

Generics

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Rotterdam, Netherlands

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Lecture topics

- Arrays as a simple generic data type
- Class generators: generics
- Interfaces and generics
- Generic lists: a concrete example
- Lambda

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- A very common necessity when programming is storing multiple values in a variable
- There actually is a built-in datatype in most programming languages to do so
- This datatype is called **array**

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- An array is declared with the type of the element, followed by square brackets
- The array is then initialized by specifying the number of elements it can store
- The elements are then written and accessed given their position in the array
- The array cannot change size: reading or writing an elements out of bounds gives an error

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An array is declared with the type of the element, followed by square brackets

```
1 int[] x;
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

```
int[] x;
```


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The array is then initialized by specifying the number of elements it can store

```
int[] x = new int[10];
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

```
int[] x = new int[10];
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The elements are then written and accessed given their position in the array

```
1 int[] x = new int[10];  
2 x[5] = 100;  
3 Console.WriteLine(x[5]);
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

```
1 int[] x = new int[10];  
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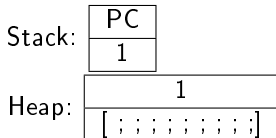
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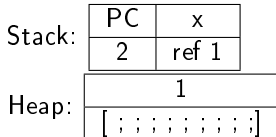
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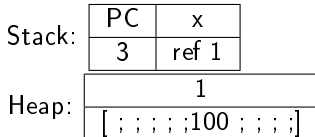
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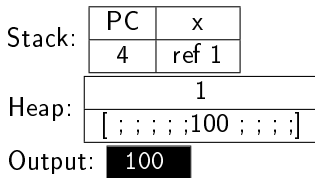
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The array cannot change size: reading or writing an elements out of bounds gives an error

The program below would just crash at runtime with an *array out of bounds error*

```
1  int[] x = new int[10];  
2  x[15] = 100;  
3  Console.WriteLine(x[15]);
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

```
1 int[] x = new int[10];  
2 x[15] = 100;  
3 System.out.println(x[15]);
```

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Arrays of various types?

- Arrays can come in all sorts of types
- `int[]`, `float[]`, `bool[]`, `string[]`, `Car[]`, ...

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So what is common to all arrays, independently of their specific content?

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So what is common to all arrays, independently of their specific content?

- An array `T[]` contains a series of elements **of any type** `T`
- It is initialized with `new T[n]`, where `n` is the number of stored elements
- We access the `i`-th element of array `a` of type `T[]` with `a[i]`; `a[i]` has type `T`
- We set the `i`-th element of array `a` of type `T[]` with `a[i] = e`; `e` has type `T`

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Arrays of various types?

So it makes perfect sense to speak about arrays in terms which are **generic** with respect to the type of the elements!

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- We can define classes that follow the same philosophy just explained for arrays
- These classes only specify a structure, but are independent of the type of their content
- These classes are called **generic classes**

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Suppose we wish to define a class that stores two elements together.

- It can be useful in many places when we want to couple two things together
- Return two values from a function
- Store a list of relationships
- ...

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Storing two elements together should be independent of their type. We do not want to define a new version of the class for each possible combination, such as:

- int and bool
- float and float
- bool and string
- Car and int
- Person and Dog
- Man and Woman
- Woman and Man
- Woman and Woman
- Man and Man
- ...

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We can define such a class by specifying that it depends on the types of its fields:

```
1 class Pair<T, U> {  
2     private T x;  
3     private U y;  
4     public Pair(T x,U y) {  
5         this.x = x;  
6         this.y = y;  
7     }  
8     public T First() {  
9         return this.x;  
10    }  
11    public U Second() {  
12        return this.y;  
13    }  
14 }
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

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1 class Pair<T, U> {  
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```

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We can then use this class by specifying what the types of its fields are concretely:

```
1 class Pair<T, U> {  
2     private T x;  
3     private U y;  
4     public Pair(T x,U y) {  
5         this.x = x;  
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10    }  
11    public U Second() {  
12        return this.y;  
13    }  
14 }  
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);  
16 Console.WriteLine(p.First());  
17 Console.WriteLine(p.Second());
```

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Heap:

1
x=
y=

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```

Stack:

PC	...		PC	ret	this	x	y
15	...		5	null	ref 1	10	true

Heap:

1
x=
y=

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```

Stack:

PC	...		PC	ret	this	x	y
15	...		6	null	ref 1	10	true

Heap:

1
x=10
y=

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Stack:

PC	...		PC	ret	this	x	y
15	...		6	null	ref 1	10	true

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x=10 y=true

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```

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15	...		6	ref 1

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Stack:

PC	p
16	ref 1

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Stack:

PC	...		PC	ret	this
16	...		9	null	ref 1

Heap:

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x=10 y=true

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Stack:

PC	...		PC	ret
16	...		9	10

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PC	p
17	ref 1

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1
x=10 y=true

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Stack:

PC	...		PC	ret	this
17	...		12	null	ref 1

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x=10 y=true

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```

Stack:

PC	...		PC	ret
17	...		12	true

Heap:

1
x=10 y=true

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
3      private U y;
4      public Pair(T x,U y) {
5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);
16 Console.WriteLine(p.First());
17 Console.WriteLine(p.Second());

