

CSC 330 / Spring 2026

OCaml

# Functions, Compound Data Types

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*based on Dan Grossman's Lecture materials*

## Reminder: syntax & semantics

- ▶ Syntax: how programs are written down
  - Roughly “spelling and grammar”
- ▶ Semantics: what programs actually mean
  - Compile time (static) semantics: type checking
  - Run time (dynamic) semantics: evaluation
- ▶ Both syntax and semantics matter
  - Semantics is the essence of a programming language
  - Syntax is more about taste

# Functions

# Functions

- ▶ **The most important** building block in the whole course
  - Functions let us abstract some computation by parameterizing over parts of an expression
  - Like Python functions or Java methods, have arguments and result
    - ▶ But no classes, this/self, returns (!), etc.
- ▶ Example:

- **function binding**

```
let max ((x : int), (y : int)) =  
  if x > y then x else y
```

- **function call**

```
max (3, 17)
```

## Example with recursion

```
let rec pow ((x : int), (y : int)) =  
    if y = 0 then 1 else x * pow (x, y - 1)
```

```
let cube (x : int) =  
    pow (x, 3)
```

```
let sixtyfour = cube 4
```

```
let fortytwo = pow (2, 4) + pow (4, 2) + cube 2 + 2
```

## Heads up: recursion!

- ▶ If you're not comfortable with recursion yet, you will be soon 😊
  - We'll write **many** recursive functions in lecture and homework
  - Mostly over recursive data structures like lists (next lecture)
- ▶ Makes sense because recursive calls solve *simpler* problems
- ▶ Recursion is more general than loops!
  - We won't write a single loop in OCaml (!)
  - Easy to simulate loops with recursion
  - Loops often (not always) obscure simple, elegant solutions

## Questions

- ▶ Three questions for a new language construct:

*syntax, typing rules, evaluation rules*

- ▶ We have two new language constructs:

*function bindings, function calls*

# Functions: bindings

## ► Syntax:

```
let f ((x1 : t1), ..., (xN : tN)) = e  
let rec f ((x1 : t1), ..., (xN : tN)) = e
```

where:

- `f, x1, ..., xN` are variable names
- `t1, ..., tN` are types
- `e` is an expression



## Meta-syntax

- ▶ We use `...` to indicate some syntax is optional

- Example: `rec`

- So the syntax for function bindings can be written as:

```
let [rec] f ((x1 : t1), ..., (xN : tN)) = e
```

- ▶ But the presence/absence of `rec` **does** matter

- It affects the typing rules and evaluation rules!

- Just saying it is correct function-binding syntax with or without it

## Functions: bindings

This is a simplified-for-now syntax story:

1. Can write the return type if you want (example code won't do this):

```
let [rec] f ((x1 : t1), ..., (xN : tN)) : t = e
```

2. Can omit argument types (and we will *after* A1):

```
let [rec] f (x1, ..., xN) = e
```

3. Will see a different, more common, way to do multiple arguments later

**⚠ Note:** Be careful on argument syntax—slight errors can produce strange error messages (or even worse, behaviour)!

# Functions: bindings

## ► Type checking:

```
let [rec] f ((x1 : t1), ..., (xN : tN)) = e
```

- If `e` has type `t` in the static environment containing:
  1. The *enclosing* (up to this point) static environment
  2. `x1`  $\mapsto$  `t1`, ..., `xN`  $\mapsto$  `tN` arguments and their types
  3. If `rec` is given, `f`  $\mapsto$  `t1 * ... * tN -> t`:
    - then: add `f`  $\mapsto$  `t1 * ... * tN -> t` to the static environment
    - else: report error and fail

# Function types

- ▶ New kind of type!  $f \mapsto t_1 * \dots * t_N \rightarrow t$ 
  - Argument types  $t_1, \dots, t_N$  separated by  $*$
  - Result (return) type  $t$  after the arrow
- ▶ How this is used for typechecking function bindings:
  - $f$  has this type in the rest of program (not in earlier bindings!)
  - Arguments available in  $e$ , but not after (unsurprising)
  - Calling  $f$  evaluates  $e$ , so return type of  $f$  is type of  $e$
  - Magic for now (will study it in a few weeks): typechecker figures out  $t$  even when  $f$  is recursive

# Functions: bindings

## ► Evaluation:

```
let [rec] f ((x1 : t1), ..., (xN : tN)) = e
```

- Nothing to do! Function are values!
  - Real story a bit more nuanced, but we will get to it...
- Add `f` to the dynamic environment so later expressions can call
  - `f` is bound to the function being defined here
  - And for recursion, if `rec` is present, then `f` also bound within `e`

