

ARMv8-A72: ARM64 Architecture

Programming for Raspberry Pi 4B

v 1.0

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Changelog



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1 ARM64 Architecture

ARM64 (AArch64) is a 64-bit architecture developed by ARM Holdings, widely used in modern mobile devices and servers.

ARM64 offers a significant register file structure, with 31 general-purpose registers and special-purpose registers such as the Program Counter (PC) and Stack Pointer (SP). These registers provide flexibility for performing low-level operations efficiently.

Key Features

- 64-bit general-purpose registers (X0-X30).
- Special-purpose registers for the stack, program control, and more.
- Optimized function calling convention.

1.1 Memory Layout in Computer Systems

In modern computer systems, memory is divided into several distinct segments that each serve a different purpose in the execution of a program. These segments include the stack, heap, and various regions that hold code and data. This section provides a mathematical description of the layout of memory in a typical system and explains the role of each memory segment.

1.1.1 Memory Segments

A typical program is divided into the following memory segments:

Stack	Used for local variables, function call management, and control flow.
Stack	It grows downward in memory.
Неар	Used for dynamic memory allocation (e.g., via malloc).
ΠΕαρ	It grows upward in memory.
.text Stores the program's executable instructions (machine code	
.data Stores initialized global and static variables.	
.bss	Stores uninitialized global and static variables.
.uss	This segment is initialized to zero at runtime.
.rodata	Stores read-only data, such as string literals or constant variables.



- **Stack:** Used for local variables, function call management, and control flow. It grows downward in memory.
- **Heap:** Used for dynamic memory allocation (e.g., via malloc). It grows upward in memory.
- .text: Stores the program's executable instructions (machine code).
- .data: Stores initialized global and static variables.
- .bss: Stores uninitialized global and static variables. This segment is initialized to zero at runtime.
- .rodata: Stores read-only data, such as string literals or constant variables.

The memory layout in a typical process can be visualized as:

Higher Memory Addresses Grows Down Heap (grows up) Uninitialized Data (.bss) Initialized Data (.data) Read-Only Data (.rodata) Program Code (.text)

Lower Memory Addresses



1.2 Performance Metrics and Benchmarks

A computer user focuses on minimizing response time (or **execution time**), while a warehouse-scale operator aims to maximize throughput, the total work completed in a given period.¹

We want to relate the performance of two different computers, say, X and Y. For the phase

"X is faster than Y".

we can define it in terms of execution times: let

- T_X denote the execution time of computer X,
- T_Y denote the execution time of computer Y.

If *X* is faster than *Y*, then:

$$T_X < T_Y$$

This inequality means that the time required for X to complete the task is less than the time required for Y.

In particular, "X is n times faster than Y" means that

$$\frac{\mathsf{Execution}\,\mathsf{Time}_Y}{\mathsf{Execution}\,\mathsf{Time}_X} = n.$$

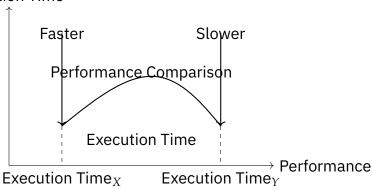
Since execution time is the reciprocal of performance, the following relationship holds:

$$n = \frac{\mathsf{Execution}\,\mathsf{Time}_Y}{\mathsf{Execution}\,\mathsf{Time}_X} = \frac{1/\mathsf{Performance}_Y}{1/\mathsf{Performance}_X} = \frac{\mathsf{Performance}_X}{\mathsf{Performance}_Y}.$$
 where:

- n < 1: Computer X is 1/n times slower than Y. In other words, computer Y is 1/n times faster than computer X.

• n > 1: Computer X is n times faster than Y.

Execution Time



¹John L. Hennessy and David A. Patterson, Computer Architecture: A Quantitative Approach, 5th ed., Morgan Kaufmann, 2011.

