

# CSE 143X

Accelerated Computer  
Programming I/II

# Recursive Programming

```
public static void solveProblem() {  
    solveProblem();  
}
```

- 1 Writing Recursive Functions

## hasX

Implement a function

```
public static boolean hasX(String s)
```

which returns true if there is an 'x' in s, and false otherwise. You may not use contains or loops.

For example:

- `hasX("hello")` → false
- `hasX("xylophone")` → true
- `hasX("abcdx")` → true
- `hasX("qrst")` → false

## Procedure For Solving Recursion Problems

- 1 Figure out what the base case is. To do this, look at the type of the argument and think of the simplest thing of that type.
- 2 Now that you know the base case(s), figure out what the answer for the base case is.
- 3 Now, we have to figure out the recursive step. First, write down what the function we are writing does.
- 4 Then, ask the question: "What is the smallest piece of the problem I can break off?"
- 5 Figure out the answer to the question for the tiny problem.
- 6 Use a recursive call to solve whatever is left.

## hasX

Implement a function

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For example:

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- `hasX("qrst")` → false

- 1 Figure out what the base case is. To do this, look at the type of the argument and think of the simplest thing of that type:

**The argument is a String. The simplest String is the empty String.**

- 2 Now that you know the base case(s), figure out what the answer for the base case is:

```
1 if (s.length() == 0) {  
2     // The empty string doesn't have any x's  
3     return false;  
4 }
```

- 3 Now, we have to figure out the recursive step. First, write down what the function we are writing does:

**hasX(s) returns true when s contains an 'x'**

- 4 Ask the question: “What is the smallest piece of the problem I can break off?”

**A String is made up of chars. We can break off a single char:**

```
1 else {
2     // Break off the first character
3     char c = s.charAt(0);
4     ...
```

- 5 Figure out the answer to the question for the tiny problem:

```
1     // Answer the question for that character
2     if (c == 'x') {
3         return true;
4     }
5     ...
```

- 6 Use a recursive call to solve whatever is left.

```
1     // Ask someone else to solve the rest of the problem
2     return hasX(s.substring(1));
3 }
```



## hasX Solution

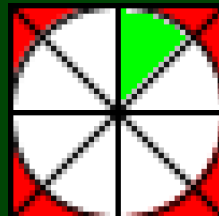
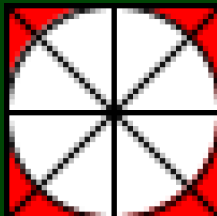
```
1 public static boolean hasX(String s) {
2     if (s.length() == 0) {
3         // The empty string doesn't have any x's
4         return false;
5     }
6     else {
7         // Break off the first character
8         char c = s.charAt(0);
9
10        // Answer the question for that character
11        return c == 'x' || hasX(s.substring(1));
12    }
13 }
```

```
paintbucket
```

Implement a function

```
public static void paintbucket(int x, int y, Color empty)
```

which fills an area with `Color.GREEN` when the `DrawingPanel` is clicked.



The algorithm to fill in the space is called “floodfill.” To see it working with `DrawingPanel`, download the code. Here it is more generally:

```
floodfill
```

```
1 public static final ThingToFill drawing;  
2 public static final int SIZE = ...;  
3 public static void floodfill(int x, int y, Color empty) {  
4     if (x >= 0 && y >= 0 && x < SIZE && y < SIZE &&  
5         drawing.getColor(x, y).equals(empty)) {  
6         drawing.setColor(x, y, Color.GREEN);  
7         floodfill(x - 1, y, empty);  
8         floodfill(x, y - 1, empty);  
9         floodfill(x + 1, y, empty);  
10        floodfill(x, y + 1, empty);  
11    }  
12 }
```

## isPalindrome

Implement a function

```
public static boolean isPalindrome(int[] arr, int begin, int end)
```

which returns true if the elements between begin and end (inclusive) of arr are the same forwards and backwards.

For example:

- `isPalindrome({1, 1, 1, 1}, 0, 2) → true`
- `isPalindrome({1, 1, 1, 1}, 0, 3) → true`
- `isPalindrome({1, 1, 1, 1}, 1, 2) → true`
- `isPalindrome({1, 2, 3, 4}, 1, 1) → true`
- `isPalindrome({1, 2, 3, 4}, 1, 2) → false`
- `isPalindrome({1, 2, 3, 2, 1}, 1, 3) → true`
- `isPalindrome({1, 2, 3, 2, 1}, 0, 1) → false`

```
isPalindrome
1 public static boolean isPalindrome(int[] arr, int begin, int end) {
2     if (begin >= end) {
3         return true;
4     }
5     else {
6         return arr[begin] == arr[end]) &&
7             isPalindrome(arr, begin + 1, end - 1);
8     }
9 }
```

Okay, but wait. Are we ever going to ask for partial arrays being palindromes? We'd rather a function:

```
public static boolean isPalindrome(int[] arr)
```

How can we write this using our previous function?

```
1 public static boolean isPalindrome(int[] arr) {
2     return isPalindrome(arr, 0, arr.length - 1);
3 }
```

Note that, now, we should make our original function **PRIVATE**, because we don't want a user to ever actually call it.

In general, to solve some recursive problems, we will need to make **public-private** pairs. The private method will have extra arguments we can use and the public method will call the private one.

```
1 public static boolean isPalindrome(int[] arr) {
2     return isPalindrome(0, arr.length - 1);
3 }
4
5 private static boolean isPalindrome(int[] arr, int begin, int end) {
6     if (begin >= end) {
7         return true;
8     }
9     else {
10        return arr[begin] == arr[end] &&
11            isPalindrome(arr, begin + 1, end - 1);
12    }
13 }
```

```
crawl
```

Write a method

```
public static void crawl(File f)
```

that prints out the names of the files we reach by looking inside any folders starting at `f`. The names should be indented as many times as the number of folders it is inside.

So, for instance, an output might look like:

OUTPUT

```
>> folder1
>>   file.txt
>>   IAmInsideFolder1
>>     insideinside.html
>>     lecture.pdf
>>     oops.jpg
```

Because we need to keep track of how far we are supposed to indent, our recursive function will need to have a second argument `indent`:

```
public static void crawl(File f, String indent)
```

### `crawl` Solution

```
1 public static void crawl(File f) {
2     return crawl(f, "");
3 }
4 private static void crawl(File f, String indent) {
5     System.out.println(indent + f.getName());
6     if (f.isDirectory()) {
7         List<File> filesInDir = f.listFiles();
8         for (int i = 0; i < filesInDir.size(); i++) {
9             crawl(filesInDir.get(i), indent + " ");
10        }
11    }
12 }
```



- See earlier starred slide with approach to recursion problems.
- Practice writing recursive functions **a lot**. Looking at an answer does not count as practicing.
- Always identify **how many** base cases (e.g. the special, weird ones) you will need.

Non-negative numbers	→	0
int	→	negative, 0
String	→	""
File System	→	non-folder

- If the problem doesn't seem like you can break it down easily, think about what arguments you could add to help (and use a public-private pair).

Generally, you need arguments to **"keep track of"** something.

- Saving the start and end bounds of an `int[]`
- Saving the number of times we've recursed into a folder (to print them indented)