

# Temasek Junior College 2023 JC2 H2 Computing Programming Constructs

Section	1	Algorithms and Data Structures	
Unit	1.1	Algorithmic Representation	
Objectives	1.1.1	Use appropriate techniques or tools such as pseudo-code and flowchart to show program flow.	
	1.1.3	Use a combination of various control structures.	

Section	2	Programming
Unit	2.2	Programming Elements and Constructs
Objectives	2.2.3	Apply the fundamental programming constructs to control the flow of
		program execution:
		- Sequence
		- Selection
		- Iteration

#### 1 Introduction

To design code that can compare and manipulate data, and to make decisions, programmers use different logical, relational and arithmetic operators via the programming constructs of **sequence**, **selection** and **iteration**. These constructs are key 'building blocks' in almost all programs and can be assembled in different ways to achieve the goal(s) of a program.

### 2 Sequence

The difference between a computer and a human is that a computer will do exactly as instructed. It will not misinterpret an instruction or "figure it out" like a human would. If a computer does something unexpected, it is probably due to its human programmer(s) not supplying sufficiently clear and precise instructions in the form of code. Hence computers need precise instructions. Equally important, these instructions must be given in the correct order.

Program code statements written one after another as a precise set of instructions to complete a (sub)-task is called a **sequence**. During program runtime, these statements will be executed in the order that they were written in.

#### 3 Selection

There will be times when a program needs to execute a selected portion of the code only when certain conditions are met. Take for example a login page. An error message is to be displayed only when the user enters an invalid username and password pair. If the username and password pair is correct, an alternative sequence of code that directs the user to the landing page will be executed. In such cases, the **selection** programming construct should be used.

**Selection** is a programming construct that allows a program to run a specific sequence of code depending on whether a condition evaluates to True or False.

### 3.1 Selection Using IF-THEN and IF-THEN-ELSE Statements

IF-THEN and IF-THEN-ELSE statements are used to implement the selection programming construct.

### **Example 1**

Write down the output of the program containing the following code snippet.

### [Solution]

```
Pass
End of program
```

#### Notes

- In the above code snippet, the expression test\_score >= 60 is evaluated. If the expression evaluates to True, then the program will output Pass.
- The final line of code OUTPUT "End of program" is outside of the selection programming construct. It will thus execute regardless of whether test\_score >= 60 evaluates to True or False.
- Observe that the code is **written sequentially** to:
  - o first assign the value of 71 to the variable test score;
  - o then evaluate the expression test\_score >= 60 to decide whether to output Pass;
  - o lastly, output End of Program.

This itself demonstrates the **sequence** programming construct, where the code statements are written one after another as a precise set of instructions.

In **Example 1**, no code has been written to specify the action(s) to take when the expression  $test\_score >= 60$  evaluates to False. In this case, the execution will continue with the first statement that comes after the IF statement block.

The use of ELSE will allow the specification of an additional sequence of code statements to be executed when test score >= 60 evaluates to False.

# Example 2

Write down the output of the program containing the following code snippet for the test cases of 70, 10 and 60.

### [Solution]

test_score	Output
70	Pass
70	End of program
10	Room for improvement
10	End of program
60	Pass
60	End of program

- In the above code snippet, an ELSE statement block is written after the IF statement block to output "Room for improvement".
- When the expression test\_score >= 60 is evaluated to False, the execution of the code jumps immediately to the ELSE statement block, bypassing the code written within the IF statement block.

#### 3.2 Multiple Conditions and Nested Selection

Nested selection is used to implement branching logic. This means that if a condition of a main selection block evaluates to  $\mathtt{True}$ , then it leads to sub-conditions (in the form of nested  $\mathtt{IF}$  statements), which are included inside the main condition.

