C++ Overview

C++ Techniques

Relevant techniques include:

- 1. C++ <u>classes</u>, with *private* and *public* <u>members</u>
- 2. Function and operator name <u>overloading</u> to give "natural" function calls
- 3. <u>Templates</u> to allow the same code to be used on a variety of different data types
- 4. A clean <u>built-in I/O interface</u>, which itself involves overloading the input and output operators

Learning these techniques is much of what C++ is all about.

Outline

- 1. Classes: constructors, destructors, clean interface
- 2. Default arguments
- 3. Function and operator overloading
- 4. Use of const
- 5. Rule of three: copy constructor, assignment, destructor
- 6. Templates: function and class templates
- 7. C++ Error Handling
- 8. STL: vector class

Constructors

- A <u>constructor</u> is a method that executes when an object of a class is declared and sets the initial state of the new object.
- A constructor
 - has the same name with the class,
 - no return type
 - has zero or more parameters (the constructor without an argument is the *default constructor*)
- There may be more than one constructor defined for a class.
- If no constructor is explicitly defined, one that initializes the data members using language defaults is automatically generated.

Class syntax - Example

```
// A class for simulating an integer memory cell
class IntCell
 public:
       IntCell( )
       { storedValue = 0; }
                                           constructors
       IntCell(int initialValue )
       { storedValue = initialValue; }
       int read( )
       { return storedValue; }
       void write( int x )
       { storedValue = x;}
 private:
       int storedValue;
};
```

Extra Constructor Syntax

```
// A class for simulating an integer memory cell
class IntCell
   public:
                                                     Single
       IntCell( int initialValue = 0 )
                                                     constructor
          : storedValue( initialValue) { }
                                                     (instead of
                                                     two)
       int read( )
          { return storedValue; }
       void write( int x )
          { storedValue = x; }
   private:
       int storedValue;
};
```

Destructor

- Performs termination housekeeping before the system reclaims the object's memory
- Complement of the constructor
- An **automatic default destructor** is added to your class if no other destructor is defined.
- The only action of the automatic default destructor is to call the default destructor of all member objects.

Automatic Default Destructor

A destructor should never be called directly. Instead, it is automatically called when the object's memory is being reclaimed by the system:

- If the object is on the **stack**, when the function returns
- If the object is on the **heap**, when **delete** is used

Custom Destructor

To add custom behavior to the end-of-life of the function, a custom destructor can be defined:

- A custom destructor is a member function.
- Its name is tilde (~) followed by the class name

```
• e.g. ~IntCell(); 
 ~Cube();
```

- Receives no parameters, returns no value
- One destructor per class.

Custom destructor

A custom destructor is essential when an object allocates an external resource that must be closed or freed when the object is destroyed. Examples:

- Heap memory
- Open files

Custom Destructor Example

```
class IntCell{
   public:
     IntCell(int initialValue=0) {
        storedValue = new int (initialValue);
     ~IntCell() {
        delete storedValue:
     int read( ) {
        return *storedValue;
     void write( int x ) {
        *storedValue = x;
     private:
       int *storedValue;
```

Separation of Interface and Implementation

- Large-scale projects put the interface and implementation of classes in different files.
 - For small amount of coding it may not matter.
- *Header File*: contains the interface of a class. Usually ends with . h (an include file)
- Source-code file: contains the implementation of a class. Usually ends with . cpp
 - .cpp file includes the .h file with the preprocessor command #include.
 - Example: #include "myclass.h"

C++ header file (.h)

It defines the interface to the class, which includes the declaration of **all** member variables and functions.

```
#ifndef IntCell H
#define IntCell H
class IntCell
  public:
      IntCell( int initialValue = 0 );
      int read( ) const;
      void write( int x );
  private:
      int storedValue;
#endif
```

C++ Implementation File (.cpp)

It contains the code to implement the class (or other C++ code)

```
#include <iostream>
#include "IntCell.h"
using std::cout;
//Construct the IntCell with initialValue
IntCell::IntCell( int initialValue)
   : storedValue(initialValue) {}
//Return the stored value.
                                    Scope operator ::
int IntCell::read( ) const
                                    ClassName :: member
    return storedValue;
//Store x.
void IntCell::write( int x )
    storedValue = x;
```

A client program

```
#include <iostream>
#include "IntCell.h"
using namespace std;
int main()
      IntCell m; // or IntCell m(0);
      m.write (5);
      cout << "Cell content : " << m.read() << endl;</pre>
      return 0;
```

