**Constructors and Destructor**

Constructor is used for initialization and destructor is used for cleanup.

# Constructors in C++

**What is constructor?**

A constructor is a member function of a class which initializes objects of a class. In C++, Constructor is automatically called when object (instance of class) is created. It is special member function of the class.

Constructor function can also be defined as inline function.

**Characteristics** of a constructor:

1. Constructor has same name as the class itself
2. Constructor should be declared in the public section
3. Constructor do not have return type, not even void
4. A constructor is automatically called when an object is created
5. If we do not specify a constructor, C++ compiler generates a default constructor for us (expects no parameters and has an empty body)
6. Constructor can have default arguments
7. Constructor cannot be inherited, though a derived class can call the base class constructor
8. Constructor cannot be virtual
9. We cannot refer to constructor address
10. An object with a constructor or destructor cannot be used as a member of a union
11. Constructor makes implicit calls to the operators new and delete when memory allocation is required

Types of Constructors

1. Default Constructors
2. Parameterized Constructors
3. Copy Constructor
4. Constructors with default arguments

# Default Constructors

Default constructor is the constructor which doesn’t take any argument. It has no parameters.

If no such constructor is defined, then the compiler supplies a default constructor. The default value of variables is 0 in case of automatic initialization.

A a; // invokes the default constructor of the compiler to create the object a

# Parameterized Constructors

It is possible to pass arguments to constructors. Typically, these arguments help initialize an object when it is created.

To create a parameterized constructor, simply add parameters to it the way you would to any other function. When you define the constructor’s body, use the parameters to initialize the object.

**Uses** of Parameterized constructor:

It is used to initialize the various data elements of different objects with different values when they are created.

It is used to overload constructors.

Parameterized constructor can be invoked in two ways:

1. **Explicitly**

integer int1 = integer(1, 100);

1. **Implicitly (shorthand method)**

integer int1(1, 100);

**Can we have more than one constructors in a class?**

Yes, It is called Constructor Overloading.

**NOTE**:

Default constructor is provided by compiler as long as we do not use any other constructors in the class.

However, once we define a constructor, we must also define the default implicit constructor.

# Copy Constructor

A copy constructor is a member function which initializes an object using another object of the same class. See section [Copy Constructor in C++](#_Copy_Constructor_in).

# Constructors with Default Arguments

It is possible to define constructor with default arguments.

The default arguments must be trailing ones.

Example 01

complex(float real, float img = 0);

complex c1(5.2, 6.3); // assigns 5.2 to real and 6.3 to img

complex c2(5.2); // assigns 5.2 to real and 0.0 to img

Example 02

A::A() {} // default constructor

A::A(int i = 0) {} // default argument constructor

Default argument constructor can be called with either one argument or not arguments.

When called with no arguments, it becomes a default constructor.

When both these forms are used in a class, it may cause ambiguity.

A a; // this will generate compilation error because of ambiguity whether to call A::A() or A::A(int i = 0)

# Destructors in C++

**What is destructor?**

Destructor is a member function which destructs or deletes an object.

**When is destructor called?**

A destructor function is called automatically when the object goes out of scope:

1. the function ends
2. the program ends
3. a block containing local variables ends
4. a delete operator is called

Note:

1. When the pointers to objects go out of scope, a destructor is not called implicitly. We need to write user defined destructor in this case.
2. Objects are destroyed in reverse order of their creation.

**How destructors are different from a normal member function?**

Destructors have same name as the class preceded by a tilde (~)

Destructors don’t take any argument and don’t return anything

**Can there be more than one destructor in a class?**

No, there can only one destructor in a class with class name preceded by ~, no parameters and no return type.

**When do we need to write a user-defined destructor?**

If we do not write our own destructor in class, compiler creates a default destructor for us. The default destructor works fine unless we have dynamically allocated memory or pointer in class.

When a class contains a pointer to memory allocated in class, we should write a destructor to release memory before the class instance is destroyed. This must be done to avoid memory leak.

**Can a destructor be virtual?**

Yes, In fact, it is always a good idea to make destructors virtual in base class when we have a virtual function. See section [Virtual Destructors](#_Virtual_Destructors).

# Initialization of Data Members

In C++, class variables are initialized in the same order as they appear in the class declaration.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

int y;

int x;

public:

//Test() : x(10), y(x + 10) {} // 1 incorrect intialization

Test() : x(y-10), y(20) {} // 2 correct intialization

void print() {

cout<<"x = "<<x<<" y = "<<y;

}

};

int main() {

Test t;

t.print();

return 0;

}

Output:

x = 10 y = 32775

x = 10 y = 20

Following two versions can be used to avoid the problem 1 in above code:

Change the order of declaration. int x , int y;

Change the order of initialization. Test() : x(y-10), y(20) {}

// 1 program prints correct value of x, but some garbage value for y, because y is initialized before x as it appears before in the class declaration.

