

C++ Training

# 2. STL Algorithms

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### 2.1. Terminology

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# Terminology

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### Standard Library:

The *Standard Library* is the official collection of classes and functions described in and provided with the C++ standard. In parts, the STL is a subset of the Standard Library.



### Standard Template Library (STL):

The *STL* is a template-based C++ library developed in the 80s and 90s by Dave Musser, Alexander Stepanov and Meng Lee. Many concepts, ideas, classes, etc., were introduced into the C++ standard library.

## 2.2. Motivation

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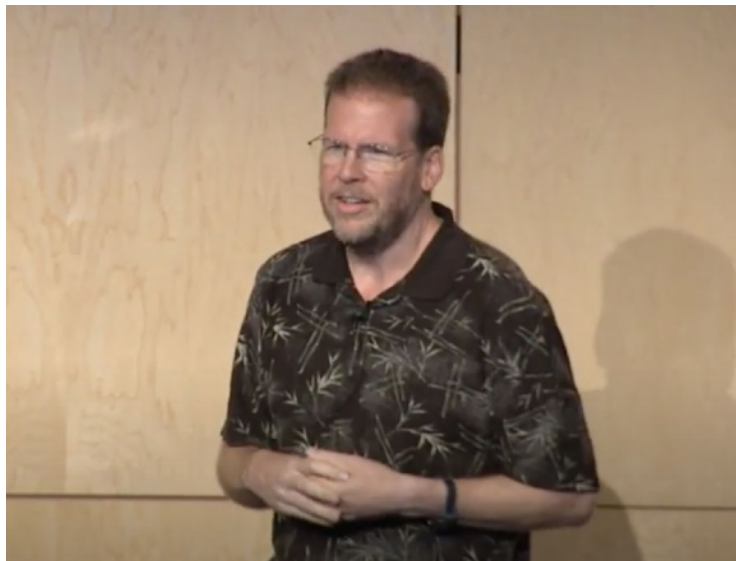
# The Expert's View on the STL

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*"There was never any question that the [standard template] library represented a breakthrough in efficient and extensible design."  
(Scott Meyers, Effective STL)*

# The Expert's Advice

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*"If you want to improve code quality in your organization, I would say, take all your coding guidelines and replace them with the one goal. That's how important I think this one goal is: No Raw Loops. This will make the biggest change in code quality within your organization."*

*(Sean Parent, C++ Seasoning, Going Native 2013)*

## 2.3. STL Algorithms

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# STL Algorithms

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- Free functions, not member functions
- Operate on half open ranges
- Algorithms are decoupled from containers
- Provide an intuitive naming and parameter convention

```
namespace std {
```

```
template< class RandomIt >  
void sort( RandomIt first, RandomIt last );
```

```
template< class InputIt, class OutputIt >  
OutputIt copy( InputIt first, InputIt last, OutputIt d_first );
```

```
template< class InputIt, class UnaryPredicate >  
InputIt find_if( InputIt first, InputIt last, UnaryPredicate p );
```

```
} // namespace std
```

# STL Algorithms

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C++ Algorithm library Constrained algorithms

## Algorithms library

The algorithms library defines functions for a variety of purposes (e.g. searching, sorting, counting, manipulating) that operate on ranges of elements. Note that a range is defined as `[first, last)` where *last* refers to the element *past* the last element to inspect or modify.

### Non-modifying sequence operations

Defined in header `<algorithm>`

<code>all_of</code> (C++11) <code>any_of</code> (C++11) <code>none_of</code> (C++11)	checks if a predicate is <code>true</code> for all, any or none of the elements in a range (function template)
<code>ranges::all_of</code> (C++20) <code>ranges::any_of</code> (C++20) <code>ranges::none_of</code> (C++20)	checks if a predicate is <code>true</code> for all, any or none of the elements in a range (niebloid)
<code>for_each</code>	applies a function to a range of elements (function template)
<code>ranges::for_each</code> (C++20)	applies a function to a range of elements (niebloid)
<code>for_each_n</code> (C++17)	applies a function object to the first n elements of a sequence (function template)
<code>ranges::for_each_n</code> (C++20)	applies a function object to the first n elements of a sequence (niebloid)
<code>count</code> <code>count_if</code>	returns the number of elements satisfying specific criteria (function template)

# Examples

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- Copy from a vector to a deque

```
std::copy( vec.begin(), vec.end(), deq.begin() );
```

