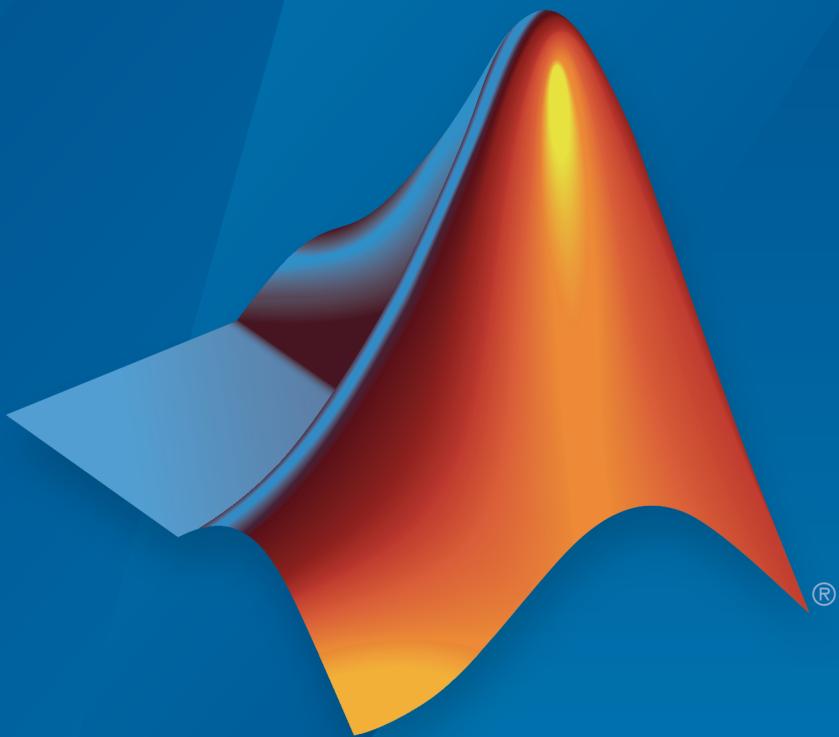


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# Object-Oriented Programming



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## *Object-Oriented Programming*

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# Using Object-Oriented Design in MATLAB

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- “Why Use Object-Oriented Design” on page 1-2
- “Using Handles” on page 1-12

# Why Use Object-Oriented Design

## In this section...

[“Approaches to Writing MATLAB Programs” on page 1-2](#)

[“When Should You Create Object-Oriented Programs” on page 1-6](#)

## Approaches to Writing MATLAB Programs

Creating software applications typically involves designing the application data and implementing operations performed on that data. Procedural programs pass data to functions, which perform the necessary operations on the data. Object-oriented software encapsulates data and operations in objects that interact with each other via the object's interface.

The MATLAB language enables you to create programs using both procedural and object-oriented techniques and to use objects and ordinary functions together in your programs.

### Procedural Program Design

In procedural programming, your design focuses on the steps that must execute to achieve a desired state. Typically, you represent data as individual variables or fields of a structure. You implement operations as functions that take the variables as arguments. Programs usually call a sequence of functions, each one of which is passed data, and then returns modified data. Each function performs an operation or many operations on the data.

### Object-Oriented Program Design

The object-oriented program design involves:

- Identifying the components of the system or application that you want to build
- Analyzing and identifying patterns to determine what components are used repeatedly or share characteristics
- Classifying components based on similarities and differences

After performing this analysis, you define classes that describe the objects your application uses.

## Classes and Objects

A class describes a set of objects with common characteristics. Objects are specific instances of a class. The values contained in an object's properties are what make an object different from other objects of the same class. The functions defined by the class (called methods) are what implement object behaviors that are common to all objects of a class.

## Using Objects in MATLAB Programs

The MATLAB language defines objects that are designed for use in any MATLAB code. For example, consider the `try/catch` programming construct.

If the code executed in the `try` block generates an error, program control passes to the code in the `catch` block. This behavior enables your program to provide special error handling that is more appropriate to your particular application. However, you must have enough information about the error to take the appropriate action.

MATLAB provides detailed information about the error by passing an `MException` object to functions executing the `try/catch` blocks.

The following `try/catch` blocks display the error message stored in an `MException` object when you call a function (`surf` in this case) without the necessary arguments:

```
try
    surf
catch ME
    disp(ME.message)
end
```

Not enough input arguments.

In this code, `ME` is an object of the `MException` class, which the `catch` statement creates to capture information about the error. Displaying the value of the object `message` property returns the error message (Not enough input arguments). Your program can access other properties to get information about the error.

List all the public properties of an object with the `properties` function:

```
properties(ME)
```

```
Properties for class MException:
    identifier
```

```
message
cause
stack
```

## Objects Organize Data

Properties store the information returned in `MException` objects. Reference a property using dot notation, as in `ME.message`. This reference returns the value of the property. For example,

```
class(ME.message)

ans =
char
```

shows that the value of the `message` property is an array of class `char` (a character array). The `stack` property contains a MATLAB `struct`:

```
s = ME.stack

s =
  file: [1x90 char]
  name: 'surf'
  line: 50
```

You can treat `ME.stack` as a structure and reference its fields without assigning the value:

```
ME.stack.file

ans =
D:\myMATLAB\matlab\toolbox\matlab\graph3d\surf.m
```

The `file` field of the `struct` contained in the `stack` property is a character array:

```
class(ME.stack.file)

ans =
char
```

You could, for example, use a property reference in MATLAB functions:

```
strcmp(ME.stack.name, 'surf')
ans =
1
```

## Objects Manage Their Own Data

You could write a function that generates a report from the data returned by **MException** object properties. This function could become complicated because it would have to be able to handle all possible errors. Perhaps you would use different functions for different **try/catch** blocks in your program. If the data returned by the error object must change, you would have to update the functions to use the new data.

Objects define their own operations as part of their interface. The **MException** object can generate its own report. The methods that implement an object's operations are part of the object definition (that is, specified by the class that defines the object). The object definition can be modified many times, but the interface your program use does not change. Objects isolate your code from the object's code.

To see what methods exist for **MException** objects, use the **methods** function:

```
methods(ME)
```

Methods for class **MException**:

<b>addCause</b>	<b>getReport</b>	<b>ne</b>	<b>throw</b>
<b>eq</b>	<b>isequal</b>	<b>rethrow</b>	<b>throwAsCaller</b>

Static methods:  
**last**

You can use these methods like any other MATLAB statement when there is an **MException** object in the workspace. For example:

```
ME.getReport
```

```
ans =  
Error using ==> surf  
Not enough input arguments.
```

Objects often have methods that overload (redefined for the particular class of the object) MATLAB functions. Overloading enables you to use objects just like other values. For example, **MException** objects have an **isequal** method. This method enables you to compare these objects in the same way you would compare variables containing numeric values. If **ME1** and **ME2** are **MException** objects, you can compare them with this statement:

```
isequal(ME1,ME2)
```

However, what really happens in this case is MATLAB calls the `MException isEqual` method because you passed `MException` objects to `isEqual`.

Similarly, the `eq` method enables you to use the `==` operator with `MException` objects:

```
ME == ME2
```

Objects should support only those methods that make sense. For example, it would probably not make sense to multiply `MException` objects so the `MException` class does not implement methods to do so.

## When Should You Create Object-Oriented Programs

You can implement simple programming tasks as simple functions. However, as the magnitude and complexity of your tasks increase, functions become more complex and difficult to manage.

As functions become too large, you can break them into smaller functions and pass data from one to function to another. However, as the number of functions becomes large, designing, and managing the data passed to functions becomes difficult and error prone. At this point, consider moving your MATLAB programming tasks to object-oriented designs.

### Understand a Problem in Terms of Its Objects

Thinking in terms of objects is simpler and more natural for some problems. Think of the nouns in your problem statement as the objects to define and the verbs as the operations to perform.

Consider the design of classes to represent money lending institutions (banks, mortgage companies, individual money lenders, and so on). It is difficult to represent the various types of lenders as procedures. However, you can represent each one as an object that performs certain actions and contains certain data. The process of designing the objects involves identifying the characteristics of a lender that are important to your application.

### Identify Commonalities

What do all money lenders have in common? All `MoneyLender` objects can have a `loan` method and an `InterestRate` property, for example.

### Identify Differences

How does each money lender differ? One can provide loans to businesses while another provides loans only to individuals. Therefore, the `loan` operation might need to be

different for different types of lending institutions. Subclasses of a base `MoneyLender` class can specialize the subclass versions of the `loan` method. Each lender can have a different value for its `InterestRate` property.

Factor out commonalities into a superclass and implement what is specific to each type of lender in the subclass.

### **Add Only What Is Necessary**

These institutions might engage in activities that are not of interest to your application. During the design phase, determine what operations and data an object must contain based on your problem definition.

### **Objects Manage Internal State**

Objects provide several useful features not available from structures and cell arrays. For example, objects can:

- Constrain the data values assigned to any given property
- Calculate the value of a property only when it is queried
- Broadcast notices when any property value is queried or changed
- Restrict access to properties and methods

### **Reducing Redundancy**

As the complexity of your program increases, the benefits of an object-oriented design become more apparent. For example, suppose that you implement the following procedure as part of your application:

- 1 Check inputs
- 2 Perform computation on the first input argument
- 3 Transform the result of step 2 based on the second input argument
- 4 Check validity of outputs and return values

You can implement this procedure as an ordinary function. But suppose that you use this procedure again somewhere in your application, except that step 2 must perform a different computation. You could copy and paste the first implementation, and then rewrite step 2. Or you could create a function that accepted an option indicating which computation to make, and so on. However, these options lead to more complicated code.

An object-oriented design can factor out the common code into what is called a base class. The base class would define the algorithm used and implement whatever is common to

all cases that use this code. Step 2 could be defined syntactically, but not implemented, leaving the specialized implementation to the classes that you then derive from this base class.

```
Step 1
function checkInputs()
    % actual implementation
end

Step 2
function results = computeOnFirstArg()
    % specify syntax only
end

Step 3
function transformResults()
    % actual implementation
end

Step 4
function out = checkOutputs()
    % actual implementation
end
```

The code in the base class is not copied or modified. Classes you derive from the base class inherit this code. Inheritance reduces the amount of code to be tested, and isolates your program from changes to the basic procedure.

## Defining Consistent Interfaces

The use of a class as the basis for similar, but more specialized classes is a useful technique in object-oriented programming. This class defines a common interface. Incorporating this kind of class into your program design enables you to:

- Identify the requirements of a particular objective
- Encode requirements into your program as an interface class

## Reducing Complexity

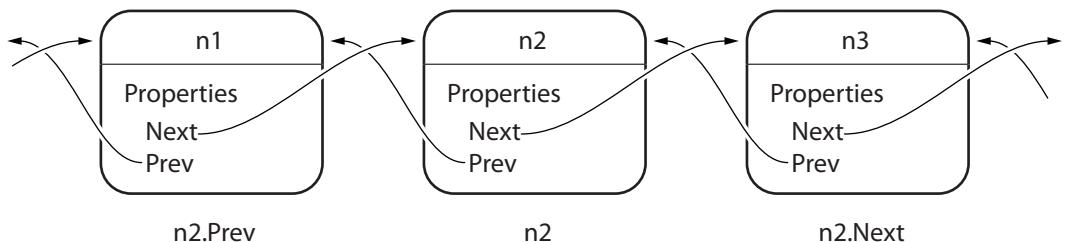
Objects reduce complexity by reducing what you must know to use a component or system:

- Objects provide an interface that hides implementation details.

- Objects enforce rules that control how objects interact.

To illustrate these advantages, consider the implementation of a data structure called a doubly linked list. See “Class to Implement Linked Lists” on page 3-31 for the actual implementation.

Here is a diagram of a three-element list:



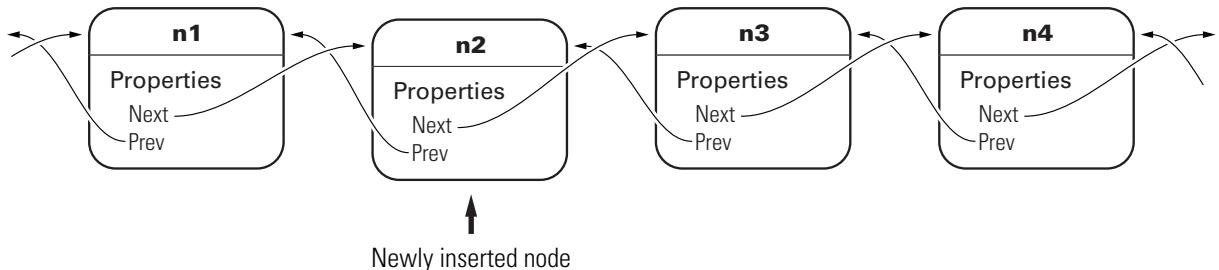
To add a node to the list, disconnect the existing nodes in the list, insert the new node, and reconnect the nodes appropriately. Here are the basic steps:

First disconnect the nodes:

- 1 Unlink `n2.Prev` from `n1`
- 2 Unlink `n1.Next` from `n2`

Now create the new node, connect it, and renumber the original nodes:

- 1 Link `new.Prev` to `n1`
- 2 Link `new.Next` to `n3` (was `n2`)
- 3 Link `n1.Next` to `new` (will be `n2`)
- 4 Link `n3.Prev` to `new` (will be `n2`)



The details of how methods perform these steps are encapsulated in the class design. Each node object contains the functionality to insert itself into or remove itself from the list.

For example, in this class, every node object has an `insertAfter` method. To add a node to a list, create the node object and then call its `insertAfter` method:

```
nnew = NodeConstructor;  
nnew.insertAfter(n1)
```

Because the node class defines the code that implements these operations, this code is:

- Implemented in an optimal way by the class author
- Always up to date with the current version of the class
- Properly tested
- Can automatically update old-versions of the objects when they are loaded from MAT-files.

The object methods enforce the rules for how the nodes interact. This design removes the responsibility for enforcing rules from the applications that use the objects. It also means that the application is less likely to generate errors in its own implementation of the process.

## Fostering Modularity

As you decompose a system into objects (car → engine → fuel system → oxygen sensor), you form modules around natural boundaries. Classes provide three levels of control over code modularity:

- Public — Any code can access this particular property or call this method.
- Protected — Only this object's methods and methods of the object's derived from this object's class can access this property or call this method.
- Private — Only the object's own methods can access this property or call this method.

## Overloaded Functions and Operators

When you define a class, you can overload existing MATLAB functions to work with your new object. For example, the MATLAB serial port class overloads the `fread` function to read data from the device connected to the port represented by this object. You can define various operations, such as equality (`eq`) or addition (`plus`), for a class you have defined to represent your data.

## **More About**

- “Role of Classes in MATLAB” on page 3-2

# Using Handles

## In this section...

- “What Is a Handle?” on page 1-12
- “Copies of Handles” on page 1-12
- “Handle Objects Modified in Functions” on page 1-13
- “Determine If an Object Is a Handle” on page 1-15
- “Deleted Handle Objects” on page 1-16

Because more than one variable can refer to the same object, users interact with instances of handle classes differently than instances of value classes. Understanding how handle objects behave can help you determine whether to implement a handle or a value class. This topic illustrates some of those interactions.

For more information on handle classes, see “Handle Classes”.

## What Is a Handle?

Certain kinds of MATLAB objects are *handles*. When a variable holds a handle, it actually holds a reference to the object.

Handle objects enable more than one variable to refer to the same object. Handle-object behavior affects what happens when you copy handle objects and when you pass them to functions.

## Copies of Handles

All copies of a handle object variable refer to the same underlying object. This reference behavior means that if `h` identifies a handle object, then,

```
h2 = h;
```

Creates another variable, `h2`, that refers to the same object as `h`.

For example, the MATLAB `audioplayer` function creates a handle object that contains the audio source data to reproduce a specific sound segment. The variable returned by the `audioplayer` function identifies the audio data and enables you to access object functions to play the audio.

MATLAB software includes audio data that you can load and use to create an `audioplayer` object. This sample load audio data, creates the audio player, and plays the audio:

```
load gong Fs y
gongSound = audioplayer(y,Fs);
play(gongSound)
```

Suppose that you copy the `gongSound` object handle to another variable (`gongSound2`):

```
gongSound2 = gongSound;
```

The variables `gongSound` and `gongSound2` are copies of the same handle and, therefore, refer to the same audio source. Access the `audioplayer` information using either variable.

For example, set the sample rate for the gong audio source by assigning a new value to the `SampleRate` property. First get the current sample rate and then set a new sample rate:

```
sr = gongSound.SampleRate
```

```
sr =
```

```
8192
```

```
gongSound.SampleRate = sr*2;
```

You can use `gongSound2` to access the same audio source:

```
gongSound2.SampleRate
```

```
ans =
```

```
16384
```

Play the gong sound with the new sample rate:

```
play(gongSound2)
```

## Handle Objects Modified in Functions

When you pass an argument to a function, the function copies the variable from the workspace in which you call the function into the parameter variable in the function's workspace.

Passing a nonhandle variable to a function does not affect the original variable that is in the caller's workspace. For example, `myFunc` modifies a local variable called `var`, but when the function ends, the local variable `var` no longer exists:

```
function myFunc(var)
    var = var + 1;
end
```

Define a variable and pass it to `myfunc`:

```
x = 12;
myFunc(x)
```

The value of `x` has not changed after executing `myFunc(x)`:

```
x
x =
12
```

The `myFunc` function can return the modified value, which you could assign to the same variable name (`x`) or another variable.

```
function out = myFunc(var)
    out = var + 1;
end
```

Modify a value in `myfunc`:

```
x = 12;
x = myFunc(x)

x =
13
```

When the argument is a handle variable, the function copies only the handle, not the object identified by that handle. Both handles (original and local copy) refer to the same object.

When the function modifies the data referred to by the object handle, those changes are accessible from the handle variable in the calling workspace without the need to return the modified object.

For example, the `modifySampleRate` function changes the `audioplayer` sample rate:

```
function modifySampleRate(audioObj,sr)
    audioObj.SampleRate = sr;
end
```

Create an `audioplayer` object and pass it to the `modifySampleRate` function:

```
load gong Fs y
gongSound = audioplayer(y,Fs);
gongSound.SampleRate

ans =
8192

modifySampleRate(gongSound,16384)
gongSound.SampleRate

ans =
16384
```

The `modifySampleRate` function does not need to return a modified `gongSound` object because `audioplayer` objects are handle objects.

## Determine If an Object Is a Handle

Handle objects are members of the `handle` class. Therefore, you can always identify an object as a handle using the `isa` function. `isa` returns logical `true` (1) when testing for a handle variable:

```
load gong Fs y
gongSound = audioplayer(y,Fs);
isa(gongSound,'handle')

ans =
1
```

To determine if a variable is a valid handle object, use `isa` and `isValid`:

```
if isa(gongSound,'handle') && isValid(gongSound)
    ...
```

```
end
```

## Deleted Handle Objects

When a handle object has been deleted, the handle variables that referenced the object can still exist. These variables become invalid because the object they referred to no longer exists. Calling `delete` on the object removes the object, but does not clear handle variables.

For example, create an `audioplayer` object:

```
load gong Fs y
gongSound = audioplayer(y,Fs);
```

The output argument, `gongSound`, is a handle variable. Calling `delete` deletes the object along with the audio source information it contains:

```
delete(gongSound)
```

However, the handle variable still exists:

```
gongSound
gongSound =
    handle to deleted audioplayer
```

The `whos` command shows `gongSound` as an `audioplayer` object:

```
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
Fs	1x1	8	double	
gongSound	1x1	104	audioplayer	
y	42028x1	336224	double	

---

**Note:** The value for Bytes returned by the `whos` command does not include all the data referenced by a handle because many variables can reference the same data.

---

The handle `gongSound` no longer refers to a valid object, as shown by the `isValid` handle method:

```
isValid(gongSound)
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

Calling `delete` on a deleted handle does nothing and does not cause an error. You can pass an array containing both valid and invalid handles to `delete`. MATLAB deletes the valid handles, but does not issue an error when encountering handles that are already invalid.

You cannot access properties with the invalid handle variable:

```
gongSound.SampleRate
```

```
Invalid or deleted object.
```

Functions and methods that access object properties cause an error:

```
play(gongSound)
```

```
Invalid or deleted object.
```

To remove the variable, `gongSound`, use `clear`:

```
clear gongSound
```

```
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
Fs	1x1	8	double	
y	42028x1	336224	double	

## More About

- “Handle Class Destructor” on page 7-16
- “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2



# Basic Example

---

## Create a Simple Class

### In this section...

- “Design Class” on page 2-2
- “Create Object” on page 2-3
- “Access Properties” on page 2-3
- “Call Methods” on page 2-4
- “Add Constructor” on page 2-4
- “Vectorize Methods” on page 2-5
- “Overload Functions” on page 2-6
- “**BasicClass** Code Listing” on page 2-6

### Design Class

The basic purpose of a class is to define an object that encapsulates data and the operations performed on that data. For example, **BasicClass** defines a property and two methods that operate on the data in that property:

- **Value** — Property that contains the data stored in an object of the class
- **roundOff** — Method that rounds the value of the property to two decimal places
- **multiplyBy** — Method that multiplies the value of the property by the specified number

Here is the definition of **BasicClass**:

```
classdef BasicClass
    properties
        Value
    end
    methods
        function r = roundOff(obj)
            r = round([obj.Value],2);
        end
        function r = multiplyBy(obj,n)
            r = [obj.Value] * n;
        end
    end
```

```
end
```

For a summary of class syntax, see [classdef](#).

To use the class:

- Save the class definition in a `.m` file with the same name as the class.
- Create an object of the class.
- Access the properties to assign data.
- Call methods to perform operation on the data.

## Create Object

Create an object of the class using the class name:

```
a = BasicClass
```

```
a =
```

```
BasicClass with properties:
```

```
Value: []
```

Initially, the property value is empty.

## Access Properties

Assign a value to the `Value` property using the object variable and a dot before the property name:

```
a.Value = pi/3;
```

To access a property value, use dot notation without the assignment:

```
a.Value
```

```
ans =
```

```
1.0472
```

For information on class properties, see “Properties” on page 5-12.

### Call Methods

Call the `roundOff` method on object `a`:

```
roundOff(a)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1.0500
```

Pass the object as the first argument to a method that takes multiple arguments:

```
multiplyBy(a,3)
```

```
ans =
```

```
3.1416
```

You can also call a method using dot notation:

```
a.multiplyBy(3)
```

It is not necessary to pass the object explicitly as an argument when using dot notation. The notation uses the object to the left of the method name.

For information on class methods, see “Methods and Functions” on page 5-15

### Add Constructor

Classes can define a special method to create objects, called a constructor. Constructor methods enable you to pass arguments to the constructor, and to validate and assign property values. Here is a constructor for the `BasicClass` class:

```
methods
    function obj = BasicClass(val)
        if nargin > 0
            if isnumeric(val)
                obj.Value = val;
            else
                error('Value must be numeric')
            end
        end
    end
end
```

By adding this constructor to the class definition, you can create an object in one step:

```
a = BasicClass(pi/3)  
a =  
  
BasicClass with properties:  
  
Value: 1.0472
```

This constructor also performs type checking on the input argument. For example:

```
a = BasicClass('A character array')  
  
Error using BasicClass (line 11)  
Value must be numeric
```

For information on constructors, see “Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20

## Vectorize Methods

MATLAB enables you to vectorize operations. For example, you can add a number to a vector:

```
[1 2 3] + 2  
ans =  
  
3     4     5
```

MATLAB adds the number 2 to each of the elements in the array [1 2 3]. To vectorize the arithmetic operator methods, enclose the `obj.Value` property reference in brackets, where `obj` is an object array.

```
[obj.Value] + 2
```

This syntax enables the method to work with arrays of object. For example, given objects `a1`, `a2`, and `a3`:

```
[a1.Value,a2.Value,a3.Value] + 2
```

By using vector notation, `a` can be an array:

```
a(1) = BasicClass(2.7984);  
a(2) = BasicClass(sin(pi/3));  
a(3) = BasicClass(7);
```

```
roundOff(a)  
ans =  
2.8000    0.8700    7.0000
```

## Overload Functions

Classes can implement existing functionality, such as addition, by defining a method with the same name as the existing MATLAB function. For example, suppose that you want to add two **BasicClass** objects. It makes sense to add the values of the **ObjectValue** properties of each object.

Here is an overload of the MATLAB **plus** function. It defines addition for this class as adding the property values:

```
method  
    function r = plus(o1,o2)  
        r = [o1.Value] + [o2.Value];  
    end  
end
```

By implementing a method called **plus**, you can use the “+” operator with objects of **BasicClass**.

```
a = BasicClass(pi/3);  
b = BasicClass(pi/4);  
a + b  
  
ans =  
1.8326
```

### Related Information

For information on overloading functions, see “Overload Functions in Class Definitions” on page 9-31.

For information on overloading operators, see “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49.

## BasicClass Code Listing

Here is the **BasicClass** definition after adding the features discussed in this topic:

```
classdef BasicClass
properties
    Value
end
methods
    function obj = BasicClass(val)
        if nargin == 1
            if isnumeric(val)
                obj.Value = val;
            else
                error('Value must be numeric')
            end
        end
    end
    function r = roundOff(obj)
        r = round([obj.Value],2);
    end
    function r = multiplyBy(obj,n)
        r = [obj.Value] * n;
    end
    function r = plus(o1,o2)
        r = o1.Value + o2.Value;
    end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Class Syntax Guide”



# MATLAB Classes Overview

---

- “Role of Classes in MATLAB” on page 3-2
- “Developing Classes — Typical Workflow” on page 3-8
- “Class to Represent Structured Data” on page 3-19
- “Class to Implement Linked Lists” on page 3-31
- “Class for Graphing Functions” on page 3-48

## Role of Classes in MATLAB

### In this section...

[“Classes” on page 3-2](#)

[“Some Basic Relationships” on page 3-4](#)

## Classes

In the MATLAB language, every value is assigned to a class. For example, creating a variable with an assignment statement constructs a variable of the appropriate class:

```
a = 7;
b = 'some text';
s.Name = 'Nancy';
s.Age = 64;
whos

whos
  Name      Size            Bytes  Class       Attributes
  a            1x1                  8  double
  b            1x9                 18  char
  s            1x1                370  struct
```

Basic commands like `whos` display the class of each value in the workspace. This information helps MATLAB users recognize that some values are characters and display as text while other values are double precision numbers, and so on. Some variables can contain different classes of values like structures.

### Predefined Classes

MATLAB defines fundamental classes that comprise the basic types used by the language. For more information, see “[Fundamental MATLAB Classes](#)”.

### User-Defined Classes

You can create your own MATLAB classes. For example, you could define a class to represent polynomials. This class could define the operations typically associated with MATLAB classes, like addition, subtraction, indexing, displaying in the command

window, and so on. These operations would need to perform the equivalent of polynomial addition, polynomial subtraction, and so on. For example, when you add two polynomial objects:

```
p1 + p2
```

the `plus` operation must be able to add polynomial objects because the polynomial class defines this operation.

When you define a class, you can overload special MATLAB functions (such as `plus.m` for the addition operator). MATLAB calls these methods when users apply those operations to objects of your class.

See “Class Design for Polynomials” on page 19-2 for an example that creates just such a class.

### MATLAB Classes — Key Terms

MATLAB classes use the following words to describe different parts of a class definition and related concepts.

- Class definition — Description of what is common to every instance of a class.
- Properties — Data storage for class instances
- Methods — Special functions that implement operations that are usually performed only on instances of the class
- Events — Messages defined by classes and broadcast by class instances when some specific action occurs
- Attributes — Values that modify the behavior of properties, methods, events, and classes
- Listeners — Objects that respond to a specific event by executing a callback function when the event notice is broadcast
- Objects — Instances of classes, which contain actual data values stored in the objects' properties
- Subclasses — Classes that are derived from other classes and that inherit the methods, properties, and events from those classes (subclasses facilitate the reuse of code defined in the superclass from which they are derived).
- Superclasses — Classes that are used as a basis for the creation of more specifically defined classes (that is, subclasses).

- Packages — Folders that define a scope for class and function naming

## Some Basic Relationships

This section discusses some of the basic concepts used by MATLAB classes.

### Classes

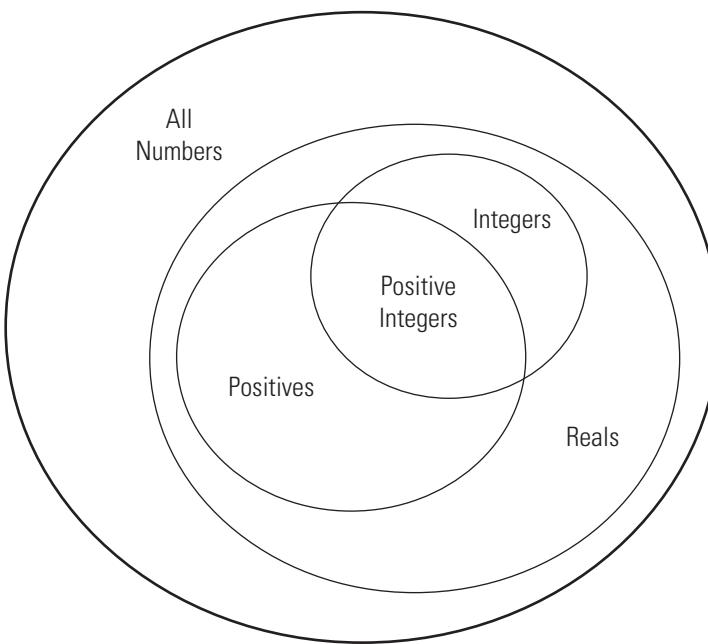
A class is a definition that specifies certain characteristics that all instances of the class share. These characteristics are determined by the properties, methods, and events that define the class and the values of attributes that modify the behavior of each of these class components. Class definitions describe how objects of the class are created and destroyed, what data the objects contain, and how you can manipulate this data.

### Class Hierarchies

It sometimes makes sense to define a new class in terms of existing classes. This approach enables you to reuse the designs and techniques in a new class that represents a similar entity. You accomplish this reuse by creating a subclass. A subclass defines objects that are a subset of those objects defined by the superclass. A subclass is more specific than its superclass and might add new properties, methods, and events to those components inherited from the superclass.

Mathematical sets can help illustrate the relationships among classes. In the following diagram, the set of Positive Integers is a subset of the set of Integers and a subset of Positives. All three sets are subsets of Reals, which is a subset of All Numbers.

The definition of Positive Integers requires the additional specification that members of the set be greater than zero. Positive Integers combine the definitions from both Integers and Positives. The resulting subset is more specific, and therefore more narrowly defined, than the supersets, but still shares all the characteristics that define the supersets.



The “is a” relationship is a good way to determine if it is appropriate to define a particular subset in terms of existing supersets. For example, each of the following statements makes sense:

- A Positive Integer is an Integer
- A Positive Integer is a Positive number

If the “is a” relationship holds, then it is likely you can define a new class from a class or classes that represent some more general case.

### Reusing Solutions

Classes are usually organized into taxonomies to foster code reuse. For example, if you define a class to implement an interface to the serial port of a computer, it would probably be similar to a class designed to implement an interface to the parallel port. To reuse code, you could define a superclass that contains everything that is common to the two types of ports, and then derive subclasses from the superclass in which you implement only what is unique to each specific port. Then the subclasses would inherit all the common functionality from the superclass.

## Objects

A class is like a template for the creation of a specific instance of the class. This instance or object contains actual data for a particular entity that is represented by the class. For example, an instance of a bank account class is an object that represents a specific bank account, with an actual account number and an actual balance. This object has built into it the ability to perform operations defined by the class, such as making deposits to and withdrawals from the account balance.

Objects are not just passive data containers. Objects actively manage the data contained by allowing only certain operations to be performed, by hiding data that does not need to be public, and by preventing external clients from misusing data by performing operations for which the object was not designed. Objects even control what happens when they are destroyed.

## Encapsulating Information

An important aspect of objects is that you can write software that accesses the information stored in the object via its properties and methods without knowing anything about how that information is stored, or even whether it is stored or calculated when queried. The object isolates code that accesses the object from the internal implementation of methods and properties. You can define classes that hide both data and operations from any methods that are not part of the class. You can then implement whatever interface is most appropriate for the intended use.

## References

- [1] Shalloway, A., J. R. Trott, *Design Patterns Explained A New Perspective on Object-Oriented Design..* Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley 2002.
- [2] Gamma, E., R. Helm, R. Johnson, J. Vlissides, *Design Patterns Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software.* Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley 1995.
- [3] Freeman, E., Elisabeth Freeman, Kathy Sierra, Bert Bates, *Head First Design Patterns.* Sebastopol, CA 2004.

## Related Examples

- “Create a Simple Class” on page 2-2
- “Developing Classes — Typical Workflow” on page 3-8

- “Class to Represent Structured Data” on page 3-19
- “Class to Implement Linked Lists” on page 3-31

## **External Websites**

- Object Oriented Programming

## Developing Classes — Typical Workflow

### In this section...

- “Formulating a Class” on page 3-8
- “Specifying Class Components” on page 3-9
- “`BankAccount` Class Implementation” on page 3-10
- “Formulating the `AccountManager` Class” on page 3-14
- “Implementing the `AccountManager` Class” on page 3-15
- “`AccountManager` Class Synopsis” on page 3-15
- “Using `BankAccount` Objects” on page 3-16

### Formulating a Class

This example discusses how to approach the design and implementation of a class. The objective of this class is to represent a familiar concept (a bank account). However, you can apply the same approach to most class designs.

To design a class that represents a bank account, first determine the elements of data and the operations that form your abstraction of a bank account. For example, a bank account has:

- An account number
- An account balance
- A status (open, closed, etc.)

You must perform certain operations on a bank account:

- Create an object for each bank account
- Deposit money
- Withdraw money
- Generate a statement
- Save and load the `BankAccount` object

If the balance is too low and you attempt to withdraw money, the bank account broadcasts a notice. When this event occurs, the bank account broadcasts a notice to other entities that are designed to listen for these notices. In this example, a simplified version of an account manager program performs this task.

In this example, an account manager program determines the status of all bank accounts. This program monitors the account balance and assigns one of three values:

- **open** — Account balance is a positive value
- **overdrawn** — Account balance is overdrawn, but by \$200 or less.
- **closed** — Account balance is overdrawn by more than \$200.

These features define the requirements of the **BankAccount** and **AccountManager** classes. Include only what functionality is required to meet your specific objectives. Support special types of accounts by subclassing **BankAccount** and adding more specific features to the subclasses. Extend the **AccountManager** as required to support new account types.

## Specifying Class Components

Classes store data in properties, implement operations with methods, and support notifications with events and listeners. Here is how the **BankAccount** and **AccountManager** classes define these components.

### Class Data

The class defines these properties to store the account number, account balance, and the account status:

- **AccountNumber** — A property to store the number identifying the specific account. MATLAB assigns a value to this property when you create an instance of the class. Only **BankAccount** class methods can set this property. The **SetAccess** attribute is **private**.
- **AccountBalance** — A property to store the current balance of the account. The class operation of depositing and withdrawing money assigns values to this property. Only **BankAccount** class methods can set this property. The **SetAccess** attribute is **private**.
- **AccountStatus** — The **BankAccount** class defines a default value for this property. The **AccountManager** class methods change this value whenever the value of the **AccountBalance** falls below 0. The **Access** attribute specifies that only the **AccountManager** and **BankAccount** classes have access to this property.
- **AccountListener** — Storage for the **InsufficientFunds** event listener. Saving a **BankAccount** object does not save this property because you must recreate the listener when loading the object.

## Class Operations

These methods implement the operations defined in the class formulation:

- **BankAccount** — Accepts an account number and an initial balance to create an object that represents an account.
- **deposit** — Updates the **AccountBalance** property when a deposit transaction occurs
- **withdraw** — Updates the **AccountBalance** property when a withdrawal transaction occurs
- **getStatement** — Displays information about the account
- **loadobj** — Recreates the account manager listener when you load the object from a MAT-file.

## Class Events

The account manager program changes the status of bank accounts that have negative balances. To implement this action, the **BankAccount** class triggers an event when a withdrawal results in a negative balance. Therefore, the triggering of the **InsufficientFunds** event occurs from within the **withdraw** method.

To define an event, specify a name within an **events** block. Trigger the event by a call to the **notify** handle class method. Because **InsufficientFunds** is not a predefined event, you can name it with any **char** vector and trigger it with any action.

## BankAccount Class Implementation

It is important to ensure that there is only one set of data associated with any object of a **BankAccount** class. You would not want independent copies of the object that could have, for example, different values for the account balance. Therefore, implement the **BankAccount** class as a handle class. All copies of a given handle object refer to the same data.

## BankAccount Class Synopsis

BankAccount Class	Discussion
<pre>classdef BankAccount &lt; handle</pre>	Handle class because there should be only one copy of any instance of <b>BankAccount</b> . “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2

<b>BankAccount Class</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<pre>properties (Access = ?AccountManager)AccountStatus contains the status           AccountStatus = 'open' end</pre>	<p>of the account determined by the current balance. Access is limited to the <b>BankAccount</b> and <b>AccountManager</b> classes. “Class Members Access” on page 12-26</p>
<pre>properties (SetAccess = private)           AccountNumber           AccountBalance end properties (Transient)           AccountListener end</pre>	<p><b>AccountStatus</b> property access by <b>AccountManager</b> class methods.</p> <p><b>AccountNumber</b> and <b>AccountBalance</b> properties have private set access.</p>
	<p><b>AccountListener</b> property is transient so the listener handle is not saved.</p>
<pre>events       InsufficientFunds end</pre>	<p>See “Specify Property Attributes” on page 8-7.</p>
	<p>Class defines event called <b>InsufficientFunds</b>. <b>withdraw</b> method triggers event when account balance becomes negative.</p>
	<p>For information on events and listeners, see “Events” .</p>
<p>methods</p>	<p>Block of ordinary methods. See “Methods and Functions” on page 5-15 for syntax.</p>
<pre>function BA = BankAccount(AccountNumber,InitialBalance)     BA.AccountNumber = AccountNumber;     BA.AccountBalance = InitialBalance;     BA.AccountListener = AccountManager.addAccount(BA); end</pre>	<p><b>Constructor</b> initializes property values with input arguments.</p>
	<p><b>AccountManager.addAccount</b> is static method of <b>AccountManager</b> class. Creates listener for <b>InsufficientFunds</b> event and stores listener handle in <b>AccountListener</b> property.</p>

BankAccount Class	Discussion
<pre> function deposit(BA,amt)     BA.AccountBalance = BA.AccountBalance + amt;     if BA.AccountBalance &gt; 0         BA.AccountStatus = 'open';     end end </pre>	deposit adjusts value of AccountBalance property.
<pre> function withdraw(BA,amt)     if (strcmp(BA.AccountStatus,'closed') &amp;&amp;         BA.AccountBalance &lt; 0)         disp(['Account ',num2str(BA.AccountNumber),               ' has been closed.'])         return     end     newbal = BA.AccountBalance - amt;     BA.AccountBalance = newbal;     if newbal &lt; 0         notify(BA,'InsufficientFunds')     end end </pre>	If AccountStatus is closed and subsequent deposit brings AccountBalance into positive range, then AccountStatus is reset to open.
<pre> function getStatement(BA)     disp('-----')     disp(['Account: ',num2str(BA.AccountNumber)])     ab = sprintf('%0.2f',BA.AccountBalance);     disp(['CurrentBalance: ',ab])     disp(['Account Status: ',BA.AccountStatus])     disp('-----') end </pre>	Updates AccountBalance property. If value of account balance is negative as a result of the withdrawal, notify triggers InsufficientFunds event.
<pre> methods (Static) </pre>	For more information on listeners, see “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21.
<pre> function obj = loadobj(s)     if isstruct(s)         accNum = s.AccountNumber;         initBal = s.AccountBalance;         obj = BankAccount(accNum,initBal);     else         obj.AccountListener = AccountManager.addListener(s);     end end </pre>	Display selected information about the account. End of ordinary methods block.
	Beginning of static methods block. See “Static Methods” on page 9-29
	loadobj method: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the load operation fails, create the object from a struct.</li> </ul> Creates the listener using the newly created BankAccount object as the source.
	For more information on saving and loading objects, see “Save and Load Process for Objects” on page 13-2

BankAccount Class	Discussion
end end	End of static methods block
	End of <code>classdef</code>

**Expand for Class Code**

```

classdef BankAccount < handle
    properties (Access = ?AccountManager)
        AccountStatus = 'open'
    end
    properties (SetAccess = private)
        AccountNumber
        AccountBalance
    end
    properties (Transient)
        AccountListener
    end
    events
        InsufficientFunds
    end
    methods
        function BA = BankAccount(accNum,initBal)
            BA.AccountNumber = accNum;
            BA.AccountBalance = initBal;
            BA.AccountListener = AccountManager.addAccount(BA);
        end
        function deposit(BA,amt)
            BA.AccountBalance = BA.AccountBalance + amt;
            if BA.AccountBalance > 0
                BA.AccountStatus = 'open';
            end
        end
        function withdraw(BA,amt)
            if (strcmp(BA.AccountStatus,'closed')&& BA.AccountBalance <= 0)
                disp(['Account ',num2str(BA.AccountNumber), ' has been closed.'])
                return
            end
            newbal = BA.AccountBalance - amt;
            BA.AccountBalance = newbal;
            if newbal < 0
                notify(BA,'InsufficientFunds')
            end
        end
    end

```

```
function getStatement(BA)
    disp('-----')
    disp(['Account: ',num2str(BA.AccountNumber)])
    ab = sprintf('%0.2f',BA.AccountBalance);
    disp(['CurrentBalance: ',ab])
    disp(['Account Status: ',BA.AccountStatus])
    disp('-----')
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(s)
        if isstruct(s)
            accNum = s.AccountNumber;
            initBal = s.AccountBalance;
            obj = BankAccount(accNum,initBal);
        else
            obj.AccountListener = AccountManager.addAccount(s);
        end
    end
end
end
```

## Formulating the AccountManager Class

The purpose of the `AccountManager` class is to provide services to accounts. For the `BankAccount` class, the `AccountManager` class listens for withdrawals that cause the balance to drop into the negative range. When the `BankAccount` object triggers the `InsufficientFunds` event, the `AccountManager` resets the account status.

The `AccountManager` class stores no data so it does not need properties. The `BankAccount` object stores the handle of the listener object.

The `AccountManager` performs two operations:

- Assign a status to each account as a result of a withdrawal
- Adds an account to the system by monitoring account balances.

### Class Components

The `AccountManager` class implements two methods:

- `assignStatus` — Method that assigns a status to a `BankAccount` object. Serves as the listener callback.

- `addAccount` — Method that creates the `InsufficientFunds` listener.

## Implementing the AccountManager Class

The `AccountManager` class implements both methods as static because there is no need for an `AccountManager` object. These methods operate on `BankAccount` objects.

The `AccountManager` is not intended to be instantiated. Separating the functionality of the `AccountManager` class from the `BankAccount` class provides greater flexibility and extensibility. For example, doing so enables you to:

- Extend the `AccountManager` class to support other types of accounts while keeping the individual account classes simple and specialized.
- Change the criteria for the account status without affecting the compatibility of saved and loaded `BankAccount` objects.
- Develop an `Account` superclass that factors out what is common to all accounts without requiring each subclass to implement the account management functionality

## AccountManager Class Synopsis

AccountManager Class	Discussion
<pre><code>classdef AccountManager</code></pre>	<p>This class defines the <code>InsufficientFunds</code> event listener and the listener callback.</p>
<pre><code>methods (Static)</code></pre>	<p>There is no need to create an instance of this class so the methods defined are static. See “Static Methods” on page 9-29.</p>
<pre><code>function assignStatus(BA)     if BA.AccountBalance &lt; 0         if BA.AccountBalance &lt; -200             BA.AccountStatus = 'closed';         else             BA.AccountStatus = 'overdrawn';         end     end end</code></pre>	<p>The <code>assignStatus</code> method is the callback for the <code>InsufficientFunds</code> event listener. It determines the value of a <code>BankAccount</code> object <code>AccountStatus</code> property based on the value of the <code>AccountBalance</code> property.</p> <p>The <code>BankAccount</code> class constructor calls the <code>AccountManager addAccount</code> method to create and store this listener.</p>

AccountManager Class	Discussion
<pre> function lh = addAccount(BA)     lh = addlistener(BA, 'InsufficientFunds',         @(src, ~)AccountManager.assignStatus(src)); end </pre>	<p>addAccount creates the listener for the InsufficientFunds event that the BankAccount class defines.</p> <p>See “Control Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27</p>
<pre> end </pre>	<p>end statements for methods and for classdef.</p>

#### Expand for Class Code

```

classdef AccountManager
methods (Static)
    function assignStatus(BA)
        if BA.AccountBalance < 0
            if BA.AccountBalance < -200
                BA.AccountStatus = 'closed';
            else
                BA.AccountStatus = 'overdrawn';
            end
        end
    end
    function lh = addAccount(BA)
        lh = addlistener(BA, 'InsufficientFunds', ...
            @(src, ~)AccountManager.assignStatus(src));
    end
end

```

## Using BankAccount Objects

The BankAccount class, while overly simple, demonstrates how MATLAB classes behave. For example, create a BankAccount object with an account number and an initial deposit of \$500:

```
BA = BankAccount(1234567,500)
```

```
BA =
```

```
BankAccount with properties:
```

```
AccountNumber: 1234567
AccountBalance: 500
AccountListener: [1x1 event.listener]
```

Use the `getStatement` method to check the status:

```
getStatement(BA)
```

```
-----  
Account: 1234567  
CurrentBalance: 500.00  
Account Status: open  
-----
```

Make a withdrawal of \$600, which results in a negative account balance:

```
withdraw(BA,600)
getStatement(BA)
```

```
-----  
Account: 1234567  
CurrentBalance: -100.00  
Account Status: overdrawn  
-----
```

The \$600 withdrawal triggered the `InsufficientFunds` event. The current criteria defined by the `AccountManager` class results in a status of `overdrawn`.

Make another withdrawal of \$200:

```
withdraw(BA,200)
getStatement(BA)
```

```
-----  
Account: 1234567  
CurrentBalance: -300.00  
Account Status: closed  
-----
```

Now the `AccountStatus` has been set to `closed` by the listener and further attempts to make withdrawals are blocked without triggering the event:

```
withdraw(BA,100)
```

Account 1234567 has been closed.

If the **AccountBalance** is returned to a positive value by a deposit, then the **AccountStatus** is returned to open and withdrawals are allowed again:

```
deposit(BA,700)  
getStatement(BA)
```

```
-----  
Account: 1234567  
CurrentBalance: 400.00  
Account Status: open  
-----
```

# Class to Represent Structured Data

## In this section...

- “Objects as Data Structures” on page 3-19
- “Structure of the Data” on page 3-19
- “The `TensileData` Class” on page 3-20
- “Create an Instance and Assign Data” on page 3-20
- “Restrict Properties to Specific Values” on page 3-21
- “Simplifying the Interface with a Constructor” on page 3-22
- “Calculate Data on Demand” on page 3-23
- “Displaying `TensileData` Objects” on page 3-24
- “Method to Plot Stress vs. Strain” on page 3-25
- “`TensileData` Class Synopsis” on page 3-26

## Objects as Data Structures

This example defines a class for storing data with a specific structure. Using a consistent structure for data storage makes it easier to create functions that operate on the data. A MATLAB `struct` with field names describing the particular data element is a useful way to organize data. However, a class can define both the data storage (properties) and operations that you can perform on that data (methods). This example illustrates these advantages.

### Background for the Example

For this example, the data represents tensile stress/strain measurements. These data are used to calculate the elastic modulus of various materials. In simple terms, stress is the force applied to a material and strain is the resulting deformation. Their ratio defines a characteristic of the material. While this is an over simplification of the process, it suffices for this example.

### Structure of the Data

This table describes the structure of the data.

Data	Description
Material	char vector identifying the type of material tested
SampleNumber	Number of a particular test sample
Stress	Vector of numbers representing the stress applied to the sample during the test.
Strain	Vector of numbers representing the strain at the corresponding values of the applied stress.
Modulus	Number defining an elastic modulus of the material under test, which is calculated from the stress and strain data

## The TensileData Class

This example begins with a simple implementation of the class and builds on this implementation to illustrate how features enhance the usefulness of the class.

The first version of the class provides only data storage. The class defines a property for each of the required data elements.

```
classdef TensileData
properties
    Material
    SampleNumber
    Stress
    Strain
    Modulus
end
end
```

## Create an Instance and Assign Data

The following statements create a `TensileData` object and assign data to it:

```
td = TensileData;
td.Material = 'Carbon Steel';
td.SampleNumber = 001;
td.Stress = [2e4 4e4 6e4 8e4];
td.Strain = [.12 .20 .31 .40];
td.Modulus = mean(td.Stress./td.Strain);
```

## Advantages of a Class vs. a Structure

Treat the `TensileData` object (`td` in the previous statements) much as you would any MATLAB structure. However, defining a specialized data structure as a class has advantages over using a general-purpose data structure, like a MATLAB `struct`:

- Users cannot accidentally misspell a field name without getting an error. For example, typing the following:

```
td.Modulis = ...
```

would simply

Add a field to a structure, but returns an error when `td` is an instance of the `TensileData` class.

- A class is easy to reuse. Once you have defined the class, you can easily extend it with subclasses that add new properties.
- A class is easy to identify. A class has a name so that you can identify objects with the `whos` and `class` functions and the Workspace browser. The class name makes it easy to refer to records with a meaningful name.
- A class can validate individual field values when assigned, including class or value.
- A class can restrict access to fields, for example, allowing a particular field to be read, but not changed.

## Restrict Properties to Specific Values

Restrict properties to specific values by defining a property set access method. MATLAB calls the set access method whenever setting a value for a property.

### Material Property Set Function

The `Material` property set method restricts the assignment of the property to one of the following strings: `aluminum`, `stainless steel`, or `carbon steel`.

Add this function definition to the methods block.

```
classdef TensileData
properties
    Material
    SampleNumber
    Stress
```

```
    Strain
    Modulus
end
methods
    function obj = set.Material(obj,material)
        if (strcmpi(material,'aluminum') ||...
            strcmpi(material,'stainless steel') ||...
            strcmpi(material,'carbon steel'))
            obj.Material = material;
        else
            error('Invalid Material')
        end
    end
end
end
```

When there is an attempt to set the `Material` property, MATLAB calls the `set.Material` method before setting the property value.

If the value matches the acceptable values, the function sets the property to that value. The code within `set` method can access the property directly to avoid calling the property `set` method recursively.

For example:

```
td = TensileData;
td.Material = 'brass';

Error using TensileData/set.Material
Invalid Material
```

## Simplifying the Interface with a Constructor

Simplify the interface to the `TensileData` class by adding a constructor that:

- Enables you to pass the data as arguments to the constructor
- Assigns values to properties

The constructor is a method having the same name as the class.

```
methods
    function td = TensileData(material,samplenumber,stress,strain)
        if nargin > 0
```

```

        td.Material = material;
        td.SampleNumber = samplenumber;
        td.Stress = stress;
        td.Strain = strain;
    end
end
end

```

Create a `TensileData` object fully populated with data using the following statement:

```

td = TensileData('carbon steel',1,...
[2e4 4e4 6e4 8e4],...
[.12 .20 .31 .40]);

```

## Calculate Data on Demand

If the value of a property depends on the values of other properties, define that property using the `Dependent` attribute. MATLAB does not store the values of dependent properties. The dependent property `get` method determines the property value when the property is queried.

### Calculating Modulus

`TensileData` objects do not store the value of the `Modulus` property. The constructor does not have an input argument for the value of the `Modulus` property. The value of the `Modulus`:

- Is calculated from the `Stress` and `Strain` property values
- Must change if the value of the `Stress` or `Strain` property changes

Therefore, it is better to calculate the value of the `Modulus` property only when its value is requested. Use a property `get` access method to calculate the value of the `Modulus`.

### Modulus Property Get Method

The `Modulus` property depends on `Stress` and `Strain`, so its `Dependent` attribute is `true`. Place the `Modulus` property in a separate `properties` block and set the `Dependent` attribute.

The `get.Modulus` method calculates and returns the value of the `Modulus` property.

```
properties (Dependent)
```

```
    Modulus  
end
```

Define the property get method in a `methods` block using only default attributes.

```
methods  
    function modulus = get.Modulus(obj)  
        ind = find(obj.Strain > 0);  
        modulus = mean(obj.Stress(ind)./obj.Strain(ind));  
    end  
end
```

This method calculates the average ratio of stress to strain data after eliminating zeros in the denominator data.

MATLAB calls the `get.Modulus` method when the property is queried. For example,

```
td = TensileData('carbon steel',1,...  
    [2e4 4e4 6e4 8e4],...  
    [.12 .20 .31 .40]);  
td.Modulus  
  
ans =  
    1.9005e+005
```

#### Modulus Property Set Method

To set the value of a `Dependent` property, the class must implement a property set method. There is no need to allow explicit setting of the `Modulus` property. However, a set method enables you to provide a customized error message. The `Modulus` set method references the current property value and then returns an error:

```
methods  
    function obj = set.Modulus(obj,~)  
        fprintf('%s%d\n','Modulus is: ',obj.Modulus)  
        error('You cannot set the Modulus property');  
    end  
end
```

#### Displaying `TensileData` Objects

The `TensileData` class overloads the `disp` method. This method controls object display in the command window.

The **disp** method displays the value of the **Material**, **SampleNumber**, and **Modulus** properties. It does not display the **Stress** and **Strain** property data. These properties contain raw data that is not easily viewed in the command window.

The **disp** method uses **fprintf** to display formatted text in the command window:

```
methods
    function disp(td)
        fprintf(1,...
            'Material: %s\nSample Number: %g\nModulus: %1.5g\n',...
            td.Material,td.SampleNumber,td.Modulus);
    end
end
```

## Method to Plot Stress vs. Strain

It is useful to view a graph of the stress/strain data to determine the behavior of the material over a range of applied tension. The **TensileData** class overloads the MATLAB **plot** function.

The **plot** method creates a linear graph of the stress versus strain data and adds a title and axis labels to produce a standardized graph for the tensile data records:

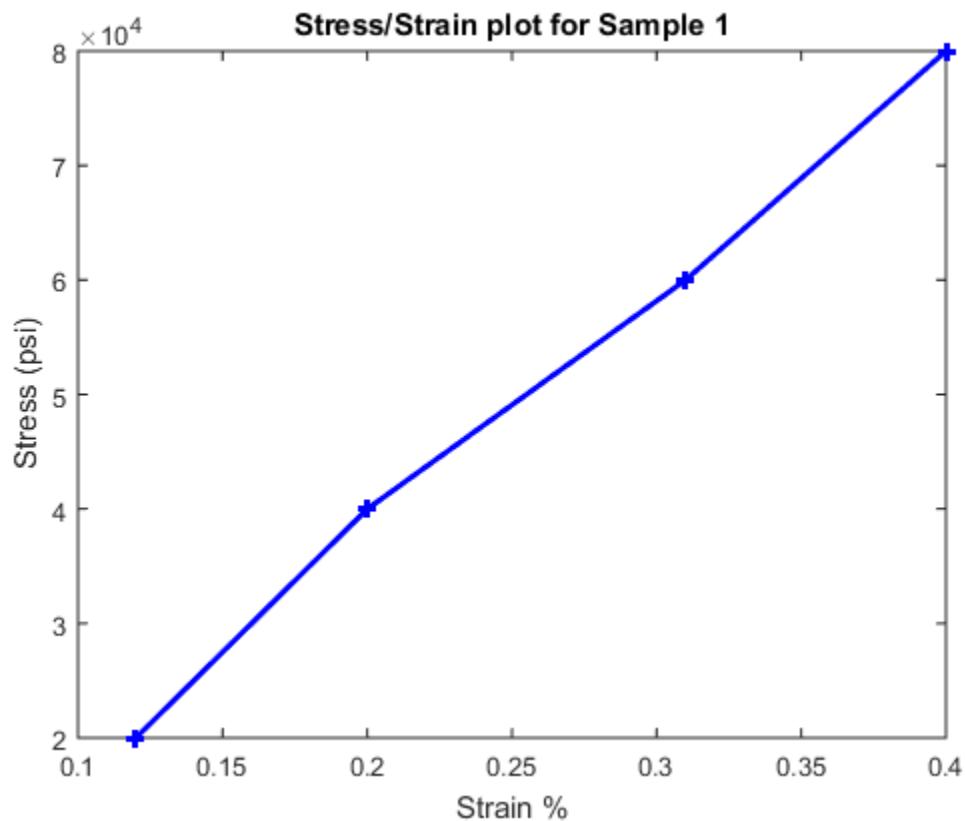
```
methods
    function plot(td,varargin)
        plot(td.Strain,td.Stress,varargin{:})
        title(['Stress/Strain plot for Sample',...
            num2str(td.SampleNumber)])
        ylabel('Stress (psi)')
        xlabel('Strain %')
    end
end
```

The first argument to this method is a **TensileData** object, which contains the data.

The method passes a variable list of arguments (**varargin**) directly to the built-in **plot** function. The **TensileData** **plot** method allows you to pass line specifier arguments or property name/value pairs.

For example:

```
td = TensileData('carbon steel',1,...
    [2e4 4e4 6e4 8e4],[.12 .20 .31 .40]);
plot(td,'-+b','LineWidth',2)
```



## TensileData Class Synopsis

### Example Code

```
classdef TensileData  
  
properties  
    Material  
    SampleNumber  
    Stress  
    Strain  
end
```

### Discussion

Value class enables independent copies of object. For more information, see “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2

See “Structure of the Data” on page 3-19

Example Code	Discussion
<pre>properties (Dependent)     Modulus end</pre>	<p>Calculate <b>Modulus</b> when queried.</p> <p>For information about this code, see “Calculate Data on Demand” on page 3-23.</p>
<pre>methods</pre>	<p>For general information, see “Access Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54</p>
<pre>function td = TensileData(material,samplenumber,..)     stress,strain)     if nargin &gt; 0         td.Material = material;         td.SampleNumber = samplenumber;         td.Stress = stress;         td.Strain = strain;     end end</pre>	<p>For general information about methods, see “Ordinary Methods” on page 9-7</p> <p>For information about this code, see “Simplifying the Interface with a Constructor” on page 3-22.</p>
<pre>function obj = set.Material(obj,material)     if (strcmpi(material,'aluminum')   ...         strcmpi(material,'stainless steel')   ...         strcmpi(material,'carbon steel'))         obj.Material = material;     else         error('Invalid Material')     end end</pre>	<p>For general information about constructors, see “Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20</p> <p>Restrict possible values for <b>Material</b> property.</p>
<pre>function m = get.Modulus(obj)     ind = find(obj.Strain &gt; 0);     m = mean(obj.Stress(ind)./obj.Strain(ind)); end</pre>	<p>For information about this code, see “Restrict Properties to Specific Values” on page 3-21.</p> <p>For general information about property set methods, see “Property Set Methods” on page 8-49.</p> <p>Calculate <b>Modulus</b> property when queried.</p>
	<p>For information about this code, see “Modulus Property Get Method” on page 3-23.</p> <p>For general information about property get methods, see “Property Get Methods” on page 8-52.</p>

Example Code	Discussion
<pre>function obj = set.Modulus(obj,~)     fprintf('%s%d\n','Modulus is: ',obj.Modulus)     error('You cannot set Modulus property'); end</pre>	Add set method for <b>Dependent Modulus</b> property. For information about this code, see “Modulus Property Set Method” on page 3-24.
<pre>function disp(td)     fprintf(1, 'Material: %s\nSample Number: %g\nModulus: %1.5g\n',...         td.Material,td.SampleNumber,td.Modulus) end</pre>	For general information about property set methods, see “Property Set Methods” on page 8-49.
<pre>function plot(td,varargin)     plot(td.Strain,td.Stress,varargin{::})     title(['Stress/Strain plot for Sample',...         num2str(td.SampleNumber)])     ylabel('Stress (psi)')     xlabel('Strain %') end</pre>	Overload <b>disp</b> method to display certain properties.
<pre>end</pre>	For information about this code, see “Displaying <b>TensileData</b> Objects” on page 3-24
<pre>end</pre>	For general information about overloading <b>disp</b> , see “Overloading the <b>disp</b> Function” on page 18-41
<pre>end</pre>	Overload <b>plot</b> function to accept <b>TensileData</b> objects and graph stress vs. strain.
<pre>end</pre>	“Method to Plot Stress vs. Strain” on page 3-25
<pre>end</pre>	<b>end</b> statements for <b>methods</b> and for <b>classdef</b> .

#### Expand for Class Code

```
classdef TensileData
properties
    Material
    SampleNumber
    Stress
    Strain
end
properties (Dependent)
    Modulus
end
```

```
methods
    function td = TensileData(material,samplenumber,stress,strain)
        if nargin > 0
            td.Material = material;
            td.SampleNumber = samplenumber;
            td.Stress = stress;
            td.Strain = strain;
        end
    end

    function obj = set.Material(obj,material)
        if (strcmpi(material,'aluminum') ||...
            strcmpi(material,'stainless steel') ||...
            strcmpi(material,'carbon steel'))
            obj.Material = material;
        else
            error('Invalid Material')
        end
    end

    function m = get.Modulus(obj)
        ind = find(obj.Strain > 0);
        m = mean(obj.Stress(ind)./obj.Strain(ind));
    end

    function obj = set.Modulus(obj,~)
        fprintf('%s%d\n','Modulus is: ',obj.Modulus)
        error('You cannot set Modulus property');
    end

    function disp(td)
        sprintf('Material: %s\nSample Number: %g\nModulus: %1.5g\n',...
            td.Material,td.SampleNumber,td.Modulus)
    end

    function plot(td,varargin)
        plot(td.Strain,td.Stress,varargin{:})
        title(['Stress/Strain plot for Sample ',...
            num2str(td.SampleNumber)])
        xlabel('Strain %')
        ylabel('Stress (psi)')
    end
end
```

`end`

## More About

- “Class Components” on page 5-5

# Class to Implement Linked Lists

## In this section...

- “Class Definition Code” on page 3-31
- “`dlnode` Class Design” on page 3-31
- “Create Doubly Linked List” on page 3-32
- “Why a Handle Class for Linked Lists?” on page 3-33
- “`dlnode` Class Synopsis” on page 3-34
- “Specialize the `dlnode` Class” on page 3-45

## Class Definition Code

For the class definition code listing, see “`dlnode` Class Synopsis” on page 3-34.

To use the class, create a folder named `@dlnode` and save `dlnode.m` to this folder. The parent folder of `@dlnode` must be on the MATLAB path. Alternatively, save `dlnode.m` to a path folder.

## dlnode Class Design

`dlnode` is a class for creating doubly linked lists in which each node contains:

- Data array
- Handle to the next node
- Handle to the previous node

Each node has methods that enable the node to be:

- Inserted before a specified node in a linked list
- Inserted after a specific node in a linked list
- Removed from a list

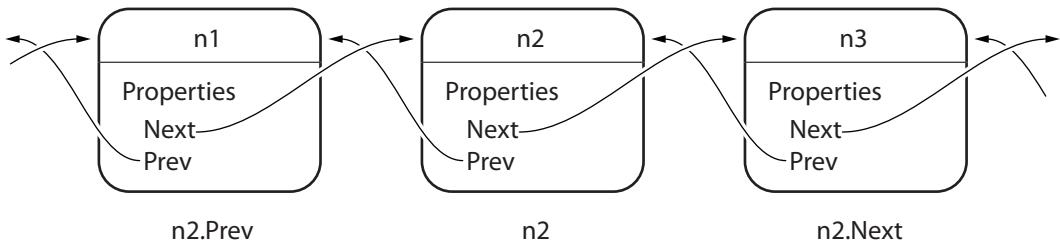
## Class Properties

The `dlnode` class implements each node as a handle object with three properties:

- `Data` — Contains the data for this node
- `Next` — Contains the handle of the next node in the list (`SetAccess = private`)

- **Prev** — Contains the handle of the previous node in the list (**SetAccess = private**)

This diagram shows a list with three-nodes n1, n2, and n3. It also shows how the nodes reference the next and previous nodes.



### Class Methods

The **dlnode** class implements the following methods:

- **dlnode** — Construct a node and assign the value passed as an input to the **Data** property
- **insertAfter** — Insert this node after the specified node
- **insertBefore** — Insert this node before the specified node
- **removeNode** — Remove this node from the list and reconnect the remaining nodes
- **clearList** — Remove large lists efficiently
- **delete** — Private method called by MATLAB when deleting the list.

### Create Doubly Linked List

Create a node by passing the node's data to the **dlnode** class constructor. For example, these statements create three nodes with data values 1, 2, and 3:

```
n1 = dlnode(1);
n2 = dlnode(2);
n3 = dlnode(3);
```

Build these nodes into a doubly linked list using the class methods designed for this purpose:

```
n2.insertAfter(n1) % Insert n2 after n1
n3.insertAfter(n2) % Insert n3 after n2
```

Now the three nodes are linked:

n1.Next % Points to n2

ans =

dlnode with properties:

```
Data: 2  
Next: [1x1 dlnode]  
Prev: [1x1 dlnode]
```

n2.Next.Prev % Points back to n2

ans =

dlnode with properties:

```
Data: 2  
Next: [1x1 dlnode]  
Prev: [1x1 dlnode]
```

n1.Next.Next % Points to n3

ans =

dlnode with properties:

```
Data: 3  
Next: []  
Prev: [1x1 dlnode]
```

n3.Prev.Prev % Points to n1

ans =

dlnode with properties:

```
Data: 1  
Next: [1x1 dlnode]  
Prev: []
```

## Why a Handle Class for Linked Lists?

Each node is unique in that no two nodes can be previous to or next to the same node.

For example, a node object, `node`, contains in its `Next` property the handle of the next node object, `node.Next`. Similarly, the `Prev` property contains the handle of the previous node, `node.Prev`. Using the three-node linked list defined in the previous section, you can demonstrate that the following statements are true:

```
n1.Next == n2  
n2.Prev == n1
```

Now suppose that you assign `n2` to `x`:

```
x = n2;
```

The following two equalities are then true:

```
x == n1.Next  
x.Prev == n1
```

But each instance of a node is unique so there is only one node in the list that can satisfy the conditions of being equal to `n1.Next` and having a `Prev` property that contains a handle to `n1`. Therefore, `x` must point to the same node as `n2`.

There has to be a way for multiple variables to refer to the same object. The MATLAB `handle` class provides a means for both `x` and `n2` to refer to the same node.

The handle class defines the `eq` method (use `methods('handle')` to list the handle class methods), which enables the use of the `==` operator with all handle objects.

#### Related Information

For more information on handle classes, see “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2.

## dlnode Class Synopsis

This section describes the implementation of the `dlnode` class.

Example Code	Discussion
<pre>classdef dlnode &lt; handle</pre>	“ <code>dlnode</code> Class Design” on page 3-31 “Why a Handle Class for Linked Lists?” on page 3-33 “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2

Example Code	Discussion
<pre>properties   Data end</pre>	<p>“<code>dlnode</code> Class Design” on page 3-31</p>
<pre>properties (SetAccess = private)   Next = dlnode.empty   Prev = dlnode.empty end</pre>	<p>“Property Attributes” on page 8-8: <code>SetAccess</code>.</p> <p>Initialize these properties to <code>empty</code> <code>dlnode</code> objects.</p> <p>For general information about properties, see “Property Syntax” on page 8-5</p>
<pre>methods</pre>	<p>For general information about methods, see “Methods in Class Design” on page 9-2</p>
<pre>function node = dlnode(Data)   if (nargin &gt; 0)     node.Data = Data;   end end</pre>	<p>Creating an individual node (not connected) requires only the data.</p> <p>For general information about constructors, see “Guidelines for Constructors” on page 9-22</p>
<pre>function insertAfter(newNode, nodeBefore)   removeNode(newNode);   newNode.Next = nodeBefore.Next;   newNode.Prev = nodeBefore;   if ~isempty(nodeBefore.Next)     nodeBefore.Next.Prev = newNode;   end   nodeBefore.Next = newNode; end</pre>	<p>Insert node into a doubly linked list after specified node, or link the two specified nodes if there is not already a list. Assigns the correct values for <code>Next</code> and <code>Prev</code> properties.</p> <p>“Insert Nodes” on page 3-39</p>
<pre>function insertBefore(newNode, nodeAfter)   removeNode(newNode);   newNode.Next = nodeAfter;   newNode.Prev = nodeAfter.Prev;   if ~isempty(nodeAfter.Prev)     nodeAfter.Prev.Next = newNode;   end   nodeAfter.Prev = newNode; end</pre>	<p>Insert node into doubly linked list before specified node, or link the two specified nodes if there is not already a list. This method assigns correct values for <code>Next</code> and <code>Prev</code> properties.</p> <p>See “Insert Nodes” on page 3-39</p>

Example Code	Discussion
<pre> function removeNode(node)     if ~isscalar(node)         error('Nodes must be scalar')     end     prevNode = node.Prev;     nextNode = node.Next;     if ~isempty(prevNode)         prevNode.Next = nextNode;     end     if ~isempty(nextNode)         nextNode.Prev = prevNode;     end     node.Next = dlnode.empty;     node.Prev = dlnode.empty; end </pre>	<p>Remove node and fix the list so that remaining nodes are properly connected. <code>node</code> argument must be scalar.</p> <p>Once there are no references to <code>node</code>, MATLAB deletes it.</p> <p><a href="#">“Remove a Node” on page 3-40</a></p>
<pre> function clearList(node)     prev = node.Prev;     next = node.Next;     removeNode(node)     while ~isempty(next)         node = next;         next = node.Next;         removeNode(node);     end     while ~isempty(prev)         node = prev;         prev = node.Prev;         removeNode(node)     end end </pre>	<p>Avoid recursive calls to destructor as a result of clearing the list variable. Loop through list to disconnect each node.</p> <p>When there are no references to a node, MATLAB calls the class destructor (see the <code>delete</code> method) before deleting it.</p>
<pre> methods (Access = private)     function delete(node)         clearList(node)     end end </pre>	<p>Class destructor method. MATLAB calls the <code>delete</code> method you delete a node that is still connected to the list.</p>
	<p>End of private methods and end of class definition.</p>

#### Expand for Class Code

```

classdef dlnode < handle
    % dlnode A class to represent a doubly-linked node.
    % Link multiple dlnode objects together to create linked lists.
properties
    Data
end
properties(SetAccess = private)
    Next = dlnode.empty
    Prev = dlnode.empty

```

```
end

methods
    function node = dlnode(Data)
        % Construct a dlnode object
        if nargin > 0
            node.Data = Data;
        end
    end

    function insertAfter(newNode, nodeBefore)
        % Insert newNode after nodeBefore.
        removeNode(newNode);
        newNode.Next = nodeBefore.Next;
        newNode.Prev = nodeBefore;
        if ~isempty(nodeBefore.Next)
            nodeBefore.Next.Prev = newNode;
        end
        nodeBefore.Next = newNode;
    end

    function insertBefore(newNode, nodeAfter)
        % Insert newNode before nodeAfter.
        removeNode(newNode);
        newNode.Next = nodeAfter;
        newNode.Prev = nodeAfter.Prev;
        if ~isempty(nodeAfter.Prev)
            nodeAfter.Prev.Next = newNode;
        end
        nodeAfter.Prev = newNode;
    end

    function removeNode(node)
        % Remove a node from a linked list.
        if ~isscalar(node)
            error('Input must be scalar')
        end
        prevNode = node.Prev;
        nextNode = node.Next;
        if ~isempty(prevNode)
            prevNode.Next = nextNode;
        end
        if ~isempty(nextNode)
            nextNode.Prev = prevNode;
        end
    end
end
```

```
    end
    node.Next = dlnode.empty;
    node.Prev = dlnode.empty;
end

function clearList(node)
    % Clear the list before
    % clearing list variable
    prev = node.Prev;
    next = node.Next;
    removeNode(node)
    while ~isempty(next)
        node = next;
        next = node.Next;
        removeNode(node);
    end
    while ~isempty(prev)
        node = prev;
        prev = node.Prev;
        removeNode(node)
    end
end
methods (Access = private)
    function delete(node)
        clearList(node)
    end
end
end
```

## Class Properties

Only `dlnode` class methods can set the `Next` and `Prev` properties because these properties have private set access (`SetAccess = private`). Using private set access prevents client code from performing any incorrect operation with these properties. The `dlnode` class methods perform all the operations that are allowed on these nodes.

The `Data` property has public set and get access, allowing you to query and modify the value of `Data` as required.

Here is how the `dlnode` class defines the properties:

```
properties
```

```

    Data
end
properties(SetAccess = private)
    Next = dlnode.empty;
    Prev = dlnode.empty;
end

```

## Construct a Node Object

To create a node object, specify the node's data as an argument to the constructor:

```

function node = dlnode(Data)
    if nargin > 0
        node.Data = Data;
    end
end

```

## Insert Nodes

There are two methods for inserting nodes into the list — `insertAfter` and `insertBefore`. These methods perform similar operations, so this section describes only `insertAfter` in detail.

```

function insertAfter(newNode, nodeBefore)
    removeNode(newNode);
    newNode.Next = nodeBefore.Next;
    newNode.Prev = nodeBefore;
    if ~isempty(nodeBefore.Next)
        nodeBefore.Next.Prev = newNode;
    end
    nodeBefore.Next = newNode;
end

```

### How `insertAfter` Works

First, `insertAfter` calls the `removeNode` method to ensure that the new node is not connected to any other nodes. Then, `insertAfter` assigns the `newNode` `Next` and `Prev` properties to the handles of the nodes that are after and before the `newNode` location in the list.

For example, suppose that you want to insert a new node, `nnew`, after an existing node, `n1`, in a list containing `n1–n2–n3`.

First, create `nnew`:

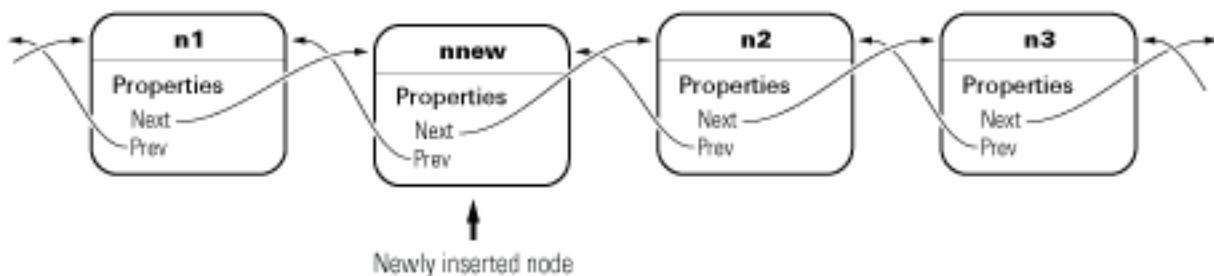
```
nnew = dlnode(rand(3));
```

Next, call `insertAfter` to insert `nnew` into the list after `n1`:

```
nnew.insertAfter(n1)
```

The `insertAfter` method performs the following steps to insert `nnew` in the list between `n1` and `n2`:

- Set `nnew.Next` to `n1.Next` (`n1.Next` is `n2`):  
`nnew.Next = n1.Next;`
- Set `nnew.Prev` to `n1`  
`nnew.Prev = n1;`
- If `n1.Next` is not empty, then `n1.Next` is still `n2`, so `n1.Next.Prev` is `n2.Prev`, which is set to `nnew`  
`n1.Next.Prev = nnew;`
- `n1.Next` is now set to `nnew`  
`n1.Next = nnew;`



#### Remove a Node

The `removeNode` method removes a node from a list and reconnects the remaining nodes. The `insertBefore` and `insertAfter` methods always call `removeNode` on the node to insert before attempting to connect it to a linked list.

Calling `removeNode` ensures that the node is in a known state before assigning it to the `Next` or `Prev` property:

```
function removeNode(node)
    if ~isscalar(node)
```

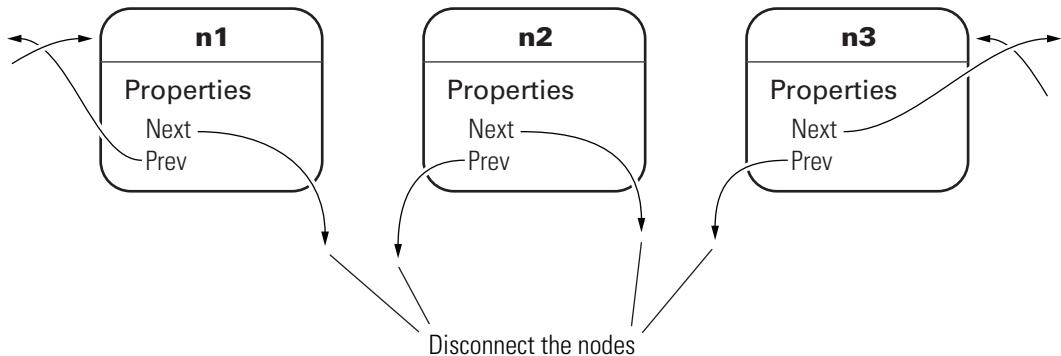
```

        error('Input must be scalar')
    end
    pNode = node.Prev;
    nextNode = node.Next;
    if ~isempty(pNode)
        pNode.Next = nextNode;
    end
    if ~isempty(nextNode)
        nextNode.Prev = pNode;
    end
    node.Next = dlnode.empty;
    node.Prev = dlnode.empty;
end

```

For example, suppose that you remove **n2** from a three-node list (**n1**–**n2**–**n3**):

```
n2.removeNode;
```



**removeNode** removes **n2** from the list and reconnects the remaining nodes with the following steps:

```

n1 = n2.Prev;
n3 = n2.Next;
if n1 exists, then
    n1.Next = n3;
if n3 exists, then
    n3.Prev = n1

```

The list is rejoined because **n1** connects to **n3** and **n3** connects to **n1**. The final step is to ensure that **n2.Next** and **n2.Prev** are both empty (that is, **n2** is not connected):

```
n2.Next = dlnode.empty;
```

```
n2.Prev = dlnode.empty;
```

#### Removing a Node from a List

Suppose that you create a list with 10 nodes and save the handle to the head of the list:

```
head = dlnode(1);
for i = 10:-1:2
    new = dlnode(i);
    insertAfter(new,head);
end
```

Now remove the third node (**Data** property assigned the value 3):

```
removeNode(head.Next.Next)
```

Now the third node in the list has a data value of 4:

```
head.Next.Next
```

```
ans =
```

```
dlnode with properties:
```

```
    Data: 4
    Next: [1x1 dlnode]
    Prev: [1x1 dlnode]
```

And the previous node has a **Data** value of 2:

```
head.Next
```

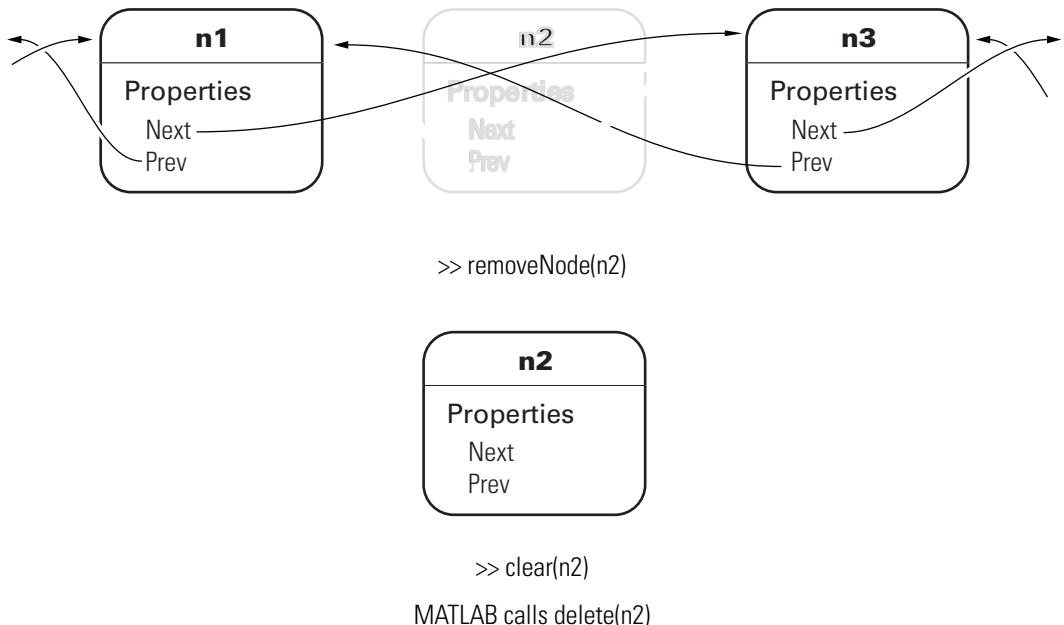
```
ans =
```

```
dlnode with properties:
```

```
    Data: 2
    Next: [1x1 dlnode]
    Prev: [1x1 dlnode]
```

#### Delete a Node

To delete a node, call the **removeNode** method on that node. The **removeNode** method disconnects the node and reconnects the list before allowing MATLAB to destroy the removed node. MATLAB destroys the node once references to it by other nodes are removed and the list is reconnected.



## Delete the List

When you create a linked list and assign a variable that contains, for example, the head or tail of the list, clearing that variable causes the destructor to recurse through the entire list. With large enough list, clearing the list variable can result in MATLAB exceeding its recursion limit.

The `clearList` method avoids recursion and improves the performance of deleting large lists by looping over the list and disconnecting each node. `clearList` accepts the handle of any node in the list and removes the remaining nodes.

```
function clearList(node)
    if ~isscalar(node)
        error('Input must be scalar')
    end
    prev = node.Prev;
    next = node.Next;
    removeNode(node)
    while ~isempty(next)
        node = next;
        next = node.Next;
```

```
    removeNode(node);
end
while ~isempty(prev)
    node = prev;
    prev = node.Prev;
    removeNode(node)
end
end
```

For example, suppose that you create a list with many nodes:

```
head = dlnode(1);
for k = 100000:-1:2
    nextNode = dlnode(k);
    insertAfter(nextNode,head)
end
```

The variable **head** contains the handle to the node at the head of the list:

```
head
head =
dlnode with properties:
    Data: 1
    Next: [1x1 dlnode]
    Prev: []

head.Next
ans =
dlnode with properties:
    Data: 2
    Next: [1x1 dlnode]
    Prev: [1x1 dlnode]
```

You can call **clearList** to remove the whole list:

```
clearList(head)
```

The only nodes that have not been deleted by MATLAB are those nodes for which there exists an explicit reference. In this case, those references are **head** and **nextNode**:

```
head  
head =  
  
dlnode with properties:  
  
Data: 1  
Next: []  
Prev: []  
  
nextNode  
nextNode =  
  
dlnode with properties:  
  
Data: 2  
Next: []  
Prev: []
```

You can remove these nodes by clearing the variables:

```
clear head nextNode
```

### The delete Method

The `delete` method simply calls the `clearList` method:

```
methods (Access = private)  
    function delete(node)  
        clearList(node)  
    end  
end
```

The `delete` method has private access to prevent users from calling `delete` when intending to delete a single node. MATLAB calls `delete` implicitly when the list is destroyed.

To delete a single node from the list, use the `removeNode` method.

### Specialize the `dlnode` Class

The `dlnode` class implements a doubly linked list and provides a convenient starting point for creating more specialized types of linked lists. For example, suppose that you want to create a list in which each node has a name.

Rather than copying the code used to implement the `dlnode` class, and then expanding upon it, you can derive a new class from `dlnode` (that is, subclass `dlnode`). You can create a class that has all the features of `dlnode` and also defines its own additional features. And because `dlnode` is a handle class, this new class is a handle class too.

#### NamedNode Class Definition

To use the class, create a folder named `@NamedNode` and save `NamedNode.m` to this folder. The parent folder of `@NamedNode` must be on the MATLAB path. Alternatively, save `NamedNode.m` to a path folder.

The following class definition shows how to derive the `NamedNode` class from the `dlnode` class:

```
classdef NamedNode < dlnode
    properties
        Name = ''
    end
    methods
        function n = NamedNode (name,data)
            if nargin == 0
                name = '';
                data = [];
            end
            n = n@dlnode(data);
            n.Name = name;
        end
    end
end
```

The `NamedNode` class adds a `Name` property to store the node name.

The constructor calls the class constructor for the `dlnode` class, and then assigns a value to the `Name` property.

#### Use `NamedNode` to Create a Doubly Linked List

Use the `NamedNode` class like the `dlnode` class, except that you specify a name for each node object. For example:

```
n(1) = NamedNode('First Node',100);
n(2) = NamedNode('Second Node',200);
n(3) = NamedNode('Third Node',300);
```

Now use the insert methods inherited from `dlnode` to build the list:

```
n(2).insertAfter(n(1))
n(3).insertAfter(n(2))
```

A single node displays its name and data when you query its properties:

```
n(1).Next
```

```
ans =
```

```
NamedNode with properties:
```

```
Name: 'Second Node'
Data: 200
Next: [1x1 NamedNode]
Prev: [1x1 NamedNode]
```

```
n(1).Next.Next
```

```
ans =
```

```
NamedNode with properties:
```

```
Name: 'Third Node'
Data: 300
Next: []
Prev: [1x1 NamedNode]
```

```
n(3).Prev.Prev
```

```
ans =
```

```
NamedNode with properties:
```

```
Name: 'First Node'
Data: 100
Next: [1x1 NamedNode]
Prev: []
```

## More About

- “The Handle Superclass” on page 7-13

## Class for Graphing Functions

### In this section...

[“Class Definition Block” on page 3-48](#)

[“Using the topo Class” on page 3-49](#)

[“Behavior of the Handle Class” on page 3-50](#)

The *class block* is the code that starts with the `classdef` key word and terminates with the `end` key word. The following example illustrated a simple class definition that uses:

- Handle class
- Property set and get functions
- Use of a delete method for the handle object
- Static method syntax

### Class Definition Block

The following code defines a class called `topo`. It is derived from `handle` so it is a handle class, which means it references the data it contains. See “Using the topo Class” on page 3-49 for information on how this class behaves.

```
classdef topo < handle
% topo is a subclass of handle
properties
    FigHandle % Store figure handle
    FofXY % function handle
    Lm = [-2*pi 2*pi] % Initial limits
end % properties

properties (Dependent, SetAccess = private)
    Data
end % properties Dependent = true, SetAccess = private

methods
    function obj = topo(fnc,limits)
        % Constructor assigns property values
        obj.FofXY = fnc;
        obj.Lm = limits;
    end % topo

    function set.Lm(obj,lim)
        % Lm property set function
        if ~(lim(1) < lim(2))
            error('Limits must be monotonically increasing')
        else

```

```

        obj.Lm = lim;
    end
end % set.Lm

function data = get.Data(obj)
% get function calculates Data
% Use class name to call static method
    [x,y] = topo.grid(obj.Lm);
    matrix = obj.FofXY(x,y);
    data.X = x;
    data.Y = y;
    data.Matrix = matrix;% Return value of property
end % get.Data

function surflight(obj)
% Graph function as surface
    obj.FigHandle = figure;
    surf(obj.Data.X,obj.Data.Y,obj.Data.Matrix, ...
        'FaceColor',[.8 .8 0],'EdgeColor',[0 .2 0],...
        'FaceLighting','gouraud');
    camlight left; material shiny; grid off
    colormap copper
end % surflight method

function delete(obj)
% Delete the figure
    h = obj.FigHandle;
    if ishandle(h)
        delete(h);
    else
        return
    end
end % delete
end % methods

methods (Static = true) % Define static method
    function [x,y] = grid(lim)
        inc = (lim(2)-lim(1))/35;
        [x,y] = meshgrid(lim(1):inc:lim(2));
    end % grid
end % methods Static = true
end % topo class

```

## Using the topo Class

This class is designed to display a combination surface/contour graph of mathematical functions of two variables evaluated on a rectangular domain of  $x$  and  $y$ . For example, any of the following functions can be evaluated over the specified domain (note that  $x$  and  $y$  have the same range of values in this example just for simplicity).

```

x.*exp(-x.^2 - y.^2); [-2 2]
sin(x).*sin(y); [-2*pi 2*pi]

```

```
sqrt(x.^2 + y.^2); [-2*pi 2*pi]
```

To create an instance of the class, passing a function handle and a vector of limits to the constructor. The easiest way to create a function handle for these functions is to use an anonymous function:

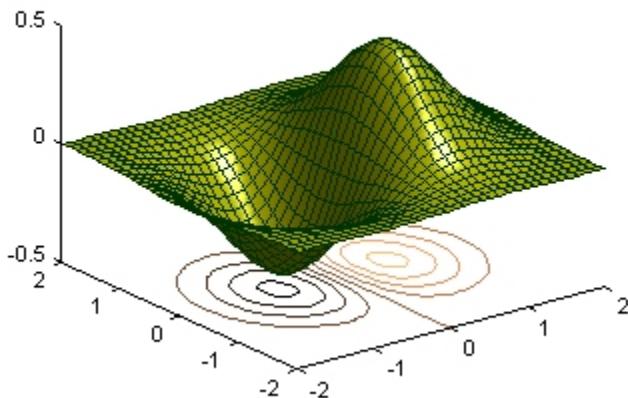
```
tobj = topo(@(x,y) x.*exp(-x.^2-y.^2),[-2 2]);
```

The class **surflight** method uses the object to create a graph of the function. The actual data required to create the graph is not stored. When the **surflight** method accesses the **Data** property, the property's **get** function performs the evaluation and returns the data in the **Data** property structure fields. This data is then plotted. The advantage of not storing the data is the reduced size of the object.

## Behavior of the Handle Class

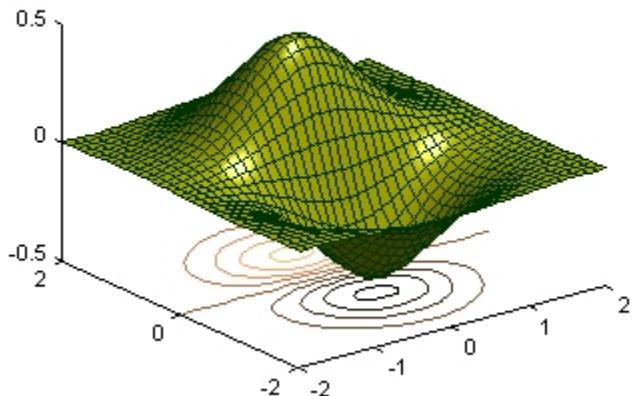
The **topo** class is defined as a handle class. This means that instances of this class are handle objects that reference the underlying data store created by constructing the object. For example, suppose you create an instance of the class and create a copy of the object:

```
tobj = topo(@(x,y) x.*exp(-x.^2-y.^2),[-2 2]);  
a = tobj;  
surflight(a)
```



Now suppose you change the `FofXY` property so that it contains a function handle that points to another function:

```
tobj.FofXY = @(x,y) y.*exp(-x.^2-y.^2);  
surflight(a)
```



Because `a` is a copy of the handle object `tobj`, changes to the data referenced by `tobj` also change the data referenced by `a`.

### How a Value Class Differs

If `topo` were a value class, the objects `tobj` and `a` would not share data; each would have its own copy of the property values.



# Static Data

---

# Static Data

## In this section...

- “What Is Static Data” on page 4-2
- “Static Variable” on page 4-2
- “Static Data Object” on page 4-3
- “Constant Data” on page 4-5

## What Is Static Data

Static data refers to data that all objects of the class share and that you can modify after creation.

Use static data to define counters used by class instances or other data that is shared among all objects of a class. Unlike instance data, static data does not vary from one object to another. MATLAB provides several ways to define static data, depending on your requirements.

## Static Variable

Classes can use a persistent variable to store static data. Define a static method or local function in which you create a persistent variable. The method or function provides access to this variable. Use this technique when you want to store one or two variables.

Saving an object of the class defining the persistent variable does not save the static data associated with the class. To save your static data in an object, or define more extensive data, use the static data object technique “Static Data Object” on page 4-3

## Implementation

The `StoreData` class defines a static method that declares a persistent variable `Var`. The `setgetVar` method provides set and get access to the data in the persistent variable. Because the `setgetVar` method has public access, you can set and get the data stored in the persistent variable globally. Control the scope of access by setting the method `Access` attribute.

```
classdef StoreData
    methods (Static)
```

```
function out = setgetVar(data)
    persistent Var;
    if nargin
        Var = data;
    end
    out = Var;
end
end
```

Set the value of the variable by calling `setgetVar` with an input argument. The method assigns the input value to the persistent variable:

```
StoreData.setgetVar(10);
```

Get the value of the variable by calling `setgetVar` with no input argument:

```
a = StoreData.setgetVar
a =
10
```

Clear the persistent variable by calling `clear` on the `StoreData` class:

```
clear StoreData
a = StoreData.setgetVar
a =
[]
```

Add a method like `setgetVar` to any class in which you want the behavior of a static property.

## Static Data Object

To store more extensive data, define a handle class with public properties. Assign an object of the class to a constant property of the class that uses the static data. This technique is useful when you want to:

- Add more properties or methods that modify the data.
- Save objects of the data class and reload the static data.

## Implementation

The **SharedData** class is a handle class, which enables you to reference the same object data from multiple handle variables:

```
classdef SharedData < handle
    properties
        Data1
        Data2
    end
end
```

The **UserData** class is the stub of a class that uses the data stored in the **SharedData** class. The **UserData** class stores the handle to a **SharedData** object in a constant property.

```
classdef UserData
    properties (Constant)
        Data = SharedData
    end
    % Class code here
end
```

The **Data** property contains the handle of the **SharedData** object. MATLAB constructs the **SharedData** object when loading the **UserData** class. All subsequently created instances of the **UserData** class refer to the same **SharedData** object.

To initialize the **SharedData** object properties, load the **UserData** class by referencing the constant property.

```
h = UserData.Data
h =
SharedData with properties:
    Data1: []
    Data2: []
```

Use the handle to the **SharedData** object to assign data to property values:

```
h.Data1 = 'MyData1';
h.Data2 = 'MyData2';
```

Each instance of the **UserData** class refers to the same handle object:

```
a1 = UseData;  
a2 = UseData;
```

Reference the data using the object variable:

```
a1.Data.Data1
```

```
ans =
```

```
MyData1
```

Assign a new value to the properties in the `SharedData` object:

```
a1.Data.Data1 = rand(3);
```

All new and existing objects of the `UseData` class share the same `SharedData` object. `a2` now has the `rand(3)` data that was assigned to `a1` in the previous step:

```
a2.Data.Data1
```

```
ans =
```

0.8147	0.9134	0.2785
0.9058	0.6324	0.5469
0.1270	0.0975	0.9575

To reinitialize the constant property, clear all instances of the `UseData` class and then clear the class:

```
clear a1 a2  
clear UseData
```

## Constant Data

To store constant values that do not change, assign the data to a constant property. All instances of the class share the same value for that property. Control the scope of access to constant properties by setting the property `Access` attribute.

The only way to change the value of a constant property is to change the class definition. Use constant properties like public final static fields in Java®.

## See Also

```
clear | persistent
```

## Related Examples

- “Properties with Constant Values” on page 15-2
- “Static Methods” on page 9-29

## More About

- “Method Attributes” on page 9-5
- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8
- “Static Properties” on page 5-64

# Class Definition—Syntax Reference

---

- “Class Files and Folders” on page 5-2
- “Class Components” on page 5-5
- “Classdef Block” on page 5-10
- “Properties” on page 5-12
- “Methods and Functions” on page 5-15
- “Events and Listeners” on page 5-20
- “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22
- “Call Superclass Methods on Subclass Objects” on page 5-25
- “Representative Class Code” on page 5-28
- “MATLAB Code Analyzer Warnings” on page 5-33
- “Objects In Conditional Statements” on page 5-35
- “Operations on Objects” on page 5-42
- “Use of Editor and Debugger with Classes” on page 5-46
- “Automatic Updates for Modified Classes” on page 5-48
- “Compatibility with Previous Versions ” on page 5-56
- “Comparison of MATLAB and Other OO Languages” on page 5-59

# Class Files and Folders

## In this section...

- “Class Definition Files” on page 5-2
- “Options for Class Folders” on page 5-2
- “Options for Class Files” on page 5-2
- “Group Classes with Package Folders ” on page 5-3

## Class Definition Files

Place class definition code in .m files, similarly to how you define function files. The name of the file is the name of the class followed by the .m extension. For information on the code that defines a class, see “Class Components” on page 5-5.

## Options for Class Folders

There are two ways create folders that contain class-definition files:

- *Path folder* — a folder that is on the MATLAB path.
- *Class folder* — a folder that is in a path folder and is name with the @ character and the class name. For example:

@MyClass

Class folders are not directly on the MATLAB path. The path folder that contains the class folder is on the MATLAB path.

## Options for Class Files

There are two ways to specify classes with respect to files and folders:

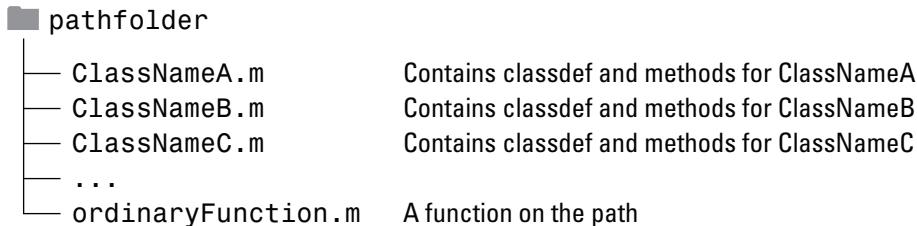
- Create a single, self-contained class definition file in a path folder or a class folder
- Define a class in multiple files, which requires you to use a class folder inside a path folder

### Create a Single, Self-Contained Class Definition File

Create a single, self-contained class definition file in a folder on the MATLAB® path. The name of the file must match the class (and constructor) name and must have the .m

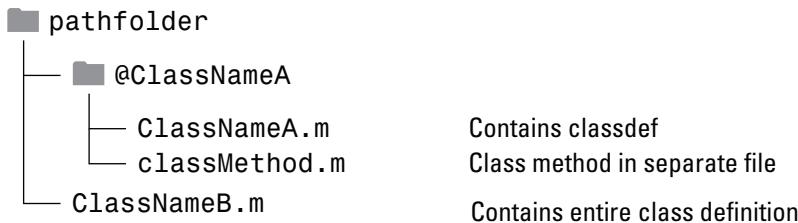
extension. Define the class entirely in this file. You can put other single-file classes in this folder.

The following diagram shows an example of this folder organization. `pathfolder` is a folder on the MATLAB path.



### Distribute the Class Definition to Multiple Files

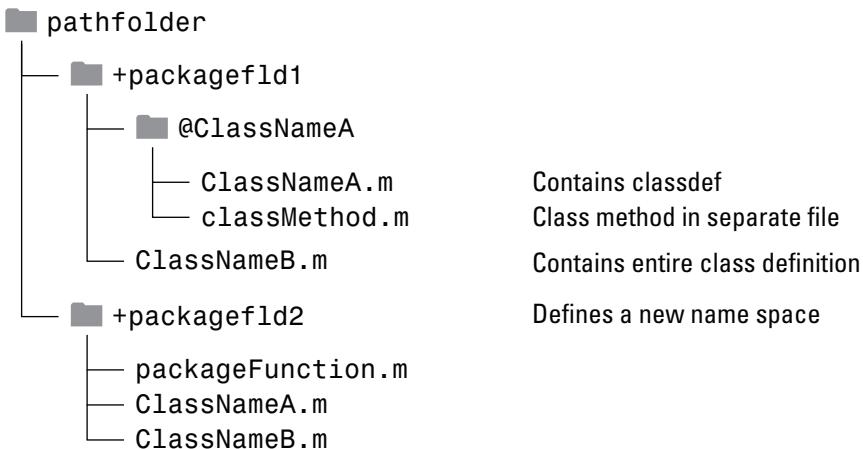
If you use multiple files to define a class, put all the class-definition files (the file containing the `classdef` and all class method files) in a single `@ClassName` folder. That class folder must be inside a folder that is on the MATLAB path. You can define only one class in a class folder.



A path folder can contain classes defined in both class folders and single files without a class folder.

### Group Classes with Package Folders

The parent folder to a package folder is on the MATLAB path, but the package folder is not. Package folders (which always begin with a `+` character) can contain multiple class definitions, package-scoped functions, and other packages. A package folder defines a new name space in which you can reuse class names. Use the package name to refer to classes and functions defined in package folders (for example, `packagefld1.ClassNameA()`, `packagefld2.packageFunction()`).



### More About

- “Folders Containing Class Definitions” on page 6-16
- “Packages Create Namespaces” on page 6-24
- “Methods in Separate Files” on page 9-10

# Class Components

## In this section...

- “Class Building Blocks” on page 5-5
- “Class Definition Block” on page 5-5
- “Properties Block” on page 5-6
- “Methods Block” on page 5-6
- “Events Block” on page 5-7
- “A Complete Class” on page 5-7
- “Enumeration Classes” on page 5-8
- “Related Information” on page 5-9

## Class Building Blocks

MATLAB organizes class definition code into modular blocks, delimited by keywords. All keywords have an associated `end` statement:

- `classdef...end` — Definition of all class components
- `properties...end` — Declaration of property names, specification of property attributes, assignment of default values
- `methods...end` — Declaration of method signatures, method attributes, and function code
- `events...end` — Declaration of event name and attributes
- `enumeration...end` — Declaration of enumeration members and enumeration values for enumeration classes.

`properties`, `methods`, `events`, and `enumeration` are keywords only within a `classdef` block.

## Class Definition Block

The `classdef` block contains the class definition within a file that starts with the `classdef` keyword and terminates with the `end` keyword.

```
classdef (ClassAttributes) ClassName < SuperClass
    ...
end
```

For example, this `classdef` defines a class called `MyClass` that subclasses the `handle` class, but cannot be used to derive subclasses:

```
classdef (Sealed) MyClass < handle
    ...
end
```

See, “Classdef Block” on page 5-10 for more syntax information.

## Properties Block

The `properties` block (one for each unique set of attribute specifications) contains property definitions, including optional initial values. The properties block starts with the `properties` keyword and terminates with the `end` keyword.

```
classdef ClassName
    properties (PropertyAttributes)
        ...
    end
    ...
end
```

For example, this class defines a property called `Prop1` that has private access and has a default value equal to the output of the `date` function.

```
classdef MyClass
    properties (Access = private)
        Prop1 = date
    end
    ...
end
```

See “Property Definition” on page 8-14 for more information.

## Methods Block

The `methods` block (one for each unique set of attribute specifications) contains function definitions for the class methods. The methods block starts with the `methods` keyword and terminates with the `end` keyword.

```
classdef ClassName
    methods (MethodAttributes)
        ...
    end
```

```
    ...
end
```

For example:

```
classdef MyClass
    methods (Access = private)
        function obj = myMethod(obj)
            ...
        end
    end
end
```

See “Methods and Functions” on page 5-15 for more information.

## Events Block

The `events` block (one for each unique set of attribute specifications) contains the names of events that this class declares. The events block starts with the `events` keyword and terminates with the `end` keyword.

```
classdef ClassName
    events (EventAttributes)
        EventName
    end
    ...
end
```

For example, this class defined an event called `StateChange` with a `ListenAccess` set to `protected`:

```
classdef EventSource
    events (ListenAccess = protected)
        StateChanged
    end
    ...
end
```

See “Events and Listeners” on page 5-20 for more information.

## A Complete Class

A complete class definition contains any combination of properties, methods, and events code blocks.

```
classdef (Sealed) MyClass < handle
    properties (Access = private)
        Prop1 = datenum(date)
    end
    properties
        Prop2
    end
    methods
        function obj = MyClass(x)
            obj.Prop2 = x;
        end
    end
    methods (Access = {?MyOtherClass})
        function d = myMethod(obj)
            d = obj.Prop1 + x;
        end
    end
    events (ListenAccess = protected)
        StateChanged
    end
end
```

## Enumeration Classes

Enumeration classes are specialized classes that define a fixed set of names representing a single type of value. Enumeration classes use an `enumeration` block that contains the enumeration members defined by the class.

The enumeration block starts with the `enumeration` keyword and terminates with the `end` keyword.

```
classdef ClassName < SuperClass
    enumeration
        EnumerationMember
    end
    ...
end
```

For example, this class defines two enumeration members that represent logical `false` and `true`:

```
classdef Boolean < logical
    enumeration
```

```
No  (0)
Yes (1)
end
end
```

See, “Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5 for more information.

## Related Information

“Folders Containing Class Definitions” on page 6-16

## Classdef Block

### In this section...

- “How to Specify Attributes and Superclasses” on page 5-10
- “Class Attribute Syntax” on page 5-10
- “Superclass Syntax” on page 5-11
- “Local Functions in Class File” on page 5-11

## How to Specify Attributes and Superclasses

The `classdef` block contains the class definition. The `classdef` line is where you specify:

- Class attributes
- Superclasses

The `classdef` block contains the `properties`, `methods`, and `events` subblocks.

## Class Attribute Syntax

Class attributes modify class behavior in some way. Assign values to class attributes only when you want to change their default value.

No change to default attribute values:

```
classdef ClassName
    ...
end
```

One or more attribute values assigned:

```
classdef (attribute1 = value,...)
    ...
end
```

For example, the `TextString` class specifies that it cannot be used to derive subclasses:

```
classdef TextString (Sealed)
    ...
```

```
end
```

See “Class Attributes” on page 6-6 for a list of attributes and a discussion of the behaviors they control.

## Superclass Syntax

Derive a class from one or more other classes by specifying the superclasses on the `classdef` line:

```
classdef ClassName < SuperclassName
  ...
end
```

For example, the `LinkedList` class inherits from classes called `Array` and `handle`:

```
classdef LinkedList < Array & handle
  ...
end
```

## Local Functions in Class File

You can define only one class per file. However, you can add local functions to a file containing the `classdef` block. Local functions are scoped to the `classdef` file and have access to private and protected class members.

```
classdef ClassName
  ...
end
function localFunction
  ...
end
```

## Related Examples

- “User-Defined Classes” on page 6-2
- “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9
- “Local Functions”

# Properties

## In this section...

“The Properties Block” on page 5-12

“Access to Property Values” on page 5-13

## The Properties Block

Define class properties within a `properties` block:

```
classdef ClassName
    properties (PropertyAttributes)
        PropertyName class = DefaultValue
    end
end
```

Property attributes apply to all properties defined within the block. To define properties with different attributes, use multiple `properties` block. All property attributes have default values. For a list of property attributes, see “Property Attributes” on page 8-8.

