



# Chapter 8

Operator  
Overloading,  
Friends,  
and References

# Learning Objectives

- Basic Operator Overloading
  - Unary operators
  - As member functions
- Friends and Automatic Type Conversion
  - Friend functions, friend classes
  - Constructors for automatic type conversion
- References and More Overloading
  - << and >>
  - Operators: = , [], ++, --

# Operator Overloading Introduction

- Operators +, -, %, ==, etc.
  - Really just functions!
- Simply "called" with different syntax:  
 $x + 7$ 
  - "+" is binary operator with x & 7 as operands
  - We "like" this notation as humans
- Think of it as:  
 $+(x, 7)$ 
  - "+" is the function name
  - x, 7 are the arguments
  - Function "+" returns "sum" of it's arguments

# Operator Overloading Perspective

- Built-in operators
  - e.g., +, -, =, %, ==, /, \*
  - Already work for C++ built-in types
  - In standard "binary" notation
- We can overload them!
  - To work with OUR types!
  - To add "Chair types", or "Money types"
    - As appropriate for our needs
    - In "notation" we're comfortable with
- Always overload with similar "actions"!

# Overloading Basics

- Overloading operators
  - VERY similar to overloading functions
  - Operator itself is "name" of function
- Example Declaration:

```
const Money operator +( const Money& amount1,  
                        const Money& amount2);
```

  - Overloads + for operands of type Money
  - Uses constant reference parameters for efficiency
  - Returned value is type Money
    - Allows addition of "Money" objects

# Overloaded "+"

- Given previous example:
  - Note: overloaded "+" NOT member function
  - Definition is "more involved" than simple "add"
    - Requires issues of money type addition
    - Must handle negative/positive values
- Operator overload definitions generally very simple
  - Just perform "addition" particular to "your" type

# Money "+" Definition:

## Display 8.1 Operator Overloading

- Definition of "+" operator for Money class:

```
52  const Money operator +(const Money& amount1, const Money& amount2)
53  {
54      int allCents1 = amount1.getCents( ) + amount1.getDollars( )*100;
55      int allCents2 = amount2.getCents( ) + amount2.getDollars( )*100;
56      int sumAllCents = allCents1 + allCents2;
57      int absAllCents = abs(sumAllCents); //Money can be negative.
58      int finalDollars = absAllCents/100;
59      int finalCents = absAllCents%100;

60      if (sumAllCents < 0)
61      {
62          finalDollars = -finalDollars;
63          finalCents = -finalCents;
64      }

65      return Money(finalDollars, finalCents);
66  }
```

*If the return statements puzzle you, see the tip entitled A Constructor Can Return an Object.*

# Overloaded "=="

- Equality operator, ==
  - Enables comparison of Money objects
  - Declaration:

```
bool operator ==(const Money& amount1,  
                 const Money& amount2);
```

    - Returns bool type for true/false equality
  - Again, it's a non-member function  
(like "+" overload)



# Overloaded "==" for Money:

## Display 8.1 Operator Overloading

- Definition of "==" operator for Money class:

```
83 bool operator ==(const Money& amount1, const Money& amount2)
84 {
85     return ((amount1.getDollars( ) == amount2.getDollars( ))
86             && (amount1.getCents( ) == amount2.getCents( )));
87 }
```

# Constructors Returning Objects

- Constructor a "void" function?
  - We "think" that way, but no
  - A "special" function
    - With special properties
    - CAN return a value!
- Recall return statement in "+" overload for Money type:
  - return Money(finalDollars, finalCents);
    - Returns an "invocation" of Money class!
    - So constructor actually "returns" an object!
    - Called an "anonymous object"

# Returning by const Value

- Consider "+" operator overload again:

```
const Money operator +(const Money& amount1,  
                      const Money& amount2);
```

- Returns a "constant object"?
  - Why?
- Consider impact of returning "non-const" object to see...→

# Returning by non-const Value

- Consider "no const" in declaration:

```
Money operator +( const Money& amount1,  
                  const Money& amount2);
```

- Consider expression that calls:

```
m1 + m2
```

- Where m1 & m2 are Money objects
- Object returned is Money object
- We can "do things" with objects!
  - Like call member functions...

