

# Breaking the Ice with Useful Standard Algorithms: Sorting `std::vector`

---



**Giovanni Dicanio**

AUTHOR, SOFTWARE ENGINEER

<https://blogs.msmvps.com/gdicanio>



# Overview



Sorting `std::vector` using `std::sort`

Iterators

Relation between *iterators*, *containers*  
and *algorithms*

Custom sorting



# Sorting `std::vector`



Code from scratch



*Reuse* Standard Library's algorithms

```
#include  
<algorithm>
```



```
std::sort( something... );
```



# Sorting std::vector

Use the Standard Library's *sort* algorithm



```
// v is a std::vector
```

*begin(v)*

*end(v)*

*sort( first, last );*

A diagram consisting of two dotted arrows. The first arrow originates from the text 'begin(v)' in an orange box and points down and to the right to the 'first' parameter in the 'sort' function call. The second arrow originates from the text 'end(v)' in an orange box and points down and to the left to the 'last' parameter in the 'sort' function call.

## Sorting std::vector

Use the Standard Library's *sort* algorithm



```
// v is a std::vector
```

*Begin*  
of data

*End*  
of data

```
sort( begin(v), end(v) );
```

## Sorting std::vector

Use the Standard Library's *sort* algorithm



```
// v is a std::vector
```

*Iterators*



```
graph TD; A[Iterators] -.-> B[begin(v)]; A -.-> C[end(v)];
```

```
sort( begin(v), end(v) );
```

## Sorting `std::vector`

Use the Standard Library's *sort* algorithm



# What Are Iterators?

`std::vector`



Generalized *pointer*



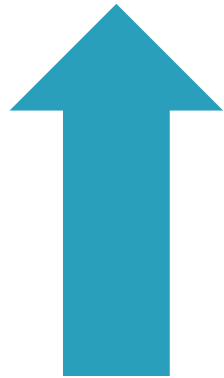


# What Are Iterators?

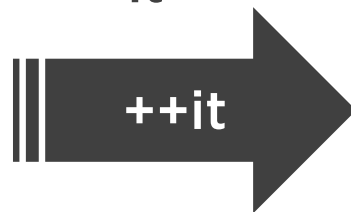


# Advancing Iterators

`std::vector`



`it`



# Advancing Iterators

`std::vector`



`it`



# Dereferencing Iterators

`std::vector`



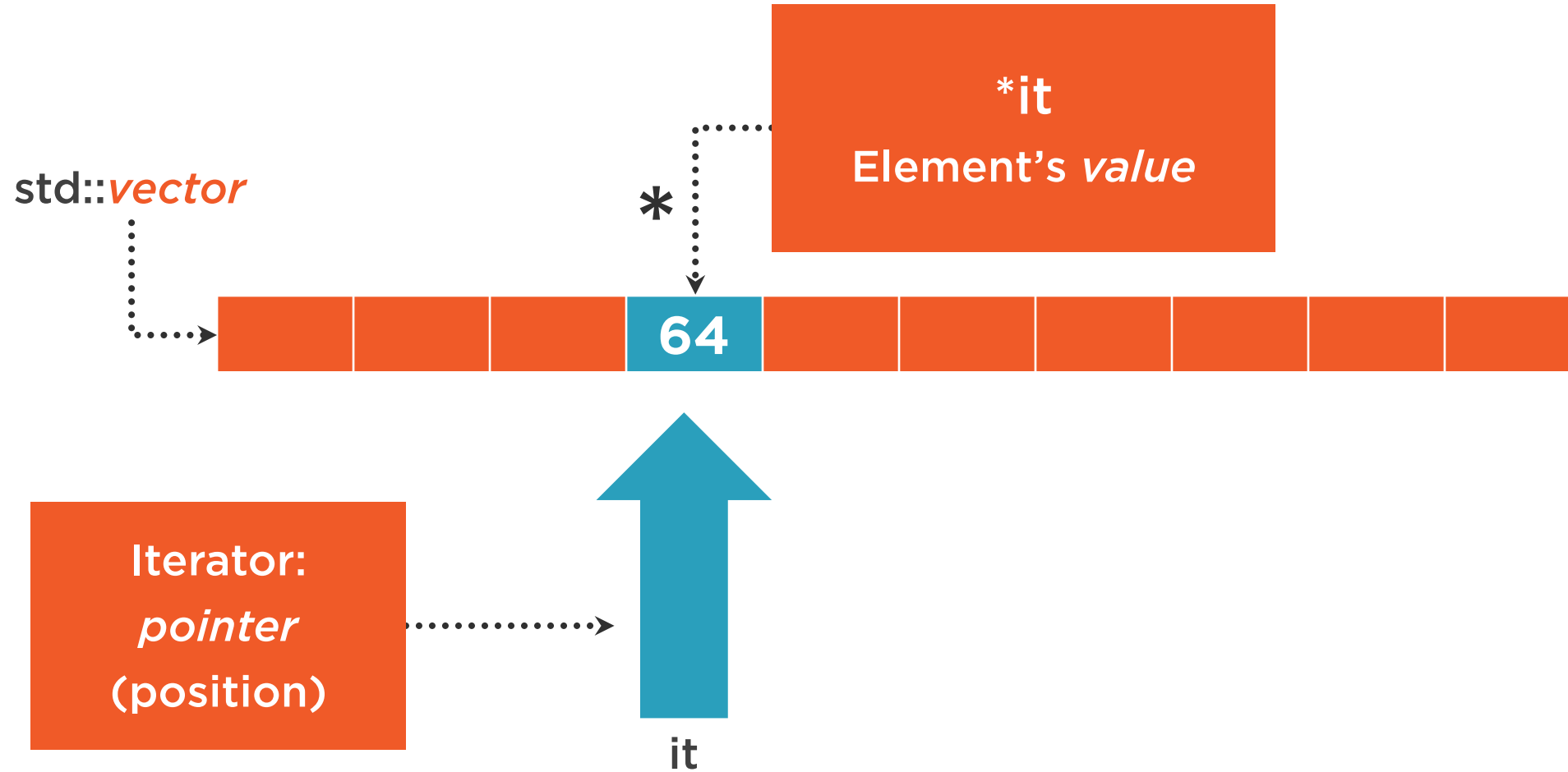
Iterator:  
*pointer*  
(position)



