Go notes for TIC-80

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Notes for using Go with TIC-80 by targeting WASM with `tinygo`.

Contents

1 Language overview

1.1 Types

See also 1.9 Interfaces concerning *type assertions*.

Go supports the primitives listed on the right hand side.

```go
// integral
int, int8, int16, int32, int64
uint, uint8, uint16, uint32, uint64, uintptr
// floating point
float32, float64
complex64, complex128
//other
string, bool
// aliases
byte // uint8
```

```go
rune // int32 for unicode
```

Types may be converted to some new type `T` using `T(v)` .

Type aliases may be defined using the `type` keyword.

```go
type MyFloat float64
```

1.2 Declarations

Variables may either be explicitly typed or inferred. Constants may be inferred, and support arbitrary precision until coerced.

```go
// explicit type
var i int
// explicit type initialized
var i int = 1
// implicit type
i := 1
// constant
const Pi = 3.14
```

Pointers are either declared to point to an array or a variable. References can be taken with the `&` operator.

```go
// pointer to array
var a []int
x = a[1]
// pointer to type
var p *int
// dereference
x = *p
// reference
q := &x
```

The allocation primatives are `make` and `new`, and apply to different types. `new` allocates and zeros memory, returning a **pointer** `*T`. The keyword `make` is reserved only for slices, maps, and channels, and **does not** return a pointer.

```go
// p is *MyCustomType
p := new(MyCustomType)
// v is MyCustomType
var v MyCustomType
```

1.3 Structs

Structs are a collection of fields, which are `{}` initialized. Pointers to structs have a free level of indirection, thus `(*p).x` is the same as `p.x`. Uninitialized fields are implicitly zero.

```go
type Vertex struct {
    X int
    Y int
}
v1 := Vertex{1, 2}
v2 := Vertex{Y: 2} // X implicitly 0
```

Go implements the concept of **constructors as factories**, which is conventionally the name of the struct prefixed with `New`.

```go
func NewVertex(x, y int) Vertex {
    return NewVertex{x, y}
}
```

1.4 Functions

Functions must be explicitly typed and support multiple (named) return types. Function are first class citizens and may be assigned to variables. Functions support closure capture.

```go
// function type
func(int32, int32) int32

// anonymous: a and b have same type
adder := func(a, b int32) int32 {return a + b}

// single return type
```

```go
func foo(a int32, b int32) int32 {
    return a + b
}

// multiple returns
func mfoo(a, b int32) (int32, int32) {
    return a, b
}

// multiple returns named
func bar(a int32, b int32) (out1 int32, out2 int32) {
    out1 = a
    out2 = b
    return
}

// closure capture
func adder() func(int) int {
    sum := 0
    return func(x int) int {
        sum += x
        return sum
    }
}
```

The address of a **local variable** may be returned without issue: the storage of a variable survives the function context. Referencing an r-value **allocates a new** instance.

```go
func NewFile(fd int, name string) *File {
    if fd < 0 {
        return nil
    }
    // new instance each time it is called
    return &File{fd: fd, name:name}
}
```

1.5 Methods

Methods may be defined on **types** (such as custom structs). Methods have a special **receiver** argument.

```go
func (v Vertex) Abs() float64 {
    return math.Sqrt(v.X * v.X + v.Y * v.Y)
}
// invocation
v.Abs()
```

For methods to be mutating they must be declared with **pointer receivers**.

```go
func (v *Vertex) Scale(f float64) {
    v.X = v.X * f
    v.Y = v.Y * f
}
```

1.6 Arrays

Go arrays are 0 indexed. Fixed size arrays are declared with `[n]T` syntax. Slices are dynamically sized references to arrays, declared with `[]T`. Slices may be literal.

When slicing, the bounds are implicitly the start and end if excluded.

```go
// array of 10 ints
var a [10]int
// slice to 3 ints and indices 1, 2, 3
b := a[1:4]
// slice literal
c := []bool{false, false, false}
```

The `len` of a slice is the number of elements it contains, whereas the `cap` is the number of elements in the underlying array.

