

An Introduction to the Z Notation (Based on [J.Woodcock and J.Davies 1996; J.M. Spivey 1998])

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Agenda



What Is Formal Specification

😚 What Is Z Notation

- 🌻 Mathematical Language
- 🌻 Schema Language
- 😚 Example: the Birthday Book
- Strengthening the Specification
- 😚 Implementing the Birthday Book

What is Formal Specification



- Use mathematical notation to describe in a precise way the properties which an information system must have, without unduly constraining the way in which these properties are achieved.
- Formal specifications describe *what* the system must do without saying *how* it is to be done.
- A formal specification can serve as a single, reliable reference point for those
 - 🌻 who investigate the customer's needs,
 - who implement programs to satisfy those needs,
 - 👂 who test the results, and
 - who write instruction manuals for the system.

Specification Qualities



A good specification should be

- 😚 abstract and complete.
- 📀 clear and unambiguous.
- 😚 concise and comprehensible.
- 📀 easy to maintain and cost-effective.

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What is Z Notation



Z(Zed) is a formal specification language used for describing and modeling computing systems.

- 📀 The Z notation is based on
 - The mathematical language is used to describe objects and their properties. (e.g., sets, logic, and relations)
 - Mathematical objects and their properties can be collected together in schema. The *schema language* is used to describe the state of a system, and the ways in which that state may change.
 - The *theory of refinement*: the mathematical data types of specification to be implemented by more computer-oriented data type in a design.

What is Z Notation



We can use Z to

- 📀 describe data structures.
- 😚 model system state.
- 📀 explain design intentions.
- 📀 verify development steps.





Qualitative Results



stage of development

Mathematical Language



😚 Sets

📀 Relations

😚 Functions

📀 Numbers and finiteness



Set comprehension:

Given any non-empty set s, we can define a new set by considering only those elements of s that satisfy some property p.

• Denote the set of elements x in s that satisfy predicate p.

 $\{x:s \mid p\}$

Example: suppose that a red car is seen driving away from the scene of a crime. If *Person* denotes the set of all people, then the set to consider is given by

 $\{x : Person \mid x \text{ drives a red car}\}$



Term comprehension:

We may also describe a set of objects constructed from certain elements of a given set.

Denote the set of all expressions e such that x is drawn from s and satisfies p.

 $\{x:s\mid p\bullet e\}$

Example: In order to pursue their investigation of the crime, the authorities require a set of addresses to visit. This set is given by

 $\{x : Person \mid x \text{ drives a red car} \bullet address(x)\}$



A comprehension without a term part is equivalent to one in which the term is the same as the bound variable:

$$\{x:s \mid p\} == \{x:s \mid p \bullet x\}$$

The comprehension without a predicate part is equivalent to the one with the predicate true:

$$\{x: s \bullet e\} == \{x: s \mid true \bullet e\}$$

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Denote the set of expression e formed as x and y range over a and b, respectively, and satisfy predicate p.

$$\{x:a; y:b \mid p \bullet e\}$$

Example: an eyewitness account has established that the driver of the red car had an accomplice, and that this accomplice left a copy of the Daily Mail at the scene:

 $\{x : Person; y : Person \mid x \text{ is associated with } y \\ \land x \text{ drives a red car} \\ \land y \text{ reads the Daily Mail } \bullet x\}$



Power set:

If a is a set, then the set of all subsets of a is called the *power* set of a, and written \mathbb{P} a.

😚 Example:



Sertesian product :

If X and Y are sets, then the Cartesian product $X \times Y$ is the set of all possible ordered pairs (x,y), where x is an element of X and y is an element of Y:

$$X \times Y = \{(x, y) \mid x \in X \text{ and } y \in Y\}$$

Example:

$$\textcircled{1,2} \times \{3,4\} = \{(1,3),(1,4),(2,3),(2,4)\}$$



📀 Types :

A type is a maximal set, at least within the confines of the current specification.

