

Higher-Order Functions I

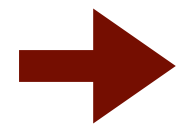
15-150

Lecture 10: September 30, 2025

Stephanie Balzer
Carnegie Mellon University

Recap

Recap



Polymorphic types (type families) and instantiation.

Recap

→ Polymorphic types (type families) and instantiation.

→ parameterized data types

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→ Polymorphic types (type families) and instantiation.

→ parameterized data types

```
datatype 'a tree =  
  Empty | Node of 'a tree * 'a * 'a tree
```

Recap

→ Polymorphic types (type families) and instantiation.

→ parameterized data types

```
datatype 'a tree =  
  Empty | Node of 'a tree * 'a * 'a tree
```

→ Typing rules and most general type.

Recap

➔ Polymorphic types (type families) and instantiation.

➔ parameterized data types

```
datatype 'a tree =  
  Empty | Node of 'a tree * 'a * 'a tree
```

➔ Typing rules and most general type.

➔ Type guarantee:

Recap

➔ Polymorphic types (type families) and instantiation.

➔ parameterized data types

```
datatype 'a tree =  
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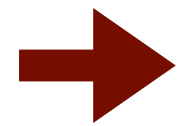
➔ Typing rules and most general type.

➔ Type guarantee:

If $e : t$ and $e \hookrightarrow v$ then $v : t$.

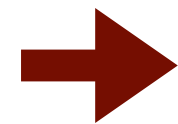
Today's topic

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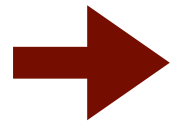


Function currying.

Today's topic

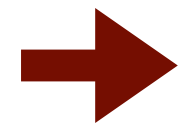


Function currying.

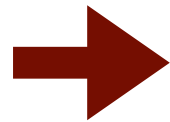


Higher-order functions:

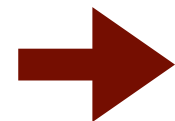
Today's topic



Function currying.



Higher-order functions:



Functions whose argument and/or return types are functions.

Today's topic

- ➔ Function currying.
- ➔ Higher-order functions:
 - ➔ Functions whose argument and/or return types are functions.
- ➔ More polymorphism.

Currying

Currying

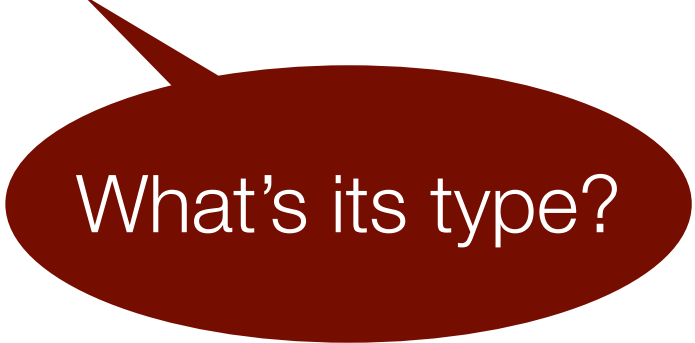
Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y
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Currying

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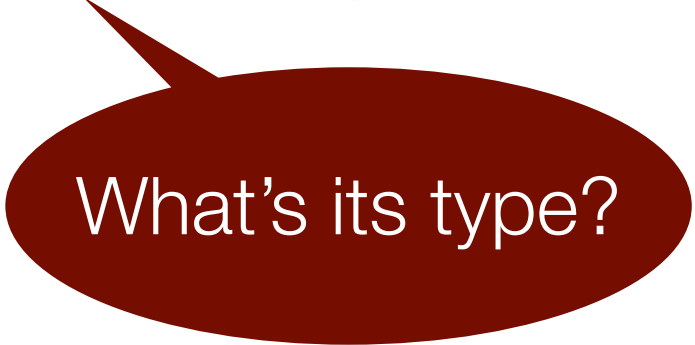


What's its type?

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add:                *)
```

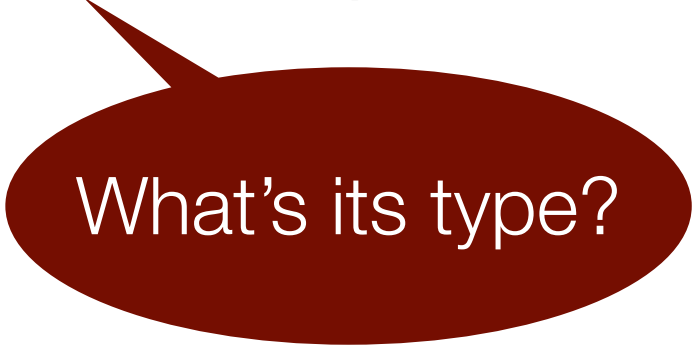


What's its type?

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int    *)
```

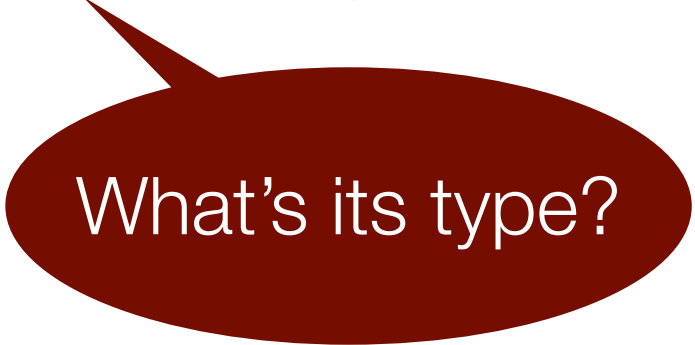


What's its type?

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
```



What's its type?

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Recall, the function definition introduces a binding in the environment:

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
```

Recall, the function definition introduces a binding in the environment:

[env
fn (x,y) => x + y / add]

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's consider another function:

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's consider another function:

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y
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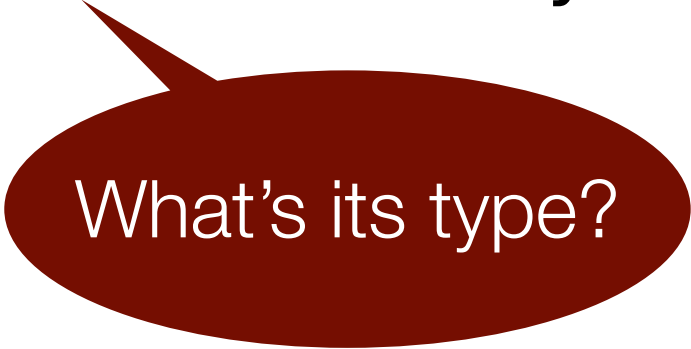
Currying

Consider:

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What's its type?

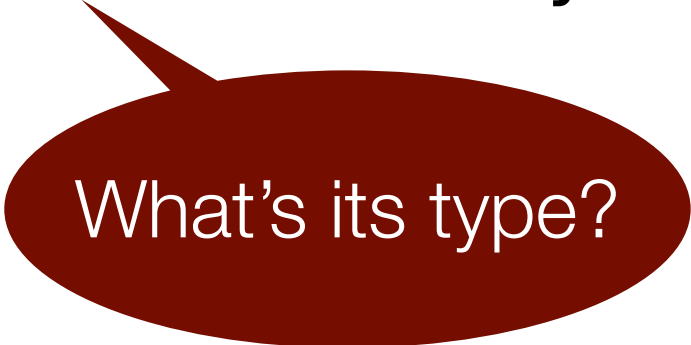
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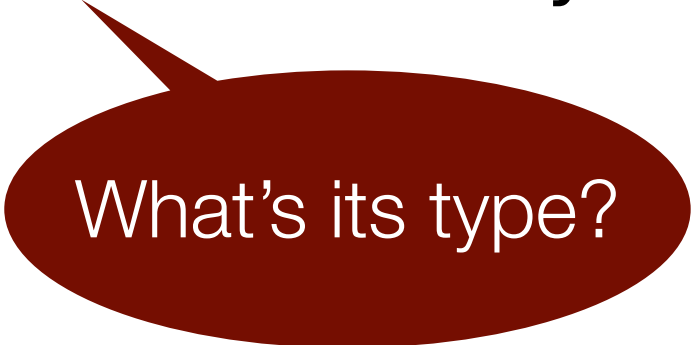
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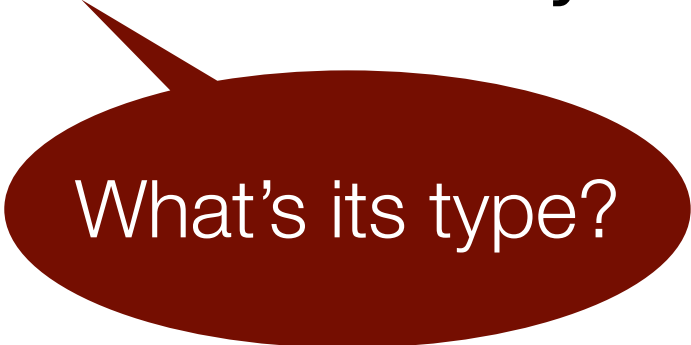
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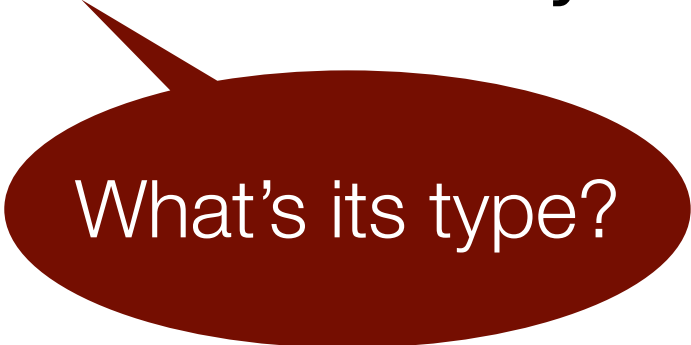
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Notice, arrows right-associate!

Currying

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Notice, arrows right-associate!

$$t_1 \rightarrow t_2 \rightarrow t_3$$

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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$t_1 \rightarrow t_2 \rightarrow t_3$ means $t_1 \rightarrow (t_2 \rightarrow t_3)$

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Correspondingly, function application left-associates!

Currying

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Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
```

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
              (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

Binding for plus:

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
```

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
              (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

Binding for plus:

[env
fn x => fn y => x + y / plus]

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
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➔ Function `plus` is the curried form of `add`.

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
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➔ Function `plus` is the curried form of `add`.

➔ Currying: changing “*” to “->”.

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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➔ Function `plus` is the curried form of `add`.

➔ Currying: changing “*” to “->”.

➔ Named after Haskell Curry.

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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➔ Function `plus` is the curried form of `add`.

➔ Currying: changing “*” to “->”.

➔ Named after Haskell Curry.

➔ Useful for staging (next lecture!).

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
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Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
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```

Let's evaluate:

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
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```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., (fn (x,y) => x+y)/add] add (3,4)
```

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's evaluate:

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Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's evaluate:

```
[..., (fn (x,y) => x+y)/add] add (3,4)  
==> [...] (fn (x,y) => x+y) (3,4)  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] x+y
```

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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==> [...] (fn (x,y) => x+y) (3,4)  
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==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+y
```

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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```

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Let's evaluate:

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==> [...] (fn (x,y) => x+y) (3,4)  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] x+y  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+y  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+4  
==> [...] 7
```

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's define yet another function:

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's define yet another function:

```
val incr3 = plus 3
```

Currying

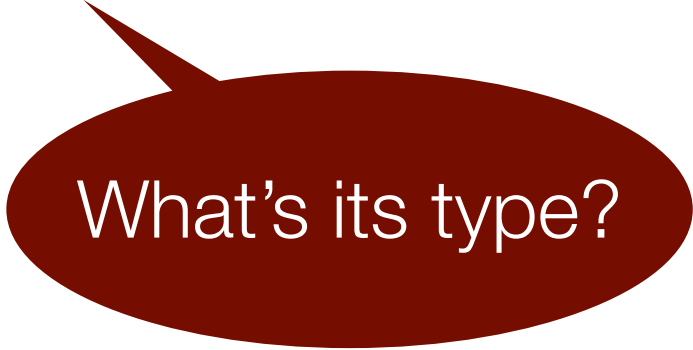
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What's its type?

