LECTURE 4: ARM Cortex-M architecture overview

EMBEDDED SYSTEM COURSE

Learning Goals

Introduce about the ARM Cortex M processor.

Explain some core components in Cortex-M including NVIC, SysTick timer and Floating Point Unit.

Explain about the basic concepts on Cortex-M instruction set.

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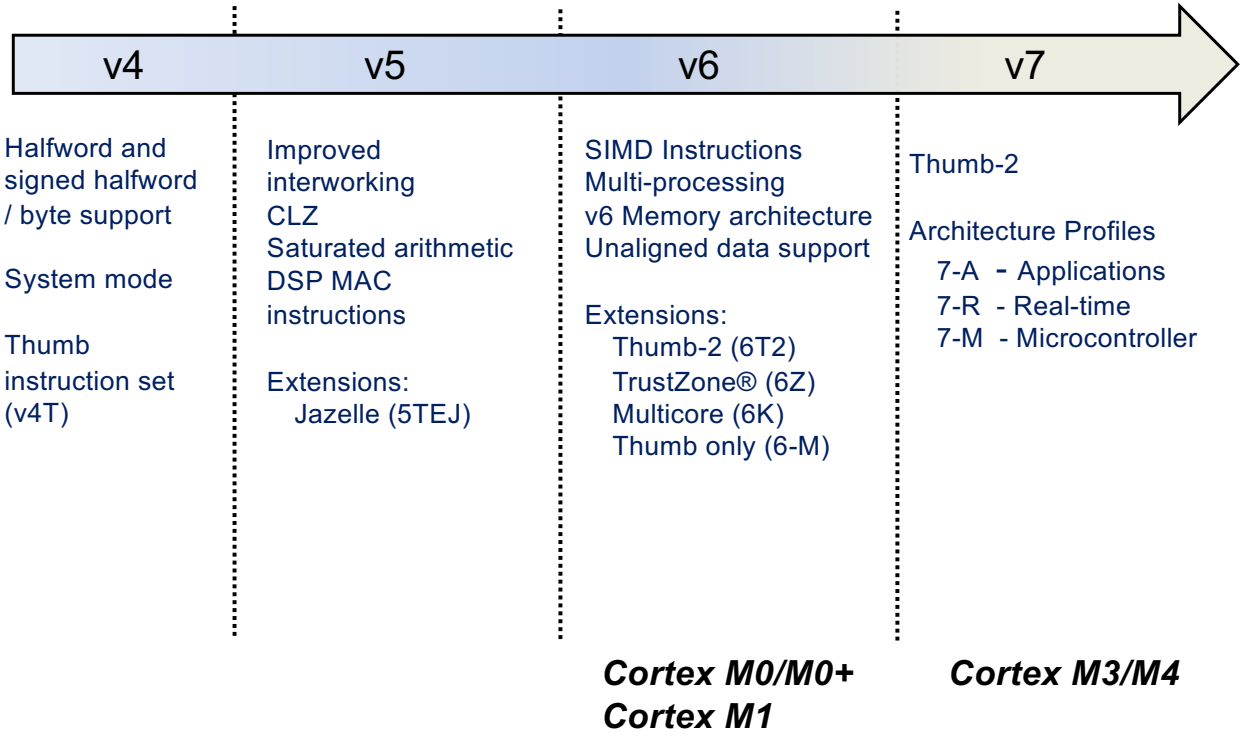
Development of the ARM Architecture



