

RUN-TIME ENVIRONMENTS

Baishakhi Ray

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These slides are motivated from Prof. Alex Aiken: Compilers (Stanford)



- We have covered the front-end phases

- Lexical analysis
- Parsing
- Semantic analysis

} All the compilation errors
are caught in this phase

- Next are the back-end phases

- Code generation
- Optimization

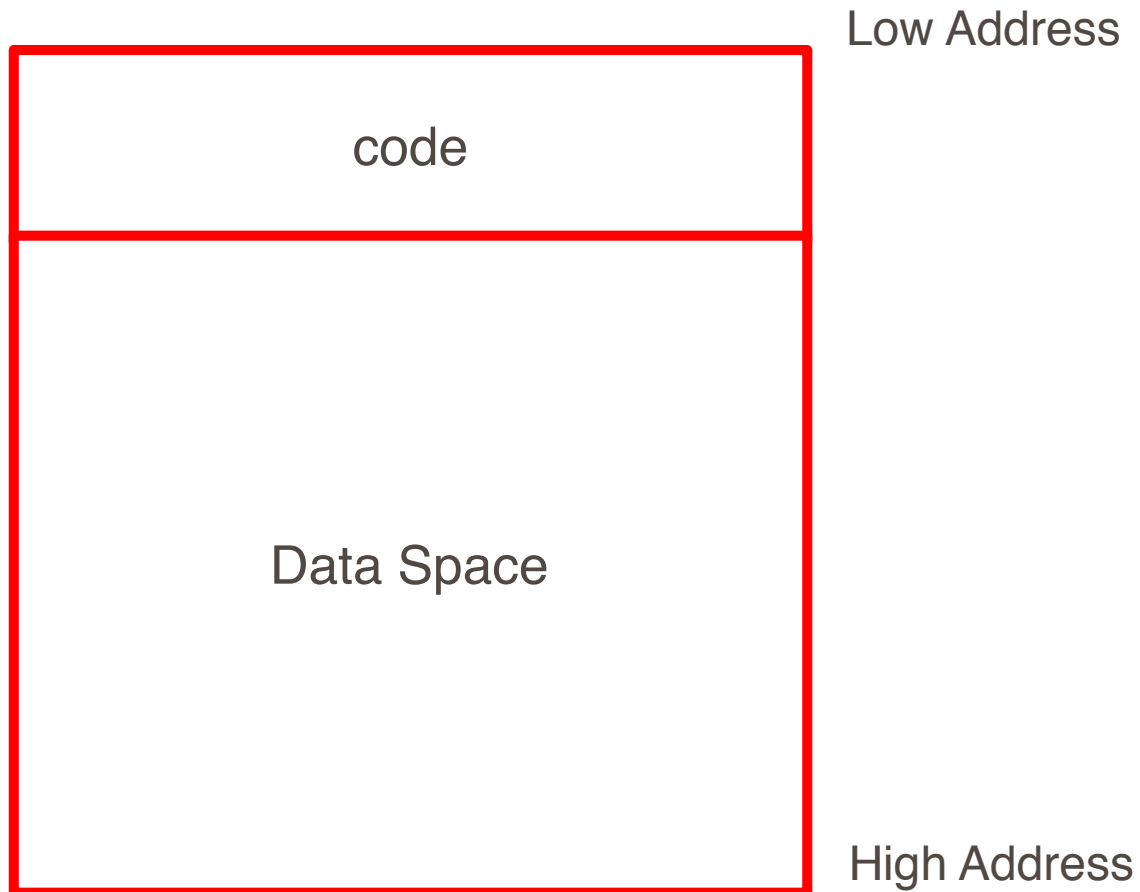
Run-time environments

- What are we trying to generate?
- How executable code is laid out?

