

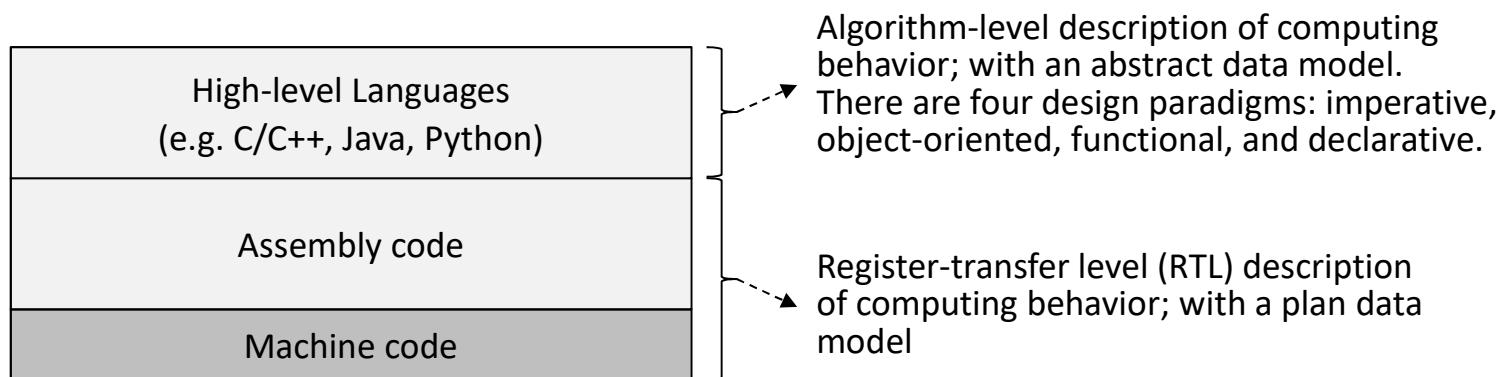
RISC-V Instruction Set Architecture



Chun-Jen Tsai
National Chiao Tung University
09/17/2021

Computer Language Hierarchy

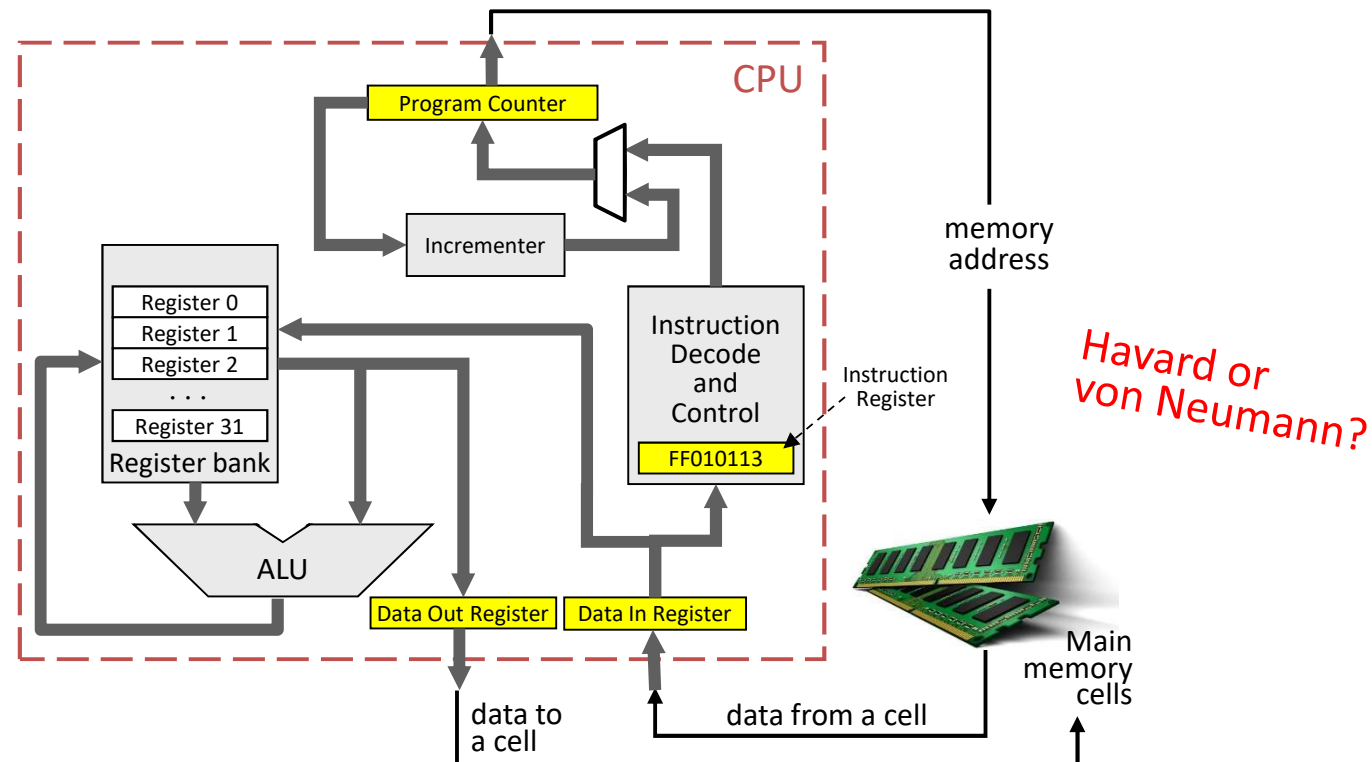
- ❑ Computer languages are classified into three layers



