

14. Classes and OOP Continued

☑ 16. How Long Does it Take to Learn ...

✓ 15. This Pointer

Pointers



Pointers

Pointers have traditionally been a stumbling block for many students learning C++, but they do not need to be!

A C++ pointer is just a variable that stores the memory address of an object in your program.

That is the most important thing to understand and remember about pointers - they essentially keep track of *where* a variable is stored in the computer's memory.

In the previous lessons, you implemented A* search in a single file without using C++ pointers, except in CellSort code that was provided for you; a C++ program can be written without using pointers extensively (or at all). However, pointers give you better control over how your program uses memory. However, much like the pass-by-reference example that you saw previously, it can often be far more efficient to perform an operation with a pointer to an object than performing the same operation using the object itself.

Pointers are an extremely important part of the C++ language, and as you are exposed to more C++ code, you will certainly encounter them. In this notebook, you will become familiar with basic pointers so you get comfortable with the syntax, and you will be ready to use them in the course project code.

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