`nil` slices are slices with length and capacity equal to 0.

```go
s := []int{2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13}
// len=6 cap=6 [2 3 5 7 11 13]
s = s[:0]
// len=0 cap=6 []
s = s[:4]
// len=4 cap=6 [2 3 5 7]
s = s[2:]
```

```
// len=2 cap=4 [5 7]
```

Slices may be **dynamically allocated** with the `make` function, which allocates and zeros out an array.

```
// len 5, cap 5
a := make([]int, 5)
// len 0, cap 5
b := make([]int, 0, 5)
```

1.7 Maps

A map is a key-value store. The zero value of a map is `nil`. Maps are dynamically allocated and must be initialized with `make`.

```
// variable declaration
var m = map[string]int
// init
m = make(map[string]int)
```

Maps may be **mutated** with the usual `[]` syntax. When an entry is read, the map returns both the value an an `ok` boolean. If the key is not in the map, the value is a zero and `ok` is `false`.

```
// add entry
m["Hello World"] = 42
// read entry
value, ok := m["Hello World"]
// remove
delete(m, "Hello World")
```

Map literals may also be declared.

```
// map literal
ml = map[string]int{
    "Hello": 13,
    "World": 12,
}
```

1.8 Control flow

See also 1.9 Interfaces concerning *type switches* for control flow.

A **defer** statement defers the execution of a function until the surrounding function returns. Defers are executed in LIFO order.

```
defer fmt.Println("world")
fmt.Println("hello")
```

The **for** loop has an initializer, a condition, and a post statement, with the initializer and post statement being optional.

```
for i := 0; i < 10: i++ {
    // ...
}
```

The **while** loops have the same syntax, though the semi colons may be dropped.

```
// while
for i < 10 {
    // ...
}
```

Infinite loops are created without any arguments.

```
// infinite
for {
    // ...
}
```

For loops may also be used with **range indexing**, implicitly enumerating the array or slice.

```
var pow = []int{1, 2, 4, 8}
for i, v := range pow {
    // ...
}
```

If statements have need not have brackets, and support optional capture initializers. The variable in the initializer only exists for the scope of the 'if' block.

```
if some_condition {
    // ...
} else {
    // ...
}
```

```go
// with a capture init
if y := a + b; y < 10 {
    return y
}
```

The **switch** statement can be used on any primitive. Cases do not have fall-through, and the cases need not be constants.

```go
switch os := runtime.GOOS; os {
case "darwin":
    // ...
case "linux":
    // ...
default:
    // ...
}
```

In the example to the right, `f()` is not invoked unless `i != 0`. A switch statement without a condition is the same as `switch true`.

```go
switch i {
case 0:
    // ...
case f():
    // ...
}
```

1.9 Interfaces

From what I can tell, the Go-ism for interface names is to end the interface with `-er`, e.g. `fmt.Stringer`.

Interfaces are **types** that define a set of method signatures. They may be thought of as a tuple of `(value, type)`

```go
type Absoluter interface {
    Abs() float64
}
```

The **nil interface** is the interface which implement no methods, such as primitives. It is declared with `interface{}`

```go
var i interface{}
```

Variables of instance type may be declared and instantiated by any type which implements the interface.

```go
type SomeFloat float64
func (f SomeFloat) Abs() float64 {
    // ...
}
// instantiate interface
var a Absoluter
a = SomeFloat(1.0)
```

Care must be taken when dealing with pointers. In this example, `*Vector` *does* implement the interface, but `Vector` *does not*.

```go
type Vector struct {
    X, Y float64
}
func (v *Vector) Abs() float64 {
    // ...
}
// ok
v := Vector{}
var a Absoluter = &v
// error
a = v
```

Type assertions may be used to access an interfaces concrete value. It returns a `(value, ok)` tuple, where the `ok` boolean denotes whether the type assertion was true. The syntax is `t, ok := i.(T)` to assert type `T`.

```go
var i interface{} = "Hello World"
// ok is true
s, ok := i.(string)
// ok is false, v is 0.0
f, ok := i.(float64)
```

Switches may also be used on interfaces as control flow with **type switches**.

```go
switch v := i.(type) {
case T:
    // here v has type T
```

```go
case S:
    // here v has type S
default:
    // no match; here v has the same type as i
}
```

Interfaces may **embed** or extend existing interfaces by including them in the definition.

```go
type A interface {
    GetName() string
}
// embeds A
type B interface {
    A
    SetValue(v int)
}
```

Go differentiates between **basic** and **non-basic** interfaces, where basic interfaces may be entirely implemented and initialized, whereas non-basic interfaces are used primarily in 1.11 Generics.

