Scope, Function Calls and Storage Management

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Adapted by Mooly Sagiv

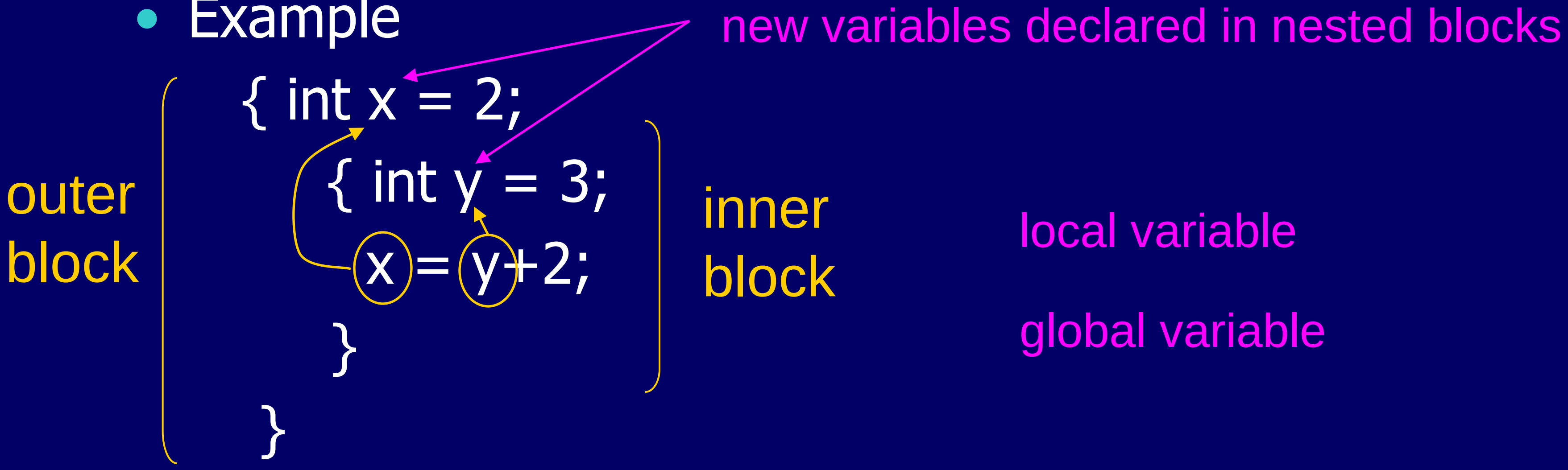
Topics

- Block-structured languages and stack storage
- In-line Blocks
  - activation records
  - storage for local, global variables
- First-order functions
  - parameter passing
  - tail recursion and iteration
- Higher-order functions
  - deviations from stack discipline
  - language expressiveness => implementation complexity
- Garbage Collection

Block-Structured Languages

◆ Nested blocks, local variables

- Example



new variables declared in nested blocks

```
{ int x = 2;
    { int y = 3;
       x = y+2;
    }
}
```

outer block

inner block

local variable

global variable

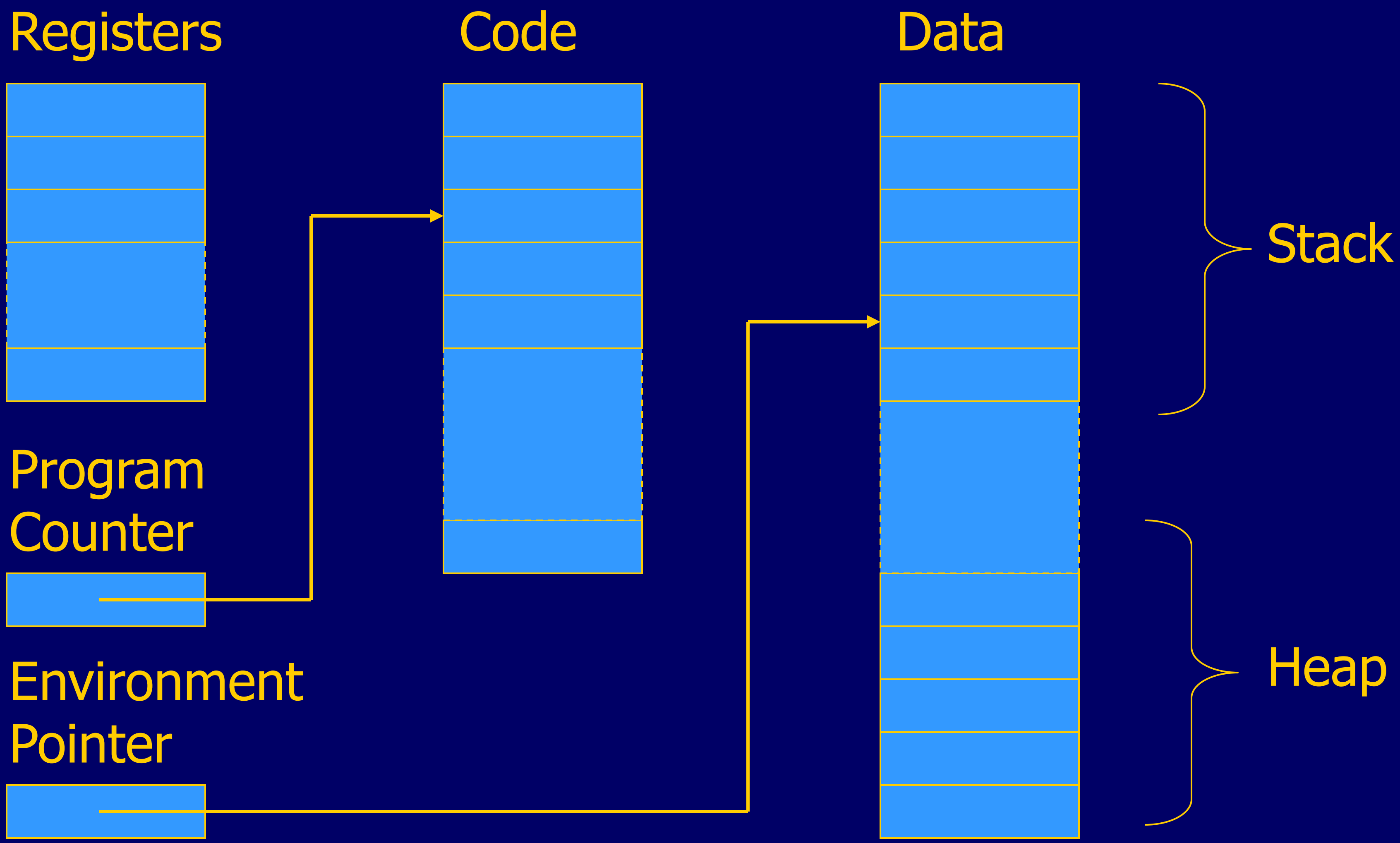
- Storage management
  - Enter block: allocate space for variables
  - Exits block: some or all space may be deallocated

Examples

- Blocks in common languages
  - C, ~~JavaScript~~ * { … }
  - Algol begin … end
  - ML let … in …
- Two forms of blocks
  - In-line blocks
  - Blocks associated with functions or procedures
- Topic: block-based memory management, access to local variables, parameters, global variables

* JavaScript functions provide blocks

Simplified Machine Model



Interested in Memory Mgmt Only

- Registers, Code segment, Program counter
  - Ignore registers
  - Details of instruction set will not matter
- Data Segment
  - Stack contains data related to block entry/exit
  - Heap contains data of varying lifetime
  - Environment pointer points to current stack position
    - Block entry: add new activation record to stack
    - Block exit: remove most recent activation record

Some basic concepts

- Scope
  - Region of program text where declaration is visible
- Lifetime (Duration)
  - Period of time when location is allocated to program

```
{ int x = … ;
    {  int y = … ;
        {  int x = … ;
             ….
          };
    };
};
```

- Inner declaration of x hides outer one.
- Called “hole in scope”
- Lifetime of outer x includes time when inner block is executed
- Lifetime ≠ scope
- Lines indicate “contour model” of scope.

In-line Blocks

◆ Activation record
  - Data structure stored on run-time stack
  - Contains space for local variables

◆ Example

```
{ int x=0;
   int y=x+1;
      {  int z=(x+y)*(x-y);
       };
};
```

Push record with space for x, y

Set values of x, y

    Push record for inner block

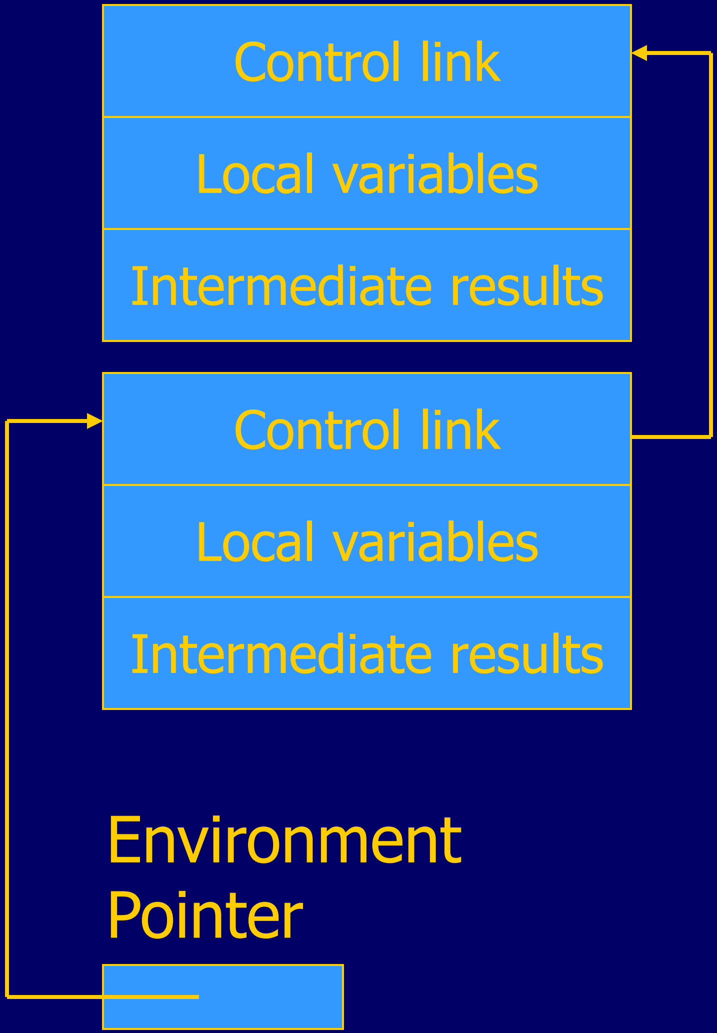
    Set value of z

    Pop record for inner block

Pop record for outer block

May need space for variables and intermediate results like (x+y), (x-y)

Activation record for in-line block



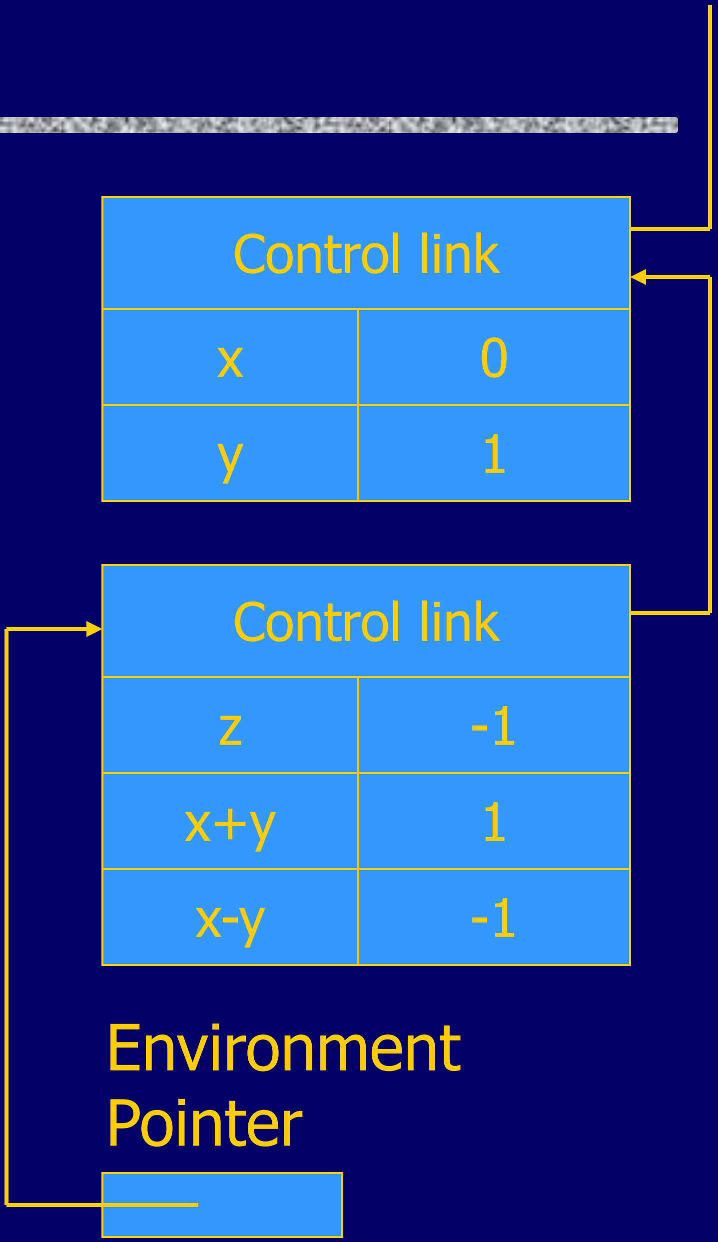
- Control link
  - pointer to previous record on stack
- Push record on stack:
  - Set new control link to point to old env ptr
  - Set env ptr to new record
- Pop record off stack
  - Follow control link of current record to reset environment pointer

Can be optimized away, but assume not for purpose of discussion.

