CSCI 104
Copy Semantics

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Copy constructors and assignment operators

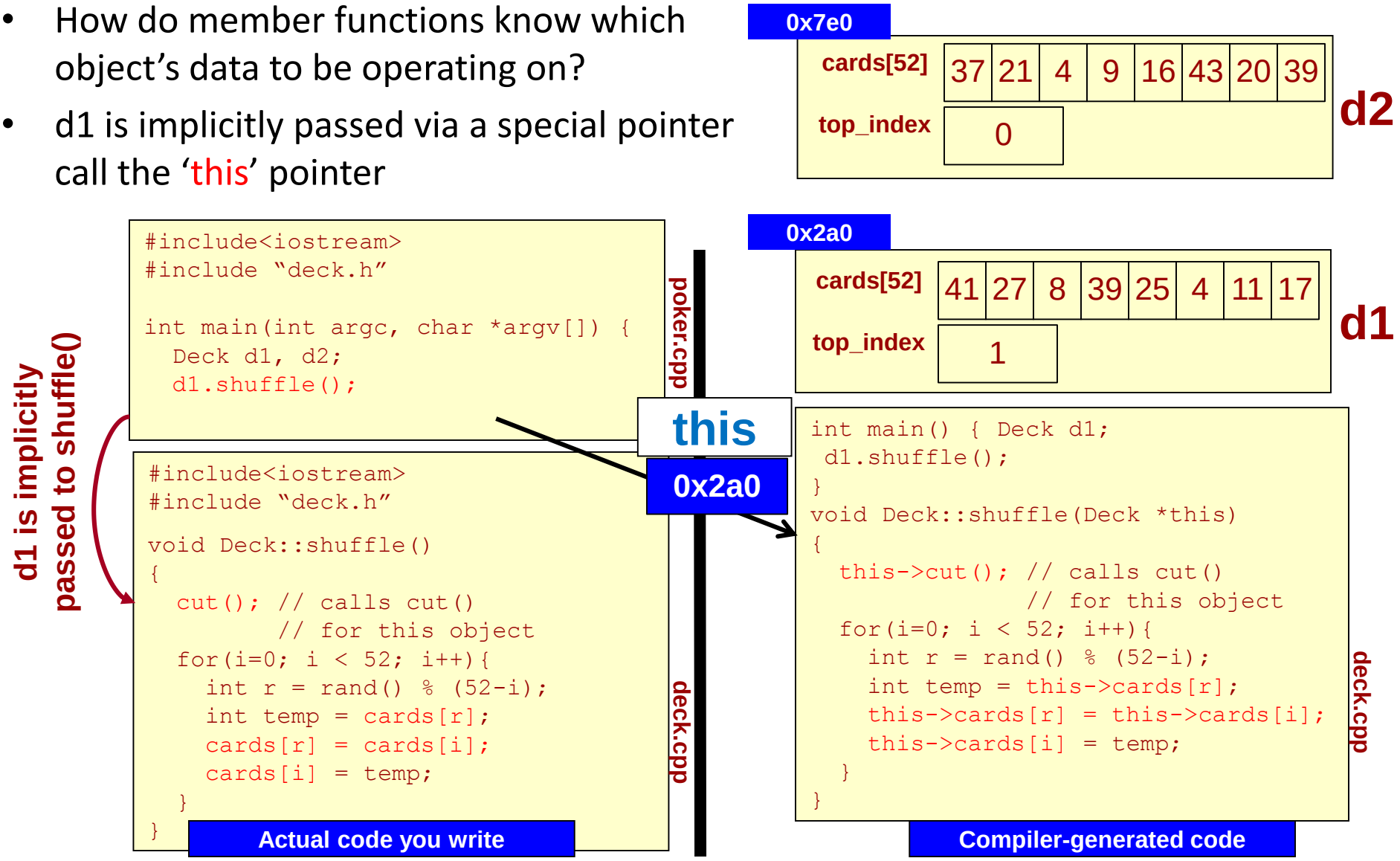
COPY SEMANTICS

Get the Code

- On your VM run the command:
  - wget http://ee.usc.edu/~redekopp/cs104/copycon.cpp

this Pointer

- How do member functions know which object's data to be operating on?
- d1 is implicitly passed via a special pointer call the 'this' pointer



Another Use of 'this'

