# System-Level I/O

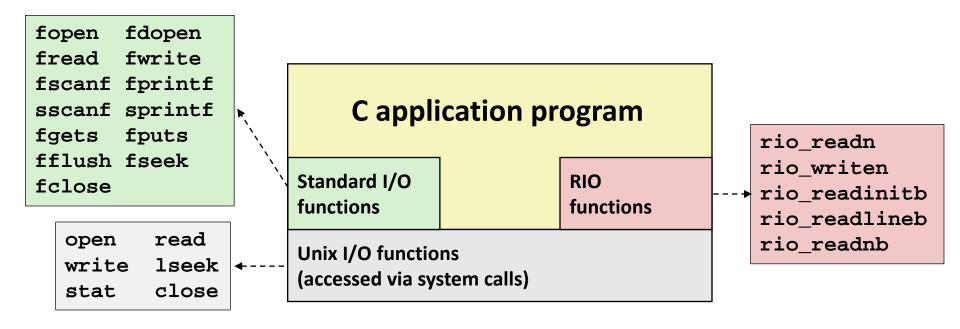
15-213: Introduction to Computer Systems 16<sup>th</sup> Lecture, March 23, 2017

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# **Today: Unix I/O and C Standard I/O**

- Two sets: system-level and C level
- Robust I/O (RIO): 15-213 special wrappers good coding practice: handles error checking, signals, and "short counts"



## **Today**

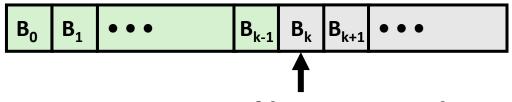
- Unix I/O
- RIO (robust I/O) package
- Standard I/O
- Which I/O when
- Metadata, sharing, and redirection

# **Unix I/O Overview**

- A Linux *file* is a sequence of *m* bytes:
  - $\blacksquare$   $B_0, B_1, \dots, B_k, \dots, B_{m-1}$
- Cool fact: All I/O devices are represented as files:
  - /dev/sda2 (/usr disk partition)
  - /dev/tty2 (terminal)
- Even the kernel is represented as a file:
  - /boot/vmlinuz-3.13.0-55-generic (kernel image)
  - proc (kernel data structures)

# **Unix I/O Overview**

- Elegant mapping of files to devices allows kernel to export simple interface called *Unix I/O*:
  - Opening and closing files
    - open()and close()
  - Reading and writing a file
    - read() and write()
  - Changing the current file position (seek)
    - indicates next offset into file to read or write
    - lseek()



**Current file position = k** 

# File Types

- Each file has a type indicating its role in the system
  - Regular file: Contains arbitrary data
  - Directory: Index for a related group of files
  - Socket: For communicating with a process on another machine
- Other file types beyond our scope
  - Named pipes (FIFOs)
  - Symbolic links
  - Character and block devices

## **Regular Files**

- A regular file contains arbitrary data
- Applications often distinguish between text files and binary files
  - Text files are regular files with only ASCII or Unicode characters
  - Binary files are everything else
    - e.g., object files, JPEG images
  - Kernel doesn't know the difference!
- Text file is sequence of text lines
  - Text line is sequence of chars terminated by newline char ('\n')
    - Newline is 0xa, same as ASCII line feed character (LF)
- End of line (EOL) indicators in other systems
  - Linux and Mac OS: '\n' (0xa)
    - line feed (LF)
  - Windows and Internet protocols: '\r\n' (0xd 0xa)
    - Carriage return (CR) followed by line feed (LF)

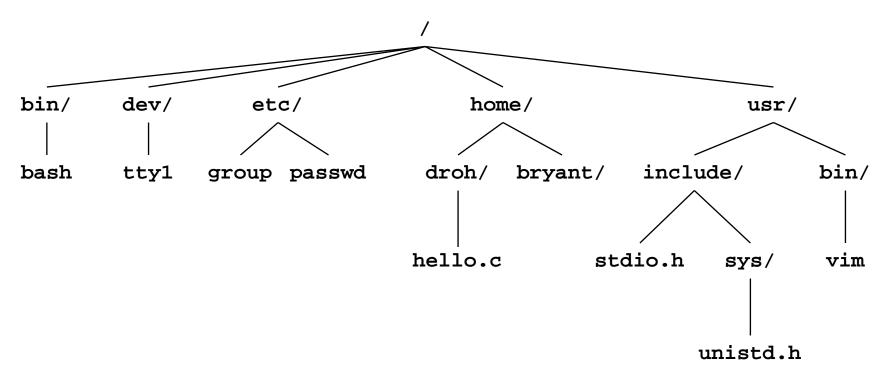


#### **Directories**

- Directory consists of an array of links
  - Each link maps a filename to a file
- Each directory contains at least two entries
  - (dot) is a link to itself
  - . (dot dot) is a link to the parent directory in the directory hierarchy (next slide)
- Commands for manipulating directories
  - mkdir: create empty directory
  - ls: view directory contents
  - rmdir: delete empty directory