```

Stack:

PC	p
18	ref 1

Heap:

1
x=10 y=true

Output: 10 true

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An example: arbitrary pairs

- In Java, generic arguments cannot be all those primitive types with non-reference values that sit directly on the stack
- This means that we cannot write `Pair<int,int>` in Java
- The standard library contains **reference versions** of those types, starting with a capital letter, such as `Integer`, etc.
- Those types are like the primitive types, but their values are references that point to the actual value on the heap
- We can then write `Pair<Integer,Integer>`

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The types of the fields can change, but the class implementation always remains the same:

```
1 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);  
2 Pair<float, bool> p = new Pair<float, bool>(10,false);  
3 Pair<bool, bool> p = new Pair<bool, bool>(false,true);  
4 Pair<string, int> p = new Pair<string, int>("First item",5);  
5 ...
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

```
1 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);  
2 Pair<float, bool> p = new Pair<float, bool>(10,false);  
3 Pair<bool, bool> p = new Pair<bool, bool>(false,true);  
4 Pair<string, int> p = new Pair<string, int>("First item",5);  
5 ...
```


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Typechecking of generic classes

- Typechecking is simply a form of **substitution**
- When the class is instantiated with types as arguments, a new version of the class is created
- The created class has the concrete versions of these parameters in it

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```
1 class Pair<T, U> {  
2     private T x;  
3     private U y;  
4     public Pair(T x,U y) {  
5         this.x = x;  
6         this.y = y;  
7     }  
8     public T First() {  
9         return this.x;  
10    }  
11    public U Second() {  
12        return this.y;  
13    }  
14 }  
15 Pair<int , bool> p = new Pair<int , bool>(10,true);
```

Declarations:

PC
1

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
3      private U y;
4      public Pair(T x,U y) {
5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);

```

Declarations:

PC	this	x	y
5	Pair	T	U

Classes:

Pair
First=Pair \rightarrow T
Pair=(Pair \times T \times U) \rightarrow Pair
Second=Pair \rightarrow U
x=T
y=U

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
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5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);

```

Declarations:

PC	this	x	y
6	Pair	T	U

Classes:

Pair
First=Pair \rightarrow T
Pair=(Pair \times T \times U) \rightarrow Pair
Second=Pair \rightarrow U
x=T
y=U

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
3      private U y;
4      public Pair(T x,U y) {
5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);

```

Declarations:

PC	this	x	y
7	Pair	T	U

Classes:

Pair
First=Pair \rightarrow T
Pair=(Pair \times T \times U) \rightarrow Pair
Second=Pair \rightarrow U
x=T
y=U

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
3      private U y;
4      public Pair(T x,U y) {
5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);

```

Declarations:

PC	this
10	Pair

Classes:

Pair
First=Pair \rightarrow T
Pair=(Pair \times T \times U) \rightarrow Pair
Second=Pair \rightarrow U
x=T
y=U

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
3      private U y;
4      public Pair(T x,U y) {
5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);

```

Declarations:

PC	this
12	Pair

Classes:

Pair
First=Pair \rightarrow T
Pair=(Pair \times T \times U) \rightarrow Pair
Second=Pair \rightarrow U
x=T
y=U

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
3      private U y;
4      public Pair(T x,U y) {
5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);

```

Declarations:

PC
15

Classes:

Pair
First=Pair \rightarrow T
Pair=(Pair \times T \times U) \rightarrow Pair
Second=Pair \rightarrow U
x=T
y=U

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```

1  class Pair<T, U> {
2      private T x;
3      private U y;
4      public Pair(T x,U y) {
5          this.x = x;
6          this.y = y;
7      }
8      public T First() {
9          return this.x;
10     }
11     public U Second() {
12         return this.y;
13     }
14 }
15 Pair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);

```

Declarations:

PC	p
16	Pair<int, bool>

Classes:

Pair
First=Pair \rightarrow T
Pair=(Pair \times T \times U) \rightarrow Pair
Second=Pair \rightarrow U
x=T
y=U

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This means that the compiler would actually generate code that behaves like the following:

```
1 class PairIntBool {  
2     private x int;  
3     private y bool;  
4     public PairIntBool(int x,boolean y) {  
5         this.x = x;  
6         this.y = y;  
7     }  
8     public int First() {  
9         return this.x;  
10    }  
11    public bool Second() {  
12        return this.y;  
13    }  
14 }  
15 PairIntBool p = new PairIntBool(10,true);
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

```
1 class PairIntBool {  
2     private x int;  
3     private y bool;  
4     public PairIntBool(int x,boolean y) {  
5         this.x = x;  
6         this.y = y;  
7     }  
8     public int First() {  
9         return this.x;  
10    }  
11    public bool Second() {  
12        return this.y;  
13    }  
14 }  
15 PairIntBool p = new PairIntBool(10,true);
```

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- Interfaces can also be defined generically.
- When implementing a generic interface, we need to provide the types of its generic arguments.