Example

```
{ int x=0;
   int y=x+1;
      {  int z=(x+y)*(x-y);
       };
};
```

- Push record with space for x, y
- Set values of x, y
  - Push record for inner block
  - Set value of z
  - Pop record for inner block
- Pop record for outer block



Control link	
x	0
y	1

Control link	
z	-1
x+y	1
x-y	-1

Environment Pointer

Scoping rules

- Global and local variables
  - x, y are local to outer block
  - z is local to inner bock
  - x, y are global to inner block

```
{ int x=0;
   int y=x+1;
        {  int z=(x+y)*(x-y);
         };
};
```

- Static scope
  - global refers to declaration in closest enclosing block
- Dynamic scope
  - global refers to most recent activation record

These are same until we consider function calls.

Functions and procedures

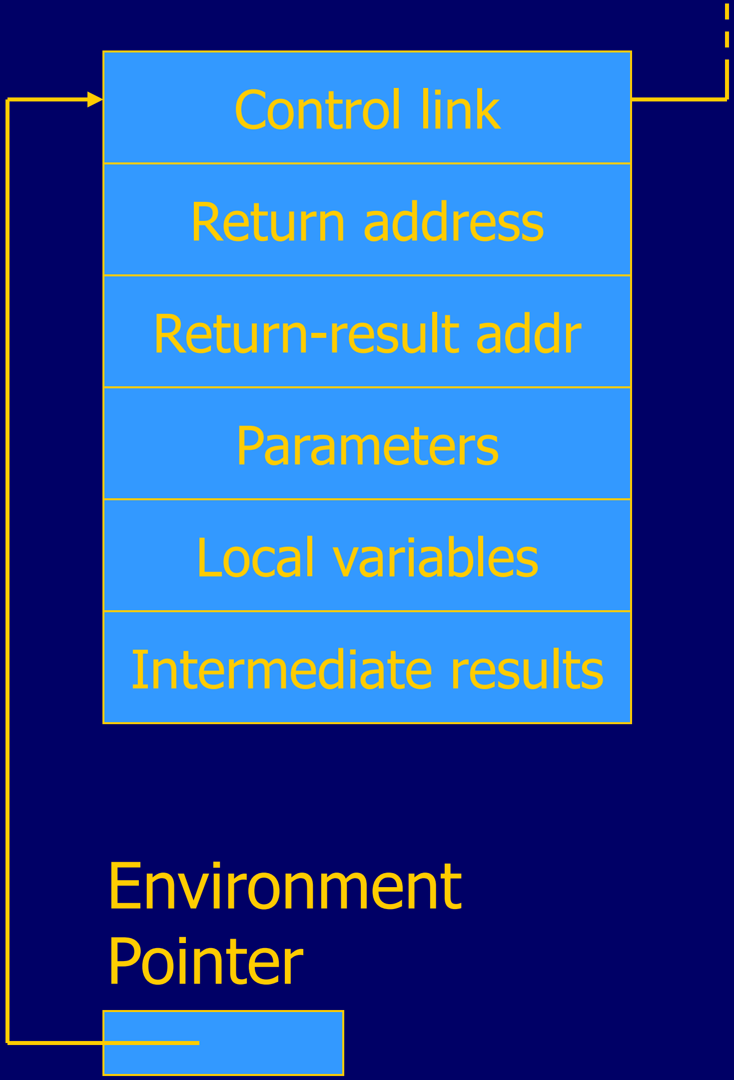
- Syntax of procedures (Algol) and functions (C)

```
procedure P (<pars>)
    begin
        <local vars>
        <proc body>
    end;
```

```
<type> function f(<pars>)
{
        <local vars>
        <function body>
}
```

- Activation record must include space for
  - parameters
  - return address
  - local variables, intermediate results
  - return value (an intermediate result)
  - location to put return value on function exit

Activation record for function


Control link

Return address

Return-result addr

Parameters

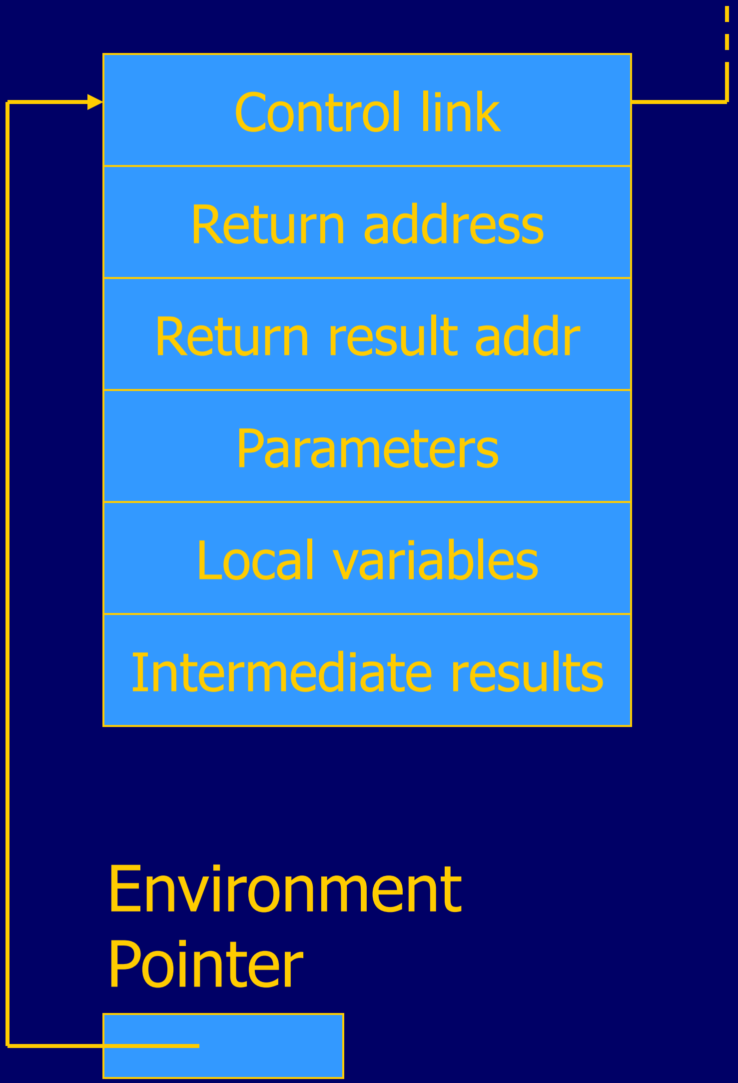
Local variables

Intermediate results

Environment Pointer

- Return address
  - Location of code to execute on function return
- Return-result address
  - Address in activation record of calling block to receive return address
- Parameters
  - Locations to contain data from calling block

Example

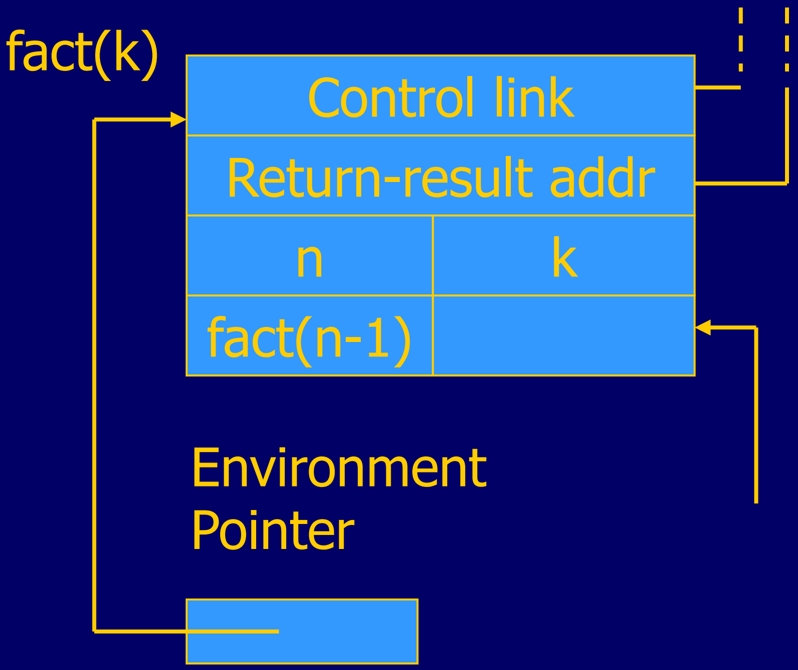


- **Function**

  fact(n) = if n<= 1 then 1
  else n * fact(n-1)

  - Return result address
  - location to put fact(n)
- **Parameter**
  - set to value of n by calling sequence
- **Intermediate result**
  - locations to contain value of fact(n-1)

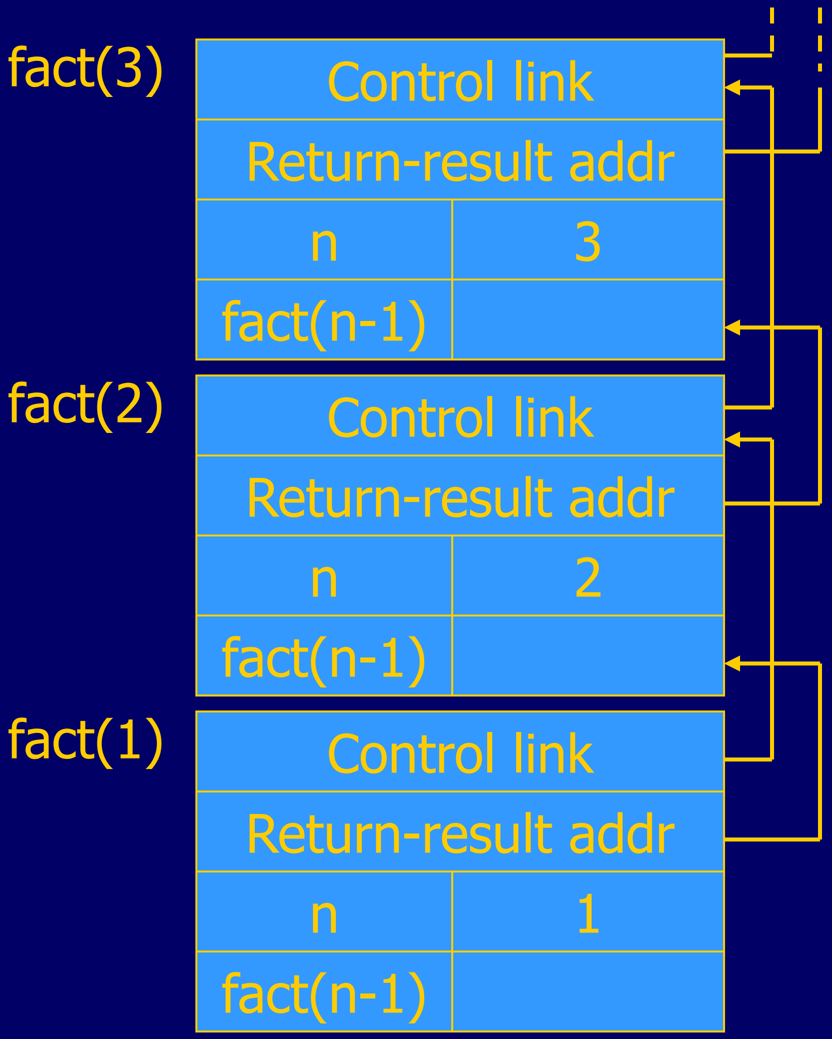
Function call



fact(k)

Control link	
Return-result addr	
n	k
fact(n-1)	

Environment
Pointer



fact(3)

Control link	
Return-result addr	
n	3
fact(n-1)	

fact(2)

Control link	
Return-result addr	
n	2
fact(n-1)	

fact(1)

