Instruction encoding

- The ISA defines
  - The format of an instruction (syntax)
  - The meaning of the instruction (semantics)
- Format = Encoding
  - Each instruction format has various fields
  - Opcode field gives the semantics (Add, Load etc …)
  - Operand fields (rs,rt,rd,immed) say where to find inputs (registers, constants) and where to store the output

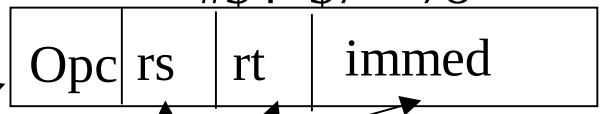
MIPS Instruction encoding

- MIPS = RISC hence
  - Few (3+) instruction formats
- R in RISC also stands for “Regular”
  - All instructions of the same length (32-bits = 4 bytes)
  - Formats are consistent with each other
    - Opcode always at the same place (6 most significant bits)
    - rd and rs always at the same place
    - immed always at the same place etc.

I-type (immediate) format

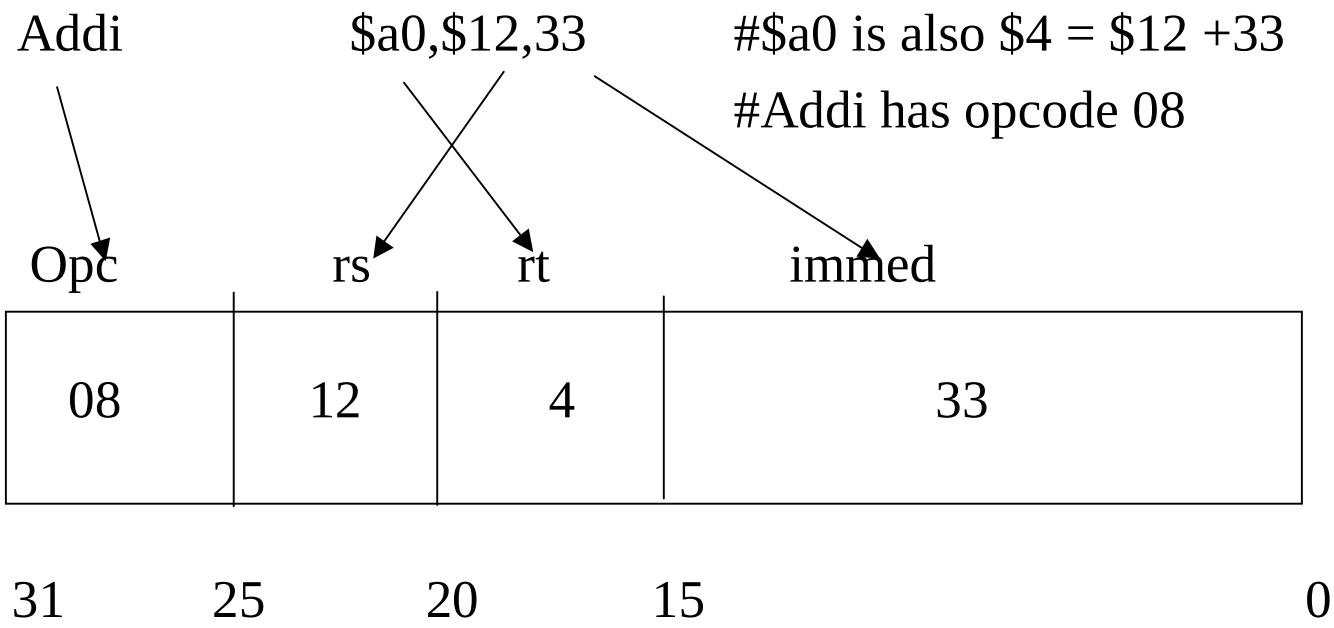
- An instruction with an immediate constant has the SPIM form:

Opcode	Operands	Comment
Addi	$4,$7,78	#$4=$7 + 78



- Encoding of the 32 bits:
  - Opcode is 6 bits
  - Since we have 32 registers, each register “name” is 5 bits
  - This leaves 16 bits for the immediate constant