ARM CORTEX

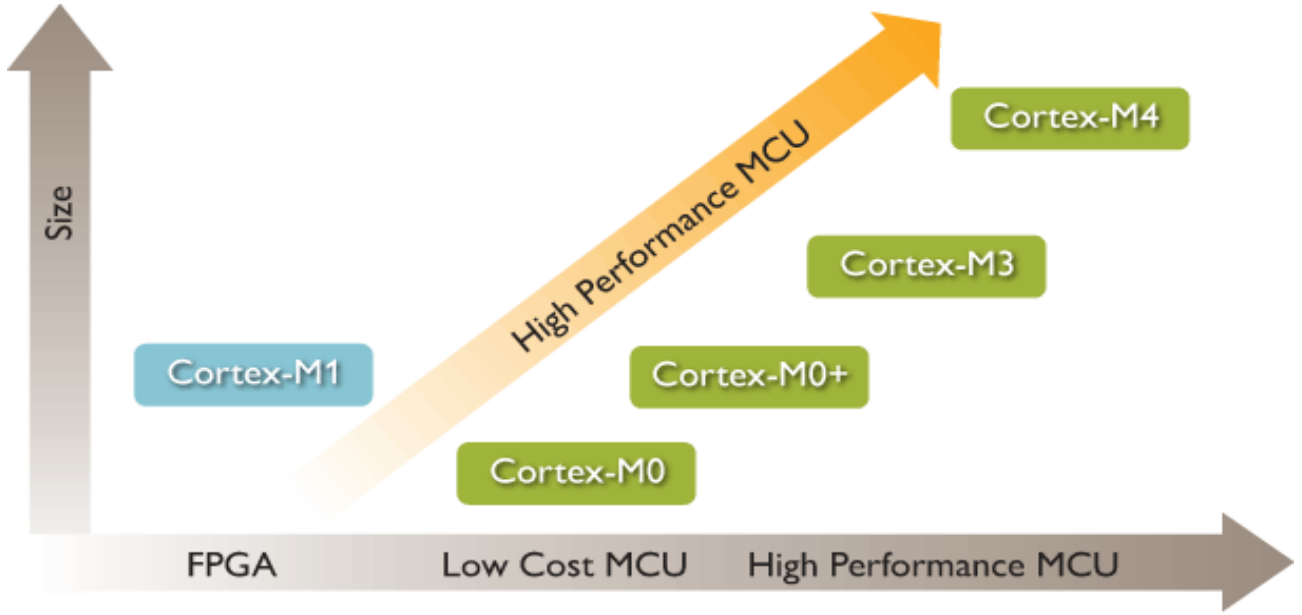
The ARM Cortex family includes processors based on the three distinct profiles of the ARMv7 architecture.

The A profile for sophisticated, high-end applications running open and complex operating systems

The R profile for real-time systems

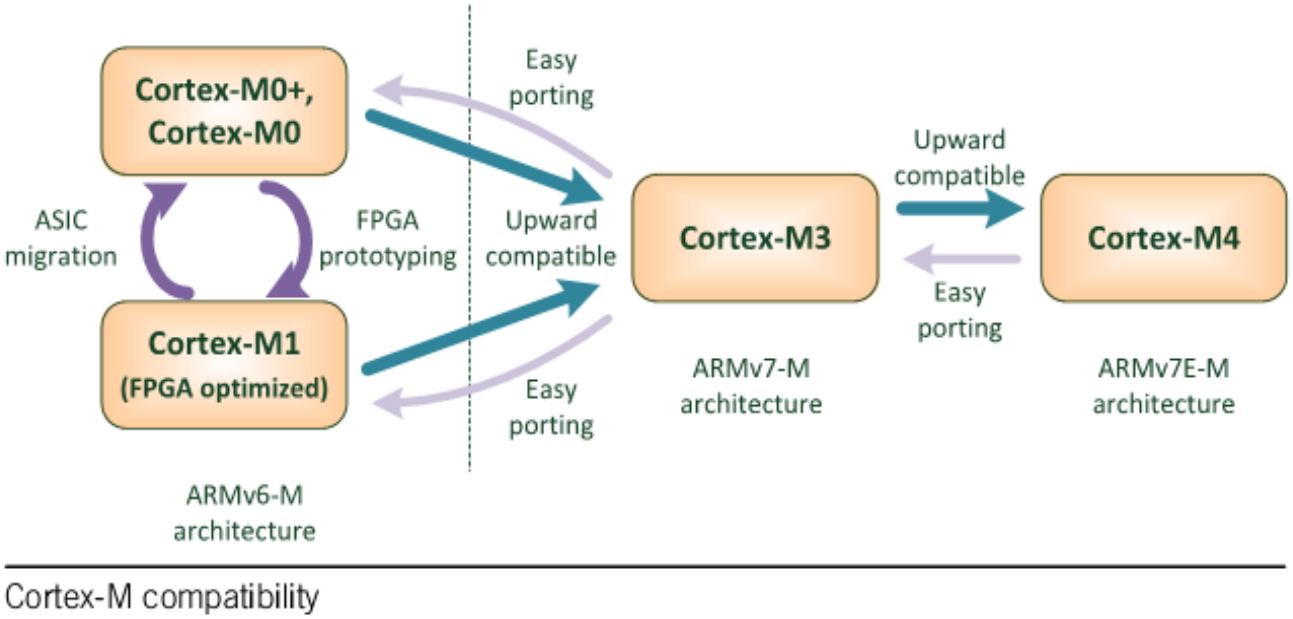
The M profile optimized for cost-sensitive and microcontroller applications

