Floating Point

Introduction to Computer Systems
4th Lecture, March 8, 2018

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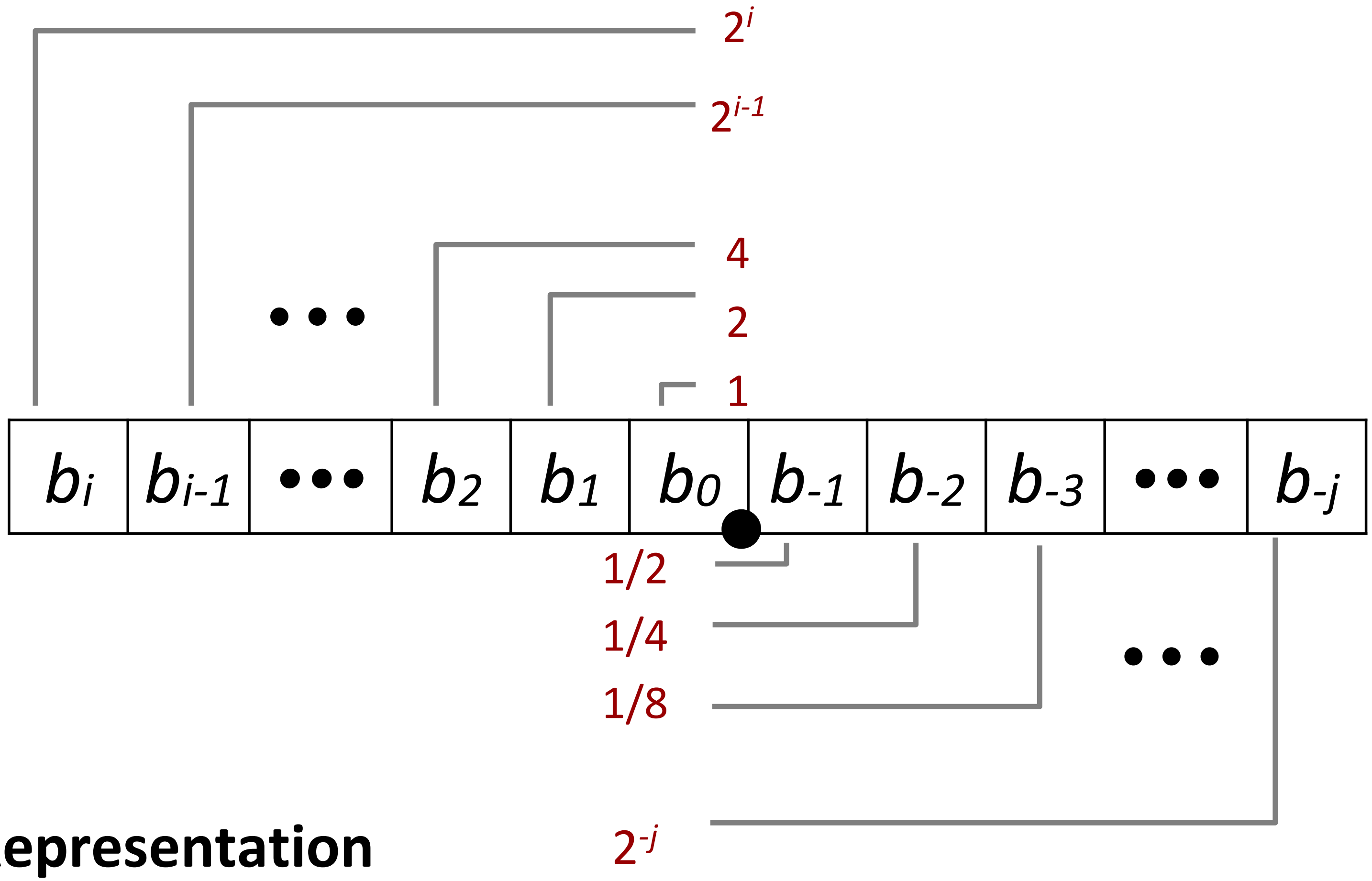
Today: Floating Point

- Background: Fractional binary numbers
- IEEE floating point standard: Definition
- Example and properties
- Rounding, addition, multiplication
- Floating point in C
- Summary

