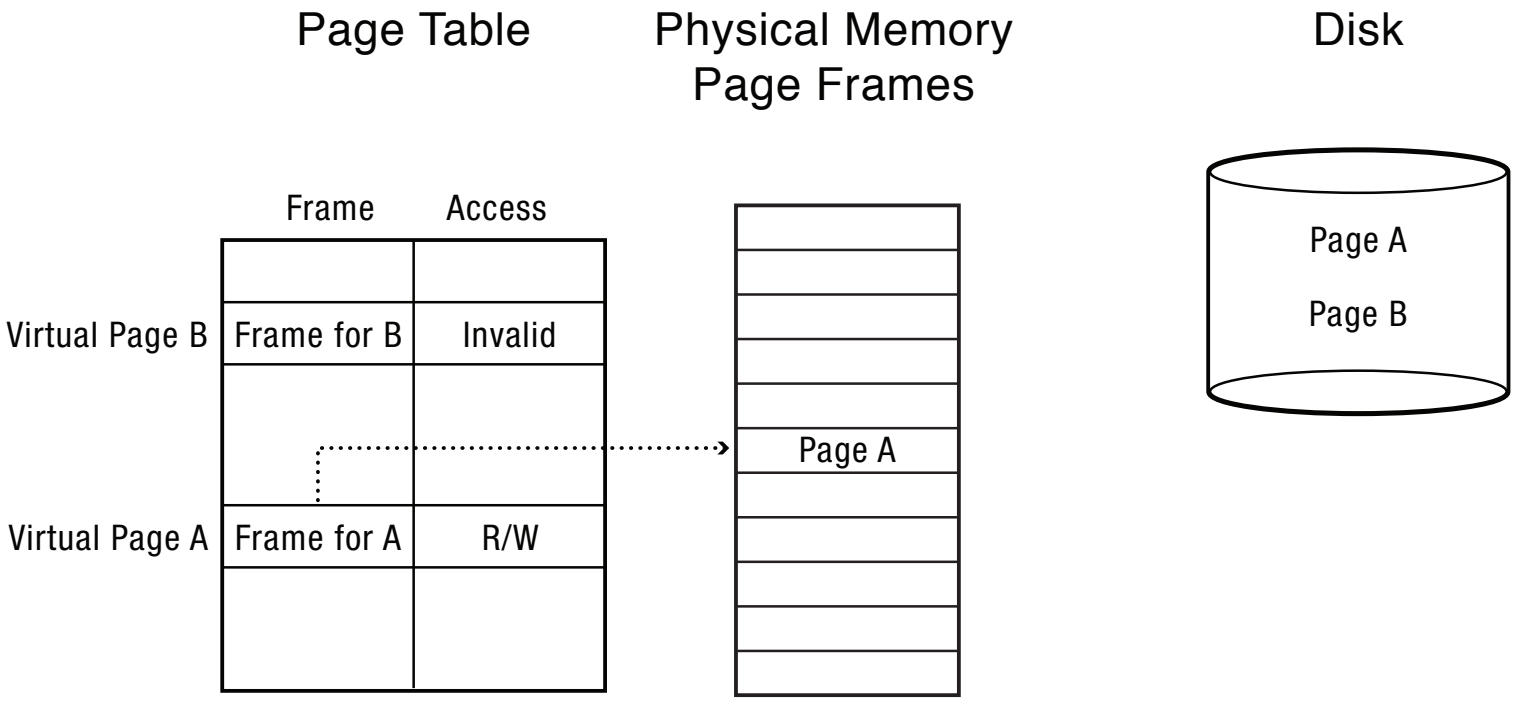
Caching and Virtual Memory

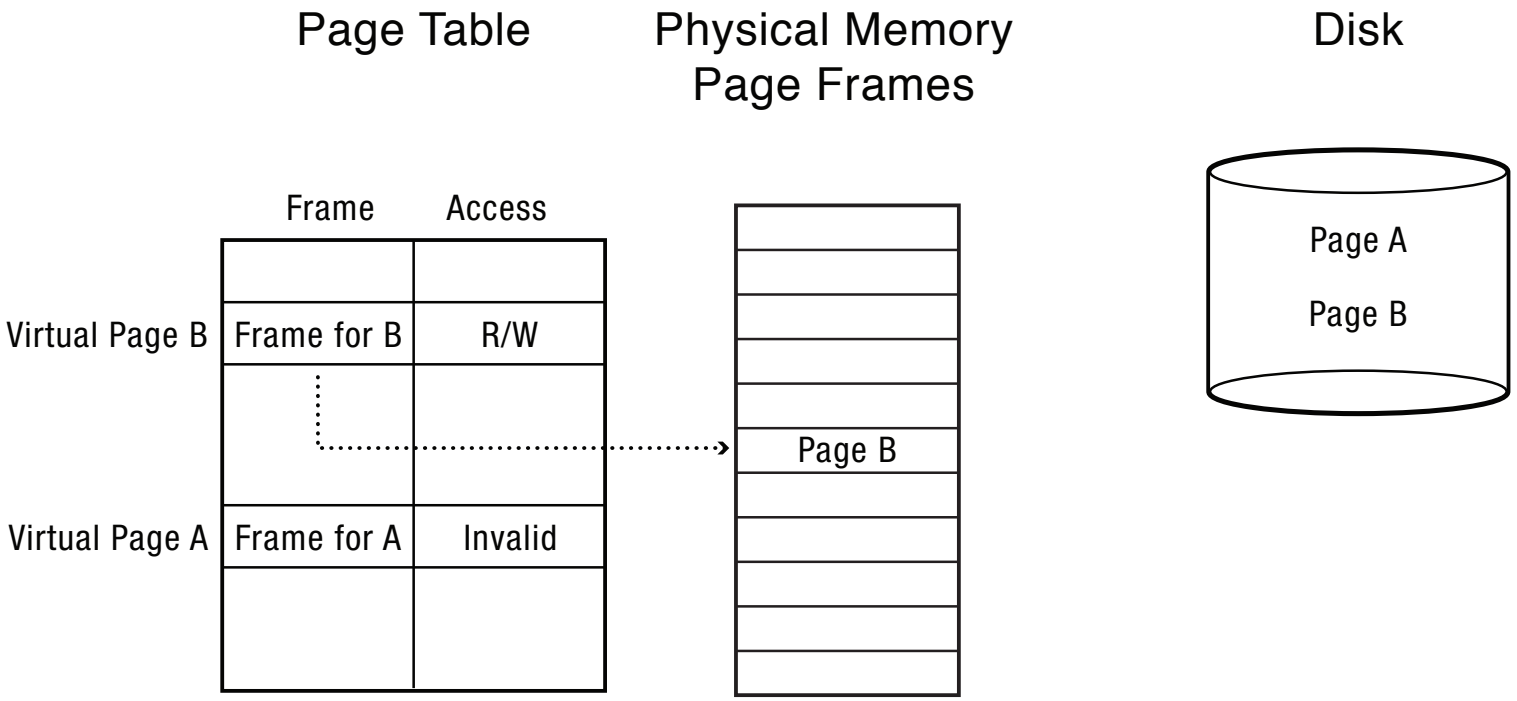
Main Points

- Can we provide the illusion of near infinite memory in limited physical memory?
  - Demand-paged virtual memory
  - Memory-mapped files
- How do we choose which cache entry to replace?
  - FIFO, MIN, LRU, LFU, Clock
- What types of workloads does caching work for, and how well?
  - Spatial/temporal locality vs. Zipf workloads

