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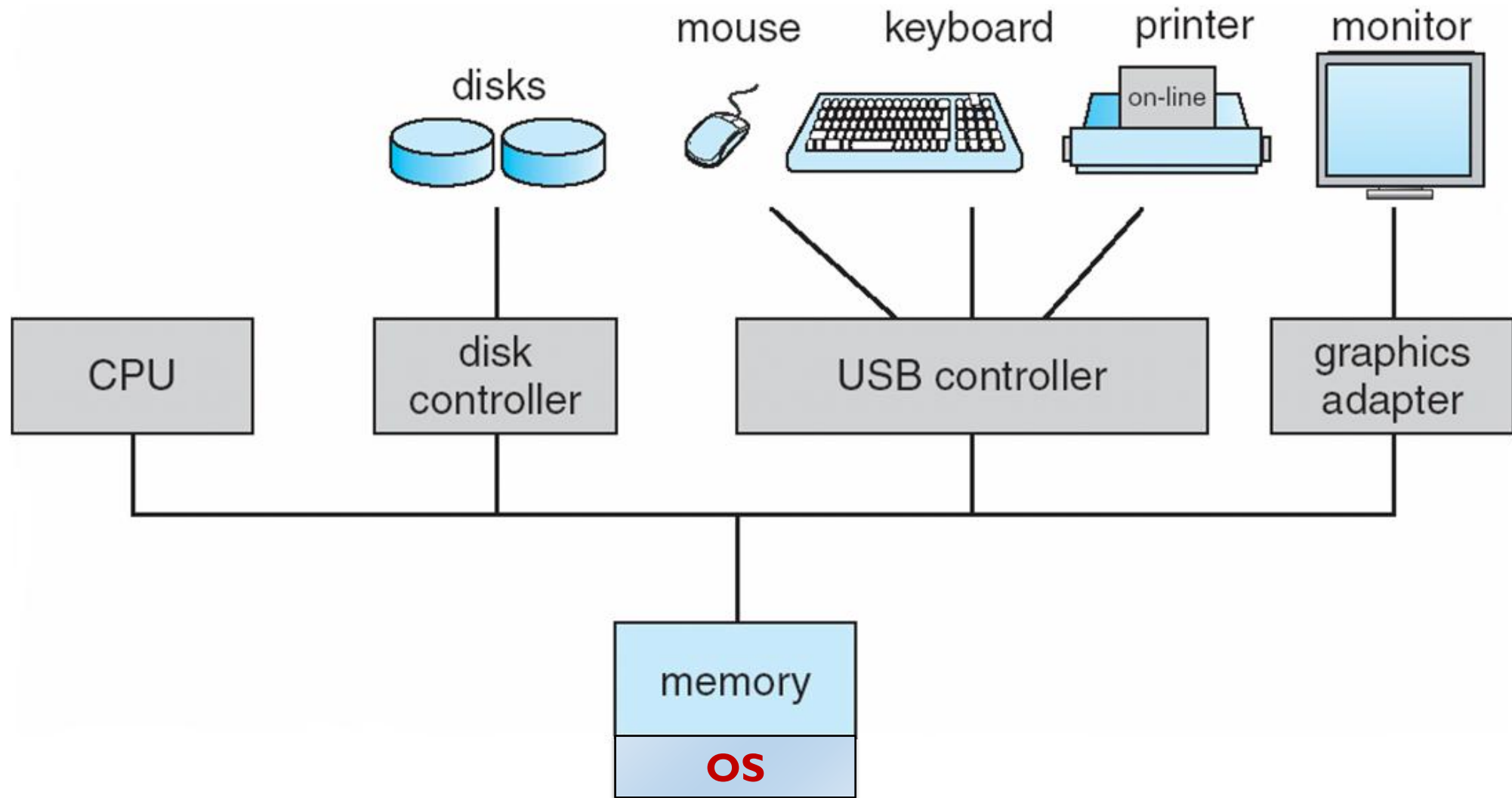
Seoul National University

