Main Idea of a Cache - keep a copy of frequently used information as “close” (w.r.t access time) to the processor as possible.

Steps when the CPU generates a memory request:
1) check the (faster) cache first
2) If the addressed memory value is in the cache (called a hit), then no need to access memory
3) If the addressed memory value is NOT in the cache (called a miss), then transfer the block of memory containing the reference to cache. (The CPU is stalled waiting while this occurs)
4) The cache supplies the memory value from the cache.

Effective Memory Access Time
Suppose that the hit time is 10 ns, the cache miss penalty is 1600 ns, and the hit rate is 99%.

Effective Access Time \approx (hit time \ast hit probability) + (miss penalty \ast miss probability)

Effective Access Time = 10 \ast 0.99 + 1600 \ast (1 - 0.99) = 9.9 + 16.0 = 25.9 \text{ ns}

(One way to reduce the miss penalty is to not have the cache wait for the whole block to be read from memory before supplying the accessed memory word.)
Fortunately, programs exhibit **locality of reference** that helps achieve high hit-rates:

1) **spatial locality** - if a (logical) memory address is referenced, nearby memory addresses will tend to be referenced soon.

2) **temporal locality** - if a memory address is referenced, it will tend to be referenced again soon.
**Cache** - Small fast memory between the CPU and RAM/Main memory.

Example:
- 32-bit address
- 512 KB ($2^{19}$)
- 8 byte per block/line
- byte-addressable memory

\[
\text{Number of Cache Line} = \frac{\text{size of cache}}{\text{size of line}} = \frac{2^{19}}{2^{3}} = 2^{16}
\]

Three Types of Cache:
1) Direct-mapped - a memory block maps to a single cache line

![Diagram of Direct-Mapped Cache](image)
Cache - Small fast memory between the CPU and RAM/Main memory.

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- 8 byte per block/line

Number of Cache Line = \frac{\text{size of cache}}{\text{size of line}} = \frac{2^{19}}{2^3} = 2^{16}

2) Fully-Associative Cache - a memory block can map to any cache line

32-bit address:

```
tag          offset
29            3
```

Advantage: Flexibility on what’s in the cache
Disadvantage: Complex circuit to compare all tags of the cache with the tag in the target address
Therefore, they are expensive and slower so use only for small caches (say 8-64 lines)

Replacement algorithms - on a miss of a full cache, we must select a block in the cache to replace
- LRU - replace the cache block that has not been used for the longest time (need additional bits)
- Random - select a block randomly (only slightly worse that LRU)
- FIFO - select the block that has been in the cache for the longest time (slightly worse that LRU)

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3) Set-Associative Cache - a memory block can map to a small (2, 4, or 8) set of cache lines

Common Possibilities:

- 2-way set associative - each memory block can map to either of two lines in the cache
- 4-way set associative - each memory block can map to either of four lines in the cache

\[
\text{Number of Sets} = \frac{\text{number of cache lines}}{\text{size of each set}} = \frac{2^{16}}{4} = \frac{2^{16}}{2^2} = 2^{14}
\]

**4-way Set Associative Cache**

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<th>Other Bits</th>
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32-bit address:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
15 & 14 & 3 \\
\text{tag} & \text{set #} & \text{offset}
\end{array}
\]
**Block/Line Size**
The larger the line size:
- fewer cache line for the same size cache
- improves hit rate since larger blocks are read when a miss occurs
- larger miss penalty since more words are read from memory when a miss occurs

**Number of Caches:**
Issues:
- Number of cache levels

![Cache Diagram]

- unified vs. split caches
  split caches - separate smaller caches for data and instructions
  unified cache - data and instructions in the same cache

Advantages of each:
- split caches - reduces contention for “memory” between instruction and data accesses
- unified caches - balances the load between instructions and data automatically
  (e.g., a tight loop might need more data blocks than instruction blocks)
Types of Cache Misses:

- Compulsory Misses: misses due to the first access to a block

- Capacity Misses: misses on blocks that were in the cache, but were forced out due to the capacity of the cache.

- Conflict/Collision Misses: misses due to conflict caused by the direct or set-associated mapping that are eliminated by using fully-associative mapping

Studying the performance of a cache vs. characteristics of the cache:
Write Policy - do we keep the cache and memory copy of a block identical???

Just reading a shared variable causes no problems - all caches have the same value
Writing can cause a “cache-coherency problem”

Write Policies
write back - CPU only changes local cache copy until that block is replaced, then it is written back to memory (a UPDATE/DIRTY bit is associated with each cache line to indicate if it has been modified). If we assume that CPU 0 writes the block back to memory before CPU 1, then X’s resulting value will be 6. Thereby, discarding the effect of “X:=X+2”.

Disadvantage(s) of writeback?
Advantage(s) of writeback?

write through - on a write to a cache block, write to the main memory copy to keep it up to date
To avoid stalling the CPU on a write, a write buffer can be used to allow the CPU to continue execution without stalling to wait for the write.

write miss options:
write allocate - the block written to is read into the cache before updating
no-write allocate - no block is allocated in the cache and only the lower-level memory is modified

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**Cache Coherency Solutions**

a) bus watching with write through / Snoopy caches - caches eavesdrop on the bus for other caches write requests. If the cache contains a block written by another cache, it take some action such as invalidating it’s cache copy.

![Diagram showing bus watching with write through / Snoopy caches]

The MESA protocol is a common cache-coherency protocol.

b) noncachable memory - part of memory is designated as noncachable, so the memory copy is the only copy. Access to this part of memory always generate a “miss”.

![Diagram showing noncachable memory]

c) Hardware transparency - additional hardware is added to update all caches and memory at once on a write.