# Doubly-Linked-List in Rust

## Documentation

# Introduction

Doubly Linked List is the most primitive data structure after Singly Linked List. Although you can easily find resources on the internet about implementation of Doubly Linked List in C++, Java, Python etc., it’s very hard to find code of this data structure, implemented in Rust programming language. But why is it so hard to implement Doubly Linked List in Rust? What makes Rust so different from other vastly used programming languages? Why should we use Rust at all? What makes hard to build Doubly Linked in Rust? After reading this documentation we hope that you will have answers to these questions and also you will be able see difference between Rust and other widely exploited programming languages as you follow us into the process of thinking and implementation.

Throughout our documentation we will explain important concepts of Rust, that make it unique, fast and performant. We will examine how Rust manages memory in order to understand how should we use information stored in memory. After all, we will see what are the restrictions referring to using pointers and references. Our goal is to explain every feature of the language, which will used later, in easily understandable language.

During planning of our model of data structure, we will analyze problems, facing off Rust restrictions and memory management. After analysis, solutions will be introduced, explained and estimated. As we will be able to use memory efficiently, we will try to make time complexity of the data structure as effective as possible.

In the process of implementation code will be well structured, easily readable and understandable. Methods in the data structure will be split up as much as possible according to their functionality, using that way of arrangement we will get rid of redundant code and our scripts will be much easier to read, imagine and understand. Names of the structure data types and methods will also be as self-descriptive as possible. Test examples will be written and provided to check efficiency of our code at every stage of progress.

# Brief Review About Rust

Rust has its own distinctive features, that make it safe and fast. In order to develop our general understanding of the programming language we need to learn how ownership, references and lifetimes work. We are assuming that you know some basic syntax of Rust and you can understand C++, Let’s dive in!

## Pointers and References

In order to take initial step, we need to know how pointers work in Rust. It’s important know to understand this topic, because without pointers, it’s nearly impossible to create data structure which will use memory efficiently.

In rust we have several types of smart pointers. But at first let’s explain what is pointer in general and what are those smart pointers? So, pointer is just a variable which stores the memory address of another variable. At first, we should see what address of variable looks like.

Let’s see C++ example:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. cout << &x << endl;
6. }

Output:

0x7ffd9a45e5e4

As we can see if we print out variable, with ‘&’ sign we will get **hexadecimal number**, which is actually address in our memory. In programming that **hexadecimal address** is called **reference** of a variable.

We can also see what is stored in the reference using ‘\*’ sign like that:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. cout << \*&x << endl;
6. }

Output:

10

The process of seeing what is stored of reference is called **dereferencing**.

It would be pity, if we couldn’t save reference of variable somewhere for future use, it’s also little bit annoying to use ‘&’ sign when you want to get the reference of some variable. That’s why we have pointers in C++ and declaration and use of pointer looks like this:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. int\* x\_ptr = &x;
6. cout << x\_ptr << endl;
7. }

Output:

0x7ffc137306cc

 We can also dereference our pointer like that:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. int\* x\_ptr = &x;
6. cout << \*x\_ptr << endl;
7. }

 Output:

10

 As you can see ‘\*’ sign is also used for declaration of pointer, so please don’t confuse, when write <Type> \* <Variable Name> like: int\* x\_ptr = &x it means that we are using ‘\*’ sign for declaration of pointer. But When we write \*<Variable Name> like: \*x\_ptr it means **dereferencing**.

Please also note that, it doesn’t matter how will you write:

int\* x\_ptr = &x;

or

int \*x\_ptr = &x;

but the last example is more preferable (although we use both syntax), since when you want to declare multiple pointer in one line you have to write like that:

int \*x\_ptr = &x, \*y\_ptr = &y;

Pointers also can be declared with new keyword in order to allocate memory for new pointer variable. After allocation we can store reference to it. Let’s Check:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. int\* x\_ptr = new int;
6. x\_ptr = &x;
7. cout << \*x\_ptr << endl;
8. }

Output:

10

Memory allocation with “new” keyword is widely used for example we use it to create new pointer for new element or node of some data-structure.

Sometimes after usage of pointers, they become redundant. Also at some point of our code we don’t need some variables and we want to free out some memory. Therefore C++ provides us with delete keyword. So, if we want to remove our variable from memory our code will look like this:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. // do some stuff with x
6. delete &x;
7. cout << x << endl;
8. }

Output:

munmap\_chunk(): invalid pointer

Command terminated by signal 6

In output we would definitely get error, because memory was emptied. We can also do the same with pointers.

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. int \*x\_ptr = new int;
6. x\_ptr= &x;
7. delete x\_ptr;
8. cout<<x\_ptr<<endl;
9. }

 Output:

munmap\_chunk(): invalid pointer

Command terminated by signal 6

Please note, we also can’t allocate new space for deleted pointer:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x = 10;
5. int \*x\_ptr = new int;
6. x\_ptr = &x;
7. delete x\_ptr;
8. x\_ptr = new int;
9. int y = 5;
10. x\_ptr = &y;
11. cout<< x\_ptr <<endl;
12. }

Output:

free(): invalid pointer

Command terminated by signal 6

The kind of pointers, that we have just explained, is also called raw pointer. When we use raw pointers, we are responsible to delete them whenever it’s necessary.

Now let’s consider following example of using raw pointers:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
4. void mem\_leak\_func(){
5. int \*ptr = new int;
6. //do some stuff with pointer
7. //return without deallocation
8. return;
9. }
11. int main() {
12. mem\_leak\_func();
13. cout<<"successfully executed!!!";
14. }

Output:

successfully executed!!!

We allocated space in memory for pointer, which was not deallocated but became inaccessible for main() function as leaving mem\_leak\_func() function scope.

So, after execution of mem\_leak\_func() function we have allocated space in memory that can’t be reached. This phenomenon is called **Memory Leak**, execution following function many times will fill up whole memory.

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
4. void mem\_leak\_func(){
5. int\* ptr = new int;
6. //do some stuff with pointer
7. //return without deallocation
8. return;
9. }
11. int main() {
12. for(int i=0;i<25000000;i++){
13. mem\_leak\_func();
14. }
15. cout<<"successfully executed!!!";
16. }

Output:

terminate called after throwing an instance of 'std::bad\_alloc'

what(): std::bad\_alloc

We got bad allocation runtime error because memory is full and it’s impossible to allocate new space. So, if we ever do not deallocate used space we may get runtime error that is hard to find and it’s also very easy to forget deallocation when code size becomes bigger.

In order to avoid **memory leaks**, we use **Smart Pointers**. Smart Pointers deallocate space in memory when it’s necessary. In C++ one of the Smart Pointers is called unique\_ptr, that points to single value. Check our code using Smart Pointer:

1. #include <bits/stdc++.h>
2. using namespace std;
4. void mem\_leak\_func(){
5. unique\_ptr<int> valuePtr(new int);
6. //do some stuff with pointer
7. //return without deallocation
8. return;
9. }
11. int main() {
12. for(int i=0;i<25000000;i++){
13. mem\_leak\_func();
14. }
15. cout<<"successfully executed!!!";
16. }

Output:

successfully executed!!!