Fall 2026

Architectural Support for OS

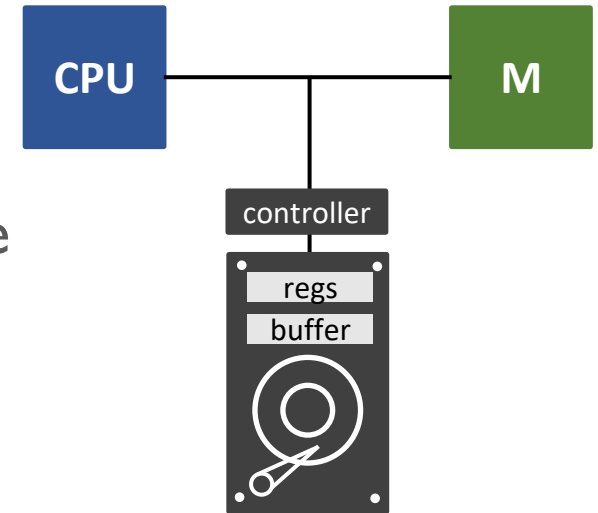


Computer System Organization



Issue #1: I/O

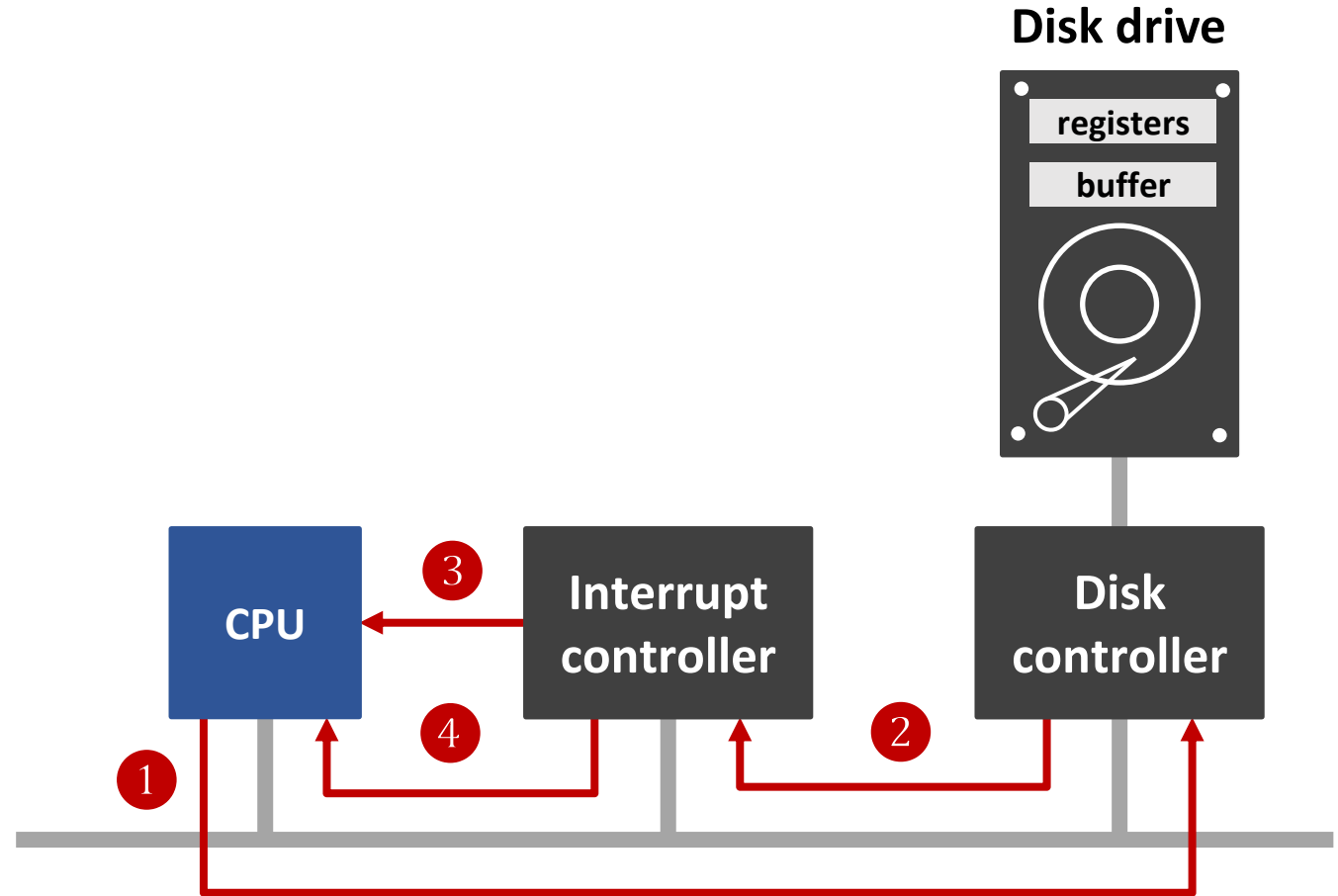
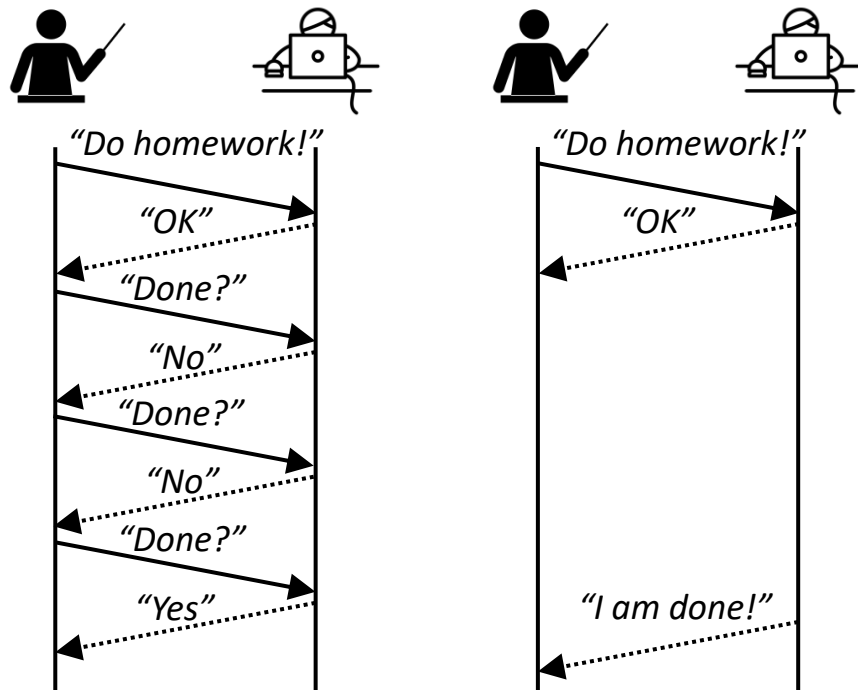
- How to perform I/Os efficiently?
 - I/O devices and CPU can execute concurrently
 - Each device controller is in charge of a particular device type
 - Each device has a local buffer
 - CPU issues specific commands to I/O devices
 - CPU moves data between main memory and local buffers
- CPU is a precious resource; it should be freed from time-consuming tasks
 - Checking whether the issued command has been completed or not
 - Moving data between main memory and device buffers



