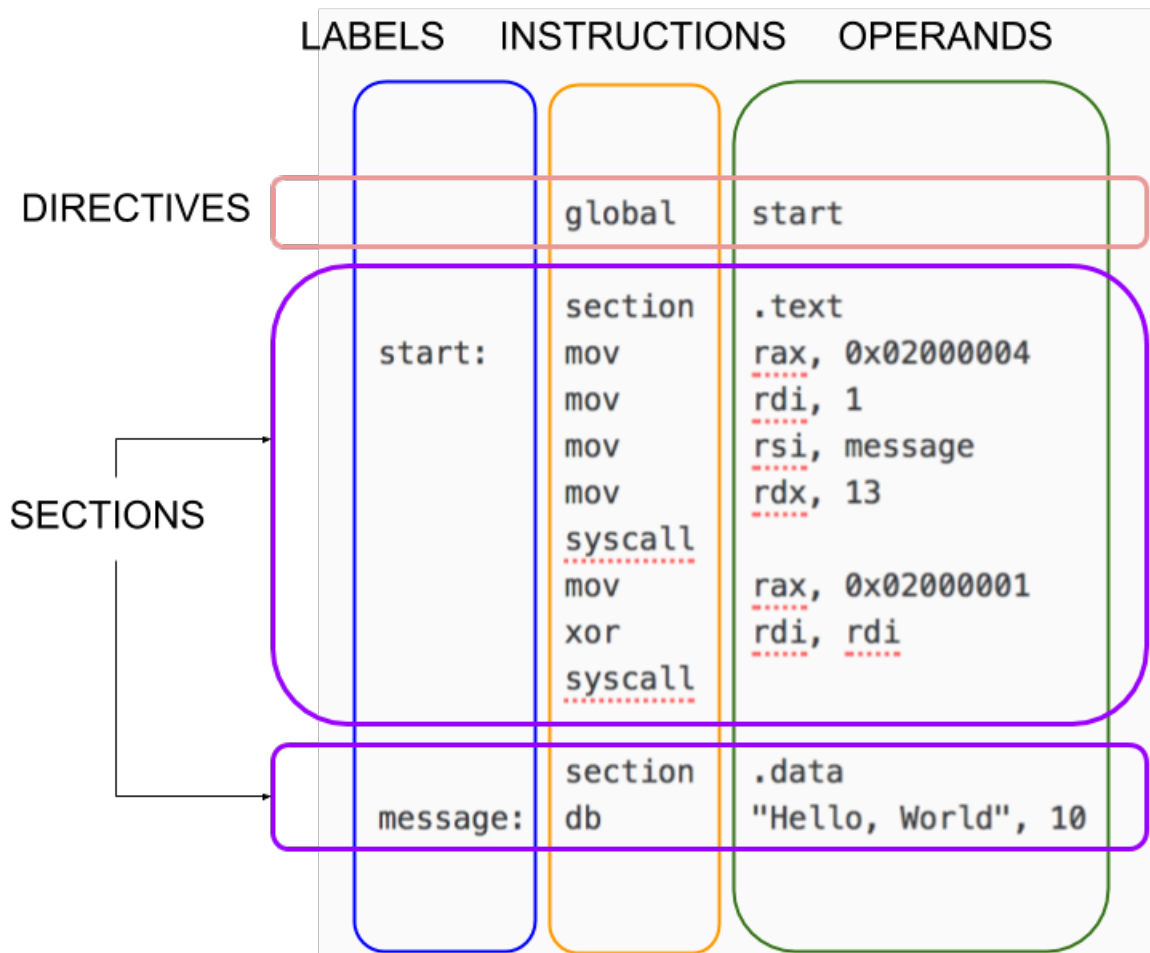NASM is line-based. Program source code is laid out by convention the following way:

Translation information for the assembler are called **directives.**   Lines, beginning in column 1, can have an optional **tag or label**.   In column 10, an **instruction** followed by zero or more **operands** which appear starting in column 16. Lastly, in any line the characters that may follow a semi-colon is taken by the assembler to be a **comment** .

The source code is separated into two major **sections** .

Executable instruction code is placed in a section called .text .

Variable and constant data in a section called .data .