# Exception Handling and Exception Safety CS100 Lecture 24

**GK**xx

December 26, 2023

#### Contents

- Things tend to go wrong.
- Exception handling
  - throw
  - try-catch
- 8 Exception safety
  - Exception safety guarantees
  - Exception specification

#### Input failure

```
int num_of_people;
std::cin >> num_of_people;
```

What happens when the input is not an integer?

#### Input failure

```
int num_of_people;
std::cin >> num_of_people;
What happens when the input is not an integer?
if (!std::cin) {
   // handle input failure
}
```

#### strcpy

```
You are asked to write a strcpy function...
void strcpy(char *dest, const char *source) {
  while (*source)
    *dest++ = *source++;
  *dest = '\0';
}
```

#### strcpy

You are asked to write a strcpy function...

```
void strcpy(char *dest, const char *source) {
  while (*source)
    *dest++ = *source++;
  *dest = '\0';
}
```

In reality, things may go wrong:

- Null pointers? Or even worse wild pointers?
- Buffer overflow?

#### Which is better?

1. Terminate the program on failure and report the error.

```
void strcpy(char *dest, const char *source) {
  if (!dest || !source) {
    std::cerr << "strcpy arguments invalid.\n";
    exit(1);
  }
  while (*source)
    *dest++ = *source++;
  *dest = '\0';
}</pre>
```

2. Return false on failure:

```
bool strcpy(char *dest, const char *source) {
  if (!dest || !source)
    return false;
  while (*source)
    *dest++ = *source++;
  *dest = '\0';
  return true;
}
```

#### Which is better?

3. Be silent to errors.

```
void strcpy(char *dest, const char *source) {
  if (dest && source) {
    while (*source)
      *dest++ = *source++;
    *dest = '\0';
  }
```

4. Use assertions.

```
void strcpy(char *dest, const char *source) {
  assert(dest != NULL);
  assert(source != NULL);
  while (*source)
    *dest++ = *source++;
  *dest = '\0';
}
```

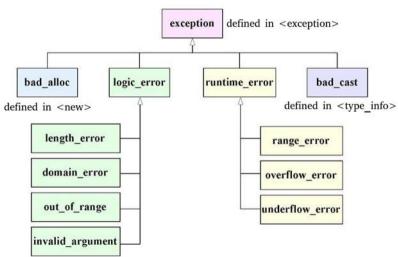
A good blog on this topic: https://blog.csdn.net/myan/article/details/1921

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#### Throwing an exception

```
class Dynarray {
  std::size_t m_length;
  int *m storage:
public:
  int &at(std::size t n) {
    if (n >= m length)
      throw std::out of range{"Dynarray subscript out of range!"};
    return m storage[n];
```



- The normal new and new[] operators throw std::bad\_alloc when running out of memory.
- dynamic\_cast for references throws std::bad\_cast when the cast fails.
  - dynamic\_cast for pointers does not throw. It returns nullptr on failure.



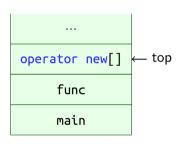
- The normal new and new[] operators throw std::bad\_alloc when running out of memory.
- dynamic\_cast for references throws std::bad\_cast when the cast fails.
  - dynamic\_cast for pointers does not throw. It returns nullptr on failure.
- std::system\_error is thrown in many cases, especially in functions that interface with OS facilities, e.g. the constructor of std::thread.
- <chrono> defines std::nonexistent\_local\_time and std::ambiguous\_local\_time representing some errors related to time settings.



operator[] for STL containers does not check boundaries, but at() does.

We will see that exceptions thrown could be catched and handled.

```
void func(int n) {
   std::string s;
   std::cin >> s;
   int *p = new int[n];
   // ...
}
int main() {
   int size = 100;
   func(size);
   // ...
}
```



Suppose operator new[] encounters shortage of memory...

```
void func(int n) {
  std::string s:
  std::cin >> s:
 int *p = new int[n];
  // ...
int main() {
  int size = 100;
  func(size);
  // ...
```

• During the creation of p, std::bad\_alloc is raised in operator new[].

