ART reference manual

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Getting started

ART is a software tool for developers of programming language interpreters and compilers which provides four core technologies: generalised parsing, ambiguity management using *choosers*, term rewriting and attribute evaluation.

ART supports a design style which we call Ambiguity Retained Translation (hence the name) in which multiple interpretations of a program text are allowed to co-exist rather than forcing each phase of a translator to output a single interpretation. So, for instance, decisions on whether an identifier in ANSI-C is a type name or a variable name can be delayed until a full program analysis is available.

1.1 Documentation

The ART bookshelf is a set of documents comprising:

- ♦ artRef Installation instructions and a reference guide to the ART script language and the value system (this document).
- artSLE A tutorial guide to software language engineering with ART, showing how to implement simple language interpreters using either Structural Operational Semantics (SOS)-style rewriting, or attribute-action systems.
- artLab The laboratory guide used in the Royal Holloway undergraduate course Software Language Engineering
- artInt A guide for researchers and developers to the internals of ART, describing algorithms and their implementations.

The most recent versions of these documents may be downloaded from

https://github.com/AJohnstone2007/ART/tree/main/doc

1.2 Downloading and first run

1. ART is written in Java; therefore an up-to-date Java installation is required. At the time of writing, the UK Oracle download page for Java is at

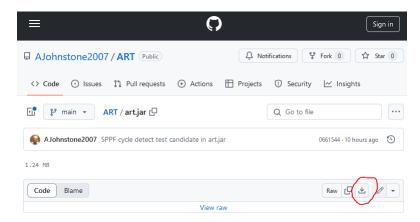
https://www.oracle.com/uk/java/technologies/downloads/

Select and install the appropriate version for your operating system. Other Java implementations are available and locatable via search engines.

Make a work directory, the location of which we shall call artwork.
 Download the art.jar file by opening a Web browser on:

https://github.com/AJohnstone2007/ART/blob/main/art.jar

Click the GitHub download button (circled in red below) to download a copy of art.jar to your work directory artwork.



3. Test the download and your Java installation by opening a command window, changing your directory to *artwork* and typing the command

The expected output is a version number, a build timestamp and summary usage information which will look like this:

```
ART 5_0_241 2024-11-01 08:12:44 Usage:
```

4. Instead of the ART message you may see something like this:

Class has been compiled by a more recent version of the Java Environment (class file version xy.0), this version of the Java Runtime only recognizes class file versions up to pq.0.

This means that your Java installation is for an old version of Java, and you will need to install a current version: see step 1.

5. The official ART repository is at

```
https://github.com/AJohnstone2007/ART
```

It includes the latest version of the ART bookshelf documents at

https://github.com/AJohnstone2007/ART/blob/main/doc and the source code under

https://github.com/AJohnstone2007/ART/tree/main/src

1.3 Using the ART command line interface

ART may be run from a command line by typing java -jar art.jar followed by zero or more arguments.

If there are no arguments, then a help message is printed.

If the first argument is fx, run as a Java FX application (see section 1.4).

If the first argument is ide, open the ART Integrated Development Environment (see section 1.5).

The rest of the arguments are concatenated with separating spaces into a single input specification with the following exceptions:

- For an argument containing a single period character and ending .art such as path/name.art, the contents of the file path/name.art is concatenated
- 2. For an argument containing a single period character and ending .xyz such as path/name.xyz where xyz is not lower case art, the string !try 'name.xyz' is concatenated.

The input string is then passed to the ART script language interpreter.

