

11 Inheritance, Polymorphism, Interfaces



Objectives

At the end of the lesson, the student should be able to:

- Define super classes and subclasses
- Override methods of super classes
- Create final methods and final classes

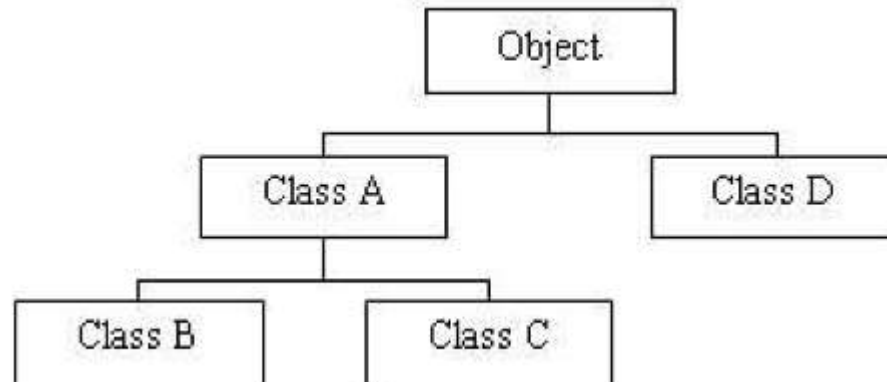


Inheritance



Object Class

- In Java, all classes, including the classes that make up the Java API, are subclassed (extended) from the **Object** super class.
- A sample class hierarchy is shown below.



Super class & Sub class

- Super class (Parent class)
 - Any class above a specific class in the class hierarchy.
- Sub class (Child class)
 - Any class below a specific class in the class hierarchy.



Reusability

- Benefits of Inheritance in OOP : Reusability
 - Once a behavior (method) is defined in a super class, that behavior is automatically inherited by all subclasses
 - Thus, you can encode a method only once and they can be used by all subclasses.
 - Once a set of properties (fields) are defined in a super class, the same set of properties are inherited by all subclasses
 - A subclass only needs to implement the differences between itself and the parent.



Inheritance: How to derive a sub class



extends keyword

- To derive a child class, we use the **extends** keyword.
- Suppose we have a parent class called Person.

```
public class Person {
    protected String name;
    protected String address;

    /**
     * Default constructor
     */
    public Person(){
        System.out.println("Inside Person:Constructor");
        name = ""; address = "";
    }
    . . .
}
```



extends keyword

- Now, we want to create another class named **Student**
- Since a student is also a person, we decide to just extend the class **Person**, so that we can inherit all the properties and methods of the existing class **Person**.
- To do this, we write,

```
public class Student extends Person {  
    public Student(){  
        System.out.println("Inside Student:Constructor");  
    }  
    . . . .  
}
```



Inheritance: Constructor Calling Chain



How Constructor method of a Super class gets called

- When a **Student** object, a subclass (child class), is instantiated, the default constructor of its super class (parent class), **Person** class, is invoked implicitly to do the necessary initializations.
- After that, subclass's constructor method is then invoked



