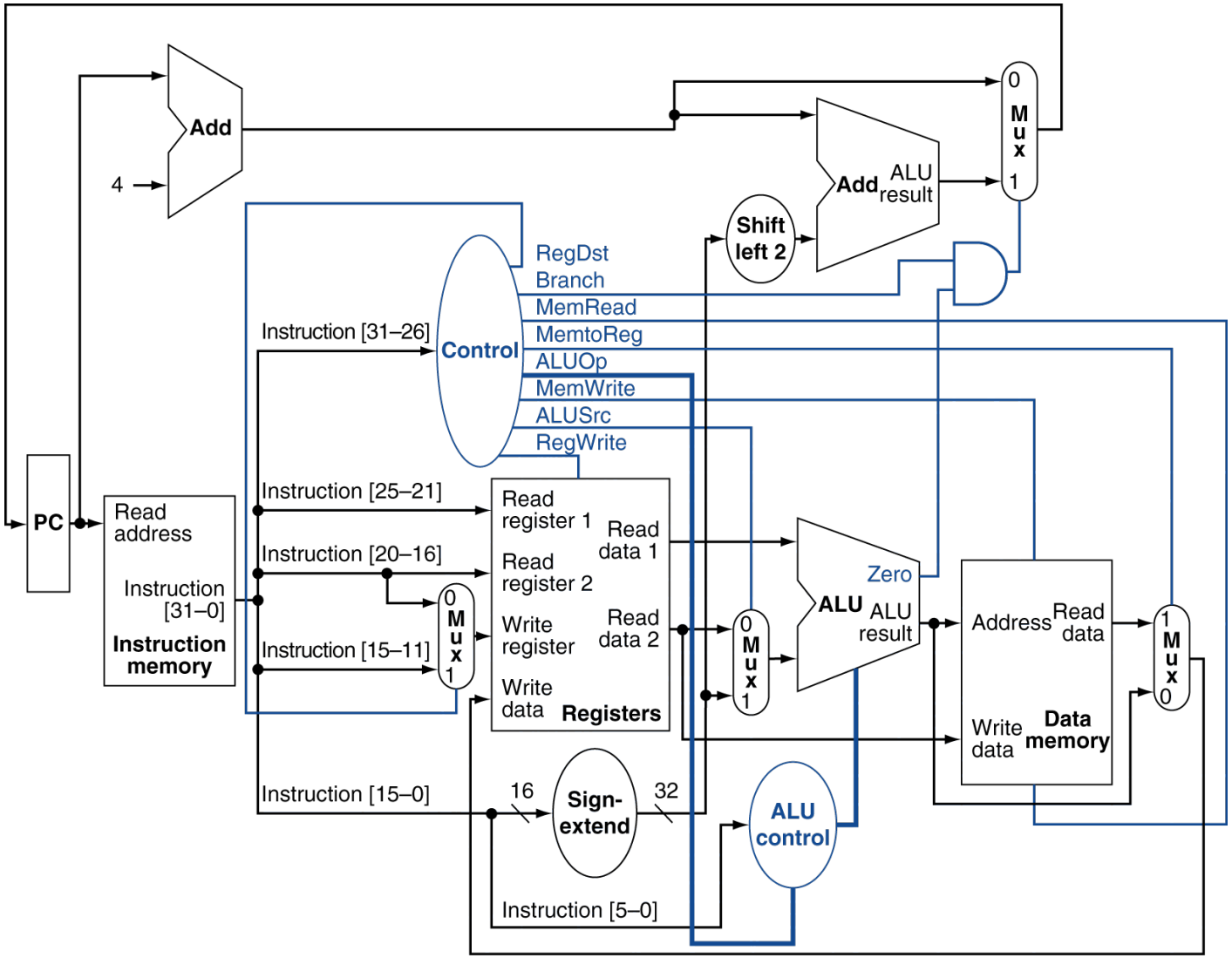
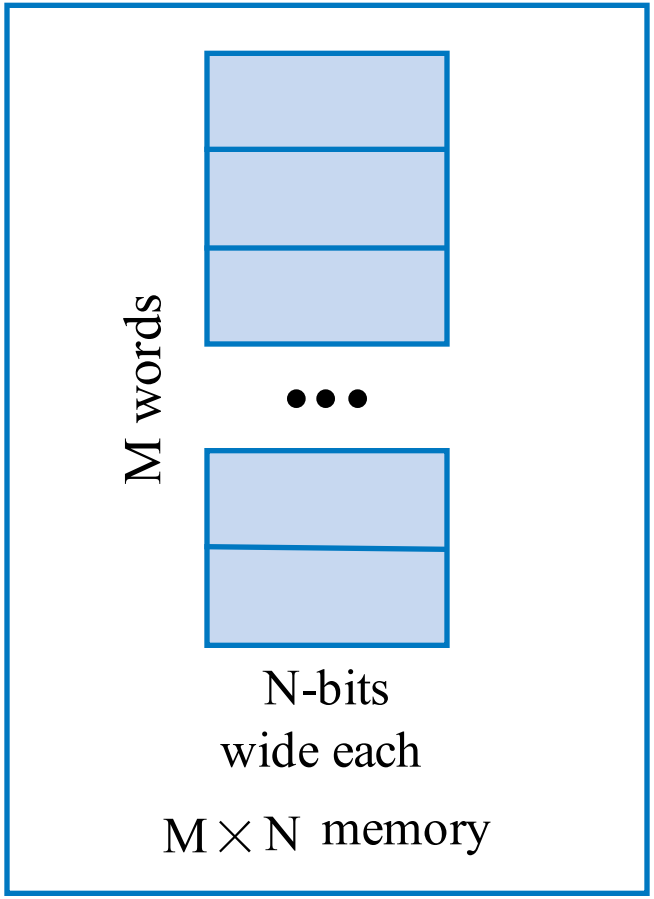
Topic 15
Memory