² The computer X is 1.5 times faster than Y means

$$1.5 = \frac{\text{Execution Time}_{Y}}{\text{Execution Time}_{X}}.$$

If Execution $\mathsf{Time}_X = 10\mathsf{s}$ and Execution Time $_{\Upsilon} =$ 15s, TFAE:

- X is 1.5 times faster than γ
- Y is about 0.76 times slower than



1.2.1 Quantifying Performance

Understanding performance is crucial in evaluating computer systems. We use metrics such as **response time** (or *execution time*) and **throughput** to measure the efficiency of a system. The relationship between performance and execution time is inversely proportional:

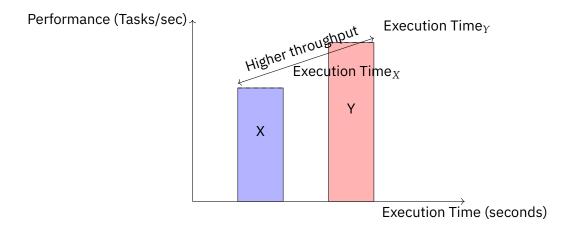
$$Performance = \frac{1}{\text{Execution Time}}$$

This relationship allows us to compare two systems, X and Y:

$$n = \frac{Performance_X}{Performance_Y} = \frac{Execution Time_Y}{Execution Time_X}$$

1.2.2 Illustrating Performance Comparison

The following diagram represents the comparison between two systems, X and Y, in terms of their execution time and throughput:



In this example:

- System X has a shorter execution time, indicating higher performance for a given task.
- System Y has a longer execution time, leading to lower performance compared to X.

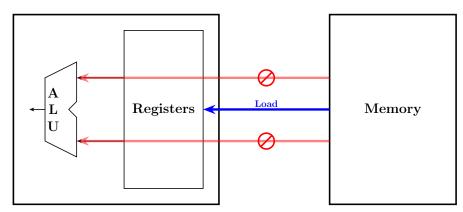


2 GNU Assembly Syntax (GAS)

GNU Assembly (GAS) follows the AT&T syntax conventions, which differ in operand order and notation from Intel syntax. Below is a structured overview of GAS syntax components and rules.

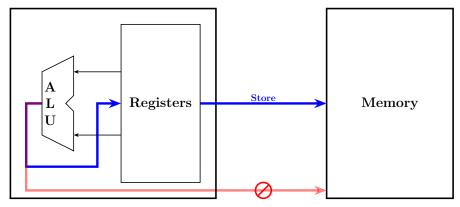


3 Load, Store and Branch Instructions



Processor Core

Figure 1: Loading Data from Memory



Processor Core

Figure 2: Storing Data to Memory

3.1 CPU components and Data paths

3.2 AArch64 User Registers

- General purpose registers
- Frame pointer
- PSTATE register
 - Negative
 - Zero
 - Carry
 - oVerflow
- Link register



- Stack pointer
- Zero register
- Program counter

3.3 Instruction Components



3.3.1 Setting and using condition flags

Example 1.

Table 1: Operation Examples

Operation	Result	N	Z	С	V
0x70000000 + 0x70000000	0xE0000000	1	0	0	1
0x80000000 + 0x80000000	0x00000000	0	1	1	1
0x90000000 + 0x90000000	0x30000000	0	0	1	1
0x00001234 - 0x00001000	0x00000234	0	0	1	0
Oxfffffff - OxfffffffC	0x00000003	0	0	1	0
0x80000005 - 0x80000004	0x00000001	0	0	1	0
0x70000000 - 0xF0000000	0x80000000	1	0	0	1
0xA0000000 - 0xA0000000	0x00000000	0	1	1	0

Let

$$a = a_{31}a_{30} \cdots a_1 a_0 \in \mathbb{F}_2^{32}$$

$$b = b_{31}b_{30} \cdots b_1 b_0 \in \mathbb{F}_2^{32}$$

$$c = b_{31}c_{30} \cdots c_1 c_0 \in \mathbb{F}_2^{32},$$

where $c = a + b \mod 2^{32}$.

Table 2: Flag bits NZCV in PSTATE.

	Name	Logical Instruction	Arithmetic Instruction
N	(Negative)	No meaning	$N=c_{31}$
Z	(Zero)	Result is all zeroes	$Z = \bigoplus_{i=0}^{31} c_i = 0$
С	(Carry)	-	$Z = \bigoplus_{i=0}^{31} c_i = 0$
٧	(oVerflow)	-	$Z = \bigoplus_{i=0}^{31} c_i = 0$

3.3.2 Immediate Values

Terminology. An **immediate value** in assembly language is a *constant value* that is specified by the programmer.



