BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

Inheritance and Polymorphism

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Motivations

❖ Suppose you will define classes to model ***circles***, ***rectangles***, and ***triangles***.

❖ These classes have **many common** features.

❖ What is the best way to design these classes so to **avoid redundancy**?

The answer is to use inheritance.

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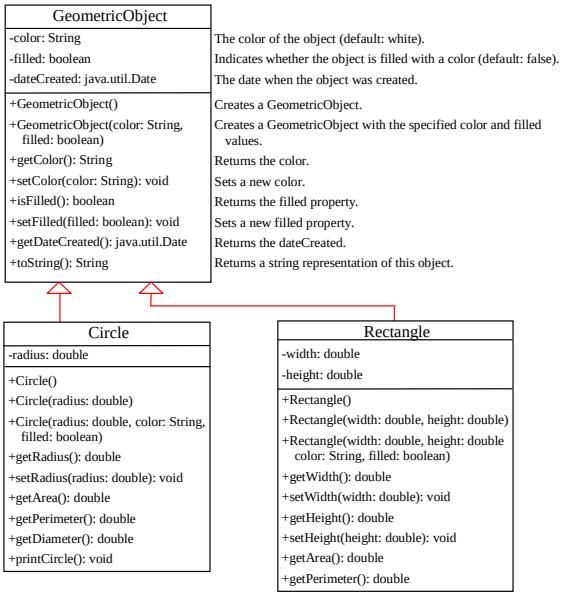
Superclasses and Subclasses



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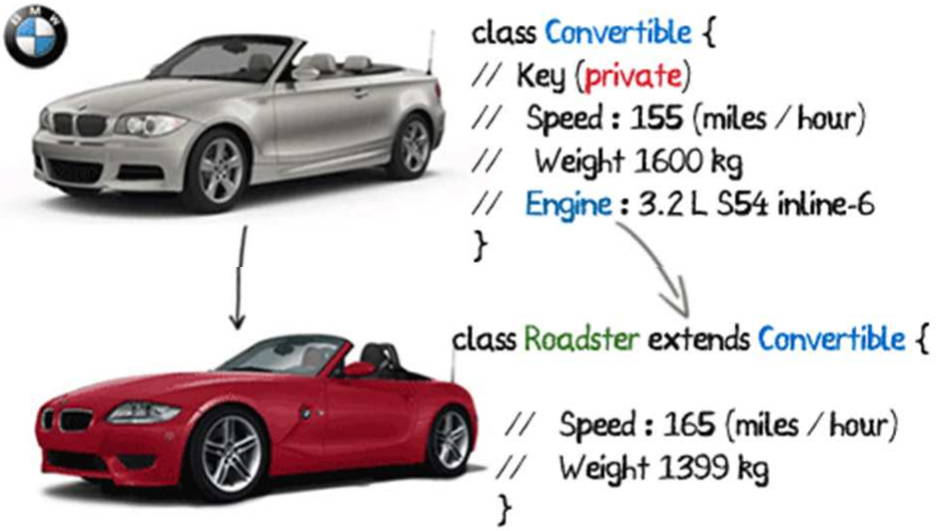
Superclass



Subclass

Are Superclass's Constructor Inherited?

❖ **No**. Unlike properties and methods, a superclass's **constructors are not inherited** in the subclass.

❖ They are invoked **explicitly** or **implicitly**.

❖ Explicitly using the **super** keyword.

❖ They can only be invoked from the subclasses' constructors, using the keyword **super**.

*If the keyword **super** is not **explicitly** used, the superclass's **no-arg constructor** is **automatically** invoked.*

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Superclass's Constructor is Always Invoked

❖ A constructor may invoke an **overloaded** constructor **or** its superclass's constructor.

❖ **If** none of them is invoked explicitly, the compiler puts **super()** as the first statement in the constructor.

❖ For example:

```
public A() {
}
```

is equivalent to

```
public A() {
  super();
}
```

```
public A(double d) {
  // some statements
}
```

is equivalent to

```
public A(double d) {
  super();
  // some statements
}
```

Using the Keyword super

❖ The keyword **super** refers to the superclass of the class in which super appears.

