

Module 4: Types of MEV Strategies

Duration: 75 minutes | **Level:** Beginner | **Author:** Obelisk Core

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will:

- Understand the three main types of MEV strategies in detail
 - Learn technical implementation approaches for each strategy type
 - Analyze real-world examples and case studies
 - Explore advanced MEV techniques and emerging opportunities
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MEV Strategy Classification

Primary Categories

```
MEV Strategies
├── Arbitrage MEV (60% of total MEV)
│   ├── DEX Arbitrage
│   ├── Cross-Chain Arbitrage
│   └── Triangular Arbitrage
├── Liquidation MEV (30% of total MEV)
│   ├── Protocol Liquidations
│   ├── Cross-Protocol Liquidations
│   └── Cascading Liquidations
└── Sandwich Attack MEV (10% of total MEV)
    ├── Simple Sandwich
    ├── Complex Sandwich
    └── Multi-Victim Sandwich
```

Strategy Characteristics

- **Capital Requirements:** Vary from 0(flashloans)to 100M+
 - **Risk Level:** Low to extremely high
 - **Technical Complexity:** Basic to advanced
 - **Competition:** Moderate to extremely competitive
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Arbitrage MEV

Definition and Mechanics

Arbitrage MEV involves exploiting price differences across different venues, protocols, or assets to generate profits.

DEX Arbitrage

Core Concept

```
Price on DEX A: 100 USDC per token
Price on DEX B: 102 USDC per token
Opportunity: Buy on A, sell on B
Profit per token: 2 USDC (minus fees and gas)
```

Implementation Requirements

1. Price Monitoring

- Real-time price feeds from multiple DEXs
- Slippage calculation and estimation
- Gas cost prediction
- Liquidity depth analysis

2. Execution Infrastructure

- Low-latency transaction submission
- Optimal gas price selection
- Slippage protection mechanisms
- Failure handling and rollback

3. Capital Management

- Sufficient capital for trades
- Gas reserve for failed attempts
- Risk management for position exposure

DEX Arbitrage Example

Scenario: ETH/USDC arbitrage opportunity

Initial State:

- Uniswap V3: 1 ETH = 1,850 USDC
- SushiSwap: 1 ETH = 1,855 USDC
- Gas estimate: 0.08 ETH
- Trade size: 10 ETH

Calculation:

Buy on Uniswap: $10 \text{ ETH} \times 1,850 = 18,500 \text{ USDC}$

Sell on SushiSwap: $10 \text{ ETH} \times 1,855 = 18,550 \text{ USDC}$

Gross profit: 50 USDC

Gas cost: 0.08 ETH = 150 USDC (at \$1,875/ETH)

Net profit: -100 USDC (not profitable)

Optimal Trade Size:

Max profitable size: $50 \text{ USDC} \div 0.08 \text{ ETH} = 625 \text{ USDC per ETH}$

Optimal trade: 0.27 ETH

Actual profit: $0.27 \times 5 \text{ USDC} - 0.08 \text{ ETH} = 1.35 - 150 = -148.65 \text{ USDC}$

Result: Opportunity not profitable with \$1,875 ETH price and high gas costs

Advanced DEX Arbitrage

Flashloan Arbitrage:

Capital Requirement: \$0 (borrowed funds)

Process:

1. Flashloan 100 ETH from Aave
2. Execute arbitrage: Uniswap → SushiSwap
3. Repay flashloan + fees
4. Keep remaining profit

Requirements:

- Integration with flashloan-enabled protocols
- Atomic execution capability
- Accurate profit calculation

Cross-DEX Optimization:

- Route optimization across multiple DEXs
- Liquidity fragmentation exploitation
- Optimal trade size calculation
- Fee optimization strategies

Cross-Chain Arbitrage

Multi-Chain Opportunities

Ethereum → Arbitrum → Optimism arbitrage

ETH Price on Ethereum: \$1,875

ETH Price on Arbitrum: \$1,878

ETH Price on Optimism: \$1,872

Opportunity Path:

1. Buy ETH on Ethereum (\$1,875)
2. Bridge to Arbitrum (cost: ~\$15)
3. Sell on Arbitrum (\$1,878)
4. Bridge to Optimism (cost: ~\$12)
5. Buy back on Optimism (\$1,872)
6. Bridge back to Ethereum

