

# Algorithms and Analysis

## Lesson 5: *Use Arrays*



*Variable length arrays, implementing stacks*

# Outline

1. Why Arrays?
2. Variable Length Arrays
3. Programming Language
4. Implementing Stacks



# Use Arrays

- An array is a contiguous chunk of memory
- In C we can create arrays using  
`int *array = new int [20]`
- The array has an access time of  $\Theta(1)$
- The constant factor is small (i.e. access time  $\approx 1$  time step)
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- 95% of the time using arrays is going to give you the best performance, although never use raw arrays!

# Disadvantages of Arrays

- Arrays have a fixed length
- Very often we don't know how big an array we want
  - ★ E.g. reading words from a file
- Adding or deleting elements from the middle of an array is costly
- Sorted arrays are expensive to maintain
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- Arrays don't know how big they are—**annoying**

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2. **Variable Length Arrays**
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# Variable Length Arrays

- We want a variable length array
- Initially a variable length array would have length zero
- We should be able to
  - ★ Add an element to an array
  - ★ Access any element in the array
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- It would be useful if it resized
- It would be great to have some algorithms (e.g. sort) that can be run on a list

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- We need to distinguish between
  - ★ the number of elements in the list `size()`
  - ★ the number of elements in the array `capacity()`
- If the number of elements grows larger than the capacity then we need to increase the capacity

# Initial Capacity

- We could prevent resizing arrays by using a huge initial capacity
- However, how big is big enough?
- What happens when we have an array of arrays?
- Memory like time is resource we should care about
- In an analogy with **time complexity** we also care about **space complexity** (i.e. how much memory we need)
- If we want to store  $n$  elements it is reasonable to expect that we use  $c n$  bits of memory where we want to keep  $c$  small

