Introduction to Computer Graphics with WebGL

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Models and Architectures

Objectives

- Learn the basic design of a graphics system
- Introduce pipeline architecture
- Examine software components for an interactive graphics system

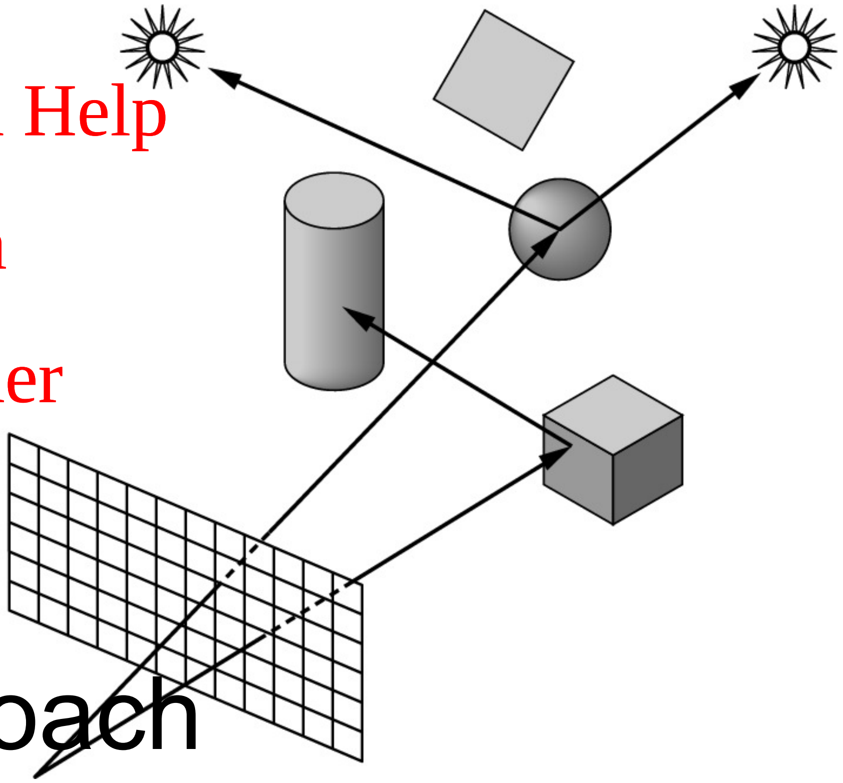
Image Formation Revisited

- Can we mimic the synthetic camera model to design graphics hardware software?
- Application Programmer Interface (API)

  Need only specify
  - Objects
  - Materials
  - Viewer
  - Lights
- But how is the API implemented?

Physical Approaches

- **Ray tracing**: follow rays of light from center of projection until they either are absorbed by objects or go off to infinity
  - Can handle global effects
    - Multiple reflections
    - Translucent objects
  - Slow
  - Must have whole data base available at all times



- **Radiosity**: Energy based approach
  - Very slow

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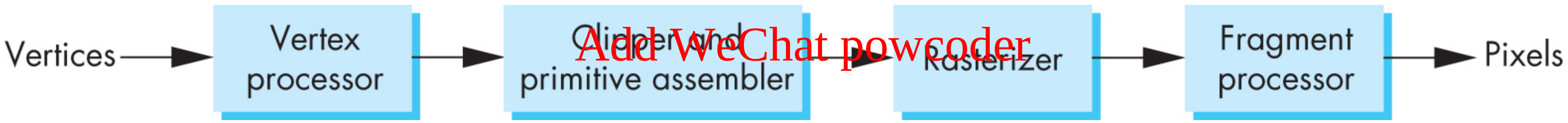
Practical Approach

- Process objects one at a time in the order they are generated by the application
  - Can consider only local lighting
- Pipeline architecture



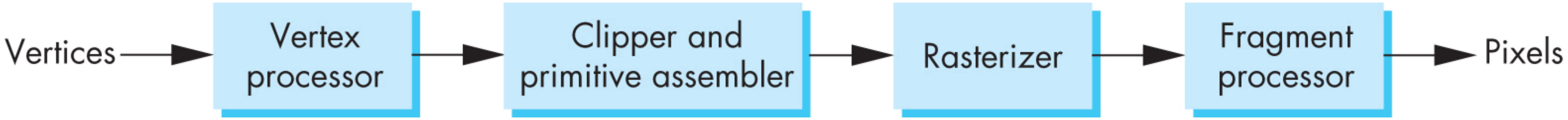
application program

display

- All steps can be implemented in hardware on the graphics card

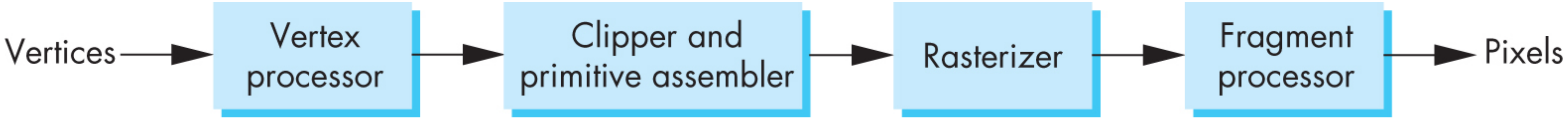
Vertex Processing

- Much of the work in the pipeline is in converting object representations from one coordinate system to another
  - Object coordinates
  - Camera (eye) coordinates
  - Screen coordinates
- Every change of coordinates is equivalent to a matrix transformation
- Vertex processor also computes vertex colors



Projection

- *Projection* is the process that combines the 3D viewer with the 3D objects to produce the 2D image
  - Perspective projections: all projectors meet at the center of projection
  - Parallel projection: projectors are parallel, center of projection is replaced by a direction of projection



Vertices → Vertex processor → Clipper and primitive assembler → Rasterizer → Fragment processor → Pixels

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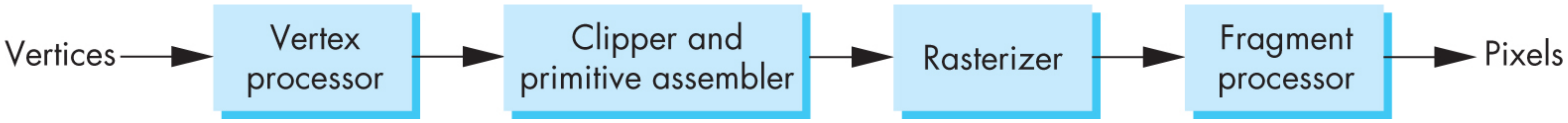
Primitive Assembly

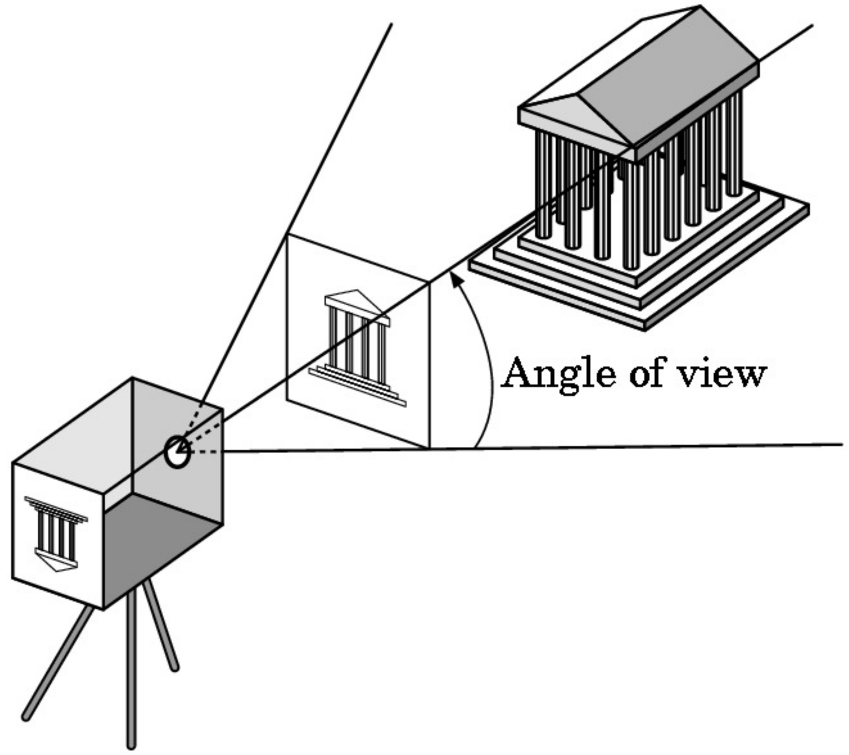
- Vertices must be collected into geometric objects before clipping and rasterization can take place
  - Line segments
  - Polygons
  - Curves and surfaces

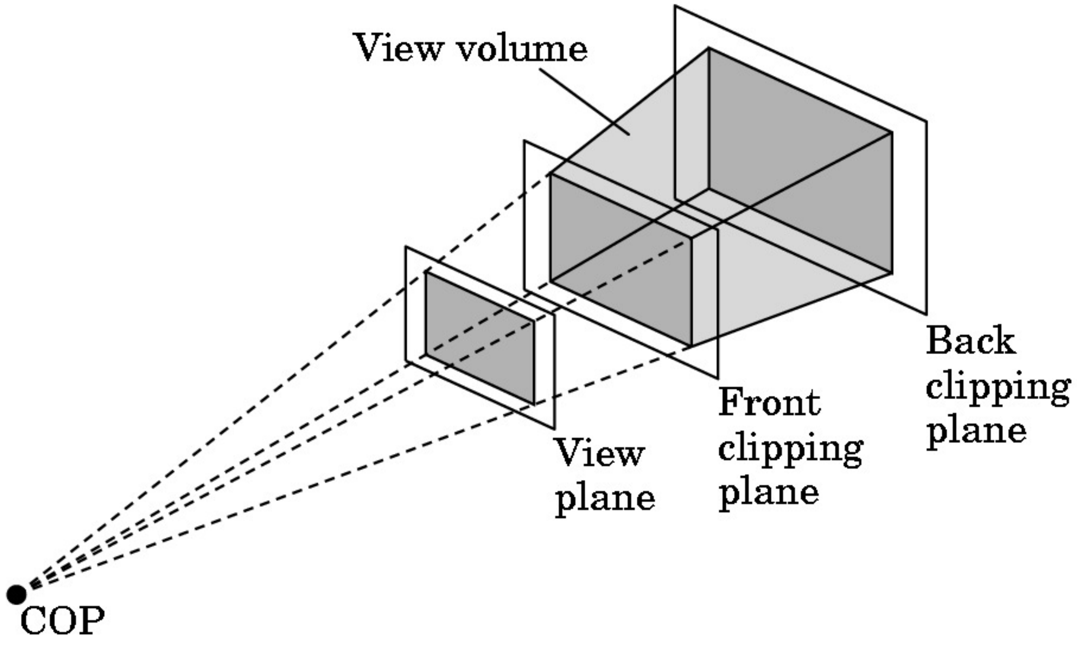


Clipping

- Just as a real camera cannot “see” the whole world, the virtual camera can only see part of the world or object space

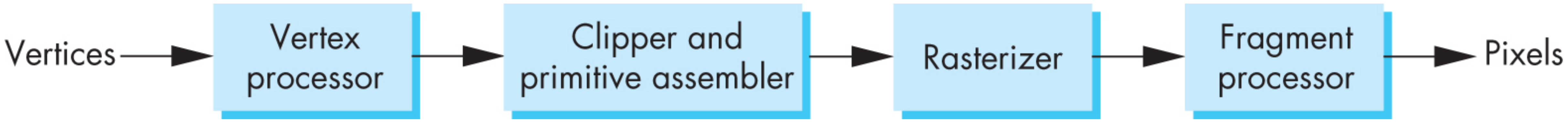
  - Objects that are not within this volume are said to be *clipped* out of the scene





