

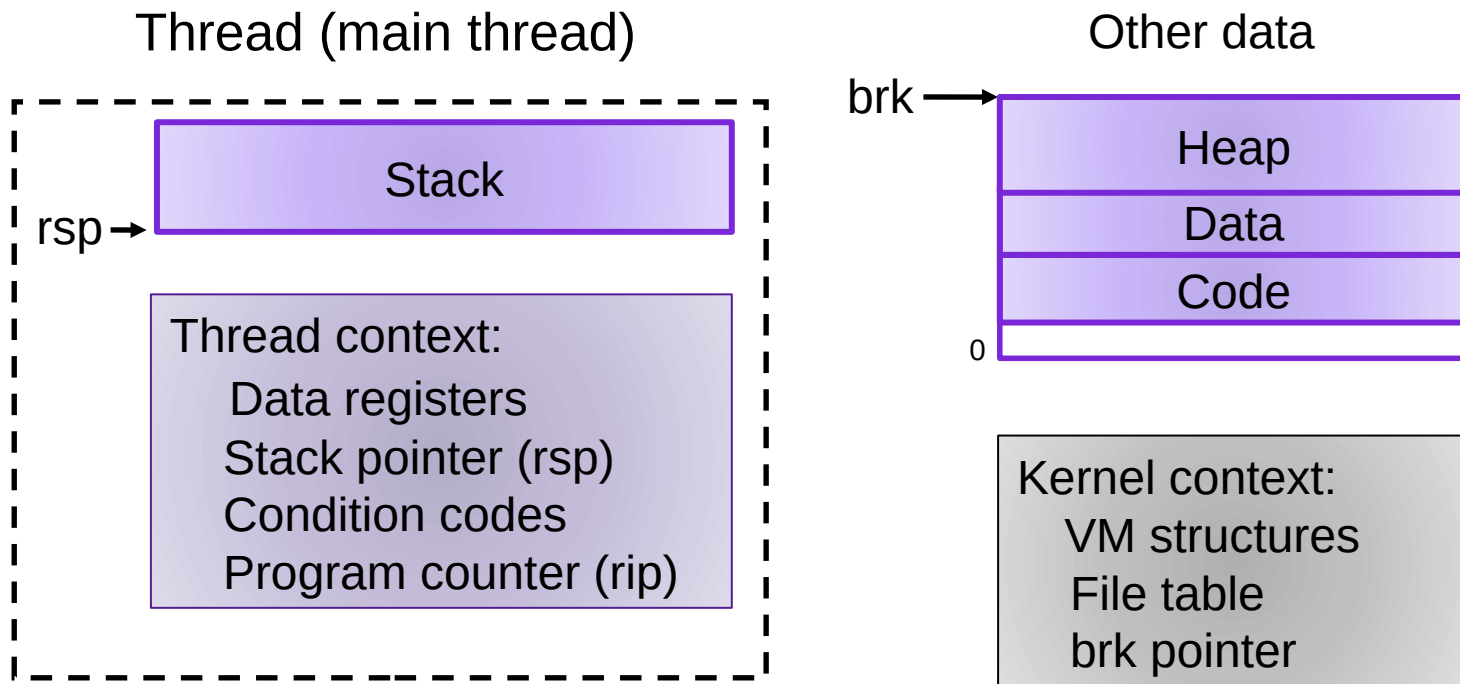
Lecture 20: Synchronization

CS 105

Spring 2025

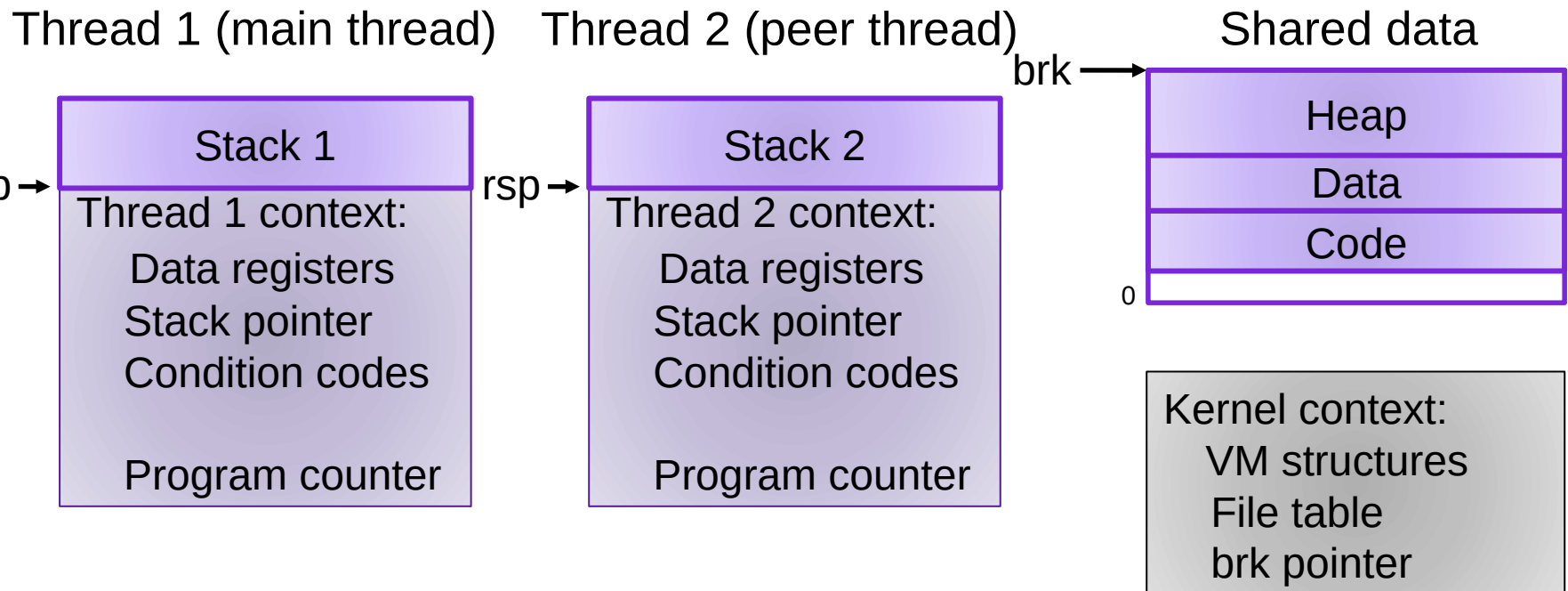
Review: Alternate View of a Process

- Process = thread + other state



Review: Multi-threading

- Multiple threads can be associated with a process
 - Each thread has its own logical control flow
 - Each thread has its own stack for local variables
 - Each thread has its own thread id (TID)
 - Each thread shares the same code, data, and kernel context



Review: Locks

- A **lock** (aka a mutex) is a synchronization primitive that provides mutual exclusion. When one thread holds a lock, no other thread can hold it.
 - a lock can be in one of two states: locked or unlocked
 - a lock is initially unlocked
- function `acquire(&lock)` waits until the lock is unlocked, then atomically sets it to locked
- function `release(&lock)` sets the lock to unlocked

Review: use a lock

- You and your roommate share a refrigerator. Being good roommates, you both try to make sure that the refrigerator is always stocked with milk.



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Algorithm 6:

```
acquire(&lock)
if (milk == 0) {           // no milk
    milk++;                // buy milk
}
release(&lock)
```

Review: use a lock

- You and your roommate share a refrigerator. Being good roommates, you both try to make sure that the refrigerator is always stocked with milk.



Algorithm 6:

```
acquire(&lock)
if (milk == 0) {           // no milk
    milk++;                // buy milk
}
release(&lock)
```

Correct!

Review: Locks

```
/* Global shared variable */
volatile long cnt = 0; /* Counter */

int main(int argc, char** argv){
    long niters;
    pthread_t tid1, tid2;

    niters = atoi(argv[1]);
    pthread_create(&tid1, NULL,
        thread, &niters);
    pthread_create(&tid2, NULL,
        thread, &niters);
    pthread_join(tid1, NULL);
    pthread_join(tid2, NULL);

    /* Check result */
    if (cnt != (2 * niters))
        printf("BOOM! cnt=%ld\n", cnt);
    else
        printf("OK cnt=%ld\n", cnt);
    exit(0);
}
```

```
/* Thread routine */
void* count_func(void* vargp){
    long i, niters;
    niters = *((long*)vargp);
    for (i = 0; i < niters; i++){

        cnt++;

    }

    return NULL;
}
```

