



# Better Code

Sean Parent | Principal Scientist



# Better Code

- Regular Types
  - Goal: No Incomplete Types
- Algorithms
  - Goal: No Raw Loops
- Data Structures
  - Goal: No Incidental Data Structures
- Runtime Polymorphism
  - Goal: No Inheritance
- Concurrency
  - Goal: No Raw Synchronization Primitives

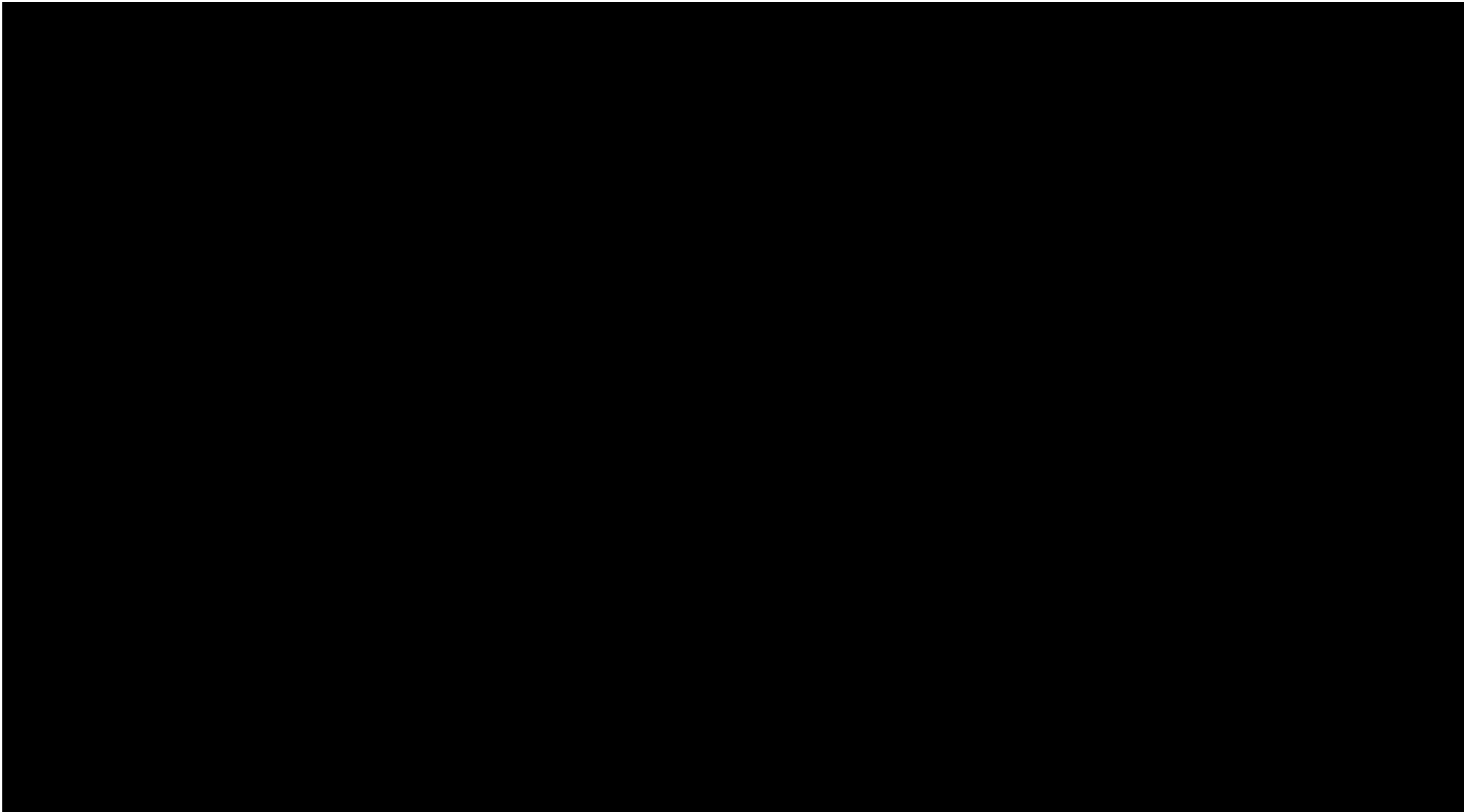
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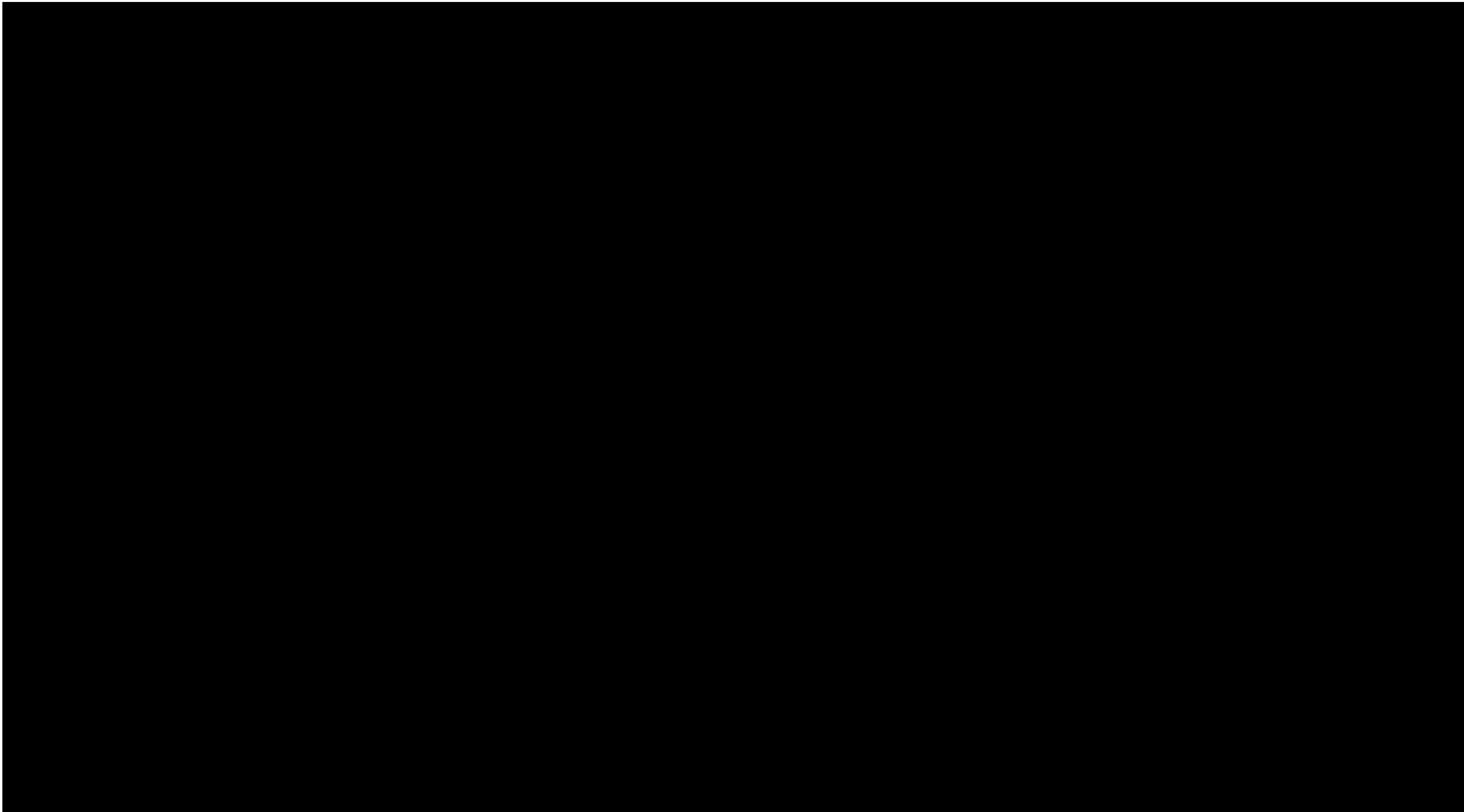