Run-time Processes

- Execution of a program is initially under the control of the operating system
- When a program is invoked:
 - The OS allocates space for the program
 - The code is loaded into part of the space
 - The OS jumps to the entry point (i.e., “main”)

Memory Layout



- **By tradition**
 - Low address at the top
 - High address at the bottom
 - Lines delimiting areas for different kinds of data
- **Simplified representation**
 - Not all memory need be contiguous
- **Compiler is responsible for:**
 - Generating code
 - Orchestrating use of the data area

Code Generation Goals

- Two goals:
 - Correctness
 - Speed
- Most complications in code generation come from trying to be fast as well as correct

Assumptions about Execution

- Execution is sequential; control moves from one point in a program to another in a well-defined order
- When a procedure is called, control eventually returns to the point immediately after the call

Activations

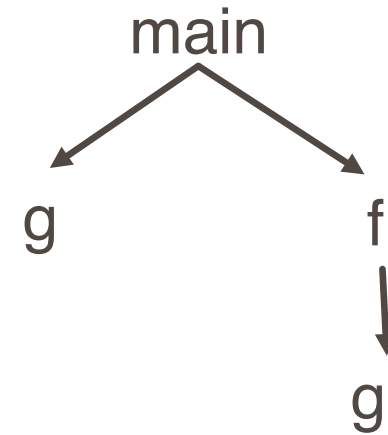
- An **invocation** of procedure P is an activation of P
- The **lifetime** of an activation of P is
 - All the steps to execute P
 - Including all the steps in procedures P calls
- The **lifetime** of a variable x is the portion of execution in which x is defined
 - Lifetime is a dynamic (run-time) concept
 - Scope is a static concept

Activation Trees

- Assumption (2) requires that when P calls Q, then Q returns before P does
- Lifetimes of procedure activations are properly nested
- Activation lifetimes can be depicted as a tree

- Example:

```
Class Main {  
    int g() { 1 };  
    int f() { g() };  
    int main() { g(); f(); };  
}
```



Example 2

```
Class Main {  
    int g(){1};  
    int f(int x){  
        if(x == 0) g();  
        else f(x-1);  
    };  
    int main() {f(3);};  
}
```

Activation Trees

- The activation tree depends on run-time behavior
- The activation tree may be different for every program input
- Since activations are properly nested, a stack can track currently active procedures

Activation Trees

- Example:

```
Class Main {  
    int g() { 1 };  
    int f() { g() };  
    int main() { g(); f(); };  
}
```

main

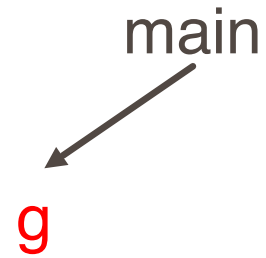
Stack

main

Activation Trees

- Example:

```
Class Main {  
  int g() { 1 };  
  int f() { g() };  
  int main() { g(); f(); };  
}
```

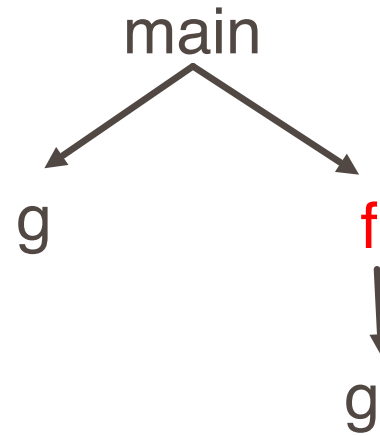


Stack
main
g

Activation Trees

- Example:

```
Class Main {  
  int g() { 1 };  
  int f() { g() };  
  int main() { g(); f(); };  
}
```



Stack

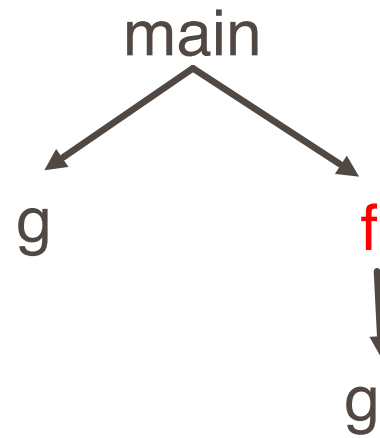
main

g. f

Activation Trees

- Example:

```
Class Main {  
  int g() { 1 };  
  int f() { g() };  
  int main() { g(); f(); };  
}
```



