

Recursion

- Recursion the phenomenon of a definition or algorithm that uses itself in the definition or the algorithm
- A (mathematical) function is defined recursively if its definition consists of two parts:
 - One or more *base* (or *anchor* or *stopping*) case(s), in which the value(s) of the function is/are specified in terms of one or more values of the parameter(s)
 - An inductive or recursive step, in which the function's value for the current value of the parameter(s) is defined in terms of previously defined function values and/or parameter values
 - E.g. (factorial):

 Definition: $n! = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n = 0 \\ 1 \times 2 \times \dots \times n = n \times (n-1)! & \text{if } n > 0 \end{cases}$
 - Anchor or base or stopping case: 0! = 1
- A recursive algorithm implemented in $C++ \rightarrow$ recursive function
 - ◆ A function that *calls itself* (directly or indirectly)

Recursion

```
#include <iostream>
#include <cstdlib>
using namespace std;
int factorial(int n);
int main()
{
   int num;
   cout << "To compute n!, enter n (integer only): ";
   cin >> num;
   cout << num << "! = " << factorial(num) << endl;
   return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}</pre>
```

(continued)

```
Recursion

5! = 5 * 4! = 5 * 24 = 120

4! = 4 * 3! = 4 * 6 = 24

3! = 3 * 2! = 3 * 2 = 6

2! = 2 * 1! = 2 * 1 = 2

1! = 1 * 0! = 1 * 1 = 1

0! = 1
```



Recursion

requirements

Before attempting to solve a problem recursively, make sure the following four requirements are met:

- ◆ The problem must be *decomposable into sub-problems* that are themselves *simpler versions of the same problem* that you are trying to solve in the first place
- ◆ Base case(s) must exist
- ◆ As the problem gets smaller, it must *approach* (*get nearer to*) the *base case*(*s*)
- ◆ *Base case(s)* must eventually be *reached*

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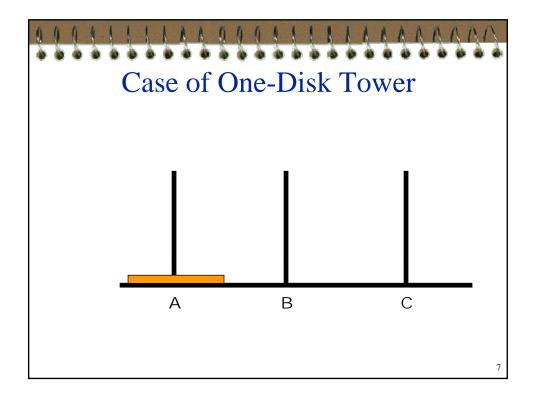
A Classic Ducklans in Decreeion

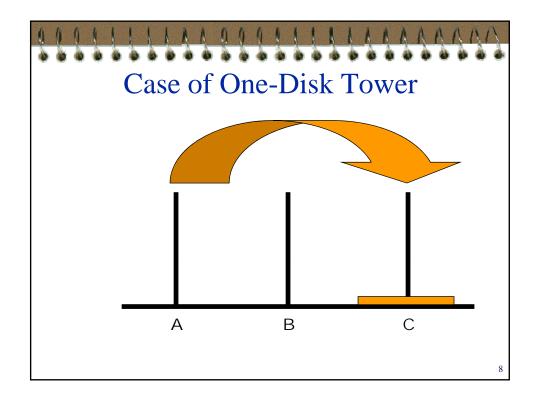
A Classic Problem in Recursion

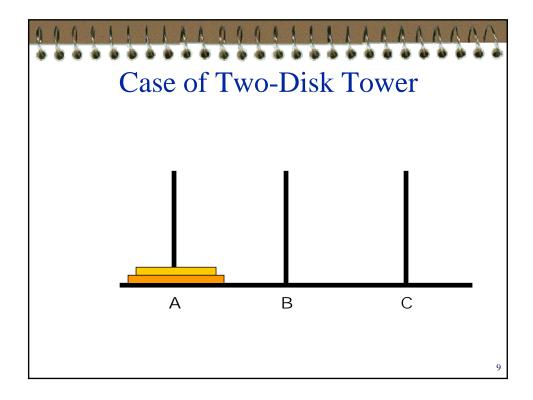
"The Towers of Hanoi"