#### **Directory Hierarchy**

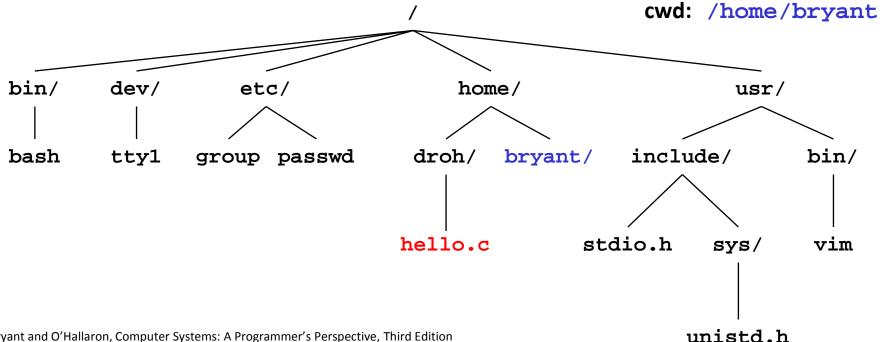
 All files are organized as a hierarchy anchored by root directory named / (slash)



- Kernel maintains *current working directory (cwd)* for each process
  - Modified using the cd command

#### **Pathnames**

- Locations of files in the hierarchy denoted by pathnames
  - Absolute pathname starts with '/' and denotes path from root
    - home/droh/hello.c
  - Relative pathname denotes path from current working directory
    - ../home/droh/hello.c



### **Opening Files**

 Opening a file informs the kernel that you are getting ready to access that file

```
int fd; /* file descriptor */
if ((fd = open("/etc/hosts", O_RDONLY)) < 0) {
   perror("open");
   exit(1);
}</pre>
```

- Returns a small identifying integer *file descriptor* 
  - fd == -1 indicates that an error occurred
- Each process created by a Linux shell begins life with three open files associated with a terminal:
  - 0: standard input (stdin)
  - 1: standard output (stdout)
  - 2: standard error (stderr)

### **Closing Files**

Closing a file informs the kernel that you are finished accessing that file

```
int fd;   /* file descriptor */
int retval; /* return value */

if ((retval = close(fd)) < 0) {
   perror("close");
   exit(1);
}</pre>
```

- Closing an already closed file is a recipe for disaster in threaded programs (more on this later)
- Moral: Always check return codes, even for seemingly benign functions such as close()

#### **Reading Files**

 Reading a file copies bytes from the current file position to memory, and then updates file position

- Returns number of bytes read from file fd into buf
  - Return type ssize\_t is signed integer
  - nbytes < 0 indicates that an error occurred</p>
  - Short counts (nbytes < sizeof(buf)) are possible and are not errors!</p>

#### **Writing Files**

Writing a file copies bytes from memory to the current file position, and then updates current file position

- Returns number of bytes written from buf to file fd
  - nbytes < 0 indicates that an error occurred</p>
  - As with reads, short counts are possible and are not errors!

# Simple Unix I/O example

Copying stdin to stdout, one byte at a time

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(void)
{
    char c;

    while(rate)(STDIN_FILENO, &c, 1) != 0)
        write(std)(STDIN_FILENO, &c, 1);
    exit(0),
```

Always check return codes from system calls!

# Simple Unix I/O example

Copying stdin to stdout, one byte at a time

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(void)
{
    char c;

    while(Read(STDIN_FILENO, &c, 1) != 0)
        Write(STDOUT_FILENO, &c, 1);
    exit(0);
}
```

#### **On Short Counts**

- Short counts can occur in these situations:
  - Encountering (end-of-file) EOF on reads
  - Reading text lines from a terminal
  - Reading and writing network sockets
- Short counts never occur in these situations:
  - Reading from disk files (except for EOF)
  - Writing to disk files
- Best practice is to always allow for short counts.