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We can define a generic interface as follows:

```
1 interface IPair<T, U> {  
2     private x T;  
3     private y U;  
4     public Pair(T x,U y) {  
5         this.x = x;  
6         this.y = y;  
7     }  
8     public T First() {  
9         return this.x;  
10    }  
11    public U Second() {  
12        return this.y;  
13    }  
14 }
```

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Which in Java then becomes:

```
1 interface IPair<T, U> {  
2     private x T;  
3     private y U;  
4     public Pair(T x,U y) {  
5         this.x = x;  
6         this.y = y;  
7     }  
8     public T First() {  
9         return this.x;  
10    }  
11    public U Second() {  
12        return this.y;  
13    }  
14 }
```

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The generic interface can then be implemented by a class (generic or not) as follows:

```
1  ...
2  class Pair<T, U> : IPair {
3      private x T;
4      private y U;
5      public Pair(T x,U y) {
6          this.x = x;
7          this.y = y;
8      }
9      public T First() {
10         return this.x;
11     }
12     public U Second() {
13         return this.y;
14     }
15 }
16 IPair<int , bool> p = new Pair<int , bool>(10,true);
```


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Which in Java then becomes:

```
1  ...
2  class Pair<T, U> implements IPair {
3      private x T;
4      private y U;
5      public Pair(T x,U y) {
6          this.x = x;
7          this.y = y;
8      }
9      public T First() {
10         return this.x;
11     }
12     public U Second() {
13         return this.y;
14     }
15 }
16 IPair<int, bool> p = new Pair<int, bool>(10,true);
```

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Ingredients

- We need an `List<T>` generic interface
- We then need two generic classes that implement the interface: `Empty<T>` and `Node<T>`
- In `Empty` the methods fail with a (descriptive) error.

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Ingredients

Live coding demo: generic lists.

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Introduction

- Both C# and (since very recently) Java feature anonymous functions
- They are very handy whenever we need to implement an interface with a single method, such as `PerformAction` or similar.

Lambda functions

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Conclusion

In C# lambda functions have types:

- `Func<T,U>` for a function that takes as input a parameter of type `T`, and which returns a value of type `U`
 - `Func<T1,T2,U>` for a function that takes as input parameters of type `T1` and `T2`, and which returns a value of type `U`
 - ...
-
- `Action<T>` for a function that takes as input a parameter of type `T`, and which returns nothing (`void`)
 - `Action<T1,T2>` for a function that takes as input parameters of type `T1` and `T2`, and which returns nothing (`void`)
 - ...

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In Java lambda functions have many more types (see the documentation for the full list):

- `Function<T,R>` for a function that takes as input a parameter of type `T`, and which returns a value of type `R`
- `BiFunction<T1,T2,R>` for a function that takes as input parameters of type `T1` and `T2`, and which returns a value of type `R`
- `Predicate<T>` for a function that takes as input a parameter of type `T`, and which returns a boolean value
- ...

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Declaration of lambda functions is quite simple: the parameters are separated from the body by an ASCII arrow.

Calling lambda functions is also simple: just brackets with the argument in C#, and an appropriate method in Java (see documentation).

```
1 Func<int,int> f = x => (x + 2);  
2 Console.WriteLine(f(10));
```

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```
1 Func<int,int> f = x => (x + 2);  
2 Console.WriteLine(f(10));
```

Stack:

PC
1

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```
1 Func<int,int> f = x => (x + 2);  
2 Console.WriteLine(f(10));
```

Stack:

PC	f
2	(x) => return (x + 2);

Lambda functions

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```
1 Func<int,int> f = x => (x + 2);  
2 Console.WriteLine(f(10));
```

Stack:

PC	...		ret	x
2	...		null	10

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```
1 Func<int,int> f = x => (x + 2);  
2 Console.WriteLine(f(10));
```

Stack:

PC	...		ret
2	...		12

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```
1 Func<int,int> f = x => (x + 2);  
2 Console.WriteLine(f(10));
```

Stack:

PC	f
3	(x) => return (x + 2);

Output: 12

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Live coding demo: generic lists with map, filter, and fold.

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Looking back

- Generics make it possible to define a class once, but use it with multiple types as arguments
- It is particularly useful for containers such as arrays, tuples, lists, etc.
- It is particularly useful for relationships such as functions

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The best of luck, and thanks for the
attention!