

## Accessing String Elements

13. string Operations 1

A copy of the character at a particular position in a `string` variable may be obtained by using the member function:

```
char at(int position);  
// position:    position of desired element
```

For example:

```
string s1 = "mairsy doates and doesy doates";  
char ch1 = s1.at(5);           // ch1 == 'y'
```

Note that the positions in a string are numbered sequentially, starting at zero. So:

```
for (int i = 7; i <= 12; i++)  
    cout << s1.at(i) << ' ';
```

would print: d o a t e s

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The character at a particular position in a `string` variable may also be referenced by using an index with the `string` object, similar to an array access.

For example:

```
string s1 = "mairsy doates and doesy doates";  
char ch1 = s1[5];           // ch1 == 'y'
```

The primary difference between `at()` and `[]` with `string` variables is that `[]` returns a reference to the `string` element, so:

```
for (int i = 7; i <= 12; i++) {  
    s1[i] = 'x';  
    cout << s1[i] << ' ';  
}
```

would print: x x x x x x

Inserting One `string` into Another13. `string` Operations 3

A string of characters may be inserted at a particular position in a string variable by using the member function:

```
string& insert(int startinsert, string s);  
  
// startinsert:   position at which insert begins  
// s:            string to be inserted
```

For example:

```
string Name = "Fred Flintstone";  
string MiddleInitial = " G.";  
Name.insert(4, MiddleInitial);  
cout << Name << endl;
```

prints: Fred G. Flintstone

The function returns (a reference to) the `string s1` which can be assigned to another `string` variable if desired; but the content of the original `string` is changed in any case.

Inserting a Part of one String into Another 13. `string` Operations 4

Another version of the `insert` function takes four parameters:

```
string& insert(int startinsert, string s, int startcopy,  
              int numtocopy);  
  
// startinsert:   position at which insert begins  
// s:            string to be inserted  
// startcopy:     position (in s) of first element to be used  
// numtocopy:     number of elements (of s) to be used
```

For example:

```
string s4 = "0123456789";  
string s5 = "abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy";  
s4.insert(3, s5, 7, 5);  
cout << "s4: " << s4 << endl;
```

prints: s4: 012hijkl3456789

Note: a sequence of characters from a string is called a substring.

## Extracting a Substring

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A substring of a `string` may be extracted (copied) and assigned to another by using the member function:

```
string& substr(int startcopy, int numtocopy);  
  
// startcopy:   position at which substring begins  
// numtocopy:   length of substring
```

For example:

```
string s4 = "Fred Flintstone";  
string s5 = s4.substr(5, 10);  
cout << s4 << endl << s5 << endl;
```

prints: Fred Flintstone  
Flintstone

## Erasing a Substring

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A substring may be deleted from a `string` by using the member function:

```
string& erase(int starterase, int numtoerase);  
  
// starterase:   position of first element to be erased  
// numtoerase:   number of elements to be erased
```

For example:

```
string s6 = "abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy";  
s6.erase(3, 5);  
cout << "s6: " << s6 << endl;
```

would print: s6: abcijklmnopqrstuvwxy

## Replacing a Substring

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A substring may be erased and replaced by another substring by using the member function:

```
string& replace(int startreplace, int numtoreplace,
               string s);

// startreplace: position of first element to be replaced
// numtoreplace: number of elements to be replaced
```

For example:

```
string s6 = "abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy";
string s7 = "Fred Flintstone";
s6.replace(3, 5, "01234");
s7.replace(0, 4, "Bradley");
cout << "s6: " << s6 << endl;
cout << "s7: " << s7 << endl;
```

would print: s6: abc01234ijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
s7: Bradley Flintstone

## Searching for a Substring

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A string may be searched for an occurrence of a substring by using the member function:

```
int find(string s, int startsearch);

// s:           substring to be searched for
// startsearch: position at which to begin search
// returns      position at which matching substring
//             starts; -1 if no match is found
```

For example:

```
string s1 = "To be or not to be, that is the question.";
int loc = s1.find("be", 0);
int newloc = s1.find("be", loc + 1);
cout << loc << '\t' << newloc << endl;
```

prints: 3 16

Note: using `loc` instead of `loc + 1` in the second call would result in finding the first occurrence again.

## Just for Fun

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Putting several of the member functions together:

```
string s1 = "But I have heard it works, even if you don't believe in it.";

s1.erase(0, 4); // erase initial "But "

s1.replace(s1.find("even", 0), 4, "only"); // change "even" to "only"

s1.replace(s1.find("don't ", 0), 5, ""); // erase "don't " by replacing it
// with the empty string

cout << s1 << endl;
```

prints: I have heard it works, only if you believe in it.

## And That's Just the Beginning

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This chapter includes only a minimal introduction to the world of string objects in C++.

There are many additional member functions. For example, there are ten different `replace` member functions in the standard C++ string library.

The interested reader is referred to Bjarne Stroustrup's excellent *The C++ Programming Language, 3rd Ed.* for further details.