Lecture 09 - Abstract Classes and Interfaces Part 2

CS202: Introduction to Object Oriented Programming

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Today's Topics:

- Quick Recap - Abstract Classes and Interfaces
- The Cloneable Interface
- Abstract Classes vs. Interfaces
- Class Design

Introduction

Inheritance Hierarchy

More general
less specific

Person

Less general
more specific

Student extends
Person

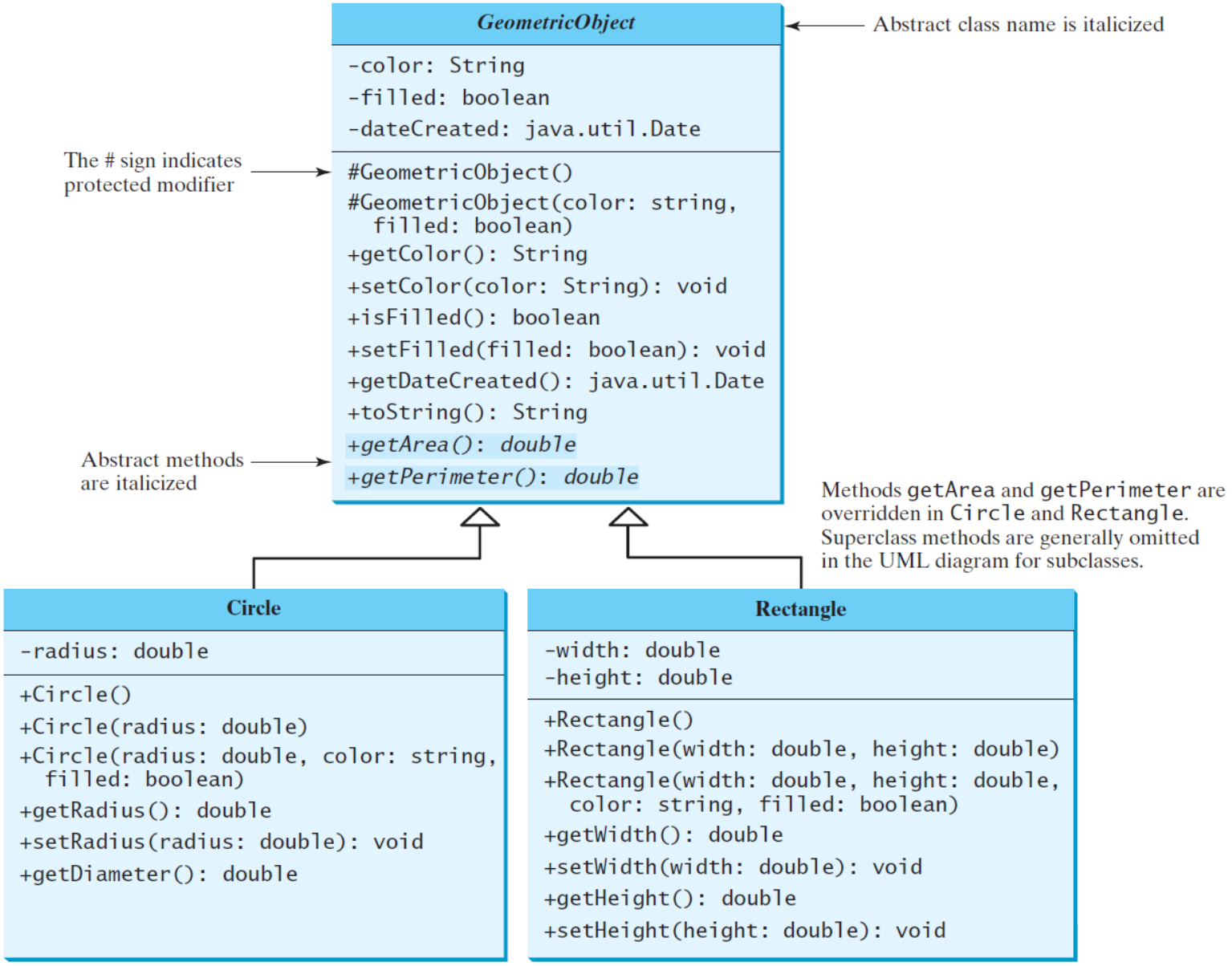
Inheritance Hierarchy

More general
less specific

Sometimes a superclass is so abstract that it cannot be used to create any specific instances. Such a class is referred to as an abstract class.