Non-basic interfaces are interfaces with **type-unions** (the pipe operator), or which embed other non-basic interfaces.

```go
// the above A and B are both basic
// the below C and D are non-basic
type C interface {
    int | int64 | float64
}
type D interface {
    C
    Content() string
}
```

1.10 Errors

The error type is an interfaces that implements the `Error() string` method.

```go
type error interface {
    Error() string
}
```

Errors are normally returned in a tuple with the result. Errors are handled by testing `err != nil`.

```go
i, err := strconv.Atoi("42")
if err != nil {
    // ...
    return
}
```

Go also has `panic` and `recover`. The `panic` keyword is reserved for errors that are "unrecoverable", and `recover` is to recover from them. When a `panic` is called, go immediately begins the stack unwind until it hits a `recover`.

`recover` **always returns** `nil` unless called from a deferred function.

```go
func server(workChan <-chan *Work) {
    for work := range workChan {
        go safelyDo(work)
    }
}

func safelyDo(work *Work) {
    // deferred lambda
    defer func() {
        if err := recover(); err != nil {
            log.Println("work failed:", err)
        }
    }()
    do(work)
}
```

1.11 Generics

Functions may accept **type parameters** for generics. This parameter appears in `[]` before the functions arguments. The type parameter must fulfill a `constraint`.

```go
// T must support == comparison
func Index[T comparable](s []T, x T) int {
    // ...
}
```

Constraints may be defined through interfaces.

```go
type Number interface {
```

The super-type of all interfaces is `any`. The pipe syntax denotes type unions.

```
    int | int64 | float64
}
```

1.12 Exports and imports

Exported functions from a package must begin with a capital letter. Packages which make use of `helloworld` may only refer to `helloworld.Foo`.

```
package helloworld
// not exported
func foo() {
    // ....
}
// is exported
func Foo() {
    // ...
}
```

Go also uses **compiler directives** in the form of annotated functions with **comments** to export or import symbols at link-time.

```
// link the symbol _start to the function Init
//go:linkname Init _start
func Init()

// import a function symbol
//go:export
func add(x, y int) int

// export a function symbol
//go:export
func sub(x, y int) int {
    return x - y
}
```

2 Goroutines and concurrency

A **goroutine** is a lightweight thread that is managed by the runtime. The keyword `go` is reserved for starting a new goroutine. They run in the same address space. The `sync` package provides goroutine primatives.

2.1 Channels

Channels are a typed pipe for IO, and may be used to send or receive with the **channel operator**, i.e. `<-`. Channels are by default blocking to allow goroutines to synchronize without explicit locking mechanisms.

```
// initialize integer channel
ch := make(chan int)
// send
ch <- value
// receive
v := <- ch
```

Channels may be **buffered**, which means they have a fixed size and will result in a deadlock if trying to send to a full buffer.

```
// buffered channel with 100 elements
ch := make(chan int, 100)
```

Channels may be **closed** to indicate no additional values will be sent. A second return argument indicates whether a channel is closed or not. It is not necessary to *always* close channels, and should be used only to indicate no additional information.

```
ch := make(chan int)
ch <- 10
// close channel
close(ch)
// ok == false since channel closed
v, ok := <- ch
```

The `range` keyword may be used in a for-loop to read all values from a channel until closed.

```
// read until closed
for i := range ch {
    // ...
}
```

The `select` keyword is analogous to the `switch` statement for waiting on multiple operations. The `select` blocks execution until one of its cases

```
select {
// will only run if ch not full
```

can run, then executes that case. It is non-deterministic if multiple cases are ready simultaneously. The `default` case is optional, and will run if no other cases are ready.

```
case ch <- x:
    x = x + 1
// will run if can read from recv
case <- recv:
    fmt.Println("received")
// optional default
default:
    fmt.Println("no operation)
}
```

2.2 Example

Below is a concurrent example for summing numbers in an array:

```
package main

func sum(s []int, c chan int) {
    sum := 0
    for _, v := range s {
        sum += v
    }
    c <- sum
}

func main() {
    s := []int{7, 2, 8, -9, 4, 0}
    // make a channel for io between goroutines
    c := make(chan int)
    // spawn two goroutines that sum different parts of s
    go sum(s[:len(s)/2], c)
    go sum(s[len(s)/2:], c)
    // receive
    x, y := <-c, <-c
}
```

2.3 Mutexes

The `sync.Mutex` (mutual exclusion) can be used when multiple goroutines need to access the same resource without worrying about race conditions. The standard mutex supports `Lock` and `Unlock` methods.

```
mu := sync.Mutex()
mu.Lock()
// practice is to defer unlocks
defer mu.Unlock()
```

