

CS 241: Systems Programming

Lecture 34. Course Overview

Fall 2025

Stephen Checkoway

Announcements

Group project Final Report due Dec 19 at 9 a.m.

Group assessment Google form due Dec. 19 at 9 a.m.

Group project Presentation given Dec. 19 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

- ▶ Room: King 237

Today's Class

A look back at what we covered this semester, with clicker questions

Why do we use Rust?

- A. Faster than languages like Python and Java that aren't compiled to machine language
- B. Offers memory safety guarantees that compiled languages like C and C++ don't
- C. Easier to write code in than scripting languages like Python
- D. A and B
- E. A, B and C

Why Rust?



- Systems language: Designed to interface with Operating System and networks and provide low-level access to memory
- Designed for memory-safety
- Has lots of cool packages called “crates”
- Jason Orendorff, a GitHub engineer who wrote a book on Rust:
 - “To me, what’s great about Rust is that it’s both fast AND reliable. It lets me write multi-headed programs that run on 16 cores and keep them readable, maintainable, and crash-free. It also lets me write very low-level algorithms requiring control over memory layout and pull in a crate that makes HTTPS requests super simple. It’s the combination of these features that makes Rust so unique.”

Review: Rust & Memory Safety

Rust ensures that program are memory safe, e.g.,

- It's impossible to confuse a pointer with an integer
- It's impossible to access out-of-bounds data in an array/Vec

Most modern languages (Python, Java, Go, Haskell, Ruby, etc.) are memory-safe

Most systems languages (C and C++) are not!

- Memory safety errors are common and lead to real harm

Ownership

Rust ensures memory safety through a concept of ownership

These are rules that the rust compiler enforces to prevent **undefined behavior**

What is true after this line of code?

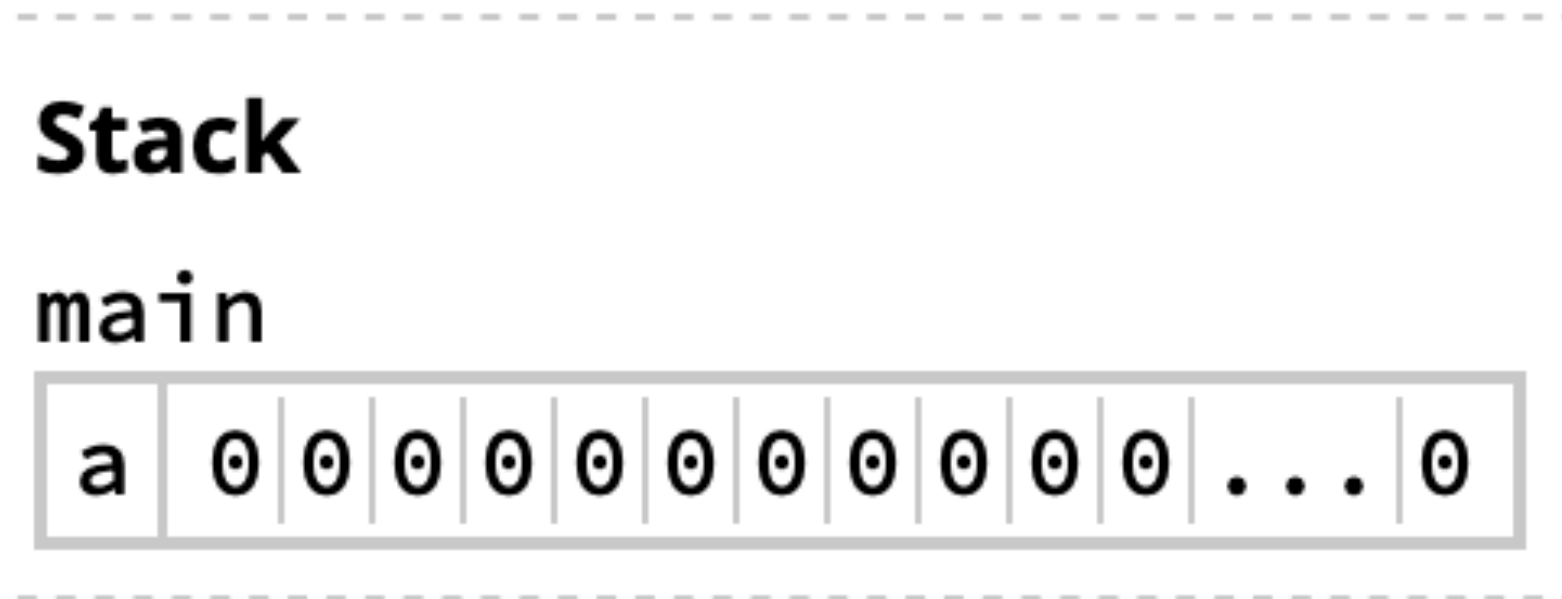
```
let v = vec![1,2,3]
```

- A. The stack contains memory holding the values 1, 2, 3
- B. The stack contains memory holding the values 1, 2, 3, and a pointer to that memory, v
- C. The heap contains memory holding the values 1, 2, 3, and a pointer to that memory, v
- D. The heap contains memory holding the values 1, 2, 3, and the stack contains a pointer to that memory, v