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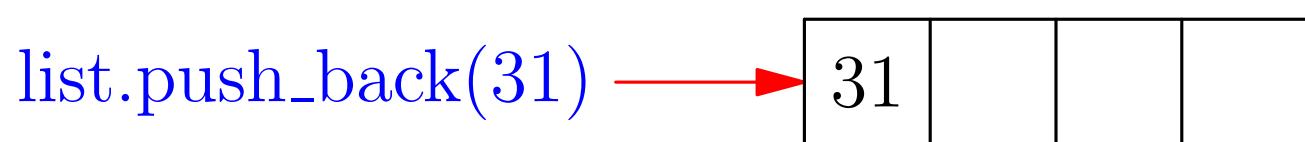
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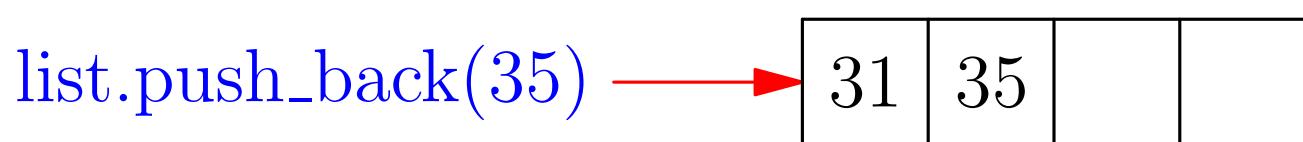
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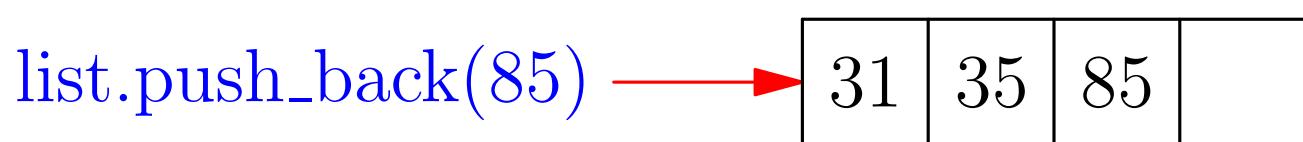
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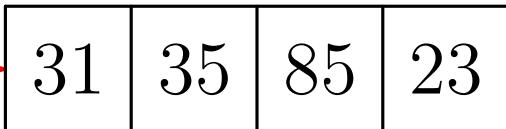
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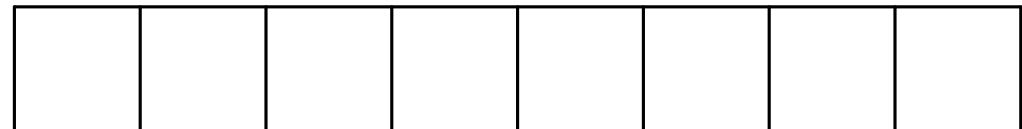
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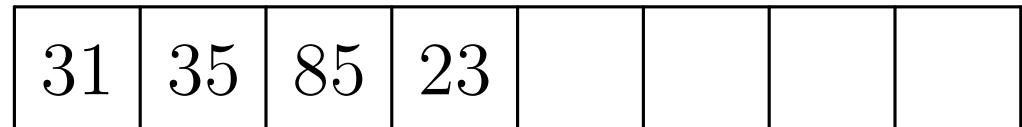
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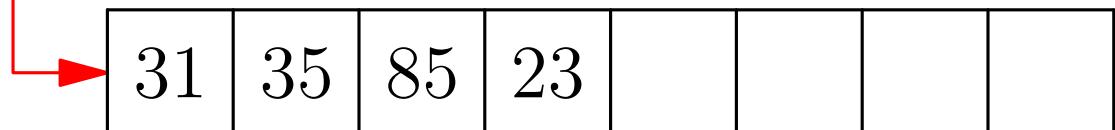
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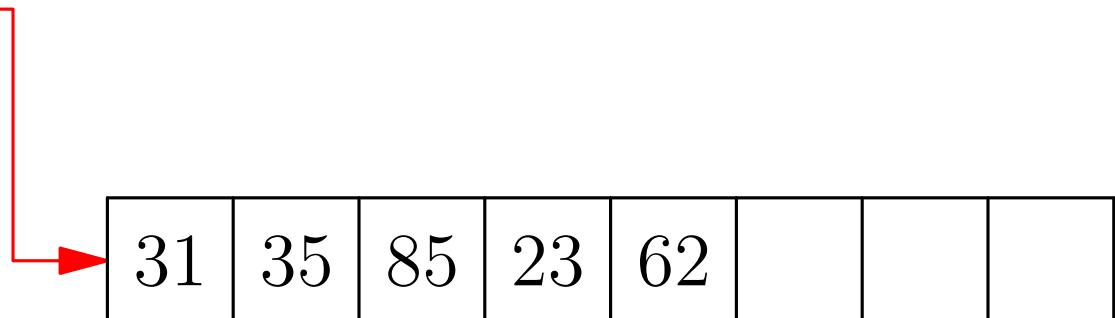
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# Amortised Time Analysis

- How efficient is resizing?
- Most `push_back(elem)` operations are  $\Theta(1)$
- When we are at full capacity we have to copy all elements
- Adding to a full array is slow but it is **amortised** by other quick adds

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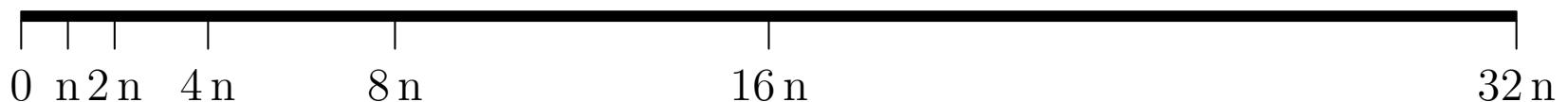
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- 250 adds and copies operations + 4 `new` operations

