
Chapter 8

Declaring types and classes

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8.1 Type declarations

We can introduce new names for types that we already have by means of the `type` keyword. As an example, if we wanted to think of an ordered pair of integers as some position, we could do so by writing

```
type Pos = (Int, Int)
```

and we might declare a transformation as a function which maps a `Pos` to another `Pos`

```
type Trans = Pos -> Pos
```

`type` declarations are not allowed to be recursive. Recursive types may be declared using the `data` mechanism, which is discussed in the next section.

`type` declarations can be parameterized by other types. If we wanted a more generic two-tuple instead of one specifically meant for integers, we could write

```
type Pair a = (a,a)
```

Additionally, we can use more than one parameter. Suppose we wanted a type which is a list of keys associated with values:

```
type Assoc k v = [(k,v)]
```

We could define a function which returns the first value that is associated with a key

```
find :: Eq k => k -> Assoc k v -> v
find k t = head [v | (k',v) <- t, k == k']
```

`find` is a function which takes a key (which must be a type which derives `Eq`), a list of key-value pairs, and returns a value. It works by taking the first element of the list of values which match the key used as an argument.

8.2 Data declarations

A new type, as opposed to a synonym for an existing type, can be declared by specifying its values using the `data` mechanism.

If we wanted to define a new type which describes the cardinal directions, we could do

```
data Move = North | South | East | West
```

The pipe (`|`) symbol is read as *or* and the new values of the type are called *constructors*. The names of new constructors must begin with a capital letter, just like the name of the new types. Additionally, the same constructor name cannot be used in multiple types.

With pattern matching, we can define functions which apply a move to a position, which apply a sequence of moves to a position, and which apply the reverse direction of a move.

```
move :: Move -> Pos -> Pos
move North (x,y) = (x,y+1)
move South (x,y) = (x, y-1)
move East  (x,y) = (x+1,y)
move West  (x,y) = (x-1,y)

moves :: [Move] -> Pos -> Pos
moves [] p = p
moves (m:ms) p = moves ms (move m p)

rev :: Move -> Move
rev North = South
rev south = North
rev East  = West
rev West  = East
```

Note: If you want to try these in GHCi, the phrase `deriving Show` must be added to the end of the data declaration so that the system can display values of the new type. We'll discuss this more later in the chapter.

Constructors can have arguments. As an example, consider the `Shape` data type:

```
data Shape = Circle Float | Rect Float Float
```

These constructors are used to define functions on `Shapes`. As examples, consider the following:

```
square :: Float -> Shape
square n = Rect n n

area :: Shape -> Float
area (Circle r) = pi * r ^ 2
area (Rect x y) = x * y
```

Due to their taking arguments, the constructors `Circle` and `Rect` are considered *constructor functions* which map `Floats` to `Shapes`.

The difference between functions and constructor functions is that the latter have no defining equations and exist solely for the purpose of building pieces of data. As an example, `negate 1.0` can be evaluated to `-1.0`; `Circle 1.0` is fully evaluated and cannot be further simplified. The expression `Circle 1.0` is a piece of data in the same way that `1.0` is.

Data declaration can also be parameterized. Consider the following type from `Prelude`:

```
data Maybe a = Nothing | Just a
```

This type is thought of as being values of a type `a` which may either fail or succeed. As an example, let's consider the same versions of `div` and `head` (recall that `div` will not work if the divisor is 0 and that `head` will not work on the empty list):

```
safediv :: Int -> Int -> Maybe Int
safediv _ 0 = Nothing
safediv m n = Just (div m n)

safehead :: [a] -> Maybe a
safehead [] = Nothing
safehead xs = Just (head xs)
```

8.3 Newtype declarations

If a type has a single constructor with a single argument, then it can also be declared with the `newtype` mechanism. As an example, a natural number type could be defined as

```
newtype Nat = N Int
```

The single constructor `N` takes an `Int` as an argument – it is up to the library to ensure that it is non-negative.

Let's look at how `newtype` compares with these two alternative definitions of the natural number type

```
type Nat = Int

data Nat = N Int
```

Using `newtype` instead of `type` means that `Nat` and `Int` are different types instead of synonyms; this ensures that the type system does not allow using one in place of the other.

Using `newtype` instead of `data` brings a performance benefit. `newtype` constructors (like `N`) don't incur any costs when the programs are evaluated since they are automatically removed by the compiler once type-checking has completed.

8.4 Recursive types

As mentioned in the first section, `type` declarations can't be recursive. However, both `data` and `newtype` can be recursive. Consider a recursive definition of the natural numbers

```
data Nat = Zero | Succ Nat
```

Then the values of type `Nat` correspond to natural numbers – `Zero` represents the number zero and `Succ` represents the successor function (as defined on the naturals, that's `(+1)`).