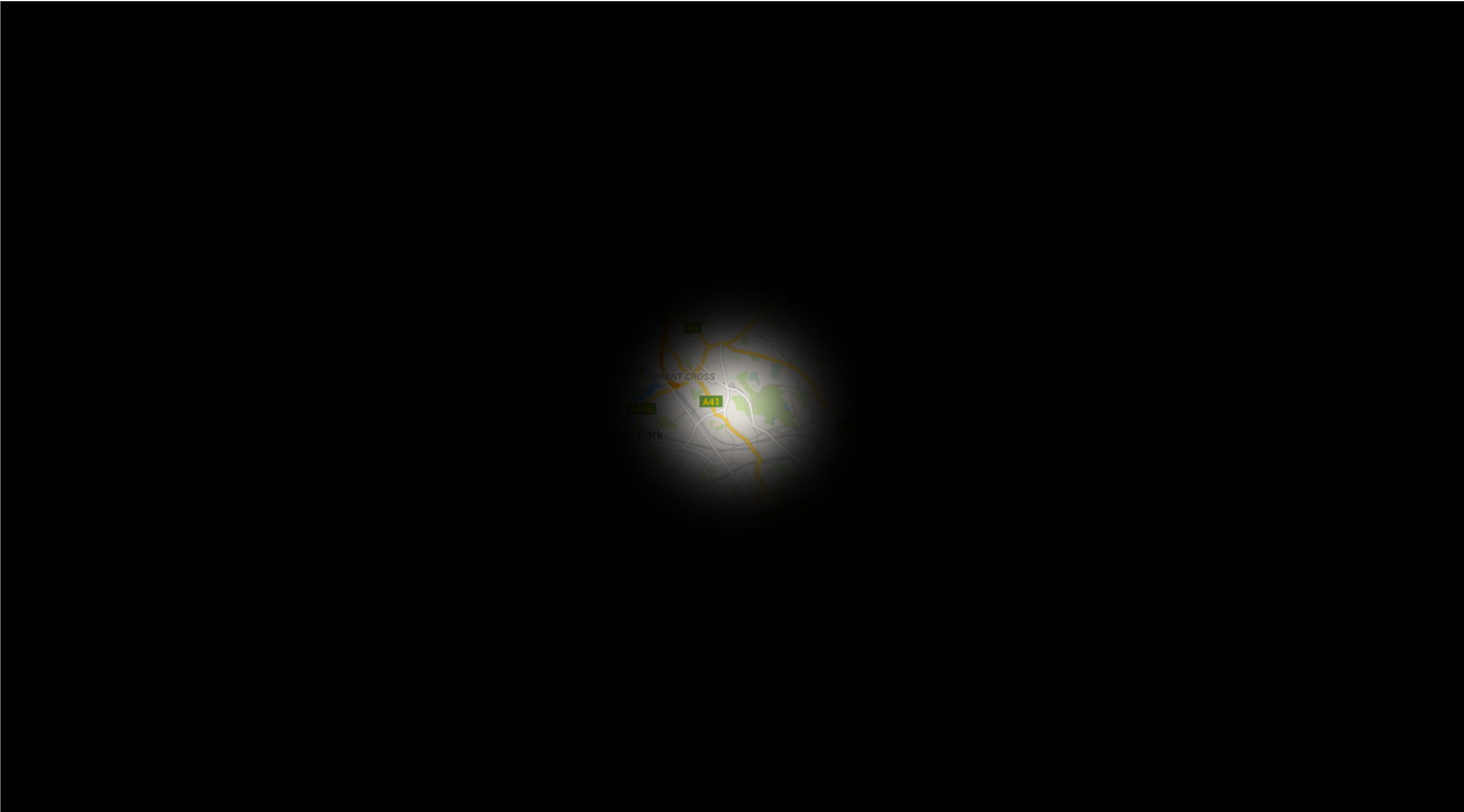
# The Knowledge

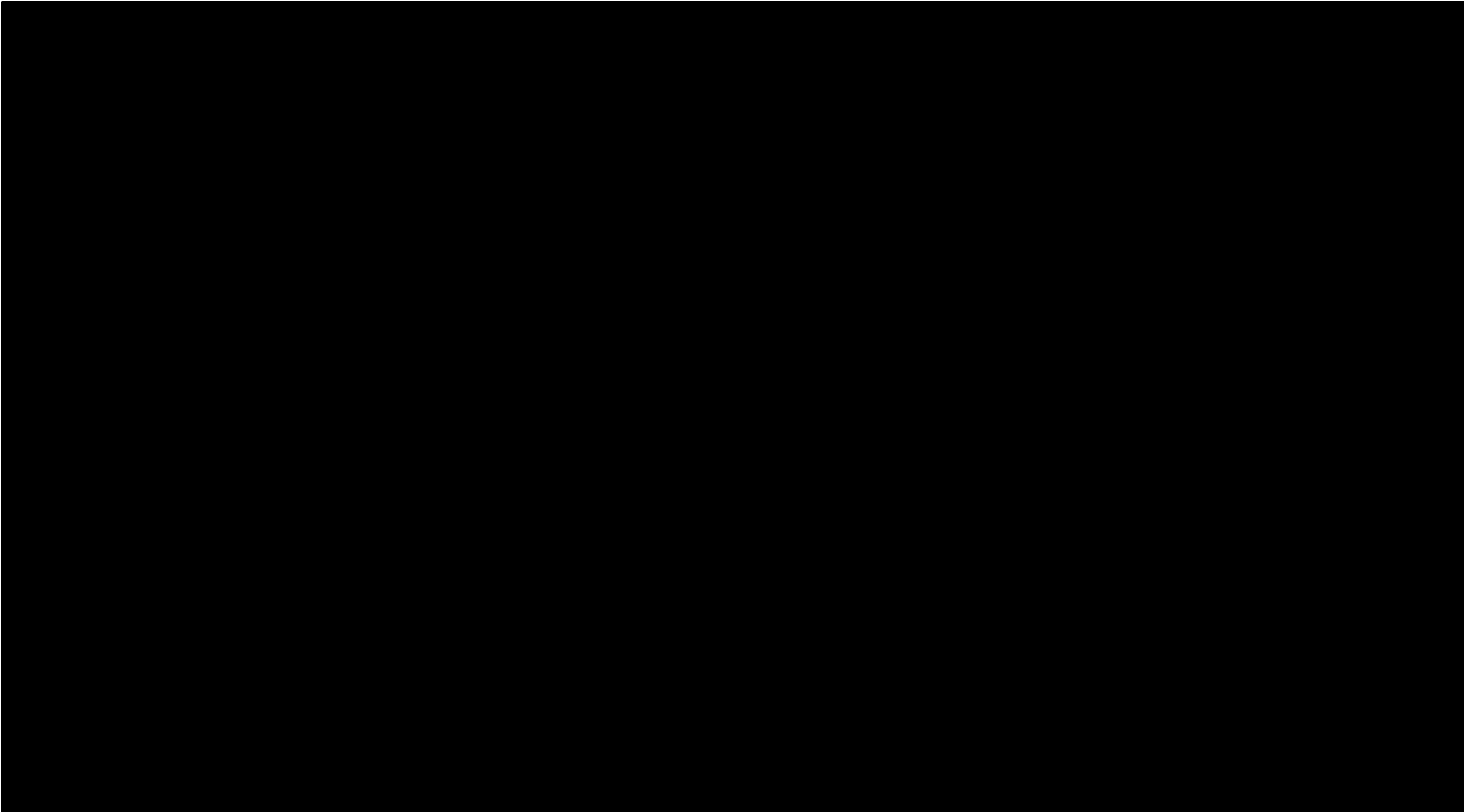




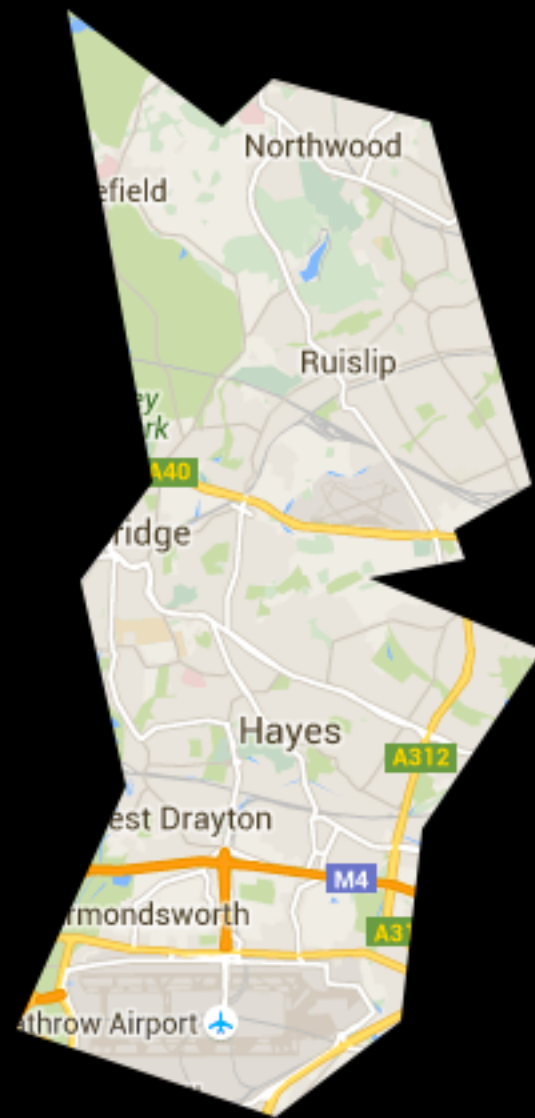




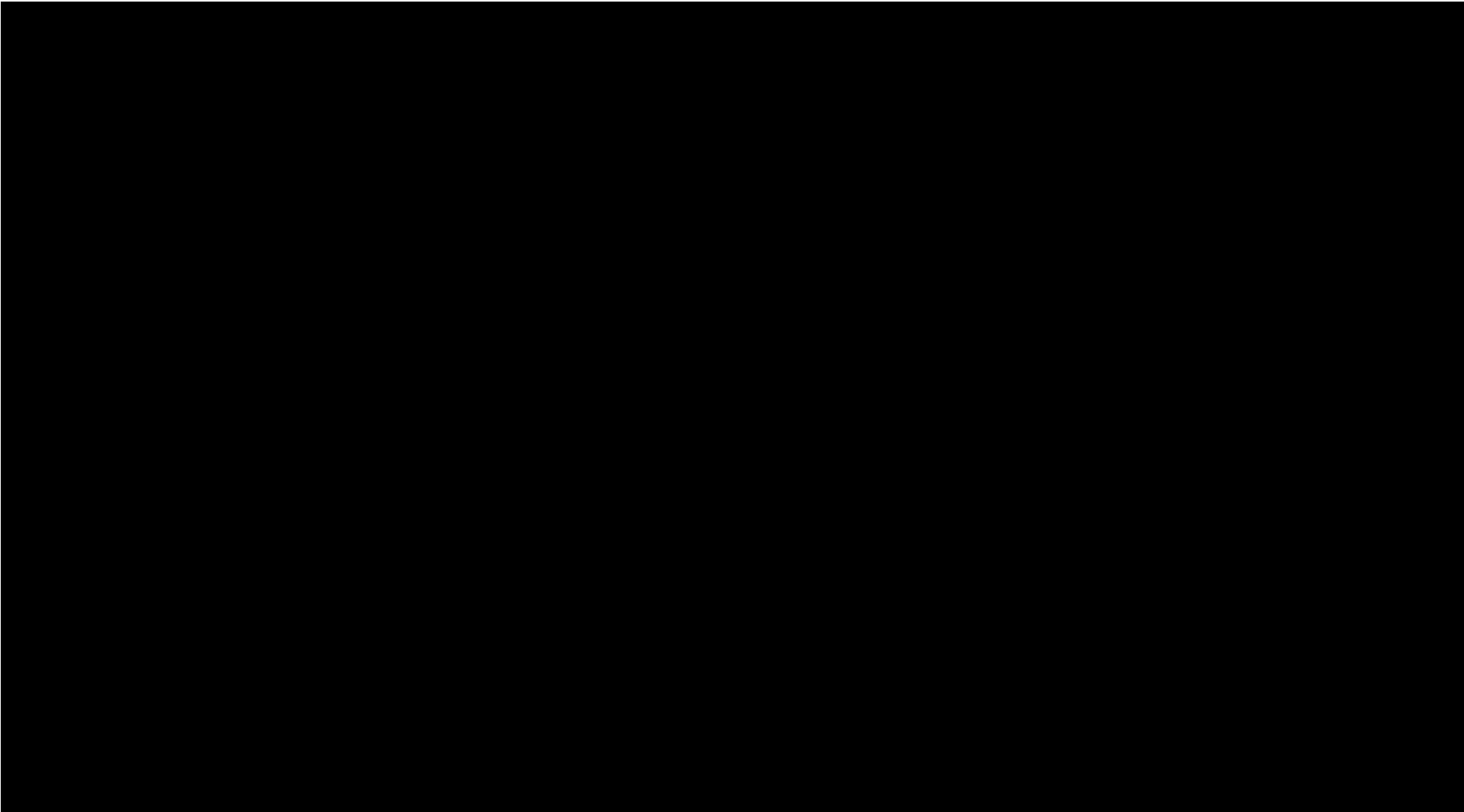




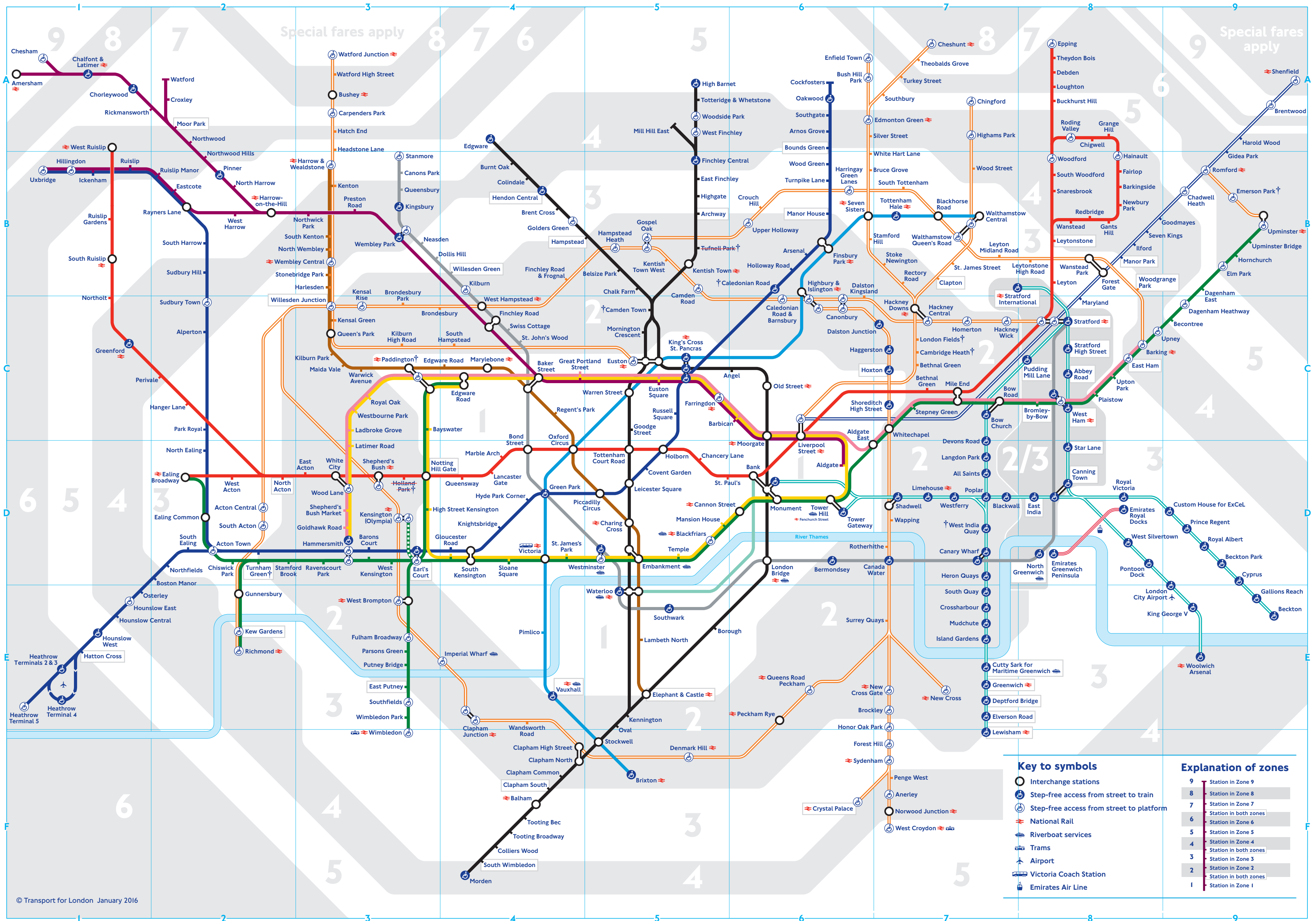




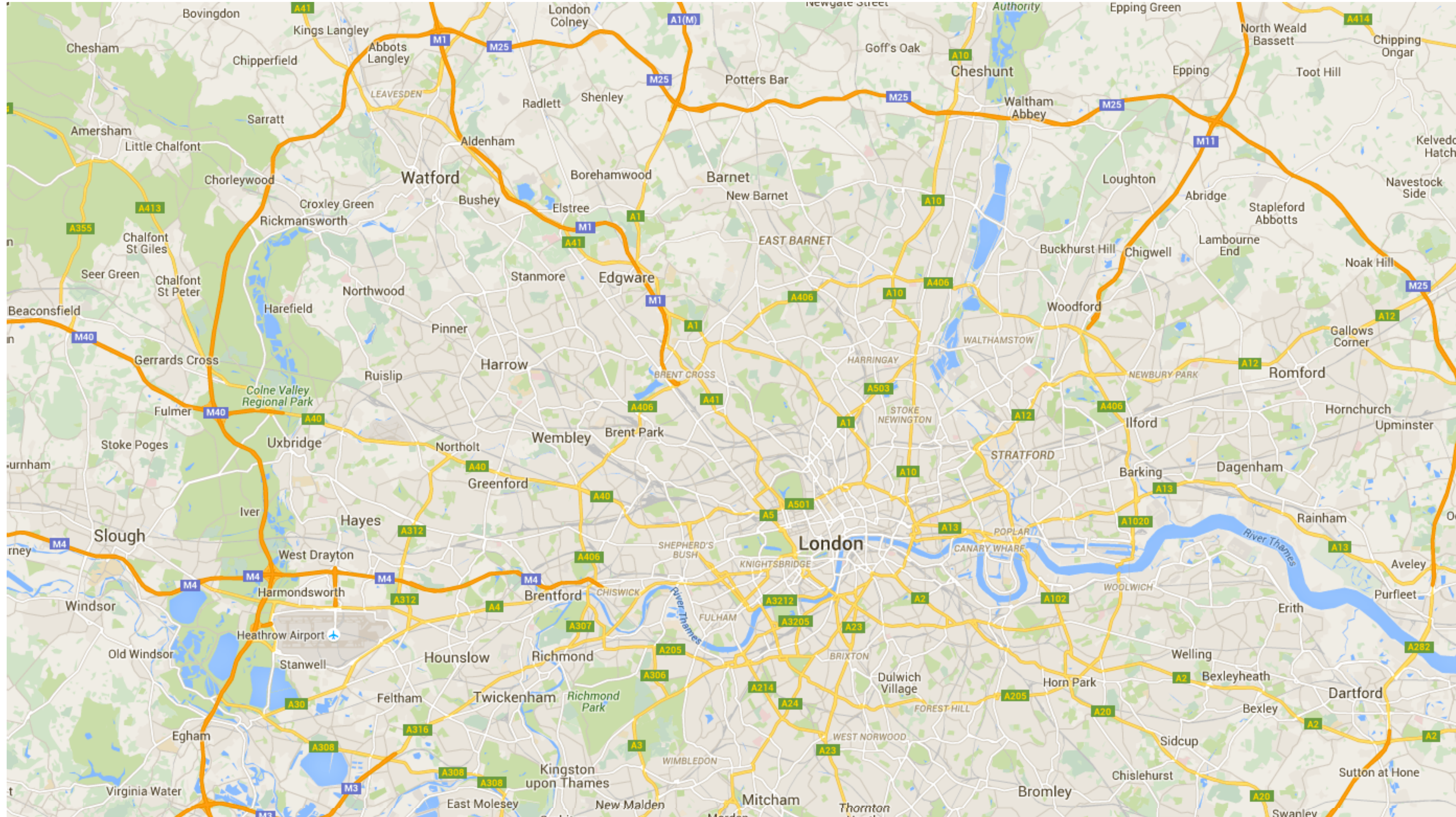




















“There are rules!”

– The Big Lebowski



# Lower Bound

```
template <class ForwardIterator, class T, class Compare>