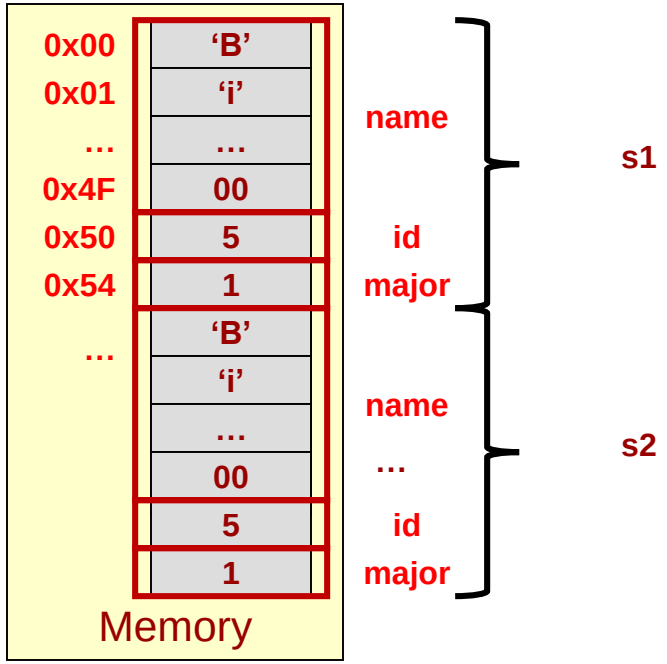
- This can be used to resolve scoping issues with similar named variables

```
class Student {
 public:
  Student(string name, int id, double gpa);

   ~Student();  // Destructor
private:
   string name;
   int id;
   double gpa;
};


Student::Student(string name, int id, double gpa)
{ // which is the member and which is the arg?
  name = name; id = id; gpa = gpa;
}


Student::Student(string name, int id, double gpa)
{ // Now it's clear
  this->name = name;
  this->id = id;
  this->gpa = gpa;
}
```

Struct/Class Assignment

- Assigning one struct or class object to another will perform an element by element copy of the source struct/class to the destination struct/class

```
#include<iostream>
using namespace std;

enum {CS, CECS };

struct student {
  char name[80];
  int id;
  int major;
};

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
  student s1,s2;
  strncpy(s1.name,"Bill",80);
  s1.id = 5; s1.major = CS;
  s2 = s1;
  return 0;
}
```



Multiple Constructors

- Can have multiple constructors with different argument lists

Sutdent.h

```
class Student {
 public:
   Student();    // Constructor 1
   Student(string name, int id, double gpa);
                 // Constructor 2
   ~Student();  // Destructor
   string get_name();
   int get_id();
   double get_gpa();

   void set_name(string name);
   void set_id(int id);
   void set_gpa(double gpa);
 private:
   string _name;
   int _id;
   double _gpa;
};
```

Student.cpp

```
Student::Student()
{
  _name = "", _id = 0; _gpa = 2.0;
}

Student::Student(string name, int id, double
gpa)
{
  _name = name; _id = id; _gpa = gpa;
}
```

```
#include<iostream>
#include "student.h"

int main()
{
  Student s1;  // calls Constructor 1
  string myname;
  cin >> myname;
  s1.set_name(myname);
  s1.set_id(214952);
  s1.set_gpa(3.67);

  Student s2(myname, 32421, 4.0);
             // calls Constructor 2

}
```

Copy Constructors

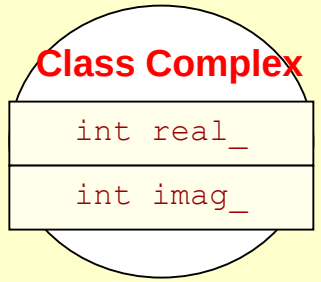
- Write a prototype for the constructor that would want to be called by the red line of code
- Realm of Reasonable Answers:
  - Complex(Complex)
    - We will see that this can't be right…
  - Complex(Complex &)
  - Complex(const Complex &)
- We want a constructor that will build a new Complex object (c3) by making a copy of another (c1)

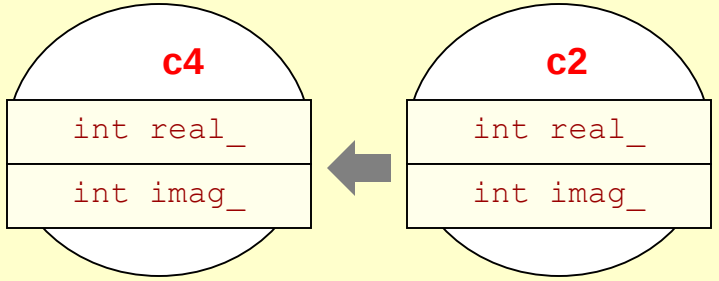
```
class Complex
{
 public:
  Complex(int r, int i);

  // What constructor definition do I
  // need for c3's declaration below

  ~Complex()
 private:
  int real, imag;
};


int main()
{
  Complex c1(2,3), c2(4,5)

  Complex c3(c1);


}
```

