CS350: Data Structures

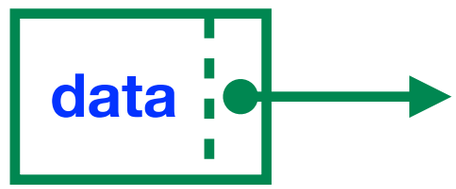
Linked Lists

James Moscola
Department of Engineering & Computer Science
York College of Pennsylvania

Linked Lists

- **Come in a variety of different forms**
  - singly linked lists
  - doubly linked lists
  - circular linked lists

- **Composed of a set of nodes that hold data and contain one or more pointers to neighboring nodes in the list**
  - singly linked lists contain only a pointer to the next node in the list
  - doubly linked lists contain a pointer to the next node and the previous node in the list



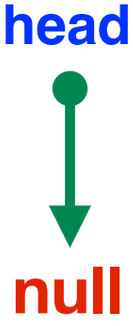
Linked List Operations

- **Basic operations include:**
  - insert / add
  - remove

- **Additional operations may include:**
  - getFirst
  - getLast
  - find
  - isEmpty
  - makeEmpty

Linked List Insertion

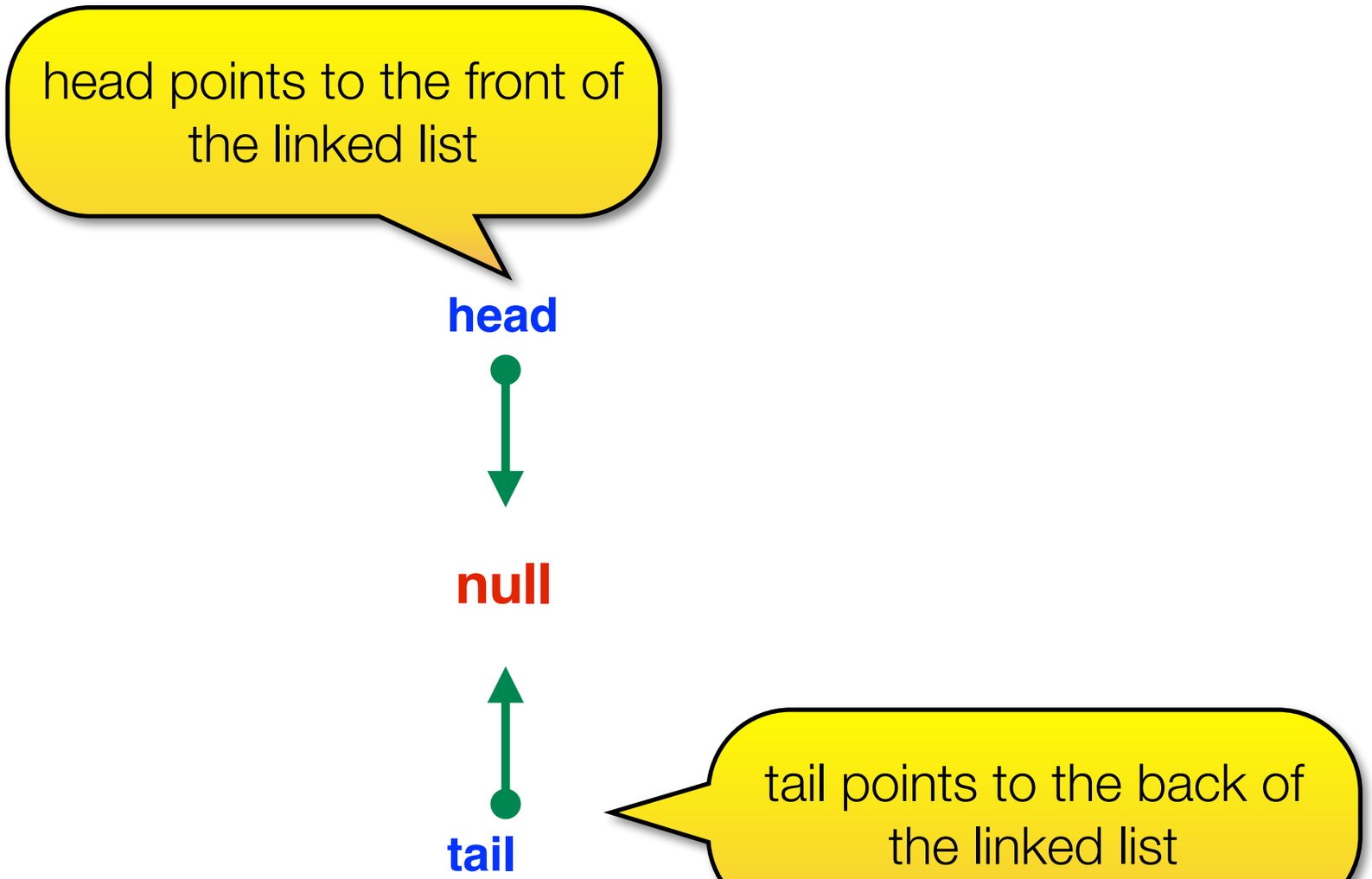
- **Basic implementation uses a head pointer that points to the first node in the list**
  - Points to null upon initialization when no nodes exist in the list



