

Basics of the C++ Class

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Rationale for the C++ Class

C++ Basics 2

Bjarne Stroustrup from *The C++ Programming Language*, 3rd Edition, page 223:

The aim of the C++ class construct is to provide the programmer with a tool for creating new types that can be used as conveniently as the built-in types.

A type is a concrete representation of a concept.

For example, the C++ built-in type `double` with its operations `+`, `-`, `*`, etc., provides a concrete approximation of the mathematical concept of a real number. A class is a user-defined type.

We design a new type to provide a definition of a concept that has no counterpart among the built-in types.

A program that provides types that closely match the concepts of the application tend to be easier to understand and to modify than a program that does not.

A well-chosen set of user-defined types makes a program more concise. In addition, it makes many sorts of code analysis feasible. In particular, it enables the compiler to detect illegal uses of objects that would otherwise remain undetected until the program is thoroughly tested.

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Rationale for the C++ Class

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The C++ class type provides a means to encapsulate heterogeneous data elements and the operations that can be performed on them in a single entity.

Like the struct type, a class type may contain data elements, called data members, of any simple or structured type (including class types).

Also like the struct type[†], a class type may also contain functions, called function members or methods, that may be invoked to perform operations on the data members.

The class type also provides mechanisms for controlling access to members, both data and function, via the use of the keywords public, private and protected.

A variable of a class type is referred to as an object, or as an instance of the class.

[†] What's the difference? Members of a struct type are, by default, public; members of a class type are, by default, private.

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Encapsulation and Information Hiding

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The C++ class provides support for both...

Encapsulation

A C++ class provides a mechanism for bundling data and the operations that may be performed on that data into a single entity.

Information Hiding

A C++ class provides a mechanism for specifying access restrictions on both the data and the operations which it encapsulates.

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Interface for a Simple Date Class

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Here's a simple class type declaration:

```
class DateType {
public:
    DateType();
    DateType(int newMonth, int newDay,
             int newYear); // constructors
    int YearIs( ) const;    // returns Year
    int MonthIs( ) const;  // returns Month
    int DayIs( ) const;    // returns Day
private:
    int Year;
    int Month;
    int Day;
};
```

This statement defines a new data type; it does not declare a variable of that type; no storage is allocated.

Keyword "const" applied in a member function prototype specifies that the function is not permitted to modify any data members.

The DateType class incorporates three data members, Year, Month, and Day, and four function members.

Typically, the class type declaration is incorporated into a header file, providing a user with a description of the interface to the class, while the implementations of the class member functions are contained in a cpp file.

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Simple Date Class

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Given the class type declaration, a user may declare variables of that type in the usual way:

```
DateType Today, Tomorrow, AnotherDay;
```

Unlike simple types (such as int), default initializations are performed, as specified in the default (parameterless) constructor. If the class does not provide such a constructor, one is automatically provided, but it will not initialize data members in any useful way.

The data members of the DateType class are declared as being private. The effect is that the data members cannot be accessed in the way fields of a struct variable are accessed:

```
cout << Today.Month;
```

will generate a compile-time error. A user of a DateType variable may access only those members which were declared public. So, the user could print the Month field of Today by using the public member function MonthIs():

```
cout << Today.MonthIs();
```

Note the use of the field selection operator '.'.

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Member Function Definitions

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Of course, the member functions of a class type must be defined. Moreover, it is possible for two different class types to have member functions with the same names. In fact, you've already seen that with I/O streams.

To disambiguate the connection between the function being defined and the class type to which it belongs, the function definition must indicate the relevant class type name by using the scope resolution operator (::):

```
// DateType::MonthIs()
// Pre: self has been initialized
// Post: Month field of self is returned
int DateType::MonthIs() const {

    return Month;
}
```

Function definition (implementation) goes in cpp file.

Note that, as a member function of class DateType, Initialize() may access the data members directly:

Members (data or function) declared at the outermost level of a class type declaration have **class scope**; that is, they are accessible by any function member of an instance of that class type.

