

A Brief Introduction to C++ for Java Developers

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- A C++ introduction for Java developers
 - We will focus on the differences between the two languages
- Very few new theoretical concept
- Enough C++ to use libraries presented in this AI course
- Knowledge of Java and OOP principles is **given for granted**

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- Multiparadigm programming language
 - Procedural
 - Imperative
 - Object-Oriented Programming
 - Functional Programming
 - Generic Programming
 - Metaprogramming
- Compiled
- Statically typed
- Strongly typed (can argue about that)

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Why C++ is cool

- Lots of stuff available
- It is *very* powerful (more than Java)
- Metaprogrammable
- It is “expert friendly”

Why C++ sucks

- C heritage
- Complex and verbose syntax
- Compilers are stupid
- “Feels” old
 - What? Headers? Are we still in the 70's?
- No automatic memory management (so what?)
- It is too “expert friendly”

Which platform?

- Language is **standardized** (C++ $\neq$ Microsoft!)
- Many compilers available
 - each one introduces non-standard extensions
 - which we will neither use or mention
- This course will be Linux-centered
 - **GCC**

Which tools?

- Any text editor is good
- **Eclipse** and **Netbeans** plug-ins are available
- Several specific IDEs as well
- A build system is not required, but it doesn't hurt
 - **Autotools** (good luck with those!)
 - **CMake**

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- [Standard library documentation](#)
- Books:
 - [The C++ Programming Language](#)
 - [Thinking in CPP](#) (suggested reading)
 - [The C++ Annotations](#)
 - Many others ranging from introductory to advanced topics
- If you have (and you will) have any doubts, ask guys at [Stackoverflow](#) or browse through the answers
- Your favourite compiler documentation
- Your favourite utility library (mine is [Boost](#))

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- A C++ program code is organized into:
 - Source files (**.cpp**, **.cc**, **.cxx**)
 - Header files (**.hpp**, **.hh**, **.hxx**)
- The one and only entry point of a stand-alone program is its `main` function
- Libraries don't need a `main`
- Header files usually contain **declarations** of program elements:
 - Global variables
 - Functions
 - Struct and classes
- Headers expose the public interface of a module
- Source files contain **definitions** (implementations)

Example

Revisited "Hello, World" C++ application

```
#include <iostream>

int someGlobalVar;

void say_it(char str[]) {
    std::cout << "Hello, World! " << str << std::endl;
}

int main(int argc, char* argv[]) {
    someGlobalVar = argc;
    say_it(argv[1]);
    std::cout << "Argument count is " << someGlobalVar
               << std::endl;
    return 0;
}
```

“Hello, World!” example breakdown

- Header inclusion allows one to use functionalities from a different module or library
 - To use the standard stream library

```
#include <iostream>
```

- Global variables and free functions reside outside classes

```
int someGlobalVar;  
void say_it(char str[]) { ... }
```

- To write something to standard output
 - Special syntax (employs operator overload)
 - Works for all basic types
 - `cout` is an object representing buffered standard output
 - `endl` puts and end of line in the stream and flushes it
 - Both in `std` namespace

```
std::cout << "Hello, World! " << str << std::endl;
```

- C++ has no first class strings
 - A literal string is an *immutable* array of chars

```
char aLiteralString[] = "Hello, World!";
```

- Each name you use in a program has to be declared
- Declaration binds a name to a type
- Different kinds of definitions
 - Variables:** the compiler allocates storage
 - Functions:** a function body is provided
 - Classes:** a class body is provided
- **One Definition Rule:** multiple declarations but only one definition allowed

Example

```
int f(int x); // function declaration
class MyClass; // class declaration
int g(double x) { // fun. declaration and definition
    int y = x * x; // var. declaration and definition
    return y;
}
int f(int x) { return 2 * x; } // function definition
class MyClass { /* ... */ }; // class definition
```

- A variable is the name of a **stack memory location** which contains an object of a certain **type**
 - Roughly, a variable is the name for a bunch of bytes
 - Its type tells the compiler how to interpret those bytes
 - A variable *is* the object it refers to
- A variable is tied to a scope
 - Whenever a variable is defined storage space is reserved
 - Whenever a variable goes out of scope that space is reclaimed

```
Type varName = /* initializer expression */;  
int x1, x2 = 100, x3; // all share the same type
```