Example: Constructor Calling Chain

- To illustrate this, consider the following code,

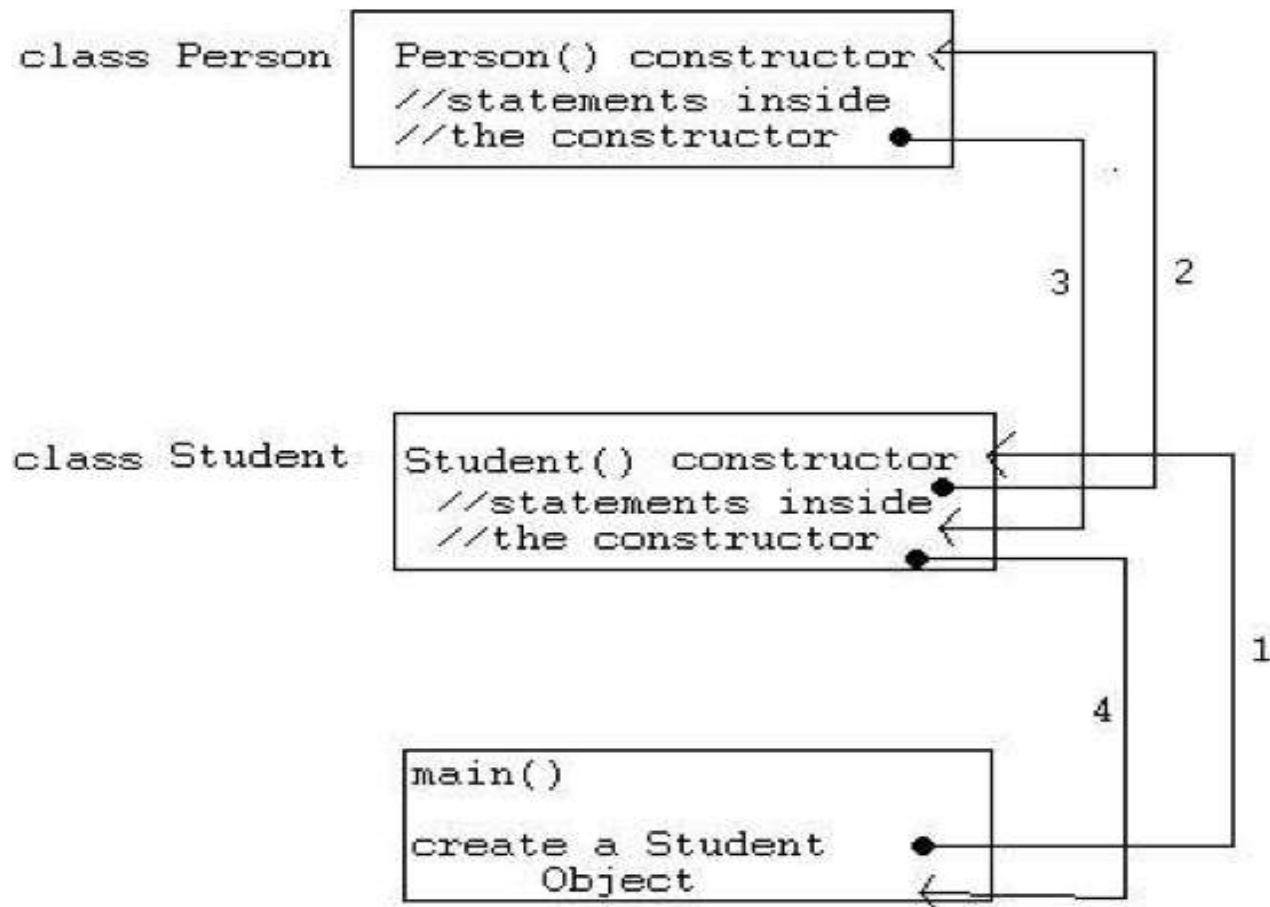
```
public static void main( String[] args ){  
    Student anna = new Student();  
}
```
- In the code, we create an object of class **Student**.
The output of the program is,

```
Inside Person:Constructor  
Inside Student:Constructor
```



Example: Constructor Calling Chain

- The program flow is shown below.



Inheritance: “super” Keyword



The “super” keyword

- A subclass can also **explicitly** call a constructor of its immediate super class.
- This is done by using the **super** constructor call.
- A **super** constructor call in the constructor of a subclass will result in the execution of relevant constructor from the super class, based on the arguments passed.



The “super” keyword

- For example, given our previous example classes **Person** and **Student**, we show an example of a super constructor call.
- Given the following code for Student,

```
public Student(){  
    super( "SomeName", "SomeAddress" );  
    System.out.println("Inside Student:Constructor");  
}
```



The “super” keyword

- Few things to remember when using the super constructor call:
 - The super() call **MUST OCCUR AS THE FIRST STATEMENT IN A CONSTRUCTOR.**
 - The super() call can only be used in a constructor definition.



The “super” keyword

- Another use of super is to refer to members of the super class (just like the this reference).
- For example,

```
public Student() {  
    super.name = "somename";  
    super.address = "some address";  
}
```



Inheritance: Overriding methods



Overriding methods

- If for some reason a derived class needs to have a different implementation of a certain method from that of the super class, overriding methods could prove to be very useful.
- A subclass can override a method defined in its super class by providing a new implementation for that method.



