

Lecture 10

Equality and Hashcode

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Announcements

Announcements

This coming week is the craziest part of the quarter!

- Quiz 4 due tomorrow 10 pm
- HW4 due tomorrow 10 pm

- HW5 due next Thursday
 - Hardest hw in 331 and future hws build on it
- Section tomorrow!
 - important things you need to know for HW5

- Midterm review session Friday 3:30-5 in this room
- Midterm Monday 1:10-2:10 in this room

- Mid-quarter course evaluation Friday (during part of class)
 - Visitor: Jamal from the Center for Teaching and Learning

Equality

Object equality

A **simple** idea??

- Two objects are equal if they have the same value

A **subtle** idea: intuition can be misleading

- Same object or same contents?
- Same concrete value or same abstract value?
- Same right now or same forever?
- Same for instances of this class or also for subclasses?
- When are two collections equal?
 - How related to equality of elements? Order of elements?
 - What if a collection contains itself?
- How can we implement equality efficiently?

Mathematical properties of equality

Reflexive `a.equals(a) == true`

- An object equals itself

Symmetric `a.equals(b) ↔ b.equals(a)`

- Order doesn't matter

↔ Two-way implication (if and only if)

Transitive `a.equals(b) ∧ b.equals(c) ⇒ a.equals(c)`

- "transferable"

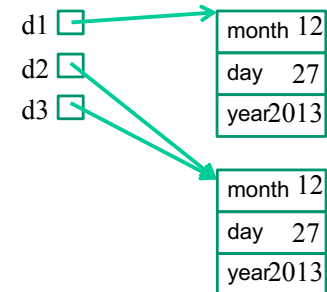
In mathematics, a relation that is reflexive, transitive, and symmetric is an **equivalence relation**

Reference equality

- Reference equality means an object is equal only to itself
 - `a == b` only if `a` and `b` refer to (point to) the same object
- Reference equality is an equivalence relation
 - Reflexive `a==a`
 - Symmetric `a==b ↔ b==a`
 - Transitive `a==b ∧ b==c ⇒ a==c`
- Reference equality is the *smallest* equivalence relation on objects
 - "Hardest" to show two objects are equal (must be same object)
 - Cannot be any more restrictive without violating reflexivity
 - Sometimes but not always what we want

What might we want?

```
Date d1 = new Date(12,27,2013);
Date d2 = new Date(12,27,2013);
Date d3 = d2;
// d1==d2 ?
// d2==d3 ?
// d1.equals(d2) ?
// d2.equals(d3) ?
```



- Sometimes want equivalence relation bigger than `==`
 - Java takes OOP approach of letting classes *override* `equals`

Overriding Object's equals

Object.equals method

```
public class Object {  
    public boolean equals(Object o) {  
        return this == o;  
    }  
    ...  
}
```

- Implements reference equality
- Subclasses can override to implement a different equality
- But library includes a *contract* equals should satisfy
 - Reference equality satisfies it
 - So should *any* overriding implementation
 - Balances flexibility in notion-implemented and what-clients-can-assume even in presence of overriding

equals specification

```
public boolean equals(Object obj)
```

Indicates whether some other object is “equal to” this one.

The `equals` method implements an equivalence relation:

- It is *reflexive*: for any reference value `x`, `x.equals(x)` should return `true`.
- It is *symmetric*: for any reference values `x` and `y`, `x.equals(y)` should return `true` if and only if `y.equals(x)` returns `true`.
- It is *transitive*: for any reference values `x`, `y`, and `z`, if `x.equals(y)` returns `true` and `y.equals(z)` returns `true`, then `x.equals(z)` should return `true`.
- It is *consistent*: for any reference values `x` and `y`, multiple invocations of `x.equals(y)` consistently return `true` or consistently return `false`, provided no information used in equals comparisons on the object is modified.
- For any *non-null* reference value `x`, `x.equals(null)` should return `false`.

