What is a vector instruction?

- What is a vector instruction?
  - Vector instructions handle many data values with a single instruction
    - Registers often contain a set of values
    - All values in set treated the "same" way
  - Vector instructions may operate on
    - Integers & floating point numbers
    - Bit vectors
- Where are they used?
  - Scientific computation (numerically intensive)
  - Graphics: bit-oriented vectors
    - MMX (x86)
    - AltiVec (PowerPC)

Problems with scalar processors

- How can scalar processors be sped up?
  - Use deeper pipelines
    - In longer pipelines, pipeline latencies become an issue
  - Reduce the instruction fetch/decode rate: for a given amount of data, fetch fewer instructions
    - Make instructions more complex?
    - Make instructions operate on more values?
- Speed up scalar processors with vectors
  - One instruction operates on many values
  - Rather than fetching 64 or more instructions to perform 64 FP adds, the CPU fetches only one
  - Good for small instruction caches!

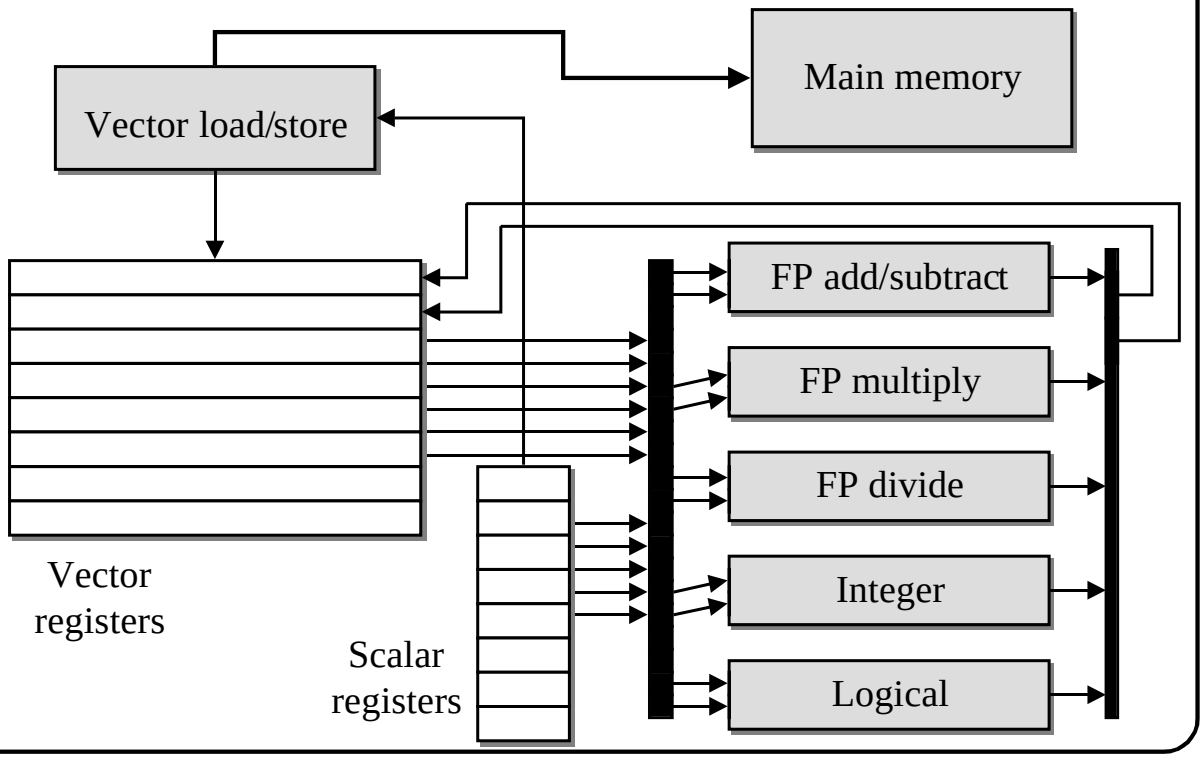
Using vectors to avoid scalar bottlenecks

- Independent computations
  - Computation on each vector element is independent of all other vector elements
  - Deep pipelines can be used without creating data hazards
  - ⇒ Compiler must generate vector instructions
- Lots of work per instruction
  - Each instruction can cause many operation
  - ⇒ Fewer instructions need to be fetched and decoded
- Reduce control hazards and loop overhead
  - A vector instruction can function as a loop in a scalar architecture
  - No branches!
    - Lower loop overhead
    - No control hazards

