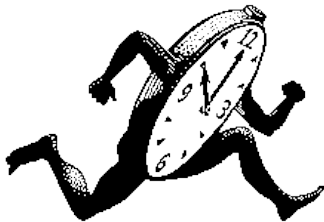


# Runtime Environments

Stephen A. Edwards

Columbia University

Fall 2017



Storage Classes

The Stack and Activation Records

In-Memory Layout Issues

The Heap

Automatic Garbage Collection

Shared Libraries and Dynamic Linking

Objects and Inheritance

Exceptions

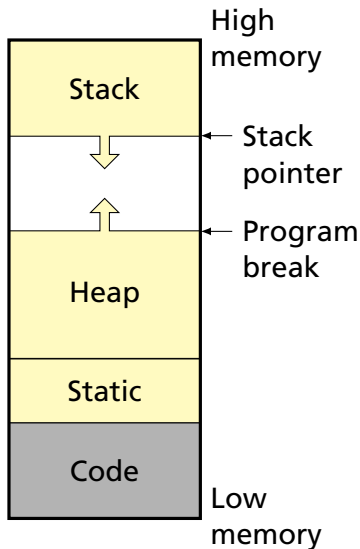
# Storage Classes

# Storage Classes and Memory Layout

Stack: objects created/destroyed in last-in, first-out order

Heap: objects created/destroyed in any order; automatic garbage collection optional

Static: objects allocated at compile time; persist throughout run



# Static Objects

```
class Example {  
    public static final int a = 3;  
  
    public void hello() {  
        System.out.println("Hello");  
    }  
}
```

## Advantages

Zero-cost memory management

Often faster access (address a constant)

No out-of-memory danger

## Examples

Static class variable

Code for hello method

String constant "Hello"

Information about the Example class

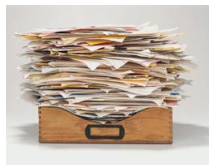
## Disadvantages

Size and number must be known beforehand

Wasteful if sharing is possible

# The Stack and Activation Records

# Stack-Allocated Objects



Natural for supporting recursion.

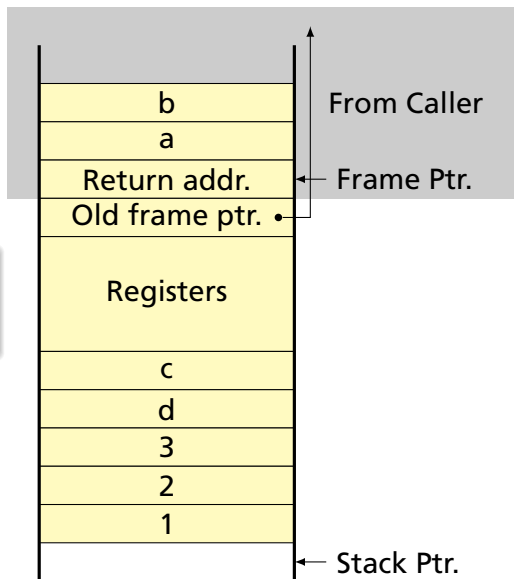
Idea: some objects persist from when a procedure is called to when it returns.

Naturally implemented with a stack: linear array of memory that grows and shrinks at only one boundary.

Each invocation of a procedure gets its own *frame* (*activation record*) where it stores its own local variables and bookkeeping information.

## An Activation Record: The State Before Calling *bar*

```
int foo(int a, int b) {  
    int c, d;  
    bar(1, 2, 3);  
}
```





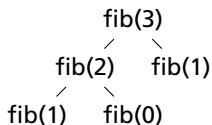
# Recursive Fibonacci

(Real C)

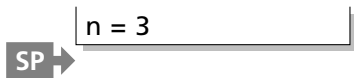
```
int fib(int n) {  
    if (n<2)  
        return 1;  
    else  
        return  
            fib(n-1)  
            +  
            fib(n-2);  
}
```

(Assembly-like C)

```
int fib(int n) {  
    int tmp1, tmp2, tmp3;  
    tmp1 = n < 2;  
    if (!tmp1) goto L1;  
    return 1;  
L1: tmp1 = n - 1;  
    tmp2 = fib(tmp1);  
L2: tmp1 = n - 2;  
    tmp3 = fib(tmp1);  
L3: tmp1 = tmp2 + tmp3;  
    return tmp1;  
}
```



