CS61B Lecture #6: Object-Oriented Mechanisms

- Readings for this week: *Blue Reader* Chapter 6.
- New in this lecture: the bare mechanics of "object-oriented programming."
- The general topic is: Writing software that operates on many kinds of data.

Overloading

Problem: How to get `System.out.print(x)` or `stdout.put(x)` to print `x`, regardless of type of `x`?

- In Scheme, one function can take an argument of any type, and then test the type.
- In Java, methods specify a single type of argument.
- Partial solution: *overloading*—multiple method definitions with the same name and different numbers or types of arguments.
- E.g., `System.out` has type `java.io.PrintStream`, which defines

`void println()`	*Prints new line.*
`void println(String s)`	*Prints S.*
`void println(boolean b)`	*Prints "true" or "false"*
`void println(char c)`	*Prints single character*
`void println(int i)`	*Prints I in decimal*
`etc.`	

- Each of these is a different function. Compiler decides which to call on the basis of arguments' types.

Generic Data Structures

Problem: How to get a "list of anything" or "array of anything"?

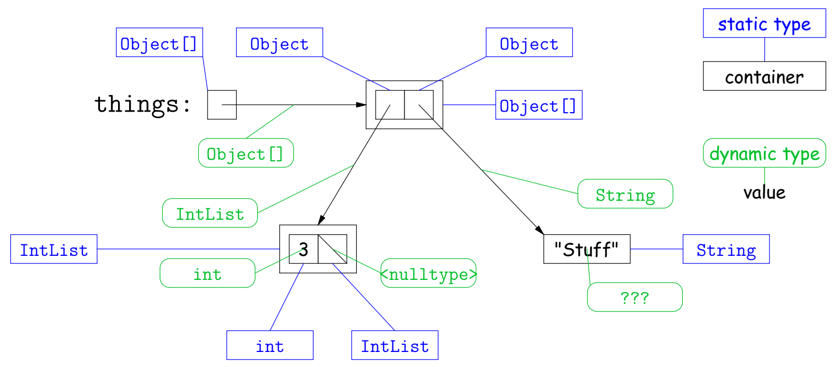
- Again, no problem in Scheme.
- But in Java, lists (such as `IntList`) and arrays have a single type of element.
- First, the short answer: any reference value can be converted to type `java.lang.Object` and back, so can use `Object` as the "generic (reference) type":

```
Object[] things = new Object[2];
things[0] = new IntList (3, null);
things[1] = "Stuff";
// Now ((IntList) things[0]).head == 3;
// and ((String) things[1]).startsWith("St") is true
// things[0].head                Illegal
// things[1].startsWith ("St")   Illegal
```

Dynamic vs. Static Types

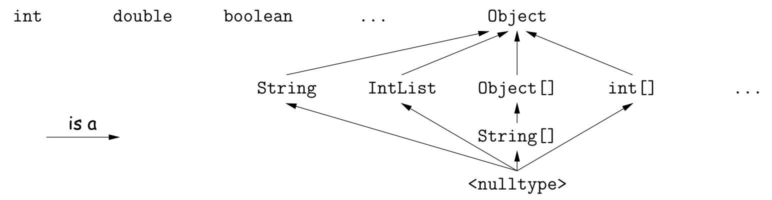
- Every *value* has a type—its *dynamic type.*
- Every *container* (variable, component, parameter), literal, function call, and operator expression (e.g. `x+y`) has a type—its *static type.*
- Therefore, every *expression* has a static type.

```
Object[] things = new Object[2];
things[0] = new IntList (3, null);
things[1] = "Stuff";
```



Type Hierarchies

- A container with (static) type T may contain a certain value only if that value "is a" T—if the (dynamic) type of the value is a *subtype* of T. Likewise, a function with return type T may return only values that are subtypes of T.
- Java is designed so that any expression of (static) type T always yields a value that "is a" T.
- All types are subtypes of themselves (& that's all for primitive types)
- *Reference types* form a *type hierarchy;* some are subtypes of others. **null**'s type is a subtype of all reference types.
- All reference types are subtypes of `Object`.



The Basic Static Type Rule

- Static types are "known to the compiler," because you declare them, as in

```
Object x;           // Static type of field
int f (Object s) { // Static type of call to f, and of parameter
  int y;            // Static type of local variable
```

  or they are pre-declared by the language (like 3).
- Compiler insists that in an *assignment*, `L = E`, or function call, `f(E)`, where

```
void f (SomeType L) { ... },
```

  E's static type must be subtype of L's static type.
- Similar rules apply to `E[i]` (static type of E must be an array) and other built-in operations.

Consequences of Compiler's "Sanity Checks"

- This is a *conservative* rule. The last line of the following, which you might think is perfectly sensible, is illegal:

```
int[] A = new int[2];
Object x = A; // All references are Objects
A[i] = 0;     // Static type of A is array...
x[i+1] = 1;   // But not of x:  ERROR
```

  Compiler figures that not every `Object` is an array.
- Q: Don't we *know* that `x` contains array value!?
- A: Yes, but still must tell the compiler, like this:

```
((int[]) x)[i+1] = 1;
```

- Defn: Static type of cast `(T) E` is T.
- Q: What if `x` *isn't* an array value, or is null?
- A: For that we have runtime errors—exceptions.