Fractional binary numbers

- **What is 1011.101_2?**

Fractional Binary Numbers



- **Representation**
  - Bits to right of "binary point" represent fractional powers of 2
  - Represents rational number:

$$\sum_{k=-j}^{i} b_k \times 2^k$$

Fractional Binary Numbers: Examples

- **Value** **Representation**

Value	Representation
5 3/4	101.11_2
2 7/8	10.111_2
1 7/16	1.0111_2

- **Observations**
  - Divide by 2 by shifting right (unsigned)
  - Multiply by 2 by shifting left
  - Numbers of form $0.111111\ldots_2$ are just below 1.0
    - $1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + \ldots + 1/2^i + \ldots \rightarrow 1.0$
    - Use notation $1.0 - \varepsilon$

Representable Numbers

- **Limitation #1**
  - Can only exactly represent numbers of the form $x/2^k$
    - Other rational numbers have repeating bit representations
  - Value Representation
    - 1/3 `0.0101010101[01]`...$_2$
    - 1/5 `0.001100110011[0011]`...$_2$
    - 1/10 `0.0001100110011[0011]`...$_2$

- **Limitation #2**
  - Just one setting of binary point within the *w* bits
    - Limited range of numbers (very small values? very large?)

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IEEE Floating Point

- **IEEE Standard 754**
  - Established in 1985 as uniform standard for floating point arithmetic
    - Before that, many idiosyncratic formats
  - Supported by all major CPUs

- **Driven by numerical concerns**
  - Nice standards for rounding, overflow, underflow
  - Hard to make fast in hardware
    - Numerical analysts predominated over hardware designers in defining standard

Floating Point Representation

- **Numerical Form:**

$$(-1)^s\, M\;\, 2^E$$

  - **Sign bit *s*** determines whether number is negative or positive
  - **Significand *M*** normally a fractional value in range [1.0,2.0).
  - **Exponent *E*** weights value by power of two

- **Encoding**
  - MSB s is sign bit ***s***
  - **exp** field encodes ***E*** (but is not equal to E)
  - **frac** field encodes ***M*** (but is not equal to M)

Precision options

- **Single precision: 32 bits**

s	exp	frac
1	8-bits	23-bits

- **Double precision: 64 bits**

s	exp	frac
1	11-bits	52-bits

- **Extended precision: 80 bits (Intel only)**

s	exp	frac
1	15-bits	63 or 64-bits

"Normalized" Values

$v = (-1)^s \, M \, 2^E$

- **When: exp ≠ 000…0 and exp ≠ 111…1**

- **Exponent coded as a *biased* value: *E = Exp – Bias***
  - *Exp*: unsigned value of exp field
  - *Bias* = 2^{k-1} - 1, where *k* is number of exponent bits
    - Single precision: 127 (Exp: 1…254, E: -126…127)
    - Double precision: 1023 (Exp: 1…2046, E: -1022…1023)

- **Significand coded with implied leading 1: *M* =** $1.xxx{\ldots}x_2$
  - xxx…x: bits of frac field
  - Minimum when frac=000…0 (M = 1.0)
  - Maximum when frac=111…1 (M = 2.0 – ε)
  - Get extra leading bit for "free"

Normalized Encoding Example

$$v = (-1)^s M\, 2^E$$
$$E = Exp - Bias$$

- **Value:** `float F = 15213.0;`
  - $15213_{10} = 11101101101101_2$
    $= 1.1101101101101_2 \times 2^{13}$

- **Significand**

  $M = 1.\underline{1101101101101}_2$

  `frac`$= \underline{1101101101101}0000000000_2$

- **Exponent**

  $E = 13$

  $Bias = 127$

  $Exp = 140 = 10001100_2$

- **Result:**

s	exp	frac
0	10001100	11011011011010000000000

Denormalized Values

$v = (-1)^s\, M\, 2^E$
$E = 1 - Bias$

- **Condition:** exp = 000…0

- **Exponent value:** E **= 1 – Bias (instead of** E **= 0 –** $Bias$**)**
- **Significand coded with implied leading 0:** $M = 0.xxx{\ldots}x_2$
  - **`xxx`…`x`**: bits of **`frac`**
- **Cases**
  - **`exp`** = 000…0, **`frac`** = 000…0
    - Represents zero value
    - Note distinct values: +0 and –0 (why?)
  - **`exp`** = 000…0, **`frac`** ≠ 000…0
    - Numbers closest to 0.0
    - Equispaced

