

ECE2800J

Programming and Elementary Data Structures

Linked List

Learning Objectives:

Understand what is a linked list and when to use it

Know how to implement a singly-linked list

Understand what is double-ended list and when to use it

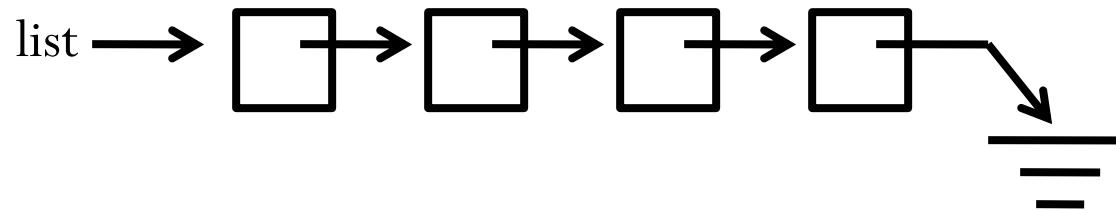
Outline

- Introduction to Linked List
- Implementation of Linked List
- Double-Ended Linked Lists

Linked Lists

Introduction

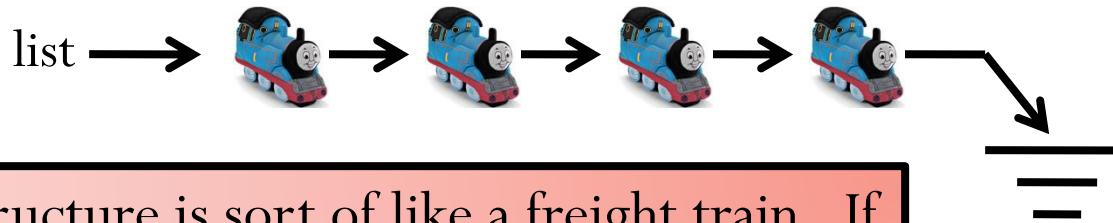
- Expandable arrays are only one way to implement storage that can grow and shrink over time.
- Another way is to use a **linked structure**.
- A linked structure is one with a series of zero or more data containers, connected by pointers from one to another, like:



Linked Lists

Introduction

- Expandable arrays are only one way to implement storage that can grow and shrink over time.
- Another way is to use a **linked structure**.
- A linked structure is one with a series of zero or more data containers, connected by pointers from one to another, like:



A linked structure is sort of like a freight train. If you need to carry more freight, you get a new boxcar, connect it to the train, and fill it. When you don't need it any more, you can remove that boxcar from the train.

Linked Lists

Introduction

- Suppose we wanted to implement an abstract data type for a mutable list of integers, represented as a linked structure.
- This ADT will be similar to the `list_t` type from project two, except that `list_t` is **immutable**:
 - Once a `list_t` object was created, no operations on that list would ever change it.

Linked Lists

Introduction

- There are three operations that the list must support:

```
bool isEmpty();  
    // EFFECTS: returns true if list is empty,  
    //           false otherwise  
  
void insert(int v);  
    // MODIFIES: this  
    // EFFECTS: inserts v into the front of the list  
  
class listIsEmpty {}; // An exception class  
int remove();  
    // MODIFIES: this  
    // EFFECTS: if list is empty, throw listIsEmpty.  
    //           Otherwise, remove and return the first  
    //           element of the list
```

Linked Lists

Introduction

- For example, if the list is (1 2 3), and you `remove()`, the list will be changed to (2 3), and `remove` returns 1.

```
int remove();  
    // MODIFIES: this  
    // EFFECTS: if list is empty, throw listIsEmpty.  
    //           Otherwise, remove and return the  
    //           first element of the list
```

- If you then `insert(4)`, the list changes to (4 2 3).

```
void insert(int v);  
    // MODIFIES: this  
    // EFFECTS: inserts v into the front of the list
```

Outline

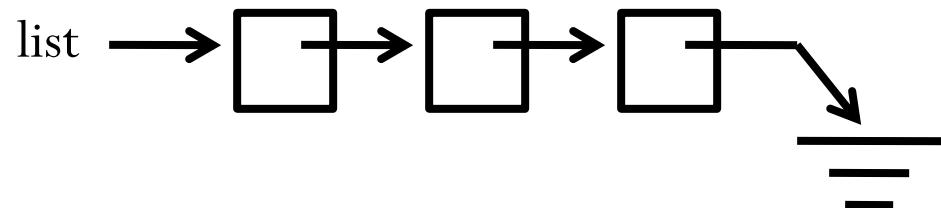
- Introduction to Linked List
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Linked Lists