# Functions: calling

## ► Syntax:

`f (e1, ..., eN)`

where `f, e1, ..., eN` are expressions (will generalize this a bit later)

## ► Type checking:

– If:

► `f` has type `f : t1 * ... * tN -> t`, and

► `e1` has type `t1`, and ..., and `eN` has type `tN`

– then: `f (e1, ..., eN)` has type `t`

# Functions: calling

## ► Evaluation:

$e_0 (e_1, \dots, e_N)$

1. Evaluate  $e_0$  in current dynamic environment
  - Since  $e_0$  type checked, the result will be a function
  - So the result is some

$\text{let } [\text{rec}] f ((x_1 : t_1), \dots, (x_N : t_N)) = e$

2. In current dynamic environment, evaluate:  $e_1$  to value  $v_1$ , ... ,  $e_N$  to value  $v_N$
3. The  $e_0 (e_1, \dots, e_N)$  call now evaluates to the result of evaluating  $e$  in an *extended dynamic environment* with  $x_1 \mapsto v_1, \dots, x_N \mapsto v_N$

**Technically:** *extend dynamic environment where  $f$  was defined.* But more on this later!

## Heads up: function gotchas

- ▶ Be careful with argument declaration and argument passing
  - Else confusing error messages
- ▶ **Remember:** cannot refer to later bindings
  - So helper functions must come first
  - Mutual recursion is handled specially



## Demonstration 1: Functions

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```
# let max ((x : int), (y : int)) =  
  if x > y then x else y ;;
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```
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val max : int * int -> int = <fun>
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# max (3, 17) ;;
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# max (3, 17) ;;  
- : int = 17
```

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  if x > y then x else y ;;  
val max : int * int -> int = <fun>  
  
# max (3, 17) ;;  
- : int = 17  
  
# (* Note: pow assumes y >= 0 *)  
let rec pow ((x : int), (y : int)) =  
  if y = 0 then 1 else x * pow (x, y - 1)  
let cube (x : int) = pow (x, 3) ;;
```

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val pow : int * int -> int = <fun>  
val cube : int -> int = <fun>  
  
# let sixtyfour = cube 4  
let fortytwo = pow (2, 4) + pow (4, 2) + cube 2 + 2 ;;
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let cube (x : int) = pow (x, 3) ;;  
val pow : int * int -> int = <fun>  
val cube : int -> int = <fun>  
  
# let sixtyfour = cube 4  
let fortytwo = pow (2, 4) + pow (4, 2) + cube 2 + 2 ;;  
val sixtyfour : int = 64  
val fortytwo : int = 42
```

## Demonstration 1: Functions

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```
# let is_even (x : int) =  
  (x mod 2) = 0  
  
let average ((x : int), (y : int)) =  
  (x + y) / 2  
  
let average_ceil ((x : int), (y : int)) =  
  ((x + y) / 2) + (if not (is_even (x + y)) then 1 else 0) ;;
```

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val is_even : int -> bool = <fun>  
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val is_even : int -> bool = <fun>  
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# average (3, 4)  
average_ceil (3, 4) ;;
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val is_even : int -> bool = <fun>  
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- : int = 3  
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# average (3, 4)  
average_ceil (3, 4) ;;  
- : int = 3  
- : int = 4  
  
# (* More than two arguments are possible *)  
let average_ceil_or_not ((x : int), (y : int), (ceil : bool)) =  
  ((x + y) / 2) + (if ceil && not (is_even (x + y)) then 1 else 0) ;;  
average_ceil_or_not (3, 4, true) ;;  
average_ceil_or_not (3, 4, false) ;;
```

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val is_even : int -> bool = <fun>
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val average_ceil_or_not : int * int * bool -> int = <fun>
- : int = 4
- : int = 3
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# Demonstration 1: Functions

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val is_even : int -> bool = <fun>
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average_ceil_or_not (3, 4, true) ;;
average_ceil_or_not (3, 4, false) ;;

val average_ceil_or_not : int * int * bool -> int = <fun>
- : int = 4
- : int = 3

# (* There is no automatic int<->float casting *)
let average_f ((x : float), (y : float)) = (x +. y) /. 2.0
average_f (3., 4.) ;;
```

