Instancing

Instancing is the ability to draw the same object multiple times. It uses all the same vertices and graphics pipeline each time. It avoids the overhead of the program asking to have the object drawn again, letting the GPU/driver handle all of that.

Instancing – What and why?

vkCmdDraw(CommandBuffers[nextImageIndex], vertexCount, instanceCount, firstVertex, firstInstance);

But, this will only get us multiple instances of identical objects drawn on top of each other. How can we make each instance look differently?

Making each Instance look differently -- Approach #1

Use the built-in vertex shader variable gl_InstanceIndex to define a unique display property, such as position or color.

In the vertex shader:

int NUMINSTANCES = 16;
float DELTA = 3.0;
float xdelta = DELTA * float(gl_InstanceIndex % 4);
float ydelta = DELTA * float(gl_InstanceIndex / 4);
vColor = vec3(1., float((1.+gl_InstanceIndex) / float(NUMINSTANCES)), 0.);
xdelta -= DELTA * sqrt(float(NUMINSTANCES)) / 2.;
ydelta -= DELTA * sqrt(float(NUMINSTANCES)) / 2.;
vec4 vertex = vec4(aVertex.xyz + vec3(xdelta, ydelta, 0.), 1.);
gl_Position = PVM * vertex;

In the vertex shader:

Making each Instance look differently -- Approach #2

Put the unique characteristics in a uniform buffer and reference them.

Still uses gl_InstanceIndex

In the vertex shader:

layout( std140, set = 3, binding = 0 ) uniform colorBuf
{
vec3 uColors[1024];
} Colors;

int index = gl_InstanceIndex % 1024; // 0 - 1023
vColor = Colors.uColors[index];

Making each Instance look differently -- Approach #3

Put a series of unique characteristics in a data buffer, one element per instance. Read a new characteristic for each instance.

Internally uses gl_InstanceIndex, but you don’t
This is just the Vertex Input State Portion of the Graphics Pipeline Structure:

How We Constructed the Graphics Pipeline Structure Before:

- `vkCreateGraphicsPipelines()`
- `vpvisci = VkPipelineVertexInputStateCreateInfo();`
  - `vpvisci.sType = VK_STRUCTURE_TYPE_PIPELINE_VERTEX_INPUT_STATE_CREATE_INFO;`
  - `vpvisci.pNext = nullptr;`
  - `vpvisci.flags = 0;`
  - `vpvisci.vertexBindingDescriptionCount = 4;`
  - `vpvisci.vertexAttributeDescriptionCount = 5;`
  - `vpvisci.pVertexBindingDescriptions = vvibd;`
  - `vpvisci.pVertexAttributeDescriptions = vviad;`

How We Constructed the Graphics Pipeline Structure Now:

- `vkCreateGraphicsPipelines()`
- `vgpci = VkGraphicsPipelineCreateInfo();`
  - `vgpci.sType = VK_STRUCTURE_TYPE_GRAPHICS_PIPELINE_CREATE_INFO;`
  - `vgpci.pNext = nullptr;`
  - `vgpci.flags = 0;`
  - `vgpci.pVertexInputState = &vpvisci;`
  - `vgpci.p vertex DynamicState = nullptr;`

Let’s assign a different color per Instance.

- Create a data buffer with one `glm::vec3` (to hold r, g, b) for each Instance.

This definition says that we should advance through the input buffer by this much every time we hit a new vertex.

This definition says that we should advance through the input buffer by this much every time we hit a new instance.
How We Construct the Graphics Pipeline Structure Now

Let's assign a different color per Instance.
Create a data buffer with one glm::vec3 (to hold r, g, b) for each Instance.

```cpp
// VkPipelineVertexInputStateCreateInfo
vkvisci.sType = VK_STRUCTURE_TYPE_PIPELINE_VERTEX_INPUT_STATE_CREATE_INFO;
vkvisci.pNext = nullptr;
vkvisci.flags = 0;
vkvisci.vertexBindingDescriptionCount = 2;
vkvisci.pVertexBindingDescriptions = vvibd;
vkvisci.vertexAttributeDescriptionCount = 5;
vkvisci.pVertexAttributeDescriptions = vviad;
```

```cpp
// VkGraphicsPipelineCreateInfo
vgpci.sType = VK_STRUCTURE_TYPE_GRAPHICS_PIPELINE_CREATE_INFO;
vgpci.pNext = nullptr;
vgpci.flags = 0;
```

```cpp
vgpci.pVertexInputState = &vkvisci;
```

```cpp
result = vkCreateGraphicsPipelines(LogicalDevice, VK_NULL_HANDLE, 1, IN &vgpci, PALLOCATOR, OUT pGraphicsPipeline);
```

Note: same names as before, but different sizes

How We Write the Vertex Shader Now

```cpp
#version 400
#extension GL_ARB_separate_shader_objects : enable
#extension GL_ARB_shading_language_420pack : enable

layout( location = 0 ) in vec3 aVertex;
layout( location = 1 ) in vec3 aNormal;
layout( location = 2 ) in vec3 aColor;
layout( location = 3 ) in vec2 aTexCoord;
layout( location = 4 ) in vec3 aInstanceColor;

layout ( location = 0 ) out vec3 vNormal;
layout ( location = 1 ) out vec3 vColor;
layout ( location = 2 ) out vec2 vTexCoord;

void main( )
{
    mat4 PVM = Matrices.uProjectionMatrix * Matrices.uViewMatrix * Matrices.uModelMatrix;
vNormal = normalize( vec3( Matrices.uNormalMatrix * vec4(aNormal, 1.) ) );
    vColor = aInstanceColor;
vTexCoord = aTexCoord;
    gl_Position = PVM * vec4( aVertex, 1. );
}
```