Example: Overriding Methods

- Suppose we have the following implementation for the `getName` method in the `Person` super class,

```
public class Person {  
    :  
    :  
    public String getName(){  
        System.out.println("Parent: getName");  
        return name;  
    }  
}
```



Example: Overriding Methods

- To override the `getName` method of the super class `Person` in the subclass `Student`, reimplement the method

```
public class Student extends Person{
    :
    public String getName(){
        System.out.println("Student: getName");
        return name;
    }
    :
}
```

- Now, when we invoke the `getName` method of an object of the subclass `Student`, the overridden `getName` method would be called, and the output would be,

`Student: getName`



Inheritance: Type casting



Type Casting between Objects

- An object instance of a subclass can be assigned to a variable (reference) of a parent class through implicit type casting
- Example
 - Let's assume **Student** class is a child class of **Person** class
 - Let's assume **TuftsStudent** class is a child class of **Student** class

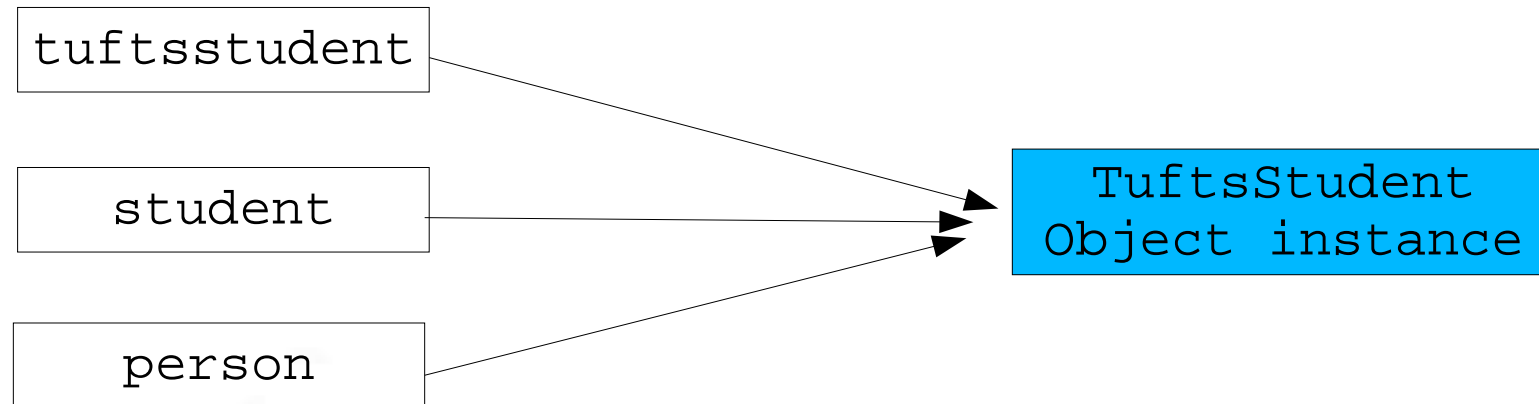
```
TuftsStudent tuftstudent = new TuftsStudent();
```

```
Student student = tuftstudent; // Implicit type casting
```

```
Person person = tuftstudent; // Implicit type casting
```



Type Casting between Objects



Inheritance: Final Class & Final Methods



Final Classes

- Final Classes

- Classes that cannot be extended
- To declare final classes, we write,

```
public final ClassName{  
    . . .  
}
```

- Example:

```
public final class Person {  
    . . .  
}
```

- Other examples of final classes are your wrapper classes and Strings.



Final Methods

- Final Methods

- Methods that cannot be overridden
- To declare final methods, we write,

```
public final [returnType] [methodName]([parameters]){  
    . . .  
}
```

- Static methods are automatically final.



Example: final Methods

```
public final String getName(){  
    return name;  
}
```



Polymorphism



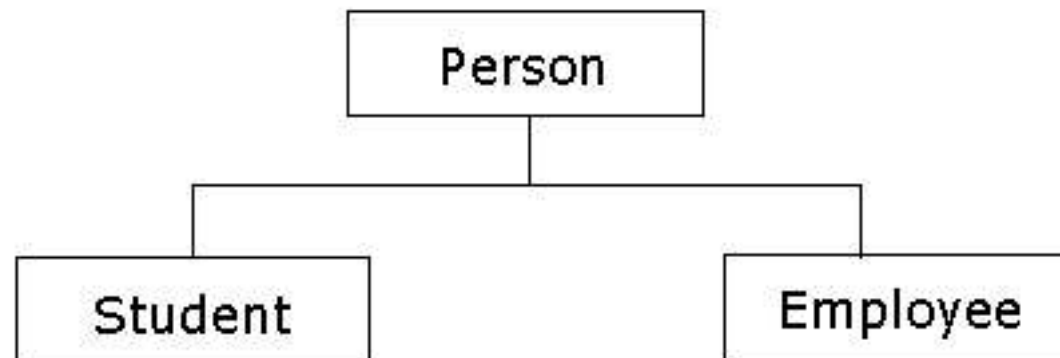
What is Polymorphism?