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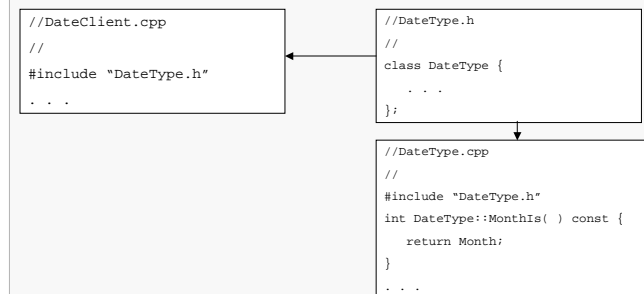
Implementation Organization

C++ Basics 8

For separate compilation, a typical organization of the class implementation would involve two files:

```
DateType.h    class declaration
DateType.cpp  function member definitions
```

Suppose that a user of the DateType class writes a program consisting of a single source file, DateClient.cpp. Then the user would incorporate the DateType class files as follows:



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Using the Member Functions

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In addition to using the class member functions directly, the user of a class may also implement higher-level functions that make use of the member functions. For example:

```
enum RelationType {Precedes, Same, Follows};

RelationType ComparedTo(DateType dateA, DateType dateB) {
    if (dateA.YearIs() < dateB.YearIs())
        return Precedes;
    if (dateA.YearIs() > dateB.YearIs())
        return Follows;
    if (dateA.MonthIs() < dateB.MonthIs())
        return Precedes;
    if (dateA.MonthIs() > dateB.MonthIs())
        return Follows;
    if (dateA.DayIs() < dateB.DayIs())
        return Precedes;
    if (dateA.DayIs() > dateB.DayIs())
        return Follows;
    return Same;
}
```

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Using the Member Functions

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Then:

```
DateType Tomorrow, AnotherDay;
Tomorrow.Initialize(10, 6, 1881);
AnotherDay.Initialize(10, 12, 1885);

if ( ComparedTo(Tomorrow, AnotherDay) == Same ) {
    cout << "Think about it, Scarlett!" << endl;
}
```

Of course, the DateType class designer could also have implemented a member function for comparing two dates.

In fact, that would be more natural and more useful, since there is one natural way for the comparison to be (logically) defined.

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Additional DateType Methods

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```
// add to DateType.h:
enum RelationType {Precedes, Same, Follows}; // file scoped
RelationType ComparedTo(DateType dateA); // to public section
```

```
// add implementation to DateType.cpp:
RelationType DateType::ComparedTo(DateType otherDate) {
    if (Year < otherDate.YearIs())
        return Precedes;
    if (Year > otherDate.YearIs())
        return Follows;
    if (Month < otherDate.MonthIs())
        return Precedes;
    if (Month > otherDate.MonthIs())
        return Follows;
    if (Day < otherDate.DayIs())
        return Precedes;
    if (Day > otherDate.DayIs())
        return Follows;
    return Same;
}
```

```
if ( Tomorrow.ComparedTo(AnotherDay) == Same )
    cout << "Think about it, Scarlett!" << endl;
```

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Using the Methods

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Another example:

```
void PrintDate(DateType aDate, ostream& Out) {
    PrintMonth( aDate.MonthIs( ), Out );
    Out << ' ' << aDate.DayIs( )
        << ", " << setw(4) << aDate.YearIs( ) << endl;
}

void PrintMonth(int Month, ostream& Out) {
    switch (Month) {
        case 1: cout << "January"; return;
        case 2: cout << "February"; return;
        . . .
        case 12: cout << "December"; return;
        default: cout << "Juvember";
    }
}
```

These are not natural candidates to be member functions...

Then:

```
DateType LeapDay;
LeapDay.Initialize(2, 29, 2000);
PrintDate(LeapDay, cout);
```

will print: February 29, 2000

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Taxonomy of Member Functions

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Member functions implement operations on objects. The types of operations available may be classified in a number of ways. Here is one common taxonomy:

Constructor an operation that creates a new instance of a class (i.e., an object)

Mutator an operation that changes the state of one, or more, of the data members of an object

Observer (reporter) an operation that reports the state of one or more of the data members of an object, without changing them

Iterator an operation that allows processing of all the components of a data structure sequentially

In the `DateType` class, `DateType()` is a constructor while `YearIs()`, `Months()` and `Days()` are observers. `DateType` does not provide any iterators or mutators.

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Default Constructor

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The `DateType` class has two explicit constructor member functions.

It is generally desirable to provide a default constructor, since that guarantees that any declaration of an object of that type must be initialized. :