equals specification

- Equals contract is:
 - Weak enough to allow different useful overrides
 - Strong enough so clients can assume equal-ish things
 - Example: To implement a set
 - Complete enough for real software
- So:
 - Equivalence relation
 - Consistency, but allow for mutation to change the answer
 - Asymmetric with `null`
 - `null.equals(a)` raises exception
 - for non-null `a`, `a.equals(null)` must return `false`

An example

A class where we may want `equals` to mean equal contents

```
public class Duration {
    private final int min; // RI: min>=0
    private final int sec; // RI: 0<=sec<60
    public Duration(int min, int sec) {
        assert min>=0 && sec>=0 && sec<60;
        this.min = min;
        this.sec = sec;
    }
}
```

- Should be able to implement what we want and satisfy the `equals` contract...

How about this?

```
public class Duration {
    ...
    public boolean equals(Duration d) {
        return this.min==d.min && this.sec==d.sec;
    }
}
```

Two bugs:

1. Violates contract for `null` (not that interesting)
 - Can add `if(d==null) return false;`
 - But our fix for the other bug will make this unnecessary
2. Does not override `Object`'s `equals` method (more interesting)

Overloading: `String.indexOf`

```
int indexOf(int ch)
```

Returns the index within this string of the first occurrence of the specified character.

```
int indexOf(int ch, int fromIndex)
```

Returns the index within this string of the first occurrence of the specified character, starting the search at the specified index.

```
int indexOf(String str)
```

Returns the index within this string of the first occurrence of the specified substring.

```
int indexOf(String str, int fromIndex)
```

Returns the index within this string of the first occurrence of the specified substring, starting at the specified index.

Overriding: `String.equals`

In Object:

```
public boolean equals(Object obj)
```

... The `equals` method for class `Object` implements the most discriminating possible equivalence relation on objects; that is, for any non-null reference values `x` and `y`, this method returns true if and only if `x` and `y` refer to the same object (`x == y` has the value true) ...

In String:

```
public boolean equals(Object anObject)
```

Compares this string to the specified object. The result is true if and only if the argument is not null and is a `String` object that represents the same sequence of characters as this object.

Overriding vs. Overloading

Consider the following classes

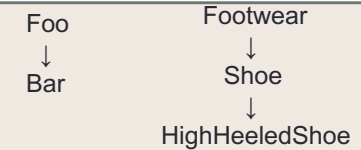
```
class Foo extends Object {
    Shoe m(Shoe x, Shoe y) { ... }
}
```

```
class Bar extends Foo {...}
```



Overriding vs. Overloading

- The result is method overriding
- The result is method overloading
- The result is a type-error
- None of the above



Method in Foo

```
Shoe m(Shoe x, Shoe y) { ... }
```

Possible Methods in Bar

```
Shoe m(Shoe q, Shoe z) { ... } overriding
```

```
HighHeeledShoe m(Shoe x, Shoe y) { ... } overriding
```

```
Shoe m(FootWear x, HighHeeledShoe y) { ... } overloading
```

```
Shoe m(FootWear x, FootWear y) { ... } overloading
```

```
Shoe m(HighHeeledShoe x, HighHeeledShoe y) { ... } overloading
```

```
Shoe m(Shoe y) { ... } overloading
```

```
FootWear m(Shoe x, Shoe y) { ... } type error
```

```
Shoe z(Shoe x, Shoe y) { ... } new method
```

Overloading versus overriding

In Java:

- A class can have multiple methods with the same name and different parameters (number or type)
- A method *overrides* a superclass method only if it has the same name and exact same argument types

So `Duration`'s `boolean equals(Duration d)` does *not* override `Object`'s `boolean equals(Object d)`

- Overloading is sometimes useful to make several closely related functions with the same name
- Overloading is sometimes confusing since the rules for what-method-gets-called are complicated
- [Overriding covered in CSE143, but not overloading]

Overload resolution

Java's [language spec for resolving Method Invocations](#) (including overload resolution) is about 18 pages long.

