

# Moltemplate Manual

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## 1 Introduction

Moltemplate is a cross-platform text-based molecule builder for LAMMPS. It is typically used for building coarse-grained toy molecular models. Moltemplate users have access to (nearly) all of the standard and non-standard (custom, user-created) force-field and features available in LAMMPS.

*(Although optimized for LAMMPS, moltemplate is a general text manipulation tool which, in principle, could be used to generate topology and force-field files for other simulation programs. Please email [jewett.ajj@gmail.com](mailto:jewett.ajj@gmail.com) if you want to attempt this.)*

A file format has been created to store molecule definitions (the LAMMPS-template format, “LT”). Typical “.LT” files contain atom coordinates, topology data (bonds), LAMMPS force-field data, and other LAMMPS settings (such as group definitions, fixes, and user-defined input files) for a type of molecule (or a molecular subunit). Molecules can be copied, combined, and linked together to define new molecules. (These can be used to define larger molecules. Unlimited levels of object composition, nesting, and inheritance are supported.) Once built, individual molecules and subunits can

be customized (atoms and bonds, and subunits can be moved, deleted and replaced).

Moltemplate requires the Bourne-shell, and a recent version of python (2.7 or 3.0 or higher), and can run on OS X, linux, or windows (if a suitable shell environment has been installed). **A substantial amount of memory is needed** to run moltemplate. For example, building a system of 1000000 atoms typically requires between 3 and 12 GB of *available* memory. (This depends on the number of bonds, molecules, and angular interactions. See section 12 for details.)

### 1.1 Converting *LT files* to LAMMPS input/data files

The moltemplate.sh program converts LT-files (which contain molecule definitions) into complete LAMMPS input-scripts and data-files:

```
moltemplate.sh -atomstyle "full" system.lt
```

or

```
moltemplate.sh -xyz coords.xyz -atomstyle "full" system.lt
```

In the first example, the coordinates of the atoms in the system are built from commands inside the “system.lt” file. In the second example coordinates for the atoms are read from an XYZ-file (PDB-files are also supported). (The “full” atom style was used in this example, but other LAMMPS atom styles are supported, including hybrid styles.)

Either of these commands will construct a LAMMPS data file and a LAMMPS input script (and possibly one or more auxiliary input files), which can be directly run in LAMMPS with minimal editing.

### 1.2 Converting LAMMPS input/data files to *LT files*

Existing LAMMPS input/data files can be converted into “.LT” files using the “ltemplify.py” utility. (*Some additional manual editing may be required. See appendix B.*)

### Additional tools

The VMD topotools plugin [1] is useful for converting PDB files into LAMMPS format. These files can then be converted to “LT” format using the “ltemplify.py” utility. VMD [2] and topotools are also useful for visualizing the data files created by moltemplate.sh (See section 4.3.)

The PACKMOL [3] program is useful for generating coordinates of dense heterogeneous mixtures of molecules, which can be read by moltemplate. (The VMD “solvate” plugin may also be helpful.)

### Online examples

This manual explains in detail how to use moltemplate.sh to build LAMMPS files from scratch. You will also need to learn how to *run* LAMMPS and visualize your results. Section 4 contains a brief tutorial which explains how

to build a box of water using moltemplate and visualize initial conformation, run LAMMPS, and then visualize the trajectory. In addition, many complete working examples (with images and readme files) are available online (at <http://moltemplate.org>) which can be downloaded and modified. (These examples are also located in the “tools/moltemplate/examples” subdirectory bundled with LAMMPS.) These examples are a good starting point for learning LAMMPS and moltemplate.

## License

Moltemplate.sh is publicly available at <http://moltemplate.org> under the terms of the open-source 3-clause BSD license. <http://www.opensource.org/licenses/BSD-3-Clause>

## 2 Installation

If you don't already have moltemplate, the first step of the installation is to download and unpack the moltemplate archive. The most up-to-date version of moltemplate can always be downloaded at: <http://www.moltemplate.org> and unpacked using:

```
tar xzf moltemplate_2012-3-31.tar.gz
```

(The date will vary from version to version.)

Alternately, if you obtained moltemplate bundled with LAMMPS, then the “moltemplate” directory will probably be located in the “tools” subdirectory of your lammgs installation.

If necessary, move the “moltemplate” directory to its desired location. (For the sake of this example, let's assume you move it to: “\$HOME/moltemplate”.)

The “moltemplate.sh” script and the python scripts it invokes are located in the “src” subdirectory. You should update your PATH environment variable to include this directory. You also need to set your MOLTEMPLATE\_PATH environment variable to point to the “common” subdirectory. (Force fields and commonly used molecules will eventually be located here.)

If you use the bash shell, typically you would edit your ~/.bash\_profile, ~/.bashrc, or ~/.profile files to contain the following lines:

```
export PATH="$PATH:$HOME/moltemplate/src"
export MOLTEMPLATE_PATH="$HOME/moltemplate/common"
```

If you use the tcsh shell, typically you would edit your ~/.login, ~/.cshrc, or ~/.tcshrc files to contain the following lines:

```
setenv PATH "$PATH:$HOME/moltemplate/src"
setenv MOLTEMPLATE_PATH "$HOME/moltemplate/common"
```

*Note: You may need to log out and then log back in again for the changes to take effect.*



<i>NewMol inherits Mol1 Mol2 ...</i> {  <i>additional content ...</i>  }	Create a new molecule <b>type</b> based on multiple existing molecule types. Atom types, bond types, angle types (etc) which are defined in <i>Mol1</i> , or <i>Mol2</i> , ... are available inside the new molecule. <i>Additional content</i> (including more <i>write()</i> or <i>write_once()</i> or <i>new</i> commands) follows within the curly brackets. (See sections 10, 11.8, and 11.8.1)
<i>MolType.xform()</i>	Apply the coordinate transform <i>xform()</i> to the coordinates of the atoms in all molecules of type <i>MolType</i> . (See section 10.)
<i>molecule.xform()</i>	Apply the coordinate transform <i>xform()</i> to the coordinates in <i>molecule</i> . (Here <i>molecule</i> refers to a specific instance or copy of a particular molecule type. See sections 8 and 4.2.)
<i>molecules[range].xform()</i>	Apply the coordinate transform <i>xform()</i> to the coordinates of molecules specified by <i>molecule[range]</i> . (This also works for multidimensional arrays. See sections 7.5 and 8.)
<b>delete</b> <i>molecule</i>	Delete the <i>molecule</i> instance. (This command can appear inside a molecule's definition to delete a specific molecular subunit within a molecule. In that case, it will be carried out in every copy of that molecule type. <b>delete</b> can also be used to delete specific atoms, bonds, angles, dihedrals, and improper interactions.) See section 8.3.
<b>delete</b> <i>molecules[range]</i>	Delete a range of molecules specified by <i>molecule[range]</i> . (This also works for multidimensional arrays. See sections 8.3 and 9.4.)
<b>write_once</b> ('file') { <i>text ...</i> }	Write the text enclosed in curly brackets {...} to file <i>file</i> . The <i>text</i> can contain @variables which are replaced by integers. (See sections 5.1 and 5.2.)
<b>write</b> ('file') { <i>text ...</i> }	Write the text enclosed in curly brackets {...} to file <i>file</i> . <i>This is done every time a new copy of this molecule is created using the "new" command.</i> The <i>text</i> can contain either @variables or \$variables which will be replaced by integers. (See sections 5.1 and 5.2.)
Note: <i>file</i> names beginning with "Data " or "In " (such as "Data Atoms" or "In Settings") are inserted into the relevant section of the LAMMPS data file or input script. (See section 5.4.)	
<b>include</b> <i>file</i>	Insert the contents of file <i>file</i> here. (Quotes optional.)
<b>import</b> <i>file</i>	Insert the contents of file <i>file</i> here. This command prevents circular inclusions and is safer to use.

<b>using namespace</b> <i>X</i>	This enables you to refer to any of the molecule types, defined within a <b>namespace</b> object ( <i>X</i> in this example), <i>without</i> needing to refer to these objects by their full path. (Unfortunately, atom types, or bond, angle, dihedral, or improper types must still be referred to explicitly, by their full path.) Note: a “ <b>namespace</b> object” is any object which lacks any <i>write()</i> or <i>new</i> commands. (In other words, namespace objects define atom types and/or molecule types without creating any atoms or molecules. See section 11.7.)
<b>category</b> <i>\$catname(i<sub>0</sub>, Δ)</i> or <b>category</b> <i>@catname(i<sub>0</sub>, Δ)</i>	Create a new variable category. See section D.2 for details.
create_var { <i>variable</i> }	Create a variable locally (but do not write it to a file). (Typically <i>\$mol</i> is the <i>variable</i> . See section 6.1.1.)
<i>#commented text</i>	All text following a “#” character is treated as a comment and ignored.

### 3.2 Common \$ and @ variables

variable type	meaning
<code>\$atom:name</code>	A unique ID number assigned to atom <i>name</i> in this molecule. (Note: The <i>:name</i> suffix can be omitted if the molecule in which this variable appears only contains a single atom.)
<code>@atom:type</code>	A number which indicates an atom's <i>type</i> (typically used to lookup pair interactions.)
<code>\$bond:name</code>	A unique ID number assigned to bond <i>name</i> (Note: The <i>:name</i> suffix can be omitted if the molecule in which this variable appears only contains a single bond.)
<code>@bond:type</code>	A number which indicates a bond's <i>type</i>
<code>\$angle:name</code>	A unique ID number assigned to angle <i>name</i> (Note: The <i>:name</i> suffix can be omitted if the molecule in which this variable appears only contains a single angle interaction.)
<code>@angle:type</code>	A number which indicates an angle's <i>type</i>
<code>\$dihedral:name</code>	A unique ID number assigned to dihedral <i>name</i> (Note: The <i>:name</i> suffix can be omitted if the molecule in which this variable appears only contains a single dihedral-angle interaction.)
<code>@dihedral:type</code>	A number which indicates a dihedral's <i>type</i>
<code>\$improper:name</code>	A unique ID number assigned to improper <i>name</i> (Note: The <i>:name</i> suffix can be omitted if the molecule in which this variable appears only contains a single improper interaction.)
<code>@improper:type</code>	A number which indicates an improper's <i>type</i>
<code>\$mol</code> or <code>\$mol.</code>	This variable refers to the ID number of <i>this</i> molecule object. (See section 4.1. Note: “ <i>\$mol</i> ” is shorthand for “ <i>\$mol.</i> ”)
<code>\$mol:...</code>	The ID number assigned to the molecule to which this object belongs (if applicable). See sections 6.1.1, 11.6 and appendix G.
<i>The numbers assigned to each variable are saved in the <b>output_ttree/ttree_assignments.txt</b> file</i>	
<b>Advanced variable usage</b>	
<code>\$category:query()</code>	Query the current value of the counter in this <i>\$category</i> without incrementing it. (The “ <i>\$category</i> ” is usually either <i>\$atom</i> , <i>\$bond</i> , <i>\$angle</i> , <i>\$dihedral</i> , <i>\$improper</i> , or <i>\$mol</i> .) This is useful for counting the number of atoms, bonds, angles, molecules, etc... created so far.
<code>@category:query()</code>	Query the current value of the counter in this <i>@category</i> without incrementing it. (The “ <i>@category</i> ” is usually either <i>@atom</i> , <i>@bond</i> , <i>@angle</i> , <i>@dihedral</i> , or <i>@improper</i> .) This is useful for counting the number of atom types, bond types, angle types, etc... declared so far.)
<code>@{category:variable}</code> or <code>#{category:variable}</code>	Curly-brackets, {}, are used to refer to variables with non-standard delimiters or whitespace characters. (See section 5.7.)

See section 5.2 for details.

### 3.3 Coordinate transformations

suffix	meaning
<code>.move(x,y,z)</code>	Add numbers $(x,y,z)$ to the coordinates of every atom
<code>.rot(<math>\theta</math>, x, y, z)</code>	Rotate atom coordinates by angle $\theta$ around axis $(x,y,z)$ passing through the origin. (Dipole directions are also rotated.)
<code>.rot(<math>\theta</math>, x, y, z, <math>x_0</math>, <math>y_0</math>, <math>z_0</math>)</code>	Rotate atom coordinates by angle $\theta$ around axis pointing in the direction $(x,y,z)$ , passing through the point $(x_0, y_0, z_0)$ . (This point will be a <i>fixed point</i> . Dipole directions are also rotated.)
<code>.scale(ratio)</code>	Multiply all atomic coordinates by <i>ratio</i> . ( <b>Important:</b> <i>The scale() command does not update force-field parameters such as atomic radii or bond-lengths. Dipole magnitudes are affected.</i> )
<code>.scale(<math>x_r</math>, <math>y_r</math>, <math>z_r</math>)</code>	Multiply $x$ , $y$ , $z$ coordinates by $x_r, y_r, z_r$ , respectively
<code>.scale(ratio,<math>x_0</math>, <math>y_0</math>, <math>z_0</math>)</code> or <code>.scale(<math>x_r</math>, <math>y_r</math>, <math>z_r</math>, <math>x_0</math>, <math>y_0</math>, <math>z_0</math>)</code>	You can supply 3 optional additional arguments $x_0, y_0, z_0$ which specify the point around which you want the scaling to occur. (This point will be a <i>fixed point</i> . If omitted, the origin is used.)

**Note:** Multiple transformations can be chained together into a compound operation.

(For example: `.scale(2.0).rotate(45.2, 1, 0, 0).move(25.0, 0, 0)`)

These are evaluated from left-to-right. (See section 7.1.)

### 3.4 moltemplate.sh command line arguments:

argument	meaning
-atomstyle <i>style</i>	Inform moltemplate which atom_style you are using. ( <i>style</i> is “full” by default). Other styles like “molecular” or “hybrid full dipole” are supported. For custom atom styles, you can also specify the list of column names manually (enclosed in quotes). For example: <code>-atomstyle "molid x y z atomid atomtype mux muy muz"</code>
-pdb coords.pdb	Read all of the atomic coordinates from an external PDB file (Periodic boundary conditions are also read, if present. See section 4.2.)
-xyz coords.xyz	Read all of the atomic coordinates from an external XYZ file (See section 4.2.)
-a ' <i>variable value</i> '	Assign <i>variable</i> to <i>value</i> . (The <i>variable</i> should begin with either a @ or a \$ character. Quotes and a space separator are required. See appendix D.1.)
-a bindings_file'	The variables in column 1 of <i>bindings_file</i> (which is a text file) will be assigned to the values in column 2 of that file. (This is useful when there are many variable assignments to make. See appendix D.1.)
-b ' <i>variable value</i> ' or -b <i>bindings_file</i>	Assign variables to values. Unlike assignments made with “-a”, assignments made using “-b” are non-exclusive. (They may overlap with other variables in the same category. See appendix D.1.)
-overlay-bonds -overlay-angles -overlay-dihedrals -overlay-impropers	By default moltemplate overwrites duplicate bonded interactions which involve the same set of atoms. These flags disable that behavior. This can be useful when you want to superimpose multiple angular or dihedral forces on the same set of atoms (eg. to enable more complex force fields).
-nocheck	Do <i>not</i> check for common LAMMPS/moltemplate syntax errors. (This might be useful when using moltemplate with simulation software other than LAMMPS, or to build systems which need new non-standard LAMMPS features.)

## 4 Introductory tutorial

### *Summary*

*Moltemplate is based on a very simple text generator (wrapper) which repetitively copies short text fragments into one (or more) files and keeps track of various kinds of counters.*

LAMMPS is a powerful but complex program with many contributors. Moltemplate is a front-end for LAMMPS. Moltemplate users will have to tackle the same steep learning-curve (and significant number of bugs) that other LAMMPS users face. Moltemplate does have a limited understanding of basic LAMMPS syntax, and will attempt to correct user mistakes. However users must still learn LAMMPS syntax and write LT files which obey it. For users who are new to LAMMPS, the easiest way to do this is to modify an existing example (such as the water box example in this section). (The official LAMMPS documentation <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/Manual.html> is an excellent reference to look up LAMMPS commands you see in these examples that you are not familiar with.)

### 4.1 Simulating a box of water using moltemplate and LAMMPS



Figure 1: Coordinates of a single water molecule in our example. (Atomic radii not to scale.)