#### Example 3

Study the code snippet below:

```
01 DECLARE age : INTEGER
02 DECLARE salary : INTEGER
03 DECLARE quarantor : STRING
04
05 OUTPUT "Enter your age: "
06 INPUT age
07
08 IF age >= 21 THEN
                                            // Main condition
09
10
       OUTPUT "Enter your salary: "
11
       INPUT salary
12
13
       IF salary > 15000 THEN
                                            // Start nested selection
14
           OUTPUT "You can rent the flat"
15
       ELSE
           OUTPUT "Not enough for rental"
16
                                            // End nested selection
17
       ENDIF
18
19 ELSE
20
21
       IF age >= 18 AND age < 21 THEN
                                           // Main condition
22
23
           OUTPUT "Any guarantor (Y/N):"
24
           INPUT quarantor
25
           IF guarantor = "Y" THEN
26
                                            // Start nested selection
27
               OUTPUT "Contact guarantor"
28
           ELSE
29
               OUTPUT "Guarantor needed"
30
                                            // End nested selection
           ENDIF
31
32
                                            // Main condition
       ELSE
33
34
           OUTPUT "Can't rent the flat"
35
36
       ENDIF
37
38 ENDIF
```

Identify the lines which contain the main branch of the selection programming construct and the lines that contain nested selection. Give a short description of what each of these lines means.

### [Solution]

```
Line 08 – Is age 21 or over?
...
Line 13 – Is salary over 15000?
...
Line 15 – No.
...
Line 19 – No.
...
Line 21 – Is age 18 or above but below 21?
...
Line 26 – Is guarantor available?
...
Line 28 – No.
...
Line 32 – No
```

- In pseudocode, not all nested IF-THEN and IF-THEN-ELSE statements belong to sub-conditions. Some may belong to the main logic branch. In line 21, although the IF statement is nested within the ELSE in line 19, it is part of the main logic branch that checks the age of the user, which is the main condition that determines the action the program will take i.e.
  - o get user to input salary (age 21 or above) or
  - o check availability of guarantor (below age 21 but age 18 or above) or
  - o inform the user that he/she cannot rent a flat (below age 18).
- For multiple conditions belonging to the same logic branch, each subsequent condition will be nested within an ELSE statement e.g.

```
IF condition_1
    ...
ELSE
    IF condition_2
    ...
ELSE
    IF condition_3
    ...
ELSE
    IF condition_4
    ...
ELSE
    ...
ENDIF
ENDIF
ENDIF
```

### 3.3 Selection Using CASE Statements

CASE statements can be used as an alternative method for writing selection programming constructs when handling a lot of related options.

The use of CASE statements can make the code clearer for another programmer to follow.

### **Example 4**

Rewrite the following selection programming construct using CASE statements.

```
01 IF error code = "400" THEN
       OUTPUT "Bad request"
03 ELSE
04 IF error code = "401" THEN
          OUTPUT "Unauthorised request"
05
06
       ELSE
07
           IF error code = "403" THEN
               OUTPUT "Forbidden request"
0.8
09
           ELSE
               IF error code = "404" THEN
10
                   OUTPUT "Page not found"
11
12
                   OUTPUT "Are you sure of the URL?"
13
               ELSE
14
                   IF error code = "408" THEN
15
                       OUTPUT "Timeout error"
16
                       OUTPUT "Unable to process request"
17
                   ELSE
18
                       OUTPUT "Unknown error"
19
                       CALL Reload
20
                   ENDIF
21
               ENDIF
22
           ENDIF
23
       ENDIF
24 ENDIF
```

### [Solution]

```
01 CASE OF error code
02
       400
                : OUTPUT "Bad request"
03
       401
                : OUTPUT "Unauthorised request"
                : OUTPUT "Forbidden request"
04
      403
05
      404
                : OUTPUT "Page not found"
06
                  OUTPUT "Are you sure of the URL?"
                : OUTPUT "Timeout error"
07
      408
                  OUTPUT "Unable to process request"
      OTHERWISE : OUTPUT "Unknown error"
09
10
                  CALL Reload
11 ENDCASE
```

