

# Memory Management

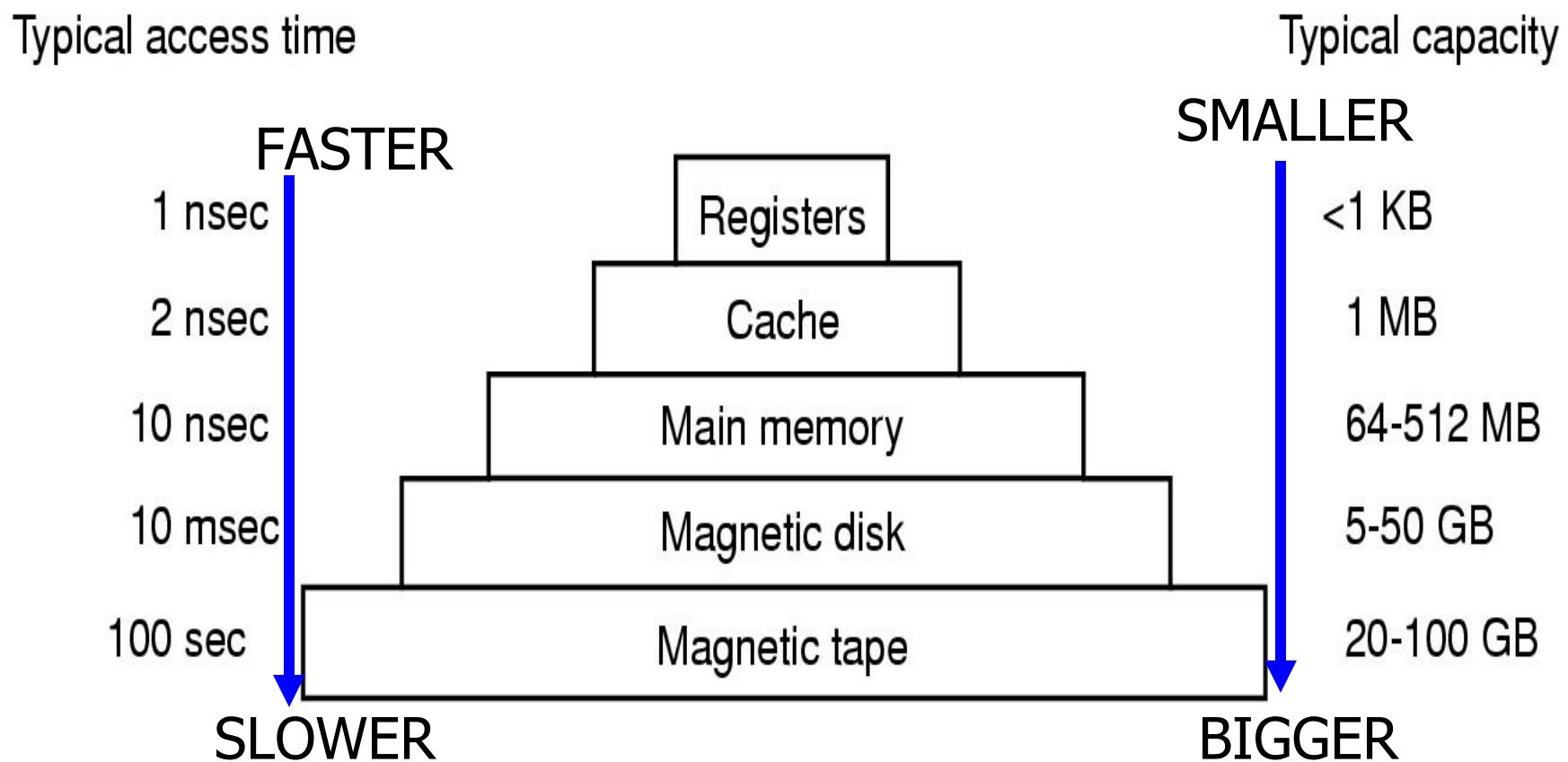
From Chapter 3, Modern Operating Systems, Andrew S. Tanenbaum

