Ensure Correct Vulkan Synchronization by Using Synchronization Validation

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Understanding Vulkan Synchronization

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Slides are available at: https://www.lunarg.com/news-insights/white-papers/vulkan-synchronization-siggraph-2021/
Introduction

- Understanding Vulkan Synchronization
  - Synchronization terminology in the Vulkan spec
  - Some of the new features in VK_KHR_synchronization2 (aka sync2)

- Validating Vulkan Synchronization
  - Theory of operation
  - Demo
  - Interpreting error messages
  - Frequently found errors

- Q & A
Execution Dependencies

● Most Vulkan commands are started in queue submission order but may execute in any order
  ○ Even commands using the same pipeline stages!
● The programmer must tell Vulkan when 2 commands depend on each other
  ○ We do this by defining barriers
● *First synchronization scope* is what *happens before* a barrier
  ○ AKA: `srcStageMask`
● *Second synchronization scope* is what *happens after* a barrier
  ○ AKA: `dstStageMask`
Memory Dependencies

- GPUs have lots of caches
  - Vulkan defines logical memory access types that correspond to caches that *might* be associated with a pipeline stage
  - Cache maintenance operations are required for different stages to ‘see’ the output of other stages in memory.
- **First access scope**: memory accesses by commands that *happen before* the barrier.
  - AKA: `srcAccessMask`
  - A barrier does a **cache clean (or flush)** on any caches used in the first access scope
- **Second access scope**: memory accesses by commands that *happen after* the barrier.
  - AKA: `dstAccessMask`
  - A barrier does a **cache invalidate** on any caches used in the first access scope
## Types of synchronization errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAW</td>
<td>Read-after-write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAR</td>
<td>Write-after-read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAW</td>
<td>Write-after-write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRW</td>
<td>Write-racing-write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRW</td>
<td>Read-racing-write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hello race condition!

vkCmdCopyBuffer(cb, buffer_a, buffer_b, 1, &region); /* a is copy src */
vkCmdCopyBuffer(cb, buffer_c, buffer_a, 1, &region); /* a is copy dst */

Write after read hazard because buffer_a is both src and dst in commands with no execution dependency!

vkCmdCopyBuffer(cb, buffer_a, buffer_b, 1, &region);
vkCmdPipelineBarrier(cb, VK_PIPELINE_STAGE_TRANSFER_BIT, VK_PIPELINE_STAGE_TRANSFER_BIT, 0, 0, nullptr, 0, nullptr, 0,nullptr);
vkCmdCopyBuffer(cb, buffer_c, buffer_a, 1, &region);
Pipeline Stages and Access Masks

- **Pipeline stages bits are ordered**
  - Logical ordering defined in Vulcan spec
  - In srcStageMask, each stage bit also waits for all earlier stages
  - In dstStageMask, each stage bit also blocks all later stages
  - You can often 'get away' with only setting some of the bits you are synchronizing

- **Access mask bits are independent**
  - You need to set ALL bits you are synchronizing
  - **BUT**, you must explicitly specify each pipeline stage if you want to use an access mask that requires it. (This is a common source of errors)
Pipeline Stage - details

- Was a **32-bit** mask, but all bits are used so sync2 made it **64 bits**
  - Several extensions **require** using sync2 or the ‘special’ stage mask bits
  - All bit values in the 32-bit mask have same meaning in the 64-bit mask

- Valid values are limited by
  - Queue Capabilities
  - Enabled extensions & features
  - Being in a renderpass

- Special values
  - NONE, TOP_OF_PIPE, BOTTOM_OF_PIPE - will be discussed separately
  - ALL_COMMANDS - blocks ‘everything’, all stages and some event-related commands
  - ALL_GRAPHICS - all active parts of the graphics pipeline
  - In sync2, several stages expand to multiple new stages
    - e.g. TRANSFER stage is equivalent to (COPY | BLIT | CLEAR | RESOLVE)
Pipeline stage ordering example

