A record in Scheme is a data structure that comprises some fixed number of values, each of which is given a name (the field name) to indicate its status and situation within the record. Programmers can create values of new types in Scheme (distinct from built-in types of values, such as numbers, Booleans, characters, procedures, pairs, vectors, and the null value), specifying the new types in record type definitions. A record type definition introduces a new type, giving it a name and specifying the fields that a value of the record type will contain.

For instance, in a program that amateur astronomers will use for keeping an inventory of interesting stars, the programmer might well define a record type for stars, with the fields of each record containing different pieces of information about a star. The record type definition for the new type might look like this:

```scheme
(define-record-type star
 (make-star name distance apparent-magnitude spectral-class)
 star?
 (name star-name)
 (distance star-distance)
 (apparent-magnitude star-apparent-magnitude)
 (spectral-class star-spectral-class))
```

This defines star as a record type. The first subexpression of the define-record-type-expression must be an identifier, and this identifier will be the name of the new record type.

Each record of the star type will have four fields: name, distance, apparent-magnitude, and spectral-class. As in pairs, lists, and vectors, Scheme imposes no restriction on the type of value that can be stored in any of the fields.

A record type definition implicitly defines several procedures for operating on values of the newly defined type:

- A constructor builds and returns a newly allocated instance of the record type. The second subexpression of the define-record-type-expression should be an S-expression containing one or more identifiers. The first identifier will be the name of the constructor procedure, and the remaining identifiers, if any, will be the names of the fields that the constructor is expected to initialize. These names will be parameters of the constructor, so that the appropriate values to be stored into the specified fields initially must be provided as arguments to the constructor procedure when it is invoked. (In the example, the constructor is make-star, and it takes four arguments, corresponding to the four fields of the records. In this case, the constructor is expected to initialize all four of the fields in the record that it builds before returning it.)

- A type predicate takes one argument, which can be any Scheme value, and returns #t if the type of that argument is the new record type and #f if it is not. The third subexpression of the define-record-type-expression must be an identifier that will be the name of the type predicate. (In the example, the type predicate is star?.)

- An accessor procedure takes one argument, a record of the type, and returns the value stored in a particular field of that record. There will be an accessor procedure for each field. Each of the subexpressions of the define-record-type-expression following the type-predicate identifier must be an S-expression containing either two or three identifiers. The first identifier will be the name of the field, and the second will be the accessor procedure for that
A modifier procedure takes two arguments, a record of the type and a value, and stores the value into a particular field of that record, destructively replacing the value previously stored in that field. Modifiers are invoked only for this side effect and the value that they return is unspecified. A modifier procedure for a particular field is defined if, and only if, the S-expression that specifies the name and accessor for the field also includes a third identifier, which will be the name of the modifier procedure. (In the example, none of the fields has a modifier procedure, so star records are “immutable” — once constructed, they can never be changed.)

After the type definition, the programmer can begin using the implicitly defined procedures as if they had been introduced with define. However, it is neither necessary nor possible actually to write out definitions for the procedures that the record type definition generates.

If a record type definition occurs inside a library, the library can export any of the procedures that the record type definition implicitly defines, but it cannot export the record type itself. So, for instance, a library containing the above definition of the star record type can export any or all of the procedures make-star, star?, star-name, star-distance, star-apparent-magnitude, and star-spectral-class, but cannot export the record type star. Similarly, application programs and other libraries can import such procedures, but cannot import the record type definitions that produce them.

There are conventional rules for deriving the names of constructors, type predicates, accessor procedures, and modifier procedures from the programmer-selected names for the type and for each field:

- The name of the constructor is formed by prefixing make- to the base name for the type.
- The name of the type predicate is formed by suffixing a question mark to the base name for the type.
- The name of each accessor procedure is formed by concatenating the base name for the type, a hyphen, and the name of the field to be selected.
- The name of each modifier procedure is formed by concatenating the prefix set-, the base name for the type, a hyphen, the name of the field to be modified, and an exclamation point. (For instance, if we had provided a modifier procedure for the distance field of a star record, we would have named it set-star-distance!.)
Exercises

1. Write a record type definition for a record type called \textit{pixel}, with three fields named \textit{x-coordinate}, \textit{y-coordinate}, and \textit{color}. The \textit{x-coordinate} and \textit{y-coordinate} fields should be mutable (that is, you should provide modifier procedures for them). How many procedures are implicitly defined by your definition? What are the names of those procedures? What is the arity of each one (that is, how many arguments does each one expect to receive)?

2. Write a record type definition for a structure that keeps track of several items of information about a disk partition: the number of bytes in each sector, the number of file allocation tables, the total number of sectors, the number of sectors in each cluster, the number of sectors in each file allocation table, the number of sectors in each track, the number of “reserved” sectors, the number of “hidden” sectors, the number of root-directory entries, the number of read/write heads available in the drive, and a numerical descriptor identifying the type of medium used in the disk.

3. Is it possible to define a record type that has no fields? Could this be useful in any way?

4. Here’s a record type definition that might appear in the code for a multi-player role-playing game:

\begin{verbatim}
(define-record-type avatar
  (make-avatar id-number name image charisma intelligence)
  avatar?
  (id-number avatar-id-number)
  (name avatar-name)
  (image avatar-image)
  (charisma avatar-charisma)
  (intelligence avatar-intelligence)
  (agility avatar-agility set-avatar-agility!)
  (strength avatar-strength set-avatar-strength!)
  (location avatar-location set-avatar-location!)
  (possessions avatar-possessions set-avatar-possessions!))
\end{verbatim}

An avatar should have a unique, internally generated ID number, a name and image supplied by the player, and randomly generated levels of charisma, intelligence, agility, and strength. The initial location for a newly created avatar should be the place at which The Quest Begins, and the avatar should start out with some minimal equipment as possessions. In the course of the avatar’s subsequent misadventures, the contents of the \textit{agility} and \textit{strength} fields might change, and the \textit{location} and \textit{possession} fields would also naturally change, but the values in the other fields are fixed—presumably nothing that happens in the game (short of total annihilation) can affect the avatar’s charisma and intelligence.

However, the implicitly defined \textit{make-avatar} procedure does only a fraction of this work. The caller must provide all of the parameters of the constructor, not just the values intended for the name and image fields, and \textit{make-avatar} initializes only the fields for which it receives values, leaving \textit{agility}, \textit{strength}, \textit{location}, and \textit{possessions} unspecified.

Define a “husk” constructor \textit{create-avatar} that takes two arguments, \textit{name} and \textit{image}, internally generates appropriate values for \textit{id-number}, \textit{charisma}, and \textit{intelligence}, invokes \textit{make-avatar} to build and partially initialize an \textit{avatar} record, uses the modifier procedures to initialize the mutable fields, and returns the fully initialized record.