Pipelining

Drawbacks of the Single Cycle Imp

- A single cycle machine has disadvantages such as: All instructions take the same time (CPI = 1), but some instructions are shorter than others:
  - ADD uses Instruction Memory, Register File, ALU, Register File
  - LW uses Instruction Memory, Register File, ALU, Data Memory, and Register file again...
- The cycle time of the machine is the time needed to execute the "longest" instruction.
- Note also that we're underutilizing functional units (the instruction memory, register file, and ALU sit idle while data memory is being read/written)
- We are violating our principle -- *make the common case fast* -- we're making the *common* case take as long as the most *uncommon* case...

Thought experiment

- Suppose we could design a machine whose cycle time varied, so that it was just long enough for each kind of instruction.
- What would our performance improvement be over the single cycle machine, given these numbers:

Instruction Type	IMEM	Reg Read	ALU	DMEM	Reg Write	Total
Load	2	1	2	2	1	8
Store	2	1	2	2	-	7
R-type	2	1	2	-	1	6
Branch	2	1	2	-	-	5

Thought Experiment 2

- GCC instruction mix: 22% loads, 11% stores, 49% R-format, 18% branches
  - Single-cycle cycle time = ??
  - Vari-cycle cycle time = ??
  - What's the speedup?
- Now suppose we add floating point, and that that our FP ALU takes 8 ns for add/sub and 16 ns for mult/div.
  - What would be the new cycle time of the single cycle machine?
  - How much faster would the variable clock machine be, given this mix: 25% loads, 15% stores, 30% R-format, 10% branches, 10% FP mult, 10 % FP add
  - Vari-cycle time = .26*40 + .14*35 + .31*30 + .10*25 + .09*80 + .10*40 = 38ns
  - What's the speedup?

Improving Performance

- Of course, it's really impractical to build a variable clock machine.
- As the ISA gets more complex, the single cycle shortcomings become more serious, so what do we do? Two approaches:
  - *Multiple cycle machine* (section 5.4): This is a way to approximate the effect of a variable clock, by letting instructions take different numbers of cycles to complete. For instance, loads might take 5 cycles because they use all 5 functional units, but adds might only take 4 cycles...
  - *Pipelining*: Observe that we're underutilizing our functional units -- e.g the ALU sits idle while we access data memory. Find a way to work on several instructions at the same time.
- CISC ISAs pretty much require a multi-cycle implementation. Why?
- RISC ISAs are amenable to pipelining.

Pipelining Defined

- Basic metaphor is the assembly line:
  - Split a job A into *n* sequential subjobs ($A_1, A_2, ..., A_n$) with each A_i taking approximately the same time.
  - Each subjob is processed by a different substation (resource), or equivalently, passes through a series of *stages*.
  - When subjob A_1 moves from stage 1 to stage 2, subjob A_2 enters stage 1, and so on.
- Laundry example:
  - Suppose doing a load of laundry, from beginning to end, takes 1.5 hours. How long does it take to do 3 loads of laundry?
  - If we split this job into 3 subjobs: washing (30 minutes), drying (30 minutes), folding+ironing (30 minutes).
  - With a pipeline, how long does each load of laundry take?
  - How long do 3 loads of laundry take? 10 loads? N loads?