General Information about the Cortex-M



Embedded Processors

General Information about the Cortex-M



Cortex M processor

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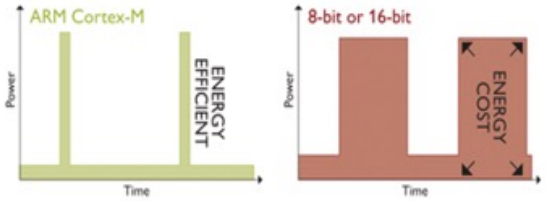
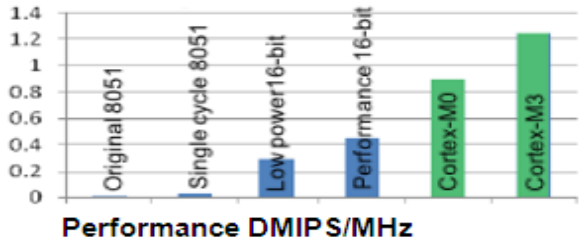
Cortex-M Advantages:

1. Energy efficiency
2. Smaller code
3. Ease of use
4. High performance





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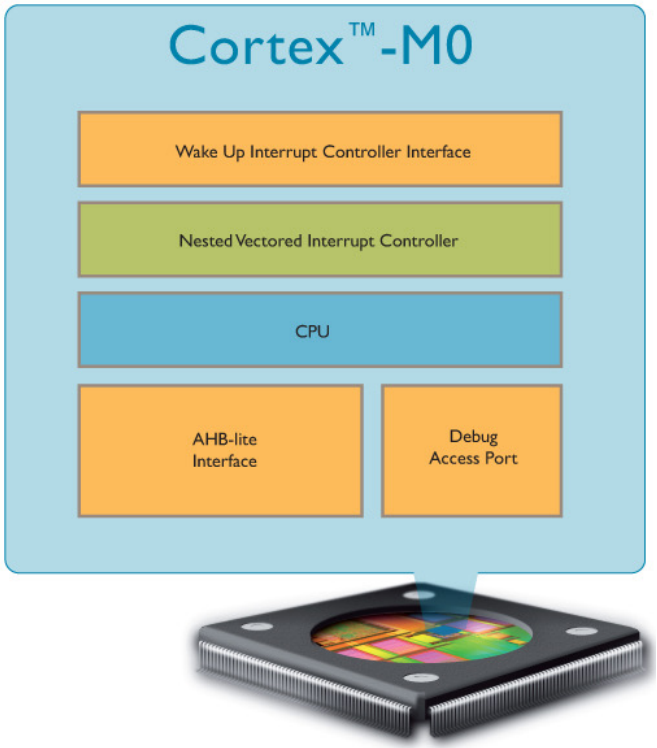
Cortex M0

- 32-bit RISC processor
- 3-stage pipeline von Neumann architecture
- ARMv6-M architecture
- 16-bit Thumb instruction set with Thumb-2 technology
- Load-Store Architecture
- 56 Instructions
- Low power support



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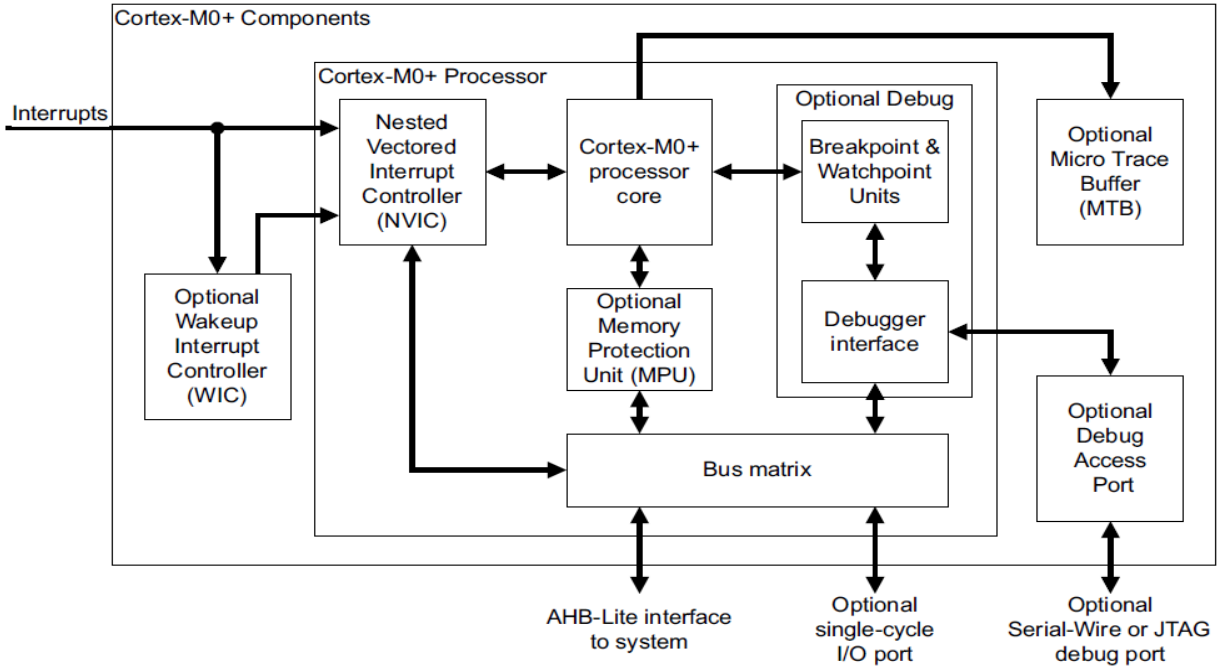
Simplified Block Diagram



