# 13. Pointers, Algorithms, Iterators and Containers II

Iterations with Pointers, Arrays: Indices vs. Pointers, Arrays and Functions, Pointers and const, Algorithms, Container and Iteration, Vector-Iteration, Typdef, Sets, the Concept of Iterators



## Recall: Pointers running over the Array

**Beispiel**

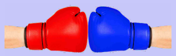
```
int a[5] = {3, 4, 6, 1, 2};
for (int* p = a; p < a+5; ++p)
  std::cout << *p << ' '; // 3 4 6 1 2
```

- An array can be converted into a pointer to its first element.
- Pointers "know" arithmetics and comparisons.
- Pointers can be dereferenced.

⇒ Pointers can be used to operate on arrays.



## Arrays: Indices vs. Pointer



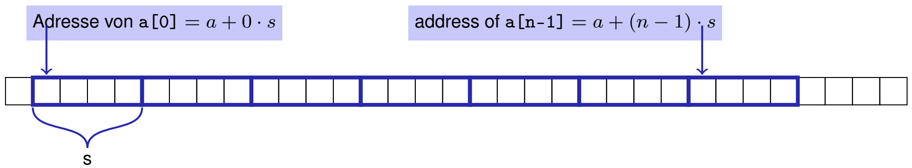
```
int a[n];

// Task: set all elements to 0

// Solution with indices is more readable
for (int i = 0; i < n; ++i)
    a[i] = 0;

// Solution with pointers is faster and more generic
int* begin = a;  // Pointer to the first element
int* end = a+n;  // Pointer past the end
for (int* p = begin; p != end; ++p)
   *p = 0;
```



## Arrays and Indices

```
// Set all elements to value
for (int i = 0; i < n; ++i)
  a[i] = value;
```

Computational costs




⇒ One **addition** and one **multiplication** per element

## The Truth about Random Access

The expression

`a[i]`

is equivalent to

`*(a + i)`

$$\uparrow$$

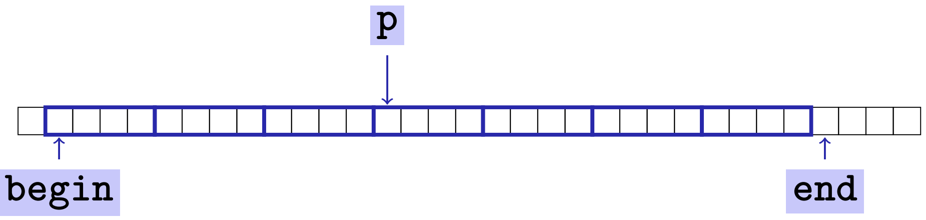
$$a + i \cdot s$$



## Arrays and Pointers

```
// set all elements to value
for (int* p = begin; p != end; ++p)
   *p = value;
```

Computational cost




⇒ one **addition** per element



## Reading a book . . . with indices . . . with pointers

**Random Access**

- open book on page 1
- close book
- open book on pages 2-3
- close book
- open book on pages 4-5
- close book
- ....

**Sequential Access**

- open book on page 1
- turn the page
- turn the page
- turn the page
- turn the page
- turn the page
- ...



## Array Arguments: *Call by (const) reference*

```
void print_vector (const int (&v)[3]) {
  for (int i = 0; i<3 ; ++i) {
    std::cout << v[i] << " ";
  }
}
void make_null_vector (int (&v)[3]) {
  for (int i = 0; i<3 ; ++i) {
    v[i] = 0;
  }
}
```

## Array Arguments: *Call by value (not really ...)*

```
void make_null_vector (int v[3]) {
  for (int i = 0; i<3 ; ++i) {
    v[i] = 0;
  }
}
...
int a[10];
make_null_vector (a); // only sets a[0], a[1], a[2]

int∗ b;
make_null_vector (b); // no array at b, crash!
```



## Array Arguments: *Call by value* does not exist

- Formal argument types *T* `[n]` or *T* `[]` (array over `T`) are equivalent to *T* ∗ (pointer to `T`)
- For passing an array the pointer to its first element is passed
- length information is lost
- Function cannot work on a part of an array (example: search for an element in the second half of an array)



## Arrays in Functions

Covention of the standard library: pass an array (or a part of it) using two pointers