The Z notation has a single built-in type: the set of all integers $\ensuremath{\mathbb{Z}}$:

 $\mathbb{Z} = \{...,-3,-2,-1,0,1,2,3,...\}$

- Any other types may be constructed from ℤ, or from user-defined basic types.
- Every expression that appears in Z specification is associated with a unique type, and if the expression is defined, then the value of the expression is a member of its type.



Binary relations

Denotes the set of all relations between X and Y:

$$X \leftrightarrow Y == \mathbb{P}(X \times Y)$$

Image Maplet The pair (x,y) can be written as x → y.

$$[X, Y]$$

$$_ \mapsto _ : X \times Y \to X \times Y$$

$$\forall x : X; y : Y \bullet x \mapsto y = (x, y)$$







Domain and Range

dom
$$R = \{x : X; y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \bullet x\}$$

$$\operatorname{ran} R = \{ x : X; \ y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \bullet y \}$$



Domain and Range Example: Function-Drives

Drivers

Cars



dom drives = {*helen, indra, jim, kate*}

 $ran \ drives = \{alfa, beetle, cortina\}$



😚 Domain Subtraction

$$A \triangleleft R = \{x : X; y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \land x \notin A \bullet x \mapsto y\}$$

If we are concerned only with people who are not called 'Helen', then the relation {*Henlen*} *Henlen Drives* tells us all that we want to know. It is a relation with three elements:

{Indra \mapsto alfa, Jim \mapsto beetle, Kate \mapsto cortina}



- Domain dom $R = \{x : X; y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \bullet x\}$
- $Range ran R = \{ x : X; \ y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \bullet y \}$
- Solution Domain Restriction $A \lhd R = \{x : X; \ y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \land x \in A \bullet x \mapsto y\}$
- Range Restriction $R \rhd B = \{x : X; \ y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \land y \in B \bullet x \mapsto y\}$
- Obmain Subtraction $A \triangleleft R = \{x : X; \ y : Y \mid x \mapsto y \in R \land x \notin A \bullet x \mapsto y\}$
- Solution
 Representation
 R ▷ B = {x : X; y : Y | x ↦ y ∈ R ∧ y ∉ B x ↦ y}

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Mathematical Language: Functions



Partial functions

From X to Y is a relation that maps each element of X to at most one element of Y. The element of Y, if it exists, is written f(x).

$$X \to Y == \{f : X \leftrightarrow Y \mid \forall x : X; y_1, y_2 : Y \bullet (x \mapsto y_1) \in f \land (x \mapsto y_2) \in f \Rightarrow y_1 = y_2\}$$

📀 Total functions

The set of total functions are partial functions whose domain is the whole of X. They relate each element of X to exactly one element of Y.

$$X \to Y == \{f : X \to Y \mid \operatorname{dom} f = X\}$$

Mathematical Language: Functions



 Partial Functions: each element of the source set is mapped to at most one element of the target.
 Total Functions: each element of the source set is mapped to some element of the target.

- Injective (1 to 1): each element of the domain is mapped to a different element of the target.
 - ⇒→ : partial, injective functions
 - \circledast \rightarrowtail : total, injective functions
- Surjective (onto): the range of the function is the whole of the target
 - 🌞 🛶 : partial, surjective functions
 - 👂 → : total, surjective functions
- S Bijective (1 to 1 correspondence): both injective and surjective
 - ▷→ : total, bijective functions

Mathematical Language: Functions



Overriding

If f and g are functions of the same type, then $f \oplus g$ is a function that agrees with f everywhere outside the domain of g; but agrees with g where g is defined.

$$\begin{array}{c} [X, Y] \\ \underline{\ } \oplus \underline{\ } : (X \leftrightarrow Y) \times (X \leftrightarrow Y) \rightarrow (X \leftrightarrow Y) \\ \hline \forall f, g : X \leftrightarrow Y \bullet \\ f \oplus g = (\operatorname{dom} g \lessdot f) \cup g \end{array}$$

$$names' = names \oplus \{i \mapsto v\}$$

Overriding



Original



Overriding



Update



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Overriding



Override



Mathematical Language: Numbers and finiteness

😚 Natural numbers

 $\mathbb{N} == \{n : \mathbb{Z} \mid n \ge 0\}$

Strictly positive integers

 $\mathbb{N}_1 == \mathbb{N} \backslash \{0\}$

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We can write the text of a schema in one of two the following two forms:

or

$Name \cong [declaration \mid constraint]$



Name $\widehat{=}$ [$a : \mathbb{Z}$; $c : \mathbb{P}\mathbb{Z} \mid c \neq \phi \land a \in c$]