Complexity Factors:

- Bridge delays and costs
- Price volatility during bridge time
- Chain-specific liquidity differences
- Gas cost optimization across chains

Bridge Arbitrage Strategies

- Monitor multiple bridges for price discrepancies
- Time bridge crossings with market movements
- Optimize bridge selection based on costs
- Manage cross-chain position risks

Triangular Arbitrage

Three-Asset Arbitrage

Path: ETH → USDC → UNI → ETH

Initial State:

- ETH/USDC: 1 ETH = 1,850 USDC
- USDC/UNI: 1 USDC = 0.75 UNI
- UNI/ETH: 1 UNI = 0.00054 ETH

Arbitrage Calculation:

Start with 1 ETH

Convert to USDC: $1 \times 1,850 = 1,850$ USDC

Convert to UNI: $1,850 \div 0.75 = 2,467$ UNI

Convert back to ETH: $2,467 \times 0.00054 = 1.332$ ETH

Profit: 0.332 ETH (17.9% return)

After Gas Costs and Slippage:

Actual return: ~15% (still highly profitable)

Technical Implementation

- Real-time price feed aggregation
 - Path optimization algorithms
 - Slippage impact calculation
 - Gas cost optimization
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Liquidation MEV

Definition and Purpose

Liquidation MEV involves closing undercollateralized lending positions to capture liquidation bonuses.

How Liquidation Works

Collateralization Ratio

Lending Protocol Example (Aave):

- Collateral Requirement: 150%
- Liquidation Threshold: 145%
- Liquidation Bonus: 7%

Position Example:

- Borrowed: 1,000 USDC
- Collateral: 2.0 ETH @ $3,750$
- Ratio: $3,750 \div 1,000 = 375\%$ (safe)

Price Drop Scenario:

- ETH drops to \$1,000
- New value: 2.0 ETH @ $2,000$
- New ratio: $2,000 \div 1,000 = 200\%$ (still safe)

Further Drop:

- ETH drops to \$750
- New value: 2.0 ETH @ $1,500$
- New ratio: $1,500 \div 1,000 = 150\%$ (liquidated)

Liquidation Trigger:

- Seizer gets: 1,000 USDC + 70 USDC (7% bonus)
- Seizer pays: 2.0 ETH (or equivalent)
- Protocol recovers: 1,070 USDC from liquidation

Protocol-Specific Parameters

Aave V3:

- Liquidation Threshold: 82.5%

- Liquidation Bonus: 5-10% (varies by asset)
- Gas Cost: ~0.01-0.05 ETH
- Competition: High (many liquidators)

Compound:

- Liquidation Threshold: 75%
- Liquidation Bonus: 5%
- Gas Cost: ~0.008-0.03 ETH
- Competition: Moderate

MakerDAO:

- Liquidation Threshold: 150%
- Liquidation Penalty: 13%
- Auction-based system
- Competition: Very high

Liquidation MEV Process

Step-by-Step Implementation

1. Position Monitoring

Real-time tracking of:

- └─ Collateral prices
- └─ Loan-to-value ratios
- └─ Liquidation thresholds
- └─ Position sizes and borrowers

2. Profit Calculation

Opportunity Analysis:

Position Value: \$1,000,000

Liquidation Threshold: 150%

Current Ratio: 155% (approaching liquidation)

Bonus: 7%

Gas Estimate: 0.02 ETH (\$37.50)

Profit Calculation:

Gross Bonus:
$$1 \times 1000000 \times 7\%$$

$$= 1 \times 1000000 \times 0.07 = 70000$$

Gas Cost: \$37.50

Net Profit: \$69,962.50

Competition Risk: 40% chance of being frontrun

3. Execution Strategy

- Determine optimal gas price
- Submit liquidation transaction
- Handle competing liquidators
- Monitor transaction inclusion

Advanced Liquidation Strategies

Cascading Liquidations:

Single Price Drop → Multiple Liquidations

Market Event:

- ETH drops 20% in 5 minutes
- Aave positions at various ratios

Liquidation Sequence:

1. Positions at 150% ratio liquidate first
2. Price impact from liquidations
3. More positions drop below threshold
4. Chain reaction continues