The effect of this is that a command of the form

```
java -jar art.jar rules.art test.str
```

will run ART using the rules in rules.art and test using the input string in test.str. Multiple xyz.art files will be concatenated together, and each xyz.str file will create a new test try. ART directives and even rules can also be inserted via the command line, for instance

java -jar art.jar rules.art test.str !print derivation

1.4 Using JavaFX with ART

ART provides support for languages that display 2D and 3D graphics using JavaFX. If your application requires graphics, then you must install JavaFX via the page at https://gluonhq.com/products/javafx/

Running ART with JavaFX requires a very long command line because of the need to specify class and module paths, so we recommend that you create an appropriate shell script (Un*x) or Windows batch file:

A useful Windows batch script art.bat contains this line:

```
java --module-path %jfxHome%\lib --add-modules javafx.controls
-cp .;%artHome%\art.jar;%artHome%\richtextfx.jar
```

uk.ac.rhul.cs.csle.art.ART %*

where %jfxhome% is the name of an environment variable bound to the location of the Java FX modules and and %artHome% is the location of art.jar.

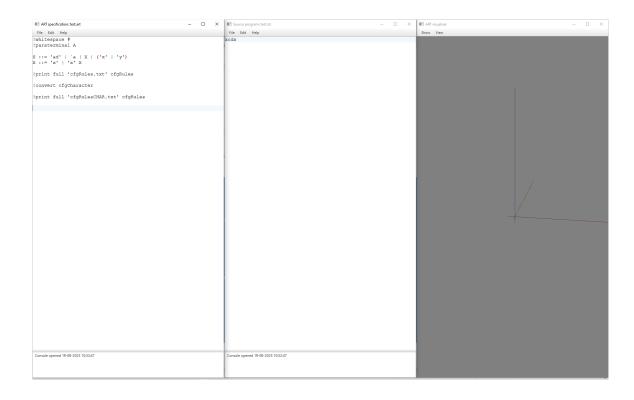
1.5 Using the Integrated Development Environment

Summer 2025: the IDE needs further development before it is ready for serious work. Please use the command line interface.

The ART jar file includes a simple Integrated Development Environment (IDE) that can aid development of language specifications. It requires JavaFX to be installed (see previous section), and in addition uses the RichTextFX editor component from https://github.com/FXMisc/RichTextFX. You may download a copy to your artwork directory from

https://github.com/AJohnstone2007/ART/blob/main/richtextfx.jar

In use, the IDE splits the screen into three windows: at startup the leftmost windows holds the ART script, the middle window holds the input string and the rightmost window displays visualisation information. Messages from the ART interpreter appear in the console section of the script window; messages generated by the semantics of the specified language processor appear in the console section of the middle window. These windows can be resized, moved around and iconised in the usual way.



Script language fundamentals

ART interprets specifications written in the ART script language. The latest ART syntax specification is available from the repository **here**.

A specification is a sequence of four kinds of phrase:

- 1. Directives, which begin with an exclamation mark!
- 2. Context Free Grammar (CFG) rules, of the form identifier ::= cfgExpression
- 3. Choose rules, of the form slotSet > slotSet or slotSet >> slotSet
- 4. Term Rewrite (TR) rules, of the form premises --- conclusion

2.1 Script language lexical elements

The ART script language is free format, and a sequence of whitespace characters and comments may appear before and after each script language lexical element: whitespace characters are: newline, return, tab and space; comments are delimited by (* and *), or by // and line end.

Language lexical elements comprise the fixed keywords and punctuation defined in the ART syntax specification, along with the elements listed in Table 2.1: comments, identifiers, real and integer literals and several styles of string .

	Name	Pattern	Examples	
COMBLOCK	Block comment	(*\phi*)	(* comment *)	
COMLINE	Line comment	//♦ newline	// comment	
ID	Identifier	(alpha _)(alpha _ digit)*	_ab XYZ X123	
INT	Integer	-?digit+	-123 999 0	
REAL	Real	-? digit+.digit+	-123.45 999.0 0.3	
STRDQ	Double-quote string	" * "	"" "x" "abc" "\n"	
STRSQ	Single-quote string	' ◇* '	'' 'x' 'abc' '\n'	
STRBR	Braced string	{◊*}	{} {x} {abc} '\n'	
STRDOL	Dollar string	\$\$*\$	\$\$ \$x\$ \$abc\$ '\n'	
STRBQ	Back-quote string	` \$	`x `\n	

In strings and comments, the symbol \diamond denotes any printable letter *except* for the closing delimiter, along with the escape sequences listed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.1 Lexical elements of the ART script language

Within strings, non-printing characters such as newline are not allowed. Instead an *escape sequence* introduced by a backslash $\$ as listed in Table 2.2. Any other sequence $\$ yields the character x.