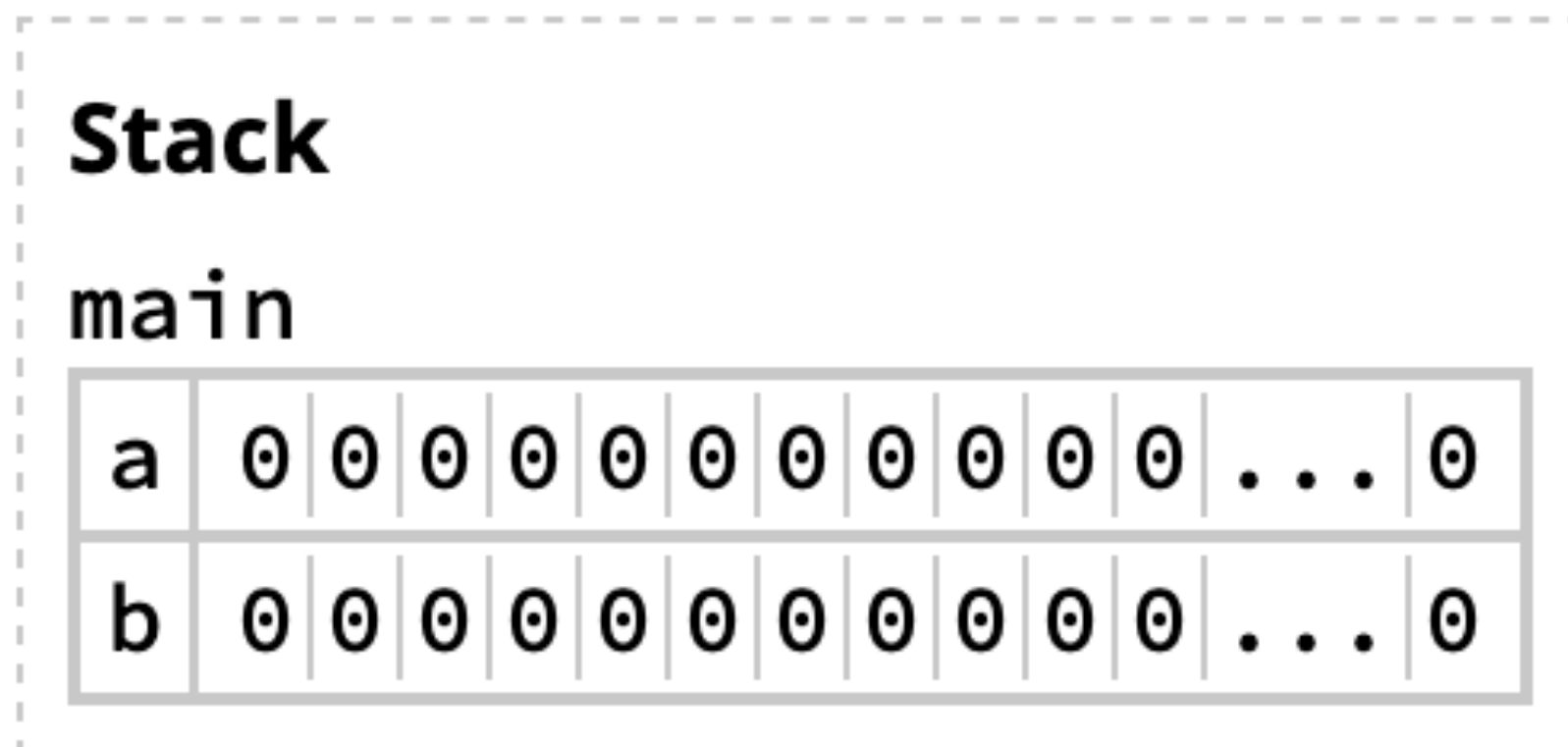
Data on the stack vs. heap

```
let a = [0; 1_000_000]; L1  
let b = a; L2
```

L1



L2

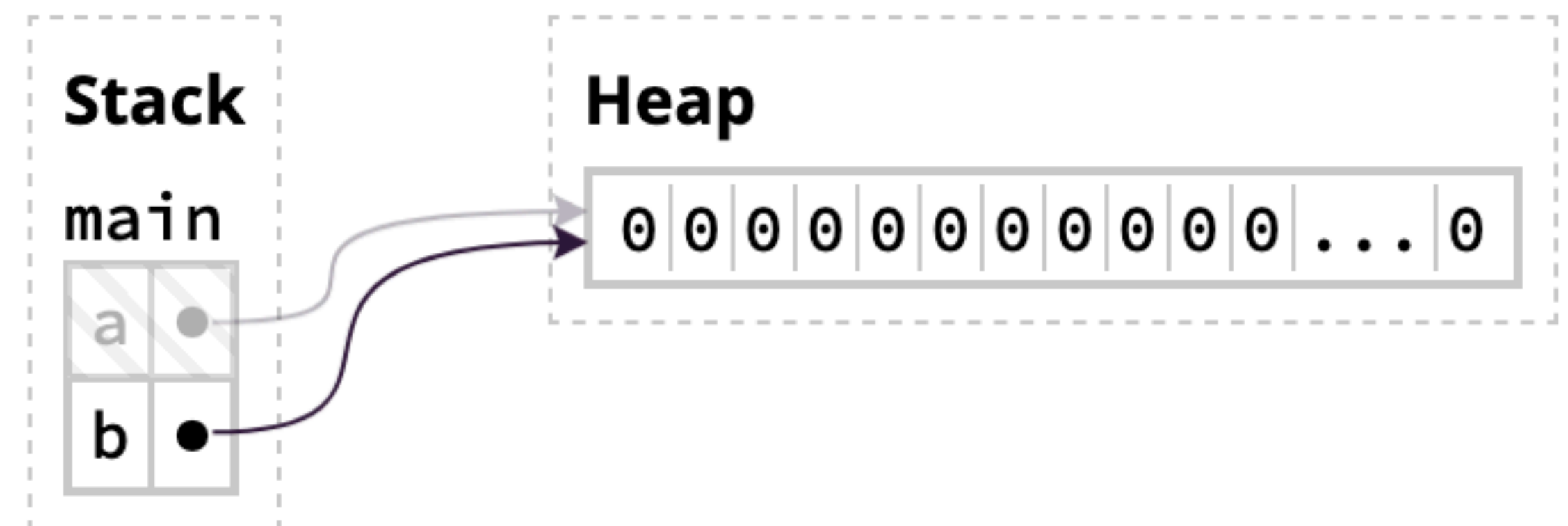


```
let a = Box::new([0; 1_000_000]); L1  
let b = a; L2
```