Demand Paging (Before)



Demand Paging (After)



Demand Paging

1. TLB miss
2. Page table walk
3. Page fault (page invalid in page table)
4. Trap to kernel
5. Convert address to file + offset
6. Allocate page frame
   - Evict page if needed
7. Initiate disk block read into page frame
8. Disk interrupt when DMA complete
9. Mark page as valid
10. Resume process at faulting instruction
11. TLB miss
12. Page table walk to fetch translation
13. Execute instruction

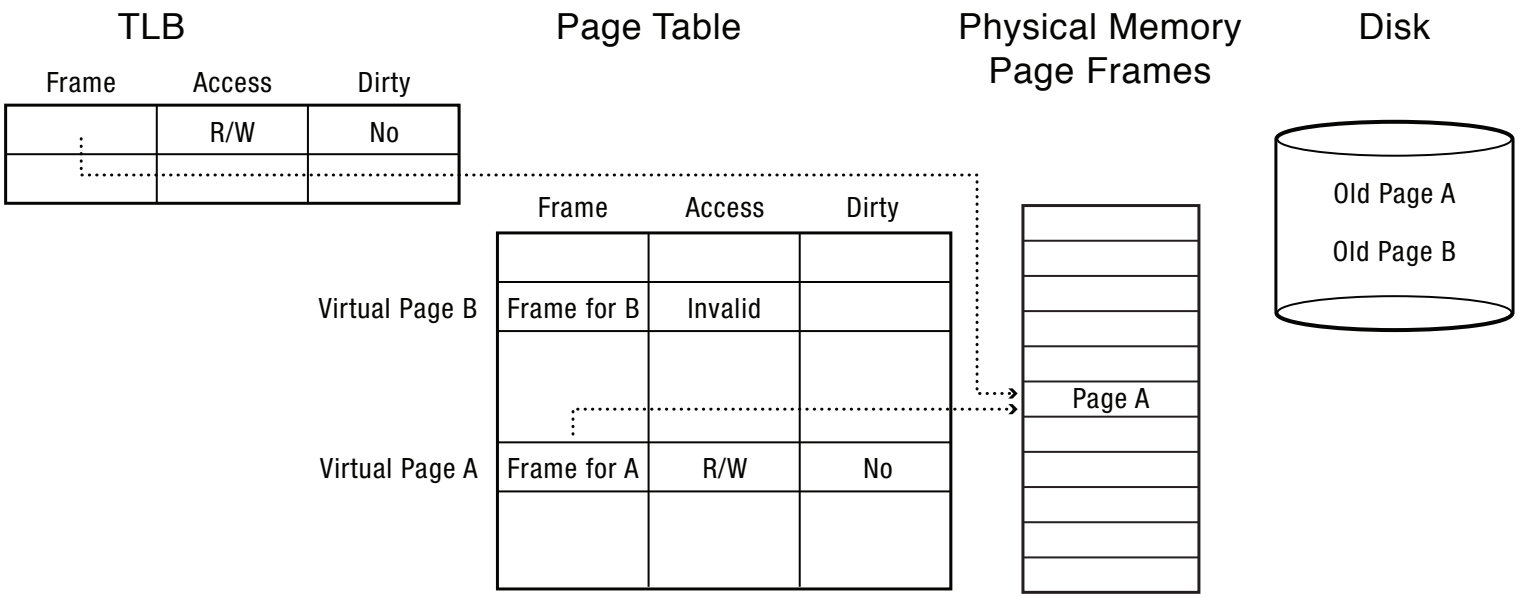
Allocating a Page Frame

- Select old page to evict
- Find all page table entries that refer to old page
  - If page frame is shared
- Set each page table entry to invalid
- Remove any TLB entries
  - Copies of now invalid page table entry
- Write changes to page to disk, if necessary

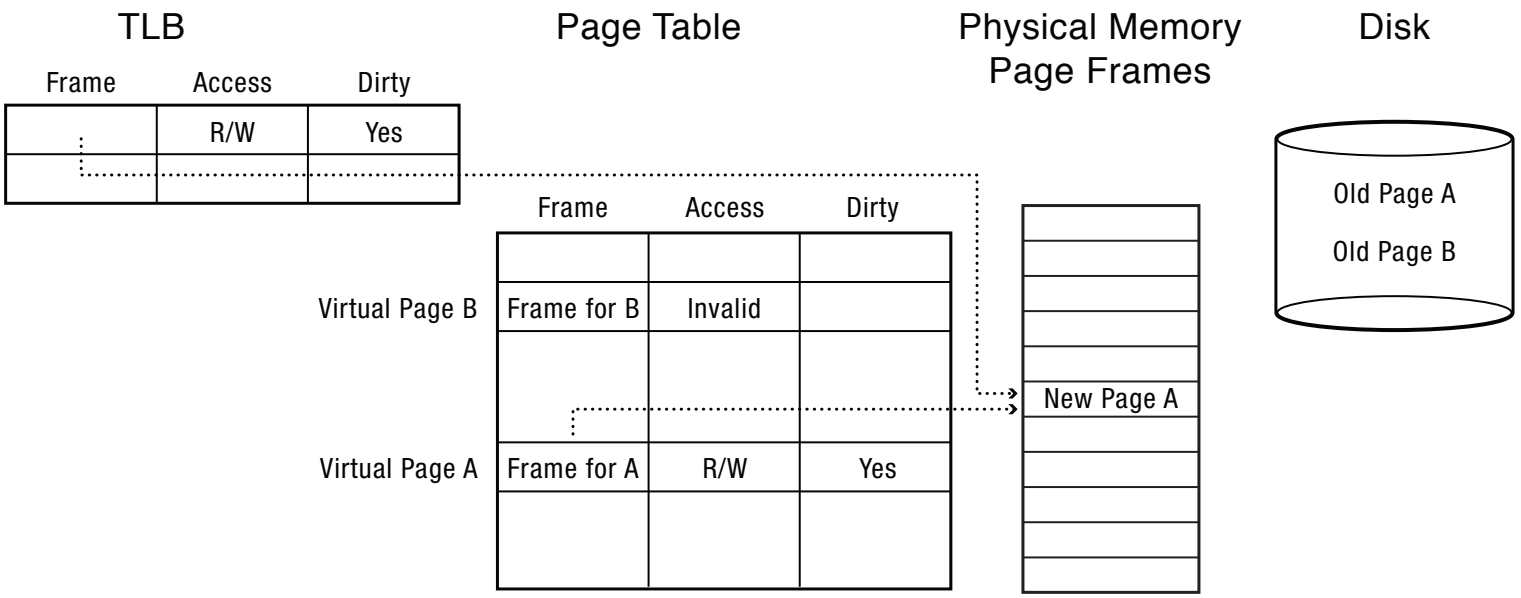
How do we know if page has been modified?