- There is a simple mapping rule of the assembly language of a processor to its machine code → they are basically the same.
- The machine code design of a processor reflects its instruction set architecture (ISA)

What Do Instructions Do?

- ❑ CPU instruction set design always follows the imperative programming paradigm:
 - Processing: select data source, destination, & operation
 - Control: update the CPU special registers (e.g. PC, mode)



CISC vs RISC ISA

- ❑ In computer history, we have Complex Instruction Set Computer (CISC) before we have Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC)
 - What defines “complex” operation?
 - Why did we build “complex” computers before “simple” computers?
 - Which one is “better” (consider Intel i9 vs ARM Cortex A78)?
 - Does instruction set architecture design really matter?

Scalar ISA vs Vector ISA

- ❑ A vector ISA put several numbers in a (vector) register and perform the same operation on all data items concurrently, for example,

```
rv1 ← [a, b, c, d];  
rv2 ← [e, f, g, h];  
rv3 ← rv1 + rv2;      // [a+e, b+f, c+g, d+h]
```

- Intel SSE, and the infamous AVX-512 instructions are vector extensions to the base scalar ISA
- ARM defines scalar instructions in the base ISA, and vector instructions in the NEON coprocessor ISA

RISC-V

- ❑ 5th generation RISC ISA design from UC Berkeley[†]
 - Work begins in 2010 in Parallel Computing Lab, Berkeley
 - License-free, royalty-free
 - Designed for everything, from 32-bit microcontrollers to 128-bit supercomputers
 - Standard maintained by RISC-V Foundation (<http://riscv.org>)

- ❑ Recent purchase of ARM by NVIDIA may further push industry adoption of RISC-V ISA