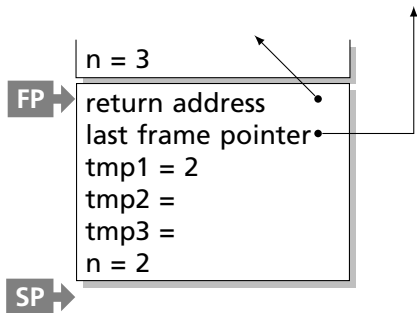
## Executing fib(3)



```
int fib(int n) {
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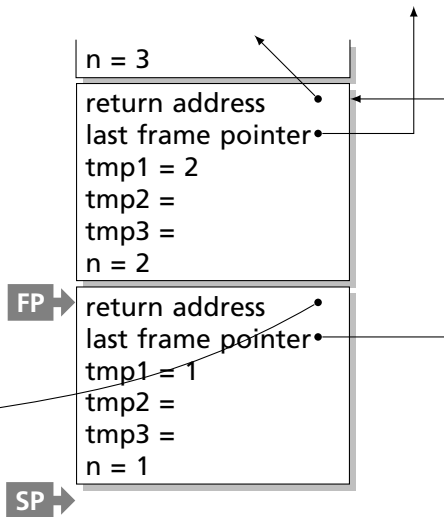
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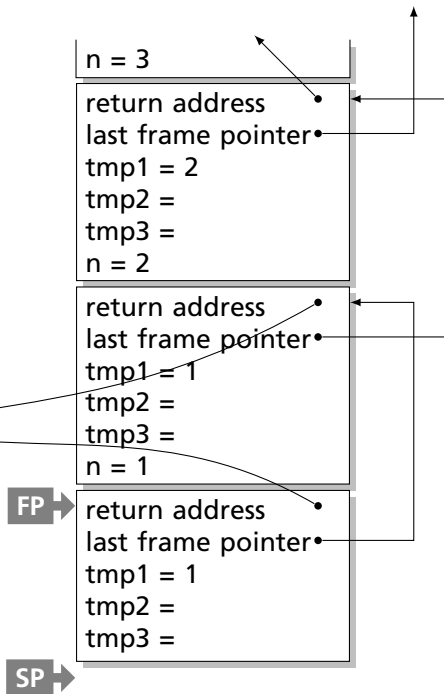
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```



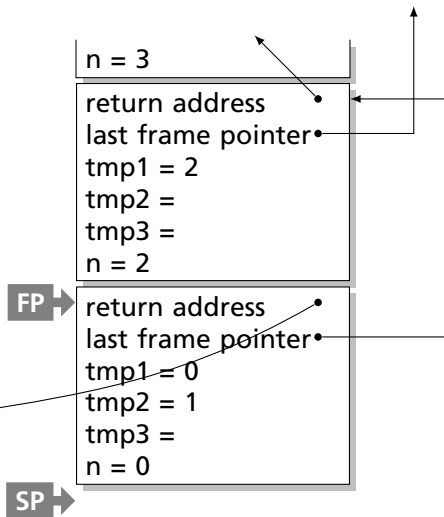
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}
```



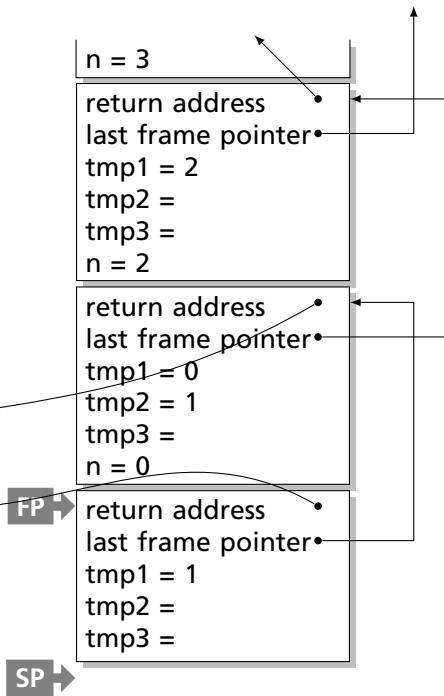
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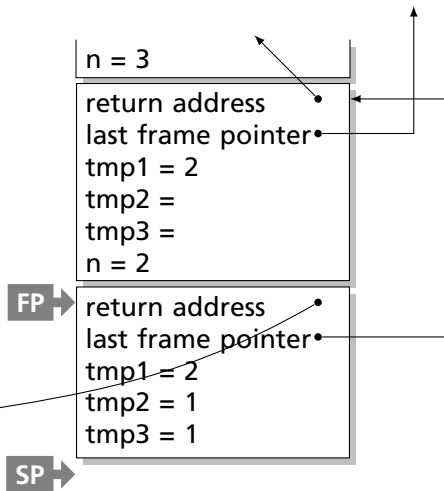
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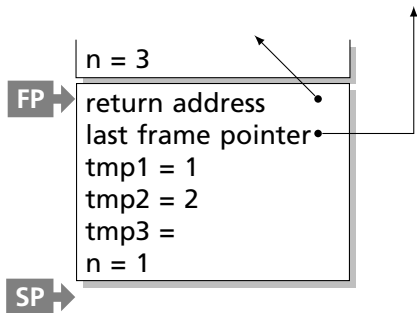
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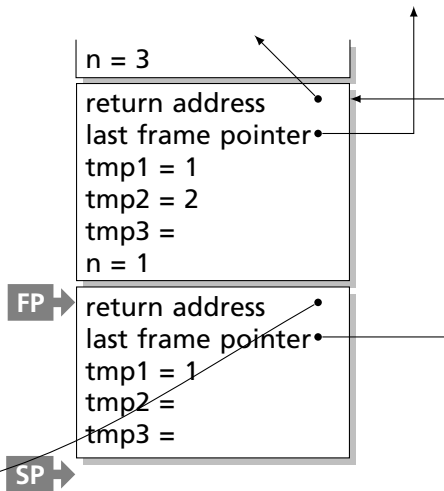
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```