Currying

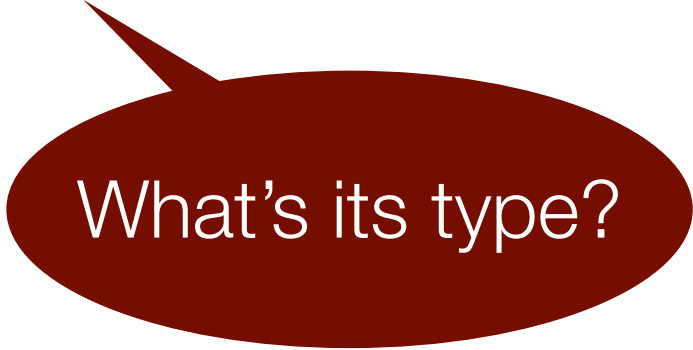
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```
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Let's define yet another function:

```
val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3:                *)
```



What's its type?

Currying

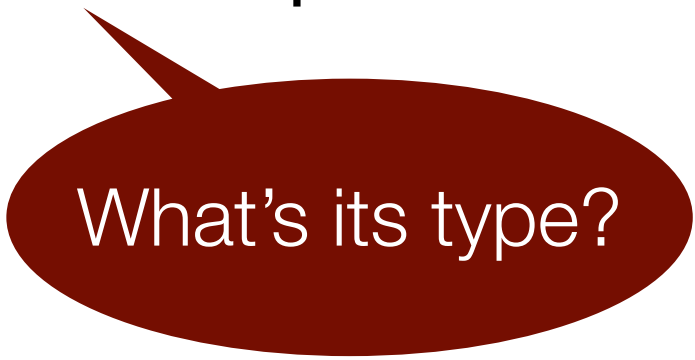
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Let's define yet another function:

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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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What's its type?

Currying

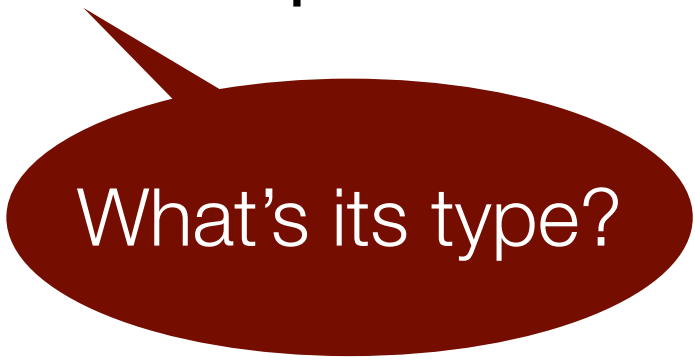
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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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What's its type?

Currying

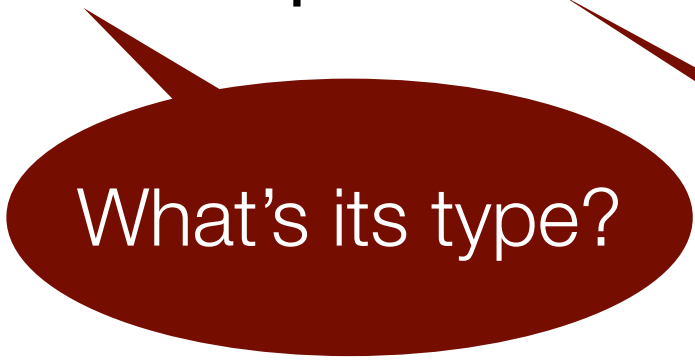
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Let's define yet another function:

```
val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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What's its type?



partial application

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
              (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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Binding for incr3:

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
```

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
              (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

```
val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Binding for incr3:

$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{env} \\ [3/x] \\ \text{fn } y \Rightarrow x + y \end{array} \right] / \text{incr3}$

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's evaluate:

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```
val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., (fn x => fn y => x+y)/plus] plus 3
```

Currying

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```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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Let's evaluate:

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==> [..., 3/x] fn y => x+y
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Consider:

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Let's evaluate:

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[..., (fn x => fn y => x+y)/plus] plus 3
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```
==> [...] (fn x => fn y => x+y) 3
```

```
==> [..., 3/x] fn y => x+y
```



lambda

Currying

Consider:

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fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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Let's evaluate:

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[..., (fn x => fn y => x+y)/plus] plus 3
```

```
==> [...] (fn x => fn y => x+y) 3
```

```
==> [..., 3/x] fn y => x+y
```

lambda

It's a value!

Currying

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```
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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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Let's evaluate:

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Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
```

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
              (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

```
val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., (fn x => fn y => x+y)/plus] plus 3  
==> [...] (fn x => fn y => x+y) 3  
==> [..., 3/x] fn y => x+y
```

Currying

Consider:

```
fun add (x,y) = x + y    (* add: int * int -> int *)
```

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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
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Let's evaluate:

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[..., (fn x => fn y => x+y)/plus] plus 3
```

```
==> [...] (fn x => fn y => x+y) 3
```

```
==> [..., 3/x] fn y => x+y
```



closure

Currying

Consider:

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
                (* plus: int -> int -> int *)  
  
val incr3 = plus 3    (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Currying

Consider:

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
                (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

```
val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., 3/x, (fn y => x+y)/incr3] incr3 4
```

Currying

Consider:

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
                (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

```
val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., 3/x, (fn y => x+y)/incr3] incr3 4  
==> [..., 3/x] (fn y => x+y) 4
```

Currying

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fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
(* plus: int -> int -> int *)
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val incr3 = plus 3 (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., 3/x, (fn y => x+y)/incr3] incr3 4  
==> [..., 3/x] (fn y => x+y) 4  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] x+y
```

Currying

Consider:

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y
                        (* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

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val incr3 = plus 3      (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., 3/x, (fn y => x+y)/incr3] incr3 4
==> [..., 3/x] (fn y => x+y) 4
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] x+y
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+y
```

Currying

Consider:

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
(* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

```
val incr3 = plus 3 (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., 3/x, (fn y => x+y)/incr3] incr3 4  
==> [..., 3/x] (fn y => x+y) 4  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] x+y  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+y  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+4
```

Currying

Consider:

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y  
(* plus: int -> int -> int *)
```

```
val incr3 = plus 3 (* incr3: int -> int *)
```

Let's evaluate:

```
[..., 3/x, (fn y => x+y)/incr3] incr3 4  
==> [..., 3/x] (fn y => x+y) 4  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] x+y  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+y  
==> [..., 3/x, 4/y] 3+4  
==> [...] 7
```

Currying: syntactic sugar

Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

```
fun plus x y = x + y
```

Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

```
fun plus x y = x + y
```

which is syntactic sugar for

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y
```

Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

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Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

`fun plus x`  `y = x + y` 

which is syntactic sugar for

`fun plus x = fn y => x + y`

Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

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fun plus x y = x + y
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Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

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fun plus x y = x + y
```

which is syntactic sugar for

```
fun plus x = fn y => x + y
```

which is itself syntactic sugar for

```
val rec plus = fn x => fn y => x + y
```

Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

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fun plus x y = x + y
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Currying: syntactic sugar

A maybe more convenient notation

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val rec plus = fn x => fn y => x + y
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fun definitions are
recursive!

Currying: some more examples

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z
```

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z  
(* f:                                     *)
```

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z  
(* f: int * int * int -> int *)
```

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z  
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```

```
fun g x y z = (x + y) div z
```

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z  
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```

```
fun g x y z = (x + y) div z  
(* g:                                     *)
```

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z
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```
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```

```
fun g x y z = (x + y) div z
```

```
(* g: int -> int -> int -> int *)
```

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z
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```
(* f: int * int * int -> int *)
```

```
fun g x y z = (x + y) div z
```

```
(* g: int -> int -> int -> int *)
```

```
fun h (x, y) z = (x + y) div z
```

Currying: some more examples

```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z  
(* f: int * int * int -> int *)
```

```
fun g x y z = (x + y) div z  
(* g: int -> int -> int -> int *)
```

```
fun h (x, y) z = (x + y) div z  
(* h:                                     *)
```

Currying: some more examples

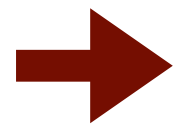
```
fun f (x, y, z) = (x + y) div z  
(* f: int * int * int -> int *)
```

```
fun g x y z = (x + y) div z  
(* g: int -> int -> int -> int *)
```

```
fun h (x, y) z = (x + y) div z  
(* h: int * int -> int -> int *)
```

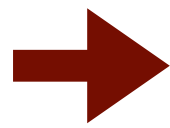
Higher-order functions

Higher-order functions



Higher-order functions are functions whose argument type and/or return type are functions.

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Remark: Some require return type to be a higher-order function.
We do not adopt this stricter definition.

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➔ Higher-order functions facilitate staging.

Higher-order function: filter

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Filtering elements in a list, given a predicate:

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```
(* filter: ('a -> bool) -> 'a list -> 'a list
   REQUIRES: p is total
   ENSURES: filter p L evaluates to a list consisting of
             the elements of L that satisfy p,
             with elements appearing in same order as in L.
*)
```

Higher-order function: filter

Filtering elements in a list, given a predicate:

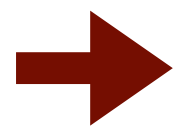
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➔ **filter** is higher-order

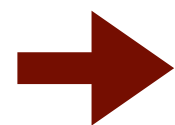
Higher-order function: filter

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filter is higher-order



takes the predicate `p: 'a -> bool` as an argument

Higher-order function: filter

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➔ **filter** is higher-order

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➔ **filter** is curried

Higher-order function: filter

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- ➔ **filter** is higher-order
 - ➔ takes the predicate `p: 'a -> bool` as an argument
- ➔ **filter** is curried
- ➔ **filter** is predefined as `List.filter`.

Higher-order function: filter

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```
fun filter (p: 'a -> bool) ([]: 'a list): 'a list =
  | filter p (x::xs) =
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Filter in action:

Higher-order function: filter

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Filter in action:

```
val keepevens = filter (fn n => n mod 2 = 0)
```

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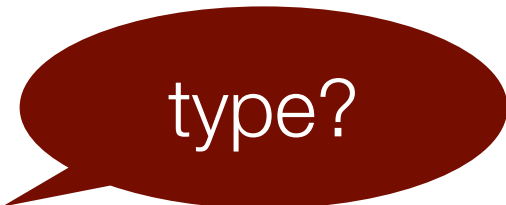
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type?

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```

Filter in action:

(* int -> bool *)

type?