ForwardIterator lower_bound(ForwardIterator first, ForwardIterator last,
    const T& value, Compare comp)
{
    auto n = distance(first, last);

    while (n != 0) {
        auto h = n / 2;
        auto m = next(first, h);

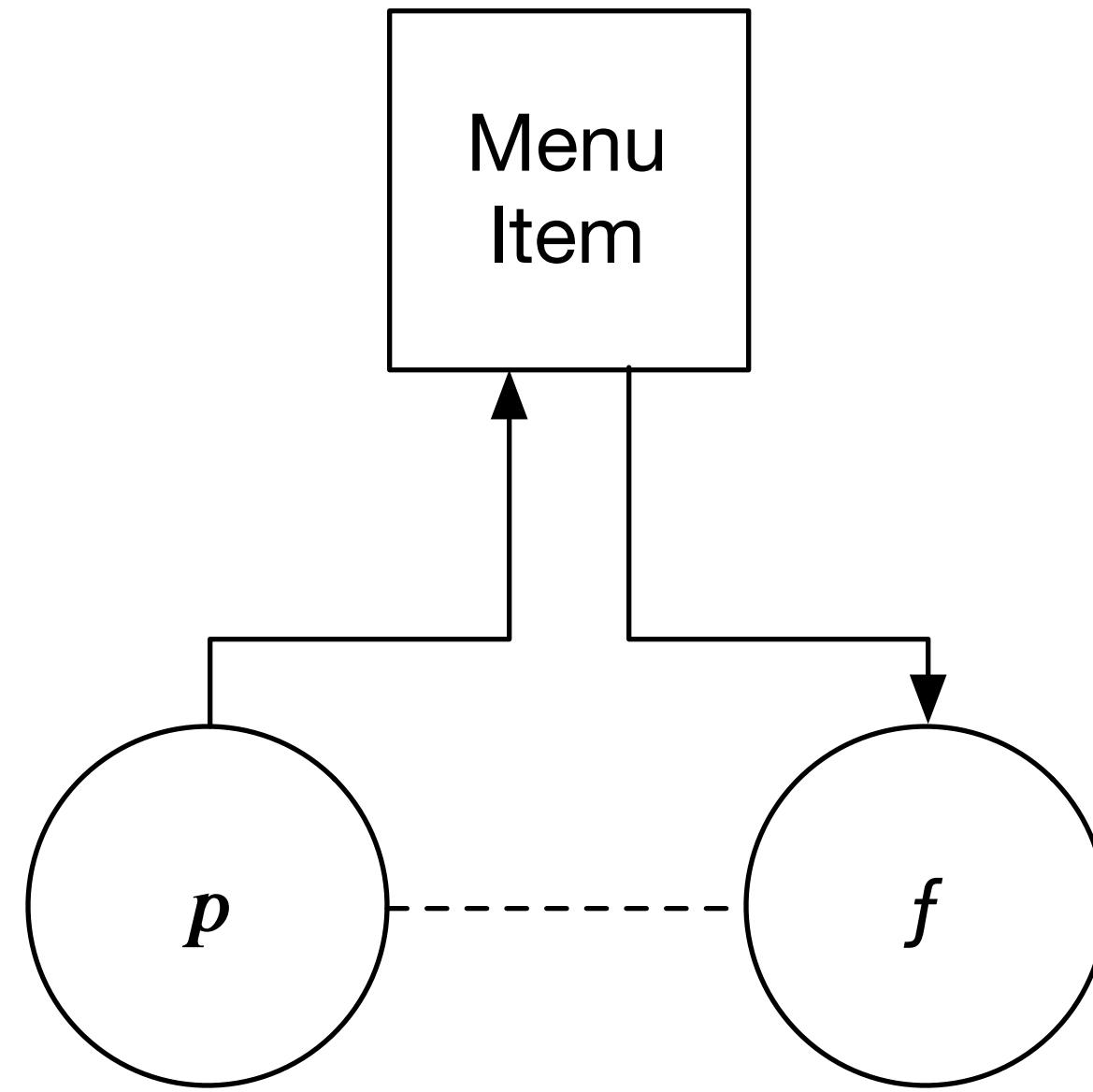
        if (comp(*m, value)) {
            first = next(m);
            n -= h + 1;
        } else { n = h; }
    }

    return first;
}
```