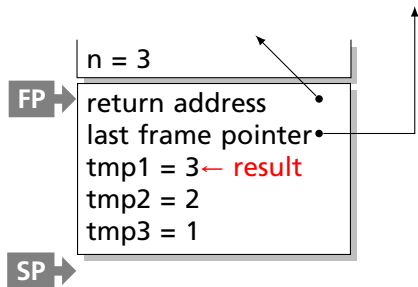
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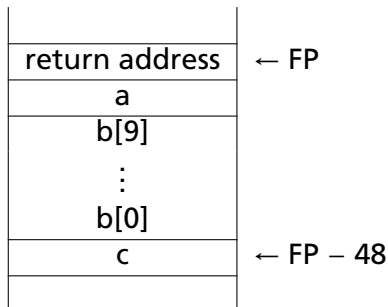
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    if (!tmp1) goto L1;  
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    tmp3 = fib(tmp1);  
L3: tmp1 = tmp2 + tmp3;  
    return tmp1;  
}
```



# Allocating Fixed-Size Arrays

Local arrays with fixed size are easy to stack.

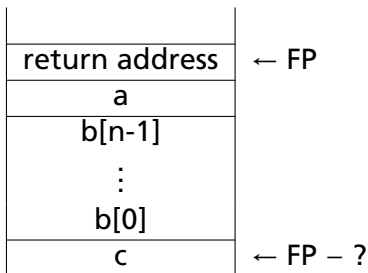
```
void foo()  
{  
    int a;  
    int b[10];  
    int c;  
}
```



# Allocating Variable-Sized Arrays

Variable-sized local arrays aren't as easy.

```
void foo(int n)
{
    int a;
    int b[n];
    int c;
}
```

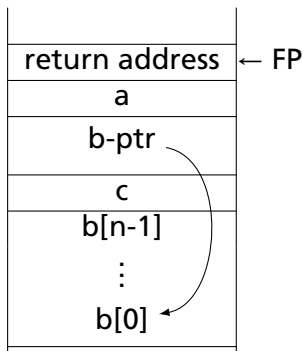


Doesn't work: generated code expects a fixed offset for c.  
Even worse for multi-dimensional arrays.

## Allocating Variable-Sized Arrays

As always:  
add a level of indirection

```
void foo(int n)
{
    int a;
    int b[n];
    int c;
}
```



Variables remain constant offset from frame pointer.

## Nesting Function Definitions

```
let articles words =  
  let report w =  
    let count = List.length  
      (List.filter ((=) w) words)  
    in w ^ ": " ^  
      string_of_int count  
  in String.concat ", "  
    (List.map report ["a"; "the"])  
in articles  
  ["the"; "plt"; "class"; "is";  
   "a"; "pain"; "in";  
   "the"; "butt"]
```

```
let count words w = List.length  
  (List.filter ((=) w) words) in  
let report words w = w ^ ": " ^  
  string_of_int (count words w) in  
let articles words =  
  String.concat ", "  
  (List.map (report words)  
   ["a"; "the"]) in  
articles  
  ["the"; "plt"; "class"; "is";  
   "a"; "pain"; "in";  
   "the"; "butt"]
```

Produces "a: 1, the: 2"

# Implementing Nested Functions with Access Links

```
let a x s =  
  let b y =  
    let c z = z + s in  
    let d w = c (w+1) in  
    d (y+1) in (* b *)  
  let e q = b (q+1) in  
  e (x+1) (* a *)
```

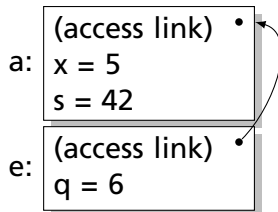
a: (access link) •  
x = 5  
s = 42

What does "a 5 42" give?



# Implementing Nested Functions with Access Links

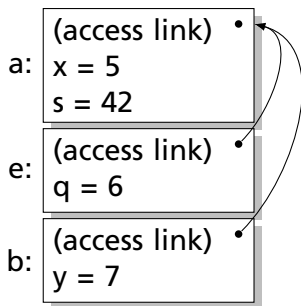
```
let a x s =  
  let b y =  
    let c z = z + s in  
    let d w = c (w+1) in  
    d (y+1) in (* b *)  
  let e q = b (q+1) in  
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# Implementing Nested Functions with Access Links

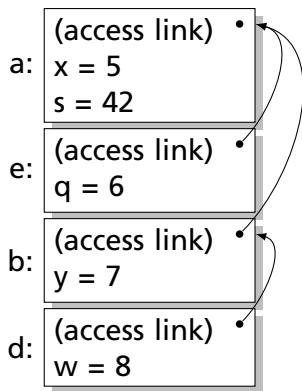
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  let b y =  
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```



What does "a 5 42" give?

# Implementing Nested Functions with Access Links

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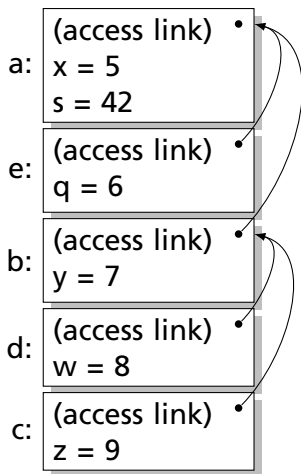


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# Implementing Nested Functions with Access Links

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let a x s =  
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```

What does "a 5 42" give?



# In-Memory Layout Issues

# Layout of Records and Unions

Modern processors have byte-addressable memory.

0  
1  
2  
3



The IBM 360 (c. 1964) helped to popularize byte-addressable memory.

Many data types (integers, addresses, floating-point numbers) are wider than a byte.

16-bit integer:            1   0

32-bit integer:    3   2   1   0



## Layout of Records and Unions

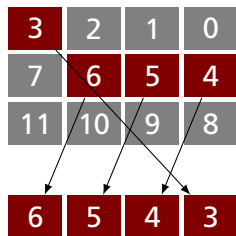
Modern memory systems read data in 32-, 64-, or 128-bit chunks:

3	2	1	0
7	6	5	4
11	10	9	8

Reading an aligned 32-bit value is fast: a single operation.