We can define the following conversion functions:

```
nat2int :: Nat -> Int
nat2int Zero      = 0
nat2int (Succ n) = 1 + nat2int n

int2nat :: Int -> Nat
int2nat 0 = Zero
int2nat n = Succ (int2nat (n-1))
```

We can define addition on the `Nat` type as

```
add :: Nat -> Nat -> Nat
add Zero n = n
add (Succ m) n = Succ (add m n)
```

This definition draws on the idea that the addition of two natural numbers takes place by moving the `Succ` constructors from the first number until they are exhausted, at which point the `Zero` at the end is replaced by the second number. As an example, let's see what happens with `add 2 1`:

```
add (Succ (Succ Zero)) (Succ Zero)
= {applying add}
Succ (add (Succ Zero) (Succ Zero))
= {applying add}
Succ (Succ (add Zero (Succ Zero)))
= {applying add}
Succ (Succ (Succ Zero))
```

As another example, consider the following definition of the `List` type:

```
dat List a = Nil | Cons a (List a)
```

A value of type `List a` is either `Nil` (the empty list) or of the form `Cons x xs` for some values `x` of type `a` and `xs` of type `List a`, which represent a non-empty list.

We can re-define the `len` function so that it operates on our own `List`:

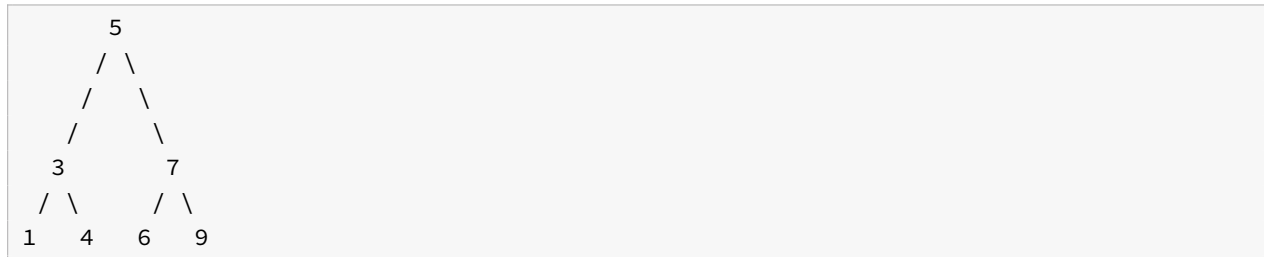
```
len :: List a -> Int
len Nil      = 0
len (Cons _ xs) = 1 + len xs
```

Recursion makes representing some data structures, like binary trees, fairly simple:

```
data BinTree a = Leaf a | Node (BinTree a) a (BinTree a)
```

The second constructor can be interpreted as the left child, the value, and the right child of a node in the tree.

We can define the tree



as

```
t :: BinTree Int
t = Node (Node (Leaf 1) 3 (Leaf 4)) 5
        (Node (Leaf 6) 7 (Leaf 9))
```

Consider a function that searches such a tree and reports whether a value exists within it (where *l*, *v*, and *r* are the left node, value, and right node, respectively):

```
occurs :: Eq a => a -> Tree a -> Bool
occurs x (Leaf v)      = x == v
occurs x (Node l v r) = x == v || occurs x l || occurs x r
```

As an added benefit of lazy evaluation, if either of the first two conditions are true, then the remaining conditions are not evaluated. In the worst case `occurs` traverses the entire tree.

Consider a function which flattens a tree to a list:

```
flatten :: Tree a -> [a]
flatten (Leaf x) = [x]
flatten (Node l x r) = flatten l ++ [x] ++ flatten r
```

If applying this function to a tree yields a sorted list then the tree is called a search tree.

Applying `flatten` to our tree yields `[1,3,4,5,6,7,9]` so we do have a search tree. Since that is the case, we can re-write `occurs` to take advantage of the fact that we have a binary search tree:

```
occurs :: Ord a => a -> Tree a -> Bool
occurs x (Leaf v) = x == v
occurs x (Node l v r)
  | x == v = True
  | x < v  = occurs x l
  | x > v  = occurs x r
```

This version only traverses one path down the tree instead of testing every node.

We can declare many different types of trees. We can have trees that only have data in their leaves,

```
data Tree a = Leaf a | Node (Tree a) (Tree a)
```

trees that have data only in their nodes,

```
data Tree a = Leaf | Node (Tree a) a (Tree a)
```

trees that have different data types in their leaves and nodes,

```
data Tree a b = Leaf a | Node (Tree a b) b (Tree a b)
```

or trees that have a list of sub-trees

```
data Tree a = Node a [Tree a]
```

8.5 Class and instance declarations