

`std::iterator` Is Deprecated

In C++17 you must not derive from `std::iterator`. Instead it requires you to write the trait `typedefs` explicitly.

The Standard Library API requires that each iterator type has to expose five `typedef`s:

- `iterator_category` - the type of the iterator
- `value_type` - type stored in the iterator
- `difference_type` - the type that is the result of subtracting two iterators
- `pointer` - pointer type of the stored type
- `reference` - the reference type of the stored type

`iterator_category` must be one of `input_iterator_tag`, `forward_iterator_tag`, `bidirectional_iterator_tag` or `random_access_iterator_tag`.

Before C++17, if you wanted to define a custom iterator, you could use `std::iterator` as a base class. In C++14 it's defined as:

```
template<
    class Category,
    class T,
    class Distance = std::ptrdiff_t,
    class Pointer = T*,
    class Reference = T&
> struct iterator;
```

This helper class made defining the `typedefs` in a short way:

```
class ColumnIterator
: public std::iterator<std::random_access_iterator_tag, Column>
{
    // ...
};
```

In C++17 you must not derive from `std::iterator` and you need to write the

trait `typedefs` explicitly:

```
class ColumnIterator {
public:
    using iterator_category = std::random_iterator_tag;
    using value_type = Column;
    using difference_type = std::ptrdiff_t;
    using pointer = Column*;
    using reference = Column&;

    // ...
};
```

While you have to write more code, it's much easier to read, and it's less error-prone.

For example, the referencing paper mentions the following example from The Standard Library:

```
template <class T, class charT = char, class traits = char_traits<charT> >
class ostream_iterator:
    public iterator<output_iterator_tag, void, void, void, void>;
```

In the above code, it's not clear what all of those four `void` types mean in the definition.

Additionally, `std::iterator` could lead to complicated errors in the name lookup, especially if you happen to use the same name in the derived iterator as in the base class.

Extra Info: You can read more information in the paper [P0174R2 - Deprecating Vestigial Library Parts in C++17](#).

Let's have a look at some smaller elements that were altered in the Standard Library.