

Linking

15-213 / 18-213: Introduction to Computer Systems
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Today

- **Linking**
- Case study: Library interpositioning

Example C Program

main.c

```
int buf[2] = {1, 2};

int main()
{
    swap();
    return 0;
}
```

swap.c

```
extern int buf[];

int *bufp0 = &buf[0];
static int *bufp1;

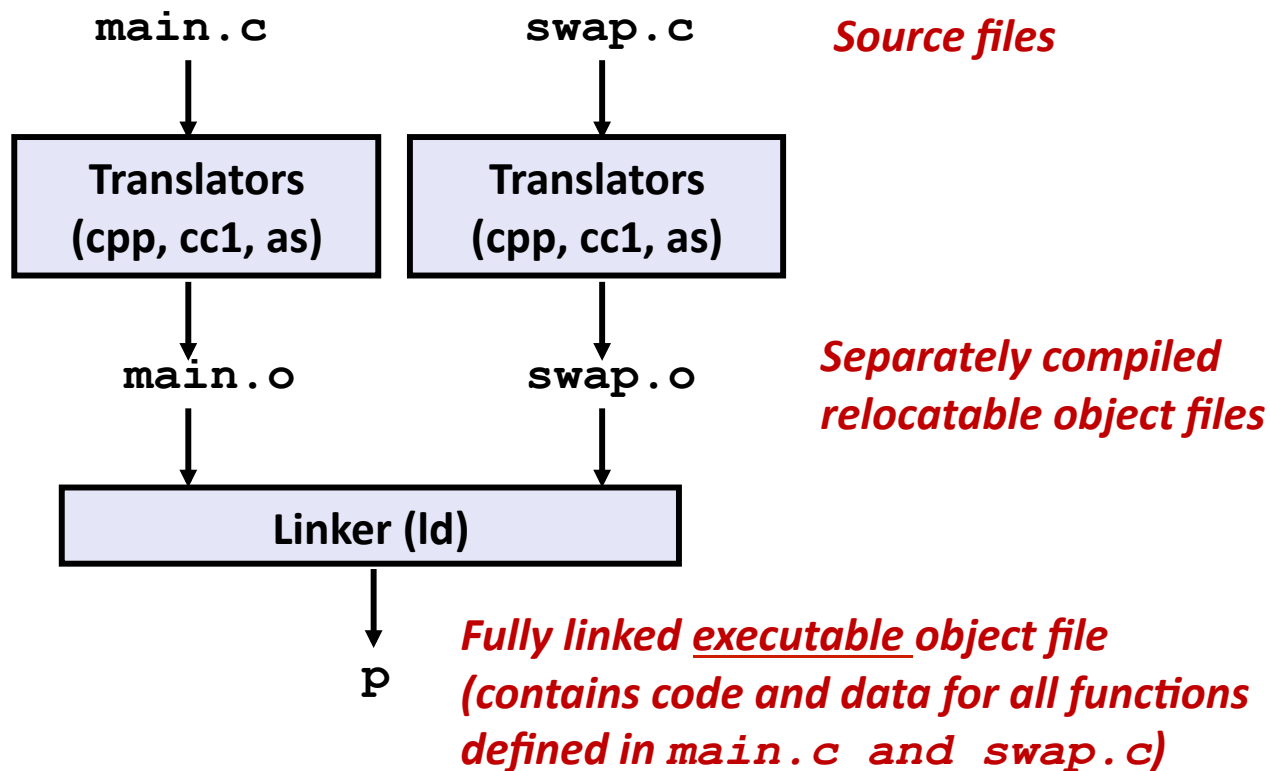
void swap()
{
    int temp;

    bufp1 = &buf[1];
    temp = *bufp0;
    *bufp0 = *bufp1;
    *bufp1 = temp;
}
```

Static Linking

- Programs are translated and linked using a *compiler driver*:

- `unix> gcc -O2 -g -o p main.c swap.c`
- `unix> ./p`



Why Linkers?

■ Reason 1: Modularity

- Program can be written as a collection of smaller source files, rather than one monolithic mass.
- Can build libraries of common functions (more on this later)
 - e.g., Math library, standard C library

Why Linkers? (cont)

■ Reason 2: Efficiency

- Time: Separate compilation
 - Change one source file, compile, and then relink.
 - No need to recompile other source files.
- Space: Libraries
 - Common functions can be aggregated into a single file...
 - Yet executable files and running memory images contain only code for the functions they actually use.

What Do Linkers Do?

■ Step 1. Symbol resolution

- Programs define and reference *symbols* (variables and functions):
 - `void swap() {...} /* define symbol swap */`
 - `swap(); /* reference symbol swap */`
 - `int *xp = &x; /* define symbol xp, reference x */`
- Symbol definitions are stored in object file (by compiler) in *symbol table*.
 - Symbol table is an array of structs
 - Each entry includes name, size, and location of symbol.
- Linker associates each symbol reference with exactly one symbol definition.

What Do Linkers Do? (cont)

■ Step 2. Relocation

- Merges separate code and data sections into single sections
- Relocates symbols from their relative locations in the `.o` files to their final absolute memory locations in the executable.
- Updates all references to these symbols to reflect their new positions.

Three Kinds of Object Files (Modules)

■ Relocatable object file (.o file)

- Contains code and data in a form that can be combined with other relocatable object files to form executable object file.
 - Each .o file is produced from exactly one source (.c) file

■ Executable object file (a.out file)

- Contains code and data in a form that can be copied directly into memory and then executed.

■ Shared object file (.so file)

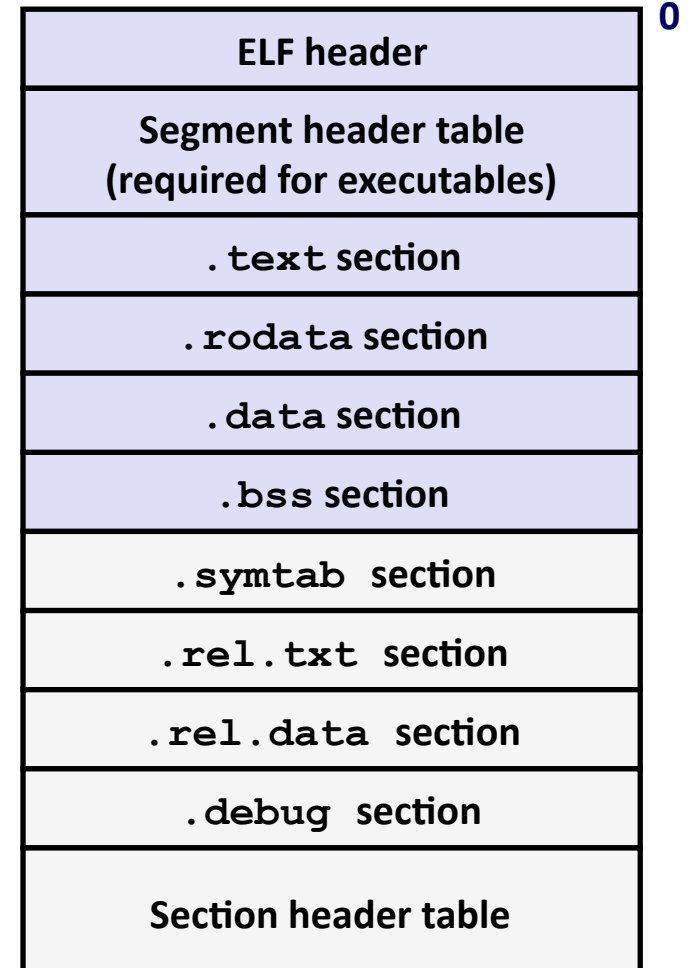
- Special type of relocatable object file that can be loaded into memory and linked dynamically, at either load time or run-time.
- Called *Dynamic Link Libraries* (DLLs) by Windows