Big Picture - Single Cycle Computer



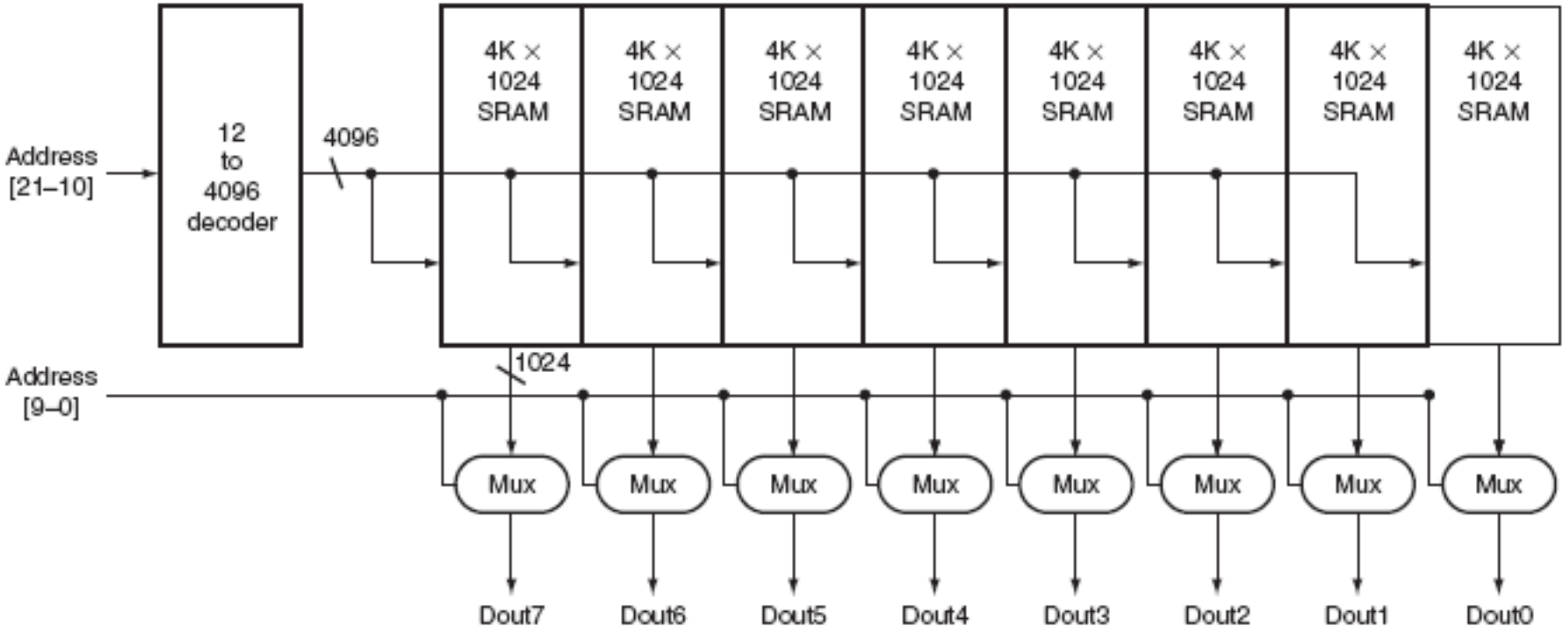
Memory Components

- ***MxN memory***
  - M words (row)
  - N bits (column) wide each
- Types of memory
  - RAM
  - ROM



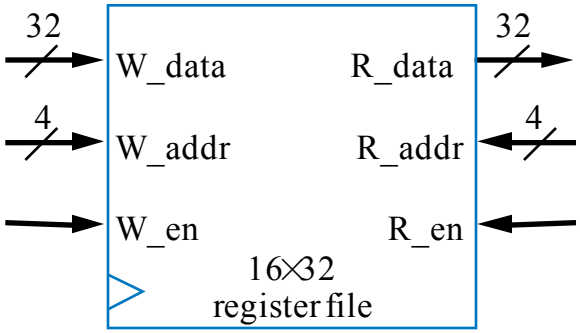
Two-Level Memory Addressing

- Typical memory organization

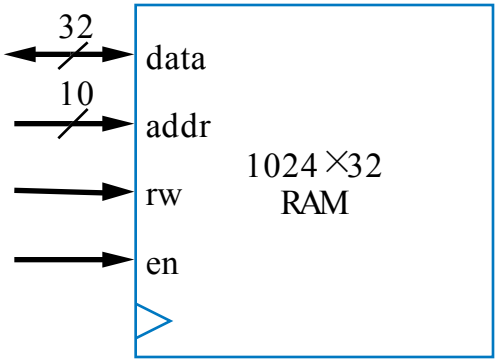


Random Access Memory (RAM)