L1



L2



No use-after-free

A common vulnerability in C and C++ code is

- Allocate some heap memory
- Free the allocated memory
- Use the freed memory; this is **undefined behavior!**

In Rust, that might look something like

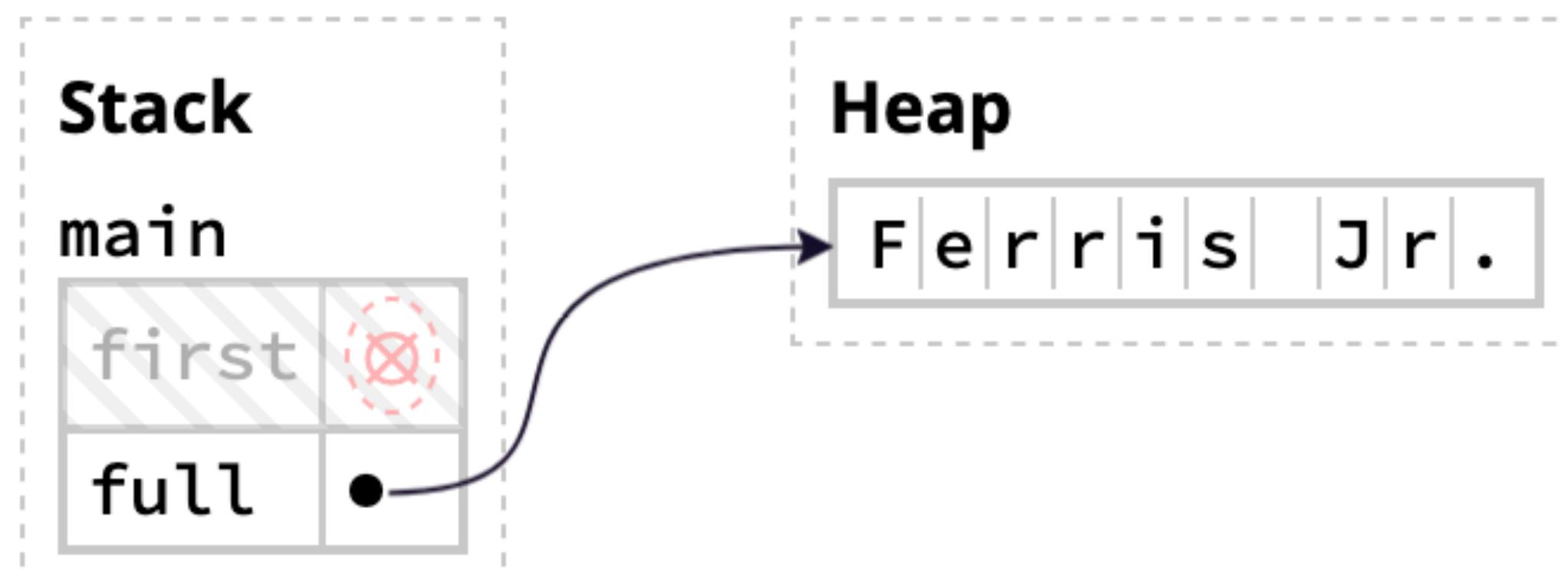
```
let b = Box::new(10);  
drop(b); // Frees the allocated memory  
println!("{b}");
```

Rust gives a compile time error

Cannot use a variable after moving it

```
fn main() {  
    let first = String::from("Ferris");  
    let full = add_suffix(first);  
    println!("{full}, originally {first}"); L1 // first is now used here  
}  
  
fn add_suffix(mut name: String) -> String {  
    name.push_str(" Jr.");  
    name  
}
```

L1 undefined behavior: pointer used
after its pointee is freed



Appending the string “ Jr.” causes
the string to be reallocated

If we could continue to access `first`,
it would point to freed memory!

Undefined behavior!

