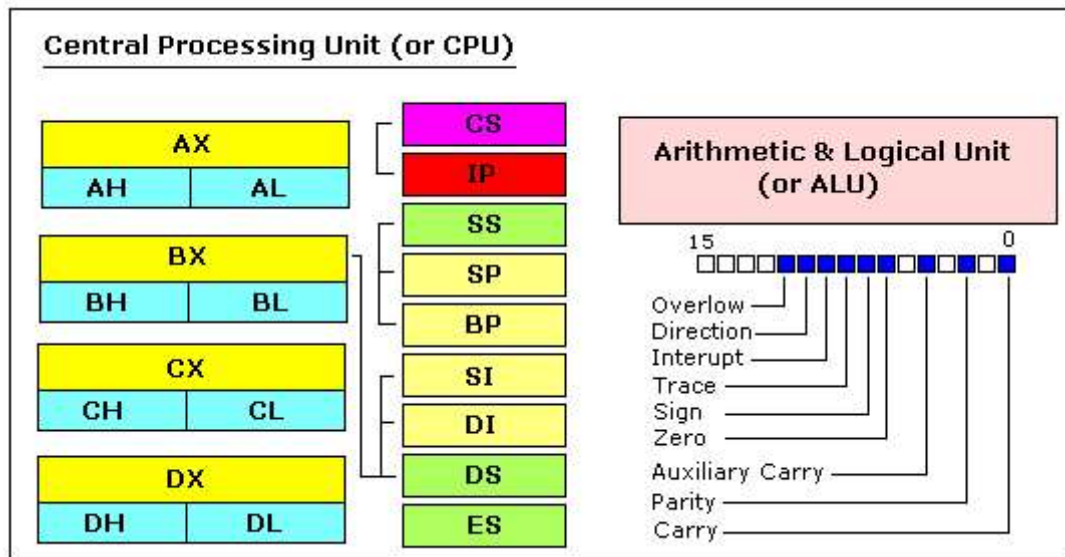


inside the CPU



general purpose registers

8086 CPU has 8 general purpose registers, each register has its own name:

- **AX** - the accumulator register (divided into **AH / AL**).
- **BX** - the base address register (divided into **BH / BL**).
- **CX** - the count register (divided into **CH / CL**).
- **DX** - the data register (divided into **DH / DL**).
- **SI** - source index register.
- **DI** - destination index register.
- **BP** - base pointer.
- **SP** - stack pointer.

Despite the name of a register, it's the programmer who determines the usage for each general purpose register. The main purpose of a register is to keep a number (variable). The size of the above registers is 16 bit, it's something like: **0011000000111001b** (in binary form), or **12345** in decimal (human) form.

4 general purpose registers (AX, BX, CX, DX) are made of two separate 8 bit registers, for example if AX= **0011000000111001b**, then AH=**00110000b** and AL=**00111001b**. Therefore, when you modify any of the 8 bit registers 16 bit register is also updated, and vice-versa. The same is for other 3 registers, "H" is for high and "L" is for low part.

Because registers are located inside the CPU, they are much faster than memory. Accessing a memory location requires the use of a system bus, so it takes much longer. Accessing data in a register usually takes no time. Therefore, you should try to keep variables in the registers. Register sets are very small and most registers have special Purposes which limit their use as variables, but they are still an excellent place to store temporary data of calculations.

segment registers

- **CS** - points at the segment containing the current program.
- **DS** - generally points at segment where variables are defined.
- **ES** - extra segment register, it's up to a coder to define its usage.
- **SS** - points at the segment containing the stack.