- RAM – readable and writable memory
  - Traditionally: "random access memory"
  - Logically same as register file
    - Memory with address inputs, data inputs/outputs, and control
  - RAM vs. register file
    - RAM is typically larger
    - RAM typically stores bits more efficiently than flip flops
    - RAM typically implemented on a chip in a square rather than rectangular shape – keeps longest wires (hence delay) short

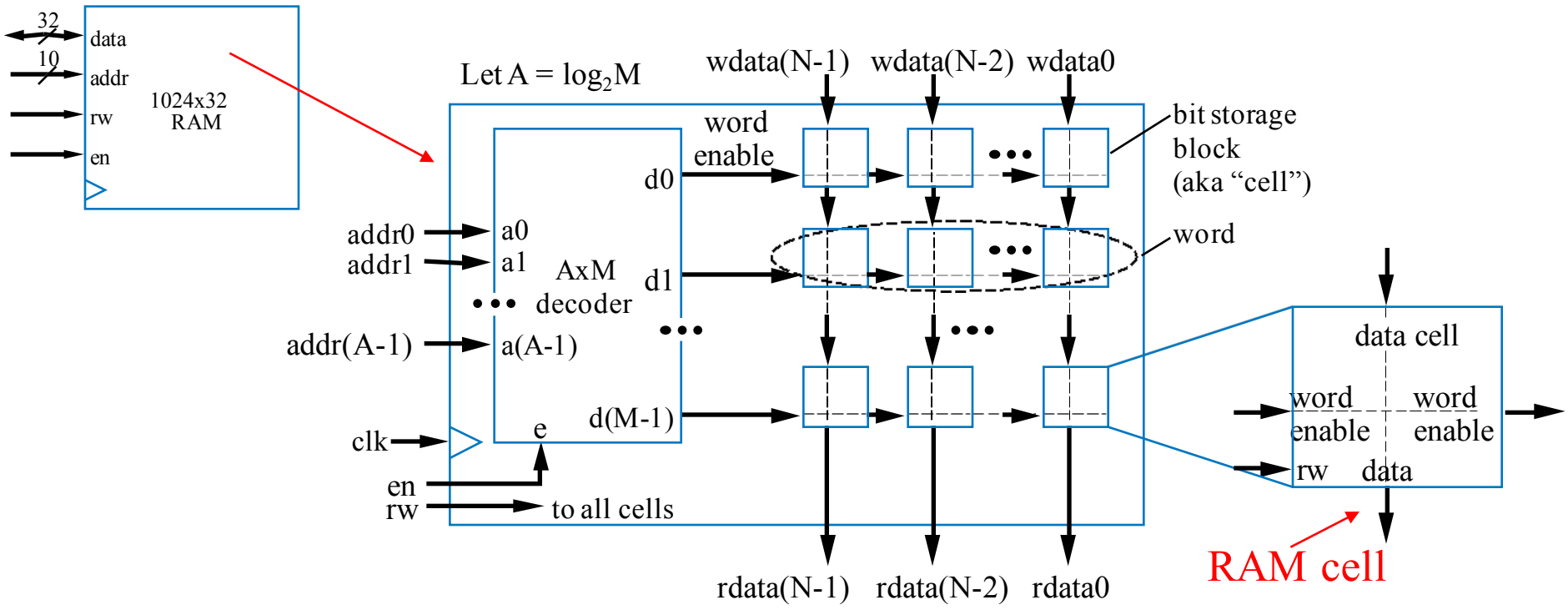


Register file



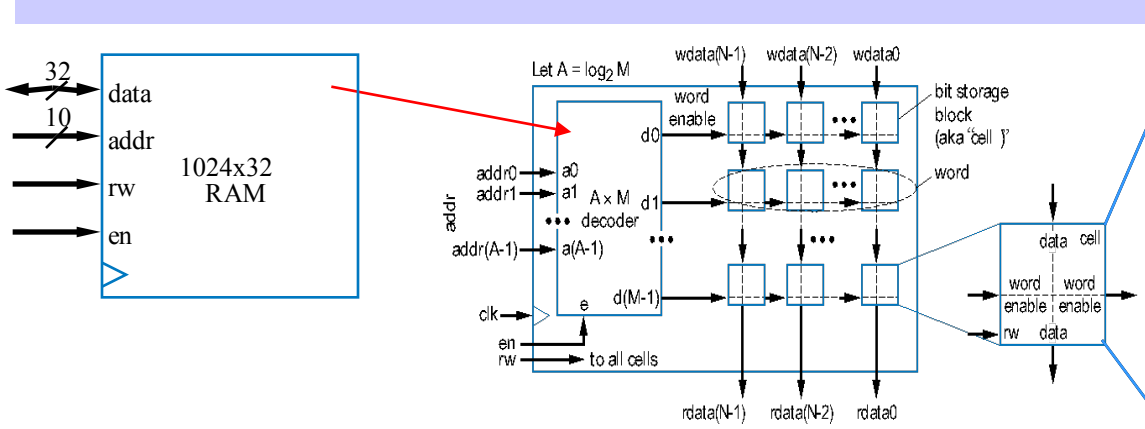
RAM block symbol

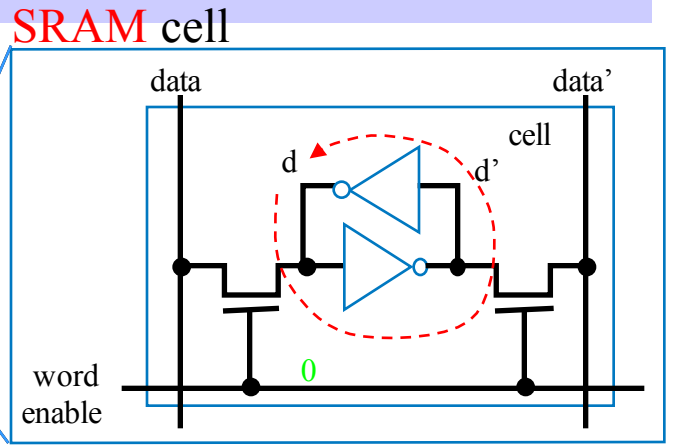
RAM Internal Structure



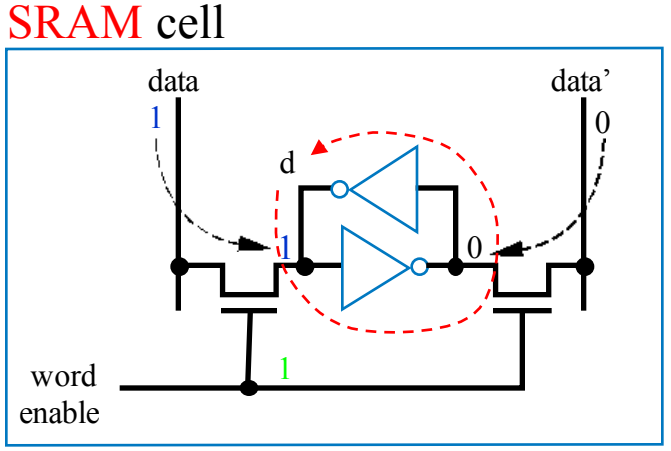
- Similar internal structure as register file