I-type format example



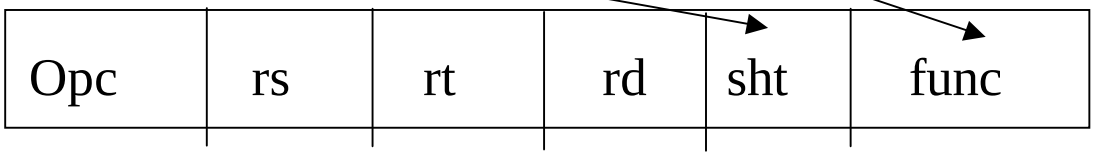
In hex: 21840021

Sign extension

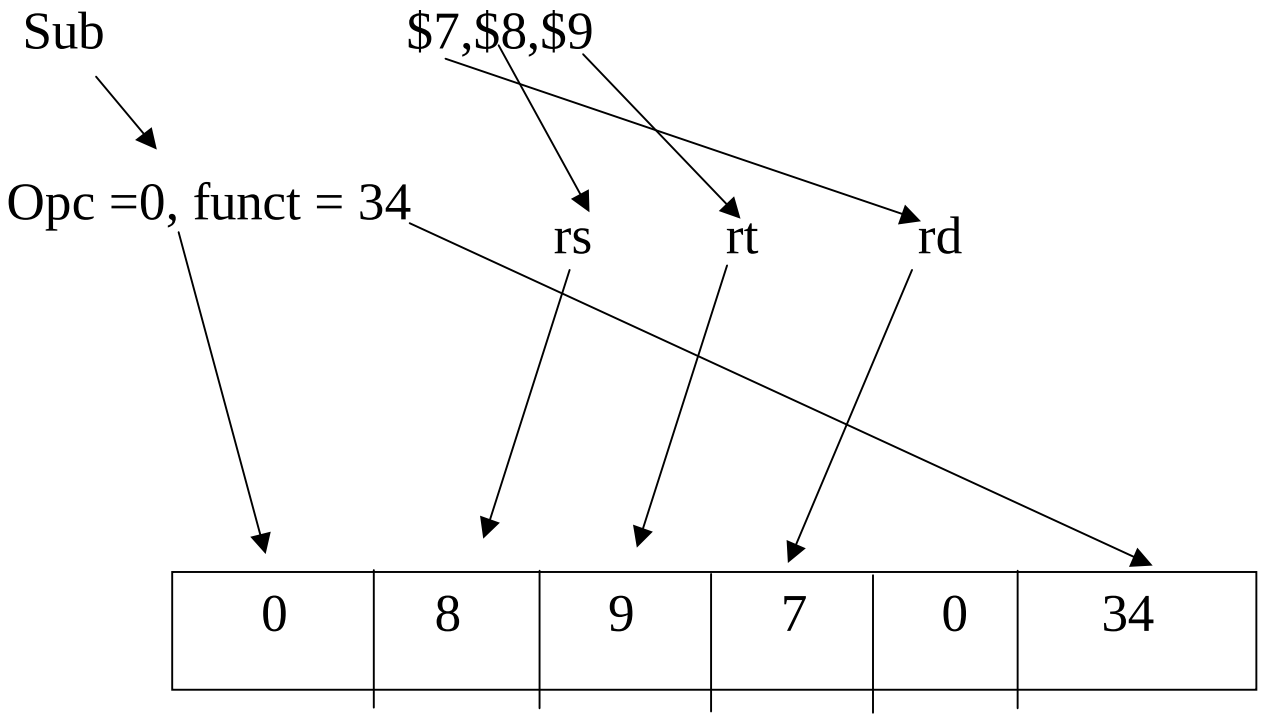
- Internally the ALU (adder) deals with 32-bit numbers
- What happens to the 16-bit constant?
  - Extended to 32 bits
- If the Opcode says “unsigned” (e.g., Addiu)
  - Fill upper 16 bits with 0’s
- If the Opcode says “signed” (e.g., Addi)
  - Fill upper 16 bits with the msb of the 16 bit constant
    - i.e. fill with 0’s if the number is positive
    - i.e. fill with 1’s if the number is negative

R-type (register) format

- Arithmetic, Logical, and Compare instructions require encoding 3 registers.
- Opcode (6 bits) + 3 registers (5.3 =15 bits) => 32 -21 = 11 “free” bits
- Use 6 of these bits to expand the Opcode
- Use 5 for the “shift” amount in shift instructions



R-type example



Load and Store instructions

- MIPS= RISC = Load-Store architecture
  - Load: brings data from memory to a register
  - Store: brings data back to memory from a register
- Each load-store instruction must specify
  - The unit of info to be transferred (byte, word etc.) through the Opcode
  - The address in memory
- A memory address is a 32-bit byte address
- An instruction has only 32 bits so ….

