

# Chapter 4

# Expressions

## Operators

- C emphasizes expressions rather than statements.
- Expressions are built from variables, constants, and operators.
- C has a rich collection of operators, including
  - arithmetic operators
  - relational operators
  - logical operators
  - assignment operators
  - increment and decrement operatorsand many others

## Arithmetic Operators

- C provides five binary *arithmetic operators*:
  - + addition
  - subtraction
  - \* multiplication
  - / division
  - % remainder
- An operator is *binary* if it has two operands.
- There are also two *unary* arithmetic operators:
  - + unary plus
  - unary minus

## Unary Arithmetic Operators

- The unary operators require one operand:

`i = +1;`

`j = -i;`

- The unary `+` operator does nothing. It's used primarily to emphasize that a numeric constant is positive.

## Binary Arithmetic Operators

- The value of  $i \% j$  is the remainder when  $i$  is divided by  $j$ .  
 $10 \% 3$  has the value 1, and  $12 \% 4$  has the value 0.
- Binary arithmetic operators—with the exception of  $\%$ —allow either integer or floating-point operands, with mixing allowed.
- When `int` and `float` operands are mixed, the result has type `float`.  
 $9 + 2.5f$  has the value 11.5, and  $6.7f / 2$  has the value 3.35.

## The / and % Operators

- The / and % operators require special care:
  - When both operands are integers, / “truncates” the result. The value of  $1 / 2$  is 0, not 0.5.
  - The % operator requires integer operands; if either operand is not an integer, the program won’t compile.
  - Using zero as the right operand of either / or % causes undefined behavior.
  - The behavior when / and % are used with negative operands is *implementation-defined* in C89.
  - In C99, the result of a division is always truncated toward zero and the value of  $i \% j$  has the same sign as  $i$ .

## Implementation-Defined Behavior

- The C standard deliberately leaves parts of the language unspecified.
- Leaving parts of the language unspecified reflects C's emphasis on efficiency, which often means matching the way that hardware behaves.
- It's best to avoid writing programs that depend on implementation-defined behavior.

## Operator Precedence

- Does  $i + j * k$  mean “add  $i$  and  $j$ , then multiply the result by  $k$ ” or “multiply  $j$  and  $k$ , then add  $i$ ”?
- One solution to this problem is to add parentheses, writing either  $(i + j) * k$  or  $i + (j * k)$ .
- If the parentheses are omitted, C uses *operator precedence* rules to determine the meaning of the expression.



## Operator Precedence

- The arithmetic operators have the following relative precedence:

Highest:      $+$     $-$  (unary)  
                   $*$     $/$     $\%$

Lowest:      $+$     $-$  (binary)

- Examples:

$i + j * k$     is equivalent to    $i + (j * k)$

$-i * -j$      is equivalent to    $(-i) * (-j)$

$+i + j / k$    is equivalent to    $(+i) + (j / k)$

## Operator Associativity

- **Associativity** comes into play when an expression contains two or more operators with equal precedence.
- An operator is said to be *left associative* if it groups from left to right.
- The binary arithmetic operators ( $*$ ,  $/$ ,  $\%$ ,  $+$ , and  $-$ ) are all left associative, so

$i - j - k$  is equivalent to  $(i - j) - k$

$i * j / k$  is equivalent to  $(i * j) / k$

## Operator Associativity

- An operator is *right associative* if it groups from right to left.
- The unary arithmetic operators (+ and −) are both right associative, so  
 $- + i$  is equivalent to  $-(+i)$

## Program: Computing a UPC Check Digit

- Most goods sold in U.S. and Canadian stores are marked with a Universal Product Code (UPC):



- Meaning of the digits underneath the bar code:  
First digit: Type of item  
First group of five digits: Manufacturer  
Second group of five digits: Product (including package size)  
Final digit: Check digit, used to help identify an error in the preceding digits

## Program: Computing a UPC Check Digit

- How to compute the check digit:
  - Add the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, and eleventh digits.
  - Add the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth digits.
  - Multiply the first sum by 3 and add it to the second sum.
  - Subtract 1 from the total.
  - Compute the remainder when the adjusted total is divided by 10.
  - Subtract the remainder from 9.