Optionally assign default values to the property in the `properties` block. MATLAB evaluates the assignment statement when the class is first referenced or when loading a saved object.

---

**Note:** Evaluation of property default values occurs only when the value is first needed, and only once when MATLAB first initializes the class. MATLAB does not reevaluate the expression each time you create an instance of the class.

---

For more information on the evaluation of expressions that you assign as property default values, see “When MATLAB Evaluates Expressions” on page 6-12.

### Properties with Different Attributes

The following class defines three properties. `Model` and `Color` use default attribute values, resulting in public read and write access. `SerialNumber` has read-only access by object users. Assign the `SerialNumber` property value from a class member function, such as the constructor or other class method.

```
classdef NewCar
properties
    Model
    Color
end
properties (SetAccess = private, GetAccess = public)
    SerialNumber
end
methods
...
end
end
```

## Access to Property Values

Use dot notation to access property value.

```
A = NewCar
```

```
A =
```

NewCar with properties:

```
    Model: []
    Color: []
    SerialNumber: []
```

Set the `Model` and `Color` properties:

```
A.Model = 'XGT7000';
A.Color = 'Red';
```

Add a constructor to the `NewCar` class to set property values:

```
classdef NewCar
properties
    Model
    Color
end
properties (SetAccess = private, GetAccess = public)
    SerialNumber
end
methods
    function obj = NewCar(model,color)
```

```
obj.Model = model;
obj.Color = color;
obj.SerialNumber = datenum(datetime('now'));
end
end
end

A = NewCar('XGT7000','Red')

A =

NewCar with properties:

    Model: 'XGT7000'
    Color: 'Red'
    SerialNumber: 7.362456078531134e+05
```

### Related Examples

- “Ways to Use Properties” on page 8-2
- “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21

# Methods and Functions

## In this section...

- “The Methods Block” on page 5-15
- “Method Calling Syntax” on page 5-15
- “Private Methods” on page 5-17
- “More Detailed Information On Methods” on page 5-17
- “Class-Related Functions” on page 5-17
- “How to Overload Functions and Operators” on page 5-18
- “Rules for Defining Methods in Separate Files” on page 5-18

## The Methods Block

Define methods as MATLAB functions within a `methods` block, inside the `classdef` block. The constructor method has the same name as the class and returns an object. You can assign values to properties in the class constructor. Terminate all method functions with an `end` statement.

```
classdef ClassName
    properties
        PropertyName
    end
    methods
        function obj = ClassName(arg1,...)
            obj.PropertyName = arg1;
            ...
        end
        function ordinaryMethod(obj,arg1,...)
            ...
        end
    end
    methods (Static)
        function staticMethod(arg1,...)
            ...
        end
    end
end
```

## Method Calling Syntax

MATLAB differs from languages like C++ and Java in that there is no special hidden class object passed to all methods. You must pass an object of the class explicitly to the

method. The left most argument does not need to be the class object, and the argument list can have multiple objects. MATLAB dispatches to the method defined by the class of the dominant argument. For more information, see “Method Invocation” on page 9-14.

Methods must be on the MATLAB path when called. For example, if you create an object and then change your current folder to a folder from which the method file is not visible, MATLAB errors when you try to call that method.

Always use case sensitive method names in your MATLAB code.

### Ordinary Methods

Call ordinary methods using MATLAB function syntax or dot notation. For example, suppose you have a class that defines `ordinaryMethod`. Pass an object of the defining class and whatever arguments are required.

```
classdef MyClass
  methods
    function out = ordinaryMethod(obj,arg1)
      ...
    end
  end
end
```

Call `ordinaryMethod` using the object `obj` of the class and either syntax:

```
obj = MyClass;
r = ordinaryMethod(obj,arg1);
r = obj.ordinaryMethod(arg1);
```

### Static Methods

Static methods do not require an object of the class. To call a static method, prefix the method name with the class name so that MATLAB can determine what class defines the method.

```
classdef MyClass
  methods (Static)
    function out = staticMethod(arg1)
      ...
    end
  end
end
```

Call **staticMethod** using the syntax *classname.methodname*:

```
r = MyClass.staticMethod(arg1);
```

See “Static Methods” on page 9-29 for information on methods that do not require objects of their class.

## Private Methods

Use the **Access** method attribute to create a private method. You do not need to use a private folder.

See “Method Attributes” on page 9-5 for a list of method attributes.

## More Detailed Information On Methods

“Methods”

## Class-Related Functions

You can define functions that are not class methods in the file that contains the class definition (**classdef**). Define local functions outside of the **classdef** - **end** block, but in the same file as the class definition. Functions defined in **classdef** files work like local functions. You can call these functions from anywhere in the same file, but they are not visible outside of the file in which you define them.

Local functions in **classdef** files are useful for utility functions that you use only within that file. These functions can take or return arguments that are instances of the class but, it is not necessary, as in the case of ordinary methods. For example, the following code defines **myUtilityFcn** outside the **classdef** block:

```
classdef MyClass
    properties
        PropName
    end
    methods
        function obj = MyClass(arg1)
            obj.PropName = arg1;
        end
    end
end % End of classdef
```

```
function myUtilityFcn  
    ...  
end
```

You also can create package functions, which require the use of the package name when calling these functions.

## How to Overload Functions and Operators

Overload MATLAB functions for your class by defining a class method with the same name as the function that you want to overload. MATLAB dispatches to the class method when the function is called with an instance of the class.

You can overload MATLAB arithmetic, logical, relational, and indexing operators by defining class methods with the appropriate names.

See the `handle` class for a list of operations defined for that class. All classes deriving from `handle` inherit these methods.

## Rules for Defining Methods in Separate Files

The following rules apply to methods defined in separate files:

- To specify attributes for a method defined in a separate file, declare this method in a `methods` block in the `classdef` file. Specify the attribute values with the `methods` block.
- The syntax declared in the `methods` block (if used) must match the method's `function` line.
- The separate file must be in the class folder.
- The class constructor method must be defined in the `classdef` file. The constructor cannot be in a separate file.
- Handle class `delete` methods must be defined in the `classdef` file. The `delete` method cannot be in a separate file.

All functions that use dots in their names must be defined in the `classdef` file, including:

- Converter methods that must use the package name as part of the class name because the class is contained in packages

- Property set and get access methods

For more information on defining methods in separate files, see “Methods in Separate Files” on page 9-10

## **More About**

- “Methods in Class Design” on page 9-2

## Events and Listeners

### In this section...

[“Define and Trigger Events” on page 5-20](#)

[“Listen for Events” on page 5-20](#)

### Define and Trigger Events

To define an event, declare a name for the event in an `events` block. Trigger the event using the `handle` class `notify` method. Only classes derived from the `handle` class can define events.

For example, `MyClass` class:

- Subclasses `handle`
- Defines an event named `StateChange`
- Triggers the event using the inherited `notify` method in its `upDateUI` method.

```
classdef MyClass < handle
  events
    StateChange
  end
  ...
  methods
    function upDateUI(obj)
      ...
      notify(obj, 'StateChange');
    end
  end
end
```

### Listen for Events

Any number of objects can listen to the `StateChange` event. When `notify` executes, MATLAB calls all registered listener callbacks. MATLAB passes the handle of the object generating the event and event data to the callback functions. To create a listener, use the `addlistener` method of the `handle` class.

```
addlistener(event_obj, 'StateChange', @myCallback)
```

To control the lifecycle of the listener, use the `event.listener` constructor to create the `listener` object.

## See Also

`event.hasListener` | `event.listener` | `event.propListener`

## Related Examples

- “Overview Events and Listeners” on page 11-2
- “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21

## Attribute Specification

### In this section...

- “Attribute Syntax” on page 5-22
- “Attribute Descriptions” on page 5-22
- “Attribute Values” on page 5-23
- “Simpler Syntax for true/false Attributes” on page 5-23

## Attribute Syntax

Attributes modify the behavior of classes and class components (properties, methods, and events). Attributes enable you to define useful behaviors without writing complicated code. For example, you can create a read-only property by setting its `SetAccess` attribute to `private`, but leaving its `GetAccess` attribute set to `public`:

```
properties (SetAccess = private)
    ScreenSize = getScreenSize
end
```

All class definition blocks (`classdef`, `properties`, `methods`, and `events`) support specific attributes. All attributes have default values. Specify attribute values only in cases where you want to change from the default value to another predefined value.

---

**Note:** Specify the value of a particular attribute only once in any component block.

---

## Attribute Descriptions

For lists of supported attributes, see:

- “Class Attributes” on page 6-6
- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8
- “Method Attributes” on page 9-5
- “Event Attributes” on page 11-19

## Attribute Values

When you specify attribute values, those values affect all the components defined within the defining block. For example, the following property definition blocks set the:

- `AccountBalance` property `SetObservable` attribute to `true`
- `SSNumber` and `CreditCardNumber` properties' `Hidden` attribute to `true` and `SetAccess` attribute to `private`.

Defining properties with different attribute settings requires multiple `properties` blocks.

```
properties (SetObservable = true)
    AccountBalance
end
properties (SetAccess = private, Hidden = true)
    SSNumber
    CreditCardNumber
end
```

Specified multiple attributes in a comma-separated list, as shown in the previous example.

When specifying class attributes, place the attribute list directly after the `classdef` keyword:

```
classdef (AttributeName = attributeName) className
...
end
```

## Simpler Syntax for true/false Attributes

You can use a simpler syntax for attributes whose values are `true` or `false` — the attribute name alone implies `true` and adding the `not` operator (`~`) to the name implies `false`. For example:

```
methods (Static)
...
end
```

Is the same as:

```
methods (Static = true)
...
...
```

```
end
```

Use the `not` operator before an attribute name to define it as `false`:

```
methods (~Static)
...
end
```

Is the same as:

```
methods (Static = false)
...
end
```

All attributes that take a logical value (that is, `true` or `false`) have a default value of `false`. Therefore, specify an attribute only if you want to set it to `true`.

### Related Examples

- “Evaluation of Expressions in Class Definitions” on page 6-9

# Call Superclass Methods on Subclass Objects

## In this section...

[“Superclass Relation to Subclass” on page 5-25](#)

[“How to Call Superclass Methods” on page 5-25](#)

[“How to Call Superclass Constructor” on page 5-26](#)

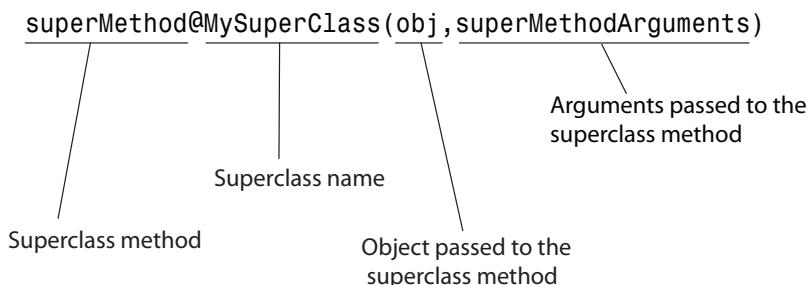
## Superclass Relation to Subclass

Subclasses can override superclass methods to support the greater specialization defined by the subclass. Because of the relationship that a subclass object is a superclass object, it is often useful to call the superclass version of the method before executing the specialized subclass code.

## How to Call Superclass Methods

Subclass methods can call superclass methods if both methods have the same name. From the subclass, reference the method name and superclass name with the @ symbol.

This diagram illustrates how to call the `superMethod` defined by `MySuperClass`.



For example, a subclass can call a superclass `disp` method to implement the display of the superclass part of the object. Then the subclass adds code to display the subclass part of the object:

```
classdef MySub < MySuperClass
methods
    function disp(obj)
        disp@MySuperClass(obj)
        ...
    end
end
end
```

## How to Call Superclass Constructor

If you create a subclass object, MATLAB calls the superclass constructor to initialize the superclass part of the subclass object. By default, MATLAB calls the superclass constructor without arguments. If you want the superclass constructor called with specific arguments, explicitly call the superclass constructor from the subclass constructor. The call to the superclass constructor must come before any other references to the object.

The syntax for calling the superclass constructor uses an @ symbol:

```
obj = obj@MySuperClass(SuperClassArguments);
```

Object returned  
from superclass

Name of superclass

Object being  
constructed

Superclass constructor  
argument list

In the following class, the `MySub` object is initialized by the `MySuperClass` constructor. The superclass constructor constructs the `MySuperClass` part of the object using the specified arguments.

```
classdef MySub < MySuperClass
methods
    function obj = MySub(arg1,arg2,...)
        obj = obj@MySuperClass(SuperClassArguments);
```

```
    ...
end
end
end
```

See “Subclass Constructors” on page 9-24 for more information.

## Related Examples

- “Modify Superclass Methods” on page 12-16

## Representative Class Code

### In this section...

[“Class Calculates Area” on page 5-28](#)

[“Description of Class Definition” on page 5-30](#)

### Class Calculates Area

The `CircleArea` class shows the syntax of a typical class definition. This class stores a value for the radius of a circle and calculates the area of the circle when you request this information. `CircleArea` also implements methods to graph, display, and create objects of the class.

To use the `CircleArea` class, copy this code into a file named `CircleArea.m` and save this file in a folder that is on the MATLAB path.

```
classdef CircleArea
    properties
        Radius
    end
    properties (Constant)
        P = pi
    end
    properties (Dependent)
        Area
    end
    methods
        function obj = CircleArea(r)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Radius = r;
            end
        end
        function val = get.Area(obj)
            val = obj.P*obj.Radius^2;
        end
        function obj = set.Radius(obj,val)
            if val < 0
                error('Radius must be positive')
            end
            obj.Radius = val;
        end
        function plot(obj)
```

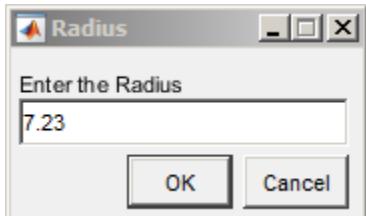
```
r = obj.Radius;
d = r*2;
pos = [0 0 d d];
curv = [1 1];
rectangle('Position',pos,'Curvature',curv, ...
    'FaceColor',[.9 .9 .9])
line([0,r],[r,r])
text(r/2,r+.5,['r = ',num2str(r)])
title(['Area = ',num2str(obj.Area)])
axis equal
end
function disp(obj)
    rad = obj.Radius;
    disp(['Circle with radius: ',num2str(rad)])
end
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = createObj
        prompt = {'Enter the Radius'};
        dlgTitle = 'Radius';
        rad = inputdlg(prompt,dlgTitle);
        r = str2double(rad{:});
        obj = CircleArea(r);
    end
end
end
```

### Use the CircleArea Class

Create an object using the dialog box:

```
ca = CircleArea.createObj
```

Add a value for radius and click **OK**.



Query the area of the defined circle:

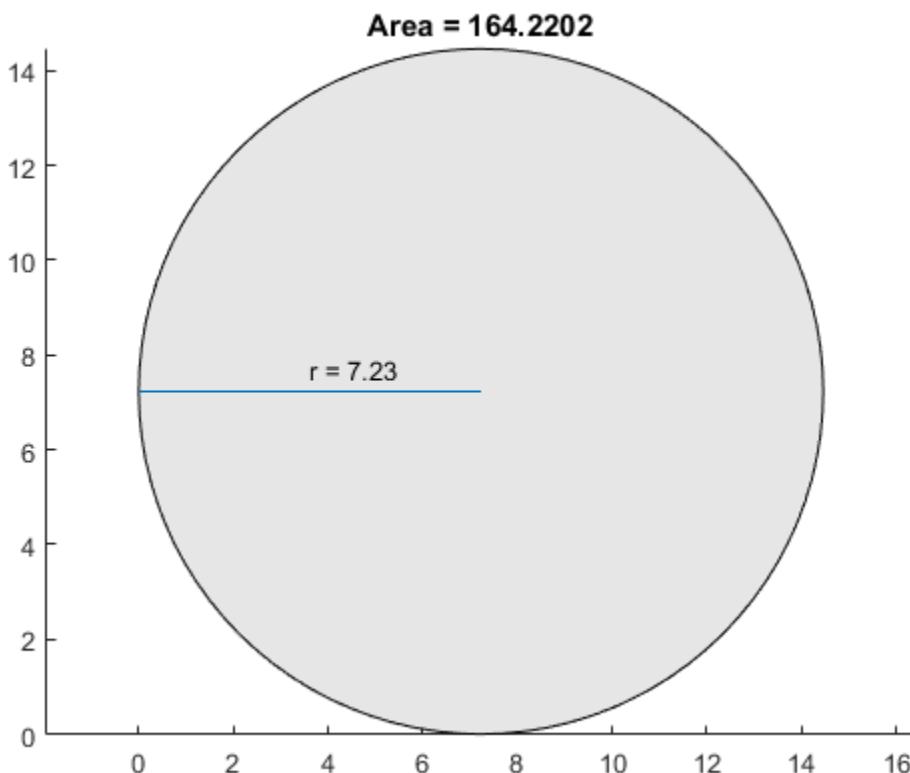
```
ca.Area
```

```
ans =
```

```
164.2202
```

Call the overloaded plot method:

```
plot(ca)
```



## Description of Class Definition

Class definition code begins with the `classdef` keyword followed by the class name:  
`classdef CircleArea`

Define the **Radius** property within the **properties-end** keywords. Use default attributes:

```
properties
    Radius
end
```

Define the **P** property as **Constant** (“Properties with Constant Values” on page 15-2). Call the **pi** function only once when class is initialized.

```
properties (Constant)
    P = pi
end
```

Define the **Area** property as **Dependent** because its value depends on the **Radius** property.

```
properties (Dependent)
    Area
end
```

**methods % Begin defining methods**

The **CircleArea** class constructor method has the same name as the class and accepts the value of the circle radius as an argument. This method also allows no input arguments. (“Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20)

```
function obj = CircleArea(r)
    if nargin > 0
        obj.Radius = r;
    else
        obj.Radius = 0;
    end
end
```

Because the **Area** property is **Dependent**, it does not store its value. The **get.Area** method calculates the value of the **Area** property whenever it is queried. (“Access Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54)

```
function val = get.Area(obj)
    val = obj.P*obj.Radius^2;
end
```

The **set.Radius** method tests the value assigned to the **Radius** property to ensure the value is not less than zero. MATLAB calls **set.Radius** to assign a value to **Radius**. (“Property Set Methods” on page 8-49).

```
function obj = set.Radius(obj,val)
    if val < 0
        error('Radius must be positive')
    end
    obj.Radius = val;
end
```

The **CircleArea** class overloads the **plot** function. The **plot** method uses the **rectangle** function to create a circle and draws the radius. (“Overload Functions in Class Definitions” on page 9-31

```
function plot(obj)
    r = obj.Radius;
    d = r*2;
    pos = [0 0 d d];
    curv = [1 1];
    rectangle('Position',pos,'Curvature',curv)
    line([0,r],[r,r])
    text(r/2,r+0.5,['r = ',num2str(r)])
    axis equal
end
```

The **CircleArea** class overloads the **disp** function to change the way MATLAB displays objects in the command window.

```
function disp(obj)
    rad = obj.Radius;
    disp(['Circle with radius: ',num2str(rad)])
end
methods (Static)
```

The **CircleArea** class defines a **Static** method that uses a dialog box to create an object. (“Static Methods” on page 9-29

```
function obj = createObj
    prompt = {'Enter the Radius'};
    dlgTitle = 'Radius';
    rad = inputdlg(prompt,dlgTitle);
    r = str2double(rad{:});
    obj = CircleArea(r);
end
```

End of **Static** methods block and end of **classdef** block.

```
end
end
```

# MATLAB Code Analyzer Warnings

## In this section...

- “Syntax Warnings and Property Names” on page 5-33
- “Variable/Property Name Conflict Warnings” on page 5-33
- “Exception to Variable/Property Name Rule” on page 5-34

## Syntax Warnings and Property Names

The MATLAB Code Analyzer helps you optimize your code and avoid syntax errors while you write code. It is useful to understand some of the rules that the Code Analyzer applies in its analysis of class definition code. This understanding helps you avoid situations in which MATLAB allows code that is undesirable.

## Variable/Property Name Conflict Warnings

The Code Analyzer warns about the use of variable names in methods that match the names of properties. For example, suppose a class defines a property called `EmployeeName` and in this class, there is a method that uses `EmployeeName` as a variable:

```
properties
    EmployeeName
end
methods
    function someMethod(obj,n)
        EmployeeName = n;
    end
end
```

While the previous function is legal MATLAB code, it results in Code Analyzer warnings for two reasons:

- The value of `EmployeeName` is never used
- `EmployeeName` is the name of a property that is used as a variable

If the function `someMethod` contained the following statement instead:

```
obj.EmployeeName = n;
```

The Code Analyzer generates no warnings.

If you change `someMethod` to:

```
function EN = someMethod(obj)
    EN = EmployeeName;
end
```

The Code Analyzer returns only one warning, suggesting that you might actually want to refer to the `EmployeeName` property.

While this version of `someMethod` is legal MATLAB code, it is confusing to give a property the same name as a function. Therefore, the Code Analyzer provides a warning suggesting that you might have intended the statement to be:

```
EN = obj.EmployeeName;
```

### Exception to Variable/Property Name Rule

Suppose you define a method that returns a value of a property and uses the name of the property for the output variable name. For example:

```
function EmployeeName = someMethod(obj)
    EmployeeName = obj.EmployeeName;
end
```

The Code Analyzer does not warn when a variable name is the same as a property name when the variable is:

- An input or output variable
- A global or persistent variable

In these particular cases, the Code Analyzer does not warn you that you are using a variable name that is also a property name. Therefore, a coding error like the following:

```
function EmployeeName = someMethod(obj)
    EmployeeName = EmployeeName; % Forgot to include obj.
end
```

does not trigger a warning from the Code Analyzer.

### Related Examples

- “Use of Editor and Debugger with Classes” on page 5-46

# Objects In Conditional Statements

## In this section...

- “Enable Use of Objects In Conditional Statements” on page 5-35
- “How MATLAB Evaluates Switch Statements” on page 5-35
- “How to Define the `eq` Method” on page 5-37
- “Enumerations in Switch Statements” on page 5-39

## Enable Use of Objects In Conditional Statements

Enable the use of objects in conditional statements by defining relational operators for the class of the object. Classes that derive from the `handle` class inherit relational operators. Value classes can implement operators to support the use of conditional statements involving objects. For information on defining operators for your class, see “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49.

## How MATLAB Evaluates Switch Statements

MATLAB enables you to use objects in `switch` statements when the object’s class defines an `eq` method. The `eq` method implements the `==` operation on objects of that class.

For objects, `switch_expression == case_expression` defines how MATLAB evaluates `switch` and `cases` statements.

---

**Note:** You do not need to define `eq` methods for enumeration classes. See “Enumerations in Switch Statements” on page 5-39.

---

## Handle Objects in Switch Statements

All classes derived from the `handle` class inherit an `eq` method. The expression,

`h1 == h2`

is `true` if `h1` and `h2` are handles for the same object.

For example, the `BasicHandle` class derives from `handle`:

```
classdef BasicHandle < handle
    properties
        Prop1
    end
    methods
        function obj = BasicHandle(val)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Prop1 = val;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

Create a `BasicHandle` object and use it in a `switch` statement:

```
h1 = BasicHandle('Handle Object');
h2 = h1;
```

Here is the `switch` statement code:

```
switch h1
    case h2
        disp('h2 is selected')
    otherwise
        disp('h2 not selected')
end
```

The result is:

```
h2 is selected
```

### Object Must Be Scalar

The `switch` statements work only with scalar objects. For example:

```
h1(1) = BasicHandle('Handle Object');
h1(2) = BasicHandle('Handle Object');
h1(3) = BasicHandle('Handle Object');
h2 = h1;

switch h1
    case h2
        disp('h2 is selected')
    otherwise
        disp('h2 not selected')
```

```
end
```

The result is:

```
SWITCH expression must be a scalar or string constant.
```

In this case, `h1` is not scalar. Use `isscalar` to determine if an object is scalar before entering a `switch` statement.

## How to Define the `eq` Method

To enable the use of value-class objects in `switch` statements, implement an `eq` method for the class. Use the `eq` method to determine what constitutes equality of two objects of the class.

### Behave Like a Built-in Type

Some MATLAB functions also use the built-in `==` operator in their implementation. Therefore, your implementation of `eq` should be replaceable with the built-in `eq` to enable objects of your class work like built-in types in MATLAB code.

### Design of `eq`

Implement the `eq` method to return a logical array representing the result of the `==` comparison.

For example, the `SwitchOnVer` class implements an `eq` method that returns `true` for the `==` operation if the value of the `Version` property is the same for both objects. In addition, `eq` works with arrays the same way as the built-in `eq`. For the following expression:

```
obj1 == obj2
```

The `eq` method works like this:

- If both `obj1` and `obj2` are scalar, `eq` returns a scalar value.
- If both `obj1` and `obj2` are nonscalar arrays, then these arrays must have the same dimensions, and `eq` returns an array of the same size.
- If one input argument is scalar and the other is a nonscalar array, then `eq` treats the scalar object as if it is an array having the same dimensions as the nonscalar array.

### Implementation of `eq`

Here is a class that implements an `eq` method. Ensure your implementation contains appropriate error checking for the intended use.

```
classdef SwitchOnVer
    properties
        Version
    end
    methods
        function obj = SwitchOnVer(ver)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Version = ver;
            end
        end
        function bol = eq(obj1,obj2)
            if ~strcmp(class(obj1),class(obj2))
                error('Objects are not of the same class')
            end
            s1 = numel(obj1);
            s2 = numel(obj2);
            if s1 == s2
                bol = false(size(obj1));
                for k=1:s1
                    if obj1(k).Version == obj2(k).Version
                        bol(k) = true;
                    else
                        bol(k) = false;
                    end
                end
            elseif s1 == 1
                bol = scalarExpEq(obj2,obj1);
            elseif s2 == 1
                bol = scalarExpEq(obj1,obj2);
            else
                error('Dimension mismatch')
            end
        function ret = scalarExpEq(ns,s)
            % ns is nonscalar array
            % s is scalar array
            ret = false(size(ns));
            n = numel(ns);
            for kk=1:n
                if ns(kk).Version == s.Version
```

```

        ret(kk) = true;
    else
        ret(kk) = false;
    end
end
end
end
end
end
end
end

```

Use `SwitchOnVer` objects in `switch` statements:

```

% Create known versions of objects
ov1 = SwitchOnVer(1.0);
ov2 = SwitchOnVer(2.0);
ov3 = SwitchOnVer(3.0);
...
...
if isscalar(objIn)
    switch(objIn)
        case ov1
            disp('This is version 1.0')
        case ov2
            disp('This is version 2.0')
        case ov3
            disp('This is version 3.0')
        otherwise
            disp('There is no version')
    end
else
    error('Input object must be scalar')
end

```

## Enumerations in Switch Statements

MATLAB enables you to use enumerations in `switch` statements without requiring an explicitly defined `eq` method for the enumeration class.

For example, the `WeeklyPlanner` class defines enumerations for five days of the week. The `switch/case` statements in the `todaySchedule` static method dispatch on the enumeration member corresponding to the current day of the week. The `date` and `datestr` functions return a `char` vector with the name of the current day.

```
classdef WeeklyPlanner
enumeration
    Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
end
methods (Static)
    function todaySchedule
        dayName = datestr(date, 'dddd');
        dayEnum = WeeklyPlanner.(dayName);
        switch dayEnum
            case WeeklyPlanner.Monday
                disp('Monday schedule')
            case WeeklyPlanner.Tuesday
                disp('Tuesday schedule')
            case WeeklyPlanner.Wednesday
                disp('Wednesday schedule')
            case WeeklyPlanner.Thursday
                disp('Thursday schedule')
            case WeeklyPlanner.Friday
                disp('Friday schedule')
        end
    end
end
end
```

Call `todaySchedule` to display today's schedule:

```
WeeklyPlanner.todaySchedule
```

### Enumerations Derived from Built-In Types

Enumeration classes that derived from built-in types inherit the superclass `eq` method. For example, the `FlowRate` class derives from `int32`:

```
classdef FlowRate < int32
enumeration
    Low      (10)
    Medium   (50)
    High     (100)
end
end
```

The `switchEnum` function switches on the input argument, which can be a `FlowRate` enumeration value.

```
function switchEnum(inpt)
```

```
switch inpt
    case 10
        disp('Flow = 10 cfm')
    case 50
        disp('Flow = 50 cfm')
    case 100
        disp('Flow = 100 cfm')
    end
end
```

Call `switchEnum` with an enumerated value:

```
switchEnum(FlowRate.Medium)
```

```
Flow = 50 cfm
```

# Operations on Objects

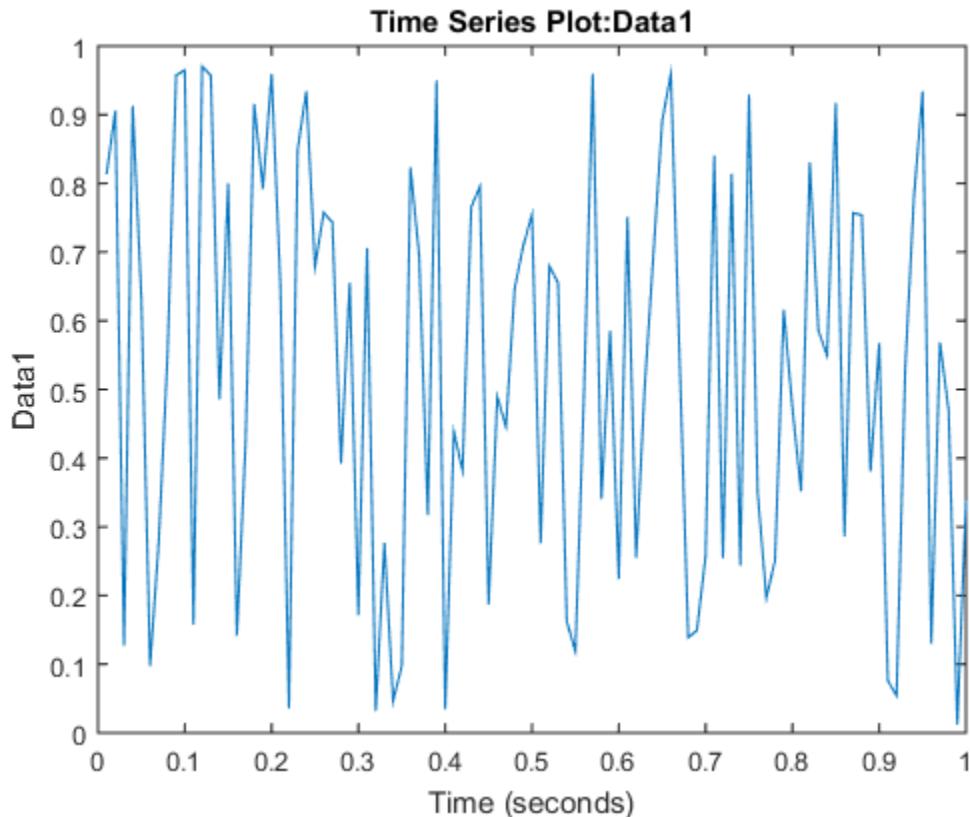
## In this section...

- “Object Operations” on page 5-42
- “Help on Objects” on page 5-43
- “Functions to Test Objects” on page 5-45
- “Functions to Query Class Components” on page 5-45

## Object Operations

A fundamental purpose of objects is to contain data and facilitate ways to manipulate that data. Objects often define their own version of ordinary MATLAB functions that work with the object. For example, you can create a timeseries object and pass the object to `plot`:

```
ts = timeseries(rand(100,1),.01:.01:1, 'Name', 'Data1');  
plot(ts)
```



However, MATLAB does not call the standard `plot` function. MATLAB calls the `timeseries` `plot` method, which can extract the data from the `timeseries` object and create a customized graph.

## Help on Objects

Suppose you use an `audioplayer` object to play audio with MATLAB. To do this, load audio data into MATLAB and create an `audioplayer`:

```
load('handel','Fs','y')
chorus = audioplayer(y,Fs);
```

The `audioplayer` function creates an object that you access using the object variable `chorus`. MATLAB stores the audio source and other information in the object properties.

Here are the properties and values for the `chorus` instance of the `audioplayer`:

```
chorus
```

```
chorus =
```

Click the link to get the documentation on `audioplayer` objects.

[`audioplayer`](#) with properties:

```
    SampleRate: 8192
    BitsPerSample: 16
    NumberOfChannels: 1
        DeviceID: -1
    CurrentSample: 1
    TotalSamples: 73113
        Running: 'off'
    StartFcn: []
    StopFcn: []
    TimerFcn: []
    TimerPeriod: 0.0500
        Tag: ''
    UserData: []
    Type: 'audioplayer'
```

The object's documentation discusses the purpose of the object and describes the properties and methods that you use when working with objects of that class.

You can also list the methods to see what operations you can perform. Pass the object to the `methods` function to see the list:

```
methods(chorus)
```

Methods for class `audioplayer`:

```
audioplayer    getdisp      pause      resume      stop
```

```
delete      horzcat      play       set        vertcat
get        isplaying     playblocking  setdisp
```

To play the audio, use the play method:

```
play(chorus)
```

## Functions to Test Objects

These functions provide logical tests, which are useful when using objects in ordinary functions.

Function	Description
<code>isa</code>	Determine whether an argument is an object of specific class.
<code>isequal</code>	Determine if two objects are equal, which means both objects are of the same class and size and their corresponding property values are equal.
<code>a == b (eq)</code>	Determine if handle variable <code>a</code> refers to the same object as handle variable <code>b</code> .
<code>isobject</code>	Determine whether input is a MATLAB object

## Functions to Query Class Components

These functions provide information about object class components.

Function	Description
<code>class</code>	Return class of object.
<code>enumeration</code>	Display class enumeration members and names.
<code>events</code>	List event names defined by the class.
<code>methods</code>	List methods implemented by the class.
<code>methodsview</code>	List methods in separate window.
<code>properties</code>	List class property names.

## Use of Editor and Debugger with Classes

### In this section...

[“Write Class Code in the Editor” on page 5-46](#)

[“How to Refer to Class Files” on page 5-46](#)

[“How to Debug Class Files” on page 5-47](#)

### Write Class Code in the Editor

The MATLAB code editor provides an effective environment for class development. The Code Analyzer, which is built into the editor, checks code for problems and provides information on fixing these problems. For information on editor use and features, see “Code Editor”.

### How to Refer to Class Files

Define classes in files just like scripts and functions. To use the editor or debugger with a class file, use the full class name. For example, suppose the file for a class, `myclass.m` is in the following location:

```
+PackFld1/+PackFld2/@myclass/myclass.m
```

To open `myclass.m` in the MATLAB editor, you could reference the file using dot-separated package names:

```
edit PackFld1.PackFld2.myclass
```

You could also use path notation:

```
edit +PackFld1/+PackFld2/@myclass/myclass
```

If `myclass.m` is not in a class folder, then enter:

```
edit +PackFld1/+PackFld2/myclass
```

To refer to functions inside a package folder, use dot or path separators:

```
edit PackFld1.PackFld2.packFunction  
edit +PackFld1/+PackFld2/packFunction
```

To refer to a function defined in its own file inside of a class folder, use:

```
edit +PackFld1/+PackFld2/@myclass/myMethod
```

## How to Debug Class Files

For debugging, `dbstop` accepts any of the file specifications used by the `edit` command.

See “Automatic Updates for Modified Classes” on page 5-48 for information about clearing class.

## Related Examples

- “MATLAB Code Analyzer Warnings” on page 5-33

## Automatic Updates for Modified Classes

### In this section...

- “When MATLAB Loads Class Definitions” on page 5-48
- “Consequences of Automatic Update” on page 5-49
- “What Happens When Class Definitions Change” on page 5-49
- “Actions That Do Not Trigger Updates” on page 5-50
- “Multiple Updates to Class Definitions” on page 5-50
- “Object Validity with Deleted Class File” on page 5-50
- “When Updates Are Not Possible” on page 5-50
- “Potential Consequences of Class Updates” on page 5-51
- “Updates to Class Attributes” on page 5-51
- “Updates to Property Definitions” on page 5-52
- “Updates to Method Definitions” on page 5-53
- “Updates to Event Definitions” on page 5-54

### When MATLAB Loads Class Definitions

MATLAB loads a class definition:

- The first time the class is referenced, such as creating an instance, accessing a constant property, or calling a static method of the class.
- Whenever the definition of a loaded class changes and MATLAB returns to the command prompt.
- When you change the MATLAB path and cause a different definition of the class to be used.
- Whenever you access the class metadata.

MATLAB allows only one definition for a class to exist at any time. Therefore, MATLAB attempts to update all existing objects of a class automatically to conform to the new class definition. You do not need to call `clear classes` to remove existing objects when you change their defining class.

---

**Note:** Using an editor other than the MATLAB editor or using MATLAB Online™ can result in delays to automatic updating.

---

## Consequences of Automatic Update

MATLAB follows a set of basic rules when updating existing objects. An automatic update can result in:

- Existing objects being updated to the new class definition.
- An error if MATLAB cannot convert the objects to the new class definition or if there is an error in the class definition itself.

Here is an example of what happens when you create an instance of a concrete class edit the class definition to make the class abstract.

```
a = MyClass;
% Edit MyClass to make it Abstract

a
Error using MyClass/display
Cannot update object because the class 'MyClass' is now abstract.
```

---

**Note:** MATLAB does not update metaclass instances when you change the definition of a class. You must get new metaclass data after updating a class definition.

---

## What Happens When Class Definitions Change

MATLAB updates existing objects when a class definition changes, including the following situations:

- Value change to handle — Existing objects become independent handles referring to different objects.
- Enumeration member added — Existing objects preserve the enumeration members they had previously, even if the underlying values have changed.
- Enumeration member removed — Existing objects that are not using the removed member have the same enumeration members that they had previously. Existing objects that use the removed member replace the removed member with the default member of the enumeration.

- Enumeration block removed — Enumeration members are taken out of use.
- Superclass definition changed — Changes applied to all subclasses in the hierarchy of that superclass.
- Superclass added or removed — Change of superclass applied to all existing objects.

## **Actions That Do Not Trigger Updates**

These actions do not update existing objects:

- Calling the `class` function on an out-of-date object
- Assigning an out-of-date object to a variable
- Calling a method that does not access class data
- Changing property validation in the class definition (“Validate Property Values” on page 8-21)

Objects do not update until referenced in a way that exposes the change, such as invoking the object display or assigning to a property.

## **Multiple Updates to Class Definitions**

Updates do not occur incrementally. Updates conform to the latest version of the class.

## **Object Validity with Deleted Class File**

Deleting a class definition file does not make instances of that class invalid. However, you cannot call methods on existing objects of that class.

## **When Updates Are Not Possible**

Some class updates result in an invalid class definition. In these cases, objects do not update until the error is resolved:

- Adding a superclass can result in a property or method being defined twice.
- Changing a superclass to be `Sealed` when objects of one of its subclasses exists results in an invalid subclass definition.

Some class updates cause situations in which MATLAB cannot update existing objects to conform to a modified class definition. These cases result in errors until you delete the objects:

- Adding an enumeration block to a non-enumeration class
- Redefining a class to be abstract
- Removing a class from a heterogeneous hierarchy that results in there being no default object to replace existing objects in a heterogeneous array
- Updating a class to restrict array formation behavior, such as overloading array indexing and concatenation.
- Inheriting a `subsref`, `subsasgn`, `cat`, `vertcat`, or `horzcat` method
- Redefining a handle class to be a value class.

## Potential Consequences of Class Updates

- Following an update, existing objects can be incompatible with the new class definition. For example, a newly added property can require execution of the constructor to be valid.
- Removing or renaming properties can lose the data held in the property. For example, if a property holds the only reference to another object and you remove that property from the class, the MATLAB deletes the object because there are no longer any references to it.
- Removing a class from a heterogeneous class hierarchy can result in invalid heterogeneous array elements. In this case, the default object for the heterogeneous hierarchy replaces these array elements.

## Updates to Class Attributes

Changing class attributes can change existing object behavior or make the objects invalid. MATLAB returns an error when you access the invalid objects.

Change	Effect
<code>Make Abstract = true</code>	Accessing existing objects returns an error.
<code>Change AllowedSubclasses</code>	Newly created objects can inherit from different superclasses than existing objects.
<code>Change ConstructOnLoad</code>	Loading classes obeys the current value of <code>ConstructOnLoad</code> .
<code>Change HandleCompatible</code>	Newly created objects can have different class hierarchy than existing objects.

Change	Effect
Change <code>Hidden</code>	Appearance of class in list of superclasses and access by <code>help</code> function can change
Change <code>InferiorClasses</code>	Method dispatching for existing objects can change.
<code>Make Sealed = true</code>	Existing subclass objects return errors when accessed.

## Updates to Property Definitions

When you change the definition of class properties, MATLAB applies the changes to existing objects of the class.

Change	Effect
Add property	Adds the new property to existing objects of the class. Sets the property values to the default value (which is <code>[]</code> if the class definition does not specify a default).
Remove property	Removes the property from existing objects of the class. Attempts to access the removed property fail.
Change property default value	Does not apply the new default value to existing objects of the class.
Move property between subclass and superclass	Does not apply different default value when property definition moves between superclass and subclass.
Change property attribute value	<p>Applies changes to existing objects of the class.</p> <p>Some cases require transitional steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Abstract</b> — Existing objects of a class that becomes abstract cannot be updated. Delete these objects.</li> <li>• <b>Access</b> — Changes to the <code>public</code>, <code>protected</code>, or <code>private</code> property access settings affect access to existing objects.</li> </ul> <p>Changes to the access lists do not change existing objects. However, if you add classes to the access list, instances of those classes have access to this property. If you remove classes from the access list, objects of those classes no longer have access to this property.</p>

Change	Effect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dependent</b> — If changed to <code>true</code>, existing objects no longer store property values. If you want to query the property value, add a property get method for the property.</li> <li>• <b>Transient</b> — If changed to <code>true</code>, objects already saved, reload this property value. If changed to <code>false</code>, objects already saved reload this property using the default value.</li> </ul>

## Updates to Method Definitions

When you change the definition of class methods, MATLAB changes the affected class member in existing objects as follows.

Change	Effect
Add method	You can call the new method on existing objects of the class.
Modify method	Modifications are available to existing objects.
Remove method	You can no longer call deleted method on existing objects.
Change method attribute value	<p>Apply changes to existing objects of the class.</p> <p>Some cases require transitional steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Abstract</b> — Existing objects of a class that becomes abstract cannot be updated. Delete these objects.</li> <li>• <b>Access</b> — Changes to method <code>public</code>, <code>protected</code>, or <code>private</code> access settings affect access to existing objects.</li> </ul> <p>Changes to the access lists do not change existing instances. However, if you add classes to the access list, instances of those classes have access to this method. If you remove classes from the access list, objects of those classes no longer have access to this method.</p>

Change	Effect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sealed</b> — If changed to <code>true</code> and existing subclasses already have defined the method, MATLAB returns an error because the new class definition cannot be applied to existing subclasses.</li> </ul>

## Updates to Event Definitions

Change	Effect
Add event	Existing objects of the class support the new event.
Change event name	<p>New event name is visible to existing objects of the class. MATLAB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not update existing metaclass objects</li> <li>• Does update newly acquired metaclass objects</li> <li>• Does not update listeners to use new event name</li> </ul>
Remove event	Existing objects no longer support deleted event.
Change event attribute value	<p>Apply changes to existing objects of the class.</p> <p>Some cases require transitional steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ListenAccess</b> — Changes to event <code>public</code>, <code>protected</code>, or <code>private</code> listen access settings affect access to existing objects.</li> </ul> <p>Changes to the access list do not change existing objects. However, if you add classes to the access list, objects of those classes can create listeners for this event. If you remove classes from the access list, objects of those classes are not allowed to create listeners for this event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NotifyAccess</b> — Changes to event <code>public</code>, <code>protected</code>, or <code>private</code> notify access settings affect access to existing objects.</li> </ul> <p>Changes to the access list do not change existing objects. However, if you add classes to the access list,</p>

<b>Change</b>	<b>Effect</b>
	instances of those classes can trigger this event. If you remove classes, objects of those classes are not able to trigger this event.

## **Related Examples**

- “Use of Editor and Debugger with Classes” on page 5-46

## Compatibility with Previous Versions

### In this section...

- “New Class-Definition Syntax Introduced with MATLAB Software Version 7.6” on page 5-56
- “Changes to Class Constructors” on page 5-57
- “New Features Introduced with Version 7.6” on page 5-57
- “Examples of Old and New” on page 5-58

## New Class-Definition Syntax Introduced with MATLAB Software Version 7.6

MATLAB software Version 7.6 introduces a new syntax for defining classes. This new syntax includes:

- The `classdef` keyword begins a block of class-definitions code. An `end` statement terminates the class definition.
- Within the `classdef` code block, `properties`, `methods`, and `events` are also keywords delineating where you define the respective class members.

### Cannot Mix Class Hierarchy

It is not possible to create class hierarchies that mix classes defined before Version 7.6 and current class definitions that use `classdef`. Therefore, you cannot subclass an old class to create a version of the new class.

### Only One “@” Class Folder per Class

For classes defined using the new `classdef` keyword, a class folder shadows all class folders that occur after it on the MATLAB path. Classes defined in class folders must locate all class files in that single folder. However, classes defined in class folders continue to take precedence over functions and scripts having the same name, even those functions and scripts that come before them on the path.

### Private Methods

You do not need to define private folders in class folders in Version 7.6. You can set the method's `Access` attribute to `private` instead.

## Changes to Class Constructors

Class constructor methods have two major differences. Class constructors:

- Do not use the `class` function.
- Must call the superclass constructor only if you want to pass arguments to its constructor. Otherwise, no call to the superclass constructor is necessary.

### Example of Old and New Syntax

Compare the following two `Stock` constructor methods. The `Stock` class is a subclass of the `Asset` class, which requires arguments passed to its constructor.

#### Constructor Function Before Version 7.6

```
function s = Stock(description,num_shares,share_price)
    s.NumShares = num_shares;
    s.SharePrice = share_price;
% Construct Asset object
    a = Asset(description,'stock',share_price*num_shares);
% Use the class function to define the stock object
    s = class(s,'Stock',a);
```

Write the same `Stock` class constructor as shown here. Define the inheritance on the `classdef` line and define the constructor within a `methods` block.

#### Constructor Function for Version 7.6

```
classdef Stock < Asset
    ...
    methods
        function s = Stock(description,num_shares,share_price)
% Call superclass constructor to pass arguments
        s = s@Asset(description,'stock',share_price*num_shares);
        s.NumShares = num_shares;
        s.SharePrice = share_price;
    end % End of function

    end % End of methods block
end % End of classdef block
```

## New Features Introduced with Version 7.6

- Properties: “Ways to Use Properties” on page 8-2
- Handle classes: “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2
- Events and listeners: “Event and Listener Concepts” on page 11-14
- Class member attributes: “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22
- Abstract classes: “Abstract Classes” on page 12-86
- Dynamic properties: “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61
- Ability to subclass MATLAB built-in classes: “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9
- Packages for scoping functions and classes: “Packages Create Namespaces” on page 6-24. MATLAB does not support packages for classes created before MATLAB Version 7.6 (that is, classes that do not use `classdef`).
- The JIT/Accelerator supports objects defined only by classes using `classdef`.

## Examples of Old and New

The MATLAB Version 7.6 implementation of classes uses different syntax from previous releases. However, classes written in previous versions continue to work. Most of the code you use to implement the methods is likely to remain the same, except where you take advantage of new features.

The following sections reimplement examples using the latest syntax. The original MATLAB Classes and Objects documentation implemented these same examples and provide a comparison of old and new syntax.

“Class Design for Polynomials” on page 19-2

“Using Heterogeneous Class Hierarchies” on page 20-2

# Comparison of MATLAB and Other OO Languages

## In this section...

- “Some Differences from C++ and Java Code” on page 5-59
- “Object Modification” on page 5-60
- “Static Properties” on page 5-64
- “Common Object-Oriented Techniques” on page 5-65

## Some Differences from C++ and Java Code

The MATLAB programming language differs from other object-oriented languages, such as C++ or Java in some important ways.

### Public Properties

Unlike fields in C++ or the Java language, you can use MATLAB properties to define a public interface separate from the implementation of data storage. You can provide public access to properties because you can define set and get access methods that execute automatically when assigning or querying property values. For example, the following statement:

```
myobj.Material = 'plastic';
```

assigns the `char` vector `plastic` to the `Material` property of `myobj`. Before making the actual assignment, `myobj` executes a method called `set.Material` (assuming the class of `myobj` defines this method), which can perform any necessary operations. See “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43 for more information on property access methods.

You can also control access to properties by setting attributes, which enable public, protected , or private access. See “Property Attributes” on page 8-8 for a full list of property attributes.

### No Implicit Parameters

In some languages, one object parameter to a method is always implicit. In MATLAB, objects are explicit parameters to the methods that act on them.

### Dispatching

In MATLAB classes, method dispatching is not based on method signature, as it is in C++ and Java code. When the argument list contains objects of equal precedence, MATLAB uses the left-most object to select the method to call.

However, if the class of an argument is superior to the class of the other arguments, MATLAB dispatches to the method of the superior argument, regardless of its position within the argument list.

See “Class Precedence” on page 6-22 for more information.

### Calling Superclass Method

- In C++, you call a superclass method using the scoping operator:  
*superclass::method*
- In Java code, you use: *superclass.method*

The equivalent MATLAB operation is *method@superclass*.

### Other Differences

In MATLAB classes, there is no equivalent to C++ templates or Java generics. However, MATLAB is weakly typed and it is possible to write functions and classes that work with different types of data.

MATLAB classes do not support overloading functions using different signatures for the same function name.

## Object Modification

MATLAB classes can define public properties, which you can modify by explicitly assigning values to those properties on a given instance of the class. However, only classes derived from the `handle` class exhibit reference behavior. Modifying a property value on an instance of a value classes (classes not derived from `handle`), changes the value only within the context in which the modification is made.

The sections that follow describe this behavior in more detail.

### Objects Passed to Functions

MATLAB passes all variables by value. When you pass an object to a function, MATLAB copies the value from the caller into the parameter variable in the called function.

However, MATLAB supports two kinds of classes that behave differently when copied:

- Handle classes — a handle class instance variable refers to an object. A copy of a handle class instance variable refers to the same object as the original variable. If a function modifies a handle object passed as an input argument, the modification affects the object referenced by both the original and copied handles.
- Value classes — the property data in an instance of a value class are independent of the property data in copies of that instance (although, a value class property could contain a handle). A function can modify a value object that is passed as an input argument, but this modification does not affect the original object.

See “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2 for more information on the behavior and use of both kinds of classes.

### **Passing Value Objects**

When you pass a value object to a function, the function creates a local copy of the argument variable. The function can modify only the copy. If you want to modify the original object, return the modified object and assign it to the original variable name. For example, consider the value class, **SimpleClass** :

```
classdef SimpleClass
    properties
        Color
    end
    methods
        function obj = SimpleClass(c)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Color = c;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

Create an instance of **SimpleClass**, assigning a value of **red** to its **Color** property:

```
obj = SimpleClass('red');
```

Pass the object to the function **g**, which assigns **blue** to the **Color** property:

```
function y = g(x)
    x.Color = 'blue';
    y = x;
end
```

```
y = g(obj);
```

The function `g` modifies its copy of the input object and returns that copy, but does not change the original object.

```
y.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
blue
```

```
obj.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
red
```

If the function `g` did not return a value, the modification of the object `Color` property would have occurred only on the copy of `obj` within the function workspace. This copy would have gone out of scope when the function execution ended.

Overwriting the original variable actually replaces it with a new object:

```
obj = g(obj);
```

### Passing Handle Objects

When you pass a handle to a function, the function makes a copy of the handle variable, just like when passing a value object. However, because a copy of a handle object refers to the same object as the original handle, the function can modify the object without having to return the modified object.

For example, suppose you modify the `SimpleClass` class definition to make a class derived from the handle class:

```
classdef SimpleHandleClass < handle
    properties
        Color
    end
    methods
        function obj = SimpleHandleClass(c)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Color = c;
            end
        end
    end
```

```
    end  
end
```

Create an instance of `SimpleHandleClass`, assigning a value of `red` to its `Color` property:

```
obj = SimpleHandleClass('red');
```

Pass the object to the function `g`, which assigns `blue` to the `Color` property:

```
y = g(obj);
```

The function `g` sets the `Color` property of the object referred to by both the returned handle and the original handle:

```
y.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
blue
```

```
obj.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
blue
```

The variables `y` and `obj` refer to the same object:

```
y.Color = 'yellow';  
obj.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
yellow
```

The function `g` modified the object referred to by the input argument (`obj`) and returned a handle to that object in `y`.

### **MATLAB Passes Handles by Value**

A handle variable is a reference to an object. MATLAB passes this reference by value.

Handles do not behave like references in C++. If you pass an object handle to a function and that function assigns a different object to that handle variable, the variable in the caller is not affected. For example, suppose you define a function `g2`:

```
function y = g2(x)
    x = SimpleHandleClass('green');
    y = x;
end
```

Pass a handle object to `g2`:

```
obj = SimpleHandleClass('red');
y = g2(obj);
y.Color

ans =
green

obj.Color

ans =
red
```

The function overwrites the handle passed in as an argument, but does not overwrite the object referred to by the handle. The original handle `obj` still references the original object.

## Static Properties

In MATLAB, classes can define constant properties, but not "static" properties in the sense of other languages like C++. You cannot change constant properties from the initial value specified in the class definition.

MATLAB has long-standing rules that variables always take precedence over the names of functions and classes. Assignment statements introduce a variable if one does not exist.

Expressions of this form

```
A.B = C
```

Introduce a new variable, `A`, that is a `struct` containing a field `B` whose value is `C`. If `A.B = C` could refer to a static property of class `A`, then class `A` would take precedence over variable `A`.

This behavior would be a significant incompatibility with prior releases of MATLAB. For example, the introduction of a class named `A` on the MATLAB path could change the meaning of an assignment statement like `A.B = C` inside a `.m` code file.

In other languages, classes rarely use static data, except as private data within the class or as public constants. In MATLAB, you can use constant properties the same way you use `public final static` fields in Java. To use data that is internal to a class in MATLAB, create persistent variables in private or protected methods or local functions used privately by the class.

Avoid static data in MATLAB. If a class has static data, using the same class in multiple applications causes conflicts among applications. Conflicts are less of an issue in some other languages. These languages compile applications into executables that run in different processes. Each process has its own copy of the class static data. MATLAB, frequently runs many different applications in the same process and environment with a single copy of each class.

For ways to define and use static data in MATLAB, see “Static Data” on page 4-2.

## Common Object-Oriented Techniques

This table provides links to sections that discuss object-oriented techniques commonly used by other object-oriented languages.

Technique	How to Use in MATLAB
Operator overloading	“Operator Overloading” on page 17-49
Multiple inheritance	“Subclassing Multiple Classes” on page 12-21
Subclassing	“Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9
Destructor	“Handle Class Destructor” on page 7-16
Data member scoping	“Property Attributes” on page 8-8
Packages (scoping classes)	“Packages Create Namespaces” on page 6-24
Named constants	See “Properties with Constant Values” on page 15-2 and “Named Values” on page 14-2
Enumerations	“Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5
Static methods	“Static Methods” on page 9-29

Technique	How to Use in MATLAB
Static properties	Not supported. See <code>persistent</code> variables. For the equivalent of Java <code>static final</code> or C++ <code>static const</code> properties, use <code>Constant</code> properties. See “Properties with Constant Values” on page 15-2  For mutable static data, see “Static Data” on page 4-2
Constructor	“Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20
Copy constructor	No direct equivalent
Reference/reference classes	“Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2
Abstract class/Interface	“Abstract Classes” on page 12-86
Garbage collection	“Object Lifecycle” on page 7-20
Instance properties	“Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61
Importing classes	“Import Classes” on page 6-29
Events and Listeners	“Event and Listener Concepts” on page 11-14

# Defining and Organizing Classes

---

- “User-Defined Classes” on page 6-2
- “Class Attributes” on page 6-6
- “Evaluation of Expressions in Class Definitions” on page 6-9
- “Folders Containing Class Definitions” on page 6-16
- “Class Precedence” on page 6-22
- “Packages Create Namespaces” on page 6-24
- “Import Classes” on page 6-29

## User-Defined Classes

### In this section...

- “What Is a Class Definition” on page 6-2
- “Attributes for Class Members” on page 6-2
- “Kinds of Classes” on page 6-3
- “Constructing Objects” on page 6-3
- “Class Hierarchies” on page 6-3
- “`classdef` Syntax” on page 6-3
- “Class Code” on page 6-4

### What Is a Class Definition

A MATLAB class definition is a template whose purpose is to provide a description of all the elements that are common to all instances of the class. Class members are the properties, methods, and events that define the class.

Define MATLAB classes in code blocks, with subblocks delineating the definitions of various class members. For syntax information on these blocks, see “Class Components” on page 5-5.

### Attributes for Class Members

Attributes modify the behavior of classes and the members defined in the class-definition block. For example, you can specify that methods are static or that properties are private. The following sections describe these attributes:

- “Class Attributes” on page 6-6
- “Method Attributes” on page 9-5
- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8
- “Event Attributes” on page 11-19

Class definitions can provide information, such as inheritance relationships or the names of class members without actually constructing the class. See “Class Metadata” on page 16-2.

See “Specifying Attributes” on page 6-7 for more on attribute syntax.

## Kinds of Classes

There are two kinds of MATLAB classes—handle classes and value classes.

- Value classes represent independent values. Value objects contain the object data and do not share this data with copies of the object. MATLAB numeric types are value classes. Values objects passed to and modified by functions must return a modified object to the caller.
- Handle classes create objects that reference the object data. Copies of the instance variable refer to the same object. Handle objects passed to and modified by functions affect the object in the caller’s workspace without returning the object.

For more information, see “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2.

## Constructing Objects

For information on class constructors, see “Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20.

For information on creating arrays of objects, see “Construct Object Arrays” on page 10-2.

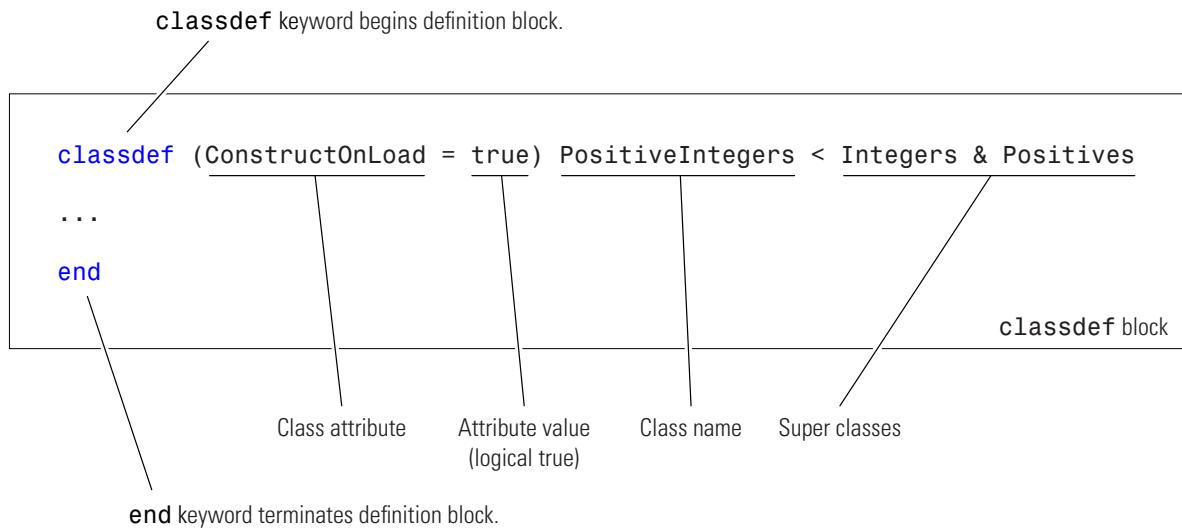
## Class Hierarchies

For more information on how to define class hierarchies, see “Hierarchies of Classes — Concepts” on page 12-2.

## classdef Syntax

Class definitions are blocks of code that are delineated by the `classdef` keyword at the beginning and the `end` keyword at the end. Files can contain only one class definition.

The following diagram shows the syntax of a `classdef` block. Only comments and blank lines can precede the `classdef` keyword.



## Class Code

Here is a simple class definition with one property and a constructor method that sets the value of the property when there is an input argument supplied.

```
classdef MyClass
    properties
        Prop
    end
    methods
        function obj = MyClass(val)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Prop = val;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

To create an object of `MyClass`, save the class definition in a `.m` file having the same name as the class and call the constructor with any necessary arguments:

```
d = datestr(now);
o = MyClass(d);
```

Use dot notation to access the property value:

```
o.Prop  
ans =  
10-Nov-2005 10:38:14
```

The constructor should support a no argument syntax so MATLAB can create default objects. For more information, see “No Input Argument Constructor Requirement” on page 9-24.

For more information on the components of a class definition, see “Class Components” on page 5-5

## Related Examples

- “Create a Simple Class” on page 2-2
- “Developing Classes — Typical Workflow” on page 3-8
- “Class to Represent Structured Data” on page 3-19

## Class Attributes

### In this section...

[“Specifying Class Attributes” on page 6-6](#)

[“Specifying Attributes” on page 6-7](#)

### Specifying Class Attributes

All classes support the attributes listed in the following table. Attributes enable you to modify the behavior of class. Attribute values apply to the class defined within the `classdef` block.

```
classdef (Attribute1 = value1, Attribute2 = value2,...) ClassName
    ...
end
```

For more information on attribute syntax, see “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22.

### Class Attributes

Attribute Name	Class	Description
Abstract	logical (default = false)	If specified as <code>true</code> , this class is an abstract class (cannot be instantiated).  See “Abstract Classes” on page 12-86 for more information.
AllowedSubclasses	<code>meta.class</code> object or cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects	List classes that can subclass this class. Specify subclasses as <code>meta.class</code> objects in the form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A single <code>meta.class</code> object</li><li>• A cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects. An empty cell array, <code>{ } </code>, is the same as a <code>Sealed</code> class (no subclasses).</li></ul> Specify <code>meta.class</code> objects using the <code>?ClassName</code> syntax only.  See “Specify Allowed Subclasses” on page 12-23 for more information.

Attribute Name	Class	Description
ConstructOnLoad	logical (default = <b>false</b> )	If <b>true</b> , MATLAB calls the class constructor when loading an object from a MAT-file. Therefore, implement the constructor so it can be called with no arguments without producing an error.  See “Initialize Objects When Loading” on page 13-30 for more information.
HandleCompatible	logical (default = <b>false</b> ) for value classes	If specified as <b>true</b> , this class can be used as a superclass for handle classes. All handle classes are <b>HandleCompatible</b> by definition. See “Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-37 for more information.
Hidden	logical (default = <b>false</b> )	If <b>true</b> , this class does not appear in the output of the <b>superclasses</b> or <b>help</b> functions.
InferiorClasses	meta.class object or cell array of meta.class objects	Use this attribute to establish a precedence relationship among classes. Specify a cell array of <b>meta.class</b> objects using the <b>? operator</b> .  The fundamental classes are always inferior to user-defined classes and do not show up in this list.  See “Class Precedence” on page 6-22 and “Dominant Argument in Overloaded Graphics Functions” on page 9-47.
Sealed	logical (default = <b>false</b> )	If <b>true</b> , this class cannot be subclassed.

## Specifying Attributes

Attributes are specified for class members in the **classdef**, **properties**, **methods**, and **events** definition blocks. The particular attribute setting applies to all members defined within that particular block. You can use multiple **properties** definition blocks to apply different attribute setting to different properties.

### Superclass Attributes Are Not Inherited

Class attributes are not inherited, so superclass attributes do not affect subclasses.

### Attribute Syntax

Specify class attribute values in parentheses, separating each attribute name/attribute value pair with a comma. The attribute list always follows the `classdef` or `class` member keyword, as shown:

```
classdef (attribute-name = expression, ...) ClassName
    properties (attribute-name = expression, ...)
    ...
    end
    methods (attribute-name = expression, ...)
    ...
    end
    events (attribute-name = expression, ...)
    ...
    end
end
```

### More About

- “Expressions in Attribute Specifications” on page 6-10

# Evaluation of Expressions in Class Definitions

## In this section...

- “Why Use Expressions” on page 6-9
- “Where to Use Expressions in Class Definitions” on page 6-9
- “How MATLAB Evaluates Expressions” on page 6-12
- “When MATLAB Evaluates Expressions” on page 6-12
- “Expression Evaluation in Handle and Value Classes” on page 6-12

## Why Use Expressions

An expression used in a class definition can be any valid MATLAB statement that evaluates to a single array. Use expressions to define property default values and in attribute specifications. Expressions are useful to derive values in terms of other values. For example, suppose you want to define a constant property with the full precision value of  $2\pi$ . You can assign the property the value returned by the expression `2*pi`. MATLAB evaluates the function the when first loading the class.

For information on assign property default values and attribute values, see the following topics:

- “Property Definition” on page 8-14
- “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22

## Where to Use Expressions in Class Definitions

Here are some examples of expressions used in a class definition:

```
classdef MyClass
    % Some attributes are set to logical values
    properties (Constant = true)
        CnstProp = 2*pi
    end
    properties
        % Static method of this class
        Prop1 = MyClass.setupAccount
        % Constant property from this class
        Prop2 = MyClass.CnstProp
        % Function that returns a value
```

```
Prop3 = datestr(now)
% A class constructor
Prop4 = AccountManager
end
methods (Static)
    function accNum = setupAccount
        accNum = randi(9,[1,12]);
    end
end
end
```

MATLAB does not call property set methods when assigning the result of default value expressions to properties. (See “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43 for information about these special methods.)

Enumerations that derived from MATLAB types can use expression to assign a value:

```
classdef FlowRate < int32
    enumeration
        Low      (10)
        Medium   (FlowRate.Low*5)
        High     (FlowRate.Low*10)
    end
end
```

MATLAB evaluates these expressions only once when enumeration members are first accessed.

### Expressions in Attribute Specifications

For attributes values that are logical `true` or `false`, class definitions can specify attribute values using expressions. For example, this assignment makes `MyClass` sealed (cannot be subclassed) for versions of MATLAB before R2014b (`verLessThan`)

```
classdef (Sealed = verLessThan('matlab','R2014b')) MyClass
```

The expression on the right side of the equal sign (=) must evaluate to `true` or `false`. You cannot use any definitions from the class file in this expression, including any constant properties, static methods, and local functions.

While you can use conditional expression to set attribute values, doing so can cause the class definition to change based on external conditions. Ensure that this behavior is consistent with your class design.

---

**Note:** The `AllowedSubclasses` and the `InferiorClasses` attributes require an explicit specification of a cell array of `meta.class` objects as their values. You cannot use expressions to return these values.

---

See “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22 for more information on attribute syntax.

### Expressions That Specify Default Property Values

Property definitions allow you to specify default values for properties using any expression that has no reference to variables. For example, `VectorAngle` defines a constant property (`Rad2Deg`) and uses it in an expression that defines the default value of another property (`Angle`). The default value expression also uses a static method (`getAngle`) defined by the class:

```
classdef VectorAngle
    properties (Constant)
        Rad2Deg = 180/pi
    end
    properties
        Angle = VectorAngle.Rad2Deg*VectorAngle.getAngle([1 0],[0 1])
    end
    methods
        function obj = VectorAngle(vx,vy)
            obj.Angle = VectorAngle.getAngle(vx,vy);
        end
    end
    methods (Static)
        function r = getAngle(vx,vy)
            % Calculate angle between 2D vectors
            cr = vx(1)*vy(1) + vx(2)*vy(2)/sqrt(vx(1)^2 + vx(2)^2) * ...
                sqrt(vy(1)^2 + vy(2)^2);
            r = acos(cr);
        end
    end
end
```

You cannot use the input variables to the constructor to define the default value of the `Angle` property. For example, this definition for the `Angle` property is not valid:

```
properties
    Angle = VectorAngle.Rad2Deg*VectorAngle.getAngle(vx,vy)
end
```

Attempting to create an instance causes an error:

```
a = VectorAngle([1,0],[0,1])  
Error using VectorAngle  
Unable to update the class 'VectorAngle' because the new definition contains an  
error:  
Undefined function or variable 'vx'.
```

### Expressions in Class Methods

Expression in class methods execute like expressions in any function. MATLAB evaluates an expression within the function workspace when the method executes. Therefore, expressions used in class methods are not considered part of the class definition and are not discussed in this section.

## How MATLAB Evaluates Expressions

MATLAB evaluates the expressions used in the class definition without any workspace. Therefore, these expressions cannot reference variables of any kind.

MATLAB evaluates expressions in the context of the class file, so these expressions can access any functions, static methods, and constant properties of other classes that are on your path at the time MATLAB initializes the class. Expressions defining property default values can access constant properties defined in their own class.

## When MATLAB Evaluates Expressions

MATLAB evaluates the expressions in class definitions only when initializing the class. Initialization occurs before the first use of the class.

After initialization, the values returned by these expressions are part of the class definition and are constant for all instances of the class. Each instance of the class uses the results of the initial evaluation of the expressions without re-evaluation.

If you clear a class, then MATLAB reinitializes the class by reevaluating the expressions that are part of the class definition. (see “Automatic Updates for Modified Classes” on page 5-48)

## Expression Evaluation in Handle and Value Classes

The following example shows how value and handle object behave when assigned to properties as default values. Suppose that you have the following classes.

## Expressions in Value Classes

The `ClassExp` class has a property that contains a `ContClass` object:

```
classdef ContClass
    properties
        % Assign current date and time
        TimeProp = datestr(now)
    end
end

classdef ClassExp
    properties
        ObjProp = ContClass
    end
end
```

When you first use the `ClassExp` class, MATLAB creates an instance of the `ContClass` class. MATLAB initializes both classes at this time. All instances of `ClassExp` include a copy of this same instance of `ContClass`.

```
a = ClassExp;
a.ObjProp.TimeProp

ans =
08-Oct-2003 17:16:08
```

The `TimeProp` property of the `ContClass` object contains the date and time when MATLAB initialized the class. Creating additional instances of the `ClassExp` class shows that the date string has not changed:

```
b = ClassExp;
b.ObjProp.TimeProp

ans =
08-Oct-2003 17:16:08
```

Because this example uses a value class for the contained object, each instance of the `ClassExp` has its own copy of the object. For example, suppose that you change the value of the `TimeProp` property on the object contained by `ClassExp` object `b`:

```
b.ObjProp.TimeProp = datestr(now)
```

```
ans =  
08-Oct-2003 17:22:49
```

The copy of the object contained by object **a** is unchanged:

```
a.ObjProp.TimeProp
```

```
ans =  
08-Oct-2003 17:16:08
```

### Expressions in Handle Classes

Now consider the behavior if the contained object is a handle object:

```
classdef ContClass < handle  
properties  
    TimeProp = datestr(now)  
end  
end
```

Creating two instances of the **ClassExp** class shows that MATLAB created an object when it initialized the **ContClass**. MATLAB used a copy of the object's *handle* for each instance of the **ClassExp** class. Therefore, there is one **ContClass** object and the **ObjProp** property of each **ClassExp** object contains a copy of its handle.

Create an instance of the **ClassExp** class and note the time of creation:

```
a = ClassExp;  
a.ObjProp.TimeProp  
  
ans =  
08-Oct-2003 17:46:01
```

Create a second instance of the **ClassExp** class. The **ObjProp** contains the handle of the same object:

```
b = ClassExp;  
b.ObjProp.TimeProp  
  
ans =  
08-Oct-2003 17:46:01
```

Reassign the value of the contained object **TimeProp** property:

```
b.ObjProp.TimeProp = datestr(now);  
b.ObjProp.TimeProp
```

```
ans =
```

```
08-Oct-2003 17:47:34
```

The **ObjProp** property of object **b** contains a handle to the same object as the **ObjProp** property of object **a**. The value of the **TimeProp** property has changed on this object as well:

```
a.ObjProp.TimeProp
```

```
ans =
```

```
08-Oct-2003 17:47:34
```

## More About

- “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2

## Folders Containing Class Definitions

### In this section...

- “Class and Path Folders” on page 6-16
- “Using Path Folders” on page 6-16
- “Using Class Folders” on page 6-17
- “Access to Functions Defined in Private Folders” on page 6-17
- “Class Precedence and MATLAB Path” on page 6-18
- “Changing Path to Update Class Definition” on page 6-19

### Class and Path Folders

There are two types of folders that can contain class definition files.

- Path folders — The folder is on the MATLAB path and the folder name does not begin with an @ character. Use this type of folder when you want multiple classes in one folder. However, the entire class definition must be contained in one .m file.
- Class folders — The folder name begins with an @ character followed by the class name. The folder is not on the MATLAB path, but its parent folder is on the path. Use this type of folder when you want to use multiple files for one class definition.

See the `path` function for information about the MATLAB path.

### Using Path Folders

The class definition files in the folders are on the MATLAB path. Therefore, class definitions placed in path folders behave like any ordinary function with respect to precedence—the first occurrence of a name on the MATLAB path takes precedence over all subsequent occurrences of the same name.

The name of each class definition file must match the name of the class that is specified with the `classdef` keyword. Using a path folder eliminates the need to create a separate class folder for each class. However, the entire class definition, including all methods, must be contained within a single file.

Suppose that you have three classes defined in a single folder:

```
.../path_folder/MyClass1.m  
.../path_folder/MyClass2.m  
.../path_folder/MyClass2.m
```

To use these classes, add `path_folder` to your MATLAB path:

```
addpath path_folder
```

## Using Class Folders

A class folder name always begins with the @ character followed by the class name for the folder name. A class folder must be contained in a path folder, but the class folder is not on the MATLAB path. Place the class definition file inside the class folder, which also can contain separate method files. The class definition file must have the same name as the class folder (without the @ character). The class definition (beginning with the `classdef` keyword) must appear in the file before any other code (white space and comments do not constitute code).

```
.../parent_folder/@MyClass/MyClass.m  
.../parent_folder/@MyClass/myMethod1.m  
.../parent_folder/@MyClass/myMethod2.m
```

Define only one class per folder. All files must have a .m extension.

Use a class folder when you want to use more than one file for your class definition. MATLAB treats any .m file in the class folder as a method of the class. Class files provide the advantage that MATLAB can explicitly identify any file in the folder as a method of that class. For more information, see “Changing Path to Update Class Definition” on page 6-19.

The base name of each file must be a valid MATLAB function name. Valid function names begin with an alphabetic character and can contain letters, numbers, or underscores. For more information, see “Methods in Separate Files” on page 9-10.

## Access to Functions Defined in Private Folders

Private folders contain functions that are accessible only from functions defined in folders immediately above the `private` folder. If a class folder contains a `private` folder, only the class defined in that folder can access functions defined in the `private` folder. Subclasses do not have access to superclass private functions. For more information on private folders, see “Private Functions”.

If you want a subclass to have access to the private functions of the superclass, a better approach is to define the functions as protected methods of the superclass. Specify the methods with the **Access** attribute set to **protected**.

### No Class Definitions in Private Folders

You cannot put class definitions in private folders because doing so would not meet the requirements for class or path folders.

## Class Precedence and MATLAB Path

When there are multiple class definition files with the same name, the file location on the MATLAB path determines the file precedence. All class definition files before a class on the path take precedence, whether or not the definitions are contained in a class folder. The class takes precedence over all class definition files occurring later on the path.

For example, consider a path with the following folders, containing the files indicated.

Order in Path	Folder and File	File Defines
1	fldr1/Foo.m	Class Foo
2	fldr2/Foo.m	Function Foo
3	fldr3/@Foo/Foo.m	Class Foo
4	fldr4/@Foo/bar.m	Method bar
5	fldr5/Foo.m	Class Foo

Here is the logic that MATLAB applies to determine which version of **Foo** to call:

Class **fldr1/Foo.m** takes precedence over the class **fldr3/@Foo** because:

- **fldr1/Foo.m** is before **fldr3/@Foo** on the path

Class **fldr3/@Foo** takes precedence over function **fldr2/Foo.m** because:

- **fldr3/@Foo** is a class in a class folder
- **fldr2/Foo.m** is not a class
- Classes in class folders take precedence over functions

Function **fldr2/Foo.m** takes precedence over class **fldr5/Foo.m** because:

- `fldr2/Foo.m` comes before class `fldr5/Foo.m` on the path
- `fldr5/Foo.m` is not in a class folder
- Classes that are not defined in class folders obey the path order with respect to functions.

Class `fldr3/@Foo` takes precedence over class `fldr4/@Foo` because:

- The method `bar` is not recognized as part of the `Foo` class defined in `fldr3/@Foo`.

If `fldr3/@Foo/Foo.m` does not contain a `classdef` keyword (that is, it is a MATLAB class prior to Version 7.6), then `fldr4/@Foo/bar.m` becomes a method of the `Foo` class defined in `fldr3/@Foo`.

### Previous Behavior of Classes Defined in Class Folders

In MATLAB Versions 5 through 7, class folders do not shadow other class folders having the same name, but residing in later path folders. Instead, the class uses the combination of methods from all class folders having the same name to define the class. This behavior is no longer supported.

For backward compatibility, classes defined in class folders always take precedence over functions and scripts having the same name. This precedence applies to functions and scripts that come before these classes on the path.

## Changing Path to Update Class Definition

Changing your MATLAB path can change the class definition file for a class (see `path`). However, for classes that are defined in path folders (that is, not in class @ folders), you must clear the class before MATLAB recognizes the new folder as the current class definition.

### Class Definitions in Class Folders

Suppose that you define two versions of a class named `Foo` in two folders, `fldA` and `fldB`.

```
fldA/+FooPkg/@Foo/Foo.m  
fldB/+FooPkg/@Foo/Foo.m
```

Add folder `fldA` to the top of the path.

```
addpath fldA
```

Create an instance of class `FooPkg.Foo`. MATLAB uses `fldA/+FooPkg/@Foo/Foo.m` as the class definition.

```
a = FooPkg.Foo;
```

Change the current folder to `fldB`.

```
cd fldB
```

The current folder is always first on the path. Therefore, MATLAB finds `fldB/+FooPkg/@Foo/Foo.m` as the definition for class `FooPkg.Foo`.

```
b = FooPkg.Foo;
```

MATLAB automatically updates the existing instance, `a`, to use the new class definition in `fldB`.

### Class Definitions in Path Folders

Suppose that you define two versions of a class named `Foo` in two folders, `fldA` and `fldB`, but do not use a class folder.

```
fldA/+FooPkg/Foo.m  
fldB/+FooPkg/Foo.m
```

Add folder `fldA` to the top of the path.

```
addpath fldA
```

Create an instance of class `FooPkg.Foo`. MATLAB uses `fldA/+FooPkg/@Foo/Foo.m` as the class definition.

```
a = FooPkg.Foo;
```

Change the current folder to `fldB`.

```
cd fldB
```

The current folder is effectively the top of the path. However, MATLAB does not identify `fldB/+FooPkg/Foo.m` as the definition for class `FooPkg.Foo`. MATLAB continues to use the original class definition until you clear the class.

To use the definition of `FooPkg.Foo` in `fldB`, clear `FooPkg.Foo`.

```
clear FooPkg.Foo
```

MATLAB automatically updates the existing objects to conform to the class definition in `f1dB`. In most cases, clearing instance variables is unnecessary.

## More About

- “[Packages Create Namespaces](#)” on page 6-24
- “[Automatic Updates for Modified Classes](#)” on page 5-48

# Class Precedence

## In this section...

[“Use of Class Precedence” on page 6-22](#)

[“Why Mark Classes as Inferior” on page 6-22](#)

[“InferiorClasses Attribute” on page 6-22](#)

## Use of Class Precedence

MATLAB uses class precedence to determine which method to call when multiple classes have the same method. You can specify the relative precedence of user-defined classes with the class `InferiorClasses` attribute.

The material presented in this topic builds on an understanding of the following information:

- [“Class Metadata” on page 16-2](#)
- [“Attribute Specification” on page 5-22](#)

## Why Mark Classes as Inferior

When more than one class defines methods with the same name or when classes overload functions, MATLAB determines which method or function to call based on the dominant argument. Here is how MATLAB determines the dominant argument:

- 1 Determine the dominant argument based on the class of arguments.
- 2 If there is a dominant argument, call the method of the dominant class.
- 3 If arguments are of equal precedence, use the leftmost argument as the dominant argument.
- 4 If the class of the dominant argument does not define a method with the name of the called function, call the first function on the path with that name.

## InferiorClasses Attribute

Specify the relative precedence of user-defined classes using the class `InferiorClasses` attribute. To specify classes that are inferior to the class you are defining, assign a cell array of class `meta.class` objects to this attribute.

For example, the following `classdef` declares that `MyClass` is dominant over `ClassName1` and `ClassName2`.

```
classdef (InferiorClasses = {?ClassName1,?ClassName2}) MyClass
    ...
end
```

The `?` operator combined with a class name creates a `meta.class` object. See [metaclass](#).

MATLAB built-in classes are always inferior to user-defined classes and should not be used in this list.

The built-in classes include: `double`, `single`, `char`, `logical`, `int64`, `uint64`, `int32`, `uint32`, `int16`, `uint16`, `int8`, `uint8`, `cell`, `struct`, and `function_handle`.

### Dominant Class

MATLAB uses class dominance when evaluating expressions involving objects of more than one class. The dominant class determines:

- Which class method to call when more than one class defines methods with the same names.
- The class of arrays that are formed by combining objects of different classes, assuming MATLAB can convert the inferior objects to the dominant class.

### No Attribute Inheritance

Subclasses do not inherit a superclass `InferiorClasses` attribute. Only classes specified in the subclass `InferiorClasses` attribute are inferior to subclass objects.

### More About

- “Class Precedence and MATLAB Path” on page 6-18
- “Dominant Argument in Overloaded Graphics Functions” on page 9-47

# Packages Create Namespaces

## In this section...

- “Package Folders” on page 6-24
- “Internal Packages” on page 6-25
- “Referencing Package Members Within Packages” on page 6-25
- “Referencing Package Members from Outside the Package” on page 6-26
- “Packages and the MATLAB Path” on page 6-27

## Package Folders

Packages are special folders that can contain class folders, function, and class definition files, and other packages. The names of classes and functions are scoped to the package folder. A package is a namespace within which names must be unique. Function and class names must be unique only within the package. Using a package provides a means to organize classes and functions. Packages also enable you to reuse the names of classes and functions in different packages.

---

**Note:** Packages are not supported for classes created prior to MATLAB Version 7.6 (that is, classes that do not use `classdef`).

---

Package folders always begin with the + character. For example,

```
+mypack  
+mypack/pkfcn.m % a package function  
+mypack/@myClass % class folder in a package
```

The parent of the top-level package folder must be on the MATLAB path.

### **Listing the Contents of a Package**

List the contents of a package using the `help` command:

```
help event
```

Contents of event:

```
EventData           - event.EVENTDATA    Base class for event data
```

```

PropertyEvent           - event.PROPERTYEVENT    Event data for object property
listener                - event.LISTENER      Listener object
proplistener             - event.PROPLISTENER   Listener object for property eve

```

You can also use the **what** command:

```
what event
```

```
Classes in directory Y:\xxx\matlab\toolbox\matlab\lang\+event
```

```
EventData      PropertyEvent  listener      proplistener
```

## Internal Packages

MathWorks® reserves the use of packages named **internal** for utility functions used by internal MATLAB code. Functions that belong to an **internal** package are intended for MathWorks use only. Using functions or classes that belong to an **internal** package is discouraged. These functions and classes are not guaranteed to work in a consistent manner from one release to the next. Any of these functions and classes might be removed from the MATLAB software in any subsequent release without notice and without documentation in the product release notes.

## Referencing Package Members Within Packages

All references to packages, functions, and classes in the package must use the package name prefix, unless you import the package. (See “Import Classes” on page 6-29.) For example, call this package function:

```
+mypack/pkfcn.m
```

With this syntax:

```
z = mypack.pkfcn(x,y);
```

Definitions do not use the package prefix. For example, the function definition line of the **pkfcn.m** function would include only the function name:

```
function z = pkfcn(x,y)
```

Define a package class with only the class name:

```
classdef myClass
```

but call it with the package prefix:

```
obj = mypack.myClass(arg1,arg2,...);
```

Calling class methods does not require the package name because you have an object of the class. You can use dot or function notation:

```
obj.myMethod(arg)  
myMethod(obj,arg)
```

A static method requires the full class name, which includes the package name:

```
mypack.myClass.stMethod(arg)
```

## Referencing Package Members from Outside the Package

Functions, classes, and other packages contained in a package are scoped to that package. To reference any of the package members, prefix the package name to the member name, separated by a dot. For example, the following statement creates an instance of `MyClass`, which is contained in `mypack` package.

```
obj = mypack.MyClass;
```

### Accessing Class Members — Various Scenarios

This section shows you how to access various package members from outside a package. Suppose that you have a package `mypack` with the following contents:

```
+mypack  
+mypack/myFcn.m  
+mypack/@MyFirstClass  
+mypack/@MyFirstClass/myFcn.m  
+mypack/@mMyFirstClass/otherFcn.m  
+mypack/@MyFirstClass/MyFirstClass.m  
+mypack/@MySecondClass  
+mypack/@MySecondClass/MySecondClass.m  
+mypack/+mysubpack  
+mypack/+mysubpack/myFcn.m
```

Invoke the `myFcn` function in `mypack`:

```
mypack.myFcn(arg)
```

Create an instance of each class in `mypack`:

```
obj1 = mypack.MyFirstClass;
obj2 = mypack.MySecondClass(arg);
```

Invoke the `myFcn` function that is in the package `mysubpack`:

```
mypack.mysubpack.myFcn(arg1,arg2);
```

If `mypack.MyFirstClass` has a method called `myFcn`, call it like any method call on an object:

```
obj = mypack.MyFirstClass;
myFcn(obj,arg);
```

If `mypack.MyFirstClass` has a property called `MyProp`, assign it using dot notation and the object:

```
obj = mypack.MyFirstClass;
obj.MyProp = x;
```

## Packages and the MATLAB Path

You cannot add package folders to the MATLAB path, but you must add the package parent folder to the MATLAB path. Package members are not accessible if the package parent folder is not on the MATLAB path, even if the package folder is the current folder. Making the package folder the current folder is not sufficient to add the package parent folder to the path.

Package members remain scoped to the package. Always refer to the package members using the package name. Alternatively, import the package into the function in which you call the package member, see “Import Classes” on page 6-29.

Package folders do not shadow other package folders that are positioned later on the path, unlike classes, which do shadow other classes. If two or more packages have the same name, MATLAB treats them all as one package. If redundantly named packages in different path folders define the same function name, then MATLAB finds only one of these functions.

## Resolving Redundant Names

Suppose a package and a class have the same name. For example:

```
fldr_1/+foo
fldr_2/@foo/foo.m
```

A call to `which foo` returns the path to the executable class constructor:

```
>> which foo  
fldr_2/@foo/foo.m
```

A function and a package can have the same name. However, a package name by itself is not an identifier. Therefore, if a redundant name occurs alone, it identifies the function. Executing a package name alone returns an error.

### Package Functions vs. Static Methods

In cases where a package and a class have the same name, a static method takes precedence over a package function. For example, path folder `fldrA` contains a package function and path folder `fldrB` contains a class static method:

```
fldrA/+foo/bar.m % bar is a function in package foo  
fldrB/@foo/bar.m % bar is a static method of class foo
```

A call to `which foo.bar` returns the path to the static method:

```
which foo.bar  
fldrB/@foo/bar.m
```

In cases where the same path folder contains both package and class folders with the same name, the class static method takes precedence over the package function.

```
fldr/@foo/bar.m % bar is a static method of class foo  
fldr/+foo/bar.m % bar is a function in package foo
```

A call to `which foo.bar` returns the path to the static method:

```
which foo.bar  
fldr/@foo/bar.m
```

### More About

- “Folders Containing Class Definitions” on page 6-16
- “Class Precedence” on page 6-22

# Import Classes

## In this section...

- “Syntax for Importing Classes” on page 6-29
- “Import Package Functions” on page 6-29
- “Package Function and Class Method Name Conflict” on page 6-30
- “Clearing Import List” on page 6-30

## Syntax for Importing Classes

Import classes into a function to simplify access to class members. For example, suppose that there is a package that contains several classes and you need to use only one of these classes in your function, or even just a static method from that class. Use the `import` command to simplify code. Once you have imported the class, you do not need to reference the package name:

```
function myFunc
    import pkg.cls1
    obj = cls1(arg,...); % call cls1 constructor
    obj.Prop = cls1.staticMethod(arg,...); % call cls1 static method
end
```

Import all classes in a package using the syntax `pkg.*`:

```
function myFunc
    import pkg.*
    obj1 = cls1(arg,...); % call pkg.cls1 constructor
    obj2 = cls2(arg,...); % call pkg.cls2 constructor
    a = pkgFunction(); % call package function named pkgFunction
end
```

## Import Package Functions

Use `import` to import package functions:

```
function myFunc
    import pkg.pkfcn
    pkfcn(arg,...); % call imported package function
end
```

## Package Function and Class Method Name Conflict

Avoid importing an entire package using the \* wildcard syntax. Doing so imports an unspecified set of names into the local scope. For example, suppose that you have the following folder organization:

```
+pkg/timedata.m          % package function  
+pkg/@MyClass/MyClass.m  % class definition file  
+pkg/@MyClass/timedata.m % class method
```

Import the package and call `timedata` on an instance of `MyClass`:

```
import pkg.*  
myobj = pkg.MyClass;  
timedata(myobj)
```

A call to `timedata` finds the package function, not the class method because MATLAB applies the `import` and finds `pkg.timedata` first. Do not use a package in cases where you have name conflicts and plan to import the package.

## Clearing Import List

You cannot clear the import list from a function workspace. To clear the base workspace only, use:

```
clear import
```

## More About

- “[Packages Create Namespaces](#)” on page 6-24

# Value or Handle Class – Which to Use

---

- “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2
- “Which Kind of Class to Use” on page 7-11
- “The Handle Superclass” on page 7-13
- “Handle Class Destructor” on page 7-16
- “Find Handle Objects and Properties” on page 7-25
- “Implement Set/Get Interface for Properties” on page 7-27
- “Implement Copy for Handle Classes” on page 7-34
- “Control Number of Instances” on page 7-41

## Comparison of Handle and Value Classes

### In this section...

- “Basic Difference” on page 7-2
- “Behavior of MATLAB Built-In Classes” on page 7-3
- “User-Defined Value Classes” on page 7-4
- “User-Defined Handle Classes” on page 7-5
- “Determining Equality of Objects” on page 7-7
- “Functionality Supported by Handle Classes” on page 7-9

### Basic Difference

A *value* class constructor returns an object that is associated with the variable to which it is assigned. If you reassign this variable, MATLAB creates an independent copy of the original object. If you pass this variable to a function for the purpose of modifying it, the function must return the modified object as an output argument.

A *handle* class constructor returns a handle object that is a reference to the object created. You can assign the handle object to multiple variables or pass it to functions without causing MATLAB to make a copy of the original object. A function that modifies a handle object passed as an input argument does not need to return the object.

All handle classes are derived from the abstract handle class.

### Create a Value Class

By default, MATLAB classes are value classes. The following definition creates a value class named `MyValueClass`:

```
classdef MyValueClass  
    ...  
end
```

### Create a Handle Class

To create a `handle` class, derive the class from the `handle` class.

```
classdef MyHandleClass < handle
```

```
    ...
end
```

## Behavior of MATLAB Built-In Classes

MATLAB fundamental classes are value classes (“Fundamental MATLAB Classes”). For example, if you create an object of the class `int32` and make a copy of this object, the result is two independent objects. When you change the value of `a`, the value of `b` does not change. This behavior is typical of classes that represent values.

```
a = int32(7);
b = a;
a = a^4;

b
7
```

MATLAB graphics objects are implemented as handle objects because they represent visual elements. For example, create a graphics line object and copy its handle to another variable. Both variables refer to the same line object.

```
x = 1:10; y = sin(x);
l1 = line(x,y);
l2 = l1;
```

Set the properties of the line object using either copy of the handle.

```
set(l2, 'Color', 'red')
set(l1, 'Color', 'green')

get(l2, 'Color')

ans =
0     1     0
```

Calling the `delete` function on the `l2` handle destroys the line object. If you attempt to set the `Color` property on the line `l1`, the `set` function returns an error.

```
delete(l2)
set(l1, 'Color', 'blue')

Error using matlab.graphics.primitive.Line/set
Invalid or deleted object.
```

If you delete the object by deleting any one of the existing handles, all copies are now invalid because you deleted the single object to which all handles refer.

Deleting a handle object is not the same as clearing the handle variable. In the graphics object hierarchy, the parent of the object holds a reference to the object. For example, the parent axes hold a reference to the line object referred to by 11 and 12. If you clear both variables from the workspace, the object still exists.

For more information on the behavior of handle objects, see “Using Handles” on page 1-12.

## User-Defined Value Classes

MATLAB associates objects of value classes with the variables to which you assign the object. When you copy a value object to another variable or pass a value object to a function, MATLAB creates an independent copy of the object and all the data contained by the object. The new object is independent of changes to the original object. Value objects behave like MATLAB numeric and **struct** classes. Each property behaves essentially like a MATLAB array

Value objects are always associated with one workspace or temporary variable. Value objects go out of scope when their variable goes out of scope or is cleared. There are no references to value objects, only copies that are independent objects.

### Value Object Behavior

Here is a value class that stores a value in its **Number** property. The default property value is the number 1.

```
classdef NumValue
properties
    Number = 1
end
end
```

Create a **NumValue** object assigned to the variable **a**.

```
a = NumValue
a =
NumValue with properties:
```

```
Number: 1
```

Assign the value of **a** to another variable, **b**.

```
b = a
```

```
b =
```

```
NumValue with properties:
```

```
Number: 1
```

The variables **a** and **b** are independent. Changing the value of the **Number** property of **a** does not affect the **Number** property of **b**.

```
a.Number = 7
```

```
a =
```

```
NumValue with properties:
```

```
Number: 7
```

```
b
```

```
b =
```

```
NumValue with properties:
```

```
Number: 1
```

### Modifying Value Objects in Functions

When you pass a value object to a function, MATLAB creates a copy of that object in the function workspace. Because copies of value objects are independent, the function does not modify the object in the caller's workspace. Therefore, functions that modify value objects must return the modified object to be reassigned in the caller's workspace.

For more information, see “Object Modification” on page 5-60.

## User-Defined Handle Classes

Instances of classes that derive from the **handle** class are references to the underlying object data. When you copy a handle object, MATLAB copies the handle, but does not copy the data stored in the object properties. The copy refers to the same object as the

original handle. If you change a property value on the original object, the copied handle references the same change.

### Handle Object Behavior

Here is a handle class that stores a value in its `Number` property. The default property value is the number 1.

```
classdef NumHandle < handle
    properties
        Number = 1
    end
end
```

Create a `NumHandle` objects assigned to the variable `a`.

```
a = NumHandle
```

```
a =
```

```
    NumHandle with properties:
```

```
        Number: 1
```

Assign the value of `a` to another variable, `b`.

```
b = a
```

```
b =
```

```
    NumHandle with properties:
```

```
        Number: 1
```

The variables `a` and `b` refer to the same underlying object. Changing the value of the `Number` property of `a` also changes the `Number` property of `b`. That is, `a` and `b` refer to the same object.

```
a.Number = 7
```

```
a =
```

```
    NumHandle with properties:
```

```
        Number: 7
```

```
b  
b =  
NumHandle with properties:  
Number: 7
```

### Modifying Handle Objects in Functions

When you pass a handle object to a function, MATLAB creates a copy of the handle in the function workspace. Because copies of handles reference the same underlying object, functions that modify the handle object effectively modify the object in the caller's workspace as well. Therefore, functions that modify handle objects passed as input arguments do not return the modified object to the caller.

For more information, see "Object Modification" on page 5-60.

### Deleting Handles

You can destroy handle objects by explicitly calling the handle delete method. Deleting the handle of a handle class object makes all handles invalid. For example:

```
a = NumHandle;  
b = a;  
delete(a)  
b.Number  
  
Invalid or deleted object.
```

Calling `delete` on a handle object invokes the destructor function or functions for that object. See "Handle Class Destructor" on page 7-16 for more information.

### Initialize Properties to Contain Handle Objects

For information on the differences between initializing properties to default values in the properties block and initializing properties from within the constructor, see "Initialize Property Values" on page 8-15 and "Initialize Arrays of Handle Objects" on page 10-10.

## Determining Equality of Objects

Equality for value objects means that the objects are of the same class and have the same state.

Equality for handle objects means that the handle variables refer to the same object. You also can identify handle variables that refer to different objects of the same class that have the same state.

### Equality of Value Objects

To determine if value objects are the same size and their contents are of equal value, use `isequal`. For example, use the previously defined `NumValue` class to create two instances and test for equality:

```
a = NumValue;  
b = NumValue;  
isequal(a,b)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

`a` and `b` are independent and therefore are not the same object. However each represents the same value.

If you change the value represented by a value object, the objects are no longer equal.

```
a = NumValue;  
b = NumValue;  
b.Number = 7;  
isequal(a,b)
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

Value classes do not have a default `eq` method to implement the `==` operation.

### Equality of Handle Objects

Handle objects inherit an `eq` method from the handle base class. You can use `==` and `isequal` to test for two different relationships among handle objects:

- The handles refer to the same object: `==` and `isequal` return `true`.
- The handles refer to objects of the same class that have the same values, but are not the same objects — only `isequal` returns `true`.

Use the previously defined `NumHandle` class to create an object and copy the handle.

```
a = NumHandle;  
b = a;
```

Test for equality using == and isEqual.

```
a == b  
ans =  
1  
isEqual(a,b)  
ans =  
1
```

Create two instances of the NumHandle class using the default values.

```
a = NumHandle;  
b = NumHandle;
```

Determine if a and b refer to the same object.

```
a == b  
ans =  
0
```

Determine if a and b have the same values.

```
isEqual(a,b)  
ans =  
1
```

## Functionality Supported by Handle Classes

Deriving from the handle class enables your class to:

- Inherit several useful methods (“Handle Class Methods” on page 7-13)
- Define events and listeners (“Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21)

- Define dynamic properties (“Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61)
- Implement set and get methods (“Implement Set/Get Interface for Properties” on page 7-27)
- Customize copy behavior (“Implement Copy for Handle Classes” on page 7-34)

See “The Handle Superclass” on page 7-13 for more information on the handle class and its methods.

### **Related Examples**

- “Which Kind of Class to Use” on page 7-11
- “Implement Copy for Handle Classes” on page 7-34
- “Using Handles” on page 1-12

# Which Kind of Class to Use

## In this section...

[“Examples of Value and Handle Classes” on page 7-11](#)

[“When to Use Handle Classes” on page 7-11](#)

[“When to Use Value Classes” on page 7-12](#)

## Examples of Value and Handle Classes

Handle and value classes are useful in different situations. For example, value classes enable you to create new array classes that have the same behavior as MATLAB numeric classes.

[“Class Design for Polynomials” on page 19-2](#) and [“Class to Represent Structured Data” on page 3-19](#) provides examples of value classes.

Handle classes enable you to create objects that more than one function or object can share. Handle objects allow more complex interactions among objects because they allow objects to reference each other.

[“Class to Implement Linked Lists” on page 3-31](#) and [“Developing Classes — Typical Workflow” on page 3-8](#) provides examples of a handle class.

## When to Use Handle Classes

Use a handle class when:

- No two instances of a class can have the same state, making it impossible to have exact copies. For example:
  - A copy of a graphics object (such as a line) has a different position in its parents list of children than the object from which it was copied. Therefore, the two objects are not identical.
  - Nodes in lists or trees having specific connectivity to other nodes—no 2 nodes can have the same connectivity.
- The class represents physical and unique objects like serial ports and printers.
- The class represents visible objects like graphics components.

- The class defines events and notifies listeners when an event occurs (`notify` is a handle class method).
- The class creates listeners by calling the `handle` class `addlistener` method.
- The class subclasses the `dynamicprops` class (a subclass of `handle`) so that instances can define dynamic properties.
- The class subclasses the `matlab.mixin.SetGet` class (a subclass of `handle`) so that it can implement a graphics object style set/get interface to access property values.
- You want to create a singleton class or a class in which you track the number of instances from within the constructor.
- Instances of a class cannot share state, such as nodes in a linked list.

### When to Use Value Classes

Value class objects behave like normal MATLAB variables. A typical use of value classes is to define data structures. For example, suppose that you want to define a class to represent polynomials. This class can define a property to contain a list of coefficients for the polynomial. It can implement methods that enable you to perform various operations on the polynomial object. For example, implement addition and multiplication without converting the object to another class.

A value class is suitable because you can copy a polynomial object and have two objects that are identical representations of the same polynomial. For an example of value classes, see “Class Design for Polynomials” on page 19-2 and “Subclasses of MATLAB Built-In Types” on page 12-48.

### Related Examples

- “Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-37

# The Handle Superclass

## In this section...

- “Building on the Handle Class” on page 7-13
- “Handle Class Methods” on page 7-13
- “Event and Listener Methods” on page 7-14
- “Relational Methods” on page 7-14
- “Test Handle Validity” on page 7-14
- “When MATLAB Destroys Objects” on page 7-14

## Building on the Handle Class

The handle class is an abstract class. Therefore, you cannot create objects of this class directly. Use the `handle` class as a superclass to implement subclasses that inherit handle behavior. MATLAB defines several classes that derive from the `handle` class. These classes provide specialized functionality to subclasses.

### Specialized Handle Base Classes

Derive your class from these `handle` classes to add both handle behavior and specific functionality to your class:

- `matlab.mixin.SetGet` — Provides `set` and `get` methods to access property values.
- `dynamicprops` — Enables you to define properties that are associated with an object, but not the class in general.
- `matlab.mixin.Copyable` Provides a `copy` method that you can customize for your class.

For information on how to define subclasses, see “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9 .

## Handle Class Methods

When you derive a class from the `handle` class, the subclass inherits methods that enable you to work more effectively with handle objects.

List the methods of a class by passing the class name to the `methods` function:

```
methods('handle')
```

Methods for class handle:

addlistener	findobj	gt	lt
delete	findprop	isvalid	ne
eq	ge	le	notify

## Event and Listener Methods

For information on how to use the `notify` and `addlistener` methods, see “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21.

## Relational Methods

```
TF = eq(H1,H2)
TF = ne(H1,H2)
TF = lt(H1,H2)
TF = le(H1,H2)
TF = gt(H1,H2)
TF = ge(H1,H2)
```

The handle class overloads these functions to support equality tests and sorting on handles. For each pair of input arrays, these functions return a logical array of the same size. Each element is an element-wise equality or comparison test result. The input arrays must be the same size or one (or both) can be scalar. The method performs scalar expansion as required. For more information on handle class relational methods, see [relationaloperators](#).

## Test Handle Validity

Use the `isValid` handle class method to determine if a variable is a valid handle object. For example, in the statement:

```
B = isValid(H)
```

`B` is a logical array in which each element is `true` if, and only if, the corresponding element of `H` is a valid handle. `B` is always the same size as `H`.

## When MATLAB Destroys Objects

MATLAB destroys objects in the workspace of a function when the function:

- Reassigns an object variable to a new value
- Does not use an object variable for the remainder of a function
- Function execution ends

When MATLAB destroys an object, it also destroys values stored in the properties of the object. MATLAB frees computer memory associated with the object for use by MATLAB or the operating system.

You do not need to free memory in handle classes. However, there can be other operations that you want to perform when destroying an object. For example, closing a file or shutting down an external program that the object constructor started. Define a `delete` method in your handle subclass for these purposes.

See “Handle Class Destructor” on page 7-16 for more information.

## Related Examples

- “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2

## Handle Class Destructor

### In this section...

- “Basic Knowledge” on page 7-16
- “Syntax of Handle Class Destructor Method” on page 7-16
- “Support Destruction of Partially Constructed Objects” on page 7-17
- “When to Define a Destructor Method” on page 7-18
- “Destructors in Class Hierarchies” on page 7-19
- “Object Lifecycle” on page 7-20
- “Restrict Access to Object Delete Method” on page 7-21
- “Nondestructor Delete Methods” on page 7-22
- “Java Objects Referencing MATLAB Objects” on page 7-22

## Basic Knowledge

### Terms and Concepts

*Class destructor* – a method named `delete` that MATLAB calls implicitly before destroying an object of a handle class. Also, user-defined code can call `delete` explicitly to destroy an object.

*Nondestructor* – a method named `delete` that does not meet the syntax requirements of a valid destructor. Therefore, MATLAB does not call this method implicitly when destroying handle objects. A method named `delete` in a value class is not a destructor.

“Object Lifecycle” on page 7-20

“Method Attributes” on page 9-5

### Syntax of Handle Class Destructor Method

MATLAB calls the destructor of a handle class when destroying objects of the class. MATLAB recognizes a method named `delete` as the class destructor only if you define `delete` as an ordinary method with the appropriate syntax.

To be a valid class destructor, the `delete` method:

- Must define one, scalar input argument, which is an object of the class.

- Must not define output arguments
- Cannot be **Sealed**, **Static**, or **Abstract**

In addition, the **delete** method should *not*:

- Throw errors, even if the object is invalid.
- Create new handles to the object being destroyed
- Call methods or access properties of subclasses

MATLAB does not call a noncompliant **delete** method when destroying objects of the class. A **delete** method that is not a valid destructor shadows the handle base class **delete** method. A noncompliant **delete** method can prevent the destruction of the object by shadowing the handle class **delete** method.

Declare **delete** as an ordinary method:

```
methods
    function delete(obj)
        % obj is always scalar
    ...
end
end
```

### **delete** Called Element-Wise on Array

MATLAB calls the **delete** method separately for each element in an array. Therefore, a **delete** method is passed only one scalar argument with each invocation.

Calling **delete** on a deleted handle should not error and can take no action. This design enables **delete** to work on object arrays containing a mix of valid and invalid objects.

## **Support Destruction of Partially Constructed Objects**

Errors that occur while constructing an object can result in a call to **delete** before the object is fully created. Therefore, class **delete** methods must be able to work with partially constructed objects.

For example, the **PartialObject** class **delete** method determines if the **Data** property is empty before accessing the data this property contains. If an error occurs while assigning the constructor argument to the **Name** property, MATLAB passes the partially constructed object to **delete**.