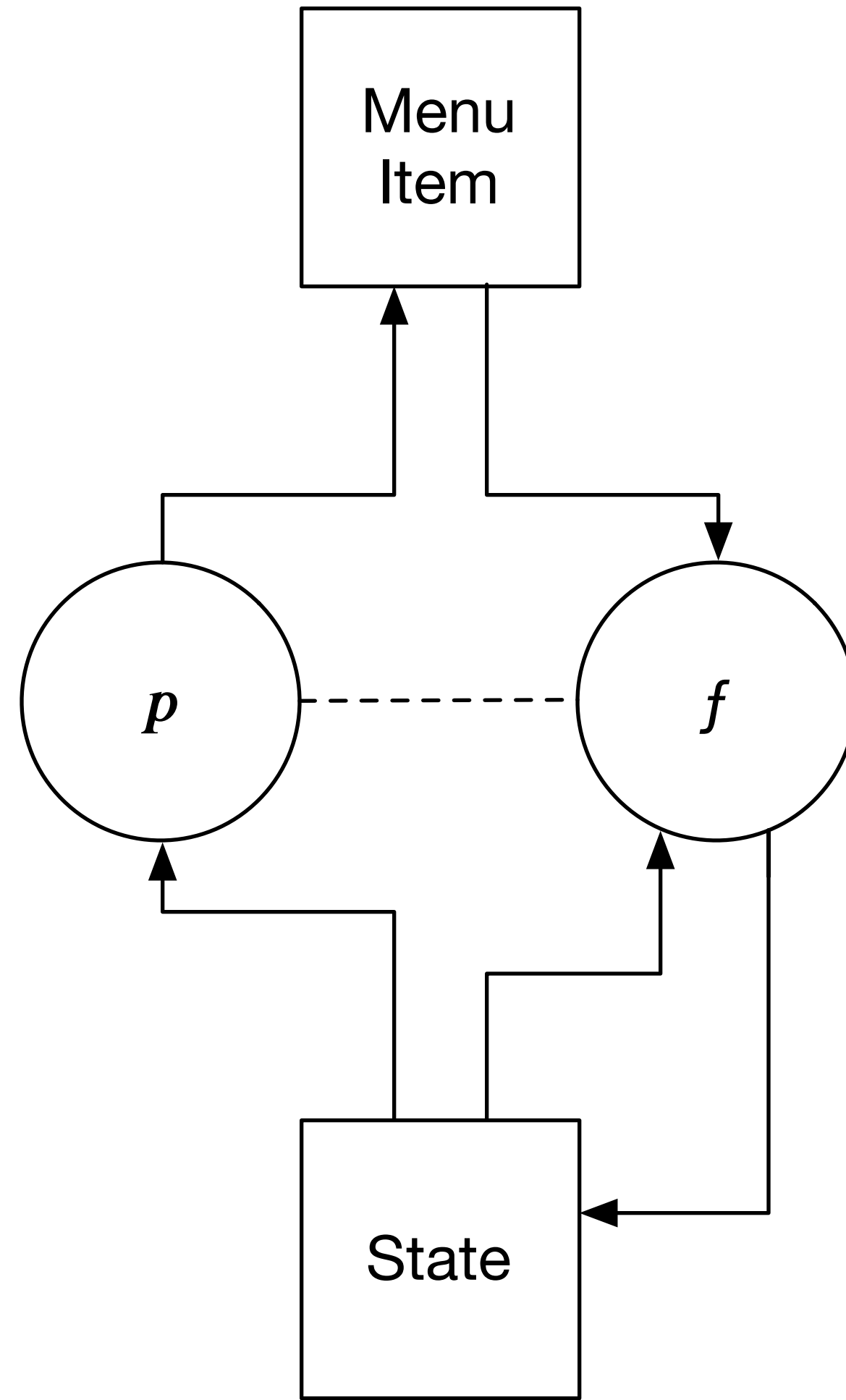


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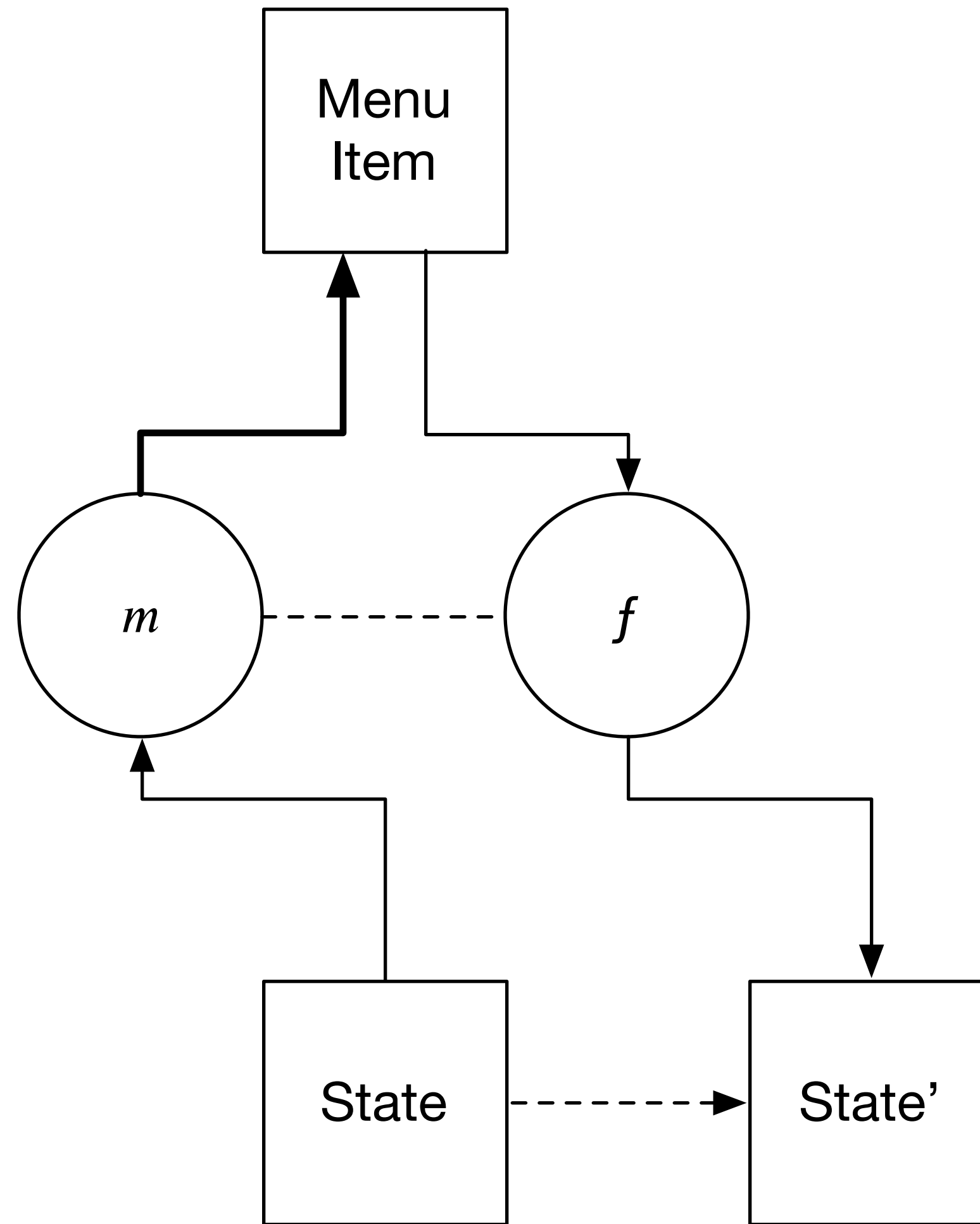














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Start Dictation	fn fn
Emoji & Symbols	⌘⇧Space



# Good Code

Good code is *correct*



# Good Code

Good code is *correct*

Consistent; without contradiction



# Simple Bug

```
void print_string(const char* s) {  
    while (*s != '\0') {  
        cout << *s++;  
    }  
}  
  
int main() {  
    print_string(nullptr);  
}
```



# Simple Bug

```
void print_string(const char* s) {  
    while (*s != '\0') {  
        cout << *s++;  
    }  
}
```

```
int main() {  
    print_string(nullptr);  
}
```

Thread 1: EXC\_BAD\_ACCESS (code=1, address=0x0)



# Simple Bug

```
void print_string(const char* s) {  
    while (*s != '\0') {  
        cout << *s++;  
    }  
}  
  
int main() {  
    print_string(nullptr);  
}
```



# Simple Bug

```
void print_string(const char* s) {  
    while (*s != '\0') {  
        cout << *s++;  
    }  
}  
  
int main() {  
    print_string(nullptr); // FORCE CRASH!  
}
```



# Subtle defects



# Subtle defects

Consistency requires context

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```
template<class T> const T& min(const T& a, const T& b);
```

Returns: The smaller value.

Remarks: Returns the first argument when the arguments are equivalent.



# Subtle defects

Consistency requires context

```
template<class T> const T& min(const T& a, const T& b);
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Returns: The smaller value.

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```
template<class T> const T& max(const T& a, const T& b);
```

Returns: The larger value.

Remarks: Returns the first argument when the arguments are equivalent.

# Subtle defects



# Subtle defects

```
template<typename T>  
const T& clamp(const T& a, const T& lo, const T& hi)  
{  
    return min(max(lo, a), hi);  
}
```

# Subtle defects

```
template<typename T>
const T& clamp(const T& a, const T& lo, const T& hi)
{
    return min(max(lo, a), hi);
}
```

```
template<typename T, typename Compare>
const T& clamp(const T& a, const T& lo, const T& hi, Compare comp)
{
    return min(max(lo, a, comp), hi, comp);
}
```



# Subtle defects

# Subtle defects

```
int main() {  
    using pair = pair<int, string>;  
  
    pair a = { 1, "OK" };  
  
    pair lo = { 1, "FAIL: LO" };  
    pair hi = { 2, "FAIL: HI" };  
  
    a = clamp(a, lo, hi, [](const auto& a, const auto& b) {  
        return a.first < b.first;  
    });  
  
    cout << a.second << endl;  
};
```



# Subtle defects

```
int main() {  
    using pair = pair<int, string>;  
  
    pair a = { 1, "OK" };  
  
    pair lo = { 1, "FAIL: LO" };  
    pair hi = { 2, "FAIL: HI" };  
  
    a = clamp(a, lo, hi, [](const auto& a, const auto& b) {  
        return a.first < b.first;  
    });  
  
    cout << a.second << endl;  
};
```

**FAIL: LO**

# Subtle defects



# Subtle defects

```
template<typename T>  
const T& clamp(const T& a, const T& lo, const T& hi)  
{  
    return min(max(a, lo), hi);  
}
```

# Subtle defects

```
template<typename T>
const T& clamp(const T& a, const T& lo, const T& hi)
{
    return min(max(a, lo), hi);
}
```

```
template<typename T, typename Compare>
const T& clamp(const T& a, const T& lo, const T& hi, Compare comp)
{
    return min(max(a, lo, comp), hi, comp);
}
```



# Subtle defects

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```
template<class T> const T& min(const T& a, const T& b);
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Returns: The smaller value.

Remarks: Returns the first argument when the arguments are equivalent.

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template<class T> const T& max(const T& a, const T& b);
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Returns: The larger value.

Remarks: Returns the **second** argument when the arguments are equivalent.



# Subtle defects

```
template<class T> const T& min(const T& a, const T& b);
```

Returns: The smaller value.

Remarks: Returns the first argument when the arguments are equivalent.

```
template<class T> const T& max(const T& a, const T& b);
```

Returns: The larger value.

Remarks: Returns the **second** argument when the arguments are equivalent.

```
template <class T> const T& max(const T& a, const T& b, const T& c);
```

Returns: The larger value.

Remarks: ???

# Rules are Contentious

# Rules are Contentious

“Names should not be associated with semantics because everybody has their own hidden assumptions about what semantics are, and they clash, causing comprehension problems without knowing why. This is why it's valuable to write code to reflect what code is actually doing, rather than what code ‘means’: it's hard to have conceptual clashes about what code actually does.”

– Craig Silverstein, Google





“There is no spoon.”

– The Matrix



How can nothing be something?

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf
```

```
double x = 0.0 / 0.0;
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf
```

```
double x = 0.0 / 0.0;  
// NaN
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
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int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior
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```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf
```

```
double x = 0.0 / 0.0;  
// NaN
```

```
struct empty { };
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// indeterminate value
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf
```

```
double x = 0.0 / 0.0;  
// NaN
```

```
struct empty { };  
// sizeof(empty) == 1
```

How can nothing be something?



# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }  
// OK
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }  
// OK  
  
void x = f();
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }  
// OK  
  
void x = f();  
// Error
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// Error  
// but common extension  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]
```

```
void f() { return void(); }  
// OK
```

```
void x = f();  
// Error  
// but void* is a pointer to anything...
```

How can nothing be something?



# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };  
try {  
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);  
} catch (...) {  
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;  
}
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };  
try {  
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);  
} catch (...) {  
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;  
}  
// Basic Exception Guarantee:  
// Valid but unspecified
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };  
try {  
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);  
} catch (...) {  
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;  
}  
// Basic Exception Guarantee:  
// Valid but unspecified  
  
std::vector<int> y = std::move(x);
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };  
try {  
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);  
} catch (...) {  
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;  
}  
// Basic Exception Guarantee:  
// Valid but unspecified
```

```
std::vector<int> y = std::move(x);  
// Moved from object, x, is valid but unspecified
```