## Demonstration 1: Functions

```
# let is_even (x : int) =
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val average_ceil_or_not : int * int * bool -> int = <fun>
- : int = 4
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# (* There is no automatic int<->float casting *)
let average_f ((x : float), (y : float)) = (x +. y) /. 2.0
average_f (3., 4.) ;;

val average_f : float * float -> float = <fun>
- : float = 3.5
```

## Demonstration 1: Functions

```
# let is_even (x : int) =
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let average ((x : int), (y : int)) =
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let average_ceil ((x : int), (y : int)) =
  ((x + y) / 2) + (if not (is_even (x + y)) then 1 else 0) ;;

val is_even : int -> bool = <fun>
val average : int * int -> int = <fun>
val average_ceil : int * int -> int = <fun>

# average (3, 4)
average_ceil (3, 4) ;;
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let average_ceil_or_not ((x : int), (y : int), (ceil : bool)) =
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average_ceil_or_not (3, 4, true) ;;
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val average_ceil_or_not : int * int * bool -> int = <fun>
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average_f (3., 4.) ;;

val average_f : float * float -> float = <fun>
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# (* There is no automatic int<->float casting *)
average_f (3, 4) ;;
```

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val is_even : int -> bool = <fun>
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val average_ceil : int * int -> int = <fun>

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let average_ceil_or_not ((x : int), (y : int), (ceil : bool)) =
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# (* There is no automatic int<->float casting *)
let average_f ((x : float), (y : float)) = (x +. y) /. 2.0
average_f (3., 4.) ;;

val average_f : float * float -> float = <fun>
- : float = 3.5

# (* There is no automatic int<->float casting *)
average_f (3, 4) ;;
Error: This expression has type int but an expression was expected of type
      float
Hint: Did you mean `3.?'
```

## So much power in these questions

- ▶ Three questions per language construct:

*syntax, typing rules, evaluation rules*

- ▶ Two new language constructs:

*function bindings, function calls*

**This is the most important building block in the entire course!**

```
let rec pow ((x : int), (y : int)) =  
  if y = 0  
  then 1  
  else x * pow (x, y - 1)  
let cube (x : int) =  
  pow (x, 3)  
let sixtyfour = cube 4
```

# Tuples and lists

## Compound data types

- ▶ So far: integers, booleans, variables, conditionals, functions
- ▶ **Now:** two ways to build data with multiple parts:
  - ☐ tuples: fixed number of "pieces" with possibly different types
  - ☐ lists: any number of "pieces" all with the same type
- ▶ Later: more general ways to create compound data (trees, maps, graphs, etc.)

# General design principle

- ▶ Whenever we design a new type `t` we need two things:
  - A way to build (introduce, construct) values of type `t`
  - A way to use (eliminate, destruct) values of type `t`
- ▶ **Examples:**
  - Build `t1 -> t2` with function bindings, use with function calls
  - Build `bool` with `true` and `false`, use with