Cortex-M0 Functional Blocks

- ARMv6-M Thumb instruction set
- NVIC: 32 external interrupt inputs
- Debug: 4 HD breakpoints, 2 watchpoints.
- Bus interfaces: 32-bit AMBA-3 AHB-Lite system interface

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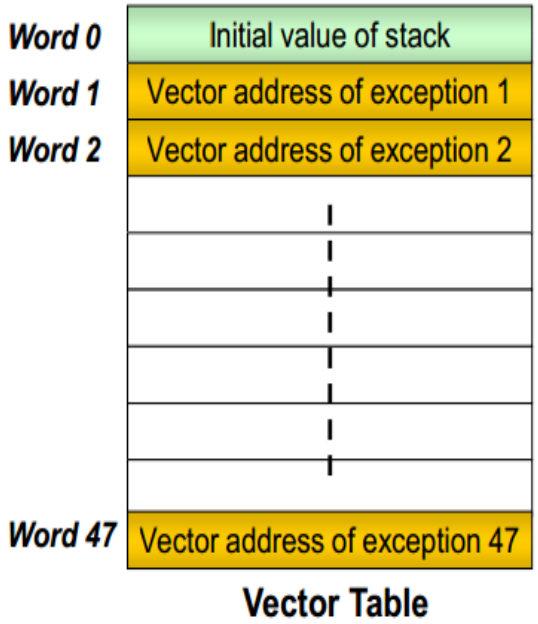
Memory model

- 32-bit address space
- Virtual memory is not supported in ARMv6-M
- Instruction fetches are always half-word-aligned
- Data accesses are always naturally aligned

Exception model

- Each exception has exception number, priority number and vector address
- An exception may be an interrupt or a hardware error
- Vector table base address is fixed at 0x00



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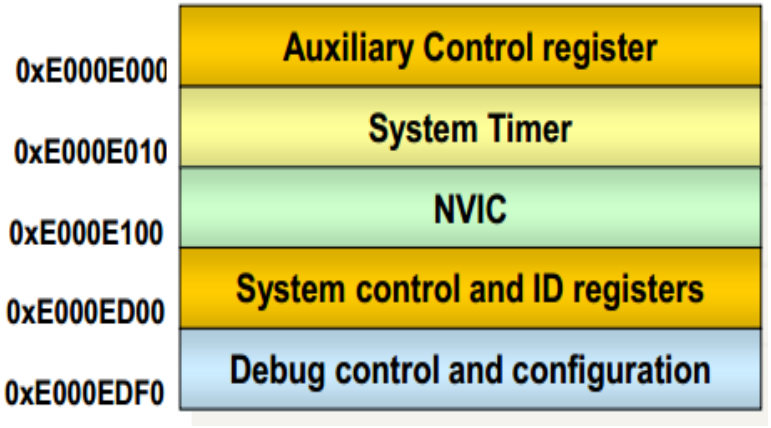
System control space

Consists of the following groups:

- CPUID space.
- System control, configuration and status.
- SysTick system timer
- Nested Vectored Interrupt Controller (NVIC)