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```
void func(int n) {
  std::string s:
  std::cin >> s:
  int *p = new int[n];
  // ...
int main() {
  int size = 100;
  func(size);
  // ...
```

- During the creation of p, std::bad\_alloc is raised in operator new[].
- Control flow returns to func.

```
void func(int n) {
  std::string s;
  std::cin >> s:
  int *p = new int[n];
  // ...
int main() {
  int size = 100;
  func(size);
  // ...
```

- During the creation of p, std::bad\_alloc is raised in operator new[].
- Control flow returns to func.
- **3** s is destroyed.

```
void func(int n) {
  std::string s:
  std::cin >> s:
  int *p = new int[n];
  // ...
int main() {
  int size = 100;
  func(size);
  // ...
```

- During the creation of p, std::bad\_alloc is raised in operator new[].
- Control flow returns to func.
- s is destroyed.
- n is destroyed.

```
void func(int n) {
  std::string s:
  std::cin >> s:
  int *p = new int[n];
  // ...
int main() {
  int size = 100;
  func(size):
  // ...
```

- During the creation of p, std::bad\_alloc is raised in operator new[].
- Control flow returns to func.
- s is destroyed.
- n is destroyed.
- Control flow returns to main.

```
void func(int n) {
  std::string s:
  std::cin >> s:
  int *p = new int[n];
  // ...
int main() {
  int size = 100;
  func(size):
  // ...
```

- During the creation of p, std::bad\_alloc is raised in operator new[].
- Control flow returns to func.
- s is destroyed.
- on is destroyed.
- Control flow returns to main.
- size is destroyed.

```
void func(int n) {
 std::string s:
 std::cin >> s:
  int *p = new int[n];
 // ...
int main() {
 int size = 100:
 func(size):
  // ...
```

- During the creation of p, std::bad\_alloc is raised in operator new[].
- Control flow returns to func.
- s is destroyed.
- n is destroyed.
- Ontrol flow returns to main.
- size is destroyed.

#### Notice

Stack unwinding is only guaranteed to happen for **caught** exceptions. If an exception is not caught, whether the stack is unwound is **implementation-defined**.

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  - throw
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  - Exception safety guarantees
  - Exception specification

```
void func(int n) {
  std::string s:
  std::cin >> s:
  int *p = new int[n];
  // ...
int main() {
  trv {
    int size = 100:
    func(size):
  } catch (const std::bad_alloc &e) {
    // deal with shortage of memory here.
    . . .
```

*More Effective C++* Item 13: Catch exceptions by reference.

#### what()

The error message could be obtained via the 'what' member function, which is virtual, const and noexcept.

```
void fun() {
  throw std::runtime error("I love watermelons.");
int main() {
  try {
    fun():
  } catch (const std::runtime error &re) {
    std::cout << re.what() << std::endl;</pre>
```

#### Output:

I love watermelons.

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 trv {
    auto i = 42:
    auto copy = v;
    int x = copv.at(100):
   a(x):
  } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) {
    // deal with shortage of memory
  } catch (const std::out of range &oor) {
    // deal with illegal subscript '100'
  } catch (...) {
    // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
   throw; // Throw the exception again.
  std::cout << "returns.\n":
```

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 try {
    auto i = 42:
    auto copy = v:
\wedge int x = copy.at(100);
                            throws std::out of range
   q(x);
  } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) {
    // deal with shortage of memory
  } catch (const std::out of range &oor) {
    // deal with illegal subscript '100'
  } catch (...) {
    // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
    throw; // Throw the exception again.
  std::cout << "returns\n";</pre>
```

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 try {
    auto i = 42:
    auto copy = v: `copy' is destroyed
    int x = copy.at(100);
   q(x);
  } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) {
    // deal with shortage of memory
  } catch (const std::out of range &oor) {
    // deal with illegal subscript '100'
  } catch (...) {
    // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
    throw; // Throw the exception again.
  std::cout << "returns\n";</pre>
```