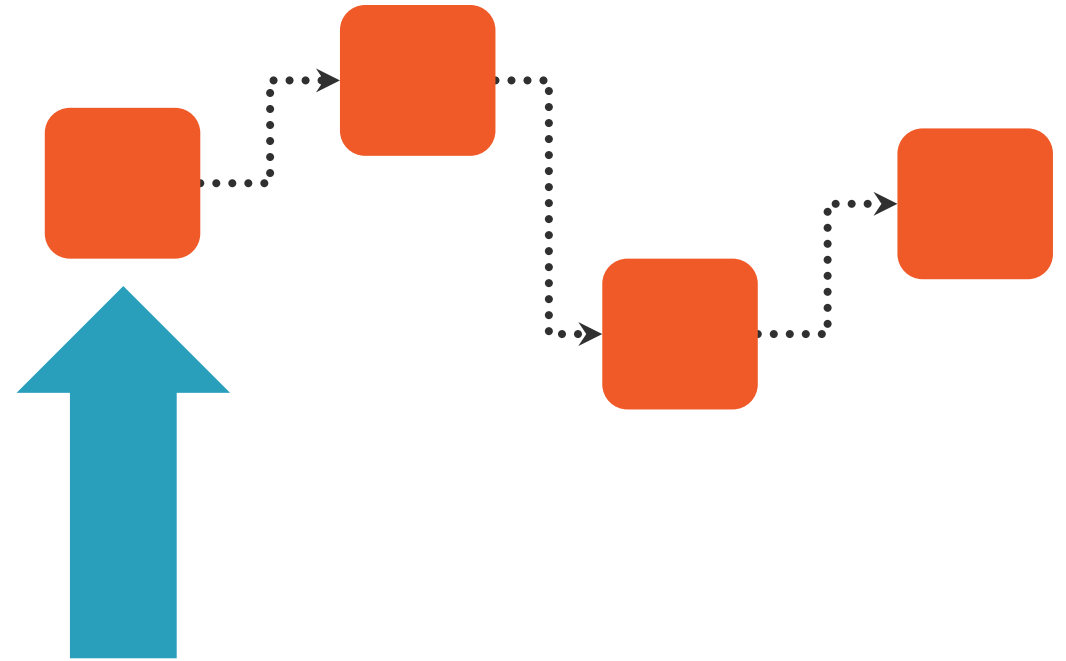
`it`



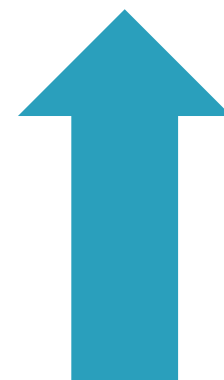
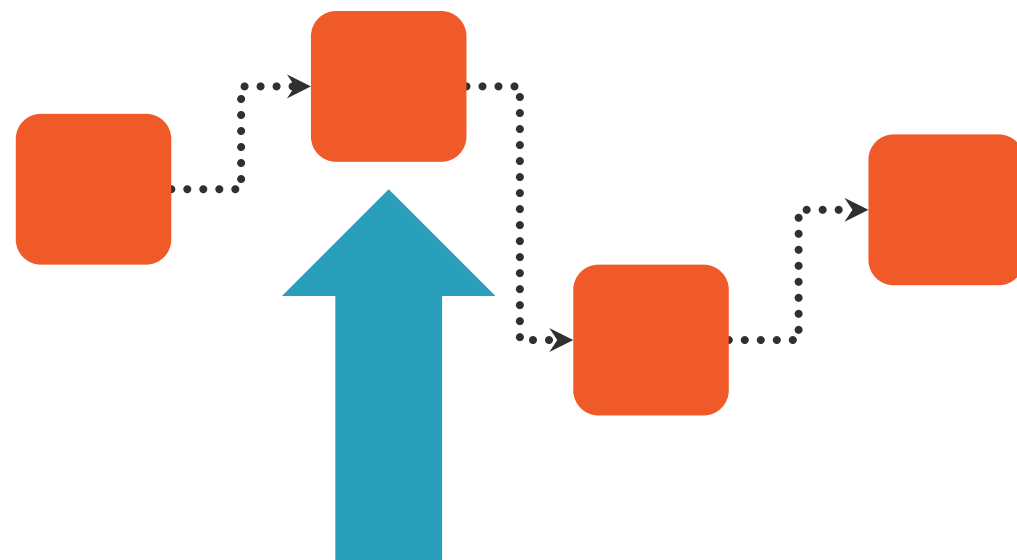
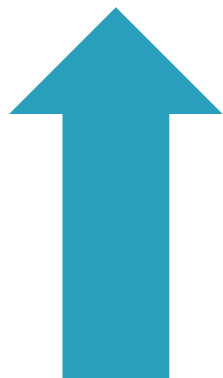
# Dereferencing Iterators