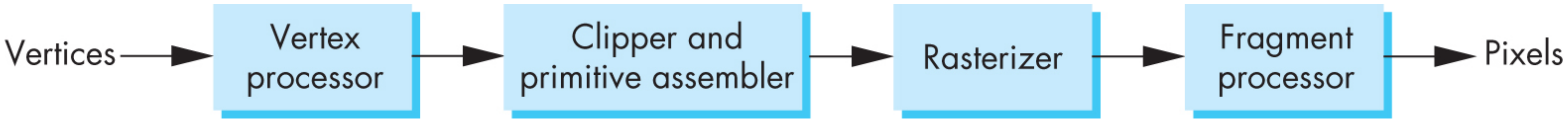
Rasterization

- If an object is not clipped out, the appropriate pixels in the frame buffer must be assigned colors
- Rasterizer produces a set of fragments for each object
- Fragments are "potential pixels"
  - Have a location in frame buffer
  - Color and depth attributes
- Vertex attributes are interpolated over objects by the rasterizer



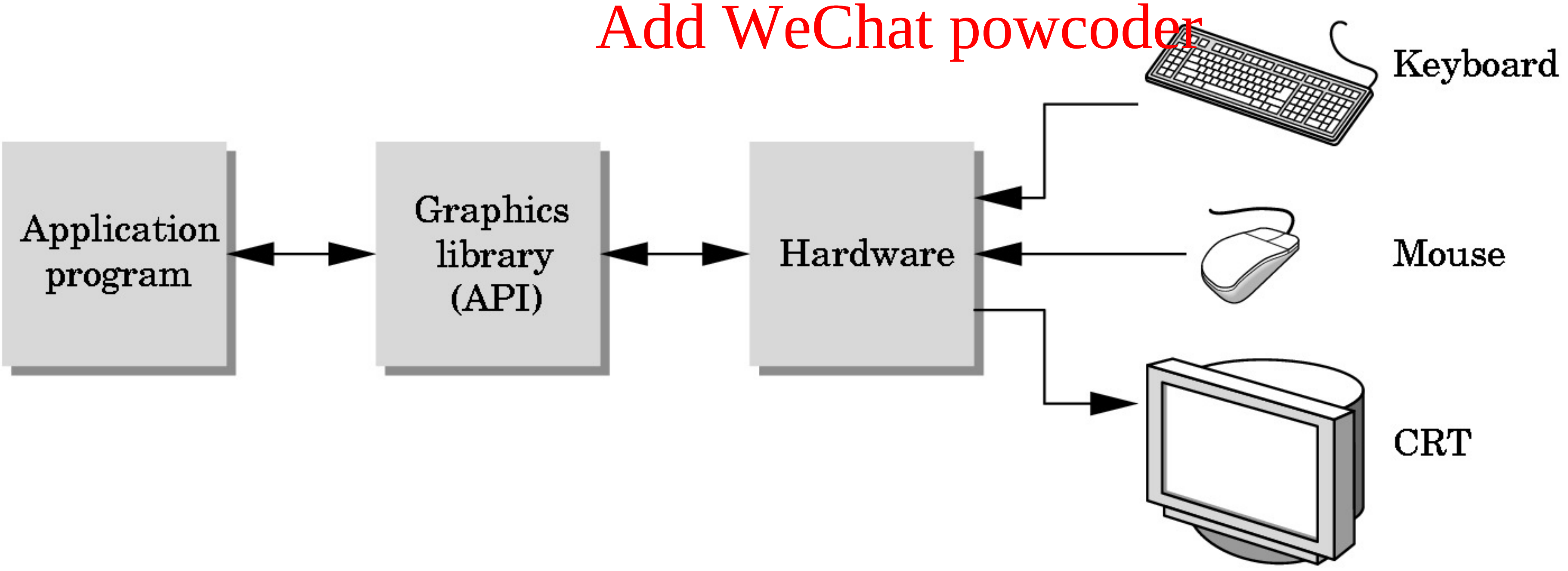
Fragment Processing

- Fragments are processed to determine the color of the corresponding pixel in the frame buffer
- Colors can be determined by texture mapping or interpolation of vertex colors
- Fragments may be blocked by other fragments closer to the camera
  - Hidden-surface removal



The Programmer's Interface

- Programmer sees the graphics system through a software interface: the Application Programmer Interface (API)



API Contents

- Functions that specify what we need to form an image
  - Objects
  - Viewer
  - Light Source(s)
  - Materials
- Other information
  - Input from devices such as mouse and keyboard
  - Capabilities of system

Object Specification

- Most APIs support a limited set of primitives including
  - Points (0D object)
  - Line segments (1D objects)
  - Polygons (2D objects)
  - Some curves and surfaces
    - Quadrics
    - Parametric polynomials
- All are defined through locations in space or *vertices*

Example (old style)

type of object

location of vertex

```
glBegin(GL_POLYGON)
 glVertex3f(0.0, 0.0, 0.0);
 glVertex3f(0.0, 1.0, 0.0);
 glVertex3f(0.0, 0.0, 1.0);
glEnd( );
```

end of object definition

Example (GPU based)

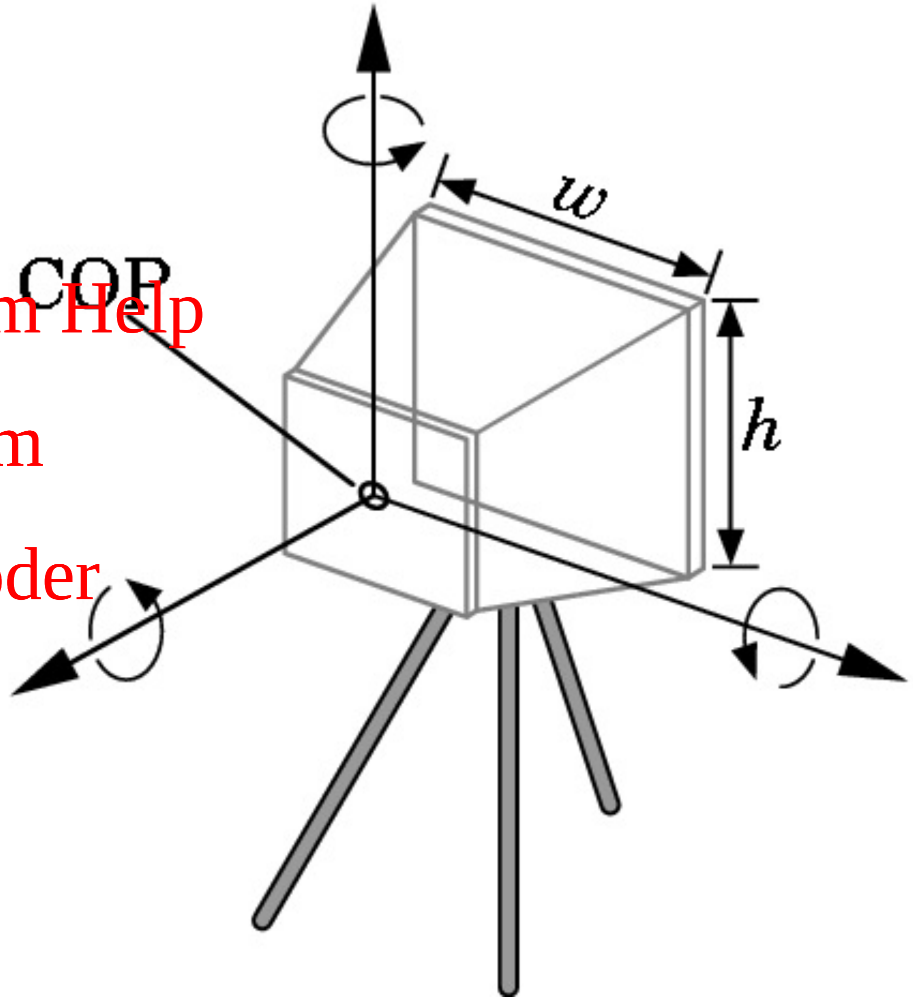
- Put geometric data in an array

```
var points = [
 vec3(0.0, 0.0, 0.0),
 vec3(0.0, 1.0, 0.0),
 vec3(0.0, 0.0, 1.0),
];
```

- Send array to GPU
- Tell GPU to render as triangle

Camera Specification

- Six degrees of freedom
  - Position of center of lens
  - Orientation
- Lens
- Film size
- Orientation of film plane



Lights and Materials

- Types of lights
  - Point sources vs distributed sources
  - Spot lights
  - Near and far sources
  - Color properties
- Material properties
  - Absorption: color properties
  - Scattering
    - Diffuse
    - Specular

Programming with WebGL Part 1: Background

- Ed Angel
- Professor Emeritus of Computer Science
- University of New Mexico

Objectives

- Development of the OpenGL API
- OpenGL Architecture
    - OpenGL as a state machine
    - OpenGL as a data flow machine
- Functions
    - Types
    - Formats
- Simple program

Early History of APIs

- IFIPS (1973) formed two committees to come up with a standard graphics API
  - Graphical Kernel System (GKS)
    - 2D but contained good workstation model
  - Core
    - Both 2D and 3D
  - GKS adopted as IS0 and later ANSI standard (1980s)
- GKS not easily extended to 3D (GKS-3D)
  - Far behind hardware development

PHIGS and X

- Programmers Hierarchical Graphics System (PHIGS)
    - Arose from CAD community
    - Database model with retained graphics (structures)
- X Window System
    - DEC/MIT effort
    - Client-server architecture with graphics
- PEX combined the two
    - Not easy to use (all the defects of each)

OpenGL

The success of GL lead to OpenGL (1992), a platform-independent API that was

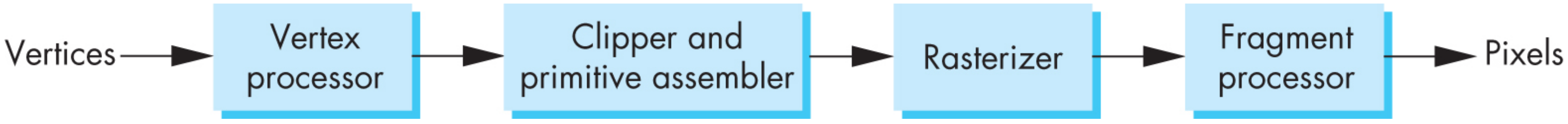
- Easy to use
- Close enough to the hardware to get excellent performance
- Focus on rendering
- Omitted windowing and input to avoid window system dependencies

OpenGL Evolution

- Originally controlled by an Architectural Review Board (ARB)
  - Members included SGI, Microsoft, Nvidia, HP, 3DLabs, IBM,…….
  - Now Kronos Group
  - Was relatively stable (through version 2.5)
    - Backward compatible
    - Evolution reflected new hardware capabilities
      - 3D texture mapping and texture objects
      - Vertex and fragment programs
  - Allows platform specific features through extensions

Modern OpenGL

- Performance is achieved by using GPU rather than CPU
- Control GPU through programs called shaders
- Application's job is to send data to GPU
- GPU does all rendering



Immediate Mode Graphics

- Geometry specified by vertices
  - Locations in space(2 or 3 dimensional)
  - Points, lines, circles, polygons, curves, surfaces
- Immediate mode
  - Each time a vertex is specified in application, its location is sent to the GPU
  - Old style uses **`glVertex`**
  - Creates bottleneck between CPU and GPU
  - Removed from OpenGL 3.1 and OpenGL ES 2.0

Retained Mode Graphics

- Put all vertex attribute data in array
- Send array to GPU to be rendered immediately
- Almost OK but problem is we would have to send array over each time we need another render of it
- Better to send array over and store on GPU for multiple renderings