- `begin`: pointer to the first element
- `end`: pointer *behind* the last element
- `[begin, end)` designates the elements of the part of the array
- *valid* range means: there are array elements “available” here.
- `[begin, end)` is empty if `begin == end`



## Arrays in Functions: `fill`

```
// PRE: [begin, end) is a valid range
// POST: every element within [begin, end) will be set to value
void fill (int* begin, int* end, int value) {
  for (int* p = begin; p != end; ++p)
     *p = value;
}
  ...

int a[5];
fill (a, a+5, 1);
for (int i=0; i<5; ++i)
  std::cout << a[i] << " ";
```

expects pointers to the first element of a range

pass the address (of the first element) of a

## Pointers are not Integers!

- Addresses can be interpreted as house numbers of the memory, that is, integers
- But integer and pointer arithmetics behave differently.

`ptr + 1` is *not* the next house number but the $s$-next, where $s$ is the memory requirement of an object of the type behind the pointer `ptr`.

- Integers and pointers are not compatible

```
int* ptr = 5; // error: invalid conversion from int to int*
int a = ptr;  // error: invalid conversion from int* to int
```



## Null-Pointer

- special pointer value that signals that no object is pointed to
- represented b the integer number 0 (convertible to `T*`)

```
int* iptr = 0;
```

- cannot be dereferenced (checked during runtime)
- to avoid undefined behavior

```
int* iptr; // iptr points into ‘‘nirvana’’
int j = *iptr; // illegal address in *
```



## Pointer Subtraction

- If *p1* and *p2* point to elements of the same array `a` with length $n$
- and $0 \leq k_1, k_2 \leq n$ are the indices corresponding to *p1* and *p2*, then

*p1* - *p2* has value $k_1$ - $k_2$

↑

Only valid if *p1* and p2 point into the same array.

- The pointer difference describes “how far away the elements are from each other”



## Pointer Operators

| Description | Op | Arity | Precedence | Associativity | Assignment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subscript** | `[]` | 2 | 17 | left | R-value → L-value |
| **Dereference** | `*` | 1 | 16 | right | R-Wert → L-Wert |
| **Address** | `&` | 1 | 16 | rechts | L-value → R-value |

Precedences and associativities of +, −, ++ (etc.) like in chapter 2

## Mutating Functions

- Pointers can (like references) be used for functions with effect

**Beispiel**

```
int a[5];
fill(a, a+5, 1); // modifies a
```

pass address of the element past a

pass address of the first element of a

- Such functions are called *mutating*



## Const Correctness

- There are also *non*-mutating functions that access elements of an array only in a read-only fashion

```
// PRE: [begin , end) is a valid and nonempty range
// POST: the smallest value in [begin, end) is returned
int min (const int* begin ,const int* end)
{
    assert (begin != end);
    int m = *begin; // current minimum candidate
    for (const int* p = ++begin; p != end; ++p)
        if (*p < m) m = *p;
    return m;
}
```

- mark with `const`: value of objects cannot be modified through such `const`-pointers.



## `const` is not absolute

- The value at an address can change even if a `const`-pointer stores this address.

**beispiel**

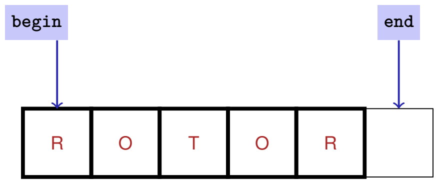
```
int a[5];
const int* begin1 = a;
int*       begin2 = a;
*begin1 = 1;    // error *begin1 is constt
*begin2 = 1;    // ok, although *begin will be modified
```

- `const` is a promise from the point of view of the `const`-pointer, not an absolute guarantee



## Wow – Palindromes!

```
// PRE: [begin end) is a valid range of characters
// POST: returns true if the range forms a palindrome
bool is_palindrome (const char* begin, const char* end) {
  while (begin < end)
    if (*(begin++) != *(--end)) return false;
  return true;
}
```



## Algorithms

For many problems there are prebuilt solutions in the standard library

### Example: filling an array

```
#include <algorithm> // needed for std::fill
...

int a[5];
std::fill (a, a+5, 1);

for (int i=0; i<5; ++i)
    std::cout << a[i] << " "; // 1 1 1 1 1
```



## Algorithms

Advantages of using the standard library

- simple programs
- less sources of errors
- good, efficient code
- code independent from the data type
- there are also algorithms for more complicated problems such as the efficient sorting of an array



## Algorithms

The same prebuilt algorithms work for many different data types.