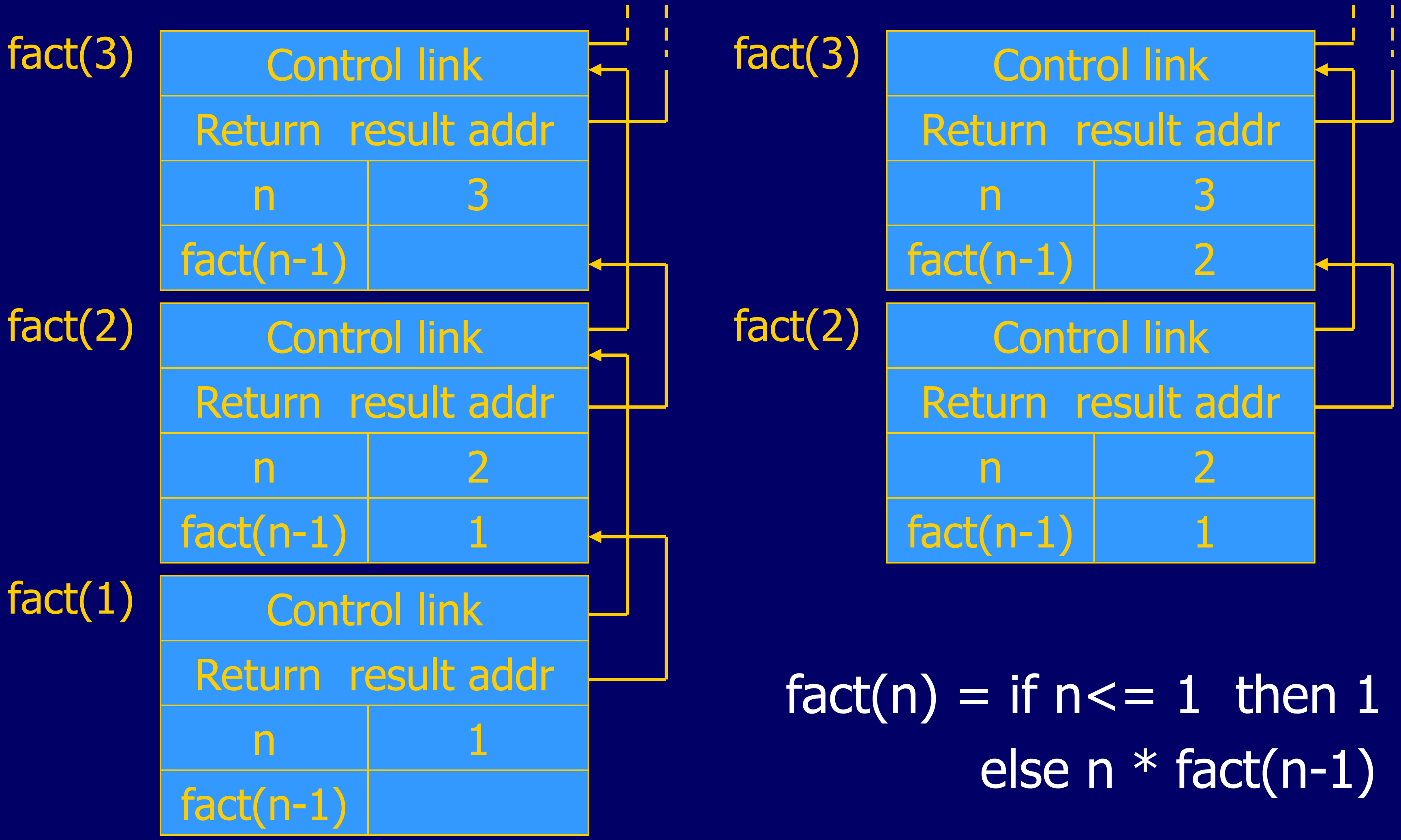
Control link	
Return-result addr	
n	1
fact(n-1)	

```
fact(n) = if n<= 1  then 1
               else n * fact(n-1)
```

Return address omitted; would be ptr into code segment

Function return next slide →

Function return



fact(3)

Control link	
Return result addr	
n	3
fact(n-1)	

fact(2)

Control link	
Return result addr	
n	2
fact(n-1)	1

fact(1)

Control link	
Return result addr	
n	1
fact(n-1)	

fact(3)

Control link	
Return result addr	
n	3
fact(n-1)	2

fact(2)

Control link	
Return result addr	
n	2
fact(n-1)	1

fact(n) = if n<= 1 then 1
else n * fact(n-1)

Topics for first-order functions

- Parameter passing
  - pass-by-value: copy value to new activation record
  - pass-by-reference: copy ptr to new activation record
- Access to global variables
  - global variables are contained in an activation record higher “up” the stack
- Tail recursion
  - an optimization for certain recursive functions

See this yourself: write factorial and run under debugger

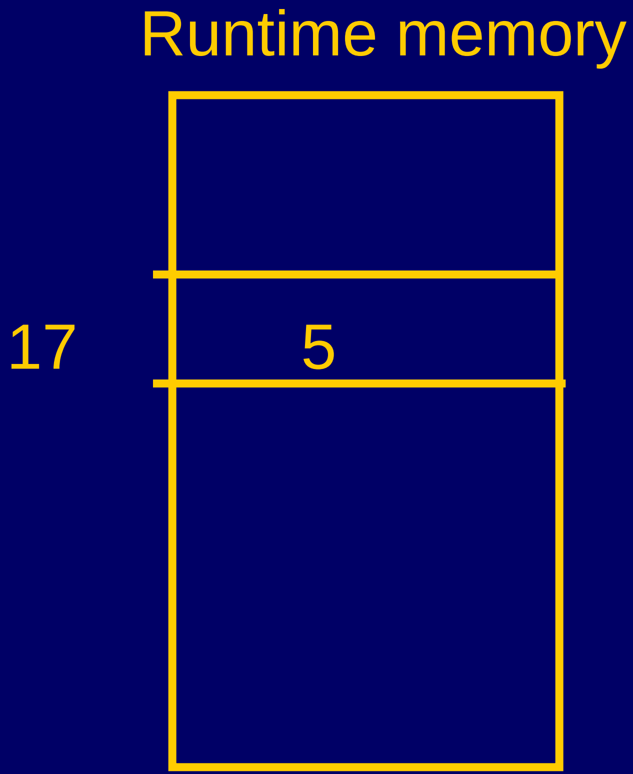
L-values vs. R-values

- Assignment x := exp is compiled into:
  - Compute the **address** of x
  - Compute the **value** of exp
  - Store the value of exp into the address of x
- Generalization
  - R-value
    - Maps program expressions into Context values
  - L-value
    - Maps program expressions into locations
    - Not always defined
  - Java has no small L-values

A Simple Example

```
int x = 5;
```

```
    x = x + 1;
```



A Simple Example

int x = 5;

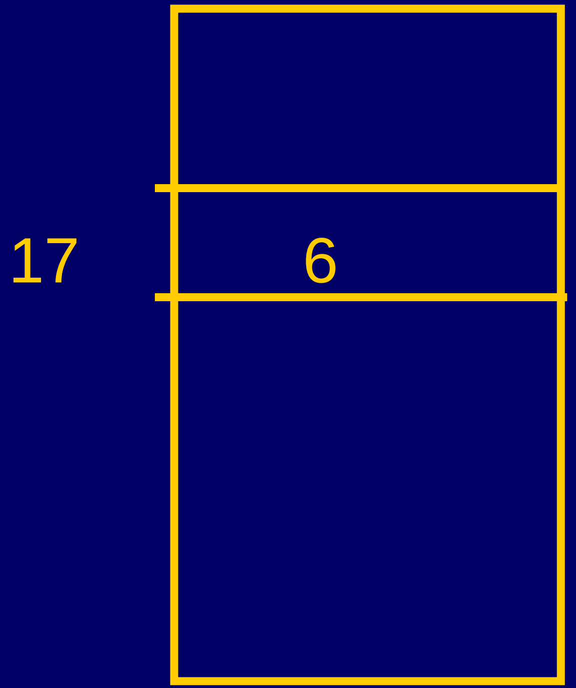
lvalue(x)=17, rvalue(x) =5

lvalue(5)=⊥, rvalue(5)=5

x = x + 1;

lvalue(x)=17, rvalue(x) =5

lvalue(5)=⊥, rvalue(5)=5



Runtime memory

Partial rules for Lvalue in C

- Type of e is pointer to T
- Type of e1 is integer
- lvalue(e2) ≠undefined

exp	**lvalue**	**rvalue**
id	location(id)	content(location(id))
const	undefined	value(const)
***e**	rvalue(e)	content(rvalue(e))
&e2	undefined	lvalue(e2)
e + e1	undefined	rvalue(e)+sizeof(T)*rvalue(e1)

Parameter passing

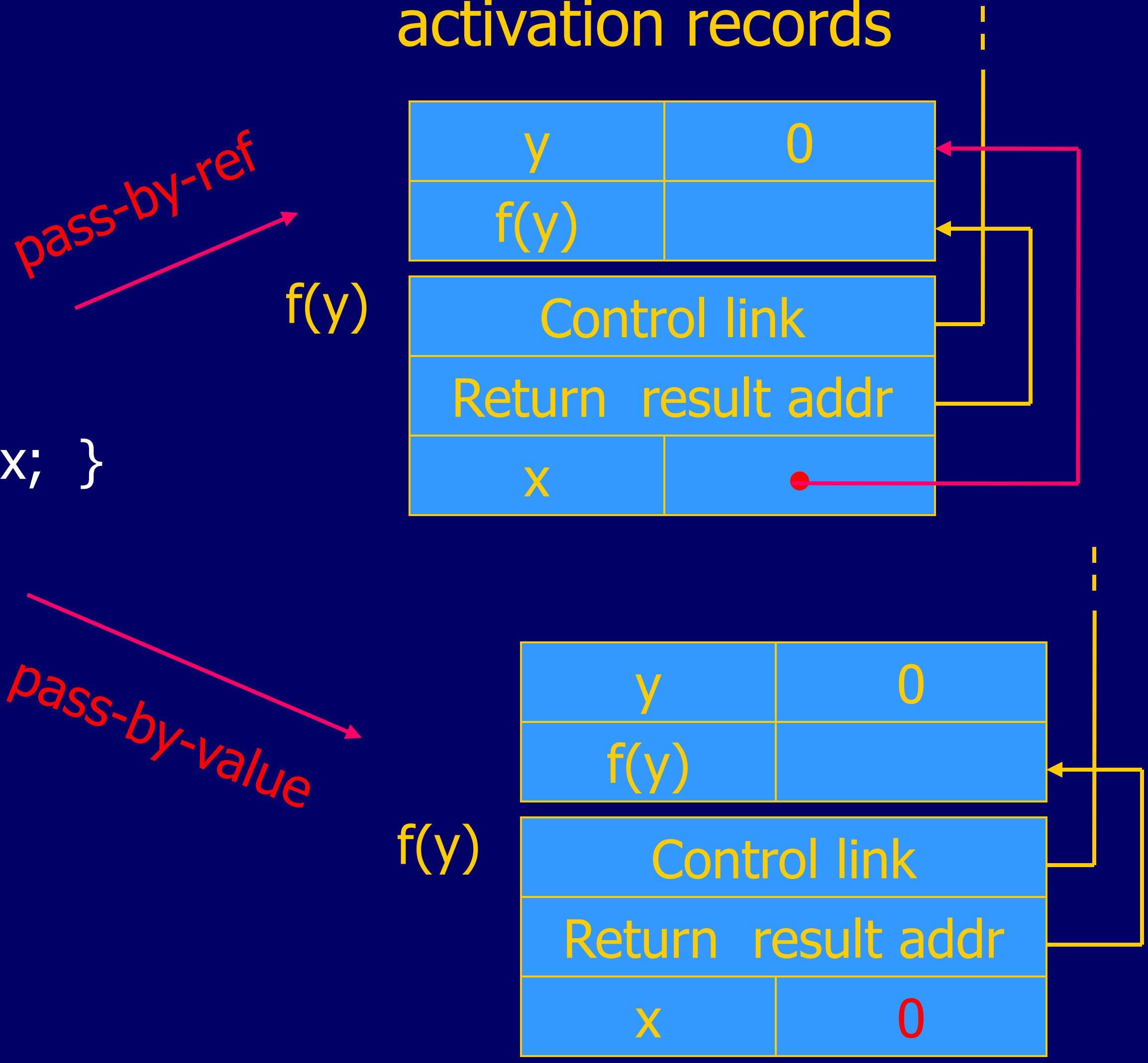
- Pass-by-reference
  - Place L-value (address) in activation record
  - Function can assign to variable that is passed
- Pass-by-value
  - Place R-value (contents) in activation record
  - Function cannot change value of caller’s variable
  - Reduces aliasing (alias: two names refer to same loc)

Example

pseudo-code

activation records

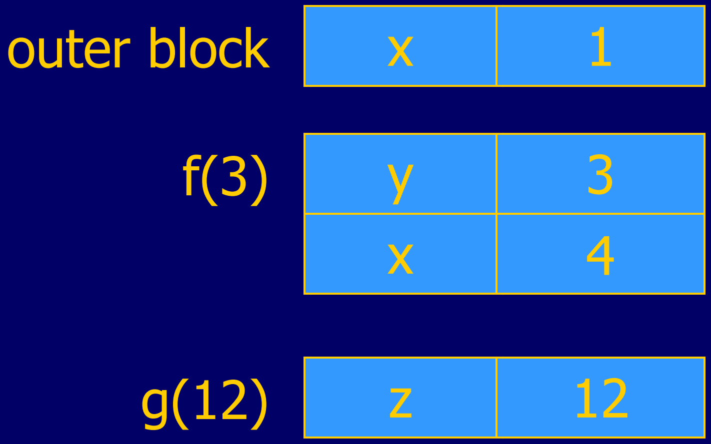
```
function f (x) =
    { x = x+1; return x;  }
var y = 0;
print (f(y)+y);
```



Access to global variables

- Two possible scoping conventions
  - Static scope: refer to closest enclosing block
  - Dynamic scope: most recent activation record on stack
- Example

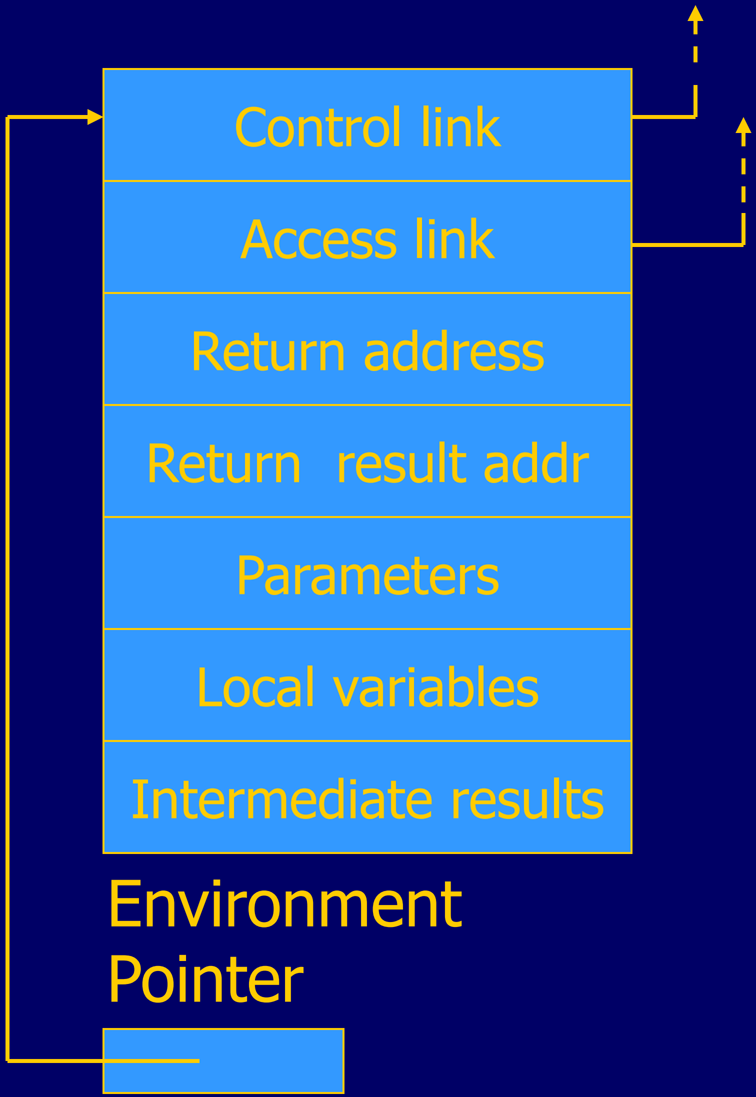
```
var x=1;
function g(z) { return x+z; }
function f(y) {
    var x = y+1;
    return g(y*x);
}
f(3);
```



outer block	x	1
f(3)	y	3
	x	4
g(12)	z	12

Which x is used for expression x+z ?