```
classdef PartialObject < handle
```

```
properties
    % Restrict the Name property
    % to a cell array
    Name cell
    Data
end
methods
    function h = PartialObject(name)
        if nargin > 0
            h.Name = name;
            h.Data.a = rand(10,1);
        end
    end
    function delete(h)
        % Protect against accessing properties
        % of partially constructed objects
        if ~isempty(h.Data)
            t = h.Data.a;
            disp(t)
        else
            disp('Data is empty')
        end
    end
end
end
```

An error occurs if you call the constructor with a `char` vector, instead of the required cell array:

```
obj = PartialObject('Test')
```

MATLAB passes the partially constructed object to the `delete` method. The constructor did not set the value of the `Data` property because the error occurred when setting the `Name` property.

```
Data is empty
Error setting 'Name' property of 'PartialObject' class:
...
```

### When to Define a Destructor Method

Use a `delete` method to perform cleanup operations before MATLAB destroys the object. MATLAB calls the `delete` method reliably, even if execution is interrupted with Ctrl-c or an error.

If an error occurs during the construction of a handle class, MATLAB calls the class destructor on the object along with the destructors for any objects contained in properties and any initialized base classes.

For example, suppose that a method opens a file for writing and you want to close the file in your `delete` method. The `delete` method can call `fclose` on a file identifier that the object stores in its `FileID` property:

```
function delete(obj)
    fclose(obj.FileID);
end
```

## Destructors in Class Hierarchies

If you create a hierarchy of classes, each class can define its own `delete` method. When destroying an object, MATLAB calls the `delete` method of each class in the hierarchy. Defining a `delete` method in a `handle` subclass does not override the `handle` class `delete` method. Subclass `delete` methods augment the superclass `delete` methods.

### Inheriting a Sealed Delete Method

Classes cannot define a valid destructor that is `Sealed`. MATLAB returns an error when you attempt to instantiate a class that defines a `Sealed` `delete` method.

Normally, declaring a method as `Sealed` prevents subclasses from overriding that method. However, a `Sealed` method named `delete` that is not a valid destructor does not prevent a subclass from defining its own destructor.

For example, if a superclass defines a method named `delete` that is not a valid destructor, but is `Sealed`, then subclasses:

- Can define valid destructors (which are always named `delete`).
- Cannot define methods named `delete` that are not valid destructors.

### Destructors in Heterogeneous Hierarchies

Heterogeneous class hierarchies require that all methods to which heterogeneous arrays are passed must be sealed. However, the rule does not apply to class destructor methods. Because destructor methods cannot be sealed, you can define a valid destructor in a heterogeneous hierarchy that is not sealed, but does function as a destructor.

For information on heterogeneous hierarchies, see “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23

## Object Lifecycle

MATLAB invokes the `delete` method when the lifecycle of an object ends. The lifecycle of an object ends when the object is:

- No longer referenced anywhere
- Explicitly deleted by calling `delete` on the handle

### Inside a Function

The lifecycle of an object referenced by a local variable or input argument exists from the time the variable is assigned until the time it is reassigned, cleared, or no longer referenced within that function or in any handle array.

A variable goes out of scope when you explicitly clear it or when its function ends. When a variable goes out of scope and its value belongs to a handle class that defines a `delete` method, MATLAB calls that method. MATLAB defines no ordering among variables in a function. Do not assume that MATLAB destroys one value before another value when the same function contains multiple values.

### Sequence During Handle Object Destruction

MATLAB invokes the `delete` methods in the following sequence when destroying an object:

- 1 The `delete` method for the class of the object
- 2 The `delete` method of each superclass class, starting with the immediate superclasses and working up the hierarchy to the most general superclasses

MATLAB invokes the `delete` methods of superclasses at the same level in the hierarchy in the order specified in the class definition. For example, the following class definition specifies `superclass1` before `superclass2`. MATLAB calls the `delete` method of `superclass1` before the `delete` method of `superclass2`.

```
classdef myClass < superclass1 & superclass2
```

After calling each `delete` method, MATLAB destroys the property values belonging exclusively to the class whose method was called. The destruction of property values that

contain other handle objects can cause a call the `delete` methods for those objects when there are no other references to those objects.

Superclass `delete` methods cannot call methods or access properties belonging to a subclass.

### Destruction of Objects with Cyclic References

Consider a set of objects that reference other objects of the set such that the references form a cyclic graph. In this case, MATLAB:

- Destroys the objects if they are referenced only within the cycle
- Does not destroy the objects as long as there is an external reference to any of the objects from a MATLAB variable outside the cycle

MATLAB destroys the objects in the reverse of the order of construction.

### Restrict Access to Object Delete Method

Destroy handle objects by explicitly calling `delete` on the object:

```
delete(obj)
```

A class can prevent explicit destruction of an object by setting its `delete` method `Access` attribute to `private`. However, a method of the class can call the `private` `delete` method.

If the class `delete` method `Access` attribute is `protected`, only methods of the class and of subclasses can explicitly delete objects of that class.

However, when an object lifecycle ends, MATLAB calls the object's `delete` method when destroying the object regardless of the method's `Access` attribute.

### Inherited Private Delete Methods

Class destructor behavior differs from the normal behavior of an overridden method. MATLAB executes each `delete` method of each superclass upon destruction, even if that `delete` method is not `public`.

When you explicitly call an object's `delete` method, MATLAB checks the `delete` method `Access` attribute in the class defining the object, but not in the superclasses of

the object. A superclass with a **private delete** method cannot prevent the destruction of subclass objects.

Declaring a private delete method makes most sense for sealed classes. In the case where classes are not sealed, subclasses can define their own delete methods with public access. MATLAB calls a private superclass **delete** method as a result of an explicit call to a public subclass **delete** method.

## Nondestructor Delete Methods

A class can implement a method named **delete** that is not a valid class destructor. MATLAB does not call this method implicitly when destroying an object. In this case, **delete** behaves like an ordinary method.

For example, if the superclass implements a **Sealed** method named **delete** that is not a valid destructor, then MATLAB does not allow subclasses to override this method.

A **delete** method defined by a value class cannot be a class destructor.

## Java Objects Referencing MATLAB Objects

Java does not support the object destructors that MATLAB objects use. Therefore, it is important to manage the lifecycle of all objects used in applications that include both Java and MATLAB objects.

### References Can Prevent Destructor Execution

Java objects that hold references to MATLAB objects can prevent deletion of the MATLAB objects. In these cases, MATLAB does not call the handle object **delete** method even when there is no handle variable referring to that object. To ensure your **delete** method executes, call **delete** on the object explicitly before the handle variable goes out of scope.

Problems can occur when you define callbacks for Java objects that reference MATLAB objects.

For example, the **CallbackWithJava** class creates a Java `com.mathworks.jmi.Callback` object and assigns a class method as the callback function. The result is a Java object that has a reference to a handle object via the function-handle callback.

```

classdef CallbackWithJava < handle
methods
    function obj = CallbackWithJava
        jo = com.mathworks.jmi.Callback;
        set(jo,'DelayedCallback',@obj.cbFunc); % Assign method as callback
        jo.postCallback
    end
    function cbFunc(obj,varargin)
        c = class(obj);
        disp(['Java object callback on class ',c])
    end
    function delete(obj)
        c = class(obj);
        disp(['ML object destructor called for class ',c])
    end
end
end

```

Suppose that you create a `CallbackWithJava` object from within a function:

```

function testDestructor
    cwj = CallbackWithJava
    ...
end

```

Creating an instance of the `CallbackWithJava` class creates the `com.mathworks.jmi.Callback` object and executes the callback function:

```

testDestructor
cwj =

```

CallbackWithJava with no properties.

```

Java object callback on class CallbackWithJava

```

The handle variable, `cwj`, exists only in the function workspace. However, MATLAB does not call the class `delete` method when the function ends. The `com.mathworks.jmi.Callback` object still exists and holds a reference to the object of the `CallbackWithJava` class, which prevents destruction of the MATLAB object.

```

clear classes

```

Warning: Objects of 'CallbackWithJava' class exist. Cannot clear this class or any of its superclasses.

To avoid causing inaccessible objects, call the `delete` explicitly before losing the handle to the MATLAB object.

```
function testDestructor
    cwj = CallbackWithJava
    ...
    delete(cwj)
end
```

### Manage Object Lifecycle in Applications

MATLAB applications that use Java objects should manage the lifecycle of the objects involved. A typical user-interface application references Java objects from MATLAB objects and creates callbacks on Java objects that reference MATLAB objects.

You can break these cyclic references in various ways:

- Explicitly call `delete` on the MATLAB objects when they are no longer needed
- Unregister the Java object callbacks that reference MATLAB objects
- Use intermediate handle objects that reference both the Java callbacks and the MATLAB objects.

### More About

- “Using Handles” on page 1-12

# Find Handle Objects and Properties

## In this section...

[“Find Handle Objects” on page 7-25](#)

[“Find Handle Object Properties” on page 7-25](#)

## Find Handle Objects

The `findobj` method enables you to locate handle objects that meet certain conditions.

```
function HM = findobj(H,<conditions>)
```

The `findobj` method returns an array of handles matching the conditions specified. You can use regular expressions with `findobj`. For more information, see `regexp`.

## Find Handle Object Properties

The `findprop` method returns the `meta.property` object for the specified object and property.

```
function mp = findprop(h,'PropertyName')
```

The property can also be a dynamic property created by the `addprop` method of the `dynamicprops` class.

Use the returned `meta.property` object to obtain information about the property, such as the settings of any of its attributes. For example, the following statements determine that the setting of the `AccountStatus` property `Dependent` attribute is `false`.

```
ba = BankAccount(007,50,'open');  
mp = findprop(ba,'AccountStatus');  
mp.Dependent  
  
ans =  
    0
```

## See Also

`handle`

## Related Examples

- “Class Metadata” on page 16-2

# Implement Set/Get Interface for Properties

## In this section...

- “The Standard Set/Get Interface” on page 7-27
- “Subclass Syntax” on page 7-27
- “Get Method Syntax” on page 7-28
- “Set Method Syntax” on page 7-28
- “Class Derived from `matlab.mixin.SetGet`” on page 7-29

## The Standard Set/Get Interface

Some MATLAB objects, such as graphics objects, implement an interface based on `set` and `get` functions. These functions enable access to multiple properties on arrays of objects in a single function call.

You can add `set` and `get` functionality to your class by deriving from one of these classes:

- `matlab.mixin.SetGet` — use when you want support for case-insensitive, partial property name matching. Deriving from `matlab.mixin.SetGet` does not affect the exact property name required by the use of dot notation reference to properties.
- `matlab.mixin.SetGetExactNames` — use when you want to support only case-sensitive full property name matching.

---

**Note:** The `set` and `get` methods referred to in this section are different from property set access and property get access methods. See “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43 for information on property access methods.

---

## Subclass Syntax

Use the abstract class `matlab.mixin.SetGet` or `matlab.mixin.SetGetExactNames` as a superclass:

```
classdef MyClass < matlab.mixin.SetGet
    ...
end
```

Because `matlab.mixin.SetGet` and `matlab.mixin.SetGetExactNames` derive from the handle class, your subclass is also a `handle` class.

## Get Method Syntax

The `get` method returns the value of an object property using the object handle and the property name:

```
v = get(H, 'PropertyName');
```

If you specify an array of handles with a single property name, `get` returns the property value for each object as a cell array of values:

```
CV = get(H, 'PropertyName');
```

The `CV` array is always a column regardless of the shape of `H`.

If you specify a cell array of `char` vector property names and an array of handles, `get` returns a cell array of property values. Each row in the cell corresponds to an object in the handle array. Each column in the cell corresponds to a property name.

```
props = {'PropertyName1', 'PropertyName2'};  
CV = get(H, props);
```

`get` returns an  $m$ -by- $n$  cell array, where  $m = \text{length}(H)$  and  $n = \text{length}(props)$ .

If you specify a handle array, but no property names, `get` returns an array of type `struct` in which each structure in the array corresponds to an object in `H`. Each field in each structure corresponds to a property defined by the class of `H`. The value of each field is the value of the corresponding property.

```
SV = get(H);
```

If you do not assign an output variable, then `H` must be scalar.

For an example, see “Using `get` with Arrays of Handles” on page 7-31.

## Set Method Syntax

The set method assigns the specified value to the specified property for the object with handle `H`. If `H` is an array of handles, MATLAB assigns the value to the property for each object in the array `H`.

```
set(H, 'PropertyName' , PropertyValue)
```

You can pass a cell array of property names and a cell array of property values to `set`:

```
props = {'PropertyName1','PropertyName2'};  
vals = {PropertyValue1,PropertyValue2};  
set(H,props,vals)
```

If `length(H)` is greater than one, then the property value cell array (`vals`) can have values for each property in each object. For example, suppose `length(H)` is 2 (two object handles). You want to assign two property values on each object:

```
props = {'PropertyName1','PropertyName2'};  
vals = {Property11Value,Property12Value;Property21Value,Property22Value};  
set(H,props,vals)
```

The preceding statement is equivalent to the follow two statements:

```
set(H(1), 'PropertyName1' , PropertyValue11Value , 'PropertyName2' , PropertyValue12Value)  
set(H(2), 'PropertyName1' , PropertyValue21Value , 'PropertyName2' , PropertyValue22Value)
```

If you specify a scalar handle, but no property names, `set` returns a `struct` with one field for each property in the class of `H`. Each field contains an empty cell array.

```
SV = set(h);
```

## Class Derived from `matlab.mixin.SetGet`

This sample class defines a set/get interface and illustrates the behavior of the inherited methods:

```
classdef LineType < matlab.mixin.SetGet  
    properties  
        Style = '_'  
        Marker = 'o'  
    end  
    properties (SetAccess = protected)  
        Units = 'points'  
    end  
    methods  
        function obj = LineType(s,m)  
            if nargin > 0  
                obj.Style = s;
```

```
    obj.Marker = m;
end
end
function obj = set.Style(obj,val)
if ~strcmpi(val,'-') || ...
strcmpi(val,'--') || ...
strcmpi(val,'..'))
    error('Invalid line style ')
end
obj.Style = val;
end
function obj = set.Marker(obj,val)
if ~isstrprop(val,'graphic')
    error('Marker must be a visible character')
end
obj.Marker = val;
end
end
end
```

Create an instance of the class and save its handle:

```
h = LineType('--','*');
```

Query the value of any object property using the inherited `get` method:

```
get(h,'Marker')
```

```
ans =
```

```
*
```

Set the value of any property using the inherited `set` method:

```
set(h,'Marker','Q')
```

### Property Access Methods Called with `set` and `get`

MATLAB calls property access methods (`set.Style` or `set.Marker` in the `LineType` class) when you use the `set` and `get` methods.

```
set(h,'Style','-.')
```

```
Error using LineType>LineType.set.Style
Invalid line style
```

For more information on property access methods, see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43

### List All Properties

Return a **struct** containing object properties and their current values using **get**:

```
h = LineType('--','*');
SV = get(h)
```

```
SV =
    Style: '--'
    Marker: '*'
    Units: 'points'
```

Return a **struct** containing the properties that have **public SetAccess** using **set**:

```
S = set(h)
```

```
S =
    Style: {}
    Marker: {}
```

The **LineType** class defines the **Units** property with **SetAccess = protected**. Therefore, **S = set(h)** does not create a field for **Units** in **S**.

**set** cannot return possible values for properties that have nonpublic set access.

### Using **get** with Arrays of Handles

Suppose that you create an array of **LineType** objects:

```
H = [LineType('..','z'),LineType('--','q')]
```

```
H =
```

```
1x2 LineType with properties:
```

```
Style
Marker
Units
```

When **H** is an array of handles, **get** returns a (**length(H)**-by-1) cell array of property values:

```
CV = get(H, 'Style')
```

```
CV =
```

```
'-' '-' '-'
```

When H is an array of handles and you do not specify a property name, `get` returns a `struct` array containing fields with names corresponding to property-names. Assign the output of `get` to a variable when H is not scalar.

```
SV = get(H)
```

```
SV =
```

```
2x1 struct array with fields:  
  Style  
  Marker  
  Units
```

Get the value of the `Marker` property from the second array element in the `SV` array of structures:

```
SV(2).Marker
```

```
ans =
```

```
q
```

### Arrays of Handles, Names, and Values

You can pass an array of handles, a cell array of property names, and a cell array of property values to `set`. The property value cell array must have one row of property values for each object in H. Each row must have a value for each property in the property name array:

```
H = [LineType('..','z'), LineType('---','q')];  
set(H, {'Style', 'Marker'}, {'..','o';'---','x'})
```

The results of this call to `set` is:

```
H(1)
```

```
ans =
```

```
LineType with properties:
```

```
Style: ...
Marker: 'o'
Units: 'points'
```

```
H(2)
```

```
ans =
```

```
LineType with properties:
```

```
Style: '--'
Marker: 'x'
Units: 'points'
```

### Customize the Property List

Customize the way property lists display by redefining the following methods in your subclass:

- `setdisp` — When you call `set` with no output argument and a single scalar handle input, `set` calls `setdisp` to determine how to display the property list.
- `getdisp` — When you call `get` with no output argument and a single scalar handle input, `get` calls `getdisp` to determine how to display the property list.

### See Also

`get` | `set`

### More About

- “Ways to Use Properties” on page 8-2

## Implement Copy for Handle Classes

### In this section...

[“Copy Method for Handle Classes” on page 7-34](#)

[“Customize Copy Operation” on page 7-35](#)

[“Copy Properties That Contain Handles” on page 7-36](#)

[“Exclude Properties from Copy” on page 7-38](#)

### Copy Method for Handle Classes

Copying a handle variable results in another handle variable that refers to the same object. You can add copy functionality to your handle class by subclassing `matlab.mixin.Copyable`. The inherited `copy` method enables you to make shallow copies of objects of the class. The `CopyObj` class shows the behavior of copy operations.

```
classdef CopyObj < matlab.mixin.Copyable
    properties
        Prop
    end
end
```

Create an object of the `CopyObj` class and assign the handle of a `line` object to the property `Prop`.

```
a = CopyObj;
a.Prop = line;
```

Copy the object.

```
b = copy(a);
```

Confirm that the handle variables `a` and `b` refer to different objects.

```
a == b
ans =
logical
0
```

However, the `line` object referred to by `a.Prop` has not been copied. The handle contained in `a.Prop` refers to the same object as the handle contained in `b.Prop`.

```
a.Prop == b.Prop
ans =
logical
1
```

For more detailed information on the behavior of the copy operation, see `matlab.mixin.Copyable.copy`.

## Customize Copy Operation

Customize handle object copy behavior by deriving your class from `matlab.mixin.Copyable`. The `matlab.mixin.Copyable` class is an abstract base class that derives from the handle class. `matlab.mixin.Copyable` provides a template for customizing object copy operations by defining:

- `matlab.mixin.Copyable.copy` — Sealed method that defines the interface for copying objects
- `matlab.mixin.Copyable.copyElement` — Protected method that subclasses can override to customize object copy operations for the subclass

The `matlab.mixin.Copyable` `copy` method, calls the `copyElement` method. Your subclass customizes the copy operation by defining its own version of `copyElement`.

The default implementation of `copyElement` makes shallow copies of all the nondependent properties. `copyElement` copies each property value and assigns it to the new (copied) property. If a property value is a handle object, `copyElement` copies the handle, but not the underlying data.

To implement different copy behavior for different properties, override `copyElement`. For example, the `copyElement` method of the `SpecializedCopy` class:

- Creates a new class object
- Copies the value of `Prop1` to the new object
- Reinitializes the default value of `Prop2` by adding a timestamp when the copy is made

```
classdef SpecializedCopy < matlab.mixin.Copyable
properties
    Prop1
    Prop2 = datestr(now)
end
methods(Access = protected)
    function cp = copyElement(obj)
        cp = SpecializedCopy;
        cp.Prop1 = obj.Prop1;
        cp.Prop2 = datestr(now);
    end
end
end
```

Create an object of the class and assign a value to **Prop1**:

```
a = SpecializedCopy;
```

```
a.Prop1 = 7
```

```
a =
```

SpecializedCopy with properties:

```
Prop1: 7
```

```
Prop2: '17-Feb-2015 17:51:23'
```

Use the inherited **copy** method to create a copy of **a**:

```
b = copy(a)
```

```
b =
```

SpecializedCopy with properties:

```
Prop1: 7
```

```
Prop2: '17-Feb-2015 17:51:58'
```

The copy (object **b**) has the same value for **Prop1**, but the subclass **copyElement** method assigned a new value to **Prop2**. Notice the different timestamp.

### Copy Properties That Contain Handles

Copying an object also copies the values of object properties. Object properties can contain other objects, including handle objects. If you simply copy the value of a property that contains a handle object, you are actually copying the handle, not the object itself.

Therefore, your copy references the same object as the original object. Classes that derive from the `matlab.mixin.Copyable` class can customize the way the copy method copies objects of the class.

### Class to Support Handle Copying

Suppose that you define a class that stores a handle in an object property. You want to be able to copy objects of the class and want each copy of an object to refer to a new handle object. Customize the class copy behavior using these steps:

- Create a subclass of `matlab.mixin.Copyable`.
- Override `copyElement` to control how the property containing the handle is copied.
- Because the property value is a handle, create a new default object of the same class.
- Copy property values from the original handle object to the new handle object.

The “HandleCopy” on page 7-37 class customizes copy operations for the property that contains a handle object. The “ColorProp” on page 7-38 class defines the handle object to assign to `Prop2`:

Create an object and assign property values:

```
a = HandleCopy;
a.Prop1 = 7;
a.Prop2 = ColorProp;
```

Make a copy of the object using the `copy` method inherited from `matlab.mixin.Copyable`:

```
b = copy(a);
```

Demonstrate that the handle object contained by object `a` and `b` are independent. Changing the value on object `a` does not affect object `b`:

```
a.Prop2.Color = 'red';
b.Prop2.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
blue
```

### HandleCopy

The `HandleCopy` class customizes the copy operation for objects of this class.

```
classdef HandleCopy < matlab.mixin.Copyable
```

```
properties
    Prop1 % Shallow copy
    Prop2 % Handle copy
end
methods (Access = protected)
    function cp = copyElement(obj)
        % Shallow copy object
        cp = copyElement@matlab.mixin.Copyable(obj);
        % Get handle from Prop2
        hobj = obj.Prop2;
        % Create default object
        new_hobj = eval(class(hobj));
        % Add public property values from orig object
        HandleCopy.propValues(new_hobj,hobj);
        % Assign the new object to property
        cp.Prop2 = new_hobj;
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function propValues(newObj,orgObj)
        pl = properties(orgObj);
        for k = 1:length(pl)
            if isprop(newObj,pl{k})
                newObj.(pl{k}) = orgObj.(pl{k});
            end
        end
    end
end
end
```

### ColorProp

The `ColorProp` class defines a color by assigning an RGB value to its `Color` property.

```
classdef ColorProp < handle
    properties
        Color = 'blue';
    end
end
```

## Exclude Properties from Copy

Use the `NonCopyable` property attribute to indicate that you do not want a copy operation to copy a particular property value. By default, `NonCopyable` is `false`,

indicating that the property value is copyable. You can set `NonCopyable` to `true` only on properties of handle classes.

For classes that derive from `matlab.mixin.Copyable`, the default implementation of `copyElement` honors the `NonCopyable` attribute. Therefore, if a property has its `NonCopyable` attribute set to `true`, then `copyElement` does not copy the value of that property. If you override `copyElement` in your subclass, you can choose how to use the `NonCopyable` attribute.

### **Set the Attribute to Not Copy**

Set `NonCopyable` to `true` in a property block:

```
properties (NonCopyable)
    Prop1
end
```

### **Default Values**

If a property that is not copyable has a default value assigned in the class definition, the `copy` operation assigns the default value to the property. For example, the `CopiedClass` assigns a default value to `Prop2`.

```
classdef CopiedClass < matlab.mixin.Copyable
    properties (NonCopyable)
        Prop1
        Prop2 = datestr(now) % Assign current time
    end
end
```

Create an object to copy and assign a value to `Prop1`:

```
a = CopiedClass;
a.Prop1 = 7

a =
```

`CopiedClass` with properties:

```
Prop1: 7
Prop2: '17-Feb-2015 15:19:34'
```

Copy `a` to `b` using the `copy` method inherited from `matlab.mixin.Copyable`:

```
b = copy(a)
```

```
b =  
  
CopiedClass with properties:  
  
Prop1: []  
Prop2: '17-Feb-2015 15:19:34'
```

In the copy **b**, the value of **Prop1** is not copied. The value of **Prop2** is set to its default value, which MATLAB determined when first loading the class. The timestamp does not change.

### Objects with Dynamic Properties

Subclasses of the **dynamicprops** class allow you to add properties to an object of the class. When a class derived from **dynamicprops** is also a subclass of **matlab.mixin.Copyable**, the default implementation of **copyElement** does not copy dynamic properties. The default value of **NonCopyable** is **true** for dynamic properties.

The default implementation of **copyElement** honors the value of a dynamic property **NonCopyable** attribute. If you want to allow copying of a dynamic property, set its **NonCopyable** attribute to **false**. Copying a dynamic property copies the property value and the values of the property attributes.

For example, this copy operation copies the dynamic property, **DynoProp**, because its **NonCopyable** attribute is set to **false**. The object **obj** must be an instance of a class that derives from both **dynamicprops** and **matlab.mixin.Copyable**:

```
obj = MyDynamicClass;  
p = addprop(obj,'DynoProp');  
p.NonCopyable = false;  
obj2 = copy(obj);
```

### See Also

[matlab.mixin.Copyable](#)

### Related Examples

- “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61

# Control Number of Instances

## In this section...

[“Limit Instances” on page 7-41](#)

[“Singleton Class Implementation” on page 7-41](#)

## Limit Instances

You can limit the number of instances of a class that can exist at any one time. For example, a *singleton* class can have only one instance and must provide a way to access this instance. Create a singleton class using a:

- Persistent variable to contain the instance
- Sealed class to prevent subclassing (class `Sealed` attribute set to `true`)
- Private constructor (method `Access` attribute set to `private`)
- Static method to return the handle to the instance, if one exists, or to create the instance when needed.

## Singleton Class Implementation

This skeletal class definition shows how you can approach the implementation of a class that allows you to create only one instance at a time:

```
classdef (Sealed) SingleInstance < handle
    methods (Access = private)
        function obj = SingleInstance
            end
        end
    methods (Static)
        function singleObj = getInstance
            persistent localObj
            if isempty(localObj) || ~isValid(localObj)
                localObj = SingleInstance;
            end
            singleObj = localObj;
        end
    end
end
```

The `getInstance` static method returns a handle to the object, which the class stores in a persistent variable. `getInstance` creates an instance only the first time called in a session or when the object becomes invalid. For example:

```
sobj = SingleInstance.getInstance  
sobj =  
    SingleInstance with no properties
```

As long as `sobj` exists as a valid handle, calling `getInstance` returns a handle to the same object. If you delete `sobj`, then calling `getInstance` creates an object and returns the handle.

```
delete(sobj)  
isValid(sobj)  
  
ans =  
  
0
```

After deleting the object, you can create a new instance:

```
sobj = SingleInstance.getInstance;  
isValid(sobj)  
  
ans =  
  
1
```

### See Also

[persistent](#)

### More About

- “Handle Class Destructor” on page 7-16

# Properties — Storing Class Data

---

- “Ways to Use Properties” on page 8-2
- “Property Syntax” on page 8-5
- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8
- “Property Definition” on page 8-14
- “Mutable and Immutable Properties” on page 8-19
- “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21
- “Property Class and Size Validation” on page 8-27
- “Property Validation Functions” on page 8-35
- “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43
- “Property Set Methods” on page 8-49
- “Property Get Methods” on page 8-52
- “Access Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54
- “Properties Containing Objects” on page 8-58
- “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61
- “Access Methods for Dynamic Properties” on page 8-65
- “Dynamic Property Events” on page 8-67
- “Dynamic Properties and ConstructOnLoad” on page 8-71

# Ways to Use Properties

## In this section...

[“What Are Properties” on page 8-2](#)

[“Types of Properties” on page 8-2](#)

## What Are Properties

Properties encapsulate the data that belongs to instances of classes. Data contained in properties can be public, protected, or private. This data can be a fixed set of constant values, or it can depend on other values and calculated only when queried. You control these aspects of property behaviors by setting property attributes and by defining property-specific access methods.

### Flexibility of Object Properties

In some ways, properties are like fields of a `struct` object. However, storing data in an object property provides more flexibility. Properties can:

- Define a constant value that you cannot change outside the class definition. See “Properties with Constant Values” on page 15-2.
- Calculate its value based on the current value of other data. See “Property Get Methods” on page 8-52.
- Execute a function to determine if an attempt to assign a value meets a certain criteria. See “Property Set Methods” on page 8-49.
- Trigger an event notification when any attempt is made to get or set its value. See “Property-Set and Query Events” on page 11-17.
- Control access by code to the property values. See the `SetAccess` and `GetAccess` attributes “Property Attributes” on page 8-8.
- Control whether its value is saved with the object in a MAT-file. See “Save and Load Objects” on page 13-2.

For an example of a class that defines and uses a class, see “Create a Simple Class” on page 2-2.

## Types of Properties

There are two types of properties:

- Stored properties — Use memory and are part of the object
- Dependent properties — No allocated memory and the get access method calculates the value when queried

### **Features of Stored Properties**

- Can assign an initial value in the class definition
- Property value is stored when you save the object to a MAT-file
- Can use a set access method to control possible values, but you are not required to use such methods.

### **When to Use Stored Properties**

- You want to be able to save the property value in a MAT-file
- The property value is not dependent on other property values

### **Features of Dependent Properties**

Dependent properties save memory because property values that depend on other values are calculated only when needed.

### **When to Use Dependent Properties**

Define properties as dependent when you want to:

- Compute the value of a property from other values (for example, you can compute area from `Width` and `Height` properties).
- Provide a value in different formats depending on other values. For example, the size of a push button in values determined by the current setting of its `Units` property.
- Provide a standard interface where a particular property is or is not used, depending on other values. For example, different computer platforms can have different components on a toolbar).

For examples of classes that use dependent properties, see “Calculate Data on Demand” on page 3-23 and “Using Heterogeneous Class Hierarchies” on page 20-2.

### **Related Examples**

- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8
- “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43

- “Static Properties” on page 5-64

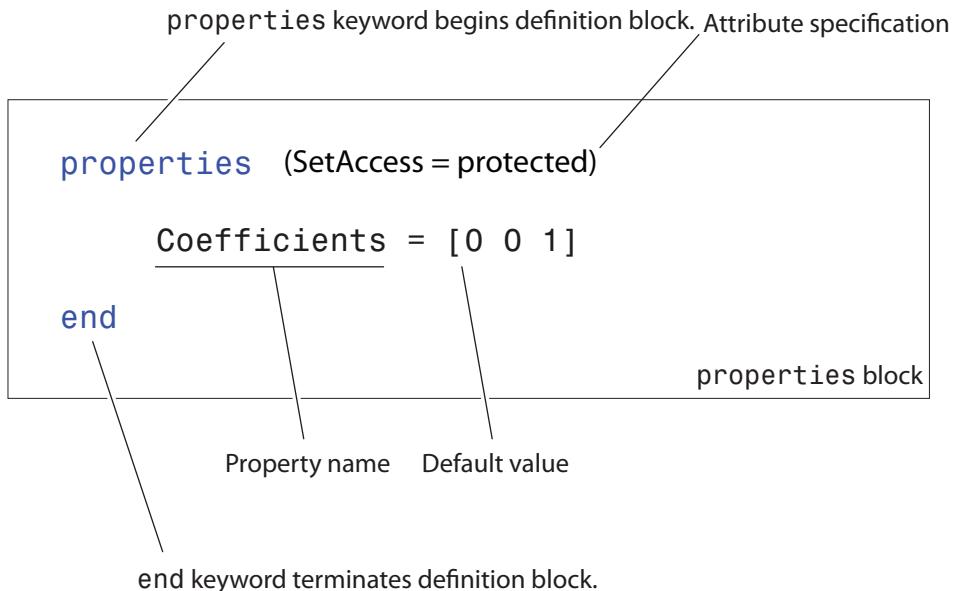
# Property Syntax

## In this section...

- “Property Definition Block” on page 8-5
- “Access Property Values” on page 8-6
- “Inheritance of Properties” on page 8-7
- “Specify Property Attributes” on page 8-7

## Property Definition Block

The following illustration shows a typical property specification. The **properties** and **end** keywords delineate a block of code that defines properties having the same attribute settings.



**Note:** Properties cannot have the same name as the class.

For an example, see “Create a Simple Class” on page 2-2.

### Assigning a Default Value

The preceding example shows the `Coefficients` property specified as having a default value of `[0 0 1]`.

You can initialize property values with MATLAB expressions. However, these expressions cannot refer to the class that you are defining in any way, except to call class static methods. MATLAB executes expressions that create initial property values only when initializing the class, which occurs just before first using the class. See “Property Default Values” on page 8-15 for more information about how MATLAB evaluates default value expressions.

### Define One Property Per Line

Property names must be listed on separate lines. MATLAB interprets a name following a property name as the name of a class.

### Restrict Property Values

You can restrict property values by associating a class with the property in the property definition. For example, the definition of `MyData` requires that values assigned to this property must be of type `int32` or types that are compatible with `int32`.

```
properties
    MyData int32
end
```

For more information, see “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21.

### Access Property Values

Property access syntax is like MATLAB structure field syntax. For example, if `obj` is an object of a class, then you can get the value of a property by referencing the property name:

```
val = obj.PropertyName
```

Assign values to properties by putting the property reference on the left side of the equal sign:

```
obj.PropertyName = val
```

When you access a property, MATLAB executes any property set or get access method and triggering any enabled property events.

## Inheritance of Properties

When you derive one class from another class, the derived (subclass) class inherits all the properties of the superclass. In general, subclasses define only properties that are unique to that particular class. Superclasses define properties that more than one subclass use.

## Specify Property Attributes

Attributes specified with the `properties` keyword apply to all property definitions that follow in that block. If you want to apply attribute settings to certain properties only, reuse the `properties` keyword and create another property block for those properties.

For example, the following code shows the `SetAccess` attribute set to `private` for the `IndependentVar` and `Order` properties, but not for the `Coefficients` property:

```
properties
    Coefficients = [0 0 1];
end
properties (SetAccess = private)
    IndependentVar
    Order = 0
end
```

These properties (and any others placed in this block) have private set access

For information about the properties of a specific class, use the `properties` function.

## Related Examples

- “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21
- “Property Definition” on page 8-14
- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8

# Property Attributes

## In this section...

[“Purpose of Property Attributes” on page 8-8](#)

[“Specifying Property Attributes” on page 8-8](#)

[“Table of Property Attributes” on page 8-8](#)

## Purpose of Property Attributes

Specifying attributes in the class definition enables you to customize the behavior of properties for specific purposes. Control characteristics like access, data storage, and visibility of properties by setting attributes. Subclasses do not inherit superclass member attributes.

## Specifying Property Attributes

Assign property attributes on the same line as the `properties` keyword:

```
properties (Attribute1 = value1, Attribute2 = value2, ...)  
    ...  
end
```

For example, give the `Data` property `private` access:

```
properties (Access = private)  
    Data  
end
```

For more information on attribute syntax, see “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22.

## Table of Property Attributes

All properties support the attributes listed in the following table. Attribute values apply to all properties defined within the `properties...end` code block that specifies the nondefault values.

## Property Attributes

Attribute Name	Class	Description
AbortSet	logical default = <code>false</code>	If <code>true</code> , MATLAB does not set the property value if the new value is the same as the current value. MATLAB does not call the property set method, if one exists.  For handle classes, setting <code>AbortSet</code> to <code>true</code> also prevent the triggering of property <code>PreSet</code> and <code>PostSet</code> events.
Abstract	logical default = <code>false</code>	See “Assignment When Property Value Unchanged” on page 11-41  If <code>true</code> , the property has no implementation, but a concrete subclass must redefine this property without <code>Abstract</code> being set to <code>true</code> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abstract properties cannot define set or get access methods. See “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43.</li> <li>• Abstract properties cannot define initial values. See “Assigning a Default Value” on page 8-6.</li> <li>• All subclasses must specify the same values as the superclass for the property <code>SetAccess</code> and <code>GetAccess</code> attributes.</li> <li>• <code>Abstract=true</code> use with the class attribute <code>Sealed=false</code> (the default).</li> </ul>
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enumeration, default = <code>public</code></li> <li>• <code>meta.class</code> object</li> <li>• cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects</li> </ul>	<code>public</code> – unrestricted access <code>protected</code> – access from class or subclasses <code>private</code> – access by class members only (not subclasses)

Attribute Name	Class	Description
		<p>List of classes that have get and set access to this property. Specify classes as <code>meta.class</code> objects in the form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single <code>meta.class</code> object</li> <li>• A cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects. An empty cell array, <code>{}</code>, is the same as <code>private</code> access.</li> </ul> <p>See “Class Members Access” on page 12-26</p>
		<p>Use <code>Access</code> to set both <code>SetAccess</code> and <code>GetAccess</code> to the same value. Query the values of <code>SetAccess</code> and <code>GetAccess</code> directly (not <code>Access</code>).</p>
Constant	<p>logical</p> <p><code>default = false</code></p>	<p>Set to <code>true</code> if you want only one value for this property in all instances of the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subclasses inherit constant properties, but cannot change them.</li> <li>• <code>Constant</code> properties cannot be <code>Dependent</code>.</li> <li>• <code>SetAccess</code> is ignored.</li> </ul> <p>See “Properties with Constant Values” on page 15-2 for more information.</p>
Dependent	<p>logical</p> <p><code>default = false</code></p>	<p>If <code>false</code>, property value is stored in object. If <code>true</code>, property value is not stored in object. The set and get functions cannot access the property by indexing into the object using the property name.</p> <p>MATLAB does not display in the command window the names and values of <code>Dependent</code> properties that do not define a get method (scalar object display only).</p>

Attribute Name	Class	Description
<code>GetAccess</code>	<p>enumeration</p> <p><code>default = public</code></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Calculate Data on Demand” on page 3-23</li> <li>“Property Get Methods” on page 8-52</li> <li>“Avoid Property Initialization Order Dependency” on page 13-12</li> </ul> <p><code>public</code> — unrestricted access</p> <p><code>protected</code> — access from class or subclasses</p> <p><code>private</code> — access by class members only (not from subclasses)</p> <p>List classes that have get access to this property. Specify classes as <code>meta.class</code> objects in the form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single <code>meta.class</code> object</li> <li>A cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects. An empty cell array, {}, is the same as <code>private</code> access.</li> </ul> <p>See “Class Members Access” on page 12-26</p> <p>MATLAB does not display in the command window the names and values of properties having <code>protected</code> or <code>private</code> <code>GetAccess</code> or properties whose <code>Hidden</code> attribute is <code>true</code>.</p> <p>The <code>struct</code> function defines fields for all properties when converting objects to <code>structs</code>.</p>
<code>GetObservable</code>	<p>logical</p> <p><code>default = false</code></p>	If <code>true</code> , and it is a handle class property, then you can create listeners for access to this property. The listeners are called

Attribute Name	Class	Description
<code>Hidden</code>	logical  <code>default = false</code>	whenever property values are queried. See “Property-Set and Query Events” on page 11-17  Determines if the property can be shown in a property list (e.g., Property Inspector, call to <code>set</code> or <code>get</code> , etc.).  MATLAB does not display in the command window the names and values of properties whose <code>Hidden</code> attribute is <code>true</code> or properties having <code>protected</code> or <code>private GetAccess</code> .
<code>NonCopyable</code>	logical  <code>default = false</code>	Determine if property value can be copied when object is copied.  You can set <code>NonCopyable</code> to <code>true</code> only in handle classes.
<code>SetAccess</code>	enumeration  <code>default = public</code>	For more information, see “Exclude Properties from Copy” on page 7-38  <code>public</code> — unrestricted access  <code>protected</code> — access from class or subclasses  <code>private</code> — access by class members only (not from subclasses)  <code>immutable</code> — property can be set only in the constructor.  See “Mutable and Immutable Properties” on page 8-19  List classes that have set access to this property. Specify classes as <code>meta.class</code> objects in the form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A single <code>meta.class</code> object</li></ul>

Attribute Name	Class	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects. An empty cell array, {}, is the same as <code>private</code> access.</li> </ul> <p>See “Class Members Access” on page 12-26</p>
<code>SetObservable</code>	logical  <code>default = false</code>	If <code>true</code> , and it is a handle class property, then you can create listeners for access to this property. The listeners are called whenever property values are modified. See “Property-Set and Query Events” on page 11-17
<code>Transient</code>	logical  <code>default = false</code>	If <code>true</code> , property value is not saved when object is saved to a file. See “Save and Load Process for Objects” on page 13-2 for more about saving objects.

## Related Examples

- “Property Definition” on page 8-14

# Property Definition

## In this section...

- “What You Can Define” on page 8-14
- “Initialize Property Values” on page 8-15
- “Property Default Values” on page 8-15
- “Assign Property Values from Constructor” on page 8-16
- “Initialize Properties to Unique Values” on page 8-16
- “Property Attributes” on page 8-16
- “Property Access Methods” on page 8-17
- “Reference Object Properties Using Variables” on page 8-18

## What You Can Define

Control aspects of property definitions in the following ways:

- Specify a default value for each property individually, see “Property Default Values” on page 8-15.
- Assign property values in a class constructor, see “Assign Property Values from Constructor” on page 8-16.
- Define properties with constant values, see “Named Values” on page 14-2.
- Assign property attribute values on a per block basis, see “Property Attributes” on page 8-16.
- Define methods that execute when the property is set or queried, see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-17.
- Define the class and size of property values, see “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21.
- Define properties that do not store values, but whose values depend on other properties, see “Types of Properties” on page 8-2.

---

**Note:** Always use case-sensitive property names in your MATLAB code. Properties cannot have the same name as the class.

---

## Initialize Property Values

There are two basic approaches to initializing property values:

- In the property definition — MATLAB evaluates the expression only once and assigns the same value to the property of every instance.
- In a class constructor — MATLAB evaluates the assignment expression for each instance, which ensures that each instance has a unique value.

For more information on the evaluation of expressions that you assign as property default values, see “When MATLAB Evaluates Expressions” on page 6-12.

## Property Default Values

Within a `properties` block, you can control an individual property's default value. Assign default values as a value or MATLAB expressions. Expressions cannot reference variables. For example:

- Prop1 — No assignment results in empty [ ] default value
- Prop2 — Assign character array as default value
- Prop3 — Assign result of expression as default value

```
classdef ClassName
    properties
        Prop1
        Prop2 = 'some text'
        Prop3 = sin(pi/12)
    end
end
```

If the class definition does not specify a default property value, MATLAB sets the property value to empty `double` ([ ]).

---

**Note:** Evaluation of property default values occurs only when the value is first needed, and only once when MATLAB first initializes the class. MATLAB does not reevaluate the expression each time you create an instance of the class.

---

For more information on the evaluation of expressions that you assign as property default values, see “Evaluation of Expressions in Class Definitions” on page 6-9 and “Properties Containing Objects” on page 8-58.

## Assign Property Values from Constructor

To assign values to a property from within the class constructor, reference the object that the constructor returns (the output variable `obj`):

```
classdef MyClass
    properties
        Prop1
    end
    methods
        function obj = MyClass(intval)
            obj.Prop1 = intval;
        end
    end
end
```

When you assign a property in the class constructor, MATLAB evaluates the assignment statement for each object you create. Assign property values in the constructor if you want each object to contain a unique value for that property.

For example, suppose that you want to assign a unique handle object to the property of another object each time you create one of those objects. Assign the handle object to the property in the constructor. Call the handle object constructor to create a unique handle object with each instance of your class.

For more information on constructor methods, see “Referencing the Object in a Constructor” on page 9-23.

## Initialize Properties to Unique Values

MATLAB assigns properties to the specified default values only once when MATLAB loads the class definition. Therefore, if you initialize a property value with a handle-class constructor, MATLAB calls this constructor only once and every instance references the same handle object. If you want a property value to be initialized to a new instance of a handle object each time you create an object, assign the property value in the constructor.

## Property Attributes

All properties have attributes that modify certain aspects of the property's behavior. Specified attributes apply to all properties in a particular properties block. For example:

```
classdef ClassName
```

```
properties (PropertyAttribute = value)
    Prop1
    Prop2
end
end
```

For example, only methods in the same class definition can modify and query the **Salary** and **Password** properties.

```
classdef EmployeeInfo
    properties (Access = private)
        Salary
        Password
    end
end
```

This restriction exists because the class defines these properties in a **properties** block with the **Access** attribute set to **private**.

### Property Attributes

For a description of property attributes you can specify, see, “Property Attributes” on page 8-8.

## Property Access Methods

MATLAB calls whenever setting or querying a property value. Define property set access or get access methods in **methods** blocks that specify no attributes and have the following syntax:

```
methods

    function obj = set.PropertyName(obj,value)
        ...
    end

    function value = get.PropertyName(obj)
        ...
    end

end
```

MATLAB does not call the property set access method when assigning the default value specified in the property's definition block.

For example, the `set.Password` method tests the length of the character array assigned to a property named `Password`. If there are fewer than seven characters in the value assigned to the property, MATLAB returns the error. Otherwise, MATLAB assigns the specified value to the property.

```
function obj = set.Password(obj,pw)
    if numel(pw) < 7
        error('Password must have at least 7 characters')
    else
        obj.Password = pw;
end
```

For more information on property access methods, see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43.

## Reference Object Properties Using Variables

MATLAB can resolve a property name from a `char` variable using an expression of the form:

```
object.(PropertyNameVar)
```

where `PropertyNameVar` is a variable containing the name of a valid object property. Use this syntax when passing property names as arguments. For example, the `getPropValue` function returns the value of the `KeyType` property:

```
PropertyName = 'KeyType';
function o = getPropValue(obj,PropertyName)
    o = obj.(PropertyName);
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Evaluation of Expressions in Class Definitions” on page 6-9
- “Ways to Use Properties” on page 8-2
- “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21

# Mutable and Immutable Properties

## In this section...

[“Set Access to Property Values” on page 8-19](#)

[“Define Immutable Property” on page 8-19](#)

## Set Access to Property Values

The property **SetAccess** attribute enables you to determine under what conditions code can modify object property values. There are four levels of set access that provide varying degrees of access to object property values:

- **SetAccess = public** — Any code with access to an object can set public property values. There are differences between the behavior of handle and value classes with respect to modifying object properties.
- **SetAccess = protected** — Only code executing from within class methods or methods of subclasses can set property values. You cannot change the value of an object property unless the class or any of its subclasses defines a method to do so.
- **SetAccess = private** — Only the defining class can set property values. You can change the value of an object property only if the class defines a method that sets the property.
- **SetAccess = immutable** — Property value is set during construction. You cannot change the value of an immutable property after the object is created. Set the value of the property as a default or in the class constructor.

## Define Immutable Property

In this class definition, only the **Immute** class constructor can set the value of the **CurrentDate** property:

```
classdef Immute
    properties (SetAccess = immutable)
        CurrentDate
    end
    methods
        function obj = Immute
            obj.CurrentDate = date;
        end
```

```
    end
end

a = Immute

a =

Immute with properties:

CurrentDate: '19-Oct-2005'
```

### Related Examples

- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8
- “Object Modification” on page 5-60

# Validate Property Values

## In this section...

- “Property Validation in Class Definitions” on page 8-21
- “Sample Class Using Property Validation” on page 8-22
- “Order of Validation” on page 8-23
- “Objects Not Updated When Changing Validation” on page 8-24
- “Validation During Load Operation” on page 8-25

## Property Validation in Class Definitions

MATLAB property validation enables you to place specific restrictions on property values. You can use validation to constrain the class and size of property values. Also, you can use functions to establish criteria that the property value must conform to. MATLAB defines a set of validation functions and you can write your own validation functions.

The use of property validation is optional in class definitions.

### Validation Syntax

The highlighted area in the following code shows the syntax for property validation.

```
classdef MyClass
properties
    Prop(dim1,dim2,...) ClassName {fcn1,fcn2,...} = defaultValue
end
```

Size      Class      Functions

Property validations include:

- Size — The length of each dimension, specified as a positive integer or a colon. A colon indicates that any length is allowed in that dimension. The value assigned to the

property must conform to the specified size or be compatible with the specified size. For more information, see “Property Size Validation” on page 8-27.

- Class — The name of a single MATLAB class. The value assigned to the property must be of the specified class or convertible to the specified class. Use any MATLAB class or externally defined class that is supported by MATLAB, except for Java and COM classes. For more information, see “Property Class Validation” on page 8-29.
- Functions — A comma-separated list of validation function names. MATLAB passes the value assigned to the property to each the validation functions after applying any possible class and size conversions. Validator functions throw errors if the validation fails, but do not return values. For more information, see “Property Validation Functions” on page 8-35.

For a list of MATLAB validation functions, see “MATLAB Validation Functions” on page 8-38.

## Sample Class Using Property Validation

The `ValidateProps` class defines three properties with validation.

```
classdef ValidateProps
properties
    Location(1,3) double {mustBeReal, mustBeFinite}
    Label(1,:) char {mustBeMember(Label,['High','Medium','Low'])} = 'Low'
    State(1,1) matlab.lang.OnOffSwitchState
end
end
```

- `Location` must be a 1-by-3 array of class `double` whose values are real, finite numbers.
- `Label` must be a `char` vector that is either `'High'`, `'Medium'`, or `'Low'`.
- `State` must be an enumeration member of the `matlab.lang.OnOffSwitchState` class (`off` or `on`).

### Validation at Instantiation

Creating an object of the `ValidateProps` class performs the validation on implicit and explicit default values:

```
a = ValidateProps
a =
```

ValidateProps with properties:

```
Location: [0 0 0]
Label: 'Low'
State: off
```

When creating the object, MATLAB:

- Initializes the **Location** property value to `[0 0 0]` to satisfy the size and class requirements.
- Sets the **Label** property to its default value, `'Low'`. The default value must be a member of the allowed set of values. The empty `char` implicit default value would cause an error.
- Sets the **State** property to the `off` enumeration member defined by the `matlab.lang.OnOffSwitchState` class.

For information on how MATLAB selects default values, see “Default Values Per Size and Class” on page 8-33.

## Order of Validation

When a value is assigned to the property, including default values that are specified in the class definition, MATLAB performs validation in this order:

- Class validation — This validation can cause conversion to a different class, such as conversion of a `char` to `string`. Assignment to properties follows MATLAB coercion rules for arrays. See “Valid Combinations of Unlike Classes”.
- Size validation — This validation can cause size conversion, such as scalar expansion or conversion of a column vector to a row vector. Assignment to a property that specifies a size validation behaves the same as assignment to any MATLAB array. For information on indexed assignment, see “Indexing on Assignment”.
- Validator functions — MATLAB passes the result of the class and size validation to each validation function, in left to right order. An error can occur before all validation functions have been called, which ends the validation process.
- Set method — MATLAB performs property validation before calling a property set method, if one is defined for that property. Assignment to the property within a property set or get method does not apply the validation again. Often, you can replace property set methods using property validation.

## Property Validation Errors

The `ValueProp` class uses size, class, and function validation to ensure that an assignment to the `Value` property is a double scalar that is not negative.

```
classdef ValueProp
    properties
        Value(1,1) double {mustBeNonnegative} = 0
    end
end
```

This statement attempts to assign a cell array to the property. This assignment violates the class validation.

```
a.Value = {10,20};
```

```
Error setting property 'Value' of class 'ValueProp':
Invalid data type. Value must be double or be convertible to double.
```

This statement attempts to assign a 1-by-2 double array to the property. This assignment violates the size validation.

```
a.Value = [10 20];
```

```
Error setting property 'Value' of class 'ValueProp':
Size of value must be scalar.
```

This statement attempts to assign a scalar double to the property. This assignment fails the function validation, which requires a nonnegative number.

```
a.Value = -10;
```

```
Error setting property 'Value' of class 'ValueProp':
Value must be nonnegative.
```

The validation process ends with the first error encountered.

## Objects Not Updated When Changing Validation

If you change the property validation while objects of the class exist, MATLAB does not attempt to apply the new validation to existing property values. However, MATLAB does apply the new validation when you make assignments to the properties of existing objects.

## Validation During Load Operation

When saving an object to a MAT file, MATLAB saves all nondefault property values with the object. When loading the object, MATLAB restores these property values in the newly created object.

If a class definition changes the property validation such that the loaded property value is no longer valid, MATLAB substitutes the currently defined default value for that property. However, the `load` function suppresses the validation errors that occur before assigning the default value from the current class definition. Therefore, validation errors are silently ignored during load operations.

To illustrate this behavior, this example creates, saves, and loads an object of the `MonthTemp` class. This class restricts the `AveTemp` property to a cell array.

```
classdef MonthTemp
    properties
        AveTemp cell
    end
end
```

Create a `MonthTemp` object and assign a value to the `AveTemp` property.

```
a = MonthTemp;
a.AveTemp = {'May',70};
```

Save the object using `save`.

```
save TemperatureFile a
```

Edit the property definition to change the validation class for the `AveTemp` property from cell array to `containers.Map`.

```
classdef MonthTemp
    properties
        AveTemp containers.Map
    end
end
```

Load the saved object with the new class definition on the MATLAB path. MATLAB cannot assign the saved value to the `AveTemp` property because the cell array, `{'May',70}`, is not compatible with the current requirement that the property value be a `containers.Map` object. MATLAB cannot convert a cell array to a `containers.Map`.

To address the incompatibility, MATLAB sets the `AveTemp` property of the loaded object to the current default value, which is an empty `containers.Map` object.

```
load TemperatureFile a
a.AveTemp

ans =
Map with properties:

    Count: 0
    KeyType: char
    ValueType: any
```

The loaded object has a different value assigned to the `AveTemp` property because the saved value is now invalid. However, the load process suppresses the validation error.

To prevent loss of data when changing class definitions and reloading objects, implement a `loadobj` method or class converter method that enables the saved values to satisfy the current property validation.

For more information on saving and loading objects, see “Save and Load Process for Objects” on page 13-2.

## Related Examples

- “Property Class and Size Validation” on page 8-27
- “Property Validation Functions” on page 8-35

# Property Class and Size Validation

## In this section...

- “Property Class and Size” on page 8-27
- “Property Size Validation” on page 8-27
- “Property Class Validation” on page 8-29
- “Default Values Per Size and Class” on page 8-33

## Property Class and Size

MATLAB applies any class and size validation defined for a property before calling validation functions. Assignment to a property that defines size or class validation is analogous to assignment to a MATLAB object array. MATLAB can apply class and size conversions to the right side of the assignment to satisfy class and size validation.

For more information, see “Order of Validation” on page 8-23 and “Property Validation Functions” on page 8-35.

---

**Note:** Abstract properties support only class validation. You cannot use size or validation functions with abstract properties.

---

## Property Size Validation

Specify the property size as the row, column, and additional dimension following the property name. Size validation does not support scientific notation.

```
classdef MyClass
    properties
        Prop(dim1,dim2,...) = defaultValue
    end
end
```

## Assignment and Size Validation

This class defines the size of the `Location` property as 1-by-3. Any value assigned to this property must conform to that size or must be convertible to that size.

```
classdef ValidateProps
  properties
    Location(1,3)
  end
end
```

The implicit default value assigned by MATLAB, [0 0 0], conforms to the specified size:

```
a = ValidateProps
a =
  ValidateProps with properties:
    Location: [0 0 0]
```

MATLAB applies scalar expansion when you assign a scalar the `Location` property.

```
a = ValidateProps;
a.Location = 1
a =
  ValidateProps with properties:
    Location: [1 1 1]
```

MATLAB converts columns to rows to match the size specification:

```
col = [1;1;1]
col =
  1
  1
  1
a.Location = col
a =
  ValidateProps with properties:
    Location: [1 1 1]
```

## Colon in Size Specification

A colon in the size specification indicates that the corresponding dimension can have any length. For example, you can assign a value of any length to the `Label` property in this class.

```
classdef ValidateProps
properties
    Label(1,:)
end
end

a = ValidateProps;
a.Label = 'Click to Start'

a =
ValidateProps with properties:
    Label: 'Click to Start'
```

For information on colon indexing, see “Single-Colon Indexing with Different Array Types”.

## Property Class Validation

Defining the class of a property can reduce the need to test the values assigned to the property in your code. The value assigned to the property must be of the specified class or convertible to the specified class.

You can use any MATLAB class or externally defined class that is supported by MATLAB, except Java and COM classes.

Place the name of the class in the property definition block following the property name and optional size specification.

```
classdef MyClass
properties
    Prop ClassName = defaultValue
end
end
```

If you do not specify a default value, MATLAB assigns an empty object of the specified class to the property. If you assign a size and a class, MATLAB honors both the size and class. See “Default Values Per Size and Class” on page 8-33.

You can specify only one class per property. Use validation functions like `mustBeNumeric` or `mustBeInteger` to restrict properties to a broader category of classes. For more information on validation functions, see “Property Validation Functions” on page 8-35.

### Using Class Validation

The `PropsWithClass` class defines two properties with class definitions:

- **Number** — Values must be of class `double` or convertible to `double`.
- **Today** — Values must be of class `char` or convertible to `char`. The default value is the `char` vector returned by the `date` function.

```
classdef PropsWithClass
properties
    Number double
    Today char = date
end
end
```

Create an object of the `PropsWithClass` class.

```
p = PropsWithClass
p =
PropsWithClass with properties:
    Number: []
    Today: '10-Sep-2016'
```

MATLAB performs conversions from any compatible class to the property class. For example, assign a `datetime` array to the `Today` property.

```
p.Today = [datetime('now'),datetime('tomorrow')];
disp(class(p.Today))
ans =
char
```

Because the `datetime` class has a `char` converter, you can assign a `datetime` array to the `Today` property.

Assigning an incompatible value to a property that uses class validation causes an error.

```
p.Number = datetime('now');

Error setting property 'Number' of class 'PropsWithClass':
Invalid data type. Value must be double or be convertible to double.
```

### User-Defined Class for Validation

You can define a class to control the values assigned to a property. Enumeration classes enable users to set property values to character vectors or string scalars with inexact name matching.

For example, suppose that there is a class that represents a three-speed mechanical pump. You can define an enumeration class to represent the three flow rates.

```
classdef FlowRate < int32
    enumeration
        Low      (10)
        Medium   (50)
        High     (100)
    end
end
```

The Pump class has a method to return the current flow rate in gallons per minute. Define the Speed property as a FlowRate class.

```
classdef Pump
    properties
        Speed FlowRate
    end
    methods
        function getGPM(p)
            if isempty(p.Speed)
                gpm = 0;
            else
                gpm = int32(p.Speed);
            end
            fprintf('Flow rate is: %i GPM\n',gpm);
        end
    end
end
```

Users can set the Speed property using inexact text.

```
p = Pump;
p.Speed = 'm'
```

```
p =
```

```
Pump with properties:
```

```
    Speed: Medium
```

The numerical value is available from the property.

```
getGPM(p)
```

```
Flow rate is: 50 GPM
```

For information about enumeration classes, see “Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5.

### Integer Class Validation

MATLAB supports several integer classes (see “Integers”). However, restricting a property to an integer class can result in integer overflow. The resulting value can saturate at the maximum or minimum value in the integer’s range.

When integer overflow occurs, the value that is actually assigned to a property might not be the value from the right side of the assignment statement.

For example, suppose that you want to restrict a property value to a scalar `uint8`.

```
classdef IntProperty
  properties
    Value(1,1) uint8
  end
end
```

Assigning a numeric value to the `Value` property effectively casts the numeric value to `uint8`, but does not result in an error for out-of-range values.

```
a = IntProperty;
a.Value = -10;
disp(a.Value)
```

```
0
```

Assignment to the `Value` property is equivalent to indexed assignment of an array. If the assigned value is out of the range of values that `uint8` can represent, MATLAB sets the value to the closest value that it can represent using `uint8`.

```
a = uint8.empty;
a(1) = -10

a =
uint8

0
```

To avoid the potential for integer overflow, use a combination of validation functions that restrict the value to the intended range instead of an integer class.

```
classdef IntProperty
properties
    Value(1,1) {mustBeInteger, mustBeNonnegative, ...
        mustBeLessThan(Value,256)}
end
end
```

Because there is no conversion of the assigned value by the `uint8` class, the validators catch out of range values and throw an appropriate error.

```
a = IntProperty;
a.Value = -10;

Error setting property 'Value' of class 'IntProperty':
Value must be nonnegative.
```

## Default Values Per Size and Class

Any default property value that you assign in the class definition must conform to the specified validation.

### Implicit Default Values

MATLAB defines a default value implicitly if you do not specify a default value in the class definition. This table shows how size and class determine the implicit default value of MATLAB classes.

Size	Class	Implicit Default Assigned by MATLAB
(m,n)	Any numeric	m-by-n array of zeros of specified class.

Size	Class	Implicit Default Assigned by MATLAB
(m, :) or (:, n)	Any class	m-by-0 or 0-by-n of specified class.
(m, n)	char	Runtime error — define a default value in the class.
(m, n)	cell	Runtime error — define a default value in the class.
(m, n)	struct	m-by-n struct
(m, n)	string	m-by-n string
(m, n)	enumeration class	First enumeration member defined in the class.
(1, 1)	function_handle	Runtime error — define a default value in the class.

To determine the implicit default value, MATLAB calls the default class constructor and builds an array of the specified size using the instance returned by the constructor call. If the class does not support a default constructor (that is, a constructor called with no arguments), then MATLAB throws an error when instantiating the class containing the validation.

For heterogeneous arrays, MATLAB calls the `getDefaultScalarElement` method to get the default object.

## Related Examples

- “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21
- “Property Validation Functions” on page 8-35
- “Enumerations for Property Values” on page 14-17

# Property Validation Functions

## In this section...

[“Validate Property Using Functions” on page 8-35](#)

[“MATLAB Validation Functions” on page 8-38](#)

[“Define Validation Functions” on page 8-40](#)

[“Add Support for Validation Functions” on page 8-41](#)

## Validate Property Using Functions

Use property validation functions in class definitions to impose specific restrictions on property values. A validation function accepts a potential property value as an argument and issues an error if the value does not meet the specific requirement imposed by the function.

During the validation process, MATLAB passes the value to each validation function listed in the class definition. MATLAB calls each function from left to right and throws the first error encountered. The value passed to the validation functions is the result of any conversion applied by the class and size specifications. For more information on class and size validation, see “Property Class and Size Validation” on page 8-27.

For a list of MATLAB validation functions, see “MATLAB Validation Functions” on page 8-38

### Validation Function Syntax

Specify validation functions as a comma-separated list of function names or function calls with arguments, enclosed in braces.

```
classdef MyClass
  properties
    Prop {fcn1, fcn2, ...} = defaultValue
  end
end
```

MATLAB passes the potential property value to the validation function implicitly. However, if the validation function requires input arguments in addition to the potential property value, then you must include both the property and the additional arguments. Additional arguments must be literal values and cannot reference variables. Literal values are nonsymbolic representations, such as numbers and text.

For example, the function `mustBeGreaterThan` requires a value that the property value must be greater than. Pass the property as the first argument. Use the property name, but do not enclose the name in quotation marks.

```
properties
    Prop {mustBeGreaterThanOrEqual(Prop,10)}
end
```

## Using Validation Functions

The following class specifies validation functions for each property.

- Data must be numeric and finite.
- Interp must be one of the three options listed. Specify a default value for this property to satisfy this requirement.

```
classdef ValidatorFunction
    properties
        Data {mustBeNumeric, mustBeFinite}
        Interp {mustBeMember(Interp,['linear','cubic','spline'])} = 'linear'
    end
end
```

Creating a default object of the class shows the initial values.

```
a = ValidatorFunction
a =
ValidatorFunction with properties:
```

```
    Data: []
    Interp: 'linear'
```

Assigning values to properties calls the validation functions.

```
a.Data = 'cubic'
Error setting property 'Data' of class 'ValidatorFunction':
Value must be numeric.
```

Because the `Data` property validation does not include a numeric class, there is no conversion of the `char` vector to a numeric value. If you change the validation of the `Data` property to specify the class as `double`, MATLAB converts the `char` vector to a `double` array.

```
properties
    Data double {mustBeNumeric, mustBeFinite}
end
```

The assignment to the `char` vector does not produce an error because MATLAB converts the `char` vector to class `double`.

```
a.Data = 'cubic'

a =

ValidatorFunction with properties:

    Data: [99 117 98 105 99]
    Interp: 'linear'
```

Assignment to the `Interp` property requires an exact match.

```
a = ValidatorFunction;
a.Interp = 'cu'

Error setting property 'Interp' of class 'ValidatorFunction':
Value must be a member of this set
    linear
    cubic
    spline
```

Using an enumeration class provides inexact matching and case insensitivity.

### Enumeration Class for Inexact Matching

Property validation using an enumeration class provides these advantages:

- Inexact, case-insensitive matching for unambiguous char vectors or string scalars
- Conversion of inexact matches to correct values

For example, suppose that you define the `InterpMethod` enumeration class for the `Interp` property validation.

```
classdef InterpMethod
    enumeration
        linear
        cubic
        spline
    end
```

```
end
```

Change the `Interp` property validation to use the `InterpMethod` class.

```
classdef ValidatorFunction
  properties
    Data {mustBeNumeric, mustBeFinite}
    Interp InterpMethod
  end
end
```

Assign a value matching the first few letters of 'cubic'.

```
a = ValidatorFunction;
a.Interp = 'cu'

a =
  ValidatorFunction with properties:
    Data: []
    Interp: cubic
```

## MATLAB Validation Functions

MATLAB defines functions for use in property validation. These functions support common use patterns for property validation and provide descriptive error messages. This table lists the MATLAB validation functions, their meanings, and the MATLAB functions used by the validation functions.

Name	Meaning	Dependencies
<code>mustBePositive(A)</code>	$A > 0$	<code>gt</code> , <code>isreal</code> , <code>isnumeric</code> , <code>islogical</code>
<code>mustBeNonpositive(A)</code>	$A \leq 0$	<code>ge</code> , <code>isreal</code> , <code>isnumeric</code> , <code>islogical</code>
<code>mustBeFinite(A)</code>	A has no NaN and no Inf elements.	<code>isfinite</code>
<code>mustBeNonNaN(A)</code>	A has no NaN elements.	<code>isnan</code>

Name	Meaning	Dependencies
mustBeNonnegative(A)	$A \geq 0$	ge, isreal, isnumeric, islogical
mustBeNegative(A)	$A < 0$	lt, isreal, isnumeric, islogical
mustBeNonzero(A)	$A \neq 0$	eq, isnumeric, islogical
mustBeGreater Than(A,B)	$A > B$	gt, isscalar, isreal, isnumeric, islogical
mustBeLessThan(A,B)	$A < B$	lt, isreal, isnumeric, islogical
mustBeGreaterThanOrEqual(A,B)	$A \geq B$	ge, isreal, isnumeric, islogical
mustBeLessThanOrEqual(A,B)	$A \leq B$	le, isreal, isnumeric, islogical
mustBeNonempty(A)	A is not empty	isempty
mustBeNonsparse(A)	A has no sparse elements.	issparse
mustBeNumeric(A)	A is numeric.	isnumeric
mustBeNumericOrLogical(A)	A is numeric or logical.	isnumeric, islogical
mustBeReal(A)	A has no imaginary part.	isreal
mustBeInteger(A)	$A == \text{floor}(A)$	isreal, isfinite, floor, isnumeric, islogical

Name	Meaning	Dependencies
mustBeMember(A,B)	A is an exact match for a member of B.	ismember

## Define Validation Functions

Validator functions are ordinary MATLAB functions that are designed for the specific purpose of validating property values. Functions used as property validators:

- Accept the potential property value as an input argument
- Do not return values
- Throw errors if the validation fails

Creating your own validation function is useful when you want to provide specific validation that is not available using the MATLAB validation functions. You can create local functions within the class file or place the function on the MATLAB path to be available for use in any class.

For example, the `IMData` class uses a local function to define a validator that restricts the `Data` property to a specific range of numeric values.

```
classdef IMData
    properties
        Data {mustBeNumeric, mustBeInRange(Data,[0,255])} = 0
    end
end
function mustBeInRange(a,b)
    if any(a(:) < b(1)) || any(a(:) > b(2))
        error(['Value assigned to Data property is not in range ',...
            num2str(b(1)), '...', num2str(b(2))])
    end
end
```

When you create an instance of the `IMData` class, MATLAB validates that the default value is numeric, in the range `0 . . . 255`, and not empty.

```
a = IMData
a =
IMData with properties:
```

```
Data: 0
```

Property assignment invokes the validators in left-to-right order. Assigning a `char` vector to the `Data` property causes an error thrown by `mustBeNumeric`.

```
a.Data = 'red'
```

```
Error setting property 'Data' of class 'ImData':  
Value must be numeric.
```

Assigning a numeric value that is out of range causes an error thrown by `mustBeInRange`.

```
a.Data = -1
```

```
Error setting property 'Data' of class 'ImData':  
Value assigned to Data property is not in range 0...255
```

## Add Support for Validation Functions

Support MATLAB validation functions for objects of your class by implementing the dependent functions as methods of your class. To determine which methods to implement for each function, see the validation function reference pages listed in this table “MATLAB Validation Functions” on page 8-38.

For example, suppose that you want your class to support the `mustBeGreaterThan` validation function. Overload these MATLAB functions as methods in your class:

- `isreal` — Always return logical `true` because `mustBeGreaterThan` does not support complex numbers.
- `gt` — The second object in the comparison must be scalar, as required by `mustBeGreaterThan`.

The `SupportmBGT` class implements support for `mustBeGreaterThan`.

```
classdef SupportmBGT  
properties  
    Prop(1,1) double {mustBeReal}  
end  
methods  
    function obj = SupportmBGT(data)  
        if nargin > 0
```

```
    obj.Prop = data;
end
end
function tf = isreal(obj)
    tf = true;
end
function tf = gt(obj1, obj2)
    tf = [obj1(:).Prop] > obj2.Prop;
end
end
end
```

Use `mustBeGreaterThan` with objects of this class:

```
a = SupportmBGT(10);
b = SupportmBGT(12);
mustBeGreaterThan(a,b)
```

```
Error using mustBeGreaterThan (line 19)
Value must be greater than the comparison value.
```

### Related Examples

- “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21
- “Property Class and Size Validation” on page 8-27

# Property Access Methods

## In this section...

- “Properties Provide Access to Class Data” on page 8-43
- “Property Setter and Getter Methods” on page 8-43
- “Set and Get Method Execution and Property Events” on page 8-46
- “Access Methods and Properties Containing Arrays” on page 8-47
- “Access Methods and Arrays of Objects” on page 8-47
- “Modify Property Values with Access Methods” on page 8-47

## Properties Provide Access to Class Data

In MATLAB, properties can have public access. Therefore, properties can provide access to data that the class design exposes to users.

Use property access methods to provide error checking or to implement side effects resulting from property access. Examples of access methods include functions that update other property values when setting the property or translate the format of a property value before returning the value.

You can use property validation to restrict the size, class, and other aspects of property values. For information on property validation, see “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21.

## Performance Considerations with Access Methods

Property access methods do add the overhead of a function call whenever accessing property values. If performance-critical access to properties occurs inside methods of the class, define private properties to store values. Use these values inside methods without any error checking. For less frequent access from outside the class, define public **Dependent** properties that use access methods for error checking.

For information on access methods used with **Dependent** properties, see “Access Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54.

## Property Setter and Getter Methods

Property access methods execute specific code whenever the property value is queried or assigned a value. These methods enable you to perform various operations:

- Execute code before assigning property values to perform actions such as:
  - Impose value range restrictions (“Validate Property Values” on page 8-21)
  - Check for proper types and dimensions
  - Provide error handling
- Execute code before returning the current values of properties to perform actions such as:
  - Calculate the value of properties that do not store values (see “Calculate Data on Demand” on page 3-23)
  - Change the value of other properties
  - Trigger events (see “Overview Events and Listeners” on page 11-2)

To control what code can access properties, see “Property Attributes” on page 8-8.

### MATLAB Calls Access Methods

---

**Note:** You cannot call property access methods directly. MATLAB calls these methods when you access property values.

---

Property access methods execute automatically whenever you set or query the corresponding property values from outside the access method. MATLAB does not call access methods recursively. That is, MATLAB does not call the set method when setting the property from within its set method. Similarly, MATLAB does not call the get method when querying the property value from within its get method.

Obtain the function handle for the set and get access methods from the property `meta.property` object. The `meta.property SetMethod` and `GetMethod` properties contain the function handles that refer to these methods.

### Restrictions on Access Methods

Define property access methods only:

- For concrete properties (that is, properties that are not abstract)
- Within the class that defines the property (unless the property is abstract in that class, in which case the concrete subclass must define the access method).

MATLAB has no default set or get property access methods. Therefore, if you do not define property access methods, MATLAB software does not invoke any methods before assigning or returning property values.

Once defined, only the set and get methods can set and query the actual property values. See “When Set Method Is Called” on page 8-50 for information on cases where MATLAB does not call property set methods.

---

**Note:** Property set and get access methods are not equivalent to user-callable `set` and `get` methods used to set and query property values from an instance of the class. See “Implement Set/Get Interface for Properties” on page 7-27 for information on user-callable `set` and `get` methods.

---

### Access Methods Cannot Call Functions to Access Properties

You can set and get property values only from within your property set or get access method. You cannot call another function from the set or get method and attempt to access the property value from that function.

For example, an anonymous function that calls another function to do the actual work cannot access the property value. Similarly, an access function cannot call another function to access the property value.

### Defining Access Methods

Access methods have special names that include the property name. Therefore, `get.PropertyName` executes whenever `PropertyName` is referenced and `set.PropertyName` executes whenever `PropertyName` is assigned a value.

Define property access methods in a methods block that specifies no attributes. You cannot call these methods directly. MATLAB calls these methods when any code accesses the properties.

Property access methods do not appear in the list of class methods returned by the `methods` command and are not included in the `meta.class` object `Methods` property.

### Access Method Function Handles

The property `meta.property` object contains function handles to the property set and get methods. `SetMethod` contains a function handle to the set method. `GetMethod` contains a function handle to the get method.

Obtain these handles from the `meta.property` object:

```
mc = ?ClassName;
mp = findobj(mc.PropertyList, 'Name', 'PropertyName');
fh = mp.GetMethod;
```

For example, if the class `MyClass` defines a get method for its `Text` property, you can obtain a function handle to this function from the `meta.class` object:

```
mc = ?MyClass;
mp = findobj(mc.PropertyList, 'Name', 'Text');
fh = mp.GetMethod;
```

The returned value, `fh`, contains a function handle to the get method defined for the specified property name for the specified class.

For information on defining function handles, see “Create Function Handle”

## Set and Get Method Execution and Property Events

MATLAB software generates events before and after set and get operations. You can use these events to inform listeners that property values have been referenced or assigned. The timing of event generation is as follows:

- `PreGet` — Triggered before calling the property get method
- `PostGet` — Triggered after the property get method has returned its value

If a class computes a property value (`Dependent = true`), then the behaviors of its set events are like the get events:

- `PreSet` — Triggered before calling the property set method
- `PostSet` — Triggered after calling the property set method

If a property is not computed (`Dependent = false`, the default), then the assignment statement with the set method generates the events:

- `PreSet` — Triggered before assigning the new property value within the set method
- `PostSet` — Triggered after assigning the new property value within the set method

For information about using property events, see “Create Property Listeners” on page 11-37.

## Access Methods and Properties Containing Arrays

You can use array indexing with properties that contain arrays without interfering with property set and get methods.

For indexed reference:

```
val = obj.PropName(n);
```

MATLAB calls the get method to get the referenced value.

For indexed assignment:

```
obj.PropName(n) = val;
```

MATLAB:

- Invokes the get method to get the property value
- Performs the indexed assignment on the returned property
- Passes the new property value to the set method

## Access Methods and Arrays of Objects

When reference or assignment occurs on an object array, MATLAB calls the set and get methods in a loop. In this loop, MATLAB always passes scalar objects to set and get methods.

## Modify Property Values with Access Methods

Property access methods are useful in cases where you want to perform some additional steps before assigning or returning a property value. For example, the `Testpoint` class uses a property set method to check the range of a value. It then applies scaling if it is within a particular range, and set it to `NaN` if it is not.

The property get methods applies a scale factor before returning its current value:

```
classdef Testpoint
properties
    expectedResult = []
end
properties(Constant)
```

```
    scalingFactor = 0.001
end
methods
    function obj = set.expectedResult(obj,erIn)
        if erIn >= 0 && erIn <= 100
            erIn = erIn.*obj.scalingFactor;
            obj.expectedResult = erIn;
        else
            obj.expectedResult = NaN;
        end
    end
    function er = get.expectedResult(obj)
        er = obj.expectedResult/obj.scalingFactor;
    end
end
end
```

### More About

- “Properties Containing Objects” on page 8-58

# Property Set Methods

## In this section...

- “Overview of Property Access Methods” on page 8-49
- “Property Set Method Syntax” on page 8-49
- “Validate Property Set Value” on page 8-50
- “When Set Method Is Called” on page 8-50

## Overview of Property Access Methods

For an overview of property access methods, see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43

## Property Set Method Syntax

MATLAB calls a property's set method whenever a value is assigned to the property.

---

**Note:** You cannot call property access methods directly. MATLAB calls these methods when you access property values.

---

Property set methods have the following syntax, where *PropertyName* is the name of the property.

For a value class:

```
methods
    function obj = set.PropertyName(obj,value)
    ...
end
```

- **obj** — Object whose property is being assigned a value
- **value** — The new value that is assigned to the property

Value class set functions must return the modified object to the calling function. Handle classes do not need to return the modified object.

For a handle class:

```
methods
    function set.PropertyName(obj,value)
    ...
end
```

Use default method attributes for property set methods. The methods block defining the set method cannot specify attributes.

## Validate Property Set Value

Use the property set method to validate the value being assigned to the property. The property set method can perform actions like error checking on the input value before taking whatever action is necessary to store the new property value.

```
classdef MyClass
properties
    Prop1
end
methods
    function obj = set.Prop1(obj,value)
        if (value > 0)
            obj.Prop1 = value;
        else
            error('Property value must be positive')
        end
    end
end
end
```

For an example of a property set method, see “Restrict Properties to Specific Values” on page 3-21 .

## When Set Method Is Called

If a property set method exists, MATLAB calls it whenever a value is assigned to that property. However, MATLAB does NOT call property set methods in the following cases:

- Assigning a value to a property from within its own property set method, to prevent recursive calling of the set method. However, property assignments made from functions called by a set method do call the set method.
- Initializing default values in class definitions when loading the class

- Assigning a property to its default value that is specified in the class definition
- Copying a value object (that is, not derived from the handle class). MATLAB does not call the set or get method when copying property values from one object to another.
- Assigning a property value that is the same as the current value when the property's **AbortSet** attribute is **true**. See "Assignment When Property Value Unchanged" on page 11-41 for more information on this attribute.
- 

As an optimization, if MATLAB determines that a property value does not change as a result of an assignment referencing the property, MATLAB does not call the property set method.

A set method for one property can assign values to other properties of the object. These assignments do call any set methods defined for the other properties. For example, a graphics window object can have a **Units** property and a **Size** property. Changing the **Units** property can also require a change to the values of the **Size** property to reflect the new units.

## Property Get Methods

### In this section...

- “Overview of Property Access Methods” on page 8-52
- “Property Get Method Syntax” on page 8-52
- “Calculate Value for Dependent Property” on page 8-52
- “Errors Not Returned from Get Method” on page 8-53
- “Get Method Behavior” on page 8-53

## Overview of Property Access Methods

For an overview of property access methods, see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43

## Property Get Method Syntax

MATLAB calls a property's get method whenever the property value is queried.

---

**Note:** You cannot call property access methods directly. MATLAB calls these methods when you access property values.

---

Property get methods have the following syntax, where *PropertyName* is the name of the property. The function must return the property value.

```
methods
    function value = get.PropertyName(obj)
    ...
end
```

## Calculate Value for Dependent Property

The `SquareArea` class defines a dependent property `Area`. MATLAB does not store a value for the dependent `Area` property. When you query the value of the `Area` property, MATLAB calls the `get.Area` method calculates the value based on the `Width` and `Height` properties.

```
classdef SquareArea
```

```
properties
    Width
    Height
end
properties (Dependent)
    Area
end
methods
    function a = get.Area(obj)
        a = obj.Width * obj.Height;
    end
end
end
```

## Errors Not Returned from Get Method

The MATLAB default object display suppresses error messages returned from property get methods. MATLAB does not allow an error issued by a property get method to prevent the display of the entire object.

Use the property set method to validate the property value. Validating the value when setting a property ensures that the object is in a valid state. Use the property get method only to return the value that the set method has validated.

## Get Method Behavior

MATLAB does NOT call property get methods in the following cases:

- Getting a property value from within its own property get method, which prevents recursive calling of the get method
- Copying a value object (that is, not derived from the handle class). Neither the set or get method is called when copying property values from one object to another.

## Related Examples

- “Access Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54

## Access Methods for Dependent Properties

### In this section...

[“Set and Get Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54](#)

[“Calculate Dependent Property Value” on page 8-55](#)

[“When to Use Set Methods with Dependent Properties” on page 8-55](#)

[“Private Set Access with Dependent Properties” on page 8-56](#)

### Set and Get Methods for Dependent Properties

Dependent properties do not store data. The value of a dependent property depends on some other value, such as the value of a nondependent property.

Dependent properties must define get-access methods (`get.PropertyName`) to determine a value for the property when the property is queried.

To be able to set the value of a dependent property, the property must define a set access method (`set.PropertyName`). The property set access method usually assigns the value to another, nondependent property for storage of the value.

For example, the `Account` class returns a value for the dependent `Balance` property that depends on the value of the `Currency` property. The `get.Balance` method queries the `Currency` property before calculating a value for the `Balance` property.

MATLAB calls the `get.Balance` method when the `Balance` property is queried. You cannot call `get.Balance` explicitly.

Here is a partial listing of the class showing a dependent property and its get method:

```
classdef Account
    properties
        Currency
        DollarAmount
    end
    properties (Dependent)
        Balance
    end
    ...
    methods
        function value = get.Balance(obj)
```

```

c = obj.Currency;
switch c
    case 'E'
        v = obj.DollarAmount / 1.1;
    case 'P'
        v = obj.DollarAmount / 1.5;
    otherwise
        v = obj.DollarAmount;
end
format bank
value = v;
end
end
end

```

## Calculate Dependent Property Value

One application of a property get method is to determine the value of a property only when you need it, and avoid storing the value. To use this approach, set the property **Dependent** attribute to **true**:

```

properties (Dependent = true)
    Prop
end

```

The get method for the **Prop** property determines the value of that property and assigns it to the object from within the method:

```

function value = get.Prop(obj)
    value = calculateValue;
    ...
end

```

This **get** method calls a function or static method called **calculateValue** to calculate the property value and returns **value** as a result. The property get method can take whatever action is necessary within the method to produce the output value.

For an example of a property get method, see “Calculate Data on Demand” on page 3-23.

## When to Use Set Methods with Dependent Properties

Although a dependent property does not store its value, you can define a set method for a dependent property to enable code to set the property.

For example, suppose that you have a class that changes the name of a property from `OldPropertyName` to `NewPropertyName`. You can continue to allow the use of the old name without exposing it to new users. To support the old property name, define `OldPropertyName` a dependent property with set and get methods:

```
properties
    NewPropertyName
end
properties (Dependent, Hidden)
    OldPropertyName
end
methods
    function obj = set.OldPropertyName(obj, val)
        obj.NewPropertyName = val;
    end
    function value = get.OldPropertyName(obj)
        value = obj.NewPropertyName;
    end
end
```

There is no memory wasted by storing both old and new property values. Code that accesses `OldPropertyName` continues to work as expected. Setting the `Hidden` attribute of `OldPropertyName` prevents new users from seeing the property.

Assignments made from property set methods cause the execution of any set methods defined for properties being set. See “Calculate Data on Demand” on page 3-23 for an example.

### Private Set Access with Dependent Properties

If you use a dependent property only to return a value, then do not define a set access method for the dependent property. Instead, set the `SetAccess` attribute of the dependent property to `private`. For example, consider the following get method for the `MaxValue` property:

```
methods
    function mval = get.MaxValue(obj)
        mval = max(obj.BigArray(:));
    end
end
```

This example uses the `.MaxValue` property to return a value that it calculates only when queried. For this application, define the `.MaxValue` property as dependent and private:

```
properties (Dependent, SetAccess = private)
    MaxValue
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8

## Properties Containing Objects

### In this section...

[“Assigning Objects as Default Property Values” on page 8-58](#)

[“Assigning to Read-Only Properties Containing Objects” on page 8-58](#)

[“Assignment Behavior” on page 8-58](#)

### Assigning Objects as Default Property Values

MATLAB evaluates property default values only once when loading the class. MATLAB does not reevaluate the assignment each time you create an object of that class. If you assign an object as a default property value in the class definition, MATLAB calls the constructor for that object only once when loading the class.

---

**Note:** Evaluation of property default values occurs only when the value is first needed, and only once when MATLAB first initializes the class. MATLAB does not reevaluate the expression each time you create an instance of the class.

---

For more information on the evaluation of expressions that you assign as property default values, see “When MATLAB Evaluates Expressions” on page 6-12.

### Assigning to Read-Only Properties Containing Objects

When a class defines a property with private or protected `SetAccess`, and that property contains an object which itself has properties, assignment behavior depends on whether the property contains a handle or a value object:

- Handle object – you can set properties on handle objects contained in read-only properties
- Value object – you cannot set properties on value object contained in read-only properties.

### Assignment Behavior

These classes illustrate the assignment behavior:

- **ReadOnlyProps** – class with two read-only properties. The class constructor assigns a handle object of type **HanClass** to the **PropHandle** property and a value object of type **ValClass** to the **PropValue** property.
- **HanClass** – handle class with public property
- **ValClass** – value class with public property

```
classdef ReadOnlyProps
    properties(SetAccess = private)
        PropHandle
        PropValue

    end
    methods
        function obj = ReadOnlyProps
            obj.PropHandle = HanClass;
            obj.PropValue = ValClass;
        end
    end
end

classdef HanClass < handle
    properties
        Hprop
    end
end

classdef ValClass
    properties
        Vprop
    end
end
```

Create an instance of the **ReadOnlyProps** class:

```
a = ReadOnlyProps
a =
ReadOnlyProps with properties:

    PropHandle: [1x1 HanClass]
    PropValue: [1x1 ValClass]
```

Use the private `PropHandle` property to set the property of the `HanClass` object it contains:

```
class(a.PropHandle.Hprop)  
ans =  
double  
a.PropHandle.Hprop = 7;
```

Attempting to make an assignment to the value class object property is not allowed:

```
a.PropValue.Vprop = 11;
```

You cannot set the read-only property 'PropValue' of `ReadOnlyProps`.

### More About

- “Mutable and Immutable Properties” on page 8-19

# Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance

## In this section...

[“What Are Dynamic Properties” on page 8-61](#)

[“Define Dynamic Properties” on page 8-62](#)

## What Are Dynamic Properties

You can add properties to instances of classes that derive from the `dynamicprops` class. These dynamic properties are sometimes referred to as instance properties. Use dynamic properties to attach temporary data to objects or to assign data that you want to associate with an instance of a class, but not all objects of that class.

It is possible for more than one program to define dynamic properties on the same object. In these cases, avoid name conflicts. Dynamic property names must be valid MATLAB identifiers (see “Variable Names”) and cannot be the same name as a method of the class.

## Characteristics of Dynamic Properties

Once defined, dynamic properties behave much like class-defined properties:

- Set and query the values of dynamic properties using dot notation. (See “Assign Data to the Dynamic Property” on page 8-63.)
- MATLAB saves and loads dynamic properties when you save and load the objects to which they are attached. (See “Dynamic Properties and `ConstructOnLoad`” on page 8-71.)
- Define attributes for dynamic property. (See “Set Dynamic Property Attributes” on page 8-62).
- MATLAB does not save property attribute values when you save objects that have dynamic properties. Therefore, any nondefault attribute setting are not retained when you load the object. (See “Save and Load Dynamic Properties” on page 13-38.)
- By default, dynamic properties have their `NonCopyable` attribute set to `true`. If you copy an object containing a dynamic property, the dynamic property is not copied. (See “Objects with Dynamic Properties” on page 7-40)
- Add property set and get access methods. (See “Access Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54.)
- Listen for dynamic property events. (See “Dynamic Property Events” on page 8-67.)

- Access dynamic property values from object arrays, with restricted syntax. (See “Accessing Dynamic Properties in Arrays” on page 10-13.)
- The `isequal` function always returns `false` when comparing objects that have dynamic properties, even if the properties have the same name and value. To compare objects that contain dynamic properties, overload `isequal` for your class.

## Define Dynamic Properties

Any class that is a subclass of the `dynamicprops` class (which is itself a subclass of the `handle` class) can define dynamic properties using the `addprop` method. The syntax is:

```
P = addprop(H, 'PropertyName')
```

where:

`P` is an array of `meta.DynamicProperty` objects

`H` is an array of handles

`PropertyName` is the name of the dynamic property you are adding to each object

### Name Dynamic Properties

Use only valid names when naming dynamic properties (see “Variable Names”). In addition, *do not* use names that:

- Are the same as the name of a class method
- Are the same as the name of a class event
- Contain a period (.)

### Set Dynamic Property Attributes

To set property attributes, use the `meta.DynamicProperty` object associated with the dynamic property. For example, if `P` is the object returned by `addprop`, this statement sets the property’s `Hidden` attribute to `true`:

```
P.Hidden = true;
```

The property attributes `Constant` and `Abstract` have no meaning for dynamic properties. Setting the value of these attributes to `true` has no effect.

## Remove a Dynamic Property

Remove the dynamic property by deleting its `meta.DynamicProperty` object:

```
delete(P);
```

## Assign Data to the Dynamic Property

Suppose, you are using a predefined set of user interface widget classes (buttons, sliders, check boxes, etc.). You want to store the location of each instance of the widget class. Assume that the widget classes are not designed to store location data for your particular layout scheme. You want to avoid creating a map or hash table to maintain this information separately.

Assuming the `button` class is a subclass of `dynamicprops`, add a dynamic property to store your layout data. Here is a simple class to create a `uicontrol` button:

```
classdef button < dynamicprops
    properties
        UiHandle
    end
    methods
        function obj = button(pos)
            if nargin > 0
                if length(pos) == 4
                    obj.UiHandle = uicontrol('Position',pos, ...
                        'Style','pushbutton');
                else
                    error('Improper position')
                end
            end
        end
    end
end
```

Create an instance of the `button` class, add a dynamic property, and set its value:

```
b1 = button([20 40 80 20]);
b1.addprop('myCoord');
b1.myCoord = [2,3];
```

Access the dynamic property just like any other property, but only on the object on which you defined it:

```
b1.myCoord
```

```
ans =
```

```
2      3
```

## Related Examples

- “Access Methods for Dynamic Properties” on page 8-65
- “Dynamic Property Events” on page 8-67
- “Dynamic Properties and ConstructOnLoad” on page 8-71

# Access Methods for Dynamic Properties

## In this section...

“Create Access Methods for Dynamic Properties” on page 8-65

“Shared Set and Get Methods” on page 8-66

You can define property set access or get access methods for dynamic properties without creating additional class methods. For general information on the use of access methods, see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43.

## Create Access Methods for Dynamic Properties

Use these steps to create a property access method:

- Define a function that implements the operations you want to perform before the property set or get occurs. These methods must have the following signatures:  
`mySet(obj, val)` or `val = myGet(obj)`
- Obtain the dynamic property's corresponding `meta.DynamicProperty` object.
- Assign a function handle referencing your set or get property function to the `meta.DynamicProperty` object's `GetMethod` or `SetMethod` property. This function does not need to be a method of the class. You cannot use a naming scheme like `set.PropertyName`. Instead, use any other valid function name.

Suppose that you want to create a property set function for the `myCoord` dynamic property of the `button` class created in “Define Dynamic Properties” on page 8-62.

Write the function as follows.

```
function set_myCoord(obj, val)
    if ~(length(val) == 2)
        error('myCoords require two values')
    end
    obj.myCoord = val;
end
```

Because `button` is a `handle` class, the property set function does not need to return the object as an output argument.

To get the `meta.DynamicProperty` object, use the `handle` class `findprop` method:

```
mb1 = b1.findprop('myCoord');  
mb1.SetMethod = @set_myCoord;
```

MATLAB calls the property set function whenever you set this property:

```
b1.myCoord = [1 2 3] % length must be two  
Error using button.set_myCoord  
myCoords require two values
```

You can set and get the property values only from within your property access methods. You cannot call another function from the set or get method, and then attempt to access the property value from that function.

### Shared Set and Get Methods

You can assign the same function handle for the set or get method of multiple dynamic properties. MATLAB passes only the object and the value to the assigned set function.

Reference or assignment to a property from within its set or get method does not invoke the set or get method again. Therefore, if you use a handle to the same function for multiple dynamic properties, that function is not invoked when accessing any of those properties from within that function.

### Related Examples

- “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61

# Dynamic Property Events

## In this section...

- “Dynamic Properties and Ordinary Property Events” on page 8-67
- “Dynamic-Property Events” on page 8-67
- “Listen for a Specific Property Name” on page 8-68
- “PropertyAdded Event Callback Execution” on page 8-69
- “PropertyRemoved Event Callback Execution” on page 8-70
- “How to Find `meta.DynamicProperty` Objects” on page 8-70

## Dynamic Properties and Ordinary Property Events

Dynamic properties support property set and get events so you can define listeners for these properties. Listeners are bound to the particular dynamic property for which they are defined.

If you delete a dynamic property, and then create another dynamic property with the same name, the listeners do not respond to events generated by the new property. A listener defined for a dynamic property that has been deleted does not cause an error, but the listener callback is never executed.

“Property-Set and Query Events” on page 11-17 provides more information on how to define listeners for these events.

## Dynamic-Property Events

To respond to the addition and removal of dynamic properties, attach listeners to objects containing the dynamic properties. The `dynamicprops` class defines events for this purpose:

- **PropertyAdded** — Triggered when you add a dynamic property to an object derived from the `dynamicprops` class.
- **PropertyRemoved** — Triggered when you delete the object or the `meta.DynamicProperty` object associated with a dynamic property.
- **ObjectBeingDestroyed** — Triggered when the object is destroyed. This event is inherited from the `handle` class.

These events have public listen access (`ListenAccess` attribute) and private notify access (`NotifyAccess` attribute).

The `PropertyAdded` and `PropertyRemoved` events pass an `event.DynamicPropertyEvent` object to listener callbacks. The event data object has three properties:

- `PropertyName` — Name of the dynamic property that is added or removed
- `Source` — Handle to the object that is the source of the event
- `EventName` — Name of the event (`PropertyAdded`, `PropertyRemoved`, or `ObjectBeingDestroyed`)

## Listen for a Specific Property Name

Suppose that you have an application that creates a dynamic property under certain conditions. You want to:

- Set the value of a hidden property to `true` when a property named `SpecialProp` is added.
- Set the value of the hidden property to `false` when `SpecialProp` is removed.

Use the `event.DynamicPropertyEvent` event data to determine the name of the property and whether it is added or deleted.

The `DynamTest` class derives from `dynamicprops`. It defines a hidden property, `HiddenProp`.

```
classdef DynamTest < dynamicprops
    properties (Hidden)
        HiddenProp
    end
end
```

Define a callback function that uses the `EventName` property of the event data to determine if a property is added or removed. Obtain the name of the property from the `PropertyName` property of the event data. If a dynamic property is named `SpecialProp`, change the value of the hidden property.

```
function DyPropEvtCb(src,evt)
    switch evt.EventName
```

```

case 'PropertyAdded'
    switch evt.PropertyName
        case 'SpecialProp'
            % Take action based on the addition of this property
            %...
            %...
            src.HiddenProp = true;
            disp('SpecialProp added')
        otherwise
            % Other property added
            % ...
            disp([evt.PropertyName, ' added'])
    end
case 'PropertyRemoved'
    switch evt.PropertyName
        case 'SpecialProp'
            % Take action based on the removal of this property
            %...
            %...
            src.HiddenProp = false;
            disp('SpecialProp removed')
        otherwise
            % Other property removed
            % ...
            disp([evt.PropertyName, ' removed'])
    end
end
end

```

Create an object of the `DynamTest` class.

```
dt = DynamTest;
```

Add a listener for both `PropertyAdded` and `PropertyRemoved` events.

```
lad = addlistener(dt, 'PropertyAdded', @DyPropEvtCb);
lrm = addlistener(dt, 'PropertyRemoved', @DyPropEvtCb);
```

## PropertyAdded Event Callback Execution

Adding a dynamic property triggers the `PropertyAdded` event. This statement adds a dynamic property to the object and saves the returned `meta.DynamicProperty` object.

```
ad = addprop(dt, 'SpecialProp');
```

The addition of the dynamic property causes the listener to execute its callback function, `DyPropEvtCb`. The callback function assigns a value of `true` to the `HiddenProp` property.

```
dt.HiddenProp
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

## PropertyRemoved Event Callback Execution

Remove a dynamic property by calling `delete` on the `meta.DynamicProperty` object that is returned by the `addprop` method. Removing the `meta.DynamicProperty` object triggers the `PropertyRemoved` event.

Delete the `meta.DynamicProperty` object returned when adding the dynamic property `SpecialProp`.

```
delete(ad)
```

The callback executes:

```
SpecialProp removed
```

The value of `HiddenProp` is now `false`.

```
dt.HiddenProp
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

## How to Find `meta.DynamicProperty` Objects

You can obtain the `meta.DynamicProperty` object for a dynamic property using `findprop`. Use `findprop` if you do not have the object returned by `addprop`.

```
ad = findprop(dt, 'SpecialProp');
```

## Related Examples

- “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61

## Dynamic Properties and ConstructOnLoad

Setting the class `ConstructOnLoad` attribute to `true` causes MATLAB to call the class constructor when loading the class. MATLAB saves and restores dynamic properties when loading an object.

If you create dynamic properties from the class constructor, you can cause a conflict if you also set the class `ConstructOnLoad` attribute to `true`. Here is the sequence:

- A saved object saves the names and values of properties, including dynamic properties
- When loaded, a new object is created and all properties are restored to the values at the time the object was saved
- Then, the `ConstructOnLoad` attribute causes a call to the class constructor, which would create another dynamic property with the same name as the loaded property. See “Save and Load Objects” on page 13-2 for more on the load sequence.
- MATLAB prevents a conflict by loading the saved dynamic property, and does not execute `addprop` when calling the constructor.

If you use `ConstructOnLoad`, add dynamic properties from the class constructor, and want the constructor to call `addprop` at load time, then set the dynamic property `Transient` attribute to `true`. This setting prevents the property from being saved. For example:

```
classdef (ConstructOnLoad) MyClass < dynamicprops
    function obj = MyClass
        P = addprop(obj, 'DynProp');
        P.Transient = true;
        ...
    end
end
```

### Related Examples

- “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61



# Methods – Defining Class Operations

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- “Methods in Class Design” on page 9-2
- “Method Attributes” on page 9-5
- “Ordinary Methods” on page 9-7
- “Methods in Separate Files” on page 9-10
- “Method Invocation” on page 9-14
- “Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20
- “Static Methods” on page 9-29
- “Overload Functions in Class Definitions” on page 9-31
- “Class Support for Array-Creation Functions” on page 9-35
- “Object Precedence in Method Invocation” on page 9-45
- “Dominant Argument in Overloaded Graphics Functions” on page 9-47
- “Class Methods for Graphics Callbacks” on page 9-50

# Methods in Class Design

## In this section...

- “Class Methods” on page 9-2
- “Kinds of Methods” on page 9-2
- “Method Naming” on page 9-3

## Class Methods

*Methods* are functions that implement the operations performed on objects of a class. Methods, along with other class members support the concept of encapsulation—class instances contain data in properties and class methods operate on that data. This design allows the internal workings of classes to be hidden from code outside of the class, and thereby enabling the class implementation to change without affecting code that is external to the class.

Methods have access to private members of their class including other methods and properties. This encapsulation enables you to hide data and create special interfaces that must be used to access the data stored in objects.

### Examples and Syntax

For sample code and syntax, see “Methods and Functions” on page 5-15

For a discussion of how to create classes that modify standard MATLAB behavior, see “Methods That Modify Default Behavior” on page 17-2 .

For information on the use of @ and path directors and packages to organize your class files, see “Class Files and Folders” on page 5-2

For the syntax to use when defining classes in more than one file, see “Methods in Separate Files” on page 9-10

## Kinds of Methods

There are specialized kinds of methods that perform certain functions or behave in particular ways:

- *Ordinary methods* are functions that act on one or more objects and return some new object or some computed value. These methods are like ordinary MATLAB functions

that cannot modify input arguments. Ordinary methods enable classes to implement arithmetic operators and computational functions. These methods require an object of the class on which to operate. See “Ordinary Methods” on page 9-7.

- *Constructor methods* are specialized methods that create objects of the class. A constructor method must have the same name as the class and typically initializes property values with data obtained from input arguments. The class constructor method must return the object it creates. See “Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20
- *Destructor methods* are called automatically when the object is destroyed, for example if you call `delete(object)` or there are no longer any references to the object. See “Handle Class Destructor” on page 7-16
- *Property access methods* enable a class to define code to execute whenever a property value is queried or set. See “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43
- *Static methods* are functions that are associated with a class, but do not necessarily operate on class objects. These methods do not require an instance of the class to be referenced during invocation of the method, but typically perform operations in a way specific to the class. See “Static Methods” on page 9-29
- *Conversion methods* are overloaded constructor methods from other classes that enable your class to convert its own objects to the class of the overloaded constructor. For example, if your class implements a `double` method, then this method is called instead of the double class constructor to convert your class object to a MATLAB double object. See “Object Converters” on page 17-12 for more information.
- *Abstract methods* define a class that cannot be instantiated itself, but serves as a way to define a common interface used by numerous subclasses. Classes that contain abstract methods are often referred to as interfaces. See “Abstract Classes” on page 12-86 for more information and examples.

## Method Naming

The name of a function that implements a method can contain dots (for example, `set.PropertyName`) only if the method is one of the following:

- Property set/get access method (see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43)
- Conversion method that converts to a package-qualified class, which requires the use of the package name (see “Packages Create Namespaces” on page 6-24)

You cannot define property access or conversion methods as local functions, nested functions, or separately in their own files. Class constructors and package-scoped

functions must use the unqualified name in the function definition; do not include the package name in the function definition statement.

## Related Examples

- “Method Attributes” on page 9-5
- “Rules for Naming to Avoid Conflicts” on page 9-33

# Method Attributes

## In this section...

- “Purpose of Method Attributes” on page 9-5
- “Specifying Method Attributes” on page 9-5
- “Table of Method Attributes” on page 9-5

## Purpose of Method Attributes

Specifying attributes in the class definition enables you to customize the behavior of methods for specific purposes. Control characteristics like access, visibility, and implementation by setting method attributes. Subclasses do not inherit superclass member attributes.

## Specifying Method Attributes

Assign method attributes on the same line as the `methods` keyword:

```
methods (Attribute1 = value1, Attribute2 = value2, ...)  
...  
end
```

For more information on attribute syntax, see “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22.

## Table of Method Attributes

Attributes enable you to modify the behavior of methods. All methods support the attributes listed in the following table.

Attribute values apply to all methods defined within the `methods...end` code block that specifies the nondefault values.

## Method Attributes

Attribute Name	Class	Description
Abstract	logical Default = false	If <code>true</code> , the method has no implementation. The method has a syntax line that can include arguments, which subclasses use when implementing the method:

Attribute Name	Class	Description
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enumeration, default = <b>public</b></li> <li><b>meta.class</b> object</li> <li>cell array of <b>meta.class</b> objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subclasses are not required to define the same number of input and output arguments. However, subclasses generally use the same signature when implementing their version of the method.</li> <li>The method can have comments after the <b>function</b> line.</li> <li>The method does not contain <b>function</b> or <b>end</b> keywords, only the function syntax (e.g., <code>[a,b] = myMethod(x,y)</code>)</li> </ul> <p>Determines what code can call this method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>public</b> — Unrestricted access</li> <li><b>protected</b> — Access from methods in class or subclasses</li> <li><b>private</b> — Access by class methods only (not from subclasses)</li> <li>List classes that have access to this method. Specify classes as <b>meta.class</b> objects in the form:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single <b>meta.class</b> object</li> <li>A cell array of <b>meta.class</b> objects. An empty cell array, {}, is the same as <b>private</b> access.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>See “Class Members Access” on page 12-26</p>
Hidden	<b>logical Default = false</b>	When <b>false</b> , the method name shows in the list of methods displayed using the <b>methods</b> or <b>methodsv</b> commands. If set to <b>true</b> , the method name is not included in these listings and <b>ismethod</b> does not return <b>true</b> for this method name. .
Sealed	<b>logical Default = false</b>	If <b>true</b> , the method cannot be redefined in a subclass. Attempting to define a method with the same name in a subclass causes an error.
Static	<b>logical Default = false</b>	Specify as <b>true</b> to define a method that does not depend on an object of the class and does not require an object argument. Use the class name to call the method: <b>classname.methodname</b> or an instance of the class: <b>obj.methodname</b>
		“Static Methods” on page 9-29 provides more information.

# Ordinary Methods

## In this section...

[“Ordinary Methods Operate on Objects” on page 9-7](#)

[“Methods Inside classdef Block” on page 9-7](#)

[“Method Files” on page 9-8](#)

## Ordinary Methods Operate on Objects

Ordinary methods define functions that operate on objects of the class. Therefore, one of the input arguments must be an object or array of objects of the defining class. These methods can compute values based on object data, can overload MATLAB built-in functions, and can call other methods and functions. Ordinary methods can return modified objects.

## Methods Inside classdef Block

This example shows the definition of a method (*methodName*) within the `classdef` and `methods` blocks:

```
classdef ClassName
    methods (AttributeName = value,...)
        function methodName(obj,args)
            % method code
            ...
        end
        ...
    end % end of method block
    ...
end
```

Method attributes apply only to that particular methods block, which is terminated by the `end` statement.

---

**Note:** Nonstatic methods must include an explicit object variable as a function argument. The MATLAB language does not support an implicit reference in the method function definition.

---

### Sample Method

The `addData` method adds a value to the `Data` property of `MyData` objects. The `Data` property has a default value of 0.