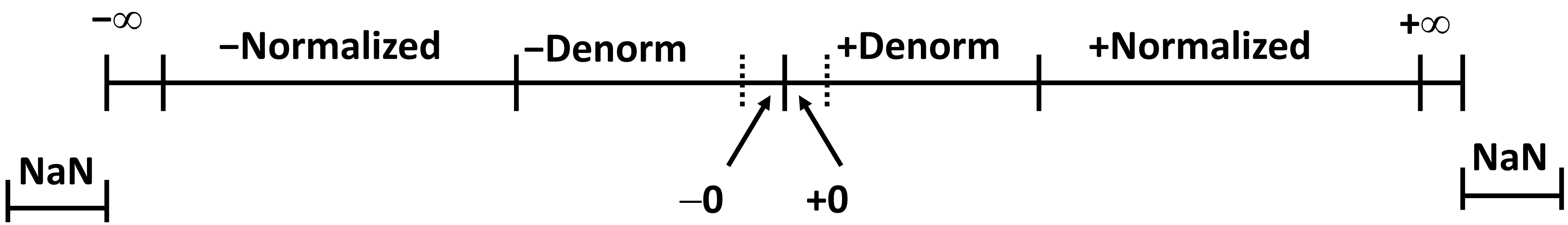
Special Values

- **Condition: `exp` = `111…1`**

- **Case: `exp` = `111…1`, `frac` = `000…0`**
  - Represents value ∞ (infinity)
  - Operation that overflows
  - Both positive and negative
  - E.g., $1.0/0.0 = -1.0/-0.0 = +\infty$, $1.0/-0.0 = -\infty$

- **Case: `exp` = `111…1`, `frac` ≠ `000…0`**
  - Not-a-Number (NaN)
  - Represents case when no numeric value can be determined
  - E.g., sqrt(–1), $\infty - \infty$, $\infty \times 0$

Visualization: Floating Point Encodings



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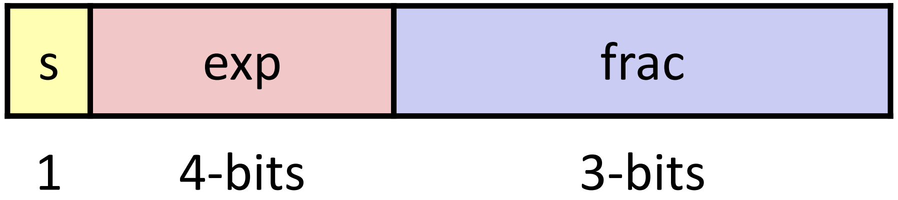
Tiny Floating Point Example



- **8-bit Floating Point Representation**
  - the sign bit is in the most significant bit
  - the next four bits are the exponent, with a bias of 7
  - the last three bits are the **`frac`**

- **Same general form as IEEE Format**
  - normalized, denormalized
  - representation of 0, NaN, infinity

Dynamic Range (Positive Only)

