SWE2001: System Program
Lecture 0x0C: Linking

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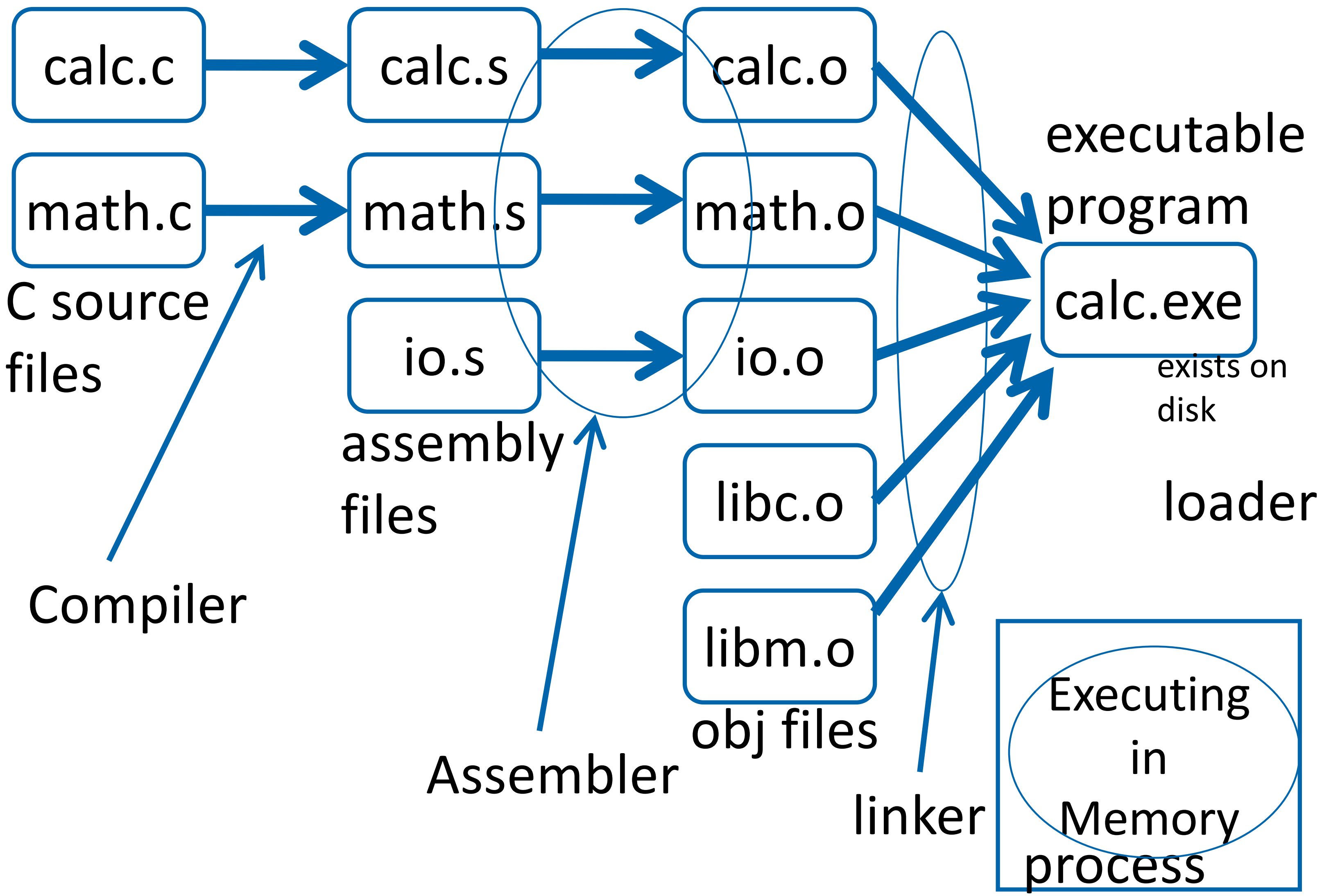
Linking


calc.c
calc.s
calc.o
math.c
math.s
math.o
io.s
io.o
libc.o
libm.o
C source files
assembly files
obj files
executable program
calc.exe
exists on disk
loader
Compiler
Assembler
linker
Executing in Memory
process

Example C Program

```c
int sum(int *a, int n);

int array[2] = {1, 2};

int main()
{
    int val = sum(array, 2);
    return val;
}
```

main.c

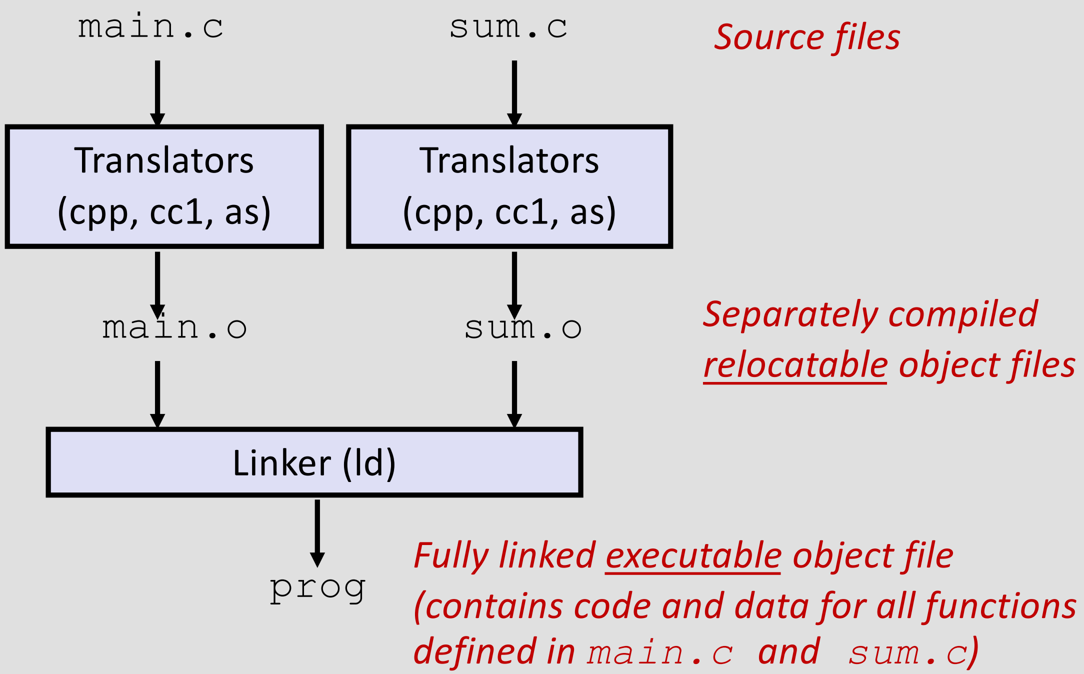
```c
int sum(int *a, int n)
{
    int i, s = 0;

    for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
        s += a[i];
    }
    return s;
}
```