3	2	1	0
7	6	5	4
11	10	9	8

It is harder to read an unaligned value: two reads plus shifting



SPARC and ARM prohibit unaligned accesses

MIPS has special unaligned load/store instructions

x86, 68k run more slowly with unaligned accesses

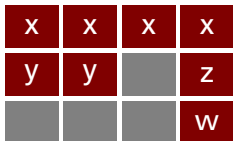
# Padding

To avoid unaligned accesses, the C compiler pads the layout of unions and records.

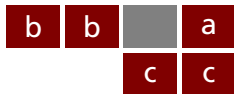
Rules:

- ▶ Each  $n$ -byte object must start on a multiple of  $n$  bytes (no unaligned accesses).
- ▶ Any object containing an  $n$ -byte object must be of size  $mn$  for some integer  $m$  (aligned even when arrayed).

```
struct padded {  
    int x;    /* 4 bytes */  
    char z;   /* 1 byte  */  
    short y;  /* 2 bytes */  
    char w;   /* 1 byte  */  
};
```



```
struct padded {  
    char a;   /* 1 byte  */  
    short b;  /* 2 bytes */  
    short c;  /* 2 bytes */  
};
```





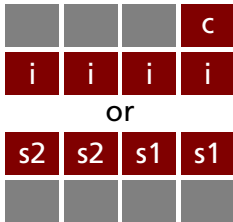
# Unions

A C *struct* has a separate space for each field; a C *union* shares one space among all fields

```
union intchar {  
    int i;    /* 4 bytes */  
    char c;  /* 1 byte  */  
};
```



```
union twostructs {  
    struct {  
        char c;    /* 1 byte */  
        int i;     /* 4 bytes */  
    } a;  
    struct {  
        short s1; /* 2 bytes */  
        short s2; /* 2 bytes */  
    } b;  
};
```



# Arrays

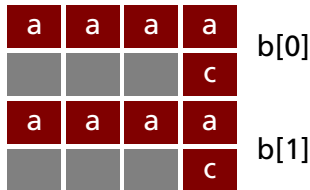
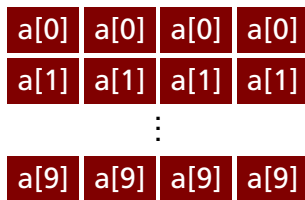


Basic policy in C: an array is just one object after another in memory.

```
int a[10];
```

This is why you need padding at the end of *structs*.

```
struct {  
    int a;  
    char c;  
} b[2];
```



# Arrays and Aggregate types

The largest primitive type  
dictates the alignment

```
struct {  
  short a;  
  short b;  
  char c;  
} d[4];
```

b	b	a	a	d[0]
a	a		c	d[1]
	c	b	b	
b	b	a	a	d[2]
a	a		c	d[3]
	c	b	b	

# Arrays of Arrays

```
char a[4];
```

a[3]	a[2]	a[1]	a[0]
------	------	------	------

```
char a[3][4];
```

a[0][3]	a[0][2]	a[0][1]	a[0][0]	a[0]
a[1][3]	a[1][2]	a[1][1]	a[1][0]	a[1]
a[2][3]	a[2][2]	a[2][1]	a[2][0]	a[2]

# The Heap

# Heap-Allocated Storage

Static works when you know everything beforehand and always need it.

Stack enables, but also requires, recursive behavior.

A *heap* is a region of memory where blocks can be allocated and deallocated in any order.

(These heaps are different than those in, e.g., heapsort)

# Dynamic Storage Allocation in C

```
struct point {
    int x, y;
};

int play_with_points(int n)
{
    int i;
    struct point *points;

    points = malloc(n * sizeof(struct point));

    for ( i = 0 ; i < n ; i++ ) {
        points[i].x = random();
        points[i].y = random();
    }

    /* do something with the array */

    free(points);
}
```

# Dynamic Storage Allocation





# Dynamic Storage Allocation



↓ free(  )

# Dynamic Storage Allocation



↓ free(  )



# Dynamic Storage Allocation



↓ free(  )



↓ malloc(  )

# Dynamic Storage Allocation



↓ free(  )



↓ malloc(  )



# Dynamic Storage Allocation

## Rules:

Each allocated block contiguous (no holes)

Blocks stay fixed once allocated

## malloc()

Find an area large enough for requested block

Mark memory as allocated

## free()

Mark the block as unallocated



# Simple Dynamic Storage Allocation

Maintaining information about free memory

Simplest: Linked list

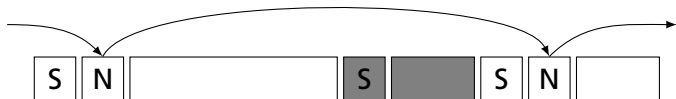
The algorithm for locating a suitable block

Simplest: First-fit

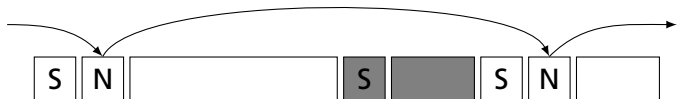
The algorithm for freeing an allocated block

