4.3 Intel 8253/54 - Programmable Interval Timer

The Intel 8253 and 8254 are Programmable Interval Timers (PTIs) designed for microprocessors to perform timing and counting functions using three 16-bit registers. Each counter has 2 input pins, i.e. Clock & Gate, and 1 pin for "OUT" output. To operate a counter, a 16-bit count is loaded in its register. On command, it begins to decrement the count until it reaches 0, then it generates a pulse that can be used to interrupt the CPU. The following table differentiates the features of 8253 and 8254,

8253	8254
Its operating frequency is 0 - 2.6 MHz	Its operating frequency is 0 - 10 MHz
It uses N-MOS technology	It uses H-MOS technology
Read-Back command is not available	Read-Back command is available
Reads and writes of the same counter cannot be interleaved.	Reads and writes of the same counter can be interleaved.

The most prominent features of 8253/54 are as follows −

- It has three independent 16-bit down counters.
- It can handle inputs from DC to 10MHz.
- These three counters can be programmed for either binary or BCD count.
- It is compatible with almost all microprocessors.
- 8254 has a powerful command called READ BACK command, which allows the user to check the count value, the programmed mode, the current mode, and the status of the counter.

8254 Architecture:

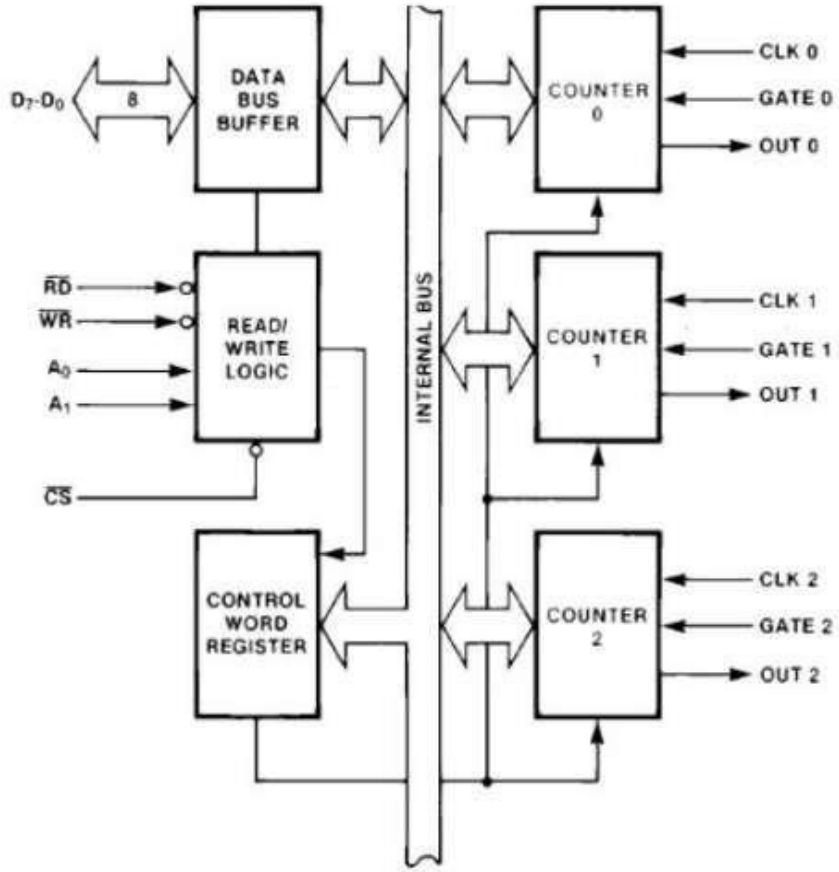

Figure 4.2.2 Architecture of 8254

[Source: "Microprocessor Architecture Programming and Application" by R.S. Gaonkar, page-]

8254 Pin Description

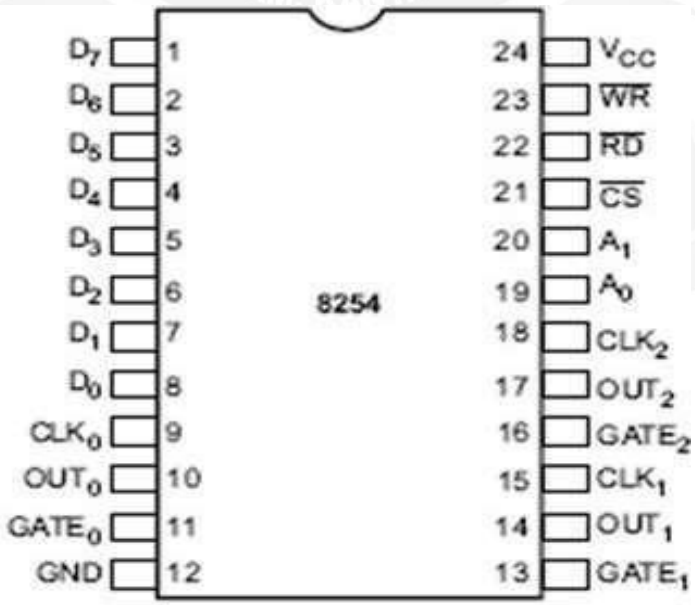

Figure 4.2.3 Pin diagram of 8254

[Source: "Microprocessor Architecture Programming and Application" by R.S. Gaonkar, page-]

In the above figure, there are three counters, a data bus buffer, Read/Write control logic, and a control register. Each counter has two input signals - CLOCK & GATE, and one output signal - OUT.

