What is C?

C is a structured programming language developed by Dennis Ritchie in **1973** at **Bell Laboratories**. It is one of the most popular computer languages today because of its structure, high-level abstraction, machine independent feature etc.

C language was developed to write the **UNIX** operating system; hence it is strongly associated with UNIX, which is one of the most popular network operating system in use today and heart of internet data superhighway.

Any programming Language can be divided in to two categories.

1. Problem oriented (High level language)
2. Machine oriented (Low level language)

But C is considered as a **Middle level Language**.

Where is C used? Key Applications

1. 'C' language is widely used in embedded systems.
2. It is used for developing system applications.
3. It is widely used for developing desktop applications.
4. Most of the applications by Adobe are developed using 'C' programming language.
5. It is used for developing browsers and their extensions. Google's Chromium is built using 'C' programming language.
6. It is used to develop databases. MySQL is the most popular database software which is built using 'C'.
7. It is used in developing an operating system. Operating systems such as Apple's OS X, Microsoft's Windows, and Symbian are developed using 'C' language. It is used for developing desktop as well as mobile phone's operating system.
8. It is used for compiler production.
9. It is widely used in IOT applications.

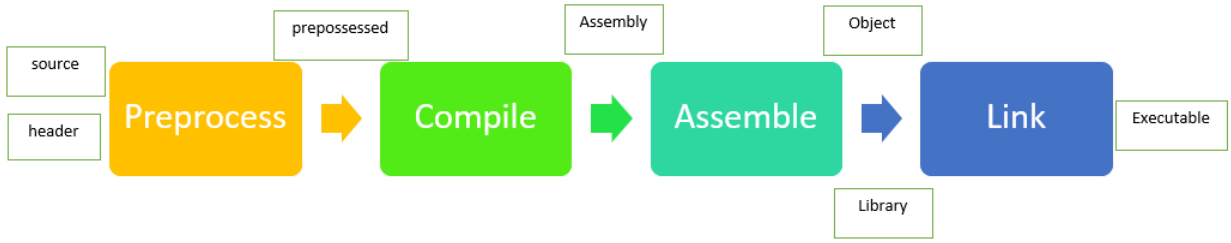
How 'C' Works?

C is a compiled language. A compiler is a special tool that compiles the program and converts it into the object file which is machine readable. After the compilation process, the linker will combine different object files and creates a single executable file to run the program.

The following are the phases through which our program passes before being transformed into an executable form:

1. Preprocessor
2. Compiler
3. Assembler
4. Linker

The following diagram shows the execution of a 'C' program

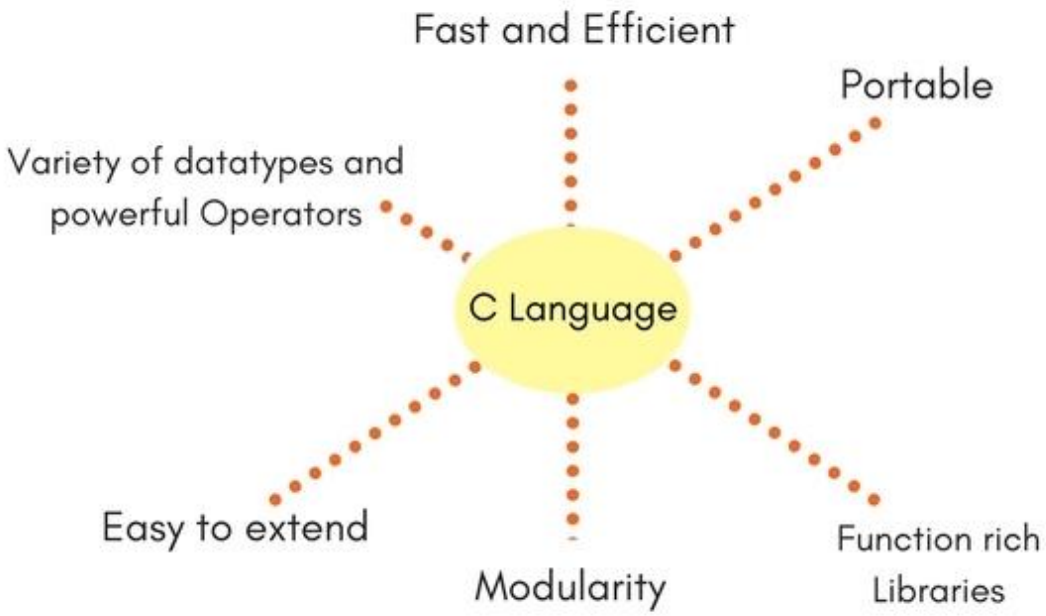


You will get more detail how compiler with program work in next chapter

Nowadays, various compilers are available online, and you can use any of those compilers. The functionality will never differ and most of the compilers will provide the features required to execute both 'C' and 'C++' programs.

Features of C language

- It is a robust language with rich set of built-in functions and operators that can be used to write any complex program.
- The C compiler combines the capabilities of an assembly language with features of a high-level language.
- Programs Written in C are efficient and fast. This is due to its variety of data type and powerful operators.
- It is many time faster than BASIC.
- C is highly portable this means that programs once written can be run on another machines with little or no modification.
- Another important feature of C program, is its ability to extend itself.
- A C program is basically a collection of functions that are supported by C library. We can also create our own function and add it to C library.
- C language is the most widely used language in operating systems and embedded system development today.



Summary

- 'C' was developed by Dennis Ritchie in 1972.
- It is a robust language.
- It is a low programming level language close to machine language
- It is widely used in the software development field.
- It is a procedure and structure oriented language.
- It has the full support of various operating systems and hardware platforms.
- Many compilers are available for executing programs written in 'C'.
- A compiler compiles the source file and generates an object file.
- A linker links all the object files together and creates one executable file.
- It is highly portable.