We can use the language of schemas to describe the state of a system, and operation upon it. Suppose that the state of a system is modeled by the following schema





To describe an operation upon the state, we use two copies of *State*: one representing the state before the operation; the other representing the state afterwards.

State' a' : A b' : B P[a'/a, b'/b]

The constraint part of the schema is modified to reflect the new names of the state variables.



Then we can describe an operation by including both *State* and *State*' in the declaration part of a schema. For example,



The behavior of the operation is described in the constraint part of the schema.

Note that the schema also includes an input component of type I and an output component of type O.



When a schema name appears in a declaration part of a schema, the result is a merging of declarations and a conjunction of constraints.


 Δ *Schema* can be applied whenever we wish to describe an operation that may change the state.

_∆ Schema _____ Schema Schema'

 Ξ *Schema* can be applied whenever we wish to describe an operation that does not change the state.

Note: θ here means the valuation of variables in the schema.

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Different aspects of the state can be described as separate schemas; these schemas may be combined in various ways using schema operators:

The logical schema operators:

× − × −



The relational schema operators:

 $_{\$}$ -Sequential composition \gg - Piping



- $\ensuremath{\mathfrak{S}}$ If S and T are two schemas, then their conjunction S \wedge T is a schema
 - by whose declaration is a merge of the two declarations.
 - whose constraint is a conjunction of the two constraints.
- Their disjunction $S \lor T$ is a schema
 - 🌻 whose declaration is a merge of the two declarations.
 - whose constraint is a disjunction of the two constraints.





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The schema $S \wedge T$ (conjunction) is equivalent to

$$S \wedge T$$

$$a: A$$

$$b: B$$

$$c: C$$

$$P \wedge Q$$

The schema $S \vee T$ (disjunction) is equivalent to

$$S \lor T$$

$$a: A$$

$$b: B$$

$$c: C$$

$$P \lor Q$$

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Basic three functions:

- line for the second second second second.
- 😚 Find the birthday of a person.
- Give a date, return names of people whose birthday is exactly that day.



Given basic types:

[NAME, DATE]

Use a schema to describe the state of the birthday book:

_BirthdayBook known : ℙNAME birthday : NAME → DATE

known = dom birthday

- *known* is the set of names with birthdays recorded.
- birthday is a function when applied to certain names, gives the birthdays associated with them.
- invariant is relationship which is true in every state of the system.



One possible state of the system has three people in the set *known*, with their birthdays recorded by the function *birthday*:

$$\begin{array}{l} known = \{ \textit{Cindy}, \textit{Randy}, \textit{John} \} \\ birthday = \\ \{ \textit{Cindy} \mapsto 7/5, \\ \textit{Randy} \mapsto 11/5, \\ \textit{John} \mapsto 6/2 \}. \end{array}$$

The invariant is satisfied, because *birthday* records a date for exactly the three names in *known*.



- BirthdayBook _____ known : ℙ NAME birthday : NAME → DATE

known = dom *birthday*

```
_BirthdayBook' _____
known' : ℙ NAME
birthday' : NAME → DATE
```

known' = dom *birthday'*



Specify an operation to add new birthday-name record:



We can prove $known' = known \cup \{name?\}$ from the specification of *AddBirthday*, using the invariants on the state before and after the operation:

known'

 $= \operatorname{dom} birthday' \qquad [invariant after] \\ = \operatorname{dom}(birthday \cup \{name? \mapsto date?\}) \\ [spec. of AddBirthday] \\ = \operatorname{dom} birthday \cup \operatorname{dom} \{name? \mapsto date?\} \\ [fact about dom] \\ = \operatorname{dom} birthday \cup \{name?\} \\ [fact about dom] \\ = known \cup \{name?\}. \\ [invariant before] \end{cases}$

Note: Laws of Domain $dom\{Q \cup R\} = dom\{Q\} \cup dom\{R\}$ $dom\{x_1 \mapsto y_1, ..., x_1 \mapsto x_n\} = \{x_1, ..., x_n\}$



Find the birthday of a person:

_FindBirthday ____ EBirthdayBook name? : NAME date! : DATE

name? ∈ *known date*! = *birthday*(*name*?)



