Introduction to C++: Part 1

tutorial version 0.8

Research Computing Services

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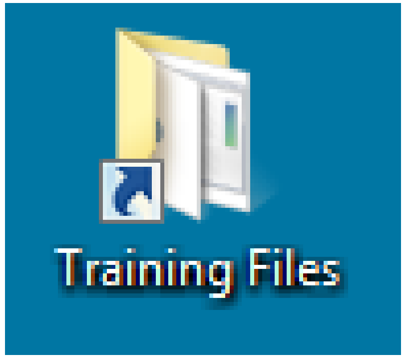
Getting started with the training room terminals

- Log on with your BU username
  - If you don’t have a BU username:
  - Username: Choose *tutm1-tutm18, tutn1-tutn18*
  - Password: on the board.



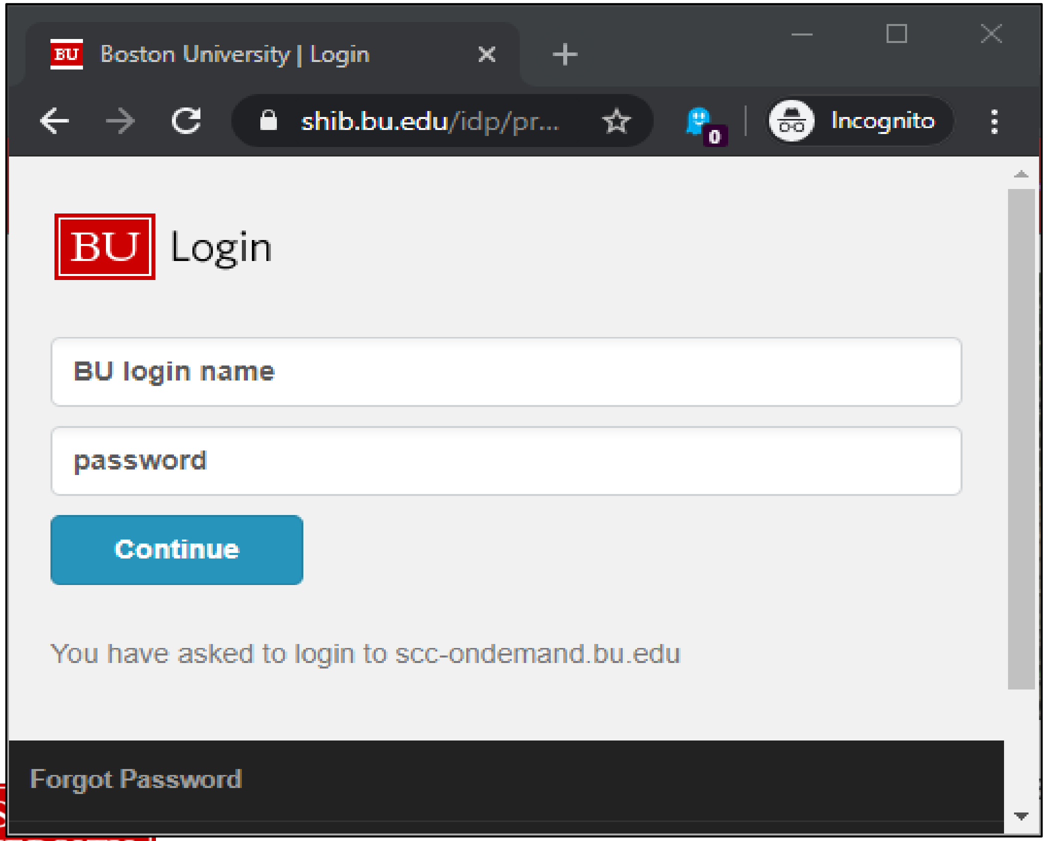
SCC OnDemand

- Based on an NSF-funded open source project "Open OnDemand", developed by the Ohio Supercomputing Center (OSC) and fully customized for the BU Shared Computing Cluster (SCC). Provides cluster access entirely through a webbrowser.

- Provides:
  - Easy file management
  - Command-line shell access
  - Graphical desktop environments and desktop applications
  - Web-server based applications (e.g. RStudio, Jupyter, Tensorboard)