## Program: Computing a UPC Check Digit

- Example for UPC 0 13800 15173 5:

First sum:  $0 + 3 + 0 + 1 + 1 + 3 = 8$ .

Second sum:  $1 + 8 + 0 + 5 + 7 = 21$ .

Multiplying the first sum by 3 and adding the second yields 45.

Subtracting 1 gives 44.

Remainder upon dividing by 10 is 4.

Remainder is subtracted from 9.

Result is 5.

## Program: Computing a UPC Check Digit

- The `upc.c` program asks the user to enter the first 11 digits of a UPC, then displays the corresponding check digit:

```
Enter the first (single) digit: 0  
Enter first group of five digits: 13800  
Enter second group of five digits: 15173  
Check digit: 5
```

- The program reads each digit group as five one-digit numbers.
- To read single digits, we'll use `scanf` with the `%1d` conversion specification.

## Chapter 4: Expressions

### upc.c

```
/* Computes a Universal Product Code check digit */

#include <stdio.h>

int main(void)
{
    int d, i1, i2, i3, i4, i5, j1, j2, j3, j4, j5,
        first_sum, second_sum, total;

    printf("Enter the first (single) digit: ");
    scanf("%1d", &d);
    printf("Enter first group of five digits: ");
    scanf("%1d%1d%1d%1d%1d", &i1, &i2, &i3, &i4, &i5);
    printf("Enter second group of five digits: ");
    scanf("%1d%1d%1d%1d%1d", &j1, &j2, &j3, &j4, &j5);
    first_sum = d + i2 + i4 + j1 + j3 + j5;
    second_sum = i1 + i3 + i5 + j2 + j4;
    total = 3 * first_sum + second_sum;

    printf("Check digit: %d\n", 9 - ((total - 1) % 10));

    return 0;
}
```



## Assignment Operators

- ***Simple assignment:*** used for storing a value into a variable
- ***Compound assignment:*** used for updating a value already stored in a variable

## Simple Assignment

- The effect of the assignment  $v = e$  is to evaluate the expression  $e$  and copy its value into  $v$ .
- $e$  can be a constant, a variable, or a more complicated expression:

```
i = 5;           /* i is now 5 */
j = i;           /* j is now 5 */
k = 10 * i + j;  /* k is now 55 */
```

## Simple Assignment

- If  $v$  and  $e$  don't have the same type, then the value of  $e$  is converted to the type of  $v$  as the assignment takes place:

```
int i;
```

```
float f;
```

```
i = 72.99f;    /* i is now 72 */
```

```
f = 136;      /* f is now 136.0 */
```

## Simple Assignment

- In many programming languages, assignment is a statement; in C, however, assignment is an operator, just like  $+$ .
- The value of an assignment  $v = e$  is the value of  $v$  after the assignment.
  - The value of  $i = 72.99f$  is 72 (not 72.99).

## Side Effects

- An operators that modifies one of its operands is said to have a *side effect*.
- The simple assignment operator has a side effect: it modifies its left operand.
- Evaluating the expression  $i = 0$  produces the result 0 and—as a side effect—assigns 0 to  $i$ .

## Side Effects

- Since assignment is an operator, several assignments can be chained together:

`i = j = k = 0;`

- The `=` operator is right associative, so this assignment is equivalent to

`i = (j = (k = 0)) ;`

## Side Effects

- Watch out for unexpected results in chained assignments as a result of type conversion:

```
int i;  
float f;
```

```
f = i = 33.3f;
```

- `i` is assigned the value 33, then `f` is assigned 33.0 (not 33.3).

## Side Effects

- An assignment of the form  $v = e$  is allowed wherever a value of type  $v$  would be permitted:

```
i = 1;  
k = 1 + (j = i);  
printf("%d %d %d\n", i, j, k);  
/* prints "1 1 2" */
```

- “Embedded assignments” can make programs hard to read.
- They can also be a source of subtle bugs.



## Lvalues

- The assignment operator requires an *lvalue* as its left operand.
- An lvalue represents an object stored in computer memory, not a constant or the result of a computation.
- Variables are lvalues; expressions such as `10` or `2 * i` are not.

