Recognition," arXiv (2014), <https://arxiv.org/abs/1409.1556>.

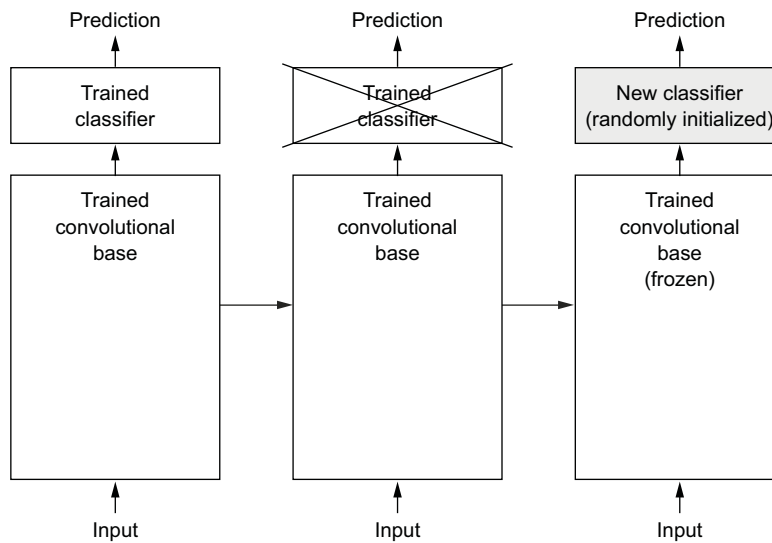


Figure 8.12 Swapping classifiers while keeping the same convolutional base

information about where objects are located in the input image; these layers get rid of the notion of space, whereas the object location is still described by convolutional feature maps. For problems where object location matters, densely connected features are largely useless.

Note that the level of generality (and therefore reusability) of the representations extracted by specific convolution layers depends on the depth of the layer in the model. Layers that come earlier in the model extract local, highly generic feature maps (such as visual edges, colors, and textures), whereas layers that are higher up extract more-abstract concepts (such as “cat ear” or “dog eye”). So if your new dataset differs a lot from the dataset on which the original model was trained, you may be better off using only the first few layers of the model to do feature extraction, rather than using the entire convolutional base.

In this case, because the ImageNet class set contains multiple dog and cat classes, it’s likely to be beneficial to reuse the information contained in the densely connected layers of the original model. But we’ll choose not to, in order to cover the more general case where the class set of the new problem doesn’t overlap the class set of the original model. Let’s put this into practice by using the convolutional base of the VGG16 network, trained on ImageNet, to extract interesting features from cat and dog images, and then train a dogs-versus-cats classifier on top of these features.

The VGG16 model, among others, comes prepackaged with Keras. You can import it from the `keras.applications` module. Many other image-classification models (all pretrained on the ImageNet dataset) are available as part of `keras.applications`:

- Xception
- ResNet
- MobileNet
- EfficientNet
- DenseNet
- etc.

Let's instantiate the VGG16 model.

Listing 8.19 Instantiating the VGG16 convolutional base

```
conv_base = keras.applications.vgg16.VGG16(
    weights="imagenet",
    include_top=False,
    input_shape=(180, 180, 3))
```

We pass three arguments to the constructor:

- `weights` specifies the weight checkpoint from which to initialize the model.
- `include_top` refers to including (or not) the densely connected classifier on top of the network. By default, this densely connected classifier corresponds to the 1,000 classes from ImageNet. Because we intend to use our own densely connected classifier (with only two classes: cat and dog), we don't need to include it.
- `input_shape` is the shape of the image tensors that we'll feed to the network. This argument is purely optional: if we don't pass it, the network will be able to process inputs of any size. Here we pass it so that we can visualize (in the following summary) how the size of the feature maps shrinks with each new convolution and pooling layer.