Activation record for static scope



Control link

Access link

Return address

Return result addr

Parameters

Local variables

Intermediate results

Environment Pointer

- Control link
  - Link to activation record of previous (calling) block
- Access link
  - Link to activation record of closest enclosing block in program text
- Difference
  - Control link depends on dynamic behavior of prog
  - Access link depends on static form of program text

Complex nesting structure

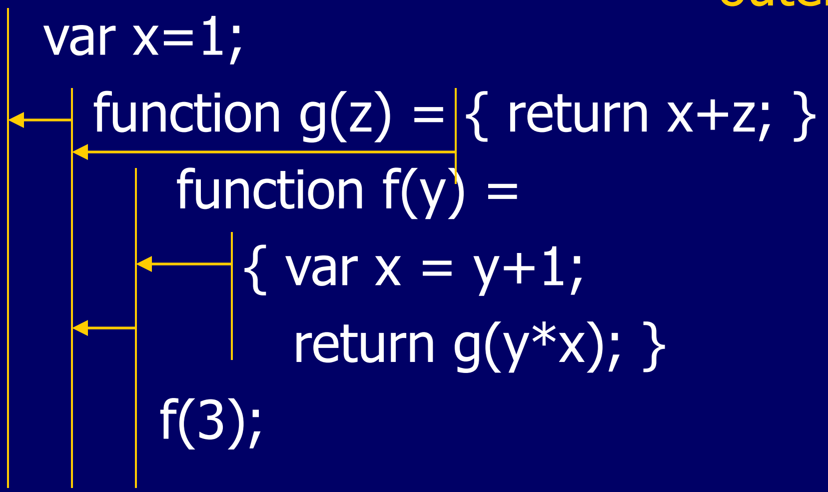
```
function m(…) {
   var x=1;
   …
   function n( … ){
     function g(z) { return x+z; }
     …
     { …
          function f(y) {
             var x = y+1;
             return g(y*x); }
         …
        f(3);  … }
     … n( … ) …}
 … m(…)
```

Simplify to

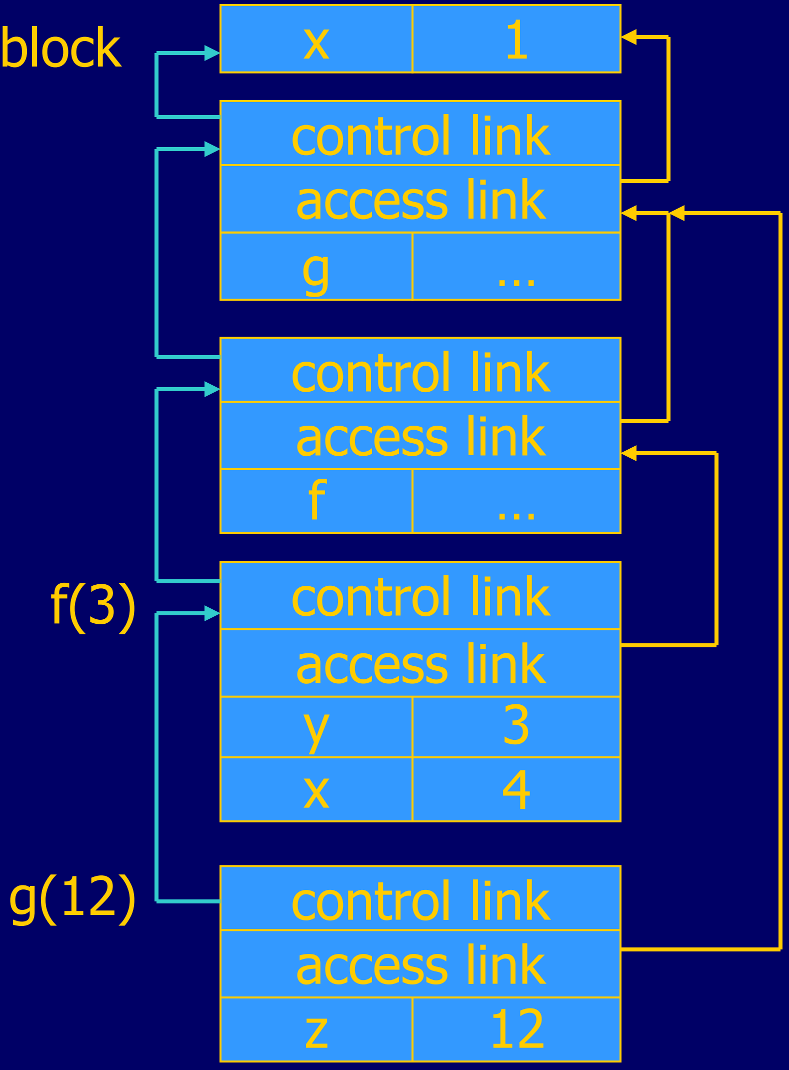
```
var x=1;
   function g(z) { return x+z; }
        function f(y)
          { var x = y+1;
             return g(y*x); }
       f(3);
```

Simplified code has same block nesting, if we follow convention that each declaration begins a new block.

Static scope with access links



```
var x=1;
  function g(z) = { return x+z; }
    function f(y) =
      { var x = y+1;
          return g(y*x); }
    f(3);
```



Use access link to find global variable:

- Access link is always set to frame of closest enclosing lexical block
- For function body, this is block that contains function declaration

Tail recursion (first-order case)

- Function g makes a *tail call* to function f if
  - Return value of function f is return value of g
- Example

tail call not a tail call

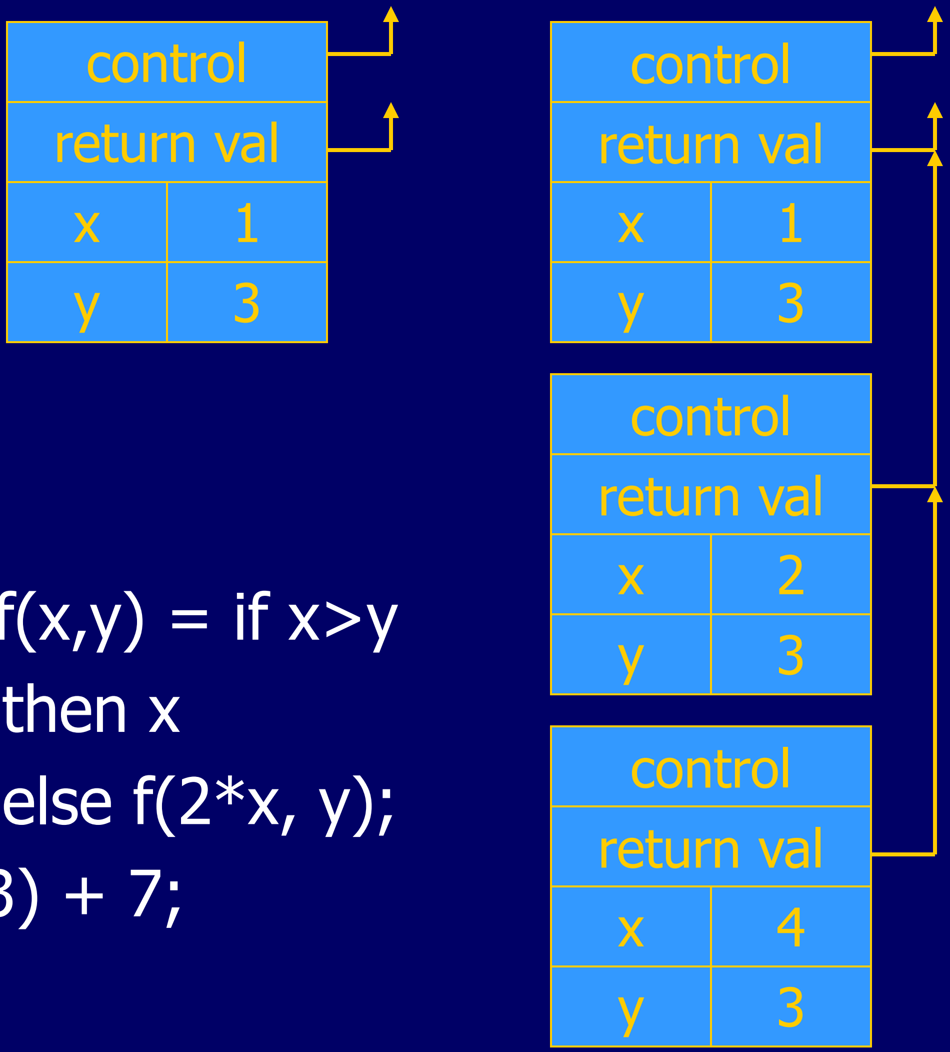
```
fun g(x) = if x>0 then f(x) else f(x)*2
```

- Optimization
  - Can pop activation record on a tail call
  - Especially useful for recursive tail call
    - next activation record has exactly same form

Example

Calculate least power of 2 greater than y

f(1,3)



```
fun f(x,y) = if x>y
      then x
      else f(2*x, y);
f(1,3) + 7;
```

Optimization

- Set return value address to that of caller

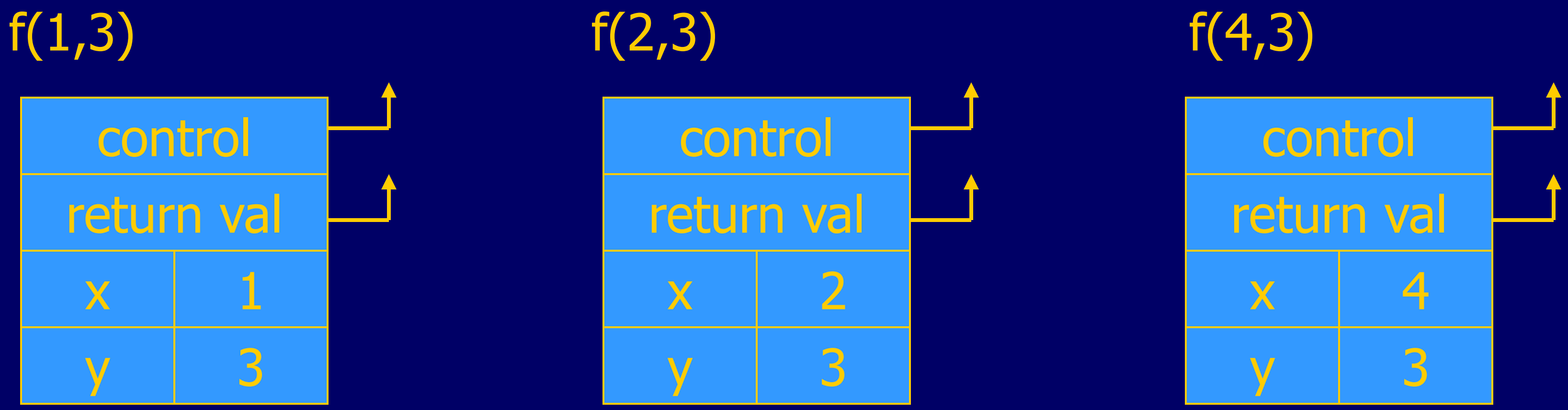
Question

- Can we do the same with control link?