A program that uses IntCell in file TestIntCell.cpp

Another Example: Complex Class

```
#ifndef Complex H
#define Complex H
using namespace std;
class Complex
  float re, im; // by default private
  public:
    Complex(float x = 0, float y = 0)
       : re(x), im(y) { }
    Complex operator* (Complex rhs);
    float modulus();
    void print();
};
#endif
```

Implementation of Complex Class

```
#include <iostream>
#include <cmath>
#include "Complex.h"
Complex Complex::operator*(Complex rhs)
   Complex prod;
   prod.re = (re*rhs.re - im*rhs.im);
   prod.im = (re*rhs.im + im*rhs.re);
   return prod;
float Complex::modulus()
    return sqrt(re*re + im*im);
void Complex::print()
    std::cout << "(" << re <<"," << im << ")" << std::endl;
```

Using the class in a client program

```
#include <iostream>
#include "Complex.h"
int main()
  Complex c1, c2(1), c3(1,2);
   float x;
  // overloaded * operator!!
  c1 = c2 * c3 * c2;
   // mistake! The compiler will stop here, since the
   // re and im parts are private.
   x = sqrt(c1.re*c1.re + c1.im*c1.im);
   // OK. Now we use an authorized public function
  x = c1.modulus();
   c1.print();
   return 0;
```

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Default Arguments

- In C++, functions can have default arguments
- This is specified in the function declaration;

```
int foo(int x = 1, int y = 2, int z = 3);
foo(); // all parameters use the default value
foo(5); // y and z use the default value
foo(5,8); // z uses the default value
foo(5,8,9); // default values are not used
```

Default Arguments

• Note that it is impossible to suppy a user-defined value for z without also supplying a value for x and y. That is the following does not work:

```
foo(,,9); // compile error
```

• For this reason the default parameters must be the rightmost ones:

```
int foo(int x = 1, int y = 2, int z); // WRONG int foo(int z, int x = 1, int y = 2); // CORRECT
```

Function Overloading

- Functions with same name and different parameters
- Overloaded functions should perform similar tasks (otherwise it would be confusing):
- Function to square ints and function to square floats

```
int square( int x) {return x * x;}
float square(float x) { return x * x;}
```

• Compiler chooses based on the actual parameter types:

```
square(4); // calls the integer version square(4.0f); // calls the float version
```

Function Overloading

• Functions that only differ by return type cannot be overloaded:

```
int square(int x);
float square(int x); // Compile error
```

Overloaded Operators

• An operator with more than one meaning is said to be *overloaded*.

$$2+3$$
 $3.1+3.2$ \rightarrow + is an overloaded operator

- To enable a particular operator to operate correctly on instances of a class, we may define a new meaning for the operator.
 - → we may overload it

Operator Overloading

- Operator overloading allows us to use existing operators for user-defined classes.
- The following operators can be overloaded:

```
+ - * / % ^ & |

~ ! , = =

++ -- << >> == != && ||

+= -= /= %= ^= &= |= *=

<<= >>= [] () -> ->* new delete
```

• Note that the precedence, associativity, and arity of the operators cannot be changed!

Operator Overloading

- Format
 - Write function definition as normal
 - Function name is keyword **operator** followed by the symbol for the operator being overloaded.
 - operator+ would be used to overload the addition operator (+)
- No new operators can be created
 - Use only existing operators
- Built-in types
 - Cannot overload operators
 - You cannot change how two integers are added

Overloaded Operators -- Example

What if we want to multiply a complex number with a scalar? Define another function with the same name but different parameters.

```
class Complex
{
    ...
    Complex operator*(Complex rhs) const;
    Complex operator*(float k) const;
    ...
};
```

Implementation of Complex Class

```
Complex Complex::operator*(Complex rhs) const
   Complex prod;
   prod.re = (re*rhs.re - im*rhs.im);
   prod.im = (re*rhs.im + im*rhs.re);
   return prod;
Complex Complex::operator*(float k) const
   Complex prod;
   prod.re = re * k;
   prod.im = im * k;
   return prod;
```

Using the class in a Driver File

```
#include <iostream>
#include "Complex.h"
int main()
   Complex c1, c2(1), c3(1,2);
   c1 = c2 * c3 * c2;
   c1.print();
   c1 = c1 * 5; // translated to c1.operator*(5)
   c1.print();
   // How about this?
   c1 = 5 * c1; // CANNOT translate to 5.operator*(c1)
   return 0;
```

