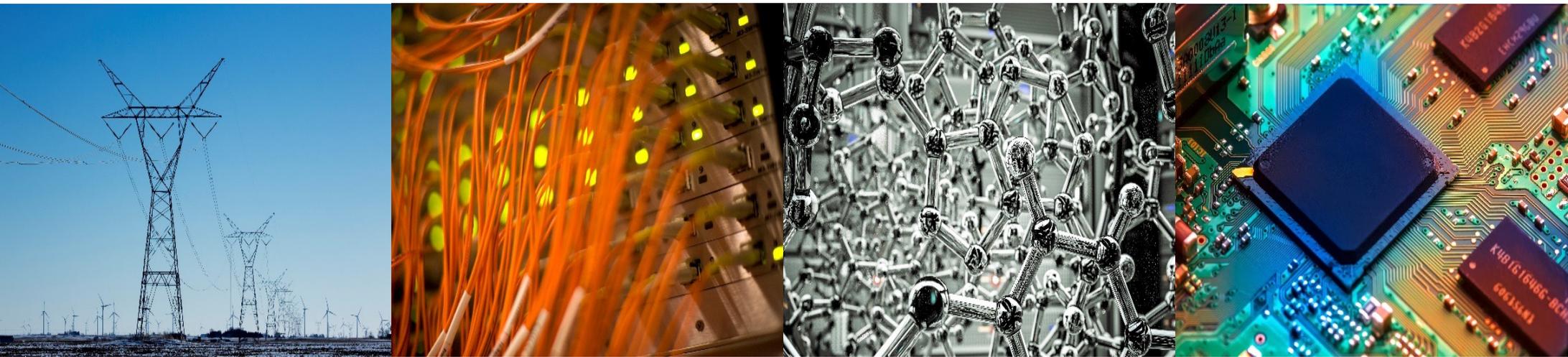


ECE 220 Computer Systems & Programming

Lecture 9 – Pointers and Arrays

February 17, 2026



- **HKN MT1 review session: Sunday, 2/22, 12:30pm to 3pm at ECEB 1002**

I ILLINOIS

Electrical & Computer Engineering

GRAINGER COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Pointers and Arrays

Pointer

- Address of a variable in memory
- Allows us to indirectly access variables (in other words, we can talk about its **address** rather than its **value**)

Array

- A list of values arranged *sequentially* in memory
- Example: a list of telephone numbers
- Indices **start from 0**: **a[4]** refers to the 5th element of the array **a**

Pointers in C

Declaring Pointers

```
int *ptr;  
char *cptr;  
void *vptr;
```

Using address and dereference operators

& (address operator): **&variable** - returns the address of variable

***** (dereference operator): ***ptr** - returns the value pointed to by ptr

Example:

```
int variable = 4;  
int *ptr;  
ptr = &variable;  
*ptr = *ptr + 1;
```

➤ What will be the value of **variable** and **ptr** at the end? **3**

More on Pointers

NULL pointer (a pointer that points to nothing)

```
int *ptr;  
ptr = NULL;
```

Syntax for using pointers

1. Declaring a pointer

```
type *ptr1;  
type* ptr2;
```

2. Creating a pointer from a variable

```
type var;  
type* var_ptr = &var;
```

3. Dereferencing a pointer

```
*var_ptr  
**var_pptr
```

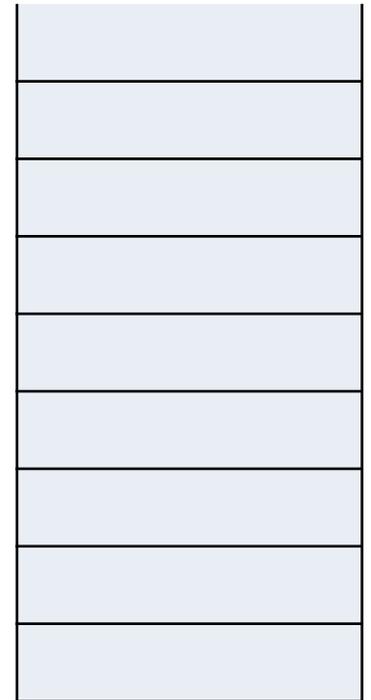


Arrays

- Allocate a group of memory locations: character string, table of numbers
- Declaring and using arrays

Example:

```
int grid[5] = {10,11,12,13,14};  
grid[4] = grid[1] + 1;  
int i;  
for(i=0;i<2;i++){  
    grid[i+1] = grid[i] + 2;  
}
```



Passing Array as Argument

Arrays are **passed by reference** in C

- the address of the array (i.e., address of the first element) is written to the function's activation record
- otherwise, would have to copy each element

Example:

```
int main() {
    int array[10] = {2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20};
    int result;
    result = average(array, 10);
    return 0;
}
```

```
int average(int array[10], int size);
/* int average(int array[], int size); */
/* int average(int *array, int size); */
```

Pointer Array Duality

```
char word[4];  
char *cptr;  
cptr = word;
```

	Using pointer <i>cptr</i>	Using pointer notation on <i>word</i>	Using array notation on <i>word</i>
Address of the first element in array <i>word</i>	cptr	word	&word[0]
Address of the <i>n</i> th element in array <i>word</i>	(cptr+n)	(word+n)	&word[n]
Value of the first element in array <i>word</i>	*cptr	*word	word[0]
Value of the <i>n</i> th element in array <i>word</i>	*(cptr+n)	*(word+n)	word[n]

Exercise: implement a function to reverse an array

`/* array_reversal(): reverses an integer array, such that the first element will become the last element, the second element will become the second to last element and so on. This function takes two arguments: a pointer to an integer array and its size. */`

```
void array_reversal(int array[], int n) {
```

```
}
```

8