



香港中文大學

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

CENG3430 Rapid Prototyping of Digital Systems

Lecture 01: Introduction to VHDL

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- Basic Structure of a VHDL Module
 - ① Library Declaration
 - ② Entity Declaration
 - ③ Architecture Body
- Data Objects, Identifiers, Types, and Attributes
 - Data Objects
 - ① Constant
 - ② Signal
 - ③ Variable
 - Data Identifier
 - Data Types
 - Data Attributes
- Operators in VHDL

Basic Structure of a VHDL Module



A VHDL file

Library Declaration

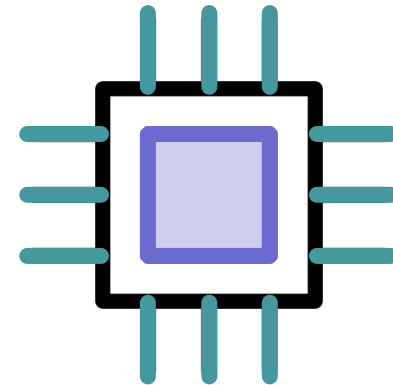
```
library IEEE;  
use IEEE.std_logic_1164.all;  
use IEEE.std_logic_arith.all;  
use IEEE.std_logic_unsigned.all;
```

Entity Declaration

Define the signals to be seen outside externally (I/O pins)

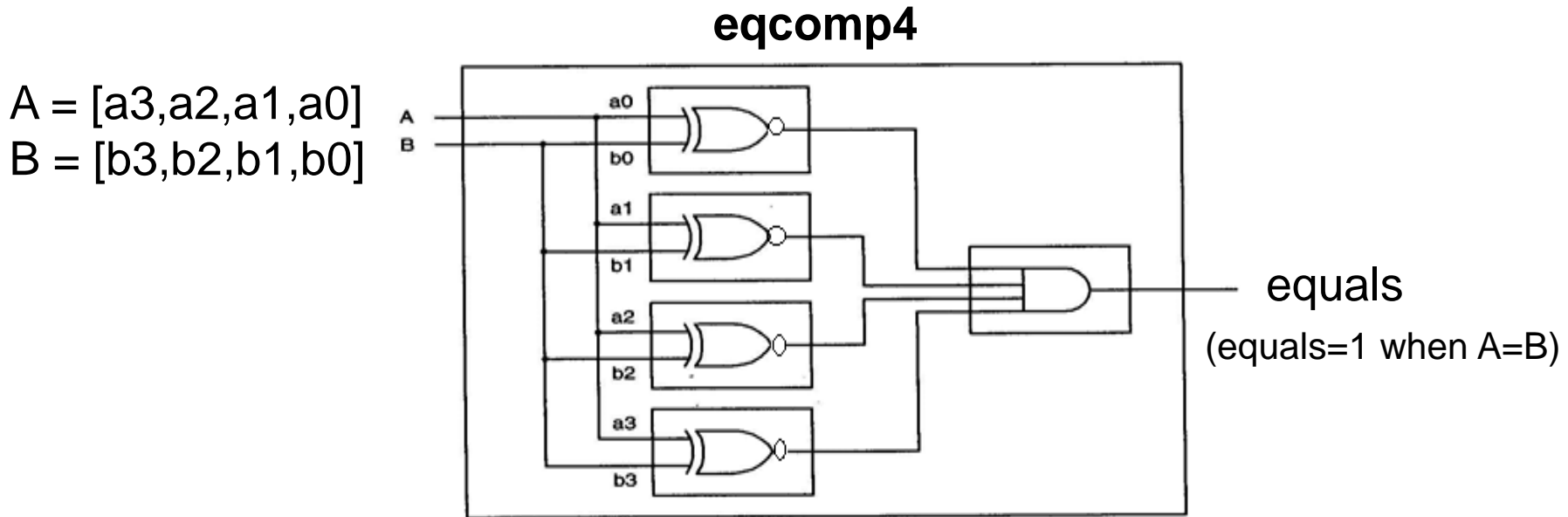
Architecture Body

Define the internal operations of the entity (desired functions)



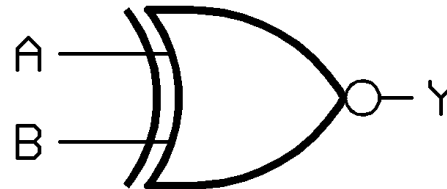
Example: 4-bit Comparator in VHDL (1/2)

- **Schematic Circuit** of a 4-bit Comparator



*Recall: Exclusive NOR (XNOR)

- When A=B, Output Y = 0
- Otherwise, Output Y = 1



Truth Table

A	B	Y
0	0	1
0	1	0
1	0	0
1	1	1

Example: 4-bit Comparator in VHDL (2/2)

- Code of 4-bit Comparator in VHDL:

eqcomp4.vhd

```
1  --the code starts here , "a comment"
```

**Library
Declaration**

```
2  library IEEE;
```

```
3  use IEEE.std_logic_1164.all;
```

**Entity
Declaration**

```
4  entity eqcomp4 is
```

```
5  port (a, b: in std_logic_vector(3 downto 0 ) ;
```

```
6      equals: out std_logic);
```

```
7  end eqcomp4;
```