sum.c

Static Linking

- **Programs are translated and linked using a *compiler driver*:**
  - `linux> gcc -Og -o prog main.c sum.c`
  - `linux> ./prog`



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Why Linkers?

- Reason 1: Modularity

  - Program can be written as a collection of smaller source files, rather than one monolithic mass.

  - Can build libraries of common functions (more on this later)
    - e.g., Math library, standard C library

Why Linkers? (cont)

- Reason 2: Efficiency
  - Time: Separate compilation
    - Change one source file, compile, and then relink.
    - No need to recompile other source files.
  - Space: Libraries
    - Common functions can be aggregated into a single file...
    - Yet executable files and running memory images contain only code for the functions they actually use.

What Do Linkers Do?

- Step 1: Symbol resolution

  - Programs define and reference *symbols* (global variables and functions):
    - `void swap() {…}    /* define symbol swap */`
    - `swap();            /* reference symbol swap */`
    - `int *xp = &x;      /* define symbol xp, reference x */`

  - Symbol definitions are stored in object file (by assembler) in *symbol table*.
    - Symbol table is an array of `structs`
    - Each entry includes name, size, and location of symbol.

  - During symbol resolution step, the linker associates each symbol reference with exactly one symbol definition.

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What Do Linkers Do? (cont)

- Step 2: Relocation

  - Merges separate code and data sections into single sections

  - Relocates symbols from their relative locations in the `.o` files to their final absolute memory locations in the executable.

  - Updates all references to these symbols to reflect their new positions.

Three Kinds of Object Files (Modules)

- Relocatable object file (**`.o`** file)
  - Contains code and data in a form that can be combined with other relocatable object files to form executable object file.
    - Each `.o` file is produced from exactly one source (`.c`) file

- Executable object file (**`a.out`** file)
  - Contains code and data in a form that can be copied directly into memory and then executed.

- Shared object file (**`.so`** file)
  - Special type of relocatable object file that can be loaded into memory and linked dynamically, at either load time or run-time.
  - Called *Dynamic Link Libraries* (DLLs) by Windows

Executable and Linkable Format (ELF)

- Standard binary format for object files

- One unified format for
  - Relocatable object files (`.o`),
  - Executable object files (`a.out`)
  - Shared object files (`.so`)

- Generic name: ELF binaries

ELF Object File Format

- Elf header
  - Word size, byte ordering, file type (.o, exec, .so), machine type, etc.
- Segment header table
  - Page size, virtual addresses memory segments (sections), segment sizes.
- **`.text`** section
  - Code
- **`.rodata`** section
  - Read only data: jump tables, ...
- **`.data`** section
  - Initialized global variables
- **`.bss`** section
  - Uninitialized global variables
  - “Block Started by Symbol”
  - “Better Save Space”
  - Has section header but occupies no space

0

ELF header
Segment header table (required for executables)
`.text` section
`.rodata` section
`.data` section
`.bss` section
`.symtab` section
`.rel.txt` section
`.rel.data` section
`.debug` section
Section header table

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ELF Object File Format

- **`.symtab`** section
  - Symbol table
  - Procedure and static variable names
  - Section names and locations
- **`.rel.text`** section
  - Relocation info for **`.text`** section
  - Addresses of instructions that will need to be modified in the executable
  - Instructions for modifying.
- **`.rel.data`** section
  - Relocation info for **`.data`** section
  - Addresses of pointer data that will need to be modified in the merged executable
- **`.debug`** section
  - Info for symbolic debugging (**`gcc -g`**)
- Section header table
  - Offsets and sizes of each section

0
ELF header
Segment header table (required for executables)
`.text` section
`.rodata` section
`.data` section
`.bss` section
`.symtab` section
`.rel.txt` section
`.rel.data` section
`.debug` section
Section header table

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Linker Symbols

- Global symbols
  - Symbols defined by module *m* that can be referenced by other modules.
  - E.g.: non-**`static`** C functions and non-**`static`** global variables.
- External symbols
  - Global symbols that are referenced by module *m* but defined by some other module.
- Local symbols
  - Symbols that are defined and referenced exclusively by module *m*.
  - E.g.: C functions and global variables defined with the **`static`** attribute.
  - Local linker symbols are *not* local program variables

Step 1: Symbol Resolution

Referencing a global…

…that's defined here

```c
int sum(int *a, int n);

int array[2] = {1, 2};

int main()
{
    int val = sum(array, 2);
    return val;
}
```

main.c

```c
int sum(int *a, int n)
{
    int i, s = 0;

    for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
        s += a[i];
    }
    return s;
}
```

sum.c

Defining a global

Linker knows nothing of `val`

Referencing a global…

…that's defined here

Linker knows nothing of `i` or `s`

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Local Symbols

- Local non-static C variables vs. local static C variables
  - local non-static C variables: stored on the stack
  - local static C variables: stored in either `.bss`, or `.data`

```c
int f()
{
    static int x = 0;
    return x;
}

int g()
{
    static int x = 1;
    return x;
}
```

Compiler allocates space in `.data` for each definition of `x`

Creates local symbols in the symbol table with unique names, e.g., `x.1` and `x.2`.

