

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering

## ECE 120: Introduction to Computing

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### Basic I/O in C

## Allowing Input from the Keyboard, Output to the Monitor

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To control input and output (**I/O**), we use two functions from the standard **C** library.

Put this line at the top of your **C** program:

```
#include <stdio.h>
```

This directive tells the **C** compiler that your program **uses the standard C I/O functions**.

## Write Output Using `printf`

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To write text onto the display, use `printf`.

The “f” means “formatted.”

- When using the function,
- you must **specify the desired format** between quotation marks.

Example:

```
printf ("Here is an example.");
```

The function call above **writes the text between the quotes to the monitor**.

## Use Backslash to Include Special ASCII Characters

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Certain **ASCII** characters

- control text appearance, and
- are hard to put between quotes.

For example

- **ASCII's linefeed** character (or lf, sometimes called newline)
- **starts a new line of text**.

To **include linefeed**, write `\n` between quotes.

The **backslash indicates a special ASCII character**. Use `\\` for one backslash.

## One Can Include Many Linefeeds

Example:

```
printf("This\ntext\n\nhas\nlines!\n");
```

The call above prints the three lines below (at the left of the screen).

```
This
text\nhas
lines!
```

The next `printf` also starts on a new line (because of the linefeed at the end of the format).

## Use Format Specifiers to Print Expressions

`printf` also prints expression values

For example, `%d` specifies what and how to print

```
printf("Integers: %d %d %d\n",
      6 * 7, 17 + 200, 32 & 100);
```

Output: [followed by ASCII linefeed]

```
Integers: 42 217 32
```

The **expressions** to print

- appear **after the format specification**, and
- are **separated by commas**.

## Many Format Specifiers are Supported

Format Specifier	Interpretation
<code>%c</code>	int or char as ASCII character
<code>%d</code>	int as decimal
<code>%e</code>	double as decimal scientific notation
<code>%f</code>	double as decimal
<code>%%</code>	one percent sign

## These Tables Suffice for Our Class

Format Specifier	Interpretation
<code>%u</code>	unsigned int as decimal
<code>%x</code>	integer as lower-case hexadecimal
<code>%X</code>	integer as upper-case hexadecimal

See man pages on a lab machine for more.

## Format Specifiers Print Only the Expression Values

If you want spacing, include it in the format.

Example:

```
printf("%d%d%d", 12, -34, 56);
```

prints

```
12-3456
```

Except for format specifiers and special ASCII characters like linefeed, **characters print exactly as they appear.**

## Pitfall: Passing the Wrong Type of Expression

Be sure that your expressions (and ordering) match the format.

Example:

```
printf("%d %f", 10.0, 17);
```

may print (output is system dependent)

```
0 0.000000
```

A C compiler **may be able to warn you** about this kind of error.

## Pitfall: Too Few/Many Expressions

If you pass more expressions than format specifiers, **the last expressions are ignored.**

If you pass fewer expressions than format specifiers, **printf prints ... bits!** (In other words, behavior is unspecified.)

Again, a C compiler **may be able to warn you** about this kind of error.

## Read Input Using `scanf`

To read values from the keyboard, use `scanf`.

The “f” again means “formatted.”

`scanf` also takes

- a format in quotation marks, and
- a comma-separated list of variable addresses

Example: `int A;` **memory address of variable A**

```
scanf ("%d", &A);
```

reads a decimal integer, converts it to **2's complement**, and stores the bits in **A**.

## scanf Ignores White Space Typed by User

Example: 

```
int A;
int B;
scanf ("%d%d", &A, &B);
```

The user can separate the two numbers with spaces, tabs, and/or linefeeds, such as ...

```
5 42      /* A is 5, B is 42 */
5 /* two lines -> same result */
42
```

The user must push <Enter> when done.

## Other Characters in Format Must be Typed Exactly

If format includes characters

- other than format specifiers and white space
- user must **type them exactly** with no extra spaces. **Rarely useful.**

Example: 

```
int A; int B;
scanf ("%d<>%d", &A, &B);
```

Type "5<>42" and A==5, B==42.

But type "5 <>42" and A==5, while B is unchanged (no initializer, so B contains bits).

## Conversion Specifiers Similar to printf

Format Specifier	Interpretation
<b>%c</b>	store one <b>ASCII</b> character (as <b>char</b> )
<b>%d</b>	convert decimal integer to <b>int</b>
<b>%f</b>	convert decimal real number to <b>float</b>
<b>%lf</b>	convert decimal real number to <b>double</b>

## Conversion Specifiers Similar to printf

Format Specifier	Interpretation
<b>%u</b>	convert decimal integer to <b>unsigned int</b>
<b>%x</b> or <b>%X</b>	convert hexadecimal integer to <b>unsigned int</b>

## More Pitfalls for `scanf` than for `printf`

`scanf` has the same pitfalls as `printf`

- Be sure to **match format specifiers (and ordering) to variable types**.
- Be sure to **match number of specifiers to number of addresses** given.

And more!

- **Don't forget to write "&" before each variable.** (Behavior is again undefined, but can be quite difficult to find the bug.)

## `printf` Returns the Number of Characters Printed

Function calls are expressions.

Both `printf` and `scanf` return `int` (the calls evaluate to values of type `int`).

**`printf` returns the number of characters printed** to the display.

Writing a `printf` followed by a semicolon

- evaluates the expression (calls `printf`),
- then discards the return value.

**The return value of `printf` is rarely used.**

## `scanf` Returns the Number of Conversions

**`scanf` returns the number of conversions performed successfully**, or -1 for no conversions.

The return value is **important for checking user input**.

For example,

```
if (2 != scanf ("%d%d", &A, &B)) {
    printf ("Bad input!\n");
    A = 42; B = 10; /* defaults */
}
```