Chapter 15: Writing Large Programs

Chapter 15

Writing Large Programs

- A C program may be divided among any number of *source files*.
- By convention, source files have the extension .c.
- Each source file contains part of the program, primarily definitions of functions and variables.
- One source file must contain a function named main, which serves as the starting point for the program.

- Consider the problem of writing a simple calculator program.
- The program will evaluate integer expressions entered in Reverse Polish notation (RPN), in which operators follow operands.
- If the user enters an expression such as

$$30\ 5\ -\ 7\ *$$

the program should print its value (175, in this case).

- The program will read operands and operators, one by one, using a stack to keep track of intermediate results.
 - If the program reads a number, it will push the number onto the stack.
 - If the program reads an operator, it will pop two numbers from the stack, perform the operation, and then push the result back onto the stack.
- When the program reaches the end of the user's input, the value of the expression will be on the stack.

- How the expression 30 5 7 *: will be evaluated:
 - 1. Push 30 onto the stack.
 - 2. Push 5 onto the stack.
 - 3. Pop the top two numbers from the stack, subtract 5 from 30, giving 25, and then push the result back onto the stack.
 - 4. Push 7 onto the stack.
 - 5. Pop the top two numbers from the stack, multiply them, and then push the result back onto the stack.
- The stack will now contain 175, the value of the expression.

- The program's main function will contain a loop that performs the following actions:
 - Read a "token" (a number or an operator).
 - If the token is a number, push it onto the stack.
 - If the token is an operator, pop its operands from the stack, perform the operation, and then push the result back onto the stack.
- When dividing a program like this one into files, it makes sense to put related functions and variables into the same file.

- The function that reads tokens could go into one source file (token.c, say), together with any functions that have to do with tokens.
- Stack-related functions such as push, pop, make_empty, is_empty, and is_full could go into a different file, stack.c.
- The variables that represent the stack would also go into stack.c.
- The main function would go into yet another file, calc.c.



- Splitting a program into multiple source files has significant advantages:
 - Grouping related functions and variables into a single file helps clarify the structure of the program.
 - Each source file can be compiled separately, which saves time.
 - Functions are more easily reused in other programs when grouped in separate source files.

Header Files

- Problems that arise when a program is divided into several source files:
 - How can a function in one file call a function that's defined in another file?
 - How can a function access an external variable in another file?
 - How can two files share the same macro definition or type definition?
- The answer lies with the #include directive, which makes it possible to share information among any number of source files.

Header Files

- The #include directive tells the preprocessor to insert the contents of a specified file.
- Information to be shared among several source files can be put into such a file.
- #include can then be used to bring the file's contents into each of the source files.
- Files that are included in this fashion are called *header files* (or sometimes *include files*).
- By convention, header files have the extension . h.

- The #include directive has two primary forms.
- The first is used for header files that belong to C's own library:

```
#include <filename>
```

- The second is used for all other header files: #include "filename"
- The difference between the two has to do with how the compiler locates the header file.

- Typical rules for locating header files:
 - #include <filename>: Search the directory (or directories) in which system header files reside.
 - #include "filename": Search the current directory,
 then search the directory (or directories) in which
 system header files reside.
- The places to be searched for header files can usually be altered, often by a command-line option such as -Ipath.

• Don't use brackets when including header files that you have written:

```
#include <myheader.h> /*** WRONG ***/
```

• The preprocessor will probably look for myheader.h where the system header files are kept.

• The file name in an #include directive may include information that helps locate the file, such as a directory path or drive specifier:

```
#include "c:\cprogs\utils.h"
  /* Windows path */

#include "/cprogs/utils.h"
  /* UNIX path */
```

• Although the quotation marks in the #include directive make file names look like string literals, the preprocessor doesn't treat them that way.