MEV Opportunity:

Monitor for potential cascades

Execute early liquidations

Capture multiple liquidation bonuses

Cross-Protocol Liquidations:

Multiple Protocols = Multiple Opportunities

Portfolio Approach:

- ├— Monitor Aave positions
- ├— Track Compound loans
- ├— Watch MakerDAO CDPs
- ├— Scan specialized protocols

Benefit: Diversified opportunity source

Challenge: Multiple technical integrations

Liquidation MEV Economics

Profit Factors

- **Position Size:** Larger positions = higher bonuses
- **Liquidation Threshold:** Lower thresholds = more liquidations
- **Bonus Percentage:** Higher bonuses = better profits
- **Gas Competition:** Lower gas = higher net profits

Risk Assessment

- **Frontrunning Risk:** Others may execute first
 - **Gas Market Risk:** Sudden gas price increases
 - **Liquidity Risk:** Unable to liquidate position
 - **Protocol Risk:** Smart contract vulnerabilities
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Sandwich Attack MEV

Definition and Mechanics

Sandwich attacks involve placing transactions immediately before and after a victim's transaction to profit from the price impact.

Simple Sandwich Attack

Attack Pattern

Victim Transaction: Large DEX trade

Execution Sequence:

1. Front-Run: Detect victim's trade, buy before them
2. Victim Trade: Large trade moves price favorably
3. Back-Run: Sell acquired assets for profit

Example:

Token A price: \$100

Victim buys 1,000 tokens (drives price to \$110)

Sandwich attack:

- Buy 50 tokens at \$100
- Victim buys, price moves to \$110
- Sell 50 tokens at \$110
- Profit: $50 \times (110 - 100) = 500$

Technical Requirements

- **Mempool Monitoring:** Detect victim trades before inclusion
- **Price Impact Prediction:** Estimate slippage from large trades

- **Transaction Coordination:** Ensure bundle inclusion
- **Slippage Protection:** Minimize own trade impact

Complex Sandwich Attacks

Multi-Victim Sandwich

Target: Multiple victim transactions in same block

Attack Structure:

Victim 1: Large UNI buy (price impact +2%)

Victim 2: Large UNI sell (price impact -1.5%)

Victim 3: Large UNI buy (price impact +3%)

Sandwich Strategy:

1. Front-run all three victims
2. Buy before first victim (+2% gain)
3. Sell between second and third victims
4. Buy again before third victim (+3% gain)
5. Back-run final victim

Total Profit: Combined impact from all victims

Sandwich with Liquidation

Cross-Strategy Opportunity:

Victim Transaction: Large trade triggers liquidation

Attack Sequence:

1. Front-run victim trade
2. Execute victim's trade (moves price)
3. Trigger liquidation of existing position
4. Back-run victim's position
5. Capture liquidation bonus + trade profit

Benefit: Multiple profit sources in single bundle

Challenge: Complex execution coordination

Sandwich Protection Mechanisms

User-Implemented Protection

Slippage Tolerance Protection:

- Set tight slippage limits
- Use limit orders when possible
- Submit transactions privately
- Monitor for potential sandwich attacks

Example Protection:

Victim Transaction:

- Trade Size: 10,000 UNI
- Max Slippage: 0.5%
- Max Price Impact: $\frac{102.50 - 102}{102} = 0.0049$

Attack Analysis:

- Expected slippage: 2% (victim trade)
- Attack viability: High (5x above user limit)
- User protection: Effective (transaction would fail)

Protocol-Level Protection

Uniswap V3 Protection:

- Concentrated liquidity reduces price impact
- Slippage protection mechanisms
- TWAP (Time-Weighted Average Price) oracles
- Private transaction support

1inch Protection:

- Advanced pathfinding algorithms
- Price impact minimization
- MEV-resistant routing
- Private transaction submission

Advanced MEV Techniques

Non-Standard MEV Strategies

Time-Window Arbitrage

Concept: Exploit predictable price movements

Example: Governance Token Voting

1. Monitor upcoming governance votes
2. Identify tokens likely to appreciate
3. Buy before vote announcement
4. Sell after price increase

Risk Factors:

- Vote outcome uncertainty
- Price moves before announcement
- Other participants with similar strategies

