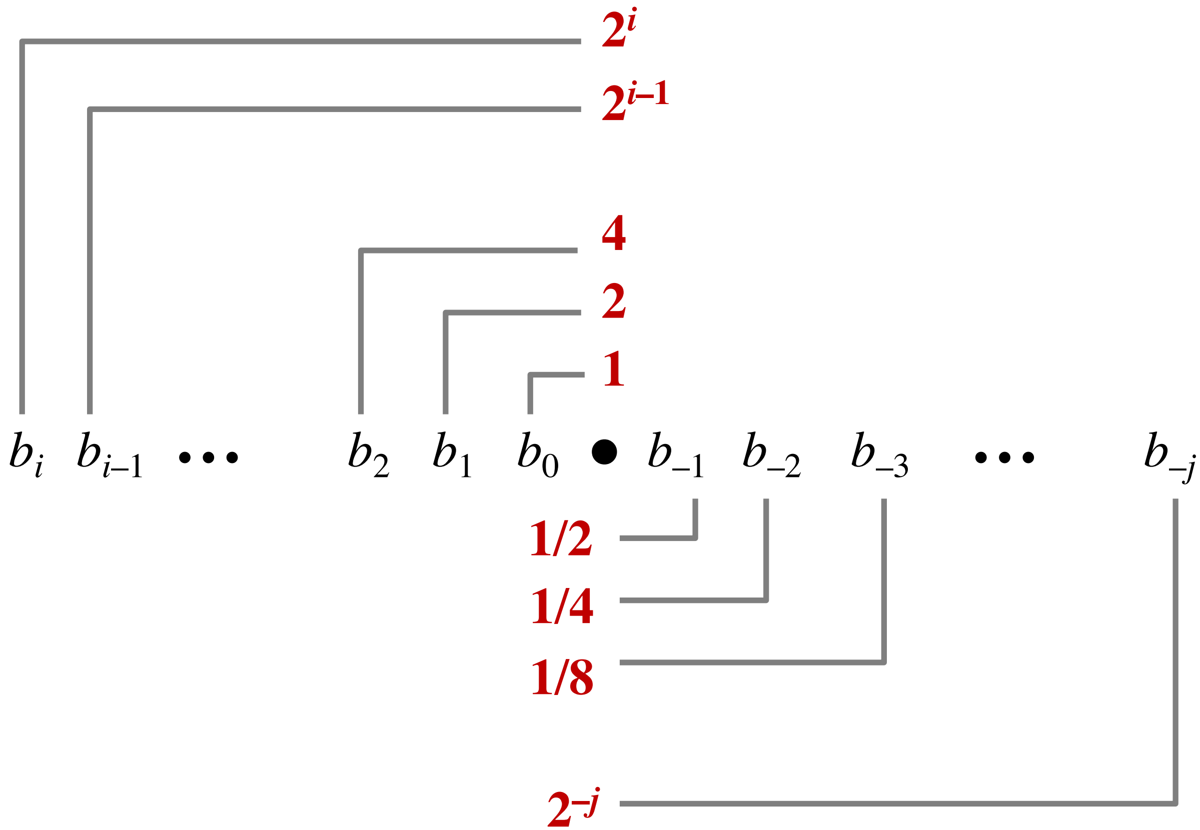
Floating Point Representation

Fractional binary numbers
IEEE floating-point standard
Floating-point operations and rounding
Lessons for programmers

Many more details we will skip (it's a 58-page standard...)
See CSAPP 2.4 for more detail.

Fractional Binary Numbers



$$\sum_{k=-j}^{i} b_k \cdot 2^k$$

Fractional Binary Numbers

Value Representation

5 and 3/4

2 and 7/8

47/64

Observations

Shift left =

Shift right =

Numbers of the form `0.111111`…$_2$ are…?

Limitations:

Exact representation possible when?

1/3 = 0.333333…$_{10}$ = 0.

Fixed-Point Representation

Implied binary point.

