

# Semantic Analysis

# Where We Are?

- Program is lexically well-formed:
  - Identifiers have valid names.
  - Strings are properly terminated.
  - No stray characters.
- Program is syntactically well-formed:
  - Class declarations have the correct structure.
  - Expressions are syntactically valid.
- Does this mean that the program is legal (valid)?

Consider the following program:

It is syntactically correct, but is it error free?

```
class MyClass implements MyInterface {
    string myInteger;

    void doSomething() {
        int[] x = new string;

        x[5] = myInteger * y;
    }
    void doSomething() {

    }
    int fibonacci(int n) {
        return doSomething() + fibonacci(n - 1);
    }
}
```

```
class MyClass implements MyInterface {
    string myInteger;

    void doSomething() {
        int[] x = new string;
        x[5] => myInteger * y;
    }
    void doSomething() {
    }
    int fibonacci(int n) {
        return doSomething() + fibonacci(n - 1);
    }
}

```

Interface not declared

Wrong type

Can't multiply strings

Variable not declared

Can't redefine functions

Can't add void

No main function

- Semantic analysis is our last line of defense.
- Parsing cannot catch all errors
- This is because CFG are **not expressive enough** to describe everything we are interested in in a language.
- **i.e., some language constructs are not context free.**

# Limitations of CFGs

- Using CFGs:
- How would you prevent **duplicate class definitions**?
- How would you differentiate **variables of one type from variables of another** type?
- How would you **ensure classes implement all interface methods**?
- For most programming languages, these are **provably impossible**.

# Implementing Semantic Analysis

- Attribute Grammars
  - Augment rules to do checking during parsing.
  - Approach suggested in the Compilers book.
  - Has its limitations; more on that later.
- Recursive AST Walk
  - Construct the AST, then use virtual functions and recursion to explore the tree.
  - The approach we'll take in this class.

# Abstract Syntax Tree: AST

- Much of the semantic analysis can be expressed as a recursive descent of an AST.
- When we traverse an AST some operations are performed on a node before we process its children and some operations are performed after we process its children
  - Before: process an AST node  $n$
  - Recurse: Process the children of  $n$
  - After: Finish processing the AST node  $n$
- This is called **Recursive Decent Traversal of a Tree**
  - Sometimes we process a node before its children, sometimes after, and sometimes both.
- When performing semantic analysis on a portion of the AST, we need to know **which identifiers are defined**



# Types of Checks

- Scope-Checking
  - How can we tell **what object a particular identifier refers to?**
  - How do we **store this information?**
- Type-Checking
  - How can we tell whether **expressions have valid types?**
  - How do we know all **function calls have valid arguments?**

# Scope

- The same name in a program **may refer to fundamentally different things**:
- This is perfectly legal Java code:

```
public class A {  
    char A;  
    A A(A A) {  
        A.A = 'A';  
        return A((A) A);  
    }  
}
```

```
public class A{  
    char A;  
    A A(A A) {  
        A.A= 'A';  
        return A((A) A);  
    }  
}
```

- This is perfectly legal C++ code:

```
int Awful() {  
    int x= 137;  
    {  
        string x= "Scope!"  
        if (float x= 0)  
            double x= x;  
    }  
    if (x== 137) cout << "Y";  
}
```

# Scope

- The scope of an entity is the **set of locations** in a program where that **entity's name refers to that entity**.
- The introduction of new variables into scope **may hide older variables**.
- **How do we keep track of what's visible?**

# Symbol Tables

- A symbol table is a **mapping from a name to the thing that name refers to**.
- As we run our **semantic analysis, continuously update the symbol table** with information about what is in scope.
- Questions:
  - What does this look like in practice?
  - **What operations** need to be defined on it?
  - How do we **implement** it?

# Symbol Tables: The Intuition

```
0: int x = 137;
1: int z = 42;
2: int MyFunction(int x, int y) {
3:     printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x, y, z);
4:     {
5:         int x, z;
6:         z = y;
7:         x = z;
8:         {
9:             int y = x;
10:            {
11:                printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x, y, z);
12:            }
13:            printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x, y, z);
14:        }
15:        printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x, y, z);
16:    }
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17: }
```

Symbol Table	
x	0



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16:    }
17: }
```

Symbol Table	
x	<b>0</b>
z	<b>1</b>

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```
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1: int z = 42;
2: int MyFunction(int x, int y) {
3:     printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x, y, z);
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16: }
17: }
```

Symbol Table	
x	0
z	1
x	2
y	2

# Symbol Tables: The Intuition

```
0: int x = 137;
1: int z = 42;
2: int MyFunction(int x, int y) {
3:     printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x@2, y@2, z@1);
4:     {
5:         int x, z;
6:         z = y;
7:         x = z;
8:         {
9:             int y = x;
10:            {
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Symbol Table	
x	0
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3:     printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x@2, y@2, z@1);
4:     {
5:         int x, z;
6:         z = y;
7:         x = z;
8:         {
9:             int y = x;
10:        {
11:            printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x, y, z);
12:        }
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Symbol Table	
x	0
z	1
x	2
y	2
x	5
z	5

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3:     printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x@2, y@2, z@1);
4:     {
5:         int x, z;
6:         z@5 = y@2;
7:         x = z;
8:         {
9:             int y = x;
10:            {
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Symbol Table	
x	0
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x	5
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Symbol Table	
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x	2
y	2
x	5
z	5

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Symbol Table	
x	0
z	1
x	2
y	2
x	5
z	5
y	9



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Symbol Table	
x	0
z	1
x	2
y	2
x	5
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7:         x@5 = z@5;
8:         {
9:             int y = x@5;
10:            {
11:                printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x@5, y@9, z@5);
12:            }
13:            printf("%d,%d,%d\n", x, y, z);
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x	0
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y	2
x	5
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x	5
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Symbol Table	
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x	2
y	2
x	5
z	5

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```

Symbol Table	
x	0
z	1



# Symbol Table Operations

- Typically implemented as a **stack of maps**.
- Each map corresponds to a particular scope.
- Stack allows for easy “enter” and “exit” operations.
- Symbol table operations are
  - **Push scope**: Enter a new scope.
  - **Pop scope**: Leave a scope, discarding all declarations in it.
  - **Insert symbol**: Add a new entry to the current scope.
  - **Lookup symbol**: Find what a name corresponds to.

# Using a Symbol Table

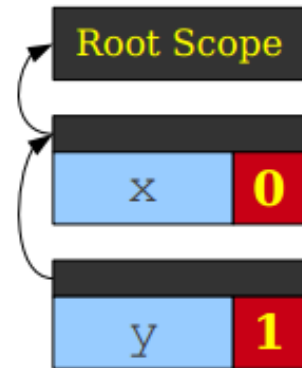
- To process a portion of the program that creates a scope (block statements, function calls, classes, etc.)
  - Enter a new scope.
  - Add all variable declarations to the symbol table.
  - Process the body of the block/function/class.
  - Exit the scope.
- Much of semantic analysis is defined in terms of recursive AST traversals like this.

# Another View of Symbol Tables