$v = (-1)^s\, M\, 2^E$

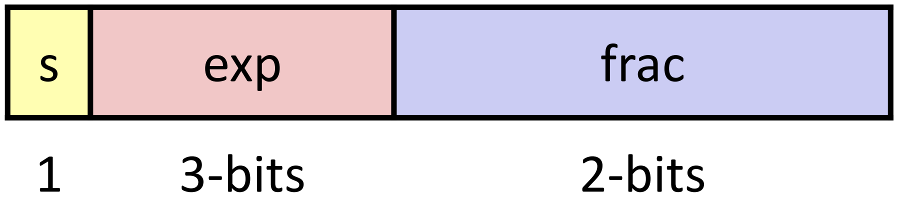
n: E = Exp – Bias

d: E = 1 – Bias

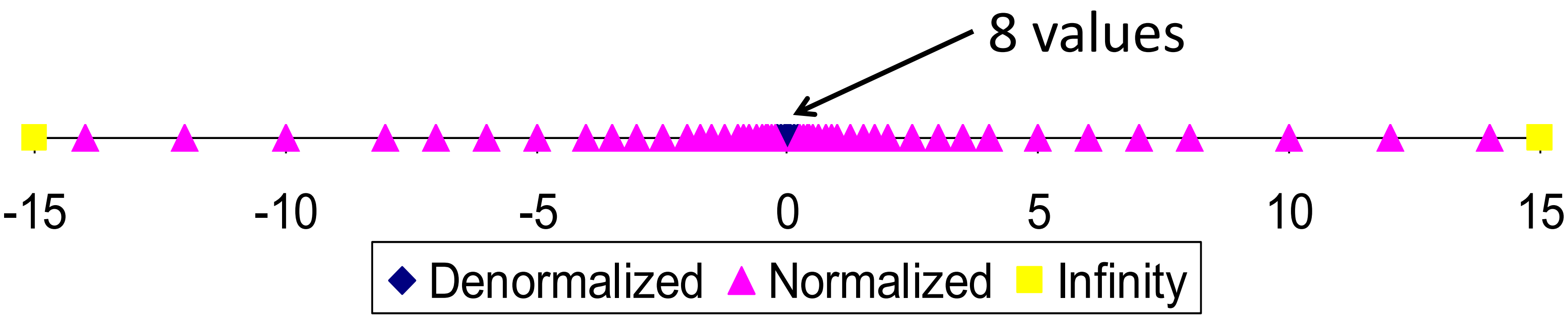
	s exp frac	E	Value	
Denormalized numbers	0 0000 000	-6	0	
	0 0000 001	-6	1/8*1/64 = 1/512	closest to zero
	0 0000 010	-6	2/8*1/64 = 2/512	
	…			
	0 0000 110	-6	6/8*1/64 = 6/512	
	0 0000 111	-6	7/8*1/64 = 7/512	largest denorm
Normalized numbers	0 0001 000	-6	8/8*1/64 = 8/512	smallest norm
	0 0001 001	-6	9/8*1/64 = 9/512	
	…			
	0 0110 110	-1	14/8*1/2 = 14/16	
	0 0110 111	-1	15/8*1/2 = 15/16	closest to 1 below
	0 0111 000	0	8/8*1 = 1	
	0 0111 001	0	9/8*1 = 9/8	closest to 1 above
	0 0111 010	0	10/8*1 = 10/8	
	…			
	0 1110 110	7	14/8*128 = 224	
	0 1110 111	7	15/8*128 = 240	largest norm
	0 1111 000	n/a	inf	

Distribution of Values

- **6-bit IEEE-like format**
  - e = 3 exponent bits
  - f = 2 fraction bits
  - Bias is $2^{3-1}-1 = 3$

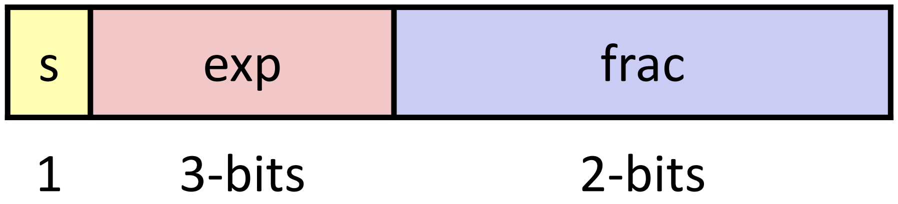


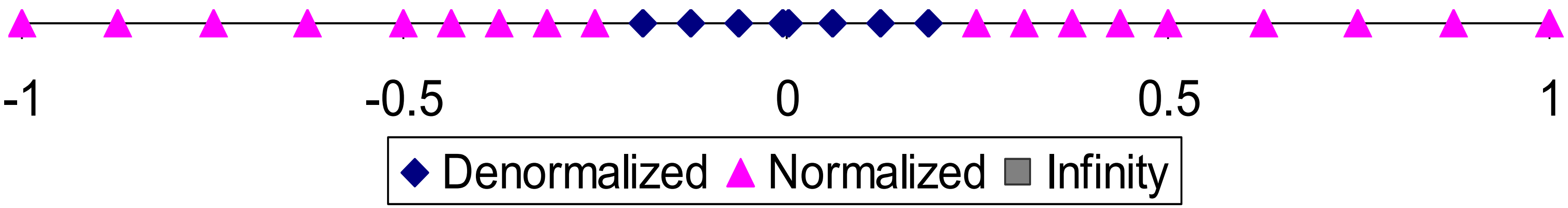
- **Notice how the distribution gets denser toward zero.**