Sequence	code point name
\b	back space
\f	form feed
\n	new line
\r	carriage return
\t	horizontal tab
\uWXYZ	Unicode BMP (16-bit) code point where WXYZ is a four-digit hex number
\vUVWXYZ	full Unicode code point where UVWXYZ is a six-digit hex number

Table 2.2 Escape sequences

2.2 Script structures

As it processes rules and directives, ART updates various structures such as the current Context Free Grammar rule set, the current set of whitespace elements and the current derivation term. The full set of structures and their function is shown in Table 2.3.

Name	Part of	Rôle	Default value
cfgRules	_	Parser and lexer rules	Empty
start	cfgRules	Parser start symbol	LHS of first CFG rule
characterSet	cfgRules	The set of 'in band' characters	All terminal characters
whitespace	cfgRules	The set of whitespace elements	&SIMPLE_WHITESPACE
paraterminal	cfgRules	The set of paraterminals	Empty
token	cfgRules	Token list	All terminals
lexicalisations	_	Lexicalisations from the most recent !try	Empty
derivations	_	Derivation steps from the most recent !try	Empty
tasks	_	Task descriptors from the most recent !try	Empty
chooseRules	_	Chooser rules	Longest match
trRules	-	Term rewriter ruls	Empty
start	trRules	Initial term rewriter relation symbol	Relation from first TR rule
finalTerms	trRules	Normal forms of the rewrite rules	All values
term	_	Resulting term from the most recent !try	Null term

Table 2.3 Script structures

ART interprets a specification line by line, modifying these current structures accordingly: for instance, when a Context Free Grammar rule is encountered, it is added to the current CFG Rule set and similarly for Choose rules and Term Rewrite rules.

Some of these structures are really sub-structures of others. The second column in Table 2.3 shows the parent structure for each element: a - in that column

means that the corresponding element is a top level structure. Rule sets may be cleared, saved and restored. So, for instance, when the whitespace set is updated it is the whitespace of the current cfgRules that is modified; and that value will be saved and restored as part of the Contxt Free Grammar rule set. Similarly the finalTerms (the irreducible terms) of a relation 'belong' to the current trRules, and will be saved and restored when the trRules are saved and restored.

2.3 The !try pipeline

An ART specification sets up rules and definitions for a translation run which is then triggered by a !try directive. The ART pipeline shown in Figure 2.1 comprises six processing blocks (shown as blue rounded boxes) whose individual behaviour is parameterised by the current rule sets in place when the run starts, shown in yellow. The input and output data structures for each block are represented by green boxes.

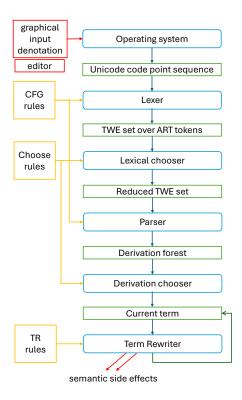


Figure 2.1 The !try pipeline

The starting point is an input text, produced perhaps in a text editor. This is partitioned into lexemes using the *Lexer* which outputs a *Terminals With Extents* (TWE) set which can be then pruned using *Lexical Choose* rules; the resulting *lexicalisations* are then analysed by the *Parser* to produce a *Derivation Forest* which is pruned by the *Derivation Choose* rules to produce a single

Derivation Term. This term is then repeatedly rewritten to some final term, with semantic effects being generated as side effects generated by ART's value system.

The term rewriter may be configured to process Attribute-Action systems, that is a set of Context Free Grammar rules with embedded actions and value expressions that evaluate attributes associated with derivation tree nodes; there is also a specialised high-speed interpreter for these kinds of specifications.

