

Ve 280

Programming and Introductory Data Structures

Dynamic Memory Allocation; Destructor

Outline

- Dynamic Memory Allocation
- Dynamic Arrays
- Overloaded Constructor and Default Argument
- Destructor

Memory

Dynamic Allocation

- So far, the data structures we've **built** have all had room for "at most N" elements.
 - E.g., the two `IntSet` implementations could have at most `MAXELTS` distinct integers.
- Sometimes, a **fixed-sized** structure is reasonable.
 - E.g., a deck of cards has 52 individual cards in it
- However, there is no meaningful sense in which "a set of integers" is limited to some particular size.
 - No matter how big you make the set's capacity, an application that needs more will eventually come along.

Memory

Dynamic Allocation

- We have seen two types of variables so far:

1. Global Variables
2. Local Variables

1. Global Variables

- These are defined anywhere outside of a function definition.
- Space is set aside for these variables **before** the program begins execution, and is reserved for them **until** the program completes.
- This space is reserved at **compile time**.

Memory

Dynamic Allocation

2. Local Variables

- Local variables are defined **within a block**.
 - These include function arguments.
 - Space is set aside for these variables when the relevant block is entered, and is reserved for them until the block is exited.
 - This space is reserved at **run time**, but the size is known to the compiler.
-
- Since the compiler must know how big all of these variables will be, it is **static** information, and must be declared by the programmer.

Memory

Dynamic Allocation

- It turns out that there is a **third** type of object you can create, a "**dynamic**" one.
- They are dynamic in the sense that the compiler:
 - Doesn't need to know **how big it is**.
 - Doesn't need to know **how long it lives**.
- For example:
 - Our implementation of `IntSet` should be able to grow as big as any client needs it to grow, subject to the limits of the physical machine.
 - The `IntSet` should last as long as the client needs to use it, after which the **client** should be the one responsible for **destroying** it.

Memory

Dynamic Allocation

- Dynamic object creation is accomplished through the **dynamic storage management** facilities in the language.
- These facilities consist of two operations:
 - **new**: Reserve space for an object of some type, initialize the object, and return a pointer to it.
 - **delete**: Given a pointer to an object created by new, destroy the object and release the space previously occupied by that object.

Memory

Dynamic Allocation – new

```
int *ip = new int;
```

- This creates new space for an integer, and returns a pointer to that space, assigning it to `ip`.
- Note that we didn't do anything to initialize the integer – it could be any random integer value.
- We can initialize it to a specific value with an "initializer":

```
int *ip = new int(5);
```

- We can also new a class type. E.g.,

```
IntSet *isp = new IntSet;
```

- The **constructor** is called. `isp` points to an empty `IntSet` object with zero elements.

Memory

Dynamic Allocation – delete

- If objects were created by `new`, they can be destroyed by `delete`:

```
delete ip;
```

- This **releases the space**.
- Note: you cannot **delete** an object not created by **new**!

```
int a = 5;  
int ip = &a;  
delete ip; // Error
```

Memory

Dynamic Allocation – delete

- We can also destroy instances of class that were created by new:

```
delete isp;
```

- In this specific case (deleting an `IntSet`), the `IntSet` consists of only "ordinary" types (`ints`, `arrays-of-ints`), so we don't need to do anything to destroy it.
- That won't be true of all class-destruction events!
- Just as we have **constructors** to create objects, sometimes we will need **destructors** to properly destroy them.
 - We will see this later ...

Memory

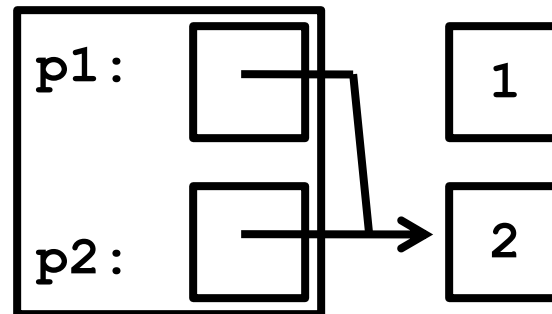
Dynamic Allocation – delete

- Note that a dynamic object's lifetime is completely under the control of the program – it lives until it is **explicitly** destroyed.
- This is true even if you "forget" the pointer to the object.

```
int *p1 = new int(1);  
int *p2 = new int(2);  
p1 = p2;
```

Any problem?

