

# Working with lex and Yacc

Seminar - 09

# ABOUT LEX AND YACC

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Lex is a lexical analyser generator used in **compiler design** to convert a sequence of **characters** (source code) into a sequence of **tokens**.

## Characters:

[a-z] [A-Z] [0-9] [!,@,#,\$,%,&,\*,(,),[,],.,,]

Alphabets and  
numbers

Special  
characters

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## Tokens:

- **Keywords:** reserved words like **if,else,return,in,while** etc..
  - **Identifiers:** variable and function names like **x,sum,myFunction** etc..
  - **Operators:** **+,=,-,\*,/,&,%,!,etc..**
  - **Punctuations:** like **;,{}[],.** etc...
  - **Literals:** numeric and string constants like **123,"hello",3.14** etc..
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# EXAMPLE:

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```
%{  
    #include <stdio.h> //header file  
%}  
%% //lex rule  
int|float|return { printf("KEYWORD: %s\n", yytext); }  
[a-zA-Z_][a-zA-Z0-9_]* { printf("IDENTIFIER: %s\n", yytext); }  
[0-9]+ { printf("NUMBER: %s\n", yytext); }  
[+\\-*/=] { printf("OPERATOR: %s\n", yytext); }  
.|\n { /* Ignore other characters */ }  
%%  
int main()  
{  
    yylex(); // Call lexical analyzer  
    return 0;  
}
```