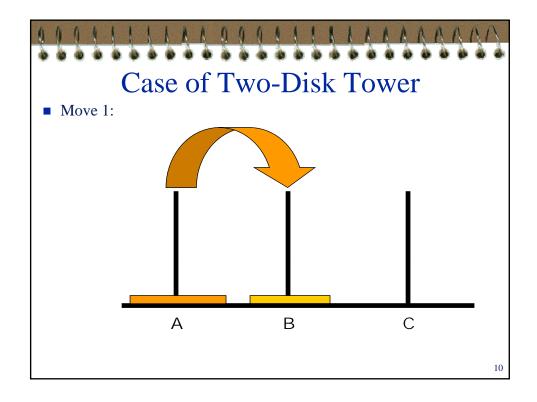
- A puzzle in which disks are moved from one peg to another according to the following set of rules:
 - When a disk is moved from one peg it must be placed on another
 - Only one disk may be moved at a time, and it must be the top disk on a peg
 - A larger disk may never be placed on top of a smaller disk
- Legend has it that...
 - Priests in the Temple of Bramah were given a puzzle consisting of a golden platform with 3 diamond needles, on which were placed 64 golden disks
 - The priests were to move one disk per day, following the above rules
 - When they had successfully completed their task, time would end

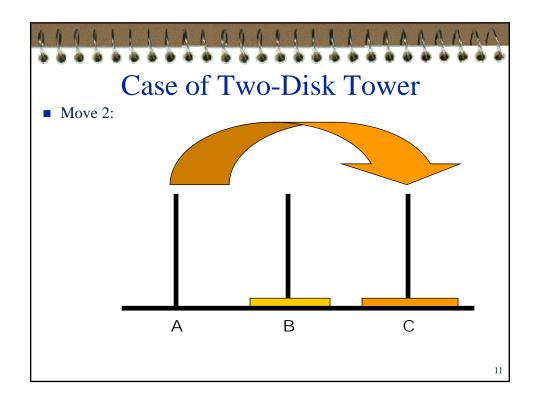


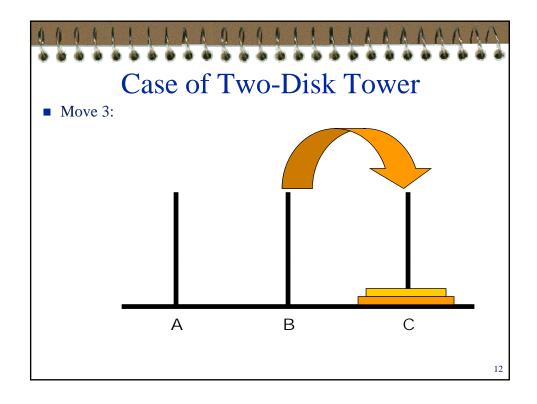


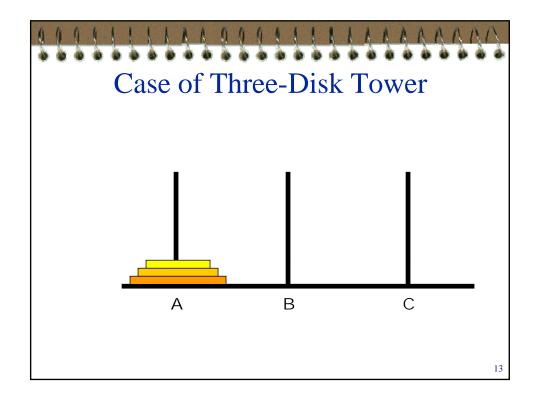


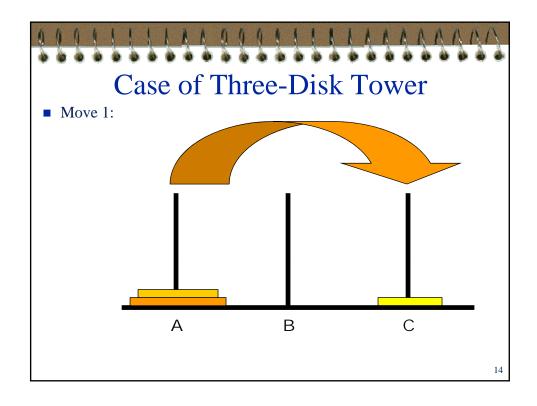