Table 3: AArch64 condition modifiers.

Condition Code	Meaning	Condition Flags	Binary Encoding
EQ	Equal	Z = 1	0000
NE	Not Equal	z = 0	0001
HI	Unsigned Higher	$(\mathtt{C}=1) \wedge (\mathtt{Z}=0)$	1000

There are two ways that immediate values can be specified in GNU ARM assembly:

(Method 1) The first way is as a literal immediate value. This can be optionally prefixed with a pound sign for clarity:

#<immediate|symbol>

(Method 2) The second way is the

=<immediate|symbol>

syntax, which can only be used with the 'ldr' pseudo-instruction.

Table 4: Summary of Valid Immediate Values

Immediate Type	Bits	Description	Legal	Illegal
Arithmetic	12			
Logical	13			



3.3.3 Addressing Modes

Table 5: Load/Store Memory Addressing Modes

Name	Syntax	Range
Register Address	[Xn sp]	
Singed Immediate Offset	[Xn sp, #± <imm9>]</imm9>	$\left[-2^8,2^8\right)$
Unsinged Immediate Offset	[Xn sp, # <imm12>]</imm12>	[0,0x7ff8]
Pre-indexed Immediate Offset	[Xn sp, #± <imm9>]!</imm9>	$\left[-2^8,2^8\right)$
Post-indexed Immediate Offset	[Xn sp], #± <imm9></imm9>	$\left[-2^8,2^8\right)$
Register Offset	[Xn sp, Xm, (U S)XTW]	(or LSL #1-3)
Literal	label	± 1 MB
Pseudo Load	= <immediate symbol></immediate symbol>	64 bits

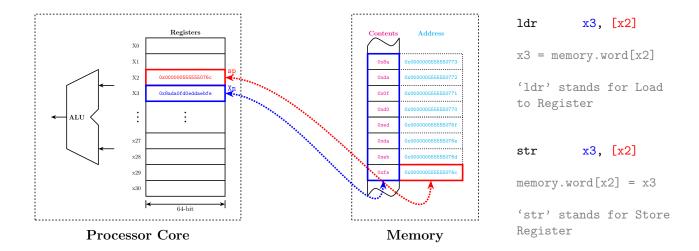
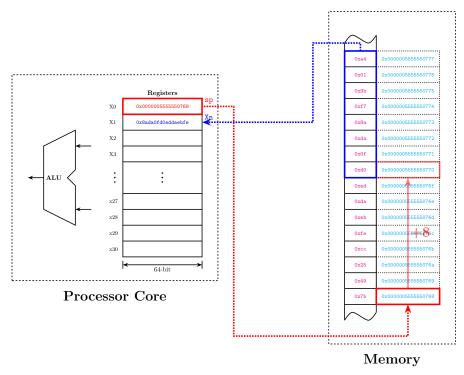


Figure 3: Access the memory address containing in the register ${\tt Xn}$ or ${\tt sp.}$

Remark. [Xn] or [sp] is just shorthand notation for [Xn, #00] or [sp, #00], respectively.





ldur x0, [x1, #0x08]
stur x0, [x1,
#-0x08]

Figure 4: Signed Immediate Offset.

Table 6: Pre-index, Post-index and Pre-index with Update

	ldr X1, [X0, #0x08]
Pre-index	X1 ← memory.word[X0 + 0x08]
	X0 remains unchanged
	ldr X1, [X0], #0x08
Post-index	X1 ← memory.word[X0]
	XO ← XO + OxO8
	ldr X1, [X0, #0x08]!
Pre-index with Update	X1 ← memory.word[X0 + 0x08]
	X0← X0 + 0x08



3.4 Load and Store Instructions

The load and store instructions allow the programmer to move data from memory to registers or from registers to memory. The load/store instructions can be grouped into the following types:

- single register,
- register pair,
- atomic.