Here we show an example of a lammps-template file for water. (The settings shown here are borrowed from the simple-point-charge [4] SPC/E model.) In addition to coordinates, topology and force-field settings, “LT” files can optionally include any other kind of LAMMPS settings including SHAKE constraints, k-space settings, and even group definitions. (*Unicode is supported.*)

```
# (NOTE: Text following '#' characters are comments)
#
# file "spce_simple.lt"
#
#   H1      H2
#   \      /
#    O
#
SPCE {

# LAMMPS supports a large number of force-field styles. We must select
# which ones we need. This information belongs in the "In Init" section.
```

```

write_once("In Init") {
  units      real          # angstroms, kCal/mole, Daltons, Kelvin
  atom_style  full         # select column format for Atoms section
  pair_style  lj/charmm/coul/long 9.0 10.0 10 # params needed: epsilon sigma
  bond_style  harmonic     # parameters needed: k_bond, r0
  angle_style harmonic     # parameters needed: k_theta, theta0
  kspace_style pppm 0.0001 # long-range electrostatics sum method
  pair_modify mix arithmetic # using Lorenz-Berthelot mixing rules
}

## Atom properties and molecular topology go in the various "Data ..." sections

# We selected "atom_style full". That means we use this column format:
# atomID      molID      atomType  charge  coordX   coordY   coordZ

write("Data Atoms") {
  $atom:O      $mol:..    @atom:O  -0.8476  0.0000000 0.000000  0.00000
  $atom:H1     $mol:..    @atom:H   0.4238  0.8164904 0.5773590 0.00000
  $atom:H2     $mol:..    @atom:H   0.4238  -0.8164904 0.5773590 0.00000
}

# All 3 atoms share same molID number which is unique for each water molecule
# The "O" & "H1","H2" atoms in ALL molecules share same atom types: "O" & "H"

write_once("Data Masses") {
  # atomType  mass
  @atom:O    15.9994
  @atom:H    1.008
}

write("Data Bonds") {
  # bondID  bondType  atomID1  atomID2
  $bond:OH1 @bond:OH  $atom:O  $atom:H1
  $bond:OH2 @bond:OH  $atom:O  $atom:H2
}

write("Data Angles") {
  # angleID  angleType  atomID1  atomID2  atomID3
  $angle:HOH @angle:HOH $atom:H1 $atom:O $atom:H2
}

# --- Force-field parameters go in the "In Settings" section: ---

write_once("In Settings") {
  # -- Non-bonded (Pair) interactions --
  #          atomType1 atomType2  parameter-list (epsilon, sigma)
  pair_coeff @atom:O @atom:O    0.1553 3.166
  pair_coeff @atom:H @atom:H    0.0    2.058
}

```

```

# (mixing rules determine interactions between types @atom:O and @atom:H)

# -- Bonded interactions --
#           bondType   parameter list (k_bond, r0)
bond_coeff @bond:OH   1000.00 1.0
#           angleType  parameter-list (k_theta, theta0)
angle_coeff @angle:HOH 1000.0   109.47

# Group definitions and constraints can also go in the "In Settings" section
group spce type @atom:O @atom:H
fix fSHAKE spce shake 0.0001 10 100 b @bond:OH a @angle:HOH
# (lammps quirk: Remember to "unfix fSHAKE" during minimization.)
}
} # SPCE

```

Words which are preceded by “\$” or “@” characters are counter variables and will be replaced by integers. (See section 5.2 for details.) Users can include SPCE water in their simulations using commands like these:

```

# -- file "system.lt" --
import "spce_simple.lt"
wat = new SPCE [1000]

```

You can now use “moltemplate.sh” to create simulation input files for LAMMPS

```
moltemplate.sh -pdb coords.pdb -atomstyle "full" system.lt
```

This command will create lammps input files for the molecular system described in “system.lt”, using the desired atom style (“full” by default). In this example, moltemplate is relying on an external file (“coords.pdb”) to supply the atomic coordinates of the water molecules, as well as the periodic boundary conditions. Coordinates in XYZ format are also supported using “-xyz coords.xyz”.

### ***Details***

*Note that since XYZ files lack boundary information, you must also include a “Boundary” section in your “.lt” file, as demonstrated in section 4.2. In both cases, the order of the atom types in a PDB or XYZ file (after sorting) should match the order they are created by moltemplate (which is determined by the order of the “new” commands in the LT file). Unfortunately this may require careful manual editing of the PDB or XYZ file.*

## **4.2 Coordinate generation**

It is not necessary to provide a separate file with atomic coordinates. It is more common to manually specify the location (and orientation) of the molecules in your system using the “.move()” and “.rot()” commands in the LT file itself (discussed in section 6). For example you can replace the line:

```
wat = new SPCE [1000]
```

from the example above with 1000 lines:

```
wat1    = new SPCE
wat2    = new SPCE.move(3.450, 0.0, 0.0)
wat3    = new SPCE.move(6.900, 0.0, 0.0)
wat4    = new SPCE.move(10.35, 0.0, 0.0)
      :
      :
wat1000 = new SPCE.move(34.50, 34.50, 34.50)
```

Specifying geometry this way is tedious. Alternatively, moltemplate has simple commands for arranging multiple copies of a molecule in periodic, crystalline, toroidal, and helical 1-D, 2-D, and 3-D lattices. For example, you can generate a simple cubic lattice of  $10 \times 10 \times 10$  water molecules (with a 3.45 Angstrom spacing) using a single command (which in this example we split into multiple lines)

```
wat = new SPCE [10].move(0,0,3.45)
      [10].move(0,3.45,0)
      [10].move(3.45,0,0)
```

(See section 6 for more details and examples.) This will create 1000 molecules with names like “wat[0][0][0]”, “wat[0][0][1]”, ..., “wat[9][9][9]”. You can always access individual atomIDs, molIDs, bondIDs, angleIDs, and dihedrIDs (if present), for any molecule elsewhere in your LT files using this notation: “\$atom:wat[2][3][4]/H1”, “\$bond:wat[0][5][1]/OH1”, “\$angle:wat[2][8][3]/HOH”, “\$mol:wat[0][1][2]”. This allows you to define interactions which link different molecules together (see section 6).

A list of available coordinate transformations is provided in section 3.3.

### Boundary Conditions:

LAMMPS simulations have finite volume and are usually periodic. We must specify the dimensions of the simulation boundary using the “write\_once(“Data Boundary”)” command.

```
write_once("Data Boundary") {
  0.0 34.5 xlo xhi
  0.0 34.5 ylo yhi
  0.0 34.5 zlo zhi
}
```

This is usually specified in the outermost LT file (“system.lt” in this example). (*Note: Boundary conditions do not have to be rectangular or even periodic. For triclinic cells, additional “xy”, “xz”, and “yz” tilt parameters can be added. For details, lookup the “read\_data” and “boundary” commands in the official LAMMPS documentation.*)

This system is shown in figure 2a). After you have specified the geometry, then you can run moltemplate.sh this way:

```
moltemplate.sh -atomstyle "full" system.lt
```

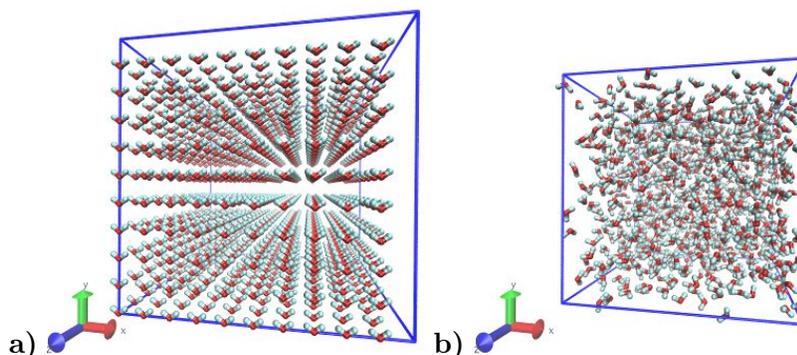


Figure 2: A box of 1000 water molecules (before and after pressure equilibration), generated by moltemplate and visualized by VMD with the topotools plugin. (The VMD console commands used for visualization were: “topo readlammpsdata system.data full”, “animate write psf system.psf”, “pbc wrap -compound res -all”, and “pbc box”. See sections 4.3, and C for details.

### 4.3 Visualization using VMD & topotools

When you run moltemplate, it generates a LAMMPS *data* file. This file is usually called “system.data”. Geometric information, and bonded topology are stored in this file. After you have run moltemplate, you should look at your system to check it for mistakes. Problems can easily occur with overlapping atoms (missing molecules), periodic boundaries, incorrectly bonded atoms, incorrect rotation and movement. Sometimes many iterations of alternately running moltemplate and visualization are necessary.

VMD and topotools can view *data* files in 3-D. Some very basic instructions how to do this are provided below. (*Note: These instructions were written for VMD 1.9 and topotools 1.2*)

To view a *data* file:

- a) start VMD
- b) from the menu, select **Extensions**→**Tk Console**
- c) enter:

```
topo readlammpsdata system.data full
animate write psf system.psf
```

The first command will display all of the atoms and bonds in your system in VMD’s 3-D window. (We use “full” because we are using the “full” atom\_style in this particular example. If you are using a different atom\_style, then change the command above accordingly.)

The second command will create a PSF file (“system.psf”) which will be useful later for viewing a trajectory file created during a LAMMPS simulation. (See section 4.5.)

Most likely, atoms and bonds will be represented by ugly dots and lines by default. To change the way molecules are displayed, control their color,

display periodic boundaries, and wrap atomic coordinates, read the short VMD tutorial in appendix C.

(Note: As of 2012-12-18, VMD does not have built-in support for exotic atom\_styles such as ellipsoids and dipoles, but their are 3rd-party scripts, plugins and settings you can use. Search the VMD and LAMMPS mailing lists for help.)

#### 4.4 Running a LAMMPS simulation (after using moltemplate)

To run a simulation of one or more molecules, LAMMPS requires an *input script* and a *data file*. Input scripts typically contain force field styles, parameters and run settings. (They sometimes also contain atom coordinates.) Data files typically contain atom coordinates and bonded topology data. (They sometimes also contain force-field parameters.)

Moltemplate will create the following files: “system.data”, “system.in”, “system.in.init”, “system.in.settings”, (and possibly other files including “system.in.coords”). These are LAMMPS input/data files, and they can be run in LAMMPS with minimal modification (see below). The main input script file is named “system.in”, and it usually contains just three lines:

```
include "system.in.init"
read_data "system.data"
include "system.in.settings"
```

To *run* a simulation, you will have to edit this file in order to add a couple of run commands. These commands tell LAMMPS about the simulation conditions you want to use (temperature, pressure), how long to run the simulation, how to integrate the equations of motion, and how to write the results to a file (file format, frequency, etc). Moltemplate.sh can not do this for you. Some simple examples (which you can paste into your input script) are provided in the *online examples* which can be downloaded from <http://moltemplate.org>. (These example input scripts typically have names like “run.in.nvt” and “run.in.npt”.)

In addition to the examples, an introduction to LAMMPS input scripts is provided at these links: [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/Section\\_commands.html#cmd\\_1](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/Section_commands.html#cmd_1). [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/Section\\_howto.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/Section_howto.html) and [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/Section\\_howto.html#howto\\_15](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/Section_howto.html#howto_15)

Here is a list of basic input script commands used in the moltemplate examples (and links to their documentation):

```
run http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/run.html
timestep http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/timestep.html
thermo http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/thermo.html
dump http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/dump.html
read_data http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/read\_data.html
restart http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/restart.html
```

`include` <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/include.html>  
`fix nve` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix\\_nve.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix_nve.html)  
`fix nvt` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix\\_nh.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix_nh.html)  
`fix npt` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix\\_nh.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix_nh.html)  
`fix langevin` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix\\_langevin.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix_langevin.html)  
`fix` <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix.html>  
`group` <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/group.html>  
`compute` <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/compute.html>  
`print` <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/print.html>  
`variable` <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/variable.html>  
`rerun` <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/rerun.html>  
`fix shake` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix\\_shake.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix_shake.html)  
`fix rigid` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix\\_rigid.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/fix_rigid.html)

In addition, all users should be familiar with the following commands:  
(These appear in the “In Init” section of most LT files.)

`atom_style` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/atom\\_style.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/atom_style.html)  
`pair_style` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/pair\\_style.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/pair_style.html)  
`bond_style` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/bond\\_style.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/bond_style.html)  
`angle_style` [http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/angle\\_style.html](http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/angle_style.html)

## 4.5 Visualizing Trajectories

After you have run a simulation in LAMMPS, there are several programs which can visualize the system. If you have saved your trajectory in LAMMPS “dump” format, later you can view it in VMD [2]. For the purpose of viewing trajectories in LAMMPS, I recommend using the following style of “dump” commands in the LAMMPS input-script that you use when you run LAMMPS:

```
dump 1 all custom 1000 DUMP_FILE.lammpstrj id mol type x y z ix iy iz
```

(The “all” and “1000”, refer to the atom selection and save interval, which may differ depending on the kind of simulation you are running. See <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/dump.html> for details.)

Once you have a dump file, you can view it in VMD using:

- a) Start VMD From the menu in the upper-left, select **File**→**New Molecule**
- b) Browse to select the PSF file you created above, and load it. (Don’t close the window yet.)

c) Browse to select the trajectory file. If necessary, for "file type" select: "LAMMPS Trajectory". Click on **OK**.

d) Click on the **Load** button.

Again, to customize molecule appearance, display periodic boundary conditions and wrap molecule coordinates, see the commands discussed in appendix C.

(*Note: VMD may not be able to correctly visualize simulations which do not preserve the number of atoms and bonds over time, such as those run using **fix bond/create**, **fix bond/break**, or **fix gcmc**.*)

## 5 Overview

### 5.1 Basics: The *write()* and *write\_once()* commands

Each LT file typically contains one or more "write" or "write\_once" commands. These commands have the following syntax

```
write_once(filename) {text_block}
```

This creates a new file with the desired file name and fills it with the text enclosed in curly brackets {}. Text blocks usually span multiple lines and contain counter variables (beginning with "@" or "\$"). which are replaced with numbers. However the "write()" command will repeatedly append the same block of text to the file every time the molecule (in which the write command appears) is generated or copied (using the "new" command, after incrementing the appropriate counters, as explained in 5.2.2).

### 5.2 Basics: counter variables

Words following a "@" or a "\$" character are *counter variables*. (These are not to be confused with *LAMMPS variables* <http://lammps.sandia.gov/doc/variable.html>). By default, *all counter variables are substituted with a numeric counter* before they are written to a file. These counters begin at 1 (by default), and are incremented as the system size and complexity grows (see below).

These words typically contain a colon (:) followed by more text. The text preceding this colon is the *category name*. (For example: "\$atom:", "\$bond:", "\$angle:", "@atom:", "@bond:", "@angle:") Variables belonging to different categories are counted independently.

Users can override these assignment rules and create custom categories. (See appendices D.1 and D.2 for details.)

(*Unicode is supported.*)

#### 5.2.1 Static counters begin with "@"

"@" variables generally correspond to *types*: such as atom types, bond types, angle types, dihedral types, improper types. These are simple variables and they assigned to unique integers in the order they are read from your LT files. Each uniquely named variable in each category is assigned to a different

integer. For example, “@bond:” type variables are numbered from “1” to the number of *bond types*. (Pairs of bonded atoms are assigned a *bond type*. Later, LAMMPS will use this integer to lookup the bond-length and Hooke’s-law elastic constant describing the force between these two atoms.)

### 5.2.2 Instance counters begin with “\$”

On the other hand, “\$” variables correspond to unique ID numbers: atom-IDs, bond-IDs, angle-IDs, dihedral-IDs, improper-IDs, and molecule-IDs. These variables are created whenever a copy of a molecule is created (using the “new” command). If you create 1000 copies of a water molecule using a command like

```
wat = new SPCE[10] [10] [10]
```

then moltemplate creates 3000 “\$atom” variables with names like

```
$atom:wat [0] [0] [0] /O
$atom:wat [0] [0] [0] /H1
$atom:wat [0] [0] [0] /H2
$atom:wat [0] [0] [1] /O
$atom:wat [0] [0] [1] /H1
$atom:wat [0] [0] [1] /H2
:
$atom:wat [9] [9] [9] /O
$atom:wat [9] [9] [9] /H1
$atom:wat [9] [9] [9] /H2
```

### 5.2.3 Variable names: short-names *vs.* full-names

In the example above, the \$ variables have full-names like “\$atom:wat[8][3][7]/H1”, not “\$atom:H1”. However inside the definition of the water molecule, you don’t specify the full name. You can refer to this atom as “\$atom:H1”. Likewise, the full-name for the @atom variables is actually “@atom:SPCE/H”, not “@atom:H”. However inside the definition of the water molecule, you typically use the shorthand notation “@atom:H”.

### 5.2.4 Numeric substitution

Before being written to a file, every variable (either \$ or @) with a unique *full-name* will be assigned to a unique integer, starting at 1 by default.