Executable and Linkable Format (ELF)

- **Standard binary format for object files**
- **One unified format for**
 - Relocatable object files (`.o`),
 - Executable object files (`a.out`)
 - Shared object files (`.so`)
- **Generic name: ELF binaries**

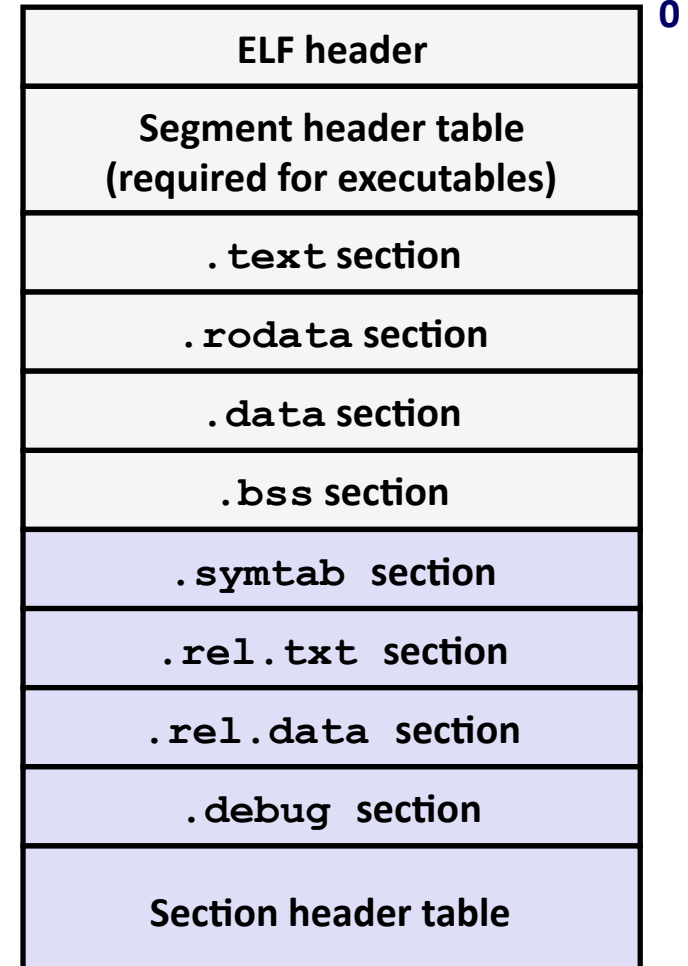
ELF Object File Format

- **Elf header**
 - Word size, byte ordering, file type (.o, exec, .so), machine type, etc.
- **Segment header table**
 - Page size, virtual addresses memory segments (sections), segment sizes.
- **.text section**
 - Code
- **.rodata section**
 - Read only data: jump tables, ...
- **.data section**
 - Initialized global variables
- **.bss section**
 - Uninitialized global variables
 - “Block Started by Symbol”
 - **“Better Save Space”**
 - Has section header but occupies no space



ELF Object File Format (cont.)

- **.symtab section**
 - Symbol table
 - Procedure and static variable names
 - Section names and locations
- **.rel.text section**
 - Relocation info for **.text** section
 - Addresses of instructions that will need to be modified in the executable
 - Instructions for modifying.
- **.rel.data section**
 - Relocation info for **.data** section
 - Addresses of pointer data that will need to be modified in the merged executable
- **.debug section**
 - Info for symbolic debugging (`gcc -g`)
- **Section header table**
 - Offsets and sizes of each section



Linker Symbols

■ Global symbols

- Symbols defined by module m that can be referenced by other modules.
- E.g.: non-**static** C functions and non-**static** global variables.