We can also get dangling pointers if we execute code:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int \*x\_ptr = new int(55);
5. int \*y\_ptr = x\_ptr;
6. //print out memory addresses that are saved in pointers
7. cout<<"before x\_ptr deletion"<<endl;
8. cout<<"x\_ptr : "<<x\_ptr<<endl;
9. cout<<"y\_ptr : "<<y\_ptr<<endl;
10. //print out line break
11. cout<<"-----\n";
12. delete x\_ptr;
13. x\_ptr = nullptr;
14. // address of x\_ptr is freed but y\_ptr still points to it
15. cout<<"after x\_ptr deletion"<<endl;
16. cout<<"x\_ptr : "<<x\_ptr<<endl;
17. cout<<"y\_ptr : "<<y\_ptr<<endl;
18. }

Output:

before x\_ptr deletion

x\_ptr : 0x556e9aeafeb0

y\_ptr : 0x556e9aeafeb0

-----

after x\_ptr deletion

x\_ptr : 0

y\_ptr : 0x556e9aeafeb0

As we can see Smart Pointers have advantages over Raw Pointers. Maybe one of the disadvantages of Smart Pointers is that it takes more time to instantiate Smart Pointer compared to Raw Pointer, but time difference is **so small** that, it doesn’t worth to use Raw Pointers, if we don’t work for special kind of project of course.

Now, as we can see the difference between Smart and Raw Pointers. We can speak about Smart Pointers in Rust.

Rust also has Raw and Smart Pointers, but raw pointers are only used in Unsafe Rust, because Memory Leak is serious security issue. In our project we will not use any Pointer that is unsafe to use, that’s why we will take into perspective only Smart Pointers.

There are Several kinds of Smart Pointers in Rust:

**Box Pointers** Box<T> **:** One variable can’t have two or more **Box Pointers**. Variables stored in this kind of Smart Pointer, **can be** dereferenced and edited (mutated).

**Reference Counting Pointers** Rc<T> : Compared to Box Pointers, single variable can have Multiple **Reference Counting Pointers**, but variables inside this kind of Smart Pointer, **can’t be** dereferenced and edited (mutated).

**Reference Cell Pointers** RefCell<T> : This type enforces the borrowing rules at runtime instead of compile time. This kind of pointers can be used to with weak pointers as an escape from safety rules, therefore we won’t use them because our data structure has to be safe and efficient.

In our project we will heavily use Box Pointers and references, so you don’t need to worry about another kind of pointers.

Note that: **In Rust there is no NULL pointer** instead of that it’s used Option::None which is Enum type.

## Syntax of References in Rust

Rust treats references differently than other programming languages, we will examine and compare C++ and Rust examples in order to understand conceptual differences and similarities between Rust and C-like languages approach to the references.

If we want to declare reference variable in C++, we should do like that:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x=10;
5. int &x\_ref = x;
6. cout << x\_ref << endl;
7. }

Output:

10

 In C++, it’s more look like an alias for some variable, every change applied to x\_ref variable will also be applied to x variable.

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int x=10;
5. int &x\_ref = x;
6. x\_ref++;
7. cout << x\_ref << endl;
8. }

 Output:

11

 But why do we need alias for variable if we can access it with original name? We need reference variables to do not copy them when we passing argument to the function. So, let’s look at that:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. void increase\_variable(int var){ // copy of x value saved in var
4. var++; // copy of x value increased
5. }
6. int main() {
7. int x=10;
8. increase\_variable(x);
9. cout << x << endl;
10. }

 Output:

10

x variable have not increased, because increase\_variable function created **copy of x value** and x was not increased. But if we write like that:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. void increase\_variable(int &var){ // reference of x copied in saved in var
4. var++; // var increased, so x increased also, as var is the reference of x
5. }
6. int main() {
7. int x=10;
8. increase\_variable(x);
9. cout << x << endl;
10. }

 Output:

11

As you can see only **reference of x was copied** instead of x, so we avoided copying of the variable, only reference was copied and x increased as **the reference of x** was increased. Maybe it still seems little bit confusing but whenever you have big data structure like vector, for instance, you should pass function the reference of vector variable in order to avoid copying the whole data of vector.

Now let’s see how that works in Rust, if we want to declare reference for a value it will look like this:

1. fn main() {
2. let mut x : i32 = 10;
3. let x\_ref : &mut i32 = &mut x;
4. \*x\_ref+=1;
5. println!("{}",\*x\_ref);
6. }

Output:

11

 As you can see if you want to declare variable in Rust you have to use following syntax let [<mutability>] <variable name> : <type> = <value> (i32 stands for 32-bit integer). Note that, by default in rust variables are not mutable so we have to use mut keyword if we want to declare mutable variable. Syntax of this code can be sugarized, since we can do not specify type, if compiler can infer it independently.

let mut x : i32 = 10; can be sugarized as let mut x = 10;. we will not use sugar syntax, intentionally for better comprehension.

Now let’s discuss about third line of the code shown above, and compare it to the C++ syntax:

In C++:

int &x\_ref = x;

In rust:

let x\_ref : &mut i32 = &mut x;

In C++ we use ‘&’ sign on the left side of equal sign (‘=’), but In Rust ‘&’ sign appears on the right side. We also have to use mut keyword with ‘&’ sign if we are storing reference of mutable variable to the x\_ref.

Now let’s see what is happening on fourth line.

In C++:

x\_ref++;

In Rust:

\*x\_ref+=1;

You have to explicitly dereference the reference variable in Rust in order to change it, but it is not happening in C++.

If we want to increase our variable using function our code will be like this:

1. fn increase\_variable(var : &mut i32){
2. \*var+=1;
3. }
4. fn main() {
5. let mut x : i32 = 10;
6. increase\_variable(&mut x);
7. println!("{}",x);
8. }

Output:

11

Now we know syntax of rust references, let’s move on to the next concept called Ownership!!!

## Ownership

Ownership is one of the core concepts of the rust that distinguishes it from other languages. There are several rules referring to ownership:

* Each value in Rust has a variable that’s called its *owner*.
* There can only be one owner at a time.
* When the owner goes out of scope, the value will be dropped.

These rules make our code safer but it’s little bit hard to get use to it. So, let see everything in details. Instead of copying, in Rust values are moved by default because, “There can only be one owner at a time”. This feature saves us from dangling pointer error. But there are primitive types which can be copied for example: Integer types (i8,u32,i128,usize), Float Point Types (f32,f64), Boolean Types (true, false) and Character Types (‘A’, ‘😻’ , ’x’). But any other types are regarded as Compound types Like Strings, Vectors, mutable references (&mut), etc.