Distribution of Values (close-up view)

- **6-bit IEEE-like format**
  - e = 3 exponent bits
  - f = 2 fraction bits
  - Bias is 3





Special Properties of the IEEE Encoding

- **FP Zero Same as Integer Zero**
  - All bits = 0

- **Can (Almost) Use Unsigned Integer Comparison**
  - Must first compare sign bits
  - Must consider −0 = 0
  - NaNs problematic
    - Will be greater than any other values
    - What should comparison yield?
  - Otherwise OK
    - Denorm vs. normalized
    - Normalized vs. infinity

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Floating Point Operations: Basic Idea

- $\mathtt{x} +_{\mathtt{f}} \mathtt{y} = \mathtt{Round}(\mathtt{x} + \mathtt{y})$

- $\mathtt{x} \times_{\mathtt{f}} \mathtt{y} = \mathtt{Round}(\mathtt{x} \times \mathtt{y})$

- **Basic idea**
  - First compute exact result
  - Make it fit into desired precision
    - Possibly overflow if exponent too large
    - Possibly round to fit into **`frac`**

Rounding

- **Rounding Modes (illustrate with $ rounding)**

	$1.40	**$1.60**	**$1.50**	**$2.50**	**–$1.50**
Towards zero	$1	$1	$1	$2	–$1
Round down (−∞)	$1	$1	$1	$2	–$2
Round up (+∞)	$2	$2	$2	$3	–$1
Nearest Even (default)	$1	$2	$2	$2	–$2

Closer Look at Round-To-Even

Default Rounding Mode

- Hard to get any other kind without dropping into assembly
- All others are statistically biased
  - Sum of set of positive numbers will consistently be over- or under-estimated

Applying to Other Decimal Places / Bit Positions

- When exactly halfway between two possible values
  - Round so that least significant digit is even
- E.g., round to nearest hundredth

7.8949999	7.89	(Less than half way)
7.8950001	7.90	(Greater than half way)
7.8950000	7.90	(Half way—round up)
7.8850000	7.88	(Half way—round down)

Rounding Binary Numbers

- **Binary Fractional Numbers**
  - "Even" when least significant bit is `0`
  - "Half way" when bits to right of rounding position = `100`…$_2$

- **Examples**
  - Round to nearest 1/4 (2 bits right of binary point)

Value	Binary	Rounded	Action	Rounded Value
2 3/32	10.00011_2	10.00_2	(<1/2—down)	2
2 3/16	10.00110_2	10.01_2	(>1/2—up)	2 1/4
2 7/8	10.11100_2	11.00_2	(1/2—up)	3
2 5/8	10.10100_2	10.10_2	(1/2—down)	2 1/2

FP Multiplication

- $(-1)^{s1}\ M1\ \ 2^{E1}$ **x** $(-1)^{s2}\ M2\ \ 2^{E2}$
- **Exact Result:** $(-1)^{s}\ M\ \ 2^{E}$
  - Sign s: $s1$ ^ $s2$
  - Significand M: $M1$ x $M2$
  - Exponent E: $E1 + E2$

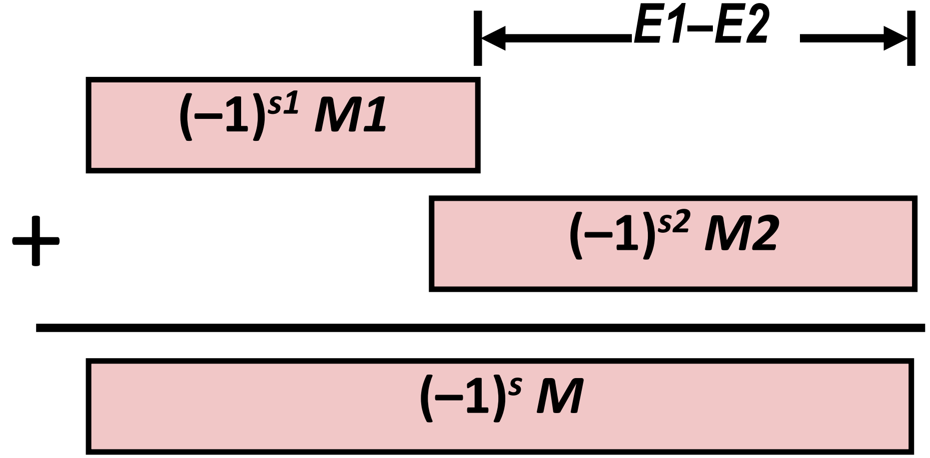
- **Fixing**
  - If $M \geq 2$, shift M right, increment E
  - If E out of range, overflow
  - Round M to fit **`frac`** precision

