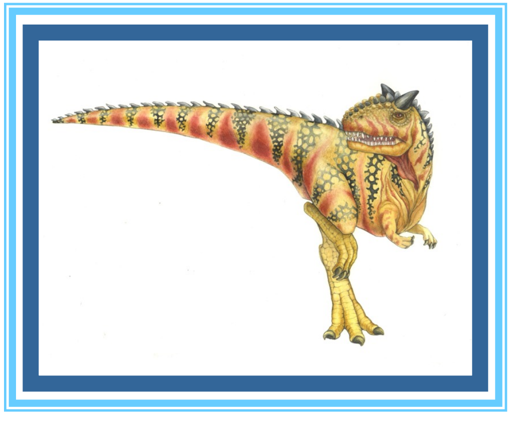
Chapter 6: Synchronization Tools



Outline

- Background
- The Critical-Section Problem
- Peterson's Solution
- Hardware Support for Synchronization
- Mutex Locks
- Semaphores
- Monitors
- Liveness
- Evaluation

Objectives

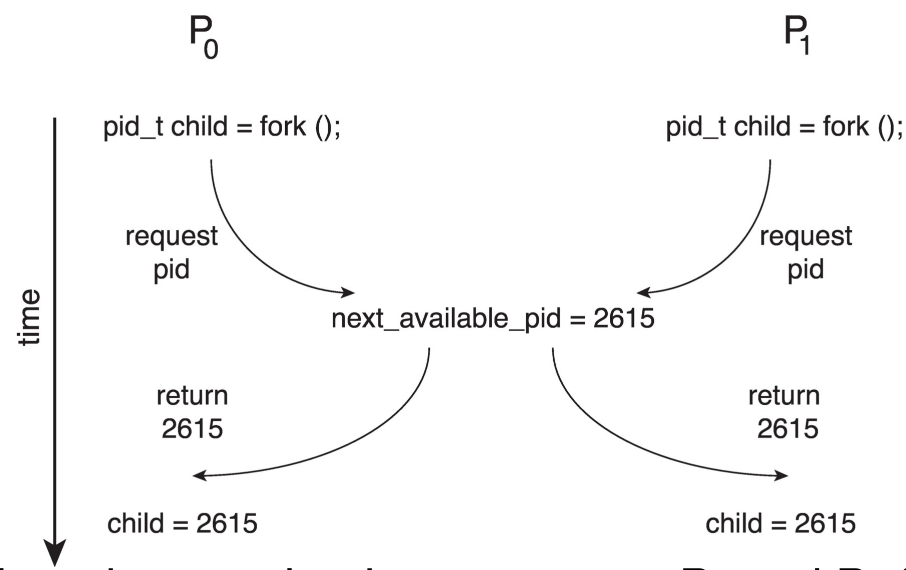
- Describe the critical-section problem and illustrate a race condition
- Illustrate hardware solutions to the critical-section problem using memory barriers, compare-and-swap operations, and atomic variables
- Demonstrate how mutex locks, semaphores, monitors, and condition variables can be used to solve the critical section problem
- Evaluate tools that solve the critical-section problem in low-, Moderate-, and high-contention scenarios

Background

- Processes can execute concurrently
  - May be interrupted at any time, partially completing execution
- Concurrent access to shared data may result in data inconsistency
- Maintaining data consistency requires mechanisms to ensure the orderly execution of cooperating processes
- We illustrated in chapter 4 the problem when we considered the Bounded Buffer problem with use of a counter that is updated concurrently by the producer and consumer,. Which lead to race condition.

Race Condition

- Processes P_0 and P_1 are creating child processes using the `fork()` system call
- Race condition on kernel variable `next_available_pid` which represents the next available process identifier (pid)



- Unless there is a mechanism to prevent P_0 and P_1 from accessing the variable `next_available_pid` the same pid could be assigned to two different processes!

Critical Section Problem

- Consider system of ***n*** processes {$p_0, p_1, \ldots p_{n-1}$}
- Each process has **critical section** segment of code
  - Process may be changing common variables, updating table, writing file, etc.
  - When one process in critical section, no other may be in its critical section
- ***Critical section problem*** is to design protocol to solve this
- Each process must ask permission to enter critical section in **entry section**, may follow critical section with **exit section**, then **remainder section**

Critical Section

- General structure of process P_i

```
while (true) {

        entry section

            critical section

        exit section

            remainder section

}
```

Critical-Section Problem (Cont.)