// 2 Initialization order has been changed, now program prints correct value

# Does compiler create default constructor when we write our own?

In C++, compiler by default creates default constructor for every class. But, if we define our own constructor, compiler doesn’t create the default constructor.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class myInteger {

private:

int value;

public:

myInteger() { value = 5; }

myInteger(int arg) { value = arg; }

void printValue(void) { cout << "Value is : " << value << endl; }

};

int main() {

myInteger I1;

I1.printValue();

myInteger I2(7);

I2.printValue();

return 0;

}

Output:

Value is : 5

Value is : 7

Compile Errors: // in case parameterized constructor is present but default constructor is absent

prog.cpp: In function 'int main()':

prog.cpp:17:13: error: no matching function for call to 'myInteger::myInteger()'

myInteger I1;

^

prog.cpp:8:9: note: candidate: myInteger::myInteger(int)

myInteger(int arg) {

^

prog.cpp:8:9: note: candidate expects 1 argument, 0 provided

prog.cpp:4:7: note: candidate: constexpr myInteger::myInteger(const myInteger&)

class myInteger {

^

prog.cpp:4:7: note: candidate expects 1 argument, 0 provided

prog.cpp:4:7: note: candidate: constexpr myInteger::myInteger(myInteger&&)

prog.cpp:4:7: note: candidate expects 1 argument, 0 provided

# Is it possible to call constructor and destructor explicitly?

Yes, it is possible to call special member functions explicitly by programmer.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

public:

Test() { cout << "Constructor is executed\n"; }

~Test() { cout << "Destructor is executed\n\n"; }

};

int main() {

Test(); // Explicit call to constructor

Test t; // local object

t.~Test(); // Explicit call to destructor

return 0;

}

Output:

Constructor is executed

Destructor is executed

Constructor is executed

Destructor is executed

Destructor is executed

When the constructor is called explicitly the compiler creates a nameless temporary object and it is immediately destroyed. That’s why 2nd line in the output is call to destructor.

C++ standard says that

Once a destructor is invoked for an object, the object no longer exists; the behaviour is undefined if the destructor is invoked for an object whose lifetime has ended.

As mentioned here <https://isocpp.org/wiki/faq/dtors#dont-call-dtor-on-local> , we should never call destructor explicitly on local (automatic) object, because really bad results can be acquired by doing that.

Local objects are automatically destroyed by compiler when they go out of scope and this is the guarantee of C++ language. In general, special member functions shouldn’t be called explicitly.

Constructor and destructor can also be called from the member function of class.

Explicit call to destructor is only necessary when object is placed at particular location in memory by using placement new. Destructor should not be called explicitly when the object is dynamically allocated because delete operator automatically calls destructor.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

public:

Test() { cout << "Constructor is executed\n"; }

~Test() { cout << "Destructor is executed\n\n"; }

friend void fun(Test t);

};

void fun(Test t) {

Test();

t.~Test();

}

int main() {

Test();

Test t;

fun(t);

return 0;

}

Output:

Constructor is executed

Destructor is executed

Constructor is executed

Constructor is executed

Destructor is executed

Destructor is executed

Destructor is executed

Destructor is executed

# Elimination of the definition block

In C, you must always define all the variables at the beginning of a block, after the opening brace.

In C++, however, there’s a significant problem in being forced to define all objects at the beginning of a scope. If a constructor exists, it must be called when the object is created. However, if the constructor takes one or more initialization arguments, how do you know you will have that initialization information at the beginning of a scope?

## Storage allocation

A variable can now be defined at any point in a scope, so it might seem that the storage for a variable may not be defined until its point of definition.

The compiler even checks to make sure that you don’t put the object definition (and thus the constructor call) where the sequence point only conditionally passes through it, such as in a switch statement or somewhere a goto can jump past it.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class X {

public:

X();

};

X::X() {}

void f(int i) {

if(i < 10) {

goto jump1; // Error: goto bypasses init

}

X x1; // Constructor called here

jump1:

switch(i) {

case 1 :

X x2; // Constructor called here

break;

case 2 : // Error: case bypasses init

X x3; // Constructor called here

break;

}

}

int main() {

f(9);

f(11);

return 0;

}

Compilation Error

cppmain.cpp: In function 'void f(int)':

cppmain.cpp:17:2: error: jump to label 'jump1' [-fpermissive]

jump1:

^

cppmain.cpp:13:8: note: from here

goto jump1; // Error: goto bypasses init

^

cppmain.cpp:16:4: note: crosses initialization of 'X x1'

X x1; // Constructor called here

^

cppmain.cpp:23:8: error: jump to case label [-fpermissive]

case 2 : // Error: case bypasses init

^

cppmain.cpp:21:6: note: crosses initialization of 'X x2'

X x2; // Constructor called here

^

# Aggregate initialization

An aggregate is just what it sounds like: a bunch of things clumped together.

Initializing aggregates can be error-prone and tedious. C++ aggregate initialization makes it much safer. When you create an object that’s an aggregate, all you must do is make an assignment, and the initialization will be taken care of by the compiler.

For an array of built-in types this is quite simple:

int a[5] = { 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 };

If you try to give more initializers than there are array elements, the compiler gives an error message.

But what happens if you give fewer initializers? For example:

int b[6] = {0};

Here, the compiler will use the first initializer for the first array element, and then use zero for all the elements without initializers.