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const keyword in C++

- Constant is something that doesn't change.
- In C language and C++ we use the keyword const to make program elements constant.
- const keyword can be used in many contexts in a C++ program. It can be used with:
 - Variables
 - Pointers
 - Function arguments and return types
 - Class Data members
 - Class Member functions
 - Objects

Example uses of keyword const

We may encounter const in the following cases:

1. Const reference parameter:

```
Complex operator*(const Complex& rhs);
```

In this case it means the parameter cannot be modified in the function.

2. Const member function:

```
Complex operator*(Complex& rhs) const;
```

In this case it means the function cannot modify class members.

3. Const object/variable:

```
const Complex c1(3, 4);
```

In this case it means the object cannot be modified.

Pointers with const keyword in C++

- Either we can make the pointer itself a constant or we can apply const to what the pointer is pointing to.
- E.g. constant pointer:

```
int * const p = &i; // must be initialized
*p = 6; // it is O.K.
p = &j; // NOT O.K.
```

Pointer to a const variable

• E.g. making what the pointer is pointing to, constant:

```
int i;
const int * p = &i;
*p = 6;  // it is NOT O.K., because i is
    //treated as constant when accessed by p.
```

However, it can be changed independently:

```
i = 6; // It is O.K.
```

• It is also possible to declare a const pointer to a constant value:

```
const int n = 5;
const int * const p = &n;
```

const Reference

- A const reference will not let you change the value it references:
- Example:

```
int n = 5;
const int & rn = n;
rn = 6; // error!!
```

• const reference is like a const pointer to a const object.

Parameter Passing

Call by value

- Copy of data passed to function
- Changes to copy do not change original

Call by reference

- Uses &
- Avoids a copy and allows changes to the original

Call by constant reference

- Uses const&
- Avoids a copy and guarantees that actual parameter will not be changed

Example

```
int squareByValue( int ); // pass by value
void squareByReference( int & ); // pass by reference
int squareByConstReference ( const int & ); // const ref.
```

Example (cont.)

```
int squareByValue( int a ) {
   return a *= a; // caller's argument not modified
void squareByReference( int &a ) {
   a *= a;  // caller's argument modified
int squareByConstReference (const int& a ) {
 // a *= a; not allowed (compiler error)
  return a * a;
```

Example

```
int squareByValue( int ); // pass by value
void squareByReference( int & ); // pass by reference
int squareByConstReference ( const int & ); // const ref.
int main()
{ int x = 2, z = 4, r1, r2;
   r1 = squareByValue(x);
   squareByReference( z );
   r2 = squareByConstReference(x);
   cout. << "x = " << x << " z = " << z << endl;
   cout << "r1 = " << r1 << " r2 = " << r2 << endl;
   return 0;
```

Improving the Complex Class

```
#ifndef _Complex H
#define Complex H
using namespace std;
class Complex
  float re, im; // by default private
  public:
   Complex (float x = 0, float y = 0)
       : re(x), im(y) { }
   Complex operator* (const Complex& rhs) const;
   float modulus() const;
   void print() const;
};
#endif
```

Improving the Complex Class

```
#include <iostream>
#include <cmath>
#include "Complex.h"
Complex Complex::operator*(const Complex& rhs) const
   Complex prod;
   prod.re = (re*rhs.re - im*rhs.im);
   prod.im = (re*rhs.im + im*rhs.re);
   return prod;
float Complex::modulus() const
    return sqrt(re*re + im*im);
void Complex::print() const
   std::cout << "(" << re <<"," << im << ")" <<
  std::endl;
```

Outline

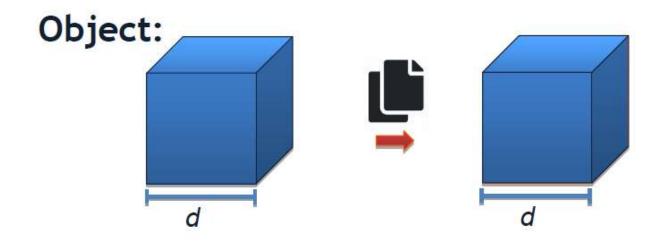
- 1. Classes : constructors, destructors, clean interface
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Rule of Three

- Whenever you need to define
 - a copy constructor,
 - assignment operator, or
 - the destructor,
 you must define all three of them
- This is known as the <u>rule of three</u>
- In general, for every class that contains pointer members you must define all three functions

Copy Constructor

• In C++, a **copy constructor** is a special constructor that exists to make a copy of an existing object.