Example

```
{ // beginning of a scope  
  double x; // x contains garbage (not 0!)  
  x = 9.5; // now x contains 9.5  
} // here x's storage is reclaimed
```

- Roughly the same as Java
 - `boolean` is called `bool`
 - A nonzero integral type is interpreted as `true` while `0` is `false`
- Has signed and unsigned versions of integral types
 - `int` and unsigned `int`, `short` and unsigned `short`, etc...
- Usual coercion rules apply
- Additionally:
 - Pointers and arrays
 - References
 - Function types, member function types (we won't cover these)
- C++ lacks first-class strings
 - Only string literals and chars

```
char s[] = "A string";  
char aSpace = ' ', aTabulation = '\t';
```

- Arrays *are not* objects

- Same as Java

Operators: arithmetic, logic, bitwise, ternary operator

Branches: if, switch/case, goto

Loops: while, for, break, continue

- Assignment is actually an *expression* that returns the value being assigned

```
if (int* a = (int*) malloc(sizeof(int) * 10)) {  
    do_stuff_with_array(a);  
} else {  
    std::cerr << "Couldn't allocate memory" << std::endl;  
}
```

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- Basic mechanism of encapsulation and reuse
- Three kinds of functions:
 - Free functions: not tied to an object; syntactically defined outside a class
 - Non-static member functions: called methods in Java
 - Static member functions: called static methods in Java

Function Default Arguments

- Functions can have default arguments
- The must come last in the argument list
- Must be specified in the **declaration** and *not* in the definition
- If during invocation user leaves some arguments out these are bound to the default value

Example

```
int my_sum(int x, int y, int z = 10, int w = 100) {  
    return x + y + z + w;  
}
```

```
// my_sum(1) // this is an error!  
my_sum(1, 2) // calls my_sum(1, 2, 10, 100)  
my_sum(1, 2, 3) // calls my_sum(1, 2, 3, 100)  
my_sum(1, 2, 3, 4) // calls my_sum(1, 2, 3, 4)
```

Notice that you can't assign w without assigning z because argument passing is positional

- A pointer is the address of a memory location
 - Compare to a variable, which is the name of a memory location
- A pointer type is denoted by the pointee type and a star:

```
int* pointerToAnInt;  
Object* pointerToAnObject;
```

- Two new dual operators:
 - Address-of (&):** takes the address of a variable
 - Dereference (*):** “follows” the pointer and obtain the pointed to object (pointee)
 - &x has the type of x “plus a star at the end”
 - *x has the type of x “minus a star at the end”

```
int x = 10;  
int* ptrX = &x;  
int** ptrPtrX = &ptrX;  
assert( *ptrX == 10 );  
assert( *(&x) == 10 ); // cancel each other out
```

“Famous Mind-bending Pointer Example”TM

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- Why does it work?

```
void swap(int* a, int* b) {  
    int temp = *a;  
    *a = *b;  
    *b = temp;  
}  
  
int x = 10, y = 20;  
swap(&x, &y);  
assert( x == 20 && y == 10 );
```

- Usually you are not (and you should not be) interested in a pointer's actual value
 - Let's forget about pointer arithmetic
 - In C++ there are a better options: references

- Practically an indexed variable
- A contiguous area of memory
- Each element is initialized with its default initializer

```
int a[3] = {10, 20, 30};  
int b[] = {9, 10, 11}; // size is inferred  
assert( a[0] == b[1] );  
int x = get_int_value();  
int c[x]; // contains garbage
```

- An array variable is an immutable pointer (cannot point to something else)

```
std::cout << a << ' ' << &a << std::endl // print  
the same string twice  
assert( a[0] == *a);  
assert( *(b + 2) == b[2] ); // ptr. arithmetic is  
ugly
```

- When you don't know how many things you are dealing with, you need dynamic memory
- In C you call `malloc` to allocate chunks of memory on the heap

```
float* ptrFloat = (float*) malloc(sizeof(float));
```

- Not type-safe and error prone
- C++ elegant solution: operator `new`

```
double* ptrDouble = new double;  
MyObjectType* o = new MyObjectType;
```