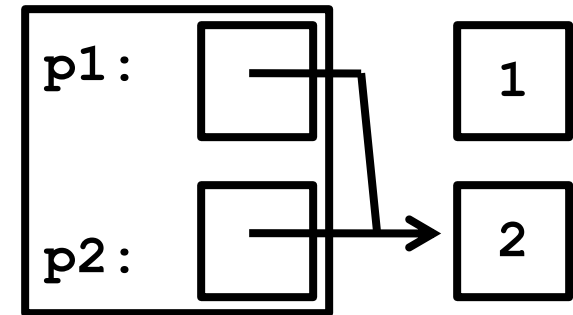
- This leaves us with:



Memory

Dynamic Allocation – delete

```
int *p1 = new int(1);  
int *p2 = new int(2);  
p1 = p2;
```



- Two pointers point to the object "2", and **none** to the object "1".
- There is no way to release the memory occupied by "1".
- And worse:

```
delete p1;  
delete p2;
```

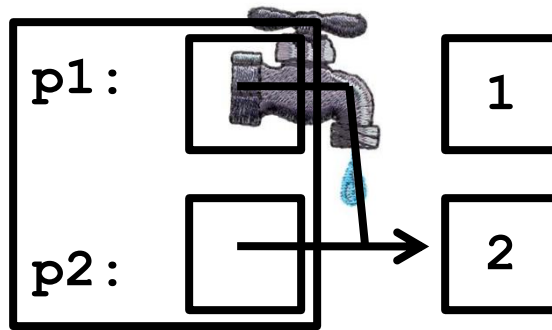
"releases" the memory reserved for "2" **twice**.

- This is surely not good!

Memory

Dynamic Allocation – delete

- Note there is an important difference between the lifetime of a pointer variable and the lifetime of the object it points to!



- In the previous example, exiting the block that defines p1 causes the local object p1 to vanish, but the dynamic object it points to remains!
- This leaves us with an allocated dynamic object that we have no means of recycling. This is called a **memory leak**.
- If memory leaks occur often enough, your program may reach a point where it can no longer allocate new dynamic objects.

Checking Memory Leak

- Tool to use: `valgrind`

- Command:

```
valgrind --leak-check=full ./program <args>
```

- Function: search for memory leaks and give details of each individual leak.

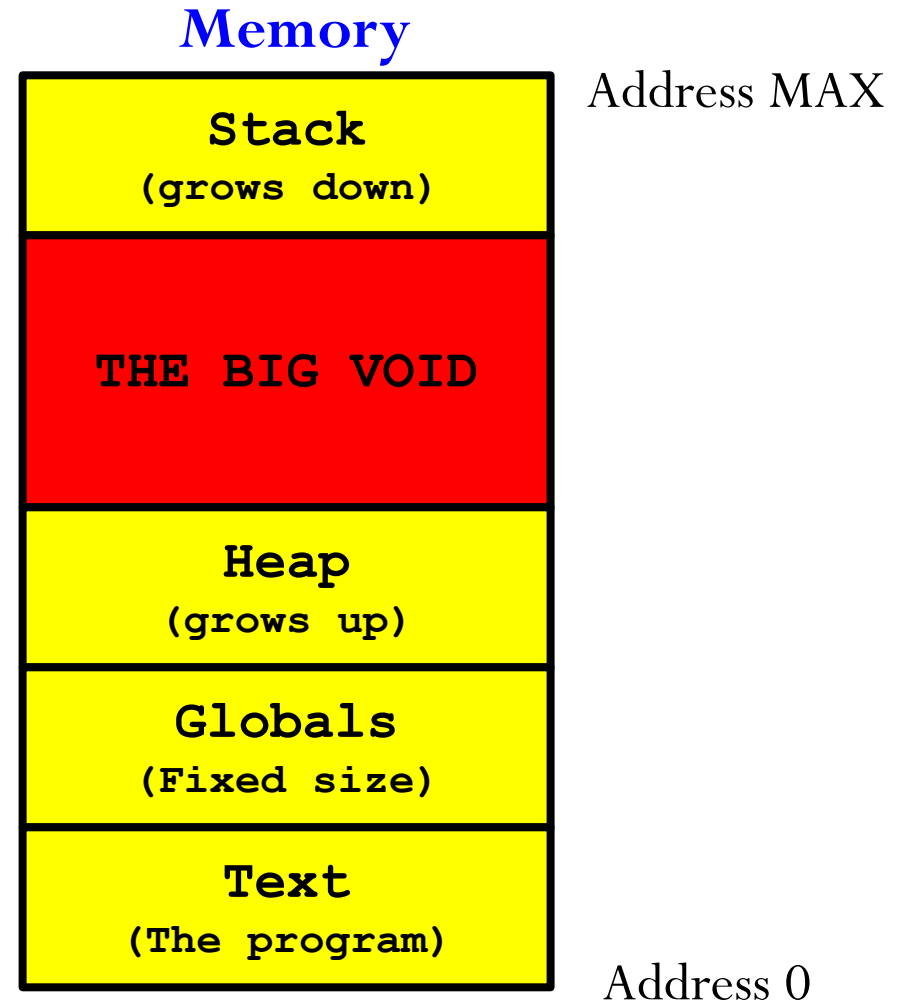
- To install, type the command:

```
sudo apt-get install valgrind
```