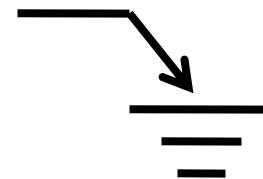
Implementation

- To implement linked list, we need to pick a concrete representation for the node in the list.

```
struct node {  
    node *next;  
    int   value;  
};
```



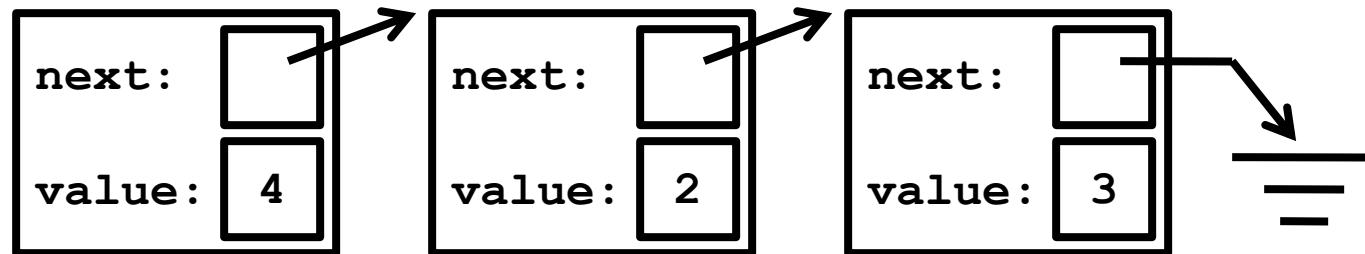
- The invariants on these fields are:
 - The **value** field holds the integer value of this element of the list.
 - The **next** field points to the next node in the list, or `nullptr` if the node is the last one in the list.
- `nullptr` means "pointing at nothing". Its is represented as:



Linked Lists

Implementation

- The concrete representation of the list (4 2 3) is:



- The basic idea of implementation is that each time an `int` is inserted into the list, we'll create a new node to hold it.
- Each time an `int` is removed from the (non-empty) list, we'll save the value of the first node, **destroy** the first node, and return the value.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- We'll use the following (private) data members:

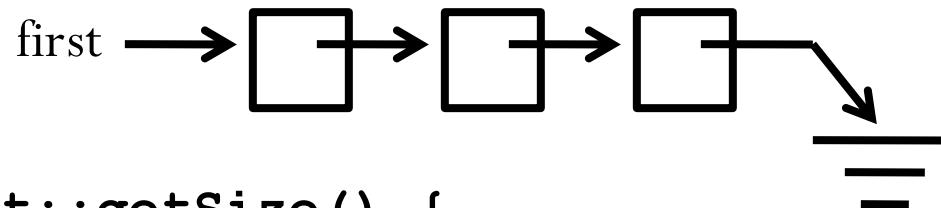
```
class IntList {  
    node *first;  
public:  
    ...  
};
```

```
struct node {  
    node *next;  
    int    value;  
};
```

- The rep invariant is that “first” points to first node of the sequence of nodes representing this `IntList`, or `nullptr` if the list is empty.

Linked List Traversal

- With the “first” pointer, we can traverse the linked list.



```
int IntList::getSize() {  
    // Effect: return # of items in this list  
    int count = 0;  
    node *current = first;  
    while(current) {  
        count++;  
        current = current->next;  
    }  
    return count;  
}
```

Traverse
through the list.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Here are the public methods we have to implement:

```
class IntList {  
    node *first;  
public:  
    bool isEmpty();  
    void insert(int v);  
    int remove();  
    IntList(); // default ctor  
    IntList(const IntList& l); // copy ctor  
    ~IntList(); // dtor  
    // assignment  
    IntList &operator=(const IntList &l);  
};
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- We will implement the "operational" methods first, assuming that the representation invariants hold.
- After that, we'll go back and implement the default constructor and the **Big Three** to make sure that:
 - The invariants hold during object creation.
 - All dynamic resources are accounted for.
- A list is empty if there is no node in the list, or `first` is `nullptr`:

```
bool IntList::isEmpty() {  
    return !first;  
}
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- When we insert an integer, we start out with the "first" field pointing to the current list:
 - That list might be empty, or it might not, but in any event "first" **must** point to a valid list thanks to the rep invariant.
- The first thing we need to do is to create a new node to hold the new "first" element:

```
void IntList::insert(int v) {  
    node *np = new node;  
    ...  
}
```

Question: Can we declare a local object instead of a dynamic one? I.e., declare:

```
node n;
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Next, we need to establish the invariants on the new node.
- This means setting the value field to v, and the next field to the “rest of the list” – this is precisely the start of the current list:

```
void IntList::insert(int v) {  
    node *np = new node;  
    np->value = v;  
    np->next = first;  
    ...  
}
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Finally, we need to reestablish the representation invariant: `first` currently points to the `second` node in the list, and it must point to the first node of the new list instead:

```
void IntList::insert(int v) {  
    node *np = new node;  
    np->value = v;  
    np->next = first;  
    first = np;  
}
```

We have accomplished the work of the method, and all invariants are now true, so we are done.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Finally, we need to reestablish the representation invariant: `first` currently points to the `second` node in the list, and it must point to the first node of the new list instead:

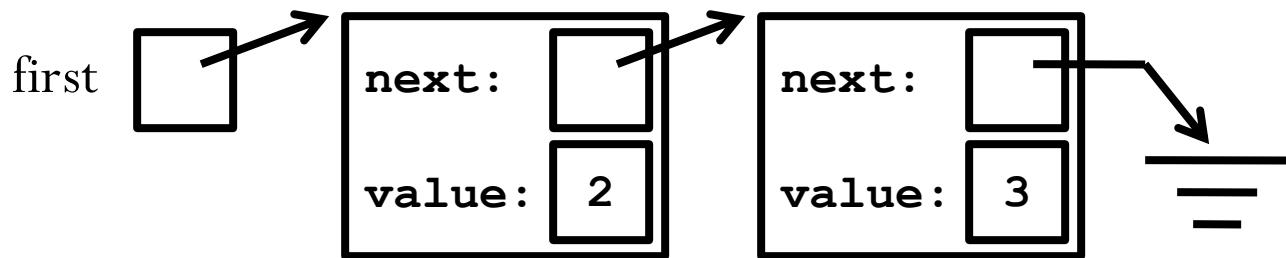
```
void IntList::insert(int v) {  
    node *np = new node;  
    np->value = v;  
    np->next = first;  
    first = np;  
}
```

Notice that this works no matter what the current list is, as long as the invariant holds (see next slides).