- Sort the elements in a vector

```
std::sort( vec.begin(), vec.end() );
```

- Reverse the order of elements

```
std::reverse( vec.begin(), vec.end() );
```

- Find the value 5 in a list

```
std::find( lst.begin(), lst.end(), 5 );
```

# Examples

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- Copy from a vector of integers to `std::cout`

```
std::copy( vec.begin(), vec.end()  
          , std::ostream_iterator<int>( std::cout, "\n" ) );
```

- Removing all duplicates from a range

```
std::sort( vec.begin(), vec.end() );  
vec.erase( std::unique( vec.begin(), vec.end() ), vec.end() );
```

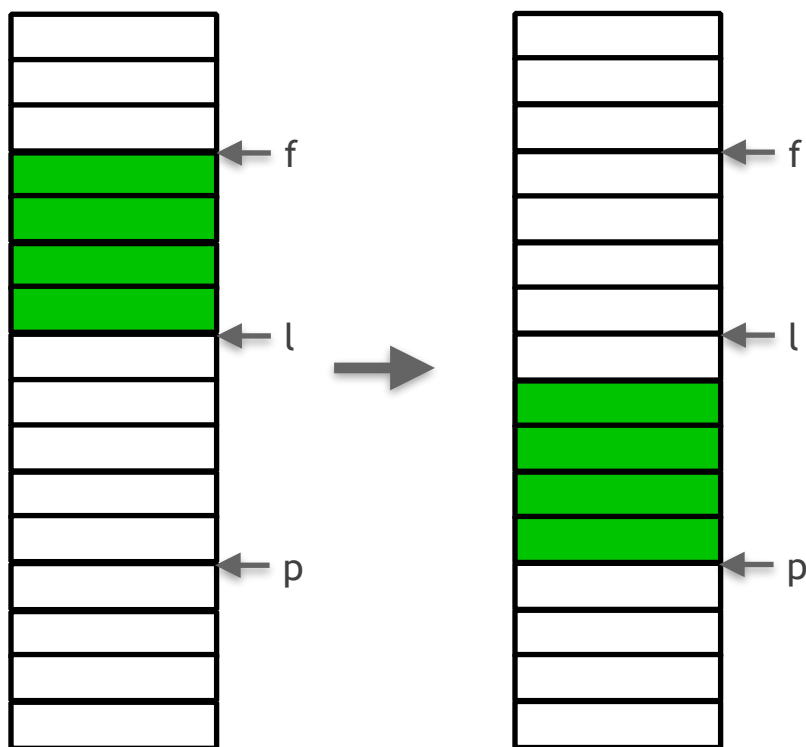
- Find the first odd integer in a list

```
struct IsOdd {  
    bool operator()( int i ) const { return i & 0x1; }  
};
```

```
std::find_if( lst.begin(), lst.end(), IsOdd{} );
```

# Examples

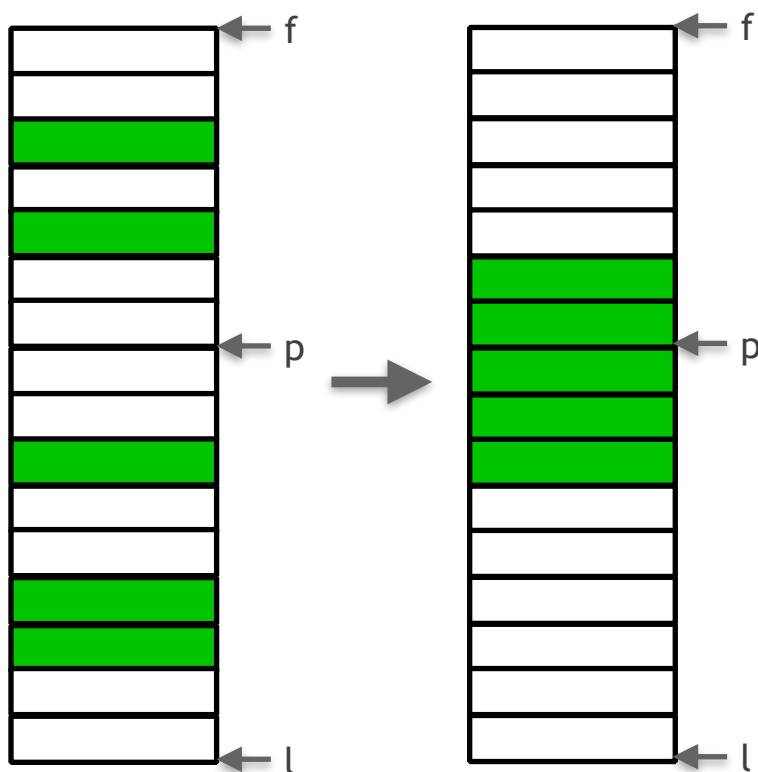
- Move a number of consecutive elements in a vector



```
rotate( f, l, p );
```