**Architecture
Body**

```
8  architecture arch_eqcomp4 of eqcomp4 is
```

```
9  begin
```

```
10     equals <= '1' when (a = b) else '0';
```

```
11  -- "comment" equals is active high
```

```
12 end arch_eqcomp4;
```

Entity Declaration



Entity enclosed by the entity name **eqcomp4** (entered by the user)

port defines the I/O pins

1 --the code starts here , "a comment"

2 library IEEE;

3 use IEEE.std_logic_1164.all;

4 entity **eqcomp4** is

5 **port** (a, b: in std_logic_vector(3 **downto** 0) ;

6 **equals: out std_logic**);

7 end **eqcomp4**;

8 architecture arch_eqcomp4 of eqcomp4 is

9 begin

10 equals <= '1' when (a = b) else '0';

11 -- "comment" equals is active high

12 end arch_eqcomp4;

Library
Declaration

Entity
Declaration

Architecture
Body

a, b, equals are I/O signals

downto: define a bus



- An **I/O signal** (or I/O pin) can
 - Carry logic information.
 - Be implemented as a wire in hardware.
 - Be “in”, “out”, “inout”, “buffer” (modes of I/O pin)
- There are many **logic types** of signals
 - 1) **bit**: can be logic 1 or 0 only
 - 2) **std_logic**: can be 1, 0, Z (high impedance), ..., etc
 - Standard logic (an IEEE standard)
 - 3) **std_logic_vector**: a group of wires (a **bus**)
 - a, b: in `std_logic_vector(3 downto 0)`; in VHDL
 - a(0), a(1), a(2), a(3), b(0), b(1), b(2), b(3) are **std_logic** signals

Class Exercise 1.1

Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

```
1  library IEEE;                                eqcomp4.vhd
2  use IEEE.std_logic_1164.all;
3  entity eqcomp4 is
4  port (a, b: in std_logic_vector(3 downto 0 );
5         equals: out std_logic);
6  end eqcomp4;
7  architecture arch_eqcomp4 of eqcomp4 is
8  begin
9         equals <= '1' when (a = b) else '0';
10 end arch_eqcomp4;
```

- How many input and output pins are there in the code?

Answer: _____

- What are their names and their types?

Answer: _____

- What is the difference between `std_logic` and `std_logic_vector`?

Answer: _____

Class Exercise 1.2

Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

```
1 entity test12 is
2 port (in1, in2: in std_logic;
3       out1: out std_logic);
4 end test12;
5 architecture test12arch of test12 is
6 begin
7     out1 <= in1 or in2;
8 end test12_arch;
```

test1.vhd

- Give line numbers of (1) entity declaration and (2) arch. body.
Answer: _____
- Find an error in the VHDL code.
Answer: _____
- Draw the schematic chip and names the pins.
Answer: _____
- Underline the words that are defined by users in the code.
Answer: _____

Modes of I/O Pins



- Modes of I/O pin should be explicitly specified in **port** of entity declaration:

Example:

```
entity do_care is port (  
    s: in std_logic_vector(1 downto 0);  
    y: buffer std_logic);  
end do_care;
```

- There are 4 modes of I/O pins:
 - 1) **in**: Data flows **in** only
 - 2) **out**: Data flows **out** only (cannot be read back by the entity)
 - 3) **inout**: Data flows **bi-directionally** (i.e., in or out)
 - 4) **buffer**: Similar to **out** but it can be **read back** by the entity

Class Exercise 1.3

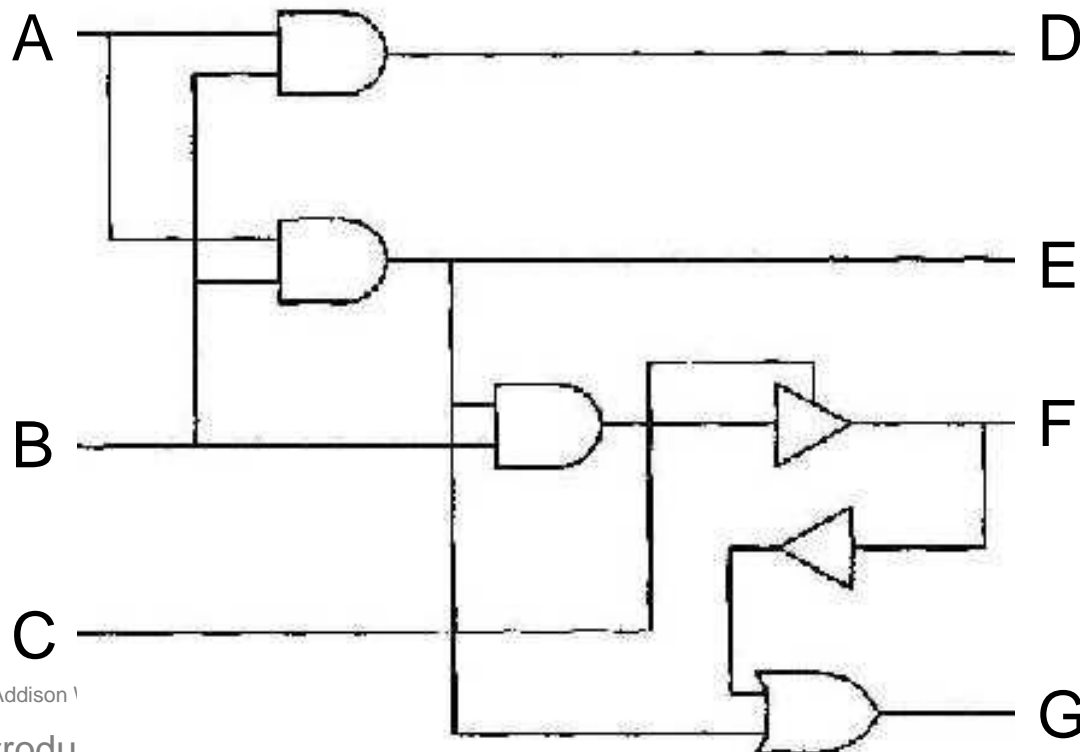
Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

