

# CSE 220: Systems Programming

Variables, Strings, and Loops

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# Administrivia

Have you done your assigned reading?

Is your VM working?

Did you compile and run Hello World?

Remember that many of you are new to the command prompt!  
Check the Piazza post on this.

Read [everything](#) for all assignments and labs.

Check Piazza frequently.

# Types

C is a **typed language**.

**Every variable** has a type, and is **declared**.

Every **value assigned to a variable** must match that type.

The compiler will automatically convert between some types.

Valid:

```
int x = 0;
float y = 0;
x = 37;
y = x;
```

Invalid:

```
int x = 0;
x = "Hello, world!";
```

# Some Types

There are **many types**; for now, consider:

- **int**: Integers of a convenient size for the computer (32-bit for us)
- **char**: Characters (typically 8-bit integers)
- **double**: Double-precision floating-point numbers

There are also **array types**.

Array types are declared with square brackets: `[]`:

- **char** `a[]`: An array of characters. Often used for **C strings**.
- **int** `scores[200]`: An array of **exactly 200** integers.

# A Warning

These slides attempt to be precise, but **simplify some things**.

Usually this is because the details:

- are unnecessarily confusing, or
- require knowledge you are not expected to have.

If something here conflicts with the standard or the compiler, **the standard or compiler wins**.

I will try to mark **imprecise statements** with a pilcrow: ¶.

# Declaring Variables

Variables are **declared** by **stating their type and name**.

```
int x;           /* x is an integer */
double d;       /* d is a floating-point double */
```

Variables retain their type **while they are in scope**.

Various modifiers can be applied to variables.

In particular, **const** declares the variable is a constant.

# Scope

Variables in C have **scope**.

A variable cannot be used **out of scope**.

Variables declared **outside of any block** ({}):

- are normally **global**: they can be accessed by **any code**
- are **file-local** with the modifier **static**: they can be accessed by any code **in this file**

Variables declared **in a block**:

- Come into scope **where declared** ¶
- are valid until the }

# Arrays

C arrays are **a series of contiguous memory locations**.  
(This will become important later.)

Arrays are declared with `[]`. The size is between `[]`.

Arrays can have three “sizes”, depending on what’s in the `[]`:

- **Unknown size**: Nothing is specified
- **Constant size**: A constant expression is specified
- **Variable size**: A run-time computed expression is specified



# Array Sizes

Array sizes specify **how many elements are in the array.**

```
int x[32];  
int matrix[32][16];
```

C **does not remember** the array's size. ¶

This means that **illegal accesses aren't caught.**

```
int x[4];  
x[10234] = 0;           /* Whoops. */
```

# Unknown Array Sizes

Unknown size arrays are limited in use.

They often appear as arguments to functions (as in `main()`).

An array of unknown size cannot be declared normally.

Sizes are required for multidimensional arrays.

(Except for the “outermost” dimension, but only sometimes.)

```
void func(int matrix[][3][2]);
```

# Array Indexing

C array indexes **start at 0**.

An array of **size 10** contains elements **0 through 9**.

Arrays can be **dereferenced with []**:

```
int array[10];  
int i = 7;
```

```
array[4] = 0;  
array[i] = 0;  
array[i + 1] = 0;
```

# Static Initializers

An array can be initialized **all at once** at declaration.

```
int array[10] = { 0, 3, 5, 0, 0,  
                1, 0, 0, 2, 0 };
```

This is called a **static initializer**.

Static initializers can **only be used at declaration**.

```
int array[3];
```

```
array = { 1, 3, 5 };    /* syntax error */
```

# C Strings

C strings are just arrays.

Strings, like arrays are not associated with a length.

(You have to count the characters to know how long they are.)

A C string consists of:

- the characters in the string, followed by
- a zero byte (the ASCII NUL character) (NUL terminator).

The zero byte is idiomatically written `'\0'`.

# Quoted Strings

Quoted strings automatically build such arrays.

```
char str[] = "Hello";  
/* str = { 'H', 'e', 'l', 'l', 'o', '\0' } */
```

A quoted string may be assigned to an **array only at declaration**.

After declaration, quoted strings must be **copied into** arrays:

```
char str[32];  
  
strncpy(str, 32, "Hello");    /* See man 3 strncpy */
```

# String Functions

There are **many string functions** in the C library.

**Most** of them are defined in `<string.h>`.

Some useful examples:

- `strlen()`: Compute the length of a string by counting bytes
- `strncpy()`: Copy a string until its NUL character
- `strncat()`: Concatenate one string to another
- `strstr()`: Search for one string inside another

# Strings as Pointers

The idiomatic string type is `char *`.

Arrays and pointers are [closely related](#), we'll discuss this later.

```
char *str = "Hello, CSE 220";
```

```
char array[] = "Another string";  
char *otherstr = array;
```



# Character Constants

C strings can be in many encodings, but C code is in ASCII. ¶

ASCII contains Latin characters, numbers, and punctuation.

An ASCII character can be **converted to an integer** with `' '`.

```
char c = 'A';           /* 65 */
int i = 'B';           /* 66 */
```

**Each byte of a string** can be assigned in this fashion.

```
char str[] = "emacs";
/* Give it the respect it deserves */
str[0] = 'E';
```

# The for Loop

The C for loop is its **most versatile** loop.

It allows looping over **almost anything**.

```
for (initialization; condition; increment) {  
    body;  
}
```

It translates to a more traditional while loop (with caveats):

```
initialization;  
while (condition) {  
    body;  
    increment;  
}
```

# Looping over Arrays

A common use of the `for` loop is looping over arrays:

```
int array[ARRAYSZ];

for (int i = 0; i < ARRAYSZ; i++) {
    /* Use array[i] */
}
```

Remember that you must **somehow know the size of the array**.

# Looping over Strings

It is **idiomatic** to loop over strings:

```
for (int i = 0; str[i] != '\0'; i++) {  
    /* use str[i] */  
}
```

Note that the string length is never **directly computed!**

# Controlling the Loop

Two keywords **control loop execution**:

- **break**
- **continue**

The **continue** statement will **immediately**:

- Execute the increment statement
- Start the body over at the top

The **break** statement will **immediately end the loop**.

# Loop Example

We will develop `strlen()` together.

# Summary

- C is a **typed language**
- **Every variable** has a type
- Variable values must **match** the type
- Variables have **scope**, and cannot be used outside that scope
- Arrays are **contiguous memory locations**
- Array syntax uses `[]`
- C strings are arrays of characters
- Every C string is **terminated with a zero byte**
- For loop syntax
- For loops are very flexible

# References I

## Required Readings

- [1] Brian W. Kernighan and Dennis M. Ritchie. *The C Programming Language*. Second Edition. Chapter 1: 1.9, 1.10; Chapter 2: Intro, 2.1–2.4. Prentice Hall, 1988.



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