- Polymorphism
 - The ability of a reference variable to change behavior according to what object instance it is holding.
 - This allows multiple objects of different subclasses to be treated as objects of a single super class, while automatically selecting the proper methods to apply to a particular object based on the subclass it belongs to.



Example: Polymorphism

- Given the parent class **Person** and the subclass **Student** of the previous examples, we add another subclass of **Person** which is **Employee**.
- Below is the class hierarchy for that,



Example: Polymorphism

- In Java, we can create a reference that is of type super class to an object of its subclass. For example,

```
public static main( String[] args ) {  
  
    Student studentObject = new Student();  
    Employee employeeObject = new Employee();  
  
    Person ref = studentObject; //Person reference points  
                                // to a Student object  
}
```



Example: Polymorphism

- Now suppose we have a `getName` method in our super class `Person`, and we override this method in both `Student` and `Employee` subclass's

```
public class Student {  
    public String getName() {  
        System.out.println("Student Name:" + name);  
        return name;  
    }  
}
```

```
public class Employee {  
    public String getName() {  
        System.out.println("Employee Name:" + name);  
        return name;  
    }  
}
```



Polymorphism

- Going back to our main method, when we try to call the `getName` method of the reference `Person ref`, the `getName` method of the `Student` object will be called.
- Now, if we assign `ref` to an `Employee` object, the `getName` method of `Employee` will be called.



Example: Polymorphism

```
1 public static main( String[] args ) {
2
3     Student studentObject = new Student();
4     Employee employeeObject = new Employee();
5
6     Person ref = studentObject; //Person ref. points to a
7                               // Student object
8
9     // getName() method of Student class is called
10    String temp= ref.getName();
11    System.out.println( temp );
12
13    ref = employeeObject; //Person ref. points to an
14                          // Employee object
15
16    //getName() method of Employee class is called
17    String temp = ref.getName();
18    System.out.println( temp );
19 }
```



Polymorphism

- Another example that illustrates polymorphism is when we try to pass a reference to methods as a parameter
- Suppose we have a static method `printInformation` that takes in a `Person` reference as parameter.

```
public static printInformation( Person p ){  
    // It will call getName() method of the  
    // actual object instance that is passed  
    p.getName();  
}
```



Polymorphism

- We can actually pass a reference of type **Employee** and type **Student** to the **printInformation** method as long as it is a subclass of the **Person** class.

```
public static main( String[] args )
{
    Student    studentObject = new Student();
    Employee   employeeObject = new Employee();

    printInformation( studentObject );

    printInformation( employeeObject );
}
```



Abstract Class



Abstract Classes

- Abstract class
 - a class that contains abstract methods, methods which do not have implementation
 - often appears at the top of an object-oriented programming class hierarchy, defining the broad types of actions possible with objects of all subclasses of the class.
 - An abstract class cannot be instantiated. Another class has to provide implementation of abstract methods



Abstract Classes

- abstract methods
 - methods in the abstract classes that do not have implementation
 - To create an abstract method, just write the method declaration without the body and use the abstract keyword

- For example,

```
public abstract void someMethod();
```



Sample Abstract Class

```
public abstract class LivingThing {
    public void breath(){
        System.out.println("Living Thing breathing...");
    }

    public void eat(){
        System.out.println("Living Thing eating...");
    }

    /**
     * abstract method walk
     * We want this method to be overridden by subclasses of
     * LivingThing
     */
    public abstract void walk();
}
```



Abstract Classes

- When a class extends the `LivingThing` abstract class, it is required to override the abstract method `walk()`, or else, that subclass will also become an abstract class, and therefore cannot be instantiated.
- For example,

```
public class Human extends LivingThing {  
  
    public void walk(){  
        System.out.println("Human walks...");  
    }  
}
```



Coding Guidelines

- Use abstract classes to define broad types of behaviors at the top of an object-oriented programming class hierarchy, and use its subclasses to provide implementation details of the abstract class.

Interfaces



What is an Interface?

- All methods of an interface are abstract methods
- defines the signatures of a set of methods, **without the body (implementation of the methods)**
- defines a standard and public way of specifying the behavior of classes.
- allows classes, regardless of their locations in the class hierarchy, to implement common behaviors
- a class implements the interface



Example: Interface

```
// Note that Interface contains just set of method
// signatures without any implementations
public interface Relation {
    public boolean isGreater( Object a, Object b);
    public boolean isLess( Object a, Object b);
    public boolean isEqual( Object a, Object b);
}
```



Example 2: Interface

```
public interface OperateCar {  
  
    // constant declarations, if any  
  
    // method signatures  
    int turn(Direction direction,  
            double radius, double startSpeed, double endSpeed);  
    int changeLanes(Direction direction, double startSpeed,  
double endSpeed);  
    int signalTurn(Direction direction, boolean signalOn);  
    int getRadarFront(double distanceToCar, double speedOfCar);  
    int getRadarRear(double distanceToCar, double speedOfCar);  
    .....  
    // more method signatures  
}
```



Why do we use Interfaces?