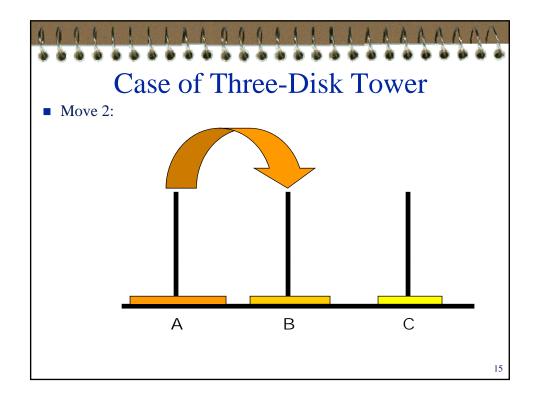


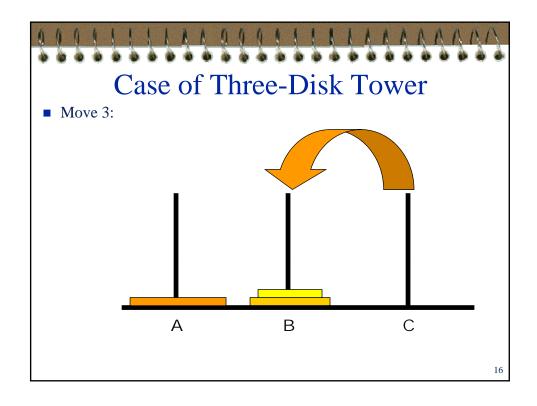


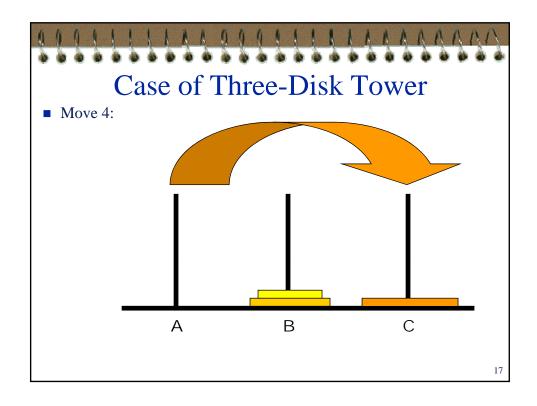


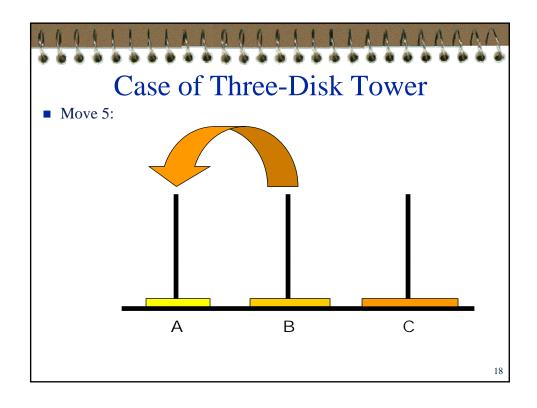


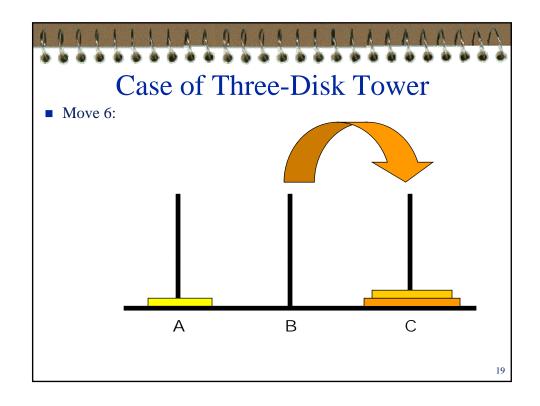


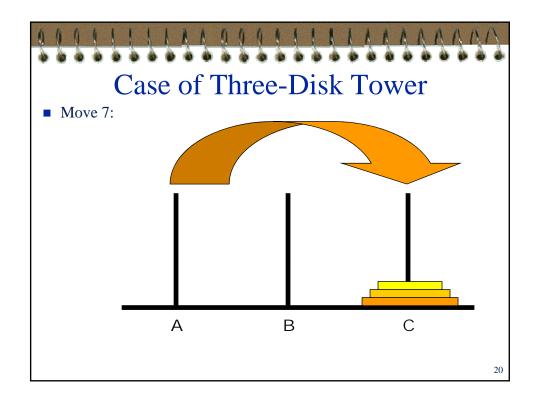














Simplifying the Case of Three-Disk Tower

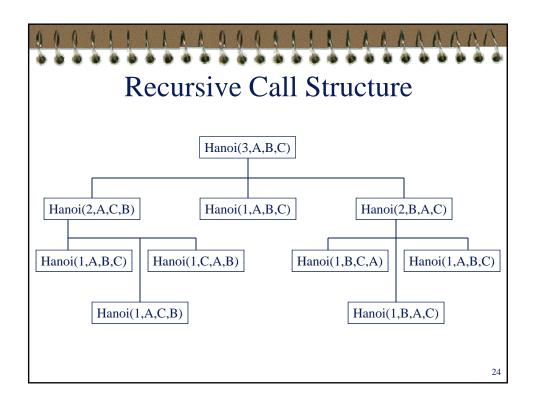
- *Step 1*
 - ♦ Move top 2 disks from A to B using C as auxiliary
- Step 2
 - Move the remaining largest disk from A to C
- *Step 3*
 - Move the 2 disks from B to C using A as auxiliary
- Thus, the problem for 3 disks involves
 - ◆ A recursive step → moving 2 disks
 - ◆ A stopping step (base case) → a one disk move

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Generalizing to Case of *n*-Disk Tower

- *Step 1*
 - \bullet Move top (n-1) disks from A to B using C as auxiliary
- *Step 2*
 - Move the remaining largest disk from A to C
- *Step 3*
 - ♦ Move the (*n*-1) disks from B to C using A as auxiliary
- Moving (*n*-1) disks from one tower to another is a smaller problem similar to the original problem that can be solved the same way → recursively





How Many Total Moves for Given *n*?

■ If we call Hanoi with ..., it takes ...

```
1 disk
2 disks
Hanoi(1, 'A', 'B', 'C') 1 move
Hanoi(2, 'A', 'B', 'C') 3 moves
3 disks
Hanoi(3, 'A', 'B', 'C') 7 moves
Hanoi(4, 'A', 'B', 'C') 15 moves
5 disks
Hanoi(5, 'A', 'B', 'C') 31 moves
.
```

.

20 disks Hanoi(20, 'A', 'B', 'C') 1,048,575 moves 21 disks Hanoi(21, 'A', 'B', 'C') 2,097,151 moves

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What Space and Time Costs?

- Space cost is O(n) and time cost is $O(2^n)$
- If our machine executes 400 million instructions/second, then ...