Stack

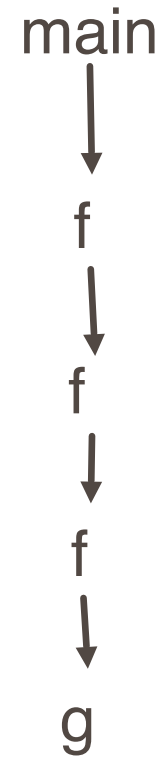
main

g f

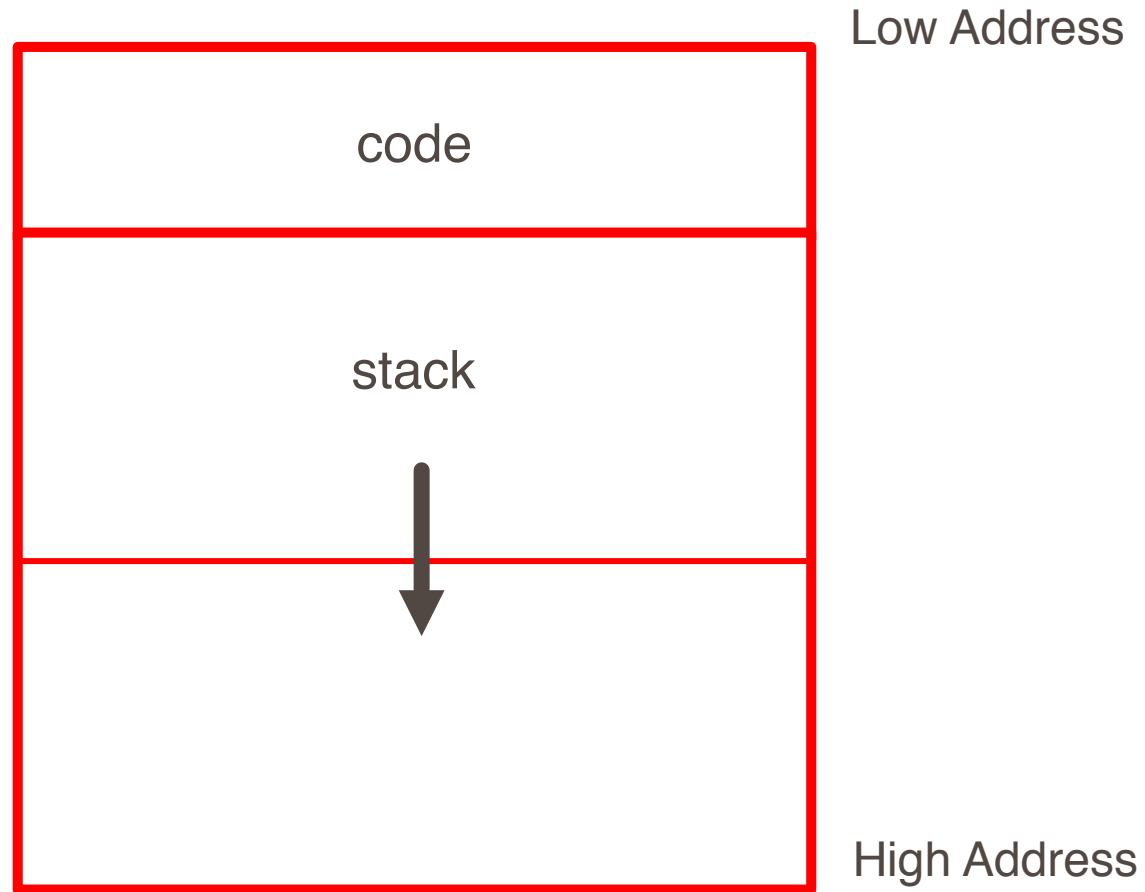
g

Example 2

```
Class Main {  
    int g(){1};  
    int f(int x){  
        if(x == 0) g();  
        else f(x-1);  
    };  
    int main() {f(3);};  
}
```



Revised Memory Layout



Activation Records

- The information needed to manage one procedure activation is called an activation record (AR) or frame.
- If procedure F calls G, then G's activation record contains a mix of info about F and G.
 - F is “suspended” until G completes, at which point F resumes.
 - G's AR contains information needed to resume execution of F.
 - G's AR may also contain:
 - G's return value (needed by F)
 - Actual parameters to G (supplied by F)
 - Space for G's local variables