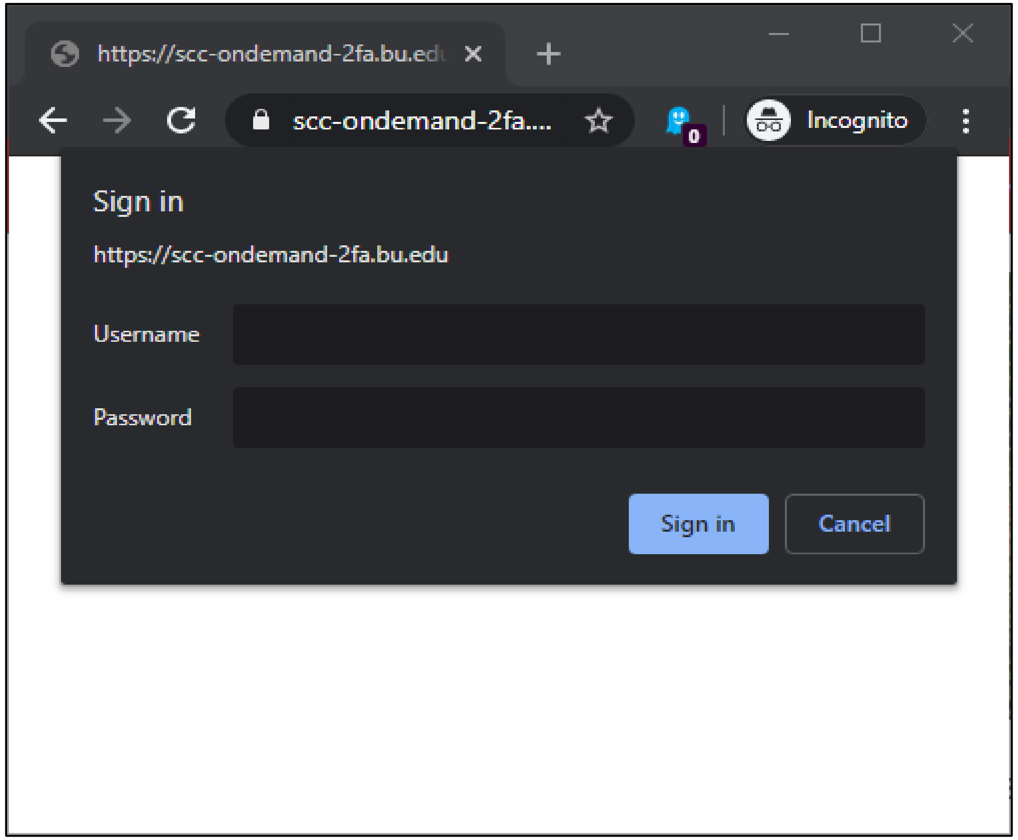
Existing SCC Account

1. Open a web browser
2. Navigate to http://scc-ondemand.bu.edu
3. Log in with your BU Kerberos Credentials

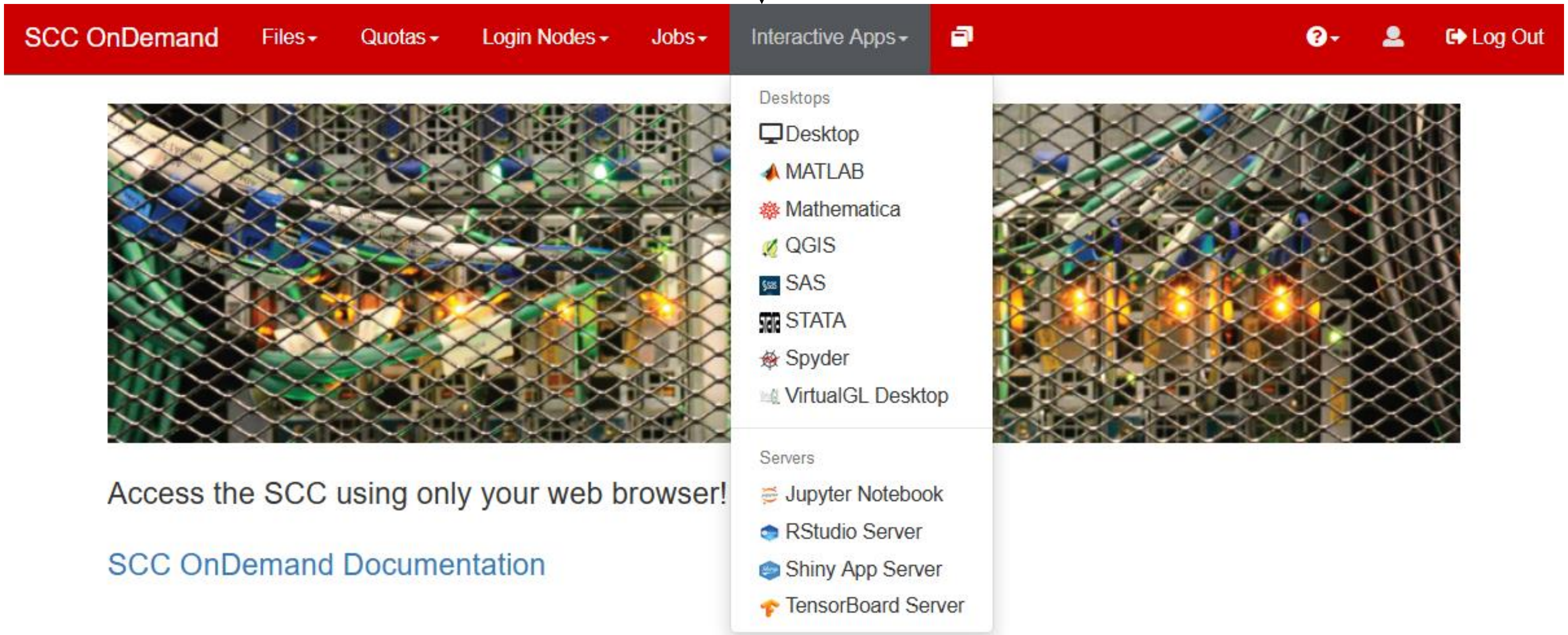


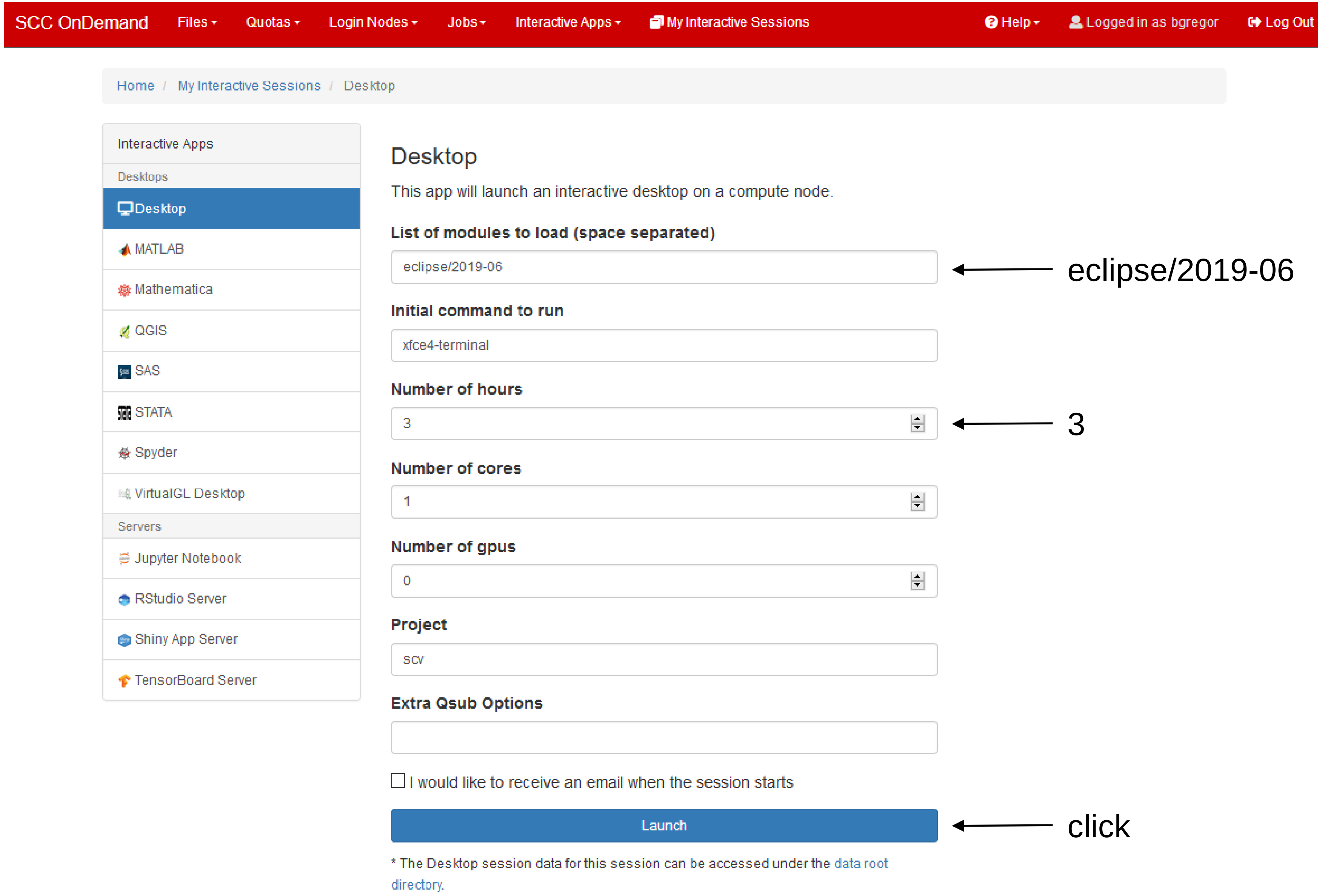
Temporary Tutorial Account

1. Open a web browser
2. Navigate to http://scc-ondemand-**2fa**.bu.edu
