The reason why we were specializing the sum() member function was because we needed to overload the function to make sure strings are passed. We special initialized the value for the summation because the value could have been a string or an int. We define the variable outside of the class definition because it is a global variable and can only be defined once. If we define the global variable within the class, each time we create a new class it would cause an error because the variables were already defined.