# of Disks	Execution Time (seconds)
20	.0025 second
30	2.5 seconds
40	42 minutes
50	29.2 days
60	80 years
70	80,000 years
80	83 million years

■ So, at 1 disk per day, it would take approximately 400,000,000*365.4*24*60*60 = 12,600,000,000,000,000 years or about a million times the current estimated age of the universe



Some Remarks about Preceding Analysis

- Time cost is $O(2^n)$
 - ♦ (About as bad as we have ever seen Big-O gets)
- Nevertheless, it gets the job done with a minimal amount of code

Recursion vs Iteration

- Iteration can be used in place of recursion
 - An iterative algorithm uses a *looping* (repetition, iteration) construct
 - ♦ A recursive algorithm uses a *branching* (function-call, invocation) construct
- Recursive solutions are usually *less efficient* than iterative solutions
 - In terms of both *time* and *space*
 - Mainly due to costly stack operations
- Recursive solutions bear the *risk of stack overflow*
 - Size of stack is finite
- Recursion can greatly *simplify the solution of certain problems*
 - Often resulting in concise and elegant algorithms (thus source code)

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Recursion

Tracing Exercise

Shown below are the definitions for functions **F1**, **F2** and **F3**:

```
void F1(int n)
                         void F2(int n)
                                                 void F3(int n)
   if (n>=1 \&\& n<= 8)
                            if (n>=1 && n<=8)
                                                    if (n>=1 && n<=8)
      cout << n;
                               F2(n - 1);
                                                       cout << n;
      F1(n - 1);
                               cout << n;
                                                       F3(n + 1);
                                                       cout << n;
      cout << "*":
                               cout << "*":
                                                       cout << "*";
```

- What output is produced by the function call **F1(3)**?
- What output is produced by the function call **F1(7)**?
- What output is produced by the function call **F2(3)**?
- What output is produced by the function call **F2(7)**?
- What output is produced by the function call **F3(3)**?
- What output is produced by the function call **F3(7)**?

Recursion **Coding Exercises** ■ Write a *recursive* function to find the sum 1 + 2 + 3 + ... + ngiven **n** (a nonzero, positive integer) ■ Write a *recursive* function to find the sum of the first **n** odd integers 1 + 3 + 5 + ... + (2*n - 1)given **n** (a nonzero, positive integer) • Given below is the body of the **main** function of a program that is to read in a line of text on a character-by-character basis and then display the characters in reverse order. It calls the function **Reverse** that uses *recursion* to carry out the reversal of the characters. Write the function definition for Reverse. int main() cout << "Enter a line of text below:" << endl;</pre> Reverse(); cout << endl;</pre> return EXIT_SUCCESS; }

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Textbook Readings

- Chapter 9
 - ♦ Section 9.1



Extras

- Lecture note from another of my (recent) classes
 - ◆CS 2318: Assembly Language

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MIPS32 AL – More On Functions (quick review on recursion)

- Toward a general "definition" of recursion:
 - A term used to describe the...
 - characteristic feature of a method of dealing with a subject... whereby...
 - part of the method involves other subjects of the same kind as the subject under consideration
- Examples of "dealing with a subject" *recursively*:
 - Defining a *tree* in terms of (*sub-*)*trees*
 - ◆ Evaluating n! using (n 1)!, (n 2)!, ...
 - ♦ Calling a function that's an instance of the one being implemented



MIPS32 AL – More On Functions (quick review on recursion)

- An important role played by recursion in computer science:
 - (recall that computer science is about *problem solving*)
 - Divide-and-conquer problem-solving strategy
 - Solve given problem by solving smaller problems of the same type
- C++ implementation (as function) of associated algorithm:
 - \bullet Function body has call(s) to same function \rightarrow recursive function
- Recursive function is usually *less efficient* (resource-wise)
 - ◆ Compared to it's *iterative* counterpart
 - (any difficulties involved in obtaining the iterative version aside)
 - Due to overhead associated with function calls
- Recursion indispensable for certain important problems
 - (e.g.: traversing/processing non-linear data structures like trees)
 - Mightily difficult (if not impossible) to deal with iteratively
 - ◆ Where recursion finds its niche

