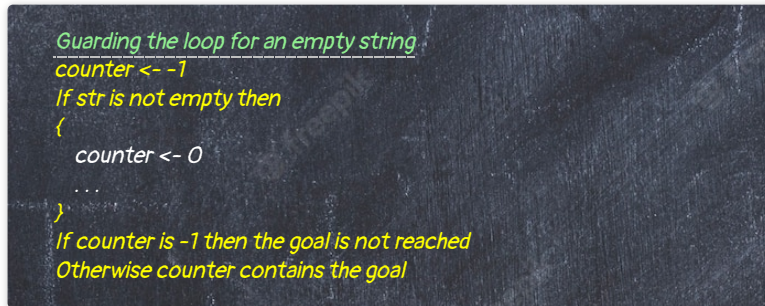


Loop Guards

The problem statement said that the input would have a period if characters were entered. But, what should we do if the input string is empty? We should skip the loop altogether.

You can modify the loop to handle this case by **guarding** the loop with an **if** statement.



```
Guarding the loop for an empty string  
counter <- -1  
If str is not empty then  
{  
  counter <- 0  
  ...  
}  
If counter is -1 then the goal is not reached  
Otherwise counter contains the goal
```

The **counter** is set to **-1 before** the loop guard. After the loop guard, if it still **-1** it means that the loop was **never entered**; you'll have to handle that in the **post-condition** processing.



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