Assignment & Copy Constructors

- C++ compiler automatically generates a ***default*** copy constructor
  - Constructor called when an object is allocated and initializes the object to be a copy of another object of the same type
  - Signature would look like **Complex(const Complex &);**
  - Called by either of the options shown in the code
  - **Simply performs an element by element copy**
- C++ compiler automatically generates a ***default*** assignment function
  - Called when you assign to an object that is already allocated (memory already exists)
  - **Simply performs an element by element copy**
  - **Complex& operator=(const Complex &);**

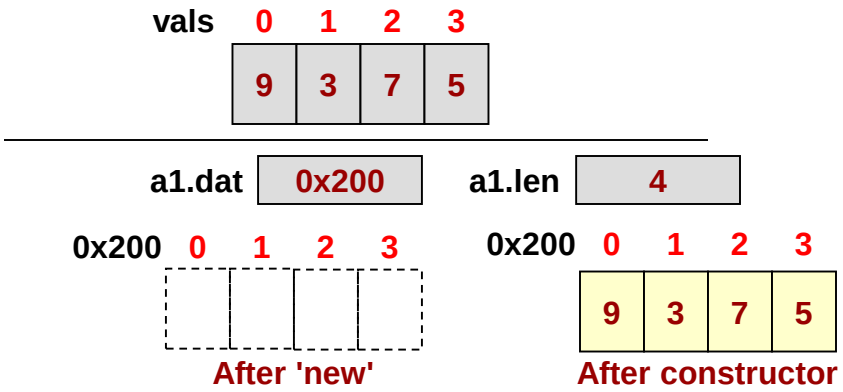
```
class Complex
{
 public:
  Complex(int r, int i);
  // compiler will provide by default:
  // Complex(const Complex& );
  // Complex& operator=(const Complex&);
  ~Complex()
 private:
  int real, imag;
};

int main()
{
  Complex c1(2,3), c2(4,5)
  Complex c3(c1); // copy constructor
  Complex c4 = c1; // copy constructor
  c4 = c2;   // default assignment oper.
  // c4.operator=(c2)
}
```