Review: Locks

```
/* Global shared variable */
volatile long cnt = 0; /* Counter */
pthread_mutex_t lock; /* Lock */

int main(int argc, char** argv){
    long niters;
    pthread_t tid1, tid2;

    niters = atoi(argv[1]);
    pthread_create(&tid1, NULL,
        thread, &niters);
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```
/* Thread routine */
void* count_func(void* vargp){
    long i, niters;
    niters = *((long*)vargp);
    for (i = 0; i < niters; i++){
        pthread_mutex_lock(&lock);
        cnt++;
        pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock);
    }

    return NULL;
}
```

Problems with Locks

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1. Locks are slow

- threads that fail to acquire a lock on the first attempt must "spin", which wastes CPU cycles
- threads get scheduled and de-scheduled while the lock is still locked

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1. Locks are slow

- threads that fail to acquire a lock on the first attempt must "spin", which wastes CPU cycles
- threads get scheduled and de-scheduled while the lock is still locked

2. Using locks correctly is hard

- hard to ensure all race conditions are eliminated
- easy to introduce synchronization bugs (deadlock, livelock)

Blocking Lock (aka mutex)

- Initial state of lock is 0 ("available")

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- acquire(&lock)
 - while value == 1, block (**suspend thread**)
 - when value == 0, set value to 1

```
acquire(&lock) {  
    while(lock == 1) {  
        ;  
    }  
    lock == 1  
}
```


Blocking Lock (aka mutex)

- Initial state of lock is 0 ("available")
- acquire(&lock)
 - while value == 1, block (**suspend thread**)
 - when value == 0, set value to 1
- release(&lock)
 - set value to 0
 - **resume a thread waiting on lock (if any)**

```
acquire(&lock) {  
    while(lock == 1) {  
        ;  
    }  
    lock == 1  
}
```

```
release(&lock) {  
    lock == 0  
}
```

Example: Bounded Buffers



finite capacity (e.g. 20 loaves)
implemented as a queue

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Threads A: **produce** loaves of bread
and put them in the queue

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Threads A: **produce** loaves of bread
and put them in the queue



Threads B: **consume** loaves by taking
them off the queue

Example: Bounded Buffers



finite capacity (e.g. 20 loaves)
implemented as a queue

1. How do you implement a bounded buffer ($0 \leq \text{count} \leq n$)?
2. How do you synchronize concurrent access to a bounded buffer?