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 try {
   auto copy = v:
   int x = copy.at(100);
   q(x);
 } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) {
   // deal with shortage of memory
 } catch (const std::out of range &oor) {
   // deal with illegal subscript '100'
 } catch (...) {
   // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
   throw; // Throw the exception again.
 std::cout << "returns\n";</pre>
```

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 try {
    auto i = 42:
    auto copy = v:
    int x = copy.at(100);
   q(x);
 } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) { Not matched
    // deal with shortage of memory
  } catch (const std::out of range &oor) {
    // deal with illegal subscript '100'
  } catch (...) {
    // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
    throw; // Throw the exception again.
  std::cout << "returns\n";</pre>
```

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 try {
    auto i = 42:
    auto copy = v:
    int x = copy.at(100);
   q(x);
  } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) {
    // deal with shortage of memory
  } catch (const std::out of range &oor) { Matched
    // deal with illegal subscript '100'
  } catch (...) {
    // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
    throw; // Throw the exception again.
  std::cout << "returns\n";</pre>
```

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 try {
    auto i = 42:
    auto copy = v:
    int x = copy.at(100);
   q(x);
  } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) {
    // deal with shortage of memory
  } catch (const std::out of range &oor) {
   // deal with illegal subscript '100'
 } catch (...) {
    // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
    throw; // Throw the exception again.
  std::cout << "returns\n";</pre>
```

```
void f(const std::vector<int> &v) {
 try {
    auto i = 42:
   auto copy = v;
    int x = copy.at(100);
   q(x);
  } catch (const std::bad alloc &ba) {
    // deal with shortage of memory
  } catch (const std::out of range &oor) {
    // deal with illegal subscript '100'
  } catch (...) {
    // What else may happen (probably in 'g(x)')? We are not sure.
    throw; // Throw the exception again.
  std::cout << "returns\n"; Control flow continues here</pre>
```

## Catch by base class

operator new[] raises std::bad\_alloc when out of memory.

 But if the array-new length is obviously invalid, an instance of std::bad\_array\_new\_length is raised.

```
new int[-1]; // negative size
new int[3]{2, 3, 4, 6, 8}; // too many initializers
new int[LONG_MAX][100]; // too large
```

# Catch by base class

operator new[] raises std::bad\_alloc when out of memory.

 But if the array-new length is obviously invalid, an instance of std::bad\_array\_new\_length is raised.

```
new int[-1]; // negative size
new int[3]{2, 3, 4, 6, 8}; // too many initializers
new int[LONG_MAX][100]; // too large
```

• catch (const std::bad\_alloc &) also catches it, because of inheritance:

```
exception decay bad_array_new_length
```

# Catch by base class

```
try {
   do_something();
} catch (const std::runtime_error &re) {
   // deal with runtime_error
} catch (const std::exception &e) {
   // deal with other kinds of exceptions
} catch (...) {
   // deal with other things
}
```

## Catch by base class

```
try {
     do something():
    } catch (const std::runtime error &re) {
     // deal with runtime error
    } catch (const std::exception &e) {
     // deal with other kinds of exceptions
    } catch (...) {
     // deal with other things
Note: Other things (e.g. a string) can also be thrown.
    throw "I don\'t want to talk to vou.":
    throw 42:
In this case, these things are caught by catch (...).
```

### Catch by base class

catch clauses are examined one-by-one.

```
try {
   do_something();
} catch (const std::exception &e) {
   std::cout << "exception\n";
} catch (const std::runtime_error &re) {
   std::cout << "runtime_error\n";
} catch (...) {
   // deal with other things
}</pre>
```