### Example: filling an array

```
#include <algorithm> // needed for std::fill
...

char c[3];
std::fill (c, c+3, "!");

for (int i=0; i<3; ++i)
    std::cout << c[i]; // !!!
```



## Excursion: Templates

- Templates permit the provision of a type as argument
- The compiler finds the matching type from the call arguments

### Example `fill` with templates

```
template <typename T>
void fill (T* begin , T* end, T value) {
    for (T* p = begin; p != end; ++p)
        *p = value;
}
int a[5];
fill (a, a+5, 1);   // 1 1 1 1 1

char c[3];
fill (c, c+3, '!'); // !!!
```

The triangular brackets we already know from vectors. Vectors are also implemented as templates.

`std::fill` is also implemented as template!

## Containers and Traversal

- **Container:** Container (Array, Vector, ...) for elements
- **Traversal:** Going over all elements of a container
  - Initialization of all elements (`fill`)
  - Find the smallest element (`min`)
  - Check properties (`is_palindrome`)
  - ...
- There are a lot of different containers (sets, lists, ...)



## Iteration Tools

- Arrays: indices (random access) or pointers (natural)
- Array algorithms (`std::`) use pointers

```
int a[5];
std::fill (a, a+5, 1);   // 1 1 1 1 1
```

- How do you traverse vectors and other containers?

```
std::vector<int> v (5, 0); // 0 0 0 0 0
std::fill (?, ?, 1);   // 1 1 1 1 1
```



## Vectors: *too sexy for pointers*

- Our `fill` with templates does not work for vectors...
- ...and `std::fill` also does not work in the following way:

```
std::vector<int> v (5, 0);
std::fill (v, v+5, 1);   // Compiler error message !
```

Vectors are snobby...

- they refuse to be converted to pointers,...
- ...and cannot be traversed using pointers either.
- They consider this far too primitive. ☺



## Also in memory: Vector $\neq$ Array

```
bool a[8] = {true, true, true, true, true, true, true, true};
```

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *true* | *true* | *true* | *true* | *true* | *true* | *true* | *true* |

8 Byte (Speicherzelle = 1 Byte = 8 Bit)

```
std::vector<bool> v (8, true);
```

| |
|---|
| 0b11111111 |

1 Byte

`bool*`-pointer does not fit here because it runs byte-wise and not bit-wise

## Vector-Iterators

**Iterator:** a “pointer” that fits to the container.

**Example: fill a vector using `std::fill` – this works**

```
#include <vector>
#include <algorithm> // needed for std::fill

...
std::vector<int> v(5, 0);
std::fill (v.begin(), v.end(), 1);
for (int i=0; i<5; ++i)
    std::cout << v[i] << " "; // 1 1 1 1 1
```



## Vector Iterators

For each vector there are two *iterator types* defined

- `std::vector<int>::const_iterator`
  - for non-mutating access
  - in analogy with `const int*` for arrays
- `std::vector<int>::iterator`
  - for mutating access
  - in analogy with `int*` for arrays
- A vector-iterator `it` is no pointer, but it behaves like a pointer:
  - it points to a vector element and can be dereferenced (`*it`)
  - it knows arithmetics and comparisons (`++it`, `it+2`, `it < end`,...)



## Vector-Iterators: `begin()` and `end()`

- `v.begin()` points to the first element of `v`
- `v.end()` points past the last element of `v`
- We can traverse a vector using the iterator...

```
for (std::vector<int>::const_iterator it = v.begin();
                                      it != v.end(); ++it)
    std::cout << *it << " ";
```

- ...or fill a vector.

```
std::fill (v.begin(), v.end(), 1);
```



## Type names in C++ can become looooooong

- `std::vector<int>::const_iterator`
- The declaration of a *type alias* helps with

`typedef` *Typ Name*;

existing type (→ *Typ*)

Name that can now be used to access the type (→ *Name*)

**Examples**

```
typedef std::vector<int> int_vec;
typedef int_vec::const_iterator Cvit;
```

## Vector Iterators work like Pointers

```
typedef std::vector<int>::const_iterator Cvit;

std::vector<int> v(5, 0); // 0 0 0 0 0

// output all elements of a, using iteration
for (Cvit it = v.begin(); it != v.end(); ++it)
    std::cout << *it << " ";
```