If we follow Rust rules we will avoid memory leaks! Let’s consider following code in C++:

1. #include <iostream>
2. using namespace std;
3. int main() {
4. int \*x\_ptr = new int(10);
5. int \*y\_ptr = new int(20);
6. //initial values stored in pointers
8. cout<<"before reassignment of y\_ptr"<<endl;
9. cout<< x\_ptr <<endl;
10. cout<< y\_ptr <<endl;
12. y\_ptr = x\_ptr;//y\_ptr reassigned
14. cout<<"before reassignment of y\_ptr"<<endl;
15. cout<< x\_ptr <<endl;
16. cout<< y\_ptr <<endl;
18. }

Output:

before reassignment of y\_ptr

0x55691a835eb0

0x55691a835ef1

before reassignment of y\_ptr

0x55691a835eb0

0x55691a835eb0

As you can see after reassignment of y\_ptr we have no access to 0x55691a835ef1 address, and we are getting memory leak.

Now let’s do the similar thing with **Box** Type **Smart Pointer** to **Compound Type** like &mut:

1. #[allow(unused)]
2. fn main() {
3. let mut x\_ptr : Box<&mut i32> = Box::new(&mut 10);
4. let mut y\_ptr : Box<&mut i32> = Box::new(&mut 20);
5. x\_ptr = y\_ptr;
6. }

Output:

1. error[E0716]: temporary value dropped while borrowed
2. --> jdoodle.rs:4:51
3. |
4. 4 | let mut y\_ptr : Box<&mut i32> = Box::new(&mut 20);
5. | ^^ - temporary value is freed at the end of this statement
6. | |
7. | creates a temporary which is freed while still in use
8. 5 | x\_ptr = y\_ptr;
9. | ----- borrow later used here
10. |
11. = note: consider using a `let` binding to create a longer lived value
13. error: aborting due to previous error
15. For more information about this error, try `rustc --explain E0716`.

Rust do not allow us to leave temporary value inaccessible. Thanks to Rust restrictions we can avoid memory leaks!!! We cannot use variables of moved values, for instance:

1. #[allow(unused)]
2. fn main() {
3. let mut x\_ptr : Box<i32> = Box::new(10);
4. let mut y\_ptr : Box<i32> = Box::new(20);
5. x\_ptr = y\_ptr;
6. println!("{} {}",\*x\_ptr,\*y\_ptr);
7. }

Output:

1. error[E0382]: borrow of moved value: `y\_ptr`
2. --> jdoodle.rs:6:29
3. |
4. 4 | let mut y\_ptr : Box<i32> = Box::new(20);
5. | --------- move occurs because `y\_ptr` has type `std::boxed::Box<i32>`, which does not implement the `Copy` trait
6. 5 | x\_ptr = y\_ptr;
7. | ----- value moved here
8. 6 | println!("{} {}",\*x\_ptr,\*y\_ptr);
9. | ^^^^^^ value borrowed here after move
11. error: aborting due to previous error
13. For more information about this error, try `rustc --explain E0382`.

Yeah, we were dereferencing moved value, so we got error here. But if we want to copy Compound Types we can use clone() method:

1. #[allow(unused)]
2. fn main() {
3. let mut x\_ptr : Box<i32> = Box::new(10);
4. let mut y\_ptr : Box<i32> = Box::new(20);
5. x\_ptr = y\_ptr.clone();
6. println!("{} {}",\*x\_ptr,\*y\_ptr);
7. }

Output:

20 20

 Rust force us to use clone() method in order to copy!

Ownership concept and moving semantics are steadily connected with function scopes, because as we pass variable to the function, compound values are moved to function scope.

Let’s create String and try to print that two times using function:

1. fn print\_string(s: String){ //word value moved here in s
2. println!("{}",s); // move value printed out
3. }//moved value stored in s dropped as it left the function scope
4. fn main() {
5. let word : String = String::from("hello!");
6. print\_string(word);
7. print\_string(word);
8. }

Output:

1. error[E0382]: use of moved value: `word`
2. --> jdoodle.rs:7:18
3. |
4. 5 | let word : String = String::from("hello!");
5. | ---- move occurs because `word` has type `std::string::String`, which does not implement the `Copy` trait
6. 6 | print\_string(word);
7. | ---- value moved here
8. 7 | print\_string(word);
9. | ^^^^ value used here after move
11. error: aborting due to previous error
13. For more information about this error, try `rustc --explain E0382`.

Code didn’t compile successfully because, our String type variable, stored in word, moved into the function scope and it dropped after the last line of print\_string() function executed, so value stored in word didn’t get back it’s owned variable and became empty. As it became empty, we were not allowed to use it again, therefore compiler gave us error about usage of valueless variable.

In order to avoid this error, we just need to pass reference of our variable to the function. The process of passing variable reference is called **borrowing**.

1. fn print\_string(s: &String){ //reference to word variable copied into s
2. println!("{}",\*s); //value stored in reference printed out
3. }//reference of word variable destroyed but not the word value itself.
4. fn main() {
5. let word : String = String::from("hello!");
6. //borrow word variable to the function
7. print\_string(&word);//passed only reference not value
8. print\_string(&word);//passed only reference not value
9. }

Output:

hello!

hello!

We reached our goal (without cloning of value) using **borrow** concept.

## Lifetimes

In Rust every variable has its own lifetime, to understand Lifetimes let’s start from the easiest example, as other programming languages, Rust also has code blocks with its own scope. Let’s write code using code blocks.

*fn* do\_some\_stuff() {  
 *let* x: &*i32* = &10;  
 {  
 *let* z: &*i32* = x;  
 *let* y: &*i32* = &15;  
 print!("{} + {} = {}", \*z, \*y, \*z + \*y);  
 }  
}  
  
*fn* main() {  
 do\_some\_stuff();  
}

Output:

10 + 15 = 25

Everything works fine, since rust can infer lifetime of each variable, but what we see is sugarized syntax. So, we can get the same result with lifetime variables, let’s see what our code will look like, if we add lifetime variable to the x variable.

*fn* do\_some\_stuff<'a>() {  
 *let* x: &'a *i32* = &10;  
 {  
 *let* z: &'a *i32* = x;  
 *let* y: &*i32* = &15;  
 print!("{} + {} = {}", \*z, \*y, \*z + \*y);  
 }  
}  
  
*fn* main() {  
 do\_some\_stuff();  
}

Output:

10 + 15 = 25

It’s obvious that lifetime of x is longer than lifetime of y and z, but when we write in the **Type Field** of z: &'a *i32* it means, that we are storing in z value of *i32* variable, which has longer lifetime than z.

