**Part D**

Common Interview Questions (Must know)

1.What is an operating system, and what are its primary functions?

- An operating system (OS) is software that manages computer hardware and software resources and provides services for computer programs. Its primary functions include managing the computer’s memory, processes, hardware (including disk drives and printers), and handling user input and output.

2. Explain the difference between process and thread.

- A process is an independent program in execution with its own memory space, while a thread is a smaller unit within a process that can be scheduled and executed. Multiple threads within a process share the same memory but run independently.

3. What is virtual memory, and how does it work?

- Virtual memory is a memory management technique that gives an application the impression it has contiguous working memory, while in reality, it may be fragmented and even partly stored on disk. The OS handles the mapping of virtual memory to physical memory, allowing for more efficient use of RAM.

4. Describe the difference between multiprogramming, multitasking, and multiprocessing.

- Multiprogramming allows multiple programs to reside in memory simultaneously and ensures CPU utilization by switching between them. Multitasking enables multiple tasks to run concurrently on a single CPU, usually through time-sharing. Multiprocessing uses two or more CPUs to execute processes simultaneously.

5. What is a file system, and what are its components?

- A file system is a method of storing and organizing files on a disk. Components include the hierarchical structure of directories, files, inodes, and the data blocks where file contents are stored.

6. What is a deadlock, and how can it be prevented?

-A deadlock is a situation where two or more processes are unable to proceed because each is waiting for the other to release resources. Deadlock can be prevented by ensuring that at least one of the necessary conditions (mutual exclusion, hold and wait, no preemption, and circular wait) does not hold.

7. Explain the difference between a kernel and a shell

- The kernel is the core of an operating system that directly interacts with hardware. The shell is a command-line interface that allows users to interact with the kernel by entering commands..

8. What is CPU scheduling, and why is it important?

- CPU scheduling is the process of determining which process or thread gets to use the CPU at any given time. It is important for ensuring efficient CPU utilization, process prioritization, and overall system responsiveness.

9. How does a system call work?

- A system call is a way for programs to interact with the OS. When a program needs to request a service from the OS (e.g., file access), it issues a system call, which transitions the CPU from user mode to kernel mode to execute the request.

10. What is the purpose of device drivers in an operating system?

- Device drivers are specialized programs that allow the OS to communicate with hardware devices, translating OS commands into device-specific actions.

11. Explain the role of the page table in virtual memory management.

- The page table maps virtual addresses to physical addresses, keeping track of where virtual pages are stored in physical memory. It allows for efficient memory access and management.

12. What is thrashing, and how can it be avoided?

- Thrashing occurs when excessive paging operations cause a significant slowdown in system performance. It can be avoided by using better memory management techniques, such as increasing physical memory or optimizing page replacement algorithms.

13. Describe the concept of a semaphore and its use in synchronization.

- A semaphore is a synchronization primitive used to control access to a common resource in concurrent programming. It can signal and wait operations to manage the availability of resources, ensuring that processes do not interfere with each other.

14. How does an operating system handle process synchronization?

- The OS handles process synchronization through mechanisms like locks, semaphores, and monitors, ensuring that processes do not simultaneously access shared resources in a way that leads to race conditions or inconsistencies.

15. What is the purpose of an interrupt in operating systems?

- Interrupts are signals that indicate an event requiring immediate attention from the CPU. They allow the OS to respond to external events (like I/O operations) or handle exceptional conditions efficiently.

16. Explain the concept of a file descriptor.

- A file descriptor is a reference to an open file in an OS, used by processes to read, write, or manipulate files. It is an integer that uniquely identifies an open file within a process.

17. How does a system recover from a system crash?

- Recovery from a system crash may involve rebooting the system, running file system checks, restoring from backups, or using journaling file systems that can replay logs to recover from the crash.

18. Describe the difference between a monolithic kernel and a microkernel.

- A monolithic kernel includes all OS services in a single large kernel, providing high performance but making the OS less modular. A microkernel, on the other hand, only includes the most essential services, with other services running in user space, improving modularity and stability at the cost of performance.

19. What is the difference between internal and external fragmentation?

- Internal fragmentation occurs when allocated memory is slightly larger than the requested memory, leaving unused space within allocated regions. External fragmentation occurs when free memory is split into small, non-contiguous blocks, making it difficult to allocate memory even if there is enough total free space.

20. How does an operating system manage I/O operations?

- The OS manages I/O operations by using device drivers to communicate with hardware, scheduling I/O requests, and using buffering, caching, and spooling techniques to improve efficiency and performance.

21. Explain the difference between preemptive and non-preemptive scheduling.

- Preemptive Scheduling: The operating system can interrupt a currently running process to start or resume another process, ensuring that higher-priority tasks get CPU time more quickly. It allows the system to respond to events like time slices expiring or higher-priority processes arriving.

Non-Preemptive Scheduling: Once a process is given the CPU, it runs until it either completes or voluntarily yields the CPU (e.g., by waiting for I/O). This method is simpler but can lead to inefficiencies if long-running processes dominate the CPU.