CS350  
Kartik Gopalan

# Memory Management

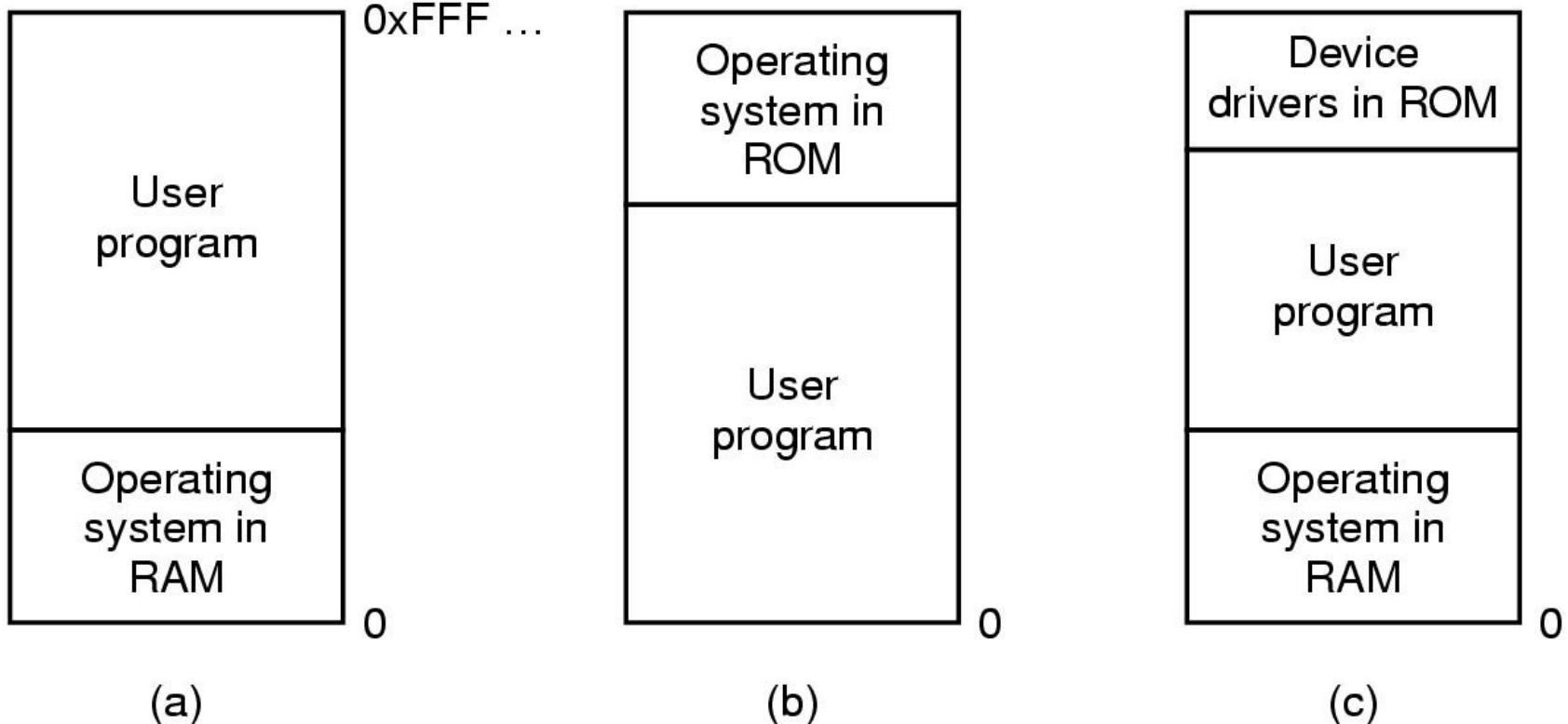
- Ideally programmers want memory that is
  - large
  - fast
  - non volatile
- Memory hierarchy
  - small amount of fast, expensive memory – cache
  - some medium-speed, medium price main memory
  - Lots of slow, cheap disk storage
- Memory manager handles the memory hierarchy

# Typical Memory Hierarchy



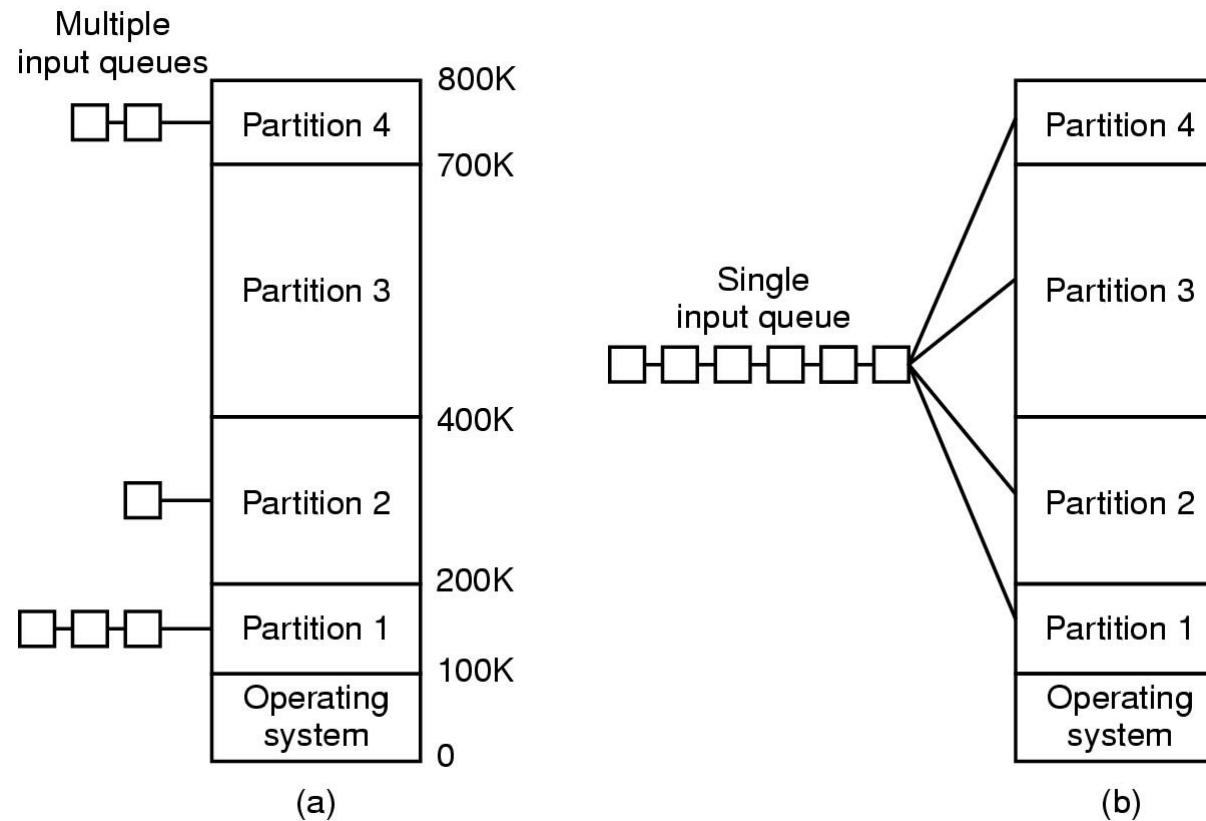
# Basic Memory Management

## Monoprogramming without Swapping or Paging



Three simple ways of organizing memory  
- an operating system with one user process