If an instance of std::runtime\_error is thrown, it will be caught by "catch (const std::exception &)" instead of "catch (const std::runtime\_error &)" in this case.

```
void fun() {
 int i = 42:
 std::vector<int> v:
∧v.at(i) = 10; throws std::out_of_range
int main() {
 try {
    std::string str("Hello");
    fun();
 } catch (...) {}
```

```
void fun() {
  int i = 42:
  std::vector<int> v; `v' is destroyed
  v.at(i) = 10:
int main() {
  try {
    std::string str("Hello");
   fun();
  } catch (...) {}
```

```
void fun() {
 std::vector<int> v:
 v.at(i) = 10;
int main() {
 try {
   std::string str("Hello");
   fun();
 } catch (...) {}
```

```
void fun() {
  int i = 42:
  std::vector<int> v;
  v.at(i) = 10;
int main() {
  try {
    std::string str("Hello");
    fun(); Control flow returns here
  } catch (...) {}
```

```
void fun() {
  int i = 42:
  std::vector<int> v:
  v.at(i) = 10;
int main() {
  try {
    std::string str("Hello"); `str' is destroyed
    fun();
  } catch (...) {}
```

```
void fun() {
  int i = 42:
  std::vector<int> v:
  v.at(i) = 10;
int main() {
  try {
    std::string str("Hello");
    fun();
  } catch (...) {} The exception is caught.
```

#### Notes

- The try block and catch blocks are independent scopes. Objects declared in the try block cannot be used in catch blocks.
- When an exception occurs, local objects in the try block are destroyed before the exception is caught.
- Stack unwinding is only guaranteed to happen for caught exceptions.
- If an exception is thrown and not caught, 'std::terminate' will be called to terminate the program. (defined in <exception>)

#### Function-try-block

A function-try-block is typically useful for a constructor.

```
class Dynarray {
public:
    Dynarray(std::size_t n)
        try : m_length(n), m_storage(new int[n]{}) {}
    catch (const std::bad_alloc &ba) {
        std::cerr << "No enough memory.\n";
        throw;
    }
};</pre>
```

- Exceptions raised both in constructor initializer list and function body can be caught.
- Non-static data members cannot be referred to in such catch blocks. (Why?)

#### Function-try-block

A function-try-block is typically useful for a constructor.

```
class Dynarray {
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        try : m_length(n), m_storage(new int[n]{}) {}
    catch (const std::bad_alloc &ba) {
        std::cerr << "No enough memory.\n";
        throw;
    }
};</pre>
```

- Exceptions raised both in constructor initializer list and function body can be caught.
- Non-static data members cannot be referred to in such catch blocks. (Why?)
  - An exception thrown in the constructor indicates that the initialization has failed!
  - Once an exception is thrown, everything initialized in the try block are destroyed.

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#### Exception safety guarantees

Exception-safe functions offer one of three guarantees:

- **Nothrow guarantee**: Promise never to throw exceptions.
- **Strong guarantee**: Promise that if an exception is thrown, the state of the program is **unchanged**, as if the function had not been called ("roll back").
- Weak guarantee (basic guarantee): Promise that if an exception is thrown, everything in the program remains in a valid state (though possibly changed).
  - No objects or data structures become corrupted.
  - All class invariants are satisfied. For example, a Polynomial should have at least one coefficient (the constant term). In Dynarray, m\_length should represent the length of the memory block that m\_storage points to.

Effective C++ Item 29: Strive for exception-safe code.



#### Exception safety guarantees

The level of an exception safety guarantee measures how hard it is to recover from an exception.

```
void foo(std::vector<int> &values) {
  try {
    values = something();
  } catch (const std::bad_alloc &ba) {
    // Can we assume that 'values' is still in a valid state? (weak guarantee)
    // Can we assume that 'values' remains unchanged? (strong guarantee)
  }
}
```

#### Exception safety guarantees

#### *Effective C++* Item 29:

A software system is **either exception-safe or it's not**. There's no such thing as a partially exception-safe system. If a system has **even a single function** that's not exception-safe, the system as a whole is not exception-safe.