In summary

- The **declared types of parameters and the object it's called on** determine the signature of the method to call
 - declared type is also known as compile-time type
- The **runtime type of the object it's called on** determines which implementation of that method signature gets called
 - this is called dynamic dispatch

Example: Overloading

```
public class Duration {
    public boolean equals(Duration d) {...}
    ...
}
Duration d1 = new Duration(10,5);
Duration d2 = new Duration(10,5);
Object o1 = d1;
Object o2 = d2;
d1.equals(d2); // true
o1.equals(o2); // false(!)
d1.equals(o2); // false(!)
o1.equals(d2); // false(!)
d1.equals(o1); // true [using Object's equals]
```

overloading...oops!

Overload resolution

In summary

- The **declared types of parameters and the object it's called on** determine the signature of the method to call
- The **runtime type of the object it's called on** determines which implementation of that method signature gets called

`o1.equals(d2)`

- `o1` has declared type `Object` so the signature `equals(Object)` is chosen
- The runtime type of `o1` is `Duration`, so `Duration`'s `equals(Object)` method gets called. Since `Duration` doesn't implement `equals(Object)`, the superclass `Object`'s implementation is called.

Overload resolution

In summary

- The **declared types of parameters and the object it's called on** determine the signature of the method to call
- The **runtime type of the object it's called on** determines which implementation of that method signature gets called

`o1.equals(o2)`

- `o2` has declared type `Object` so the signature `equals(Object)` is chosen
- The runtime type of `o1` is `Duration`, so `Duration`'s `equals(Object)` method is chosen. Since `Duration` doesn't implement `equals(Object)`, the superclass `Object`'s implementation is called.

Example fixed (mostly)

```
public class Duration {
    public boolean equals(Object d) {...}
    ...
}
Duration d1 = new Duration(10,5);
Duration d2 = new Duration(10,5);
Object o1 = d1;
Object o2 = d2;
d1.equals(d2); // true
o1.equals(o2); // true [overriding]
d1.equals(o2); // true [overriding]
o1.equals(d2); // true [overriding]
d1.equals(o1); // true [overriding]
```

But wait!

This doesn't actually compile:

```
public class Duration {
    ...
    public boolean equals(Object o) {
        return this.min==o.min && this.sec==o.sec;
    }
}
```

Really fixed now

```
public class Duration {
    public boolean equals(Object o) {
        if(! o instanceof Duration)
            return false;
        Duration d = (Duration) o;
        return this.min==d.min && this.sec==d.sec;
    }
}
```

Cast statement

- Cast cannot fail
- We want equals to work on *any* pair of objects
- Gets null case right too (null instanceof C always false)
- So: rare use of cast that is correct and idiomatic
 - This is what you should do (cf. *Effective Java*)

Satisfies the contract

```
public class Duration {
    public boolean equals(Object o) {
        if(! o instanceof Duration)
            return false;
        Duration d = (Duration) o;
        return this.min==d.min && this.sec==d.sec;
    }
}
```

- Reflexive: Yes
- Symmetric: Yes, even if o is not a Duration!
 - (Assuming o's equals method satisfies the contract)
- Transitive: Yes, similar reasoning to symmetric

Even better

- Great style: use the @Override annotation when overriding

```
public class Duration {
    @Override
    public boolean equals(Object o) {
        ...
    }
}
```

- *Compiler warning* if not actually an override
 - Catches bug where argument is Duration or String or ...
 - Alerts reader to overriding
 - Concise, relevant, *checked* documentation

Summary: Overriding Equals

Equals contract – Equals must implement an equivalence relation

- Reflexive `a.equals(a)`
- Symmetric `a.equals(b) ⇔ b.equals(a)`
- Transitive `a.equals(b) ∧ b.equals(c) ⇒ a.equals(c)`

Equals must override, not overload `Object`'s equals

- Must take in a parameter of type `Object`
- After checking `instanceof`, can cast argument to the right class

Equals and Subclassing

Okay, so are we done?