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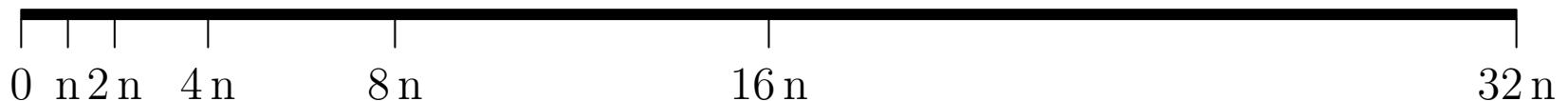
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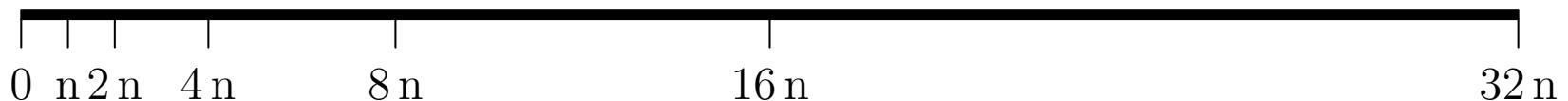
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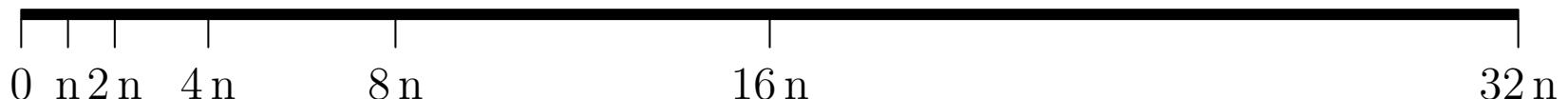
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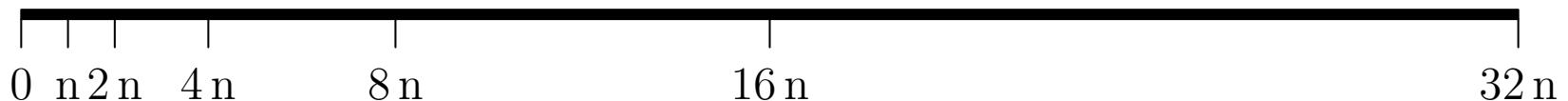
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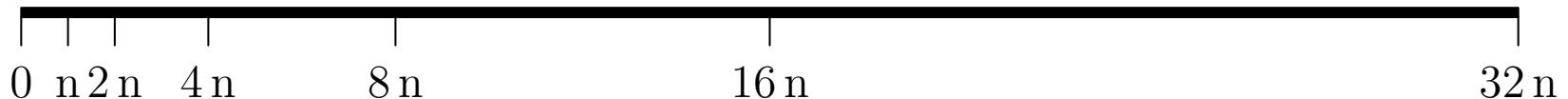
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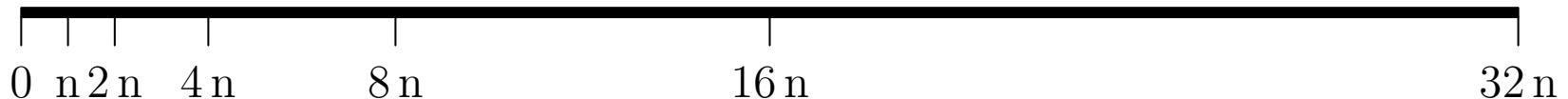
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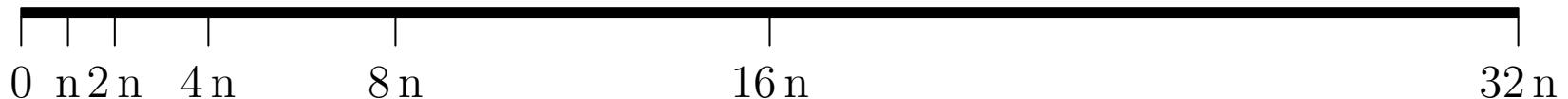
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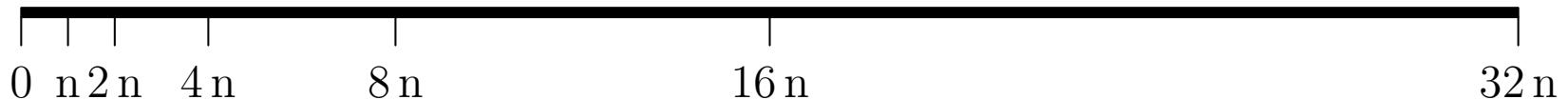
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# Insertion and Deletion