- It's usually best not to include path or drive information in #include directives.
- Bad examples of Windows #include directives:

```
#include "d:utils.h"
#include "\cprogs\include\utils.h"
#include "d:\cprogs\include\utils.h"
```

• Better versions:

```
#include "utils.h"
#include "..\include\utils.h"
```



- The #include directive has a third form: #include tokens
 - tokens is any sequence of preprocessing tokens.
- The preprocessor will scan the tokens and replace any macros that it finds.
- After macro replacement, the resulting directive must match one of the other forms of #include.
- The advantage of the third kind of #include is that the file name can be defined by a macro rather than being "hard-coded" into the directive itself.

• Example:

```
#if defined(IA32)
    #define CPU_FILE "ia32.h"
#elif defined(IA64)
    #define CPU_FILE "ia64.h"
#elif defined(AMD64)
    #define CPU_FILE "amd64.h"
#endif
#include CPU_FILE
```

- Most large programs contain macro definitions and type definitions that need to be shared by several source files.
- These definitions should go into header files.



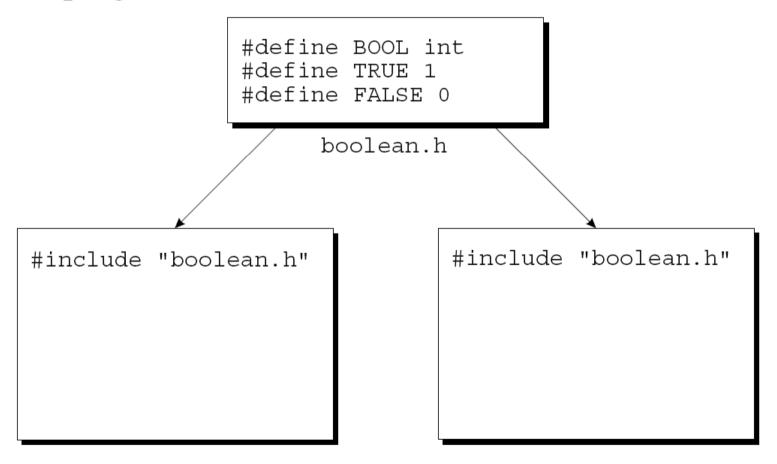
- Suppose that a program uses macros named BOOL, TRUE, and FALSE.
- Their definitions can be put in a header file with a name like boolean.h:

```
#define BOOL int
#define TRUE 1
#define FALSE 0
```

• Any source file that requires these macros will simply contain the line

```
#include "boolean.h"
```

• A program in which two files include boolean.h:



- Type definitions are also common in header files.
- For example, instead of defining a BOOL macro, we might use typedef to create a Bool type.
- If we do, the boolean.h file will have the following appearance:

```
#define TRUE 1
#define FALSE 0
typedef int Bool;
```



- Advantages of putting definitions of macros and types in header files:
 - Saves time. We don't have to copy the definitions into the source files where they're needed.
 - Makes the program easier to modify. Changing the definition of a macro or type requires editing a single header file.
 - Avoids inconsistencies caused by source files containing different definitions of the same macro or type.



- Suppose that a source file contains a call of a function f that's defined in another file, foo.c.
- Calling f without declaring it first is risky.
 - The compiler assumes that f's return type is int.
 - It also assumes that the number of parameters matches the number of arguments in the call of f.
 - The arguments themselves are converted automatically by the default argument promotions.

- Declaring f in the file where it's called solves the problem but can create a maintenance nightmare.
- A better solution is to put f's prototype in a header file (foo.h), then include the header file in all the places where f is called.
- We'll also need to include foo.h in foo.c, enabling the compiler to check that f's prototype in foo.h matches its definition in foo.c.

- If foo.c contains other functions, most of them should be declared in foo.h.
- Functions that are intended for use only within foo.c shouldn't be declared in a header file, however; to do so would be misleading.