A second shorthand for arrays is automatic counting, in which you let the compiler determine the size of the array based on the number of initializers:

int c[] = { 1, 2, 3, 4 };

Because structures are also aggregates, they can be initialized in a similar fashion.

struct X {

int i;

float f;

char c;

};

X x1 = { 1, 2.2, 'c' };

If you have an array of such objects, you can initialize them by using a nested set of curly braces for each object:

X x2[3] = { {1, 1.1, 'a'}, {2, 2.2, 'b'} };

Here, the third object is initialized to zero.

struct Y {

float f;

int i;

Y(int a);

};

You must indicate constructor calls. The best approach is the explicit one as follows:

Y y1[] = { Y(1), Y(2), Y(3) };

# Use of explicit keyword in C++

If a class has a constructor which can be called with a single argument, then this constructor becomes conversion constructor because such a constructor allows conversion of the single argument to the class being constructed.

We can avoid such implicit conversions as these may lead to unexpected results. We can make the constructor explicit with the help of explicit keyword.

We can still typecast the values, if needed.

Without use of explicit

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

int val;

public:

Test(int arg) { val = arg; }

void printValue() { cout << "value is : " << val << endl; }

};

int main() {

Test t1(100);

Test t2 = 53.6;

t1.printValue();

t2.printValue();

return 0;

}

Output:

value is : 100

value is : 53

With use of explicit

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

int val;

public:

explicit Test(int arg) { val = arg; }

void printValue() { cout << "value is : " << val << endl; }

};

int main() {

Test t1(100);

//Test t2 = 53; // CE error: conversion from 'int' to non-scalar type 'Test' requested

// in case explicit is used in constructor

Test t3 = (Test)54;

t1.printValue();

//t2.printValue();

t3.printValue();

return 0;

}

Output:

value is : 100

value is : 54

# When do we use Initializer List in C++?

Initializer List is used to initialize data members of a class. The list of members to be initialized is indicated with constructor as a comma separated list followed by a colon.

* Prefer initialization over assignment
* Initialization happens before the body of the constructor is executed

1. For initialization of non-static const data members
2. For initialization of reference members
3. For initialization of member objects which do not have default constructor
4. For initialization of base class members: parameterized constructor of base class can only be called using Initializer List
5. When constructor’s parameter name is same as data member: If constructor’s parameter name is same as data member name then the data member must be initialized either using this pointer or Initializer List
6. For Performance reasons

It is better to initialize all class variables in Initializer List instead of assigning values inside body.

## Example for 1:

#include<iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

const int t;

public:

//Test(int x):t(x) {} //Initializer list must be used

Test(int x) { t = x; }

int getT() { return t; }

};

int main() {

Test t1(10);

cout << t1.getT();

return 0;

}

Compile Errors:

prog.cpp: In constructor 'Test::Test(int)':

prog.cpp:8:2: error: uninitialized const member in 'const int' [-fpermissive]

Test(int x) { t = x; }

^

prog.cpp:5:12: note: 'const int Test::t' should be initialized

const int t;

^

prog.cpp:8:18: error: assignment of read-only member 'Test::t'

Test(int x) { t = x; }

## Example for 6:

// Assume that Type is an already declared class and it has appropriate constructors and operators

class MyClass {

Type variable;

public:

MyClass(Type a) { variable = a; }

};

Without the Initializer List, following steps are followed by compiler:

Type’s constructor is called first for “a”

The assignment operator of “Type” is called inside body of MyClass() constructor to assign

variable = a;

And then finally destructor of “Type” is called for “a” since it goes out of scope.

// Assume that Type is an already declared class and it has appropriate constructors and operators

class MyClass {

Type variable;

public:

MyClass(Type a):variable(a) { }

};

With the Initializer List, following steps are followed by compiler:

Copy constructor of “Type” class is called to initialize: variable(a). The arguments in initializer list are used to copy construct “variable” directly.

Destructor of “Type” is called for “a” since it goes out of scope.

If we use assignment inside constructor body there are three function calls: constructor + destructor + one addition assignment operator call.

And if we use Initializer List there are only two function calls: copy constructor + destructor call.

Example:

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class A {

// data members of A

public:

A () { cout << "\n A's constructor"; /\* Initialize data members \*/ }

A (const A &a) { cout << "\n A's Copy constructor"; /\* copy data members \*/}

A& operator= (const A &a) { // Assignemt Operator

if(this == &a) return \*this; // Handle self-assignment:

cout << "\n A's Assignment Operator"; return \*this; // Copy data members

}

};

class B {

A a;

// Other members of B

public:

B(A &a) { this->a = a; cout << "\n B's constructor"; }

};

int main() {

A a1;

B b(a1);

return 0;

}

Output:

A's constructor

A's constructor

A's Assignment Operator

B's constructor

# When are static objects destroyed?

**What is static keyword in C++?**

static keyword can be applied to local variables, functions, class’ data members and objects in C++. static local variable retains their values between function call and initialized only once. static function can be directly called using the scope resolution operator preceded by class name. C++ also supports static objects.

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/some-interesting-facts-about-static-member-functions-in-c/>

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/stati/>

**What are static objects in C++?**

An object become static when static keyword is used in its declaration. See the following two statements for example in C++.

Test t; // Stack based object

static Test t1; // Static object

First statement when executes creates object on stack means storage is allocated on stack. Stack based objects are also called automatic objects or local objects. static object are initialized only once and live until the program terminates. Local object is created each time its declaration is encountered in the execution of program.

Static objects are allocated storage in static storage area. **static object is destroyed at the termination of program**.