```
if e1 then e2 else e3
```



## Pairs (2-tuples): building

- ▶ **Syntax:**  $(e1, e2)$  where  $e1$  and  $e2$  are expressions
- ▶ **Type checking:**
  - If  $e1$  has type  $t1$  and  $e2$  has type  $t2$ :
    - ▶ then:  $(e1, e2)$  has type  $t1 * t2$
    - ▶ else: report error and fail (only if  $e1$  or  $e2$  do not type check)
- ▶ **Evaluation:**
  - If  $e1$  evaluates to value  $v1$  and  $e2$  evaluates to value  $v2$ :
    - ▶ then:  $(e1, e2)$  evaluates to  $(v1, v2)$

## The star of the show

- ▶ `*` is a type constructor: it builds tuple types out of other types
  - So `int * bool`, `string * int`, `int * (int * int)`, are 3 of the infinite number of types we can construct with `*`
- ▶ Tuple types are also known as product types
- ▶ But the connection to multiplication is obscure and best ignored
  - Just using the same character in unrelated syntax
  - `3 * 4` is an expression that evaluates to 12, while `int * int` is a type

## Nested pairs

- ▶ Pairs can be nested
- ▶ Nesting is *not* a new feature!
- ▶ Simply a consequence of the syntax and semantics rules we set up `((1, 4), (2, (true, 3))): (int * int) * (int * (bool * int))`
- ▶ Compositionality is a hallmark of good design
  - Comes from orthogonality: one thing does not affect another

## Pairs (2-tuples): using

► **Syntax:** `fst e` and `snd e` where `e` is an expression

► **Type checking:**

– If `e` has type `t1 * t2`:

► then: `fst e` has type `t1` and `snd e` has type `t2`

► **Evaluation:**

– If `e` evaluates to a pair of values `(v1, v2)`:

► then: `fst e` evaluates to `v1` and `snd e` evaluates to `v2`

⚠: `fst` and `snd` are actually library functions, but we will pretend they are “built in” for another week or so

# Tuples: building

- ▶ **Syntax:**  $(e_1, \dots, e_N)$  where  $e_1, \dots, e_N$  are expressions and  $N \geq 2$ 
  - This is a new feature:  $(5, \text{true}, 7)$  is a 3-tuple (triple), **not** any sort of nested pair
- ▶ **Type checking:**
  - If  $e_1$  has type  $t_1$ , and ..., and  $e_N$  has type  $t_N$ :
    - ▶ then:  $(e_1, \dots, e_N)$  has type  $t_1 * \dots * t_N$
    - ▶ else: report error and fail
- ▶ **Evaluation:**
  - If  $e_1$  evaluates to value  $v_1$ , and ..., and  $e_N$  evaluates to value  $v_N$ :
    - ▶ then:  $(e_1, \dots, e_N)$  evaluates to  $(v_1, \dots, v_N)$

## Tuples: using

- ▶ OCaml does not have a built-in way to **use** arbitrary tuples... 🤪
- ▶ Instead, OCaml relies on a more general mechanism we will learn soon: pattern-matching
- ▶ But A1 uses triples a lot
  - So we wrote `fst3`, `snd3`, and `thd3` for you to treat-like-primitives
  - So `fst` and `snd` for pairs; `fst3`, `snd3`, and `thd3` for triples
  - Why can't `fst` be used for triples? *Type systems have limitations!*

## Nested pairs vs. tuples

- OCaml didn't *need* tuples, but they can be convenient
- Parentheses matters in tuple types and tuple expressions!

```
let x = (5, 7, 9)
(* x : int * int * int *)
let seven = snd3 x
(* snd x doesn't typecheck *)
```

```
let x = (5, (7, 9))
(* x : int * (int * int) *)
let seven = fst (snd x)
let pr = snd x
(* snd3 x doesn't typecheck *)
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples



## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# let swap (pr : int * int) = (snd pr, fst pr)

let sum_pairs ((pr1 : int * int), (pr2 : int * int)) =
  (fst pr1 + fst pr2, snd pr1 + snd pr2)

let four_six = sum_pairs ((1, 2), (3, 4)) ;;
```

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let four_six = sum_pairs ((1, 2), (3, 4)) ;;
val swap : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val sum_pairs : (int * int) * (int * int) -> int * int = <fun>
val four_six : int * int = (4, 6)
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

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let four_six = sum_pairs ((1, 2), (3, 4)) ;;
val swap : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val sum_pairs : (int * int) * (int * int) -> int * int = <fun>
val four_six : int * int = (4, 6)

# val sort_pair : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3) ;;
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# let swap (pr : int * int) = (snd pr, fst pr)

let sum_pairs ((pr1 : int * int), (pr2 : int * int)) =
  (fst pr1 + fst pr2, snd pr1 + snd pr2)

let four_six = sum_pairs ((1, 2), (3, 4)) ;;
val swap : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val sum_pairs : (int * int) * (int * int) -> int * int = <fun>
val four_six : int * int = (4, 6)

# val sort_pair : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3) ;;
val sort_pair : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3)
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# let swap (pr : int * int) = (snd pr, fst pr)

let sum_pairs ((pr1 : int * int), (pr2 : int * int)) =
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let four_six = sum_pairs ((1, 2), (3, 4)) ;;
val swap : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val sum_pairs : (int * int) * (int * int) -> int * int = <fun>
val four_six : int * int = (4, 6)

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val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3) ;;
val sort_pair : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3)

# let div_mod ((x : int), (y : int)) = (x / y, x mod y)
let r = div_mod (16, 3) ;;
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

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val swap : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
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val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3) ;;
val sort_pair : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3)

# let div_mod ((x : int), (y : int)) = (x / y, x mod y)
let r = div_mod (16, 3) ;;
val div_mod : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val r : int * int = (5, 1)
```

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val swap : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
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val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3) ;;
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let r = div_mod (16, 3) ;;
val div_mod : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val r : int * int = (5, 1)