3.4.1 Load/store single register

These instructions transfer a double-word(64-bit), single word(32-bit), half-word(16-bit), or byte(8-bit) from a register to memory or from memory to a register:

ldr Load Register

str Store Register

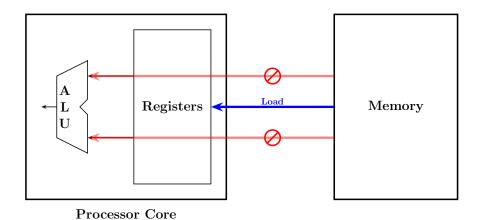


Figure 5: Loading Data from Memory

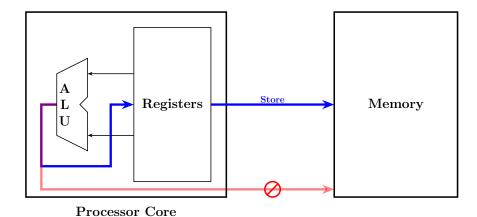


Figure 6: Storing Data to Memory



Syntax {<size>} Rd, <addr>

Operation

Name Effect 1dr Rd ← Mem[addr]		Effect	Description
		$\texttt{Rd} \leftarrow \texttt{Mem[addr]}$	Load register from memory at addr
	str	$\texttt{Mem[addr]} \leftarrow \texttt{Rd}$	Store register in memory at addr

Example.

```
// Load the word (4 byte) value
// from Mem[x4] into w8,
// and set the upper four bytes of x8to zero.
ldr w8, [x4]
```

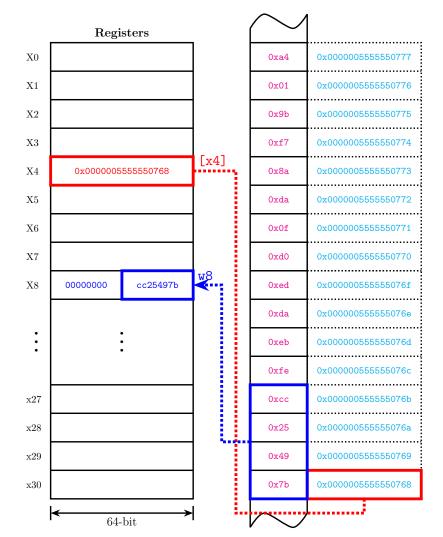


Figure 7: Load the word (4 byte) value from Mem [x4] into w8, and set the upper four bytes of x8 to zero.

- <op> is either ldr or str
- The optional <size> is one of:
 - b, h, sb, sh, sw
 - ъ: unsigned byte
 - h: unsigned half-word
 - sb: signed byte
 - sh: signed half-word
 - sw: signed word
- str cannot use a singed <size>. It also cannot use the literal addressing mode.



```
// Store the least-significant byte
// from register x12 into Mem[x2].
strb x12, [x2]
```

```
// Load the double-word (8 byte) value
// from Mem[x3 + 7] into x5. Then set x3 = x3 + 7:
ldr x5, [x3, #7]!
```

```
// Store the half-word (2 byte) value
// in w9 to Mem[x6]. Then set x6 = x6 + 7:
strh w9, [x6], #7
```

```
// Load the half-word value
// from Mem[x0 + 8] into x5 and sign extend it:
ldrsh x5, [x0, 8]
```

```
// Store the least significant byte
// in w1 at Mem[x9]:
strb w1, [x9]
```

3.4.2 Load/store single register (unscaled)

These instructions are the same as Load/Store Single Register, except that they only use an unscaled, signed addressing mode with an offset range of [-256, 256].

ldur Load Register (Unscaled)stur Store Register (Unscaled)

Syntax {<size>} Rd, [Xn, #imm9]

Operation

Name	Effect	Description
ldur	$\texttt{Rd} \leftarrow \texttt{Mem[addr]}$	Load register from memory at addr
stur	$\texttt{Mem[addr]} \leftarrow \texttt{Rd}$	Store register in memory at addr

Example.

```
// Load the byte value from Mem[x5 + 255].
// Sign extend it and store the value in x4:
ldursb x4, [x5, #255]
```

```
// Store the double-word value in x1 to Mem[x2 - 256]:
stur x1, [x2, #-256]
```

Programmers rarely need to write ldur or stur explicitly. The programmer can just use ldr or str, and the assembler will almost always automatically convert them to ldur or stur when appropriate.