- **Depending on implementation, insertion may take place at the head of the list, at the tail of the list, or at some other specified node**

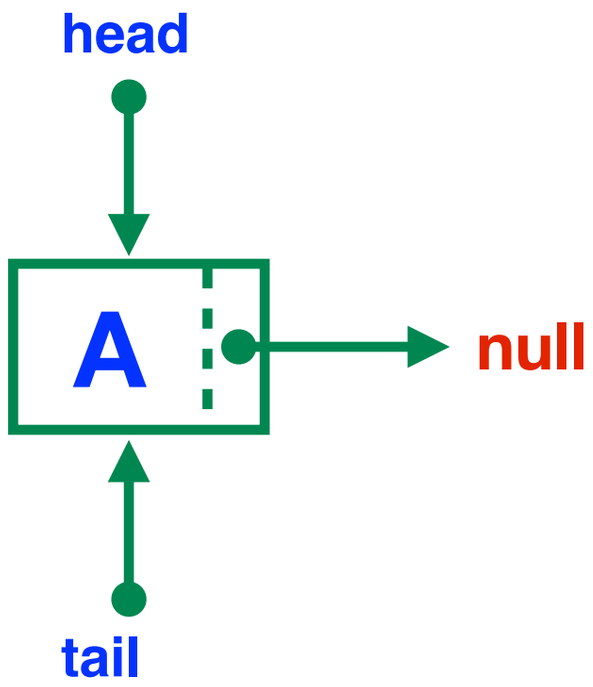
Linked List Insertion

Start with Empty List



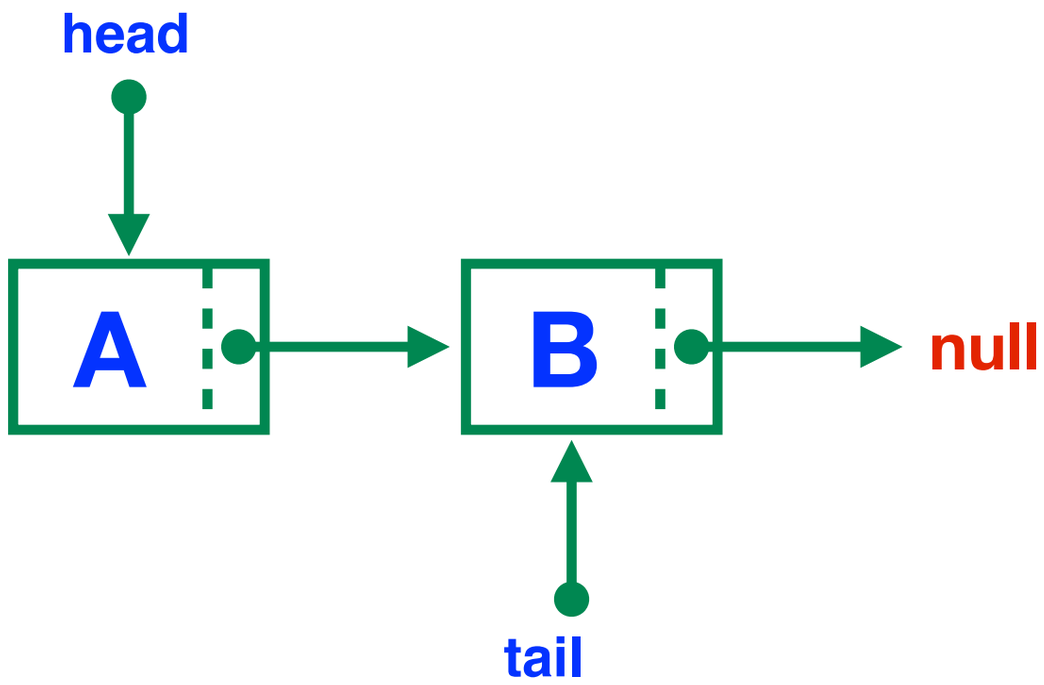
Linked List Insertion

Insert Value: A



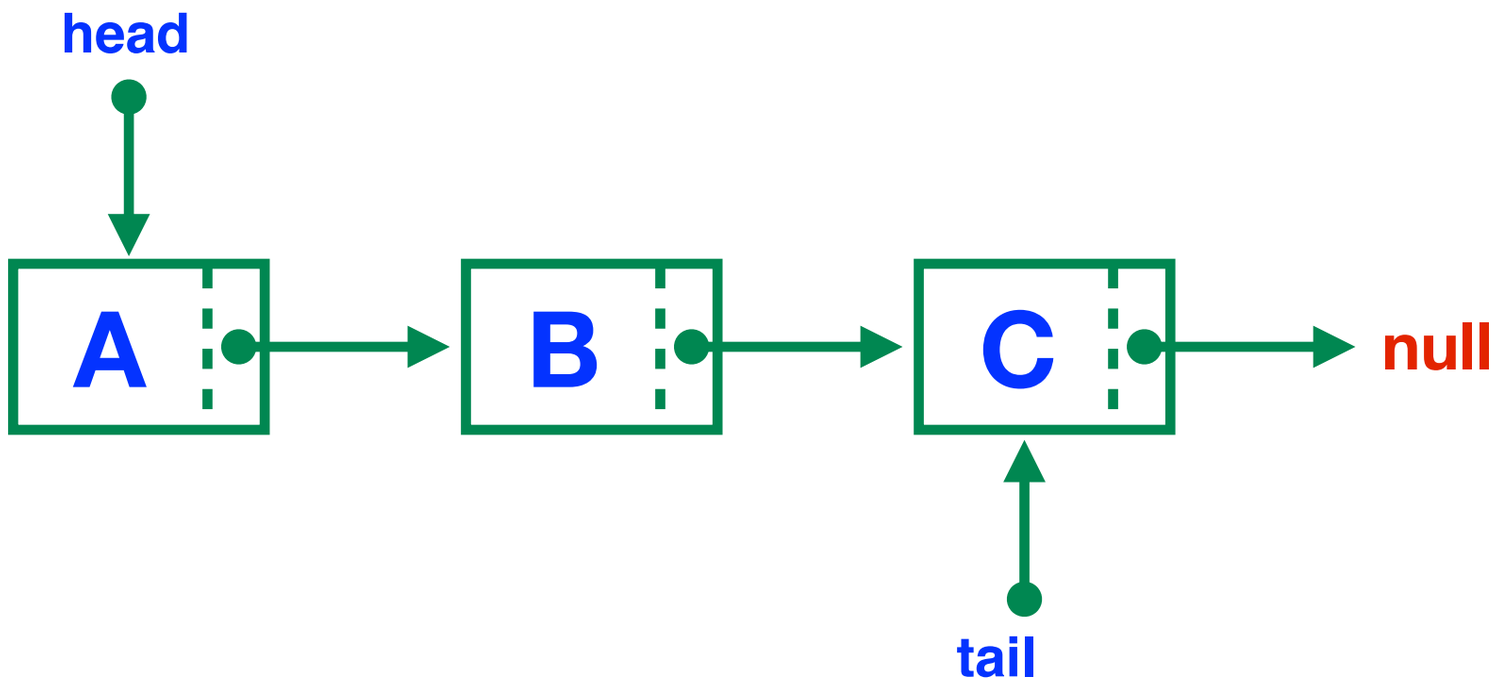
Linked List Insertion

Insert Value: B



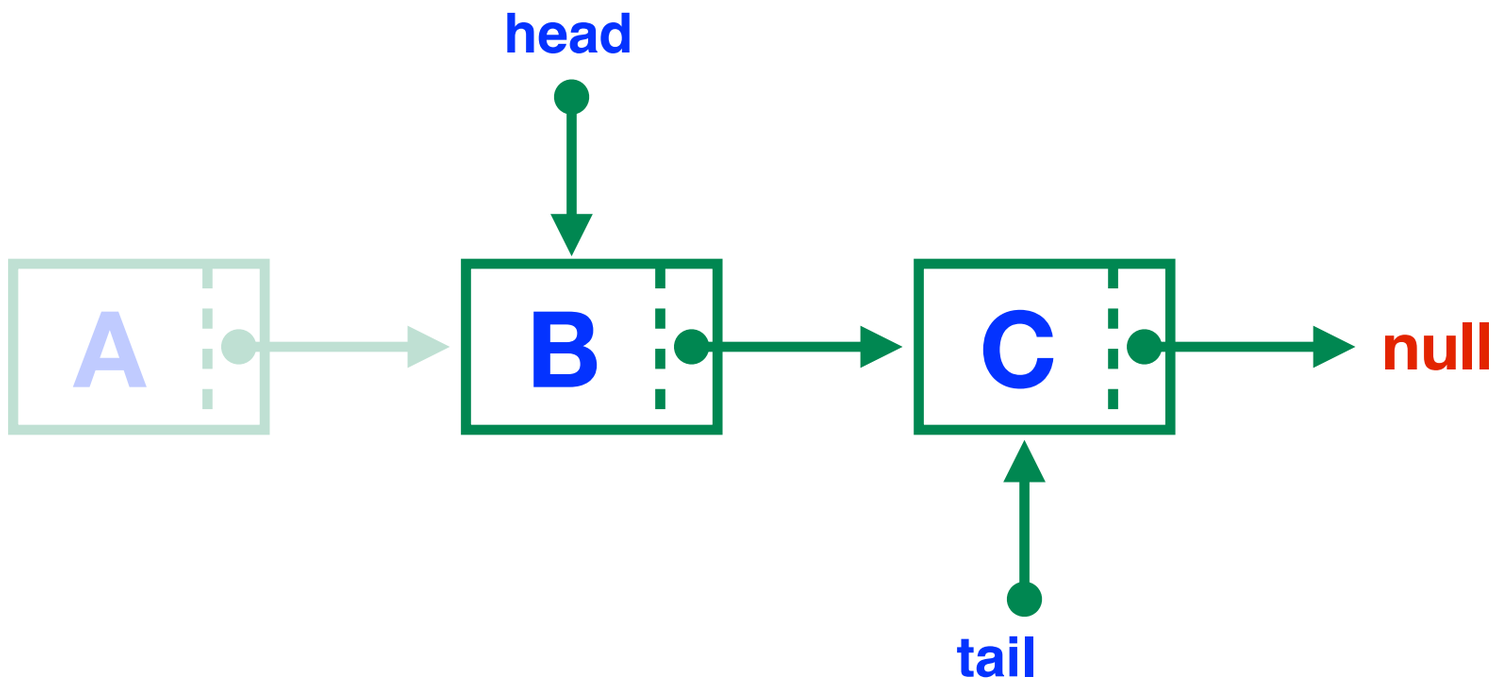
Linked List Insertion

Insert Value: C



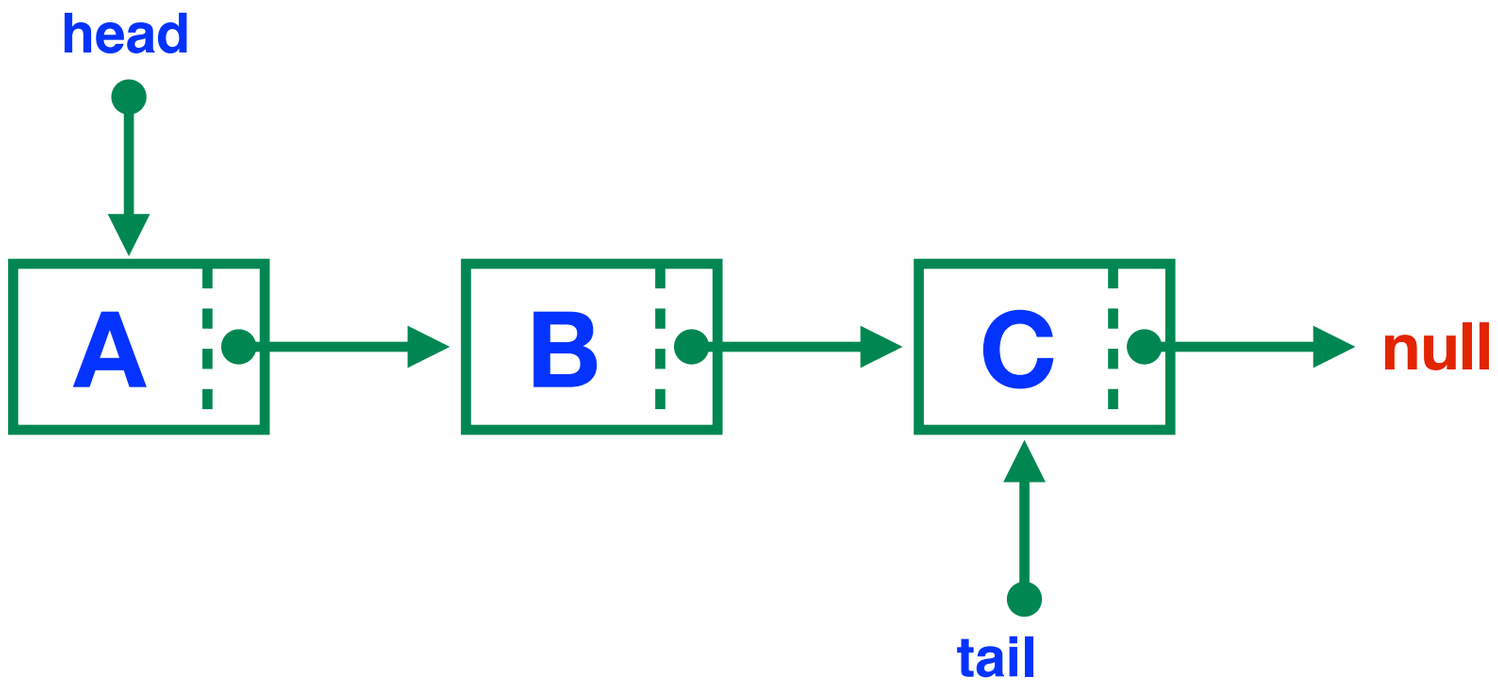
Linked List Removal

Remove First Value:



Linked List Removal

- **Removing last value is not very efficient when using singly linked lists**
  - Want to make next-to-last node in list the last node