The various \$atom variables in the water example will be substituted with integers from 1 to 3000 (assuming no other molecules are present). But the “@atom:O” and “@atom:H” variables (which are shorthand for “@atom:SPCE/O” and “@atom:SPCE/H”) will be assigned to to “1” and “2” (again, assuming no other molecule types are present).

So, in summary, @ variables increase with the *complexity* of your system (IE the number of molecule types or force-field parameters), but \$ variables increase with the *size* of your system.

### 5.2.5 Variable scope

This effectively means that all variables are specific to local molecules they were defined in. In other words, an atom type named “@atom:H” inside the “SPCE” molecule, will be assigned to a different number than an atom named “@atom:H” in an “Arginine” molecule. This is because the two variables will have different *full* names (“@atom:SPCE/H”, and “@atom:Arginine/H”).

### Sharing atom types or other variables between molecules

If you want to share atom types between molecules, you can place them outside the current molecule definition. Later you can use file-system-path-like syntax (“./”, or “../” or “/”) to access atoms (or molecules) outside of the current molecule. For example, two different molecule types can share the same type of hydrogen atom by referring to it using this syntax: “@atom:./H”. (More complex nested relationships are possible. For example see section 11.6.) (*Further details of variable syntax are discussed in appendix G.*)

### 5.3 Troubleshooting using the *output\_ttree* directory

Users can see what numbers were assigned to each variable by inspecting the contents of the “output\_ttree” subdirectory created by moltemplate. Unfortunately, it not unusual for LAMMPS to crash the first time you attempt to run it on a DATA file created by moltemplate. This often occurs if you failed to spell atom types and other variables consistently. The LAMMPS error message (located at the end of the “log.lammps” file created by LAMMPS) will help you determine what type of mistake you made. (For example, what type of variable was misspelled or placed in the wrong place?)

To help you, the “output\_ttree” directory contains a file named “ttree\_assignments.txt”. This is a simple 2-column text file containing a list of *all* of the variables you have created in one column, and the numbers they were assigned to in the second column. (There is also a comment on each line beginning with a “#” character which indicates the file and line number where this variable is first used.)

The “output\_ttree” directory also contains all of the files that you created. The versions with a “.template” extension contain text interspersed with *full* variable names (before numeric substitution). (A spelling mistake, like using “\$atom:H” when you meant to say “\$atom:H1” or “@atom:H” will show up in these files if you inspect them carefully.) This can help you identify where the mistake occurred in your LT files.

Once a molecular system is debugged and working, users can ignore or discard the contents of this directory.

### 5.4 “Data” and “In”

Again, LAMMPS requires an *input script* and a *data file* to run. *Moltemplate’s job is to generate these files. Input scripts* typically contain force-field

styles, parameters and run settings *Data files* typically contain atom coordinates and bonded topology data.

If you are familiar with LAMMPS, you may have noticed the file names above (in the example from section 4.1) sound suspiciously like sections from LAMMPS data files or input scripts, such as “Data Boundary”, “Data Atoms”, “Data Bonds”, “Data Masses”, “Data Angles”, “Data Dihedrals”, “Data Improvers”, “In Init”, “In Settings”). All files whose names begin with “In ” or “Data ” are special. For the user’s convenience, the `moltemplate.sh` script copies the contents of these files into the corresponding section (“Atoms”, “Bonds”, “Angles”, etc.) of the DATA file or INPUT scripts generated by `moltemplate` (“system.data”, “system.in.settings”, etc). (Then the original files are moved to the “output\_ttree/” directory, in an effort to clean things up and hide them from view.) Users can create their own custom sections to a LAMMPS data file. (See section 5.6.

However the “write()” and “write\_once()” commands are not only used for generating sections from a DATA file or INPUT scripts. Any file can be created. Files whose names do not begin with “In ” or “Data ” can have any format (and are not moved or cleaned up). (See section 5.5 for an example.)

### 5.5 (*Advanced*) Using `moltemplate` to generate auxiliary files

The following excerpt from an LT file creates a file named “system.in.sw”. (It contains parameters for the “sw” pair style. This exotic many-body pair style requires a large number of parameters, which are read from a separate file.) This “system.in.sw” file will be read later when you run the simulation. (The `pair_coeff` command below tells LAMMPS to read that file.)

```
write_once("system.in.sw") {
  mW mW mW 6.189 2.3925 1.8 23.15 1.2 -0.33333 7.04956 0.602224 4 0 0
}
write_once("In Settings") {
  pair_coeff * * sw system.in.sw mW NULL NULL NULL
}
```

As new force-field styles and/or fixes are added to LAMMPS, the files they depend on can be embedded in an LT file in this way.

### 5.6 (*Advanced*) Making custom DATA sections

Suppose that in the future, the format of the LAMMPS DATA file changes so that it now becomes necessary to supply a new section named “Foo Fee Fum”, for example. You could do that using this command:

```
write_once("Data Foo Fee Fum") {
  File contents goes here. (These files can contain
  atom counters and/or other counter variables).
}
```

This way moltemplate copy this text into the “Foo Fee Fum” section at the end of the DATA file it is constructing. This allows users to adapt to future changes in the LAMMPS data file format.

## 5.7 Details/Comments

Note that it is okay for static and instance variables to share the same variable names (such as “@atom:O” and “\$atom:O”, or “@angle:HOH” and “\$angle:HOH”). These are distinct and are counted separately.

Variable and molecule names can include unicode characters. They can also include some whitespace characters and other special characters by using backslashes and curly-brackets, for example: “@{atom: CA }” and “@atom:\ CA\ ”. Curly-brackets are useful to clarify when a variable name begins and ends, such as in this example: “@{atom:C}\*@{atom:H}”. This prevents the “\*” character from being appended to the end of the “C” variable name. (Note that using the “\*” character in any of the *coeff* commands within moltemplate is discouraged. See section 12.)

## 6 Object composition and coordinate generation

Each time a molecule is created using the “new” command, it can be rotated, moved, and scaled. (Individual atom positions can be customized later using the “write(“Data Atoms”)” command. Molecules are free to move during the simulation, of course.) The initial atomic coordinates of a large compound object is typically created by moving each individual component.

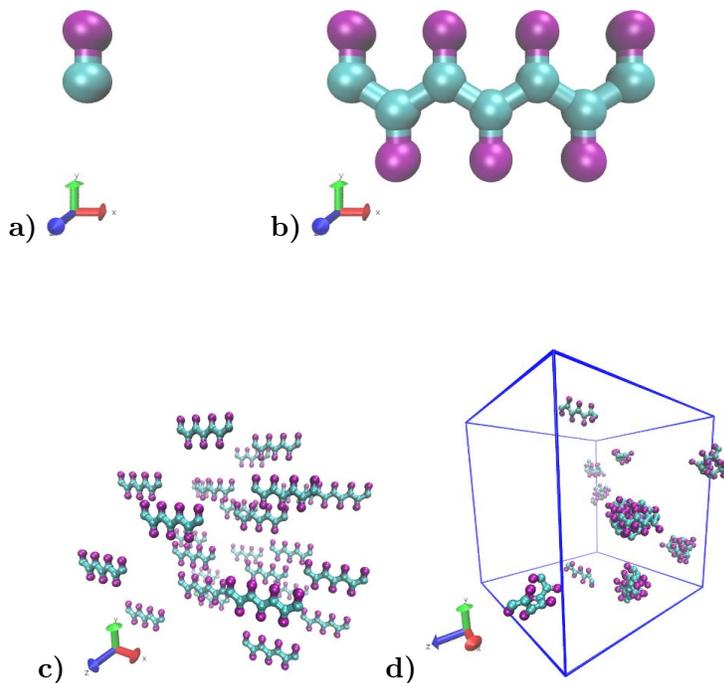


Figure 3: **a)-b)** *Building a complex system from small pieces*: Construction of a polymer (**b**) out of smaller (2-atom) subunits (**a**) using composition and rigid-body transformations. Bonds connecting different residues together (blue) must be declared explicitly, but angle and dihedral interactions will be generated automatically. See section 6.1 for details. **c)** An irregular lattice of short polymers. (See section 9.) **d)** The same system after 100000 time steps using Langevin dynamics. (The VMD console commands used for visualization were: “topo readlammpsdata system.data full”, “animate write psf system.psf”, “pbc wrap -compound res -all”, and “pbc box”. See sections 4.3, and C for details.

### 6.1 Building a large molecule from smaller pieces

As an example, we define a small 2-atom molecule “2bead”, construct a short polymer (“peptide”) using it as a building block, and then create a lattice of peptides. At each step, we define the relative orientation and position of each unit.

The file below contains the definition of the “2bead” molecule. It contains coordinates of two atoms, and their atomic properties (such as their mass, and Lennard Jones parameters). In addition, it defines a bond be-

tween the atoms, as well as parameters for that type of bond (“@bond:sidechain”). If we were only planning to build a system containing a few isolated “2bead” molecules, then this would be all we need. However, later we intend to connect multiple “2bead” molecules together later to build a polymer (in this example).

Consequently, some new sections have been added to the “2bead” molecule which may seem out of place in a simple 2-atom molecule. This molecule is slightly more complicated because each “2bead” molecule will eventually be used as a building-block for a larger molecule (“Polymer”). Consequently, additional information will be used to define additional 2-body (@bond), 3-body (@angle), and 4-body (@dihedral) interactions between atoms in different monomers in the final polymer. Hopefully the meaning of these interactions will be clear by the context in which they are used. (If not, read section 6.2.)

```
# -- file "2bead.lt" --

2bead {

  write_once("In Init") {
    # -- Default styles for "2bead" --
    units          real
    atom_style     full
    bond_style     harmonic
    angle_style    harmonic
    dihedral_style charmm
    pair_style     lj/cut/coul/debye 0.1 11.0
    pair_modify    mix arithmetic
    dielectric     80.0
    special_bonds  lj 0.0 0.0 0.0
  }

  write("Data Atoms") {
    # atomId molId  atomType  charge  x      y      z
    $atom:CA $mol:... @atom:CA  0.0    0.000  1.0000  0.0000000
    $atom:R  $mol:... @atom:R   0.0    0.000  4.4000  0.0000000
  }

  # Note: The "..." in "$mol:..." tells moltemplate that this molecule
  #       may be a part of a larger molecule, and to use the larger
  #       parent objects molecule id number as its own, if present.

  write_once("Data Masses") {
    # atomType  mass
    @atom:CA   13.0
    @atom:R    50.0
  }
}
```

```

# As usual, force-field parameters ("coeffs") go in the "In Settings" section:
write_once("In Settings") {
  # Pairwise (non-bonded) interactions:
  #           atomType1 atomType2  epsilon sigma
  pair_coeff  @atom:CA @atom:CA      0.10 2.0
  pair_coeff  @atom:R  @atom:R      0.50 3.6
  # (Interactions between different atoms are determined by mixing rules.)
}

write("Data Bonds") {
  # bond-id  bond-type      atom-id1  atom-id2
  $bond:CR  @bond:sidechain $atom:CA  $atom:R
}

write_once("In Settings") {
  #           bond-type      k      r0
  bond_coeff @bond:sidechain 30.0  3.4
  bond_coeff @bond:backbone  30.0  3.7
}

# Although there's no need to define angular interactions (because this
# "molecule" only contains two atoms), we define the settings for angles
# or dihedrals which might be present later when we build a polymer.

# Rules for determining 3-body (angle) interactions by atom & bond type:
write_once("Data Angles By Type") {
  # angle-type  atomType1 atomType2 atomType3  bondType1 bondType2
  @angle:backbone @atom:CA @atom:CA @atom:CA  @bond:*  @bond:*
  @angle:sidechain @atom:CA @atom:CA @atom:R   @bond:*  @bond:*
}

# Force-field parameters for 3-body (angle) interactions:
write_once("In Settings") {
  #           angle-type      k      theta0
  angle_coeff @angle:backbone 30.00 114
  angle_coeff @angle:sidechain 30.00 123
}

# Rules for determining 4-body (dihedral) interactions by atom & bond type:
write_once("Data Dihedrals By Type") {
  # dihedralType atmType1 atmType2 atmType3 atmType4  bndType1 bnd2  bnd3
  @dihedral:back @atom:CA @atom:CA @atom:CA @atom:CA  @bond:* @bond:* @bond:*
  @dihedral:side @atom:R  @atom:CA @atom:CA @atom:R   @bond:* @bond:* @bond:*
}

# Force-field parameters for 4-body (dihedral) interactions:
write_once("In Settings") {
  #           dihedral-type      K  n  d  w

```

```

    dihedral_coeff @dihedral:back  -0.5 1 -180 0.0
    dihedral_coeff @dihedral:side  -1.5 1 -180 0.0
  }
}

```

*Note: The ellipsis notation used here (eg "\$mol:...") warns moltemplate that the "2bead" molecule may be part of a larger molecule. (This is explained in more detail in section 11.6.2.)*

### 6.1.1 Building a simple polymer

We construct a short polymer by making 7 copies of "2bead", rotating and moving each copy:

```

# -- file "peptide.lt" --

import "2bead.lt"

Peptide {
  res1 = new 2bead
  res2 = new 2bead.rot(180.0, 1,0,0).move(3.2,0,0)
  res3 = new 2bead.rot(360.0, 1,0,0).move(6.4,0,0)
  res4 = new 2bead.rot(540.0, 1,0,0).move(9.6,0,0)
  res5 = new 2bead.rot(720.0, 1,0,0).move(12.8,0,0)
  res6 = new 2bead.rot(900.0, 1,0,0).move(16.0,0,0)
  res7 = new 2bead.rot(1080.0, 1,0,0).move(19.2,0,0)

  # Now, link the residues together this way:
  write("Data Bonds") {
    $bond:backbone1 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:res1/CA $atom:res2/CA
    $bond:backbone2 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:res2/CA $atom:res3/CA
    $bond:backbone3 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:res3/CA $atom:res4/CA
    $bond:backbone4 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:res4/CA $atom:res5/CA
    $bond:backbone5 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:res5/CA $atom:res6/CA
    $bond:backbone6 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:res6/CA $atom:res7/CA
  }

  create_var { $mol:. } #<-creates a molecule ID number for this (".") object

  # This causes atoms in res1,res2,res3,...,res7 to share the same molecule ID
  # because in the 2bead.lt file, the "..." in "$mol:..." preferentially looks
  # for a counter of that type appearing in a "write()" statement (or a
  # "create_var" statement) in a parent molecule or earlier ancestor.
}

```

The position and orientation of each copy of "2bead" is specified after the "new" statement. Each "new" statement is typically followed by a chain of move/rotate/scale functions separated by dots, evaluated left-to-right (optionally followed by square brackets and then more dots). For example,

“res2” is a copy of “2bead” which is first rotated 180 degrees around the X axis (denoted by “1,0,0”), and **then** moved in the (3.2,0,0) direction. (The last three arguments to the “rot()” command denote the axis of rotation, which does not have to be normalized.) (A list of available coordinate transformations is provided in section 3.3.)

*(Note: Although we did not do this here, it is sometimes convenient to represent polymers as 1-dimensional arrays. See sections 7 and 7.4 for examples.)*

To bond atoms in different molecules or molecular subunits together, we used the write(“Data Bonds”) command to append additional bonds to the system. (Because we are outside the definition of these molecules, we must be careful to refer to the atom-IDs and bond-types by their *full-names*. Here I’m using the “@bond:backbone” settings which were defined in the “2bead” molecule, so I refer to the bond type as “@bond:2bead/backbone”. See section 5.2.3.)

### 6.1.2 Sharing atom, bond and angle types

Normally you must separately define the parameters for all of the atoms types, and bond types, angle types etc... in every type of molecule. However different kinds of monomers in a heteropolymer typically will share some common backbone atom types and other properties. You must be careful to indicate which atom and bond types are shared between different monomers by referring them using a “./” prefix. (See sections 5.2.5, 11.6, and 11.5 for details and examples.) *Note: There is a heteropolymer example in the the “2bead\_heteropolymer/” directory in the online examples. This example demonstrates how to share backbone atoms, bonds, and angles. You can also define specific angle or dihedral interactions which are specific to the atom types in different residues.*

## 6.2 Bonded interactions *by type*

In this example we did *not* provide a list of all 3-body and 4-body forces between bonded atoms in the polymer. (for example using the “write\_once(“Data Angles”)” command from section 4.1, *or* the “write\_once(“Data Dihedrals”)”, or “write\_once(“Data Improvers”)” commands.) Instead we provided moltemplate.sh with instructions to help it figure out which atoms participate in 3-body and 4-body bonded interactions. Moltemplate can detect consecutively bonded atoms and determine the forces between them based on atom type. (Bond type can also be used as a criteria.) We did this in “2bead.lt” using the “write\_once(“Angles By Type”)” and “write\_once(“Dihedrals By Type”)” commands. You can also generate improper interactions between any 4-atoms bonded together in a T-shaped topology using the “write\_once(“Improvers By Type”)” command. See appendix A for more details. *(More general interactions are possible. See appendix F.2.)*

## 7 Arrays and coordinate transformations

Moltemplate supports 1-dimensional, and multi-dimensional arrays. These can be used to create straight (or helical) polymers sheets, tubes, tori. They are also to fill solid 3-dimensional volumes with molecules or atoms. (See sections 4.2 and 9.)