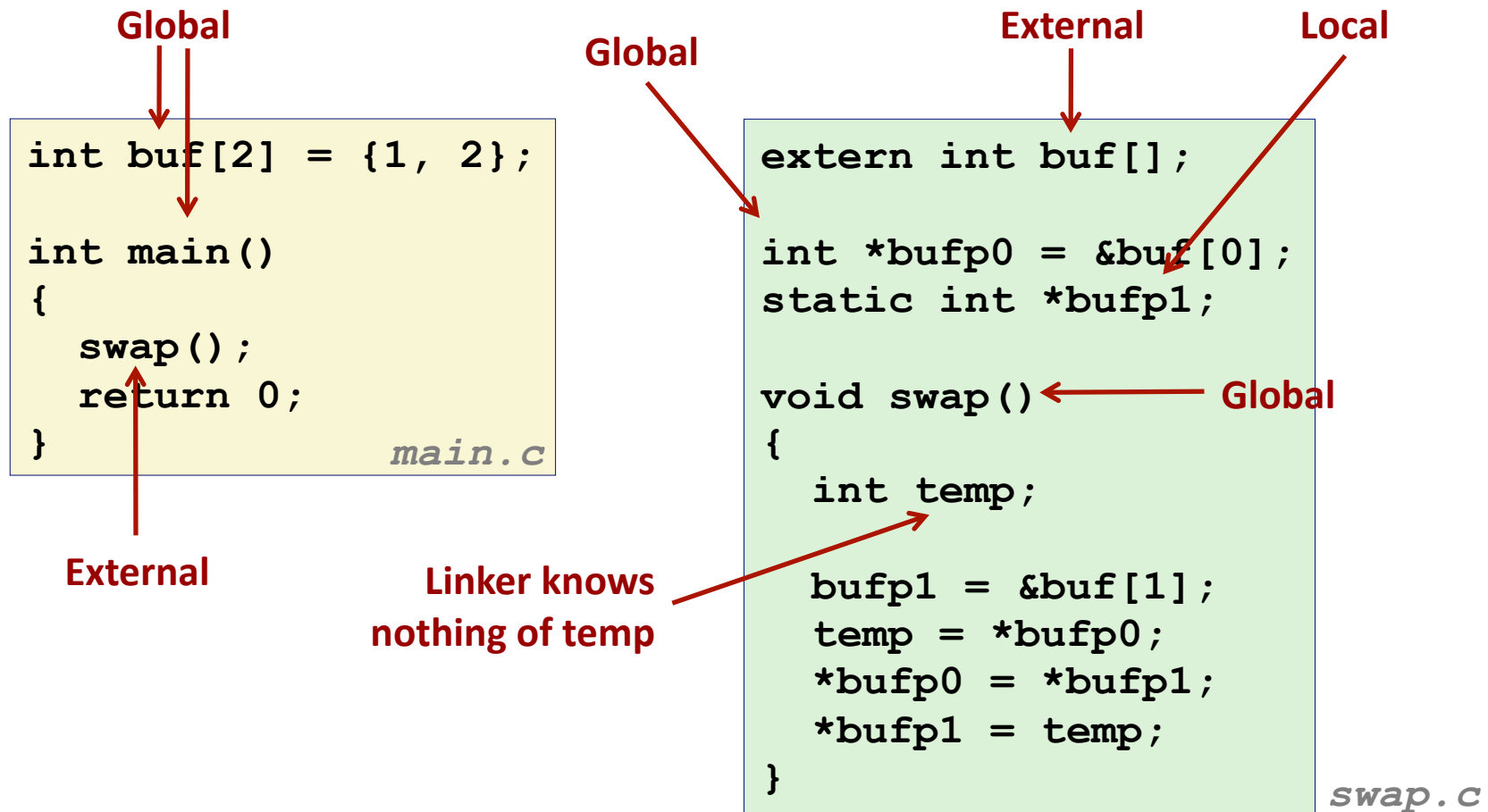
■ External symbols

- Global symbols that are referenced by module m but defined by some other module.

■ Local symbols

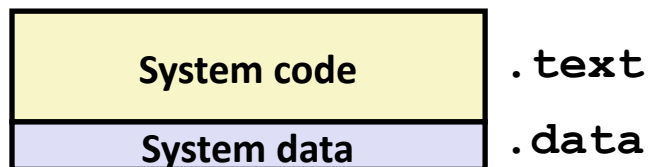
- Symbols that are defined and referenced exclusively by module m .
- E.g.: C functions and variables defined with the **static** attribute.
- **Local linker symbols are *not* local program variables**

Resolving Symbols

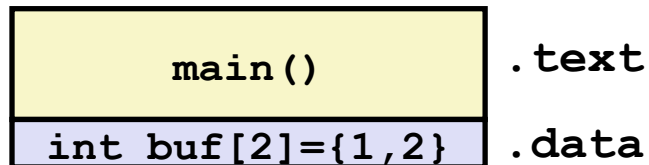


Relocating Code and Data

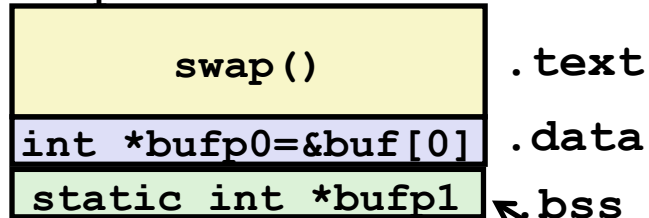
Relocatable Object Files



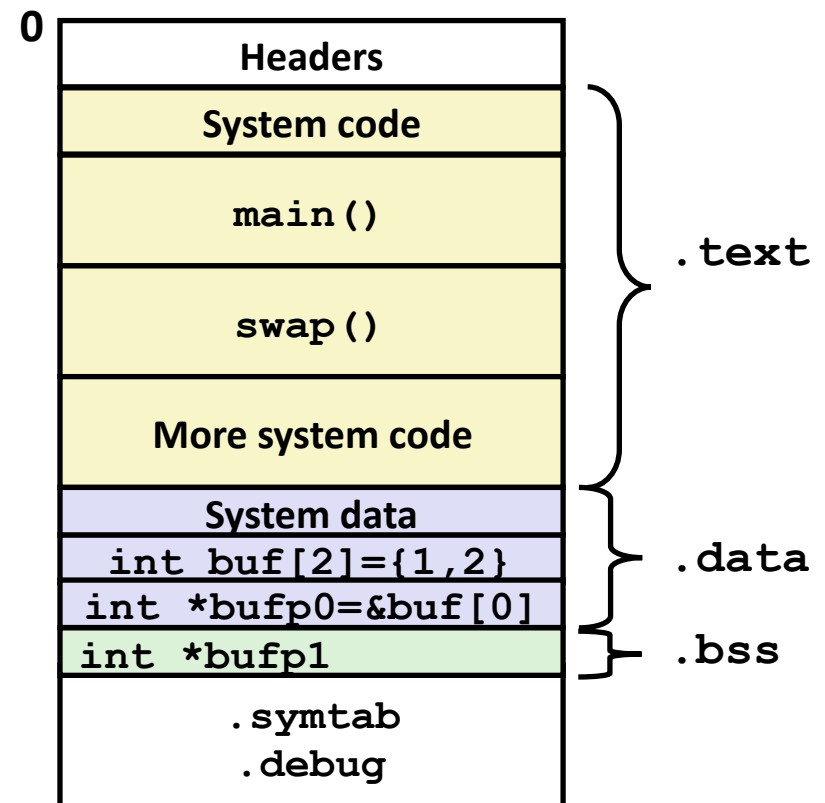
main.o



swap.o



Executable Object File



Even though private to swap, requires allocation in .bss

Relocation Info (main)

main.c

```
int buf[2] =
    {1,2};

int main()
{
    swap();
    return 0;
}
```

main.o

```
00000000 <main>:
   0:  8d 4c 24 04      lea    0x4(%esp),%ecx
   4:  83 e4 f0         and    $0xffffffff0,%esp
   7:  ff 71 fc        pushl  0xffffffffc(%ecx)
   a:  55             push  %ebp
   b:  89 e5         mov    %esp,%ebp
   d:  51             push  %ecx
   e:  83 ec 04       sub    $0x4,%esp
  11:  e8 fc ff ff ff  call   12 <main+0x12>
                        12: R_386_PC32 swap
  16:  83 c4 04       add    $0x4,%esp
  19:  31 c0         xor    %eax,%eax
  1b:  59             pop    %ecx
  1c:  5d             pop    %ebp
  1d:  8d 61 fc       lea   0xffffffffc(%ecx),%esp
  20:  c3             ret
```

-4

Disassembly of section .data:

```
00000000 <buf>:
   0:  01 00 00 00 02 00 00 00
```