Less general
more specific

Abstract Classes and Abstract Methods



abstract method in abstract class

- An abstract method cannot be contained in a nonabstract class.

correct:

```
public abstract class  A {
   public abstract void unfinished();
}
```

Interfaces

Interfaces

What is an interface?

Why is an interface useful?

How do you define an interface?

How do you use an interface?

What is an interface?
Why is an interface useful?

- An interface is a classlike construct that contains only constants and abstract methods.
- In many ways, an interface is similar to an abstract class, but the intent of an interface is to specify common behavior for objects.
- For example, you can specify that the objects are comparable, edible, cloneable using appropriate interfaces.

Define an Interface

To distinguish an interface from a class, Java uses the following syntax to define an interface:

```
public interface InterfaceName {
  constant declarations;
  abstract method signatures;
}
```

Example:

```
public interface Edible {
  /** Describe how to eat */
  public abstract String howToEat();
}
```

Interface is a Special Class

An interface is treated like a special class in Java. **Each interface is compiled into a separate bytecode file**, just like a regular class. Like an abstract class, you cannot create an instance from an interface using the new operator, but in most cases you can use an interface more or less the same way you use an abstract class. For example, you can use an interface as a data type for a variable, as the result of casting, and so on.

The Cloneable Interface

The Cloneable Interface

"The **`Cloneable`** interface specifies that an object can be cloned".

```
package java.lang;
   public interface Cloneable {
}
```

The Cloneable Interfaces

Marker Interface: An empty interface.

A marker interface does not contain constants or methods. It is used to denote that a class possesses certain desirable properties. A class that implements the Cloneable interface is marked cloneable, and its objects can be cloned using the clone() method defined in the Object class.

```
package java.lang;
public interface Cloneable {
}
```

The Cloneable Interfaces

A class implements the Cloneable interface to indicate to the Object.clone() method that it is legal for that method to make a field-for-field copy of instances of that class.

Examples

Many classes (e.g., Date and Calendar) in the Java library implement Cloneable. Thus, the instances of these classes can be cloned. For example, the following code

```
Calendar calendar = new GregorianCalendar(2003, 2, 1);
Calendar calendarCopy = (Calendar)calendar.clone();
System.out.println("calendar == calendarCopy is " +
  (calendar == calendarCopy));
System.out.println("calendar.equals(calendarCopy) is " +
  calendar.equals(calendarCopy));
```

displays

```
calendar == calendarCopy is false
calendar.equals(calendarCopy) is true
```

Implementing Cloneable Interface

To define a custom class that implements the Cloneable interface, the class must override the clone() method in the Object class. The following code defines a class named House that implements Cloneable and Comparable.