# Good Code

# Good Code

Good code is *correct*

Consistent; without contradiction



# Good Code

Good code is *correct*

Consistent; without contradiction

Good code has *meaning*

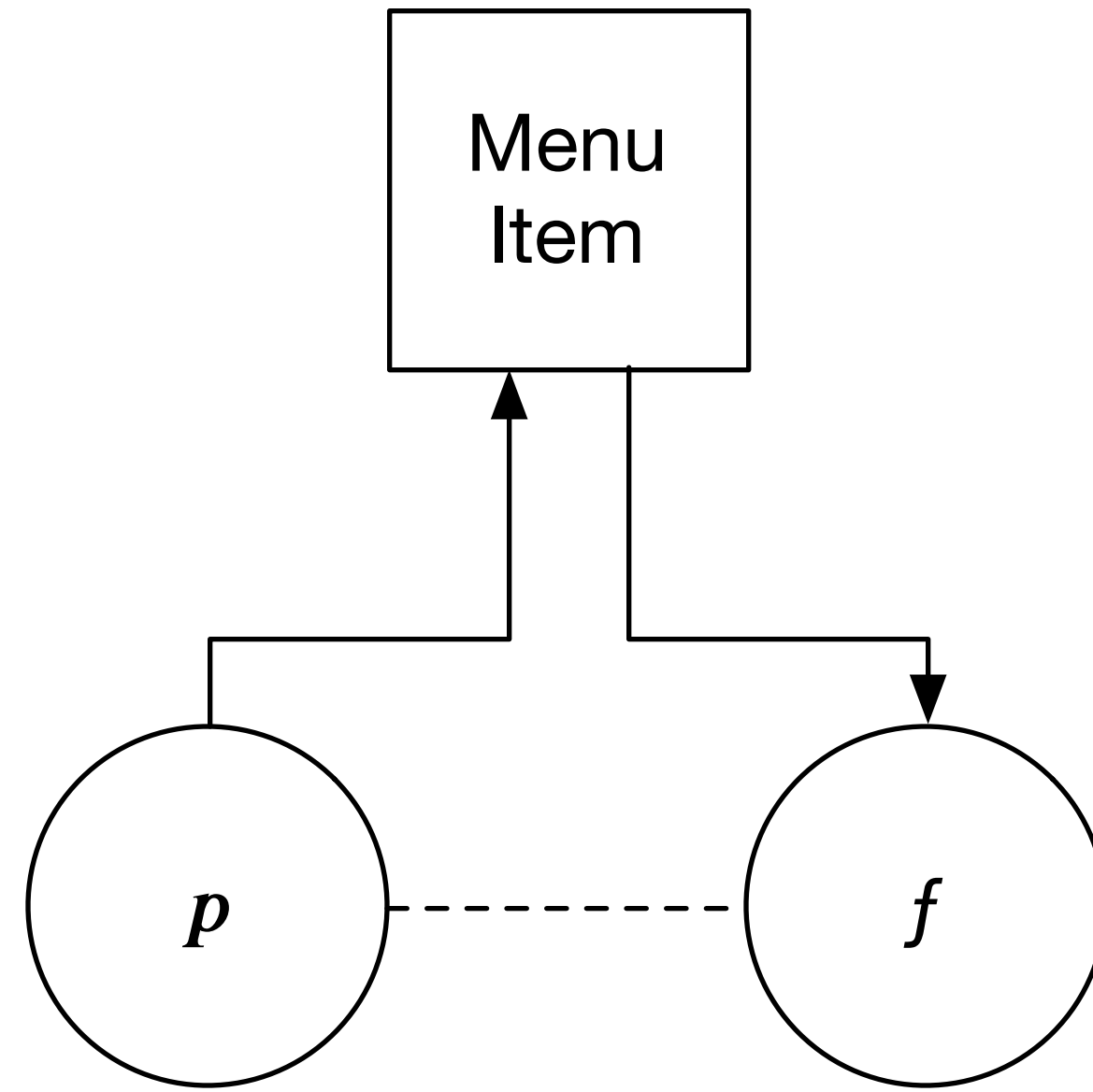
# Good Code

Good code is *correct*

Consistent; without contradiction

Good code has *meaning*

Correspondence to an entity; specified, defined





# Categories of nothing

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Absence of *something*

0,  $\emptyset$ ,  $[p, p)$ , void

# Categories of nothing

Absence of *something*

0,  $\emptyset$ ,  $[p, p)$ , void

Absence of *meaning*

NaN, undefined, indeterminate

# How can nothing be something?



# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
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int x = 1 / 0;
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int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior; reading from meaningless value
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior; reading from meaningless value
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior; reading from meaningless value
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf; OK, approximation for underflow
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct
```

```
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior; reading from meaningless value
```

```
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf; OK, approximation for underflow
```

```
double x = 0.0 / 0.0;
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct  
  
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior; reading from meaningless value  
  
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf; OK, approximation for underflow  
  
double x = 0.0 / 0.0;  
// NaN; OK, though undefined behavior would also be
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct  
  
int x = 1 / 0;  
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# How can nothing be something?

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int x;  
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double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
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double x = 0.0 / 0.0;  
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struct empty : void { };
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int x;  
// Partially formed; assign value or destruct  
  
int x = 1 / 0;  
// undefined behavior; reading from meaningless value  
  
double x = 1.0 / 0.0;  
// inf; OK, approximation for underflow  
  
double x = 0.0 / 0.0;  
// NaN; OK, though undefined behavior would also be  
  
struct empty : void { };  
// sizeof(empty) == 0;
```

How can nothing be something?



# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK  
using empty = int[0];
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];
```



# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }  
// OK
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }  
// OK  
  
void x = f();
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
int a[0];  
// OK  
using empty = int[0];  
// sizeof(empty) == 0  
empty a[2];  
// &a[0] == &a[1]  
  
void f() { return void(); }  
// OK  
  
void x = f();  
// OK  
// void* is OK
```



How can nothing be something?

# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };  
try {  
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);  
} catch (...) {  
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;  
}
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };  
try {  
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);  
} catch (...) {  
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;  
}  
// Basic Exception Guarantee:  
// Partially formed object. Reading is undefined behavior
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };  
try {  
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);  
} catch (...) {  
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;  
}  
// Basic Exception Guarantee:  
// Partially formed object. Reading is undefined behavior  
  
std::vector<int> y = std::move(x);
```

# How can nothing be something?

```
std::vector<int> x = { 1, 2, 3 };
try {
    x.insert(x.begin(), 0);
} catch (...) {
    std::cout << x.size() << std::endl;
}
// Basic Exception Guarantee:
// Partially formed object. Reading is undefined behavior

std::vector<int> y = std::move(x);
// Moved from object, x, is partially formed
```





“That makes you wonder. Take chicken, for example.”

– Matrix



# Specification

# Specification

- `clone_ptr<T>` is like `std::unique_ptr<T>` but with two additional operations, copy and assignment that copy the object pointed to.

- Example implementation of new operations:

```
clone_ptr(const clone_ptr& x) : _ptr(new T(*x)) { }  
clone_ptr& operator=(const clone_ptr& x) { return *this = clone_ptr(x); }
```

# Specification

- `clone_ptr<T>` is like `std::unique_ptr<T>` but with two additional operations, copy and assignment that copy the object pointed to.

- Example implementation of new operations:

```
clone_ptr(const clone_ptr& x) : _ptr(new T(*x)) { }  
clone_ptr& operator=(const clone_ptr& x) { return *this = clone_ptr(x); }
```

- copy-assignment written in terms of copy and move-assignment

# What is copy?

- *Copying* an object creates a new object which is equal-to and logically disjoint from the original.

**T a = b;  $\Rightarrow$  a == b;**

**T a = b; modify(b);  $\Rightarrow$  a != b;**



# “copy” of clone\_ptr

`clone_ptr<T> a = b; ⇒ a != b;`

- “*Copying*” a clone pointer creates an object that is not equal to the original
- Contradiction
  
- Defining a copy-constructor that doesn't copy is dangerous
  - The compiler may elide copies
  - Programmers will assume they are substitutable

# Specification: Amendment 1

- Two `clone_ptr`s are considered equal if the value they point to is equal. Because we don't want to require that the pointed to types are equal `operator==( )` and `operator!=( )` are not implemented. i.e.:

`clone_ptr<T> a = b; ⇒ a == b;`

However, `==` is not implemented.

# What is a pointer?

- A *pointer* is an object that refers to another object via a dereference operation. Two pointers are equal if they refer to the same instance of an object.

**a == b; ⇒ &\*a == &\*b;**

“equality” of clone\_ptr

```
clone_ptr<T> a = b; ⇒ a == b;
```

- Because clone\_ptr is a pointer this would imply:

```
assert(&*a == &*b);
```

- But that is false - contradiction.

# Specification: Amendment 2

- Because `clone_ptr<>` is not a pointer it is to be renamed `indirect<>`.



# What is a const?

- *const* is a type qualifier. An object accessed through a *const* reference may not be modified.

```
const T a = b; read(a); ⇒ a == b;  
modify(a); is not allowed
```

## “const” of indirect

```
const indirect<T> a = b; read(a); ⇒ a == b;
```

- Because const does not propagate (from unique\_ptr):

```
void read(const indirect<T>& x) {  
    modify(*x);  
}
```

- Contradiction!

# Specification: Amendment 3

- Because copy of remote part implies const propagation, `get()`, `operator*()` and `operator->()` must be overloaded:

```
T* get();  
const T* get() const;
```

```
T& operator*();  
const T& operator*() const;
```

```
T* operator->();  
const T* operator->() const;
```

# Alternative Specification:

# Alternative Specification:

- `clone_ptr<T>` is like `std::unique_ptr<T>` but with one additional operation, `clone()` that works by copying the object pointed to.
- Example implementation of clone operation:

```
clone_ptr clone() const { return make_clone<T>(**this); }
```



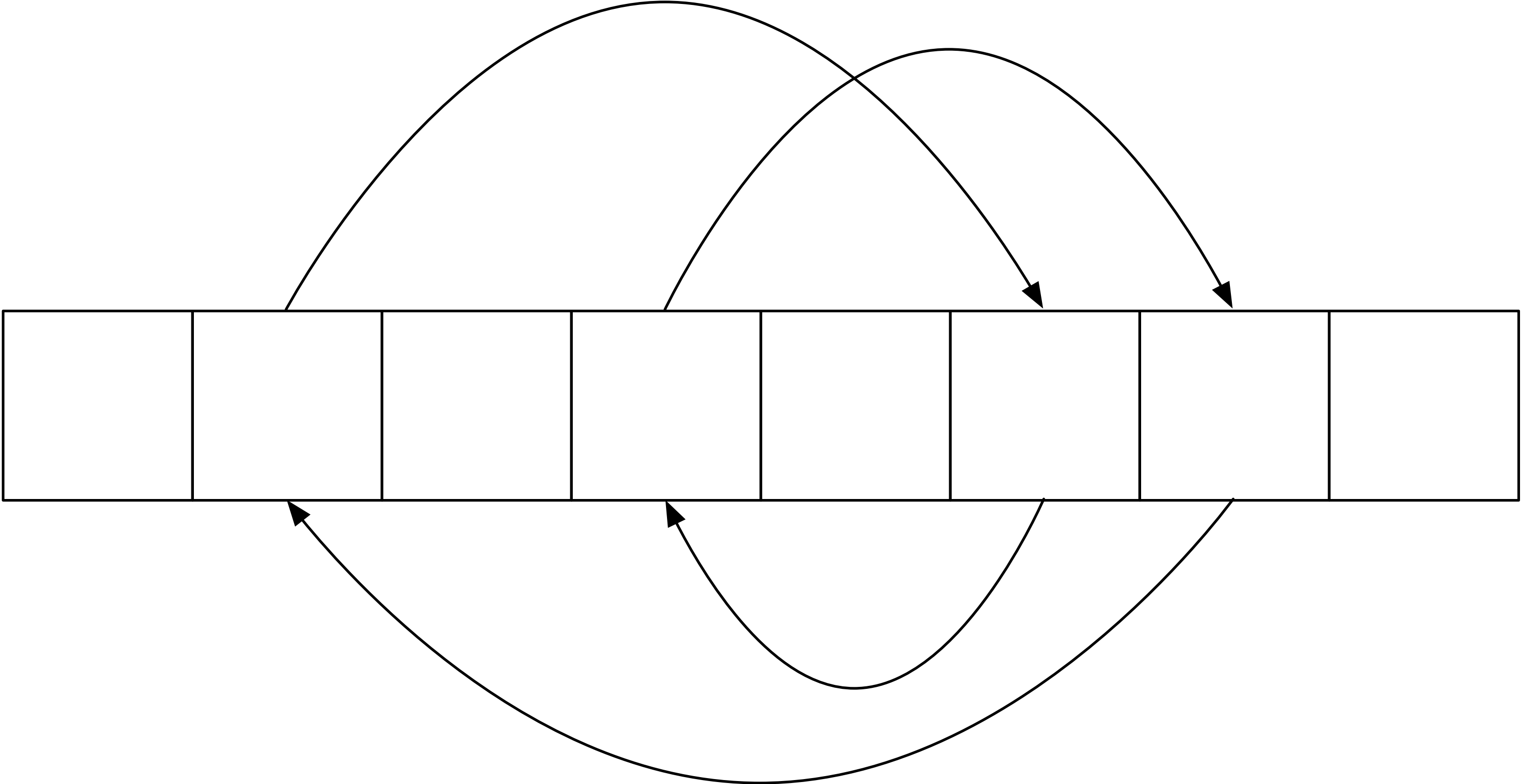


“What’s in the box?”