```
0: int x;  
1: int y;  
2: int MyFunction(int x, int y)  
3: {  
4:   int w, z;  
5:   {  
6:     int y;  
7:   }  
8:   {  
9:     int w;  
10:  }  
11: }
```

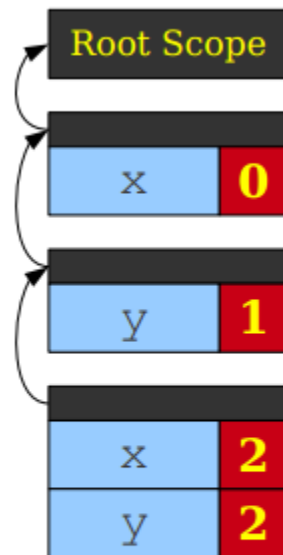
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```



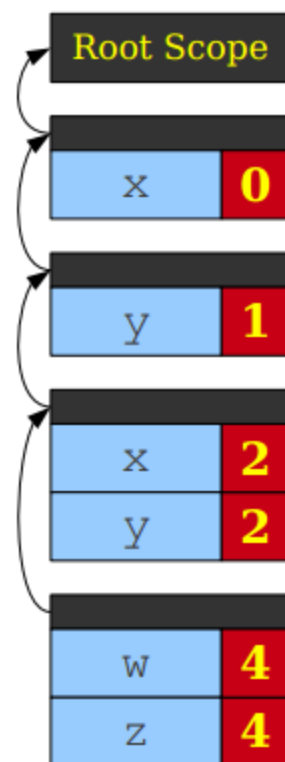
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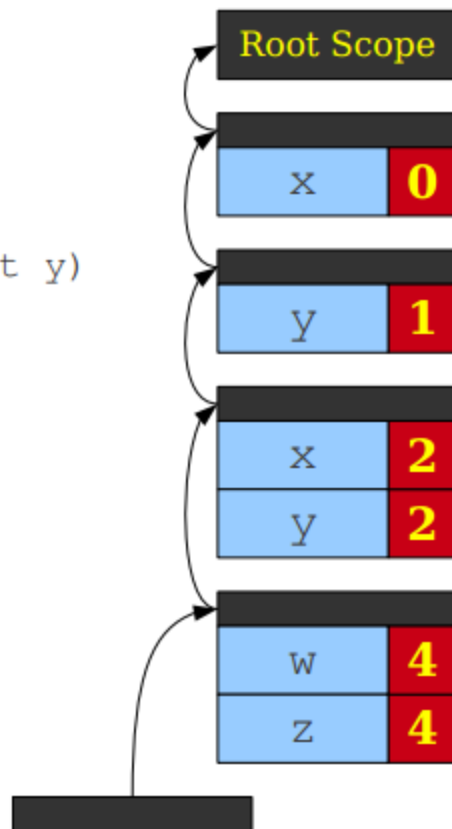
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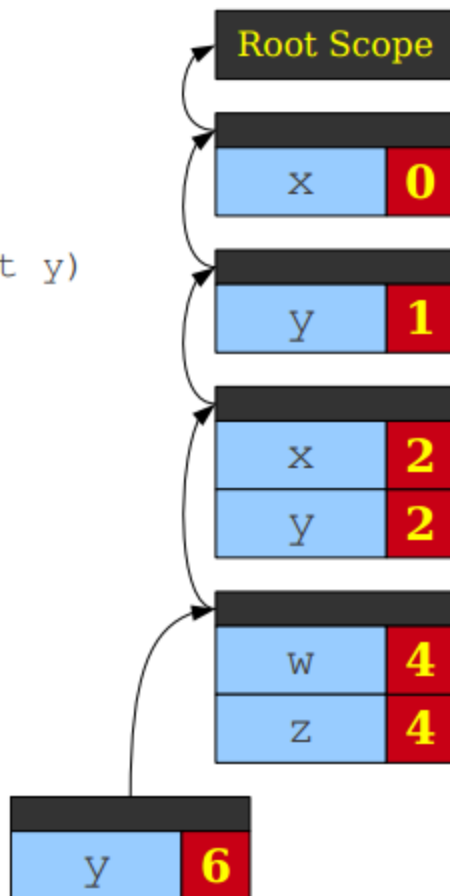
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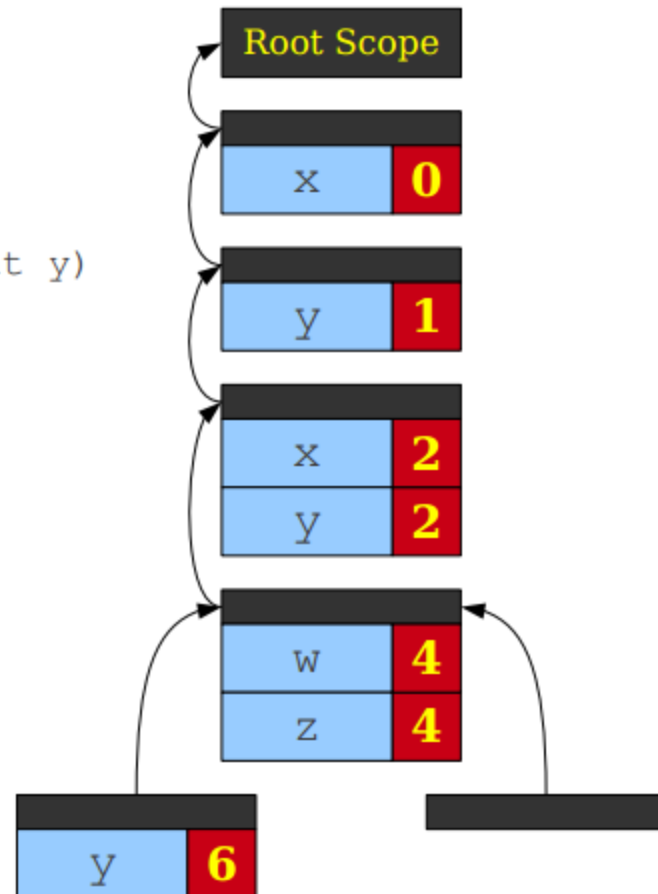
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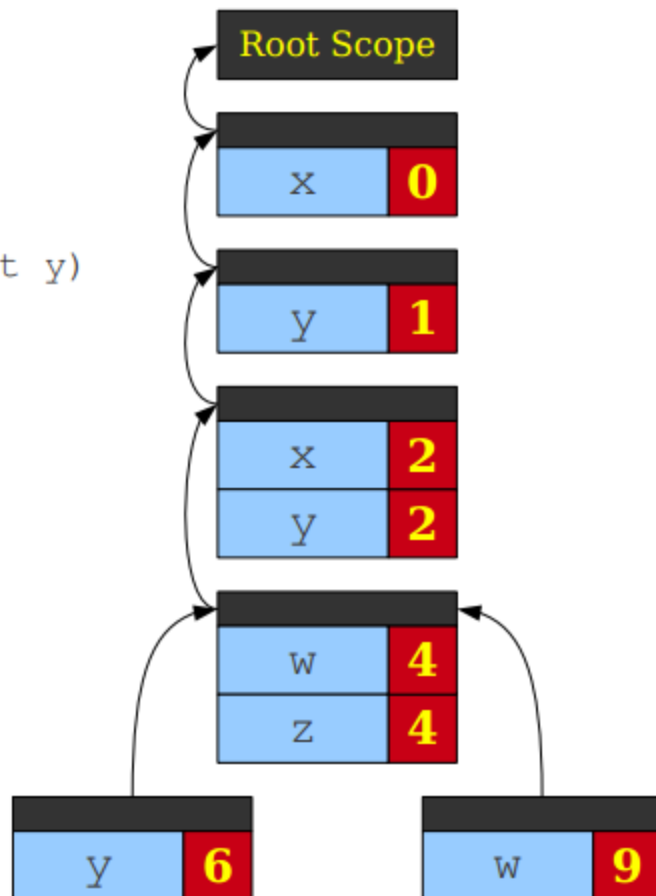
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0: int x;  
1: int y;  
2: int MyFunction(int x, int y)  
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5:   {  
6:     int y;  
7:   }  
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```



# Spaghetti Stacks

- Treat the symbol table as a linked structure of scopes.
- Each scope stores a pointer to its parents, but not vice-versa.
- From any point in the program, symbol table appears to be a stack.
- This is called a **spaghetti stack**.

# Type-Checking

- Type errors.
- What are types?
- What is type-checking?
- A simple type system.

