

From Templates to Concepts

The Amazing Journey of Metaprogramming

ALEX DATHSKOVSKY

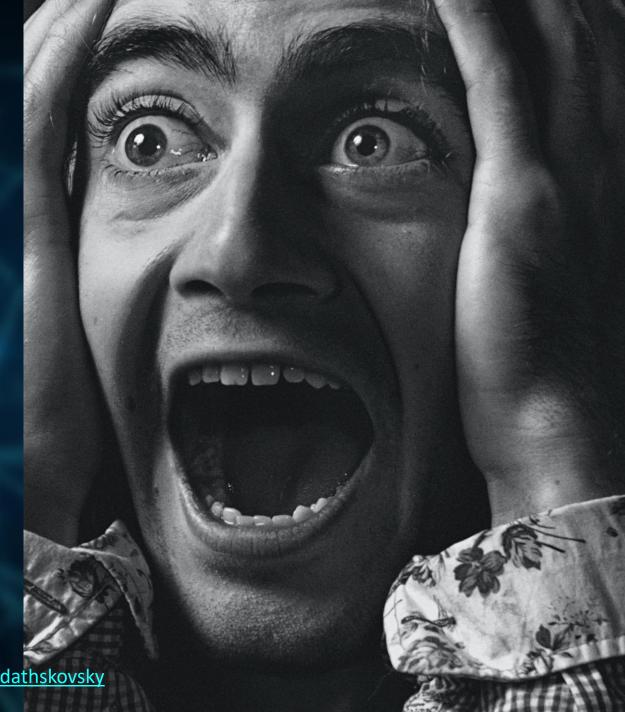






lemplates: What's the first thing that comes to mind?

Templates: What's the first thing that comes to mind?



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BASIC TEMPLATE RULES

 Function templates can be fully specialized or overloaded

Partial specialization is not allowed

• This is ok:

```
template <typename T>
    void print(T t) {fmt::print("T: {}\n", t);};
 8
    template <>
 9
10
    void print(int t) {fmt::print("T:Int=={}\n", t);};
11
12
13
    int main() {
14
      print("1");
      print(1);
15
16
```

• This is ok:

```
template <typename T>
    void print(T t) {fmt::print("T: {}\n", t);};
 8
    template <>
 9
10
    void print(int t) {fmt::print("T:Int=={}\n", t);};
11
12
13
    int main() {
14
      print("1");
      print(1);
15
16
```

```
T: 1
T:Int==1
```

•This is not allowed:

```
6 template <typename T>
7 void print(T t) {fmt::print("T: {}\n", t);};
8
9 template <typename T>
10 void print<T*>(T* p) {fmt::print("T*: {}\n", *p);}
```

```
<source>:10:6: error: function template partial specialization is not allowed
void print<T*>(T* p) {fmt::print("T: {}\n", *t);};
```

But we can overload

```
template <typename T>
    void print(T t) {fmt::print("T: {}\n", t);};
 8
 9
    template <typename T>
    void print(T* p) {fmt::print("T*: {}\n", *p);};
10
11
12
13 \vee int main() {
     int i = 1;
14
     print(&i);
15
     print(1);
16
17
```

But we can overload

```
template <typename T>
    void print(T t) {fmt::print("T: {}\n", t);};
 8
 9
    template <typename T>
    void print(T* p) {fmt::print("T*: {}\n", *p);};
10
11
12
13 \vee int main() {
     int i = 1;
14
     print(&i);
15
     print(1);
16
17
```

T*: 1

Overloading and specializations are tricky.

```
template <typename T>
33
    void print(T) {fmt::print("Generic");};
    template <typename T>
35
    void print(T*) {fmt::print("Overload");};
    template<>
37
    void print(double*) { fmt::print("Specialization");};
38
39
    int main(){
40
        double d = 1.5;
41
        print(&d);
42
43
   };
```

```
template <typename T>
    void print(T) {fmt::print("Generic");};
    template <typename T>
35
    void print(T*) {fmt::print("Overload");};
    template<>
37
    void print(double*) { fmt::print("Specialization");};
38
39
    int main(){
40
        double d = 1.5;
41
        print(&d);
42
43
   };
```

Specialization

```
template <typename T>
    void print(T) {fmt::print("Generic");};
    template<>
35
    void print(double*) { fmt::print("Specialization");};
36
    template <typename T>
37
    void print(T*) {fmt::print("Overload");};
38
39
    int main(){
40
        double d = 1.5;
41
42
        print(&d);
43
    };
```

```
template <typename T>
    void print(T) {fmt::print("Generic");};
    template<>
35
    void print(double*) { fmt::print("Specialization");};
36
    template <typename T>
37
    void print(T*) {fmt::print("Overload");};
38
39
    int main(){
40
        double d = 1.5;
41
42
        print(&d);
43
    };
```

Overload

Overload resolution considers only base templates.