Requirements for solution to critical-section problem

1. **Mutual Exclusion** - If process P_i is executing in its critical section, then no other processes can be executing in their critical sections
2. **Progress** - If no process is executing in its critical section and there exist some processes that wish to enter their critical section, then the selection of the process that will enter the critical section next cannot be postponed indefinitely
3. **Bounded Waiting** - A bound must exist on the number of times that other processes are allowed to enter their critical sections after a process has made a request to enter its critical section and before that request is granted
   - Assume that each process executes at a nonzero speed
   - No assumption concerning **relative speed** of the n processes

Interrupt-based Solution

- Entry section: disable interrupts
- Exit section: enable interrupts
- Will this solve the problem?
  - What if the critical section is code that runs for an hour?
  - Can some processes starve – never enter their critical section.
  - What if there are two CPUs?

Software Solution 1

- Two process solution
- Assume that the **`load`** and **`store`** machine-language instructions are atomic; that is, cannot be interrupted
- The two processes share one variable:
  - **`int turn;`**
- The variable **`turn`** indicates whose turn it is to enter the critical section
- initially, the value of **`turn`** is set to *i*

Algorithm for Process P_i

```
while (true){

        while (turn = = j);

        /* critical section */

        turn = j;

        /* remainder section */

}
```

Correctness of the Software Solution

- Mutual exclusion is preserved

  P_i enters critical section only if:

  `turn = i`

  and **`turn`** cannot be both 0 and 1 at the same time
- What about the Progress requirement?
- What about the Bounded-waiting requirement?

Peterson's Solution

- Two process solution
- Assume that the **`load`** and **`store`** machine-language instructions are atomic; that is, cannot be interrupted
- The two processes share two variables:
  - **`int turn;`**
  - **`boolean flag[2]`**
- The variable **`turn`** indicates whose turn it is to enter the critical section
- The **`flag`** array is used to indicate if a process is ready to enter the critical section.
  - **`flag[i] = `*`true`*** implies that process P_i is ready!

Algorithm for Process P_i

```
while (true){

        flag[i] = true;
        turn = j;
        while (flag[j] && turn = = j)
                ;

           /* critical section */

        flag[i] = false;

        /* remainder section */

}
```

Correctness of Peterson's Solution

- Provable that the three CS requirement are met:
  1. Mutual exclusion is preserved

     P_i enters CS only if:

     either **`flag[j] = false`** or **`turn = i`**
  2. Progress requirement is satisfied
  3. Bounded-waiting requirement is met

Peterson's Solution and Modern Architecture

- Although useful for demonstrating an algorithm, Peterson's Solution is not guaranteed to work on modern architectures.
  - To improve performance, processors and/or compilers may reorder operations that have no dependencies
- Understanding why it will not work is useful for better understanding race conditions.
- For single-threaded this is ok as the result will always be the same.
- For multithreaded the reordering may produce inconsistent or unexpected results!

Modern Architecture Example

- Two threads share the data:

```
boolean flag = false;
int x = 0;
```

- Thread 1 performs

```
while (!flag)
  ;
print x
```

- Thread 2 performs

```
x = 100;
flag = true
```

- What is the expected output?

  100

Modern Architecture Example (Cont.)

- However, since the variables `flag` and `x` are independent of each other, the instructions:

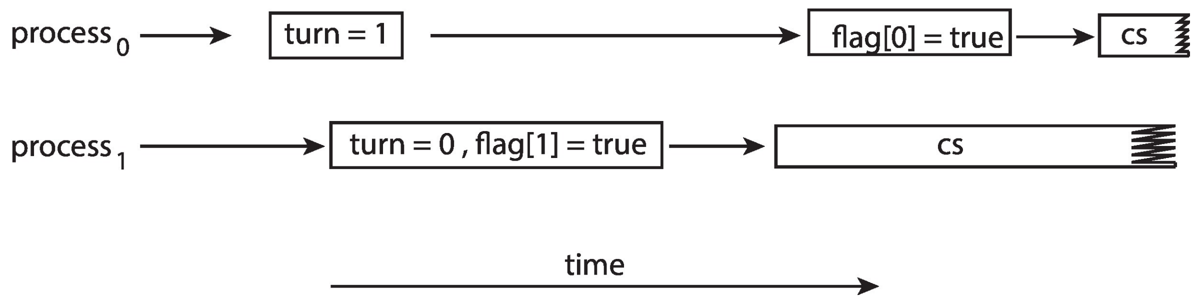
```
flag = true;
x = 100;
```

  for Thread 2 may be reordered

- If this occurs, the output may be 0!

