

CHAPTER 3: INHERITANCE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- explain the Java inheritance concept
- explain the principle of aggregation
- apply the visibility levels required for inheritance
- understand UML class models with inheritance relationships
- understand where inherited properties can be used
- use the keywords "this" and "super"
- understand and use constructor chaining
- know class "Object" and its methods
- use the "instanceof" operator
- know the keyword "final" and its effects
- know abstract classes and methods and when to use them
- know when to use aggregation and when to use inheritance



3.1 MOTIVATION AND CONCEPT



Real world Java applications do not consist of just one class

When developing large software systems, it is important for economic reasons to structure existing source code and make it reusable. How can we achieve that?

Let's look at a class for accounts.

Account

-nr : String

-secret: int

-balance : double

+deposit(amount: double): void

+withdraw(amount: double): void

+print(): void



If we introduce another class Person as account owner, then the question arises how Person could related to the class Account.

Person

-name: String

+sayHello(): void

relationship?

Account

-nr : String

-secret: int

-balance : double

+deposit(amount: double): void

+withdraw(amount: double): void

+print(): void

Basically we can distinguish between two possibilities:

aggregation

inheritance



AGGREGATION

Aggregation refers to building objects from other objects. For example, the Person class could have an attribute account of type Account.

Person

-name: String

-account: Account

+sayHello(): void

Account

-nr : String

-secret: int

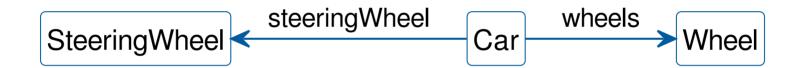
-balance : double

+deposit(amount: double): void

+withdraw(amount: double): void

+print(): void

AGGREGATION WITH CARS



A car has a steering wheel and 4 wheels.

... if we convert this into Java, we might get:

```
class Wheel { ... }

class SteeringWheel { ... }

class Car {
  private Wheel[] wheels = new Wheel[4];
  private SteeringWheel steeringWheel = new SteeringWheel();
  //...
}
```

INHERITANCE

The second type of reuse in object-oriented languages is inheritance. If a class K2 inherits from a class K1, K2 receives all **non-private** attributes and methods of K1. Typically K2 defines more "own" attributes and methods and thus represents a specialisation of K1.



In UML class models the arrowhead points to the parent.

K2 is a class derived from K1, syntactically this is expressed in Java with the keyword extends:

```
class K1 { ... }
class K2 extends K1 { ... }
```

AGGREGATION VS. INHERITANCE

Inheritance defines a "is-a" relationship. For example, "a share is an asset", but not "a share has an asset". Thus it makes sense to derive share from asset. Aggregation does not make sense because it makes less sense if a share object has a reference to an asset object.

Attention: Since aggregation is more flexible than aggregation, try to use aggregation first and inheritance only if it really "fits"!

INHERITANCE AND VISIBILITY LEVELS

Only non-private properties are inherited. For finer control of inheritance, a visibility level is introduced via the keyword protected, which describes properties that are non-public but are still inherited.

```
class Person {
    protected String name;
    // Aggregation of an Address object
    private Address address;
    public Address getAddress() {
        return address;
    }
}
// a Student is a Person
class Student extends Person {
        private int registrationNumber;
}
```

- The Student class inherits the attribute name and the method getAddress from the superclass Person.
- The methods of a Student object can accordingly use the inherited attributes as well as registrationNumber.
- Access to the address attribute is possible via the inherited getter getAddress!

In a UML class diagram, the visibility level protected is represented by the character # (hash) (see example in the next section).

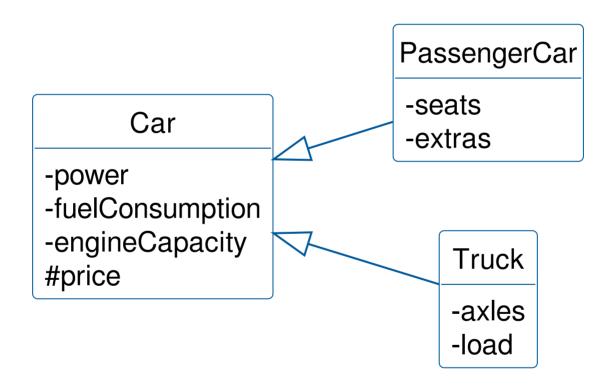


3.2 UML CLASS MODELS AND INHERITANCE HIERARCHIES



The notation for UML class models is extended to include inheritance relationships.

