Anatomy of a Method

September 14, 2007

ComS 207: Programming I (in Java)
Iowa State University, FALL 2007
Instructor: Alexander Stoytchev

HW3 is due Today

Midterm 1

- Next Tuesday Sep 18 @ 6:30 – 7:45pm.
- Location: Curtiss Hall 127 (classsroom)
- On Monday we will have a review session
- No class on Friday (Sep 21, 2006)

Quick review of last lecture

Encapsulation

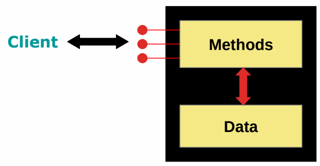
- We can take one of two views of an object:
  - internal - the details of the variables and methods of the class that defines it
  - external - the services that an object provides and how the object interacts with the rest of the system
- From the external view, an object is an *encapsulated* entity, providing a set of specific services
- These services define the *interface* to the object

Encapsulation

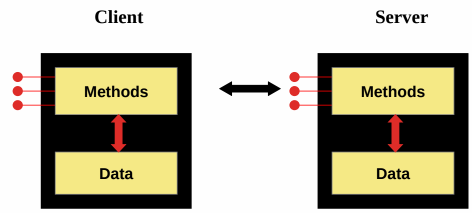
- One object (called the *client*) may use another object for the services it provides
- The client of an object may request its services (call its methods), but it should not have to be aware of how those services are accomplished
- Any changes to the object's state (its variables) should be made by that object's methods
- We should make it difficult, if not impossible, for a client to access an object's variables directly
- That is, an object should be *self-governing*

Encapsulation

- An encapsulated object can be thought of as a *black box* -- its inner workings are hidden from the client
- The client invokes the interface methods of the object, which manages the instance data



Client-Server Relation



Visibility Modifiers

- In Java, we accomplish encapsulation through the appropriate use of *visibility modifiers*
- A *modifier* is a Java reserved word that specifies particular characteristics of a method or data
- We've used the `final` modifier to define constants
- Java has three visibility modifiers: `public`, `protected`, and `private`
- The `protected` modifier involves inheritance, which we will discuss later

Visibility Modifiers

	`public`	`private`
Variables	Violate encapsulation	Enforce encapsulation
Methods	Provide services to clients	Support other methods in the class

Visibility Modifiers

- Members of a class that are declared with *public visibility* can be referenced anywhere
- Members of a class that are declared with *private visibility* can be referenced only within that class
- Members declared without a visibility modifier have *default visibility* and can be referenced by any class in the same package
- An overview of all Java modifiers is presented in Appendix E

Visibility Modifiers

- Public variables violate encapsulation because they allow the client to "reach in" and modify the values directly
- Therefore instance variables should not be declared with public visibility
- It is acceptable to give a constant public visibility, which allows it to be used outside of the class
- Public constants do not violate encapsulation because, although the client can access it, its value cannot be changed

Visibility Modifiers

- Methods that provide the object's services are declared with public visibility so that they can be invoked by clients
- Public methods are also called *service methods*
- A method created simply to assist a service method is called a *support method*
- Since a support method is not intended to be called by a client, it should not be declared with public visibility

Accessors and Mutators

- Because instance data is private, a class usually provides services to access and modify data values
- An *accessor method* returns the current value of a variable
- A *mutator method* changes the value of a variable
- The names of accessor and mutator methods take the form `getX` and `setX`, respectively, where `X` is the name of the value
- They are sometimes called “getters” and “setters”

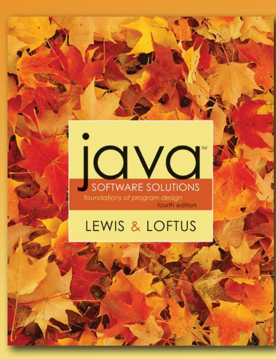
Mutator Restrictions

- The use of mutators gives the class designer the ability to restrict a client’s options to modify an object’s state
- A mutator is often designed so that the values of variables can be set only within particular limits
- For example, the `setFaceValue` mutator of the `Die` class should have restricted the value to the valid range (1 to `MAX`)
- We’ll see in Chapter 5 how such restrictions can be implemented