- **Implementation**
  - Biggest chore is multiplying significands

Floating Point Addition

- $(-1)^{s1}\ M1\ \ 2^{E1}\ \ +\ \ (-1)^{s2}\ M2\ \ 2^{E2}$
  - Assume $E1 > E2$

Get binary points lined up



- **Exact Result:** $(-1)^{s}\ M\ \ 2^{E}$
  - Sign *s*, significand *M*:
    - Result of signed align & add
  - Exponent *E*: *E1*

- **Fixing**
  - If $M \geq 2$, shift *M* right, increment *E*
  - if $M < 1$, shift *M* left *k* positions, decrement *E* by *k*
  - Overflow if *E* out of range
  - Round *M* to fit `frac` precision

Mathematical Properties of FP Add

- **Compare to those of Abelian Group**
  - Closed under addition? *Yes*
    - But may generate infinity or NaN
  - Commutative? *Yes*
  - Associative? *No*
    - Overflow and inexactness of rounding
    - `(3.14+1e10)-1e10 = 0, 3.14+(1e10-1e10) = 3.14`
  - 0 is additive identity? *Yes*
  - Every element has additive inverse? *Almost*
    - Yes, except for infinities & NaNs
- **Monotonicity**
  - $a \geq b \Rightarrow a+c \geq b+c$? *Almost*
    - Except for infinities & NaNs

Mathematical Properties of FP Mult

- **Compare to Commutative Ring**
  - Closed under multiplication? ***Yes***
    - But may generate infinity or NaN
  - Multiplication Commutative? ***Yes***
  - Multiplication is Associative? ***No***
    - Possibility of overflow, inexactness of rounding
    - Ex: `(1e20*1e20)*1e-20= inf, 1e20*(1e20*1e-20)= 1e20`
  - 1 is multiplicative identity? ***Yes***
  - Multiplication distributes over addition? ***No***
    - Possibility of overflow, inexactness of rounding
    - `1e20*(1e20-1e20)= 0.0, 1e20*1e20 – 1e20*1e20 = NaN`
- **Monotonicity**
  - $a \geq b$ & $c \geq 0 \Rightarrow a * c \geq b * c$? ***Almost***
    - Except for infinities & NaNs

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Floating Point in C

- **C Guarantees Two Levels**
  - **`float`** single precision
  - **`double`** double precision

- **Conversions/Casting**
  - Casting between **`int`**, **`float`**, and **`double`** changes bit representation
  - **`double`/`float`** → **`int`**
    - Truncates fractional part
    - Like rounding toward zero
    - Not defined when out of range or NaN: Generally sets to TMin
  - **`int`** → **`double`**
    - Exact conversion, as long as **`int`** has ≤ 53 bit word size
  - **`int`** → **`float`**
    - Will round according to rounding mode

Floating Point Puzzles

- **For each of the following C expressions, either:**
  - Argue that it is true for all argument values
  - Explain why not true

```
int x = …;
float f = …;
double d = …;
```

Assume neither **d** nor **f** is NaN

```
1. x == (int)(float) x
2. x == (int)(double) x
3. f == (float)(double) f
4. d == (double)(float) d
5. f == -(-f);
6. 2/3 == 2/3.0
7. d < 0.0      ⇒  ((d*2) < 0.0)
8. d > f        ⇒  -f > -d
9. d * d >= 0.0
10. (d+f)-d == f
```

Summary

- **IEEE Floating Point has clear mathematical properties**
- **Represents numbers of form M x 2^E**
- **One can reason about operations independent of implementation**
  - As if computed with perfect precision and then rounded
- **Not the same as real arithmetic**
  - Violates associativity/distributivity
  - Makes life difficult for compilers & serious numerical applications programmers