

CPT210 - Microprocessor

Lecture 5 - Assemblers and Instruction Encoding



Overview

- Lecture 1-4 Review
 - Computer Architecture
 - BUSes
 - Cache and Memory
 - Endianness
 - Data Representation

Break: SURF Introduction

- Lecture 5
 - ARM Assemblers
 - What assembler is
 - Why use assembler
 - Differences between assembler and compiler
 - Instruction encoding
 - Condition field
 - Immediate flag
 - Operation code
 - Status update flag
 - First operand register
 - Destination register
 - Second operand
 - Rotation and Shift
 - ROR
 - LSR
 - ASR
 - LSL

Before End: Assessment Explaination



Teaching Team & Office hours Teaching staff (3)



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• Computer Architecture

Feature	Von Neumann Architecture	Harvard Architecture
Memory Structure	Shared memory for data and instructions	Separate memory for data and instructions
Bus Structure	Single bus for both	Separate buses for each
Access to Instructions/Data	One at a time (either instruction or data)	Simultaneous access
Cost & Complexity	Simpler and cheaper	More complex and expensive
Speed	Slower due to bottleneck	Faster due to parallelism
Application	General computing (e.g., PCs)	Embedded systems, real-time systems



- Computer Architecture
- > The Von Neumann Bottleneck

Problem:

Because the CPU can only access either an instruction or data at a time through a single bus, it often has to wait for memory, limiting performance.

One Solution:

Modern CPUs often use caches or modified Harvard architectures to reduce this bottleneck.

out of the scope of this module, reverse for self-learning



- Computer Architecture
- > Take-away information

"Von Neumann shares one wire, Harvard splits and runs faster."

This means Von Neumann uses a single shared bus, while Harvard separates instruction and data paths for faster access.

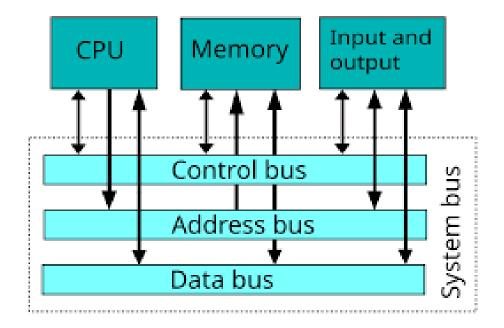


- BUSes
- What is a BUS?

A **bus** is a communication pathway that connects different components of a computer system, such as the CPU, memory, and I/O devices. It consists of a set of parallel lines that carry **data**, addresses, or control signals.



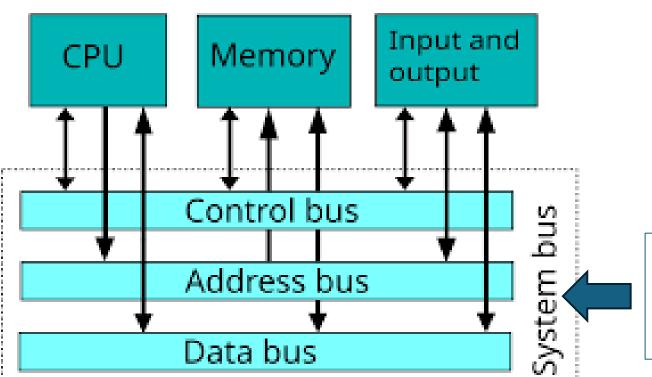
- **BUSes**
- > Three main types of BUSes



Bus Type	Description
Address Bus	Carries the memory addresses where data is located or needs to go. Usually unidirectional (from CPU to memory).
Data Bus	Transfers actual data between the CPU, memory, and peripherals. Usually bidirectional .
Control Bus	Carries control signals (e.g., read/write signals, clock signals, interrupt requests). Mostly unidirectional.



- BUSes
- > Exampe: How CPU reads Data from memory address 0x1000



- 1. CPU puts **0x1000** on the **address bus**
- 2. CPU sends a **READ** signal on the **control bus**
- 3. The memory module at that address sends the data back to the CPU via the **data bus**

In practice, these three buses are often grouped together and called the **system bus**, which handles all communication between the CPU, memory, and I/O devices.