  - Must traverse entire list, starting from the head, to find the next-to-last node in the list
  - O(N)



Linked List Implementation

```
public class LinkedListNode<E> {
   public E data;
   public LinkedListNode<E> next;
}
```

Linked List Implementation

```
// Inserts at the tail of the list

public void insert (E data) {
   LinkedListNode<E> newNode = new LinkedListNode<E>();
   newNode.data = data;  // assign data to newNode
   tail.next = newNode;
   tail = newNode;
}
```

This method is oversimplified, what happens if this is called when the list is empty?

Linked List Implementation

Fixed insert method

```
// Inserts at the tail of the list

public void insert (E data) {
   LinkedListNode<E> newNode = new LinkedListNode<E>();
   newNode.data = data;  // assign data to newNode
   if (isEmpty()) {
      head = tail = newNode;
   } else {
      tail.next = newNode;
      tail = newNode;
   }
}
```

Linked List Implementation

```
// Inserts at the head of the list

public void insertAtHead (E data) {
   LinkedListNode<E> newNode = new LinkedListNode<E>();
   newNode.data = data;  // assign data to newNode
   newNode.next = head;
   head = newNode;
}
```

This method is oversimplified, what happens if this is called when the list is empty?

Linked List Implementation

```
// Inserts at the head of the list

public void insertAtHead (E data) {
   LinkedListNode<E> newNode = new LinkedListNode<E>();
   newNode.data = data;  // assign data to newNode
   newNode.next = head;

   if (!isEmpty()) {
      head = newNode;
   } else {
      head = tail = newNode;
   }
}
```

Linked List Implementation

```
// Removes node from head of list and returns its value

public E remove() {
   if (head != null) {
      E nodeData = head.data;
      head = head.next;
      return nodeData;
   } else {
      return null;
   }
}
```

Considerations for Linked List Implementation

- **Implementation as previously shown requires a error checking in the insert and remove methods to check for edge cases (i.e. checking for an empty list)**