Peterson’s Solution Revisited

- The effects of instruction reordering in Peterson’s Solution



- This allows both processes to be in their critical section at the same time!
- To ensure that Peterson’s solution will work correctly on modern computer architecture we must use **Memory Barrier**.

Memory Barrier

- **Memory model** are the memory guarantees a computer architecture makes to application programs.
- Memory models may be either:
  - **Strongly ordered** – where a memory modification of one processor is immediately visible to all other processors.
  - **Weakly ordered** – where a memory modification of one processor may not be immediately visible to all other processors.
- A **memory barrier** is an instruction that forces any change in memory to be propagated (made visible) to all other processors.

Memory Barrier Instructions

- When a memory barrier instruction is performed, the system ensures that all loads and stores are completed before any subsequent load or store operations are performed.
- Therefore, even if instructions were reordered, the memory barrier ensures that the store operations are completed in memory and visible to other processors before future load or store operations are performed.

Memory Barrier Example

- Returning to the example of slides 6.17 - 6.18
- We could add a memory barrier to the following instructions to ensure Thread 1 outputs 100:
- Thread 1 now performs

```
while (!flag)
  memory_barrier();
print x
```

- Thread 2 now performs

```
x = 100;
memory_barrier();
flag = true
```

- For Thread 1 we are guaranteed that that the value of `flag` is loaded before the value of `x`.
- For Thread 2 we ensure that the assignment to `x` occurs before the assignment `flag`.

Synchronization Hardware

- Many systems provide hardware support for implementing the critical section code.
- Uniprocessors – could disable interrupts
  - Currently running code would execute without preemption
  - Generally too inefficient on multiprocessor systems
    - Operating systems using this not broadly scalable
- We will look at three forms of hardware support:

1. Hardware instructions
2. Atomic variables

Hardware Instructions

- Special hardware instructions that allow us to either *test-and-modify* the content of a word, or to *swap* the contents of two words atomically (uninterruptedly.)
  - **Test-and-Set** instruction
  - **Compare-and-Swap** instruction

The test_and_set Instruction

- Definition

```
boolean test_and_set (boolean *target)
  {
          boolean rv = *target;
          *target = true;
          return rv:
  }
```

- Properties
  - Executed atomically
  - Returns the original value of passed parameter
  - Set the new value of passed parameter to **`true`**

Solution Using test_and_set()

- Shared boolean variable **`lock`**, initialized to **`false`**
- Solution:

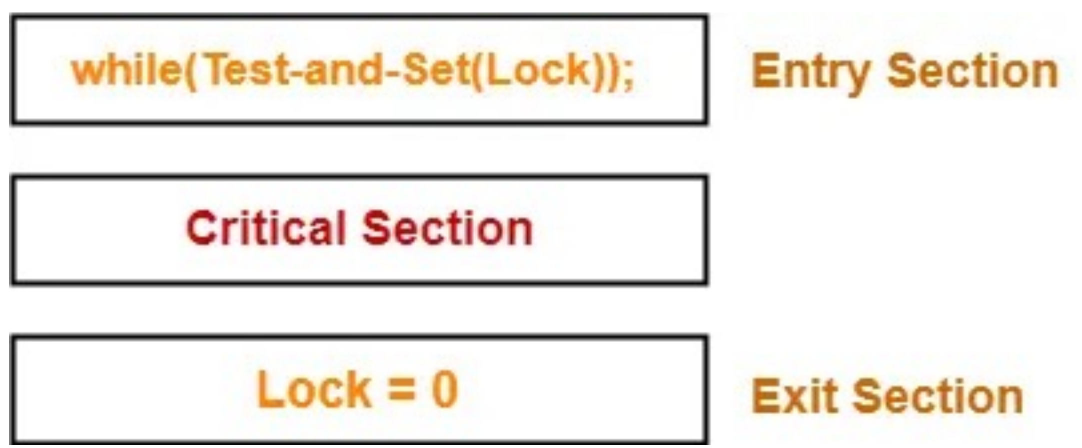
```
do {
        while (test_and_set(&lock))
         ; /* do nothing */

               /* critical section */

     lock = false;
               /* remainder section */
 } while (true);
```

- Does it solve the critical-section problem?