OpenGL 3.1

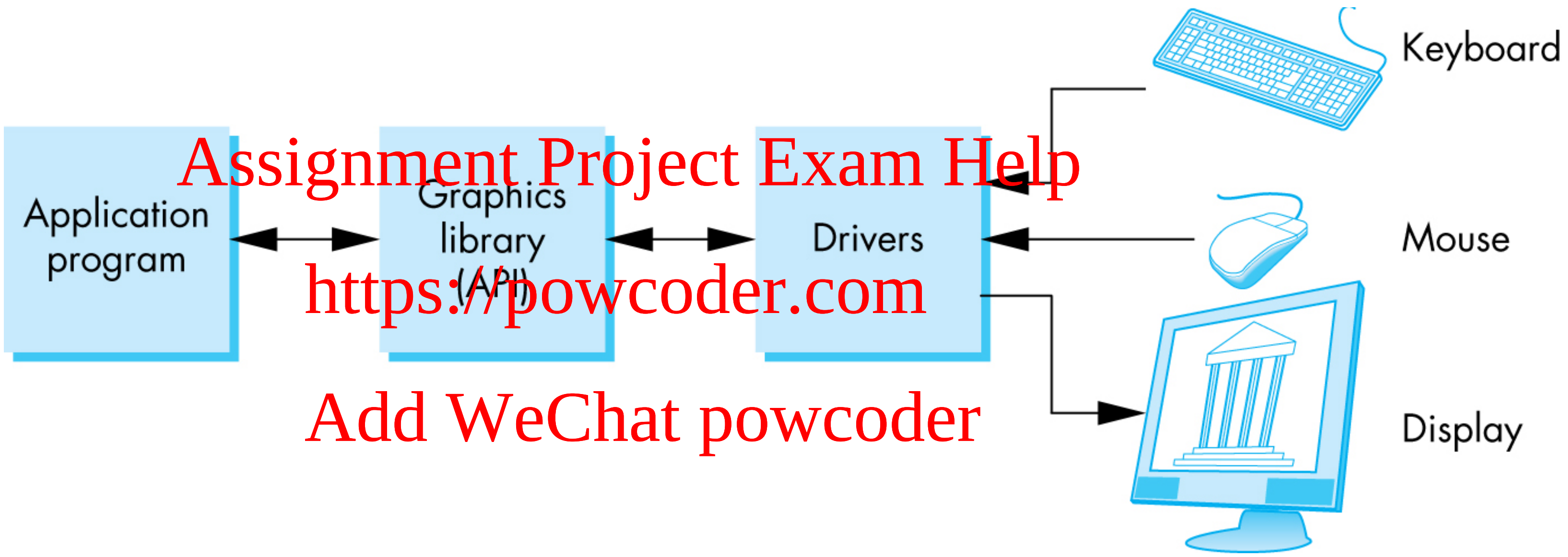
- Totally shader-based
  - No default shaders
  - Each application must provide both a vertex and a fragment shader

- No immediate mode
- Few state variables
- Most 2.5 functions deprecated
- Backward compatibility not required
  - Exists a compatibility extension

Other Versions

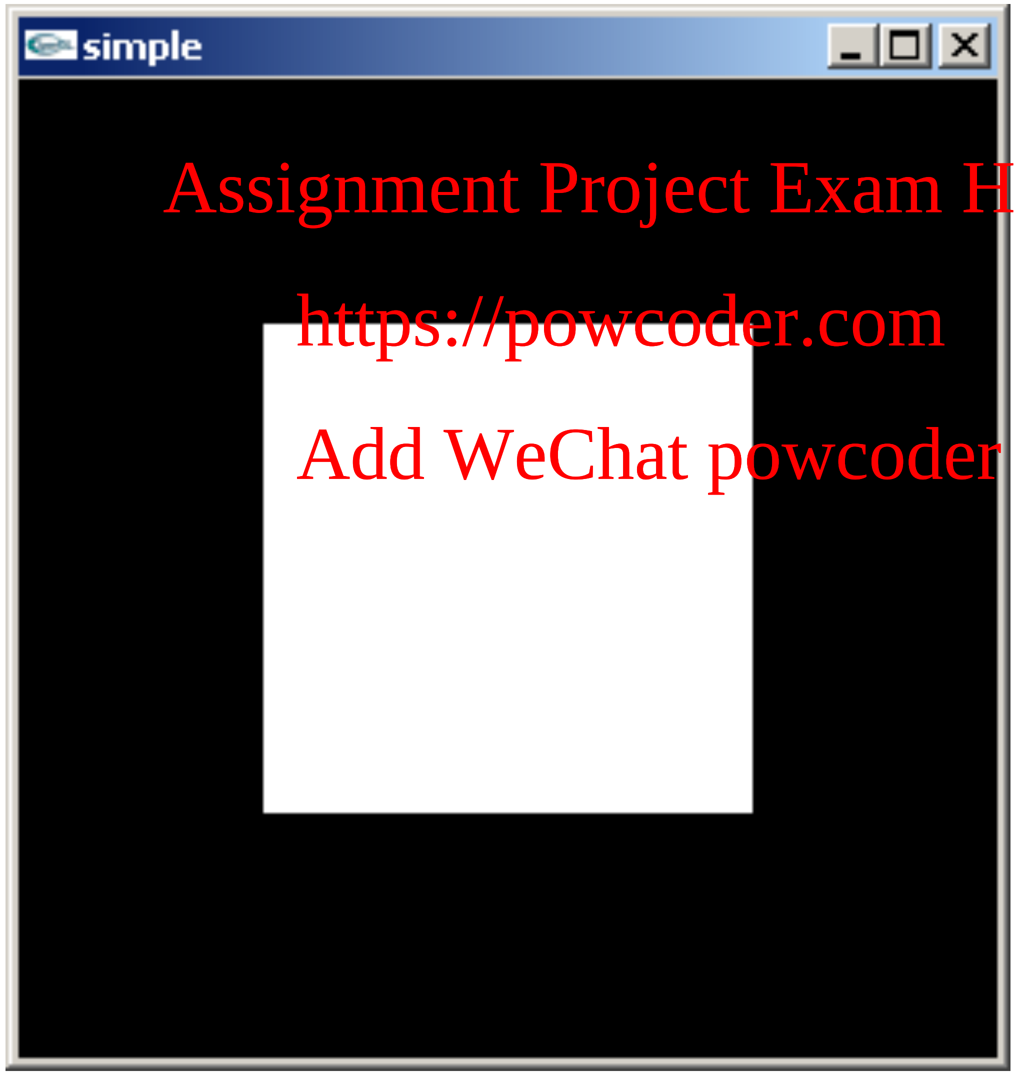
- OpenGL ES
  - Embedded systems
  - Version 1.0 simplified OpenGL 2.1
  - Version 2.0 simplified OpenGL 3.1
    - Shader based
- WebGL
  - Javascript implementation of ES 2.0
  - Supported on newer browsers
- OpenGL 4.1, 4.2, …..
  - Add geometry, tessellation, compute shaders

OpenGL Architecture



A OpenGL Simple Program

Generate a square on a solid background



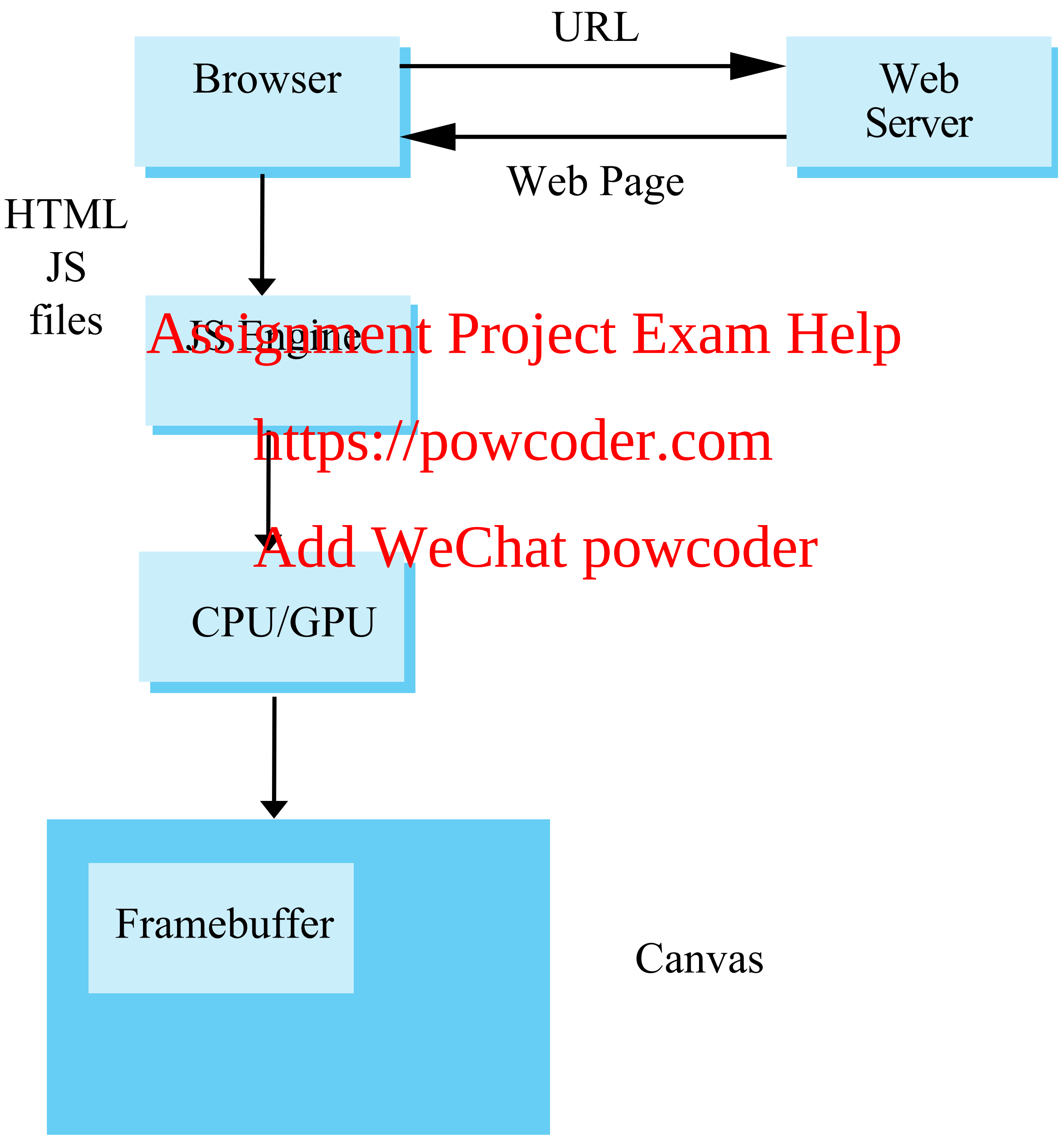
It used to be easy

```
#include <GL/glut.h>
void mydisplay(){
      glClear(GL_COLOR_BUFFER_BIT);
      glBegin(GL_QUAD;
            glVertex2f(-0.5, -0.5);
            glVertex2f(-0,5, 0,5);
            glVertex2f(0.5, 0.5);
            glVertex2f(0.5, -0.5);
      glEnd()
}
int main(int argc, char** argv){
      glutCreateWindow("simple");
      glutDisplayFunc(mydisplay);
      glutMainLoop();
}
```

What happened?

- Most OpenGL functions deprecated
  - immediate vs retained mode
  - make use of GPU
- Makes heavy use of state variable default values that no longer exist
  - Viewing
  - Colors
  - Window parameters
- However, processing loop is the same

Execution in Browser



Event Loop

- Remember that the sample program specifies a render function which is a *event listener* or *callback* function

Every program should have a render callback

For a static application we need only execute the render function once

In a dynamic application, the render function can call itself recursively but each redrawing of the display must be triggered by an event