```
DateType::DateType( ) {  
    Month = Day = 1;    // default date  
    Year = 1980;  
}
```

The "default" constructor is simply a constructor that takes no parameters.

Constructor Rules

- the name of the constructor member must be that of the class
- the constructor has no return value; `void` would be an error
- the default constructor is called automatically if an instance of the class is defined; if the constructor requires any parameters they must be listed after the variable name at the point of declaration

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Other Constructors

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The `DateType` class also has a nondefault constructor. This provides a user with the option of picking the date to be represented (essential since there are no mutator member functions).

```
DateType::DateType(int aMonth, int aDay, int aYear) {  
    if ( ( aMonth >= 1 && aMonth <= 12)  
        && ( aDay >= 1 ) && ( aYear >= 1 ) ) {  
        Month = aMonth;  
        Day = aDay;  
        Year = aYear;  
    }  
    else {  
        Month = Day = 1;    // handling user error  
        Year = 1980;  
    }  
}
```

The compiler determines which constructor is invoked by applying the rules for overloaded function names (slide ??).

When the constructor requires parameters they must be listed after the variable name at the point of declaration:

```
DateType aDate(10, 15, 2000);  
DateType bDate(4, 0, 2005);    // set to 1/1/1980
```

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Default Constructor Use

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If you do not provide a constructor method, the compiler will automatically create a simple default constructor. This automatic default constructor:

- takes no parameters
- calls the default constructor for each data member that is an object of another class
- provides no initialization for data members that are not objects

Given the limitations of the automatic default constructor:

Always implement your own default constructor when you design a class!

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Overloading, Briefly

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In C++ it is legal, although not always wise, to declare two or more functions with the same name. This is called overloading.

However, it must be possible for the compiler to determine which definition is referred to by each function call. When the compiler encounters a function call and the function name is overloaded, the following criteria are used (in the order listed) to resolve which function definition is to be used:

Considering types of the actual and formal parameters:

1. Exact match (no conversions or only trivial ones like array name to pointer)
2. Match using promotions (bool to int; char to int; float to double, etc.)
3. Match using standard conversions (int to double; double to int; etc.)
4. Match using user-defined conversions (not covered yet)
5. Match using the ellipsis . . . in a function declaration (ditto)

Clear as mud, right? Keep this simple for now. Only overload a function name if you want two or more logically similar functions, like the constructors on the previous slides, and then only if the parameter lists involve different numbers of parameters or at least significantly different types of parameters.

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Operator Overloading

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Standard Operator Overloading

C++ language operators, (e.g., “==”, “++”, etc.) can be overloaded to operate upon user-defined types.

```
// add to DateType.h:
bool operator==(Datetype otherDate) const ;
```

```
// add to DateType.cpp:
bool dateType::operator==(Datetype otherDate) const {
    return( (Day == otherdate.Day ) &&
            (Month == otherDate.Month ) &&
            (Year == otherDate.Year ) );
}
```

```
DateType aDate(10, 15, 2000);
DateType bDate(10, 15, 2001);
```

```
if (aDate == bDate) { . . . }
```

When logically appropriate, overloading relational operators intelligently allows users to treat objects of a user-defined type as naturally as the simple built-in types.

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Default Function Arguments

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Technique provided to allow formal parameters to be assigned default values that are used when the corresponding actual parameter is omitted.

```
// add to Datetype.h
DateType::DateType(int aMonth = 1, int aDay = 1, int aYear = 1980);
```

The default parameter values are provided as initializations in the parameter list in the function prototype, but not in its implementation.

```
// add to DateType.cpp
DateType::DateType(int aMonth, int aDay, int aYear){
    if ( (aMonth >= 1 && aMonth <= 12)
        && (aDay >= 1) && (aYear >= 1) ) {
        Month = aMonth;
        Day = aDay;
        Year = aYear;
    }
    else {
        Month = Day = 1; // default date
        Year = 1980;
    }
}
```

This allows the omission of the default constructor, since default values are provided for all the parameters. In fact, including the default constructor now would result in a compile-time error.

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Default Function Arguments

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If a default argument is omitted in the call, the compiler automatically inserts the default value in the call.