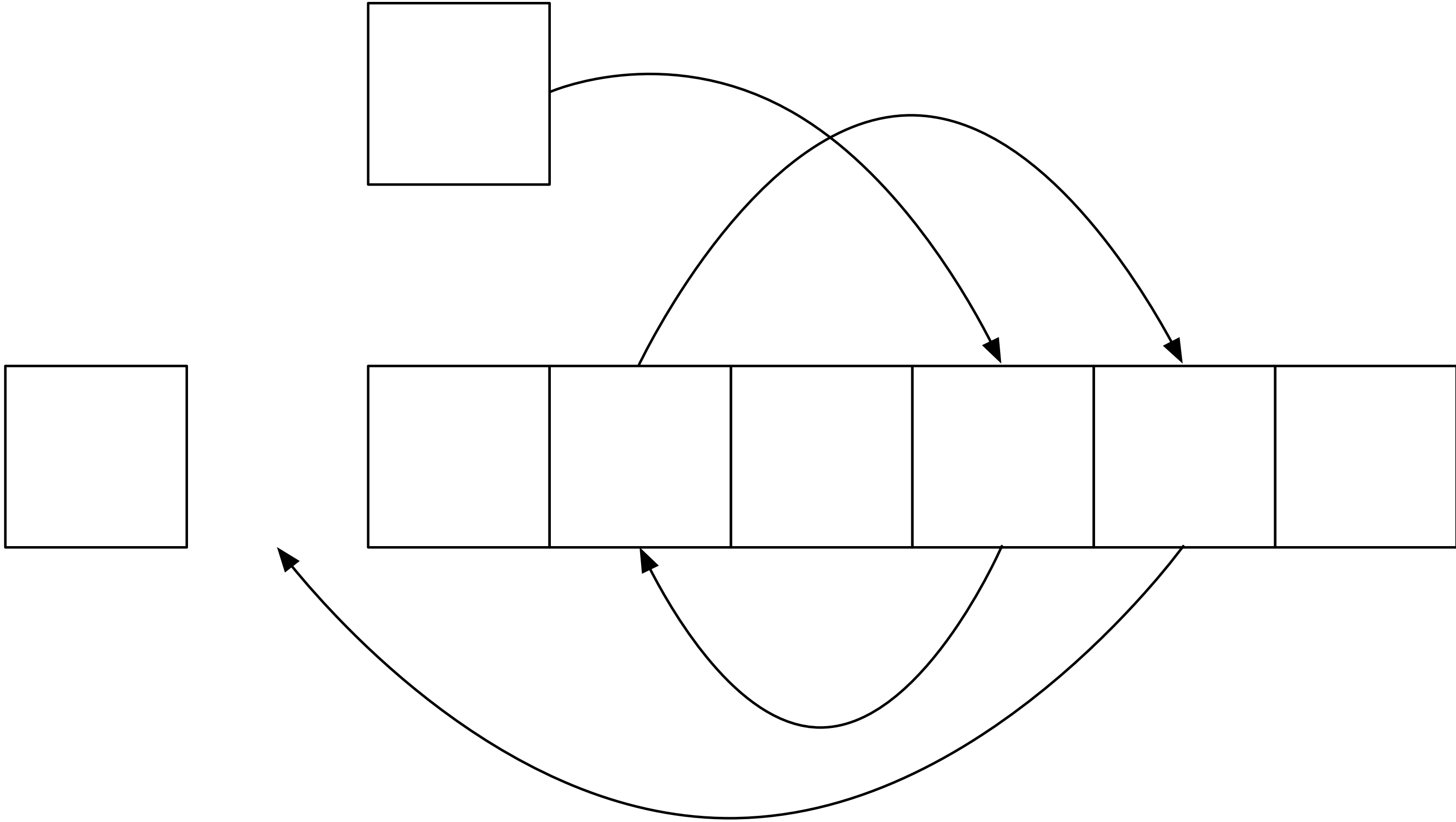
– Seven



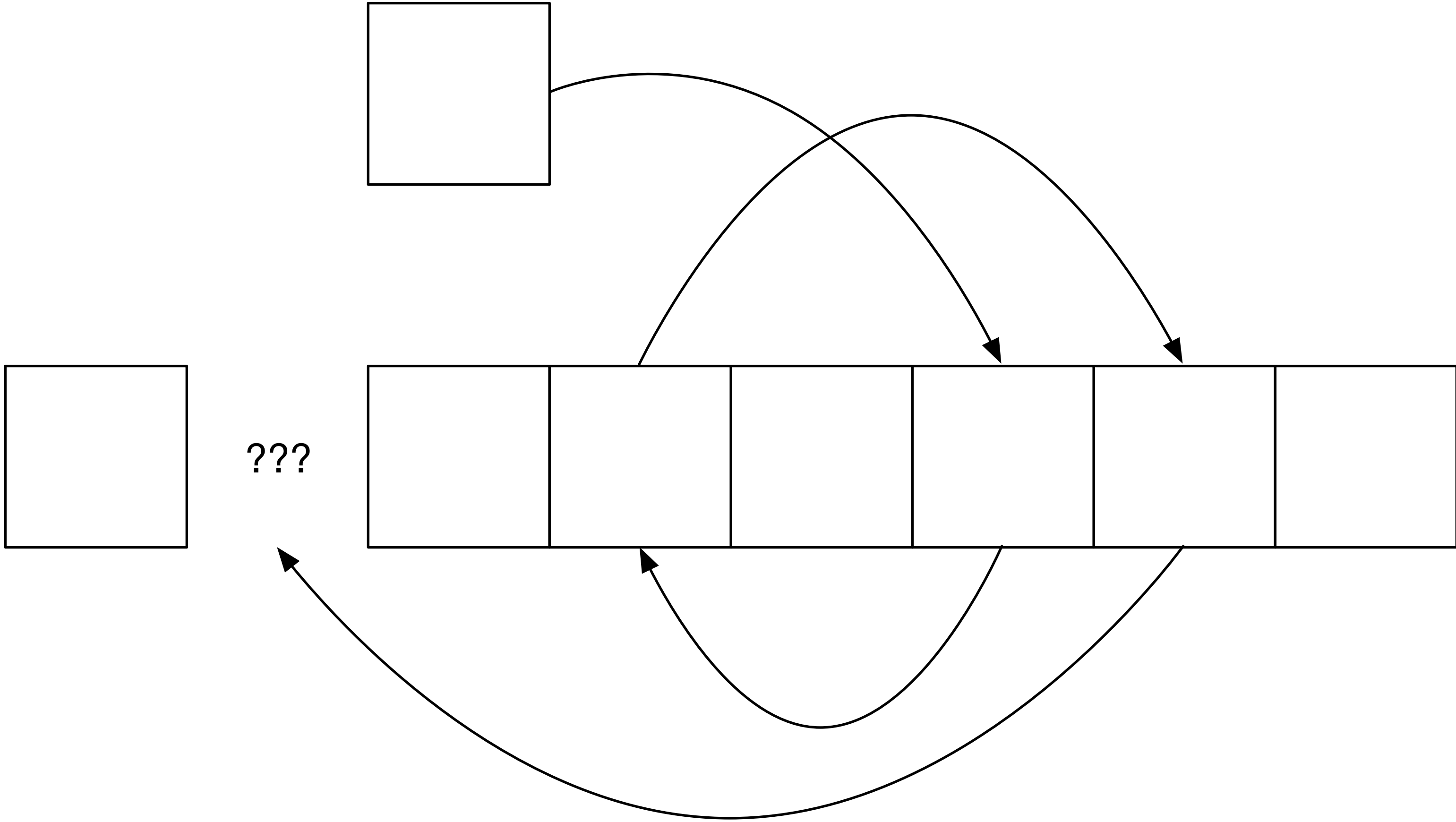
# The Permutation Paradox



# The Permutation Paradox

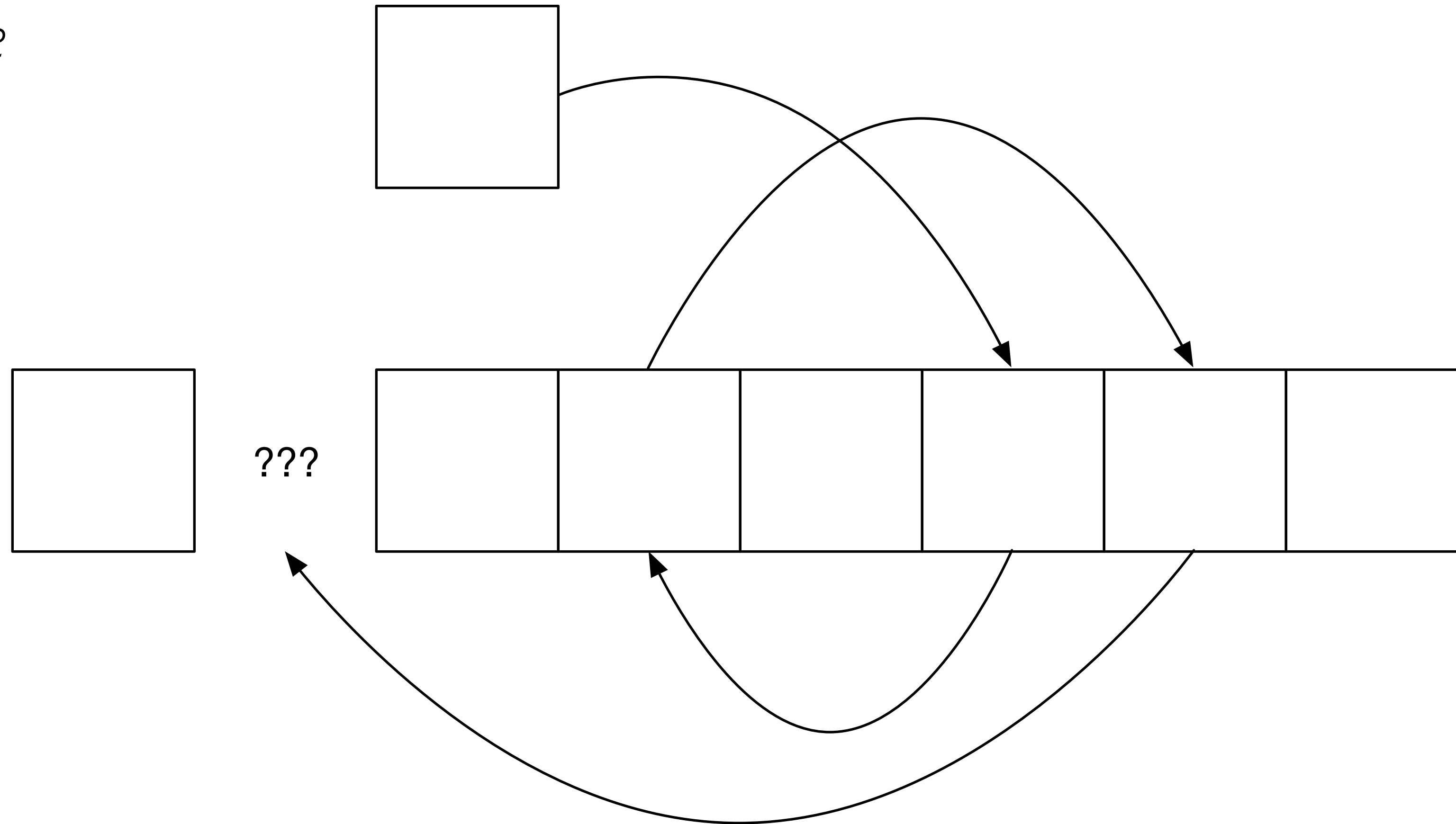


# The Permutation Paradox



# The Permutation Paradox

*nothing*  $\Rightarrow$  *unsafe*

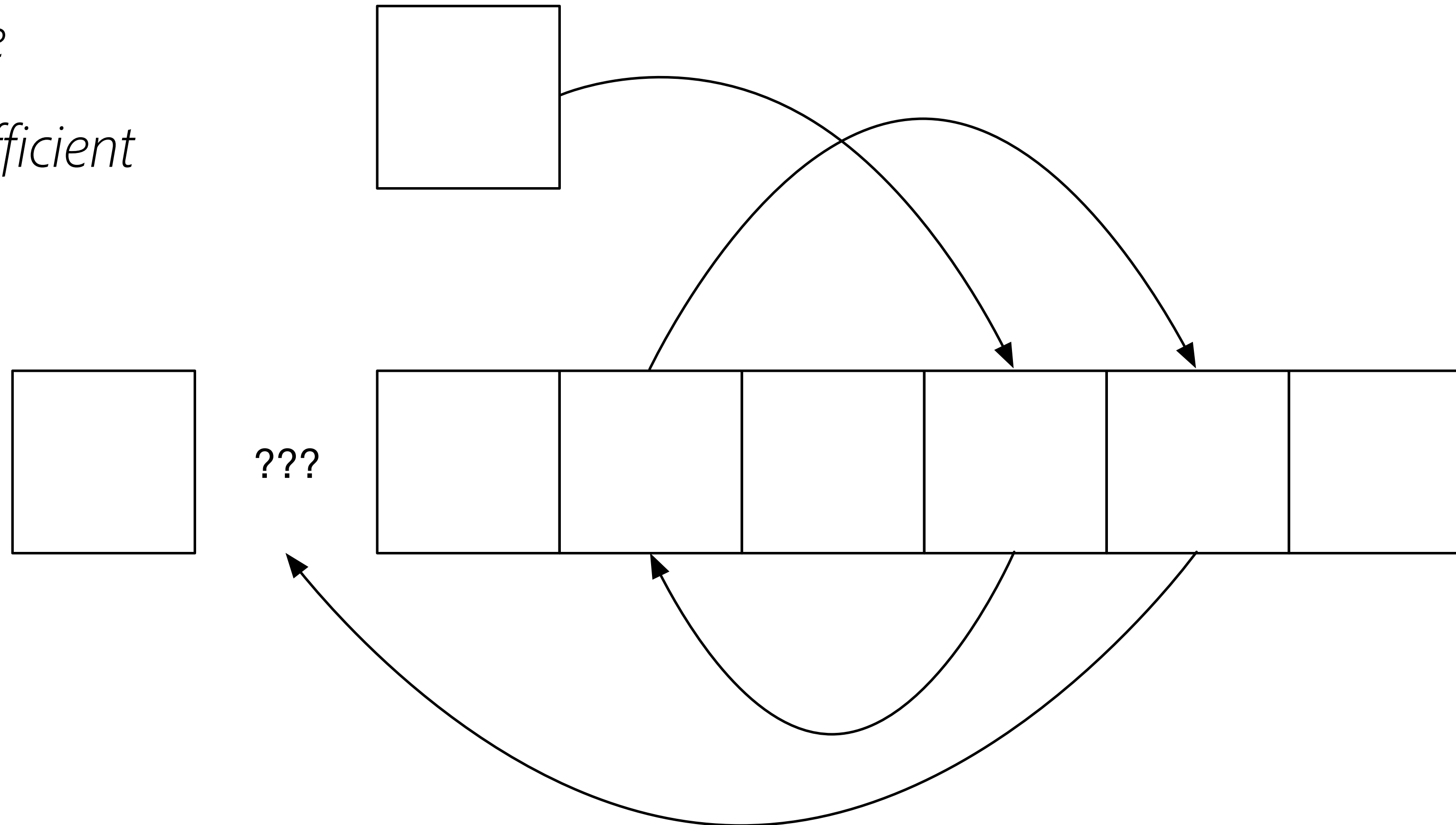




# The Permutation Paradox

*nothing*  $\Rightarrow$  *unsafe*

*something*  $\Rightarrow$  *inefficient*



# The Permutation Paradox

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“There is a duality between transformations and the corresponding actions: An action is definable in terms of a transformation and vice versa:

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```
void a(T& x) { x = f(x); } // action from transformation
```

and

```
T f(T x) { a(x); return x; } // transformation from action
```

# The Permutation Paradox

“There is a duality between transformations and the corresponding actions: An action is definable in terms of a transformation and vice versa:

```
void a(T& x) { x = f(x); } // action from transformation
```

and

```