# YACC (YET ANOTHER COMPILER COMPILER)

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YACC is a **parser generator** used with **Lex** to build compilers or interpreters.

**Yacc does:**

- Takes **tokens** from Lex.
  - Uses a **grammar (BNF - Backus-Naur Form)** to construct a syntax tree.
  - Detects and reports **syntax errors**.
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*Goal* → *Expr*

*Expr* → *Expr + Term*

| *Expr - Term*

| *Term*

*Term* → *Term × Factor*

| *Term + Factor*

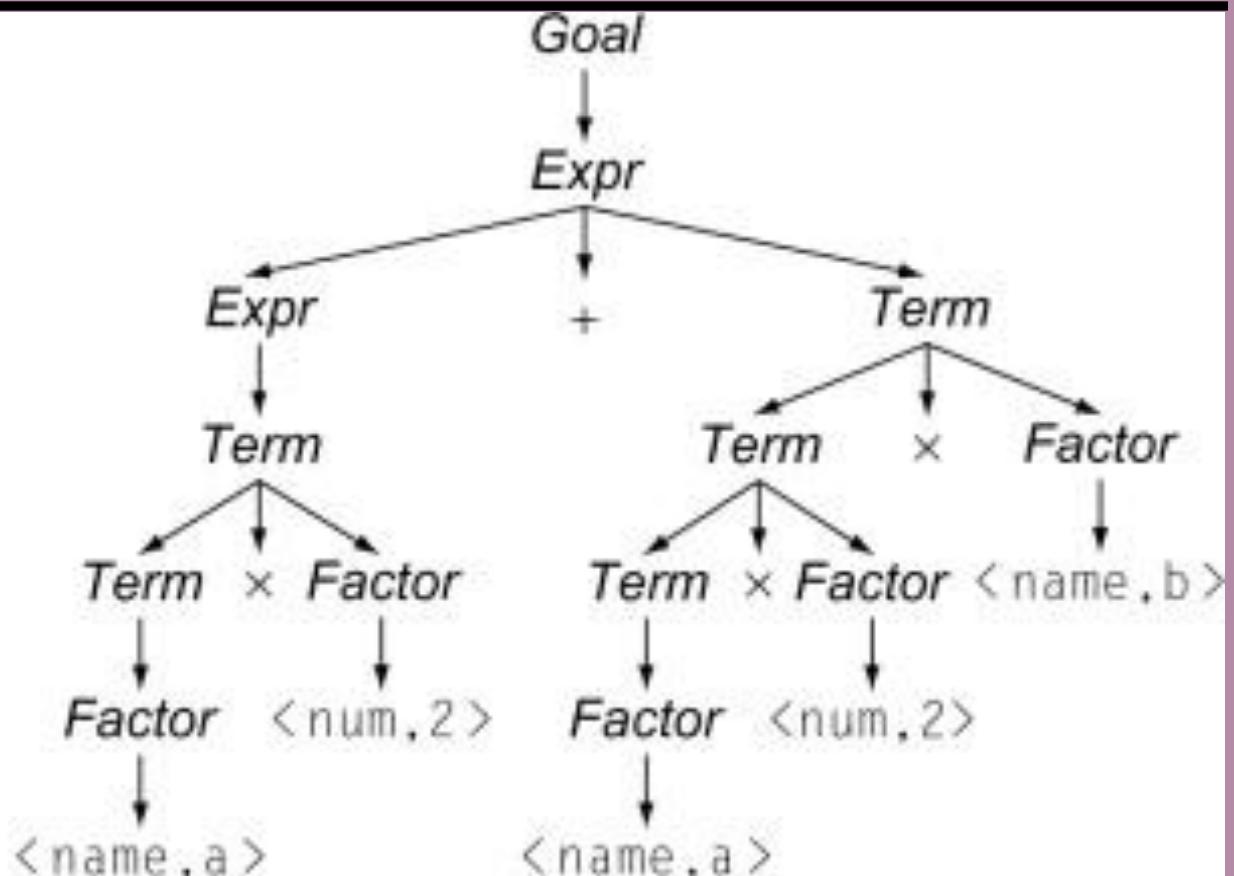
| *Factor*

*Factor* → *Expr*

| *num*

| *name*

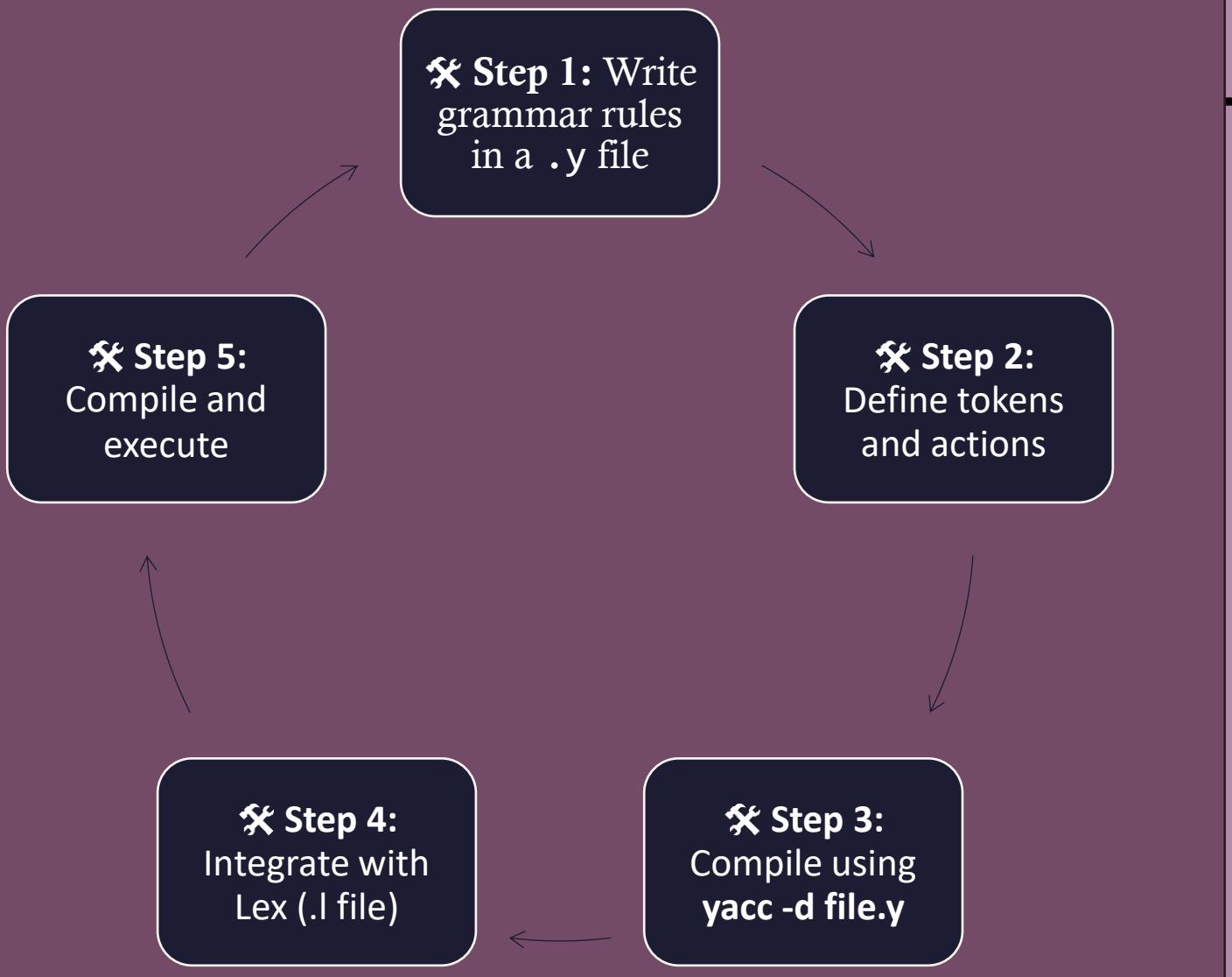
(a) Classic Expression Grammar



(b) Parse Tree for  $a \times 2 + a \times 2 \times b$

Source: [ScienceDirect](#)

# Yacc workflow



```
%{  
#include <stdio.h> //header file  
%}  
%token NUMBER PLUS MULTIPLY //tokens defined and passed from lex file  
%%  
expr: expr PLUS term { printf("Addition\n"); } //grammar rules-01  
| term  
;  
term: term MULTIPLY factor { printf("Multiplication\n"); } //grammar rules-02  
| factor  
;  
factor: NUMBER //grammar rule-03  
;  
%%  
int yyerror(char *msg) { //function to handle error  
    printf("Syntax Error!\n");  
}  
int main() {  
yyparse(); //to make parsing input as per rules defined.  
return 0;  
}
```

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# THANK YOU....!