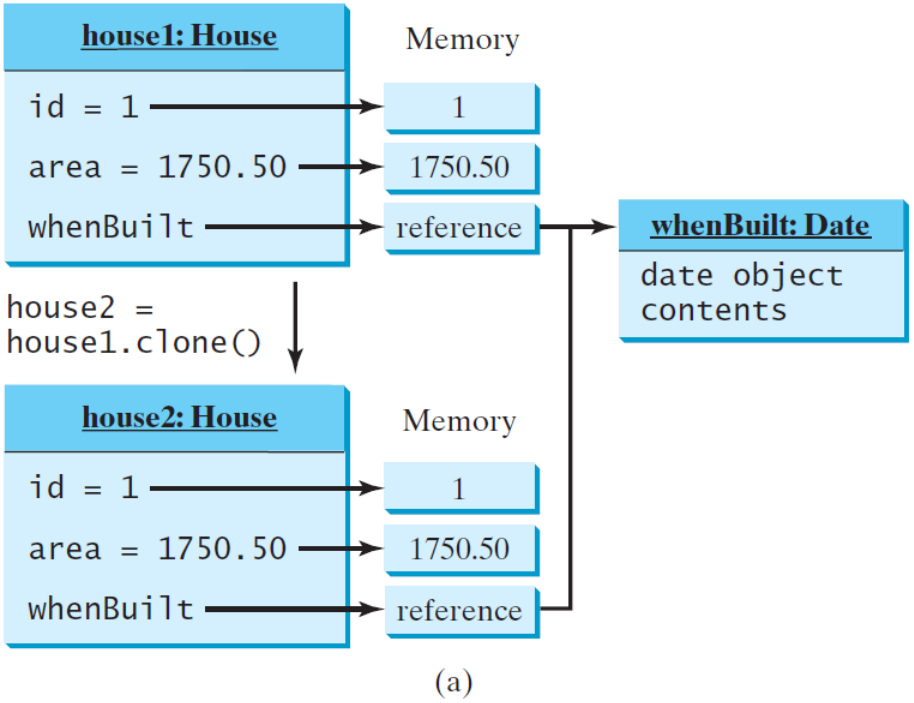
House.java

Shallow vs. Deep Copy

```
House house1 = new House(1, 1750.50);

House house2 = (House)house1.clone();
```

```
@Override /** Override the protected clone method defined in
  the Object class, and strengthen its accessibility */
public Object clone() throws CloneNotSupportedException {
  return super.clone();
}
```



(a)

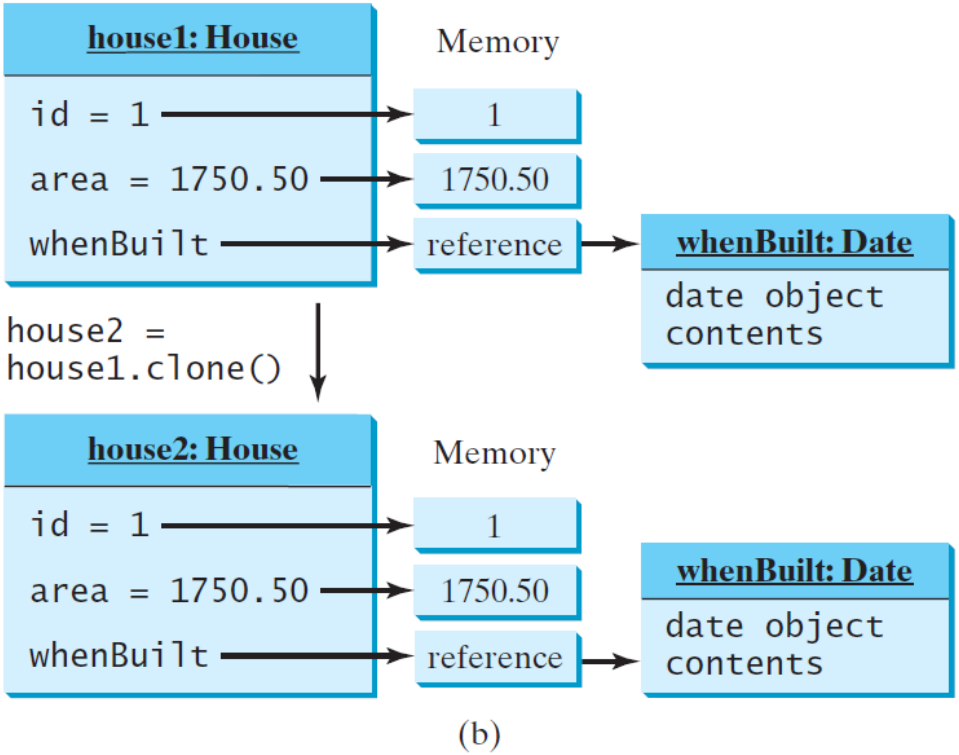
Shallow Copy

Shallow vs. Deep Copy

```
House house1 = new House(1, 1750.50);

House house2 = (House)house1.clone();
```

```
public Object clone() throws CloneNotSupportedException {
  // Perform a shallow copy
  House houseClone = (House)super.clone();
  // Deep copy on whenBuilt
  houseClone.whenBuilt = (java.util.Date)(whenBuilt.clone());
  return houseClone;
}
```



