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3.0 Methods, functions, types, etc.

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Values, variables and expressions


- As mentioned previously, a functional program is essentially an *expression* which yields a *value*:
 - That expression is *expressed* in terms of *functions* of values. Semi-formally (using *productions*):
 - `expression ::= term | function(term,term,...)`
 - `term ::= value | expression`
 - `value ::= constant | variable`
 - `variable ::= identifier`
 - A *variable* is something which we use to simplify an expression by extracting a sub-expression and giving it an identifier with which to refer to it.
 - Note that what we are used to thinking of as “operators” are just functions under another name (and with a different style of invocation);
1 + 2 is equivalent to 1.+(2) §
 - Also note that in Scala, we also have classes and objects which complicate the structure noted above—but in pure functional programming, we just have expressions as described.
 - What about keywords like *if*, *for*, *match*, *case*, etc.? These can all be treated, loosely, as “syntactic sugar” to define expressions.

§ is equivalent to `implicitly[Numeric[Int]].plus(1,2)`

Methods and functions

- A *function* is a value whose behavior is that it can transform a value of one type into a value of (maybe) another type:
 - so, for example, `Int=>String` is the type of a function which transforms an `Int` into a `String`
 - one way* to define a function is by declaring a variable with an appropriate type and provide an expression which says what the function does (where “_” is a placeholder for the value of the input to the function);
 - e.g.:

```
val f: Int=>Int = _*2
```

 What do you think this function does?
- A *method* is a property of a class or an object (it is not itself an object) which does the following:
 - it defines an identifier (so we can refer to the method);
 - it defines a list of input parameters (essentially, these are “variables” available to the function);
 - it defines a function (via the method body) in a convenient and readily understood format;
 - and—by convention, if the method belongs to a *class* (rather than an *object*)—implicitly adds another parameter set: (*this*).
 - e.g.:

```
object MyMath { def double(x: Int): Int = x*2 }
```

* the other way is by defining a method

Types, values, etc.

- The strength of Scala rests to a large extent on its strict type safety. How do types, values and other properties relate to each other?
- Variables* all have six important aspects—which are shared knowledge between you and the compiler:
 - **name**: the *identifier* of the variable (i.e. how it gets referenced);
 - **type**: the *domain* the value belongs to, i.e. properties the variable supports—methods, range of legal values, etc.;
 - **scope**: *where* the variable can be referenced;
 - **mutability**: *whether* the value can be changed;
 - **value**: the *value* of the variable—(if mutable, then the *current* value);
 - **evaluation mechanism**: *how/when* the variable “evaluates” its value (if all functions are *pure* functions—idempotent—it won’t matter when it gets evaluated).

**By “variable”, a Scala programmer doesn’t mean something that can change its value during a run. A variable is used in the sense of algebra—it’s something that stands for some sort of quantity.*

A quick explanation: types

- Different styles of type:
 - **functions**: these can transform value(s) of one (or more) types into a value of some other type.
e.g. `(x: Int) => x.toString`
 - **scalars**: ordinary value types such as *Int*, *Double*, *String*, *LocalDate*, etc.
e.g. `3`
 - **containers**: wrappers around groups of values which may contain zero thru N members:
 - **longitudinal*** (collections): e.g. *Iterator*, *List*, *Array*, etc.
e.g. `List("a", "b", "c")`
 - **transverse***: e.g. *Option*, *Tuple*, *Try*, *Future*, *Either*, etc.
e.g. `Tuple("a", 1, 3.1415927)`
 - **hybrid***: e.g. *Map*, `Seq[Tuple2[String, Int]]` etc.
e.g. `Map("a" -> 1, "b" -> 2)`

**These terms are not in common use: I use them to help differentiate different families of containers.*

A quick explanation: Scope

- Scope in Scala is similar (but not the same) as in Java.
- Example of legal code:

```
val x = 3
```

```
def y = {  
  val x = 5  
  x + 8  
}
```



This is called “shadowing”

The value of *y* is 13 (not 8).

Evaluation mechanism

- A variable or parameter can be *evaluated* in several ways, each by a different mechanism:
 - **direct reference (call-by-value)**: a variable (or method parameter) has a value and that value is effectively *substituted* for the variable/parameter wherever that variable/parameter is referenced.
 - `val x: X = expression`
 - `def y(x: X)`
 - **indirect reference (call-by-name)**: an indirect reference is like a reference via a pointer. We don't actually need to evaluate the pointer until we refer to it.
 - `def x = expression` which is equivalent to `val x: Unit=>Double = { _ => expression }`
 - `def y(x: => X)`
 - **lazy**: if a variable is lazily-evaluated, evaluation is *deferred* until it is needed. But unlike an indirect reference, which is evaluated each and every time it is referenced, a lazy variable is evaluated only when it is *first* referenced.

Exercise 1 - REPL

- A. `def f(x: Int) = x*x`
- B. `f(9)`
- C. `def f(x: Int) = {println(x); x*x}`
- D. `f(9)`
- E. `val y = f(9)`
- F. `lazy val z = f(9)`
- G. `z + 19`
- H. `f{println("hello"); 9}`
- I. `def f(x: => Int) = x*x`
- J. `f{println("hello"); 9}`
- K. `def f(x: () => Int) = x()*x()`
- L. `f{() => println("hello"); 9}`
- M. `val g = {println(9); 9*9}`

Constructors & Extractors

- You're familiar with the idea of *constructors* such as:
 - `List(1,2,3)`
 - `Complex(1.0,-1.0)`
- But, surely, if you can construct objects, you ought to be able to “deconstruct” (or deconstruct/extract) them:

```
case class Complex(real: Double, imag: Double)
```

```
val z = Complex(1.0,-1.0)
```

```
z match {  
  case Complex(r,i) => println(s"$r+i$i")  
}
```

```
def show(l: List[Int]): String =  
  l match {  
    case Nil => ""  
    case h::t => s"$h,"+show(t)  
  }
```

- Yes you can! This is how pattern matching works.

Exercise 2 - REPL

- A. `case class Complex(real: Double, imag: Double)`
- B. `val z = Complex(1,0)`
- C. `z match {case Complex(r,i) => println(s"$r i$i"); case _ => println(s"exception: $z") }`
- D. `val l = List(1,2,3)`
- E. `l match { case h :: t => println(s"head: $h; tail: $t"); case Nil => println(s"empty") }`