C++ supports both

1. local static object
2. global static object

Example: local static object

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

public:

Test() { cout << "Constructor is executed\n"; }

~Test() { cout << "Destructor is executed\n"; }

};

void myfunc() { static Test obj; } // Object obj is still not destroyed because it is static

//void myfunc() { Test obj; } // Object obj is still not destroyed because it is static // 2

int main() {

cout << "main() starts\n";

myfunc(); // Destructor will not be called here

cout << "main() terminates\n";

return 0;

}

Output:

main() starts

Constructor is executed

main() terminates

Destructor is executed

Output: // 2

main() starts

Constructor is executed

Destructor is executed

main() terminates

Example: global static object

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

public:

int a;

Test() {

a = 10;

cout << "Constructor is executed\n";

}

~Test() { cout << "Destructor is executed\n"; }

};

static Test obj;

int main() {

cout << "main() starts\n";

cout << obj.a;

cout << "\nmain() terminates\n";

return 0;

}

Output:

Constructor is executed

main() starts

10

main() terminates

Destructor is executed

# Playing with Destructors in C++

Example:

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

int i;

class A {

public:

~A() { i=10; }

};

int foo() {

i=3;

A ob;

return i;

}

int main() {

cout << "i = " << foo() << endl;

return 0;

}

Output

i = 3

How to make the program to output “i = 10” ?

1. Return by Reference
2. Create the object ob in a block scope

//1

int & foo() {

i = 3;

A ob;

return i;

}

The function foo() returns the l-value of the variable i. So, the address of i will be copied in the return value. Since, the references are automatically dereferenced. It will output “i = 10”.

// 2

int foo() {

i = 3;

{

A ob;

}

return i;

}

Since the object ob is created in the block scope, the destructor of the object will be called after the block ends, thereby changing the value of i to 10. Finally 10 will copied to the return value.

# Private Constructor

**Can a constructor be private in C++?**

Yes, Constructor can be defined in private section of class. It is useful when called by a static member function or a friend function.

When we make a copy constructor private in a class, objects of that class become non-copyable.

This is particularly useful when our class has pointers or dynamically allocated resources. In such situations, we can either write our own copy constructor like above String example, or make a private copy constructor so that users get compiler errors rather than surprises at run time.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class A {

private:

A(){ cout << "constructor of A\n"; }

};

int main() {

A a;

return 0;

}

Compile Errors :

prog.cpp: In function 'int main()':

prog.cpp:6:3: error: 'A::A()' is private

A(){ cout << "constructor of A\n"; }

^

prog.cpp:10:4: error: within this context

A a;

**How to use Constructors in private section?**

1. Using Friend Class
2. Using Singleton design pattern
3. Named Constructor Idiom

## Using Friend Class

If we want that class should not be instantiated by anyone else but only by a friend class.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class A {

private:

A() { cout << "constructor of A\n"; }

friend class B;

};

class B {

public:

B() {

A a1;

cout << "constructor of B\n";

}

};

int main() {

B b1;

return 0;

}

Output:

constructor of A

constructor of B

## Using Singleton design pattern

When we want to design a singleton class. This means instead of creating several objects of class, the system is driven by a single object or a very limited number of objects.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Singleton {

private:

/\* Here will be the instance stored. \*/

static Singleton\* instance;

/\* Private constructor to prevent instancing. \*/

Singleton();

public:

/\* Static access method. \*/

static Singleton\* getInstance();

};

/\* Null, because instance will be initialized on demand. \*/

Singleton\* Singleton::instance = 0;

Singleton\* Singleton::getInstance() {

if (instance == 0)

{

instance = new Singleton();

}

return instance;

}

Singleton::Singleton() { cout << "Inside Singleton's constructor" << endl; }

int main() {

//Singleton\* s = new Singleton(); // Won't work, check Compilation Error 1

Singleton\* s = Singleton::getInstance(); // Ok

Singleton\* r = Singleton::getInstance();

/\* The addresses will be the same. \*/

cout << s << std::endl;

cout << r << std::endl;

}

Output:

Inside Singleton's constructor

0x1729c20

0x1729c20

Compile Errors : // 1

prog.cpp: In function 'int main()':

prog.cpp:28:1: error: 'Singleton::Singleton()' is private

Singleton::Singleton() { cout << "Inside Singleton's constructor" << endl; }

^

prog.cpp:31:34: error: within this context

Singleton\* s = new Singleton(); // Won't work

## Named Constructor Idiom

Since constructor has same name as of class, different constructors are differentiated by their parameter list, but if numbers of constructors is more, then implementation can become error prone.