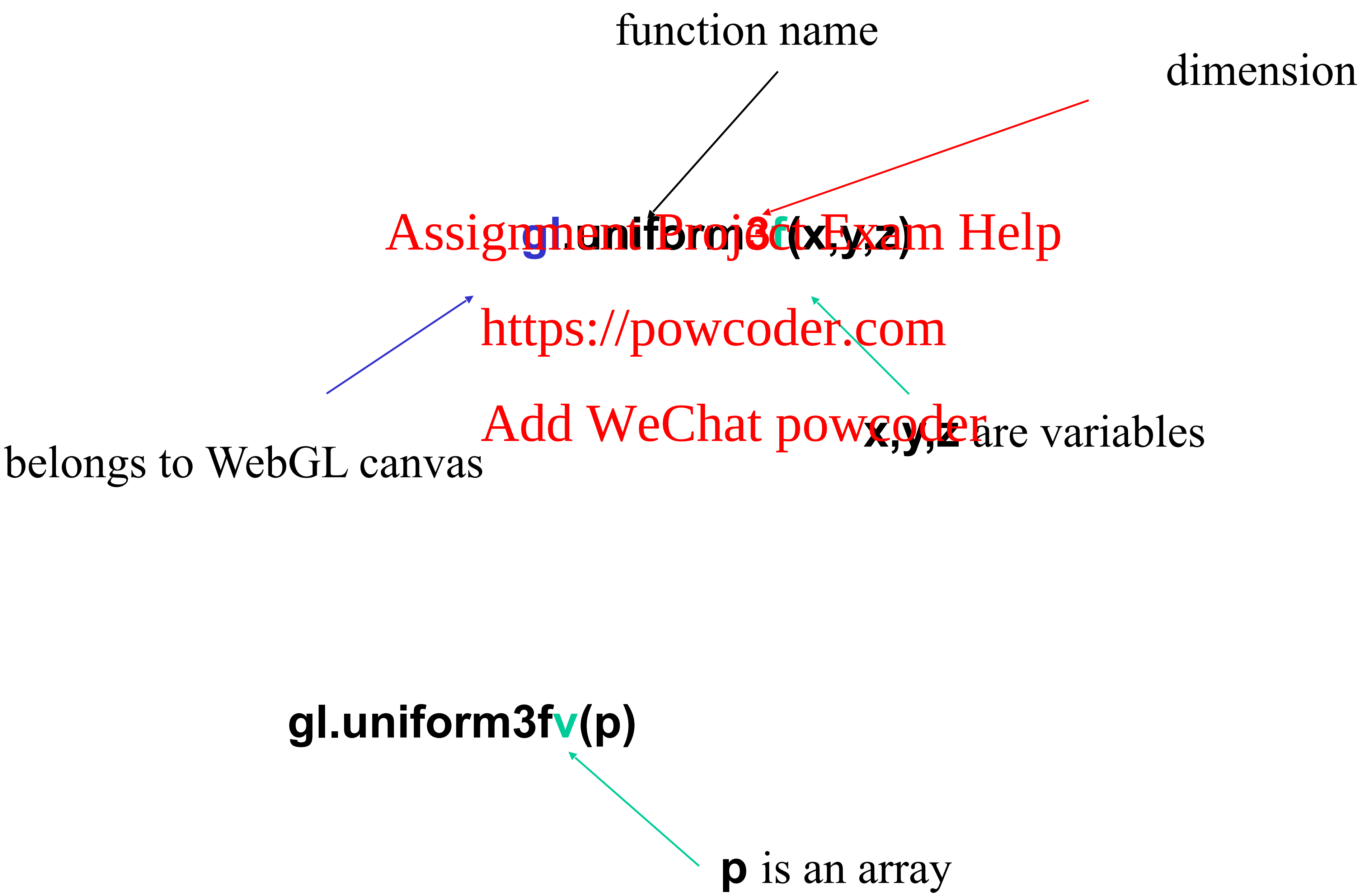
Lack of Object Orientation

- All versions of OpenGL are not object oriented so that there are multiple functions for a given logical function
- Example: sending values to shaders

```
gl.uniform3f
gl.uniform2i
gl.uniform3dv
```

- Underlying storage mode is the same

WebGL function format



function name

dimension

gl.uniform3f(x,y,z)

belongs to WebGL canvas

x,y,z are variables

gl.uniform3fv(p)

p is an array

WebGL constants

- Most constants are defined in the canvas object
  - In desktop OpenGL, they were in #include files such as `gl.h`

- Examples
  - **desktop OpenGL**
    - `glEnable(GL_DEPTH_TEST);`
  - **WebGL**
    - `gl.enable(gl.DEPTH_TEST)`
  - `gl.clear(gl.COLOR_BUFFER_BIT)`

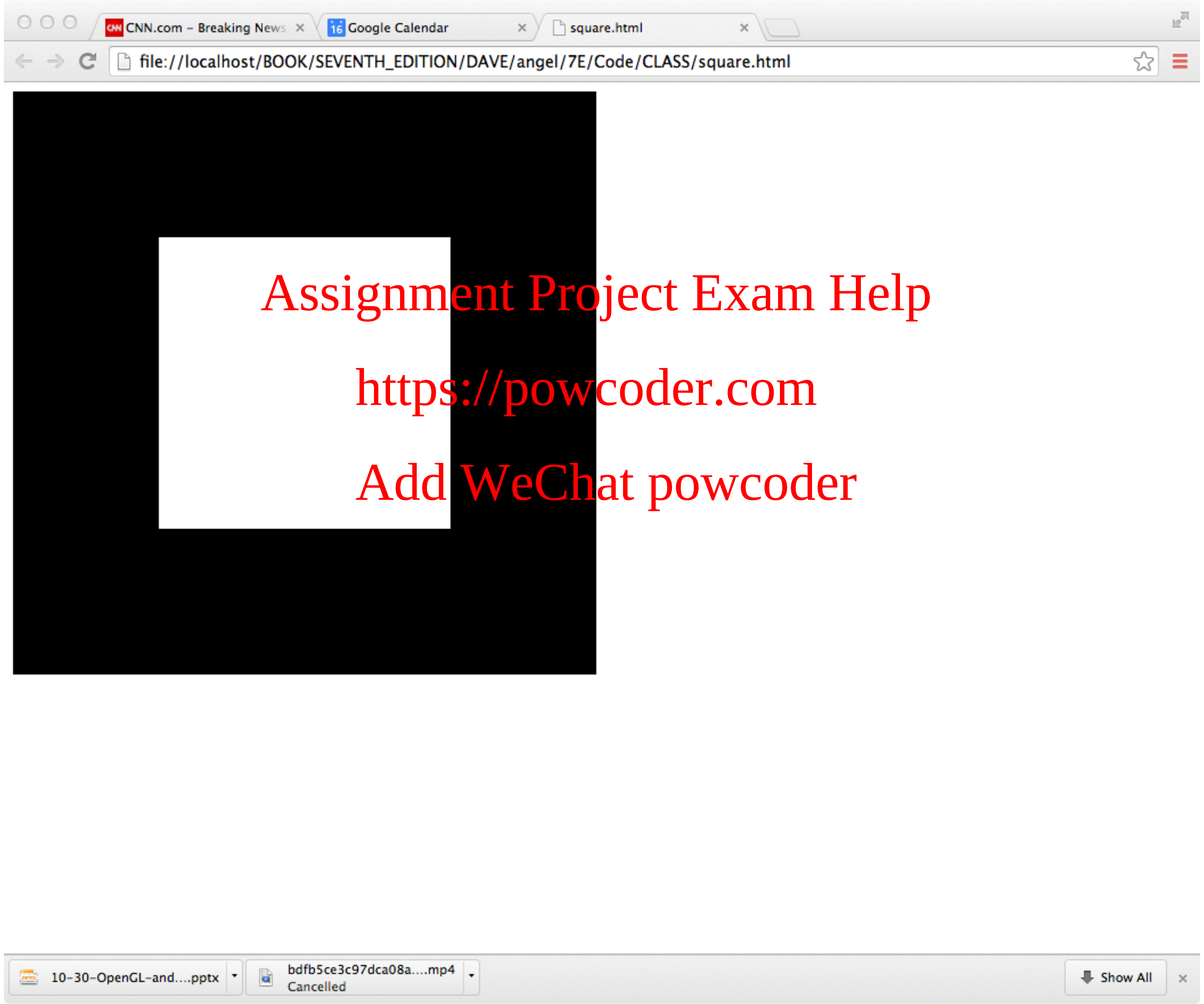
WebGL and GLSL

- WebGL requires shaders and is based less on a state machine model than a data flow model
- Most state variables, attributes and related pre 3.1 OpenGL functions have been deprecated
- Action happens in shaders
- Job of application is to get data to GPU

GLSL

- OpenGL Shading Language
- C-like with
  - Matrix and vector types (2, 3, 4 dimensional)
  - Overloaded operators
  - C++ like constructors
- Similar to Nvidia’s Cg and Microsoft HLSL
- Code sent to shaders as source code
- WebGL functions compile, link and get information to shaders

Square Program



WebGL

- Five steps
  - Describe page (HTML file)
    - request WebGL Canvas
    - read in necessary files
  - Define shaders (HTML file)
    - could be done with a separate file (browser dependent)
  - Compute or specify data (JS file)
  - Send data to GPU (JS file)
  - Render data (JS file)

square.html

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
<script id="vertex-shader" type="x-shader/x-vertex">

attribute vec4 vPosition;
void main()
{
    gl_Position = vPosition;
}
</script>

<script id="fragment-shader" type="x-shader/x-fragment">

precision mediump float;

void main()
{
    gl_FragColor = vec4( 1.0, 1.0, 1.0, 1.0 );
}
</script>
```

Shaders

- We assign names to the shaders that we can use in the JS file
- These are trivial pass-through (do nothing) shaders that set the two required built-in variables

  gl_Position

  gl_FragColor
- Note both shaders are full programs
- Note vector type vec4
- Must set precision in fragment shader

square.html (cont)

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="../Common/webgl-utils.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="../Common/initShaders.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="../Common/MV.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="square.js"></script>
</head>

<body>
<canvas id="gl-canvas" width="512" height="512">
Oops ... your browser doesn't support the HTML5 canvas element
</canvas>
</body>
</html>
```

Files

- **`../Common/webgl-utils.js`**: Standard utilities for setting up WebGL context in Common directory on website
- **`../Common/initShaders.js`**: contains JS and WebGL code for reading, compiling and linking the shaders

- **`../Common/MV.js`**: our matrix-vector package
- **`square.js`**: the application file

square.js

```
var gl;
var points;

window.onload = function init(){
      var canvas = document.getElementById( "gl-canvas" );

    gl = WebGLUtils.setupWebGL( canvas );
    if ( !gl ) { alert( "WebGL isn't available" );
 }
    // Four Vertices

    var vertices = [
        vec2( -0.5, -0.5 ),
        vec2(  -0.5,  0.5 ),
        vec2(  0.5, 0.5 ),
        vec2( 0.5, -0.5)
    ];
```

Notes

- **`onload`**: determines where to start execution when all code is loaded
- canvas gets WebGL context from HTML file
- vertices use vec2 type in MV.js
- JS array is not the same as a C or Java array
  - object with methods
  - vertices.length // 4
- Values in clip coordinates

square.js (cont)

```
//  Configure WebGL
gl.viewport( 0, 0, canvas.width, canvas.height );
gl.clearColor( 0.0, 0.0, 0.0, 1.0 );

 //  Load shaders and initialize attribute buffers

var program = initShaders( gl, "vertex-shader", "fragment-shader" );
gl.useProgram( program );

 // Load the data into the GPU
var bufferId = gl.createBuffer();
gl.bindBuffer( gl.ARRAY_BUFFER, bufferId );
gl.bufferData( gl.ARRAY_BUFFER, flatten(vertices), gl.STATIC_DRAW );

 // Associate out shader variables with our data buffer

var vPosition = gl.getAttribLocation( program, "vPosition" );
gl.vertexAttribPointer( vPosition, 2, gl.FLOAT, false, 0, 0 );
gl.enableVertexAttribArray( vPosition );
```

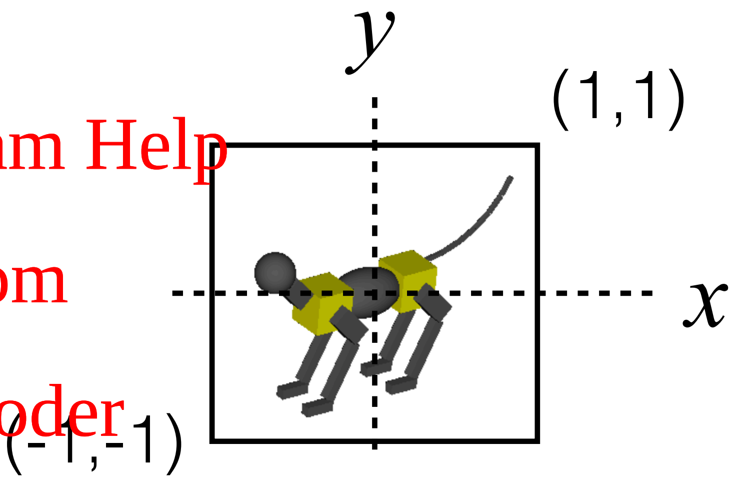
Canvas and OpenGL

From square.html:

```
<canvas id="gl-canvas" width="512" height="512">        // These are pixels!
Oops ... your browser doesn't support the HTML5 canvas element
</canvas>
```