CLASS TEMPLATES

Support partial and complete specialization.

```
template <typename T>
 7 struct more {};
 8 template <typename T>
 9 struct more<T*> {};
10 template<>
    struct more<int>{};
11
12
13
14 \vee int main()  {
15
       auto m1 = more<double>();
16
       auto m2 = more<double*>();
       auto m3 = more<int>();
17
18
```

TRAIT LIBRARY

C++11 introduced the standard type trait library

Example of useful traits:

```
is_pointer<T>
is_abstract<T>
is_assignable<T>
is_convertible<T, U>
is_same<T, U>
```

CONSTRAINTS WITH TRAITS

Will this always work?

```
4 template <typename T>
5 void print(T const& t){
6 fmt::print("{}", t);
7 }
```

The Answer is no. This pattern may take a pointer as well

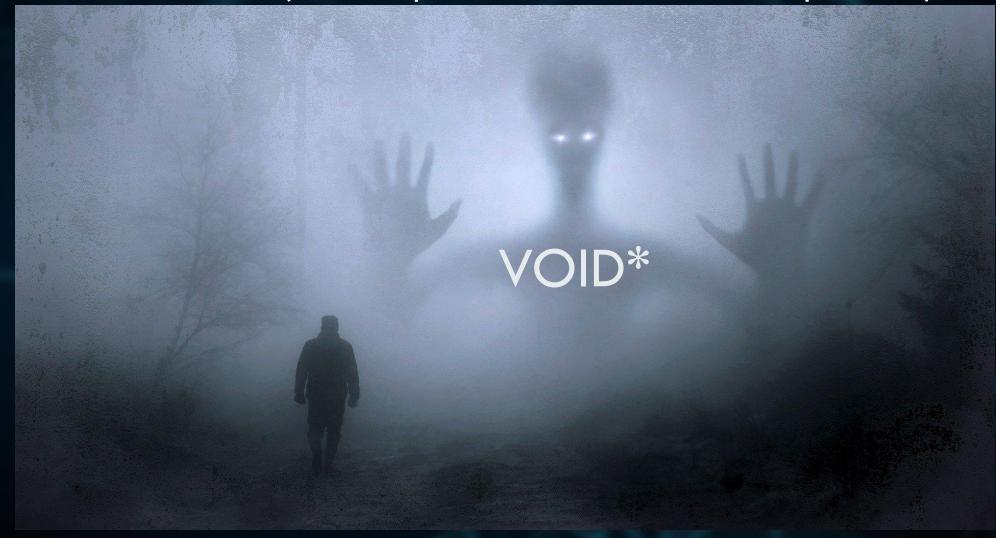
The Answer is no. This pattern may take a pointer as well

error: static_assert failed due to requirement 'formattable_pointer' "Formatting of non-void pointers is disallowed."

We can fix it with traits (other implementation variants are possible):

```
template <typename T, bool>
    struct printHelper {
        static void print(T const& t){fmt::print("{}", t);};
    };
10
    template <typename T>
11
    struct printHelper<T, true> {
12
        static void print(T const& t){fmt::print("{}", *t);};
13
14
   };
15
16
    template <typename T>
    void print(T const& t){
17
        printHelper<T, std::is pointer<T>::value>::print(t);
18
19
20
```

• We can fix it with traits (other implementation variants are possible):



