Functions

Functions define named pieces of code
- to whom you can supply values (arguments/parameters)
- which do some computation on those values
- and which return a result

E.g.

```c
int timesTwo(int x) {
    int two_x = x*2;
    return two_x;
}
```

Function Signatures

Each function has a signature
- defining the number and types of parameters
- defining the type of the return value

E.g.

```c
// timesTwo takes an int parameter and returns an int result
int timesTwo(int);
```

A function call must supply an appropriate number of values, each with the correct type
Calling Functions

You invoke/call a function

- by giving its name
- by giving values for the parameters
- by using the result

E.g.

```c
int y;
y = timesTwo(2);
```

In fact, C does not require you to use the result of a function

Calling a Function (in more detail)

Example function call

```c
res = fun(expr1, expr2, ...)
```

- each expression is evaluated and its value associated to a parameter
- control transfers to the body of the function
- function local variables are created
- the function code executes
- when the result is returned, control returns to the caller

Implementing Functions Calls in MIPS Assembler

When we call a function:

- in the caller code
  - the arguments are evaluated and set up for function ($a?)
  - control is transferred to the code for the function (jal fun)
- in code at the start of the function, called the prologue
  - local variables are created ($t?)
  - registers to be preserved are saved ($s?)
- the code for the function body is then executed
- in code at the end of the function, called the epilogue
  - the return value is set up ($v0)
  - control transfers back to where the function was called from (jr $ra)
  - the caller receives the return value
Simple view of implementing function calls in MIPS:

Function with No Parameters or Return Value

- `jal hello` sets `$ra` to address of following instruction, and transfers execution to `hello`
- `jr $ra` transfers execution to the address in `$ra`

```c
int main(void) {
    hello();
    hello();
    hello();
    return 0;
}

void hello(void) {
    printf("hi\n");
}
```

Function with a Return Value but No Parameters

By convention, function return value is passed back in `$v0`

```c
int main(void) {
    int a = answer();
    printf("%d\n", a);
    return 0;
}

int answer(void) {
    return 42;
}
```
Function with a Return Value and Parameters

By convention, first 4 parameters are passed in $a0, $a1, $a2, $a3
If there are more parameters they are passed on the stack
Parameters too big to fit in a register, such as structs, also passed on the stack.

```c
int main(void) {
    int a = product(6, 7);
    printf("%d\n", a);
    return 0;
}

int product(int x, int y) {
    return x * y;
}
```

Function calling another function ... DO NOT DO THIS

Functions that do not call other functions - leaf functions - are easier to implement.

Function that call other function(s) are harder to implement, because they must save $ra in their prologue and restore it in their epilogue.

The `jr $ra` in `main` below will fail, because `jal hello` changed `$ra`

```c
int main(void) {
    hello();
    return 0;
}

void hello(void) {
    printf("hi\n");
}
```

Simple Function Call Example - C

```c
void f(void);
int main(void) {
    printf("calling function f\n");
    f();
    printf("back from function f\n");
    return 0;
}

void f(void) {
    printf("in function f\n");
}
```

source code for call_return.c
Simple Function Call Example - broken MIPS

```
la $a0, string0  # printf("calling function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
jal f            # set $ra to following address
la $a0, string1  # printf("back from function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
li $v0, 0        # fails because $ra changes since main called
jr $ra
f:
la $a0, string2  # printf("in function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
jr $ra          # return from function f
```

The Stack: Where it is in Memory

Data associated with a function call placed on the stack:

![Stack Diagram]

The Stack: Allocating Space

- `$sp` (stack pointer) initialized by operating system
- always 4-byte aligned (divisible by 4)
- points at currently used (4-byte) word
- grows downward (towards smaller addresses)
- a function can do this to allocate 40 bytes:
  ```
  sub $sp, $sp, 40  # move stack pointer down
  ```
- a function must leave $sp at original value
- so if you allocated 40 bytes, before return (`jr $ra`)
  ```
  add $sp, $sp, 40  # move stack pointer back
  ```
The Stack: Saving and Restoring Registers - the Hard Way

```assembly
# function prologue code
sub $sp, $sp, 12      # allocate 12 bytes
sw $ra, 8($sp)        # save $ra on $stack
sw $s1, 4($sp)        # save $s1 on $stack
sw $s0, 0($sp)        # save $s0 on $stack

# function body code

# function epilogue code
lw $s0, 0($sp)        # restore $s0 from $stack
lw $s1, 4($sp)        # restore $s1 from $stack
lw $ra, 8($sp)        # restore $ra from $stack
add $sp, $sp, 12      # move stack pointer back
jr $ra                # return
```