Give a date, return names of people whose birthday is exactly that day.



To finish the specification, we must say what state the system is in when it is first started. This is the initial state of the system, and it also is specified by a schema:

__ InitBirthdayBook _____ BirthdayBook ______known = Ø

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- A correct implementation of our specification will faithfully record birthdays and display them, so long as there are no mistakes in the input. But the specification has a serious flaw:
 - add a birthday for someone already known to the system.
 - 🌻 find the birthday of someone not known.
- The specification we have described clearly and concisely the behavior for correct input, and modifying it to describe the handling of incorrect input could only make it obscure.



Better solution :

- describe, separately from the first specification, the errors which might be detected and the desired responses to them.
- use schema operators (e.g., ∧, ∨) to combine the two descriptions into a stronger specification.
- Add an extra output *result*! to each operation on the system.
 When an operation is successful, this output will take the value *ok*, but it may take other values when an error is detected.
 The following free type definition defines *REPORT* to be a set containing exactly these three values:

REPORT ::= *ok* | *already_known* | *not_known*

Free Type



Free type adds nothing to the power of Z, but it makes it easier to describe recursive structures such as lists and trees.
 A *free type T* is defined as follows:

$$T ::= c_1 \mid ... \mid c_m \mid d_1 \langle\!\langle E_1 \rangle\!\rangle \mid ... \mid d_n \langle\!\langle E_n \rangle\!\rangle$$

where disjoint $\langle \{c_1\}, ..., \{c_m\}, \operatorname{ran} d_1, ..., \operatorname{ran} d_n \rangle$, $c_1, ..., c_m$ are constant expressions, $d_1, ..., d_m$ are constructor functions, and $E_1, ..., E_m$ are expressions that may depend on set T.

Free Type Example



😚 Example:

The following free type definition, with seven distinct constants, is a structure of colors of the rainbow:

Colors ::= red | orange | yellow | green | blue | indigo | violet



The following *free type* definition introduces a new type constructed using a single constant zero and a single constructor function succ:

 $nat ::= zero \mid succ \langle\!\langle nat \rangle\!\rangle$



This type has a structure which is exactly that of the natural numbers (zero corresponds to 0, and succ corresponds to the function +1).



We can define a schema Success which just specifies that the result should be ok:

Then we can combine AddBirthday operation with Success by conjunction operator \wedge :

AddBirthday \land Success

This describes an operation for correct input.

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Here is an operation which produces the report *already_known* when its input *name*? is already a member of *known*:

_AlreadyKnown _____ ΞBirthdayBook name? : NAME result! : REPORT name? ∈ known result! = already_known

We can combine this description with the previous one to give a specification for a robust version of *AddBirthday*:

 $RAddBirthday \cong (AddBirthday \land Success) \lor AlreadyKnown.$



```
RAddBirthday_
\Delta Birthday Book
name? : NAME
date? · DATE
result! · RFPORT
(name? \notin known \land
     birthday' = birthday \cup \{name? \mapsto date?\} \land
     result! = ok) \lor
(name? \in known \land
     birthday' = birthday \land
     result! = already_known
```



A robust version of the *FindBirthday* operation must be able to report if the input name is not known:

_NotKnown ΞBirthdayBook name? : NAME result! : REPORT name? ∉ known result! = not_known

The robust operation either behaves as described by *FindBirthday* and reports success, or reports that the name was not known:

 $RFindBirthday \cong (FindBirthday \land Success) \lor NotKnown.$



The *Remind* operation never results in an error, so the robust version need only add the report of success.