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How Linker Resolves Duplicate Symbol Definitions

- Program symbols are either *strong* or *weak*
  - *Strong*: procedures and initialized globals
  - *Weak*: uninitialized globals

	p1.c	p2.c	
strong	`int foo=5;`	`int foo;`	weak
strong	`p1() { }`	`p2() { }`	strong

Linker's Symbol Rules

- Rule 1: Multiple strong symbols are not allowed
  - Each item can be defined only once
  - Otherwise: Linker error
- Rule 2: Given a strong symbol and multiple weak symbols, choose the strong symbol
  - References to the weak symbol resolve to the strong symbol
- Rule 3: If there are multiple weak symbols, pick an arbitrary one
  - Can override this with **`gcc -fno-common`**

Linker Puzzles

`int x;` `p1() {}`	`p1() {}`	Link time error: two strong symbols (`p1`)
`int x;` `p1() {}`	`int x;` `p2() {}`	References to `x` will refer to the same uninitialized int. Is this what you really want?

`int x;`
`int y;`
`p1() {}`
	`double x;`
	`p2() {}`
		Writes to `x` in `p2` might overwrite `y`!
		Evil!

`int x=7;`
`int y=5;`
`p1() {}`
	`double x;`
	`p2() {}`
		Writes to `x` in `p2` will overwrite `y`!
		Nasty!

`int x=7;` `p1() {}`	`int x;` `p2() {}`	References to `x` will refer to the same initialized variable.

Nightmare scenario: two identical weak structs, compiled by different compilers with different alignment rules.

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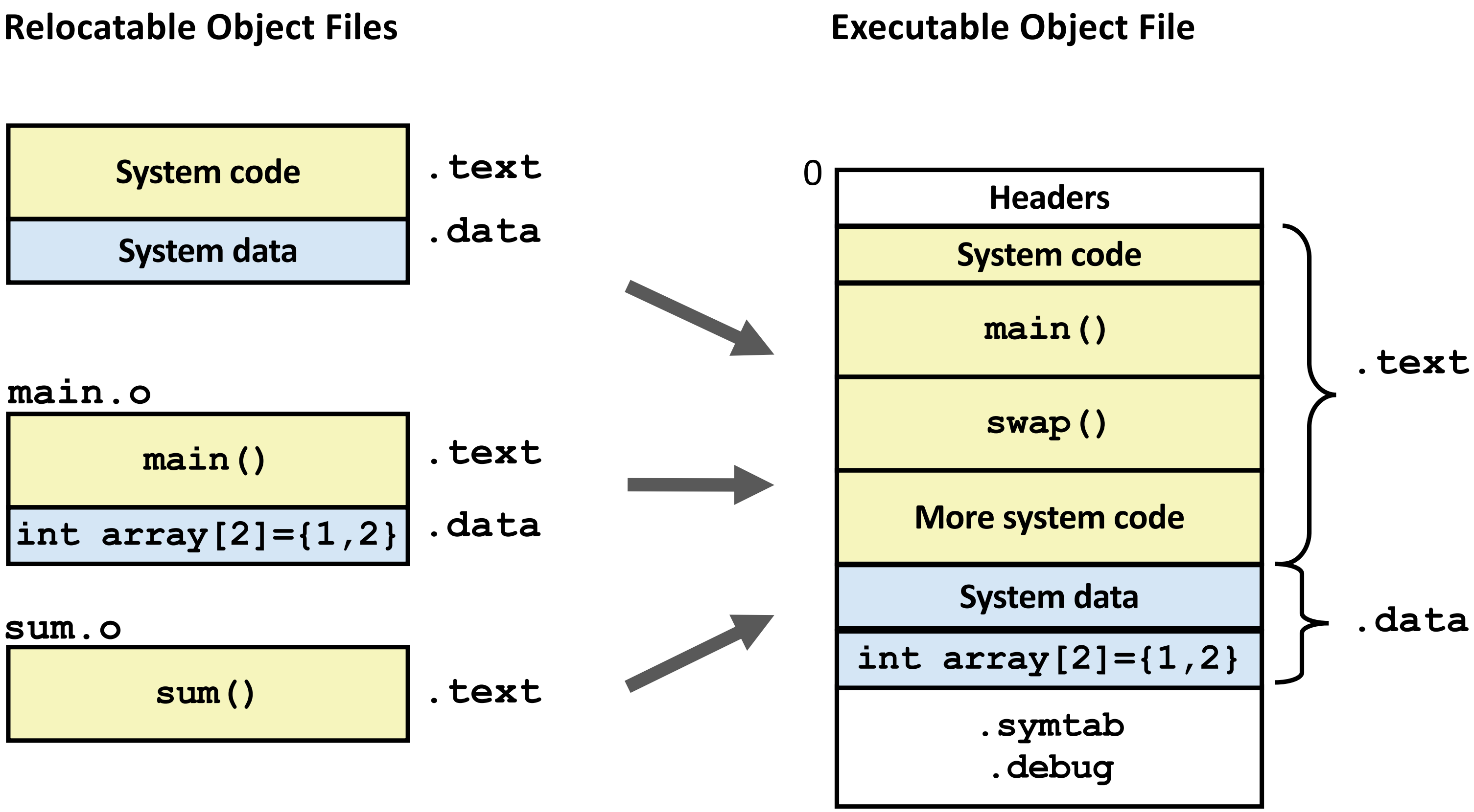
Global Variables