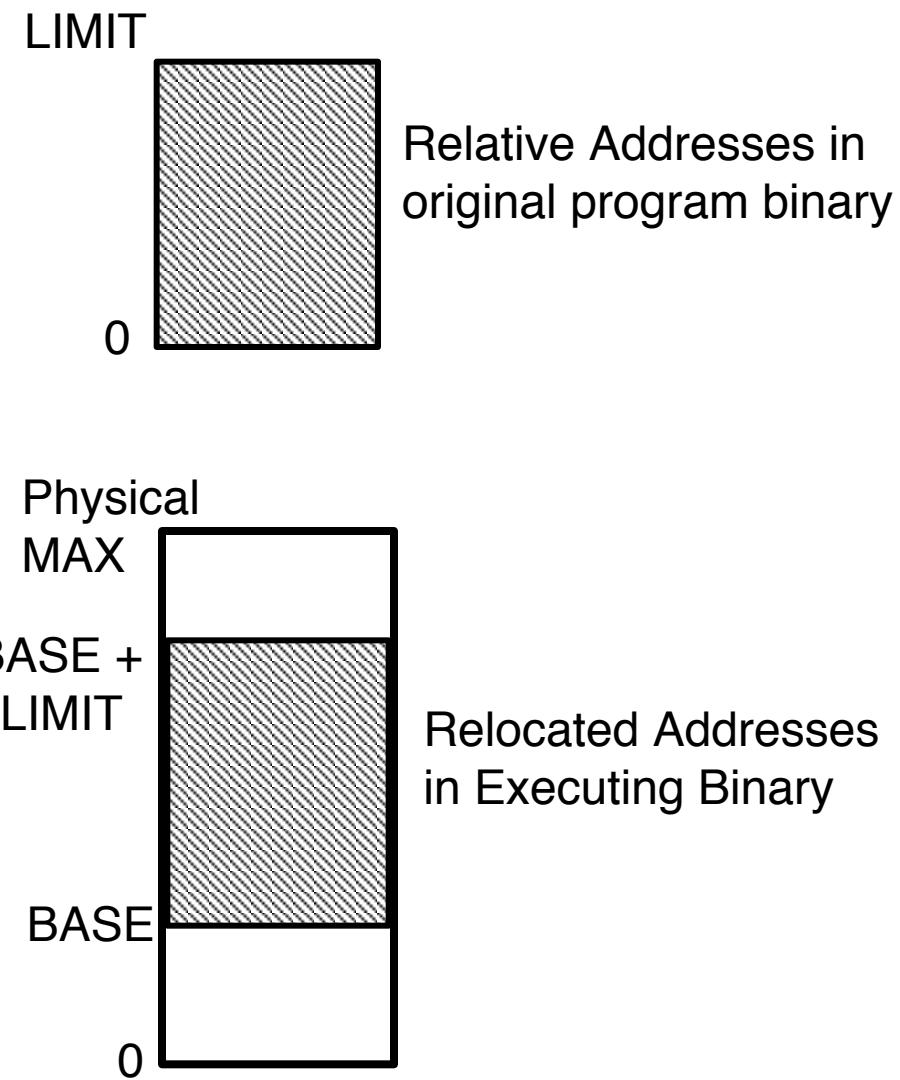
# Multiprogramming with Fixed Partitions



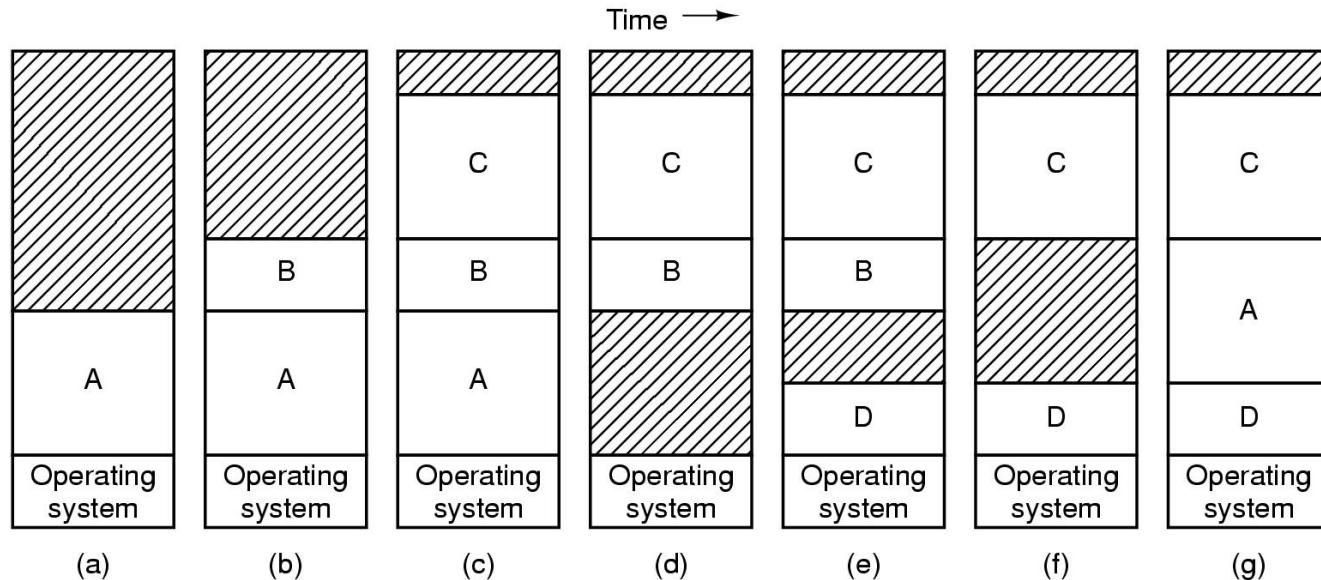
- Fixed memory partitions
  - (a) separate input queues of processes for each partition
  - (b) single input queue

# Relocation and Protection

- Problem: A programmer doesn't know where a program will be loaded in memory
  - address locations of variables and code routines cannot be absolute
  - must keep a program out of other processes' partitions
- Solution: Use base and limit values
- Relocation
  - Address locations in a program are relative.
  - They are added to a **base value** to map to physical addresses.
- Protection
  - Access to address locations larger than **limit value** results in an error