- Done:
 - Understanding the `equals` contract
 - Implementing `equals` correctly for `Duration`
 - Overriding
 - Satisfying the contract [for all types of arguments]
- Alas, matters can get worse for subclasses of `Duration`
 - No perfect solution, so understand the trade-offs...

Two subclasses

```
class CountedDuration extends Duration {
    public static numCountedDurations = 0;
    public CountedDuration(int min, int sec) {
        super(min, sec);
        ++numCountedDurations;
    }
}

class NanoDuration extends Duration {
    private final int nano;
    public NanoDuration(int min, int sec, int nano){
        super(min, sec);
        this.nano = nano;
    }
    public boolean equals(Object o) { ... }
    ...
}
```


CountedDuration is good

- `CountedDuration` does not override `equals`
- Will (implicitly) treat any `CountedDuration` like a `Duration` when checking `equals`
- Any combination of `Duration` and `CountedDuration` objects can be compared
 - Equal if same contents in `min` and `sec` fields
 - Works because `o instanceof Duration` is `true` when `o` is an instance of `CountedDuration`

Now NanoDuration [not so good!]

- If we don't override `equals` in `NanoDuration`, then objects with different `nano` fields will be equal

- So using everything we have learned:

```
@Override
public boolean equals(Object o) {
    if (! (o instanceof NanoDuration))
        return false;
    NanoDuration nd = (NanoDuration) o;
    return super.equals(nd) && nano == nd.nano;
}
```

- But we have violated the `equals` contract
 - Hint: Compare a `Duration` and a `NanoDuration`

The symmetry bug

```
public boolean equals(Object o) {
    if (! (o instanceof NanoDuration))
        return false;
    NanoDuration nd = (NanoDuration) o;
    return super.equals(nd) && nano == nd.nano;
}
```

This is **not symmetric!**

```
Duration d1 = new NanoDuration(5, 10, 15);
Duration d2 = new Duration(5, 10);
d1.equals(d2); // false
d2.equals(d1); // true
```

Fixing symmetry

This version restores symmetry by using `Duration`'s `equals` if the argument is a `Duration` (and not a `NanoDuration`)

```
public boolean equals(Object o) {
    if (! (o instanceof Duration))
        return false;
    // if o is a normal Duration, compare without nano
    if (! (o instanceof NanoDuration))
        return super.equals(o);
    NanoDuration nd = (NanoDuration) o;
    return super.equals(nd) && nano == nd.nano;
}
```

Alas, this *still* violates the `equals` contract

- Transitivity: $a.equals(b) \wedge b.equals(c) \Rightarrow a.equals(c)$

The transitivity bug

```
Duration d1 = new NanoDuration(1, 2, 3);
Duration d2 = new Duration(1, 2);
Duration d3 = new NanoDuration(1, 2, 4);
d1.equals(d2); // true
d2.equals(d3); // true
d1.equals(d3); // false!
```

NanoDuration	Duration	NanoDuration
min 1	min 1	min 1
sec 2	sec 2	sec 2
nano 3		nano 4

No great solution

- *Effective Java* says not to (re)override `equals` like this
 - Unless superclass is non-instantiable (e.g., abstract)
 - “Don’t do it” a non-solution given the equality we want for `NanoDuration` objects
- Two far-from-perfect approaches on next two slides:
 1. Don’t make `NanoDuration` a subclass of `Duration`
 2. Change `Duration`’s `equals` such that only `Duration` objects that are not (proper) subclasses of `Duration` are equal

Bad idea: the `getClass` trick

Different run-time class checking to satisfy the `equals` contract:

```
@Override
public boolean equals(Object o) { // in Duration
    if (o == null)
        return false;
    if (! o.getClass().equals(getClass()))
        return false;
    Duration d = (Duration) o;
    return d.min == min && d.sec == sec;
}
```