3.4.3 Load/store pair

These instructions are used to store or load two registers at a time. This can be useful for moving registers onto the stack or for copying data. These two instructions are particularly useful for transferring data in a load-store architecture because each instruction can move twice as much information as the ldr and str instructions.

ldp Load Pairstp Store Pair

Syntax	<op>{<size>}</size></op>	Rt,	Rt2,	<addr></addr>
--------	--------------------------	-----	------	---------------

Operation

Name	Effect	Description	
		Load register pair	
ldp	$\texttt{Rt} \leftarrow \texttt{Mem[addr]}$	from memory at addr	
	$\texttt{Rt2} \leftarrow \texttt{Mem[addr + size(Rt)]}$	where sizeof(Rt) is	
		4 for Wt registers	
		and 8 for Xt registers	
stur	$\texttt{Mem[addr]} \leftarrow \texttt{Rd}$ Store register pa		
	$\texttt{Mem[addr + size(Rt)]} \leftarrow \texttt{Rt2}$	in memory at addr	

- <op> is either ldp or stp.
- The optional <size> is optionally sw for signed words.
- <addr> is 7 bits Preindexed, Post-indexed, or Signed immediate.
- Signed immediate Xt range: [-0x200, 0x1f8].
 Wt range: [-0x100, 0xfc].

Example.

```
// Load the byte value from Mem[x5 + 255].
// Sign extend it and store the value in x4:
ldursb x4, [x5, #255]
```

```
// Store the double-word value in x1 to Mem[x2 - 256]: stur x1, [x2, #-256]
```

3.4.4 Summary



3.5 Branch instructions

Branch instructions allow the programmer to change the address of the next instruction to be executed. They are used to implement loops, if-then structures, subroutines, and other flow control structures. There are five instructions related to branching:

- Branch,
- Branch to Register,
- Branch and Link (subroutine call),
- Compare and Branch, and
- Form program-counter-relative Address.

3.5.1 Branch



4 Data Processing and Other Instructions

4.1 Arithmetic Operations

```
#include <stdio.h>
static int x = 5;
static int y = 8;
int main(void) {
   int sum;
sum = x + y;
printf("The sum is %d\n",sum);
return 0;
}
```

```
.data
                  "The sum is %d\n"
2
  fmt:
        .asciz
3
         .algin
4
  x:
        .word
5
        .word
  у:
         .text
                 main, %function
        .type
        .global main
9
  main:
             x29, x30, [sp, #-16]! // Push FP, LR onto the stack
10
         // sum = x + y
11
        adr x14, x
                                    // Calculate address of x
12
                                    // Calculate address of y
13
         adr
               x15, y
         ldr x4, [x14]
                                    // Load x
14
                                    // Load y
15
         ldr
             x5, [x15]
16
         add
              x1, x4, x5
                                    // x1 = x4 + x5
17
        // printf("The sum is %d\n", sum)
adr x0, fmt // Calcula
18
19
             x0, fmt // Calculate address of fmt
              printf
                                 // Call the printf function
20
        bl
21
22
         // return 0
         mov w0, #0
23
              x29, x30, [sp], #16 // Pop FP and LR from the stack
25
                                     // Return from main
         ret
                 main,(. - main)
         .size
```

There are six basic arithmetic operations:

add Addition

adc Addition with Carry

sub Subtract

suc Subtraction with Carry

neg Negate

ngc Negate with Carry

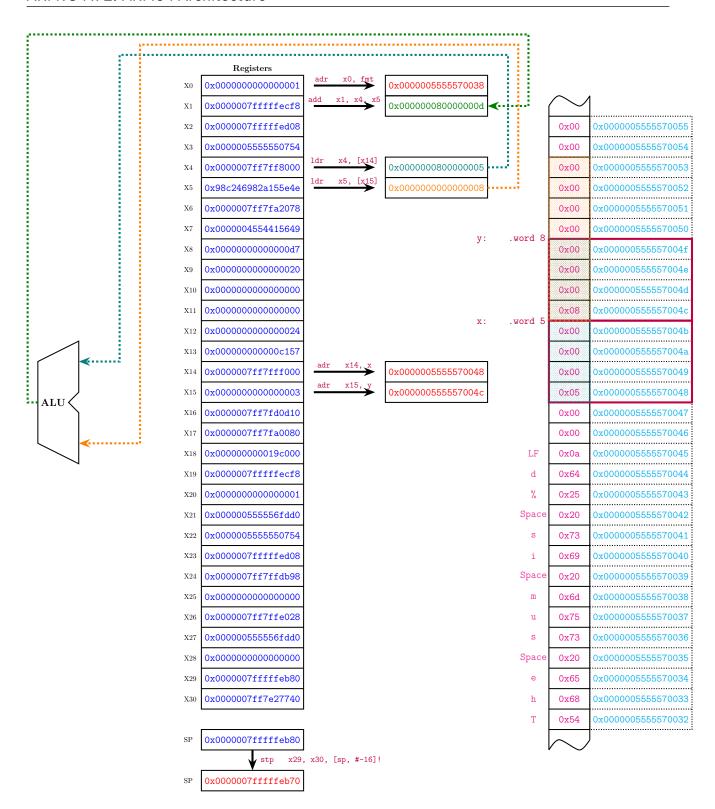
• Data Segment:

- * fmt holds "The sum is %d\n\0".
- * x contains the integer 5.
- * y contains the integer 8.

Stack Frame during main Execution:

- * Temporary space for x29 and x30.
- * Stack pointer adjusts as needed for the function call and return.







- **4.2 Shift Operations**
- 4.3 Multiply Operations with Overflow
- 4.4 Multiply Operations with 64-bit results
- 4.5 Multiply Operations with 128-bit results
- **4.6 Division Operations**
- **4.7 Comparison Operations**
- **4.8 Conditional Operations**



5 Structured Programming



6 Section Title

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³This is a sidenote. This template features a large margin specifically so you can put notes, figures, tables and other things into it as additional material to the main content in the text block.

6.1 Subsection Title

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⁴This sidenote has been pushed down the page manually with an optional parameter, otherwise it would be right under the one above.

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6.1.1 Subsubsection Title

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Section, subsection and subsubsection titles can span multiple lines, as shown here. Make sure to put a shorter version of these long titles in the optional parameter to the section commands so the title output to the table of contents is the short version.

8 Font Examples

8.1 Font Sizes

\tiny \scriptsize \footnotesize \small \normalsize

\large \Large \LARGE \huge \Huge

The default font size for the document is 12pt, represented by \normalsize. The standard LaTeX font size commands modify this to be smaller or larger as needed.



The sans family is the default, as is standard in the

business world. Use the serif family to accentuate

text, such as for quotations. The mono family is best used where it's important that all characters

are the same width, such as for numbers in a table

or for code.

8.2 Font Families

IBM Plex Sans Text

IBM Plex Serif Text

IBM Plex Mono Text

8.3 Font Weights

ExtraLight Light Normal SemiBold Bold

8.4 Condensed Fonts

Plex Sans Normal

Plex Sans Condensed

9 Quotations

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- John Smith, 1972

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Condensed fonts can be useful if horizontal space is at a premium. You might want to use the condensed font in a wide table.

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- John Smith. 1972



10 Table Examples

This statement automatically references the table below using its label: Table 8.

Table 8: Text block table caption.

Prospect	Industry	Revenue
Gerlach Inc	Business Development	\$3M
Doyle and Sons	Law	\$1M
Heathcote Group	Consulting	\$12M
Goyette Inc	Advertising	\$5M
Holzdeppe GmbH	Manufacturing	\$23M
Bienias AG	Accounting	\$2.5M

Table 7: Margin table caption.

Year	Qtr.	Perf.	
20XX	Q1	0.5%	
20XX	Q2	26.5%	
20XX	Q1	35.4%	
20XX	Q4	41.3%	

Table 9: Full width table caption.