3. Log in with Tutorial Account



Click on Interactive Apps/Desktop

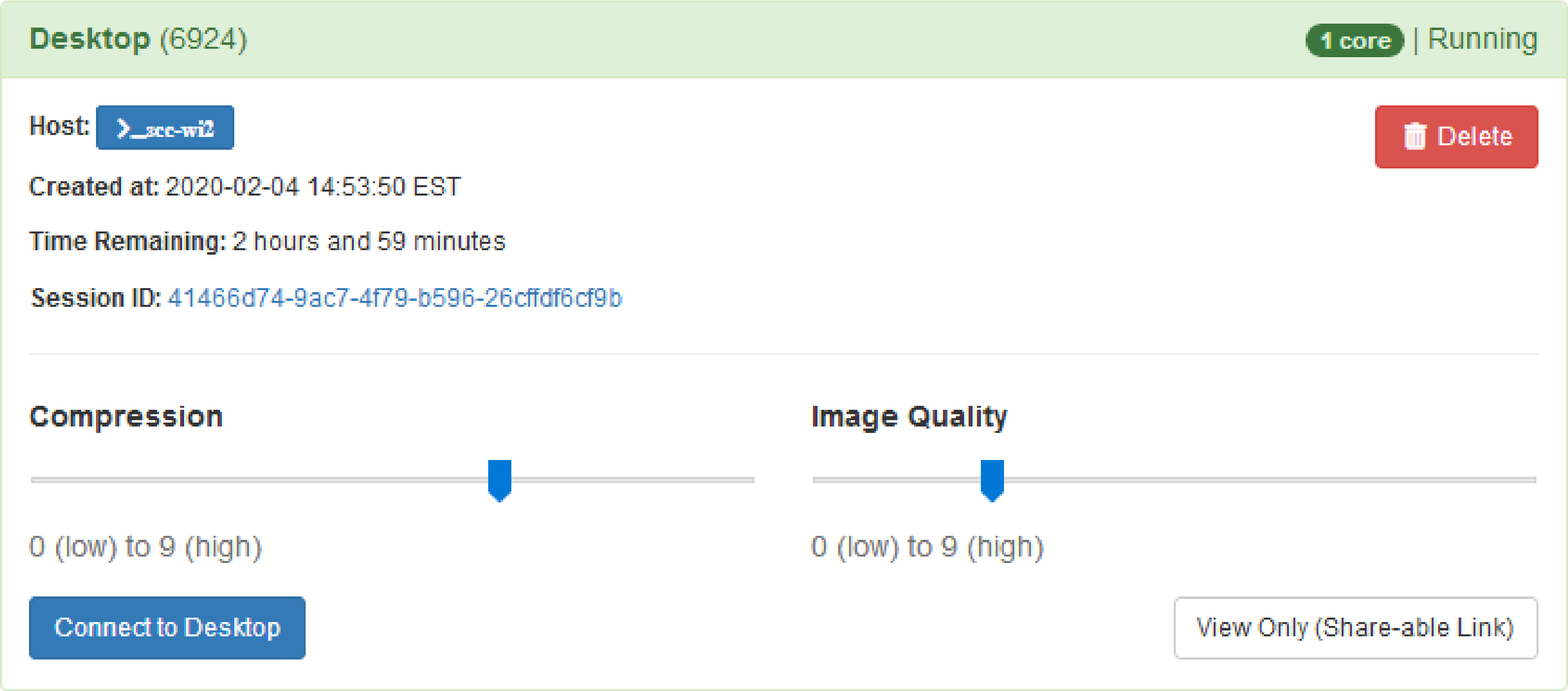




eclipse/2019-06

3

click



When your desktop is ready click *Connect to Desktop*

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- Enter this command to create a directory in your home folder and to copy in tutorial files:

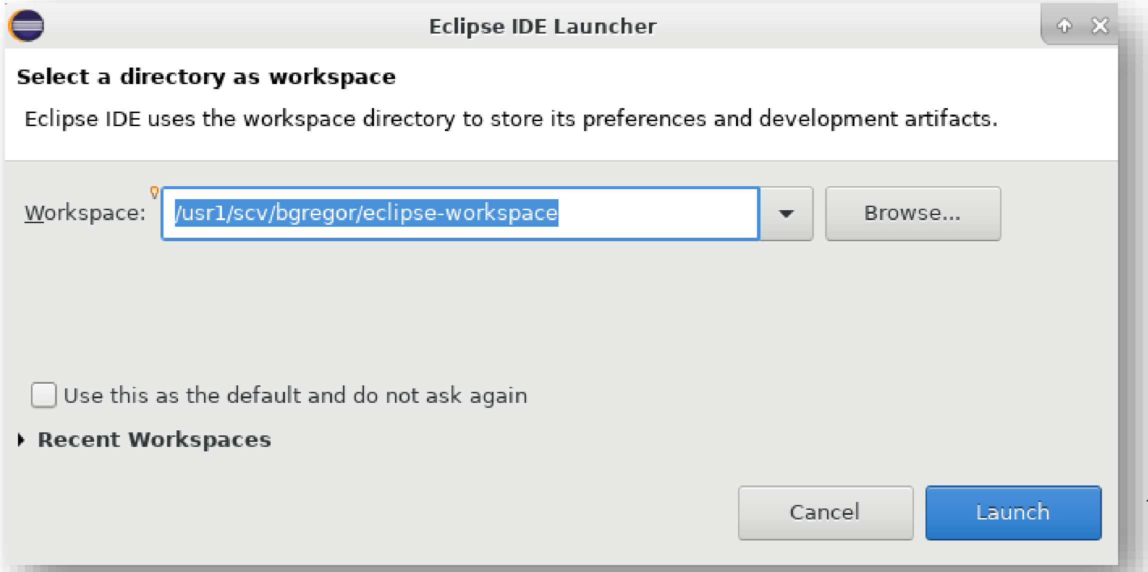
```
/net/scc2/scratch/intro_to_cpp.sh
```

Run the Eclipse software

- Enter this command to start up the Eclipse development environment.

```
eclipse &
```

- When this window appears just click the Launch button:



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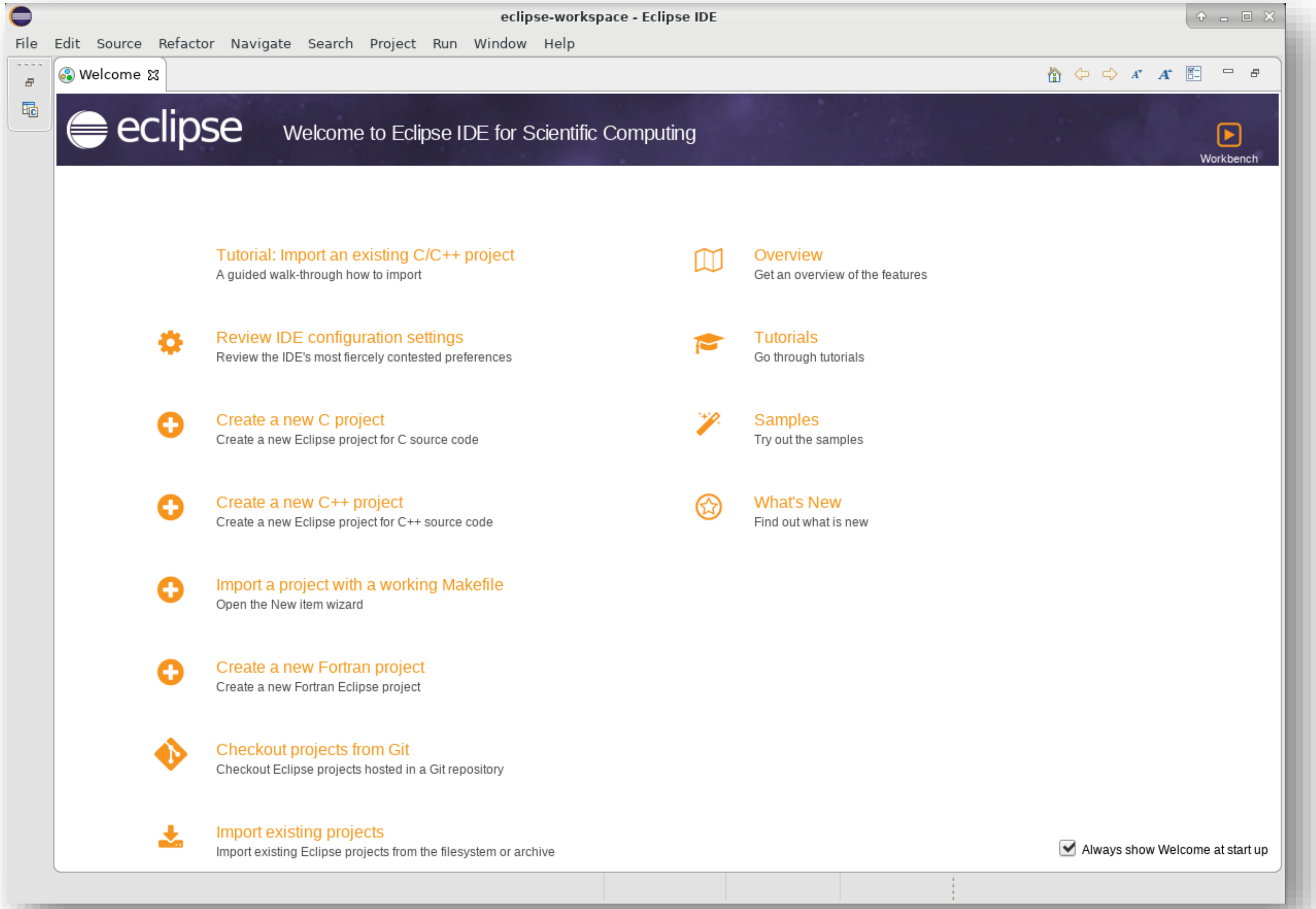
Run the Eclipse software

- When this window appears just leave it be for now.



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Tutorial Outline: All 4 Parts

- Part 1:
  - Intro to C++
  - Object oriented concepts
  - Write a first program
- Part 2:
  - Using C++ objects
  - Standard Template Library
  - Basic debugging
- Part 3:
  - Defining C++ classes
  - Look at the details of how they work
- Part 4:
  - Class inheritance
  - Virtual methods
  - Available C++ tools on the SCC