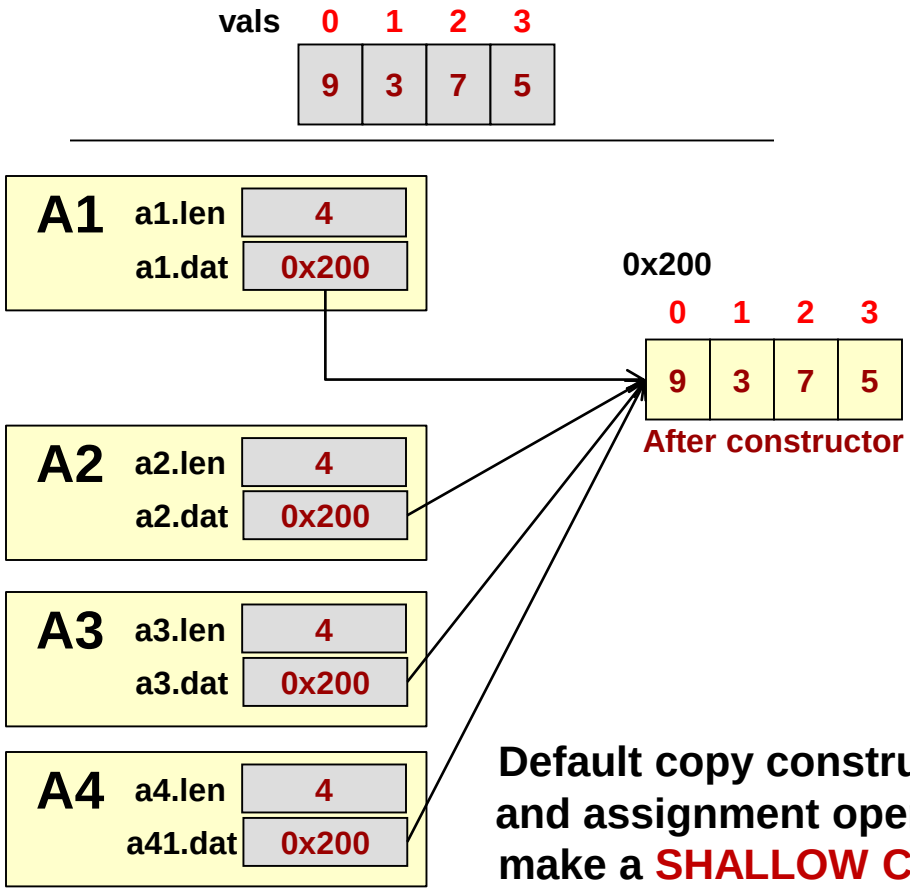
Assignment & Copy Constructors

- C++ compiler automatically generates a ***default*** copy constructor
- C++ compiler automatically generates a ***default*** assignment function
- See picture below of what a1 looks like as it is constructed




```
class MyArray
{
 public:
  MyArray(int d[], int num); //normal
  ~MyArray();
  int len; int *dat;

};
// Normal constructor
MyArray::MyArray(int d[], int num)
{
  dat = new int[num]; len = num;
  for(int i=0; i < len; i++){
    dat[i] = d[i];
  }
}

int main()
{
  int vals[] = {9,3,7,5};
  MyArray a1(vals,4);
  MyArray a2(a1); // calls default copy
  MyArray a3 = a1; // calls default copy
  MyArray a4;
  a4 = a1; // calls default assignment
  // how are the contents of a2, a3, a4
  // related to a1
}
```

Assignment & Copy Constructors



Default copy constructor and assignment operator make a SHALLOW COPY (data members only) rather than a DEEP copy (data members + what they point at)

```
class MyArray
{
 public:
  MyArray(int d[], int num); //normal
  ~MyArray();
  int len; int *dat;

};
// Normal constructor
MyArray::MyArray(int d[], int num)
{
  dat = new int[num]; len = num;
  for(int i=0; i < len; i++){
    dat[i] = d[i];
  }
}

int main()
{
  int vals[] = {9,3,7,5};
  MyArray a1(vals,4);
  MyArray a2(a1); // calls default copy
  MyArray a3 = a1; // calls default copy
  MyArray a4;
  a4 = a1; // calls default assignment
  // how are the contents of a2, a3, a4
  // related to a1
}
```

When to Write Copy Constructor

- Default copy constructor and assignment operator ONLY perform SHALLOW copies
  - **SHALLOW COPY (data members only)**
  - **DEEP copy (data members + what they point at)**
  - [Like saving a webpage to your HD…it makes a shallow copy and doesn't copy the pages linked to]
- You SHOULD/MUST define your own copy constructor and assignment operator when a DEEP copy is needed
  - When you have pointer data members that point to data that should be copied when a new object is made
  - Often times if your data members are pointing to dynamically allocated data, you need a DEEP copy
- If a Shallow copy is acceptable, you do NOT need to define a copy constructor

Defining Copy Constructors

- Same name as normal constructor but should take in an argument of the object type:
  - Usually a const reference
- **MyArray(const MyArray&);**

```
class MyArray
{public:
  MyArray(int d[], int num);
  MyArray(const MyArray& rhs);
  ~MyArray();
 private:
  int *dat; int len;
}
// Normal constructor
MyArray::MyArray(int d[], int num)
{
  dat = new int[num]; len = num;
  // copy values from d to dat
}
// Copy constructor
MyArray::MyArray(const MyArray &rhs){
{
  len = rhs.len; dat = new int[len];
  // copy from rhs.dat to dat
}

int main()
{
  intvals[] = {9,3,7,5};
  MyArray a1(vals,4);
  MyArray a2(a1);
  MyArray a3 = a1;
  // how are the contents of a2 and a1 related?
}
```

Implicit Calls to Copy Constructor

- Recall pass-by-value passes a copy of an object…If defined the copy constructor will automatically be called to make this copy otherwise the default copy will perform a shallow copy

```
class Complex
{
 public:
  Complex(intr, inti);
  Complex Complex(const Complex &rhs);
  ~Complex();
  int real, imag;
};
// Copy constructor
Complex::Complex(const Complex &c)
{
  cout << "In copy constructor" << endl;
  real = c.real; imag = c.imag;
}
// ** Copy constructor called for pass-by-value
int dummy(Complex rhs)
{
   cout << "In dummy" << endl;
}

intmain()
{
  Complex c1(2,3), c2(4,5);
  int x = dummy(c1);
  //     ** Copy Constructor called on c1 **

}
```

Copy Constructors

- Write a prototype for the constructor that would want to be called by the red line of code
- Now we see why the first option can't be right…because to pass c1 by value requires a call to the copy constructor which we are just now defining (circular reference/logic)
  - Complex(Complex)
    - We will see that this can't be right…
- The argument must be passed by reference
  - Complex(const Complex &)

```
class Complex
{
 public:
  Complex(int r, int i);
  Complex(Complex c); // Bad b/c pass
     // by value req. copy to be made
     //  ...chicken/egg problem
  Complex(const Complex &c); // Good
  ~Complex()
 private:
  int real, imag;
};


int main()
{
  Complex c1(2,3), c2(4,5)
  Complex c3(c1);


}
```