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val keepevens = filter (fn n => n mod 2 = 0)
```

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```

Filter in action:

```
val keepevens = filter (fn n => n mod 2 = 0)  
val [2,~6, 10] = keepevens [1,2,~5,~6,11,10,13]
```

Higher-order function: composition

Higher-order function: composition

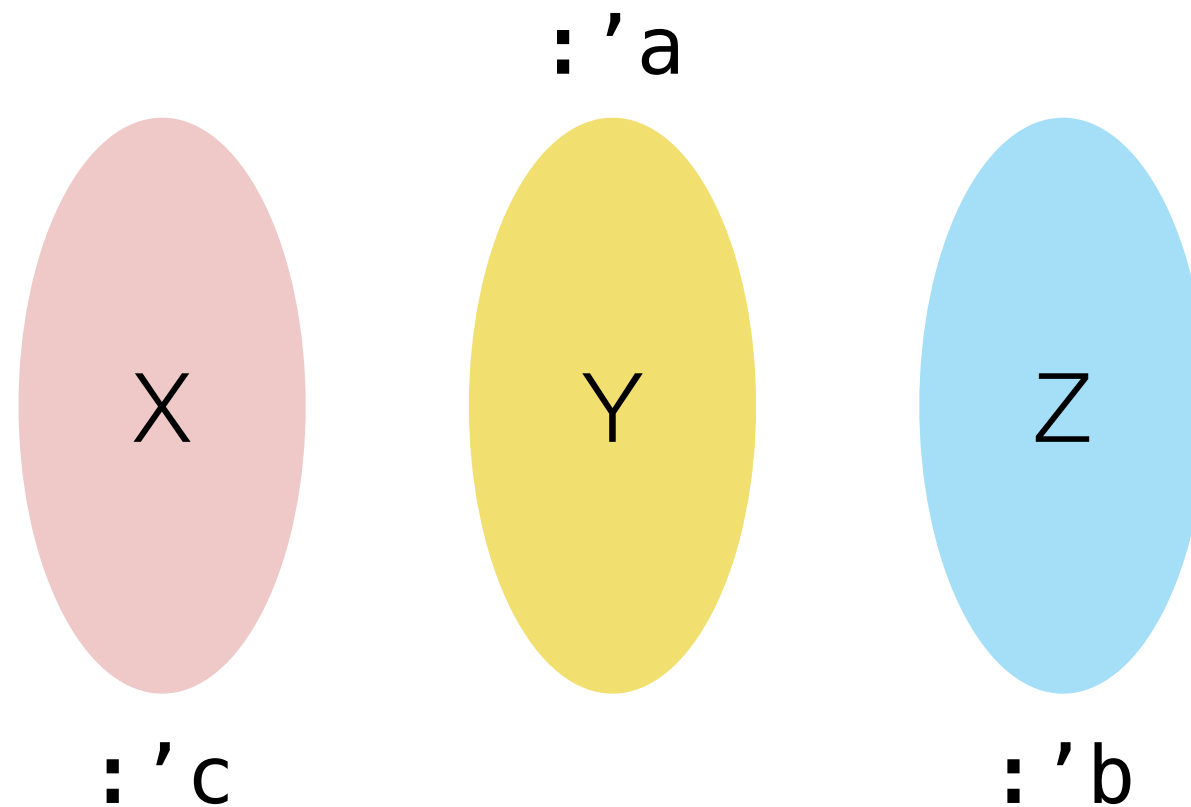
Function composition, abstractly:

Higher-order function: composition

Function composition, abstractly: $(f \circ g)(x) = f(g(x))$

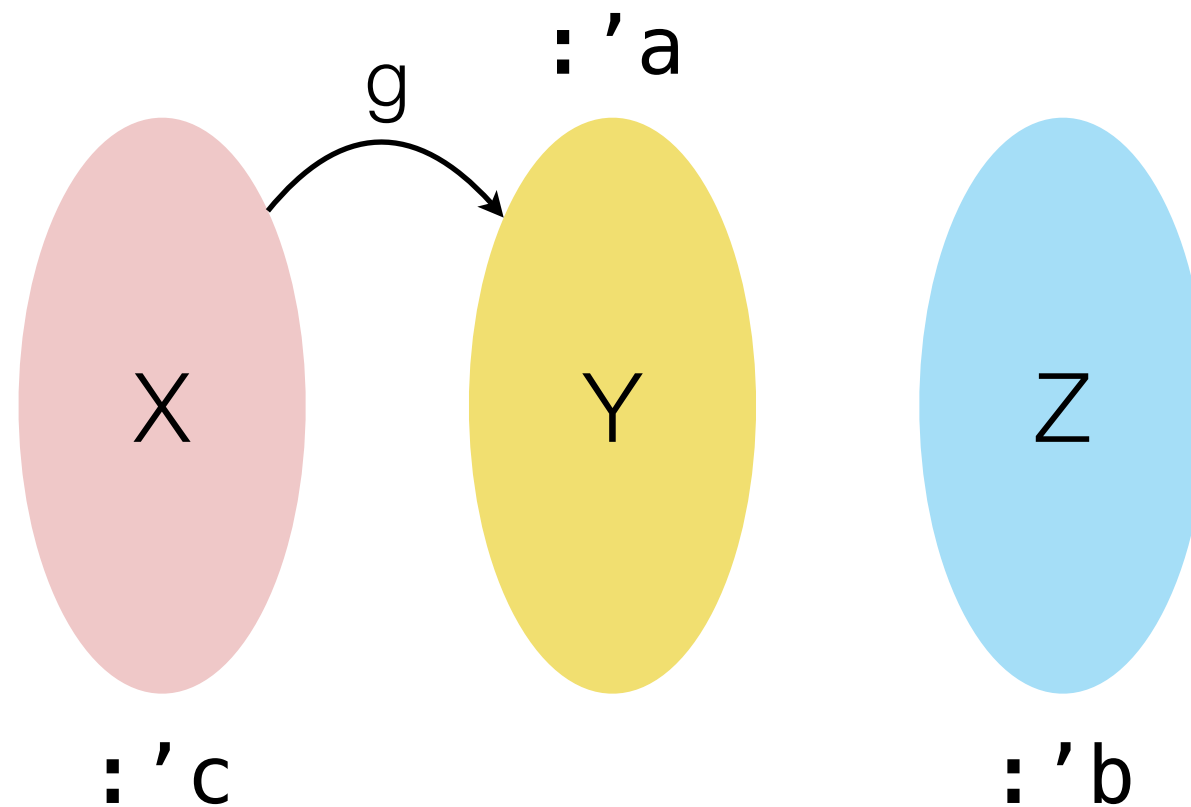
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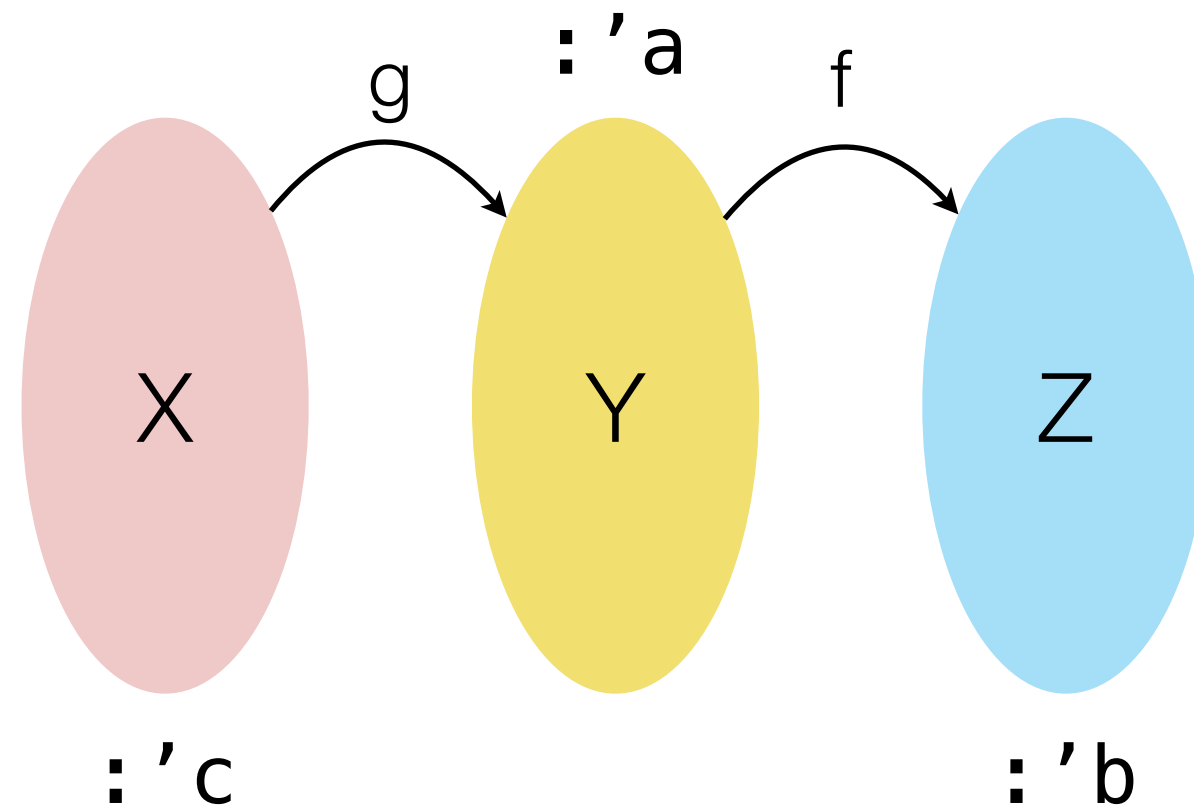
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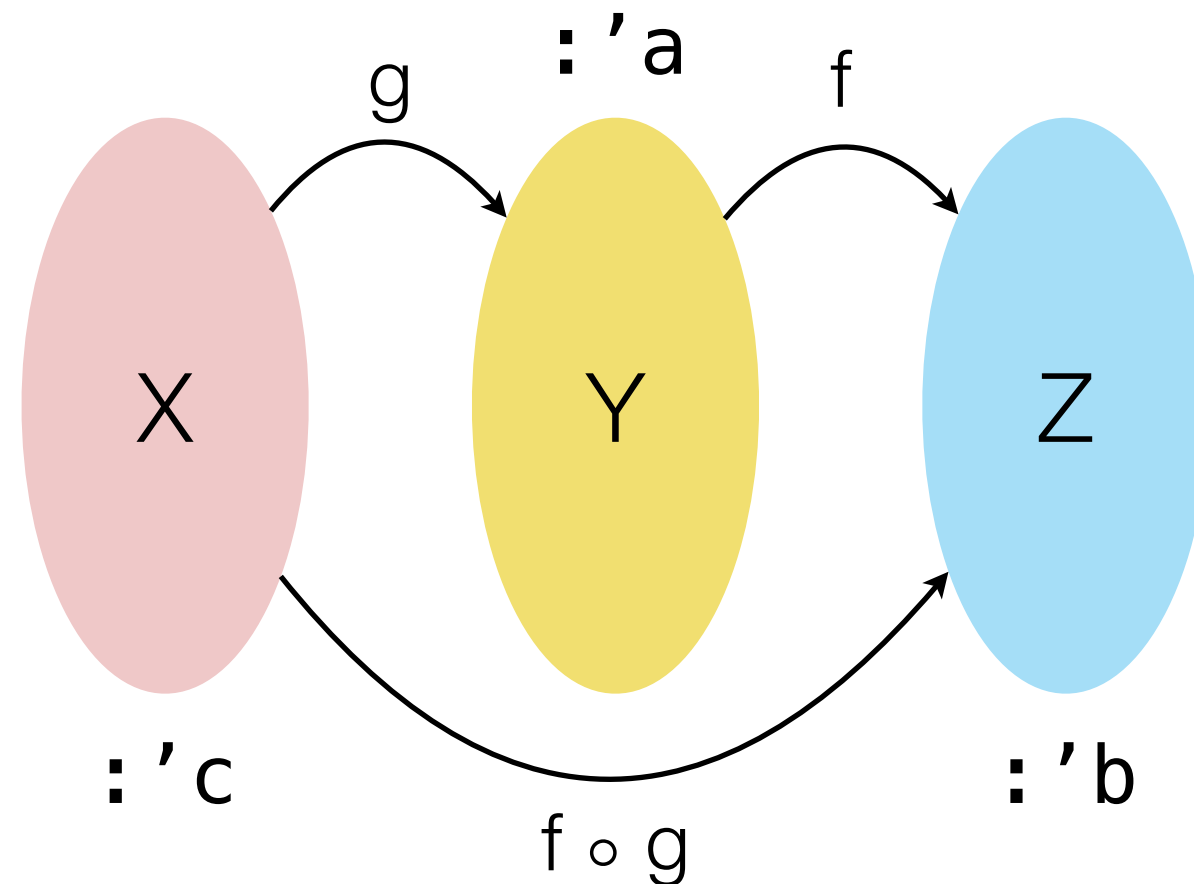
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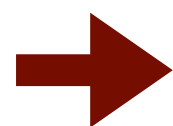