Addressing in Load/Store instructions

- The address will be the sum
  - of a *base* register (register rs)
  - a 16-bit *offset* (or displacement) which will be in the immed field and is added (as a signed number) to the contents of the base register
- Thus, one can address any byte within ± 32KB of the address pointed to by the contents of the base register.

Examples of load-store instructions

- Load word from memory:

  Lw rt,rs,offset #rt = Memory[rs+offset]

- Store word to memory:

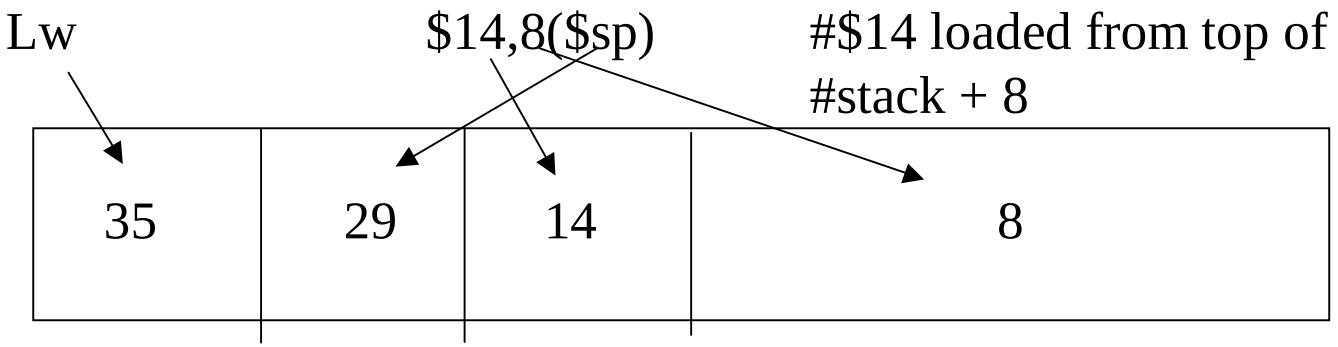
  Sw rt,rs,offset #Memory[rs+offset]=rt

- For bytes (or half-words) only the lower byte (or half-word) of a register is addressable
  - For load you need to specify if it is sign-extended or not

```
Lb   rt,rs,offset    #rt =sign-ext( Memory[rs+offset])
Lbu  rt,rs,offset    #rt =zero-ext( Memory[rs+offset])
Sb   rt,rs,offset    #Memory[rs+offset]= least signif.
                     #byte of rt
```

Load-Store format

- Need for
  - Opcode (6 bits)
  - Register destination (for Load) and source (for Store) : rt
  - Base register: rs
  - Offset (immed field)
- Example



Loading small constants in a register

- If the constant is small (i.e., can be encoded in 16 bits) use the immediate format with Li (Load immediate)

```
Li      $14,8       #$14 = 8
```

- But, there is no opcode for Li!
- Li is a *pseudoinstruction*
  - It's there to help you
  - SPIM will recognize it and transform it into Addi (with sign-extension)

```
Addi    $14,$0,8        #$14 = $0+8
```

Loading large constants in a register

- If the constant does not fit in 16 bits (e.g., an address)
- Use a two-step process
  - Lui (load upper immediate) to load the upper 16 bits; it will zero out automatically the lower 16 bits
  - Use Ori for the lower 16 bits (but not Li, why?)
- Example: Load the constant 0x1B234567 in register $t0

```
Lui     $t0,0x1B23      #note the use of hex constants
 Ori    $t0,$t0,0x4567
```

How to address memory in assembly language

- Problem: how do I put the base address in the right register and how do I compute the offset
- Method 1 (most recommended). Let the assembler do it!

```
                .data           #define data section
xyz:            .word   1       #reserve room for 1 word at address xyz
                ……..            #more data
                .text           #define program section
                  …..           # some lines of code
                 lw   $5, xyz   # load contents of word at add. xyz in $5
```

- In fact the assembler generates:

```
        Lw      $5, offset ($gp)        #$gp is register 28
```

Generating addresses

- Method 2. Use the pseudo-instruction La (Load address)

  ```
  La   $6,xyz          #$6 contains address of xyz
  Lw   $5,0($6)        #$5 contains the contents of xyz
  ```

  – La is in fact Lui followed by Addi
  – This method can be useful to traverse an array after loading the base address in a register
- Method 3
  – If you know the address (i.e. a constant) use Li or Lui + Addi