- Rationale: the compiler knows how big are your objects
- Objects can also be initialized

```
double* pd = new double; *pd = 3.14;  
double* p2d = new double(3.14);  
assert( *pd == *p2d );
```

- No `null` keyword; use `0` or `NULL` macro instead

Foreword

- Don't use arrays in C++
 - No bound checks
 - Must be manually deleted (not true for static ones)
 - They are not objects
 - Difficult to pass around
- Learn to use a `std::vector` instead

Usage

- Use operator `new` to allocate more than one object in a contiguous memory chunk
- Compare C and C++ versions of the same code:

```
int* arrayInC = (int*) malloc(sizeof(int) * 100);  
int* arrayInCpp = new int[100];
```

- Space allocated on the stack is automatically reclaimed when variables/static arrays go out of scope
- Space allocated in the heap must be manually freed
- Enter operator `delete` and operator `delete[]`
`delete` reclaims memory allocated via `new`
`delete[]` reclaims memory allocated via `new[]`

```
int* pi = new int(100);  
delete pi;  
int* arr = new int[100];  
delete[] arr; // dimension is not needed  
// delete arr; // is undefined behaviour
```

- Other undefined/unsafe behaviours
 - Deleting a pointer not returned by a `new`
 - Double delete
 - Although deleting a null pointer is a no-op

- `const` is a type decorator much like `*` is for pointers
- A `const` variable is immutable
 - The memory region it represents cannot be modified
 - Immutability at the *bit level*
 - `const` variables cannot be assigned

```
const int aConst = 100; // before type annotation
// ++aConst; aConst += 10; aConst = 99; // errors
int const anotherConst = -12; // after type
    annotation
```

- If you know you will not change a variable, make it `const`
- I can always convert from a non-`const` type to a `const` type and vice versa

const pointer types

- Pointer to const object:
 - Pointee cannot be modified

```
int x = 100;  
const int* ptr1 = new int(10);  
int const* ptr2 = &x;  
// *ptr1 = 12; ++*ptr1; // errors  
ptr2 = ptr1; // can change pointer  
*ptr2 = 101; // can't change x through pointer
```

- const pointer to object:
 - Pointer cannot be modified (can be still deleted)

```
int x = 20;  
int* const ptr = new int(10);  
// ptr = &x; // error  
*ptr = x; // can change pointee
```

- Beware of conversions

```
const int x = 10;  
const int* px = &x;  
// int* px2 = &x; // could change x through pointer  
// int* px3 = px; // same as above
```

- Basically, references are const pointers
- Syntactically, references behave like variables

```
int x = 100;  
int& rx = x;  
++rx;  
assert( x == 101 );
```

- Equivalent to:

```
int* const px = &x;  
++*px;  
assert( x == 101 );
```

- If you assign a reference you change the object it refers to

```
rx = 200;  
assert( x == 200 && rx == 200 );
```

- Ampersand is a type decorator just like const and *

“Famous Mind-bending Pointer Example”TM

Take Two

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- References are especially useful as function arguments
- Explain why it works:

```
void swap(int& a, int& b) {  
    const int temp = a;  
    a = b;  
    b = temp;  
}
```

```
void inc(int& x) { ++x; }
```

```
int x = 10, y = 20;  
swap(x, y);  
assert( x == 20 && y == 10 );  
inc(x); inc(y);  
assert( x == 21 && y == 11 );
```

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- Compilation is subdivided in three stages
 - 1 Preprocessing
 - 2 Compilation
 - 3 Linking

Preprocessing + Compilation

Input – Translation unit: a source file and the headers it includes

Output – Object file: contains native code + metadata

Linking

- Takes a bunch of object files and produces:
 - An executable
 - A library (static or dynamic)
- Resolves names (translates names to addresses)

- Headers contain the public interface of a library
 - Declarations of types, variables and functions
 - Do not contain definitions — remember ODR!
 - `inline` functions and templates are an exception

Example

- Suppose you write a library containing:

```
unsigned int my_crc32(char* buffer) { /*...*/ }
```

- Problem: users must repeat that function prototype whenever they use `my_crc32` in their code
- Solution:
 - Library writers produce headers with all the required declarations
 - A text preprocessor automatically copy-pastes header contents into source files (`#include` directive)

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- We will use only a small subset of preprocessor features
- Many archaic preprocessor uses are superseded by safer C++ features
 - Compile time constants
 - Generic code