Here we show an easier way to create the short polymer shown in section 6.1.1. You can make 7 copies of the *2bead* molecule this way:

```
res = new 2bead [7]
```

This creates 7 new *2bead* molecules (named *res[0]*, *res[1]*, *res[2]*, *res[3]*, ... *res[6]*). Unfortunately, by default, the coordinates of each molecule are identical. To prevent the atom coordinates from overlapping, you have several choices:

### 7.1 Transformations following brackets [] in a new statement

After every square-bracket [] in a new command, you can specify a list of transformations to apply. For example, we could have generated atomic coordinates for the the short polymer in section 6.1.1 using this command:

```
res = new 2bead [7].rot(180, 1,0,0).move(3.2,0,0)
```

This will create 7 molecules. The coordinates of the first molecule *res[0]* are will be unmodified. However each successive molecule will have its coordinates cumulatively modified by the commands “rot(180, 1,0,0)” followed by “move(3.2,0,0)”.

#### optional: initial customizations (preceding [] brackets)

You can also make adjustments to the initial coordinates of the molecule before it is copied, and before any of the array transformations are applied. For example:

```
res = new 2bead.scale(1.5) [7].rot(180, 1,0,0).move(3.2,0,0)
```

In this example, the “scale(1.5)” transformation is applied once to enlarge every *2bead* monomer initially. This will happen before any of the rotation and move commands are applied to build the polymer (so the 3.2 Angstrom spacings between each monomer will not be effected).

### 7.2 Transformations following instantiation

Alternately you apply transformations to a molecule after they have been created (even if they are part of an array).

```
res = new 2bead [7]

# Again, the first line creates the molecules named
# "res[0]", "res[1]", "res[2]", "res[3]", ... "res[6]".
# The following lines move them into position.
```

```

res[1].rot(180.0, 1,0,0).move(3.2,0,0)
res[2].rot(360.0, 1,0,0).move(6.4,0,0)
res[3].rot(540.0, 1,0,0).move(9.6,0,0)
res[4].rot(720.0, 1,0,0).move(12.8,0,0)
res[5].rot(900.0, 1,0,0).move(16.0,0,0)
res[6].rot(1080.0, 1,0,0).move(19.2,0,0)

```

### 7.3 Transformation order (general case)

A typical array of molecules might be instantiated this way:

```

mols = new Molecule.XFORMS1() [N].XFORMS2()
mols[*].XFORMS3()

```

The list of transformations denoted by “XFORMS1” in this example are applied to the molecule first. Then the transformations in “XFORMS2” are then applied to each copy of the molecule multiple times. (For the molecule with index “*i*”, named “Molecule[*i*”, XFORMS2 will be applied *i* times.) Finally after all the molecules have been created, the list of transformations in XFORMS3 will be applied. For example, to create a ring of 10 peptides of radius 30.0, centered at position (0,25,0), use this notation:

```

peptide_ring = new Peptide.move(0,30,0) [10].rot(36,1,0,0)
# After creating it, we can move the entire ring
# (These commands are applied last.)
peptide_ring[*].move(0,25,0)

```

### 7.4 Random arrays

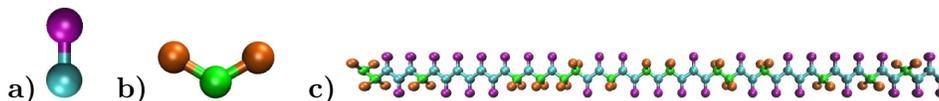


Figure 4: A random heteropolymer (c), composed of of *2bead* and *3bead* monomers (a and b) in a 3:2 ratio.

Arrays of random molecules can be generated using the *new random()* [] syntax. For example, below we define a random polymer composed of 50 *2bead* and *3bead* monomers. (See figure 4.)

```

RandPoly50 {
# Make a chain of randomly chosen monomers:

monomers = new random([2bead, 3bead], [0.6, 0.4], 123456)
              [50].rot(180,1,0,0).move(2.95, 0, 0)

# Now, link the monomers together this way:
write("Data Bonds") {
    $bond:bb1 @bond:backbone $atom:monomers[0]/CA $atom:monomers[1]/CA
    $bond:bb2 @bond:backbone $atom:monomers[1]/CA $atom:monomers[2]/CA

```

```

    $bond:bb3 @bond:backbone $atom:monomers[2]/CA $atom:monomers[3]/CA
    $bond:bb4 @bond:backbone $atom:monomers[3]/CA $atom:monomers[4]/CA
    :
    $bond:bb50 @bond:backbone $atom:monomers[48]/CA $atom:monomers[49]/CA
}
#(Note: Both the "2bead" and "3bead" molecules contain atoms
#      named "$atom:CA". The atom types are different, however.)
} #RandPoly50

```

It is also possible to fill a 2 or 3-dimensional volume with molecules randomly. This is discussed in section 9.2.

The *new random()* function takes 2 or 3 arguments: a list of molecule types (*2bead* and *3bead* in this example), and a list of probabilities (*0.6* and *0.4*) both enclosed in square-brackets []. There is no limit to the number of molecule types which appear in these lists. (These lists can also contain vacancies/blanks. See section 9.3.) (An optional random-seed argument can also be included. For example the “*123456*” shown above. If you omit this number, then you will get different results each time you run *moltemplate*.) Note that once a molecule containing random monomers is defined, (“*RandPoly50*” in this example), each copy of that molecule (created using the *new* command) is identical.

### optional: initial customizations (within *random()*)

As before, you may apply an initial transformation to each monomer type immediately after its name. For example to move the two monomer types closer or further away from the polymer axis, you can use:

```

monomers = new random([2bead.move(0,0.01,0),
                      3bead.move(0,-0.01,0)],
                      ...

```

These *move(0,0.01,0)* and *move(0,-0.01,0)* commands will be applied *before* the other rotate and move commands are applied which generate the polymer.

## 7.5 [\*] and [i-j] notation

You can move the entire array of molecules using “[\*]” notation:

```
res[*].move(0,0,40)
```

(Note that “*res.move(0,0,40)*” does not work. You must include the “[\*]”.) You can also use range limits to move only some of the residues:

```
res[2-4].move(0,0,40)
```

This will move only the third, fourth, and fifth residues.

Of course, as mentioned earlier, you can also always load atom coordinates from an external PDB or XYZ file. Such files can be generated by PACKMOL, or a variety of advanced graphical molecular modeling programs. For complex systems, this may be the best choice.

## 8 Customizing molecule position and topology

By default, each copy of a molecule created using the *new* command is identical. This need not be the case.

As discussed in section 7.2, individual molecules which were recently created can be moved, rotated, and scaled. You can also overwrite or delete individual atoms, bonds, and other interactions within a molecule, or their subunits. (See sections 8.3.2, 8.1, and 8.2.) You make any of these modifications to *some* copies of the molecule without effecting other copies. Furthermore, if those molecules are compound objects (if they contain individual molecular subunits within them), then you can rearrange the positions of their subunits as well. And all of this can be done from anywhere else in the LT file.

For example, suppose we used the “Peptide” molecule we defined above to create a larger, more complex “Dimer” molecule.

```
Dimer {  
  peptides = new Peptide [2].rot(180,1,0,0).move(0, 12.4, 0)  
}  
dimer = new Dimer
```

The *Dimer* molecule is shown in figure 7a). (*Note: The rot() and move() commands are only applied to the the second peptide, as explained in section 7.1.*) We can customize the position of the 3rd residue of the second peptide this way:

```
dimer/peptide[1]/res[2].move(0,0.2,0.6)
```

This does not effect the position of *res[2]* in *peptide[0]* (or in any other “*Peptide*” molecule). If you want to move them both, you could use a wildcard character “\*”

```
dimer/peptide[*]/res[2].move(0,0.2,0.6)
```

(You can also use ranged notation, such as “peptide[0-1]”, as an alternative to “peptide[\*]”. See section 7.5. You could also modify the definition of the “*Peptide*” molecule. See section 10.)

### 8.1 Customizing individual atom locations

To customize the positions of *individual atoms*, don’t use the “move” or “rot” commands. Instead simply overwrite their coordinates this way:

```
write("Data Atoms") {  
  $atom:dimer/peptide[0]/res[2]/CA $mol:dimer/peptide[1] @atom:2bead/R 0 6.4 8.2 0.6  
}
```

Note that because you are outside the definition of the 2bead molecule, you must be careful to refer to the atom-ID, molecule-ID, and atom-Type variables using their *full* names, as shown above. (Don’t use the abbreviated names you normally use. See section 5.2.3.)

## 8.2 Adding bonds and angles to individual molecules

Adding additional bonds within a molecule can be accomplished by writing additional lines of text to the “Data Bonds” section. (This is what we did when we added bonds between residues to create a polymer in section 6.1.1.) Again, bonds and atom names must be referred to by their *full* names. Bonds and bonded interactions can be deleted using the “delete” command. (See section 8.3.)

## 8.3 The delete command

### 8.3.1 Deleting molecules or molecular subunits

Molecules can be further customized by deleting individual atoms, bonds, bonded-interactions, and entire subunits. We can **delete** the 3rd residue of the second peptide, use the “delete” command:

```
delete dimer/peptide[1]/res[2]
```

### 8.3.2 Deleting atoms, bonds, angles, dihedrals, and impropers

Individual atoms or bonds can be deleted in a similar way:

```
delete dimer/peptide[1]/res[3]/CA          #<-- deletes the "CA" atom
delete dimer/peptide[1]/res[4]/sidechain  #<-- deletes the "sidechain" bond
```

Whenever an atom or a molecule is deleted, the bonds, angles, dihedrals, and improper interactions involving those atoms are deleted as well. (*In fact, any lines of text in any “write()” statement containing references to deleted atoms are omitted. Note: You must omit the “\$” character when deleting atoms, bonds, or angles, as we did in the two lines above.*)

When a bond is deleted, any angular, dihedral, or improper interactions which were *automatically* generated by moltemplate are removed as well. (However other bonded interactions explicitly listed by the user in their “Data Angles”, “Data Dihedrals”, or “Data Improper” sections are not removed. These need to be deleted manually.)

Multiple molecules can be moved or deleted in a single command. For example, the following command deletes the third, fourth, and fifth residues from both peptide[0] and peptide[1]:

```
delete dimer/peptide[*]/res[2-4]
```

See section 7.5 for an explanation of ranged (“[2-4]”) array notation, and wildcard characters (“\*”).

*Minor bug notice: Deleting atoms or molecules may cause inaccuracies in the \$atoms, \$bonds, \$angles, \$dihedrals, and \$impropers sections of the “tree\_assignments.txt” file. (If this is a problem, please email me. -Andrew 2013-4-07.) Fortunately, this should not harm the resulting LAMMPS data files or input scripts generated by moltemplate. They should still work with LAMMPS.*

## 9 Multidimensional arrays

The same techniques work with multidimensional arrays. Coordinate transformations can be applied to each layer in a multi-dimensional array. For example, to create a cubic lattice of 3x3x3 peptides: you would use this syntax:

```
peptides = new Peptide [3].move(0, 0, 30.0)
           [3].move(0, 30.0, 0)
           [3].move(30.0, 0, 0)
```

(Similar commands can be used with rotations to generate objects with cylindrical, helical, conical, or toroidal symmetry.)

### 9.1 Customizing individual rows, columns, or layers

Similarly, you can customize the position of individual peptides, or layers or columns using the methods above:

```
peptides[1][*][*].move(20,0,0)
peptides[*][1][*].move(0,0,20)
peptides[*][*][1].move(0,20,0)
```

(See figure 3c))

### 9.2 Creating random mixtures using multidimensional arrays

You can use “*new random()*” to fill space with a random mixture of molecules. The following 2-dimensional example creates a lipid bilayer (shown in figure 5) composed of an equal mixture of DPPC and DLPC lipids. (...Whose definition we omit here. See the online examples for details.)

```
import "lipids"
lipids = new random([DPPC,DLPC], [0.5,0.5], 123)
           [19].move(7.5, 0, 0)
           [22].move(3.75, 6.49519, 0)
           [2].rot(180, 1, 0, 0)
```

# define DPPC & DLPC  
# "123"=random\_seed  
# lattice spacing 7.5  
# hexagonal lattice  
# 2 monolayers

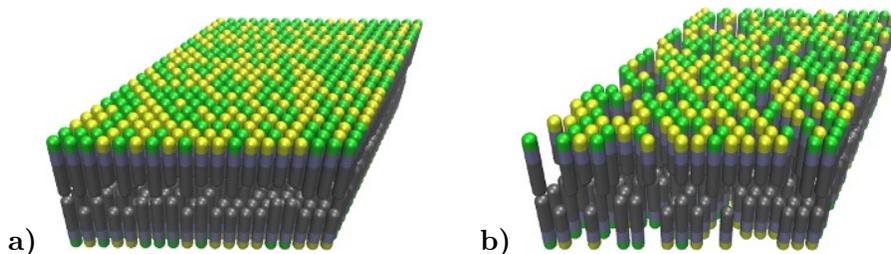


Figure 5: A lipid bilayer membrane composed of a random equal mixture of two different lipid types in a 1:1 ratio. (See section 9.2.) In **b**) one of the molecule types was left blank leaving vacancies behind. (See section 9.3.)

### 9.3 Inserting random vacancies

The list of molecule types passed to the `random()` function may contain blanks. In the next example, 30% of the lipids are missing:

```
lipids = new random([DPPC, ,DLPC], [0.35,0.3,0.35], 123) # 2nd element is blank
                [19].move(7.5, 0, 0)
                [22].move(3.75, 6.49519, 0)
                [2].rot(180, 1, 0, 0)
```

The results are shown in figure 5b). (*Note: When this happens, the array will contain missing elements. Any attempt to access the atoms inside these missing molecules will generate an error message, however moving or deleting array entries using `[*]` or `[i-j]` notation should be safe.*)

### 9.4 Cutting rectangular holes using delete

The delete command can be used to cut large holes in 1, 2, and 3-dimensional objects. For example, consider a simple 3-dimensional 12x12x12 cube of molecules. (For simplicity, each “molecule” in this example contains only one atom. These atoms appear as blue spheres in figure 6.)

```
molecules = new OneAtomMolecule [12].move(3.0,0,0)
                                [12].move(0,3.0,0)
                                [12].move(0,0,3.0)
```

Then, we cut out some rectangular vacancies:

```
delete molecules[*][*][2]
delete molecules[*][*][8]
delete molecules[6-7][0-8][5-6]
```

The result of these operations is shown in figure 6. (*Note: You may move or delete previously deleted array elements more than once, and/or deleting overlapping rectangular regions without error.*)

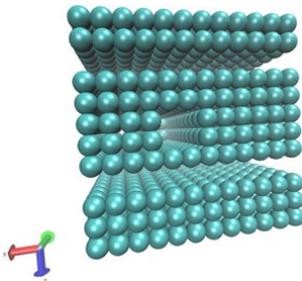


Figure 6: Rectangular holes can be carved out of an array of molecules (represented here by blue spheres) using the “delete” command. Three delete commands were used to remove the two planar regions and the rectangular hole in the center.

