

# Why should the first letter of a Java class be upper-cased? [closed]

Asked 12 years, 4 months ago   Modified 2 years, 10 months ago

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28



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Closed 12 years ago.

Why should the first letter of a Java class be upper-cased? Is it not possible to run a program containing lower-cased class names? If it is possible, what's the difference?

java

naming-conventions

uppercase

lowercase

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edited Aug 14, 2012 at 7:02



Sai Ye Yan Naing Aye

6,740 ● 12 ● 48 ● 65

asked Aug 14, 2012 at 6:45

SKADIN

545 ● 1 ● 6 ● 14

62 Because it says so in the common writing rules. It's the same thing with natural languages, like English. yOU CaN bREaK tHE RuLeS, tHE mEsSaGe gETS tHrouGH anYwaY, bUt iT lOOk vErY silly. – [some](#) Aug 14, 2012 at 7:14

10 Answers

Sorted by:

Highest score (default)



114

It's a coding convention, adopted by most Java programs. It makes reading code easier as you become use to a given standard.



No, you don't have to follow it, but you won't make any friends by not doing so ;)



Why / how was this convention established in the first place?

The convention was established by Sun/The creators of the Java language.

It was likely establish to improve the promotion of the language across a wide and diverse audience, to lower the entry level requirements for new developers (much easier to learn if you don't need to keep switching between other people's "ideas" of what good code looks like) and generally to try and keep the code clean within the community.

You could ask "why do companies have style guidelines for coders?" and the reasons would, generally, be the same

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 6:46



[MadProgrammer](#)

347k ● 22 ● 239 ● 377

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Why / how was this convention established in the first place?

– [Michael](#) Sep 30, 2015 at 0:36

- 
- 1 @Michael The convention was established by the Sun/The creators of the Java language. It was likely establish to improve the promotion of the language across a wide and diverse audience, to lower the entry level requirements for new developers (much easier to learn if you don't need to keep switching between other people's "ideas" of what good code looks like) and generally to try and keep the code clean within the community. But that's just my take on it. You could task "why do companies have style guidelines for coders?" and the reasons would, generally, be the same
- [MadProgrammer](#) Sep 30, 2015 at 0:45
- 



Using *naming conventions* makes it easier to **quickly** understand code when you read it.

22

Here are two simple lines of code:



```
foo = FooFactory.getFooInstance();
```



```
foo.doSomethingFoosDo();
```



If we know the author follows naming conventions, we quickly know several things:

1. *foo* is an instance of some class
2. *FooFactory* is a class
3. *getFooInstance()* is a **static** method of the class *FooFactory*
4. *doSomethingFoosDo()* is an **instance** method of *foo*

Otherwise we waste time wondering things like "*is FooFactory an object or a class?*"

Without naming conventions, you'd actually have to search through the source code to answer such questions.

This seems overly uptight at first, but it makes an **ENORMOUS** difference as you begin to write more complex software and work with others.

You'll find that naming conventions even make *your own code* more readable.

answered Aug 14, 2012 at 6:52



jahroy

22.7k ● 10 ● 61 ● 110

I'm not against naming conventions and I do try to follow them wherever reasonable, but good IDEs have made some of them less significant. Quite like the syntax highlighting above that makes it clear which foo is an object and which is a class. – [Alexandre G](#) Jan 29, 2015 at 3:02

Ok... Maybe IDE's have made them "*less significant*" **when** you're using an IDE. Not sure that's any kind of reason not to follow naming conventions. I'd argue you should strive to make your code readable for people using text editors and online repositories as well people reading code on their local machine with IDEs. – [jahroy](#) Apr 12, 2015 at 6:50

@Alexandre G - Interestingly enough, if I edit my answer to make FooFactory start with a lowercase letter, the syntax highlighting no longer identifies *fooFactory* as a class.  
– [jahroy](#) Apr 26, 2017 at 3:55



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## Why should the first letter of a Java class be upper-cased?

There are [Code Conventions for the Java Programming Language](#) and it says:



This Code Conventions for the Java Programming Language document contains **the**



**standard conventions that we at Sun follow and recommend that others follow.** It covers filenames, file organization, indentation, comments, declarations, statements, white space, naming conventions, programming practices and includes a code example.