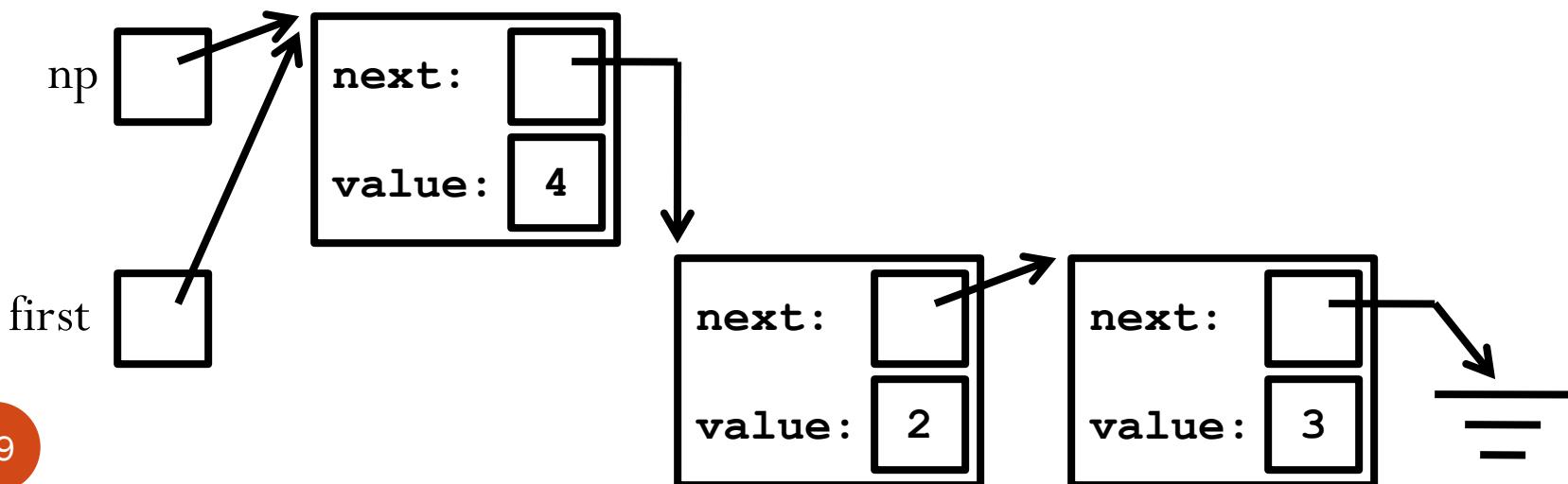
Linked Lists

Example

- Suppose we are inserting a 4.
- The list might already have elements:



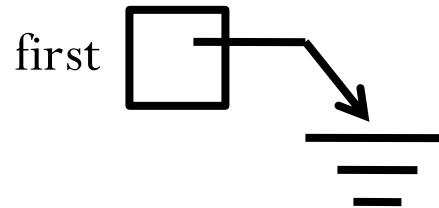
- And then the new list is



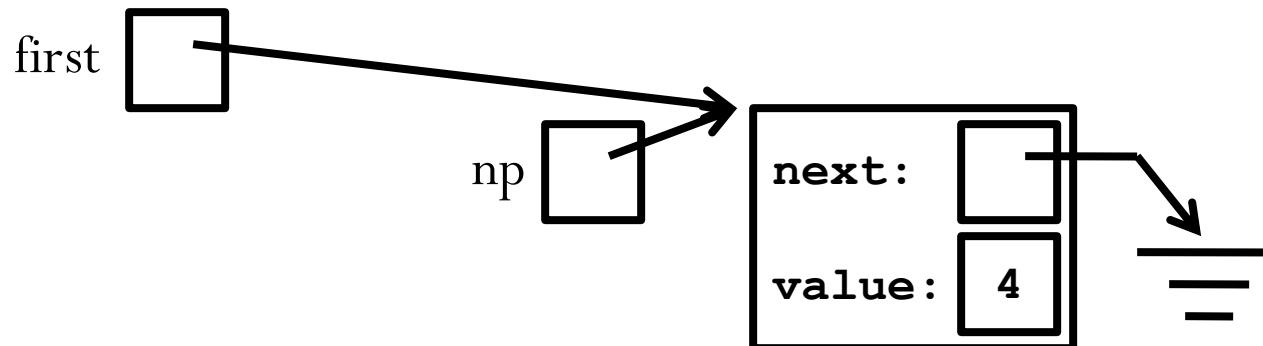
Linked Lists

Example

- Suppose we are inserting a 4.
- The list might be empty:



- And the new list is



Linked Lists

Implementation

- Removal is a bit trickier since there are lots of things we need to accomplish, and they have to happen in precisely **the right order**.
- If the first item is removed, this violates the invariant on "first", which we have to fix:

```
int IntList::remove() {  
    ...  
    first = first->next;  
    ...  
}
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

```
first = first->next;
```

- If we are removing the first node, we must delete it to avoid a memory leak.
- Unfortunately, we **can't** delete it before advancing the "first" pointer (since `first->next` would then be undefined).
- But, **after** we advance the "first" pointer, the node to be removed is an orphan, and can't be deleted.
- We solve this by introducing a local variable to remember the "old" first node, which we will call the `victim`.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- After creating the victim, we can then delete the node **after** it is skipped by first.

```
int IntList::remove() {  
    node *victim = first;  
    ...  
    first = victim->next;  
    ...  
    delete victim;  
    ...  
}
```

Note: equivalent to
first = first->next;

Linked Lists

Implementation

- However, removing the first node is only half of the work.
- We must also return the value that was stored in the node.
- This is also tricky:
 - We can't return the value first and then delete the node, since then the delete wouldn't happen.
 - Likewise, if we delete the node first, the contained value is lost.
- So, we use **another** local variable, `result`, to remember the result that we will eventually return.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Now that we have the `result` variable, the method becomes:

```
int IntList::remove() {  
    node *victim = first;  
    int result;  
    ...  
    first = victim->next;  
    result = victim->value;  
    delete victim;  
    return result;  
}
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Finally, we need to cope with an empty list, and throw an exception if we have one:

```
int IntList::remove() {
    node *victim = first;
    int result;
    if (isEmpty()) {
        listIsEmpty e;
        throw e;
    }
    first = victim->next;
    result = victim->value;
    delete victim;
    return result;
}
```