- BUSes
- > Key Feactures of BUSes

Feature	Explanation	
Parallel Transfer	A bus transfers multiple bits at once	
Directionality	Some buses are unidirectional, others bidirectional	
Bus Width	The number of bits in a bus determines how much data it can handle at once	
Performance Impact	Wider and faster buses increase overall system performance	



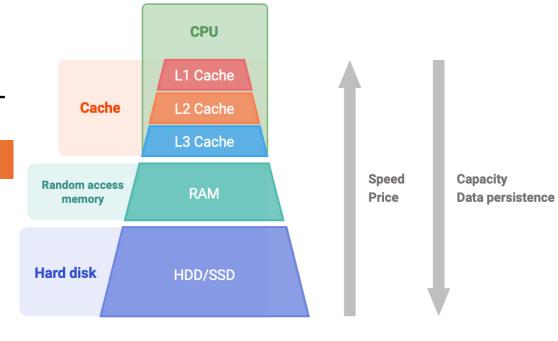
- BUSes
- > Take-away information

* "Address locates, data transfers, control directs."

Don't confuse them!



- Cache and Memory
- > CPU cache V.S. Memory

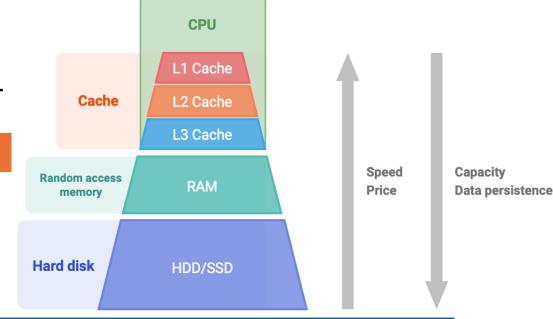


CPU Cache is a **small but extremely fast** type of memory located **inside or very close to the CPU**. It temporarily stores frequently accessed data or instructions to speed up processing.

RAM (Random Access Memory) is the **main working memory** of the computer. It stores **programs and data** that the CPU needs **while running**.



- Cache and Memory
- > CPU cache V.S. Memory



Feature	CPU Cache	RAM (main memory)
Speed	Extremely fast	Fast (but slower than cache)
Size	Small (KB to a few MB)	Large (GBs)
Location	Inside or near the CPU	On the motherboard
Cost	Very high per byte	Moderate
Volatility	Volatile	Volatile
Purpose	Temporary buffer for fast access	Stores all active programs/data



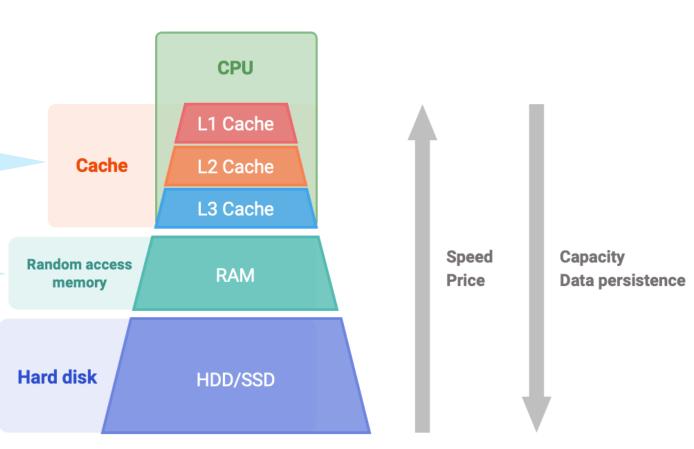
- Cache and Memory
- > CPU cache V.S. Memory

Analogy

Your brain's short-term memory (fast recall, small size)

Your working desk (holds what you're currently doing)

Your bookshelf (stores everything, but takes time to fetch)



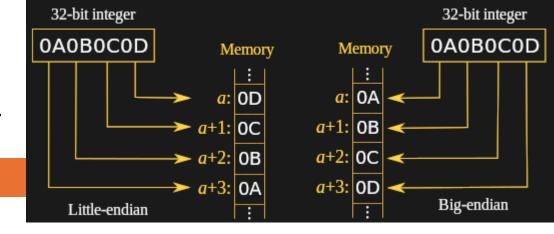


- Cache and Memory
- > Take-away information

"CPU cache is faster, smaller and more expensive than RAM."