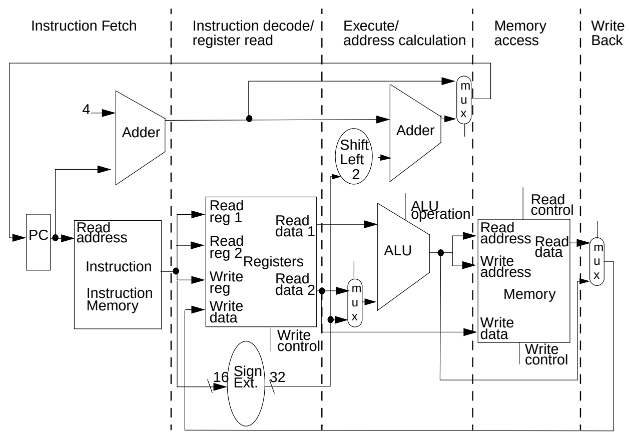
Pipeline Performance

- The execution time for a single job can be longer, since each substage takes the same amount of time -- the time for the longest of any stages. Eg. it might not take a full 30 minutes to fold and iron clothes...
- However, throughput is enhanced because a new job can start at every stage time (and one job completes at every stage time).
- Pipelining enchances performance by *increasing throughput* of jobs, not by decreasing the amount of time each job takes.
- In the best case, throughput increases by a factor of n, if there are n stages. This is optimistic, because:
  - Execution time of a job by itself could be less than n stage times
  - We are assuming the pipeline can be kept full all of the time.

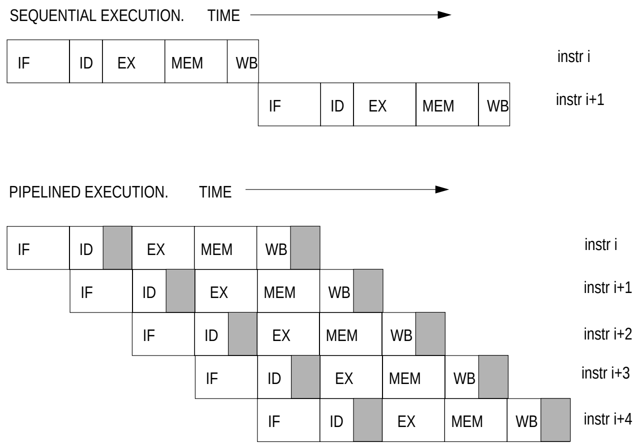
Pipeline Implementation

- The trick is to break the one long cycle into a sequence of smaller, hopefully equally-sized tasks. Traditionally, the cycle is broken into these 5 subjobs (pipe stages):
  - IF: *Instruction Fetch* -- get the next instruction
  - ID: *Instruction Decode* -- decode the instruction and read the registers
  - EX: *ALU Execution* -- utilize the ALU
  - MEM: *Memory Access* -- read/write memory
  - WB: *Write Back* -- write results to the register file
- On each machine cycle, each pipe stage does its small piece of work on the instruction that is currently inside of it. Each instruction now takes 5 cycles to complete.

The 5 Stages



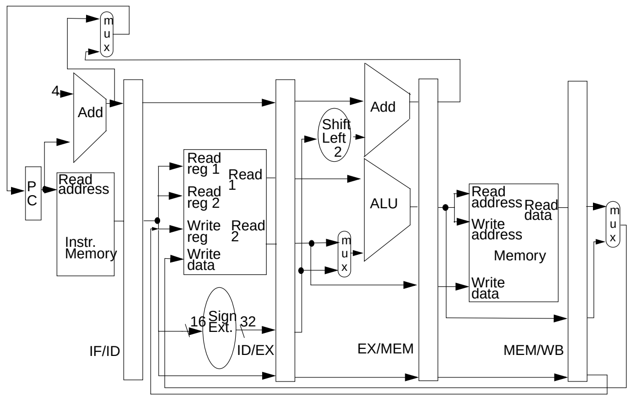
Block diagram of pipeline



Why it’s not (quite) so simple:

- We need to remember information about each instruction in the pipeline. This information has to flow from stage to stage. We accomplish this with *pipeline registers*.
- We need to deal with dependencies between instructions:
  - Data dependencies
  - Control dependencies
- We’ll ignore dependencies between instructions for now.

Adding Pipeline Registers:



- Note the 4 new registers which maintain state between stages.