Source: objdump -r -d

Relocation Info (swap, .text)

swap.c

```
extern int buf[];

int
  *bufp0 = &buf[0];

static int *bufp1;

void swap()
{
  int temp;

  bufp1 = &buf[1];
  temp = *bufp0;
  *bufp0 = *bufp1;
  *bufp1 = temp;
}
```

swap.o

Disassembly of section .text:

```
00000000 <swap>:
  0:  8b 15 00 00 00 00      mov     0x0,%edx
                        2:  R_386_32      buf
  6:  a1 04 00 00 00      mov     0x4,%eax
                        7:  R_386_32      buf
  b:  55                  push   %ebp
  c:  89 e5              mov     %esp,%ebp
  e:  c7 05 00 00 00 00 04  movl   $0x4,0x0
15:  00 00 00
                        10: R_386_32      .bss
                        14: R_386_32      buf
18:  8b 08              mov     (%eax),%ecx
1a:  89 10              mov     %edx,(%eax)
1c:  5d                  pop     %ebp
1d:  89 0d 04 00 00 00      mov     %ecx,0x4
                        1f: R_386_32      buf
23:  c3                  ret
```

Relocation Info (swap, .data)

swap.c

```
extern int buf[];

int *bufp0 =
    &buf[0];
static int *bufp1;

void swap()
{
    int temp;

    bufp1 = &buf[1];
    temp = *bufp0;
    *bufp0 = *bufp1;
    *bufp1 = temp;
}
```

Disassembly of section .data:

```
00000000 <bufp0>:
    0:  00 00 00 00

    0:  R_386_32 buf
```

Executable Before/After Relocation (.text)

```

00000000 <main>:
  . . .
  e:   83 ec 04      sub    $0x4,%esp
 11:   e8 fc ff ff    call   12 <main+0x12>
                        12: R_386_PC32 swap
 16:   83 c4 04      add    $0x4,%esp
  . . .

```

$$0x80483b0 + (-4) - 0x8048392 = 0x1a$$

$$0x8048396 + 0x1a = 0x80483b0$$

```

08048380 <main>:
8048380:   8d 4c 24 04      lea   0x4(%esp),%ecx
8048384:   83 e4 f0         and   $0xffffffff0,%esp
8048387:   ff 71 fc        pushl 0xffffffffc(%ecx)
804838a:   55              push  %ebp
804838b:   89 e5           mov   %esp,%ebp
804838d:   51              push  %ecx
804838e:   83 ec 04        sub   $0x4,%esp
8048391:   e8 1a 00 00 00  call  80483b0 <swap>
8048396:   83 c4 04        add   $0x4,%esp
8048399:   31 c0           xor   %eax,%eax
804839b:   59              pop   %ecx
804839c:   5d              pop   %ebp
804839d:   8d 61 fc        lea  0xffffffffc(%ecx),%esp
80483a0:   c3              ret

```

```

0:  8b 15 00 00 00 00      mov    0x0,%edx
                2:  R_386_32      buf
6:  a1 04 00 00 00      mov    0x4,%eax
                7:  R_386_32      buf
...
e:  c7 05 00 00 00 00 04  movl   $0x4,0x0
15: 00 00 00
                10: R_386_32      .bss
                14: R_386_32      buf
...
1d: 89 0d 04 00 00 00      mov    %ecx,0x4
                1f: R_386_32      buf
23: c3
                ret

```

Before relocation

After relocation

```

080483b0 <swap>:
80483b0:  8b 15 20 96 04 08      mov    0x8049620,%edx
80483b6:  a1 24 96 04 08      mov    0x8049624,%eax
80483bb:  55                    push   %ebp
80483bc:  89 e5                mov    %esp,%ebp
80483be:  c7 05 30 96 04 08 24  movl   $0x8049624,0x8049630
80483c5:  96 04 08
80483c8:  8b 08                mov    (%eax),%ecx
80483ca:  89 10                mov    %edx,(%eax)
80483cc:  5d                    pop    %ebp
80483cd:  89 0d 24 96 04 08      mov    %ecx,0x8049624
80483d3:  c3                    ret

```

Executable After Relocation (.data)

```
Disassembly of section .data:
```

```
08049620 <buf>:
```

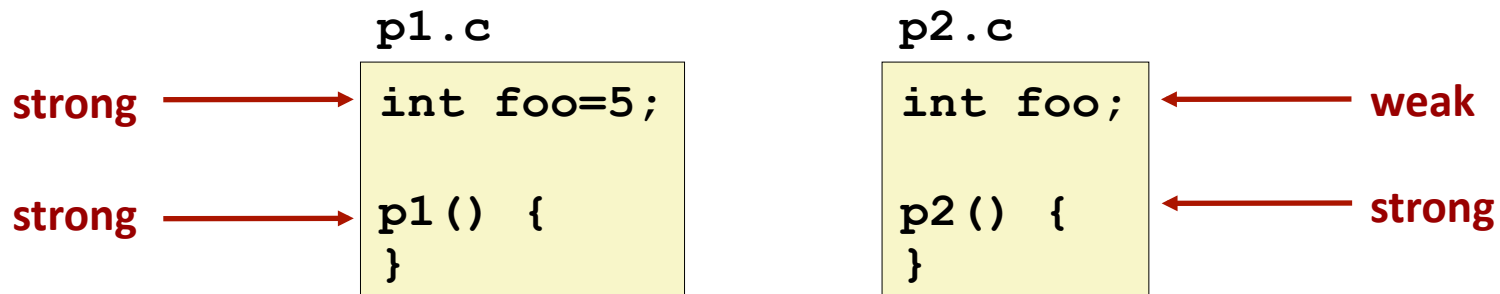
```
8049620:      01 00 00 00 02 00 00 00
```

```
08049628 <bufp0>:
```

```
8049628:      20 96 04 08
```

Strong and Weak Symbols

- Program symbols are either strong or weak
 - **Strong**: procedures and initialized globals
 - **Weak**: uninitialized globals



Linker's Symbol Rules

- **Rule 1: Multiple strong symbols are not allowed**
 - Each item can be defined only once
 - Otherwise: Linker error
- **Rule 2: Given a strong symbol and multiple weak symbol, choose the strong symbol**
 - References to the weak symbol resolve to the strong symbol
- **Rule 3: If there are multiple weak symbols, pick an arbitrary one**
 - Can override this with `gcc -fno-common`

Linker Puzzles

```
int x;
p1() {}
```

```
p1() {}
```

Link time error: two strong symbols (**p1**)

```
int x;
p1() {}
```

```
int x;
p2() {}
```

References to **x** will refer to the same uninitialized int. Is this what you really want?

```
int x;
int y;
p1() {}
```

```
double x;
p2() {}
```

Writes to **x** in **p2** might overwrite **y**!
Evil!

```
int x=7;
int y=5;
p1() {}
```

```
double x;
p2() {}
```

Writes to **x** in **p2** will overwrite **y**!
Nasty!

```
int x=7;
p1() {}
```

```
int x;
p2() {}
```

References to **x** will refer to the same initialized variable.

Nightmare scenario: two identical weak structs, compiled by different compilers with different alignment rules.