- Avoid if you can
- Otherwise
  - Use **`static`** if you can
  - Initialize if you define a global variable
  - Use **`extern`** if you reference an external global variable

Step 2: Relocation



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Relocation Structures in ELF

```
// "sys/elf.h"
typedef struct {
        Elf32_Addr      r_offset;
        Elf32_Word      r_info;
} Elf32_Rel;

typedef struct {
        Elf32_Addr      r_offset;
        Elf32_Word      r_info;
        Elf32_Sword     r_addend;
} Elf32_Rela;

typedef struct {
        Elf64_Addr      r_offset;
        Elf64_Xword     r_info;
} Elf64_Rel;

typedef struct {
        Elf64_Addr      r_offset;
        Elf64_Xword     r_info;
        Elf64_Sxword    r_addend;
} Elf64_Rela;
```

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Relocation Algorithm

```
foreach section s {
    foreach relocation entry r {
        refptr = s + r.offset;  /* ptr to reference to be relocated */

        /* Relocate a PC-relative reference */
        if (r.type == R_X86_64_PC32) {
            refaddr = ADDR(s) + r.offset; /* ref's run-time address */
            *refptr = (unsigned) (ADDR(r.symbol) + r.addend - refaddr);
        }

        /* Relocate an absolute reference */
        if (r.type == R_X86_64_32)
            *refptr = (unsigned) (ADDR(r.symbol) + r.addend);
    }
}
```

Figure 7.10 **Relocation algorithm.**

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Relocation Entries

```c
int array[2] = {1, 2};

int main()
{
    int val = sum(array, 2);
    return val;
}
```
main.c

```
0000000000000000 <main>:
   0:   48 83 ec 08             sub    $0x8,%rsp
   4:   be 02 00 00 00          mov    $0x2,%esi
   9:   bf 00 00 00 00          mov    $0x0,%edi      # %edi = &array
                        a: R_X86_64_32 array          # Relocation entry

   e:   e8 00 00 00 00          callq  13 <main+0x13> # sum()
                        f: R_X86_64_PC32 sum-0x4      # Relocation entry
  13:   48 83 c4 08             add    $0x8,%rsp
  17:   c3                      retq
```
main.o