Solution Using test_and_set()

- Initially, lock value is set to 0.

- Lock value = 0 means the critical section is currently vacant and no process is present inside it.
- Lock value = 1 means the critical section is currently occupied and a process is present inside it.



Solution Using test_and_set()

Scene-01:

- Process P_0 arrives.
- It executes the test-and-set(Lock) instruction.
- Since lock value is set to 0, so it returns value 0 to the while loop and sets the lock value to 1.
- The returned value 0 breaks the while loop condition.
- Process P_0 enters the critical section and executes.
- Now, even if process P_0 gets preempted in the middle, no other process can enter the critical section.
- Any other process can enter only after process P_0 completes and sets the lock value to 0.

Solution Using test_and_set()

Scene-02:

- Another process P_1 arrives.
- It executes the test-and-set(Lock) instruction.
- Since lock value is now 1, so it returns value 1 to the while loop and sets the lock value to 1.
- The returned value 1 does not break the while loop condition.
- The process P_1 is trapped inside an infinite while loop.
- The while loop keeps the process P_1 busy until the lock value becomes 0 and its condition breaks.

Solution Using test_and_set()

Scene-03:

- Process P_0 comes out of the critical section and sets the lock value to 0.
- The while loop condition breaks.
- Now, process P_1 waiting for the critical section enters the critical section.
- Now, even if process P_1 gets preempted in the middle, no other process can enter the critical section.
- Any other process can enter only after process P_1 completes and sets the lock value to 0.

Solution Using test_and_set()

Characteristics:

- It ensures mutual exclusion.
- ~~It is deadlock free.~~
- It does not guarantee bounded waiting and may cause starvation.
- It suffers from spin lock.
- ~~It is not architectural neutral since it requires the operating system to support test-and-set instruction.~~
- It is a busy waiting solution which keeps the CPU busy when the process is actually waiting.

The compare_and_swap Instruction

- Definition

```
int compare_and_swap(int *value, int expected, int new_value)
 {
   int temp = *value;
   if (*value == expected)
       *value = new_value;
    return temp;
 }
```

- Properties
  - Executed atomically
  - Returns the original value of passed parameter **`value`**
  - Set the variable **`value`** the value of the passed parameter **`new_value`** but only if **`*value == expected`** is true. That is, the swap takes place only under this condition.

Solution using compare_and_swap

- Shared integer **lock** initialized to 0;
- Solution:

```
while (true){
    while (compare_and_swap(&lock, 0, 1) != 0)
          ; /* do nothing */

    /* critical section */

    lock = 0;

    /* remainder section */
}
```

- Does it solve the critical-section problem?

Solution using compare_and_swap

- Initially lock = 0

P0 executes **instruction 1**, initially lock = 0 so, it is **matched** with the second parameter of the function expected value of 0 and then assign new **value 1** (as the third parameter) to lock, now **lock = 1**.

As we know the whole function **compare_and_swap** returns the main initial value of the lock i.e. **lock = 0**. So, it **satisfied** and executes **instruction 2** and enters into its **critical section**. After that **P0 preempted**.

P1 gets the CPU and executes **instruction 1,** right now **lock = 1**. It is **not matched** with the second parameter of the function expected value of 0. So, it does not assign a new value 1 (as the third parameter) to lock.

As we know whole function **compare_and_swap** returns the main initial value of the lock i.e. **lock=1**. So, it not satisfied and stuck in **instructions 1** (while loop) i.e. **busy waiting** until lock=0.

Compare and Swap instruction satisfy mutual exclusion.

Atomic Variables

- Typically, instructions such as compare-and-swap are used as building blocks for other synchronization tools.
- One tool is an **atomic variable** that provides *atomic* (uninterruptible) updates on basic data types such as integers and booleans.
- For example:
  - Let **`sequence`** be an atomic variable
  - Let **`increment()`** be operation on the atomic variable **`sequence`**
  - The Command:

    ```
    increment(&sequence);
    ```

    ensures **`sequence`** is incremented without interruption:

Atomic Variables

- The **`increment()`** function can be implemented as follows:

```
void increment(atomic_int *v)
{
     int temp;
     do {
          temp = *v;
     }
     while (temp != (compare_and_swap(v,temp,temp+1));
}
```

- An atomic variable is just a variable whose value changes atomically. When you increment an atomic variable from 3 to 4, you never ever have to worry about accessing the value when it is somewhere between 3 and 4. Threads, processes, queues, etc. are all complex structures that try to help you get more than a single thing done at a time while also helping you to avoiding having to write all of your code so that it handles the possibility of accessing a variable halfway between two values.