Role of .h Files

c1.c

```
#include "global.h"

int f() {
    return g+1;
}
```

c2.c

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include "global.h"

int main() {
    if (!init)
        g = 37;
    int t = f();
    printf("Calling f yields %d\n", t);
    return 0;
}
```

global.h

```
#ifndef INITIALIZE
int g = 23;
static int init = 1;
#else
int g;
static int init = 0;
#endif
```

Running Preprocessor

c1.c

```
#include "global.h"

int f() {
    return g+1;
}
```

global.h

```
#ifdef INITIALIZE
int g = 23;
static int init = 1;
#else
int g;
static int init = 0;
#endif
```

-DINITIALIZE

no initialization

```
int g = 23;
static int init = 1;
int f() {
    return g+1;
}
```

```
int g;
static int init = 0;
int f() {
    return g+1;
}
```

`#include` causes C preprocessor to insert file verbatim (Use `gcc -E` to view result)

Global Variables

- Avoid if you can

- Otherwise
 - Use `static` if you can
 - Initialize if you define a global variable
 - Use `extern` if you use external global variable

Packaging Commonly Used Functions

- **How to package functions commonly used by programmers?**
 - Math, I/O, memory management, string manipulation, etc.

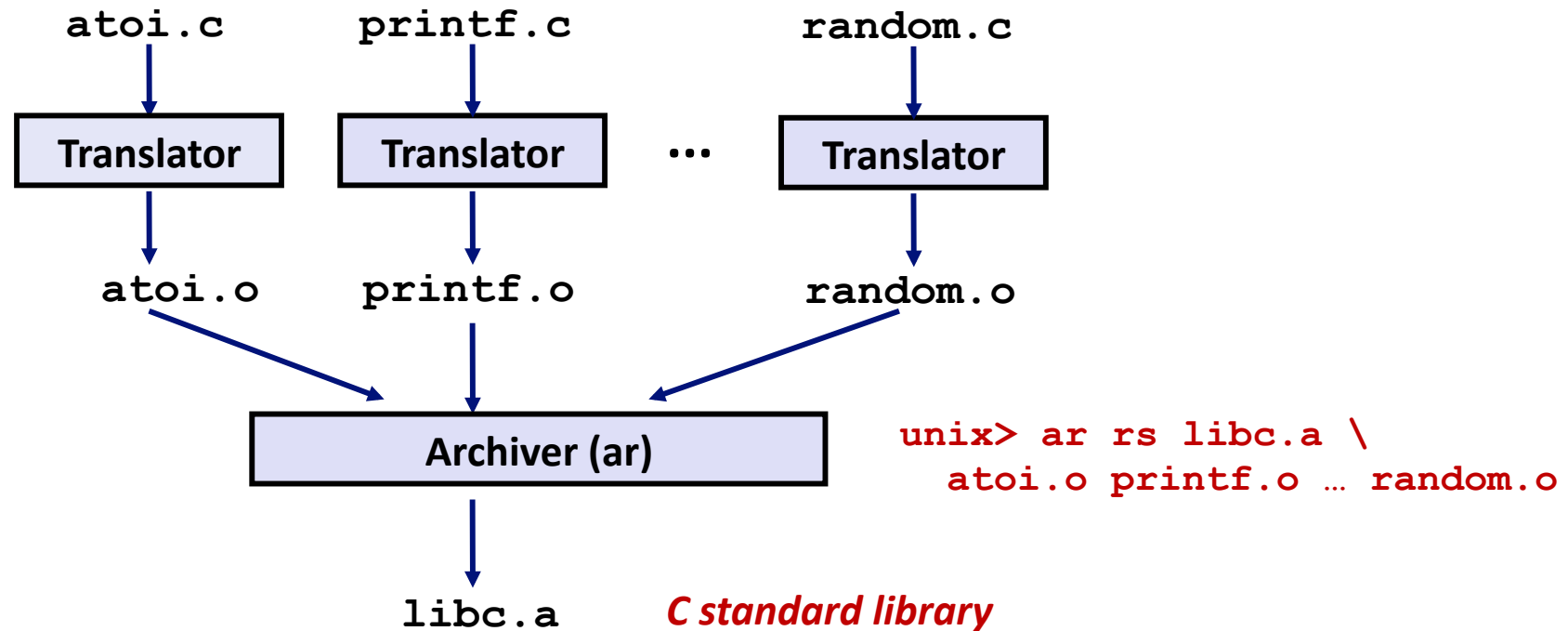
- **Awkward, given the linker framework so far:**
 - **Option 1:** Put all functions into a single source file
 - Programmers link big object file into their programs
 - Space and time inefficient
 - **Option 2:** Put each function in a separate source file
 - Programmers explicitly link appropriate binaries into their programs
 - More efficient, but burdensome on the programmer

Solution: Static Libraries

■ **Static libraries** (.a archive files)

- Concatenate related relocatable object files into a single file with an index (called an *archive*).
- Enhance linker so that it tries to resolve unresolved external references by looking for the symbols in one or more archives.
- If an archive member file resolves reference, link it into the executable.

Creating Static Libraries



- Archiver allows incremental updates
- Recompile function that changes and replace .o file in archive.

Commonly Used Libraries

libc.a (the C standard library)

- 8 MB archive of 1392 object files.
- I/O, memory allocation, signal handling, string handling, data and time, random numbers, integer math

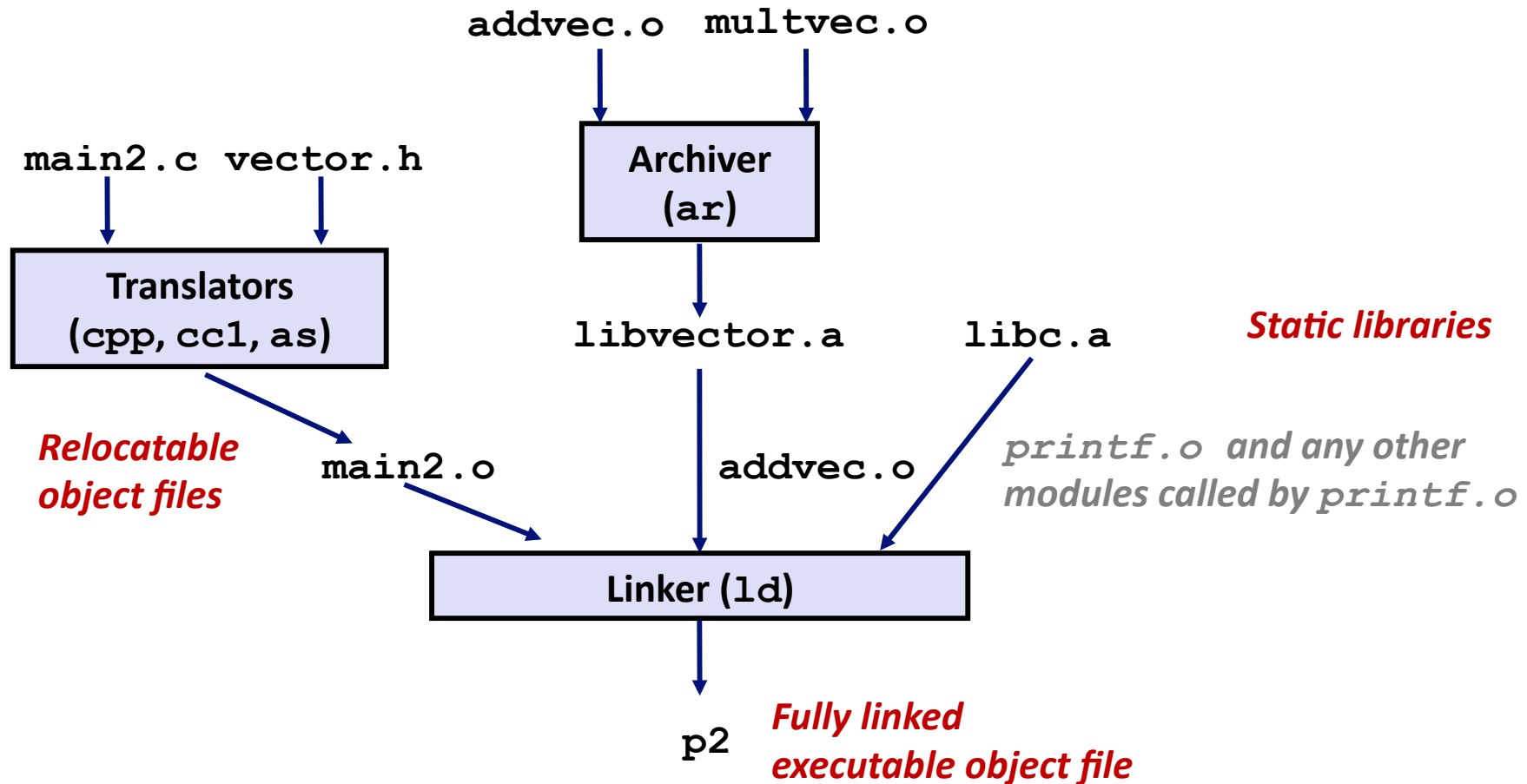
libm.a (the C math library)

- 1 MB archive of 401 object files.
- floating point math (sin, cos, tan, log, exp, sqrt, ...)