Automatic Copy constructor

- If we do not provide a custom copy constructor, the C++ compiler provides an **automatic default copy constructor** for our class for free!
- The automatic copy constructor will copy the contents of all member variables.
 - Note that compiler provided copy constructor performs *member-wise copying* of the elements of the class (i.e. **Shallow copy**).

Custom Copy Constructor

A custom copy constructor is:

- A class constructor
- Has exactly one argument
 - The argument must be const reference of the same type as the class.

Example:

```
IntCell(const IntCell & obj)
```

• Note that the parameter must be a const reference.

Copy Constructor Invocation

Often, copy constructors are invoked automatically:

- Passing an object as a parameter (by value)
- Returning an object from a function (by value)
- Initializing a new object

Example

```
//The following is a copy constructor
//for Complex class. Since it is same
//as the compiler's default copy
//constructor for this class, it is
//actually redundant.

Complex::Complex(const Complex & C )
{
    re = C.re;
    im = C.im;
}
```

Another Example

```
class MyString
 public:
     MyString(const char* s = "");
     MyString(const MyString& s);
 private:
     char* str;
     int length;
};
```

Example (cont.)

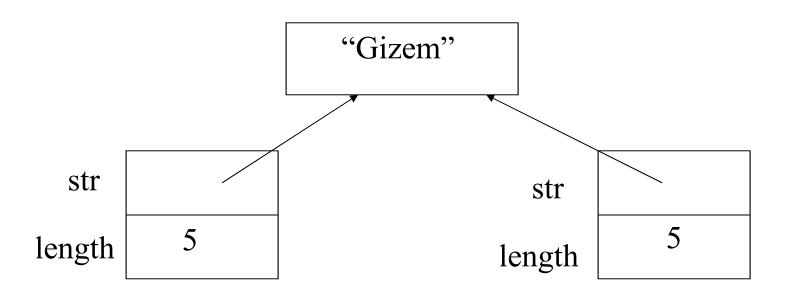
```
MyString::MyString(const MyString& s)
{
  length = s.length;
  str = new char[length + 1];
  strcpy(str, s.str);
}
```

• What is the compiler's default copy constructor?

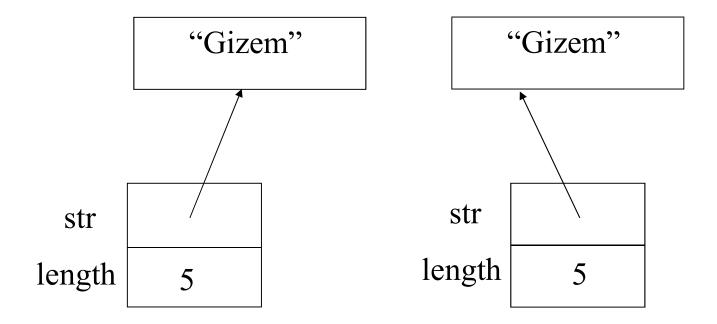
Shallow versus Deep copy

- Shallow copy is a copy of pointers rather than data being pointed at.
- A deep copy is a copy of the data being pointed at rather than the pointers.

Shallow copy: only pointers are copied



Deep copy: the actual data are copied



Deep copy semantics

- How to write the copy constructor in a class that has dynamically allocated memory:
 - 1. Dynamically allocate memory for data of the calling object.
 - 2. Copy the data values from the passed-in parameter into corresponding locations in the new memory belonging to the calling object.
 - 3. A constructor which does these tasks is called a *deep* copy constructor.

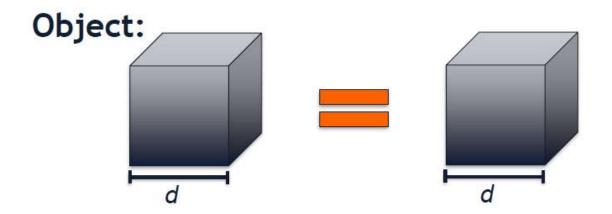
Calling the copy constructor

• Automatically called:

• More examples:

Assignment operator

• In C++, an **assignment operator** defines the behavior when an object is copied using the assignment operator = .