The arrowhead is always pointing to the parent class!



The model contains the following statements:

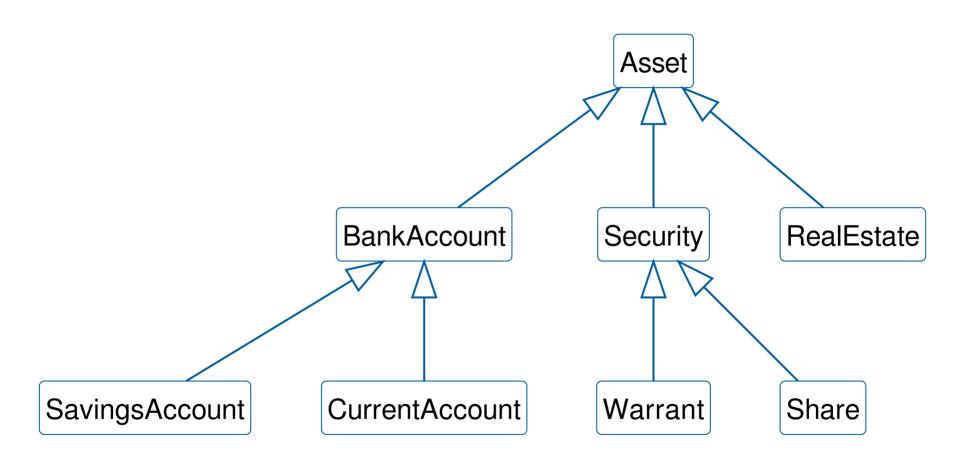
- Car and Truck inherit attributes of the superclass Car.
- Common attributes and methods (not shown here) are reusable by the superclass.
- The class Car has 4 attributes of which only price may be inherited, as the other attributes are private.
- The class PassengerCar has 3 attributes, one inherited and 2 "locally" defined: price, seats, extras.
- The class Truck has 3 attributes, one inherited and 2 "locally" defined: price, axles, load.

INHERITANCE HIERARCHIES

In Java, a class can have any number of subclasses, but only one superclass - this is called single inheritance. Other object-oriented languages, such as C++, allow multiple inheritance. Single inheritance creates a derivation tree in the graphical representation of a class model. The root of the tree contains the most abstract class, the closer you get to the leaves the more concrete the classes become.



If the classes of an abstraction level are arranged at the same tree level, an inheritance hierarchy is created.





3.3 ACCESSING INHERITED PROPERTIES

Look at method f() - which statements are correct?

```
public class Base {
  public int a;
  protected int b;
  int c;
  private int d;

public void f() { ... }
  protected void g() { ... }
  void h() { ... }
  private void k() { ... }
```

```
public class Child extends Base {
  public void f() {
    a = 1;
    b = 2;
    c = 3;
    d = 4;
    f();
    g();
    h();
    k();
}
```

Hint: The chapter on classes and objects contains information on visibility levels.



In the example, the class Child inherits the following properties from class Base:

• Attributes: a, b, c

• Methods: f, g, h

Attribute d and method k are private and are therefore not inherited by Child! Accordingly, the following accesses are not permitted in method f:

```
• d = 4;
```

• k();

Remarks:

- Method f calls itself recursively, which leads to an infinite loop! With super.f(); the overridden method of the superclass can be called.
- write access to attribute d could be realised through a public setter in class Base.



EXERCISE: METHOD INHERITANCE

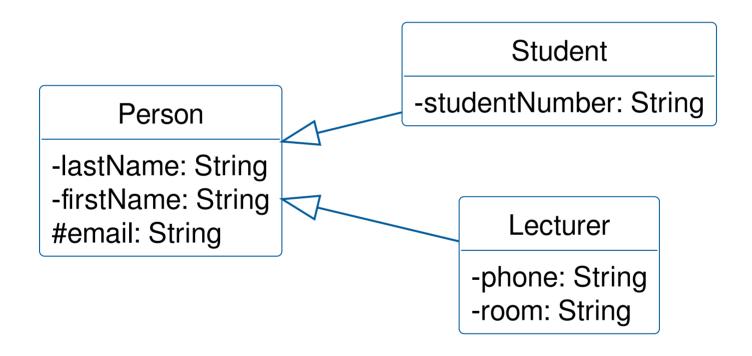
How can one achieve that a method m is inherited but cannot be called from the outside?