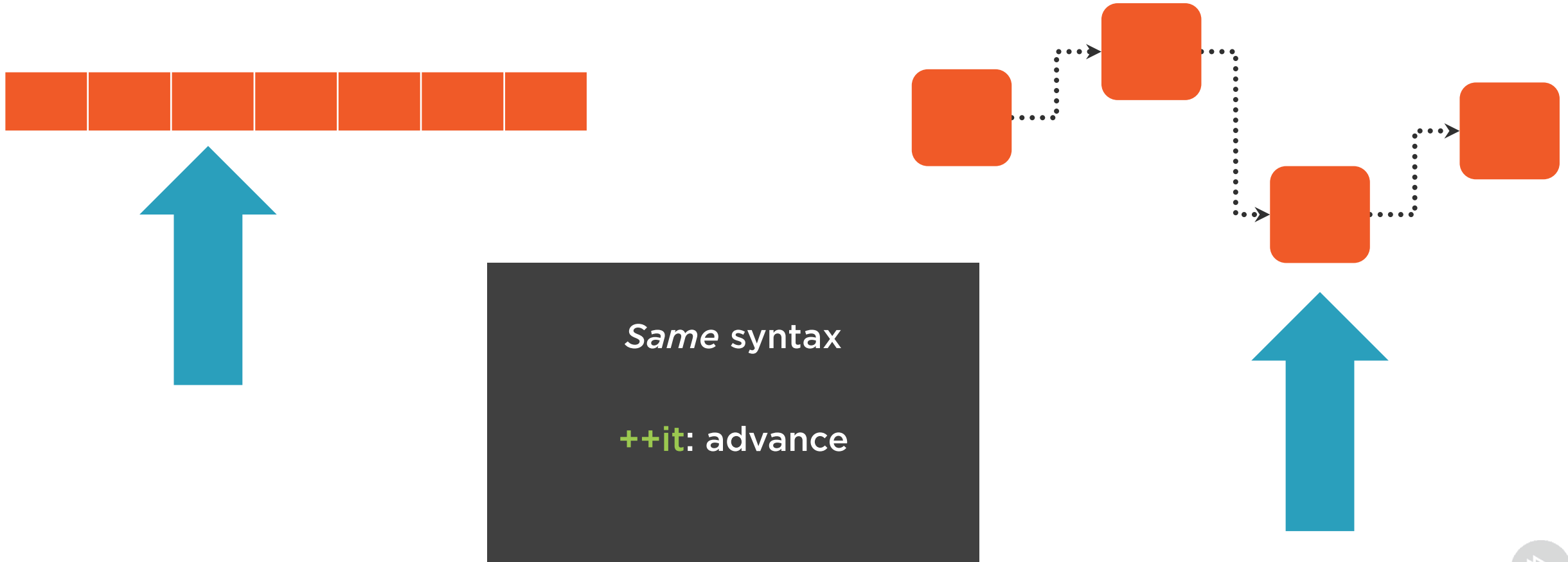
# Iterators Abstract Away Containers



# Iterators Abstract Away Containers

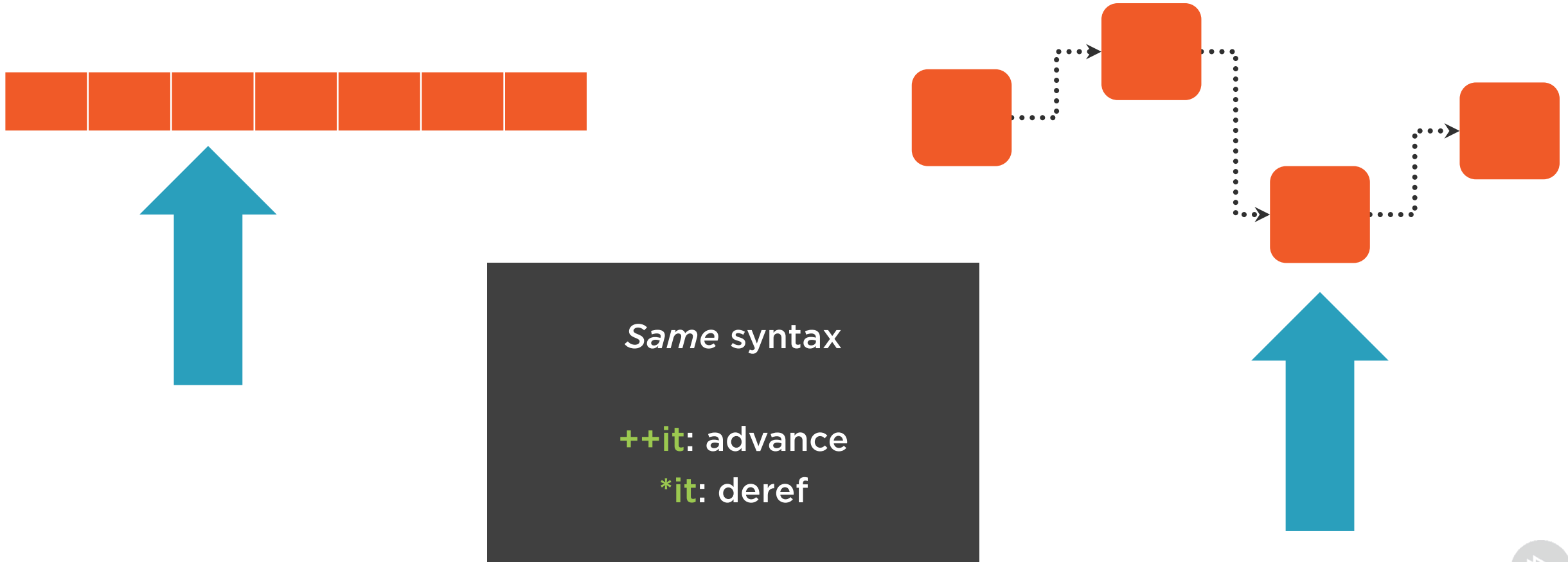


# Iterators Abstract Away Containers





# Iterators Abstract Away Containers



```
vector<int>::iterator
```

```
vector<string>::iterator
```

```
vector<string>::const_iterator
```

What's the Type of an Iterator?





```
vector<int>::iterator
```

```
vector<string>::iterator
```

```
vector<string>::const_iterator
```