$b_7\ b_6\ b_5\ b_4\ b_3$ [.] $b_2\ b_1\ b_0$

$b_7\ b_6\ b_5\ b_4\ b_3\ b_2\ b_1\ b_0$ [.]

range: difference between largest and smallest representable numbers

precision: smallest difference between any two representable numbers

fixed point = fixed range, fixed precision

IEEE **Floating Point** Standard 754

IEEE = Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers

Numerical form:

$$V_{10} = (-1)^{s} * M * 2^{E}$$

- **Sign bit** ***s*** determines whether number is negative or positive
- **Significand (mantissa)** ***M*** usually a fractional value in range [1.0,2.0)
- **Exponent** ***E*** weights value by a (-/+) power of two
- Analogous to scientific notation

Representation:

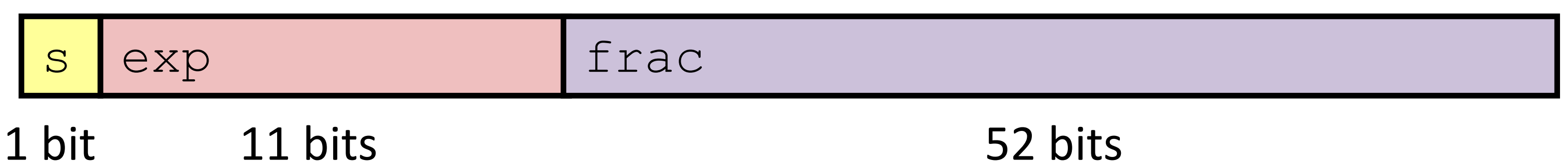
- MSB **`s`** = sign bit ***s***
- **`exp`** field encodes ***E*** (but is *not equal* to E)
- **`frac`** field encodes ***M*** (but is *not equal* to M)

Numerically well-behaved, but hard to make fast in hardware

Precisions

Single precision (`float`): 32 bits

Double precision (`double`): 64 bits



Finite representation of infinite range…

Three kinds of values

$V = (-1)^{s} * M * 2^{E}$

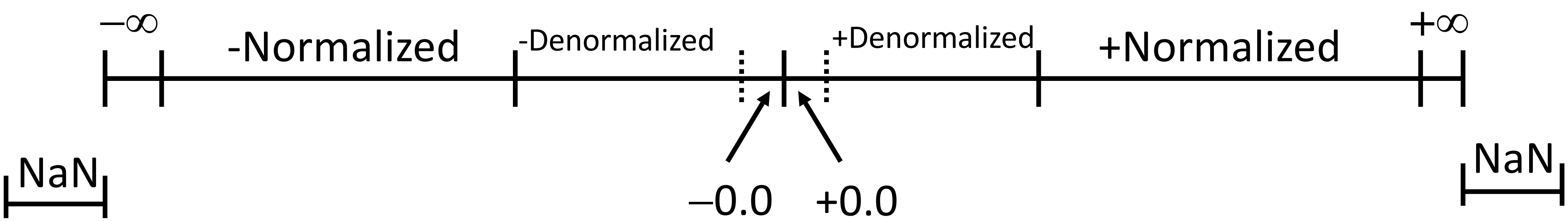
s	exp	frac

1. **Normalized:** M = 1.xxxxx...
   As in scientific notation: 0.011 x 2^5 = 1.1 x 2^3
   Representation advantage?

2. **Denormalized**, near zero: M = 0.xxxxx..., smallest E
   Evenly space near zero.

3. **Special values:**
   0.0: **s** = 0 **exp** = 00…0 **frac** = 00…0
   +inf, -inf: **exp** = 11…1 **frac** = 00…0
   division by 0.0
   NaN ("Not a Number"): **exp** = 11…1 **frac** ≠ 00…0
   sqrt(-1), $\infty - \infty$, $\infty * 0$, etc.

