Creating a complex strongly-typed context for function components

In this lesson, we'll learn how to implement a strongly-typed context where consumers can change values within it.

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Explicitly setting the context type

In this lesson, we are going to enhance the context from the last lesson so that the theme can be updated by consumers.

In the last lesson, the type for the context was inferred from the default value, which was a simple string. The type for our enhanced context is going to be a little more complex:

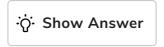
```
type ThemeContextType = {
  theme: string;
  setTheme: (value: string) => void;
};
```

So, there will be a theme property containing the current value for the theme and a setTheme method to update the current theme.

React's createContext function expects us to supply a parameter for initial context value. We can supply a default value for the theme property, but it doesn't make sense to provide a default implementation for the setTheme method. So, a simple approach is to pass in undefined as the initial value:

```
const ThemeContext = React.createContext(undefined);
```

What do you think is the inferred type for the context value in this case?



So, ThemeContext isn't typed as we require at the moment. How do you think we can explicitly specify the type for the context when using createContext?



Therefore, we can type our context as follows:

```
const ThemeContext = React.createContext<ThemeContextType | undefined>(
   undefined
);
```

Using the enhanced context in the provider

The modification to the context provider is to the value we provide from it.

Instead of a simple string, it is now an object containing the theme property and the setTheme method:

Adding an option to change the theme in the Header component

The useTheme custom hook remains the same as in the last lesson. The App component remains the same as well.

We are going to change the Header component though so that the user can change the theme:

We destructure the current theme value as well as the setTheme method from the useTheme hook. Notice that we have put an exclamation mark (!) after the call to the useTheme hook to tell the TypeScript compiler that its return value won't be undefined.

We have also added a drop down that has options to change the theme to *White*, *Blue*, and *Green*. The value of the drop down is set to the current theme value, and when this is changed, it calls the context's setTheme method to update this in the shared state.

The full implementation of the context is available by clicking the link below. Give it a try and change the theme value and see the background change color.

Open full implementation

Wrap up

Generally, we will need to create a type for a context and explicitly define the

type when the context is created. Often the initial value for the context is undefined, so the context type is usually a union type that contains undefined.

Next, we will learn how to create a strongly-typed context with class components.