Use  
*auto*

# What's the Type of an Iterator?





auto

auto

auto

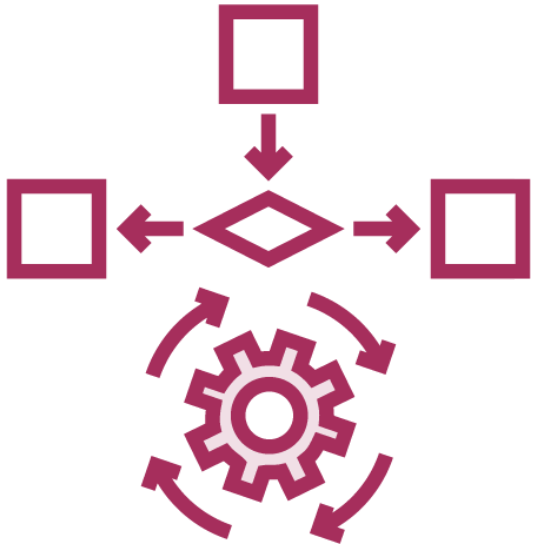
Use  
*auto*

# What's the Type of an Iterator?

Use *auto* to simplify your C++ code



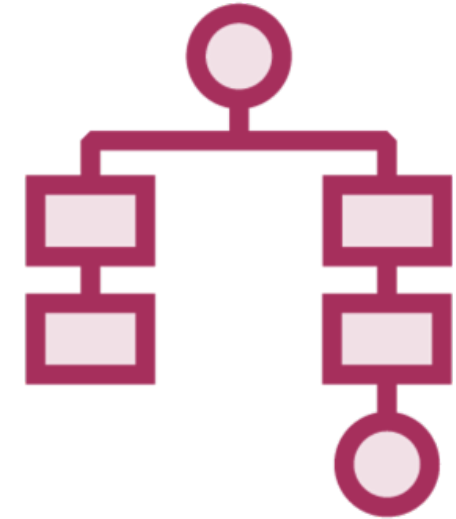
# Algorithms, Iterators, and Containers



Algorithms



Iterators

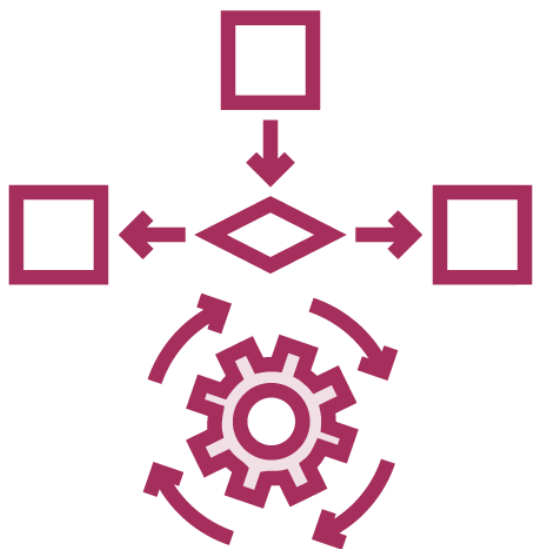


Containers

Algorithms use *iterators* to access elements inside containers



# Algorithms, Iterators, and Containers



Algorithms



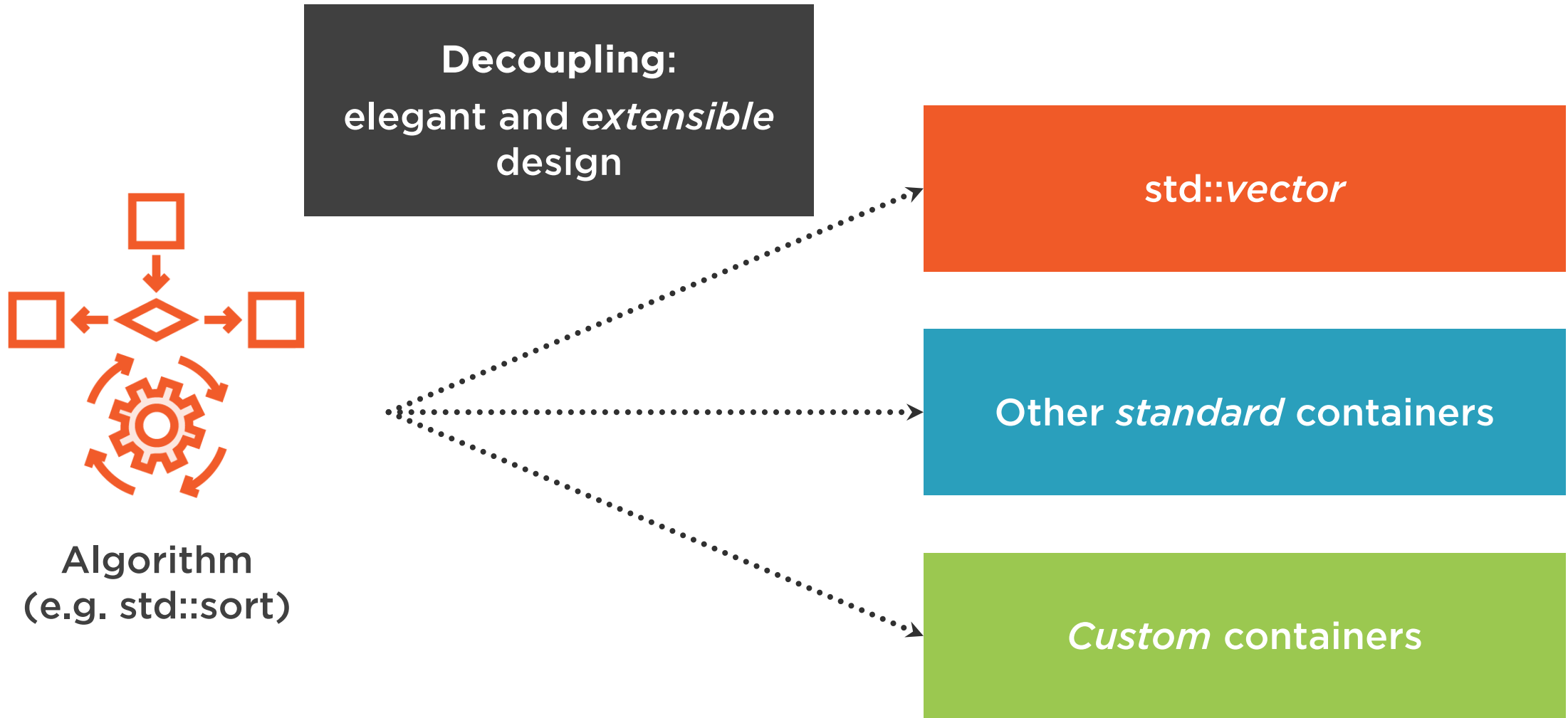
Iterators



Containers



# Reusing Algorithms with Different Containers



```
// v is a std::vector
```

*Begin  
of data*

*End  
of data*

```
sort( begin(v), end(v) );
```



Sorting Using **Custom** Comparison





```
// v is a std::vector
```

ADDITIONAL PARAMETER



```
sort( begin(v), end(v) );
```

Sorting Using Custom Comparison



```
// v is a std::vector
```




```
sort( begin(v), end(v), CustomComparison );
```

Sorting Using Custom Comparison



```
// 'names' is a vector<string>
sort(begin(names), end(names),
    [](auto const& a, auto const& b) {
        // Compare by string length
    }
);
```



## Sorting Using Custom Comparison

Custom sorting of a `vector<string>` using a *lambda*

```
// 'names' is a vector<string>  
sort(begin(names), end(names),  