[†] <https://riscv.org/about/history/>

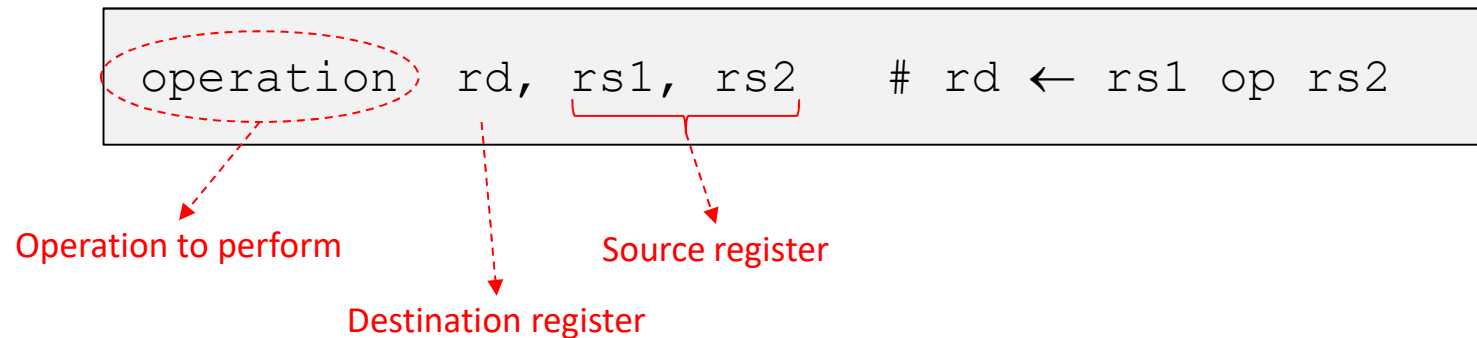
RISC-V Registers

- ❑ There are 32 general-purpose registers, $x0 \sim x31$
 - Each register can be of 32, 64, or 128 bits, depending on the ISA class: RV32, RV64, or RV128
 - $x0$ always holds zero
 - Each register has an alias from the programming convention: (ABI stands for Application Binary Interface)

Register	ABI Name	Description	Saver
x0	zero	Hard-wired zero	—
x1	ra	Return address	Caller
x2	sp	Stack pointer	Callee
x3	gp	Global pointer	—
x4	tp	Thread pointer	—
x5–7	t0–2	Temporaries	Caller
x8	s0/fp	Saved register/frame pointer	Callee
x9	s1	Saved register	Callee
x10–11	a0–1	Function arguments/return values	Caller
x12–17	a2–7	Function arguments	Caller
x18–27	s2–11	Saved registers	Callee
x28–31	t3–6	Temporaries	Caller

Instruction Format

- ❑ Classical three-address format are used:



- ❑ Little-endian format is adopted
- ❑ Minimal operations are defined
 - Only 47 instructions in the base integer instruction set
 - For example, traditional assembly has a `mov` instruction to move data between registers, in RISC-V, you use `addi` instead:

```
addi rd, rs1, 0 # rd ← rs1
```


Instruction Classification (RV32-IMA)

- ❑ User-Level Base Integer Instructions
 - Load / Store
 - Shift / Arithmetic
 - Logical / Compare
 - Branch / Jump-and-Link
 - Synchronization / System
 - Counter
- ❑ Multiplication and Division Instructions (Extension M)
- ❑ Atomic Instructions (Extension A)
- ❑ Privileged Instructions

Load / Store

❑ Load:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Load Byte	I	LB rd, rs1, imm
Load Half Word	I	LH rd, rs1, imm
Load Word	I	LW rd, rs1, imm
Load Byte Unsigned	I	LBU rd, rs1, imm
Load Half Word Unsigned	I	LHU rd, rs1, imm

❑ Store:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Store Byte	S	SB rs1, rs2, imm
Store Halfword	S	SH rs1, rs2, imm
Store Word	S	SW rs1, rs2, imm

❑ Instruction format:

	31	20	15	11	7	0
I	imm[11:0]				rd	opcode
S	imm[11:5]		rs2	rs1	func3	imm[4:0] opcode

Shift / Arithmetic

□ Shift:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Shift Left	R	SLL rd, rs1, rs2
Shift Left Immediate	I	SLLI rd, rs1, imm
Shift Right	R	SRL rd, rs1, rs2
Shift Right Immediate	I	SRLI rd, rs1, imm
Shift Right Arithmetic	R	SRA rd, rs1, rs2
Shift Right Arithmetic Immediate	I	SRAI rd, rs1, imm

□ Arithmetic:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Add	R	ADD rd, rs1, rs2
Add Immediate	I	ADDI rd, rs1, imm
Subtract	R	SUB rd, rs1, rs2
Load Upper Immediate	U	LUI rd, imm
Add Upper Immediate to PC	U	AUIPC rd, imm

□ Instruction format:

	31	20	15	12	7	0
R	func7		rs2	rs1	func3	rd opcode
I	imm[11:0]			rs1	func3	rd Opcode
U	imm[31:12]				Rd	Opcode

Logical / Compare

❑ Logical:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
XOR	R	XOR rd, rs1, rs2
XOR Immediate	I	XORI rd, rs1, imm
OR	R	OR rd, rs1, rs2
OR Immediate	I	ORI rd, rs1, imm
AND	R	AND rd, rs1, rs2
AND Immediate	I	ANDI rd, rs1, imm