```
class MyClass implements MyInterface {  
    string myInteger;  
  
    void doSomething() {  
        int[] x;  
        x = new string;  
        x[5] = myInteger * y;  
    }  
    void doSomething() {  
    }  
    int fibonacci(int n) {  
        return doSomething() + fibonacci(n - 1);  
    }  
}
```

Interface not declared

Wrong type

Can't multiply strings

Variable not declared

Can't redefine functions

Can't add void

No main function

# What is a Type?

- “The notion varies from language to language.
- The consensus:
  - **A set of values.**
  - **A set of operations on those values”**
- Type errors arise when operations are performed **on values that do not support that operation.**

# Types of Type-Checking

- **Static type checking.**
  - Analyze the program during compile-time to prove the absence of type errors.
  - Never let bad things happen at runtime.
- **Dynamic type checking.**
  - Check operations at runtime before performing them.
  - More precise than static type checking, but usually less efficient.
  - (Why?)
- **No type checking.**
  - Throw caution to the wind!

# Type Systems

- The rules governing permissible operations on types forms a **type system**.
- **Strong type systems** are systems that never allow for a type error.
  - Java, Python, JavaScript, LISP, Haskell, etc.
- **Weak type systems** can allow type errors at runtime.
  - C, C++



# Typing in Decaf

- Decaf is typed **statically** and **weakly**:
  - Type-checking occurs at compile-time.
  - Runtime errors like dereferencing `null` or an invalid object are allowed.
- Decaf uses **class-based inheritance**.
- Decaf distinguishes primitive types and classes.


# Static Typing in Decaf

- Static type checking in Decaf consists of two separate processes:
  - Inferring the type of each expression from the types of its components.
  - Confirming that the types of expressions in certain contexts matches what is expected.
- Logically two steps, but you will probably combine into one pass.

# An Example

```
while (numBitsSet(x + 5) <= 10) {  
    if (1.0 + 4.0) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
    while (5 == null) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
}
```

Well-typed  
expression with  
wrong type.



# An Example