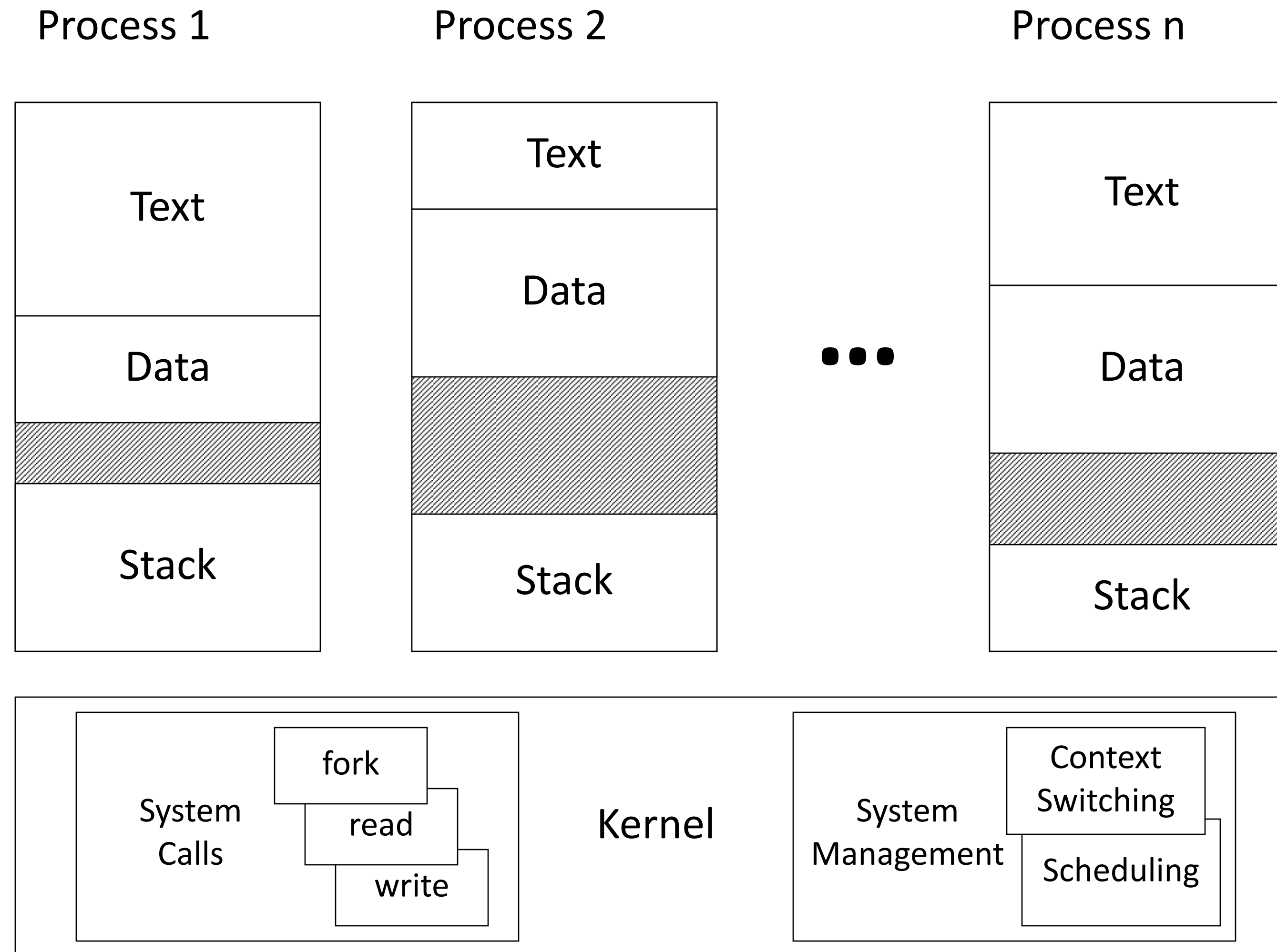
```
fn foo(s: String) { /* . . . */ }

fn main() {
    let clickers = String::from("Clickers!");
    foo(XXX); // <-- Here
    println!("{clickers}");
}
```

What should we replace XXX with to pass the clickers string to foo() ?

- A. clickers
- B. &clickers
- C. clickers.clone()
- D. More than one of the above

Review: Processes and the Kernel



Why do we have the kernel control switching which process is on the CPU, instead of the processes themselves?

- A. It would be too slow
- B. They could refuse to give up the CPU
- C. They don't have enough information about other processes
- D. More than one of the above

Operating system tasks

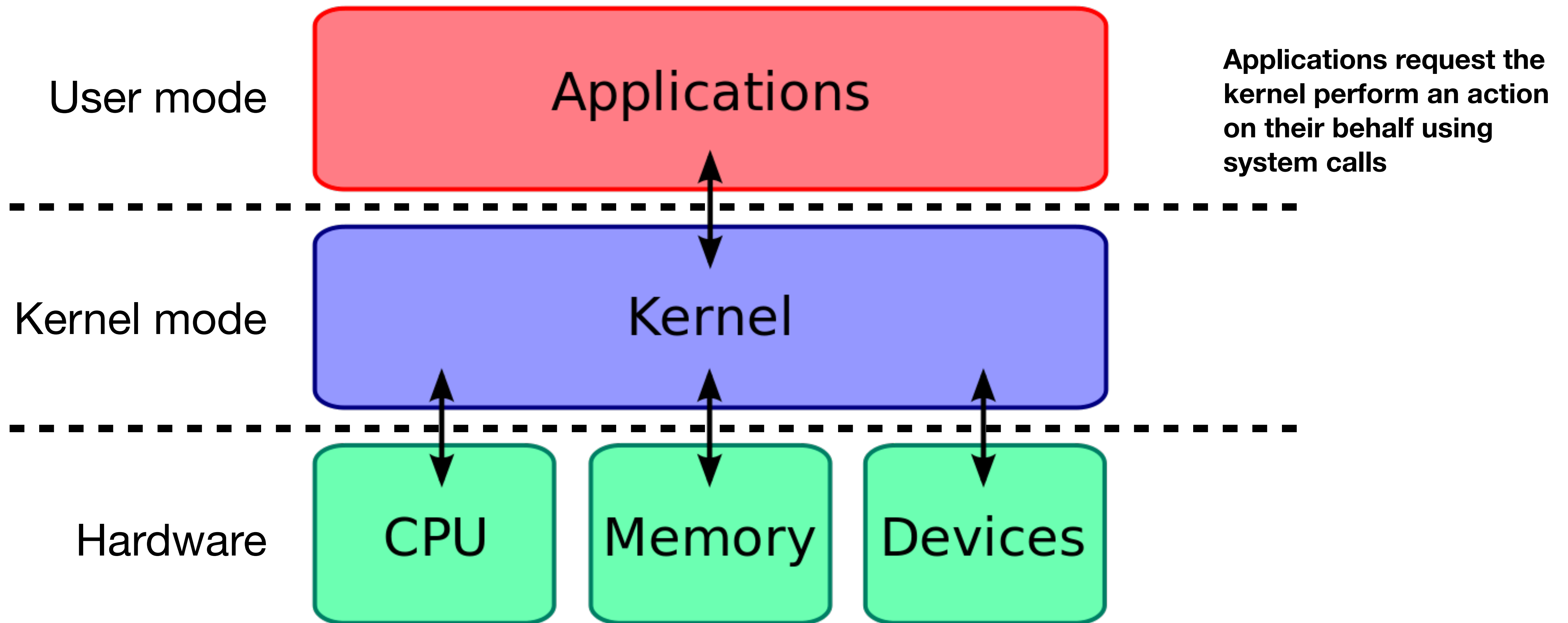
Managing the resources of a computer

- CPU, memory, network, etc.