Interrupts

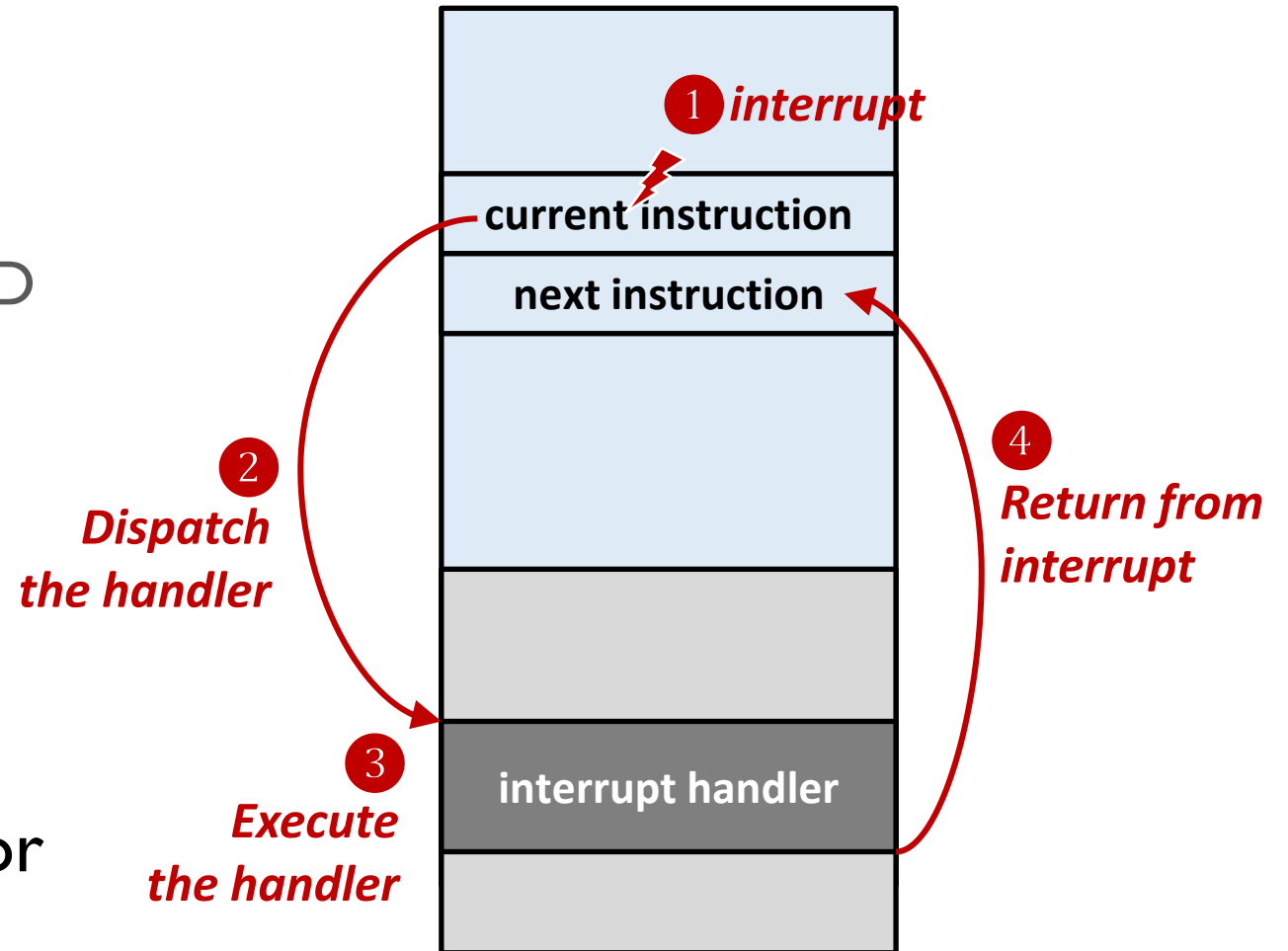
■ How does the kernel notice an I/O has finished?