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- In C++14 some of the traits got a new alias for its inner type "trait"_t
- In C++17 some of the traits got the "trait"_v aliasing

```
template<typename T>
using add_pointer_t = typename add_pointer<T>::type;

template<typename T>
constexpr bool is_pointer_v = is_pointer<T>::value;
```

```
template <typename T, bool>
 6
    struct printHelper {
 8
        static void print(T const& t){fmt::print("{}", t);};
 9
10
11
    template <typename T>
    struct printHelper<T, true> {
12
        static void print(T const& t){fmt::print("{}", *t);};
13
    };
14
15
    template <typename T>
16
    void print(T const& t){
17
        printHelper<T, std::is_pointer_v<T>>::print(t);
18
19
```

We can simplify things with Tag Dispatch
 std::is_pointer<T>::type is std::true_type or std::false_type;

```
template <typename T>
    void printHelper(std::false type, T const& t){
        fmt::print("{}", t);
10
    template <typename T>
11
12
    void printHelper(std::true type, T const& t){
        fmt::print("{}", *t);
13
14
15
    template <typename T>
16
    void print(T const& t) {
17
        printHelper(typename std::is pointer<T>::type{}, t);
18
19
```

• With C++17 we can simplify even further by using constexpr if

```
5
     template <typename T>
     void print(T const& t){
6
         if constexpr (std::is_pointer_v<T>){
              fmt::print("{}", *t);
8
9
         }else{
              fmt::print("{}", t);
10
11
12
```

• With C++20 we can use a simple Concept (more about that later). Very similar to tag dispatch, but with better readability and less code

```
void print(auto& t){
 5
         fmt::print("{}", t);
     void print(auto* t){
 9
         fmt::print("{}", *t);
10
```

• With C++20 we can use a simple Concept (more about that later). Very similar to tag dispatch, but with better readability and less code

```
void print(const auto& t){
22
         fmt::print("{}", t);
23
24
25
26
     void print(const pointer auto& t){
         fmt::print("{}", *t);
27
28
```

CONTAINER DETECTION

DETECTING A CONTAINER (NAÏVE IMPLEMENTATION)

 Identifying Containers We want to identify containers during compile time. An Idea: All STL containers have nested::iterator type (we can use that) template <typename T>

```
struct is container
{ static const bool value = ???; };
```

SFINAE

SFINAE - SUBSTITUTION FAILURE IS NOT AN ERROR

Special rule for function template overload resolution: If an overload candidate would cause a compilation error during type substitution, it is silently removed from the overload set.

ELLIPSES (...)

Functions with variadic arguments (...) are always inferior in overload resolution

```
void print (...) {
    fmt::print("ellipses\n");
 8
9
    void print(int) {
10
        fmt::print("integer\n");
11
12
13
    int main(){
14
     print(17);
15
    print("17");
16
17
```

ELLIPSES (...)

Functions with variadic arguments (...) are always inferior in overload resolution

```
void print (...) {
    fmt::print("ellipses\n");
 8
9
    void print(int) {
10
        fmt::print("integer\n");
11
12
13
    int main(){
14
     print(17);
15
    print("17");
16
17
```

integer ellipses

DETECTING A CONTAINER (NAÏVE IMPLEMENTATION)

```
template <typename T>
 6
     struct is_container {
 8
         template <typename S>
         static std::byte f(...);
 9
10
11
         template <typename S>
12
         static std::size_t f(typename S::iterator*);
13
14
         static const bool value = (sizeof(f<T>(0)) == sizeof(std::size_t));
15
     };
```

DETECTING A CONTAINER (NAÏVE IMPLEMENTATION)

How should we use it? An Idea:

DETECTING A CONTAINER (NAÏVE IMPLEMENTATION)

How should we use it? An Idea:

```
template <typename T>
16
    void print (const T& t) {
17
        if (!is container<T>::value) {
18
            fmt::print("{}", t);
19
20
        else {
21
             for (auto const& e : t) {
22
                 fmt::print("{}", e);
23
24
25
26
```

DETECTING A CONTAINER

- The previous example wasn't a good idea until C++17
- We will gradually get better with our approach, but until C++17 we had to do something different...

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- We will gradually get better with our approach, but until C++17 we had to do something different...



DETECTING A CONTAINER

What can we do:

- We can delegate to a helper class
- We can delegate to a helper method
- In some cases, it's more desirable to just write two functions and have the compiler pick the right one!