Threads A: **produce** loaves of bread
and put them in the queue



Threads B: **consume** loaves by taking
them off the queue

Example: Bounded Buffers

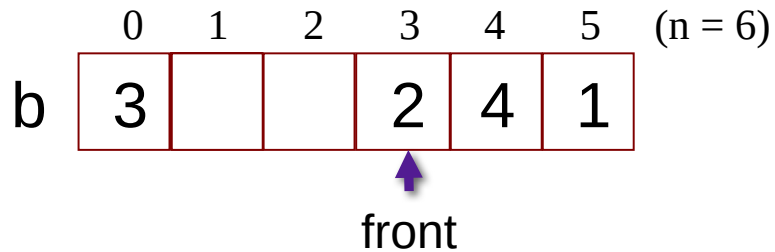
	0	1	2	3	4	5	(n = 6)
b	3			2	4	1	

Example: Bounded Buffers

	0	1	2	3	4	5	(n = 6)
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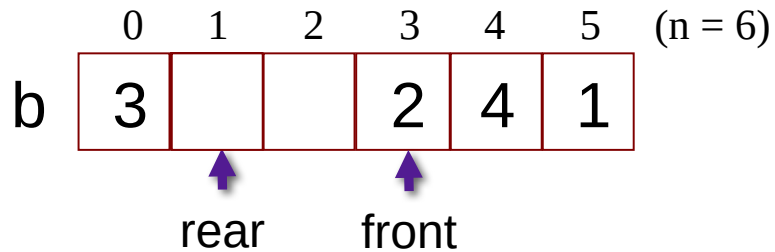
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typedef struct {  
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    int n;            // length of array (max # slots)  
    int count;         // number of elements in array  
    int front;         // index of first element,  $0 \leq \text{front} < n$   
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} bbuf_t
```

Example: Bounded Buffers



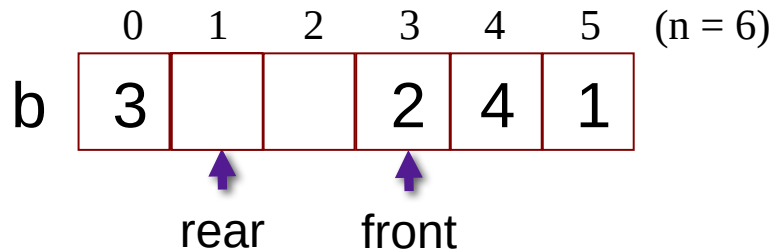
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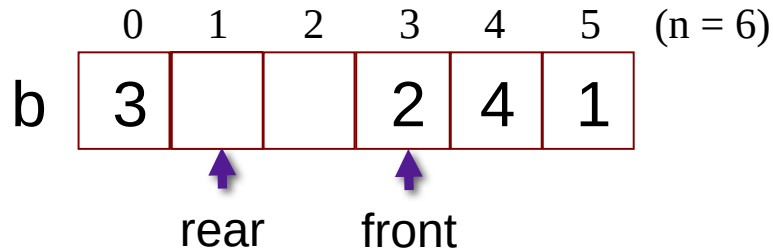
Example: Bounded Buffers



Values wrap around!!

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typedef struct {  
    int* b;           // ptr to buffer containing the queue  
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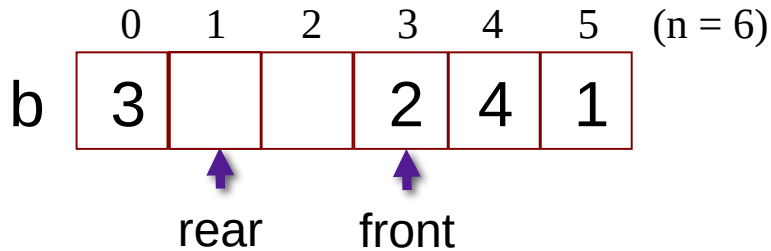
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```
void init(bbuf_t* ptr, int n){  
    ptr->b = malloc(n*sizeof(int));  
    ptr->n = n;  
    ptr->count = 0;  
    ptr->front = 0;  
    ptr->rear = 0;  
}
```



Example: Bounded Buffers



Values wrap around!!

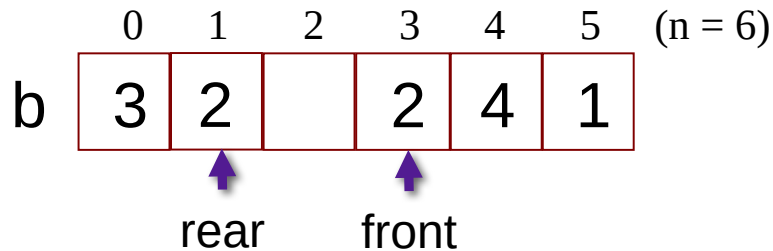
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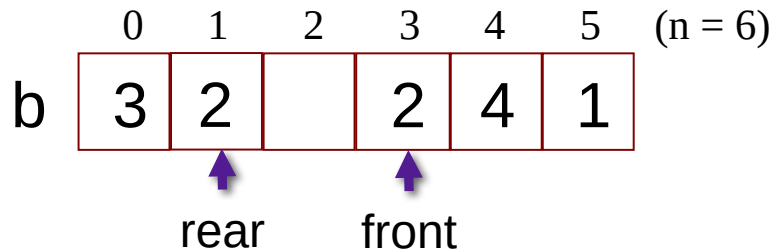
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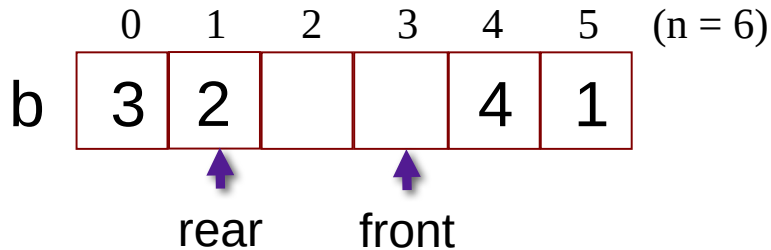
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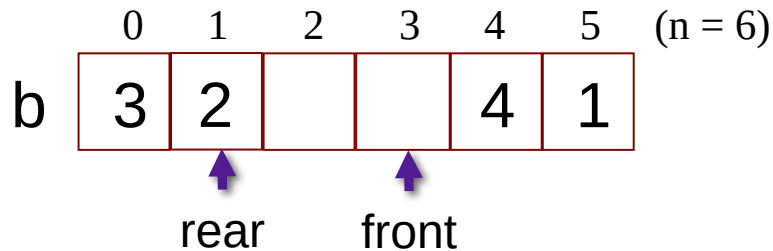
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Example: Bounded Buffers