- In `srcStageMask`:
  - VERTEX_SHADER also waits on all grey stages
- In `dstStageMask`:
  - VERTEX_SHADER also blocks all green stages
Pipeline barriers - execution dependency chains

- Used to get sequential execution of multiple commands
- Barrier1.dstMask must be the same as or after Barrier2.srcMask in pipeline stage order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command A</th>
<th>Barrier1</th>
<th>Command B</th>
<th>Barrier2</th>
<th>Command C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOTTOM_OFPIPE</td>
<td>DRAW_INDIRECT</td>
<td>COMPUTE_SHADER</td>
<td>DRAW_INDIRECT</td>
<td>ALL_COMMANDS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

// A, B, C should execute in order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier1.dstMask</th>
<th>Barrier2.srcMask</th>
<th>dependency chain?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRAW_INDIRECT</td>
<td>DRAW_INDIRECT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAW_INDIRECT</td>
<td>COMPUTE_SHADER</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPUTE_SHADER</td>
<td>BOTTOM_OF_PIPE or ALL_COMMANDS</td>
<td>No (but might be slow)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Command A
Barrier1
Command B
Barrier2
Command C
// A, B, C should execute in order
Waiting for everything or nothing

- srcStageMask = ALL_COMMANDS blocks or waits for all stages
  - This is wait for idle on the GPU and will often hurt performance
- srcStageMask = NONE or TOP_OFPIPE
  - Your barrier waits for nothing
  - Can only form an execution dependency chain with the prior barrier with dstStageMask = ALL_COMMANDS
- dstStageMask = NONE or BOTTOM_OFPIPE
  - Nothing can wait for your barrier
  - Use srcStageMask = ALL_COMMANDS to form an execution dependency chain
- This comes up when interacting with other parts of Vulkan
  - Semaphores & Fences usually are OK
  - Renderpass implicit SubpassDependencies often go poorly (more later)
Access Mask details

- Was a **32-bit** mask, but all bits are used so sync2 made it **64 bits**
  - Several extensions require using sync2 or the ‘special’ access mask bits
  - All bit values in the 32-bit mask have same meaning in the 64 bit mask

- Valid bits are limited by which bits are set in the corresponding StageMask
  - Eg. PIPELINE_STAGE_TRANSFER allows ACCESS_TRANSFER_READ or WRITE
  - sync2 defines 200+ VUIDs to identify all possible errors

- Special values
  - NONE - no memory access, used to define an execution barrier
  - MEMORY_READ, MEMORY_WRITE - any memory access allowed by StageMask.
  - SHADER_READ - in sync2 expands to (SAMPLER_READ|STORAGE_READ|UNIFORM_READ)
  - SHADER_WRITE - in sync2 expands to STORAGE_WRITE (which is above 2^32)
Memory Barriers

**typedef struct VkMemoryBarrier {**
    VkStructureType   sType;
    const void*       pNext;
    VkAccessFlags     srcAccessMask;
    VkAccessFlags     dstAccessMask;
} VkMemoryBarrier;**

/* sync2 */

**typedef struct VkMemoryBarrier2KHR {**
    VkStructureType             sType;
    const void*                 pNext;
    VkPipelineStageFlags2KHR    srcStageMask;
    VkAccessFlags2KHR           srcAccessMask;
    VkPipelineStageFlags2KHR    dstStageMask;
    VkAccessFlags2KHR           dstAccessMask;
} VkMemoryBarrier2KHR;**

- A memory barrier synchronizes all memory accessible by the GPU
- You can use to synchronize buffers and images, UNLESS you are doing Image Layout Transition or Queue Family Ownership Transfer
- N barriers can be converted to 1 by or-ing all of their masks together
- Sync2 makes pipeline stages be part of the barrier structures instead of separate parameters to vkCmdPipelineBarrier()
Buffer Barriers - Queue Family Ownership

- Like a MemoryBarrier except
  - Adds a VkBuffer handle
  - Adds srcQueueFamilyIndex, dstQueueFamilyIndex for Queue Family Ownership (QFO) Transfer