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MIPS32 AL – More On Functions (quick review on recursion)

- For recursion to be useful/successful problem-solving tool, insofar as it means using the *divide-and-conquer* strategy, certain conditions must apply:
 - Problem is decomposable into *smaller problems* of the *same type*
 - ◆ At least a *base case* exists
 - Also called anchor case, stopping case, ...
 - ◆ Each recursive step *makes progress* toward a base case
 - ◆ Base case(s) will eventually be reached
- Fatal error can result if method is not properly applied
 - ♦ Infinite recursion
 - ◆ Stack overflow



MIPS32 AL – More On Functions (quick review on recursion)

- Main hurdle students face when applying recursion:
 - Express problem in terms of smaller problems of the same type
- Key to success:
 - Think divide-and-conquer
 - Do only a small part yourself
 - ◆ Have faith on others to (together) do the rest
- A simple problem we'll solve/implement recursively
 - Sum numbers from 1 to N (for $N \ge 1$)
- 3 other relatively simple problems (for practice):
 - Flip contents of an array: {1, 2, 3, 4, 5} becomes {5, 4, 3, 2, 1}
 - ◆ Search if an array contains a value that matches a given value
 - Determine if an array contains any duplicates
- (You wish they were always so simple!)

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MIPS32 AL – More On Functions (a recursive function example)

■ Sum from 1 to N (for $N \ge 1$)

```
int SumToN(int N) // N >= 1 & not too big
{
   if (N < 2)
      return 1;
   else
      return N + SumToN(N - 1);
}</pre>
```

- **SumToN** is both caller and callee
- How should we implement in MIPS assembly?

MIPS32 AL – More On Functions (a recursive function example)

■ Sum from 1 to N (for $N \ge 1$)

```
int SumToN(int N) // N >= 1 & not too big
{
  if (N < 2)
    return 1;
  else
    return N + SumToN(N - 1);
}</pre>
```

- **SumToN** is both caller and callee
- How should we implement it in MIPS assembly?
- Good news: no new things to be learned
 - ♦ We implement it just like any other (non-leaf) function

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MIPS32 AL - More On F_sⁿ .data .asciiz "Desired N: " .asciiz "Sum to N = " .text (a recursive function e.g.) .globl main addiu \$sp, \$sp, -32 sw \$ra, 28 (\$sp) sw \$fp, 24 (\$sp) addiu \$fp, \$sp, 32 ■ Sum from 1 to N addiu \$fp, \$sp, 3 la \$a0, str1 li \$v0, 4 syscall li \$v0, 5 syscall j quitTest move \$a0, \$v0 jal SumToN move \$t0, \$v0 la \$a0, str2 li \$v0, 4 syscall move \$a0, \$t0 li \$v0, 1 syscall li \$v0, 1 syscall li \$v0, 1 syscall la \$a0, tr1 li \$v0, 5 syscall la \$v0, vo, 4 syscall la \$v0, vo, 4 syscall li \$v0, 4 syscall li \$v0, 4 syscall li \$v0, 5 syscall bgtz \$v0, repeat lw \$fp. 24(\$sp) SumToN: addiu \$sp, \$sp, -32 sw \$ra, 28 (\$sp) sw \$fp, 24 (\$sp) addiu \$fp, \$sp, 32 repeat: slti \$t0, \$a0, 2 beq \$t0, \$0, recur addi \$v0, \$0, 1 j done sw \$a0, 0(\$fp) recur: addi \$a0, \$a0, -1 jal SumToN lw \$a0, 0(\$fp) add \$v0, \$v0, \$a0 quitTest: done: lw \$fp, 24(\$sp) lw \$fp, 24(\$sp) lw \$ra, 28(\$sp) addiu \$sp, \$sp, 32 li \$v0, 10 syscall lw \$ra, 28(\$sp) addiu \$sp, \$sp, 32 jr \$ra