Using vectors to avoid scalar bottlenecks

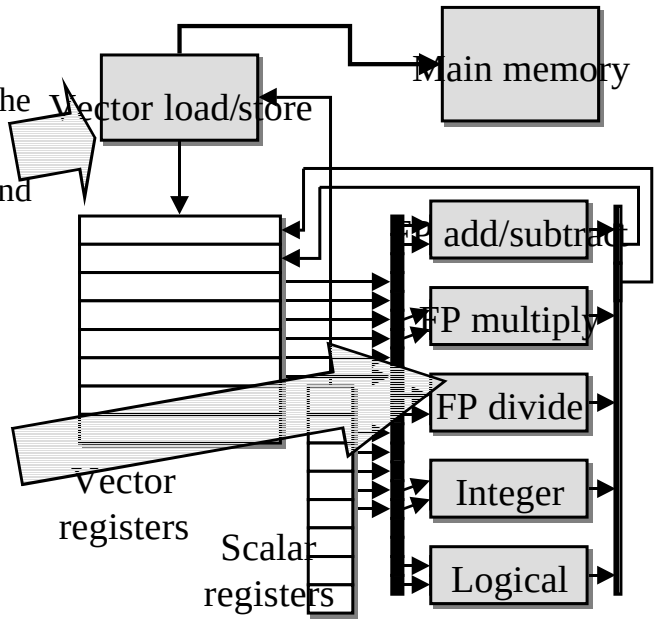
- Optimize memory access
  - The memory access pattern for an entire vector load/store is known at instruction issue
  - ⇒ CPU may be able to get all of the data by paying the latency for memory access only a few times
- Overlapping vector operations
  - Overlap vector operations if there are enough functional units
    - Keep CPU busy with useful work
    - Reduce execution time
  - Requires more hardware, but hardware provides performance improvements
- Memory-memory vs. register-memory vector architectures

Simple DLX vector architecture (DLXV)



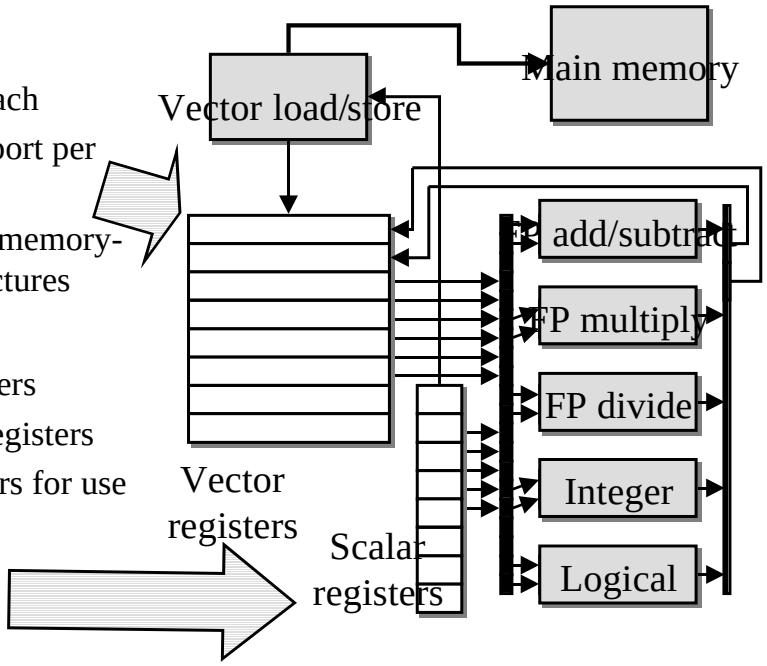
DLXV architecture

- Vector load-store unit
  - Interfaces the vector unit with the memory
  - Moves data between memory and CPU
  - Fully pipelined: one word per clock cycle after startup
- Vector functional units
  - Fully pipelined: start a new operation on every clock cycle
  - Control unit detects hazards



DLXV architecture

- Vector registers
  - 8 registers, 64 values each
  - 2 read ports & 1 write port per register (is it enough?)
  - May not be needed for memory-memory vector architectures
- Scalar registers
  - Regular DLX FP registers
  - Regular DLX integer registers
  - Special-purpose registers for use by the vector unit
    - Vector length
    - Vector-mask