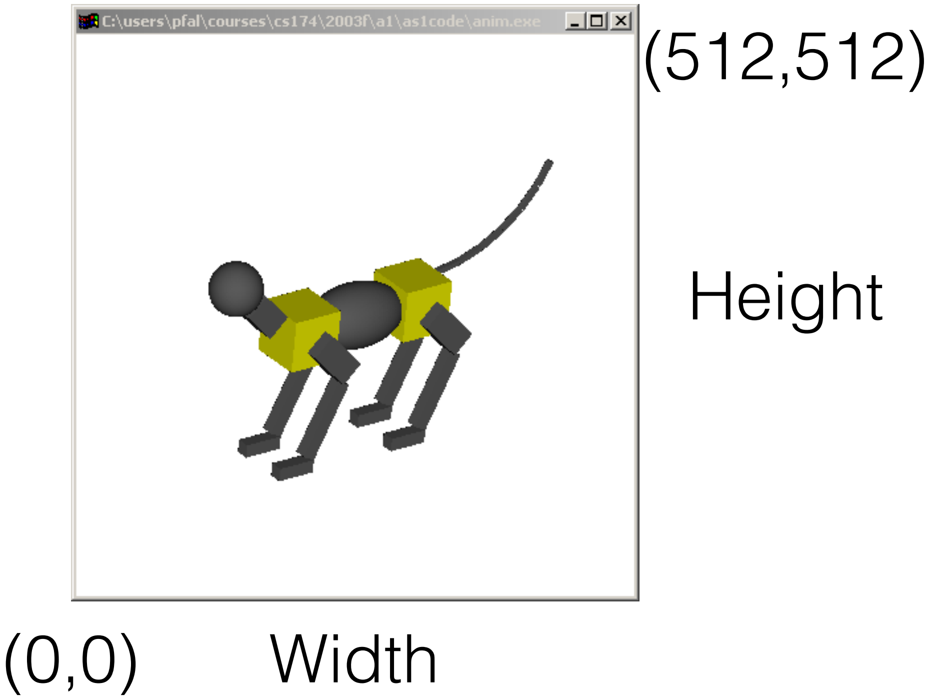
From square.js

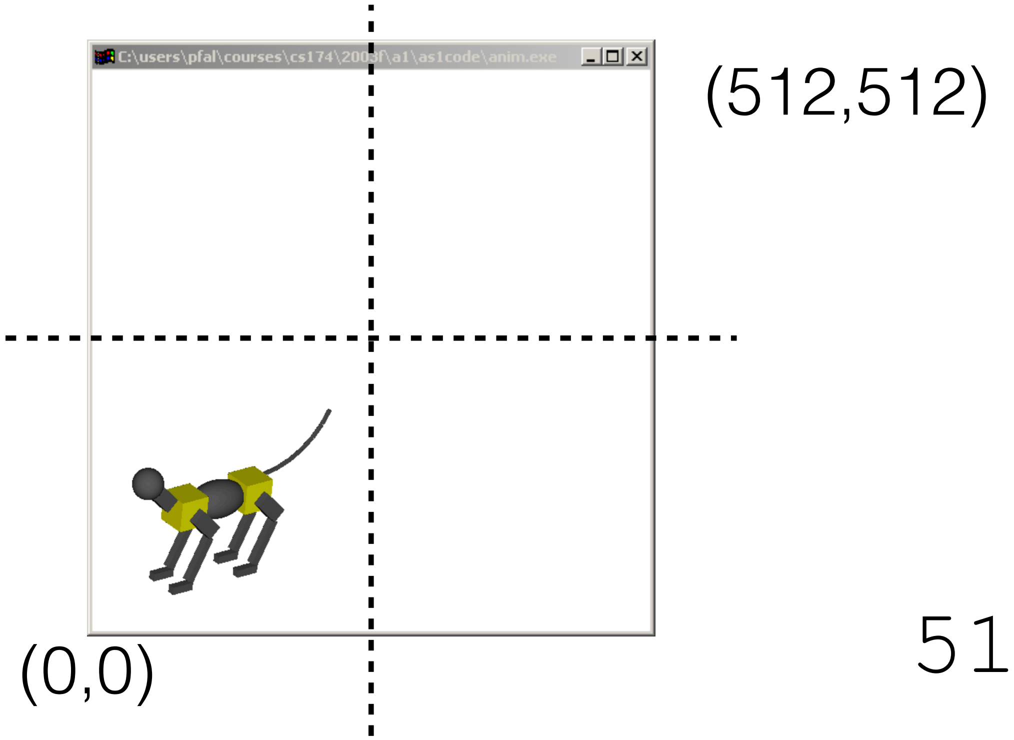
```
gl.viewport( 0, 0, canvas.width, canvas.height );
```



- In clip coordinates the viewport in WebGL is [-1,1]
- Normally we set it by the projection transformation

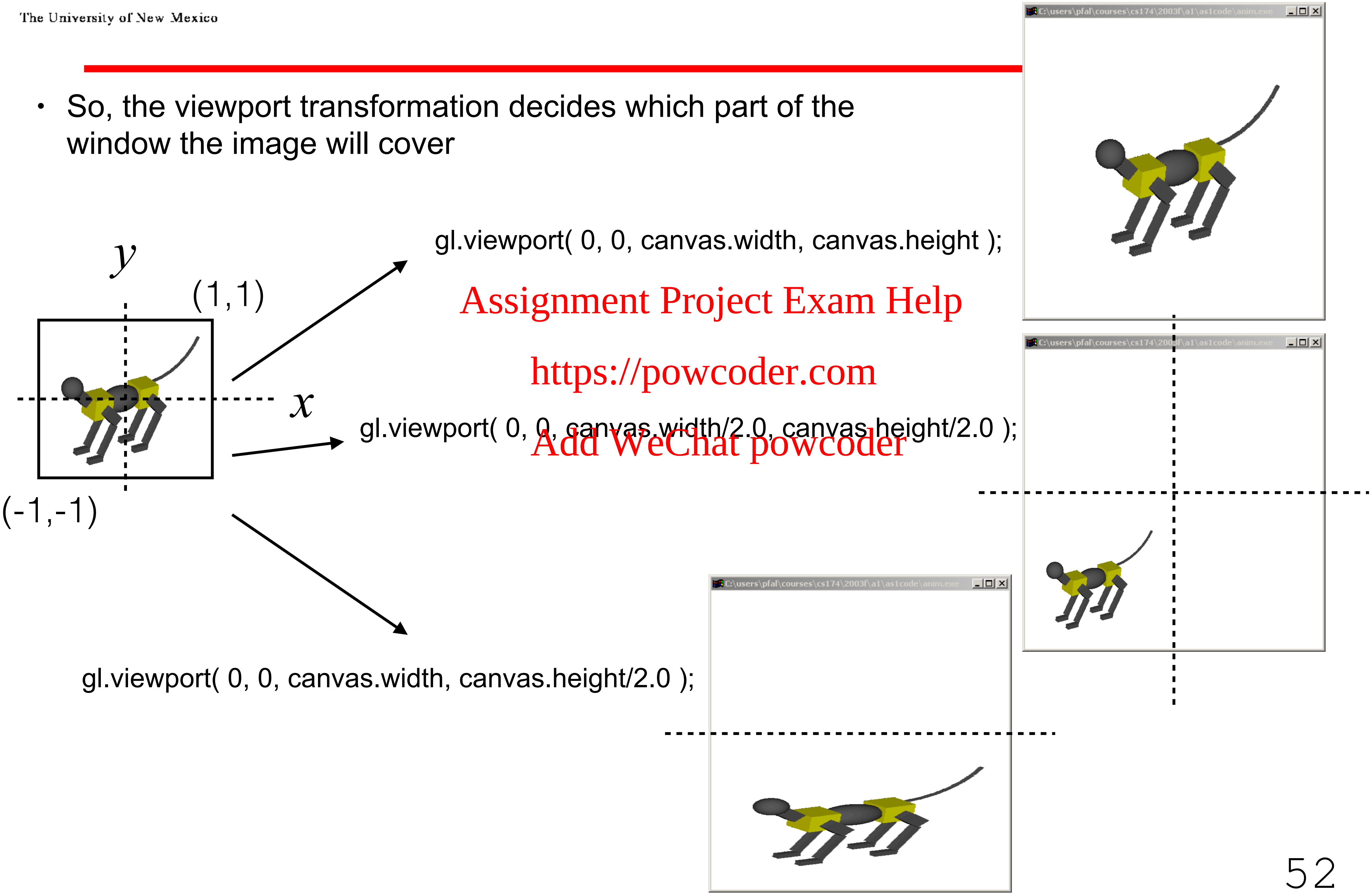
gl.viewport(0, 0, canvas.width, canvas.height); —- gl.viewport(0, 0, canvas.width/2.0, canvas.height/2.0);





Canvas and OpenGL

- So, the viewport transformation decides which part of the window the image will cover



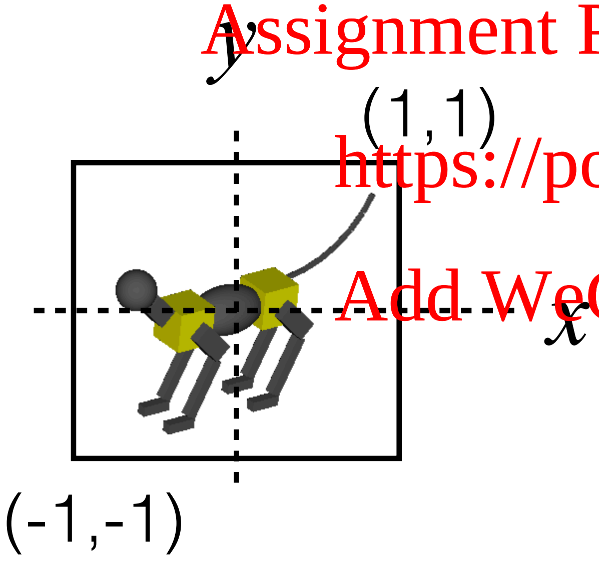
```
gl.viewport( 0, 0, canvas.width, canvas.height );
```

```
gl.viewport( 0, 0, canvas.width/2.0, canvas.height/2.0 );
```

```
gl.viewport( 0, 0, canvas.width, canvas.height/2.0 );
```

Canvas and OpenGL

- Where is z?
- By convention from the screen towards your eyes (right-handed system)

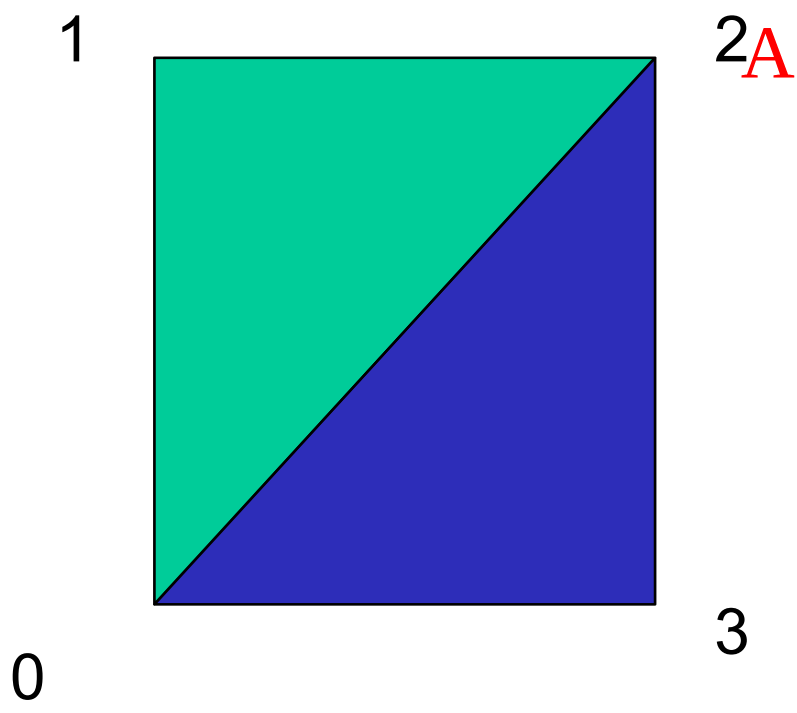


Notes

- `initShaders` used to load, compile and link shaders to form a program object
- Load data onto GPU by creating a **vertex buffer object** on the GPU
  - Note use of flatten() to convert JS array to an array of float32's
- Finally we must connect variable in program with variable in shader
  - need name, type, location in buffer

square.js (cont)