T f(T x) { a(x); return x; } // transformation from action
```

Despite this duality, independent implementations are sometimes more efficient, in which case both action and transformation need to be provided.”

– *Elements of Programming (section 2.5)*





“It’s not that I’m lazy, it’s that I just don’t care.”

– Office Space



# Good Code

Good code is *correct*

Consistent; without contradiction

Good code has *meaning*

Correspondence to an entity; specified, defined

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Maximum effect with minimum resources



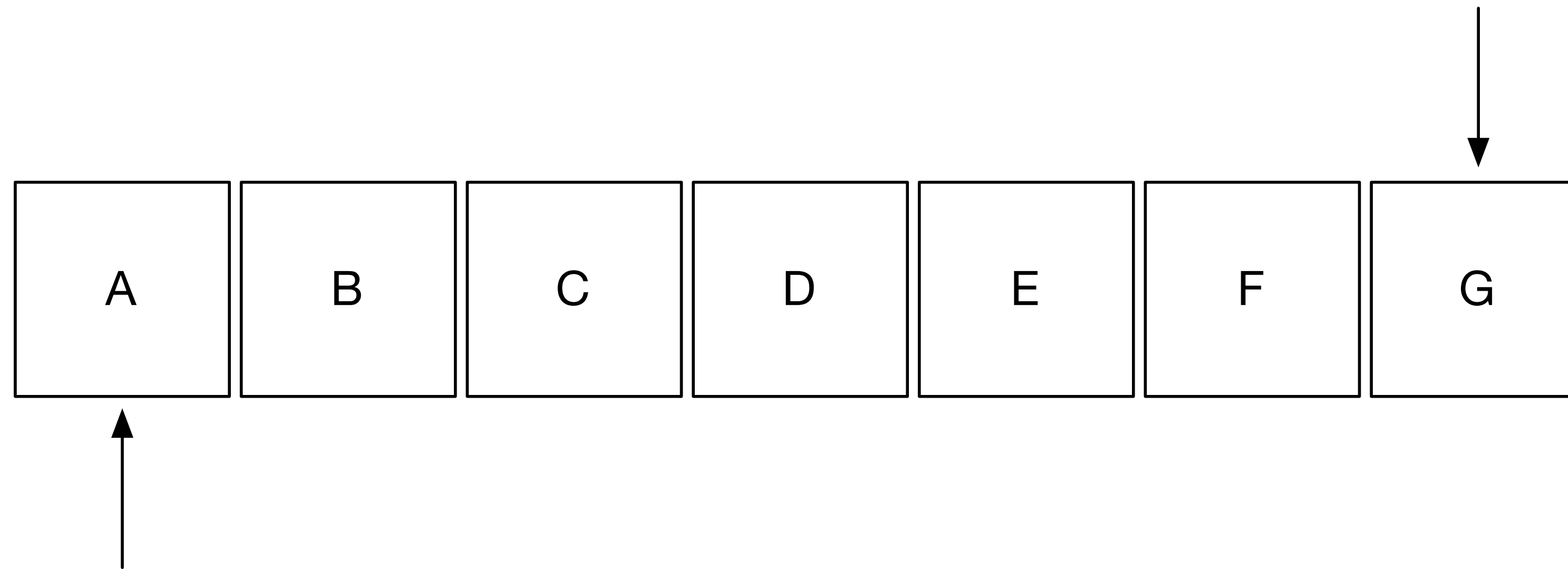
# Efficiency

# Efficiency

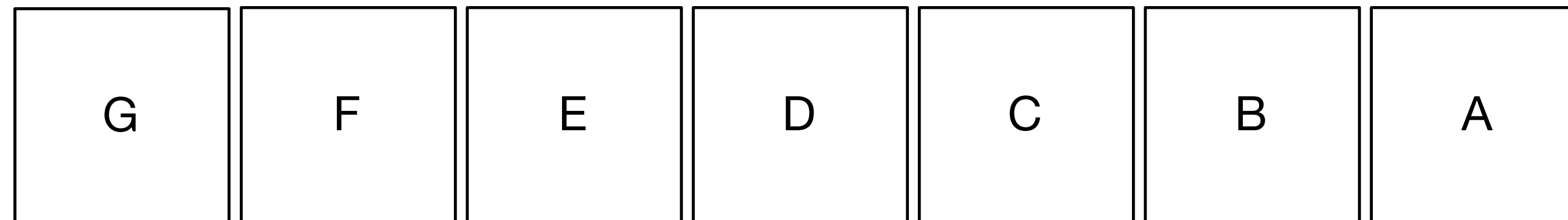
Choice of data structures and algorithms

Choice of what to optimize for

# Efficiency



# Efficiency





# Efficiency

```
template <class ForwardIterator, class N>
auto reverse_n(ForwardIterator f, N n) {
    if (n < 2) return next(f, n);

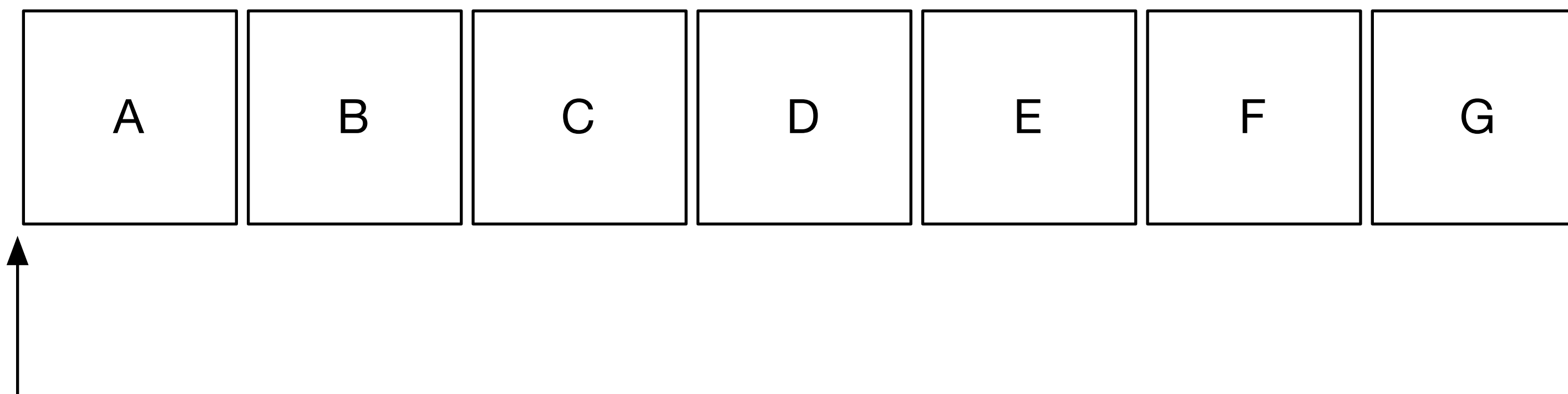
    auto h = n / 2;
    auto m1 = reverse_n(f, h);
    auto m2 = next(m1, n % 2);
    auto l = reverse_n(m2, h);
    swap_ranges(f, m1, m2);
    return l;
}
```