- The RPN calculator example can be used to illustrate the use of function prototypes in header files.
- The stack.c file will contain definitions of the make_empty, is_empty, is_full, push, and pop functions.
- Prototypes for these functions should go in the stack.h header file:

```
void make_empty(void);
int is_empty(void);
int is_full(void);
void push(int i);
int pop(void);
```



- We'll include stack.h in calc.c to allow the compiler to check any calls of stack functions that appear in the latter file.
- We'll also include stack.h in stack.c so the compiler can verify that the prototypes in stack.h match the definitions in stack.c.

```
void make empty(void);
               int is empty(void);
               int is full(void);
               void push(int i);
               int pop(void);
                       stack.h
                                #include "stack.h"
#include "stack.h"
int main(void)
                                int contents[100];
                                int top = 0;
  make empty();
                               void make empty(void)
                                { ... }
                                int is empty(void)
        calc.c
                                { ... }
                               int is full(void)
                                { ... }
                               void push(int i)
                                { ... }
                                int pop(void)
```





- To share a function among files, we put its *definition* in one source file, then put *declarations* in other files that need to call the function.
- Sharing an external variable is done in much the same way.

• An example that both declares and defines i (causing the compiler to set aside space):

```
int i;
```

• The keyword extern is used to declare a variable without defining it:

```
extern int i;
```

• extern informs the compiler that i is defined elsewhere in the program, so there's no need to allocate space for it.

• When we use extern in the declaration of an array, we can omit the length of the array: extern int a[];

• Since the compiler doesn't allocate space for a at this time, there's no need for it to know a's length.

• To share a variable i among several source files, we first put a definition of i in one file:

```
int i;
```

- If i needs to be initialized, the initializer would go here.
- The other files will contain declarations of i: extern int i;
- By declaring i in each file, it becomes possible to access and/or modify i within those files.

- When declarations of the same variable appear in different files, the compiler can't check that the declarations match the variable's definition.
- For example, one file may contain the definition int i;
 while another file contains the declaration

```
extern long i;
```

• An error of this kind can cause the program to behave unpredictably.

- To avoid inconsistency, declarations of shared variables are usually put in header files.
- A source file that needs access to a particular variable can then include the appropriate header file.
- In addition, each header file that contains a variable declaration is included in the source file that contains the variable's definition, enabling the compiler to check that the two match.

Nested Includes

- A header file may contain #include directives.
- stack.h contains the following prototypes:

```
int is_empty(void);
int is_full(void);
```

• Since these functions return only 0 or 1, it's a good idea to declare their return type to be Bool:

```
Bool is_empty(void);
Bool is_full(void);
```

• We'll need to include the boolean.h file in stack.h so that the definition of Bool is available when stack.h is compiled.

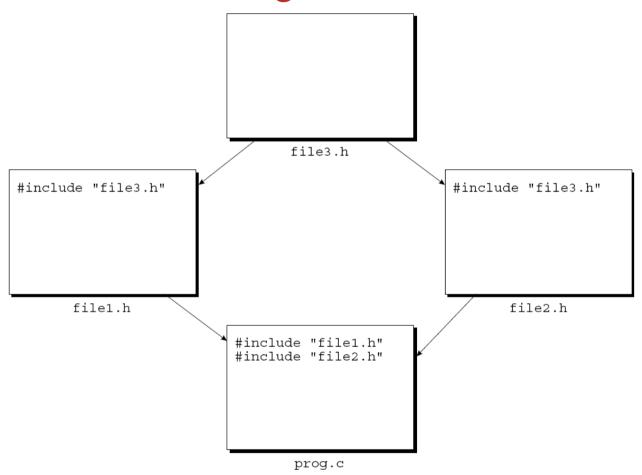


Chapter 15: Writing Large Programs

Nested Includes

- Traditionally, C programmers shun nested includes.
- However, the bias against nested includes has largely faded away, in part because nested includes are common practice in C++.