Coordinate the running of all other programs

OS can be considered as a set of programs

- **kernel** – name given to the core OS “program”



Review: System calls

Programs talk to the OS via system calls

- Set of functions to request access to resources of the machine
- System calls vary by operating system and computer architecture

Types of system calls

- Input/output (may be terminal, network, or file I/O)
- File system manipulation (e.g., creating/deleting files/directories)
- Process control (e.g., process creation/termination)
- Resource allocation (e.g., memory)
- Device management (e.g., talking to USB devices)
- Inter-process communication (e.g., pipes and sockets)
- ...

File Operation System Calls

`Open` – tells the kernel a process would like to interact with an I/O device/file.

`Seek` – changes where in the file you are reading/writing

`Read` - copies bytes from a file into process memory

`Write` – copies bytes from process memory into a file

`Close` – tells the kernel we are done using a file

The read and write system calls return the number of bytes read/written. In what scenario would we return less than the number of bytes we asked to read/write?

A. Reading until the end of the file

B. Writing to the end of the file

C. Reading from a network

D. Writing to a network

E. More than one of the above

```
ssize_t write(int fildes, void const *buf, size_t nbyte);  
ssize_t read(int fildes, void *buf, size_t nbyte);
```

Creating a new process

Two schools of thought

- Windows way: single system call
 - `CreateProcess("calc.exe", /* other params */)`
- Unix way: two (or more) system calls
 - Create a copy of the currently running process: `fork()`
 - Transform the copy into a new process:
`execve("/usr/bin/bc", args, env)`

What will print after running this code if the child's PID is 5?
Include output from all processes

```
int child_pid = fork();  
  
if (child_pid == 0) {  
    printf("Child is %d\n", getpid());  
} else {  
    printf("My child is %d\n", child_pid);  
}
```

A. "Child is 5"

B. "My child is 5"

C. "My child is 0"

D. More than 1 of the above

Fork



```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {
    printf("Child is
%d\n", getpid());
} else {
    printf("My child
is %d\n", child_pid);
}
```

child_pid: 5

Text

Data

Stack



```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {
    printf("Child is
%d\n", getpid());
} else {
    printf("My child
is %d\n", child_pid);
}
```

child_pid: 0

Text

Data

Stack

Fork



```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {
    printf("Child is
%d\n", getpid());
} else {
    printf("My child
is %d\n", child_pid);
}
```

child_pid: 5

Text

Data

Stack



```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {
    printf("Child is
%d\n", getpid());
} else {
    printf("My child
is %d\n", child_pid);
}
```

child_pid: 0

Text

Data

Stack

Fork



```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {
    printf("Child is
%d\n", getpid());
} else {
    printf("My child
is %d\n", child_pid);
}
```

child_pid: 5

Text

Data

Stack



```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {
    printf("Child is
%d\n", getpid());
} else {
    printf("My child
is %d\n", child_pid);
}
```

child_pid: 0

Text

Data

Stack

What order will the two statements print in?

```
int child_pid = fork();  
  
if (child_pid == 0) {  
    printf("Child is %d\n", getpid());  
} else {  
    printf("My child is %d\n", child_pid);  
}
```

A. First parent, then child

B. First child, then parent

C. It depends

Running another program

```
int execve(char const *path, char *const argv[],  
           char *const envp[]);
```

- The PID of the process doesn't change
- The open file descriptors remain open (unless marked close on exec)
- Returns -1 and sets **errno** on error

Exec

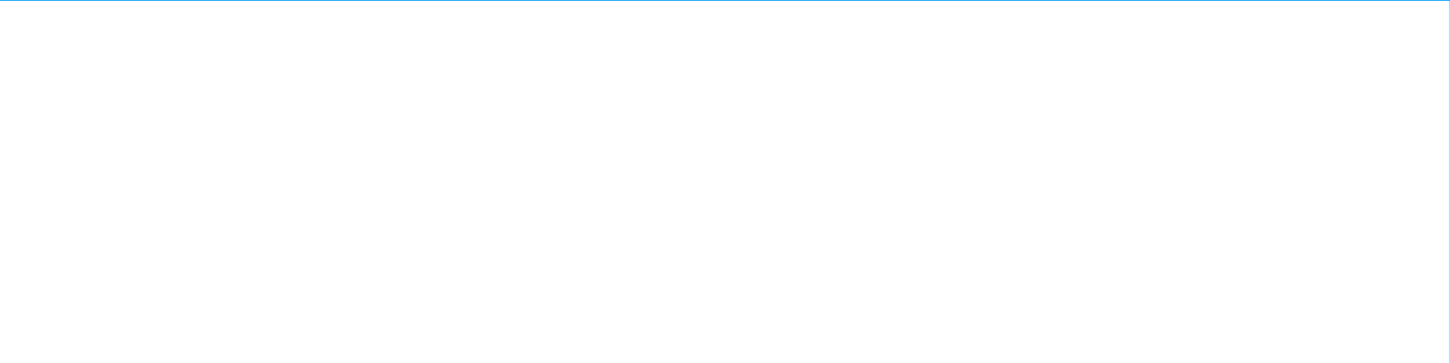
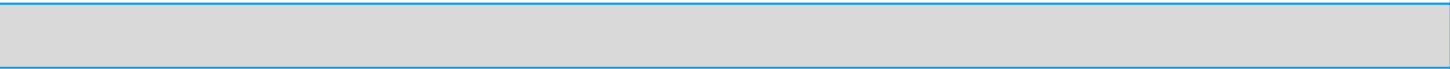


```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {

execv("a.out",NULL);
} else {
    printf("I am the
parent");
}
```

