

Lecture 05

Lifetimes and Memory

CS211 – Fundamentals of Computer Programming II
Branden Gena – Spring 2023

Slides adapted from:
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Administrivia

- Homework 1 due tonight
 - Homework 2 will also release tonight, with a one-week deadline
- Lots of office hours today to help with questions
- Slip days allow you to submit late without penalty
 - Use them when you need them

Today's Goals

- Continue examples of Strings, Arrays, and Pointers
 - Explain AddressSanitizer errors you'll get when working with them
- Discuss variable lifetimes: when is a variable no longer valid
- Understand memory and C memory layout
 - The basis for pointers and variable lifetimes

Getting the code for today

```
cd ~/cs211/lec/          (or wherever you put stuff)
tar -xkvf ~cs211/lec/05_lifetimes_memory.tgz
cd 05_lifetimes_memory/
```

Outline

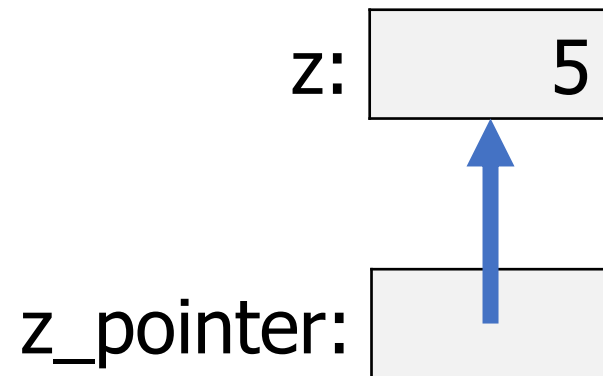
- **Pointers**
- Address Sanitizer
- Arguments to main()

- Variable Lifetimes

- Memory Layout

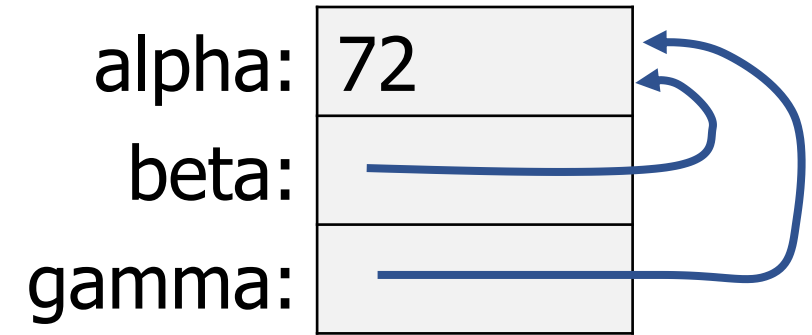
Pointers are another type of value

- Values could be a number, like 5 or 6.27
- Or they could be a “pointer” to an **object**
 - Points at the object, not the variable or value
 - It points at the “chunk of memory”
 - Technically, in C it holds the address of that memory



Pointer examples

```
double alpha = 72;  
double* beta = &alpha;  
double* gamma = beta;
```



- Pointers have a “value” that is some memory address
 - Contains the “location” of some object in memory
 - Conceptually an arrow pointing at that object
- Operator `&` gets the memory address of an object

Dereference a pointer to get the value it points at

```
void add_two(int* n) {  
    *n = *n + 2;  
}
```

```
int main(void) {  
    int x = 15;  
    add_two(&x);  
    printf("%d\n", x);  
    return 0;  
}
```

- Operator * follows the pointer to interact with the value
 - Can be used to read or write
- End result: functions have the ability to directly modify variables through pointers

Possible pointer values

- Uninitialized

```
unsigned long* zeta;
```

- Pointing at an existing object

```
char* letter_ptr = &my_char;
```

- Null (explicitly pointing at nothing)

```
int* p = NULL;
```

```
bool* b = NULL;
```

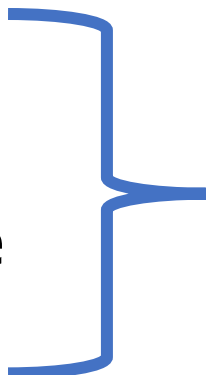
```
double* d = NULL;
```

- NULL works for any pointer type
- NULL is NOT the same as uninitialized (🐛)
- Dereferencing a null pointer is an error (segfault)

A note on writing meaningful code

- Technically, NULL pointers and null terminators are both implemented as a value zero (on any modern system)
 - `false` is implemented as zero as well
 - So, technically, you could use any to mean any
- But humans will be the ones reading your code
 - NULL `\0`, 0, and `false` all have different meanings

- NULL means pointers
- `\0` means the end of strings
- `false` means a Boolean value
- 0 means a number



Use the one that is appropriate to the situation!

Arrays passed into functions are just pointers

- When you pass an array into a function, you don't pass a copy of the values
 - Instead you pass a pointer to the start of the array
 - Be sure to pass a length as well! (no way to determine that in C)

```
void print_array(int* values, int count) {  
    . . .  
}
```

```
int main(void) {  
    int array[10] = {1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1};  
    print_array(array, 10);  
    return 0;  
}
```

Outline

- Pointers
- **Address Sanitizer**
- Arguments to main()

- Variable Lifetimes

- Memory Layout

DANGER! Nothing stops you from going past the end of an array

array_print.c

- C does not check whether your array accesses are valid
 - It just tries to grab the value in the memory you asked for
- Going past the end (or before the beginning) of an array is **UNDEFINED BEHAVIOR**
 - Could result in *anything* happening
- If you're lucky, the code will crash
 - But you will not always get lucky
 - Be sure to always check if you're going past the end of the array

Address Sanitizer

- Automatically compiled in as part of your homework code
- Checks various accesses to memory for validity
 - Produces long error messages that can be scary at first! But are really helpful!
 - Error locations: (more on these “locations” on Thursday)
 - Stack – local variable
 - Global – global variable (usually a string)
 - Heap – variable created with `malloc()`
 - Error types:
 - buffer-overflow – past the end of an array of memory
 - buffer-underflow – before the beginning of an array of memory (rare)
 - various others