- State the difference between out and buffer.

Answer: _____

- Based on the following schematic, identify the modes of the IO pins.



[Reviews for
Common
Logic Gates](#)

Architecture Body (More in Lec03)



- **Architecture Body:** Defines the operation of the chip

Example:

```
architecture arch_eqcomp4 of eqcomp4 is
begin
    equals <= '1' when (a = b) else '0';
    -- "comment" equals is active high
end arch_eqcomp4;
```

How to read it?

- **arch_eqcomp4:** the architecture name (entered by the user)
- **equals, a, b:** I/O signal pins designed by the user in the entity declaration
- **begin ... end:** define the internal operation
 - equals <= '1' when (a = b) else '0';
- “--”: comment

Class Exercise 1.4

Student ID: _____ Date: _____
Name: _____

- Draw the schematic circuit for the following code.

```
1  library IEEE;
2  use IEEE.STD_LOGIC_1164.ALL;
3  entity test is
4      port( in1: in std_logic_vector (2 downto 0);
5            out1: out std_logic_vector (3 downto 0));
6  end test;
7  architecture test_arch of test is
8  begin
9      out1(0) <= in1(1);
10     out1(1) <= in1(2);
11     out1(2) <= not(in1(0) and in1(1));
12     out1(3) <= '1';
13 end test_arch ;
```



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Objects: 3 Different Data Objects



- Data objects are assigned **types** and hold **values** of the specified types.
- Data objects belong to one of three classes:
 - 1) **Constants (Global)**: Hold unchangeable values
 - E.g., **constant** `width: INTEGER := 8;`
 - 2) **Signals (Global)**: Represent physical wires
 - E.g., **signal** `count: BIT := '1';`
 - 3) **Variables (Local)**: Used only by programmers for internal representation (less direct relationship to the synthesized hardware)
 - E.g., **variable** `flag: BOOLEAN := TRUE;`
- Data objects must be **declared** before being used.

Constant Objects (Global)



```
constant CONST_NAME: <type> := <value>;
```

Note: Constants must be declared with initialized values.

- **Examples:**

- `constant CONST_NAME: STD_LOGIC := 'Z';`

- `constant CONST_NAME: STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (3
downto 0) := "0-0-";`

- `'-'` is don't care

- **Constants can be declared in**

- Anywhere allowed for declaration.

Signal Objects (Global)



```
signal SIG_NAME: <type> [: <value>];
```

Note: Signals can be declared without initialized values.

- Examples:

- signal s1_bool: BOOLEAN;

- Declared without initialized value

- signal xs1_int1: INTEGER := 175;

- signal su2_bit: BIT := '1';

- Signals can be declared

- Either in the “port” of the entity declaration,

- Or before the “begin” of the architecture body.

Recall: Modes of I/O Pins



- If a signal is declared in **port**, it is used as **I/O pins**.
- **Modes of I/O pin** should be further explicitly specified in **port** of entity declaration:

Example:

```
entity do_care is port(  
    s: in std_logic_vector(1 downto 0);  
    y: buffer std_logic);  
end do_care;
```

- There are **4 modes of I/O pins**:
 - 1) **in**: Data flows **in** only
 - 2) **out**: Data flows **out** only (cannot be read back by the entity)
 - 3) **inout**: Data flows **bi-directionally** (i.e., in or out)
 - 4) **buffer**: Similar to **out** but it can be **read back** by the entity

Variable Objects (Local)



```
variable VAR_NAME: <type> [: <value>];
```

Note: Variables can be declared without initialized values.

- **Examples:**

- variable v1_bool: BOOLEAN:= TRUE;

- variable val_int1: INTEGER:=135;

- variable vv2_bit: BIT;

- Declared without initialized value

- Variables can only be declared/used in the `process` statement in the architecture body (see *Lec03*).