ENABLE IF

ENABLE_IF

 enable_if is SFINAE – based method to force the compiler to pick an overload.

```
template<bool B, class T = void>
struct enable_if {};

template<class T>
struct enable_if<true, T> { using type = T; };

template< bool B, class T = void >
using enable_if_t = typename enable_if<B,T>::type;
```

ENABLE_IF

 enable_if is SFINAE based method to force the compiler to pick an overload.

```
template <typename T>
19
    void print (const T& t, std::enable_if t<!is_container_v<T>, void*> = nullptr) {
20
        fmt::print("{}\n", t);
21
22
23
    template <typename T>
24
    void print (const T& t, std::enable if t<is container v<T>, void*> = nullptr) {
25
        for (auto&& e : t){
26
            fmt::print("{}", e);
27
28
29
30
31
    int main(){
32
        print(18);
33
        print(std::array<int, 3>{{1, 2, 3}});
34
35
    };
```

ENABLE_IF

 enable_if is SFINAE based method to force the compiler to pick an overload.

```
template <typename T>
19
    void print (const T& t, std::enable_if t<!is_container_v<T>, void*> = nullptr) {
20
        fmt::print("{}\n", t);
21
22
23
    template <typename T>
24
    void print (const T& t, std::enable_if_t<is_container_v<T>, void*> = nullptr) {
25
        for (auto&& e : t){
26
            fmt::print("{}", e);
27
28
29
30
31
    int main(){
32
        print(18);
33
        print(std::array<int, 3>{{1, 2, 3}});
34
35
    };
```

18 123

DETECTING A CONTAINER: C++17 IMPLEMENTATION

```
template <typename T>
18 ∨void print(T t){
        if constexpr (!is_container_v<T>){
19 ∨
20
            fmt::print("Number: {}\n", t);
21 🗸
        } else {
22
            fmt::print("Container: ");
23 🗸
            for (auto&& e : t){
                fmt::print("{} ", e);
24
25
26
27
28
29 \vee int main(){
        print(2);
30
        print(std::array<int, 3>{{1,2,3}});
31
32
```

DETECTING A CONTAINER: C++17 IMPLEMENTATION

```
template <typename T>
18 ∨void print(T t){
        if constexpr (!is container v<T>){
19 ∨
20
            fmt::print("Number: {}\n", t);
21 🗸
        } else {
22
            fmt::print("Container: ");
23 🗸
            for (auto&& e : t){
                fmt::print("{} ", e);
24
25
26
27
28
29 \veeint main(){
        print(2);
30
        print(std::array<int, 3>{{1,2,3}});
31
32
```

Number: 2

Container: 123

VARIADIC TEMPLATES

VARIADIC TEMPLATES: C++17 EXAMPLE

Here we will check if all types are integral

```
template <typename... T>
11
12
    struct are_all_integral :
        public std::conjunction<std::is_integral<T>...>{};
13
14
15
    template <typename... T>
    void check(T... vals){
16
        static_assert(are_all_integral<T...>::value,
17
        "All vals must be integral");
18
19
```

VOID T

 An extremely simple alias template that helps verify well-formedness.

- Can be used for arbitrary member/trait detection
- void_t<T> is well formed void only if T is well-formed,
 just like enable_if<b, T>::type

VOID_T

```
29 template< class...>
30 using void_t = void;
```

VOID_T

```
29 template< class... >
30 using void_t = void;
```

Luckily for us its already provided in in type_traits since C++17
Thank You Walter.E Brown ©

CONCEPTS

CONCEPTS

- We have already seen examples of concepts:
 - naïve is_container
 - are_all_integral
 - auto as function parameter

