Method Design & Method Overloading

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ComS 207: Programming I (in Java)
Iowa State University, FALL 2006
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Quick Review of Last Lecture

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The this Reference

- The `this` reference allows an object to refer to itself
- That is, the `this` reference, used inside a method, refers to the object through which the method is being executed
- Suppose the `this` reference is used in a method called `tryMe`, which is invoked as follows:

```
obj1.tryMe();
obj2.tryMe();
```

- In the first invocation, the `this` reference refers to `obj1`; in the second it refers to `obj2`

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The this reference

- The `this` reference can be used to distinguish the instance variables of a class from corresponding method parameters with the same names
- The constructor of the `Account` class (from Chapter 4) could have been written as follows:

```
public Account (Sring name, long acctNumber,
                double balance)
{
   this.name = name;
   this.acctNumber = acctNumber;
   this.balance = balance;
}
```

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The this reference

```
public Account (Sring owner, long account,
                double initial)
{
   name = owner;
   acctNumber = account;
   balance = initial;
}

public Account (Sring name, long acctNumber,
                double balance)
{
   this.name = name;
   this.acctNumber = acctNumber;
   this.balance = balance;
}
```

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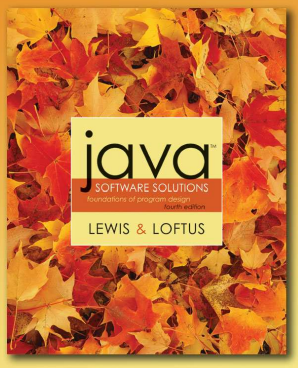
Chapter 6

Section 6.5 – 6.6



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Interfaces

- A Java *interface* is a collection of abstract methods and constants
- An *abstract method* is a method header without a method body
- An abstract method can be declared using the modifier `abstract`, but because all methods in an interface are abstract, usually it is left off
- An interface is used to establish a set of methods that a class will implement

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Interfaces

interface is a reserved word

None of the methods in an interface are given a definition (body)

```
public interface Doable
{
   public void doThis();
   public void doThat();
   public void doThis2 (float value, char ch);
   public boolean doTheOther (int num);
}
```

A semicolon immediately follows each method header

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Interfaces

- An interface cannot be instantiated
- Methods in an interface have public visibility by default
- A class formally implements an interface by:
  - stating so in the class header
  - providing implementations for each abstract method in the interface
- If a class asserts that it implements an interface, it must define all methods in the interface

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Interfaces

```
public class CanDo implements Doable
{
   public void doThis ()
   {
      // whatever
   }

   public void doThat ()
   {
      // whatever
   }

   // etc.
}
```

implements is a reserved word

Each method listed in Doable is given a definition

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Interfaces

- A class that implements an interface can implement other methods as well
- See Complexity.java (page 310)
- See Question.java (page 311)
- See MiniQuiz.java (page 313)
- In addition to (or instead of) abstract methods, an interface can contain constants
- When a class implements an interface, it gains access to all its constants

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Interfaces

- A class can implement multiple interfaces
- The interfaces are listed in the `implements` clause
- The class must implement all methods in all interfaces listed in the header

```
class ManyThings implements interface1, interface2
{
   // all methods of both interfaces
}
```

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Interfaces

- The Java standard class library contains many helpful interfaces
- The `Comparable` interface contains one abstract method called `compareTo`, which is used to compare two objects
- We discussed the `compareTo` method of the `String` class in Chapter 5
- The `String` class implements `Comparable`, giving us the ability to put strings in lexicographic order

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Where ca you find the standard Java interfaces

- C:\Program Files\Java\jdk1.5.0\src.zip

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The Comparable Interface

- Any class can implement `Comparable` to provide a mechanism for comparing objects of that type

```
if (obj1.compareTo(obj2) < 0)
   System.out.println ("obj1 is less than obj2");
```

- The value returned from `compareTo` should be negative is `obj1` is less that `obj2`, 0 if they are equal, and positive if `obj1` is greater than `obj2`
- When a programmer designs a class that implements the `Comparable` interface, it should follow this intent

