



PAUL G. ALLEN SCHOOL
OF COMPUTER SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

CSE 341

Section 3

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Spring 2017

Agenda

1. SML Docs

- Standard Basis

2. First-Class Functions

- Anonymous
- Some style tips
- Higher-Order

3. Examples

Standard Basis Documentation

Online Documentation

<http://www.standardml.org/Basis/index.html>

<http://www.smlnj.org/doc/smlnj-lib/Manual/toc.html>

Helpful Subset

Top-Level <http://www.standardml.org/Basis/top-level-chapter.html>

List <http://www.standardml.org/Basis/list.html>

ListPair <http://www.standardml.org/Basis/list-pair.html>

Real <http://www.standardml.org/Basis/real.html>

String <http://www.standardml.org/Basis/string.html>

Anonymous Functions

An Anonymous Function

```
fn pattern => expression
```

- An expression that creates a new function with no name.
- Usually used as an argument to a higher-order function.
- Almost equivalent to the following:

```
let fun name pattern = expression in name end
```

- **The difference is that anonymous functions cannot be recursive!!!**

Anonymous Functions

What's the difference between the following two bindings?

```
val name = fn pattern => expression;
```

```
fun name pattern = expression;
```

- Once again, the difference is recursion.
- However, excluding recursion, a **fun** binding could just be syntactic sugar for a **val** binding and an anonymous function.
- This is because there are no recursive **val** bindings in SML.

Unnecessary Function Wrapping

What's the difference between the following two expressions?

`(fn xs => t1 xs)` vs. `t1`

Let's look at another example we're familiar with...

`(if ex then true else false)` vs. `ex`

- Other than style, these two expressions result in the exact same thing.
- However, one creates an unnecessary function to wrap `t1`.
- Style points, blah blah... do it because it's nice, not for the points 😊

Higher-Order Functions

- A function that returns a function or takes a function as an argument.

Two Canonical Examples

- `map : ('a -> 'b) * 'a list -> 'b list`
 - Applies a function to every element of a list and return a list of the resulting values.
 - Example: `map (fn x => x*3, [1,2,3]) === [3,6,9]`
- `filter : ('a -> bool) * 'a list -> 'a list`
 - Returns the list of elements from the original list that, when a predicate function is applied, result in true.
 - Example: `filter (fn x => x>2, [~5,3,2,5]) === [3,5]`

Note: `List.map` and `List.filter` are similarly defined in SML but use currying. We'll cover these later in the course.

Broader Idea

Functions are Awesome!

- SML functions can be passed around like any other value.
- They can be passed as function arguments, returned, and even stored in data structures or variables.
- Functions like `map` are very pervasive in functional languages.
 - A function like `map` can even be written for other data structures such as trees.