# What if physical memory is not enough to hold all processes? — Swapping

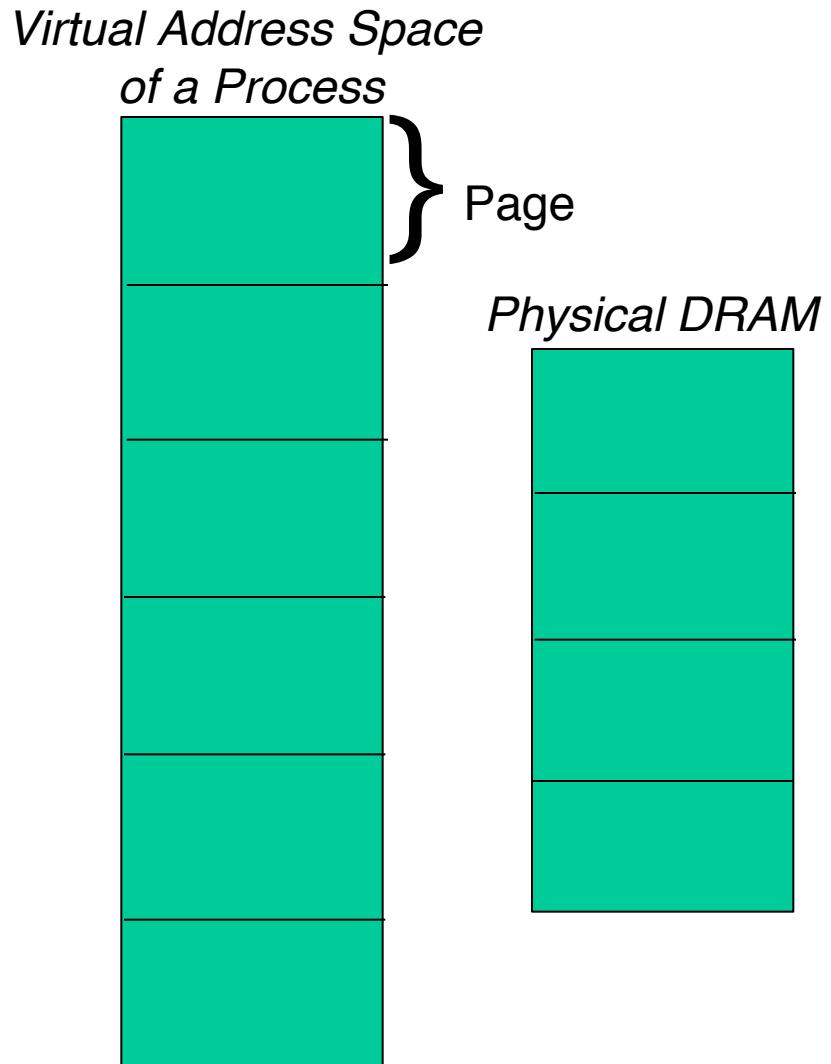


- Physical memory may not be enough to accommodate the needs of all processes
- Memory allocation changes as
  - processes come into memory
  - leave memory and are *swapped out* to disk
  - Re-enter memory by getting *swapped-in* from disk
- Shaded regions are unused memory

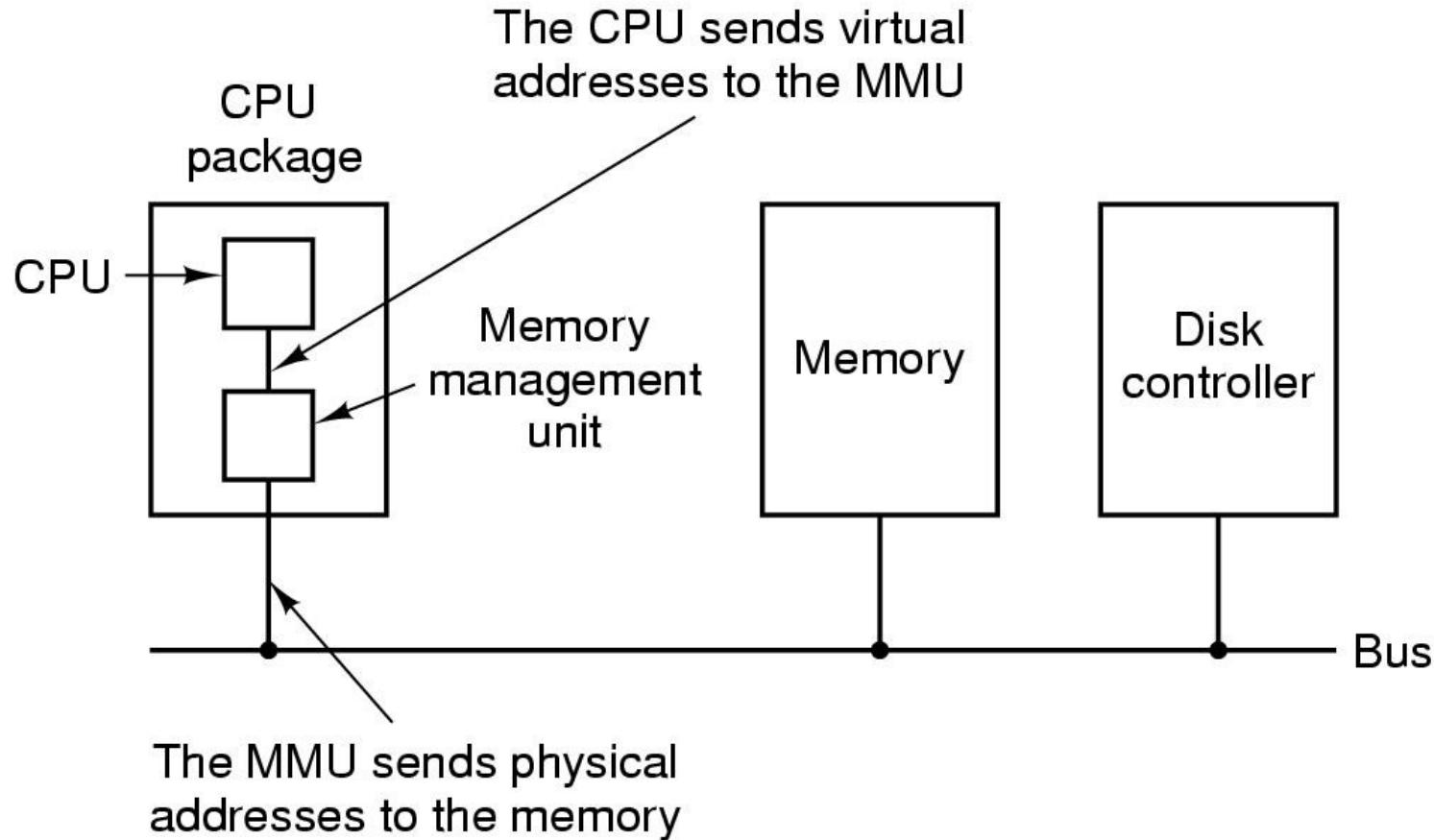
# What if physical memory is not enough for a single process?