We can also specify lifetime of y, to show that y and z are taking values, that have different lifetimes:

*fn* do\_some\_stuff<'a, 'b>() {  
 *let* x: &'a *i32* = &10;  
 {  
 *let* z: &'a *i32* = x;  
 *let* y: &'b *i32* = &15;  
 print!("{} + {} = {}", \*z, \*y, \*z + \*y);  
 }  
}  
  
*fn* main() {  
 do\_some\_stuff();  
}

Output:

10 + 15 = 25

We can make our code little bit complicated, using more lifetimes:

*fn* do\_some\_stuff<'a, 'b, 'c>(var : &'c *i32*) {  
 *let* x: &'a *i32* = &10;  
 {  
 *let* z: &'a *i32* = x;  
 *let* y: &'b *i32* = &15;  
 print!("{} + {} + {} = {}", \*z, \*y, \*var, \*z + \*y + \*var);  
 }  
}  
  
*fn* main() {  
 *let* variable: &*i32* = &20;  
 do\_some\_stuff(variable);  
}

Output:

10 + 15 + 20 = 45

Please note, we **cannot** specify lifetime parameters in the main() function:

*fn* do\_some\_stuff<'a, 'b, 'c>(var: &'c *i32*) {  
 *let* x: &'a *i32* = &10;  
 {  
 *let* z: &'a *i32* = x;  
 *let* y: &'b *i32* = &15;  
 print!("{} + {} + {} = {}", \*z, \*y, \*var, \*z + \*y + \*var);  
 }  
}  
  
*fn* main<'c>() {  
 *let* variable: &'c *i32* = &20;  
 do\_some\_stuff(variable);  
}

Output:

error[E0131]: `main` function is not allowed to have generic parameters  
--> src\main.rs:10:8  
|  
10 | *fn* main<'c>() {  
 | ^^^^ `main` cannot have generic parameters  
  
 error: aborting due to previous error  
  
 For more information about this error, try `rustc --explain E0131`.

We can create *struct*, which will take references of different lifetimes. At first let’s see what will happen if we don’t specify lifetime parameter for *struct*.

*struct* Coordinate {  
 x: &*i32*}  
  
*fn* main() {  
 *let* s: Coordinate;  
 {  
 *let* position: *i32* = 10;  
 s = Coordinate {  
 x: &position  
 };  
 }// position value drops here  
 print!("{}", \*s.x); //position value is already dropped  
}

Output:

error[E0106]: missing lifetime specifier  
--> src\main.rs:2:8  
|  
2 | x: &i32  
| ^ expected named lifetime parameter  
|  
help: consider introducing a named lifetime parameter  
|  
1 | *struct* Coordinate<'a> {  
2 | x: &'a i32  
|  
  
error: aborting due to previous error  
  
For more information about this error, try `rustc --explain E0106`.

Rust forces us to use lifetime specifier for structure keys, because if we don’t specify lifetime, value of some key might be dropped. If structure key has dropped value in means that, in the structure we are keeping dangling reference. In order to do not use *struct* instance after its value is dropped, we have to explicitly declare lifetime parameters for *struct* s.

*struct* Coordinate<'a> {  
 x: &'a *i32*}  
  
*fn* main() {  
 *let* s: Coordinate;  
 {  
 *let* position: *i32* = 10;  
 s = Coordinate {  
 x: &position  
 };  
 }  
 print!("{}", \*s.x);  
}

Output:

error[E0597]: `position` does not live long enough  
--> src\main.rs:10:16  
|  
10 | x: &position  
| ^^^^^^^^^ borrowed value does not live long enough  
11 | };  
12 | }  
| - `position` dropped here whilestill borrowed  
13 | print!("{}", \*s.x);  
| ---- borrow later used here  
  
error: aborting due to previous error  
  
For more information about this error, try `rustc --explain E0597`.

We got error because value stored in x is already dropped and it means that we are using *struct* variable at improper place. We have to print out key of the structure before the value of x will be dropped.

So, proper code looks like this:

*struct* Coordinate<'a> {  
 x: &'a *i32*}  
  
*fn* main() {  
 *let* s: Coordinate;  
 {  
 *let* position: *i32* = 10;  
 s = Coordinate {  
 x: &position  
 };  
 print!("{}", \*s.x);  
 }  
}

Output:

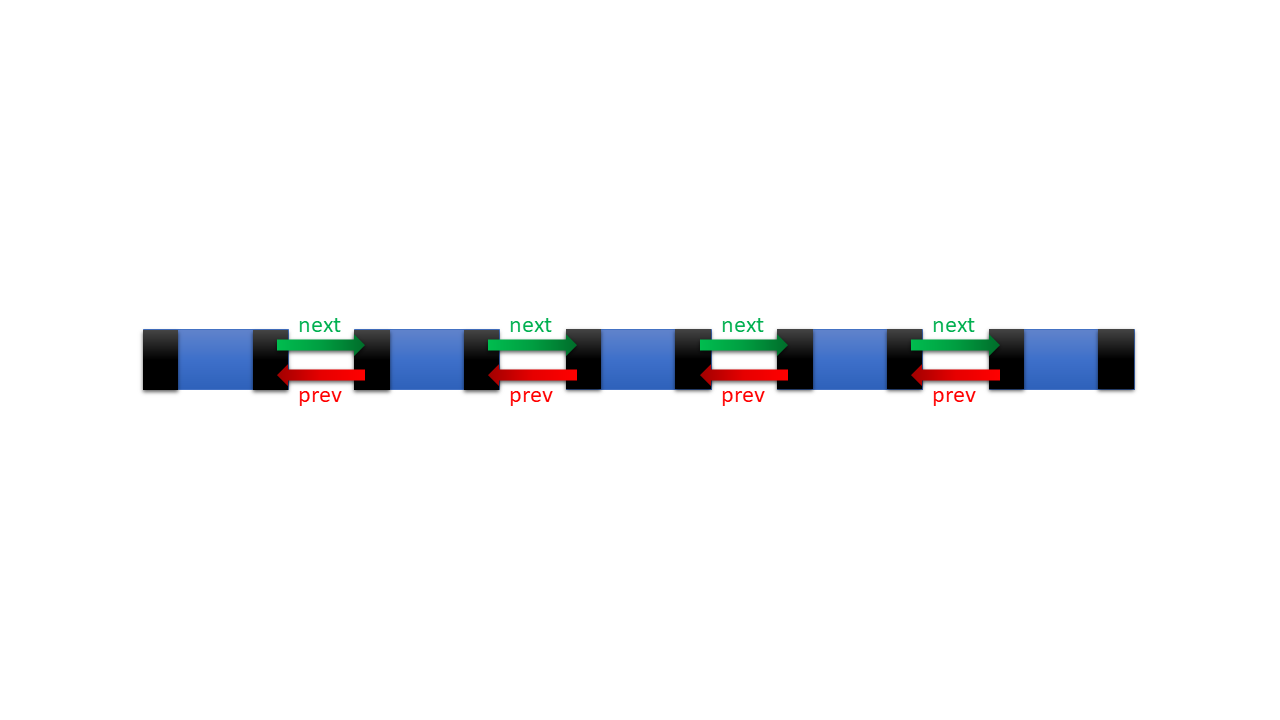
10

In summary, lifetimes help us to make our code safer and more comprehensive. Now we have understanding of Rust’s core concepts. Using these features of Rust, we will create safe and fast data structure.