    [](auto const& a, auto const& b) {  
        // Compare by string length  
    })  
);
```

## Sorting Using Custom Comparison

Custom sorting of a `vector<string>` using a *lambda*



```
// 'names' is a vector<string>
sort(begin(names), end(names),
    [](auto const& a, auto const& b) {
        // Compare by string length
    }
);
```



## Sorting Using Custom Comparison

Custom sorting of a `vector<string>` using a *lambda*

```
// 'names' is a vector<string>
sort(begin(names), end(names),
    [](auto const& a, auto const& b) {
        return a.length() < b.length(); ..... SHORTER STRINGS FIRST
    }
);
```

## Sorting Using Custom Comparison

Custom sorting of a `vector<string>` using a *lambda*



C64

Connie

Amiga 500

I'm a long string

SHORTER STRINGS FIRST



## Sorting Using Custom Comparison

Sorting by *string length*: shorter strings first



# Custom Sorting in Action



*Demo: Generic Lambdas in Action*

**“Practical C++14 and C++17 Features”**





# To Learn More About Lambdas



*Better Lambdas*

**“Practical C++14 and C++17 Features”**



# To Learn More on Standard C++ Library's Algorithms



*“Beautiful C++: STL Algorithms”*



# Summary



Sorting `std::vector` with `std::sort`

Iterators

Algorithms, iterators and containers

Custom sorting