NFT MEV

Opportunities in NFT Markets:

Floor Sweeping:

- Detect underpriced NFT listings
- Sweep floor before others notice
- Resell at market price

Collection Launch Sniping:

- Monitor new NFT collections
- Mint at floor price
- Quick flip for profit

Rare Trait Hunting:

- Identify rare trait combinations
- Mint strategies targeting rare traits
- Premium pricing for rare items

Governance MEV

Token Vote Exploitation:

Pre-Vote Position Building:

1. Buy governance tokens before proposal
2. Vote for proposal that benefits you
3. Sell tokens after vote passes

MEV Considerations:

- Requires significant token holdings
- Long-term time horizons
- Regulatory considerations
- Community reputation impact

Cross-Protocol MEV

Multi-Protocol Arbitrage

DeFi Protocol Coordination:

Lending → DEX → Lending Arbitrage

1. Identify overpriced lending rates
2. Borrow from expensive lender
3. Lend at higher rate elsewhere
4. Pocket the spread

Requirements:

- Integration with multiple protocols
- Risk management across protocols
- Gas optimization across platforms

Strategy Performance Analysis

Arbitrage MEV Performance

Average Returns (2023-2024):

- └ Simple DEX Arbitrage: 0.1-2% per opportunity
- └ Flashloan Arbitrage: 0.05-1% per trade
- └ Cross-Chain Arbitrage: 1-5% per opportunity
- └ Triangular Arbitrage: 2-10% per cycle

Success Rates:

- └ Profitable opportunities: 60-80%
- └ Break-even opportunities: 15-25%
- └ Losing opportunities: 5-15%

Capital Utilization:

- └ Average trade size: $\frac{500K}{50}$ 500K
- └ Capital turnover: 10-50x per day
- └ Risk-adjusted returns: 15-35% annually

Liquidation MEV Performance

Average Returns:

- └ Small positions ($\leq \$10K$): 5-10% bonus
- └ Medium positions ($\leq \$100K$): 3-7% bonus
- └ Large positions ($> \$100K$): 1-3% bonus

Frequency:

- └ Daily opportunities: 100-500
- └ Profitable executions: 60-80%
- └ Average execution time: 5-15 seconds

Capital Requirements:

- └ Minimum: \$50K for competitive execution
- └ Optimal: \$500K+ for major opportunities
- └ Flashloan eligible: \$0 (no capital required)

Sandwich Attack Performance

Average Returns:

└ Simple sandwich: `<span class="math-inline" style="display: inline;"><math xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1998/Math/MathML" display="inline"><mrow><mn>100</mn><mo>−</mo></mrow></math></span>5,000 per attack`

|— Complex sandwich: <math xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1998/Math/MathML" display="inline"><mrow><mn>1</mn><mo>,</mo><mn>000</mn><mo>−</mo></mrow></math>50,000 per attack

└─ Multi-victim: $5 \times 10^2 \times 10^2 = 500,000$ per attack

Frequency:

- Daily attacks: 50-200 (varies with market activity)

- Success rate: 70-85%

- Average attack duration: 10-30 seconds

Market Impact:

- Contributes to price volatility

- Reduces user trading efficiency

- Drives protocol innovation for protection

Risk Management

Technical Risks

Execution Failures

Common Failure Modes:

- └─ Gas price competition loss
- └─ Transaction ordering conflicts
- └─ Smart contract reverts
- └─ Network congestion issues

Mitigation Strategies:

- └─ Gas price optimization
- └─ Multiple relay submission
- └─ Transaction simulation testing
- └─ Fallback execution paths

Competition Risks

Competitive Threats:

- └─ Faster detection algorithms
- └─ Superior infrastructure
- └─ Better capital allocation
- └─ Strategic partnerships

Countermeasures:

- └─ Technology investment
- └─ Infrastructure optimization
- └─ Capital scaling
- └─ Strategic positioning

Financial Risks

Capital Requirements

Arbitrage Capital:

- └─ Minimum viable: \$50K
- └─ Competitive level: \$500K
- └─ Institutional level: \$10M+

Liquidation Capital:

- └─ Minimum viable: \$100K
- └─ Competitive level: \$1M+
- └─ Flashloan eligible: \$0

