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



- 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 ≈ 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!

- 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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- Initially a variable length array would have length zero
- We should be able to
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- ★ random access array[i]
- ★ int size()
- 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

- 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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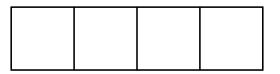
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Resizing Memory

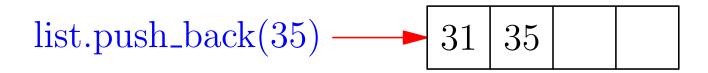
• We start with some reasonable capacity



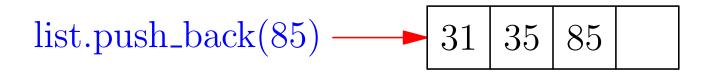
- We start with some reasonable capacity
- We can add elements

$$list.push_back(31)$$
 \longrightarrow 31

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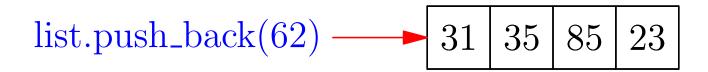


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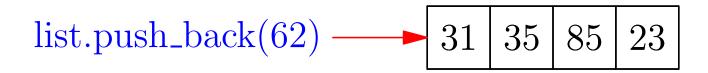


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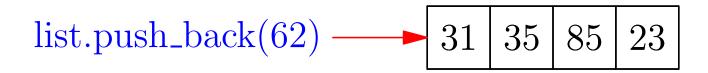


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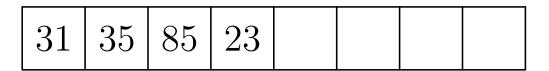
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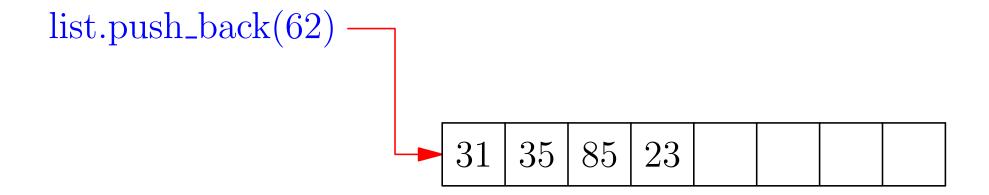


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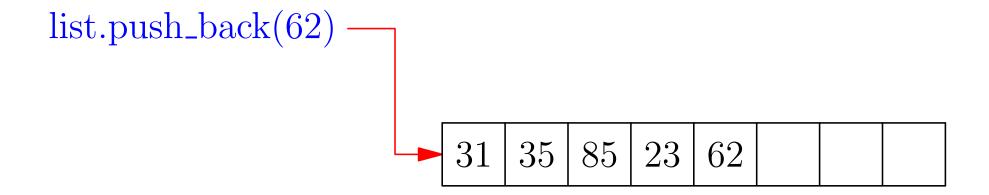
$$list.push_back(62)$$
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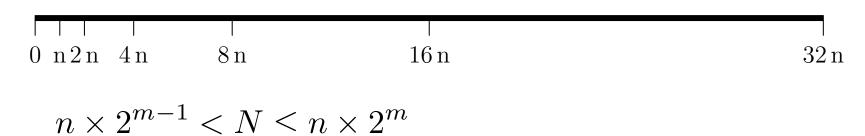
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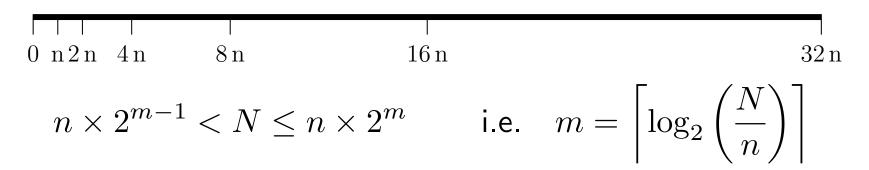
• 250 adds and copies operations + 4 **new** operations

ullet If we perform N adds with an initial capacity of n

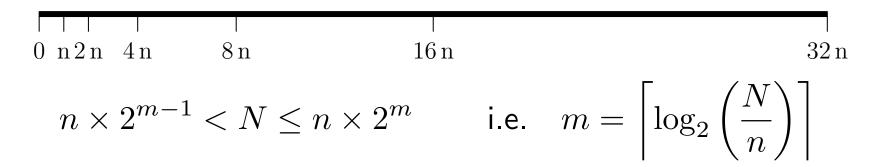
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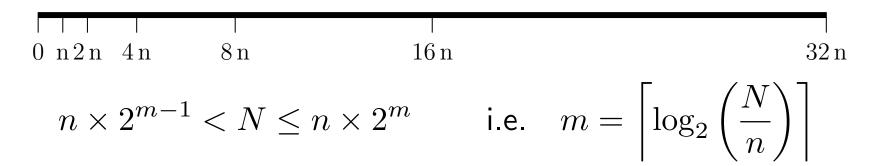
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- vector<T> is very useful and very fast for lots of things
- But if you try to insert or delete an element anywhere other than the end then you have to shove all the subsequent elements one space forward
- This is not the right data structure if you want to keep elements in order
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- Python was designed so you can rapidly write powerful programmes with a small amount of code, but it is not fast or safe

Problems with C++

- Amongst a number of issues that make C++ dangerous are
 - * Memory management
 - * Writing to parts of memory that you should not
 - * Multiple inheritance
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• In C++ you are given the right to ask for memory
int *storage = new int[n];

You have responsibility to free the memory

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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 rapid exhaust the computer's memory, slowing
 down the code and eventually leading to the programme crashing
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- To release a block of memory we can use:delete[] storage;
- Now storage is a dangling pointer and must not be used as it is no longer valid
- If we accidentally delete the storage twice we get an undefined behaviour, but often the programme will crash

- Java and Python use garbage collectors which automatically checks whether memory can be accessed and if not it is removed
- 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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Writing over Memory

In C++ the following will compile and run

```
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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- 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
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Follow Programming Idioms

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

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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){
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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

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* push(Object )
* pop()
* top()
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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();
```

- Arrays are very efficient both in space (memory) and access time
- Resizing an array is not that costly
- insertion and deletion are expensive, O(n)
- Arrays are often the simplest way to implement many other data structures, e.g. stacks
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- Stop using raw arrays