- Every page table entry has some bookkeeping
  - Has page been modified?
    - Set by hardware on store instruction to page
    - In both TLB and page table entry
  - Has page been used?
    - Set by hardware on load or store instruction to page
    - In page table entry on a TLB miss
- Can be reset by the OS kernel
  - When changes to page are flushed to disk
  - To track whether page is recently used

Keeping Track of Page Modifications (Before)



Keeping Track of Page Modifications (After)



Emulating a Modified Bit

- Some processor architectures do not keep a modified bit in the page table entry
  - Extra bookkeeping and complexity
- OS can emulate a modified bit:
  - Set all clean pages as read-only
  - On first write, take page fault to kernel
  - Kernel sets modified bit, marks page as read-write

Models for Application File I/O

- Explicit read/write system calls
  - Data copied to user process using system call
  - Application operates on data
  - Data copied back to kernel using system call
- Memory-mapped files
  - Open file as a memory segment
  - Program uses load/store instructions on segment memory, implicitly operating on the file
  - Page fault if portion of file is not yet in memory
  - Kernel brings missing blocks into memory, restarts process

Advantages to Memory-mapped Files

- Programming simplicity, esp for large file
  - Operate directly on file, instead of copy in/copy out
- Zero-copy I/O
  - Data brought from disk directly into page frame
- Pipelining
  - Process can start working before all the pages are populated
- Interprocess communication
  - Shared memory segment vs. temporary file

From Memory-Mapped Files to Demand-Paged Virtual Memory

- Every process segment backed by a file on disk
  - Code segment -> code portion of executable
  - Data, heap, stack segments -> temp files
  - Shared libraries -> code file and temp data file
  - Memory-mapped files -> memory-mapped files
  - When process ends, delete temp files
- Provides the illusion of an infinite amount of memory to programs
  - Unified LRU across file buffer and process memory

Cache Replacement Policy

- On a cache miss, how do we choose which entry to replace?
  - Assuming the new entry is more likely to be used in the near future
  - In direct mapped caches, not an issue!

- Policy goal: reduce cache misses
  - Improve expected case performance
  - Also: reduce likelihood of very poor performance

A Simple Policy

- Random?
  - Replace a random entry
- FIFO?
  - Replace the entry that has been in the cache the longest time
  - What could go wrong?

FIFO in Action

Reference	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
1	A				E				D				C		
2		B				A				E				D	
3			C				B				A				E
4				D				C				B			

Worst case for FIFO is if program strides through memory that is larger than the cache

MIN, LRU, LFU

- MIN
  - Replace the cache entry that will not be used for the longest time into the future
  - Optimality proof based on exchange: if evict an entry used sooner, that will trigger an earlier cache miss
- Least Recently Used (LRU)
  - Replace the cache entry that has not been used for the longest time in the past
  - Approximation of MIN
- Least Frequently Used (LFU)
  - Replace the cache entry used the least often (in the recent past)

LRU/MIN for Sequential Scan

							LRU								
Reference	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
1	A				E				D				C		
2		B				A				E				D	
3			C				B				A				E
4				D				C				B			
							MIN								
1	A					+					+			+	
2		B					+					+	C		
3			C					+	D					+	
4				D	E					+					+

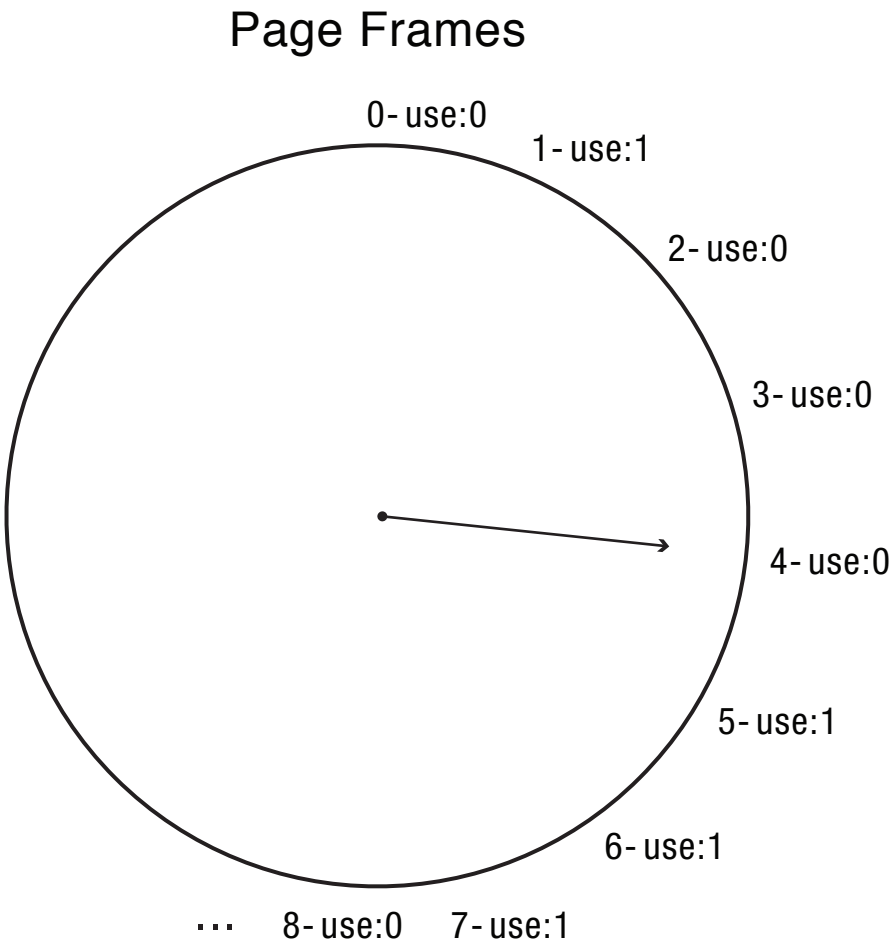
LRU															
Reference	A	B	A	C	B	D	A	D	E	D	A	E	B	A	C
1	A		+				+				+			+	
2		B			+								+		
3				C					E			+			
4						D		+		+					C
FIFO															
1	A		+				+		E						
2		B			+						A			+	
3				C								+	B		
4						D		+		+					C
MIN															
1	A		+				+				+			+	
2		B			+								+		C
3				C					E			+			
4						D		+		+					

Belady's Anomaly

FIFO (3 slots)												
Reference	A	B	C	D	A	B	E	A	B	C	D	E
1	A			D			E					+
2		B			A			+		C		
3			C			B			+		D	
FIFO (4 slots)												
1	A				+		E				D	
2		B				+		A				E
3			C						B			
4				D						C		

Clock Algorithm: Estimating LRU

- Periodically, sweep through all pages
- If page is unused, reclaim
- If page is used, mark as unused



