

1. Essential features of recursion

19.2 Recursion

Candidates should be able to:

Show understanding of recursion

Show awareness of what a compiler has to do to translate recursive programming code

Notes and guidance

Essential features of recursion.

How recursion is expressed in a programming language.

Write and trace recursive algorithms

When the use of recursion is beneficial

Use of stacks and unwinding

Essential features of recursion:

- It is defined in terms of itself // it calls itself
- It has a stopping condition
- It has self-contained subroutine
- It can return data to its previous call
- --
- Must have a base case/ stopping condition
- Must have a general case
- ... which calls itself recursively // defined in terms of itself
- ... which changes its state and moves towards the base case
- Unwinding occurs once the base case is reached

Explain a reason why a stack is a suitable abstract data type(ADT) to implement recursion:

- A stack is a LIFO(last in first out) data structure
- Each recursive call is pushed to the stack
- And is popped when the function ends
- Enable unwinding/back tracking
- ... to maintain the required order