# What to do with Non-const Object

- Can call member functions:
  - We could invoke member functions on object returned by expression `m1+m2`:
    - `(m1+m2).output(); //Legal, right?`
      - Not a problem: doesn't change anything
    - `(m1+m2).input(); //Legal!`
      - PROBLEM! //Legal, but MODIFIES!
    - Allows modification of "anonymous" object!
    - Can't allow that here!
- So we define the return object as `const`

# Overloading Unary Operators

- C++ has unary operators:
  - Defined as taking one operand
  - e.g., - (negation)
    - `x = -y;      // Sets x equal to negative of y`
  - Other unary operators:
    - ++, --
- Unary operators can also be overloaded

# Overload "-" for Money

- Overloaded "-" function declaration
  - Placed outside class definition:  
`const Money operator -(const Money& amount);`
  - Notice: only one argument
    - Since only 1 operand (unary)
- "-" operator is overloaded twice!
  - For two operands/arguments (binary)
  - For one operand/argument (unary)
  - Definitions must exist for both

# Overloaded "-" Definition

- Overloaded "-" function definition:

```
const Money operator -(const Money& amount)
{
    return Money(-amount.getDollars(),
                 -amount.getCents());
}
```

- Applies "-" unary operator to built-in type
  - Operation is "known" for built-in types
- Returns anonymous object again



# Overloaded "-" Usage

- Consider:

```
Money    amount1(10),  
         amount2(6),  
         amount3;  
amount3 = amount1 - amount2;
```

- Calls binary "-" overload

```
amount3.output();    //Displays $4.00  
amount3 = -amount1;
```

- Calls unary "-" overload

```
amount3.output()     //Displays -$10.00
```

# Overloading as Member Functions

- Previous examples: standalone functions
  - Defined outside a class
- Can overload as "member operator"
  - Considered "member function" like others
- When operator is member function:
  - Only ONE parameter, not two!
  - Calling object serves as 1<sup>st</sup> parameter

# Member Operator in Action

- `Money cost(1, 50), tax(0, 15), total;`  
`total = cost + tax;`
  - If "+" overloaded as member operator:
    - Variable/object cost is calling object
    - Object tax is single argument
  - Think of as: `total = cost.+(tax);`
- Declaration of "+" in class definition:
  - `const Money operator +(const Money& amount);`
  - Notice only ONE argument

# const Functions

- When to make function const?
  - Constant functions not allowed to alter class member data
  - Constant objects can ONLY call constant member functions
- Good style dictates:
  - Any member function that will NOT modify data should be made const
- Use keyword *const* after function declaration and heading

# Overloading Operators: Which Method?

- Object-Oriented-Programming
  - Principles suggest member operators
  - Many agree, to maintain "spirit" of OOP
- Member operators more efficient
  - No need to call accessor & mutator functions
- At least one significant disadvantage
  - (Later in chapter...)

# Overloading Function Application ( )

- Function call operator, ( )
  - Must be overloaded as member function
  - Allows use of class object like a function
  - Can overload for all possible numbers of arguments
- Example:

```
Aclass anObject;  
anObject(42);
```

  - If ( ) overloaded → calls overload

# Other Overloads

- &&, ||, and comma operator
  - Predefined versions work for bool types
  - Recall: use "short-circuit evaluation"
  - When overloaded no longer uses short-circuit
    - Uses "complete evaluation" instead
    - Contrary to expectations
- Generally should not overload these operators

# Friend Functions

- Nonmember functions
  - Recall: operator overloads as nonmembers
    - They access data through accessor and mutator functions
    - Very inefficient (overhead of calls)
- Friends can directly access private class data
  - No overhead, more efficient
- So: best to make nonmember operator overloads friends!



# Friend Functions

- Friend function of a class
  - Not a member function
  - Has direct access to private members
    - Just as member functions do
- Use keyword *friend* in front of function declaration
  - Specified IN class definition
  - But they're NOT member functions!