 $RRemind \cong Remind \land Success$

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When a program is developed from a specification, two sorts of design decision usually need to be taken:

- The data described by mathematical data types in the specification must be implemented by data structures of the programming language
- The operations described by predicates in the specification must be implemented by algorithms expressed in a programming language
- Refinement:
 - Data refinement relates an abstraction data type (e.g., sets) to a concrete data type (e.g., arrays).
 - Operation refinement converts a specification of an operation on a system into an implementable program (e.g., a procedure).



We choose to represent the birthday book with two arrays, which might be declared by: names: array [1..] of NAME dates: array [1..] of DATE

• These arrays can be modeled mathematically by functions from the set \mathbb{N}_1 of strictly positive integers to NAME or DATE:

 $\begin{array}{l} \textit{names} : \mathbb{N}_1 \rightarrow \textit{NAME} \\ \textit{dates} : \quad \mathbb{N}_1 \rightarrow \textit{DATE} \end{array}$



The element names[i] of the array is simply the value names(i) of the function, and the assignment names[i] := v is exactly described by the specification:

 $names' = names \oplus \{i \mapsto v\}$



We describe the state space of the program as a schema. There is another variable *hwm* (for 'high water mark'); it shows how much of the arrays is in use.

_BirthdayBook _____ known : ℙ NAME birthday : NAME → DATE

known = dom *birthday*

 $\begin{array}{c} \textit{BirthdayBook1}\\\textit{names}: \mathbb{N}_{1} \rightarrow \textit{NAME}\\\textit{dates}: \mathbb{N}_{1} \rightarrow \textit{DATE}\\\textit{hwm}: \mathbb{N}\\\hline \forall i, j: 1...hwm \bullet i \neq j \Rightarrow \textit{names}(i) \neq \textit{names}(j) \end{array}$



We can document this with a schema Abs (abstraction schema) that defines the *abstraction relation* between the *abstract state* space *BirthdayBook* and the concrete state space *BirthdayBook*1:

$$Abs _ \\ BirthdayBook \\ BirthdayBook1 \\ \hline known = \{i : 1..hwm \bullet names(i)\} \\ \forall i : 1..hwm \bullet birthday(names(i)) = dates(i) \\ \end{cases}$$



To add a new name, we increase *hwm* by one, and fill in the name and date in the arrays:

$$\begin{array}{l} AddBirthday1 \\ \Delta BirthdayBook \\ name? : NAME \\ date? : DATE \\ \hline \forall i : 1..hwm \bullet name? \neq names(i) \\ hwm' = hwm + 1 \\ names' = names \bigoplus \{hwm' \mapsto names?\} \\ dates' = dates \bigoplus \{hwm' \mapsto date?\} \end{array}$$

```
Note: Relationships of AddBirthday
name? \notin known
birthday' = birthday \cup {name? \mapsto date?}
```

Correct Implementation



- Suppose Aop is a schema describing a specification and Cop is a schema describing the action of a program. Abs relates abstract and concrete states.
- A concrete schema is a correct implementation of abstract schema when
 - ${\ensuremath{\overset{\,\, ext{\tiny{\#}}}{=}}}$ pre Aop \wedge Abs \Rightarrow pre Cop

(ensures that the concrete operation terminates whenever the abstract operation is guaranteed to terminate)

 $rak{l} m{k}$ pre Aop \wedge Abs \wedge Cop \Rightarrow Abs' \wedge Aop

(ensures that the state after the concrete operation represents one of those abstract states in which the abstract operation could terminate)

In this situation we shall write Spec ⊑ Ref (The sign '⊑' is the sign of refinement relation.)



To show that AddBirthday1 is a correct implementation of AddBirthday, we have the following two proof obligations.

- $rak{b}$ pre AddBirthday \wedge Abs \Rightarrow pre AddBirthday1
- \flat pre AddBirthday \land Abs \land AddBirthday $1 \Rightarrow$ Abs' \land AddBirthday

The First Statement



The pre AddBirthday is name? ∉ known. The pre AddBirthday1 is ∀i : 1..hwm • names? ≠ names(i). Abs tells us that known = {i : 1..hwm • names(i)}.