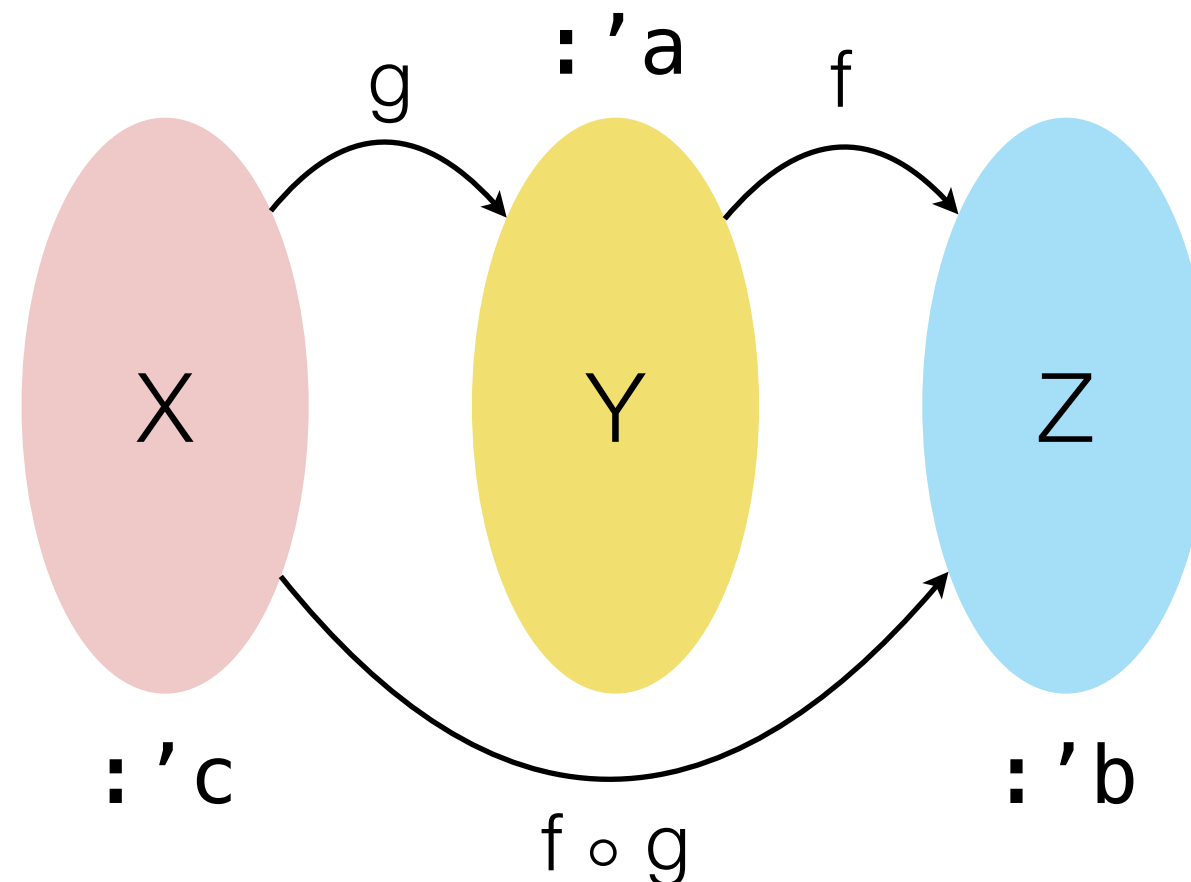
Higher-order function: composition

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Higher-order function: composition

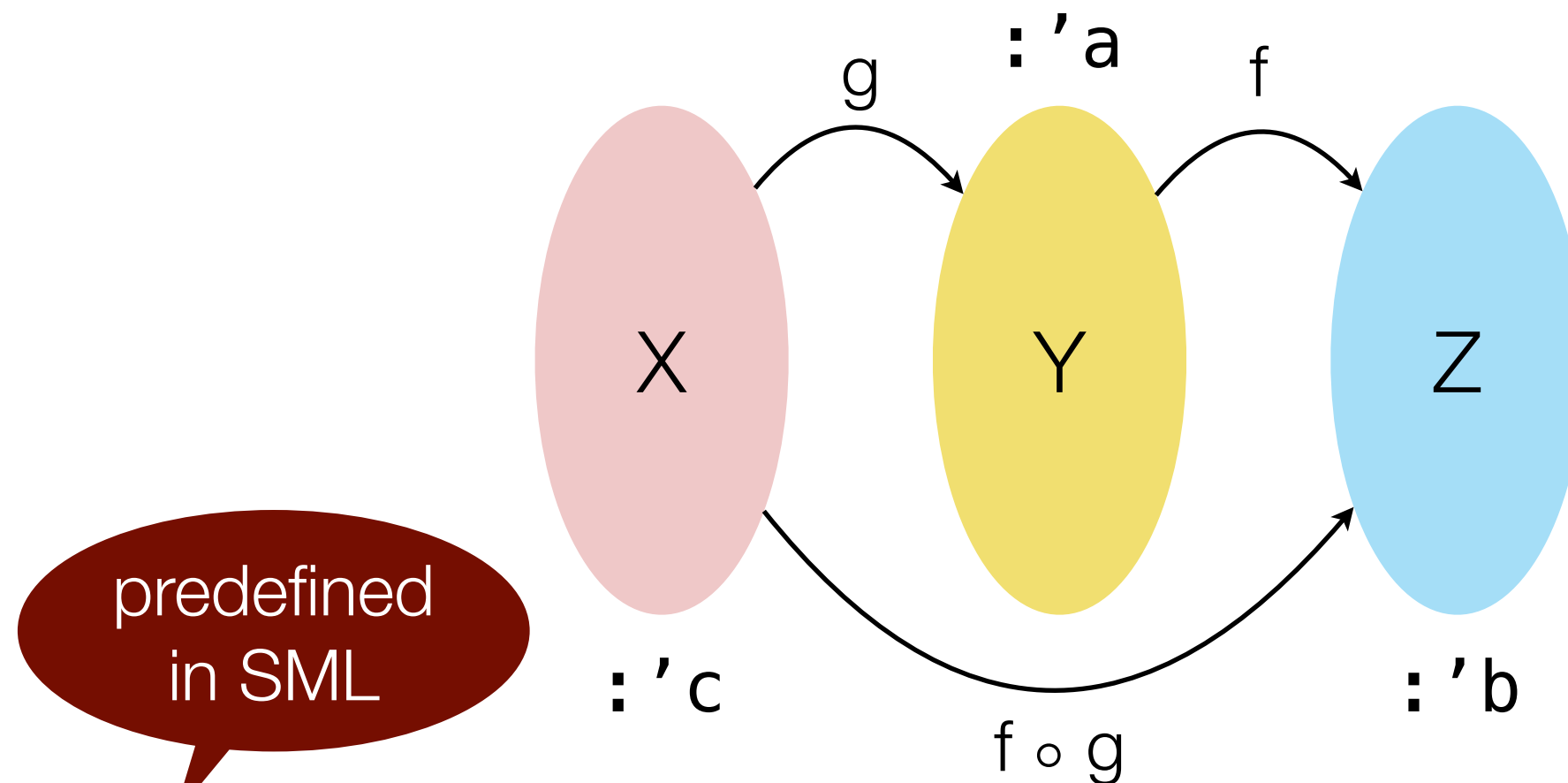
Function composition, abstractly: $(f \circ g)(x) = f(g(x))$



$\circ$ is a higher-order function, i.e., a combinator, expecting two functions as arguments and returning a function.

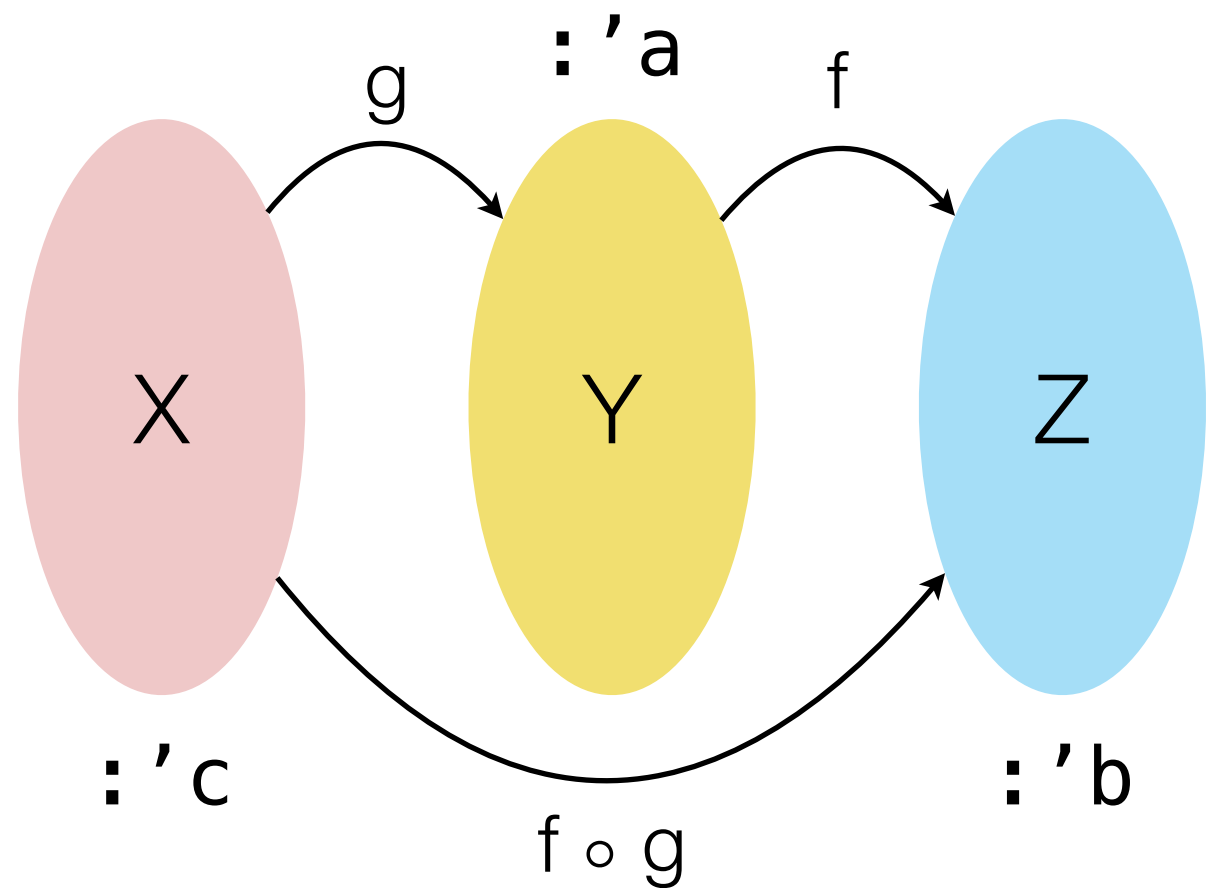
Higher-order function: composition

Function composition, abstractly: $(f \circ g)(x) = f(g(x))$



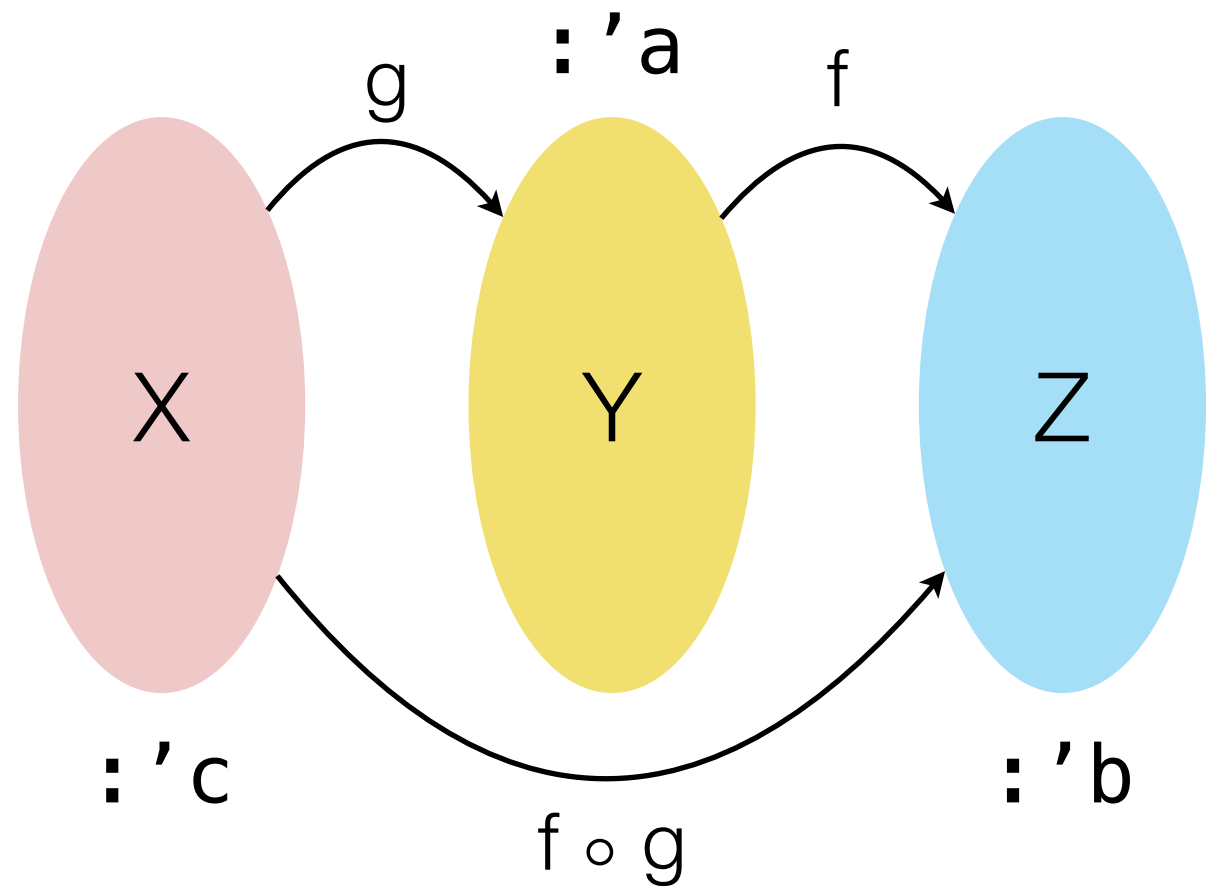
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Higher-order function: composition



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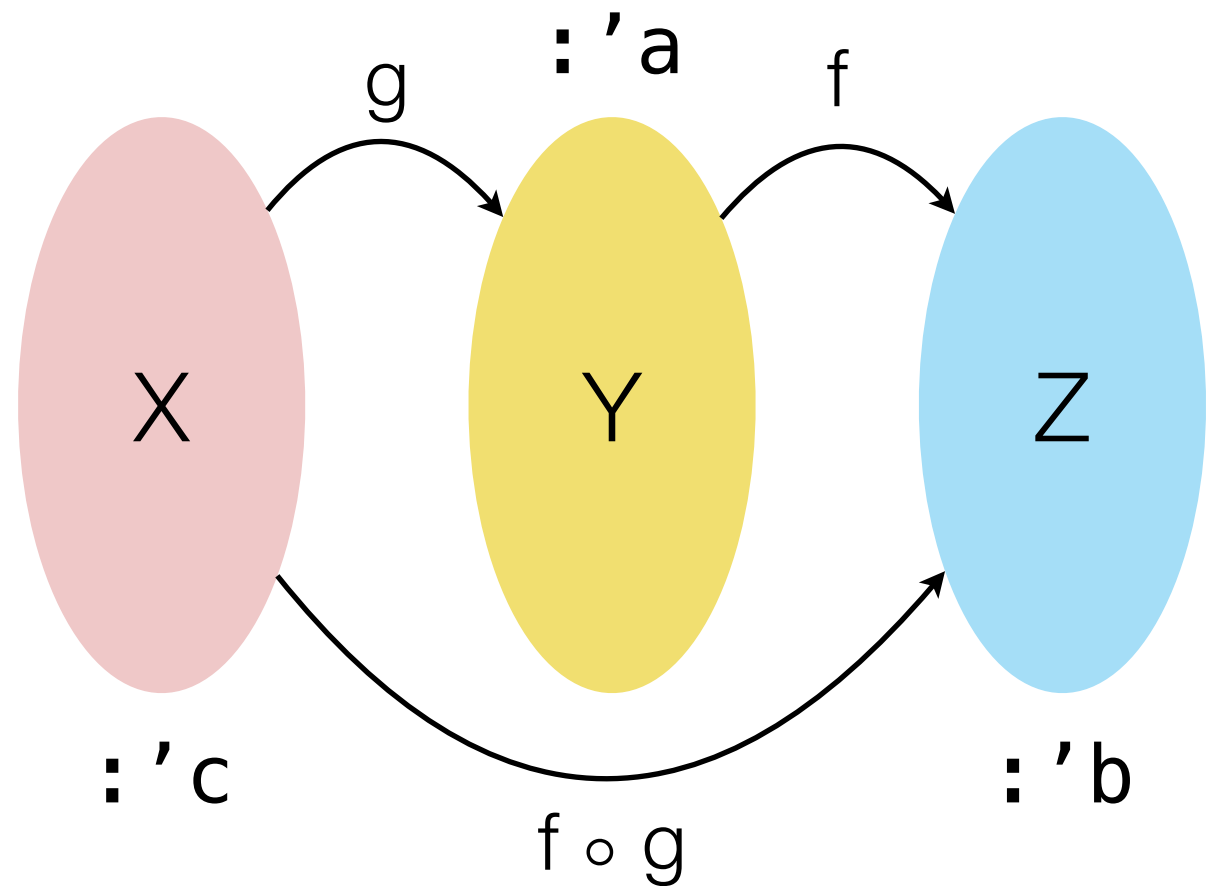
```
infix o  
fun f o g = fn x => f(g(x))
```



Higher-order function: composition

