

extern template

Chapter 2 Conditionally Safe Features

2. `string` — In this case, `string.h` and `string.cpp` would instead be modified so as to depend on `vector`. Clients wanting to use a `string` would also be forced to depend physically on `vector` *at compile time*.

Another possibility might be to create a third component, called `stringvector`, that itself depends on both `vector` and `string`. By **escalating**⁸ the mutual dependency to a higher level in the physical hierarchy, we avoid forcing any client to depend on more than what is actually needed. The practical drawback to this approach is that only those clients that proactively include the composite `stringvector.h` header would realize any benefit; fortunately, in this case, there is no **one-definition rule (ODR)** violation if they don't.

Finally, complex machinery could be added to both `string.h` and `vector.h` to conditionally include `stringvector.h` whenever both of the other headers are included; such heroic efforts would, nonetheless, involve a **cyclic physical dependency** among all three of these components. Circular intercomponent collaborations are best avoided.⁹

All members of an explicitly defined template class must be valid

In general, when using a class template, only those members that are actually used get implicitly instantiated. This hallmark allows class templates to provide functionality for **parameter** types having certain capabilities, e.g., default constructible, while also providing partial support for types lacking those same capabilities. When providing an **explicit-instantiation definition**, however, *all* members of a class template are instantiated.

Consider a simple class template having a **data member** that can be either **default-initialized** via the template's **default constructor** or initialized with an instance of the member's type supplied at construction:

```
template <typename T>
class W
{
    T d_t; // a data member of type T

public:
    W() : d_t() {}
        // Create an instance of W with a default-constructed T member.

    W(const T& t) : d_t(t) {}
        // Create an instance of W with a copy of the specified t.

    void doStuff() { /* do stuff */ }
};
```

This class template can be used successfully with a type, such as `U` in the following code snippet, that is not default constructible:

⁸lakos20, section 3.5.2, “Escalation,” pp. 604–614

⁹lakos20, section 3.4, “Avoiding Cyclic Link-Time Dependencies,” pp. 592–601