Optimization

- avoid return to caller

Tail recursion elimination



f(1,3)

control	
return val	
x	1
y	3

f(2,3)

control	
return val	
x	2
y	3

f(4,3)

control	
return val	
x	4
y	3

```
fun f(x,y) = if x>y
        then x
        else f(2*x, y);
f(1,3);
```

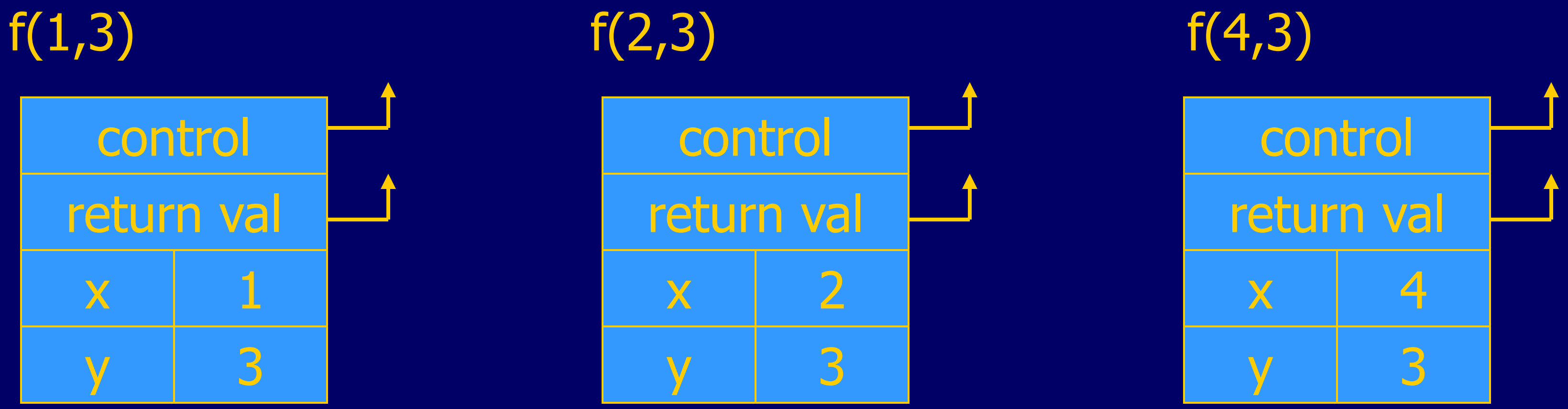
Optimization

- pop followed by push = reuse activation record in place

Conclusion

- Tail recursive function equiv to iterative loop

Tail recursion and iteration



f(1,3)

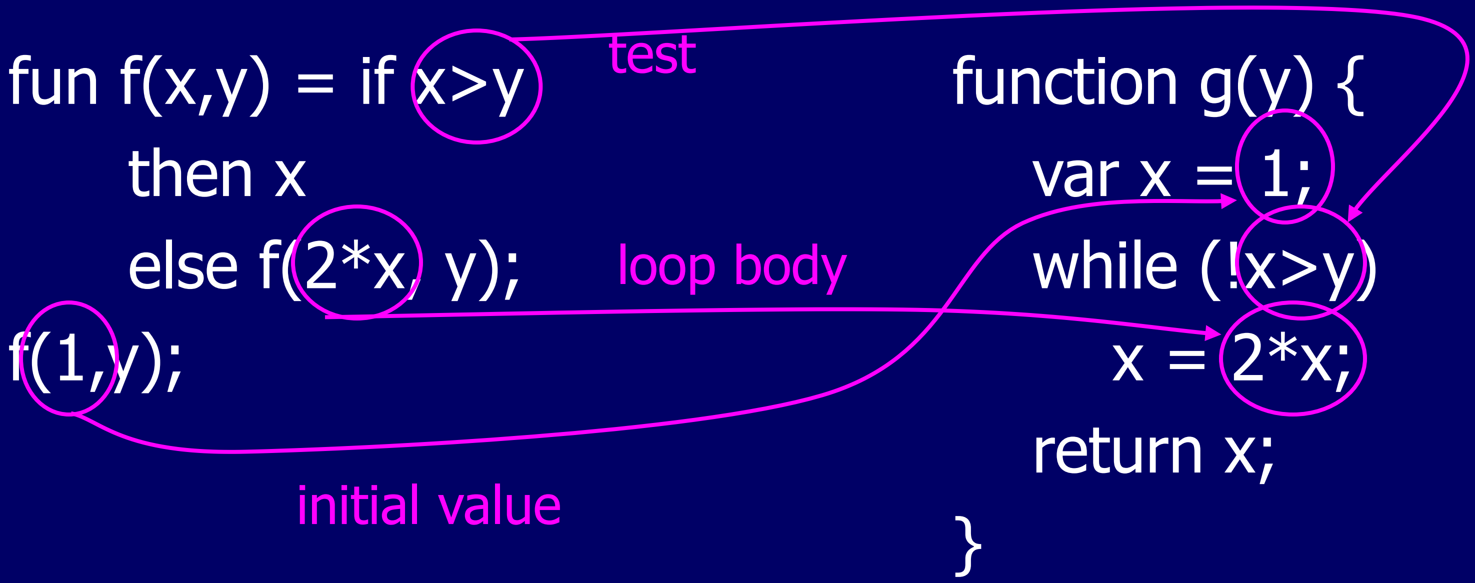
control	
return val	
x	1
y	3

f(2,3)

control	
return val	
x	2
y	3

f(4,3)

control	
return val	
x	4
y	3



```
fun f(x,y) = if x>y
      then x
      else f(2*x, y);
f(1,y);
```

```
function g(y) {
   var x = 1;
   while (!x>y)
      x = 2*x;
   return x;
}
```

Higher-Order Functions

- Language features
  - Functions passed as arguments
  - Functions that return functions from nested blocks
  - Need to maintain environment of function
- Simpler case
  - Function passed as argument
  - Need pointer to activation record "higher up" in stack
- More complicated second case
  - Function returned as result of function call
  - Need to keep activation record of returning function

Pass function as argument

OCaml

```
let x = 4 in
  let f = fun y -> x*y in
    let g = fun h ->
              let x=7
               in
               h(3) + x
      in
    g(f)
```

Pseudo-JavaScript

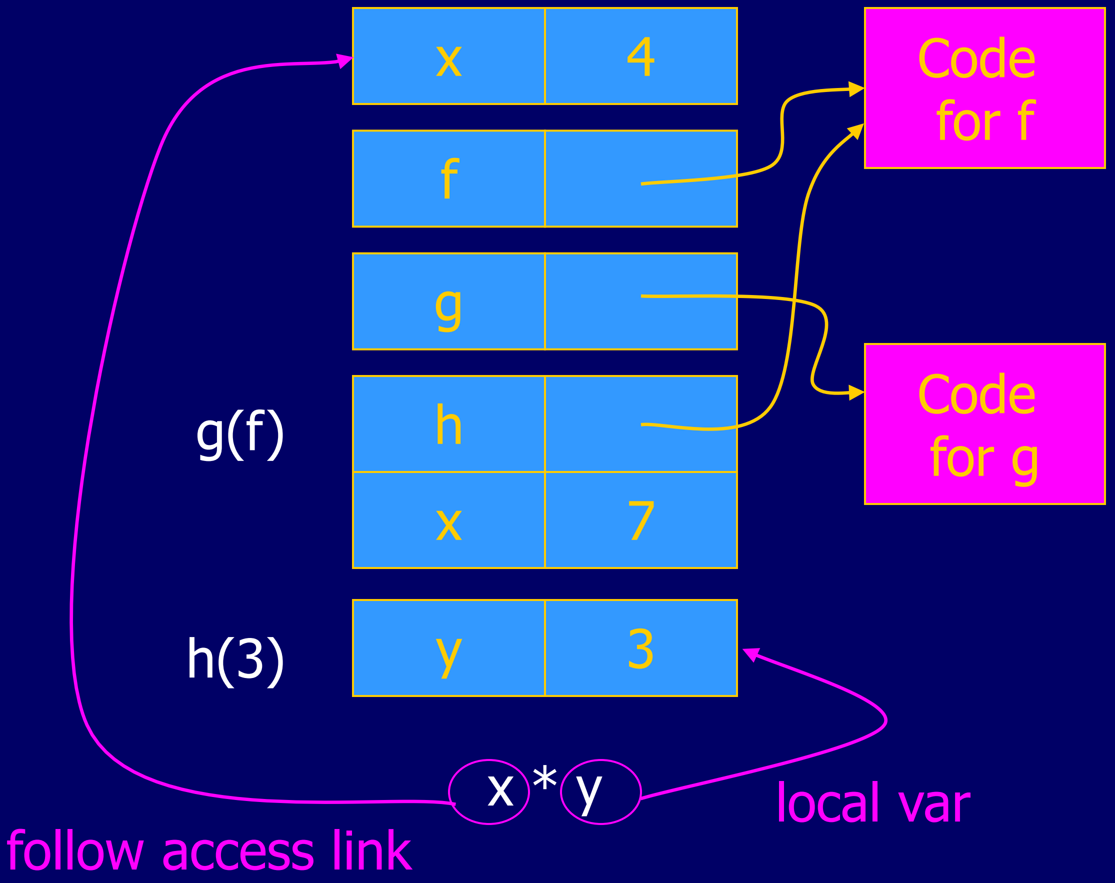
```
{ var x = 4;
  { function f(y) {return x*y};
     { function g(h) {
            var x = 7;
            return h(3) + x;
        };
        g(f);
} } }
```

There are two declarations of x

Which one is used for each occurrence of x?

Static Scope for Function Argument

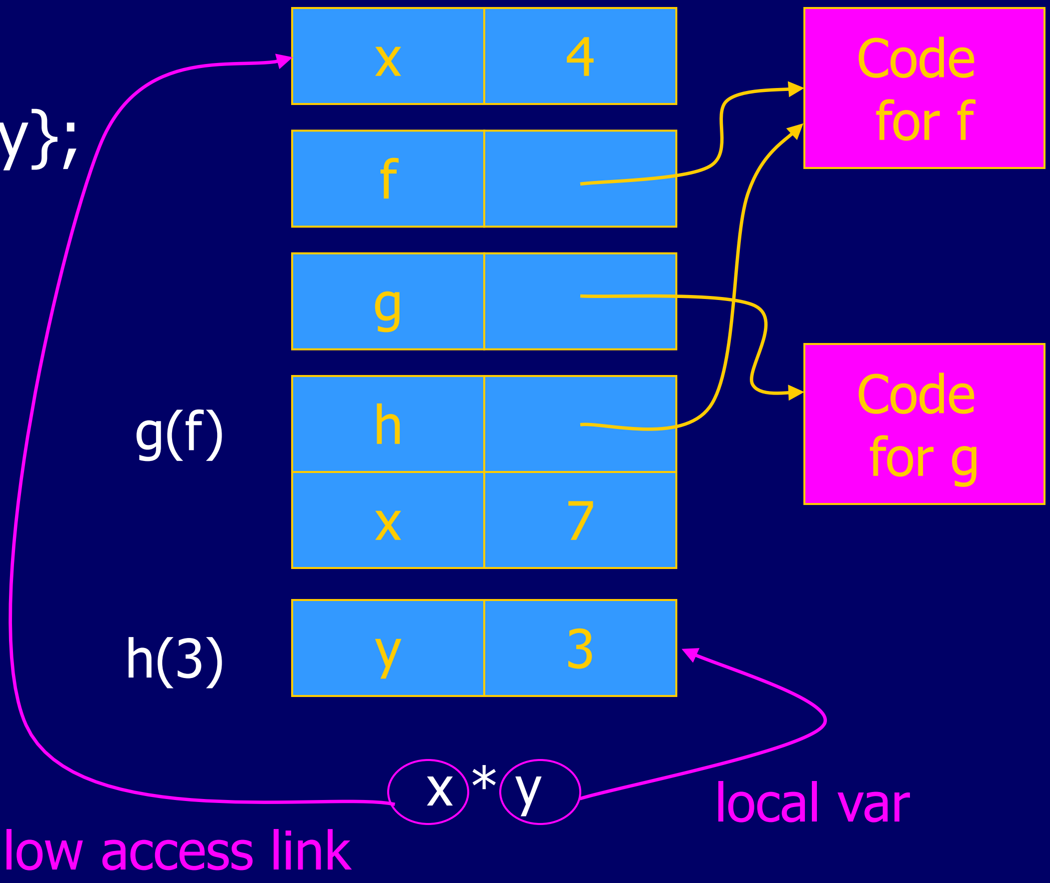
```
let x = 4 in
   let f = fun -> x*y in
      let g = fun h ->
         let
            int x=7
         in
            h(3) + x
     in
      g(f)
```



How is access link for h(3) set?

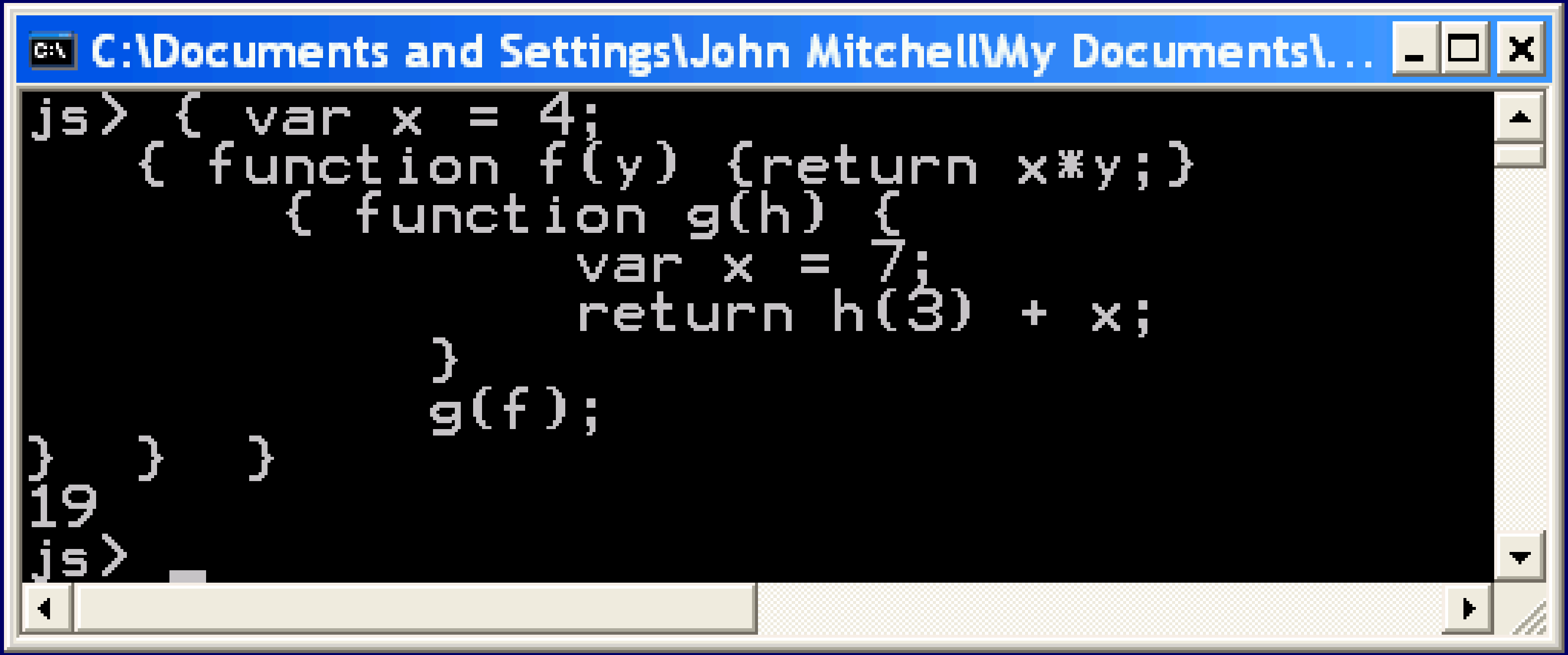
Static Scope for Function Argument

```
{ var x = 4;
  { function f(y) {return x*y};
    { function g(h) {
          int x=7;
          return h(3) + x;
          };
      g(f);
} } }
```



How is access link for h(3) set?