Here's the detail of the architecture of the VGG16 convolutional base. It's similar to the simple convnets you're already familiar with:

```
>>> conv_base.summary()
Model: "vgg16"
```

Layer (type)	Output Shape	Param #
input_19 (InputLayer)	[(None, 180, 180, 3)]	0
block1_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 180, 180, 64)	1792
block1_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 180, 180, 64)	36928
block1_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 90, 90, 64)	0
block2_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 90, 90, 128)	73856

block2_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 90, 90, 128)	147584
block2_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 45, 45, 128)	0
block3_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 45, 45, 256)	295168
block3_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 45, 45, 256)	590080
block3_conv3 (Conv2D)	(None, 45, 45, 256)	590080
block3_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 22, 22, 256)	0
block4_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 22, 22, 512)	1180160
block4_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 22, 22, 512)	2359808
block4_conv3 (Conv2D)	(None, 22, 22, 512)	2359808
block4_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	0
block5_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	2359808
block5_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	2359808
block5_conv3 (Conv2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	2359808
block5_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 5, 5, 512)	0
=====		
Total params: 14,714,688		
Trainable params: 14,714,688		
Non-trainable params: 0		

The final feature map has shape (5, 5, 512). That's the feature map on top of which we'll stick a densely connected classifier.

At this point, there are two ways we could proceed:

- Run the convolutional base over our dataset, record its output to a NumPy array on disk, and then use this data as input to a standalone, densely connected classifier similar to those you saw in chapter 4 of this book. This solution is fast and cheap to run, because it only requires running the convolutional base once for every input image, and the convolutional base is by far the most expensive part of the pipeline. But for the same reason, this technique won't allow us to use data augmentation.
- Extend the model we have (`conv_base`) by adding Dense layers on top, and run the whole thing from end to end on the input data. This will allow us to use data augmentation, because every input image goes through the convolutional base every time it's seen by the model. But for the same reason, this technique is far more expensive than the first.

We'll cover both techniques. Let's walk through the code required to set up the first one: recording the output of `conv_base` on our data and using these outputs as inputs to a new model.

FAST FEATURE EXTRACTION WITHOUT DATA AUGMENTATION

We'll start by extracting features as NumPy arrays by calling the `predict()` method of the `conv_base` model on our training, validation, and testing datasets.

Let's iterate over our datasets to extract the VGG16 features.

Listing 8.20 Extracting the VGG16 features and corresponding labels

```
import numpy as np

def get_features_and_labels(dataset):
    all_features = []
    all_labels = []
    for images, labels in dataset:
        preprocessed_images = keras.applications.vgg16.preprocess_input(images)
        features = conv_base.predict(preprocessed_images)
        all_features.append(features)
        all_labels.append(labels)
    return np.concatenate(all_features), np.concatenate(all_labels)

train_features, train_labels = get_features_and_labels(train_dataset)
val_features, val_labels = get_features_and_labels(validation_dataset)
test_features, test_labels = get_features_and_labels(test_dataset)
```

Importantly, `predict()` only expects images, not labels, but our current dataset yields batches that contain both images and their labels. Moreover, the VGG16 model expects inputs that are preprocessed with the function `keras.applications.vgg16.preprocess_input`, which scales pixel values to an appropriate range.

The extracted features are currently of shape `(samples, 5, 5, 512)`:

```
>>> train_features.shape
(2000, 5, 5, 512)
```

At this point, we can define our densely connected classifier (note the use of dropout for regularization) and train it on the data and labels that we just recorded.

Listing 8.21 Defining and training the densely connected classifier

```
inputs = keras.Input(shape=(5, 5, 512))
x = layers.Flatten()(inputs)
x = layers.Dense(256)(x)
x = layers.Dropout(0.5)(x)
outputs = layers.Dense(1, activation="sigmoid")(x)
model = keras.Model(inputs, outputs)
```

Note the use of the Flatten layer before passing the features to a Dense layer.

```

model.compile(loss="binary_crossentropy",
              optimizer="rmsprop",
              metrics=["accuracy"])

callbacks = [
    keras.callbacks.ModelCheckpoint(
        filepath="feature_extraction.keras",
        save_best_only=True,
        monitor="val_loss")
]
history = model.fit(
    train_features, train_labels,
    epochs=20,
    validation_data=(val_features, val_labels),
    callbacks=callbacks)

```

Training is very fast because we only have to deal with two Dense layers—an epoch takes less than one second even on CPU.