```
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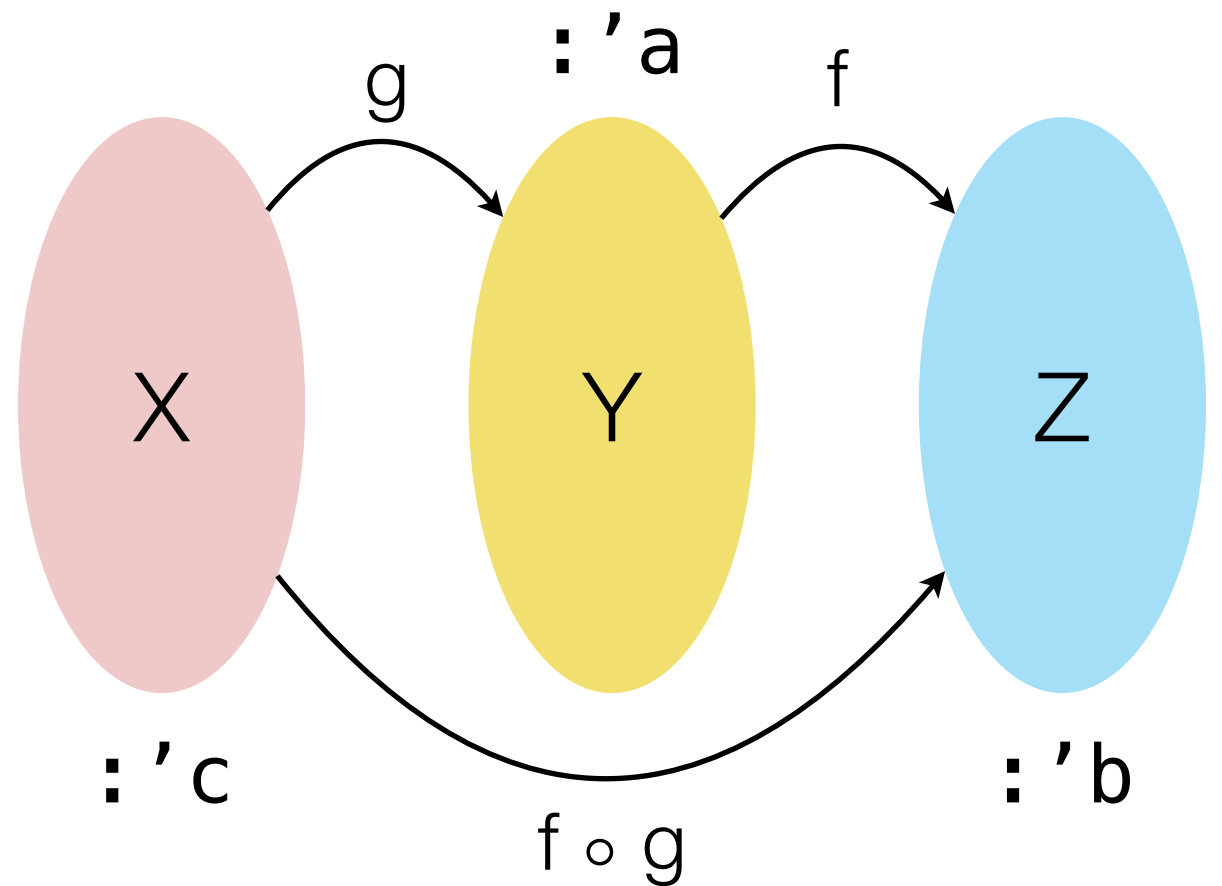
What is its type?



Higher-order function: composition

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What is its type?