```
% ar -t /usr/lib/libc.a | sort
...
fork.o
...
fprintf.o
fpu_control.o
fputc.o
freopen.o
fscanf.o
fseek.o
fstab.o
...
```

```
% ar -t /usr/lib/libm.a | sort
...
e_acos.o
e_acosf.o
e_acosh.o
e_acoshf.o
e_acoshl.o
e_acosl.o
e_asin.o
e_asinf.o
e_asinl.o
...
```

Linking with Static Libraries



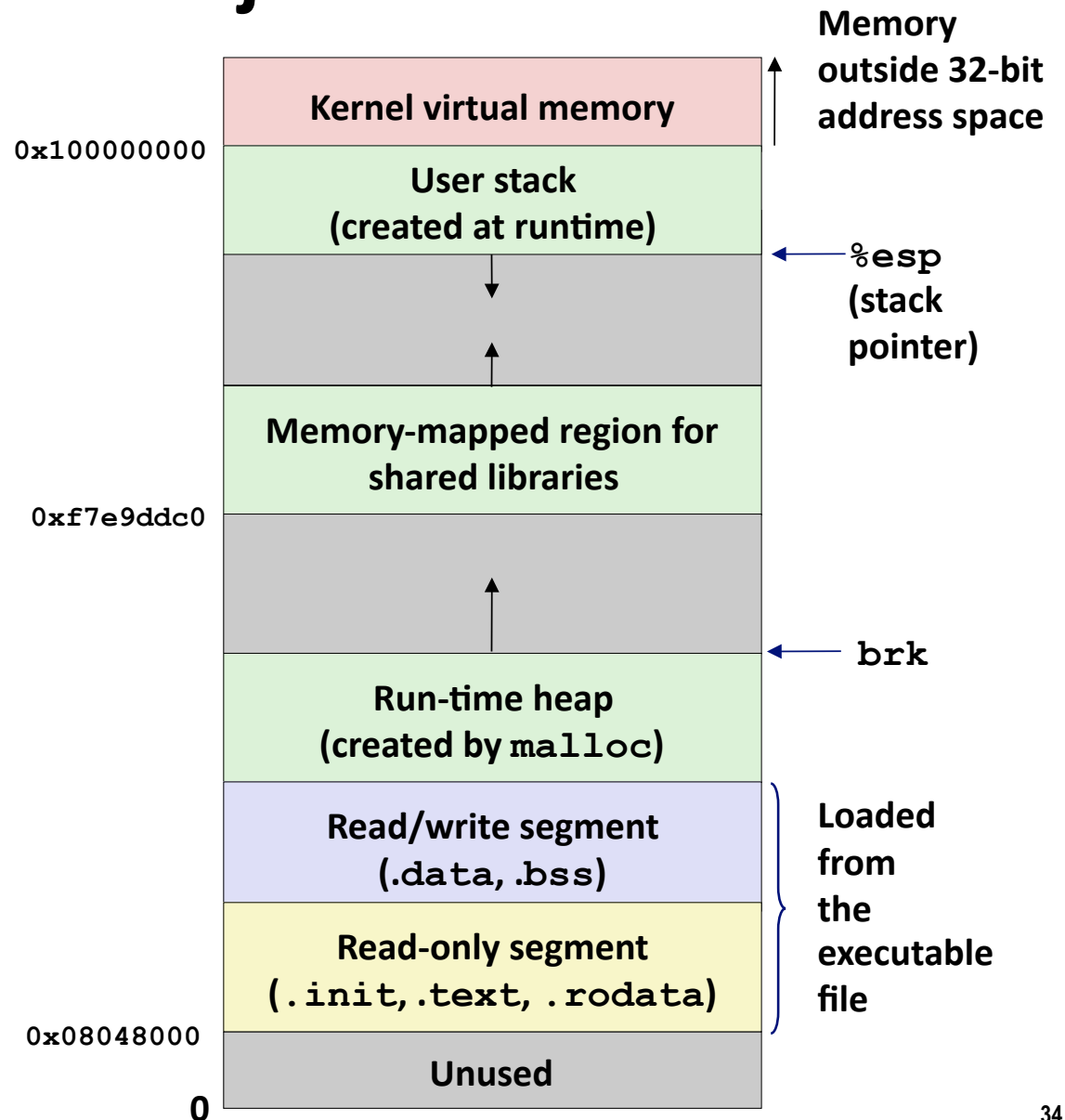
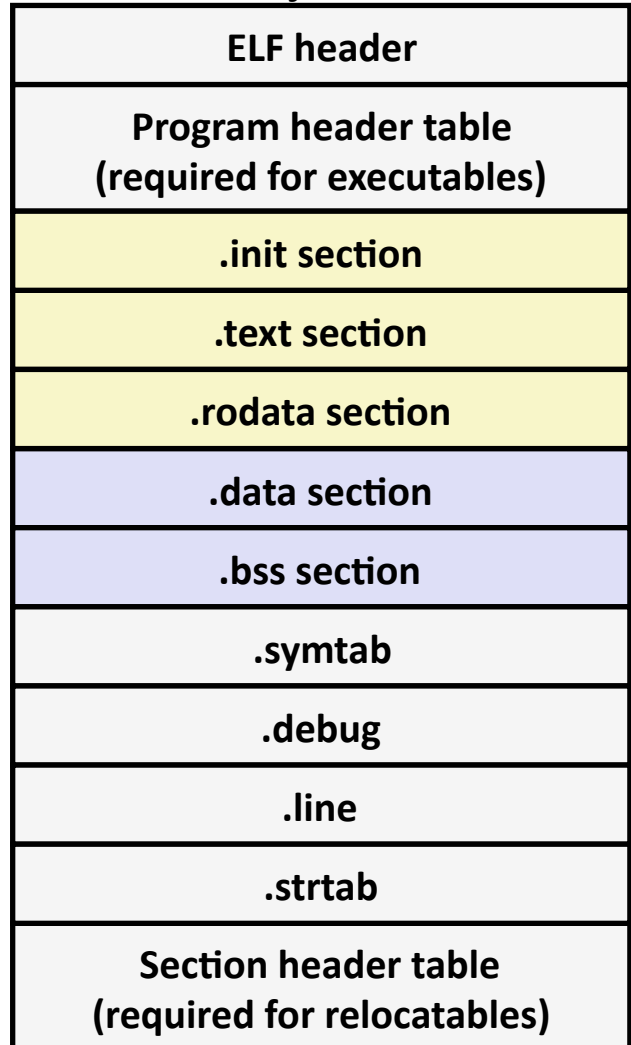
Using Static Libraries

- **Linker's algorithm for resolving external references:**
 - Scan `.o` files and `.a` files in the command line order.
 - During the scan, keep a list of the current unresolved references.
 - As each new `.o` or `.a` file, *obj*, is encountered, try to resolve each unresolved reference in the list against the symbols defined in *obj*.
 - If any entries in the unresolved list at end of scan, then error.
- **Problem:**
 - Command line order matters!
 - Moral: put libraries at the end of the command line.