#### **Notes**

- The values specified in the CASE statement are compared in the order which they are written until there is a match.
- The action(s) specified for the matched value is (are) executed and the CASE code block terminates, bypassing any remaining cases. Thereafter, the code statement immediately after the CASE block will be executed.
- An OTHERWISE statement can be used to handle actions that do not fall under any of the specified cases.
- In **Example 4**, the cases being considered are single values. In fact, each case can also consist of a set of values or a range of values e.g.

```
01 DECLARE days : INTEGER
02 DECLARE month number: INTEGER
03
04 OUTPUT "Enter month"
05 INPUT month number
07 CASE OF month number
08
      1,3,5,7,8,10,12: days \leftarrow 31 // set of values
09
      4,6,9,11: days \leftarrow 30 // set of values
                     : days ← 28 // single value
10
       2
11 ENDCASE
and
01 DECLARE score : INTEGER
02 DECLARE pass fail : STRING
03
04 OUTPUT "Enter score"
05 INPUT score
06
07 CASE OF score
      45 to 100 : pass_fail ← "pass" // range of values
0.8
       40 to 44 : pass_fail ← "sub-pass" // range of values
      0 to 39 : pass fail ← "fail" // range of values
10
11 ENDCASE
12
13 OUTPUT pass fail
```

#### **Technical Note**

For 9569 H2 Computing, the version of Python used is 3.6.4. CASE statements need to be written using the if-else conditionals.

Beyond the confines of the syllabus, Python 3.10 and above comes with the match keyword, which allows for code to be written in a manner similar to CASE statements. See https://docs.python.org/3/tutorial/controlflow.html#match-statements

#### 4 Iteration

What happens when a process needs to be repeatedly executed within a program? Must the code defining the process be written repeatedly? Fortunately, repetitive coding can be avoided with the use of the **iteration programming construct**, where the code to be repeated can be specified within a **loop**. This can be for a certain number of repetitions or controlled by a condition at the start or end of the **loop**.

**Iteration** is the repeated execution of a block of code until a certain condition is satisfied. Each repetition is considered as one iteration.

There are two main types of **loop**:

- 1) Count-controlled loop (also known as definite loop)
  - o A block of code is repeated a specified number of times e.g. FOR loops.
- 2) Condition-controlled loop (also known as indefinite loop)
  - O A block of code is repeated based on whether a specified condition evaluates to True or False e.g. WHILE, DO-WHILE and REPEAT-UNTIL loops.

### 4.1 Count-Controlled Loops

#### 4.1.1 FOR Loops

FOR loops are count-controlled i.e. the number of times to repeat a block of code written within a FOR loop needs to be explicitly specified.

#### Example 5

Write a count-controlled loop for displaying the integers 1 to 4 sequentially.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE count : INTEGER
02
03 FOR count ← 1 TO 4 // upper limit will be included
04 OUTPUT count
05 NEXT count
```

#### Notes

- The output will be as follows:

```
1
2
3
4
```

- count is initialised as 1. The sequence is stepped through in intervals of size 1 and the code in the loop is repeated four times. There is no fifth execution since the value of 5 exceeds the specified upper limit of assignment 4.
- In pseudocode, the upper limit value of 4 is included in the assignment as opposed to that of Python. To get the same output in Python, use

```
01 for count in range(1, 5): # upper limit not included 02 print(count)
```

A FOR loop can also be used to iterate through individual items of a collection via indexing. The LENGTH keyword can be used to determine the maximum value of the index.

### **Example 6**

Write a count-controlled loop to display the characters of the word "Python"

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE word : STRING
02 DECLARE index : INTEGER
03
04 word ← "Python"
05
06 FOR index ← 1 TO LENGTH(word)
07 OUTPUT word[index]
08 NEXT index
```

#### Notes

The output is as follows:

P y t h

n

- In some texts, the pseudocode .LENGTH() is used instead e.g. word.LENGTH().

### Example 7

Write a count-controlled loop to display the items in the following array:

```
subjects ← ["Computing", "Math", "Physics", "Econs", "GP", "PW"]
```

# [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE subjects : ARRAY[1 : 6] OF STRING
02 DECLARE index : INTEGER
03
04 subjects ← ["Computing", "Math", "Physics", "Econs", "GP", "PW"]
05
06 FOR index ← 1 TO LENGTH(subjects)
07 OUTPUT subjects[index]
08 NEXT index
```

### **Technical Note**

Python is a zero-based language. Hence the index of the first item in a collection is 0.

As a rule of thumb, pseudocode is usually one-based. The index of the first item in a collect is thus  ${\tt 1}.$ 

Despite so, always study a given piece of pseudocode carefully to determine if it is one-based or zero-based.

### 4.1.2 Stepping through a Sequence

There may be times when the increment (or decrement) needs to be of a different magnitude other than 1. In this case, a **step value** needs to be specified.

### **Example 8**

Write a count-controlled loop to display the multiples of 3 within 3 inclusive and 10 inclusive.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02
03 FOR i ← 3 to 10 STEP 3
04 OUTPUT i
05 NEXT i
```

### **Notes**

- The output will be as follows:

3 6 9

- i is initialised as 3. The sequence is stepped through at intervals of 3 and the code in the loop is repeated thrice. There is no fourth execution as the value of 12 exceeds the specified upper limit of assignment 10.