Result of function call



```
js> { var x = 4;
   { function f(y) {return x*y;}
     { function g(h) {
               var x = 7;
               return h(3) + x;
           }
           g(f);
}  }  }
19
js>
```

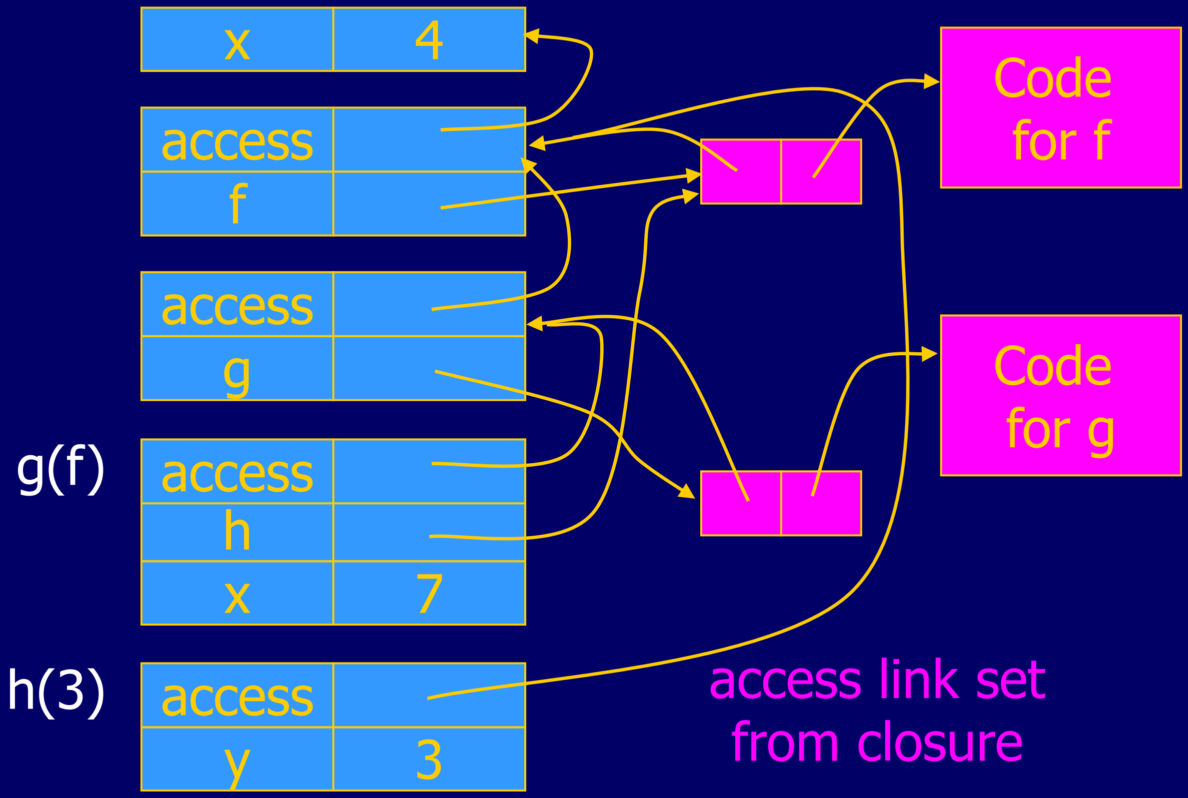
Closures

- Function value is pair *closure* = ⟨*env, code* ⟩
- When a function represented by a closure is called,
  - Allocate activation record for call (as always)
  - Set the access link in the activation record using the environment pointer from the closure

Function Argument and Closures

```
let x = 4 in
   let f = fun y->x*y in
      let g = fun h ->
            let
                x=7
            in
                h(3) + x
      in g(f)
```

Run-time stack with access links

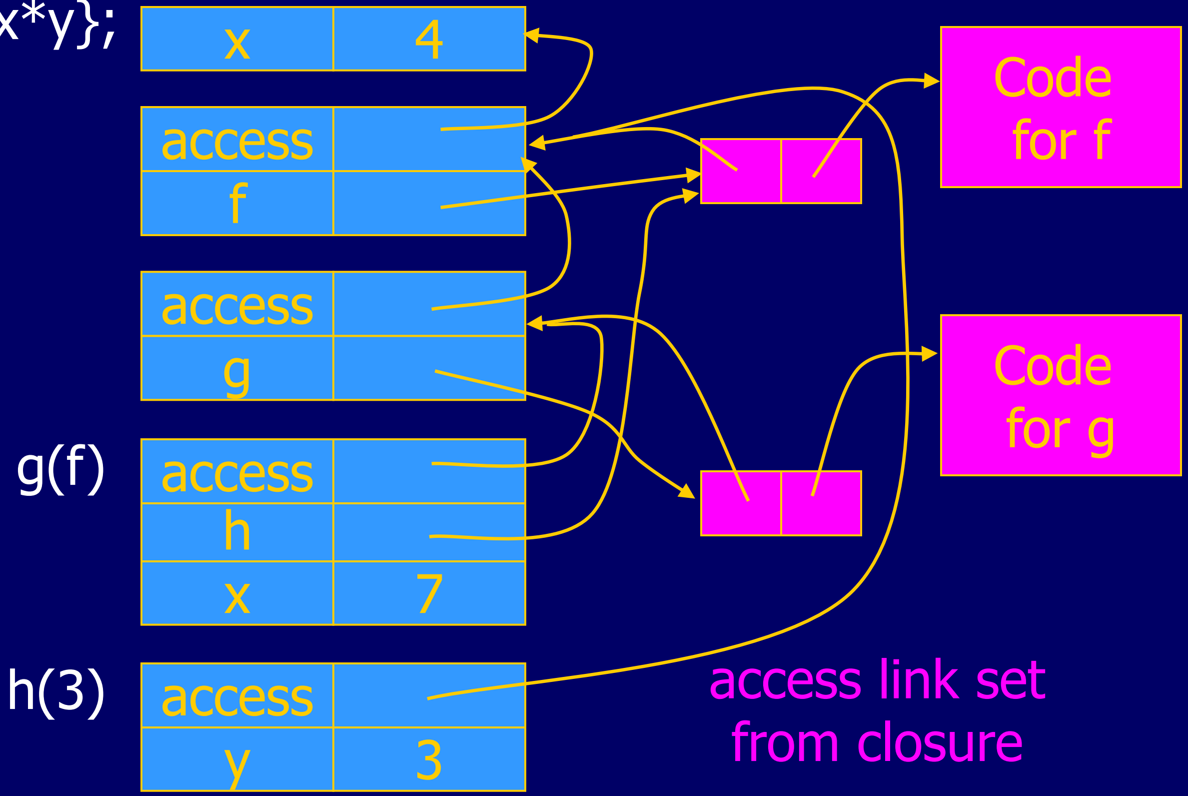


access link set from closure

Function Argument and Closures

```
{ var x = 4;
  { function f(y){return x*y};
    { function g(h) {
          int x=7;
          return h(3)+x;
      };
      g(f);
}}}
```

Run-time stack with access links



access link set from closure

Summary: Function Arguments

- Use closure to maintain a pointer to the static environment of a function body
- When called, set access link from closure
- All access links point “up” in stack
  - May jump past activ records to find global vars
  - Still deallocate activ records using stack (lifo) order

Return Function as Result

- Language feature
  - Functions that return “new” functions
  - Need to maintain environment of function
- Example

```
function compose(f,g)
        {return  function(x) { return g(f (x)) }};
```

- Function “created” dynamically
  - expression with free variables

    values are determined at run time
  - function value is closure = ⟨env, code⟩
  - code *not* compiled dynamically (in most languages)

Example: Return fctn with private state

OCaml

```
let mk_counter = fun init  ->
    let count = ref init in
      let counter = fun inc ->
              (count := !count + inc; !count)
      in
         counter
in
   let c = mk_counter 1
     in
   c(2) + c(2)
```

- Function to "make counter" returns a closure
- How is correct value of count determined in c(2) ?

Example: Return fctn with private state

JS

```
function mk_counter (init) {
    var count = init;
    function counter(inc) {count=count+inc; return count};
    return counter};
var c  = mk_counter(1);
c(2) + c(2);
```

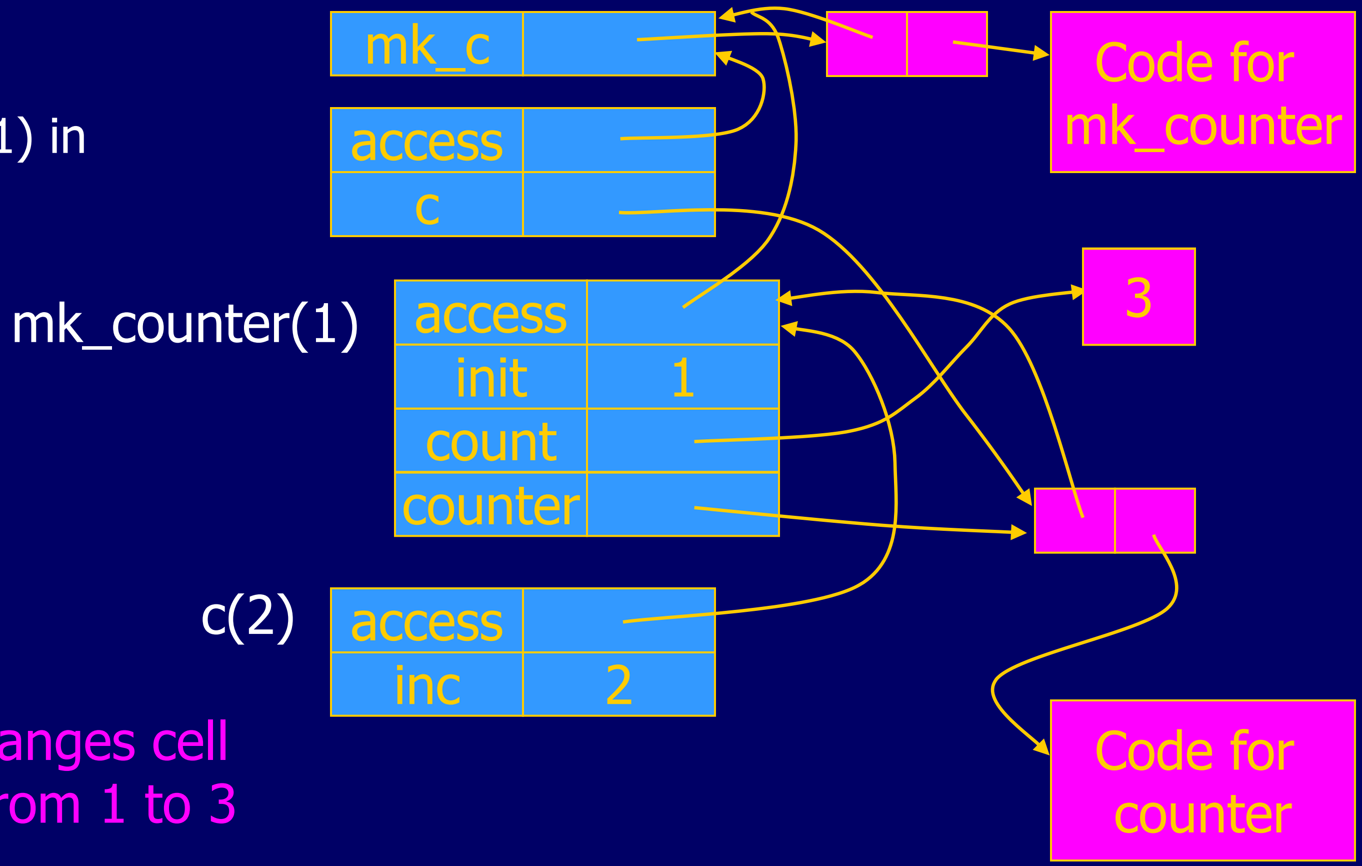
Function to "make counter" returns a closure

How is correct value of count determined in call c(2) ?