Let's look at the loss and accuracy curves during training (see figure 8.13).

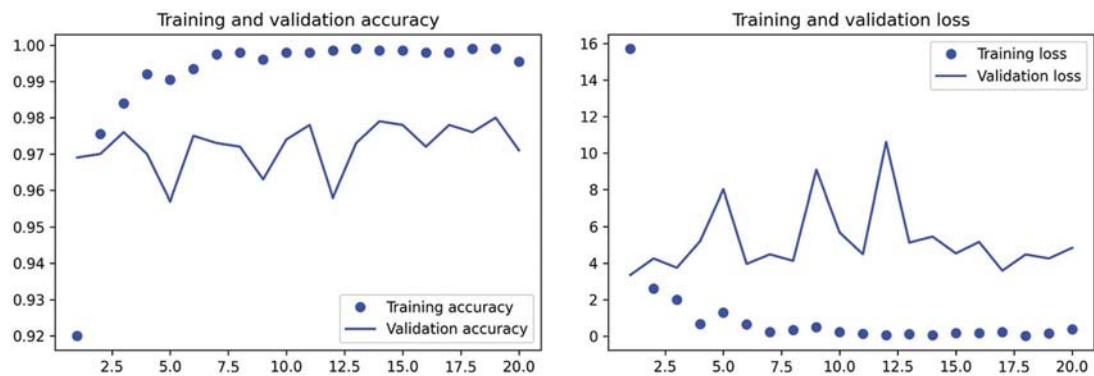


Figure 8.13 Training and validation metrics for plain feature extraction

Listing 8.22 Plotting the results

```

import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
acc = history.history["accuracy"]
val_acc = history.history["val_accuracy"]
loss = history.history["loss"]
val_loss = history.history["val_loss"]
epochs = range(1, len(acc) + 1)
plt.plot(epochs, acc, "bo", label="Training accuracy")
plt.plot(epochs, val_acc, "b", label="Validation accuracy")
plt.title("Training and validation accuracy")
plt.legend()
plt.figure()
plt.plot(epochs, loss, "bo", label="Training loss")

```

```
plt.plot(epochs, val_loss, "b", label="Validation loss")
plt.title("Training and validation loss")
plt.legend()
plt.show()
```

We reach a validation accuracy of about 97%—much better than we achieved in the previous section with the small model trained from scratch. This is a bit of an unfair comparison, however, because ImageNet contains many dog and cat instances, which means that our pretrained model already has the exact knowledge required for the task at hand. This won't always be the case when you use pretrained features.

However, the plots also indicate that we're overfitting almost from the start—despite using dropout with a fairly large rate. That's because this technique doesn't use data augmentation, which is essential for preventing overfitting with small image datasets.

FEATURE EXTRACTION TOGETHER WITH DATA AUGMENTATION

Now let's review the second technique I mentioned for doing feature extraction, which is much slower and more expensive, but which allows us to use data augmentation during training: creating a model that chains the `conv_base` with a new dense classifier, and training it end to end on the inputs.

In order to do this, we will first *freeze the convolutional base*. *Freezing* a layer or set of layers means preventing their weights from being updated during training. If we don't do this, the representations that were previously learned by the convolutional base will be modified during training. Because the Dense layers on top are randomly initialized, very large weight updates would be propagated through the network, effectively destroying the representations previously learned.

In Keras, we freeze a layer or model by setting its trainable attribute to `False`.

Listing 8.23 Instantiating and freezing the VGG16 convolutional base

```
conv_base = keras.applications.vgg16.VGG16(
    weights="imagenet",
    include_top=False)
conv_base.trainable = False
```

Setting trainable to `False` empties the list of trainable weights of the layer or model.