❖ **super** keyword can be used in two ways:

- **To call a superclass constructor.**
- **To call a superclass method.**

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Caution

❖ You **must** use the keyword **super** to call the superclass constructor.

- Invoking a superclass constructor's name in a subclass causes a **syntax error**.

❖ Java requires that the statement that uses the keyword **super** appear **first** in the constructor.

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Constructor Chaining

Constructing an instance of a class invokes all the superclasses' constructors along the inheritance chain. This is called ***constructor chaining***.

```
public class Faculty extends Employee {
  public static void main(String[] args) {
     Faculty f = new Faculty();
  }
  public Faculty() {
    System.out.println("(4) Faculty's no-arg constructor is invoked");
  }
}

class Employee extends Person {
  public Employee() {
    this("(2) Invoke Employee's overloaded constructor");
    System.out.println("(3) Employee's no-arg constructor is invoked");
  }
  public Employee(String s) {
    System.out.println(s);
  }
}

class Person {
  public Person() {
    System.out.println("(1) Person's no-arg constructor is invoked");
  }
}
```

Super(); → (Faculty)

Super(); → (Employee)

Super(); → (Person)

Example on the Impact of a Superclass without no-arg Constructor

❖ Find out the **errors** in the following program:

```
public class Apple extends Fruit {
}

public class Fruit {
  public Fruit(String name) {
     System.out.println("Fruit's constructor is invoked");
  }
}
```

Defining a Subclass

❖ A **subclass** inherits from a superclass. You can also:

- ☞ **Add new properties.**
- ☞ **Add new methods.**
- ☞ **Override the methods of the superclass.**

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Calling Superclass Methods

❖ You could rewrite the **printCircle()** method in the **Circle** class as follows:

```
public void printCircle() {
  System.out.println("The circle is created " +
                     super.getDateCreated() +
                     " and the radius is " + radius);
}
```

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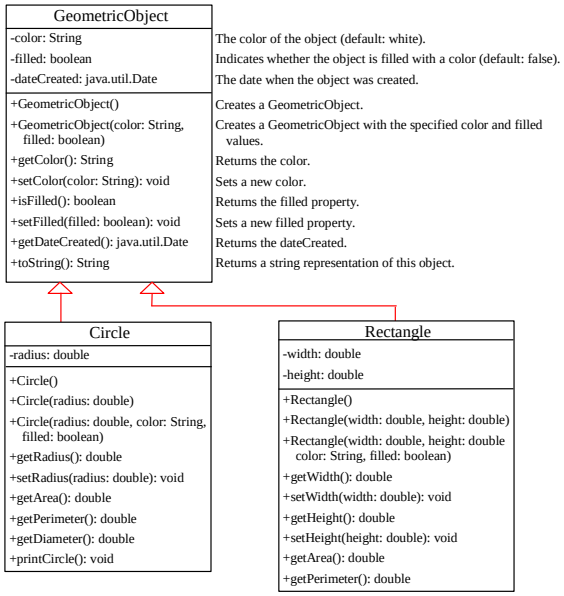
Superclasses and Subclasses



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Overriding Methods in the Superclass

- Sometimes it is necessary for the subclass to **modify** the implementation of a method defined in the superclass.
- This is referred to as **method overriding**.

```
public class Circle extends GeometricObject {
  // Other methods are omitted
  /** Override the toString method defined in GeometricObject */
  public String toString() {
    return super.toString() + "\n radius is " + radius;
  }
}
```

Note

❖ An **instance method** can be overridden **only if** it is accessible.

- Thus a **private method** cannot be overridden, because it is not accessible outside its own class.
- If a method defined in a subclass is **private** in its superclass, the two methods are completely unrelated.

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Note cont.

❖ Like an instance method, a **static** method can be inherited.

- However, a **static** method **cannot** be overridden.
- If a **static** method defined in the superclass is redefined in a subclass, the method defined in the superclass is **hidden**.