# **Today**

- Unix I/O
- RIO (robust I/O) package
- Standard I/O
- Which I/O when
- Metadata, sharing, and redirection

# The RIO Package (15-213/CS:APP Package)

RIO is a set of wrappers that provide efficient and robust I/O in apps, such as network programs that are subject to short counts

- RIO provides two different kinds of functions
  - Unbuffered input and output of binary data
    - rio\_readn and rio\_writen
  - Buffered input of text lines and binary data
    - rio\_readlineb and rio\_readnb
    - Buffered RIO routines are thread-safe and can be interleaved arbitrarily on the same descriptor
- Download from <a href="http://csapp.cs.cmu.edu/3e/code.html">http://csapp.cs.cmu.edu/3e/code.html</a>
  - > src/csapp.c and include/csapp.h

### **Unbuffered RIO Input and Output**

- Same interface as Unix read and write
- Especially useful for transferring data on network sockets

```
#include "csapp.h"
ssize_t rio_readn(int fd, void *usrbuf, size_t n);
ssize_t rio_writen(int fd, void *usrbuf, size_t n);

Return: num. bytes transferred if OK, 0 on EOF (rio_readn only), -1 on error
```

- rio\_readn returns short count only if it encounters EOF
  - Only use it when you know how many bytes to read
- rio\_writen never returns a short count
- Calls to rio\_readn and rio\_writen can be interleaved arbitrarily on the same descriptor

#### Implementation of rio\_readn

```
/*
 * rio readn - Robustly read n bytes (unbuffered)
 * /
ssize t rio readn(int fd, void *usrbuf, size t n)
   size t nleft = n;
   ssize t nread;
   char *bufp = usrbuf;
   while (nleft > 0) {
       if ((nread = read(fd, bufp, nleft)) < 0) {</pre>
           if (errno == EINTR) /* Interrupted by sig handler return */
              nread = 0;  /* and call read() again */
           else
              return -1; /* errno set by read() */
       else if (nread == 0)
          break;
                              /* EOF */
       nleft -= nread;
       bufp += nread;
   return (n - nleft); /* Return >= 0 */
```

### **Buffered RIO Input Functions**

 Efficiently read text lines and binary data from a file partially cached in an internal memory buffer

```
#include "csapp.h"

void rio_readinitb(rio_t *rp, int fd);

ssize_t rio_readlineb(rio_t *rp, void *usrbuf, size_t maxlen);

ssize_t rio_readnb(rio_t *rp, void *usrbuf, size_t n);

Return: num. bytes read if OK, 0 on EOF, -1 on error
```

- rio\_readlineb reads a text line of up to maxlen bytes from file fd and stores the line in usrbuf
  - Especially useful for reading text lines from network sockets
- Stopping conditions
  - maxlen bytes read
  - EOF encountered
  - Newline ('\n') encountered

# **Buffered RIO Input Functions (cont)**

```
#include "csapp.h"

void rio_readinitb(rio_t *rp, int fd);

ssize_t rio_readlineb(rio_t *rp, void *usrbuf, size_t maxlen);

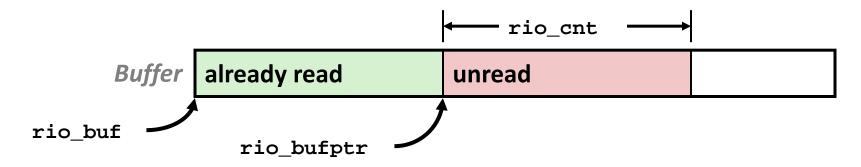
ssize_t rio_readnb(rio_t *rp, void *usrbuf, size_t n);

Return: num. bytes read if OK, 0 on EOF, -1 on error
```

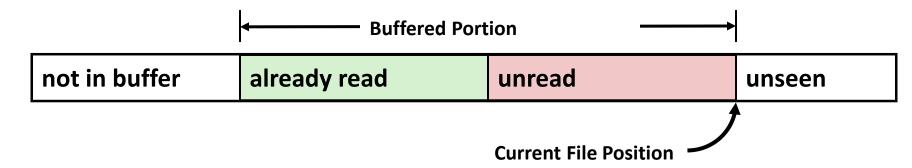
- rio\_readnb reads up to n bytes from file fd
- Stopping conditions
  - maxlen bytes read
  - EOF encountered
- Calls to rio\_readlineb and rio\_readnb can be interleaved arbitrarily on the same descriptor
  - Warning: Don't interleave with calls to rio\_readn

## **Buffered I/O: Implementation**

- For reading from file
- File has associated buffer to hold bytes that have been read from file but not yet read by user code

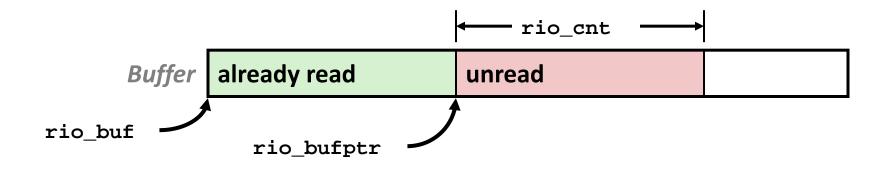


Layered on Unix file:



## **Buffered I/O: Declaration**

All information contained in struct



#### **RIO Example**

 Copying the lines of a text file from standard input to standard output

```
#include "csapp.h"

int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
    int n;
    rio_t rio;
    char buf[MAXLINE];

    Rio_readinitb(&rio, STDIN_FILENO);
    while((n = Rio_readlineb(&rio, buf, MAXLINE)) != 0)
        Rio_writen(STDOUT_FILENO, buf, n);
    exit(0);
}
```

## **Today**

- Unix I/O
- RIO (robust I/O) package
- Standard I/O
- Which I/O when
- Metadata, sharing, and redirection

# **Standard I/O Functions**

- The C standard library (libc.so) contains a collection of higher-level standard I/O functions
  - Documented in Appendix B of K&R
- Examples of standard I/O functions:
  - Opening and closing files (fopen and fclose)
  - Reading and writing bytes (fread and fwrite)
  - Reading and writing text lines (fgets and fputs)
  - Formatted reading and writing (fscanf and fprintf)

# **Standard I/O Streams**

- Standard I/O models open files as streams
  - Abstraction for a file descriptor and a buffer in memory
- C programs begin life with three open streams (defined in stdio.h)
  - stdin (standard input)
  - stdout (standard output)
  - stderr (standard error)

```
#include <stdio.h>
extern FILE *stdin; /* standard input (descriptor 0) */
extern FILE *stdout; /* standard output (descriptor 1) */
extern FILE *stderr; /* standard error (descriptor 2) */
int main() {
   fprintf(stdout, "Hello, world\n");
}
```

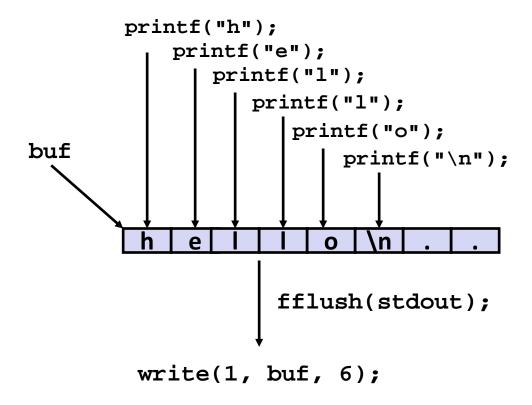
# **Buffered I/O: Motivation**

- Applications often read/write one character at a time
  - getc, putc, ungetc
  - gets, fgets
    - Read line of text one character at a time, stopping at newline
- Implementing as Unix I/O calls expensive
  - read and write require Unix kernel calls
    - > 10,000 clock cycles
- Solution: Buffered read
  - Use Unix read to grab block of bytes
  - User input functions take one byte at a time from buffer
    - Refill buffer when empty



# **Buffering in Standard I/O**

Standard I/O functions use buffered I/O



Buffer flushed to output fd on "\n", call to fflush or exit, or return from main.

## **Standard I/O Buffering in Action**

You can see this buffering in action for yourself, using the always fascinating Linux strace program:

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main()
{
    printf("h");
    printf("e");
    printf("l");
    printf("l");
    printf("o");
    printf("\n");
    fflush(stdout);
    exit(0);
}
```

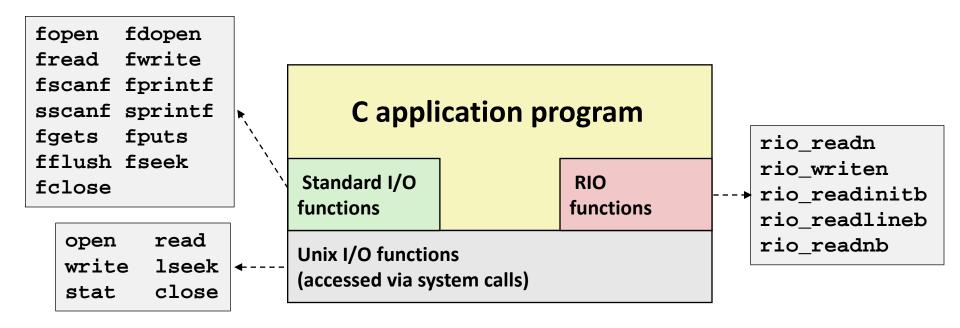
```
linux> strace ./hello
execve("./hello", ["hello"], [/* ... */]).
...
write(1, "hello\n", 6) = 6
...
exit_group(0) = ?
```

## **Today**

- Unix I/O
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- Standard I/O
- Which I/O when
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# Unix I/O vs. Standard I/O vs. RIO

Standard I/O and RIO are implemented using low-level Unix I/O



Which ones should you use in your programs?

# Pros and Cons of Unix I/O

#### Pros

- Unix I/O is the most general and lowest overhead form of I/O
  - All other I/O packages are implemented using Unix I/O functions
- Unix I/O provides functions for accessing file metadata
- Unix I/O functions are async-signal-safe and can be used safely in signal handlers

#### Cons

- Dealing with short counts is tricky and error prone
- Efficient reading of text lines requires some form of buffering, also tricky and error prone
- Both of these issues are addressed by the standard I/O and RIO packages

# Pros and Cons of Standard I/O

#### Pros:

- Buffering increases efficiency by decreasing the number of read and write system calls
- Short counts are handled automatically

#### Cons:

- Provides no function for accessing file metadata
- Standard I/O functions are not async-signal-safe, and not appropriate for signal handlers
- Standard I/O is not appropriate for input and output on network sockets
  - There are poorly documented restrictions on streams that interact badly with restrictions on sockets (CS:APP3e, Sec 10.11)

# **Choosing I/O Functions**

- General rule: use the highest-level I/O functions you can
  - Many C programmers are able to do all of their work using the standard I/O functions
  - But, be sure to understand the functions you use!
- When to use standard I/O
  - When working with disk or terminal files
- When to use raw Unix I/O
  - Inside signal handlers, because Unix I/O is async-signal-safe
  - In rare cases when you need absolute highest performance
- When to use RIO
  - When you are reading and writing network sockets
  - Avoid using standard I/O on sockets

### **Aside: Working with Binary Files**

- **■** Functions you should *never* use on binary files
  - Text-oriented I/O: such as fgets, scanf, rio\_readlineb
    - Interpret EOL characters.
    - Use functions like rio\_readn or rio\_readnb instead
  - String functions
    - strlen, strcpy, strcat
    - Interprets byte value 0 (end of string) as special

### **Today**

- Unix I/O
- RIO (robust I/O) package
- Standard I/O
- Metadata, sharing, and redirection
- Closing remarks

#### File Metadata

- Metadata is data about data, in this case file data
- Per-file metadata maintained by kernel
  - accessed by users with the stat and fstat functions

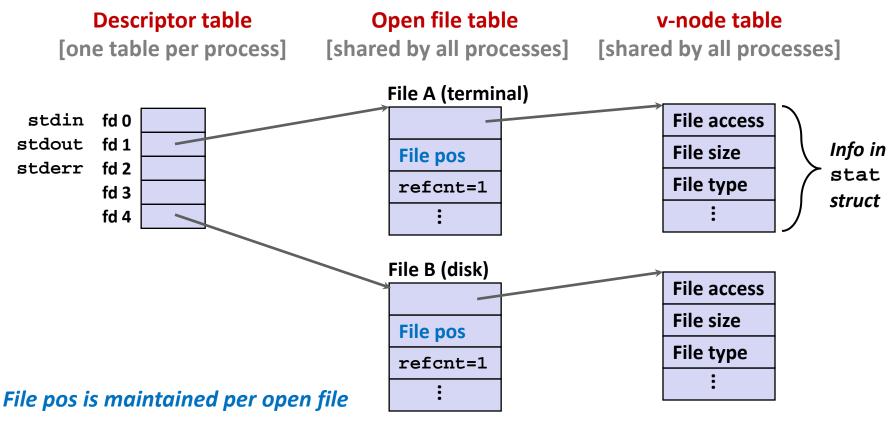
```
/* Metadata returned by the stat and fstat functions */
struct stat {
   dev t
               st dev; /* Device */
   ino t
               st ino; /* inode */
               st_mode; /* Protection and file type */
   mode t
   nlink t
               st_nlink; /* Number of hard links */
   uid t
               st_uid; /* User ID of owner */
               st_gid; /* Group ID of owner */
   gid_t
   dev t
               st_rdev; /* Device type (if inode device) */
               st_size; /* Total size, in bytes */
   off t
   unsigned long st blksize; /* Blocksize for filesystem I/O */
   unsigned long st blocks; /* Number of blocks allocated */
   time t
               st_atime; /* Time of last access */
   time_t st_mtime; /* Time of last modification */
   time t
               st ctime; /* Time of last change */
```

#### **Example of Accessing File Metadata**