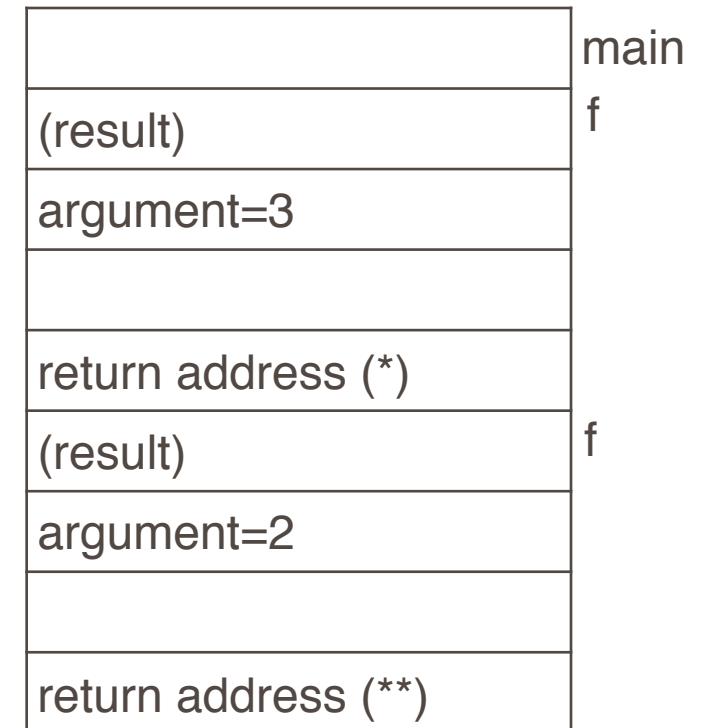
The Contents of a Typical AR for G

- Space for G's return value
- Actual parameters
- Pointer to the previous activation record
 - The control link; points to AR of caller of G
- Machine status prior to calling G
 - Contents of registers & program counter
 - Local variables
- Other temporary values

Example 2

```
Class Main {  
    int g(){1};  
    int f(int x){  
        if(x == 0) g();  
        else f(x-1) (**);  
    };  
    int main() {f(3); (*)};  
}
```