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Overriding vs. Overloading

```
public class Test {
  public static void main(String[] args) {
    A a = new A();
    a.p(10);
    a.p(10.0);
  }
}

class B {
  public void p(double i) {
    System.out.println(i * 2);
  }
}

class A extends B {
  // This method overrides the method in B
  public void p(double i) {
    System.out.println(i);
  }
}
```

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Overriding vs. Overloading

```
public class Test {
  public static void main(String[] args) {
    A a = new A();
    a.p(10);
    a.p(10.0);
  }
}

class B {
  public void p(double i) {
    System.out.println(i * 2);
  }
}

class A extends B {
  // This method overloads the method in B
  public void p(int i) {
    System.out.println(i);
  }
}
```

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The Object Class

❖ Every class in **Java** is descended from the **java.lang.Object** class.

❖ If no inheritance is specified when a class is defined, the superclass of the class is **Object**.

```
public class Circle {
  ...
}
```

Equivalent

```
public class Circle extends Object{
  ...
}
```

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The toString() method in Object

❖ The **toString()** method returns a string representation of the **object**.

❖ The default implementation returns a string consisting of:

- A **class name** of which the object is an instance.
- The at sign (**@**).
- A **number** representing this object.

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The toString() method in Object

```
Circle c = new Circle();
System.out.println(c.toString());
```

- The code displays something like:

Circle@15037e5

- This message is not very helpful or informative.
- Usually you should **override** the **toString** method so that it returns an informative string representing the object.

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```
class GraduateStudent extends Student {
}

class Student extends Person {
   public String toString() {
      return "Student";
   }
}

class Person extends Object {
   public String toString() {
      return "Person";
   }
}
```

Polymorphism

```
public class Demo {
  public static void main(String[] a) {
      m(new Object());
      m(new Person());
      m(new Student());
      m(new GraduateStudent());
  }
  public static void m(Object x){
      System.out.println(x.toString());
  }
}
```

Method **m** takes a parameter of the **Object** type.

You can invoke it with any object.

❖ An object of a **subtype** can be used wherever its **supertype** value is required.

❖ This feature is known as **polymorphism**.

Dynamic Binding

```
public class Demo {
  public static void main(String[] a) {
    m(new GraduateStudent());
    m(new Student());
    m(new Person());
    m(new Object());
  }
  public static void m(Object x) {
      System.out.println(x.toString());
  }
}
```

This capability is known as ***dynamic binding***.

❖ When the method **m(Object x)** is executed, the argument **x**'s **toString** method is invoked. **x** may be an instance of **GraduateStudent**, **Student**, **Person**, or **Object**.

❖ Classes **GraduateStudent**, **Student**, **Person**, and **Object** have their own implementation of the **toString** method. Which implementation is used will be determined **dynamically** by the JVM at **runtime**.

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Dynamic Binding

- Dynamic binding works as follows:
  - Suppose an object **o** is an instance of classes $C_1, C_2, ..., C_{n-1}$, and C_n, where C_1 is a subclass of C_2, C_2 is a subclass of C_3, ..., and C_{n-1} is a subclass of C_n.
  - That is, C_n is the most general class, and C_1 is the most specific class.

Dynamic Binding cont.

- Dynamic binding works as follows:
  - If **o** invokes a method **p**, the **JVM** searches the implementation for the method **p** in $C_1, C_2, ..., C_{n-1}$ and C_n, in this order, until it is found.
  - Once an implementation is found, the search stops and the first-found implementation is invoked.

Generic Programming

```
public class Demo {
  public static void main(String[] a) {
    m(new GraduateStudent());
    m(new Student());
    m(new Person());
    m(new Object());
  }
  public static void m(Object x){
      System.out.println(x.toString());
  }
}
```

Polymorphism allows methods to be used generically for a wide range of object arguments.

This is known as:

generic programming

- If a method's parameter type is a superclass (e.g., **Object**), you may pass an object to this method of any of the parameter's subclasses (e.g., **Student**).
- When an **object** (e.g., a **Student** object) is used in the method, the particular implementation of the method of the object that is invoked (e.g., **toString**) is determined **dynamically**.

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Casting Objects

- **Casting** can also be used to convert an object of one class type to another **within an inheritance hierarchy**.

m(new Student());

assigns the object **new Student()** to a parameter of the **Object** type. This statement is equivalent to:

```
Object o = new Student(); // Implicit casting
m( o );
```

The statement **Object o = new Student(),** known as **implicit casting,** is legal because an instance of **Student** is automatically an instance of **Object**.

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Why Casting is Necessary?

❖ Suppose you want to assign the object reference **o** to a variable of the **Student** type using the following statement:

```
Student b = o ;   // A compile error would occur.
```

❖ Why does the statement **Object o = new Student()** work and the statement **Student b = o** doesn't?

- This is because a **Student** object is always an instance of **Object**, but an **Object** is not necessarily an instance of **Student**.
- Even though you can see that **o** is really a **Student** object, the compiler is not so clever to know it.

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Why Casting Is Necessary?

❖ To tell the compiler that **o** is a **Student** object, use an **explicit casting**.

❖ The syntax is similar to the one used for casting among primitive data types.

❖ Enclose the target object type in parentheses and place it before the object to be cast, as follows:

```
Student b = (Student) o ; // Explicit casting
```

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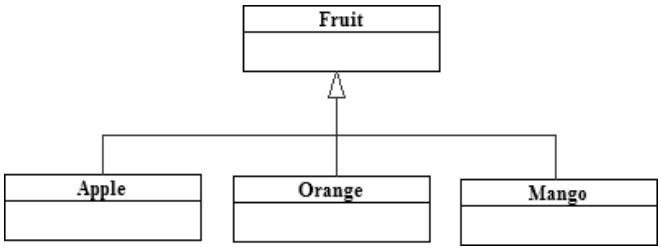
Casting from Superclass to Subclass

❖ Explicit casting **must** be used when casting an object from a superclass to a subclass.

```
Fruit fruit = new Apple();
Apple a = (Apple) fruit;
Orange o = (Orange) fruit;
```

❖ This type of casting **may not** always succeed.



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The instanceof Operator

❖ Use the **instanceof** operator to test whether an object is an instance of a class:

```
Object  myObject = new Circle();
:
// Perform casting if myObject is an instance of Circle
if (myObject  instanceof  Circle) {
  System.out.println("The circle diameter is " +
    (  (Circle)myObject).getDiameter()   );
}
```

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The equals Method

❖ The **equals()** method compares the contents of two objects.

❖ The default implementation of the **equals** method in the **Object** class is as follows:

```
public boolean equals (Object obj) {
    return ( this == obj );
}
```

❖ For example, the **equals** method is **overridden** in the **Circle** class.

```
public boolean equals(Object o) {
  if (o instanceof Circle) {
    return radius == ((Circle)o).radius;
  }
  else
    return false;
}
```

Note

❖ The == comparison operator is used for comparing two **primitive data type** values or for determining whether two objects have the **same references**.

❖ The **equals** method is intended to test whether two objects have the **same contents**, provided that the method is modified in the defining class of the objects.

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The ArrayList Class

- You can create an array to store objects.
- But the array's **size is fixed** once the array is created.
- Java provides the **ArrayList** class that can be used to store an **unlimited** number of objects.

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The ArrayList Class

java.util.ArrayList<E>	
+ArrayList()	Creates an empty list.
+add(o: E) : void	Appends a new element o at the end of this list.
+add(index: int, o: E) : void	Adds a new element o at the specified index in this list.
+clear(): void	Removes all the elements from this list.
+contains(o: Object): boolean	Returns true if this list contains the element o.
+get(index: int) : E	Returns the element from this list at the specified index.
+indexOf(o: Object) : int	Returns the index of the first matching element in this list.
+isEmpty(): boolean	Returns true if this list contains no elements.
+lastIndexOf(o: Object) : int	Returns the index of the last matching element in this list.
+remove(o: Object): boolean	Removes the element o from this list.
+size(): int	Returns the number of elements in this list.
+remove(index: int) : boolean	Removes the element at the specified index.
+set(index: int, o: E) : E	Sets the element at the specified index.

Generic Type <E>

❖ **ArrayList** is known as a generic class with a generic type **E**.

❖ You can specify a concrete type to replace **E** when creating an **ArrayList**.

❖ For example, the following statement creates an **ArrayList** and assigns its reference to variable **cities**. This **ArrayList** object can be used to store **strings:**