```
DateType dDate(2,29); // Feb 29, 1980
DateType eDate(3); // March 1, 1980
DateType fDate(); // Jan 1, 1980
```

Restriction: omitted parameters in the call must be the rightmost parameters.

```
DateType dDate(,29); // error
```

Be very careful if you mix the use of overloading with the use of default function parameters.

Default parameter values may be used with any type of function, not just constructors. In fact, not just with member functions of a class.

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Default Arguments Usage

C++ Basics 21

Default Arguments in prototypes

- Omitted arguments in the function prototype must be the rightmost arguments.

Default Arguments - Guidelines

- Default arguments are specified in the first declaration/definition of the function, (i.e. the prototype).
- Default argument values should be specified with constants.
- In the parameter list in function declarations, all default arguments must be the rightmost arguments.
- In calls to functions with > 1 default argument, all arguments following the first (omitted) default argument must also be omitted.

Default Arguments and Constructors

- Default argument constructors can replace the need for multiple constructors.
- Default argument constructors ensure that no object will be created in a non-initialized state.
- Constructors with completely defaulted parameter lists, (can be invoked with no arguments), becomes the class default constructor, (of which there can be only one).

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Inline Member Functions

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Class declaration inline functions

- inline functions should be placed in header files to allow compiler to generate the function copies.

```
class DateType {
public:
    DateType(int newMonth = 1, int newDay = 1,
             int newYear = 1980);
    int YearIs () const {return Year};
    int MonthIs ()const {return Month};
    int DayIs () const {return Day};
private:
    int Year, Month, Day;
};
```

- Member functions defined in a class declaration are implicitly inlined.
- Efficiency is traded off at the expense of violating the information hiding by allowing the class clients to see the implementation.
- Reference to the class data members by the inline functions before their actual definition is perfectly acceptable due to the class scoping.
- To avoid confusion, the private members can be defined first in the class or the inline functions can be explicitly defined after the class declaration, (but in the header file).

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Properties of a Good Class

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A well-designed class will exhibit the following characteristics:

abstraction

correctness

safety

efficiency

generality

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Features of a Solid C++ Class

C++ Basics 24

In all cases:

Explicit default constructor

Guarantees that every declared instance of the class will be initialized in some controlled manner.

If objects of the class contain pointers to dynamically-allocated storage:

Explicit destructor

Prevents memory waste.

Copy constructor

Implicitly used when copying an object during parameter passing or initialization. Prevents destructor aliasing problem.

Assignment operator

Implicitly used when an object is assigned to another. Prevents destructor aliasing problem.

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Example – Integer Stack Class Interface

C++ Basics 25

```
// Stack.h - conditional compilation directives omitted to save space
class Stack {
private:
    int Capacity;           // current stack array size
    int Top;               // first available index in stack array
    int* Stk;              // stack array (allocated dynamically)
public:
    Stack(int InitSize);   // construct new stack with Capacity InitSize
    bool Push(int toInsert); // push toInsert on top of stack, increasing
                            // stack array dimension if necessary
    int Pop();             // remove and return element at top of stack
    int Peek() const;     // return copy of element at top of stack
    bool isEmpty() const; // indicate whether stack is currently empty
    bool isFull() const;  // indicate whether stack is currently full
    ~Stack();              // deallocate stack array
};
```

- specifies the data members and function members that all Stack objects will have
- imposes access restrictions via public and private sections
- separates user interface from implementation

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Stack Class Constructor and Destructor

C++ Basics 26

```
// Stack.cpp
#include "Stack.h"
#include <new>
using namespace std;

Stack::Stack(int InitSize) {
    Capacity = InitSize;
    Top = 0;
    Stk = new(nothrow) int[Capacity];
    if (Stk == NULL) Capacity = 0;
}