3 Common interfaces

3.1 Readers and writers

The `io` package specifies a `io.Reader` interface, which declares the `Read` method.

```
// prototype
func (T) Read(b []byte) (n int, err error)
// example
r := strings.NewReader("Hello, Reader!")
buffer := make([]byte, 8)
for {
    n, err := r.Read(buffer)
    // ...
    if err == io.EOF {
        break
    }
}
```

4 Standard patterns

4.1 Errors and recovery

Throw errors with `panic` so that goroutines can handle and recover as needed.

```go
func (s *S) error(err string) {
    panic(Error(err))
}

func Runner(str string) (s *S, err error) {
    s = new(S)
    defer func() {
        if e := recover(); e != nil {
            // Clear return value.
            regexp = nil
            // will re-panic cannot coerce
            err = e.(Error)
        }
    }()
    // will panic if there is a call error
    return s.Call(str), nil
}
```

4.2 Parallelism

Goroutines can be used for concurrency by initializing e.g. multiple channels.

```go
const numCPU = 4 // number of CPU cores

func (v Vector) DoAll(u Vector) {
    // buffered array
    c := make(chan int, numCPU)
    fraction := len(v) / numCPU
    for i := 0; i < numCPU; i++ {
        go v.DoSome(
            // lower index
            i * fraction,
            // upper index
            (i+1) * fraction,
            u,
            c
        )
    }
    // drain the channel.
    for i := 0; i < numCPU; i++ {
        // wait for one task to complete
        <-c
    }
    // all done.
}
```

4.3 Enums

Although Go does not have a concept of an enum, there is the builtin `iota`, which is an automatically incrementing integer scoped to `const` blocks with the initial value of 0. It can be used to quickly define monotonically increasing constants. `iota` may also be used in expressions.

```go
const (
    A = 1
    B  = 2
    C  = 4
)
// becomes
const (
    A = iota + 1
    B
    _ // skip
    C
)
```

5 TIC-80 with WASM

In order to use WASM with the TIC-80, the TIC-80 executable must be compiled with -DBUILD_PRO=On. The full setup proceedure is then

```
git clone "https://github.com/nesbox/TIC-80"
cd TIC-80/build
# run cmake
cmake .. -DBUILD_PRO=On
make -j4
# link binary
sudo ln -s $(pwd)/bin/tic80 /usr/local/bin/tic80
```

Refer to the TIC-80 readme for full installation instructions for your OS.

When executing a *.wasmp script, we also require a setupfile with tile set, wave forms, etc. This is already included in the example repository (see 6 Using tinygo to target TIC-80). We will generally use the CLI arguments --skip --fs . to skip the startup animation and to mount the current working directory as the filesystem.

We load and start the WASM executable with

```
load wasmdemo.wasmp
import binary cart.wasm
run
```

5.1 Specifications

There is a full rundown of the TIC-80 and its functions on the official site. Another very useful resource is the GitHub wiki.

Some general points:

- TIC-80 runs at 60 fps.

6 Using tinygo to target TIC-80

We have an example repository, containing a Makefile for targetting TIC-80 with tinygo in fjebaker/global-game-jam-2023. It is also worth reading the tinygo documentation on the Differences from Go.

Finally, it is also worth noting that someone has already implemented a Go module for the TIC-80 soru-coder/tic80 which we can use to base our implementation on. I am reluctant to just use this module as we won't really learn the memory map overview, and wrapping new functions is not too difficult.

6.1 Setup

tinygo requires all sorts of setup configuration, but is probably easiest to use directly from the Docker image provided by the maintainers. As long as you have a Docker runtime installed and running, the Makefile included in the example repository should work fine.

Inline with the restrictions of the TIC-80, we have a target.json file included which sets up the memory topology and linker flags needed. Interesting to note is that although we *should not need* to provide an entry point, go **still requires** that the **_start symbol is invoke** to setup the garbage collector and thread runtime. We can delegate this task to the BOOT function.

```
//go:export BOOT
func BOOT() {
    tic80.Init()
}
// still need this since _start calls main
func main() {}
```

6.2 Modifying tic80.go

The full memory map of the TIC-80 is probably easiest to understand by looking at the C example here. We add new functions simply with the compiler directives. For example, the `print` function might look like:

```go
import unsafe

//go:export print
func print(textBuffer unsafe.Pointer, x, y int32, color, fixed, scale, alt int8) int32
```