Mutex Locks

- Previous solutions are complicated and generally inaccessible to application programmers
- OS designers build software tools to solve critical section problem
- Simplest is mutex lock
  - Boolean variable indicating if lock is available or not
- Protect a critical section by
  - First **`acquire()`** a lock
  - Then **`release()`** the lock
- Calls to **`acquire()`** and **`release()`** must be **atomic**
  - Usually implemented via hardware atomic instructions such as compare-and-swap.
- But this solution requires **busy waiting**
  - This lock therefore called a **spinlock**

Solution to CS Problem Using Mutex Locks

```
while (true) {
        acquire lock

            critical section

        release lock

remainder section
}
```

Semaphore

- Synchronization tool that provides more sophisticated ways (than Mutex locks) for processes to synchronize their activities.
- Semaphore ***S*** – integer variable
- Can only be accessed via two indivisible (atomic) operations
  - **`wait()`** and **`signal()`**
    - Originally called **`P()`** and **`V()`**
- Definition of the **`wait() operation`**

```
wait(S) {
    while (S <= 0)
       ; // busy wait
    S--;
}
```

- Definition of the **`signal() operation`**

```
signal(S) {
    S++;
}
```

Semaphore (Cont.)

- **Counting semaphore** – integer value can range over an unrestricted domain
- **Binary semaphore** – integer value can range only between 0 and 1
  - Same as a **mutex lock**
- Can implement a counting semaphore ***S*** as a binary semaphore
- With semaphores we can solve various synchronization problems

Semaphore Usage Example

- Solution to the CS Problem
  - Create a semaphore "**mutex**" initialized to 1

```
wait(mutex);
    CS
signal(mutex);
```

- Consider P_1 and P_2 that with two statements S_1 and S_2 and the requirement that S_1 to happen before S_2
  - Create a semaphore "**synch**" initialized to 0

```
P1:
    S1;
    signal(synch);
P2:
    wait(synch);
    S2;
```

Semaphore Implementation

- Must guarantee that no two processes can execute the **`wait()`** and **`signal()`** on the same semaphore at the same time
- Thus, the implementation becomes the critical section problem where the **`wait`** and **`signal`** code are placed in the critical section
- Could now have **busy waiting** in critical section implementation
- Note that applications may spend lots of time in critical sections and therefore this is not a good solution

Semaphore Implementation with no Busy waiting

- With each semaphore there is an associated waiting queue
- Each entry in a waiting queue has two data items:
  - Value (of type integer)
  - Pointer to next record in the list
- Two operations:
  - **block** – place the process invoking the operation on the appropriate waiting queue
  - **wakeup** – remove one of processes in the waiting queue and place it in the ready queue

Implementation with no Busy waiting (Cont.)

- Waiting queue

```
typedef struct {
   int value;
   struct process *list;
} semaphore;
```

Implementation with no Busy waiting (Cont.)

```
wait(semaphore *S) {
   S->value--;
   if (S->value < 0) {
      add this process to S->list;
      block();
   }
}

signal(semaphore *S) {
   S->value++;
   if (S->value <= 0) {
      remove a process P from S->list;
      wakeup(P);
   }
}
```

No Busy-Waiting Example

Producer Consumer problem

- Let's examine the basic model that is sleep and wake. Assume that we have two system calls as **sleep** and **wake**. The process which calls sleep will get blocked while the process which calls will get waked up.
- There is a popular example called **producer consumer problem** which is the most popular problem simulating **sleep and wake** mechanism.
- The concept of sleep and wake is very simple. If the critical section is not empty then the process will go and sleep. It will be waked up by the other process which is currently executing inside the critical section so that the process can get inside the critical section.
- In producer consumer problem, let us say there are two processes, one process writes something while the other process reads that. The process which is writing something is called **producer** while the process which is reading is called **consumer**.
- In order to read and write, both of them are using a buffer. The code that simulates the sleep and wake mechanism in terms of providing the solution to producer consumer problem is shown below.