2.4 Input text, characters and letters

Tools built using ART read *texts*. A text is a one dimensional sequence of *characters*, each an instance of an abstract character drawn from some character set. A character set is a finite ordered collection of characters; the position of a character in the order is called the character's *code point*, and thus a text in some particular character set may be represented as a sequence of code points, that is a sequence of natural numbers.

A letter is a graphical denotation of a character that might be drawn by hand or displayed by a computer. A related collection of letters is called a script. Human (natural) languages are written in many scripts, for instance Greek uses letters such as $\alpha\beta\gamma$ whereas many Western languages use Latin letters such as abc. Our texts might use multiple scripts: this document is mainly written using the Latin script, but we use Greek script in some mathematical elements.

This notion of a letter is a little vague. Is the accented French e-acute \acute{e} a separate letter, or is it the letter e with some special attribute representing the accent? The conventional view is that the French alphabet has 26 letters and some accents which are not letters. On the other hand, the Swedish alphabet has 29 letters: a...z along with \mathring{a} , \ddot{a} and \ddot{o} which are considered independent letters, not accented letters. Exactly what constitutes a letter is a really just a cultural convention.

A more precise way of thinking about scripts is to enumerate the graphemes: the set of minimal (and hence indivisible) marks that carry meaning. In the French example above, the letter e and the accent ' are separate graphemes but in Swedish, \mathring{a} is a single grapheme. The French \acute{e} is then thought of as a zero-width ' grapheme which consumes no space along a line, followed by an e grapheme which fills space on a line. These sorts of accented letters are then compounds which appear as a sequence of characters in our texts.

To successfully handle texts written in multiple scripts, we need to create a character set that has one character for every grapheme in every human language. This is exactly the goal of the Unicode Consortium: they have defined a character set comprising approximately 1.1 million code points of which at the time of writing 154,998 are used. The standard is extended annually; the 2024 revision added approximately 5,000 characters.

In addition to characters that directly represent graphemes, Unicode defines characters such as line-terminator and back-space which control very basic aspects of text display, but it does not offer encodings for things such as text colour, styles (such as italics) or font selection: these are all the province of text styling systems which build on the basic Unicode notion of a text to create rich or styled text.

ART input texts, then, are simply sequences of Unicode characters represented as Unicode code points which an ART parser may match to other sequences of Unicode code points. How those sequences are created, stored or displayed is of no concern to ART's algorithms.

Of course, humans prefer to use graphical denotations of a text rather than just listing a sequence of numbers. We prefer to use an operating system's text editor to construct a graphical denotation of the text which the operating system then converts into sequence of code points that may be read into ART's input buffer. Helpfully, the operating system will also convert code points back into graphical denotations of text when, for instance, we send code points to a printer or screen.

In this way, we can choose to think of ART as directly handling the graphical denotation of the text but that is not really true: ART only handles binary numbers; the interpretation and presentation of those numbers as lines of written text is the job of the operating system.

Directives

A directive instructs the ART script interpreter to take some immediate action. A summary of the available directives is shown in Table 3.1 which contains links to the detailed descriptions below.

Name	Argument	Action
!prompt	STRDQ	Print string on console and wait for carriage return
!trace	INT	Set the trace threshold: see section 8.2
!error	INT	Set the error threshold: see section 8.1
!print	structure LIST	Render structures as text
!show	structure LIST	Graphically visualise structures
!clear	structure	Empties current structure
!save	ID structure	Bind a copy of structure to ID
!recall	ID	Make current a copy of the structure previously bound to ID
!convert	ID LIST	Apply transformations to structures
!characterSet	STRBR	Restrict in-band characters to a subset of the Unicode code points
!token	element LIST	Enumerate lexical tokens
!whitespace	element LIST	Clear current whitespace set and add elements from LIST
!paraterminal	ID LIST	Clear current paraterminal set and add nonterminals from LIST
!configuration	typedID LIST	Clear current configuration tuple and add typed terms
!final	term LIST	Clear current TR final term set and add terms from the LIST
!lexer	ID	Select lexicalisation algorithm
!parser	ID	Select parsing algorithm
!interpreter	ID	Select interpreter
!generate	INT genkey LIST	Generate sentential forms from CFG rules
!generate	ID	Generate compilable translator artefacts
!mode	ID LIST	Enable and disable algorithm features
!start	ID	Set the start nonterminal for the CFG rules
!start	relation	Set the start relation for the TR rules
!try	STRDQ	Run full pipeline on input STRDQ
!try	$\mathit{STRDQ} = \mathit{term}$	Run full pipeline on input STRDQ and test result against term
!try	term	Run rewriter only on term
!try	$ extit{term}_1 = extit{term}_2$	Run rewriter only on $term_1$ and test result against $term_2$