Set visibility to public so that m is public for derived classes
Set visibility to protected, so that \underline{m} is only visible within the inheritance hierarchy
Set no visibility, so that m is not visible outside the class
Set visibility to private, so that m is a private property for all classes within the inheritance hierarchy



EXERCISE: INHERITED ATTRIBUTES

Given the following class model:





V	Which attributes are accessible in objects of type Student and Lecturer?
	Lecturer can access only phone, rom, lastName, firstName and email
	Student can access only studentNumber, lastName, firstName and email
	Student can access only studentNumber and email
	Student can access only studentNumber, phone, room, lastName, firstName and email
	Lecturer can access only studentNumber, phone, room, lastName, firstName and email
	Lecturer can access only phone, room and email

Which attributes are stored in an object of class Student or Lecturer?
Lecturer has email, phone and room
Student has studentNumber and email
Student has studentNumber, lastName, firstName and email
Student has studentNumber, phone, room, lastName, firstName and email

Which attributes are stored in an object of class Person or Lecturer?
Lecturer has phone, room, lastName, firstName and email
Lecturer has studentNumber, phone, room, lastName, firstName and email
Person has studentNumber, phone, room, lastName, firstName and email
Person has lastName, firstName and email



3.4 CREATING OBJECTS WITH INHERITANCE

THIS AND SUPER WITH INHERITANCE

Every Java object has the predefined references this and super.

The meaning of this was explained in the chapter about classes and objects, it refers to the object itself.

In contrast, super serves as a reference to the superclass.

Remarks:

The reference super can only be used with a concrete access, i.e. in the form super.superclassMethod() or super.superclassAttribute.

The reference this, on the other hand, can also be used by itself, e.g. to parameterise a method call with the current object: aMethod (this);

Example with usage of super

```
class Car {
    public String toString() { ... }
}

class Convertible extends Car {
    public String toString() {
        return "Convertible - " + super.toString();
    }
}
```

The reference super is used to call the toString method of the superclass, which is overwritten due to the name identity. Without super, the toString call would lead to an endless recursion, as the local method would always be called!



DEFINING CONSTRUCTORS FOR DERIVED CLASSES

A constructor (CTOR) has the task of correctly initialising an object during object creation.

```
class SuperClass {
    public SuperClass() { ... }
}

class DerivedClass extends SuperClass {
    public DerivedClass() {
        super(); // Call super class CTOR
    }
}
```

When creating an object of a derived class, the constructors must be executed along the inheritance hierarchy from top to bottom to ensure correct initialisation of the inherited attributes.

Correct chaining of constructors is necessary to define the initialization order. This can, for example, prevent a non-initialized superclass reference from being used for a method call, which would lead to a NullPointerException, since references are always initialized with null. To ensure the above procedure, every constructor of a derived class must call a suitable (i.e. with a matching parameter list) superclass constructor in its first line.

Consequently, attribute initialization starts at the most abstract base class and proceeds along the hierarchy.

DEFAULT CONSTRUCTOR

As long as no custom CTOR exists, the compiler creates a parameterless CTOR to ensure constructor chaining. Also, the compiler will add a super call as the first line in any custom constructor, if necessary.

See example on the next page...