# Examples

- Gather an arbitrary number of element at a specific position



```
stable_partition(f, p, not1(s));  
stable_partition(p, l, s);
```

# Programming Task

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**Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/STLintro):** Solve the following tasks on a vector of integers by means of STL algorithms:

- Print the contents of the vector to the screen
- Reverse the order of elements in the vector
- Find the first element with the value 5
- Count the elements with the value 5
- Replace all 5s by 2s
- Sort the vector
- Determine the range of 2s

**Hint:** Use either of the following two web pages as reference.

[www.cppreference.com](http://www.cppreference.com)

[www.cplusplus.com](http://www.cplusplus.com)

# Programming Task

**Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/STLpro):** Solve the following tasks on a vector of integers by means of STL algorithms:

- Compute the product of all elements in the vector
- Extract all numbers  $\leq 5$  from the vector
- Compute the (numerical) length of the vector
- Compute the ratios  $v[i+1]/v[i]$  for all elements  $v[i]$  in  $v$
- Move the range  $[v[3], v[5]]$  to the beginning of the vector

Hint: Use either of the following two web pages as reference.

[www.cppreference.com](http://www.cppreference.com)

[www.cplusplus.com](http://www.cplusplus.com)



# Programming Task

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**Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/Simpson):** Implement the empty functions to perform the following operations on the Simpson characters:

- Print all characters to the screen
- Randomize their order
- Find the youngest character
- Order them by first name
- Order them by last name without affecting the order of first names
- Order them by age without affecting the order of first and last names
- Put all Simpsons first without affecting the general order of characters
- Compute the total age of all characters
- Determine the third oldest character as quickly as possible

# Programming Task

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**Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/SimpsonPro):** Implement the empty functions to perform the following operations on the Simpson characters:

- Print all characters to the screen
- Randomize their order
- Find the youngest character
- Order them by last name without affecting the order of first names
- Highlight the last name of all persons with the given name
- Put all children first
- Compute the total length of all last names
- Check if two adjacent characters have the same age
- Compute the maximum age difference between two adjacent characters
- Determine the median age of all characters

# Programming Task

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### Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/Accumulate):

**Step 1:** Implement the `accumulate()` algorithm. The algorithm should take a pair of iterators, an initial value for the reduction operation, and a binary operation that performs the elementwise reduction.

**Step 2:** Implement an overload of the `accumulate()` algorithm that uses `std::plus` as the default binary operation.

**Step 3:** Implement an overload of the `accumulate()` algorithm that uses the default of the underlying data type as initial value and `std::plus` as the default binary operation.

**Step 4:** Test your implementation with a custom binary operation (e.g. `Times`).

# Programming Task

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**Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/SortSubrange):** Implement the `sort_subrange()` algorithm in the following example. The algorithm should take four iterators, which specify the total range of elements and the subrange to be sorted.

# Programming Task

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**Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/ExtractStrings):** Implement the `extract_strings()` algorithm. The algorithm should extract all strings from a long string of space-separated words.

# Programming Task

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**Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/LongestStreak):** Determine the longest streak of consecutive equal values in the given range of elements.

# Programming Task

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### Task (2\_STL\_Algorithms/IsPalindrome):

Step 1: Implement the `is_palindrome()` algorithm in the following example. The algorithm should detect if the given range is the same when traversed forward and backward. The algorithm should return `true` only for true palindromes, and `false` for empty ranges and non-palindromes.

Step 2: Restrict the algorithm to bidirectional iterators by means of C++20 concepts.

# Algorithm Guidelines

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**Guideline:** “No raw loops” (Sean Parent)

**Guideline:** “Prefer to use algorithms or embed your raw loop in named functions” (Klaus Iglberger)

**Guideline:** Use algorithms to reduce duplication (DRY).

**Guideline:** Know the standard algorithms. They can handle all basic tasks elegantly and efficiently (zero cost abstraction).