Simplest: Coalesce adjacent free blocks

## Simple Dynamic Storage Allocation



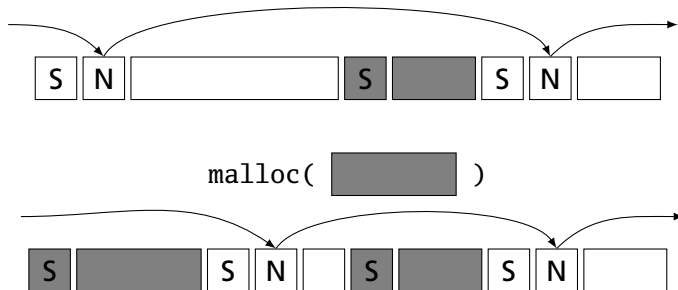
# Simple Dynamic Storage Allocation



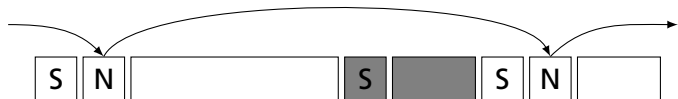
`malloc( [ ] )`



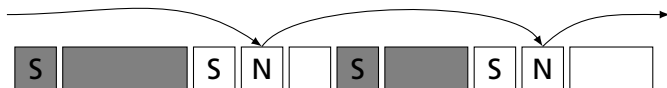
# Simple Dynamic Storage Allocation



# Simple Dynamic Storage Allocation

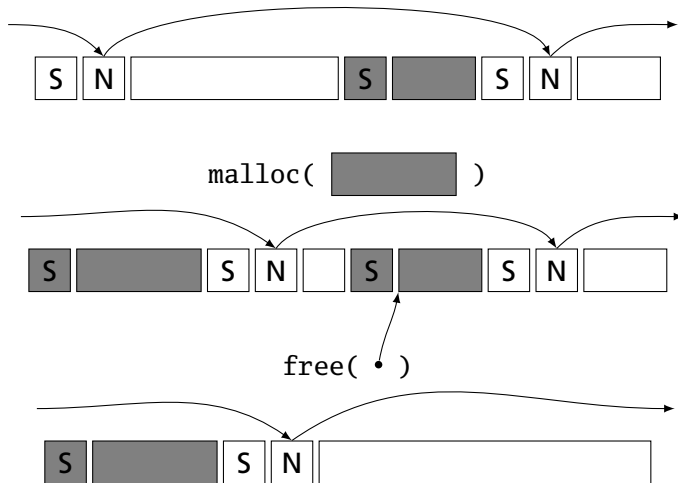


`malloc( [gray box] )`



`free( • )`

# Simple Dynamic Storage Allocation



# Dynamic Storage Allocation

Many, many other approaches.

Other “fit” algorithms

Segregation of objects by size

More clever data structures

# Heap Variants

Memory pools: Differently-managed heap areas

Stack-based pool: only free whole pool at once


- Nice for build-once data structures

Single-size-object pool:

- Fit, allocation, etc. much faster

- Good for object-oriented programs

# Fragmentation

malloc(  ) seven times give



free() four times gives



malloc(  ) ?

Need more memory; can't use fragmented memory.



Zebra

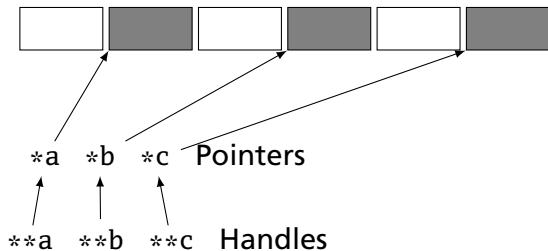


Tapir

# Fragmentation and Handles

Standard CS solution: Add another layer of indirection.

Always reference memory through "handles."

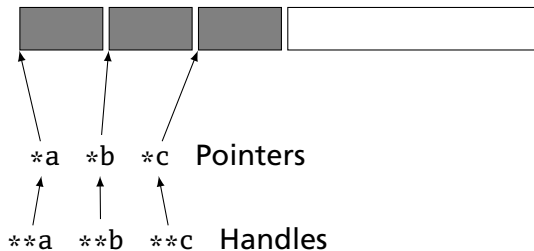


The original Macintosh did this to save memory.

# Fragmentation and Handles

Standard CS solution: Add another layer of indirection.

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The original Macintosh did this to save memory.



# Automatic Garbage Collection

# Automatic Garbage Collection

Entrust the runtime system with freeing heap objects

Now common: Java, C#, Javascript, Python, Ruby, OCaml and most functional languages

## Advantages

Much easier for the programmer

Greatly improves reliability: no memory leaks, double-freeing, or other memory management errors

## Disadvantages

Slower, sometimes unpredictably so

May consume more memory

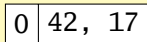


# Reference Counting

What and when to free?

- ▶ Maintain count of references to each object
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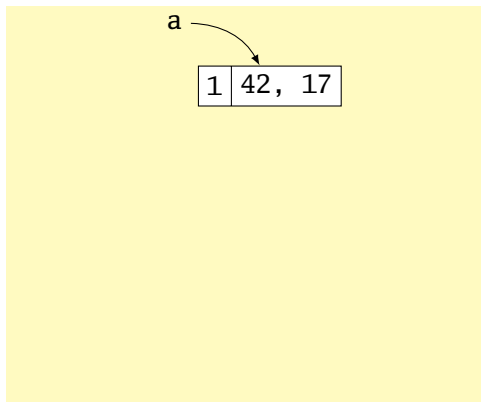
A diagram showing a memory cell with a yellow background. The cell is divided into two parts: a small box on the left containing the number '0', and a larger box on the right containing the text '42, 17'. This represents a reference count of zero and a pointer to a list containing the values 42 and 17.