- This given name? ∉ known ∧ known = {i : 1..hwm • names(i)} ⇒ ∀i : 1..hwm • names? ≠ names(i)
- So the first proof obligation pre AddBirthday \land Abs \Rightarrow pre AddBirthday1 is true.

The Second Statement



- Think about the concrete states before and after an execution of AddBirthday1, and the abstract states they represent according to Abs.
- The two concrete states are related by AddBirthday1, and we must show that the two abstract states are related as prescribed by AddBirthday:

Prove that birthday' = birthday \cup {name? \mapsto date?}
The Second Statement (Cont'd)



- The domains of these two functions are the same, because
 - dom *birthday*' = known'[invariant after] = {i : 1... $hwm' \bullet names'(i)$ } [from Abs'] $= \{i : 1..hwm \bullet names'(i)\} \cup \{names'(hwm')\}$ [hwm'=hwm+1] $= \{i : 1..hwm \bullet names(i)\} \cup \{names?\}$ $[names' = names \oplus \{ hwm' \mapsto names? \}]$ = known \cup { names? } [from Abs] $= \operatorname{dom} birthday \cup \{names?\}$ [invariant before]

Note: Laws of Domain $\operatorname{dom}\{x_1 \mapsto y_1, ..., x_1 \mapsto x_n\} = \{x_1, ..., x_n\}$

The Second Statement (Cont'd)



📀 There is no change in the part of arrays which was in use before the operation. So for all *i* in the range 1...hwm: $names'(i) = names(i) \land dates'(i) = dates(i)$ For any *i* in this range, *birthday*'(*names*'(*i*)) = dates'(i)[from Abs'] [dates unchanged] = dates(i)= birthday(names(i)) [from Abs]

The Second Statement (Cont'd)



• For the new name, stored at index hwm' = hwm + 1

birthday'(names?)
= birthday'(names'(hwm')) [names'(hwm') = name?]
= dates'(hwm') [from Abs']
= date? [spec. of Addbirthday1]

- The second proof obligation pre AddBirthday ∧ Abs ∧ AddBirthday1 ⇒ Abs' ∧ AddBirthday is also true.
- It shows that both of the proof obligation is true, so we can conclude that AddBirthday1 is a correct implementation of AddBirthday.

Refinement of the Birthday Book



Abstract : AddBirthday (Aop)



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The second operation, *FindBirthday*, is implemented by the following operation, again described in terms of the concrete state:

FindBirthday1 = EindBirthdayBook FindBirthdayBook FindBirthdayBo

Check the pre-conditions and output

date! = dates(i)
= birthday(names(i))
= birthday(name?)

[spec. of *FindBirthday*1] [from *Abs*] [spec. of *FindBirthday*1]

Note: Relationships of *FindBirthday* $name? \in known$ date! = birthday(name?)



The operation *Remind* poses a new problem, because its output cards is a set of names. Here is a schema *AbsCards* that defines the abstraction relation:



The concrete operation can now be described: it produces as outputs *cardlist* and *ncards*:

 $\begin{array}{l} \hline Remind1 \\ \hline \Xi BirthdayBook1 \\ today? : DATE \\ cardlist! : \mathbb{N}_1 \rightarrow NAME \\ ncards! : \mathbb{N} \\ \hline \{i: 1..ncards! \bullet cardlist!(i)\} \\ = \{j: 1..hwm \mid dates(j) = today? \bullet names(j)\} \end{array}$

Note: Relationships of *Remind* $names! = \{n : known | birthday(n) = today?\}$



The initial state of the program has hwm = 0:

_InitBirthdayBook1_____ BirthdayBook1 hwm = 0

known

$$= \{i : 1..hwm \bullet names(i)\}$$
[from Abs]
$$= \{i : 1..0 \bullet names(i)\}$$
[from InitBirthdayBook1]
$$= \emptyset$$
[1..0 = \emptyset]

```
Note: Relationships of InitBirthdayBook known = \emptyset
```



Thank you for listening