Pointers
Ch 9 & 13.1

Hey, don't I know you?

Don't you know that pointing is rude?
Highlights

- pointers

```c
int x = 6;
int* xp;
xp = &x;
```
object vs memory address

An object is simply a box in memory and if you pass this into a function it makes a copy.

A memory address is where a box is located and if you pass this into a function, you can change the variable everywhere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory address</th>
<th>Object (box)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arrays</td>
<td>int, double, char, ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using &amp;</td>
<td>classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(pointers)
Review: address vs value

Consider the following:

```cpp
int x=6;
cout << x << "\n";
cout << &x << endl;
```

x is a variable (a box containing value 6)

&x is a memory address (sign pointing to box)

- Rather than giving the value inside the box, this gives the whole box

(see: memAddress.cpp)
Review: address vs value

Similar to a URL and a webpage
- A URL is not a webpage, but a link to one

Webpage g;
cout << &g;
Pointers

Just as & goes from value (webpage) to address (url), * goes the opposite:

Webpage g;
URL u = &g;
Webpage g2 = *u;
Pointers

You can also think of pointers as “phone numbers” and what they point to as “people”
If multiple people have the same “phone number”, they call the same person (object)
A pointer is used to store a memory address and denoted by a * (star!)

```cpp
int x = 6;
int* xp;
xp = &x;
```

Here variable “xp” has type “integer pointer”

```cpp
cout << *(&x); // *(&x) same as x
```

The * goes from address to variable (e.g. like hitting ENTER on a url, or “call” on a phone contact)  
(See: pointerBasics.cpp)
Pointers (phone analogy)

int* jacky;

Make a contact name called “jacky”

Make a phone-number for an person (int)

int Jackeline_Wu = 9;

Make a person (int) “Jacqueline Wu” exist

jacky = & Jackeline_Wu;

(& = address of)

Save Jacqueline Wu's phone number into the “jacky” contact

*jacky = 9001;

* = call up

Call the “jacky” contact (and connect with Jacqueline Wu)
Pointers

It is useful to think of pointers as types:

```c
int* xp;
```

Here I declared a variable “xp” of type “int*”

Just like arrays and [], the use of the * is different for the declaration than elsewhere:

Declaration: the * is part of the type (`int* xp;`)
Everywhere else: * follows the pointer/address (i.e. `*xp = 2;` puts 2 where xp is pointing to)
Pointers

Pointers and references allow you to change anything into a memory address that you want.

This can make it easier to share variables across functions.

You can also return a pointer from a function (return links to variables) (see: returnPointer.cpp)
Pointers

Why do we need pointers? (memory addresses are stupid!!!)

Suppose we had the following class:

```cpp
class Person{
    string name;
    Person mother;
    Person father;
};
```

Will this work?
Pointers

As is, it will not... it is impossible to make a box enclose two other equal sized boxes

The only way it can enclose something like itself is that thing is smaller
Pointers

To do this we can use pointers instead!

A pointer does not store the whole class data, it only remembers where it is (like a URL)

```cpp
class person{
    string name;
    person* mother;
    person* father;
};
```

(See: person.cpp) (more on this shortly)
When dealing with classes, often you need to deference (*) and access a member (.)

There is a shortcut to de-reference and call a member (follow arrow and go inside a box)

You can replace (*var).x with var->x, so...

```
(*(me.mother)).name;
```

... same as ...

```
me.mother->name;
```
Person class

How would you make your grandmother? How could you get your grandmother using only yourself as a named object?

```cpp
class person{
    string name;
    person* mother;
    person* father;
};
```

(See: personV2.cpp)