• Big and little Endianness



Endianness

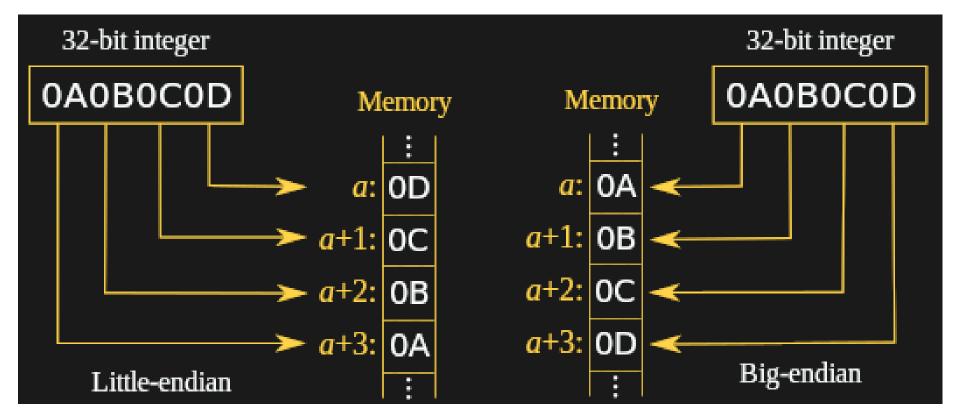
Endianness refers to the **order in which bytes are stored in memory** for multi-byte data types like integers and floats.

Big-endian: the **most significant byte (MSB)** is stored at the **lowest memory address**; storage order matches human reading order (left to right).

Little-Endian: the **least significant byte (LSB)** is stored at the **lowest memory address**; storage order is reversed from how we usually read numbers.

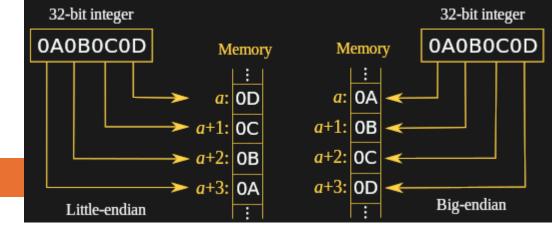


- Big and little Endianness
- > Endianness





• Big and little Endianness



Endianness

Aspect	Big-Endian	Little-Endian
Byte Order	MSB first	LSB first
Readability	Human-friendly	Needs reversing
Typical Architectures	SPARC, Motorola, Network protocols	x86, x86-64 (Intel/AMD)
Usage Example	Network transmission	Local memory, files

Why Important



- Cross-platform data exchange
- Debugging memory
- Affects how structures/unions are stored
- Networking uses big-endian as standard



- Big and little Endianness
- > Take-away information

* "Big-endian MSB stores lowest, Little-endian LSB stores lowest."



- Data Representation
- Base Conversion: Binary Octal Decimal Hexadecimal

Base	Prefix	Example
Binary (base = 2)	0b	0b1111 (=15)
Octal (base = 8)	00/0	0o17 (=15)
Decimal (base = 10)	none	15
Hexadecimal (base = 16)	0x	0xF (=15)

- Data Representation
- > Base Conversion: Binary Octal Decimal Hexadecimal

How to convert 13.125 in decimal into binary?

Integer part:

$$13 \div 2 = 6 \cdots 1$$

 $6 \div 2 = 3 \cdots 0$
 $3 \div 2 = 1 \cdots 1$

$$1 \div 2 = 0 \cdots 1$$

0b1101

Decimal part:

$$0.125 \times 2 = 0.25$$

 $0.25 \times 2 = 0.5$
 $0.5 \times 2 = 1.0$

0.001 in binary

13.125 in decimal = 1101.001 in binary



• Data Representation

Base Conversion: Binary – Octal – Decimal - Hexadecimal

Decimal	Binary	Octal	Hexadecimal
0	0000	00	0
1,	0001	01	1
2	0010	02	2
3	0011	03	3
4	0100	04	4
5	0101	05	5
6	0110	06	6
7	0111	07	7
8	1000	10	8
9	1001	11	9
10	1010	12	А
11	1011	13	В
12	1100	14	С
13	1101	15	D
14	1110	16	E
15	1111	17	F



- Data Representation
- **▶ IEEE 754**
- ★ IEEE 754 is the most widely used standard for representing **floating-point numbers** in binary in computers.

Why Important

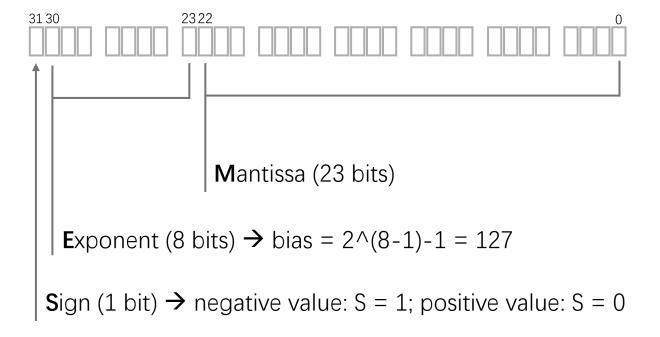


- An universal standard for floating-point numbers
- Help to understand why computers make rounding errors
- How computers store real-world numbers using binary
- If you want to understand real-world numbers in computing, you need to understand IEEE 754.