Memory

The heap

- The space for objects created via `new` comes from a location in memory called the **heap**.
- Stack is for function calls.



Outline

- Dynamic Memory Allocation
- **Dynamic Arrays**
- Overloaded Constructor and Default Argument
- Destructor

Dynamic Arrays

Creating

- So far, the things we create **dynamically** have sizes **known** to the compiler.
 - E.g., `int`, `IntSet`
- However, one can also create objects whose sizes are **unknown** to the compiler, by creating **dynamic arrays**.
- Syntax:

```
int *ia = new int[5];
```

It creates an array of five integers in the heap, and stores a pointer to the first element of that array in `ia`.

- The size is put inside `[]`. It could even be a variable.

```
int n = 20;
```

```
int *ia= new int[n];
```

Dynamic Arrays

Freeing

- Freeing an array works slightly different than freeing a single object:

`delete[] ia;`

- If you allocate an **array-of-T**, you **absolutely must** use the `delete[]` operator, and **not** the "plain" `delete` operator.
- They are completely different:
 - Mixing them leads to undefined behavior.

Dynamic Arrays

Freeing

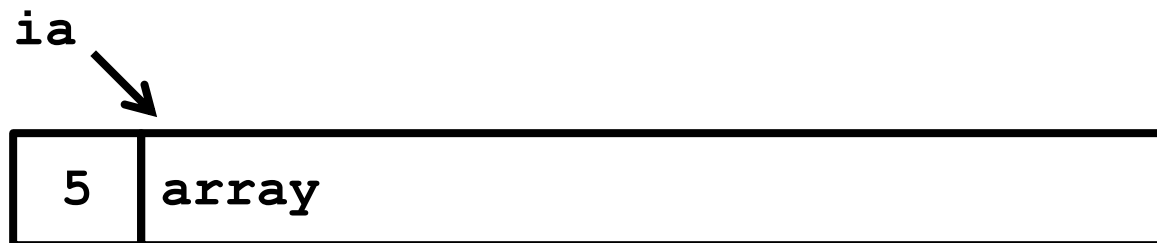
- When the new operator sees it is allocating an array, it stores the **size of the array** along with the array.
- It does this by carving out space for the array, plus a bit extra:



- The space **before** the array records the number of elements in the array, in this case, 5:



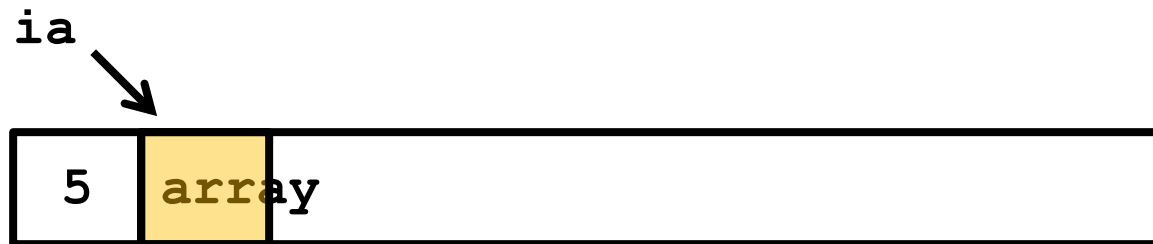
- And a pointer to the beginning of the array is returned:



Dynamic Arrays

Freeing

- Now, if you just `delete ia`; the `delete` operator thinks it is only returning enough space for a single integer to the heap.



- The `delete []` operator knows to look "just before" the pointer, to see **how many** elements to return to the heap.