Nth Chance: Not Recently Used

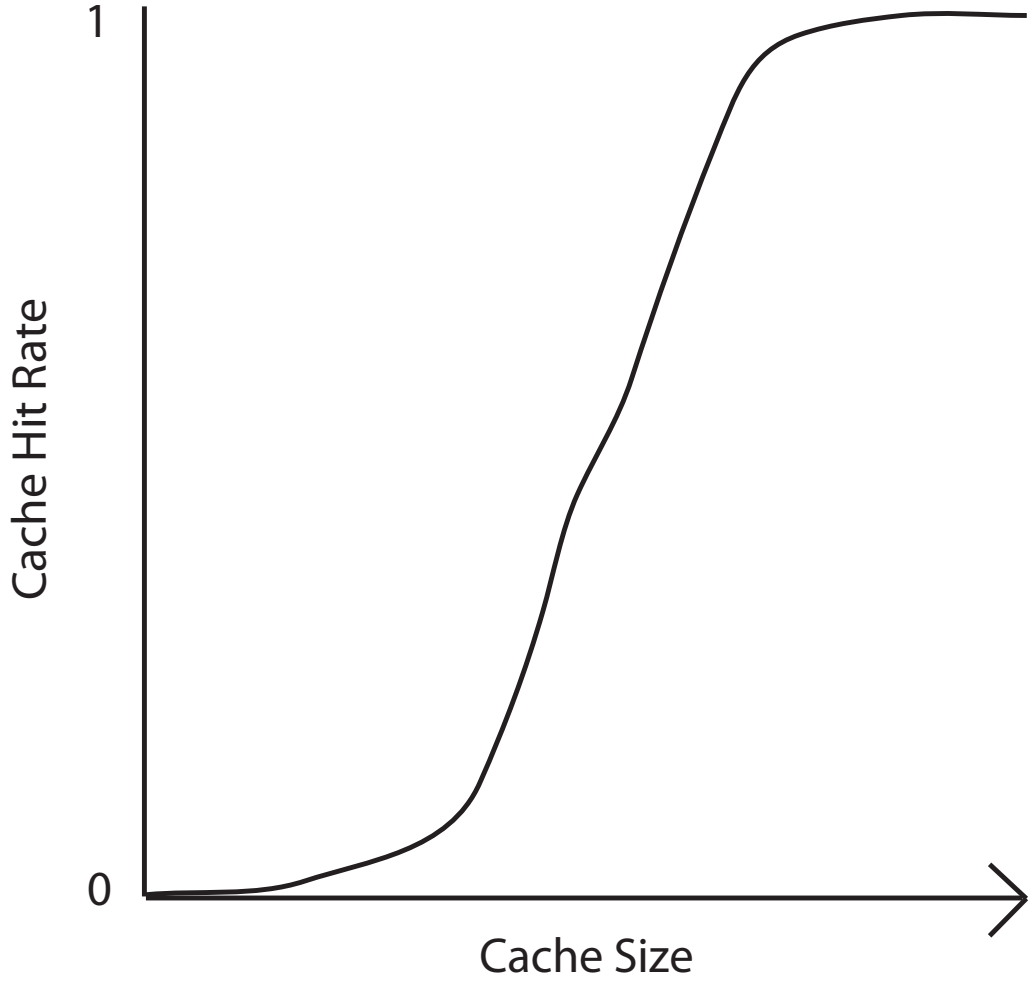
- Periodically, sweep through all page frames
- If page hasn't been used in any of the past N sweeps, reclaim
- If page is used, mark as unused and set as active in current sweep

Emulating a Use Bit

- Some processor architectures do not keep a use bit in the page table entry
  - Extra bookkeeping and complexity
- OS can emulate a use bit:
  - Set all unused pages as invalid
  - On first read/write, take page fault to kernel
  - Kernel sets use bit, marks page as read or read/write

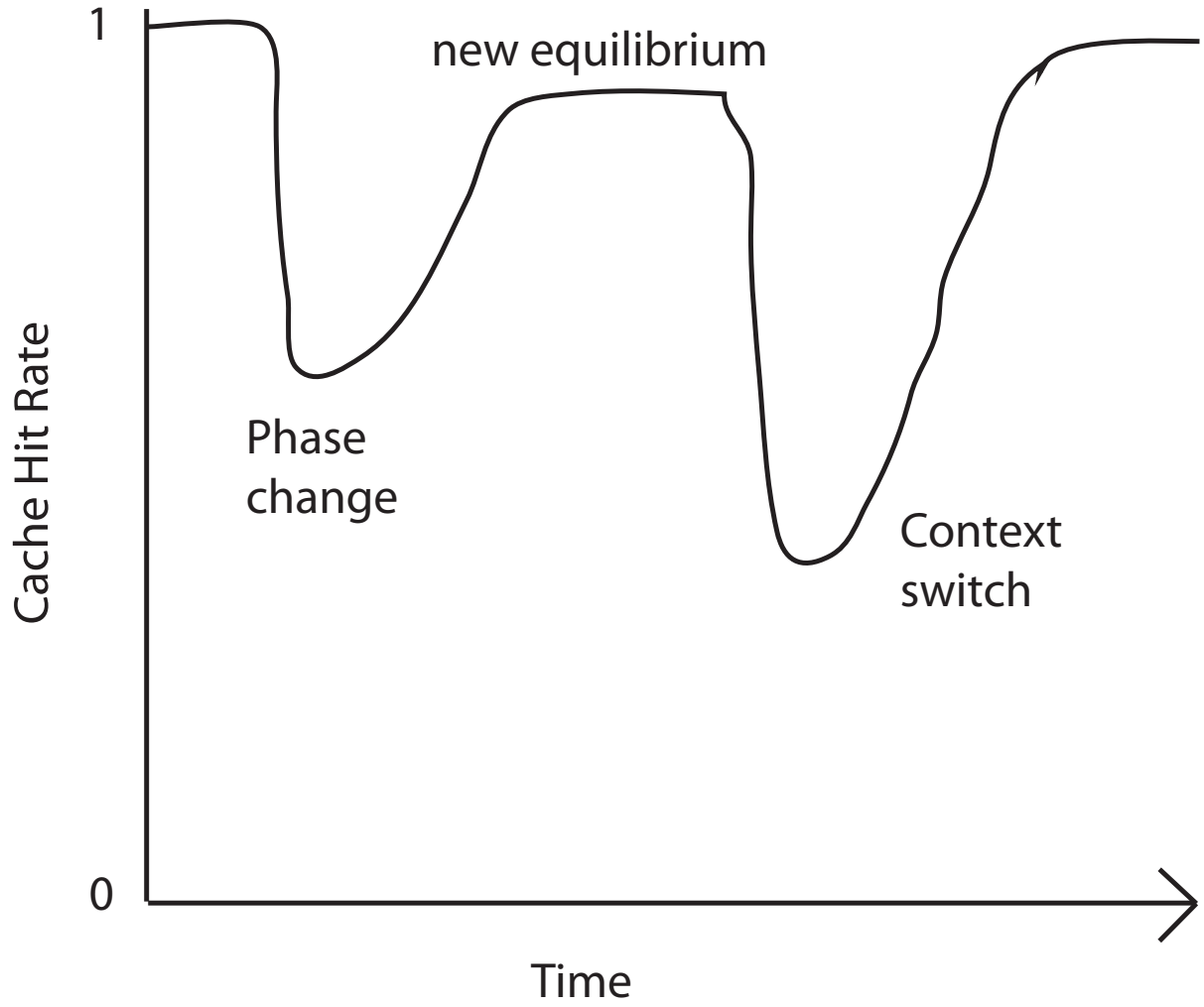
Working Set Model

- Working Set: set of memory locations that need to be cached for reasonable cache hit rate
- Thrashing: when system has too small a cache