The Stack: Saving and Restoring Registers - the Easy way

```assembly
# function prologue code
push $ra              # save $ra on $stack
push $s1              # save $s1 on $stack
push $s0              # save $s0 on $stack

# function body code

# function epilogue code
pop $s0               # restore $s0 from $stack
pop $s1               # restore $s1 from $stack
pop $ra               # restore $ra from $stack
```

- note must `pop` everything `push`-ed, must be in reverse order
- `push` & `pop` are pseudo-instructions
  - `push` & `pop` available only on mipsy, not other MIPS emulators
  - but `push` & `pop` can be real instructions or pseudo-instructions on other architectures

The Stack: Growing & Shrinking

How stack changes as functions are called and return:

```
main() calls f()

f() calls g()

h() returns

main() returns
```

```
Stack frame for main()

Stack frame for f()

Stack frame for g()

Stack frame for h()
```

```
Sp

Sp

Sp

Sp
```

```
Stack frame for main()

Stack frame for f()

Stack frame for g()

Stack frame for h()
```

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```
Stack frame for main()

Stack frame for f()

Stack frame for g()
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Stack frame for main()

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```
A function that calls another function must save $ra.

```assembly
main:
    # prologue
    push $ra           # save $ra on $stack
    jal hello         # call hello

    # epilogue
    pop $ra           # recover $ra from $stack
    li $v0, 0         # return 0
    jr $ra
```

**Simple Function Call Example - correct hard way**

```assembly
la $a0, string0  # printf("calling function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
jal f             # set $ra to following address
la $a0, string1  # printf("back from function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
lw $ra, 0($sp)    # recover $ra from $stack
addi $sp, $sp, 4  # move stack pointer back to what it was
li $v0, 0         # return 0 from function main
jr $ra

f:
la $a0, string2  # printf("in function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
jr $ra           # return from function f
```

**Simple Function Call Example - correct easy way**

```assembly
la $a0, string0  # printf("calling function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
jal f             # set $ra to following address
la $a0, string1  # printf("back from function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
pop $ra           # recover $ra from $stack
li $v0, 0         # return 0 from function main
jr $ra

# f is a leaf function so it doesn't need an epilogue or prologue
f:
la $a0, string2  # printf("in function f\n");
li $v0, 4
syscall
jr $ra           # return from function f
```
MIPS Calling conventions

- $a0..a3$ contain first 4 arguments
- $v0$ contains return value
- $ra$ contains return address
- if function changes $sp$, $fp$, $s0..s7$ it restores their value
- callers assume $sp$, $fp$, $s0..s7$ unchanged by call ($jal$)
- a function may destroy the value of other registers e.g. $t0..t9$
- callers must assume value in e.g. $t0..t9$ changed by call ($jal$)

MIPS Register usage conventions (not covered in COMP1521)

- floating point registers used to pass/return float/doubles
- similar conventions for saving floating point registers
- stack used to pass arguments after first 4
- stack used to pass arguments which do not fit in register
- stack used to return values which do not fit in register
- for example a struct can be a C function argument or function return value but a struct can be any number of bytes

Example - Returning a Value - C

```c
int answer(void);
int main(void) {
    int a = answer();
    printf("%d\n", a);
    return 0;
}
int answer(void) {
    return 42;
}
```

Source code for return_answer.c
Example - Returning a Value - MIPS

```assembly
# code for function main
main:
    begin                # move frame pointer
    push $ra            # save $ra onto stack
    jal answer         # call answer(), return value will be in $v0
    move $a0, $v0       # printf("%d", a);
    li $v0, 1           #
    syscall            #
    li $a0, '\n'       # printf("%c", '\n');
    li $v0, 11          #
    syscall            #
    pop $ra             # recover $ra from stack
    end                 # move frame pointer back
    li $v0, 0           # return
    jr $ra              #
```

