

Lambda expressions

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1. Why lambda expressions?

Lambda expressions (sometimes incorrectly called 'closures') are 'anonymous functions'. Why are they needed?

- Small functions may be needed; defining them is tedious, would be nice to just write the function recipe in-place.
- C++ can not define a function dynamically, depending on context.

Example:

1. we read `float c`
2. now we want function `float f(float)` that multiplies by `c`:

```
float c; cin >> c;
float mult( float x ) {
    // multiply x by c
};
```

2. Introducing: lambda expressions

Traditional function usage:

explicitly define a function and apply it:

```
double sum(float x,float y) { return x+y; }  
cout << sum( 1.2, 3.4 );
```

New:

apply the function recipe directly:

Code:

```
[] (float x,float y) -> float {  
    return x+y; } ( 1.5, 2.3 )
```

Output

[func] lambdadirect:

3.8

3. Lambda syntax

```
[capture] ( inputs ) -> outtype { definition };  
[capture] ( inputs ) { definition };
```

- The square brackets are how you recognize a lambda; we will get to the 'capture' later.
- Inputs: like function parameters
- Result type specification `-> outtype`:
can be omitted if compiler can deduce it;
- Definition: function body.

4. Assign lambda expression to variable

Code:

```
auto summing =  
    [] (float x,float y) -> float {  
        return x+y; };  
cout << summing ( 1.5, 2.3 ) << '\n';
```

Output

[func] lambdavar:

3.8

- This is a variable declaration.
- Uses `auto` for technical reasons; see later.

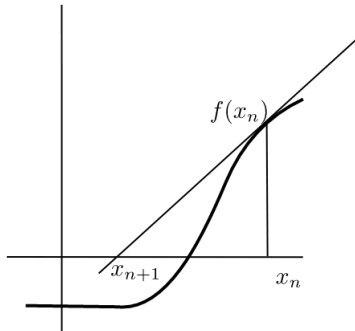
Return type could have been omitted:

```
auto summing =  
    [] (float x,float y) { return x+y; };
```

Example of lambda usage: Newton's method

5. Newton's method

$$x_{n+1} = x_n - f(x_n)/f'(x_n)$$



6. Newton for root finding

With

$$f(x) = x^2 - 2$$

zero finding is equivalent to

$$f(x) = 0 \quad \text{for } x = \sqrt{2}$$

so we can compute a square root if we have a zero-finding function.

Newton's method for this f :

$$x_{n+1} = x_n - f(x_n)/f'(x_n) = x_n - \frac{(x_n^2 - 2)}{2x_n} = x_n/2 + 2/x_n$$

Square root computation only takes division!

Exercise 1

The Newton method (see HPC book) for finding the zero of a function f , that is, finding the x for which $f(x) = 0$, can be programmed by supplying the function and its derivative:

```
double f(double x) { return x*x-2; };  
double fprime(double x) { return 2*x; };
```

and the algorithm:

```
double x{1.};  
while ( true ) {  
    auto fx = f(x);  
    cout << "f( " << x << " ) = " << fx << '\n';  
    if (std::abs(fx)<1.e-10 ) break;  
    x = x - fx/fprime(x);  
}
```

Rewrite this code to use lambda functions for f and g .

You can base this off the file `newton.cxx` in the repository

7. Function pointers

You can pass a function to another function.

In C syntax:

```
void f(int i) { /* something with i */ };  
void apply_to_5( (void)(*f)(int) ) {  
    f(5);  
}  
int main() {  
    apply_to_5(f);  
}
```

8. Lambdas as parameter: the problem

Lambdas have a type that is dynamically generated, so you can not write a function that takes a lambda as argument, because you can't write the type.

```
void apply_to_5( /* what? */ f ) {  
    f(5);  
}  
  
int main() {  
    apply_to_5  
        ( [] (double x) { cout << x; } );  
}
```

(Actually, this simple case does work with C syntax, but not for general lambdas)

9. Lambdas as parameter: the solution

```
#include <functional>
using std::function;
```

With this, you can declare parameters by their signature (that is, types of parameters and output):

```
double find_zero
( function< double(double) > f,
  function< double(double) > fprime ) {
```

This states that $f, fprime$ are in the class of `double(double)` functions:

`double` parameter in, `double` result out.