22. What is round-robin scheduling, and how does it work?

- A time-sharing scheduling algorithm that assigns a fixed time slice or quantum to each process in the queue. The CPU cycles through all processes in the queue, giving each one a turn to execute for the duration of the quantum. If a process doesn't finish in its quantum, it is moved to the back of the queue.

23. Describe the priority scheduling algorithm. How is priority assigned to processes?

- In this algorithm, each process is assigned a priority, and the CPU is allocated to the process with the highest priority. Priority can be assigned based on factors like the importance of the process, resource requirements, or deadlines. The algorithm can be either preemptive (a higher-priority process interrupts a lower-priority one) or non-preemptive.

24. What is the shortest job next (SJN) scheduling algorithm, and when is it used?

- Also known as Shortest Job First (SJF), this algorithm selects the process with the smallest execution time to run next. It minimizes the average waiting time for a batch of processes. It's used in batch processing systems where job lengths are known in advance.

25. Explain the concept of multilevel queue scheduling.

- In this algorithm, processes are divided into different queues based on their priority or type (e.g., system processes, interactive processes, batch processes). Each queue has its own scheduling algorithm, and the scheduler selects processes from the queues based on their priority.

26. What is a process control block (PCB), and what information does it contain?

- A data structure maintained by the operating system that stores information about a process, including process ID, process state, program counter, CPU registers, memory management information, accounting information, and I/O status.

27. Describe the process state diagram and the transitions between different process states.

- Process State Diagram: It represents the different states a process can be in during its lifecycle:

- New: The process is being created.

- Ready: The process is waiting to be assigned to the CPU.

- Running: The process is being executed by the CPU.

- Waiting/Blocked: The process is waiting for some event (e.g., I/O completion).

- Terminated: The process has finished execution.

Transitions occur when processes are scheduled, interrupted, blocked for I/O, or terminated.

28. How does a process communicate with another process in an operating system?

- Processes communicate through mechanisms like pipes, message queues, shared memory, semaphores, and sockets. These methods allow processes to exchange data and synchronize their actions.

29. What is process synchronization, and why is it important?

- The coordination of processes to ensure that they operate correctly and efficiently when accessing shared resources. It prevents race conditions, ensures data consistency, and avoids issues like deadlocks.

30. Explain the concept of a zombie process and how it is created.

- A process that has completed execution but still has an entry in the process table because its parent process has not yet read its exit status. It is created when a child process exits and the parent process has not yet performed the wait() system call to clean up the process.

31. Describe the difference between internal fragmentation and external fragmentation.

- Internal Fragmentation: Occurs when allocated memory may have small unused portions due to fixed block allocation.

- External Fragmentation: Occurs when free memory is split into small, non-contiguous blocks, making it difficult to allocate larger contiguous memory blocks despite having sufficient free memory overall.

32. What is demand paging, and how does it improve memory management efficiency?

- A paging technique where pages of memory are only loaded into RAM when they are needed (i.e., on demand). It reduces the amount of physical memory used by keeping only the necessary pages in memory, thus improving efficiency.

33. Explain the role of the page table in virtual memory management.

- A data structure used by the memory management unit (MMU) to map virtual addresses to physical addresses. It keeps track of where virtual pages are stored in physical memory, enabling the OS to efficiently manage and access memory.

34. How does a memory management unit (MMU) work?

- A hardware component that handles the translation of virtual addresses to physical addresses, manages access rights, and supports virtual memory by using page tables.

35. What is thrashing, and how can it be avoided in virtual memory systems?

- A condition where the system spends more time swapping pages in and out of memory than executing processes, leading to severe performance degradation. It can be avoided by adjusting the degree of multiprogramming, using better page replacement algorithms, or increasing physical memory.

36. What is a system call, and how does it facilitate communication between user programs and the operating system?

- An interface that allows user programs to request services from the operating system, such as file handling, process control, or communication. It transitions the CPU from user mode to kernel mode to execute the request safely and securely.

37. Describe the difference between a monolithic kernel and a microkernel.

- Monolithic Kernel: A large kernel that includes all essential operating system services (e.g., device drivers, file system, networking) within a single binary.

- Microkernel: A smaller kernel that only includes essential services, with other services running in user space, enhancing modularity, security, and stability.

38. How does an operating system handle I/O operations?

- The OS handles I/O operations through device drivers, which act as intermediaries between the hardware and software. The OS also uses buffering, caching, and spooling to manage data transfer and optimize performance.

39. Explain the concept of a race condition and how it can be prevented.

- A situation where the outcome of a process depends on the timing or sequence of other processes' execution. It can be prevented using synchronization mechanisms like locks, semaphores, and atomic operations to ensure that only one process can access shared resources at a time.

40. Describe the role of device drivers in an operating system.

- These are specialized programs that act as translators between the operating system and hardware devices. They provide a uniform interface for the OS to communicate with various hardware components (such as printers, disk drives, and keyboards), abstracting the hardware-specific details and enabling the OS to manage I/O operations effectively.