- Let's create a better is_container
 - A container C is a type that can be iterated with range-based for loop
 - Specifically:
 - 1. std::begin(C&) returns begin Iterator
 - 2. std::end(C&) returns tail Itererator
 - 3. beginlter and taillter comparable with !=
 - 4. beginlter has ++
 - 5. beginlter has * which isn't void
 - 6. beginlter and taillter are copy constructible and destructible

```
template <typename C>
using TBegin = decltype(std::begin(std::declval<C&>));

template <typename C>
using TEnd = decltype(std::end(std::declval<C&>));

template <typename BI, typename EI>
using TNotEqualAble = decltype(std::declval<BI>() != std::declval<EI>());
```

```
31 template <typename BI>
32 using TIncable = decltype(++std::declval<BI&>());
33
34 template <typename BI>
35 using TDerefable = decltype(*std::declval<BI>());
```

```
37 template<typename C, typename = void>
38 struct is_container : std::false_type {};
```

```
40
    template <typename C>
    struct is container<C, std::void t<</pre>
41
42
   TBegin<C>,
    TEnd<C>,
43
   TIncable<TBegin<C>>,
44
   TINeq<TBegin<C>, TEnd<C>>,
45
    TDerefable<TBegin<C>>>>:
46
    std::integral_constant<bool,</pre>
47
    std::is_convertible_v<TINeq<TBegin<C>, TEnd<C>>, bool>
48
    && !std::is_void_v<TDerefable<TBegin<C>>>
49
    && std::is_destructible_v<TBegin<C>>
50
    && std::is_copy_constructible_v<TBegin<C>>>
51
    && std::is_destructible_v<TEnd<C>>>
52
    && std::is copy constructible v<TEnd<C>>> {};
53
```

Usage examples:

```
template <typename C>
146
     constexpr bool isContainer(const C& c){
147
         return is container<C>::value;
148
149
150
     template <typename C>
151
     constexpr std::enable if t<is container<C>::value, typename C::value type>
152
     getFirst1(const C& c){
153
         return *c.begin();
154
155
156
     template <typename C, std::enable if t<is container<C>::value, bool> = true>
157
     constexpr auto getFirst2(const C& c){
158
         return *c.begin();
159
160
```

- Problems ?
 - Its hard to develop new concepts
 - Error messages can be extremely daunting when a concept isn't met
 - enable_if or void_t aren't readable for many people

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 - Errc
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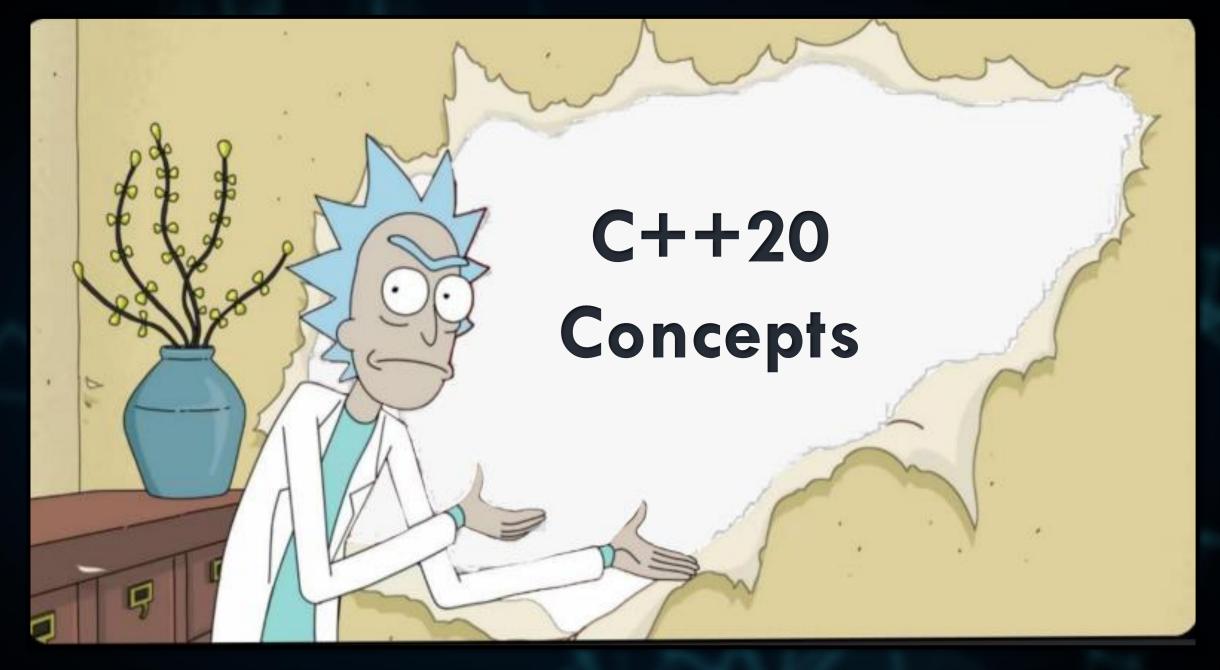
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With C++20 It's easier to create and use a Concepts

```
template <typename BI, typename EI>
59
    concept Negable = requires(BI bi, EI ei){
60
        { bi != ei } -> std::convertible to<bool>;
61
62
   };
63
    template <typename BI, Neqable<BI> EI>
64
    constexpr bool foo(BI bi, EI ei){
65
        return true;
66
67
```