Sample vectorizable code

- Implement $\vec{Y} = a\vec{X} + \vec{Y}$
  - X and Y are vectors
  - A is a scalar
  - SAXPY/DAXPY loop (S or D indicates single or double precision)
  - Very common operation in scientific codes
- Code for DLX at right
  - Interlocks between the MULTD and ADDD and the memory operations
  - Possible problems with branches
  - Total instruction count ≈600

```
for (i = 0; i < 64; i++) {
  Y[i] = a * X[i] + Y[i];
}
```

```
LD    F0,a
ADDI  R4,Rx,#512
Loop:
LD    F2,0(Rx)  ; load X[i]
MULTD F2,F0,F2  ; a * X[i]
LD    F4,0(Ry)  ; load Y[i]
ADDD  F4,F2,F4  ; a*X[i]+Y[i]
SD    F4,0(Ry)  ; store Y[i]
ADDI  Rx,Rx,#8  ; X index++
ADDI  Ry,Ry,#8  ; Y index++
SUB   R20,R4,Rx ; loop bound
BNEZ  R20,Loop  ; loop if not done
```

Vectorized code for DAXPY

- Original code had
  - Lots of dependencies
  - Lots of loop overhead
- Vectorized code has
  - No looping!
  - Only a few vector instructions
    - Reduced instruction bandwidth (6 instructions)
    - Fewer interlocks: encountered only at startup
  - Simpler decoding: fewer dependencies to work out

```
LD    F0,a
ADDI  R4,Rx,#512
Loop:
LD    F2,0(Rx)  ; load X[i]
MULTD F2,F0,F2  ; a * X[i]
LD    F4,0(Ry)  ; load Y[i]
ADDD  F4,F2,F4  ; a*X[i]+Y[i]
SD    F4,0(Ry)  ; store Y[i]
ADDI  Rx,Rx,#8  ; X index++
ADDI  Ry,Ry,#8  ; Y index++
SUB   R20,R4,Rx ; loop bound
BNEZ  R20,Loop  ; loop if not done
```

```
LD      F0,a
LV      V1,Rx     ; load X vector
MULTSV  V2,F0,V1  ; scalar-vector multiply
LV      V3,Ry     ; load Y vector
ADDV    V4,V2,V3  ; add
SV      Ry,V4     ; store result
```


Calculating vector execution time

- Terms (not “official”; made up by textbook authors)
  - Convoy: a group of vector instructions that could be issued in the “same” cycle because there are no dependencies between them
  - Chime: the time a maximum-length vector instruction takes to complete its execution
- Basic performance
  - Approximate execution time for a sequence of vector instructions is number of convoys * chime length
  - Only approximate because it ignores startup overheads

    ⇒Overheads are often short compared to instruction execution time

Vector startup latency

- Startup latency: delay before the first result comes out of the vector pipeline
  - Pipeline produces one result per cycle thereafter
  - Effect on performance reduced with longer vector lengths
  - Irrelevant if vectors infinitely long (but this isn't realistic)
- Startup latency == pipeline depth
- Sample startup latencies (for DLXV)
  - Load/store: 10 cycles
  - Multiply: 7 cycles
  - Add: 6 cycles
  - Memory often has a longer startup latency (why?)

Sample performance calculation

```
LD      F0,a
LV      V1,Rx      ; load X vector
MULTSV  V2,F0,V1   ; scalar-vector multiply
LV      V3,Ry      ; load Y vector
ADDV    V4,V2,V3   ; add
SV      Ry,V4      ; store result
```

Idealized

Realistic

• Only MULTSV & second LV may be combined => 4 convoys

• Sequence requires 4 chimes

• Total time required => 64 * 4 = 256

• Requires 4 cycles/element

• Compute actual start & finish times for each convoy

		Start	Finish
LD	F0,a	0	
LV	V1,Rx	0	9+n
MULTSV	V2,F0,V1	10+n	16+2n
LV	V3,Ry	10+n	20+2n
ADDV	V4,V2,V3	20+2n	26+3n
SV	Ry,V4	26+3n	36+4n