# (* nesting *)
let middle_elt (prpr : int * (int * int)) =
  fst (snd prpr)
let two = middle_elt (1, (2, 3)) ;;
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# let swap (pr : int * int) = (snd pr, fst pr)

let sum_pairs ((pr1 : int * int), (pr2 : int * int)) =
  (fst pr1 + fst pr2, snd pr1 + snd pr2)

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val swap : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val sum_pairs : (int * int) * (int * int) -> int * int = <fun>
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# val sort_pair : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val one_four : int * int = (1, 4)
val two_three : int * int = (2, 3) ;;
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# let div_mod ((x : int), (y : int)) = (x / y, x mod y)
let r = div_mod (16, 3) ;;
val div_mod : int * int -> int * int = <fun>
val r : int * int = (5, 1)

# (* nesting *)
let middle_elt (prpr : int * (int * int)) =
  fst (snd prpr)
let two = middle_elt (1, (2, 3)) ;;
val middle_elt : int * (int * int) -> int = <fun>
val two : int = 2
```



## Demonstration 2: Tuples

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# (* arbitrary tuples *)  
let person1 = (("Zachary", "L.", "Tatlock"), 201)  
let person2 = (("Daniel", "J.", "Grossman"), 309) ;;
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# (* arbitrary tuples *)  
let person1 = (("Zachary", "L.", "Tatlock"), 201)  
let person2 = (("Daniel", "J.", "Grossman"), 309) ;;  
  
val person1 : (string * string * string) * int =  
  (("Zachary", "L.", "Tatlock"), 201)  
val person2 : (string * string * string) * int =  
  (("Daniel", "J.", "Grossman"), 309)
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# (* arbitrary tuples *)
let person1 = (("Zachary", "L.", "Tatlock"), 201)
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val person1 : (string * string * string) * int =
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# (* ⚠ BUT WAIT! ⚠
* Not only isn't there a function to get the third (or fourth etc) element,
* but fst and snd don't work on 3-tuples (or 4-tuples etc.)
* Indeed, sometimes type systems "get in our way":
* fst and snd are functions that require pairs (2-tuples)
* OCaml's answer is pattern-matching (next week) so for A1,
* we "give you" fst3, snd3, and thd3, which you will use for triples (3-tuples) *)
(* you cannot understand these implementations yet but you can use them *)
let fst3 (x, _, _) = x (* gets the first element of a triple *)
let snd3 (_, x, _) = x (* gets the second element of a triple *)
let thd3 (_, _, x) = x (* gets the third element of a triple *) ;;
```

## Demonstration 2: Tuples

```
# (* arbitrary tuples *)
let person1 = (("Zachary", "L.", "Tatlock"), 201)
let person2 = (("Daniel", "J.", "Grossman"), 309) ;;

val person1 : (string * string * string) * int =
  (("Zachary", "L.", "Tatlock"), 201)
val person2 : (string * string * string) * int =
  (("Daniel", "J.", "Grossman"), 309)

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* Not only isn't there a function to get the third (or fourth etc) element,
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(* you cannot understand these implementations yet but you can use them *)
let fst3 (x, _, _) = x (* gets the first element of a triple *)
let snd3 (_, x, _) = x (* gets the second element of a triple *)
let thd3 (_, _, x) = x (* gets the third element of a triple *) ;;

val fst3 : 'a * 'b * 'c -> 'a = <fun>
val snd3 : 'a * 'b * 'c -> 'b = <fun>
val thd3 : 'a * 'b * 'c -> 'c = <fun>
val middle_initials : string * string = ("L.", "J.")
```

## Compound data types

- ▶ So far: integers, booleans, variables, conditionals, functions
- ▶ Now: two ways to build data with multiple parts:
  - ☒ tuples: fixed number of "pieces" with possibly different types
  - ☐ lists: any number of "pieces" all with the same type
- ▶ Later: more general ways to create compound data (trees, maps, graphs, etc.)

# Lists: building

- ▶ **Syntax:** `[e1; ...; eN]` where `e1, ..., eN` are expressions
- ▶ **Type checking:**
  - If `e1` has type `t`, and ..., and `eN` has type `t`:
    - ▶ then: `[e1; ...; eN]` has type `t list`
      - ▶ Another type constructor (`list`): type of lists whose elements have *same* type `t`
        - ▶ Examples: `bool list int list, (int * (int * int)) list, int list list` etc.
    - ▶ else: report error and fail
- ▶ **Evaluation:**
  - If `e1` evaluates to value `v1`, and ..., and `eN` evaluates to value `vN`:
    - ▶ then: `[e1; ...; eN]` evaluates to `[v1; ...; vN]`

⚠: Elements are separated by semicolons! Otherwise you can get very weird error messages.