  - Decoder enables appropriate word based on address inputs
  - rw controls whether cell is written or read

Static RAM (SRAM)



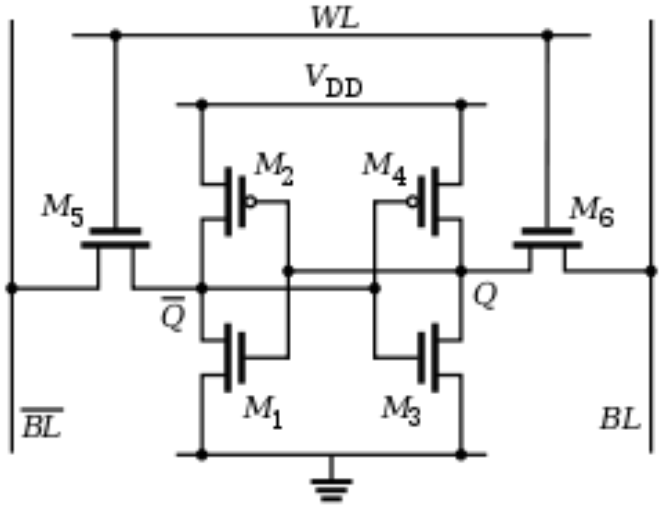


- "Static" RAM cell
  - 6 transistors (recall inverter is 2 transistors)
  - Writing this cell
    - *word enable* input comes from decoder
    - When 0, value *d* loops around inverters
      - That loop is where a bit stays stored
    - When 1, the *data* bit value enters the loop
      - *data* is the bit to be stored in this cell
      - *data'* enters on other side
      - Example shows a "1" being written into cell

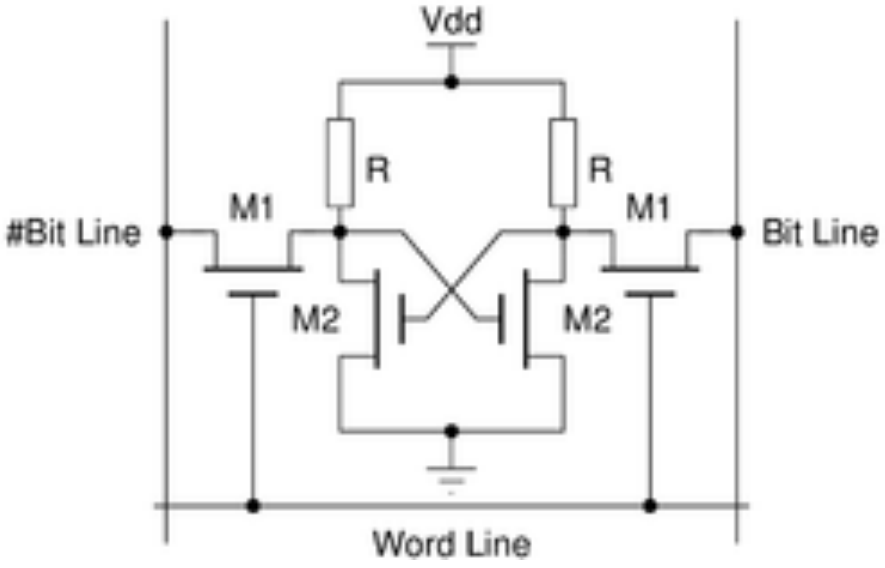


Static RAM (SRAM)

