

# C and C++

## 2. Functions — Preprocessor

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## Function type-system nasties

- ▶ A function definition with no values (e.g. `power()`) is not an empty parameter specification, rather it means that its arguments should not be type-checked! (this is not the case in C++)
- ▶ Instead, a function with no arguments is declared using `void`
- ▶ An ellipsis (`...`) can be used for partial parameter specification, for example:  

```
int printf(char* fmt,...) { stmt }
```
- ▶ The ellipsis is useful for defining functions with variable length arguments, but leaves a hole in the type system (`stdarg.h`)
- ▶ In comparison, C++ uses operator overloading to provide better I/O type safety (more on this later)

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## Functions

- ▶ C does not have objects, but does have function support
- ▶ A function *definition* has a *return type*, *parameter specification*, and a *body* or *statement*; for example:  

```
int power(int base, int n) { stmt }
```
- ▶ A function *declaration* has a return type and parameter specification followed by a semicolon; for example:  

```
int power(int base, int n);
```

  - ▶ The use of the `extern` keyword for function declarations is optional
- ▶ All arguments to a function are copied, i.e. *passed-by-value*; modification of the local value does not affect the original
- ▶ Just as for variables, a function must have exactly one definition and can have multiple declarations
- ▶ A function which is used but only has a declaration, and no definition, results in a link error (more on this later)
- ▶ Functions cannot be nested

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## Recursion

- ▶ Functions can call themselves recursively
- ▶ On each call, a new set of local variables are created
- ▶ Therefore, a function recursion of depth  $n$  has  $n$  sets of variables
- ▶ Recursion can be useful when dealing with recursively defined data structures, like trees (more on such data structures later)
- ▶ Recursion can also be used as you would in ML:

```
1  
2 unsigned int fact(unsigned int n) {  
3   return n ? n*fact(n-1) : 1;  
4 }
```

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## Compilation

- ▶ A compiler transforms a C source file or *execution unit* into an *object* file
- ▶ An object file consists of machine code, and a list of:
  - ▶ *defined* or *exported* symbols representing defined function names and global variables
  - ▶ *undefined* or *imported* symbols for functions and global variables which are declared but not defined
- ▶ A *linker* combines several object files into an *executable* by:
  - ▶ combining all object code into a single file
  - ▶ adjusting the absolute addresses from each object file
  - ▶ resolving all undefined symbols

The Part 1B Compiler Course describes how to build a compiler and linker in more detail

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## Handling code in multiple files in C

- ▶ C separates declaration from definition for both variables and functions
- ▶ This allows portions of code to be split across multiple files
- ▶ Code in different files can then be compiled at different times
  - ▶ This allows libraries to be compiled once, but used many times
  - ▶ It also allows companies to sell binary-only libraries
- ▶ In order to use code written in another file we still need a declaration
- ▶ A *header* file can be used to:
  - ▶ supply the declarations of function and variable definitions in another file
  - ▶ provide preprocessor macros (more on this later)
  - ▶ avoid duplication (and `:. errors`) that would otherwise occur
- ▶ You might find the Unix tool `nm` useful for inspecting symbol tables

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## Multi-source file example

### Header File — example4.h

```
1 /*reverse a string in place */
2 void reverse(char str[]);
```

### Source File — example4a.c

```
1 #include <string.h>
2 #include "example4.h"
3
4 /*reverse a string in place */
5 void reverse(char s[]) {
6     int c, i, j;
7     for (i=0,j=strlen(s)-1;
8         i<j;i++,j--)
9         c=s[i], s[i]=s[j], s[j]=c;
10 }
```

### Source File — example4b.c

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include "example4.h"
3
4
5 int main(void) {
6     char s[] = "Reverse me";
7     reverse(s);
8     printf("%s\n",s);
9     return 0;
10 }
```

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## Variable and function scope with static

- ▶ The `static` keyword limits the scope of a variable or function
- ▶ In the global scope, `static` does not export the function or variable symbol
  - ▶ This prevents the variable or function from being called externally
- ▶ In the local scope, a `static` variable retains its value between function calls
  - ▶ A single static variable exists even if a function call is recursive

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## C Preprocessor

- ▶ The preprocessor is executed before any compilation takes place
- ▶ It manipulates the textual content of the source file in a single pass
- ▶ Amongst other things, the preprocessor:
  - ▶ deletes each occurrence of a backslash followed by a newline;
  - ▶ replaces comments by a single space;
  - ▶ replaces definitions, obeys conditional preprocessing directives and expands macros; and
  - ▶ it replaces escaped sequences in character constants and string literals and concatenates adjacent string literals

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## Controlling the preprocessor programmatically

- ▶ The preprocessor can be used by the programmer to rewrite source code
- ▶ This is a powerful (and, at times, useful) feature, but can be hard to debug (more on this later)
- ▶ The preprocessor interprets lines starting with `#` with a special meaning
- ▶ Two text substitution directives: `#include` and `#define`
- ▶ Conditional directives: `#if`, `#elif`, `#else` and `#endif`

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## The `#include` directive

- ▶ The `#include` directive performs text substitution
- ▶ It is written in one of two forms:

```
#include "filename"    #include <filename>
```
- ▶ Both forms replace the `#include ...` line in the source file with the contents of `filename`
- ▶ The quote (`"`) form searches for the file in the same location as the source file, then searches a predefined set of directories
- ▶ The angle (`<`) form searches a predefined set of directories
- ▶ When a `#included` file is changed, all source files which depend on it should be recompiled

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## The `#define` directive

- ▶ The `#define` directive has the form:

```
#define name replacement text
```
- ▶ The directive performs a direct text substitution of all future examples of `name` with the `replacement text` for the remainder of the source file
- ▶ The `name` has the same constraints as a standard C variable name
- ▶ Replacement does not take place if `name` is found inside a quoted string
- ▶ By convention, `name` tends to be written in upper case to distinguish it from a normal variable name

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## Defining macros

- ▶ The `#define` directive can be used to define *macros* as well; for example: `#define MAX(A,B) ((A)>(B)?(A):(B))`
- ▶ In the body of the macro:
  - ▶ prefixing a parameter in the replacement text with `'#'` places the parameter value inside string quotes (`"`)
  - ▶ placing `'##'` between two parameters in the replacement text removes any whitespace between the variables in generated output
- ▶ Remember: the preprocessor only performs text substitution
  - ▶ This means that syntax analysis and type checking doesn't occur until the compilation stage
  - ▶ This can, initially at least, generate some confusing compiler warnings on line numbers where the macro is used, rather than when it is defined; for example:  
`#define JOIN(A,B) (A ## B)`

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## Example

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2
3 #define PI 3.141592654
4 #define MAX(A,B) ((A)>(B)?(A):(B))
5 #define PERCENT(D) (100*D)           /* Wrong? */
6 #define DPRINT(D) printf(#D " = %g\n",D)
7 #define JOIN(A,B) (A ## B)
8
9 int main(void) {
10     const unsigned int a1=3;
11     const unsigned int i = JOIN(a,1);
12     printf("%u %g\n",i, MAX(PI,3.14));
13     DPRINT(MAX(PERCENT(0.32+0.16),PERCENT(0.15+0.48)));
14
15     return 0;
16 }
```

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## Conditional preprocessor directives

Conditional directives: `#if`, `#ifdef`, `#ifndef`, `#elif` and `#endif`

- ▶ The preprocessor can use conditional statements to include or exclude code in later phases of compilation
- ▶ `#if` accepts a (somewhat limited) integer *expression* as an argument and only retains the code between `#if` and `#endif` (or `#elif`) if the expression evaluates to a non-zero value; for example:  
`#if SOME_DEF > 8 && OTHER_DEF != THIRD_DEF`
- ▶ The built-in preprocessor function `defined` accepts a name as its sole argument and returns `1L` if the name has been `#defined`; `0L` otherwise
- ▶ `#ifdef N` and `#ifndef N` are equivalent to `#if defined(N)` and `#if !defined(N)` respectively
- ▶ `#undef` can be used to remove a `#defined` name from the preprocessor macro and variable namespace.

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## Example

Conditional directives have several uses, including preventing double definitions in header files and enabling code to function on several different architectures; for example:

```
1 #if SYSTEM_SYSV
2 #define HDR "sysv.h"
3 #elif SYSTEM_BSD
4 #define HDR "bsd.h"
5 #else
6 #define HDR "default.h"
7 #endif
8 #include HDR
1 #ifndef MYHEADER_H
2 #define MYHEADER_H 1
3 ...
4 /* declarations & defs */
5 ...
6 #endif /* !MYHEADER_H */
```

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## Error control

- ▶ To help other compilers which generate C code (rather than machine code) as output, compiler line and filename warnings can be overridden with:  
`#line constant "filename"`
- ▶ The compiler then adjusts its internal value for the next line in the source file as *constant* and the current name of the file being processed as *filename* ("*filename*" may be omitted)
- ▶ The statement `"#error some text"` causes the preprocessor to write a diagnostic message containing *some text*
- ▶ There are several predefined identifiers that produce special information: `__LINE__`, `__FILE__`, `__DATE__`, and `__TIME__`.

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## Exercises

1. Write a function definition which matches the declaration `int cntlower(char str[]);`. The implementation should return the number of lower-case letters in a string
2. Use function recursion to write an implementation of merge sort for a fixed array of integers; how much memory does your program use for a list of length  $n$ ?
3. Define a macro `SWAP(t,x,y)` that exchanges two arguments of type `t`  
(K&R, Exercise 4-14)
4. Define a macro `SWAP(x,y)` that exchanges two arguments of the same type (e.g. `int` or `char`) *without using a temporary*

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