Copy Constructor vs Assignment

A copy constructor creates a new object (constructor).

An assignment operator assigns a value to an existing object.

 An assignment operator is always called on an object that has already been constructed.

Automatic Assignment Operator

If an assignment operator is not provided, the C++ compiler provides an automatic assignment operator.

The automatic assignment operator will copy the contents of all member variables.

- by default memberwise copy :
 - Sets variables equal, i.e., x = y;
 - Memberwise copy member by member copymyObject1 = myObject2;
 - This is *shallow copy*.

Custom Assignment Operator

A custom assignment operator is:

- Is a public member function of the class.
- Has the function name operator=.
- Has a return value of a reference of the class' type.
- Has exactly one argument
- The argument must be constreference of the class' type.

Example:

```
IntCell & operator=(const IntCell & obj )
```

Deep vs Shallow Assignment

- Same kind of issues arise in the assignment.
- For shallow assignments, the default assignment operator is OK.
- For deep assignments, you have to write your own overloaded assignment operator (operator=)
 - The copy constructor is not called when doing an object-to-object assignment.

this Pointer

- Each class object has a pointer which automatically points to itself. The pointer is identified by the keyword this.
- Another way to think of this is that each member function has an implicit first parameter; that parameter is this, the pointer to the object calling that function.

Example: overloading operator=

```
// defining an overloaded assignment operator
Complex & Complex::operator=(const Complex & rhs )
   // don't assign to yourself!
   if ( this != &rhs ) // note the "address of" rhs
       this -> Re = rhs.Re; // correct but redundant
                   // it means Re = rhs.Re
       this -> Imag = rhs.Imag;
   return *this; // return the calling class object // enables cascading
```

Another Example

```
MyString& MyString::operator=(const MyString& rhs)
 if (this != &rhs) {
      delete[] this->str; // donate back useless memory
      this->length = rhs.length;
      // allocate new memory
      this->str = new char[this->length + 1];
      strcpy(this->str, rhs.str); // copy characters
 return *this; // return self-reference
```

Copy constructor and assignment operator

- Note that the copy constructor is called when a **new** object is being created
- The assignment operator is called when an **existing** object is assigned to a new state.

```
class MyObject {
public:
 MyObject();  // Default constructor
  MyObject(const MyObject &a); // Copy constructor
  MyObject& operator=(const MyObject& a) // Assignment op.
};
MyObject a; // constructor called
MyObject b = a; // copy constructor called
b = a;
                 // assignment operator called
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                                                        64
```

Destructor

• For classes with pointers we also need to define a destructor to avoid memory leaks

```
class MyString {
  public:
     MyString(const char* s = "");
     MyString(const MyString& s);
     ~MyString(); // destructor
     MyString& operator=(const MyString& s);
     ...
  private:
     int length;
     char* str;
};
```

Destructor

• For classes with pointers we also need to define a destructor to avoid memory leaks

```
MyString::~MyString()
{
   delete[] str;
}
```

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Templates

• Templates allow us to write routines that work for arbitrary types without having to know what these types will be.

- Two types of templates:
 - Function templates
 - Class templates

Function Templates

- A function template is not an actual function; instead it is a design (or pattern) for a function.
- The compiler creates the actual function based on the actual types used in the program.

```
// swap function template.

template < class T>
void swap( T &lhs, T &rhs )
{
    T tmp = lhs;
    lhs = rhs;
    rhs = tmp;
}
```

Using a template

- Instantiation of a template with a particular type, logically creates a new function.
- Only one instantiation is created for each parameter-type combination.

```
int main()
{
    int x = 5, y = 7;
    double a = 2, b = 4;
    swap(x,y); //instanties an int version of swap
    swap(x,y); //uses the same instantiation
    swap(a,b); //instantiates a double version of swap

cout << x << " " << y << endl;
    cout << a << " " << b << endl;

// swap(x, b); // Illegal: no match
    return 0;
}</pre>
```

Class templates

- Class templates are used to define generic classes:
 - e.g. it may be possible to use a class that defines several operations on a collection of integers to manipulate a collection of real numbers.

```
template <class T>
class TemplateTest
{
    // this class can use T as a generic type
    public:
        void f(T a);
        T g();
        ...
    private:
        T x, y, z;
        ...
};
```

Implementation

- Each member function must be declared as a template.
- All member functions must be implemented in the **header file** (so that the compiler can find their definition and replace "T" with the actual parameter type)

```
// Typical member implementation.
template <class T>
void TemplateTest<T>::f(T a)
{
   // Member body
}
```

Object declarations using template classes

Form:

class-name <type> an-object;

Interpretation:

• *Type* may be any defined data type. *Class-name* is the name of a template class. The object *an-object* is created when the arguments specified between <> replace their corresponding parameters in the template class.