```
while (numBitsSet(x + 5) <= 10) {  
    if (1.0 + 4.0) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
    while (5 == null) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
}
```

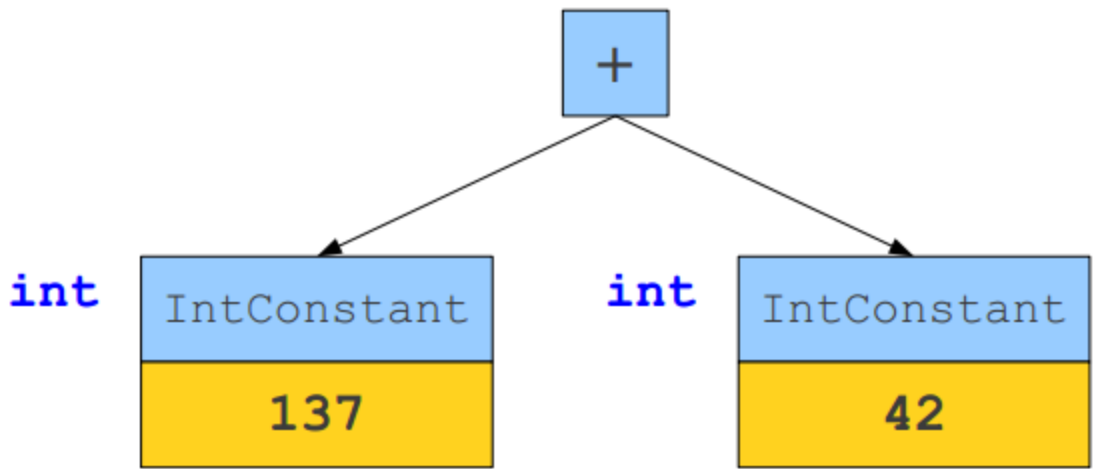
Expression with  
type error

# Inferring Expression Types

- How do we determine the type of an expression?
- Think of process as **logical inference**.

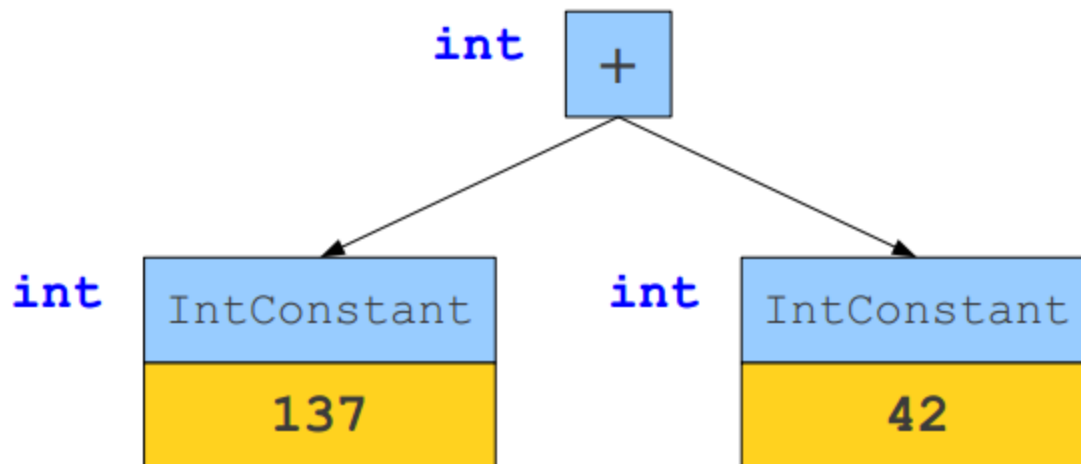
# Inferring Expression Types

- How do we determine the type of an expression?
- Think of process as **logical inference**.



# Inferring Expression Types

- How do we determine the type of an expression?
- Think of process as **logical inference**.



# Type Checking as Proofs

- We can think of typing checking as proving claims about the types of expressions.
- We begin with a set of axioms, then apply our inference rules to determine the types of expressions.
- Many type systems can be thought of a proof systems.



# Sample Inference Rules

- “If  $\mathbf{x}$  is an identifier that refers to an object of type  $\mathbf{t}$ , the expression  $\mathbf{x}$  has type  $\mathbf{t}$ .”
- “If  $\mathbf{e}$  is an integer constant,  $\mathbf{e}$  has type  $\mathbf{int}$ .”
- “If the operands  $\mathbf{e}_1$  and  $\mathbf{e}_2$  of  $\mathbf{e}_1 + \mathbf{e}_2$  are known to have types  $\mathbf{int}$  and  $\mathbf{int}$ , then  $\mathbf{e}_1 + \mathbf{e}_2$  has type  $\mathbf{int}$ .”

# Formalizing our Notation

- We will encode our axioms and inference rules using this syntax:

$$\frac{\text{Preconditions}}{\text{Postconditions}}$$

- This is read “if *preconditions* are true, we can infer *postconditions*.”

# Examples of Formal Notation

$\mathbf{A} \rightarrow \mathbf{t}\omega$  is a production.

---

$\mathbf{t} \in \text{FIRST}(\mathbf{A})$

$\mathbf{A} \rightarrow \epsilon$  is a production.

---

$\epsilon \in \text{FIRST}(\mathbf{A})$

$\mathbf{A} \rightarrow \omega$  is a production.

$\mathbf{t} \in \text{FIRST}^*(\omega)$

---

$\mathbf{t} \in \text{FIRST}(\mathbf{A})$

$\mathbf{A} \rightarrow \omega$  is a production.

$\epsilon \in \text{FIRST}^*(\omega)$

---

$\epsilon \in \text{FIRST}(\mathbf{A})$

# Formal Notation for Type Systems

- We write

$$\vdash \mathbf{e} : \mathbf{T}$$

if the expression  $\mathbf{e}$  has type  $\mathbf{T}$ .

- The symbol  $\vdash$  means “we can infer...”

# Our Starting Axioms

---

`⊢ true : bool`

---

`⊢ false : bool`

# Some Simple Inference Rules

*i* is an integer constant

---

$\vdash i : \mathbf{int}$

*s* is a string constant

---

$\vdash s : \mathbf{string}$

*d* is a double constant

---

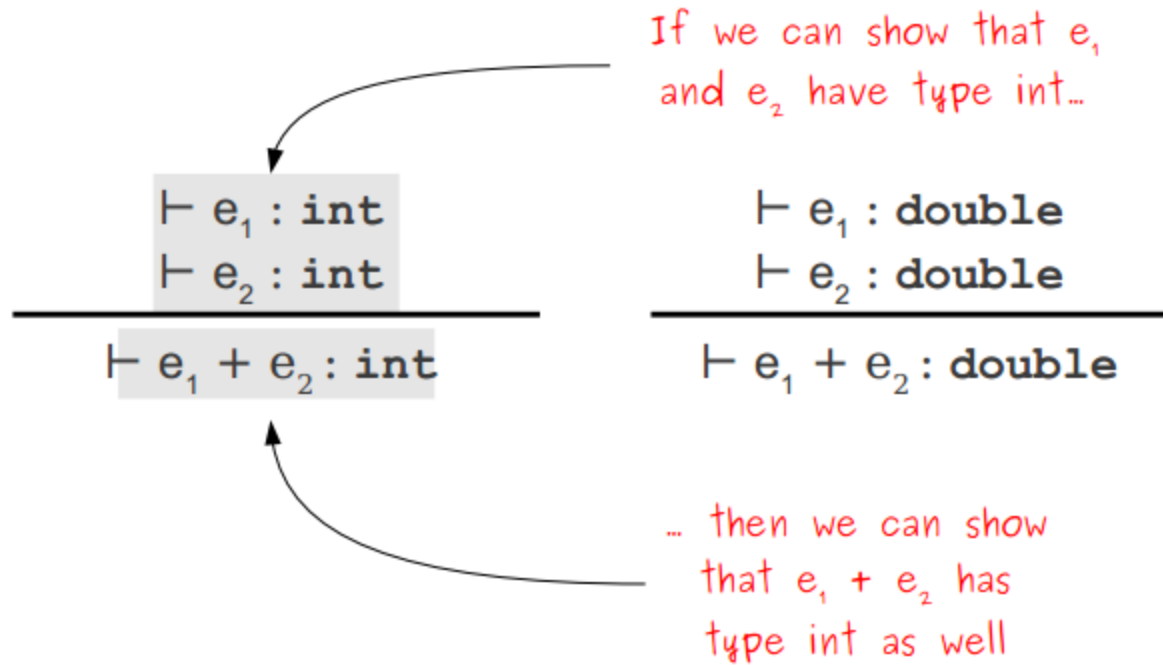
$\vdash d : \mathbf{double}$

## More Complex Inference Rules

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \vdash e_1 : \mathbf{int} \\ \vdash e_2 : \mathbf{int} \end{array}}{\vdash e_1 + e_2 : \mathbf{int}}$$

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \vdash e_1 : \mathbf{double} \\ \vdash e_2 : \mathbf{double} \end{array}}{\vdash e_1 + e_2 : \mathbf{double}}$$