Data Bus Buffer

It is a tristate, bi-directional, 8-bit buffer, which is used to interface the 8253/54 to the system data bus. It has three basic functions −

- Programming the modes of 8253/54.
- Loading the count registers.
- Reading the count values.

Read/Write Logic

It includes 5 signals, i.e. RD, WR, CS, and the address lines A0 & A1. In the peripheral I/O mode, the RD and WR signals are connected to IOR and IOW, respectively. In the memory mapped I/O mode, these are connected to MEMR and MEMW. Address lines A0 & A1 of the CPU are connected to lines A0 and A1 of the 8253/54, and CS is tied to a decoded address. The control word register and counters are selected according to the signals on lines A0 & A1.

A_1	A_0	Result
0	0	Counter 0
0	1	Counter 1
1	0	Counter 2
1	1	Control Word Register
X	X	No Selection

Control Word Register

This register is accessed when lines A0 & A1 are at logic 1. It is used to write a command word, which specifies the counter to be used, its mode, and either a read or write operation. Following table shows the result for various control inputs.

A_1	A_0	RD	WR	CS	Result
0	0	1	0	0	Write Counter 0
0	1	1	0	0	Write Counter 1
1	0	1	0	0	Write Counter 2
1	1	1	0	0	Write Control Word
0	0	0	1	0	Read Counter 0
0	1	0	1	0	Read Counter 1
1	0	0	1	0	Read Counter 2
1	1	0	1	0	No operation
X	X	1	1	0	No operation
X	X	X	X	1	No operation

Counters

Each counter consists of a single, 16 bit-down counter, which can be operated in either binary or BCD. Its input and output is configured by the selection of modes stored in the control word register. The programmer can read the contents of any of the three counters without disturbing the actual count in process.

Control Word Format

D_7	D_6	D_5	D_4	D_3	D_2	D_1	D_0
SC1	SC0	RW1	RW0	M2	M1	M0	BCD

SC—Select Counter

SC1	SC0	
0	0	Select Counter 0
0	1	Select Counter 1
1	0	Select Counter 2
1	1	Read-Back Command (see Read Operations)

M—Mode

M2	M1	M0	
0	0	0	Mode 0
0	0	1	Mode 1
X	1	0	Mode 2
X	1	1	Mode 3
1	0	0	Mode 4
1	0	1	Mode 5

RW—Read/Write

RW1	RW0	
0	0	Counter Latch Command (see Read Operations)
0	1	Read/Write least significant byte only
1	0	Read/Write most significant byte only
1	1	Read/Write least significant byte first, then most significant byte

BCD

0	Binary Counter 16-bits
1	Binary Coded Decimal (BCD) Counter (4 Decades)

Figure 4.2.3 Control wordof 8254

[Source: "Microprocessor Architecture Programming and Application" by R.S. Gaonkar, page-]

Intel 8253/54 - Operational Modes

8253/54 can be operated in 6 different modes. In this chapter, we will discuss these operational modes.

Mode 0 ─ Interrupt on Terminal Count

- It is used to generate an interrupt to the microprocessor after a certain interval.
- Initially the output is low after the mode is set. The output remains LOW after the count value is loaded into the counter.
- The process of decrementing the counter continues till the terminal count is reached, i.e., the count become zero and the output goes HIGH and will remain high until it reloads a new count.
- The GATE signal is high for normal counting. When GATE goes low, counting is terminated and the current count is latched till the GATE goes high again.

Mode 1 – Programmable One Shot

- It can be used as a mono stable multi-vibrator.
- The gate input is used as a trigger input in this mode.
- The output remains high until the count is loaded and a trigger is applied.

Mode 2 – Rate Generator

- The output is normally high after initialization.
- Whenever the count becomes zero, another low pulse is generated at the output and the counter will be reloaded.

Mode 3 – Square Wave Generator

- This mode is similar to Mode 2 except the output remains low for half of the timer period and high for the other half of the period.

Mode 4 − Software Triggered Mode

- In this mode, the output will remain high until the timer has counted to zero, at which point the output will pulse low and then go high again.
- The count is latched when the GATE signal goes LOW.
- On the terminal count, the output goes low for one clock cycle then goes HIGH. This low pulse can be used as a strobe.

Mode 5 – Hardware Triggered Mode

- This mode generates a strobe in response to an externally generated signal.
- This mode is similar to mode 4 except that the counting is initiated by a signal at the gate input, which means it is hardware triggered instead of software triggered.
- After it is initialized, the output goes high.
- When the terminal count is reached, the output goes low for one clock cycle.