```
unix> gcc -L. libtest.o -lmine
unix> gcc -L. -lmine libtest.o
libtest.o: In function `main':
libtest.o(.text+0x4): undefined reference to `libfun'
```

Loading Executable Object Files

Executable Object File



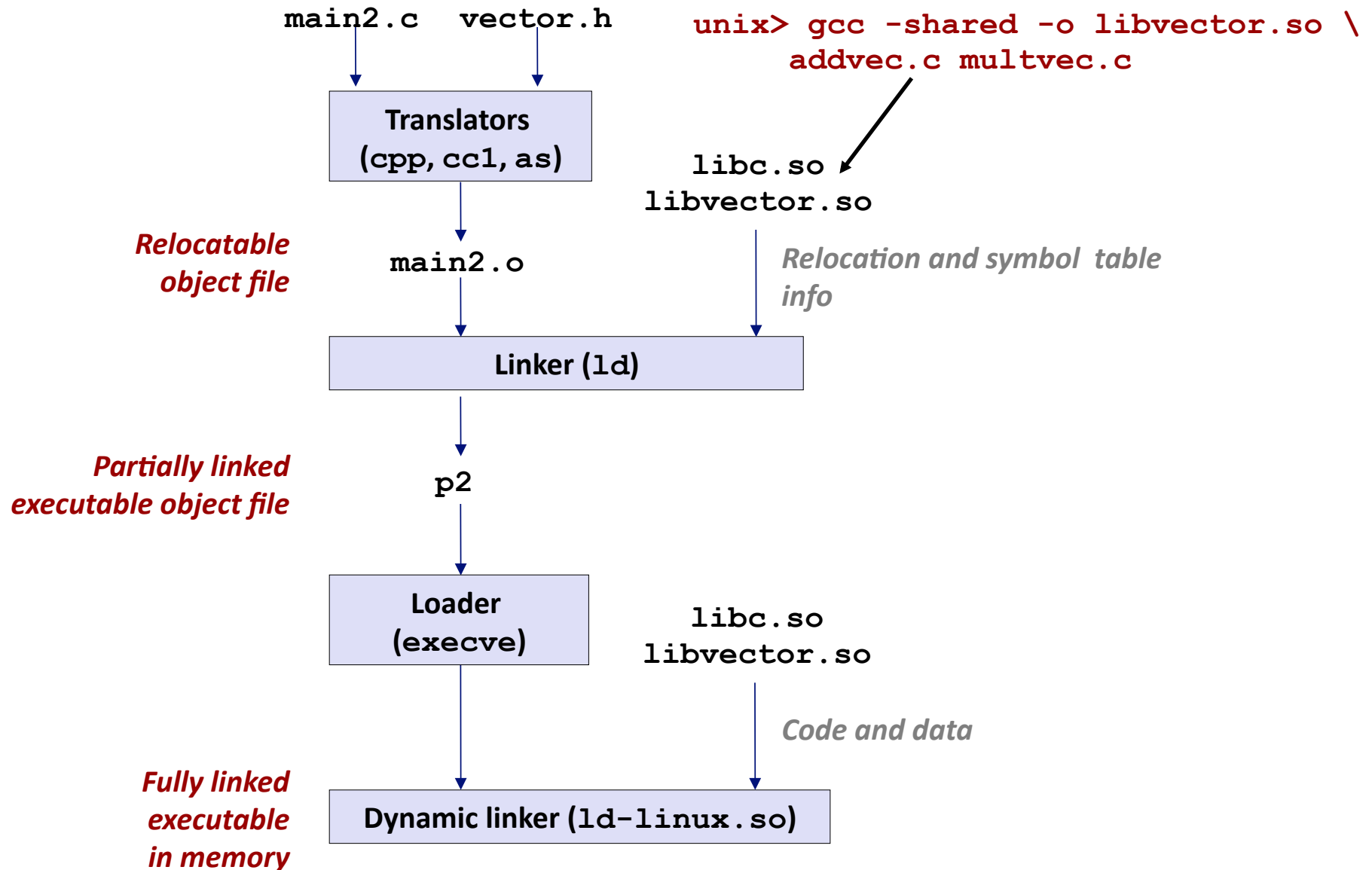
Shared Libraries

- **Static libraries have the following disadvantages:**
 - Duplication in the stored executables (every function need std libc)
 - Duplication in the running executables
 - Minor bug fixes of system libraries require each application to explicitly relink
- **Modern solution: Shared Libraries**
 - Object files that contain code and data that are loaded and linked into an application *dynamically*, at either *load-time* or *run-time*
 - Also called: dynamic link libraries, DLLs, `.so` files

Shared Libraries (cont.)

- **Dynamic linking can occur when executable is first loaded and run (load-time linking).**
 - Common case for Linux, handled automatically by the dynamic linker (`ld-linux.so`).
 - Standard C library (`libc.so`) usually dynamically linked.
- **Dynamic linking can also occur after program has begun (run-time linking).**
 - In Linux, this is done by calls to the `dlopen()` interface.
 - Distributing software.
 - High-performance web servers.
 - Runtime library interpositioning.
- **Shared library routines can be shared by multiple processes.**
 - More on this when we learn about virtual memory

Dynamic Linking at Load-time



Dynamic Linking at Run-time

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <dlfcn.h>

int x[2] = {1, 2};
int y[2] = {3, 4};
int z[2];

int main()
{
    void *handle;
    void (*addvec)(int *, int *, int *, int);
    char *error;

    /* Dynamically load the shared lib that contains addvec() */
    handle = dlopen("./libvector.so", RTLD_LAZY);
    if (!handle) {
        fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
        exit(1);
    }
}
```

