More Fun with Rationals
The previous example has shown that rational numbers aren’t always represented in their simplest form. (Why?)

One would expect the rational numbers to be simplified:

- reduce them to their smallest numerator and denominator by dividing both with a divisor.

We could implement this in each rational operation, but it would be easy to forget this division in an operation.

A better alternative consists of simplifying the representation in the class when the objects are constructed:
class Rational(x: Int, y: Int) {
    private def gcd(a: Int, b: Int): Int = if (b == 0) a else gcd(b, a % b)
    private val g = gcd(x, y)
    def numer = x / g
    def denom = y / g
    ...
}

gcd and g are private members; we can only access them from inside the Rational class.

In this example, we calculate gcd immediately, so that its value can be re-used in the calculations of numer and denom.
It is also possible to call \( \text{gcd} \) in the code of \( \text{numer} \) and \( \text{denom} \):

```python
class Rational(x: Int, y: Int) {
    private def gcd(a: Int, b: Int): Int = if (b == 0) a else gcd(b, a % b)
    def numer = x / gcd(x, y)
    def denom = y / gcd(x, y)
}
```

This can be advantageous if it is expected that the functions \( \text{numer} \) and \( \text{denom} \) are called infrequently.
It is equally possible to turn numer and denom into vals, so that they are computed only once:

```scala
class Rational(x: Int, y: Int) {
    private def gcd(a: Int, b: Int): Int = if (b == 0) a else gcd(b, a % b)
    val numer = x / gcd(x, y)
    val denom = y / gcd(x, y)
}
```

This can be advantageous if the functions numer and denom are called often.
Clients observe exactly the same behavior in each case. This ability to choose different implementations of the data without affecting clients is called *data abstraction*. It is a cornerstone of software engineering.
Self Reference

On the inside of a class, the name `this` represents the object on which the current method is executed.

**Example**

Add the functions `less` and `max` to the class `Rational`.

```python
class Rational(x: Int, y: Int) {
    ...
    def less(that: Rational) =
        numer * that.denom < that.numer * denom

    def max(that: Rational) =
        if (this.less(that)) that else this
}
```
Note that a simple name $x$, which refers to another member of the class, is an abbreviation of $\text{this}.x$. Thus, an equivalent way to formulate `less` is as follows.

```python
def less(that: Rational) =
    this.numer * that.denom < that.numer * this.denom
```
Let’s say our Rational class requires that the denominator is positive.

We can enforce this by calling the require function.

```scala
class Rational(x: Int, y: Int) {
    require(y > 0, "denominator must be positive")
    ...
}
```

require is a predefined function.

It takes a condition and an optional message string.

If the condition passed to require is false, an IllegalArgumentException is thrown with the given message string.
Besides `require`, there is also `assert`.

`Assert` also takes a condition and an optional message string as parameters. E.g.

```scala
val x = sqrt(y)
assert(x >= 0)
```

Like `require`, a failing `assert` will also throw an exception, but it’s a different one: `AssertionError` for `assert`, `IllegalArgumentException` for `require`.

This reflects a difference in intent

- `require` is used to enforce a precondition on the caller of a function.
- `assert` is used as to check the code of the function itself.
In Scala, a class implicitly introduces a constructor. This one is called the primary constructor of the class.

The primary constructor

- takes the parameters of the class
- and executes all statements in the class body (such as the require a couple of slides back).
Scala also allows the declaration of *auxiliary constructors*. These are methods named `this`.

**Example** Adding an auxiliary constructor to the class `Rational`.

```scala
class Rational(x: Int, y: Int) {
  def this(x: Int) = this(x, 1)
  ...
}
new Rational(2)  // 2/1
Exercise

Modify the `Rational` class so that rational numbers are kept unsimplified internally, but the simplification is applied when numbers are converted to strings.

Do clients observe the same behavior when interacting with the rational class?

- 0  yes
- 0  no
- 0  yes for small sizes of denominators and nominators and small numbers of operations.