With the Named Constructor Idiom, you declare all the class’s constructors in the private or protected sections, and then for accessing objects of class, you create public static functions.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Point {

public:

Point(float x, float y);

Point(float r, float a);

};

int main() {

Point p = Point(5.7, 1.2);

return 0;

}

Compile Errors :

prog.cpp:6:3: error: 'Point::Point(float, float)' cannot be overloaded

Point(float r, float a);

^

prog.cpp:5:3: error: with 'Point::Point(float, float)'

Point(float x, float y);

^

// Soluton for above problem

#include <iostream>

#include <cmath>

using namespace std;

class Point {

private:

float x1, y1;

Point(float x, float y) { x1 = x; y1 = y; };

public:

static Point Polar(float, float);

static Point Rectangular(float, float);

void display();

};

void Point :: display() {

cout << "x :: " << this->x1 <<endl;

cout << "y :: " << this->y1 <<endl;

}

Point Point :: Polar(float x, float y) {

return Point(x\*cos(y), x\*sin(y));

}

Point Point :: Rectangular(float x, float y) {

return Point(x,y);

}

int main() {

Point pp = Point::Polar(5.7, 1.2);

cout << "polar coordinates \n"; pp.display();

Point pr = Point::Rectangular(5.7,1.2);

cout << "rectangular coordinates \n"; pr.display();

return 0;

}

Output:

polar coordinates

x :: 2.06544

y :: 5.31262

rectangular coordinates

x :: 5.7

y :: 1.2

# Private Destructor

It is not compiler error to create private destructors.

If object is not dynamically allocated, then it will generate compiler error.

If object is dynamically allocated then, it is programmer’s responsibility to delete it.

**What is the use of private destructor?**

Whenever we want to control destruction of objects of a class, we make the destructor private. For dynamically created objects, it may happen that you pass a pointer to the object to a function and the function deletes the object. If the object is referred after the function call, the reference will become dangling.

See Example: 06

When a class has private destructor, only dynamic objects of that class can be created. Following is a way to create classes with private destructors and have a function as friend of the class. The function can only delete the objects.

Example: 01

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

~Test() {}

};

int main()

{ }

Compiles and runs fine. It is not compiler error to create private destructors.

Example: 02

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

~Test() {}

};

int main()

{

Test t;

}

Compile Errors :

prog.cpp: In function 'int main()':

prog.cpp:6:5: error: 'Test::~Test()' is private

~Test() {}

^

prog.cpp:10:10: error: within this context

Test t;

Example: 03

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

~Test() {}

};

int main()

{

Test \*t;

}

There is no object being constructed, the program just creates a pointer of type “Test \*”, so nothing is destructed.

Example: 04

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

~Test() {}

};

int main()

{

Test \*t = new Test;

}

The above program also works fine. When something is created using dynamic memory allocation, it is programmer’s responsibility to delete it

Example: 05

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

~Test() {}

};

int main() {

Test \*t = new Test;

delete t;

}

Compile Errors :

prog.cpp: In function 'int main()':

prog.cpp:6:5: error: 'Test::~Test()' is private

~Test() {}

^

prog.cpp:11:12: error: within this context

delete t;

^

Example: 06

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

private:

~Test() {}

friend void destructTest(Test\* );

};

void destructTest(Test\* ptr) {

delete ptr;

}

int main() {

Test \*ptr = new Test;

destructTest (ptr);

return 0;

}

# Copy Constructor in C++

**What is a copy constructor?**

A copy constructor is a member function which initializes an object using another object of the same class. A copy constructor has the following general function prototype:

ClassName (const ClassName &old\_obj);

Copy constructor is called when a new object is created from an existing object, as a copy of the existing object.

Assignment operator is called when an already initialized object is assigned a new value from another existing object.

A (A); ☒

A (A &); ☑ // copy constructor

#include<iostream>

using namespace std;

class Point {

private:

int x, y;

public:

Point(int x1, int y1) { x = x1; y = y1; }

Point(const Point &p2) { cout << "Inside copy constructor" << endl; x = p2.x; y = p2.y; } // Copy constructor

int getX() { return x; }

int getY() { return y; }

};

int main() {

Point p1(10, 15); // Normal constructor is called here

cout << "p1.x = " << p1.getX() << ", p1.y = " << p1.getY() << endl;

Point p2 = p1; // Copy constructor is called here

cout << "p2.x = " << p2.getX() << ", p2.y = " << p2.getY() << endl;

Point p3(20, 25);

cout << "p3.x = " << p3.getX() << ", p3.y = " << p3.getY() << endl;

p3 = p2; // this is assignment , copy constructor is not called here

cout << "p3.x = " << p3.getX() << ", p3.y = " << p3.getY() << endl;

return 0;

}

Output:

p1.x = 10, p1.y = 15

Inside copy constructor

p2.x = 10, p2.y = 15

p3.x = 20, p3.y = 25

p3.x = 10, p3.y = 15

## When is copy constructor called?

In C++, a Copy Constructor may be called in following cases:

1. When an object is constructed based on another object of the same class
2. When an object of the class is passed (to a function) by value as an argument
3. When an object of the class is returned by value
4. When compiler generates a temporary object

It is however, not guaranteed that a copy constructor will be called in all these cases, because the C++ Standard allows the compiler to optimize the copy away in certain cases.

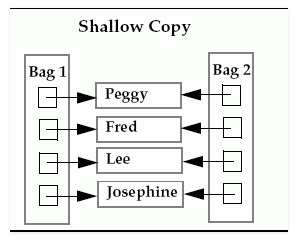
Check <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copy_elision#Return_value_optimization>

## When should we write our own copy constructor?

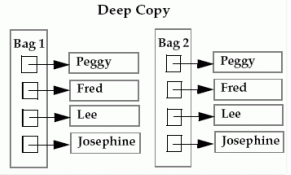
If we don’t define our own copy constructor, the C++ compiler creates a default copy constructor for each class which does a member wise copy between objects. The compiler created copy constructor works fine in general. Don’t write a copy constructor if shallow copies are ok.

