

7 - Pointer to object and string stream

- New mystery file: tinyurl.com/player-cpp
- Introduces printing to a string stream (a form of overloading/polymorphism, for safe buffering).
- Uses a class reference return type and the this pointer to be able to keep working on an object (for chaining).
- Simplify the program:
 1. Remove references and pointers, make member functions "normal".
 2. Check if you need all functions, especially global ones.
 3. Remove the string stream and print the data as a normal string.

Explanation of <sstream> and ostringstream

The header <sstream> provides classes that let you read from and write to strings as if they were input/output streams (like cin and cout).

- ostringstream means "output string stream." You can "print" text into it using the << operator, just like cout. When you're done, you can get the entire string using .str().

Example:

```
#include <sstream>
#include <string>
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    ostringstream os; // string stream object
    os << "Score: " << 42 << ", Lives: " << 3; // print to string stream
    string info = os.str(); // get string data
    cout << info; // Output: Score: 42, Lives: 3
}
```

Explanation of Player reference and this pointer

- Code fragment from the class review:

```
Player& fire(int rounds) { // returns reference to same Player object
    ammo -= rounds;        // ammo is private Player data
    if (ammo < 0) ammo = 0;
    return *this;          // returns value of current Player object
}
```

- When member functions are defined in this way, they can be chain-called: p.fire(10).reload(5).move(1,0). Each method works on this same object p without creating a copy.

The this Pointer

Every non-static member function in C++ has an implicit pointer named this, which points to the object that called the function.

- Inside a member function, you can use this to refer explicitly to the current object.

- When returning `*this`, you return the object itself by reference, enabling method chaining.
- Example:

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

class Counter {
private:
    int value;
public:
    Counter(int v) : value(v) {}

    Counter& add(int n) {
        value += n;
        return *this;    // return reference to this object
    }

    Counter& sub(int n) {
        value -= n;
        return *this;
    }

    void show() const {
        cout << "Value = " << value << endl;
    }
};

int main() {
    Counter c(10);
    c.add(5).sub(3).add(2);    // chain-calling works via `this`
    c.show();                  // prints: Value = 14
}
```

- Here, `this` is a pointer to the object `c`. When `add()` and `sub()` return `*this`, they return the same object, allowing the chain `c.add(5).sub(3).add(2)`.

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