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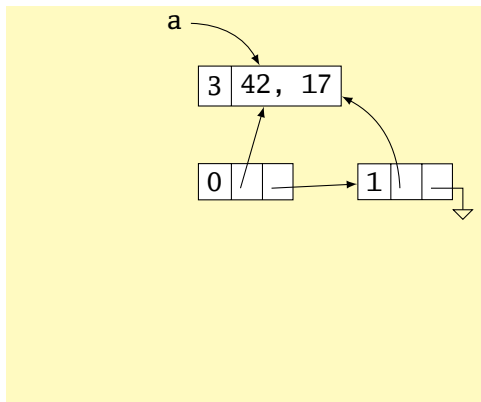


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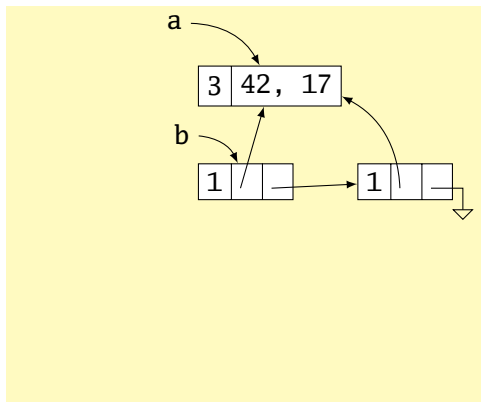


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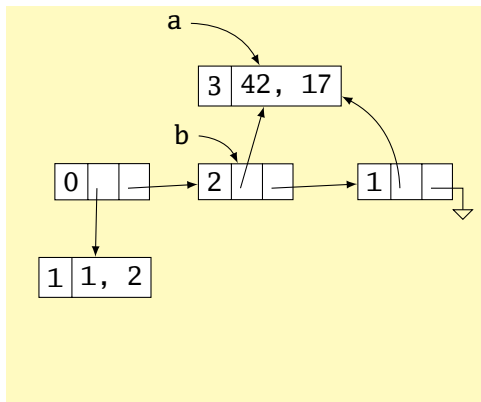


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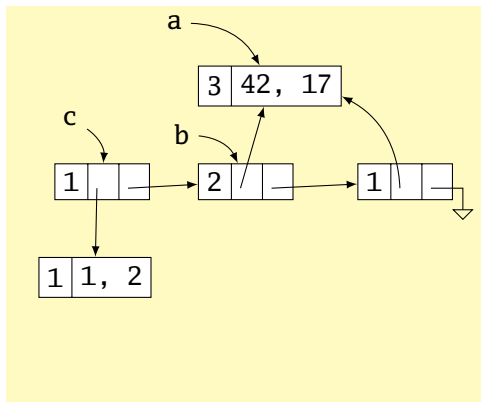


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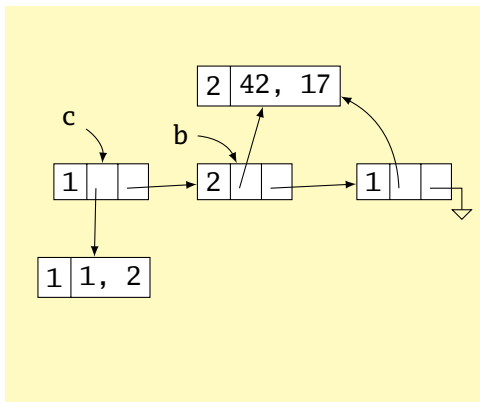


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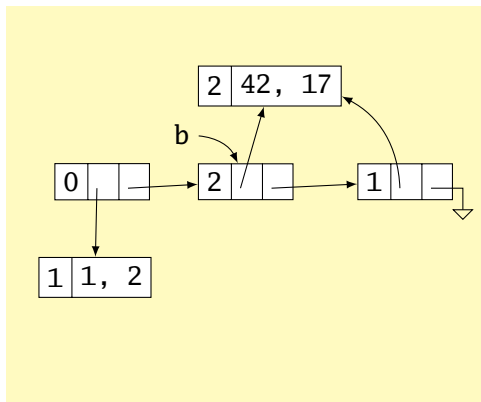


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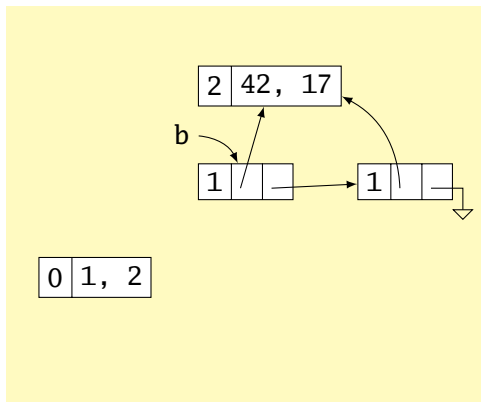


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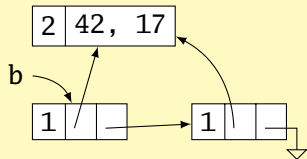


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# Issues with Reference Counting

Circular structures defy reference counting:



Neither is reachable, yet both have non-zero reference counts.

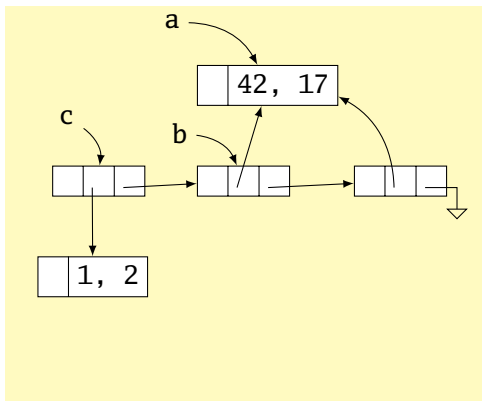
High overhead (must update counts constantly), although incremental

# Mark-and-Sweep

What and when to free?