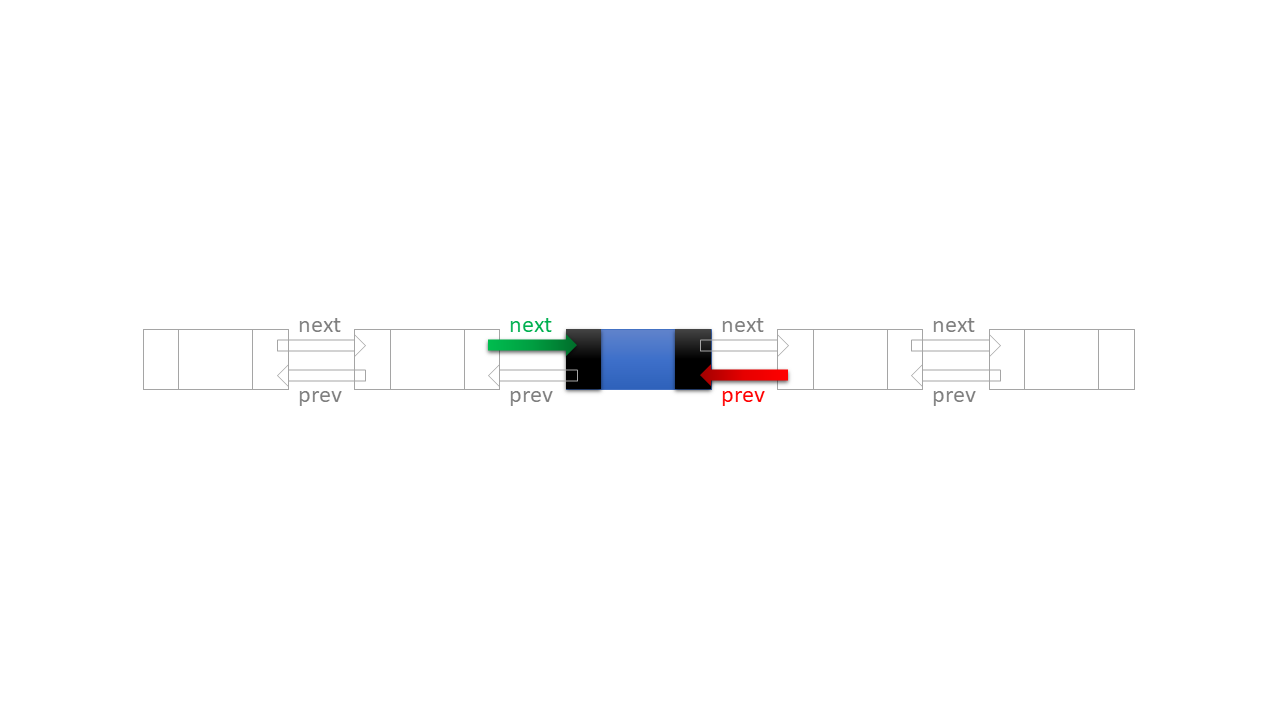
# Constructing Doubly Linked List in Rust

In this part we will find out the way of constructing Doubly-Linked-List data structure in Rust, using safe and effective approaches.

Before the explanation of solution, let’s see how does Doubly-Linked-List looks like and what are the challenges we are facing.



Each node has two pointers called next and previous. And that leads us to the problem: some of the nodes pointed by two pointers.



In Rust we cannot have two mutable pointers, pointing to the same object. But why do we need pointer in node named next and previous? We need them in order to navigate left and right in Doubly Linked List whenever we want.

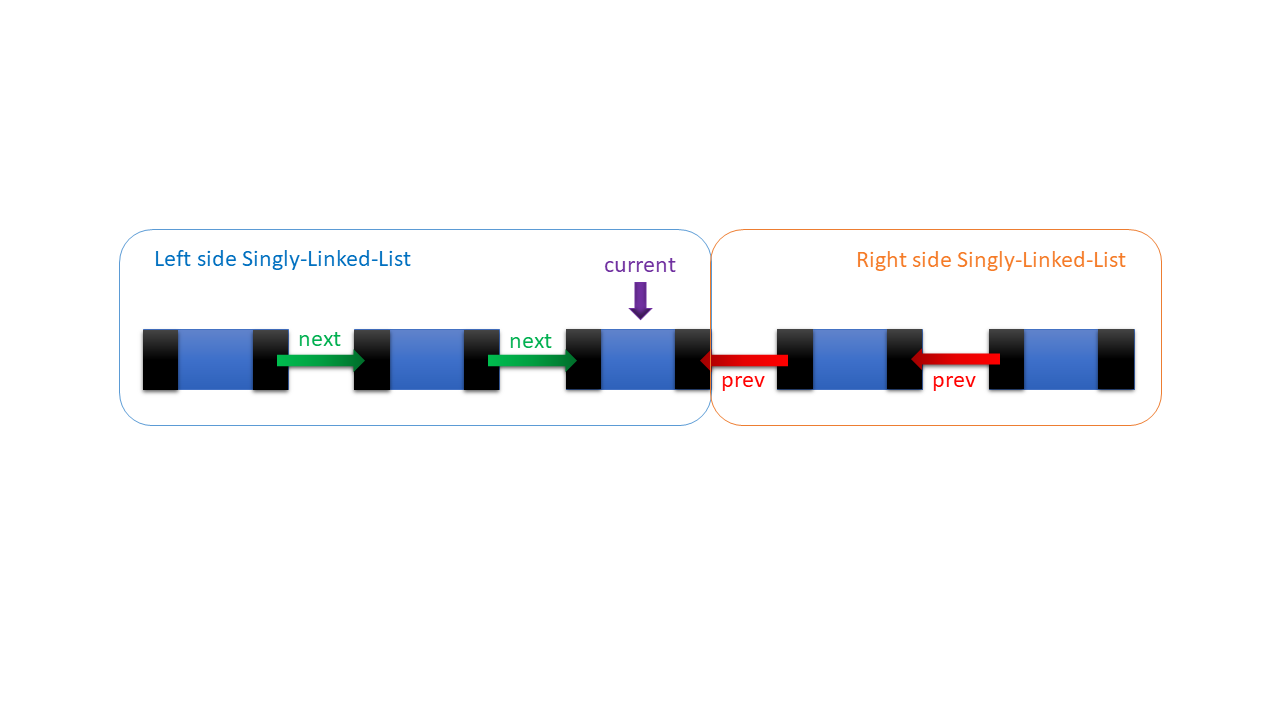
Two pointers, pointing to the same object, create safety issue. Because if reference of the first pointer will be dropped, then in the second dangling reference will be left.