main
↓
f
↓
f
↓
f
↓
g



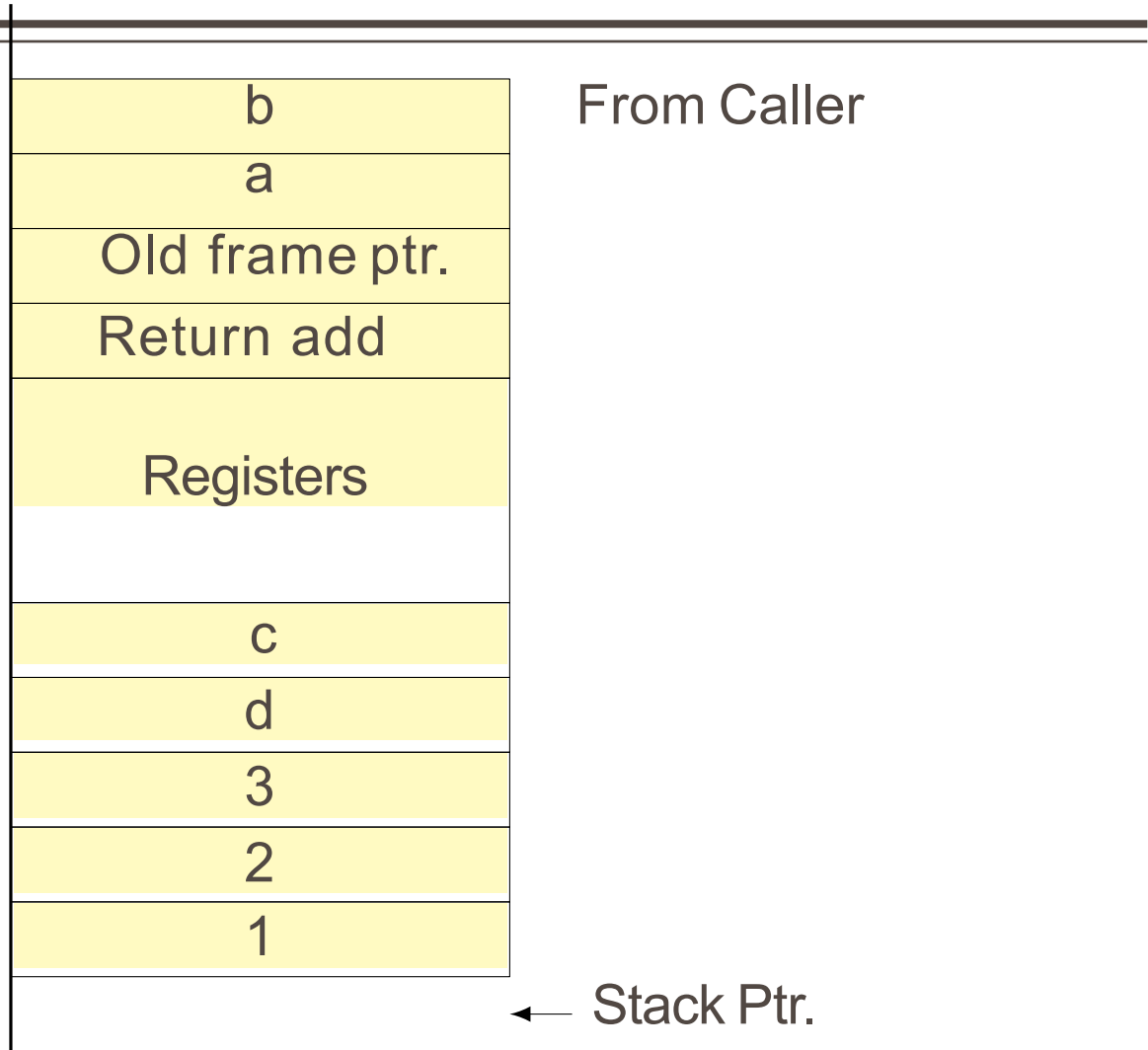
Discussion

- The advantage of placing the return value 1st in a frame is that the caller can find it at a fixed offset from its own frame
- There is nothing magic about this organization
 - Can rearrange order of frame elements
 - Can divide caller/callee responsibilities differently
 - An organization is better if it improves execution speed or simplifies code generation
- Real compilers hold as much of the frame as possible in registers
 - Especially the method result and arguments

The compiler must determine, at compile-time, the layout of activation records and generate code that correctly accesses locations in the activation record

Thus, the AR layout and the code generator must be designed together.