- _____
- Hardware interrupt



Interrupt Handling

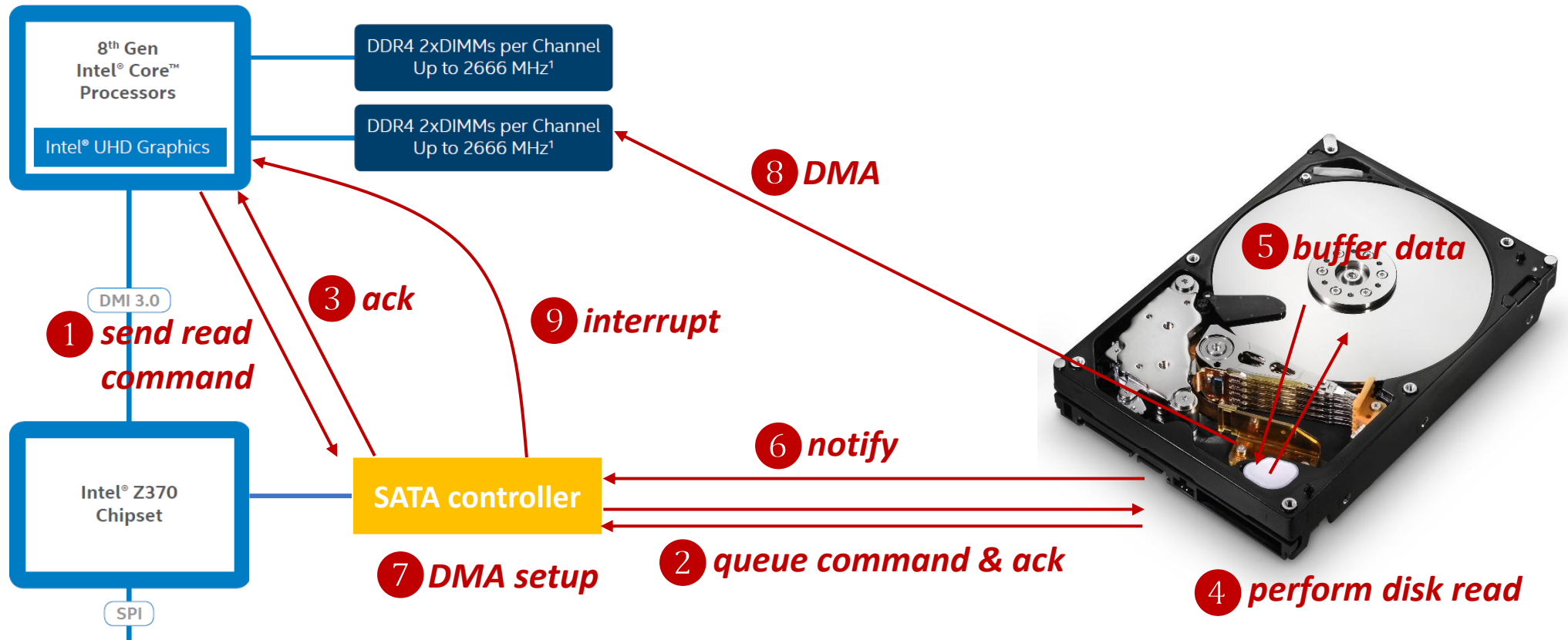
- Preserves the state of the CPU
 - In a fixed location
 - In a location indexed by the device ID
 - On the system stack
- Determines the type
 - Polling
 - Vectored interrupt system
- Transfers control to the interrupt service routine (ISR) or interrupt handler



Data Transfer Modes

- Programmed I/O (PIO)
 - CPU is involved in moving data between I/O devices and memory
 - By special I/O instructions vs. by memory-mapped I/O
 - e.g., keyboard, mouse, ...
- DMA (Direct Memory Access)
 - Used for high-speed I/O devices to transmit information at close to memory speeds
 - Device controller transfers blocks of data from the local buffer directly to main memory (or vice versa) without CPU intervention
 - DMA controller oversees the overall data transfer
 - Only an interrupt is generated per request

Disk I/O Example



Issue #2: Protection

- How to prevent user applications from harming the system?
 - What if an application accesses disk drives directly?
 - What if an application executes the HLT instruction?

HLT—Halt

Opcode	Instruction	Op/ En	64-Bit Mode	Compat/ Leg Mode	Description
F4	HLT	NP	Valid	Valid	Halt

Description

Stops instruction execution and places the processor in a HALT state.

Protected Instructions

- Protected or _____ instructions
 - The ability to perform certain tasks that cannot be done from user mode
 - Direct I/O access
 - e.g., in / out instructions in x86
 - Accessing system registers
 - Control and status registers (CSRs)
 - System table locations (e.g., interrupt handler table)
 - Setting special “mode bits”, etc.
 - Memory state management
 - Page table updates, page table base address, TLB loads, etc.
 - HLT instruction in x86
 - ...