Table 3.1 Directive summary

There is also a set of experimental directives which test out new features or support aspects of our research papers. These experimental directives are not intended for general use, and may be removed or may change their behaviour in future versions; they are listed Table 3.2 for completeness but are not documented here.

Name	Argument	Action
!deleteTokens INT		Remove INT tokens from centre of lexicalisation
!swapTokens	INT	Reverse order of INT tokens from centre of lexicalisation
!breakCycles	none	Break cycles in derivations using SLE25 paper algorithm
!breakCyclesRelation	none	Generate cycle break relation using SLE25 paper operations

Table 3.2 Experimental directive summary

!prompt

!trace

!error

!print structure LIST

Print to the console the elements *structure* LIST which may be one of the structure names in Table 2.3 along with the keywords in Table ??. The argument list is processed left-to-right.

!show structure LIST

Graphically visualise the elements *structure* LIST which may be one of the structure names in Table 2.3 along with the keywords in Table ??. The argument list is processed left-to-right.

When running under the IDE, the visualisation will appear as an interactive graphics window. When not running under the IDE, or after a file argument, the visualisation will be written to file in the GraphViz .dot format for processing and visualisation using GraphViz.

!save
!recall
!clear
!convert
!characterSet
!token
!whitespace
!paraterminal
!configuration
!final
!lexer
!lexer !parser
!parser
!parser !interpreter
!parser !interpreter !generate
!parser !interpreter !generate !mode

Context free grammar rules

Lexical builtins

Lexical builtins are hardcoded recognisers for certain classes of substring which may be used as shorthands for common lexical patterns on the right hand side of Context Free Grammar rules. Builtin names begin with an ampersand & character.

GIFT annotations

Attributes and actions

Name	Examples
&CHAR_BQ	,C
&ID	Alphanumeric Identifier
&INTEGER	123
&REAL	12.3
&STRING_BRACE	A string delimited by braces
&STRING_BRACE_NEST	A string with nested instances delimited by braces
&STRING_DOLLAR	A string delimited by dollar signs
&STRING_DQ	A string delimited by double quotes
$\&STRING_PLAIN_SQ$	A string delimited by single quotes with no escapes
$\& STRING_SQ$	A string delimited by single quotes
&SIMPLE_WHITESPACE	
&COMMENT_BLOCK_C	/* a C-style block comment */
&COMMENT_LINE_C	// a C-style line comment
&COMMENT_NEST_ART	(* An ART style comment (* nestable *) *)

Table 4.1 Lexical builtins

Choose rules

Rewrite rules

The value system

ART provides several builtin types and operations which may be used instead of rewrite rules to perform more efficient basic arithmetic and collection operations.

7.1 Types

7.2 Value system abbreviations

Internally, all values are held as subterms whose root node is labelled with the type, and whose children contain the values.