# More Complex Inference Rules





## Even More Complex Inference Rules

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \vdash e_1 : T \\ \vdash e_2 : T \\ T \text{ is a primitive type} \end{array}}{\vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \vdash e_1 : T \\ \vdash e_2 : T \\ T \text{ is a primitive type} \end{array}}{\vdash e_1 != e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

## Strengthening our Inference Rules

- The facts we're proving have no *context*.
- We need to strengthen our inference rules to remember under what circumstances the results are valid.

# Adding Scope

- We write

$$\mathbf{S} \vdash \mathbf{e} : \mathbf{T}$$

if, in scope  $\mathbf{S}$ , expression  $\mathbf{e}$  has type  $\mathbf{T}$ .

- Types are now proven relative to the scope they are in.

# Old Rules Revisited

---

$$S \vdash \text{true} : \text{bool}$$

---

$$S \vdash \text{false} : \text{bool}$$
$$i \text{ is an integer constant}$$

---

$$S \vdash i : \text{int}$$
$$s \text{ is a string constant}$$

---

$$S \vdash s : \text{string}$$
$$d \text{ is a double constant}$$

---

$$S \vdash d : \text{double}$$
$$S \vdash e_1 : \text{double}$$
$$S \vdash e_2 : \text{double}$$

---

$$S \vdash e_1 + e_2 : \text{double}$$
$$S \vdash e_1 : \text{int}$$
$$S \vdash e_2 : \text{int}$$

---

$$S \vdash e_1 + e_2 : \text{int}$$

# A Correct Rule

$x$  is an identifier.  
 **$x$  is a variable in scope  $S$**  with type  $T$ .

---

$S \vdash x : T$

# Rules for Functions

$f$  is an identifier.

---

$S \vdash f(e_1, \dots, e_n) : ??$

# Rules for Functions

$f$  is an identifier.

$f$  is a non-member function in scope  $S$ .

---

$S \vdash f(e_1, \dots, e_n) : ??$

# Rules for Functions

$f$  is an identifier.  
 $f$  is a non-member function in scope  $S$ .  
 $f$  has type  $(T_1, \dots, T_n) \rightarrow U$

---

$S \vdash f(e_1, \dots, e_n) : ??$



# Rules for Functions

$f$  is an identifier.

$f$  is a non-member function in scope  $S$ .

$f$  has type  $(T_1, \dots, T_n) \rightarrow U$

$S \vdash e_i : T_i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq n$

---

$S \vdash f(e_1, \dots, e_n) : ??$

# Rules for Functions

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 $S \vdash e_i : T_i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq n$

---

$S \vdash f(e_1, \dots, e_n) : U$

# Rules for Arrays

$$S \vdash e_1 : T[]$$
$$S \vdash e_2 : \mathbf{int}$$

---

$$S \vdash e_1[e_2] : T$$

# Rule for Assignment

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} S \vdash e_1 : T \\ S \vdash e_2 : T \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 = e_2 : T}$$

# Typing with Classes

- How do we factor inheritance into our inference rules?
- We need to consider the shape of class hierarchies.

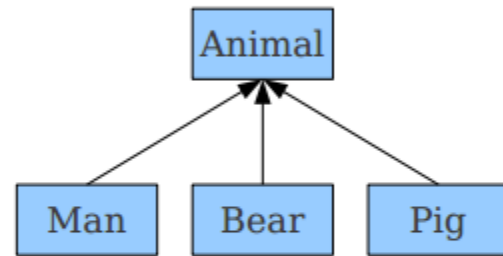
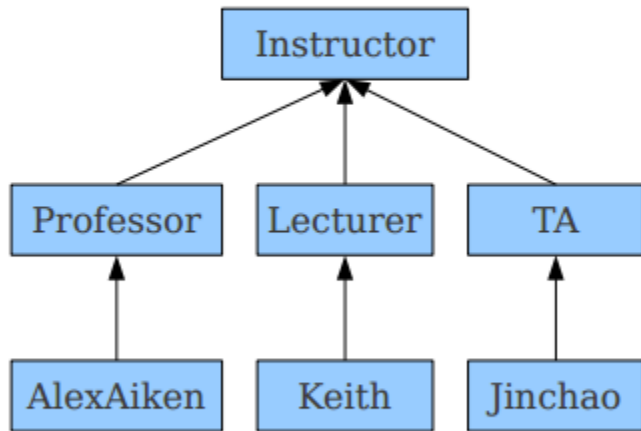
# Rule for Assignment

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T \\ S \vdash e_2 : T \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 = e_2 : T}$$

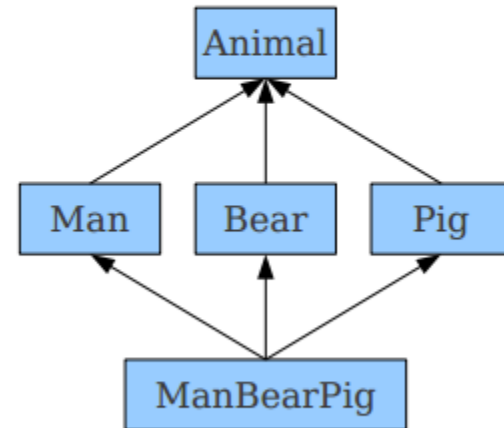
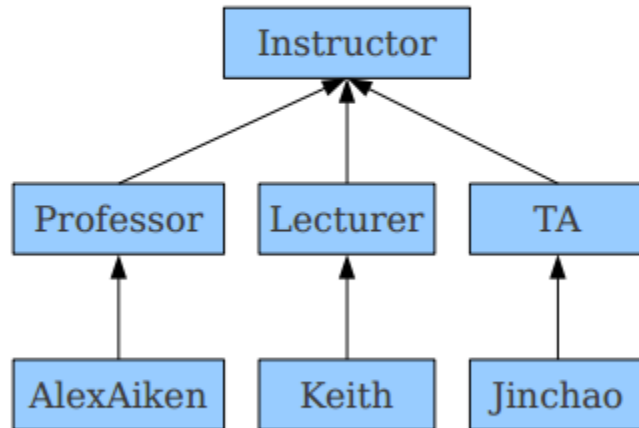
If **Derived** extends **Base**, will this rule work for this code?