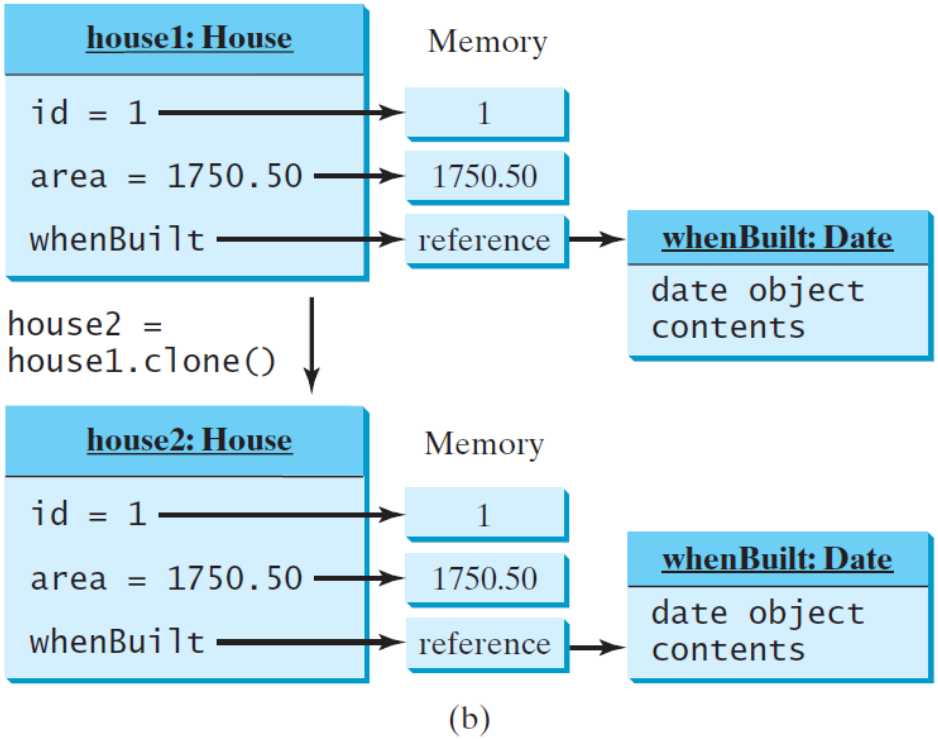
Deep Copy

Shallow vs. Deep Copy

```
House house1 = new House(1, 1750.50);

House house2 = (House)house1.clone();
```

```
public Object clone() {
  try {
    // Perform a shallow copy
    House houseClone = (House)super.clone();
    // Deep copy on whenBuilt
    houseClone.whenBuilt = (java.util.Date)(whenBuilt.clone());
    return houseClone;
  }
  catch (CloneNotSupportedException ex) {
    return null;
  }
}
```



(b)

Deep Copy

Interfaces vs. Abstract Classes

In an interface, the data must be constants; an abstract class can have all types of data.

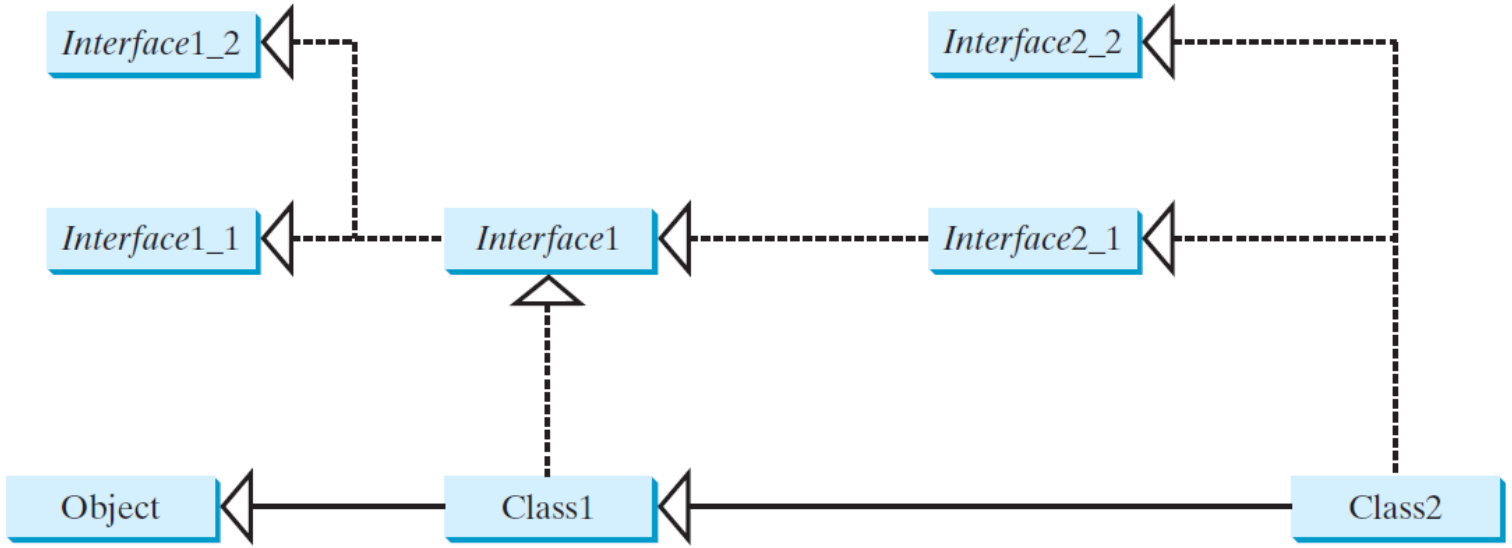
Each method in an interface has only a signature without implementation; an abstract class can have concrete methods.