A function can usually offer a guarantee no stronger than the **weakest** guarantee of the functions it calls.

```
class Dynarray {
  int *m storage:
  std::size t m length:
public:
 Dynarray &operator=(const Dynarray &other) {
    if (this != &other) {
      delete[] m storage;
     m_storage = new int[other.m_length]; // May throw std::bad_alloc
      std::copy(other.m storage, other.m storage + other.m length, m storage);
     m length = other.m length;
    return *this:
```

```
class Dynarray {
  int *m storage:
  std::size t m length:
public:
 Dynarray &operator=(const Dynarray &other) {
    if (this != &other) {
      delete[] m storage;
     m_storage = new int[other.m_length]; // May throw std::bad_alloc
      std::copy(other.m storage, other.m storage + other.m length, m storage);
     m length = other.m length;
    return *this:
};
```

**No guarantee at all!** The data pointed to by m\_storage has already been destroyed before the exception happens.

```
class Dynarray {
public:
    Dynarray & operator=(const Dynarray & other) {
        auto new_data = new int[other.m_length];
        std::copy(other.m_storage, other.m_storage + other.m_length, new_data);
        delete[] m_storage;
        m_storage = new_data;
        m_length = other.m_length;
        return *this;
    }
};
```

```
public:
   Dynarray &operator=(const Dynarray &other) {
    auto new_data = new int[other.m_length];
    std::copy(other.m_storage, other.m_storage + other.m_length, new_data);
    delete[] m_storage;
    m_storage = new_data;
    m_length = other.m_length;
    return *this;
   }
};
```

**Strong guarantee.** Nothing has been changed before new[] on the first line throws an exception.

class Dynarray {

```
class Dynarray {
public:
    Dynarray & operator=(const Dynarray & other) {
        m_length = other.m_length;
        auto new_data = new int[m_length];
        std::copy(other.m_storage, other.m_storage + m_length, new_data);
        delete[] m_storage;
        m_storage = new_data;
        return *this;
    }
};
```

```
Dynarray & operator=(const Dynarray & other) {
    m_length = other.m_length;
    auto new_data = new int[m_length];
    std::copy(other.m_storage, other.m_storage + m_length, new_data);
    delete[] m_storage;
    m_storage = new_data;
    return *this;
}
};
```

**No guarantee.** m\_length is changed too early. If new[] throws, m\_length is not equal to the length of the memory block that m\_storage points to.

class Dynarray {

public:

The "copy-and-swap" idiom, talked about in previous recitations.

```
class Dynarray {
public:
  void swap(Dynarray &other) noexcept {
    using std::swap:
    swap(m length, other.m length);
    swap(m_storage, other.m_storage);
  Dynarray & operator = (const Dynarray & other) {
    Dynarray(other).swap(*this);
    return *this:
```

The "copy-and-swap" idiom, talked about in previous recitations.

```
class Dynarray {
public:
  void swap(Dynarray &other) noexcept {
    using std::swap:
    swap(m length, other.m length);
    swap(m_storage, other.m_storage);
  Dynarray & operator = (const Dynarray & other) {
    Dynarray(other).swap(*this);
    return *this:
```

**Strong guarantee.** The only thing that may throw an exception is Dynarray(other) (which allocates memory through new[]).

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Before C++11, a function may declare in advance what exception(s) it may throw.

```
void *operator new(std::size_t size) throw(std::bad_alloc); // May throw std::bad_alloc.
```

```
Before C++11, a function may declare in advance what exception(s) it may throw. void *operator new(std::size_t size) throw(std::bad_alloc); // May throw std::bad_alloc. To a function that offers nothrow guarantee: throw() int add(int a, int b) throw() { return a + b; }
```

People came to realize that it is **whether the function throws exceptions or not** that really matters.

- In most cases, knowing the specific exception type offers no more help.
- In most cases, all we can do is to catch it through catch(...), report it or do some logging, and then throw it again through throw;

People came to realize that it is **whether the function throws exceptions or not** that really matters.

- In most cases, knowing the specific exception type offers no more help.
- In most cases, all we can do is to catch it through catch(...), report it or do some logging, and then throw it again through throw;

Since C++11, declare noexcept for non-throwing functions.

```
class Dynarray {
public:
    void swap(Dynarray &other) noexcept {
      std::swap(m_storage, other.m_storage);
      std::swap(m_length, other.m_length);
    }
};
```

The throw() specifiers have been deprecated and removed in modern C++.