#	Prospect	Industry	Revenue	Employees
1	Gerlach Inc	Business Development	\$3M	65
2	Doyle and Sons	Law	\$1M	15
3	Heathcote Group	Consulting	\$12M	250
4	Goyette Inc	Advertising	\$5M	100
5	Holzdeppe GmbH	Manufacturing	\$23M	75
6	Bienias AG	Accounting	\$2.5M	40

11 Figure Examples

This statement automatically references the figure below using its label: Figure 9.

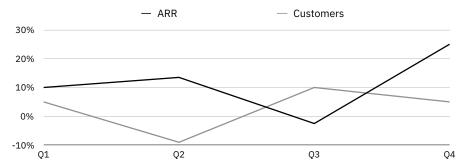


Figure 9: Text block figure caption.



Figure 8: Margin figure caption.



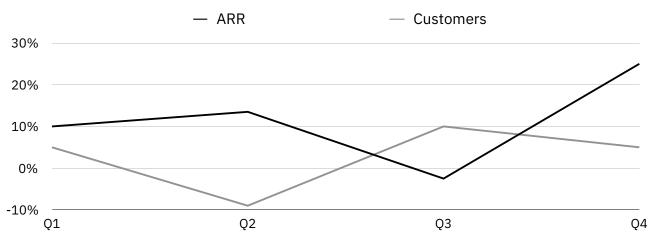


Figure 10: Full width figure caption.

12 List Examples

12.1 Bullet Point List

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- First bullet point item
 - First indented bullet point item
 - Second indented bullet point item
 - First second-level indented bullet point item
 - Second second-level indented bullet point item
 - Third indented bullet point item
- Second bullet point item
- Third bullet point item

Etiam vulputate arcu dignissim, finibus sem et, viverra nisl. Aenean luctus congue massa, ut laoreet metus ornare in. Nunc fermentum nisi imperdiet lectus tincidunt vestibulum at ac elit. Nulla mattis nisl eu malesuada suscipit.

12.2 Numbered List

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Praesent porttitor arcu luctus, imperdiet urna iaculis, mattis eros. Pellentesque iaculis odio vel nisl ullamcorper, nec faucibus ipsum molestie. Sed dictum nisl non aliquet porttitor.

Bullet point lists can also be created in the margin. For these, we can remove the usual left margin to increase the available horizontal space:

- Bullet item one.
- Bullet item two.
- Bullet item three.

Numbered lists can also be created in the margin. For these, we can remove the usual left margin to increase the available horizontal space:

- 1. Numbered item one.
- 2. Numbered item two.
- 3. Numbered item three.



- 1. First numbered item
 - a. First indented numbered item
 - b. Second indented numbered item
 - i. First second-level indented numbered item
 - ii. Second second-level indented numbered item
 - c. Third indented numbered item
- 2. Second numbered item
- 3. Third numbered item

Etiam vulputate arcu dignissim, finibus sem et, viverra nisl. Aenean luctus congue massa, ut laoreet metus ornare in. Nunc fermentum nisi imperdiet lectus tincidunt vestibulum at ac elit. Nulla mattis nisl eu malesuada suscipit.

12.3 Description List

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Item One Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Praesent porttitor arcu luctus, imperdiet urna iaculis, mattis eros. Pellentesque iaculis odio vel nisl ullamcorper, nec faucibus ipsum molestie.

Item Two Sed dictum nisl non aliquet porttitor.

Subitem Maecenas consectetur metus at tellus finibus condimentum. Proin arcu lectus, ultrices non tincidunt et, tincidunt ut quam. Integer luctus posuere est, non maximus ante dignissim quis.

Subsubitem Maecenas consectetur metus at tellus finibus condimentum. Proin arcu lectus, ultrices non tincidunt et, tincidunt ut quam. Integer luctus posuere est, non maximus ante dignissim quis.

Item Three Etiam vulputate arcu dignissim, finibus sem et, viverra nisl. Aenean luctus congue massa, ut laoreet metus ornare in. Nunc fermentum nisi imperdiet lectus tincidunt vestibulum at ac elit. Nulla mattis nisl eu malesuada suscipit.