Dynamic Arrays

Building a new `IntSet`

- We now build a version of `IntSet` that allows the client to specify how large the capacity of the set should be.
- The data elements will change slightly:

```
class IntSet {  
    int *elts; // pointer to dynamic array  
    int sizeElts; // capacity of array  
    int numElts; // current occupancy  
public:  
    ...  
};
```

Rather than hold an array explicitly, we have a pointer that will (eventually) point to a dynamically-created array.

- **sizeElts** tells us the size of the allocated array (which is not necessarily **MAXELTS**)
- **numElts** still tells us how many elements there actually are.

Dynamic Arrays

Building a new `IntSet`

- We'll base our changes on the **unsorted** implementation.
- The methods are mostly unchanged. There is a new **default constructor**:

```
IntSet::IntSet() {  
    // Allocate the "default-size" array  
    elts = new int[MAXELTS];  
    sizeElts = MAXELTS;  
    numElts = 0;  
}
```

Dynamic Arrays

Building a new `IntSet`

- Alternatively, we can write the default constructor using the **initialization syntax**:

```
IntSet::IntSet(): elts(new int[MAXELTS]),  
    sizeElts(MAXELTS), numElts(0)  
{  
}
```

Outline

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Dynamic Arrays

Building a new `IntSet`

- In addition to the default, we can write an "alternate constructor".
- It has the same name as the default, but a **different** type signature:

```
class IntSet {
    int *elts;      // pointer to dynamic array
    int sizeElts;   // capacity of array
    int numElts;    // current occupancy
public:
    IntSet();       // default constructor
    // EFFECTS: create a MAXELTS capacity set
    IntSet(int size); // constructor with
                    // explicit capacity
    // REQUIRES: size > 0
    // EFFECTS: create a size capacity set
};
```

Function Overloading

- This is called **function overloading**.
 - Two different functions with exactly the **same name**, but **different argument count** and/or **argument types**.
 - a) `int average(int a, int b);`
 - b) `double average(double a, double b);`
 - c) `int average(int a, int b, int c);`
- Compiler tells which function to call based on the actual argument count and types.

```
average(2, 3); → int average(int a, int b);
```

```
average(2, 3, 5); → int average(int a, int b, int c);
```

```
average(2.0, 3.0); → double average(double a, double b);
```

Dynamic Arrays

Building a new `IntSet`

- The alternate constructor creates an array of the specified size:

```
IntSet::IntSet(int size): elts(new int[size]),  
    sizeElts(size), numElts(0)  
{  
}
```

Dynamic Arrays

Building a new `IntSet`

- Since the compiler knows the argument count and types, it can pick the “right” constructor when a new object is created.
- For example:

```
IntSet is1;    // No arguments
               // Call default constructor
IntSet is2(200); // Integer argument
               // Call alternate
```

Dynamic Arrays

Building a new `IntSet`

```
IntSet::IntSet(int size) :  
    elts(new int[size]),  
    sizeElts(size),  
    numElts(0) {  
}
```

```
IntSet::IntSet() :  
    elts(new int[MAXELTS]),  
    sizeElts(MAXELTS),  
    numElts(0) {  
}
```

- Notice that the two constructors are nearly identical:
 - The only difference is whether we use `size` or `MAXELTS`.
 - Otherwise the code is duplicated.
- This is bad: when we find ourselves writing the same code over and over, we should try to use parametric generalization.

Dynamic Arrays

Building a new constructor

- One way to solve this problem of duplicate definitions is to use **default argument**.
- We can define **just one** constructor, but make its argument **optional**.
- First, we have to re-declare the constructor in IntSet:

```
class IntSet {  
    int *elts;    // pointer to dynamic array  
    int sizeElts; // capacity of array  
    int numElts;  // current occupancy  
public:  
    IntSet( int size = MAXELTS );  
        // EFFECTS: create a set with specified  
        //          capacity. It defaults to MAXELTS if  
        //          not supplied.  
};
```

Default Argument

- `int add(int a, int b, int c = 1)`

- The default value of c is 1.

- Using default arguments allows you to call the function with different number of arguments.

`add(1, 2) // a = 1, b = 2, c = 1 (default value)`

`add(1, 2, 3) // a = 1, b = 2, c = 3`

- There could be multiple default arguments in a function, but they must be the last arguments.

`int add(int a, int b = 0, int c = 1) // OK`

`int add(int a, int b = 1, int c) // Error`

Dynamic Arrays

Building a new constructor

- Then, we implement the constructor in a same way as before.

```
IntSet::IntSet(int size) :  
    elts(new int[size]), sizeElts(size),  
    numElts(0)  
{  
}
```

Don't add "**= MAXELTS**"!

