

Loop Invariants

Selection Sort

The following code implements selection sort on an array $A[n]$. There are two loops, each of which has a loop invariant.

```
void swap(int&x,int&y)
{
    int temp = x;
    x = y;
    y = temp;
}

void sort()
{
    for(int i = 0; i < n; i++)
        for(int j = i+1; i < n; j++)
            if(A[i] > A[j]) swap(A[i],A[j]);
}
```

We let $Final[i]$ be the value of $A[i]$ after A is sorted. For ease of understanding, we rewrite the function using while loops.

Outer Loop Invariant: $A[k] = Final[k]$ for all $k < i$

Inner Loop Invariant: $A[ell] \geq A[i]$ for all $i < ell < j$

```
void sort()
{
    int i = 0;
    // Outer Loop Invariant holds
    while (i < n-1)
    {
        // Outer Loop Invariant holds
        int j = i+1;
        // Inner Loop Invariant holds
        while(j < n)
        {
            // Inner Loop Invariant holds
            if(A[j] < A[i])
                swap(A[j],A[i])
            j++
            // Inner Loop Invariant holds
        }
        // Inner Loop Invariant holds
        i++;
        // Outer Loop Invariant holds
    }
    // Outer Loop Invariant holds
}
```

Doubling

You are working on computer which lacks multiplication and addition. However, it can add or subtract 1 or 2. What does this function do? What is its loop invariant?

```
int double(int n)
// input condition: n >= 0
{
    int p = n;
    int q = 0;
    while(p > 0)
    {
        p = p-1;
        q = q+2;
    }
    return q;
}
```

Real Number to a Non-Negative Integer Power

Recall that $x^0 = 1$ if x is real.¹
 x^a can be computed using recursion.

```
float power(float x, int a)
// input condition: a >= 0
{
    if(a == 0) return 1.0;
    else if(a%2) // a is odd
        return x*power(x,a-1);
    else
        return power(x*x,a/2);
}
```

We prove correctness of this code by strong induction on a .

Proof: By strong induction. Let x be any real number, and let $a \geq 0$ be an integer.

Inductive Hypothesis: `power(x,i)` returns x^i for all $i < a$.

Case 1. $a = 0$. The return value is $1.0 = x^0$.

Case 2: a is odd. By the inductive hypothesis `power(x,a-1)` returns x^{a-1} . Hence `power(x,a)` returns $x \cdot x^{a-1} = x^a$.

Case 3: a is even and greater than zero. `power(x,a)` returns `power(x*x,a/2)` which is equal to $(x^2)^{a/2} = x^a$ by the inductive hypothesis. ■

We now give a non-recursive version of the function, using a loop invariant to prove correctness. We write x^a to mean x^a .

```
1 float power(float x, int a)
2 // input condition: a >= 0
3 {
4     float y = x;
```

¹What about $x = 0.0^0$? Isn't any power of 0.0 equal to 0.0?

```

5   int b = a;
6   float rslt = 1.0;
7   // Loop invariant: b >= 0 and rslt*y^b == x^a
8   while(b > 0)
9   {
10  // Loop invariant: b >= 0 and rslt*y^b == x^a
11  if(b%2) rslt = rslt*y;
12  y = y*y;
13  b = b/2 // truncated integer division
14  // Loop invariant: b >= 0 and rslt*y^b == x^a
15  }
16  // Loop invariant: b >= 0 and rslt*y^b == x^a
17  return rslt;
18  }

```

This code has only one loop. We need to prove that the loop invariant holds before the first iteration of the loop, and that, if it holds at the beginning of an iteration, it holds at the end of that iteration. It follows that the loop invariant holds after the loop exits.

1. LI holds at line 7, because $rslt*y^b == 1.0*x^a$
2. LI holds at line 10 for the first iteration, since it holds at line 7 and none of the variables have been changed.
3. LI holds at line 10 for any other iteration (after the first, that is) since it holds at line 14 of the previous iteration and none of the variables have been changed.
4. Assume LI holds at line 10. We must prove that LI holds at line 14 of the same iteration. This statement is non-trivial, since the values of the variables are changed during the loop.

To avoid confusion, we use write $rslt$, y , b for the values of those variables at line 10, and $rslt'$, y' , b' for the values of the same variables at line 14. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
 y' &= y^2 \\
 b' &= \begin{cases} b/2 & \text{if } b \text{ is even} \\ (b-1)/2 & \text{if } b \text{ is odd} \end{cases} \\
 rslt' &= \begin{cases} rslt & \text{if } b \text{ is even} \\ rslt \cdot y & \text{if } b \text{ is odd} \end{cases}
 \end{aligned}$$

We know that $b > 0$, since the loop condition must hold. Thus $b' \geq (b-1)/2 \geq 0$.

If b is even, we have $rslt' \cdot (y')^{b'} = rslt \cdot (y^2)^{b/2} = rslt \cdot y^b = x^a$ and we are done. If b is odd, we have $rslt' \cdot (y')^{b'} = rslt \cdot y \cdot (y^2)^{(b-1)/2} = rslt \cdot y \cdot y^{b-1} = rslt \cdot y^b = x^a$ and we are done.

5. Since LI holds at the end of the last iteration, it must hold at line 16 since no values have been changed.

We now prove correctness of the code. Since the loop condition has failed, $b \leq 0$ at line 17. By the loop invariant, $b \geq 0$. Thus, $b = 0$, hence $y^b = 1$. Thus $rslt = rslt \cdot y^b = x^a$ at line 17, so the correct value is returned.