Dynamic Linking at Run-time

```
...

/* Get a pointer to the addvec() function we just loaded */
addvec = dlsym(handle, "addvec");
if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
    fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", error);
    exit(1);
}

/* Now we can call addvec() just like any other function */
addvec(x, y, z, 2);
printf("z = [%d %d]\n", z[0], z[1]);

/* unload the shared library */
if (dlclose(handle) < 0) {
    fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
    exit(1);
}
return 0;
}
```

Today

- Linking
- **Case study: Library interpositioning**

Case Study: Library Interpositioning

- **Library interpositioning** : powerful linking technique that allows programmers to intercept calls to arbitrary functions
- **Interpositioning can occur at:**
 - Compile time: When the source code is compiled
 - Link time: When the relocatable object files are statically linked to form an executable object file
 - Load/run time: When an executable object file is loaded into memory, dynamically linked, and then executed.

Some Interpositioning Applications

■ Security

- Confinement (sandboxing)
 - Interpose calls to libc functions.
- Behind the scenes encryption
 - Automatically encrypt otherwise unencrypted network connections.

■ Monitoring and Profiling

- Count number of calls to functions
- Characterize call sites and arguments to functions
- Malloc tracing
 - Detecting memory leaks
 - **Generating address traces**

Example program

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <malloc.h>

int main()
{
    free(malloc(10));
    printf("hello, world\n");
    exit(0);
}

hello.c
```

- **Goal: trace the addresses and sizes of the allocated and freed blocks, without modifying the source code.**
- **Three solutions: interpose on the `lib malloc` and `free` functions at compile time, link time, and load/run time.**

Compile-time Interpositioning

```
#ifndef COMPILETIME
/* Compile-time interposition of malloc and free using C
 * preprocessor. A local malloc.h file defines malloc (free)
 * as wrappers mymalloc (myfree) respectively.
 */

#include <stdio.h>
#include <malloc.h>

/*
 * mymalloc - malloc wrapper function
 */
void *mymalloc(size_t size, char *file, int line)
{
    void *ptr = malloc(size);
    printf("%s:%d: malloc(%d)=%p\n", file, line, (int)size,
ptr);
    return ptr;
}

```

mymalloc.c

Compile-time Interpositioning

```
#define malloc(size) mymalloc(size, __FILE__, __LINE__ )
#define free(ptr) myfree(ptr, __FILE__, __LINE__ )

void *mymalloc(size_t size, char *file, int line);
void myfree(void *ptr, char *file, int line);
```

`malloc.h`

```
linux> make helloc
gcc -O2 -Wall -DCOMPILETIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -O2 -Wall -I. -o helloc hello.c mymalloc.o
linux> make runc
./helloc
hello.c:7: malloc(10)=0x501010
hello.c:7: free(0x501010)
hello, world
```

Link-time Interpositioning

```
#ifdef LINKTIME
/* Link-time interposition of malloc and free using the
static linker's (ld) "--wrap symbol" flag. */

#include <stdio.h>

void *__real_malloc(size_t size);
void __real_free(void *ptr);

/*
 * __wrap_malloc - malloc wrapper function
 */
void *__wrap_malloc(size_t size)
{
    void *ptr = __real_malloc(size);
    printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
}
```

mymalloc.c

Link-time Interpositioning

```
linux> make hello1
gcc -O2 -Wall -DLINKTIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -O2 -Wall -Wl,--wrap,malloc -Wl,--wrap,free \
-o hello1 hello.c mymalloc.o
linux> make run1
./hello1
malloc(10) = 0x501010
free(0x501010)
hello, world
```

- The “-Wl” flag passes argument to linker
- Telling linker “--wrap,malloc” tells it to resolve references in a special way:
 - Refs to `malloc` should be resolved as `__wrap_malloc`
 - Refs to `__real_malloc` should be resolved as `malloc`

```
#ifndef RUNTIME
/* Run-time interposition of malloc and free based on
 * dynamic linker's (ld-linux.so) LD_PRELOAD mechanism */
#define _GNU_SOURCE
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <dlfcn.h>

void *malloc(size_t size)
{
    static void *(*mallocp)(size_t size);
    char *error;
    void *ptr;

    /* get address of libc malloc */
    if (!mallocp) {
        mallocp = dlsym(RTLD_NEXT, "malloc");
        if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
            fputs(error, stderr);
            exit(1);
        }
    }
    ptr = mallocp(size);
    printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
}
```

Load/Run-time Interpositioning

mymalloc.c

Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```
linux> make hellor
gcc -O2 -Wall -DRUNTIME -shared -fPIC -o mymalloc.so mymalloc.c
gcc -O2 -Wall -o hellor hello.c
linux> make runr
(LD_PRELOAD="/usr/lib64/libdl.so ./mymalloc.so" ./hellor)
malloc(10) = 0x501010
free(0x501010)
hello, world
```

- **The `LD_PRELOAD` environment variable tells the dynamic linker to resolve unresolved refs (e.g., to `malloc`) by looking in `libdl.so` and `mymalloc.so` first.**
 - `libdl.so` necessary to resolve references to the `dlopen` functions.

Interpositioning Recap

■ Compile Time

- Apparent calls to malloc/free get macro-expanded into calls to mymalloc/myfree

■ Link Time

- Use linker trick to have special name resolutions
 - malloc → __wrap_malloc
 - __real_malloc → malloc

■ Compile Time

- Implement custom version of malloc/free that use dynamic linking to load library malloc/free under different names