Protocols

**Protocols:**

* Objective C was extended at NEXT to introduce the concept of multiple inheritances of specification, not implementation, through the introduction of protocols.
* This is a pattern achievable either as an abstract multiply-inherited base class in C++ or as an interface (as in java and C#).
* Objective C makes use of ad-hoc protocols, called informal protocols and compiler enforced protocols, called formal protocols.
* Informal protocol is a list of methods, which a class can opt to implement. It's specified in the documentation, since it has no presence in language.
* Informal protocols often include optional methods, where implementing the method can change the behavior of class.
* For Ex: a text field class might have a delegate which should implement an informal protocol with an optional auto complete method. The text field discovers whether the delegate implements that method (via reflection) and if so, calls it to support auto complete.
* Formal protocol is similar to an interface in java or C#. It's a list of methods, which any class can declare itself to implement.
* Versions of Objective C before 2.0 required that a class must implement all methods in a protocol, it declares itself as adopting, the compiler will send an error if the class does not implement every method of its declared protocols.
* Objective C 2.0 added support for making certain methods in a protocol optional, and the compiler will not enforce implementation of optional methods.
* The Objective C concept of protocols is different from the java or C# concept of interfaces in which a class may implement that protocol without being declared to implement that protocol.
* The difference is not detectable from outside code.
* Formal protocols cannot provide any implementation; they simply assure caller that classes which conform to the protocol will provide implementation.

**Defining a protocol**

@protocol MyProtocolName <NSObject>

//Methods go here

@ends

Replace "MyProtocolName" with name of your choice .There are no curly Braces.

That is because variables go in curly braces, and protocols have Variables associated with them "<NSObject>" means that the amount of protocol is derivation of the NSObject Protocol.

There are Both NSObject class and NSObject Protocol. Pointed brackets are associated with protocols.

**using the Protocol:**

In Java we specify that a class implements an interface with the "implements" keyword. In Objective C we use pointy brackets in the interface declaration.

(In Objective C "interface” means part of the class in the header file or "interface"

In java also same), following the class you extend.

E.x: we usually declare class like this

@interface CustomView:UIView

To specify that it implements a protocol, simply change it to this:

@ interface CustomView:UIView <MyProtocol Name>.

**Protocol as variables**:

Here is where it differs from java the most. In java when declaring a variable, you would use an interface name just you would a class.

In Objective -C you declare a variable this way:

id<My Protocol Name> myNewVariable

So the new type is "id<MyProtocolName>", id is the generic object even though it’s a pointer to an object, it does not have an asterisks it's assumed.

You can also use the notation when defining methods

Ex:

-(void)dosomethingWithThisObject :(id<My Protocol Name>)