Given that, Doubly-Linked-List seems unsafe data structure. But is there any way to make that structure safe and keep the functionality and benefits (traversing either left or right at any stage) of this data structure?

Fortunately, answer to that question is positive. It sounds a little bit weird, but to keep functionality and benefits of the structure we don’t need to have two pointers for each node.

We can keep the data structure 100% safe if we spilt our list into left side Singly-Linked-List and right side Singly-Linked-List in relation to the current node.

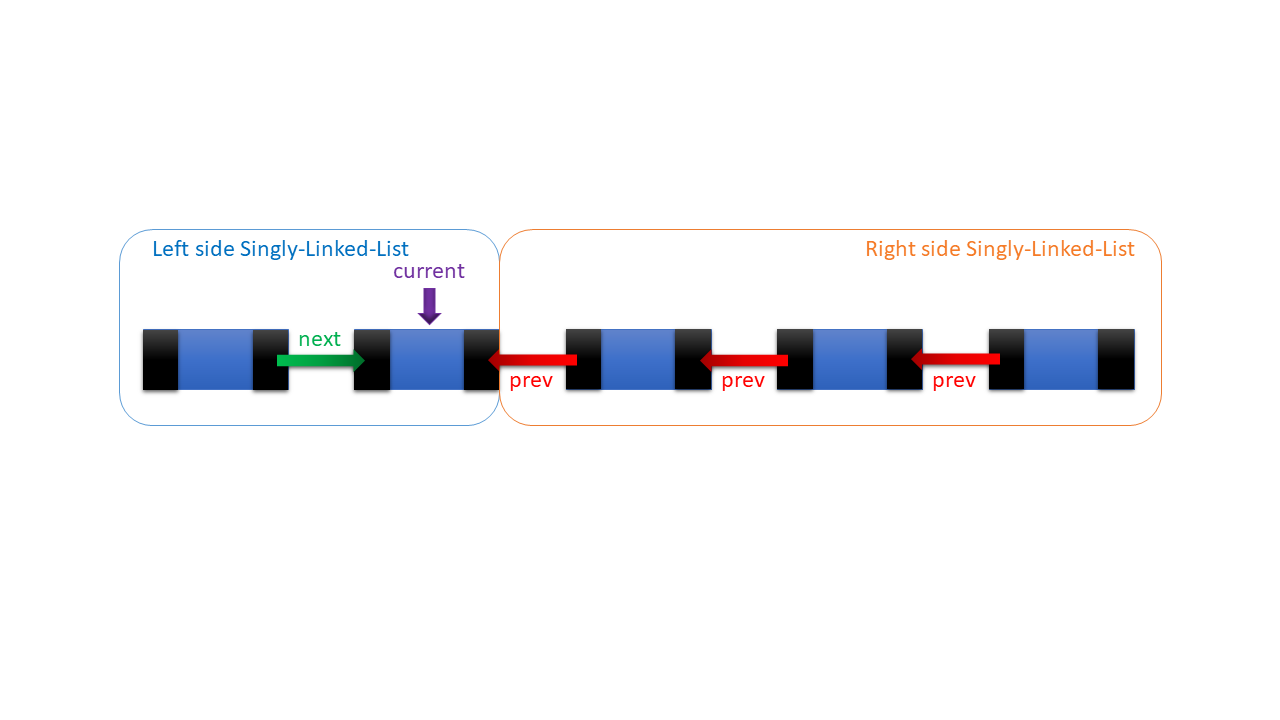
Visual of our Doubly-Linked-List should be something like that:



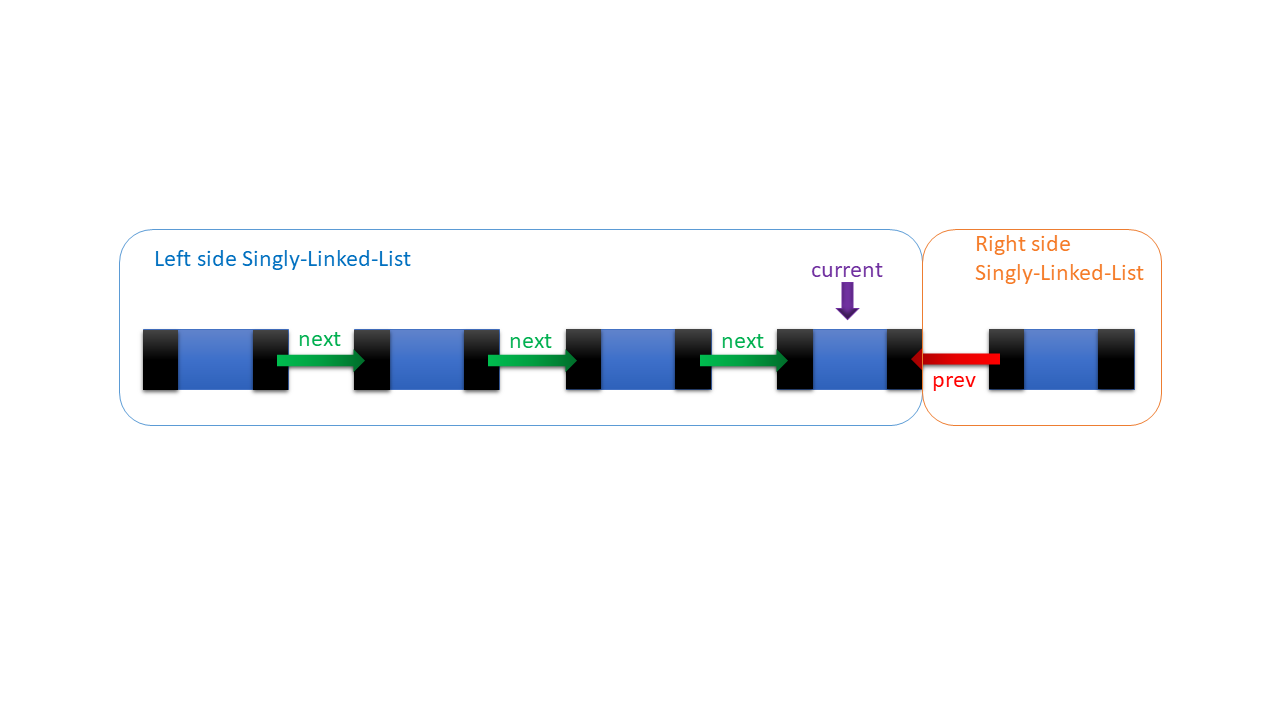
* In order to **navigate left**, we will pop the last element from the Left side Singly-Linked-List and push it to the Right side Singly-Linked-List.
* In order to **navigate right**, we will pop the last element from the Right side Singly-Linked-List and push it to the Left side Singly-Linked-List.

We will use move semantics of Rust to do that. And it will be completely safe!!!

From current stage we can move to the left:



Or move to the right:



Voilà! We managed to maintain the functionality of the data structure and developed safer model for Doubly-Linked-List. Now we can implement it and add awesome functionality to our structure, which will make that efficient, safe and reliable.