	Variables	*Constructors*	*Methods*
Abstract class	No restrictions.	Constructors are invoked by subclasses through constructor chaining. An abstract class cannot be instantiated using the new operator.	No restrictions.
Interface	All variables must be `public static final`.	No constructors. An interface cannot be instantiated using the new operator.	All methods must be public abstract instance methods

Interfaces vs. Abstract Classes

Interfaces vs. Abstract Classes, cont.

All classes share a single root, the Object class, but there is no single root for interfaces. Like a class, an interface also defines a type. A variable of an interface type can reference any instance of the class that implements the interface. If a class extends an interface, this interface plays the same role as a superclass. You can use an interface as a data type and cast a variable of an interface type to its subclass, and vice versa.



Suppose that c is an instance of Class2. c is also an instance of Object, Class1, Interface1, Interface1_1, Interface1_2, Interface2_1, and Interface2_2.

Caution: conflict interfaces

In rare occasions, a class may implement two interfaces with conflict information (e.g., two same constants with different values or two methods with same signature but different return type). This type of errors will be detected by the compiler.

Whether to use an interface or a class?

Abstract classes and interfaces can both be used to model common features. How do you decide whether to use an interface or a class? In general, a strong is-a relationship that clearly describes a parent-child relationship should be modeled using classes. For example, a staff member is a person. A weak is-a relationship, also known as an is-kind-of relationship, indicates that an object possesses a certain property. A weak is-a relationship can be modeled using interfaces. For example, all strings are comparable, so the String class implements the Comparable interface. You can also use interfaces to circumvent single inheritance restriction if multiple inheritance is desired. In the case of multiple inheritance, you have to design one as a superclass, and others as interface.

Class Design Guidelines

Designing a Class

(Coherence)

- A class should describe a single entity, and all the class operations should logically fit together to support a coherent purpose.
- You can use a class for students, for example, but you should not combine students and staff in the same class, because students and staff have different entities.

Designing a Class, cont.

(Separating responsibilities) A single entity with too many responsibilities can be broken into several classes to separate responsibilities. The classes String, StringBuilder, and StringBuffer all deal with strings, for example, but have different responsibilities. The String class deals with immutable strings, the StringBuilder class is for creating mutable strings, and the StringBuffer class is similar to StringBuilder except that StringBuffer contains synchronized methods for updating strings.

Designing a Class, cont.

Classes are designed for **reuse**. Users can incorporate classes in many different combinations, orders, and environments. Therefore, you should design a class that imposes no restrictions on what or when the user can do with it, design the properties to ensure that the user can set properties in any order, with any combination of values, and design methods to function independently of their order of occurrence.

Designing a Class, cont.

Provide a public no-arg constructor and override the equals method and the toString method defined in the Object class whenever possible.

Designing a Class, cont.

Follow standard Java programming style and naming conventions. Choose informative names for classes, data fields, and methods. Always place the data declaration before the constructor, and place constructors before methods. Always provide a constructor and initialize variables to avoid programming errors.

Using Visibility Modifiers

Each class can present two contracts – one for the users of the class and one for the extenders of the class. Make the fields private and accessor methods public if they are intended for the users of the class. Make the fields or method protected if they are intended for extenders of the class. The contract for the extenders encompasses the contract for the users. The extended class may increase the visibility of an instance method from protected to public, or change its implementation, but you should never change the implementation in a way that violates that contract.

Using Visibility Modifiers, cont.

- A class should use the private modifier to hide its data from direct access by clients.
- You can use get methods and set methods to provide users with access to the private data, but only to private data you want the user to see or to modify.
- A class should also hide methods not intended for client use.

Using the static Modifier

A property that is shared by all the instances of the class should be declared as a static property.