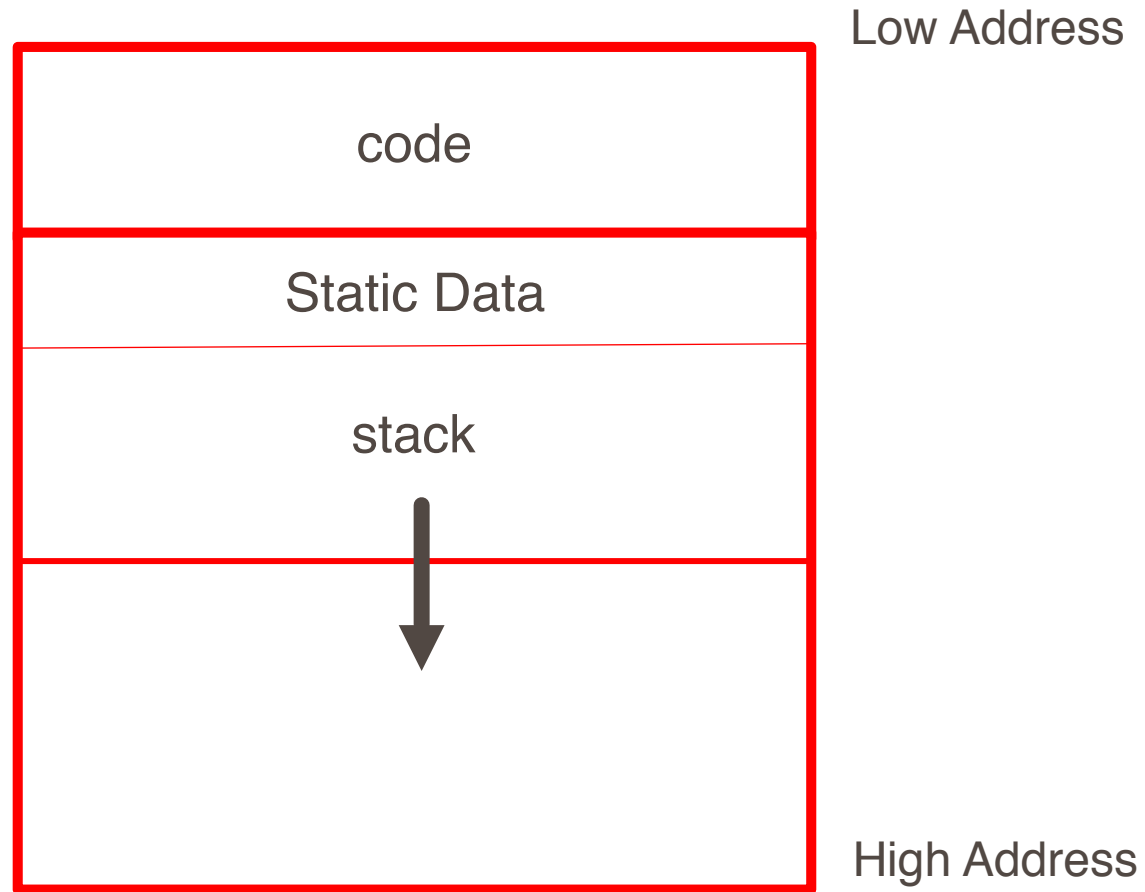
```
int foo(int a, int b) {  
    int c, d;  
    bar(1, 2, 3);  
}
```



Globals

- All references to a global variable point to the same object
 - Can't store a global in an activation record
- Globals are assigned a fixed address once
 - Variables with fixed address are “statically allocated”
- Depending on the language, there may be other statically allocated values

