CS61B Lecture #12

Today: Various odds and ends in support of abstraction.

Readings: At this point, we have looked at Chapters 1–9 of Head First Java. Today's lecture is about Chapters 9 and 11. For Friday, please read Chapter 10 of HFJ and Chapter 3 ("Numbers") from Assorted Material on Java.

Parent constructors

- In lecture notes #5, talked about how Java allows implementer of a class to control all manipulation of objects of that class.
- In particular, this means that Java gives the constructor of a class the first shot at each new object.
- When one class extends another, there are two constructors—one for the parent type and one for the new (child) type.
- In this case, Java guarantees that one of the parent's constructors is called first. In effect, there is a call to a parent constructor at the beginning of every one of the child's constructors.
- You can call the parent's constructor yourself. By default, Java calls the "default" (parameterless) constructor.

```java
class Figure {
    class Rectangle extends Figure {
        public Figure (int sides) {
            super (4);
        }
    }
}
```

What to do About Errors?

- Large amount of any production program devoted to detecting and responding to errors.
- Some errors are external (bad input, network failures); others are internal errors in programs.
- When method has stated precondition, it's the client's job to comply.
- Still, it's nice to detect and report client's errors.
- In Java, we throw exception objects, typically:

  ```java
  throw new SomeException (optional description);
  ```

- Exceptions are objects. By convention, they are given two constructors: one with no arguments, and one with a descriptive string argument (which the exception stores).
- Java system throws some exceptions implicitly, as when you dereference a null pointer, or exceed an array bound.

Catching Exceptions

- A throw causes each active method call to terminate abruptly, until (and unless) we come to a try block.
- Catch exceptions and do something corrective with try:

  ```java
  try {
      Stuff that might throw exception;
  } catch (SomeException e) {
      Do something reasonable;
  } catch (SomeOtherException e) {
      Do something else reasonable;
  }
  Go on with life;
  ```

- When SomeException exception occurs in "Stuff...", we immediately "do something reasonable" and then "go on with life."
- Descriptive string (if any) available as e.getMessage() for error messages and the like.
Exceptions: Checked vs. Unchecked

• The object thrown by throw command must be a subtype of Throwable (in java.lang).
• Java pre-declares several such subtypes, among them
  - Error, used for serious, unrecoverable errors;
  - Exception, intended for all other exceptions;
  - RuntimeException, a subtype of Exception intended mostly for programming errors too common to be worth declaring.
• Pre-declared exceptions are all subtypes of one of these.
• Any subtype of Error or RuntimeException is said to be unchecked.
• All other exception types are checked.

Unchecked Exceptions

• Intended for
  - Programmer errors: many library functions throw IllegalArgumentException when one fails to meet a pre-condition.
  - Errors detected by the basic Java system: e.g.,
    * Executing x.y when x is null,
    * Executing A[i] when i is out of bounds,
    * Executing (String) x when x turns out not to point to a String.
  - Certain catastrophic failures, such as running out of memory.
• May be thrown anywhere at any time with no special preparation.

Checked Exceptions

• Intended to indicate exceptional circumstances that are not necessarily programmer errors. Examples:
  - Attempting to open a file that does not exist.
  - Input or output errors on a file.
  - Receiving an interrupt.
• Every checked exception that can occur inside a method must either be handled by a try statement, or reported in the method’s declaration.
• For example,

  ```java
  void myRead () throws IOException, InterruptedException { ... }
  ```

  means that myRead (or something it calls) might throw IOException or InterruptedException.
• Language Design: Why did Java make the following illegal?

  ```java
  class Parent {
    void f () { ... }
  }

  class Child extends Parent {
    void f () throws IOException { ... }
  }
  ```

Good Practice

• Throw exceptions rather than using print statements and System.exit everywhere,
• ... because response to a problem may depend on the caller, not just method where problem arises.
• Nice to throw an exception when programmer violates preconditions.
• Particularly good idea to throw an exception rather than let bad input corrupt a data structure.
• Good idea to document when methods throw exceptions.
• To convey information about the cause of exceptional condition, put it into the exception rather than into some global variable:

  ```java
  class MyBad extends Exception { try { ... 
    public IntList errs; 
  } catch (MyBad e) { MyBad (IntList nums) { errs=nums; } ... e.errs ... }
  ```