But now `Duration` objects never equal `CountedDuration` objects

- Subclasses do not “act like” instances of superclass because behavior of `equals` changes with subclasses
- Generally considered wrong to “break” subtyping like this

Composition

Choose composition over subclassing

- Often good advice: many programmers overuse (abuse) subclassing [see future lecture on proper subtyping]

```
public class NanoDuration {
    private final Duration duration;
    private final int nano;
    ...
}
```

`NanoDuration` and `Duration` now unrelated

- No presumption they can be compared to one another

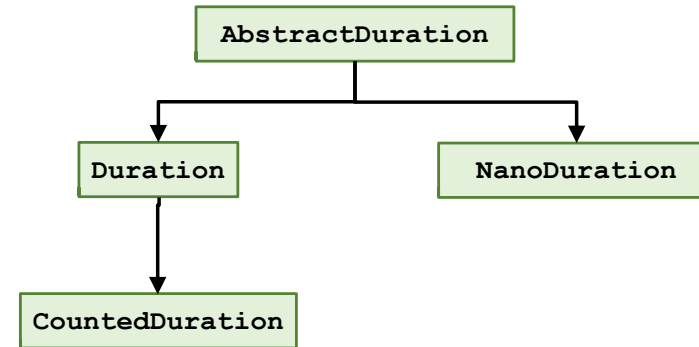
Solves some problems, introduces others

- Can’t use `NanoDurations` where `Durations` are expected (not a subtype)
- No inheritance, so need explicit *forwarding* methods

Slight alternative

- Can avoid some method redefinition by having `Duration` and `NanoDuration` both extend a common abstract class
 - Or implement the same interface
 - Leave overriding `equals` to the two subclasses
- Keeps `NanoDuration` and `Duration` from being used “like each other”
- But requires advance planning or willingness to change `Duration` when you discover the need for `NanoDuration`

Class hierarchy



Summary: Equals and Subclassing

- Be careful when creating subclasses – `equals` needs to work!
- `NanoDuration` is not a proper Java subclass of `Duration` since we can't get `equals` to work
 - More on the nuances of subclassing later!
- Unresolvable tension between
 - “What we want for equality”
 - “What we want for subtyping”
- This is one of the limitations of Java

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- Section tomorrow!
 - important things you need to know for HW5

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Equals and Collections

hashCode

Another method in `Object`:

```
public int hashCode()
```

“Returns a hash code value for the object. This method is supported for the benefit of hashtables such as those provided by `java.util.HashMap`.”

Contract (again essential for correct overriding):

- **Self-consistent:**

```
o.hashCode() == o.hashCode()
```

...so long as `o` doesn't change between the calls

- **Consistent with equality:**

```
a.equals(b) ⇒ a.hashCode() == b.hashCode()
```

Think of it as a pre-filter

- If two objects are equal, they *must* have the same hash code
 - Up to implementers of `equals` and `hashCode` to satisfy this
 - If you override `equals`, you *must* override `hashCode`

- If two objects have the same hash code, they *may or may not* be equal
 - “Usually not” leads to better performance
 - `hashCode` in `Object` tries to (but may not) give every object a different hash code

- Hash codes are usually cheap[er] to compute, so check first if you “usually expect not equal” – a pre-filter

Asides

- Hash codes are used for hash tables
 - A common collection implementation
 - See CSE332
 - Libraries won't work if your classes break relevant contracts
- Cheaper pre-filtering is a more general idea
 - Example: Are two large video files the exact same video?
 - Quick pre-filter: Are the files the same size?