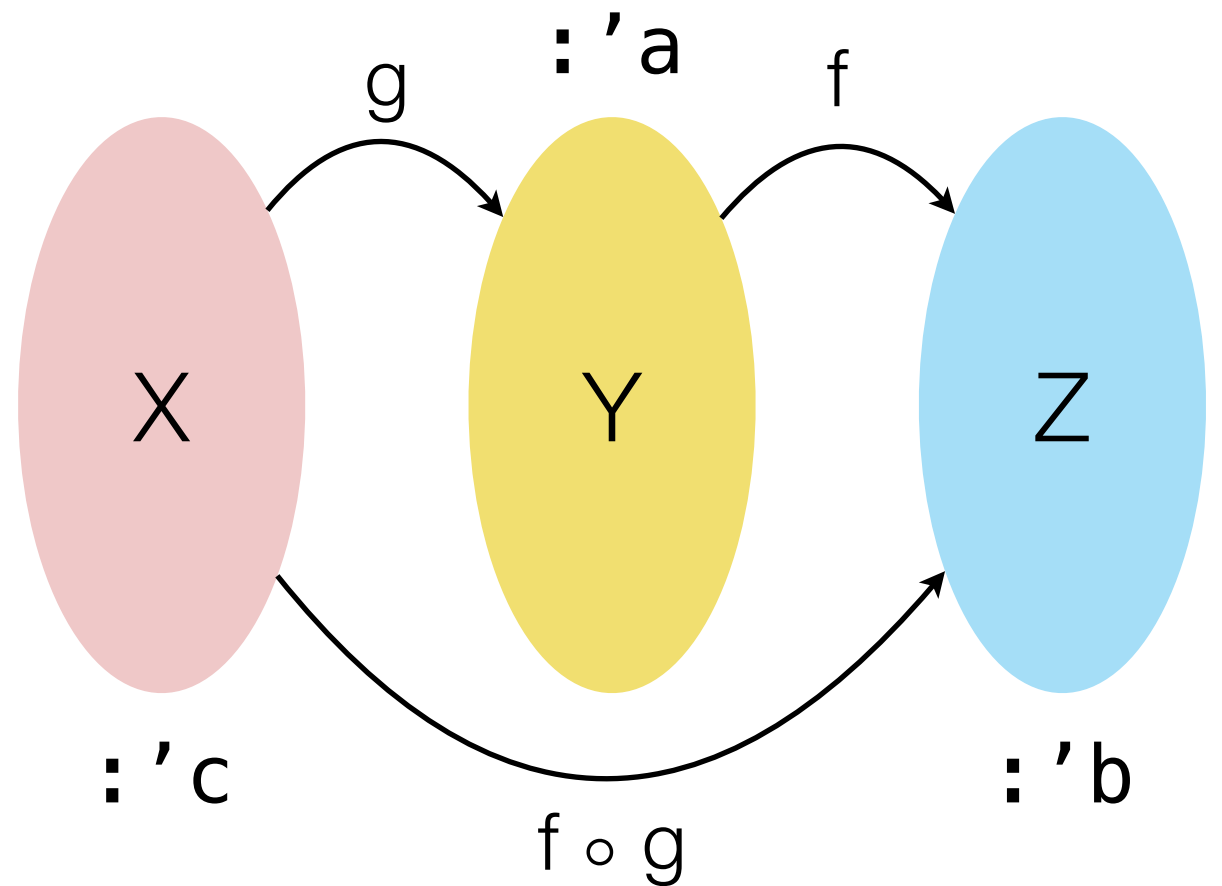
$(* (op\ o) :$

$*)$

Higher-order function: composition

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What is its type?

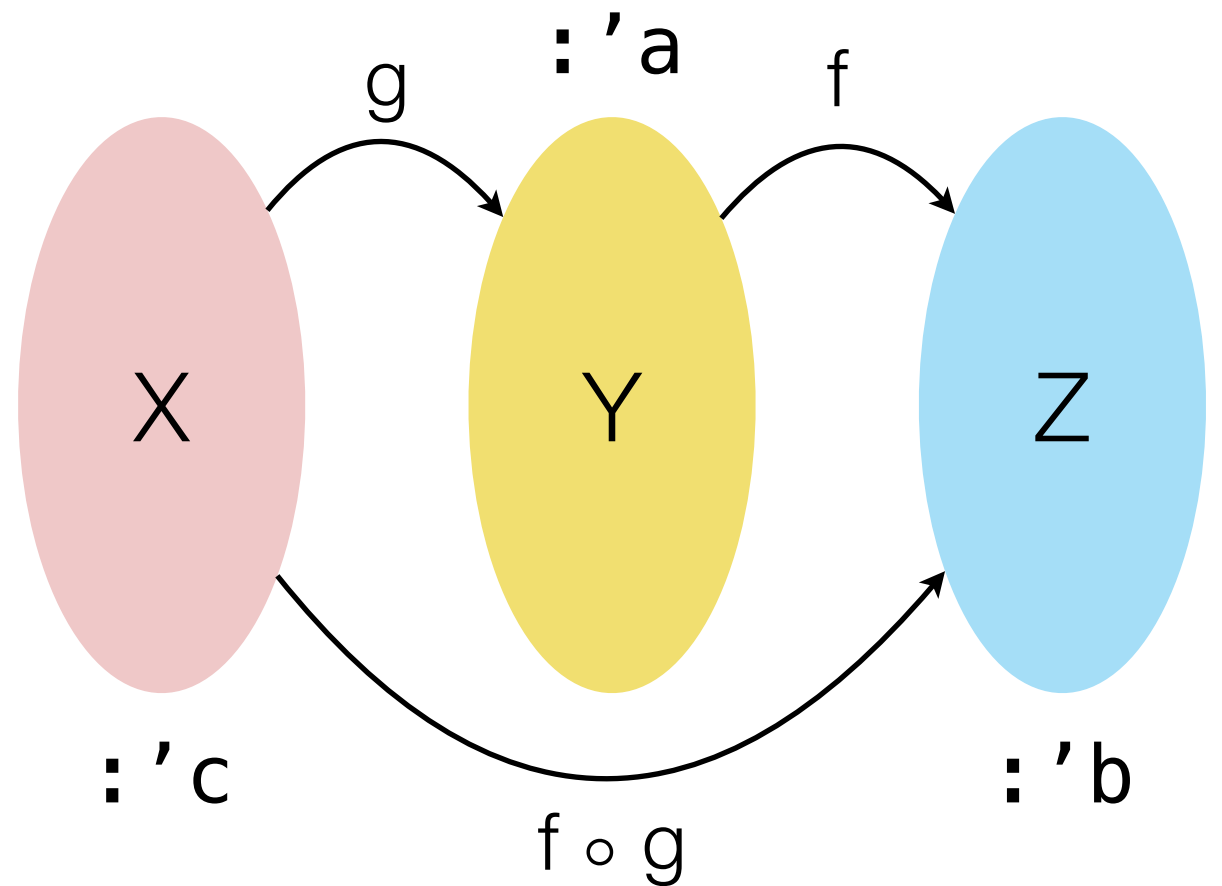


```
(* (op o): ('a -> 'b) *)
```

Higher-order function: composition

```
infix o
fun f o g = fn x => f(g(x))
```

What is its type?

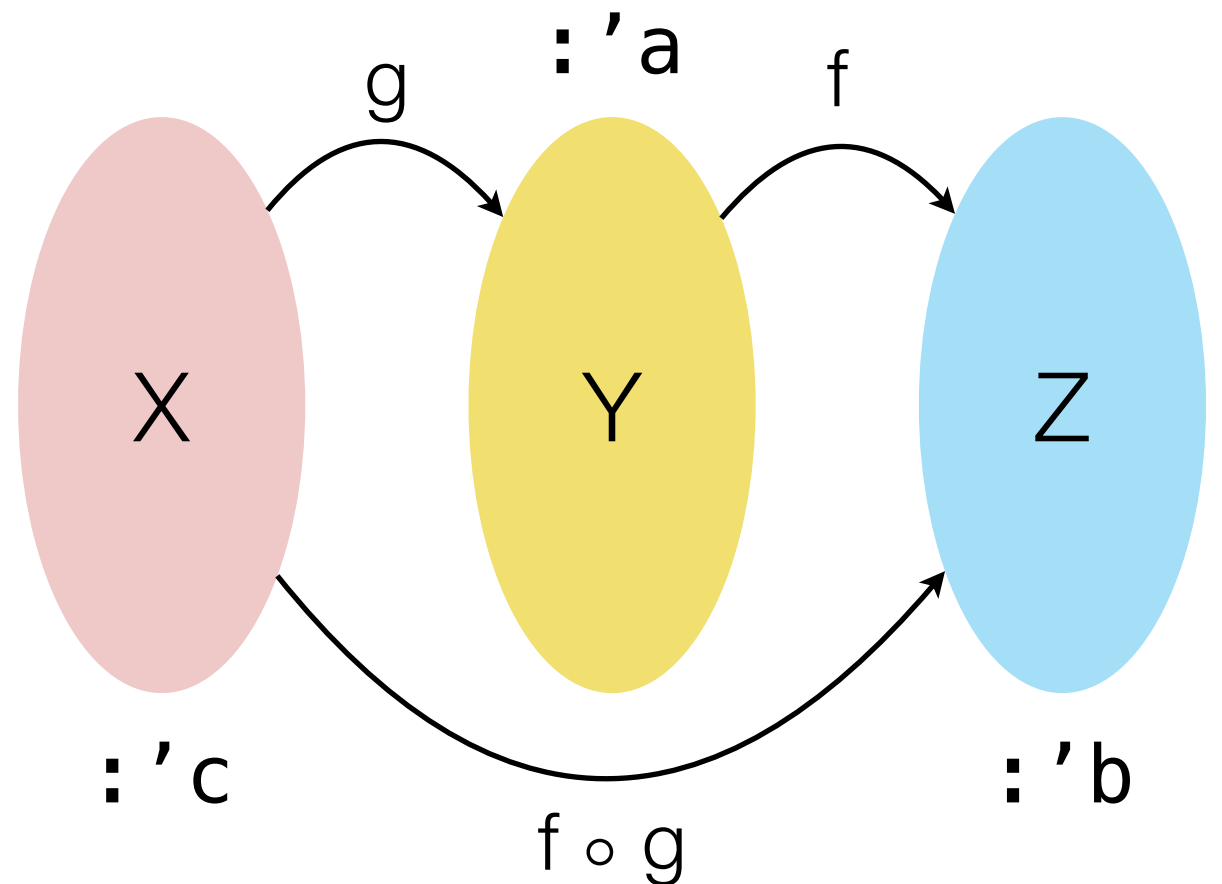


```
(* (op o): ('a -> 'b) * ('c -> 'a) *)
```