ML

Function Results and Closures

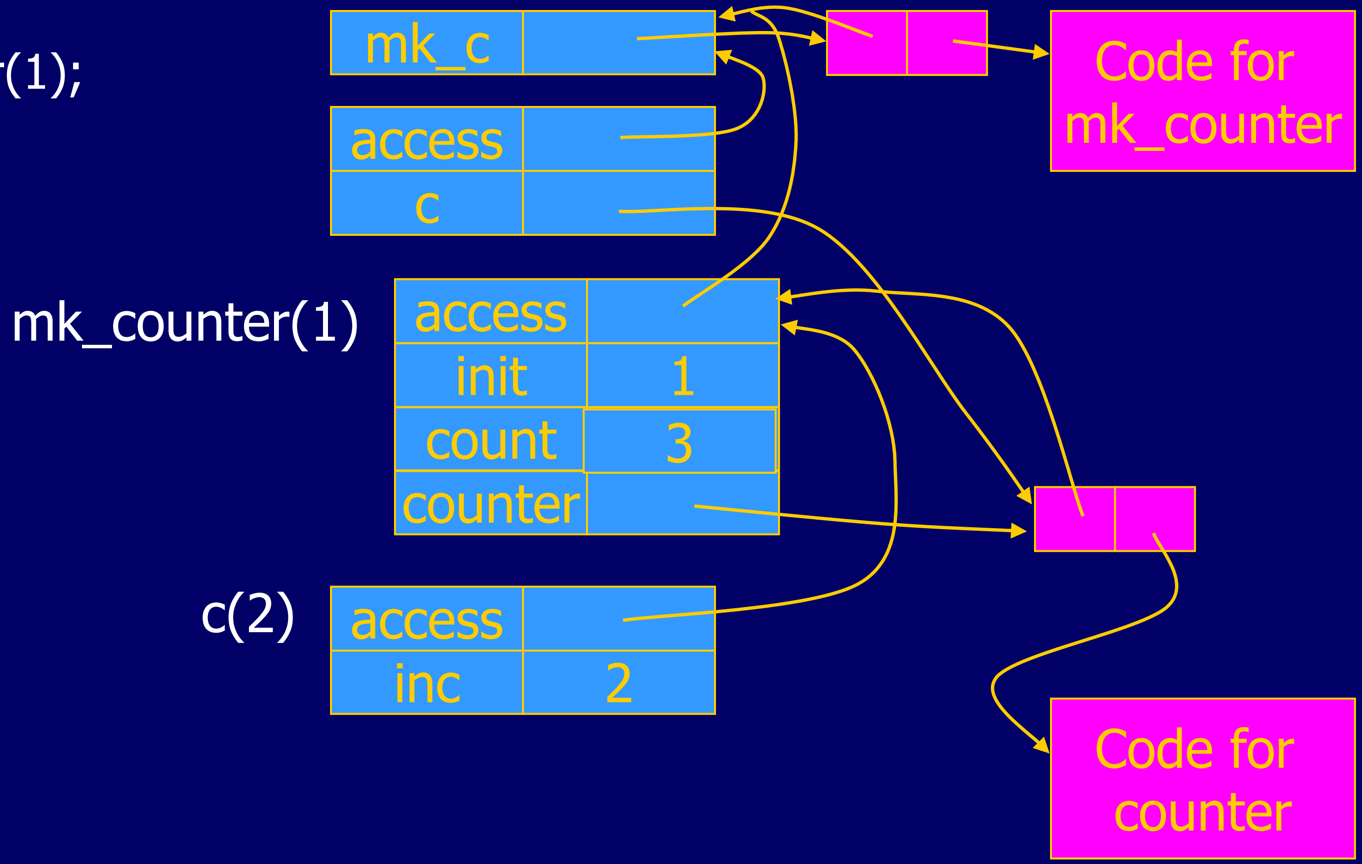
```
let mk_counter =fun init ->
   let count = ref init  in
        let counter = fun inc -> (count := !count + inc; !count)
        in counter
in
let c = mk_counter(1) in
c(2) + c(2)
```



Call changes cell value from 1 to 3

Function Results and Closures

```
function mk_counter (init) {
    var count = init;
    function counter(inc) {count=count+inc; return count};
    return counter};
var c  = mk_counter(1);
c(2) + c(2);
```



Closures in Web programming

- Useful for event handlers in Web programming:

```
function AppendButton(container, name, message) {
    var btn = document.createElement('button');
    btn.innerHTML = name;
    btn.onclick = function (evt) { alert(message); }
    container.appendChild(btn);
}
```

- Environment pointer lets the button’s click handler find the message to display

Summary: Return Function Results

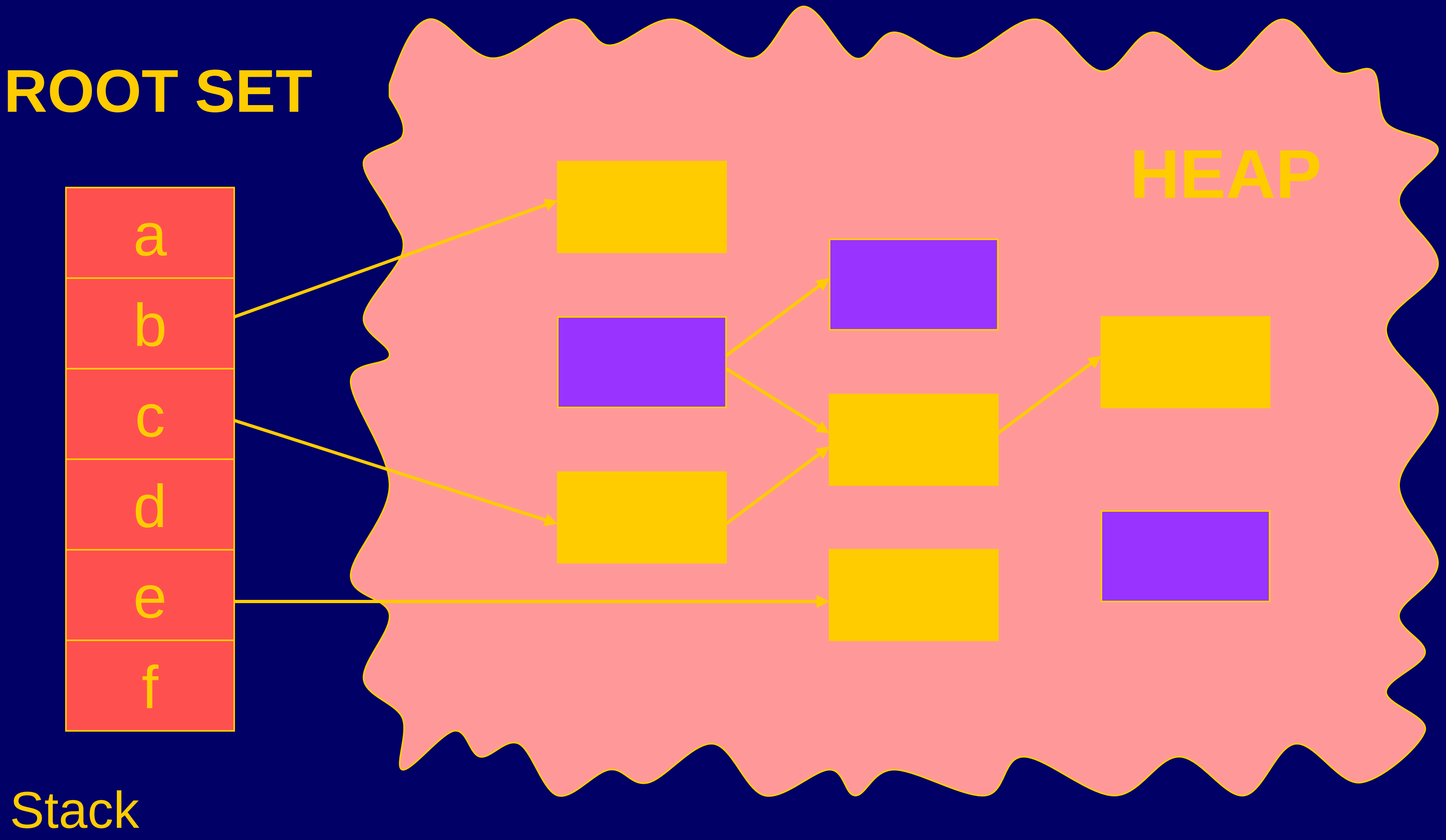
- Use closure to maintain static environment
- May need to keep activation records after return
  - Stack (lifo) order fails!
- Possible “stack” implementation
  - Forget about explicit deallocation
  - Put activation records on heap
  - Invoke garbage collector as needed
  - Not as totally crazy as is sounds

    May only need to search reachable data

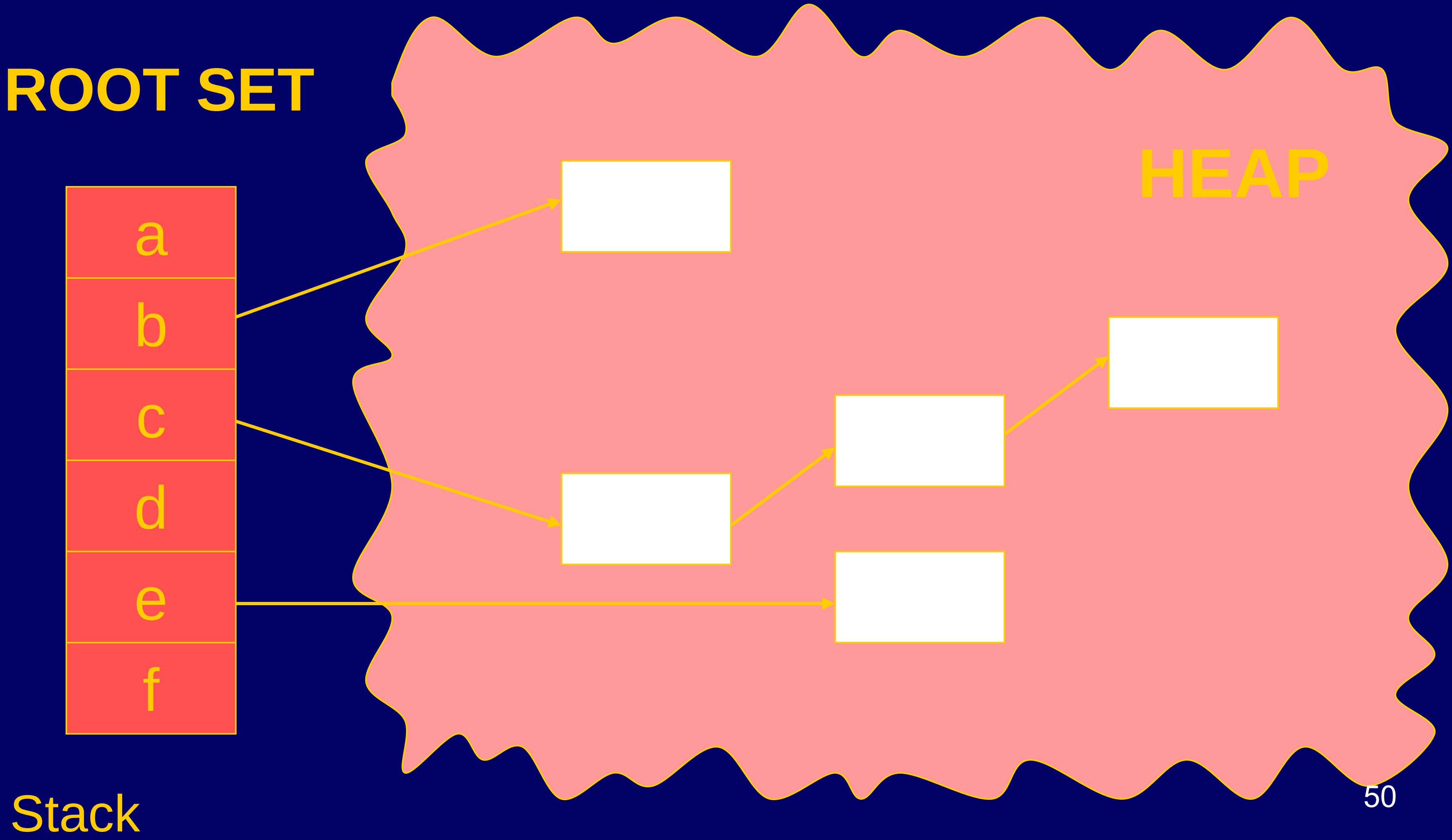
Summary of scope issues

- Block-structured lang uses stack of activ records
  - Activation records contain parameters, local vars, …
  - Also pointers to enclosing scope
- Several different parameter passing mechanisms
- Tail calls may be optimized
- Function parameters/results require closures
  - Closure environment pointer used on function call
  - Stack deallocation may fail if function returned from call
  - Closures *not* needed if functions not in nested blocks