```
ArrayList<String> cities = new ArrayList<String>();
ArrayList<String> cities = new ArrayList<>();
```

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Differences and Similarities between Arrays and ArrayList

Operation	*Array*	*ArrayList*
Creating an array/ArrayList	`String[] a = new String[10]`	`ArrayList<String> list = new`
Accessing an element	`a[index]`	`list.get(index);`
Updating an element	`a[index] = "London";`	`list.set(index, "London");`
Returning size	`a.length`	`list.size();`
Adding a new element		`list.add("London");`
Inserting a new element		`list.add(index, "London");`
Removing an element		`list.remove(index);`
Removing an element		`list.remove(Object);`
Removing all elements		`list.clear();`

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ArrayLists from/to Arrays

- Creating an **ArrayList** from an array of objects:

```
String[] array = {"red", "green", "blue"};
ArrayList<String> list = new
    ArrayList<>(Arrays.asList(array));
```

- Creating an array of objects from an **ArrayList**:

```
String[] array1 = new String[list.size()];
list.toArray(array1);
```

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max and min in an ArrayList

```
java.util.Collections.max(list)
java.util.Collections.min(list)
```

Shuffling an ArrayList

```
Integer[] array = {3, 5, 95, 4, 15, 34, 3, 6, 5};
ArrayList<Integer> list = new
    ArrayList<>(Arrays.asList(array));
java.util.Collections.shuffle(list);
System.out.println(list);
```

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The protected Modifier

- The **protected** modifier can be applied on **data** and **methods** in a class.
- A **protected** data/method in a **public** class can be accessed by any class in the same package **or** its subclasses, **even if** the subclasses are in a different package.

Visibility increases

private, none (if no modifier is used), protected, public

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Accessibility Summary

Modifier on members in a class	Accessed from the same class	Accessed from the same package	Accessed from a subclass	Accessed from a different package
public	✓	✓	✓	✓
protected	✓	✓	✓	-
default	✓	✓	-	-
private	✓	-	-	-

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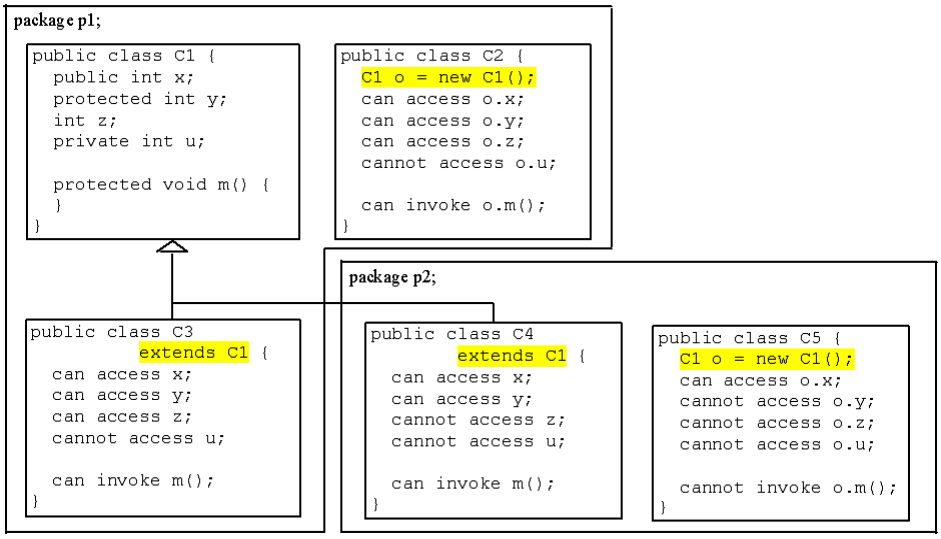
Visibility Modifiers



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A Subclass Cannot Weaken the Accessibility

- A subclass may override a **protected** method in its superclass and change its visibility to **public**.
- However, a subclass **cannot weaken** the accessibility of a method defined in the superclass.
- For example, if a method is defined as **public** in the superclass, it must be defined as **public** in the subclass.

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The final Modifier

- The **final class** cannot be extended:

```
final class Math {
    …
}
```

- The **final variable** is a **constant**:

```
final static double PI = 3.14159;
```

- The **final method** cannot be overridden by its subclasses.

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Note

- The modifiers are used on classes and class **members** (data and methods), except that the **final** modifier can also be used on local variables in a method.
- A **final** local variable is a constant inside a method.

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