**Guideline:** Use the right algorithm for the right task.



# Algorithm Guidelines

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**Guideline:** Consider the design of the STL: It follows SRP, OCP, DRY and builds on the Command design pattern.

**Core Guideline P.3:** Express intent

**Core Guideline T.40:** Use function objects to pass operations to algorithms

**Core Guideline T.141:** Use an unnamed lambda if you need a simple function object in one place only

# Limitations of STL Algorithms

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# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 1

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**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadCopy):** Explain the error in the following program.

```
vector<int> vec;  
list<int> lst;  
  
// ... Initialization of lst  
  
copy( lst.begin(), lst.end(), vec.begin() );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 1

**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadCopy):** Explain the error in the following program.

```
vector<int> vec;  
list<int> lst;  
  
// ... Initialization of lst  
  
copy( lst.begin(), lst.end(), vec.begin() );
```

- `copy()` assumes that the target holds enough elements for all elements to be copied
- Reasonable assumption since it is not possible to change the size of a container via the given iterators
- In case the target vector is empty, we enter the realm of undefined behavior

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 1

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Either resize the vector accordingly ...

```
vector<int> vec;  
list<int> lst;
```

```
// ... Initialization of lst
```

```
vec.resize( lst.size() );  
copy( lst.begin(), lst.end(), vec.begin() );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 1

---

... or use the following approach:

```
vector<int> vec;  
list<int> lst;  
  
// ... Initialization of lst  
  
copy( lst.begin(), lst.end(), std::back_inserter( vec ) );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 2

**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadTransform):** Explain the error in the following program.

```
int transmogrify( int x );

vector<int> values;
// ... Put data into the vector

vector<int> results;

// Apply 'transmogrify' to each object in values,
// appending the return values to results
transform( values.begin(), values.end(),
           results.end(), transmogrify );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 2

**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadTransform):** Explain the error in the following program.

```
int transmogrify( int x );

vector<int> values;
// ... Put data into the vector

vector<int> results;

// Apply 'transmogrify' to each object in values,
// appending the return values to results
transform( values.begin(), values.end(),
           results.end(), transmogrify );
```

Same problem as in the previous task: The target vector has not enough elements → undefined behavior.



# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 2

**Task (continued):** Ok, now that we have repaired the access violation, there is an easy way to considerably improve performance. Show how this can be achieved.

```
int transmogrify( int x );

vector<int> values;
// ... Put data into the vector

vector<int> results;

// Apply 'transmogrify()' to each object in values,
// appending the return values to results
transform( values.begin(), values.end(),
           std::back_inserter( results ), transmogrify );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 2

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If we turn the transmogrify function into a functor, the compiler can take advantage of the inline function definition and inline the function call. This is **not** possible in case of a function pointer.

```
struct Transmogrify {  
    inline int operator()( int x ) const { return x * x; }  
};  
  
vector<int> values;  
// ... Put data into the vector  
  
vector<int> results;  
  
// Apply 'Transmogrify' to each object in values,  
// appending the return values to results  
transform( values.begin(), values.end(),  
           std::back_inserter( results ), Transmogrify() );
```

## Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 2

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**Core Guideline T.40:** Use function objects to pass operations to algorithms

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 3

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**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadAccumulate):** Explain the error in the following program:

```
vector<double> vec;  
  
// ... Adding elements to vec  
  
const double sum = accumulate( vec.begin(), vec.end(), 0 );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 3

**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadAccumulate):** Explain the error in the following program:

```
vector<double> vec;  
  
// ... Adding elements to vec  
  
const double sum = accumulate( vec.begin(), vec.end(), 0 );
```

- The type of the third parameter defines the type of the accumulator
- adding double values to an int strips away the floating point part
- the final result is wrong!