Stack::~Stack() {
    delete [] Stk;
}
```

Note dynamic allocation of stack array. The use of "nothrow" guarantees that if the memory allocation fails then Stk will be set to NULL.

An explicit destructor is needed since a Stack object contains a pointer to memory that is allocated dynamically on the system heap. If the implementation does not provide a destructor, the default destructor will NOT deallocate that memory.

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Stack::Push()

C++ Basics 27

```
// . . . Stack.cpp continued

bool Stack::Push(int toInsert) {
    if (Top == Capacity) {
        int* tmpStk = new(nothrow) int[2*Capacity];
        if (tmpStk == NULL)
            return false;
        for (int Idx = 0; Idx < Capacity; Idx++) {
            tmpStk[Idx] = Stk[Idx];
        }
        delete [] Stk;
        Stk = tmpStk;
        Capacity = 2*Capacity;
    }
    Stk[Top] = toInsert;
    Top++;
    return true;
}
```

If the Stack array is full, we attempt to allocate a larger array. If that succeeds, we copy the contents of the old Stack array to the new one, delete the old one, and then retarget the old Stack array pointer.

As far as user can tell, underlying structure could be a linked list instead of an array.

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Stack::Pop() and Stack::Peek()

C++ Basics 28

```
int Stack::Pop() {
    if ( (Top > 0) && (Top < Capacity) ) {
        Top--;
        return Stk[Top];
    }
    return 0;
}

int Stack::Peek() const {
    if ( (Top > 0) && (Top < Capacity) )
        return Stk[Top-1];
    return 0;
}
```

If the test Top > 0 were omitted, a call to Pop() when the Stack was empty would result in an invalid array access.

As designed, Pop() and Peek() have no way to indicate failure due to an empty stack.

Use of keyword "const" in member function declaration specifies that function is not allowed to modify the value of any data member.

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Stack::isEmpty() and Stack::isFull()

C++ Basics 29

```
bool Stack::isEmpty() const {
    return (Top == 0);
}

bool Stack::isFull() const {
    if (Top < Capacity) return false;
    int* tmpInt = new(nothrow) int[2*Capacity];
    if (tmpInt == NULL) return true;
    delete [] tmpInt;
    return false;
}
```

isFull() tests to see if the Stack array is, in fact, at its capacity. If it is, isFull() then tests to see if it would be possible to increase the size of the Stack array in the usual manner.

There are a number of shortcomings in this Stack implementation. One is that a Stack object can hold only integer values. We could, of course, easily “clone” the code and modify it to hold doubles, or characters, or any other type (including user-defined).

A better approach would be to design the Stack class so that the implementation allowed the data values to be of any type at all. We will revisit that idea later (more than once).

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Try this now...

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Implement a *safe* Stack::Pop() function:

If there's nothing on the stack, Pop “somehow usefully” signals the caller that there's an error.

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Revised Stack Interface

C++ Basics 31

First revise the Stack class interface to incorporate an error recording mechanism:

```
// Stack.h - conditional compilation directives omitted to save space
enum ErrorType { NO_ERROR, STACK_UNDERFLOW, STACK_OVERFLOW }; Now
class Stack {
private:
    int Capacity;           // current stack array size
    int Top;               // first available index in stack array
    int* Stk;              // stack array (allocated dynamically)
    ErrorType errorType;   // indicates last error detected
public:
    Stack(int InitSize);   // construct new stack with Capacity InitSize
    bool Push(int toInsert); // push toInsert on top of stack, increasing
                            // stack array dimension if necessary
    int Pop();             // remove and return element at top of stack
    int Peek() const;     // return copy of element at top of stack
    bool isEmpty() const; // indicate whether stack is currently empty
    bool isFull() const;  // indicate whether stack is currently full
    ErrorType getError() const; // return error state Now
    ~Stack();             // deallocate stack array
};
```

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Revised Stack::Pop()

C++ Basics 32

Second revise the Stack::Pop() implementation to record the error:

