

1 Pre-Check

This section is designed as a conceptual check for you to determine if you conceptually understand and have any misconceptions about this topic. Please answer true/false to the following questions, and include an explanation:

- 1.1 Each hardware thread in the CPU uses a shared cache.
- 1.2 Atomicity can only be guaranteed within a single RISC-V instruction.
- 1.3 The amount of speedup is directly proportional to the increase in number of threads.

2 Coherency and Atomics

The benefits of multi-threading programming come only after you understand concurrency. Here are two of the most common concurrency issues:

1. **Cache-incoherence**: each hardware thread has its own cache, hence data modified in one thread may not be immediately reflected in the other. This can often be solved by bypassing the cache and writing directly to memory, i.e. using volatile keywords in many languages.
2. **Read-modify-write**: Read-modify-write is a very common pattern in programming. In the context of multi-threading programming, the **interleaving** of R, M, W stages often produces a lot of issues.

In order to solve the problems created by Read-modify-write, we have to rely on the idea of **uninterrupted execution**, also known as atomic execution.

In RISC-V, we have two categories of atomic instructions:

1. **Load-reserve, store-conditional**: allows us to have uninterrupted execution across multiple instructions
2. **Amo.swap**: allows for uninterrupted memory operations within a single instruction

Both of these can be used to achieve atomic primitives. Here are examples for each:

Test-and-set	Compare-and-swap
Start: <code>addi t0 x0 1 # Locked = 1</code>	<code># a0 holds address of memory location</code>
<code>amoswap.w.aq t1 t0 (a0)</code>	<code># a1 holds expected value</code>
<code>bne t1 x0 Start</code>	<code># a2 holds desired value</code>
<code># If the lock is not free, retry</code>	<code># a0 holds return value, 0 if successful, !=0 otherwise</code>
<code>... # Critical section</code>	<code>cas:</code>
<code>amoswap.w.rl x0 x0 (a0) # Release lock</code>	<code>lr.w t0, (a0) # Load original value.</code>
	<code>bne t0, a1, fail # Doesnt match, so fail.</code>
	<code>sc.w a0, a2, (a0) # Try to update.</code>
	<code>jr ra # Return.</code>
	<code>fail:</code>
	<code>li a0, 1 # Set return to failure.</code>
	<code>jr ra # Return.</code>

Instruction definitions:

1. **Load-reserve**: Loads the four bytes at $M[R[rs1]]$, writes them to $R[rd]$, sign-extending the result and registers a reservation on that word in memory.
2. **Store-conditional rd, rs2, (rs1)**: Stores the four bytes in register $R[rs2]$ to $M[R[rs1]]$, provided there exists a load reservation on that memory address. Writes 0 to $R[rd]$ if the store succeeded, or a nonzero error code otherwise.
3. **Amoswap rd, rs2, (rs1)**: Atomically, puts the sign-extended word located at $M[R[rs1]]$ into $R[rd]$ and puts $R[rs2]$ into $M[R[rs1]]$.

Explanations for both methodologies:

1. **Test-and-set**: We have a lock stored at the address specified by $a0$. We utilize `amoswap` to put in 1 and get the old value. If the old value was a 1, we would not have changed the value of the lock and we will realize that someone currently has the lock. If the old value was a 0, we will have just "locked" the lock and can continue with the critical section. When we are done, we put a 0 back into the lock to "unlock" it.
2. **Compare-and-swap**: CAS tries to first reserve the memory and gets the value stored and compares it to the expected value. If the expected value and the value that was stored do not match, the entire process fails and we must restart to update based on the new information. Otherwise, we register a reservation on the memory and try to store the new value. If the exit code is nonzero, something went wrong with the store and we must retry the entire LR/SC process. Otherwise with a zero exit code, we continue into the critical section, then release the lock.

2.1 Why do we need special instructions for these operations? Why can't we use normal load and store for `lr` and `sc`? Why can't we expand `amoswap` to a normal load and store?