Writing these terms out can be tiresome, so the ART front end provides a set of abbreviations that follow typical programming language conventions. This ART script exercises all of the abbreviations, showing both the 'raw' form used internally and the 'cooked' abbreviation.

```
1 | !print "** The term a(b,c) with no abbreviations"
2 !print term a(b,c)
3 !printraw term a(b,c)
4 !print "** __bool true"
5 !print term true
6 !printraw term true
  !print "** __bool false"
8 !print term false
9 !printraw term false
10 !print "** __char `a"
11 !print term `a
12 !printraw term `a
13 !print "** __intAP 1234"
14 !print term £1234
15 !printraw term £1234
16 !print " ** __int32 1234"
17 !print term 1234
18 !printraw term 1234
19 !print "** __realAP 1234.0"
20 | !print term £1234.0
21 !printraw term £1234.0
```

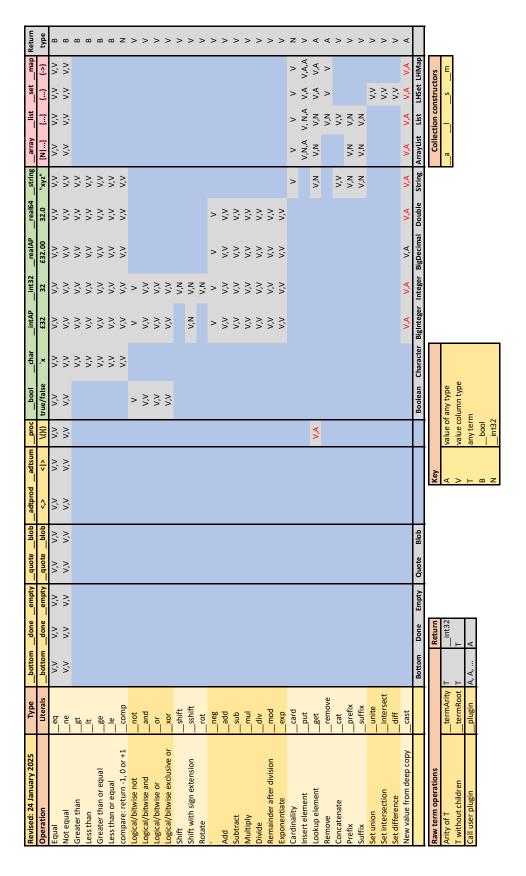


Figure 7.1 ART Value system: types, operations and signatures

```
22 | !print " ** __real64 1234.0"
23 !print term 1234.0
24 !printraw term 1234.0
25 !print "** __array of size 3 a,b,c"
26 !print term [3 | a,b,c ]
27 | !printraw term [ 3 | a,b,c]
28 !print " ** __list a,b,c"
29 !print term [ a,b,c ]
30 !printraw term [a,b,c]
31 !print " ** empty list"
32 !print term []
33 !printraw term []
34 | !print " ** __set a,b,c"
35 | !print term { a,b,c }
36 | !printraw term { a,b,c }
37 !print "** empty set"
38 !print term { }
39 | !printraw term { }
40 | !print " ** __map a=p, b=q, c=r"
|| !print term { a=p, b=q, c=r }
||a||!printraw term \{a=p, b=q, c=r\}
43 !print "** empty map"
|44|!print term \{=\}
|| !printraw term | =|
```

The output from this script is:

```
1 *** Value system attached to System default plugin
2 ** The term a(b,c) with no abbreviations
3 a(b, c)
4 a(b, c)
5 ** __bool true
6 true
7 __bool(true)
8 ** __bool false
9 false
10 __bool(false)
11 ** __char `a
12 `a
13 __char(a)
14 ** __intAP 1234
15 £1234
16 __intAP(1234)
17 ** __int32 1234
18 1234
19 __int32(1234)
20 ** __realAP 1234.0
21 £1234.0
22 __realAP(1234.0)
```

```
Constructor
                             Rôle
                                             Operations
__bottom
                             Match failure
                                             __eq __ne
__done
__empty
__quote
\_blob(N)
\_proc(M,B)
\_adtprod(V, N)
\_adtsum(V, N)
\_bool(V)
\_char(V)
\_intAP(V)
\_int32(V)
\_realAP(V)
\_real64(V)
\_string(V)
\_array(N,\_a(...))
__list(__l(...))
__set(__s(...))
__map(__m(...))
__map(__map(...), __m(...))
```