Phase Change Behavior

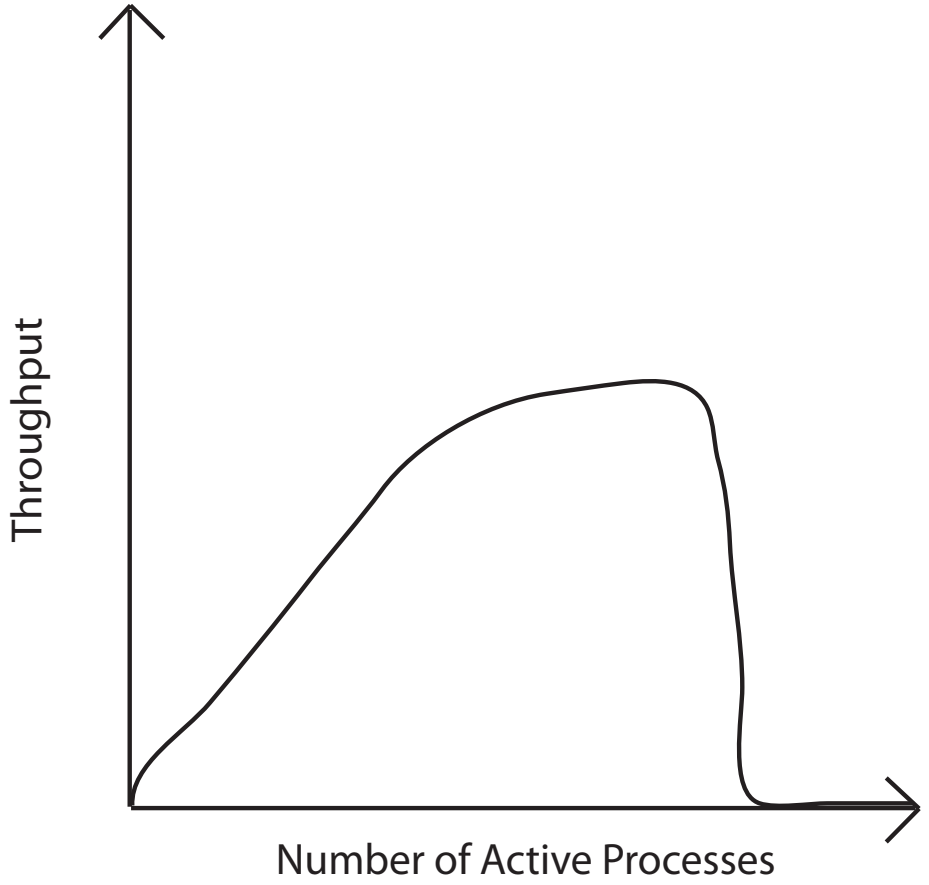
- Programs can change their working set
- Context switches also change working set



Question

- What happens to system performance as we increase the number of processes?
  - If the sum of the working sets > physical memory?

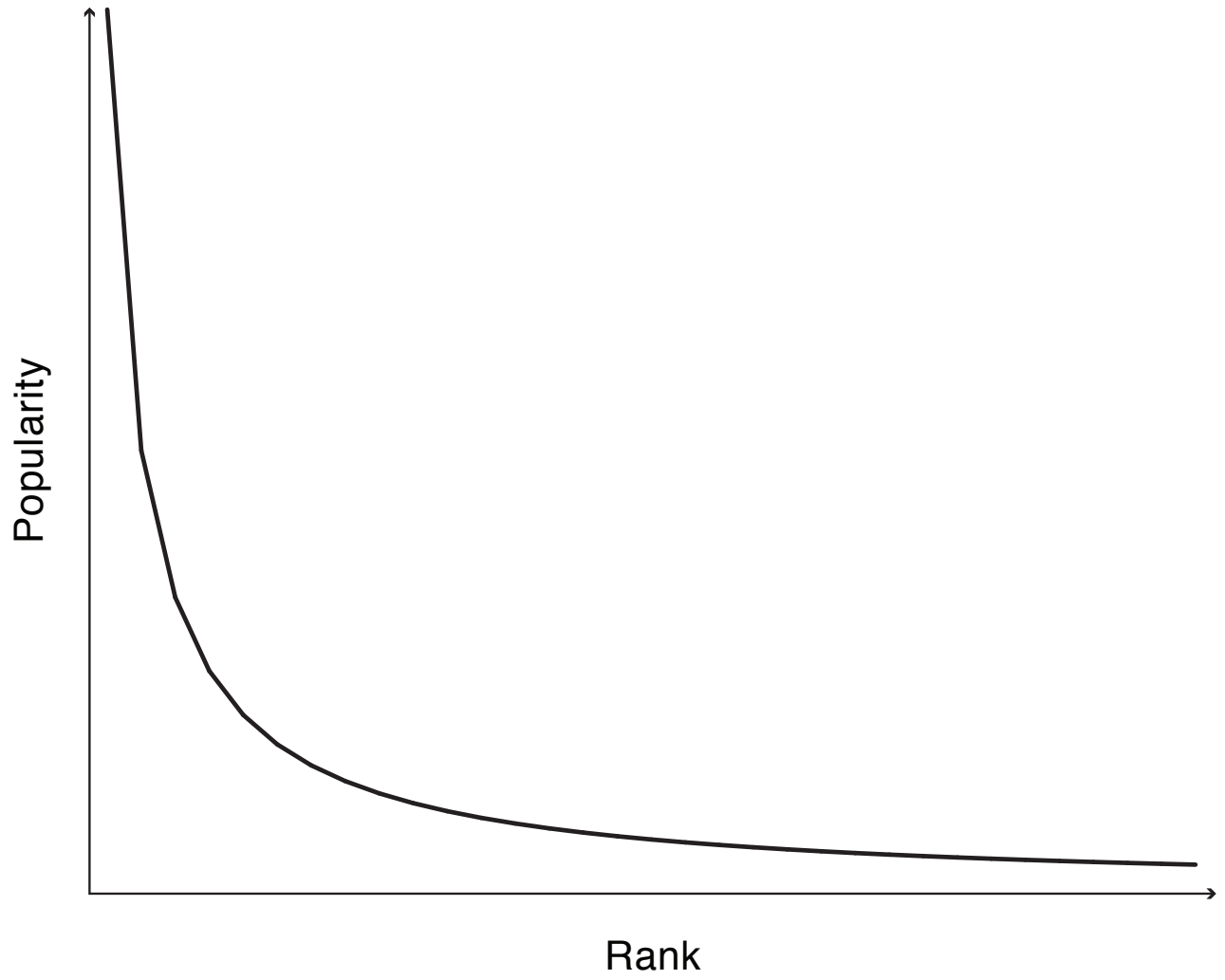
Thrashing



Zipf Distribution

- Caching behavior of many systems are not well characterized by the working set model
- An alternative is the Zipf distribution
  - Popularity ~ 1/k^c, for kth most popular item, $1 < c < 2$