Garbage Collection

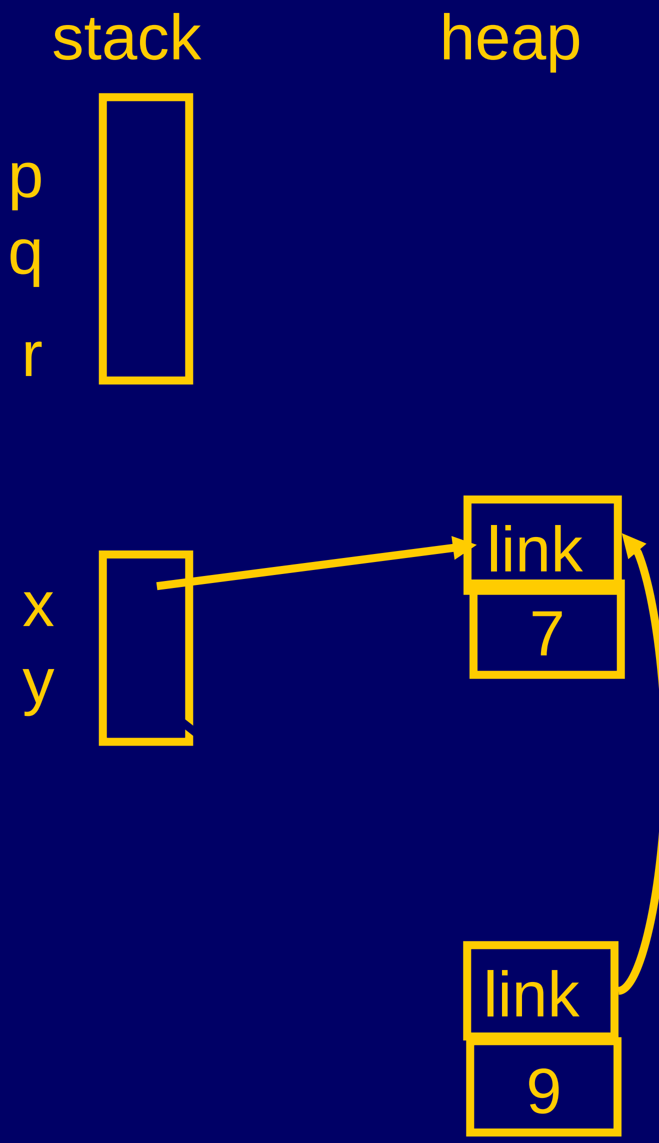


Garbage Collection



What is garbage collection

- The runtime environment reuse chunks that were allocated but are not subsequently used garbage chunks
  - not live
- It is undecidable to find the garbage chunks:
  - Decidability of liveness
  - Decidability of type information
- conservative collection
  - every live chunk is identified
  - some garbage runtime chunk are not identified
- Find the reachable chunks via pointer chains
- Often done in the allocation function



```
typedef struct list  {struct list *link; int key} *List;
typedef struct tree {int key;
                              struct tree *left:
                              struct tree *right} *Tree;
foo() {    List x = cons(NULL, 7);
    List y = cons(x, 9);
   x->link = y;
     }
void main() {
  Tree p, r; int q;
  foo();
  p = maketree();   r = p->right;
  q= r->key;
  showtree(r);}
```

```
typedef struct list  {struct list *link; int key} *List;
typedef struct tree {int key;
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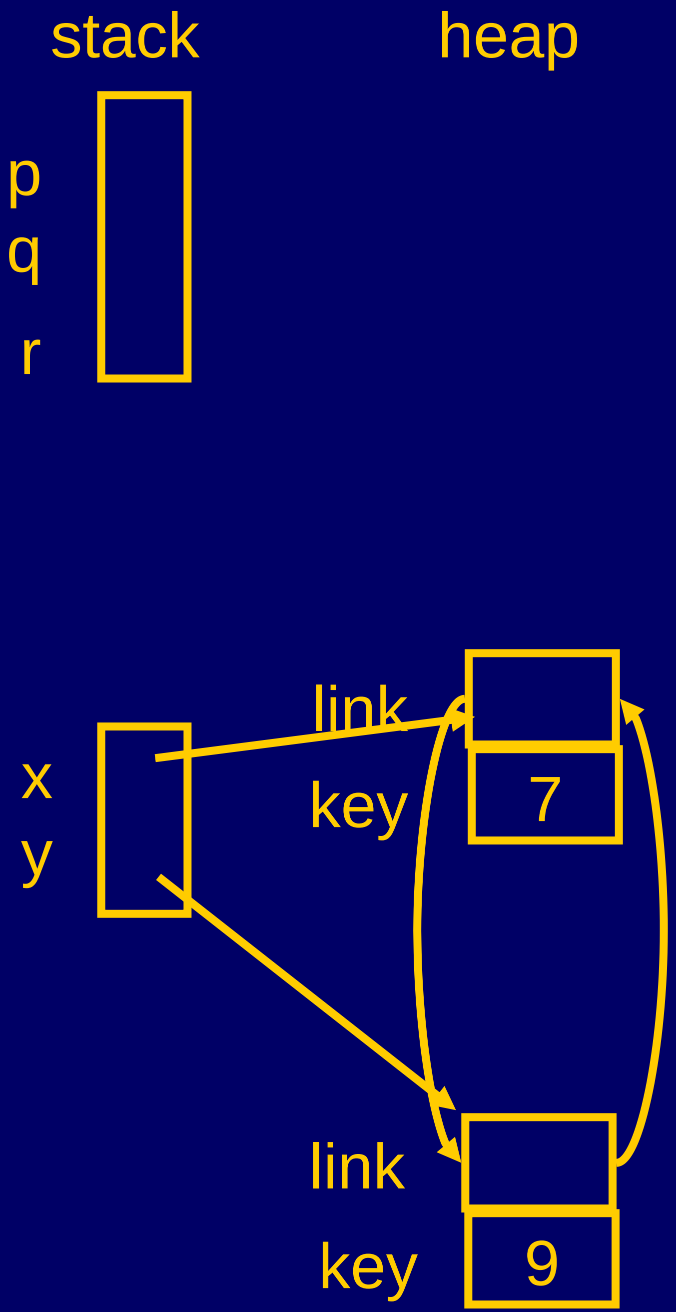
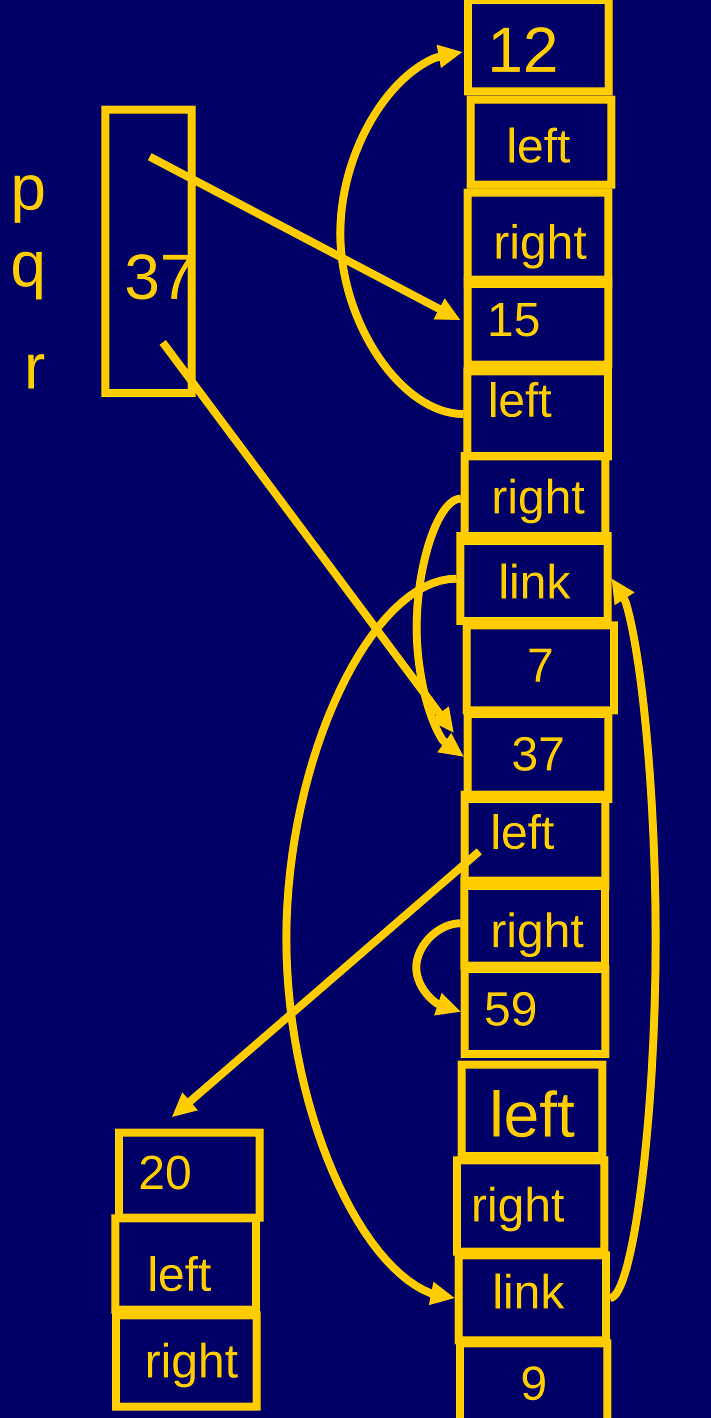
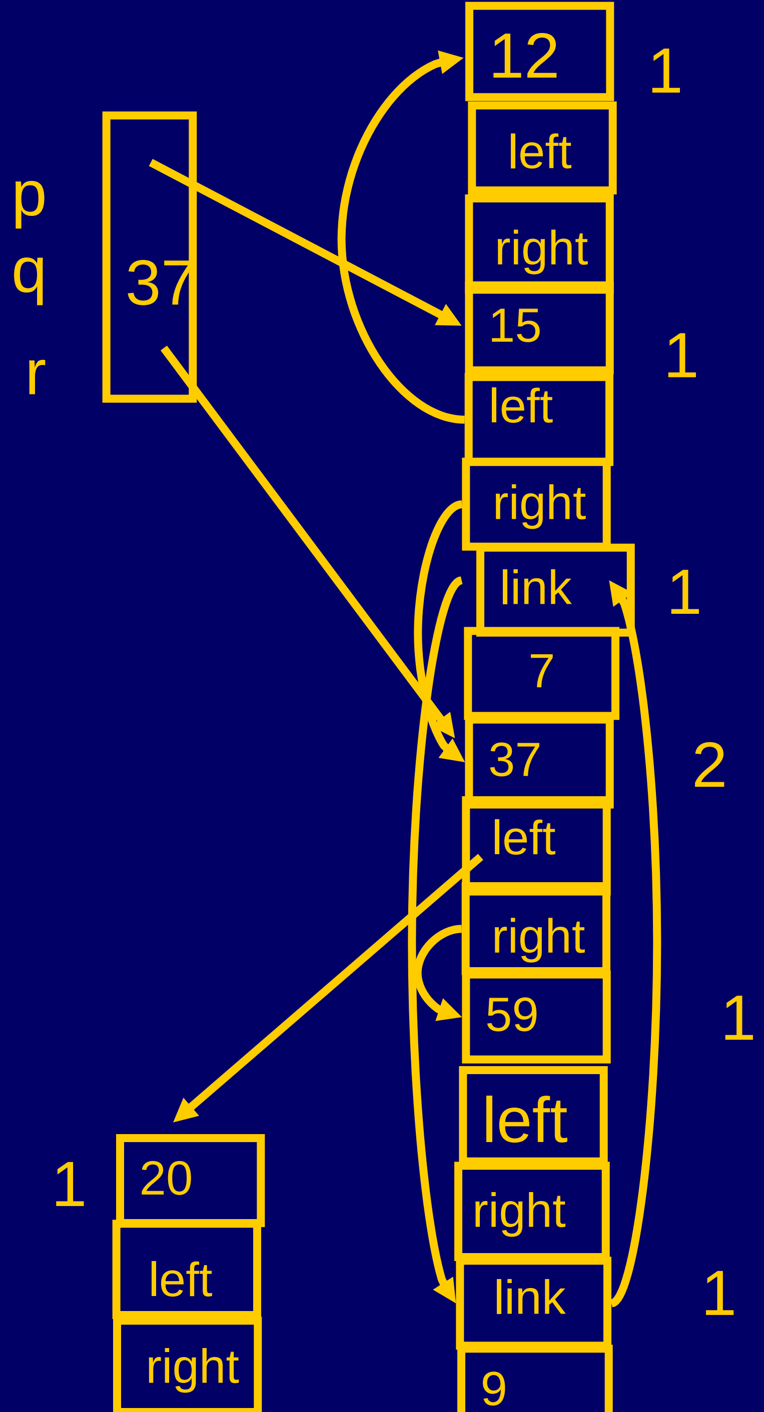


```
typedef struzct list  {struct list *link; int key}
*List;
typedef struct tree {int key;
                                  struct tree *left:
                                  struct tree *right} *Tree;
foo() {    List x = create_list(NULL, 7);
    List y = create_list(x, 9);
   x->link = y;
    }
void main() {
  Tree p, r; int q;
  foo();
  p = maketree();   r = p->right;
  q= r->key;
  showtree(r);}
```



Garbage Collection Techniques

- Tracing
  - Scan the reachable heaps from the root
  - Release unreachable elements
  - Cost proportional to reachable heap
- Reference Counting
  - Maintain a counter of references to each chunk of memory
  - The compiler generates the update code for references when pointers are manipulated
  - Release objects with zero reference counter
  - Constant cost



p

q

r

37

12

1

left

right

15

1

left

right

link

1

7

37

2

left

right

59

1

left

right

link

1

9

1

20

left

right

Garbage Collection vs. Explicit Memory Deallocation

- Faster program development
- Less error prone
- Can lead to faster programs
  - Can improve locality of references
- Support very general programming styles, e.g. higher order and OO programming
- Standard in ML, Java, C#, Javascript
- Supported in C and C++ via separate libraries

- May require more space
- Needs a large memory
- Can lead to long pauses
- Can change locality of references
- Effectiveness depends on programming language and style
- Hides documentation
- More trusted code

Summary

- Runtime memory management is crucial for functionality and correctness
- Lexical scope is natural
  - Becomes tricky with higher order functions
  - Closures
- Garbage Collection permits general programming style