Strings
Or, arrays Pt 2

Revision Sessions

- Week 4 Wednesday 25/06/2025 12PM-2PM - Bongo/Tabla Lab (K17 G07/G08)

  Sign up at: https://buytickets.at/comp1511unsw/1290763 (Access Code: "COMP1511", also linked on the forum)

Assignment 1

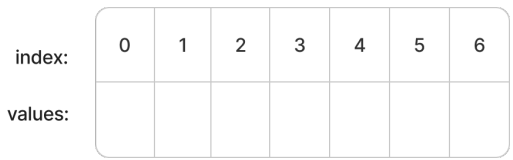
- Releasing *really* soon
- Watch the Assignment Walkthrough video
- Submission in ~Week 7
- Worth 20%

Arrays recap

- A collection of data, all of the same type. (homogeneous)
- We have a single identifier for the entire array
- It is a random access data structure, meaning we can access any element in the array at any time

The array declaration syntax

```
int
ice_cream_per_day[7];
```



Declare + initialise

```
int ice_cream_per_day[7]
= {3, 2, 1, 2, 1, 3, 5};
```

^ Note you can only do this when you declare, not later!

```
int ice_cream_per_day[7]
= {};
```

^ Will initialise all elements to 0

Some corrections

```
int my_data[] = {3, 2, 1,
2, 1, 3, 5};
```

^ Will create a 7-element array

```
int my_data[14] = {3, 2, 1,
2, 1, 3, 5};
```

^ Will create a 14-element array, with the first 7 elements then 7 0'd out

Accessing elements

```
int first_day_ice_creams
= ice_cream_per_day[0];
```

index:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
values:	3	2	1	2	1	3	4

Writing elements

```
ice_cream_per_day[0] =
5;
```

index:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
values:	5	2	1	2	1	3	4

Strings

Strings!

- Strings are multi-character words
- `"Jake Renzella"` -> is a string with 13 characters!
- Strings are great! They are everywhere!

Bad news	Good news
C doesn't have a string data type :(	C has arrays! :)

An int array

```
int numbers[7] = {3, 2, 1, 2, 1, 3, 4}
```

index:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
values:	3	2	1	2	1	3	4

A char array

We can build our own string type by using an array of chars!

Strings in C are char arrays

- A collection of characters
- C does know how to work with `char[]`s

```c
#include <stdio.h>

int main(void) {
    char name[3] = {'G',
'a', 'b'};
    // change name to
Jake
    // :( can't, won't
fit

    return 0;
}
```

```c
#include <stdio.h>
#define MAX_STR 50

int main(void) {
    char name[MAX_STR] =
{'J', 'a', 'k', 'e'};

    return 0;
}
```

New problem

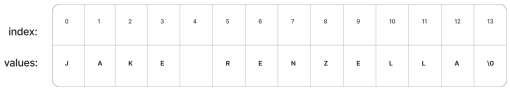
How does C know where the string ends?

```c
char name[MAX_STR] =
{'J', 'a', 'k',
'e'};
```

The null terminator

- Remember in C, we don't know when arrays end
- We have to keep track of the length ourselves
- We can't always do this with `char[]`...
- Instead, we place a special character called the null terminator at the end of our character arrays `\0`

`char[]`



Notice the `\0` at the end! This means that C will know when it reaches the end of the array

How to use strings in C

- Because strings are character arrays, the type is `char[]`
- There are two ways to declare a string, here's one:

```
char word[] = {'h', 'e',
'l', 'l', 'o', '\0'};
```

Anyone think that's annoying?

Strings are very common

So there are easier ways to use them:

```
char word[] = "hello";
```

- This is exactly the same as the previous example
- It includes the null terminator!

String literals

`"Jake!"`

- uses double quotes `"` to wrap the string literal
- single quote for characters!
- Used to assign strings to `char[]` easily:

```
char name[] = "Jake Renzella";
```

Using strings

- printing: `printf` or `fputs`
- scanning: `fgets`
- Both included in **`<stdio.h>`**

`fgets`

- Reads a string from the terminal
- `fgets(array[], length, stream)`
  - **array[]** -> The array that the string will be stored
  - **length** -> The number of characters that can be read in
  - **stream** -> The origin of the string (we always use `stdin`)

`fgets` usage

```
// Declare the array which
will contain the string.
Note, we don't know how big
the string will be, so
let's come up with a
maximum.
char my_string[MAX_LENGTH]

// read the string in
fgets(my_string,
MAX_LENGTH, stdin);
```

Reading strings in a loop

- We can read until `CTRL+D` is entered in the terminal by calling `fgets` in a loop
- `fgets()` stops reading when either length-1 characters are read, newline character is read or an end of file is reached, whichever comes first

Reading strings in a loop

```c
#include <stdio.h>

// I know my string will never need to
be more than 15 chars
#define MAX_LENGTH 15

int main(void) {
    char name[MAX_LENGTH];
    printf("Enter your name: ");

    // fgets reads the entire string,
including the newline character
    while (fgets(name, MAX_LENGTH,
stdin) != NULL) {
        // every time this runs, we
update `name`!
    }
}
```

Printing strings

`fputs(array[], stream)`

- **array[]** -> the character array to be printed
- **stream** -> the location to print, always use `stdout` in COMP1511

Printing strings

```
char name[] = "Jake";
fputs(name, stdout);
```

^ Why doesn't fputs need the LENGTH, like `fget`?

Other useful string functions

- `strlen()` -> gives us the length of the string (excluding the `\0`).
- `strcpy()` -> copy the contents of one string to another
- `strcat()` -> join one string to the end of another (concatenate)
- `strcmp()` -> compare two strings
- `strchr()` -> find the first occurrence of a character

note: some of these may require `#include <string.h>`

Demo

Feedback

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