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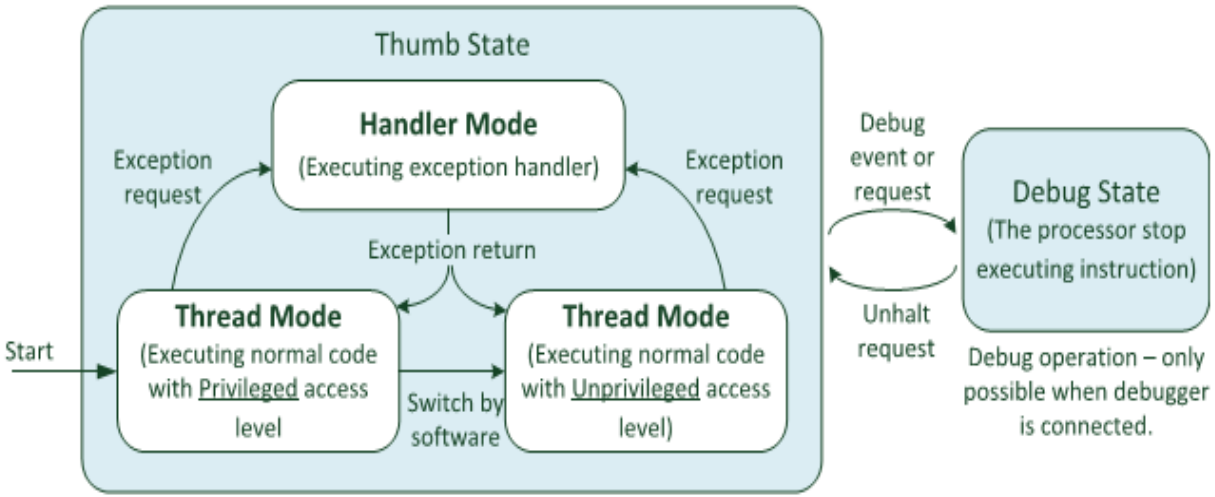
Programmer's Model

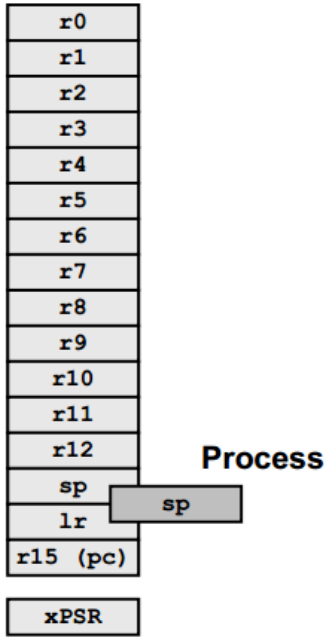
Operation Modes & States



Programmer's Model

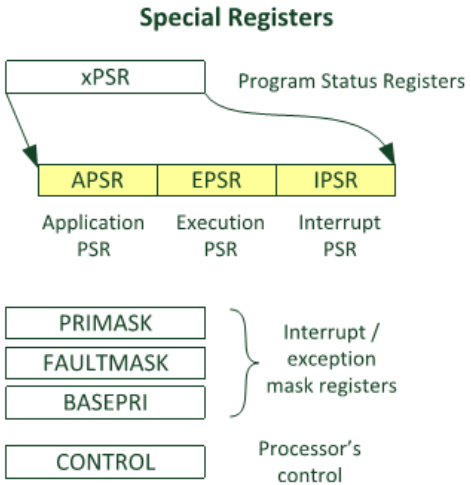
Core Registers

- All registers are 32 bits wide
- 13 general purpose registers
- Registers r0 – r7 (Low registers)
- Registers r8 – r12 (High registers)
- 3 registers with special meaning/usage
  - ✓ Stack Pointer (SP) – r13
  - ✓ Link Register (LR) – r14
  - ✓ Program Counter (PC) – r15
- Special-purpose registers
  - ✓ xPSR shows a composite of the content of
  - ✓ APSR, IPSR, EPSR



Programmer's Model

Special Registers



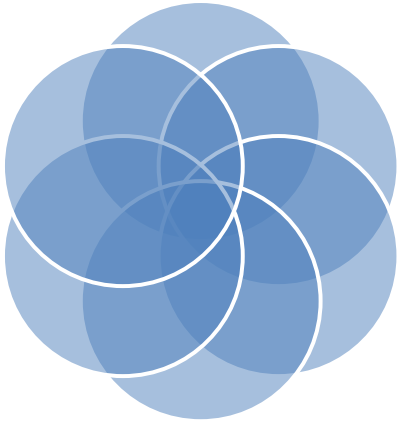
APSR, IPSR, and EPSR

	31	30	29	28	27	26:25	24	23:20	19:16	15:10	9	8	7	6	5	4:0
xPSR	N	Z	C	V	Q	ICI/IT	T		GE*	ICI/IT		Exception Number				

Programmer's Model

Stack

Full descending: stack pointer indicates the last stacked item on the stack memory.



