

# Lecture 5

# Arrays in MIPS

FIT 1008  
Introduction to Computer Science



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# Objectives for this lecture

- How to write MIPS programs that involve **arrays**
- The need for **memory diagrams** and how to draw them
- Understand what are **pointers** and how do we use them.
- How to use **addressing modes** to access variables
- How to allocate memory on the **Heap**

# Simple Implementation

- Arrays have a **fixed length**.
- All the items will have the **same size**.
- All the items in the list are initialised to 0.
- We will **store length** before the items.

# Arrays in MIPS

**len(a)**

**a[0]**

**a[1]**

**a[2]**

**a[3]**

**a[4]**

**a**

5
0
-1
4
-9
16

**0x10012FBC**

**0x10012FBC**

**0x10012FC0**

**0x10012FC4**

**0x10012FC8**

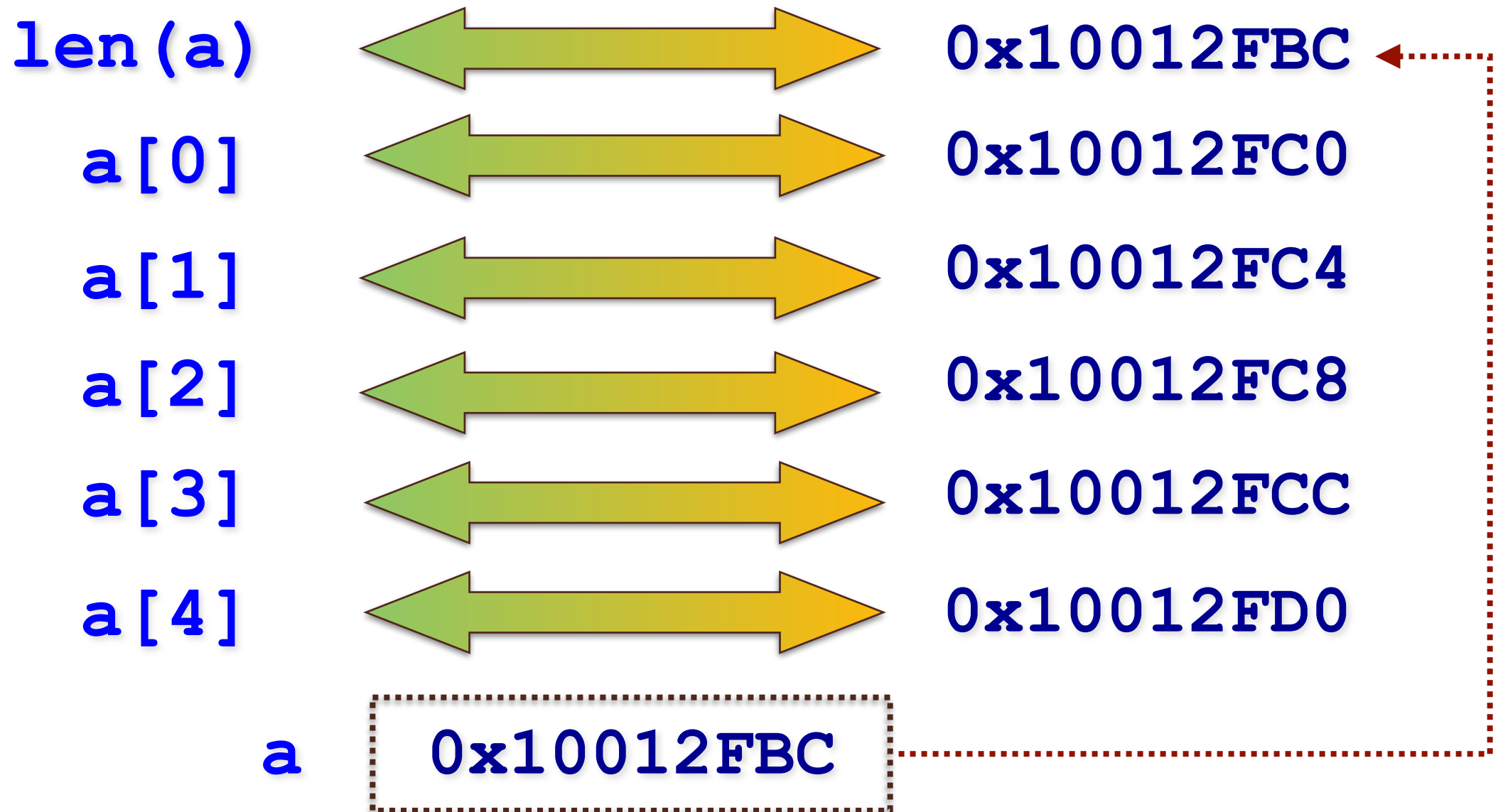
**0x10012FCC**

**0x10012FD0**

Variables  
which hold  
addresses  
are called  
pointers



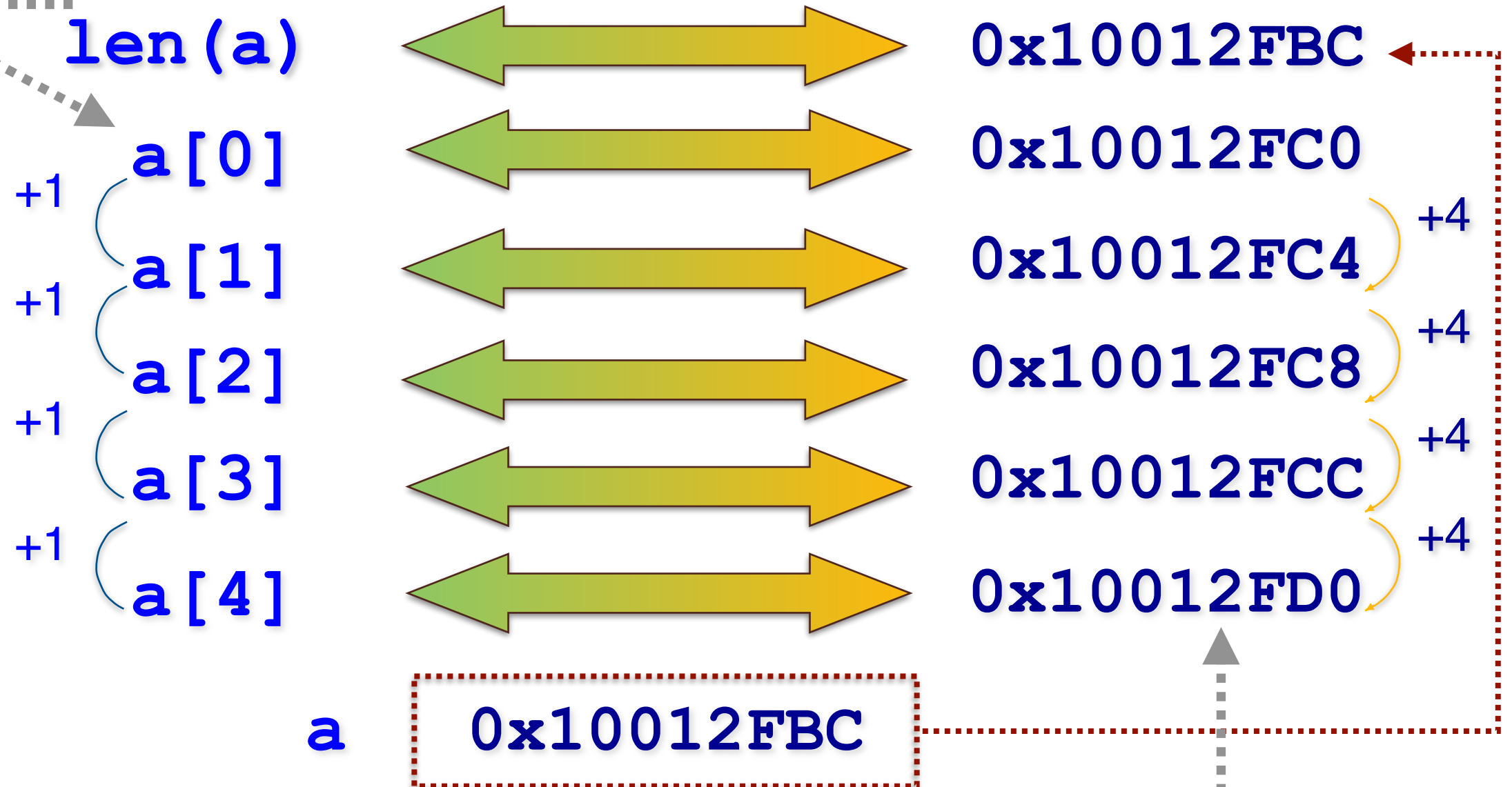
# Arrays in MIPS



To program arrays in assembly language, need to understand their relationship, and how to convert from one to another.