## 10 Customizing molecule *types*

You can create modified versions of existing molecule *types*, without having to redefine the entire molecule. For example:

```
Dimer0 = Dimer.move(-9.6,-6.2, 0).scale(0.3125)
```

or equivalently:

```
Dimer0 = Dimer
Dimer0.move(-9.6,-6.2, 0).scale(0.3125)
```

This creates a new type of molecule named “Dimer0” whose coordinates have been centered and rescaled. (Note that the “scale()” command only effects the atomic coordinates. (You will have to override earlier force field settings, such as atomic radii and bond-lengths in order for this to work properly.) If we want to make additional customizations (such as adding atoms, bonds, or molecular subunits), we could use this syntax:

```
Dimer0 = Dimer

# Add some new atoms connecting the two peptides in the dimer

Dimer0 {
  write("Data Atoms") {
    $atom:t1 $mol:. @atom:2bead/CA 0.0 23.0 0.0 0.0
    $atom:t2 $mol:. @atom:2bead/CA 0.0 24.7 4.0 0.0
    $atom:t3 $mol:. @atom:2bead/CA 0.0 24.7 8.4 0.0
    $atom:t4 $mol:. @atom:2bead/CA 0.0 23.0 12.4 0.0
  }
  write("Data Bonds") {
    $bond:b1 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:peptides[0]/res7/CA $atom:t1
    $bond:b2 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:t1 $atom:t2
    $bond:b3 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:t2 $atom:t3
    $bond:b4 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:t3 $atom:t4
    $bond:b5 @bond:2bead/backbone $atom:t4 $atom:peptides[1]/res7/CA
  }
}

# Center and rescale the atoms in all "Dimer0"
Dimer0.move(-9.6,-6.2, 0).scale(0.3125)
```

The result of these modifications is shown in figure 7b).

*Note1: Coordinate transformations applied to entire molecule types are an experimental feature as of 2013-4-07. This feature has not been rigorously tested.*

*Note2: These coordinate transformations will be applied **after** the molecule is constructed. (If you add atoms to the molecule, these will be added before the coordinate transformations are applied, even if you issue the command later.) Consequently, to make things clear, I recommend placing the coordinate transforms applied to an entire molecule type **after** all of its internal details (bonds, atoms, subunits) have been declared, as we did here.*

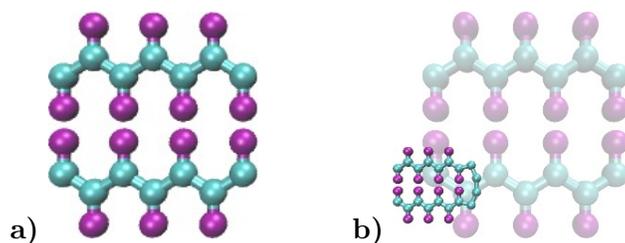


Figure 7: **a)** The “Dimer” molecule. This is a contrived example consisting of two “Peptides”. See section 6.1.1 **b)** A customized version of the “Dimer” molecule. (The original “Dimer” is shown faded in the background for comparison.)

*Note3: You may also want all of the atoms in “Dimer0” to share the same molecule-ID counter (“\$mol”), so that LAMMPS realizes they belong to the same molecule. To do that you should delete the “create\_var {\$mol:.” line from the definition of the Peptide molecule, and add it to Dimer0.*

### **(Advanced) Inheritance**

The *Dimer0* molecule is a type of *Dimer* molecule. For those who are familiar with programming, relationships like this are analogous to the relationship between parent and child objects in an object-oriented programming language. More general kinds of inheritance are supported by moltemplate and are discussed in section 11.8.

### **(Advanced) Multiple Inheritance**

If we wanted, we could have created a new molecule type (like “*Dimer0*”) which includes atom types and features from *multiple* different types of molecules. Section 11.8 mentions one way to do this and section 11.8.3 discusses alternate approaches.

## **Advanced moltemplate usage**

### **11 Portability: Using *LT files* for force-field storage**

The “.LT” format is a flexible file format for storing force field parameters in LAMMPS. If you want to share your “.LT” file with others, it’s not safe to assume that all interactions use the same standard formula.

#### **11.1 Mixing molecule types**

LAMMPS has the ability to combine molecules using multiple different force-field styles together using. In section 4.1, we provided an example of an SPCE water molecule model. This example was simple to understand. However, as written, it would be impossible to combine this definition of

water with other molecules which don't share the same simple bond or angle styles. For example, we used harmonic restoring forces to preserve the water angle at \$109.47, but other users may want to mix this SPCE water with a small number of molecules which use a more complicated angular potential formula, or tabular angle potentials. Using the "hybrid" keyword, you can avoid this limitation. A more robust example is included below.

```
# file "spce.lt"
#
#   H1     H2
#   \     /
#     0

SPCE {

  write_once("In Init") {
    # -- Default styles (for solo "SPCE" water) --
    units      real
    atom_style  full
    pair_style  hybrid lj/charmm/coul/long 9.0 10.0 10.0
    bond_style  hybrid harmonic
    angle_style hybrid harmonic
    kspace_style ppm 0.0001
    pair_modify mix arithmetic
  }

  # AtomID MolID(".=this) AtomType charge coordX coordY coordZ
  write("Data Atoms") {
    $atom:O $mol:. @atom:O -0.8476 0.0000000 0.00000 0.000000
    $atom:H1 $mol:. @atom:H 0.4238 0.8164904 0.00000 0.5773590
    $atom:H2 $mol:. @atom:H 0.4238 -0.8164904 0.00000 0.5773590
  }

  # atom-type Mass
  write_once("Data Masses") {
    @atom:O 15.9994
    @atom:H 1.008
  }

  # -- Forces between atoms (non-bonded) --

  #      atomTypeI atomTypeJ pair-style-name parameter-list
  write("In Settings") {
    pair_coeff @atom:O @atom:O lj/charmm/coul/long 0.1553 3.166
    pair_coeff @atom:H @atom:H lj/charmm/coul/long 0.0 2.058
  }

  # -- Forces between atoms (bonded) --

```

```

# bond-id  bond-type  atom-id1 atom-id2
write("Data Bonds") {
  $bond:OH1  @bond:OH  $atom:O  $atom:H1
  $bond:OH2  @bond:OH  $atom:O  $atom:H2
}

#          bond-type  bond-style-name  parameter-list
write("In Settings") {
  bond_coeff  @bond:OH  harmonic  200.0  1.0
}

# angle-id  angle-type  atom-id1 atom-id2 atom-id3
write("Data Angles") {
  $angle:HOH @angle:HOH  $atom:H1 $atom:O $atom:H2
}

#          angle-type  angle-style-name  parameter-list
write("In Settings") {
  angle_coeff  @angle:HOH  harmonic  200.0  109.47
}

# miscellaneous
write_once("In Settings") {
  group spce type  @atom:O  @atom:H
  fix fSHAKE spce shake 0.0001 10 100 b @bond:OH a @angle:HOH
  # (Remember to "unfix" fSHAKE during minimization.)
}

} # SPCE

```

There are two differences between this molecule definition and the “spce\_simple.lt” example from section 4.1:

### Hybrid force field styles

To experienced LAMMPS users, it may seem strange that in this example that we have chosen “hybrid” styles followed by only one force-field style (“harmonic”). However this will make your molecule easier to share with others. When other people use your LT file, they can override these styles as explained in section 11.2.

## 11.2 Combining molecules with different force field styles

*Later on*, if a user wants to combine the SPCE water molecule with another molecule which uses a tabular pair\_style (for example), they would have to specify the complete hybrid pair\_style in the “Init” section of their LT file. For example:

```

import "spce.lt"
import "other_molecule.lt"

write_once("In Init") {
  pair_style hybrid lj/charmm/coul/long 9 10 10 table spline 1000
}

```

Note: By placing the “`write_once("In Init"){ }`” statement *after* “`import "spce.lt"`”, this insures that the `pair_style` commands issued here will override the `pair_style` commands issued earlier “`spce.lt`”. This allows moltemplate users to combine their molecules “`spce.lt`” file shown here with other template files without modification (assuming the atom styles match).

### **Warning: Force-field parameters belong in “In Settings”, not “Data”**

LAMMPS allows users to store force-field parameters (“Coeffs”) in two places: a DATA file, *or* an INPUT script. Similarly, moltemplate technically allows you to store these parameters in in the “Data” sections of your .LT file:

```

write_once("Data Pair Coeffs")
write_once("Data Bond Coeffs")
write_once("Data Angle Coeffs")
write_once("Data Dihedral Coeffs")
write_once("Data Improper Coeffs")

```

*However, for portability reasons, this is discouraged.* Instead, declare your force field parameters as we do in this manual, using the corresponding input script commands. (For example, “`pair_coeff`”, “`bond_coeff`”, “`angle_coeff`”, “`dihedral_coeff`”, and “`improper_coeff`”. As in the examples, all of these commands belong in the “`write_once("In Settings")`” sections of your .LT files.)

### **11.3 Nesting**

Molecule names such as “Solvent” (or even “Water”) are short and easy to type, but are vague and are not portable. If you use common, generic molecule names, you will not be able to combine your molecule templates with templates written by others (without carefully checking for naming conflicts). LT files were meant to be used for storing and exchanging libraries of different molecule types.

Suppose, for example, that you want to run a simulation consisting of different molecule types, each of which belong to different LT files. Suppose two of the LT files both happen to contain definitions for “Water”. Moltemplate does not detect these name clashes automatically and instead

attempts to merge the two versions of “Water” together, (most likely creating a molecule with 6 atoms instead of 3). This is presumably not what you want.

As the number of molecule types grows, the possibility of naming clashes increases. As the behavior of the same molecule can be approximated using many different force fields, one has to be careful to avoid clashing molecule names.

To alleviate the problem, you can “nest” your molecules inside the definition of other molecules or namespace objects. This reduces the scope in which your molecule is defined. See section 11.5 for an example.

## 11.4 A simple force-field example

Force-field parameters can be shared by groups of related molecules. In the example below, we create an object named “TraPPE”. Later we use it to define a new molecule named “Cyclopentane”.

The following example defines a coarse-grained (united-atom) version of a “cyclopentane” molecule. (Hydrogen atoms have been omitted.) In this example, only the atom types (and positions) and the bonds connecting them need to be specified. The interactions between them are determined automatically by the settings in the force-field file “trappe1998.lt”.

```
import "trappe1998.lt"

cyclopentane {

  # AtomID MolID('.=this) AtomType charge coordX coordY coordZ
  write("Data Atoms") {
    $atom:C1 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 0.0000 0.0000000000 1.0000000
    $atom:C2 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 0.0000 0.951056516 0.3090170
    $atom:C3 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 0.0000 0.587785252 -0.809017
    $atom:C4 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 0.0000 -0.587785252 -0.809017
    $atom:C5 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 0.0000 -0.951056516 0.3090170
  }

  write("Data Bonds") {
    $bond:bond1 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C1 $atom:C2
    $bond:bond2 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C2 $atom:C3
    $bond:bond3 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C3 $atom:C4
    $bond:bond4 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C4 $atom:C5
    $bond:bond5 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C5 $atom:C1
  }
}
```

(The “TraPPE/” is explained below.) We can create copies of this molecule in the same way we did with SPCE:

```
# A cubic lattice of 125 cyclopentane molecules (12-angstrom spacing)
mols = new Cyclopentane [5].move(0,0,12) [5].move(0,12,0) [5].move(12,0,0)
```

Unlike the SPCE example, we don't have to specify all of the interactions between these atoms because the atom and bond types (CH2, CC). match the type-names defined in the "trappe1998.lt" file. This file contains a collection of atom types and force-field parameters for coarse-grained hydrocarbon chains. (See [5] for details.) This way, the "CH2" atoms in cyclopentane will interact with, and behave identically to any "CH2" atom from any other molecule which uses the TraPPE force field. (The same is true for other atom types, and interaction-types which are specific to "TraPPE", such as "@atom:TraPPE/CH3", "@bond:TraPPE/CC", etc... Another molecule which uses the TraPPE force field is discussed later in section 11.5.) The important parts of the "trappe1998.lt" file are shown below:

#### 11.4.1 Namespace example

```
# -- file "trappe1998.lt" --

TraPPE {
  write_once("Data Masses") {
    @atom:CH2 14.1707
    @atom:CH3 15.2507
  }
  write_once("In Settings") {
    bond_coeff      @bond:CC      harmonic  120.0   1.54
    angle_coeff     @angle:CCC     harmonic  62.0022 114
    dihedral_coeff @dihedral:CCCC opls  1.411036 -0.271016 3.145034 0.0
    pair_coeff      @atom:CH2 @atom:CH2 lj/charmm/coul/charmm 0.091411522 3.95
    pair_coeff      @atom:CH3 @atom:CH3 lj/charmm/coul/charmm 0.194746286 3.75
    # (Interactions between different atom types use mixing rules.)
    # (Hybrid styles were used for portability.)
  }
  write_once("Data Angles By Type") {
    @angle:CCC @atom:C* @atom:C* @atom:C* @bond:CC @bond:CC
  }
  write_once("Data Dihedrals By Type") {
    @dihedral:CCCC @atom:C* @atom:C* @atom:C* @atom:C* @bond:CC @bond:CC @bond:CC
  }
}
```

In addition to the atom-type names and masses, this file stores the force-field parameters (coeffs) for the interactions between them.

#### Bonded interactions *by type*

Again, the "Angles By Type" and "Dihedrals By Type" sections tell moltemplate.sh that bonded 3-body and 4-body interactions exist between any 3 or 4 consecutively bonded carbon atoms (of type CH2, CH3, or CH4) assuming they are bonded using "CC" (saturated) bonds. The "\*" character is a wild-card. "C\*" matches "CH2", "CH3", and "CH4". (Bond-types can be omitted or replaced with wild-cards "@bond:\*".)

## Namespaces and nesting:

Names like “CH2” and “CC” are extremely common. To avoid confusing them with similarly named atoms and bonds in other molecules, we enclose them (“nest” them) within a *namespace* (“TraPPE”, in this example). Unlike “SPCE” and “Cyclopentane”, “TraPPE” is not a molecule. It is just a container of atom types, bond-types and force-field parameters shared by other molecules. We do this to distinguish them from other atoms and bonds which have the same name, but mean something else. Elsewhere we can refer to these atom/bond types as “@atom:TraPPE/CH2” and “@bond:TraPPE/CC”. (You can also avoid repeating the cumbersome “TraPPE/” prefix for molecules defined within the TraPPE namespace. For example, see section 11.5.)

### 11.5 Nested molecules

Earlier in section 11.4.1, we created an object named “TraPPE” and used it to create a molecule named “Cyclopentane”. Here we use it to demonstrate nesting. Suppose we define a new molecule “Butane” consisting of 4 coarse-grained (united-atom) carbon-like beads, whose types are named “CH2” and “CH3”.

```
# -- file "trappe_butane.lt" --

import "trappe1998.lt"

Butane {
  write("Data Atoms"){
    $atom:C1 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH3 0.0 0.419372 0.000 -1.937329
    $atom:C2 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 -0.419372 0.000 -0.645776
    $atom:C3 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 0.419372 0.000 0.645776
    $atom:C4 $mol:. @atom:TraPPE/CH3 0.0 -0.419372 0.0000 1.937329
  }
  write("Data Bonds"){
    $bond:b1 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C1 $atom:C2
    $bond:b2 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C2 $atom:C3
    $bond:b3 @bond:TraPPE/CC $atom:C3 $atom:C4
  }
}
```

Alternately, as mentioned above, it may be simpler to nest our “Butane” within “TraPPE”, so that so that it does not get confused with other (perhaps all-atom) representations of butane. In that case, we would use:

```
# -- file "trappe_butane.lt" --

import "trappe1998.lt"

TraPPE {
  Butane {
```

```

write("Data Atoms"){
  $atom:C1 $mol:.. @atom:../CH3 0.0 0.419372 0.000 -1.937329
  $atom:C2 $mol:.. @atom:../CH2 0.0 -0.419372 0.000 -0.645776
  $atom:C3 $mol:.. @atom:../CH2 0.0 0.419372 0.000 0.645776
  $atom:C4 $mol:.. @atom:../CH3 0.0 -0.419372 0.0000 1.937329
}
write("Data Bonds"){
  $bond:b1 @bond:../CC $atom:C1 $atom:C2
  $bond:b2 @bond:../CC $atom:C2 $atom:C3
  $bond:b3 @bond:../CC $atom:C3 $atom:C4
}
}
}

```

Note: Wrapping Butane within “TraPPE{ }” clause merely appends additional content to be added to the “TraPPE” object defined in the “trappe1998.lt” file (which was included earlier). It does not overwrite it. Again “../” tells moltemplate use the “CH2” atom defined in the context of the TraPPE environment (IE. one level up). This insures that moltemplate does not create a new “CH2” atom type which is local to the Butane molecule. (Again, by default all atom types and other variables are local. See section 5.2.5.)

To use this butane molecule in a simulation, you would import the file containing the butane definition, and use a “new” command to create one or more butane molecules.

```

import "trappe_butane.lt"
new butane = TraPPE/Butane

```

(You don’t need to import “trappe1998.lt” in this example because it was imported within “trappe\_butane.lt”.) The “TraPPE/” prefix before “Butane” lets moltemplate/ttree know that butane was defined *locally* within TraPPE.