Example address sanitizer error

```
=====
==238==ERROR: AddressSanitizer: heap-buffer-overflow on address 0x602000000016 at pc 0x55a44c0d8243
bp 0x7ffd8caf8c10 sp 0x7ffd8caf8c00
WRITE of size 1 at 0x602000000016 thread T0
SCARINESS: 31 (1-byte-write-heap-buffer-overflow)
#0 0x55a44c0d8242 in expand_charseq src/translate.c:74
#1 0x55a44c0d6c23 in gr_expand_charseq harness/hw02_tester.c:37
#2 0x55a44c0d7394 in main harness/tester.c:28
#3 0x7fa42386fbf6 in __libc_start_main (/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6+0x21bf6)
#4 0x55a44c0d6699 in _start (/autograder/source/compile/tester+0x4699)

0x602000000016 is located 0 bytes to the right of 6-byte region [0x602000000010,0x602000000016)
allocated by thread T0 here:
#0 0x7fa4248b8c68 in __interceptor_malloc (/usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libasan.so.5+0x10bc68)
#1 0x55a44c0d8006 in expand_charseq src/translate.c:62

SUMMARY: AddressSanitizer: heap-buffer-overflow src/translate.c:74 in expand_charseq
Shadow bytes around the buggy address:
0x0c047fff7fb0: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0x0c047fff7fc0: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
. . .
(more here that wouldn't fit on the slide)
```

Example address sanitizer error

```
=====
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  . . .
 (more here that wouldn't fit on the slide)
```

Error is coming from AddressSanitizer

Example address sanitizer error

```
=====
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. . .
(more here that wouldn't fit on the slide)
```

Heap-buffer-overflow means past the end of an array created with `malloc()`

Example address sanitizer error

```
=====
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 0x0c047fff7fc0: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
  . . .
 (more here that wouldn't fit on the slide)
```

The error happened in `expand_charseq()` in `src/translate.c` line 74

Example address sanitizer error

```
=====
==238==ERROR: AddressSanitizer: heap-buffer-overflow on address 0x602000000016 at pc 0x55a44c0d8243
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```

0x602000000016 is located 0 bytes to the right of 6-byte region [0x602000000010,0x602000000016) allocated by thread T0 here:

```
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#1 0x55a44c0d8006 in expand_charseq src/translate.c:62
```

SUMMARY: AddressSanitizer: heap-buffer-overflow src/translate.c:74 in expand_charseq
Shadow bytes around the buggy address:

```
0x0c047fff7fb0: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
```

```
0x0c047fff7fc0: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
```

```
. . .
```

(more here that wouldn't fit on the slide)

Full "stack trace" of functions that were called to get to where the error happened

Example address sanitizer error

```
=====
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#1 0x55a44c0d8006 in expand_charseq src/translate.c:62
```

SUMMARY: AddressSanitizer: heap-buffer-overflow src/translate.c:74 in expand_charseq
Shadow bytes around the buggy address:

```
0x0c047fff7fb0: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
```

```
0x0c047fff7fc0: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
```

```
...
```

(more here that wouldn't fit on the slide)

Where the array was created in the first place (expand_charseq() in translate.c line 62)

Live demos of AddressSanitizer

array_print.c
string_print.c

- With pointers, arrays, and strings
- Things to try
 - Intentionally go past end of array
 - Go before beginning of array
 - Use a pointer as an array
 - NULL pointer
- Malformed string with printf

Where the error happened may not but where the bug is

- AddressSanitizer usually points to a line where the array is being accessed
- But the bug is often because an index is out of bounds
- Or because the pointer passed in was invalid to begin with
- This is a new class of problem you'll all have to deal with
 - Errors that occur because of bugs elsewhere

Other AddressSanitizer errors

string_print.c

- Dereferencing a NULL pointer

```
src/string_print.c:4:28: runtime error: load of null pointer of type 'const char'
```

```
AddressSanitizer:DEADLYSIGNAL
```

```
=====
```

```
==2838978==ERROR: AddressSanitizer: SEGV on unknown address 0x000000000000 (pc 0x000000400912 bp 0x000000000000 sp 0x7ffe1379cec0 T0)
```

```
==2838978==The signal is caused by a READ memory access.
```

```
==2838978==Hint: address points to the zero page.
```

```
SCARINESS: 10 (null-deref)
```

```
#0 0x400911 in print_string_chars src/string_print.c:4
```

```
#1 0x400a33 in main src/string_print.c:12
```

```
#2 0x7fefdbf5a492 in __libc_start_main ../csu/libc-start.c:314
```

```
#3 0x40082d in _start (/home/branden/cs211/f21/lec/04_arrays_strings/string_print+0x40082d)
```

```
AddressSanitizer can not provide additional info.
```

```
SUMMARY: AddressSanitizer: SEGV src/string_print.c:4 in print_string_chars
```

```
==2838978==ABORTING
```

Break + Say hi to your neighbors

- Things to share
 - Name
 - Major
 - One of the following
 - Favorite Candy
 - Favorite Pokemon
 - Favorite Emoji

Break + Say hi to your neighbors

- Things to share

- Name -Branden

- Major -Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Computer Science

- One of the following

- Favorite Candy - Twix

- Favorite Pokemon - Eevee

- Favorite Emoji - 🍷

Outline

- Pointers
- Address Sanitizer
- **Arguments to main()**
- Variable Lifetimes
- Memory Layout

Passing arguments to main

- We've been using `"int main(void);"` as `main()`'s signature
- Actually, `main()` can receive arguments, which are what the user called the program with