Listing 8.24 Printing the list of trainable weights before and after freezing

```
>>> conv_base.trainable = True
>>> print("This is the number of trainable weights "
        "before freezing the conv base:", len(conv_base.trainable_weights))
This is the number of trainable weights before freezing the conv base: 26
>>> conv_base.trainable = False
>>> print("This is the number of trainable weights "
        "after freezing the conv base:", len(conv_base.trainable_weights))
This is the number of trainable weights after freezing the conv base: 0
```

Now we can create a new model that chains together

- 1 A data augmentation stage
- 2 Our frozen convolutional base
- 3 A dense classifier

Listing 8.25 Adding a data augmentation stage and a classifier to the convolutional base

```
data_augmentation = keras.Sequential(
    [
        layers.RandomFlip("horizontal"),
        layers.RandomRotation(0.1),
        layers.RandomZoom(0.2),
    ]
)

inputs = keras.Input(shape=(180, 180, 3))
x = data_augmentation(inputs)
x = keras.applications.vgg16.preprocess_input(x)
x = conv_base(x)
x = layers.Flatten()(x)
x = layers.Dense(256)(x)
x = layers.Dropout(0.5)(x)
outputs = layers.Dense(1, activation="sigmoid")(x)
model = keras.Model(inputs, outputs)
model.compile(loss="binary_crossentropy",
              optimizer="rmsprop",
              metrics=["accuracy"])
```

Apply data augmentation.

Apply input value scaling.

With this setup, only the weights from the two Dense layers that we added will be trained. That's a total of four weight tensors: two per layer (the main weight matrix and the bias vector). Note that in order for these changes to take effect, you must first compile the model. If you ever modify weight trainability after compilation, you should then recompile the model, or these changes will be ignored.

Let's train our model. Thanks to data augmentation, it will take much longer for the model to start overfitting, so we can train for more epochs—let's do 50.

NOTE This technique is expensive enough that you should only attempt it if you have access to a GPU (such as the free GPU available in Colab)—it's intractable on CPU. If you can't run your code on GPU, then the previous technique is the way to go.

```
callbacks = [
    keras.callbacks.ModelCheckpoint(
        filepath="feature_extraction_with_data_augmentation.keras",
        save_best_only=True,
        monitor="val_loss")
]
```

```

history = model.fit(
    train_dataset,
    epochs=50,
    validation_data=validation_dataset,
    callbacks=callbacks)

```

Let's plot the results again (see figure 8.14). As you can see, we reach a validation accuracy of over 98%. This is a strong improvement over the previous model.

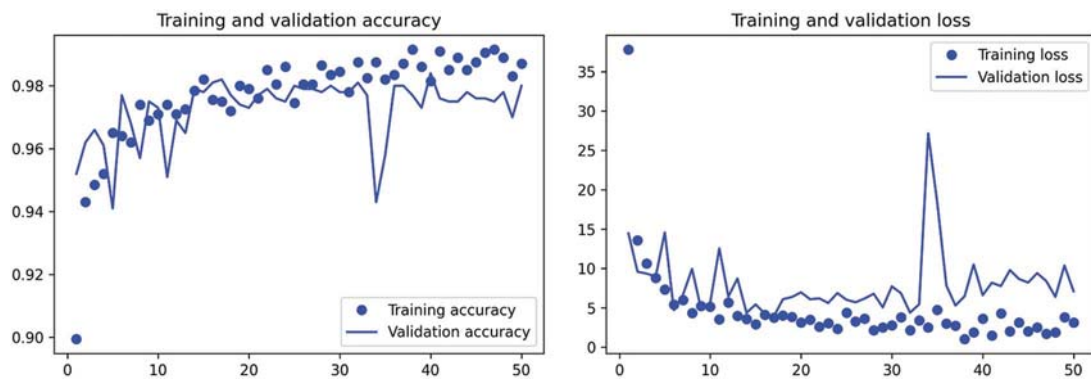


Figure 8.14 Training and validation metrics for feature extraction with data augmentation

Let's check the test accuracy.