Example

- Trace the execution of this 3 instruction sequence:

```
lw     $10, 16($1)
sub    $11, $2, $3
sw     $12, 16($4)
```

Instruction Fetch

- We'll next describe the operation of the pipeline in some detail, using pseudocode.
- Instruction Fetch and Decode is the same for all instructions:
- *Instruction Fetch Stage.* The IF/ID register needs to hold 2 pieces of information:

```
IF/ID.IR  <- IMemory[PC]
if (EX/MEM.ALUResult == 0)
  PC <- EX/MEM.TargetPC
else
  PC <- PC + 4
IF/ID.nPC  <- PC
```

Instruction Decode

- *Instruction Decode Stage.* The ID/EX register needs to hold 6 pieces of information. Let A be input 1 of the ALU and B be input 2.

```
ID/EX.nPC  <- IF/ID.nPC
ID/EX.A    <- Reg[IF/ID.IR[25:21]] (i.e. read rs)
ID/EX.B    <- Reg[IF/ID/IR[20:16]] (i.e. read rt)
ID/EX.Imm  <- sign-extend(IF/ID.IR[15:0])
ID/EX.rd   <- IF/ID.IR[15:11]
ID/EX.rt   <- IF/ID.IR[20:16]
```

- Note that we start computing immediate, even though we might not need it, and it might be “garbage”

ALU Execution

- *ALU Execution Stage* either computes the memory address for load/stores, the value for arithmetic instructions, or whether a branch is being taken.
- The EX/MEM register needs to hold 4 pieces of information:

```
EX/MEM.B         <- ID/EX.B
EX/MEM.WriteReg  <- ID/EX.rd (for R-type)
                    or ID/EX.rt (for Load)
EX/MEM.TargetPC <- (4*ID/EX.Imm) + ID/EX.nPC
EX/MEM.ALUResult <- “ALU Result”
    ALU Result is either
        ID/EX.A + ID/EX.Imm    (for lw, sw)
        ID/EX.A op ID/EX.B     (for R-type)
        ID/EX.A  - ID/EX.B      (for beq)
```

Memory Access and WriteBack

- *Memory Access Stage.* The MEM/WB register needs to hold 3 pieces of information:

```
MEM/WB.MemData     <- DMemory[EX/MEM.ALUResult]
MEM/WB.ALUResult   <- EX/MEM.ALUResult
MEM/WB.WriteReg    <- EX/MEM.WriteReg
DMemory[ALUResult] <- EX/MEM.B  (for stores)
```

- *Write Back Stage.* All we need to do here is write back the results (either from an ALU op or memory load) to the destination register:

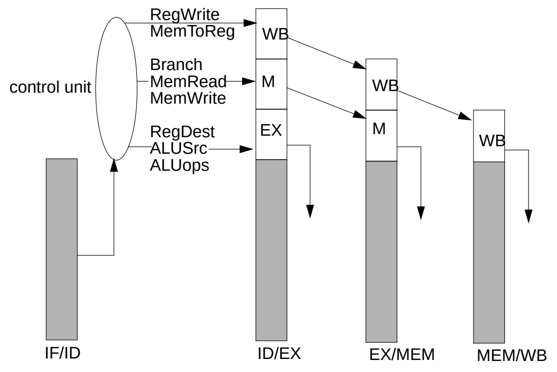
```
if ins was Load
  Reg[MEM/WB.WriteReg] <- MEM/WB.MemData
else if ins was R-type
  Reg[MEM/WB.WriteReg] <- MEM/WB.ALUResult
```

Summary of Simple Pipeline

- In stages 1 and 2 (IF and ID) the information to be kept is the same for all instructions.
- But the pipeline registers must accomodate the “maximum” amount of information that we might need to maintain.
- For example, if we have a store, the contents of rs must be kept in EX/MEM, which is not necessary in the case of loads or arithmetic instructions.
- Instructions must pass through all stages even if there is nothing to be done in that stage.
- The pipeline takes 4 cycles before it is operating at full efficiency.

Control

- The basic idea with pipeline control is to pass along control information from stage to stage:



Control in the Ideal Case

- Control signals must be split among the 5 stages:
  - IF: nothing special to control (always read instruction, increment PC)
  - ID: nothing special, same for all instructions
  - EX: control signals for ALUsrc and ALUop are needed.
  - MEM: Controls for MemRead, MemWrite, and Branch are needed here
  - WB: Controls for what to write (MemToReg) and RegWrite and RegDst needed here