

Functions

“to get a deeper understanding of the language”



Deep C - a 3 day course
Jon Jagger & Olve Maudal

function declarations

- a function declaration promises that a function exists
- typically written in header files
- return type must be explicit

stdio.h

```
...  
FILE * fopen(const char * path, const char * mode);  
int fflush(FILE * stream);  
...  
void perror(const char * diagnostic);  
FILE * tmpfile(void);  
...
```

parameter names are optional but help readability



avoid bool parameters as they can be confusing

exercise

- what does this say?

```
int get_value();
```

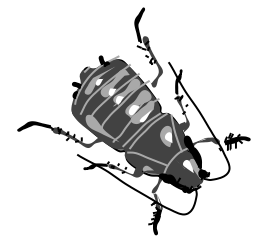
- try the following in your environment.

```
#include <stdio.h>

int get_value();

int main()
{
    printf("%d\n", get_value());
    printf("%d\n", get_value(42));
    printf("%d\n", get_value(42,24));
    return 0;
}

int get_value()
{
    return 42;
}
```



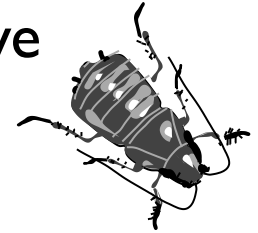
f() vs f(void)

if a function has no parameters say so explicitly with `void`

```
int rand();
```



provides no parameter information;
the definition of `rand` can have
any number of parameters!



```
int rand(void);
```



`rand` has no parameters;
the definition of `rand` must have
no parameters

Parameter-argument number and type mismatches are **not** caught with the -Wall option. Read -Wall as -Wmost

call.c

```
int func();  
int main(void)  
{  
    return func(42);  
}
```

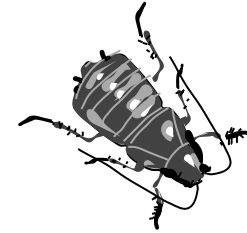
```
$ gcc -Wall call.c  
$
```

You need to use -Wstrict-prototypes

call.c

```
int func(void);  
int main(void)  
{  
    return func(42);  
}
```

```
$ gcc -Wall -Wstrict-prototypes call.c  
error: too many arguments to function 'func'  
$
```



function definitions

- a definition honors the declaration promise
- definitions are usually written in source files

stdio.c

```
#include <stdio.h>
...
FILE * fopen(const char * path, const char * mode)
{
    ...
}

int fflush(FILE * stream)
{
    ...
}

void perror(const char * message)
{
    ...
}
...
```

parameter names are required



parameter name can be different to that used in the function declaration

inline functions

- all declarations must be declared inline
- there must be a definition in the translation unit – a file-scope declaration with `extern` is a definition
- does not affect sequence point model – there is still a sequence point before a call to an inline function
- prefer inlining over macros

is_even.h

c99

```
#ifndef IS_EVEN_INCLUDED
#define IS_EVEN_INCLUDED

#include <stdbool.h>

static inline bool is_even(int value)
{
    return value % 2 == 0;
}

#endif
```

pass by pointer

- use a pointer to a non-const
- if the definition needs to change the target

delay.h

```
void delay( struct date * when );
```

the lack of a const here means
delay might change *when

```
#include "delay.h"
```

```
int main(void)  
{
```

```
    struct date due = { 2012, march, 28 };  
    delay(&due);
```

```
    ...
```

```
}
```

struct date * when = &due;



pass by value

changing the parameter does not change the argument

```
bool search(  
    const int values[], size_t from, size_t to,  
    int find)  
{  
    while (from != to && values[from] != find)  
    {  
        from++;  
    }  
    return from != to;  
}  
  
int main(void)  
{  
    ...  
    ... search(array, 0, size, 42);  
    ...  
}
```

size_t from = 0;

pass by value

- works for enums and structs too
- but not for arrays

date.h

```
struct date
{
    int year; int month; int day;
};

const char * day_name(struct date when);
```

```
#include "date.h"
```

```
int main(void)
{
    struct date today = { 2012, march, 28 };
    ...
    puts(day_name(today));

    assert(today.year == 2012);
    assert(today.month == march);
    assert(today.day == 28);
}
```