Signals and Variables Assignments



- Both **signals** and **variables** can be declared without initialized values.
- Their values can be assigned after declaration.
 - Syntax of **signal** assignment:

```
SIG_NAME <= <expression>;
```

- Syntax of **variable** assignment:

```
VAR_NAME := <expression>;
```

Class Exercise 1.5

Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

```
1  entity nandgate is
2      port (in1, in2: in STD_LOGIC;
3              out1: out STD_LOGIC);
4  end nandgate;
5  architecture nandgate_arch of nandgate is
6  _____
7  begin
8      connect1 <= in1 and in2;
9      out1 <= not connect1;
10 end nandgate_arch;
```

- Declare a signal named “connect1” in Line 6.
- Can you assign an I/O mode to this signal? Why?

Answer: _____

- Where can we declare signals?

Answer: _____

- Draw the schematic circuit for the code.



- **Data Objects**

- ① **Constant**

- ② **Signal**

- In Entity Declaration (Port): **External I/O Pins**

- Modes of I/O Pins:

- ① In

- ② Out

- ③ Inout

- ④ Buffer

- In Architecture Body: **Internal Signals**

- ③ **Variable**



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- **Identifiers:** Used to represent and **name** an object
 - An object can be constant, signal or variable.
- Rules for naming data objects:
 - 1) Made up of alphabets, numbers, and underscores
 - 2) First character must be a letter
 - 3) Last character CANNOT be an underscore
 - 4) NOT case sensitive
 - Txclk, Txclk, TXCLK, TxClk are all equivalent
 - 5) Two connected underscores are NOT allowed
 - 6) VHDL-reserved words may NOT be used

Class Exercise 1.6

Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

- Determine whether the following identifiers are legal or not. If not, please give your reasons.
 - tx_clk
 - _tx_clk
 - Three_State_Enable
 - 8B10B
 - sel7D
 - HIT_1124
 - large#number
 - link__bar
 - select
 - rx_clk_



- An **alias** is an alternate identifier for an existing object.
 - It is NOT a new object.
 - Referencing the alias is equivalent to the original one.
 - It is often used as a convenient method to identify a range of an array (signal bus) type.
- **Example:**
 - `signal sig_x: std_logic_vector(31 downto 0);`
 - `alias top_x: std_logic_vector (3 downto 0)`
`is sig_x(31 downto 28);`



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Data Types in VHDL



- VHDL is **strongly-typed** language.
 - Data objects of different base types **CANNOT** to assigned to each other without the use of type-conversion.
- A **type** has a set of values and a set of operations.
- Common types can be classified into two classes:
 - Scalar Types
 - Integer Type
 - Floating Type
 - Enumeration Type
 - Physical Type
 - Composite Types
 - Array Type
 - Record Type

Scalar: Integer Type



- An **integer type** can be defined with or without specifying a range.
 - If a range is not specified, VHDL allows integers to have a minimum range of
 - $-2,147,483,647$ to $2,147,483,647$
 - $-(2^{31} - 1)$ to $(2^{31} - 1)$
 - Or a range can be specified, e.g.,
`variable a: integer range 0 to 255;`

Scalar: Floating Type



- Floating point type values are used to approximate real numbers.
- The only predefined floating type is named **REAL**, which includes the range
$$-1.0E38 \text{ to } +1.0E38$$
- Floating point types are rarely used (or even not supported) in code to be **synthesized** (see Lec02).
 - Because of its huge demand of resources.

Scalar: Enumeration Type (1/2)



- How to introduce an abstract concept into a circuit?
- An **enumeration type** is defined by a list of values.
 - The list of values may be defined by users.
 - Example:

```
type colors is (RED, GREEN, BLUE);  
signal my_color: colors;
```

- Enumeration types are often defined for **state machines** (see *Lec04*).
- There are two particularly useful enumeration types predefined by the IEEE 1076/1993 standards.
 - **type** BOOLEAN is (FALSE, TRUE);
 - **type** BIT is ('0', '1');

Scalar: Enumeration Type (2/2)



- An enumerated type is **ordered**.
 - The order in which the values are listed in the type declaration defines their relation.
 - The leftmost value is less than all other values.
 - Each values is greater than the one to the left, and less than the one to the right.
- Example:

```
type colors is (RED, GREEN, BLUE)
signal my_color: colors;
```

- Then a comparison of my_color can be:

```
when my_color >= RED
```

Scalar: Physical Type



- **Physical type** values are used as **measurement units**.
 - They are used mainly in **simulations** (see *Lab01*).
- The only predefined physical type is **TIME**.

- Its primary unit is `fs` (**f****e**mto**s**econds) as follows:

```
type time is range -2147483647 to 2147483647
```

```
units
```

```
    fs;
```

```
    ps = 1000 fs;
```

```
    ns = 1000 ps;
```

```
    us = 1000 ns;
```

```
    ms = 1000 us;
```

```
    sec = 1000 ms;
```

```
    min = 60 sec;
```

```
    hr = 60 min;
```

```
end units;
```

Composite: Array Type



- An object of an **array type** consists of multiple elements of the same type.
- The most commonly used array types are those predefined by the IEEE 1076 and 1164 standards:

```
type BIT_VECTOR is array (NATURAL range <>) of bit;  
type STD_LOGIC_VECTOR is array (NATURAL range <>) of std_logic;
```

 - Their range are not specified (using `range <>`), and only bounded by `NATURAL` (positive integers).
- **Example:**

```
port (a: in std_logic_vector (3 downto 0);  
      b: in std_logic_vector (0 to 3);  
      equals: out std_logic);
```

 - `a, b` are both 4-bit vectors of `std_logic`.