❑ Compare:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Set <	R	SLT rd, rs1, rs2
Set < Immediate	I	SLTI rd, rs1, imm
Set < Unsigned	R	SLTU rd, rs1, rs2
Set < Immediate Unsigned	I	SLTIU rd, rs1, imm

❑ Instruction format:

	31	20	15	12	7	0
R	func7		rs2	rs1	func3	rd opcode
I	imm[11:0]			rs1	func3	rd Opcode

Branch / Jump-and-Link

□ Branch:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Branch =	SB	BEQ rs1, rs2, imm
Branch ≠	SB	BNE rs1, rs2, imm
Branch <	SB	BLT rs1, rs2, imm
Branch ≥	SB	BGE rs1, rs2, imm
Branch < Unsigned	SB	BLTU rs1, rs2, imm
Branch ≥	SB	BGEU rs1, rs2, imm

□ Jump-and-Link:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Jump & Link	UJ	JAL rd, imm
Indirect Jump & Link with Register	UI	JALR rd, rs1, imm

□ Instruction format:

	31	30	25	20	15	11	8	7	0
SB	imm[12]	imm[10:5]	rs2	rs1	func3	imm[4:1]	imm[11]	opcode	
UJ	imm[20]	imm[10:1]	imm[11]	imm[19:12]	rd	opcode			
UI	imm[11:10]	rs1	func3	rd	opcode				

Synchronization / System

❑ Fence (barrier):

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Synch Thread	I	FENCE
Synch Instruction & Data	I	FENCE . I

❑ System call:

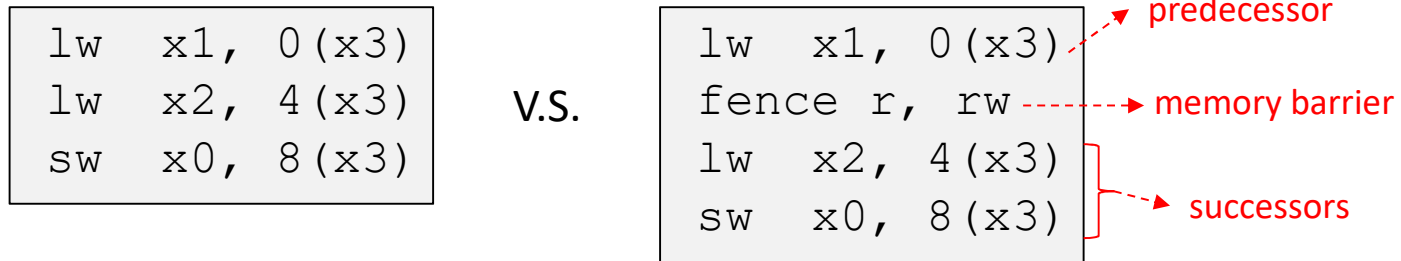
Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
System CALL	I	ECALL
System BREAK	I	EBREAK

❑ Instruction format:

31	20	15	12	7	0
I	imm[11:0]	rs1	func3	rd	Opcode

Fence/Barrier Instructions

- ❑ To ensure the ordering of memory operations, use the `fence` instruction:



- ❑ On systems without a coherent cache, to make sure I and D caches are consistent, use `fence.i`:
 - Ensure cache coherence by programmer; low hardware cost
 - Negative impact on performance
 - Cannot guarantee coherence across multiple cores

System / Counter

❑ Counter:

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Read CYCLE	I	RDCYCLE rd
Read CYCLE Upper Half	I	RDCYCLEH rd
Read TIME	I	RDTIME rd
Read TIME Upper Half	I	RDTIMEH rd
Read INSTRET	I	RDINSTRET rd
Read INSTRET Upper Half	I	RDINSTRETH rd

❑ Instruction format:

31	20	15	12	7	0
I	imm[11:0]	rs1	func3	rd	Opcode

Instruction Extension M

❑ Multiplication and Division

Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Multiply	R	MUL rd, rs1, rs2
Multiply Upper Half	R	MULH rd, rs1, rs2
Multiply Half Signed-Unsigned	R	MULHSU rd, rs1, rs2
Multiply Upper Half Unsigned	R	MULHU rd, rs1, rs2
Divide	R	DIV rd, rs1, rs2
Divide Unsigned	R	DIVU rd, rs1, rs2
Remainder	R	REM rd, rs1, rs2
Remainder Unsigned	R	REMU rd, rs1, rs2