Examples

Chapter 4

Sections 4.4 & 4.5

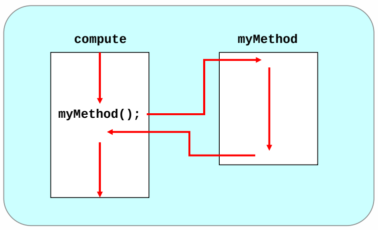


Method Declarations

- Let’s now examine method declarations in more detail
- A *method declaration* specifies the code that will be executed when the method is invoked (called)
- When a method is invoked, the flow of control jumps to the method and executes its code
- When complete, the flow returns to the place where the method was called and continues
- The invocation may or may not return a value, depending on how the method is defined

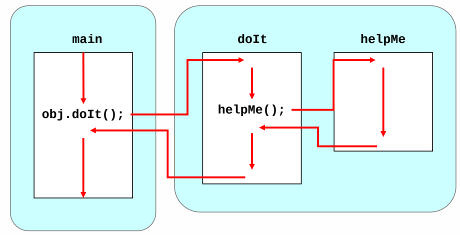
Method Control Flow

- If the called method is in the same class, only the method name is needed



Method Control Flow

- The called method is often part of another class or object



Method Header

- A method declaration begins with a *method header*

```
char calc (int num1, int num2, String message)
```

return type

method name

parameter list

The parameter list specifies the type and name of each parameter

The name of a parameter in the method declaration is called a *formal parameter*

Method Body

- The method header is followed by the *method body*

```
char calc (int num1, int num2, String message)
{
   int sum = num1 + num2;
   char result = message.charAt (sum);

   return result;
}
```

The return expression must be consistent with the return type

`sum` and `result` are local data

They are created each time the method is called, and are destroyed when it finishes executing

The return Statement

- The *return type* of a method indicates the type of value that the method sends back to the calling location
- A method that does not return a value has a `void` return type
- A *return statement* specifies the value that will be returned

  return *expression*;

- Its expression must conform to the return type

Parameters

- When a method is called, the *actual parameters* in the invocation are copied into the *formal parameters* in the method header

```
ch = obj.calc (25, count, "Hello");
```

```
char calc (int num1, int num2, String message)
{
   int sum = num1 + num2;
   char result = message.charAt (sum);

   return result;
}
```

Local Data

- As we've seen, local variables can be declared inside a method
- The formal parameters of a method create *automatic local variables* when the method is invoked
- When the method finishes, all local variables are destroyed (including the formal parameters)
- Keep in mind that instance variables, declared at the class level, exists as long as the object exists

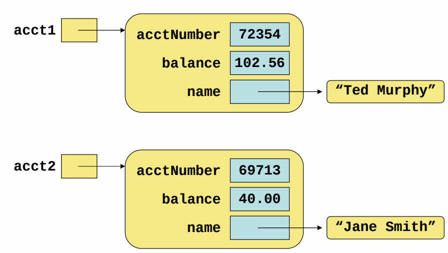
Bank Account Example

- Let's look at another example that demonstrates the implementation details of classes and methods
- We'll represent a bank account by a class named `Account`
- It's state can include the account number, the current balance, and the name of the owner
- An account's behaviors (or services) include deposits and withdrawals, and adding interest

Driver Programs

- A *driver program* drives the use of other, more interesting parts of a program
- Driver programs are often used to test other parts of the software
- The `Transactions` class contains a `main` method that drives the use of the `Account` class, exercising its services
- See Transactions.java (page 172)
- See Account.java (page 173)

Bank Account Example



Bank Account Example

- There are some improvements that can be made to the `Account` class
- Formal getters and setters could have been defined for all data
- The design of some methods could also be more robust, such as verifying that the `amount` parameter to the `withdraw` method is positive

Constructors Revisited

- Note that a constructor has no return type specified in the method header, not even `void`
- A common error is to put a return type on a constructor, which makes it a "regular" method that happens to have the same name as the class
- The programmer does not have to define a constructor for a class
- Each class has a *default constructor* that accepts no parameters

Run examples from the book

THE END