## New Rules for Interfaces

Java 8 changes the rules for interfaces. It adds the following:

1. interfaces can contain default implementations (code) for methods!

2. interfaces can contain static methods with code.

3. functional interfaces using the @Functional annotation

## Default Methods

Before Java 8 **all** interface methods were **abstract** (no method body). In Java 8, you can supply a "default" implementation for methods in an interface.

Suppose we have an interface for Money named **Valuable**. The Valuable interface has two methods: getValue() and getCurrency(). In Java 7 we would write:

public interface Valuable {

double getValue();

String getCurrency( );

}

In Java 8, we could specify default code for getCurrency that simply returns "Baht":

public interface Valuable {

double getValue();

**default** String getCurrency( ) { return "Baht"; }

}

To make the default getCurrency more general, you can add code to get the currency for the user's current Locale setting:

import java.util.\*; // for Currency and Locale

public interface Valuable {

double getValue(); // abstract method

default String getCurrency( ) {

Locale locale = Locale.getDefault();

return Currency.getInstance(locale).getDisplayName();

}

}

Any code that "implements Valuable" can either override the getCurrency() method, or do nothing and use the default implementation.

## Static Methods

Java 8 interfaces can define static methods, including code. Any class that implements the interface will get the static method, as if the static method was defined in the class itself.

public interface VAT {

static double VAT\_RATE = 0.07; // automatically "public final"

static double getTax(Valuable v) {

return v.getValue() \* VAT\_RATE;

}

}

## Functional Interfaces

An interface with only one abstract method is called a "*functional Interface*", since they can be used like functions. Functional interfaces can be implemented as lambda expressions and method references. A lambda expression defines just one method, so the implicit type of a lambda (the target type) must be an interface with only one abstract method.

Similarly, a function reference refers to just one function. So, you can use a function reference in places that expect an interface with just one abstract method.

Some older interfaces (before Java 8) that qualify as functional interfaces are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Comparable*<T> | int compareTo( T other ) |
| *Comparator<*T> | int compare(T a, T b) |
| *Runnable* | void run( ) |
| *Callable*<T> | T call( ) |

Java 8 has many new functional interfaces in the package java.util.function. Most of them are special cases of one of these:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interface | Abstract Method | Purpose |
| ***Consumer*<T>** | void accept(T arg) | A function of one variable that doesn't return anything. It *consumes* the argument. |
| ***Supplier<*T>** | T get( ) | Produces or "supplies" an object of type T, one object per call. |
| ***Predicate<*T>** | boolean test(T arg) | Performs a test on the argument. Used to build filters. |
| ***Function*<T, R>** | R apply(T arg) | A function of one parameter that produces a result. Can be used to *map* one kind of object to another. |
| ***BiFunction<*T,U,R>** | R apply(T a, U b) | Function of two parameters. |
| ***UnaryOperator<*T>** | T apply(T arg) | A unary operator. This is the same as *Function<T,T>* |
| ***BinaryOperator*<T>** | T apply(T a, T b) | A binary operator. Same as *BiFunction<T,T,T>* |

Many of these interfaces also have *default methods*. The default methods are used to "build" more complex functions.

For example, suppose we want a Predicate to test if a Double is greater than zero. Using a Lambda:

Predicate<Double> isPositive = (d) -> (d > 0.0);

You can test this predicate by invoking test( ) with some doubles:

isPositive.test( 2.5 ) // returns true

isPositive.test( 0.0 ) // returns false

We can create a new Predicate that tests for (d <= 0.0) by calling the **negate()** default method of Predicate:

Predicate<Double> notPositive = isPositive.negate( );

And test it:

notPositive.test( 0.0 ) // returns true

The *Consumer, Supplier, Predicate,* and *Function* interfaces all have type parameters. To make it possible to write Lambda expressions using primitive data types, Java 8 also adds many functional interfaces for primitive types like int and double (some people call this *interface pollution*). For example, for *Consumer* there are the following extra interfaces:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***IntConsumer*** | void accept( int x ) | Consumes an int |
| ***DoubleConsumer*** | void accept( double x ) | Consumes a double |
| ***LongConsumer*** | void accept( long x ) | Consumes a long |

Similarly for *Supplier* and *Predicate*. For *Function*, there are many specialized variations such as IntFunction, IntToDoubleFunction, IntToLongFunction, etc.

The *Functional Interfaces* serve two purposes:

1) provide convenient interface types for writing commonly used lambdas

2) provide interfaces used in the new *streams API*.

### Example using Functional Interfaces

**Student**

name: String

id: String

birthday: LocalDate

Suppose we have a Student class. A Student has an id, name, and birthday.

We want to print all the students born this month (so we can send them a birthday greeting.

A simple code for this is:

public void filterAndPrint( List<Student> students, int month ) {

for(Student s : students ) {

if (s.getBirthday().getMonthValue() == month)

System.out.println( s );

}

}

In this code there is a test (a Predicate) and a Consumer. To make our code more general, let's rewrite the method so it accepts a Predicate (the test) and a Consumer (the action to perform).

public void filterAndDo( List<Student> students,

**Predicate<Student> tester**,

**Consumer<Student> consumer** ) {

for(Student s: students) if (**tester.test(s)**) **consumer.accept(s)**;

}

And use this new method to print students with birthday in May:

Month month = Month.May; // an enum of the Months, used by LocalDate

// Test: test the birthday month

Predicate<Student> hasBirthMonth =

(s) -> s.getBirthday().getMonthValue() == month;

// Consumer: print the student name and birthday

Consumer<Student> printBirthday =

(s) -> System.out.println(s+" has birthday on "+s.getBirthday());

filterAndDo( students, hasBirthMonth, printBirthday );

We can use the new *Streaming interface* of collections instead of the for loop. In this case, we really don't need the method at all. We can just write:

students.stream().filter( hasBirthMonth ).forEach( printBirthday );

## Defining a Functional Interface

To define your own functional interface, prefix your interface declaration with @FunctionalInterface. However, any interface with exactly one abstract method can be used as a target type of a lambda expression even if you don't use this annotation.

## References

* In the Java API docs, the package desciption for java.util.function has a long description of the functional interfaces. The Java tutorial on Lambda expressions uses several function interfaces.
* "Enhancements in Java SE 8" online at https://docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/technotes/guides/language/enhancements.html