## — Virtual Memory

- Swapping is useful when the sum total of memory requirements of all processes is greater than DRAM available in the system.
- But sometimes, a single process might require more memory than the available DRAM in the system.
- In such cases swapping is not enough. Rather, we need to break up the memory space of a process into smaller equal-sized pieces (called pages).
- Operating system then decides which pages stay in memory and which get moved to disk.
- **Virtual memory:** means that each process gets an illusion that it has more memory than the physical DRAM in the system.



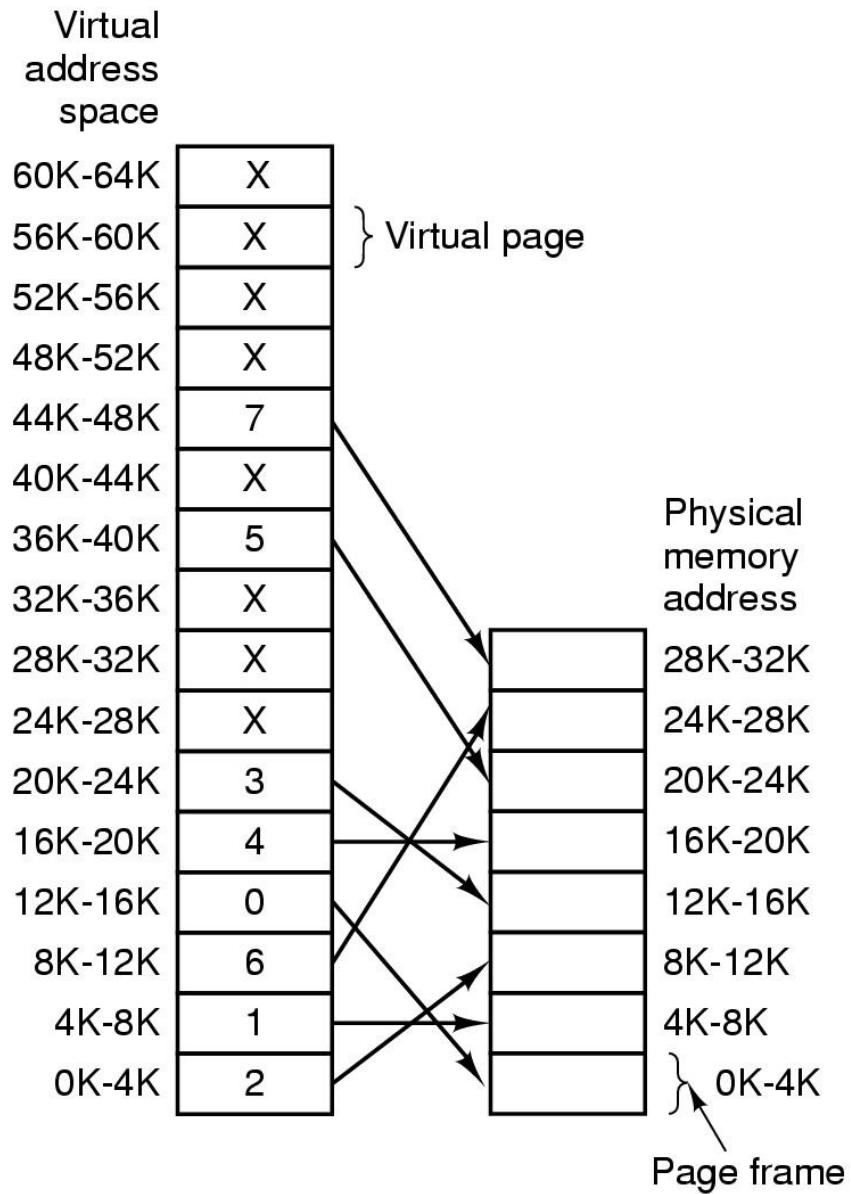
# Virtual Memory and MMU



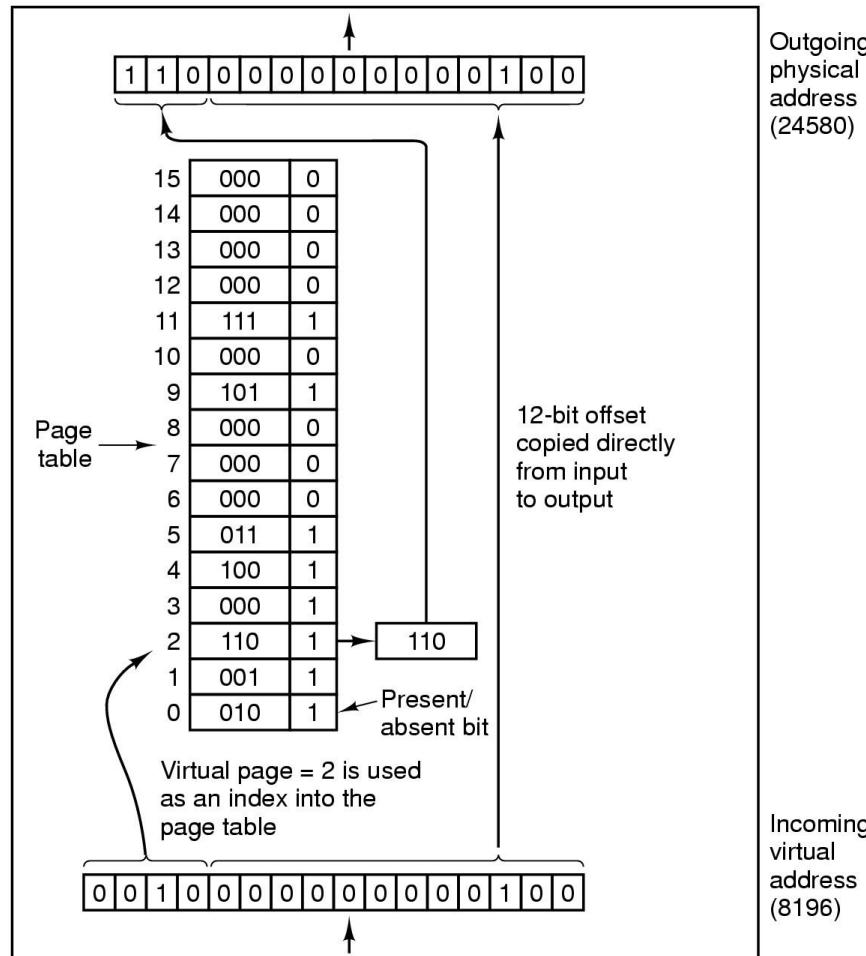
- MMU = Memory Management Unit
- Part of Hardware that accompanies the CPU
- Converts Virtual Addresses to Physical Addresses