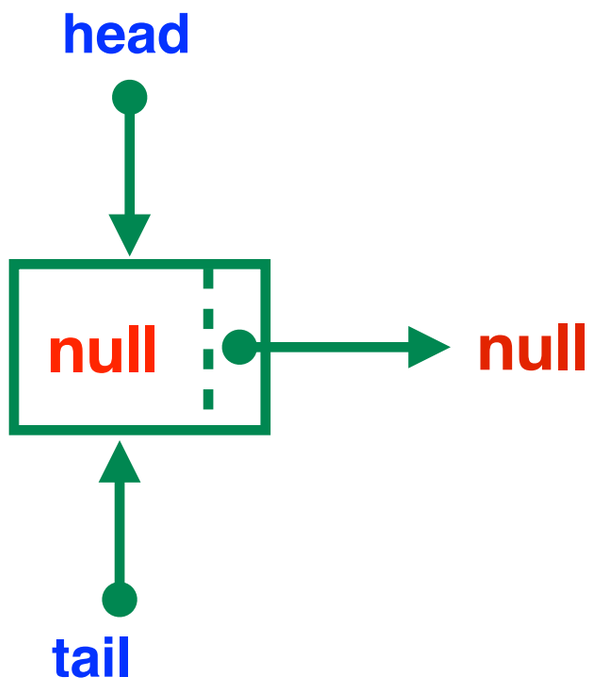
- **To improve the speed of the Linked List operations, it is possible to remove these tests**
  - Tradeoff: speedup comes at the expense of one additional ‘dummy’ node in the Linked List

- **Idea: create a dummy node that exists in the linked list at ALL times ... it is created as part of the list and points to the head node**
  - Eliminates the need to always check for null
  - Generalized the insert and remove methods

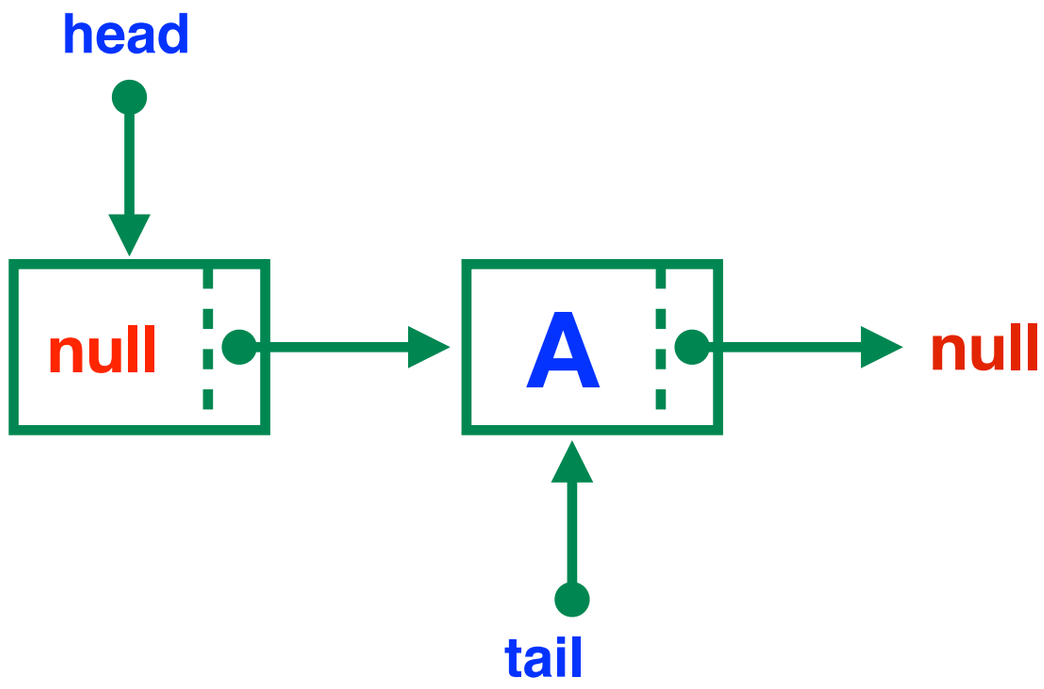
Linked List with Header Node

- **Implementation as previously shown requires error checking in the insert and remove methods to check for edge cases (i.e. checking for an empty list)**

Empty list



List with single node



Linked List Implementation

```
// Inserts at the tail of the list
// When using dummy header node, no need to test for null

public void insert (E data) {
   LinkedListNode<E> newNode = new LinkedListNode<E>();
   newNode.data = data;  // assign data to newNode
   tail.next = newNode;
   tail = newNode;
}
```

Linked List Implementation

```
// Inserts at the head of the list

public void insertAtHead (E data) {
   LinkedListNode<E> newNode = new LinkedListNode<E>();
   newNode.data = data;  // assign data to newNode
   newNode.next = head.next;
   head.next = newNode;
}
```