2.2 Now that we have atomic operations, let's try to experiment with them. Let us try to implement an algorithm that enforces ordered thread execution. This means that if we have four threads, thread 0 goes first, thread 1 goes next, etc. For this problem assume that `a1` holds the location of a piece of memory we have access to for the entire duration of our algorithm. Also, we can assume there exists a label `get_thread_num` that returns the thread's number in `a0`. Try to fill in the blanks below. Please use LR/SC for this problem:

```

1      addi t0, x0, 0
2
3      ----- # Setup for the first (0-th) thread
4      ...
5      # Assume we now spawn 4 threads in this code
6      ...
7
8  Check: jal ----- # Get the current thread number
9              # Get the ID of the next thread that should operate
10             ----- # (make sure this can't get interfered with)
11
12             -----
13 Done: addi t0, t0, 1
14
15             ----- # Set which thread is next to run
16
17      bne -----
18      ...
19      # Assume we now join the 4 threads in this code
20      ...
21      jr ra

```

3 Thread-Level Parallelism

As powerful as data level parallelization is, it can be quite inflexible, as not all applications have data that can be vectorized. Multithreading, or running a single piece of software on multiple hardware threads, is much more powerful and versatile.

OpenMP provides an easy interface for using multithreading within C programs. Some examples of OpenMP directives:

- The `parallel` directive indicates that each thread should run a copy of the code within the block. If a for loop is put within the block, **every** thread will run every iteration of the for loop.

```
#pragma omp parallel
{
    ...
}
```

NOTE: The opening curly brace needs to be on a newline or **else** there will be a compile-time error!

- The `parallel for` directive will split up iterations of a for loop over various threads. Every thread will run **different** iterations of the for loop. The following two code snippets are equivalent.

```
#pragma omp parallel for          #pragma omp parallel
for (int i = 0; i < n; i++) {     {
    ...                            #pragma omp for
}                                  for (int i =0; i < n; i++) { ... }
}
```

There are two functions you can call that may be useful to you:

- `int omp_get_thread_num()` will return the number of the thread executing the code
- `int omp_get_num_threads()` will return the number of total hardware threads executing the code

3.1 For each question below, state and justify whether the program is **sometimes incorrect**, **always incorrect**, **slower than serial**, **faster than serial**, or **none of the above**. Assume the default number of threads is greater than 1. Assume no thread will complete before another thread starts executing. Assume `arr` is an `int[]` of length `n`.

(a)

```
// Set element i of arr to i
#pragma omp parallel
{
    for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
        arr[i] = i;
}
```

(b)

```
// Set arr to be an array of Fibonacci numbers.
```

```

arr[0] = 0;
arr[1] = 1;
#pragma omp parallel for
for (int i = 2; i < n; i++)
    arr[i] = arr[i-1] + arr[i - 2];

```

(c)

```

// Set all elements in arr to 0;
int i;
#pragma omp parallel for
for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
    arr[i] = 0;

```

3.2 What potential issue can arise from this code?

```

1 // Decrements element i of arr. n is a multiple of omp_get_num_threads()
2 #pragma omp parallel
3 {
4     int threadCount = omp_get_num_threads();
5     int myThread = omp_get_thread_num();
6     for (int i = 0; i < n; i++) {
7         if (i % threadCount == myThread) arr[i] -= 1;
8     }
9 }

```

3.3

```

1 // Assume n holds the length of arr
2 double fast_product(double *arr, int n) {
3     double product = 1;
4     #pragma omp parallel for
5     for (int i = 0; i < n; i++) {
6         product *= arr[i];
7     }
8     return product;
9 }

```

- (a) What is wrong with this code?
- (b) Fix the code using `#pragma omp critical`

- (c) Fix the code using `#pragma omp reduction(operation: var)`.

4 Amdahl's Law

In the programs we write, there are sections of code that are naturally able to be sped up. However, there are likely sections that just can't be optimized any further to maintain correctness. In the end, the overall program speedup is the number that matters, and we can determine this using Amdahl's Law:

$$\text{True Speedup} = \frac{1}{S + \frac{1-S}{P}}$$

where S is the non-sped-up part and P is the speedup factor (determined by the number of cores, threads, etc.).

- 4.1 You are going to run a convolutional network to classify a set of 100,000 images using a computer with 32 threads. You notice that 99% of the execution of your project code can be parallelized on these threads. What is the speedup?

- 4.2 You run a profiling program on a different program to find out what percent of this program each function takes. You get the following results:

Function	% Time
f	30%
g	10%
h	60%

- (a) We don't know if these functions can actually be parallelized. However, assuming all of them can be, which one would benefit the most from parallelism?
- (b) Let's assume that we verified that your chosen function can actually be parallelized. What speedup would you get if you parallelized just this function with 8 threads?