```
% ./programname arg1 arg2 arg3
```

Real signature for main

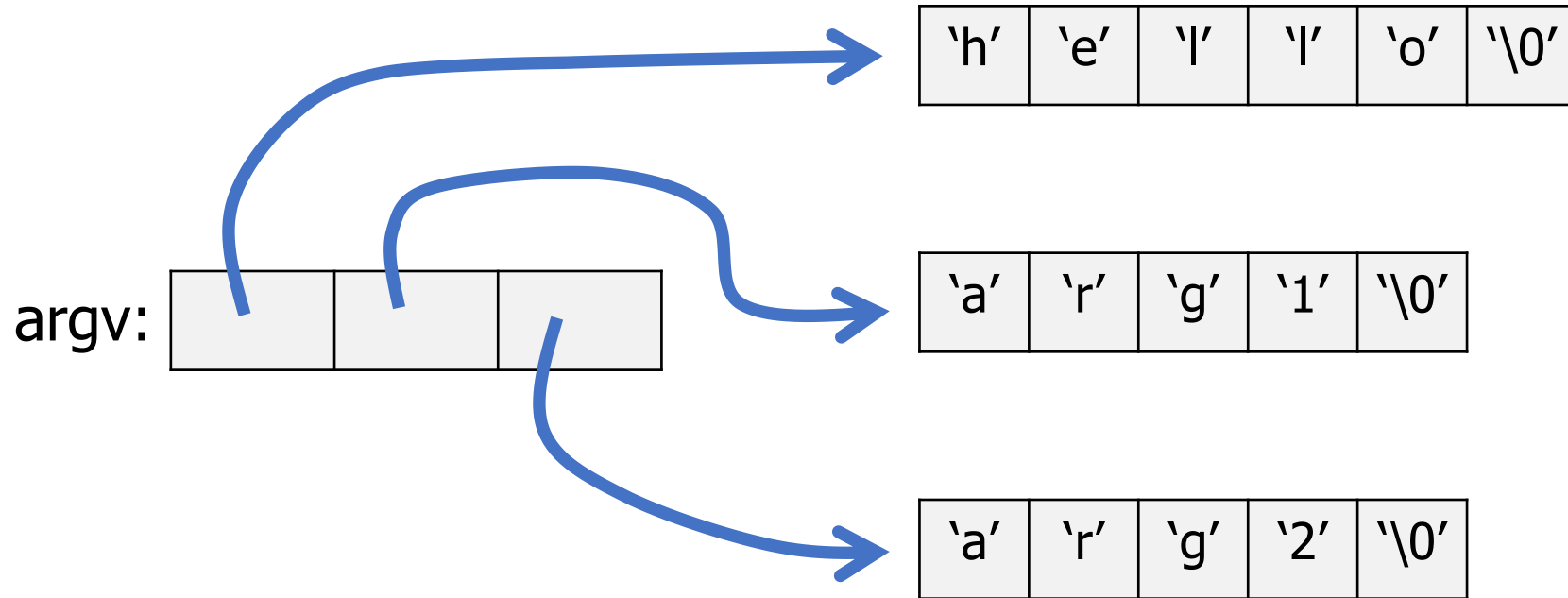
- The real signature for `main()` is:

```
int main(int argc, char* argv[]);
```

- `argc` – the number of strings in `argv` (length of `argv`)
- `argv` – an array of strings (array of `char*`)
 - The first string is the name of the program itself
 - The remaining strings are the arguments to the function
- By using `main(void)`, we've just been ignoring these
 - Which is fine, because they aren't always useful

Pointer to a pointer

Run program as: `./hello arg1 arg2`



`char* argv[]` – array of pointers

Working with argv

- Let's print out all the arguments to the function

```
int main(int argc, char* argv[]) {
    for (int i=0; i<argc; i++) {
        printf("Argument %d: \"%s\"\n", i, argv[i]);
    }

    return 0;
}
```


Outline

- Pointers
- Address Sanitizer
- Arguments to main()
- **Variable Lifetimes**
- Memory Layout

When is a pointer “valid”?


1. If it is initialized
2. If the variable it is referencing still has a valid lifetime
 - Variables “live” until the end of the scope they were created in
 - Scopes are defined by { }
 - Example:

```
void some_function(void) {  
    int a = 5;  
}
```

 a goes “out of scope” here
The variable stops being “alive”

Examples of variable lifetimes

```
int main(void) {  
→ int a = 5;  
  printf("%d\n", a);  
  
  return 0;  
}
```

a: 


Examples of variable lifetimes

```
int main(void) {  
    int a = 5;  
→ printf("%d\n", a);  
  
    return 0;  
}
```

a:  5

Examples of variable lifetimes

```
int main(void) {  
    int a = 5;  
    printf("%d\n", a);  
  
→ return 0;  
}
```

a:  5

Examples of variable lifetimes

```
int main(void) {  
    int a = 5;  
    printf("%d\n", a);  
  
    return 0;  
→ }
```

a: 

- Variable `a` is no longer “alive” at this point
 - It “poofs” out of existence
 - The variable is no longer valid

Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

n: 17

```
→ void test(int n) {  
    int a = 5;  
    if (n >= a) {  
        int b = 16;  
        printf("%d\n", b);  
    }  
  
    printf("%d\n", n);  
}
```

Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

```
void test(int n) {
```



```
    int a = 5;
```

```
    if (n >= a) {
```

```
        int b = 16;
```

```
        printf("%d\n", b);
```

```
    }
```

```
    printf("%d\n", n);
```

```
}
```

n:	17
a:	5

Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

```
void test(int n) {  
    int a = 5;  
    → if (n >= a) {  
        int b = 16;  
        printf("%d\n", b);  
    }  
  
    printf("%d\n", n);  
}
```

n:	17
a:	5

Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

```
void test(int n) {  
    int a = 5;  
    if (n >= a) {  
        int b = 16;  
        printf("%d\n", b);  
    }  
  
    printf("%d\n", n);  
}
```

n:	17
a:	5
b:	16



Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

```
void test(int n) {  
    int a = 5;  
    if (n >= a) {  
        int b = 16;  
        printf("%d\n", b);  
    }  
  
    printf("%d\n", n);  
}
```

n:	17
a:	5
b:	16



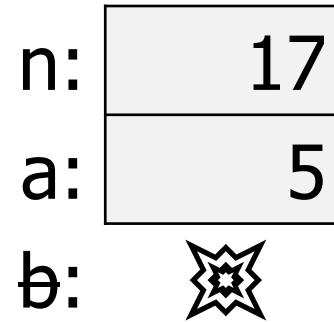
Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

```
void test(int n) {  
    int a = 5;  
    if (n >= a) {  
        int b = 16;  
        printf("%d\n", b);  
    }  
}
```



```
printf("%d\n", n);  
}
```



Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

```
void test(int n) {  
    int a = 5;  
    if (n >= a) {  
        int b = 16;  
        printf("%d\n", b);  
    }  
}
```

```
→ printf("%d\n", n);  
}
```

n:	17
a:	5

Referring to variable `b`
at this point would be
a compilation error

Lifetimes go from creation to end brace }

```
test(17);
```

n: ✨

```
void test(int n) {
```

a: ✨

```
    int a = 5;
```

```
    if (n >= a) {
```

```
        int b = 16;
```

```
        printf("%d\n", b);
```

```
    }
```

```
    printf("%d\n", n);
```

→ }

Variable lifetimes are what makes loops work

- Variables created inside of loops only exist until the end of that iteration of the loop
 - i.e. they only exist until the next end curly brace }

```
while (n < 5) {  
    int i = 1;  
    n += i;  
}
```

A new variable `i` is created
each time the loop repeats

Dangling pointers reference invalid objects

```
int* get_pointer_to_value(void) {  
    int n = 5;  
    return &n;  
}
```

```
int main(void) {  
    int* x = get_pointer_to_value();  
    printf("%d\n", *x);  
    return 0;  
}
```

Dangling pointers reference invalid objects

```
int* get_pointer_to_value(void) {  
    int n = 5;  
    return &n;  
} ←
```

n goes out of scope at the end of this function

So what does the pointer point to???