We need to define our own copy constructor only if an object has pointers or any run time allocation of resource like file handle, a network connection..etc.

Default constructor does only **shallow copy**



**Deep copy** is possible only with user defined copy constructor. In user defined copy constructor, we make sure that pointers (or references) of copied object point to new memory locations.



#include<iostream>

#include<cstring>

using namespace std;

class String {

private:

char \*s;

int size;

public:

String(const char \*str = NULL); // constructor

~String() { delete [] s; } // destructor

String(const String&); // copy constructor

void print() { cout << s << endl; } // Function to print string

void change(const char \*); // Function to change

};

String::String(const char \*str) {

size = strlen(str);

s = new char[size+1];

strcpy(s, str);

}

void String::change(const char \*str) {

delete [] s;

size = strlen(str);

s = new char[size+1];

strcpy(s, str);

}

String::String(const String& old\_str) {

size = old\_str.size;

s = new char[size+1];

strcpy(s, old\_str.s);

}

int main() {

String str1("GeeksQuiz");

String str2 = str1;

str1.print(); // what is printed ?

str2.print();

str2.change("GeeksforGeeks");

str1.print(); // what is printed now ?

str2.print();

return 0;

}

Output:

GeeksQuiz

GeeksQuiz

GeeksQuiz

GeeksforGeeks

// Output without copy constructor in above example

Output:

GeeksQuiz

GeeksQuiz

GeeksforGeeks

GeeksforGeeks

Runtime Errors: Abort signal from abort(3) (SIGABRT)

## Can we make copy constructor private?

Yes, see section [Private Constructor](#_Private_Constructor)

## Why argument to a copy constructor must be passed as a reference?

A copy constructor is called when an object is passed by value. Copy constructor itself is a function. So **if we pass argument by value in a copy constructor, a call to copy constructor would be made to call copy constructor which becomes a non-terminating chain of calls**. Therefore compiler doesn’t allow parameters to be pass by value.

Can it be pointer ????????

Pointers are not included because the whole point of references is to "be" aliases for objects, whereas pointers represent indirection.

## Why copy constructor argument should be const in C++?

1. So that objects are not accidentally modified
2. To return an object of a class in case of user defined copy constructor

#include<iostream>

using namespace std;

class Test {

public:

Test(const Test &t) { cout << "Copy Constructor Called" << endl; }

Test() { cout << "Constructor Called" << endl; }

};

Test fun() {

cout << "fun() Called" << endl;

Test t;

return t;

}

int main()

{

Test t1;

t1 = fun();

Test t2 = fun(); // Compilation Error if const is not used in constructor

return 0;

}

Output:

Constructor Called

fun() Called

Constructor Called

fun() Called

Constructor Called

// Compilation Error if const is not used in constructor

Compile Errors :

prog.cpp: In function 'int main()':

prog.cpp:19:15: error: invalid initialization of non-const reference of type 'Test&' from an rvalue of type 'Test'

Test t2 = fun();

^

prog.cpp:6:3: note: initializing argument 1 of 'Test::Test(Test&)'

Test(Test &t) { cout << "Copy Constructor Called" << endl; }

^

The function fun() returns by value. So the compiler creates a temporary object which is copied to t2 using copy constructor in the original program (The temporary object is passed as an argument to copy constructor).

The reason for compiler error is, compiler created temporary objects cannot be bound to non-const references and the original program tries to do that. It doesn’t make sense to modify compiler created temporary objects as they can die any moment.

## Copy Constructor in Inheritance

If you don't specify a base class constructor in the initializer list, its default constructor is called. If you want a constructor other than the default constructor to be called, you must specify which constructor (and with which arguments) you want to call.

**Why this is the case?**

In this case ambiguity is that If a Base class have multiple constructor which constructor should be called from the derived class constructor.

Derived class copy constructor does not call the Base class copy constructor. You need to call Base class copy constructor in initialization list of derived class copy constructor.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class Base {

public:

Base() { cout << "Base()" << endl; }

Base(const Base &obj) { cout << "Base(const Base &obj)" << endl; }

~Base() { cout << "~Base()" << endl; }

};

class Derived : public Base {

public:

Derived() { cout << "Derived()" << endl; }

//Derived(const Derived &obj) { cout << "(const Derived &obj)" << endl; } // 1 //

Derived(const Derived &obj) : Base(obj) { cout << "(const Derived &obj)" << endl; } // 2 //

~Derived() { cout << "~Derived()" << endl; }

};

int main() {

Derived d1;

Derived d2(d1);

return 0;

}

Output 1:

Base()

Derived()

Base()

(const Derived &amp;obj)

~Derived()

~Base()

~Derived()

~Base()

Output 2:

Base()

Derived()

Base(const Base &obj)

(const Derived &obj)

~Derived()

~Base()

~Derived()

~Base()

# When does compiler create default and copy constructors in C++?

In C++, compiler creates a default constructor if we don’t define our own constructor (See this). Compiler created default constructor has empty body, i.e., it doesn’t assign default values to data members (In java, default constructors assign default values).

Compiler also creates a copy constructor if we don’t write our own copy constructor. Unlike default constructor, body of compiler created copy constructor is not empty, it copies all data members of passed object to the object which is being created.