Class Exercise 1.7

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Name: _____

- Given

```
a: std_logic_vector (3 downto 0);
```

- Create a 4-bit bus `c` using “to” instead of “downto”:

- Draw the circuit for this vector assignment `c <= a`

Composite: Record Type



- An object of a **record type** consists of multiple elements of the **different** types.
 - Individual fields of a record can be used by element name.
- **Example:**

```
type iocell is record
    buffer_in: bit_vector(7 downto 0);
    bnable: bit;
    buffer_out: bit_vector(7 downto 0);
end record;
```

- Then we can use the record as follows:

```
signal bus_a: iocell;
signal vec: bit_vector(7 downto 0);
bus_a.buffer_in <= vec;
```

Types and Subtypes



- A **subtype** is a type with a constraint.
 - Subtypes are mostly used to define objects based on existing base types with a constraint.
- Example:
 - Without subtype

```
signal my_byte: bit_vector(7 downto 0);
```
 - With subtype:

```
subtype byte is bit_vector(7 downto 0);  
signal my_byte: byte;
```
- Subtypes are also used to **resolve a base type**.
 - A resolution function is defined by the IEEE 1164 standard.

```
subtype std_logic is resolved std_ulogic;
```

 - Resolved is the name of the resolution function.

Resolved Logic Concept

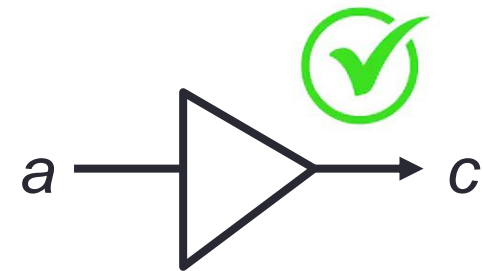


- **Resolved Logic** (Multi-value Signal): Multiple outputs can be connected together to drive a signal.
 - The **resolution function** is used to determine how multiple values from different sources (drivers) for a signal will be reduced to one value.

- **Single-value Signal Assignment:**

```
signal a, c: bit;
```

```
c <= a;
```



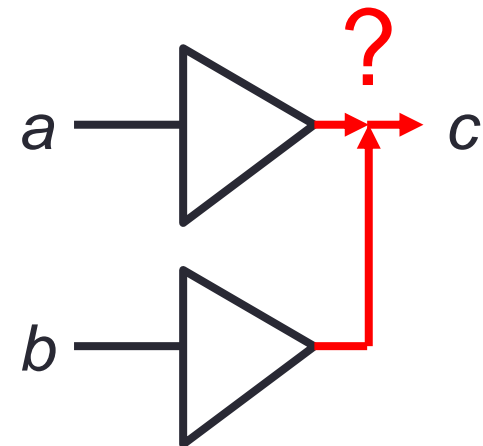
- **Multi-value Signal Assignment:**

```
signal a, b, c: bit;
```

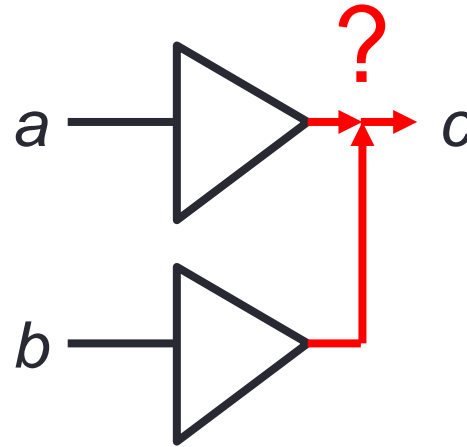
```
c <= a;
```

```
c <= b;
```

← We need to “resolve” it!



std_logic vs. std_ulogic (1/2)



- `std_logic`: a type of **resolved logic**, that means a signal can be driven by 2 inputs.
- `std_`**u**`logic` (“**u**” means unresolved): a type of **unresolved logic**, that means a signal **CANNOT** be driven by 2 inputs.

std_logic vs. std_ulogic (2/2)



- How to use it?

```
library IEEE;
```

```
use IEEE.std_logic_1164.all;
```

```
entity
```

```
architecture
```

IEEE 1164: 9-valued Logic Standard



- 'U': Uninitialized
- 'X': Forcing Unknown
- '0': Forcing 0
- '1': Forcing 1
- 'Z': High Impedance (Float)
- 'W': Weak Unknown
- 'L': Weak 0
- 'H': Weak 1
- '-': Don't care

VHDL Resolution Table

	U	X	0	1	Z	W	L	H	-
U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
X	U	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
0	U	X	0	X	0	0	0	0	X
1	U	X	X	1	1	1	1	1	X
Z	U	X	0	1	Z	W	L	H	X
W	U	X	0	1	W	W	W	W	X
L	U	X	0	1	L	W	L	W	X
H	U	X	0	1	H	W	W	H	X