Vector element pointed to by `it`



## Vector Iterators work like Pointers

```
typedef std::vector<int>::iterator Vit;

// manually set all elements to 1
for (Vit it = v.begin(); it != v.end(); ++it)
    *it = 1;

// output all elements again, using random access
for (int i=0; i<5; ++i)
    std::cout << v[i] << " ";
```

increment the iterator

short term for `*(v.begin()+i)`



## Other Containers: Sets

- A set is an unordered collection of elements, where each element is contained only once.

$$\{1, 2, 1\} = \{1, 2\} = \{2, 1\}$$

- C++: `std::set<T>` for a set with elements of type `T`



## Sets: Example Application

- Determine if a given text contains a question mark and output all *pairwise different* characters!

## Letter Salad (1)

Consider a text as a set of characters.

```
#include<set>
...
typedef std::set<char>::const_iterator Csit;
...
std::string text =
"What are the distinct characters in this string?";

std::set<char> s (text.begin(),text.end());
```

Set is initialized with String iterator range `[text.begin(), text.end())`



## Letter Salad (2)

Determine if the text contains a question mark and output all characters

Search algorithm, can be called with arbitrary iterator range

```
// check whether text contains a question mark
if (std::find (s.begin(), s.end(), '?') != s.end())
    std::cout << "Good question!\n";

// output all distinct characters
for (Csit it = s.begin(); it != s.end(); ++it)
    std::cout << *it;
```

Ausgabe:
`Good question!`
`?Wacdeghinrst`



## Sets and Indices?

- Can you traverse a set using random access? No.

```
for (int i=0; i<s.size(); ++i)
    std::cout << s[i];
```

error message: no subscript operator

- Sets are unordered.
  - There is no "$i$th element".
  - Iterator comparison `it != s.end()` works, but not `it < s.end()`!



## The Concept of Iterators

C++knows different iterator types

- Each container provides an associated iterator type.
- All iterators can dereference (`*it`) and traverse (`++it`)
- Some can do more, e.g. random access (`it[k]`, or, equivalently `*(it + k)`), traverse backwards (`--it`),...

## The Concept of Iterators

Every container algorithm is generic, that means:

- The container is passed as an iterator-range
- The algorithm works for all containers that fulfil the requirements of the algorihm
- `std::find` only requires `*` and `++` , for instance
- The implementation details of a container are irrelevant.



## Why Pointers and Iterators?

Would you not prefer the code

```
for (int i=0; i<n; ++i)
    a[i] = 0;
```

over the following code?

```
for (int* ptr=a; ptr<a+n; ++ptr)
    *ptr = 0;
```

Maybe, but in order to use the generic `std::fill(a, a+n, 0);`, we *have to* work with pointers.



## Why Pointers and Iterators?

In order to use the standard library, we have to know that:

- a static array `a` is a the same time a pointer to the first element of `a`
- `a+i` is a pointer to the element with index $i$

Using the standard library with different containers: Pointers ⇒ Iterators



## Why Pointers and Iterators?

Example: To search the smallest element of a container in the range $[\text{begin}, \text{end})$ use the function call

```
std::min_element(begin, end)
```

- returns an *iterator* to the smallest element
- To read the smallest element, we need to dereference:

```
*std::min_element(begin, end)
```

## That is Why: Pointers and Iterators

- Even for non-programmers and “dumb” users of the standard library: expressions of the form
  `*std::min_element(begin, end)`
  cannot be understood without knowing pointers and iterators.
- Behind the scenes of the standard library: working with dynamic memory based on pointers is indispensible. More about this later in this course.



# 14. Recursion 1

Mathematical Recursion, Termination, Call Stack, Examples, Recursion vs. Iteration



## Mathematical Recursion

- Many mathematical functions can be naturally defined recursively.
- This means, the function appears in its own definition

$$n! = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } n \leq 1 \\ n \cdot (n-1)!, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$



## Recursion in $\mathrm{C++}$: In the same Way!

$$n! = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } n \leq 1 \\ n \cdot (n-1)!, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

```
// POST: return value is n!
unsigned int fac (unsigned int n)
{
  if (n <= 1)
    return 1;
  else
    return n * fac (n-1);
}
```

## Infinite Recursion

- is as bad as an infinite loop. . .
- . . . but even worse: it burns time and memory

```
void f()
{
  f(); // f() -> f() -> ... stack overflow
}
```



## Recursive Functions: Termination

As with loops we need

- progress towards termination

`fac(n)`:
terminates immediately for $n \leq 1$, otherwise the function is called recusively with < n .