Note:

1. Compiler doesn’t create a default constructor if we write any constructor even if it is copy constructor.
2. Compiler creates a copy constructor if we don’t write our own. Compiler creates it even if we have written other constructors in class.

# Virtual Constructor

Can we make a class constructor virtual in C++ to create polymorphic objects?

No.

Some important link for virtual constructor and destructor

<https://www.quora.com/Why-Destructors-in-C++-can-be-virtual-but-constructors-cannot-be-virtual>

<http://www.stroustrup.com/bs_faq2.html#virtual-ctor>

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/advanced-c-virtual-constructor/>

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/advanced-c-virtual-copy-constructor/>

Virtual functions are used to implement polymorphic behaviour. It is used to call a function based on the type of object pointed by the pointer variable instead of the type of the pointer variable. Thus, “VIRTUAL” keyword allows us to call functions based on partial information only whereas to create an object of given data type you need to know exact information of what you want to create. Virtual tells the compiler that the type of the object used for calling the function should be determined at run-time, but for creating an object we need to know the type at compile type itself.

2 reasons why virtual constructor is not allowed:

1. C++ being static typed language, it is meaningless to the C++ compiler to create an object polymorphically. The compiler must be aware of the class type to create the object. In other words, what type of object to be created is a compile time decision from C++ compiler perspective.

If we make constructor virtual, compiler flags an error. In fact except inline, no other keyword is allowed in the declaration of constructor.

inline constructor() {} // only inline is allowed with constructor

<any\_keyword> constructor() {} // other then inline nothing is allowed

In practical scenarios we would need to create a derived class object in a class hierarchy based on some input. In other words, object creation and object type are tightly coupled which forces modifications to extended. The objective of virtual constructor is to decouple object creation from its type.

See <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/advanced-c-virtual-constructor/>

1. If we make constructor as virtual in base, it means that it could be redefined in derived. Keep in mind that constructor is invoked during object creation (object is not created yet. still it is in the status "creating". Object will create only after executing constructor part code). Assume you are trying to create object of the class which has virtual constructor. During this process constructor of the class will be invoked. It looks for virtual keyword. Now it tries to look for virtual constructor in derived. But not possible bcz there is no vptr and no vtable available at this point of time. So, when object is not created, then there is no vptr. If no vptr for this object, then how the constructor of derived is invoked? No address of this constructor will available in vtable.

Hence there is no point in having virtual constructor

Note: Never call virtual functions during construction or destruction

See <http://www.artima.com/cppsource/nevercall.html>

# Virtual Destructors

To work correctly, classes with virtual methods must also have virtual destructors.

Destructors in the Base class can be Virtual. Whenever Upcasting is done, Destructors of the Base class must be made virtual for proper destrucstion of the object when the program exits.

NOTE : Constructors are never Virtual, only Destructors can be Virtual.

Upcasting without Virtual Destructor

Lets first see what happens when we do not have a virtual Base class destructor.

class Base {

public:

~Base() {cout << "Base Destructor\t"; }

};

class Derived:public Base {

public:

~Derived() { cout<< "Derived Destructor"; }

};

int main() {

Base\* b = new Derived; //Upcasting

delete b;

}

Output :

Base Destructor

In the above example, delete b will only call the Base class destructor, which is undesirable because, then the object of Derived class remains undestructed, because its destructor is never called. Which results in memory leak.

**Upcasting with Virtual Destructor**

Now lets see. what happens when we have Virtual destructor in the base class.

class Base {

public:

virtual ~Base() {cout << "Base Destructor\t"; }

};

class Derived:public Base {

public:

~Derived() { cout<< "Derived Destructor"; }

};

int main() {

Base\* b = new Derived; //Upcasting

delete b;

}

Output :

Derived Destructor

Base Destructor

When we have Virtual destructor inside the base class, then first Derived class's destructor is called and then Base class's destructor is called, which is the desired behaviour.

## Pure Virtual Destructors

Pure Virtual Destructors are legal in C++. Also, **pure virtual Destructors must be defined, which is against the pure virtual behaviour**. This seems strange that how a virtual function is pure if it requires a function body? But destructors are always called in the reverse order of the class derivation. That means derived class destructor will be invoked first & then base class destructor will be called. If definition for the pure virtual destructor is not provided then what function body will be called during object destruction? Therefore compiler & linker enforce existence of function body for pure virtual destructor.

The only difference between Virtual and Pure Virtual Destructor is, that pure virtual destructor will make its Base class Abstract, hence you cannot create object of that class.

There is no requirement of implementing pure virtual destructors in the derived classes.

class Base {

public:

virtual ~Base() = 0; //Pure Virtual Destructor

};

Base::~Base() { cout << "Base Destructor"; } //Definition of Pure Virtual Destructor

class Derived:public Base {

public:

~Derived() { cout<< "Derived Destructor"; }

};

See <http://www.gotw.ca/gotw/031.htm>

# Virtual Copy Constructor

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/advanced-c-virtual-copy-constructor/>

# Copy Elision in C++

Copy elision (or Copy omission) is a compiler optimization technique that avoids unnecessary copying of objects. Now a days, almost every compiler uses it.

