Interfaces

Lecture 6

Syntax

- An interface is a set of requirements
  - Describes what classes should do
  - Does not describe how they should do it
- Example
  ```java
  public interface Salaried {
    void setSalary(BigDecimal d);
    BigDecimal getSalary();
  }
  ```
  - To satisfy this interface, a class must provide `setSalary` and `getSalary` methods with:
    - matching signatures (checked by compiler)
    - matching behaviors (up to you)

Good Practice: Use BigDecimal

- Amounts of money (with pennies) should be represented with BigDecimal
  - java.math.BigDecimal
  - Methods for basic arithmetic operations
  - Rounds to given precision
  - Use BigDecimal(String) constructor, avoid BigDecimal(double)
- Double and float are always dangerous, due to rounding errors
  ```java
  System.out.println(4.56); //prints 4.56
  System.out.println(4.56*100); //prints 455.99999999999994
  ```

Declaring an Interface

- Looks like a class definition, except:
  - Keyword `interface` replaces class
  - Methods have no body
  - No constructors
- Like a class, an interface can contain:
  - Fields
    - Must be `public static final` (i.e., constants)
    - These qualifiers usually omitted (implicit)
  - Methods
    - Must be `public abstract` (i.e., bodiless)
    - These qualifiers usually omitted (implicit)
    - Can not be `final` or `static`
- The interface itself is public or package visible

Examples

```java
public interface Salaried {
  void setSalary(BigDecimal d);
  BigDecimal getSalary();
}
```
```java
interface Voter {
  int MINIMUM_AGE = 18;
  Voter(short age); // compile-time error
  void Register(District d);
  boolean isRegistered();
}
```

Implementing an Interface

- Declare a class that `implements` the interface
  ```java
  class Employee implements Salaried {
      ...}
  ```
- Supply definitions for all interface methods
  ```java
  public void setSalary (BigDecimal d) {
      ...
  }
  public BigDecimal getSalary() {
      ...
  }
  ```
- Note: public modifier of method can not be omitted in class definition (even though it is omitted in interface)
- Class can declare more methods than required by interface
Eclipse Demo

- See (interface) SimpleSalaried
  - Generate class (boiler plate) from interface
    - New > Class
    - Add interface Salaried
    - Make sure checkbox to create "inherited abstract methods" is selected
- See (class) SafePencil
  - Generate interface from class
    - Refactor > Extract Interface...
    - Select methods to include in interface
  - Problem: concrete representation driving the abstract view

Relationship with Resolve

- Recall Resolve’s separation of client-side view and implementer’s view
- Client-side
  - Description of what a component does
  - Abstract state, the “mathematical model”
  - Requires and ensures clauses
- Implementer’s side
  - Description of how component works
  - Concrete state, the “representation”
- Matching concepts in Java
  - Interface: Client-side (“abstract instance/template”)
  - Class: Implementer (“concrete instance/template”)

Role of Interfaces vs Classes

- Interfaces (should) provide
  - Method signatures
  - Mathematical model
  - Constraints (invariants on abstract state)
  - Method specifications
- Classes (should) provide
  - Concrete representation (in private fields)
  - Concrete implementation (in method bodies)
  - Conventions (invariants on concrete representation)
  - Correspondence (abstraction relation mapping concrete representation to abstract state)

//Math Model: salary is a Real
//Constraint (Abs Inv): salary \geq 0;
public interface Salaried {
    //Requires: d \geq 0;
    //Alters: this.salary
    //Ensures: this.salary = d
    void setSalary(BigDecimal d);
    //Returns: this.salary
    BigDecimal getSalary();
}

Good Practice: Naming Interfaces

- How should interfaces be distinguished from classes in their names?
- Resolve approach
  - Classes end in "_1" (or _2, _3,...)
  - eg Pencil vs Pencil_1
- Microsoft approach
  - Interfaces start with "I"
  - eg IPencil vs Pencil
- Java approach
  - No difference, both are nouns or adjectives
  - eg WritingStick vs Pencil

Instantiating an Interface

- The declared type of a variable can be an interface
  - interface Salaried { . . . }
  - Salaried payee: //ok
- But interfaces cannot be instantiated directly
  - payee = new Salaried(); //compile-time error
- Only classes can be instantiated directly
- Variable of type I can refer to an instance of a class that implements I
  - class Employee implements Salaried { . . . }
  - Salaried payee = new Employee(); //ok
- (This might remind you of widening!)
Interfaces and Classes

- Salaried
- Employee
- Consultant

Salaried s = new Employee();
Salaried s2 = new Consultant();
Salaried s3 = s;

Declared vs Dynamic Type

- Declared type = set at compile time (by declaration)
- Dynamic type = set at run time (by new)

Examples
- Employee e = new Employee("Pierre");
- Salaried s = new Employee("Lisa", 12345);

- Compiler can not infer dynamic type

  void select (Salaried s) {
    //declared type of s is: Salaried
    //dynamic type of s is: ???
    . . .
  }

- Operator instanceof tests the run-time type

  if (s instanceof Employee) { ... }
  else if (s instanceof Consultant) { ... }

Role of Declared Type

- Declared type determines which members can be used

  class Employee implements Salaried {
    public void setSalary (BigDecimal d) {...}
    public BigDecimal getSalary() {...}
    public void promote (int r) {...}
  }

- Only interface members can be called/accessed by client
  - Class method is the code to execute when called
  - That method code can access all class members

Simple Rule

- Rule: Interfaces can only be used as declared types
  - Interfaces are never dynamic types
  - Interfaces are never instantiated
  - All dynamic types are classes
  - All run-time objects are constructed from a class, not an interface

Implementing Multiple Interfaces

- One class can implement several interfaces

  class Employee implements Salaried, Voter {
    . . .
  }

- Class must provide functionality from all interfaces it implements
  - Union of method signatures
  - Satisfies the behavioral contracts of all interfaces it implements

Good Practice: Code to Interface

- "Coding to the interface" means all declared types are interface types
  - All variable and field declarations use interface types
    Salaried lastHire = new Employee();
  - All argument and return types in method signatures are interface types
    public Voter choose(Salaried[] s) {...}
Multiple Interfaces

```
Voter v = new Employee();
Salaried s = new Employee();
Salaried s2 = new Consultant();
Voter v2 = s; // compile-time error
```

Summary

- **Declaring an interface**
  - Method signatures without implementation
  - Fields too, but this is less common
  - All implicitly public
- **Implementing an interface**
  - Class provides implementation for all methods
- **Separation of client-side and implementation**
  - Interface has abstract state, invariant, specs
  - Classes have concrete representation, convention
- **Declared vs dynamic type**
  - Interfaces can not be instantiated