Unit Overview
Recursion & Searching

Major Topics
✓ Introduction to recursion
✓ Search algorithms I
✓ Recursion vs. iteration
  ▪ Search algorithms II
  ▪ Eliminating recursion
  ▪ Search in the C++ STL
  ▪ Recursive backtracking
Review
Review
Recursion vs. Iteration [1/5]

We use a **tree** to show the function calls an algorithm makes:

- A box represents making a call to a function.
- A line from an $A$ box down to a $B$ box represents this call to function $A$ making a call to function $B$.

```c
int ff(int n) {
    return gg(n-1) + gg(n);
}
```

```c
int gg(int k) {
    if (k <= 1) return 7;
    else return 2*gg(k-1);
}
```

Tree representing calls made by doing $ff(2)$

Same function. Different **invocations** of that function.
Choice of algorithm can make a *huge* difference in performance.

### Computing $F_6$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fibonacci No.</th>
<th>fibo_recurse.cpp</th>
<th>fibo_first.cpp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$F_7$</td>
<td>9 calls</td>
<td>41 calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_{10}$</td>
<td>12 calls</td>
<td>177 calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_{20}$</td>
<td>22 calls</td>
<td>21,891 calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_{40}$</td>
<td>42 calls</td>
<td>331,160,281 calls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A running program uses a **call stack**, which holds **stack frames**.
- Each stack frame corresponds to an **invocation** of a function. It holds automatic variables and the function’s **return address**.
- A function call **pushes** a new stack frame on the **top** of the stack.
- When the function exits, this stack frame is **popped** off the stack.

Recursion results in stack frames corresponding to different invocations of the same function.

```c
void zebra(int n) {
    if (n == 0) ...
    ...
    zebra(n-1);
}
```
Review
Recursion vs. Iteration [4/5]

A function call’s **recursion depth** is the greatest number of stack frames on the call stack *at any one time* as a result of the call.

When analyzing *time* usage, the total number of calls is of interest. When analyzing *space* usage, the recursion depth is of interest.
Two factors can make recursive algorithms inefficient.

- Inherent inefficiency of some recursive algorithms
  - But there are efficient recursive algorithms.

- **Function-call overhead**
  - Making all those function calls requires work: pushing and popping stack frames, saving return addresses, creating and destroying automatic variables.

And recursion has another problem.

- **Memory-management issues**
  - A high recursion depth causes the system to run out of memory for the call stack. This is stack overflow, and it generally cannot be dealt with using normal error-handling procedures. The result is usually a crash.
  - When we use iteration, we can manage memory ourselves. This can be more work for the programmer, but it also allows proper error handling.

These two are important regardless of the recursive algorithm used.
Search Algorithms II
Sequential Search (also called Linear Search) is another algorithm for finding a given key in a list.

Procedure

- Start from the beginning, looking at each item, in order.
- If the desired key is found, then stop, answering YES.
- If the end of the list is reached, then stop, answering NO.
For Binary Search to work well, the list should be:
- Sorted (absolutely required for Binary Search).
- Random-access (for efficiency).

Sequential Search requires neither of these.

Still, we like Binary Search better than Sequential Search. Why?
We like Binary Search better than Sequential Search, because it is much faster ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List Size</th>
<th>Lookups: Binary Search (worst case)</th>
<th>Lookups: Sequential Search (worst case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
... so it can process much more data in the same amount of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Look-Ups We Have Time For</th>
<th>Maximum List Size: Binary Search</th>
<th>Maximum List Size: Sequential Search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$k$</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TO DO

- Write Sequential Search, and compare its performance with that of Binary Search.

See `seqsearch_compare.cpp`.

This file contains the implementation of Binary Search from `binsearch2.cpp`.

So Sequential Search is much slower than Binary Search.

On the other hand, Binary Search requires a sorted dataset, and sorting takes even longer than Sequential Search.
Eliminating Recursion
Eliminating Recursion
In General [1/2]

While it is a useful algorithm-design tool, recursion can have serious drawbacks. Thus, it can sometimes be helpful to eliminate recursion—that is, to convert recursion to iteration.

Fact. Every recursive function can be rewritten as a non-recursive function that uses essentially the same algorithm.

This is true because we can simulate the call stack ourselves. We can eliminate recursion by mimicking the system’s method of handling recursive calls using stack frames.

We can always eliminate recursion, but that does not mean that eliminating it is always a good idea.
Eliminating Recursion
In General [2/2]

To rewrite any recursive function in iterative form:

- Declare an appropriate Stack.
  - A Stack item holds all automatic variables, an indication of what location to return to, and the return value (if any).
- Replace each automatic variable with its field in the top Stack item.
  - Set these up at the beginning of the function.
- Put a loop around the rest of the function: while (true) { ... }
- Replace each recursive call with:
  - Push an object with parameter values and current execution location.
  - Restart the loop (continue).
  - A label marking the current location.
  - Pop the stack, using the return value, if any, appropriately.
- Replace each return with:
  - If the “return address” is the outside world, then really return.
  - Otherwise, set the return value, and skip to the proper label (goto?).

This method is rarely used. Thinking often gets better results.
Eliminating Recursion
Tail Calls [1/2]

When a calling some function is the last thing a function does, we refer to the call as a **tail call**.