Sandwich Capital:

- └─ Minimum viable: \$200K
- └─ Competitive level: \$2M+
- └─ Flashloan options: Limited

Risk-Adjusted Returns

Expected Returns by Strategy:

Arbitrage: 15-25% annually
Liquidation: 20-35% annually
Sandwich: 10-100% annually (highly volatile)

Risk Factors:

- └─ Market volatility
- └─ Competition intensity
- └─ Technology obsolescence
- └─ Regulatory changes

Real-World Case Studies

Case Study 1: The Terra Luna MEV Event

Context: Massive price movement creates unprecedented MEV opportunities

Timeline:

- May 9, 2022: UST depeg begins

- May 11, 2022: Luna price crashes 99%
- MEV extraction: \$50M+ over 48 hours

MEV Activities:

Arbitrage Opportunities:

- └─ UST/USDC price discrepancies
- └─ Cross-chain arbitrage (Terra → Ethereum)
- └─ DEX price fragmentation
- └─ CEX-DEX price gaps

Liquidation Cascades:

- └─ Collateral value destruction
- └─ Automated liquidations
- └─ Manual liquidations
- └─ Cross-protocol liquidations

Technical Challenges:

- └─ Network congestion
- └─ Gas price spikes
- └─ API failures
- └─ Liquidity constraints

Lessons:

- Extreme market conditions create massive MEV
- Infrastructure resilience crucial during crises
- Capital requirements scale with opportunity size
- Risk management becomes critical

Case Study 2: Uniswap V3 MEV Evolution

Context: Concentrated liquidity creates new MEV landscape

Innovation:

- Concentrated liquidity pools
- Position-dependent pricing
- NFT-style LP positions
- New MEV opportunities

New Strategies:

Concentrated Liquidity Arbitrage:

- └─ Monitor price range updates
- └─ Arbitrage between ranges
- └─ Front-run range changes
- └─ Exploit position exits

NFT MEV:

- └─ LP position NFT identification
- └─ Rarity-based arbitrage
- └─ Position ownership tracking
- └─ Dynamic pricing models

Impact:

- 3x increase in arbitrage opportunities
- New sandwich attack vectors
- Enhanced liquidation strategies
- Protocol-level MEV protection needs

Case Study 3: Layer 2 MEV Landscape

Context: Arbitrum and Optimism create new MEV environments

L2 Characteristics:

Arbitrum:

- └─ Fast finality (2-3 minutes)
- └─ Low gas costs (\$0.001-0.01)
- └─ Centralized sequencer
- └─ MEV-aware ordering

Optimism:

- └─ Fast finality (2-4 minutes)
- └─ Very low gas costs (\$0.001-0.005)
- └─ Centralized sequencer
- └─ Priority fee markets

MEV Differences:

- Faster finality reduces opportunity window
- Centralized sequencing creates different dynamics
- Low gas costs enable new strategies
- New protocols create novel opportunities

Lessons:

- MEV adapts to new environments
 - Architecture changes affect MEV types
 - Low latency doesn't eliminate MEV
 - New opportunities emerge in L2 ecosystems
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Strategy Selection Guide

Choosing Your MEV Strategy

Factor Analysis

Strategy Selection Criteria:

Capital Requirements:

- Flashloan eligible: Liquidation MEV
- \$50K-200K: Simple arbitrage
- \$200K-1M: Complex arbitrage + liquidation
- \$1M+: All strategies including sandwich

Technical Skills:

- Beginner: Liquidation MEV
- Intermediate: DEX arbitrage
- Advanced: Cross-chain + sandwich
- Expert: Multi-strategy optimization

Risk Tolerance:

- Low: Liquidations (predictable)
- Medium: Arbitrage (moderate risk)
- High: Sandwich (high risk/reward)

Market Conditions:

- Low volatility: Focus on arbitrage
- High volatility: All strategies active
- Crisis periods: Liquidation opportunities
- New protocol launches: Various strategies

Portfolio Approach

Diversified MEV Strategy:

Core Holdings (70%):

- └─ 50% Liquidation MEV (stable returns)
- └─ 30% Simple arbitrage (moderate risk)
- └─ 20% Capital reserves

Growth Opportunities (20%):