File inclusion: `#include` directive

```
#include <iostream> // relative to include
                    directories
#include "mylib/mymodule.hpp" // relative to CWD
```

Include guards: to include an header only once per translation unit

```
// file: someheader.hpp
#ifndef SOMEHEADER_HPP_
#define SOMEHEADER_HPP_
// header code
#endif
```

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- Unlike Java, there is no concept of package in C++
- Yet you can organize names into hierarchies of namespaces

```
namespace mylib {  
    int myfun(int x); // function declaration  
    class MyType {}; // class definition  
}
```

- myfun and MyType live inside mylib namespace
- mylib::myfun and mylib::MyType are their qualified names
- Namespaces can be nested

```
namespace mylib { namespace util {  
    unsigned int my_crc32(char* buf) { /* ... */ }  
} }
```

- Namespaces can span files and translation units
 - In the previous snippet I re-opened mylib namespace, possibly in a different file
 - mylib::util::my_crc32 is its qualified name

- Similar to Java `import` directive
- Useful to save typing
- `using namespace Ns;`
 - All names in `Ns` are available unqualified
 - Same as `import Ns.*;` in Java
- `using Ns::somename;`
 - Only `Ns::somename` is available unqualified
 - Same as `import Ns.somename;` in Java
- Watch for ambiguities!

```
namespace ns1 { int f(); void g(double d); }  
namespace ns2 { int f(); void g(int n); }  
double f();
```

```
using namespace ns1;  
using ns2::f; using ns2::g;  
// f(); // call of 'f' is ambiguous  
ns1::f(); // must disambiguate  
::f(); // calls 'f' in the default namespace  
g(3.14); // calls ns1::g  
g(100); // calls ns2::g
```

```
// file: mylib.hpp
namespace mymath {
    double* poly_zeros(double coeff[]);
    namespace signal {
        double* fft(double v[]);
    } }

// file: mylib.cpp
namespace mymath {
    double poly_zeros(double coeff[]) { /* ... */ }
}
double* mymath::signal::fft(double v[]) { /* ... */ }

// file: application.cpp
#include "mylib.hpp"
int main(int argc, char* argv[]) {
    using namespace mymath;
    double someVector[] = /* ... */;
    double* zeros = poly_zeros(someVector);
    double* dft = signal::fft(someVector);
}
```

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Commonalities

- Almost all OOP concepts in Java are directly mapped to C++
 - Inheritance
 - Abstract classes/methods
 - Interfaces (more or less)

Differences

- No automatic memory management makes these operations critical:
 - Construction
 - Destruction
 - Copy and assignment
- Objects can live on the stack or on the heap
- **There is no common Object root**
 - No toString, clone, equals, hash methods for free!
- Multiple inheritance

Example

A C++ counter — take 1

```
class Counter {  
public:  
    Counter() { val = 0; } // default ctor  
    Counter(int val) { this->val = val; }  
    int getVal() { return val; }  
    void setVal(int val) { this->val = val; }  
    void inc() { ++val; }  
private:  
    int val;  
    // int val = 10; // error illegal C++; Java only  
};
```

- Visibility declaration refer to group of members
- `class` and `struct` are synonyms except:
 - `class` members have default `private` visibility
 - `struct` members have default `public` visibility
- `this` is a (const) **pointer** to the current object
- Data members (i.e., `val`) cannot be default initialized
- Still this definition is not idiomatic C++
 - Methods are inline
 - No copy-constructor or destructor (actually not needed)
 - It's not const-correct

- Syntax changes if accessing a member from a pointer or a variable/reference
 - Biggest difference from Java
- Dot operator: access from a variable/reference
- “Arrow” operator: access from a pointer

```
void inc_n(Counter& c, int n) {  
    for (int i = 0; i < n; ++i)  
        c.inc();  
}
```

```
Counter* c = new Counter(10);  
c->inc(); c->inc();  
assert( c->getVal() == 12 );  
c->setVal(-10);  
inc_n(*c, 10);  
assert( c->getVal() == 0 );
```