# Implementing Doubly Linked List in Rust

Finally! We reached the implementation stage! In order to make our code structured we have to use module system of Rust. We will create module for Singly-Linked-List and Doubly-Linked-List. Our File Structure will be like that:

src

├── main.rs

├── doubly\_linked\_list

│   └── list.rs

└── doubly\_linked\_list.rs

Singly-Linked-List structure module (list.rs) will be included in Doubly-Linked-List structure module (doubly\_linked\_list.rs), Doubly-Linked-List module will be included in main file (main.rs). Note, Box Pointers always be wrapped by Option, because there is no NULL pointer in Rust, but Option provides us None.

## Implementation of Singly-Linked-List

In order to create Singly-Linked-List we will need two structures, one for Singly-Linked-List itself and another for the nodes. Let’s create structure for Singly-Linked-List:

*pub struct* List<T> {  
 head: Option<Box<Node<T>>>,  
 size: *i32*,  
}

List structure will have two keys:

* head: pointer to the last node of the Singly-Linked-List
* size: 32-bit integer for size of the Singly-Linked-List

Node Structure will look like that:

*pub struct* Node<T> {  
 elem: T,  
 next: Option<Box<Node<T>>>,  
}

* elem: for the value resided into the node
* next: for pointer to the next node

As we defined the structures, we can implement the methods for List<T>. The first step is to create define the function which will return empty instance for the structure:

*impl*<T> List<T> {  
 *pub fn new*() -> *Self* {  
 List {  
 head: *None*,  
 size: 0,  
 }  
 }  
}

function returns Literally empty instance with None stored in head and 0 in size.

We can test our code writing ‘#[test]’ to the tester function and executing ‘cargo test’ command:

Test:

#[test]  
*fn* create\_new() {  
 *let* list: List<*i32*> = List::*new*();  
 assert\_eq!(list, List {  
 head: *None*,  
 size: 0,  
 } *as* List<*i32*>);  
}

Result:

C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\src\doubly\_linked\_list>cargo test  
error[E0369]: binary operation `==` cannot be applied to *type* `doubly\_linked\_list::list::List<i32>`  
--> src\doubly\_linked\_list\list.rs:142:5  
|  
142 | assert\_eq!(list, List {  
 | \_\_\_\_\_^  
 | |\_\_\_\_\_|  
 | |  
143 | | head: None,  
144 | | size: 0,  
145 | | } *as* List<i32>);  
| | ^  
| |\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_|  
| |\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_doubly\_linked\_list::list::List<i32>  
| doubly\_linked\_list::list::List<i32>  
|  
= note: an implementation of `std::cmp::PartialEq` might be missing *for* `doubly\_linked\_list::list::List<i32>`  
= note: this error originates *in* a *macro* (*in* Nightly builds, run with -Z *macro*-backtrace *for* more info)

We got this error because our struct doesn’t support ‘==’ operator, in order to make the mentioned operator supported, we just need to use std::cmp, write #[derive(PartialEq)] above the declared structures. There is no need to write operator functions, because Rust will automatically derive functionality for the List<T> and Node<T>.

Let’s add it to the Structures and run it again!

#[derive(PartialEq)]  
*pub struct* List<T> {  
 head: Option<Box<Node<T>>>,  
 size: *i32*,  
}  
  
#[derive(PartialEq)]  
*pub struct* Node<T> {  
 elem: T,  
 next: Option<Box<Node<T>>>,  
}

Test Result:

C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\src\doubly\_linked\_list>cargo test  
Compiling doubly-linked-list v0.1.0 (C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list)  
Finished test [unoptimized + debuginfo] target(s) *in* 1.44s  
Running C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\target\debug\deps\doubly\_linked\_list-f4dd80bb82e872e1.exe  
  
running 1 test  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::create\_new ... ok  
  
test result: ok. 1 passed; 0 failed; 0 ignored; 0 measured; 0 filtered out

### List::push()

In order to insert elements in the list, push() function has to be created.

List::*push*() must implement following actions:

* Take a new element to push it in the List
* Create Box Pointer to the new Node
* Next key of New node has to be the Box Pointer of last element of the List
* head of the List has to be Box Pointer to the new Node
* size of the List has to be increased by 1

*impl*<T> List<T> {  
 *pub fn* push(&*mut self*, elem: T) {  
 *self*.head = *Some*(Box::*new*(Node { elem: elem, next: *self*.head.take() }));  
 *self*.size += 1;  
 }  
}

Note that, in Node, next is *self*.head.take(). We need to use .take() in order to move value from *self*.head and store None in *self*.head.

* Value of *self*.head will be replaced by None.
* The value taken from *self*.head will be moved to the next key of new Node

### List::pop()

List::*pop*() function will be used for popping and taking the moved out element from the List.

List::*pop*() must implement following actions:

* Return the element of the Node stored in head
* head of the List has to be Box Pointer to the next value of Node
* size of the List has to be decreased by 1
* if there is nothing to pop, *None* will be returned

*impl*<T> List<T> {  
 *pub fn* pop(&*mut self*) -> Option<T> {  
 *self*.size = cmp::max(*self*.size - 1, 0);  
 *match self*.head.take() {  
 *Some*(node) => {  
 *self*.head = node.next;  
 *Some*(node.elem)  
 }  
 *None* => *None*,  
 }  
 }  
}

Let’s Test our functions described above:

Test:

#[test]  
*fn* push\_and\_pop(){  
 *let mut* list: List<*i32*> = List::*new*();  
 list.push(1);  
 list.push(2);  
 list.push(3);  
 assert\_eq!(list.pop(),*Some*(3));  
 assert\_eq!(list.pop(),*Some*(2));  
 assert\_eq!(list.pop(),*Some*(1));  
 assert\_eq!(list.pop(),*None*);  
}

Result:

C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\src\doubly\_linked\_list>cargo test  
Compiling doubly-linked-list v0.1.0 (C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list)  
Finished test [unoptimized + debuginfo] target(s) *in* 4.58s  
Running C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\target\debug\deps\doubly\_linked\_list-f4dd80bb82e872e1.exe  
  
running 2 tests  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::create\_new ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::push\_and\_pop ... ok  
  
test result: ok. 2 passed; 0 failed; 0 ignored; 0 measured; 0 filtered out

Everything works fine!

In order to get head and size of the List we have to define two getter functions for them.