Outline

- Dynamic Memory Allocation
- Dynamic Arrays
- Overloaded Constructor and Default Argument
- **Destructor**

Problem

- There is a problem with what we've built so far.
- What happens if we have a local `IntSet` inside of a function and the function returns?
- Answer: **Memory leak**! Because link to the `elts` array in `IntSet` is lost.

```
class IntSet {  
    int *elts;      // pointer to dynamic array  
    int sizeElts;   // capacity of array  
    int numElts;    // current occupancy  
public:  
    ...  
};
```

Question

- Is this a problem with the "static" version of IntSet?
Why?

```
void foo() {  
    IntSet is2;  
    // Do work with is2 in some way  
}
```

```
class IntSet {  
    int elts[MAXELTS];  
    int numElts; // current occupancy  
  
public:  
    ...  
};
```

Dynamic Arrays

How to solve the leak


- To solve this memory leak, we have to de-allocate the integer array whenever the "enclosing" `IntSet` is destroyed.
- We do this with a **destructor** and it is the opposite of a constructor.
 - The constructor ensures that the object is a legal instance of its class and the destructor's job is to destroy the object.
- In a class where its methods (including the constructor) allocate **dynamic storage**, the destructor is responsible for **de-allocating** it.

The Destructor

```
class IntSet {  
    int *elts;    // pointer to dynamic array  
    int sizeElts; // capacity of array  
    int numElts;  // current occupancy  
public:  
    IntSet(int size = MAXELTS);  
    // EFFECTS: create a set with size capacity;  
    //          capacity is MAXELTS by default.  
    ~IntSet(); // Destroy this IntSet  
    ...  
};
```

```
IntSet::~~IntSet() {  
    delete[] elts;  
}
```

Note that we have to use the array-based
delete operator, not the "standard"
delete operator




The Destructor

```
class IntSet {  
    int *elts;    // pointer to dynamic array  
    int sizeElts; // capacity of array  
    int numElts;  // current occupancy  
public:  
    IntSet(int size = MAXELTS);  
    // EFFECTS: create a set with size capacity;  
    //          capacity is MAXELTS by default.  
    ~IntSet(); // Destroy this IntSet  
    ...  
};
```

```
IntSet::~~IntSet() {  
    delete[] elts;  
}
```

When the IntSet is destroyed, the elements in the array will first be deleted.



The Destructor

```
class IntSet {
    int *elts;    // pointer to dynamic array
    int sizeElts; // capacity of array
    int numElts;  // current occupancy
public:
    IntSet(int size = MAXELTS);
    // EFFECTS: create a set with size capacity;
    //          capacity is MAXELTS by default.
    ~IntSet(); // Destroy this IntSet
    ...
};

IntSet::~~IntSet() {
    delete[] elts;
}
```

Note: the destructors for any ADTs declared locally within a block of code are called automatically when the block ends.

Dynamic Arrays

Dynamic IntSet

- The new definition of IntSet can be created/destroyed dynamically, just like anything else:

```
// a non-standard size
IntSet *ip = new IntSet(50);

... // do stuff

delete ip; // Destroys the IntSet.
```