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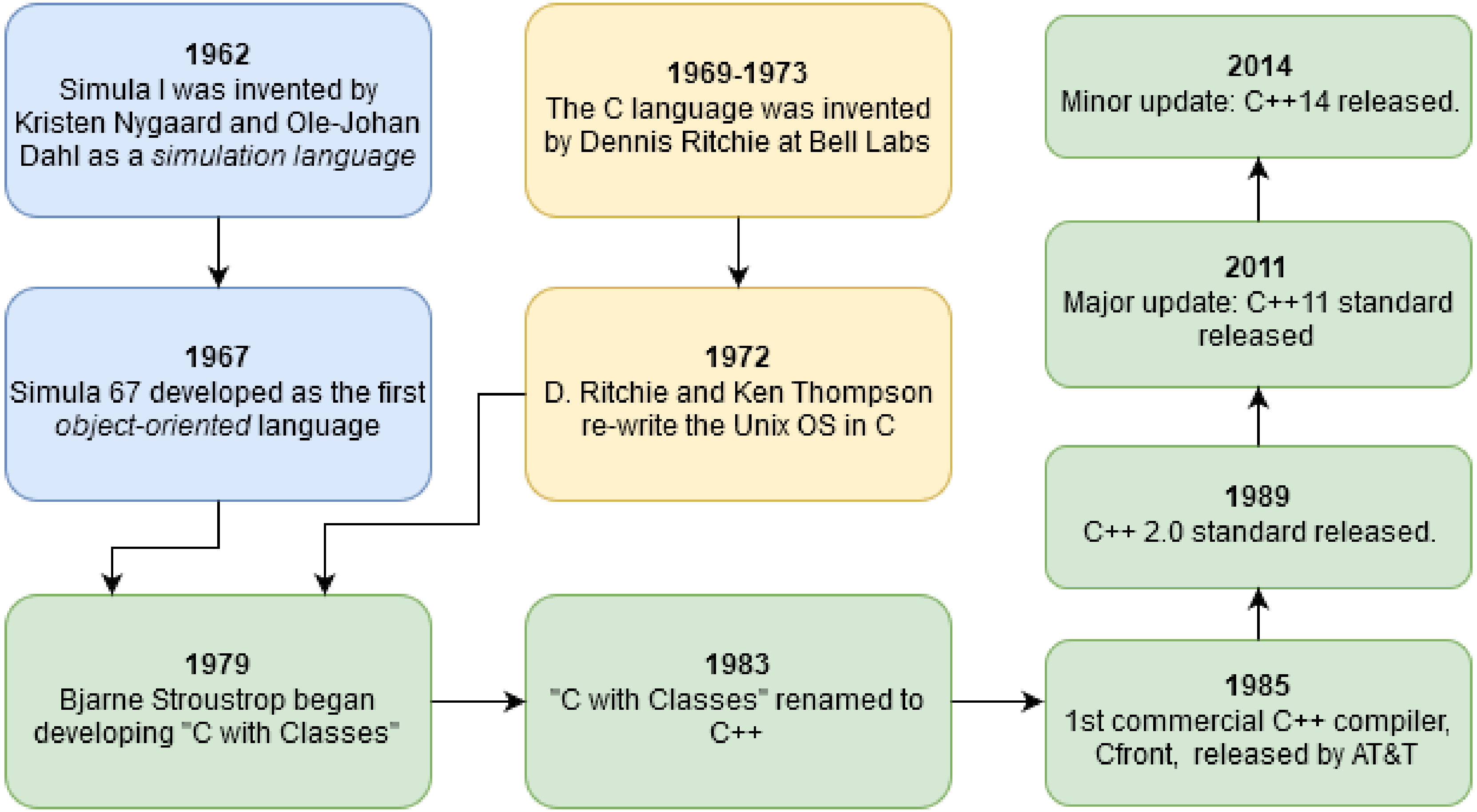
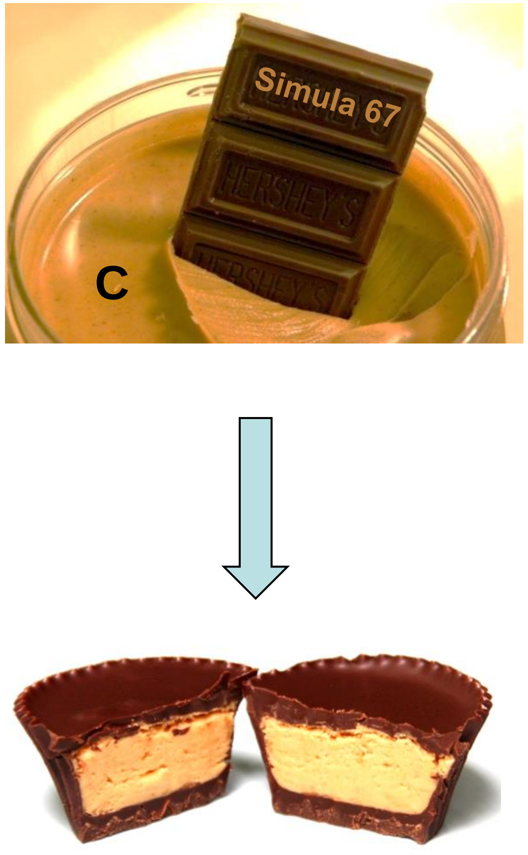
Tutorial Outline: Part 1

- Very brief history of C++
- Definition object-oriented programming
- When C++ is a good choice
- The Eclipse IDE
- Object-oriented concepts
- First program!
- Some C++ syntax
- Function calls

Very brief history of C++





C++

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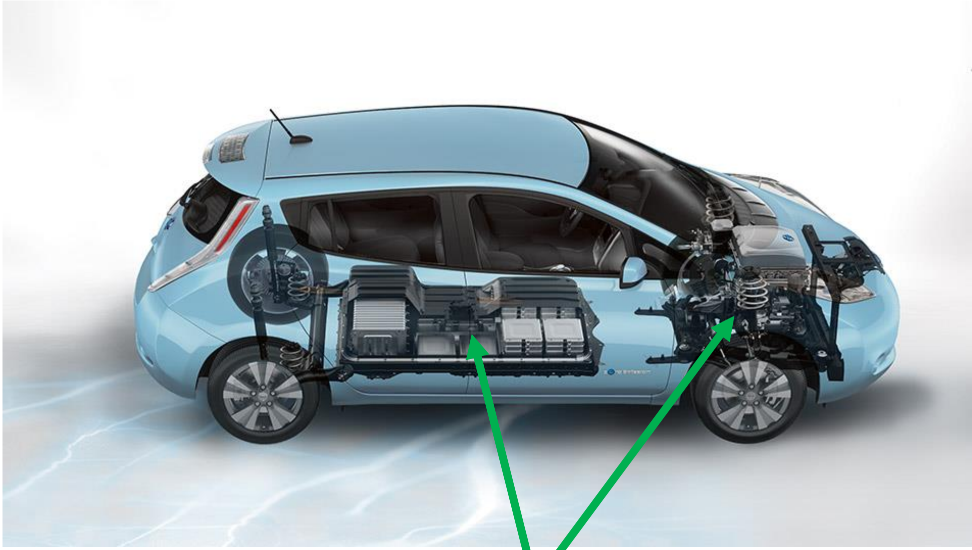
For details more check out [A History of C++: 1979−1991]

Object-oriented programming

- OOP defines *classes* to represent these things.
- Classes can contain data and methods (internal functions).
- Classes control access to internal data and methods. A *public* interface is used by external code when using the class.
- This is a highly effective way of modeling real world problems inside of a computer program.