*Note: An alternative procedure using **inheritance** exists which may be a cleaner way to handle these kinds of relationships. See sections 11.8 and 11.8.1.*

## 11.6 Path syntax: “../”, “.../”, and “\$mol:.”

Generally, multiple slashes (“/”) as well as (“../”) can be used build a path that indicates the (relative) location of any other molecule in the object hierarchy. (The “.”, “/” and “..” symbols are used here in the same way they are used to specify a path in a unix-like file-system. For example, the “.” in “\$mol:.” refers to the current molecule (instance), in the same way that “../” refers to the current directory. (Note: “\$mol” is shorthand for “\$mol:.”)

A slash by itself, “/”, refers to the *global environment*. This is the outermost environment in which all molecules are defined/created.

### 11.6.1 (Advanced) Ellipsis notation “.../”

If you are using multiple levels of nesting, and if you don't know (or if you don't want to specify) where a particular molecule type or atom type (such as “CH2”) was defined, you can refer to it using “.../CH2” instead of “../CH2”. The “...” ellipsis syntax searches up the tree of nested molecules to find the target (the text following the “/” slash).

### 11.6.2 (Advanced) \$mol:... notation

Molecules can contain multiple layers of hierarchy, however all the atoms share the same molecule ID. To refer to the ID of the molecule to which you belong, use “\$mol:...”. (If none of the molecules which instantiate the current molecule define a variable in the \$mol category, then a new local \$mol variable will be created automatically.

The “...” syntax is explained more formally in appendix G.)

## 11.7 using namespace syntax

Because the *Butane* molecule was defined within the *TraPPE* environment, you normally have to indicate this when you refer to it later. For example, to create a copy of a *Butane* molecule, you would normally use:

```
import "trappe_butane.lt"

butane = new TraPPE/Butane
```

However for convenience, you can use the “**using namespace**” declaration so that, in the future, you can quickly refer to any of the molecule types defined within *TraPPE* directly, without having to specify their path.

```
import "trappe_butane.lt"

using namespace TraPPE

butane = new Butane
```

### This only works for molecule types, not atom types

Unfortunately, you still *must* always **refer to** atom types, bond types, and any other **primitive types explicitly** (by their full path). For example, the second line in the “*Data Atoms*” in the example below does not refer to the *CH2* atom type defined in *TraPPE*. (Instead it creates a *new* atom type, which is probably not what you want.)

```
import "trappe_butane.lt"
using namespace TraPPE
butane = new Butane
write("Data Atoms") {
  $atom:C1 $mol @atom:TraPPE/CH2 0.0 0.41937 0.00 1.9373 # <-- yes
  $atom:C2 $mol @atom:CH2 0.0 -0.41937 0.00 -0.6457 # <-- no, bad idea
}
```

If, for example, you want to leave out the “TraPPE/” prefix when accessing the atom, bond, and angle types defined in TraPPE, then instead you can define a new molecule which *inherits* from TraPPE. (See section 11.8.)

## 11.8 Inheritance

We could have defined *Butane* this way:

```
import "trappe1998.lt"

Butane inherits TraPPE {
  write("Data Atoms"){
    $atom:C1 $mol:. @atom:CH3 0.0 0.419372 0.000 -1.937329
    $atom:C2 $mol:. @atom:CH2 0.0 -0.419372 0.000 -0.645776
    $atom:C3 $mol:. @atom:CH2 0.0 0.419372 0.000 0.645776
    $atom:C4 $mol:. @atom:CH3 0.0 -0.419372 0.0000 1.937329
  }
  write("Data Bonds"){
    $bond:b1 @bond:CC $atom:C1 $atom:C2
    $bond:b2 @bond:CC $atom:C2 $atom:C3
    $bond:b3 @bond:CC $atom:C3 $atom:C4
  }
}
```

A molecule which *inherits* from another molecule (or namespace) *is* a particular type of that molecule (or namespace). Defining *Butane* this way allows it to access all of molecule types, atom types, and bond types, etc... defined within *TraPPE* as if they were defined locally. (I did not have to refer to the CH3 atom types as “@atom:TraPPE/CH3”, for example.)

### 11.8.1 Multiple inheritance:

A molecule can inherit from multiple parents. This is one way you can allow the *Butane* molecule to borrow atom, bond, angle, dihedral, and improper types from *multiple* different force-field parents:

```
import "trappe1998.lt"
import "dreiding1990.lt"

Butane inherits TraPPE Dreiding {
  ...
}
```

*Details:* Moltemplate attempts to resolve duplicate atom types or molecule types if they are found in both parents, giving priority to the first parent in the list of parents following the “inherits” keyword. (“TraPPE” in this example. Note: This feature has not been rigorously tested as of 2013-4-07.)

### 11.8.2 Inheritance vs. Nesting

If two molecules are related to each other this way: “*A is a particular type of B*”, then consider using inheritance instead of nesting (or object composition). In this example (with *Butane* and *TraPPE*) either nesting or inheritance would work.

Again, one very minor advantage to nesting *Butane* inside *TraPPE*, is that it prevents the name *Butane* from being confused with or conflicting with any other versions of the *Butane* molecule defined elsewhere. (Usually this is not a consideration.)

### 11.8.3 Inheritance vs. Object Composition

On the other hand, if two molecules are related to each other this way: “*A is comprised of B and C*”, then you might consider using object composition instead of inheritance. For example:

```
import "B.lt" # <-- defines the molecule type "B"

import "C.lt" # <-- defines the molecule type "C"

A {
  b = new B
  c = new C
}
```

## 12 Known bugs and limitations

Please report any bugs you find by email to [jewett.ajj@gmail.com](mailto:jewett.ajj@gmail.com), or to the `lammps-users` mailing list.

### 1) Moltemplate consumes a large amount of memory (RAM)

Memory use grows proportional to system size. As of 2013-7-15, setting up a system of 1000000 atoms using moltemplate currently requires between 2.7 and 12 GB of *available* memory. (Systems with many bonds and angles consume more memory, as well as systems with a high molecule count.) Unfortunately this code was not carefully written to minimize memory usage. (In addition, python programs can require more than 10 times as much memory as similar programs written in C/C++.)

This problem might be alleviated by using other python interpreters with a lower memory footprint. Alternately, it may be necessary to split a large system into pieces, run moltemplate on each piece, and combine the resulting data files into one large data file later.

Also, computers with a moderate amount of RAM can be rented very cheaply. (For example, see <http://cloud.google.com/products/compute-engine.html>.)

When setting up large simulations with moltemplate, consider using the “*ulimit*” command to prevent system crashes. (If you are on a shared computer, ask an administrator to do this.) If these options are not available,

you can always run a resource monitor (like “top”) before starting moltemplate and kill the process if it’s memory usage exceeds 80%.

**2) Limited support for non-point-like atoms:**

As of 2013-4-07, only the “full”, “angle”, “atomic”, “charge”, and “molecular” styles have been tested. The “dipole” atom style *is* fully supported but it has not been tested. Non-point-like atoms like “ellipsoid”, “tri”, “line” *should* also work with moltemplate. However these objects are *not rotated correctly* by the “.rot()” command (or scaled correctly by the “.scale()” command). More exotic exotic atom styles, such as “wavepacket”, “electron”, “sphere” and “peri” have not been tested. Feel free to contact [jewett.ajj@gmail.com](mailto:jewett.ajj@gmail.com) to request support for new atom styles.

**3) When placed at the end of a line, LAMMPS interprets the “&” character** as a request to merge two lines together. *It is usually safe to use this character inside moltemplate write() or write\_once() commands.* However in some rare cases, joining two lines together using the “&” character can confuse moltemplate. For example, in a lammmps input script command, (like “pair\_coeff” or “dihedral\_coeff”), **the “&” character should not appear before the last “@” or “\$” variable is referenced.** Also avoid using the “&” character anywhere in the “Data Atoms”, “Data Bonds”, “Data Angles”, “Data Dihedrals”, “Data Improvers”, “Data Angles By Type”, “Data Dihedrals By Type”, and “Data Improvers By Type” sections.

**4) Triclinic boundary conditions have not been tested:**

As of 2013-4-07, support for PDB files with triclinic cells is experimental. Please let me know if it is not working.

**5) Inconsistent support for wildcard characters (“\*” and “?”)** As of 2013-4-07, the wildcard character “\*” is interpreted differently in different parts of an LT file. Wildcard characters work reliably and are used for *string* pattern matching when inside any of the “By Type” sections in an LT file (such as “Angles By Type”, “Dihedrals By Type”, and “Improvers By Type”). However these characters are interpreted differently when they appear in *pair\_coeff*, *bond\_coeff*, *angle\_coeff*, *dihedral\_coeff*, and *improper\_coeff* commands (and their corresponding “Coeff” sections of a data file). LAMMPS interprets “\*” characters appearing in any of the *coeff* commands as *numeric* wildcard characters. This can lead to unintended side-effects and is discouraged. So please avoid “\*” characters in any of the “coeff” commands (eg *pair\_coeff*, *bond\_coeff*, *angle\_coeff*, *dihedral\_coeff*, *improper\_coeff*). The “\*” character can be safely used in array brackets, [*\**], or in the “By Type” sections. (See section 7.5 and appendix A.)

## Appendices

### A Bonded interactions “By Type”

Interactions between atoms in LAMMPS are normally specified *by atom type*, unless they are directly bonded together. However, as of 2013-4-07, all *bonded interactions*, including 3-body angle, and 4-body dihedral and improper interactions, are specified by unique *by atom ID number*. (There are typically a large number of angles and bonds in a typical molecule, and the majority of lines in a typical LAMMPS data file are used to keep track of them.)

This has changed in moltemplate.sh. moltemplate.sh contains a utility which can generate angles, dihedrals, and impropers automatically by atom and bond *type*. (This utility is described in section F.) moltemplate.sh will inspect the network of bonds present in your system, detect all 3-body, and 4-body interactions, and determine their type. (Higher n-body interactions can also be defined by the user.) Specifying interactions this way can eliminate significant redundancy since many atoms share the same type.

To make use of this feature, you would create a new section named “Angles By Type”, “Dihedrals By Type”, or “Impropers By Type” whose syntax mimics the “Angles”, “Dihedrals”, and “Impropers” sections of a LAMMPS data file. The syntax is best explained by example:

```
write("Data Angles By Type") {
  @angle:XCXgeneral      * *C* *
  @angle:CCCgeneral     @atom:C @atom:C @atom:C * *
  @angle:CCCsaturated   @atom:C @atom:C @atom:C @bond:sp3 @bond:sp3
}
```

The first line will generate a 3-body angle interaction (of type “@angle:XCXgeneral”) between any 3 consecutively bonded atoms as long as the second atom’s type-name contains the letter “C”. (Atom and bond type-names can contain wildcard characters \*)

The second line will generate a 3-body interaction of type “@angle:CCCgeneral” between any 3 atoms of type “@atom:C”, regardless of the type of bonds connecting them. (The last two columns, which are both wildcard characters, \*, tell moltemplate.sh to ignore the two bond types. Since this is the default behavior these two columns are optional and can be omitted.)

The third line will generate a 3-body interaction of type “@angle:CCCsaturated” between any 3 atoms of type “@atom:C”, if they are connected by bonds of type “@bond:sp3”.

Note: The 2nd and 3rd lines in this example will generate new interactions which may override any angle interactions assigned earlier.

### Regular expressions

Regular-expressions can also be used to match potential atom and bond types. (To use regular expressions, surround the atom and bond types on

either side by slashes. For example: @atom:C[1-5]/, should match @atom:C1 through @atom:C6.) *Note: This feature has not been tested as of 2013-4-07.*

In a similar way, one can define “Dihedrals By Type” and “Improper By Type”.

## B Using ltemplify.py to create an *LT* file

The “ltemplify.py” script can be used to convert existing simple LAMMPS input script and data files into a single “.LT” file. Users can pass one or more LAMMPS input scripts followed by a LAMMPS data file to the “ltemplify.py” script as arguments. (The data file must appear last in this list. See examples below.) All atoms, bonds, angles, dihedrals, and improper and their associated types will be converted to moltemplate “\$” or “@” counter variables, (and the relevant portion of each file will be moved to sections with the correct header names). Coefficients, atom styles, and most force-field styles and settings *should* also be included in the resulting .LT file. However constraints, fixes and and group commands are not understood and must be added to the resulting .LT file manually. (See section B.2.)

### Disclaimer

*ltemplify.py is experimental software.* As of 2013-4-07, the ltemplify.py script has *not* been rigorously tested. Please look over the resulting “.LT” file and check for errors. (If necessary, convert any remaining atom, bond, angle, dihedral, or improper id or type numbers to the corresponding \$ or @ variables.) Exotic pair styles which have their own special syntax are not understood and must be converted manually. (See section B.2.) Please report errors in the behavior of ltemplify.py.

### Reassigning variable names

Unfortunately, ltemplify.py does not attempt to pick *good* names for your atoms, bonds, or angles. Currently, ltemplify.py generates type names and id names automatically, resulting in atoms with names like “\$atom:id1753”, and types like “@atom:type7”. (Furthermore, if the user extracted only *part* of the data file, then these numbers probably do not begin at “1”.)

Moltemplate will assign all of these variables to new numbers when you run it on your LT file later (so the names and numbers do not matter). Still, you may wish to use a text-editor (or *sed*) to replace all instances of “@atom:type7” with something more meaningful, like “@atom:CG1”, and “@bond:type3” with “@bond:C=C”.

## B.1 Examples

### Example 1

```
ltemplify.py -name Mol file.in file.data > mol.lt
```

This creates a template for a new type of molecule (named “Mol”), consisting of all the atoms in the lammps files you included, and saves this

data in a single LT file (“mol.lt”). This file can be used with moltemplate.sh (and/or ttree.py) to define large systems containing this molecule.

Note: The input script (“file.in” in this example) should appear before the data file (“file.data”) in the argument list.

In many cases, a LAMMPS data file may contain many copies of the same molecule. In order to select one of these molecules you must manually indicate the atoms which belong to that molecule. To do that, use the following syntax:

### Example 2

```
ltemplify.py -name Mol -molid "1" file.in file.data > mol.lt
```

In this example, only atoms belonging to molecule 1 are extracted.

This only works if you are using one of the “molecular” atom\_styles. If you are using a different atom\_style, you can select the atoms you want either by type or by id number. To do that use the following syntax:

### Example 3

```
ltemplify.py -name Mol -atomtype "1 2 3" lammpsfile.in lammpsfile.data > mol.lt
```

In this example, only atoms whose type is 1, 2, or 3 are included.

### Example 4

```
ltemplify.py -name Mol -atomid "13 14 15 61*69" \  
lammpsfile.in lammpsfile.data > mol.lt
```

In this example, only atoms whose ids are 13, 14, 15, and 61 through 69 are included.

## B.2 Known bugs and limitations (ltemplify.py):

### Group commands and fixes are not included

ltemplify.py does not understand “fix” or “group” commands. Constraints which require fixes (like “fix shake” or “fix rigid”) must be added manually to (the “In Settings” section of) the resulting .LT file. (See section 4.1 for an example.)

### Exotic styles are not supported

ltemplify.py does **not** understand the syntax of exotic many-body pair\_styles such as tersoff, sw, meam, reax, dpd, edip, dipole, lubricate, hbond/dreiding (even though these styles are supported by moltemplate). After running ltemplify.py, the user must manually edit the resulting “.lt” files. For example: ltemplify.py will not understand wildcard characters (“\*” characters) which appear in the “pair\_coeff” commands or “Pair Coeffs” section. You will have to remove the extra lines generated by ltemplify.py and put the wildcard characters back (eg “pair\_coeff \* \* ...”) manually. (Later the user

may need to run moltemplate using the appropriate “-a” command line args to make sure the various atom types are assigned to the correct numbers. This is usually needed in order to keep them consistent with the order of parameters in the corresponding pair style’s input files. See section D.1.) In addition, auxiliary atom types (such as the “hydrogen” atom type required by hbond/dreiding) If you are using the “hbond/dreiding” pair style, you will have to manually specify the atom type for the hydrogen-atom mediator in every “pair\_coeff” command.

### Wildcard characters (“\*”) expansion

As explained in section 12, moltemplate is often confused whenever wildcard characters (“\*” characters) appear inside any of the the “coeff” commands (or “Coeff” sections of the data file). So ltemplify.py attempts to remove these characters and expand these commands, generating multiple lines of output, and listing each atom type explicitly. (This is also done for bond types, angle types, dihedral types, and improper types.) This may not be what you want. (For example, this can be a problem if you are using a pair style which requires you to specify “\* \*” for the atom types, such as *tersoff*, *eam*, or *sw*.)