Source: `objdump -r -d main.o`

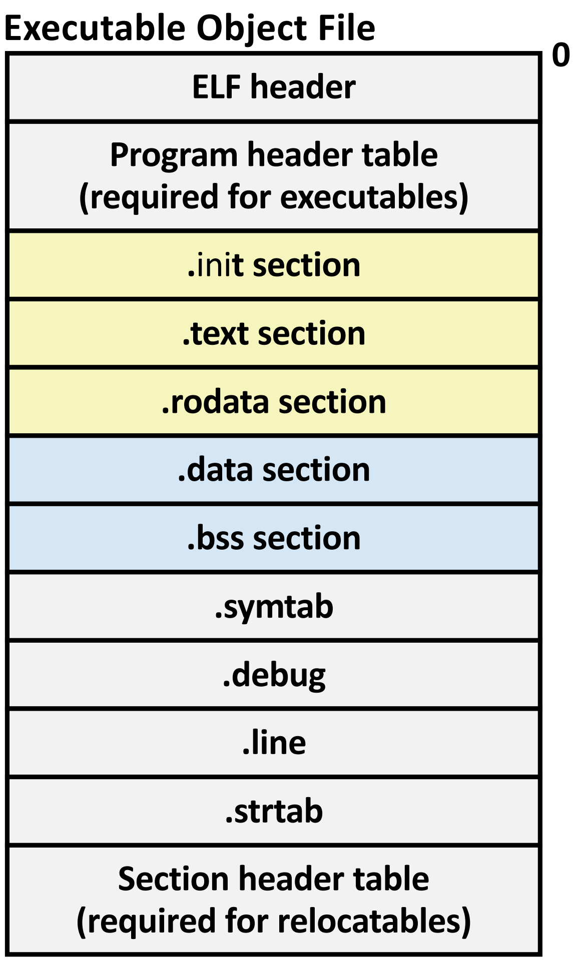
Relocated .text section

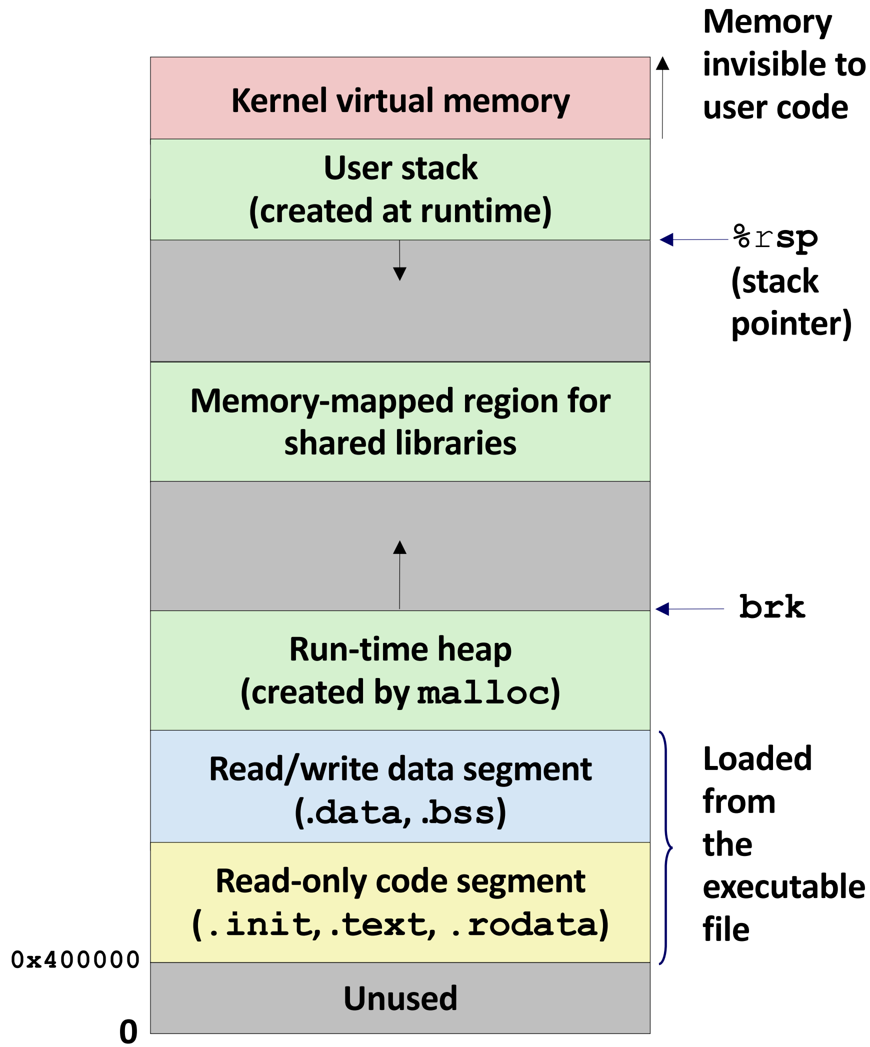
```
00000000004004d0 <main>:
  4004d0:       48 83 ec 08       sub    $0x8,%rsp
  4004d4:       be 02 00 00 00    mov    $0x2,%esi
  4004d9:       bf 18 10 60 00    mov    $0x601018,%edi   # %edi = &array
  4004de:       e8 05 00 00 00    callq  4004e8 <sum>     # sum()
  4004e3:       48 83 c4 08       add    $0x8,%rsp
  4004e7:       c3                retq

00000000004004e8 <sum>:
  4004e8:       b8 00 00 00 00          mov    $0x0,%eax
  4004ed:       ba 00 00 00 00          mov    $0x0,%edx
  4004f2:       eb 09                   jmp    4004fd <sum+0x15>
  4004f4:       48 63 ca                movslq %edx,%rcx
  4004f7:       03 04 8f                add    (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
  4004fa:       83 c2 01                add    $0x1,%edx
  4004fd:       39 f2                   cmp    %esi,%edx
  4004ff:       7c f3                   jl     4004f4 <sum+0xc>
  400501:       f3 c3                   repz retq
```

Using PC-relative addressing for sum(): 0x4004e8 = 0x4004e3 + 0x5

Source: `objdump -dx prog`

Loading Executable Object Files





Packaging Commonly Used Functions

- How to package functions commonly used by programmers?
  - Math, I/O, memory management, string manipulation, etc.

- Awkward, given the linker framework so far:
  - Option 1: Put all functions into a single source file
    - Programmers link big object file into their programs
    - Space and time inefficient
  - Option 2: Put each function in a separate source file
    - Programmers explicitly link appropriate binaries into their programs
    - More efficient, but burdensome on the programmer

Old-fashioned Solution: Static Libraries

- Static libraries (`.a` archive files)
  - Concatenate related relocatable object files into a single file with an index (called an *archive*).
  - Enhance linker so that it tries to resolve unresolved external references by looking for the symbols in one or more archives.
  - If an archive member file resolves reference, link it into the executable.

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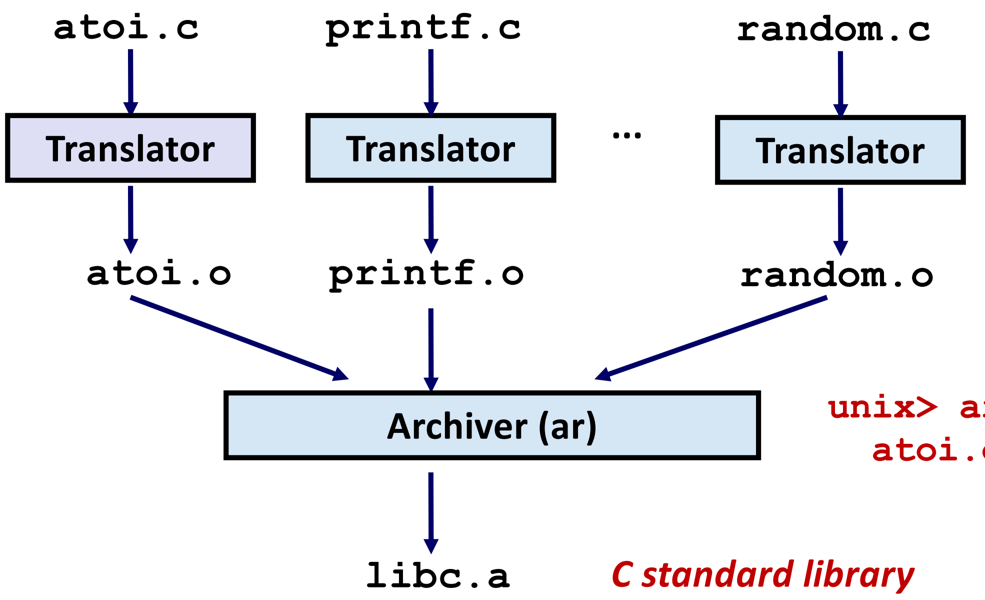
Creating Static Libraries




```
unix> ar rs libc.a \
  atoi.o printf.o … random.o
```

C standard library

- Archiver allows incremental updates
- Recompile function that changes and replace .o file in archive.