With C++20 It's easier to create and use a Concepts

```
foo(int(), long());
```

 With C++20 It's easier to create and use a Concepts foo(int(), std::vector<int>::iterator());

We can write the same constraint in many ways

```
69 template <typename BI, typename EI>
70 requires Neqable<BI, EI>
71 constexpr bool foo_2(BI bi, EI ei){
72 return true;
73 }
```

We can write the same constraint in many ways

```
75 template <typename BI, typename EI>
76 constexpr bool foo_3(BI bi, EI ei) requires Neqable<BI, EI>{
77    return true;
78 }
```

CONCEPTS: C++20 CONCEPT LIBRARY

We can write the same constraint in many ways

```
81 constexpr bool foo_4(auto bi, Neqable<decltype(bi)> auto ei) {
82    return true;
83 }
```

Let's implement all other concepts that are needed

```
template <typename C>
64
    concept NeqableBeginAndEnd = requires(C c){
65
        { std::begin(c) != std::end(c) } -> std::same as<bool>;
66
   };
67
68
69
    template <typename C>
    concept Beginable = requires(C c) {
70
        std::begin(c);
71
72
   };
73
   template <typename C>
74
    concept Endable = requires(C c) {
75
        std::end(c);
76
77
```

Let's implement all other concepts that are needed

```
template <typename C>
79
    concept BeginIncrementable = requires(C c) {
80
       std::begin(c)++;
81
82
   -};
83
84
    template <typename C>
    concept BeginDerefable = requires(C_c) {
85
        *std::begin(c);
86
87
   };
88
    template <typename C>
89
    concept BeginDerefToVoid = requires(C c) {
90
        { *std::begin(c) } -> std::same as<void>;
91
92
```

Let's implement all other concepts that are needed

```
template <typename C>
 94
     concept BeginAndEndCopyConstructibleAndDestructible = requires(C c) {
 95
         std::destructible<decltype(std::begin(c))>
                                                                &&
96
         std::destructible<decltype(std::end(c))>
                                                                &&
97
         std::copy constructible<decltype(std::begin(c))>
                                                                &&
98
         std::copy constructible<decltype(std::end(c))>;
 99
100
```

Now let's implement all other concepts that are needed

```
103 template <typename C>
104 \concept Container =
105     Beginable <C > && Endable <C > &&
106     BeginIncrementable <C > && BeginDerefable <C > &&
107     NeqableBeginAndEnd <C > &&
108     !BeginDerefToVoid <C > &&
109     BeginAndEndCopyConstructibleAndDestructible <C >;
```

Usage Examples:

```
static_assert(Container<std::vector<int>>>, "Must Be a container");
```

Usage Examples:

```
static assert(Container<std::vector<int>>, "Must Be a container");
147
     constexpr bool isFirstElemTheSame(Container auto c1, Container auto c2){
143
         return *std::begin(c1) == *std::begin(c2);
144
145
146
147
     int main(){
         std::vector v{1, 2, 3};
148
         std::array a{1, 1, 1};
149
         return isFirstElemTheSame(v, a);
150
151
```

Error Example:

```
constexpr bool isFirstElemTheSame(Container auto c1, Container auto c2){
   return *std::begin(c1) == *std::begin(c2);

   return *std::begin(c1) == *std::begin(c2);

   int main(){
        int main(){
            std::vector v{1, 2, 3};
            std::tuple t{1, "hello"sv};
            return isFirstElemTheSame(v, t);
        }
}
```

