

Polymorphism

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Polymorphism: The Motto

One Thing,
Many Shapes.....

One Variable, Many Values

```
1 byte a;  
2 switch(a){  
3 case 1:  
4     return 1 * 1;  
5 case 2:  
6     return 2 * 2;  
7 case 3:  
8     return 3 * 3;  
9     ...  
10 case 127:  
11     return 127 * 127;  
12 }
```

- better ways?
- mechanism? raw memory interpretation

One Class, Many Instances

```
1 Student s;  
2 if (s equals student1)  
3     show(score1);  
4 else if (s equals student2)  
5     show(score2);  
6 ...  
7 else if (s equals student100)  
8     show(score100);
```

- better ways?
- mechanism? data abstraction

One Method Name, Many Parameter Lists

```
1 //no overloading
2 System.out.println("abc");
3 System.out.println(3);
4 System.out.println(4.0);
5 //overloading
6 System.out.print("abc");
7 System.out.print(3);
8 System.out.print(4.0);
```

- mechanism? signature by name + parameter types

A Twist in Method Overloading

```
1 //overloading
2 System.out.print("abc");
3 System.out.print(3);
4 System.out.print(4.0);
5 //a twist (of course, not exactly workable)
6 String("abc").print();
7 Integer(3).print();
8 Double(4.0).print();
```

- mechanism? just write print() for every class (we'll see)

Polymorphic Behavior

- all cases above: some polymorphic behavior
- **BUT** almost no one calls them real “polymorphism”

Why Not?

Polymorphic Behavior on Known Stuff

- polymorphic behavior of **known** primitive-type variables
- polymorphic behavior of **known** classes (extended types)
- polymorphic behavior of **known** parameter types

Unknown Stuff: Future Extensions

Backward Compatibility

inheritance hierarchy

Forward Advance

newly added variables/methods

Polymorphism of Instance Content

one **advanced** content, many **compatible** ways to access

Polymorphism of Instance References

one **compatible** reference, many **advanced** contents to point to

Reference Upcast versus Reference Downcast

```
1 CSIEProfessor c = new CSIEProfessor();  
2 Professor p = c;  
3 // Professor p = new CSIEProfessor();
```

Upcast

simple (backward compatibility)

```
1 CSIEProfessor c = new CSIEProfessor();  
2 Professor p = c;  
3 CSIEProfessor c2 = (CSIEProfessor)p;
```

Downcast

need to check whether content fits (forward advance)

need RTTI (run-time type information/identification) to make downcast work (**where did we see it?**)

Content/Reference Polymorphism: Summary

backward compatibility handled

forward advance: only via downcast (RTTI)

simpler mechanism for forward advance?

Our Needs in Forward Advance

- new instance variables for advanced state
- new instance methods to manipulate new variables
- give new meanings to existing instance variables
- give new meanings to existing instance methods
- write an “updated but compatible” version of existing method

Method Overriding (Virtual Function)

calls the updated version through an upper-level reference

Method Invocation Polymorphism

one method (via upper-level reference),
many possible extended behaviors

Object.equals

```
1  class Coordinate extends Object{
2      double x, y;
3
4      boolean equals(Object o){
5          if (o instanceof Coordinate){
6              Coordinate c = (Coordinate)o;
7              return (c.x == this.x && c.y == this.y);
8          }
9          return false;
10     }
11 }
```

Object.toString

```
1   Coordinate c = new Coordinate ();  
2   System.out.println(c);
```

Twist Revisited

```
1 System.out.print("abc");
2 System.out.print(3);
3 System.out.print(4.0);
4 //a twist (of course, not exactly workable)
5 String("abc").print();
6 Integer(3).print();
7 Double(4.0).print();
```

`System.out.print(Object)` can have polymorphic behavior by internally calling the updated `Object.print()` (actually, `Object.toString()`) without overloading

V-Table: A Possible Mechanism of Method Overriding

again, not the only mechanism

RTTI revisited

- all we need is a link to the class area (stores name, vtable, etc.)
- where is the link? `java.lang.Object`
- how to access? `Object.getClass()`
- each area is an instance of `java.lang.Class`

Summary on Polymorphism

- one thing, many shapes
- important in strongly-typed platforms with inheritance
- view from content: one advanced content with many compatible access
- view from reference: one compatible reference can point to many advanced contents
- view from method: one compatible method “contract”, many different method “realization”