"Class Car"

public interface



private data and methods

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Characteristics of C++

> "Actually I made up the term 'object-oriented', and I can tell you I did not have C++ in mind."
>
> – Alan Kay (helped invent OO programming, the Smalltalk language, and the GUI)

- C++ is…
  - Compiled.
    - A separate program, the compiler, is used to turn C++ source code into a form directly executed by the CPU.
  - Strongly typed and unsafe
    - Conversions between variable types must be made by the programmer (strong typing) but can be circumvented when needed (unsafe)
  - C compatible
    - call C libraries directly and C code is nearly 100% valid C++ code.
  - Capable of very high performance
    - The programmer has a very large amount of control over the program execution, compilers are high quality.
  - Object oriented
    - With support for many programming styles (procedural, functional, etc.)
- No automatic memory management (mostly)
  - The programmer is in control of memory usage

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When to choose C++

- Despite its many competitors C++ has remained popular for ~30 years and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future.

- Why?
  - Complex problems and programs can be effectively implemented
    - OOP works in the real world.

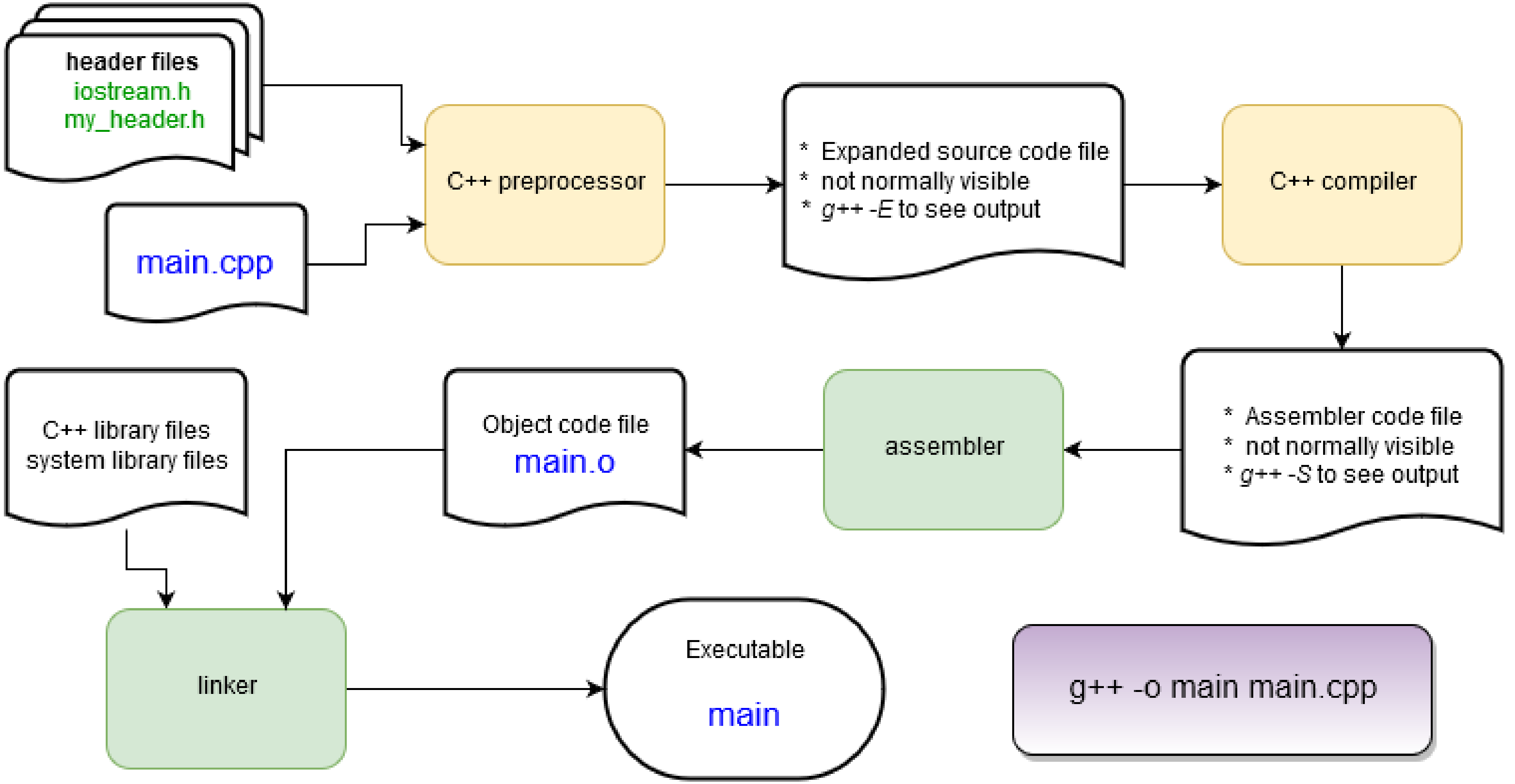
  - No other language quite matches C++'s combination of performance, libraries, expressiveness, and ability to handle complex programs.