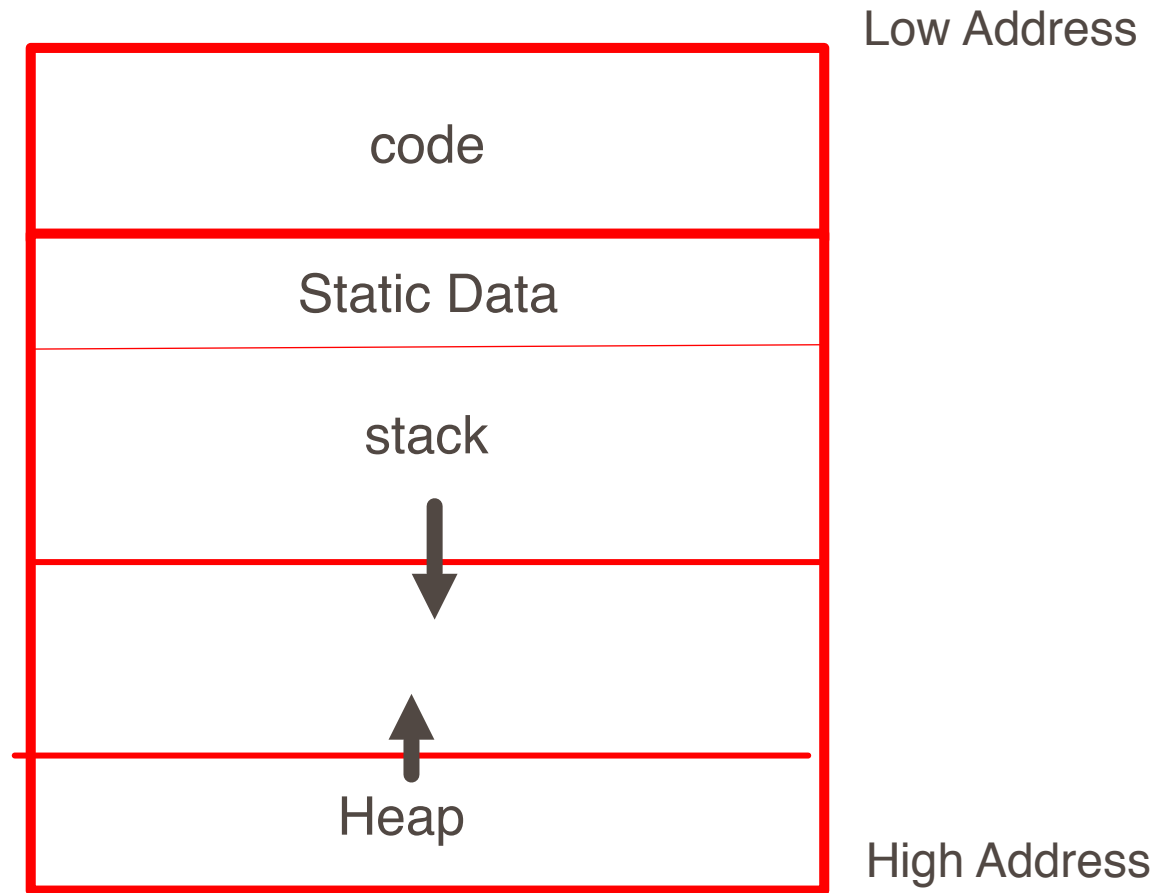
Revised Memory Layout



Heap Storage

- A value that outlives the procedure that creates it cannot be kept in the AR .
- Eg. method `foo() { new Bar }`
 - The Bar value must survive deallocation of foo's AR
- Languages with dynamically allocated data use a heap to store dynamic data

Revised Memory Layout



Notes

- The code area contains object code
 - For most languages, fixed size and read only
- The static area contains data (not code) with fixed addresses (e.g., global data)
 - Fixed size, may be readable or writable
- The stack contains an AR for each currently active procedure
 - Each AR usually fixed size, contains locals
- Heap contains all other data
 - In C, heap is managed by malloc and free
- Both the heap and the stack grow
 - Must take care that they don't grow into each other
 - Solution: start heap and stack at opposite ends of memory and let them grow towards each other

Data Layout

- Low-level details of machine architecture are important in laying out data for correct code and maximum performance
- Chief among these concerns is alignment

Alignment

- Most modern machines are (still) 32 bit
 - 8 bits in a byte
 - 4 bytes in a word
 - Machines are either byte or word addressable
- Data is word aligned if it begins at a word boundary
- Most machines have some alignment restrictions or performance penalties for poor alignment
 - SPARC and ARM prohibit unaligned accesses
 - MIPS has special unaligned load/store instructions
 - x86, 68k run more slowly with unaligned accesses
- Example: A string “Hello” Takes 5 characters (without a terminating \0)
 - To word align next datum, add 3 “padding” characters to the string •
 - The padding is not part of the string, it’s just unused memory

Padding

- To avoid unaligned accesses, the C compiler pads the layout of unions and records.
- Rules:
 - Each n-byte object must start on a multiple of n bytes (no unaligned accesses).
 - Any object containing an n-byte object must be of size m*n for some integer m (aligned even when arrayed).

```
struct padded {  
    int x;    /* 4 bytes */  
    char z;   /* 1 byte  */  
    short y;  /* 2 bytes */  
    char w;   /* 1 byte  */  
};
```

x	x	x	x
y	y		z
			w

```
struct padded {  
    char a;   /* 1 byte */  
    short b;  /* 2 bytes */  
    short c;  /* 2 bytes */  
};
```

b	b		a
		c	c

Unions

- A C struct has a separate space for each field; a C union shares one space among all fields

```
union intchar {  
    int i; /* 4 bytes */  
    char c; /* 1 byte */  
};
```



```
union twostructs {  
    struct {  
        char c; /* 1 byte */  
        int i; /* 4 bytes */  
    } a;  
    struct {  
        short s1; /* 2 bytes */  
        short s2; /* 2 bytes */  
    } b;  
};
```



or