```
template <class ForwardIterator>
void reverse(ForwardIterator f, ForwardIterator l) {
    reverse_n(f, distance(f, l));
}
```

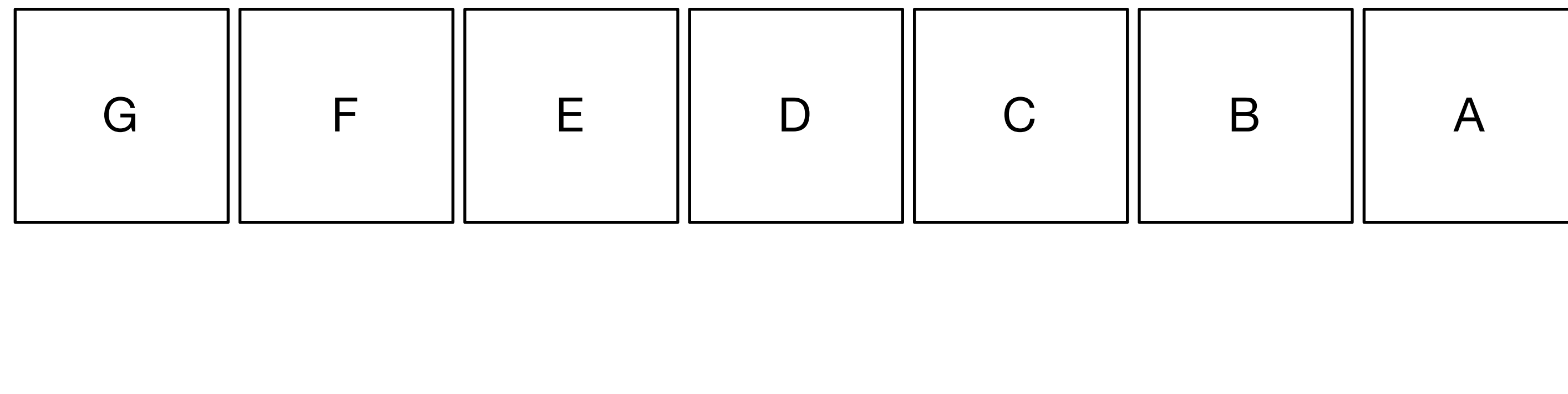
$O(n \log n)$

*Elements of Programming, 10.3*

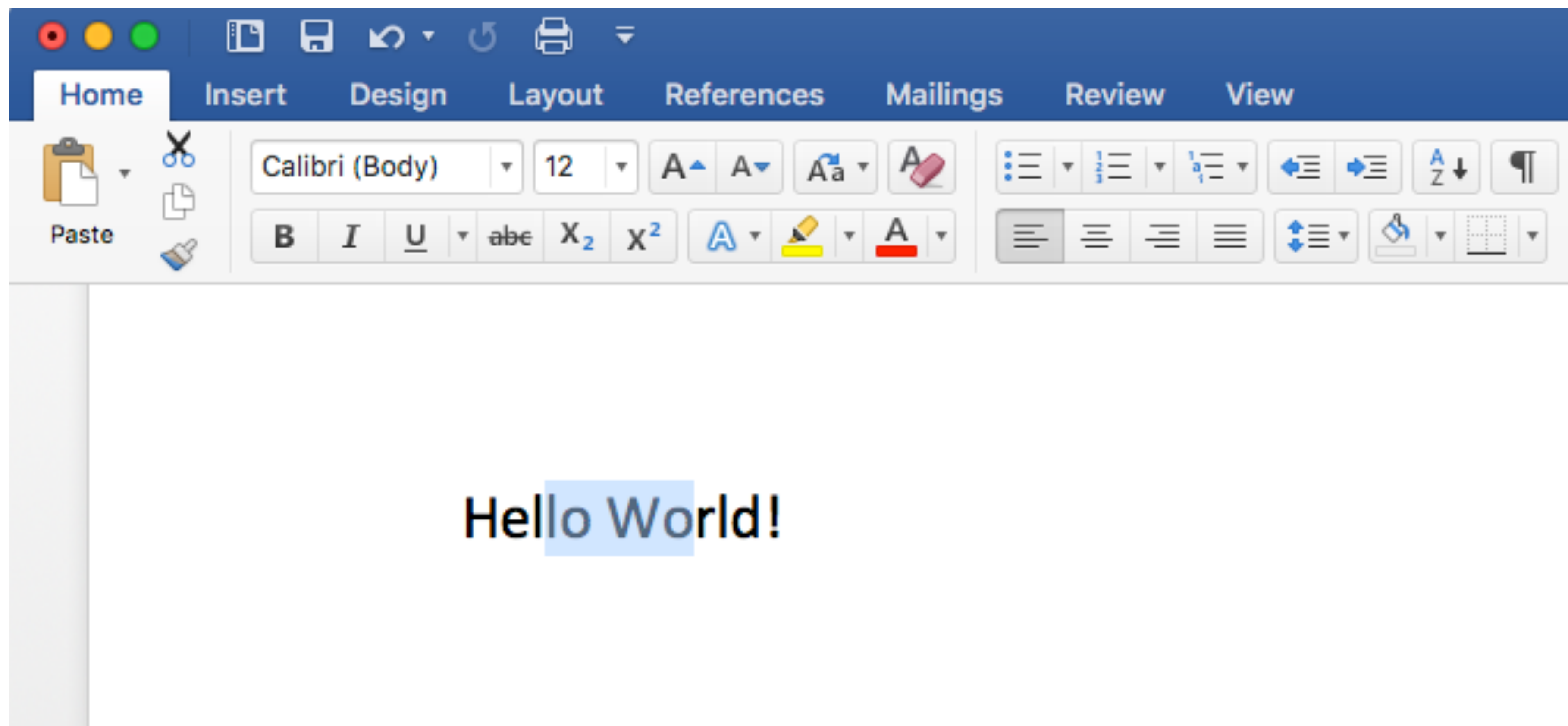
# Efficiency



# Efficiency

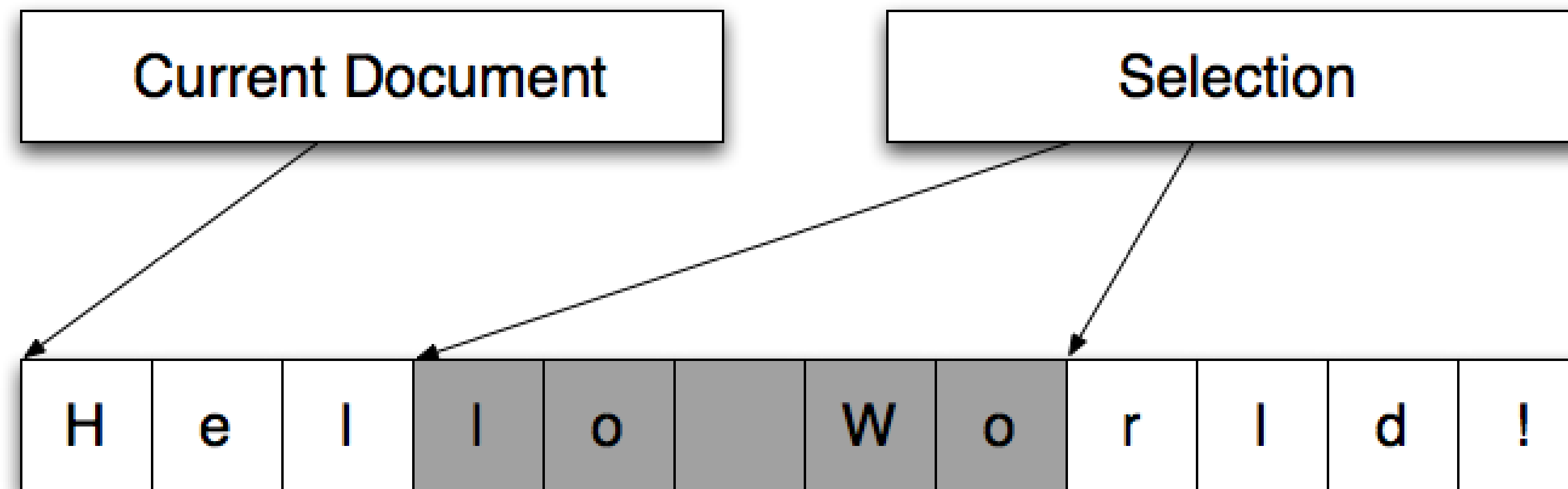


# Simple Word Model



# Simple Word Model

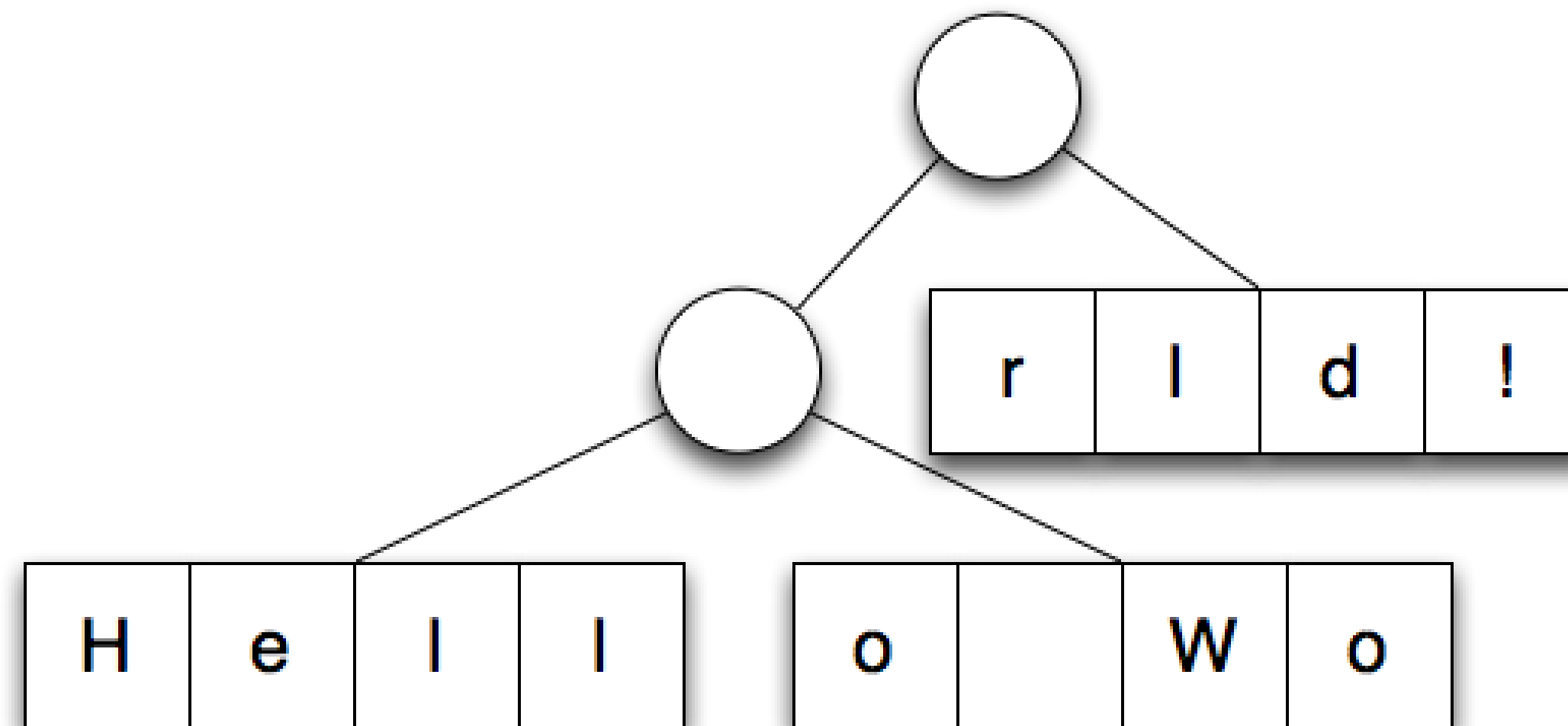
- Current Document
- Selection
  - Provides a range; an empty range denotes a location





# More Complex Word Model

- Need to be able to set the selection in “constant” time
  - This would imply a vector data structure
- Also need constant time insert and erase
  - This would imply a list data structure
- Solution: a more complex data structure such as a rope



# What is an efficient type?

# What is an efficient type?

- A type is *complete* if the set of provided basis operations allow us to construct and operate on any valid, representable value
- A type is *efficient* if the set of basis operations allow for any valid operation to be performed in the most efficient way possible for the chosen representation

# What is an efficient type?

- A type is *complete* if the set of provided basis operations allow us to construct and operate on any valid, representable value
- A type is *efficient* if the set of basis operations allow for any valid operation to be performed in the most efficient way possible for the chosen representation
  
- By simply making all data members public, you provide, by definition, an efficient basis
- However, you may fail to protect the invariants of the type, making the approach unsafe
  
- `std::move` is both unsafe and inefficient.





“I don't smoke, I don't drink... I recycle..”

- 50/50



# Good Code

Good code is *correct*

Consistent; without contradiction

Good code has *meaning*

Correspondence to an entity; specified, defined

Good code is *efficient*

Maximum effect with minimum resources

Good code is *reusable*

Applicable to multiple problems; general in purpose

# Reusable

# Reusable

Concrete but of general use, i.e. numeric algorithms, utf conversions, ...

Generic when algorithm is useful with different models  
Sometimes faster to convert one model to another

Runtime dispatched when types not known at compile time

# Reusable



# Reusable

Minimize client dependencies and intrusive requirements

Separate data structures from algorithms

# Reusable

# Reusable

```
template <class T, class InputIterator, class OutputIterator>  
OutputIterator copy_utf(InputIterator first, InputIterator last,  
                        OutputIterator result);
```

```
const char str[] = u8"Hello World!";  
vector<uint16_t> out;  
copy_utf<uint16_t>(begin(str), end(str), back_inserter(out));
```





“You mean we’re in the future.”

– Back to the Future Part II



# Why Status Quo Will Fail

# Why Status Quo Will Fail

“I’ve assigned this problem [binary search] in courses at Bell Labs and IBM. Professional programmers had a *couple of hours* to convert the description into a programming language of their choice; a high-level pseudo code was fine... Ninety percent of the programmers found bugs in their programs (and I wasn’t always convinced of the correctness of the code in which no bugs were found).”

– Jon Bentley, Programming Pearls, 1986

## Why Status Quo Will Fail

```
int* lower_bound(int* first, int* last, int value)
{
    while (first != last)
    {
        int* middle = first + (last - first) / 2;

        if (*middle < value) first = middle + 1;
        else last = middle;
    }

    return first;
}
```

# Signs of Hope

## Elements of Programming

Concepts aren't dead yet in C++

Increased interest in new languages and formalisms

Renewed interest in Communication Sequential Processes

Renewed interest in Functional Programming ideas

Rise of Reactive Programming & Functional Reactive Programming



# Work Continues

# Work Continues

*Generating Reactive Programs for Graphical User Interfaces from Multi-way Dataflow Constraint Systems*, GPCE 2015, Gabriel Foust, Jaakko Järvi, Sean Parent

*One Way To Select Many*, ECOOP 2016, Jaakko Järvi, Sean Parent

<http://sean-parent.stlab.cc/papers-and-presentations>

<https://github.com/stlab>

# Write Better Code



**Adobe**