```
int Stack::Pop() {
    if ( (Top > 0) && (Top < Capacity) ) {
        errorType = NO_ERROR; Now
        Top--;
        return Stk[Top];
    }
    errorType = STACK_UNDERFLOW; Now
    return 0;
}
```

Other changes:

- constructor should initialize errorType to NO_ERROR
- Push() should set errorType to STACK_OVERFLOW when Stack size cannot be increased (and could be void now)
- Peek() should also set errorType to STACK_UNDERFLOW if Stack is empty (and would no longer be const)
- implement getError()

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Using Revised Stack::Pop()

C++ Basics 33

```
#include "Stack.h"
#include <iostream>
#include <string>
using namespace std;
string toString(ErrorType e);

void main() {
    Stack s1(5);

    s1.Push(99);  s1.Push(345);  s1.Push(235);

    for (int Idx = 0; Idx < 5; Idx++) { // causes 2 underflow errors
        s1.Pop();
        // Check for error after each Pop()
        if (s1.getError() != NO_ERROR)
            cout << "Error: " << toString(s1.getError()) << endl;
    }
}

string toString(ErrorType e) {
    switch (e) {
        case NO_ERROR      : return "no error";
        case STACK_UNDERFLOW : return "stack underflow";
        case STACK_OVERFLOW  : return "stack overflow";
        default              : return "unknown error";
    }
}
```

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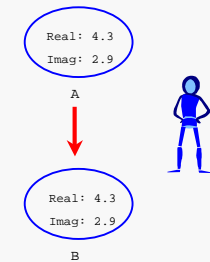
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Assignment of Objects

C++ Basics 34

A default assignment operation is provided for objects (just as for struct variables):

```
class Complex {
private:
    double Real, Imag;
public:
    Complex( );
    Complex(double RealPart, double ImagPart);
    ...
    double Modulus( );
};
...
Complex A(4.3, 2.9);
Complex B;
B = A; // copies the data members of A into B
```



The default assignment operation simply copies values of the data members from the "source" object into the corresponding data members of the "target" object.

This is satisfactory in many cases. However, if an object contains a pointer to dynamically allocated memory, the result of the default assignment operation is usually not desirable...

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Dynamic Content

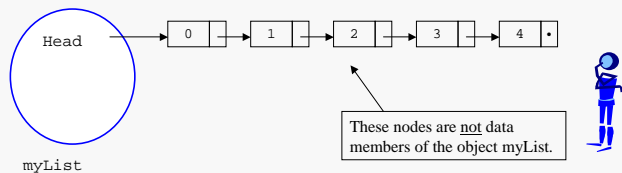
C++ Basics 35

Consider the LinkedList class discussed earlier:

```
class Integer {
private:
    int Data;
public:
    Integer(int newData);
};
typedef Integer ItemType;

LinkedList myList();

for (int Idx = 0; Idx < 5; Idx++) {
    Integer newInteger(Idx);
    myList.AppendNode(newInteger);
}
```



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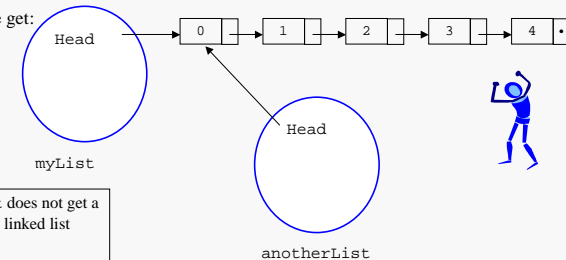
Shallow Copying

C++ Basics 36

Now, suppose we declare another LinkedList object and assign the original one to it:

```
LinkedList anotherList;
anotherList = myList;
```

Here's what we get:



anotherList does not get a new copy of the linked list nodes.

It just gets a copy of the Head pointer from myList.

So both LinkedList objects share the same dynamic data.

This is almost certainly **NOT** what was desired when the code above was written.

This is known as making a "shallow copy" of the source object.

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Deep Copying

C++ Basics 37

When an object contains a pointer to dynamically allocated data, we generally will want the assignment operation to create a complete duplicate of the "source" object.

This is known as making a "deep copy" (since the copy operation must follow any pointer in the object to its target).

In order to do this, you must provide your own implementation of the assignment operator for the class in question, and take care of the "deep" copy logic yourself. Here's a first attempt:

```
LinkList& LinkList::operator=(const LinkList& otherList) {  
    Head = NULL;           // don't copy pointers  
    Tail = NULL;  
    Curr = NULL;  
  