Values wrap around!!

Exercise: What can go wrong?

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Example: Bounded Buffers

0 1 2 3 4 5 (n = 6)



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void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val)
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```
    ptr->b[ptr->rear] = val;  
    ptr->rear = ((ptr->rear) + 1) % (ptr->n);  
    ptr->count++;
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    int val = ptr->b[ptr->front];  
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Example: Bounded Buffers

0 1 2 3 4 5 (n = 6)



```
typedef struct {
    int* b;      rear
    int n;
    int count;
    int front;
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    pthread_mutex_t lock;
} bbuf_t
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```
void init(bbuf_t* ptr, int n){
    ptr->b = malloc(n*sizeof(int));
    ptr->n = n;
    ptr->count = 0;
    ptr->front = 0;
    ptr->rear = 0;
    init(&(ptr->lock));
}
```



```
void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val)
```



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    ptr->b[ptr->rear]= val;
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int get(bbuf_t* ptr){
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    int val= ptr->b[ptr->front];
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}
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```
void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val){
    acquire(&(ptr->lock))
```



```
    ptr->b[ptr->rear] = val;
    ptr->rear = ((ptr->rear)+1)%(ptr->n);
    ptr->count++;
    release(&(ptr->lock))
}
```

```
int get(bbuf_t* ptr){
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```



```
    int val = ptr->b[ptr->front];
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b	3	2			4	1
---	---	---	--	--	---	---

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rear points to index 2
 front points to index 4

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```
void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val){
    acquire(&(ptr->lock))
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    }
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    release(&(ptr->lock))
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```



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void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val){
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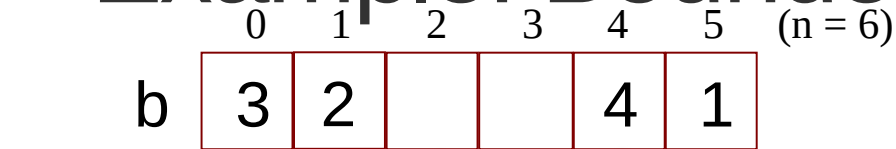
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    }  
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Condition Variables

- A condition variable `cv` is a stateless synchronization primitive that is used in combination with locks (mutexes)
 - condition variables allow threads to efficiently wait for a change to the shared state protected by the lock
 - a condition variable is comprised of a waitlist

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- A condition variable `cv` is a stateless synchronization primitive that is used in combination with locks (mutexes)
 - condition variables allow threads to efficiently wait for a change to the shared state protected by the lock
 - a condition variable is comprised of a waitlist
- Interface:
 - **`wait(CV* cv, Lock* lock)`**: Atomically releases the lock, suspends execution of the calling thread, and places that thread on `cv`'s waitlist; after the thread is awoken, it re-acquires the lock before `wait` returns
 - **`signal(CV* cv)`**: takes one thread off of `cv`'s waitlist and marks it as eligible to run. (No-op if waitlist is empty.)

Example: Bounded Buffers

0 1 2 3 4 5 (n = 6)



```
typedef struct {
    int* b;      rear
    int n;
    int count;
    int front;
    int rear;
}
```

```
} bbuf_t
void init(bbuf_t* ptr, int n){
    ptr->b = malloc(n*sizeof(int));
    ptr->n = n;
    ptr->count = 0;
    ptr->front = 0;
    ptr->rear = 0;
```



```
void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val)
```



```
    ptr->b[ptr->rear]= val;
    ptr->rear= ((ptr->rear)+1)%(ptr->n);
    ptr->count++;
```

```
}
```

```
int get(bbuf_t* ptr){
```



```
    int val= ptr->b[ptr->front];
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```
    return val;
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void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val)



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void put(bbuf_t* ptr, int val){
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 - Declare a condition variable that corresponds to when it is safe to proceed with the function.
 - Add a wait for that condition to ensure the critical line is only executed under the right conditions.
 - Add a signal when the condition becomes true.
4. Add loops around your waits. Even though a condition was true when signal was called, it might not still be true when a thread resumes execution.