- Queue Family Ownership Transfer (also part of Image Memory Barriers)
  - VK_SHARING_MODE_CONCURRENT is usually very slow (for Images only)
  - VK_SHARING_MODE_EXCLUSIVE requires a QFO barrier to switch ownership between one queue family and another

- QFO Barrier
  - Create a Buffer (or Image) Memory Barrier
  - Submit on src queue, only srcAccessMask used.
  - Submit on dst queue, only dstAccessMask used.
  - However, both PipelineStageMasks are used by both queues
  - Use a Semaphore to synchronize the 2 queues
  - Use the ‘other’ PipelineStageMask to form an execution dependency with the Semaphore wait or signal operation
Image Memory Barriers

- Like a BufferMemoryBarrier except
  - VkImage handle instead of VkBuffer
  - Adds VkImageLayout oldLayout and newLayout to allow Image Layout Transitions

- Image Layout Transitions
  - Re-arrange memory for efficient use by different pipeline stages
  - *Happens between* the first and second execution scopes of the barrier
  - Each subresource of an image can be transitioned independently.

- sync2 adds magic ‘do the right thing’ layouts
  - Avoid the need for providing different layouts for Color, Depth and Stencil Images
  - VK_IMAGE_LAYOUT_READ_ONLY_OPTIMAL_KHR
  - VK_IMAGE_LAYOUT_ATTACHMENT_OPTIMAL_KHR
Renderpass - it is REALLY complicated

https://github.com/David-DiGioia/vulkan-diagrams
Renderpass - what to watch out for

- Load and store operations often cause synchronization errors
  - LOAD_OP_DONT_CARE generates WRITE accesses to your attachments
- **Rasterization order** synchronizes some operations within a subpass
- Pipeline Barriers in a RenderPass are even trickier
  - You need a Subpass self-Dependency (srcSubpass == dstSubpass) that includes all the pipeline stages your barrier(s) will use
  - Set of allowed pipeline stages is limited
- Internal Subpass Dependencies don’t affect the outside world
  - (srcSubpass and dstSubpass != EXTERNAL)
  - *First and second execution scopes* only include commands in other subpasses
- Implicit External Subpass Dependencies don’t do what you want, define them explicitly
Implicit Subpass External Dependencies

/* INITIAL implicit subpass */
VkSubpassDependency implicitDependency = {
    .srcSubpass = VK_SUBPASS_EXTERNAL;
    // First subpass attachment is used in
    .dstSubpass = firstSubpass;
    .srcStageMask = NONE;
    .dstStageMask = ALL_COMMANDS;
    .srcAccessMask = 0;
    .dstAccessMask =
        VK_ACCESS_INPUT_ATTACHMENT_READ_BIT |
        VK_ACCESS_COLOR_ATTACHMENT_READ_BIT |
        VK_ACCESS_COLOR_ATTACHMENT_WRITE_BIT |
        VK_ACCESS_DEPTH_STENCIL_ATTACHMENT_READ_BIT |
        VK_ACCESS_DEPTH_STENCIL_ATTACHMENT_WRITE_BIT;
    .dependencyFlags = 0;
};
/* FINAL implicit subpass is similar,
* but src and dst are swapped
*/

- These are Image Memory Barriers for your attachments
- Inserted by the driver ONLY IF
  - You have initial or final layout transitions.
  - You don’t provide your own dependency
- They wait for or block NOTHING
- Use them as a template but change the external side to be useful
  - You probably want an execution dependency chain!
- Maybe use different pipeline stages on internal side instead of ALL_COMMANDS
- Maybe add internal side access bits, but you probably want at least the default ones.
Other stuff

- Semaphores and Fences synchronize all GPU execution and memory accesses that were submitted before they signal
  - This is why wait for nothing / block nothing is sometimes ok
- Queries execute completely in submission order
- Many other changes in sync2:
  - `vkQueueSubmit2KHR()` is much nicer than `vkQueueSubmit()`
  - `VkDependencyInfoKHR` reduces typing for pipeline barrier commands
  - Event commands are redesigned
Validating Vulkan Synchronization

