

14.G: OBJECT-ORIENTED PROGRAMMING (GLOSSARY)



Contributed by [Chuck Severance](#)
Clinical Associate Professor (School of Information) at [University of Michigan](#)

attribute

A variable that is part of a class.

class

A template that can be used to construct an object. Defines the attributes and methods that will make up the object.

child class

A new class created when a parent class is extended. The child class inherits all of the attributes and methods of the parent class.

constructor

An optional specially named method (`__init__`) that is called at the moment when a class is being used to construct an object. Usually this is used to set up initial values for the object.

destructor

An optional specially named method (`__del__`) that is called at the moment just before an object is destroyed. Destructors are rarely used.

inheritance

When we create a new class (child) by extending an existing class (parent). The child class has all the attributes and methods of the parent class plus additional attributes and methods defined by the child class.

method

A function that is contained within a class and the objects that are constructed from the class. Some object-oriented patterns use 'message' instead of 'method' to describe this concept.

object

A constructed instance of a class. An object contains all of the attributes and methods that were defined by the class. Some object-oriented documentation uses the term 'instance' interchangeably with 'object'.

parent class

The class which is being extended to create a new child class. The parent class contributes all of its methods and attributes to the new child class.

-
1. <https://docs.python.org/3/library/html.parser.html>↩
 2. Cookie image copyright CC-BY <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dinner...es/23570475099>↩
 3. If you are curious about where the list class is defined, take a look at (hopefully the URL won't change) <https://github.com/python/cpython/bl...s/listobject.c> - the list class is written in a language called "C". If you take a look at that source code and find it curious you might want to explore a few Computer Science courses.↩