## Lvalues

- Since the assignment operator requires an lvalue as its left operand, it's illegal to put any other kind of expression on the left side of an assignment expression:

```
12 = i;           /* ** WRONG ** */  
i + j = 0;        /* ** WRONG ** */  
-i = j;           /* ** WRONG ** */
```

- The compiler will produce an error message such as “*invalid lvalue in assignment.*”

## Compound Assignment

- Assignments that use the old value of a variable to compute its new value are common.

- Example:

```
i = i + 2;
```

- Using the += compound assignment operator, we simply write:

```
i += 2;    /* same as i = i + 2; */
```

## Compound Assignment

- There are nine other compound assignment operators, including the following:

$--$      $*=$      $/=$      $\%=$

- All compound assignment operators work in much the same way:

$v += e$  adds  $v$  to  $e$ , storing the result in  $v$

$v -= e$  subtracts  $e$  from  $v$ , storing the result in  $v$

$v *= e$  multiplies  $v$  by  $e$ , storing the result in  $v$

$v /= e$  divides  $v$  by  $e$ , storing the result in  $v$

$v \% = e$  computes the remainder when  $v$  is divided by  $e$ , storing the result in  $v$

## Compound Assignment

- $v += e$  isn't "equivalent" to  $v = v + e$ .
- One problem is operator precedence:  $i *= j + k$  isn't the same as  $i = i * j + k$ .
- There are also rare cases in which  $v += e$  differs from  $v = v + e$  because  $v$  itself has a side effect.
- Similar remarks apply to the other compound assignment operators.

## Compound Assignment

- When using the compound assignment operators, be careful not to switch the two characters that make up the operator.
- Although `i =+ j` will compile, it is equivalent to `i = (+j)`, which merely copies the value of `j` into `i`.

## Increment and Decrement Operators

- Two of the most common operations on a variable are “incrementing” (adding 1) and “decrementing” (subtracting 1):

```
i = i + 1;
```

```
j = j - 1;
```

- Incrementing and decrementing can be done using the compound assignment operators:

```
i += 1;
```

```
j -= 1;
```

## Increment and Decrement Operators

- C provides special ++ (*increment*) and -- (*decrement*) operators.
- The ++ operator adds 1 to its operand. The -- operator subtracts 1.
- The increment and decrement operators are tricky to use:
  - They can be used as *prefix* operators (++i and --i) or *postfix* operators (i++ and i--).
  - They have side effects: they modify the values of their operands.



## Increment and Decrement Operators

- Evaluating the expression `++i` (a “pre-increment”) yields `i + 1` and—as a side effect—increments `i`:

```
i = 1;
printf("i is %d\n", ++i);    /* prints "i is 2" */
printf("i is %d\n", i);     /* prints "i is 2" */
```

- Evaluating the expression `i++` (a “post-increment”) produces the result `i`, but causes `i` to be incremented afterwards:

```
i = 1;
printf("i is %d\n", i++);    /* prints "i is 1" */
printf("i is %d\n", i);     /* prints "i is 2" */
```

## Increment and Decrement Operators

- `++i` means “increment `i` immediately,” while `i++` means “use the old value of `i` for now, but increment `i` later.”
- How much later? The C standard doesn’t specify a precise time, but it’s safe to assume that `i` will be incremented before the next statement is executed.

## Increment and Decrement Operators

- The `--` operator has similar properties:

```
i = 1;
printf("i is %d\n", --i);    /* prints "i is 0" */
printf("i is %d\n", i);     /* prints "i is 0" */
i = 1;
printf("i is %d\n", i--);    /* prints "i is 1" */
printf("i is %d\n", i);     /* prints "i is 0" */
```

## Increment and Decrement Operators

- When ++ or -- is used more than once in the same expression, the result can often be hard to understand.
- Example:

```
i = 1;  
j = 2;  
k = ++i + j++;
```

The last statement is equivalent to

```
i = i + 1;  
k = i + j;  
j = j + 1;
```

The final values of *i*, *j*, and *k* are 2, 3, and 4, respectively.