„n is getting smaller for each call."



## Recursive Functions: Evaluation

Example: `fac(4)`

```
// POST: return value is n!
unsigned int fac (unsigned int n)
{
  if (n <= 1) return 1;
  return n * fac(n-1); // n > 1
}
```

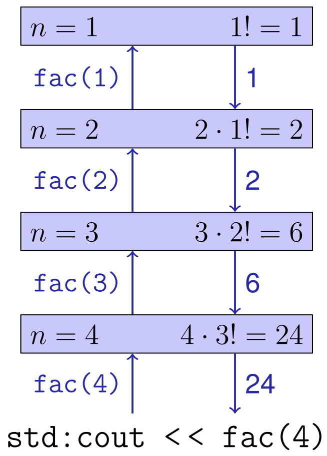
Initialization of the formal argument: $n = 4$
recursive call with argument $n - 1 == 3$



## The Call Stack

For each function call:

- push value of the call argument onto the stack
- always work with the top value
- at the end of the call the top value is removed from the stack



## Euclidean Algorithm

- finds the greatest common divisor $\gcd(a,b)$ of two natural numbers $a$ and $b$
- is based on the following mathematical recursion (proof in the lecture notes):

$$\gcd(a,b) = \begin{cases} a, & \text{if } b = 0 \\ \gcd(b, a \bmod b), & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$



## Euclidean Algorithm in C++

$$\gcd(a,b) = \begin{cases} a, & \text{if } b = 0 \\ \gcd(b, a \bmod b), & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

```
unsigned int gcd
 (unsigned int a, unsigned int b)
{
  if (b == 0)
    return a;
  else
    return gcd (b, a % b);
}
```

Termination: $a \bmod b < b$, thus $b$ gets smaller in each recursive call.



## Fibonacci Numbers

$$F_n := \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } n = 0 \\ 1, & \text{if } n = 1 \\ F_{n-1} + F_{n-2}, & \text{if } n > 1 \end{cases}$$

$0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89 \ldots$



## Fibonacci Numbers in C++

**Laufzeit**

`fib(50)` takes "forever" because it computes $F_{48}$ two times, $F_{47}$ 3 times, $F_{46}$ 5 times, $F_{45}$ 8 times, $F_{44}$ 13 times, $F_{43}$ 21 times ... $F_1$ ca. $10^9$ times (!)

```
unsigned int fib (unsigned int n)
{
  if (n == 0) return 0;
  if (n == 1) return 1;
  return fib (n-1) + fib (n-2); // n > 1
}
```

Correctness and termination are clear.

## Fast Fibonacci Numbers

Idea:

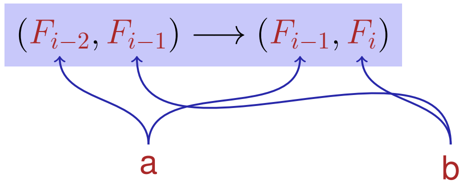
- Compute each Fibonacci number only once, in the order $F_0, F_1, F_2, \ldots, F_n$!
- Memorize the most recent two numbers (variables `a` and `b`)!
- Compute the next number as a sum of `a` and `b`!



## Fast Fibonacci Numbers in $C{+}{+}$

```
unsigned int fib (unsigned int n){
  if (n == 0) return 0;
  if (n <= 2) return 1;
  unsigned int a = 1;  // F_1
  unsigned int b = 1;  // F_2
  for (unsigned int i = 3; i <= n; ++i){
    unsigned int a_old = a;  // F_i-2
    a = b;                   // F_i-1
    b += a_old;              // F_i-1 += F_i-2 -> F_i
  }
  return b;
}
```

very fast, also for `fib(50)`






## Recursion and Iteration

Recursion can *always* be simulated by

- Iteration (loops)
- explicit “call stack” (e.g. array)

Often recursive formulations are simpler, but sometimes also less efficient.