#### noexcept

The noexcept specifier makes it possible for more optimization.

- When an exception is thrown inside a noexcept function, whether the stack is unwound is implementation-defined.
  - Compilers need not keep the runtime stack in an unwindable state.
- Certain functions must be noexcept so that they can be called by standard library functions.

Recall that std::vector<T> will allocate a larger block of memory when the current memory capacity is not enough.

```
template <typename T>
class vector {
 T *m storage;
  T *m_end_of_elem, *m_end_of_storage; // Possible implementation.
public:
 void push back(const T &x) {
    if (size() == capacity())
      reallocate(capacity() == 0 ? 1 : capacity() * 2):
    construct object at(m end of elem. x):
    ++m end of elem;
private:
 void reallocate(std::size t new capacity);
};
```

Before C++11, the elements are **copied** to the new memory block.

 Note: std::vector<T> does not use new[], because it needs to separate object creation from memory allocation. The following code uses allocate\_memory, construt\_object\_at and destroy\_and\_deallocate for demonstration only.

```
template <typename T>
class vector {
  void reallocate(std::size t new capacity) {
    auto new storage = allocate memory(new capacity), p = new storage;
    for (auto old_data = m_storage; old_data != m_end_of_elem; ++old_data)
      construct object at(p++. *old data):
    destroy and deallocate(m storage):
   m storage = new storage;
   m end of elem = p;
   m end of storage = m storage + new capacity:
```

To offer **strong exception safety guarantee**, reallocate needs to "recall" the operations once an exception is encountered.

```
template <typename T>
class vector {
  void reallocate(std::size t new capacity) {
    auto new storage = allocate_memory(new_capacity), p = new_storage;
    trv {
      for (auto old data = m storage; old data != m end of elem: ++old data)
       construct object at(p++. *old data):
    } catch (...) {
     while (p != new storage) destroy(--p);
      deallocate(new storage): throw:
    destroy and deallocate(m storage):
   m storage = new storage; m end of elem = p; m end of storage = m storage + new capacity;
};
```

Since C++11, a reasonable optimization is to **move** elements, instead of copying them.

```
template <typename T>
class vector {
  void reallocate(std::size t new capacity) {
    auto new storage = allocate memory(new capacity), p = new storage;
    trv {
      for (auto old_data = m_storage; old_data != m_end_of_elem; ++old data)
        construct object at(p++, std::move(*old data));
    } catch (...) {
      // Wait ... The elements are moved! How can we recover them?
    // ...
```

Since C++11, a reasonable optimization is to **move** elements, instead of copying them. Unlike copy, **move** of an element is a modifying operation.

- The old elements are modified during this procedure.
- If a move throws an exception, there is no way of rolling back!

Due to this consideration, std::vector<T> uses the move operation of T only when it is noexcept.

```
for (auto old_data = m_storage; old_data != m_end_of_elem; ++old_data)
  construct_object_at(p++, std::move_if_noexcept(*old_data));
```

#### noexcept

noexcept is only a logical guarantee. A noexcpet function may still

- call functions that are not noexcept, or
- throw exceptions under certain circumstances.

#### Summary

- throw an exception
- try-catch: catch and handle exceptions
- Standard library exceptions: std::exception, std::bad\_alloc, std::logic\_error, std::runtime\_error, std::bad\_cast, ...
- Stack unwinding:
  - Destroys local objects in reverse order of initialization.
  - Only guaranteed to happen for caught exceptions.

Exception safety

#### Summary

- Exception safety guarantee:
  - Nothrow guarantee
  - Strong guarantee: "roll back"
  - Weak guarantee: Promises that everything is in a valid state.
- noexcept: specifies that a function offers nothrow guarantee.
- Move operations are often noexcept, because unlike copy, move is a modifying operation.



#### Homework

Make your Dynarray::operator= offer the strong exception safety guarantee.