❑ Instruction format:

31	20	15	12	7	0
R	func7	Rs2	rs1	func3	rd opcode

Instruction Extension A

❑ Atomic Instructions

		Instruction	Format	Mnemonic
Lock-free	{	Load Reserved	R	LR.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Store Conditional	R	SC.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic Swap	R	AMOSWAP.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic Add	R	AMOADD.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic XOR	R	AMOXOR.W rd, rs1, rs2
Lock-based	{	Atomic AND	R	AMOAND.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic OR	R	AMOODR.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic Minimum	R	AMOMIN.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic Maximum	R	AMOMAX.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic Minimum Unsigned	R	AMOMINU.W rd, rs1, rs2
		Atomic Maximum Unsigned	R	AMOMAXU.W rd, rs1, rs2

❑ Instruction format:

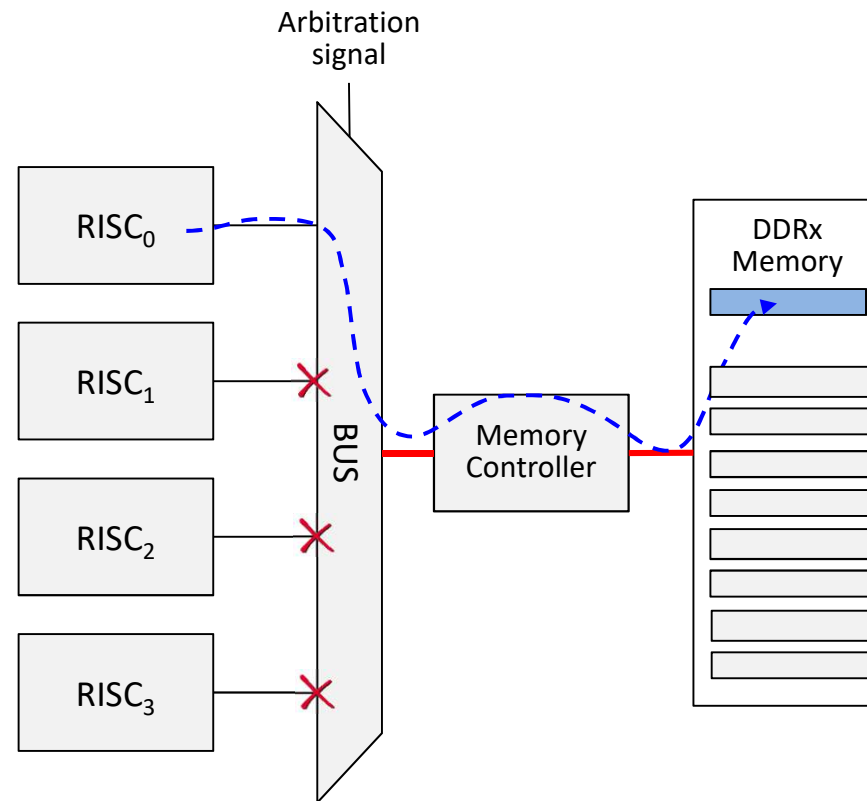
31	20	15	12	7	0
R	func7	rs2	rs1	func3	rd opcode

Lock-Based Atomic Instructions

- ❑ A lock-based atomic instruction, such as `AMOSWAP.W`, requires **read-then-write** a memory cell to be done without any interruption.
 - In concurrent programming, a mutex (or a critical section) is implemented using an atomic operation
 - For a single-core system, interrupt-masking can be used to achieve the goal → clumsy but working
- ❑ Lock-base atomic instructions simply lock the “memory bus” for a couple of cycles until the operation is done
 - Easy to implement in hardware, invisible to software
 - May hurt performance, especially in a multicore system that uses a shared bus topology

Inefficiency of Lock-based Scheme

- ❑ Lock-based atomic access to one memory cell stops all accesses to all other memory cells



Lock-Free Atomic Instructions

- ❑ Load-Reserved (LR) and Store-Conditional (SC) instructions were proposed back in the 1970's:
 - A pair of LR and SC instructions are used to implement accesses to mutex variables
 - LR returns the current value of a memory location
 - SC to the same memory location stores a new value only if no updates have occurred to that location since the LR
- ❑ With the LR/SC scheme, it is guaranteed that only one of the threads that try to acquire a mutex can success