```
Base    myBase;  
Derived myDerived;  
  
myBase = myDerived;
```

# Single Inheritance



# Multiple Inheritance





## Properties of Inheritance Structures

- Any type is convertible to itself. (**reflexivity**)
- If A is convertible to B and B is convertible to C, then A is convertible to C. (**transitivity**)
- If A is convertible to B and B is convertible to A, then A and B are the same type. (**antisymmetry**)
- This defines a **partial order** over types.

# Types and Partial Orders

- We say that  $A \leq B$  if  $A$  is convertible to  $B$ .
- We have that
  - $A \leq A$
  - $A \leq B$  and  $B \leq C$  implies  $A \leq C$
  - $A \leq B$  and  $B \leq A$  implies  $A = B$

# Updated Rule for Assignment

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_2 \leq T_1 \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 = e_2 : T_1}$$

Can we do better than this?

# Updated Rule for Assignment

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_2 \leq T_1 \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 = e_2 : \mathbf{T}_2}$$

# Updated Rule for Assignment

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_2 \leq T_1 \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 = e_2 : \mathbf{T}_2}$$

# Updated Rule for Comparisons

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T \\ S \vdash e_2 : T \\ T \text{ is a primitive type} \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

# Updated Rule for Comparisons

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T \\ S \vdash e_2 : T \\ T \text{ is a primitive type} \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_1 \text{ and } T_2 \text{ are of class type.} \\ T_1 \leq T_2 \text{ or } T_2 \leq T_1 \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

# Updated Rule for Comparisons

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T \\ S \vdash e_2 : T \\ T \text{ is a primitive type} \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_1 \text{ and } T_2 \text{ are of class type.} \\ T_1 \preceq T_2 \text{ or } T_2 \preceq T_1 \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$



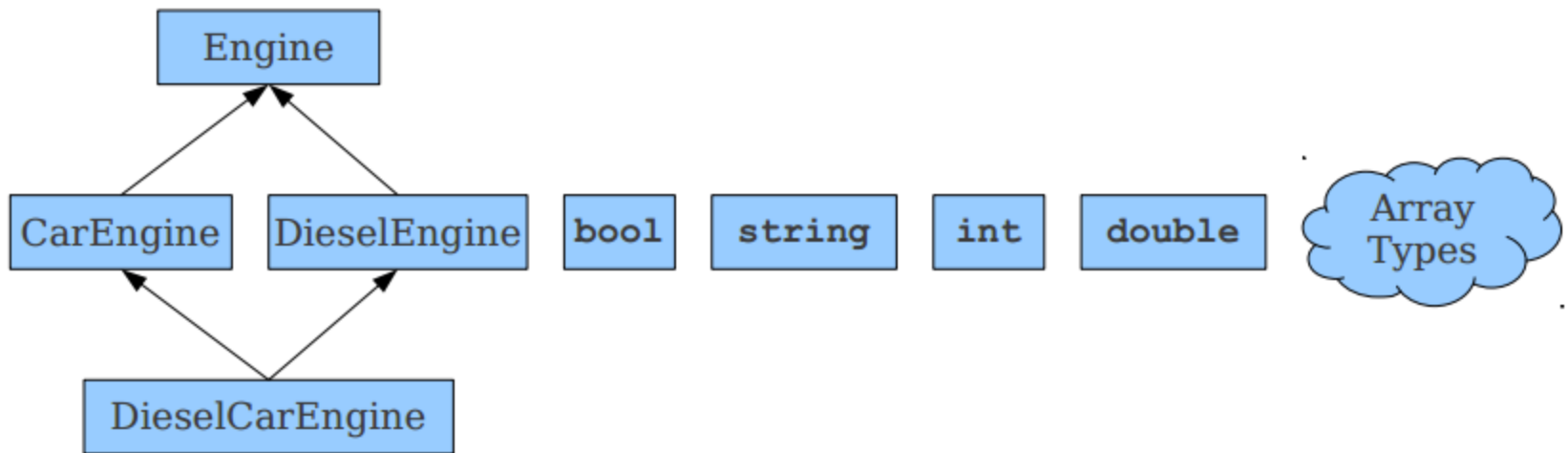
# Updated Rule for Comparisons

Can we unify  
these rules?