Linked Lists

Exercise

- Note that for victim, we initialize it when it is declared, but we don't for result.
- Question:

Why didn't we initialize result to victim->value?

```
int IntList::remove() {  
    node *victim = first;  
    int result;  
    if (isEmpty()) {  
        listIsEmpty e;  
        throw e;  
    }  
    first = victim->next;  
    result = victim->value;  
    delete victim;  
    return result;  
}
```

Linked Lists

Exercise

- Slightly more efficient (one assignment less when the list is empty!)

```
int IntList::remove() {  
    if (isEmpty()) {  
        listIsEmpty e;  
        throw e;  
    }  
    node *victim = first;  
    first = victim->next;  
    int result = victim->value;  
    delete victim;  
    return result;  
}
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Now let's work on the maintenance methods:
 - Constructors
 - Assignment operator
 - Destructor
- The default constructor is easy:
 - We just have to establish the representation invariant for an empty list:

```
IntList::IntList() : first(nullptr)  
{ }
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Likewise, the destructor is easy.
- We have to destroy each node in the list before the list itself is destroyed.
- Actually, we already have a mechanism to destroy a single node – it's a side effect of `remove()`.
- So, we call `remove()` until the list is empty, ignoring `remove()`'s result.
- We put this functionality into another private method, called `removeAll()`.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Here is the destructor and its helper:

```
void IntList::removeAll() {  
    while (!isEmpty()) {  
        remove();  
    }  
}
```

```
IntList::~IntList() {  
    removeAll();  
}
```



Do you agree that the copy operation can be performed as follows?

```
IntList::IntList(const IntList &l) : first(nullptr) {  
    node *current = l.first;  
    while(current) {  
        insert(current->value);  
        current = current->next;  
    }  
}
```

Select all the correct answers.

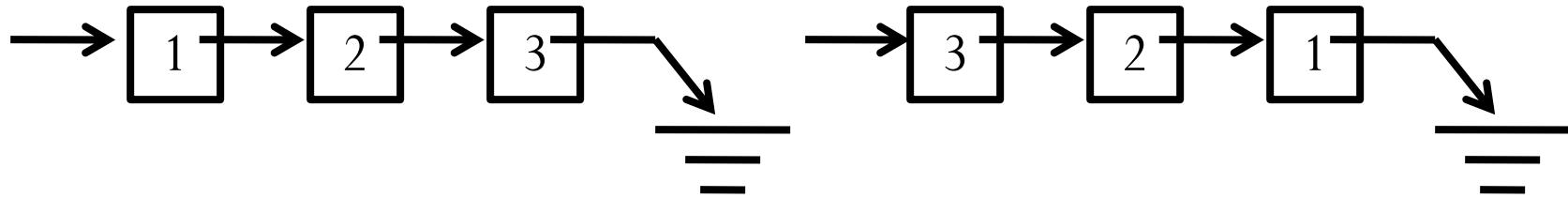
- A. Yes, all the values are copied.
- B. No, some values are not copied.
- C. No, even if all the values are copied.
- D. In fact, sometimes it works.



Linked Lists

Implementation

- The copy constructor is tricky.
- The naive approach would be to walk the list from front to back, and insert each element that we find into the list.
- However, this gives us a list **in reverse order**, because we always insert a new element at the beginning of the list.



- What we would prefer is to be able to walk the list **backward**.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- Since there's no convenient way to walk the list backwards, we'll instead write a helper function that will **recursively** walk the list till the end.
- When we unwind the recursion, we can insert the elements from "back" to "front", which gives us the right answer:

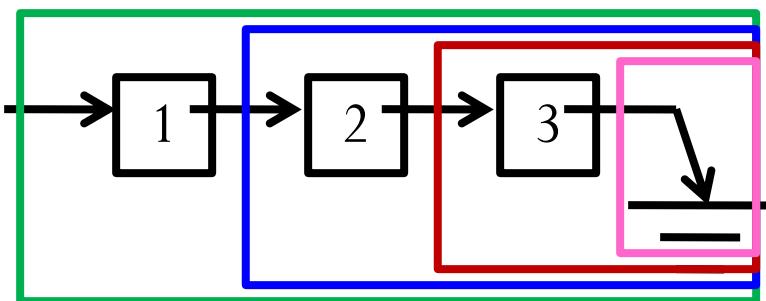
```
void IntList::copyList(node *list) {  
    if (!list) return; // Base case  
  
    copyList(list->next);  
    insert(list->value);  
}
```

copyList is a private member function

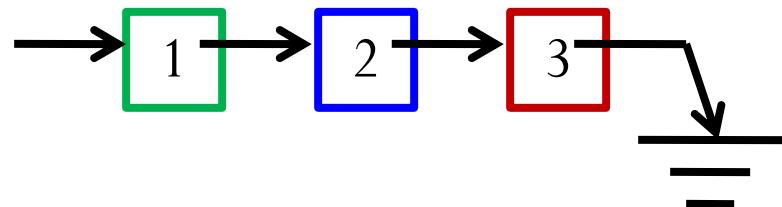
Linked Lists

Implementation

```
void IntList::copyList(node *list) {  
    if (!list) return; // Base case  
  
    copyList(list->next);  
    insert(list->value);  
}
```



Assuming the current list is empty



- `copyList()` must be a private method, since it deals with the concrete representation, not the abstraction.

Linked Lists

Implementation

- With `copyList()`, the copy constructor and assignment operator are pretty easy.
- For the copy constructor, make sure we start with an empty list, and then call `copyList()`:

```
IntList::IntList(const IntList &l)
: first(nullptr)
{
    copyList(l.first);
}
```

Linked Lists

Implementation

- The assignment operator ensures that there is no self-assignment, destroys the current list, then copies the new one:

```
IntList &IntList::operator=
    (const IntList &l) {
    if (this != &l) {
        removeAll();
        copyList(l.first);
    }
    return *this;
}
```

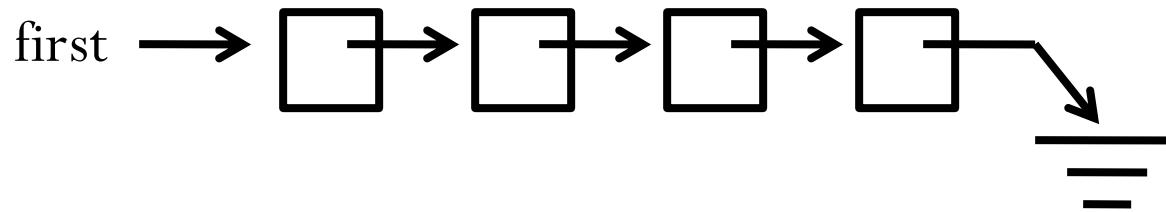
Outline

- Introduction to Linked List
- Implementation of Linked List
- Double-Ended Linked Lists

Linked Lists

Double-ended list

- What if we wanted to insert something at the end of the list?
- Intuitively, with the current representation, we need to walk down the list until we found "the last element", and then insert it there.



- That's not very efficient, because we have to go through every element to insert something at the tail.
- Instead, we'll change our concrete representation to track both the front and the back of our list.

Linked Lists

Double-ended list

- The new representation has **two** node pointers:

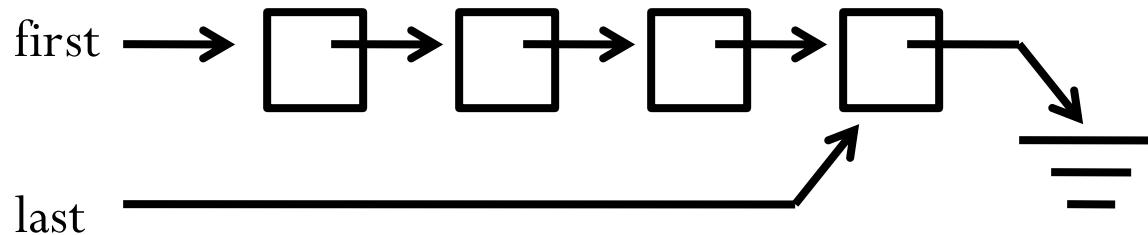
```
class IntList {  
    node *first;  
    node *last;  
public:  
    ...  
};
```

- The invariant on `first` is unchanged.
- The invariant on `last` is:
 - `last` points to the last node of the list if it is not empty, and is `nullptr` otherwise.