No Busy-Waiting Example

```
#define N 100 //maximum slots in buffer
#define count=0 //items in the buffer
void producer (void)
{
   int item;
   while(True)
   {
      item = produce_item(); //producer produces an item
      if(count == N) //if the buffer is full then the producer will sleep
         Sleep();
      insert_item (item); //the item is inserted into buffer
      countcount=count+1;
      if(count==1) //The producer will wake up the
      //consumer if there is at least 1 item in the buffer
      wake-up(consumer);
   }
}
```

```
void consumer (void)
{
   int item;
   while(True)
   {
      {
         if(count == 0) //The consumer will sleep if the buffer is empty.
         sleep();
         item = remove_item();
         countcount = count - 1;
         if(count == N-1) //if there is at least one slot available in the buffer
         //then the consumer will wake up producer
         wake-up(producer);
         consume_item(item); //the item is read by consumer.
      }
   }
}
```

No Busy-Waiting Example

- The producer produces the item and inserts it into the buffer. The value of the global variable count got increased at each insertion. If the buffer is filled completely and no slot is available then the producer will sleep, otherwise it keep inserting.
- On the consumer's end, the value of count got decreased by 1 at each consumption. If the buffer is empty at any point of time then the consumer will sleep otherwise, it keeps consuming the items and decreasing the value of count by 1.
- The consumer will be waked up by the producer if there is at least 1 item available in the buffer which is to be consumed. The producer will be waked up by the consumer if there is at least one slot available in the buffer so that the producer can write that.

Problems with Semaphores

- Incorrect use of semaphore operations:
  - `signal(mutex)` …. `wait(mutex)`
  - `wait(mutex)` … `wait(mutex)`
  - Omitting of `wait (mutex)` and/or `signal (mutex)`
- These – and others – are examples of what can occur when semaphores and other synchronization tools are used incorrectly.

Monitors

- A high-level abstraction that provides a convenient and effective mechanism for process synchronization
- *Abstract data type*, internal variables only accessible by code within the procedure
- Only one process may be active within the monitor at a time
- Pseudocode syntax of a monitor:

```
monitor monitor-name
{
  // shared variable declarations
  procedure P1 (…) { …. }

  procedure P2 (…) { …. }

  procedure Pn (…) {……}

  initialization code (…) { … }
}
```

Single Resource allocation

- Allocate a single resource among competing processes using priority numbers that specifies the maximum time a process plans to use the resource

```
R.acquire(t);
     ...
  access the resurce;
     ...

R.release;
```

- Where R is an instance of type **`ResourceAllocator`**

Single Resource allocation

- Allocate a single resource among competing processes using priority numbers that specifies the maximum time a process plans to use the resource
- The process with the shortest time is allocated the resource first
- Let R is an instance of type **`ResourceAllocator`** (next slide)
- Access to **`ResourceAllocator`** is done via:

```
R.acquire(t);
    ...
  access the resurce;
    ...
R.release;
```

- Where **`t`** is the maximum time a process plans to use the resource

Single Resource Monitor (Cont.)

- Usage:

```
acquire
 ...
release
```

- Incorrect use of monitor operations
  - **`release()`** … **`acquire()`**
  - **`acquire()`** … **`acquire())`**
  - Omitting of **`acquire()`** and/or **`release()`**

Liveness

- Processes may have to wait indefinitely while trying to acquire a synchronization tool such as a mutex lock or semaphore.
- Waiting indefinitely violates the progress and bounded-waiting criteria discussed at the beginning of this chapter.
- **Liveness** refers to a set of properties that a system must satisfy to ensure processes make progress.
- Indefinite waiting is an example of a liveness failure.

Liveness

- **Deadlock** – two or more processes are waiting indefinitely for an event that can be caused by only one of the waiting processes
- Let ***S*** and ***Q*** be two semaphores initialized to 1

P_0	P_1
`wait(S);`	`wait(Q);`
`wait(Q);`	`wait(S);`
`...`	`...`
`signal(S);`	`signal(Q);`
`signal(Q);`	`signal(S);`

- Consider if P_0 executes wait(S) and P_1 wait(Q). When P_0 executes wait(Q), it must wait until P_1 executes signal(Q)
- However, P_1 is waiting until P_0 execute signal(S).
- Since these signal() operations will never be executed, P_0 and P_1 are **deadlocked**.

End of Chapter 6