Implementation with 6 transistors

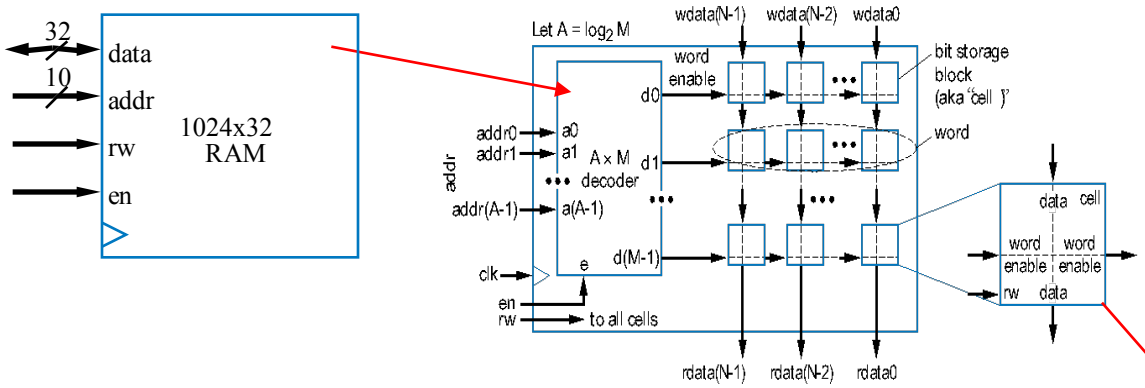


Implementation with 4 transistors

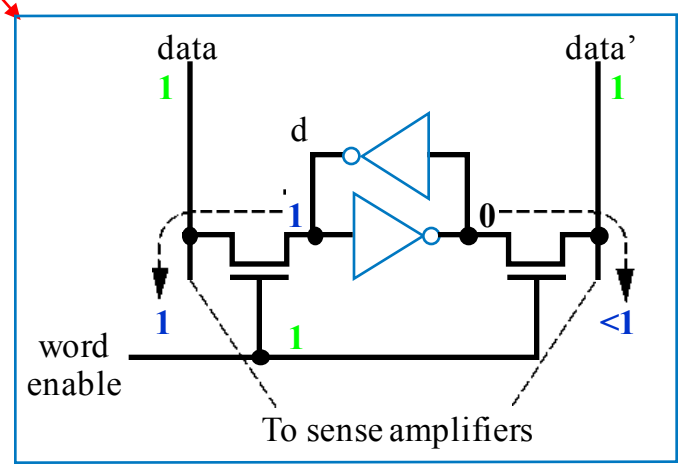


Source: wikipedia

Static RAM (SRAM)

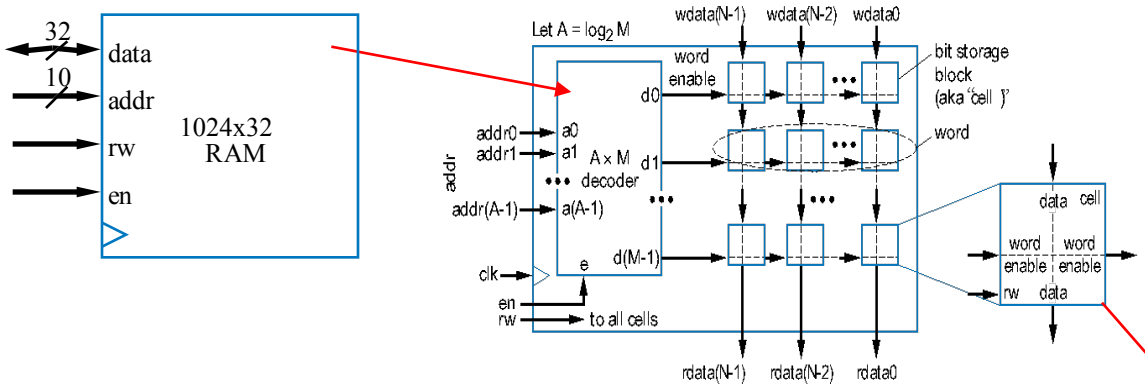


SRAM cell

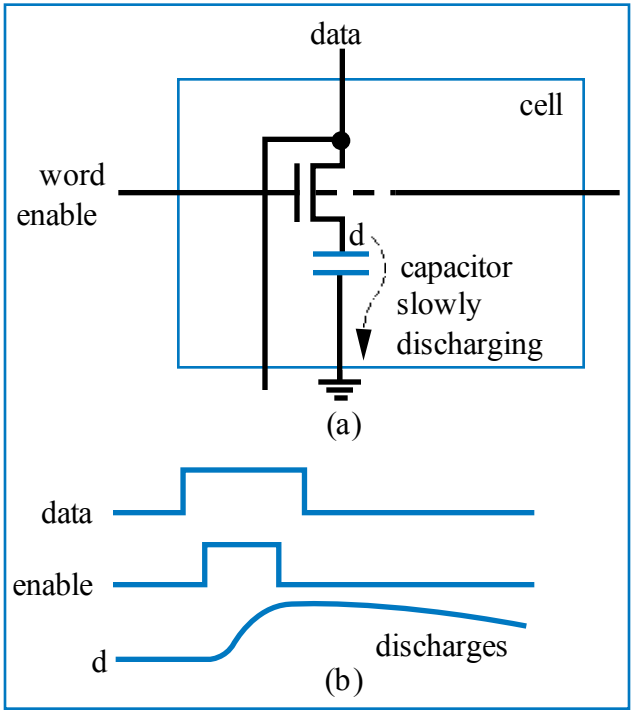


- "Static" RAM cell
  - Reading this cell
    - Somewhat trickier
    - When rw set to read, the RAM logic sets both *data* and *data'* to 1
    - The stored bit d will pull either the left line or the right line down slightly below 1
    - "Sense amplifiers" detect which side is slightly pulled down