# Page Tables

- Stores the mapping between virtual addresses and physical addresses

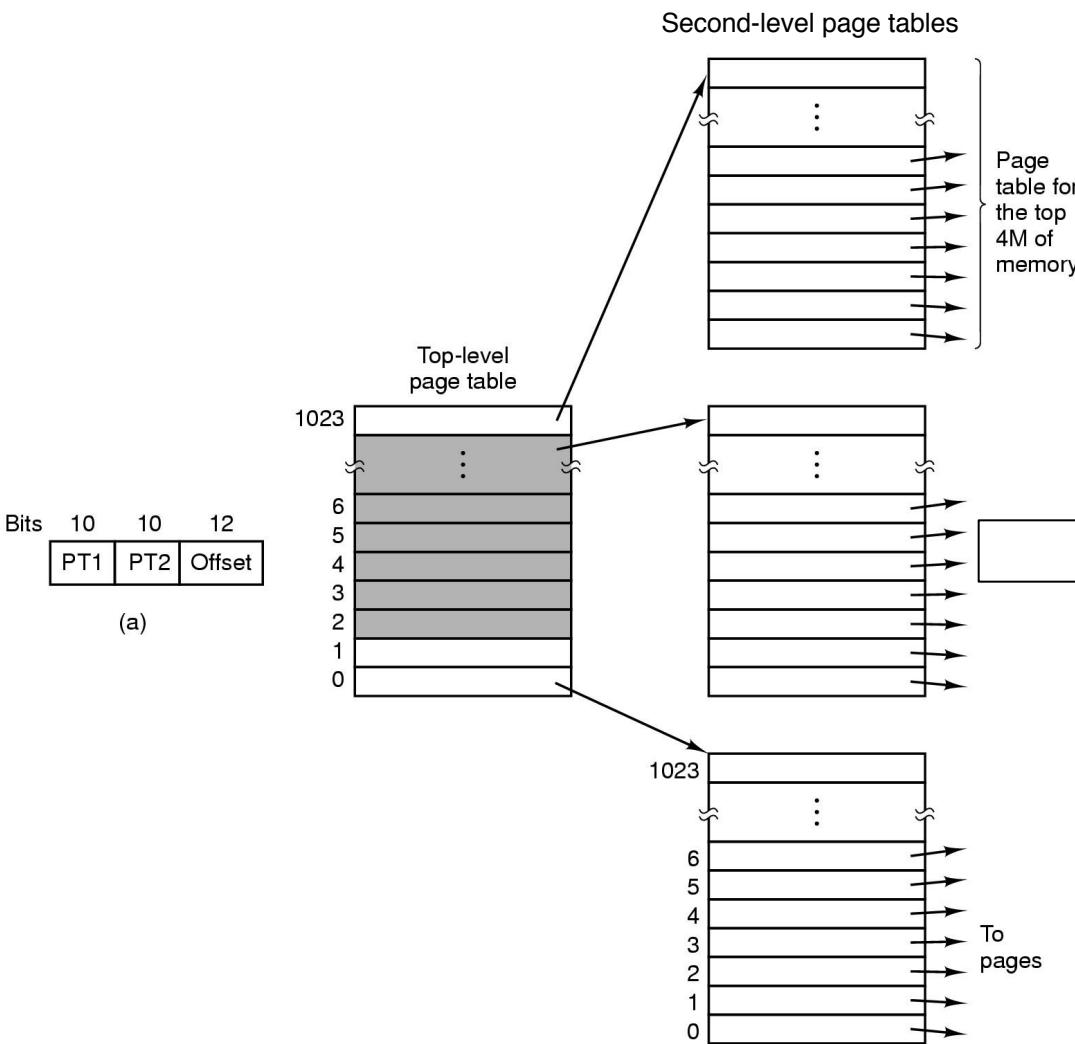


# Virtual Address Translation For Small Address Space



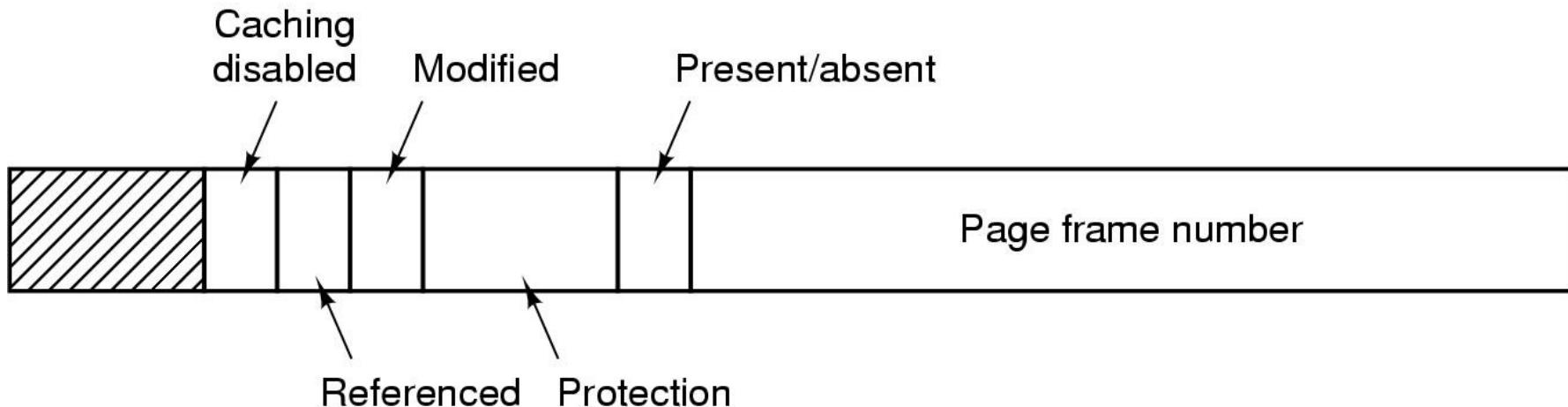
Internal operation of MMU with 16 4 KB pages

# Virtual Address Translation For Large Address Space



- 32 bit address with 2 page table fields
- Two-level page tables
- PT too Big for MMU
  - Keep it in main memory
- But how does MMU know where to find PT?
  - Registers (CR3 on Intel)

# Typical Page Table Entry (PTE)



- ◆ Page Frame number = physical page number for the virtual page represented by the PTE
- ◆ Referenced bit: Whether the page was accessed since last time the bit was reset.
- ◆ Modified bit: Also called “Dirty” bit. Whether the page was written to, since the last time the bit was reset.
- ◆ Protection bits: Whether the page is readable? writeable? executable? contains higher privilege code/data?
- ◆ Present/Absent bit: Whether the PTE contains a valid page frame #. Used for marking swapped/unallocated pages.

# Translation look-aside buffer

- ◆ TLB caches virtual-to-physical address translations
- ◆ TLB is a small cache that speeds up the translation of virtual addresses to physical addresses.
- ◆ It is not a Data Cache or Instruction Cache. Those are separate.
- ◆ TLB simply caches translations from virtual page number to physical page number so that the MMU don't have to access page-table in memory too often.

# TLBs – Translation Lookaside Buffers

<b>Valid</b>	<b>Virtual page</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Protection</b>	<b>Page frame</b>
1	140	1	RW	31
1	20	0	R X	38