✍: There is no equivalent of Python's `[1, "s", Foo()]` in OCaml

## Lists: empty lists

- ▶  $N$  can be zero: `[]` is the empty list for any type `'a list`
- ▶ Recall:
  - If `e1` has type `t`, and ..., and `eN` has type `t`, then `[e1; ...; eN]` has type `t list`
- ▶ Even if \_\_all\_\_ zero elements of `[]` have type `t`, then `[]` has type `t list`
  - `[]` can be of type `int list`, `bool list`, `int list list`, `(bool * int) list` etc.
  - OCaml writes *any type of list* as `'a list` (or `'b list`, `'c list` etc.)
  - But all list elements of any list have the same type
- ▶ These are **polymorphic types**: we will see them a lot in OCaml



## Lists: building with `::`

Create (or `cons`, from `construct`) a list with one more element at the front

► **Syntax:** `e1 :: e2` where `e1` and `e2` are expressions

► **Type checking:**

– If `e1` has type `t` and `e2` has type `t list`:

► then: `e1 :: e2` has type `t list`

► else: report error and fail

► **Evaluation:**

– If `e1` evaluates to `v1` and `e2` evaluates to `[v2; ...; vN]`:

► then: `e1 :: e2` evaluates to `[v1; v2; ...; vN]`

## Two ways to build?

- ▶ `::` is more common in code
- ▶ `::` and `[]` is all we *need*
  - `e1 :: e2 :: e3 :: ... :: eN :: []` is the same as `[e1; e2; e3; ...; eN]`
  - First of many examples of **syntactic sugar**
- ▶ List values are printed as `[v1; v2; v3; ...; vN]`

⚠: OCaml lists are (singly) linked lists under the hood

## Lists: using

- ▶ For now, we will *use* lists with these features:
  - Test if a list is empty with `e = []`
  - Get the **first** element of a *non-empty list* with function `List.hd`
  - Get the **rest** (tail) of a *non-empty list* with function `List.tl` (a list with everything after the first element)
- ▶ `List.hd` and `List.tl` will raise an exception if given an empty list
- ▶ Later, we will use *pattern matching* to do this more safely and elegantly.

## Lists: testing for empty list

- ▶ **Syntax:** `e = []` where `e` is an expression
- ▶ **Type checking:**
  - If `e` has type `t list`:
    - ▶ then: `e = []` has type `bool`
    - ▶ else: report error and fail
- ▶ **Evaluation:**
  - If `e` evaluates to value `[]`:
    - ▶ then: `e = []` evaluates to `true`
    - ▶ else: `e = []` evaluates to `false`

# Lists: getting the first element

► **Syntax:** `List.hd e` where `e` is an expression

► **Type checking:**

- If `e` has type `t list`
  - then: `List.hd e` has type `t`
  - else: report error and fail

Alternate definition: `List.hd` has type `'a list -> 'a`

► **Evaluation:**

- If `e` evaluates to value `[v1; v2; ...; vN]`
  - then: `List.hd e` evaluates to value `v1`
  - else: `e` evaluates to `[]`, so `List.hd e` raises an exception

# Lists: getting the tail (everything except the first element)

► Syntax: `List.tl e` where `e` is an expression

► Type checking:

– If `e` has type `t list`:

► then: `List.tl e` has type `t list`

► else: report error and fail

Alternate definition: `List.tl` has type `'a list -> 'a list`

► Evaluation:

– If `e` evaluates to value `[v1; v2; ...; vN]`:

► then: `List.tl e` evaluates to value `[v2; ...; vN]`

► else: `e` evaluates to `[]`, so `List.tl e` raises an exception

## Recursion again!

- ▶ Functions over lists are usually recursive
  - Only way to get to all the elements
- ▶ **Design recipe:** answer the following two questions
  - *What should the answer be for an empty list?*
    - ▶ Often thinking about the return type provides a good hint (base case)
  - *What should the answer be for a non-empty list?*
    - ▶ Typically this will be in terms of the answer for the tail (recursion)

## Lists of tuples

- ▶ Processing lists of tuples is a common pattern (especially in A1)
  - Requires *no new features!*
  - Just compose what we've already learned
  - **Again:** compositionality is a hallmark of good design
    - ▶ often stemming from orthogonality.