Example - Argument & Return - C

```c
void two(int i);
int main(void) {
    two(1);
}
void two(int i) {
    if (i < 1000000) {
        two(2 * i);
    }
    printf("%d\n", i);
}
```

Example - Argument & Return - MIPS (main)

```assembly
main:
    begin                # move frame pointer
    push $ra            # save $ra onto stack
    li $a0, 1           #
    jal two             # two(1);
    pop $ra             # recover $ra from stack
    end                 # move frame pointer back
    li $v0, 0           # return 0
    jr $ra              #
```

Example - Argument & Return - MIPS (main)

```assembly
main:
    begin                # move frame pointer
    push $ra            # save $ra onto stack
    li $a0, 1           #
    jal two             # two(1);
    pop $ra             # recover $ra from stack
    end                 # move frame pointer back
    li $v0, 0           # return 0
    jr $ra              #
```

Example - Argument & Return - C

```c
void two(int i);
int main(void) {
    two(1);
}
void two(int i) {
    if (i < 1000000) {
        two(2 * i);
    }
    printf("%d\n", i);
}
```
Example - Argument & Return - MIPS (two)

```assembly
begin # move frame pointer
push $ra # save $ra onto stack
push $s0 # save $s0 onto stack
move $s0, $a0
bge $a0, 1000000, two_end_if
mul $a0, $a0, 2
jal two
two_end_if:
move $a0, $s0
li $v0, 1 # printf("%d");
syscall
li $a0, 
li $v0, 11
syscall
pop $s0 # recover $s0 from stack
pop $ra # recover $ra from stack
end # move frame pointer back
jr $ra # return from two
```

Example - More complex Calls - C

```c
int main(void) {
    int z = sum_product(10, 12);
    printf("%d\n", z);
    return 0;
}
int sum_product(int a, int b) {
    int p = product(6, 7);
    return p + a + b;
}
int product(int x, int y) {
    return x * y;
}
```

Example - more complex Calls - MIPS (main)

```assembly
main:
begin # move frame pointer
push $ra # save $ra onto stack
li $a0, 10 # sum_product(10, 12);
li $a1, 12
jal sum_product
move $a0, $v0 # printf("%d", z);
li $v0, 1
syscall
li $a0, 
li $v0, 11
syscall
pop $ra # recover $ra from stack
end # move frame pointer back
li $v0, 0 # return 0 from function main
jr $ra # return from function main
```
Example - more complex Calls - MIPS (sum_product)

sum_product:
begin
# move frame pointer
push $ra  # save $ra onto stack
push $s0  # save $s0 onto stack
push $s1  # save $s1 onto stack
move $s0, $a0  # preserve $a0 for use after function call
move $s1, $a1  # preserve $a1 for use after function call
li $a0, 6  # product(6, 7);
li $a1, 7
jal product
add $v0, $v0, $s0  # add a and b to value returned in $v0
add $v0, $v0, $s1  # and put result in $v0 to be returned
pop $s1  # recover $s1 from stack
pop $s0  # recover $s0 from stack
pop $ra  # recover $ra from stack
end
# move frame pointer back
jr $ra  # return from sum_product

Example - more complex Calls - MIPS (product)

• a function which doesn't call other functions is called a leaf function
• its code can be simpler...

int product(int x, int y) {
    return x * y;
}

Example - strlen using array - C

C
int main(void) {
    int i = my_strlen("Hello");
    printf("%d\n", i);
    return 0;
}
int my_strlen(char *s) {
    int length = 0;
    while (s[length] != 0) {
        length++;
    }
    return length;
}