1	130	1	RW	29
1	129	1	RW	62
1	19	0	R X	50
1	21	0	R X	45
1	860	1	RW	14
1	861	1	RW	75

- TLB is part of the MMU hardware (comes with CPU)

# Two types of memory translation architectures

## ❑ Architected Page Tables

- Page table interface defined by ISA and understood by memory translation hardware
- E.g. x86 architecture
- MMU handles TLB miss (in hardware)
- OS handles page faults (in software)
- ISA specifies page table format

## ❑ Architected TLBs

- TLB interface defined by ISA and understood by MMU
- E.g. alpha architecture
- TLB miss handled by OS (in software)
- ISA does not specify page table format

# Cold Start Penalty

- Immediately after a context switch, the incoming process may find that all (or majority) of TLB entries are invalid.
  - On some x86 processors, TLB has to be “flushed” upon every context switch because there is no field in TLB to identify the process context.
- Cold Start Penalty = Cost of repopulating the TLB (and other caches) upon a context switch.
  - » Every memory access results in a TLB miss.
  - » MMU walks the page-table to repopulate the missing TLB entry.
  - » Handling a TLB miss has a high latency, affecting the performance of incoming process, hence the term “penalty”.

# Tagged TLB

- One “tag” is stored with each TLB entry
  - » Tag identifies the process/thread/execution context to which the TLB entry belongs
- Thus TLB entries for more than one execution context can be stored simultaneously in the TLB.
  - » TLB lookup hardware matches the tag in addition to the virtual page #.
- With tagged TLB, context switch does no longer requires a complete TLB flush.
  - » Greatly reduces cold-start penalty.