child_pid: 5



Text

Data

Stack

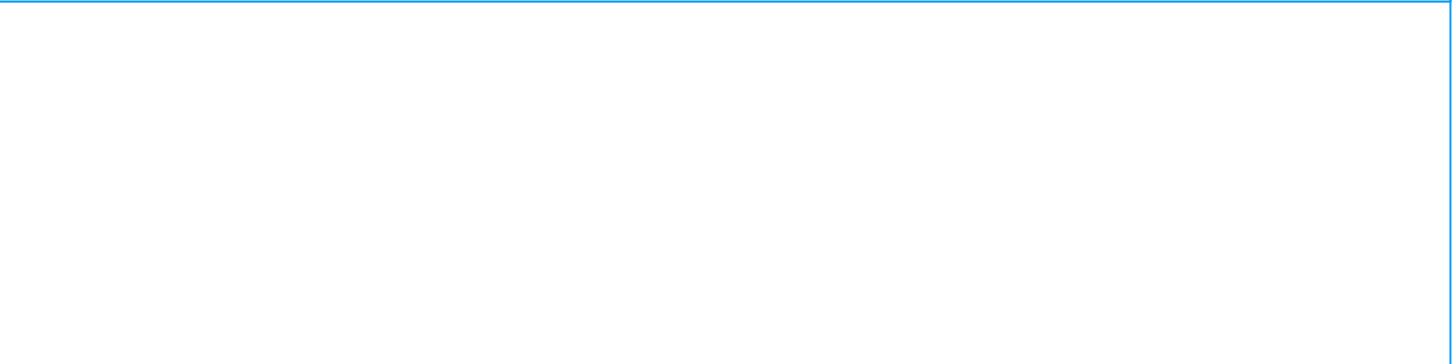
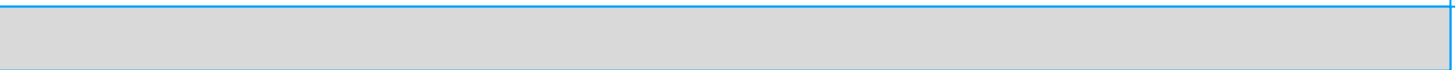


```
int child_pid =
fork();

if (child_pid == 0) {

execv("a.out",NULL);
} else {
    printf("I am the
parent");
}
```

child_pid: 0



Text

Data

Stack

If there are no errors, exec will return

```
int child_pid =  
fork();  
  
if (child_pid == 0) {  
  
execv("a.out", NULL);  
} else {  
    printf("I am the  
parent");  
}
```