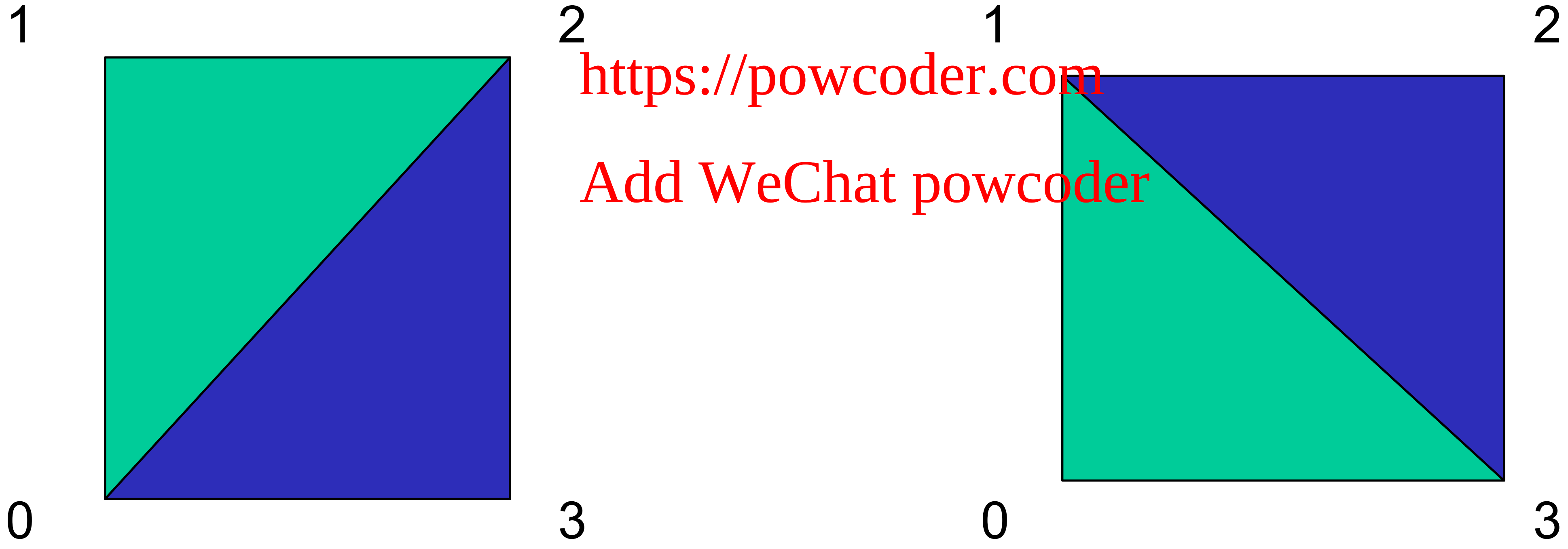
```
    render();
};  // end of onload()

function render() {
    gl.clear( gl.COLOR_BUFFER_BIT );
    gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLE_FAN, 0, 4 );
}
```



Triangles, Fans or Strips

```
gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLES, 0, 6 ); // 0, 1, 2, 0, 2, 3
```

```
gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLE_FAN, 0, 4 ); // 0, 1 , 2, 3
```



```
gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLE_STRIP, 0, 4 ); // 0, 1, 3, 2
```

Writing Shaders

- First programmable shaders were programmed in an assembly-like manner
- OpenGL extensions added functions for vertex and fragment shaders
- Cg (C for graphics) C-like language for programming shaders
    - Works with both OpenGL and DirectX
    - Interface to OpenGL complex
- OpenGL Shading Language (GLSL)

GLSL

- OpenGL Shading Language
- Part of OpenGL 2.0 and up
- High level C-like language
- New data types

    Matrices

    Vectors

    Samplers
- As of OpenGL 3.1, application must provide shaders

Simple Vertex Shader

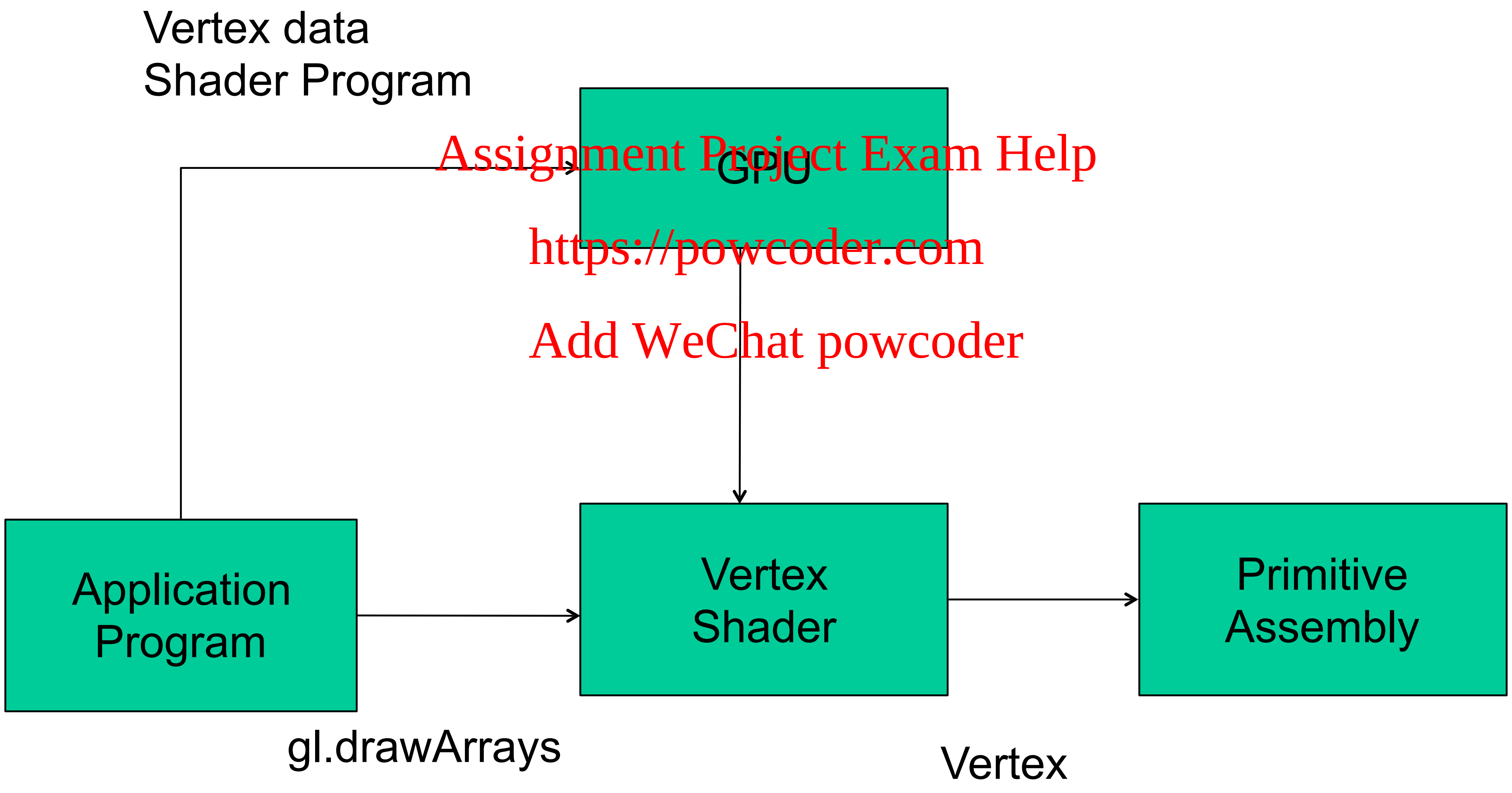
input from application

```
attribute vec4 vPosition;
void main(void)
{
    gl_Position = vPosition;
}
```

must link to variable in application

built in variable

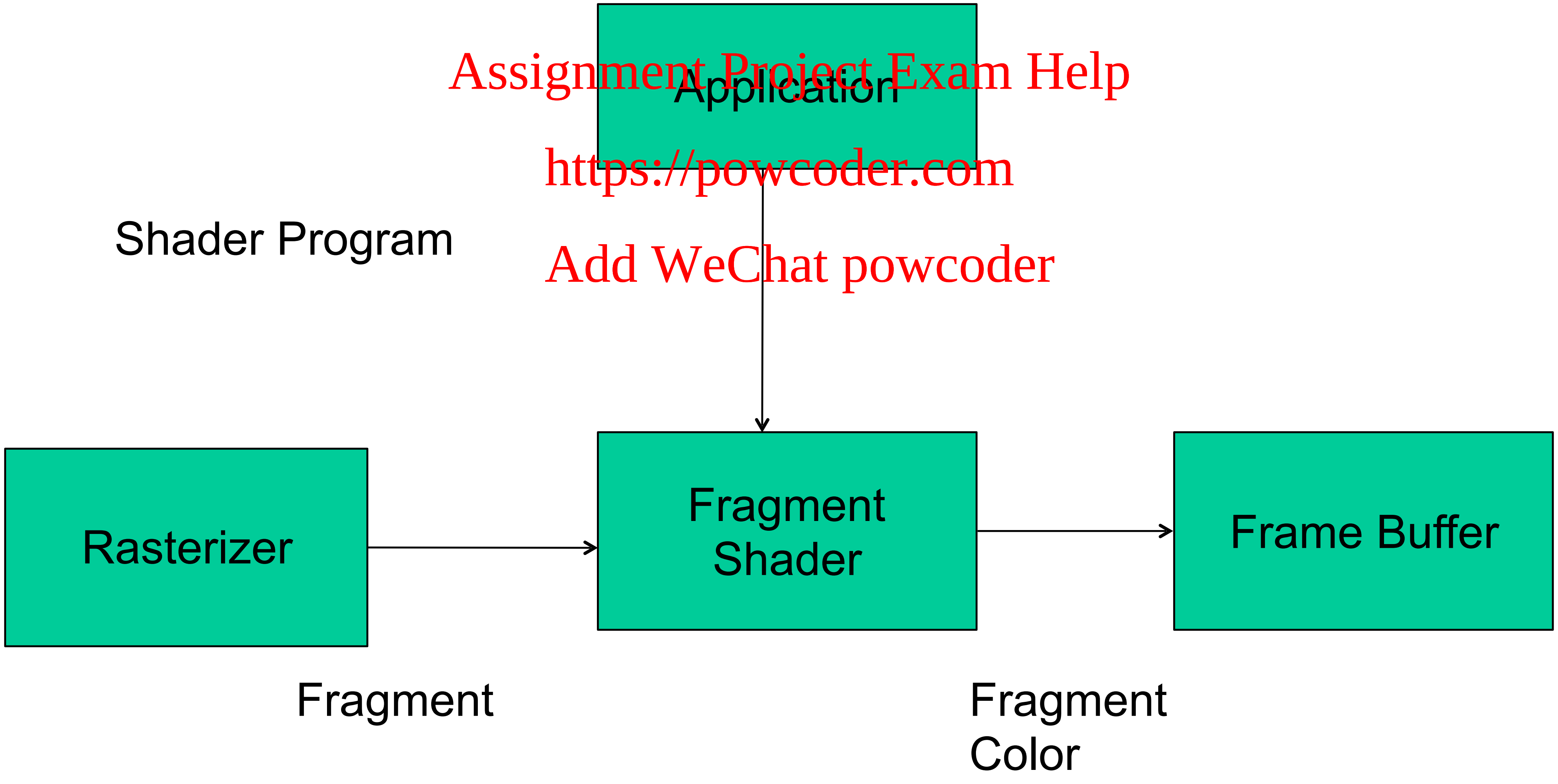
Execution Model



Simple Fragment Program

```
precision mediump float;
void main(void)
{
  gl_FragColor = vec4(1.0, 0.0, 0.0, 1.0);
}
```

Execution Model



Data Types

- C types: int, float, bool
- Vectors:

  float vec2, vec3, vec4

  Also int (ivec) and boolean (bvec)
- Matrices: mat2, mat3, mat4

  Stored by columns

  Standard referencing m[row][column]
- C++ style constructors

  vec3 a =vec3(1.0, 2.0, 3.0)

  vec2 b = vec2(a)