• Total time is 37+4n, or 293 cycles

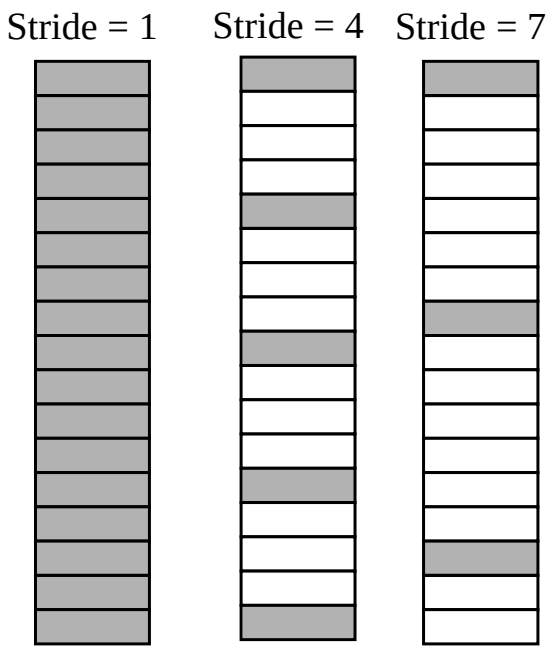
• Requires 4.58 cycles/element

Vector load-store unit issues

- Load-store units may not be able to complete one result per cycle (unlike most pipelined functional units)
- Long startup latencies
  - Relatively slow memory delays the first word of data
  - Data caches don't usually help vector processors (why?)
- Avoid memory conflicts
  - Vector processors often access several banks of memory at once
  - CPU gets more than one word per memory cycle
- Non-sequential memory accesses
  - Programs often need to load a vector from non-sequential elements
  - Done using *strided* memory access

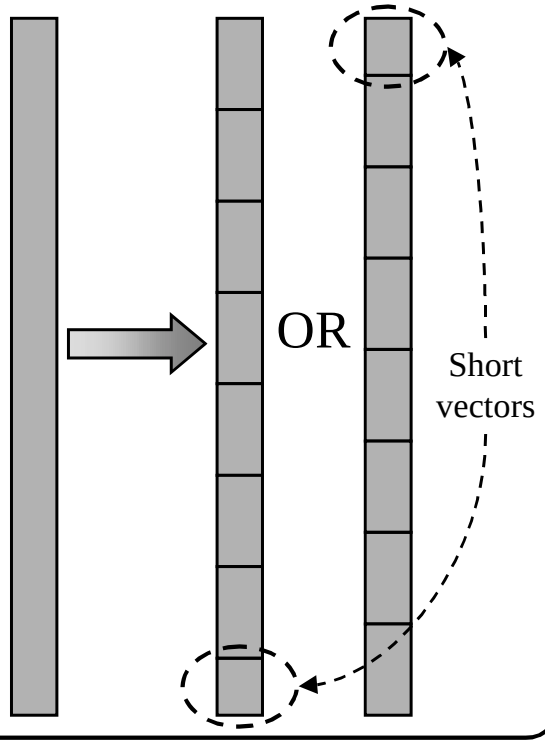
Vector stride

- Data in memory may not be sequential
  - Distance between adjacent elements in the vector is called the stride
- Strided access needed only for load and store
  - ⇒ Vectors held in a register are accessed normally
- Stride & vector address obtained from general purpose registers
- Stride and number of memory banks should be relatively prime
  - ⇒ Spreads accesses evenly for better performance



Handling odd-length vectors & strip mining

- Must handle vectors of less than the maximal length
  - Done by setting the vector length register (VLR)
- Strip mining example (500 elements)
  - Create 7 operations that run on full-length (64 element) vectors
  - Create 1 operation that runs on 52 elements
    - Shorter vector can be the first or last handled
    - Making it first simplifies the end-of-loop checks