## Demonstration 3: Lists

## Demonstration 3: Lists

```
# (* building lists:  
  * from [] (pronounced empty) and :: (pronounced cons); or  
  * the [x1; ...; xN] shorthand *)  
let empty = []  
let some_years = 2019 :: (2020 :: (2021 :: []))  
let some_years = 2019 :: 2020 :: 2021 :: []  
let some_years = [2019; 2020; 2021] ;;
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

```
# (* building lists:  
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let empty = []  
let some_years = 2019 :: (2020 :: (2021 :: []))  
let some_years = 2019 :: 2020 :: 2021 :: []  
let some_years = [2019; 2020; 2021] ;;  
val empty : 'a list = []  
val some_years : int list = [2019; 2020; 2021]
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

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# (* building lists:
   * from [] (pronounced empty) and :: (pronounced cons); or
   * the [x1; ...; xN] shorthand *)
let empty = []
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let some_years = [2019; 2020; 2021] ;;

val empty : 'a list = []
val some_years : int list = [2019; 2020; 2021]

# (* confusing error message because this is a one-element list of a triple *)
let bad_some_years = [2019,2020,2021] ;;
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

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let some_years = [2019; 2020; 2021] ;;

val empty : 'a list = []
val some_years : int list = [2019; 2020; 2021]

# (* confusing error message because this is a one-element list of a triple *)
let bad_some_years = [2019,2020,2021] ;;
val bad_some_years : (int * int * int) list = [(2019, 2020, 2021)]
```

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# (* building lists:
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let some_years = [2019; 2020; 2021] ;;

val empty : 'a list = []
val some_years : int list = [2019; 2020; 2021]

# (* confusing error message because this is a one-element list of a triple *)
let bad_some_years = [2019,2020,2021] ;;
val bad_some_years : (int * int * int) list = [(2019, 2020, 2021)]

# (* naturally, we can make lists using any expressions *)
let more_years = (2020 - 3) :: (fst (sum_pairs (one_four, two_three)))
:: (if 0 > 2 then -3 else 4) :: some_years ;;
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

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let empty = []
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let some_years = [2019; 2020; 2021] ;;

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let more_years = (2020 - 3) :: (fst (sum_pairs (one_four, two_three)))
                  :: (if 0 > 2 then -3 else 4) :: some_years ;;
val more_years : int list = [2017; 3; 4; 2019; 2020; 2021]
```



## Demonstration 3: Lists

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```
# (* Because lists typically have any length, we use recursion to make them or process them
   * check for empty: lst = []
   * get first element: List.hd (pronounced head)
   * get the list containing all but the first element: List.tl (pronounced tail) *)

let rec countdown (n : int) =
  if n <= 0 then []
  else n :: countdown (n - 1)

let rec sum_list (xs : int list) =
  if xs = [] then 0
  else (List.hd xs) + sum_list (List.tl xs)

let rec length (xs : 'a list) =
  if xs = [] then 0 else 1 + length (List.tl xs)

let rec nth ((xs: 'a list), (n : int)) =
  if n = 0 then List.hd xs
  else nth (List.tl xs, n - 1) ;;
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

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val countdown : int -> int list = <fun>
val sum_list : int list -> int = <fun>
val length : 'a list -> int = <fun>
val nth : 'a list * int -> 'a = <fun>
```

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val countdown : int -> int list = <fun>
val sum_list : int list -> int = <fun>
val length : 'a list -> int = <fun>
val nth : 'a list * int -> 'a = <fun>

# let l = [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10]
let l' = countdown 10
let s = (sum_list l) + (sum_list l')
let len = length l
let fifth = nth (l', 5)
let l = [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10]
let l' = countdown 10
let s = (sum_list l) + (sum_list l')
let len = length l
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val countdown : int -> int list = <fun>
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let s = (sum_list l) + (sum_list l')
let len = length l
let fifth = nth (l', 5) ;;

val l : int list = [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10]
val l' : int list = [10; 9; 8; 7; 6; 5; 4; 3; 2; 1]
val s : int = 110
val len : int = 10
val fifth : int = 5
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

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val s : int = 110
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# (* naturally, we can make lists using any expressions *)
let more_years = (2020 - 3) :: (fst (sum_pairs (one_four, two_three)))
                  :: (if 0 > 2 then -3 else 4) :: some_years ;;
```

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val countdown : int -> int list = <fun>
val sum_list : int list -> int = <fun>
val length : 'a list -> int = <fun>
val nth : 'a list * int -> 'a = <fun>