A. Zero times

B. Once

C. Twice

Text

child_pid: 0

Data

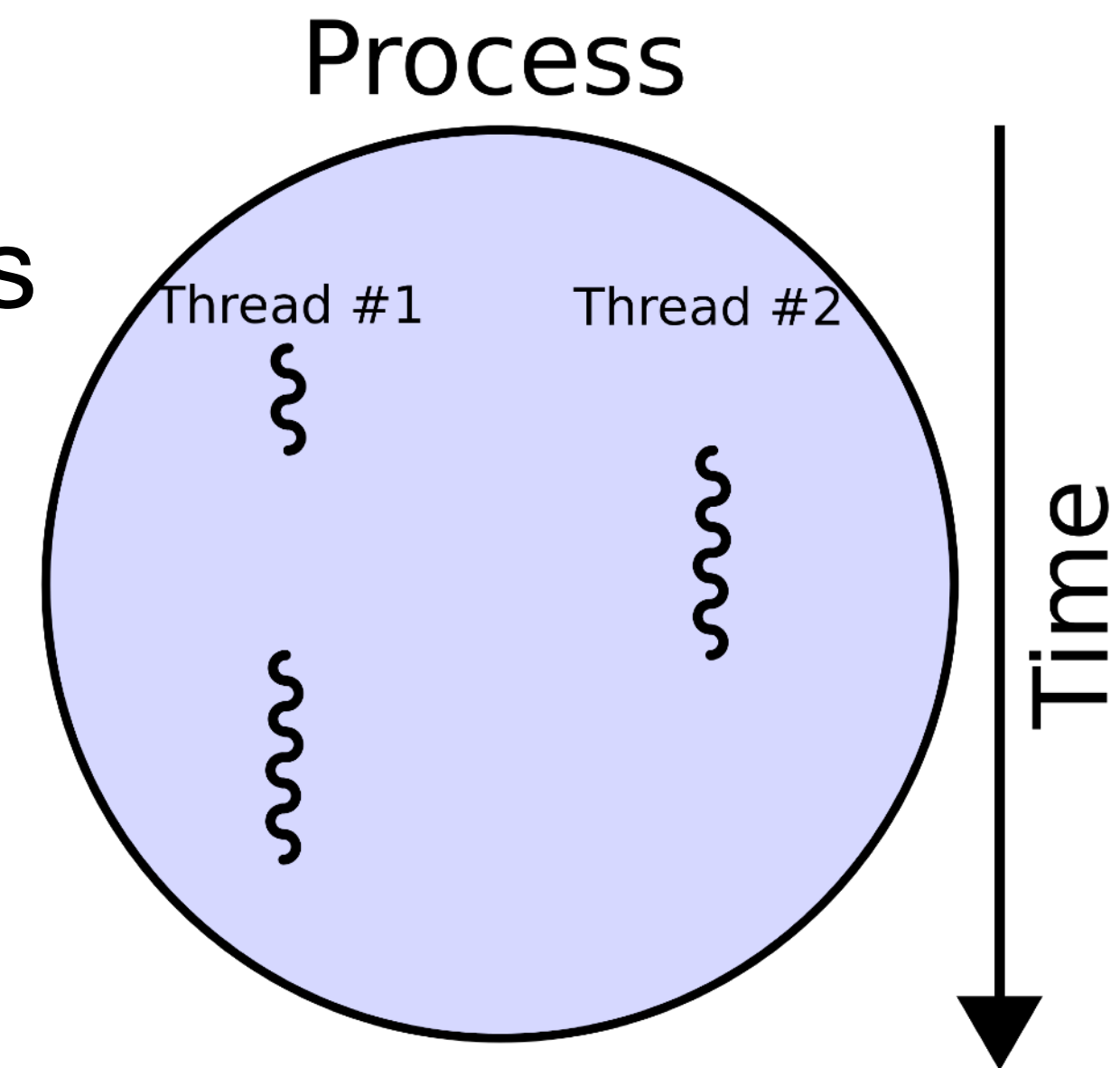
Stack

Review: Threads

A process may be composed of multiple **threads of execution**

Each thread runs concurrently with but independent of other threads in the process

Threads are a bit like cooperating processes inside a process



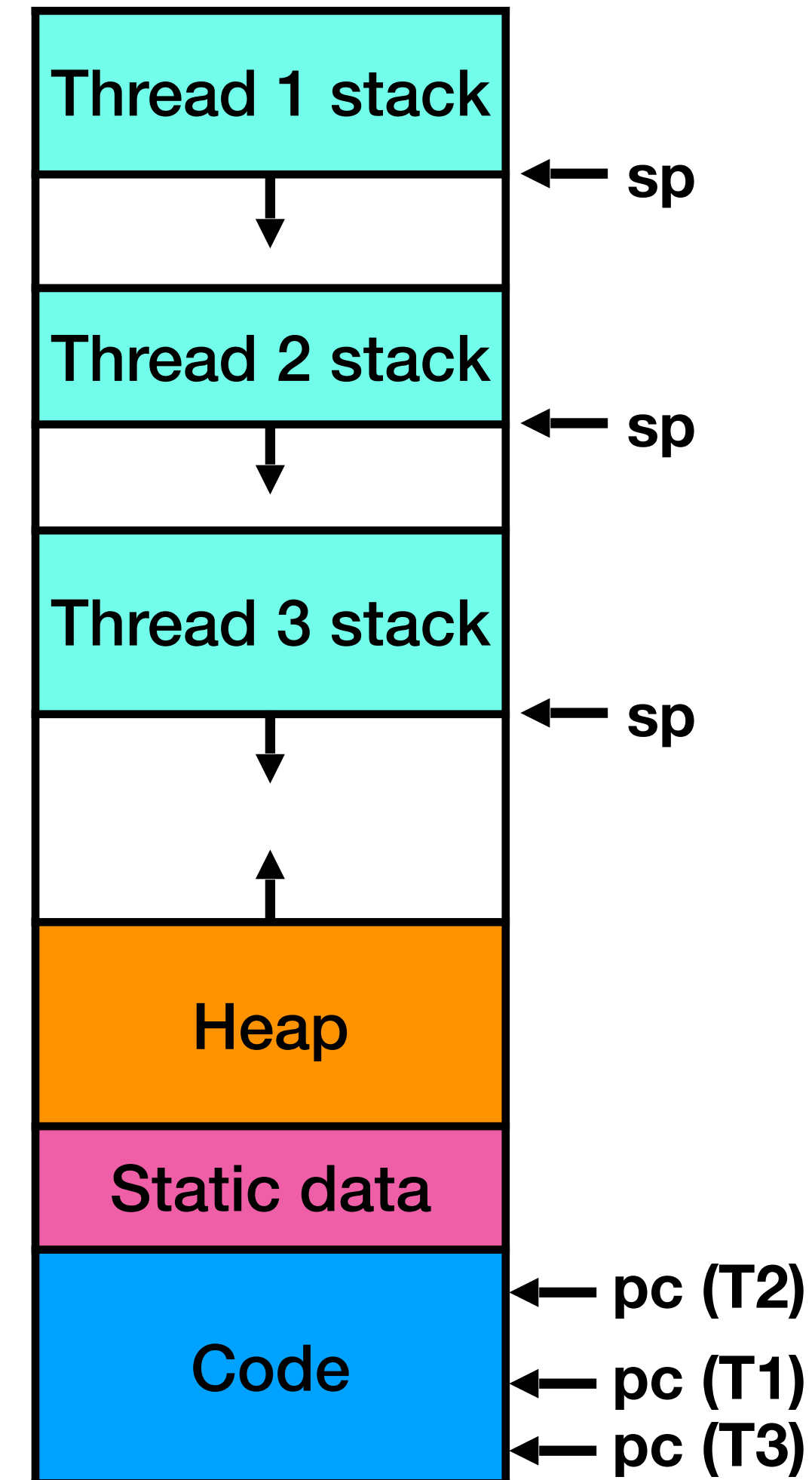
Relationship between threads

Each thread in a process shares all of the process's

- memory (data and code)
- open files
- permissions (e.g., to access the file system)
- user ID, group ID, process ID