- Rule: When 2 signals meet, the forcing signal dominates.

bit vs. std_logic



- `bit` is a predefined type and can only represent the **idealized** value 0 or 1.
 - `type bit IS ('0', '1');`
- `std_logic` provides more **realistic** modeling of signals within a digital system.
 - `type std_ulogic IS ('U', 'X', '0', '1', 'Z', 'W', 'L', 'H', '-');`
 - `SUBTYPE std_logic IS resolved std_ulogic;`
- **Type-conversion** functions (i.e., `to_bit` & `to_std_logic`) are needed for the assignment between these two.
 - Recall: VHDL is **strongly-typed** language.
 - Data objects of different base types **CANNOT** be assigned to each other without the use of type-conversion.



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Attributes (1/2)



- An **attribute** provides information about items such as entities, architecture, types, and signals.
 - There are several useful predefined value, signal, and range attributes (see [VHDL Predefined Attributes](#)).

- **Example:**

```
type count is integer range 0 to 127;
```

```
type states is (idle, decision, read, write);
```

```
type word is array(15 downto 0) of std_logic;
```

– Then

```
count' left = 0
```

```
count' right = 127
```

```
states' left = idle
```

```
states' right = write
```

```
word' left = 15
```

```
word' right = 0
```

Attributes (2/2)

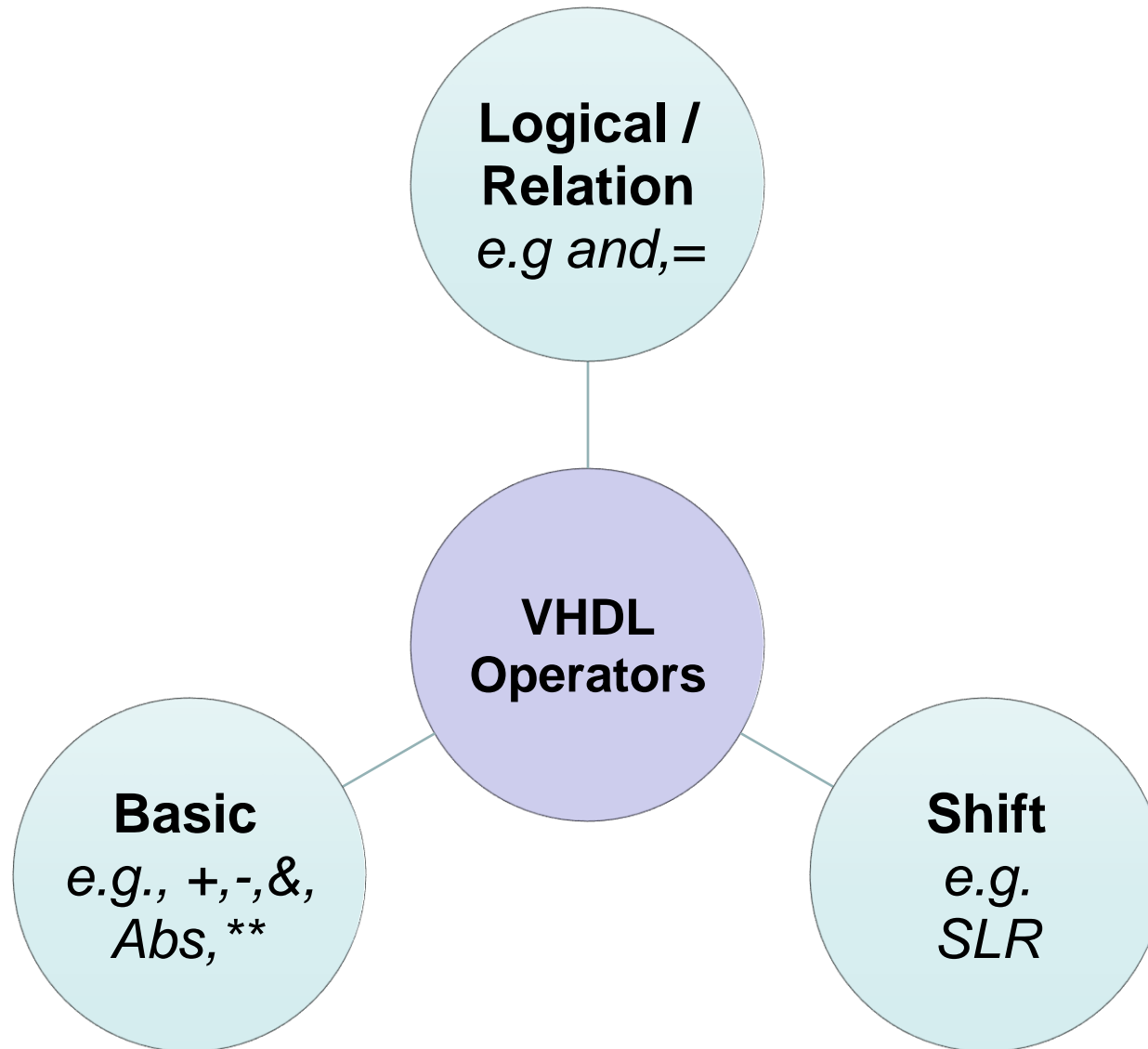


- Another important signal attribute is the `'event`.
 - This attribute yields a Boolean value of TRUE if an event has just occurred on the signal.
 - It is used primarily to determine if a **clock** has transitioned.
- Example (*more in Lec04*):

```
...  
port (my_in, clock: in std_logic;  
      my_out: out std_logic);  
...  
if clock = '1' and clock'event then  
    my_out <= my_in;
```