```
linux> ./statcheck statcheck.c
int main (int argc, char **argv)
                                   type: regular, read: yes
                                   linux> chmod 000 statcheck.c
   struct stat stat:
                                   linux> ./statcheck statcheck.c
   char *type, *readok;
                                   type: regular, read: no
                                   linux> ./statcheck ..
   Stat(argv[1], &stat);
                                   type: directory, read: yes
   type = "regular";
   else if (S ISDIR(stat.st mode))
      type = "directory";
   else
      type = "other";
   if ((stat.st mode & S IRUSR)) /* Check read access */
      readok = "yes";
   else
       readok = "no";
   printf("type: %s, read: %s\n", type, readok);
   exit(0);
                                                statcheck.c
```

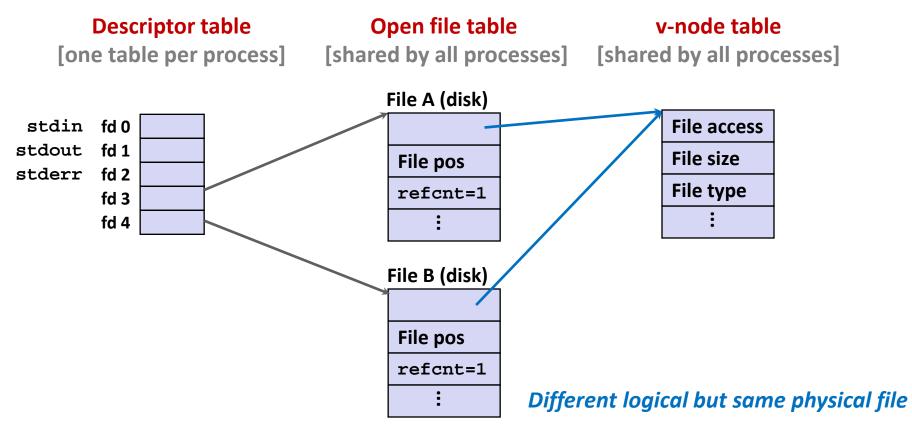
### **How the Unix Kernel Represents Open Files**

Two descriptors referencing two distinct open files.
 Descriptor 1 (stdout) points to terminal, and descriptor 4 points to open disk file



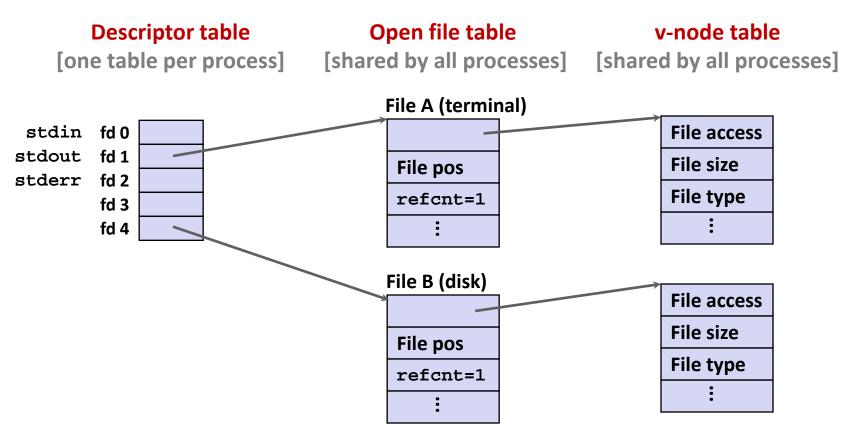
#### **File Sharing**

- Two distinct descriptors sharing the same disk file through two distinct open file table entries
  - E.g., Calling open twice with the same filename argument



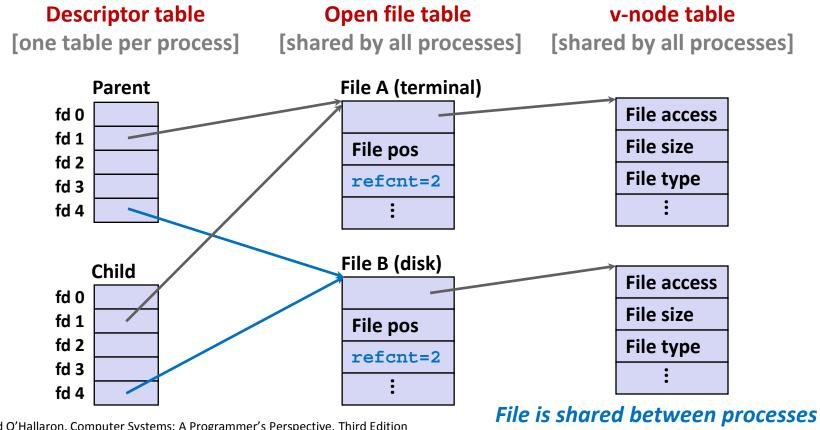
#### How Processes Share Files: fork

- A child process inherits its parent's open files
  - Note: situation unchanged by exec functions (use fcnt1 to change)
- Before fork call:



#### How Processes Share Files: fork

- A child process inherits its parent's open files
- After fork:
  - Child's table same as parent's, and +1 to each refent



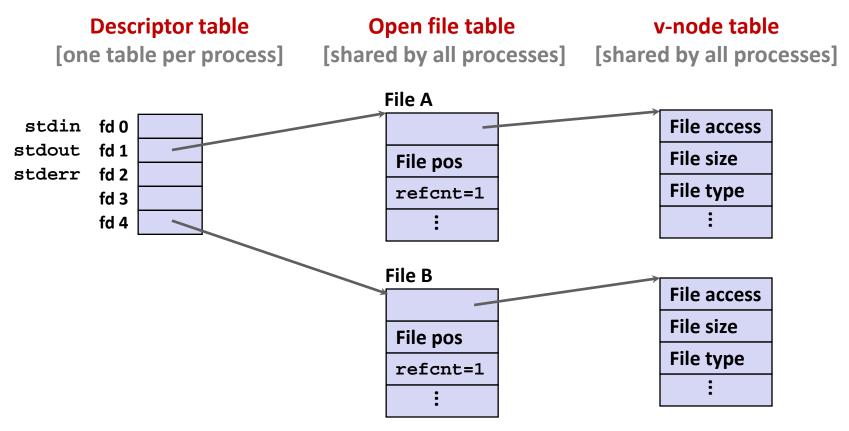
# I/O Redirection

- Question: How does a shell implement I/O redirection?
  linux> ls > foo.txt
- Answer: By calling the dup2(oldfd, newfd) function
  - Copies (per-process) descriptor table entry oldfd to entry newfd

#### **Descriptor table Descriptor table** after dup2(4,1)before dup2(4,1)fd 0 fd 0 fd 1 fd 1 b a fd 2 fd 2 fd 3 fd 3 fd 4 fd 4

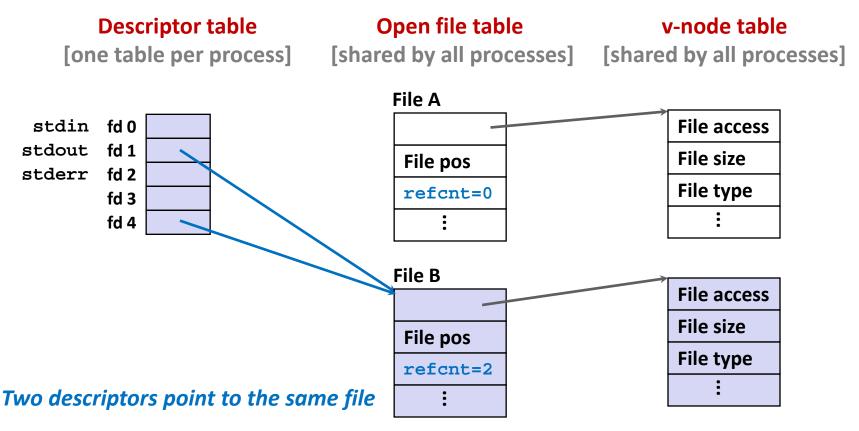
# I/O Redirection Example

- Step #1: open file to which stdout should be redirected
  - Happens in child executing shell code, before exec



# I/O Redirection Example (cont.)

- Step #2: call dup2(4,1)
  - cause fd=1 (stdout) to refer to disk file pointed at by fd=4



## Warm-Up: I/O and Redirection Example

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
    int fd1, fd2, fd3;
    char c1, c2, c3;
    char *fname = argv[1];
    fd1 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
    fd2 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
    fd3 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
   Dup2(fd2, fd3);
   Read(fd1, &c1, 1);
   Read(fd2, &c2, 1);
   Read(fd3, &c3, 1);
   printf("c1 = %c, c2 = %c, c3 = %c\n", c1, c2, c3);
   return 0;
                                              ffiles1.c
```