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T \\ S \vdash e_2 : T \\ T \text{ is a primitive type} \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_1 \text{ and } T_2 \text{ are of class type.} \\ T_1 \leq T_2 \text{ or } T_2 \leq T_1 \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

# The Shape of Types



# Extending Convertibility

- If  $A$  is a primitive or array type,  $A$  is only convertible to itself.
- More formally, if  $A$  and  $B$  are types and  $A$  is a primitive or array type:
  - $A \leq B$  implies  $A = B$
  - $B \leq A$  implies  $A = B$

# Updated Rule for Comparisons

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T \\ S \vdash e_2 : T \\ T \text{ is a primitive type} \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$
$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_1 \text{ and } T_2 \text{ are of class type.} \\ T_1 \leq T_2 \text{ or } T_2 \leq T_1 \end{array}}{S \vdash e_1 == e_2 : \mathbf{bool}}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} S \vdash e_1 : T_1 \\ S \vdash e_2 : T_2 \\ T_1 \leq T_2 \text{ or } T_2 \leq T_1 \end{array}$$

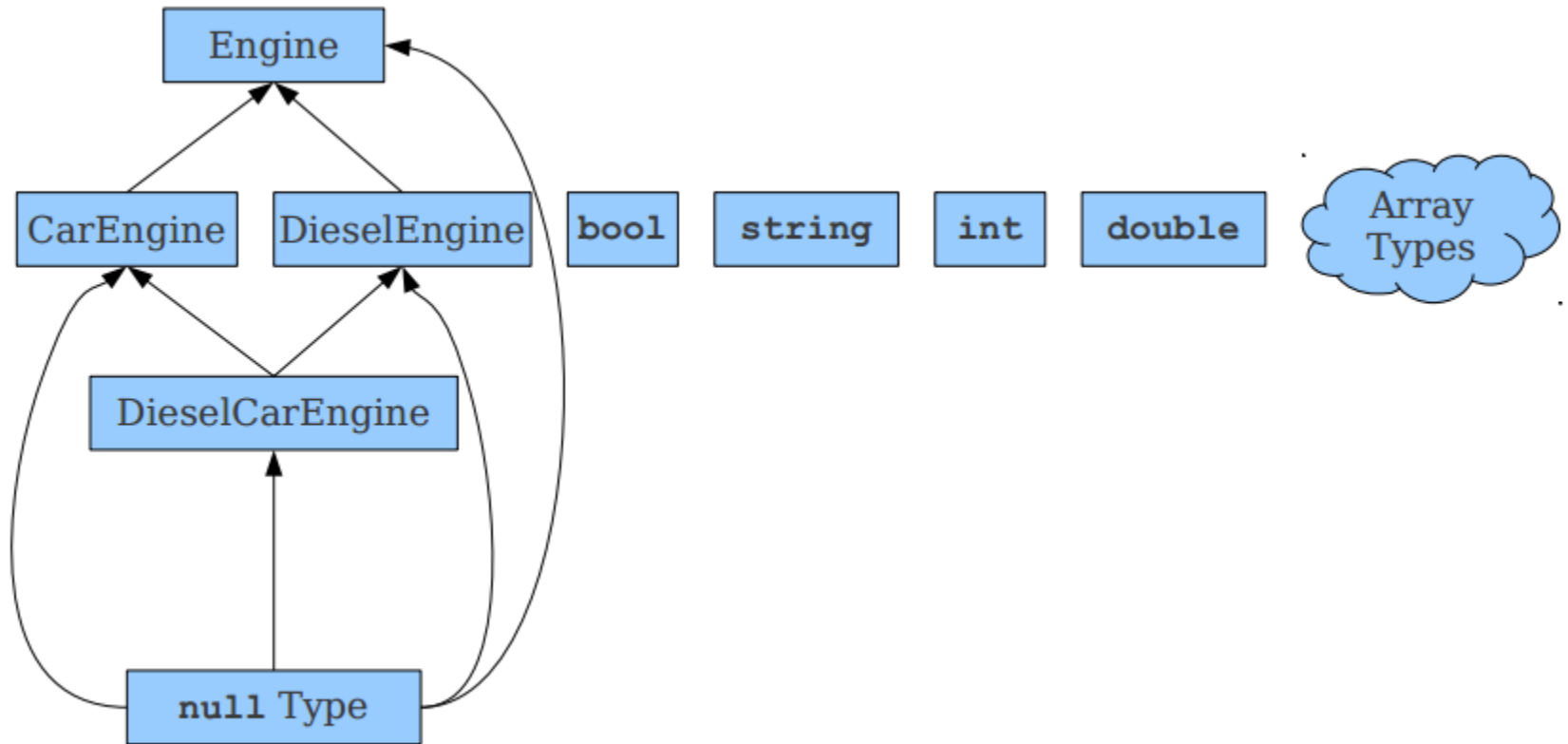
# Updated Rule for Function Calls

$$\begin{array}{l} f \text{ is an identifier.} \\ f \text{ is a non-member function in scope } S. \\ f \text{ has type } (T_1, \dots, T_n) \rightarrow U \\ S \vdash e_i : R_i \text{ for } 1 \leq i \leq n \\ R_i \leq T_i \text{ for } 1 \leq i \leq n \\ \hline S \vdash f(e_1, \dots, e_n) : U \end{array}$$

# A Tricky Case

---

$S \vdash \text{null} : ??$



# Handling `null`

- Define a new type corresponding to the type of the literal `null`; call it “**`null` type.**”
- Define `null` type  $\leq$  A for any class type A.
- The `null` type is (typically) not accessible to programmers; it's only used internally.
- Many programming languages have types like these.



# A Tricky Case

---

$S \vdash \text{null} : \text{null type}$

# Object-Oriented Considerations

$S$  is in scope of class  $T$ .

---

$S \vdash \mathbf{this} : T$

$T$  is a class type.

---

$S \vdash \mathbf{new} T : T$

$S \vdash e : \mathbf{int}$

---

$S \vdash \mathbf{NewArray}(e, T) : T[]$


# Using our Type Proofs

- We can now prove the types of various expressions.
- How do we check...
  - ... that **if** statements have well-formed conditional expressions?
  - ... that **return** statements actually return the right type of value?
- Use another proof system!

