
Module 7b: Local

CPSC 110

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Learning goals

- Write well-formed local expressions
- Diagram lexical scoping on top of expressions using local
- Hand-evaluate local expressions
- Use local to encapsulate function definitions (“private” helper functions)
- Use local to avoid redundant computation

Local

The `local` function is comprised of *local definitions* and a *body*.

- Must have 0 or more definitions inside square brackets `[...]`
- Must have a body

```
1 (local [<definition 1> ; local definitions
2       <definition 2>
3       ...])
4 <expression> ; body
```

Local Evaluation Rules

Three steps happen at the same time when evaluating a local expression.

1. Renaming
 - rename definitions and all references to definitions
 - the new name must be globally unique
2. Lifting
 - lift renamed definitions out of the `local`, into top-level scope (not just out of the expression!)
3. Replace entire `local` with renamed body
 - After evaluation, the `local` expression is gone!

See `02-evaluation-rules.rkt` for a step-by-step evaluation.

Encapsulation

Finding good candidates for encapsulation:

1. One function has 1+ helpers closely linked to it
2. Outside program only cares about the main function, not the helpers

When refactoring existing code, make sure to

- Encapsulate (group) functions that are good candidates
 - Open function with new global name + necessary parameters
 - Wrap old functions in []
 - Add “trampoline” call to the appropriate function
- Rename `check-expects` + possibly stubs
- Delete unnecessary pieces
 - Delete tests for hidden functions (may lose some base cases)
 - Delete signatures that don’t apply anymore
 - Delete old stubs

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using `local` for Encapsulation

Advantages:

- Templates can be pre-encapsulated, saving time later on
- Template functions inside `local` don’t have to be renamed! That’s right, you can keep it as `fn-for-element` and `fn-for-loe` (for example).

Disadvantages:

- Cannot write base case tests for helper functions
 - Can only test the whole function
 - However, at this point in the course, we may not need to actually test the absolute base case test first

Terminology

- **Top-level definition:** definition visible to entire program
- **Local definition:** definition restricted to a certain scope
 - Within that scope, a local definition has precedence over any higher-level definitions
- **Lexical scoping**
 - **Scope contours:** boxes drawn around parts of the programming illustrating scopes
 - **Top-level scope:** global scope; scope of the whole program
 - Scope can be imagined as a bunch of nested boxes, or a tree where the top-most node is the global scope and each subnode is a scope within that scope.
- **Encapsulation:** bundling data with functions that operate on that data

- **Refactoring:** changing a program's code/structure without changing the program's behaviour
- **Namespace Management:** way to deal the problem of large programs inevitably using the same names
 - encapsulating many functions away so that the only public functions are ones with unique, descriptive names
 - ensuring other programmers don't call functions they're not supposed to