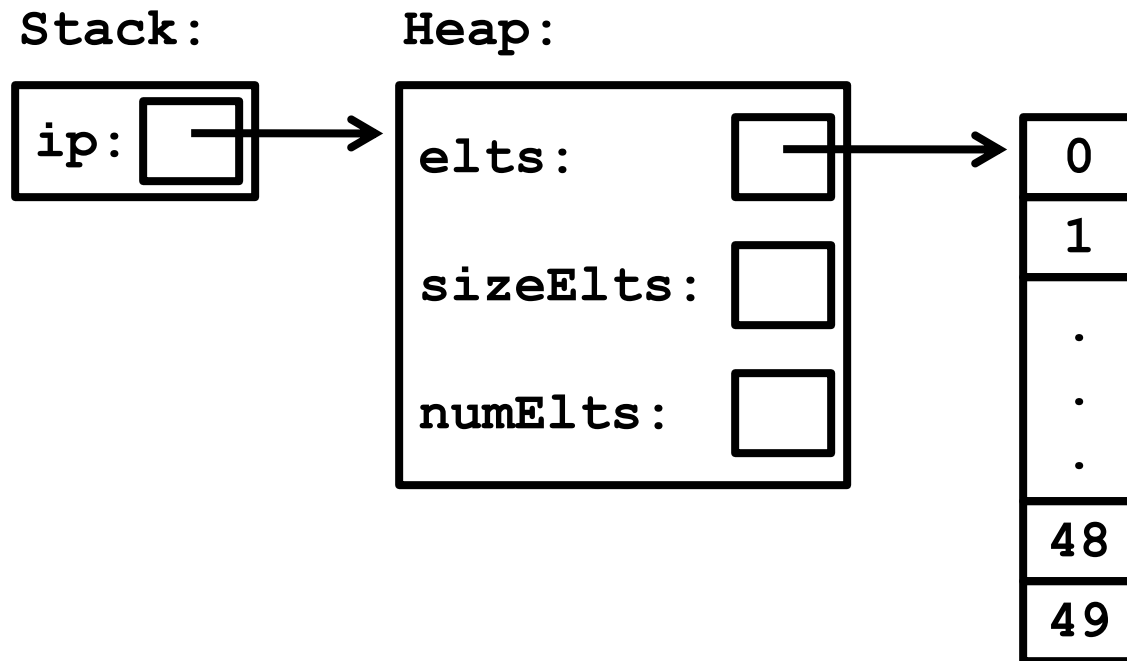


```
IntSet *ip = new IntSet(50);
```

Dynamic Arrays

Dynamic `IntSet` creation

- After the `IntSet` pointer is created, we get:
 - Allocate space to hold the `IntSet` (a pointer and two integers)
 - Call the constructor on that object (allocates space for the array of 50 integers)

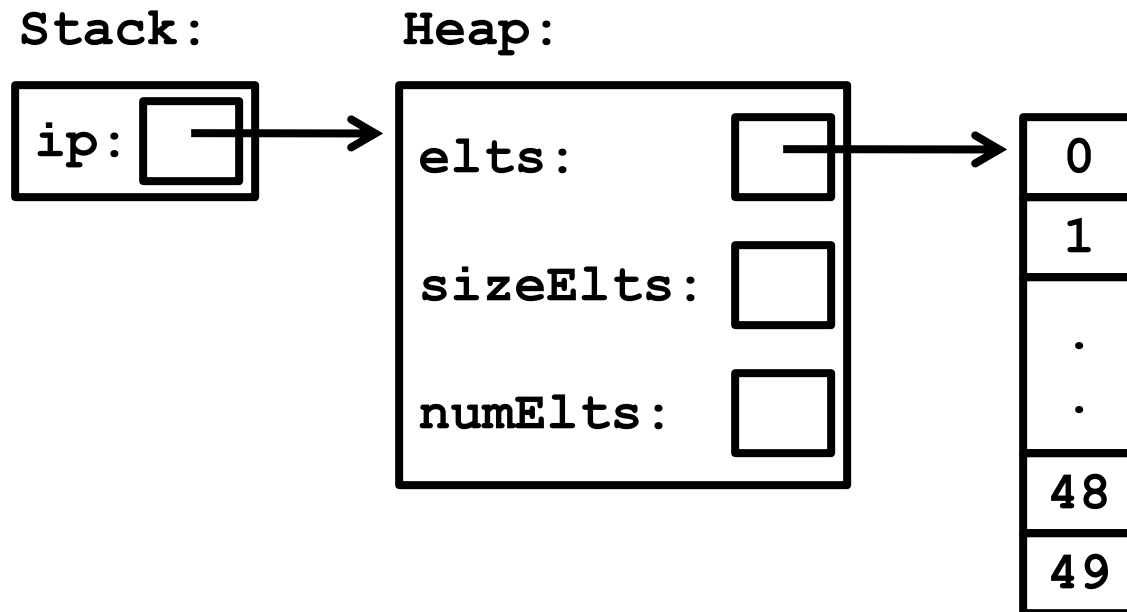


Dynamic Arrays

Dynamic `IntSet` deletion

```
delete ip;
```

- When you call `delete` on an instance of a class with a destructor
 - **First** the destructor is called (deallocates the array)
 - **Then** the object itself is deleted



References

- **Problem Solving with C++ (8th Edition)**, by *Walter Savitch*, Addison Wesley Publishing (2011)
 - Chapter 9.1 **Pointers**
 - Chapter 9.2 **Dynamic Arrays**
 - Chapter 11.4 **Classes and Dynamic Arrays**
 - Chapter 10.2 **Constructors for Initialization** (pp. 560-570)
 - Chapter 6.3 **Default Arguments for Functions** (pp. 344-345)