- If a source file includes the same header file twice, compilation errors may result.
- This problem is common when header files include other header files.
- Suppose that file1.h includes file3.h, file2.h includes file3.h, and prog.c includes both file1.h and file2.h.



• When prog.c is compiled, file3.h will be compiled twice.



- Including the same header file twice doesn't always cause a compilation error.
- If the file contains only macro definitions, function prototypes, and/or variable declarations, there won't be any difficulty.
- If the file contains a type definition, however, we'll get a compilation error.

- Just to be safe, it's probably a good idea to protect all header files against multiple inclusion.
- That way, we can add type definitions to a file later without the risk that we might forget to protect the file.
- In addition, we might save some time during program development by avoiding unnecessary recompilation of the same header file.

- To protect a header file, we'll enclose the contents of the file in an #ifndef-#endif pair.
- How to protect the boolean.h file:

```
#ifndef BOOLEAN_H
#define BOOLEAN_H
#define TRUE 1
#define FALSE 0
typedef int Bool;
#endif
```



- Making name of the macro resemble the name of the header file is a good way to avoid conflicts with other macros.
- Since we can't name the macro BOOLEAN.H, a name such as BOOLEAN_H is a good alternative.

#error Directives in Header Files

- #error directives are often put in header files to check for conditions under which the header file shouldn't be included.
- Suppose that a header file uses a feature that didn't exist prior to the original C89 standard.
- An #ifndef directive that tests for the existence of the STDC macro:

```
#ifndef __STDC__
#error This header requires a Standard C compiler
#endif
```

Dividing a Program into Files

- Designing a program involves determining what functions it will need and arranging the functions into logically related groups.
- Once a program has been designed, there is a simple technique for dividing it into files.



Dividing a Program into Files

- Each set of functions will go into a separate source file (foo.c).
- Each source file will have a matching header file (foo.h).
 - foo.h will contain prototypes for the functions defined in foo.c.
 - Functions to be used only within foo.c should not be declared in foo.h.
- foo.h will be included in each source file that needs to call a function defined in foo.c.
- foo.h will also be included in foo.c so the compiler can check that the prototypes in foo.h match the definitions in foo.c.

Dividing a Program into Files

- The main function will go in a file whose name matches the name of the program.
- It's possible that there are other functions in the same file as main, so long as they're not called from other files in the program.

- Let's apply this technique to a small textformatting program named justify.
- Assume that a file named quote contains the following sample input:

```
C is quirky, flawed, and an enormous success. Although accidents of history surely helped, it evidently satisfied a need
```

for a system implementation language efficient enough to displace assembly language, yet sufficiently abstract and fluent to describe algorithms and interactions in a wide variety of environments.

-- Dennis M. Ritchie



• To run the program from a UNIX or Windows prompt, we'd enter the command justify <quote

- The < symbol informs the operating system that justify will read from the file quote instead of accepting input from the keyboard.
- This feature, supported by UNIX, Windows, and other operating systems, is called *input* redirection.

• Output of justify:

C is quirky, flawed, and an enormous success. Although accidents of history surely helped, it evidently satisfied a need for a system implementation language efficient enough to displace assembly language, yet sufficiently abstract and fluent to describe algorithms and interactions in a wide variety of environments. — Dennis M. Ritchie

• The output of justify will normally appear on the screen, but we can save it in a file by using *output* redirection:

justify <quote >newquote



- justify will delete extra spaces and blank lines as well as filling and justifying lines.
 - "Filling" a line means adding words until one more word would cause the line to overflow.
 - "Justifying" a line means adding extra spaces between words so that each line has exactly the same length (60 characters).
- Justification must be done so that the space between words in a line is equal (or nearly equal).
- The last line of the output won't be justified.

- We assume that no word is longer than 20 characters, including any adjacent punctuation.
- If the program encounters a longer word, it must ignore all characters after the first 20, replacing them with a single asterisk.
- For example, the word

```
antidisestablishmentarianism
```

would be printed as

antidisestablishment*



- The program can't write words one by one as they're read.
- Instead, it will have to store them in a "line buffer" until there are enough to fill a line.