### Example 9

Write a count-controlled loop to display all even numbers from 1 to 10 in descending order.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02
03 FOR i ← 1 to 10 STEP -2
04 OUTPUT i
05 NEXT i
```

# **Notes**

- For a sequence in descending order, use a negative step value. The range of values to be assigned to the counting variable ( $\pm$  in this case) in the FOR loop should still be specified in ascending order ( $\pm$  to  $\pm$ 0 in this case, not  $\pm$ 0 to  $\pm$ 1).
- The output will be as follows:

- i is initialised as 10. The sequence is stepped through at intervals of −2 and the code in the loop is repeated five times. There is no sixth execution as the value of 0 is smaller than the specified lower limit of assignment 1.

#### 4.2 Condition-Controlled Loops

Instead of pre-defining the number of repetitions explicitly, a process can also be repeated for as long as a condition is met, or until a condition is met. The number of repetitions to run the code is thus dependent on the number of times it takes for the condition to evaluate to True.

In this case, the code to be repeated will have to be placed in a **condition-controlled loop**.

# 4.2.1 Pre-Condition-Controlled Loops

In a **pre-condition-controlled loop**, the condition will be evaluated at the start of the loop. The code placed inside the loop will be executed only when the condition is evaluated to True.

#### 4.2.1.1 WHILE LOOPS

The WHILE loop can be used to set-up a pre-condition-controlled loop. When doing so, an **initial value** must **always** be assigned to the variable before the WHILE loop.

#### Example 10

Write a pre-condition-controlled loop to check whether the password input by a user is correct. The user will be prompted to re-enter the password until it is correct.

### [Solution]

- The first user input is assigned as the initial value of password guess.
- The code in the WHILE loop will be executed when the values of password\_guess and password do not match. The eventual number of repetitions will be dependent on the number of times the user takes to enter the correct password.
- Once the condition is met, the code written within the WHILE loop is bypassed and the next line of code after the loop will be executed. In this case the message "Welcome to the site" will be displayed upon a match between password and password guess.

#### Example 11

Write a pre-condition-controlled loop to perform a countdown from 5 to 0.

# [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02
03 i ← 5
04
05 WHILE i >= 0
06 OUTPUT i
07 i ← i − 1
08 ENDWHILE
```

### **Notes**

- The output is as follows:

- The value of 5 is assigned as the initial value of i.
- The code in the WHILE loop will be executed as long as i >= 0. For each iteration, the value of i is decreased by 1 until i = -1, where the loop is terminated. Hence the code in loop will be executed six times.

# **Technical Note**

etc.

This is as opposed to Python where they are written in the form

```
- i = i + 1 or i += 1

- i = i - 2 or i -= 2

- i = i * 3 or i *= 2

etc.
```

In some texts, a WHILE loop is also known as a WHILE-DO loop. There is no difference in syntax except for the additional DO keyword placed after the condition e.g.

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER  
02  
03 i \leftarrow 5  
04  
05 WHILE i >= 0 DO // A DO keyword is placed after the condition  
06   OUTPUT i  
07   i \leftarrow i - 1  
08 ENDWHILE
```

#### 4.2.1.2 Flags

It is important that a while loop always terminates.

Besides including the condition in the WHILE statement to trigger termination when it is no longer met or when it is first met, a **flag** can also be used.

A flag is typically a Boolean variable than can take on one of two values: True or False. It is often used to indicate whether a certain condition or an event has occurred, or to trigger a specific action when being set to a certain value.

### Example 12

Write a pre-condition-controlled loop with a flag to indicate that counting down from 5 to 0 has been completed.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02 DECLARE countdown complete: BOOLEAN
03
04 i \leftarrow 5
05 countdown complete ← False
07 WHILE NOT countdown_complete
08
09
      OUTPUT i
10
       i ← i - 1
11
12
       IF i = -1 THEN
13
           countdown complete ← True
14
       ENDIF
15
16 ENDWHILE
```