```
classdef MyData
properties
    Data = 0
end
methods
    function obj = addData(obj,val)
        newData = obj.Data + val;
        obj.Data = newData;
    end
end
end

a = MyData;
a = addData(a,75)

a =
MyData with properties:

    Data: 75
```

### Calling Methods

Either of the following statements is correct syntax for calling a method, where `obj` is an object of the class defining the `methodName` method:

```
obj.methodName(arg)
methodName(obj,arg)
```

### Method Files

You can define methods:

- Inside the class definition block
- In a separate file in the class folder (that is, `@ClassName` folder)

For more information on class folders, see “Folders Containing Class Definitions” on page 6-16.

## **More About**

- “Methods in Separate Files” on page 9-10
- “Determining Which Method Is Invoked” on page 9-14
- “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49

# Methods in Separate Files

## In this section...

- “Class Folders” on page 9-10
- “Define Method in Function File” on page 9-11
- “Specify Method Attributes in `classdef` File” on page 9-11
- “Methods You Must Define in the `classdef` File” on page 9-12

## Class Folders

You can define class methods in files that are separate from the class definition file, with certain exceptions (see “Methods You Must Define in the `classdef` File” on page 9-12).

To use multiple files for class definitions, put the class files in a folder having a name beginning with the @ character followed by the name of the class (this is called a class folder). Ensure that the parent folder of the class folder is on the MATLAB path.

If the class folder is contained in one or more package folders, then the top-level package folder must be on the MATLAB path.

For example, the folder `@MyClass` must contain the file `MyClass.m` (which contains the `classdef` block) and can contain other methods and function defined in files having a `.m` extension. The folder `@MyClass` can contain a number of files:

```
@MyClass/MyClass.m  
@MyClass/subsref.m  
@MyClass/subsasgn.m  
@MyClass/horzcat.m  
@MyClass/vertcat.m  
@MyClass/myFunc.m
```

---

**Note:** MATLAB treats any `.m` file in the class folder as a method of the class. The base name of the file must be a valid MATLAB function name. Valid function names begin with an alphabetic character, and can contain letters, numbers, or underscores.

---

## Define Method in Function File

To define a method in a separate file in the class folder, create the function in a file with the `.m` extension. Do not use the `method-end` keywords in that file. Name the file with the function name, as with any function.

In the `myFunc.m` file, implement the method:

```
function output = myFunc(obj,arg1,arg2)
    ...% code here
end
```

It is a good practice to declare the function signature in the `classdef` file in a methods block:

```
classdef MyClass
    methods
        output = myFunc(obj,arg1,arg2)
    end
    ...
end
```

## Specify Method Attributes in `classdef` File

If you specify method attributes for a method that you define in a separate function file, include the method signature in a `methods` block in the `classdef` file. This `methods` block specifies the attributes that apply to the method.

For example, the following code shows a method with `Access` set to `private` in the `methods` block. The method implementation resides in a separate file. Do not include the `function` or `end` keywords in the `methods` block. Include only the function signature showing input and output arguments.

```
classdef MyClass
    methods (Access = private)
        output = myFunc(obj,arg1,arg2)
    end
end
```

In a file named `myFunc.m`, in the `@MyClass` folder, define the function:

```
function output = myFunc(obj,arg1,arg2)
    ...
```

```
end
```

### Static Methods in Separate Files

To create a static method, set the method **Static** attribute to **true** and list the function signature in a static methods block in the **classdef** file. Include the input and output arguments with the function name. For example:

```
classdef MyClass
...
    methods (Static)
        output = staticFunc1(arg1,arg2)
        staticFunc2
    end
    ...
end
```

Define the functions in separate files using the same function signature. For example, in the file @MyClass/staticFunc1.m:

```
function output = staticFunc1(arg1,arg2)
    ...
end
```

and in @Myclass/staticFunc2.m:

```
function staticFunc2
    ...
end
```

### Methods You Must Define in the **classdef** File

Define the following methods in the **classdef** file. You cannot define these methods in separate files:

- Class constructor
- Handle class **delete** methods
- All functions that use dots in their names, including:
  - Converter methods that must use the package name as part of the class name because the class is contained in packages
  - Property set and get access methods

### **Related Information**

- “Converters for Package Classes” on page 17-12
- “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43

### **Related Examples**

- “Folders Containing Class Definitions” on page 6-16

## Method Invocation

### In this section...

- “Determining Which Method Is Invoked” on page 9-14
- “Referencing Names with Expressions—Dynamic Reference” on page 9-16
- “Controlling Access to Methods” on page 9-17
- “Invoking Superclass Methods in Subclass Methods” on page 9-18
- “Invoking Built-In Functions” on page 9-19

### Determining Which Method Is Invoked

When MATLAB invokes an ordinary method that has an argument list, it uses the following criteria to determine which method to call

- The class of the leftmost argument whose class is not specified as inferior to any other argument's class is chosen as the dominant class and its method is invoked.
- If this class does not define the named method, then a function with that name on the MATLAB path is invoked.
- If no such function exists, MATLAB issues an error indicating that the dominant class does not define the named method.

### Dominant Argument

The dominant argument in a method's argument list determines which version of the method or function that the MATLAB runtime calls. Dominance is determined by the relative precedences of the classes of the arguments. In general, user-defined classes take precedence over built-in MATLAB classes. Therefore, the leftmost argument determines which method to call. However, user-defined classes can specify the relative dominance of specific classes.

For example, suppose `classA` defines `classB` as inferior and suppose that both classes define a method called `combine`.

Calling the method with an object of `classB` and `classA`:

```
combine(B,A)
```

actually calls the `combine` method of `classA` because `A` is the dominant argument.

## Dot Notation vs. Function Notation

MATLAB classes support both function and dot notation syntax for calling methods. For example, if `setColor` is a method of the class of object `X`, then calling `setColor` with function notation would be:

```
X = setColor(X, 'red');
```

The equivalent method call using dot notation is:

```
X = X.setColor('red')
```

However, in certain cases, the results for dot notation can differ with respect to how MATLAB dispatching works:

- If there is an overloaded `subsref`, it is invoked whenever using dot notation. That is, the statement is first tested to see if it is subscripted assignment.
- If there is no overloaded `subsref`, then `setColor` must be a method of `X`. An ordinary function or a class constructor is never called using this notation.
- Only the argument `X` (to the left of the dot) is used for dispatching. No other arguments, even if dominant, are considered. Therefore dot notation can call only methods of `X`; methods of other argument are never called.

## Case Where Result Is Different

Here is an example of a case where dot and function notation can give different results. Suppose that you have the following classes:

- `classA` defines a method called `methodA` that requires an object of `classB` as one of its arguments
- `classB` defines `classA` as inferior to `classB`

```
classdef classB (InferiorClasses = {?classA})  
...  
end
```

The `methodA` method is defined with two input arguments, one of which is an object of `classB`:

```
classdef classA  
methods  
    function methodA(obj,obj_classB)  
        ...
```

```
    end  
end
```

`classB` does not define a method with the same name as `methodA`. Therefore, the following syntax causes the MATLAB runtime to search the path for a function with the same name as `methodA` because the second argument is an object of a dominant class. If a function with that name exists on the path, then MATLAB attempts to call this function instead of the method of `classA` and most likely returns a syntax error.

```
obj = classA(...);  
methodA(obj,obj_classB)
```

Dot notation is stricter in its behavior. For example, this call to `methodA`:

```
obj = classA(...);  
obj.methodA(obj_classB)
```

can call only `methodA` of the class of `obj`.

## Referencing Names with Expressions—Dynamic Reference

You can reference an object's properties or methods using an expression in dot-parentheses syntax:

```
obj.(expression)
```

The expression must evaluate to a `char` vector that is the name of a property or a method. For example, the following statements are equivalent:

```
obj.Property1  
obj.('Property1')
```

In this case, `obj` is an object of a class that defines a property called `Property1`. Therefore, you can pass a `char` variable in the parentheses to reference to property:

```
propName = 'Property1';  
obj.(propName)
```

You can call a method and pass input arguments to the method using another set of parentheses:

```
obj.(expression)(arg1,arg2,...)
```

Using this notation, you can make dynamic references to properties and methods in the same way you can create dynamic references to the fields of `structs`.

As an example, suppose that an object has methods corresponding to each day of the week. These methods have the same names as the days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, and so on). Also, the methods take as `char` vector input arguments, the current day of the month (the date). Now suppose that you write a function in which you want to call the correct method for the current day.

Use an expression created with the `date` and `datestr` functions:

```
obj.(datestr(date,'dddd'))(datestr(date,'dd'))
```

The expression `datestr(date,'dddd')` returns the current day as a `char` vector. For example:

```
datestr(date,'dddd')
```

```
ans =
```

```
Tuesday
```

The expression `datestr(date,'dd')` returns the current date as a `char` vector. For example:

```
datestr(date,'dd')
```

```
ans =
```

```
11
```

Therefore, the expression using dot-parentheses (called on Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup>) is the equivalent of:

```
obj.Tuesday('11')
```

## Controlling Access to Methods

There can be situations where you want to create methods for internal computation within the class, but do not want to publish these methods as part of the public interface to the class. In these cases, you can use the `Access` attribute to set the access to one of the following options:

- `public` — Any code having access to an object of the class can access this method (the default).

- **private** — Restricts method access to the defining class, excluding subclasses. Subclasses do not inherit private methods.
- **protected** — Restricts method access to the defining class and subclasses derived from the defining class. Subclasses inherit this method.
- Access list — Restricts method access to classes in access list. For more information, see “Class Members Access” on page 12-26

Local and nested functions inside the method files have the same access as the method. Local functions inside a class-definition file have private access to the class defined in the same file.

## Invoking Superclass Methods in Subclass Methods

A subclass can override the implementation of a method defined in a superclass. Sometimes, the subclass method needs to execute some additional code instead of completely replacing the superclass method. MATLAB classes can use a special syntax for invocation of superclass methods from a subclass implementation for the same-named method.

The syntax to call a superclass method in a subclass class uses the @ symbol:

*MethodName@SuperclassName*

For example, the following `disp` method is defined for a `Stock` class that is derived from an `Asset` class. The method first calls the `Asset` class `disp` method, passing the `Stock` object so that the `Asset` components of the `Stock` object can be displayed. After the `Asset disp` method returns, the `Stock disp` method displays the two `Stock` properties:

```
classdef Stock < Asset
    methods
        function disp(s)
            disp@Asset(s) % Call base class disp method first
            fprintf(1,'Number of shares: %g\nShare price: %3.2f\n',...
                s.NumShares,s.SharePrice);
        end % disp
    end
end
```

### Limitations of Use

The following restrictions apply to calling superclass methods. You can use this notation only within:

- A method having the same name as the superclass method you are invoking

- A class that is a subclass of the superclass whose method you are invoking

## **Invoking Built-In Functions**

The MATLAB `builtin` function enables you to call the built-in version of a function that has been overloaded by a method.

## **More About**

- “Object Precedence in Method Invocation” on page 9-45
- “Class Precedence” on page 6-22

# Class Constructor Methods

## In this section...

- “Purpose of Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20
- “Basic Structure of Constructor Methods” on page 9-20
- “Guidelines for Constructors” on page 9-22
- “Related Information” on page 9-22
- “Initializing Objects in Constructor” on page 9-23
- “No Input Argument Constructor Requirement” on page 9-24
- “Subclass Constructors” on page 9-24
- “Errors During Class Construction” on page 9-27
- “Output Object Not Assigned” on page 9-27

## Purpose of Class Constructor Methods

A constructor method is a special function that creates an instance of the class. Typically, constructor methods accept input arguments to assign the data stored in properties and return an initialized object.

All MATLAB classes have a default constructor method. This method returns an object of the class that is created with no input arguments. A class can define a constructor method that overrides the default constructor. An explicitly defined constructor can accept input arguments, initialize property values, call other methods, and perform other operations necessary to create objects of the class.

## Basic Structure of Constructor Methods

Constructor methods can be structured into three basic sections:

- Pre-initialization — Compute arguments for superclass constructors.
- Object initialization — Call superclass constructors.
- Post initialization — Perform any operations related to the subclass, including referencing and assigning to the object, call class methods, passing the object to functions, and so on.

This code illustrates the basic operations performed in each section:

```

classdef ConstructorDesign < BaseClass1
properties
    ComputedValue
end
methods
    function obj = ConstructorDesign(a,b,c)

        %% Pre Initialization %%
        % Any code not using output argument (obj)
        if nargin == 0
            % Provide values for superclass constructor
            % and initialize other inputs
            a = someDefaultValue;
            args{1} = someDefaultValue;
            args{2} = someDefaultValue;
        else
            % When nargin ~= 0, assign to cell array,
            % which is passed to superclass constructor
            args{1} = b;
            args{2} = c;
        end
        compvalue = myClass.staticMethod(a);

        %% Object Initialization %%
        % Call superclass constructor before accessing object
        % You cannot conditionalize this statement
        obj = obj@BaseClass1(args{:});

        %% Post Initialization %%
        % Any code, including access to object
        obj.classMethod(arg);
        obj.ComputedValue = compvalue;
        ...
    end
    ...
end
...

```

Call the constructor like any function, passing arguments and returning an object of the class.

```
obj = ConstructorDesign(a,b,c);
```

## Guidelines for Constructors

- The constructor has the same name as the class.
- The only output argument from a constructor is the object constructed.
- If you do not want to assign the output argument, you can clear the object variable in the constructor (see “Output Object Not Assigned” on page 9-27).
- If you create a class constructor, provide support for no input arguments. See “No Input Argument Constructor Requirement” on page 9-24.
- If your constructor makes an explicit call to a superclass constructor, this call must occur before any other reference to the constructed object and cannot occur after a `return` statement.
- Calls to superclass constructors cannot be conditional. You cannot place superclass construction calls in loops, conditions, switches, try/catch, or nested functions. See “No Conditional Calls to Superclass Constructors” on page 9-25 for more information.
- A class does not need to define a constructor method unless it is a subclass of a superclass whose constructor requires arguments. In this case, you must explicitly call the superclass constructor with the required arguments. See “Subclass Constructors” on page 9-24
- If a class does not define a constructor, MATLAB supplies a constructor that takes no arguments and returns a scalar object whose properties are initialized to empty or the values specified as defaults in the property definitions. The constructor supplied by MATLAB also calls all superclass constructors with no arguments.

## Related Information

For information specific to constructing enumerations, see “Enumeration Class Constructor Calling Sequence” on page 14-8.

For information on creating object arrays in the constructor, see “Construct Object Arrays” on page 10-2.

If the class being created is a subclass, MATLAB calls the constructor of each superclass class to initialize the object. Implicit calls to the superclass constructor are made with no arguments. If superclass constructors require arguments, call them from the subclass constructor explicitly. See “Control Sequence of Constructor Calls” on page 12-14

## Initializing Objects in Constructor

Constructor methods must return an initialized object as the only output argument. The output argument is created when the constructor executes, before executing the first line of code.

For example, the following constructor function can assign the value of the object's property `A` as the first statement because the object `obj` has already been assigned to an instance of `myClass`.

```
function obj = myClass(a,b,c)
    obj.A = a;
    ...
end
```

You can call other class methods from the constructor because the object is already initialized.

The constructor also creates an object whose properties have their default values—either empty ([ ]) or the default value specified in the property definition block.

For example, the following code calls the class method `CalculateValue` to assign the value of the property `Value`.

```
function obj = myClass(a,b,c)
    obj.Value = obj.CalculateValue(a,b);
    ...
end
```

## Referencing the Object in a Constructor

When initializing the object, for example, by assigning values to properties, use the name of the output argument to refer to the object within the constructor. For example, in the following code the output argument is `obj` and the object is reference as `obj`:

```
% obj is the object being constructed
function obj = myClass(arg)
    obj.property1 = arg*10;
    obj.method1;
    ...
end
```

For more information on defining default property values, see “Property Default Values” on page 8-15.

## No Input Argument Constructor Requirement

There are cases where the constructor must be able to be called with no input argument:

- When loading objects into the workspace. If the class `ConstructOnLoad` attribute is set to `true`, the `load` function calls the class constructor with no arguments.
- When creating or expanding an object array such that not all elements are given specific values, the class constructor is called with no arguments to fill in unspecified elements (for example, `x(10,1) = myclass(a,b,c);`). In this case, the constructor is called once with no arguments to populate the empty array elements with copies of this one object.

If there are no input arguments, the constructor creates an object using only default properties values. A good practice is to add a check for zero arguments to the class constructor to prevent an error if either of these two cases occur:

```
function obj = myClass(a,b,c)
    if nargin > 0
        obj.A = a;
        obj.B = b;
        obj.C = c;
        ...
    end
end
```

For ways to handle superclass constructors, see “Basic Structure of Constructor Methods” on page 9-20.

## Subclass Constructors

Subclass constructor functions must explicitly call superclass constructors if the superclass constructors require input arguments. The subclass constructor must specify these arguments in the call to the superclass constructor using the constructor output argument. Here is the syntax:

```
classdef MyClass < SuperClass
    function obj = MyClass(arg)
        obj@SuperClass(SuperArgList);
        ...
    end
end
```

The class constructor must make all calls to superclass constructors before any other references to the object. These changes include assigning property values or calling ordinary class methods. Also, a subclass constructor can call a superclass constructor only once.

### Reference Only Specified Superclasses

If the `classdef` does not specify the class as a superclass, the constructor cannot call a superclass constructor with this syntax.

```
classdef MyClass < SuperClass
```

MATLAB calls any uncalled constructors in the left-to-right order in which they are specified in the `classdef` line. MATLAB passes no arguments to these functions.

### No Conditional Calls to Superclass Constructors

Calls to superclass constructors must be unconditional. There can be only one call for a given superclass. Initialize the superclass portion of the object by calling the superclass constructors before using the object (for example, to assign property values or call class methods).

If you must call superclass constructors with different arguments that depend on some condition, you can build a cell array of arguments and provide one call to the constructor.

For example, the `Cube` class constructor calls the superclass `Shape` constructor using default values when the `Cube` constructor is called with no arguments. If the `Cube` constructor is called with four input arguments, pass `upvector` and `viewangle` to the superclass constructor:

```
classdef Cube < Shape
    properties
        SideLength = 0
        Color = [0 0 0]
    end
    methods
        function cubeObj = Cube(length,color,upvector,viewangle)
            if nargin == 0
                super_args{1} = [0 0 1];
                super_args{2} = 10;
            elseif nargin == 4
                super_args{1} = upvector;
                super_args{2} = viewangle;
```

```
    else
        error('Wrong number of input arguments')
    end
    cubeObj@Shape(super_args{:});
    if nargin > 0 % Use value if provided
        cubeObj.SideLength = length;
        cubeObj.Color = color;
    end
    ...
end
...
end
end
```

### Zero or More Superclass Arguments

If you must support the syntax that calls the superclass constructor with no arguments, provide this syntax explicitly.

Suppose in the case of the `Cube` class example, all property values in the `Shape` superclass and the `Cube` subclass have default values specified in the class definitions. Then you can create an instance of `Cube` without specifying any arguments for the superclass or subclass constructors.

Here is how you can implement this behavior in the `Cube` constructor:

```
methods
    function cubeObj = Cube(length,color,upvector,viewangle)
        if nargin == 0
            super_args = {};
        elseif nargin == 4
            super_args{1} = upvector;
            super_args{2} = viewangle;
        else
            error('Wrong number of input arguments')
        end
        cubeObj@Shape(super_args{:});
        if nargin > 0
            cubeObj.SideLength = length;
            cubeObj.Color = color;
        end
    ...
end
end
```

## More on Subclasses

See “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9 for information on creating subclasses.

## Errors During Class Construction

For handle classes, MATLAB calls the `delete` method when an error occurs under these conditions:

- A reference to the object is present in the code prior to the error.
- An early `return` statement is present in the code before the error.

MATLAB calls the `delete` method on the object, the `delete` methods for any objects contained in properties, and the `delete` methods for any initialized base classes.

Depending on when the error occurs, MATLAB can call the class destructor before the object is fully constructed. Therefore class `delete` methods must be able to operate on partially constructed objects that might not have values for all properties. For more information, see “Support Destruction of Partially Constructed Objects” on page 7-17.

For information on how objects are destroyed, see “Handle Class Destructor” on page 7-16.

## Output Object Not Assigned

You can suppress the assignment of the class instance to the `ans` variable when no output variable is assigned in a call to the constructor. This technique is useful for apps that creates graphical interface windows that hold onto the constructed objects. These apps do not need to return the object.

Use `nargout` to determine if the constructor has been called with an output argument. For example, the class constructor for the `MyApp` class clears the object variable, `obj`, if called with no output assigned:

```
classdef MyApp
methods
    function obj = MyApp
        ...
        if nargout == 0
            clear obj
        end
    end
```

```
    end  
    ...  
end
```

When a class constructor does not return an object, MATLAB does not trigger the `meta.class InstanceCreated` event.

## Related Examples

- “Simplifying the Interface with a Constructor” on page 3-22
- “Subclass Constructor Implementation” on page 12-11

# Static Methods

## In this section...

- “What Are Static Methods” on page 9-29
- “Why Define Static Methods” on page 9-29
- “Defining Static Methods” on page 9-29
- “Calling Static Methods” on page 9-30
- “Inheriting Static Methods” on page 9-30

## What Are Static Methods

Static methods are associated with a class, but not with specific instances of that class. These methods do not require an object of the class as an input argument, unlike ordinary methods which operate on specific objects of the class. You can call static methods without creating an object of the class

## Why Define Static Methods

Static methods are useful when you do not want to create an instance of the class before executing some code. For example, you might want to set up the MATLAB environment or use the static method to calculate data required to create class instances.

Suppose that a class needs a value for pi calculated to particular tolerances. The class could define its own version of the built-in `pi` function for use within the class. This approach maintains the encapsulation of the class's internal workings, but does not require an instance of the class to return a value.

## Defining Static Methods

To define a method as static, set the methods block `Static` attribute to `true`. For example:

```
classdef MyClass
...
methods(Static)
    function p = pi(tol)
        [n d] = rat(pi,tol);
```

```
    p = n/d;
  end
end
end
```

## Calling Static Methods

Invoke static methods using the name of the class followed by dot (.), then the name of the method:

```
classname.staticMethodName(args, ...)
```

Calling the `pi` method of `MyClass` in the previous section would require this statement:

```
value = MyClass.pi(.001);
```

You can also invoke static methods using an instance of the class, like any method:

```
obj = MyClass;
value = obj.pi(.001);
```

## Inheriting Static Methods

Subclasses can redefine static methods unless the method's `Sealed` attribute is also set to `true` in the superclass.

## Related Examples

- “Implementing the `AccountManager` Class” on page 3-15

# Overload Functions in Class Definitions

## In this section...

[“Why Overload Functions” on page 9-31](#)

[“Implementing Overloaded MATLAB Functions” on page 9-31](#)

[“Rules for Naming to Avoid Conflicts” on page 9-33](#)

## Why Overload Functions

Classes can redefine MATLAB functions by implementing methods having the same name. Overloading is useful when defining specialized types that you want to behave like existing MATLAB types. For example, you can implement relational operations, plotting functions, and other commonly used MATLAB functions to work with objects of your class.

You can also modify default behaviors by implementing specific functions that control these behaviors. For more information on functions that modify default behaviors, see “Methods That Modify Default Behavior” on page 17-2.

## Implementing Overloaded MATLAB Functions

Class methods can provide implementations of MATLAB functions that operate only on instances of the class. This restriction is possible because MATLAB can always identify to which class an object belongs.

MATLAB uses the dominant argument to determine which version of a function to call. If the dominant argument is an object, then MATLAB calls the method defined by the object's class, if one exists.

In cases where a class defines a method with the same name as a global function, the class's implementation of the function is said to *overload* the original global implementation.

To overload a MATLAB function:

- Define a method with the same name as the function you want to overload.
- Ensure that the method argument list accepts an object of the class, which MATLAB uses to determine which version to call.

- Perform the necessary steps in the method to implement the function. For example, access the object properties to manipulate data.

Generally, the method that overloads a function produces results similar to the MATLAB function. However, there are no requirements regarding how you implement the overloading method. The overloading method does not need to match the signature of the overloaded function.

---

**Note:** MATLAB does not support overloading functions using different signatures for the same function name.

---

### Overload the `bar` Function

It is convenient to overload commonly used functions to work with objects of your class. For example, suppose that a class defines a property that stores data that you often graph. The `MyData` class overrides the `bar` function and adds a title to the graph:

```
classdef MyData
    properties
        Data
    end
    methods
        function obj = MyData(d)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Data = d;
            end
        end
        function bar(obj)
            y = obj.Data;
            bar(y, 'EdgeColor', 'r');
            title('My Data Graph')
        end
    end
end
```

The `MyData` `bar` method has the same name as the MATLAB `bar` function. However, the `MyData` `bar` method requires a `MyData` object as input. Because the method is specialized for `MyData` objects, it can extract the data from the `Data` property and create a specialized graph.

To use the `bar` method, create an object:

```
y = rand(1,10);  
md = MyData(y);
```

Call the method using the object:

```
bar(md)
```

You can also use dot notation:

```
md.bar
```

### Implementing MATLAB Operators

Classes designed to implement new MATLAB data types typically define certain operators, such as addition, subtraction, or equality.

For example, standard MATLAB addition (+) cannot add two polynomials because this operation is not defined by simple addition. However, a `polynomial` class can define its own `plus` method that the MATLAB language calls to perform addition of `polynomial` objects when you use the + symbol:

```
p1 + p2
```

For information on overloading operators, see “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49.

## Rules for Naming to Avoid Conflicts

The names of methods, properties, and events are scoped to the class. Therefore, adhere to the following rules to avoid naming conflicts:

- You can reuse names that you have used in unrelated classes.
- You can reuse names in subclasses if the member does not have public or protected access. These names then refer to entirely different methods, properties, and events without affecting the superclass definitions
- Within a class, all names exist in the same name space and must be unique. A class cannot define two methods with the same name and a class cannot define a local function with the same name as a method.
- The name of a static method is considered without its class prefix. Thus, a static method name without its class prefix cannot match the name of any other method.

## Related Examples

- “Dominant Argument in Overloaded Graphics Functions” on page 9-47

- “Class Support for Array-Creation Functions” on page 9-35

# Class Support for Array-Creation Functions

## In this section...

[“Extend Array-Creation Functions for Your Class” on page 9-35](#)

[“Which Syntax to Use” on page 9-36](#)

[“Implement Support for Array-Creation Functions” on page 9-37](#)

## Extend Array-Creation Functions for Your Class

There are several MATLAB functions that create arrays of a specific size and type, such as `ones` and `zeros`. User-defined classes can add support for array-creation functions without requiring the use of overloaded method syntax.

Class support for any of the array-creation functions enables you to develop code that you can share with built-in and user-defined data types. For example, the class of the variable `x` in the following code can be a built-in type during initial development, and then be replaced by a user-defined class that transparently overloads `zeros`:

```
cls = class(x);
zArray = zeros(m,n,cls);
```

Array-creation functions create arrays of a specific type in two ways:

- Class name syntax — Specify class name that determines the type of array elements.
- Prototype object syntax — Provide a prototype object that the function uses to determine the type and other characteristics of the array elements.

For example:

```
zArray = zeros(2,3,'uint8');

p = uint8([1 3 5 ; 2 4 6]);
zArray = zeros(2,3,'like',p);
```

After adding support for these functions to a class named `MyClass`, you can use similar syntax with that class:

```
zArray = zeros(2,3,'MyClass');
```

Or pass an object of your class:

```
p = MyClass(...);  
zArray = zeros(size(p),'like',p);
```

MATLAB uses these arguments to dispatch to the appropriate method in your class.

### Array-Creation Functions That Support Overloading

The following functions support this kind of overloading.

Array-Creation Functions
ones
zeros
eye
nan (lowercase)
inf
true
false
cast
rand
randn
randi

## Which Syntax to Use

To create an array of default objects, which require no input arguments for the constructor, then use the class name syntax.

To create an array of objects with specific property values or if the constructor needs other inputs, use the prototype object to provide this information.

Classes can support both the class name and the prototype object syntax.

You can implement a class name syntax with the `true` and `false` functions even though these functions do not support that syntax by default.

## Class Name Method Called If Prototype Method Does Not Exist

If your class implements a class name syntax, but does not implement a prototype object syntax for a particular function, you can still call both syntaxes. For example, if you implement a static `zeros` method only, you can call:

```
zeros(...,'like',MyClass(...))
```

In the case in which you call the prototype object syntax, MATLAB first searches for a method named `zerosLike`. If MATLAB cannot find this method, it calls for the `zeros` static method.

This feature is useful if you only need the class name to create the array. You do not need to implement both methods to support the complete array-creation function syntax. When you implement only the class name syntax, a call to a prototype object syntax is the same as the call to the class name syntax.

## Implement Support for Array-Creation Functions

Use two separate methods to support an array-creation function. One method implements the class name syntax and the other implements the prototype object syntax.

For example, to support the `zeros` function:

- Implement the class name syntax:

```
zeros(...,'ClassName')
```

As a **Static** method:

```
methods (Static)
    function z = zeros(varargin)
        ...
    end
end
```

- Implement the prototype object syntax:

```
zeros(...,'like',obj)
```

As a **Hidden** method with the `char` vector '`Like`' appended to the name.

```
methods (Hidden)
    function z = zerosLike(obj varargin)
        ...
end
```

```
    end  
end
```

### How MATLAB Interprets the Function Call

The special support for array-creation functions results from the interpretation of the syntax.

- A call to the `zeros` function of this form:

```
zeros(..., 'ClassName')
```

Calls the class static method with this syntax:

```
ClassName.zeros(varargin{1:end-1})
```

- A call to the `zeros` function of this form:

```
zeros(..., 'like', obj)
```

Calls the class method with this syntax:

```
zerosLike(obj, varargin{1:end-2})
```

### Support All Function Inputs

The input arguments to an array-creation function can include the dimensions of the array the function returns and possibly other arguments. In general, there are three cases that your methods must support:

- No dimension input arguments resulting in the return of a scalar. For example:

```
z = zeros('MyClass');
```

- One or more dimensions equal to or less than zero, resulting in an empty array. For example:

```
z = zeros(2,0,'MyClass');
```

- Any number of valid array dimensions specifying the size of the array. For example:

```
z = zeros(2,3,5,'MyClass');
```

When the array-creation function calls your class method, it passes the input arguments, excluding the class name or the literal '`'like'`' and the object variable to your method. You can implement your methods with these signatures:

- `zeros(varargin)` for “class name” methods

- `zeros(obj, varargin)` for “like prototype object” methods

### Sample Class

The `Color` class represents a color in a specific color space, such as, `RGB`, `HSV`, and so on. The discussions in “Class Name Method Implementations” on page 9-39 and “Prototype Object Method Implementation” on page 9-41 use this class as a basis for the overloaded method implementations.

```
classdef Color
properties
    ColorValues = [0,0,0]
    ColorSpace = 'RGB'
end
methods
    function obj = Color(cSpace,values)
        if nargin > 0
            obj.ColorSpace = cSpace;
            obj.ColorValues = values;
        end
    end
end
end
```

### Class Name Method Implementations

The `zeros` function strips the final `ClassName` char vector and uses it to form the call to the static method in the `Color` class. The arguments passed to the static method are the array dimension arguments.

Here is an implementation of a `zeros` method for the `Color` class. This implementation:

- Defines the `zeros` method as `Static` (required)
- Returns a scalar `Color` object if the call to `zeros` has no dimension arguments
- Returns an empty array if the call to `zeros` has any dimensions arguments equal to 0.
- Returns an array of default `Color` objects. Use `repmat` to create an array of the dimensions specified by the call to `zeros`.

```
classdef Color
...
methods (Static)
    function z = zeros(varargin)
```

```
if (nargin == 0)
    % For zeros('Color')
    z = Color;
elseif any([varargin{:}] <= 0)
    % For zeros with any dimension <= 0
    z = Color.empty(varargin{:});
else
    % For zeros(m,n,...,'Color')
    % Use property default values
    z = repmat(Color,varargin{:});
end
end
end
```

The `zeros` method uses default values for the `ColorValues` property because these values are appropriate for this application. An implementation of a `ones` method can set the `ColorValues` property to `[1,1,1]`, for example.

Suppose that you want to overload the `randi` function to achieve the following objectives:

- Define each `ColorValue` property as a 1-by-3 array in the range of 1 to a specified maximum value (for example, 1–255).
- Accommodate scalar, empty, and multidimensional array sizes.
- Return an array of `Color` objects of the specified dimensions, each with random `ColorValues`.

```
classdef Color
...
methods (Static)
    function r = randi(varargin)
        if (nargin == 0)
            % For randi('ClassName')
            r = Color('RGB',randi(255,[1,3]));
        elseif any([varargin{2:end}] <= 0)
            % For randi with any dimension <= 0
            r = Color.empty(varargin{2:end});
        else
            % For randi(max,m,n,...,'ClassName')
            if numel(varargin{:}) < 2
                error('Not enough input arguments')
            end
            dims = varargin{2:end};
            r = zeros(dims,'Color');
```

```

        for k = 1:prod(dims)
            r(k) = Color('RGB',randi(varargin{1},[1,3]));
        end
    end
end
end

```

### Prototype Object Method Implementation

The objective of a method that returns an array of objects that are “like a prototype object” depends on the requirements of the class. For the `Color` class, the `zeroLike` method creates objects that have the `ColorSpace` property value of the prototype object, but the `ColorValues` are all zero.

Here is an implementation of a `zerosLike` method for the `Color` class. This implementation:

- Defines the `zerosLike` method as `Hidden`
- Returns a scalar `Color` object if the call to the `zeros` function has no dimension arguments
- Returns an empty array if the call to the `zeros` function has any dimension arguments that are negative or equal to 0.
- Returns an array of `Color` objects of the dimensions specified by the call to the `zeros` function.

```

classdef Color
...
methods (Hidden)
    function z = zerosLike(obj,varargin)
        if nargin == 1
            % For zeros('like',obj)
            cSpace = obj.ColorSpace;
            z = Color;
            z.ColorSpace = cSpace;
        elseif any([varargin{:}] <= 0)
            % For zeros with any dimension <= 0
            z = Color.empty(varargin{:});
        else
            % For zeros(m,n,...,'like',obj)
            if ~isscalar(obj)
                error('Prototype object must be scalar')
            end
        end
    end
end

```

```
        obj = Color(obj.ColorSpace,zeros(1,3,'like',obj.ColorValues));
        z = repmat(obj,varargin{:});
    end
end
end
end
```

### Full Class Listing

Here is the `Color` class definition with the overloaded methods.

---

**Note:** In actual practice, the `Color` class requires error checking, color space conversions, and so on. This overly simplified version illustrates the implementation of the overloaded methods.

---

```
classdef Color
properties
    ColorValues = [0,0,0]
    ColorSpace = 'RGB'
end
methods
    function obj = Color(cSpace,values)
        if nargin > 0
            obj.ColorSpace = cSpace;
            obj.ColorValues = values;
        end
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function z = zeros(varargin)
        if (nargin == 0)
            % For zeros('ClassName')
            z = Color;
        elseif any([varargin{:}] <= 0)
            % For zeros with any dimension <= 0
            z = Color.empty(varargin{:});
        else
            % For zeros(m,n,...,'ClassName')
            % Use property default values
            z = repmat(Color,varargin{:});
        end
    end
end
```

```

function r = randi(varargin)
    if (nargin == 0)
        % For randi('ClassName')
        r = Color('RGB',randi(255,[1,3]));
    elseif any([varargin{2:end}] <= 0)
        % For randi with any dimension <= 0
        r = Color.empty(varargin{2:end});
    else
        % For randi(max,m,n,...,'ClassName')
        if numel(varargin{:}) < 2
            error('Not enough input arguments')
        end
        dims = varargin{2:end};
        r = zeros(dims,'Color');
        for k = 1:prod(dims)
            r(k) = Color('RGB',randi(varargin{1},[1,3]));
        end
    end
end
methods (Hidden)
    function z = zerosLike(obj,varargin)
        if nargin == 1
            % For zeros('like',obj)
            cSpace = obj.ColorSpace;
            z = Color;
            z.ColorSpace = cSpace;
        elseif any(varargin{:}) <= 0
            % For zeros with any dimension <= 0
            z = Color.empty(varargin{:});
        else
            % For zeros(m,n,...,'like',obj)
            if ~isscalar(obj)
                error('Prototype object must be scalar')
            end
            obj = Color(obj.ColorSpace,zeros(1,3,'like',obj.ColorValues));
            z = repmat(obj,varargin{:});
        end
    end
end
end

```

## Related Examples

- “Construct Object Arrays” on page 10-2

# Object Precedence in Method Invocation

## In this section...

[“Object Precedence” on page 9-45](#)

[“Specifying Precedence of User-Defined Classes” on page 9-46](#)

## Object Precedence

Establishing an object precedence enables MATLAB to determine which of possibly many versions of an operator or function to call in a given situation.

For example, consider the expression

*objectA* + *objectB*

Ordinarily, objects have equal precedence and the method associated with the leftmost object is called. However, there are two exceptions:

- User-defined classes have precedence over MATLAB fundamental classes (see “Fundamental MATLAB Classes”) and certain built-in classes.
- User-defined classes can specify their relative precedence with respect to other user-defined classes using the `InferiorClasses` attribute.

In “Class Design for Polynomials” on page 19-2, the `polynom` class defines a `plus` method that enables the addition of `DocPolynom` objects. Given the object `p`:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5])
p =
x^3-2*x-5
```

the expression:

```
1 + p
ans =
x^3-2*x-4
```

calls the `DocPolynom plus` method (which converts the `double`, 1, to a `DocPolynom` object and then implements the addition of two polynomials). The user-defined `DocPolynom` class has precedence over the built-in `double` class.

## Specifying Precedence of User-Defined Classes

You can specify the relative precedence of user-defined classes by listing inferior classes in a class attribute. The `InferiorClasses` property places a class below other classes in the precedence hierarchy. Define the `InferiorClasses` property in the `classdef` statement:

```
classdef (InferiorClasses = {?class1,?class2}) myClass
```

This attribute establishes a relative priority of the class being defined with the order of the classes listed.

### Location in the Hierarchy

If *objectA* is above *objectB* in the precedence hierarchy, then the expression

*objectA* + *objectB*

calls `@classA/plus.m`. Conversely, if *objectB* is above *objectA* in the precedence hierarchy, then the MATLAB runtime calls `@classB/plus.m`.

## More About

- “Dominant Argument in Overloaded Graphics Functions” on page 9-47
- “Class Precedence” on page 6-22

# Dominant Argument in Overloaded Graphics Functions

## In this section...

- “Graphics Object Precedence” on page 9-47
- “Dominant Argument” on page 9-47
- “Defining Class Precedence” on page 9-47
- “Calls to Inferior-Class Methods” on page 9-49

## Graphics Object Precedence

MATLAB graphics objects have the same precedence as user-defined objects. If you want to implement a method that accepts a graphics object as its first argument (for example, an axes handle), define the MATLAB graphics class as inferior to your class.

## Dominant Argument

When evaluating expression involving objects of more than one class, MATLAB uses the dominant argument to determine which method or function to call.

Here is how MATLAB dispatches in response to a function call:

- Determine the dominant argument based on the class of arguments.
- If there is a dominant argument, call the method of the dominant class.
- If arguments are of equal precedence, use the leftmost argument as the dominant argument.
- If the class of the dominant argument does not define a method with the name of the called function, call the first function on the path with that name.

## Defining Class Precedence

Specify the relative precedence of MATLAB classes using the `InferiorClasses` class attribute. Here is the basic syntax:

```
classdef (InferiorClasses = {?class1,?class2}) ClassName
```

The following definition of the `TemperatureData` class implements a specialized version of `plot` to graph temperature data. The class `plot` method supports a variable number of input arguments to allow an axes handle as the first argument:

```
plot(obj)
plot(ax,obj)
```

`obj` is an instance of the `TemperatureData` class and `ax` is an axes handle.

MATLAB calls the `plot` method in both cases because the `TemperatureData` class specifies the `matlab.graphics.axis.Axes` as inferior.

```
classdef (InferiorClasses = {?matlab.graphics.axis.Axes}) TemperatureData
properties
    Time
    Temperature
end
methods
    function obj = TemperatureData(x,y)
        obj.Time = x;
        obj.Temperature = y;
    end
    function plot(varargin)
        if nargin == 1
            obj = varargin{1};
            plot(obj.Time,obj.Temperature)
        elseif nargin == 2
            ax = varargin{1};
            obj = varargin{2};
            plot(ax,obj.Time,obj.Temperature)
        elseif nargin > 2
            ax = varargin{1};
            obj = varargin{2};
            plot(ax,obj.Time,obj.Temperature,varargin{3:end})
        end
        datetick('x')
        xlabel('Time')
        ylabel('Temperature')
    end
end
end
```

The following call to `plot` dispatches to the `TemperatureData` `plot` method, not the built-in `plot` function, because the `TemperatureData` object is dominant over the axes object.

```
x = 1:10;
y = rand(1,10)*100;
```

```
ax = axes;
td = TemperatureData(x,y);
plot(ax,td)
```

## Calls to Inferior-Class Methods

When you declare a class as inferior to your class, and both classes define a method with the same name, MATLAB dispatches to your class method regardless of argument order.

Suppose the `TemperatureData` class that is described in the previous section defines a `set` method. If you attempt to assign an object of the `TemperatureData` class to the `UserData` property of an axes object:

```
td = TemperatureData(x,y);
set(gca, 'UserData', td)
```

The results is a call to the `TemperatureData set` method. MATLAB does not call the built-in `set` function.

To support the use of a `set` function with inferior classes, implement a `set` method in your class that calls the built-in `set` function when the first argument is an object of the inferior class.

```
function set(varargin)
    if isa(varargin{1}, 'matlab.graphics.axis.Axes')
        builtin('set', varargin{:})
    else
        ...
    end
```

## More About

- “Object Precedence in Method Invocation” on page 9-45

# Class Methods for Graphics Callbacks

## In this section...

“Referencing the Method” on page 9-50

“Syntax for Method Callbacks” on page 9-50

“Use a Class Method for a Slider Callback” on page 9-51

## Referencing the Method

To use an ordinary class method as callback for a graphics object, specify the callback property as a function handle referencing the method. For example,

```
uicontrol('Style','slider','Callback',@obj.sliderCallback)
```

Where your class defines a method called *sliderCallback* and *obj* is an instance of your class.

To use a static methods as a callback, specify the callback property as a function handle that includes the class name that is required to refer to a static method:

```
uicontrol('Style','slider','Callback',@MyClass.sliderCallback)
```

## Syntax for Method Callbacks

For ordinary methods, use dot notation to pass an instance of the class defining the callback as the first argument:

```
@obj.methodName
```

Define the callback method with the following input arguments:

- An instance of the defining class as the first argument
- The event source handle
- The event data

The function signature would be of this form:

```
function methodName(obj,src,eventData)
    ...
end
```

For static methods, the required class name ensures MATLAB dispatches to the method of the specified class:

```
@MyClass.methodName
```

Define the static callback method with two input arguments — the event source handle and the event data

The function signature would be of this form:

```
function methodName(src, eventData)
```

### Passing Extra Arguments

If you want to pass arguments to your callback in addition to the source and event data arguments passed by MATLAB, you can use an anonymous function. The basic syntax for an anonymous function that you assign to the graphic object's **Callback** property includes the object as the first argument:

```
@(src, event) callbackMethod(object, src, eventData, arg1, ... argn)
```

The function signature would be of this form:

```
function methodName(obj, src, eventData, varargin)
    ...
end
```

## Use a Class Method for a Slider Callback

This example shows how to use a method of your class as a callback for a uicontrol slider.

The **SeaLevelSlider** class creates a slider that varies the color limits of an indexed image to give the illusion of varying the sea level.

### Class Definition

Define **SeaLevelSlider** as a handle class with the following members:

- The class properties store figure and axes handles and the calculated color limits.
- The class constructor creates the graphics objects and assigns the slider callback.
- The callback function for the slider accepts the three required arguments — a class instance, the handle of the event source, and the event data. The event data argument is empty and not used.

- The uicontrol callback uses dot notation to reference the callback method:  
... 'Callback',@obj.sliderCallback.

```
classdef SeaLevelSlider < handle
properties
    Figure
    Axes
    CLimit
end

methods
    function obj = SeaLevelSlider(x,map)
        obj.Figure = figure('Colormap',map, ...
            'Position',[100,100,560,580], ...
            'Resize','off');
        obj.Axes = axes('DataAspectRatio',[1,1,1], ...
            'XLimMode','manual','YLimMode','manual', ...
            'Parent',obj.Figure);
        image(x,'CDataMapping','scaled', ...
            'Parent',obj.Axes);
        obj.CLimit = get(obj.Axes,'CLim');
        uicontrol('Style','slider',...
            'Parent',obj.Figure, ...
            'Max',obj.CLimit(2)-10, ...
            'Min',obj.CLimit(1)-1, ...
            'Value',obj.CLimit(1), ...
            'Units','normalized', ...
            'Position',[0.9286,0.1724,0.0357,0.6897], ...
            'SliderStep',[0.003,0.005], ...
            'Callback',@obj.sliderCallback);
    end

    function sliderCallback(obj,src,~)
        minValue = get(src,'Value');
        maxValue = obj.CLimit(2);
        obj.Axes.CLim = [minValue maxValue];
    end
end
```

### Using the SeaLevelAdjuster Class

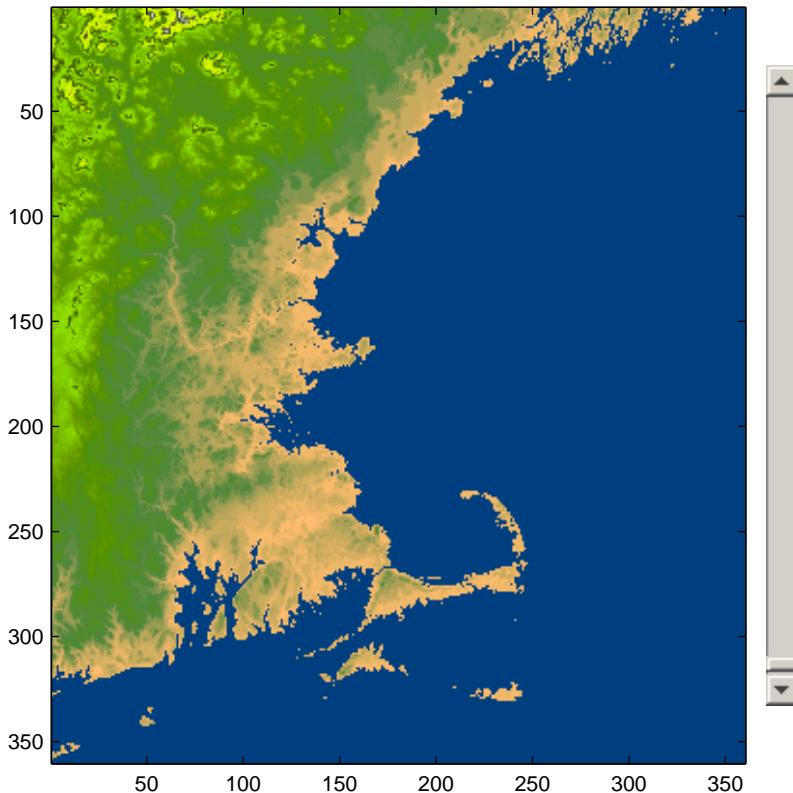
The class uses the `cape` image that is included with the MATLAB product. To obtain the image data, use the `load` command:

```
load cape X map
```

After loading the data, create a `SeaLevelSlider` object for the image:

```
slaObj = SeaLevelSlider(X,map);
```

Move the slider to change the color mapping and visualize a rise in sea level.



## More About

- “Listener Callback Syntax” on page 11-29



# Object Arrays

---

- “Construct Object Arrays” on page 10-2
- “Initialize Object Arrays” on page 10-5
- “Empty Arrays” on page 10-8
- “Initialize Arrays of Handle Objects” on page 10-10
- “Accessing Dynamic Properties in Arrays” on page 10-13
- “Implicit Class Conversion” on page 10-15
- “Concatenating Objects of Different Classes” on page 10-17
- “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23
- “Heterogeneous Array Constructors” on page 10-33

## Construct Object Arrays

### In this section...

[“Build Arrays in the Constructor” on page 10-2](#)

[“Referencing Property Values in Object Arrays” on page 10-3](#)

### Build Arrays in the Constructor

A class constructor can create an array by building the array and returning it as the output argument.

For example, the `ObjectArray` class creates an object array that is the same size as the input array. Then it initializes the `Value` property of each object to the corresponding input array value.

```
classdef ObjectArray
    properties
        Value
    end
    methods
        function obj = ObjectArray(F)
            if nargin ~= 0
                m = size(F,1);
                n = size(F,2);
                obj(m,n) = ObjectArray;
                for i = 1:m
                    for j = 1:n
                        obj(i,j).Value = F(i,j);
                    end
                end
            end
        end
    end
end
```

To preallocate the object array, assign the last element of the array first. MATLAB fills the first to penultimate array elements with default `ObjectArray` objects.

After preallocating the array, assign each object `Value` property to the corresponding value in the input array `F`. To use the class:

- Create 5-by-5 array of magic square numbers
- Create a 5-by-5 object array

```
F = magic(5);
A = ObjectArray(F);
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
A	5x5	304	ObjectArray	
F	5x5	200	double	

## Referencing Property Values in Object Arrays

Given an object array `objArray` in which each object has a property `PropName`:

- Reference the property values of specific objects using array indexing:

```
objArray(ix).PropName
```

- Reference all values of the same property in an object array using dot notation. MATLAB returns a comma-separated list of property values.

```
objArray.PropName
```

- To assign the comma-separated list to a variable, enclose the right-side expression in brackets:

```
values = [objArray.PropName]
```

For example, given the `ObjProp` class:

```
classdef ObjProp
    properties
        RegProp
    end
    methods
        function obj = ObjProp
            obj.RegProp = randi(100);
        end
    end
end
```

Create an array of `ObjProp` objects:

```
for k = 1:5
```

```
    objArray(k) = ObjProp;  
end
```

Access the `RegProp` property of the second element of the object array using array indexing:

```
objArray(2).RegProp
```

```
ans =
```

```
91
```

Assign the values of all `RegProp` properties to a numeric array:

```
propValues = [objArray.RegProp]
```

```
propValues =
```

```
82     91     13     92     64
```

Use standard indexing operations to access the values of the numeric array. For more information on numeric arrays, see “Matrices and Arrays”.

### Related Examples

- “Initialize Object Arrays” on page 10-5
- “Initialize Arrays of Handle Objects” on page 10-10
- “Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20

# Initialize Object Arrays

## In this section...

[“Calls to Constructor” on page 10-5](#)

[“Initial Value of Object Properties” on page 10-6](#)

## Calls to Constructor

During the creation of object arrays, MATLAB can call the class constructor with no arguments, even if the constructor does not build an object array. For example, suppose that you define the following class:

```
classdef SimpleValue
    properties
        Value
    end
    methods
        function obj = SimpleValue(v)
            obj.Value = v;
        end
    end
end
```

Execute the following statement to create an array:

```
a(1,7) = SimpleValue(7)
```

Error using SimpleValue (line 7)  
Not enough input arguments.

This error occurs because MATLAB calls the constructor with no arguments to initialize elements 1 through 6 in the array.

Your class must support the no input argument constructor syntax. A simple solution is to test `nargin` and let the case when `nargin == 0` execute no code, but not error:

```
classdef SimpleValue
    properties
        Value
    end
    methods
        function obj = SimpleValue(v)
```

```
if nargin > 0
    obj.Value = v;
end
end
end
end
```

Using the revised class definition, the previous array assignment statement executes without error:

```
a(1,7) = SimpleValue(7)
a =
1x7 SimpleValue array with properties:
Value
```

The object assigned to array element `a(1,7)` uses the input argument passed to the constructor as the value assigned to the property:

```
a(1,7)
ans =
SimpleValue with properties:
Value: 7
```

MATLAB created the objects contained in elements `a(1,1:6)` with no input argument. The default value for properties empty [ ]. For example:

```
a(1,1)
ans =
SimpleValue with properties:
Value: []
```

MATLAB calls the `SimpleValue` constructor once and copies the returned object to each element of the array.

### Initial Value of Object Properties

When MATLAB calls a constructor with no arguments to initialize an object array, one of the following assignments occurs:

- If property definitions specify default values, MATLAB assigns these values.
- If the constructor assigns values in the absence of input arguments, MATLAB assigns these values.
- If neither of the preceding situations apply, MATLAB assigns the value of empty double (that is, [ ]) to the property.

## Related Examples

- “Initialize Arrays of Handle Objects” on page 10-10

## Empty Arrays

### In this section...

[“Creating Empty Arrays” on page 10-8](#)

[“Assigning Values to an Empty Array” on page 10-8](#)

### Creating Empty Arrays

Empty arrays have no elements, but are of a certain class. All nonabstract classes have a static method named `empty` that creates an empty array of the same class. The `empty` method enables you to specify the dimensions of the output array. However, at least one of the dimensions must be 0. For example, define the `SimpleValue` class:

```
classdef SimpleValue
    properties
        Value
    end
    methods
        function obj = SimpleValue(v)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Value = v;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

Create a 5-by-0 empty array of class `SimpleValue`.

```
ary = SimpleValue.empty(5,0)

ary =
      5x0 SimpleValue array with properties:
```

Value

Calling `empty` with no arguments returns a 0-by-0 empty array.

### Assigning Values to an Empty Array

An empty object defines the class of an array. To assign nonempty objects to an empty array, MATLAB calls the class constructor to create default instances of the class for

every other array element. Once you assign a nonempty object to an array, all array elements must be nonempty objects.

---

**Note:** A class constructor must avoid returning empty objects by default.

---

For example, using the `SimpleValue` defined in the “Initialize Object Arrays” on page 10-5 section, create an empty array:

```
ary = SimpleValue.empty(5,0);  
class(ary)
```

```
ans =
```

```
SimpleValue
```

`ary` is an array of class `SimpleValue`. However, it is an empty array:

```
ary(1)
```

```
Index exceeds matrix dimensions.
```

If you make an assignment to a property value, MATLAB calls the `SimpleClass` constructor to grow the array to the require size:

```
ary(5).Value = 7;  
ary(5).Value
```

```
ans =
```

```
7
```

```
ary(1).Value
```

```
ans =
```

```
[]
```

MATLAB populates array elements one through five with `SimpleValue` objects created by calling the class constructor with no arguments. Then MATLAB assigns the property value 7 to the object at `ary(5)`.

## Related Examples

- “Initialize Arrays of Handle Objects” on page 10-10

## Initialize Arrays of Handle Objects

When initializing an array of handle objects, MATLAB fills in the empty elements of an array with a default object. To create the default object, MATLAB:

- Calls the class constructor once to obtain an object
- Creates unique handles for each element in the array
- Copies the property values from the constructed default object without calling the constructor again.

The `InitHandleArray` class illustrates this behavior.

```
classdef InitHandleArray < handle
    properties
        RandNumb
    end
    methods
        function obj = InitHandleArray
            obj.RandNumb = randi(100);
        end
    end
end
```

The property `RandNumb` contains a random number that the `InitHandleArray` constructor assigns.

Consider what happens when MATLAB initialize an array created by assigning to the last element in the array. (The last element is the one with the highest index values). Suppose the value of the `RandNumb` property of the `InitHandleArray` object assigned to the element `A(4,5)` is 59:

```
A(4,5) = InitHandleArray;
A(4,5).RandNumb
```

```
ans =
```

```
59
```

The element in the index location `A(4,5)` is an instance of the `InitHandleArray` class. The default object used for element `A(1,1)` is also an instance of the `InitHandleArray` class, but its `RandNumb` property is set to a different random number.

To fill in the preceding array elements, MATLAB calls the class constructor to create a single object. MATLAB copies this object to all the remaining array elements. Calling the constructor to create the default object resulted in another call to the `randi` function, which returns a new random number:

```
A(1,1).RandNumb
```

```
ans =
```

```
10
```

MATLAB copies this second instance to all remaining array elements:

```
A(2,2).RandNumb
```

```
ans =
```

```
10
```

```
A(2,3).RandNumb
```

```
ans =
```

```
10
```

When initializing an object array, MATLAB assigns a copy of a single object to the empty elements in the array. MATLAB gives each object a unique handle so that later you can assign different property values to each object. The objects are not equivalent:

```
A(1,1) == A(2,2)
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

That is, the handle `A(1,1)` does not refer to the same object as `A(2,2)`. The creation of an array with a statement such as:

```
A(4,5) = InitHandleArray;
```

results in two calls to the class constructor. The first creates the object for array element `A(4,5)`. The second creates a default object that MATLAB copies to all remaining empty array elements.

## Related Information

See “Indexing Multidimensional Arrays” and “Reshaping Multidimensional Arrays” for information on array manipulation.

See “Initialize Properties to Unique Values” on page 8-16 for information on assigning values to properties.

See “Object Array Indexing” on page 17-15 for information on implementing `subsasgn` methods for your class.

## Accessing Dynamic Properties in Arrays

You cannot reference all the dynamic properties in an object array using a single statement, as you can with ordinary properties. For example, the `ObjectArrayDynamic` class subclasses the `dynamicprops` class.

```
classdef ObjectArrayDynamic < dynamicprops
    properties
        RegProp
    end
    methods
        function obj = ObjectArrayDynamic
            obj.RegProp = randi(100);
        end
    end
end
```

You can add dynamic properties to objects of the `ObjectArrayDynamic` class. Create an object array and add dynamic properties to each member of the array. Define elements 1 and 2 as `ObjectArrayDynamic` objects:

```
a(1) = ObjectArrayDynamic;
a(2) = ObjectArrayDynamic;
```

Add dynamic properties to each object and assign a value.

```
a(1).addprop('DynoProp');
a(1).DynoProp = 1;
a(2).addprop('DynoProp');
a(2).DynoProp = 2;
```

Get the values of the ordinary properties, as with any array.

```
a.RegProp
ans =
4
ans =
85
```

However, MATLAB returns an error if you try to access the dynamic properties of all array elements using this syntax.

```
a.DynoProp
```

```
No appropriate method, property, or field 'DynoProp' for class  
'ObjectArrayDynamic'.
```

Refer to each object individually to access dynamic property values:

```
a(1).DynoProp
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

```
a(2).DynoProp
```

```
ans =
```

```
2
```

For information about classes that can define dynamic properties, see “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61 .

# Implicit Class Conversion

## In this section...

[“Class Conversion Mechanism” on page 10-15](#)

[“Concatenation” on page 10-15](#)

[“Subscripted Assignment” on page 10-16](#)

## Class Conversion Mechanism

When you create or modify object arrays using concatenation or subscripted assignment, MATLAB attempts to convert unlike types to conform to the class of the array.

To perform the conversion, MATLAB attempts to call a converter method defined by the class to be converted. A converter method has the same name as the destination class. For example, if a class defines a method named `double`, this method converts an object of the class to an object of class `double`.

If no converter exists, MATLAB passes the object to be converted to the constructor of the destination class.

Both concatenation and subscripted assignment can cause MATLAB to apply this class conversion mechanism. The conversion can be successful or can result in an error if the conversion is not possible.

## Concatenation

In concatenation operations, the dominant object determines the class of the resulting array. MATLAB determines the dominant object as follows:

- User-defined classes are dominant over built-in classes like `double`.
- If there is no defined dominance relationship between any two objects, then the left-most object dominates

For example, in the statement `C = [A, B]`, if `A` is the dominant object, MATLAB attempts to convert `B` to the class of `A`.

## Subscripted Assignment

In subscripted assignment, the left side of the assignment statement defines the class of the array. If you assign array elements when the right side is a different class than the left side, MATLAB attempts to convert to the class of the left side.

For example, assigning an object of `ClassB` to an element of array `A` requires conversion.

```
A = ClassA;  
B = ClassB;  
A(2) = B;
```

MATLAB first looks for a converter method defined by the class of the source object `B`. This converter method must have the name `ClassA`. The subscripted assignment is effectively a call to the converter defined by `ClassB`:

```
A(2) = B.ClassA % Call method of ClassB
```

If no converter method exists, MATLAB passes the source object to the destination class constructor:

```
A(2) = ClassA(B) % Call ClassA constructor
```

## Related Examples

- “Valid Combinations of Unlike Classes”
- “Concatenating Objects of Different Classes” on page 10-17
- “Object Converters” on page 17-12

# Concatenating Objects of Different Classes

## In this section...

- “Basic Knowledge” on page 10-17
- “MATLAB Concatenation Rules” on page 10-17
- “Concatenating Objects” on page 10-18
- “Calling the Dominant-Class Constructor” on page 10-18
- “Converter Methods” on page 10-20

## Basic Knowledge

The material presented in this section builds on an understanding of the information presented in the following sections.

- “Construct Object Arrays” on page 10-2
- “Valid Combinations of Unlike Classes”

## MATLAB Concatenation Rules

MATLAB follows these rules for concatenating objects:

- MATLAB always attempts to convert all objects to the dominant class.
- User-defined classes take precedence over built-in classes like `double`.
- If there is no defined dominance relationship between any two objects, then the left-most object dominates (see “Class Precedence” on page 6-22).

When converting to a dominant class during concatenation or subscripted assignment, MATLAB searches the non-dominant class for a conversion method that is the same name as the dominant class. If such a conversion method exists, MATLAB calls it. If a conversion method does not exist, MATLAB calls the dominant class constructor on the non-dominant object.

It is possible for the dominant class to define `horzcat`, `vertcat`, or `cat` methods that modify the default concatenation process.

**Note:** MATLAB does not convert objects to a common superclass unless those objects are part of a heterogeneous hierarchy. For more information, see “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23.

---

## Concatenating Objects

Concatenation combines objects into arrays:

```
ary = [obj1,obj2,obj3,...,objn];
```

The size of `ary` is 1-by-n.

```
ary = [obj1;obj2;obj3;...;objn];
```

The size of `ary` is n-by-1.

The class of the arrays is the same as the class of the objects being concatenated. Concatenating objects of different classes is possible if MATLAB can convert objects to the dominant class. MATLAB attempts to convert unlike objects by:

- Calling the inferior object converter method, if one exists.
- Passing an inferior object to the dominant class constructor to create an object of the dominant class.

If conversion of the inferior object is successful, MATLAB returns an array that is of the dominant class. If conversion is not possible, MATLAB returns an error.

## Calling the Dominant-Class Constructor

MATLAB calls the dominant class constructor to convert an object of an inferior class to the dominant class. MATLAB passes the inferior object to the constructor as an argument. If the class design enables the dominant class constructor to accept objects of inferior classes as input arguments, then concatenation is possible without implementing a separate converter method.

If the constructor simply assigns this argument to a property, the result is an object of the dominant class with an object of an inferior class stored in a property. If this assignment is not a desired result, then ensure that class constructors include adequate error checking.

For example, consider the class `ColorClass` and two subclasses, `RGBColor` and `HSVColor`:

```
classdef ColorClass
    properties
        Color
    end
end
```

The class `RGBColor` inherits the `Color` property from `ColorClass`. `RGBColor` stores a color value defined as a three-element vector of red, green, and blue (RGB) values. The constructor does not restrict the value of the input argument. It assigns this value directly to the `Color` property.

```
classdef RGBColor < ColorClass
    methods
        function obj = RGBColor(rgb)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Color = rgb;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

The class `HSVColor` also inherits the `Color` property from `ColorClass`. `HSVColor` stores a color value defined as a three-element vector of hue, saturation, brightness value (HSV) values.

```
classdef HSVColor < ColorClass
    methods
        function obj = HSVColor(hsv)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Color = hsv;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

Create an instance of each class and concatenate them into an array. The `RGBColor` object is dominant because it is the leftmost object and neither class defines a dominance relationship:

```
crgb = RGBColor([1 0 0]);
chsv = HSVColor([0 1 1]);
```

```
ary = [crgb, chsv];
class(ary)

ans =

RGBColor
```

You can combine these objects into an array because MATLAB can pass the inferior object of class `HSVColor` to the constructor of the dominant class. However, notice that the `Color` property of the second `RGBColor` object in the array actually contains an `HSVColor` object, not an RGB color specification:

```
ary(2).Color

ans =

HSVColor with properties:

    Color: [0 1 1]
```

Avoid this undesirable behavior by:

- Implementing converter methods
- Performing argument checking in class constructors before assigning values to properties

## Converter Methods

If your class design requires object conversion, implement converter methods for this purpose.

The `ColorClass` class defines converter methods for `RGBColor` and `HSVColor` objects:

```
classdef ColorClass
    properties
        Color
    end
    methods
        function rgbObj = RGBColor(obj)
            if isa(obj, 'HSVColor')
                rgbObj = RGBColor(hsv2rgb(obj.Color));
            end
        end
    end
```

```
function hsvObj = HSVColor(obj)
    if isa(obj,'RGBColor')
        hsvObj = HSVColor(rgb2hsv(obj.Color));
    end
end
end
```

Create an array of `RGBColor` and `HSVColor` objects with the revised superclass:

```
crgb = RGBColor([1 0 0]);
chsv = HSVColor([0 1 1]);
ary = [crgb,chsv];
class(ary)

ans =
RGBColor
```

MATLAB calls the converter method for the `HSVColor` object, which it inherits from the superclass. The second array element is now an `RGBColor` object with an RGB color specification assigned to the `Color` property:

```
ary(2)

ans =
RGBColor with properties:

    Color: [1 0 0]

ary(2).Color

ans =
1     0     0
```

If the leftmost object is of class `HSVColor`, the array `ary` is also of class `HSVColor`, and MATLAB converts the `Color` property data to HSV color specification.

```
ary = [chsv crgb]

ary =
1x2 HSVColor
```

```
Properties:  
    Color  
  
ary(2).Color  
  
ans =  
  
0     1     1
```

Defining a converter method in the superclass and adding better argument checking in the subclass constructors produces more predictable results. Here is the `RGBColor` class constructor with argument checking:

```
classdef RGBColor < ColorClass  
methods  
    function obj = RGBColor(rgb)  
        if nargin == 0  
            rgb = [0 0 0];  
        else  
            if ~isa(rgb,'double')...  
                && size(rgb,2) == 3 ...  
                && max(rgb) <= 1 && min(rgb) >= 0  
            error('Specify color as RGB values')  
        end  
    end  
    obj.Color = rgb;  
end  
end
```

Your applications can require additional error checking and other coding techniques. The classes in these examples are designed only to demonstrate concepts.

## More About

- “Implicit Class Conversion” on page 10-15
- “Object Converters” on page 17-12
- “Hierarchies of Classes — Concepts” on page 12-2

# Heterogeneous Arrays

## In this section...

- “MATLAB Arrays” on page 10-23
- “Heterogeneous Hierarchies” on page 10-23
- “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-24
- “Heterogeneous Array Concepts” on page 10-25
- “Nature of Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-25
- “Unsupported Hierarchies” on page 10-28
- “Default Object” on page 10-30
- “Conversion During Assignment and Concatenation” on page 10-31
- “Empty Arrays of Heterogeneous Abstract Classes” on page 10-31

## MATLAB Arrays

MATLAB determines the class of an array by the class of the objects contained in the array. MATLAB is unlike some languages in which you define an array of object pointers or references. In these other languages, the type of the array is different from the type of an object in the array. You can access the elements of the array and dispatch to methods on those elements, but you cannot call an object method on the whole array, as you can in MATLAB.

Object arrays in MATLAB are typically homogeneous in class. Because of this homogeneity, you can perform operations on whole arrays, such as multiplying numeric matrices. You can form heterogeneous array by defining a hierarchy of classes that derive from a common superclass. Cell arrays provide option for an array type that can hold different kinds of unrelated objects.

For an example of a heterogeneous class hierarchy, see “Using Heterogeneous Class Hierarchies” on page 20-2.

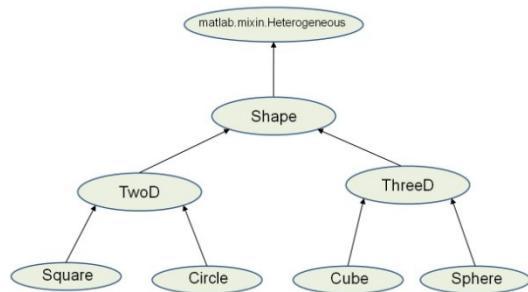
## Heterogeneous Hierarchies

You can form arrays of objects that are subclasses of a common superclass when these classes are part of a heterogeneous hierarchy. A MATLAB heterogeneous class hierarchy:

- Derives from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`

- Defines a single root superclass that derives directly from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`
- Seals methods that are inherited by subclasses.

For example, in the following diagram, `Shape` is the root of the heterogeneous hierarchy.



## Heterogeneous Arrays

A heterogeneous array is an array of objects that differ in their specific class, but all objects derive from or are instances of a common superclass. The common superclass forms the root of the hierarchy of classes that you can combine into heterogeneous arrays.

The common superclass class must derive from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`. Methods that you can call on the array as a whole must have the same definitions for all subclasses.

Heterogeneous hierarchies are useful to:

- Create arrays of objects that are of different classes, but part of a related hierarchy.
- Call methods of the most specific common superclass on the array as a whole
- Access properties of the most specific common superclass using dot notation with the array
- Use common operators that are supported for object arrays
- Support array indexing (scalar or nonscalar) that returns arrays of the most specific class

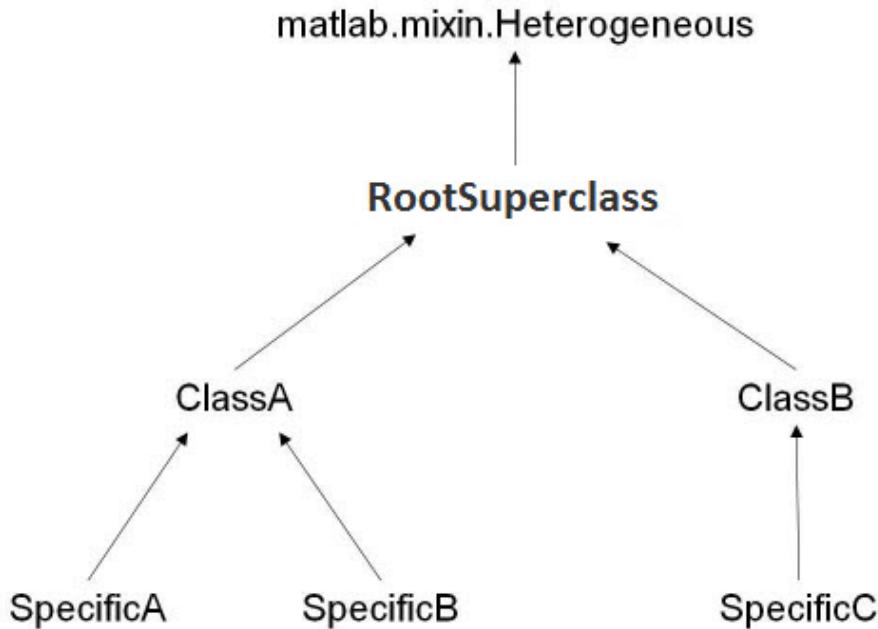
## Heterogeneous Array Concepts

- Heterogeneous array — An array in which two or more elements belong to different specific classes. All elements derive from the same root superclass.
- Root superclass — Class derived directly from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`. The root superclass can be abstract or concrete. Only concrete subclasses of the root superclass can form heterogeneous arrays.
- Most specific common superclass — The most specific class in the inheritance hierarchy from which all the objects in a heterogeneous array derive. The most specific common superclass can be the root superclass or a more specific superclass shared by the objects currently in the array.
- Class of a heterogeneous array — The most specific common superclass from which all objects in the heterogeneous array derive. Adding and removing objects from a heterogeneous array can change the most specific superclass shared by the instances. This change results in a change in the class of a heterogeneous array. The most specific common superclass can be abstract.

## Nature of Heterogeneous Arrays

The heterogeneous hierarchy in this diagram illustrates the characteristics of heterogeneous arrays concerning:

- Array class
- Property access
- Method invocation



### Class of Heterogeneous Arrays

The class of a heterogeneous array is that of the most specific superclass shared by the objects of the array.

If the following conditions are true, the concatenation and subscripted assignment operations return a heterogeneous array:

- The objects on the right side of the assignment statement are of different classes
- All objects on the right side of the assignment statement derive from a common subclass of `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`

For example, form an array by concatenating objects of these classes. The class of `a1` is `ClassA`:

```
a1 = [SpecificA, SpecificB];
```

```
class(a1)
```

```
ans =
```

```
ClassA
```

If the array includes an object of the class **SpecificC**, the class of **a2** is **RootSuperclass**:

```
a2 = [SpecificA,SpecificB,SpecificC];  
class(a2)
```

```
ans =
```

```
RootSuperclass
```

If you assigned an object of the class **SpecificC** to array **a1** using indexing, the class of **a1** becomes **RootSuperclass**:

```
a1(3) = SpecificC;  
class(a1)
```

```
ans =
```

```
RootSuperclass
```

If the array contains objects of only one class, then the array is not heterogeneous. For example, the class of **a** is **SpecificA**.

```
a = [SpecificA,SpecificA];  
class(a)
```

```
ans =
```

```
SpecificA
```

## Property Access

Access array properties with dot notation when the class of the array defines the properties. The class of the array is the most specific common superclass, which ensures all objects inherit the same properties.

For example, suppose **ClassA** defines a property called **Prop1**.

```
a1 = [SpecificA,SpecificB];
a1.Prop1
```

Referring to `Prop1` using dot notation returns the value of `Prop1` for each object in the array.

### Method Invocation

To invoke a method on a heterogeneous array, the class of the array must define or inherit the method as `Sealed`. For example, suppose `RootSuperclass` defines a `Sealed` method called `superMethod`.

Call the method on all objects in the array `a2`:

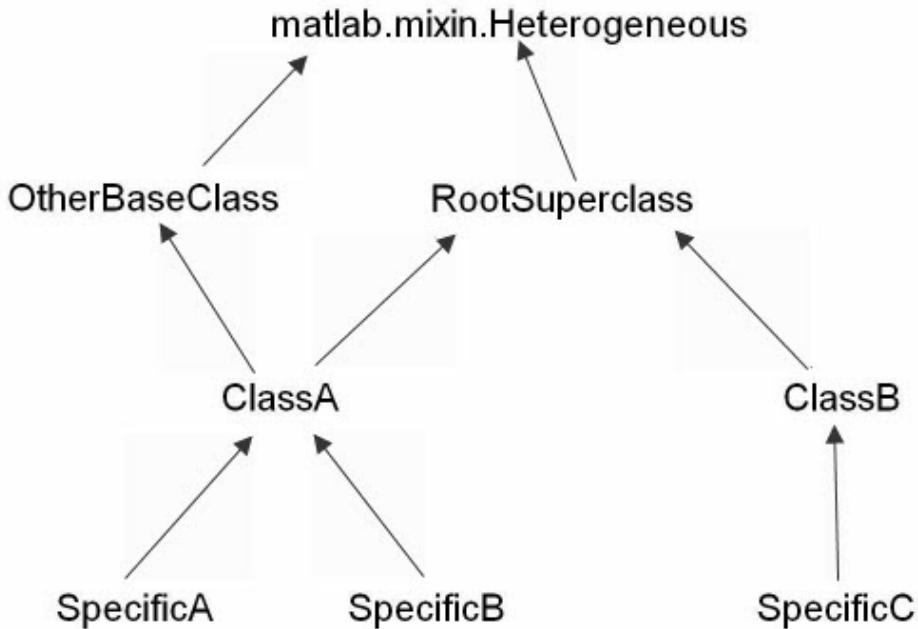
```
a2 = [SpecificA,SpecificB,SpecificC];
a2.superMethod
```

Sealing the method (so that it cannot be overridden in a subclass) ensures that the same method definition exists for all elements of the array. Calling that method on a single element of the array invokes the same method implementation as calling the method on the whole array.

## Unsupported Hierarchies

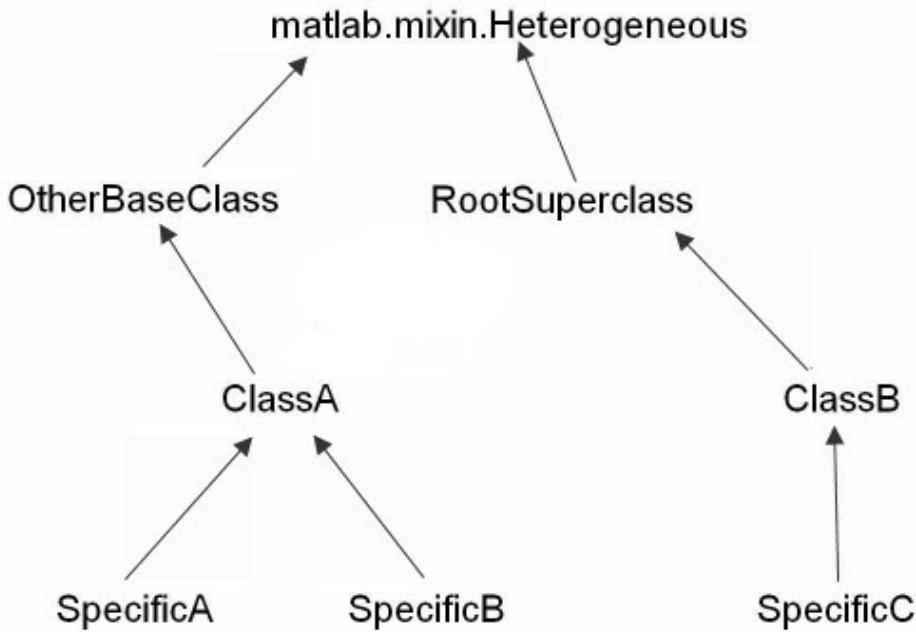
Heterogeneous hierarchies cannot have ambiguities when obtaining default objects, determining the class of the array, and converting class objects to other types. Members of the hierarchy can derive from only one root superclass (that is, from only one direct subclass of `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`).

This diagram shows a hierarchy that is not allowed:



`ClassA` derives from two classes that are subclasses of `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`.

The next diagram shows two separate heterogeneous hierarchies. `ClassA` has only one root superclass (called `OtherBaseClass`). The heterogeneous hierarchy is no longer ambiguous:



## Default Object

A default object is the object returned by calling the class constructor with no arguments. MATLAB uses default objects in these situations:

- Indexed assignment creates an array with gaps in array elements. For example, assign the first element of array `h` to index 5:

```
h(5) = ClassA(arg1,arg2);
```

MATLAB fills the unassigned positions with default objects.

- Loading a heterogeneous array from a MAT-file when the class definition of a specific object in the array is not available. MATLAB replaces the object with the default object.

Heterogeneous hierarchies enable you to define the default object for that hierarchy. The `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous` class provides a default implementation of a method called `getDefaultScalarElement`. This method returns an instance of the root class of the heterogeneous hierarchy, unless the root superclass is abstract.

If the root superclass is abstract or is not appropriate for a default object, override the `getDefaultScalarElement` method. Implement the `getDefaultScalarElement` override in the root superclass, which derives directly from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`.

`getDefaultScalarElement` must return a scalar object that is derived from the root superclass. For specific information on how to implement this method, see `getDefaultScalarElement`.

## Conversion During Assignment and Concatenation

If you create a heterogeneous array that contains objects that are not derived from the same root superclass, MATLAB attempts to call a method called `convertObject`. Implement `convertObject` to convert objects to the appropriate class. There is no default implementation of this method.

To support the formation of heterogeneous arrays using objects that are not part of the heterogeneous hierarchy, implement a `convertObject` method in the root superclass. The `convertObject` method must convert the nonmember object to a valid member of the heterogeneous hierarchy.

For details on implementing the `convertObject` method, see `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`.

## Empty Arrays of Heterogeneous Abstract Classes

For homogeneous arrays, MATLAB does not allow you to initialize an empty array of an abstract class. However, if the class is part of a heterogeneous hierarchy, you can initialize empty arrays of an abstract class. Initializing an empty heterogeneous array is useful in cases in which you do not know the class of the concrete elements in advance.

For example, suppose `RootSuperclass` is an abstract class that is the root of a heterogeneous hierarchy. Initialize an array using the `empty` static method:

```
ary = RootSuperclass.empty;
```

## Related Examples

- “Using Heterogeneous Class Hierarchies” on page 20-2
- “Handle-Compatible Classes and Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 12-46

# Heterogeneous Array Constructors

## In this section...

- “Building Arrays in Superclass Constructors” on page 10-33
- “When Errors Can Occur” on page 10-33
- “Initialize Array in Superclass Constructor” on page 10-34
- “Sample Implementation” on page 10-35
- “Potential Error” on page 10-37

## Building Arrays in Superclass Constructors

When a subclass in a heterogeneous class hierarchy calls its superclass to construct an array of objects, you must ensure that the superclass constructor does not return a heterogeneous array to the subclass. The following programming patterns show how to avoid the errors caused by returning the wrong class to the subclass constructor.

## When Errors Can Occur

Constructors must return objects that are the same class as the defining class. When working with objects from a heterogeneous class hierarchy, the class of an object array can change as you add array elements of different classes. As a result, heterogeneous superclass constructors can change the class of object arrays when the class design requires all the following techniques:

- Building object arrays in subclass constructors
- Calling superclass constructors from subclass constructors to pass arguments
- Creating object arrays in the superclass constructor

In addition, either of the following is true:

- The root superclass is not abstract and does not implement a `getDefaultScalarElement` method.
- The root superclass implements a `getDefaultScalarElement` method that returns an object that is not the same class as the subclass.

When assigning to object arrays, MATLAB uses the default object to fill in unassigned array elements. In a heterogeneous hierarchy, the default object can be the superclass

that is called by the subclass constructor. Therefore, building an array in the superclass constructor can create a heterogeneous array.

If a superclass constructor returns a heterogeneous array to the subclass constructor, MATLAB generates an error (see “Potential Error” on page 10-37).

## Initialize Array in Superclass Constructor

To avoid errors, initialize the object array explicitly in the superclass constructor. For example, use `repelem` in the superclass constructor to initialize the array before initializing the superclass part of the objects. Initializing the array ensures that all elements assigned into the array are of the same class as the `obj` argument.

In this code, the superclass constructor creates one object for each element in the input argument, `arg`:

```
method
    function obj = SuperClass(arg)
        ...
        n = numel(arg);
        obj = repelem(obj,1,n);
        for k = 1:n
            obj(k).SuperProp = arg(k);
        end
        ...
    end
end
```

The subclass constructor calls the superclass constructor to pass the required argument array, `a`:

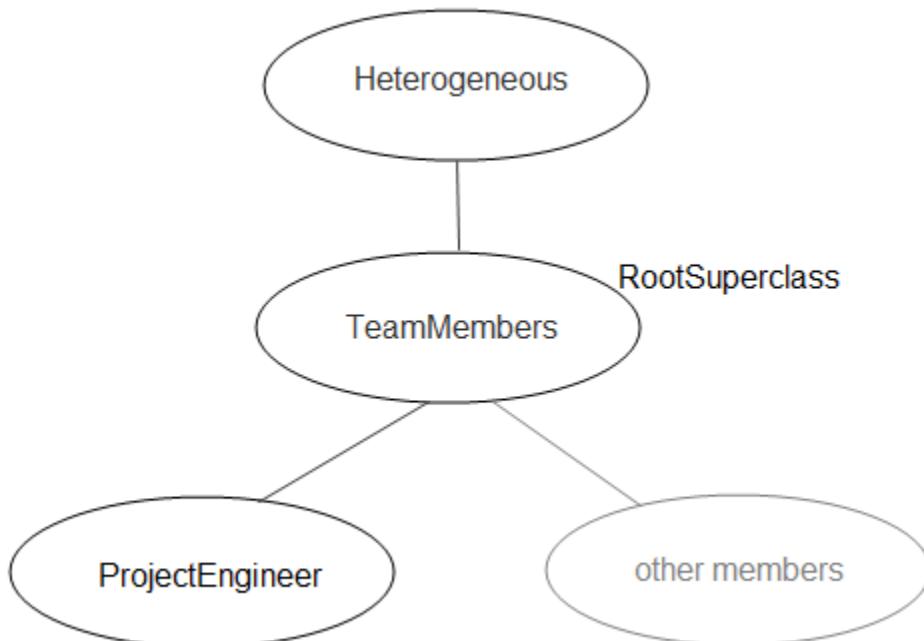
```
method
    function obj = SubClass(a)
        obj = obj@SuperClass(a);
        for k = 1:numel(a)
            obj(k).SubProp = a(k);
        end
    end
end
```

## Sample Implementation

The following class hierarchy defines a subclass that builds object arrays in its constructor. The root superclass of the hierarchy initializes the superclass part of the objects in the array.

This class hierarchy represents members of an engineering team. The classes in the hierarchy include:

- **TeamMembers** — Superclass for specific team member classes, like `ProjectEngineer`. **TeamMembers** defines the `Name` and `PhoneX` properties and derives from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`.
- **ProjectEngineer** — Team members that are engineers. Each instance inherits a `Name` and `PhoneX` property and defines a billing `Rate` property.
- Other members — Other types of team members not implemented for this example for simplicity.



The `TeamMembers` class is the root of the heterogeneous hierarchy and is a concrete class. Before assigning values to the `Name` and `PhoneX` properties, the constructor initializes an array of subclass (`ProjectEngineer`) objects.

The `ProjectEngineer` constructor provides the `obj` argument for the call to `repelem` with this statement:

```
obj = obj@TeamMembers(varargin{1:2});
```

Here is the `TeamMembers` class:

```
classdef TeamMembers < matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous
properties
    Name
    PhoneX
end
methods
    function obj = TeamMembers(nme,ext)
        if nargin > 0
            n = numel(nme);
            obj = repelem(obj,1,n);
            for k = 1:n
                obj(k).Name = nme{k};
                obj(k).PhoneX = ext(k);
            end
        else
            obj.Name = '';
        end
    end
end
end
```

The `ProjectEngineer` class represents one type of team member. This class supports array inputs and returns an array of objects.

```
classdef ProjectEngineer < TeamMembers
    % Inputs: {Name}, [PhoneX], {Rate}
properties
    Rate
end
methods
    function obj = ProjectEngineer(varargin)
        obj = obj@TeamMembers(varargin{1:2});
        for k = 1:numel(varargin{1})
```

```

        obj(k).Rate = varargin{3}{k};
    end
end
end
end

```

The `ProjectEngineer` class requires a cell array of names, a numeric array of phone extensions, and a cell array of billing rates for each engineer in the team.

```

nm = {'Fred', 'Nancy', 'Claudette'};
px = [8112,8113,8114];
rt = {'C2','B1','A2'};
tm = ProjectEngineer(nm,px,rt)

tm =
1x3 ProjectEngineer array with properties:

    Rate
    Name
    PhoneX

```

## Potential Error

The `TeamMembers` constructor initializes the object array with this statement:

```
obj = repelem(obj,1,n);
```

Because the `obj` argument to `repelem` is a `ProjectEngineer` object, the array returned is of the same class.

Without this statement, the `TeamMembers` constructor would create default objects to fill in array elements in the `for` loop. The resulting heterogeneous array would be of the class of the common superclass (`TeamMembers` in this case). If the superclass returns this heterogeneous array to the subclass constructor, it is a violation of the rule that class constructors must preserve the class of the returned object.

MATLAB issues this error:

```
When constructing an instance of class 'ProjectEngineer', the constructor must
preserve the class of the returned object.
```

```
Error in ProjectEngineer (line 8)
```

```
obj = obj@TeamMembers(varargin{1:2});
```

### More About

- “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23

# Events — Sending and Responding to Messages

---

- “Overview Events and Listeners” on page 11-2
- “Define Custom Event Data” on page 11-6
- “Observe Changes to Property Values” on page 11-9
- “Implement Property Set Listener” on page 11-11
- “Event and Listener Concepts” on page 11-14
- “Event Attributes” on page 11-19
- “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21
- “Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27
- “Listener Callback Syntax” on page 11-29
- “Callback Execution” on page 11-32
- “Determine If Event Has Listeners” on page 11-34
- “Listen for Changes to Property Values” on page 11-37
- “Assignment When Property Value Unchanged” on page 11-41
- “Techniques for Using Events and Listeners” on page 11-45

## Overview Events and Listeners

### In this section...

- “Why Use Events and Listeners” on page 11-2
- “Events and Listeners Basics” on page 11-2
- “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-3
- “Create Listener” on page 11-4

## Why Use Events and Listeners

Events are notices that objects broadcast in response to something that happens, such as a property value changing or a user interaction with an application program. Listeners execute functions when notified that the event of interest occurs. Use events to communicate changes to objects. Listeners respond by executing the callback function.

For more information, see “Event and Listener Concepts” on page 11-14.

## Events and Listeners Basics

When using events and listeners:

- Only handle classes can define events and listeners.
- Define event names in the `events` block of a class definition (“Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21).
- Use event attributes to specify access to the event (“Event Attributes” on page 11-19).
- Call the handle `notify` method to trigger the event. The event notification broadcasts the named event to all listeners registered for this event.
- Use the handle `addlistener` method to couple a listener to the event source object. MATLAB destroys the listener when the source of the event is destroyed.
- Use the `event.listener` and `event.proplistener` class constructors to create listeners that are not coupled to the lifecycle of the event source object. This approach is useful when the event source and the listeners are defined in different components that you want to be able to add, remove, or modify independently. Your application code controls the listener object lifecycle.

- Listener callback functions must define at least two input arguments — the event source object handle and the event data (See “Listener Callback Syntax” on page 11-29 for more information).
- Modify the data passed to each listener callback by subclassing the `event.EventData` class.

### Predefined Events

MATLAB Defines events for listening to property sets and queries. For more information, see “Listen for Changes to Property Values” on page 11-37.

All handle objects define an event named `ObjectBeingDestroyed`. MATLAB triggers this event before calling the class destructor.

## Events and Listeners Syntax

Define an event name in the `events` code block:

```
classdef ClassName < handle
    ...
    events
        EventName
    end
    ...
end
```

For example, `MyClass` defines an event named `StateChange`:

```
classdef MyClass < handle
    events
        StateChange
    end
end
```

Trigger an event using the handle class `notify` method:

```
classdef ClassName < handle
    ...
    events
        EventName
    end
    ...
    methods
```

```
function anyMethod(obj)
    ...
    notify(obj,'EventName');
end
end
end
```

Any function or method can trigger the event for a specific instance of the class defining the event. For example, the `triggerEvent` method calls `notify` to trigger the `StateChange` event:

```
classdef MyClass < handle
events
    StateChange
end
methods
    function triggerEvent(obj)
        notify(obj,'StateChange')
    end
end
end
```

Trigger the `StateChange` event with the `triggerEvent` method:

```
obj = MyClass;
obj.triggerEvent
```

## Create Listener

Define a listener using the `handle` class `addlistener` method. Pass a function handle for the listener callback function using one of these syntaxes:

- `addlistener(eventObject,'EventName',@functionName)` — for an ordinary function.
- `addlistener(eventObject,'EventName',@Obj.methodName)` — for a method of `Obj`.
- `addlistener(eventObject,'EventName',@ClassName.methodName)` — for a static method of the class `ClassName`.

```
ListenerObject = addlistener(SourceOfEvent,'EventName',@listenerCallback);
```

`addlistener` returns the listener object. The input arguments are:

- *SourceOfEvent* — An object of the class defining the event on which the event occurred.
- *EventName* — The name of the event defined in the class `events` code block.
- *@listenerCallback* — a function handle referencing the function that executes in response to the event.

For example, create a listener object for the `StateChange` event:

```
function lh = createListener(src)
    lh = addlistener(src, 'StateChange', @handleStateChange)
end
```

Define the callback function for the listener. The callback function must accept as the first two arguments the event source object and an event data object:

```
function handleStateChange(src, eventData)
    ...
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27
- “Implement Property Set Listener” on page 11-11

## Define Custom Event Data

### In this section...

- “Class Event Data Requirements” on page 11-6
- “Define and Trigger Event” on page 11-6
- “Define Event Data” on page 11-7
- “Create Listener for Overflow Event” on page 11-8

### Class Event Data Requirements

Suppose that you want to create a listener callback function that has access to specific information when the event occurs. This example shows how by creating custom event data.

Events provide information to listener callback functions by passing an event data argument to the specified function. By default, MATLAB passes an `event.EventData` object to the listener callback. This object has two properties:

- `EventName` — Name of the event triggered by this object.
- `Source` — Handle of the object triggering the event.

Provide additional information to the listener callback by subclassing the `event.EventData` class.

- Define properties in the subclass to contain the additional data.
- Define a constructor that accepts the additional data as arguments.
- Set the `ConstructOnLoad` class attribute.
- Use the subclass constructor as an argument to the `notify` method to trigger the event.

### Define and Trigger Event

The `SimpleEventClass` defines a property set method (see “Property Set Methods” on page 8-49) from which it triggers an event if the property is set to a value exceeding a certain limit. The property set method performs these operations:

- Saves the original property value
- Sets the property to the specified value
- If the specified value is greater than 10, the set method triggers an `Overflow` event
- Passes the original property value, and other event data, in a `SpecialEventDataClass` object to the `notify` method.

```
classdef SimpleEventClass < handle
properties
    Prop1 = 0
end
events
    Overflow
end
methods
    function set.Prop1(obj,value)
        orgvalue = obj.Prop1;
        obj.Prop1 = value;
        if (obj.Prop1 > 10)
            % Trigger the event using custom event data
            notify(obj,'Overflow',SpecialEventDataClass(orgvalue));
        end
    end
end
end
```

## Define Event Data

Event data is always contained in an `event.EventData` object. The `SpecialEventDataClass` adds the original property value to the event data by subclassing `event.EventData`:

```
classdef (ConstructOnLoad) SpecialEventDataClass < event.EventData
properties
    OrgValue = 0
end
methods
    function eventData = SpecialEventDataClass(value)
        eventData.OrgValue = value;
    end
end
end
```

## Create Listener for Overflow Event

To listen for the `Overflow` event, attach a listener to an instance of the `SimpleEventClass` class. Use the `addlistener` method to create the listener. Also, you must define a callback function for the listener to execute when the event is triggered.

The function `setupSEC` instantiates the `SimpleEventClass` class and adds a listener to the object. In this example, the listener callback function displays information that is contained in the `eventData` argument (which is a `SpecialEventDataClass` object).

```
function sec = setupSEC
    sec = SimpleEventClass;
    addlistener(sec, 'Overflow', @overflowHandler)
    function overflowHandler(eventSrc,eventData)
        disp('The value of Prop1 is overflowing!')
        disp(['Its value was: ' num2str(eventData.OrgValue)])
        disp(['Its current value is: ' num2str(eventSrc.Prop1)])
    end
end
```

Create the `SimpleEventClass` object and add the listener:

```
sec = setupSEC;
sec.Prop1 = 5;
sec.Prop1 = 15; % listener triggers callback
```

```
The value of Prop1 is overflowing!
Its value was: 5
Its current value is: 15
```

## Related Examples

- “Observe Changes to Property Values” on page 11-9

# Observe Changes to Property Values

This example shows how to listen for changes to a property value. This example uses:

- `PostSet` event predefined by MATLAB
- `SetObservable` property attribute to enable triggering the property `PostSet` event.
- `addlistener` handle class method to create the listener

```
classdef PropLis < handle
    % Define a property that is SetObservable
    properties (SetObservable)
        ObservedProp = 1
    end
    methods
        function attachListener(obj)
            %Attach a listener to a PropListener object
            addlistener(obj, 'ObservedProp', 'PostSet', @PropLis.propChange);
        end
    end
    methods (Static)
        function propChange(metaProp, eventData)
            % Callback for PostSet event
            % Inputs: meta.property object, event.PropertyEvent
            h = eventData.AffectedObject;
            propName = metaProp.Name;
            disp(['The ', propName, ' property has changed.'])
            disp(['The new value is: ', num2str(h.ObservedProp)])
            disp(['Its default value is: ', num2str(metaProp.DefaultValue)])
        end
    end
end
```

The `PropLis` class uses an ordinary method (`attachListener`) to add the listener for the `ObservedProp` property. If the `PropLis` class defines a constructor, the constructor can contain the call to `addlistener`.

The listener callback is a static method (`propChange`). MATLAB passes two arguments when calling this function:

- `metaProp` — a `meta.property` object for `ObservedProp`
- `eventData` — an `event.PropertyEvent` object contain event-specific data.

These arguments provide information about the property and the event.

Use the `PropLis` class by creating an instance and calling its `attachListener` method:

```
p1Obj = PropLis;  
p1Obj.ObservedProp  
  
ans =  
  
1  
  
p1Obj.attachListener  
p1Obj.ObservedProp = 2;
```

```
The ObservedProp property has changed.  
The new value is: 2  
Its default value is: 1
```

### See Also

`event.proplistener`

### Related Examples

- “Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27
- “Implement Property Set Listener” on page 11-11

# Implement Property Set Listener

This example shows how to define a listener for a property set event. The listener callback triggers when the value of a specific property changes. The class defined for this example uses a method for a push-button callback and a static method for the listener callback. When the push-button callback changes the value of a property, the listener executes its callback on the `PreSet` event.

This example defines a class (`PushButton`) with these design elements:

- `ResultNumber` – Observable property
- `uicontrol pushbutton` – Push-button object used to generate a new graph when its callback executes
- A listener that responds to a change in the observable property

## PushButton Class Design

The `PushButton` class creates `figure`, `uicontrol`, `axes` graphics objects and a listener object in the class constructor.

The push button's callback is a class method (named `pressed`). When the push button is activated, the following sequence occurs:

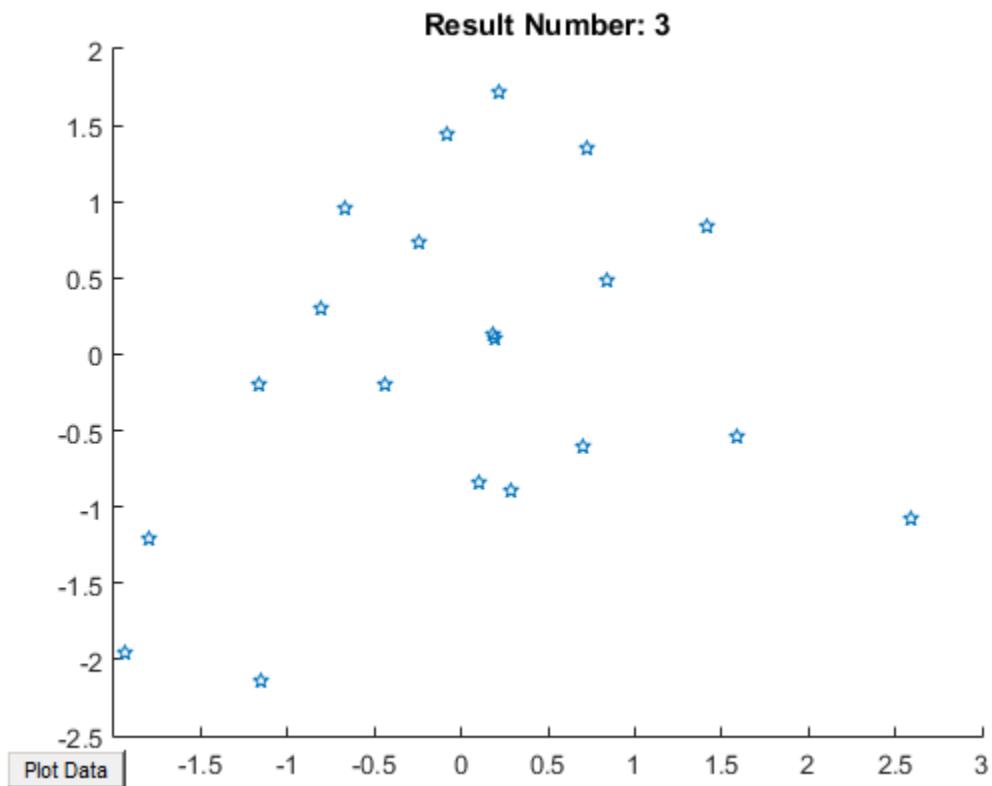
- 1 MATLAB executes the `pressed` method, which graphs a new set of data and increments the `ResultNumber` property.
- 2 Attempting to set the value of the `ResultNumber` property triggers the `PreSet` event, which executes the listener callback before setting the property value.
- 3 The listener callback uses the event data to obtain the handle of the callback object (an instance of the `PushButton` class), which then provides the handle of the axes object that is stored in its `AxHandle` property.
- 4 The listener callback updates the axes `Title` property, after the callback completes execution, MATLAB sets the `ResultsNumber` property to its new value.

```
classdef PushButton < handle
properties (SetObservable)
    ResultNumber = 1
end
properties
```

```
AxHandle
end
methods
    function buttonObj = PushButton
        myFig = figure;
        buttonObj.AxHandle = axes('Parent',myFig);
        uicontrol('Parent',myFig,...
            'Style','pushbutton',...
            'String','Plot Data',...
            'Callback',@(src,evnt)pressed(buttonObj));
        addlistener(buttonObj,'ResultNumber','PreSet',...
            @PushButton.updateTitle);
    end
end
methods
    function pressed(obj)
        scatter(obj.AxHandle,randn(1,20),randn(1,20),'p')
        obj.ResultNumber = obj.ResultNumber + 1;
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function updateTitle(~,eventData)
        h = eventData.AffectedObject;
        set(get(h.AxHandle,'Title'),'String',[ 'Result Number: ',...
            num2str(h.ResultNumber)])
    end
end
end
```

The scatter graph looks similar to this graph after three push-button clicks.

```
buttonObj = PushButton;
```



## Related Examples

- “Listen for Changes to Property Values” on page 11-37

## Event and Listener Concepts

### In this section...

- “The Event Model” on page 11-14
- “Limitations” on page 11-15
- “Default Event Data” on page 11-16
- “Events Only in Handle Classes” on page 11-16
- “Property-Set and Query Events” on page 11-17
- “Listeners” on page 11-17

### The Event Model

Events represent changes or actions that occur within objects. For example,

- Modification of class data
- Execution of a method
- Querying or setting a property value
- Destruction of an object

Basically, any activity that you can detect programmatically can generate an event and communicate information to other objects.

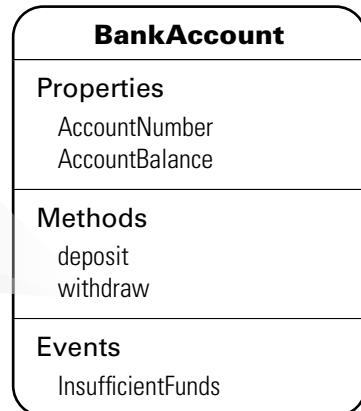
MATLAB classes define a process that communicates the occurrence of events to other objects that respond to the events. The event model works this way:

- A handle class declares a name used to represent an event. “Name Events” on page 11-21
- After creating an object of the event-declaring class, attach listener to that object. “Control Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27
- A call to the handle class notify method broadcasts a notice of the event to listeners. The class user determines when to trigger the event. “Trigger Events” on page 11-22
- Listeners execute a callback function when notified that the event has occurred. “Specifying Listener Callbacks” on page 11-29
- You can bind listeners to the lifecycle of the object that defines the event, or limit listeners to the existence and scope of the listener object. “Control Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27

The following diagram illustrates the event model.

1. The **withdraw** method is called.

```
if AccountBalance <= 0
    notify(obj, 'InsufficientFunds');
end
```



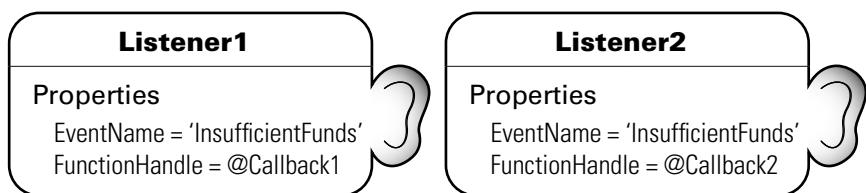
2. The **notify** method triggers an event, and a message is broadcast.

InsufficientFunds

InsufficientFunds

3. Listeners awaiting message execute their callbacks.

(The broadcasting object does not necessarily know who is listening.)



## Limitations

There are certain limitations to the use of events:

- The event source cannot guarantee that listeners exist when triggering the event.
- A listener cannot prevent other listeners from being notified that the event occurred.
- The order in which listeners execute is not defined.

- Listeners should not modify the event data object passed to the listener callback, because other listeners are passed this same handle object.

## Default Event Data

Events provide information to listener callbacks by passing an event data argument to the callback function. By default, MATLAB passes an `event.EventData` object to the listener callback. This object has two properties:

- `EventName` — The event name as defined in the class `event` block
- `Source` — The object that is the source of the event

MATLAB passes the source object to the listener callback in the required event data argument. Use the source object to access any of the object's public properties from within your listener callback function.

### Customize Event Data

You can create a subclass of the `event.EventData` class to provide additional information to listener callback functions. The subclass would define properties to contain the additional data and provide a method to construct the derived event data object so it can be passed to the `notify` method.

“Define Event-Specific Data” on page 11-25 provides an example showing how to customize this data.

## Events Only in Handle Classes

You can define events only in handle classes. This restriction exists because a value class is visible only in a single MATLAB workspace so no callback or listener can have access to the object that triggered the event. The callback could have access to a copy of the object. However, accessing a copy is not useful because the callback cannot access the current state of the object that triggered the event or effect any changes in that object.

“Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2 provides general information on handle classes.

“Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21 shows the syntax for defining a handle class and events.

## Property-Set and Query Events

There are four predefined events related to properties:

- **PreSet** — Triggered just before the property value is set, before calling its set access method
- **PostSet** — Triggered just after the property value is set
- **PreGet** — Triggered just before a property value query is serviced, before calling its get access method
- **PostGet** — Triggered just after returning the property value to the query

These events are predefined and do not need to be listed in the class `events` block.

When a property event occurs, the callback is passed an `event.PropertyEvent` object. This object has three properties:

- **EventName** — The name of the event described by this data object
- **Source** — The source object whose class defines the event described by the data object
- **AffectedObject** — The object whose property is the source for this event (that is, `AffectedObject` contains the object whose property was either accessed or modified).

You can define your own property-change event data by subclassing the `event.EventData` class. The `event.PropertyEvent` class is a sealed subclass of `event.EventData`.

See “Listen for Changes to Property Values” on page 11-37 for a description of the process for creating property listeners.

See “The PostSet Event Listener” on page 11-55 for an example.

See “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43 for information on methods that control access to property values.

## Listeners

Listeners encapsulate the response to an event. Listener objects belong to the `event.listener` class, which is a handle class that defines the following properties:

- **Source** — Handle or array of handles of the object that generated the event
- **EventName** — Name of the event
- **Callback** — Function to execute when an enabled listener receives event notification
- **Enabled** — Callback function executes only when **Enabled** is **true**. See “Enable and Disable Listeners” on page 11-58 for an example.
- **Recursive** — Allow listener to trigger the same event that caused execution of the callback.

**Recursive** is **false** by default. If the callback triggers the event for which it is defined as the callback, the listener cannot execute recursively. Therefore, set **Recursive** to **false** if the callback must trigger its own event. Setting the **Recursive** property to **true** can create a situation where infinite recursion reaches the recursion limit and triggers an error.

“Control Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27 provides more specific information.

# Event Attributes

## Specify Event Attributes

The following table lists the attributes you can set for events. To specify a value for an attribute, assign the attribute value on the same line as the event keyword. For example, all the events defined in the following `events` block have protected `ListenAccess` and private `NotifyAccess`.