Dynamic RAM (DRAM)



DRAM cell



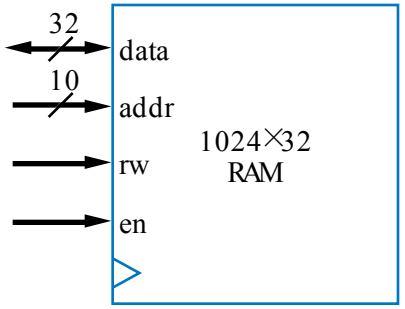
- "Dynamic" RAM cell
  - 1 transistor (rather than 6)
  - Relies on large capacitor to store bit
    - Write: Transistor conducts, data voltage level gets stored on top plate of capacitor
    - Read: sense amplifier on the data line
    - Problem: Capacitor discharges over time
      - Must "refresh" regularly, by reading *d* and then writing it right back

Comparing Memory Types

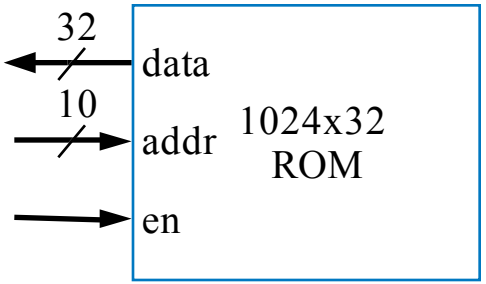
- Register file
  - Fastest
  - But small capacity and biggest size
- SRAM
  - Fast
  - More compact than register file
- DRAM
  - Slowest
    - And refreshing takes time
  - But very compact
- Use register file for small items, SRAM for large items, and DRAM for huge items
  - Note: DRAM's big capacitor requires a special chip design process, so DRAM is often a separate chip

Read-Only Memory – ROM

- Memory that can only be read from, not written to
  - Data lines are output only
  - No need for *rw* input
- Advantages over RAM
  - Compact: May be smaller
  - ***Nonvolatile***: Saves bits even if power supply is turned off
  - Faster Speed: especially than DRAM
  - Low power: Doesn't need power supply to save bits, so can extend battery life
- Choose ROM over RAM if stored data won't change (or won't change often)