## Warm-Up: I/O and Redirection Example

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
                                      c1 = a, c2 = a, c3 = b
   int fd1, fd2, fd3;
   char c1, c2, c3;
   char *fname = argv[1];
   fd1 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
   fd2 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
   fd3 = Open(fname, O_RDONLY, 0);
                                      dup2(oldfd, newfd)
   Dup2(fd2, fd3); ←
   Read(fd1, &c1, 1);
   Read(fd2, &c2, 1);
   Read(fd3, &c3, 1);
   printf("c1 = %c, c2 = %c, c3 = %c\n", c1, c2, c3);
   return 0;
                                            ffiles1.c
```

#### **Master Class: Process Control and I/O**

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
    int fd1;
    int s = getpid() & 0x1;
    char c1, c2;
    char *fname = argv[1];
    fd1 = Open(fname, O_RDONLY, 0);
    Read(fd1, &c1, 1);
    if (fork()) { /* Parent */
        sleep(s);
        Read(fd1, &c2, 1);
        printf("Parent: c1 = %c, c2 = %c\n", c1, c2);
    } else { /* Child */
        sleep(1-s);
        Read(fd1, &c2, 1);
        printf("Child: c1 = %c, c2 = %c n", c1, c2);
    return 0;
                                            ffiles2.c
```