```
events (ListenAccess = 'protected', NotifyAccess = 'private')
    EventName1
    EventName2
end
```

To define other events in the same class definition that have different attribute settings, create another `events` block.

## Event Attributes

Attribute Name	Class	Description
Hidden	logical Default = <code>false</code>	If <code>true</code> , event does not appear in list of events returned by <code>events</code> function (or other event listing functions or viewers).
ListenAccess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enumeration, <code>default = public</code></li> <li>• <code>meta.class</code> object</li> <li>• cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects</li> </ul>	<p>Determines where you can create listeners for the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <code>public</code> — Unrestricted access</li> <li>• <code>protected</code> — Access from methods in class or subclasses</li> <li>• <code>private</code> — Access by class methods only (not from subclasses)</li> <li>• List classes that have listen access to this event. Specify classes as <code>meta.class</code> objects in the form:</li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single <code>meta.class</code> object</li> <li>• A cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects. An empty cell array, <code>{}</code>, is the same as <code>private</code> access.</li> </ul> </ul>

See “Class Members Access” on page 12-26

Attribute Name	Class	Description
NotifyAccess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enumeration, default = <code>public</code></li><li>• <code>meta.class</code> object</li><li>• cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects</li></ul>	<p>Determines where code can trigger the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <code>public</code> — Any code can trigger event</li><li>• <code>protected</code> — Can trigger event from methods in class or derived classes</li><li>• <code>private</code> — Can trigger event by class methods only (not from derived classes)</li><li>• List classes that have notify access to this event. Specify classes as <code>meta.class</code> objects in the form:</li><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A single <code>meta.class</code> object</li><li>• A cell array of <code>meta.class</code> objects. An empty cell array, {}, is the same as <code>private</code> access.</li></ul></ul>

See “Class Members Access” on page 12-26

## Related Examples

- “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21

# Events and Listeners Syntax

## In this section...

- “Components to Implement” on page 11-21
- “Name Events” on page 11-21
- “Trigger Events” on page 11-22
- “Listen to Events” on page 11-22
- “Define Event-Specific Data” on page 11-25

## Components to Implement

Implementation of events and listeners involves these components:

- Specification of the name of an event in a handle class — “Name Events” on page 11-21.
- A function or method to trigger the event when the action occurs — “Trigger Events” on page 11-22.
- Listener objects to execute callback functions in response to the triggered event — “Listen to Events” on page 11-22.
- Default or custom event data that the event passes to the callback functions — “Define Event-Specific Data” on page 11-25.

## Name Events

Define an event by declaring an event name inside an `events` block. For example, this class creates an event called `ToggledState`:

```
classdef ToggleButton < handle
    properties
        State = false
    end
    events
        ToggledState
    end
end
```

## Trigger Events

The `OnStateChange` method calls `notify` to trigger the `ToggledState` event. Pass the handle of the object that is the source of the event and the name of the event to `notify`.

```
classdef ToggleButton < handle
    properties
        State = false
    end
    events
        ToggledState
    end
    methods
        function OnStateChange(obj,newState)
            if newState ~= obj.State
                obj.State = newState;
                notify(obj,'ToggledState');
            end
        end
    end
end
```

## Listen to Events

After the call to `notify` triggers an event, MATLAB broadcasts a message to all listeners that are defined for that event and source object. There are two ways to create listeners: using the `handle` class `addlistener` method or the `event.listener` class constructor.

### Use `addlistener` for Persistent Listeners

If you want the listener to persist beyond the normal variable scope, use `addlistener` to create it. The event source object holds a reference to the listener object. When the event source object is destroyed, MATLAB destroys the listener.

This code defines a listener for the `ToggleState` event:

```
lh = addlistener(obj,'ToggleState',@RespondToToggle.handleEvnt);
```

`addlistener` has these arguments:

- `obj` — The object that is the source of the event

- `ToggleState` — The event name passed as a `char` vector
- `@RespondToToggle.handleEvnt` — A function handle to the callback function (see the following definition “Define Listener” on page 11-24).

### Use `event.listener` to Decouple Listener and Source

Use the `event.listener` class constructor to create listeners when you want to manage the lifecycle of the listener and do not want a coupling between the event source and listener object. MATLAB does not destroy listeners created with `event.listener` when the event source is destroyed. However, your code must keep the listener object handle in scope when creating listeners using `event.listener`.

The `event.listener` constructor requires the same arguments as `addlistener`: the event-naming object, the event name, and a function handle to the callback. `event.listener` returns the handle to the listener object.

```
lh = event.listener(obj, 'EventName', @callbackFunction)
```

For example, this code uses the `ToggleState` event discussed previously:

```
lh = event.listener(obj, 'ToggleState', @RespondToToggle.handleEvnt)
```

### Callback Function

The listener callback function must accept a minimum of two arguments, which MATLAB automatically passes to the callback. Here are the required arguments:

- The source of the event — that is, `obj` in the call to `addlistener` or `event.listener`.
- An `event.EventData` object or a subclass of `event.EventData`, such as the `ToggleEventData` object described in, “Define Event-Specific Data” on page 11-25.

Define the callback function to accept the source object and event data arguments.

```
function callbackFunction(src, evtdata)
    ...
end
```

For more information on callback syntax, see “Listener Callback Syntax” on page 11-29.

## Define Listener

The `RespondToToggle` class defines objects that listen for the `ToggleState` event defined in the `ToggleButton` class.

```
classdef RespondToToggle < handle
    methods
        function obj = RespondToToggle(toggle_button_obj)
            addlistener(toggle_button_obj,'ToggledState',@RespondToToggle.handleEvnt);
        end
    end
    methods (Static)
        function handleEvnt(src,~)
            if src.State
                disp('ToggledState is true')
            else
                disp('ToggledState is false')
            end
        end
    end
end
```

The class `RespondToToggle` adds the listener in its constructor. In this case, the class defines the callback (`handleEvnt`) as a static method that accepts the two required arguments:

- `src` — The handle of the object triggering the event (that is, a `ToggleButton` object)
- `evtdata` — An `event.EventData` object

For example, this code creates objects of both classes:

```
tb = ToggleButton;
rtt = RespondToToggle(tb);
```

Whenever you call the `OnStateChange` method of the `ToggleButton` object, `notify` triggers the event. For this example, the callback displays the value of the `State` property:

```
tb.OnStateChange(true)

ToggledState is true

tb.OnStateChange(false)
```

ToggledState is false

## Remove Listeners

Remove a listener object by calling `delete` on its handle. For example, if the class `RespondToToggle` saved the listener handle as a property, you could delete the listener.

```
classdef RespondToToggle < handle
properties
    ListenerHandle % Property for listener handle
end
methods
    function obj = RespondToToggle(toggle_button_obj)
        hl = addlistener(toggle_button_obj,'ToggledState',@RespondToToggle.handleEvnt);
        obj.ListenerHandle = hl; % Save listener handle
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function handleEvnt(src,~)
        if src.State
            disp('ToggledState is true')
        else
            disp('ToggledState is false')
        end
    end
end
end
```

With this code change, you can remove the listener from an instance of the `RespondToToggle` class. For example:

```
tb = ToggleButton;
rtt = RespondToToggle(tb);
```

The object `rtt` is listening for the `ToggledState` event triggered by object `tb`. To remove the listener, call `delete` on the property containing the listener handle.

```
delete(rtt.ListenerHandle)
```

To deactivate a listener temporarily, see “Temporarily Deactivate Listeners” on page 11-27.

## Define Event-Specific Data

Suppose that you want to pass the state of the toggle button as a result of the event to the listener callback. You can add more data to the default event data by subclassing the `event.EventData` class and adding a property to contain this information. Then you can pass this object to the `notify` method.

**Note:** To save and load objects that are subclasses of `event.EventData`, such as `ToggleEventData`, enable the `ConstructOnLoad` class attribute for the subclass.

```
classdef (ConstructOnLoad) ToggleEventData < event.EventData
    properties
        NewState
    end

    methods
        function data = ToggleEventData(newState)
            data.NewState = newState;
        end
    end
end
```

The call to `notify` can use the `ToggleEventData` constructor to create the necessary argument.

```
evtdata = ToggleEventData(newState);
notify(obj, 'ToggledState', evtdata);
```

### Related Examples

- “Listener Callback Syntax” on page 11-29
- “Listen for Changes to Property Values” on page 11-37
- “Techniques for Using Events and Listeners” on page 11-45

# Listener Lifecycle

## In this section...

- “Control Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27
- “Temporarily Deactivate Listeners” on page 11-27
- “Permanently Delete Listeners” on page 11-27

## Control Listener Lifecycle

There are two ways to create listeners:

- `addlistener` creates a coupling between the listener and event source object. The listener object persists until you delete it or until the event object is destroyed. When the event source object is destroyed, MATLAB automatically destroys the listener object.
- `event.listener` and `event.proplistener` construct listener objects that are not coupled to the lifecycle of the event source object. The listener is active as long as the listener object remains in scope and is not explicitly deleted. Therefore, your application must maintain a reference to the listener object by storing the listener handle. The advantage of uncoupling the listener and event objects is that you can define and destroy each independently.

For more information, see “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21.

## Temporarily Deactivate Listeners

The `addlistener` method returns the listener object so that you can set its properties. For example, you can temporarily disable a listener by setting its `Enabled` property to `false`:

```
ListenerHandle.Enabled = false;
```

To reenable the listener, set `Enabled` to `true`.

```
ListenerHandle.Enabled = true;
```

## Permanently Delete Listeners

Calling `delete` on a listener object destroys it and permanently removes the listener:

```
delete(ListenerHandle)
```

---

**Note:** Do not use the `pack` command with objects that define events and listeners. The `pack` command causes the destructor of any listeners defined for the objects in the workspace. For information on restoring listeners when saving objects, see “Restore Listeners” on page 13-35.

---

## Related Examples

- “Enable and Disable Listeners” on page 11-58

# Listener Callback Syntax

## In this section...

[“Specifying Listener Callbacks” on page 11-29](#)

[“Input Arguments for Callback Function” on page 11-29](#)

[“Additional Arguments for Callback Function” on page 11-30](#)

## Specifying Listener Callbacks

Callbacks are functions that execute when the listener receives notification of the event. Pass a function handle referencing the callback function to `addlistener` or `event.listener` when creating the listener.

All callback functions must accept at least two arguments:

- The handle of the object that is the source of the event
- An `event.EventData` object or an object that is derived from the `event.EventData` class.

### Syntax to Reference Callback

For a function: `functionName`

```
lh = addlistener(eventSourceObj, 'EventName', @functionName)
```

For an ordinary method called with an object of the class: `obj.methodName`

```
lh = addlistener(eventSourceObj, 'EventName', @obj.methodName)
```

For a static method: `ClassName.methodName`

```
lh = addlistener(eventSourceObj, 'EventName', @ClassName.methodName)
```

For a function in a package: `PackageName.functionName`

```
lh = addlistener(eventSourceObj, 'EventName', @PackageName.functionName)
```

## Input Arguments for Callback Function

Define the callback function to accept the required arguments:

```
function callbackFunction(src, evnt)
```

```
    ...
end
```

If you do not use the event source and event data arguments, you can define the function to ignore these inputs:

```
function callbackFunction(~,~)
    ...
end
```

For a method:

```
function callbackMethod(obj,src,evnt)
    ...
end
```

## Additional Arguments for Callback Function

To pass arguments to your callback in addition to the source and event data arguments passed by MATLAB, use an anonymous function. Anonymous functions can use any variables that are available in the current workspace.

### Syntax Using Anonymous Function

Here is the syntax for an ordinary method. The input arguments (`arg1, ... argn`) must be defined in the context in which you call `addlistener`.

```
lh = addlistener(src,'EventName',@(src,evnt)obj.callbackMethod(src,evnt,arg1,...argn))
```

Use `varargin` to define the callback function.

```
function callbackMethod(src,evnt,varargin)
    arg1 = varargin{1};
    ...
    argn = varargin{n};
    ...
end
```

For general information on anonymous function, see “Anonymous Functions”.

### Using Methods for Callbacks

The `TestAnonyFcns` class shows the use of an anonymous function with an additional argument. The listener callback displays the inputs arguments to show how MATLAB calls the callback method.

```
classdef TestAnonyFcn < handle
events
    Update
end
methods
    function obj = TestAnonyFcn
        t = datestr(now);
        addlistener(obj, 'Update', @(src, evnt) obj.evntCb(src, evnt, t));
    end
    function triggerEvnt(obj)
        notify(obj, 'Update')
    end
end
methods (Access = private)
    function evntCb(~,~,evnt,varargin)
        disp(['Number of inputs: ', num2str(nargin)])
        disp(evnt.EventName)
        disp(varargin{:})
    end
end
end
```

Create an object and trigger the event by calling the **triggerEvt** method:

```
obj = TestAnonyFcn;
obj.triggerEvnt;

Number of inputs: 4
Update
01-Jul-2008 17:19:36
```

## Related Examples

- “Callback Execution” on page 11-32
- “Create Function Handle”

## Callback Execution

### In this section...

- “When Callbacks Execute” on page 11-32
- “Listener Order of Execution” on page 11-32
- “Callbacks That Call `notify`” on page 11-32
- “Manage Callback Errors” on page 11-33
- “Invoke Functions from Function Handles” on page 11-33

### When Callbacks Execute

Listeners execute their callback function when notified that the event has occurred. Listeners are passive observers in the sense that errors in the execution of a listener callback do not prevent the execution of other listeners responding to the same event, or execution of the function that triggered the event.

Callback function execution continues until the function completes. If an error occurs in a callback function, execution stops and control returns to the calling function. Then any remaining listener callback functions execute.

### Listener Order of Execution

The order in which listeners callback functions execute after the firing of an event is undefined. However, all listener callbacks execute synchronously with the event firing.

The handle class `notify` method calls all listeners before returning execution to the function that called `notify`.

### Callbacks That Call `notify`

Do not modify and reuse or copy and reuse the event data object that you pass to `notify`, which is then passed to the listener callback.

Listener callbacks can call `notify` to trigger events, including the same event that invoked the callback. When a function calls `notify`, MATLAB sets the property values of the event data object that is passed to callback functions. To ensure that these properties have appropriate values for subsequently called callbacks, always create a new event data object if you call `notify` with custom event data.

## Manage Callback Errors

If you want to control how your program responds to errors, use a `try/catch` statement in your listener callback function to handle errors.

## Invoke Functions from Function Handles

When you create a function handle inside a class method, the context of the method determines the context in which the function executes. This context gives the function access to private and protected methods that are accessible to that class.

For example, the `UpdateEvt` class defines an event named `Update` and a listener for that event. The listener callback is the private method `evtCb`.

```
classdef UpdateEvt < handle
  events
    Update
  end
  methods
    function obj = UpdateEvt
      addlistener(obj,'Update',@evtCb);
    end
  end
  methods (Access = private)
    function obj = evtCb(obj,varargin)
      disp('Updated Event Triggered')
    end
  end
end
```

Private methods are normally accessible only by class methods. However, because the function handle is created in a class method, `notify` can execute the callback from outside of the class:

```
a = UpdateEvt;
a.notify('Update')

Updated Event Triggered
```

## Related Examples

- “Listener Callback Syntax” on page 11-29

## Determine If Event Has Listeners

### In this section...

[“Do Listeners Exist for This Event?” on page 11-34](#)

[“Why Test for Listeners” on page 11-34](#)

[“Coding Patterns” on page 11-34](#)

[“Listeners in Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 11-35](#)

### Do Listeners Exist for This Event?

Use the `event.hasListener` function to determine if a specific event has listeners. `event.hasListener` accepts an array of event source objects and an event name as input arguments. It returns an array of logical values indicating if listeners exist for the specified event on each object in the array.

---

**Note:** When called, `event.hasListener` must have `NotifyAccess` for the event. That is, call `event.Listener` in a context in which you can call `notify` for the event in question.

---

### Why Test for Listeners

Use `event.hasListener` to avoid sending event notifications when there are no listeners for the event. For example, if creating custom event data consumes significant resources, or if events are triggered repeatedly, use `event.hasListener` to test for listeners before performing these steps.

### Coding Patterns

- Conditionalize the creation of event data and the call to notify using `event.hasListener`. For an object array `a`, determine if there are listeners before creating event data and triggering the event:

```
if any(event.hasListener(a, 'NameOfEvent'))
    evt = MyCustomEventData(...);
    notify(a, 'NameOfEvent', evt)
end
```

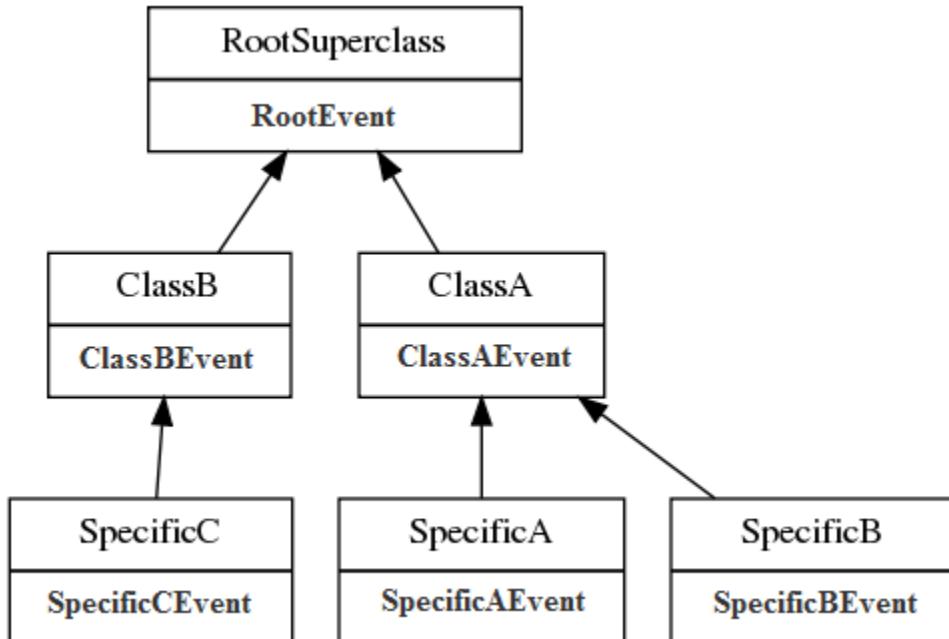
- Trigger events selectively using logical indexing with the values returned by `event.hasListener`. Send event notifications only for array elements that have listeners:

```
ind = event.hasListeners(a,'NameOfEvent');
notify(a(ind),'NameOfEvent',evt)
```

## Listeners in Heterogeneous Arrays

If the input object array is heterogeneous, the class of the array must define the specified event. You can query the listeners only for events that all objects in the array define.

For example, in the following diagram, the class of a heterogeneous array formed with objects of classes **SpecificA**, **SpecificB**, and **SpecificC** is **RootSuperclass**. Therefore, `event.hasListener` can find listeners only for the **RootEvent** event, because it is the only event common to all array elements.



Create a heterogeneous array with the three most specific classes:

```
het = [SpecificA,SpecificB,SpecificC];
class(het)

ans

RootSuperclass

events(het)

Events for class RootSuperclass

RootEvent
```

`event.hasListener` cannot determine if there are listeners for events that are defined by some but not all objects in the array:

```
event.hasListener(het,'ClassAEvent')

Error using event.hasListener
Event 'ClassAEvent' is not defined for class 'RootSuperclass'.
```

Determine if individual objects in the heterogeneous array have listeners defined for their specific events, by indexing into the array:

```
event.hasListener(het(1),'ClassAEvent')
```

For more information about determining the class of heterogeneous arrays, see “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23.

## Related Examples

- “Listener Lifecycle” on page 11-27

# Listen for Changes to Property Values

## In this section...

[“Create Property Listeners” on page 11-37](#)

[“Property Event and Listener Classes” on page 11-39](#)

## Create Property Listeners

You can define listeners for the predeclared property events (named: `PreSet`, `PostSet`, `PreGet`, and `PostGet`). To create listeners for those named events:

- Specify the `SetObservable` and/or `GetObservable` property attributes.
- Define callback functions
- Create the property listener by including the name of the property and the event in the call to `addlistener`.
- If necessary, subclass `event.data` to create a specialized event data object to pass to the callback function.
- Prevent execution of the callback if the new value is the same as the current value (see “Assignment When Property Value Unchanged” on page 11-41).

## Set Property Attributes to Enable Property Events

In the properties block, enable the `SetObservable` attribute. You can define `PreSet` and `PostSet` listeners for the properties defined in this block:

```
properties (SetObservable)
    PropOne
    PropTwo
    ...
end
```

## Define Callback Function for Property Event

The listener executes the callback function when MATLAB triggers the property event. Define the callback function to have two specific arguments, which are passed to the function automatically when called by the listener:

- Event source — a `meta.property` object describing the object that is the source of the property event

- Event data — a `event.PropertyEvent` object containing information about the event

You can pass additional arguments if necessary. It is often simple to define this method as `Static` because these two arguments contain most necessary information in their properties.

For example, suppose the `handlePropEvents` function is a static method of the class creating listeners for two properties of an object of another class:

```
methods ($Static)
  function handlePropEvents(src,evtnt)
    switch src.Name
      case 'PropOne'
        % PropOne has triggered an event
        ...
      case 'PropTwo'
        % PropTwo has triggered an event
        ...
    end
  end
end
```

Another possibility is to use the `event.PropertyEvent` object's `EventName` property in the `switch` statement to key off the event name (`PreSet` or `PostSet` in this case).

“Class Metadata” on page 16-2 provides more information about the `meta.property` class.

### Add Listener to Property

The `addlistener` handle class method enables you to attach a listener to a property without storing the listener object as a persistent variable. For a property event, use the four-argument version of `addlistener`.

Here is a call to `addlistener`:

```
addlistener(EventObject,'PropOne','PostSet',@ClassName.handlePropertyEvents);
```

The arguments are:

- `EventObject` — handle of the object generating the event
- `PropOne` — name of the property to which you want to listen
- `PostSet` — name of the event for which you want to listen
- `@ClassName.handlePropertyEvents` — function handle referencing a static method, which requires the use of the class name

If your listener callback is an ordinary method and not a static method, the syntax is:

```
addlistener(EventObject,'PropOne','PostSet',@obj.handlePropertyEvents);
```

where *obj* is the handle of the object defining the callback method.

If the listener callback is a function that is not a class method, you pass a function handle to that function. Suppose that the callback function is a package function:

```
addlistener(EventObject,'PropOne','PostSet',@package.handlePropertyEvents);
```

For more information on passing functions as arguments, see “Create Function Handle”.

## Property Event and Listener Classes

The following two classes show how to create **PostSet** property listeners for two properties — **PropOne** and **PropTwo**.

### Class Generating the Event

The **PropEvent** class enables property **PreSet** and **PostSet** event triggering by specifying the **SetObservable** property attribute. These properties also enable the **AbortSet** attribute, which prevents the triggering of the property events if the properties are set to a value that is the same as their current value (see “Assignment When Property Value Unchanged” on page 11-41).

```
classdef PropEvent < handle
    properties (SetObservable, AbortSet)
        PropOne
        PropTwo
    end
    methods
        function obj = PropEvent(p1,p2)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.PropOne = p1;
                obj.PropTwo = p2;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

### Class Defining the Listeners

The **PropListener** class defines two listeners:

- Property **PropOne** **PostSet** event
- Property **PropTwo** **PostSet** event

You can define listeners for other events or other properties using a similar approach. It is not necessary to use the same callback function for each listener. See the **meta.property** and **event.PropertyEvent** reference pages for more on the information contained in the arguments passed to the listener callback function.

```
classdef PropListener < handle
    % Define property listeners
    methods
        function obj = PropListener(evtobj)
            if nargin > 0
                addlistener(evtobj,'PropOne','PostSet',@PropListener.handlePropEvents);
                addlistener(evtobj,'PropTwo','PostSet',@PropListener.handlePropEvents);
            end
        end
    end
    methods (Static)
        function handlePropEvents(src,evnt)
            switch src.Name
                case 'PropOne'
                    sprintf('PropOne is %s\n',num2str(evnt.AffectedObject.PropOne))
                case 'PropTwo'
                    sprintf('PropTwo is %s\n',num2str(evnt.AffectedObject.PropTwo))
            end
        end
    end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Assignment When Property Value Unchanged” on page 11-41

# Assignment When Property Value Unchanged

## In this section...

- “AbortSet When Value Does Not Change” on page 11-41
- “How MATLAB Compares Values” on page 11-41
- “When to Use AbortSet” on page 11-42
- “Implement AbortSet” on page 11-42

## AbortSet When Value Does Not Change

When you set a property value, MATLAB triggers the property **PreSet** and **PostSet** events, invokes the property set method (if one is defined), and sets the property value. These actions occur even when the current value of the property is the same as the new value.

You can prevent these actions by setting the property's **AbortSet** attribute to **true**. When **AbortSet** is enabled, MATLAB compares the current property value to the new value being assigned to the property. If the new value is the same as the current value, MATLAB does not:

- Set the property value.
- Trigger the **PreSet** and **PostSet** events.
- Call the property set method, if one exists.

To compare values, MATLAB must get the current value of the property. Getting the current value causes the property get method (`get .Property`) to execute, if one exists. Any errors that occur when calling the property get method are visible to the user, even if MATLAB does not change the current value.

## How MATLAB Compares Values

MATLAB uses the `isequal` function to determine if the current value of the property is the same as the new value. To determine if specific values evaluate as equal when using the **AbortSet** attribute, see the `isequal` function documentation or any `isequal` method overloaded for the class of the property value.

## When to Use AbortSet

Use of the `AbortSet` attribute does incur some overhead in the comparison of the current and new property values. However, enabling `AbortSet` is useful in these cases.

- The cost of setting a property value is greater than the cost of comparing the current value of the property with the new value being assigned.
- You want to prevent notification of the `PreSet` and `PostSet` events and execution of the listener callbacks when the property value does not change.

## Implement AbortSet

The following example shows how the `AbortSet` attribute works. The `AbortTheSet` class defines a property, `PropOne`, that has listeners for the `PreGet` and `PreSet` events and enables the `AbortSet` attribute. The behavior of the post set/get events is equivalent so only the pre set/get events are used for simplicity:

---

**Note:** To use this class, save the `AbortTheSet` class in a file with the same name in a folder on your MATLAB path.

---

```
classdef AbortTheSet < handle
    properties (SetObservable, GetObservable, AbortSet)
        PropOne = 7
    end
    methods
        function obj = AbortTheSet(val)
            obj.PropOne = val;
            addlistener(obj, 'PropOne', 'PreGet', @obj.getPropEvt);
            addlistener(obj, 'PropOne', 'PreSet', @obj.setPropEvt);
        end
        function propval = get.PropOne(obj)
            disp('get.PropOne called')
            propval = obj.PropOne;
        end
        function set.PropOne(obj, val)
            disp('set.PropOne called')
            obj.PropOne = val;
        end
        function getPropEvt(obj, src, evnt)
            disp ('Pre-get event triggered')
```

```
% ...
end
function setPropEvt(obj,src,evnt)
    disp ('Pre-set event triggered')
    % ...
end
function disp(obj)
    % Overload disp to avoid accessing property
    disp (class(obj))
end
end
end
```

The class specifies an initial value of 7 for the **PropOne** property. Therefore, if you create an object with the property value of 7, there is no need to trigger the **PreSet** event:

```
ats = AbortTheSet(7);

get.PropOne called
```

If you specify a value other than 7, then MATLAB triggers the **PreSet** event:

```
ats = AbortTheSet(9);

get.PropOne called
set.PropOne called
get.PropOne called
```

Similarly, if you set the **PropOne** property to the value 9, the **AbortSet** attribute prevents the property assignment and the triggering of the **PreSet** event. Notice also, that there is no **PreGet** event generated. Only the property get method is called:

```
ats.PropOne = 9;

get.PropOne called
```

If you query the property value, the **PreGet** event is triggered:

```
a = ats.PropOne

Pre-get event triggered
get.PropOne called
a =
```

If you set the `PropOne` property to a different value, MATLAB:

- Calls the property get method to determine if the value is changing
- Triggers the `PreSet` event
- Calls the property set method to set the new value
- Calls the property get method again to determine if the result of calling the set method changed the value.

```
ats.PropOne = 11;  
  
get.PropOne called  
Pre-set event triggered  
set.PropOne called  
get.PropOne called
```

Because a property set method can modify the value that is assigned to a property, MATLAB must query the property value that would result from an assignment after a call to the property set method. The result is multiple calls to a property get method, if one is defined for that property.

## Related Examples

- “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43
- “Determine If Event Has Listeners” on page 11-34

# Techniques for Using Events and Listeners

## In this section...

- “Example Overview” on page 11-45
- “Techniques Demonstrated in This Example” on page 11-46
- “Summary of `fcneval` Class” on page 11-46
- “Summary of `fcnview` Class” on page 11-47
- “Methods Inherited from Handle Class” on page 11-49
- “Using the `fcneval` and `fcnview` Classes” on page 11-49
- “Implement UpdateGraph Event and Listener” on page 11-51
- “The PostSet Event Listener” on page 11-55
- “Enable and Disable Listeners” on page 11-58
- “`@fcneval/fcneval.m` Class Code” on page 11-59
- “`@fcnview/fcnview.m` Class Code” on page 11-60

## Example Overview

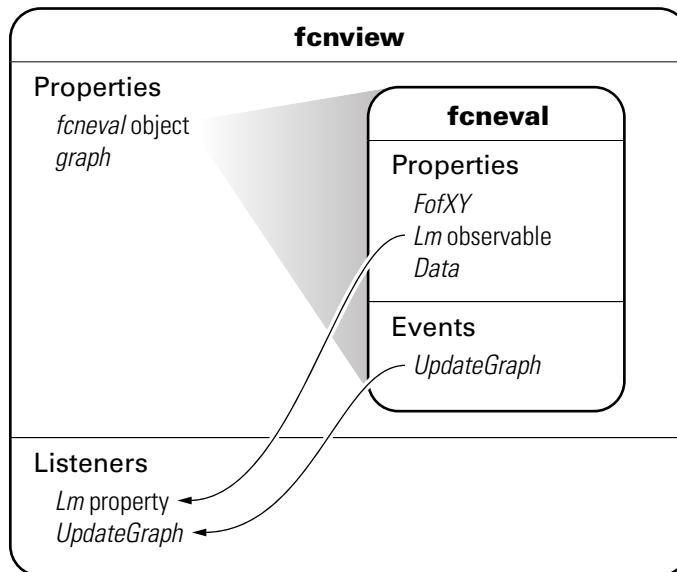
This example defines two classes:

- `fcneval` — The function evaluator class contains a MATLAB expression and evaluates this expression over a specified range
- `fcnview` — The function viewer class contains a `fcneval` object and displays surface graphs of the evaluated expression using the data contained in `fcneval`.

This class defines two events:

- A class-defined event that occurs when a new value is specified for the MATLAB function
- A property event that occurs when the property containing the limits is changed

The following diagram shows the relationship between the two objects. The `fcnview` object contains a `fcneval` object and creates graphs from the data it contains. `fcnview` creates listeners to change the graphs if any of the data in the `fcneval` object change.



## Techniques Demonstrated in This Example

- Naming an event in the class definition
- Triggering an event by calling `notify`
- Enabling a property event via the `SetObservable` attribute
- Creating listeners for class-defined events and property `PostSet` events
- Defining listener callback functions that accept additional arguments
- Enabling and disabling listeners

## Summary of **fcneval** Class

The **fcneval** class evaluates a MATLAB expression over a specified range of two variables. The **fcneval** is the source of the data that objects of the **fcnview** class graph as a surface. **fcneval** is the source of the events used in this example. For a listing of the class definition, see “[@fcneval/fcneval.m Class Code](#)” on page 11-59

Property	Value	Purpose
FofXY	function handle	MATLAB expression (function of two variables).
Lm	two-element vector	Limits over which function is evaluated in both variables. SetObservable attribute set to true to enable property event listeners.
Data	structure with x, y, and z matrices	Data resulting from evaluating the function. Used for surface graph. Dependent attribute set to true, which means the get.Data method is called to determine property value when queried and no data is stored.

Event	When Triggered
UpdateGraph	FofXY property set function (set.FofXY) calls the notify method when a new value is specified for the MATLAB expression on an object of this class.

Method	Purpose
fcneval	Class constructor. Inputs are function handle and two-element vector specifying the limits over which to evaluate the function.
set.FofXY	FofXY property set function. Called whenever property value is set, including during object construction.
set.Lm	Lm property set function. Used to test for valid limits.
get.Data	Data property get function. This method calculates the values for the Data property whenever that data is queried (by class members or externally).
grid	A static method (Static attribute set to true) used in the calculation of the data.

## Summary of fcnview Class

Objects of the `fcnview` class contain `fcneval` objects as the source of data for the four surface graphs created in a function view. `fcnview` creates the listeners and callback functions that respond to changes in the data contained in `fcneval` objects. For a listing of the class definition, see “`@fcnview/fcnview.m` Class Code” on page 11-60

Property	Value	Purpose
FcnObject	fcneval object	This object contains the data that is used to create the function graphs.
HAxes	axes handle	Each instance of a fcnview object stores the handle of the axes containing its subplot.
HLUpdateGraph	event.listener object for UpdateGraph event	Setting the event.listener object's Enabled property to true enables the listener; false disables listener.
HLLm	event.listener object for Lm property event	Setting the event.listener object's Enabled property to true enables the listener, false disables listener.
HEnableCm	uimenu handle	Item on context menu used to enable listeners (used to handle checked behavior)
HDisableCm	uimenu handle	Item on context menu used to disable listeners (used to manage checked behavior)
HSurface	surface handle	Used by event callbacks to update surface data.

Method	Purpose
fcnview	Class constructor. Input is fcneval object.
createLisn	Calls addlistener to create listeners for UpdateGraph and Lm property PostSet listeners.
lims	Sets axes limits to current value of fcneval object's Lm property. Used by event handlers.
updateSurfaceData	Updates the surface data without creating a new object. Used by event handlers.
listenUpdateGraph	Callback for UpdateGraph event.
listenLm	Callback for Lm property PostSet event
delete	Delete method for fcnview class.
createViews	Static method that creates an instance of the fcnview class for each subplot, defines the context menus that enable/disable listeners, and creates the subplots

## Methods Inherited from Handle Class

Both the `fcneval` and `fcnview` classes inherit methods from the `handle` class. The following table lists only those inherited methods used in this example.

“Handle Class Methods” on page 7-13 provides a complete list of methods that are inherited when you subclass the `handle` class.

Methods Inherited from Handle Class	Purpose
<code>addlistener</code>	Register a listener for a specific event and attach listener to event-defining object.
<code>notify</code>	Trigger an event and notify all registered listeners.

## Using the `fcneval` and `fcnview` Classes

This section explains how to use the classes.

- Create an instance of the `fcneval` class to contain the MATLAB expression of a function of two variables and the range over which you want to evaluate this function
- Use the `fcnview` class static function `createViews` to visualize the function
- Change the MATLAB expression or the limits contained by the `fcneval` object and all the `fcnview` objects respond to the events generated.

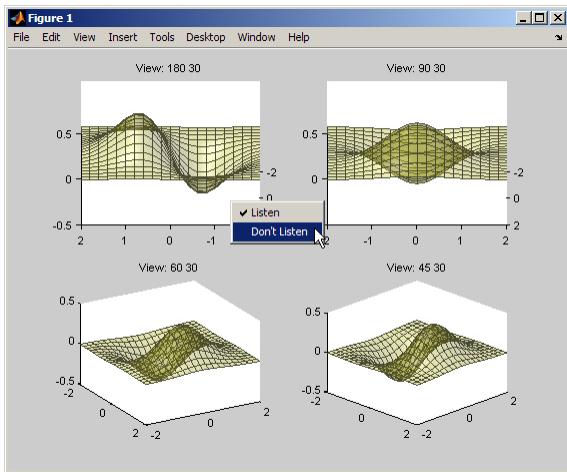
You create a `fcneval` object by calling its constructor with two arguments—an anonymous function and a two-element, monotonically increasing vector. For example:

```
feobject = fcneval(@(x,y) x.*exp(-x.^2-y.^2), [-2 2]);
```

Use the `createViews` static method to create the graphs of the function. Use the class name to call a static function:

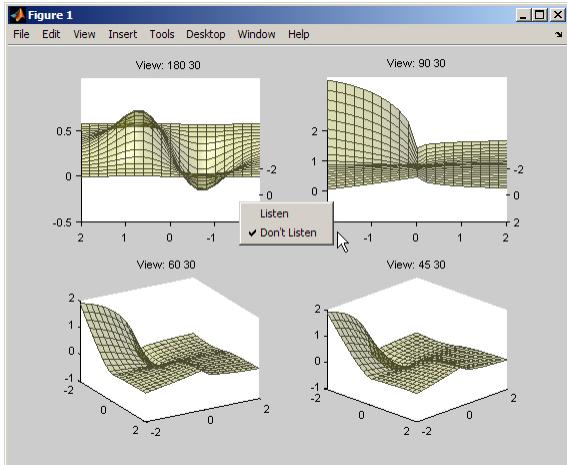
```
fcnview.createViews(feobject);
```

The `createView` method generates four views of the function contained in the `fcneval` object.



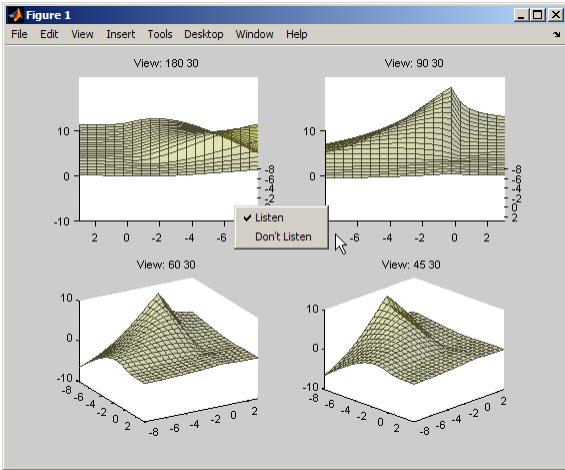
Each subplot defines a context menu that can enable and disable the listeners associated with that graph. For example, if you disable the listeners on subplot 221 (upper left) and change the MATLAB expression contained by the `fcneval` object, only the remaining three subplots update when the `UpdateGraph` event is triggered:

```
feobject.FofXY = @(x,y) x.*exp(-x.^5-y.^5);
```



Similarly, if you change the limits by assigning a value to the `feobject.Lm` property, the `feobject` triggers a `PostSet` property event and the listener callbacks update the graph.

```
feobject.Lm = [-8 3];
```



In this figure, the listeners are reenabled via the context menu for subplot 221. Because the listener callback for the property `PostSet` event also updates the surface data, all views are now synchronized.

## Implement UpdateGraph Event and Listener

The `UpdateGraph` event occurs when the MATLAB representation of the mathematical function contained in the `fcneval` object is changed. The `fcnview` objects that contain the surface graphs are listening for this event, so they can update the graphs to represent the new function.

### Define and Trigger `UpdateGraph` Event

The `UpdateGraph` event is a class-defined event. The `fcneval` class names the event and calls `notify` when the event occurs.

1. A property is assigned a new value.

```
obj.FofXY = @(x,y)x^2+y^2
```

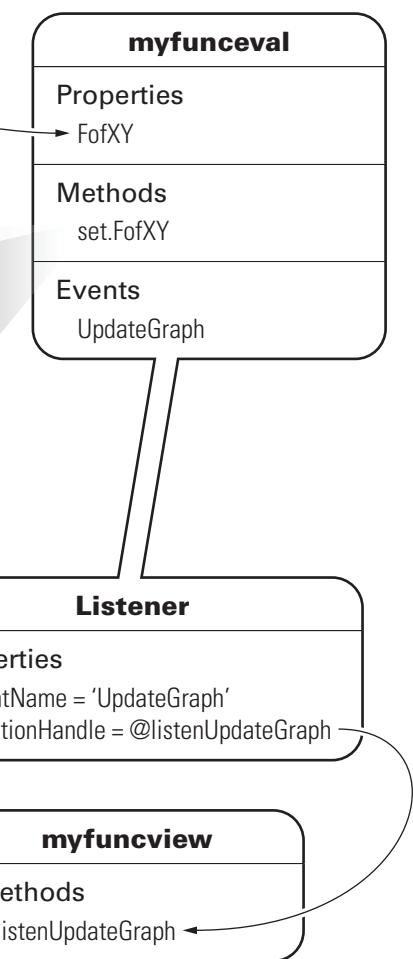
2. Setting the property runs a set access method, which, in turn, executes **notify**.

```
function set.FofXY(obj,func)
    obj.FofXY = func;
    notify(obj,'UpdateGraph');
end
```

3. The **notify** method triggers an event, and a message is broadcast.

4. A listener awaiting the message executes its callback.

5. The callback function is executed.



The **fcnview** class defines a listener for this event. When **fcneval** triggers the event, the **fcnview** listener executes a callback function that performs the follow actions:

- Determines if the handle of the surface object stored by the **fcnview** object is still valid (that is, does the object still exist)
- Updates the surface **XData**, **YData**, and **ZData** by querying the **fcneval** object's **Data** property.

The **fcneval** class defines an event name in an **event** block:

```

events
    UpdateGraph
end

```

### Determine When to Trigger Event

The `fcneval` class defines a property set method for the `FofXY` property. `FofXY` is the property that stores the MATLAB expression for the mathematical function. This expression must be a valid MATLAB expression for a function of two variables.

The `set.FofXY` method:

- Determines the suitability of the expression
- If the expression is suitable:
  - Assigns the expression to the `FofXY` property
  - Triggers the `UpdateGraph` event

If `fcneval.isSuitable` does not return an `MException` object, the `set.FofXY` method assigns the value to the property and triggers the `UpdateGraph` event.

```

function set.FofXY(obj,func)
% Determine if function is suitable to create a surface
    me = fcneval.isSuitable(func);
    if ~isempty(me)
        throw(me)
    end
% Assign property value
    obj.FofXY = func;
% Trigger UpdateGraph event
    notify(obj,'UpdateGraph');
end

```

### Determine Suitability of Expression

The `set.FofXY` method calls a static method (`fcneval.isSuitable`) to determine the suitability of the specified expression. `fcneval.isSuitable` returns an `MException` object if it determines that the expression is unsuitable. `fcneval.isSuitable` calls the `MException` constructor directly to create more useful error messages for the user.

`set.FofXY` issues the exception using the `MException.throw` method. Issuing the exception terminates execution of `set.FofXY` and prevents the method from making an assignment to the property or triggering the `UpdateGraph` event.

Here is the `fcneval.isSuitable` method:

```
functionisOk = isSuitable(funcH)
    v = [1 1;1 1];
    % Can the expression except 2 numeric inputs
    try
        funcH(v,v);
    catch %#ok<CTCH>
        me = MException('DocExample:fcneval',...
            ['The function ',func2str(funcH),' Is not a suitable F(x,y)']);
        isOk = me;
        return
    end
    % Does the expression return non-scalar data
    if isscalar(funcH(v,v));
        me = MException('DocExample:fcneval',...
            ['The function ',func2str(funcH),' Returns a scalar when evaluated']);
        isOk = me;
        return
    end
    isOk = [];
end
```

The `fcneval.isSuitable` method could provide additional test to ensure that the expression assigned to the `FofXY` property meets the criteria required by the class design.

### Other Approaches

The class could have implemented a property set event for the `FofXY` property and would, therefore, not need to call `notify` (see “Listen for Changes to Property Values” on page 11-37). Defining a class event provides more flexibility in this case because you can better control event triggering.

For example, suppose that you wanted to update the graph only if the new data is different. If the new expression produced the same data within some tolerance, the `set.FofXY` method could not trigger the event and avoid updating the graph. However, the method could still set the property to the new value.

### Listener and Callback for UpdateGraph Event

The `fcnview` class creates a listener for the `UpdateGraph` event using the `addlistener` method:

```
obj.HLUpdateGraph = addlistener(obj.FcnObject,'UpdateGraph',...
    @(src,evnt)listenUpdateGraph(obj,src,evnt)); % Add obj to argument list
```

The `fcnview` object stores a handle to the `event.listener` object in its `HLUpdateGraph` property, which is used to enable/disable the listener by a context menu (see “Enable and Disable Listeners” on page 11-58).

The `fcnview` object (`obj`) is added to the two default arguments (`src, evnt`) passed to the listener callback. Keep in mind, the source of the event (`src`) is the `fcneval` object, but the `fcnview` object contains the handle of the surface object that the callback updates.

The `listenUpdateGraph` function is defined as follows:

```
function listenUpdateGraph(obj,src,evnt)
    if ishandle(obj.HSurface) % If surface exists
        obj.updateSurfaceData % Update surface data
    end
end
```

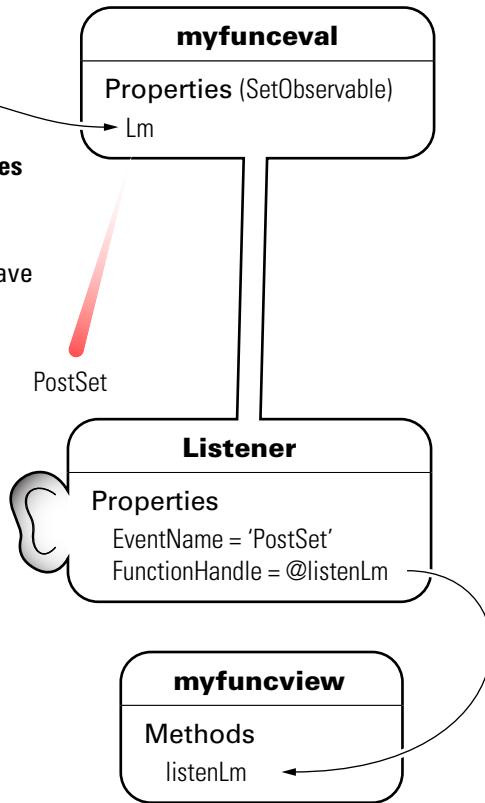
The `updateSurfaceData` function is a class method that updates the surface data when a different mathematical function is assigned to the `fcneval` object. Updating a graphics object data is more efficient than creating a new object using the new data:

```
function updateSurfaceData(obj)
% Get data from fcneval object and set surface data
set(obj.HSurface,...,
    'XData',obj.FcnObject.Data.X,...,
    'YData',obj.FcnObject.Data.Y,...,
    'ZData',obj.FcnObject.Data.Matrix);
end
```

## The PostSet Event Listener

All properties support the predefined `PostSet` event (See “Property-Set and Query Events” on page 11-17 for more information on property events). This example uses the `PostSet` event for the `fcneval Lm` property. This property contains a two-element vector specifying the range over which the mathematical function is evaluated. Just after this property is changed (by a statement like `obj.Lm = [-3 5];`), the `fcnview` objects listening for this event update the graph to reflect the new data.

1. New limits are assigned.
2. The **SetObservable** attribute of **Properties** is set to **True**, so setting the property automatically triggers a **PostSet** event.  
Note that methods and events did not have to be declared in **myfuncEval**.
3. A message is broadcast.
4. A listener awaiting the message executes its callback.



### Sequence During the `Lm` Property Assignment

The `fcneval` class defines a set function for the `Lm` property. When a value is assigned to this property during object construction or property reassignment, the following sequence occurs:

- 1 An attempt is made to assign argument value to `Lm` property.
- 2 The `set.Lm` method executes to check whether the value is in appropriate range — if yes, it makes assignment, if no, it generates an error.
- 3 If the value of `Lm` is set successfully, MATLAB triggers a `PostSet` event.
- 4 All listeners execute their callbacks, but the order is nondeterministic.

The **PostSet** event does not occur until an actual assignment of the property occurs. The property set function provides an opportunity to deal with potential assignment errors before the **PostSet** event occurs.

### Enable PostSet Property Event

To create a listener for the **PostSet** event, you must set the property's **SetObservable** attribute to **true**:

```
properties (SetObservable = true)
    Lm = [-2*pi 2*pi]; % specifies default value
end
```

MATLAB automatically triggers the event so it is not necessary to call **notify**.

“Specify Property Attributes” on page 8-7 provides a list of all property attributes.

### Listener and Callback for PostSet Event

The **fcnview** class creates a listener for the **PostSet** event using the **addlistener** method:

```
obj.HLLm = addlistener(obj.FcnObject,'Lm','PostSet',...
    @(src,evnt)listenLm(obj,src,evnt)); % Add obj to argument list
```

The **fcnview** object stores a handle to the **event.listener** object in its **HLLm** property, which is used to enable/disable the listener by a context menu (see “Enable and Disable Listeners” on page 11-58).

The **fcnview** object (**obj**) is added to the two default arguments (**src**, **evnt**) passed to the listener callback. Keep in mind, the source of the event (**src**) is the **fcneval** object, but the **fcnview** object contains the handle of the surface object that the callback updates.

The callback sets the axes limits and updates the surface data because changing the limits causes the mathematical function to be evaluated over a different range:

```
function listenLm(obj,src,evnt)
    if ishandle(obj.HAxes) % If there is an axes
        lims(obj); % Update its limits
        if ishandle(obj.HSurface) % If there is a surface
            obj.updateSurfaceData % Update its data
        end
    end
end
```

```
end
```

## Enable and Disable Listeners

Each `fcnview` object stores the handle of the listener objects it creates so that the listeners can be enabled or disabled via a context menu after the graphs are created. All listeners are instances of the `event.listener` class, which defines a property called `Enabled`. By default, this property has a value of `true`, which enables the listener. If you set this property to `false`, the listener still exists, but is disabled. This example creates a context menu active on the axes of each graph that provides a way to change the value of the `Enabled` property.

### Context Menu Callback

There are two callbacks used by the context menu corresponding to the two items on the menu:

- **Listen** — Sets the `Enabled` property for both the `UpdateGraph` and `PostSet` listeners to `true` and adds a check mark next to the **Listen** menu item.
- **Don't Listen** — Sets the `Enabled` property for both the `UpdateGraph` and `PostSet` listeners to `false` and adds a check mark next to the **Don't Listen** menu item.

Both callbacks include the `fcnview` object as an argument (in addition to the required source and event data arguments) to provide access to the handle of the listener objects.

The `enableLisn` function is called when the user selects **Listen** from the context menu.

```
function enableLisn(obj,src,evnt)
    obj.HLUpdateGraph.Enabled = true; % Enable listener
    obj.HLLm.Enabled = true; % Enable listener
    set(obj.HEnableCm,'Checked','on') % Check Listen
    set(obj.HDisableCm,'Checked','off') % Uncheck Don't Listen
end
```

The `disableLisn` function is called when the user selects **Don't Listen** from the context menu.

```
function disableLisn(obj,src,evnt)
    obj.HLUpdateGraph.Enabled = false; % Disable listener
    obj.HLLm.Enabled = false; % Disable listener
    set(obj.HEnableCm,'Checked','off') % Uncheck Listen
    set(obj.HDisableCm,'Checked','on') % Check Don't Listen
end
```

## @fcneval/fcneval.m Class Code

```
classdef fcneval < handle
properties
    FofXY
end

properties (SetObservable = true)
    Lm = [-2*pi 2*pi]
end % properties SetObservable = true

properties (Dependent = true)
    Data
end

events
    UpdateGraph
end

methods
    function obj = fcneval(fcn_handle,limits) % Constructor returns object
        if nargin > 0
            obj.FofXY = fcn_handle; % Assign property values
            obj.Lm = limits;
        end
    end

    function set.FofXY(obj,func)
        me = fcneval.isSuitable(func);
        if ~isempty(me)
            throw(me)
        end
        obj.FofXY = func;
        notify(obj,'UpdateGraph');
    end

    function set.Lm(obj,lim)
        if ~(lim(1) < lim(2))
            error('Limits must be monotonically increasing')
        else
            obj.Lm = lim;
        end
    end
end
```

```
function data = get.Data(obj)
    [x,y] = fcneval.grid(obj.Lm);
    matrix = obj.FofXY(x,y);
    data.X = x;
    data.Y = y;
    data.Matrix = real(matrix);

end

end % methods

methods (Static = true)
    function [x,y] = grid(lim)
        inc = (lim(2)-lim(1))/20;
        [x,y] = meshgrid(lim(1):inc:lim(2));
    end % grid

    function isOk = isSuitable(funcH)
        v = [1 1;1 1];
        try
            funcH(v,v);
        catch %#ok<CTCH>
            me = MException('DocExample:fcneval',...
                ['The function ',func2str(funcH),' Is not a suitable F(x,y)']);
            isOk = me;
            return
        end
        if isscalar(funcH(v,v));
            me = MException('DocExample:fcneval',...
                ['The function ',func2str(funcH),' Returns a scalar when evaluated']);
            isOk = me;
            return
        end
        isOk = [];
    end
end

end
```

## @fcnview/fcnview.m Class Code

```
classdef fcnview < handle
```

```
properties
    FcnObject      % fcneval object
    HAxes          % subplot axes handle
    HLUpdateGraph % UpdateGraph listener handle
    HLLm           % Lm property PostSet listener handle
    HEnableCm      % "Listen" context menu handle
    HDisableCm    % "Don't Listen" context menu handle
    HSurface        % Surface object handle
end

methods
    function obj = fcnview(fcnobj)
        if nargin > 0
            obj.FcnObject = fcnobj;
            obj.createLisn;
        end
    end

    function createLisn(obj)
        obj.HLUpdateGraph = addlistener(obj.FcnObject,'UpdateGraph',...
            @(src,evnt)listenUpdateGraph(obj,src,evnt));
        obj.HLLm = addlistener(obj.FcnObject,'Lm','PostSet',...
            @(src,evnt)listenLm(obj,src,evnt));
    end

    function lims(obj)
        lmts = obj.FcnObject.Lm;
        set(obj.HAxes,'XLim',lmts);
        set(obj.HAxes,'Ylim',lmts);
    end

    function updateSurfaceData(obj)
        data = obj.FcnObject.Data;
        set(obj.HSurface,...
            'XData',data.X, ...
            'YData',data.Y, ...
            'ZData',data.Matrix);
    end

    function listenUpdateGraph(obj,~,~)
        if ishandle(obj.HSurface)
            obj.updateSurfaceData
        end
    end
end
```

```
function listenLm(obj,~,~)
    if ishandle(obj.HAxes)
        lims(obj);
        if ishandle(obj.HSurface)
            obj.updateSurfaceData
        end
    end
end

function delete(obj)
    if ishandle(obj.HAxes)
        delete(obj.HAxes);
    else
        return
    end
end

end
methods (Static)
    createViews(a)
end
end

@fcnview/createViews

function createViews(fcnevalobj)
    p = pi; deg = 180/p;
    hfig = figure('Visible','off',...
        'Toolbar','none');

    for k=4:-1:1
        fcnviewobj(k) = fcnview(fcnevalobj);
        axh = subplot(2,2,k);
        fcnviewobj(k).HAxes = axh;
        hcm(k) = uicontextmenu;
        set(axh,'Parent',hfig,...
            'FontSize',8,...,
            'UIContextMenu',hcm(k))
        fcnviewobj(k).HEnableCm = uimenu(hcm(k),...
            'Label','Listen',...
            'Checked','on',...
            'Callback',@(src,evnt)enableLsn(fcnviewobj(k),src,evnt));
        fcnviewobj(k).HDisableCm = uimenu(hcm(k),...
            'Label','Don''t Listen',...
            'Callback',@(src,evnt)disableLsn(fcnviewobj(k),src,evnt));
    end
end
```

```
'Checked','off',...
'Callback',@(src,evnt)disableLisn(fcnviewobj(k),src,evnt));
az = p/k*deg;
view(axh,az,30)
title(axh,['View: ',num2str(az),' 30'])
fcnviewobj(k).lims;
surfLight(fcnviewobj(k),axh)
end
set(hfig,'Visible','on')
end
function surfLight(obj,axh)
obj.HSurface = surface(obj.FcnObject.Data.X, ...
obj.FcnObject.Data.Y, ...
obj.FcnObject.Data.Matrix, ...
'FaceColor',[.8 .8 0], 'EdgeColor',[.3 .3 .2], ...
'FaceLighting','phong', ...
'FaceAlpha',.3, ...
'HitTest','off', ...
'Parent',axh);
lims(obj)
camlight left; material shiny; grid off
colormap copper
end

function enableLisn(obj,~,~)
obj.HLUpdateGraph.Enabled = true;
obj.HLLm.Enabled = true;
set(obj.HEnableCm,'Checked','on')
set(obj.HDisableCm,'Checked','off')
end

function disableLisn(obj,~,~)
obj.HLUpdateGraph.Enabled = false;
obj.HLLm.Enabled = false;
set(obj.HEnableCm,'Checked','off')
set(obj.HDisableCm,'Checked','on')
end
```



# How to Build on Other Classes

---

- “Hierarchies of Classes — Concepts” on page 12-2
- “Subclass Syntax” on page 12-7
- “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9
- “Control Sequence of Constructor Calls” on page 12-14
- “Modify Superclass Methods” on page 12-16
- “Modify Superclass Properties” on page 12-19
- “Subclassing Multiple Classes” on page 12-21
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- “Class Members Access” on page 12-26
- “Property Access List” on page 12-34
- “Method Access List” on page 12-35
- “Event Access List” on page 12-36
- “Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-37
- “How to Define Handle-Compatible Classes” on page 12-39
- “Methods for Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-44
- “Handle-Compatible Classes and Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 12-46
- “Subclasses of MATLAB Built-In Types” on page 12-48
- “Behavior of Inherited Built-In Methods” on page 12-52
- “Subclasses of Built-In Types Without Properties” on page 12-57
- “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65
- “Use of size and numel with Classes” on page 12-73
- “Class to Represent Hardware” on page 12-79
- “Determine Array Class” on page 12-82
- “Abstract Classes” on page 12-86
- “Define an Interface Superclass” on page 12-91

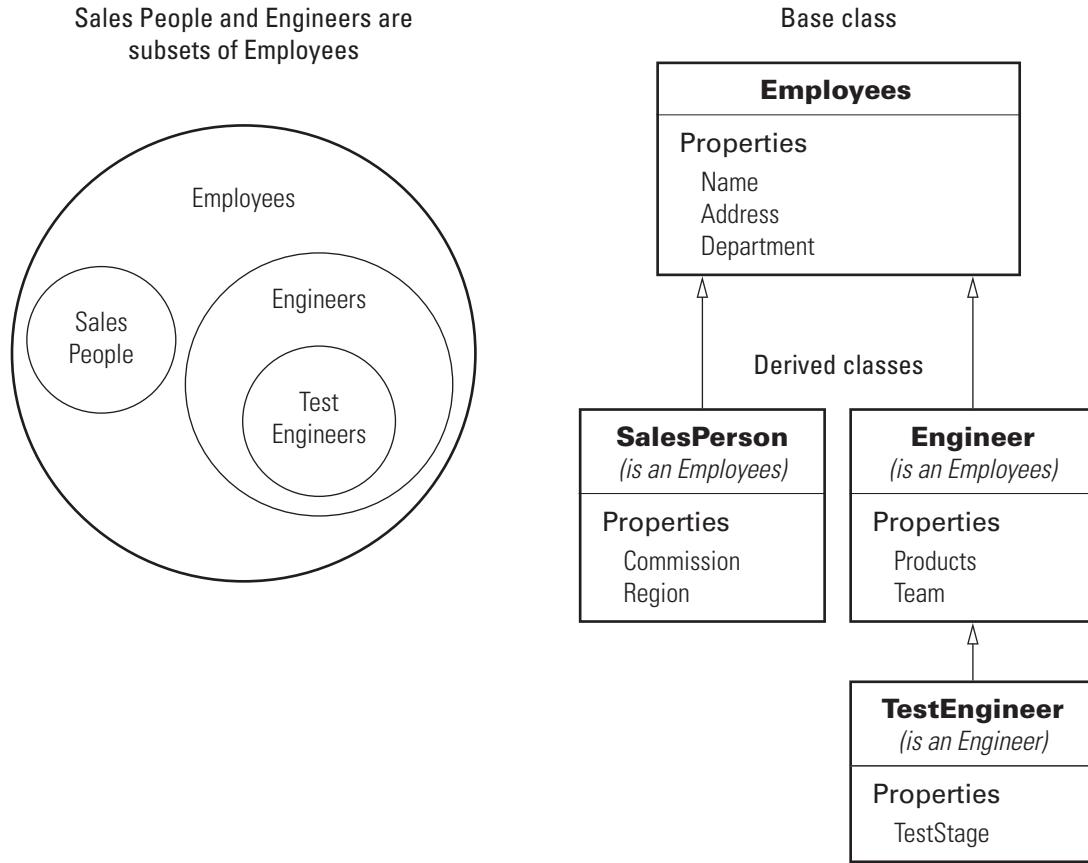
## Hierarchies of Classes — Concepts

### In this section...

- “Classification” on page 12-2
- “Develop the Abstraction” on page 12-3
- “Design of Class Hierarchies” on page 12-4
- “Super and Subclass Behavior” on page 12-4
- “Implementation and Interface Inheritance” on page 12-5

### Classification

Organizing classes into hierarchies facilitates the reuse of code and the reuse of solutions to design problems that have already been solved. You can think of class hierarchies as sets — supersets (referred to as *superclasses* or *base classes*), and subsets (referred to as *subclasses* or *derived classes*). For example, the following picture shows how you could represent an employee database with classes.



The root of the hierarchy is the **Employees** class. It contains data and operations that apply to the set of all employees. Contained in the set of employees are subsets whose members, while still employees, are also members of sets that more specifically define the type of employee. Subclasses like **TestEngineer** are examples of these subsets.

## Develop the Abstraction

Classes are representations of real world concepts or things. When designing a class, form an abstraction of what the class represents. Consider an abstraction of an employee and what are the essential aspects of employees for the intended use of the class. Name, address, and department can be what all employees have in common.

When designing classes, your abstraction contains only those elements that are necessary. For example, the employee hair color and shoe size certainly characterize the employee, but are probably not relevant to the design of this employee class. Their sales region is relevant only to some employee so this characteristic belongs in a subclass.

## Design of Class Hierarchies

As you design a system of classes, put common data and functionality in a superclass, which you then use to derive subclasses. The subclasses inherit the data and functionality of the superclass and define only aspects that are unique to their particular purposes. This approach provides advantages:

- Avoid duplicating code that is common to all classes.
- Add or change subclasses at any time without modifying the superclass or affecting other subclasses.
- If the superclass changes (for example, all employees are assigned a number), then the subclass automatically get these changes.

## Super and Subclass Behavior

Subclass objects behave like objects of the superclass because they are specializations of the superclass. This fact facilitates the development of related classes that behave similarly, but are implemented differently.

### A Subclass Object “Is A” Superclass Object

You can usually describe the relationship between an object of a subclass and an object of its superclass with a statement like:

The subclass is a superclass. For example: An Engineer is an Employee.

This relationship implies that objects belonging to a subclass have the same properties, methods, and events as the superclass. Subclass objects also have any new features defined by the subclass. Test this relationship with the `isa` function.

### Treat Subclass Objects like Superclass Objects

You can pass a subclass object to a superclass method, but you can access only those properties that the superclass defines. This behavior enables you to modify the subclasses without affecting the superclass.

Two points about super and subclass behavior to keep in mind are:

- Methods defined in the superclass can operate on subclass objects.
- Methods defined in the subclass cannot operate on superclass objects.

Therefore, you can treat an `Engineer` object like any other `Employees` object, but an `Employee` object cannot pass for an `Engineer` object.

### **Limitations to Object Substitution**

MATLAB determines the class of an object based on its most specific class. Therefore, an `Engineer` object is of `class Engineer`, while it is also an `Employees` object, as using the `isa` function reveals.

Generally, MATLAB does not allow you to create arrays containing a mix of superclass and subclass objects because an array can be of only one class. If you attempt to concatenate objects of different classes, MATLAB looks for a converter method defined by the less dominant class

See “Concatenating Objects of Different Classes” on page 10-17 for more information.

See `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous` for information on defining heterogeneous class hierarchies.

See “Object Converters” on page 17-12 for information on defining converter methods.

### **Implementation and Interface Inheritance**

MATLAB classes support both the inheritance of implemented methods from a superclass and the inheritance of interfaces defined by abstract methods in the superclass.

Implementation inheritance enables code reuse by subclasses. For example, an `employee` class can have a `submitStatus` method that all `employee` subclasses can use. Subclasses can extend an inherited method to provide specialized functionality, while reusing the common aspects. See “Modify Superclass Methods” on page 12-16 for more information on this process.

Interface inheritance is useful in these cases:

- You want a group of classes to provide a common interface.

- Subclasses create specialized implementations of methods and properties.

Create an interface using an abstract class as the superclass. This class defines the methods and properties that you must implement in the subclasses, but does not provide an implementation.

The subclasses must provide their own implementation of the abstract members of the superclass. To create an interface, define methods and properties as abstract using their **Abstract** attribute. See “Abstract Classes” on page 12-86 for more information and an example.

## Related Examples

- “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9

# Subclass Syntax

## In this section...

“Subclass Definition Syntax” on page 12-7

“Subclass double” on page 12-7

## Subclass Definition Syntax

To define a class that is a subclass of another class, add the superclass to the `classdef` line after a < character:

```
classdef ClassName < SuperClass
```

When inheriting from multiple classes, use the & character to indicate the combination of the superclasses:

```
classdef ClassName < SuperClass1 & SuperClass2
```

See “Class Member Compatibility” on page 12-21 for more information on deriving from multiple superclasses.

## Class Attributes

Subclasses do not inherit superclass attributes.

## Subclass double

Suppose you want to define a class that derived from `double` and restricts values to be positive numbers. The `PositiveDouble` class:

- Supports a default constructor (no input arguments). See “No Input Argument Constructor Requirement” on page 9-24
- Restricts the inputs to positive values using `mustBePositive`.
- Calls the superclass constructor with the input value to create the double numeric value.

```
classdef PositiveDouble < double
    methods
        function obj = PositiveDouble(data)
```

```
if nargin == 0
    data = 1;
else
    mustBePositive(data)
end
obj = obj@double(data);
end
end
end
```

Create an object of the `PositiveDouble` class using a 1-by-5 array of numbers:

```
a = PositiveDouble(1:5);
```

You can perform operations on objects of this class like any double.

```
sum(a)
```

```
ans =
```

```
15
```

Objects of the `PositiveDouble` class must be positive values.

```
a = PositiveDouble(0:5);
```

```
Error using mustBePositive (line 19)
Value must be positive.
```

```
Error in PositiveDouble (line 7)
    mustBePositive(data)
```

## Related Examples

- “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9
- “Subclasses of MATLAB Built-In Types” on page 12-48

# Subclass Constructors

## In this section...

- “Call Superclass Constructor Explicitly” on page 12-9
- “Call Superclass Constructor from Subclass” on page 12-9
- “Subclass Constructor Implementation” on page 12-11
- “Call Only Direct Superclass from Constructor” on page 12-11

## Call Superclass Constructor Explicitly

Explicitly calling each superclass constructor enables you to:

- Pass arguments to superclass constructors
- Control the order in which MATLAB calls the superclass constructors

If you do not explicitly call the superclass constructors from the subclass constructor, MATLAB implicitly calls these constructors with no arguments. The superclass constructors must support the no argument syntax to support implicit calls.

MATLAB does not guarantee any specific calling order when there are multiple superclasses. If the order in which MATLAB calls the superclass constructors is important, call the superclass constructors explicitly from the subclass constructor.

## Call Superclass Constructor from Subclass

To call the constructor for each superclass within the subclass constructor, use the following syntax:

```
obj@SuperClass1(args, . . .);  
. . .  
obj@SuperclassN(args, . . .);
```

Where *obj* is the output of the subclass constructor, *SuperClass...* is the name of a superclass, and *args* are any arguments required by the respective superclass constructor.

For example, the following segment of a class definition shows that a class called **Stocks** that is a subclass of a class called **Assets**.

```
classdef Stocks < Assets
methods
    function s = Stocks(asset_args,...)
        if nargin == 0
            % Assign values to asset_args
        end
        % Call asset constructor
        s@Assets(asset_args);
        ...
    end
end
end
```

“Subclass Constructors” on page 9-24 provides more information on creating subclass constructor methods.

### Reference Superclasses Contained in Packages

If a superclass is contained in a package, include the package name. For example, the `Assets` class is in the `finance` package:

```
classdef Stocks < finance.Assets
methods
    function s = Stocks(asset_args,...)
        if nargin == 0
            ...
        end
        % Call asset constructor
        s@finance.Assets(asset_args);
        ...
    end
end
end
```

### Initialize Objects Using Multiple Superclasses

To derive a class from multiple superclasses, initialize the subclass object with calls to each superclass constructor:

```
classdef Stocks < finance.Assets & Taxable
methods
    function s = Stocks(asset_args,tax_args,...)
        if nargin == 0
            ...
        end
    end
end
```

```

    end
    % Call asset and member class constructors
    s@finance.Assets(asset_args)
    s@Taxable(tax_args)
    ...
end
end
end

```

## Subclass Constructor Implementation

To ensure that your class constructor supports the zero arguments syntax, assign default values to input argument variables before calling the superclass constructor. You cannot conditionalize a subclass call to the superclass constructor. Locate calls to superclass constructors outside any conditional code blocks.

For example, the `Stocks` class constructor supports the no argument case with the `if` statement, but calls the superclass constructor outside of the `if` code block.

```

classdef Stocks < finance.Assets
properties
    NumShares
    Symbol
end
methods
    function s = Stocks(description,numshares,symbol)
        if nargin == 0
            description = '';
            numshares = 0;
            symbol = '';
        end
        s@finance.Assets(description);
        s.NumShares = numshares;
        s.Symbol = symbol;
    end
end
end

```

## Call Only Direct Superclass from Constructor

Call only direct superclass constructors from a subclass constructor. For example, suppose class `B` derives from class `A` and class `C` derives from class `B`. The constructor

for class C cannot call the constructor for class A to initialize properties. Class B must initialize class A properties.

The following implementations of classes A, B, and C show how to design this relationship in each class.

Class A defines properties x and y, but assigns a value only to x:

```
classdef A
    properties
        x
        y
    end
    methods
        function obj = A(x)
            ...
            obj.x = x;
        end
    end
end
```

Class B inherits properties x and y from class A. The class B constructor calls the class A constructor to initialize x and then assigns a value to y.

```
classdef B < A
    methods
        function obj = B(x,y)
            ...
            obj@A(x);
            obj.y = y;
        end
    end
end
```

Class C accepts values for the properties x and y, and passes these values to the class B constructor, which in turn calls the class A constructor:

```
classdef C < B
    methods
        function obj = C(x,y)
            ...
            obj@B(x,y);
        end
    end
```

end

## Related Examples

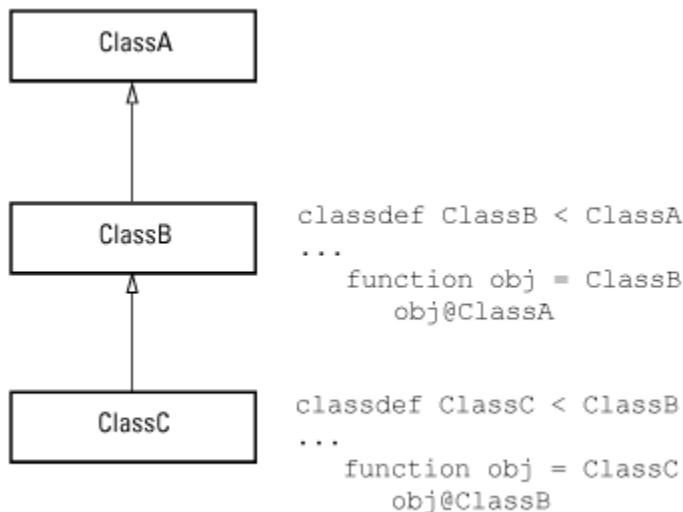
- “No Input Argument Constructor Requirement” on page 9-24

## Control Sequence of Constructor Calls

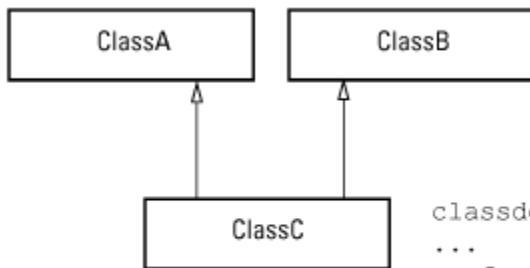
MATLAB does not guarantee the sequence in which superclass constructors are called when constructing a subclass object. However, you can control this order by calling superclass constructors explicitly from the subclass constructor.

If you explicitly call a superclass constructor from the most specific subclass constructor (**ClassC** in the following diagram), then MATLAB calls the most specific subclass constructor first. If you do not make an explicit call to a superclass constructor from the subclass constructor, MATLAB makes the implicit call when accessing the object.

Suppose that you have a hierarchy of classes in which **ClassC** derives from **ClassB**, which derives from **ClassA**. The constructor for a subclass can call only direct superclasses. Therefore, each class constructor can call the direct superclass constructor:



In cases of multiple inheritance, the subclass constructor can call each superclass constructor. To ensure that a specific superclass constructor calling sequence is followed, call all direct superclass constructors explicitly from the most specific subclass constructor:



```
classdef ClassC < ClassB & ClassA  
...  
    function obj = ClassC  
        obj@ClassA  
        obj@ClassB
```

## Related Examples

- “Call Only Direct Superclass from Constructor” on page 12-11
- “Class Constructor Methods” on page 9-20

## Modify Superclass Methods

### In this section...

- “When to Modify Superclass Methods” on page 12-16
- “Extend Superclass Methods” on page 12-16
- “Redefine Superclass Methods in Subclass” on page 12-17
- “Override Superclass Methods” on page 12-18

### When to Modify Superclass Methods

Class design enable you to pass a subclass object to a superclass method and have the method execute properly. At the same time, subclass methods can apply special processing to the unique aspects of the subclass. Some useful techniques include:

- Extend — Calling a superclass method from within a subclass method
- Redefine — Reimplementing in the subclass, the protected methods that are called from within a public superclass method
- Override — Defining the same named methods in both super and subclass, but using different implementations

### Extend Superclass Methods

Subclass methods can call superclass methods of the same name. This technique enables you to extend a superclass method in a subclass without completely redefining the superclass method.

For example, suppose that both superclass and subclass define a method called `foo`. The method names are the same so the subclass method can call the superclass method. However, the subclass method can also perform other steps before and after the call to the superclass method. It can operate on the specialized parts to the subclass that are not part of the superclass.

For example, this subclass defines a `foo` method that calls the superclass `foo` method

```
classdef Sub < Super
methods
    function foo(obj)
        % preprocessing steps
```

```

    ...
    foo@Super(obj);
    % postprocessing steps
    ...
end
end
end

```

## Redefine Superclass Methods in Subclass

A superclass method can define a process that executes in a series of steps using a protected method for each step (`Access` attribute set to `protected`). Then, subclasses can create their own versions of the protected methods that implement the individual steps in the process.

Implement this technique as shown here:

```

classdef Super
methods
    function foo(obj)
        step1(obj) % Call step1
        step2(obj) % Call step2
        step3(obj) % Call step3
    end
end
methods (Access = protected)
    function step1(obj)
        % Superclass version
    end
    function step2(obj)
        % Superclass version
    end
    function step3(obj)
        % Superclass version
    end
end
end

```

The subclass does not reimplement the `foo` method, it reimplements only the methods that carry out the series of steps (`step1(obj)`, `step2(obj)`, `step3(obj)`). That is, the subclass can specialize the actions taken by each step, but does not control the order of the steps in the process. When you pass a subclass object to the superclass `foo` method, MATLAB calls the subclass step methods because of the dispatching rules.

```
classdef Sub < Super
...
methods (Access = protected)
    function step1(obj)
        % Subclass version
    end
    function step2(obj)
        % Subclass version
    end
    function step3(obj)
        % Subclass version
    end
...
end
end
```

## Override Superclass Methods

You can completely redefine a superclass method in a subclass. In this case, both the superclass and the subclass would define a method with the same name. However, the implementation would be different and the subclass method would not call the superclass method.

```
classdef super
methods
    function foo(obj)
        % Superclass implementation
    end
end

classdef sub
methods
    function foo(obj)
        % Subclass implementation
    end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Invoking Superclass Methods in Subclass Methods” on page 9-18

# Modify Superclass Properties

## In this section...

“Superclass Property Modification” on page 12-19

“Private Local Property Takes Precedence in Method” on page 12-19

## Superclass Property Modification

There are two separate conditions under which you can redefine superclass properties:

- The value of the superclass property **Abstract** attribute is **true**
- The values of the superclass property **SetAccess** and **GetAccess** attributes are **private**

If a superclass defines a property as abstract, the subclass must implement a concrete version of this property or the subclass is also abstract. Superclasses define abstract properties to create a consistent interface among subclasses.

If a superclass defines a property with private access, then only the superclass can access this property. The subclass can implement a different property with the same name.

## Private Local Property Takes Precedence in Method

When superclass and subclass define a property with the same name, methods that refer to this property access the property of the class defining the method.

For example, if a subclass property has the same name as a superclass private property, and a method of the superclass references the property name, MATLAB accesses the property defined by the superclass.

Consider the following classes, **Super** and **Sub**:

```
classdef Super
    properties (Access = private)
        Prop = 2
    end
    methods
        function p = superMethod(obj)
            p = obj.Prop;
```

```
    end
end
end

classdef Sub < Super
properties
    Prop = 1
end
end
```

If you create an instance of the **Sub** class and use it to call the superclass method, MATLAB access the private property of the superclass:

```
subObj = Sub
subObj =
    Sub with properties:
        Prop: 1
subObj.superMethod
ans =
    2
```

### More About

- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8

# Subclassing Multiple Classes

## In this section...

[“Class Member Compatibility” on page 12-21](#)

[“Multiple Inheritance” on page 12-22](#)

## Class Member Compatibility

When you create a subclass derived from multiple superclasses, the subclass inherits the properties, methods, and events defined by all specified superclasses. If more than one superclass defines a property, method, or event having the same name, there must be an unambiguous resolution to the multiple definitions. You cannot derive a subclass from any two or more classes that define incompatible class members.

Here are various situations where you can resolve name and definition conflicts.

### Property Conflicts

If two or more superclasses define a property with the same name, then at least one of the following must be true:

- All, or all but one of the properties must have their **SetAccess** and **GetAccess** attributes set to **private**
- The properties have the same definition in all superclasses (for example, when all superclasses inherited the property from a common base class)

### Method Conflicts

If two or more superclasses define methods with the same name, then at least one of the following must be true:

- The method **Access** attribute is **private** so only the defining superclass can access the method.
- The method has the same definition in all subclasses. This situation can occur when all superclasses inherit the method from a common base class and none of the superclasses override the inherited definition.
- The subclass redefines the method to disambiguate the multiple definitions across all superclasses. Therefore, the superclass methods must not have their **Sealed** attribute set to **true**.

- Only one superclass defines the method as **Sealed**, in which case, the subclass adopts the sealed method definition.
- The superclasses define the methods as **Abstract** and rely on the subclass to define the method.

### Event Conflicts

If two or more superclasses define events with the same name, then at least one of the following must be true:

- The event **ListenAccess** and **NotifyAccess** attributes must be **private**.
- The event has the same definition in all superclasses (for example, when all superclasses inherited the event from a common base class)

### Multiple Inheritance

Resolving the potential conflicts involved when defining a subclass from multiple classes often reduces the value of this approach. For example, problems can arise when you enhance superclasses in future versions and introduce new conflicts.

Reduce potential problems by implementing only one unrestricted superclass. In all other superclasses, all methods are

- Abstract
- Defined by a subclass
- Inherited from the unrestricted superclass

When using multiple inheritance, ensure that all superclasses remain free of conflicts in definition.

### Related Examples

- “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9
- “Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-37

# Specify Allowed Subclasses

## In this section...

[“Basic Knowledge” on page 12-23](#)

[“Why Control Allowed Subclasses” on page 12-23](#)

[“Specify Allowed Subclasses” on page 12-23](#)

[“Define Sealed Hierarchy of Classes” on page 12-25](#)

## Basic Knowledge

The material presented in this section builds on an understanding of the following information:

- [“Class Metadata” on page 16-2](#)
- [“Attribute Specification” on page 5-22](#)

## Why Control Allowed Subclasses

A class definition can specify a list of classes that it allows as subclasses. Classes not in the list cannot be defined as subclass of the class. To specify the allowed subclasses, use the `AllowedSubclasses` class attribute.

The `AllowedSubclasses` attribute provides a design point between `Sealed` classes, which do not allow subclassing, and the default behavior, which does not restrict subclassing.

By controlling the allowed subclasses, you can create a sealed hierarchy of classes. That is, a system of classes that enables a specific set of classes to derive from specific base classes, but that does not allow unrestricted subclassing.

See “[Define Sealed Hierarchy of Classes](#)” on page 12-25 for more about this technique.

## Specify Allowed Subclasses

Specify a list of one or more allowed subclasses in the `classdef` statement by assigning `meta.class` objects to the `AllowedSubclasses` attribute. Create the `meta.class` object referencing a specific class using the `?` operator and the class name:

```
classdef (AllowedSubclasses = ?ClassName) MySuperClass
...
end
```

Use a cell array of `meta.class` objects to define more than one allowed subclass:

```
classdef (AllowedSubclasses = {?ClassName1,?ClassName2,...?ClassNameN}) MySuperClass
...
end
```

Always use the fully qualified class name when referencing the class name:

```
classdef (AllowedSubclasses = ?Package.SubPackage.ClassName1) MySuperClass
...
end
```

Assigning an empty cell array to the `AllowedSubclasses` attribute is effectively the same as defining a `Sealed` class.

```
classdef (AllowedSubclasses = {}) MySuperClass
...
end
```

---

**Note:** Use only the `?` operator and the class name to generate `meta.class` objects.

Values assigned to the `AllowedSubclasses` attribute cannot contain any other MATLAB expressions, including functions that return either `meta.class` objects or cell arrays of `meta.class` objects.

---

### Result of Declaring Allowed Subclasses

Including a class in the list of `AllowedSubclasses` does not define that class as a subclass or require you to define the class as a subclass. It just allows the referenced class to be defined as a subclass.

Declaring a class as an allowed subclass does not affect whether this class can itself be subclassed.

A class definition can contain assignments to the `AllowedSubclasses` attribute that reference classes that are not currently defined or available on the MATLAB path. However, any referenced subclass that MATLAB cannot find when loading the class is effectively removed from the list without causing an error or warning.

**Note:** If MATLAB does not find any of the classes in the allowed classes list, the class is effectively **Sealed**. A sealed class is equivalent to `AllowedSubclasses = {}`.

---

Use the `meta.class` property `RestrictsSubclassing` to determine if a class is **Sealed** or specifies `AllowedSubclasses`.

## Define Sealed Hierarchy of Classes

The `AllowedSubclasses` attribute enables you to define a sealed class hierarchy by sealing the allowed subclasses:

```
classdef (AllowedSubclasses = {?SubClass1,?SubClass2}) SuperClass
    ...
end
```

Define the allowed subclasses as **Sealed**:

```
classdef (Sealed) SubClass1
    ...
end

classdef (Sealed) SubClass2
    ...
end
```

Sealed class hierarchies enable you to use the level of abstraction that your design requires while maintaining a closed system of classes.

## Related Examples

- “Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-37

# Class Members Access

## In this section...

- “Basic Knowledge” on page 12-26
- “Applications for Access Control Lists” on page 12-27
- “Specify Access to Class Members” on page 12-27
- “Properties with Access Lists” on page 12-28
- “Methods with Access Lists” on page 12-29
- “Abstract Methods with Access Lists” on page 12-33

## Basic Knowledge

The material presented in this section builds on an understanding of the following information:

### Related Topics

- “Class Metadata” on page 16-2
- “Attribute Specification” on page 5-22

### Terminology and Concepts

- *Class members* — Properties, methods, and events defined by a class
- *Defining class* — The class defining the class member for which access is being specified
- *Get access* — Permission to read the value of a property, controlled by the property `GetAccess` attribute
- *Set access* — Permission to assign a value to a property; controlled by the property `SetAccess` attribute
- *Method access* — Determines what other methods and functions can call the class method; controlled by the method `Access` attribute
- *Listen access* — Permission to define listeners; controlled by the event `ListenAccess` attribute
- *Notify access* — Permission to trigger events, controlled by the event `NotifyAccess` attribute

## Possible Values for Access to Class Members

The following class member attributes can contain a list of classes:

- Properties — `Access`, `GetAccess`, and `SetAccess`. For a list of all property attributes, see “Property Attributes” on page 8-8 .
- Methods — `Access`. For a list of all method attributes, see “Method Attributes” on page 9-5 .
- Events — `ListenAccess` and `NotifyAccess`. For a list of all event attributes, see “Event Attributes” on page 11-19.

These attributes accept the following possible values:

- `public` — Unrestricted access
- `protected` — Access by defining class and its subclasses
- `private` — Access by defining class only
- Access list — A list of one or more classes. Only the defining class and the classes in the list have access to the class members to which the attribute applies. If you specify a list of classes, MATLAB does not allow access by any other class (that is, access is `private`, except for the listed classes).

## Applications for Access Control Lists

Access control lists enable you to control access to specific class properties, methods, and events. Access control lists specify a list of classes to which you grant access to these class members.

This technique provides greater flexibility and control in the design of a system of classes. For example, use access control lists to define separate classes, but not allow access to class members from outside the class system.

## Specify Access to Class Members

Specify the classes that are allowed to access a particular class member in the member access attribute statement. For example:

```
methods (Access = {?ClassName1,?ClassName2,...})
```

Use the class `meta.class` object to refer to classes in the access list. To specify more than one class, use a cell array of `meta.class` objects. Use the package name when referring to classes that are in packages.

**Note:** Specify the `meta.class` objects explicitly (created with the `?` operator), not as values returned by functions or other MATLAB expressions.

---

### How MATLAB Interprets Attribute Values

- Granting access to a list of classes restricts access to only:
  - The defining class
  - The classes in the list
  - Subclasses of the classes in the list
- Including the defining class in the access list gives all subclasses of the defining class access.
- MATLAB resolves references to classes in the access list only when the class is loaded. If MATLAB cannot find a class that is included in the access list, that class is effectively removed from access.
- MATLAB replaces unresolved `meta.class` entries in the list with empty `meta.class` objects.
- An empty access list (that is, an empty cell array) is equivalent to `private` access.

### Specify Metaclass Objects

Generate the `meta.class` objects using only the `?` operator and the class name. Values assigned to the attributes cannot contain any other MATLAB expressions, including functions that return allowed attribute values:

- `meta.class` objects
- Cell arrays of `meta.class` objects
- The values `public`, `protected`, or `private`

Specify these values explicitly, as shown in the example code in this section.

### Properties with Access Lists

These sample classes show the behavior of a property that grants read access (`GetAccess`) to a class. The `GrantAccess` class gives `GetAccess` to the `NeedAccess` class for the `Prop1` property:

```
classdef GrantAccess
```

```

properties (GetAccess = ?NeedAccess)
    Prop1 = 7
end
end

```

The `NeedAccess` class defines a method that uses the value of the `GrantAccess Prop1` value. The `dispObj` method is defined as a `Static` method, however, it could be an ordinary method.

```

classdef NeedAccess
methods (Static)
    function dispObj(GrantAccessObj)
        disp(['Prop1 is: ',num2str(GrantAccessObj.Prop1)])
    end
end
end

```

Get access to `Prop1` is private so MATLAB returns an error if you attempt to access the property from outside the class definition. For example, from the command line:

```
a = GrantAccess;
a.Prop1
```

Getting the 'Prop1' property of the 'GrantAccess' class is not allowed.

However, MATLAB allows access to `Prop1` by the `NeedAccess` class:

```
NeedAccess.dispObj(a)
```

```
Prop1 is: 7
```

## Methods with Access Lists

Classes granted access to a method can:

- Call the method using an instance of the defining class.
- Define their own method with the same name (if not a subclass).
- Override the method in a subclass only if the superclass defining the method includes itself or the subclass in the access list.

These sample classes show the behavior of methods called from methods of other classes that are in the access list. The class `AcListSuper` gives the `AcListNonSub` class access to its `m1` method:

```
classdef AcListSuper
methods (Access = {?AcListNonSub})
    function obj = m1(obj)
        disp ('Method m1 called')
    end
end
end
```

Because `AcListNonSub` is in the access list of `m1`, its methods can call `m1` using an instance of `AcListSuper`:

```
classdef AcListNonSub
methods
    function obj = nonSub1(obj,AcListSuper_Obj)
        % Call m1 on AcListSuper class
        AcListSuper_Obj.m1;
    end
    function obj = m1(obj)
        % Define a method named m1
        disp(['Method m1 defined by ',class(obj)])
    end
end
end
```

Create objects of both classes:

```
a = AcListSuper;
b = AcListNonSub;
```

Call the `AcListSuper m1` method using an `AcListNonSub` method:

```
b.nonSub1(a);
```

Method m1 called

Call the `AcListNonSub m1` method:

```
b.m1;
```

Method m1 defined by AcListNonSub

### Subclasses Without Access

Including the defining class in the access list for a method grants access to all subclasses derived from that class. When you derive from a class that has a method with an access list and that list does *not* include the defining class:

- Subclass methods cannot call the superclass method.
- Subclass methods can call the superclass method indirectly using an instance of a class that is in the access list.
- Subclasses cannot override the superclass method.
- Methods of classes that are in the superclass method access list, but that are not subclasses, can call the superclass method.

For example, `AcListSub` is a subclass of `AcListSuper`. The `AcListSuper` class defines an access list for method `m1`. However, this list does not include `AcListSuper`, so subclasses of `AcListSuper` do not have access to method `m1`:

```
classdef AcListSub < AcListSuper
  methods
    function obj = sub1(obj,AcListSuper_Obj)
      % Access m1 via superclass object (***NOT ALLOWED***)
      AcListSuper_Obj.m1;
    end
    function obj = sub2(obj,AcListNonSub_Obj,AcListSuper_Obj)
      % Access m1 via object that is in access list (is allowed)
      AcListNonSub_Obj.nonSub1(AcListSuper_Obj);
    end
  end
end
```

### No Direct Call to Superclass Method

Attempting to call the superclass `m1` method from the `sub1` method results in an error because subclasses are not in the access list for `m1`:

```
a = AcListSuper;
c = AcListSub;
c.sub1(a);

Cannot access method 'm1' in class 'AcListSuper'.

Error in AcListSub/sub1 (line 4)
  AcListSuper_Obj.m1;
```

### Indirect Call to Superclass Method

You can call a superclass method from a subclass that does not have access to that method using an object of a class that is in the superclass method access list.

The `AcListSub` `sub2` method calls a method of a class (`AcListNonSub`) that is on the access list for `m1`. This method, `nonSub1`, does have access to the superclass `m1` method:

```
a = AcListSuper;
b = AcListNonSub;
c = AcListSub;
c.sub2(b,a);
```

Method m1 called

### No Redefining Superclass Method

When subclasses are not included in the access list for a method, those subclasses cannot define a method with the same name. This behavior is not the same as cases in which the method Access is explicitly declared as `private`.

For example, adding the following method to the `AcListSub` class definition produces an error when you attempt to instantiate the class.

```
methods (Access = {?AcListNonSub})
    function obj = m1(obj)
        disp('AcListSub m1 method')
    end
end

c = AcListSub;

Class 'AcListSub' is not allowed to override the method 'm1' because neither it nor its
superclasses have been granted access to the method by class 'AcListSuper'.
```

### Call Superclass from Listed Class Via Subclass

The `AcListNonSub` class is in the `m1` method access list. This class can define a method that calls the `m1` method using an object of the `AcListSub` class. While `AcListSub` is not in the access list for method `m1`, it is a subclass of `AcListSuper`.

For example, add the following method to the `AcListNonSub` class:

```
methods
    function obj = nonSub2(obj,AcListSub_Obj)
        disp('Call m1 via subclass object:')
        AcListSub_Obj.m1;
    end
end
```

Calling the `nonSub2` method results in execution of the superclass `m1` method:

```
b = AcListNonSub;
```

```
c = AcListSub;  
b.nonSub2(c);  
  
Call m1 via subclass object:  
Method m1 called
```

This behavior is consistent with the behavior of any subclass object, which can substitute for an object of its superclass.

## Abstract Methods with Access Lists

A class containing a method declared as **Abstract** is an abstract class. It is the responsibility of subclasses to implement the abstract method using the function signature declared in the class definition.

When an abstract method has an access list, only the classes in the access list can implement the method. A subclass that is not in the access list cannot implement the abstract method so that subclass is itself abstract.

## Related Examples

- “Property Access List” on page 12-34
- “Method Access List” on page 12-35
- “Event Access List” on page 12-36

## Property Access List

This class declares access lists for the property `GetAccess` and `Access` attributes:

```
classdef PropertyAccess
    properties (GetAccess = {?ClassA, ?ClassB}, SetAccess = private)
        Prop1
    end
    properties (Access = ?ClassC)
        Prop2
    end
end
```

The class `PropertyAccess` specifies the following property access:

- Gives the classes `ClassA` and `ClassB` get access to the `Prop1` property.
- Gives all subclasses of `ClassA` and `ClassB` get access to the `Prop1` property.
- Does not provide get access to `Prop1` from subclasses of `PropertyAccess`.
- Defines private set access for the `Prop1` property.
- Gives set and get access to `Prop2` for `ClassC` and its subclasses.

### Related Examples

- “Properties with Access Lists” on page 12-28

## Method Access List

This class declares an access list for the method **Access** attribute:

```
classdef MethodAccess
    methods (Access = {?ClassA, ?ClassB, ?MethodAccess})
        function listMethod(obj)
            ...
        end
    end
end
```

The **MethodAccess** class specifies the following method access:

- Access to **listMethod** from an instance of **MethodAccess** by methods of the classes **ClassA** and **ClassB**.
- Access to **listMethod** from an instance of **MethodAccess** by methods of subclasses of **MethodAccess**, because of the inclusion of **MethodAccess** in the access list.
- Subclasses of **ClassA** and **ClassB** are allowed to define a method named **listMethod**, and **MethodAccess** is allowed to redefine **listMethod**. However, if **MethodAccess** was not in the access list, its subclasses could not redefine **listMethod**.

## Related Examples

- “Methods with Access Lists” on page 12-29

## Event Access List

This class declares an access list for the event `ListenAccess` attribute:

```
classdef EventAccess
    events (NotifyAccess = private, ListenAccess = {?ClassA, ?ClassB})
        Event1
        Event2
    end
end
```

The class `EventAccess` specifies the following event access:

- Limits notify access for `Event1` and `Event2` to `EventAccess`; only methods of the `EventAccess` can trigger these events.
- Gives listen access for `Event1` and `Event2` to methods of `ClassA` and `ClassB`. Methods of `EventAccess`, `ClassA`, and `ClassB` can define listeners for these events. Subclasses of `MyClass` cannot define listeners for these events.

## Related Examples

- “Events and Listeners Syntax” on page 11-21

# Handle Compatible Classes

## In this section...

- “Basic Knowledge” on page 12-37
- “When to Use Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-37
- “Handle Compatibility Rules” on page 12-38
- “Identify Handle Objects” on page 12-38

## Basic Knowledge

The material presented in this section builds on knowledge of the following information.

- “Subclass Constructors” on page 12-9
- “Subclassing Multiple Classes” on page 12-21
- “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2

## Key Concepts

*Handle-compatible class* — a class that you can include with handle classes in a class hierarchy, even if the class is not a handle class.

- All handle classes are handle-compatible.
- All superclasses of handle-compatible classes must also be handle compatible.

`HandleCompatible` — the class attribute that defines nonhandle classes as handle compatible.

## When to Use Handle Compatible Classes

Typically, when deriving a MATLAB class from other classes, all the superclasses are handle classes, or else none of them are handle classes. However, there are situations in which a class provides some utility that is used by both handle and non-handle subclasses. Because it is not legal to combine handle and non-handle classes, the author of the utility class must implement two distinct versions of the utility.

The solution is to use handle-compatible classes. Handle compatible classes are a type of class that you can use with handle classes when forming sets of superclasses. Designate a

nonhandle compatible class as handle-compatible by using the `HandleCompatible` class attribute.

```
classdef (HandleCompatible) MyClass
    ...
end
```

## Handle Compatibility Rules

Handle-compatible classes (that is, classes whose `HandleCompatible` attribute is set to `true`) follow these rules:

- All superclasses of a handle-compatible class must also be handle compatible
- If a class explicitly sets its `HandleCompatibility` attribute to `false`, then none of the class superclasses can be handle classes.
- If a class does not explicitly set its `HandleCompatible` attribute and, if any superclass is a handle, then all superclasses must be handle compatible.
- The `HandleCompatible` attribute is not inherited.

A class that does not explicitly set its `HandleCompatible` attribute to `true` is:

- A handle class if any of its superclasses are handle classes
- A value class if none of the superclasses are handle classes

## Identify Handle Objects

To determine if an object is a handle object, use the `isa` function:

```
isa(obj, 'handle')
```

## Related Examples

- “How to Define Handle-Compatible Classes” on page 12-39

# How to Define Handle-Compatible Classes

## In this section...

[“What Is Handle Compatibility?” on page 12-39](#)

[“Subclassing Handle-Compatible Classes” on page 12-41](#)

## What Is Handle Compatibility?

A class is handle compatible if:

- It is a handle class
- Its `HandleCompatible` attribute is set to `true`

The `HandleCompatible` class attribute identifies classes that you can combine with handle classes when specifying a set of superclasses.

Handle compatibility provides greater flexibility when defining abstract superclasses. For example, when using mixin and interface classes in which the superclass supports both handle and value subclasses. Handle compatibility removes the need to define both a handle version and a nonhandle version of a class.

## A Handle Compatible Class

The `Utility` class is useful to both handle and value subclasses. In this example, the `Utility` class defines a method to reset property values to the default values defined in the respective class definition:

```
classdef (HandleCompatible) Utility
    methods
        function obj = resetDefaults(obj)
            mc = metaclass(obj);
            mp = mc.PropertyList;
            for k=1:length(mp)
                if mp(k).HasDefault && ~strcmp(mp(k).SetAccess, 'private')
                    obj.(mp(k).Name) = mp(k).DefaultValue;
                end
            end
        end
    end
end
```

The **Utility** class is handle compatible. Therefore, you can use it in the derivation of classes that are either handle classes or value classes. See “Class Metadata” for information on using meta-data classes.

### Return Modified Objects

The **resetDefaults** method defined by the **Utility** class returns the object it modifies. When you call **resetDefaults** with a value object, the method must return the modified object. It is important to implement methods that work with both handle and value objects in a handle compatible superclass. See “Object Modification” on page 5-60 for more information on modifying handle and value objects.

Consider the behavior of a value class that subclasses the **Utility** class. The **PropertyDefaults** class defines three properties, all of which have default values:

```
classdef PropertyDefaults < Utility
    properties
        p1 = datestr(rem(now,1)) % Current time
        p2 = 'red'                % Character vector
        p3 = pi/2                 % Result of division operation
    end
end
```

Create a **PropertyDefaults** object. MATLAB evaluates the expressions assigned as default property values when the class is first loaded. MATLAB uses these same default values whenever you create an instance of this class in the current MATLAB session.

```
pd = PropertyDefaults
pd =
PropertyDefaults with properties:
    p1: ' 4:42 PM'
    p2: 'red'
    p3: 1.5708
```

Assign new values that are different from the default values:

```
pd.p1 = datestr(rem(now,1));
pd.p2 = 'green';
pd.p3 = pi/4;
```

All **pd** object property values now contain values that are different from the default values originally defined by the class:

```
pd
pd =
    PropertyDefaults with properties:
:
    p1: ' 4:45 PM'
    p2: 'green'
    p3: 0.7854
```

Call the `resetDefaults` method, which is inherited from the `Utility` class. Because the `PropertyDefaults` class is not a handle class, return the modified object.

```
pd = pd.resetDefaults
pd =
    PropertyDefaults with properties:
    p1: ' 4:54 PM'
    p2: 'red'
    p3: 1.5708
```

If the `PropertyDefaults` class was a handle class, then you would not need to save the object returned by the `resetDefaults` method. To design a handle compatible class like `Utility`, ensure that all methods work with both kinds of classes.

## Subclassing Handle-Compatible Classes

According to the rules described in “Handle Compatibility Rules” on page 12-38, when you combine a handle superclass with a handle-compatible superclass, the result is a handle subclass, which is handle compatible.

However, subclassing a handle-compatible class does not necessarily result in the subclass being handle compatible. Consider the following two cases, which demonstrate two possible results.

### Combine Nonhandle Utility Class with Handle Classes

Suppose that you define a class that subclasses a handle class, and the handle compatible `Utility` class discussed in “A Handle Compatible Class” on page 12-39. The `HPropertyDefaults` class has these characteristics:

- It is a handle class (it derives from handle).

- All its superclasses are handle compatible (handle classes are handle compatible by definition).

```
classdef HPropertyDefaults < handle & Utility
    properties
        GraphPrim = line
        Width = 1.5
        Color = 'black'
    end
end
```

The `HPropertyDefaults` class is handle compatible:

```
hpd = HPropertyDefaults;
mc = metaclass(hpd);
mc.HandleCompatible
```

ans =

1

### Nonhandle Subclasses of a Handle-Compatible Class

If you subclass both a value class that is not handle compatible and a handle compatible class, the subclass is a nonhandle compatible value class. The `ValueSub` class:

- Is a value class (it does not derive from `handle`.)
- One of its superclasses is handle compatible (the `Utility` class).

```
classdef ValueSub < MException & Utility
    methods
        function obj = ValueSub(str1,str2)
            obj = obj@MException(str1,str2);
        end
    end
end
```

The `ValueSub` class is a nonhandle-compatible value class because the `MException` class does not define the `HandleCompatible` attribute as `true`:

```
hv = ValueSub('MATLAB:narginchk:notEnoughInputs',...
    'Not enough input arguments.');
mc = metaclass(hv);
mc.HandleCompatible
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

## Related Examples

- “Methods for Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-44

## Methods for Handle Compatible Classes

### In this section...

[“Methods for Handle and Value Objects” on page 12-44](#)

[“Modify Value Objects in Methods” on page 12-44](#)

### Methods for Handle and Value Objects

Objects passed to methods of handle compatible classes can be either handle or value objects. There are two different behaviors to consider when implementing methods for a class that operate on both handles and values:

- If an input object is a handle object and the method alters the handle object, these changes are visible to all workspaces that contain the same handle.
- If an input object is a value object, then changes to the object made inside the method affect only the value inside the method workspace.

Handle compatible methods generally do not alter input objects because the effects of such changes are not the same for handle and nonhandle objects.

See “Object Modification” on page 5-60 for information about modifying handle and value objects.

### Modify Value Objects in Methods

If a method operates on both handle and value objects, the method must return the modified object. For example, the `setTime` method returns the object it modifies:

```
classdef (HandleCompatible) Util
    % Utility class that adds a time stamp
    properties
       TimeStamp
    end
    methods
        function obj = setTime(obj)
            obj.TimeStamp = now;
        end
    end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Handle-Compatible Classes and Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 12-46

# Handle-Compatible Classes and Heterogeneous Arrays

## In this section...

[“Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 12-46](#)

[“Methods Must Be Sealed” on page 12-46](#)

[“Template Technique” on page 12-46](#)

## Heterogeneous Arrays

A heterogeneous array contains objects of different classes. Members of a heterogeneous array have a common superclass, but can belong to different subclasses. See the `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous` class for more information on heterogeneous arrays. The `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous` class is a handle-compatible class.

## Methods Must Be Sealed

You can invoke only those methods that are sealed by the common superclass on heterogeneous arrays (`Sealed` attribute set to `true`). Sealed methods prevent subclasses from overriding those methods and guarantee that methods called on heterogeneous arrays have the same definition for the entire array.

Subclasses cannot override sealed methods. In situations requiring subclasses to specialize methods defined by a utility class, you can employ the design pattern referred to as the template method.

## Template Technique

Suppose that you implement a handle compatible class that works with heterogeneous arrays. This approach enables you to seal public methods, while providing a way for each subclass to specialize how the method works on each subclass instance. In the handle compatible class:

- Define a sealed method that accepts a heterogeneous array as input.
- Define a protected, abstract method that each subclass must implement.
- Within the sealed method, call the overridden method for each array element.