Pseudo Assembly Instructions

- ❑ Some pseudo instructions[†] are defined to facilitate assembly coding for programmers
 - These instructions will be mapped to some base instructions by the assembler

Pseudo instruction	Base instruction	meaning
j offset	jal x0, offset	Jump
jal offset	jal x1, offset	Jump and link
jr rs	jalr x0, 0(rs)	Jump register
jalr rs	jalr x1, 0(rs)	Jump and link register
Ret	jalr x0, 0(x1)	Return from subroutine
call offset	auipc x1, offset[31:12]+offset[11] jalr x1, offset[11:0](x1)	Call far-away subroutine
nop	addi x0, x0, 0	No operation
mv rd, rs	addi rd, rs, 0	Copy register
li rd, immediate	<i>Myriad sequences</i>	Load a large immediate

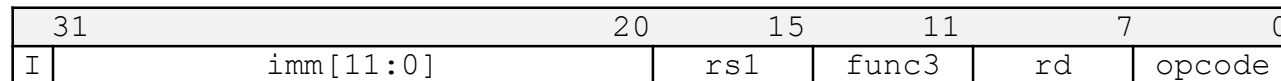
[†] For all pseudo instructions, see Chap 25 in *The RISC-V Instruction Set Manual Volume I: Unprivileged ISA*, July 2020.

Using Immediate Values

- ❑ An immediate value is a numerical constant that stores inside the instruction codeword:

```
addi x3, x5, -10 # x3 ← x5 - 10
```

Stored in bits 31 to 20 in the instruction!



- ❑ Since for type-I instruction code, 12 bits are used for an immediate value, the range is only $-2048 \sim 2048$.

32-bit Number in 32-bit Instruction?

- ❑ For a 32-bit RISC processor, each instruction is usually coded in 32-bit (or less)
 - Facilitate single-cycle instruction fetch
 - On the contrary, a CISC processor typically uses variable-length coding of instructions → large immediate value can be encoded directly in the instruction codeword
- ❑ For RISC-V, how do you encode a 32-bit number in a 32-bit instruction as an immediate value?

Load a Large Constant

- ❑ The best way to load a large constant number into a register depends on the number itself:

- Universal way:

```
lui    x3, 0xABCDE    # x3 ← 0xABCDE000
addi   x3, x3, 0x123   # x3 ← 0xABCDE123
```

Beware of sign-extension when MSB = 1!

- Case-by-case tricks:

```
addi   x3, x0, -1      # x3 ← 0xFFFFFFFF
```


- ❑ A no-brainer pseudo instruction does the trick for you:

```
li     x3, 0xABCDE123  # x3 ← 0xABCDE123
```

Accessing Data in Main Memory

- ❑ Indirect references (e.g. pointers) are often used to access data in main memory:

```
# To compute A[5] = A[3]+1, where A[] is an int array.  
lui x3, _A_array    # x10 ← &A[0]  
lw  x10, 12(x3)      # x10 ← A[3]  
add x10, x10, 1      # x10 ← x10 + 1  
sw  x10, 20(x3)      # A[5] ← x10
```



- ❑ Note that the offsets (12 and 20 in the above example) in indirect references are byte-offset. You must multiply a word address by 4 to get the correct offset.

Loading/Storing a Byte

- ❑ For a 32-bit CPU, loading 16-bit or 8-bit data from the main memory requires handling of **sign-extension** and **address alignment**:
 - Address alignment problem comes from the bus protocol
 - Load byte (`lb`) or load half word (`lh`) must handle sign extension. No need to do sign-extension for store instructions since main memory contains 8-bit cells.
- ❑ In reality, the bus width from the processor core to the main memory is 32 (for RV32).
 - The transmission is always 32-bit even for `lb/sb`.
 - A **byte-select** signal tells the CPU and the memory which bytes contains valid data

Word-Alignment Bus Issues

- ❑ Memory controller takes only word addresses and transmits word streams instead of byte streams
 - If the μ P needs a data that is not aligned to word addresses, two requests must be made to the memory controller
 - Some μ P do not handle this due to inefficiency. As a result, an misaligned exception will be triggered to alert the programmer
- ❑ A compiler flag can be used to avoid generation of unaligned data accesses
 - Be careful when you link a library that is compiled without this “strict-alignment” flag