- countdown\_complete is being used as a flag to indicate the completion of the counting down process. Intuitively, it is assigned an initial value of False, since counting down has vet to commence.
- Within the WHILE loop, an IF statement checks the value of i. When i = -1, countdown has successfully reached 0 and completed. The value of countdown\_complete is reassigned as True to indicate that the counting down process has completed.
- In line 07, the statement used to commence the loop is WHILE NOT countdown\_complete.
  - o When countdown\_complete = False, the statement will translate to WHILE NOT False i.e. WHILE True and the code in the loop executes.
  - o Conversely, when countdown\_complete = True, the statement will translate to WHILE NOT True i.e. WHILE False, and the loop terminates.
- While the use of a flag might seem rather trivial at this juncture (since the loop can be terminated by just having the actual condition written in the WHILE statement), the use of flags has the potential to improve the efficiency and readability of codes, especially in the more complex and complicated ones.

#### 4.2.1.3 Sentinel Values

Termination of a while loop can also be done so with the use of a **sentinel value**.

A sentinel value is a special value typically chosen to be distinct from the normal values expected. They can be used to mark the end of a sequence of data, indicate a boundary condition, represent special conditions or error states etc.

The choice of what sentinel value to choose is the decision of the programmer, but it should be a value that is unlikely to be part of the sequence, condition or process under consideration.

### Example 13

Write a pre-condition-controlled loop that allows entry of test scores repeatedly until -1 is entered as a sentinel value to terminate the loop.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE mark : INTEGER
02
03 OUTPUT "Enter a mark or -1 to terminate entry"
04 INPUT mark
05
06 WHILE mark <> -1
07 OUTPUT "Enter a mark or -1 to terminate entry"
08 INPUT mark
09 ENDWHILE
```

#### Notes

- The program will repeatedly request for user input until the sentinel value of −1 is entered.

### 4.2.2 Post-Condition-Controlled Loops

The code in a **post-condition-controlled loop** is repeated as long as the condition evaluates to True. As opposed to a pre-condition-controlled loop, the condition is evaluated at the end of the loop instead of the start of the loop. It follows that the code in the loop will **run at least once**, before the condition is evaluated the first time.

#### 4.2.2.1 DO-WHILE Loops

A DO-WHILE loop is an example of a post-condition-controlled loop.

In a DO-WHILE loop, the code in the loop will be executed at least once. Execution is then repeated for as many times as the condition at the end of the loop evaluates to True.

#### Example 14

Rewrite the solution to **Example 11** using a post-condition-controlled DO-WHILE loop.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02
03 i ← 5
04
05 DO
06 OUTPUT i
07 i ← i − 1
08 WHILE i >= 0
```

#### Example 15

Given that  $\pm$  was initialised as -2 instead in **Example 14**, write down the output.

# [Solution]

-2

#### Notes

- The code will now look as follows

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02
03 i ← -2
04
05 DO
06 OUTPUT i
07 i ← i - 1
08 WHILE i >= 0
```

- Even though the value of -2 is smaller than that of 0 i.e. the condition i >= 0 will evaluate to False initially, the code in the loop will still run once as the condition is checked only at the end of the loop (DO first... WHILE condition evaluates to True, DO again..., otherwise terminate).

### 4.2.2.2 REPEAT-UNTIL Loops

In a REPEAT-UNTIL loop, the code in the loop will be executed **at least once** and repeated until the condition at the end of the loop is met. This is as opposed to a DO-WHILE loop, where repetition only occurs when the condition at the end of the loop evaluates to True.

#### Example 16

Re-write the DO-WHILE loop in **Example 14** using a REPEAT-UNTIL loop.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02
03 i ← 5
04
05 REPEAT
06 OUTPUT i
07 i ← i − 1
08 UNTIL i < 0
```

#### Notes

- When i decreases to -1, the condition i < 0 is finally met and the loop terminates.