### List::get\_size()

List::*get\_size*() must implement following actions:

* return the size of List

*impl*<T> List<T> {  
 *pub fn* get\_size(&*self*) -> *i32* {  
 *self*.size  
 }  
}

### List::get\_top()

List::*get\_top*() must implement following actions:

* return the reference of node element stored in head of List

*impl*<T> List<T> {  
 *pub fn* get\_top(&*self*) -> Option<&T> {  
 *match self*.head.as\_ref() {  
 *Some*(node) => {  
 *Some*(&node.elem)  
 }  
 *None* => *None* }  
 }  
}

Lets check if getters work:

Test:

#[test]  
*fn* getters(){  
 *let mut* list : List<*i32*> = List::*new*();  
 list.push(33);  
 list.push(22);  
 list.push(11);  
  
 assert\_eq!(list.get\_size(),3);  
 assert\_eq!(list.get\_top(),*Some*(&11));  
}

Restult:

C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\src\doubly\_linked\_list>cargo test  
Compiling doubly-linked-list v0.1.0 (C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list)  
Finished test [unoptimized + debuginfo] target(s) *in* 1.44s  
Running C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\target\debug\deps\doubly\_linked\_list-f4dd80bb82e872e1.exe  
  
running 3 tests  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::getters ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::push\_and\_pop ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::create\_new ... ok  
  
test result: ok. 3 passed; 0 failed; 0 ignored; 0 measured; 0 filtered out

### Iterator

Nice! In order to make our Singly-Liked-List better than a stack, we have to make it iterable. We should have *trait*. Traits are just like sketch of the functions and properties that can be applied to any structure.

*trait Iterator* {  
 *type* Item;  
 *fn* next(&*mut self*) -> Option<*Self*::Item>;  
}

In Item we will save generic type (with lifetime parameter) of the List<T>.

Now, Let’s create structure called Iter, that will traverse over List<T>.

*pub struct* Iter<'a, T> {  
 next: Option<&'a Node<T>>,  
}

Now, iter should be implemented for List<T>. We have to borrow reference of node and store it in Iter. In order to convert &Option<T> to Option<&T>, as\_ref() have to be used. As we borrow the reference of Box pointer, we have to dereference borrowed reference of value, then dereference Box pointer to get the Node<T> from &Box<Node<T>>. After we get the Node<T> we have to return reference of it, so two ‘\*’ for getting the Node<T> and one ‘&’ for returning reference of it.

*impl*<T> List<T> {

*pub fn* iter(&*self*) -> Iter<T> {  
 Iter {  
 next: *self*.head.as\_ref().map(|node:&Box<Node<T>>| { &\*\*node }),  
 }  
 }  
}

Created Iterator trait have to be applied to the Linked list. Item of iterator will be structure with independent lifetime, therefore references, type-generics, and lifetime parameters will be used.

next() function of Iterator have to return Option, having reference of value stored in the node. To make that:

* Iter should store reference of the next node
* Reference of current node element (wrapped with Option) have to be returned

*impl*<'a, T> *Iterator for* Iter<'a, T> {  
 *type* Item = &'a T;  
  
 *fn* next(&*mut self*) -> Option<*Self*::Item> {  
 *self*.next.map(|node| {  
 *self*.next = node.next.as\_ref().map(|next\_node| { &\*\*next\_node });  
 &node.elem  
 })  
 }  
}

It’s time to test:

#[test]  
*fn* list\_iter(){  
 *let mut* list : List<*i32*> = List::*new*();  
 list.push(33);  
 list.push(22);  
 list.push(11);  
 *let mut* it : Iter<*i32*> = list.iter();  
 assert\_eq!(it.next(),*Some*(&11));  
 assert\_eq!(it.next(),*Some*(&22));  
 assert\_eq!(it.next(),*Some*(&33));  
 *//Iterator has no influence on the list* assert\_eq!(list.get\_top(),*Some*(&11));  
}

Result:

C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\src\doubly\_linked\_list>cargo test  
Compiling doubly-linked-list v0.1.0 (C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list)  
Finished test [unoptimized + debuginfo] target(s) *in* 1.12s  
Running C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\target\debug\deps\doubly\_linked\_list-f4dd80bb82e872e1.exe  
  
running 4 tests  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::create\_new ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::getters ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::list\_iter ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::push\_and\_pop ... ok  
  
test result: ok. 4 passed; 0 failed; 0 ignored; 0 measured; 0 filtered out

To implement mutable Iterator, we just need to use &mut instead of mut and as\_mut instead of as\_ref. So Struct, function and iterator implementation will look like that:

Struct:

*pub struct* IterMut<'a, T> {  
 next: Option<&'a *mut* Node<T>>,  
}

Function:

*impl*<T> List<T> {  
 *pub fn* iter\_mut(&*mut self*) -> IterMut<T> {  
 IterMut {  
 next: *self*.head.as\_mut().map(|node| { &*mut* \*\*node }),  
 }  
 }  
}

Iterator on IterMut:

*impl*<'a, T> *Iterator for* IterMut<'a, T> {  
 *type* Item = &'a *mut* T;  
  
 *fn* next(&*mut self*) -> Option<*Self*::Item> {  
 *self*.next.take().map(|node| {  
 *self*.next = node.next.as\_mut().map(|next\_node| { &*mut* \*\*next\_node });  
 &*mut* node.elem  
 })  
 }  
}

test:

#[test]  
*fn* list\_iter\_mut(){  
 *let mut* list : List<*i32*> = List::*new*();  
 list.push(33);  
 list.push(22);  
 list.push(11);  
 *let mut* it : IterMut<*i32*> = list.iter\_mut();  
 assert\_eq!(it.next(),*Some*(&*mut* 11));  
 assert\_eq!(it.next(),*Some*(&*mut* 22));  
 assert\_eq!(it.next(),*Some*(&*mut* 33));  
 *//Iterator has no influence to the list* assert\_eq!(list.get\_top(),*Some*(&11));  
}

Result:

C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\src\doubly\_linked\_list>cargo test  
Compiling doubly-linked-list v0.1.0 (C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list)  
Finished test [unoptimized + debuginfo] target(s) *in* 1.43s  
Running C:\Users\Sandro\Desktop\RUST\Rust\doubly-linked-list\target\debug\deps\doubly\_linked\_list-f4dd80bb82e872e1.exe  
  
running 5 tests  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::getters ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::list\_iter\_mut ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::list\_iter ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::create\_new ... ok  
test doubly\_linked\_list::list::push\_and\_pop ... ok  
  
test result: ok. 5 passed; 0 failed; 0 ignored; 0 measured; 0 filtered out

### Drop

As destructors in Rust, *Drop* *trait* is used. We have to implement it to make our memory free, after the usage of List<T>.

*Drop* *trait* will have only one function, and we call it drop():

*pub trait Drop* {  
 *fn* drop(&*mut self*);  
}

In the drop function we have to take value from current node and get on the next node until we don’t get None in variable.

*impl*<T> *Drop for* List<T> {  
 *fn* drop(&*mut self*) {  
 *let mut* current: Option<Box<Node<T>>> = *self*.head.take();  
 *while let Some*(*mut* boxed\_node) = current {  
 current = boxed\_node.next.take();  
 }  
 }  
}

*while let* will work until we don’t get *None* into the current. As a result, all value will be moved out of the Singly-Linked-List, and memory will be freed out.