Factory Method Pattern defined

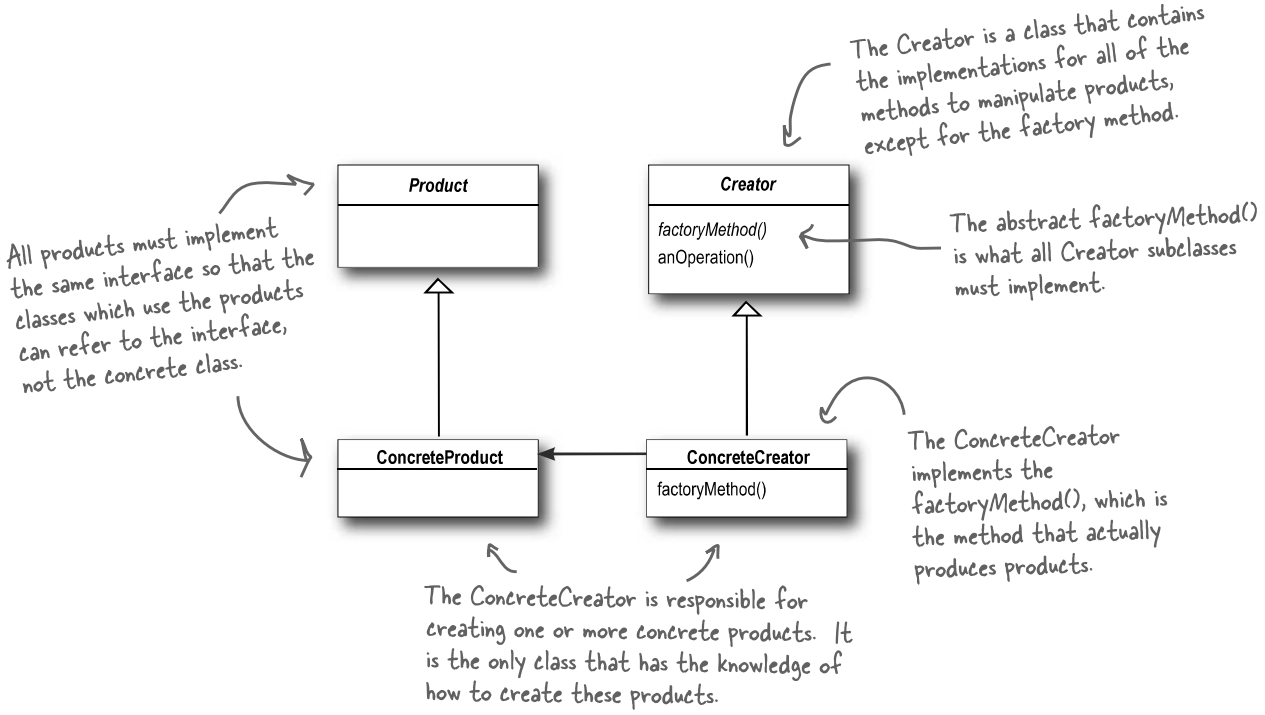
It's time to roll out the official definition of the Factory Method Pattern:

> **The Factory Method Pattern** defines an interface for creating an object, but lets subclasses decide which class to instantiate. Factory Method lets a class defer instantiation to subclasses.

As with every factory, the Factory Method Pattern gives us a way to encapsulate the instantiations of concrete types. Looking at the class diagram below, you can see that the abstract Creator gives you an interface with a method for creating objects, also known as the "factory method." Any other methods implemented in the abstract Creator are written to operate on products produced by the factory method. Only subclasses actually implement the factory method and create products.

As in the official definition, you'll often hear developers say that the Factory Method lets subclasses decide which class to instantiate. They say "decides" not because the pattern allows subclasses themselves to decide at runtime, but because the creator class is written without knowledge of the actual products that will be created, which is decided purely by the choice of the subclass that is used.

You could ask them what "decides" means, but we bet you now understand this better than they do!



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