Value distribution



Normalized values, with `float` example

$V = (-1)^s * M * 2^E$

s	exp	frac
	k=8	n=23

Value: **`float f = 12345.0;`**

$12345_{10} = 11000000111001_2$

$= 1.1000000111001_2 \times 2^{13}$ (normalized form)

Significand:

M = **`1.1000000111001`**$_2$

`frac`= **`10000001110010000000000`**$_2$

Exponent: E = **`exp`** – Bias → **`exp`** = E + Bias

E = 13

Bias = 127 = $2^7 - 1$ = $\mathbf{2^{k-1} - 1}$ Splits exponents roughly -/+

`exp` = 140 = **`10001100`**$_2$

Result:

s	exp	frac
0	**10001100**	**10000001110010000000000**

Denormalized Values: near zero

"Near zero": `exp` = `000…0`

Exponent:

E = 1 + `exp` – Bias = 1 - Bias **not:** `exp` – Bias

Significand: leading zero

M = `0.xxx…x`$_2$

`frac = xxx…x`

Cases:

`exp` = **`000…0`**, **`frac`** = **`000…0`** 0.0, -0.0

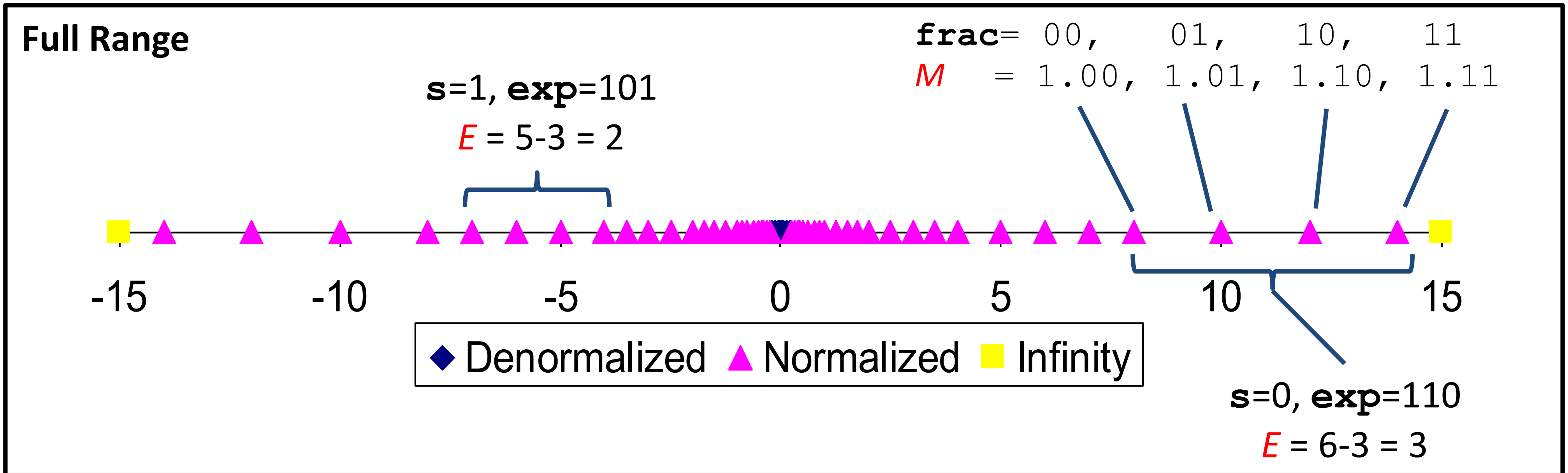
`exp` = **`000…0`**, **`frac`** ≠ **`000…0`**