- An accessor method (i.e., “getter”) should not modify an object state
- In C++ we can enforce that with `const` keyword
- In a method marked `const`:
 - You cannot modify data members
 - You cannot invoke non-`const` methods
 - `this` is a pointer to a `const` object
- `const` becomes part of the method signature

```
class Counter {  
    // ...  
    int getVal() const {  
        // ++val; setVal(10); inc(); // errors  
        return val;  
    }  
    // ...  
};
```

- User cannot invoke non-const methods
- User cannot modify data members

```
using namespace std;
void print(const Counter& c) {
    // c.setVal(100); // error
    cout << "Counter(" << c.getVal() << ")" << endl;
}
void inc_n(Counter& c, int n) { /* ... */ }

Counter* c = new Counter(10);
print(*c); // prints 'Counter(10)'
const Counter* c2 = new Counter(20);
print(*c2); // prints 'Counter(20)'
// inc_n(*c2, 10); // error
c2 = c; // notice memory leak here!
// inc_n(*c2, 10); // error
```

- The meaning of the following code is clear:

```
int x = 10;  
int y;  
int z = x;  
y = x;
```

- A variable represents a memory location
- Therefore, assignment is a bit copy
- Also, storage for x and y is reclaimed before exiting local scope

- But what is the interpretation of this code?

```
Counter a = /* initialization */  
Counter b; // what is this?  
Counter c = a; // and this?  
b = a; // assignment
```

- Objects = Data + Behaviour
 - We have to give meaning to the previous expressions

- Constructor without arguments
- It is synthesized for you if you don't provide any constructor
 - Just like Java
- Handles default initialization

```
struct A {};  
struct B {  
    B() { std::cout << "Hello!" << std::endl; }  
    B(int x) {}  
};  
struct C { C(int x) {} };  
  
A a;  
B b; // prints "Hello!"  
// C c; // error: C has not default constructor
```

- The typical constructor with arguments
 - Again, just like Java
 - But supports default arguments, like any function
- Special “functional initialization” syntax

```
using namespace std;  
struct A {  
    A(int x, int y) { cout << x << ' ' << y << endl; }  
};
```

```
A a(10, 20); // prints '10 20'  
// A a2(30); // error: A has not constructor A(int)  
A a2 = A(1, 2); // this syntax is also acceptable
```

Object Initialization – Copy Constructor

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- Has a specific signature: `T(const T&)`
- A default copy constructor is synthesized for you if you don't provide one
 - Recursively invokes each member copy constructor
 - Basic types are bit-copied
- Handles initialization from another object

```
struct A {  
    A(int x) { this->x = x; cout << "A(" << x << ")"  
        << endl; }  
    A(const A& otherObject) {  
        x = otherObject.x + 1;  
        cout << "A copy-ctor " << x << endl;  
    }  
    int x;  
};  
void f(A a) {}  
A a(0);  
A a2 = a;  
A a3(a);  
f(a);
```

Prints:

A(0)

A copy-ctor 1

A copy-ctor 2

A copy-ctor 3

- The destructor is a method called automatically before an object storage is reclaimed
 - When a variable goes out of scope
 - When a delete operation is performed
- It is a “special” (like a constructor) parameterless method

```
struct A {  
    A() { cout << "A-ctor" << endl; }  
    ~A() { cout << "A-dtor" << endl; }  
}  
  
{  
    cout << "Entering scope\n";  
    A a;  
    cout << "Exiting scope\n";  
}  
cout << "Outside scope" << endl;
```

Prints:

Entering scope

A-ctor

Exiting scope

A-dtor

Outside scope

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```
struct Base {  
    Base(int x) { cout << "B(" << x << ")" << endl; }  
    void method() {}  
};  
class Derived : public Base {  
    public:  
        Derived(int x) : Base(x * x) {  
            cout << "Derived(" << x << ")" << endl;  
        }  
};  
struct Derived2 : Derived {}; // no public required  
  
Derived d(2); // prints 'Base(4) Derived(2)'  
d.method(); // inherits methods  
Base b(d); // copy ctor: Derived 'is a' Base
```

- Minor syntactic differences from Java
 - Colon instead of extend keyword
 - Different syntax for calling base class constructor
- Remember to call base class constructor!
 - Compiler does that for you in synthesized constructors

- In Java methods are polymorphic by default
- In C++ you have to explicitly state which methods are polymorphic
- In C++ we have polymorphic dispatch only if:
 - Called method is `virtual`
 - Receiver is a pointer or a reference
- Rule: a base class destructor should always be `virtual`