PC-Relative Addressing

- ❑ Accessing an absolute address cause trouble for program relocation
 - Virtual memory mapping is a good solution, but expensive
 - PC-relative addressing partially solve this problem with virtually no extra cost
- ❑ In RISC-V, `AUIPC` is used for PC-relative addressing:

```
j      Label      # Branch to Label
.word 0xABCDE123 # Raw data (constant pool)
Label: auipc x3, -4 # x3 ← PC-4
lw     x5, 0[x3]  # x5 ← 0xABCDE123
```

Function Call and Return

- ❑ For near function calls, Jump-and-Link is used:

```
jal ra, <Function> # Call <Function>
```

- The function (callee) must be within $\pm 2^{18}$ instructions of PC; the `imm` value of `jal` is of 21-bit (bit 0 always zero), but you must exclude the sign bit and take into account word-alignment for RV32
- The return address (PC + 4) is stored in `ra` (i.e. `x1`)

- ❑ For function return, `jalr` is used :

```
jalr x0, 0(ra) # Return to caller
```

- JALR is also used for far-away function calls.

```
jalr ra, 0(x3) # Call function pointer x3
```

Calling Convention

- ❑ Each CPU ISA has to defines its Application Binary Interface (ABI) or calling convention
 - This way different compilers can produce interchangeable object files for the linkers and loaders

- ❑ ABI must address the following issues:
 - How to pass function parameters
 - How to return function values
 - How to manage local variables on the stacks
 - How to save/restore the return address and stack pointers

Parameter/Return Value Passing (1/2)

- ❑ The RISC-V calling convention passes arguments in registers when possible
 - Up to eight integer registers, `a0–a7` are used for this purpose.
 - Arguments smaller than a pointer-word are passed in the least-significant bytes of the argument registers.
 - Parameters that cannot be passed in registers will be passed using the stack

C type	Description	Bytes in RV32	Bytes in RV64
char	Character value/byte	1	1
short	Short integer	2	2
int	Integer	4	4
long	Long integer	4	8
long long	Long long integer	8	8
void*	Pointer	4	8
float	Single-precision float	4	4
double	Double-precision float	8	8
long double	Extended-precision float	16	16

Parameter/Return Value Passing (2/2)

- ❑ A `struct` parameter can be passed partially in registers and partially on stack.
- ❑ Values are returned in integer registers `a0` and `a1`.
 - Larger return values are passed entirely in memory; the **caller** allocates this memory (from the stack) and passes its pointer as an implicit first parameter to the callee.
- ❑ The stack pointer must be **16-byte** aligned for each increment/decrement operation