Zipf Distribution

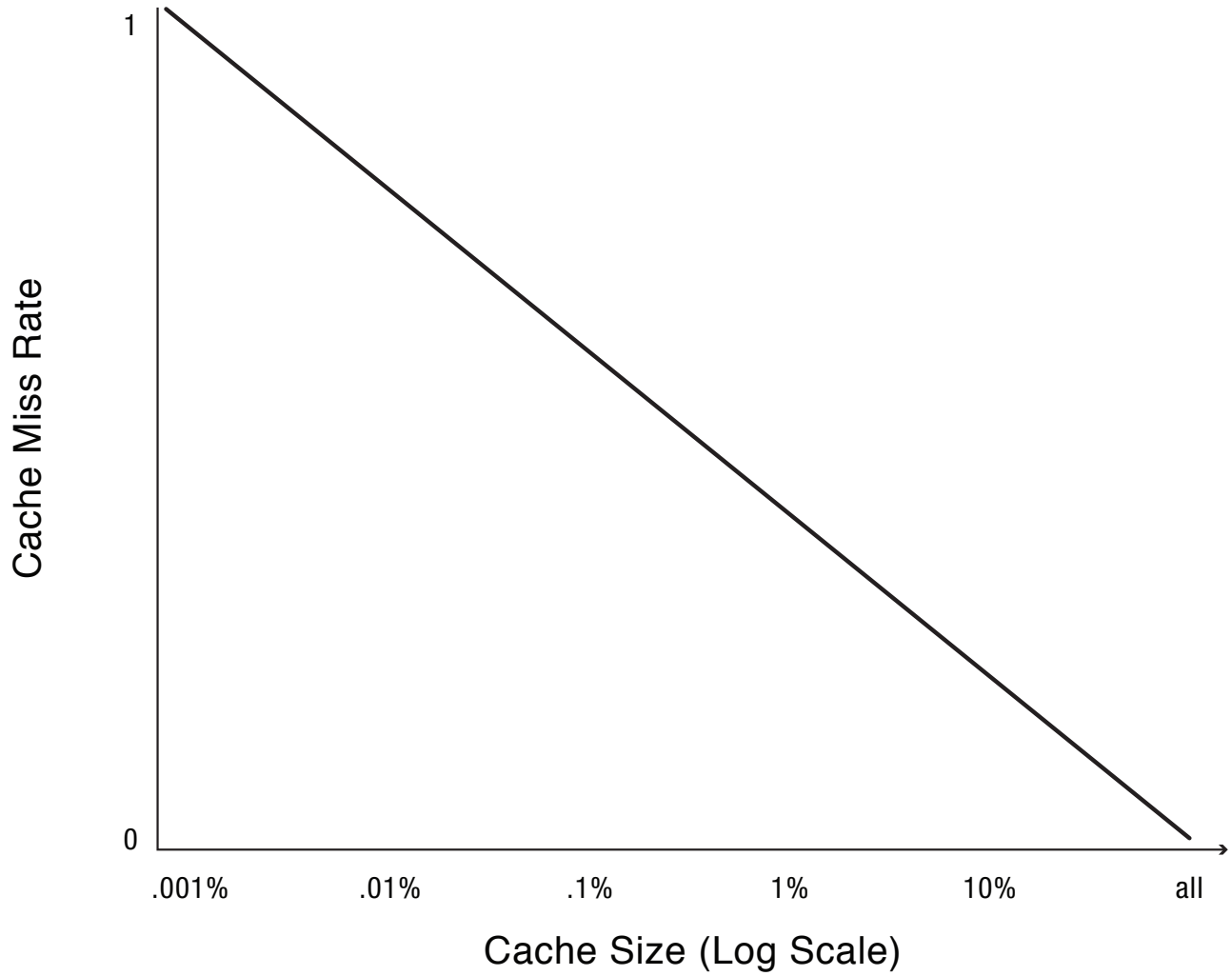


Zipf Examples

- Web pages
- Movies
- Library books
- Words in text
- Salaries
- City population
- …