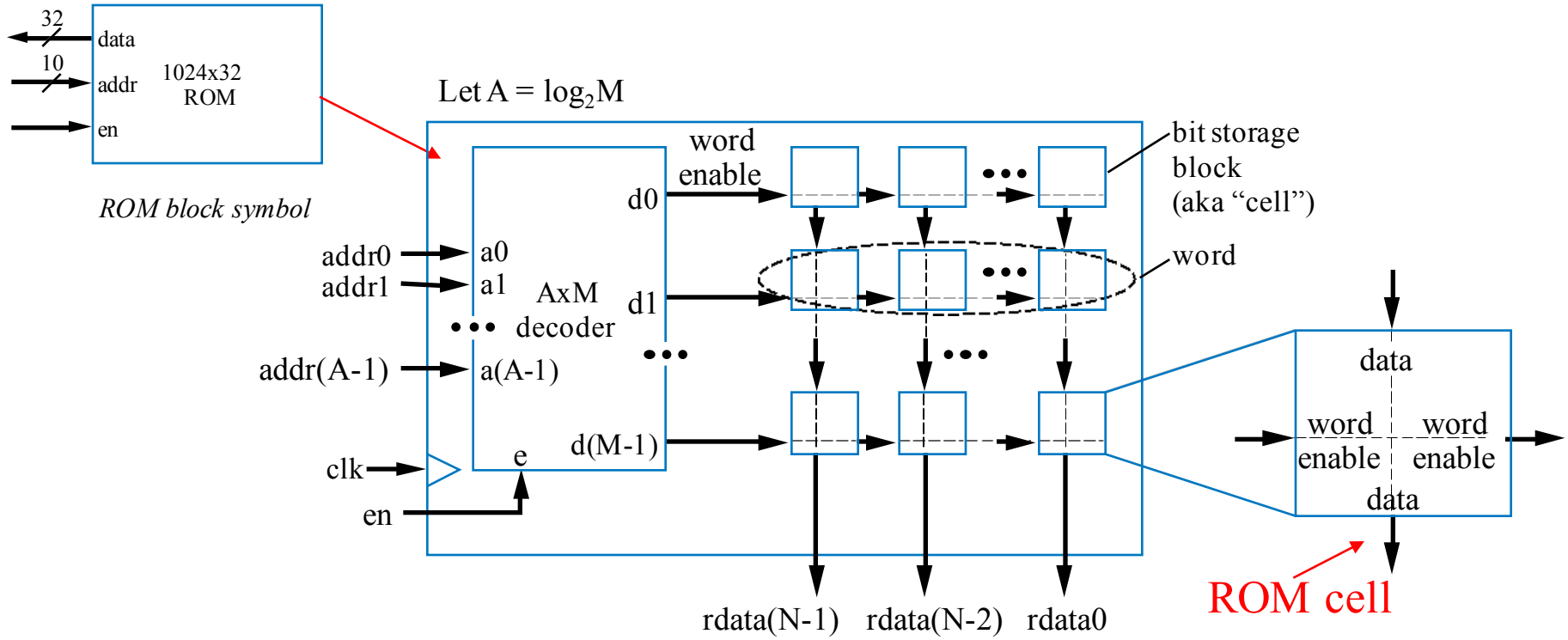


RAM block symbol



ROM block symbol

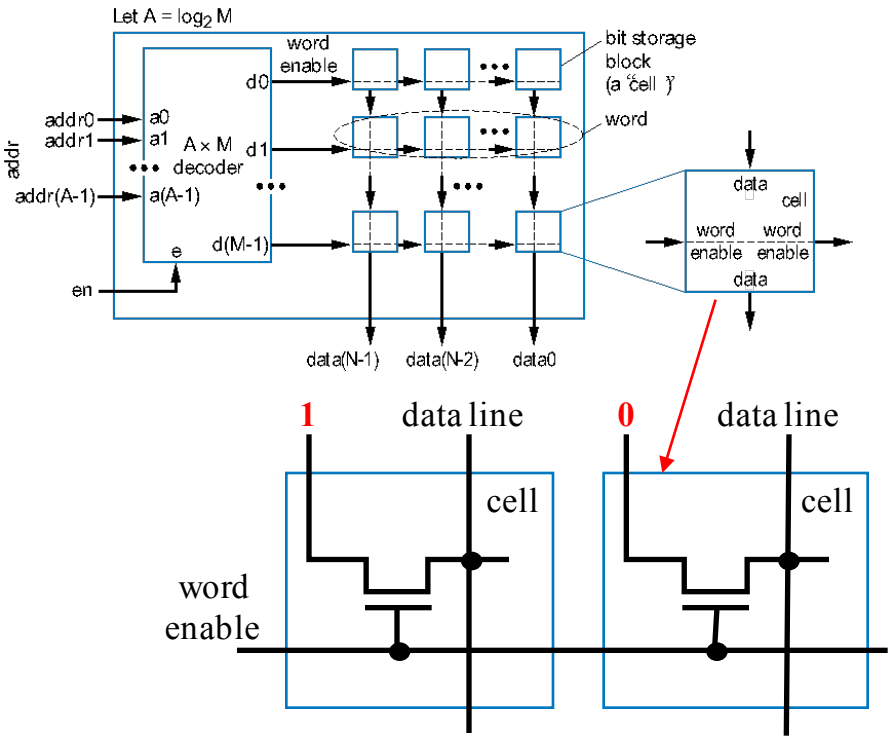
Read-Only Memory – ROM



- Internal logical structure similar to RAM, without the data input lines

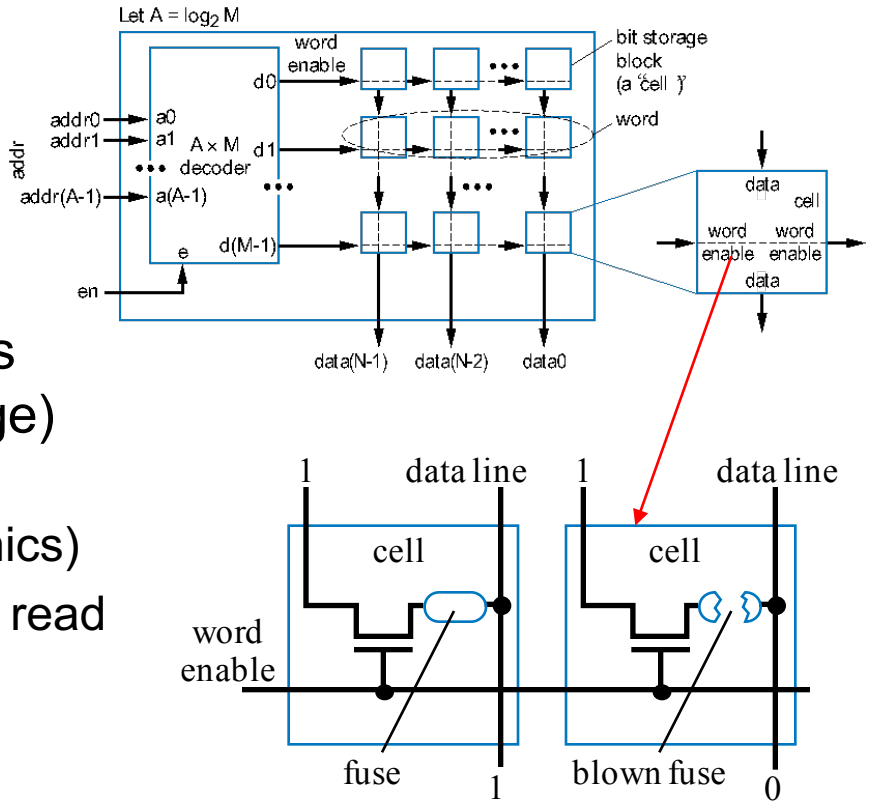
ROM Types

- How are bits stored in ROM?
  - Storing bits in a ROM known as *programming*
  - Several methods