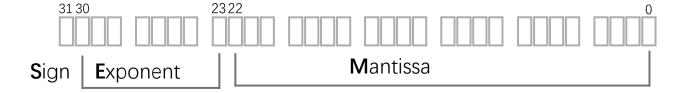
• Data Representation

▶ IEEE 754





- Data Representation
- **▶ IEEE 754**



Example with $\nu = +13.125$ (1101.001 in binary):

- What the **S** is?
- What the **E** is?
- What the **M** is?
- What is the final representation in IEEE 754?



Break: SURF Introduction



Lecture 5: learning target

How ARM assembly code is translated into machine code and how different types of instructions are encoded and used.

> ARM Assemblers

- What assembler is
- Why use assembler
- Differences between assembler and compiler

> Instruction encoding

- Condition field
- Immediate flag
- Operation code
- Status update flag
- First operand register
- Destination register
- Second operand

> Rotation and Shift

- ROR
- LSR
- ASR
- LSL



- Assemblers
- What is Assembler?

An assembler is a tool that converts human-readable **assembly language** into **machine code** (binary instructions that the CPU can execute).



- Assemblers
- > Why do we need and assembler?

Reason	Explaination
CPUs only understand binary machine code	But writing 0s and 1s directly is too hard and error-prone.
Assembly is a human-readable alternative	Easier for programmers to write, debug, and understand.
Assemblers automate translation to exact opcodes and binary format	Ensures correctness and efficiency.
Assemblers allow the use of labels, constants, macros, and directives	These features simplify and organize code.
Enables writing low-level, efficient code close to hardware	Critical for embedded systems, performance tuning, etc.

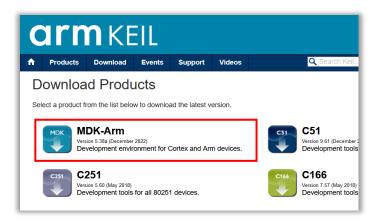


- Assemblers
- > Common tools

Tool Name	Description
Keil MDK	Includes official ARM assembler
GNU ARM Toolchain	Open-source ARM toolchain
VisUAL emulator	For simulation, not real execution (good for teaching)



- **Assemblers**
- The content of this lecture can be verified using the Keil MDK: https://www.keil.com/download/product/



You can compile and run small programs for free. Full version is quite expensive for personal use.

- A tutorial from past is also uploaded to LMO to guide you to setup the project.
 - Replace the main.c with an assembly file main.s
 - Make sure <u>main</u> is defined and exported.

AREA

MY PROG, CODE, READONLY



Assemblers

- GNU toolchain for ARM: https://developer.arm.com/downloads/-/arm-gnu-toolchain-downloads.
- ARM tools assembler: https://developer.arm.com/downloads/-/arm-compiler-for-embedded
 - This assembler is included in Keil MDK 5: https://www2.keil.com/mdk5



- Assemblers
- > Take-away information

Assembler turns readable instructions into real CPU actions.



- Assemblers
- > Any differences between Assembler and Compiler?

Feature	Assembler	Compiler
Input Language	Assembly language (e.g., ARM, x86 assembly)	High-level language (e.g., C, C++, Java)
le Output	Machine code (binary) or object file	Assembly code or object file (then linked to binary)
Level of Control	Very low-level; programmer controls every instruction	High-level; compiler handles optimizations and structure
Purpose	Direct hardware manipulation, performance tuning	General-purpose programming, software development
Abstraction Level	Minimal abstraction; close to CPU instructions	High abstraction; programmer writes logic, not hardware
* Use Case Examples	Embedded systems, device drivers, bootloaders	Applications, operating systems, web services
Translation Process	1-to-1 translation: each instruction \rightarrow one machine code	Many-to-many: one line of code → many instructions
Symbols & Labels	Supports labels, constants, macros (simplified)	Supports variables, functions, types, objects
Debugging Granularity	Very detailed, instruction-level	Abstracted, source-code level



