CS61B Lecture #12: Delegation, Exceptions, Assorted Features

- Delegation
- Exceptions
- Importing
- Nested classes.
- Type testing.
Trick: Delegation and Wrappers

- Not always appropriate to use inheritance to extend something.

- Homework gives example of a TrReader, which contains another Reader, to which it delegates the task of actually going out and reading characters.

- Another example: a class that instruments objects:

```java
interface Storage {
    void put(Object x);
    Object get();
}

class Monitor implements Storage {
    int gets, puts;
    private Storage store;
    Monitor(Storage x) { store = x; gets = puts = 0; }
    public void put(Object x) { puts += 1; store.put(x); }
    public Object get() { gets += 1; return store.get(); }
}

// ORIGINAL
Storage S = something;
f(S);

// INSTRUMENTED
Monitor S = new Monitor(something);
f(S);
System.out.println(S.gets + " gets");

Monitor is called a wrapper class.
```
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 during “Stuff…” and is not handled there, 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.
Catching Exceptions, II

• Using a supertype as the parameter type in a `catch` clause will catch any subtype of that exception as well:

```java
try {
    Code that might throw a FileNotFoundException or a MalformedURLException;
} catch (IOException ex) {
    Handle any kind of IOException;
}
```

• Since `FileNotFoundException` and `MalformedURLException` both inherit from `IOException`, the `catch` handles both cases.

• Subtyping means that multiple `catch` clauses can apply; Java takes the first.

• Stylistically, it’s nice to be more specific (concrete) about exception types where possible.

• In particular, our style checker will therefore balk at the use of `Exception`, `RuntimeException`, `Error`, and `Throwable` as exception supertypes.
Catching Exceptions, III

There’s a relatively new shorthand for handling multiple exceptions the same way:

```java
try {
    Code that might throw IllegalArgumentException
    or IllegalStateException;
} catch (IllegalArgumentException|IllegalStateException ex) {
    Handle exception;
}
```
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 precondition.
  - 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 expected to happen from time to time. 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.
A Language Design Issue

Java makes the following illegal for checked exceptions like `IOException`. Why?

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

class Child extends Parent {
    void f() throws IOException { ... }
}
```
A Language Design Issue

Java makes the following illegal for checked exceptions like IOException. Why?

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

Consider, for example,

```java
static void process(Parent p) {
    p.f();
}
```

According to the specification for class Parent, this is supposed to be OK, but the call `p.f()` actually calls Child.f, which might throw IOException. So contrary to the intent of checked exceptions, the process method might throw a checked exception that it does not list.
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 {
    public IntList errs;
    MyBad(IntList nums) { errs=nums; }
}

try {
    ...
} catch (MyBad e) {
    ... e.errs ...
}
```
Terminology

- Many students speak of “throwing” an error when they mean “throwing an exception in order to *report* an error.”

- This is a confusion of implementation (the code a program uses to *internally* signal an exceptional condition) with visible behavior (printing an error message).

- Users are not supposed to see them, but rather the messages that interpret these exceptions and report the exceptional conditions:

  **Good:** Program prints

  File myData.txt not found.

  **Bad:** Program prints

  Exception in thread "main" java.io.IOException: File not found
  at foo.main(foo.java:4)
Importing

• Writing `java.util.List` every time you mean `List` or `java.lang.regex.Pattern` every time you mean `Pattern` is annoying.

• The purpose of the `import` clause at the beginning of a source file is to define abbreviations:
  
  - `import java.util.List;` means “within this file, you can use `List` as an abbreviation for `java.util.List`.
  
  - `import java.util.*;` means “within this file, you can use any class name in the package `java.util` without mentioning the package.”

• Importing does **not** grant any special access; it **only** allows abbreviation.

• In effect, your program always contains `import java.lang.*;`
Static importing

- One can easily get tired of writing `System.out` and `Math.sqrt`. Do you really need to be reminded with each use that `out` is in the `java.lang.System` package and that `sqrt` is in the `Math` package (duh)?

- Both examples are of static members. A feature of Java allows you to abbreviate such references:
  - `import static java.lang.System.out;` means “within this file, you can use `out` as an abbreviation for `System.out`.
  - `import static java.lang.System.*;` means “within this file, you can use any static member name in `System` without mentioning the package.

- Again, this is only an abbreviation. No special access.

- Alas, you can’t do this for classes in the anonymous package.
Nesting Classes

• Sometimes, it makes sense to nest one class in another. The nested class might
  - be used only in the implementation of the other, or
  - be conceptually “subservient” to the other

• Nesting such classes can help avoid name clashes or “pollution of the name space” with names that will never be used anywhere else.

• Example: Polynomials can be thought of as sequences of terms. Assuming that terms aren’t used outside of Polynomials, you might define a class to represent a term inside the Polynomial class:

```java
class Polynomial {

    methods on polynomials

    private Term[] terms;
    private static class Term {
        ...
    }
}
```
Inner Classes

- Last slide showed a static nested class. Static nested classes are just like any other, except that they can be private or protected, and they can see private variables of the enclosing class.
- Non-static nested classes are called inner classes.
- Used when each instance of the nested class is created by and naturally associated with an instance of the containing class, like Banks and Accounts:
Example: Banks and Accounts

class Bank {
    private void addFunds(int amount) { totalFunds += amount; }

    public class Account {
        int _balance;
        public void deposit(int amount) {
            _balance += amount;
            Bank.this.addFunds(_balance);
        }
    } // Bank.this means "the bank that created me"
}

Bank bank = new Bank(...);
Bank.Account a0 = bank.new Account(...);
Bank.Account a1 = bank.new Account(...);
Example: Iterators

public class ArrayList<T> {
    ...
    public T get(int k) { ... }
    public int size() { ... }

    public Iterator<T> iterator() {
        return new ArrayIterator<T>();
        // or return this.new ArrayIterator<T>();
    }
}

private class ArrayIterator implements Iterator<T> {
    int _k;
    ArrayIterator() { _k = 0; }
    public boolean hasNext() { return _k < size(); }
    public T next() { _k += 1; return get(_k - 1); }
}
Type testing: instanceof

- It is possible to ask about the dynamic type of something:

```java
void typeChecker(Reader r) {
    if (r instanceof TrReader)
        System.out.print("Translated characters: ");
    else
        System.out.print("Characters: ");
    ...
}
```

- However, this is seldom what you want to do. Why do this:

```java
if (x instanceof StringReader)
    read from (StringReader) x;
else if (x instanceof FileReader)
    read from (FileReader) x;
...
```

when you can just call `x.read()`?!

- In general, use instance methods rather than `instanceof`. 