• The heart of the program will be a loop:

```
for (;;) {
  read word;
   if (can't read word) {
       write contents of line buffer without justification;
       terminate program;
       (word doesn't fit in line buffer) {
     write contents of line buffer with justification;
     clear line buffer;
  add word to line buffer;
```

- The program will be split into three source files:
 - word.c: functions related to words
 - line.c: functions related to the line buffer
 - justify.c: contains the main function
- We'll also need two header files:
 - word.h: prototypes for the functions in word.c
 - line.h: prototypes for the functions in line.c
- word.h will contain the prototype for a function that reads a word.

word.h



- The outline of the main loop reveals the need for functions that perform the following operations:
 - Write contents of line buffer without justification
 - Determine how many characters are left in line buffer
 - Write contents of line buffer with justification
 - Clear line buffer
 - Add word to line buffer
- We'll call these functions flush_line, space_remaining, write_line, clear_line, and add_word.

line.h

```
/****************
 space_remaining: Returns the number of characters left *
           in the current line.
int space remaining (void);
/****************
* write line: Writes the current line with
        justification.
void write line(void);
/****************
 flush line: Writes the current line without
        justification. If the line is empty, does
        nothing.
void flush line(void);
#endif
```



- Before we write the word.c and line.c files, we can use the functions declared in word.h and line.h to write justify.c, the main program.
- Writing this file is mostly a matter of translating the original loop design into C.

justify.c

```
/* Formats a file of text */
#include <string.h>
#include "line.h"
#include "word.h"

#define MAX_WORD_LEN 20

int main(void)
{
   char word[MAX_WORD_LEN+2];
   int word_len;
```

```
clear line();
for (;;) {
  read_word(word, MAX_WORD_LEN+1);
  word len = strlen(word);
  if (word_len == 0) {
    flush_line();
    return 0;
  if (word_len > MAX_WORD_LEN)
    word[MAX WORD LEN] = '*';
  if (word_len + 1 > space_remaining()) {
    write line();
    clear line();
  add_word(word);
```

- main uses a trick to handle words that exceed 20 characters.
- When it calls read_word, main tells it to truncate any word that exceeds 21 characters.
- After read_word returns, main checks whether word contains a string that's longer than 20 characters.
- If so, the word must have been at least 21 characters long (before truncation), so main replaces its 21st character by an asterisk.

- The word.h header file has a prototype for only one function, read_word.
- read_word is easier to write if we add a small "helper" function, read_char.
- read_char's job is to read a single character and, if it's a new-line character or tab, convert it to a space.
- Having read_word call read_char instead of getchar solves the problem of treating new-line characters and tabs as spaces.

word.c

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include "word.h"

int read_char(void)
{
  int ch = getchar();

  if (ch == '\n' || ch == '\t')
    return ' ';
  return ch;
}
```

```
void read_word(char *word, int len)
{
  int ch, pos = 0;

  while ((ch = read_char()) == ' ')
  ;
  while (ch != ' ' && ch != EOF) {
    if (pos < len)
      word[pos++] = ch;
    ch = read_char();
  }
  word[pos] = '\0';
}</pre>
```

- line.c supplies definitions of the functions declared in line.h.
- line.c will also need variables to keep track of the state of the line buffer:
 - line: characters in the current line
 - line_len: number of characters in the current line
 - num_words: number of words in the current line

line.c

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <string.h>
#include "line.h"
#define MAX LINE LEN 60
char line[MAX LINE LEN+1];
int line_len = 0;
int num_words = 0;
void clear_line(void)
  line[0] = ' \setminus 0';
  line_len = 0;
  num\_words = 0;
```

```
void add word(const char *word)
  if (num_words > 0) {
    line[line_len] = ' ';
    line[line_len+1] = ' \setminus 0';
    line_len++;
  strcat(line, word);
  line_len += strlen(word);
  num words++;
int space remaining (void)
  return MAX_LINE_LEN - line_len;
```

```
void write line(void)
  int extra_spaces, spaces_to_insert, i, j;
  extra spaces = MAX LINE LEN - line len;
  for (i = 0; i < line len; i++) {
    if (line[i] != ' ')
      putchar(line[i]);
    else {
      spaces_to_insert = extra_spaces / (num_words - 1);
      for (j = 1; j \le spaces to insert + 1; j++)
        putchar(' ');
      extra_spaces -= spaces_to_insert;
      num words--;
  putchar('\n');
void flush_line(void)
  if (line len > 0)
    puts(line);
```

