# Java Comparable interface

Java Comparable interface is used to order the objects of user-defined class.This interface is found in java.lang package and contains only one method named compareTo(Object). It provide single sorting sequence only i.e. you can sort the elements on based on single data member only. For example it may be rollno, name, age or anything else.

### compareTo(Object obj) method

**public int compareTo(Object obj):** is used to compare the current object with the specified object.

We can sort the elements of:

1. String objects
2. Wrapper class objects
3. User-defined class objects

### Collections class

**Collections** class provides static methods for sorting the elements of collections. If collection elements are of Set or Map, we can use TreeSet or TreeMap. But We cannot sort the elements of List. Collections class provides methods for sorting the elements of List type elements.

### Method of Collections class for sorting List elements

**public void sort(List list):** is used to sort the elements of List. List elements must be of Comparable type.

Java Comparable Example

Let's see the example of Comparable interface that sorts the list elements on the basis of age.

*File: Student.java*

1. **class** Student **implements** Comparable<Student>{
2. **int** rollno;
3. String name;
4. **int** age;
5. Student(**int** rollno,String name,**int** age){
6. **this**.rollno=rollno;
7. **this**.name=name;
8. **this**.age=age;
9. }
11. **public** **int** compareTo(Student st){
12. **if**(age==st.age)
13. **return** 0;
14. **else** **if**(age>st.age)
15. **return** 1;
16. **else**
17. **return** -1;
18. }
19. }

*File: TestSort3.java*

1. **import** java.util.\*;
2. **import** java.io.\*;
3. **public** **class** TestSort3{
4. **public** **static** **void** main(String args[]){
5. ArrayList<Student> al=**new** ArrayList<Student>();
6. al.add(**new** Student(101,"Vijay",23));
7. al.add(**new** Student(106,"Ajay",27));
8. al.add(**new** Student(105,"Jai",21));
10. Collections.sort(al);
11. **for**(Student st:al){
12. System.out.println(st.rollno+" "+st.name+" "+st.age);
13. }
14. }
15. }

[**Test it Now**](http://www.javatpoint.com/opr/test.jsp?filename=TestSort3)

Output:105 Jai 21

101 Vijay 23

106 Ajay 27

# Java Comparator interface

**Java Comparator interface** is used to order the objects of user-defined class.

This interface is found in java.util package and contains 2 methods compare(Object obj1,Object obj2) and equals(Object element).

It provides multiple sorting sequence i.e. you can sort the elements on the basis of any data member, for example rollno, name, age or anything else.

#### compare() method

**public int compare(Object obj1,Object obj2):** compares the first object with second object.

## Collections class

**Collections** class provides static methods for sorting the elements of collection. If collection elements are of Set or Map, we can use TreeSet or TreeMap. But we cannot sort the elements of List. Collections class provides methods for sorting the elements of List type elements also.

#### Method of Collections class for sorting List elements

**public void sort(List list, Comparator c):** is used to sort the elements of List by the given Comparator.

Java Comparator Example (Non-generic Old Style)

Let's see the example of sorting the elements of List on the basis of age and name. In this example, we have created 4 java classes:

1. Student.java
2. AgeComparator.java
3. NameComparator.java
4. Simple.java

**Student.java**

This class contains three fields rollno, name and age and a parameterized constructor.

1. **class** Student{
2. **int** rollno;
3. String name;
4. **int** age;
5. Student(**int** rollno,String name,**int** age){
6. **this**.rollno=rollno;
7. **this**.name=name;
8. **this**.age=age;
9. }
10. }

**AgeComparator.java**

This class defines comparison logic based on the age. If age of first object is greater than the second, we are returning positive value, it can be any one such as 1, 2 , 10 etc. If age of first object is less than the second object, we are returning negative value, it can be any negative value and if age of both objects are equal, we are returning 0.