- └─ 15% Complex arbitrage
- └─ 5% Cross-chain opportunities

High-Risk/High-Reward (10%):

- └─ 7% Sandwich attacks
- └─ 3% Experimental strategies

Future of MEV Strategies

Emerging Trends

AI-Powered MEV

Machine Learning Applications:

- └─ Predictive modeling for opportunities
- └─ Pattern recognition in transaction flow
- └─ Automated strategy optimization
- └─ Risk assessment and management

Benefits:

- └─ Faster opportunity detection
- └─ Better prediction accuracy
- └─ Reduced human error
- └─ 24/7 automated operation

Cross-Chain MEV

Multi-Chain Opportunities:

- └─ Bridge arbitrage
- └─ Cross-chain liquidations
- └─ Multi-chain arbitrage
- └─ Governance arbitrage

Technical Requirements:

- └─ Multi-chain infrastructure
- └─ Bridge integration
- └─ Cross-chain security
- └─ Latency optimization

NFT and GameFi MEV

New Opportunity Areas:

- └─ NFT floor sweeping
- └─ Gaming asset arbitrage
- └─ Yield farming optimization
- └─ Governance token manipulation

Growth Drivers:

- └─ NFT market expansion
- └─ Play-to-earn adoption
- └─ DeFi-GameFi convergence
- └─ New economic models

Regulatory Evolution

Potential Impacts:

- Securities regulations for MEV firms
- Market manipulation definitions
- Tax treatment standardization
- International coordination frameworks

Technology Development

Upcoming Changes:

- Ethereum 2.0 MEV integration
- Layer 2 MEV optimization

- Privacy-preserving MEV
 - Decentralized MEV protocols
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Interactive Exercise

Strategy Implementation Planning

Scenario: You have \$500K capital and strong technical skills

Tasks:

1. Choose optimal strategy mix
2. Calculate expected returns
3. Identify required infrastructure
4. Assess competition risks
5. Plan risk management approach

Solution Framework:

Strategy Allocation (based on \$500K capital):

Liquidation MEV (50% - \$250K):

- Expected return: 25% annually
- Risk level: Low-Medium
- Infrastructure: Price monitoring, liquidation bots
- Competition: High but manageable

Arbitrage (35% - \$175K):

- DEX arbitrage: \$100K
- Cross-chain arbitrage: \$75K
- Expected return: 20% annually
- Risk level: Medium
- Infrastructure: Multi-DEX integration, bridge APIs

Sandwich (15% - \$75K):

- Expected return: Variable (10-200%)
- Risk level: High
- Infrastructure: Mempool monitoring, sandwich bots
- Competition: Extremely high

Total Expected Return:

Conservative estimate: 22% annually (\$110K)

Optimistic estimate: 35% annually (\$175K)

Risk-adjusted return: 18% annually (\$90K)

Module Summary

Strategy Types Covered

- **Arbitrage MEV:** Price differences across venues
- **Liquidation MEV:** Undercollateralized position closure
- **Sandwich Attacks:** Profiting from victim trades

Technical Implementation

- Real-time monitoring requirements
- Execution infrastructure needs
- Risk management frameworks

- Performance optimization techniques

Economic Analysis

- Capital requirements by strategy
- Expected returns and risk profiles
- Competition dynamics
- Market impact considerations

Next Steps

- **Module 5:** Understand market impact and ethics
 - **Module 6:** Analyze real-world MEV transactions
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Quick Check: Test Your Understanding

1. **What percentage of total MEV does arbitrage typically represent?**
 - ☐ 30-40%
 - ☐ 60-70%
 - ☐ 80-90%
 2. **What is the typical liquidation bonus in major lending protocols?**
 - ☐ 1-3%
 - ☐ 5-10%
 - ☐ 15-20%
 3. **Which strategy typically requires the most capital?**
 - ☐ Arbitrage MEV
 - ☐ Liquidation MEV
 - ☐ Sandwich Attack MEV
 4. **What is a key limitation of flashloan-based strategies?**
 - ☐ High gas costs
 - ☐ Limited transaction size
 - ☐ Single-block execution requirement
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This module is part of the MEV Fundamentals course by ObeliskCore Education. For questions or feedback, contact our support team.