Exercise: Synchronization Barrier

- With data parallel programming, a computation proceeds in parallel, with each thread operating on a different section of the data. Once all threads have completed, they can safely use each others results.

```
void* thread(void* args)
{
    static int done_count = 0;
    parallel_computation(args)
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    while(done_count < NUM_THREADS) {
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Lock lock;
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Lock lock;
CVar ready;
void* thread(void* args)
{
    static int done_count = 0;
    parallel_computation(args);

    acquire(&lock);
    done_count++;
    if (done_count == NUM_THREADS) {
        signal(&ready);
    }
    release(&lock);

    acquire(&lock);
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        wait(&ready);
    }
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Condition Variables

- A condition variable `cv` is a stateless synchronization primitive that is used in combination with locks (mutexes)
 - condition variables allow threads to efficiently wait for a change to the shared state protected by the lock
 - a condition variable is comprised of a waitlist
- Interface:
 - **`wait(CV * cv, Lock * lock)`**: Atomically releases the lock, suspends execution of the calling thread, and places that thread on `cv`'s waitlist; after the thread is awoken, it re-acquires the lock before `wait` returns
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 - **`signal(CV * cv)`**: takes one thread off of `cv`'s waitlist and marks it as eligible to run. (No-op if waitlist is empty.)
 - **`broadcast(CV * cv)`**: takes all threads off `cv`'s waitlist and marks them as eligible to run. (No-op if waitlist is empty.)

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Exercise: Readers/Writers

- Consider a collection of concurrent threads that have access to a shared object
- Some threads are readers, some threads are writers
 - a unlimited number of readers can access the object at same time
 - a writer must have exclusive access to the object

```
int num_readers = 0;  
int num_writers = 0;
```

```
int reader(void* shared){
```

```
    num_readers++;
```

```
    int x = read(shared);
```

```
    num_readers--;
```

```
    return x
```

```
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){
```

```
    num_writers=1;
```

```
    write(shared, val);
```

```
    num_writers=0;
```

```
}
```

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```
    return x
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void writer(void* shared, int val){
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int num_writers = 0;  
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```

```
int reader(void* shared){  
    acquire(&lock);  
  
    num_readers++;  
    release(&lock);  
    int x = read(shared);  
    acquire(&lock);  
    num_readers--;  
  
    release(&lock);  
    return x  
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```

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    acquire(&lock);  
  
    num_writers=1;  
    write(shared, val);  
    num_writers=0;  
  
    release(&lock);  
}
```


Exercise: Readers/Writers

- Consider a collection of concurrent threads that have access to a shared object
- Some threads are readers, some threads are writers
 - a unlimited number of readers can access the object at same time
 - a writer must have exclusive access to the object

```
int num_readers = 0;  
int num_writers = 0;  
Lock lock;  
CV readable;
```

```
int reader(void* shared){  
    acquire(&lock);  
  
    num_readers++;  
    release(&lock);  
    int x = read(shared);  
    acquire(&lock);  
    num_readers--;  
  
    release(&lock);  
    return x  
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){  
    acquire(&lock);  
  
    num_writers=1;  
    write(shared, val);  
    num_writers=0;  
  
    release(&lock);  
}
```

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```
int num_readers = 0;  
int num_writers = 0;  
Lock lock;  
CV readable;
```

```
int reader(void* shared){  
    acquire(&lock);  
    while(num_writers > 0)  
        wait(readable, &lock);  
    num_readers++;  
    release(&lock);  
    int x = read(shared);  
    acquire(&lock);  
    num_readers--;  
  
    release(&lock);  
    return x  
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){  
    acquire(&lock);  
  
    num_writers=1;  
    write(shared, val);  
    num_writers=0;  
  
    release(&lock);  
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```

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    acquire(&lock);  
    while(num_writers > 0)  
        wait(readable, &lock);  
    num_readers++;  
    release(&lock);  
    int x = read(shared);  
    acquire(&lock);  
    num_readers--;  
  
    release(&lock);  
    return x  
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){  
    acquire(&lock);  
  
    num_writers=1;  
    write(shared, val);  
  
    num_writers=0;  
    broadcast(readable);  
    release(&lock);  
}
```