Call Sequence

1. Caller puts arguments in $a0-a7$
2. Caller jumps to the callee by:

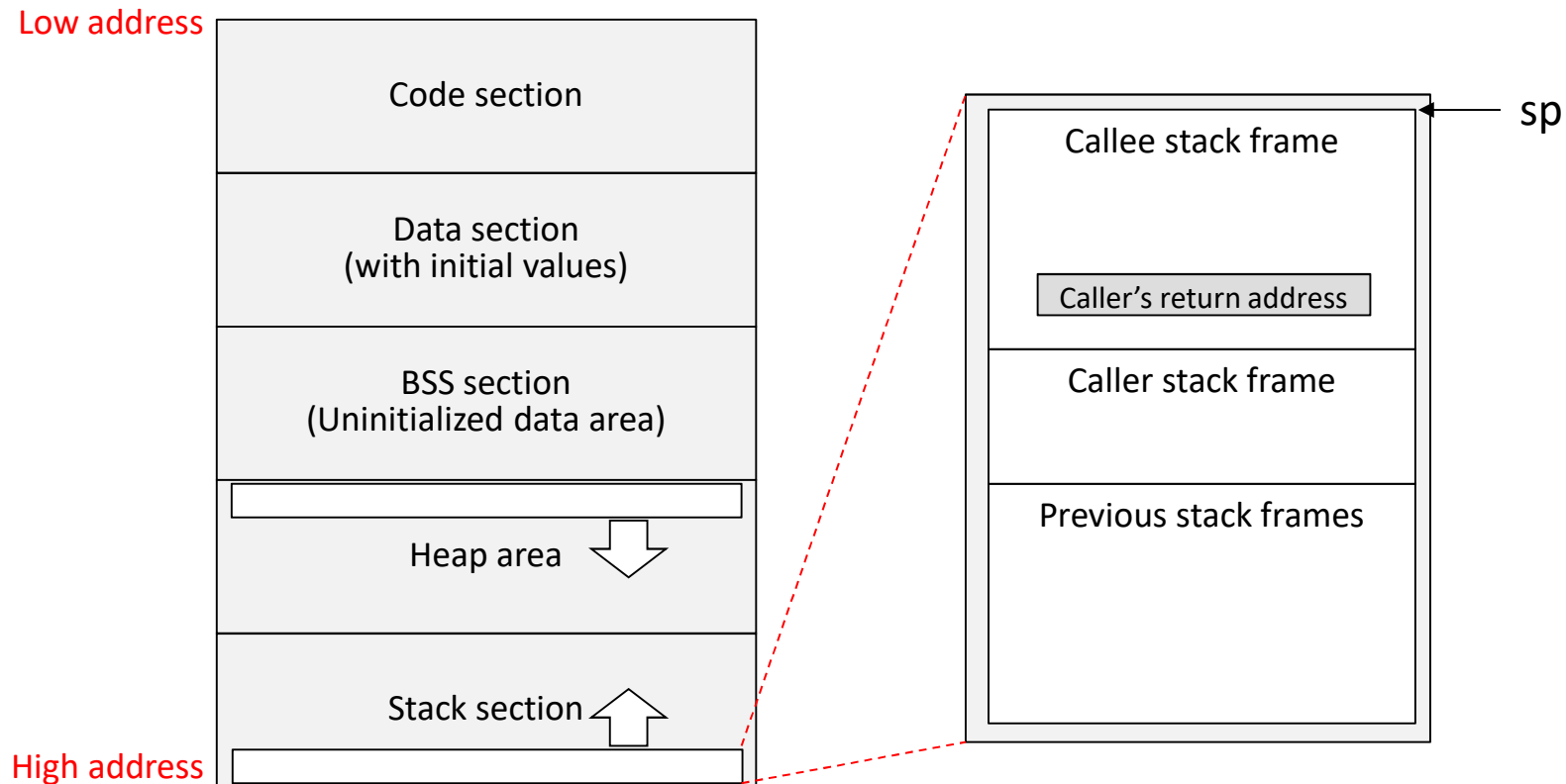
```
jal ra, <Function> # <Function> is the callee.
```

3. Callee decrements sp to allocate **stack frame** for special registers, parameters, and local variables
4. Callee performs the calculations, put result in $a0-a1$
5. Callee restores special registers, increments sp to free its stack frame
6. Callee returns control to the caller by:

```
jalr x0, 0(ra)
```

Runtime Memory Map

- ❑ The runtime memory organization for ABI



A Simple Example

- ❑ The assembly code for `getchar()` in the Aquila library is as follows (compiler optimization is `-Os`):

```
inline int getchar(void) { return (int) inbyte(); }
```

000000d8 <getchar>:

d8:	ff010113	addi	sp, sp, -16
dc:	00112623	sw	ra, 12(sp)
e0:	f89ff0ef	jal	ra, 68 <inbyte>
e4:	00c12083	lw	ra, 12(sp)
e8:	01010113	addi	sp, sp, 16
ec:	00008067	ret	

RISC-V calling convention

00000068 <inbyte>:

68:	000017b7	lui	a5, 0x1
6c:	8a87a703	lw	a4, -1880(a5) # 8a8 <uart_status>
.			
80:	8b07a783	lw	a5, -1872(a5) # 8b0 <uart_rxfifo>
84:	0007a503	lw	a0, 0(a5)
88:	0ff57513	andi	a0, a0, 255
8c:	00008067	ret	

No "sp" adjustment because this is a bottom-level function.

Return value of unsigned char in a0.

References

- ❑ RISC-V ISA Specifications:
<https://riscv.org/technical/specifications/>
- ❑ RISC-V Assembly Language Manual:
<https://github.com/riscv/riscv-asm-manual>