Building Java Programs

Chapter 5
while Loops, Fencepost Loops, and Sentinel Loops

reading: 5.1 – 5.2
Loop problem

• Write a method `printLetters` that prints each letter from a word separated by commas.

For example, the call:

```java
printLetters("Atmosphere")
```

should print:

```
A, t, m, o, s, p, h, e, r, e
```
Flawed solutions

- public static void printLetters(String word) {
  for(int i = 0; i < word.length(); i++) {
    System.out.print(word.charAt(i) + ", ");
  }
  System.out.println(); // end line
}
- Output: A, t, m, o, s, p, h, e, r, e,

- public static void printLetters(String word) {
  for(int i = 0; i < word.length(); i++) {
    System.out.print("", " + word.charAt(i));
  }
  System.out.println(); // end line
}
- Output: , A, t, m, o, s, p, h, e, r, e
Fence post analogy

- We print \( n \) letters but need only \( n - 1 \) commas.
- Similar to building a fence with wires separated by posts:
  - If we use a flawed algorithm that repeatedly places a post + wire, the last post will have an extra dangling wire.

```cpp
for (length of fence) {
  place a post.
  place some wire.
}
```
Fencepost loop

- Add a statement outside the loop to place the initial "post."
- Also called a fencepost loop or a "loop-and-a-half" solution.

```plaintext
place a post.
for (length of fence - 1) {
    place some wire.
    place a post.
}
```
Fencepost method solution

- public static void printLetters(String word) {
  System.out.print(word.charAt(0));
  for(int i = 1; i < word.length(); i++) {
    System.out.print("", " + word.charAt(i));
  }
  System.out.println(); // end line
}

- Alternate solution: Either first or last "post" can be taken out:

  public static void printLetters(String word) {
    for(int i = 0; i < word.length() - 1; i++) {
      System.out.print(word.charAt(i) + ", ");
    }
    int last = word.length() - 1;
    System.out.println(word.charAt(last)); // end line
  }
Fencepost question

- Write a method `printPrimes` that prints all prime numbers up to a max.
  - Example: `printPrimes(50)` prints
    
    2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47
  
  - If the maximum is less than 2, print no output.

- To help you, write a method `countFactors` which returns the number of factors of a given integer.
  - `countFactors(20)` returns 6 due to factors 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 20.
Fencepost answer

// Prints all prime numbers up to the given max.
public static void printPrimes(int max) {
    if (max >= 2) {
        System.out.print("2");
        for (int i = 3; i <= max; i++) {
            if (countFactors(i) == 2) {
                System.out.print("", " + i);
            }
        }
        System.out.println();
    }
}

// Returns how many factors the given number has.
public static int countFactors(int number) {
    int count = 0;
    for (int i = 1; i <= number; i++) {
        if (number % i == 0) {
            count++;
        } // i is a factor of number
    }
    return count;
}
Write a program that prompts the user for text until the user types "quit", then output the total number of characters typed.

Type a word (or "quit" to exit): hello
Type a word (or "quit" to exit): yay
Type a word (or "quit" to exit): quit
You typed a total of 8 characters.
while loops

reading: 5.1
Categories of loops

- **definite loop**: Executes a known number of times.
  - The **for** loops we have seen are definite loops.
    - Print "hello" 10 times.
    - Find all the prime numbers up to an integer \( n \).
    - Print each odd number between 5 and 127.

- **indefinite loop**: One where the number of times its body repeats is not known in advance.
  - Prompt the user until they type a non-negative number.
  - Print random numbers until a prime number is printed.
  - Repeat until the user has typed "q" to quit.
The **while** loop

- **while loop**: Repeatedly executes its body as long as a logical test is true.

  ```java
  while (test) {
    statement(s);
  }
  ```

- **Example:**

  ```java
  int age = 1; // initialization
  while (age < 21) { // test
    System.out.println("No alcohol for you!");
    age++;
  }
  System.out.println("Welcome to the club!");
  ```
Example while loop

// finds the first factor of 91, other than 1
int n = 91;
int factor = 2;
while (n % factor != 0) {
    factor++;
}
System.out.println("First factor is " + factor);

// output: First factor is 7

• while is better than for because we don't know how many times we will need to increment to find the factor.
Sentinel values

- **sentinel**: A value that signals the end of user input.
  - **sentinel loop**: Repeats until a sentinel value is seen.

- Example: Write a program that prompts the user for text until the user types "quit", then output the total number of characters typed.
  - (In this case, "quit" is the sentinel value.)

  Type a word (or "quit" to exit): **hello**
  Type a word (or "quit" to exit): **yay**
  Type a word (or "quit" to exit): **quit**
  You typed a total of 8 characters.
Solution?

Scanner console = new Scanner(System.in);
int sum = 0;
String response = "dummy"; // "dummy" value, anything but "quit"

while (!response.equals("quit")) {
    System.out.print("Type a word (or \"quit\" to exit): ");
    response = console.next();
    sum += response.length();
}

System.out.println("You typed a total of " + sum + " characters.");

- This solution produces the wrong output. Why?
  You typed a total of 12 characters.
The problem with our code

- Our code uses a pattern like this:
  
  ```
  sum = 0.
  while (input is not the sentinel) {
    prompt for input; read input.
    add input length to the sum.
  }
  ```

- On the last pass, the sentinel’s length (4) is added to the sum:
  
  ```
  prompt for input; read input ("quit").
  add input length (4) to the sum.
  ```

- This is a fencepost problem.
  - Must read $N$ lines, but only sum the lengths of the first $N-1$. 
A fencepost solution

\[ \text{sum} = 0. \]

prompt for input; read input. // place a "post"

\[ \text{while (input is not the sentinel)} \{ \]
\[ \quad \text{add input length to the sum.} \quad \text{// place a "wire"} \]
\[ \quad \text{prompt for input; read input.} \quad \text{// place a "post"} \]
\[ \} \]

- Sentinel loops often utilize a fencepost "loop-and-a-half" style solution by pulling some code out of the loop.
Correct code

Scanner console = new Scanner(System.in);
int sum = 0;

// pull one prompt/read ("post") out of the loop
System.out.print("Type a word (or \"quit\" to exit): ");
String response = console.next();

while (!response.equals("quit")) {
    sum += response.length();  // moved to top of loop
    System.out.print("Type a word (or \"quit\" to exit): ");
    response = console.next();
}

System.out.println("You typed a total of " + sum + " characters.");
public static final String SENTINEL = "quit";
...

Scanner console = new Scanner(System.in);
int sum = 0;

// pull one prompt/read ("post") out of the loop
System.out.print("Type a word (or \"" + SENTINEL + "\" to exit): ");
String response = console.next();

while (!response.equals(SENTINEL)) {
    sum += response.length();  // moved to top of loop
    System.out.print("Type a word (or \"" + SENTINEL + "\" to exit): ");
    response = console.next();
}

System.out.println("You typed a total of " + sum + " characters.");