Each subclass in the heterogeneous hierarchy implements a concrete version of the abstract method. The concrete method provides specialized behavior required by the particular subclass.

The `Printable` class shows how to implement a template method approach:

```
classdef (HandleCompatible) Printable
    methods(Sealed)
        function print(aryIn)
            n = numel(aryIn);
            for k=1:n
                printElement(aryIn(k));
            end
        end
    end
    methods(Access=protected, Abstract)
        printElement(objIn)
    end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Handle Compatible Classes” on page 12-37

## Subclasses of MATLAB Built-In Types

### In this section...

- “MATLAB Built-In Types” on page 12-48
- “Built-In Types You Can Subclass” on page 12-48
- “Why Subclass Built-In Types” on page 12-49
- “Which Functions Work with Subclasses of Built-In Types” on page 12-49
- “Behavior of Built-In Functions with Subclass Objects” on page 12-49
- “Built-In Subclasses That Define Properties” on page 12-50

## MATLAB Built-In Types

Built-in types represent fundamental kinds of data such as numeric arrays, logical arrays, and character arrays. Other built-in types like cell arrays and structures contain data belonging to any class.

Built-in types define methods that perform operations on objects of these classes. For example, you can perform operations on numeric arrays such as, sorting, arithmetic, and logical operations.

See “Fundamental MATLAB Classes” for more information on MATLAB built-in classes.

---

**Note:** It is an error to define a class that has the same name as a built-in class.

---

## Built-In Types You Can Subclass

You can subclass MATLAB numeric classes and the `logical` class. For a list of numeric types, see “Numeric Types”.

You cannot subclass any class that has its `Sealed` attribute set to `true`. To determine if the class is `Sealed`, query the class metadata:

```
mc = ?ClassName;  
mc.Sealed
```

A value of `0` indicates that the class is not `Sealed` and can be subclasses.

## Why Subclass Built-In Types

Subclass a built-in class to extend the operations that you can perform on a particular class of data. For example , when you want to:

- To perform unique operations on class data.
- Be able to use methods of the built-in class and other built-in functions directly with objects of the subclass. For example, you do not need to reimplement all the mathematical operators if you derived from a class such as `double` that defines these operators.

## Which Functions Work with Subclasses of Built-In Types

Consider a class that defines enumerations. It can derive from an integer class and inherit methods that enable you to compare and sort values. For example, integer classes like `int32` support all the relational methods (`eq`, `ge`, `gt`, `le`, `lt`, `ne`).

To see a list of functions that the subclass has inherited as methods, use the `methods` function:

```
methods('SubClassName')
```

Generally, you can use an object of the subclass with any:

- Inherited methods
- Functions that normally accept input arguments of the same class as the superclass.

## Behavior of Built-In Functions with Subclass Objects

When you define a subclass of a built-in class, the subclass inherits all the methods defined by that built-in class. MATLAB also provides additional methods to subclasses of built-in classes that override several built-in functions.

Built-in functions and methods that work on built-in classes can behave differently when called with subclasses of built-in classes. Their behavior depends on which function you are using and whether your subclass defines properties.

### Behavior Categories

When you call an inherited method on a subclass of a built-in class, the result depends on the nature of the operation performed by the method. The behaviors of these methods fit into several categories.

- Operations on data values return objects of the superclass. For example, if you subclass `double` and perform addition on two subclass objects, MATLAB adds the numeric values and returns a value of class `double`.
- Operations on the orientation or structure of the data return objects of the subclass. Methods that perform these kinds of operations include, `reshape`, `permute`, `transpose`, and so on.
- Converting a subclass object to a built-in class returns an object of the specified class. Functions such as `uint32`, `double`, `char` work with subclass objects the same as they work with built-in objects.
- Comparing objects or testing for inclusion in a specific set returns logical or built-in objects, depending on the function. Functions such as `isequal`, `ischar`, `isobject` work with subclass objects the same as they work with superclass objects.
- Indexing expressions return objects of the subclass. If the subclass defines properties, then default indexing no longer works. The subclass must define its own indexing methods.
- Concatenation returns an object of the subclass. If the subclass defines properties, then default concatenation no longer works and the subclass must define its own concatenation methods.

To list the built-in functions that work with a subclass of a built-in class, use the `methods` function.

## Built-In Subclasses That Define Properties

When a subclass of a built-in class defines properties, MATLAB no longer supports indexing and concatenation operations. MATLAB cannot use the built-in functions normally called for these operations because subclass properties can contain any data.

The subclass must define what indexing and concatenation mean for a class with properties. If your subclass needs indexing and concatenation functionality, then the subclass must implement the appropriate methods.

### Methods for Indexing

To support indexing operations, the subclass must implement these methods:

- `subsasgn` — Implement dot notation and indexed assignments
- `subsref` — Implement dot notation and indexed references

- `subsindex` — Implement object as index value

### Methods for Concatenation

To support concatenation, the subclass must implement the following methods:

- `horzcat` — Implement horizontal concatenation of objects
- `vertcat` — Implement vertical concatenation of objects
- `cat` — Implement concatenation of object arrays along specified dimension

### Related Examples

- “Class to Represent Hardware” on page 12-79
- “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65
- “Subclasses of Built-In Types Without Properties” on page 12-57

## Behavior of Inherited Built-In Methods

### In this section...

- “Subclass double” on page 12-52
- “Built-In Data Value Methods” on page 12-53
- “Built-In Data Organization Methods ” on page 12-54
- “Built-In Indexing Methods” on page 12-55
- “Built-In Concatenation Methods” on page 12-55

### Subclass double

Most built-in functions used with built-in classes are actually methods of the built-in class. For example, the `double` and `single` classes define several methods to perform arithmetic operations, indexing, matrix operation, and so on. All these built-in class methods work with subclasses of the built-in class.

Subclassing `double` enables your class to use features without implementing the methods that a MATLAB built-in class defines.

The `DocSimpleDouble` class subclasses the built-in `double` class.

```
classdef DocSimpleDouble < double
    methods
        function obj = DocSimpleDouble(data)
            if nargin == 0
                data = 0;
            end
            obj = obj@double(data);
        end
    end
end
```

Create an instance of the class `DocSimpleDouble`.

```
sc = DocSimpleDouble(1:10)

sc =
    1x10 DocSimpleDouble:
    double data:
    1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10
```

Call a method inherited from class **double** that operates on the data, such as **sum**. **sum** returns a **double** and, therefore, uses the **display** method of class **double**:

```
sum(sc)
```

```
ans =
    55
```

Index **sc** like an array of doubles. The returned value is the class of the subclass:

```
a = sc(2:4)
```

```
a =
 1x3 DocSimpleDouble:
 double data:
    2      3      4
```

Indexed assignment works the same as the built-in class. The returned value is the class of the subclass:

```
sc(1:5) = 5:-1:1
```

```
sc =
 1x10 DocSimpleDouble:
 double data:
    5      4      3      2      1      6      7      8      9      10
```

Calling a method that modifies the order of the data elements operates on the data, but returns an object of the subclass:

```
sc = DocSimpleDouble(1:10);
sc(1:5) = 5:-1:1;
a = sort(sc)
```

```
a =
 1x10 DocSimpleDouble:
 double data:
    1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10
```

## Built-In Data Value Methods

When you call a built-in data value method on a subclass object, MATLAB uses the superclass part of the subclass object as inputs to the method. The value returned is same class as the built-in class. For example:

```
sc = DocSimpleDouble(1:10);
a = sin(sc);
class(a)

ans =

double
```

## Built-In Data Organization Methods

This group of built-in methods reorders or reshapes the input argument array. These methods operate on the superclass part of the subclass object, but return an object of the same type as the subclass.

```
sc = DocSimpleDouble(randi(9,1,10))

sc = DocSimpleDouble(randi(9,1,10))

sc =

1x10 DocSimpleDouble:

double data:
    6      1      8      9      7      7      7      4      6      2

b = sort(sc)

b =

1x10 DocSimpleDouble:

double data:
    1      2      4      6      6      7      7      7      8      9
```

Methods in this group include:

- `reshape`
- `permute`
- `sort`
- `transpose`
- `ctranspose`

## Built-In Indexing Methods

Built-in classes use specially implemented versions of the `subsref`, `subsasgn`, and `subsindex` methods to implement indexing. When you index a subclass object, only the built-in data is referenced (not the properties defined by your subclass).

For example, indexing element 2 in the `DocSimpleDouble` subclass object returns the second element in the vector:

```
sc = DocSimpleDouble(1:10);
a = sc(2)

a =
  DocSimpleDouble
  double data:
    2
```

The value returned from an indexing operation is an object of the subclass. You cannot make indexed references if your subclass defines properties, unless your subclass overrides the default `subsref` method.

Assigning a new value to the second element in the `DocSimpleDouble` object operates only on the superclass data:

```
sc(2) = 12

sc =
  1x10 DocSimpleDouble:
  double data:
    1     12     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10
```

The `subsref` method also implements dot notation for methods.

## Built-In Concatenation Methods

Built-in classes use the functions `horzcat`, `vertcat`, and `cat` to implement concatenation. When you use these functions with subclass objects of the same type, MATLAB concatenates the superclass data to form a new object. For example, you can concatenate objects of the `DocSimpleDouble` class:

```
sc1 = DocSimpleDouble(1:10);
sc2 = DocSimpleDouble(11:20);
[sc1,sc2]
```

```
ans =
 1x20 DocSimpleDouble:
 double data:
 Columns 1 through 13
   1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10   11   12   13
 Columns 14 through 20
  14   15   16   17   18   19   20
```

```
[sc1;sc2]
```

```
ans =
 2x10 DocSimpleDouble:
 double data:
   1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
  11   12   13   14   15   16   17   18   19   20
```

Concatenate two objects along a third dimension:

```
c = cat(3,sc1,sc2)
```

```
c =
```

```
1x10x2 DocSimpleDouble:
```

```
double data:
```

```
(:,:,1) =
```

```
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
```

```
(:,:,2) =
```

```
 11   12   13   14   15   16   17   18   19   20
```

If the subclass of a built-in class defines properties, you cannot concatenate objects of the subclass. There is no way to determine how to combine properties of different objects. However, your subclass can define custom `horzcat` and `vertcat` methods to support concatenation in whatever way makes sense for your subclass.

### Related Examples

- “Subclasses of Built-In Types Without Properties” on page 12-57
- “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65

# Subclasses of Built-In Types Without Properties

## In this section...

- “Specialized Numeric Types” on page 12-57
- “A Class to Manage uint8 Data” on page 12-57
- “Using the DocUint8 Class” on page 12-58

## Specialized Numeric Types

Subclass built-in numeric types to create customized data types that inherit the functionality of the built-in type. Add functionality to that provided by the superclass by implementing class methods. Subclasses without properties store numeric data as the superclass type. If your subclass design does not require properties to store other data, the implementation is simpler because you do not need to define indexing and concatenation methods.

For more information, see “Subclasses of MATLAB Built-In Types” on page 12-48.

## A Class to Manage uint8 Data

This example shows a class derived from the built-in `uint8` class. This class simplifies the process of maintaining a collection of intensity image data defined by `uint8` values. The basic operations of the class include:

- Capability to convert various classes of image data to `uint8` to reduce object data storage.
- A method to display the intensity images contained in the subclass objects.
- Ability to use all the methods supported by `uint8` data (for example, `size`, indexing, `reshape`, `bitshift`, `cat`, `fft`, arithmetic operators, and so on).

The class data are matrices of intensity image data stored in the superclass part of the subclass object. This approach requires no properties.

The `DocUint8` class stores the image data, which converts the data, if necessary:

```
classdef DocUint8 < uint8
```

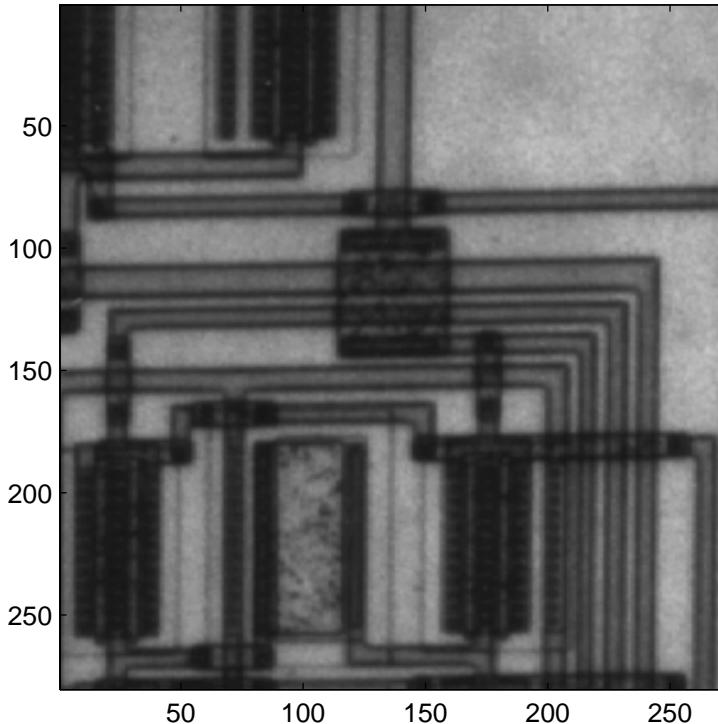
```
methods
    function obj = DocUInt8(data)
        if nargin == 0
            data = uint8(0);
        end
        obj = obj@uint8(data); % Store data on superclass
    end
    function h = showImage(obj)
        data = uint8(obj);
        figure; colormap(gray(256))
        h = imagesc(data,[0 255]);
        axis image
        brighten(.2)
    end
end
end
```

## Using the DocUInt8 Class

### Create DocUInt8 Objects

The DocUInt8 class provides a method to display all images stored as DocUInt8 objects in a consistent way. For example:

```
cir = imread('circuit.tif');
img1 = DocUInt8(cir);
img1.showImage;
```



Because DocUint8 subclasses uint8, you can use any uint8 methods. For example,

```
size(img1)  
ans =  
280 272
```

returns the size of the image data.

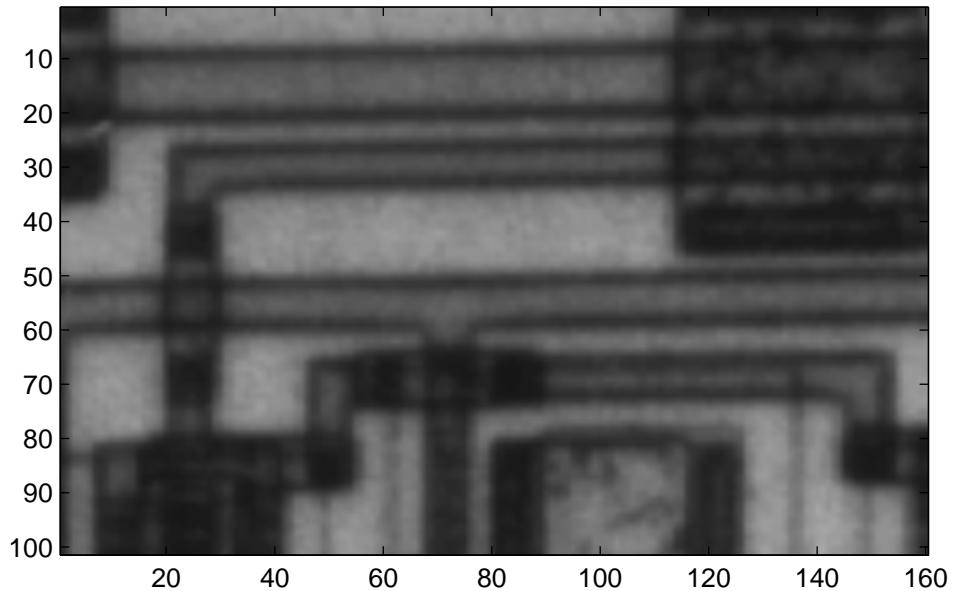
### Indexing Operations

Inherited methods perform indexing operations, but return objects of the same class as the subclass.

Therefore, you can index into the image data and call a subclass method:

```
showImage(img1(100:200,1:160));
```

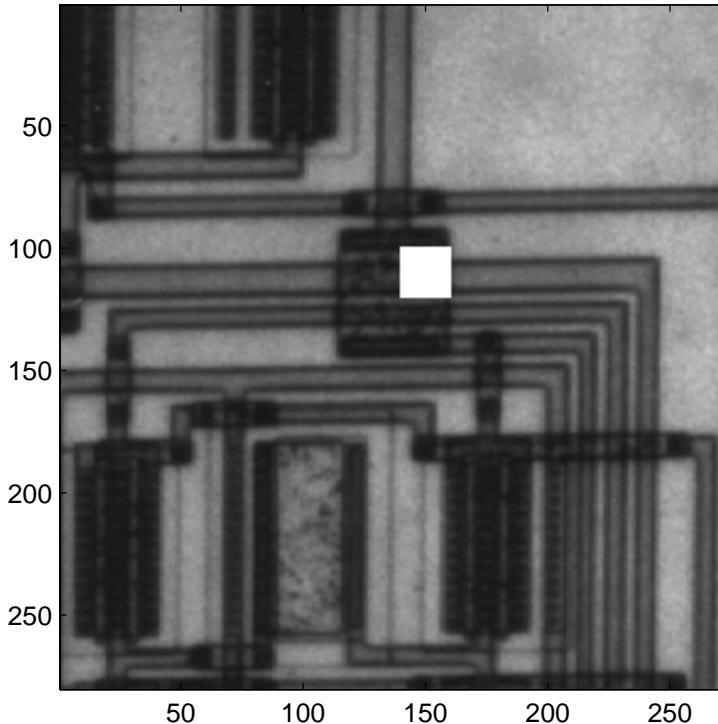
Subscripted reference operations (controlled by the inherited `subsref` method) return a `DocUint8` object.



You can assign values to indexed elements:

```
img1(100:120,140:160) = 255;  
img1.showImage;
```

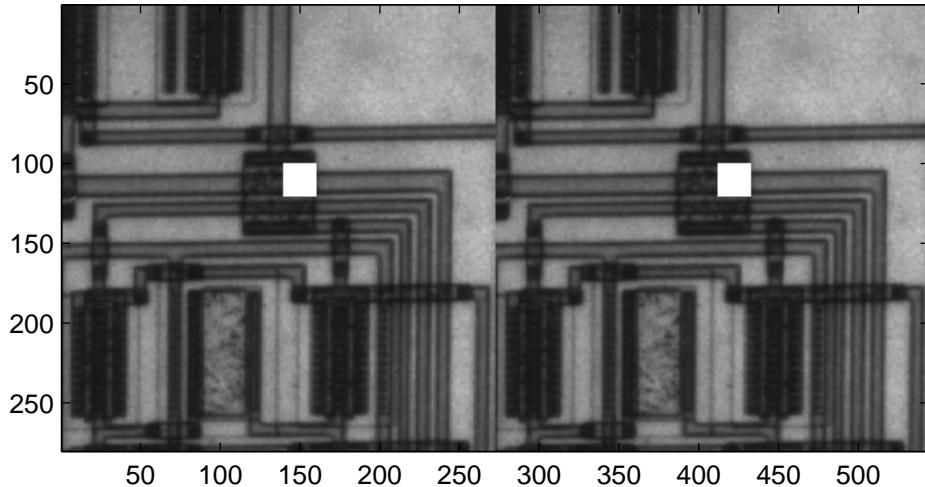
Subscripted assignment operations (controlled by the inherited `subsasgn` method) return a `DocUint8` object.



### Concatenation Operations

Concatenation operations work on **DocUint8** objects because this class inherits the **uint8 horzcat** and **vertcat** methods, which return a **DocUint8** object:

```
showImage([img1 img1]);
```



### Data Operations

Methods that operate on data values, such as arithmetic operators, always return an object of the built-in type (not of the subclass type). For example, multiplying `DocUint8` objects returns a `uint8` object:

```
a = img1.*1.8;  
showImage(a);
```

```
Undefined function 'showImage' for input arguments of type 'uint8'.
```

To perform operations of this type, implement a subclass method to override the inherited method. The `times` method implements array (element-by-element) multiplication.

Add this method to the `DocUint8` class:

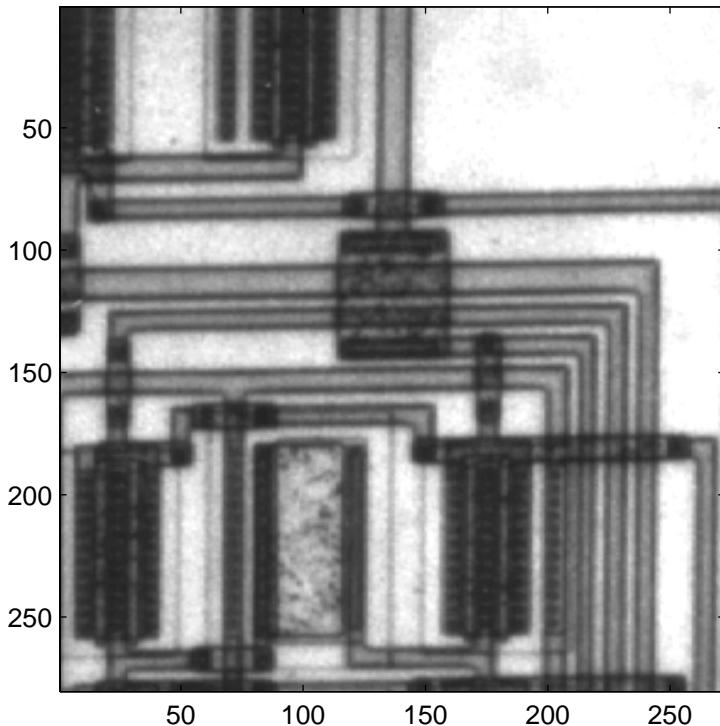
```
function o = times(obj,val)
    u8 = uint8(obj).*val;
    o = DocUint8(u8);
end
```

When you override a `uint8` method, MATLAB calls the subclass method, not the base class method. The subclass method must:

- Call the `uint8 times` method on the `DocUint8` object data.
- Construct a new `DocUint8` object using the `uint8` data.

After adding the `times` method to the `DocUint8` class, the output of multiplication expressions is an object of the `DocUint8` class:

```
showImage(img1.*1.8);
```



## Related Examples

- “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49
- “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65

# Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties

## In this section...

- “Specialized Numeric Types with Additional Data Storage” on page 12-65
- “Subclasses with Properties” on page 12-65
- “Property Added” on page 12-65
- “Methods Implemented” on page 12-66
- “Class Definition Code” on page 12-66
- “Using ExtendDouble” on page 12-68
- “Concatenation of ExtendDouble Objects” on page 12-71

## Specialized Numeric Types with Additional Data Storage

Subclass built-in numeric types to create customized data types that inherit the functionality of the built-in type. Add or modify functionality to that provided by the superclass by implementing class methods.

Providing additional data storage in the subclass by defining properties can be a useful extension to the built-in data class. However, the addition of properties to the subclass requires the subclass to define methods to implement standard array behaviors.

For more information, see “Subclasses of MATLAB Built-In Types” on page 12-48.

## Subclasses with Properties

When a subclass of a built-in class defines properties, default indexing and concatenation do not work. The default `subsref`, `subsasgn`, `horzcat`, and `vertcat` functions cannot work with unknown property types and values. Therefore, the subclass must define these behaviors by implementing these methods.

This sample implementation of the `ExtendDouble` class derives from the `double` class and defines a single property. The `ExtendDouble` class definition demonstrates how to implement indexing and concatenation for subclasses of built-in classes

## Property Added

The `ExtendDouble` class defines the `DataString` property to contain text that describes the data. The superclass part of the class contains the numeric data.

## Methods Implemented

The following methods modify the behavior of the `ExtendDouble` class:

- `ExtendDouble` — The constructor supports a no argument syntax that initializes properties to empty values.
- `subsref` — Enables subscripted reference to the superclass part of the subclass, dot notation reference to the `DataString` property, and dot notation reference the built-in data via the name `Data`.
- `subsasgn` — Enables subscripted assignment to the superclass part of the subclass, dot notation reference to the `DataString` property, and dot notation reference the built-in data via the name `Data`.
- `horzcat` — Defines horizontal concatenation of `ExtendDouble` objects. concatenates the superclass part using the `double` class `horzcat` method and forms a cell array of the `DataString` properties.
- `vertcat` — The vertical concatenation equivalent of `horzcat` (both are required).
- `char` — A `ExtendDouble` to `char` converter used by `horzcat` and `vertcat`.
- `disp` — `ExtendDouble` implements a `disp` method to provide a custom display for the object.

## Class Definition Code

The `ExtendDouble` class extends `double` and implements methods to support subscripted indexing and concatenation.

```
classdef ExtendDouble < double

    properties
        DataString
    end

    methods
        function obj = ExtendDouble(data,str)
            if nargin == 0
                data = 0;
                str = '';
            elseif nargin == 1
                str = '';
            end
            obj = obj@double(data);
```

```

    obj.DataString = str;
end

function sref = subsref(obj,s)
switch s(1).type
case '.'
    switch s(1).subs
    case 'DataString'
        sref = obj.DataString;
    case 'Data'
        d = double(obj);
        if length(s)<2
            sref = d;
        elseif length(s)>1 && strcmp(s(2).type,'()')
            sref = subsref(d,s(2:end));
        end
    otherwise
        error('Not a supported indexing expression')
    end
case '()'
    d = double(obj);
    newd = subsref(d,s(1:end));
    sref = ExtendDouble(newd,obj.DataString);
case '{}'
    error('Not a supported indexing expression')
end
end

function obj = subsasgn(obj,s,b)
switch s(1).type
case '.'
    switch s(1).subs
    case 'DataString'
        obj.DataString = b;
    case 'Data'
        if length(s)<2
            obj = ExtendDouble(b,obj.DataString);
        elseif length(s)>1 && strcmp(s(2).type,'()')
            d = double(obj);
            newd = subsasgn(d,s(2:end),b);
            obj = ExtendDouble(newd,obj.DataString);
        end
    otherwise
        error('Not a supported indexing expression')
    end
end

```

```
        end
    case '()'
        d = double(obj);
        newd = subsasgn(d,s(1),b);
        obj = ExtendDouble(newd,obj.DataString);
    case '{}'
        error('Not a supported indexing expression')
    end
end

function newobj = horzcat(varargin)
    d1 = cellfun(@double,varargin,'UniformOutput',false );
    data = horzcat(d1{:});
    str = horzcat(cellfun(@char,varargin,'UniformOutput',false));
    newobj = ExtendDouble(data,str);
end

function newobj = vertcat(varargin)
    d1 = cellfun(@double,varargin,'UniformOutput',false );
    data = vertcat(d1{:});
    str = vertcat(cellfun(@char,varargin,'UniformOutput',false));
    newobj = ExtendDouble(data,str);
end

function str = char(obj)
    str = obj.DataString;
end

function disp(obj)
    disp(obj.DataString)
    disp(double(obj))
end
end
end
```

## Using ExtendDouble

Create an instance of `ExtendDouble` and notice that the display is different from the default:

```
ed = ExtendDouble(1:10,'One to ten')
ed =
```

```
One to ten
 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
```

### Inherited Methods

The `ExtendDouble` class inherits methods from the class `double`. To see a list of all public methods defined by the `double` class, use the `methods` function:

```
methods(double.empty)
```

The `sum` function continues to operate on the superclass part of the object:

```
sum(ed)
```

```
ans =
 55
```

The `sort` function works on the superclass part of the object:

```
sort(ed(10:-1:1))
```

```
ans =
```

```
 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
```

Arithmetic operators work on the superclass part of the object:

```
ed.^2
```

```
ans =
```

```
 1   4   9   16   25   36   49   64   81   100
```

### Subscripted Indexing

Because the `ExtendDouble` class defines a property, the class must implement its own `subsref` and `subsasgn` methods.

This class implements the following subscripted indexing expressions for reference and assignment.

- `obj.DataString` — access the `DataString` property.
- `obj.Data`, `obj.Data(ind)` — access the data using a property-style reference.  
Reference returns values of type `double`.

- `obj(ind)` — access the numeric data (same as `obj.Data(ind)`). Reference returns values of type `ExtendDouble`.

The class `subsref` method enables you to use `ExtendDouble` objects like numeric arrays to reference the numeric data:

```
ed = ExtendDouble(1:10,'One to ten');  
ed(10:-1:1)
```

```
ans =  
  
One to ten  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
```

Access the numeric data of the `ExtendDouble` using property-style indexing with the arbitrarily chosen name `Data`:

```
ed.Data(10:-1:1)
```

```
ans =  
  
One to ten  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
```

Access the `DataString` property:

```
ed.DataString
```

```
ans =  
  
One to ten
```

Subscripted assignment implements similar syntax in the class `subsasgn` method.

```
ed = ExtendDouble(1:10,'One to ten');  
ed(11:13) = [11,12,13];  
ed.DataString = 'one to thirteen';  
ed
```

```
ans =  
  
One to thirteen'  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
```

The `ExtendDouble` inherits converter methods from the `double` class. For example, MATLAB calls the `char` method to perform this assignment statement.

```

ed(11:13) = [ 'a' , 'b' , 'c' ]
ed =
one to thirteen
    1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10     97     98     99

```

### Class of Value Returned by Indexing Expression

The `ExtendDouble` implements two forms of indexed reference in the `subsref` method:

- `obj.Data` and `obj.Data(ind)` — Return values of class `double`
- `obj(ind)` — Return values of class `ExtendDouble`

For example, compare the values returned by these expressions.

```

ed = ExtendDouble(1:10,'One to ten');
a = ed(1)

```

```
a =
```

```
One to ten
    1
```

```
b = ed.Data(1)
```

```
b =
```

```
    1
```

```
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
a	1x1	132	ExtendDouble	
b	1x1	8	double	
ed	1x10	204	ExtendDouble	

The increased flexibility of the implementation of indexed reference in the `ExtendDouble` class.

### Concatenation of `ExtendDouble` Objects

Create these two objects:

```
ed1 = ExtendDouble([1:10], 'One to ten');
ed2 = ExtendDouble([10:-1:1], 'Ten to one');
```

Concatenate these objects along the horizontal dimension:

```
hcat = [ed1,ed2]
```

```
hcat =
```

```
'One to ten'    'Ten to one'
```

```
Columns 1 through 13
```

```
1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10    10     9     8
```

```
Columns 14 through 20
```

```
7     6     5     4     3     2     1
```

```
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
ed1	1x10	204	ExtendDouble	
ed2	1x10	204	ExtendDouble	
hcat	1x20	528	ExtendDouble	

Vertical concatenation works in a similar way:

```
vcat = [ed1;ed2]
```

```
vcat =
```

```
'One to ten'    'Ten to one'
```

```
1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10
10    9     8     7     6     5     4     3     2     1
```

Both `horzcat` and `vertcat` return a new object of the same class as the subclass.

## Related Examples

- “Subclasses of Built-In Types Without Properties” on page 12-57

# Use of size and numel with Classes

## In this section...

- “size and numel” on page 12-73
- “Built-In Class Behavior” on page 12-73
- “Subclasses Inherit Behavior” on page 12-74
- “Classes Not Derived from Built-In Classes” on page 12-75
- “Change the Behavior of size or numel” on page 12-77
- “Overload numArgumentsFromSubscript Instead of numel” on page 12-78

## size and numel

The `size` function returns the dimensions of an array. The `numel` function returns the number of elements in an array, which is equivalent to `prod(size(objArray))`. That is, the product of the array dimensions.

The `size` and `numel` functions work consistently with arrays of user-defined objects. There is generally no need to overload `size` or `numel` in user-defined classes.

Several MATLAB functions use `size` and `numel` to perform their operations. Therefore, if you do overload either of these functions in your class, be sure that objects of your class work as designed with other MATLAB functions.

If your class modifies array indexing, see “Overload numArgumentsFromSubscript Instead of numel” on page 12-78

## Built-In Class Behavior

When you use the `size` and `numel` functions in classes derived from built-in classes, these functions behave the same as they behave in the superclass.

Consider the built-in class `double`:

```
d = 1:10;  
size(d)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1      10  
numel(d)  
ans =  
10  
dsub = d(7:end);  
size(dsub)  
ans =  
1      4
```

The `double` class defines these behaviors, including parentheses indexing.

### Subclasses Inherit Behavior

Unless the subclass explicitly overrides superclass behavior, subclasses behave like their superclasses. For example, `SimpleDouble` subclasses `double` and defines no properties:

```
classdef SimpleDouble < double  
methods  
    function obj = SimpleDouble(data)  
        if nargin == 0  
            data = 0;  
        end  
        obj = obj@double(data);  
    end  
end
```

Create an object and assign the values `1:10`:

```
sd = SimpleDouble(1:10);
```

The `size` function returns the size of the superclass part:

```
size(sd)  
ans =
```

```
1      10
```

The `numel` function returns the number of elements in the superclass part:

```
numel(sd)
```

```
ans =
```

```
10
```

Object arrays return the size of the superclass arrays:

```
size([sd;sd])
```

```
ans =
```

```
2     10
```

```
numel([sd;sd])
```

```
ans =
```

```
20
```

The `SimpleDouble` class inherits the indexing behavior of the `double` class:

```
sdsd = sd(7:end);  
size(sdsd)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1     4
```

## Classes Not Derived from Built-In Classes

Consider a simple value class. This class does not inherit the array-like behaviors of the `double` class. For example:

```
classdef VerySimpleClass  
    properties  
        Value  
    end  
end
```

Create an object and assign a 10-element array to the `Value` property:

```
vs = VerySimpleClass;  
vs.Value = 1:10;
```

```
size(vs)
ans =
1      1

numel(vs)
ans =
1

size([vs;vs])
ans =
2      1

numel([vs;vs])
ans =
2
```

**vs** is a scalar object. The **Value** property is an array of **doubles**:

```
size(vs.Value)
ans =
1      10
```

Apply indexing expressions to the object property:

```
vssub = vs.Value(7:end);
size(vssub)
ans =
1      4
```

The **vs.Value** property is an array of class **double**:

```
class(vs.Value)
ans =
```

```
double
```

Create an array of `VerySimpleClass` objects:

```
vsArray(1:10) = VerySimpleClass;
```

The `Value` property for array elements 2 through 10 is empty:

```
isempty([vsArray(2:10).Value])
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

MATLAB does not apply scalar expansion to object array property value assignment. Use the `deal` function for this purpose:

```
[vsArray.Value] = deal(1:10);  
isempty([vsArray.Value])
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

The `deal` function assigns values to each `Value` property in the `vsArray` object array.

Indexing rules for object arrays are equivalent to the rules for arrays of `struct`:

```
vsArray(1).Value
```

```
ans =
```

```
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
```

```
vsArray(1).Value(6)
```

```
ans =
```

```
6
```

## Change the Behavior of `size` or `numel`

Subclasses of built-in numeric classes inherit a `size` method, which operates on the superclass part of the subclass object (these methods are hidden). If you want `size` or

`numel` to behave differently, override them by defining a `size` or `numel` method in your subclass.

Other MATLAB functions use the values returned by these functions. If you change the way that `size` and `numel` behave, ensure that the values returned make sense for the intended use of your class.

## Overload `numArgumentsFromSubscript` Instead of `numel`

If classes implement a `numArgumentsFromSubscript` method, MATLAB calls it instead of `numel` to determine the number of elements returned by indexed expressions that return comma-separated lists. For example, expressions such as:

```
A(1:2).Prop
```

Both `subsref` and `subsasgn` use `numArgumentsFromSubscript`:

- `subsref` — `numArgumentsFromSubscript` computes the number of expected outputs (`nargout`) returned `subsref`.
- `subsasgn` — `numArgumentsFromSubscript` computes the number of expected inputs (`nargin`) that MATLAB assigns as a result of a call to `subsasgn`.

Subclasses of built-in classes always return scalar objects as a result of subscripted reference and always use scalar objects for subscripted assignment.

If you define a class in which `nargout` for `subsref` or `nargin` for `subsasgn` must be a specific value, then overload `numArgumentsFromSubscript` to return that value.

## See Also

`numArgumentsFromSubscript`

## Related Examples

- “Modify `nargout` and `nargin` for Indexing Methods” on page 17-9

# Class to Represent Hardware

## In this section...

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- “Why Derive from int32” on page 12-79
- “Implementation” on page 12-79
- “Construct MuxCard Object” on page 12-80
- “Call Methods of int32” on page 12-81

## Objective

This example implements a class to represent an optical multiplex card. These cards typically have several input ports and an output port. The `MuxCard` class represents the ports by the port names and port data rates. The output rate of a multiplex card is the sum of the input port data rates.

## Why Derive from int32

The `MuxCard` class derives from the `int32` class because 32-bit integers represent the input port data rates. The `MuxCard` class inherits the methods of the `int32` class, which simplifies the implementation of this subclass. For example, numeric array indexing and arithmetic operations work on `MuxCard` objects because the class inherits these operations from the `int32` class.

## Implementation

Here is the definition of the `MuxCard` class. Notice that the input port rates initialize the `int32` portion of class.

```
classdef MuxCard < int32
  properties
    InPutNames
    OutPutName
  end

  properties (Dependent = true)
    OutPutRate
```

```
end

methods
    function obj = MuxCard(inptnames, inptrates, outpname)
        obj = obj@int32(inptrates);
        obj.InPutNames = inptnames;
        obj.OutPutName = outpname;
    end

    function x = get.OutPutRate(obj)
        x = sum(obj);
    end

    function x = subsref(card, s)
        if strcmp(s(1).type, '.')
            base = subsref@int32(card, s(1));
            if isscalar(s)
                x = base;
            else
                x = subsref(base, s(2:end));
            end
        else
            x = subsref(int32(card), s);
        end
    end
end
end
```

## Construct MuxCard Object

The constructor takes three arguments:

- `inptnames` — Cell array of input port names
- `inptrates` — Vector of input port rates
- `outpname` — Name for the output port

```
omx = MuxCard({'inp1','inp2','inp3','inp4'},[3 12 12 48],'outp')
```

```
omx =
```

```
1x4 MuxCard array with properties:
```

```
InPutNames: {'inp1' 'inp2' 'inp3' 'inp4'}
```

```

OutPutName: 'outp'
OutPutRate: 75

int32 data:
    3          12          12          48

```

## Call Methods of int32

Use a **MuxCard** object like an array of **int32** values. For example, this indexing statement accesses the data in the object to determine the names of the input ports that have a rate of 12:

```

omx.InPutNames(omx==12)

ans =
    'inp2'    'inp3'

```

The indexing statement generates a logical array index:

```

omx == 12

ans =
    0      1      1      0

```

Indexing the **MuxCard** object accesses the **int32** vector of input port rates:

```

omx(1:2)

ans =
    3          12

```

The **OutPutRate** property get access method uses **sum** to sum the output port rates:

```

omx.OutPutRate

ans =
    75

```

## Related Examples

- “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65

## Determine Array Class

### In this section...

- “Query the Class Name” on page 12-82
- “Test for Array Class” on page 12-82
- “Test for Specific Types” on page 12-83
- “Test for Most Derived Class” on page 12-84

### Query the Class Name

To determine the class of an array, use the `class` function:

```
a = [2,5,7,11];
class(a)

ans =
double

str = 'Character array';
class(str)

ans =
char
```

### Test for Array Class

The `isa` function enables you to test for a specific class or a category of numeric class (`numeric`, `float`, `integer`):

```
a = [2,5,7,11];
isa(a, 'double')

ans =
1
```

Floating-point values (single and double precision values):

```
isa(a, 'float')

ans =
```

```
1
```

Numeric values (floating-point and integer values):

```
isa(a, 'numeric')

ans =
    1
```

### **isa Returns True for Subclasses**

`isa` returns true for classes derived from the specified class. For example, the `SubInt` class derives from the built-in type `int16`:

```
classdef SubInt < int16
methods
    function obj = SubInt(data)
        if nargin == 0
            data = 0;
        end
        obj = obj@int16(data);
    end
end
end
```

By definition, an instance of the `SubInt` class is also an instance of the `int16` class:

```
aInt = SubInt;
isa(aInt, 'int16')

ans =
    1
```

Using the `integer` category also returns `true`:

```
isa(aInt, 'integer')

ans =
    1
```

### **Test for Specific Types**

The `class` function returns the name of the *most derived* class of an object:

```
class(aInt)
```

```
ans =  
SubInt
```

Use the `strcmp` function with the `class` function to check for a specific class of an object:

```
a = int16(7);  
strcmp(class(a), 'int16')  
  
ans =  
1
```

Because the `class` function returns the class name as a `char` vector, the inheritance does not affect the result of the comparison performed by `strcmp`:

```
aInt = SubInt;  
strcmp(class(aInt), 'int16')  
  
ans =  
0
```

### Test for Most Derived Class

If you define functions that require inputs that are:

- MATLAB built-in types
- Not subclasses of MATLAB built-in types

Use the following techniques to exclude subclasses of built-in types from the input arguments.

- Define a cell array that contains the names of built-in types accepted by your function.
- Call `class` and `strcmp` to test for specific types in a MATLAB control statement.

Test an input argument:

```
if strcmp(class(inputArg), 'single')  
    % Call function  
else  
    inputArg = single(inputArg);  
end
```

## Test for Category of Types

Suppose that you create a MEX-function, `myMexFcn`, that requires two numeric inputs that must be of type `double` or `single`:

```
outArray = myMexFcn(a,b)
```

Define a cell array that contains the character arrays `double` and `single`:

```
floatTypes = {'double','single'};  
  
% Test for proper types  
if any(strcmp(class(a),floatTypes)) && ...  
    any(strcmp(class(b),floatTypes))  
    outArray = myMexFcn(a,b);  
else  
    % Try to convert inputs to avoid error  
    ...  
end
```

## Another Test for Built-In Types

Use `isobject` to separate built-in types from subclasses of built-in types. The `isobject` function returns `false` for instances of built-in types:

```
% Create a int16 array  
a = int16([2,5,7,11]);  
isobject(a)  
  
ans =  
    0
```

Determine if an array is one of the built-in integer types:

```
if isa(a,'integer') && ~isobject(a)  
    % a is a built-in integer type  
    ...  
end
```

# Abstract Classes

## In this section...

[“Abstract Classes” on page 12-86](#)

[“Declare Classes as Abstract” on page 12-87](#)

[“Determine If a Class Is Abstract” on page 12-88](#)

[“Find Inherited Abstract Properties and Methods” on page 12-89](#)

## Abstract Classes

Abstract classes are useful for describing functionality that is common to a group of classes, but requires unique implementations within each class.

### Abstract Class Terminology

*abstract class* — A class that cannot be instantiated, but that defines class components used by subclasses.

*abstract members* — Properties or methods declared in an abstract class, but implemented in subclasses.

*concrete members* — Properties or methods that are fully implemented by a class.

*concrete class* — A class that can be instantiated. Concrete classes contain no abstract members.

*interface* — An abstract class describing functionality that is common to a group of classes, but that requires unique implementations within each class. The abstract class defines the interface of each subclass without specifying the actual implementation.

An abstract class serves as a basis (that is, a superclass) for a group of related subclasses. An abstract class can define abstract properties and methods that subclasses implement. Each subclass can implement the concrete properties and methods in a way that supports their specific requirements.

### Implementing a Concrete Subclass

A subclass must implement all inherited abstract properties and methods to become a concrete class. Otherwise, the subclass is itself an abstract class.

MATLAB does not force subclasses to implement concrete methods with the same signature or attributes.

Abstract classes:

- Can define properties and methods that are not abstract
- Pass on their concrete members through inheritance
- Do not need to define any abstract members

## Declare Classes as Abstract

A class is abstract when it declares:

- The **Abstract** class attribute
- An abstract method
- An abstract property

If a subclass of an abstract class does not define concrete implementations for all inherited abstract methods or properties, it is also abstract.

### Abstract Class

Declare a class as abstract in the **classdef** statement:

```
classdef (Abstract) AbsClass  
...  
end
```

For classes that declare the **Abstract** class attribute:

- Concrete subclasses must redefine any properties or methods that are declared as abstract.
- The abstract class does not need to define any abstract methods or properties.

When you define any abstract methods or properties, MATLAB automatically sets the class **Abstract** attribute to **true**.

### Abstract Methods

Define an abstract method:

```
methods (Abstract)
    abstMethod(obj)
end
```

For methods that declare the **Abstract** method attribute:

- Do not use a **function...end** block to define an abstract method, use only the method signature.
- Abstract methods have no implementation in the abstract class.
- Concrete subclasses are not required to support the same number of input and output arguments and do not need to use the same argument names. However, subclasses generally use the same signature when implementing their version of the method.

### Abstract Properties

Define an abstract property:

```
properties (Abstract)
    AbsProp
end
```

For properties that declare the **Abstract** property attribute:

- Concrete subclasses must redefine abstract properties without the **Abstract** attribute.
- Concrete subclasses must use the same values for the **SetAccess** and **GetAccess** attributes as those attributes used in the abstract superclass.
- Abstract properties cannot define access methods and cannot specify initial values. The subclass that defines the concrete property can create access methods and specify initial values.

For more information on access methods, see “Property Access Methods” on page 8-43.

## Determine If a Class Is Abstract

Determine if a class is abstract by querying the **Abstract** property of its **meta.class** object. For example, the **AbsClass** defines two abstract methods:

```
classdef AbsClass
    methods(Abstract)
        result = absMethodOne(obj)
```

```

        output = absMethodTwo(obj)
    end
end

```

Use the logical value of the `meta.class Abstract` property to determine if the class is abstract:

```

mc = ?AbsClass;
if ~mc.Abstract
    % not an abstract class
end

```

### Display Abstract Member Names

Use the `meta.abstractDetails` function to display the names of abstract properties or methods and the names of the defining classes:

```

meta.abstractDetails('AbsClass');

Abstract methods for class AbsClass:
absMethodTwo    % defined in AbsClass
absMethodOne    % defined in AbsClass

```

### Find Inherited Abstract Properties and Methods

The `meta.abstractDetails` function returns the names and defining class of any inherited abstract properties or methods that you have not implemented in your subclass. Use this function if you want the subclass to be concrete and must determine what abstract members the subclass inherits.

For example, suppose that you create a subclass of the `AbsClass` class that is defined in the previous section. In this case, the subclass implements only one of the abstract methods defined by `AbsClass`.

```

classdef SubAbsClass < AbsClass
% Does not implement absMethodOne
% defined as abstract in AbsClass
methods
    function out = absMethodTwo(obj)
        ...
    end
end

```

```
end
```

Determine if you implemented all inherited class members using `meta.abstractDetails`:

```
meta.abstractDetails(?SubAbsClass)
```

```
Abstract methods for class SubAbsClass:  
absMethodOne % defined in AbsClass
```

The `SubAbsClass` class is abstract because it has not implemented the `absMethodOne` method defined in `AbsClass`.

```
msub = ?SubAbsClass;  
msub.Abstract
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

If you implement both methods defined in `AbsClass`, the subclass becomes concrete.

### Related Examples

- “Define an Interface Superclass” on page 12-91

# Define an Interface Superclass

## In this section...

[“Interfaces” on page 12-91](#)

[“Interface Class Implementing Graphs” on page 12-91](#)

## Interfaces

The properties and methods defined by a class form the interface that determines how class users interact with objects of the class. When creating a group of related classes, interfaces define a common interface to all these classes. The actual implementations of the interface can differ from one class to another.

Consider a set of classes designed to represent various types of graphs. All classes must implement a **Data** property to contain the data used to generate the graph. However, the form of the data can differ considerably from one type of graph to another. Each class can implement the **Data** property differently.

The same differences apply to methods. All classes can have a **draw** method that creates the graph, but the implementation of this method changes with the type of graph.

The basic idea of an interface class is to specify the properties and methods that each subclass must implement without defining the actual implementation. This approach enables you to enforce a consistent interface to a group of related objects. As you add more classes in the future, the interface remains the same.

## Interface Class Implementing Graphs

This example creates an interface for classes used to represent specialized graphs. The interface is an abstract class that defines properties and methods that the subclasses must implement, but does not specify how to implement these components.

This approach enforces the use of a consistent interface while providing the necessary flexibility to implement the internal workings of each specialized subclass differently.

In this example, a package folder contains the interface, derived subclasses, and a utility function:

```
+graphics/GraphInterface.m % abstract interface class
```

```
+graphics/LineGraph.m      % concrete subclass
```

### Interface Properties and Methods

The `graph` class specifies the following properties, which the subclasses must define:

- `Primitive` — Handle of the graphics object used to implement the specialized graph. The class user has no need to access these objects directly so this property has `protected SetAccess` and `GetAccess`.
- `AxesHandle` — Handle of the axes used for the graph. The specialized `graph` objects can set axes object properties. This property has `protected SetAccess` and `GetAccess`.
- `Data` — All subclasses of the `GraphInterface` class must store data. The type of data varies and each subclass defines the storage mechanism. Subclass users can change the data values so this property has public access rights.

The `GraphInterface` class names three abstract methods that subclasses must implement. The `GraphInterface` class also suggests in comments that each subclass constructor must accept the plot data and property name/property value pairs for all class properties.

- Subclass constructor — Accept data and P/V pairs and return an object.
- `draw` — Used to create a drawing primitive and render a graph of the data according to the type of graph implemented by the subclass.
- `zoom` — Implementation of a zoom method by changing the axes `CameraViewAngle` property. The interface suggests the use of the `camzoom` function for consistency among subclasses. The zoom buttons created by the `addButtons` static method use this method as a callback.
- `updateGraph` — Method called by the `set.Data` method to update the plotted data whenever the `Data` property changes.

### Interface Guides Class Design

The package of classes that derive from the `GraphInterface` abstract class implement the following behaviors:

- Creating an instance of a specialized `GraphInterface` object (subclass object) without rendering the plot
- Specifying any or none of the object properties when you create a specialized `GraphInterface` object

- Changing any object property automatically updates the currently displayed plot
- Allowing each specialized `GraphInterface` object to implement whatever additional properties it requires to give class users control over those characteristics.

## Define the Interface

The `GraphInterface` class is an abstract class that defines the methods and properties used by the subclasses. Comments in the abstract class describe the intended implementation:

```
classdef GraphInterface < handle
    % Abstract class for creating data graphs
    % Subclass constructor should accept
    % the data that is to be plotted and
    % property name/property value pairs
    properties (SetAccess = protected, GetAccess = protected)
        Primitive
        AxesHandle
    end
    properties
        Data
    end
    methods (Abstract)
        draw(obj)
        % Use a line, surface,
        % or patch graphics primitive
        zoom(obj,factor)
        % Change the CameraViewAngle
        % for 2D and 3D views
        % use camzoom for consistency
        updateGraph(obj)
        % Update the Data property and
        % update the drawing primitive
    end

    methods
        function set.Data(obj,newdata)
            obj.Data = newdata;
            updateGraph(obj)
        end
        function addButtons(gobj)
            hfig = get(gobj.AxesHandle,'Parent');
            uicontrol(hfig,'Style','pushbutton','String','Zoom Out',...
            'Callback',@(src,evnt)zoom(gobj,.5));
        end
    end
```

```
    uicontrol(hfig,'Style','pushbutton','String','Zoom In',...
        'Callback',@(src,evnt)zoom(gobj,2),...
        'Position',[100 20 60 20]);
end
end
end
```

The `GraphInterface` class implements the property set method (`set.Data`) to monitor changes to the `Data` property. An alternative is to define the `Data` property as `Abstract` and enable the subclasses to determine whether to implement a set access method for this property. The `GraphInterface` class defines a set access method that calls an abstract method (`updateGraph`, which each subclass must implement). The `GraphInterface` interface imposes a specific design on the whole package of classes, without limiting flexibility.

### Method to Work with All Subclasses

The `addButtons` method adds push buttons for the `zoom` methods, which each subclass must implement. Using a method instead of an ordinary function enables `addButtons` to access the protected class data (the axes handle). Use the object `zoom` method as the push-button callback.

```
function addButtons(gobj)
    hfig = get(gobj.AxesHandle,'Parent');
    uicontrol(hfig,'Style','pushbutton',...
        'String','Zoom Out',...
        'Callback',@(src,evnt)zoom(gobj,.5));
    uicontrol(hfig,'Style','pushbutton',...
        'String','Zoom In',...
        'Callback',@(src,evnt)zoom(gobj,2),...
        'Position',[100 20 60 20]);
end
```

### Derive a Concrete Class — `LineGraph`

This example defines only a single subclass used to represent a simple line graph. It derives from `GraphInterface`, but provides implementations for the abstract methods `draw`, `zoom`, `updateGraph`, and its own constructor. The base class `GraphInterface` and subclass are all contained in a package (`graphics`), which you must use to reference the class name:

```
classdef LineGraph < graphics.GraphInterface
```

## Add Properties

The `LineGraph` class implements the interface defined in the `GraphInterface` class and adds two additional properties—`LineColor` and `LineType`. This class defines initial values for each property, so specifying property values in the constructor is optional. You can create a `LineGraph` object with no data, but you cannot produce a graph from that object.

```
properties
    LineColor = [0 0 0];
    LineType = '-';
end
```

## The LineGraph Constructor

The constructor accepts a `struct` with `x` and `y` coordinate data, and property name/value pairs:

```
function gobj = LineGraph(data,varargin)
    if nargin > 0
        gobj.Data = data;
        if nargin > 2
            for k=1:2:length(varargin)
                gobj.(varargin{k}) = varargin{k+1};
            end
        end
    end
end
```

## Implement the draw Method

The `LineGraph` `draw` method uses property values to create a `line` object. The `LineGraph` class stores the `line` handle as protected class data. To support the use of no input arguments for the class constructor, `draw` checks the `Data` property to determine if it is empty before proceeding:

```
function gobj = draw(gobj)
    if isempty(gobj.Data)
        error('The LineGraph object contains no data')
    end
    h = line(gobj.Data.x,gobj.Data.y, ...
        'Color',gobj.LineColor, ...
        'LineStyle',gobj.LineType);
    gobj.Primitive = h;
```

```
    gobj.AxesHandle = get(h, 'Parent');
end
```

### Implement the zoom Method

The `LineGraph` `zoom` method follows the comments in the `GraphInterface` class which suggest using the `camzoom` function. `camzoom` provides a convenient interface to zooming and operates correctly with the push buttons created by the `addButtons` method.

### Define the Property Set Methods

Property set methods provide a convenient way to execute code automatically when the value of a property changes for the first time in a constructor. (See “Property Set Methods” on page 8-49.) The `linegraph` class uses set methods to update the `line` primitive data (which causes a redraw of the plot) whenever a property value changes. The use of property set methods provides a way to update the data plot quickly without requiring a call to the `draw` method. The `draw` method updates the plot by resetting all values to match the current property values.

Three properties use set methods: `LineColor`, `LineType`, and `Data`. `LineColor` and `LineType` are properties added by the `LineGraph` class and are specific to the `line` primitive used by this class. Other subclasses can define different properties unique to their specialization (for example, `FaceColor`).

The `GraphInterface` class implements the `Data` property set method. However, the `GraphInterface` class requires each subclass to define a method called `updateGraph`, which handles the update of plot data for the specific drawing primitive used.

### The `LineGraph` Class

Here is the `LineGraph` class definition.

```
classdef LineGraph < graphics.GraphInterface
properties
    LineColor = [0 0 0]
    LineType = '-'
end

methods
    function gobj = LineGraph(data,varargin)
        if nargin > 0
            gobj.Data = data;
            if nargin > 1
                for k=1:2:length(varargin)
```

```

        gobj.(varargin{k}) = varargin{k+1};
    end
end
end
end

function gobj = draw(gobj)
if isempty(gobj.Data)
    error('The LineGraph object contains no data')
end
h = line(gobj.Data.x,gobj.Data.y, ...
    'Color',gobj.LineColor, ...
    'LineStyle',gobj.LineType);
gobj.Primitive = h;
gobj.AxesHandle = h.Parent;
end

function zoom(gobj,factor)
camzoom(gobj.AxesHandle,factor)
end

function updateGraph(gobj)
set(gobj.Primitive, ...
    'XData',gobj.Data.x, ...
    'YData',gobj.Data.y)
end

function set.LineColor(gobj,color)
gobj.LineColor = color;
set(gobj.Primitive,'Color',color)
end

function set.LineType(gobj,ls)
gobj.LineType = ls;
set(gobj.Primitive,'LineStyle',ls)
end
end
end

```

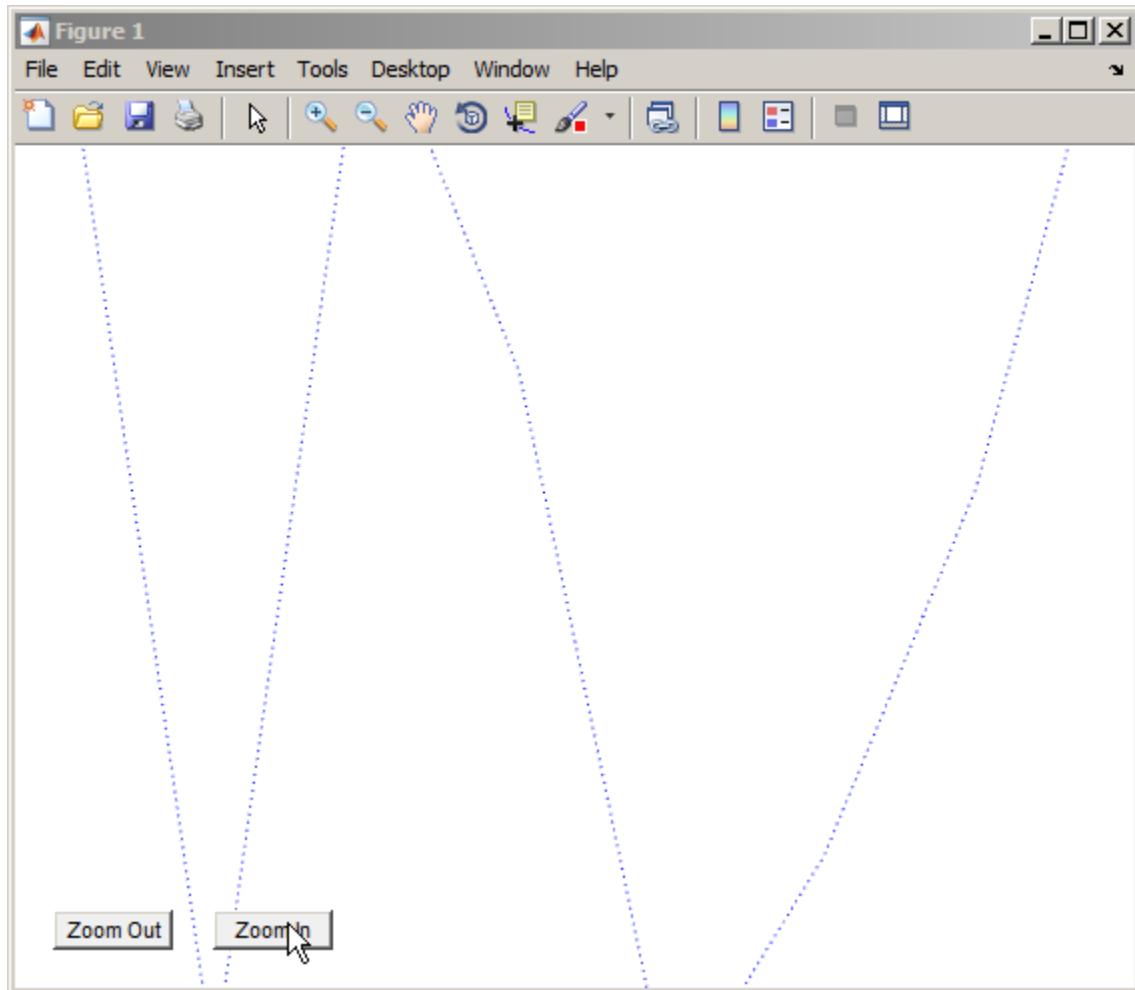
### Use the LineGraph Class

The LineGraph class defines the simple API specified by the graph base class and implements its specialized type of graph:

```
d.x = 1:10;
```

```
d.y = rand(10,1);
lg = graphics.LineGraph(d,'LineColor','b','LineType',':');
lg.draw;
lg.addButton;
```

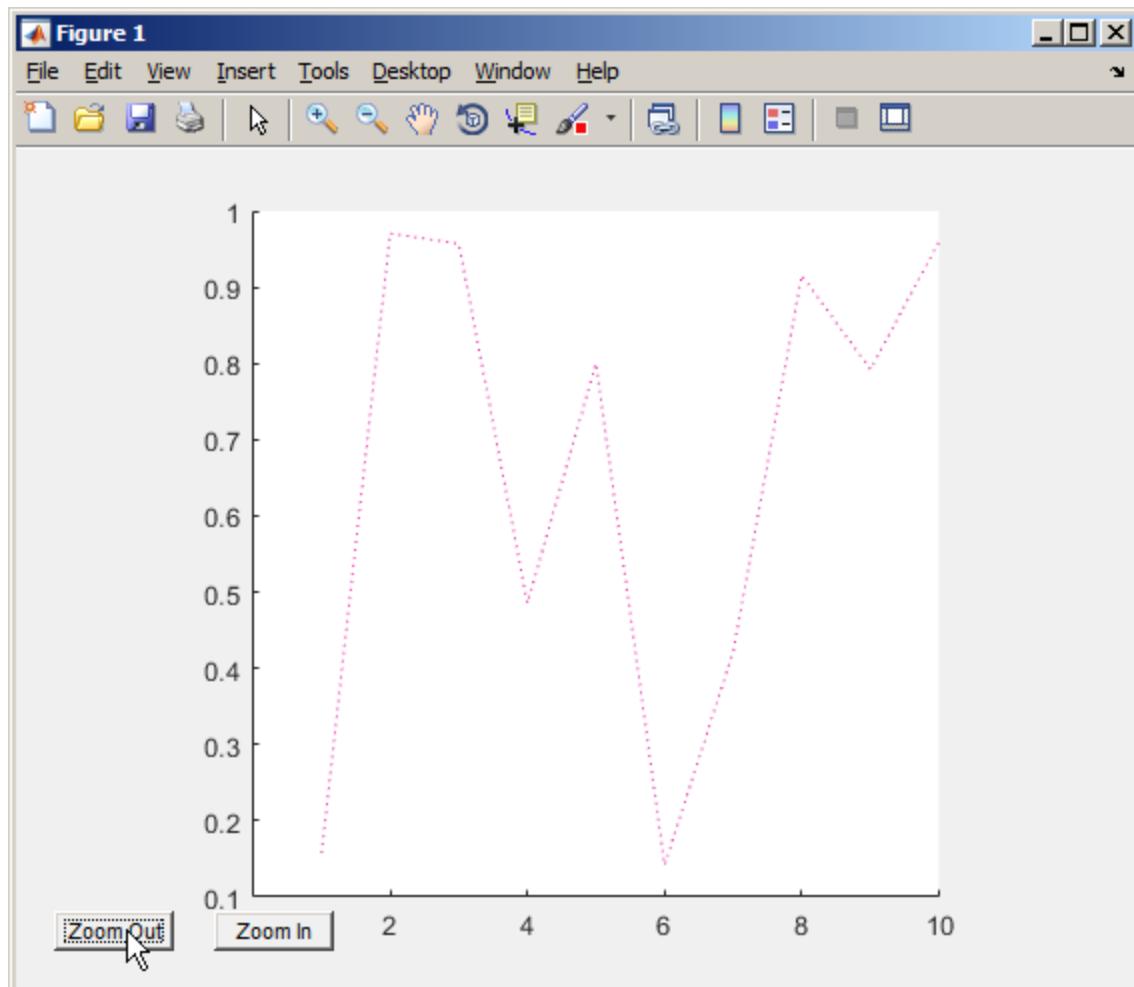
Clicking the **Zoom In** button shows the `zoom` method providing the callback for the button.



Changing properties updates the graph:

```
d.y = rand(10,1);  
lg.Data = d;  
lg.LineColor = [0.9,0.1,0.6];
```

Now click **Zoom Out** and see the new results:



## Related Examples

- “Abstract Classes” on page 12-86



# Saving and Loading Objects

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- “Save and Load Process for Objects” on page 13-2
- “Reduce MAT-File Size for Saved Objects” on page 13-5
- “Save Object Data to Recreate Graphics Objects” on page 13-7
- “Improve Version Compatibility with Default Values” on page 13-10
- “Avoid Property Initialization Order Dependency” on page 13-12
- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Basic `saveobj` and `loadobj` Pattern” on page 13-19
- “Maintain Class Compatibility” on page 13-23
- “Initialize Objects When Loading” on page 13-30
- “Save and Load Objects from Class Hierarchies” on page 13-32
- “Restore Listeners” on page 13-35
- “Save and Load Dynamic Properties” on page 13-38

## Save and Load Process for Objects

### In this section...

- “Save and Load Objects” on page 13-2
- “What Information Is Saved?” on page 13-2
- “How Is the Property Data Loaded?” on page 13-3
- “Errors During Load” on page 13-3

## Save and Load Objects

Use `save` and `load` to store and reload objects:

```
save filename object
load filename object
```

## What Information Is Saved?

Saving objects in MAT-files saves:

- The full name of the object class, including any package qualifiers
- Values of dynamic properties
- All property default values defined by the class at the time the first object of the class is saved to the MAT-file.
- The names and values of all properties, except properties that have their `Transient`, `Constant`, or `Dependent` attributes set to `true`.
- The names and values of all other properties, except properties whose current values are the same as the default values specified in the class definition.

For a description of property attributes, see “Specify Property Attributes” on page 8-7

To save graphics objects, see `savefig`.

---

**Note:** Do not use the `pack` command with objects that define events and listeners. The `pack` command causes the destruction of any listeners defined for the objects in the workspace. For information on restoring listeners when saving objects, see “Restore Listeners” on page 13-35.

---

## How Is the Property Data Loaded?

When loading objects from MAT-files, the `load` function restores the object.

- `load` creates a new object.
- If the class `ConstructOnLoad` attribute is set to `true`, `load` calls the class constructor with no arguments. Otherwise, `load` does not call the class constructor.
- `load` assigns the saved property values to the object properties. These assignments result in calls to property set methods defined by the class (except in the case of `Dependent`, `Constant`, or `Transient` properties, which are not saved or loaded).
- `load` assigns the default values saved in the MAT-file to properties whose values were not saved because the properties were set to the default values when saved. These assignments result in calls to property set methods defined by the class.

MATLAB calls property set methods to ensure that property values are still valid in cases where the class definition has changed.

For information on property set methods, see “Property Set Methods” on page 8-49.

## Errors During Load

If a new version of a class removes, renames, or changes the validation for a property, `load` can generate an error when attempting to set the altered or deleted property.

When an error occurs while an object is being loaded from a file, MATLAB does one of the following:

- If the class defines a `loadobj` method, MATLAB returns the saved values to the `loadobj` method in a `struct`.
- If the class does not define a `loadobj` method, MATLAB silently ignores the errors. The `load` function reconstitutes the object with property values that do not produce an error.

In the `struct` passed to the `loadobj` method, the field names correspond to the property names. The field values are the saved values for the corresponding properties.

If the saved object derives from multiple superclasses that have private properties with same name, the `struct` contains only the property value of the most direct superclass.

For information on how to implement `saveobj` and `loadobj` methods, see “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16.

### Changes to Property Validation

If a class definition changes property validation such that loaded property values are no longer valid, MATLAB substitutes the currently defined default value for that property. The class can define a `loadobj` method or converter methods to provide compatibility among class versions.

For information on property validation, see “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21

### Related Examples

- “Object Save and Load”

# Reduce MAT-File Size for Saved Objects

## In this section...

- “Default Values” on page 13-5
- “Dependent Properties” on page 13-5
- “Transient Properties” on page 13-5
- “Avoid Saving Unwanted Variables” on page 13-6

## Default Values

If a property often has the same value, define a default value for that property. When the user saves the object to a MAT-file, MATLAB does not save the value of a property if the current value equals the default value. MATLAB saves the default value on a per class basis to avoid saving the value for every object.

For more information on how MATLAB evaluates default value expressions, see “Property Default Values” on page 8-15.

## Dependent Properties

Use a dependent property when the property value must be calculated at run time. A dependent property is not saved in the MAT-file when you save an object. Instances of the class do not allocate memory to hold a value for a dependent property.

Dependent is a property attribute (see “Property Attributes” on page 8-8 for a complete list.)

## Transient Properties

MATLAB does not store the values of transient properties. Transient properties can store data in the object temporarily as an intermediate computation step or for faster retrieval. Use transient properties when you easily can reproduce the data at run time or when the data represents intermediate state that can be discarded.

## Avoid Saving Unwanted Variables

Do not save variables that you do not want to load. Be sure that an object is still valid before you save it. For example, if you save a deleted handle object, MATLAB loads it as a deleted handle.

### Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”

# Save Object Data to Recreate Graphics Objects

## In this section...

[“What to Save” on page 13-7](#)

[“Regenerate When Loading” on page 13-7](#)

[“Change to a Stairstep Chart” on page 13-8](#)

## What to Save

Use transient properties to avoid saving what you can recreate when loading the object. For example, an object can contain component parts that you can regenerate from data that is saved. Regenerating these components also enables newer versions of the class to create the components in a different way.

## Regenerate When Loading

The `YearlyRainfall` class illustrates how to regenerate a graph when loading objects of that class. `YearlyRainfall` objects contain a bar chart of the monthly rainfall for a given location and year. The `Location` and `Year` properties are ordinary properties whose values are saved when you save the object.

The `Chart` property contains the handle to the bar chart. When you save a bar chart, MATLAB also saves the figure, axes, and Bar object and the data required to create these graphics objects. The `YearlyRainfall` class design eliminates the need to save objects that it can regenerate:

- The `Chart` property is `Transient` so the graphics objects are not saved.
- `ChartData` is a private property that provides storage for the Bar object data (`YData`).
- The `load` function calls the `set.ChartData` method, passing it the saved bar chart data.
- The `setup` method regenerates the bar chart and assigns the handle to the `Chart` property. Both the class constructor and the `set.ChartData` method call `setup`.

```
classdef YearlyRainfall < handle
properties
    Location
    Year
```

```
end
properties(Transient)
    Chart
end
properties(Access = private)
    ChartData
end
methods
    function rf = YearlyRainfall(data)
        setup(rf,data);
    end
    function set.ChartData(obj,V)
        setup(obj,V);
    end
    function V = get.ChartData(obj)
        V = obj.Chart.YData;
    end
end
methods(Access = private)
    function setup(rf,data)
        rf.Chart = bar(data);
    end
end
end
```

### Change to a Stairstep Chart

An advantage of the `YearlyRainfall` class design is the flexibility to modify the type of graph used without making previously saved objects incompatible. Loading the object recreates the graph based only on the data that is saved to the MAT-file.

For example, change the type of graph from a bar chart to a stair-step graph by modifying the `setup` method:

```
methods(Access = private)
    function setup(rf,data)
        rf.Chart = stairs(data);
    end
end
```

### Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16

- “Object Save and Load”

## Improve Version Compatibility with Default Values

### In this section...

[“Version Compatibility” on page 13-10](#)

[“Using a Default Property Value” on page 13-10](#)

### Version Compatibility

Default property values can help you implement version compatibility for saved objects. For example, suppose that you add a property to version 2 of your class. Having a default value enables MATLAB to assign a value to the new property when loading a version 1 object.

Similarly, suppose version 2 of your class removes a property. If a version 2 object is saved and loaded into version 1, your `loadobj` method can use the default value from version 1.

### Using a Default Property Value

The `EmployeeInfo` class shows how to use property default values as a way to enhance compatibility among versions. Version 1 of the `EmployeeInfo` class defines three properties — `Name`, `JobTitle`, and `Department`.

```
classdef EmployeeInfo
    properties
        Name
        JobTitle
        Department
    end
end
```

Version 2 of the `EmployeeInfo` class adds a property, `Country`, for the country name of the employee location. The `Country` property has a default value of '`USA`'.

```
classdef EmployeeInfo
    properties
        Name
        JobTitle
        Department
        Country = 'USA'
```

```
    end  
end
```

The character array, 'USA', is a good default value because:

- MATLAB assigns an empty double [ ] to properties that do not have default values defined by the class. Empty double is not a valid value for the **Country** property.
- In version 1, all employees were in the USA. Therefore, any version 1 object loaded into version 2 receives a valid value for the **Country** property.

## Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”

## Avoid Property Initialization Order Dependency

### In this section...

[“Control Property Loading” on page 13-12](#)

[“Dependent Property with Private Storage” on page 13-12](#)

[“Property Value Computed from Other Properties” on page 13-14](#)

### Control Property Loading

Problems can occur if property values depend on the order in which `load` sets the property values.

Suppose that your class design is such that both of the following are true:

- A property set method changes another property value.
- A property value is computed from other property values.

Then the final state of an object after changing a series of property values can depend on the order in which you set the properties. This order dependency can affect the result of loading an object.

The `load` function sets property values in a particular order. This order can be different from the order in which you set the properties in the saved object. As a result, the loaded object can have different property values than the object had when it was saved.

### Restore Nondependent Properties

If a property set function changes the values of other properties, then define the `Dependent` attribute of that property as `true`. MATLAB does not save or restore dependent property values.

Use nondependent properties for storing the values set by the dependent property. Then the `load` function restores the nondependent properties with the same values that were saved. The `load` function does not call the dependent property set method because there is no value in the saved file for that property.

### Dependent Property with Private Storage

The `Odometer` class avoids order dependences when loading objects by controlling which properties are restored when loading:

- The `Units` property is dependent. Its property set method sets the `TotalDistance` property. Therefore `load` does not call the `Units` property set method.
- The `load` function restores `TotalDistance` to whatever value it had when you saved the object.

```

classdef Odometer
    properties(Constant)
        ConversionFactor = 1.6
    end
    properties
        TotalDistance = 0
    end
    properties(Dependent)
        Units
    end
    properties(Access=private)
        PrivateUnits = 'mi'
    end
    methods
        function unit = get.Units(obj)
            unit = obj.PrivateUnits;
        end
        function obj = set.Units(obj,newUnits)
            % validate newUnits to be a char vector
            switch(newUnits)
                case 'mi'
                    if strcmp(obj.PrivateUnits, 'km')
                        obj.TotalDistance = obj.TotalDistance / ...
                            obj.ConversionFactor;
                        obj.PrivateUnits = newUnits;
                    end
                case 'km'
                    if strcmp(obj.PrivateUnits, 'mi')
                        obj.TotalDistance = obj.TotalDistance * ...
                            obj.ConversionFactor;
                        obj.PrivateUnits = newUnits;
                    end
                otherwise
                    error('Odometer:InvalidUnits', ...
                        'Units ''%s'' is not supported.', newUnits);
            end
        end
    end
end

```

Suppose that you create an instance of `Odometer` and set the following property values:

```
odObj = Odometer;
odObj.Units = 'km';
odObj.TotalDistance = 16;
```

When you save the object:

- `ConversionFactor` is not saved because it is a `Constant` property.
- `TotalDistance` is saved.
- `Units` is not saved because it is a `Dependent` property.
- `PrivateUnits` is saved and provides the storage for the current value of `Units`.

When you load the object:

- `ConversionFactor` is obtained from the class definition.
- `TotalDistance` is loaded.
- `Units` is not loaded, so its set method is not called.
- `PrivateUnits` is loaded from the saved object.

If the `Units` property was not `Dependent`, loading it calls its set method and causes the `TotalDistance` property to be set again.

### Property Value Computed from Other Properties

The `Odometer2` class `TripDistance` property depends only on the values of two other properties, `TotalDistance` and `TripMarker`.

The class avoids order dependence when initializing property values during the load process by making the `TripDistance` property dependent. MATLAB does not save or load a value for the `TripDistance` property, but does save and load values for the two properties used to calculate `TripDistance` in its property get method.

```
classdef Odometer2
properties
    TotalDistance = 0
    TripMarker = 0
end
properties(Dependent)
    TripDistance
```

```
end
methods
    function distance = get.TripDistance(obj)
        distance = obj.TotalDistance - obj.TripMarker;
    end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”

## Modify the Save and Load Process

### In this section...

[“When to Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16](#)

[“How to Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16](#)

[“Implementing saveobj and loadobj Methods” on page 13-16](#)

[“Additional Considerations” on page 13-17](#)

### When to Modify the Save and Load Process

The primary reason for modifying the save and load process is to support backward and forward compatibility of classes. Consider modifying the save and load process when you:

- Rename a class
- Remove properties
- Define a circular reference of handle objects where initialization order is important
- Must call the constructor with arguments and, therefore, cannot use `ConstructOnLoad`

### How to Modify the Save and Load Process

The most versatile technique for modifying the save and load process is to implement `loadobj`, and if necessary, `saveobj` methods for your class. MATLAB executes these methods when you call `save` or `load` on an object of the class.

The `save` function calls your class `saveobj` method before performing the save operation. The `save` function then saves the value returned by the `saveobj` method. You can use `saveobj` to return a modified object or a `struct` that contains property values.

`load` calls your class `loadobj` method after loading the object. The `load` function loads the value returned by the `loadobj` method into the workspace. A `loadobj` method can modify the object being loaded or can reconstruct an object from the data saved by the class `saveobj` method.

### Implementing `saveobj` and `loadobj` Methods

Implement a `saveobj` method that modifies the object being saved, then implement a `loadobj` method to return the object to the correct state when loading it.

Implement the `loadobj` method as a **Static** method because MATLAB can call the `loadobj` method with a **struct** instead of an object of the class.

Implement the `saveobj` method as an ordinary method (that is, calling it requires an instance of the class).

MATLAB saves the object class name so that `load` can determine which `loadobj` method to call in cases where your `saveobj` method saves only the object data in a structure. Therefore, the class must be accessible to MATLAB when you load the object.

Use a `loadobj` method when:

- The class definition has changed since the object was saved, requiring you to modify the object before loading.
- A `saveobj` method modified the object during the save operation, possibly saving data in a **struct**. Implement the `loadobj` method to reconstruct the object from the output of `saveobj`.

## Additional Considerations

When you decide to modify the default save and load process, keep the following points in mind:

- If loading any property value from the MAT-file produces an error, `load` passes a **struct** to `loadobj`. The **struct** field names correspond to the property names extracted from the file.
- `loadobj` must always be able to accept a **struct** as input and return an object, even if there is no `saveobj` or `saveobj` does not return a **struct**.
- If `saveobj` returns a **struct**, then `load` always passes that **struct** to `loadobj`.
- Subclass objects inherit superclass `loadobj` and `saveobj` methods. Therefore, if you do not implement a `loadobj` or `saveobj` method in the subclass, MATLAB calls only the inherited methods.

If a superclass implements a `loadobj` or `saveobj` method, then a subclass can also implement a `loadobj` or `saveobj` method that calls the superclass methods. For more information, see “Save and Load Objects from Class Hierarchies” on page 13-32.

- The `load` function does not call the constructor by default. For more information, see “Initialize Objects When Loading” on page 13-30.

## Related Examples

- “Basic `saveobj` and `loadobj` Pattern” on page 13-19
- “Object Save and Load”

# Basic saveobj and loadobj Pattern

## In this section...

- “Using saveobj and loadobj” on page 13-19
- “Handle Load Problems” on page 13-20

## Using saveobj and loadobj

Depending on the requirements of your class, there are various ways you can use `saveobj` and `loadobj` methods. This pattern is a flexible way to solve problems that you cannot address by simpler means.

The basic process is:

- Use `saveobj` to save all essential data in a `struct` and do not save the object.
- Use `loadobj` to reconstruct the object from the saved data.

This approach is not useful in cases where you cannot save property values in a `struct` field. Data that you cannot save, such as a file identifier, you can possibly regenerate in the `loadobj` method.

### saveobj

For this pattern, define `saveobj` as an ordinary method that accepts an object of the class and returns a `struct`.

- Copy each property value to a structure field of the same name.
- You can save only the data that is necessary to rebuild the object. Avoid saving whole objects hierarchies, such as those created by graphs.

```
methods
    function s = saveobj(obj)
        s.Prop1 = obj.Prop1;
        s.Prop2 = obj.Prop2
        s.Data = obj.GraphHandle.YData;
    end
end
```

### loadobj

Define `loadobj` as a static method. Create an object by calling the class constructor. Then assign values to properties from the `struct` passed to `loadobj`. Use the data to regenerate properties that were not saved.

```
methods(Static)
    function obj = loadobj(s)
        if isstruct(s)
            newObj = ClassConstructor;
            newObj.Prop1 = s.Prop1;
            newObj.Prop2 = s.Prop2;
            newObj.GraphHandle = plot(s.Data);
            obj = newObj;
        else
            obj = s;
        end
    end
end
```

If the `load` function encounters an error, `load` passes `loadobj` a `struct` instead of an object. Your `loadobj` method must always be able to handle a `struct` as the input argument. The input to `loadobj` is always a scalar.

## Handle Load Problems

`loadobj` can handle a `struct` input even if you are not using a `saveobj` method.

The `GraphExpression` class creates a graph of a MATLAB expression over a specified range of data. `GraphExpression` uses its `loadobj` method to regenerate the graph, which is not saved with the object.

```
classdef GraphExpression
    properties
        FuncHandle
        Range
    end
    methods
        function obj = GraphExpression(fh,rg)
            obj.FuncHandle = fh;
            obj.Range = rg;
            makeGraph(obj)
        end
    end
```

```

function makeGraph(obj)
    rg = obj.Range;
    x = min(rg):max(rg);
    data = obj.FuncHandle(x);
    plot(data)
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(s)
        if isstruct(s)
            fh = s.FuncHandle;
            rg = s.Range;
            obj = GraphExpression(fh,rg);
        else
            makeGraph(s);
            obj = s;
        end
    end
end
end

```

## Save and Load Object

Create an object with an anonymous function and a range of data as inputs:

```
h = GraphExpression(@(x)x.^4,[1:25])
```

```
h =
```

GraphExpression with properties:

```
  FuncHandle: @(x)x.^4
  Range: [1x25 double]
```

Save the **GraphExpression** object and close the graph:

```
save myFile h
close
```

Load the object. MATLAB recreates the graph:

```
load myFile h
```

If the **load** function cannot create the object and passes a **struct** to **loadobj**, **loadobj** attempts to create an object with the data supplied.

## Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”

# Maintain Class Compatibility

## In this section...

- “Rename Property” on page 13-23
- “Update Property When Loading” on page 13-25
- “Maintaining Compatible Versions of a Class” on page 13-26
- “Version 2 of the PhoneBookEntry Class” on page 13-27

## Rename Property

Suppose that you want to rename a property, but do not want to cause errors in existing code that refer to the original property. For example, rename a public property called `OfficeNumber` to `Location`. Here is the original class definition:

```
classdef EmployeeList
    properties
        Name
        Email
        OfficeNumber % Rename as Location
    end
end
```

Use of a hidden dependent property can achieve the desired results.

- In the class definition, set the `OfficeNumber` property attributes to `Dependent` and `Hidden`.
- Create a property set method for `OfficeNumber` that sets the value of the `Location` property.
- Create a property get method for `OfficeNumber` that returns the value of the `Location` location property.

While the `OfficeNumber` property is hidden, existing code can continue to access this property. The `Hidden` attribute does not affect access.

Because `OfficeNumber` is dependent, there is no redundancy in storage required by adding the new property. MATLAB does not store or save dependent properties.

Here is the updated class definition.

```
classdef EmployeeList
properties
    Name
    Email
    Location
end
properties (Dependent, Hidden)
    OfficeNumber
end
methods
    function obj = set.OfficeNumber(obj, val)
        obj.Location = val;
    end
    function val = get.OfficeNumber(obj)
        val = obj.Location;
    end
end
end
```

### Saving and Loading EmployeeList Objects

You can load old instances of the `EmployeeList` class in the presence of the new class version. Code that refers to the `OfficeNumber` property continues to work.

### Forward and Backward Compatibility

Suppose that you want to be able to load new `EmployeeList` objects into systems that still have the old version of the `EmployeeList` class. To achieve compatibility with old and new versions:

- Define the `OfficeNumber` property as `Hidden`, but not `Dependent`.
- Define the `Location` property as `Dependent`.

In this version of the `EmployeeList` class, the `OfficeNumber` property saves the value used by the `Location` property. Loading an object assigns values of the three original properties (`Name`, `Email`, and `OfficeNumber`), but does not assign a value to the new `Location` property. The lack of the `Location` property in the old class definition is not a problem.

```
classdef EmployeeList
properties
    Name
    Email
```

```

end
properties (Dependent)
    Location
end
properties (Hidden)
    OfficeNumber
end
methods
    function obj = set.Location(obj,val)
        obj.OfficeNumber = val;
    end
    function val = get.Location(obj)
        val = obj.OfficeNumber;
    end
end
end

```

## Update Property When Loading

Suppose that you modify a class so that a property value changes in its form or type. Previously saved objects of the class must be updated when loaded to have a conforming property value.

Consider a class that has an `AccountID` property. Suppose that all account numbers must migrate from eight-digit numeric values to 12-element character arrays.

You can accommodate this change by implementing a `loadobj` method.

The `loadobj` method:

- Tests to determine if the `load` function passed a `struct` or object. All `loadobj` methods must handle both `struct` and object when there is an error in `load`.
- Tests to determine if the `AccountID` number contains eight digits. If so, change it to a 12-element character array by calling the `paddAccID` method.

After updating the `AccountID` property, `loadobj` returns a `MyAccount` object that MATLAB loads into the workspace.

```

classdef MyAccount
properties
    AccountID
end

```

```
methods
    function obj = padAccID(obj)
        ac = obj.AccountID;
        acstr = num2str(ac);
        if length(acstr) < 12
            obj.AccountID = [acstr,repmat('0',1,12-length(acstr))];
        end
    end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(a)
        if isstruct(a)
            obj = MyAccount;
            obj.AccountID = a.AccountID;
            obj = padAccID(obj);
        elseif isa(a,'MyAccount')
            obj = padAccID(a);
        end
    end
end
end
```

You do not need to implement a `saveobj` method. You are using `loadobj` only to ensure that older saved objects are brought up to date while loading.

## Maintaining Compatible Versions of a Class

The `PhoneBookEntry` class uses a combination of techniques to maintain compatibility with new versions of the class.

Suppose that you define a class to represent an entry in a phone book. The `PhoneBookEntry` class defines three properties: `Name`, `Address`, and `PhoneNumber`.

```
classdef PhoneBookEntry
properties
    Name
    Address
    PhoneNumber
end
end
```

However, in future releases, the class adds more properties. To provide flexibility, `PhoneBookEntry` saves property data in a `struct` using its `saveobj` method.

```

methods
    function s = saveobj(obj)
        s.Name = obj.Name;
        s.Address = obj.Address;
        s.PhoneNumber = obj.PhoneNumber;
    end
end

```

The `loadobj` method creates the `PhoneBookEntry` object, which is then loaded into the workspace.

```

methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(s)
        if isstruct(s)
            newObj = PhoneBookEntry;
            newObj.Name = s.Name;
            newObj.Address = s.Address;
            newObj.PhoneNumber = s.PhoneNumber;
            obj = newObj;
        else
            obj = s;
        end
    end
end

```

## Version 2 of the PhoneBookEntry Class

In version 2 of the `PhoneBookEntry` class, you split the `Address` property into `StreetAddress`, `City`, `State`, and `ZipCode` properties.

With these changes, you could not load a version 2 object in a previous release. However, version 2 employs several techniques to enable compatibility:

- Preserve the `Address` property (which is used in version 1) as a `Dependent` property with private `SetAccess`.
- Define an `Address` property get method (`get.Address`) to build a `char` vector that is compatible with the version 2 `Address` property.
- The `saveobj` method invokes the `get.Address` method to assign the object data to a `struct` that is compatible with previous versions. The `struct` continues to have only an `Address` field built from the data in the new `StreetAddress`, `City`, `State`, and `ZipCode` properties.

- When the `loadobj` method sets the `Address` property, it invokes the property set method (`set.Address`), which extracts the substrings required by the `StreetAddress`, `City`, `State`, and `ZipCode` properties.
- The `Transient` (not saved) property `SaveInOldFormat` enables you to specify whether to save the version 2 object as a `struct` or an object.

```
classdef PhoneBookEntry
properties
    Name
    StreetAddress
    City
    State
    ZipCode
    PhoneNumber
end
properties (Constant)
    Sep = ','
end
properties (Dependent, SetAccess=private)
    Address
end
properties (Transient)
    SaveInOldFormat = false;
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(s)
        if isstruct(s)
            obj = PhoneBookEntry;
            obj.Name = s.Name;
            obj.Address = s.Address;
            obj.PhoneNumber = s.PhoneNumber;
        else
            obj = s;
        end
    end
end
methods
    function address = get.Address(obj)
        address = [obj.StreetAddress,obj.Sep,obj.City,obj.Sep, ...
            obj.State,obj.Sep,obj.ZipCode];
    end
    function obj = set.Address(obj,address)
        addressItems = regexp(address,obj.Sep,'split');
        if length(addressItems) == 4
```

```
    obj.StreetAddress = addressItems{1};
    obj.City = addressItems{2};
    obj.State = addressItems{3};
    obj.ZipCode = addressItems{4};
else
    error('PhoneBookEntry:InvalidAddressFormat', ...
        'Invalid address format.');
end
end
function s = saveobj(obj)
if obj.SaveInOldFormat
    s.Name = obj.Name;
    s.Address = obj.Address;
    s.PhoneNumber = obj.PhoneNumber;
end
end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”

## Initialize Objects When Loading

### In this section...

[“Calling Constructor When Loading Objects” on page 13-30](#)

[“Initializing Objects in the `loadobj` Method” on page 13-30](#)

### Calling Constructor When Loading Objects

MATLAB does not call the class constructor when loading an object from a MAT-file. However, if you set the `ConstructOnLoad` class attribute to `true`, `load` does call the constructor with no arguments.

Enable `ConstructOnLoad` when you do not want to implement a `loadobj` method, but must perform some actions at construction time. For example, enable `ConstructOnLoad` when you are registering listeners for another object. Ensure that MATLAB can call the class constructor with no arguments without generating an error.

If the constructor requires input arguments, use a `loadobj` method.

### Initializing Objects in the `loadobj` Method

Use a `loadobj` method when the class constructor requires input arguments to perform object initialization.

The `LabResults` class shares the constructor object initialization steps with the `loadobj` method by performing these steps in the `assignStatus` method.

Objects of the `LabResults` class:

- Hold values for the results of tests.
- Assign a status for each value based on a set of criteria.

```
classdef LabResult
    properties
        CurrentValue
    end
    properties (Transient)
        Status
    end
```

```

end
methods
    function obj = LabResult(cv)
        obj.CurrentValue = cv;
        obj = assignStatus(obj);
    end
    function obj = assignStatus(obj)
        v = obj.CurrentValue;
        if v < 10
            obj.Status = 'Too low';
        elseif v >= 10 && v < 100
            obj.Status = 'In range';
        else
            obj.Status = 'Too high';
        end
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(s)
        if isstruct(s)
            cv = s.CurrentValue;
            obj = LabResults(cv);
        else
            obj = assignStatus(s);
        end
    end
end
end

```

The `LabResults` class uses `loadobj` to determine the status of a given test value. This approach provides a way to:

- Modify the criteria for determining status
- Ensure that objects always use the current criteria

You do not need to implement a `saveobj` method.

## Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”

## Save and Load Objects from Class Hierarchies

### In this section...

[“Saving and Loading Subclass Objects” on page 13-32](#)

[“Reconstruct the Subclass Object from a Saved \*\*struct\*\*” on page 13-32](#)

### Saving and Loading Subclass Objects

If the most specific class of an object does not define a **loadobj** or **saveobj** method, this class can inherit **loadobj** or **saveobj** methods from a superclass.

If any class in the hierarchy defines **saveobj** or **loadobj** methods:

- Define **saveobj** for all classes in the hierarchy.
- Call superclass **saveobj** methods from the subclass **saveobj** method because the **save** function calls only the most specific **saveobj** method.
- The subclass **loadobj** method can call the superclass **loadobj**, or other methods as required, to assign values to their properties.

### Reconstruct the Subclass Object from a Saved **struct**

Suppose that you want to save a subclass object by first converting its property data to a **struct** in the class **saveobj** method. Then you reconstruct the object when loaded using its **loadobj** method. This action requires that:

- Superclasses implement **saveobj** methods to save their property data in the **struct**.
- The subclass **saveobj** method calls each superclass **saveobj** method and returns the completed **struct** to the **save** function. Then the **save** function writes the **struct** to the MAT-file.
- The subclass **loadobj** method creates a subclass object and calls superclass methods to assign their property values in the subclass object.
- The subclass **loadobj** method returns the reconstructed object to the **load** function, which loads the object into the workspace.

The following superclass (**MySuper**) and subclass (**MySub**) definitions show how to code these methods.

- The `MySuper` class defines a `loadobj` method to enable an object of this class to be loaded directly.
- The subclass `loadobj` method calls a method named `reload` after it constructs the subclass object.
- `reload` first calls the superclass `reload` method to assign superclass property values and then assigns the subclass property value.

```
classdef MySuper
properties
    X
    Y
end
methods
    function S = saveobj(obj)
        S.PointX = obj.X;
        S.PointY = obj.Y;
    end
    function obj = reload(obj,S)
        obj.X = S.PointX;
        obj.Y = S.PointY;
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(S)
        if isstruct(s)
            obj = MySuper;
            obj = reload(obj,S);
        end
    end
end
end
```

Call the superclass `saveobj` and `loadobj` methods from the subclass `saveobj` and `loadobj` methods.

```
classdef MySub < MySuper
properties
    Z
end
methods
    function S = saveobj(obj)
        S = saveobj@MySuper(obj);
        S.PointZ = obj.Z;
```

```
    end
    function obj = reload(obj,S)
        obj = reload@MySuper(obj,S);
        obj.Z = S.PointZ;
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(S)
        if isstruct(s)
            obj = MySub;
            obj = reload(obj,S);
        end
    end
end
end
```

### Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”

# Restore Listeners

## In this section...

[“Create Listener with `loadobj`” on page 13-35](#)

[“Use Transient Property to Load Listener” on page 13-35](#)

[“Using the BankAccount and AccountManager Classes” on page 13-37](#)

## Create Listener with `loadobj`

Suppose that you create a property listener and want to be able to save and restore the event source and the listener. One approach is to create a listener from the `loadobj` method.

## Use Transient Property to Load Listener

The `BankAccount` class stores the account balance and an account status. A `PostSet` listener attached to the `AccountBalance` property controls the account status.

When the `AccountBalance` property value changes, the listener callback determines the account status. Important points include:

- The `BankAccount` class defines the `AccountManagerListener` property to contain the listener handle. This property enables the `loadobj` method to create a listener and return a reference to it in the object that is loaded into the workspace.
- The `AccountManagerListener` property is `Transient` because there is no need to store the listener handle with a `BankAccount` object. Create a listener that is attached to the new `BankAccount` object created during the load process.
- The `AccountBalance` listener sets the `AccountStatus`.
- Only the `AccountManager` class can access `AccountStatus` property.

```
classdef BankAccount < handle
    properties (SetObservable, AbortSet)
        AccountBalance
    end
    properties (Transient)
        AccountManagerListener
    end
    properties (Access = ?AccountManager)
```

```
    AccountStatus
end
methods
    function obj = BankAccount(initialBalance)
        obj.AccountBalance = initialBalance;
        obj.AccountStatus = 'New Account';
        obj.AccountManagerListener = AccountManager.addAccount(obj);
    end
end
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(obj)
        if isstruct(obj) % Handle possible error
            initialBalance = obj.AccountBalance;
            obj = BankAccount(initialBalance);
        else
            obj.AccountManagerListener = AccountManager.addAccount(obj);
        end
    end
end
end
```

Assume the `AccountManager` class provides services for various types of accounts. For the `BankAccount` class, the `AccountManager` class defines two `Static` methods:

- `assignStatus` — Callback for the `AccountBalance` property `PostSet` listener. This method determines the value of the `BankAccount` `AccountStatus` property.
- `addAccount` — Creates the `AccountBalance` property `PostSet` listener. The `BankAccount` constructor and `loadobj` methods call this method.

```
classdef AccountManager
methods (Static)
    function assignStatus(BA,~)
        if BA.AccountBalance < 0 && BA.AccountBalance >= -100
            BA.AccountStatus = 'overdrawn';
        elseif BA.AccountBalance < -100
            BA.AccountStatus = 'frozen';
        else
            BA.AccountStatus = 'open';
        end
    end
    function lh = addAccount(BA)
        lh = addlistener(BA,'AccountBalance','PostSet', ...
            @(src,evt)AccountManager.assignStatus(BA));
    end
end
```

```
    end  
end
```

## Using the BankAccount and AccountManager Classes

Create an instance of the BankAccount class.

```
ba = BankAccount(100)
```

```
ba =
```

```
BankAccount with properties:
```

```
    AccountBalance: 100  
    AccountManagerListener: [1x1 event.proplistener]  
    AccountStatus: 'New Account'
```

Now set an account value to confirm that the AccountManager sets AccountStatus appropriately:

```
ba.AccountBalance = -10;  
ba.AccountStatus
```

```
ans =
```

```
overdrawn
```

## Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Property Attributes” on page 8-8
- “Listen for Changes to Property Values” on page 11-37
- “Object Save and Load”

## Save and Load Dynamic Properties

### In this section...

[“Saving Dynamic Properties” on page 13-38](#)

[“When You Need `saveobj` and `loadobj` Methods” on page 13-38](#)

[“Implementing `saveobj` and `loadobj` Methods” on page 13-38](#)

### Saving Dynamic Properties

Use the `addprop` method to add dynamic properties to a class that is derived from the `dynamicprops` class. The `save` function saves dynamic properties with the object to which they are attached. For more information on dynamic properties, see “Dynamic Properties — Adding Properties to an Instance” on page 8-61.

### When You Need `saveobj` and `loadobj` Methods

The `save` function saves dynamic properties and their values. However, `save` does not save dynamic property attributes because these attributes are not specified in the class definition. If you save an object that has dynamic properties with nondefault attributes values, use `saveobj` and `loadobj` to manage the saving and loading of attribute values.

If the dynamic property has nondefault attribute values, convert the object to a `struct` in the `saveobj` method. Save the dynamic property attribute values in the `struct` so that the `loadobj` method can restore these values.

### Implementing `saveobj` and `loadobj` Methods

Your `saveobj` method can obtain the nondefault attribute values from the `meta.DynamicProperty` object associated with the dynamic property. Suppose the object that you are saving has a dynamic property called `DynoProp`. Create a `struct` in the `saveobj` method to save the data that the `loadobj` method uses to reconstruct the object.

Here is how the `saveobj` method works:

- Obtain the `meta.DynamicProperty` object for the dynamic property.
- Store the name and value of the dynamic property in `struct s`.

- Store the nondefault dynamic property attributes values for `SetAccess` and `GetAccess` in the `struct`. The `loadobj` function restores these values.

```
methods
    function s = saveobj(obj)
        metaDynoProp = findprop(obj, 'DynoProp');
        s.dynamicprops(1).name = metaDynoProp.Name;
        s.dynamicprops(1).value = obj.DynoProp;
        s.dynamicprops(1).setAccess = metaDynoProp.SetAccess;
        s.dynamicprops(1).getAccess = metaDynoProp.GetAccess;
        ...
    end
end
```

Your `loadobj` method can add the dynamic property and set the attribute values:

- Create an instance of the class.
- Use `addprop` to add a new dynamic property to the object.
- Restore the attributes of the dynamic property.

```
methods (Static)
    function obj = loadobj(s)
        if isstruct(s)
            obj = ClassConstructor;
            ...
            metaDynoProp = addprop(obj,s.dynamicprops(1).name);
            obj.(s.dynamicprops(1).name) = s.dynamicprops(1).value;
            metaDynoProp.SetAccess = s.dynamicprops(1).setAccess;
            metaDynoProp.GetAccess = s.dynamicprops(1).getAccess;
        end
    end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Modify the Save and Load Process” on page 13-16
- “Object Save and Load”



# Enumerations

---

- “Named Values” on page 14-2
- “Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5
- “Refer to Enumerations” on page 14-11
- “Enumerations for Property Values” on page 14-17
- “Operations on Enumerations” on page 14-19
- “Enumeration Class Restrictions” on page 14-27
- “Enumerations Derived from Built-In Types” on page 14-28
- “Mutable Handle vs. Immutable Value Enumeration Members” on page 14-34
- “Enumerations That Encapsulate Data” on page 14-41
- “Save and Load Enumerations” on page 14-45

## Named Values

### In this section...

[“Kinds of Predefined Names” on page 14-2](#)

[“Techniques for Defining Enumerations” on page 14-3](#)

## Kinds of Predefined Names

MATLAB supports two kinds of predefined names:

- Constant properties
- Enumerations

### Constant Properties

Use constant properties when you want a collection of related constant values whose values can belong to different types (numeric values, character strings, and so on). Define properties with constant values by setting the property **Constant** attribute. Reference constant properties by name whenever you need access to that particular value.

See “Properties with Constant Values” on page 15-2 for more information.

### Enumerations

Use enumerations when you want to create a fixed set of names representing a single type of value. Use this new type in multiple places without redefining it for each class.

You can derive enumeration classes from other classes to inherit the operations of the superclass. For example, if you define an enumeration class that subclasses a MATLAB numeric class like `double` or `int32`, the enumeration class inherits all the mathematical and relational operations that MATLAB defines for those classes.

Using enumerations instead of character strings to represent a value, such as colors ('`red`'), can result in more readable code because:

- You can compare enumeration members with `==` instead of using `strcmp`
- Enumerations maintain type information, `char` vectors do not. For example, passing a `char` vector '`red`' to functions means that every function must interpret what '`red`' means. If you define `red` as an enumeration, the actual value of '`red`' can

change (from [1 0 0] to [.93 .14 .14], for example) without updating every function that accepts colors, as you would if you defined the color as the `char` vector '`red`'.

Define enumerations by creating an `enumeration` block in the class definition.

See “Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5 for more information.

## Techniques for Defining Enumerations

Enumerations enable you to define names that represent entities useful to your application, without using numeric values or character strings. All enumerations support equality and inequality operations. Therefore, `switch`, `if`, and several comparison functions like `isequal` and `ismember` work with enumeration members.

You can define enumeration classes in ways that are most useful to your application, as described in the following sections.

### Simple Enumerated Names

Simple enumeration classes have no superclasses and no properties. These classes define a set of related names that have no underlying values associated with them. Use this kind of enumeration when you want descriptive names, but your application does not require specific information associated with the name.

See the `WeekDays` class in the “Enumeration Class” on page 14-5 and the “Define Methods in Enumeration Classes” on page 14-7 sections.

### Enumerations with Built-In Class Behaviors

Enumeration classes that subclass MATLAB built-in classes inherit most of the behaviors of those classes. For example, an enumeration class derived from the `double` class inherits the mathematical, relational, and set operations that work with variables of the class.

Enumerations do not support the colon (`:`) operator, even if the superclass does.

### Enumerations with Properties for Member Data

Enumeration classes that do not subclass MATLAB built-in numeric and logical classes can define properties. These classes can define constructors that set each member's unique property values.

The constructor can save input arguments in property values. For example, a `Color` class can specify a `Red` enumeration member color with three (Red, Green, Blue) values:

```
enumeration
    Red (1,0,0)
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Enumeration Class Restrictions” on page 14-27
- “Enumerations Derived from Built-In Types” on page 14-28
- “Enumerations That Encapsulate Data” on page 14-41

# Define Enumeration Classes

## In this section...

- “Enumeration Class” on page 14-5
- “Construct an Enumeration Member” on page 14-5
- “Convert to Superclass Value” on page 14-6
- “Define Methods in Enumeration Classes” on page 14-7
- “Define Properties in Enumeration Classes” on page 14-7
- “Enumeration Class Constructor Calling Sequence” on page 14-8

## Enumeration Class

Create an enumeration class by adding an `enumeration` block to a class definition. For example, the `WeekDays` class enumerates a set of days of the week.

```
classdef WeekDays
    enumeration
        Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
    end
end
```

To execute the MATLAB code in the following sections, place the `WeekDays` class definition in a `.m` file on your path.

## Construct an Enumeration Member

Refer to an enumeration member using the class name and the member name:

`ClassName.MemberName`

For example, assign the enumeration member `WeekDays.Tuesday` to the variable `today`:

```
today = WeekDays.Tuesday;
```

`today` is a variable of class `WeekDays`:

```
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
today	1x1	104	WeekDays	
today				
today =				
	Tuesday			

## Convert to Superclass Value

If an enumeration class specifies a superclass, convert an enumeration object to the superclass by passing the object to the superclass constructor. However, the superclass constructor must be able to accept its own class as input and return an instance of the superclass. MATLAB built-in numeric classes, such as `uint32`, allow this conversion.

For example, the `Bearing` class derives from the `uint32` built-in class:

```
classdef Bearing < uint32
    enumeration
        North (0)
        East (90)
        South (180)
        West (270)
    end
end
```

Assign the `Bearing.East` member to the variable `a`:

```
a = Bearing.East;
```

Pass `a` to the superclass constructor and return a `uint32` value:

```
b = uint32(a);
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
a	1x1	60	Bearing	
b	1x1	4	uint32	

The `uint32` constructor accepts an object of the subclass `Bearing` and returns an object of class `uint32`.

## Define Methods in Enumeration Classes

Define methods in an enumeration class like any MATLAB class. For example, here is the `WeekDays` class with a method called `isMeetingDay` added:

```
classdef WeekDays
    enumeration
        Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
    end
    methods
        function tf = isMeetingDay(obj)
            tf = ~(WeekDays.Tuesday == obj);
        end
    end
end
```

Call `isMeetingDay` with an instance of the `WeekDays` class:

```
today = WeekDays.Tuesday;
today.isMeetingDay
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

Use the enumeration member directly as input to the method:

```
isMeetingDay(WeekDays.Wednesday)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

## Define Properties in Enumeration Classes

Add properties to an enumeration class when you must store data related to the enumeration members. Set the property values in the class constructor. For example, the `SyntaxColors` class defines three properties whose values the constructor assigns to the values of the input arguments when you reference a class member.

```
classdef SyntaxColors
    properties
        R
        G
```

```
B
end
methods
    function c = SyntaxColors(r, g, b)
        c.R = r; c.G = g; c.B = b;
    end
end
enumeration
    Error (1, 0, 0)
    Comment (0, 1, 0)
    Keyword (0, 0, 1)
    String (1, 0, 1)
end
end
```

When you refer to an enumeration member, the constructor initializes the property values:

```
e = SyntaxColors.Error;
e.R

ans =
```

```
1
```

Because `SyntaxColors` is a value class (it does not derive from handle), only the class constructor can set property values:

```
e.R = 0
```

You cannot set the read-only property 'R' of `SyntaxColors`.