```
struct Base {  
    void f() { cout << "Base" << endl; }  
    virtual g() { cout << "Base" << endl; }  
};  
struct Derived : Base {  
    void f() { cout << "Derived" << endl; }  
    void g() { cout << "Derived" << endl; }  
};
```

```
Base* b = new Derived;  
b->f(); // prints "Base"  
b->g(); // prints "Derived"
```

- Pure Virtual Functions in C++ = Abstract Methods in Java
- Like in Java, a class with pure virtual functions (abstract methods) cannot be instantiated
- Minor syntactic difference

```
struct Base {  
    virtual void polymorphic() const;  
    void nonPolymorphic();  
    virtual abstract() = 0;  
};
```

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Advanced Concepts

- C++ doesn't have first class interfaces
- Can be emulated via multiple inheritance and pure virtual functions
 - Interface as a design pattern

```
struct StreamInterface {  
    virtual void open() = 0;  
    virtual char read() = 0;  
    virtual void write(char) = 0;  
    virtual void close() = 0;  
};
```

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Foreword

- We are interested in overloading operator only from a user perspective
- We will see how to implement “Stream operator”
 - To write stuff to standard output
 - Idiomatic C++ alternative to Java `toString`

Interpretation

- We can use custom types with C++ operators
- Operator application is translated to method call
- Special hooks are provided to customize operator behaviour
- Normal C++ precedence rule apply
- You can't define new operators

- Operator application is translated to method call
 - Suppose class A has overloaded plus and times operator

```
A a, b, c;  
a + b * c;  
a.operator +(b.operator *(c));
```

- To customize operator behaviour, implement special methods
 - In the previous example, a valid (but useless) definition might be

```
struct A {  
    A operator+(A a) { return *this; }  
    A operator*(A a) { return *this; }  
};
```

Overloaded Stream Operator for Classes

- To make an object “streamable”

```
#include <iosfwd>
struct A {
    // class definition
    friend std::ostream& operator<<(std::ostream& out,
        const A& a) {
        // write object 'a' to stream 'out'
        return out; // return the stream
    }
}
```

- `friend` is like *friend stereotype* in UML
- This expression now compiles

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

A a = // ...
cout << "String representation of A is: " << a <<
    endl;
```

Counter declarations

```
// file: Incrementable.hpp
```

```
struct Incrementable {  
    virtual ~Incrementable() {};  
    virtual void inc() = 0;  
}
```

```
//file: Counter.hpp
```

```
#include <iosfwd>  
#include "Incrementable.hpp"  
struct Counter : Incrementable {  
    Counter();  
    Counter(int val);  
    int getVal() const;  
    void setVal(const int val);  
    void inc();  
    friend std::ostream& operator<<(std::ostream&, const  
        Counter&);  
private:  
    int val; };
```

Counter definitions

```
//file: Counter.cpp  
#include "Counter.hpp"  
Counter::Counter() { val = 0; }  
  
Counter::Counter(const int val) { this->val = val; }  
  
int Counter::getVal() const { return val; }  
  
void Counter::setVal(const int val) { this->val = val  
    ; }  
  
void Counter::inc() { ++val; }  
  
std::ostream& operator<<(std::ostream& out, const  
    Counter& c) {  
    return out << "Counter(val=" << c.getVal() << " )";  
}
```

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Advanced Concepts

- Mechanism to write generic code
- Bears some similarities to Java Generics
- Allows one to write code parametrized w.r.t some types
 - Generic functions
 - Generic classes

```
template<class T> struct MyClass; // class template  
template<class T, class U> struct MyType; // struct  
template  
template<class T> int fun(T* a, int x); // template  
function
```

- Type parameters must be instantiated

- How to store arbitrary objects into a fixed size container?
 - Remember that there is no common supertype
- Use templates!

```
template<class T, class U> struct Pair {  
    T first;  
    U second;  
    Pair(const T& t, const U& u) {  
        first = t; second = u;  
    }  
}
```

```
Pair<int, double> p(100, 0.98);  
Pair<int, int> p2(0, 0);  
p2.first = p.first + 100;
```

A Brief Introduction to C++ for Java Developers

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