Etiam vulputate arcu dignissim, finibus sem et, viverra nisl. Aenean luctus congue massa, ut laoreet metus ornare in. Description lists can also be created in the margin:

- **A1** Description item one.
- **B1** Description item two.
- **C1** Description item three.



13 Referencing Citations

This statement requires citation [Smith:2024jd].

This statement requires multiple citations [Smith:2024jd, Smith:2023qr].

This short citation is in the margin⁵.

This long citation is in the margin⁶.

This statement has an in-text citation: Smith:2024jd.

⁵Smith:2023qr

⁶Smith:2024jd

14 Link Examples

This is a URL link: DuckDuckGo.

This is a email link: example@example.com.

This is a monospaced URL link: https://duckduckgo.com.

Links can be clicked in the PDF to navigate to the linked website or email address.

15 Equation

$$\cos^3 \theta = \frac{1}{4} \cos \theta + \frac{3}{4} \cos 3\theta \tag{1}$$

This statement automatically references the equation above using its label: Equation 1.

16 International Support

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Plex is a very high quality typeface produced by IBM. It includes extensive international support and characters.

17 Displaying Code

The block below is a code listing. It displays code in an easy to use way with line numbers for quick reference to specific parts of the code.



```
1
2
3
4
5
    {
         "city": [
                 "id": 1,
"name": "Toronto",
"country": "Canada",
 6
7
                  "population": 6200000
            },
{
 8
9
                 "id": 2,
"name": "New York",
"country": "United States of America",
10
11
12
                  "population": 8800000
13
14
        ]
15
16
    }
```



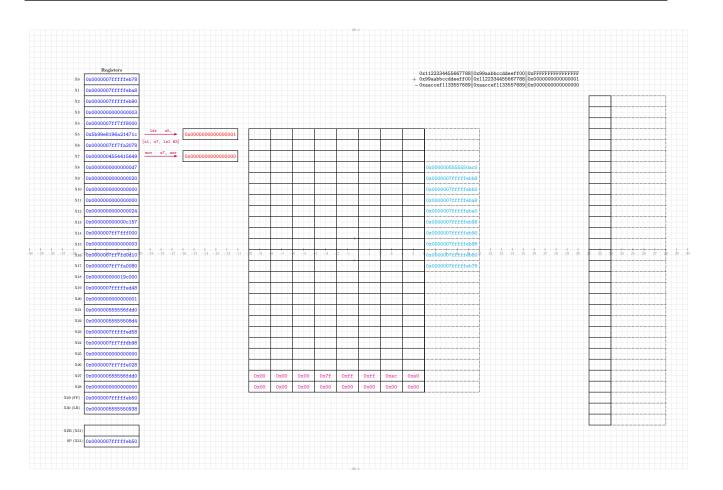


Appendices

Big Number Addition

```
\tt .global bn\_add\_asm
   .type bn_add_asm, %function
3
   /* void bn_add_asm(
4
           uint64_t* res,
           const uint64_t* op1,
6
           const uint64_t* op2,
           int32_t n);
9
      x0: res (Address)
       x1: op1 (Address)
10
      x2: op2 (Address)
11
12
      x3: n
13
       x4: *res (Contents)
      x5: *op1 (Contents)
14
15
      x6: *op2 (Contents)
      x7: counter */
16
17
  bn_add_asm:
                   w7, wzr
18
           mov
19
                   x5, [x1, x7, lsl #3]
           ldr
20
21
                   x6, [x2, x7, ls1 #3]
22
           adds
                  x4, x5, x6
23
           str
                    x4, [x0, x7, lsl #3]
25
  LOOP:
26
           ldr
                   x5, [x1, x7, lsl #3]
27
                   x6, [x2, x7, 1s1 #3]
x4, x5, x6
28
           ldr
29
           adcs
                    x4, [x0, x7, ls1 #3]
30
           str
                    w7, w7, #1
w3, w7
31
           add
32
           cmp
                    LOOP
33
           bgt
34
  END_LOOP:
35
                   w0, wzr, wzr
36
           adc
37
38
           ret
39
           .size bn_add_asm, (. - bn_add_asm)
```





A Big Nu

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B Appendix Section

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C Appendix Section

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