Wednesday

pass by pointer to const

- an efficient alternative to pass by copy
- except that the parameter can be null

date.h

```
const char * day_name(const struct date * when);
```



the const here promises that day_name wont change *when

```
#include "date.h"
```

```
int main(void)
```

```
{
```

```
    struct date today = { 2012, march, 28 };
```

```
    ...
```

```
    puts(day_name(&today));
```

```
    assert(today.year == 2012);
```

```
    assert(today.month == march);
```

```
    assert(today.day == 28);
```

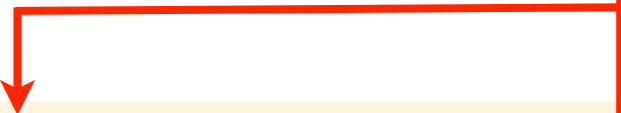
```
}
```

Wednesday


parameter order

- list output parameters first
- loosely mimics assignment

```
char * strcpy(char * dst, const char * src);
```



```
#include <string.h>
...
{
    const char * from = "Hello";
    char to[128];
    ...
    //      to = from ←
    strcpy(to , from);
}
```



you can list the type and its qualifiers in either order



```
const char * day_name(const struct date * at);
```

```
const char * day_name(struct date const * at);
```

The second style (const last) is common in C++ but not C.
The rationale for preferring the second style is that it allows you to read a declaration from right to left:

"at is a pointer to a const date"

register variables

- a speed optimization hint to the compiler
- compiler will use registers as best it can anyway
- effect is implementation defined
- register variables can't have their address taken
- don't use!

```
void send(register short * to,
          register short * from,
          register int count)
{
    register int n = (count + 7) / 8;
    switch (count % 8)
    {
        case 0 : do { *to++ = *from++;
        case 7 :      *to++ = *from++;
        case 6 :      *to++ = *from++;
        case 5 :      *to++ = *from++;
        case 4 :      *to++ = *from++;
        case 3 :      *to++ = *from++;
        case 2 :      *to++ = *from++;
        case 1 :      *to++ = *from++;
                    } while (--n > 0);
    }
}
```

??

local statics

- a local variable can have static storage class
- a local variable with 'infinite' lifetime
- best avoided – subtle and hurts thread safety
- but ok for naming magic numbers (as are enums)

```
int remembers(void)
{
    static int count = 0;
    return ++count;
}
```



```
void send(short * to, short * from, int count)
{
    static const int unrolled = 8;

    int n = (count + unrolled - 1) / unrolled;
    switch (count % unrolled)
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

__func__

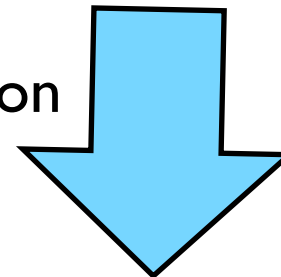
- the name of the current function is available
- via the reserved identifier __func__

```
void some_function(void)
{
    puts(__func__);
}
```

c99



as-if compiler translation



```
void some_function(void)
{
    static const char __func__[] =
        "some_function";
    puts(__func__);
}
```



... variadic functions

- functions with a variable no. of arguments
- helpers in `<stdarg.h>` provide type-unsafe access

```
#include <stdarg.h>

int my_printf(const char * format, ...)
{
    va_list args;
    va_start(args, format);
    for (size_t at = 0; format[at] != '\0'; at++)
    {
        switch (format[at])
        {
            case 'd': case 'i':
                print_int(va_arg(args, int)); break;
            case 'f': case 'F':
                print_double(va_arg(args, double)); break;
            ...
        }
    }
    va_end(args);
}
```

summary

don't use auto keyword

don't use register keyword

don't use static local variables unless const

don't use f(); declarations

do use f(void); in declarations

don't define data in a header file

do pass by copy for built in types and enum...

- they are small and they will stay small
- copying is supported at a low level, very fast
- sometimes for structs as a no-alias no-indirection optimization

do pass by plain pointer...

- when the function needs to change the argument

do pass by pointer to const (mimic pass by copy)

- for most structs
- they are not small and they only get bigger!
- very fast to pass, but be aware of cost of indirection