# Friend Function Uses

- Operator Overloads
  - Most common use of friends
  - Improves efficiency
  - Avoids need to call accessor/mutator member functions
  - Operator must have access anyway
    - Might as well give full access as friend
- Friends can be any function

# Friend Function Purity

- Friends not pure?
  - "Spirit" of OOP dictates all operators and functions be member functions
  - Many believe friends violate basic OOP principles
- Advantageous?
  - For operators: very!
  - Allows automatic type conversion
  - Still encapsulates: friend is in class definition
  - Improves efficiency

# Friend Classes

- Entire classes can be friends
  - Similar to function being friend to class
  - Example:  
class F is friend of class C
    - All class F member functions are friends of C
    - NOT reciprocated
    - Friendship granted, not taken
- Syntax: friend class F
  - Goes inside class definition of "authorizing" class

# References

- Reference defined:
  - Name of a storage location
  - Similar to "pointer"
- Example of stand alone reference:
  - `int robert;`  
`int& bob = robert;`
    - *bob* is reference to storage location for *robert*
    - Changes made to *bob* will affect *robert*
- Confusing?

# References Usage

- Seemingly dangerous
- Useful in several cases:
- Call-by-reference
  - Often used to implement this mechanism
- Returning a reference
  - Allows operator overload implementations to be written more naturally
  - Think of as returning an "alias" to a variable

# Returning Reference

- Syntax:

```
double& sampleFunction(double& variable);
```

- double& and double are different
- Must match in function declaration and heading

- Returned item must "have" a reference

- Like a variable of that type
- Cannot be expression like "x+5"
  - Has no place in memory to "refer to"

# Returning Reference in Definition

- Example function definition:

```
double& sampleFunction(double& variable)
{
    return variable;
}
```

- Trivial, useless example
- Shows concept only
- Major use:
  - Certain overloaded operators



# Overloading >> and <<

- Enables input and output of our objects
  - Similar to other operator overloads
  - New subtleties
- Improves readability
  - Like all operator overloads do
  - Enables:

```
cout << myObject;  
cin >> myObject;
```
  - Instead of need for:

```
myObject.output(); ...
```

# Overloading >>

- Insertion operator, <<

- Used with cout
- A binary operator

- Example:

```
cout << "Hello";
```

- Operator is <<
- 1<sup>st</sup> operand is predefined object *cout*
  - From library *iostream*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> operand is literal string "Hello"

# Overloading >>

- Operands of >>
  - Cout object, of class type ostream
  - Our class type

- Recall Money class
  - Used member function output()
  - Nicer if we can use >> operator:

```
Money amount(100);  
cout << "I have " << amount << endl;  
    instead of:  
cout << "I have ";  
amount.output();
```

# Overloaded >> Return Value

- `Money amount(100);`  
`cout << amount;`
  - << should return some value
  - To allow cascades:  
`cout << "I have " << amount;`  
`(cout << "I have ") << amount;`
    - Two are equivalent
- What to return?
  - cout object!
    - Returns its first argument type, ostream

# Overloaded >> Example:

## Display 8.5 Overloading << and >> (1 of 5)

### Display 8.5 Overloading << and >>

---

```
1  #include <iostream>
2  #include <cstdlib>
3  #include <cmath>
4  using namespace std;

5  //Class for amounts of money in U.S. currency
6  class Money
7  {
8  public:
9      Money( );
10     Money(double amount);
11     Money(int theDollars, int theCents);
12     Money(int theDollars);
13     double getAmount( ) const;
14     int getDollars( ) const;
15     int getCents( ) const;
16     friend const Money operator +(const Money& amount1, const Money& amount2)
17     friend const Money operator -(const Money& amount1, const Money& amount2)
18     friend bool operator ==(const Money& amount1, const Money& amount2);
19     friend const Money operator -(const Money& amount);
20     friend ostream& operator <<(ostream& outputStream, const Money& amount);
21     friend istream& operator >>(istream& inputStream, Money& amount);
22 private:
23     int dollars; //A negative amount is represented as negative dollars and
24     int cents; //negative cents. Negative $4.50 is represented as -4 and -50.
```