Linked Lists

Double-ended list

- So, in an empty list, both `first` and `last` point to `nullptr`.
- However, if the list is non-empty, it looks like this:



- Question: Adding this new data member, what methods should be changed?
 - Answer: `remove`, `insert`, and default/copy constructor should be re-written
 - In lecture, we'll only write a new method, `insertLast`, which inserts a node at the tail of the linked list

Linked Lists

Double-ended list

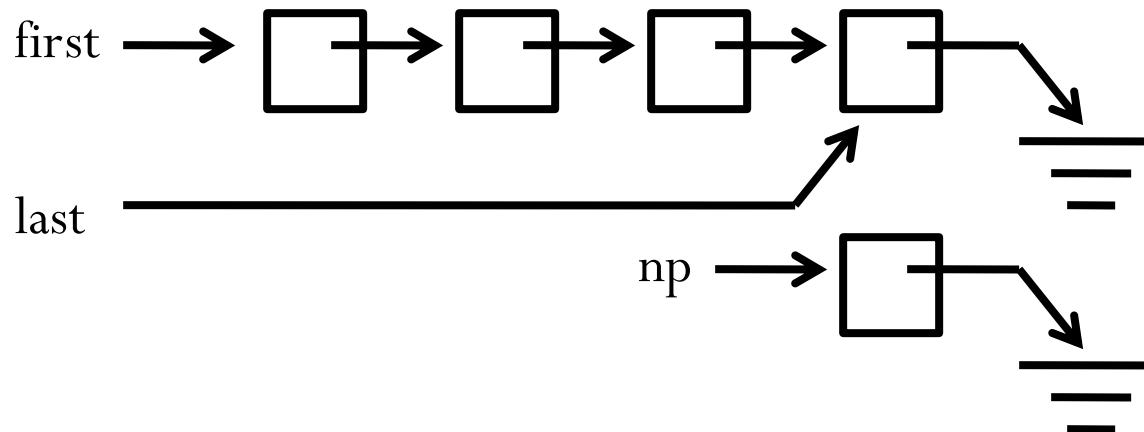
- First, we create the new node, and establish its invariants:

```
void IntList::insertLast(int v) {  
    node *np = new node;  
    np->next = nullptr;  
    np->value = v;  
    . . .  
}
```

Linked Lists

Double-ended list

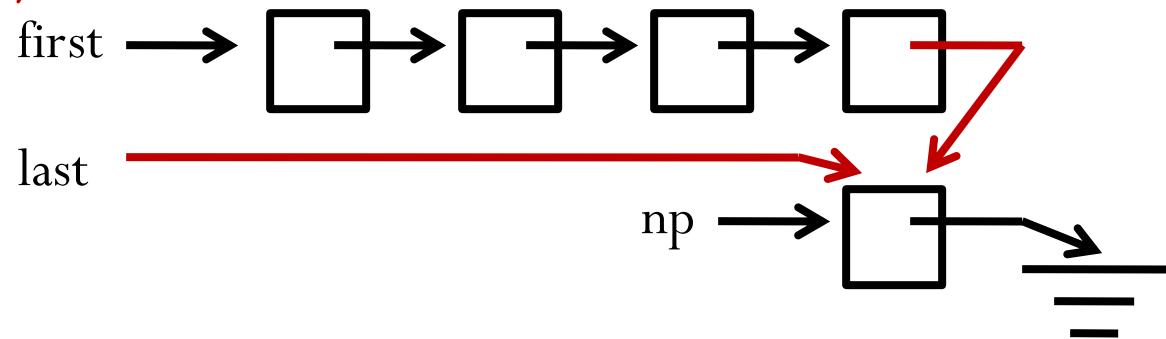
- To actually insert, there are two cases:
 - If the list is empty, we need to reestablish the invariants on `first` **and** `last` (the new node is both the first and last node of the list)
 - If the list is **not** empty, there are two broken invariants. The "old" `last->next` element (incorrectly) points to `nullptr`, and the `last` field no longer points to the last element.



