Linked Lists

Week 8

Gaddis: Chapter 17
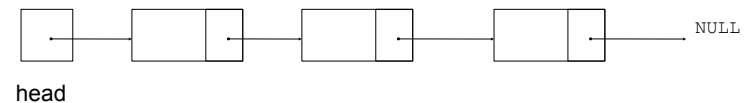
CS 5301
Fall 2017

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Introduction to Linked Lists

- A data structure representing a list
- A series of **dynamically allocated** nodes chained together in sequence
    - Each node points to <u>one</u> other node.
- A separate pointer (the head) points to the first item in the list.
- The last element points to nothing (NULL)

NULL

head

Node Organization

- Each node contains:
    - data field – may be a structure, an object, etc.
    - a pointer – that can point to another node

pointer

data
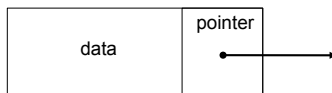
- We use a struct to define the node type:

```
struct ListNode {
    double value;
    ListNode *next;
};
```

- `next` can hold the address of a `ListNode`.
    - it can also be NULL

Defining the Linked List variable

- Define a pointer for the head of the list:

```
ListNode *head = NULL;    //NULL specifies end of list
```

- Now we have an empty linked list:

head   NULL

- NULL is equivalent to address 0
- to test a pointer for NULL (these are equivalent):

```
while (p) ...  <==>  while (p != NULL) …

if (!p) ...  <==>  if (p == NULL) ...
```

Note: If you try to dereference a pointer whose value is NULL, you will get a runtime error.   For example: `head->next`   Check before you do this.

Linked List operations

- Basic operations:
  - **create** a new, empty list
  - **append** a node to the end of the list
  - **insert** a node within the list
  - **delete** a node
  - **display** the linked list
  - **delete/destroy** the list

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Linked List class declaration

```
#include <cstddef>   // for NULL
using namespace std;

class NumberList
{
   private:
      struct ListNode      // the node data type
      {
         double value;     // data
         ListNode *next;   // ptr to next node
      };
      ListNode *head;      // the list head

   public:
      NumberList() = { head = NULL; } //create empty list
      ~NumberList();

      void appendNode(double);
      void insertNode(double);
      void deleteNode(double);
      void displayList();
};
```

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Operation:
append node to end of list

- appendNode: adds new node to end of list
- Algorithm:

  Create a new node and store the data in it
  If the list has no nodes (it's empty)
     Make head point to the new node.
  Else
     Find the last node in the list
     Make the last node point to the new node

  When defining list operations, always consider special cases:
  • Empty list
  • First element, front of the list (when head pointer is involved)

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appendNode: find last elem

- How to find the last node in the list?
- Algorithm:

  Make a pointer p point to the first element
  while the node p points to has a NEXT node
     make p point to that node (the NEXT node of
     the node p currently points to)

- In C++:

```
ListNode *p = head;
while ((*p).next != NULL)
   p = (*p).next;
```
<==>
```
ListNode *p = head;
while (p->next)
   p = p->next;
```

p=p->next is like i++

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```
void NumberList::appendNode(double num) {

    ListNode *newNode;  // To point to the new node

    // Create a new node and store the data in it
    newNode = new ListNode;
    newNode->value = num;
    newNode->next = NULL;

    // If empty, make head point to new node
    if (head==NULL)
        head = newNode;

    else {
        ListNode *p;  // To move through the list
        p = head;     // initialize to start of list

        // traverse list to find last node
        while (p->next)         //it's not last
            p = p->next;        //make it pt to next

        // now p pts to last node
        // make last node point to newNode
        p->next = newNode;
    }
}
```

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Traversing a Linked List

- Visit each node in a linked list, to
  - display contents, sum data, test data, etc.
- Basic process:

```
set a pointer to point to what head points to
while pointer is not NULL
    process data of current node
    go to the next node by setting the pointer to
        the next field of the current node
end while
```

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Operation: **display** the list

```
void NumberList::displayList() {
    ListNode *p;  //ptr to traverse the list

    // start p at the head of the list
    p = head;