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 3

---

Make sure to use the right type for the init argument:

```
vector<double> vec;
```

```
// ... Adding elements to vec
```

```
const double sum =  
    accumulate( vec.begin(), vec.end(), double{} );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 4

**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadRemove):** Explain the error in the following program:

```
std::vector<int> vec{ 1, -3, 27, 42, 4, -8, 22, 42, 37, 4, 18, 9 };  
  
vec.erase(  
    std::remove( begin(vec), end(vec)  
                , *std::max_element( begin(vec), end(vec) ) ),  
    end(vec) );
```

# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 4

**Task (3\_Concepts\_and\_STL/BadRemove):** Explain the error in the following program:

```
std::vector<int> vec{ 1, -3, 27, 42, 4, -8, 22, 42, 37, 4, 18, 9 };  
  
vec.erase(  
    std::remove( begin(vec), end(vec)  
                , *std::max_element( begin(vec), end(vec) ) ),  
    end(vec) );
```

- `std::remove()` takes its third argument by reference
- passing a reference to the value to be removed may result in aliasing effects
- In case of aliasing final result may be wrong!



# Limitations of STL Algorithms - Example 4

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Make sure to evaluate the the value in case there is aliasing:

```
std::vector<int> vec{ 1, -3, 27, 42, 4, -8, 22, 42, 37, 4, 18, 9 };  
  
vec.erase(  
    std::remove( begin(vec), end(vec)  
                , int{ *std::max_element( begin(vec), end(vec) ) } ),  
    end(vec) );
```

# Things to Remember

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- Familiarize yourself with the STL and STL-style code
- Prefer algorithms over handwritten loops
- Remember the conventions and possible pitfalls of algorithms



# Literature

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### Effective STL

50 Specific Ways to Improve  
Your Use of the Standard  
Template Library

Scott Meyers



ADDISON-WESLEY PROFESSIONAL COMPUTING SERIES

### Functional Programming in

How to improve your  
C++ programs using  
functional techniques

Ivan Čukić

MANNING

### C++17 The Complete Guide

Nicolai M. Josuttis

# References

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- Chandler Carruth, “Efficiency with Algorithms, Performance with Data Structures”. cppcon 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHNmRkzxHWs>)
- Sean Parent, “C++ Seasoning”, GoingNative 2013 (<https://channel9.msdn.com/Events/GoingNative/2013/Cpp-Seasoning>)
- Bjarne Stroustrup, “C++11 Style”. GoingNative 2012 (<http://channel9.msdn.com/Events/GoingNative/GoingNative-2012/Keynote-Bjarne-Stroustrup-Cpp11-Style>)
- Michael VanLoon, “STL Algorithms in Action”. CppCon 2015 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eidEEmGLQcU>)
- Ben Deane, “std::accumulate: Exploring an Algorithmic Empire”. CppCon 2016 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6twozNPUoA>)
- Jonathan Boccara, “105 STL Algorithms in Less Than An Hour”. CppCon 2018 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2olsGf6JlkU>)
- Conor Hoekstra, “Algorithm Intuition (Part 1 of 2)”. CppCon 2019 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUEnO6SvAMo>)
- Frederic Tingaud, “A Little Order: Delving into the STL sorting algorithms”. CppCon 2018 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0tO3Eni2uo>)
- Arthur O’Dwyer, “Back to Basics: Lambdas from Scratch”. CppCon 2019 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jCOWajNch0>)

# Online Resources

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- Working Draft, Standard for Programming Language C++: <http://eel.is/c++draft/>
- C++ Reference: [www.cppreference.com](http://www.cppreference.com)
- C++ Core Guidelines: [isocpp.github.io/CppCoreGuidelines/CppCoreGuidelines](https://isocpp.github.io/CppCoreGuidelines/CppCoreGuidelines)
- Stackoverflow: [www.stackoverflow.com](http://www.stackoverflow.com)
- Compiler Explorer: [www.godbolt.org](http://www.godbolt.org)
- Quick-Bench: [www.quick-bench.com](http://www.quick-bench.com)
- C++ Insights: [www.cppinsights.io](http://www.cppinsights.io)
- Build-Bench: [www.build-bench.com](http://www.build-bench.com)
- C++ Shell: [cpp.sh](http://cpp.sh)
- Wandbox: [wandbox.org](http://wandbox.org)
- repl.it: [repl.it](http://repl.it)
- Intel Intrinsic Guide: [software.intel.com/sites/landingpage/IntrinsicsGuide](http://software.intel.com/sites/landingpage/IntrinsicsGuide)
- x86/x64 SIMD Instruction List: <https://www.officedaytime.com/simd512e/>

# Additional Online Resources

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- C++ Bestiary: <http://videocortex.io/2017/Bestiary/>
- More C++ Idioms: [https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/More\\_C%2B%2B\\_Idioms](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/More_C%2B%2B_Idioms)
- Codewars: <https://www.codewars.com>
- CodeKata: <http://codekata.com>

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