```
int main(void) {  
    int* x = get_pointer_to_value();  
    printf("%d\n", *x);  
    return 0;  
}
```

Dangling pointers are especially dangerous

- Accessing a dangling pointer is **UNDEFINED BEHAVIOR**
 - Anything could happen!
- If you are lucky: segmentation fault (a.k.a. SIGSEGV)
 - The OS kills your program because it accesses invalid memory
- If you are unlucky: *anything at all*
 - Including returning the correct result the first time you run it and an incorrect result the second time
- AddressSanitizer checks for this and will gift you a crash

String literals are an exception to scoping rules

string_lifetime.c

- String literals **always** exist
 - This is why they cannot be modified. They might be reused later

```
const char* get_pointer_to_string(void) {  
    return "oh, hello!"; // this is okay for string literals  
}
```

```
int main(void) {  
    const char* string = get_pointer_to_string();  
    printf("%s on broadway\n", string);  
    return 0;  
}
```

Break + Question

```
int* get_array_pointer(int* array, int length) {  
    if (length > 2) {  
        return &(array[2]);  
    }  
    return array;  
}
```

Is it valid to return a pointer here?

```
int main(void) {  
    int array[] = {1, 2, 3, 4, 5};  
    int* x = get_array_pointer(array, 5);  
    printf("%d\n", *x);  
    return 0;  
}
```

Will this access fault?

Break + Question

```
int* get_array_pointer(int* array, int length) {  
    if (length > 2) {  
        return &(array[2]);  
    }  
    return array;  
}
```

Is it valid to return a pointer here? **Yes**

This code works because the lifetime of the array is longer than the lifetime of the `get_array_pointer()` function.