Each thread in a process has its own

- function call stack with a stack pointer (sp)
- program counter (pc) indicating the next instruction to execute



Which of these is possible as the first five output lines from this code?

```
for thread_num in 0..10 {  
    let t = thread::spawn(move || {  
        for _ in 0..5 {  
            println!("Hello from thread {thread_num}");  
        }  
    });  
}
```

A:

Hello from thread 5
Hello from thread 6
Hello from thread 3
Hello from thread 4
Hello from thread 4

B:

Hello from thread 0
Hello from thread 0
Hello from thread 0
Hello from thread 0
Hello from thread 0

C:

Hello from thread 0
Hello from thread 1
Hello from thread 2
Hello from thread 3
Hello from thread 4

D. All of the above (and more!)

Review: Networks

Application: supporting network applications

- e.g., HTTP

Transport: data transfer between processes on hosts

- e.g., TCP, UDP

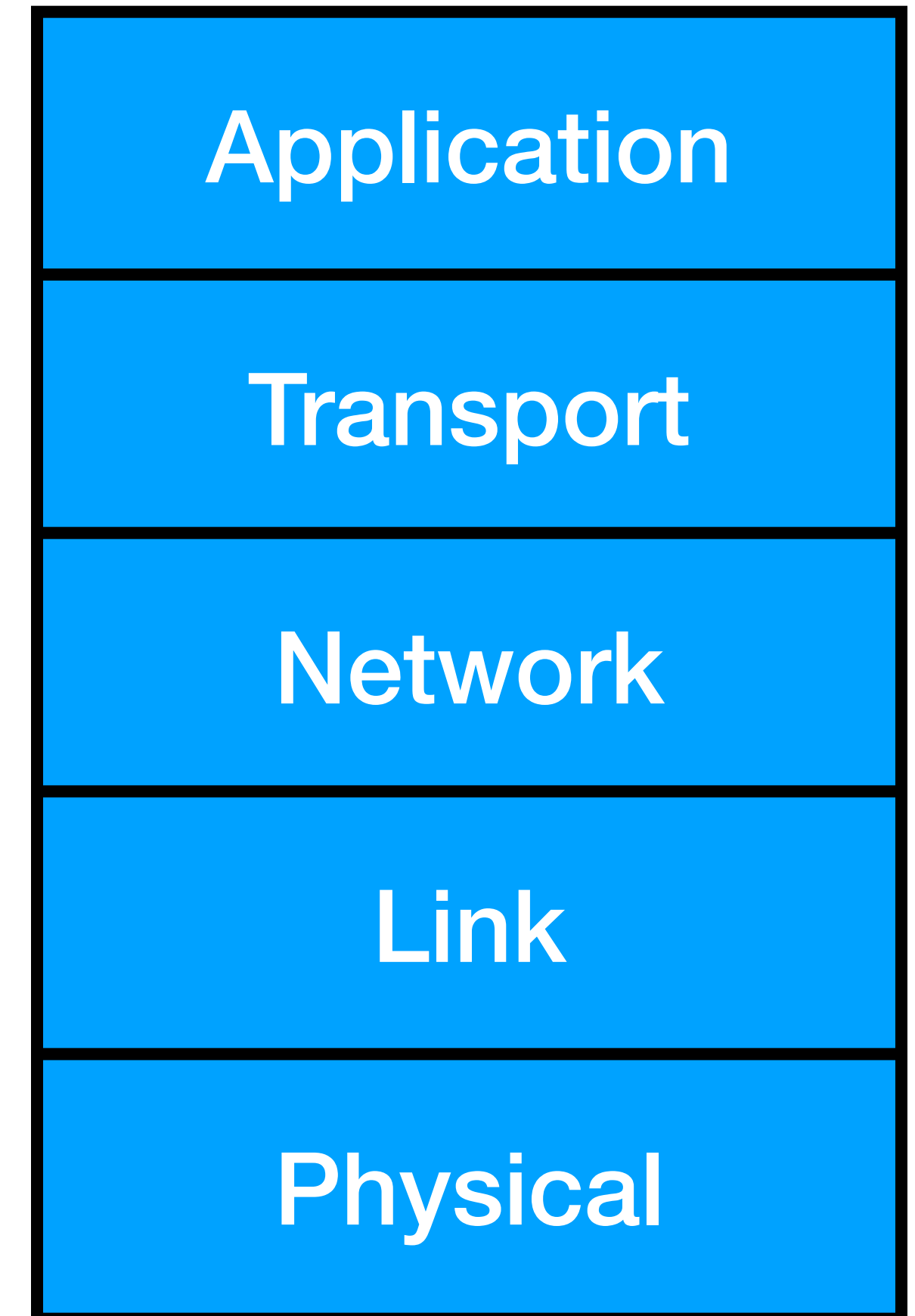
Network: routing packets from source to destination

- e.g., IP

Link: data transfer between neighboring elements

- e.g., Ethernet, WiFi

Physical: transmit data over wires (or wireless signals)



TCP vs UDP

TCP: Transmission Control Protocol

TCP guarantees reliability

- All messages will get sent to the application, in order
- If a message gets lost, TCP will retransmit the message until it's received

TCP makes sure it doesn't overwhelm receiver by sending too much, too quickly

UDP: User Datagram Protocol

UDP does NOT guarantee reliability

- Messages may be lost or arrive out-of-order

Because UDP doesn't have to worry about reliability, it is much faster

**For each of the following applications, choose whether you would use TCP or UDP, and justify why you would choose it.
[Select any letter on your clicker]**

- A. Online gaming
- B. SSH remote access
- C. Email
- D. Video conferencing
- E. Whatsapp

We covered a lot this semester

Thank you for your work, and I look forward to seeing your final presentations!