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Commonly Used Libraries

`libc.a` (the C standard library)

- 4.6 MB archive of 1496 object files.
- I/O, memory allocation, signal handling, string handling, data and time, random numbers, integer math

`libm.a` (the C math library)

- 2 MB archive of 444 object files.
- floating point math (sin, cos, tan, log, exp, sqrt, …)

```
% ar -t libc.a | sort
…
fork.o
…
fprintf.o
fpu_control.o
fputc.o
freopen.o
fscanf.o
fseek.o
fstab.o
…
```

```
% ar -t libm.a | sort
…
e_acos.o
e_acosf.o
e_acosh.o
e_acoshf.o
e_acoshl.o
e_acosl.o
e_asin.o
e_asinf.o
e_asinl.o
…
```

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Linking with Static Libraries

```c
#include <stdio.h>
#include "vector.h"

int x[2] = {1, 2};
int y[2] = {3, 4};
int z[2];

int main()
{
    addvec(x, y, z, 2);
    printf("z = [%d %d]\n", 
           z[0], z[1]);
    return 0;
}
```

main2.c

libvector.a

```c
void addvec(int *x, int *y,
            int *z, int n) {
    int i;

    for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
        z[i] = x[i] + y[i];
}
```

addvec.c

```c
void multvec(int *x, int *y,
             int *z, int n)
{
    int i;

    for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
        z[i] = x[i] * y[i];
}
```

multvec.c

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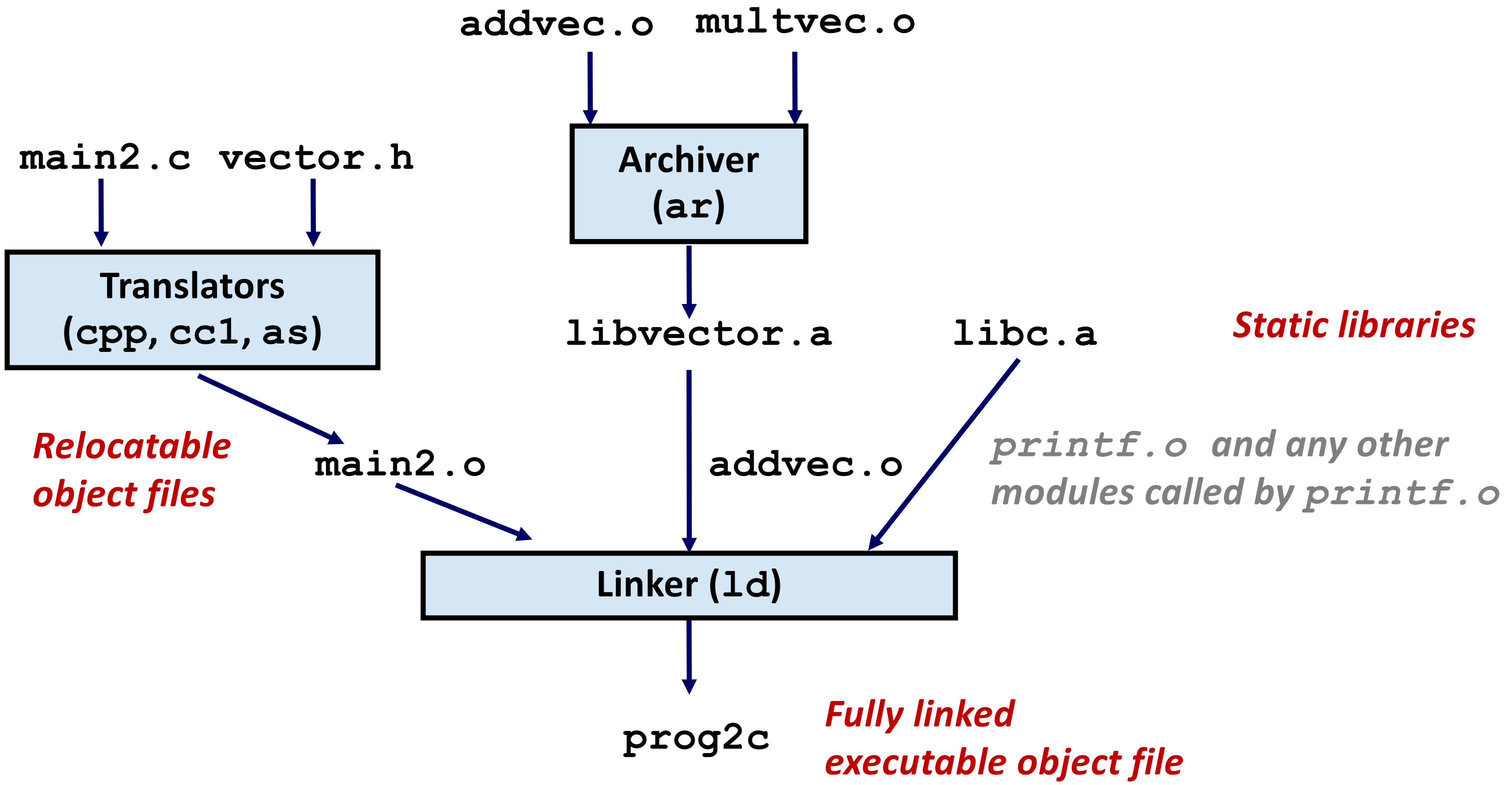
Linking with Static Libraries



"c" for "compile-time"

Using Static Libraries

- Linker's algorithm for resolving external references:
  - Scan **.o** files and **.a** files in the command line order.
  - During the scan, keep a list of the current unresolved references.
  - As each new **.o** or **.a** file, *obj*, is encountered, try to resolve each unresolved reference in the list against the symbols defined in *obj*.
  - If any entries in the unresolved list at end of scan, then error.