```
int main(void) {  
    int array[] = {1, 2, 3, 4, 5};  
    int* x = get_array_pointer(array, 5);  
    printf("%d\n", *x);  
    return 0;  
}
```

Will this access fault? **No**

Outline

- Pointers
- Address Sanitizer
- Arguments to main()

- Variable Lifetimes

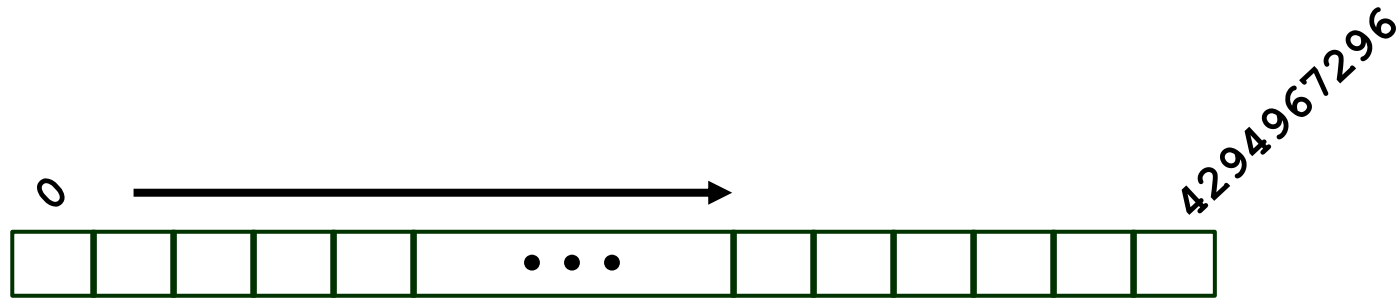
- **Memory Layout**

Memory

- Computers have memory
 - RAM sticks
 - Also some dedicated memory inside of the processor
- The operating system of the computer hands out chunks of memory to running processes
 - Like our compiled C programs
 - While they are running, they have a certain amount of memory reserved for their use
 - You can see this in Task Manager on Windows (or Top on Linux)



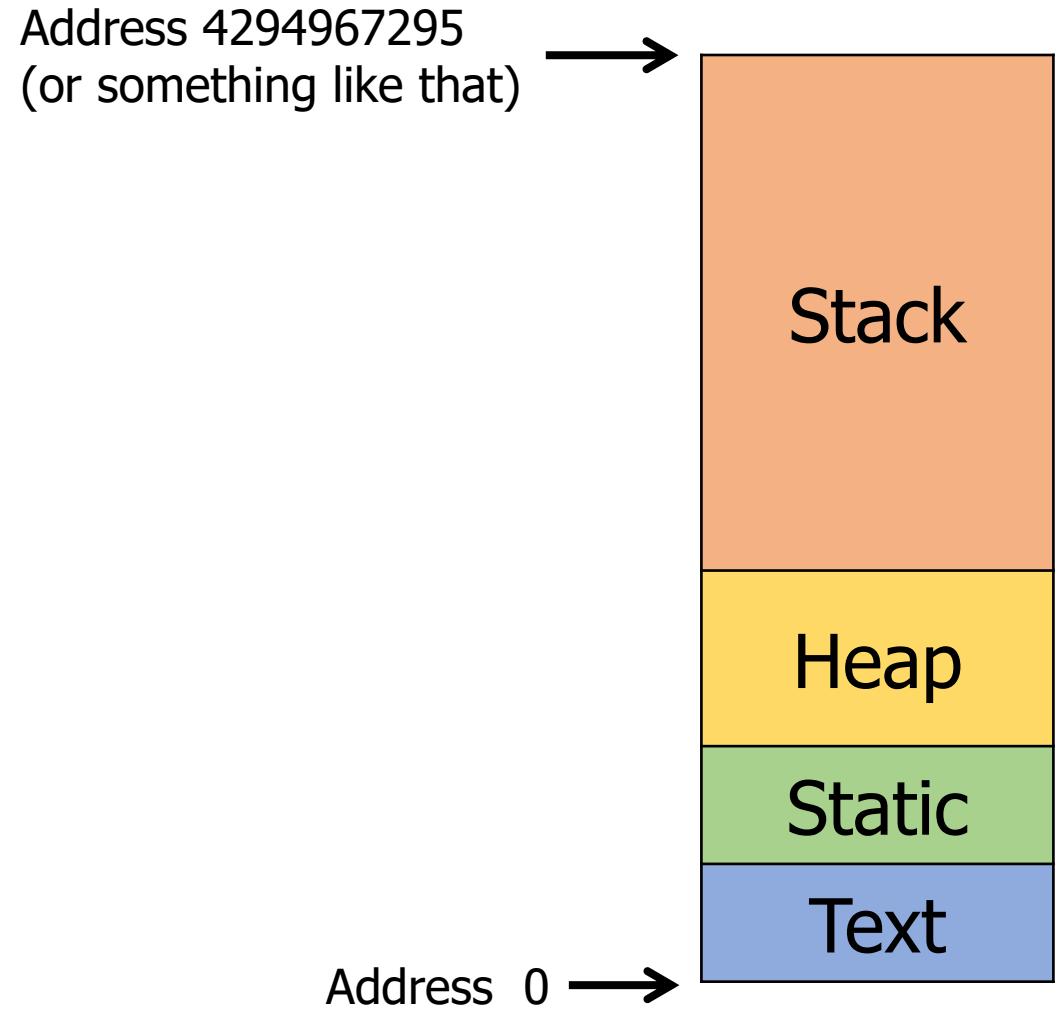
What is memory conceptually?



- A nearly infinite series of slots that can be used to hold data
 - Units of memory are known as bytes
 - So 4 GB of RAM is memory with 4294967296 bytes
 - Typical variables take 1-8 bytes
- Each slot in the memory has an index: a memory address
 - Pointers are the memory address of a variable

C memory layout

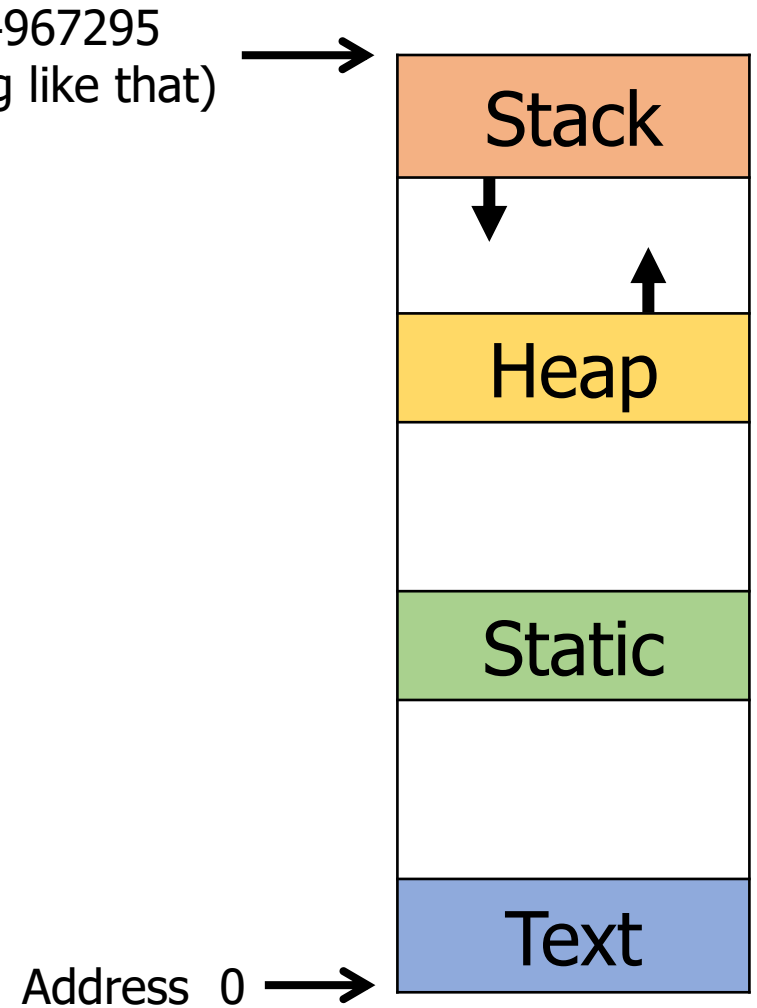
- Stack Section
 - Local variables
 - Function arguments
- Heap Section
 - Memory granted through `malloc()`
- Static Section (a.k.a. Data Section)
 - Global variables
 - Static function variables
 - Subsection with read-only data
 - Like string literals
- Text Section (a.k.a Code Section)
 - Program code



C memory layout

- Conceptually, the sections are laid out next to each other
- Realistically, there are huge gaps between them
 - Because most programs don't use all that much memory
- The stack/heap sections can grow in size if necessary

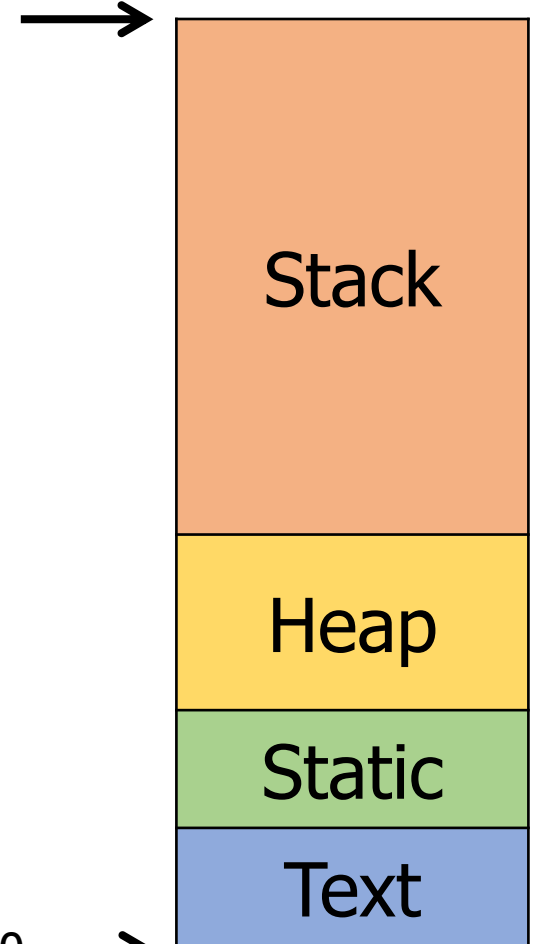
Address 4294967295
(or something like that)



C memory layout

```
int a;  
  
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

Address 4294967295
(or something like that)