# Impact of Page Size on Page tables

## Small page size

- Advantages
  - less internal fragmentation
  - page-in/page-out less expensive
- Disadvantages
  - process that needs more pages has larger page table

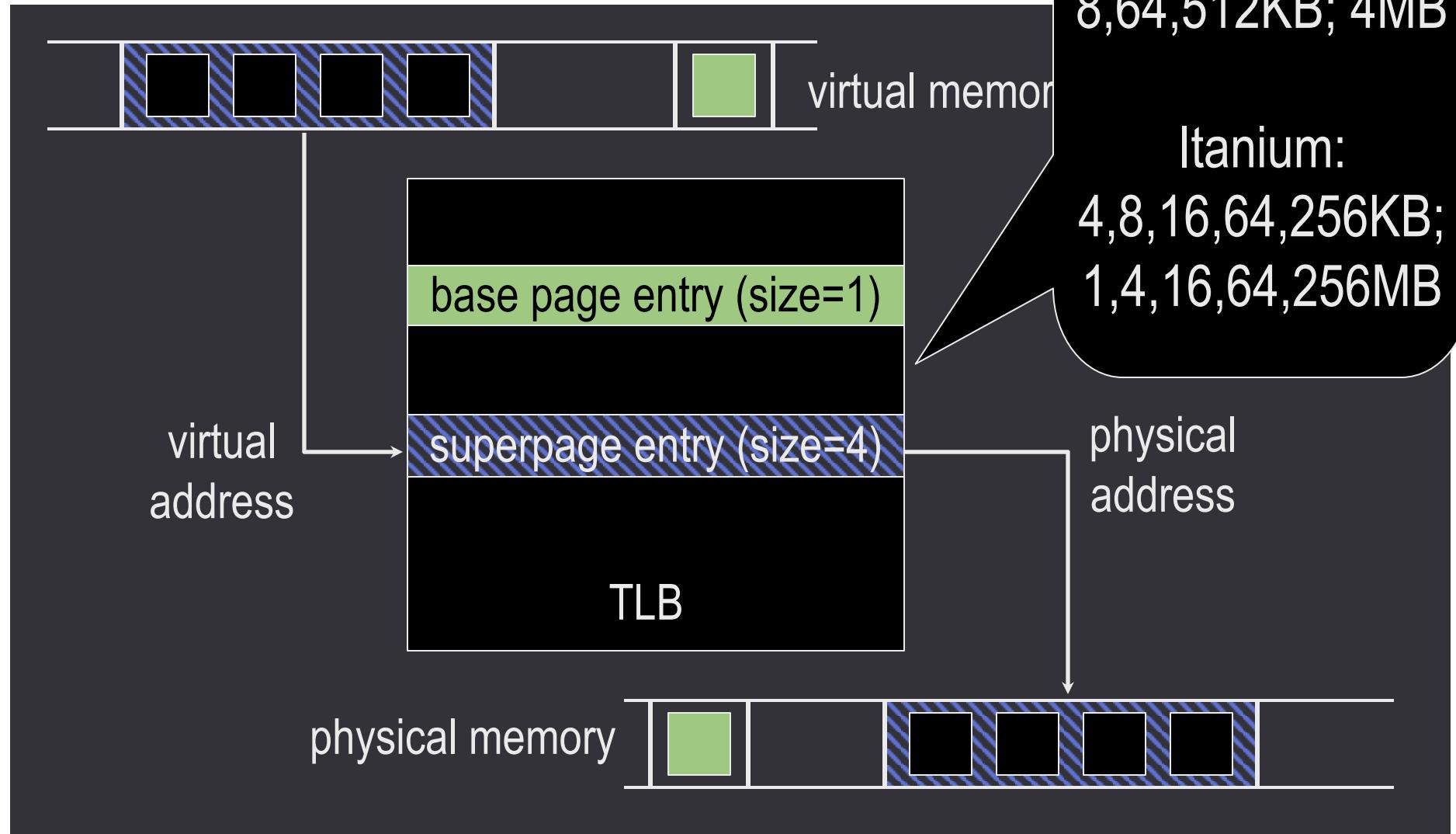
# TLB Coverage

- Max amount of memory mapped by TLB
  - Max amount of memory that can be accessed without TLB misses
- TLB Coverage =  $N \times P$  bytes
  - N = Number of entries in TLB
  - P = Page size in bytes
  - N is fixed by hardware constraints
  - So, to increase TLB Coverage, we must increase P.
- Consider these extreme examples
  - Suppose P = 1 byte
    - TLB Coverage = N bytes only
  - Suppose P =  $2^{64}$  bytes (on a 64-bit ISA)
    - TLB Coverage =  $N \times 2^{64}$  bytes
    - TLB can perform translations for N processes without any TLB misses!
- Of course, both examples above are impractical.
- But what if P is something reasonable, but greater than the standard 4KB?
- This brings us next to superpages.

# Superpages

- ◆ Memory pages of larger sizes than standard pages
  - ◆ supported by most modern CPUs
- ◆ Superpage size = power of 2 x the base page size
- ◆ Only one TLB entry per superpage
  - ◆ But multiple (identical) page-table entries, one per base page
- ◆ Constraints:
  - ◆ contiguous (physically and virtually)
  - ◆ aligned (physically and virtually)
  - ◆ uniform protection attributes
  - ◆ one reference bit, one dirty bit

# A superpage TLB



# Quiz

- Consider a machine that has a 32-bit virtual address space and 8KByte page size.
1. What is the total size (in bytes) of the virtual address space for each process?
  2. How many bits in a 32-bit address are needed to determine the page number of the address?
  3. How many bits in a 32-bit address represent the byte offset into a page?
  4. How many page-table entries are present in the page table?

# Quiz Answers

- Consider a machine that has a 32-bit virtual address space and 4KByte page size.
1. Total size (in bytes) of the virtual address space for each process =  $2^{32} = 4 * 1024 * 1024 * 1024$  bytes = 4 GB
  2. Number of pages in virtual address space =  $4\text{GB}/8\text{KB} = 512 * 1024 = 2^9 * 2^{10} = 2^{19}$ 
    - So the number of bits in a 32-bit address are needed to determine the page number of the address =  $\log_2(4\text{GB}/8\text{KB}) = \log_2(2^{19}) = 19$  bits
  3. How many bits in a 32-bit address represent the byte offset into a page?
    - $\log_2(8\text{KB}) = \log_2(2^{13}) = 13$
    - Also,  $32 - 19 = 13$  bits
  4. How many page-table entries are present in the page table?
    - Number of PTEs = Number of pages in virtual address =  $4\text{GB}/8\text{KB} = 2^{19}$  pages

# References

- **Chapter 3: Modern Operating Systems, Andrew S. Tanenbaum**
- **X86 architecture**
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