

CSE 143

Class Constructors

[Chapter 3, pp. 127-131]

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HW #2

- Remember “maintenance” in the SW Lifecycle?
- HW2 = “Maintenance of HW #1”
- Convert to classes!
- Constructors
 - Small (but important) part of HW #2
 - Covered today

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Initialization: Review!

- Variables *must* be initialized before 1st use

```
int sum;
for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++)
    sum = sum + i;           //whoops!
```

- Simple types can be initialized at declaration

```
int x = 23;
char InstructorName[] = "I. M. Boring";
```

- Input might do it

```
int num;
cin >> num;
```

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Initialization: Other Cases

- Parameter: maybe

```
int angle;
modifyTriangle (angle);
//is this or is it not initializing "angle"?
```
- If a variable is not initialized somehow, it is an error.
 - What kind of error?
- C++ variables are **not, not, not** initialized automatically!
 - But MSVC does so in “debug” mode (?)
Highlights the difference between the C++ language and a particular C++ system.
 - **Useful advice: Always test your program in “release” mode before turning in!**

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Initialization of Instances

- When declaring an instance of a class, its data members are all uninitialized
 - no surprise, consistent with C philosophy

```
BankAccount a1; // what is "name"? "balance"?
a1.deposit(20.0);
cout << a1.amount(); //what's the result?
```

- Need a way to “construct” and initialize new objects

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One Solution: Programmer-defined init function

```
class BankAccount {
public:
    void init(char name[], double initBalance);
    . . .
};
```

```
BankAccount myAccount;
myAccount.init("Bob", 200.0);
```

- Drawback: What if the client doesn't call `init`?

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Constructors

• In C++, the **constructor** is a special function (method) *automatically* called when a class instance is declared

• Three Weirdnesses:

- Constructor's name is class name
- No explicit return type, not even *void*...
- Invocation is automatic: can't disable

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A Better Bank Account

in BankAccount.h:

```
class BankAccount {
...
public:
    BankAccount();
    void deposit(double amount);
...
};
```

in BankAccount.cpp:

```
BankAccount::BankAccount() {
    balance = 0.0;
    strcpy(owner, "");
}
```

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Called Automatically

• With the constructor defined, what's wrong with the example now? (trick question!)

```
BankAccount a1;
a1.deposit(20.0);
cout << a1.amount(); //what's the result?
```

Answer: Nothing! the constructor was called automatically and initialized the private "balance" variable.

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Constructors w/ Arguments

Q: What's still wrong with the improved bank account class?

A: "" was a silly way to initialize the 'name' field.

• Solution: We can declare constructors that take arguments

- allows us to pass in meaningful values for initialization.

```
class BankAccount {
public:
    BankAccount(char name[]);
...
};
```

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Multiple Constructors

• May be several reasonable ways to initialize a class instance

• Solution: multiple constructors

- All have same name (name of class)
- Distinguished by number and types of arguments
- We say the constructor is "overloaded."
- You can do this with any function or methods in C++. More later!
- It's one case of "polymorphism," one of the chief characteristics of object-oriented programming

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An Even Better Bank Account

• Specification

```
class BankAccount {
public:
    BankAccount();
    BankAccount(char name[]);
    BankAccount(double v, char name[]);
...
};
```

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An Even Better Bank Account

- Implementation

```
BankAccount::BankAccount() {
    balance = 0.0;
    strcpy(owner, "");
}
BankAccount::BankAccount(char name[]) {
    balance = 0.0;
    strcpy(owner, name);
}
BankAccount::BankAccount(double v, char name[]) {
    balance = v;
    strcpy(owner, name);
}
```

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Invoking a Constructor

- A constructor is never invoked using the dot notation
- A constructor is invoked (automatically) whenever a class instance is created:

```
// implicit invocation of BankAccount()
BankAccount a1;

// implicit invocation of BankAccount(char[])
BankAccount a2("Bob");

// explicit invocation of BankAccount(char[])
BankAccount a3 = BankAccount("Bob");
//This is NOT an assignment statement!
```

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"Default" Constructors

- A constructor with 0 arguments is called a *default constructor*.
 - It is invoked in the variable declaration without () -- another weirdness
- If no explicit constructors are given, a default is supplied by compiler
 - Takes no arguments, does nothing
 - Not guaranteed to perform **any** initialization
 - Invisible

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Default Constructor Pitfall

- If a class has one or more "non-default" constructor:
 - then NO compiler-generator default constructor will be supplied
- Can cause subtle errors
- Wise advice: *always define your own default constructor*

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Constructors and Arrays

- BankAccount AccountList [10000];
- How many objects are being created?
- Is a constructor called? How many times? Which constructor?
- Answer:** in an array of class instances, the default constructor is called for each array element
- What if you want to invoke one of the other constructors, e.g., `BankAccount(double v, char name[])`?
 - Answer: Sorry, no way.

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Puzzler

- How many times is a constructor called in this code?

```
BankAccount myaccount ("Martin"), youraccount;
BankAccount otheraccounts [100];
...
myaccount.GiveAwayMyMoney (otheraccounts, 100);

if (myaccount.lamRicher (youraccount))
    cout << "I win!!" ;
```

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Methods for Puzzler

*//Takes all the money from my account and gives it to
//the poor*

```
void BankAccount::GiveAwayMyMoney  
    (BankAccount them [], int num);
```

*//returns true iff this account has more money than
//second one (the argument)*

```
bool BankAccount::IamRicher (BankAccount b);  
    //A "copy constructor" is involved  
    //more about that another day
```

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Constructors: Review

- A constructor cannot return a value
 - so it must be declared without a return type
- A class may provide multiple constructors
 - Compiler will choose appropriate one, depending on context.
- Syntax for invoking a constructor

```
BankAccount a1;           //NOT BankAccount a1( );  
BankAccount a2(10.0, "Bob");  
BankAccount a3 = BankAccount("Susan");
```

But not this:

```
BankAccount a3;  
a3 = BankAccount("Susan");
```

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Exercise I

- Design a TranscriptItem class
 - Quarter
 - Course name
 - Grades
 - UW style grades - numerical + letters (I, X, N,...)
- Function overloading - same function may take different types of arguments

```
ti.SetGrade(3.9);  
ti.SetGrade('X');
```

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Transcript Item

```
enum QuarterType{WINTER, SPRING, SUMMER,AUTUMN};  
enum GradeType{X_GRADE = 41, I_GRADE, N_GRADE};  
  
class {  
public:  
    TranscriptItem(int, QuarterType, char[], double);  
    TranscriptItem(int, QuarterType, char[], char);  
private:  
    int year;  
    QuarterType quarter;  
    char courseName[10];  
    int grade;    // 0 .. 40 - numerical  
                // 41+ letter grades, -1 invalid  
};
```

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Exercise II

- Design a Transcript class
 - How is the data represented?
 - What are the public methods?
 - Are there any private methods?

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