CS102 Unit 2

Programming Languages and
Simple Program Execution
Unit Objectives

• Define: \textbf{algorithm}, \textbf{syntax}, and \textbf{semantics}

• Know that statements in a program execute sequentially by default

• Know the basic parts of a C++ program
  – Inclusion of library "headers"
  – Comments
  – Code is partitioned into \textbf{functions}
  – \texttt{main()} function as the starting point
ALGORITHMS & PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES
Humans and Computers

• Humans understand instructions differently than computers
• Humans easily tolerate ambiguity and abstract concepts using context to help.
  – “Add a pinch of salt.” How much is a pinch?
  – “Steph Curry can shoot the lights out.”
  – “It’s a bear market”
• Computers must be precise, only executing well-defined instructions (no ambiguity) and operating on digital information which is finite and discrete (a fixed number of options)
Algorithms

• Algorithms are at the heart of computer systems, both in HW and SW
  – They are fundamental to Computer Science and Computer Engineering

• Informal definition
  – An algorithm is a precise way to accomplish a task or solve a problem

• A more formal definition:
  – An ordered set of unambiguous, executable steps that defines a terminating process

• Examples: What is the algorithm for
  – Brushing your teeth?
  – Calculating your GPA?
Algorithm Representation

• An algorithm is not a program or programming language

• Just as a story may be represented as a book, movie, or spoken by a story-teller, an algorithm may be represented in many ways
  – Flow chart
  – Pseudocode (English-like syntax using primitives that most programming languages would have)
  – A specific program implementation in a given programming language
Syntax and Semantics

- Programming languages have **syntax** and **semantics**
- **Syntax**: refers to the rules of a language for how it will be expressed and parsed (decomposed)
  - Specific to the language
- **Semantics**: refers to the meaning of what is written
  - Often transcends the language (same concept in many language)
- Example: A sentence
  - The **syntax** refers to the proper **grammatical rules** for writing a sentence: *capitalize the first word, have a subject and verb, ending with a period, etc.*
  - The **semantics** refer to the **meaning** conveyed by the sentence
- C++ Code Example
  - `if ( <condition> ) { <action> }` is the syntax.
  - The semantics (meaning) is “the **action** will only be performed if **condition** is true”
CODE ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE OF EXECUTION
Sequence & Executability

• Let's learn a bit more about program execution by using another language named Scratch
  – http://scratch.mit.edu

• Write a Scratch program to walk forward, turn right, then walk forward again

• Remember computers need executable steps
  – How far forward?
  – Turn right by how much?
Executability

- Scratch handles the syntax by providing a **menu** of specific "blocks" that define what the language allows you to do
  - Anything you want to do that doesn't have a specific block, requires you to compose use multiple blocks
  - Some blocks have certain aspects you can set to control their behavior.
- Go to the Scratch website, click on Create, and close the tutorial
- Write a Scratch program to walk forward, turn right, then walk forward again
- Remember computers and algorithms need **executable** steps
  - How far forward?
  - Turn right by how much?
Sequence & Executability

• You must compose a program from the "menu" of available blocks
• Create the program shown to the right and then click the green flag to the left of the red stop sign
  – What happens?
• Click the green flag again
  – What happens?
Explicit Content

• Computers do only what you tell them, no more, no less
• What additional details might we want to instruct the computer?
  – Where to start and what direction to face?
  – To provide some delay between steps
    • Remember computers execute code very quickly compared to what a human can see
Big Idea: Sequential Execution

• Notice...
  – Program is executed 1 operation at a time in sequential fashion
  – Each operation is ordered (a definite first, second, third, ... operation)
Repetition 1

- Computers are good at repeating tasks quickly.
- If we can find repeated structure, we can use a **loop** to **repeat** a set of actions multiple times.
- What actions can we repeat and how many times to have our cat friend walk in a square?
Repetition 2

- Computers are good at repeating tasks quickly
- If we can find repeated structure, we can use a **loop** to **repeat** a set of actions multiple times
GROUPING CODE IN FUNCTIONS (AKA BLOCKS)

Only if time allows!
Organizing Code - Functions

• Another way to allow reuse and easy modification is to give a name to sequence of code/actions
  – Wherever we use the name, the associated sequence of code/actions will be execute

• Most programming languages call these functions, methods, procedures, subroutines, etc.

• Scratch calls them "Blocks"

• Create a block named: WalkForwardAndTurn
Organizing Code - Functions

- We can take the actions in our loop and drag them to the definition of WalkForwardAndTurn.
- Then click on "My Blocks", find your new block and drag it into the repeat loop.
Sequence of Execution With Functions

• We said we execute sequentially, but with loops and functions is our code still executed sequentially (top-down)?

• No. Loops cause execution to go back and repeat code and functions may cause us to jump to a new set of actions, execute them, and the return back and resume the main program
Functions & Parameters/Arguments

- Our function "DelayedMove" is useful for the simple task we gave you to implement, but what if I wanted to walk in a rectangle?
  - We now need to walk different lengths
- **Q:** What might make it more useful and "general" so that we could reuse it in the future more easily?
- **A:** The ability to generalize how many steps to take and how long to wait might be helpful
  - We call these "input parameters"
- Let's allow different values of steps and the delay to be input.
  - Right click on the WalkForwardAndTurn and choose Edit
  - Click on "Add an Input (number or Text)" once and give the newly appearing box the name: distance and the click on "Add an Input" again and give the new box the name: delay
Parameters/Arguments

• Back in the main window, two new entries "distance" and "delay"
• Drag these in place of the constants (100 or 1) in the move / wait blocks

• Back in the main program, fill in the two text boxes with 100 and 1

• How could you modify the main program only to make the cat walk in a rectangle of 200 wide and 100 long?
C/C++ Program Format/Structure

• Comments
  – Anywhere in the code
  – C-Style => "/*" and "*/"
  – C++ Style => "//"

• Compiler Directives
  – #includes tell compiler what other library functions you plan on using
  – 'using namespace std;' -- Just do it for now!

• main() function
  – Starting point of execution for the program
  – All code/statements in C must be inside a function
  – Statements execute one after the next and end with a semicolon (;)
  – Ends with a 'return 0;' statement

• Other functions
  – printName() is a function that can be "called"/"invoked" from main or any other function

/* Anything between slash-star and star-slash is ignored even across multiple lines of text or code */

// Anything after "//" is ignored on a line

// #includes allow access to library functions
#include <iostream>
#include <cmath>
using namespace std;

// Code is organized into units called functions
void printName()
{
  cout << "Tommy Trojan" << endl;
}

// Execution always starts at the main() function
int main()
{
  cout << "Hello: " << endl;
  printName();
  printName();
  return 0;
}

Hello:
  Tommy Trojan
  Tommy Trojan
A First Program

• Go to:
  – http://cpp.sh

• Enter this program to print "Hello!" five times

```cpp
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;
int main()
{
    for(int i=0; i < 5; i++) {
        cout << "Hello!" << endl;
    }
    return 0;
}
```

C++ syntax requires statement to end with a semicolon (;) and grouped by curly braces { }. Removing one would lead to a syntax error.

A semantic error is when I tell the computer to do the wrong thing but it still meets the correct syntax. Change "i=0" to "i=1" and see it print only 4 times rather than the desired 5.

• Introduce some syntax errors
• Introduce a semantic error