C++ and operator overloading

- in this lecture we will examine operator overloading
- how it is possible to introduce your own data type to the language seemlessly

C++ and operator overloading

- you can define almost all C++ operators for class or enumeration operands
  - called operator overloading

- we have already looked at
  - assignment (1 of the big three)
  - copy/delete are the other two

C++ and operator overloading

- while you can overload +, −, * and /
- it is often more useful to overload (), [], =, ==, !=, <, >, <= and >=

C++ and operator overloading

- generally it is not a good idea to define operators for a type unless you are really sure it adds clarity to your own code
- conventional wisdom amoung C++ programmers is that operators should only be overloaded with their conventional meaning
- only advice - there may occasionally be good reasons to break this, but be careful

Learning about overloading through an example

- let us build a fractional data type which takes the form: $whole + \frac{num}{denon}$
- the three values: `whole`, `denom` and `num` are defined as having the type `long unsigned int`
- the `fract` data type is useful as it allows us to retain absolute precision avoiding rounding errors

fract

c++/fractions/fract.h

```
#if !defined(FRACTH)
#  define FRACTH

#include <iostream>

typedef long unsigned int longcard;

class fract
{
 private:
  bool positive;
  bool top_heavy;  // if true it _might_ be top heavy,
                   // false it is _not_ top heavy
  longcard whole;
  longcard num;
  longcard denom;
  fract not_top_heavy (void);
  bool is_top_heavy (void);   // if true it _might_ be top heavy,
                              // false it is _not_ top heavy
  fract addND (fract right);
  bool subND (fract &left, fract right);
  friend std::ostream& operator<< (std::ostream& os, const fract& l);
```

fract

c++/fractions/fract.h

```
public:
 fract (void);
 ~fract (void);
 fract (const fract &from);
 fract& operator= (const fract &from);
 fract (int);
 fract (int, int);
 fract (longcard w);
 fract (longcard n, longcard d);
 fract simplify (void);
 bool is_positive (void);
 bool is_negative (void);
 fract inc (fract right);
 fract dec (fract right);
 fract negate (void);
 bool is_zero (void);
 fract reciprocal (void);
```

fract

c++/fractions/fract.h

```
  fract operator+ (const fract &right);  // fract + fract
  fract operator+ (int right);  // fract + int
  friend fract operator+ (int left, const fract &right);  // int + fract

  fract operator* (const fract &right);  // fract * fract
  fract operator* (int right);  // fract * int
  friend fract operator* (int left, const fract &right);  // int * fract

  fract operator- (const fract &right);  // fract - fract
  fract operator- (int right);  // fract - int
  friend fract operator- (int left, const fract &right);  // int - fract
};

#endif
```

How fract might be used

c++/fractions/test-fract.cc

```
{
  fract a = fract (1, 2);
  std::cout << "a = " << a << "0;
}
```

c++/fractions/test-fract.cc

```
{
  fract a = fract (1, 2);
  fract b = fract (1, 2);
  fract c = a + b;

  std::cout << a << " + " << b << " = " << c << "0;
}
```

How fract might be used

c++/fractions/test-fract.cc

```
  {
    fract a = fract (1, 2);
    fract b = a + 1;

    std::cout << a << " + " << 1 << " = " << b << "0;
  }
  {
    fract a = fract (1, 2);
    fract b = 1 + a;

    std::cout << 1 << " + " << a << " = " << b << "0;
  }
```

Tutorial

- complete the `operator*` in the file `c++/fractions/fract.cc`
- implement the appropriate methods for overloading the `/` operator
- add some test code in `c++/fractions/test-fract.cc` to test your `/` and `*` operators
- read `c++/fractions/fract.cc` and understand it