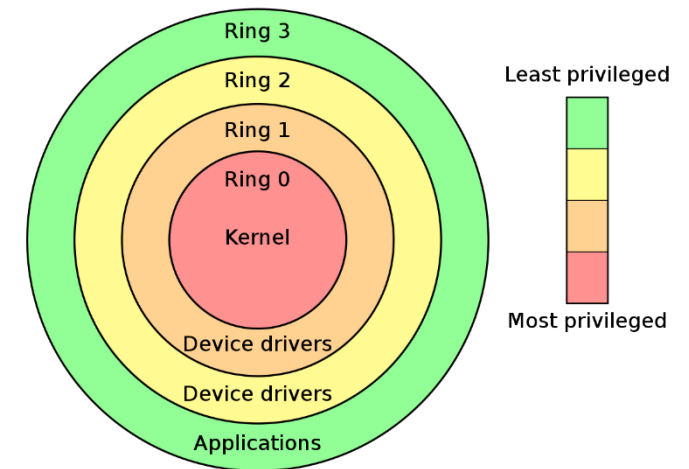
CPU Modes of Operation

■ Kernel mode vs. user mode

- How does the CPU know if a protected instruction can be executed?
- The architecture must support at least two modes of operation:

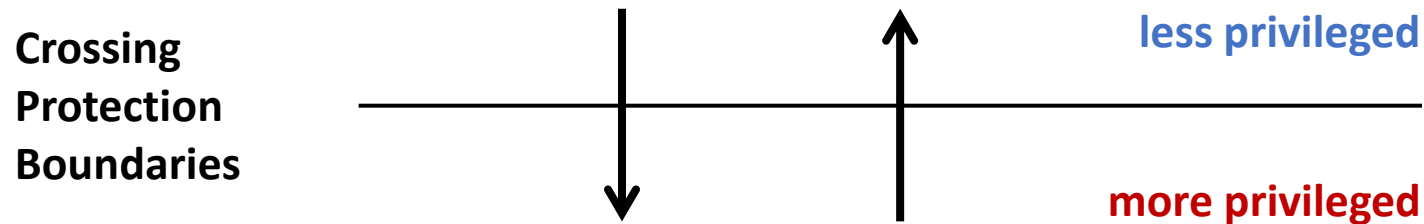
kernel and **user** mode

- 4 privilege levels in x86_64: Ring 0 > 1 > 2 > 3
 - 4 privilege levels in ARM: EL3 > EL2 > EL1 > EL0
 - 3 privilege levels in RISC-V: Machine > Supervisor > User
 - Mode can be set by a status bit in a protected register
 - IA-32: Current Privilege Level (CPL) in CS register
 - ARM: Mode field in CPSR register
- ## ■ Protected instructions can only be executed in the corresponding privileged level



Issue #3: Servicing Requests

- How to ask services to the OS?
 - How can an application read a file if it cannot access disk drives?
 - Even a “printf()” call requires hardware access
- User programs must ask the OS to do something privileged



System Calls

- OS defines a set of system calls
 - Programming interface to the services provided by OS
 - OS protects the system by rejecting illegal requests
 - OS may impose a quota on a certain resource
 - OS may consider fairness while sharing a resource
- A system call is a _____ procedure call
 - System call routines are in the OS code
 - Executed in the kernel mode
 - On entry, user mode → kernel mode switch
 - On exit, CPU mode is changed back to the user mode

System Calls Example

■ POSIX vs. Win32

Category	POSIX	Win32	Description
Process Management	fork	CreateProcess	Create a new process (CreateProcess = fork + exec)
	waitpid	WaitForSingleObject	Wait for a process to exit
	execve	(none)	Execute a new program
	exit	ExitProcess	Terminate execution
	kill	(none)	Send a signal
File Management	open	CreateFile	Create a file or open an existing file
	close	CloseHandle	Close a file
	read	ReadFile	Read data from a file
	write	WriteFile	Write data to a file
	lseek	SetFilePointer	Move the file pointer
	stat	GetFileAttributesEx	Get various file attributes
	chmod	(none)	Change the file access permission
File System Management	mkdir	CreateDirectory	Create a new directory
	rmdir	RemoveDirectory	Remove an empty directory
	link	(none)	Make a link to a file
	unlink	DeleteFile	Destroy an existing file
	chdir	SetCurrentDirectory	Change the current working directory
	mount	(none)	Mount a file system

Exceptional Events

■ Interrupts

- Generated by hardware devices
 - Triggered by a signal in INTR or NMI pins (x86_64)
- Asynchronous

■ Exceptions

- Generated by software executing instructions
 - Unintentional: Divide-by-zero, illegal instruction, ...
 - Intentional: **syscall** instruction in x86_64 or **ecall** instruction in RISC-V
- Synchronous
- Exception handling is same as interrupt handling

Exceptions in x86_64

- Traps
 - Intentional
 - System call traps, breakpoint traps, special instructions, ...
 - Return control to “next” instruction
- **Faults**
 - Unintentional but possibly recoverable
 - Page faults (recoverable), protection faults (unrecoverable), ...
 - Either re-executing faulting (“current”) instruction or abort
- Aborts
 - Unintentional and unrecoverable (parity error, machine check, ...)
 - Abort the current program or halt the system