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class B {

public:

B(const char\* str = "\0") { //default constructor

cout << "Constructor called" << endl;

}

B(const B &b) { //copy constructor

cout << "Copy constructor called" << endl;

}

};

int main() {

B ob = "copy me";

return 0;

}

Output:

Constructor called

**Why copy constructor is not called?**

According to theory, when the object “ob” is being constructed, one argument constructor is used to convert “copy me” to a temporary object & that temporary object is copied to the object “ob”. So the statement

B ob = "copy me";

should be broken down by the compiler as

B ob = B("copy me");

However, most of the C++ compilers avoid such overheads of creating a temporary object & then copying it. The modern compilers break down the statement

B ob = "copy me"; //copy initialization

as

B ob("copy me"); //direct initialization

and thus eliding call to copy constructor.

However, if we still want to ensure that the compiler doesn’t elide the call to copy constructor [disable the copy elision], we can compile the program using “-fno-elide-constructors” option with g++ and see the output as following:

aashish@aashish-ThinkPad-SL400:~$ g++ copy\_elision.cpp -fno-elide-constructors

aashish@aashish-ThinkPad-SL400:~$ ./a.out

Constructor called

Copy constructor called

If “-fno-elide-constructors” option is used, first default constructor is called to create a temporary object, then copy constructor is called to copy the temporary object to ob.

# Shallow copy and Deep copy

A **shallow copy** of an object copies all of the non-static member field values. This works well if the fields are values, but may not be what you want for fields that point to dynamically allocated memory. The pointer will be copied. but the memory it points to will not be copied -- the field in both the original object and the copy will then point to the same dynamically allocated memory, which is not usually what you want. The default copy constructor and assignment operator make shallow copies.

A **deep copy** copies all non-static fields, and makes copies of dynamically allocated memory pointed to by the fields. To make a deep copy, you must write a copy constructor and overload the assignment operator, otherwise the copy will point to the original, with disastrous consequences.

If an object has pointers to dynamically allocated memory, and the dynamically allocated memory needs to be copied when the original object is copied, then a deep copy is required.

A class that requires deep copies generally needs:

* A constructor to either make an initial allocation or set the pointer to NULL
* A destructor to delete the dynamically allocated memory
* A copy constructor to make a copy of the dynamically allocated memory
* An overloaded assignment operator to make a copy of the dynamically allocated memory

Shallow copy is fine for classes that contain no dynamically allocated variables

Classes with dynamically allocated variables need to have a copy constructor and assignment operator that do a deep copy

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

class TestCopy {

int d1; int d2; int \*ptr;

public:

TestCopy() {

cout << "Inside default constructor" << endl;

d1 = 0; d2 = 0; ptr=NULL;

}

TestCopy(int a1, int a2, int a3) {

cout << "Inside parameterized constructor" << endl;

d1 = a1; d2 = a2;

ptr = new int; \*ptr = a3;

}

TestCopy(const TestCopy &aobj) {

cout << "Inside copy constructor" << endl;

d1 = aobj.d1; d2 = aobj.d2; ptr = new int; \*ptr = \*(aobj.ptr);

}

void displayValue(void) {

cout << "d1 : " << d1 << ", d2 : " << d2;

if(NULL != ptr)

cout << ", \*ptr : " << \*ptr << endl;

else

cout << ", ptr is NULL" << endl;

}

void changeValue(int a1, int a2, int a3) {

cout << "Inside function change value";

d1 = a1; d2 = a2;

if(NULL != ptr)

\*ptr = a3;

else

cout << ", ptr is NULL" << endl;

cout << endl;

}

~TestCopy() {

cout << "Inside destructor";

d1 = 0; d2 = 0;

if(NULL != ptr)

delete ptr;

else

cout << ", ptr is NULL";

cout << endl;

}

};

int main()

{

TestCopy t1;

TestCopy t2(1, 2, 3);

TestCopy t3 = t2;

cout << endl;

t1.displayValue(); t2.displayValue(); t3.displayValue();

cout << endl;

t2.changeValue(4, 5, 6);

cout << endl;

t1.displayValue(); t2.displayValue(); //t3.displayValue();

cout << endl;

return 0;

}

// with copy constructor

G:\coding\test>cppmain.exe

Inside default constructor

Inside parameterized constructor

Inside copy constructor

d1 : 0, d2 : 0, ptr is NULL

d1 : 1, d2 : 2, \*ptr : 3

d1 : 1, d2 : 2, \*ptr : 3

Inside function change value

d1 : 0, d2 : 0, ptr is NULL

d1 : 4, d2 : 5, \*ptr : 6

d1 : 1, d2 : 2, \*ptr : 3

Inside destructor

Inside destructor

Inside destructor, ptr is NULL

G:\coding\test>

// without copy constructor

G:\coding\test>cppmain.exe

Inside default constructor

Inside parameterized constructor

d1 : 0, d2 : 0, ptr is NULL

d1 : 1, d2 : 2, \*ptr : 3

d1 : 1, d2 : 2, \*ptr : 3

Inside function change value

d1 : 0, d2 : 0, ptr is NULL

d1 : 4, d2 : 5, \*ptr : 6

d1 : 1, d2 : 2, \*ptr : 6

Inside destructor

Inside destructor

Inside destructor, ptr is NULL

G:\coding\test>

# END OF FILE