Table 7.1 ART value types and allowed operations

```
23 ** __real64 1234.0
24 1234.0
25 __real64(1234.0)
26 ** __array of size 3 a,b,c
27 [3 | a, b, c]
28 __array(__int32(3), __a(a, __a(b, __a(c))))
29 ** __list a,b,c
30 [a, b, c]
31 __list(__l(a, __l(b, __l(c))))
32 ** empty list
33 []
34 __list
35 ** __set a,b,c
36 {a, b, c}
37 __set(__s(a, __s(b, __s(c))))
38 ** empty set
39 {}
40 __set
41 ** __map a=p, b=q, c=r
42 {a=p, b=q, c=r}
||a|| = ||a|
44 ** empty map
45 {=}
46 __map
```

- 7.3 Operations
- 7.4 ART plugins

Constructor	Returns	Action
$_$ eq (L,R)	bool	value of L equal to value of R
ne(L,R)	bool	value of L not equal to value of R
${ t gt}(L,R)$	bool	value of L greater then value of R
lt(L,R)	bool	value of L less than value of R
$\mathbf{ge}(L,R)$	bool	value of L greater that or equal to value of R
$__le(L,R)$	bool	value of L less than or equal to value of R
comp(L,R)	int32	if $L < R$ then -1 else if $L > R$ then +1 else 0
not(L)	T(L)	Logical or bitwise inversion
$_$ and (L,R)	T(L)	Logical or bitwise conjunction
or(L,R)	T(L)	Logical or bitwise disjunction
xor(L,R)	T(L)	Logical or bitwise exclusive OR
shift(L,R)	T(L)	Left shift L by R bits
sshift(L,R)	T(L)	Right shift L by R bits, propagating zeroes
rot (L,R)	T(L)	Right shift L by R bits, propagating sign bit
neg(L)		
$__add(L,R)$		
sub(L,R)		
mul(L,R)		
div(L,R)		
mod(L,R)		
exp(L,R)		
card(L)		
put (L,K,V)		
$_{- extsf{-}}\mathbf{get}(L,R)$		
$_$ remove (L,K)		
cat(L,R)		
prefix(L,R)		
suffix(L,K)		
unite(L,R)		
intersect (L,R)		
diff(L,R)		
$_$ cast(L,R)		

Table 7.2 ART value operations

Script messages and tracing

Messages from ART come in four categories: *script messages* which report progress and problems with the execution of scripts; *trace messages* which report the detailed progress of parsers and rewriters; *script outputs* in response to the directives !print and !show; and *user outputs* generated by the language semantics specified in the script.

In this chapter we discuss the first two categories. Outputs from directives are documented in section 3 and user outputs are, by their nature, application specific.

8.1 Script messages

ART emits script messages at one of four *severity levels*: fatal, error, warning, and informational A *fatal* message indicates that the internal integrity of ART is compromised (such as by running out of memory) and as a result ART is shutting down and terminating.

An *error* message indicates that ART cannot proceed with the current directive, and has terminated execution of the associated action. Output files may be left in an inconsistent state. The script should be modified to correct the error.

A warning message indicates that ART has detected an anomaly of some sort, but is continuing to execute anyway; we recommend that scripts are modified to run without warnings.

An *informational* message is a simple progress report requiring no user action.

Output of messages is controlled by an internal variable that may be set with the !errorLevel directive which takes an integer in the range 0–3. The default error level is 3.

Error level	Messages displayed
0	Only fatal messages
1	Error and fatal
2	Warning, error and fatal
3	Informational, warning, error and fatal messages

8.2 Trace messages

ART can give detailed progress reports during parsing and rewriting under the control of an internal variable that may be set with the !traceLevel directive which takes an integer in the range of 0-9. As above, levels are cumulative in the sense that for level n, all messages for levels 0-n will be displayed.

Trace level	Parser	Rewriter
0	(Silent)	(Silent)
1	Parser accept	
2		Rewriter termination
3		Step number
4		Rewrite attempt
5		Rule selection
6		Premises
7		Bindings
8	Lexical match	
9	Stack activity	
10	Derivation activity	
11	Task activity	

The default trace level is 3.

8.3 Error messages with remedial actions