Overloading & Polymorphism

Overloading is considered “ad-hoc” polymorphism.

Can define new meanings (functions) of operators for specific types.

Compiler recognizes which implementation to use by signature (the types of operands used in the expression).

Overloading is already supported for many built-in types and operators:

17 * 42
4.3 * 2.9
cout << 79 << 'a' << "overloading is profitable" << endl;

The implementation used depends upon the types of operands.

Reasons for Overloading

Support natural, suggestive usage:
Complex A(4.3, -2.7), B(1.0, 5.8);
Complex C;
C = A + B; // '+' means addition for this type as well

Semantic integrity (assignment for objects with dynamic content must ensure a proper deep copy is made).

Uniformity with built-in types (??)
Able to use objects in situations expecting primitive values

Operators That Can Be Overloaded

Only the following operator symbols can be overloaded:

<table>
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<td>-&gt;</td>
<td>new</td>
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<td>delete</td>
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Rule: if you don’t know what it means, don’t overload it!

Syntax for Overloading Operators

Declared and defined like other methods or functions, except that the keyword operator is used.

As method of the Name class:

```cpp
bool Name::operator==(const Name& RHS) {
    return ( (First + Middle + Last) ==
        (RHS.First + RHS.Middle + RHS.Last) );
}
```

As nonmember function:

```cpp
bool operator==(const Name& LHS, const Name& RHS) {
    return ( (LHS.First + LHS.Middle + LHS.Last) ==
        (RHS.First + RHS.Middle + RHS.Last) );
}
```

It is probably most natural here to use the member operator approach.
Using Overloaded Operators

If `Name::operator==` defined as *member* function, then

```
nme1 == nme2
```

is the same as

```
nme1.operator==(nme2)
```

If `operator==` defined as *nonmember* function, then

```
nme1 == nme2
```

is the same as

```
operator==(nme1, nme2)
```

With a binary operator, the LHS becomes the implicit object and the RHS the parameter.

No self-respecting C++ programmer would use either of these forms.

Binary Member Operators

A class member subtract operator for `Complex` objects:

```
Complex Complex::operator-(const Complex& RHS) const {
    return ( Complex(Real - RHS.Real, Imag - RHS.Imag) );
}
```

To be a class member, the left operand of an operator must be an object of the class type:

Complex X(4.1, 2.3), Y(-1.2, 5.0);

OK: `X + Y`

Not OK: `cout << X;`

It is typical to pass by constant reference to avoid the overhead of copying the object.

Binary Non-Member Operators

A non-member subtract operator for `Complex` objects:

```
Complex operator-(const Complex& LHS, const Complex& RHS) {
    return ( Complex(LHS.getReal() - RHS.getReal(),
                    LHS.getImag() - RHS.getImag()) );
}
```

As a non-member, this subtract operator must use the public interface to access the private data members of its parameters…

... unless the class `Complex` declares it to be a friend.

If an operator or function is declared to be a friend of a class then it can access private members as if it were a member function.

Granting an Operator Friend Status

Here, the class `Complex` declares a non-member arithmetic operator to be a friend:

```
class Complex {
    private:
        double Real;
        double Imag;
    public:
        Complex();
        ...        bool operator==(const Complex& RHS) const;
        friend Complex operator*(const Complex& LHS,
                                 const Complex& RHS);
        ...}
```

The granting of friend status must be in the class declaration.

The keyword is NOT also used in the implementation.

The declaration of a friend is unaffected by the access controls public and private.

Bug note: Visual C++ does not handle friend declarations properly unless Service Pack 4 is installed.
Friend Operator Implementation

Here, the class Complex declares a non-member arithmetic operator to be a friend:

```cpp
Complex operator*(const Complex& LHS,
                 const Complex& RHS) {
    double prodReal = LHS.Real * RHS.Real -
                     LHS.Imag * RHS.Imag;
    double prodImag = LHS.Real * RHS.Imag +
                    LHS.Imag * RHS.Real;
    return (Complex(prodReal, prodImag));
}
```

The accesses to private data members are now direct, even though `operator*` is NOT a member of the class Complex.

In general, `friend` status should be granted grudgingly. Most operators should be made members instead. However, this is not always possible…

Unary Operators

A negation operator for the Complex class:

```cpp
Complex Complex::operator-() const {
    return (Complex(-Real, -Imag));
}
```

Note the use of the unary `-` operator for the built-in type `double`.

```cpp
Complex A(4.1, 3.2); // A = 4.1 + 3.2i
Complex B = -A; // B = -4.1 - 3.2i
```

Note that a unary member operator takes NO parameters.

Prefix and Postfix Operators

A member prefix increment operator for the DisplayableNumber class:

```cpp
DisplayableNumber DisplayableNumber::operator++() {
    ++Count;
    return DisplayableNumber(Count, Out);
}
```

A member postfix increment operator for the DisplayableNumber class:

```cpp
DisplayableNumber DisplayableNumber::operator++(int Dummy) {
    Count++;
    return DisplayableNumber(Count-1, Out);
}
```

The parameter is necessary to make the signature of the postfix operator different from that of the prefix operator. Note the difference in the returned objects.