When to choose C++

> "If you're not at all interested in performance, shouldn't you be in the Python room down the hall?"
> — Scott Meyers (author of Effective Modern C++)

- Choose C++ when:
  - Program performance matters
    - Dealing with large amounts of data, multiple CPUs, complex algorithms, etc.
  - Programmer productivity is less important
    - You'll get more code written in less time in a languages like Python, R, Matlab, etc.
  - The programming language itself can help organize your code
    - In C++ your objects can closely model elements of your problem
    - Complex data structures can be implemented
  - Access to a vast number of libraries
  - **Your group uses it already!**

Behind the Scenes: The Compilation Process



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Manual Compiling

- Launch a convenient editor:

```
geany first_prog.cpp &
```

- Enter in a “hello world” program as shown. Ctrl-S saves the file.
- Compile and run the program:

```
g++ -o first_prog first_prog.cpp
./first_prog
```

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std ;

int main() {
        // prints !!!Hello World!!!
        cout << "!!!Hello World!!!" << endl ;
        return 0 ;
}
```

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Hello, World! explained

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    // prints !!!Hello World!!!
    cout << "!!!Hello World!!!" << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

The *main* routine – the start of **every** C++ program! It returns an integer value to the operating system and (in this case) takes arguments to allow access to command line arguments.

The two characters // together indicate a comment that is ignored by the compiler.

The **return** statement returns an integer value to the operating system after completion. 0 means “no error”. C++ programs **must** return an integer value.

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Hello, World! explained

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    // prints !!!Hello World!!!
    cout << "!!!Hello World!!!" << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

- loads a *header* file containing function and class definitions

- Loads a *namespace* called *std*.
- Namespaces are used to separate sections of code for programmer convenience. To save typing we'll always use this line in this tutorial.

- *cout* is the *object* that writes to the stdout device, i.e. the console window.
- It is part of the C++ standard library.
- Without the "using namespace std;" line this would have been called as *std::cout*. It is defined in the *iostream* header file.
- << is the C++ *insertion operator*. It is used to pass characters from the right to the object on the left.
- *endl* is the C++ newline character.

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Header Files

- C++ (along with C) uses *header files* as to hold definitions for the compiler to use while compiling.
- A source file (file.cpp) contains the code that is compiled into an object file (file.o).
- The header (file.h) is used to tell the compiler what to expect when it assembles the program in the linking stage from the object files.

- Source files and header files can refer to any number of other header files.

- When compiling the *linker* connects all of the object (.o) files together into the executable.

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Make some changes

- Let's put the message into some variables of type *string* and print some numbers.
- Things to note:
  - Strings can be concatenated with a + operator.
  - No messing with null terminators or *strcat()* as in C
- Some string notes:
  - Access a string character by brackets or function:
    - msg[0] → "H" or msg.at(0) → "H"
    - C++ strings are *mutable* – they can be changed in place.
- Re-compile, run, and check the output.

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    string hello = "Hello";
    string world = "world!";
    string msg = hello + " " +
    world ;
    cout <<  msg << endl;
    msg[0] = 'h';
    cout <<  msg << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

A first C++ class: *string*

- *string* is not a basic type (more on those later), it is a class.
- `string hello` creates an *instance* of a string called *hello*.
- `hello` is an object. It is initialized to contain the string “Hello”.
- A class defines some data and a set of functions (methods) that operate on that data.

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    string hello = "Hello";
    string world = "world!";
    string msg = hello + " " +
    world ;
    cout <<  msg << endl;
    msg[0] = 'h';
    cout <<  msg << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

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A first C++ class: *string*

- Let's see what the *string* class contains for functionality…
- https://cplusplus.com/reference/string/string/

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    string hello = "Hello";
    string world = "world!";
    string msg = hello + " " +
    world ;
    cout <<  msg << endl;
    msg[0] = 'h';
    cout <<  msg << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

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A first C++ class: *string*

- Tweak the code to print the number of characters in the string, build, and run it.

- size() is a ***public*** method, usable by code that creates the object.

- The internal tracking of the size and the storage itself is ***private***, visible only inside the string class source code.

```
#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

int main()
{
    string hello = "Hello" ;
    string world = "world!" ;
    string msg = hello + " " + world ;
    cout <<  msg << endl ;
    msg[0] = 'h';
    cout <<  msg << endl ;

    cout << msg.size() << endl ;

    return 0;
}
```

- *cout* prints integers without any modification!

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Break your code.

- Remove a semi-colon. Re-compile. What messages do you get from the compiler?
- Fix that and break something else. Capitalize *string* → *String*
- C++ can have elaborate error messages when compiling. Experience is the only way to learn to interpret them!
- Fix your code so it still compiles and then we'll move on…

Basic Syntax

- C++ syntax is very similar to C, Java, or C#. Here's a few things up front and we'll cover more as we go along.
- Curly braces are used to denote a ***code block*** (like the main() function):

```
{   … some code… }
```

- Statements end with a semicolon:

```
int a ;
a = 1 + 3 ;
```

- Comments are marked for a single line with a ***//*** or for multilines with a pair of ***/**** and ****/*** :

```
// this is a comment.
/* everything in here
          is a comment */
```

- Variables can be declared at any time in a code block.

```
void my_function() {
    int a ;
    a=1 ;
    int b;
}
```

- Functions are sections of code that are called from other code. Functions always have a return argument type, a function name, and then a list of arguments separated by commas:

```
int add(int x, int y) {
    int z = x + y ;
    return z ;
}
```

```
// No arguments? Still need ()
void my_function() {
        /* do something...
           but a void value means the
           return statement can be skipped.*/
}
```

- A *void* type means the function does not return a value.

- Variables are declared with a type and a name:

```
// Specify the type
int x = 100;
float y;
vector<string> vec ;
// Sometimes types can be
// inferred in C++11
auto z = x;
```

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- A sampling of arithmetic operators:
  - Arithmetic: + - * / % ++ --
  - Logical: && (AND) || (OR) ! (NOT)
  - Comparison: == > < >= <= !=

- Sometimes these can have special meanings beyond arithmetic, for example the "+" is used to concatenate strings.

- What happens when a syntax error is made?
  - The compiler will complain and **refuse** to compile the file.
  - The error message *usually* directs you to the error but sometimes the error occurs before the compiler discovers syntax errors so you hunt a little bit.

Built-in (aka primitive or intrinsic) Types

- “primitive” or “intrinsic” means these types are not objects.
  - They have no methods or internal hidden data.
- Here are the most commonly used types.
- Note: The exact bit ranges here are **platform and compiler dependent**!
  - Typical usage with PCs, Macs, Linux, etc. use these values
  - Variations from this table are found in specialized applications like embedded system processors.

Name	Name	Value
char	unsigned char	8-bit integer
short	unsigned short	16-bit integer
int	unsigned int	32-bit integer
long	unsigned long	64-bit integer
bool		true or false

Name	Value
float	32-bit floating point
double	64-bit floating point
long long	128-bit integer
long double	128-bit floating point

http://www.cplusplus.com/doc/tutorial/variables/

Read-Only Types

