

readme

Lab 1

Goal: This lab will give you experience with defining and using classes and fields, and with conditionals and recursive functions.

Getting Started

Read the `Fraction.java` class into a **text editor** and compile it filling in the command `javac -g Fraction.java`. The program should compile without errors. In a shell window, run the program using `"java Fraction"`. The program should run, although it will print fractions in a non-reduced form, like `12/20`.

Part I: Constructors (1 point)

Look at the main method in the `Fraction` class, which declares and constructs four `Fraction` objects. Four different constructors are used, each with different parameters.

```
Fraction f0 = new Fraction();
Fraction f1 = new Fraction(3);
Fraction f2 = new Fraction(12, 20);
Fraction f3 = new Fraction(f2);
```

Look at the implementations of the constructors. The two-parameter constructor is straightforward. It assigns the parameters to the numerator and denominator fields. The constructor with one int parameter uses some new syntax:

```
this(n, 1);
```

The effect of this statement is to call the two-parameter constructor, passing `n` and `1` as parameters. `"this"` is a keyword in Java, which normally refers to the object on which a method is invoked. In a constructor, it can be used (as above) to invoke a constructor from within another constructor.

We could have written the one-parameter constructor thusly:

```
public Fraction(int n) {
    if (n < 0) {
        System.out.println("Fatal error: Negative numerator.");
        System.exit(0);
    }
    numberOfFractions++;
    numerator = n;
    denominator = 1;
}
```

Why call the two-parameter constructor instead? The reason is one of good software engineering: by having three of the constructors call the fourth, we have reduced duplicate code--namely, the error-checking code and fraction counting code in the first constructor. By reusing code this way, the program is shorter, and more importantly, if we later find a bug in the constructor, we might only need to fix the first constructor to fix all of them.

This principle applies to methods in general, not just constructors. In your own programs, if you find yourself copying multiple lines of code for reuse, it is usually wise to put the common code into a new shared method.

The no-parameter constructor does not use the good style just described.

Modify it to call the two-parameter constructor. Then, fill in the fourth constructor so that it uses the good style and correctly duplicates the input `Fraction` (it does neither now).

Part II: Using Objects (1 point)

Further on in the main method, there are four lines commented out. Remove the comment markers and fill in the two missing expressions so that `sumOfTwo` is the sum of `f1` and `f2`, and `sumOfThree` is the sum of `f0`, `f1`, and `f2`.

Part III: Defining Classes (1 point)

The `changeNumerator` and `fracs` methods don't work. Fix them. You may NOT change their signatures. Each fix should require the addition of just one word. These changes may or may not be in the methods themselves.

Part IV: Conditionals and Recursive Functions (1 point)

The main method prints the Fractions thusly:

```
System.out.println("The fraction f0 is " + f0.toString());
System.out.println("The fraction f1 is " + f1); // toString is implicit
System.out.println("The fraction f2 is " + f2);
System.out.println("The fraction f3 is " + f3 + ", which should equal f2");
```

How does Java know what to do when printing the fractions `f1`, `f2`, and `f3`? In the case of `f0`, we have invoked the `toString` method; please read the `toString()` code.

In the next three lines, we are asking Java to concatenate a `Fraction` to the end of a `String`. A `Fraction` is not a `String`, so can't be concatenated directly, but Java cleverly looks for a method called `toString` to convert each `Fraction` to a `String`. This is standard in Java: any object can have a `toString` method, and if it does, that method will be automatically called when you concatenate the object to a `String`. (Actually, every object has a `toString` method, but the default `toString` isn't particularly enlightening.)

As we noted earlier, the `toString` method prints a `Fraction` in non-reduced form. Examine the code in the `toString` method. It is calling another method called `gcd` that computes the greatest common divisor (GCD) of two positive integers. If this method worked correctly, `toString` would print Fractions in reduced form; instead, `gcd` always returns `1`. Rewrite the body of `gcd` so that it is a recursive function that correctly computes the GCD. Recompile and run your program.

Here is pseudocode for a recursive GCD function. `a` and `b` must be nonnegative.

```
function gcd(a, b)
    if b = 0
        return a
    else
        return gcd(b, a mod b)
```

Check-off

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- 1 point: Run your program to demonstrate that f2 and f3 are initially equal.
 - 1 point: Demonstrate that your program correctly computes the two sums of fractions.
 - 1 point: Demonstrate that your program changes f3 to 7/20, and prints the correct number of Fraction objects.
 - 1 point: Demonstrate your program that correctly computes GCDs and fractions in reduced form.