1. **import** java.util.\*;
2. **class** AgeComparator **implements** Comparator{
3. **public** **int** compare(Object o1,Object o2){
4. Student s1=(Student)o1;
5. Student s2=(Student)o2;
7. **if**(s1.age==s2.age)
8. **return** 0;
9. **else** **if**(s1.age>s2.age)
10. **return** 1;
11. **else**
12. **return** -1;
13. }
14. }

**NameComparator.java**

This class provides comparison logic based on the name. In such case, we are using the compareTo() method of String class, which internally provides the comparison logic.

1. **import** java.util.\*;
2. **class** NameComparator **implements** Comparator{
3. **public** **int** compare(Object o1,Object o2){
4. Student s1=(Student)o1;
5. Student s2=(Student)o2;
7. **return** s1.name.compareTo(s2.name);
8. }
9. }

**Simple.java**

In this class, we are printing the objects values by sorting on the basis of name and age.

1. **import** java.util.\*;
2. **import** java.io.\*;
4. **class** Simple{
5. **public** **static** **void** main(String args[]){
7. ArrayList al=**new** ArrayList();
8. al.add(**new** Student(101,"Vijay",23));
9. al.add(**new** Student(106,"Ajay",27));
10. al.add(**new** Student(105,"Jai",21));
12. System.out.println("Sorting by Name...");
14. Collections.sort(al,**new** NameComparator());
15. Iterator itr=al.iterator();
16. **while**(itr.hasNext()){
17. Student st=(Student)itr.next();
18. System.out.println(st.rollno+" "+st.name+" "+st.age);
19. }
21. System.out.println("sorting by age...");
23. Collections.sort(al,**new** AgeComparator());
24. Iterator itr2=al.iterator();
25. **while**(itr2.hasNext()){
26. Student st=(Student)itr2.next();
27. System.out.println(st.rollno+" "+st.name+" "+st.age);
28. }

31. }
32. }

Sorting by Name...

106 Ajay 27

105 Jai 21

101 Vijay 23

Sorting by age...

105 Jai 21

101 Vijay 23

106 Ajay 27

Java Comparator Example (Generic)

**Student.java**

1. **class** Student{
2. **int** rollno;
3. String name;
4. **int** age;
5. Student(**int** rollno,String name,**int** age){
6. **this**.rollno=rollno;
7. **this**.name=name;
8. **this**.age=age;
9. }
10. }

**AgeComparator.java**

1. **import** java.util.\*;
2. **class** AgeComparator **implements** Comparator<Student>{
3. **public** **int** compare(Student s1,Student s2){
4. **if**(s1.age==s2.age)
5. **return** 0;
6. **else** **if**(s1.age>s2.age)
7. **return** 1;
8. **else**
9. **return** -1;
10. }
11. }

**NameComparator.java**

This class provides comparison logic based on the name. In such case, we are using the compareTo() method of String class, which internally provides the comparison logic.

1. **import** java.util.\*;
2. **class** NameComparator **implements** Comparator<Student>{
3. **public** **int** compare(Student s1,Student s2){
4. **return** s1.name.compareTo(s2.name);
5. }
6. }

**Simple.java**

In this class, we are printing the objects values by sorting on the basis of name and age.

1. **import** java.util.\*;
2. **import** java.io.\*;
3. **class** Simple{
4. **public** **static** **void** main(String args[]){
6. ArrayList<Student> al=**new** ArrayList<Student>();
7. al.add(**new** Student(101,"Vijay",23));
8. al.add(**new** Student(106,"Ajay",27));
9. al.add(**new** Student(105,"Jai",21));
11. System.out.println("Sorting by Name...");
13. Collections.sort(al,**new** NameComparator());
14. **for**(Student st: al){
15. System.out.println(st.rollno+" "+st.name+" "+st.age);
16. }
18. System.out.println("sorting by age...");
20. Collections.sort(al,**new** AgeComparator());
21. **for**(Student st: al){
22. System.out.println(st.rollno+" "+st.name+" "+st.age);
23. }
25. }
26. }

Output:Sorting by Name...

106 Ajay 27

105 Jai 21

101 Vijay 23

Sorting by age...

105 Jai 21

101 Vijay 23

106 Ajay 27