- ▶ Stop-the-world algorithm invoked when memory full
- ▶ Breadth-first-search marks all reachable memory
- ▶ All unmarked items freed

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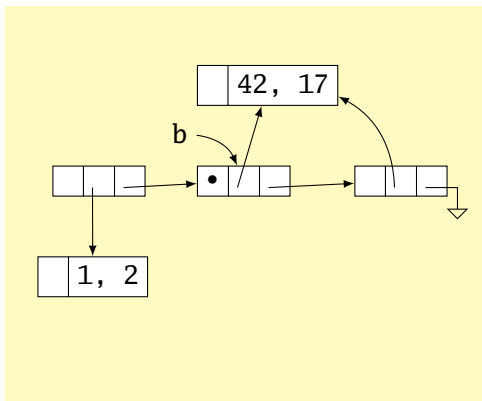


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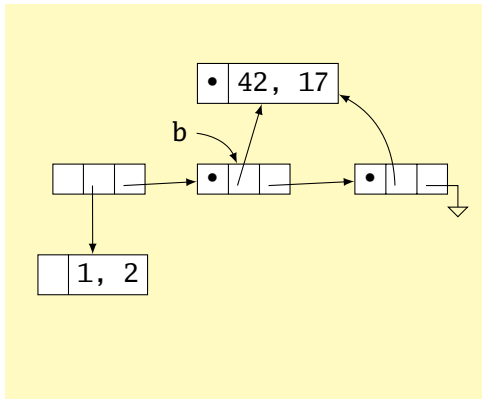


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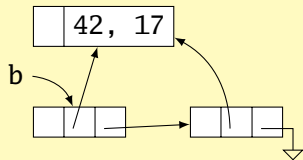


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# Mark-and-Sweep

Mark-and-sweep is faster overall; may induce big pauses

Mark-and-compact variant also moves or copies reachable objects to eliminate fragmentation

Incremental garbage collectors try to avoid doing everything at once

Most objects die young; generational garbage collectors segregate heap objects by age

Parallel garbage collection tricky

Real-time garbage collection tricky

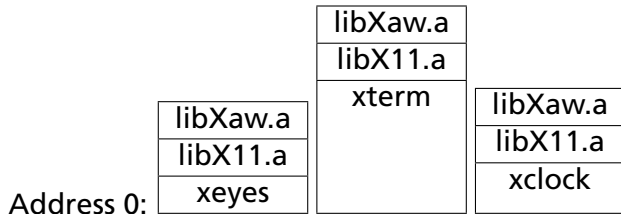
# Shared Libraries and Dynamic Linking



## Shared Libraries and Dynamic Linking

The 1980s GUI/WIMP revolution required many large libraries (the Athena widgets, Motif, etc.)

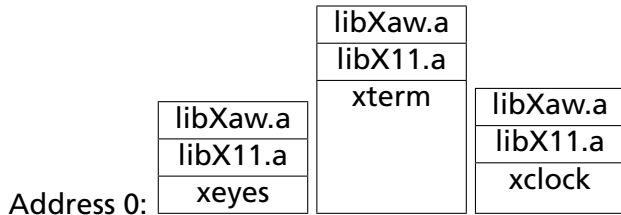
Under a *static linking* model, each executable using a library gets a copy of that library's code.



## Shared Libraries and Dynamic Linking

The 1980s GUI/WIMP revolution required many large libraries (the Athena widgets, Motif, etc.)

Under a *static linking* model, each executable using a library gets a copy of that library's code.



Wasteful: running many GUI programs at once fills memory with **nearly identical** copies of each library.

Something had to be done: another level of indirection.

## Shared Libraries: First Attempt

Most code makes assumptions about its location.

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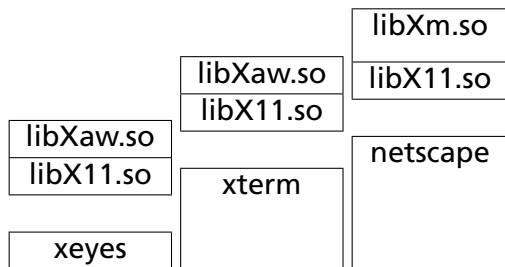


Obvious disadvantage: must ensure each new shared library located at a new address.

Works fine if there are only a few libraries; tended to discourage their use.

## Shared Libraries

Problem fundamentally is that each program may need to see different libraries **each at a different address**.





# Position-Independent Code

Solution: Require the code for libraries to be position-independent. **Make it so they can run anywhere in memory.**

As always, add another level of indirection:

- ▶ All branching is PC-relative
- ▶ All data must be addressed relative to a base register.
- ▶ All branching to and from this code must go through a jump table.

# Position-Independent Code for bar()

## Normal unlinked code

```
save %sp, -112, %sp
sethi %hi(0), %o0
    R_SPARC_HI22 .bss
mov %o0, %o0
    R_SPARC_LO10 .bss
sethi %hi(0), %o1
    R_SPARC_HI22 a
mov %o1, %o1
    R_SPARC_LO10 a
call 14
    R_SPARC_WDISP30 strcpy
nop
sethi %hi(0), %o0
    R_SPARC_HI22 .bss
mov %o0, %o0
    R_SPARC_LO10 .bss
call 24
    R_SPARC_WDISP30 baz
nop
ret
restore
```

## gcc -fpic -shared

```
save %sp, -112, %sp
sethi %hi(0x10000), %l7
call 8e0 ! add PC to %l7
add %l7, 0x198, %l7
ld [ %l7 + 0x20 ], %o0
ld [ %l7 + 0x24 ], %o1
```