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Synchronization Validation

● Detects Hazard From Insufficient Synchronization Operations
  ○ Hazard -- any access were the access pattern is not well defined
  ○ Byte Resolution Access/Synchronization Tracking
  ○ All vkCmd types (transfer, draw, renderpass, compute, resolve, etc)
  ○ Sync2 support

● Some Limitations
  ○ Single Command Buffer (current release)
  ○ Limited aliasing detection (like kinds of resources)
  ○ No swizzle support
  ○ Not GPU Assisted (doesn’t know shader execution time information)
  ○ Limited extension support
Hazard Types (common)

- Read-after-write (RAW)
  - Operation uses the result of a previous operation without waiting for the result to be completed.
- Write-after-read (WAR)
  - Operation overwrites a memory location read by a previous operation before operation is complete.
- Write-after-write (WAW)
  - Operation writes to the same set of memory locations being written by a previous operation.
Hazard Types (Vulkan Specific)

- Write-racing-write (WRW)
  - Operations on unsynchronized subpasses/queues perform writes to the same set of memory locations.

- Read-racing-write (RRW)
  - Operations on unsynchronized subpasses/queues perform read and write operations on the same set of memory locations
Synchronization Validation Theory of Operation

- Tracks access history
  - At each byte
  - Operation Type (stage, access)
  - Stores “most recent” only (more below)
- Applies synchronization operations to access history
  - Identifies “safe” subsequent access operations
  - Track dependency chaining
- Validates accesses of each subsequent operation to access history
  - The stage and access for each are compared previous access and synchronization
  - Reports hazards
  - Any hazard reported earlier may mask detection of subsequent hazard with same memory
Using Synchronization Validation

- **Clean Validation Run**
  - Resolve all outstanding non-synchronization issues.
  - Recommend “best practices” and “GPU Assisted” as well.

- **How To Enable**
  - `vkconfig`
  - `vk_layer_settings.txt`
  - Environment variables

- **Running**
  - Disable all other validation
  - Chase down issues in debugger.
    - “Debug Action: Break” on Windows
    - Break in `vkCreateDebugUtilsMessengerEXT` callback
Simple Sync Val Demo

- Using the Vulkan-Samples
Congratulations, It’s An Error.

[ SYNC-HAZARD-WRITE_AFTER_WRITE ] Object 0: handle = 0x8483000000000025, type = VK_OBJECT_TYPE_IMAGE; | MessageID = 0xfdf9f5e1 | vkCmdPipelineBarrier: Hazard WRITE_AFTER_WRITE for image barrier 0 VkImage 0x8483000000000025[]. Access info (usage: SYNC_IMAGE_LAYOUT_TRANSITION, prior_usage: SYNC_TRANSFER_TRANSFER_WRITE, write_barriers: 0, command: vkCmdCopyBufferToImage, seq_no: 2, reset_no: 1)

- Understanding the parts of this error will take a little background knowledge
Think Like Synchronization Validation

● Stage/Access pairs are need to describe the usages of resources
  ○ Not all pairs are valid, valid pairs expressed as enum SYNC_<STAGE>_<ACCESS>
  ○ Enum reflects Sync2 expanded pipeline stages
● How does the current operation (draw, transfer, etc.) affect the resource
  ○ Stage/access of operation for each resource
  ○ Comparison to earlier command stage/access and sync operations (“..is it safe?”)
  ○ Include implicit operations (layout transition, load, resolve, store)
● What relation do synch operations have relative to a given resource?
  ○ Do they apply at all? Also include earlier synch operations (chaining)
  ○ What subsequent operations are “safed” for that resource
● What are the prior commands that touch a given resource (memory location)?
  ○ Include implicit operations (layout transition, load, resolve, store)
Synchronization Validation Messages