Multiple Overloading

We can have two addition operators in a class:

```cpp
Complex Complex::operator+(double RHS) const {
    return (Complex(Real + RHS, Imag));
}
```

Signature of function used to resolve which is used:

```cpp
Complex X(4.1, 2.3);
double R = 1.9;
Complex Y = X + R; // Y.Real is 6.0
Complex Z = Y + R; // complex plus double
Complex W = Y + X; // complex plus complex
```

This lets us write mixed expressions, like:

```cpp
Complex X(4.1, 2.3);
double R = 1.9;
Complex Y = X + R; // Y.Real is 6.0
Complex Z = Y + R; // complex plus double
Complex W = Y + X; // complex plus complex
Overloading Resolution

The compiler looks for a matching implementation of ‘+’ in this order:

Member operator in X of form:

\[ X::operator + (Y) \]

Nonmember operator of form:

\[ ::operator+ (X,Y) \]

The return type is not part of the lookup process.

Provide a Reasonable Set of Operators

In some cases, whole categories of operators make sense for a type.

For instance, it makes sense to overload all of the arithmetic operators for the class Complex. It also makes sense to overload all six relational operators for the class Name.

Often the implementation of one operator can "piggyback" off of another:

```cpp
Complex Complex::operator+=(const Complex& RHS) {
    *this = *this + RHS; // uses overloaded '+'
    return (*this);
}
```

When to use Non-member Operators

For operators on primitive data types, such as:

Complex operator+(int LHS, const Complex& RHS);

When the class source is not available for modification:

E.g., ostream

For some type casting operations:

E.g., ??

Stream I/O Operators

We do not have access to the istream or ostream class code, so we cannot make overloading of ‘<<’ or ‘>>’ members of those classes.

We also cannot make them members of a data class because the first parameter must then be an object of that type.

Therefore we must define operator<< as non-member function.

However, it must access private members of the data class, so we will typically make it a friend of that class. The alternative would be to have accessor functions for all the data members that will be written, and that is frequently unacceptable.

The general signature will be:

```cpp
ostream& operator<<(ostream& Out, const Data& toWrite);
```
This overloaded operator<< will write a nicely formatted to any output stream:

```cpp
ostream& operator<<(ostream& Out, const Complex& toWrite) {
    const int Precision = 2;
    const int FieldWidth = 8;
    Out << setprecision(Precision);
    Out << setw(FieldWidth) << toWrite.Real;
    if (toWrite.Imag >= 0)
        Out << " + ";
    else
        Out << " - ";
    Out << setw(FieldWidth) << fabs(toWrite.Imag);
    Out << "i";
    Out << endl;
    return Out;
}
```

This overloaded operator>> will read a complex number formatted in the manner used by operator<<:

```cpp
istream& operator>>(istream& In, Complex& toRead) {
    char signOfImag;
    In >> toRead.Real;
    In >> signOfImag; In >> toRead.Imag;
    if (signOfImag == '-')
        toRead.Imag = -toRead.Imag;
    In.ignore(1, 'i');
    return In;
}
```

An Array Class

```cpp
class Array {
    private:
        int Capacity; // dimension of array
        int Usage; // number of cells in use
        string* List; // the list
    void ShiftTailUp(int Start);
    void ShiftTailDown(int Start);

    public:
        Array(int initCapacity = 100, string Init = "");
        Array(const Array& Source);
        Array& operator=(const Array& Source);
        int getCapacity() const;
        int getUsage() const;
        bool isFull() const;
        bool isEmpty() const;
        bool Insert(const string& newValue);
    //... continues ...
}
```
Overloading `operator[]`

The first overloading of `operator[]`:

```cpp
string& Array::operator[](int Idx) {
    assert(0 <= Idx && Idx < Capacity);
    return List[Idx];
}
```

The first is the most commonly used. It provides the functionality you'd normally expect, allowing code like:

```cpp
Array A(10);
...A[5] = "a string";
```

The operator returns a reference to an element of the array, potentially dangerous, but also useful.

However, there's an important "gotcha" with the code above…

The second overloading of `operator[]`:

```cpp
const string& Array::operator[](int Idx) const {
    assert(0 <= Idx && Idx < Capacity);
    return List[Idx];
}
```

This is provided only to support cases where a constant return value is required. These are rare. Can you think of one?

Overloading Guidelines

Avoid violating expectations about the operator:

```cpp
Complex Complex::operator~() const {
    return { Complex(Imag, Real) };  
}
```

Provide a complete set of properly related operators: \(a = a + b\) and \(a += b\) have the same effect and it makes sense to support both if either is supplied.

Define the operator overload as a class member unless it's necessary to do otherwise.

If the operator overload cannot be a class member, then make it a `friend` rather than add otherwise unnecessary member accessors to the class.