```
const float pi = 3.14 ;

const string w = "Const String"  ;
```

- The *const* keyword can be combined with any type declaration to make read-only variables.
- Assignment can happen during a function call.
- The compiler will stop with an error if a *const* variable has a new value assigned to it in your code.

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Need to be sure of integer sizes?

- In the same spirit as using *integer(kind=8)* type notation in Fortran, there are type definitions that exactly specify exactly the bits used. These were added in C++11.
- These can be useful if you are planning to port code across CPU architectures (ex. Intel 64-bit CPUs to a 32-bit ARM on an embedded board) or when doing particular types of integer math.
- For a full list and description see: http://www.cplusplus.com/reference/cstdint/

#include <cstdint>

Name	Name	Value
int8_t	uint8_t	8-bit integer
int16_t	uint16_t	16-bit integer
int32_t	uint32_t	32-bit integer
int64_t	uint64_t	64-bit integer

Reference and Pointer Variables

```
string hello = "Hello";

string *hello_ptr = &hello;

string &hello_ref = hello;
```

The object *hello* occupies some computer memory.

A **pointer** to the hello object string. *hello_ptr* is assigned the memory address of object *hello* which is accessed with the “&” syntax.

hello_ref is a **reference** to a string. The *hello_ref* variable is assigned the memory address of object *hello* automatically.

- Variable and object values are stored in particular locations in the computer’s memory.
- Reference and pointer variables **store the memory location of other variables.**
- Pointers are found in C. References are a C++ variation that makes pointers easier and safer to use.
- More on this topic later in the tutorial.

Type Casting

- C++ is strongly typed. It will auto-convert a variable of one type to another where it can.

```
short x = 1 ;
int y = x ;    // OK
string z = y ; // NO
```

- Conversions that don't change value work as expected:
  - increasing precision (float → double) or integer → floating point of at least the same precision.
- Loss of precision usually works fine:
  - 64-bit double precision → 32-bit single precision.
  - But…be careful with this, if the larger precision value is too large the result might not be what you expect!

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Type Casting

- C++ allows for C-style type casting with the syntax: `(new type) expression`

```
double x = 1.0 ;
int y = (int) x ;
float z = (float) (x / y) ;
```

- But when using C++ it's best to stick with deliberate type casting using the **4** different ways that are offered…

Type Casting

```
double d = 1234.56 ;
float f = static_cast<float>(d) ;
// same as
float g = (float) d ;
// same as, this is an implicit cast
float h = d ;
```

- `static_cast<new type>( expression )`
  - This is exactly equivalent to the C style cast.
  - This identifies a cast **at compile time**.
  - This makes it clear to another programmer that you really intended a cast that reduces precision (ex. double → float) even if it would happen automatically.
  - ~99% of all your casts in C++ will be of this type.

- `dynamic_cast<new type>( expression)`
  - Special version where type casting is performed at runtime, only works on reference or pointer type variables.
  - Usually created automatically by the compiler where needed, occasionally used by the programmer.

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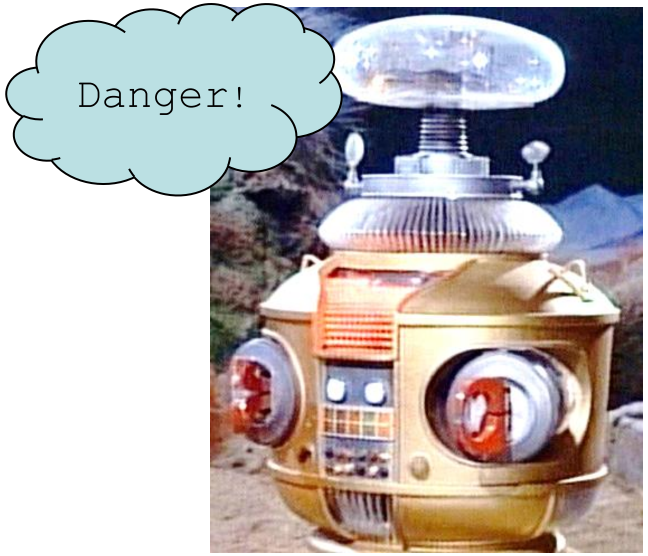
Type Casting – rarely used versions



Very old sci-fi reference

- `const_cast<new type>( expression )`
  - Variables labeled as *const* can't have their value changed.
  - const_cast lets the programmer remove or add *const* to reference or pointer type variables.
  - If you need to do this, you probably want to re-think your code…
- `reinterpret_cast<new type>( expression )`
  - Takes the bits in the expression and re-uses them **unconverted** as a new type. Also only works on reference or pointer type variables.
  - Sometimes useful when reading or writing binary files or when dealing with hardware devices like serial or USB ports.

"unsafe": the compiler will not protect you here!

The programmer must make sure everything is correct!

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Functions and Overloads

- Open the code in the “FunctionExample” directory
  - Compile and run it!

```
g++ -c Functions.cpp
g++ -c FunctionExample.cpp
g++ -o Functions Functions.o FunctionExample.o
./Functions
```

- Open Functions.cpp in geany.

The return type is *float*.

The function arguments L and W are sent as type *float*.

```
float RectangleArea1(float L, float W) {
    return L*W ;
}
```

Product is computed and returned

```
float RectangleArea2(const float L, const float W) {
    // L=2.0 ;
    return L*W ;
}

float RectangleArea3(const float& L, const float& W) {
    return L*W ;
}

void RectangleArea4(const float& L, const float& W,
float& area) {
    area= L*W ;
}
```

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Organization of *FunctionExample*

- Functions.cpp
  - Code that implements 4 functions.
- Functions.h
  - Header file that declares the 4 functions.
- FunctionExample.cpp
  - Contains the “main” routine.
  - Includes the *Functions.h* file so the 4 functions can be called.
- FunctionExample.cpp and Functions.cpp are compiled separately.
  - The header file insures the code being generated and being called is correct.
- The FunctionExample.o and Functions.o object files are linked to make the executable.
- Let’s try *gdb*, the “Gnu Debugger”, and see how to step through this code line-by-line.
- Next time we’ll use a development environment (Eclipse) that will drastically simplify debugging.