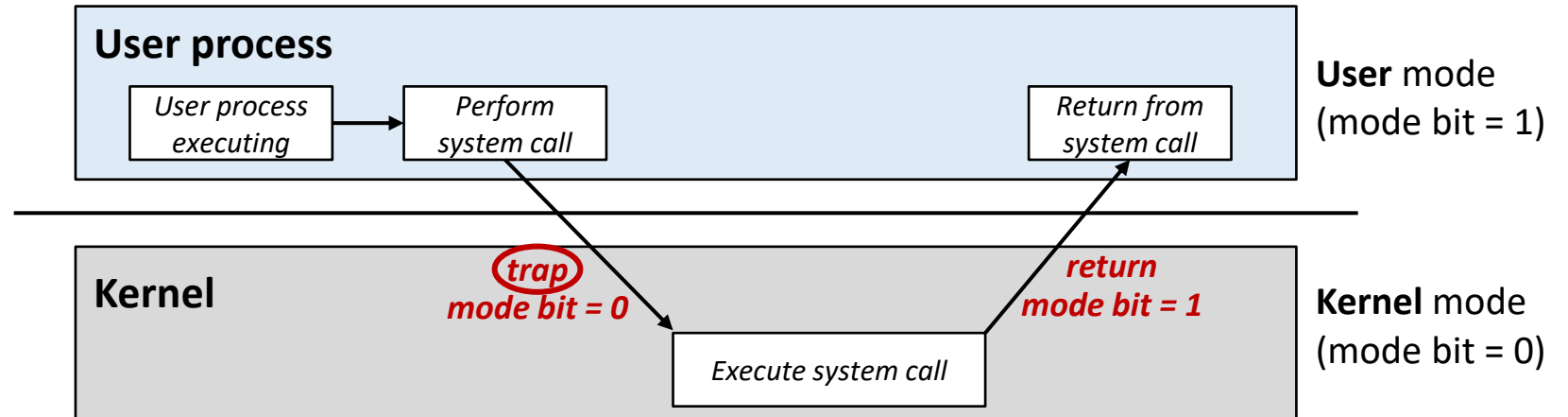
OS Trap

- There must be a special “trap” instruction that:
 - Causes an exception, which invokes a kernel handler
 - Passes a parameter indicating which system call to invoke
 - Saves caller’s state (registers, mode bits)
 - Returns to user mode when done with restoring its state
 - OS must verify caller’s parameters (e.g., pointers)

Examples:

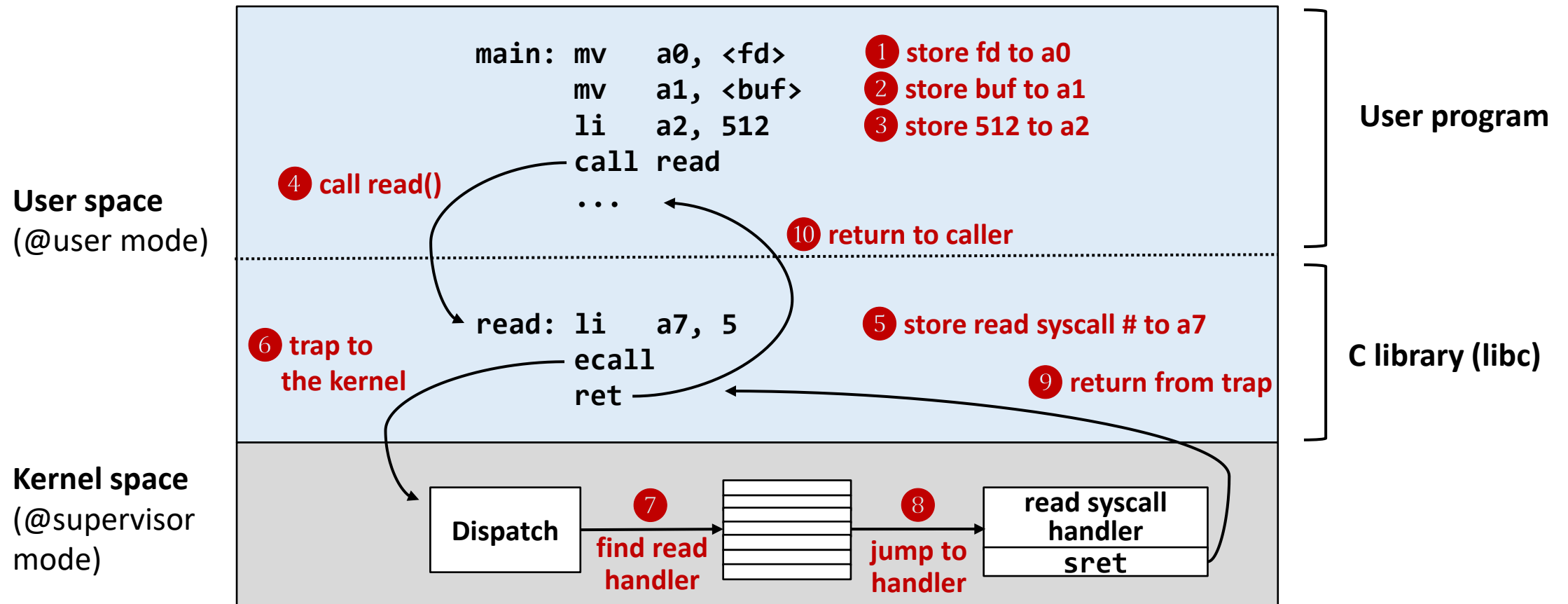
SYSCALL instruction (x86_64)