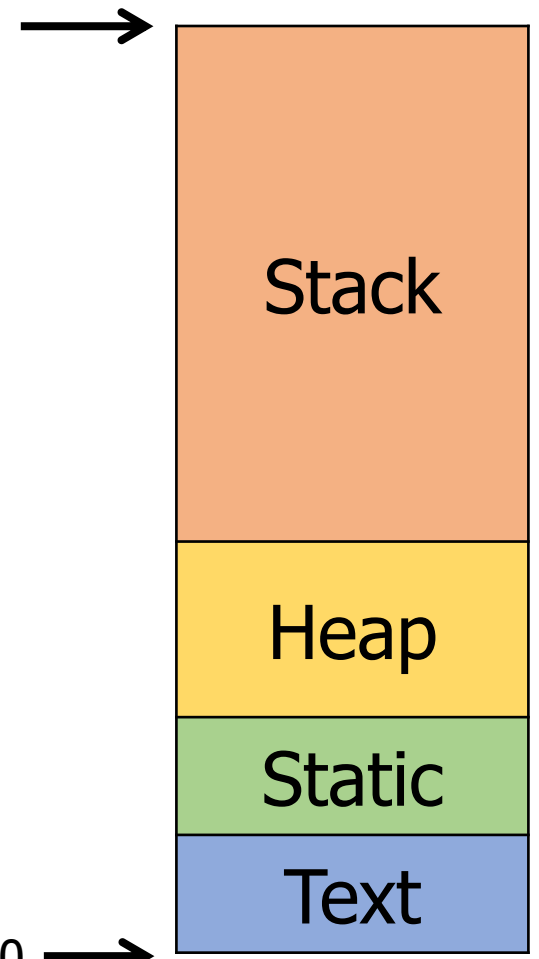


C memory layout

```
int a;
```

```
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

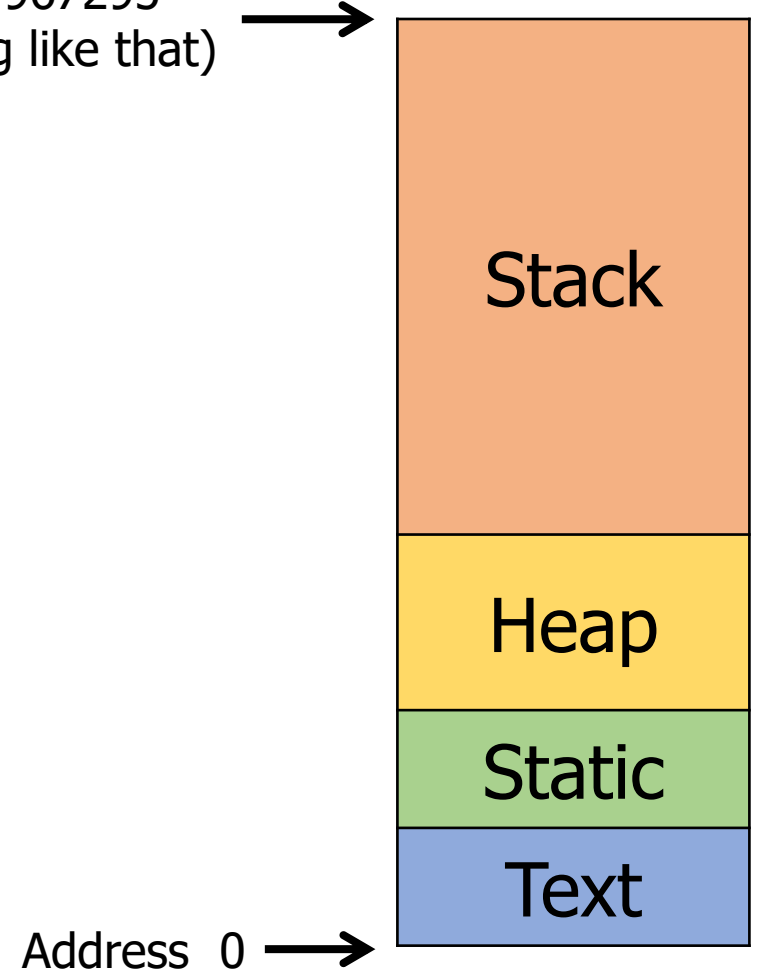
Address 4294967295
(or something like that)



C memory layout

```
int a;  
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

Address 4294967295
(or something like that)



C memory layout

```
int a;
```

```
void foo(short b) {
```

```
    static int c = 3;
```

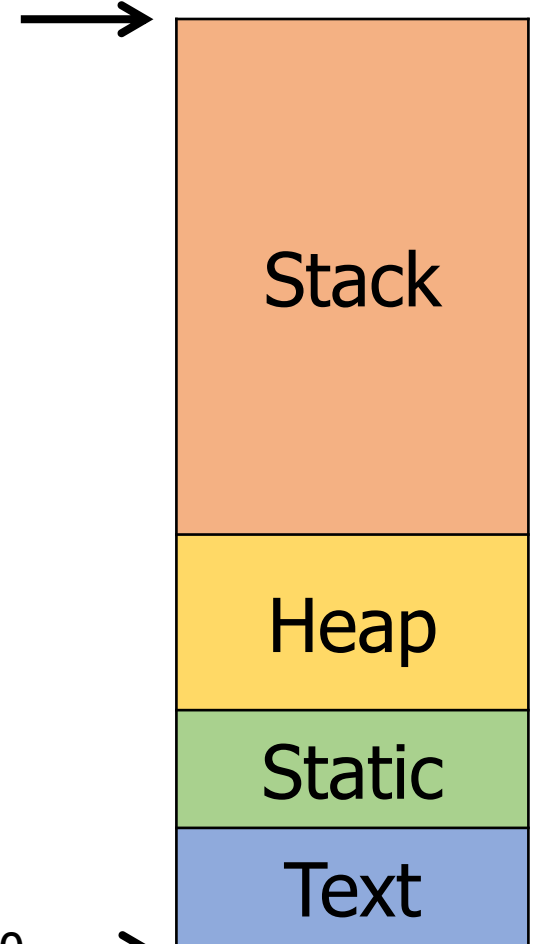
```
    char* d;
```

```
    d = (char*) malloc(4);
```

```
    printf("Hello CS211\n");
```

```
}
```

Address 4294967295
(or something like that)

