Although the C standard doesn't require it to, `bsearch` normally uses the binary search algorithm to search the array. `bsearch` first compares the key with the element in the middle of the array; if there's a match, the function returns. If the key is smaller than the middle element, `bsearch` limits its search to the first half of the array; if the key is larger, `bsearch` searches only the last half of the array. `bsearch` repeats this strategy until it finds the key or runs out of elements to search. Thanks to this technique, `bsearch` is quite fast—searching an array of 1000 elements requires only 10 comparisons at most; searching an array of 1,000,000 elements requires no more than 20 comparisons.

qsort

Section 17.7 discusses the `qsort` function, which can sort any array. `bsearch` works only for sorted arrays, but we can always use `qsort` to sort an array prior to asking `bsearch` to search it.

PROGRAM Determining Air Mileage

Our next program computes the air mileage from New York City to various international cities. The program first asks the user to enter a city name, then displays the mileage to that city:

```
Enter city name: Shanghai
Shanghai is 7371 miles from New York City.
```

The program will store city/mileage pairs in an array. By using `bsearch` to search the array for a city name, the program can easily find the corresponding mileage. (Mileages are from *Infoplease.com*.)

airmiles.c

```
/* Determines air mileage from New York to other cities */

#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <string.h>

struct city_info {
  char *city;
  int miles;
};

int compare_cities(const void *key_ptr,
                   const void *element_ptr);

int main(void)
{
  char city_name[81];
  struct city_info *ptr;
  const struct city_info mileage[] =
    {{"Berlin",          3965}, {"Buenos Aires", 5297},
     {"Cairo",           5602}, {"Calcutta",     7918},
     {"Cape Town",       7764}, {"Caracas",      2132},
     {"Chicago",          713}, {"Hong Kong",    8054},
     {"Honolulu",        4964}, {"Istanbul",     4975},
```