# Arrays in MIPS

arrays:  
adjacent  
indices  
differ by 1



addresses: addresses differ by size of array element type  
(here, 4 bytes for **integers**)

# Five ways to specify an address

- Directly (or using a label), e.g.  
`lw $t1, N` # loads from label N
- Label plus offset, e.g.  
`lw $t1, N+4` # loads from (label N + 4)
- Using a GPR to store the address, e.g.  
`lw $t1, ($s0)` # loads from address stored in \$s0
- GPR + offset, e.g.  
`lw $t1, 4($s0)`  
# loads from (address stored in \$s0)+4
- Label, offset, and GPR, e.g.  
`lw $t1, N+4($s0)`  
# loads from (label N+4)+contents of \$s0

# Creating Arrays in MIPS

```
the_list = [0]*size
```

- Allocate memory on the **Heap** for the list together with the length of list
- For integers, space required: **4\*size + 4**
- Store the address of the first byte of memory allocated in **the\_list**



# Arrays in MIPS

`len(the_list)`

5

`0x10012FBC`

`the_list[0]`

0

`0x10012FC0`

`the_list[1]`

-1

`0x10012FC4`

`the_list[2]`

4

`0x10012FC8`

`the_list[3]`

-9

`0x10012FCC`

`the_list[4]`

16

`0x10012FD0`

`the_list`

`0x10012FBC`



# construct\_list.py

```
size = int(input("Enter number of values: "))
the_list = [0] * size
for i in range(size):
    the_list[i] = int(input("Value: "))
print(the_list)
```

# Creating the list

```
lw    $t0, size
addi  $t1, $0, 4
mult  $t1, $t0
mflo  $t2
```

```
add $a0, $t2, $t1    # $a0 = 4*size + 4
addi $v0, $0, 9      # $v0 = 9
syscall              # allocate memory
```

```
sw $v0, the_list     # $v0 now points to the returned address
sw $t0, ($v0)         # store length of list
```

$\$t0 = \text{size}$   
 $\$t1 = 4$   
 $\$t2 = 4 * \text{size}$

allocate  $4 * \text{size} + 4$  bytes  
 (result in  $\$v0$ )

label `the_list`  
 references the memory  
 that will store the size

5	0x10012FBC ←
0	0x10012FC0
-1	0x10012FC4
4	0x10012FC8
-9	0x10012FCC
16	0x10012FD0
0x10012FBC	

store the size in the  
 address referenced by  
 $\$t0$

Call code (\$v0)	Service	Arguments	Returns	Notes
9	Allocate memory	\$a0 = number of bytes	\$v0 = address of first byte	-