For more information on enumeration classes that define properties, see “Mutable Handle vs. Immutable Value Enumeration Members” on page 14-34.

## Enumeration Class Constructor Calling Sequence

Each statement in an enumeration block is the name of an enumeration member, optionally followed by an argument list. If the enumeration class defines a constructor, MATLAB calls the constructor to create the enumerated instances.

MATLAB provides a default constructor for all enumeration classes that do not explicitly define a constructor. The default constructor creates an instance of the enumeration class:

- Using no input arguments, if the enumeration member defines no input arguments
- Using the input arguments defined in the enumeration class for that member

For example, the input arguments for the `Bool` class are `0` for `Bool.No` and `1` for `Bool.Yes`.

```
classdef Bool < logical
    enumeration
        No (0)
        Yes (1)
    end
end
```

The values of `0` and `1` are of class `logical` because the default constructor passes the argument to the first superclass. That is, this statement:

```
n = Bool.No;
```

Results in a call to `logical` that is equivalent to the following statement in a constructor:

```
function obj = Bool(val)
    obj@logical(val)
end
```

MATLAB passes the member argument only to the first superclass. For example, suppose `Bool` derived from another class:

```
classdef Bool < logical & MyBool
    enumeration
        No (0)
        Yes (1)
    end
end
```

The `MyBool` class can add some specialized behavior:

```
classdef MyBool
    methods
        function boolValues = testBools(obj)
            ...
        end
    end
end
```

The default `Bool` constructor behaves as if defined like this function:

- Argument passed to first superclass constructor
- No arguments passed to subsequent constructors

```
function obj = Bool(val)
    obj@logical(val)
    obj@MyBool
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Refer to Enumerations” on page 14-11
- “Operations on Enumerations” on page 14-19

# Refer to Enumerations

## In this section...

“Instances of Enumeration Classes” on page 14-11

“Conversion of Characters to Enumerations” on page 14-13

“Enumeration Arrays” on page 14-15

## Instances of Enumeration Classes

Enumeration members are instances of the enumeration class. You can assign enumeration members to variables and form arrays of enumeration members. If an enumeration class derives from a superclass, you can substitute an enumeration member for an instance of the superclass.

The `WeekDays` class defines enumeration members for five days of the week.

```
classdef WeekDays
    enumeration
        Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
    end
end
```

Create objects of the `WeekDays` class representing specific days.

```
today = WeekDays.Monday;
tomorrow = WeekDays.Tuesday;
```

The variables `today` and `tomorrow` are objects of the `WeekDays` class.

The `PPM` class defines three enumeration members. Each member has an associated numeric value derived from the class superclass.

```
classdef PPM < double
    enumeration
        High (1000)
        Medium (100)
        Low (10)
    end
end
```

Assign an enumeration member to a variable.

```
level = PPM.High;
```

When you substitute enumeration members for instances of the superclass, MATLAB coerces the enumeration member to the superclass. For example, add an enumeration member of the PPM class with a numeric values

```
levelNew = level + 100  
levelNew =  
1100
```

The result is of class **double**.

```
whos
```

Name	Size	Bytes	Class	Attributes
level	1x1	108	PPM	
levelNew	1x1	8	double	

You can substitute superclass values for enumeration members when the values correspond. For example, pass one of the numeric values defined in the enumeration class to the PPMSwitch function.

```
function PPMSwitch(ppm)  
switch ppm  
    case PPM.Low  
        disp Low  
    case PPM.Medium  
        disp Medium  
    case PPM.High  
        disp High  
end  
end
```

```
PPMSwitch(100)
```

Medium

You can also use an enumeration member directly:

```
PPMSwitch(PPM.Medium)  
Medium
```

For information on operations you can perform on enumeration class instances, see “Operations on Enumerations” on page 14-19.

## Conversion of Characters to Enumerations

Enumeration classes can convert `char` vectors to enumeration members when the `char` vector represents an enumeration member defined by the class. This conversion enables you to pass a valid `char` vector or a cell array of `char` vectors when enumerations are expected.

Use a `char` vector instead of a direct reference to an enumeration member when you want to use a simple character strings to specify an enumeration member. However, specifying an enumeration member directly eliminates the conversion from `char` to enumeration.

Enumeration classes provide a converter function using the constructor syntax.

```
today = WeekDays('Tuesday');
```

Because the `char` vector 'Tuesday' matches the enumeration member `WeekDays.Tuesday`, the `Weekdays` `char` method can perform the conversion.

```
class(today)
```

```
ans =
```

```
WeekDays
```

Create an enumeration array using the `WeekDay` class constructor and a cell array of `char` vectors.

```
wd = WeekDays({'Monday', 'Wednesday', 'Friday'})
```

```
wd =
```

```
Monday       Wednesday     Friday
```

```
class(wd)
```

```
ans =
```

```
WeekDays
```

All `char` vectors in the cell array must correspond to an enumeration member defined by the class.

### Coercion of `char` to Enumerations

MATLAB coerces `char` vectors into enumerations members when the dominant argument is an enumeration. Because user-defined classes are dominant over the `char` class, MATLAB attempts to convert the `char` vector to a member of the enumeration class.

Create an enumeration array. Then insert a `char` vector that represents an enumeration member into the array.

```
a = [WeekDays.Monday,WeekDays.Wednesday,WeekDays.Friday]  
a =  
    Monday      Wednesday      Friday
```

Add a `char` vector to the `WeekDays` array.

```
a(end+1) = 'Tuesday'  
a =  
    Monday      Wednesday      Friday      Tuesday
```

MATLAB coerces the `char` vector to a `WeekDays` enumeration member.

```
class(a)  
ans =  
WeekDays
```

### Substitute Enumeration Members for `char` Vectors

You can use enumeration members in place of `char` vectors in cases where functions require `char` vectors. For example, this call to `sprintf` expects a `char` vector, designated by the `%s` format specifier.

```
sprintf('Today is %s',WeekDays.Friday)  
ans =
```

```
Today is Friday
```

The automatic conversion of enumeration classes to `char` enable you to use enumeration members in this case.

## Enumeration Arrays

Create enumeration arrays by:

- Concatenating enumeration members using [ ]
- Assigning enumeration members to an array using indexed assignment

Create an enumeration array of class `WeekDays` by concatenating enumeration members:

```
wd = [WeekDays.Tuesday,WeekDays.Wednesday,WeekDays.Friday];
```

Create an enumeration array of class `WeekDays` by indexed assignment:

```
a(1) = WeekDays.Tuesday;
a(2) = WeekDays.Wednesday;
a(3) = WeekDays.Friday;
```

## Mixed Enumeration Members and char Vectors

You can concatenate enumeration members and `char` vectors as long as the `char` vector represents an enumeration member.

```
clear a
a = [WeekDays.Wednesday,'Friday'];
class(a)

ans =

WeekDays
```

You can also assign a `char` vector to an enumeration array:

```
clear a
a(1) = WeekDays.Wednesday;
a(2) = 'Friday';
class(a)

ans =
```

WeekDays

**Default Enumeration Member**

The default member an enumeration class is the first enumeration member defined in the enumeration block. For the `WeekDays` class, the default enumeration member is `WeekDays.Monday`.

```
classdef WeekDays
    enumeration
        Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
    end
end
```

MATLAB allows assignment to any element of an array, even if the array variable does not previously exist. To fill in unassigned array elements, MATLAB uses the default enumeration member.

For example, assign a value to element 5 of an array, `a`:

```
clear a
a(5) = WeekDays.Tuesday;
```

MATLAB must initialize the values of array elements `a(1:4)` with the default enumeration member. The result of the assignment to the fifth element of the array `a` is:

```
a
a =
Monday      Monday      Monday      Monday      Tuesday
```

**Related Examples**

- “Operations on Enumerations” on page 14-19

# Enumerations for Property Values

## In this section...

“Syntax for Property/Enumeration Definition” on page 14-17

“Example of Restricted Property” on page 14-17

## Syntax for Property/Enumeration Definition

You can restrict the values that are allowed for a property to members of an enumeration class. Define the property as restricted to a specific enumeration class in the class definition using this syntax:

```
properties
    PropName EnumerationClass
end
```

This syntax restricts values of *PropName* to members of the enumeration class *EnumerationClass*.

## Example of Restricted Property

For example, the `Days` class defines a property named `Today`. The allowed values for the `Today` property are enumeration members of the `WeekDays` class.

The `WeekDays` class defines the enumerations:

```
classdef WeekDays
    enumeration
        Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
    end
end
```

Use the `WeekDays` enumerations to restrict the allowed values of the `Today` property:

```
classdef Days
    properties
        Today WeekDays
    end
end
```

Create an object of the `Days` class.

```
d = Days;  
d.Today = WeekDays.Tuesday;  
  
d =
```

Days with properties:

Today: Tuesday

### Representing Enumeration Members with char Vectors

The automatic conversion feature enables users of the `Days` class to assign values to the `Today` property as either enumeration members, `char` vectors, or string scalars. The `Today` property is restricted to members of the `WeekDays` enumeration class. Therefore, you can assign a `char` vector that represents a member of the `WeekDays` class.

```
d = Days;  
d.Today = 'Tuesday';
```

Also, you can use a string scalar:

```
d = Days;  
d.Today = "Tuesday";
```

For more information on restricting property values, see “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21 and “Property Class and Size Validation” on page 8-27.

# Operations on Enumerations

## In this section...

- “Operations Supported by Enumerations” on page 14-19
- “Enumeration Class” on page 14-19
- “Default Methods” on page 14-20
- “Convert Enumeration Member to Characters” on page 14-20
- “Convert Enumeration Array to Cell Array of char Vectors” on page 14-20
- “Enumerations and char Vectors in Relational Operations” on page 14-21
- “Enumerations in switch Statements” on page 14-22
- “Enumeration Set Membership” on page 14-23
- “Enumeration Text Comparison Methods” on page 14-24
- “How to Get Information About Enumerations” on page 14-25
- “Testing for an Enumeration” on page 14-25

## Operations Supported by Enumerations

You can use logical, set membership, and string comparison operations on enumerations. These operations also allow the use of enumeration in conditional statements, such as `switch` and `if` statements. Converters enable you to use `char` vectors and cell arrays of strings as enumerations.

## Enumeration Class

The `WeekDays` class defines members that enumerate days of the week. This topic uses the `WeekDays` class to illustrate how to perform operations on enumerations.

```
classdef WeekDays
    enumeration
        Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
    end
end
```

For information on defining enumerations, see “Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5.

## Default Methods

Enumeration classes have the following default methods:

```
methods('WeekDays')
```

Methods for class WeekDays:

WeekDays	char	intersect	ne	setxor	strcmpi	strcmp	strncmp	union
cellstr	eq	ismember	setdiff	strcmp	string	strcmpi	strncmp	

The **WeekDays** method converts **char** vectors, a cell array of **char** vectors, or **string** array elements to enumerations.

Other methods behave similarly to the equivalent function when used with enumerations. For information on a specific method, see the documentation for that function.

## Convert Enumeration Member to Characters

Conversion to **char** is useful because you can define enumeration members with descriptive names. For example:

```
today = WeekDays.Friday;
['Today is ',char(today)]
```

```
ans =
```

```
Today is Friday
```

## Convert Enumeration Array to Cell Array of char Vectors

Use **cellstr** to convert an enumeration array to a cell array of **char** vectors.

```
ca = cellstr([WeekDays.Tuesday,WeekDays.Thursday]);
class(ca)

ans =

cell
```

Both cells in the cell array contain **char** vectors:

```
class([ca{1:2}])
ans =
char
```

## Enumerations and char Vectors in Relational Operations

Expression involving the relational operators, `eq` and `ne`, in which one operand is an enumeration allow the other operand to be of type `char`. Before performing the operation, MATLAB converts `char` vectors to scalar enumerations or cell arrays of `char` vectors to enumeration arrays.

---

**Note:** Enumeration classes that derive from MATLAB built-in classes cannot substitute `char` vectors for enumeration members.

---

```
today = WeekDays.Friday;
today == 'Friday'

ans =
1
```

Compare enumeration array to `char` vector:

```
wd = [WeekDays.Monday,WeekDays.Wednesday,WeekDays.Friday];
wd == 'Friday'

ans =
0     0     1
```

Compare enumeration array to cell array of `char` vectors:

```
cv = {'Monday','Wednesday','Friday'};
md = [WeekDays.Tuesday,WeekDays.Thursday,WeekDays.Friday];
md ~= cv

ans =
1     1     0
```

Test equality to implement `if` statements. The `char` vector `Wednesday` is equal to (`==`) the enumeration member `WeekDays.Wednesday`:

```
today = 'Wednesday';
...
if today == WeekDays.Wednesday
    disp('Team meeting at 2:00')
end
```

## Enumerations in switch Statements

Equality (`eq`) and inequality (`ne`) methods enable you to use enumeration members in `switch` statements. For example, using the `WeekDays` class defined previously, construct a `switch` statement:

```
function c = Reminder(day)
    % Add error checking here
    switch(day)
        case WeekDays.Monday
            c = 'Department meeting at 10:00';
        case WeekDays.Tuesday
            c = 'Meeting Free Day!';
        case {WeekDays.Wednesday WeekDays.Friday}
            c = 'Team meeting at 2:00';
        case WeekDays.Thursday
            c = 'Volleyball night';
    end
end
```

Pass a member of the `WeekDays` enumeration class to the `Reminder` function:

```
today = WeekDays.Wednesday;
Reminder(today)

ans =
Team meeting at 2:00
```

For more information, see “Objects In Conditional Statements” on page 5-35.

## Substitute char Vectors

---

**Note:** Enumeration classes that derive from MATLAB built-in classes cannot substitute `char` vectors for enumeration members.

---

You can use `char` vectors to represent specific enumeration members:

```
function c = Reminder2(day)
    switch(day)
        case 'Monday'
            c = 'Department meeting at 10:00';
        case 'Tuesday'
            c = 'Meeting Free Day!';
        case {'Wednesday' 'Friday'}
            c = 'Team meeting at 2:00';
        case 'Thursday'
            c = 'Volleyball night';
    end
end
```

Although you can use `char` vectors instead of specifying enumerations explicitly, MATLAB must convert the `char` to an enumeration. Eliminate the need for this conversion if it is not necessary.

## Enumeration Set Membership

Enumeration classes provide methods to determine set membership.

- `ismember` — True for elements of an enumeration array if in a set
- `setdiff` — Set difference for enumeration arrays
- `intersect` — Set intersection for enumeration arrays
- `setxor` — Set exclusive-or for enumeration arrays
- `union` — Set union for enumeration arrays

Determine if today is a meeting day for your team. Create a set of enumeration members corresponding to the days on which the team has meetings.

```
today = WeekDays.Tuesday;
teamMeetings = [WeekDays.Wednesday WeekDays.Friday];
```

Use `ismember` to determine if `today` is part of the `teamMeetings` set:

```
ismember(today,teamMeetings)
```

```
ans =
    0
```

### Mixed Sets of Enumeration and char

If you pass both enumeration and `char` arguments to an enumeration class method, the class attempts to convert the `char` to the class of the enumeration.

Determine if `char` vector is a member of the enumeration array.

```
teamMeetings = [WeekDays.Wednesday WeekDays.Friday];
ismember('Friday',teamMeetings)

ans =
```

```
1
```

Determine if the enumeration member is a member of the cell array of `char` vectors.

```
ismember(WeekDays.Friday,{ 'Wednesday' , 'Friday' })

ans =
```

```
1
```

### Enumeration Text Comparison Methods

Enumeration classes provide methods to compare enumeration members with `char` vectors. One of the arguments to the string comparison method must be a `char` vector. Comparing two enumeration members returns `false`.

- `strcmp` — Compare enumeration members
- `strncmp` — Compare first n characters of enumeration members
- `strcmpi` — Case insensitive comparison of enumeration members
- `strncMPI` — Case insensitive first n character comparison of enumeration members

#### Comparing Enumeration Member with char Vector

The string comparison methods can compare enumeration members and `char` vectors.

```
today = WeekDays.Tuesday;
strcmp(today, 'Friday')

ans =
```

```
0  
strcmp(today, 'Tuesday')  
ans =  
1
```

## How to Get Information About Enumerations

Obtain information about enumeration classes using the `enumeration` function. For example:

```
enumeration WeekDays
```

Enumeration members for class 'WeekDays':

```
Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday
```

See also “Metaclass `EnumeratedValues` Property” on page 16-8

## Testing for an Enumeration

To determine if a variable is an enumeration, use the `isenum` function. For example:

```
today = WeekDays.Wednesday;  
isenum(today)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

`isenum` returns `true` for empty enumeration objects:

```
noday = WeekDays.empty;  
isenum(noday)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

To determine if the class of a variable class is an enumeration class, use the `meta.class` object.

```
today = WeekDays.Wednesday;  
mc = metaclass(today);  
mc.Enumeration
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

## Related Examples

- “Enumeration Class Restrictions” on page 14-27

# Enumeration Class Restrictions

Enumeration classes restrict certain aspects of their use and definition:

- Enumeration classes are implicitly **Sealed**. You cannot define a subclass of an enumeration class because doing so would expand the set.
- The properties of value-based enumeration classes are immutable. Only the constructor can assign property values. MATLAB implicitly defines the **SetAccess** attributes of all properties defined by value-based enumeration classes as **immutable**. You cannot set the **SetAccess** attribute to any other value.
- All properties inherited by a value-based enumeration class that are not defined as **Constant** must have **immutable** **SetAccess**.
- The properties of handle-based enumeration classes are mutable. You can set property values on instances of the enumeration class. See “[Mutable Handle vs. Immutable Value Enumeration Members](#)” on page 14-34.
- An enumeration member cannot have the same name as a property, method, or event defined by the same class.
- Enumerations do not support colon (`a:b`) operations. For example, `FlowRate.Low:FlowRate.High` causes an error even if the `FlowRate` class derives from a numeric superclass.
- Classes that define enumerations cannot restrict properties of the same class to an enumeration type. You must create a separate enumeration class to restrict property values to an enumeration. For information on restricting property values, see “[Example of Restricted Property](#)” on page 14-17.

## Related Examples

- “[Enumerations Derived from Built-In Types](#)” on page 14-28

## Enumerations Derived from Built-In Types

### In this section...

- “Subclassing Built-In Types” on page 14-28
- “Derive Enumeration Class from Numeric Type” on page 14-28
- “How to Alias Enumeration Names” on page 14-30
- “Superclass Constructor Returns Underlying Value” on page 14-31
- “Default Converter” on page 14-32

### Subclassing Built-In Types

Enumeration classes can subclass MATLAB built-in classes. Deriving an enumeration class from a built-in classes is useful to extend the usefulness of the enumeration members.

- Enumeration inherit functionality from the built-in class.
- You can associate a numeric or logical value with enumeration members.

For a more basic discussion of enumeration classes, see “Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5.

### Derive Enumeration Class from Numeric Type

---

**Note:** Enumeration classes derived from built-in numeric and logical classes cannot define properties.

---

If an enumeration class subclasses a built-in numeric class, the subclass inherits ordering and arithmetic operations that you can apply to the enumerated names.

For example, the `Results` class subclasses the `int32` built-in class. This class associates an integer value with each of the four enumeration members — `First`, `Second`, `Third`, and `NoPoints`.

```
classdef Results < int32
    enumeration
        First    (100)
```

```
    Second  (50)
    Third   (10)
    NoPlace (0)
end
end
```

The enumeration member inherits the methods of the `int32` class (except the colon operator). Use these enumerations like numeric values (summed, sorted, averaged).

```
isa(Results.Second, 'int32')
ans =
1
```

For example, use enumeration names instead of numbers to rank two teams:

```
Team1 = [Results.First, Results.NoPlace, Results.Third, Results.Second];
Team2 = [Results.Second, Results.Third, Results.First, Results.First];
```

Perform `int32` operations on these `Results` enumerations:

```
sum(Team1)
ans =
160
mean(Team1)
ans =
40
sort(Team2, 'descend')
ans =
First      First      Second     Third
Team1 > Team2
ans =
1      0      0      0
sum(Team1) < sum(Team2)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

### How to Create Enumeration Instances

When you first refer to an enumeration class that derives from a built-in class such as, `int32`, MATLAB passes the input arguments associated with the enumeration members to the superclass constructor. For example, referencing the `Second` `Results` member, defined as:

```
Second (50)
```

means that MATLAB calls:

```
int32(50)
```

to initialize the `int32` aspect of this `Results` object.

### How to Alias Enumeration Names

Enumeration classes that derive from MATLAB built-in numeric and logical classes can define more than one name for an underlying value. The first name in the enumeration block with a given underlying value is the actual name for that underlying value and subsequent names are aliases.

Specify aliased names with the same superclass constructor argument as the actual name:

```
classdef Bool < logical
    enumeration
        No (0)
        Yes (1)
        off (0)
        on (1)
    end
end
```

For example, the actual name of an instance of the `Bool.off` enumeration member is `No`:

```
a = Bool.No
```

```
a =
```

```
No
```

```
b = Bool.off
```

```
b =
```

```
No
```

## Superclass Constructor Returns Underlying Value

The actual underlying value associated with an enumeration member is the value returned by the built-in superclass. For example, consider the `Bool` class defined with constructor arguments that are of class `double`:

```
classdef Bool < logical
    enumeration
        No (0)
        Yes (100)
    end
end
```

This class derives from the built-in `logical` class. Therefore, underlying values for an enumeration member depend only on what value `logical` returns when passed that value:

```
a = Bool.Yes
```

```
a =
```

```
Yes
```

```
logical(a)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

## How to Subclass Numeric Built-In Classes

The `FlowRate` enumeration class defines three members, `Low`, `Medium`, and `High`.

```
classdef FlowRate < int32
    enumeration
```

```
    Low      (10)
    Medium   (50)
    High     (100)
end
end
```

Reference an instance of an enumeration member:

```
setFlow = FlowRate.Medium;
```

This statement causes MATLAB to call the default constructor with the argument value of 50. MATLAB passes this argument to the first superclass constructor (`int32(50)` in this case). The result is an underlying value of 50 as a 32-bit integer for the `FlowRate.Medium` member.

Because `FlowRate` subclasses a built-in numeric class (`int32`), this class cannot define properties. However `FlowRate` inherits `int32` methods including a converter method. Programs can use the converter to obtain the underlying value:

```
setFlow = FlowRate.Medium;
int32(setFlow)

ans =
```

```
50
```

## Default Converter

If an enumeration is a subclass of a built-in numeric class, you can convert from built-in numeric data to the enumeration using the name of the enumeration class. For example:

```
a = Bool(1)

a =
```

```
Yes
```

An enumerated class also accepts enumeration members of its own class as input arguments:

```
Bool(a)

ans =
```

```
Yes
```

The converter returns an object of the same size as in input:

```
Bool([0,1])
```

```
ans =
```

```
No Yes
```

Create an empty enumeration array using the `empty` static method:

```
Bool.empty
```

```
ans =
```

```
0x0 empty Boolean enumeration.
```

## Related Examples

- “Mutable Handle vs. Immutable Value Enumeration Members” on page 14-34
- “Fundamental MATLAB Classes”

## Mutable Handle vs. Immutable Value Enumeration Members

### In this section...

- “Select Handle- or Value-Based Enumerations” on page 14-34
- “Value-Based Enumeration Classes” on page 14-34
- “Handle-Based Enumeration Classes” on page 14-36
- “Represent State with Enumerations” on page 14-39

### Select Handle- or Value-Based Enumerations

Use a handle enumeration to enumerate a set of objects whose state can change over time. Use a value enumeration to enumerate a set of abstract (and immutable) values. For information about handle and value classes, see “Comparison of Handle and Value Classes” on page 7-2.

### Value-Based Enumeration Classes

A value-based enumeration class has a fixed set of specific values. Modify these values by changing the values of properties. Doing so expands or changes the fixed set of values for this enumeration class.

#### Inherited Property `SetAccess` Must Be Immutable

Value-based enumeration classes implicitly define the `SetAccess` attributes of all properties as `immutable`. You cannot set the `SetAccess` attribute to any other value.

However, all superclass properties must explicitly define property `SetAccess` as `immutable`.

#### Enumeration Members Remain Constant

An instance of a value-based enumeration class is unique until the class is cleared and reloaded. For example, given this class:

```
classdef WeekDays
    enumeration
        Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
    end
```

```
end
```

MATLAB considers **a** and **b** as equivalent:

```
a = WeekDays.Monday;
b = WeekDays.Monday;
isequal(a,b)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

```
a == b
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

### Enumeration Member Properties Remain Constant

Value-based enumeration classes that define properties are immutable. For example, the **Colors** enumeration class associates RGB values with color names.

```
classdef Colors
    properties
        R = 0
        G = 0
        B = 0
    end
    methods
        function c = Colors(r,g,b)
            c.R = r; c.G = g; c.B = b;
        end
    end
    enumeration
        Red    (1, 0, 0)
        Green (0, 1, 0)
        Blue   (0, 0, 1)
    end
end
```

The constructor assigns the input arguments to **R**, **G**, and **B** properties:

```
red = Colors.Red;
[red.R,red.G,red.B]
```

```
ans =  
1     0     0
```

You cannot change a property value:

```
red.G = 1;
```

You cannot set the read-only property 'G' of Colors.

## Handle-Based Enumeration Classes

Handle-based enumeration classes that define properties are mutable. Derive enumeration classes from the handle class when you must be able to change property values on instances of that class.

---

**Note:** You cannot derive an enumeration class from matlab.mixin.Copyable because the number of instances you can create are limited to the ones defined inside the enumeration block.

---

### An Enumeration Member Remains Constant

Given a handle-based enumeration class with properties, changing the property value of an instance causes all references to that instance to reflect the changed value.

For example, the `HandleColors` enumeration class associates RGB values with color names, the same as the `Colors` class in the previous example. However, `HandleColors` derives from `handle`:

```
classdef HandleColors < handle  
    properties  
        R = 0  
        G = 0  
        B = 0  
    end  
    methods  
        function c = HandleColors(r, g, b)  
            c.R = r; c.G = g; c.B = b;  
        end  
    end
```

```
enumeration
    Red    (1, 0, 0)
    Green  (0, 1, 0)
    Blue   (0, 0, 1)
end
end
```

Create an instance of `HandleColors.Red` and return the value of the `R` property:

```
a = HandleColors.Red;
a.R

ans =
1
```

MATLAB constructs the `HandleColors.Red` enumeration member, which sets the `R` property to `1`, the `G` property to `0`, and the `B` property to `0`.

Change the value of the `R` property to `0.8`:

```
a.R = 0.8;
```

After setting the value of the `R` property to `0.8`, create another instance, `b`, of `HandleColors.Red`:

```
b = HandleColors.Red;
b.R

ans =
0.8000
```

The value of the `R` property of the newly created instance is also `0.8`. A MATLAB session has only one value for any enumeration member at any given time.

Clearing the workspace variables does not change the current definition of the enumeration member `HandleColors.Red`:

```
clear
a = HandleColors.Red;
a.R

ans =
```

```
0.8000
```

Clear the class to reload the definition of the `HandleColors` class:

```
clear classes
a = HandleColors.Red;
a.R

ans =
```

```
1
```

To prevent reassignment of a given property value, set that property's `SetAccess` attribute to `immutable`.

### Equality of Handle-Based Enumerations

Assign two variables to a particular enumeration member:

```
a = HandleColors.Red;
b = HandleColors.Red;
```

Compare `a` and `b` using `isequal`:

```
isequal(a,b)
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

The property values of `a` and `b` are the same, so `isequal` returns `true`. However, unlike handle classes that are not enumeration classes, `a` and `b` are the same handle because there is only one enumeration member. Determine handle equality using `==` (the handle `eq` method).

```
a == b
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

See the `handle eq` method for information on how `isequal` and `==` differ when used with handles.

## Represent State with Enumerations

The `MachineState` class defines two enumeration members to represent the state of a machine, either running or not running.

```
classdef MachineState
    enumeration
        Running
        NotRunning
    end
end
```

The `Machine` class represents a machine with start and stop operations. The `MachineState` enumerations are easy to work with because of their `eq` and `char` methods, and they result in code that is easy to read.

```
classdef Machine < handle
    properties (SetAccess = private)
        State = MachineState.NotRunning
    end

    methods
        function start(machine)
            if machine.State == MachineState.NotRunning
                machine.State = MachineState.Running;
            end
            disp (machine.State.char)
        end
        function stop(machine)
            if machine.State == MachineState.Running
                machine.State = MachineState.NotRunning;
            end
            disp (machine.State.char)
        end
    end
end
```

Create a `Machine` object and call `start` and `stop` methods

```
m = Machine;
m.start

Running

m.stop
```

NotRunning

### **Related Examples**

- “Enumerations That Encapsulate Data” on page 14-41

# Enumerations That Encapsulate Data

## In this section...

[“Enumeration Classes with Properties” on page 14-41](#)

[“Store Data in Properties” on page 14-41](#)

## Enumeration Classes with Properties

Enumeration classes can define properties to store data values. The enumeration members represent specific values for these properties, which MATLAB assigns in the class constructor. For information on defining enumeration classes, see “Define Enumeration Classes” on page 14-5.

## Store Data in Properties

---

**Note:** Enumeration classes that subclass built-in numeric or logical classes cannot define or inherit properties. For more information on this kind of enumeration class, see “[Enumerations Derived from Built-In Types](#)” on page 14-28 .

---

Define properties in an enumeration class if you want to associate specific data with enumeration members, but do not need to inherit arithmetic, ordering, or other operations that MATLAB defines for specific built-in classes.

### Representing Colors

Define an enumeration class to represent the RGB values of the colors in a color set. The `Colors` class defines names for the colors, each of which uses the RGB values as arguments to the class constructor:

```
classdef Colors
properties
    R = 0
    G = 0
    B = 0
end
methods
    function c = Colors(r, g, b)
```

```
    c.R = r; c.G = g; c.B = b;
end
end
enumeration
    Blueish    (18/255,104/255,179/255)
    Reddish    (237/255,36/255,38/255)
    Greenish   (155/255,190/255,61/255)
    Purplish   (123/255,45/255,116/255)
    Yellowish  (1,199/255,0)
    LightBlue  (77/255,190/255,238/255)
end
end
```

You can access the property values via the enumeration member:

```
Colors.Reddish.R
ans =
0.9294
```

Suppose that you want to create a plot with the new shade of red named **Reddish**:

```
a = Colors.Reddish;
[a.R,a.G,a.B]
ans =
0.9294    0.1412    0.1490
```

Use these values by accessing the enumeration member properties. For example, the **myPlot** function accepts a **Colors** enumeration member as an input argument. The function accesses the RGB values defining the color from the property values.

```
function h = myPlot(x,y,LineColor)
    h = line('XData',x,'YData',y);
    r = LineColor.R;
    g = LineColor.G;
    b = LineColor.B;
    h.Color = [r g b];
end
```

Create a plot using a reddish color line:

```
h = myPlot(1:10,1:10,Colors.Reddish);
```

The `Colors` class encapsulates the definitions of a standard set of colors. You can change the enumeration class definition of the colors and not affect functions that use the enumerations.

### Enumerations Defining Categories

The `Cars` class defines categories used to inventory automobiles. The `Cars` class derives from the `CarPainter` class, which derives from `handle`. The abstract `CarPainter` class defines a `paint` method, which modifies the `Color` property when a car is painted another color.

The `Cars` class uses the `Colors` enumeration members to specify a finite set of available colors. The exact definition of any given color can change independently of the `Cars` class.

```
classdef Cars < CarPainter
    enumeration
        Hybrid (2,'Manual',55,Colors.Reddish)
        Compact(4,'Manual',32,Colors.Greenish)
        MiniVan(6,'Automatic',24,Colors.Blueish)
        SUV      (8,'Automatic',12,Colors.Yellowish)
    end
    properties (SetAccess = private)
        Cylinders
        Transmission
        MPG
        Color
    end
    methods
        function obj = Cars(cyl,trans,mpg,colr)
            obj.Cylinders = cyl;
            obj.Transmission = trans;
            obj.MPG = mpg;
            obj.Color = colr;
        end
        function paint(obj,colorobj)
            if isa(colorobj,'Colors')
                obj.Color = colorobj;
            else
                [~,cls] = enumeration('Colors');
                disp('Not an available color')
                disp(cls)
            end
        end
    end
```

```
    end  
end
```

The `CarPainter` class requires its subclasses to define a method called `paint`:

```
classdef CarPainter < handle  
methods (Abstract)  
    paint(carobj,colorobj)  
end  
end
```

Define an instance of the `Cars` class:

```
c1 = Cars.Compact;
```

The color of this car is `Greenish`, as defined by the `Colors.Greenish` enumeration:

```
c1.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
Greenish
```

Use the `paint` method to change the car color:

```
c1.paint(Colors.Reddish)  
c1.Color
```

```
ans =
```

```
Reddish
```

## Related Examples

- “Save and Load Enumerations” on page 14-45
- “Enumerations for Property Values” on page 14-17

# Save and Load Enumerations

## In this section...

[“Basic Knowledge” on page 14-45](#)

[“Built-In and Value-Based Enumeration Classes” on page 14-45](#)

[“Simple and Handle-Based Enumeration Classes” on page 14-45](#)

[“Causes: Load as struct Instead of Object” on page 14-46](#)

## Basic Knowledge

See the `save` and `load` functions and “Save and Load Process for Objects” on page 13-2 for general information on saving and loading objects.

To see a list of enumeration names defined by a class, use the `enumeration` function.

## Built-In and Value-Based Enumeration Classes

When you save enumerations that derive from built-in classes or that are value-based classes with properties, MATLAB saves the names of the enumeration members and the definition of each member.

When loading these enumerations, MATLAB preserves names over underlying values. If the saved named value is different from the current class definition, MATLAB uses the value defined in the current class, and then issues a warning.

## Simple and Handle-Based Enumeration Classes

When you save simple enumerations that have no properties, superclasses, or values associated with the member names or enumerations derived from the `handle` class, MATLAB saves the names and any underlying values.

When loading these types of enumerations, MATLAB does not check the values associated with the names in the current class definition. This behavior results from the fact that simple enumerations have no underlying values and handle-based enumerations can legally have values that are different than those values defined by the class.

## Causes: Load as struct Instead of Object

If you add a new named value or a new property to a class after saving an enumeration, MATLAB does not warn during load.

If the changes to the enumeration class definition do not prevent MATLAB from loading the object (that is, all the named values in the MAT-File are present in the modified class definition), then MATLAB issues a warning that the class has changed and loads the enumeration.

In the following cases, MATLAB issues a warning and loads as much of the saved data as possible as a **struct**:

- MATLAB cannot find the class definition
- The class is no longer an enumeration class
- MATLAB cannot initialize the class
- There is one or more enumeration members in the loaded enumeration that is not in the class definition
- If the class is a value-based enumeration with properties and a property that exists in the file, is not present in the class definition

### **struct** Fields

The returned **struct** has these fields:

- **ValueNames** — A cell array of strings, one per unique value in the enumeration array.
- **Values** — An array of the same dimension as **ValueNames** containing the corresponding values of the enumeration members named in **ValueNames**. Depending on the kind of enumeration class, **Values** can be one of the following:
  - If the enumeration class derives from a built-in class, the array class is the same as the built-in class. The values in the array are the underlying values of each enumeration member.
  - Otherwise, a **struct** array representing the property name — property values pairs of each enumeration member. For simple and handle-based enumerations, the **struct** array has no fields.
- **ValueIndices** — a **uint32** array of the same size as the original enumeration. Each element is an index into the **ValueNames** and **Values** arrays. The content of **ValueIndices** represents the value of each object in the original enumeration array.

## More About

- “Named Values” on page 14-2



# Constant Properties

---

# Properties with Constant Values

## In this section...

- “Defining Named Constants” on page 15-2
- “Constant Property Assigned a Handle Object” on page 15-4
- “Constant Property Assigned Any Object” on page 15-4
- “Constant Properties — No Support for Get Events” on page 15-6

## Defining Named Constants

Use constant properties to define constant values that you can access by name. Create a class with constant properties by declaring the **Constant** attribute in the property blocks. Setting the **Constant** attribute means that, once initialized to the value specified in the property block, the value cannot be changed.

### Assigning Values to Constant Properties

Assign any value to a **Constant** property, including a MATLAB expression. For example:

```
classdef NamedConst
    properties (Constant)
        R = pi/180
        D = 1/NamedConst.R
        AccCode = '0145968740001110202NPQ'
        RN = rand(5)
    end
end
```

MATLAB evaluates the expressions when loading the class. Therefore, the values MATLAB assigns to **RN** are the result of a single call to the **rand** function and do not change with subsequent references to **NamedConst.RN**. Calling **clear classes** causes MATLAB to reload the class and reinitialize the constant properties.

### Referencing Constant Properties

Refer to the constant using the class name and the property name:

*ClassName.PropName*

For example, to use the `NamedConst` class defined in the previous section, reference the constant for the degree to radian conversion, `R`:

```
radi = 45*NamedConst.R
radi =
0.7854
```

### Constants In Packages

To create a library for constant values that you can access by name, first create a package folder, then define the various classes to organize the constants. For example, to implement a set of constants that are useful for making astronomical calculations, define a `AstroConstants` class in a package called `constants`:

```
+constants/@AstroConstants/AstroConstants.m
```

The class defines a set of `Constant` properties with values assigned:

```
classdef AstroConstants
    properties (Constant)
        C = 2.99792458e8      % m/s
        G = 6.67259            % m/kg
        Me = 5.976e24           % Earth mass (kg)
        Re = 6.378e6             % Earth radius (m)
    end
end
```

To use this set of constants, reference them with a fully qualified class name. For example, the following function uses some of the constants defined in `AstroConstants`:

```
function E = energyToOrbit(m,r)
    E = constants.AstroConstants.G * constants.AstroConstants.Me * m * ...
        (1/constants.AstroConstants.Re - 0.5*r);
end
```

Importing the package into the function eliminates the need to repeat the package name (see `import`):

```
function E = energyToOrbit(m,r)
    import constants.*;
    E = AstroConstants.G * AstroConstants.Me * m * ...
        (1/AstroConstants.Re - 0.5 * r);
end
```

## Constant Property Assigned a Handle Object

If a class defines a constant property with a value that is a handle object, you can assign values to the handle object properties. Create a local variable to access the handle object.

For example, the `ConstMapClass` class defines a constant property. The value of the constant property is a handle object (a `containers.Map` object).

```
classdef ConstMapClass < handle
    properties (Constant)
        ConstMapProp = containers.Map
    end
end
```

To assign the current date to the `Date` key, return the handle from the constant property, then make the assignment using the local variable on the left side of the assignment statement:

```
localMap = ConstMapClass.ConstMapProp
localMap('Date') = datestr(clock);
```

You cannot use a reference to a constant property on the left side of an assignment statement. For example, MATLAB interprets the following statement as the creation of a struct named `ConstantMapClass` with a field `ConstMapProp`:

```
ConstMapClass.ConstMapProp('Date') = datestr(clock);
```

## Constant Property Assigned Any Object

You can assign an instance of the defining class to a constant property. MATLAB creates the instance assigned to the constant property when loading the class. Use this technique only when the defining class is a handle class.

The `MyProject` is an example of such a class:

```
classdef MyProject < handle
    properties (Constant)
        ProjectInfo = MyProject
    end
    properties
        Date
        Department
        ProjectNumber
```

```
end
methods (Access = private)
    function obj = MyProject
        obj.Date = datestr(clock);
        obj.Department = 'Engineering';
        obj.ProjectNumber = 'P29.367';
    end
end
end
```

Reference property data via the **Constant** property:

```
MyProject.ProjectInfo.Date
```

```
ans =
```

```
18-Apr-2002 09:56:59
```

Because **MyProject** is a handle class, you can get the handle to the instance that is assigned to the constant property:

```
p = MyProject.ProjectInfo;
```

Access the data in the **MyProject** class using this handle:

```
p.Department
```

```
ans =
```

```
Engineering
```

Modify the nonconstant properties of the **MyProject** class using this handle:

```
p.Department = 'Quality Assurance';
```

**p** is a handle to the instance of **MyProject** that is assigned to the **ProjectInfo** constant property:

```
MyProject.ProjectInfo.Department
```

```
ans =
```

```
Quality Assurance
```

Clearing the class results in the assignment of a new instance of **MyProject** to the **ProjectInfo** property.

```
clear MyProject
MyProject.ProjectInfo.Department

ans =

Engineering
```

You can assign an instance of the defining class as the default value of a property only when the property is declared as **Constant**.

### **Constant Properties – No Support for Get Events**

Constant properties do not support property **PreGet** or **PostGet** events. MATLAB issues a warning during class initialization if you set the **GetObservable** attribute of a **Constant** property to **true**.

### **Related Examples**

- “Static Data” on page 4-2

### **More About**

- “Named Values” on page 14-2

# Information from Class Metadata

---

- “Class Metadata” on page 16-2
- “Class Introspection with Metadata” on page 16-5
- “Find Objects with Specific Values” on page 16-10
- “Get Information About Properties” on page 16-14
- “Find Default Values in Property Metadata” on page 16-20

# Class Metadata

## In this section...

- “What Is Class Metadata?” on page 16-2
- “The meta Package” on page 16-3
- “Metaclass Objects” on page 16-3
- “Metaclass Object Lifecycle” on page 16-4

## What Is Class Metadata?

Class metadata is information about class definitions that is available from various metaclasses objects. Use metaclass objects to obtain information without having to create instances of the class. Metadata enables the programmatic inspection of classes. Each metaclass has properties, methods, and events that contain information about the class or class component it describes.

All class components have an associated metaclass, which you access from the `meta.class` object. For example, create the `meta.class` object for the `matlab.mixin.Copyable` class:

```
mc = ?matlab.mixin.Copyable
mc =
class with properties:
    Name: 'matlab.mixin.Copyable'
    Description: 'Implement copy method for handle objects in MA...'
    DetailedDescription: ''
    Hidden: 0
    Sealed: 0
    Abstract: 1
    Enumeration: 0
    ConstructOnLoad: 1
    HandleCompatible: 1
    InferiorClasses: {0x1 cell}
    ContainingPackage: [1x1 meta.package]
    PropertyList: [0x1 meta.property]
    MethodList: [19x1 meta.method]
    EventList: [1x1 meta.event]
```

```
EnumerationMemberList: [0x1 meta.EnumeratedValue]
SuperclassList: [1x1 meta.class]
```

## The `meta` Package

The `meta` package contains metaclasses that describe the definition of classes and class components. The class name indicates the component described by the metaclass. For example, each class property has a `meta.property` associated with it. Attributes defined for class components correspond to properties in the respective metaclass object.

- `meta.package` — Access from `meta.class ContainingPackage` property.
- `meta.class` — Create from class name or class object using `metaclass` function or `? operator`.
- `meta.property` — Access from `meta.class PropertyList` property.
- `meta.DynamicProperty` — Obtain from the `addprop` method.
- `meta.method` — Access from `meta.class MethodList` property.
- `meta.event` — Access from `meta.class EventList` property.
- `meta.EnumeratedValue` — Access from `meta.class EnumerationMemberListList` property.

## Metaclass Objects

You cannot instantiate metaclasses directly by calling the respective class constructor. Create metaclass objects from class instances or from the class name.

- `?ClassName` — Returns a `meta.class` object for the named class. Use `meta.class.fromName` with class names stored as characters in variables.
- `meta.class.fromName('ClassName')` — returns the `meta.class` object for the named class (`meta.class.fromName` is a `meta.class` method).
- `metaclass(obj)` — Returns a metaclass object for the class instance (`metaclass`)

Create `meta.class` object from class name using the `?` operator:

```
mc = ?MyClass;
```

Create `meta.class` object from class name using the `fromName` method:

```
mc = meta.class.fromName('MyClass');
```

Create `meta.class` object from class instance

```
obj = MyClass;
mc = metaclass(obj);
```

The `metaclass` function returns the `meta.class` object (that is, an object of the `meta.class` class). You can obtain other metaclass objects (`meta.property`, `meta.method`, and so on) from the `meta.class` object.

---

**Note:** Metaclass is a term used here to refer to all the classes in the `meta` package. `meta.class` is a class in the `meta` package whose instances contain information about MATLAB classes. Metadata is information about classes contained in metaclasses.

---

## Metaclass Object Lifecycle

When you change a class definition, MATLAB reloads the class definition. If instances of the class exist, MATLAB updates those objects according to the new definition.

However, MATLAB does not update existing metaclass objects to the new class definition. If you change a class definition while metaclass objects of that class exist, MATLAB deletes the metaclass objects and their handles become invalid. You must create a new metaclass object after updating the class.

For information on how to modify and reload classes, see “Automatic Updates for Modified Classes” on page 5-48.

## Related Examples

- “Class Introspection with Metadata” on page 16-5
- “Find Objects with Specific Values” on page 16-10
- “Get Information About Properties” on page 16-14
- “Find Default Values in Property Metadata” on page 16-20

# Class Introspection with Metadata

## In this section...

- “Using Class Metadata” on page 16-5
- “Inspect the EmployeeData Class” on page 16-5
- “Metaclass EnumeratedValues Property” on page 16-8

## Using Class Metadata

Use class metadata to get information about classes and objects programmatically. For example, you can determine attribute values for class members or get a list of events defined by the class. For basic information about metadata, see “Class Metadata” on page 16-2.

## Inspect the EmployeeData Class

The `EmployeeData` class is a `handle` class with two properties, one of which has `private` Access and defines a set access method.

```
classdef EmployeeData < handle
    properties
        EmployeeName
    end
    properties (Access = private)
        EmployeeNumber
    end
    methods
        function obj = EmployeeData(name,ss)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.EmployeeName = name;
                obj.EmployeeNumber = ss;
            end
        end
        function set.EmployeeName(obj,name)
            if ischar(name)
                obj.EmployeeName = name;
            else
                error('Employee name must be a char vector')
            end
        end
    end
```

```
    end
  end
end
```

### Inspect Class Definition

Using the `EmployeeData` class, create a `meta.class` object using the `?` operator:

```
mc = ?EmployeeData;
```

Determine from what classes `EmployeeData` derives. The returned value is a `meta.class` object for the `handle` superclass:

```
a = mc.SuperclassList;
a.Name
```

```
ans =
```

```
handle
```

The `EmployeeData` class has only one superclass. For classes having more than one direct superclass, `a` contains a `meta.class` object for each superclass.

Use an indexed reference to refer to any particular superclass:

```
a(1).Name
```

or, directly from `mc`:

```
mc.SuperclassList(1).Name
```

```
ans =
```

```
handle
```

The `SuperclassList` property contains only direct superclasses.

### Inspect Properties

Find the names of the properties defined by the `EmployeeData` class. First obtain an array of `meta.properties` objects from the `meta.class` `PropertyList` property.

```
mc = ?EmployeeData;
mpArray = mc.PropertyList;
```

The length of `mpArray` indicates that there are two `meta.property` objects, one for each property defined by the `EmployeeData` class:

```
length(mpArray)
ans =
    2
```

Now get a `meta.property` object from the array:

```
prop1 = mpArray(1);
prop1.Name

ans =
EmployeeName
```

The `Name` property of the `meta.property` object identifies the class property represented by that `meta.property` object.

Query other `meta.property` object properties to determine the attributes of the `EmployeeName` properties.

### Find Component with Specific Attribute

You can use indexing techniques to list class components that have specific attribute values. For example, this code lists the methods in the `EmployeeData` class that have `private` access:

```
mc = ?EmployeeData;
mc.PropertyList(ismember({mc.PropertyList(:).SetAccess}, 'private')).Name

ans =
EmployeeNumber
```

`Access` is not a property of the `meta.property` class. Use `SetAccess` and `GetAccess`, which are properties of the `meta.property` class.

Find components with attributes that are logical values using a statement like this one:

```
mc = ?handle;
mc.MethodList(ismember([mc.MethodList(:).Hidden], true)).Name

ans =
```

```
empty
```

### Inspect Class Instance

Create an `EmployeeData` object and determine property access settings:

```
EdObj = EmployeeData('My Name',1234567);
mcEdObj = metaclass(EdObj);
mpArray = mcEdObj.PropertyList;
EdObj.(mpArray(1).Name) % Dynamic field names work with objects
```

The value of the `EmployeeName` property is the text `My Name`, which was assigned in the constructor.

```
ans =
    My Name
```

The value of the `EmployeeNumber` property is not accessible because the property has private Access.

```
EdObj.(mpArray(2).Name)
```

You cannot get the '`EmployeeNumber`' property of `EmployeeData`.

```
mpArray(2).GetAccess
```

```
ans =
    private
```

Obtain a function handle to the `EmployeeName` property set access function:

```
mpArray(1).SetMethod
```

```
ans =
@D:\MyDir\@EmployeeData\EmployeeData.m>EmployeeData.set.EmployeeName
```

### Metaclass EnumeratedValues Property

The `meta.class EnumeratedValues` property contains an array of `meta.EnumeratedValue` objects, one for each enumeration member. Use the `meta.EnumeratedValue Name` property to obtain the enumeration member names defined by an enumeration class. For example, given the `WeekDays` enumeration class:

```
classdef WeekDays
enumeration
    Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
```

```
    end  
end
```

Query enumeration names from the `meta.class` object:

```
mc = ?WeekDays;  
mc.EnumerationMemberList(2).Name  
  
ans =  
  
Tuesday
```

## Related Examples

- “Find Objects with Specific Values” on page 16-10

## Find Objects with Specific Values

### In this section...

[“Find Handle Objects” on page 16-10](#)

[“Find by Attribute Settings” on page 16-11](#)

### Find Handle Objects

Use the `handle` class `findobj` method to find objects that have properties with specific values. For example, the following class defines a `PhoneBook` object to represent a telephone book entry in a data base. The `PhoneBook` class subclasses the `dynamicprops` class, which derives from `handle`.

```
classdef PhoneBook < dynamicprops
    properties
        Name
        Address
        Number
    end
    methods
        function obj = PhoneBook(n,a,p)
            obj.Name = n;
            obj.Address = a;
            obj.Number = p;
        end
    end
end
```

Here are three of the `PhoneBook` entries in the database:

```
PB(1) = PhoneBook('Nancy Vidal','123 Washington Street','5081234567');
PB(2) = PhoneBook('Nancy Vidal','123 Main Street','5081234568');
PB(3) = PhoneBook('Nancy Wong','123 South Street','5081234569');
```

One of these three `PhoneBook` objects has a dynamic property:

```
PB(2).addprop('HighSpeedInternet');
PB(2).HighSpeedInternet = '1M';
```

### Find Property/Value Pairs

Find the object representing employee `Nancy Wong` and display the name and number by concatenating the strings:

```
NW = findobj(PB,'Name','Nancy Wong');
[NW.Name,' - ',NW.Number]

ans =

Nancy Wong - 5081234569
```

## Find Objects with Specific Property Names

Search for objects with specific property names using the **-property** option:

```
H = findobj(PB,'-property','HighSpeedInternet');
H.HighSpeedInternet

ans =

1M
```

The **-property** option enables you to omit the value of the property and search for objects using only the property name.

## Using Logical Expressions

Search for specific combinations of property names and values:

```
H = findobj(PB,'Name','Nancy Vidal','-and','Address','123 Main Street');
H.Number

ans =

5081234568
```

## Find by Attribute Settings

All metaclasses derive from the handle class. You can use the handle `findobj` method to find class members that have specific attribute settings.

For example, find the abstract methods in a class definition by searching the `meta.class.MethodList` for `meta.method` objects with their `Abstract` property set to `true`:

Use the class name in character format because class is abstract. You cannot create an object of the class:

```
mc = meta.class.fromName('MyClass');
```

Search the `MethodList` list of `meta.method` objects for those methods that have their `Abstract` property set to true:

```
absMethods = findobj(mc.MethodList,'Abstract',true);
methodNames = {absMethods.Name};
```

The cell array, `methodNames`, contains the names of the abstract methods in the class.

### Find Properties That Have Public Get Access

Find the names of all properties in the `containers.Map` class that have public `GetAccess`:

- Get the `meta.class` object.
- Use `findobj` to search the array of `meta.property` objects.
- Use braces to create a cell array of property names.

```
mc = ?containers.Map;
mpArray = findobj(mc.PropertyList,'GetAccess','public');
names = {mpArray.Name};
```

Display the names of all `containers.Map` properties that have public `GetAccess`:

```
celldisp(names)
```

```
names{1} =
```

```
Count
```

```
names{2} =
```

```
KeyType
```

```
names{3} =
```

```
ValueType
```

### Find Static Methods

Determine if any `containers.Map` class methods are static:

```
~isempty(findobj([mc.MethodList(:)],'Static',true))
ans =
```

1

`findobj` returns an array of `meta.method` objects for the static methods. In this case, the list of static methods is not empty. Therefore, there are static methods defined by this class.

Get the names of any static methods from the `meta.method` array:

```
staticMethodInfo = findobj([mc.MethodList(:)],'Static',true);
staticMethodInfo(:).Name
ans =
empty
```

The name of the static method (there is only one in this case) is `empty`. Here is the information from the `meta.method` object for the `empty` method:

```
staticMethodInfo
method with properties:

    Name: 'empty'
    Description: 'Returns an empty object array of the given size'
DetailedDescription: ''
    Access: 'public'
    Static: 1
    Abstract: 0
    Sealed: 0
    Hidden: 1
    InputNames: {'varargin'}
    OutputNames: {'E'}
DefiningClass: [1x1 meta.class]
```

## See Also

`empty`

## Related Examples

- “Get Information About Properties” on page 16-14

## Get Information About Properties

### In this section...

[“The meta.property Object” on page 16-14](#)

[“How to Find Properties with Specific Attributes” on page 16-18](#)

### The `meta.property` Object

Use the `meta.property` class to determine the values of property attributes. The writable properties of a `meta.property` object correspond to the attributes of the associated property. The values of the writable `meta.property` properties correspond to the attribute values specified in the class definition.

For example, create a default `containers.Map` object. Use the handle `findprop` method to get the `meta.property` object for the `Count` property:

```
mp = findprop(containers.Map, 'Count')  
mp =  
  
property with properties:  
  
    Name: 'Count'  
    Description: 'Number of pairs in the collection'  
    DetailedDescription: ''  
        GetAccess: 'public'  
        SetAccess: 'private'  
        Dependent: 1  
        Constant: 0  
        Abstract: 0  
        Transient: 1  
        Hidden: 0  
        GetObservable: 0  
        SetObservable: 0  
        AbortSet: 0  
        GetMethod: []  
        SetMethod: []  
    DefiningClass: [1x1 meta.class]
```

The preceding `meta.property` display shows that the default `Map` object `Count` property:

- Has public `GetAccess` and private `SetAccess`
- Is `Dependent`
- Is `Transient`

For a list of property attributes, see “Table of Property Attributes” on page 8-8.

If the class is not a `handle` class, get the `meta.property` objects from the `meta.class` object. Use the `metaclass` function an object or the `?` operator with the class name:

```
mc = ?containers.Map
mc =
class with properties:

    Name: 'containers.Map'
    Description: 'MATLAB Map Container'
    DetailedDescription: 'MATLAB Map Container'
        Hidden: 0
        Sealed: 0
    ConstructOnLoad: 1
    HandleCompatible: 1
    InferiorClasses: {0x1 cell}
    ContainingPackage: [1x1 meta.package]
        PropertyList: [4x1 meta.property]
        MethodList: [35x1 meta.method]
        EventList: [1x1 meta.event]
    EnumerationMemberList: [0x1 meta.EnumeratedValue]
    SuperclassList: [1x1 meta.class]
```

The `meta.class` object property named `PropertyList` contains an array of `meta.property` objects, one for each property defined by the `containers.Map` class. For example, the name of the property associated with the `meta.property` object in element 1 is:

```
mc.PropertyList(1).Name
ans =
Count
```

The `meta.class` object contains a `meta.property` object for hidden properties too. Compare the result with the `properties` function, which returns only public properties:

```
properties('containers.Map')

Properties for class containers.Map:
```

```
Count
KeyType
ValueType
```

The `serialization` property is `Hidden` and has its `GetAccess` and `SetAccess` attributes set to `private`. Therefore, the `properties` function does not list it. However, you can get information about this property from its associated `meta.property` object (which is the fourth element in the array of `meta.property` objects in this case):

```
mc.PropertyList(4)

ans =

class with properties:

    Name: 'serialization'
    Description: 'Serialization property.'
    DetailedDescription: ''
        GetAccess: 'private'
        SetAccess: 'private'
        Dependent: 0
        Constant: 0
        Abstract: 0
        Transient: 0
        Hidden: 1
    GetObservable: 0
    SetObservable: 0
        AbortSet: 0
        GetMethod: []
        SetMethod: []
    DefiningClass: [1x1 meta.class]
```

### How to Index Metaclass Objects

Access other metaclass objects directly from the `meta.class` object properties. For example, the statement:

```
mc = ?containers.Map;

returns a meta.class object:
```

```
class(mc)
```

```
ans =
```

```
meta.class
```

Referencing the `PropertyList` `meta.class` property returns an array with one `meta.property` object for each property of the `containers.Map` class:

```
class(mc.PropertyList)
```

```
ans =
```

```
meta.property
```

Each array element is a single `meta.property` object:

```
mc.Properties(1)
```

```
ans =
```

```
[1x1 meta.property]
```

The `Name` property of the `meta.property` object contains a `char` vector that is the name of the property:

```
class(mc.PropertyList(1).Name)
```

```
ans =
```

```
char
```

Apply standard MATLAB indexing to access information in metaclass objects.

For example, the `meta.class PropertyList` property contains an array of `meta.property` objects. The following expression accesses the first `meta.property` object in this array and returns the first and last (`C` and `t`) letters of the `char` vector contained in the `meta.property Name` property.

```
mc.PropertyList(1).Name([1 end])
```

```
ans =
```

```
Ct
```

## How to Find Properties with Specific Attributes

This example implements a function that finds properties with specific attribute values. For example, you can:

- Find objects that define constant properties (`Constant` attribute set to `true`).
- Determine what properties are read-only (`GetAccess = public`, `SetAccess = private`).

The `findAttrValue` function returns a cell array of property names that set the specified attribute.

The `findAttrValue` function accesses information from metadata using these techniques:

- If input argument, `obj`, is a `char` vector, use the `meta.class.fromName` static method to get the `meta.class` object.
- If input argument, `obj`, is an object, use the `metaclass` function to get the `meta.class` object.
- Every property has an associated `meta.property` object. Obtain these objects from the `meta.class.PropertyList` property.
- Use the `handle` class `findprop` method to determine if the requested property attribute is a valid attribute name. All property attributes are properties of the `meta.property` object. The statement, `findobj(mp, 'PropertyName')` determines whether the `meta.property` object, `mp`, has a property called `PropertyName`.
- Reference `meta.property` object properties using dynamic field names. For example, if `attrName = 'Constant'`, then MATLAB converts the expression `mp.(attrName)` to `mp.Constant`.
- The optional third argument enables you to specify the value of attributes whose values are not logical `true` or `false` (such as `GetAccess` and `SetAccess`).

```
function cl_out = findAttrValue(obj,attrName,varargin)
    if ischar(obj)
        mc = meta.class.fromName(obj);
    elseif isobject(obj)
        mc = metaclass(obj);
    end
    ii = 0; numb_props = length(mc.PropertyList);
    cl_array = cell(1,numb_props);
    for c = 1:numb_props
```

```
mp = mc.PropertyList(c);
if isempty (findprop(mp,attrName))
    error('Not a valid attribute name')
end
attrValue = mp.(attrName);
if attrValue
    if islogical(attrValue) || strcmp(varargin{1},attrValue)
        ii = ii + 1;
        cl_array(ii) = {mp.Name};
    end
end
cl_out = cl_array(1:ii);
end
```

## Find Property Attributes

Suppose that you have the following containers.Map object:

```
mapobj = containers.Map({'rose','bicycle'},{'flower','machine'});
```

Find properties with **private SetAccess**:

```
findAttrValue(mapobj,'SetAccess','private')
```

```
ans =
```

```
'Count'      'KeyType'      'ValueType'      'serialization'
```

Find properties with **public GetAccess**:

```
findAttrValue(mapobj,'GetAccess','public')
```

```
ans =
```

```
'Count'      'KeyType'      'ValueType'
```

## Related Examples

- “Find Default Values in Property Metadata” on page 16-20

## Find Default Values in Property Metadata

### In this section...

[“Default Values” on page 16-20](#)

[“meta.property Data” on page 16-20](#)

### Default Values

Class definitions can specify explicit default values for properties (see “Property Default Values” on page 8-15). You can determine if a class defines explicit default values for a property and what the value of the default is from the property’s `meta.property` object.

### meta.property Data

The `meta.class` object for a class contains a `meta.property` object for every property defined by the class, including properties with private and protected access.

For example, get the `meta.class` object for MATLAB `MException` class:

```
mc = ?MException;
```

Get an array of `meta.property` objects from the `meta.class` object:

```
mp = mc.PropertyList;
```

The first element in the `mp` array is the `meta.property` object for the `type` property:

```
mp(1)
```

```
ans =
```

```
class with properties:
```

```
    Name: 'type'
    Description: 'Type of error reporting'
    DetailedDescription: ''
    GetAccess: 'private'
    SetAccess: 'private'
    Dependent: 0
    Constant: 0
```

```

Abstract: 0
Transient: 0
Hidden: 0
GetObservable: 1
SetObservable: 1
AbortSet: 0
GetMethod: []
SetMethod: []
HasDefault: 1
DefaultValue: {}
DefiningClass: [1x1 meta.class]

```

Two `meta.property` properties provide information on default values:

- `HasDefault` — `true` if class specifies a default value for the property, `false` if it does not.
- `DefaultValue` — Contains the default value, when the class defines a default value for the property.

These properties provide a programmatic way to obtain property default values without reading class definition files. Use these `meta.property` object properties to obtain property default values for both built-in classes and classes defined in MATLAB code.

### Query Default Value

The procedure for querying a default value involves:

- 1 Getting the `meta.property` object for the property whose default value you want to query.
- 2 Testing the logical value of the `meta.property HasDefault` property to determine if the property defines a default value. MATLAB returns an error when you query the `DefaultValue` property if the class does not define a default value for the property.
- 3 Obtaining the default value from the `meta.property DefaultValue` property if the `HasDefault` value is `true`.

Use the `?` operator, the `metaclass` function, or the `meta.class.fromName` static method (works with `char` vector variable) to obtain a `meta.class` object. The `meta.class` object `PropertyList` property contains an array of `meta.property` objects. Identify which property corresponds to which `meta.property` object using the `meta.property Name` property.

For example, this class defines properties with default values:

```
classdef MyDefs
properties
    Material = 'acrylic'
    InitialValue = 1.0
end
end
```

Follow these steps to obtain the default value defined for the `Material` property. Include any error checking that is necessary for your application.

- 1 Get the `meta.class` object for the class:

```
mc = ?MyDefs;
```

- 2 Get an array of `meta.property` objects from the `meta.class PropertyList` property:

```
mp = mc.PropertyList;
```

- 3 The length of the `mp` array equals the number of properties. You can use the `meta.property Name` property to find the property of interest:

```
for k = 1:length(mp)
    if (strcmp(mp(k).Name, 'Material'))
        ...

```

- 4 Before querying the default value of the `Material` property, test the `HasDefault` `meta.property` to determine if `MyClass` defines a default property for this property:

```
if mp(k).HasDefault
    dv = mp(k).DefaultValue;
end
end
end
```

The `DefaultValue` property is read only. Changing the default value in the class definition changes the value of `DefaultValue` property. You can query the default value of a property regardless of its access settings.

Abstract and dynamic properties cannot define default values. Therefore, MATLAB returns an error if you attempt to query the default value of properties with these attributes. Always test the logical value of the `meta.property HasDefault` property before querying the `DefaultValue` property to avoid generating an error.

## Default Values Defined as Expressions

Class definitions can define property default values as MATLAB expressions (see “Evaluation of Expressions in Class Definitions” on page 6-9 for more information). MATLAB evaluates these expressions the first time the default value is needed, such as the first time you create an instance of the class.

Querying the `meta.property.DefaultValue` property causes MATLAB to evaluate a default value expression, if it had not yet been evaluated. Therefore, querying a property default value can return an error or warning if errors or warnings occur when MATLAB evaluates the expression. See “Property with Expression That Errors” on page 16-24 for an example.

## Property with No Explicit Default Value

`MyClass` does not explicitly define a default value for the `Foo` property:

```
classdef MyFoo
    properties
        Foo
    end
end
```

The `meta.property` instance for property `Foo` has a value of `false` for `HasDefault`. Because the class does not explicitly define a default value for `Foo`, attempting to access the `DefaultValue` property causes an error:

```
mc = ?MyFoo;
mp = mc.PropertyList(1);
mp.HasDefault

ans =

0

dv = mp.DefaultValue;

No default value has been defined for property Foo
```

## Abstract Property

`MyClass` defines the `Foo` property as `Abstract`:

```
classdef MyAbst
```

```
properties (Abstract)
  Foo
end
end
```

The `meta.property` instance for property `Foo` has a value of `false` for its `HasDefault` property because you cannot define a default value for an `Abstract` property.

Attempting to access `DefaultValue` causes an error:

```
mc = ?MyAbst;
mp = mc.PropertyList(1);
mp.HasDefault
```

```
ans =
```

```
0
```

```
dv = mp.DefaultValue;
```

```
Property Foo is abstract and therefore cannot have a default value.
```

### Property with Expression That Errors

`MyPropEr` defines the `Foo` property default value as an expression that errors when evaluated.

```
classdef MyPropEr
  properties
    Foo = sin(pie/2)
  end
end
```

The `meta.property` object for property `Foo` has a value of `true` for its `HasDefault` property because `Foo` does have a default value:

```
sin(pie/2)
```

However, this expression returns an error (`pie` is a function that creates a pie graph, not the value `pi`).

```
mc = ?MyPropEr;
mp = mc.PropertyList(1);
mp.HasDefault
```

```
ans =
```

```
1  
dv = mp.DefaultValue;  
  
Error using pie (line 29)  
Not enough input arguments.
```

Querying the default value causes the evaluation of the expression and returns the error.

### Property With Explicitly Defined Default Value of Empty ([])

`MyEmptyProp` assigns a default of [] (empty double) to the `Foo` property:

```
classdef MyEmptyProp  
properties  
    Foo = []  
end  
end
```

The `meta.property` object for property `Foo` has a value of true for its `HasDefault` property. Accessing `DefaultValue` returns the value []:

```
mc = ?MyEmptyProp;  
mp = mc.PropertyList(1);  
mp.HasDefault  
  
ans =  
  
1  
dv = mp.DefaultValue;  
  
dv =  
  
[]
```

### Related Examples

- “Get Information About Properties” on page 16-14



# Specialize Object Behavior

---

- “Methods That Modify Default Behavior” on page 17-2
- “Number of Arguments for `subsref` and `subsasgn`” on page 17-6
- “Modify `nargout` and `margin` for Indexing Methods” on page 17-9
- “Concatenation Methods” on page 17-11
- “Object Converters” on page 17-12
- “Object Array Indexing” on page 17-15
- “Code Patterns for `subsref` and `subsasgn` Methods” on page 17-21
- “Indexed Reference” on page 17-28
- “Indexed Assignment” on page 17-32
- “`end` as Object Index” on page 17-37
- “Objects in Index Expressions” on page 17-39
- “Class with Modified Indexing” on page 17-41
- “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49

## Methods That Modify Default Behavior

### In this section...

- “How to Customize Class Behavior” on page 17-2
- “Which Methods Control Which Behaviors” on page 17-2
- “Overload Functions and Override Methods” on page 17-4

### How to Customize Class Behavior

There are functions that MATLAB calls implicitly when you perform certain actions with objects. For example, a statement like `[B(1);A(3)]` involves indexed reference and vertical concatenation.

You can change how user-defined objects behave by defining methods that control specific behaviors. To change a behavior, implement the appropriate method with the name and signature of the MATLAB function.

### Which Methods Control Which Behaviors

The following table lists the methods to implement for your class and describes the behaviors that they control.

Class Method to Implement	Description
<b>Concatenating Objects</b> <code>cat</code> , <code>horzcat</code> , and <code>vertcat</code>	Customize behavior when concatenating objects  See “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65
<b>Creating Empty Arrays</b> <code>empty</code>	Create empty arrays of the specified class. See “Empty Arrays” on page 10-8
<b>Displaying Objects</b> <code>disp</code> <code>display</code>	Called when you enter <code>disp(obj)</code> on the command line

Class Method to Implement	Description
	Called by statements that are not terminated by semicolons. <code>disp</code> is often used to implement <code>display</code> methods.
	See “Overloading the <code>disp</code> Function” on page 18-41
	See “Custom Display Interface” on page 18-2
<b>Converting Objects to Other Classes</b>	
converters like <code>double</code> and <code>char</code>	Convert an object to a MATLAB built-in class
	See “The Character Converter” on page 19-16 and “The Double Converter” on page 19-15
<b>Indexing Objects</b>	
<code>subsref</code> and <code>subsasgn</code>	Enables you to create nonstandard indexed reference and indexed assignment
	See “Object Array Indexing” on page 17-15
<code>end</code>	Supports <code>end</code> syntax in indexing expressions using an object; e.g., <code>A(1:end)</code>
	See “ <code>end</code> as Object Index” on page 17-37
<code>numel</code>	Determine the number of elements in an array
	See “Modify <code>nargout</code> and <code>nargin</code> for Indexing Methods” on page 17-9
<code>numArgumentsFromSubscript</code>	Overload to specify the number of values to return from indexing expressions.
	See “Number of Arguments for <code>subsref</code> and <code>subsasgn</code> ” on page 17-6
<code>size</code>	Determine the dimensions of an array
	See “Use of <code>size</code> and <code>numel</code> with Classes” on page 12-73

Class Method to Implement	Description
<code>subsindex</code>	Support using an object in indexing expressions  See “Objects in Index Expressions” on page 17-39
<b>Saving and Loading Objects</b>	
<code>loadobj</code> and <code>saveobj</code>	Customize behavior when loading and saving objects  See “Object Save and Load”
<b>Reshape and Rearrange</b>	
<code>permute</code>	Rearrange dimensions of N-D array
<code>transpose</code>	Transpose vector or matrix
<code>ctranspose</code>	Complex conjugate transpose
<code>reshape</code>	Reshape array
<b>Determine Size and Shape</b>	
<code>isscalar</code>	Determine if the input is a scalar
<code>isvector</code>	Determine if the input is a vector
<code>ismatrix</code>	Determine if the input is a matrix
<code>isempty</code>	Determine if the input is empty

## Overload Functions and Override Methods

Overloading and overriding are terms that describe techniques for customizing class behavior. Here is how we use these terms in MATLAB.

### Overloading

Overloading means that there is more than one function or method having the same name within the same scope. MATLAB dispatches to a particular function or method based on the dominant argument. For example, the `timeseries` class overloads the MATLAB `plot` function. When you call `plot` with a `timeseries` object as an input argument, MATLAB calls the `timeseries` class method named `plot`.

To call the nonoverloaded function, use the `builtin` function.

## Overriding

Overriding means redefining a method inherited from a superclass. MATLAB dispatches to the most specific version of the method. That is, if the dominant argument is an object of the subclass, then MATLAB calls the subclass method.

To control class dominance, use the `InferiorClasses` attribute.

## Related Examples

- “Overload Functions in Class Definitions” on page 9-31
- “Object Precedence in Method Invocation” on page 9-45
- “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49

## Number of Arguments for `subsref` and `subsasgn`

### In this section...

“How MATLAB Determines Number of Arguments” on page 17-6

“Syntax for `subsref`, and `subsasgn` Methods” on page 17-7

### How MATLAB Determines Number of Arguments

MATLAB calls `subsref` or `subsasgn` to determine the result of executing code that involves indexed reference or assignment. The number of elements referenced or assigned by an indexing operation determines the number of arguments MATLAB uses to call `subsref` and `subsasgn`. That is, the indexing code determines the number of arguments that MATLAB:

- Returns from the call to `subsref`
- Passes to the call to `subsasgn`

Therefore, the indexing code determines the value of `nargout` for the call to `subsref` and the value of `nargin` for the call to `subsasgn`.

For example, consider the `ValuesArray` class.

```
classdef ValuesArray
    properties
        Values
    end
    methods
        function obj = ValuesArray(v)
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Values = v;
            end
        end
    end
end
```

Create an array of 10 `ValuesArray` objects.

```
l = ValuesArray.empty;
for k = 1:10
    l(k) = ValuesArray(k);
```

```
end
```

This subscripted reference returns a comma-separated list of three elements. For this statement, the value of `nargout` in `subsref` is 3.

```
l(1:3).Values
```

```
ans =
```

```
1
```

```
ans =
```

```
2
```

```
ans =
```

```
3
```

The left side of a subscripted assignment statement affects the number of input arguments that MATLAB uses to call `subsasgn`. This subscripted assignment assigns three values to the three elements added to the array. For this assignment, the value of `nargin` within `subsasgn` is 5 (the object, the indexing substructure, and the three values to assign).

```
[l(11:13).Values] = l(1:3).Values
```

```
l =
```

```
1x13 ValuesArray array with properties:
```

```
    Values
```

If the number of right-side arguments cannot satisfy the number of left-side arguments, MATLAB returns an error:

```
[l(11:13).Values] = l(1).Values
```

```
Insufficient number of outputs from right hand side of equal sign to satisfy assignment.
```

## Syntax for `subsref`, and `subsasgn` Methods

If a class overloads **subsref** to support either '`{}`', '`.`', or both types of indexing, and the operation returns more than one value, overload **subsref** to return multiple values using **varargout**:

```
function varargout = subsref(A,S)
    ...
end
```

If a class overloads **subsasgn** to support either '`{}`', '`.`', or both types of indexing, and the operation assigns more than one value, overload **subsasgn** to accept multiple values using **varargin**:

```
function A = subsasgn(A,S,varargin)
    ...
end
```

## More About

- “Modify nargout and nargin for Indexing Methods” on page 17-9

# Modify nargout and nargin for Indexing Methods

## In this section...

[“When to Modify Number of Arguments” on page 17-9](#)

[“How to Modify Number of Arguments” on page 17-9](#)

## When to Modify Number of Arguments

By default, the number of values referenced by an indexing operation determines how many output arguments MATLAB uses to call `subsref`. Similarly, the number of values to assign in an indexed assignment operation determines how many input arguments MATLAB uses to call `subsasgn`.

If your class design requires that indexing operations return or assign a different number of values than the number defined by the indexing operation, use `numArgumentsFromSubscript` to specify the required number. `numArgumentsFromSubscript` provides control over `nargout` for `subsref` and `nargin` for `subsasgn`.

If your class uses `numArgumentsFromSubscript`, implement `subsref` and `subsasgn` methods to define the actual values returned or assigned by indexing operations.

Before MATLAB release R2015b, MATLAB produced different results for some indexing expressions that return or assign to a comma-separated list. Use `numArgumentsFromSubscript` to support code that relies on the behavior of previous releases. Also, now you can overload `numArgumentsFromSubscript` instead of `numel` to achieve specific results without redefining how `numel` works.

## How to Modify Number of Arguments

When a class overloads `numArgumentsFromSubscript`, MATLAB calls this method instead of `numel` to compute the number of arguments expected for `subsref` `nargout` and `subsasgn` `nargin`.

If classes do not overload `numArgumentsFromSubscript`, MATLAB calls `numel` to compute the values of `nargout` or `nargin`.

MATLAB calls `numArgumentsFromSubscript` with three input arguments:

```
function n = numArgumentsFromSubscript(obj,s,indexingContext)
    ...
end
```

Input Argument	Description
obj	Object whose <code>subsref</code> or <code>subsasgn</code> method is called
s	Indexing structure that contains the indexing type and indices used in the operation
indexingContext	Context in which the indexing operation occurs: indexed reference used as a statement, index reference used as a function argument, and indexed assignment

MATLAB uses the value returned by `numArgumentsFromSubscript` for indexed reference and assignment. Determine the context in which the indexing operation executes by testing the value of `indexingContext` in your implementation of `numArgumentsFromSubscript`. For example, test for any or all the possible indexing contexts.

```
function n = numArgumentsFromSubscript(obj,~,indexingContext)
    switch indexingContext
        case matlab.mixin.util.IndexingContext.Statement
            n = ...; % nargin for indexed reference used as statement
        case matlab.mixin.util.IndexingContext.Expression
            n = ...; % nargin for indexed reference used as function argument
        case matlab.mixin.util.IndexingContext.Assignment
            n = ...; % nargin for indexed assignment
    end
end
```

For more information and examples, see `numArgumentsFromSubscript`.

---

**Note:** For MATLAB version R2015b and later releases, overload `numArgumentsFromSubscript` instead of `numel` to customize indexing for your class.

## More About

- “Number of Arguments for `subsref` and `subsasgn`” on page 17-6
- “Use of `size` and `numel` with Classes” on page 12-73

# Concatenation Methods

## In this section...

“Default Concatenation” on page 17-11

“Methods to Overload” on page 17-11

## Default Concatenation

You can concatenate objects into arrays. For example, suppose that you have three instances of the class `MyClass`, `obj1`, `obj2`, `obj3`. You can form arrays of these objects using brackets. Horizontal concatenation calls `horzcat`:

```
HorArray = [obj1,obj2,obj3];
```

`HorArray` is a 1-by-3 array of class `MyClass`. You can concatenate the objects along the vertical dimension, which calls `vertcat`:

```
VertArray = [obj1;obj2;obj3]
```

`VertArray` is a 3-by-1 array of class `MyClass`. To concatenate arrays along different dimensions, use the `cat` function. For example:

```
ndArray = cat(3,HorArray,HorArray);
```

`ndArray` is a 1-by-3-by-2 array.

## Methods to Overload

Overload `horzcat`, `vertcat`, and `cat` to produce specialized behaviors in your class. Overload both `horzcat` and `vertcat` whenever you want to modify object concatenation because MATLAB uses both functions for any concatenation operation.

## Related Examples

- “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65

# Object Converters

## In this section...

[“Why Implement Converters” on page 17-12](#)

[“Converters for Package Classes” on page 17-12](#)

[“Converters and Subscripted Assignment” on page 17-13](#)

## Why Implement Converters

You can convert an object of one class to an object of another class. A converter method has the same name as the class it converts to, such as `char` or `double`. Think of a converter method as an overloaded constructor method of another class. The converter takes an instance of its own class and returns an object of a different class.

Converters enable you to:

- Use methods defined for another class
- Ensure that expressions involving objects of mixed class types execute properly
- Control how instances are interpreted in other contexts

Suppose that you define a `polynomial` class. If you create a `double` method for the `polynomial` class, you can use it to call other functions that require inputs of type `double`.

```
p = polynomial( ... );
dp = double(p);
roots(dp)
```

`p` is a `polynomial` object, `double` is a method of the `polynomial` class, and `roots` is a standard MATLAB function whose input arguments are the coefficients of a polynomial.

## Converters for Package Classes

Classes defined in packages can have names that are a dot-separated list of names. The last name is a class and preceding names are packages. Name the conversion methods using the package qualifiers in the method names. For example, a conversion method to convert objects of `MyClass` to objects of the `PkgName.PkgClass` class uses this method name:

```
classdef MyClass
```

```
...
methods
    function objPkgClass = PkgName.PkgClass(objMyclass)
        ...
    end
end
end
```

You cannot define a converter method that uses dots in the name in a separate file. Define package-class converters in the `classdef` file.

## Converters and Subscripted Assignment

When you make a subscripted assignment statement like:

```
A(1) = myobj;
```

MATLAB compares the class of the Right-Side variable to the class of the Left-Side variable. If the classes are different, MATLAB attempts to convert the Right-Side variable to the class of the Left-Side variable. To do this conversion, MATLAB first searches for a method of the Right-Side class that has the same name as the Left-Side class. Such a method is a converter method, which is similar to a `typecast` operation in other languages.

If the Right-Side class does not define a method to convert from the Right-Side class to the Left-Side class, MATLAB calls the Left-Side class constructor, passing it the Right-Side variable.

For example, suppose that you make the following assignments:

```
A(1) = objA; % Object of class ClassA
A(2) = objB; % Object of class ClassB
```

MATLAB attempts to call a method of `ClassB` named `ClassA`. If no such converter method exists, MATLAB software calls the `ClassA` constructor, passing `objB` as an argument. If the `ClassA` constructor cannot accept `objB` as an argument, then MATLAB returns an error.

Use `cell` arrays to store objects of different classes.

## Related Examples

- “Converter Methods” on page 10-20

- “The Double Converter” on page 19-15

# Object Array Indexing

## In this section...

- “Default Indexed Reference and Assignment” on page 17-15
- “What You Can Modify” on page 17-16
- “When to Modify Indexing Behavior” on page 17-17
- “Built-In `subsref` and `subsasgn` Called in Methods” on page 17-17
- “Avoid Overriding Access Attributes” on page 17-19

## Default Indexed Reference and Assignment

MATLAB classes support object array indexing by default. Many class designs require no modification to this behavior.

Arrays enable you to reference and assign elements of the array using a subscripted notation. This notation specifies the indices of specific array elements. For example, suppose that you create two arrays of numbers (using `randi` and concatenation).

Create a 3-by-4 array of integers from 1 through 9:

```
A = randi(9,3,4)
```

```
A =
```

4	8	5	7
4	2	6	3
7	5	7	7

Create a 1-by-3 array of the numbers 3, 6, 9:

```
B = [3 6 9];
```

Reference and assign elements of either array using index values in parentheses:

```
B(2) = A(3,4);  
B
```

```
B =  
3 7 9
```

When you execute a statement that involves indexed reference:

```
C = A(3,4);
```

MATLAB calls the built-in **subsref** function to determine how to interpret the statement. Similarly, if you execute a statement that involves indexed assignment:

```
C(4) = 7;
```

MATLAB calls the built-in **subsasgn** function to determine how to interpret the statement.

The MATLAB default **subsref** and **subsasgn** functions also work with user-defined objects. For example, create an array of objects of the same class:

```
for k=1:3
    objArray(k) = MyClass;
end
```

Referencing the second element in the object array, **objArray**, returns the object constructed when **k = 2**:

```
D = objArray(2);
class(D)
```

```
ans =
```

```
MyClass
```

You can assign an object to an array of objects of the same class, or an uninitialized variable:

```
newArray(3,4) = D;
```

Arrays of objects behave much like numeric arrays in MATLAB. You do not need to implement any special methods to provide standard array behavior with your class.

For general information about array indexing, see “Matrix Indexing”.

## What You Can Modify

You can modify your class indexed reference and/or assignment behavior by implementing class methods called **subsref** and **subsasgn**. For syntax description, see their respective reference pages.

Once you add a `subsref` or `subsasgn` method to your class, then MATLAB calls only the class method, not the built-in function. Therefore, your class method must implement all the indexed reference and assignment operations that you want your class to support. These operations include:

- Dot notation calls to class methods
- Dot notation reference and assignment involving properties
- Any indexing using parentheses '`()`'
- Any indexing using braces '`{}`'

Implementing `subsref` and `subsasgn` methods gives you complete control over the interpretation of indexing expressions for objects of your class. Implementing the extent of behaviors that MATLAB provides by default is nontrivial.

## When to Modify Indexing Behavior

Default indexing for object arrays and dot notation for access to properties and methods enables user-defined objects to behave like built-in classes. For example, suppose that you define a class with a property called `Data` that contains an array of numeric data.

This statement:

```
obj.Data(2,3)
```

Returns the value contained in the second row, third column of the array. If you have an array of objects, use an expression like:

```
objArray(3).Data(2,3)
```

This statement returns the value contained in the second row, third column of the third element in the array.

Modify the default indexing behavior when your class design requires behavior that is different from MATLAB default behavior.

## Built-In `subsref` and `subsasgn` Called in Methods

MATLAB does not call class-defined `subsref` or `subsasgn` methods within the overloaded methods. Within class methods, MATLAB always calls the built-in `subsref` and `subsasgn` functions. This behavior occurs within the class-defined `subsref` and `subsasgn` methods too.

For example, within a class method, this dot reference:

```
obj.Prop
```

calls the built-in **subsref** function. To call the class-defined **subsref** method, use:

```
subsref(obj,substruct('.','Prop'))
```

Whenever a method requires the functionality of the class-defined **subsref** or **subsasgn** method, the class must call the overloaded methods as functions. Do not use the operators, '`()`', '`{}`', or '`.`'.

For example, suppose that you define a class to represent polynomial. This class has a **subsref** method that evaluates the polynomial with the value of the independent variable equal to the subscript. Assume that this statement defines the polynomial with its coefficients:

```
p = polynom([1 0 -2 -5]);
```

The MATLAB expression for the resulting polynomial is:

```
x^3 - 2*x - 5
```

This subscripted expression returns the value of the polynomial at `x = 3`:

```
p(3)
```

```
ans =  
16
```

Suppose that you want to use this feature in another class method. To do so, call the **subsref** function directly. The **evalEqual** method accepts two **polynom** objects and a value at which to evaluate the polynomials:

```
methods  
    function ToF = evalEqual(p1,p2,x)  
        % Create arguments for subsref  
        subs.type = '()';  
        subs.subs = {x};  
        % Need to call subsref explicitly  
        y1 = subsref(p1,subs);  
        y2 = subsref(p2,subs);  
        if y1 == y2  
            ToF = true;  
        else
```

```
    ToF = false;
end
end
end
```

This behavior enables you to use standard MATLAB indexing to implement specialized behaviors. See “Class with Modified Indexing” on page 17-41 for examples of how to use both built-in and class-modified indexing.

## Avoid Overriding Access Attributes

Because `subsref` is a class method, it has access to private class members. Avoid inadvertently giving access to private methods and properties as you handle various types of reference. Consider this `subsref` method defined for a class having private properties, `x` and `y`:

```
classdef MyPlot
properties (Access = private)
    x
    y
end
properties
    Maximum
    Minimum
    Average
end
methods
    function obj = MyPlot(x,y)
        obj.x = x;
        obj.y = y;
        obj.Maximum = max(y);
        obj.Minimum = min(y);
        obj.Average = mean(y);
    end
    function B = subsref(A,S)
        switch S(1).type
            case '.'
                switch S(1).subs
                    case 'plot'
                        % Reference to A.x and A.y call built-in subsref
                        B = plot(A.x,A.y);
                    otherwise
                        % Enable dot notation for all properties and methods
```

```
B = A.(S.subs);  
end  
end  
end  
end  
end
```

This **subsref** enables the use of dot notation to create a plot using the name '**plot**'. The statement:

```
obj = MyPlot(1:10,1:10);  
h = obj.plot;
```

calls the **plot** function and returns the handle to the graphics object.

You do not need to code each method and property name. The **otherwise** code in the inner **switch** block manages any name reference that you do not explicitly specify in **case** statements. However, using this technique exposes any private and protected class members via dot notation. For example, you can reference the private property, **x**, with this statement:

```
obj.x  
ans =  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
```

The same issue applies to writing a **subsasgn** method that enables assignment to private or protected properties. Your **subsref** and **subsasgn** methods might need to code each specific property and method name explicitly to avoid violating the class design.

### Related Examples

- “Code Patterns for **subsref** and **subsasgn** Methods” on page 17-21
- “Indexed Reference” on page 17-28
- “Indexed Assignment” on page 17-32

# Code Patterns for `subsref` and `subsasgn` Methods

## In this section...

[“Customize Indexed Reference and Assignment” on page 17-21](#)

[“Syntax for `subsref` and `subsasgn` Methods” on page 17-21](#)

[“Indexing Structure Describes Indexing Expressions” on page 17-22](#)

[“Values of the Indexing Structure” on page 17-23](#)

[“Typical Patterns for Indexing Methods” on page 17-23](#)

## Customize Indexed Reference and Assignment

User-defined classes have the same indexing behaviors as that of built-in classes. Classes can customize indexing operations by overloading the functions that MATLAB calls to evaluate indexing expressions. Overload the `subsref` and `subsasgn` functions when you want to define special behaviors for indexed reference and assignment.

For an overview of object indexing, see “Object Array Indexing” on page 17-15.

## Syntax for `subsref` and `subsasgn` Methods

MATLAB calls the `subsref` and `subsasgn` methods of your class with these arguments.

Method	Input	Output
<code>b = subsref(obj,s)</code>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><code>obj</code> — Object or object array used in indexing expression</li> <li><code>s</code> — Indexing structure</li> </ul>	<code>b</code> — Result of indexing expression
<code>obj = subsasgn(obj,s,b)</code>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><code>obj</code> — Object or object array used in indexing expression</li> <li><code>s</code> — Indexing structure</li> <li><code>b</code> — Value being assigned</li> </ul>	<code>obj</code> — Object or object array after assignment

## Modifying Number of Arguments

If your class design requires that indexing operations return or assign a different number of values than the number defined by the default indexing operation, overload the `numArgumentsFromSubscript` function to control `nargout` for `subsref` and `nargin` for `subsasgn`. For more information and examples, see `numArgumentsFromSubscript`.

## Indexing Structure Describes Indexing Expressions

The indexing structure contains information that describes the indexing expression. Class methods use the information in the indexing structure to evaluate the expression and implement custom behavior.

For example, the `CustomIndex` class defines a property that you can use in indexing expressions.

```
classdef CustomIndex
    properties
        dataArray
    end
end
```

Create an object and assign a 5-by-5 matrix created by the `magic` function to the `DataArray` property.

```
a = CustomIndex;
adataArray = magic(5);
```

This subscripted reference expression returns the first row of the 5-by-5 matrix.

```
adataArray(1,:)

ans =
    17    24     1     8    15
```

This expression assigns new values to the first row of the array stored in the `DataArray` property.

```
adataArray(1,:) = [1 2 3 4 5];
```

This assignment statement uses:

- A '`.`' type reference

- A property name following the dot (that is, `DataArray`)
- A range of indices `(1, :)` within parentheses

The indexing structure contains this information in the `type` and `subs` fields.

## Values of the Indexing Structure

When executing an indexing expression, MATLAB calls the class `subsref` or `subsasgn` method, if the class overloads these functions. One of the arguments passed to the method is the indexing structure. The indexing structure has two fields:

- `type` — One of the three possible indexing types: `'.'`, `'()'`, `'{}'`
- `subs` — A `char` vector with the property name or cell array of the indices used in the expression, including `:` and `end`.

If the indexing expression is a compound expression, then MATLAB passes an array of structures, one `struct` for each level of indexing. For example, in this expression:

```
a.DataArray(1,:)
```

the indexing structure array `S` has these values:

- `S(1).type` is set to `'.'`, indicating that the first indexing operation is a dot.
- `s(1).subs` is set to the property name, `'DataArray'`

The second level of indexing is in the second element of the indexing structure:

- `S(2).types` is set to `'()'` indicating the second indexing operation is parentheses indexing
- `S(2).subs` is set to a cell array containing the indices `{[1], [:]}`

## Typical Patterns for Indexing Methods

To overload the `subsref` and `subasgn` functions:

- Determine the full indexing expression using the `types` and `subs` fields of the indexing structure.
- Implement the specialized behaviors for the indexing operations supported by the class.
- Return the appropriate values or modified objects in response to the call by MATLAB.

A `switch` statement is a convenient way to detect the first level of indexing. There are three types of indexing—dot, parentheses, and braces. Each `case` block in the `switch` statement implements all indexing expressions that begin with that first-level type of indexing.

The methods must implement all indexing expressions that the class supports. If you do not customize a particular type of indexing, call the built-in function to handle that expression.

Use the length of the indexing structure array and indexing type define conditional statements for compound indexing expressions.

### Code Framework for `subsref` Method

The following framework for the `subsref` method shows how to use information in the indexing structure in conditional statements. Your application can involve other expression not shown here.

```
function varargout = subsref(obj,s)
    switch s(1).type
        case '.'
            if length(s) == 1
                % Implement obj.PropertyName
            ...
            elseif length(s) == 2 && strcmp(s(2).type, '()')
                % Implement obj.PropertyName(indices)
            ...
        else
            varargout = {builtin('subsref',obj,s)};
        end
        case '()'
            if length(s) == 1
                % Implement obj(indices)
            ...
            elseif length(s) == 2 && strcmp(s(2).type, '.')
                % Implement obj(ind).PropertyName
            ...
            elseif length(s) == 3 && strcmp(s(2).type, '.') && strcmp(s(3).type, '()')
                % Implement obj(indices).PropertyName(indices)
            ...
        else
            % Use built-in for any other expression
            varargout = {builtin('subsref',obj,s)};
        end
```

```

case '{}'
    if length(s) == 1
        % Implement obj{indices}
        ...
    elseif length(s) == 2 && strcmp(s(2).type, '.')
        % Implement obj{indices}.PropertyName
        ...
    else
        % Use built-in for any other expression
        varargout = {builtin('subsref',obj,s)};
    end
otherwise
    error('Not a valid indexing expression')
end

```

Using `varargout` for the returned value enables the method to work with object arrays. For example, suppose that you want to support the return of a comma-separated list with an expression like this one:

```
[x1,...xn] = objArray.PropertyName(Indices)
```

This expression results in a two-element indexing structure array. The first-level type is dot ('.') and the second level is parentheses ('()''). Build the `varargout` cell array with each value in the array.

```

case '.'
...
if length(s)==2 && strcmp(s(2).type, '()')
    prop = s(1).subs;          % Property name
    n = numel(obj);           % Number of elements in array
    varargout = cell(1,n);    % Preallocate cell array
    for k = 1:n
        varargout{k} = obj(k).(prop).(s(2).subs);
    end
end
...
end

```

### subsasgn Pattern

The following framework for the `subsasgn` method shows how to use the indexing structure in conditional statements that implement assignment operations.

```

function obj = subsasgn(obj,s,varargin)
switch s(1).type

```

```
case '.'
    if length(s) == 1
        % Implement obj.PropertyName = varargin{:};
        ...
    elseif length(s) == 2 && strcmp(s(2).type, '()')
        % Implement obj.PropertyName(indices) = varargin{:};
        ...
    else
        % Call built-in for any other case
        obj = builtin('subsasgn',obj,s,varargin);
    end
case '('
    if length(s) == 1
        % Implement obj(indices) = varargin{:};
    elseif length(s) == 2 && strcmp(s(2).type, '.')
        % Implement obj(indices).PropertyName = varargin{:};
        ...
    elseif length(s) == 3 && strcmp(s(2).type, '.') && strcmp(s(3).type, '()')
        % Implement obj(indices).PropertyName(indices) = varargin{:};
        ...
    else
        % Use built-in for any other expression
        obj = builtin('subsasgn',obj,s,varargin);
    end
case '{}'
    if length(s) == 1
        % Implement obj{indices} = varargin{:}
        ...
    elseif length(s) == 2 && strcmp(s(2).type, '.')
        % Implement obj{indices}.PropertyName = varargin{:}
        ...
        % Use built-in for any other expression
        obj = builtin('subsasgn',obj,s,varargin);
    end
otherwise
    error('Not a valid indexing expression')
end
end
```

Using `varargin` for the right-side value of the assignment statement enables the method to work with object arrays. For example, suppose that you want to support the assignment of a comma-separated list with an expression like this one:

```
C = {'one','two','three'};
```

```
[objArray.PropertyName] = C{:}
```

This expression results in an indexing structure with the dot type ('.') indexing The cell array C on the right side of the assignment statement produces a comma-separated list. This code assigns one list item to each property in the object array.

```
case '.'
if length(s)==1
    prop = s(1).subs;          % Property name
    n = numel(obj);           % Number of elements in array
    for k = 1:n
        obj(k).(prop) = varargin{k};
    end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Class with Modified Indexing” on page 17-41
- “Class to Represent Hardware” on page 12-79
- “Subclasses of Built-In Types with Properties” on page 12-65

## Indexed Reference

### In this section...

[“How Indexed Reference Works” on page 17-28](#)

[“Compound Indexed References” on page 17-29](#)

[“How to Write subsref for Objects” on page 17-30](#)

### How Indexed Reference Works

Object indexed references are in three forms — parentheses, braces, and dot-name:

```
A(I)  
A{I}  
A.name
```

Each of these statements results in a call by MATLAB to the **subsref** of class A, or a call to the built-in **subsasgn** function if the class of A does not implement a **subsasgn** method.

MATLAB passes two arguments to **subsref** and requires **subsref** to return the result of the indexed reference:

```
B = subsref(A,S)
```

The first argument is the object being referenced, A. The second argument, S, is a **substruct** with two fields:

- S.type is a **char** vector containing '()' , '{}', or '.' specifying the indexing type used.
- S.subs is a cell array or **char** vector containing the actual index or name. A colon used as an index is passed in the cell array as the colon character ':'. Ranges specified using a colon (e.g., 2:5) are expanded to 2 3 4 5.

For example, the expression:

```
A(1:4,:)
```

Causes MATLAB to call **subsref(A,S)**, where S is a 1-by-1 structure with a two-element cell array. The cell array contains the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and the colon character ':'.

```
S.type = '( )'  
S.subs = {1:4, ':'}
```

Returning the contents of each cell of `S.subs` gives the index values for the first dimension and a `char` vector `'.'` for the second dimension:

```
S.subs{ : }  
ans =  
1 2 3 4  
ans =  
:  
:
```

The default `subsref` returns all array elements in rows 1 through 4 and all the columns in the array.

Similarly, this expression:

```
A{1:4}
```

Uses a cell array containing the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4.

```
S.type = '{ }'  
S.subs = {1:4}
```

The default `subsref` returns the contents of all cell array elements in rows 1 through 4 and all the columns in the array.

This expression:

```
A.Name
```

Calls `subsref(A,S)`, where the `struct S` has these values:

```
S.type = '.'  
S.subs = 'Name'
```

## Compound Indexed References

These simple calls are combined for more complicated indexing expressions. In such cases, `length(S)` is the number of indexing levels. For example,

```
A(1,2).PropertyName(1:4)
```

calls `subsref(A,S)`, where `S` is a 3-by-1 array of `structs` with the values:

```
S(1).type = '()'      S(2).type = '.'          S(3).type = '()'  
S(1).subs = {1,2}     S(2).subs = 'PropertyName'  S(3).subs = {1:4}
```

## How to Write `subsref` for Objects

Your class `subsref` method interprets the indexing expressions passed in by MATLAB. The `subsref` method implements any behavior your class supports.

For example, use a `switch` statement to determine the type of indexing used and to obtain the actual indices. The following three code fragments illustrate how to interpret the input arguments. In each case, the `case` expression returns the value (`B`) that your `subsref` function returns.

For a parentheses index:

```
% Parse A(n)  
switch S.type  
    case '()'  
        B = A(S.subs{:});  
end
```

For a brace index when `A` is an object, you can implement indexing using `{}` as a special case. For example, suppose that you want `A{n}` to access a property of `A` called `CellProperty`, and that contains a cell array:

```
% Parse A{n}  
switch S.type  
    case '{}'  
        B = A.CellProperty{S.subs{:}};  
end
```

Although braces are used for cell arrays in MATLAB, your `subsref` method can define its own meaning for this syntax.

Dot name indexing typically accesses property values. The name can be an arbitrary `char` vector for which you take an arbitrary action:

```
switch S.type  
    case '.'  
        switch S.subs
```

```
case 'name1'  
    B = A.name1;  
case 'name2'  
    B = A.name2;  
end  
end
```

If the dot name is a method call, passing arguments requires a second level of indexing.

### Use Default Indexing

The method can call the built-in `subsref` to handle any of the three indexing types that you do not want to change. For example, call the built-in for {} indexing:

```
case '{}'  
varargout = builtin('subsref',A,s);
```

### Related Examples

- “Indexed Assignment” on page 17-32
- “Number of Arguments for `subsref` and `subsasgn`” on page 17-6
- “Modify `nargout` and `nargin` for Indexing Methods” on page 17-9

## Indexed Assignment

### In this section...

[“How Indexed Assignment Works” on page 17-32](#)

[“Indexed Assignment to Objects” on page 17-34](#)

[“Compound Indexed Assignments” on page 17-34](#)

[“How to Write subsasgn for Objects” on page 17-35](#)

### How Indexed Assignment Works

Object indexed assignments are in three forms — parentheses, braces, and dot-name:

```
A(I) = B  
A{I} = B  
A.name = B
```

Each of these statements results in a call by MATLAB to the **subsasgn** method of class A, or a call to the built-in **subsasgn** function if the class of A does not implement a **subsasgn** method.

MATLAB passes three arguments to **subsasgn** and requires **subsasgn** to return the result of the assignment:

```
A = subsasgn(A,S,B)
```

The first argument, A, is the object being assigned the value in the third argument B.

The second argument is the indexing structure, **substruct**. S has two fields:

- S.**type** is a **char** vector containing '()' , '{}', or '.' specifying the indexing type used.
- S.**subs** is a cell array or character array containing the actual indices or field name. A colon used as an index is passed in the cell array as the character ':'. Ranges specified using a colon (e.g., 2:5) are expanded to 2 3 4 5.

For example, the assignment statement:

```
A(2,3) = B;
```

generates a call to **subsasgn**:

```
A = subsasgn(A,S,B)
```

S contains:

```
S.type = '()' 
S.subs = {2,3}
```

The built-in **subsasgn**:

- Determines the class of A. If B is not the same class as A, then MATLAB tries to construct an object of the same class as A using B as an input argument. If this attempt fails, MATLAB returns an error.
- If A and B are, or can be made, into the same class, then MATLAB assigns the value of B to the array element at row 2, column 3.
- If A does not exist before you execute the assignment statement, then MATLAB initializes the five array elements that come before A(2,3) with default objects of class B.

Similarly, this expression

```
A{2,3} = B
```

Uses these values for S:

```
S.type = '{}'
S.subs = {2,3}
```

The built-in **subsasgn**:

- Assigns B to the **cell** array element at row 2, column 3.
- If A does not exist before you execute the assignment statement, MATLAB initializes the five cells that come before A(2,3) with [ ]. The result is a 2-by-3 cell array.

This expression:

```
A.Name = B
```

Calls A = **subsasgn**(A,S,B) where the **struct** S has these values:

```
S.type = '.'
S.subs = 'Name'
```

The built-in **subsasgn**:

- Assigns **B** to the **struct** field **Name**.
- If **A** does not exist before you execute the assignment statement, MATLAB creates a **struct** variable, **A** with field **Name** and assigns the value of **B** to this field location.
- If **struct A** exists, but has no field **Name**, then MATLAB adds the field **Name** and assigns the value of **B** to the new field location.
- If **struct A** exists and has a **Name** field, then MATLAB assigns the value of **B** to **Name**.

You can redefine all or some of these assignment behaviors by implementing a **subsasgn** method for your class.

## Indexed Assignment to Objects

If **A** is an object, this expression:

```
A.Name = B
```

Calls **A = subsasgn(A,S,B)** where, **S** has these values:

```
S.type = '.'  
S.subs = 'Name'
```

The default **subsasgn**:

- Attempts to assign **B** to the **Name** property.
- If the class of **A** does not have a **Name** property, MATLAB returns an error.
- If the **Name** property has restricted access (**private** or **protected**), MATLAB determines if the assignment is allowed based on the context in which the assignment is made.
- If the class of **A** defines a set method for property **Name**, MATLAB calls the set method.
- MATLAB applies all other property attributes before determining whether to assigning **B** to the property **Name**.

## Compound Indexed Assignments

These simple calls are combined for more complicated indexing expressions. In such cases, **length(S)** is the number of indexing levels. For example,

```
A(1,2).PropertyName(1:4) = B
```

calls `subsasgn(A,S,B)`, where `S` is a 3-by-1 array of structures with the values:

```
S(1).type = '()'      S(2).type = '.'          S(3).type = '()'
S(1).subs = {1,2}     S(2).subs = 'PropertyName'  S(3).subs = {1:4}
```

## How to Write `subsasgn` for Objects

The `CellProp` class defines a property that is a cell array. The `subsasgn` method enables you to refer to the property using brace indexing `{}` without the property name. For example,

```
a = CellProp;
a{4} = 'four';

a =

CellProp with properties:

CellProperty: {[1] [2] 'three' 'four'}

classdef CellProp
properties
    CellProperty cell = {1,2,'three'}
end
methods
    function A = subsasgn(A,S,B)
        switch S(1).type
            case '()'
                A(S(1).subs{:}) = B;
            case '{}'
                A.CellProperty{S.subs{:}} = B;
            case '.'
                name = S(1).subs{:};
                if strcmp(name,'CellProperty')
                    A.CellProperty = B;
                else
                    error('Not a valid property name')
                end
            end
        end
    function B = subsref(A,S)
        switch S.type
            case '()'
```

```
B = builtin('subsref',A,S);
case '{}'
    B = A.CellProperty{S.subs{:}};
case '.'
    B = builtin('subsref',A,S);
end
end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Indexed Reference” on page 17-28
- “Number of Arguments for subsref and subsasgn” on page 17-6
- “Modify nargout and nargin for Indexing Methods” on page 17-9

# end as Object Index

## In this section...

“Define end Indexing for an Object” on page 17-37

“The end Method ” on page 17-38

## Define end Indexing for an Object

When you use `end` in an object indexing expression, such as `A(4:end)`, the `end` function returns the index value corresponding to the last element in that dimension.

Classes can overload the `end` function to implement specialized behavior. If your class defines an `end` method, MATLAB calls that method to determine how to interpret the expression.

The `end` method has the calling syntax:

```
ind = end(A,k,n)
```

The arguments are described as follows:

- `A` is the object
- `k` is the index in the expression using the `end` syntax
- `n` is the total number of indices in the expression
- `ind` is the index value to use in the expression

For example, consider the 3-by-5 array `A`. When MATLAB encounters the expression:

```
A(end-1,:)
```

MATLAB calls the `end` method defined for the object `A` using the arguments:

```
ind = end(A,1,2)
```

These arguments mean that the `end` statement occurs in the first index and there are two indices. The `end` class method returns the index value for the last element of the first dimension (from which `1` is subtracted in this case). The original expression is evaluated as:

```
A(3-1,:)
```

If your class implements an `end` method, ensure that it returns a value appropriate for the class.

