Recursion
Ch 14
Announcements

Midterm Friday (come early and claim a seat!)
- Covers up to loops (Ch 1-3)
- Open book/notes
Highlights

- recursion

```cpp
int main()
{
    cout << "HI\n!";
    main();
}
```
Recursion

No fancy blue words or classes this chapter

Recursion is simply calling a method from inside itself

This copy will re-run the method on any new arguments or information

(See: badRecursion.cpp)
Recursion

If you forget your stopping case, you will not get an infinite loop but crash the program.

This is because every function call takes up more memory, so you constantly ask for more memory.

Eventually the memory (stack) cannot store anymore.
Your mother is so fat,

the recursive function computing her mass causes a stack overflow.
Recursion basics

Good recursion must have 2 parts:
- A recursive call on a **smaller** problem
- An ending case

(see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xMYvVr9fd4)

In order to use recursion, you must be able to identify a subproblem that is very similar to the original problem

Each step must get you closer to the solution
Recursion basics

For recursion, you can basically assume your function works as you want it to (even though you have not written it)

If you have the ending case and reduction step correct, then it will!
Recursion: Family tree

Person

Descendant
Recursion: In words

A child couldn't sleep, so her mother told a story about a little frog, who couldn't sleep, so the frog's mother told a story about a little bear, who couldn't sleep, so bear's mother told a story about a little weasel ...who fell asleep. ...and the little bear fell asleep; ...and the little frog fell asleep; ...and the child fell asleep. (See: story.cpp)
Recursion: Basic example

Remember, code starts in main and runs from top to bottom in sequence (normally)

When you call a function you go execute all the function's code is run before going back to the original code

Code order is important in recursion!

(See: stringRecursion.cpp)
The Fibonacci numbers are defined as:

\[ F(n) = F(n-1) + F(n-2) \]

In other words, you add the previous two to get the next.

This is recursion! Computing \( F(n) \) involves solving smaller problems of \( F(n-1) \). (See: fibonacciRecursion.cpp)
Recursion: Root finding

Find a root of:
(see: rootFind.cpp)

Method:
1. Find one positive y and 1 neg. y
2. Find midpoint (of x values)
3. update y-pos/neg
Recursion: Dictionary search

Open the dictionary to the middle
- If the word is not on that page, reopen in the middle of the unsearched side

(See: dictionarySearch.cpp)
Try googling “recursion” and click on the spelling suggestion

Recursion is very powerful and used in many advanced algorithms

It will give you a headache for a while...

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