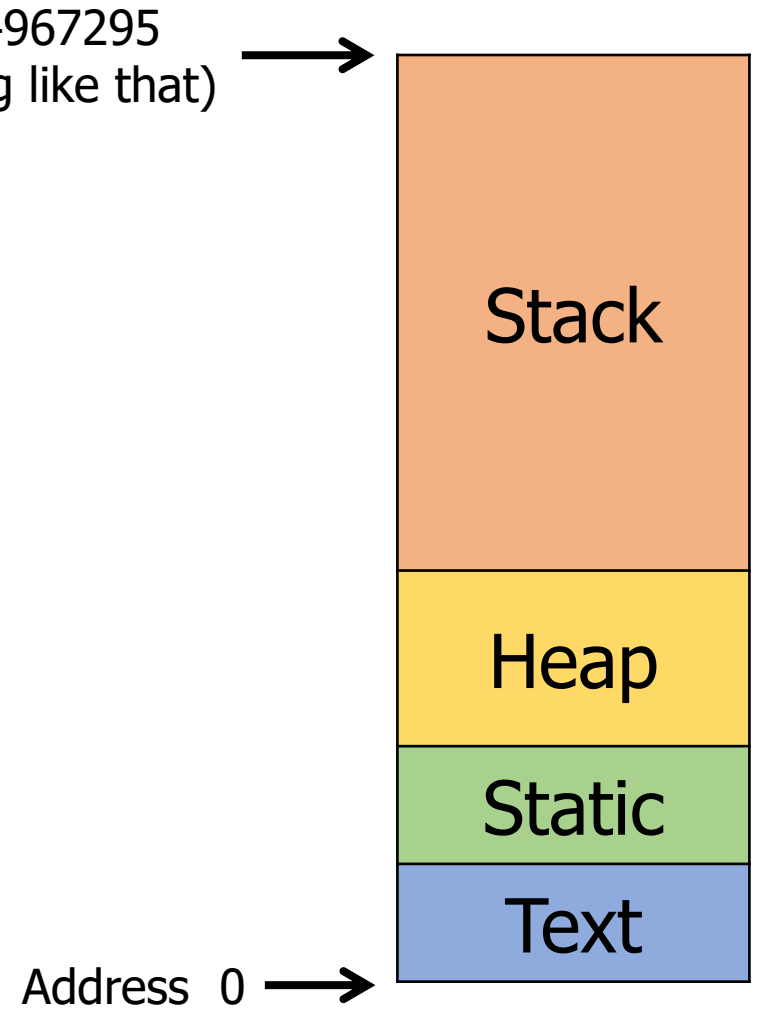


Address 0

C memory layout

```
int a;  
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

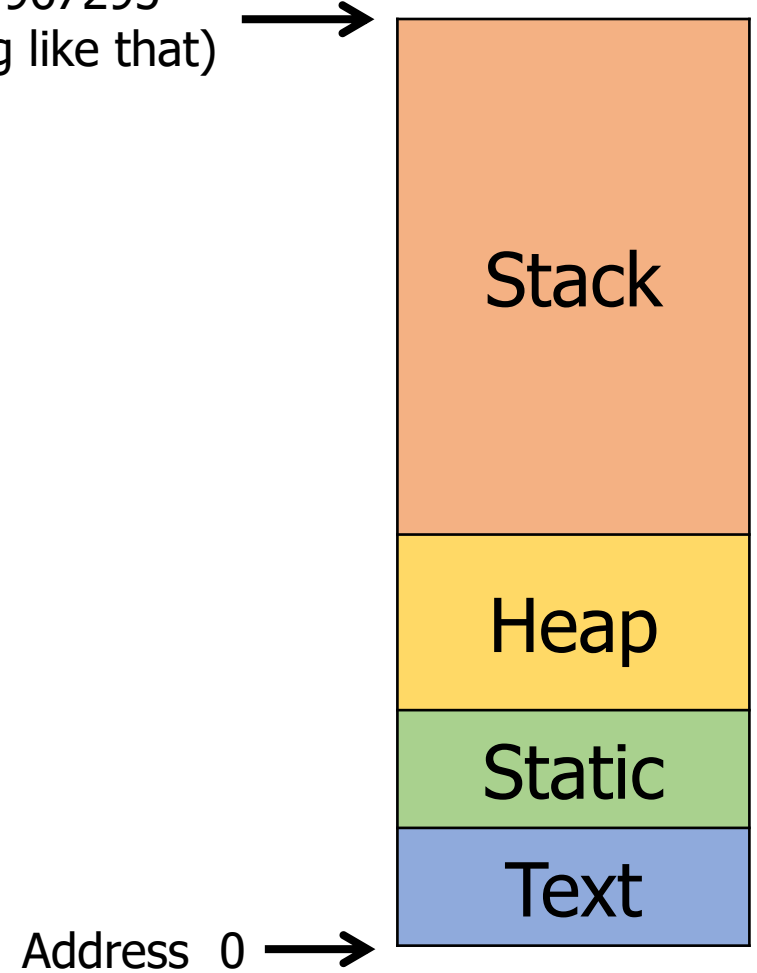
Address 4294967295
(or something like that)



C memory layout

```
int a;  
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

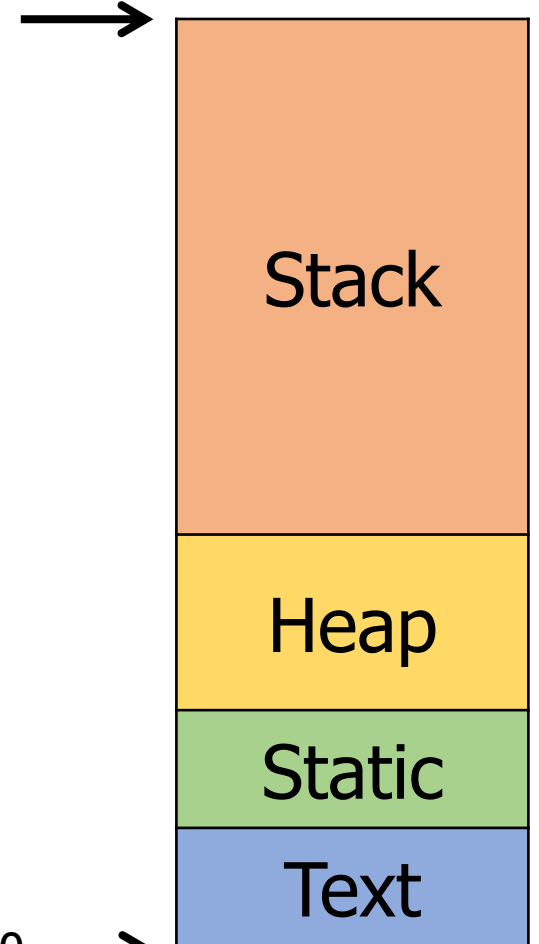
Address 4294967295
(or something like that)