Simple C

int main(void) {
    int i = my_strlen("Hello");
    printf("%d\n", i);
    return 0;
}
int my_strlen(char *s) {
    int length = 0;
    loop::
        if (s[length] == 0) goto end;
        length++;
        goto loop;
    end::
    return length;
Example - strlen using array - MIPS (my_strlen)

my_strlen: # length in t0, s in $a0
li $t0, 0
loop:
    # while (s[length] != 0) {
        add $t1, $a0, $t0
        # calculate &s[length]
        lb $t1, ( $a0)
        # load s[length] into $t2
        beq $t1, 0, end
        #
        addi $t0, $t0, 1
        # length++;
        addi $a0, $a0, 1
        # s++
        b loop
    # }
end:
    move $v0, $t0
    # return length
jr $ra
#

source code for strlen_array.s

Example - strlen using pointer - C

int main(void) {
    int i = my_strlen("Hello Andrew");
    printf("%d\n", i);
    return 0;
}

int my_strlen(char *s) {
    int length = 0;
    while (*s != 0) {
        length++;
        s++;
    }
    return length;
}

source code for strlen_pointer.c

Example - strlen using pointer - MIPS (my_strlen)

my_strlen: # length in t0, s in $a0
li $t0, 0
loop:
    # load *s into $t1
    lb $t1, ( $a0)
    # load s[length] into $t2
    beq $t1, 0, end
    #
    addi $t0, $t0, 1
    # length++;
    addi $a0, $a0, 1
    # s++
    b loop
#
end:
    move $v0, $t0
    # return length
jr $ra
#

source code for strlen_pointer.s
Storing A Local Variables On the Stack

- some local (function) variables must be stored on stack
- e.g. variables such as arrays and structs

```
int main(void) {
    int squares[10];
    int i = 0;
    while (i < 10) {
        squares[i] = i * i;
        i++;
    }
}
```

What is a Frame Pointer

- frame pointer $fp$ is a second register pointing to stack
- by convention, set to point at start of stack frame
- provides a fixed point during function code execution
- useful for functions which grow stack (change $sp$) during execution
- makes it easier for debuggers to forensically analyze stack
  - e.g. if you want to print stack backtrace after error
- using a frame pointer is optional - both in COMP1521 and generally
  - a frame pointer is often omitted when fast execution or small code a priority

Example of Growing Stack Breaking Function Return

```
void f(int a) {
    int length;
    scanf("%d", &length);
    int array[length];
    // ... more code ...
    printf("%d
", a);
}
```

```
main:
    sub $sp, $sp, 40
    li $t0, 0
loop0:
    mul $t1, $t0, 4
    add $t2, $t1, $sp
    mul $t3, $t0, $t0
    sw $t3, ($t2)
    add $t0, $t0, 1
    b loop0
end0:
```

```
f:
    # prologue
    sub $sp, $sp, 4
    sw $ra, 0($sp)
    li $v0, 5
    syscall
    # allocate space for
    # array on stack
    mul $t0, $v0, 4
    sub $sp, $sp, $t0
    # ... more code ...
    # epilogue
    # breaks because $sp has changed
    lw $ra, 0($sp)
    add $sp, $sp, 4
    jr $ra
```

```
Example of Frame Pointer Use - Hard Way

```c
void f(int a) {
    int length;
    scanf("%d", &length);
    int array[length];
    // ... more code ...
    printf("%d\n", a);
}
```

```assembly
f:
    # prologue
    sub $sp, $sp, 8
    sw $fp, 4($sp)
    sw $ra, 0($sp)
    add $fp, $sp, 8

    li $v0, 5
    syscall
    mul $t0, $v0, 4
    sub $sp, $sp, $t0
    # ... more code ...

    # epilogue
    lw $ra, -4($fp)
    move $sp, $fp
    lw $fp, 0($fp)
    jr $ra
```

Source code for `frame_pointer.s`.

Example of Frame Pointer Use - Easy Way

```c
void f(int a) {
    int length;
    scanf("%d", &length);
    int array[length];
    // ... more code ...
    printf("%d\n", a);
}
```

```assembly
f:
    # prologue
    begin
    push $ra

    li $v0, 5
    syscall
    mul $t0, $v0, 4
    sub $sp, $sp, $t0
    # ... more code ...

    # epilogue
    end
    pop $ra
    jr $ra
```

Source code for `frame_pointer.s`.

- `begin` and `end` are pseudo-instructions available only on mipsy.