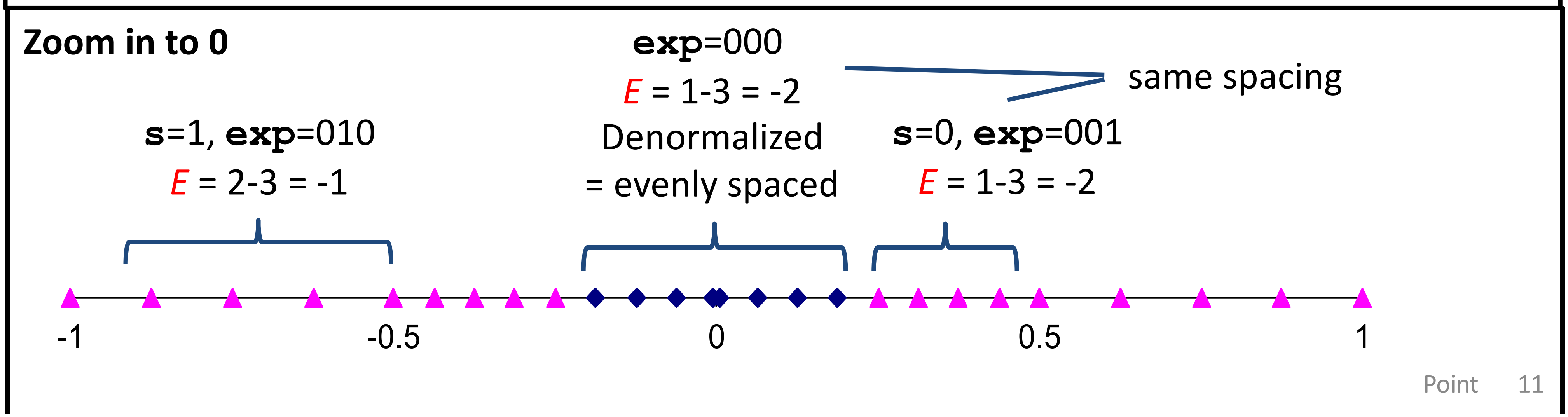
Value distribution example

6-bit IEEE-like format

s	exp	frac
1	3	2

Bias = $2^{3-1} - 1 = 3$





Try to represent 3.14, 6-bit example

6-bit IEEE-like format

Bias = $2^{3-1} - 1 = 3$

s	exp	frac
1	3	2

Value: **`3.14;`**

3.14 = 11.0010 0011 1101 0111 0000 1010 000…

= $1.1001\ 0001\ 1110\ 1011\ 1000\ 0101\ 0000\ldots_2 \times 2^1$ (normalized form)

Significand:

M = **$1.10010001111010111011100001010000\ldots_2$**

frac = $\underline{10}_2$

Exponent:

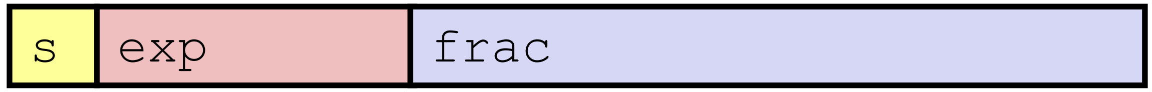
E = 1 Bias = 3 **exp** = 4 = 100_2

Result:

0 100 10 = $1.10_2 \times 2^1 = 3$ next highest?

Floating Point Arithmetic*

$V = (-1)^{s} * M * 2^{E}$




```
double x = ..., y = ...;
double z = x + y;
```

1. **Compute exact result.**
2. **Fix/Round**, roughly:

   Adjust *M* to fit in [1.0, 2.0)…

   - If *M* >= 2.0: shift *M* right, increment *E*
   - If *M* < 1.0: shift *M* left by k, decrement *E* by k

   Overflow to infinity if *E* is too wide for **`exp`**

   Round* *M* if too wide for **`frac`**.

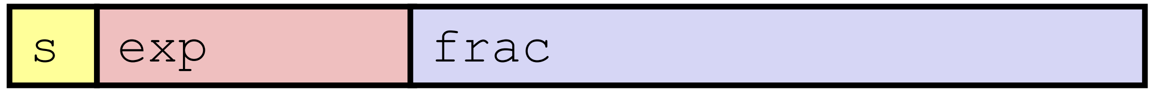
   Underflow if nearest representable value is 0.

   …

*complicated…

Lessons for programmers

$V = (-1)^s * M * 2^E$



`float` ≠ real number ≠ `double`

Rounding breaks associativity and other properties.

```
double a = ..., b = ...;
...
if (a == b) ...

if (abs(a - b) < epsilon) ...
```