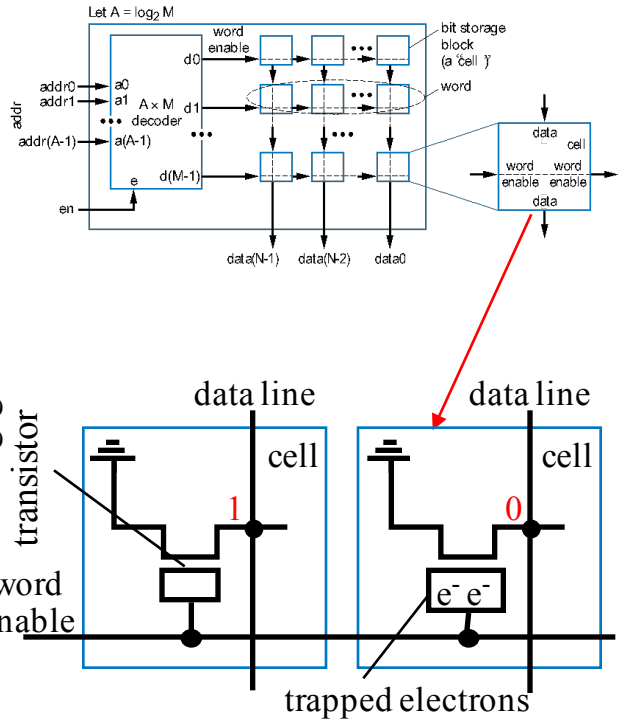
ROM Types

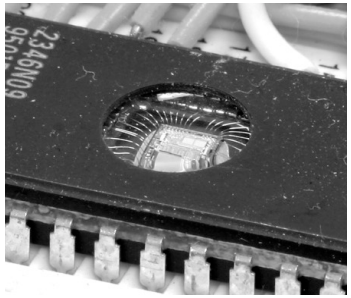
- ***Fuse-Based Programmable ROM***
  - Each cell has a fuse
  - A special device, known as a programmer, blows certain fuses (using higher-than-normal voltage)
    - Those cells will be read as 0s (involving some special electronics)
    - Cells with unblown fuses will be read as 1s
    - 2-bit word on right stores "10"
  - Also known as ***One-Time Programmable (OTP) ROM***



ROM Types

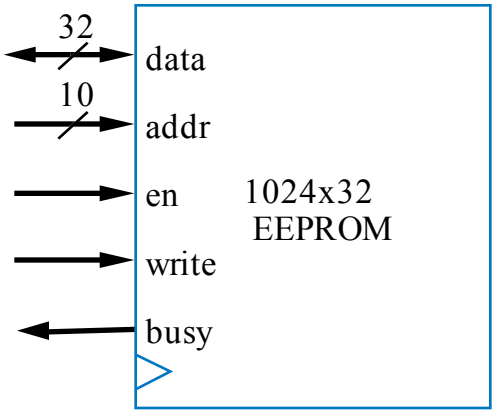
- ***Erasable Programmable ROM (EPROM)***
  - Uses "**floating-gate transistor**" in each cell
  - Special programmer device uses higher-than-normal voltage to cause electrons to *tunnel* into the gate
    - Electrons become trapped in the gate
    - Only done for cells that should store 0
    - Other cells (without electrons trapped in gate) will be 1
  - To erase, shed ultraviolet light onto chip
    - Gives trapped electrons energy to escape
    - Requires chip package to have window





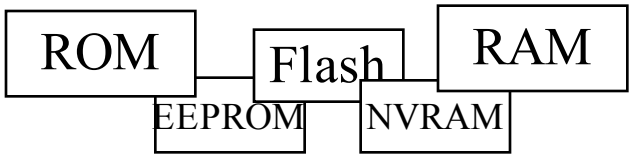
ROM Types

- ***Electronically-Erasable Programmable ROM (EEPROM)***
  - Similar to EPROM
  - But erasing done *electronically*, not using UV light
- ***Flash memory***
  - Like EEPROM, but all words (or large blocks of words) can be erased *simultaneously*
  - Become common in late 1990s
- Both types are in-system programmable
  - Can be programmed with new stored bits while in the system in which the ROM operates
    - Requires bi-directional data lines, and write control input
    - Also need ***busy*** output to indicate that erasing is in progress – erasing takes some time



Blurring of Distinction Between ROM and RAM

- Traditionally
  - RAM is readable and writable
  - ROM is read-only



- But some ROMs act almost like RAMs
  - EEPROM and Flash are in-system programmable
- And, some RAMs act almost like ROMs
  - Non-Volatile RAMs: Can save their data without the power supply
    - E.g.: Built-in battery, may work for up to 10 years
    - Another e.g.: Includes ROM backup for RAM – controller writes RAM contents to ROM before turning off
    - e.g., Magnetoresistive RAM
- Bottom line
  - Lot of choices available to designer, must find best fit with design goals