# Overloaded >> Example:

## Display 8.5 Overloading << and >> (2 of 5)

```
25     int dollarsPart(double amount) const;
26     int centsPart(double amount) const;
27     int round(double number) const;
28 };

29 int main( )
30 {
31     Money yourAmount, myAmount(10, 9);
32     cout << "Enter an amount of money: ";
33     cin >> yourAmount;
34     cout << "Your amount is " << yourAmount << endl;
35     cout << "My amount is " << myAmount << endl;
36
37     if (yourAmount == myAmount)
38         cout << "We have the same amounts.\n";
39     else
40         cout << "One of us is richer.\n";

41     Money ourAmount = yourAmount + myAmount;
```

# Overloaded >> Example:

## Display 8.5 Overloading << and >> (3 of 5)

Display 8.5 Overloading << and >>

```
42     cout << yourAmount << " + " << myAmount
43         << " equals " << ourAmount << endl;

44     Money diffAmount = yourAmount - myAmount;
45     cout << yourAmount << " - " << myAmount
46         << " equals " << diffAmount << endl;

47     return 0;
48 }
```

Since << returns a reference, you can chain << like this. You can chain >> in a similar way.

<Definitions of other member functions are as in Display 8.1.  
Definitions of other overloaded operators are as in Display 8.3.>

```
49 ostream& operator <<(ostream& outputStream, const Money& amount)
50 {
51     int absDollars = abs(amount.dollars);
52     int absCents = abs(amount.cents);
53     if (amount.dollars < 0 || amount.cents < 0)
54         //accounts for dollars == 0 or cents == 0
55         outputStream << "$-";
56     else
57         outputStream << '$';
58     outputStream << absDollars;
```

In the main function, cout is plugged in for outputStream.

For an alternate input algorithm, see Self-Test Exercise 3 in Chapter 7.

# Overloaded >> Example:

## Display 8.5 Overloading << and >> (4 of 5)

```
59     if (absCents >= 10)
60         outputStream << '.' << absCents;
61     else
62         outputStream << '.' << '0' << absCents;
63     return outputStream;
64 }
65
66 //Uses iostream and cstdlib:
67 istream& operator >>(istream& inputStream, Money& amount)
68 {
69     char dollarSign;
70     inputStream >> dollarSign; //hopefully
71     if (dollarSign != '$')
72     {
73         cout << "No dollar sign in Money input.\n";
74         exit(1);
75     }
76
77     double amountAsDouble;
78     inputStream >> amountAsDouble;
79     amount.dollars = amount.dollarsPart(amountAsDouble);
```

*Returns a reference*

*In the main function, cin is plugged in for inputStream.*

*Since this is not a member operator, you need to specify a calling object for member functions of Money.*

(continued)



# Overloaded >> Example:

## Display 8.5 Overloading << and >> (5 of 5)

### Display 8.5 Overloading << and >>

---

```
79     amount.cents = amount.centsPart(amountAsDouble);  
  
80     return inputStream;  
81 }
```

*Returns a reference*

#### SAMPLE DIALOGUE

Enter an amount of money: \$123.45  
Your amount is \$123.45  
My amount is \$10.09.  
One of us is richer.  
\$123.45 + \$10.09 equals \$133.54  
\$123.45 - \$10.09 equals \$113.36

---

# Assignment Operator, =

- Must be overloaded as member operator
- Automatically overloaded
  - Default assignment operator:
    - Member-wise copy
    - Member variables from one object → corresponding member variables from other
- Default OK for simple classes
  - But with pointers → must write our own!

# Increment and Decrement

- Each operator has two versions
  - Prefix notation: `++x;`
  - Postfix notation: `x++;`
- Must distinguish in overload
  - Standard overload method → Prefix
  - Add 2d parameter of type `int` → Postfix
    - Just a marker for compiler!
    - Specifies postfix is allowed

# Overload Array Operator, [ ]

- Can overload [ ] for your class
  - To be used with objects of your class
  - Operator must return a reference!
  - Operator [ ] must be a member function!

# Summary 1

- C++ built-in operators can be overloaded
  - To work with objects of your class
- Operators are really just functions
- Friend functions have direct private member access
- Operators can be overloaded as member functions
  - 1<sup>st</sup> operand is calling object

# Summary 2

- Friend functions add efficiency only
  - Not required if sufficient accessors/mutators available
- Reference "names" a variable with an alias
- Can overload <<, >>
  - Return type is a reference to stream type