Actually just a stub

```
call 10a24 ! strcpy
```

```
nop
ld [ %l7 + 0x20 ], %o0
```

call is PC-relative

```
call 10a3c ! baz
```

```
nop
ret
restore
```

# Objects and Inheritance

# Single Inheritance

Simple: Add new fields to end of the object

Fields in base class always at same offset in derived class  
(compiler never reorders)

Consequence: Derived classes can never remove fields

## C++

```
class Shape {  
    double x, y;  
};  
  
class Box : Shape {  
    double h, w;  
};  
  
class Circle : Shape {  
    double r;  
};
```

## Equivalent C

```
struct Shape {  
    double x, y;  
};  
  
struct Box {  
    double x, y;  
    double h, w;  
};  
  
struct Circle {  
    double x, y;  
    double r;  
};
```

# Virtual Functions

```
class Shape {  
    virtual void draw(); // Invoked by object's run-time class  
}; // not its compile-time type.  
  
class Line : public Shape {  
    void draw();  
}  
  
class Arc : public Shape {  
    void draw();  
};  
  
Shape *s[10];  
s[0] = new Line;  
s[1] = new Arc;  
s[0]->draw(); // Invoke Line::draw()  
s[1]->draw(); // Invoke Arc::draw()
```

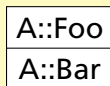
# Virtual Functions

Trick: add to each object a pointer to the virtual table for its type, filled with pointers to the virtual functions.

Like the objects themselves, the virtual table for each derived type begins identically.

```
struct A {  
    int x;  
    virtual void Foo();  
    virtual void Bar();  
};  
  
struct B : A {  
    int y;  
    virtual void Foo();  
    virtual void Baz();  
};  
  
A a1;  
A a2;  
B b1;
```

A's Vtbl



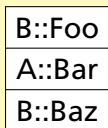
a1



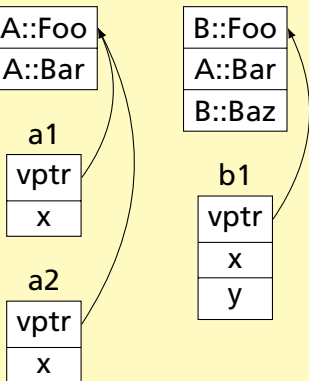
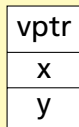
a2



B's Vtbl



b1



# Exceptions



# C++'s Exceptions

```
struct Except {} ex; // This struct functions as an exception

void top(void) {
    try {
        child();
    } catch (Except e) { // throw sends control here
        printf("oops\n");
    }
}

void child() {
    child2();
}

void child2() {
    throw ex; // Pass control up to the catch block
}
```

The diagram illustrates the flow of control during an exception. A red arrow labeled '1' points from the end of the `try` block in `top()` to the start of the `child()` function. A red arrow labeled '2' points from the end of the `child2()` function to the `throw` statement. A blue arrow labeled '3' points from the `throw` statement back to the `catch` block in `top()`, showing that control is passed up to the catch block.



## C's setjmp/longjmp: Idiosyncratic Exceptions

```
#include <setjmp.h>

jmp_buf closure;          /* return address, stack & frame ptrs. */

void top(void) {
    switch ( setjmp(closure) ) { /* normal: store closure, return 0 */
                                /* longjmp jumps here, returns 1 */
    case 0: child();          /* unexceptional case */
            break;
    case 1: break;          /* longjmp( ,1) called */
    }
}

void child() {
    child2();
}

void child2() {
    longjmp(closure, 1);
}
```

The diagram illustrates the control flow of the provided C code. Red arrows indicate the normal execution path, while blue arrows indicate the path taken by `longjmp`.

- 1**: The `setjmp(closure)` call in `top()` returns 0, leading to the `case 0` block.
- 2**: Execution reaches `child()` and then `child2()`.
- 3**: `child2()` calls `longjmp(closure, 1)`.
- 4**: `longjmp` jumps back to the `setjmp(closure)` call in `top()`.
- 5**: The `setjmp(closure)` call now returns 1, leading to the `case 1` block.

# Implementing Exceptions

One way: maintain a stack of exception handlers

```
try {  
    child();  
} catch (Ex e) {  
    foo();  
}
```

```
void child() {  
    child2();  
}
```

```
void child2() {  
    throw ex;  
}
```

```
push(Ex, Handler); // Push handler on stack  
  
child();  
pop(); // Normal termination  
goto Exit; // Jump over "catch"  
Handler:  
    foo(); // Body of "catch"  
Exit:
```

```
void child() {  
    child2();  
}
```

```
void child2() {  
    throw(ex); // Unroll stack; find handler  
}
```

Incurs overhead, even when no exceptions thrown

# Implementing Exceptions with Tables

Q: When an exception is *thrown*, where was the last *try*?

A: Consult a table: relevant handler or “pop” for every PC

1	<code>void foo() {</code>		
2			
3	<code>try {</code>		
4	<code>bar();</code>	5: query	
5	<code>} catch (Ex1 e) {</code>		1-2 Pop stack
6	<code>a();</code>	6: handle	3-5 Handler @ 5 for Ex1
7	<code>}</code>		
8	<code>}</code>		
9			
10	<code>void bar() {</code>	4: pop stack	
11	<code>baz();</code>	3: query	
12	<code>}</code>		6-15 Pop stack
13			
14	<code>void baz() {</code>		
15		2: pop stack	
16	<code>try {</code>		
17	<code>throw ex1;</code>	1: query	
18	<code>} catch (Ex2 e) {</code>		16-18 Handler @ 18 for Ex2
19	<code>b();</code>		
20	<code>}</code>		
21	<code>}</code>		19-21 Pop stack