# let l = [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10]
let l' = countdown 10
let s = (sum_list l) + (sum_list l')
let len = length l
let fifth = nth (l', 5)
let l = [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10]
let l' = countdown 10
let s = (sum_list l) + (sum_list l')
let len = length l
let fifth = nth (l', 5) ;;

val l : int list = [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10]
val l' : int list = [10; 9; 8; 7; 6; 5; 4; 3; 2; 1]
val s : int = 110
val len : int = 10
val fifth : int = 5

# (* naturally, we can make lists using any expressions *)
let more_years = (2020 - 3) :: (fst (sum_pairs (one_four, two_three)))
:: (if 0 > 2 then -3 else 4) :: some_years ;;

val more_years : int list = [2017; 3; 4; 2019; 2020; 2021]
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists



## Demonstration 3: Lists

```
# let rec sum_pair_list (prs : (int * int) list) =  
  if prs = [] then 0  
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) + (snd (List.hd prs)) + sum_pair_list (List.tl prs)  
  
let rec firsts (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =  
  if prs = [] then []  
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) :: (firsts (List.tl prs))  
  
let rec seconds (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =  
  if prs = [] then []  
  else (snd (List.hd prs)) :: (seconds (List.tl prs))  
  
let sum_pair_list2 (prs : (int * int) list) =  
  (sum_list (firsts prs)) + (sum_list (seconds prs)) ;;
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

```
# let rec sum_pair_list (prs : (int * int) list) =  
  if prs = [] then 0  
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) + (snd (List.hd prs)) + sum_pair_list (List.tl prs)  
  
let rec firsts (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =  
  if prs = [] then []  
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) :: (firsts (List.tl prs))  
  
let rec seconds (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =  
  if prs = [] then []  
  else (snd (List.hd prs)) :: (seconds (List.tl prs))  
  
let sum_pair_list2 (prs : (int * int) list) =  
  (sum_list (firsts prs)) + (sum_list (seconds prs)) ;;  
val sum_pair_list : (int * int) list -> int = <fun>  
val firsts : ('a * 'b) list -> 'a list = <fun>  
val seconds : ('a * 'b) list -> 'b list = <fun>  
val sum_pair_list2 : (int * int) list -> int = <fun>
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

```
# let rec sum_pair_list (prs : (int * int) list) =
  if prs = [] then 0
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) + (snd (List.hd prs)) + sum_pair_list (List.tl prs)

let rec firsts (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =
  if prs = [] then []
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) :: (firsts (List.tl prs))

let rec seconds (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =
  if prs = [] then []
  else (snd (List.hd prs)) :: (seconds (List.tl prs))

let sum_pair_list2 (prs : (int * int) list) =
  (sum_list (firsts prs)) + (sum_list (seconds prs)) ;;

val sum_pair_list : (int * int) list -> int = <fun>
val firsts : ('a * 'b) list -> 'a list = <fun>
val seconds : ('a * 'b) list -> 'b list = <fun>
val sum_pair_list2 : (int * int) list -> int = <fun>

# let l = [(1, "a"); (2, "b"); (3, "c")]
let f = firsts l
let s = seconds l

let l = [(1, 2); (3, 4); (5, 6)]
let f = sum_pair_list l
let s = sum_pair_list2 l ;;
```

## Demonstration 3: Lists

```
# let rec sum_pair_list (prs : (int * int) list) =
  if prs = [] then 0
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) + (snd (List.hd prs)) + sum_pair_list (List.tl prs)

let rec firsts (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =
  if prs = [] then []
  else (fst (List.hd prs)) :: (firsts (List.tl prs))

let rec seconds (prs : ('a * 'b) list) =
  if prs = [] then []
  else (snd (List.hd prs)) :: (seconds (List.tl prs))

let sum_pair_list2 (prs : (int * int) list) =
  (sum_list (firsts prs)) + (sum_list (seconds prs)) ;;

val sum_pair_list : (int * int) list -> int = <fun>
val firsts : ('a * 'b) list -> 'a list = <fun>
val seconds : ('a * 'b) list -> 'b list = <fun>
val sum_pair_list2 : (int * int) list -> int = <fun>

# let l = [(1, "a"); (2, "b"); (3, "c")]
let f = firsts l
let s = seconds l

let l = [(1, 2); (3, 4); (5, 6)]
let f = sum_pair_list l
let s = sum_pair_list2 l ;;

val l : (int * int) list = [(1, 2); (3, 4); (5, 6)]
val f : int = 21
val s : int = 21
```