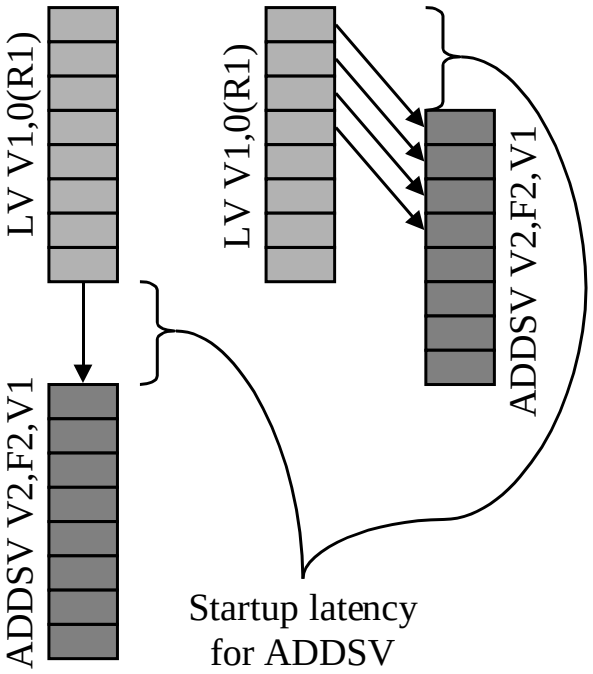
Performance for odd-size vectors

- Estimate loop performance using same method as before
  - Include time per element
  - Include vector instruction startup time
  - Include loop overhead
  - Doesn't include loop startup (paid once per execution, not once per loop)
- Compute T_{start} by adding up all of the vector startup latencies (excluding those that overlap in convoys)
- Compute T_{chime} by counting the convoys

$$T_n = \left\lceil \frac{n}{max\ vector\ length} \right\rceil \times (T_{loop} + T_{start}) + n \times T_{chime}$$

Vector chaining

- Chaining ≈ forwarding for vector operations
  - Entire result from a vector operation may take 64+ cycles to produce
  - First element is ready after the startup latency
    - Could be fed into a second operation that uses the vector register as a source,
  - Time to do two chained operations is (length + $startup_{op1}$ + $startup_{op2}$)
- Chaining reduces overall time by overlapping vector instructions

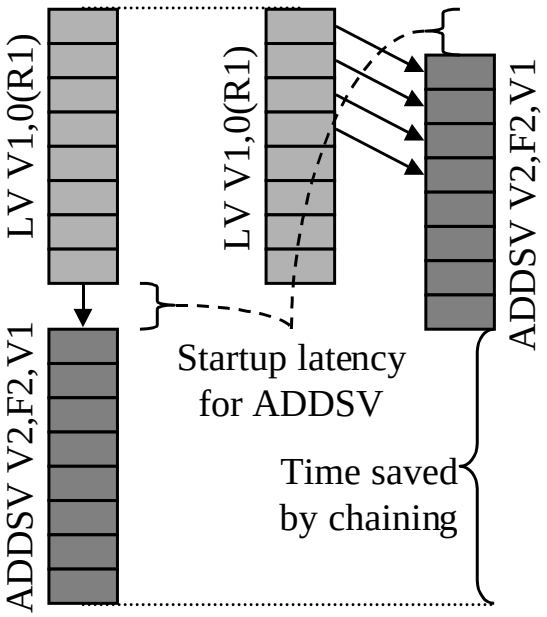


Vector chaining: example

- Example

```
LV     V1,0(Rx)
ADDSV  V2,F0,V1
```

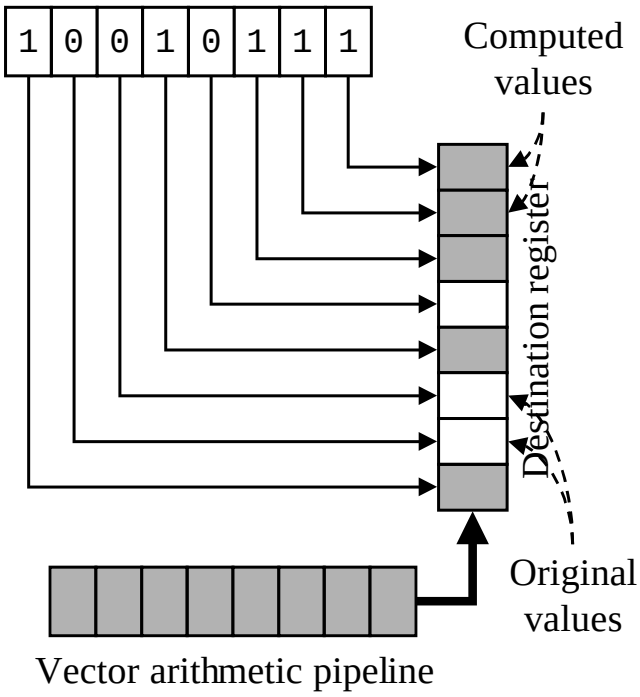
  - Without chaining, requires 10 + 64 + 6 + 64 = 146 cycles
  - With chaining, the ADDSV could start after the load produced its first element
    - Reduces total time to 10 + 6 + 64 = 82 cycles
    - Total time reduced to 56.2% of the original time
- Long chains (multiple instructions chained together) can drastically cut execution time