- `vector<T>` is very useful and very fast for lots of things
- But if you try to insert or delete an element anywhere other than the end then you have to shove all the subsequent elements one space forward
- This is not the right data structure if you want to keep elements in order
- Linked lists allow you to splice in a sublist into a list in constant time

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- Linked lists allow you to splice in a sublist into a list in constant time **although linked lists have a lot of drawbacks**

# Outline

1. Why Arrays?
2. Variable Length Arrays
3. Programming Language
4. Implementing Stacks



# Computer Languages

- Different computer languages are designed for different roles and have different advantages and disadvantages
- **C++** was designed to be fast (as fast as C)
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# Problems with C++

- Amongst a number of issues that make C++ dangerous are
  - ★ Memory management
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int *storage = new int[n];
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- You have **responsibility** to free the memory

```
delete[] storage;
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- If you don't release memory acquired with `new` using `delete` you cause a **memory leak**
- Often memory leaks are no concern, but in large programs memory leaks will rapidly exhaust the computer's memory, slowing down the code and eventually leading to the programme crashing
- To release a block of memory we can use:  
`delete [] storage;`
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- In C++ this is your responsibility
- But there is a standard **programming pattern** to elevate the problem known as **Resource Acquistion is Initialisation (RAII)**

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template <typename T>
class container {
private:
    T* data;

public:
    container(unsigned n) {data = new T[n];}

};

main() {
    for (int i=0; i<1000; ++i) {
        container<int> my_container(10000);
        // do something
    }
}
```

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```
int *array = new int[4];
int *a = new int[2];
double *darray = new double[4];
array[4] = 4;
```

- However `array[4]` has not been assigned (unlike `array[0]`, `array[1]`, `array[2]` and `array[3]`)
- The memory on the heap corresponding to the address of `array[4]` might have been assigned to `a[0]` in which case you may inadvertently have set `a[0]` to 4 leading to the program not doing what you want
- It might be that you have put an `int` into `darray[0]` which will then crash the system when you read `darray[0]`

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# Guarding Against Mistakes

- These are really hard problems to debug because where the program goes wrong or crashes can be very far from the assignment that caused the error
- Java takes the approach that it always tests whether you are writing in valid memory
- By default C++ doesn't even for data structures—making this check slows down random access
- Checks can also make pipeline optimisations harder to make
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# Follow Programming Idioms

- Using common data structures and following common idioms will prevent most errors

```
int n = 5;
vector<int> array(n);

for(int i=0; i<array.size(); ++i) {
    array[i] = i;
}

for(auto pt=array.begin(); pt != array.end(); ++pt) {
    *pt *= 2
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for(int& element: array) {
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# Outline

1. Why Arrays?
2. Variable Length Arrays
3. Programming Language
4. **Implementing Stacks**



# Stacks

- Lets look at implementing a stack
- Remember a stack has methods
  - ★ push (Object )
  - ★ pop ()
  - ★ top ()
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template <typename T>
class MyStack
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private:
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public:
    void push(const T& obj) {stack.push_back(obj);}

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    T pop() {
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- I can make `MyStack<T>` as efficient as `vector<T>` by inlining function calls
- But why would I want to lose functional?
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- Implementing a stack using a dynamically re-sizable array is trivial
- Stacks have many applications
- E.g. suppose we want to write a program to reverse the order of strings in a file

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# Reversing Strings in File

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

int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
    ifstream in(argv[1]);

    stack<string> stack;

    string word;
    while (in >> word)
        stack.push(word);

    while (!stack.empty()) {
        cout << stack.top() << ' ';
        stack.pop();
    }
}
```

# Lessons

- Arrays are very efficient both in space (memory) and access time
- Resizing an array is not that costly
- insertion and deletion from the middle of an array are expensive,  $O(n)$
- Arrays are often the simplest way to implement many other data structures, e.g. stacks
- Use (dynamically re-sizable) arrays (`vector<T>`) frequently!

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- Stop using raw arrays