    // while p pts to something (not NULL), continue
    while (p)  {
        //Display the value in the current node
        cout << p->value << " ";

        //Move to the next node
        p = p->next;
    }
    cout << endl;
}
```

Or the short version:

```
void NumberList::displayList() {
    for (ListNode *p = head; p; p = p->next)
        cout << p->value << " ";
    cout << endl;
}
```

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Destroying a Linked List: destructor

- The destructor must "delete" (deallocate) all nodes used in the list
- To do this, use list traversal to visit each node:
  - save the address of the next node in a pointer
  - delete the node

```
NumberList::~NumberList() {
    ListNode *p;   // traversal ptr
    ListNode *n;   // saves the next node

    p = head;       //start at head of list
    while (p) {
        n = p->next;  // save the next
        delete p;     // delete current
        p = n;        // advance ptr
    }
}
```
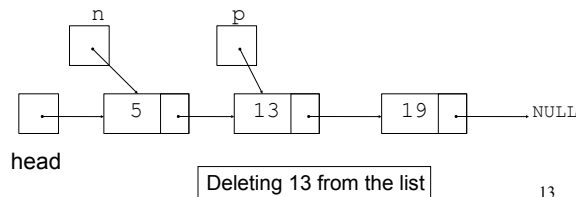
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Operation: **delete** a node from the list

- deleteNode: removes node from list, and deletes (deallocates) the removed node.
- Requires two extra pointers:
  - one to point to the node to be deleted
  - one to point to the node <u>before</u> the node to be deleted.

n   p

5   →   13   →   19   →   NULL

head

Deleting 13 from the list

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Deleting a node

- Change the pointer of the previous node to point to the node <u>after</u> the one to be deleted.
- Then just "delete" the p node

```
n->next = p->next;
delete p;
```

n   p

5   →   19   →   NULL
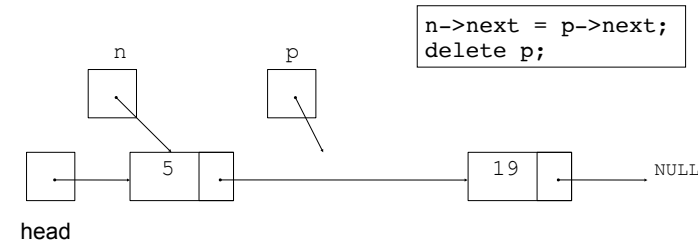
head

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Delete Node Algorithm

- Delete the node containing num

use p to traverse the list, until it points to num or NULL
--as p is advancing, make n point to the node before it

if (p is not NULL) //found!
  if (p==head)   //it's the first node, and n is garbage
    make head point to the second element
    delete p's node (the first node)
  else
    make n's node point to what p's node points to
    delete p's node
else: . . . p is NULL, not found do nothing

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Linked List functions: deleteNode

```
void NumberList::deleteNode(double num) {          in NumberList.cpp

    ListNode *p = head;     // to traverse the list
    ListNode *n;            // trailing node pointer (previous)

    // skip nodes not equal to num, stop at last
    while (p && p->value!=num) {
        n = p;          // save it!
        p = p->next;    // advance it
    }

