# Collections and Generics

## Overview

In this lab, you will make use of various Java collection classes in a standalone application. If time permits, you will implement a generic helper method to display different types of items in a collection.

## Source folders

Student project: StudentCollectionsGenerics

Solution project: SolutionCollectionsGenerics

## Roadmap

There are 5 exercises in this lab, of which the last two exercises are "if time permits". Here is a brief summary of the tasks you will perform in each exercise; more detailed instructions follow later:

1. Using a simple list
2. Using a LinkedList
3. Using a TreeMap
4. Implementing a generic method
5. Additional suggestions

## Familiarization

Open your student project and take a look at the code in UsingCollections.java. There are four methods, with liberal TODO comments indicating where you need to add your code later:

* main()  
  Calls three methods (listed below), to perform collection-based work.
* manageFootballTeams()  
  Allows the user to manipulate a list of football teams (i.e. Strings).
* manageSalaries()  
  Allows the user to manipulate a list of salaries (i.e. Doubles).
* manageEmployees()  
  Allows the user to manipulate a map of Employee objects.

You might also want to take a quick look in Helper.java, which provides some static helper methods to get input from the user.

## Exercise 1: Using a simple list

In manageFootballTeams(), add code where indicated by the TODO comments, to manipulate a list of Strings. You can use either an ArrayList or a LinkedList in this exercise, because both classes implement the necessary list-related behaviour.

Run the application, and make sure all the options work as expected.

## Exercise 2: Using a LinkedList

In manageSalaries(), add code where indicated by the TODO comments, to manipulate a list of Doubles. You must use a LinkedList in this exercise. Also note that you must declare it as LinkedList<Double> rather than as a LinkedList<double> - why is this?

In main(), uncomment the call to manageSalaries(), and then run the application. Make sure all the options work as expected.

## Exercise 3: Using a TreeMap

In this exercise, you'll use a TreeMap to manage a collection of Employee objects. To get started, take a look at the Employee class in Employee.java and note the following points:

* Each employee has an ID (string), a name, and a salary.
* The constructor initializes a new Employee object from the keyboard, for simplicity.
* The getId() method returns the employee's ID.
* The toString() method returns a textual representation of an Employee object.
* The equals() method determines whether an Employee object "is equal to" another object. This will be useful later, when you need to ascertain whether an Employee object is already in the TreeMap.

Now switch back to UsingCollections.java and locate the manageEmployees() method. Add code where indicated by the TODO comments, to manipulate a TreeMap of employees. In the TreeMap, the keys should be the employee IDs, and the values should be the Employee objects themselves.

In main(), uncomment the call to manageEmployees(), and then run the application. Make sure all the options work as expected.

## Exercise 4 (If time permits): Implementing a generic method

Take a closer look at your "display" code in each of the methods you've just written. You should find quite a lot of similarity in each case… With this in mind, refactor your code by implementing a generic helper method in Helper.java to display the items (of a given type) in any kind of collection.

Suggestions and requirements:

* Name the method displayCollection().
* The method should be flexible enough to take any kind of collection, containing any type of items.
* In the method, display a message indicating the actual type of collection passed in (e.g. ArrayList, LinkedList, etc.).
* Then display each item in the collection (along with its type, e.g. String, Double, etc.)

## Exercise 5: Additional suggestions (if time permits)

Consider how you might make use of collections in the previous applications you've written so far during the course.