

# Assignment 4: Data Structures in C

**Due:** Thursday, February 17, 10pm

**Submission:** Submit the contents of your repository via Gradescope. See [Deliverables](#) below for what to submit.

This is an *individual* assignment.

**Starter Code:** Please see [Assignment 4 on Canvas](#) for the Github Classroom link.

This assignment will take you through implementing data structures in C, working with arrays and pointers, and manually managing memory.

## Warm-up Exercises

Before you start, you might find it helpful to review arrays, pointers, and dynamic memory allocation and run through these exercises marked EASY and MEDIUM from UC Riverside:

1. [Array/Strings](#)
2. [malloc\(\)/free\(\)](#)

These are part of a [C Tutorial](#).

## Task 1: Queues

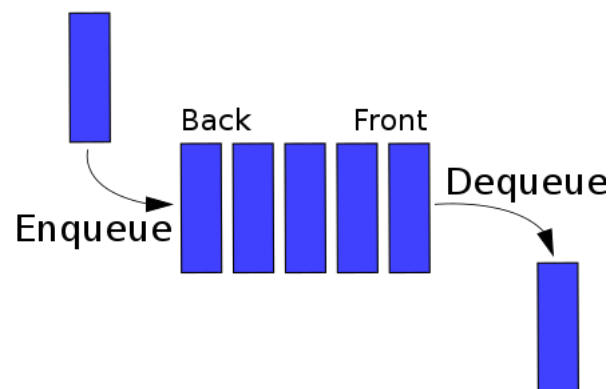


Figure 1: A Queue

We have learned about the Linked List Data Structure in lab. Now let's introduce another data structure, known as the 'queue'.

A *queue* data structure is analogous to waiting in line at a grocery store. The first person to the checkout counter is served, followed by the next person, and then the next until the line is empty. A queue is what is known as a ‘first-in first-out’ (FIFO) data structure. Thus queues have a strict policy about how information is stored and accessed.

**For this assignment, you are going to implement a specific implementation of a queue using the functions described in `queue.h`.** This data structure is also called a circular queue (specifically, a ring buffer when the maximum storage size is fixed).

### Circular Queue (Ring Buffer) implementation using an array.

A circular queue has a fixed sized, or maximum number of elements that it can hold. It is advantageous if we know how many elements are typically stored in a data structure. If we do not know, then a queue implemented using a linked is needed.

For more information on the Circular buffer, see here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circular\\_buffer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circular_buffer).

This animation below gives an idea about how the data structure ‘wraps’ around. Think about what mathematical operator has a *wrap around behavior* that could be useful in your implementation when enqueueing and dequeuing items in your queue (*hint* this operator will save you from writing many if-statements in your code!).

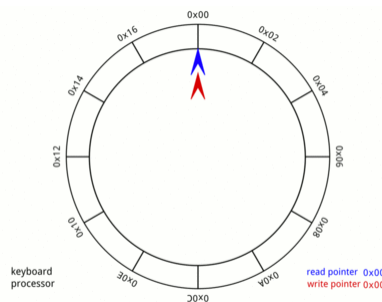


Figure 2: A Circular Queue. [Click here](#) for an animated version.

**Your task is to implement, in `queue.c` the functions described in `queue.h` to create a working implementation of circular queue.**

### What is a file that ends in `.h`.

A file that ends in `.h` is known as a header file. A header file typically is a file that contains an ‘interface’ for a set of functions to perform some task. The actual implementation (i.e. the loops, if-statements, arrays, and tools that do work) are found in a `.c` file.

More information on header files: <https://gcc.gnu.org/onlinedocs/cpp/Header-Files.html>.

## Unit Tests

A unit test is a standalone test that checks for the correctness of a specific use case in your code. In our case, we are testing if we have a working queue implementation. We provide a simple approach to writing unit tests with the starter code. For example:

```
void test1() {
    TEST_BEGIN("Test queue creation");

    queue_t* test1 = queue_new(1);
    DO_TEST(queue_empty(test1));
    DO_TEST(!queue_full(test1));
    queue_delete(test1);

    TEST_END();
}
```

You may also consider writing some unit tests to test your implementation (In fact, I would strongly encourage you to do so). Note that you can include your unit tests in your submission, and we will have our own test suite. Some example tests we might come up with include:

- Fill a queue, empty the queue, and fill the queue again.
- Create an empty queue and attempt to add something to it.
- Make sure your queue does not overwrite any data.
- etc.

## Provided Tests

You are provided a file called `queue_test.c` which you can compile separately and test your implementation of the queue functions specified in `queue.h`. These tests are a subset of what the autograder tests. Passing all the tests does not guarantee a perfect assignment, but it will give you some confidence your implementation is working and satisfies our requirements.

## Task 2: Vectors or Resizable Arrays

Our circular queue in the previous section is implemented using a fixed size array. This has some benefits. There is  $O[1]$  access to any element. We can use array semantics to walk through how the data is stored. There are no pointers to traverse. However, because it uses a fixed size array, the size of the circular buffer can't be increased.

On the other hand, linked lists are made up of individually allocated elements. The list can be of any size, but in most cases you need to traverse the pointers to find an element, i.e., access is not  $O[1]$ . For example, returning the 100th element of a linked list requires us to go through all 99 preceding items.

We'd like a construct that stores data and permits  $\sim O[1]$  access that is also resizable during runtime.

## The vector data structure

For this part of the assignment, you are to implement a vector, a data structure that is a resizable linear array. A vector, sometimes called a dynamic array, is a data structure similar to a Java's [ArrayList](#). It is also named `vector` in C++'s standard library. The vector will store strings (`char *`).

An example of a simple dynamic array would be to allocate an array of fixed size, usually larger than immediately required. The capacity of the dynamic array is the number of elements in the underlying array. The logical size of the dynamic array is the number of elements used in the underlying array. Logical size  $\leq$  capacity.