    // p not null: num is found, set links + delete
    if (p) {
        if (p==head) {    // p points to the first elem, n is garb
            head = p->next;
            delete p;
        } else {          // n points to the predecessor
            n->next = p->next;
            delete p;
        }
    }
}
```
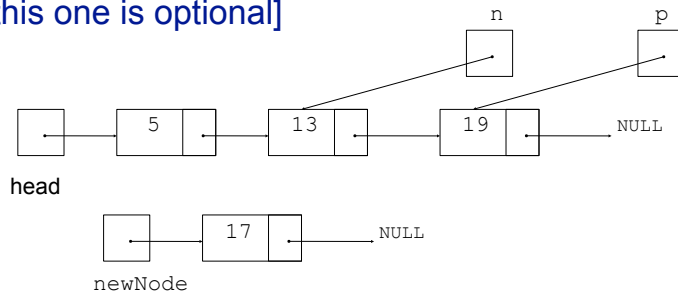
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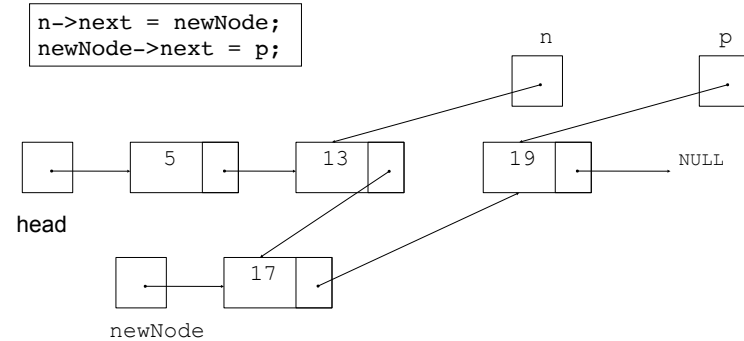## Operation: **insert** a node into a linked list

- Inserts a new node into the middle of a list.
- Uses two extra pointers:
  - one to point to node before the insertion point
  - one to point to the node after the insertion point [this one is optional]


```
n                    p

5      13      19      NULL

head

17      NULL

newNode
```

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Inserting a Node into a Linked List

- Insertion completed:

```
n->next = newNode;
newNode->next = p;
```



```
n                    p

5      13      19      NULL

head

17

newNode
```

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Insert Node Algorithm

- Insert node in a certain position

Create the new node, store the data in it
Use pointer p to traverse the list,
    until it points to: node after insertion point or NULL
    --as p is advancing, make n point to the node before
if p points to first node (p is head, n was not set)
    make head point to new node
    make new node point to p's node
else
    make n's node point to new node
    make new node point to p's node

Note: we will assume our list is sorted, so the insertion point is immediately before the first node that is larger than the number being inserted.

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insertNode code

```
void NumberList::insertNode(double num) {      in NumberList.cpp
    ListNode *newNode;      // ptr to new node
    ListNode *p;            // ptr to traverse list
    ListNode *n;            // node previous to p

    //allocate new node
    newNode = new ListNode;
    newNode->value = num;

    // skip all nodes less than num
    p = head;
    while (p && p->value < num) {        What if num is bigger than
        n = p;           // save          all items in the list?
        p = p->next;     // advance
    }

    if (p == head) { //insert before first, or empty list
        head = newNode;
        newNode->next = p;
    }
    else {                    //insert after n
        n->next = newNode;
        newNode->next = p;
    }
}
```

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Linked List variations

- Doubly linked list
  - each node has two pointers, one to the next node and one to the previous node
  - head points to first element, tail points to last.

```
private:
    // Structure for nodes
    struct Node {
        int value;        // Value in the node
        Node *prev;       // Pointer to the previous node
        Node *next;       // Pointer to the next node
    };
    Node *head;           // Pointer to the first element
    Node *tail;           // Pointer to the last element
```

head   5   13   19   NULL   tail
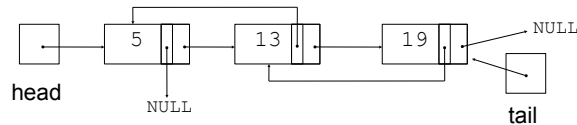
NULL

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Linked List variations

- Circular linked list
  - last cell's next pointer points to the first element.
  - no null pointers
  - every node has a successor

5   13   19
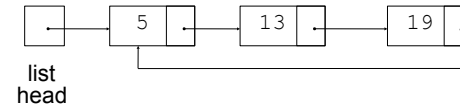
list
head

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Linked lists vs Arrays
(pros and cons)

- A linked list can easily grow or shrink in size.
  - No maximum capacity required
  - No need to resize+copy when list reaches max size.
- When a value is inserted into or deleted from a linked list, no other nodes have to be moved.
- Arrays allow random access to elements: array[i] (linked lists require traversal to get i'th element).
- Arrays do not require extra storage for "links" (linked lists are impractical when the pointer value is bigger than data value).

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