# Lists in MIPS

`len(the_list)`

`the_list[0]`

`the_list[1]`

`the_list[2]`

`the_list[3]`

`the_list[4]`

`the_list`

5
0
-1
4
-9
16

0x10012FBC
------------

0x10012FBC

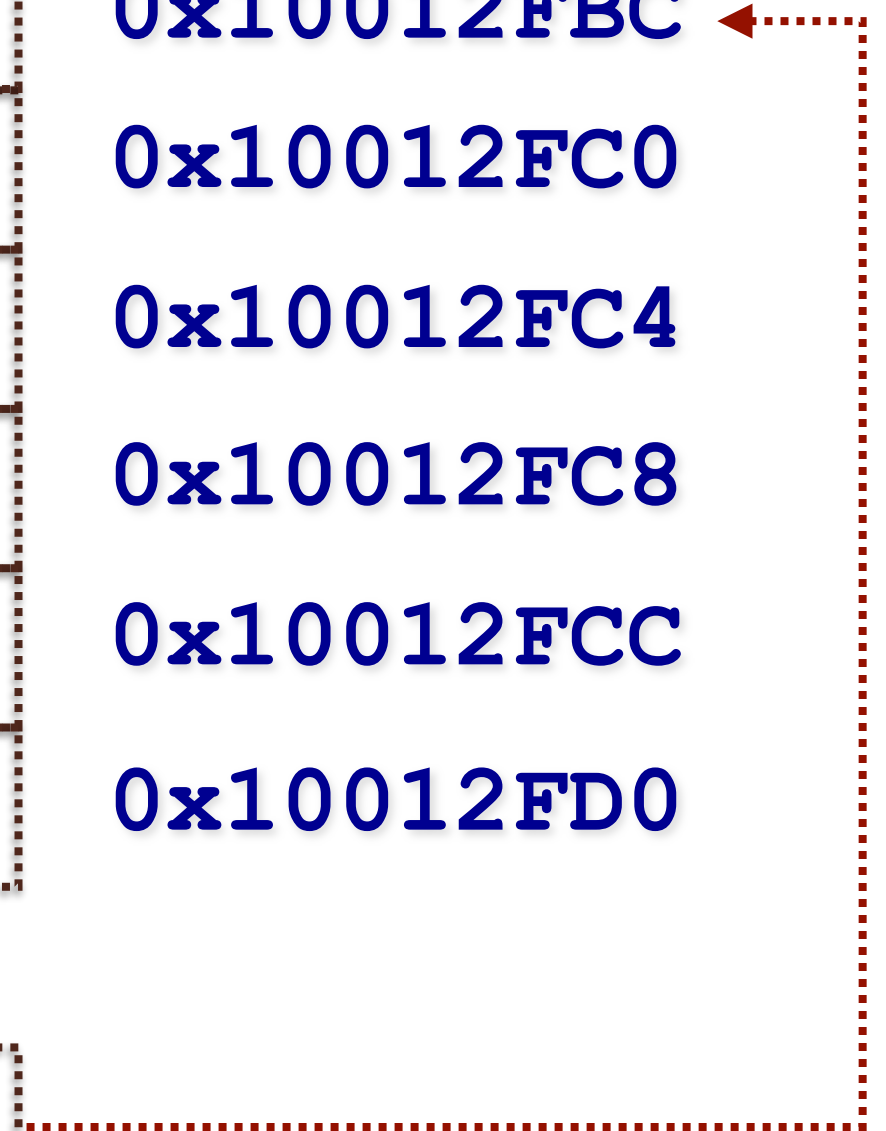
0x10012FC0

0x10012FC4

0x10012FC8

0x10012FCC

0x10012FD0



# Read in values into the list

```
for i in range(size):  
    the_list[i] = int(input("Value: "))
```

# Address of `the_list[k]`

`len(the_list)`

`the_list[0]`

`the_list[1]`

`the_list[2]`

`the_list[3]`

`the_list[4]`

`the_list`



$+4$

$k*4$

an integer  
size of 4  
bytes

address in `the_list`

+

4

+

$i*4$

# Read in values into the list

```
sw    $0, i          # i = 0
loop: lw    $t0, i
      lw    $t1, size
      # if i >= size goto endloop (Details omitted)
      # print prompt2 (Details omitted)
      # read next item into $v0 (Details omitted)
      lw    $t2, the_list
      addi  $t3, $0, 4
      mult  $t3, $t0
      mflo  $t4
      add   $t4, $t4, $t3 # t4 = i * 4 + 4
      add   $t4, $t4, $t2 # $t4 points to next location in the list
      sw    $v0, ($t4) # store the next value
      addi  $t0, $t0, 1 # i = i + 1
      sw    $t0, i
      j     loop
endloop:
```

# Print list

```
print(the_list)
```



# Print list

```
        addi $t0, $0, 0 # t0 = 0
loop2:   lw    $t1, the_list # $t1 = address of the_list
        lw    $t2, ($t1)    # $t2 = size of list
        # if $t0 >= size goto endloop2 (Details omitted)
        addi $t3, $0, 4
        mult $t3, $t0
        mflo $t4
        add  $t4, $t4, $t3 # $t4 = $t0 * 4 + 4
        add  $t4, $t4, $t1
        lw   $a0, ($t4) # load current item value into $a0
        addi $v0, $0, 1
        syscall # print current item
        addi $a0, $0, 32 # print a space - ascii code 32
        addi $v0, $0, 11
        syscall
        addi $t0, $t0, 1 # $t0 = $t0 + 1
        j    loop2
endloop2:
```

(using directly \$t0 instead of i)

# Summary

- How we could represent lists in MIPS
- How to create lists
- How to access items in lists
- How to write MIPS programs involving lists