- To have unrelated classes implement similar methods
 - Example:
 - Class `Line` and `MyInteger`
 - Not related
 - Both implements comparison methods
 - `isGreater`
 - `isLess`
 - `isEqual`



Why do we use Interfaces?

- To reveal an object's programming interface without revealing its implementation
- To model multiple inheritance which allows a class to have more than one super class



Interface vs. Abstract Class

- Interface methods have no body
- An interface can only define constants
- Interfaces have no direct inherited relationship with any particular class, they are defined independently



Interface vs. Class

- Common:

- Interfaces and classes are both types
- This means that an interface can be used in places where a class can be used
- For example:

```
PersonInterface pi = new Person();  
Person pc = new Person();
```

- Difference:

- You cannot create an instance from an interface
- For example:

```
PersonInterface pi = new PersonInterface(); //ERROR!
```



Interface vs. Class

- Common:
 - Interface and Class can both define methods
- Difference:
 - Interface does not have any implementation of the methods



Defining Interfaces

- To define an interface, we write:

```
public interface [InterfaceName] {  
    //some methods without the body  
}
```



Defining Interfaces

- As an example, let's create an interface that defines relationships between two objects according to the “natural order” of the objects.

```
public interface Relation
{
    public boolean isGreater( Object a, Object b);
    public boolean isLess( Object a, Object b);
    public boolean isEqual( Object a, Object b);
}
```



Implementing Interfaces

- To create a concrete class that implements an interface, use the **implements** keyword.

```
/**
 * Line class implements Relation interface
 */
public class Line implements Relation {
    private double x1;
    private double x2;
    private double y1;
    private double y2;

    public Line(double x1, double x2, double y1, double y2){
        this.x1 = x1;
        this.x2 = x2;
        this.y1 = y1;
        this.y2 = y2;
    }
}
```



Implementing Interfaces

```
public double getLength(){
    double length = Math.sqrt((x2-x1)*(x2-x1) +
                               (y2-y1)* (y2-y1));
    return length;
}
```

```
public boolean isGreater( Object a, Object b){
    double aLen = ((Line)a).getLength();
    double bLen = ((Line)b).getLength();
    return (aLen > bLen);
}
```

```
public boolean isLess( Object a, Object b){
    double aLen = ((Line)a).getLength();
    double bLen = ((Line)b).getLength();
    return (aLen < bLen);
}
```

```
public boolean isEqual( Object a, Object b){
    double aLen = ((Line)a).getLength();
    double bLen = ((Line)b).getLength();
    return (aLen == bLen);
}
```



Implementing Interfaces

- When your class tries to implement an interface, always make sure that you implement all the methods of that interface, or else, you would encounter this error,

```
Line.java:4: Line is not abstract and does not override  
abstract method isGreater
```

```
(java.lang.Object,java.lang.Object) in Relation
```

```
public class Line implements Relation
```

```
^
```

```
1 error
```



Relationship of an Interface to a Class

- A class can only EXTEND ONE super class, but it can IMPLEMENT MANY interfaces.
- For example:

```
public class Person implements PersonInterface,  
                                WhateverInterface {  
  
    //some code here  
}
```



Relationship of an Interface to a Class

- Another example:

```
public class ComputerScienceStudent
    extends Student
    implements PersonInterface,
               AnotherInterface{

    //some code here
}
```



Inheritance among Interfaces

- Interfaces are not part of the class hierarchy. However, interfaces can have inheritance relationship among themselves

```
public interface PersonInterface {  
    . . .  
}  
  
public interface StudentInterface  
    extends PersonInterface {  
    . . .  
}
```



Interface and Polymorphism

- Interfaces exhibit polymorphism as well, since program may call an interface method, and the proper version of that method will be executed depending on the type of object passed to the interface method call.



Summary

- Inheritance (super class, subclass)
- Using the super keyword to access fields and constructors of super classes
- Overriding Methods
- Final Methods and Final Classes
- Polymorphism (Abstract Classes, Interfaces)