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The Comparable Interface

- It's up to the programmer to determine what makes one object less than another
- For example, you may define the `compareTo` method of an `Employee` class to order employees by name (alphabetically) or by employee number
- The implementation of the method can be as straightforward or as complex as needed for the situation

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The Iterator Interface

- As we discussed in Chapter 5, an iterator is an object that provides a means of processing a collection of objects one at a time
- An iterator is created formally by implementing the `Iterator` interface, which contains three methods
- The `hasNext` method returns a boolean result – true if there are items left to process
- The `next` method returns the next object in the iteration
- The `remove` method removes the object most recently returned by the `next` method

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The Iterator Interface

- By implementing the `Iterator` interface, a class formally establishes that objects of that type are iterators
- The programmer must decide how best to implement the iterator functions
- Once established, the for-each version of the `for` loop can be used to process the items in the iterator

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Interfaces

- You could write a class that implements certain methods (such as `compareTo`) without formally implementing the interface (`Comparable`)
- However, formally establishing the relationship between a class and an interface allows Java to deal with an object in certain ways
- Interfaces are a key aspect of object-oriented design in Java
- We discuss this idea further in Chapter 9

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Interface Example:

Sortable.java
SortableIntArray.java
SortableStrigArray.java
SortingTest.java

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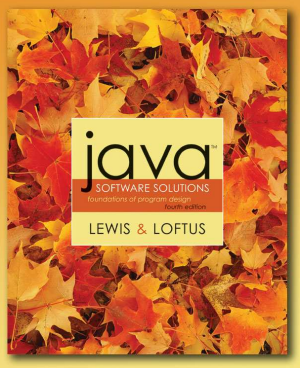
Chapter 6

Section 6.6



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Enumerated Types
(read Section 6.6 on your own)

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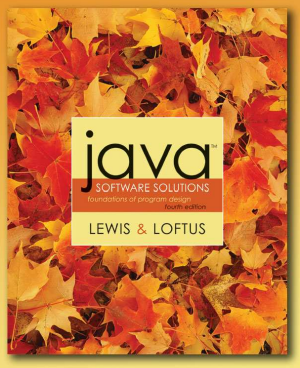
Chapter 6

Section 6.7



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Method Design

- As we've discussed, high-level design issues include:
  - identifying primary classes and objects
  - assigning primary responsibilities
- After establishing high-level design issues, its important to address low-level issues such as the design of key methods
- For some methods, careful planning is needed to make sure they contribute to an efficient and elegant system design

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Method Design

- An *algorithm* is a step-by-step process for solving a problem
- Examples: a recipe, travel directions
- Every method implements an algorithm that determines how the method accomplishes its goals
- An algorithm may be expressed in *pseudocode*, a mixture of code statements and English that communicate the steps to take

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Method Decomposition

- A method should be relatively small, so that it can be understood as a single entity
- A potentially large method should be decomposed into several smaller methods as needed for clarity
- A public service method of an object may call one or more private support methods to help it accomplish its goal
- Support methods might call other support methods if appropriate

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Method Decomposition

- Let's look at an example that requires method decomposition – translating English into Pig Latin
- Pig Latin is a language in which each word is modified by moving the initial sound of the word to the end and adding "ay"
- Words that begin with vowels have the "yay" sound added on the end

book → ookbay table → abletay

item → itemyay chair → airchay

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Method Decomposition

- The primary objective (translating a sentence) is too complicated for one method to accomplish
- Therefore we look for natural ways to decompose the solution into pieces
- Translating a sentence can be decomposed into the process of translating each word
- The process of translating a word can be separated into translating words that:
  - begin with vowels
  - begin with consonant blends (sh, cr, th, etc.)
  - begin with single consonants

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Method Decomposition

- See PigLatin.java (page 320)
- See PigLatinTranslator.java (page 323)
- In a UML class diagram, the visibility of a variable or method can be shown using special characters
- Public members are preceded by a plus sign
- Private members are preceded by a minus sign