Linked Lists

Double-ended list

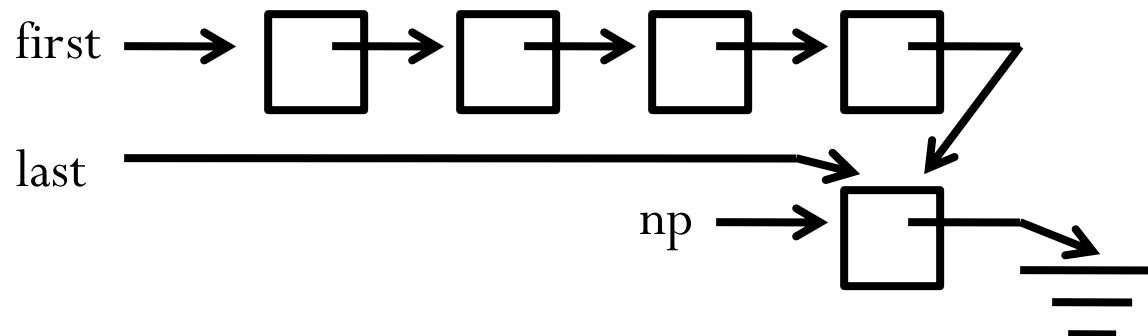
```
void IntList::insertLast(int v) {  
    node *np = new node;  
    np->next = nullptr;  
    np->value = v;  
    if (isEmpty()) {  
        first = last = np;  
    }  
    else {  
        last->next = np;  
        last = np;  
    }  
}
```



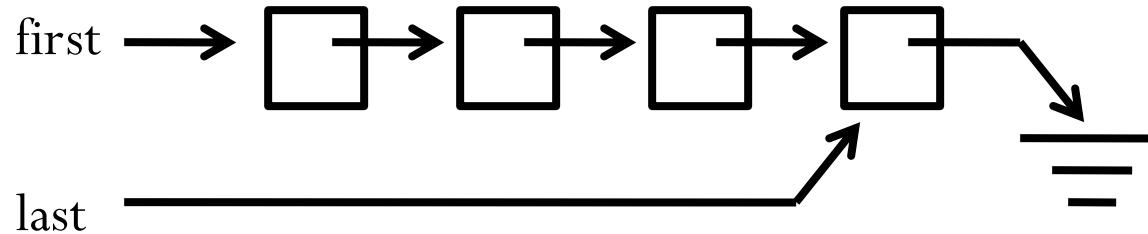
Linked Lists

Double-ended list

- This is efficient, but only for insertion.



- **Question:** Is removal **from the end** efficient or not? Why?



Linked Lists

Double-ended list

- To make removal from the end efficient, as well, we have to have a **doubly-linked** list, so we can go forward **and** backward.
- To do this, we're going to change the representation again.
- In our new representation, a node is:

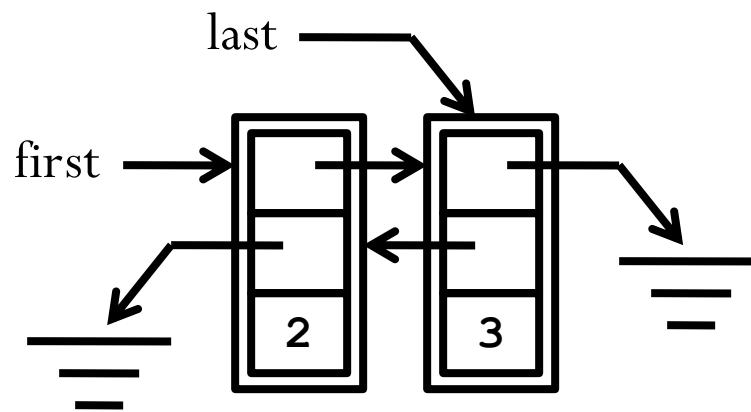
```
struct node {  
    node *next;  
    node *prev;  
    int   value;  
};
```

- The `next` and `value` fields are the same as before.
- The `prev` field's invariant is:
 - The `prev` field points to the previous node in the list, or `nullptr` if no such node exists (e.g., the current node is the first node).

Linked Lists

Double-ended list

- With this representation, an empty list is unchanged: both “first” and “last” are `nullptr`.
- While the list (2, 3) would look like this:



- We will implement each method in project five.



Which of the following statements are true when comparing doubly-linked lists and singly-linked lists?

Select all the correct answers.

- A. Doubly-linked lists allow more operations.
- B. Doubly-linked lists make some operations more efficient.
- C. Doubly-linked lists make some operations less efficient.
- D. Doubly-linked lists double the memory requirement compared to singly-linked list.



Reference

- **Problem Solving with C++ (8th Edition)**, by *Walter Savitch*, Addison Wesley Publishing (2011)
 - Chapter 13.1 Nodes and Linked Lists