C memory layout

```
int a;  
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

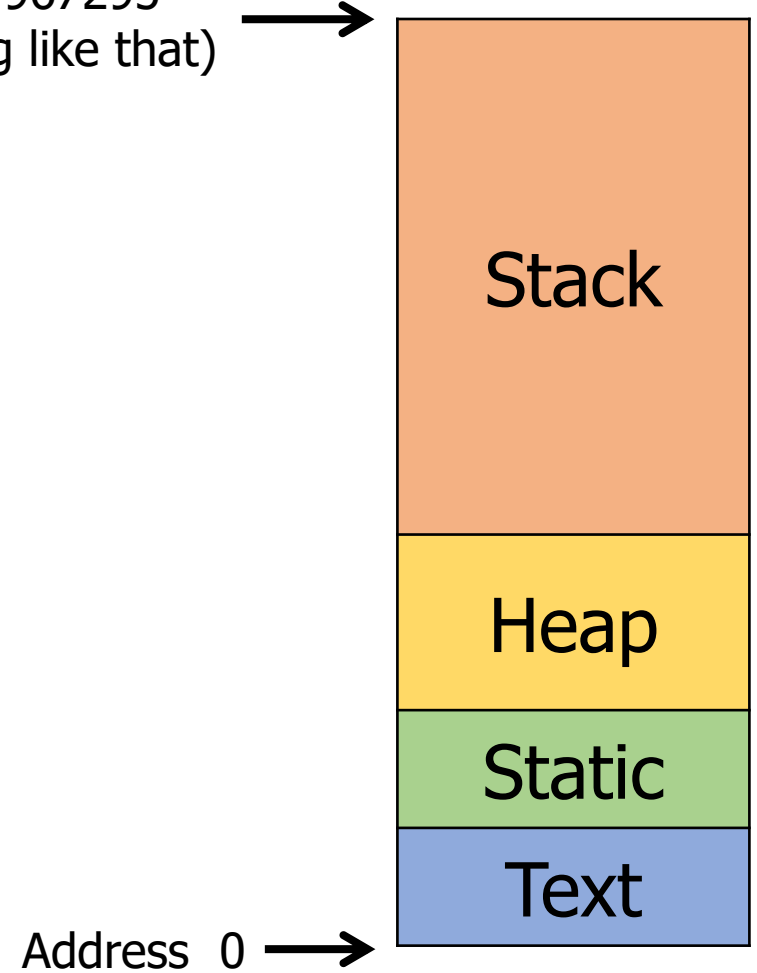
Address 4294967295
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C memory layout

```
int a;  
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

Address 4294967295
(or something like that)

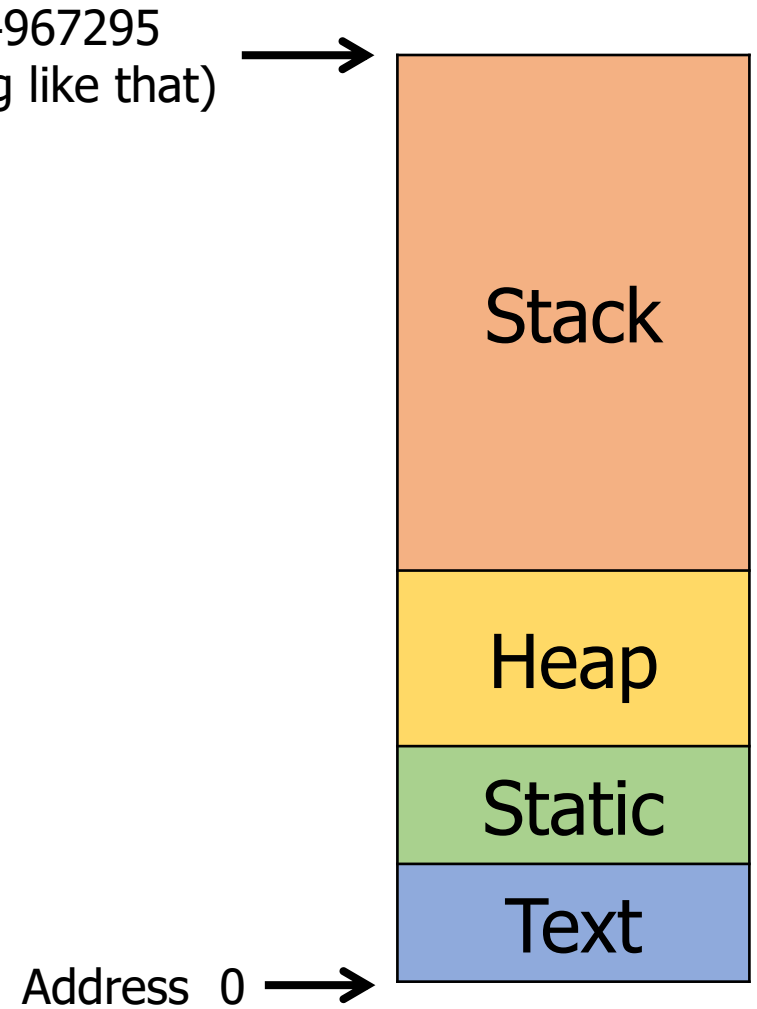


C memory layout

```
int a;  
void foo(short b) {  
    static int c = 3;  
  
    char* d;  
    d = (char*) malloc(4);  
  
    printf("Hello CS211\n");  
}
```

Program code goes in the Text section (machine instructions)

Address 4294967295
(or something like that)



Relating memory sections back to lifetimes

- Stack memory has the lifetime of the “scope”
 - From open curly brace to close curly brace
 - Local variables are here
- Static memory has the lifetime of the process
 - From the start of `main()` until it returns
 - Strings are here
- What if you want memory that outlives a function, but doesn't live for the entire duration of the program
 - Heap memory! Claim with `malloc()`

Outline

- Pointers
- Address Sanitizer
- Arguments to main()

- Variable Lifetimes

- Memory Layout

Bonus

- Review: strings

Iterating through a string

```
void print_string_chars(char* string) {  
    for (size_t i=0; string[i] != '\0'; i++) {  
        printf("String[%d] = '%c' \n", i, string[i]);  
    }  
}
```

- Note that we didn't need a length this time!
 - Just iterate until you find the null terminator

String literals cannot be modified

- `const` in C marks a variable as constant (a.k.a. immutable)

- Example:

```
const int x = 5;  
x++; // Compilation error!
```

- String literals in C are of type `const char*`

```
const char* mystr = "Hello!\n";  
mystr[1] = 'B'; // Compilation error!
```

- Just removing the `"const"` will result in a runtime crash instead...

Making modifiable strings

Two options

1. Create a new character array with enough room for the string and then copy over characters from the string literal
 - Need to be sure to copy over the `'\0'` for it to be a valid string!
2. Initialize an array with a string literal

```
char mystr[] = "abc";
```

Creates a character array of length 4 ('a', 'b', 'c', and '\0')