The elements of the dynamic array are stored contiguously in the underlying array, until all space is consumed. When all space is consumed, and an additional element is to be added, then the underlying fixed-size array needs to be increased in size. Resizing is typically done by creating a new underlying array, copying the each value over to the new array, then deallocating the old array.

However, resizing by single element at a time is expensive, because there is potentially a significant amount of copying to only add a single new element. For resizing to be efficient, the new array is created to be the size of the old array times a growth factor:  $(old\_array\_size * VECT\_GROWTH\_FACTOR)$ . If  $VECT\_GROWTH\_FACTOR = 2$ , the underlying fixed-size array would double in size everytime more space was needed. For more information, see our notes in `vector.md` in the starter code repository.

When a new string is added to the vector, a copy of the string should be made which is then stored. This means that the vector has ownership of its elements and when elements are removed, the memory they hold should also be removed. The `vect_get` function should return a const pointer to the vector's copy of the string. The `vect_get_copy` function should return a copy of the string.

**Your task is to implement the functions in `vect.c` to create a working implementation of a vector data structure.**

## Provided Tests

You are provided a file called `vect_test.c` which you can compile separately and test your implementation of your vector functions described in `vect.h`. These tests are a subset of the Gradescope autograder tests. Passing all the tests does not guarantee a perfect assignment, but it will give you some confidence your implementation is working.

## Using the Provided Makefiles

Both queue and vector starter files include a Makefile to make your life easier. Here's a quick overview of the possible targets:

- `make all` - compile everything
- `make test` - compile and run tests in the respective unit test file
- `make valgrind` - compile and run the tests through Valgrind - you should run this to check you are allocating and freeing memory correctly

## A Few New Concepts

There are a few new concepts that we might not have covered in the lecture, which you will need to understand and use for this assignment.

### Use `assert` to State (and Verify) Invariants

The `assert` statement helps check invariants that should be true about our code. We use it to state properties that we assume to hold at different parts of the code. If the assumption is broken, the program will fail early, with a message including the source file and line of the failing `assert`. We have provided some examples in the starter code, your job is to state additional assumptions you have. One example is to check that a pointer is not `NULL` before we use it:

```
int *numbers = malloc(5 * sizeof(int));
assert(numbers != NULL);
numbers[0] = 10;
//...
```

See `man 3 assert` for more details.

### `const` Means Something Should not Change

We use the `const` type modifier to tell the compiler that it should try to ensure that the given variable, argument, or return type should stay constant and not change. In particular, when used with strings (`char *`) it means that we need to make a copy of the string before we can do anything with it.

### `calloc` and `realloc`

The functions `calloc` and `realloc` are close relatives of the `malloc` function. Briefly, `calloc` allocates a given number of elements of a given size and also resets the memory to 0. `realloc` is used to re-allocate memory, either to grow or to shrink the block we are using. It will also helpfully copy anything we had in the previous block to the new block. Learn how to use these two functions by studying their man pages: `man 3 calloc` / `man 3 realloc`.

## Deliverables

**Task 1** Complete the queue implementation in the file `queue/queue.c` and commit it to your repository.

**Task 2** Complete the vector implementation in the file `vector/vect.c` and commit it to your repository.

Do not include any executables, object files, or any other binary, intermediate or hidden files.

Finally, go to our [Gradescope](#) and submit your repository (or a ZIP archive which can be downloaded from Github). This step is required – committing to Github is not enough.

## Rubric

Your implementation will be graded by an autograder script on Gradescope, as well as by manual inspection aimed at checking correctness as well as the style and design of your code (comments, correct use of types, code layout, etc.)

- 40% Queue Implementation
  - All required functions are implemented.
  - No functions were renamed (but you may add any ‘helper’ functions if you deem necessary–e.g. `queue_print`)
  - There are no memory leaks. Test your code using `valgrind`. See the `valgrind` target in the provided Makefile.
  - Your functions are free of compilation errors and runtime bugs
- 40% Vector Implementation
  - All required functions are implemented
  - No functions are renamed (but you may add any ‘helper’ functions if you deem necessary–e.g. `vect_print`)
  - There are no memory leaks. Test your code using `valgrind`. See the `valgrind` target in the provided Makefile.
  - Your functions are free of compilation errors and runtime bugs
- 20% Style and Code Design
  - Good source code structure (e.g., documented code, reasonable formatting and organization, ...)

## Resources to help

- <http://www.learn-c.org/>
  - This is a nice interactive tutorial for learning C
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queue\\_\(abstract\\_data\\_type\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queue_(abstract_data_type))
  - Queue Data Type High level description
- <http://www.cs.umd.edu/~nelson/classes/resources/cstyleguide/>
  - A very concise C style guide from UMD

## Going Further

(An optional task to extend this assignment—not for bonus, but just for fun)

- Add additional functions like:
  - `queue_peek` - Returns the first value in the queue
  - `queue_back` - Returns the last value in the queue
  - `queue_equals` - Checks if two queues are equal
  - `vect_insert_at` - Inserts an element into the vector at the given index, shifting subsequent elements to the right
  - `vect_remove_at` - Removes an element at the given index from the vector, shifting subsequent elements to the left
  - `vect_sort` - Sorts the vector in ascending order using your favorite sorting algorithm
- Investigate/Review more data structures on this webpage: <https://www.cs.usfca.edu/~galles/visualization/Algorithms.html>
  - There are visuals for the linked list and array based queue here!
  - Use them as a *rough* guide for the basic concepts. Do make sure to follow the specifications for our assignment above.
- Some examples (Revisit this again in a few weeks)
  - [https://github.com/nothings/single\\_file\\_libs](https://github.com/nothings/single_file_libs)