Listing 8.26 Evaluating the model on the test set

```

test_model = keras.models.load_model(
    "feature_extraction_with_data_augmentation.keras")
test_loss, test_acc = test_model.evaluate(test_dataset)
print(f"Test accuracy: {test_acc:.3f}")

```

We get a test accuracy of 97.5%. This is only a modest improvement compared to the previous test accuracy, which is a bit disappointing given the strong results on the validation data. A model's accuracy always depends on the set of samples you evaluate it on! Some sample sets may be more difficult than others, and strong results on one set won't necessarily fully translate to all other sets.

8.3.2 Fine-tuning a pretrained model

Another widely used technique for model reuse, complementary to feature extraction, is *fine-tuning* (see figure 8.15). Fine-tuning consists of unfreezing a few of the top layers of a frozen model base used for feature extraction, and jointly training both the newly added part of the model (in this case, the fully connected classifier) and these top layers. This is called *fine-tuning* because it slightly adjusts the more abstract representations of the model being reused in order to make them more relevant for the problem at hand.

I stated earlier that it's necessary to freeze the convolution base of VGG16 in order to be able to train a randomly initialized classifier on top. For the same reason, it's only possible to fine-tune the top layers of the convolutional base once the classifier on top has already been trained. If the classifier isn't already trained, the error signal propagating through the network during training will be too large, and the representations previously learned by the layers being fine-tuned will be destroyed. Thus the steps for fine-tuning a network are as follows:

- 1 Add our custom network on top of an already-trained base network.
- 2 Freeze the base network.
- 3 Train the part we added.
- 4 Unfreeze some layers in the base network. (Note that you should not unfreeze “batch normalization” layers, which are not relevant here since there are no such layers in VGG16. Batch normalization and its impact on fine-tuning is explained in the next chapter.)
- 5 Jointly train both these layers and the part we added.

You already completed the first three steps when doing feature extraction. Let's proceed with step 4: we'll unfreeze our `conv_base` and then freeze individual layers inside it.

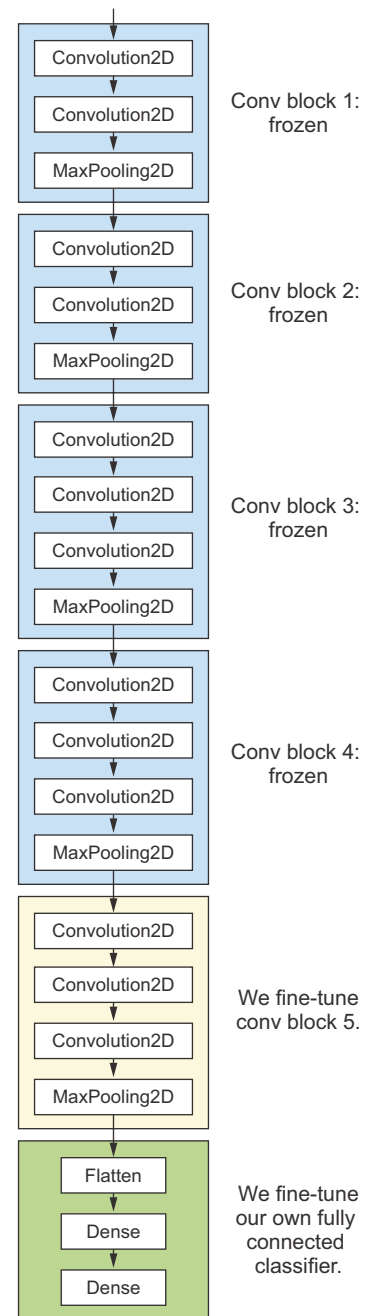


Figure 8.15 Fine-tuning the last convolutional block of the VGG16 network

As a reminder, this is what our convolutional base looks like:

```
>>> conv_base.summary()
Model: "vgg16"
```