## C Visualization in VMD

This appendix is only intended to give you a quick, minimal list of features you need to know to display your molecules using VMD. These instructions were written for VMD 1.9 and topotools 1.2. For advanced VMD features, analysis, and rendering options, consult the official VMD documentation at <http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Research/vmd/current/docs.html>

### C.1 Customizing the appearance in VMD

By default, VMD is likely to display your molecules with points and lines, which can be ugly and difficult to see. To alter the appearance of your molecules, select the **Graphics**→**Representations...** menu, and then select an option from the **Drawing Method** pull-down menu. Atoms are colored by atom-type by default. You can customize the color of each atom type by **Graphics**→**Colors...** Currently (as of 2012-12-18), VMD arbitrarily allows you to assign colors to *only* the first 9 atom types. However you can get around this limitation using multiple *representations* customize the appearance of the remaining atom types (as explained below).

You may wish to use different representations for different molecules or atom types. To do this, select the **Graphics**→**Representations...** menu and click on then **Selections** tab. Then click on the **Create Rep** button to create multiple “*representations*” of your system. For each *representation*, you can select different sets atoms, and use different draw-styles, for those atoms. For example, you can customize the color of these atoms manually by choosing **ColorID** from the **Coloring Method** pull-down menu. Then, to the right of this menu, you can select the color (which is represented by

a number). This will effect all of atoms in the current *representation*. You can also select a different **Draw Style** and alter the atom and bond radii.

You can select from the the list of *representations* you have already created by clicking on the list under the **Create Rep** button. (Double-clicking temporarily hides a *representation* from view.)

Again, each *representation* is usually assigned to a different subset of atoms from the system. To specify the atoms in each *representation*, click on the **Selections** tab. By default “all” atoms are selected, however you can select atoms according to atom **type, index, resid, charge, mass, x, y, z**. This will limit the current display settings to a subset of the atoms/bonds present in your system. When selecting atoms, you can use complex boolean expressions (containing one or more *and* and *or* operators and parenthesis). For more information and some examples, see <http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Research/vmd/vmd-1.9/ug/node19.html> and <http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Research/vmd/vmd-1.9/ug/node87.html#ug:topic:selections>.

**Note:** In VMD/topotools, the **type, index, and resid** properties of each atom correspond to the *@atom*, *\$atom*, and *\$mol* variables for each atom in moltemplate. Unfortunately, VMD does not understand moltemplate variable naming syntax (discussed in section 5.2). Instead, in VMD, variables must be specified by their numeric equivalents. You can determine these numbers by reading the *output\_ttree/ttree\_assignments.txt* file. (See section D.1 for details.) That file contains a table containing a list of the numbers assigned to each *@atom* (type), *\$atom* (id), and *\$mol* (molecule-id) variable.

## C.2 Visualizing periodic boundaries

To view the periodic box boundaries, select the **Extensions**→**Tk Console** menu, and in the *Tk Console* window, enter:

```
pbx box
```

Note that the molecules in your system might not lie inside this box. You can *wrap* them inside the box using this command:

```
pbx wrap -compound res -all
```

You may wish to center the box around a molecule. There are several ways to do this. You can move the box manually this way:

```
pbx wrap -compound res -all -shiftcenterrel {0.0 0.15 0.0}  
pbx box -shiftcenterrel {0.0 0.15 0.0}
```

This will shift the position of the box by 15% in the Y direction. (Distances are measured in units of box-length fractions, not Angstroms.)

(*Advanced usage: if you have a solute whose atoms are all of type “1”, surrounded by a solvent of atoms of type “2” then you can also try this to center the box around it using: “pbx wrap -sel type=1 -all -centersel type=2 -center com”. The “1” and “2” are the @atom type numbers assigned by moltemplate. This can be found in the output\_ttree/ttree\_assignments.txt*

file. If you are viewing a trajectory, then this will modify the appearance of every step in the trajectory, centering the box around the solute atoms.)

For more details visualizing periodic-boundaries, visit: <http://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Research/vmd/plugins/pbctools>

To prevent atom overlap, you should also check if your periodic boundary conditions are too small. To do that:

- a) select *Graphics*→*Representations* menu option
- b) click on the "Periodic" tab, and
- c) click on the **+x**, **-x**, **+y**, **-y**, **+z**, **-z**, and **self** checkboxes.

When doing so, inspect the system to make sure the atoms which appear occupy non-overlapping volumes in space.

## D Advanced moltemplate.sh Usage

moltemplate.sh has several optional command line arguments. These are explained in below:

Usage:

```
moltemplate.sh [-atomstyle style] \  
               [-pdb/-xyz coord_file] \  
               [-a assignments.txt] file.lt
```

Optional arguments:

- atomstyle style** By default, moltemplate.sh assumes you are using the "full" atom style in LAMMPS. You can change the atom style to "dipole" using **-atomstyle dipole**. If you are using a hybrid style, you must enclose the list of styles in quotes. For example:  
**-atomstyle "hybrid full dipole"**  
For custom atom styles, you can also specify the list of column names manually (enclosed in quotes):  
**-atomstyle "molid x y z atomid atomtype mux muy muz"**
- xyz xyz\_file** An optional xyz\_file argument can be supplied as an argument following **"-xyz"**. This file should contain the atomic coordinates in xyz format. (The atoms must appear in the same order in the data file.)
- pdb pdb\_file** An optional pdb\_file argument can be supplied as an argument following **"-pdb"**.  
  
This should be a PDB file (with ATOM or HETATM records) with the coordinates you wish to appear in the LAMMPS data file. (The atoms must appear in the same order in the data file.)

If the PDB file contains periodic boundary box information (IE., a "CRYST1" record), this information is also copied to the LAMMPS data file.

(Support for triclinic cells is experimental as of 2013-4-07.

Other molecular structure formats may be supported later.)

`-a "@atom:x 1"`

`-a assignments.txt`

The user can customize the numbers assigned to atom, bond, angle, dihedral, and improper types or id numbers by using

`-a "VARIABLE_NAME VALUE"`

for each variable you want to modify. If there are many variables you want to modify, you can save them in a file (one variable per line). For an example of the file format run `moltemplate.sh` once and search for a file named `"ttree_assignments.txt"`. (This file is often located in the `"output_ttree/"` directory.) Once assigned, the remaining variables in the same category will be automatically assigned to values which do not overlap with your chosen values.

`-b assignments.txt`

`"-b"` is similar to `"-a"`. However, in this case, no attempt is made to assign exclusive (unique) values to each variable.

`-nocheck`

Normally `moltemplate.sh` checks for common errors and typos and halts if it thinks it has found one. This forces the variables and categories as well as `write(file)` and `write_once(file)` commands to obey standard naming conventions. The `"-nocheck"` argument bypasses these checks and eliminates these restrictions.

## D.1 Manual variables assignment (“-a” or “-b”)

It is possible to manually customize the values assigned to the atom types (or to any other `ttree`-style variables). For example, consider the `"spce.lt"` file shown earlier. This file defines a single water molecule with two atom types (hydrogen and oxygen). Typically the `"O"` atom type is normally assigned to the integer `"1"`, and `"H"` would be assigned to `"2"`. This is because `"O"` appears before `"H"` in that file. If you wanted to swap the order, you could swap the order in which they first appear.

Alternately you can specify the atom assignments directly using one or more `"-a"` flags followed by a quoted assignment string:

```
moltemplate.sh -a "@atom:SPCE/O 2" system.lt
```

This assigns the oxygen atom type to `"2"`. Note that quotes are necessary around the `'@atom:SPCE/O 2'` string, which is a single argument. (Also note that it is necessary to include `SPCE/` before the `O`, because in that example, this atom appeared (and was thus defined) inside the `SPCE` molecule's environment. Alternately, if it had been defined outside, globally, then you could refer to it using `"@atom:O"`)

Variables need not be assigned to numbers. If for some reason, you want to substitute “a string” everywhere this atom type appears, you would do it this way:

```
moltemplate.sh -a '@atom:SPCE/O "a string"' system.lt
```

Multiple assignments can be made by using multiple “-a” flags:

```
moltemplate.sh -a '@atom:SPCE/O 2' -a '@atom:SPCE/H 1' system.lt
```

However if you have a large number of assignments to make, it may be more convenient to store them in a file. You can create a two-column text file (for example “new\_assignments.txt”) and run moltemplate this way:

```
moltemplate.sh -a new_assignments.txt system.lt
```

The contents of the “new\_assignments.txt” file in this example would be:

```
@atom:SPCE/O 2
@atom:SPCE/H 1
```

The order of lines in this file does not matter.

### Assigning \$angle, \$dihedral, \$improper variables

In general any kind of variable can be assigned this way (not only atom types), including \$mol, \$bond, @bond, @angle, \$angle, ... as well as user-defined variable type. *Caveat: The only occasional exceptions are the \$angle, \$dihedral, \$improper variables.* (When “Angles By Type” interactions are selected by the user, and mixed with regular “Angles”, all of the \$angle variables are automatically generated. The same is true for “Dihedrals By Type” and “Improper By Type”. See section F for an explanation of “By Type” interactions.)

Angles, dihedrals, and improper interactions are automatically generated, and in this case the user does not have the freedom to assign these variables.

### The “-b” flag

Note that when using the “-a” flag above, care will be taken to insure that the assignment(s) are exclusive. None of the atom types (other than @atom:SPCE/O) will be assigned “2”. (For this reason, using the “-a” flag to change the atom type assignments can, in principle, alter the numbers assigned other atom types, or variables.) This usually the desired behavior. However suppose, for some reason, that you wanted to force a variable assignment, so that other variables in the same category are not effected. In that case, you can use the “-b” flag:

```
moltemplate.sh -b '@atom:SPCE/O 2' system.lt
```

Keep in mind, that in this example, this could cause other atom-types (for example “@atom:SPCE/H”) to be assigned to overlapping numbers.

## The “`ttree_assignments.txt`” file

Generally, after running `moltemplate.sh`, a “`ttree_assignments.txt`” file will be created (or updated if it is already present) to reflect any changes you made. (This file is usually located in the “`output_ttree/`” directory. It can also be located the current directory “`./`”.) You can always check this to make sure that the atom types (or any other `ttree` variables) were assigned correctly.

The “`ttree_assignments.txt`” file has the same format as the “`new_assignments.txt`” file example above.

*Note:* In both files, an optional slash, “`/`”, may follow the “`@`” or “`$`” characters, as in “`@/atom:SPCE/O`”. (This slash is optional and indicates the environment in which the counter is defined. The “`@atom`” counter is defined globally. The “`$resid`” counter example described in section D.2 is not.)

*Bug-warning:* Using the “`delete`” command may cause some of the instance variables (specifically the `$atom`, `$mol`, `$bond`, `$angle`, `$dihedral`, and `$improper` variables) to be numbered incorrectly. However static variables (beginning with `@`) should always be accurate. -Andrew 2013-4-07.

## `lmtree.py` and `ttree.py` also accept “`-a`” and “`-b`” flags

If for some reason, you are using “`lmtree.py`” or “`ttree.py`” instead of “`moltemplate.sh`”, then the “`-a`” and “`-b`” flags explained here also work with these scripts. They are not specific to `moltemplate.sh`.

## D.2 Customizing the counting method using *category*

Variables in “`.lt`” files are assigned to integers by default, starting with 1, and incrementing by 1. This can be overridden using the “`category`” command. For example, to create a new variable category named “`distance`” which starts at 0 and increments by 0.5, you would include this command in your LT file:

```
category $distance(0.0, 0.5)
```

(This command should *not* be used with traditional counter categories like `$atom`, `$bond`, `$angle`, `$dihedral`, `$improper`, `$mol`, `@atom`, `@bond`, `@angle`, `@dihedral`, and `@improper`.)

## D.3 Creating local independent counters

By default variables in a given category are always assigned to unique integers. This can be overridden using the “`category`” command. For example, you might have a variable that keeps track of the position index of each residue in each protein chain. The first residue in a protein (N-terminus) is assigned “`1`”, the second residue, “`2`”, etc, *regardless* of the number of protein chains in your system.

To do this, we can create a new variable category named “`resid`” which is defined within the scope of each instance of the “`Protein`” molecule:

```

Residue {
  write("Data Atoms") {
    $atom:CA @atom:CA $resid:. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0
    $atom:CB @atom:CB $resid:. 0.0 1.53 0.0 0.0
  }
}

Protein {
  category $resid(1,1)
  residues = Residue[100]
}

proteins = Protein[10]

```

In this example, there are 10 proteins containing 100 residues each. The “\$resid” counters will be replaced with integers in the range 1...100, (not 1...1000, as you might expect). Because the “\$resid” counter is local to the protein it is defined within, “\$resid” variables in other proteins do not share the same counter, and can overlap.

#### D.4 Changing the variable counting order (“-order”)

Most variables are assigned automatically. By default static variables (@) are assigned in the order they appear in the file (or files, if multiple LT files are included). Subsequently, instance variables (\$) are assigned in the order they are created during instantiation. However you can customize the order in which they are assigned.

##### Ordering

LT files are parsed by `moltemplate.sh/lmtree.py` in multiple stages. The “write\_once()” and “write()” commands are carried out in the static and instance phases respectively, as explained below.

##### The *static* phase

In the “static” phase, “write\_once()” statements are carried out in the order they are read from the user’s input file(s) (regardless of whether or not they appear in nested classes). Any “include” commands will effect this order. After processing the class definitions, and carrying out the “write\_once()” commands, `lmtree.py` begins the instantiation phase.

##### The *instantiation* phase

During this phase, `lmtree.py` makes copies of (instantiates) classes which were requested by the user using the “new” command. During this stage, `lmtree.py` also appends data to files using the “write” command. (In this manual, the “write()” and “new” are called instance commands.) The sequence of alternating “write()” and “new” commands in the order that they appear

in the user’s input file(s). “new” commands recursively invoke any instance commands for each copy of the class they create.

### Static variable ordering (@)

By default, static @ variables are assigned in the order that they appear in the user’s input file (after any “include” commands have been carried out). This is true regardless of whether they appear in “write()” or “write\_once()” commands, and whether they appear in nested classes. If “-order-dfs” is selected, then static @ variables are defined in the order they appear in the tree, with variables defined in the outermost nested class, (the global class named “/”) define first. If this option is selected then static variables defined in “write\_once()” commands are assigned to numbers first before any variables in “write()” command are processed. (Position in the input file is used as a secondary sort criteria.) On the other hand, the “-order-file” command line option (described above) does not modify the numeric ordering of static variables (because they are ordered according to file position by default). *Note: **The “-order-dfs” feature may have been disabled since the time of writing. If this feature is important to you, please email me.*** -Andrew 2013-4-07

Again, the counting of instance variables (prefixed by “\$”) does not interfere with static variable assignment. For example “@atom:x” and “\$atom:x” correspond to different variables and belong to different variable categories (“@atom” and “\$atom”) and they are assigned to numerical values independently.

## E Using *lmtree.py* or *mtree.py* directly

### (bypassing *moltemplate.sh*)

“moltemplate.sh” is only a simple script which invokes “lmtree.py”, and then combines the various output files generated by lmtree.py into a single LAMMPS input script and a data file, along with coordinate data. “lmtree.py” then invokes “mtree.py”. “mtree.py” lacks the ability to read or generate coordinates, but is otherwise nearly identical to “lmtree.py” and “moltemplate.sh”.

If in the future moltemplate.sh no longer works with some new, recently added LAMMPS feature, you can bypass moltemplate.sh and run lmtree.py or mtree.py directly. Everything moltemplate.sh does can essentially be done by hand with a unix shell and a text editor. This procedure is outlined below.

#### E.1 First run *mtree.py*

The syntax for running “mtree.py” is identical to the syntax for running moltemplate.sh. The moltemplate.sh syntax is explained above.

Unfortunately, mtree.py does not understand the -pdb or -xyz arguments for processing coordinate data. If you run “mtree.py” directly, then you must extract the coordinate data from these files yourself and insert it into your lammps input files manually. This is explained below.

Example: Go to the examples/waterSPCE/ directory and run:  
ttree.py system.lt

This will prepare LAMMPS input files for a system of 32 water molecules. (In this example, we are using the “SPCE” water model.)

Running the command above will probably create the following files: “Data Atoms” (The “Atoms” section of a LAMMPS data file, w/o coordinates) “Data Bonds” (The “Bonds” section of a LAMMPS data file) “Data Angles” (The “Angles” section of a LAMMPS data file) “Data Masses” (The “Masses” section of a LAMMPS data file) “In Init” (The “Initialization” section of a LAMMPS input script.) “In Settings” (The “Settings” section of a LAMMPS input script, which typically contains force-field parameters, group defs, and constraints) “Data Boundary” (The “Periodic Boundary Conditions” section of a LAMMPS data file.) “ttree\_assignments.txt” (Variable assignments. See “customization” section.)