Building a Multiple-File Program

- Building a large program requires the same basic steps as building a small one:
 - Compiling
 - Linking



Building a Multiple-File Program

- Each source file in the program must be compiled separately.
- Header files don't need to be compiled.
- The contents of a header file are automatically compiled whenever a source file that includes it is compiled.
- For each source file, the compiler generates a file containing object code.
- These files—known as *object files*—have the extension .o in UNIX and .obj in Windows.

Building a Multiple-File Program

- The linker combines the object files created in the previous step—along with code for library functions—to produce an executable file.
- Among other duties, the linker is responsible for resolving external references left behind by the compiler.
- An external reference occurs when a function in one file calls a function defined in another file or accesses a variable defined in another file.

Building a Multiple-File Program

- Most compilers allow us to build a program in a single step.
- A GCC command that builds justify: gcc -o justify justify.c line.c word.c
- The three source files are first compiled into object code.
- The object files are then automatically passed to the linker, which combines them into a single file.
- The -o option specifies that we want the executable file to be named justify.

- To make it easier to build large programs, UNIX originated the concept of the *makefile*.
- A makefile not only lists the files that are part of the program, but also describes *dependencies* among the files.
- Suppose that the file foo.c includes the file bar.h.
- We say that foo.c "depends" on bar.h, because a change to bar.h will require us to recompile foo.c.

Chapter 15: Writing Large Programs

Makefiles

• A UNIX makefile for the justify program:



Chapter 15: Writing Large Programs

- There are four groups of lines; each group is known as a *rule*.
- The first line in each rule gives a *target* file, followed by the files on which it depends.
- The second line is a *command* to be executed if the target should need to be rebuilt because of a change to one of its dependent files.

• In the first rule, justify (the executable file) is the target:

```
justify: justify.o word.o line.o
    gcc -o justify justify.o word.o line.o
```

- The first line states that justify depends on the files justify.o, word.o, and line.o.
- If any of these files have changed since the program was last built, justify needs to be rebuilt.
- The command on the following line shows how the rebuilding is to be done.

• In the second rule, justify.o is the target:

```
justify.o: justify.c word.h line.h gcc -c justify.c
```

- The first line indicates that justify.o needs to be rebuilt if there's been a change to justify.c, word.h, or line.h.
- The next line shows how to update justify. o (by recompiling justify.c).
- The -c option tells the compiler to compile justify.c but not attempt to link it.

- Once we've created a makefile for a program, we can use the make utility to build (or rebuild) the program.
- By checking the time and date associated with each file in the program, make can determine which files are out of date.
- It then invokes the commands necessary to rebuild the program.

Chapter 15: Writing Large Programs

- Each command in a makefile must be preceded by a tab character, not a series of spaces.
- A makefile is normally stored in a file named Makefile (or makefile).
- When the make utility is used, it automatically checks the current directory for a file with one of these names.

- To invoke make, use the command
 make target
 where target is one of the targets listed in the makefile.
- If no target is specified when make is invoked, it will build the target of the first rule.
- Except for this special property of the first rule, the order of rules in a makefile is arbitrary.