```
while (numBitsSet(x + 5) <= 10) {  
  
    if (1.0 + 4.0) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
  
    while (5 == null) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
}
```

```
while (numBitsSet(x + 5) <= 10) {  
  
    if (1.0 + 4.0) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
  
    while (5 == null) {  
        /* ... */  
    }  
  
}
```

Expression with  
type error



# Proofs of Structural Soundness

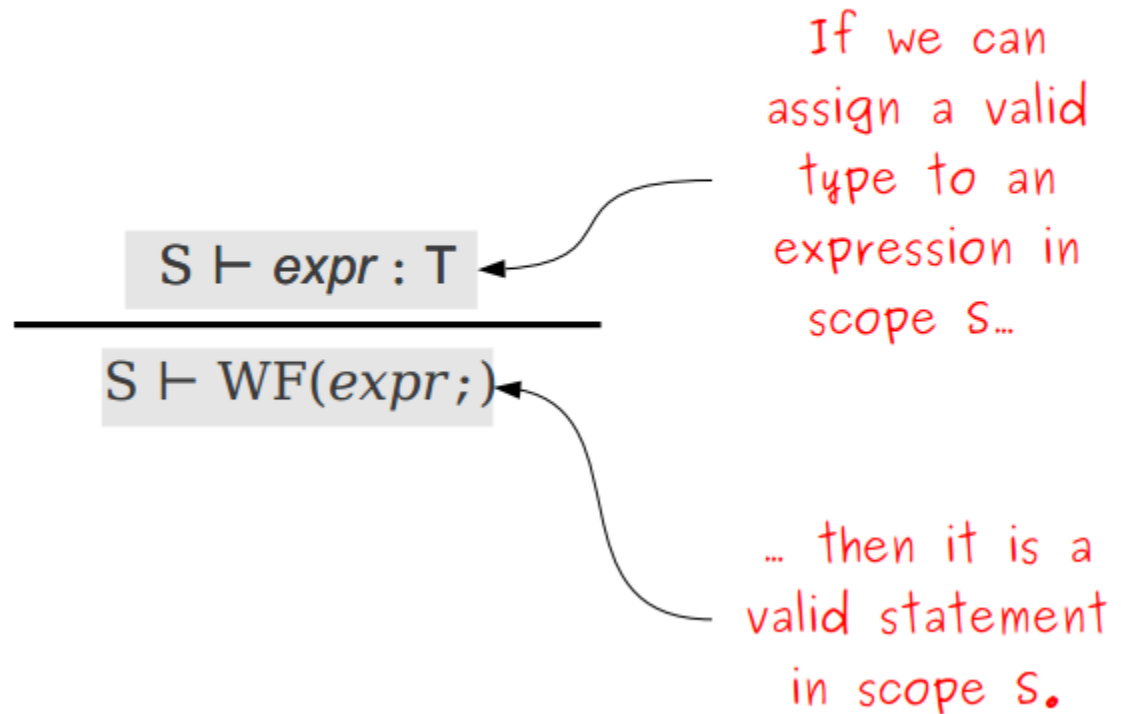
- Idea: extend our proof system to statements to confirm that they are well-formed.
- We say that

$$S \vdash WF(stmt)$$

if the statement *stmt* is **well-formed** in scope *S*.

- The type system is satisfied if for every function *f* with body *B* in scope *S*, we can show  $S \vdash WF(B)$ .

# A Simple Well-Formedness Rule



# A More Complex Rule

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash \text{WF}(stmt_1) \\ S \vdash \text{WF}(stmt_2) \end{array}}{S \vdash \text{WF}(stmt_1 \text{ } stmt_2)}$$



# A Rule for Loops

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} S \vdash \mathit{expr} : \mathbf{bool} \\ S' \text{ is the scope inside the loop.} \\ S' \vdash \mathit{WF}(\mathit{stmt}) \end{array}}{S \vdash \mathit{WF}(\mathbf{while} \ (\mathit{expr}) \ \mathit{stmt})}$$

# Rules for **return**

S is in a function returning T

$S \vdash \text{expr} : T'$

$T' \leq T$

---

$S \vdash \text{WF}(\text{return } \text{expr};)$

S is in a function returning **void**

---

$S \vdash \text{WF}(\text{return};)$

# Checking Well-Formedness

- Recursively walk the AST.
- For each statement:
  - Typecheck any subexpressions it contains.
    - Report errors if **no** type can be assigned.
    - Report errors if the **wrong** type is assigned.
  - Typecheck child statements.
  - Check the overall correctness.