It turns out that C allows compound statements to contain declarations as well:

block { *declarations statements* }

I'll use the term ***block*** to describe such a compound statement. Here's an example of a block:

```
if (i > j) {
  /* swap values of i and j */
  int temp = i;
  i = j;
  j = temp;
}
```

By default, the storage duration of a variable declared in a block is automatic: storage for the variable is allocated when the block is entered and deallocated when the block is exited. The variable has block scope; it can't be referenced outside the block. A variable that belongs to a block can be declared `static` to give it static storage duration.

The body of a function is a block. Blocks are also useful inside a function body when we need variables for temporary use. In our last example, we needed a variable temporarily so that we could swap the values of `i` and `j`. Putting temporary variables in blocks has two advantages: (1) It avoids cluttering the declarations at the beginning of the function body with variables that are used only briefly. (2) It reduces name conflicts. In our example, the name `temp` can be used elsewhere in the same function for different purposes—the `temp` variable is strictly local to the block in which it's declared.

C99 C99 allows variables to be declared anywhere within a block, just as it allows variables to be declared anywhere within a function.

10.4 Scope

In a C program, the same identifier may have several different meanings. C's scope rules enable the programmer (and the compiler) to determine which meaning is relevant at a given point in the program.

Here's the most important scope rule: When a declaration inside a block names an identifier that's already visible (because it has file scope or because it's declared in an enclosing block), the new declaration temporarily "hides" the old one, and the identifier takes on a new meaning. At the end of the block, the identifier regains its old meaning.

Consider the (somewhat extreme) example at the top of the next page, in which the identifier `i` has four different meanings:

- In Declaration 1, `i` is a variable with static storage duration and file scope.