Overriding and Extension

- Notation so far is clumsy.
- Q: If I know `Object` variable `x` contains a `String`, why can't I write, `x.startsWith("this")`?
- A: `startsWith` is only defined on Strings, not on all `Objects`, so the compiler isn't sure it makes sense, unless you cast.
- But, if an operation *were* defined on all `Objects`, then you *wouldn't* need clumsy casting.
- Example: `.toString()` is defined on all `Objects`. You can always say `x.toString()` if `x` has a reference type.
- The default `.toString()` function is not very useful; on an `IntList`, would produce string like `"IntList@2f6684"`
- But for any subtype of Object, you may *override* the default definition.

Overriding toString

- For example, if `s` is a String, `s.toString()` is the identity function (fortunately).
- For any type you define, you may supply your own definition, as we did in class `IntList`:

```
public String toString () {
  StringBuffer b = new StringBuffer ();
  b.append ("[");
  for (IntList L = this; L != null; L = L.tail)
    b.append (" " + L.head);
  b.append ("]");
  return b.toString ();
}
```

- If `x = new IntList (3, new IntList (4, null))`, then `x.toString()` is `"[3 4]"`.
- Conveniently, the "+" operator on Strings calls `.toString` when asked to append an Object, and so does the `"%s"` formatter for `printf`.
- With this trick, you can supply an output function for any type you define.

Extending a Class

- To say that class `B` is a direct subtype of class `A` (or `A` is a direct *superclass* of `B`), write

```
    class B extends A { ... }
```

- By default, `class ... extends java.lang.Object`.
- The subtype *inherits* all fields and methods of its *superclass* (and passes them along to any of its subtypes).
- In class B, you may *override* an instance method (*not* a static method), by providing a new definition with same *signature* (name, return type, argument types).
- I'll say that a method and all its overridings form a *dynamic method set*.
- **The Point:** If `f(...)` is an instance method, then the call `x.f(...)` calls whatever overriding of `f` applies to the *dynamic type* of `x`, *regardless* of the static type of `x`.

Illustration

```
class Worker {
  void work () {
    collectPay ();
  }
}
```

```
class Prof extends Worker {    | class TA extends Worker {
  // Inherits work ()          |   void work () {
}                              |     while (true) {
                               |       doLab(); discuss(); officeHour();
                               |     }
                               |   }
                               | }
```

```
Prof paul = new Prof ();    | paul.work()  ==> collectPay();
TA mike = new TA ();        | mike.work()  ==> doLab(); discuss(); ...
Worker wPaul = paul,        | wPaul.work() ==> collectPay();
       wMike = mike;        | wMike.work() ==> doLab(); discuss(); ...
```

Lesson: For instance methods (only), select method based on *dynamic type*. Simple to state, but we'll see it has profound consequences.

What About Fields and Static Methods?

```
class Parent {                         class Child extends Parent {
  int x = 0;                             String x = "no";
  static int y = 1;                      static String y = "way";
  static void f() {                      static void f() {
     System.out.printf ("Ahem!%n");         System.out.printf ("I wanna!%n");
  }                                      }
  static int f(int x) {                }
    return x+1;
  }
}
```

```
Child  tom = new Child (); | tom.x    ==> no       pTom.x    ==> 0
Parent pTom = tom;         | tom.y    ==> way      pTom.y    ==> 1
                           | tom.f()  ==> I wanna! pTom.f()  ==> Ahem!
                           | tom.f(1) ==> 2        pTom.f(1) ==> 2
```

Lesson: Fields *hide* inherited fields of same name; static methods *hide* methods of the same signature.
Real Lesson: Hiding causes confusion; so understand it, but don't do it!

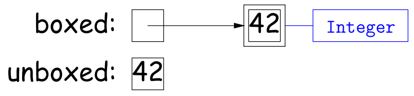
What's the Point?

- The mechanism described here allows us to define a kind of *generic* method.
- A superclass can define a set of operations (methods) that are common to many different classes.
- Subclasses can then provide different implementations of these common methods, each specialized in some way.
- All subclasses will have at least the methods listed by the superclass.
- So when we write methods that operate on the superclass, they will automatically work for all subclasses with no extra work.

Primitive Types and Objects

- Unfortunately, primitive types (**int, boolean, long,** etc.) get left out in the cold; they are not subtypes of `Object`.
- So, we can't exactly write a generic method that will handle both reference values and primitive values.
- Java has dealt with this in its library by providing ways to *box* primitive values: that is, to put it inside an object and refer to it from then on through a pointer to the object. These objects are sometimes called *wrappers:*

```
Integer boxed = new Integer (42);
int unboxed = boxed.intValue ();
```



- The library contains wrapper classes like this for all the primitive types: `Integer`, `Long`, `Boolean`, `Double`, `Float`, `Character`, `Short`, `Byte`.
- Newest Java will box and unbox *automatically*. We'll see why this is useful later.