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Basic Operators



- +** arithmetic add, for integer, float.
- arithmetic subtract, for integer, float.
- *** multiplication
- /** division
- rem** remainder
- mod** modulo ($A \text{ mod } B = A - (B * N), N \in \text{integer}$)
- abs** absolute value
- **** exponentiation (e.g., $2^{**}3$ is 8)
- &** concatenation (e.g., '0' & '1' \rightarrow "01")

Shift / Rotate Operators



- Logical Shift and Rotate

- **sll** shift left logical, fill blank with 0
- **srl** shift right logical, fill blank with 0
- **rol** rotate left logical, circular operation
 - E.g. “10010101” rol 3 is “10101100”
- **ror** rotate right logical, circular operation

- Arithmetic Shift

- **sla** shift left arithmetic, fill blank with 0, same as **sll**
- **sra** shift right arithmetic, fill blank with sign bit (MSB)

Logical / Relation Operators

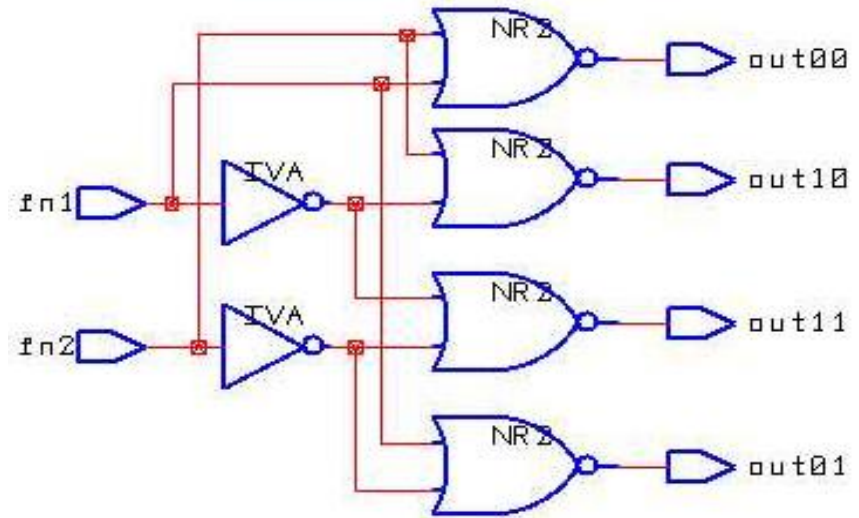


- **Logical Operators:** and, or, nand, nor, xor, xnor, not have their usual meanings.
 - E.g., nand is NOT associative
 - $(A \text{ nand } B) \text{ nand } C \neq A \text{ nand } (B \text{ nand } C)$
 - $A \text{ nand } B \text{ nand } C$ is illegal
- **Relation Operators** (result is Boolean)
 - = equal
 - /= not equal
 - < less than
 - <= less than or equal
 - > greater than
 - >= greater than or equal

Class Exercise 1.8

Student ID: _____ Date: _____
Name: _____

- Consider the circuit:
 - What is this circuit for?
Answer: _____
 - Fill in the truth table.
 - Fill in the blanks of code.



```
1  entity test16 is
2  port (in1,in2: in std_logic;
3         out00,out01,out10,out11: out std_logic);
4  end test16;
5  architecture test16_arch of test16 is
6  begin
7      out00 <= not ( _____ );
8      out10 <= not ( _____ );
9      out11 <= not ( _____ );
10     out01 <= not ( _____ );
11 end test16_arch;
```

in1	in2	out 00	out 10	out 11	out 01
0	0				
1	0				
1	1				
0	1				



- Basic Structure of a VHDL Module
 - ① Library Declaration
 - ② Entity Declaration
 - ③ Architecture Body
- Data Objects, Identifiers, Types, and Attributes
 - Data Objects
 - ① Constant
 - ② Signal
 - ③ Variable
 - Data Identifier
 - Data Types
 - Data Attributes
- Operators in VHDL