- 80% of the lifetime cost of a piece of software goes to maintenance.
- Hardly any software is maintained for its whole life by the original
- Code conventions improve the readability of the software, allowing engineers to understand new code more quickly and thoroughly.

It states [Naming Conventions](#), which says on class names:

**Class names should be nouns, in mixed case with the first letter of each internal word capitalized.** Try to keep your class names simple and descriptive. Use whole words-avoid acronyms and abbreviations (unless the abbreviation is much more widely used than the long form, such as URL or HTML).

i.e. `class Raster`; `class ImageSprite`;

# Is it not possible to run a program containing lower-cased class names? If it is possible, what's the difference?

It is possible, appropriate and there is no difference **for compiler**.

It is disrespectful for code and other programmers.

It is uncomfortable for you not to follow Java coding conventions.

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 6:55

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d1e

6,432 ● 2 ● 29 ● 41



16

Why should the first letter of a Java class be upper-cased?



It is a convention that is universally observed by experienced Java programmers.



Is it not possible to run a program containing lower-cased class names?

Yes it is possible. It is also possible to go to work in the same set of clothes for a month. But you won't make any friends by doing either.

If it is possible, what's the difference?

The difference is that your code is much less readable to other people if you ignore the conventions. Now, if you are writing code that will only ever be read by you, then code style is purely your problem. However, in the real world, most of us regularly have to read code written by other people. And if your code is painful to read because you've chosen to ignore the conventions, don't expect people to praise you for it.

Frankly, it is *anti-social* to write unreadable code in a context where there is a reasonable expectation that other people will need to read it.

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I should add that it is not *just* anti-social. It turns out that you can burn *yourself* by ignoring the conventions. The style conventions are designed to work in conjunction with Java's identifier disambiguation rules; see [JLS 6.5](#). If you ignore the style rules, you are liable to find that an ambiguous identifier (e.g. one that could be either a class name or a variable name) gets disambiguated in an unexpected way. The net result will be unexpected compilation errors that are (typically) hard to understand.

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edited Oct 14, 2013 at 8:11

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 7:38





Stephen C

718k ● 95 ● 844 ● 1.3k



## Java naming convention for class

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Classes: Names should be in CamelCase.



Try to use nouns because a class is normally representing something in the real world:



```
class Customer  
class Account
```

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edited Aug 14, 2012 at 7:04

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 6:55



Mohammad Hossain

4,114 ● 2 ● 27 ● 37



It is the [java naming convention](#)

7

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edited Aug 14, 2012 at 12:05

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 6:46



Jigar Joshi

241k ● 42 ● 408 ● 446



just naming convention.recommended to follow.

6

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 6:47

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oyss

692 ● 1 ● 8 ● 20



5

Those are not rules, but conventions. You are free to use whatever you want, the way you want, but by following the convention you are sure that other developers will quickly understand your code, as it's clear what's a class, what's a property, what's a method, and so on.



Class names should be nouns, in mixed case with the first letter of each internal word capitalized. Try to keep your class names simple and descriptive. Use whole words-avoid acronyms and abbreviations (unless the abbreviation is much more widely used than the long form, such as URL or HTML).

<http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/documentation/codeconventions-135099.html#367>

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 6:52

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jpkroehling

14k ● 1 ● 39 ● 39



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Java coding and naming conventions were framed for code maintainability. Code that is adhering to these standards will be easy to maintain. Another developer can understand what you have done in the java code.

Extract from the internet:



"Different Java programmers can have different styles and approaches to the way they program. By using standard Java naming conventions they make their code easier to read for themselves and for other programmers. Readability of Java code is important because it means less time is spent trying to figure out what the code does, leaving more time to fix or modify it."

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 11:49

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Krithika Vittal

1,477 ● 2 ● 17 ● 33



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Yes It is possible to use lower-cased class names in Java. But you should obey naming convention of Java that is recommended in Java Community.

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edited Oct 21, 2014 at 6:19

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answered Aug 14, 2012 at 7:01



Sai Ye Yan Naing Aye

6,740 ● 12 ● 48 ● 65