- Assemblers
- > Take-away information



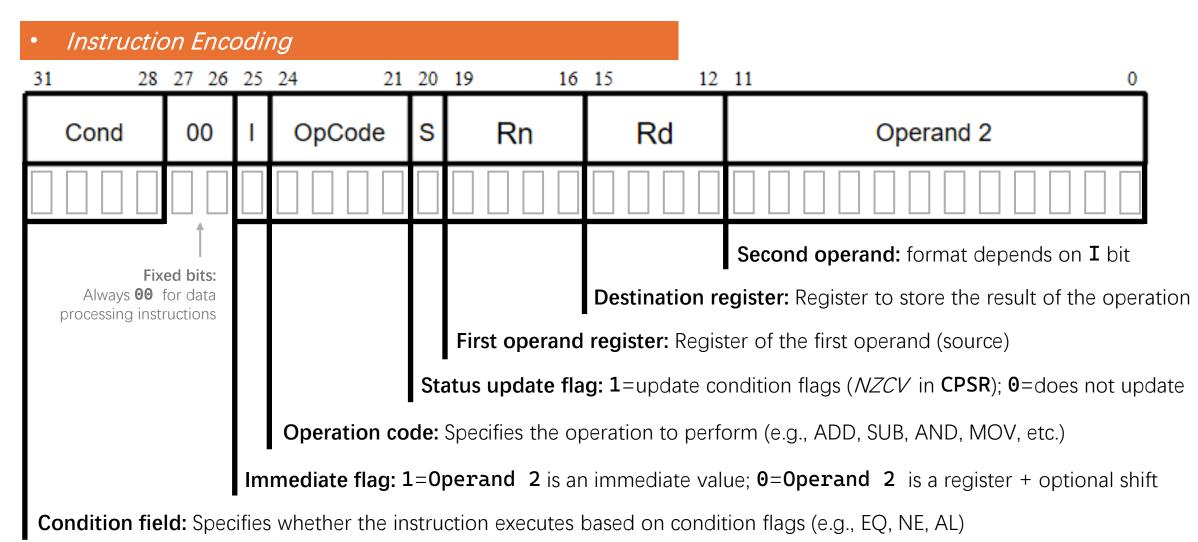
Assembler:

- → Translates human-readable **assembly code** directly into **machine code**.
- → Used when precise control of hardware and performance is critical.

Compiler:

- → Translates **high-level code** into assembly or machine code.
- → Optimizes code for readability, performance, and maintainability.







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Cond

Lecture 5

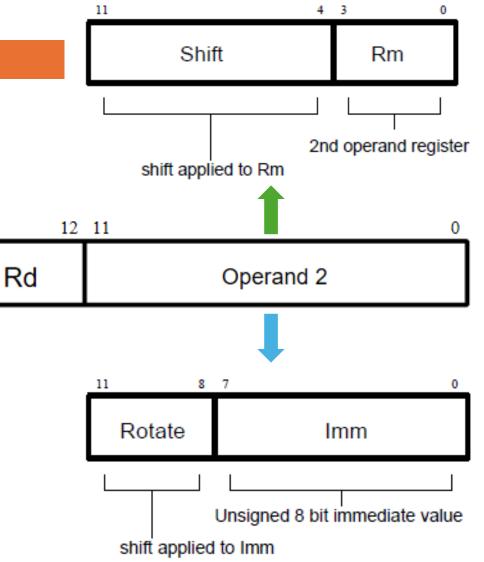
• Instruction Encoding

28 27 26 25 24

00

21 20 19

OpCode



16 15

Rn





• Instruction Encoding – Cond codes

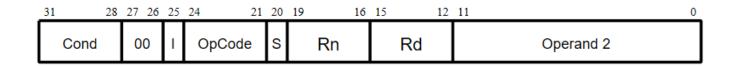
Condition field (Cond)

Cond [31:28]	Mnemonic extension	Interpretation	Status flag state for execution
0000	EQ	Equal / equals zero	Zset
0001	NE	Not equal	Zclear
0010	CS/HS	Carry set / unsigned higher or same	C set
0011	CC/LO	Carry clear / unsigned lower	C clear
0100	MI	Minus / negative	N set
0101	PL	Plus / positive or zero	Nclear
0110	VS	Overflow	V set
0111	VC	No overflow	V clear
1000	HI	Unsignedhigher	C set and Z clear
1001	LS	Unsigned lower or same	C clear or Z set
1010	GE	Signed greater than or equal	N equals V
1011	LT	Signed less than	N is not equal to V
1100	GT	Signed greater than	Z clear and N equals V
1101	LE	Signedless than or equal	Z set or N is not equal to V
1110	AL	Always	any
1111	NV	Never (do not use!)	none

Reference;

https://cas.ee.ic.ac.uk/people/gac1/Architecture/Lecture8.pdf





- Instruction Encoding I flag
- > Immediate flag (I)

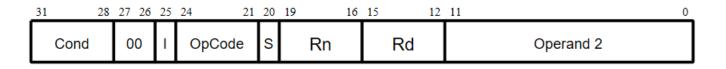
I = 1: Operand 2 is an immediate value

I = 0: Operand 2 is a register + optional shift

Example:







• Instruction Encoding – OpCode codes

> Operation code

0000 = AND - Rd:= Op1 AND Op2 0001 = EOR - Rd:= Op1 EOR Op2 0010 = SUB - Rd := Op1 - Op20011 = RSB - Rd:= Op2 - Op1 0100 = ADD - Rd = Op1 + Op20101 = ADC - Rd := Op1 + Op2 + C0110 = SBC - Rd:= Op1 - Op2 + C - 1 0111 = RSC - Rd:= Op2 - Op1 + C - 1 1000 = TST - set condition codes on Op1 AND Op2 1001 = TEQ - set condition codes on Op1 EOR Op2 1010 = CMP - set condition codes on Op1 - Op2 1011 = CMN - set condition codes on Op1 + Op2 1100 = ORR - Rd:= Op1 OR Op2 1101 = MOV - Rd := Op2

Reference; ARM7TDMI-S Instruction Set Encoding.pdf (uploaded on LM)

1110 = BIC - Rd:= Op1 AND NOT Op2

1111 = MVN - Rd:= NOT Op2

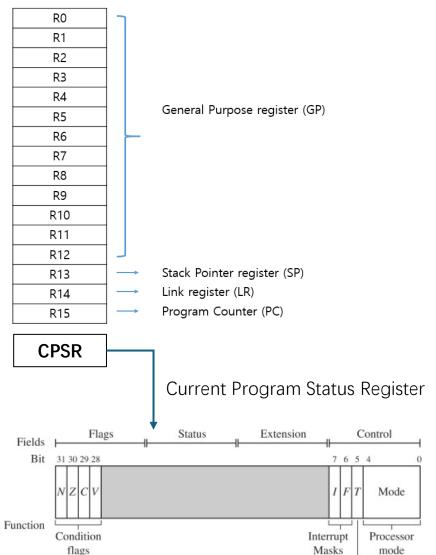


- Instruction Encoding S flag
- > Set condition codes (S)

S = 1: update the condition flags stored in the CPSR

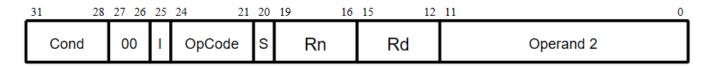
S = 0: do not alert

Condition flags	Meaning	When it is set to 1
N (Negative)	The result is negative	When the result's most significant bit is 1
Z (Zero)	The result is zero	When the result is exactly 0
C (Carry)	Carry out of an unsigned operation	In addition: if there's an extra bit In subtraction: if there's no borrow
V (Overflow)	Signed overflow occurred	When the result overflows the signed range (e.g. $+ + = -$)

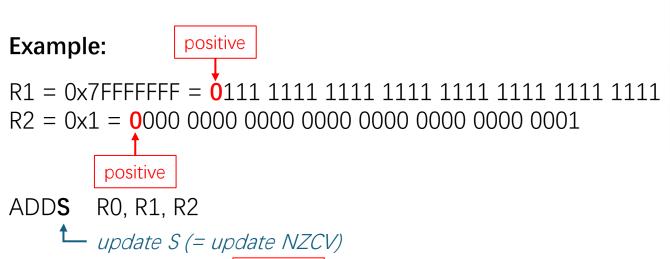


Thumb





• Instruction Encoding – S flag



negative

Condition flags	Meaning	When it is set to 1
N (Negative)	The result is negative	When the result's most significant bit is 1
Z (Zero)	The result is zero	When the result is exactly 0
C (Carry)	Carry out of an unsigned operation	In addition: if there's an extra bit In subtraction: if there's no borrow
V (Overflow)	Signed overflow occurred	When the result overflows the signed range (e.g. $+ + = -$)

- Result is negative $\rightarrow N = 1$
- Result is not zero \rightarrow Z = 0
- No unsigned carry $\rightarrow C = 0$
- Signed overflow \rightarrow V = 1



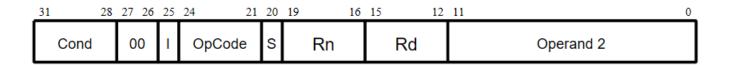
31 28	27 26	25	24 21	20	19 16	15 12	11 0
Cond	00	_	OpCode	S	Rn	Rd	Operand 2

- Instruction Encoding S flag
- ➤ When does overflow (V) happen?
 - → Only apply for calculation with **signed** values
 - → Does not apply for unsigned calculation

	Cases	V = ?
>	(+) + (+) = (-)	1
Overflow	(-) + (-) = (+)	1
Ŏ	(+) - (-) = (-)	1
	(-) - (+) = (+)	1