- Problem:
  - Command line order matters!
  - Moral: put libraries at the end of the command line.

```
unix> gcc -L. libtest.o -lmine
unix> gcc -L. -lmine libtest.o
libtest.o: In function `main':
libtest.o(.text+0x4): undefined reference to `libfun'
```

Modern Solution: Shared Libraries

- Static libraries have the following disadvantages:
  - Duplication in the stored executables (every function needs libc)
  - Duplication in the running executables
  - Minor bug fixes of system libraries require each application to explicitly relink

- Modern solution: Shared Libraries
  - Object files that contain code and data that are loaded and linked into an application *dynamically*, at either *load-time* or *run-time*
  - Also called: dynamic link libraries, DLLs, `.so` files

Shared Libraries (cont.)

- Dynamic linking can occur when executable is first loaded and run (load-time linking).
  - Common case for Linux, handled automatically by the dynamic linker (**`ld-linux.so`**).
  - Standard C library (**`libc.so`**) usually dynamically linked.
- Dynamic linking can also occur after program has begun

  (run-time linking).
  - In Linux, this is done by calls to the **`dlopen()`** interface.
    - Distributing software.
    - High-performance web servers.
    - Runtime library interpositioning.
- Shared library routines can be shared by multiple processes.
  - More on this when we learn about virtual memory

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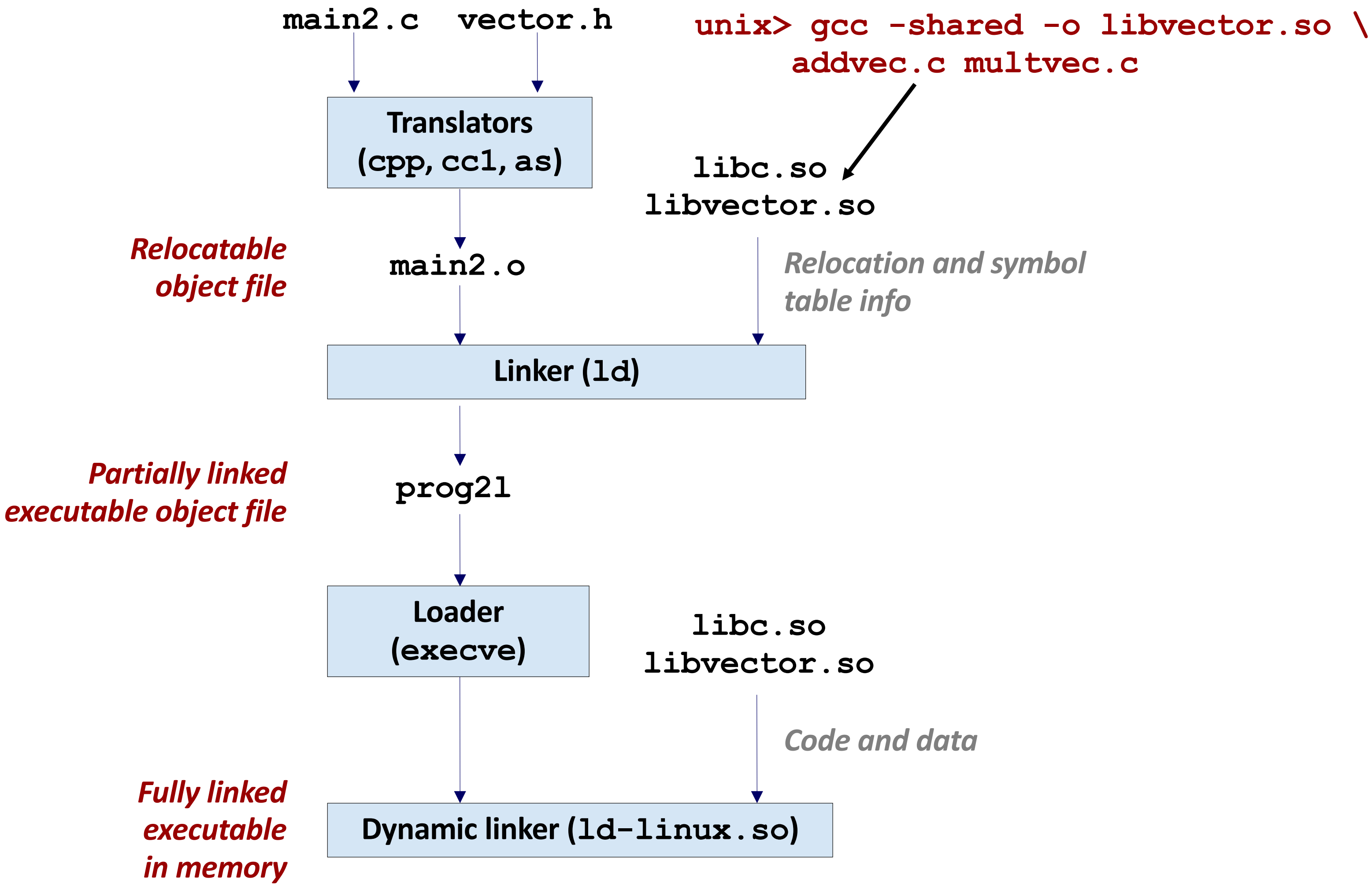
Dynamic Linking at Load-time



Dynamic Linking at Run-time

```c
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <dlfcn.h>

int x[2] = {1, 2};
int y[2] = {3, 4};
int z[2];

int main()
{
    void *handle;
    void (*addvec)(int *, int *, int *, int);
    char *error;

    /* Dynamically load the shared library that contains addvec() */
    handle = dlopen("./libvector.so", RTLD_LAZY);
    if (!handle) {
        fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
        exit(1);
    }
```

dll.c

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Dynamic Linking at Run-time

```c
    ...

    /* Get a pointer to the addvec() function we just loaded */
    addvec = dlsym(handle, "addvec");
    if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
        fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", error);
        exit(1);
    }

    /* Now we can call addvec() just like any other function */
    addvec(x, y, z, 2);
    printf("z = [%d %d]\n", z[0], z[1]);

    /* Unload the shared library */
    if (dlclose(handle) < 0) {
        fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
        exit(1);
    }
    return 0;
}
```

dll.c

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Linking Summary

- Linking is a technique that allows programs to be constructed from multiple object files.