No Pointers

- There are no pointers in GLSL
- We can use C structs which
  can be copied back from functions
- Because matrices and vectors are basic types they can be passed into and output from GLSL functions, e.g.

```
mat3 func(mat3 a)
```

- variables passed by copying

Qualifiers

- GLSL has many of the same qualifiers such as `const` as C/C++
- Need others due to the nature of the execution model
- Variables can change

  Once per primitive

  Once per vertex

  Once per fragment

  At any time in the application
- Vertex attributes are interpolated by the rasterizer into fragment attributes

Attribute Qualifier

- Attribute-qualified variables can change at most once per vertex
- There are a few built in variables such as gl_Position but most have been deprecated
- User defined (in application program)

```
attribute float temperature
attribute vec3 velocity
```

recent versions of GLSL use **in** and **out** qualifiers to get to and from shaders

Uniform Qualified

- Variables that are constant for an entire primitive
- Can be changed in application and sent to shaders
- Cannot be changed in shader
- Used to pass information to shader such as the time or a bounding box of a primitive or transformation matrices

Varying Qualified

- Variables that are passed from vertex shader to fragment shader
- Automatically interpolated by the rasterizer
- With WebGL, GLSL uses the varying qualifier in both shaders

```
varying vec4 color;
```

- More recent versions of WebGL use **out** in vertex shader and **in** in the fragment shader

```
out vec4 color; //vertex shader
in vec4 color;  // fragment shader
```

Our Naming Convention

- attributes passed to vertex shader have names beginning with v (v Position, vColor) in both the application and the shader

  Note that these are different entities with the same name

- Varying variables begin with f (fColor) in both shaders

  must have same name

- Uniform variables are unadorned and can have the same name in application and shaders

Example: Vertex Shader

```
attribute vec4 vPosition ;
attribute vec4 vColor;
varying vec4 fColor;
void main()
{
  gl_Position = vPosition;
  fColor = vColor;
}
```

Corresponding Fragment Shader

```
precision mediump float;

varying vec4 fColor;
void main()
{
  gl_FragColor = fColor;
}
```

Sending Colors from Application

```
var cBuffer = gl.createBuffer();
gl.bindBuffer( gl.ARRAY_BUFFER, cBuffer );
gl.bufferData( gl.ARRAY_BUFFER, flatten(colors),
                                gl.STATIC_DRAW );

var vColor = gl.getAttribLocation( program, "vColor" );
gl.vertexAttribPointer( vColor, 4, gl.FLOAT, false, 0, 0 );
gl.enableVertexAttribArray( vColor );
```

//**glVertexAttribPointer**(GLuint *index*, GLint *size*, GLenum *type*, GLboolean *normalized*, GLsizei *stride*, const GLvoid * *pointer*);

Sending a Uniform Variable

```
// in application

vec4 color = vec4(1.0, 0.0, 0.0, 1.0);
colorLoc = gl.getUniformLocation( program, ”color" );
gl.uniform4f( colorLoc, color);

// in fragment shader (similar in vertex shader)

uniform vec4 color;

void main()
{
   gl_FragColor = color;
}
```

Operators and Functions

- Standard C functions
  - Trigonometric
  - Arithmetic
  - Normalize, reflect, length
- Overloading of vector and matrix types

```
mat4 a;
vec4 b, c, d;
c = b*a; // a column vector stored as a 1d array
d = a*b; // a row vector stored as a 1d array
```

Swizzling and Selection

- Can refer to array elements by element using [] or selection (.) operator with

  x, y, z, w

  r, g, b, a

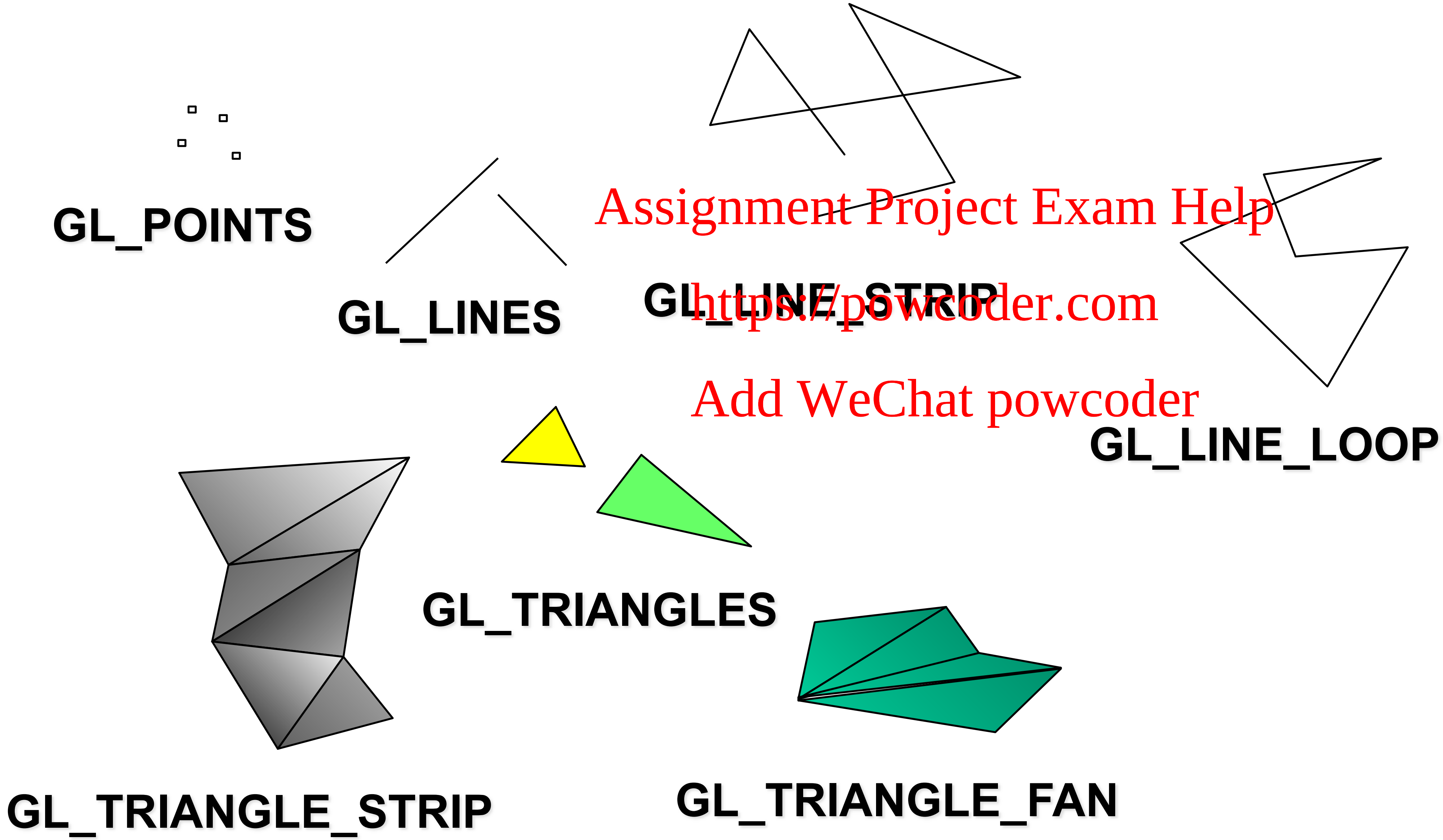
  s, t, p, q

  `a[2], a.b, a.z, a.p` are the same

- **Swizzling** operator lets us manipulate components

```
vec4 a, b;
a.yz = vec2(1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0);
b = a.yxzw;
```

WebGLPrimitives



GL_POINTS

GL_LINES

GL_LINE_STRIP

GL_LINE_LOOP

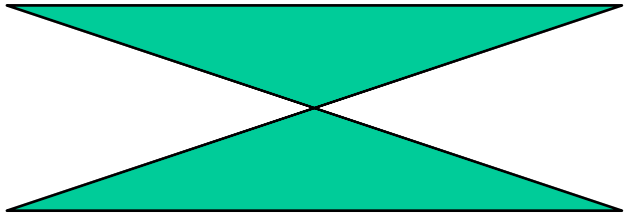
GL_TRIANGLES

GL_TRIANGLE_STRIP

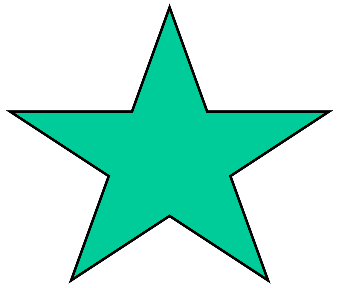
GL_TRIANGLE_FAN

Polygon Issues

- WebGL will only display triangles
  - Simple: edges cannot cross
  - Convex: All points on line segment between two points in a polygon are also in the polygon
  - Flat: all vertices are in the same plane
- Application program must tessellate a polygon into triangles (triangulation)
- OpenGL 4.1 contains a tessellator but not WebGL



nonsimple polygon



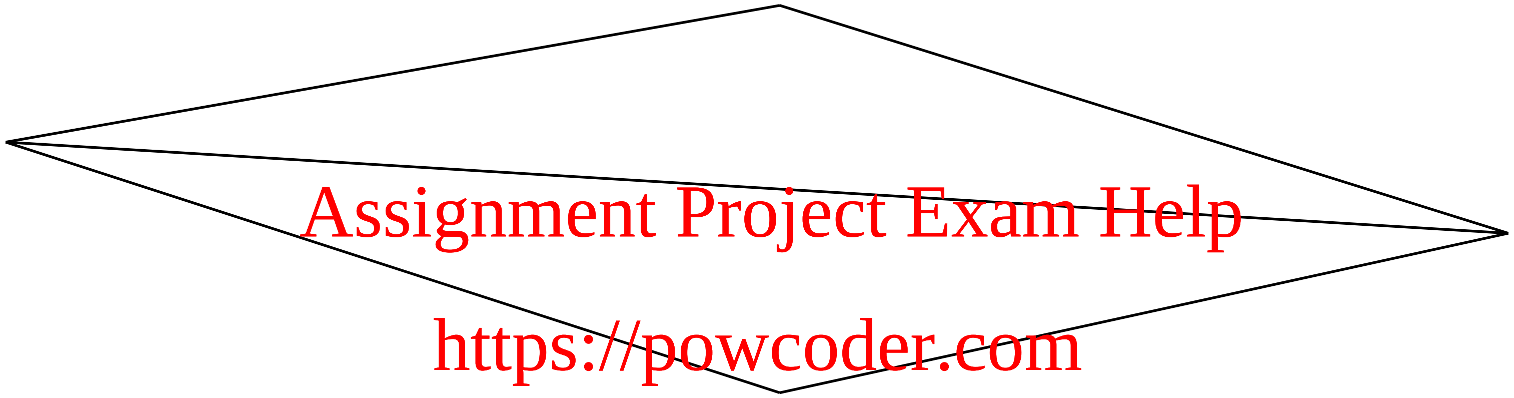
nonconvex polygon

Polygon Testing

- Conceptually simple to test for simplicity and convexity
- Time consuming
- Earlier versions assumed both and left testing to the application
- Present version only renders triangles
- Need algorithm to triangulate an arbitrary polygon