Two stacks, two independent stack pointers.

In an OS environment, ARM recommends that threads running in Thread mode use the process stack and the kernel and exception handlers use the main stack

Handler mode always uses the MSP (Main Stack Pointer)

Thread mode can use MSP (Main Stack Pointer) by default, or PSP (Process Stack Pointer).

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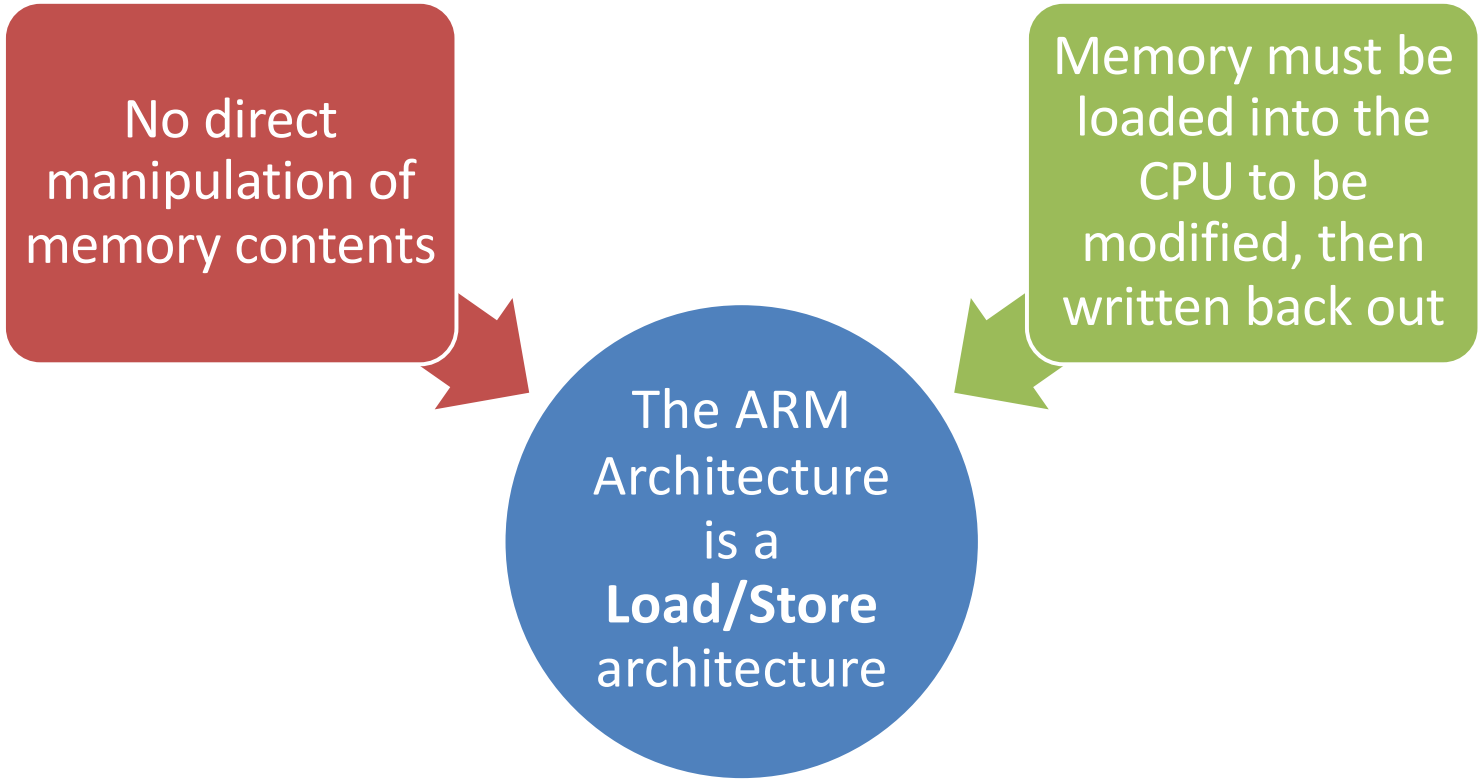
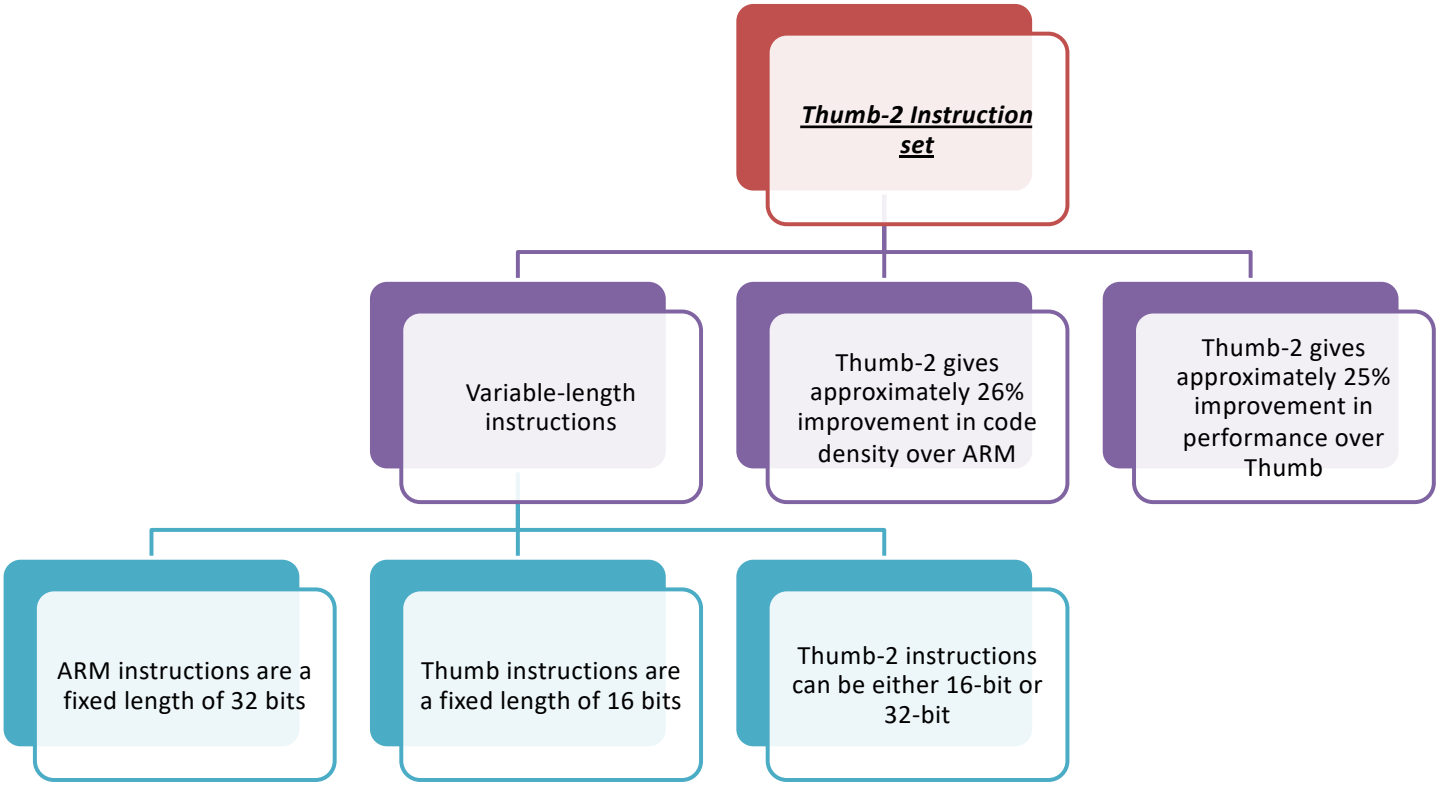
Instruction Set Architecture