For a `void` function, a tail call looks like this:

```c
void foo(TTT a, UUU b)
{
    ...
    gg(x);
}
```

For a function returning a value, a tail call looks like this:

```c
SSS bar(TTT a, UUU b)
{
    ...
    return gg(x);
}
```

Returns whatever the final function call returns. (Otherwise, it is not a tail call.)
Eliminating Recursion
Tail Calls [2/2]

Some compilers—mostly *not* C++ compilers—perform **tail call optimization (TCO)**, in which a tail call reuses the same stack frame as the function that makes the call. Essentially, a tail call turns into a *goto*.

```cpp
void foo(TTT a, UUU b)
{
    ...
    gg(x);
}
```

Automated TCO is not such a big deal in C++ compilers because of the execution of destructors of automatic variables when a function exits; so what looks like a tail call may not actually be the *last* thing a function does.
Eliminating Recursion
Tail Recursion — Definition

When a tail call is a recursive call, we have **tail recursion**; the call is **tail-recursive**.

For a `void` function, tail recursion looks like this:

```c
void foo(TTT a, UUU b) {
    ...
    foo(x, y);
}
```

For a function returning a value, tail recursion looks like this:

```c
SSS bar(TTT a, UUU b) {
    ...
    return bar(x, y);
}
```

Returns whatever the final function call returns. (Otherwise, it is not a tail call.)
Even in C++, tail recursion allows us to do a kind of manual TCO. This recursion → iteration conversion is very easy.

Eliminating Tail Recursion

- Surround the function body with a big loop.
- Replace the tail-recursive call with:
  - Set parameters to their new values, and restart the loop—which happens automatically, since we are already at the end of the loop.
  - No changes are required in the base-case.

If the only recursive call in a function is tail-recursive, then eliminating tail recursion converts the function into non-recursive form.

We like tail recursion—ironically, because it is easy to eliminate.
Eliminating Recursion
Tail Recursion — CODE

TO DO

- Eliminate the recursion in binsearch2.cpp.
  - First, modify function binSearch so that it has exactly one recursive call, and this is at the end of the function (tail recursion).

  Source filename: binsearch3.cpp.

- Next, eliminate tail recursion.

  Source filename: binsearch4.cpp.

Observation

- We said that we replace the tail-recursive call with: set parameters to their new values, and restart the loop—which is automatic.

- If the parameters already have their new values, then we replace the tail-recursive call with: *nothing!*
Search in the C++ STL
The C++ Standard Template Library includes Binary Search.

- Function `std::binary_search (<algorithm>)` searches and returns a `bool` indicating success/failure.
- The following functions (also in `<algorithm>`) return iterators to where the value was found, or where it could be inserted.
  - `std::lower_bound`
  - `std::upper_bound`
  - `std::equal_range`
These functions (binary_search in particular) are similar to ours:

- 3 parameters: 2 iterators specifying a range & a value to search for.
- They are templates, and they work for a wide range of types.
- They require the data to be sorted.
- They are faster on random-access data, but they do not require it.
- They search based on equivalence, not equality. Only operator< is used on the value type.

```cpp
#include <algorithm>   // For std::binary_search

vector<int> v1 = ...;   // Dataset, sorted
int key = ...;           // Key to find

bool found =
    std::binary_search(begin(v1), end(v1), key);
```
Search in the C++ STL
Custom Comparison

All STL Binary Search algorithms have alternate forms that allow the client to specify a comparison other than `operator<`. This is done when the dataset to be searched is sorted differently.

```cpp
#include <algorithm>   // For std::binary_search
#include <functional>  // For std::greater

vector<int> v2 = ...;    // Dataset, sorted DESCENDING
int key = ...;           // Key to find

bool found = std::binary_search(begin(v2), end(v2), key,
                                 std::greater<int>());
```

More on specifying our own comparisons later in the semester.
Sequential Search is also available in the STL.

- It is called `std::find (<algorithm>)`.
- It searches using equality (==), not equivalence.
- 3 parameters: 2 iterators specifying a range & a value to search for.
- Return value: an iterator to the first item found, or an iterator to just past the end of the range (the second parameter) if not found.
- A custom equality comparison can be specified.

```cpp
vector<int> v3 = ...;  // Dataset (unsorted?)
int key = ...;         // Key to find

auto iter = std::find(begin(v3), end(v3), key);
if (iter == end(v3)) cout << "Not found";
else cout << "FOUND: " << *iter;
```
Search in the C++ STL
Algorithms for Specific Data Structures

Some data structures do not allow fast lookup by index—so Binary Search is slow—but still allow for fast lookup by key. STL versions of such structures have their own search-by-key, as a member function `find`, which is used similarly to `std::find`.

You may be familiar with `std::map`. `std::binary_search` and `std::find` can be used with a `map`, but both are slow. The `map` member function `find` is much faster.

```cpp
map<string, int> m = ...; // Dataset
string key = ...; // Key to find

auto iter = m.find(key);
if (iter == end(m)) cout << "Not found";
else cout << "FOUND: " << *iter;
```

Why is the `find` member faster? How much faster is it? More on these when we cover Tables, later in the semester.