- Real makefiles aren't always easy to understand.
- There are numerous techniques that reduce the amount of redundancy in makefiles and make them easier to modify.
- These techniques greatly reduce the readability of makefiles.
- Alternatives to makefiles include the "project files" supported by some integrated development environments.

Errors During Linking

- Some errors that can't be detected during compilation will be found during linking.
- If the definition of a function or variable is missing from a program, the linker will be unable to resolve external references to it
- The result is a message such as "undefined symbol" or "undefined reference."

Errors During Linking

- Common causes of errors during linking:
 - Misspellings. If the name of a variable or function is misspelled, the linker will report it as missing.
 - *Missing files*. If the linker can't find the functions that are in file foo.c, it may not know about the file.
 - Missing libraries. The linker may not be able to find all library functions used in the program.
- In UNIX, the -lm option may need to be specified when a program that uses <math.h> is linked.

- During the development of a program, it's rare that we'll need to compile all its files.
- To save time, the rebuilding process should recompile only those files that might be affected by the latest change.
- Assume that a program has been designed with a header file for each source file.
- To see how many files will need to be recompiled after a change, we need to consider two possibilities.

- If the change affects a single source file, only that file must be recompiled.
- Suppose that we decide to condense the read_char function in word.c:

```
int read_char(void)
{
  int ch = getchar();
  return (ch == '\n' || ch == '\t') ? ' ' : ch;
}
```

• This modification doesn't affect word.h, so we need only recompile word.c and relink the program.

- The second possibility is that the change affects a header file.
- In that case, we should recompile all files that include the header file, since they could potentially be affected by the change.

- Suppose that we modify read_word so that it returns the length of the word that it reads.
- First, we change the prototype of read_word in word.h:

• Next, we change the definition of read_word:

```
int read_word(char *word, int len)
  int ch, pos = 0;
  while ((ch = read_char()) == ' ')
  while (ch != ' ' && ch != EOF) {
    if (pos < len)
      word[pos++] = ch;
    ch = read_char();
  word[pos] = ' \setminus 0';
  return pos;
```

• Finally, we modify justify.c by removing the include of <string.h> and changing main:

```
int main(void)
{
   char word[MAX_WORD_LEN+2];
   int word_len;

   clear_line();
   for (;;) {
      word_len = read_word(word, MAX_WORD_LEN+1);
      ...
   }
}
```

- Once we've made these changes, we'll rebuild justify by recompiling word.c and justify.c and then relinking.
- A GCC command that rebuilds the program:

```
gcc -o justify justify.c word.c line.o
```

- One of the advantages of using makefiles is that rebuilding is handled automatically.
- By examining the date of each file, make can determine which files have changed since the program was last built.
- It then recompiles these files, together with all files that depend on them, either directly or indirectly.

- Suppose that we make the indicated changes to word.h, word.c, and justify.c.
- When the justify program is rebuilt, make will perform the following actions:
 - 1. Build justify.o by compiling justify.c (because justify.c and word.h were changed).
 - 2. Build word.o by compiling word.c (because word.c and word.h were changed).
 - 3. Build justify by linking justify.o, word.o, and line.o (because justify.o and word.o were changed).



Defining Macros Outside a Program

- C compilers usually provide some method of specifying the value of a macro at the time a program is compiled.
- This ability makes it easy to change the value of a macro without editing any of the program's files.
- It's especially valuable when programs are built automatically using makefiles.

Defining Macros Outside a Program

• Most compilers (including GCC) support the −D option, which allows the value of a macro to be specified on the command line:

```
gcc -DDEBUG=1 foo.c
```

- In this example, the DEBUG macro is defined to have the value 1 in the program foo.c.
- If the −D option names a macro without specifying its value, the value is taken to be 1.

Defining Macros Outside a Program

- Many compilers also support the -U option, which "undefines" a macro as if by using #undef.
- We can use -U to undefine a predefined macro or one that was defined earlier in the command line using -D.