Good and Bad Triangles

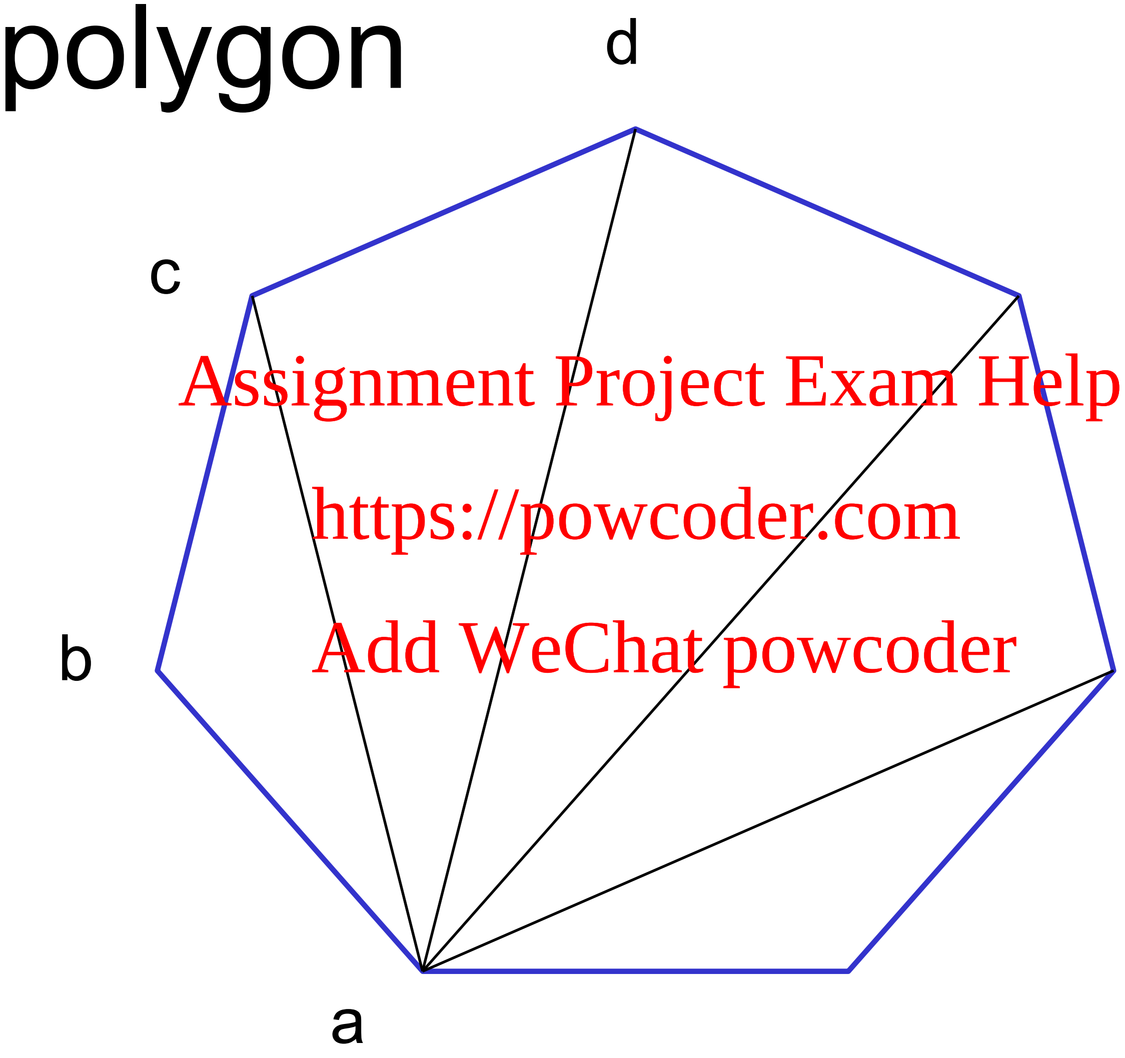
- Long thin triangles render badly



- Equilateral triangles render well
- Maximize minimum angle
- Delaunay triangulation for unstructured points

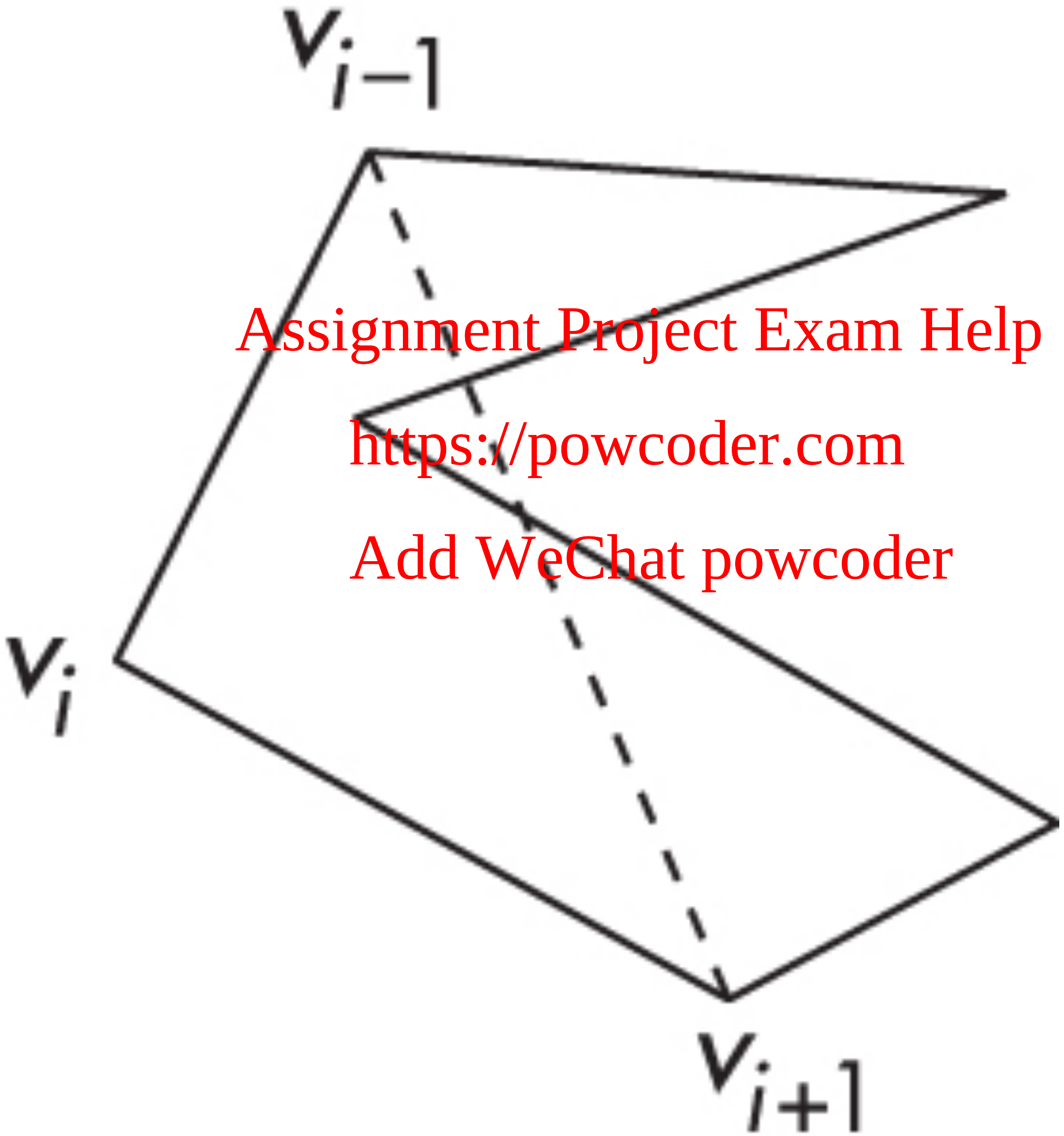
Triangularization

- Convex polygon



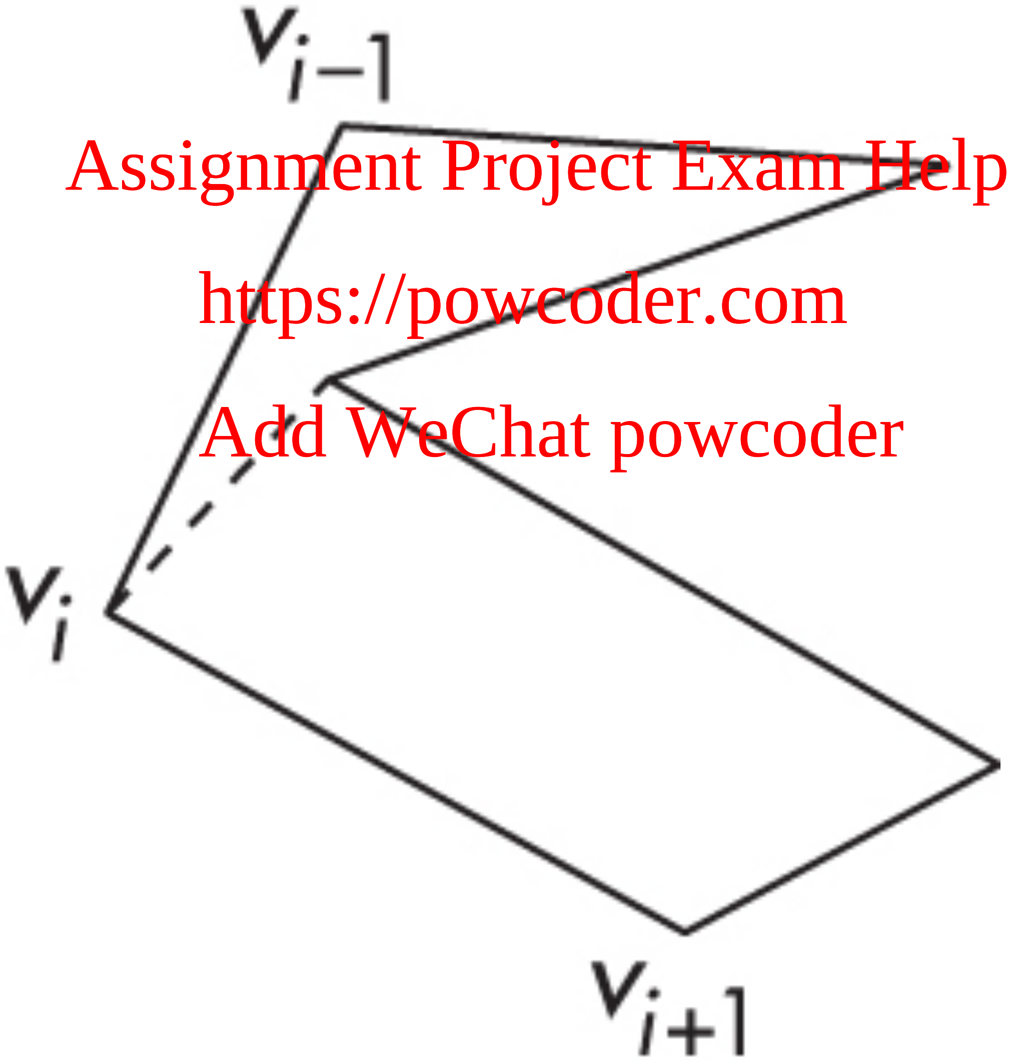
- Start with abc, remove b, then acd, ….

Non-convex (concave)



Recursive Division

- Find leftmost vertex and split



Linking Shaders with Application

- Read shaders
- Compile shaders
- Create a program object
- Link everything together
- Link variables in application with variables in shaders
    - Vertex attributes
    - Uniform variables

Program Object

- Container for shaders
  - Can contain multiple shaders
  - Other GLSL functions

```
var program = gl.createProgram();

gl.attachShader( program, vertShdr );
gl.attachShader( program, fragShdr );
gl.linkProgram( program );
```

Reading a Shader

- Shaders are added to the program object and compiled
- Usual method of passing a shader is as a null-terminated string using the function
- gl.shaderSource(fragShdr, fragElem.text);
- If shader is in HTML file, we can get it into application by getElementById method
- If the shader is in a file, we can write a reader to convert the file to a string

Adding a Vertex Shader

```
var vertShdr;
var vertElem =
    document.getElementById( vertexShaderId );

vertShdr = gl.createShader( gl.VERTEX_SHADER );

gl.shaderSource( vertShdr, vertElem.text );
gl.compileShader( vertShdr );

// after program object created
gl.attachShader( program, vertShdr );
```

Shader Reader

- Following code may be a security issue with some browsers if you try to run it locally
  - Cross Origin Request

```
function getShader(gl, shaderName, type) {
          var shader = gl.createShader(type);
          shaderScript = loadFileAJAX(shaderName);
          if (!shaderScript) {
             alert("Could not find shader source:
                        "+shaderName);
          }
}
```

Precision Declaration

- In GLSL for WebGL we must specify desired precision in fragment shaders
  - artifact inherited from OpenGL ES
  - ES must run on very simple embedded devices that may not support 32-bit floating point
  - All implementations must support mediump
  - No default for float in fragment shader
- Can use preprocessor directives (#ifdef) to check if highp supported and, if not, default to mediump

Pass Through Fragment Shader

```
#ifdef GL_FRAGMENT_SHADER_PRECISION_HIGH
  precision highp float;
#else
  precision mediump float;
#endif

varying vec4 fcolor;
void main(void)
{
     gl_FragColor = fcolor;
}
```