

C++ Templates

CSE 333 Winter 2024

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Administrivia

- ❖ Homework 2 due tomorrow (11/1)
 - File system crawler, indexer, and search engine
 - **Don't forget to clone your repo to double-/triple-/quadruple-check compilation, execution, and tests!**
 - If your code won't build or run when we clone it, well, you should have caught that...
- ❖ No new exercises until after hw2 due
 - Next exercise out Friday, due Monday
- ❖ Midterm exam a week from tomorrow (Thur. 2/8, 5-6pm)
 - Topic list and old exams on website now (exams link on resources page)
 - Closed book, slides, etc., but you may have one 5x8 notecard with whatever handwritten notes you want on both sides
 - Free blank cards available in class later this week and next 😊
 - Review in sections next week

Lecture Outline

❖ Templates

Suppose that...

- ❖ You want to write a function to compare two ints
- ❖ You want to write a function to compare two strings
 - Function overloading!

```
// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise  
int compare(const int &value1, const int &value2) {  
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;  
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;  
    return 0;  
}
```

```
// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise  
int compare(const string &value1, const string &value2) {  
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;  
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;  
    return 0;  
}
```

Hm...

- ❖ The two implementations of **compare** are nearly identical!
 - What if we wanted a version of **compare** for *every* comparable type?
 - We could write (many) more functions, but that's obviously wasteful and redundant
- ❖ What we'd prefer to do is write "*generic code*"
 - Code that is **type-independent**
 - Code that is **compile-type polymorphic** across types

C++ Parametric Polymorphism

- ❖ C++ has the notion of **templates**
 - A function or class that accepts a ***type*** as a parameter
 - You define the function or class once in a type-agnostic way
 - When you invoke the function or instantiate the class, you specify (one or more) types or values as arguments to it
 - At ***compile-time***, the compiler will generate the “specialized” code from your template using the types you provided
 - Your template definition is NOT runnable code
 - Code is *only* generated if you use your template
 - Code is specialized for the specific types of data used in the template instance (e.g.: code for < on ints differs from code for < on strings)

Function Templates

- ❖ Template to **compare** two “things”:

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise
template <typename T> // <...> can also be written <class T>
int compare(const T &value1, const T &value2) {
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;
    return 0;
}

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    std::string h("hello"), w("world");
    std::cout << compare<int>(10, 20) << std::endl;
    std::cout << compare<std::string>(h, w) << std::endl;
    std::cout << compare<double>(50.5, 50.6) << std::endl;
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

Compiler Inference

- ❖ Same thing, but letting the compiler infer the types:

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise
template <typename T>
int compare(const T &value1, const T &value2) {
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;
    return 0;
}

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    std::string h("hello"), w("world");
    std::cout << compare(10, 20) << std::endl; // ok
    std::cout << compare(h, w) << std::endl;    // ok
    std::cout << compare("Hello", "World") << std::endl; // hm...
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

functiontemplate_infer.cc

Template Non-types

- ❖ You can use non-types (constant values) in a template:

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

// return pointer to new N-element heap array filled with val
// (not entirely realistic, but shows what's possible)
template <typename T, int N>
T* varray(const T &val) {
    T* a = new T[N];
    for (int i = 0; i < N; ++i)
        a[i] = val;
    return a;
}

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    int *ip = varray<int, 10>(17);
    string *sp = varray<string, 17>("hello");
    ...
}
```

What's Going On?

- ❖ The compiler doesn't generate any code when it sees the template function
 - It doesn't know what code to generate yet, since it doesn't know what types are involved
- ❖ When the compiler sees the function being used, then it understands what types are involved
 - It generates the *instantiation* of the template and compiles it (kind of like macro expansion)
 - The compiler generates template instantiations for *each* type used as a template parameter

This Creates a Problem

```
#ifndef _COMPARE_H_
#define _COMPARE_H_

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b);

#endif // _COMPARE_H_
```

compare.h

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

using namespace std;

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    cout << comp<int>(10, 20);
    cout << endl;
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

main.cc

```
#include "compare.h"

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b) {
    if (a < b) return -1;
    if (b < a) return 1;
    return 0;
}
```

compare.cc

Solution #1 (Google Style Guide prefers)

```
#ifndef _COMPARE_H_
#define _COMPARE_H_

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b) {
    if (a < b) return -1;
    if (b < a) return 1;
    return 0;
}

#endif // _COMPARE_H_
```

compare.h

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

using namespace std;

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    cout << comp<int>(10, 20);
    cout << endl;
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

main.cc

Solution #2 (you'll see this sometimes)

```
#ifndef __COMPARE_H__
#define __COMPARE_H__

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b);

#include "compare.cc"

#endif // __COMPARE_H__
```

compare.h

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

using namespace std;

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    cout << comp<int>(10, 20);
    cout << endl;
    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

main.cc

```
template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b) {
    if (a < b) return -1;
    if (b < a) return 1;
    return 0;
}
```

compare.cc

Class Templates

- ❖ Templates are useful for classes as well
 - (In fact, that was one of the main motivations for templates!)
- ❖ Imagine we want a class that holds a pair of things that we can:
 - Set the value of the first thing
 - Set the value of the second thing
 - Get the value of the first thing
 - Get the value of the second thing
 - Swap the values of the things
 - Print the pair of things

Pair Class Definition

Pair.h

```
#ifndef _PAIR_H_
#define _PAIR_H_

template <typename Thing> class Pair {
public:
    Pair() { };

    Thing get_first() const { return first_; }
    Thing get_second() const { return second_; }
    void set_first(Thing &copyme);
    void set_second(Thing &copyme);
    void Swap();

private:
    Thing first_, second_;
};

#include "Pair.cc" // or (better?) put entire template def here

#endif // _PAIR_H_
```

Pair Function Definitions

Pair.cc

```
template <typename Thing>
void Pair<Thing>::set_first(Thing &copyme) {
    first_ = copyme;
}

template <typename Thing>
void Pair<Thing>::set_second(Thing &copyme) {
    second_ = copyme;
}

template <typename Thing>
void Pair<Thing>::Swap() {
    Thing tmp = first_;
    first_ = second_;
    second_ = tmp;
}

template <typename T>
std::ostream &operator<<(std::ostream &out, const Pair<T>& p) {
    return out << "Pair(" << p.get_first() << ", "
               << p.get_second() << ")";
}
```


Using Pair

usepair.cc

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

#include "Pair.h"

int main(int argc, char** argv) {
    Pair<std::string> ps;
    std::string x("foo"), y("bar");

    ps.set_first(x);
    ps.set_second(y);
    ps.Swap();
    std::cout << ps << std::endl;

    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
}
```

Class Template Notes (look in *Primer* for more)

- ❖ `Thing` is replaced with template argument when class is instantiated
 - The class template parameter name is in scope of the template class definition and can be freely used there
 - Class template member functions are template functions with template parameters that match those of the class template
 - These member functions must be defined as template function outside of the class template definition (if not written inline)
 - The template parameter name does *not* need to match that used in the template class definition, but really should
 - Only template methods that are actually called in your program are instantiated (but this is an implementation detail)