ECALL instruction (RISC-V)

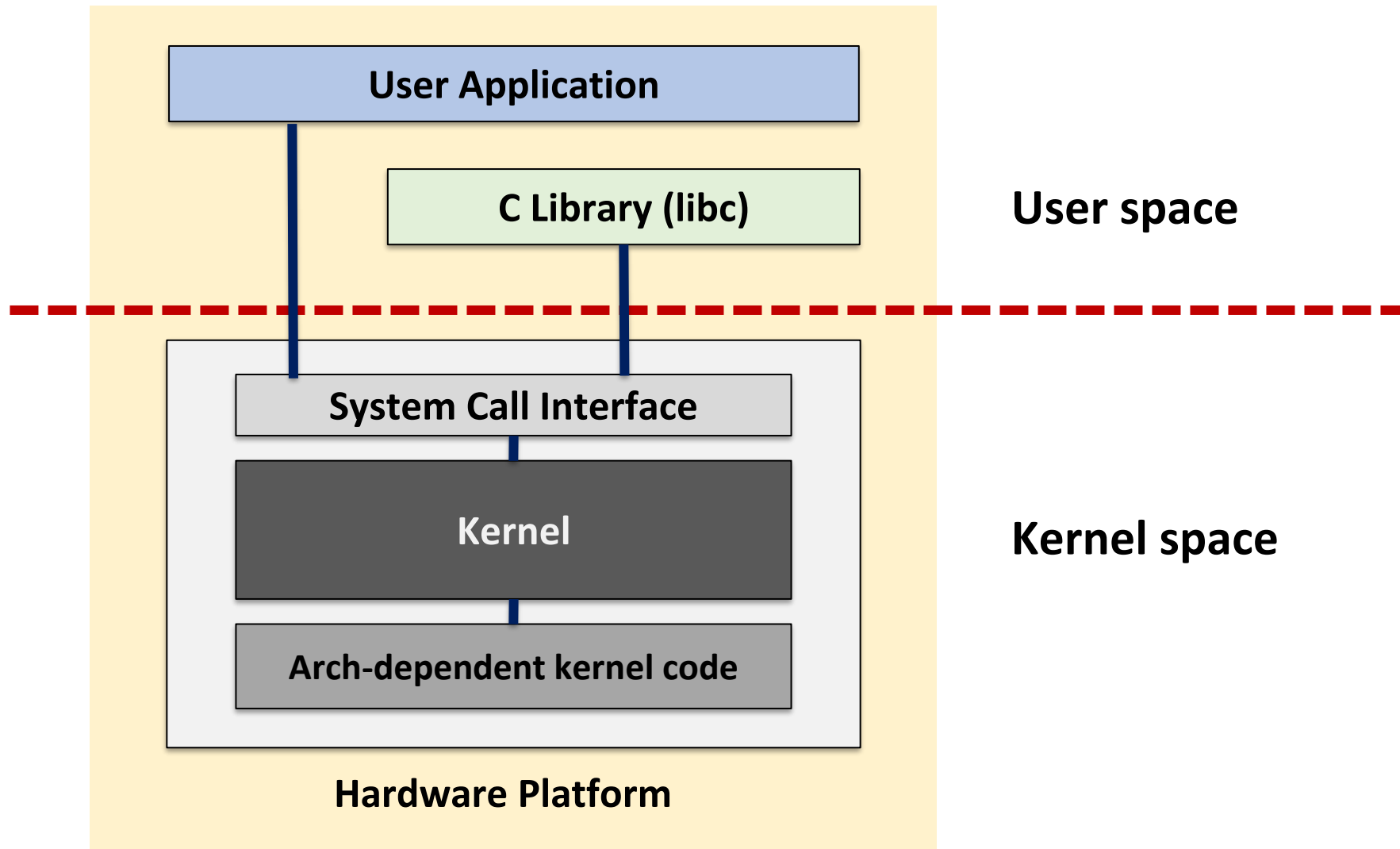


Implementing System Calls in RISC-V

▪ `count = read(fd, buf, 512);`



Typical (Monolithic) OS Structure



Issue #4: Control

- How to take the control of the CPU back from the running program?
- Cooperative approach
 - Each application periodically transfers the control of the CPU to OS by calling various system calls
 - A special system call can be used just to release the CPU (e.g., `yield()`)
 - Can be used when _____
 - What if a process ends up in an infinite loop?
(due to a bug or with a malicious intent)

