

Class Hierarchies

Abstract Classes

Consider the task of writing a class for sets of integers with the following operations.

```
abstract class IntSet {  
  def incl(x: Int): IntSet  
  def contains(x: Int): Boolean  
}
```

IntSet is an *abstract class*.

Abstract classes can contain members which are missing an implementation (in our case, `incl` and `contains`).

Consequently, no instances of an abstract class can be created with the operator `new`.

Class Extensions

Let's consider implementing sets as binary trees.

There are two types of possible trees: a tree for the empty set, and a tree consisting of an integer and two sub-trees.

Here are their implementations:

```
class Empty extends IntSet {  
  def contains(x: Int): Boolean = false  
  def incl(x: Int): IntSet = new NonEmpty(x, new Empty, new Empty)  
}
```

Class Extensions (2)

```
class NonEmpty(elem: Int, left: IntSet, right: IntSet) extends IntSet {  
  
  def contains(x: Int): Boolean =  
    if (x < elem) left contains x  
    else if (x > elem) right contains x  
    else true  
  
  def incl(x: Int): IntSet =  
    if (x < elem) new NonEmpty(elem, left incl x, right)  
    else if (x > elem) new NonEmpty(elem, left, right incl x)  
    else this  
}
```

Terminology

Empty and NonEmpty both *extend* the class IntSet.

This implies that the types Empty and NonEmpty *conform* to the type IntSet

- ▶ an object of type Empty or NonEmpty can be used wherever an object of type IntSet is required.

Base Classes and Subclasses

IntSet is called the *superclass* of Empty and NonEmpty.

Empty and NonEmpty are *subclasses* of IntSet.

In Scala, any user-defined class extends another class.

If no superclass is given, the standard class Object in the Java package `java.lang` is assumed.

The direct or indirect superclasses of a class C are called *base classes* of C.

So, the base classes of NonEmpty are IntSet and Object.

Implementation and Overriding

The definitions of `contains` and `incl` in the classes `Empty` and `NonEmpty` *implement* the abstract functions in the base trait `IntSet`.

It is also possible to *redefine* an existing, non-abstract definition in a subclass by using `override`.

Example

```
abstract class Base {  
  def foo = 1  
  def bar: Int  
}
```

```
class Sub extends Base {  
  override def foo = 2  
  def bar = 3  
}
```

Object Definitions

In the `IntSet` example, one could argue that there is really only a single empty `IntSet`.

So it seems overkill to have the user create many instances of it.

We can express this case better with an *object definition*:

```
object Empty extends IntSet {  
  def contains(x: Int): Boolean = false  
  def incl(x: Int): IntSet = new NonEmpty(x, Empty, Empty)  
}
```

This defines a *singleton object* named `Empty`.

No other `Empty` instances can be (or need to be) created.

Singleton objects are values, so `Empty` evaluates to itself.

Programs

So far we have executed all Scala code from the REPL or the worksheet.

But it is also possible to create standalone applications in Scala.

Each such application contains an object with a main method.

For instance, here is the “Hello World!” program in Scala.

```
object Hello {  
  def main(args: Array[String]) = println("hello world!")  
}
```

Once this program is compiled, you can start it from the command line with

```
> scala Hello
```

Exercise

Write a method `union` for forming the union of two sets. You should implement the following abstract class.

```
abstract class IntSet {  
  def incl(x: Int): IntSet  
  def contains(x: Int): Boolean  
  def union(other: IntSet): IntSet  
}
```

Dynamic Binding

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This means that the code invoked by a method call depends on the runtime type of the object that contains the method.

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→ `[1/x] [Empty/this] false`

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= false

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 contains 7 else true`

→ `true`

Something to Ponder

Dynamic dispatch of methods is analogous to calls to higher-order functions.

Question:

Can we implement one concept in terms of the other?

- ▶ Objects in terms of higher-order functions?
- ▶ Higher-order functions in terms of objects?