<command_name>: Hazard <hazard_type>
<command_specific_resource_identifier>
Access info (  
    usage: <current_stage_access>,  
    prior_usage: <most_recent_prior_stage_access>,  
    (read_barriers|write_barriers): <cumulative_barrier_for_prior>,  
    command: <command_of_prior_usage>,  
    seq_no: <command_index_of_prior_command>,  
    reset_no: <times_command_buffer_been_reset>  
)
vkCmdPipelineBarrier: Hazard WRITE_AFTER_WRITE for image barrier 0 VkImage 0x8483000000000025[].
Congratulations, It’s An Error. (annotated)

vkCmdPipelineBarrier: Hazard WRITE_AFTER_WRITE for image barrier 0 VkImage 0x8483000000000025[].
Congratulations, It’s An Error. (annotated)

Current command.

Hazard Type

vkCmdPipelineBarrier: Hazard WRITE_AFTER_WRITE for image barrier 0 VkImage 0x848300000000025[].
Congratulations, It’s An Error. (annotated)

vkCmdPipelineBarrier: Hazard WRITE_AFTER_WRITE for image barrier 0 VkImage 0x8483000000000025[].
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Congratulations, It’s An Error. (annotated)

vkCmdPipelineBarrier: Hazard WRITE_AFTER_WRITE for image barrier 0 VkImage 0x8483000000000025[].

Current command.

Hazard Type

Command specific resource identifier

Current command Stage/Access

Previous command Stage/Access

Previous command

Barriers applied since previous command
Congratulations, It’s An Error. (annotated)

vkCmdPipelineBarrier: Hazard WRITE_AFTER_WRITE for image barrier 0 VkImage 0x8483000000000025[].

Command Type Specific Error Details

- **Copy**
  - Source/Destination
  - Region index
- **Draw or dispatch**
  - Descriptor: binding, type
  - Attachment: index and type
  - Bound buffer: vertex or index
- **Image Barriers**
  - Transitions: oldLayout, newLayout
  - Image Subresource
- **Render pass**
  - Transitions: oldLayout, newLayout
  - load/store/resolve: attachment index, type, and operation
Simple Sync Val Demo  Part II

● Using the Vulkan-Samples
Frequently Found Issues

- **Missing pipeline stage for memory barriers**
  - Stages are not logically extended for memory access barriers.

- **Invalid stage/access pairs**
  - Yields no barrier

- **Relying on implicit subpass dependencies with VK_SUBPASS_EXTERNAL**
  - Implicit Barriers are essential no-ops

- **Missing memory dependencies with Image Layout Transitions**
  - Transitions are full subresource range *read/write* operations.

- **Missing stage/access scopes for load operations**
  - Color and depth/stencil are done by different stage/access.
Debugging Strategies

- **Stage/Access Completeness In Barriers**
  - By inspection. Simplest approach.
  - Look at read/write barrier information vs. usage vs. existing barriers

- **Localizing w/ Access info**
  - prior_usage and (prior) command data can help identify access which hazard with current
  - (read|write)_barrier

- **Hazards vs. Prior Image Layout Transitions**
  - Find the last layout transition (barrier or subpass dependency)
  - Usually a missing dstStageMask or dstAccessMask

- **Hazards at Image Layout Transitions**
  - Missing srcStageMask or srcAccessMask for the affected resource
Debugging Strategies (cont’d)

● Hazards between buffer and/or image resource uses
  ○ Write-target to/from Read-target (pre/post transfer, attachment-to/from-texture)
  ○ Application needs to track the changing roles of a resource
  ○ Look for where these role changes happen, and check the synchronization operations

● Method of bisection
  ○ Insert “big hammer” Barriers/Subpass Dependency
    ■ Stage: VK_PIPELINE_STAGE_ALL_COMMANDS_BIT
      (VK_PIPELINE_STAGE_ALL_GRAPHICS_BIT inside render pass)
    ■ Access: VK_ACCESS_MEMORY_READ_BIT | VK_ACCESS_MEMORY_WRITE_BIT
  ○ If error disappears, error source is prior to Barrier, else it is after
  ○ Move barrier to determine source of hazard
  ○ Be sure to remove after