Exercise: Readers/Writers

- Consider a collection of concurrent threads that have access to a shared object
- Some threads are readers, some threads are writers
 - a unlimited number of readers can access the object at same time
 - a writer must have exclusive access to the object

```
int num_readers = 0;  
int num_writers = 0;  
Lock lock;  
CV readable;  
CV writeable;
```

```
int reader(void* shared){  
    acquire(&lock);  
    while(num_writers > 0)  
        wait(readable, &lock);  
    num_readers++;  
    release(&lock);  
    int x = read(shared);  
    acquire(&lock);  
    num_readers--;  
  
    release(&lock);  
    return x  
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){  
    acquire(&lock);  
  
    num_writers=1;  
    write(shared, val);  
  
    num_writers=0;  
    broadcast(readable);  
    release(&lock);  
}
```

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Lock lock;
CV readable;
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```

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int reader(void* shared){
    acquire(&lock);
    while(num_writers > 0)
        wait(readable, &lock);
    num_readers++;
    release(&lock);
    int x = read(shared);
    acquire(&lock);
    num_readers--;

    release(&lock);
    return x
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){

    acquire(&lock);
    while(num_readers > 0)
        wait(writeable, &lock);

    num_writers=1;

    write(shared, val);

    num_writers=0;
    broadcast(writeable);

    release(&lock);
}
```

Exercise: Readers/Writers

- Consider a collection of concurrent threads that have access to a shared object
- Some threads are readers, some threads are writers
 - a unlimited number of readers can access the object at same time
 - a writer must have exclusive access to the object

```
int num_readers = 0;
int num_writers = 0;
Lock lock;
CV readable;
CV writeable;
```

```
int reader(void* shared){
    acquire(&lock);
    while(num_writers > 0)
        wait(readable, &lock);
    num_readers++;
    release(&lock);
    int x = read(shared);
    acquire(&lock);
    num_readers--;
    if(num_readers == 0)
        signal(writeable);
    release(&lock);
    return x
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){

    acquire(&lock);
    while(num_readers > 0)
        wait(writeable, &lock);

    num_writers=1;

    write(shared, val);

    num_writers=0;
    broadcast(readable);

    release(&lock);
}
```

Exercise: Readers/Writers

- Consider a collection of concurrent threads that have access to a shared object
- Some threads are readers, some threads are writers
 - a unlimited number of readers can access the object at same time
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```
int num_readers = 0;
int num_writers = 0;
Lock lock;
CV readable;
CV writeable;
```

```
int reader(void* shared){
    acquire(&lock);
    while(num_writers > 0)
        wait(readable, &lock);
    num_readers++;
    release(&lock);
    int x = read(shared);
    acquire(&lock);
    num_readers--;
    if(num_readers == 0)
        signal(writeable);
    release(&lock);
    return x
}
```

```
void writer(void* shared, int val){

    acquire(&lock);
    while(num_readers > 0)
        wait(writeable, &lock);

    num_writers=1;

    write(shared, val);

    num_writers=0;
    broadcast(readable);
    signal(writeable);
    release(&lock);
}
```

Programming with CVs

C

- Initialization:

```
pthread_mutex_t lock =  
    PTHREAD_MUTEX_INITIALIZER;  
pthread_cond_t cv =  
    PTHREAD_COND_INITIALIZER;
```

- Lock acquire/release:

```
pthread_mutex_lock(&lock);  
pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock);
```

- CV operations:

```
pthread_cond_wait(&cv, &lock);  
pthread_cond_signal(&cv);  
pthread_cond_broadcast(&cv);
```

Python

- Initialization:

```
lock = Lock()  
cv = Condition(lock)
```

- Lock acquire/release:

```
lock.acquire()  
lock.release()
```

- V

```
cv.wait()  
cv.notify()  
cv.notify_all()
```