Instruction Set Architecture



Cortex M0 ISA Overview:

- ARMv6-M supports Thumb-2 technology

  (The ARM instruction set is not supported)

- Thumb-2 technology supports mixed 16-bit/32-bit instructions
- Small number of additional 32-bit instructions supported
- Conditional execution is supported
- Optimized for compilation from C
  - ✓ Thumb-2 instructions are not designed to be written by hand
  - ✓ Easy to learn due to small number of mnemonics

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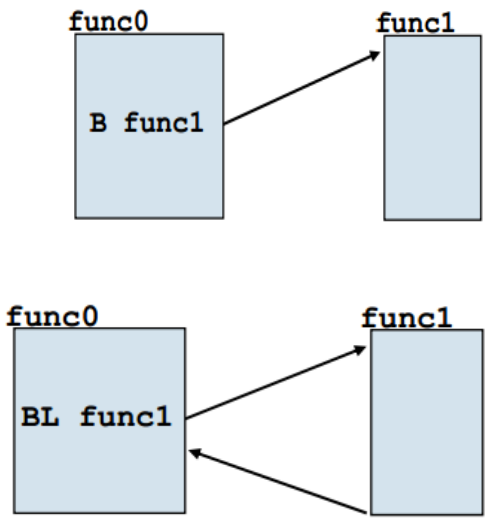
Instruction Classes

- Branch instructions
- Data-processing instructions
- Load and store instructions
- Status register access instructions
- Miscellaneous instructions

Branch instructions

- B – Branch
  - ✓ Absolute branch to a target address, relative to Program Counter (PC)
  - ✓ +/- 256 bytes range, conditional execution supported
  - ✓ +/- 1MB range, no conditional execution supported
- BL – Branch with Link
  - ✓ Branch to a subroutine – Link register is updated
  - ✓ +/- 16MB range, relative to Program Counter (PC)

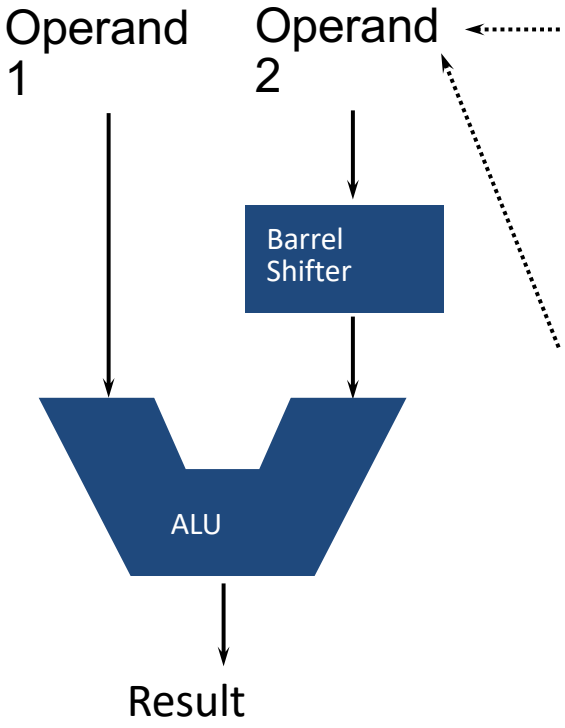


Data Processing Instructions:

- Consist of:
  - Arithmetic: **ADD ADC SUB SBC RSB RSC**
  - Logical: **AND ORR EOR BIC**
  - Comparisons: **CMP CMN TST TEQ**
  - Data movement: **MOV MVN**
- These instructions only work on registers, NOT memory.
- Syntax:

  <Operation>{<cond>}{S} Rd, Rn, Operand2
  - Comparisons set flags only - they do not specify Rd
  - Data movement does not specify Rn
  - Second operand is sent to the ALU via barrel shifter.

Using Barrel Shifter:



Register, optionally with shift operation

- Shift value can be either be:
  - 5 bit unsigned integer
  - Specified in bottom byte of another register.
- Used for multiplication by constant

Immediate value

- 8 bit number, with a range of 0-255.
  - Rotated right through even number of positions
- Allows increased range of 32-bit constants to be loaded directly into registers

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Load and store instructions:

LDR	**STR**	Word
LDRB	**STRB**	Byte
LDRH	**STRH**	Halfword
LDRSB		Signed byte load
LDRSH		Signed halfword load

- Memory system must support all access sizes
- Syntax:
  - **LDR**{<cond>}{<size>} Rd, <address>
  - **STR**{<cond>}{<size>} Rd, <address>

  e.g. **LDREQB**

Status Register Access Instructions

MRS/MSR - **Move data between a general purpose register and status register**

- **MRS (Register ← Status Register)**
- **MSR (Status Register ← Register)**

- Syntax:
  - **LDR**{<cond>}{<size>} Rd, <address>
  - **STR**{<cond>}{<size>} Rd, <address>

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Summary

- All the ARM Cortex M processors are 32-bit RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing) processors. They have:
  - 32-bit registers
  - 32-bit internal data path
  - 32-bit bus interface

- The Cortex-M processors contain the core of the processor, NVIC, the SysTick timer, and optionally the floating point unit (for Cortex-M4).

- All the ARM Cortex -M processors are based on Thumb technology, which allows a mixture of 16-bit and 32-bit instructions to be used within

Question & Answer

Thanks for your attention !

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