Common thread: popularity is self-reinforcing

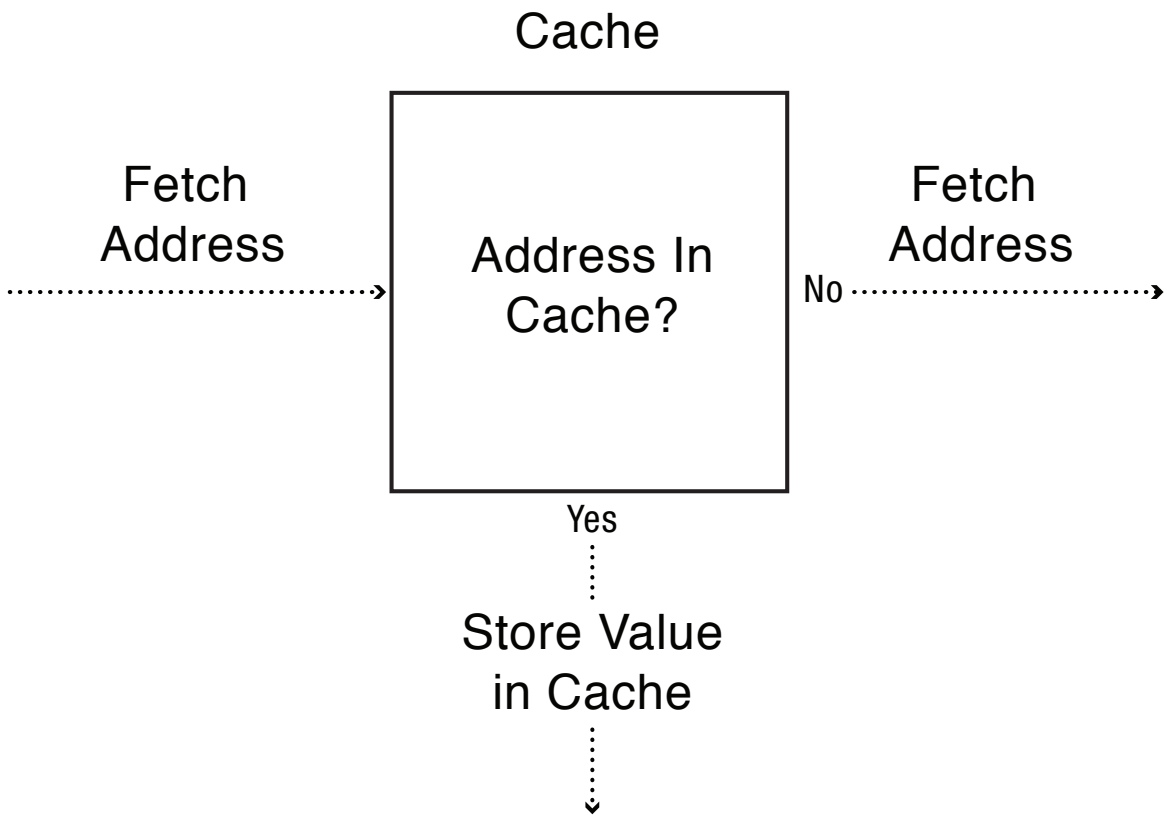
Zipf and Caching



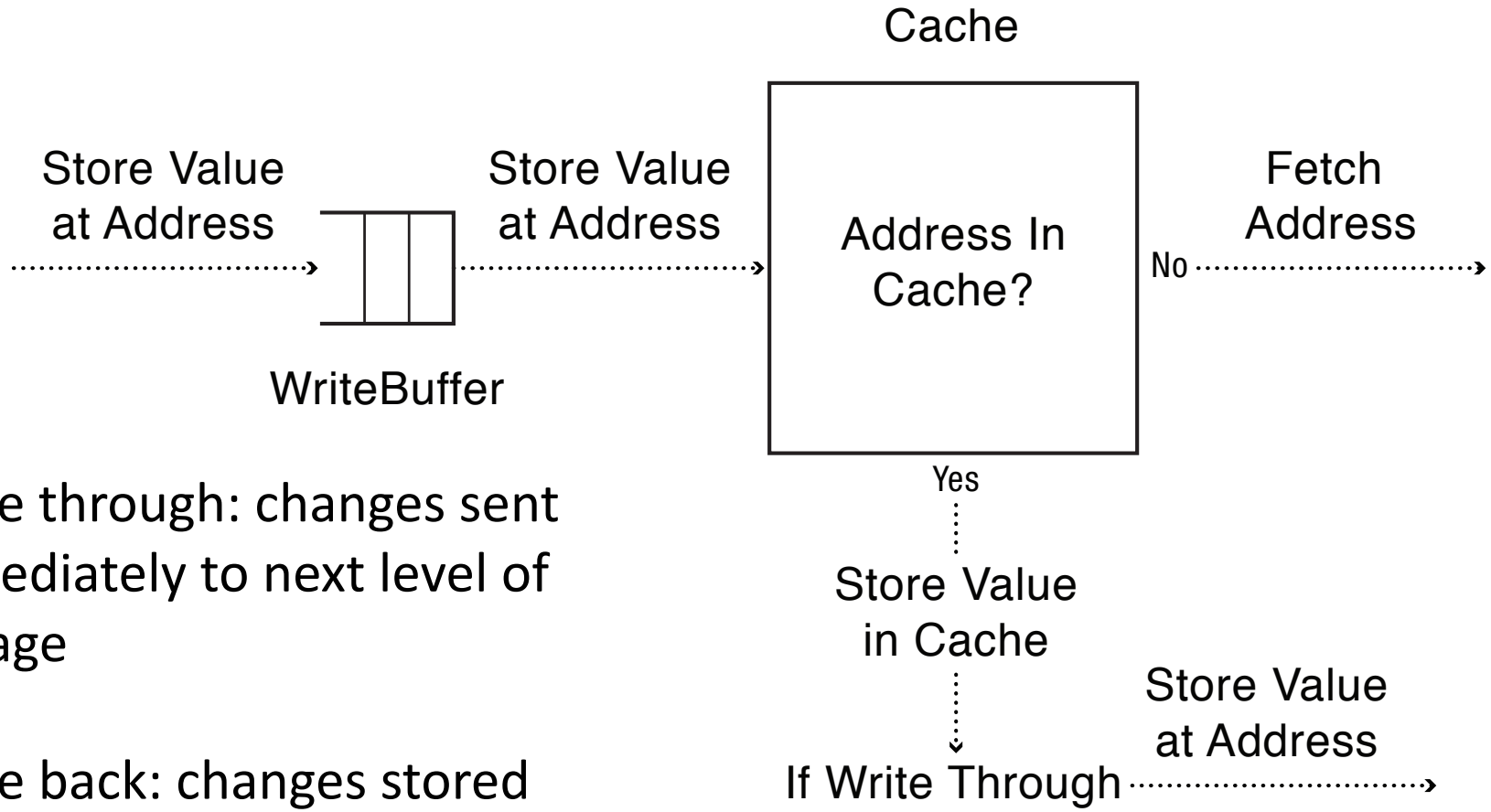
Definitions

- Cache
  - Copy of data that is faster to access than the original
  - Hit: if cache has copy
  - Miss: if cache does not have copy
- Cache block
  - Unit of cache storage (multiple memory locations)
- Temporal locality
  - Programs tend to reference the same memory locations multiple times
  - Example: instructions in a loop
- Spatial locality
  - Programs tend to reference nearby locations
  - Example: data in a loop

Cache Concept (Read)



Cache Concept (Write)



Write through: changes sent immediately to next level of storage

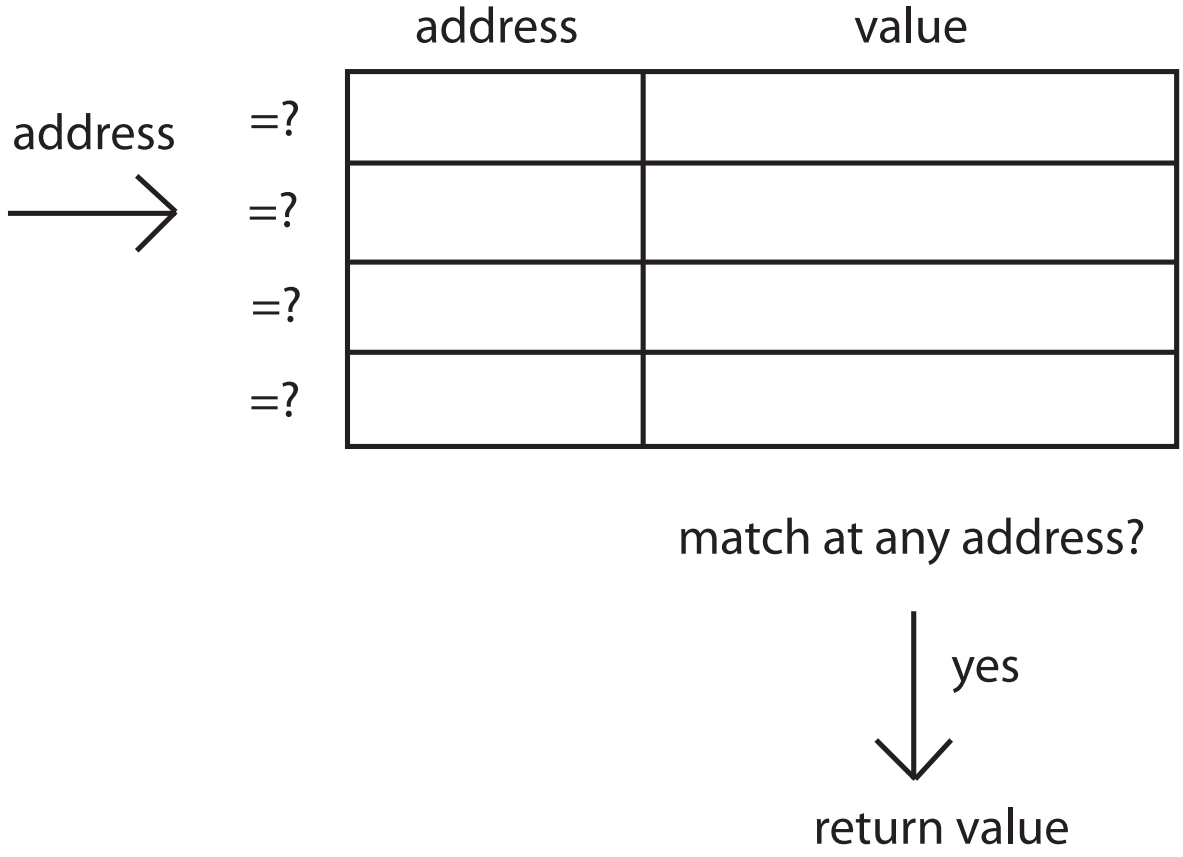
Write back: changes stored in cache until cache block is replaced