Condition flags	Meaning	When it is set to 1
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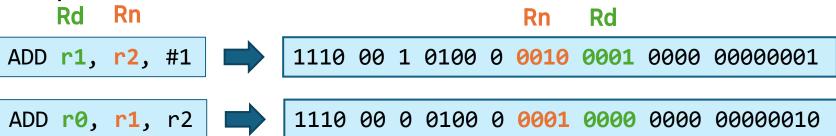


- Instruction Encoding Rn & Rd
- > Registers

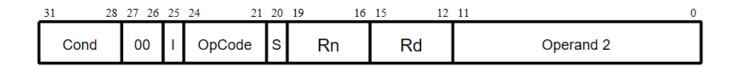
Rn = First operand register: Register number of the first operand (**source**)

Rd = Destination register: Register number to store the **result** of the operation

Example:

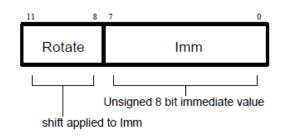






- Instruction Encoding Operand 2
- > Second operand

I = 1: Operand 2 is a (rotate) immediate (rotate_imm X 2 + imm8)



Example:

ADDSLE r2, r1, #0x5F00



1101 00 1 0100 1 0001 0010 1100 01011111



- Instruction Encoding Operand 2
- > Example

Match the following machine code to the instructions below:

ADDSLE R2, R1, #0x5F00

	Cond	00	I	OpCode	s	Rn	Rd	Operand 2
1	1101	00	1	0100	1	0001	0010	1100 0101 1111
2	0000	00	0	0010	1	0001	0000	0011 0001 0010
3	1110	00	0	0011	1	1010	1001	0000 0000 1101

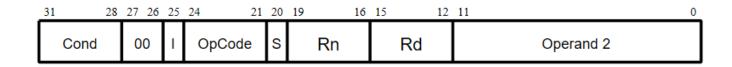


ADDSLE R2, R1, #0x5F00

- Instruction Encoding Operand 2
- > Example answer:
- Cond is LE (code: 1101); Fixed bits = 00.
- I is 1, the **Operand 2** will be an immediate number.
- OpCode is ADD (code: 0100).
- **S** is **1**, so it will set flags.
- Rn is R1 (code: 0001) and Rd is R2 (code: 0010).
- Operand 2:

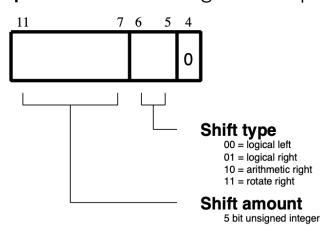
Cond	00	I	OpCode	S	Rn	Rd	Oj	perand	2
							_		
1101	00	1	0100	1	0001	0010	1100	0101	1111

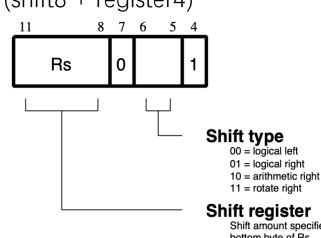


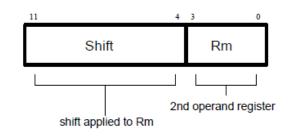


- Instruction Encoding Operand 2
- Second operand

I = 0: Operand 2 is a register + optional shift (shift8 + register4)

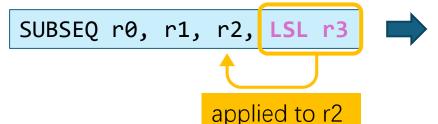






Shift amount specified in bottom byte of Rs

Example:



0000 00 0 0010 1 0001 0000 00110001 0010



- Instruction Encoding Operand 2
- > Example

Match the following machine code to the instructions below:

SUBSEQ RO, R1, R2, LSL R3

	Cond	00	I	OpCode	s	Rn	Rd	Operand 2
1	1101	00	1	0100	1	0001	0010	1100 0101 1111
2	0000	00	0	0010	1	0001	0000	0011 0001 0010
			-					
3	1110	00	0	0011	1	1010	1001	0000 0000 1101



- Instruction Encoding Operand 2
- > Example answer:
- Cond is EQ (code: 0000); Fixed bits = 00.
- I is 0, the **Operand 2** will be a register.
- OpCode is SUB (code: 0010).
- **S** is **1**, so it will set flags.
- Rn is R1 (code: 0001) and Rd is R0 (code: 0000)
- Operand 2:

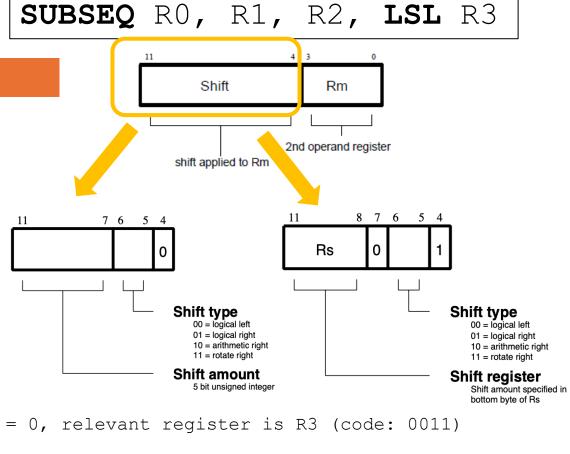
Second operand register (Rm) is R2 (code: 0010)

Shift register: the 4th bit = 1 and the 7th bit = 0, relevant register is R3 (code: 0011)

Shift type is LSL (code: 00)

Operand 2 = Shift register + 7^{th} + Shift type + 4^{th} + Second operand register = 0011 0 00 1 0010 = 0011 0001 0010

Cond	00	I	OpCode	S	Rn	Rd	Operand 2
0000	00	\cap	0010	1	0001	0000	0011 0001 0010





- Instruction Encoding Operand 2
- Question:

What instruction the following machine code represents?

Cond	00	I	OpCode	s	Rn	Rd	Operand 2
1110	00	0	0011	1	1010	1001	0000 0000 1101

Try it yourself ©



- Rotation and Shift
- > Definition and example

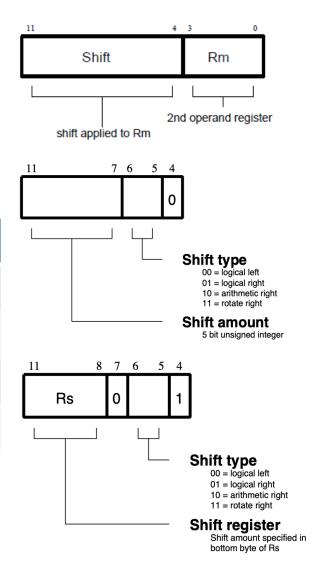
Туре	Name	What it does	Example
LSL	Logical Shift Left	Shifts bits left, fills 0s	0010 << 1 = 0100
LSR	Logical Shift Right	Shifts bits right, fills 0s	1000 >> 2 = 0010
ASR	Arithmetic Shift Right	Shifts right, fills with sign bit	1000 >> 2 = 1110 (if signed)
ROR	Rotate Right	Rotates bits around to front	1001 ROR 1 = 1100



- Rotation and Shift
- Binary Encoding (in Operand 2)

Type	Meaning	Bits 6-5
LSL	Logical Shift Left	00
LSR	Logical Shift Right	01
ASR	Arithmetic Shift Right	10
ROR	Rotate Right	11

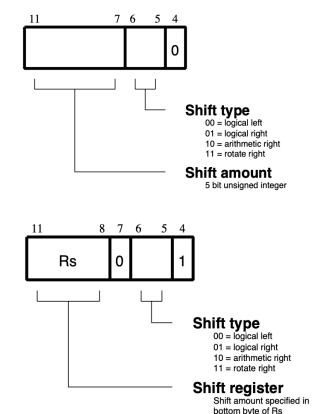
• Bits 11-7: shift amout (0-31)





- Rotation and Shift
- Binary Encoding (in Operand 2)
- Bit 4 = 0:
 - shift amout is immediate: 5-bit unsigned integer
- Bit 4 = 1:
 - shift amout is in a register: shift amout secified in bottom byte of Rs
- When I = 1 (immediate):
 - Oeprand 2 = {rotate_imm (4 bits), imm8 (8 bits)}
 - The real value = ROR(imm8, rotate_imm x 2)







Allows many 32-bit constants to be encoded with just 12 bits!



- Rotation and Shift
- > Take-away information

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Before End: Assessment Explaination



Assessment 1&2

- Assessment 1 & 2 will be combined into one and take 30% of the module mark
- On-site online assessment that happens during Tutorial → You MUST come to the tutorial in person
- You need to complete this assignment individually
- Photography/Al agencies are not allowed





- Questions are exacted from lectures and labs (about 6 questions)
- Scheduled during a specific time of your tutorial sessions (about 40 minutes)
- Bring your own LAPTOPS with FULL batteries (not tablet, not cell phone)
- Missing assessment = missing 30% of the module mark
- NO RESIT OF ASSESSMENT