● Be sure and check Core/Parameter Validation as you change code
After the presentation

Questions or presentation feedback?
Contact John Zulauf: @jzulauf on the Vulkan KhronosDevs slack channel
- https://app.slack.com/client/TDMDFS87M/CDTJ9BELF
- Or sign up for the KhronosDevs slack channel here: https://www.khronos.org/news/permalink/khronos-developer-slack-5bfc62eb261764.20435008

Report bugs or make feature requests here:
https://github.com/KhronosGroup/Vulkan-ValidationLayers

For more information:
Vulkan Synchronization -- SIGGRAPH 2021

Slides are available at: https://www.lunarg.com/news-insights/white-papers/vulkan-synchronization-siggraph-2021/
Hello race condition! (sync2)

```cpp
vkCmdCopyBuffer(cb, buffer_a, buffer_b, 1, &region);

auto barrier = lvl_init_struct<VkMemoryBarrier2KHR>();
barrier.srcStageMask = VK_PIPELINE_STAGE_TRANSFER_BIT;
barrier.srcAccessMask = VK_ACCESS_NONE_KHR;
barrier.dstStageMask = VK_PIPELINE_STAGE_TRANSFER_BIT;
barrier.dstAccessMask = VK_ACCESS_NONE_KHR;

auto dep_info = lvl_init_struct<VkDependencyInfoKHR>();
dep_info.memoryBarrierCount = 1;
dep_info.pMemoryBarriers = &barrier;
vkCmdPipelineBarrier2KHR(cb, &dep_info);

vkCmdCopyBuffer(cb, buffer_c, buffer_a, 1, &region);
```
Events

- “Split” pipeline barriers
  - Can allow for more parallelism on the GPU
  - `CmdSetEvent()` is *first scope* (src)
  - `CmdWaitEvents()` is the *second scope* (dst)

- Hard to use (and infrequently used)
  - Only partially fixed by synchronization

- Race conditions between Set, Reset, Wait commands
  - Require semaphore or pipeline barrier using the `ALL_COMMANDS` to avoid
  - “To fix correctly we need Timeline Events that work like Timeline Semaphores”

- May be signalled by Host
  - `Sync2 VK_EVENT_CREATE_DEVICE_ONLY_BIT_KHR` disables this
Events - example

Cmd 7 depends on 1, 2, & 3

Cmd 9 depends on 4, 5, & 6

Cmds 1-6 can potentially run in parallel which wouldn’t be possible with pipeline barriers
Events - changes sync2

void vkCmdSetEvent(
    VkCommandBuffer commandBuffer,
    VkEvent event,
    VkPipelineStageFlags stageMask); /* src stage */

void vkCmdResetEvent(
    VkCommandBuffer commandBuffer,
    VkEvent event,
    VkPipelineStageFlags stageMask); /* src stage */

void vkCmdWaitEvents(
    VkCommandBuffer commandBuffer,
    uint32_t eventCount,
    const VkEvent* pEvents,
    VkPipelineStageFlags srcStageMask,
    VkPipelineStageFlags dstStageMask,
    /* barrier lists omitted */);

- vkCmdSetEvent() only has enough information to set up execution dependencies.
- Driver cannot schedule work for memory dependencies until vkCmdWaitEvent() is called!

void vkCmdSetEvent2KHR(
    VkCommandBuffer commandBuffer,
    VkEvent event,
    const VkDependencyInfoKHR* pDependencyInfo);

vkCmdResetEvent2KHR() same as vkCmdResetEvent()

void vkCmdWaitEvents2KHR(
    VkCommandBuffer commandBuffer,
    uint32_t eventCount,
    const VkEvent* pEvents,
    const VkDependencyInfoKHR* pDependencyInfos);

- vkCmdSetEvent2KHR() dependency info must match what is passed to vkCmdWaitEvent2KHR()
- each pDependencyInfo[i] has the barriers for pEvents[i]
  ○ In original function this was unclear