#### **Master Class: Process Control and I/O**

```
#include "csapp.h"
                                       Child: c1 = a, c2 = b
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
                                       Parent: c1 = a, c2 = c
    int fd1;
    int s = getpid() & 0x1;
   char c1, c2;
                                       Parent: c1 = a, c2 = b
   char *fname = argv[1];
                                       Child: c1 = a, c2 = c
    fd1 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
   Read(fd1, &c1, 1);
    if (fork()) { /* Parent */
                                       Bonus: Which way does it go?
       sleep(s);
       Read(fd1, &c2, 1);
       printf("Parent: c1 = %c, c2 = %c\n", c1, c2);
    } else { /* Child */
       sleep(1-s);
       Read(fd1, &c2, 1);
       printf("Child: c1 = %c, c2 = %c\n", c1, c2);
    return 0;
                                           ffiles2.c
```

## I/O Questions in Exams

#### Problem 10. (6 points):

Unix I/O.

A. Suppose that the disk file foobar.txt consists of the six ASCII characters "foobar". What is the output of the following program?

```
/* any necessary includes */
char buf[20] = \{0\}; /* init to all zeroes */
int main(int argc, char* argv[]) {
    int fd1 = open("foobar.txt", O_RDONLY);
    int fd2 = open("foobar.txt", O_RDONLY);
    dup2(fd2, fd1);
    read(fd1, buf, 3);
    close (fd1);
    read(fd2, &buf[3], 3);
    close (fd2);
   printf("buf = %s\n", buf);
    return 0;
Output: buf = _____
```

```
*******

Problem 10

*******

A. Output: buf = foobar
```

Fall 2011 (model solution)

#### **Extra Slides**

#### For Further Information

#### The Unix bible:

- W. Richard Stevens & Stephen A. Rago, Advanced Programming in the Unix Environment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Addison Wesley, 2005
  - Updated from Stevens's 1993 classic text

#### The Linux bible:

- Michael Kerrisk, The Linux Programming Interface, No Starch Press, 2010
  - Encyclopedic and authoritative

## Fun with File Descriptors (1)

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
    int fd1, fd2, fd3;
    char c1, c2, c3;
    char *fname = argv[1];
    fd1 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
    fd2 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
    fd3 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
   Dup2(fd2, fd3);
   Read(fd1, &c1, 1);
   Read(fd2, &c2, 1);
   Read(fd3, &c3, 1);
   printf("c1 = %c, c2 = %c, c3 = %c\n", c1, c2, c3);
   return 0;
                                              ffiles1.c
```

### Fun with File Descriptors (2)

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
    int fd1;
    int s = getpid() & 0x1;
    char c1, c2;
    char *fname = argv[1];
    fd1 = Open(fname, O RDONLY, 0);
    Read(fd1, &c1, 1);
    if (fork()) { /* Parent */
        sleep(s);
        Read(fd1, &c2, 1);
        printf("Parent: c1 = %c, c2 = %c\n", c1, c2);
    } else { /* Child */
        sleep(1-s);
        Read(fd1, &c2, 1);
        printf("Child: c1 = %c, c2 = %c n", c1, c2);
    return 0;
                                            ffiles2.c
```

## Fun with File Descriptors (3)

```
#include "csapp.h"
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
    int fd1, fd2, fd3;
    char *fname = argv[1];
    fd1 = Open(fname, O_CREAT O_TRUNC O_RDWR, S_IRUSR S_IWUSR);
   Write(fd1, "pgrs", 4);
    fd3 = Open(fname, O_APPEND|O_WRONLY, 0);
   Write(fd3, "jklmn", 5);
    fd2 = dup(fd1); /* Allocates descriptor */
   Write(fd2, "wxyz", 4);
   Write(fd3, "ef", 2);
    return 0;
                                                       ffiles3.c
```

What would be the contents of the resulting file?

#### **Accessing Directories**

- Only recommended operation on a directory: read its entries
  - dirent structure contains information about a directory entry
  - DIR structure contains information about directory while stepping through its entries

```
#include <sys/types.h>
#include <dirent.h>
 DIR *directory;
  struct dirent *de;
  if (!(directory = opendir(dir name)))
      error("Failed to open directory");
 while (0 != (de = readdir(directory))) {
      printf("Found file: %s\n", de->d name);
  closedir(directory);
```