    LinkNode* myCurr = otherList.Head;    // copy list  
  
    while (myCurr != NULL) {  
        ItemType xferData = myCurr->getData();  
        AppendNode(xferData);  
        myCurr = myCurr->getNext();  
    }  
}
```

What if the target of the assignment already has its own linked list?

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...Improved Version

C++ Basics 38

Here's a somewhat improved version:

```
LinkList& LinkList::operator=(const LinkList& otherList) {  
    if (this != &otherList) { // self-assignment??  
        MakeEmpty();         // delete target's list  
  
        LinkNode* myCurr = otherList.Head; // copy list  
  
        while (myCurr != NULL) {  
            ItemType xferData = myCurr->getData();  
            AppendNode(xferData);  
            myCurr = myCurr->getNext();  
        }  
    }  
}  
  
bool LinkList::MakeEmpty() {  
    gotoHead();  
    while (!isEmpty()) {  
        DeleteCurrentNode();  
    }  
    return (Head == NULL);  
}
```

Test for self-assignment.

Delete target's linked list, if any.

Note use of target's this pointer. Also note that the default scope is that of the target object, not the source object.

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Passing an Object as a Parameter

C++ Basics 39

When an object is used as an actual parameter in a function call, the distinction between shallow and deep copying can cause seemingly mysterious problems.

```
void PrintList(LinkList& toPrint, ostream& Out) {  
    ItemType nextValue;  
    int Count = 0;  
  
    Out << "Printing list contents: " << endl;  
    toPrint.gotoHead();  
    if (toPrint.isEmpty()) {  
        Out << "List is empty" << endl;  
        return;  
    }  
  
    while (toPrint.moreList()) {  
        nextValue = toPrint.getCurrentData();  
        nextValue.Print(Out);  
        toPrint.Advance();  
    }  
}
```

The LinkList object is passed by reference because it may be large, and making a copy would be inefficient.

What do we risk because the list is not passed by constant reference or by value?

Why is the list not passed by constant reference?

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Passing Objects

C++ Basics 40

In the previous example, the object parameter cannot be passed by constant reference because the called function does change the object (although not the content of the list itself).

However, since constant reference is not an option here, it may be preferable to eliminate the chance of an unintended modification of the list and pass the LinkList parameter by value.

However, that will cause a new problem.

When an object is passed by value, the actual parameter must be copied to the formal parameter (which is a local variable in the called function).

This copying is managed by using a special constructor, called a *copy constructor*. By default this involves a shallow copy. That means that if the actual parameter involves dynamically allocated data, then the formal parameter will share that data rather than have its own copy of it.

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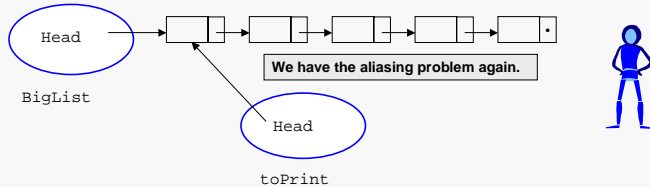
Passing Objects by Value

C++ Basics 41

In this case:

```
// use pass by value:
void PrintList(LinkList toPrint, ostream& Out) {
    // same implementation
}

void main() {
    LinkList BigList;
    // initialize BigList with some data nodes
    PrintList(BigList, cout);    // print BigList
}
```



However, the consequences this time are even worse...

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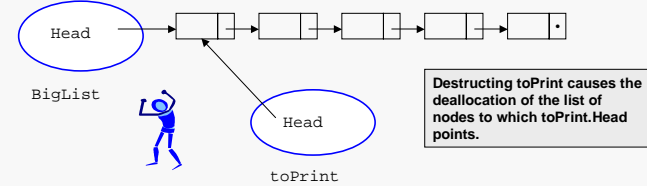
Passing Objects by Value

C++ Basics 42

As PrintList() executes, the Curr pointer in toPrint is modified and nodes are printed:

```
void PrintList(LinkList toPrint, ostream& Out) {
    // operations on myList, which is local
}
```

When PrintList() terminates, the lifetime of toPrint comes to an end and its destructor is automatically invoked:



But of course, that's the same list that BigList has created. So, when execution returns to main(), BigList will have lost its list, but BigList.Head will still point to that deallocated memory.

Havoc will ensue.

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Copy Constructors

C++ Basics 43

Possible solutions to this problem:

- always pass objects by reference – undesirable
- force a deep copy to be made when pass by value is used

The second option can be achieved by providing a user-defined copy constructor for the class, and implementing a deep copy.

When a user-defined copy constructor is available, it is used when an actual parameter is copied to a formal parameter.