This data can be easily combined into a single LAMMPS data file and a single lammmps input script later on, using a text editor, or the unix “cat” and “paste” commands.

It may also create these files: “Data Angles By Type”, “Data Dihedrals By Type”, “Data Improvers By Type”. These files tell moltemplate how to automatically generate bonded-interactions by atom and bond type. They must be converted to lists of angles, dihedrals, and improvers, using the “nbody\_by\_type.py” utility (as explained in appendix A).

## E.2 Then create a LAMMPS data file

Create a new file (“system.data” in this example), and paste the following text into it:

### Create the “header” section

Example:

LAMMPS Description

```
96 atoms
64 bonds
32 angles
0 dihedrals

2 atom types
1 bond types
1 angle types
0 dihedral types

0.000000 9.043 xlo xhi
0.000000 15.663 ylo yhi
0.000000 7.361 zlo zhi
```

If you use ttree.py, will have to count the number of atoms, bonds, and atom types, bond types etc. yourself.

Note: the numbers in the “xlo xhi” “ylo yhi” “zlo zhi” lines determine the simulation box size, and will vary from system to system. If ttree created a file named “Data Boundary”, you can copy this information from there. (Triclinic cells have a fourth line containing the “xy xz yz” parameters.) (If you have a .PDB file, these boundary box numbers are in the “CRYST1” line near the beginning of the file.)

Once you’ve created the “header” section of the data file, paste the other sections to the end of your LAMMPS data file (with the appropriate section headings and blank lines).

```
echo "" >> system.data
echo "Atoms" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
cat "Data Atoms" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
echo "Bonds" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
cat "Data Bonds" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
echo "Angles" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
cat "Data Angles" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
echo "Masses" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
cat "Data Masses" >> system.data
echo "" >> system.data
```

Depending on your system, you may also have these files as well: “Data Dihedrals” “Data Improvers” “Data Bond Coeffs” “Data Angle Coeffs” “Data Dihedral Coeffs” “Data Improper Coeffs”. If so, then then append them to the end of your data file as well. (There are numerous other optional sections for “class2” force-fields. Exotic atom styles also require their own sections such as “lines” “ellipsoids” and “triangles”. Consult the LAMMPS documentation for details on these as well.)

### E.3 Now create the LAMMPS input script

```
echo "include \"In Init\"" > system.in
echo "read_data system.data" >> system.in
echo "include \"In Settings\"" >> system.in
```

Lastly, you have to worry about supplying the atomic coordinates. (Unlike moltemplate, ttree.py does not handle atom coordinates.)

The following commands are useful for extracting coordinates from PDB or XYZ files and converting them to LAMMPS input script commands:

### E.4 Extract coordinates

To extract coordinates from a .PDB file (“file.pdb”), use:

```
awk '/^ATOM |^HETATM/{print substr($0,31,8) \
    " "substr($0,39,8) \
    " "substr($0,47,8)}' \
    < file.pdb \
    > tmp_atom_coords.dat
```

(Note: There should be two spaces following the word “ATOM” above.)

To extract coordinates from an XYZ file (“file.xyz”), use:

```
awk 'function isnum(x){return(x==x+0)} \
    BEGIN{targetframe=1;framecount=0} \
    {if (isnum($0)) {framecount++} else \
    {if (framecount==targetframe) { \
    if (NF>0) { \
    if ((NF==3) && isnum($1)) { \
    print $1" "$2" "$3} \
    else if ((NF==4) && isnum($2)) { \
    print $2" "$3" "$4} }}}} \
    < file.xyz \
    > tmp_atom_coords.dat
```

## E.5 Convert the coordinate file to LAMMPS input script format

```
awk '{if (NF>=3) { \
    natom++; print "set atom "natom" x "$1" y "$2" z "$3" "}}' \
    < tmp_atom_coords.dat \
    >> system.in.coords
```

Finally import “system.in.coords” in your lammps input script using:

```
echo "include \"system.in.coords\" >> system.in
```

## F Using the *nbody\_by\_type.py* utility

(bypassing moltemplate.sh)

moltemplate.sh uses the “nbody\_by\_type.py” utility to generate many-body interactions between bonded atoms by atom type. In the event that moltemplate.sh crashes or is not up-to-date with LAMMPS, you can assign interactions by type by manually invoking nbody\_by\_type.py yourself.

As an example, the following command will generate a file “Angles” containing lines of text which should eventually be pasted into the “Angles” section of a LAMMPS data file:

```
nbody_by_type Angles \
    -atoms "Data Atoms" \
    -bonds "Data Bonds" \
    -nbodybytype "Data Angles By Type" \
    > "Data Angles"
```

For dihedral or improper interactions, repeat the command above, and replace “Angles” with “Dihedrals”, or “Improper” everywhere.

*Note: The above instructions work assuming that you do not use any wildcard characters (“\*” or “?”) or regular expressions in your “Angles By Type” section. If you use wildcards or regular expressions, then you must run the program this way:*

```
nbody_by_type Angles \  
  -atoms "Data Atoms.template" \  
  -bonds "Data Bonds.template" \  
  -nbodybytype "Data Angles By Type.template" \  
  > "Data Angles.template"
```

*Afterwards, you must then replace each variable in the “Angles.template” file with the appropriate integer before you copy the contents into the LAMMPS data file. (The `tree_render.py` program may be useful for this. Open the `moltemplate.sh` file with a text editor to see how this was done.)*

Note that “Data Atoms”, and “Data Bonds” refer to files which are normally created by “`ttree.py`” or “`lttree.py`” which contain atom and bond data in LAMMPS data file format, respectively. Similarly “Data Angles By Type” refers to a file containing instructions for how to automatically generate angles by atom type. (Again, this would typically be generated by running “`ttree.py`” or “`lttree.py`” on an LT file containing a block of text wrapped inside a “`write_once('Data Angles By Type')`” command.)

Note: if you already have existing “Data Angles”, you can add them to the list of angle interactions created by `nbody_by_type.py`.

```
nbody_by_type Angles \  
  -atoms "Data Atoms" \  
  -bonds "Data Bonds" \  
  -nbodyfile "Data Angles" \  
  -nbodybytype "Data Angles By Type" \  
  > extra_Angles.tmp  
cat extra_Angles.tmp "Data Angles" > new_Angles  
mv -f new_Angles "Data Angles"  
rm -f extra_Angles.tmp
```

## F.1 Usage

For reference, the complete man page for the “`nbody_by_type.py`” command is included below.

```
nbody_by_type.py reads a LAMMPS data file (or an excerpt of a LAMMPS)  
data file containing bonded many-body interactions by atom type  
(and bond type), and generates a list of additional interactions  
in LAMMPS format consistent with those type (to the standard out).
```

Typical Usage:

```
nbody_by_type.py X < old.data > new.data
```

--or--

```
nbody_by_type.py X \  
    -atoms atoms.data \  
    -bonds bonds.data \  
    -nbody X.data \  
    -nbodybytype X_by_type.data  
> new_X.data
```

In both cases "X" denotes the interaction type, which is either "Angles", "Dihedrals", or "Impropers". (Support for other interaction types can be added by the user. See below.)

----- Example 1 -----

```
nbody_by_type.py X < old.data > new.data
```

In this example, nbody\_by\_type.py reads a LAMMPS data file "orig.data", and extracts the relevant section ("Angles", "Dihedrals", or "Impropers"). It also looks a section named "X By Type", (eg. "Angles By type", "Impropers By type", "Impropers By type") which contains a list of criteria for automatically defining additional interactions of that type. For example, this file might contain:

Angle By Type

```
7 1 2 1 * *  
8 2 2 * * *  
9 3 4 3 * *
```

The first column is an interaction type ID.  
The next 3 columns are atom type identifiers.  
The final 2 columns are bond type identifiers.  
The \* is a wildcard symbol indicating there is no preference for bond types in this example. (Optionally, regular expressions can also be used to define a type match, by enclosing the atom or bond type in / slashes.)

The first line tells us to that there should be a 3-body "Angle" interaction of type "7" whenever an atom of type 1 is bonded to an atom of type "2", which is bonded to another atom of type "1" again. The second line tells us that an angle is defined whenever three atoms are bonded together and the first two are of type "2". (Redundant angle interactions are filtered.)

New interactions are created for every group of bonded atoms which match these criteria if they are bonded together in the relevant way for that interaction type (as determined by

nbody\_X.py), and printed to the standard output. For example, suppose you are automatically generating 3-body "Angle" interactions using:

```
nbody_by_type Angles < old.data > new.data
```

The file "new.data" will be identical to "old.data", however the "Angles By Type" section will be deleted, and the following lines of text will be added to the "Angles" section:

```
394 7 5983 5894 5895
395 7 5984 5895 5896
396 7 5985 5896 5897
   :   :   :   :   :
847 9 14827 14848 14849
```

The numbers in the first column are counters which assign a ID to every interaction of that type, and start where the original "Angles" data left off (New angle ID numbers do not overlap with old ID numbers). The text in the second column ("7", "9", ...) matches the text from the first column of the "Angle By Type" section of the input file.

----- Example 2 -----

```
nbody_by_type.py X \  
    -atoms atoms.data \  
    -bonds bonds.data \  
    -nbody X.data \  
    -nbodybytype X_by_type.data \  
> new_X.data
```

In particular, for Angle interactions:

```
nbody_by_type.py Angles \  
    -atoms atoms.data \  
    -bonds bonds.data \  
    -nbody angles.data \  
    -nbodybytype angles_by_type.data \  
> new_Angles.data
```

When run this way, nbody\_by\_type.py behaves exactly the same way as in Example 1, however only the lines of text corresponding to the new generated interactions are printed, (not the entire data file). Also note, that when run this way, nbody\_by\_type.py does not read the LAMMPS data from the standard input. Instead, it reads each section of the data file from a different file indicated by the arguments following the "-atoms", "-bonds", "-nbody", and "-nbodybytype" flags.

"Angles" is a 3-body interaction style. So when run this way,

nbody\_by\_type.py will create a 5 (=3+2) column file (new\_Angles.data).

Note: the atom, bond and other IDs/types in need not be integers.

Note: This program must be distributed with several python modules, including: nbody\_Angles.py, nbody\_Dihedrals.py, and nbody\_Improper.py. These contain bond definitions for angular, dihedral, and improper interactions.

## F.2 Custom bond topologies

Currently nbody\_by\_type.py can detect and generate “Angle” and “Dihedral” interactions between 3 and 4 consecutively bonded atoms. It can also generate “Improper” interactions between 4 atoms bonded with a T-shaped topology (one central atom with 3 branches). The nbody\_by\_type.py script imports external modules named “nbody\_Angles.py”, “nbody\_Dihedrals.py”, and “nbody\_Improper.py” to help it detect angles, dihedrals, and improper interactions automatically. In case any new interaction types are ever added to LAMMPS, it is easy to define new bonded interaction types by supplying a new “nbody\_X.py” python modules. These python files are usually only a few lines long. Copy one of the existing modules “nbody\_Angles.py”, “nbody\_Dihedrals.py”, or “nbody\_Improper.py”) and modify it to the subgraph inside to match the bonded network that you want to search for.

## G Variable syntax details

Counter variables have names like:

***\$cpath/catname:lpath***

or

***@cpath/catname:lpath***

(Note: All of the variable examples in this appendix can refer to either static @ variables or instance \$ variables. Both variable types obey the same syntax rules. For brevity, only the instance \$ variables are shown.)

All counter variables have 3 parts:

***cpath***, the category scope object (which is usually omitted)

***catname***, the category name

***lpath***, the “leaf path”. This includes the variable’s name and (optionally) the location of that variable in the object tree relative to the object in which the variable is referenced (the current-context object)

Typically the ***cpath*** is omitted, in which case it means that the category has global scope. (*This is true for all of the standard counter variable types: “@atom”, “\$atom”, “\$mol”, “@bond”, “\$bond”, “@angle”, “\$angle”, “@dihedral”, “\$dihedral”, “@improper”, and “\$improper”.*) However the ***cpath*** can be specified explicitly, as in this example: “\$/atom:” (“/” denotes explicitly that the counter has global scope). Another example with an explicit ***cpath*** is the custom local counter variable named “\$/proteins[5]/resid:.”

(See section D.3.) In this example, the *cpath* is “\$/proteins[5]”, the *catname* is “resid”, and the *lpath* is “.”. (In section D.3, we never explicitly specified the *cpath*. This is a source of confusion. When *cpath* is omitted, then the program searches up the tree for an ancestor node containing a category with a matching *catname*. Consequently the *cpath* rarely ever needs to be stated explicitly. See section G.2 for more details.)

## G.1 General variable syntax

The ellipsis (“...”) commonly appears in counter variables (or it is implied). The most complex and general variable syntax is:

***\$cpath/.../catname:lpath***

This means: find the closest ancestor of the *cpath* object containing a category named “*catname*”. This ancestor determines the category’s scope. Counter variables in this category are local to ancestors of that object. In this usage example, *lpath* identifies the location of the variable’s corresponding “leaf” object relative to the category scope object (*cpath*). On the other hand, if the the category’s scope (*cpath*) was not explicitly stated by the user (which is typical), then the *lpath* identifies the location of the leaf object relative to the object in which the variable was referenced (the current-context “.”).

## G.2 Variable shorthand equivalents

***\$catname:lpath* is equivalent to “\$.../catname:lpath”**

This means: find the closest direct ancestor of the current object containing a category whose name matches *catname*. If not found, create a new category (at the global level). *This is the syntax used most frequently in LT files.*

If the colon is omitted, as in *\$lpath/catname*, then it is equivalent to: *\$catname:lpath*. Again, in these cases, *lpath* is a path which is relative to the object in which the variable was referenced.

If *\$lpath* is omitted, then this is equivalent to *\$catname:.*. In other words, the the leaf node is the current node, “.”. (This syntax is often used to count keep track of molecule ID numbers. You can use the counter variable “\$mol” to keep track of the current molecule id number, because it counts the molecular objects in which this variable was defined. In this case the name of the category is “mol”. As in most examples, the category object, *cpath*, is not specified. This means the category object is automatically global. A global category object means that every molecule object is given a unique ID number which is unique for the entire system, not just unique within some local molecule. As a counter-example, consider amino acid residue counters. Each amino acid in a protein can be assigned a residue ID number which identifies it within a single protein chain. However because their category was defined locally at the protein level, these residue ID numbers are not global, and are not uniquely defined if there are multiple protein chains present.)

### ***\$cpath/catname:lpath/...***

*(SHORTHAND equivalent)*

Find the category name and object corresponding to “*\$cpath/catname:*” (see above) If *\$cpath/* is blank, then search for an ancestor with a category whose name matches *catname*, as described above. To find the variable’s corresponding “leaf object”, start from the CURRENT object (not the category object). If *lpath* is not empty, follow *lpath* to a new position in the tree. Otherwise, start at the current object. (An empty *lpath* corresponds to the current object.) From this position in the object tree search for a direct ancestor which happens to also be “leaf object” for some other variable which belongs to the desired category. If no such variable is found, then ttree creates a new variable whose leaf object is the object at the *lpath* position, and put it in the desired category.

### ***\$lpath/.../catname is equivalent to \$catname:lpath/...***

*(SHORTHAND equivalent)*

If *lpath* is omitted, then start from the current node. (In the molecular examples, “*\$.../mol*” is a variable whose category name is “mol”. The “leaf object” for the variable is either the current object in which this variable was defined, OR a direct ancestor of this object which has been assigned to a variable belonging to the category named “mol”. In this way large objects (large molecules) can be comprised of smaller objects, without corrupting the “mol” counter which keeps track of which molecule we belong to. In other words, “*\$.../mol*” unambiguously refers to the ID# of the large molecule to which this sub-molecule belongs (regardless of however many layers up that may be).)

### ***\$cpath/catname:lpath***

*Variables in the output\_ttree/ttree\_assignments.txt file use the this syntax.*

If the user explicitly specifies the path leading up to the cat node, and avoids using “...”, then *lpath* is interpreted relative to the category object, not the current object (however *cpath* is interpreted relative to the current object). This happens to be the format used in the “*ttree\_assignments.txt*” file (although you can use it anywhere else in an “.LT” file). In “*ttree\_assignments.txt*” file, *cpath* is defined relative to the global object. The variables in that file always begin with “*\$/*” or “*@/*”. The slash at the beginning takes us to the global environment object (to which all the other objects belong). (Since the variables in the “*ttree\_assignments.txt*” always begin with “*\$/*” or “*@/*”, this distinction is usually not important because the category object for most variables usually is the “global” root object.)

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