Error Example:

```
<source>:149:12: error: no matching function for call to 'isFirstElemTheSame'
    return isFirstElemTheSame(v, t);

<source>:142:16: note: candidate template ignored: constraints not satisfied [with c1:auto = std::vector<int>, c2:auto = std::tuple<int, std::basic_string_view<char>>]
constexpr bool isFirstElemTheSame(Container auto c1, Container auto c2){

<source>:142:54: note: because 'std::tuple<int, std::basic_string_view<char>>' does not satisfy 'Container'
constexpr bool isFirstElemTheSame(Container auto c1, Container auto c2){

<source>:105:5: note: because 'std::tuple<int, std::basic_string_view<char>>' does not satisfy 'Beginable'
    Beginable<C> && Endable<C> &&

<source>:71:5: note: because 'std::tuple<int, std::basic_string_view<char>>' does not satisfy 'Beginable'
    Beginable</s>
<source>:71:5: note: because 'std::begin(c)' would be invalid: no matching function for call to 'begin'
    std::begin(c);

^
```

CONCLUSION

- Concepts simplify the code
- Concepts make the code More readable and maintainable
- Makes Metaprogramming easier
- Make the compiler errors much clearer

CONCLUSION

- Concepts simplify the code
- Concepts make the code More readable and maintainable
- Makes Metaprogramming easier
- Make the compiler errors much clearer

```
template <typename C>
struct is_container<C, std::void_t<</pre>
TBegin<C>,
                                                                 template <typename C>
TEnd<C>,
                                                                 concept Container =
TIncable<TBegin<C>>,
TINeq<TBegin<C>, TEnd<C>>,
                                                           105
                                                                     Beginable<C> && Endable<C> &&
                                                                     BeginIncrementable<C> && BeginDerefable<C> &&
TDerefable<TBegin<C>>>>:
                                                           106
                                                                     NegableBeginAndEnd<C> &&
std::integral_constant<bool,</pre>
                                                           107
std::is convertible v<TINeq<TBegin<C>, TEnd<C>>, bool>
                                                                     !BeginDerefToVoid<C> &&
                                                                     BeginAndEndCopyConstructibleAndDestructible<C>;
&& !std::is void v<TDerefable<TBegin<C>>>
&& std::is_destructible_v<TBegin<C>>
&& std::is copy constructible v<TBegin<C>>
&& std::is destructible v<TEnd<C>>
&& std::is copy constructible v<TEnd<C>>> {};
```

CONCLUSION

- Concepts
- Concepts
- Makes M
- Make the

```
template <typename
struct is_container
TBegin<C>,
TEnd<C>,
```

TIncable<TBegin<C>:

TINeq<TBegin<C>, T

TDerefable<TBegin<0

std::integral_const

std::is_convertible

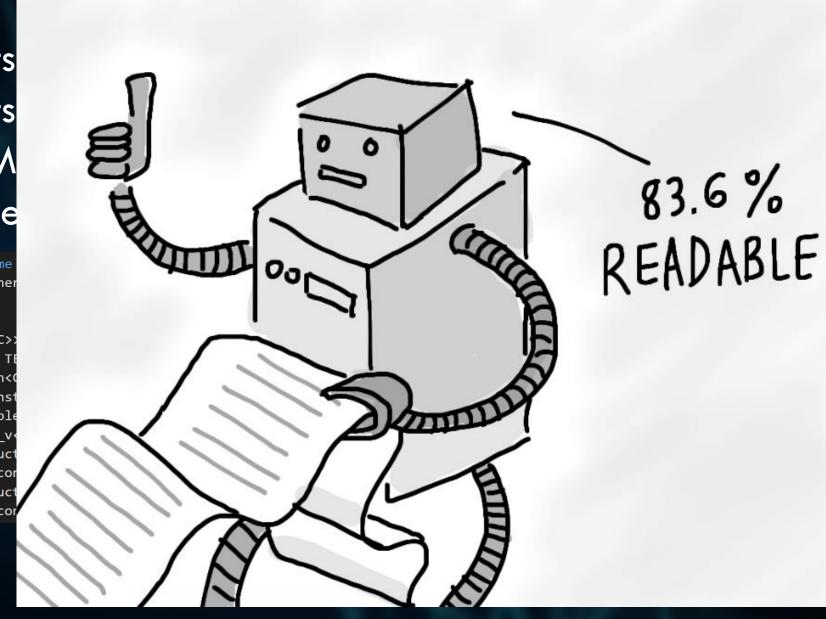
&& !std::is void v

&& std::is_destruct

&& std::is_copy_cor

&& std::is_destruct

&& std::is_copy_cor



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QUESTIONS



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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