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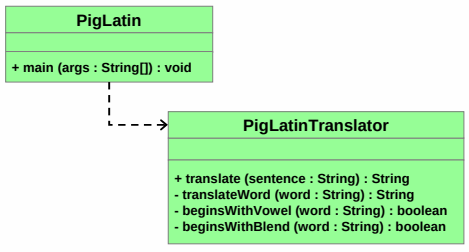
Class Diagram for Pig Latin



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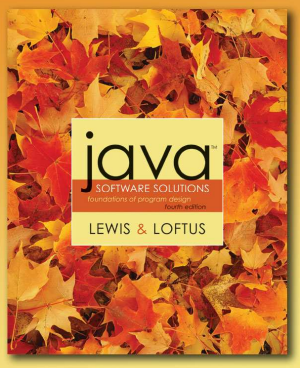
Chapter 6

Section 6.8



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Method Overloading

- *Method overloading* is the process of giving a single method name multiple definitions
- If a method is overloaded, the method name is not sufficient to determine which method is being called
- The *signature* of each overloaded method must be unique
- The signature includes the number, type, and order of the parameters

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Method Overloading

- The compiler determines which method is being invoked by analyzing the parameters

```
float tryMe(int x)
{
   return x + .375;
}

float tryMe(int x, float y)
{
   return x*y;
}
```

Invocation

```
result = tryMe(25, 4.32)
```

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Method Overloading

- The `println` method is overloaded:

```
println (String s)
println (int i)
println (double d)
```

and so on...

- The following lines invoke different versions of the `println` method:

```
System.out.println ("The total is:");
System.out.println (total);
```

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Overloading Methods

- The return type of the method is not part of the signature
- That is, overloaded methods cannot differ only by their return type
- Constructors can be overloaded
- Overloaded constructors provide multiple ways to initialize a new object

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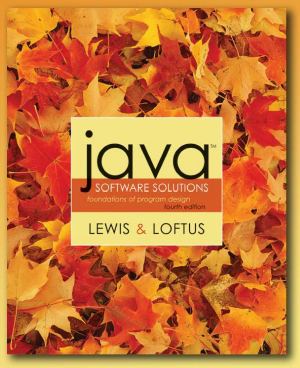
Chapter 6

Section 6.9



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Testing
(read Section 6.9 on your own)

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Testing

- Testing can mean many different things
- It certainly includes running a completed program with various inputs
- It also includes any evaluation performed by human or computer to assess quality
- Some evaluations should occur before coding even begins
- The earlier we find an problem, the easier and cheaper it is to fix

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Testing

- The goal of testing is to find errors
- As we find and fix errors, we raise our confidence that a program will perform as intended
- We can never really be sure that all errors have been eliminated
- So when do we stop testing?
  - Conceptual answer: Never
  - Snide answer: When we run out of time
  - Better answer: When we are willing to risk that an undiscovered error still exists

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Reviews

- A *review* is a meeting in which several people examine a design document or section of code
- It is a common and effective form of human-based testing
- Presenting a design or code to others:
  - makes us think more carefully about it
  - provides an outside perspective
- Reviews are sometimes called *inspections* or *walkthroughs*

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Test Cases

- A *test case* is a set of input and user actions, coupled with the expected results
- Often test cases are organized formally into *test suites* which are stored and reused as needed
- For medium and large systems, testing must be a carefully managed process
- Many organizations have a separate Quality Assurance (QA) department to lead testing efforts

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Defect and Regression Testing

- *Defect testing* is the execution of test cases to uncover errors
- The act of fixing an error may introduce new errors
- After fixing a set of errors we should perform *regression testing* – running previous test suites to ensure new errors haven't been introduced
- It is not possible to create test cases for all possible input and user actions
- Therefore we should design tests to maximize their ability to find problems

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Black-Box Testing

- In ***black-box testing***, test cases are developed without considering the internal logic
- They are based on the input and expected output
- Input can be organized into ***equivalence categories***
- Two input values in the same equivalence category would produce similar results
- Therefore a good test suite will cover all equivalence categories and focus on the boundaries between categories

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White-Box Testing

- ***White-box testing*** focuses on the internal structure of the code
- The goal is to ensure that every path through the code is tested
- Paths through the code are governed by any conditional or looping statements in a program
- A good testing effort will include both black-box and white-box tests

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THE END

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