41. What is a zombie process, and how does it occur? How can a zombie process be prevented?

- A zombie process is a process that has completed execution but still has an entry in the process table, indicating that the parent process has not yet read its exit status. It occurs when the child process terminates, and the parent process does not call wait() or waitpid() to read the child's exit status. Zombie processes can be prevented by ensuring the parent process properly handles child process termination by using the wait() or waitpid() system calls to read the exit status.

42. Explain the concept of an orphan process. How does an operating system handle orphan processes?

- An orphan process is a process whose parent has terminated before it. In Unix-like systems, when a process becomes an orphan, the init process (with PID 1) adopts it. The init process periodically checks and waits for orphaned processes to ensure they do not become zombies.

43. What is the relationship between a parent process and a child process in the context of process management?

- A parent process is a process that creates another process, known as the child process, through system calls like fork(). The parent and child processes run independently, but the parent can control and monitor the child's execution, such as waiting for its completion, retrieving its exit status, or even terminating it.

44. How does the fork() system call work in creating a new process in Unix-like operating systems?

- The fork() system call creates a new process by duplicating the calling process. The new process is called the child process, and it is an exact copy of the parent process except for a few differences, such as having a different process ID (PID). After the fork() call, both the parent and child processes continue executing, with fork() returning 0 in the child process and the child's PID in the parent process.

45. Describe how a parent process can wait for a child process to finish execution.

- The parent process can wait for a child process to finish execution by using the wait() or waitpid() system calls. These calls make the parent process pause until one of its child processes terminates, allowing the parent to retrieve the child's exit status.

46. What is the significance of the exit status of a child process in the wait() system call?

- The exit status provides information about how a child process terminated. It is an integer value returned by the wait() system call to the parent process, indicating whether the child terminated normally or due to a signal. The exit status can help the parent process determine if the child completed successfully or if there was an error.

47. How can a parent process terminate a child process in Unix-like operating systems?

- A parent process can terminate a child process using the kill() system call, which sends a signal to the specified child process. For example, sending the SIGKILL signal will force the child process to terminate immediately.

48. Explain the difference between a process group and a session in Unix-like operating systems.

- Process Group: A collection of related processes that can be managed together, often used for job control in shells. Processes in the same group share the same group ID.

- Session: A session is a collection of process groups established by a single login session. A session is initiated by a session leader (usually a shell) and can control terminal I/O for all the processes within that session.

49. Describe how the exec() family of functions is used to replace the current process image with a new one.

- The exec() functions replace the current process image with a new program image. When a process calls one of the exec() functions, it loads a new executable into its address space, replacing the old one, and starts executing the new program. Unlike fork(), exec() does not create a new process; it replaces the code, data, and stack of the existing process with that of the new program.

50. What is the purpose of the waitpid() system call in process management? How does it differ from wait()?

- waitpid() allows a parent process to wait for a specific child process to terminate by specifying the child’s PID, while wait() waits for any child process to terminate. waitpid() offers more control, as it can also be used with options like non-blocking mode (WNOHANG) to return immediately if no child process has terminated.

51. How does process termination occur in Unix-like operating systems?

- In Unix-like operating systems, process termination can occur in a few ways. The most common method is when a process voluntarily terminates itself by calling the exit() system call, which cleans up resources and informs the operating system that the process has finished. The process then enters a 'zombie' state until its parent process reads its exit status using wait() or waitpid().

52. What is the role of the long-term scheduler in the process scheduling hierarchy? How does it influence the degree of multiprogramming in an operating system?

- The long-term scheduler, also known as the job scheduler, plays a crucial role in managing the degree of multiprogramming in an operating system. It decides which jobs or processes are admitted to the system and moved into memory for execution. By controlling the flow of jobs, it determines how many processes are in memory at any given time, thereby influencing system load and performance.

53. How does the short-term scheduler differ from the long-term and medium-term schedulers in terms of frequency of execution and the scope of its decisions?

- the long-term scheduler runs much less frequently, making strategic decisions about which processes should enter the system from the job pool. The medium-term scheduler operates on an intermediate basis, temporarily removing processes from memory to disk (a process known as swapping) to manage memory resources more effectively. Each scheduler operates on different timescales and scopes, but together, they ensure the system runs efficiently."

54. Describe a scenario where the medium-term scheduler would be invoked and explain how it helps manage system resources more efficiently.

- The medium-term scheduler is typically invoked when the system experiences high memory pressure or when thrashing occurs—where the system spends more time swapping processes in and out of memory than executing them.

For example, if too many processes are loaded into memory and the system starts to slow down, the medium-term scheduler can temporarily swap out some processes to disk to free up RAM. This allows the system to continue functioning efficiently with fewer active processes, thereby reducing the load on memory and improving overall performance. Once the system stabilizes, the medium-term scheduler can bring the swapped-out processes back into memory for execution."