Doing it

- So: we have to override `hashCode` in `Duration`
 - Must obey contract
 - Aim for non-equals objects usually having different results
- Correct but expect poor performance:

```
public int hashCode() { return 1; }
```
- Correct but expect better-but-still-possibly-poor performance:

```
public int hashCode() { return min; }
```
- Better:

```
public int hashCode() { return min ^ sec; }
```

Correctness depends on `equals`

Suppose we change the spec for `Duration`'s `equals`:

```
// true if o and this represent same # of seconds
public boolean equals(Object o) {
    if (! (o instanceof Duration))
        return false;
    Duration d = (Duration) o;
    return 60*min+sec == 60*d.min+d.sec;
}
```

Must update `hashCode` – why?

- This works:

```
public int hashCode() {
    return 60*min+sec;
}
```

Equality, mutation, and time

If two objects are equal **now**, will they **always** be equal?

- In mathematics, “yes”
- In Java, “you choose”
- `Object` contract doesn't specify

For **immutable** objects:

- Abstract value never changes
- Equality should be forever (even if rep changes)

For **mutable** objects, either:

- Stick with reference equality
- “No” equality is not forever
 - Mutation changes abstract value, hence what-object-equals

Examples

`StringBuffer` is mutable and sticks with reference-equality:

```
StringBuffer s1 = new StringBuffer("hello");
StringBuffer s2 = new StringBuffer("hello");
s1.equals(s1); // true
s1.equals(s2); // false
```

By contrast:

```
Date d1 = new Date(0); // Jan 1, 1970 00:00:00 GMT
Date d2 = new Date(0);

d1.equals(d2); // true
d2.setTime(1);
d1.equals(d2); // false
```

Behavioral and observational equivalence

Two objects are “**behaviorally equivalent**” if there is no sequence of operations (excluding `==`) that can distinguish them

- they look the same forever
- might live at different addresses

Two objects are “**observationally equivalent**” if there is no sequence of *observer* operations that can distinguish them

- Excludes mutators (and `==`)
- they look the same now, but might look different later

Equality and mutation

`Set` class checks equality only upon insertion

Can therefore **violate rep invariant** of a `Set` by **mutating after insertion**

```
Set<Date> s = new HashSet<Date>();
Date d1 = new Date(0);
Date d2 = new Date(1000);
s.add(d1);
s.add(d2);
d2.setTime(0);
for (Date d : s) { // prints two of same date
    System.out.println(d);
}
```

Pitfalls of mutability and collections

From the spec of `Set`:

“Note: Great care must be exercised if mutable objects are used as set elements. The behavior of a set is not specified if the value of an object is changed in a manner that affects equals comparisons while the object is an element in the set.”

Same problem applies to **keys in maps**

Same problem applies to mutations that **change hash codes** when using `HashSet` or `HashMap`

(Libraries choose not to copy-in for performance and to preserve object identity)

Another container wrinkle: self-containment

`equals` and `hashCode` on containers are recursive:

```
class ArrayList<E> {
    public int hashCode() {
        int code = 1;
        for (Object o : list)
            code = 31*code + (o==null ? 0 : o.hashCode())
        return code;
    }
}
```

This causes an infinite loop:

```
List<Object> lst = new ArrayList<Object>();
lst.add(lst);
lst.hashCode();
```

From the `List` documentation: *Note: While it is permissible for lists to contain themselves as elements, extreme caution is advised: the `equals` and `hashCode` methods are no longer well defined on such a list.*

Summary: Equals and Collections

- **Reference equality** (strongest)
 - a and b are the same iff they live at the same address
- **Behavioral equality** (weaker than Reference equality)
 - if a and b are the same now, they will be the same after **any** sequence of method calls (immutable objects)
- **Observational equality** (weaker than Behavioral equality)
 - if a and b are the same now, they might be different after mutator methods are called (mutable objects)
- Java's `equals` has an elaborate specification, but does not require any of the above notions
 - Also requires consistency with `hashCode`
 - Concepts more general than Java
- Mutation and/or subtyping make things even less satisfying
 - Good reason not to overuse/misuse either