Practice

- Add a copy constructor to your Str class

Defining Copy Assignment Operator

- Operator=() is called when an object already exists and then you assign to it
  - Copy constructor called when you assign during a declaration:
  - E.g. MyArray a2=a1;
- Can define operator for '=' to indicate how to make a copy via assignment
- **Gotchas?**

```
class MyArray
{
 public:
  MyArray();
  MyArray(int d[], int num);
  MyArray(const MyArray& rhs);
  MyArray& operator=(const MyArray& rhs);
  ~MyArray();
  int*dat; intlen;
}

MyArray::MyArray(const MyArray &rhs){
{
  len = rhs.len; dat = new int[len];
  // copy from rhs.dat to dat
}

MyArray& MyArray::operator=(const MyArray &rhs){
{
  len = rhs.len; dat = new int[len];
  // copy from rhs.dat to dat
}

int main()
{
  intvals[] = {9,3,7,5};
  MyArray a1(vals,4);
  MyArray a2;
  a2 = a1; // operator=() since a2 already exists
}
```

Defining Copy Assignment Operator

- **Gotchas?**
  - Dest. object may already be initialized and simply overwriting data members may lead to a memory leak
  - Self assignment (which may also lead to memory leak or lost data)

```
class MyArray
{
 public:
  MyArray();
  MyArray(int d[], int num);
  MyArray(const MyArray& rhs);
  MyArray& operator=(const MyArray& rhs);
  ~MyArray();
  int *dat; int len;
}

MyArray::MyArray(const MyArray &rhs){
{ len = rhs.len; dat = new int[len];
  // copy from rhs.dat to dat
}
MyArray& MyArray::operator=(const MyArray &rhs){
{
  if(this == &rhs) return *this;
  if(dat) delete dat;
  len = rhs.len; dat = new int[len];
  // copy from rhs.dat to dat
  return *this;
}

int main()
{
  int vals1[] = {9,3,7,5}, vals2[] = {8,3,4,1};
  MyArray a1(vals1,4);
  MyArray a2(vals2,4);
  a1 = a1;  a2 = a1;
}
```

Assignment Operator Practicals

- RHS should be a const reference
  - Const so we don't change it
  - Reference so we don't pass-by-value and make a copy (which would actually call a copy constructor)
- Return value should be a reference
  - Allows for chained assignments
  - Should return (*this)
  - Reference so another copy isn't made

```
class Complex
{
 public:
  Complex(int r, int i);
  ~Complex()
  Complex operator+(Complex right_op);
  Complex &operator=(const Complex &rhs);
 private:
  int real, imag;
};


Complex &Complex::operator=(const Complex & rhs)
{
   real = rhs.real;
   imag = rhs.imag;
   return *this;
}

int main()
{
  Complex c1(2,3), c2(4,5);

  Complex c3, c4;
  c4 = c3 = c2;
  // same as c4.operator=( c3.operator=(c2) );
}
```

Assignment Operator Overloading

- If a different type argument can be accepted we can overload the = operator

```
class Complex
{
 public:
  Complex(int r, int i);
  ~Complex();
  Complex operator+(const Complex &rhs);
  Complex &operator=(const Complex &r);
  Complex &operator=(const int r);
  int real, imag;
};

Complex &Complex::operator=(const int& r)
{
  real = r; imag= 0;
  return *this;
}

int main()
{
  Complex c1(3,5);
  Complex c2,c3,c4;
  c2 = c3 = c4 = 5;
  // c2 = (c3 = (c4 = 5) );
  // c4.operator=(5);  // Complex::operator=(int&)
  // c3.operator=(c4); // Complex::operator=(Complex&)
  // c2.operator=(c3); // Complex::operator=(Complex&)
  return 0;
}
```

Copy Constructor Summary

- If you are okay with a shallow copy, you don't need to define a copy constructor or assignment operator
- Rule of Three:
  - Usually if you have dynamically allocated memory, you'll need a **copy constructor**, an **assignment operator**, and a **destructor** **(i.e. if you need 1 you need all 3)**
- Copy constructor should accept a const reference of the same object type
- Assignment operators should be careful to cleanup initialized members and check for self-assignment
- Assignment operators should return a reference type and return *this

Exercises

- Add an assignment operator to your Str class
- Also add a '+=' operator to your Str class