Exercise 2

Rewrite the Newton exercise above to use a function with prototype

```
double root = find_zero( f,g );
```

Call the function

1. first with the lambda variables you already created;
2. but in a better variant, directly with the lambda expressions as arguments, that is, without assigning them to variables.

10. Capture parameter

Capture value and reduce number of arguments:

```
int exponent=5;
auto powerfive =
    [exponent] (float x) -> float {
        return pow(x,exponent); };
```

Now powerfive is a function of one argument, which computes that argument to a fixed power.

Code:

```
cout << "To the power "
      << exponent << '\n';
for (float x=1.; x<=5.; x+=1.)
    cout << x << ":" << powerfive(x) <<
        '\n';
```

Output

[func] lambdait:

To the power 5

1:1

2:32

3:243

4:1024

5:3125

Exercise 3

Extend the newton exercise to compute roots in a loop:

```
for (int n=2; n<=8; n++) {  
    cout << "sqrt(" << n << ") = "  
        << find_zero(  
/* ... */  
        )  
    << '\n';  
}
```

Without lambdas, you would define a function

```
double squared_minus_n( double x,int n ) {  
    return x*x-n; }  

```

However, the *find_zero* function takes a function of only a real argument. Use a capture to make *f* dependent on the integer parameter.

Exercise 4

You don't need the gradient as an explicit function: you can approximate it as

$$f'(x) = (f(x + h) - f(x))/h$$

for some value of h .

Write a version of the root finding function

```
double find_zero( function< double(double)> f )
```

that uses this. You can use a fixed value $h=1e-6$. Do not reimplement the whole newton method: instead create a lambda for the gradient and pass it to the function `find_zero` you coded earlier.

11. Turn it in!

Write a program that

1. reads an integer from the commandline
2. prints a line:

The root of this number is 1.4142
which contains the word `root` and the value of the square
root of the input in default output format.

Your program should

- have a subroutine `newton_root` as described above.
- (8/10 credit): call it with two lambda expressions: one for the function and one for the derivative, *or*
- (10/10 credit) call it with a single lambda expression for the function and approximate the derivative as described above.

The tester is `coe_newton`, options as usual.

More lambda topics

12. Capture by value

Normal capture is by value:

Code:

```
int one=1;
auto increment =
    [one] ( int input ) -> void {
        cout << input+one << '\n';
    };
increment (5);
increment (6);
increment (7);
```

Output

[func] lambdavalue:

6

7

8

13. Capture by value/reference

Capture by reference:

Code:

```
int stride = 1;
auto more_and_more =
    [&stride] ( int input ) -> void {
        cout << input << "=>" <<
            input+stride << '\n';
        stride++;
    };
more_and_more(5);
more_and_more(6);
more_and_more(7);
more_and_more(8);
more_and_more(9);
cout << "stride is now: " << stride
    << '\n';
```

Output

[func] lambdareference:

5=>6

6=>8

7=>10

8=>12

9=>14

stride is now: 6

14. Capture a reduction variable

This mechanism is useful

```
int count=0;
auto count_if_f = [&count] (int i) {
    if (f(i)) count++; }
for ( int i : int_data )
    count_if_f(i);
cout << "We counted: " << count;
```

15. Lambdas vs function pointers

Lambda expression with empty capture are compatible with C-style function pointers:

Code:

```
int cfun_add1( int i ) { return i+1;
};
int apply_to_5( int(*f)(int) ) {
    return f(5);
};
//codesnippet end
/* ... */
auto lambda_add1 = [] (int i) {
    return i+1; };
cout << "C ptr: "
      << apply_to_5(&cfun_add1) <<
      '\n';
cout << "Lambda: "
      << apply_to_5(lambda_add1) <<
      '\n';
```

Output

[func] lambdacptr:

C ptr: 6

Lambda: 6