Vector mask control

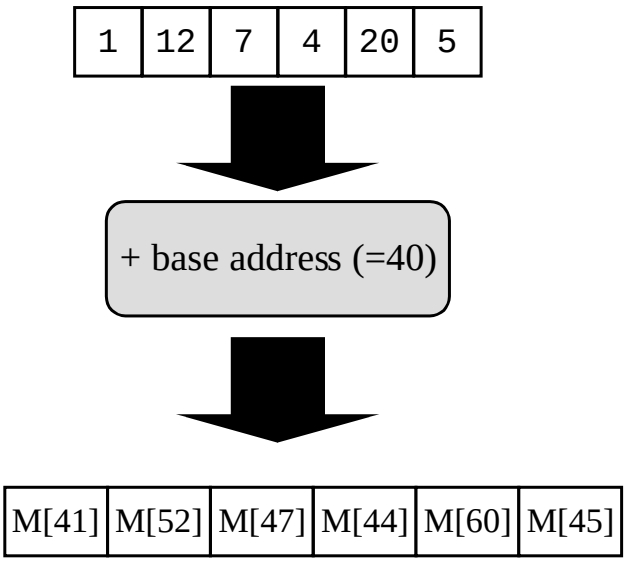
- Vector mask register: one bit for each element in a vector register
  - Bit set => perform operation
  - Bit clear => do no operation
  - Functional unit busy for a cycle regardless of bit set/clear
- Vector mask register set by
  - Copying a value from a scalar register
  - Doing a vector-based operation to set each bit individually
    - Example: SNESV

⇒ Allows the handling of conditions inside loops



Handling sparse matrices

- Sparse matrix: much of matrix is zero
  - Zero elements aren't stored
  - Non-zero elements represented as index-value pairs
  - Example: A[5] = 4 => 5,4
- Sparse matrices use *scatter-gather*
  - Memory indices stored in a vector
  - Load uses vector values as pointers or offsets
- Scatter-gather also useful when indices determined on-the-fly



Measures of vector processor performance

- R_∞: MFLOPS rate on an infinitely long vector
  - Ignores startup latency
  - Useful for determining the throughput on really long vectors
- $N_{1/2}$: vector length necessary to achieve half R_∞
  - Shows how quickly vector performance fails if non-maximal vectors are used
  - Affected greatly by startup latency
- N_v: vector length necessary so that using vector operations to do a computation will be faster than using scalar operations
  - Shows how long vectors have to be to be useful
  - Fast scalar operations and startup latency affect this number

Vector performance: example

- Assume
  - One memory pipeline, 500 MHz
  - $T_{base} = 0$ and $T_{loop} = 15$
- Compute
  - T_{start} = 10 (load) + 7 (multiply) + 10 + 6 (add) +12 (store) = 45
  - Need 3 chimes

Time to compute *n* elements

$$T_n = T_{base} + \left\lceil \frac{n}{MVL} \right\rceil \times (T_{loop} + T_{start}) + n \times T_{chime}$$

$$T_n = 0 + \left\lceil \frac{n}{64} \right\rceil \times (15 + 45) + n \times 3$$

DAXPY with chaining

```
LV      V1,Rx     ; chained w/MULTSV
MULTSV  V2,F0,V1
LV      V3,Ry     ; chained w/ADDV
ADDV    V4,V2,V3
SV      Ry,V4     ; store the result
```

$$\frac{cycles}{element} = \lim_{n\to\infty}\left(\frac{3n + \frac{n\times(15+45)}{64}}{n}\right) = 3 + \frac{60}{64} = 3.94$$

$$R_\infty = 2 \times 500 / 3.94 = 253.8 \text{ MFLOPS}$$

For $N_{1/2}$: $\frac{253.8}{2} = \frac{2\times 500}{\text{cycles/element}}, n \le 64$

$$7.88n = 0 + 1 \times (15 + 45) + n \times 3 \Rightarrow n = 12.3$$

Vector processor gotchas

- Remember the startup latency!
  - High startup latency will drastically lower performance because vectors can be short
- Improve scalar & vector performance together
  - Otherwise, the machine will perform poorly overall
  - Most *instructions* are scalar, even though most *operations* are vector
- Get a good memory system!
  - True for any processor running heavy scientific codes!
  - This is the main reason that desktop workstations can't match big iron for heavy-duty scientific use

    ⇒Can't move data in and out of the CPU fast enough