## The `end` Method

The `end` method for the `MyDataClass` example (see “Class with Modified Indexing” on page 17-41) operates on the contents of the `Data` property. The objective of this method is to return a value that can replace `end` in any indexing expression, such as:

```
obj(4:end)  
obj.Data(2,3:end)
```

This `end` method determines a positive integer value for `end`. The method returns the value so that MATLAB can use it in the indexing expression.

```
function ind = end(obj,k,n)
    szd = size(obj.Data);
    if k < n
        ind = szd(k);
    else
        ind = prod(szd(k:end));
    end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Class with Modified Indexing” on page 17-41
- “Objects in Index Expressions” on page 17-39

# Objects in Index Expressions

## In this section...

[“Objects Indexes” on page 17-39](#)

[“Ways to Implement Objects as Indices” on page 17-39](#)

[“subsindex Implementation” on page 17-39](#)

## Objects Indexes

MATLAB can use objects as indices in indexed expressions. The rules of array indexing apply — indices must be positive integers. Therefore, MATLAB must be able to derive a value from the object that is a positive integer for use in the indexed expression.

Indexed expressions like `X(A)`, where `A` is an object, cause MATLAB to call the `subsindex` function. However, if an indexing expression results in a call to an overloaded `subsref` or `subsasgn` method defined by the class of `X`, then MATLAB does not call `subsindex`.

## Ways to Implement Objects as Indices

There are several ways to implement indexing of one object by another object, `X(A)`:

- Define a `subsindex` method in the class of `A` that converts `A` to an integer. MATLAB calls `A`'s `subsindex` method to perform indexing operations when the class of `X` does not overload `subsref` or `subsasgn`.
- If the class of `X` overloads `subsref` or `subsasgn`, these methods can call the `subsindex` method of `A` explicitly. The class of `A` must implement a `subsindex` method that returns an appropriate value.
- If the class of `X` overloads `subsref` or `subsasgn`, these methods can contain code that determines an integer index value. In this case, the class of `A` does not implement a `subsindex` method.

## subsindex Implementation

`subsindex` must return the value of the object as a zero-based integer index value in the range 0 to `prod(size(X)) - 1`.

Suppose that you want to use object A to index into object B. B can be a single object or an array, depending on the class designs.

```
C = B(A);
```

Here are two examples of `subsindex` methods. The first assumes you can convert class A to a `uint8`. The second assumes class A stores an index value in a property.

- The `subsindex` method implemented by class A can convert the object to numeric format to be used as an index:

```
function ind = subsindex(obj)
    ind = uint8(obj);
end
```

The class of `obj` implements a `uint8` method to provide the conversion from the object to an integer value.

- Class A implements `subsindex` to return a numeric value that is stored in a property:

```
function ind = subsindex(obj)
    ind = obj.ElementIndex;
end
```

---

**Note:** `subsindex` values are 0-based, not 1-based.

---

### See Also

`numArgumentsFromSubscript` | `subsasgn` | `subsref`

### Related Examples

- “`end` as Object Index” on page 17-37

### More About

- “Modify `nargout` and `nargin` for Indexing Methods” on page 17-9

# Class with Modified Indexing

## In this section...

- “How to Modify Class Indexing” on page 17-41
- “Class Description” on page 17-41
- “Specialize Subscripted Reference — `subsref`” on page 17-43
- “Specialize Subscripted Assignment — `subsasgn`” on page 17-44
- “Implement Addition for Object Data — `double` and `plus`” on page 17-45
- “`MyDataClass.m`” on page 17-46

## How to Modify Class Indexing

This example defines a class that modifies the default indexing behavior by implementing `subsref` and `subsasgn` methods. The class also implements type conversion and addition by implementing a `double` converter method and a `plus` method.

The objective of the class design is to:

- Enable you to treat an object of the class as a numeric array
- Be able to contain nonnumeric and numeric data in an object of the class

## Class Description

The class has three properties:

- **Data** — numeric test data
- **Description** — description of test data
- **Date** — date test was conducted

Assume that you have the following random data (`randi`):

```
d = randi(9,3,4)
```

```
d =
```

```
8      9      3      9
9      6      5      2
2      1      9      9
```

Create an instance of the class:

```
obj = MyDataClass(d, 'Test001')
```

```
obj =
```

```
MyDataClass with properties:
```

```
    Data: [3x4 double]
Description: 'Test001'
    Date: [2012 1 7 9 32 34.5190]
```

The constructor arguments pass the values for the **Data** and **Description** properties. The **clock** function assigns the value to the **Date** property from within the constructor. This approach captures the time and date information when each instance is created.

Here is the preliminary code listing without the **subsref**, **subsasgn** **double**, and **plus** methods.

```
classdef MyDataClass
properties
    Data
    Description
end
properties (SetAccess = private)
    Date
end
methods
    function obj = MyDataClass(data,desc)
        if nargin > 0
            obj.Data = data;
        end
        if nargin > 1
            obj.Description = desc;
        end
        obj.Date = clock;
    end
end
end
```

## Specialize Subscripted Reference — `subsref`

Implement a `subsref` method to support both the default and a specialized type of indexing.

- The default indexed reference behavior for scalar objects:

```
obj.Data(2,3)
```

```
ans =
```

```
5
```

- And to add the functionality to index into the `Data` property with an expression like this statement:

```
obj(2,3)
```

If you redefine '`()`' indexing to support access to the `Data` property, you cannot create arrays of `MyDataClass` objects and use '`()`' indexing to access individual objects. You can reference only scalar objects.

To achieve the design goals, the `subsref` method must handle all indexing types. The `subsref` method:

- Calls the `builtin subsref` function for '`.`' indexing
- Returns an error for '`{}`' indexing
- Defines its own version of '`()`' indexing.

The result: `obj(i)` is equivalent to `obj.Data(i)`.

```
function sref = subsref(obj,s)
    % obj(i) is equivalent to obj.Data(i)
    switch s(1).type
        case '.'
            sref = builtin('subsref',obj,s);
        case '()'
            if length(s) < 2
                sref = builtin('subsref',obj.Data,s);
                return
            else
                sref = builtin('subsref',obj,s);
            end
        case '{}'
            error('MYDataClass:subsref',...

```

```
        'Not a supported subscripted reference')
    end
end
```

## Specialize Subscripted Assignment — `subsasgn`

To support the equivalent of the indexed reference behavior with indexed assignment, implement a `subsasgn` method.

- Support the default indexed assignment:

```
obj.Data(2,3) = 9;
```

- Add the functionality to assign values to the `Data` property with an expression like this statement:

```
obj(2,3) = 9;
```

Like the `subsref` method, the `subsasgn` method:

- Calls the `builtin subsasgn` function for '`.`' indexing
- Returns an error for '`{}`' indexing
- Defines its own version of '`()`' indexing.

The `substruct` function redefines the index type and index subscripts structure that MATLAB passes to `subsref` and `subsasgn`.

```
function obj = subsasgn(obj,s,val)
    if isempty(s) && isa(val,'MyDataClass')
        obj = MyDataClass(val.Data,val.Description);
    end
    switch s(1).type
        case '.'
            obj = builtin('subsasgn',obj,s,val);
        case '()'
            if length(s)<2
                if isa(val,'MyDataClass')
                    error('MyDataClass:subsasgn',...
                        'Object must be scalar')
                elseif isa(val,'double')
                    % Redefine the struct s to make the call: obj.Data(i)
                    snew = substruct('.','Data','()',s(1).subs(:));
                    obj = subsasgn(obj,snew,val);
                end
            end
    end
```

```

    end
  case '{}'
    error('MyDataClass:subsasgn',...
      'Not a supported subscripted assignment')
  end
end

```

## Implement Addition for Object Data — double and plus

First, implement a **double** method that converts an object to an array of doubles. By implementing a **double** converter method, it is possible to add a **MyDataClass** object to another class of object. However, the other class must implement a **double** method that also returns an array of doubles. For more information on type conversion, see “Object Converters” on page 17-12.

Allow direct addition of the **Data** property values by implementing a **plus** method. Implementing a **plus** method enables the use of the **+** operator for addition of **MyDataClass** objects.

Because the **plus** method implements addition by adding double arrays, MATLAB:

- Apply the rules of addition when adding **MyDataClass** objects
- Returns errors for any condition that can cause errors in default numeric addition. For example, dimension mismatch.

The **plus** method uses the **double** method to convert the object to numeric values before performing the addition:

```

function a = double(obj)
  a = obj.Data;
end

function c = plus(obj,b)
  c = double(obj) + double(b);
end

```

For example, the **plus** method enables you to add a scalar number to the object **Data** array.

Here are the values of the **Data**, displayed using indexed reference:

```

obj(:,:,1)
ans =

```

```
8      9      3      9
9      6      9      2
2      1      9      9
```

Add 7 to the array contained in the `Data` property:

```
obj + 7
ans =
15    16    10    16
16    13    16     9
 9     8    16    16
```

## MyDataClass.m

This definition for `MyDataClass` includes the `end` indexing method discussed in “`end` as Object Index” on page 17-37.

```
classdef MyDataClass
    % Example for "A Class with Modified Indexing"
    properties
        Data
        Description
    end
    properties (SetAccess = private)
        Date
    end
    methods
        function obj = MyDataClass(data,desc)
            % Support 0-2 args
            if nargin > 0
                obj.Data = data;
            end
            if nargin > 1
                obj.Description = desc;
            end
            obj.Date = clock;
        end

        function sref = subsref(obj,s)
            % obj(i) is equivalent to obj.Data(i)
            switch s(1).type
                case '.'
```

```

        sref = builtin('subsref',obj,s);
    case '()'
        if length(s)<2
            sref = builtin('subsref',obj.Data,s);
            return
        else
            sref = builtin('subsref',obj,s);
        end
    case '{}'
        error('MyDataClass:subsref',...
            'Not a supported subscripted reference')
    end
end

function obj = subsasgn(obj,s,val)
    if isempty(s) && isa(val,'MyDataClass')
        obj = MyDataClass(val.Data,val.Description);
    end
    switch s(1).type
        case '.'
            obj = builtin('subsasgn',obj,s,val);
        case '()'
            %
            if length(s)<2
                if isa(val,'MyDataClass')
                    error('MyDataClass:subsasgn',...
                        'Object must be scalar')
                elseif isa(val,'double')
                    snew = substrct('.','Data','()',s(1).subs(:));
                    obj = subsasgn(obj,snew,val);
                end
            end
        case '{}'
            error('MyDataClass:subsasgn',...
                'Not a supported subscripted assignment')
    end
end

function a = double(obj)
    a = obj.Data;
end

function c = plus(obj,b)
    c = double(obj) + double(b);

```

```
end

function ind = end(obj,k,n)
szd = size(obj.Data);
if k < n
    ind = szd(k);
else
    ind = prod(szd(k:end));
end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “end as Object Index” on page 17-37
- “Number of Arguments for subsref and subsasgn” on page 17-6

# Operator Overloading

## In this section...

- “Why Overload Operators” on page 17-49
- “How to Define Operators” on page 17-49
- “Sample Implementation — Addable Objects” on page 17-50
- “MATLAB Operators and Associated Functions” on page 17-52

## Why Overload Operators

By implementing operators that are appropriate for your class, you can integrate objects of your class into the MATLAB language. For example, objects that contain numeric data can define arithmetic operations like +, \*, - so that you can use these objects in arithmetic expressions. By implementing relational operators, you can use objects in conditional statements, like `switch` and `if` statements.

## How to Define Operators

You can implement MATLAB operators to work with objects of your class. To implement operators, define the associated class methods.

Each operator has an associated function (e.g., the + operator has an associated `plus.m` function). You can implement any operator by creating a class method with the appropriate name. This method can perform whatever steps are appropriate for the operation being implemented.

For a list of operators and associated function names, see “MATLAB Operators and Associated Functions” on page 17-52.

## Object Precedence in Operations

User-defined classes have a higher precedence than built-in classes. For example, suppose `q` is an object of class `double` and `p` is a user-defined class. Both of these expressions generate a call to the `plus` method in the user-defined class, if it exists:

```
q + p  
p + q
```

Whether this method can add objects of class `double` and the user-defined class depends on how you implement the method.

When `p` and `q` are objects of different classes, MATLAB applies the rules of precedence to determine which method to use.

“Object Precedence in Method Invocation” on page 9-45 provides information on how MATLAB determines which method to call.

### Operator Precedence

Overloaded operators retain the original MATLAB precedence for the operator. For information on operator precedence, see “Operator Precedence”.

## Sample Implementation – Addable Objects

The `Adder` class implements addition for objects of this class by defining a `plus` method. `Adder` defines addition of objects as the addition of the `NumericData` property values. The `plus` method constructs and returns an `Adder` object whose `NumericData` property value is the result of the addition.

The `Adder` class also implements the less than operator (`<`) by defining a `lt` method. The `lt` method returns a logical value after comparing the values in each object `NumericData` property.

```
classdef Adder
    properties
        NumericData
    end
    methods
        function obj = Adder(val)
            obj.NumericData = val;
        end
        function r = plus(obj1,obj2)
            a = double(obj1);
            b = double(obj2);
            r = Adder(a + b);
        end
        function d = double(obj)
            d = obj.NumericData;
        end
        function tf = lt(obj1,obj2)
```

```
if obj1.NumericData < obj2.NumericData
    tf = true;
else
    tf = false;
end
end
end
```

Using a double converter enables you to add numeric values to `Adder` objects and to perform addition on objects of the class.

```
a = Adder(1:10)
```

```
a =
```

Adder with properties:

```
NumericData: [1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10]
```

Add two objects:

```
a + a
```

```
ans =
```

Adder with properties:

```
NumericData: [2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20]
```

Add an object with any value that can be cast to double:

```
b = uint8(255) + a
```

```
b =
```

Adder with properties:

```
NumericData: [256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265]
```

Compare objects `a` and `b` using the `<` operator:

```
a < b
```

```
ans =
```

Ensure that your class provides any error checking required to implement your class design.

## MATLAB Operators and Associated Functions

The following table lists the function names for MATLAB operators. Implementing operators to work with arrays (scalar expansion, vectorized arithmetic operations, and so on), can also require modifying indexing and concatenation. Use the links in this table to find specific information on each function.

Operation	Method to Define	Description
<code>a + b</code>	<code>plus(a,b)</code>	Binary addition
<code>a - b</code>	<code>minus(a,b)</code>	Binary subtraction
<code>-a</code>	<code>uminus(a)</code>	Unary minus
<code>+a</code>	<code>uplus(a)</code>	Unary plus
<code>a.*b</code>	<code>times(a,b)</code>	Element-wise multiplication
<code>a*b</code>	<code>mtimes(a,b)</code>	Matrix multiplication
<code>a./b</code>	<code>rdivide(a,b)</code>	Right element-wise division
<code>a.\b</code>	<code>ldivide(a,b)</code>	Left element-wise division
<code>a/b</code>	<code>mrdivide(a,b)</code>	Matrix right division
<code>a\b</code>	<code>mldivide(a,b)</code>	Matrix left division
<code>a.^b</code>	<code>power(a,b)</code>	Element-wise power
<code>a^b</code>	<code>mpower(a,b)</code>	Matrix power
<code>a &lt; b</code>	<code>lt(a,b)</code>	Less than
<code>a &gt; b</code>	<code>gt(a,b)</code>	Greater than
<code>a &lt;= b</code>	<code>le(a,b)</code>	Less than or equal to
<code>a &gt;= b</code>	<code>ge(a,b)</code>	Greater than or equal to
<code>a ~= b</code>	<code>ne(a,b)</code>	Not equal to
<code>a == b</code>	<code>eq(a,b)</code>	Equality
<code>a &amp; b</code>	<code>and(a,b)</code>	Logical AND
<code>a   b</code>	<code>or(a,b)</code>	Logical OR

Operation	Method to Define	Description
$\sim a$	<code>not(a)</code>	Logical NOT
$a:d:b$	<code>colon(a,d,b)</code>	Colon operator
$a:b$	<code>colon(a,b)</code>	
$a'$	<code>ctranspose(a)</code>	Complex conjugate transpose
$a.'$	<code>transpose(a)</code>	Matrix transpose
$[a \ b]$	<code>horzcat(a,b,...)</code>	Horizontal concatenation
$[a; \ b]$	<code>vertcat(a,b,...)</code>	Vertical concatenation
$a(s_1, s_2, \dots, s_n)$	<code>subsref(a,s)</code>	Subscripted reference
$a(s_1, \dots, s_n) = b$	<code>subsasgn(a,s,b)</code>	Subscripted assignment
$b(a)$	<code>subsindex(a)</code>	Subscript index

## Related Examples

- “Define Arithmetic Operators” on page 19-21
- “Methods That Modify Default Behavior” on page 17-2



# Customizing Object Display

---

- “Custom Display Interface” on page 18-2
- “How CustomDisplay Works” on page 18-7
- “Role of size Function in Custom Displays” on page 18-10
- “Customize Display for Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 18-12
- “Class with Default Object Display” on page 18-14
- “Choose a Technique for Display Customization” on page 18-19
- “Customize Property Display” on page 18-23
- “Customize Header, Property List, and Footer” on page 18-26
- “Customize Display of Scalar Objects” on page 18-32
- “Customize Display of Object Arrays” on page 18-36
- “Overloading the disp Function” on page 18-41

## Custom Display Interface

### In this section...

[“Default Object Display” on page 18-2](#)

[“CustomDisplay Class” on page 18-3](#)

[“Methods for Customizing Object Display” on page 18-3](#)

### Default Object Display

MATLAB adds default methods named `disp` and `display` to all MATLAB classes that do not implement their own methods with those names. These methods are not visible, but create the default simple display.

The default simple display consists of the following parts:

- A header showing the class name, and the dimensions for nonscalar arrays.
- A list of all nonhidden public properties, shown in the order of definition in the class.

The actual display depends on whether the object is scalar or nonscalar. Also, there are special displays for a scalar handle to a deleted object and empty object arrays. Objects in all of these states are displayed differently if the objects have no properties.

The `details` function creates the default detailed display. The detailed display adds these items to the simple display:

- Use of fully qualified class names
- Link to `handle` class, if the object is a handle
- Links to `methods`, `events`, and `superclasses` functions executed on the object.

See “Class with Default Object Display” on page 18-14 for an example of how MATLAB displays objects.

### Properties Displayed by Default

MATLAB displays object properties that have public get access and are not hidden (see “Property Attributes” on page 8-8). Inherited abstract properties are excluded from display. When the object being displayed is scalar, any dynamic properties attached to the object are also included.

## CustomDisplay Class

The `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` class provides an interface that you can use to customize object display for your class. To use this interface, derive your class from `CustomDisplay`:

```
classdef MyClass < matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
```

The `CustomDisplay` class is `HandleCompatible`, so you can use it in combination with both value and handle superclasses.

---

**Note:** You cannot use `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` to derive a custom display for enumeration classes.

---

### disp, display, and details

The `CustomDisplay` interface does not allow you to override `disp`, `display`, and `details`. Instead, override any combination of the customization methods defined for this purpose.

## Methods for Customizing Object Display

There are two groups of methods that you use to customize object display for your class:

- *Part builder methods* build the strings used for the standard display. Override any of these methods to change the respective parts of the display.
- *State handler methods* are called for objects in specific states, like scalar, nonscalar, and so on. Override any of these methods to handle objects in a specific state.

All of these methods have protected access and must be defined as protected in your subclass of `CustomDisplay` (that is, `Access = protected`).

### Parts of an Object Display

There are three parts that makeup the standard object display — header, property list, and footer

For example, here is the standard object display for a `containers.Map` object:

```
>> map1 = containers.Map({'Apr','Jul','Nov'},[4,7,11])

map1 =
    Map with properties: ← Header
    {
        Count: 3
        KeyType: char
        ValueType: double
    } Property List
```

The default object display does not include a footer. The detailed display provides more information:

```
>> details(map1)

3x1 containers.Map handle array with properties:

    Count: 3
    KeyType: 'char'
    ValueType: 'double'

Methods, Events, Superclasses ← Footer
```

### Part Builder Methods

Each part of the object display has an associated method that assembles the respective part of the display.

Method	Purpose	Default
getHeader	Create the text used for the header.	Returns the <code>char</code> vectors, <code>[class(obj), ' with properties:']</code> linking the class name to a help popup
getPropertyGroup	Define how and what properties display, including order, values, and grouping.	Returns an array of <code>PropertyGroup</code> objects, which determines how to display the properties

Method	Purpose	Default
getFooter	Create the text used for the footer.	<p>There are two footers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple display — Returns an empty <code>char</code> vector</li> <li>Detailed display — Returns linked calls to <code>methods</code>, <code>events</code>, and <code>superclasses</code> for this class</li> </ul>

### Object States That Affect Display

There are four object states that affect how MATLAB displays objects:

- Valid scalar object
- Nonscalar object array
- Empty object array
- Scalar handle to a deleted object

### State Handler Methods

Each object state has an associated method that MATLAB calls whenever displaying objects that are in that particular state.

State Handler Method	Called for Object in This State
displayScalarObject	<code>(isa(obj,'handle') &amp;&amp; isvalid(obj)) &amp;&amp; prod(size(obj)) == 1</code>
displayNonScalarObject	<code>prod(size(obj)) &gt; 1</code>
displayEmptyObject	<code>prod(size(obj)) == 0</code>
displayScalarHandleToDeleteObject	<code>isa(obj,'handle') &amp;&amp; isscalar(obj) &amp;&amp; ~isvalid(obj)</code>

### Utility Methods

The `CustomDisplay` class provides utility methods that return strings that are used in various parts of the different display options. These static methods return text that simplifies the creation of customized object displays.

If the computer display does not support hypertext linking, the strings are returned without the links.

Method	Inputs	Outputs
convertDimensionsToString	Valid object array	Object dimensions converted to a <code>char</code> vector; determined by calling <code>size(obj)</code>
displayPropertyGroups	<code>PropertyGroup</code> array	Displays the titles and property groups defined
getClassNameForHeader	Object	Simple class name linked to the object's documentation
getDeletedHandleText	None	Text ' <code>handle to deleted</code> ' linked to the documentation on deleted handles
getDetailedFooter	Object	Text containing phrase ' <code>Methods, Events, Superclasses</code> ', with each link executing the respective command on the input object
getDetailedHeader	Object	Text containing linked class name, link to handle page (if handle class) and ' <code>with properties:</code> '
getHandleText	None	Text ' <code>handle</code> ' linked to a section of the documentation that describes handle objects
getSimpleHeader	Object	Text containing linked class name and the phrase ' <code>with properties:</code> '

## Related Examples

- “How CustomDisplay Works” on page 18-7

# How CustomDisplay Works

## In this section...

[“Steps to Display an Object” on page 18-7](#)

[“Methods Called for a Given Object State” on page 18-8](#)

## Steps to Display an Object

When displaying an object, MATLAB determines the state of the object and calls the appropriate method for that state (see “Object States That Affect Display” on page 18-5).

For example, suppose `obj` is a valid scalar object of a class derived from `CustomDisplay`. If you type `obj` at the command line without terminating the statement with a semicolon:

```
>> obj
```

The following sequence results in the display of `obj`:

- 1 MATLAB determines the class of `obj` and calls the `disp` method to display the object.
- 2 `disp` calls `size` to determine if `obj` is scalar or nonscalar
- 3 When `obj` is a scalar handle object, `disp` calls `isValid` to determine if `obj` is the handle of a deleted object. Deleted handles in nonscalar arrays do not affect the display.
- 4 `disp` calls the state handler method for an object of the state of `obj`. In this case, `obj` is a valid scalar that results in a call to:

```
displayScalarObject(obj)
```

- 5 `displayScalarObject` calls the display part-builder methods to provide the respective header, property list, and footer.

```
...
header = getHeader(obj);
disp(header)

...
groups = getPropertyGroups(obj)
displayPropertyGroups(obj,groups)

...
footer = getFooter
```

```
disp(footer)
```

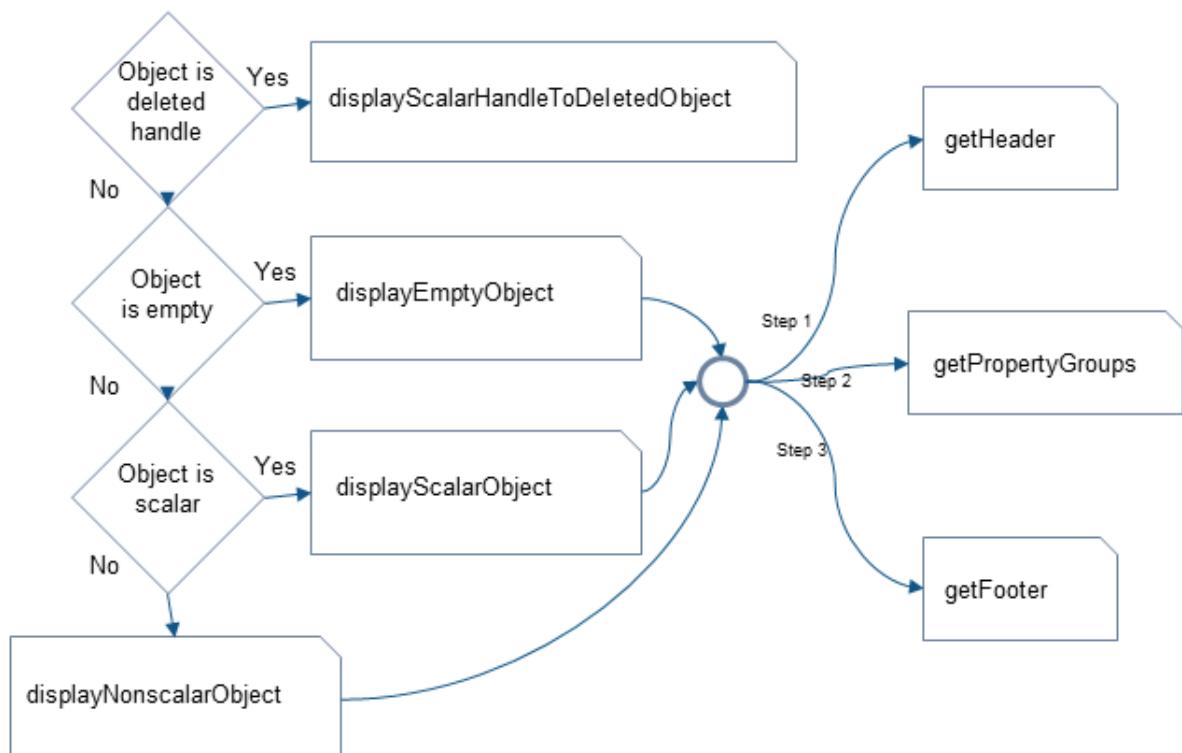
MATLAB follows a similar sequence for nonscalar object arrays and empty object arrays.

In the case of scalar handles to deleted objects, `disp` calls the `displayScalarHandleToDeleteObject` method, which displays the default text for handles to deleted objects without calling any part-builder methods.

## Methods Called for a Given Object State

The following diagram illustrates the methods called to display an object that derives from `CustomDisplay`. The `disp` method calls the state handler method that is appropriate for the state of the object or object array being displayed.

Only an instance of a handle class can be in a state of scalar handle to a deleted object.



## **Related Examples**

- “Class with Default Object Display” on page 18-14

## Role of size Function in Custom Displays

### In this section...

[“How size Is Used” on page 18-10](#)

[“Precautions When Overloading size” on page 18-10](#)

### How size Is Used

In the process of building the custom display, `CustomDisplay` methods call the `size` function at several points:

- `disp` calls `size` to determine which state handler method to invoke.
- The default `getHeader` method calls `size` to determine whether to display a scalar or nonscalar header.
- The default `displayPropertyGroups` method calls `size` to determine if it should look up property values when the property group is a cell array of property names. By default, only scalar objects display the values of properties.

### Precautions When Overloading size

If your class overloads the `size` function, then MATLAB calls the overloading version. You must ensure that the implementation of `size` is consistent with the way you want to display objects of the class.

An unusual or improper implementation of `size` can result in undesirable display behavior. For example, suppose a class overloads `size` reports an object as scalar when it is not. In this class, a property list consisting of a cell array of strings results in the property values of the first object of the array being displayed. This behavior can give the impression that all objects in the array have the same property values.

However, reporting an object as scalar when in fact the object is empty results in the object displaying as an empty object array. The default methods of the `CustomDisplay` interface always determine if the input is an empty array before attempting to access property values.

As you override `CustomDisplay` methods to implement your custom object display, consider how an overloading `size` method can affect the result.

## **Related Examples**

- “Methods That Modify Default Behavior” on page 17-2

## Customize Display for Heterogeneous Arrays

You can call only sealed methods on nonscalar heterogeneous arrays. If you want to customize classes that are part of a heterogeneous hierarchy, you must override and declare as **Sealed** all the methods that are part of the **CustomDisplay** interface.

The versions of **disp** and **display** that are inherited from `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` are sealed. However, these methods call all of the part builder (“Part Builder Methods” on page 18-4) and state handler methods (“State Handler Methods” on page 18-5).

To use the **CustomDisplay** interface, the root class of the heterogeneous hierarchy can declare these methods as **Sealed** and **Access = protected**.

If you do not need to override a particular method, then call the superclass method, as shown in the following code.

For example, the following code shows modifications to the **getPropertyGroups** and **displayScalarObject** methods, while using the superclass implementation of all others.

```
classdef RootClass < matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay & matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous
    ...
    methods (Sealed, Access = protected)
        function header = getHeader(obj)
            header = getHeader@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        end

        function groups = getPropertyGroups(obj)
            % Override of this method
            % ...
        end

        function footer = getFooter(obj)
            footer = getFooter@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        end

        function displayNonScalarObject(obj)
            displayNonScalarObject@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        end

        function displayScalarObject(obj)
            % Override of this method
            % ...
        end

        function displayEmptyObject(obj)
            displayEmptyObject@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        end
```

```
function displayScalarHandleToDeleteObject(obj)
    displayScalarHandleToDeleteObject@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
end
end
end
```

You do not need to declare the inherited static methods as **Sealed**.

## Related Examples

- “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23

## Class with Default Object Display

### In this section...

- “The EmployeeInfo Class” on page 18-14
- “Default Display — Scalar” on page 18-15
- “Default Display — Nonscalar” on page 18-15
- “Default Display — Empty Object Array” on page 18-16
- “Default Display — Handle to Deleted Object” on page 18-17
- “Default Display — Detailed Display” on page 18-17

### The EmployeeInfo Class

The `EmployeeInfo` class defines a number of properties to store information about company employees. This simple class serves as the example class used in display customization sample classes.

`EmployeeInfo` derives from the `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` class to enable customization of the object display.

`EmployeeInfo` is also a handle class. Therefore instances of this class can be in the state referred to as a handle to a deleted object. This state does not occur with value classes (classes not derived from `handle`).

```
classdef EmployeeInfo < handle & matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
    properties
        Name
        JobTitle
        Department
        Salary
        Password
    end
    methods
        function obj = EmployeeInfo
            obj.Name      = input('Name: ');
            obj.JobTitle  = input('Job Title: ');
            obj.Department = input('Department: ');
            obj.Salary    = input('Salary: ');
            obj.Password  = input('Password: ');
        end
    end
```

```
    end  
end
```

The `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` is handle compatible. Therefore, superclasses can be either handle or value classes.

## Default Display – Scalar

Here is the creation and display of a scalar `EmployeeInfo` object. By default, MATLAB displays properties and their values for scalar objects.

Provide inputs for the constructor:

```
>>Emp123 = EmployeeInfo;  
Name: 'Bill Tork'  
Job Title: 'Software Engineer'  
Department: 'Product Development'  
Salary: 1000  
Password: 'bill123'
```

Display the object:

```
>>Emp123  
  
Emp123 =  
  
EmployeeInfo with properties:
```

```
    Name: 'Bill Tork'  
    JobTitle: 'Software Engineer'  
    Department: 'Product Development'  
    Salary: 1000  
    Password: 'bill123'
```

### Testing for Scalar Objects

To test for scalar objects, use `isscalar`.

## Default Display – Nonscalar

The default display for an array of objects does not show property values. For example, concatenating two `EmployeeInfo` objects generates this display:

```
>> [Emp123,Emp124]  
ans  
1x2 EmployeeInfo array with properties:
```

```
Name  
JobTitle  
Department  
Salary  
Password
```

### Testing for Nonscalar Objects

To test for nonscalar objects, use a negated call to `isscalar`.

### Default Display — Empty Object Array

An empty object array has at least one dimension equal to zero.

```
>> Empt = EmployeeInfo.empty(0,5)  
Empt =  
0x5 EmployeeInfo array with properties:
```

```
Name  
JobTitle  
Department  
Salary  
Password
```

### Testing for Empty Object Arrays

Use `isempty` to test for empty object arrays. An empty object array is not scalar because its dimensions can never be 1-by-1.

```
>> emt = EmployeeInfo.empty  
emt =  
0x0 EmployeeInfo array with properties:  
Name  
JobTitle
```

```

Department
Salary
Password

>> isscalar(emt)

ans =

0

```

## Default Display – Handle to Deleted Object

When a handle object is deleted, the handle variable can remain in the workspace.

```

>> delete(Emp123)
>> Emp123
Emp123 =
    handle to deleted EmployeeInfo

```

### Testing for Handles to Deleted Objects

To test for a handle to a deleted object, use `isValid`.

---

**Note:** `isValid` is a handle class method. Calling `isValid` on a value class object causes an error.

---

## Default Display – Detailed Display

The `details` method does not support customization and always returns the standard detailed display:

```

details(Emp123)
EmployeeInfo handle with properties:

    Name: 'Bill Tork'
    JobTitle: 'Software Engineer'
    Department: 'Product Development'
    Salary: 1000
    Password: 'bill123'

Methods, Events, Superclasses

```

## Related Examples

- “Custom Display Interface” on page 18-2

# Choose a Technique for Display Customization

## In this section...

[“Ways to Implement a Custom Display” on page 18-19](#)

[“Sample Approaches Using the Interface” on page 18-20](#)

## Ways to Implement a Custom Display

The way you customize object display using the `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` class depends on:

- What parts of the display you want to customize
- What object states you want to use the custom display

If you are making small changes to the default layout, then override the relevant part builder methods (“Part Builder Methods” on page 18-4). For example, suppose you want to:

- Change the order or value of properties, display a subset of properties, or create property groups
- Modify the header text
- Add a footer

If you are defining a nonstandard display for a particular object state (scalar, for example), then the best approach is to override the appropriate state handler method (“State Handler Methods” on page 18-5).

In some cases, a combination of method overrides might be the best approach. For example, your implementation of `displayScalarObject` might

- Use some of the utility methods (“Utility Methods” on page 18-5) to build your own display strings using parts from the default display
- Call a part builder method to get the default text for that particular part of the display
- Implement a completely different display for scalar objects.

Once you override any `CustomDisplay` method, MATLAB calls your override in all cases where the superclass method would have been called. For example, if you override the

`getHeader` method, your override must handle all cases where a state handler method calls `getHeader`. (See “Methods Called for a Given Object State” on page 18-8)

## Sample Approaches Using the Interface

Here are some simple cases that show what methods to use for the particular customized display.

### Change the Display of Scalar Objects

Use a nonstandard layout for scalar object display that is fully defined in the `displayScalarObject` method:

```
classdef MyClass < matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
    ...
    methods (Access = protected)
        function displayScalarObject(obj)
            % Implement the custom display for scalar obj
        end
    end
end
```

### Custom Property List with Standard Layout

Use standard display layout, but create a custom property list for scalar and nonscalar display:

```
classdef MyClass < matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
    ...
    methods(Access = protected)
        function groups = getPropertyGroups(obj)
            % Return PropertyGroup instances
        end
    end
end
```

### Custom Property List for Scalar Only

Use standard display layout, but create a custom property list for scalar only. Call the superclass `getPropertyGroups` for the nonscalar case.

```
classdef MyClass < matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
    properties
```

```

    Prop1
    Prop2
    Prop3
end
methods(Access = protected)
    function groups = getPropertyGroups(obj)
        if isscalar(obj)
            % Scalar case: change order
            propList = {'Prop2', 'Prop1', 'Prop3'};
            groups = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList)
        else
            % Nonscalar case: call superclass method
            groups = getPropertyGroups@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        end
    end
end
end

```

### Custom Property List with Modified Values

Change the values displayed for some properties in the scalar case by creating property/value pairs in a `struct`. This `getPropertyGroups` method displays only `Prop1` and `Prop2`, and displays the value of `Prop2` as `Prop1` divided by `Prop3`.

```

classdef MyClass < matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
properties
    Prop1
    Prop2
    Prop3
end
methods(Access = protected)
    function groups = getPropertyGroups(obj)
        if isscalar(obj)
            % Specify the values to be displayed for properties
            propList = struct('Prop1',obj.Prop1, ...
                'Prop2',obj.Prop1/obj.Prop3);
            groups = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList)
        else
            % Nonscalar case: call superclass method
            groups = getPropertyGroups@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        end
    end
end
end

```

### Complete Class Definitions

For complete class implementations, see these sections:

- “Customize Property Display” on page 18-23
- “Customize Header, Property List, and Footer” on page 18-26

“Customize Display of Scalar Objects” on page 18-32

“Customize Display of Object Arrays” on page 18-36

# Customize Property Display

## In this section...

[“Objective” on page 18-23](#)

[“Change the Property Order” on page 18-23](#)

[“Change the Values Displayed for Properties” on page 18-24](#)

## Objective

Change the order and number of properties displayed for an object of your class.

## Change the Property Order

Suppose your class definition contains the following property definition:

```
properties
    Name
    JobTitle
    Department
    Salary
    Password
end
```

In the default scalar object display, MATLAB displays all the public properties along with their values. However, you want to display only `Department`, `JobTitle`, and `Name`, in that order. You can do this by deriving from `CustomDisplay` and overriding the `getPropertyGroups` method.

Your override

- Defines method `Access` as `protected` to match the definition in the `CustomDisplay` superclass
- Creates a cell array of property names in the desired order
- Returns a `PropertyGroup` object constructed from the property list cell array

```
methods (Access = protected)
    function propgrp = getPropertyGroups(~)
        proplist = {'Department', 'JobTitle', 'Name'};
        propgrp = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(proplist);
    end
```

```
end
```

When you create a `PropertyGroup` object using a cell array of property names, MATLAB automatically

- Adds the property values for a scalar object display
- Uses the property names without values for a nonscalar object display (including empty object arrays)

The `getPropertyGroups` method is not called to create the display for a scalar handle to a deleted object.

## Change the Values Displayed for Properties

Given the same class properties used in the previous section, you can change the value displayed for properties by building the property list as a `struct` and specifying values for property names. This override of the `getPropertyGroups` method uses the default property display for nonscalar objects by calling the superclass `getPropertyGroups` method. For scalar objects, the override:

- Changes the value displayed for the `Password` property to a '\*' character for each character in the password.
- Displays the text '`Not Available`' for the `Salary` property.

```
methods (Access = protected)
    function propgrp = getPropertyGroups(obj)
        if ~isscalar(obj)
            propgrp = getPropertyGroups@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        else
            pd(1:length(obj.Password)) = '*';
            propList = struct('Department',obj.Department, ...
                'JobTitle',obj.JobTitle, ...
                'Name',obj.Name, ...
                'Salary','Not available', ...
                'Password',pd);
            propgrp = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList);
        end
    end
end
```

The object display looks like this:

```
EmployeeInfo with properties:
    Department: 'Product Development'
```

```
JobTitle: 'Software Engineer'  
Name: 'Bill Tork'  
Salary: 'Not available'  
Password: '*****'
```

## Full Class Listing

```
classdef EmployeeInfo < handle & matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay  
properties  
    Name  
    JobTitle  
    Department  
    Salary  
    Password  
end  
methods  
    function obj = EmployeeInfo  
        obj.Name      = input('Name: ');  
        obj.JobTitle  = input('Job Title: ');  
        obj.Department = input('Department: ');  
        obj.Salary    = input('Salary: ');  
        obj.Password  = input('Password: ');  
    end  
end  
methods (Access = protected)  
    function propgrp = getPropertyGroups(obj)  
        if ~isscalar(obj)  
            propgrp = getPropertyGroups@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);  
        else  
            pd(1:length(obj.Password)) = '*';  
            propList = struct('Department',obj.Department,...  
                'JobTitle',obj.JobTitle,...  
                'Name',obj.Name,...  
                'Salary','Not available',...  
                'Password',pd);  
            propgrp = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList);  
        end  
    end  
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Choose a Technique for Display Customization” on page 18-19

## Customize Header, Property List, and Footer

### In this section...

- “Objective” on page 18-26
- “Design of Custom Display” on page 18-26
- “getHeader Method Override” on page 18-28
- “getPropertyGroups Override” on page 18-29
- “getFooter Override” on page 18-29

### Objective

Customize each of the three parts of the display — header, property groups, and footer.

### Design of Custom Display

---

**Note:** This example uses the `EmployeeInfo` class described in the “Class with Default Object Display” on page 18-14 section.

---

For the header:

- Use default header for nonscalar object arrays.
- Build header text with linked class name and department name (from `Department` property)

For properties:

- Nonscalar object arrays display a subset of property names in a different order than the default.
- Scalar objects create two property groups that have titles (`Public Info` and `Personal Info`).

For the footer:

- Add a footer to the display, only when the object is a valid scalar that displays property values.

Here is the customized display of an object of the `EmployeeInfo` class.

```
Emp123 =  
  
EmployeeInfo Dept: Product Development  
  
    Public Info  
        Name: 'Bill Tork'  
        JobTitle: 'Software Engineer'  
  
    Personal Info  
        Salary: 1000  
        Password: 'bill123'  
  
Company Private
```

Here is the custom display of an array of `EmployeeInfo` objects:

```
[Emp123,Emp124]  
  
ans =  
  
1x2 EmployeeInfo array with properties:  
  
    Department  
    Name  
    JobTitle
```

Here is the display of an empty object array:

```
>> EmployeeInfo.empty(0,5)  
  
ans =  
  
0x5 EmployeeInfo array with properties:  
  
    Department  
    Name  
    JobTitle
```

Here is the display of a handle to a delete object (`EmployeeInfo` is a handle class):

```
>> delete(Emp123)  
>> Emp123
```

```
Emp123 =  
    handle to deleted EmployeeInfo
```

### Implementation

The `EmployeeInfo` class overrides three `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` methods to implement the display shown:

- `getHeader`
- `getPropertyGroups`
- `getFooter`

Each method must produce the desired results with each of the following inputs:

- Scalar object
- Nonscalar object array
- Empty object array

### getHeader Method Override

MATLAB calls `getHeader` to get the header text. The `EmployeeInfo` class overrides this method to implement the custom header for scalar display. Here is how it works:

- Nonscalar (including empty object) arrays call the superclass `getHeader`, which returns the default header.
- Scalar handles to deleted objects do not result in a call to `getHeader`.
- Scalar inputs build a custom header using the `getClassNameForHeader` static method to return linked class name text, and the value of the `Department` property.

Here is the `EmployeeInfo` override of the `getHeader` method. The required protected access is inherited from the superclass.

```
methods (Access = protected)  
    function header = getHeader(obj)  
        if ~isscalar(obj)  
            header = getHeader@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);  
        else  
            className = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(obj);  
            newHeader = [className, ' Dept: ', obj.Department];  
            header = sprintf('%s\n', newHeader);  
        end  
    end
```

```
end
```

## getPropertyGroups Override

MATLAB calls `getPropertyGroups` to get the `PropertyGroup` objects, which control how properties are displayed. This method override defines two different property lists depending on the object's state:

- For nonscalar inputs, including empty arrays and arrays containing handles to deleted objects, create a property list as a cell array to reorder properties.

By default, MATLAB does not display property values for nonscalar inputs.

- For scalar inputs, create two property groups with titles. The scalar code branch lists properties in a different order than the nonscalar case and includes `Salary` and `Password` properties. MATLAB automatically assigns property values.
- Scalar handles to deleted objects do not result in a call to `getPropertyGroups`.

Both branches return a `matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup` object, which determines how to displays the object properties.

Here is the `EmployeeInfo` override of the `getPropertyGroups` method. The protected access is inherited from the superclass.

```
methods (Access = protected)
    function propgrp = getPropertyGroups(obj)
        if ~isscalar(obj)
            propList = {'Department','Name','JobTitle'};
            propgrp = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList);
        else
            gTitle1 = 'Public Info';
            gTitle2 = 'Personal Info';
            propList1 = {'Name','JobTitle'};
            propList2 = {'Salary','Password'};
            propgrp(1) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList1,gTitle1);
            propgrp(2) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList2,gTitle2);
        end
    end
end
```

## getFooter Override

MATLAB calls `getFooter` to get the footer text. The `EmployeeInfo` `getFooter` method defines a footer for the display, which is included only when the input is a valid scalar object. In all other cases, `getFooter` returns an empty `char` vector.

Scalar handles to deleted objects do not result in a call to `getFooter`.

```
methods (Access = protected)
    function footer = getFooter(obj)
        if isscalar(obj)
            footer = sprintf('%s\n', 'Company Private');
        else
            footer = '';
        end
    end
end
```

### Complete Class Listing

```
classdef EmployeeInfo < handle & matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
properties
    Name
    JobTitle
    Department
    Salary
    Password
end
methods
    function obj = EmployeeInfo
        obj.Name      = input('Name: ');
        obj.JobTitle  = input('Job Title: ');
        obj.Department = input('Department: ');
        obj.Salary    = input('Salary: ');
        obj.Password  = input('Password: ');
    end
end

methods (Access = protected)
    function header = getHeader(obj)
        if ~isscalar(obj)
            header = getHeader@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        else
            className = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(obj);
            newHeader = [className, ' Dept: ',obj.Department];
            header = sprintf('%s\n',newHeader);
        end
    end

    function propgrp = getPropertyGroups(obj)
        if ~isscalar(obj)
            propList = {'Department','Name','JobTitle'};
            propgrp = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList);
        else
            gTitle1 = 'Public Info';
            gTitle2 = 'Personal Info';
            propList1 = {'Name','JobTitle'};
            propList2 = {'Salary','Password'};
            propgrp(1) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList1,gTitle1);
        end
    end
end
```

```
propgrp(2) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList2,gTitle2);
end
end

function footer = getFooter(obj)
if isscalar(obj)
    footer = sprintf('%s\n','Company Private');
else
    footer = '';
end
end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Choose a Technique for Display Customization” on page 18-19

## Customize Display of Scalar Objects

### In this section...

- “Objective” on page 18-32
- “Design Of Custom Display” on page 18-32
- “displayScalarObject Method Override” on page 18-33
- “getPropertyGroups Override” on page 18-34

### Objective

Customize the display of scalar objects.

### Design Of Custom Display

---

**Note:** This example uses the `EmployeeInfo` class described in the “Class with Default Object Display” on page 18-14 section.

---

The objective of this customized display is to:

- Modify the header to include the department name obtained from the `Department` property
- Group properties into two categories titled `Public Info` and `Personal Info`.
- Modify which properties are displayed
- Modify the values displayed for `Personal Info` category
- Use the default displayed for nonscalar objects, including empty arrays, and scalar deleted handles

For example, here is the customized display of an object of the `EmployeeInfo` class.

```
Emp123 =  
  
EmployeeInfo Dept: Product Development  
  
    Public Info  
        Name: 'Bill Tork'  
        JobTitle: 'Software Engineer'
```

```

Personal Info
    Salary: 'Level: 10'
    Password: '*****'

```

## Implementation

The `EmployeeInfo` class overrides two `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` methods to implement the display shown:

- `displayScalarObject` — Called to display valid scalar objects
- `getPropertyGroups` — Builds the property groups for display

## displayScalarObject Method Override

MATLAB calls `displayScalarObject` to display scalar objects. The `EmployeeInfo` class overrides this method to implement the scalar display. Once overridden, this method must control all aspects of scalar object display, including creating the header, property groups, and footer, if used.

This implementation:

- Builds a custom header using the `getClassNameForHeader` static method to return linked class name text and the value of the `Department` property to get the department name.
- Uses `sprintf` to add a new line to the header text
- Displays the header with the built-in `disp` function.
- Calls the `getPropertyGroups` override to define the property groups (see following section).
- Displays the property groups using the `displayPropertyGroups` static method.

Here is the `EmployeeInfo` override of the `displayScalarObject` method. The required protected access is inherited from the superclass.

```

methods (Access = protected)
    function displayScalarObject(obj)
        className = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(obj);
        scalarHeader = [className, ' Dept: ',obj.Department];
        header = sprintf('%s\n',scalarHeader);
        disp(header)
        propgroup = getPropertyGroups(obj);
        matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.displayPropertyGroups(obj,propgroup)
    end

```

```
end
```

## getPropertyGroups Override

MATLAB calls `getPropertyGroups` when displaying scalar or nonscalar objects. However, MATLAB does not call this method when displaying a scalar handle to a deleted object.

The `EmployeeInfo` class overrides this method to implement the property groups for scalar object display.

This implementation calls the superclass `getPropertyGroups` method if the input is not scalar. If the input is scalar, this method:

- Defines two titles for the two groups
- Creates a cell array of property names that are included in the first group. MATLAB adds the property values for the display
- Creates a `struct` array of property names with associated property values for the second group. Using a `struct` instead of a cell array enables you to replace the values that are displayed for the `Salary` and `Password` properties without changing the personal information stored in the object properties.
- Constructs two `matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup` objects, which are used by the `displayScalarObject` method.

Here is the `EmployeeInfo` override of the `getPropertyGroups` method. The required protected access is inherited from the superclass.

```
methods (Access = protected)
    function propgrp = getPropertyGroups(obj)
        if ~isscalar(obj)
            propgrp = getPropertyGroups@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        else
            gTitle1 = 'Public Info';
            gTitle2 = 'Personal Info';
            propList1 = {'Name','JobTitle'};
            pd(1:length(obj.Password)) = '*';
            level = round(obj.Salary/100);
            propList2 = struct('Salary',...
                ['Level: ',num2str(level)],...
                'Password',pd);
            propgrp(1) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList1,gTitle1);
            propgrp(2) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList2,gTitle2);
        end
    end
end
```

## Complete Class Listing

```

classdef EmployeeInfo4 < handle & matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
properties
    Name
    JobTitle
    Department
    Salary
    Password
end
methods
    function obj = EmployeeInfo4
        obj.Name      = input('Name: ');
        obj.JobTitle  = input('Job Title: ');
        obj.Department = input('Department: ');
        obj.Salary    = input('Salary: ');
        obj.Password  = input('Password: ');
    end
end

methods (Access = protected)
    function displayScalarObject(obj)
        className = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(obj);
        scalarHeader = [className, ' Dept: ',obj.Department];
        header = sprintf('%s\n',scalarHeader);
        disp(header)
        propgroup = getPropertyGroups(obj);
        matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.displayPropertyGroups(obj,propgroup)
    end

    function propgrp = getPropertyGroups(obj)
        if ~isscalar(obj)
            propgrp = getPropertyGroups@matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay(obj);
        else
            % property groups for scalars
            gTitle1 = 'Public Info';
            gTitle2 = 'Personal Info';
            propList1 = {'Name','JobTitle'};
            pd(1:length(obj.Password)) = '*';
            level = round(obj.Salary/100);
            propList2 = struct('Salary',...
                ['Level: ',num2str(level)],...
                'Password',pd);
            propgrp(1) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList1,gTitle1);
            propgrp(2) = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList2,gTitle2);
        end
    end
end
end

```

## Related Examples

- “Choose a Technique for Display Customization” on page 18-19

## Customize Display of Object Arrays

### In this section...

[“Objective” on page 18-36](#)

[“Design of Custom Display” on page 18-36](#)

[“The displayNonScalarObject Override” on page 18-37](#)

[“The displayEmptyObject Override” on page 18-38](#)

## Objective

Customize the display of nonscalar objects, including empty object arrays.

## Design of Custom Display

---

**Note:** This example uses the `EmployeeInfo` class described in the “Class with Default Object Display” on page 18-14 section.

---

The objective of this customized display is to:

- Construct a custom header using some elements of the default header
- Display a subset of property-specific information for each object in the array.
- List handles to deleted objects in the array using a `char` vector with links to documentation for handle objects and the class.
- Display empty objects with a slight modification to the default header

Here is the customized display of an array of three `EmployeeInfo` objects

```
1x3 EmployeeInfo array with members:  
1. Employee:  
    Name: 'Bill Tork'  
    Department: 'Product Development'  
  
2. Employee:  
    Name: 'Alice Blackwell'  
    Department: 'QE'
```

```
3. Employee:
    Name: 'Nancy Green'
    Department: 'Documentation'
```

Deleted object handles in the array indicate their state:

`1x3 EmployeeInfo members:`

```
1. Employee:
    Name: 'Bill Tork'
    Department: 'Product Development'

2. handle to deleted EmployeeInfo

3. Employee:
    Name: 'Nancy Green'
    Department: 'Documentation'
```

To achieve the desired result, the `EmployeeInfo` class overrides the following methods of the `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` class:

- `displayNonScalarObject` — Called to display nonempty object arrays
- `displayEmptyObject` — Called to display empty object arrays

## The `displayNonScalarObject` Override

MATLAB calls the `displayNonScalarObject` method to display object arrays. The override of this method in the `EmployeeInfo` class:

- Builds header text using `convertDimensionsToString` to obtain the array size and `getClassNameForHeader` to get the class name with a link to the help for that class.
- Displays the modified header text.
- Loops through the elements in the array, building two different subheaders depending on the individual object state. In the loop, this method:
  - Detects handles to deleted objects (using the `isValid` handle class method). Uses `getDeletedHandleText` and `getClassNameForHeader` to build text for array elements that are handles to deleted objects.
  - Builds a custom subheader for valid object elements in the array
- Creates a `PropertyGroup` object containing the `Name` and `Department` properties for valid `objects`

- Uses the `displayPropertyGroups` static method to generate the property display for valid objects.

Here is the implementation of `displayNonScalarObjects`:

```
methods (Access = protected)
    function displayNonScalarObject(objAry)
        dimStr = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.convertDimensionsToString(objAry);
        cName = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(objAry);
        headerStr = [dimStr, ' ', cName, ' members:'];
        header = sprintf('%s\n', headerStr);
        disp(header)
        for ix = 1:length(objAry)
            o = objAry(ix);
            if ~isValid(o)
                str1 = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getDeletedHandleText;
                str2 = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(o);
                headerInv = [str1, ' ', str2];
                tmpStr = [num2str(ix), '. ', headerInv];
                numStr = sprintf('%s\n', tmpStr);
                disp(numStr)
            else
                numStr = [num2str(ix), '. Employee:'];
                disp(numStr)
                propList = struct('Name', o.Name, ...
                    'Department', o.Department);
                propgrp = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList);
                matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.displayPropertyGroups(o, propgrp);
            end
        end
    end
end
```

## The `displayEmptyObject` Override

MATLAB calls the `displayEmptyObject` method to display empty object arrays. The implementation of this method in the `EmployeeInfo` class builds a custom header for empty objects following these steps:

- Gets the array dimensions in character format using the `convertDimensionsToString` static method.
- Gets text with the class name linked to the `helpPopup` function using the `getClassNameForHeader` static method.
- Builds and displays the custom text for empty arrays.

```
methods (Access = protected)
    function displayEmptyObject(obj)
        dimstr = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.convertDimensionsToString(obj);
        className = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(obj);
```

```

    emptyHeader = [dimstr,' ',className, ' with no employee information'];
    header = sprintf('%s\n',emptyHeader);
    disp(header)
end
end

```

For example, an empty `EmployeeInfo` object displays like this:

```
Empt = EmployeeInfo.empty(0,5)
```

```
Empt =
```

```
0x5 EmployeeInfo with no employee information
```

## Complete Class Listing

```

classdef EmployeeInfo < handle & matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay
properties
    Name
    JobTitle
    Department
    Salary
    Password
end
methods
    function obj = EmployeeInfo
        obj.Name      = input('Name: ');
        obj.JobTitle  = input('Job Title: ');
        obj.Department = input('Department: ');
        obj.Salary    = input('Salary: ');
        obj.Password  = input('Password: ');
    end
end
methods (Access = protected)
    function displayNonScalarObject(objAry)
        dimStr = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.convertDimensionsToString(objAry);
        cName = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(objAry);
        headerStr = [dimStr,' ',cName,' members:'];
        header = sprintf('%s\n',headerStr);
        disp(header)
        for ix = 1:length(objAry)
            o = objAry(ix);
            if ~isValid(o)
                str1 = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getDeletedHandleText;
                str2 = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(o);
                headerInv = [str1,' ',str2];
                tmpStr = [num2str(ix),'. ',headerInv];
                numStr = sprintf('%s\n',tmpStr);
                disp(numStr)
            else
                numStr = [num2str(ix),'. Employee'];
                disp(numStr)
                propList = struct('Name',o.Name, ...
                    'Department',o.Department);
            end
        end
    end
end

```

```
propgrp = matlab.mixin.util.PropertyGroup(propList);
matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.displayPropertyGroups(o,propgrp);
end
end
end

function displayEmptyObject(obj)
dimstr = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.convertDimensionsToString(obj);
className = matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay.getClassNameForHeader(obj);
emptyHeader = [dimstr,' ',className,' with no employee information'];
header = sprintf('%s\n',emptyHeader);
disp(header)
end
end
end
```

## Related Examples

- “Choose a Technique for Display Customization” on page 18-19

# Overloading the `disp` Function

## In this section...

- “Display Methods” on page 18-41
- “Overloaded `disp`” on page 18-41
- “Relationship Between `disp` and `display`” on page 18-41

## Display Methods

Subclassing `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay` is the best approach to customizing object display. However, if you do not derive your class from `matlab.mixin.CustomDisplay`, overload the `disp` function to change how MATLAB displays objects of your class.

MATLAB calls the `display` function whenever an object is referred to in a statement that is not terminated by a semicolon. For example, the following statement creates the variable `a`. MATLAB calls `display`, which displays the value of `a` in the command line.

```
a = 5  
a =  
    5  
  
display then calls disp.
```

## Overloaded `disp`

The built-in `display` function prints the name of the variable that is being displayed, if an assignment is made, or otherwise uses `ans` as the variable name. Then `display` calls `disp` to handle the actual display of the values.

If the variable that is being displayed is an object of a class that overloads `disp`, then MATLAB always calls the overloaded method. MATLAB calls `display` with two arguments and passes the variable name as the second argument.

## Relationship Between `disp` and `display`

MATLAB invokes the built-in `display` function when:

- MATLAB executes a statement that returns a value and is not terminated with a semicolon.
- There is no left-side variable, then MATLAB prints `ans =` followed by the value.
- Code explicitly invokes the `display` function.

When invoked `display`:

- If the input argument is an existing variable, `display` prints the variable name and equal sign, followed by the value.
- If the input is the result of an expression, `display` does not print `ans =`.

MATLAB invokes the built-in `disp` function when:

- The built-in `display` function calls `disp`.
- Code explicitly invokes `disp`.

For empty built-in types (numeric types, `char`, `struct`, and `cell`) the `display` function displays:

- `[ ]` — for numeric types
- `"0x0 struct array with no fields."` — for empty `structs`.
- `"Empty cell array: 0-by-1"` — for empty cell arrays.
- `' '` — for empty `char` arrays

`disp` differs from `display` in these ways:

- `disp` does not print the variable name or `ans`.
- `disp` prints nothing for built-in types (numeric types, `char`, `struct`, and `cell`) when the value is empty.

### Related Examples

- “Custom Display Interface” on page 18-2
- “Overload `disp` for DocPolynom” on page 19-17

# Defining Custom Data Types

---

# Class Design for Polynomials

## In this section...

- “Object Requirements” on page 19-2
- “DocPolynom Class Members” on page 19-2
- “DocPolynom Class Synopsis” on page 19-4
- “The DocPolynom Constructor” on page 19-13
- “Remove Irrelevant Coefficients” on page 19-14
- “Convert DocPolynom Objects to Other Types” on page 19-15
- “Overload `disp` for DocPolynom” on page 19-17
- “Display Evaluated Expression” on page 19-18
- “Redefine Indexed Reference” on page 19-19
- “Define Arithmetic Operators” on page 19-21

## Object Requirements

This example implements a class to represent polynomials in the MATLAB language. The design requirements are:

- Value class behavior—a polynomial object should behave like MATLAB numeric variables when copied and passed to functions.
- Specialized display and indexing
- Objects can be scalar only. The specialization of display and indexing functionality preclude normal array behavior.
- Arithmetic operations
- Double converter simplifying the use of polynomial object with existing MATLAB functions that accept numeric inputs.

## DocPolynom Class Members

The class definition specifies a property for data storage and defines a folder (`@DocPolynom`) that contains the class definition.

The following table summarizes the properties defined for the `DocPolynom` class.

### DocPolynom Class Properties

Name	Class	Default	Description
coef	double	[ ]	Vector of polynomial coefficients [highest order ... lowest order]

The following table summarizes the methods for the DocPolynom class.

### DocPolynom Class Methods

Name	Description
DocPolynom	Class constructor
double	Converts a DocPolynom object to a double (that is, returns its coefficients in a vector)
char	Creates a formatted display of the DocPolynom object as powers of $x$ and is used by the disp method
disp	Determines how MATLAB displays DocPolynom objects on the command line
subsref	Enables you to specify a value for the independent variable as a subscript, access the coef property with dot notation, and call methods with dot notation.
plus	Implements addition of DocPolynom objects
minus	Implements subtraction of DocPolynom objects
mtimes	Implements multiplication of DocPolynom objects

### Using the DocPolynom Class

The following examples illustrate basic use of the DocPolynom class.

Create DocPolynom objects to represent the following polynomials. The argument to the constructor function contains the polynomial coefficients  $f(x) = x^3 - 2x - 5$  and  $f(x) = 2x^4 + 3x^2 + 2x - 7$ .

```
p1 = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5])
```

```
p1 =
x^3 - 2*x - 5
```

```
p2 = DocPolynom([2 0 3 2 -7])
```

```
p2 =
2*x^4 + 3*x^2 + 2*x - 7
```

Find the roots of the polynomial by passing the coefficients to the `roots` function.

```
roots(p1.coef)
ans =
2.0946 + 0.0000i
-1.0473 + 1.1359i
-1.0473 - 1.1359i
```

Add the two polynomials `p1` and `p2`.

MATLAB calls the `plus` method defined for the `DocPolynom` class when you add two `DocPolynom` objects.

```
p1 + p2
ans =
2*x^4 + x^3 + 3*x^2 - 12
```

## DocPolynom Class Synopsis

Example Code	Discussion
<pre>classdef DocPolynom</pre>	Value class that implements a data type for polynomials.
<pre>properties     coef end</pre>	Vector of polynomial coefficients [highest order ... lowest order]
<pre>methods</pre>	For general information about methods, see “Ordinary Methods” on page 9-7
<pre>function obj = DocPolynom(c)     if nargin &gt; 0         if isa(c,'DocPolynom')             obj.coef = c.coef;         else             obj.coef = c(:).';         end     end end</pre>	<p>Class constructor creates objects using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coefficient vector of existing object</li> <li>• Coefficient vector passed as argument</li> </ul>

Example Code	Discussion
<pre> function obj = set.coef(obj,val)     if ~isa(val,'double')         error('Coefficients must be doubles')     end     ind = find(val(:).'~=0);     if ~isempty(ind);         obj.coef = val(ind(1):end);     else         obj.coef = val;     end end </pre>	<p>See “The DocPolynom Constructor” on page 19-13</p> <p>Set method for <code>coef</code> property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows coefficients only of type double</li> <li>Removes leading zeros from the coefficient vector.</li> </ul> <p>See “Remove Irrelevant Coefficients” on page 19-14</p>
<pre> function c = double(obj)     c = obj.coef; end </pre>	<p>Convert <code>DocPolynom</code> object to <code>double</code> by returning the coefficients.</p> <p>See “Convert <code>DocPolynom</code> Objects to Other Types” on page 19-15</p>

Example Code	Discussion
<pre> function str = char(obj)     if all(obj.coef == 0)         s = '0';         str = s;         return     else         d = length(obj.coef)-1;         s = cell(1,d);         ind = 1;         for a = obj.coef;             if a ~= 0;                 if ind ~= 1                     if a &gt; 0                         s(ind) = {'+'};                         ind = ind + 1;                     else                         s(ind) = {'-'};                         a = -a;                         ind = ind + 1;                     end                 end                 if a ~= 1    d == 0                     if a == -1                         s(ind) = {'-'};                         ind = ind + 1;                     else                         s(ind) = {num2str(a)};                         ind = ind + 1;                         if d &gt; 0                             s(ind) = {'*'};                             ind = ind + 1;                         end                     end                 end             end         end         if d &gt;= 2             s(ind) = {[ 'x^' int2str(d)]};             ind = ind + 1;         elseif d == 1             s(ind) = {'x'};             ind = ind + 1;         end     end end </pre>	<p>Convert DocPolynom object to <code>char</code> that represents the expression:  <math>y = f(x)</math></p> <p>See “Convert DocPolynom Objects to Other Types” on page 19-15</p>

Example Code	Discussion
<pre> d = d - 1; end end str = [s{:}]; end </pre>	
<pre> function disp(obj) c = char(obj); if iscell(c)     disp(['      ' c{:}]) else     disp(c) end end </pre>	<p>Overload <b>disp</b> function. Display objects as output of <b>char</b> method.</p> <p>For information about this code, see “Overload <b>disp</b> for DocPolynom” on page 19-17</p>
<pre> function dispPoly(obj,x) p = char(obj); e = @(x)eval(p); y = zeros(length(x)); disp(['y = ',p]) for k = 1:length(x)     y(k) = e(x(k));     disp(['      ',num2str(y(k)),...           ' = f(x = ',...           num2str(x(k)),')']) end </pre>	<p>Return evaluated expression with formatted output.</p> <p>Uses output of <b>char</b> method to evaluate polynomial at specified values of independent variable.</p> <p>For information about this code, see “Display Evaluated Expression” on page 19-18</p>

Example Code	Discussion
<pre>function b = subsref(a,s) switch s(1).type case '('     ind = s.subs{:};     b = polyval(a.coef,ind); case '.'     switch s(1).subs         case 'coef'             b = a.coef;         case 'disp'             disp(a)         otherwise             if length(s)&gt;1                 b = a.(s(1).subs)(s(2));             else                 b = a.(s.subs);             end         end     otherwise         error('Specify value for x as ob end end</pre>	<p>Redefine indexed reference for DocPolynom objects.</p> <p>For information about this code, see “Redefine Indexed Reference” on page 19-19</p>

Example Code	Discussion
<pre> function r = plus(obj1,obj2)     obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);     obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);     k = length(obj2.coef) - length(obj1.coef);     zp = zeros(1,k);     zm = zeros(1,-k);     r = DocPolynom([zp,obj1.coef] + [zm,obj2.coef]); end </pre>	<p>Define three arithmetic operators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polynomial addition</li> <li>• Polynomial subtraction</li> <li>• Polynomial multiplication</li> </ul>
<pre> function r = minus(obj1,obj2)     obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);     obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);     k = length(obj2.coef) - length(obj1.coef);     zp = zeros(1,k);     zm = zeros(1,-k);     r = DocPolynom([zp,obj1.coef] - [zm,obj2.coef]); end </pre>	<p>For information about this code, see “Define Arithmetic Operators” on page 19-21.</p>
<pre> function r = mtimes(obj1,obj2)     obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);     obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);     r = DocPolynom(conv(obj1.coef,obj2.coef)); end end </pre>	<p>For general information about defining operators, see “Operator Overloading” on page 17-49</p>
<pre> end end </pre>	<p>end statements for methods and for classdef.</p>

### Expand for Class Code

```

classdef DocPolynom
    % Documentation example
    % A value class that implements a data type for polynomials
    % See Implementing a Class for Polynomials in the
    % MATLAB documentation for more information.

    properties
        coef
    end

    % Class methods
    methods
        function obj = DocPolynom(c)

```

```
if nargin > 0
    if isa(c,'DocPolynom')
        obj.coef = c.coef;
    else
        obj.coef = c(:).';
    end
end
end % DocPolynom
function obj = set.coef(obj,val)
    if ~isa(val,'double')
        error('Coefficients must be doubles')
    end
    % Remove leading zeros
    ind = find(val(:).'~=0);
    if ~isempty(ind);
        obj.coef = val(ind(1):end);
    else
        obj.coef = val;
    end
end % set.coef

function c = double(obj)
    c = obj.coef;
end % double

function str = char(obj)
    % Created a formated display of the polynom
    % as powers of x
    if all(obj.coef == 0)
        s = '0';
        str = s;
        return
    else
        d = length(obj.coef)-1;
        s = cell(1,d);
        ind = 1;
        for a = obj.coef;
            if a ~= 0;
                if ind ~= 1
                    if a > 0
                        s(ind) = {'+'};
                        ind = ind + 1;
                    else
                        s(ind) = {'-'};
                        ind = ind + 1;
                    end
                else
                    if a > 0
                        s(ind) = {'+'};
                    else
                        s(ind) = {'-'};
                    end
                end
            end
        end
    end
    str = [s{:}];
end
```

```

        a = -a; %#ok<FXSET>
        ind = ind + 1;
    end
end
if a ~= 1 || d == 0
    if a == -1
        s(ind) = {'-'};
        ind = ind + 1;
    else
        s(ind) = {num2str(a)};
        ind = ind + 1;
        if d > 0
            s(ind) = {'*'};
            ind = ind + 1;
        end
    end
end
if d >= 2
    s(ind) = {[ 'x^' int2str(d)]};
    ind = ind + 1;
elseif d == 1
    s(ind) = {'x'};
    ind = ind + 1;
end
d = d - 1;
end
end
str = [s{:}];
end % char

function disp(obj)
    % DISP Display object in MATLAB syntax
    c = char(obj);
    if iscell(c)
        disp(['      ' c{:}])
    else
        disp(c)
    end
end % disp

function dispPoly(obj,x)
    % evaluate obj at x
    p = char(obj);

```

```
e = @(x)eval(p);
y = zeros(length(x));
disp(['y = ',p])
for k = 1:length(x)
    y(k) = e(x(k));
    disp([' ',num2str(y(k)),...
        ' = f(x = ',...
        num2str(x(k)),')'])
end
end

function b = subsref(a,s)
% SUBSREF Implementing the following syntax:
% obj([1 ...])
% obj.coef
% obj.disp
% out = obj.method(args)
% out = obj.method
switch s(1).type
    case '()'
        ind = s.subs{:};
        b = polyval(a.coef,ind);
    case '.'
        switch s(1).subs
            case 'coef'
                b = a.coef;
            case 'disp'
                disp(a)
            otherwise
                if length(s)>1
                    b = a.(s(1).subs)(s(2).subs{:});
                else
                    b = a.(s.subs);
                end
            end
        otherwise
            error('Specify value for x as obj(x)')
        end
    end % subsref

function r = plus(obj1,obj2)
% PLUS Implement obj1 + obj2 for DocPolynom
obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);
obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);
```

```

k = length(obj2.coef) - length(obj1.coef);
zp = zeros(1,k);
zm = zeros(1,-k);
r = DocPolynom([zp,obj1.coef] + [zm,obj2.coef]);
end % plus

function r = minus(obj1,obj2)
% MINUS Implement obj1 - obj2 for DocPolynoms.
obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);
obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);
k = length(obj2.coef) - length(obj1.coef);
zp = zeros(1,k);
zm = zeros(1,-k);
r = DocPolynom([zp,obj1.coef] - [zm,obj2.coef]);
end % minus

function r = mtimes(obj1,obj2)
% MTIMES Implement obj1 * obj2 for DocPolynoms.
obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);
obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);
r = DocPolynom(conv(obj1.coef,obj2.coef));
end % mtimes
end % methods
end % classdef

```

## The DocPolynom Constructor

The following function is the `DocPolynom` class constructor, which is in the file `@DocPolynom/DocPolynom.m`:

```

methods
function obj = DocPolynom(c)
if isa(c,'DocPolynom')
    obj.coef = c.coef;
else
    obj.coef = c(:).';
end
end

```

### Constructor Calling Syntax

It is possible to call the `DocPolynom` constructor with two different arguments:

- Input argument is a **DocPolynom** object — If you call the constructor function with an input argument that is already a **DocPolynom** object, the constructor returns a new **DocPolynom** object with the same coefficients as the input argument. The **isa** function checks for this input.
- Input argument is a coefficient vector — If the input argument is not a **DocPolynom** object, the constructor attempts to reshape the values into a vector and assign them to the **coef** property.

The **coef** property set method restricts property values to doubles. See “Remove Irrelevant Coefficients” on page 19-14 for a description of the property set method.

An example use of the **DocPolynom** constructor is the statement:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5])
p =
x^3 - 2*x -5
```

This statement creates an instance of the **DocPolynom** class with the specified coefficients. Note that the display of the object shows the equivalent polynomial using MATLAB language syntax. The **DocPolynom** class implements this display using the **disp** and **char** class methods.

## Remove Irrelevant Coefficients

MATLAB software represents polynomials as row vectors containing coefficients ordered by descending powers. Zeros in the coefficient vector represent terms that drop out of the polynomial. Leading zeros, therefore, can be ignored when forming the polynomial.

Some **DocPolynom** class methods use the length of the coefficient vector to determine the degree of the polynomial. It is useful, therefore, to remove leading zeros from the coefficient vector so that its length represents the true value.

The **DocPolynom** class stores the coefficient vector in a property that uses a set method to remove leading zeros from the specified coefficients before setting the property value.

```
methods
    function obj = set.coef(obj,val)
        if ~isa(val,'double')
            error('Coefficients must be doubles')
        end
        ind = find(val(:).'^=0);
```

```

if ~isempty(ind);
    obj.coef = val(ind(1):end);
else
    obj.coef = val;
end
end
end

```

## Convert DocPolynom Objects to Other Types

The DocPolynom class defines two methods to convert DocPolynom objects to other classes:

- **double** — Converts to the double numeric type so functions can perform mathematical operations on the coefficients.
- **char** — Converts to characters used to format output for display in the command window

### The Double Converter

The double converter method for the DocPolynom class simply returns the coefficient vector:

```

methods
    function c = double(obj)
        c = obj.coef;
    end
end

```

For the DocPolynom object p:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5]);
```

the statement:

```
c = double(p)
```

returns:

```
c=
    1      0      -2      -5
```

which is of class **double**:

```
class(c)
ans =
    double
```

### The Character Converter

The `char` method produces a `char` vector that represents the polynomial displayed as powers of `x`. The `char` vector returned is a syntactically correct MATLAB expression.

The `char` method uses a cell array to collect the `char` vector components that make up the displayed polynomial.

The `disp` method uses the `char` method to format the `DocPolynom` object for display. The `evalPoly` method uses `char` to create the MATLAB expression to evaluate.

Users of `DocPolynom` objects are not likely to call the `char` or `disp` methods directly, but these methods enable the `DocPolynom` class to behave like other data classes in MATLAB.

Here is the `char` method.

```
methods
    function str = char(obj)
        if all(obj.coef == 0)
            s = '0';
            str = s;
            return
        else
            d = length(obj.coef)-1;
            s = cell(1,d);
            ind = 1;
            for a = obj.coef;
                if a ~= 0;
                    if ind ~= 1
                        if a > 0
                            s(ind) = {'+'};
                            ind = ind + 1;
                        else
                            s(ind) = {'-'};
                            a = -a;
                            ind = ind + 1;
                        end
                    end
                    if a ~= 1 || d == 0
                        if a == -1
                            s(ind) = {'-'};
                            ind = ind + 1;
                        else
                            s(ind) = {num2str(a)};
                            ind = ind + 1;
                        end
                    end
                end
            end
        end
    end
```

```

        if d > 0
            s(ind) = {'*'};
            ind = ind + 1;
        end
    end
    if d >= 2
        s(ind) = {[ 'x^' int2str(d)]};
        ind = ind + 1;
    elseif d == 1
        s(ind) = {'x'};
        ind = ind + 1;
    end
    end
    d = d - 1;
end
end
str = [s{:}];
end
end

```

## Overload `disp` for DocPolynom

To provide a more useful display of DocPolynom objects, this class overloads `disp` in the class definition.

This `disp` method relies on the `char` method to produce a text representation of the polynomial, which it then displays on the screen.

The `char` method returns a cell array or the character '0' if the coefficients are all zero.

```

methods
    function disp(obj)
        c = char(obj);
        if iscell(c)
            disp([' ' c{:}])
        else
            disp(c)
        end
    end
end

```

## When MATLAB Calls the `disp` Method

The statement:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5])
```

creates a `DocPolynom` object. Because the statement is not terminated with a semicolon, the resulting output is displayed on the command line:

```
p =  
x^3 - 2*x - 5
```

## Display Evaluated Expression

The `char` converter method forms a MATLAB expression for the polynomial represented by a `DocPolynom` object. The `dispPoly` method evaluates the expression returned by the `char` method with a specified value for `x`.

```
methods  
    function dispPoly(obj,x)  
        p = char(obj);  
        e = @(x)eval(p);  
        y = zeros(length(x));  
        disp(['y = ',p])  
        for k = 1:length(x)  
            y(k) = e(x(k));  
            disp([' ',num2str(y(k)),...  
                  ' = f(x = ',...  
                  num2str(x(k)),')'])  
        end  
    end  
end
```

Create a `DocPolynom` object `p`:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5])  
  
p =  
x^3 - 2*x - 5
```

Evaluate the polynomial at `x` equal to three values, [3 5 9]:

```
dispPoly(p,[3 5 9])  
  
y = x^3 - 2*x - 5  
16 = f(x = 3)  
110 = f(x = 5)  
706 = f(x = 9)
```

## Redefine Indexed Reference

The `DocPolynom` class redefines indexed reference to support the use of objects representing polynomials. In the `DocPolynom` class, a subscripted reference to an object causes an evaluation of the polynomial with the value of the independent variable equal to the subscript.

For example, given the following polynomial:

$$f(x) = x^3 - 2x - 5$$

Create a `DocPolynom` object `p`:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5])
p =
x^3 - 2*x - 5
```

The following subscripted expression evaluates the value of the polynomial at `x = 3` and at `x = 4`, and returns the resulting values:

```
p([3 4])
ans =
16    51
```

## Indexed Reference Design Objectives

Redefine the default subscripted reference behavior by implementing a `subsref` method.

If a class defines a `subsref` method, MATLAB calls this method for objects of this class whenever a subscripted reference occurs. The `subsref` method must define all the indexed reference behaviors, not just a specific case that you want to change.

The `DocPolynom` `subsref` method implements the following behaviors:

- `p(x = [a1...an])` — Evaluate polynomial at `x = a`.
- `p.coef` — Access `coef` property value
- `p.disp` — Display the polynomial as a MATLAB expression without assigning an output.
- `obj = p.method(args)` — Use dot notation to call methods arguments and return a modified object.

- `obj = p.method` — Use dot notation to call methods without arguments and return a modified object.

### **subsref Implementation Details**

The `subsref` method overloads the `subsref` function.

For example, consider a call to the `polyval` function:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5])
p =
    x^3 - 2*x - 5
polyval(p.coef,[3 5 7])
ans =
    16    110    324
```

The `polyval` function requires the:

- Polynomial coefficients
- Values of the independent variable at which to evaluate the polynomial

The `polyval` function returns the value of  $f(x)$  at these values. `subsref` calls `polyval` through the statements:

```
case '()'
    ind = s.subs{;};
    b = polyval(a.coef,ind);
```

When implementing `subsref` to support method calling with arguments using dot notation, both the `type` and `subs` structure fields contain multiple elements.

The `subsref` method implements all subscripted reference explicitly, as show in the following code listing.

```
methods
    function b = subsref(a,s)
        switch s(1).type
            case '()'
                ind = s.subs{;};
                b = polyval(a.coef,ind);
            case '.'
                switch s(1).subs
                    case 'coef'
                        b = a.coef;
```

```

        case 'disp'
            disp(a)
        otherwise
            if length(s)>1
                b = a.(s(1).subs)(s(2).subs{:});
            else
                b = a.(s.subs);
            end
        end
    otherwise
        error('Specify value for x as obj(x)')
    end
end
end

```

## Define Arithmetic Operators

Several arithmetic operations are meaningful on polynomials. The `DocPolynom` class implements these methods:

Method and Syntax	Operator Implemented
<code>plus(a,b)</code>	Addition
<code>minus(a,b)</code>	Subtraction
<code>mtimes(a,b)</code>	Matrix multiplication

When overloading arithmetic operators, consider the data types you must support. The `plus`, `minus`, and `mtimes` methods are defined for the `DocPolynom` class to handle addition, subtraction, and multiplication on `DocPolynom` — `DocPolynom` and `DocPolynom` — `double` combinations of operands.

### Define + Operator

If either `p` or `q` is a `DocPolynom` object, this expression:

`p + q`

Generates a call to a function `@DocPolynom/plus`, unless the other object is of higher precedence.

The following method overloads the `plus` (+) operator for the `DocPolynom` class:

`methods`

```
function r = plus(obj1,obj2)
    obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);
    obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);
    k = length(obj2.coef) - length(obj1.coef);
    zp = zeros(1,k);
    zm = zeros(1,-k);
    r = DocPolynom([zp,obj1.coef] + [zm,obj2.coef]);
end
end
```

Here is how the function works:

- Ensure that both input arguments are `DocPolynom` objects so that expressions such as

`p + 1`

that involve both a `DocPolynom` and a `double`, work correctly.

- Access the two coefficient vectors and, if necessary, pad one of them with zeros to make both the same length. The actual addition is simply the vector sum of the two coefficient vectors.
- Call the `DocPolynom` constructor to create a properly typed object that is the result of adding the polynomials.

### Define - Operator

Implement the `minus` operator (`-`) using the same approach as the `plus` (`+`) operator.

The `minus` method computes `p - q`. The dominant argument must be a `DocPolynom` object.

```
methods
    function r = minus(obj1,obj2)
        obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);
        obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);
        k = length(obj2.coef) - length(obj1.coef);
        zp = zeros(1,k);
        zm = zeros(1,-k);
        r = DocPolynom([zp,obj1.coef] - [zm,obj2.coef]);
    end
end
```

### Define the \* Operator

Implement the `mtimes` method to compute the product `p*q`. The `mtimes` method implements *matrix* multiplication since the multiplication of two polynomials is the convolution (`conv`) of their coefficient vectors:

```
methods
    function r = mtimes(obj1,obj2)
        obj1 = DocPolynom(obj1);
        obj2 = DocPolynom(obj2);
        r = DocPolynom(conv(obj1.coef,obj2.coef));
    end
end
```

## Using the Arithmetic Operators

Given the `DocPolynom` object:

```
p = DocPolynom([1 0 -2 -5]);
```

The following two arithmetic operations call the `DocPolynom plus` and `mtimes` methods:

```
q = p+1;
r = p*q;
```

to produce

```
q =
x^3 - 2*x - 4

r =
x^6 - 4*x^4 - 9*x^3 + 4*x^2 + 18*x + 20
```



# Designing Related Classes

---

# Using Heterogeneous Class Hierarchies

## In this section...

- “Interfaces Based on Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 20-2
- “Define Heterogeneous Hierarchy” on page 20-2
- “Assets Class” on page 20-5
- “Stocks Class” on page 20-7
- “Bonds Class” on page 20-9
- “Cash Class” on page 20-10
- “Default Object” on page 20-12
- “Operating on an Assets Array” on page 20-14

## Interfaces Based on Heterogeneous Arrays

A heterogeneous class hierarchy lets you create arrays containing objects of different classes that are related through inheritance. You can define class methods that operate on these heterogeneous arrays as a whole.

A class design based on heterogeneous arrays provides a more convenient interface than, for example, extracting elements from a cell array and operating on these elements individually. For more information on the design of class hierarchies that support heterogeneous arrays, see “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23.

All heterogeneous hierarchies derive from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`.

## Define Heterogeneous Hierarchy

---

**Note:** This example does not use valid terminology or techniques for managing financial assets. The purpose of this example is only to illustrate techniques for defining heterogeneous class hierarchies.

---

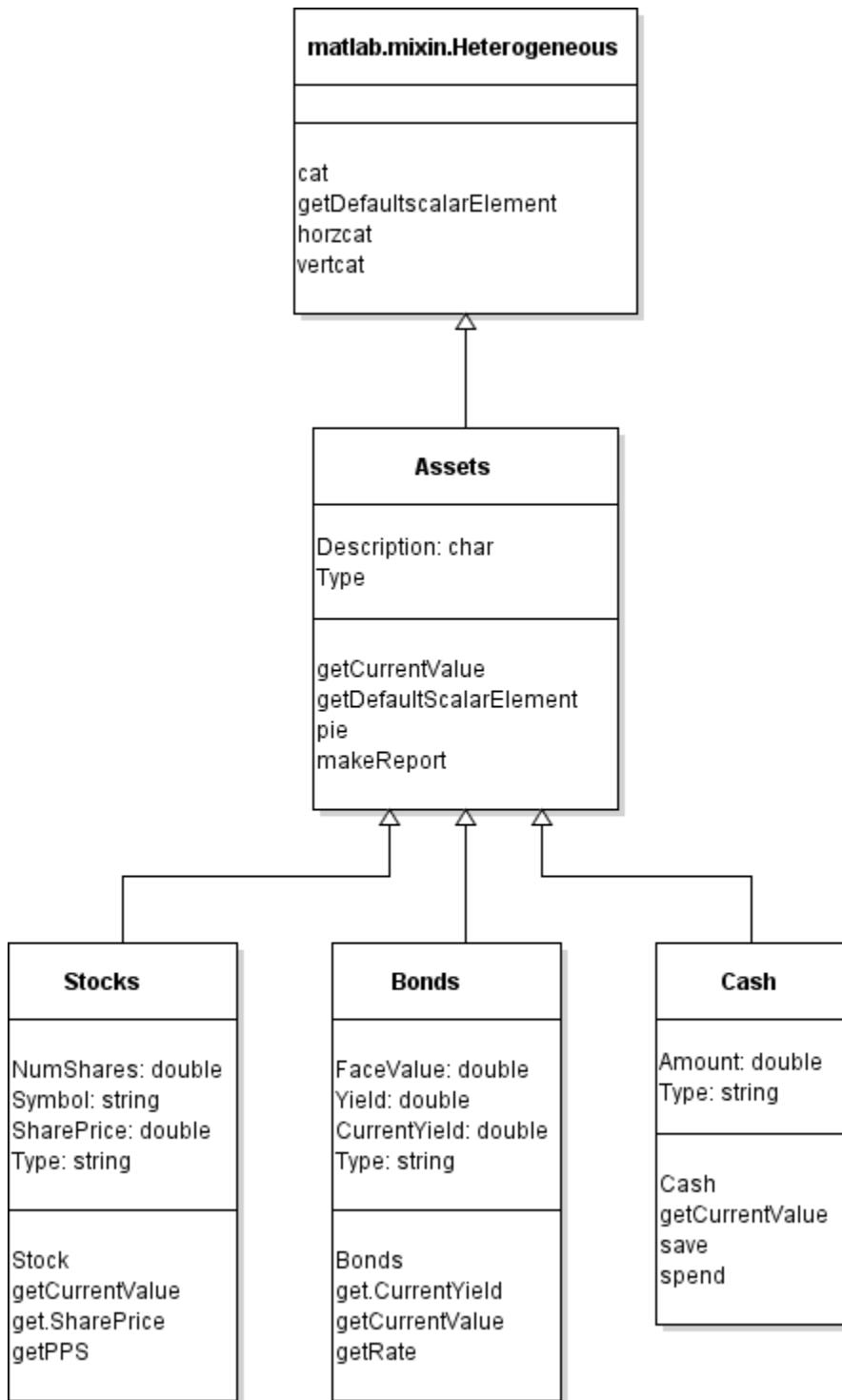
This example implements a system of classes to represent financial assets, such as stocks, bonds, and cash. Classes to represent categories of assets have certain common requirements. Each instance has one of the following:

- Textual description
- Type (stock, bond, or cash)
- Means to determine the current value of the asset

Heterogeneous arrays of these objects need methods that can operate on the whole array. These operations include:

- Creating a table of information about all assets contained in the array
- Graphing the relative contribution of each asset type contained in the array

These requirements are factored into the class that is the root of the hierarchy. The root class derives from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`. In the following diagram, the `Assets` class is the root of the hierarchy. The `Stocks`, `Bonds`, and `Cash` classes provide the specialization required for each type of asset.



## Assets Class

The **Assets** class:

- Derives directly from `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous`
- Is the root of the heterogeneous hierarchy
- Is abstract
- Is the class of heterogeneous arrays composed of any mixture of **Stock**, **Bond**, and **Cash** objects

### Properties

The **Assets** class defines two properties:

- **Description** — A general description of the individual asset constrained to be of class `char`.
- **Type** — The type of asset defined as an abstract property that each subclass implements.

### Methods

The **Assets** class defines these methods:

- **pie** — A sealed method that creates a pie chart showing the relative mix of asset types.
- **makeReport** — A sealed method that creates a report listing the assets.
- **getCurrentValue** — An abstract method that each concrete subclass must implement to return the current value of the asset.
- **getDefaultScalarElement** — `matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous` class method overridden in the **Assets** class to specify a default object. The **Assets** class is abstract so it cannot be used as the default object. For more information, see “Default Object” on page 20-12.

### Methods in Heterogeneous Hierarchies

Methods defined by the **Assets** class are either:

- Concrete methods (fully implemented) that subclasses do not override
- Abstract methods (signatures only) that subclasses implement

Concrete methods defined by superclasses in a heterogeneous hierarchy must specify the **Sealed** attribute. Sealing these methods prevents subclasses from overriding methods implemented by the superclass. When calling methods on a heterogeneous array, MATLAB calls the methods defined by the class of the array (**Assets** in this example).

The **pie** and **makeReport** methods are examples of sealed methods that operate on heterogeneous arrays composed of **Stock**, **Bond**, and **Cash** objects.

Abstract methods defined by the superclasses in a heterogeneous hierarchy must specify the **Abstract** attribute. Defining an abstract method in a superclass ensures that concrete subclasses have an implementation for that exact method name. Use these methods element-wise so that each object calls its own method.

The **getCurrentValue** method is an example of an abstract method that is implemented by each subclass to get the current value of each asset.

Each type of subclass object calculates its current value in a different way. If you add another category of asset by adding another subclass to the hierarchy, this class must implement its own version of a **getCurrentValue** method. Because all subclasses implement a **getCurrentValue** method, the **pie** and **makeReport** methods work with newly added subclasses.

For more information on the **Sealed** and **Abstract** method attributes, see “Method Attributes” on page 9-5.

### Assets Class Code

The **Assets** class and other classes in the hierarchy are contained in a package called **financial**.

```
classdef Assets < matlab.mixin.Heterogeneous
    % file: +financial/@Assets/Assets.m
    properties
        Description char = 'Assets'
    end
    properties (Abstract, SetAccess = private)
        Type
    end
    methods (Abstract)
        % Not implemented by Assets class
        value = getCurrentValue(obj)
```

```
end
methods (Static, Sealed, Access = protected)
    function defaultObject = getDefaultScalarElement
        defaultObject = financial.DefaultAsset;
    end
end
methods (Sealed)
    % Implemented in separate files
    % +financial.@Assets/pie.m
    % +financial.@Assets/makeReport.m
    pie(assetArray)
    makeReport(assetArray)
end
end
```

For code listings for `pie` and `makeReport`, see “Operating on an Assets Array” on page 20-14.

## Stocks Class

The `Stocks` class represents a specific type of financial asset. It is a concrete class that implements the abstract members defined by the `Assets` class, and defines class properties and methods specific to this type of asset.

### Properties

The `Stocks` class defines these properties:

- `NumShares` — The number of shares held for this asset.
- `Symbol` — The ticker symbol corresponding to this stock.
- `Type` — `Stocks` class implementation of the abstract property defined by the `Assets` class. This concrete property must use the same attributes as the abstract version (that is, `SetAccess private`).
- `SharePrice` — Dependent property for the price per share. The `get.SharePrice` method obtains the current share price from web services when this property is queried.

### Methods

The `Stocks` class defines these methods:

- **Stocks** — The constructor assigns property values and supports a default constructor called with no input arguments.
- **getCurrentValue** — This method is the **Stocks** class implementation of the abstract method defined by the **Assets** class. It returns the current value of this asset.
- **get.SharePrice** — The property get method for the dependent **SharePrice** property returns the current share price of this stock. For information on how to access web services from MATLAB, see the **webread** function.

### Stocks Class Code

```
classdef Stocks < financial.Assets
properties
    NumShares double = 0
    Symbol string
end
properties (SetAccess = private)
    Type = "Stocks"
end
properties (Dependent)
    SharePrice double
end
methods
    function sk = Stocks(description,numshares,symbol)
        if nargin == 0
            description = '';
            numshares = 0;
            symbol = '';
        end
        sk.Description = description;
        sk.NumShares = numshares;
        sk.Symbol = symbol;
    end
    function value = getCurrentValue(sk)
        value = sk.NumShares*sk.SharePrice;
    end
    function pps = get.SharePrice(sk)
        % Implement web access to obtain
        % Current price per share
        % Returning dummy value
        pps = 1;
    end
end
```

```
end
```

## Bonds Class

The **Bonds** class represents a specific type of financial asset. It is a concrete class that implements the abstract members defined by the **Assets** class and defines class properties and methods specific to this type of asset.

### Properties

The **Bonds** class defines these properties:

- **FaceValue** — Face value of the bond.
- **Yield** — Annual interest rate of the bond.
- **Type** — **Bonds** class implementation of the abstract property defined by the **Assets** class. This concrete property must use the same attributes as the abstract version (that is, `SetAccess private`).
- **CurrentYield** — Dependent property for the current yield. The `get.CurrentYield` property get method obtains the value from web services.

### Methods

The **Bonds** class defines these methods:

- **Bonds** — The constructor assigns property values and supports a default constructor called with no input arguments.
- **getCurrentVlaue** — This method is the **Bonds** class implementation of the abstract method defined by the **Assets** class. It returns the current value of this asset.
- **get.CurrentYield** — The property get method for the dependent **CurrentYield** property returns the current yield on this bond. For information on how to access web serviced from MATLAB, see the `webread` function.

### Bonds Class Code

```
classdef Bonds < financial.Assets
    properties
        FaceValue double = 0
        Yield double = 0
    end
    properties (SetAccess = private)
        Type = "Bonds"
```

```
end
properties (Dependent)
    CurrentYield double = 0
end
methods
    function b = Bonds(description,facevalue,yield)
        if nargin == 0
            description = '';
            facevalue = 0;
            yield = 0;
        end
        b.Description = description;
        b.FaceValue = facevalue;
        b.Yield = yield;
        b.Type = AssetTypes.Bonds;
    end
    function mv = getCurrentValue(b)
        y = b.Yield;
        cy = b.CurrentYield;
        if cy <= 0 || y <= 0
            mv = b.FaceValue;
        else
            mv = b.FaceValue*y/cy;
        end
    end
    function r = get.CurrentYield(b)
        % Implement web access to obtain
        % Current yield for this bond
        % Returning dummy value
        r = 0.24;
    end
end
end
```

## Cash Class

The **Cash** class represents a specific type of financial asset. It is a concrete class that implements the abstract members defined by the **Assets** class and defines class properties and methods specific to this type of asset.

### Properties

The **Cash** class defines these properties:

- **Amount** — The amount of cash held in this asset.
- **Type** — **Cash** class implementation of the abstract property defined by the **Assets** class. This concrete property must use the same attributes as the abstract version (that is, `SetAccess private`).

## Methods

The **Cash** class defines these methods:

- **Cash** — The constructor assigns property values and supports a default constructor called with no input arguments.
- **getCurrentValue** — This method is the **Cash** class implementation of the abstract method defined by the **Assets** class. It returns the current value of this asset.
- **save** — This method adds the specified amount of cash to the existing amount and returns a new **Cash** object with the current amount.
- **spend** — This method deducts the specified amount from the current amount and returns a new **Cash** object with the current amount.

## Cash Class Code

```
classdef Cash < financial.Assets
properties
    Amount double = 0
end
properties (SetAccess = private)
    Type = "Cash"
end
methods
    function c = Cash(description,amount)
        if nargin == 0
            description = '';
            amount = 0;
        end
        c.Description = description;
        c.Amount = amount;
    end
    function value = getCurrentValue(c)
        value = c.Amount;
    end
    function c = save(c,amount)
        newValue = c.Amount + amount;
```

```
c.Amount = newValue;
end
function c = spend(c,amount)
newValue = c.Amount - amount;
if newValue < 0
c.Amount = 0;
disp('Your balance is $0.00')
else
c.Amount = newValue;
end
end
end
```

## Default Object

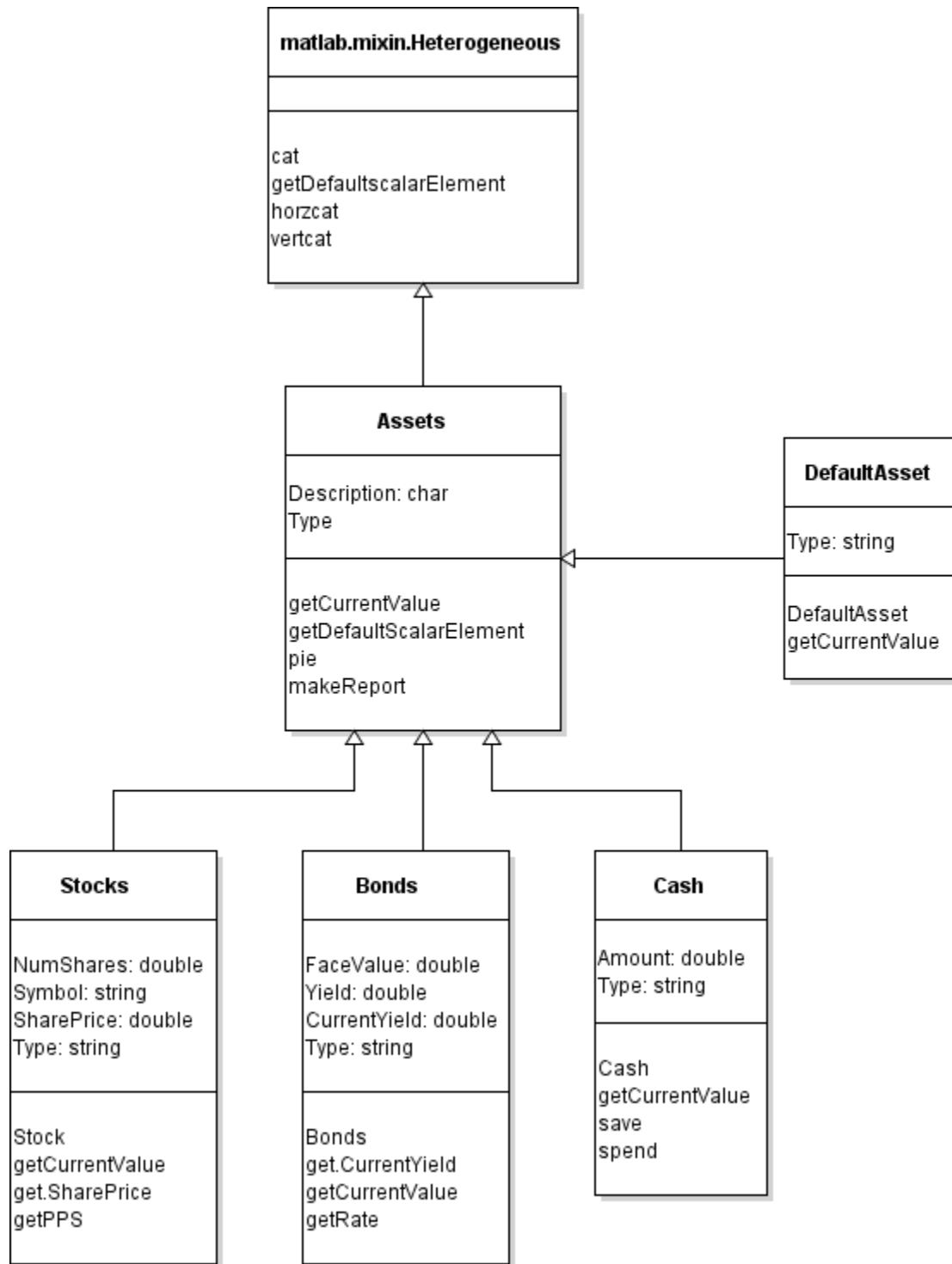
The design of this class hierarchy uses an abstract root class (**Assets**). Therefore, the **Assets** class must specify a concrete class to use as a default object by overriding **getDefaultValue**. In this case, options include:

- Use one of the existing concrete classes for the default object.
- Define a concrete class in the hierarchy to use for the default object.

This implementation adds the **DefaultAsset** class to the hierarchy as a subclass of the **Assets** class. MATLAB creates objects of this class when:

- Creating arrays using indexed assignment with gaps in index numbers
- Loading heterogeneous arrays from MAT-files when MATLAB cannot find the class of an array element.

This diagram shows the addition of the **DefaultAsset** class:



### DefaultAsset Class Code

```
classdef DefaultAsset < financial.Assets
    % file: +financial/@DefaultAsset/DefaultAsset.m
    properties (SetAccess = private)
        Type = "DefaultAsset"
    end
    methods
        function obj = DefaultAsset
            obj.Description = 'Place holder';
        end
        function value = getCurrentValue(~)
            value = 0;
        end
    end
end
```

### Operating on an Assets Array

The `Assets` class defines these methods to operate on heterogeneous arrays of asset objects:

- `pie` — Creates a pie chart showing the mix of asset types in the array.
- `makeReport` — Uses the MATLAB `table` object to display a table of asset information.

To operate on a heterogeneous array, a method must be defined for the class of the heterogeneous array and must be sealed. In this case, the class of heterogeneous arrays is always the `Assets` class. MATLAB does not use the class of the individual elements of the heterogeneous array when dispatching to methods.

### makeReport Method Code

The `Assets` class `makeReport` method builds a table using the common properties and `getCurrentValue` method for each object in the array.

```
function makeReport(obj)
    numMembers = length(obj);
    descs = cell(1,numMembers);
    types(numMembers) = "";
    values(numMembers) = 0;
    for k = 1:numMembers
```

```

descs{k} = obj(k).Description;
types(k) = obj(k).Type;
values(k) = obj(k).getCurrentValue;
end
t = table;
t.Description = descs';
t.Type = types';
t.Value = values';
disp(t)
end

```

The `Assets` class `pie` method calls the `getCurrentValue` method element-wise on objects in the array to obtain the data for the pie chart.

### pie Method Code

```

function pie(assetArray)
stockAmt = 0; bondAmt = 0; cashAmt = 0;
for k=1:length(assetArray)
    if isa(assetArray(k), 'financial.Stocks')
        stockAmt = stockAmt + assetArray(k).getCurrentValue;
    elseif isa(assetArray(k), 'financial.Bonds')
        bondAmt = bondAmt + assetArray(k).getCurrentValue;
    elseif isa(assetArray(k), 'financial.Cash')
        cashAmt = cashAmt + assetArray(k).getCurrentValue;
    end
end
k = 1;
if stockAmt ~= 0
    label(k) = {'Stocks'};
    pieVector(k) = stockAmt;
    k = k +1;
end
if bondAmt ~= 0
    label(k) = {'Bonds'};
    pieVector(k) = bondAmt;
    k = k +1;
end
if cashAmt ~= 0
    label(k) = {'Cash'};
    pieVector(k) = cashAmt;
end
pie(pieVector,label)
tv = stockAmt + bondAmt + cashAmt;
stg = {[ 'Total Value of Assets: $',num2str(tv,'%0.2f')]};
```

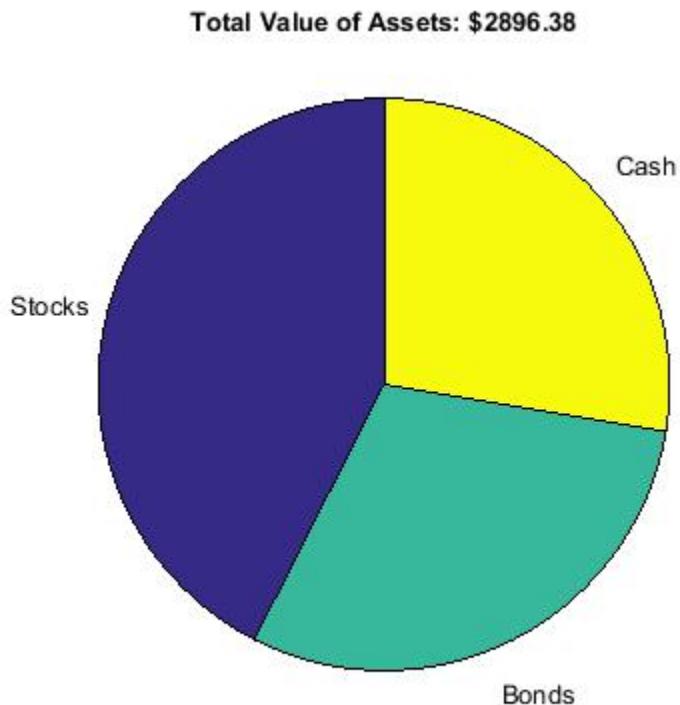
```
    title(stg,'FontSize',10)
end
```

### Create an Assets Array

These statements create a heterogeneous array by concatenating the `Stocks`, `Bonds`, and `Cash` objects. Calling the `makeReport` and `pie` methods creates the output shown.

```
s = financial.Stocks('Acme Motor Company',100,string('A'));
b = financial.Bonds('3 Month T',700,0.3);
c(1) = financial.Cash('Bank Account',500);
c(2) = financial.Cash('Gold',500);
assetArray = [s,b,c];
makeReport(assetArray)
pie(assetArray)
```

Description	Type	Value
'Acme Motor Company'	Stocks	1232.5
'3 Month T'	Bonds	807.69
'Bank Account'	Cash	500
'Gold'	Cash	500



## Related Examples

- “Heterogeneous Arrays” on page 10-23
- “Validate Property Values” on page 8-21
- “Access Methods for Dependent Properties” on page 8-54

