

Verimatrix Interview Exercise

In this exercise, you will complete a small project as a demonstration of your problem solving abilities, programming knowledge, and software engineering skills. The exercise is designed to be complex enough to allow you to come up with a creative solution while still remaining self-contained and hopefully not taking too much of your time.

Don't be afraid to submit your work even if you didn't have time to fully complete your solution or get it fully working as we'll still be able to see your approach to solving the problem and the quality of your code.

We hope you have fun with it!

Problem Description

The problem you have to solve is to write an interpreter for an esoteric programming language targeting an imaginary machine.

The Machine

The machine consists of:

- A tape: a contiguous collection of cells containing binary digits (bits). All cells are initially 0.
- A tape pointer: a location on the tape which can be read from or written to. The pointer starts in the "middle" of the tape and can be moved left or right by one cell at a time.
- Input stream: a simple bit stream which can be read one bit at a time. Once a bit is read, the stream automatically advances.
- Output stream: a simple bit stream which can be written to one bit at a time. Once a bit is written, the stream automatically advances.

The language

The language that we want to interpret is made up of operations, each represented by a single character.

If we assume that the tape pointer is called `p` then the operations are as follows:

- `+` - Negate the bit on the tape under `p` (i.e. a 0 becomes a 1 and a 1 becomes a 0).
- `,` - Read the next bit from the input stream, writing it to the tape under `p`. If the end of the input stream (EOF) has been reached then the value read will just be 0.
- `;` - Write the bit on the tape under `p` to the output stream.
- `<` - Move `p` left by one cell.
- `>` - Move `p` right by one cell.
- `[` - If the value on the tape under `p` is 0 then set `p` to the location of the next matching `]`.
- `]` - If the value on the tape under `p` is 1 then set `p` to the location of the prior matching `[`.

Note that the `[` and `]` pairs are nested and paired in the usual natural way. For example:

```
[ [ [ ] ] ]  
^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^
```

```
| | |_1_| | |
| |__2__| | |
|____3____|
```

Any characters that are not recognised as valid operations should simply be ignored by the interpreter. This allows a programmer to make use of whitespace and comments to make their programs more readable.

Input/Output

You can assume that the input stream and output stream are connected to devices that read and write 8-bit ASCII encoded characters in little-endian order. For example, the character **A** is represented by the number **65** which is **01100001** in binary, so an **A** would be read from the input stream as **1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0**. If the total number of bits that have been output at the end of the program is not a multiple of eight then the last character will be padded with zeros on the most significant end.

For example, here is a program that will output "Hello, world!"

```
;;;+;+;+;+;+; H
+;+;+;+;+;+; e
;;;+;+;+;+;+; l
;;;+;+;+;+;+; l
+;+;+;+;+;+; o
;;;+;+;+;+;+; ,
;;;;+;+;+;
+;+;+;+;+;+; w
+;+;+;+;+;+; o
+;+;+;+;+;+; r
;;;+;+;+;+;+; l
;;;+;+;+;+;+; d
+;+;+;+;+;+; !
+;+;+;+;+;+; \n
+;+;+;+;
```

The task

Build an interpreter for the language described above. It must be possible to provide input to the input stream and read output from the output stream, but you are free to choose how exactly to do this. For example, you could simply connect the input and output streams to **stdin** and **stdout** respectively, or the input could be passed as a command line argument, or you could use files. Invalid programs with unpaired **[** and **]** operations should be rejected with a suitable error message.

We would suggest starting by trying to implement a function that looks something like this.

```
/*
 * Take a program, "code", and the contents of the input stream, "input", and
 * execute the program. The contents of the output stream are returned.
 */
bit_stream interpret(const std::string &code, const bit_stream &input);
```

An example of how this function might be used:

[illegible]

The finished exercise should be a complete, buildable, tested project.

Expectations

- The program should be written in C++. You can use whichever standard with which you are familiar, however we would encourage the use of more modern C++ if possible.
- You can choose whichever compiler(s), architecture(s), Operating System(s), and build system you prefer as long as it is easy to build and run your program on a standard Windows, Linux, or macOS computer. You may wish to provide instructions explaining how to build and run your program.
- Although the tape is described as infinite, it will obviously be limited in practice by the amount of available memory. The point is that you shouldn't arbitrarily constrain the size in your program but should allow it use as much memory as is required.
- Some people may choose to extend the project with additional features. This is not disallowed but is not required or expected.
- You can provide the project as a compressed archive, or you can upload it to a version control service such as GitHub. We would ask that if you do use something like GitHub that you make the project private to prevent other candidates from finding and using your solution. We can provide Github user names on request for you to grant permission to see your repository.
- While not mandatory, it might be useful for you and for us if you also provide a **README** file explaining your approach, any assumptions that you have made, what you found challenging, what you would change in hindsight and any other information you think would be useful in evaluating your solution and your approach.

Test Cases

Below are some examples that you can use for testing:

[illegible]

Expected result: reverses the input. For example Hello -> olleH

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