Timers

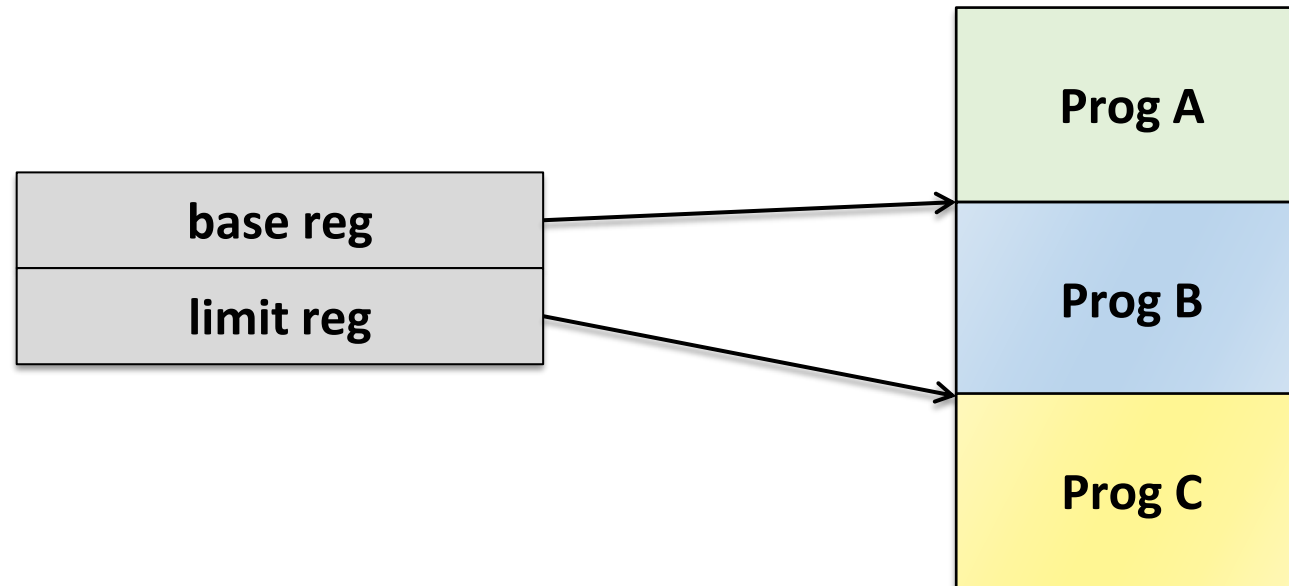
- A non-cooperative approach
 - Use a hardware timer that generates a periodic interrupt
 - The timer interrupt transfers control back to OS
- The OS preloads the timer with a time to interrupt
 - 10ms for Linux 2.4, 1ms for Linux 2.6, 4ms for Linux 5.5
 - 100ms for xv6
- The timer is privileged
 - Only the OS can load it

Issue #5: Memory Protection

- How can we protect memory?
 - Unlike the other hardware resources, we allow applications to access memory directly without OS intervention. Why?
- From malicious users:
OS must protect user applications from each other
- For integrity and security:
OS must also protect itself from user applications

Simplest Memory Protection

- Use base and limit registers
- Base and limit registers are loaded by OS before starting an application
- CPU generates an exception if the memory address is out of bound
- Can be used in a simple embedded environment



Virtual Memory

- Modern CPUs are equipped with memory management hardware
 - MMU (Memory Management Unit)
- MMU provides more sophisticated memory protection mechanisms
 - Virtual memory
 - Paging: page tables, page protection, TLBs
 - Segmentation: segment tables, segment protection
- Manipulation of MMU is a privileged operation

Issue #6: Synchronization

- How to coordinate concurrent activities?
 - What if multiple concurrent streams access the shared data?
 - Interrupt can occur at any time and may interfere with the interrupted code

```
LOAD R1 ← Mem[X]
```

```
ADD R1 ← R1, #1
```

```
LOAD R1 ← Mem[X]
```

```
ADD R1 ← R1, #1
```

```
STORE R1 → Mem[X]
```

```
STORE R1 → Mem[X]
```

- Turn off/on interrupts?

Atomic Instructions

- Requires special atomic instructions
 - Read-Modify-Write (e.g., INC, DEC)
 - Test-and-Set
 - Compare-and-Swap
 - LOCK prefix in x86_64
 - LL (Load Locked) & SC (Store Conditional) in MIPS
- RISC-V “A” extension
 - LR (Load Reserved) & SC (Store Conditional) instructions
 - AMO (Atomic Memory Operation) instructions
 - Swap, integer add, bitwise AND/OR/XOR, integer max/min (signed/unsigned)

Summary

- The functionality of an OS is limited by architectural features
 - Multiprocessing on MS-DOS/8086?
- The structure of an OS can be simplified by architectural support
 - Interrupt, DMA, atomic instructions, etc.
- Most proprietary OSes were developed with the certain architecture in mind
 - SunOS/Solaris for SPARC
 - IBM AIX for Power/PowerPC
 - HP-UX for PA-RISC