- Linking can happen at different times in a program's lifetime:
  - Compile time (when a program is compiled)
  - Load time (when a program is loaded into memory)
  - Run time (while a program is executing)

- Understanding linking can help you avoid nasty errors and make you a better programmer.

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Today

- Linking
- Case study: Library interpositioning

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Case Study: Library Interpositioning

- Library interpositioning : powerful linking technique that allows programmers to intercept calls to arbitrary functions
- Interpositioning can occur at:
  - Compile time: When the source code is compiled
  - Link time: When the relocatable object files are statically linked to form an executable object file
  - Load/run time: When an executable object file is loaded into memory, dynamically linked, and then executed.

Some Interpositioning Applications

- Security
  - Confinement (sandboxing)
  - Behind the scenes encryption
- Debugging
  - In 2014, two Facebook engineers debugged a treacherous 1-year old bug in their iPhone app using interpositioning
  - Code in the SPDY networking stack was writing to the wrong location
  - Solved by intercepting calls to Posix write functions (write, writev, pwrite)

Source: Facebook engineering blog post at `https://code.facebook.com/posts/313033472212144/debugging-file-corruption-on-ios/`

Some Interpositioning Applications

- Monitoring and Profiling
  - Count number of calls to functions
  - Characterize call sites and arguments to functions
  - Malloc tracing
    - Detecting memory leaks
    - Generating address traces

Example program

- Goal: trace the addresses and sizes of the allocated and freed blocks, without breaking the program, and without modifying the source code.

```c
#include <stdio.h>
#include <malloc.h>

int main()
{
    int *p = malloc(32);
    free(p);
    return(0);
}
```
int.c

- Three solutions: interpose on the **`lib malloc`** and **`free`** functions at compile time, link time, and load/run time.

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Compile-time Interpositioning

```c
#ifdef COMPILETIME
#include <stdio.h>
#include <malloc.h>

/* malloc wrapper function */
void *mymalloc(size_t size)
{
    void *ptr = malloc(size);
    printf("malloc(%d)=%p\n",
           (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
}

/* free wrapper function */
void myfree(void *ptr)
{
    free(ptr);
    printf("free(%p)\n", ptr);
}
#endif
```

mymalloc.c

Compile-time Interpositioning

```
#define malloc(size) mymalloc(size)
#define free(ptr) myfree(ptr)

void *mymalloc(size_t size);
void myfree(void *ptr);
```
malloc.h

```
linux> make intc
gcc -Wall -DCOMPILETIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -Wall -I. -o intc int.c mymalloc.o
linux> make runc
./intc
malloc(32)=0x1edc010
free(0x1edc010)
linux>
```

Link-time Interpositioning

```c
#ifdef LINKTIME
#include <stdio.h>

void *__real_malloc(size_t size);
void __real_free(void *ptr);

/* malloc wrapper function */
void *__wrap_malloc(size_t size)
{
    void *ptr = __real_malloc(size); /* Call libc malloc */
    printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
}

/* free wrapper function */
void __wrap_free(void *ptr)
{
    __real_free(ptr); /* Call libc free */
    printf("free(%p)\n", ptr);
}
#endif
```

mymalloc.c

Link-time Interpositioning

```
linux> make intl
gcc -Wall -DLINKTIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -Wall -c int.c
gcc -Wall -Wl,--wrap,malloc -Wl,--wrap,free -o intl
int.o mymalloc.o
linux> make runl
./intl
malloc(32) = 0x1aa0010
free(0x1aa0010)
linux>
```

- The "**`-Wl`**" flag passes argument to linker, replacing each comma with a space.
- The "**`--wrap,malloc`**" **`arg`** instructs linker to resolve references in a special way:
  - Refs to `malloc` should be resolved as `__wrap_malloc`
  - Refs to `__real_malloc` should be resolved as `malloc`

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Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```
#ifdef RUNTIME
#define _GNU_SOURCE
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <dlfcn.h>

/* malloc wrapper function */
void *malloc(size_t size)
{
    void *(*mallocp)(size_t size);
    char *error;

    mallocp = dlsym(RTLD_NEXT, "malloc"); /* Get addr of libc malloc */
    if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
        fputs(error, stderr);
        exit(1);
    }
    char *ptr = mallocp(size); /* Call libc malloc */
    printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
}
```

mymalloc.c

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Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```c
/* free wrapper function */
void free(void *ptr)
{
    void (*freep)(void *) = NULL;
    char *error;

    if (!ptr)
        return;

    freep = dlsym(RTLD_NEXT, "free"); /* Get address of libc free */
    if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
        fputs(error, stderr);
        exit(1);
    }
    freep(ptr); /* Call libc free */
    printf("free(%p)\n", ptr);
}
#endif
```

mymalloc.c

Load/Run-time Interpositioning

- **`The LD_PRELOAD`** environment variable tells the dynamic linker to resolve unresolved refs (e.g., to **`malloc)`** by looking in **`mymalloc.so`** first.

```
linux> make intr
gcc -Wall -DRUNTIME -shared -fpic -o mymalloc.so mymalloc.c -ldl
gcc -Wall -o intr int.c
linux> make runr
(LD_PRELOAD="./mymalloc.so" ./intr)
malloc(32) = 0xe60010
free(0xe60010)
linux>
```

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Interpositioning Recap

- Compile Time
  - Apparent calls to malloc/free get macro-expanded into calls to mymalloc/myfree
- Link Time
  - Use linker trick to have special name resolutions
    - malloc → __wrap_malloc
    - __real_malloc → malloc
- Load/Run Time
  - Implement custom version of malloc/free that use dynamic linking to load library malloc/free under different names