Review: Basic Gates in Logic Circuits



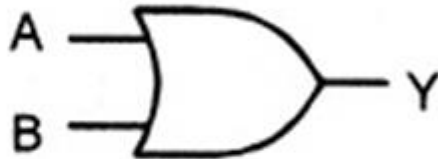
2-input
AND gate



A	B	Y
0	0	0
0	1	0
1	0	0
1	1	1

$$Y = A \cdot B$$

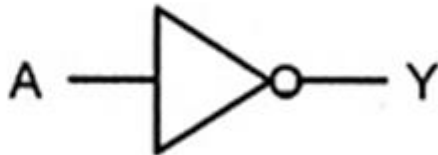
2-input
OR gate



A	B	Y
0	0	0
0	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	1

$$Y = A + B$$

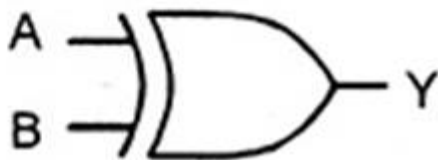
Inverter
(NOT gate)



A	Y
0	1
1	0

$$Y = \bar{A}$$

2-input
EX-OR
gate



A	B	Y
0	0	0
0	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	0

$$Y = A \oplus B$$

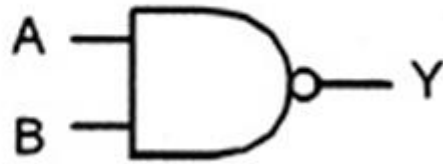
Review: NAND and NOR Gates



- In many technologies, implementation of **NAND gates** or **NOR gates** is easier than that of AND or OR gates.

– NAND Gate:

2-input
NAND
gate

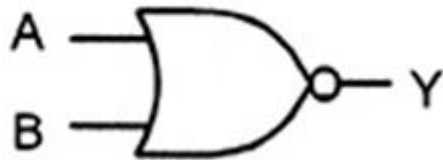


A	B	Y
0	0	1
0	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	0

$$Y = \overline{A \cdot B}$$

– NOR Gate:

2-input
NOR
gate



A	B	Y
0	0	1
0	1	0
1	0	0
1	1	0

$$Y = \overline{A + B}$$

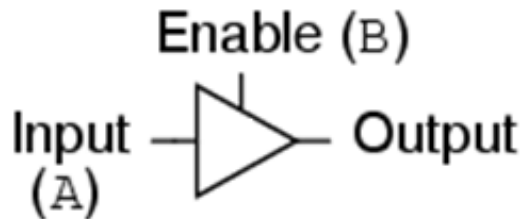
- Any logic function can be realized using only NAND gates or only NOR gates.

Review: Tristate Logic



- The concept of **tristate logic** is also essential in digital system designs.
 - Directly connecting outputs of two gates together might not operate properly, and might cause damage to the circuit.
 - One way is to use **tristate buffers**.
- Tristate buffers are gates with a **high impedance state (High-Z or Z)** in addition to high and low logic states.
 - High impedance state is equivalent to an **open circuit**.

Tristate buffer symbol



Truth table

A	B	Output
0	0	High-Z
0	1	0
1	0	High-Z
1	1	1

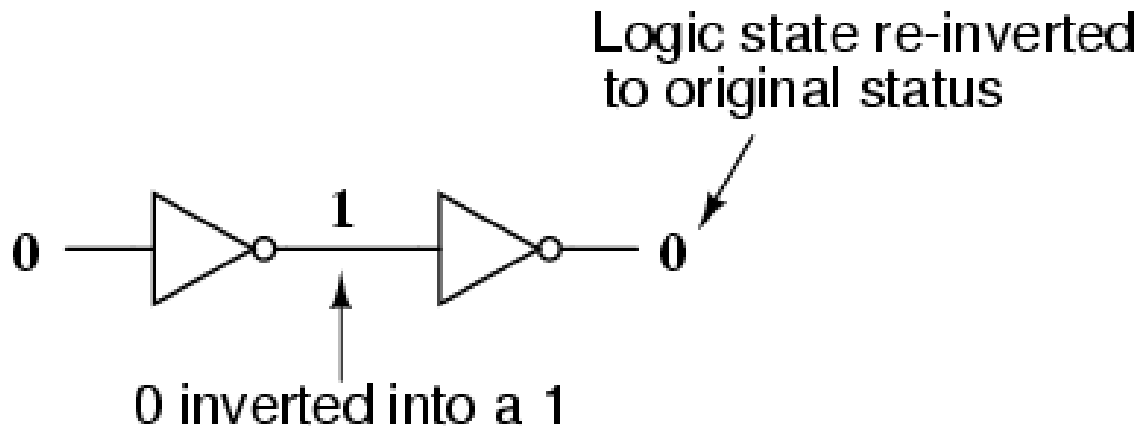


Review: Buffer Gate

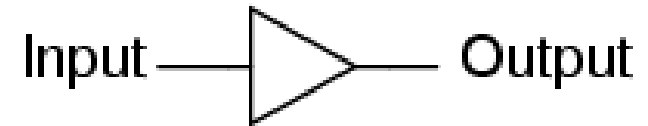


- **Double inversion** would “cancel” each other out.
 - A weak signal may be **amplified** by means of two inverters.
- For this purpose, a special logic gate called a **buffer gate** is manufactured to perform the double inversion.
 - Its symbol is simply a **triangle**, **with no inverting “bubble”** on the output terminal:

Double inversion



"Buffer" gate



Input	Output
0	0
1	1