## Increment and Decrement Operators

- In contrast, executing the statements

```
i = 1;
```

```
j = 2;
```

```
k = i++ + j++;
```

will give *i*, *j*, and *k* the values 2, 3, and 3, respectively.

## Expression Evaluation

- Table of operators discussed so far:

<i>Precedence</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Symbol(s)</i>	<i>Associativity</i>
1	increment (postfix)	++	left
	decrement (postfix)	--	
2	increment (prefix)	++	right
	decrement (prefix)	--	
	unary plus	+	
	unary minus	-	
3	multiplicative	* / %	left
4	additive	+ -	left
5	assignment	= *= /= %= += -=	right

## Expression Evaluation

- The table can be used to add parentheses to an expression that lacks them.
- Starting with the operator with highest precedence, put parentheses around the operator and its operands.
- Example:

$a = b += c++ - d + --e / -f$

*Precedence  
level*

$a = b += (c++) - d + --e / -f$

1

$a = b += (c++) - d + (--e) / (-f)$

2

$a = b += (c++) - d + ((--e) / (-f))$

3

$a = b += (((c++) - d) + ((--e) / (-f)))$

4

$(a = (b += (((c++) - d) + ((--e) / (-f)))))$

5

## Order of Subexpression Evaluation

- The value of an expression may depend on the order in which its subexpressions are evaluated.
- C doesn't define the order in which subexpressions are evaluated (with the exception of subexpressions involving the logical and, logical or, conditional, and comma operators).
- In the expression  $(a + b) * (c - d)$  we don't know whether  $(a + b)$  will be evaluated before  $(c - d)$ .



## Order of Subexpression Evaluation

- Most expressions have the same value regardless of the order in which their subexpressions are evaluated.
- However, this may not be true when a subexpression modifies one of its operands:

`a = 5;`

`c = (b = a + 2) - (a = 1);`

- The effect of executing the second statement is undefined.

## Order of Subexpression Evaluation

- Avoid writing expressions that access the value of a variable and also modify the variable elsewhere in the expression.
- Some compilers may produce a warning message such as “*operation on ‘a’ may be undefined*” when they encounter such an expression.

## Order of Subexpression Evaluation

- To prevent problems, it's a good idea to avoid using the assignment operators in subexpressions.
- Instead, use a series of separate assignments:

```
a = 5;
```

```
b = a + 2;
```

```
a = 1;
```

```
c = b - a;
```

The value of `c` will always be 6.

## Order of Subexpression Evaluation

- Besides the assignment operators, the only operators that modify their operands are increment and decrement.
- When using these operators, be careful that an expression doesn't depend on a particular order of evaluation.

## Order of Subexpression Evaluation

- Example:

```
i = 2;
```

```
j = i * i++;
```

- It's natural to assume that `j` is assigned 4. However, `j` could just as well be assigned 6 instead:
  1. The second operand (the original value of `i`) is fetched, then `i` is incremented.
  2. The first operand (the new value of `i`) is fetched.
  3. The new and old values of `i` are multiplied, yielding 6.

## Undefined Behavior

- Statements such as `c = (b = a + 2) - (a = 1) ;` and `j = i * i++ ;` cause *undefined behavior*.
- Possible effects of undefined behavior:
  - The program may behave differently when compiled with different compilers.
  - The program may not compile in the first place.
  - If it compiles it may not run.
  - If it does run, the program may crash, behave erratically, or produce meaningless results.
- Undefined behavior should be avoided.

## Expression Statements

- C has the unusual rule that any expression can be used as a statement.
- Example:

```
++i;
```

`i` is first incremented, then the new value of `i` is fetched but then discarded.

## Expression Statements

- Since its value is discarded, there's little point in using an expression as a statement unless the expression has a side effect:

```
i = 1;           /* useful */  
i--;             /* useful */  
i * j - 1;       /* not useful */
```



## Expression Statements

- A slip of the finger can easily create a “do-nothing” expression statement.
- For example, instead of entering  
`i = j;`  
we might accidentally type  
`i + j;`
- Some compilers can detect meaningless expression statements; you’ll get a warning such as “*statement with no effect.*”