```
LinkList::LinkList(const LinkList& Source) {
    Head = Tail = Curr = NULL;

    ListNode* myCurr = Source.Head; // copy list

    while (myCurr != NULL) {
        ItemType xferData = myCurr->getData();
        AppendNode(xferData);
        myCurr = myCurr->getNext();
    }
}
```

No self-test is needed because the copy constructor is used to initialize the target object.

The copy constructor takes an object of the relevant type as a parameter (constant reference should be used). Implement a deep copy in the body of the constructor and the problem described on the previous slides is solved.

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Initialization

C++ Basics 44

When an object is declared, it may be initialized with the value of an existing object (of the same type):

```
void main() {
    LinkList aList; // default construction
    // Now throw some nodes into aList
    // . . .

    LinkList anotherList = aList; // initialization
}
```

Technically initialization is different from assignment since here we know that the “target” object does not yet store any defined values.

Although it looks like an assignment, the initialization shown here is accomplished by the copy constructor.

If there is no user-defined copy constructor, the default (shallow) copy constructor manages the initialization.

If there is a user-defined copy constructor, it will manage the copying as the author of the LinkList class wishes.

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When implementing a class that involves dynamic allocation, if there is any chance that:

- objects of that type will be passed as parameters, or
- objects of that type will be used in initializations

then your implementation should include a copy constructor that provides a proper deep copy.

If there is any chance that:

- objects of that type will be used in assignments

then your implementation should include an overloaded assignment operator that provides a proper deep copy.

This provides relatively cheap insurance against some very nasty behavior.

Method invocations have processing overhead:

`toPrint.getData()`; requires the following steps:

- save registers on the stack
- create new activation record
- push function arguments on the stack
- execute code for `toPrint.getData()`
- remove activation record
- restore saved registers

If the body of the called function were simply listed inline, with the appropriate substitutions of variables if there were parameters, we'd only have to do:

execute code for `toPrint.getData()`

Generally more efficient for *small* functions

Expanded in-place of invocation

- Eliminates method invocation overhead
- Compiler generates necessary code and maps parameters automatically
- Still only one copy of function implementation

Two ways to specify an inline method

- Provide implementation during class definition (default inline)
- Use 'inline' keyword (explicit inline)

```
// Stack.h
class Stack {
private:
. . .
public:
. . .
    bool isEmpty() const {return (Top == 0);}; // default inline
    bool isFull() const;
. . .
};
```

```
inline bool Stack::isEmpty() const { // explicit inline
    return (Top == 0);
}
```

Tradeoffs of inline methods

C++ Basics 49

Default inline violates some basic software engineering goals
separation of interface and implementation is broken
information hiding is lost – implementation is now exposed to clients

All code that invokes an inline must be recompiled when:

- method is changed
- switching from inline to regular or vice-versa

Inline is request, not command to compiler

Could manually inline, but at what cost...?

Size of executable may increase

although that's not usually that much of a factor

'this' pointer

C++ Basics 50

A predefined variable, provided automatically, which is a pointer to the object itself.

```
LinkedList& LinkedList::operator=(const LinkedList& otherList) {  
    if (this != &otherList) { // self-assignment??  
        ...  
    }  
}
```

There are also situations where an object may want to pass itself to another object.

`this` makes that possible.

Very possibly the worst naming decision in the entire C++ language.

Private Member Functions

C++ Basics 51

A member function that can only be called within the class.

Avoids duplication of code.

Useful for:

- Helper Functions (e.g., key search function in linked list class)
- Error Checking
- Repeated Code
- Intermediate values