Higher-order function: composition

```
infix o
fun f o g = fn x => f(g(x))
```

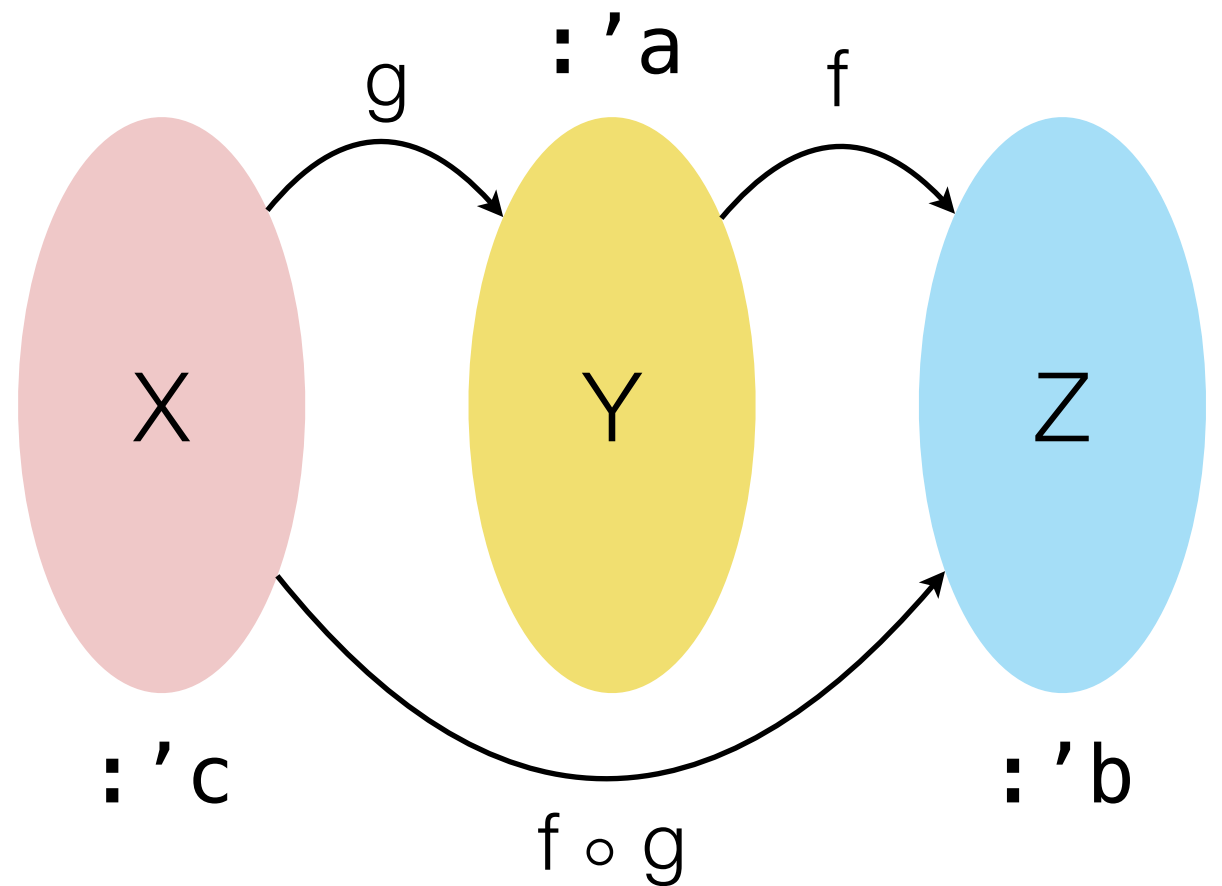
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```
(* (op o): ('a -> 'b) * ('c -> 'a) -> 'c -> 'b *)
```

Higher-order function: composition

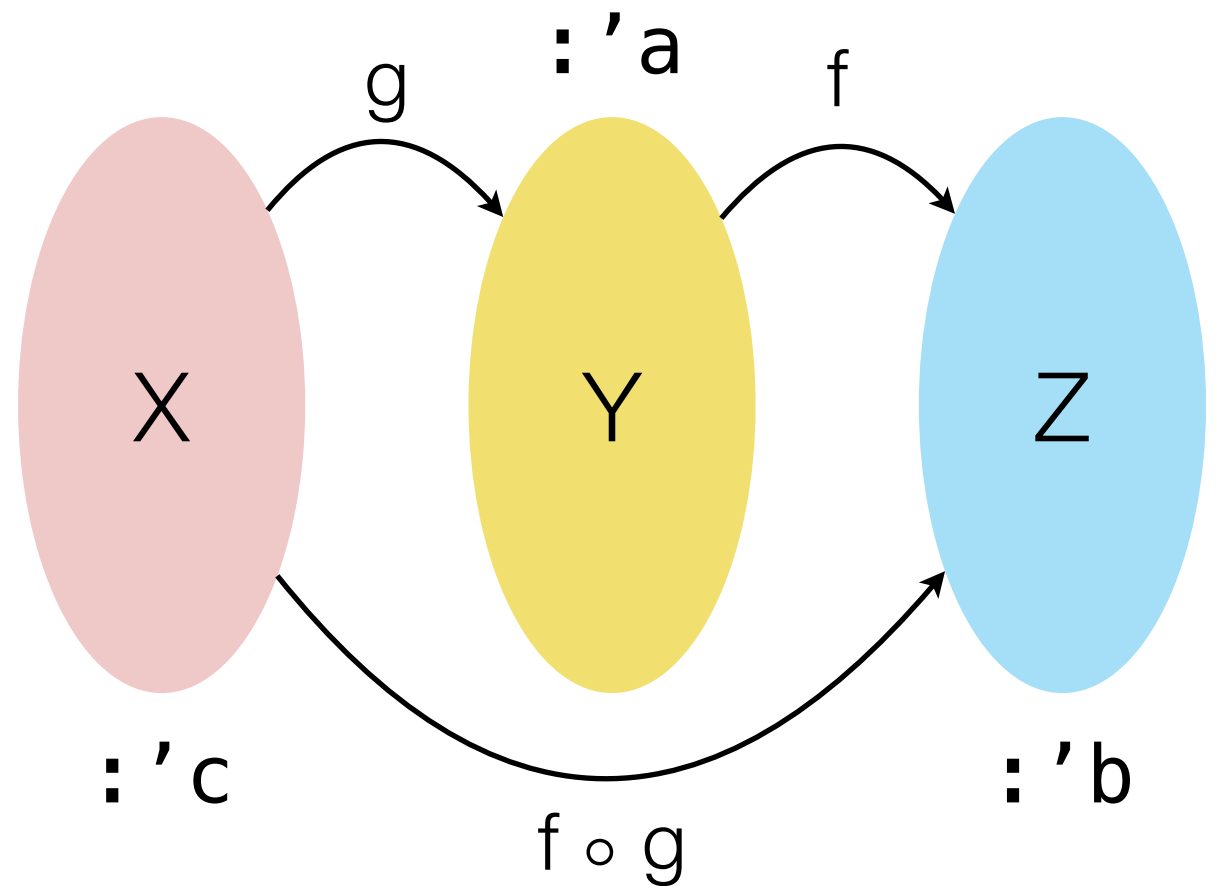
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Higher-order function: composition

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Examples:

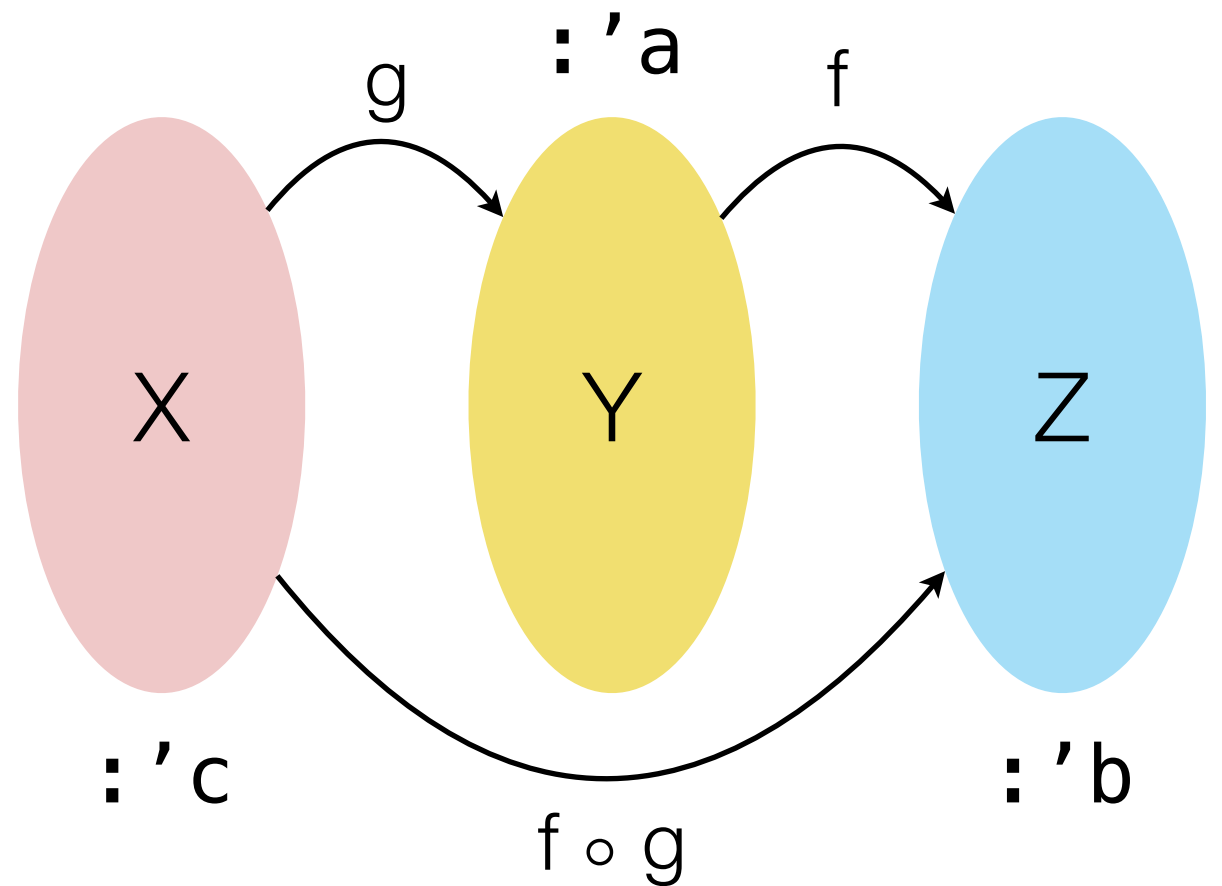


Higher-order function: composition

```
infix o
fun f o g = fn x => f(g(x))
```

Examples:

```
fun incr x = x + 1
fun double x = 2 * x
```



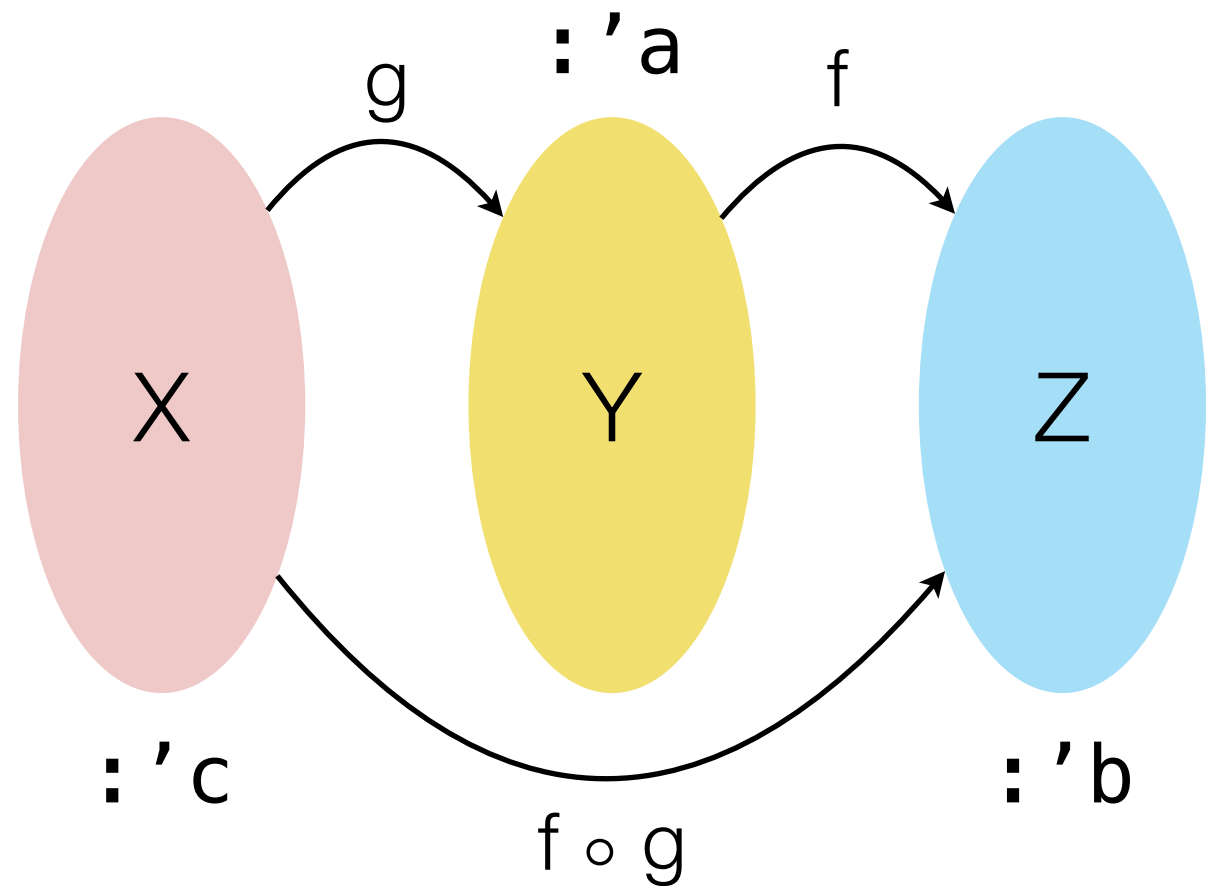
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Examples:

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Then we have:



Higher-order function: composition

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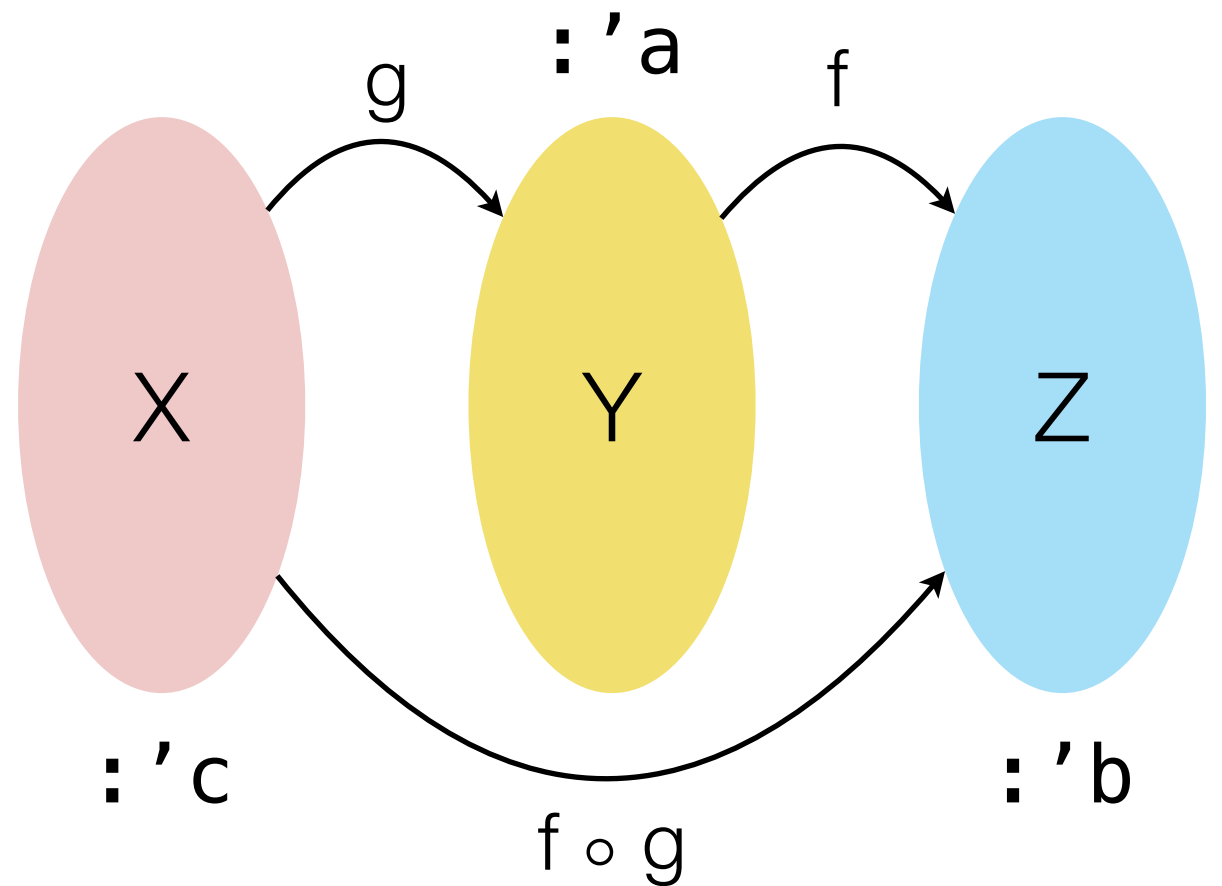
Examples:

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fun double x = 2 * x
```

Then we have:

```
double o incr ≅ fn x => 2x + 2
```

```
incr o double ≅ fn x => 2x + 1
```



Higher-order function: map

Higher-order function: map

Transforming elements in a list, given a transformation function:

Higher-order function: map

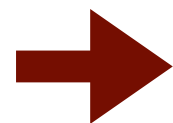
Transforming elements in a list, given a transformation function:

```
(* map: ('a -> 'b) -> 'a list -> 'b list
   REQUIRES: true
   ENSURES: For all  $n \geq 0$ ,  $\text{map } f [x_1, \dots, x_n] \cong [f \ x_1, \dots, f \ x_n]$ 
*)
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map is higher-order

Higher-order function: map

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→ map is higher-order

→ takes a function $f: 'a \rightarrow 'b$ as an argument

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→ map is higher-order

→ takes a function $f: 'a \rightarrow 'b$ as an argument

→ map is predefined in SML

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```
fun map (f: 'a -> 'b) ([]: 'a list): 'b list =
  | map f (x::xs) =
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Higher-order function: map

Transforming elements in a list, given a transformation function:

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Example:

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fun map (f: 'a -> 'b) ([]: 'a list): 'b list = []
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```

Example:

```
map double [1,2,3] ==> [2,4,6]
```

Higher-order function: fold

Higher-order function: fold

Combining elements in a list, given a binary operation and base value:

Higher-order function: fold

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(* fold: ('a * 'b -> 'b) -> 'b -> 'a list -> 'b *)
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Combining elements in a list, given a binary operation and base value:

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combining function:

'a: type of list elements

'b: type of base value and
of combined value

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Higher-order function: fold

Combining elements in a list, given a binary operation and base value:

(* fold: ('a * 'b -> 'b) -> 'b -> 'a list -> 'b *)

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initial value

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Higher-order function: fold

Combining elements in a list, given a binary operation and base value:

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`(* fold: ('a * 'b -> 'b) -> 'b -> 'a list -> 'b *)`

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list to be combined

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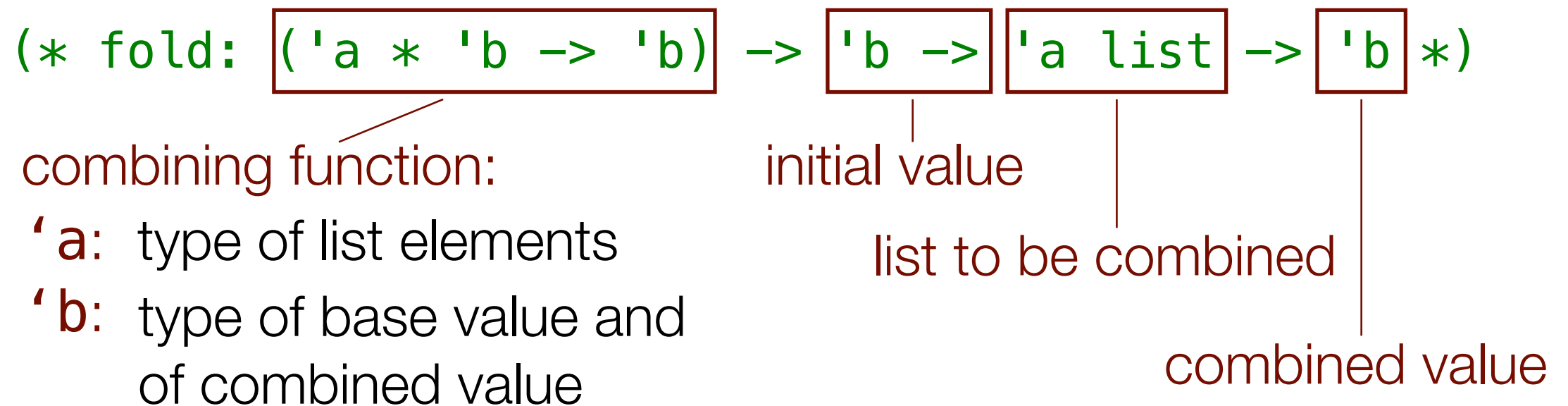
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initial value

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Higher-order function: fold

Combining elements in a list, given a binary operation and base value:



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Two implementations:

Higher-order function: fold

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(* fold: ('a * 'b -> 'b) -> 'b -> 'a list -> 'b *)
```

Two implementations:

$$\text{foldl } f \ z \ [x_1, \dots, x_n] \cong f(x_n, \dots f(x_3, f(x_2, f(x_1, z))))$$

Higher-order function: fold

Combining elements in a list, given a binary operation and base value:

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Two implementations:

`foldl f z [x1, ..., xn] ≅ f(xn, ... f(x3, f(x2, f(x1, z))))`

`foldr f z [x1, ..., xn] ≅ f(x1, ... f(xn-2, f(xn-1, f(xn, z))))`

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`(* fold: ('a * 'b -> 'b) -> 'b -> 'a list -> 'b *)`

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$\text{foldl } f \ z \ [x_1, \dots, x_n] \xrightarrow{\hspace{1.5cm}} \cong f(x_n, \dots f(x_3, f(x_2, f(x_1, z))))$

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Examples:

`foldl (op -) 0 [1,2,3,4] ==>`

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Examples:

`foldl (op -) 0 [1,2,3,4] ==> 2`

Higher-order function: fold

Combining elements in a list, given a binary operation and base value:

$(\ast \text{ fold}: ('a \ast 'b \rightarrow 'b) \rightarrow 'b \rightarrow 'a \text{ list} \rightarrow 'b \ast)$

Two implementations:

$\text{foldl } f \ z \ [x_1, \dots, x_n] \xrightarrow{\hspace{1cm}} \cong f(x_n, \dots f(x_3, f(x_2, f(x_1, z))))$

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Examples:

$\text{foldl } (\text{op } -) \ 0 \ [1, 2, 3, 4] \implies 2 \quad (4 - (3 - (2 - (1 - 0))))$

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Examples:

$\text{foldl } (\text{op } -) \ 0 \ [1, 2, 3, 4] \implies 2$

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Higher-order function: fold

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Let's implement foldl and foldr:

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```

Homework:

```
foldl (op ::) [] [1,2,3,4] ==> ?
```

```
foldr (op ::) [] [1,2,3,4] ==> ?
```

That's all for today. See you on Thursday!