Example

```
// Memory cell interface (MemoryCell.h)
template <class T>
class MemoryCell
{
 public:
    MemoryCell(const T& initVal = T());
    const T& read( ) const;
    void write(const T& x);
 private:
    T storedValue;
};
```

Class template implementation

```
// Implementation of class members as template functions
template <class T>
MemoryCell<T>::MemoryCell(const T& initVal) :
 storedValue(initVal){ }
template <class T>
const T& MemoryCell<T>::read() const
 return storedValue;
template <class T>
void MemoryCell<T>::write(const T& x)
 storedValue = x;
```

A simple test routine

```
int main()
 MemoryCell<int> m; // instantiate int version
  MemoryCell<float> f; // instantiate float version
  MemoryCell<int> m2; // use the previously created class
 m.write(5);
 m2.write(6);
  f.write(3.5);
  cout << "Cell content: " << m.read() << endl;</pre>
  cout << "Cell content: " << m2.read() << endl;</pre>
  cout << "Cell content: " << f.read() << endl;</pre>
 return 0;
```

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• In C, errors are reported by returning error codes from functions:

```
int read(const char* filename, char data[])
{
   FILE* fp = fopen(filename, "r");
   if (fp == NULL)
      return -1; // indicate error

   // read file contents into data
   ...
}
```

- In C++, we have a more advanced mechanism called exceptions
- It uses three keywords: throw, catch, try
- The function that encounters an error throws an exception:

```
int read(const char* filename, char data[])
{
   FILE* fp = fopen(filename, "r");
   if (fp == NULL)
        throw "file open error"; // indicate error
   // otherwise read file contents into data
   ...
}
```

• This exception must be caught, otherwise the program will abnormally terminate:

```
int main()
   char data[128];
   try {
      read("test.txt", data);
      ... // possibly some other code
   catch(const char* error) {
      // if read function throws an exception,
      // program will continue executing from here
      cout << "Error message: " << error << endl;</pre>
```

- Note that we throw an object or a variable, and we catch an object or a variable. These types should match for the exception to be caught
- In the previous example we threw a const char* and caught a const char*, so it was correct

Another Example

• We can also throw an object of a user defined class:

```
class FileReadError
};
int read(const char* filename, char data[])
   FILE* fp = fopen(filename, "r");
   if (fp == NULL)
      throw FileReadError(); // indicate error
   // read file contents into data
```

• Then we must update the catch code as well:

```
int main()
{
    char data[128];
    try {
       read("test.txt", data);
    }
    catch(FileReadError error) {
            // if read throws an exception,
            // we will come here
    }
}
```

- There are many details of exception handling
- In this class, you should only know that the destructors of the local objects will be called when an exception is thrown:

```
class A {
public:
    ~A() { cout << "destructor called" << endl; }
};

int read(const char* filename, char data[]) {
    A a;
    FILE* fp = fopen(filename, "r");
    if (fp == NULL)
        throw "file open error"; // a's destructor will be called
    ...
}</pre>
```

Standard Template Library

- I/O Facilities: iostream
- Garbage-collected String class
- Containers
 - vector, list, queue, stack, map, set
- Numerical
 - complex
- General algorithms
 - search, sort

Using the vector

- Vector: Dynamically growing, shrinking array of elements
- To use it include library header file:

```
#include <vector>
```

Vectors are declared as

• The elements of an integer vector behave just like ordinary integer variables

```
a[2] = 45;
```

Manipulating vectors

• The size () member function returns the number of elements in the vector.

a.size() returns a value of 4.

- **The operator=** can be used to assign one vector to another.
- e.g. v1 = v2, so long as they are vectors of the same type.
- The push_back() member function allows you to add elements to the end of a vector.

push_back() and pop_back()

```
vector<int> v;
v.push_back(3);
v.push_back(2);
// v[0] is 3, v[1] is 2, v.size() is 2
v.pop_back();
int t = v[v.size()-1];
v.pop_back();
```