#### Example 17

Rewrite the solution to **Example 10** using a post-condition-controlled REPEAT-UNTIL loop.

# [Solution]

```
01 CONSTANT password = "1234"
02
03 DECLARE password_guess : STRING
04
05 REPEAT
06    OUTPUT "Enter your password"
07    INPUT password_guess
08 UNTIL password_guess = password
09
10 OUTPUT "Welcome to the site"
```

#### **Technical Note**

Python does not have built-in DO-WHILE and REPEAT-UNTIL loops. Nevertheless, such a structure can be mimic using a while True with a nested if...break statement e.g.

```
i = 5
while True:
    print(i)
    i = i - 1
    if i < 0:
        break</pre>
```

This will allow the code in the loop to run at least once.

### 4.2.2.3 Use of Flags and Sentinel Values in Post-Condition-Controlled Loops

As with the pre-condition-controlled loops, flags and sentinel values can also be used in post-condition-controlled loops.

### Example 18

Re-write the code in **Example 12** using a REPEAT-UNTIL loop.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE i : INTEGER
02 DECLARE countdown complete: BOOLEAN
03
04 i \leftarrow 5
05 countdown complete ← False
06
07 REPEAT
0.8
09
      OUTPUT i
       i ← i - 1
10
11
      IF i = -1 THEN
12
13
           countdown complete ← True
14
       ENDIF
16 UNTIL countdown complete ← True
```

#### Notes

- Compare the code above with that in **Example 16**. Both are REPEAT-UNTIL loops performing the same purpose. While the use of a flag might seem rather trivial at this juncture (since the loop can be terminated by just having the actual condition written in the UNTIL statement), the use of flags has the potential to improve the efficiency and readability of codes, especially in the more complex and complicated ones.

### Example 19

Re-write the code in **Example 13** using a DO-WHILE loop.

### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE mark : INTEGER
02
03 DO
04     OUTPUT "Enter a mark or -1 to terminate entry"
05     INPUT mark
06 WHILE mark <> -1
```

### **Notes**

- For this instance, the value of −1 is used as the sentinel value for terminating the loop.

### 4.2.3 Nested Loops

The nesting of loops is a common programming concept which involves using one loop inside another loop. Nested loops are very useful for iterating over the contents of multi-dimensional data structures such as nested lists and two-dimensional arrays. It is also a powerful technique for implementing complex code such as sorting algorithms.

When using nested loops, the same or different type of loop can be nested within the outer loop e.g. a count-controlled FOR loop can be nested within another count-controlled FOR loop.

### Example 20

Display the first 5 multiples of 1, followed by that of 2 and then 3.

#### [Solution]

```
01 DECLARE num : INTEGER
02 DECLARE multiplier : INTEGER
03 DECLARE result : INTEGER
04
05 FOR num ← 1 TO 3
06 FOR multiplier ← 1 TO 5
07 result ← num * multiplier
08 OUTPUT result
09 NEXT multiplier
10 NEXT num
```

#### Notes

- The output is as follows:

- The statements in the outer loop (lines 06 and 09) are controlled by line 05 FOR num  $\leftarrow$  1 TO 3.
- The statements in the inner loop (lines 07 and 08) are controlled by line 06 FOR multiplier  $\leftarrow$  1 TO 5.
- In each iteration, the statements in the inner loop will repeat 5 times.

A loop of a different type can also be nested within the outer loop e.g. a condition-controlled WHILE loop can be nested within a count-controlled FOR loop.

### Example 21

Write a program to guess five pre-determined numbers between 1 inclusive and 100 inclusive that are arranged in ascending order.

```
01 DECLARE to guess : ARRAY [1 : 5] OF INTEGER
02 DECLARE guess : INTEGER
03 DECLARE i : INTEGER
04
05 to guess \leftarrow [11, 33, 44, 88, 100]
06
07 FOR i \leftarrow 1 TO 5
08
09
       guess ← -1 // initialise guess using a sentinel value
10
11
       WHILE guess <> to guess[i]
12
           OUTPUT "Enter your guess"
13
           INPUT guess
14
      ENDWHILE
15
16 NEXT i
17
18 OUTPUT "Congratulations on making the correct guesses!"
```