Memory Hierarchy

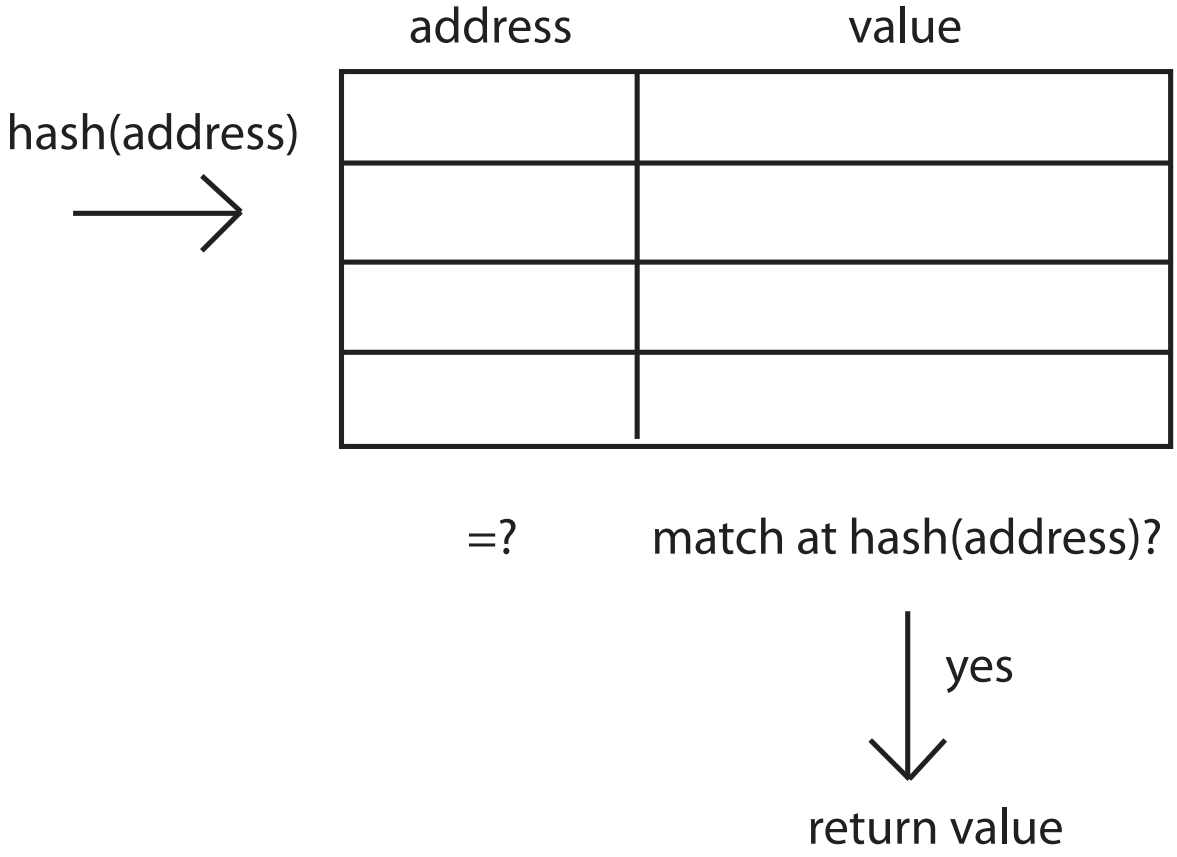
Cache	Hit Cost	Size
1st level cache/first level TLB	1 ns	64 KB
2nd level cache/second level TLB	4 ns	256 KB
3rd level cache	12 ns	2 MB
Memory (DRAM)	100 ns	10 GB
Data center memory (DRAM)	100 μs	100 TB
Local non-volatile memory	100 μs	100 GB
Local disk	10 ms	1 TB
Data center disk	10 ms	100 PB
Remote data center disk	200 ms	1 XB

i7 has 8MB as shared 3rd level cache; 2nd level cache is per-core

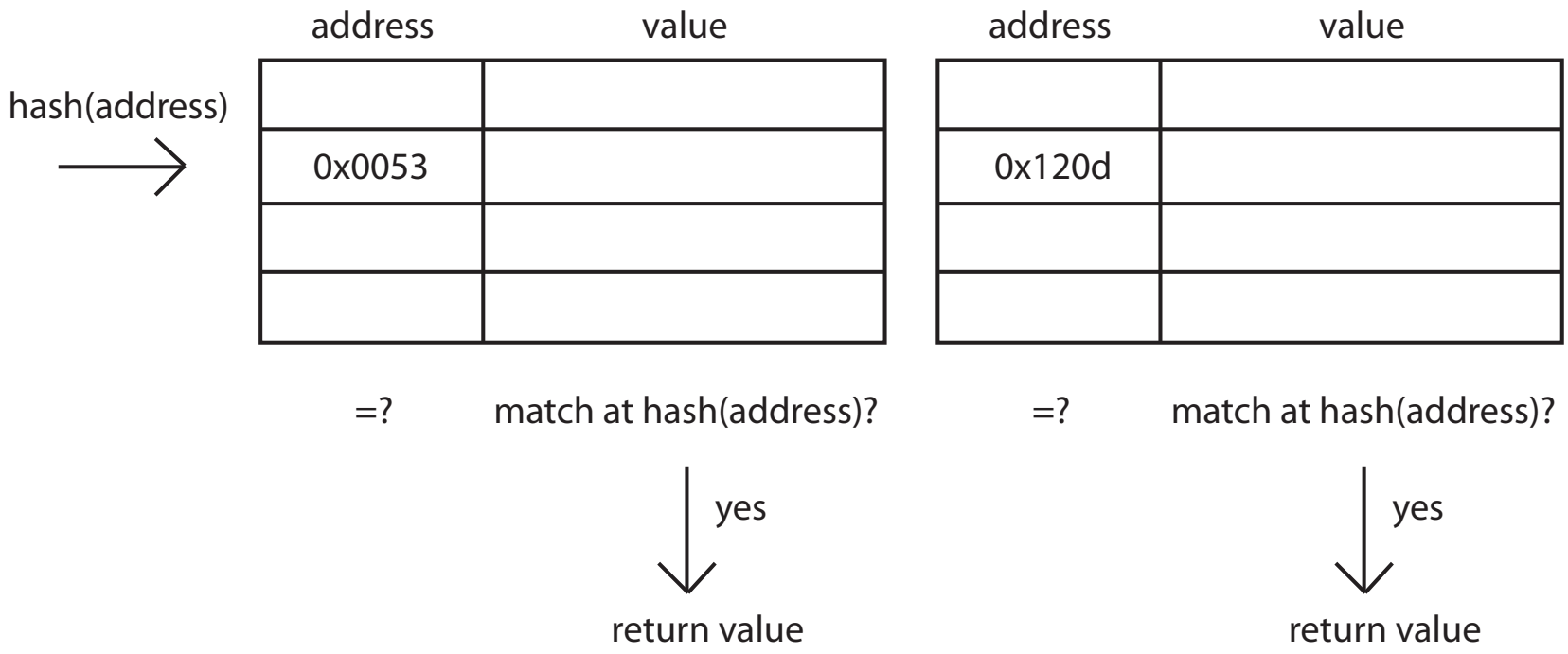
Cache Lookup: Fully Associative



Cache Lookup: Direct Mapped



Cache Lookup: Set Associative



Page Coloring

- What happens when cache size >> page size?
  - Direct mapped or set associative
  - Multiple pages map to the same cache line
- OS page assignment matters!
  - Example: 8MB cache, 4KB pages
  - 1 of every 2K pages lands in same place in cache
- What should the OS do?

Page Coloring