Layer (type)	Output Shape	Param #
input_19 (InputLayer)	[(None, 180, 180, 3)]	0
block1_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 180, 180, 64)	1792
block1_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 180, 180, 64)	36928
block1_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 90, 90, 64)	0
block2_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 90, 90, 128)	73856
block2_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 90, 90, 128)	147584
block2_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 45, 45, 128)	0
block3_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 45, 45, 256)	295168
block3_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 45, 45, 256)	590080
block3_conv3 (Conv2D)	(None, 45, 45, 256)	590080
block3_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 22, 22, 256)	0
block4_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 22, 22, 512)	1180160
block4_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 22, 22, 512)	2359808
block4_conv3 (Conv2D)	(None, 22, 22, 512)	2359808
block4_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	0
block5_conv1 (Conv2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	2359808
block5_conv2 (Conv2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	2359808
block5_conv3 (Conv2D)	(None, 11, 11, 512)	2359808
block5_pool (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 5, 5, 512)	0

```

Total params: 14,714,688
Trainable params: 14,714,688
Non-trainable params: 0

```

We'll fine-tune the last three convolutional layers, which means all layers up to block4_pool should be frozen, and the layers block5_conv1, block5_conv2, and block5_conv3 should be trainable.

Why not fine-tune more layers? Why not fine-tune the entire convolutional base? You could. But you need to consider the following:

- Earlier layers in the convolutional base encode more generic, reusable features, whereas layers higher up encode more specialized features. It's more useful to fine-tune the more specialized features, because these are the ones that need to be repurposed on your new problem. There would be fast-decreasing returns in fine-tuning lower layers.
- The more parameters you're training, the more you're at risk of overfitting. The convolutional base has 15 million parameters, so it would be risky to attempt to train it on your small dataset.

Thus, in this situation, it's a good strategy to fine-tune only the top two or three layers in the convolutional base. Let's set this up, starting from where we left off in the previous example.

Listing 8.27 Freezing all layers until the fourth from the last

```
conv_base.trainable = True
for layer in conv_base.layers[:-4]:
    layer.trainable = False
```

Now we can begin fine-tuning the model. We'll do this with the RMSprop optimizer, using a very low learning rate. The reason for using a low learning rate is that we want to limit the magnitude of the modifications we make to the representations of the three layers we're fine-tuning. Updates that are too large may harm these representations.

Listing 8.28 Fine-tuning the model

```
model.compile(loss="binary_crossentropy",
              optimizer=keras.optimizers.RMSprop(learning_rate=1e-5),
              metrics=["accuracy"])

callbacks = [
    keras.callbacks.ModelCheckpoint(
        filepath="fine_tuning.keras",
        save_best_only=True,
        monitor="val_loss")
]
history = model.fit(
    train_dataset,
    epochs=30,
    validation_data=validation_dataset,
    callbacks=callbacks)
```

We can finally evaluate this model on the test data:

```
model = keras.models.load_model("fine_tuning.keras")
test_loss, test_acc = model.evaluate(test_dataset)
print(f"Test accuracy: {test_acc:.3f}")
```

Here, we get a test accuracy of 98.5% (again, your own results may be within one percentage point). In the original Kaggle competition around this dataset, this would have been one of the top results. It's not quite a fair comparison, however, since we used pretrained features that already contained prior knowledge about cats and dogs, which competitors couldn't use at the time.

On the positive side, by leveraging modern deep learning techniques, we managed to reach this result using only a small fraction of the training data that was available for the competition (about 10%). There is a huge difference between being able to train on 20,000 samples compared to 2,000 samples!

Now you have a solid set of tools for dealing with image-classification problems—in particular, with small datasets.

Summary

- Convnets are the best type of machine learning models for computer vision tasks. It's possible to train one from scratch even on a very small dataset, with decent results.
- Convnets work by learning a hierarchy of modular patterns and concepts to represent the visual world.
- On a small dataset, overfitting will be the main issue. Data augmentation is a powerful way to fight overfitting when you're working with image data.
- It's easy to reuse an existing convnet on a new dataset via feature extraction. This is a valuable technique for working with small image datasets.
- As a complement to feature extraction, you can use fine-tuning, which adapts to a new problem some of the representations previously learned by an existing model. This pushes performance a bit further.