Class for Convertibles

Class for Passenger Cars

```
public class PassengerCar {
    protected String name;

public PassengerCar() {
        this("unknown");
    }
    public PassengerCar(
        String name) {
        this.name = name;
    }
}
```

- Starting with the object creation triggered by new
- ... first the Convertible instance will be initialised
- ... then the toString method is implicitely called



Class for Convertibles

Class for Passenger Cars

```
public class PassengerCar {
    protected String name;
    public PassengerCar() {
        this("unknown");
    }
    public PassengerCar(
        String name) {
        this.name = name;
    }
}
```

- CTOR Convertible (boolean) is calling Passenger Car ()
- CTOR PassengerCar() is calling CTOR PassengerCar(String)
- Ouptutis: Convertible: fabric roof = true, name = unknown

EXERCISE: CTOR CHAINING

```
public class Hello {
    public Hello() { System.out.print("Hello, Unknown"); }
    public Hello(String name) { System.out.print("Hello, " + name); }
}

class Person extends Hello {
    public Person() { super("Unnamed"); }
    public Person(String name) { super(name); }
}

class Other extends Hello {
    public Other(String name) { super(); }
}
```

Which outputs are correct?

new	Other ("Unknown") will produce "Hello, Unnamed";
new	<pre>Hello("World") will produce "Hello, World";</pre>
new	Person() will produce "Hello, Unknown";
new	Person("Lisa") will produce "Hello, Lisa";
new	Other("World") will produce "Hello, World";

3.5 THE SUPERCLASS OBJECT

4

Every class inherits from Object - even if it is not explicitly stated.



The class java.lang.Object is the base class for all classes because the compiler implicitly adds the following inheritance relationship:

```
class MyNewClass extends Object { ... }
```

If a class inherits from another class, it also inherits indirectly from Object, since inherited properties are inherited at any depth. This approach ensures that every object inherits certain standard methods from Object.



IMPORTANT STANDARD METHODS

- boolean equals():
 Object comparison
- String toString():
 yields the object's string representation in format <class>@<hashcode>
- Class getClass(): yields the class description
- int hashCode(): returns a hash value for the object for storage in hash tables

Please be aware: Methods in custom classes usually need to be overridden (or redefined). For example, in the default implementation, the equals() method does not compare the contents, but the references of the objects to be compared.



3.6 OVERIDING INHERITED METHODS



Inherited methods can be overridden, i.e. redefined, by specifying a method with the same signature (parameter types + result type). By means of...

super.<Methode>(<Parameter>)

...the overridden method can still be called.

In the following example for the Square and ColoredSquare classes, the main() method calls the ColoredSquare.toString() method and ColoredSquare.toString() calls Square.toString().

Square

```
class Square {
   private double sideLength;
   public Square(double sideLength) {
        this.sideLength = sideLength;
   }
   public String toString() {
        return "sideLength=" + sideLength;
   }
   static public void main(String args[])
        String msg =
        new ColoredSquare(2.25, "blue")
        .toString();
        System.out.println(msg);
   }
}
```

ColoredSquare

Some remarks:

- The instances of the Colored Square class can only call one to String method
- The methods that are most concrete in the inheritance hierarchy are always called on instances
- The call super.super doesn't work
- The call super.toString() calls the toString of the super class. If the super class does not override toString, it inherits toString from its super class. Thus, the call also works on inherited methods in super classes

EXERCISE: OVERRIDING METHODS

Given the following example:

```
class Person {
    void update(String name) { ... }
    void print() { ... }
    void sendMail(String text) { ... }
}
```

```
class Student extends Person {
    void update(String name,
        String registrationNumber) { ... }
    void print() { ... }
    void mail(String text) { ... }
}
```

Which statements are correct?

Person.print overrides Student.print
Student.print overrides Person.print
Student.Student overrides Person.Person
Student.update overrides Person.update

Student.mail overrides Person.sendMail

Which statements are correct?

The methods update (String name) and update (String name,
String registrationNumber) can be called on an instance of
Person
The mail and sendMail methods can be called on an instance of Student
The methods update (String name) and update (String name,
String registrationNumber) can be called on an instance of

Student

3.7 CHECKING DATA TYPES WITH "INSTANCEOF"

How to check the type of value in method doSomething?

In many situations you are given an object reference (e.g. as a parameter) and you need to know what type it is. The instanceof operator can help here: it returns true if an object reference is of a particular type.

One possible use is in so-called "downcasts".

DOWNCAST EXAMPLE 1

```
Object o = "abc";
if (o instanceof String) {
    /**
    * now it is save to downcast from Object to String!
    */
    String s = (String) o;
    System.out.println(s.length());
}
Square sq = new ColoredSquare(1., "yellow");
System.out.println(sq instanceof Square); // true
System.out.println(sq instanceof ColoredSquare); // true
```

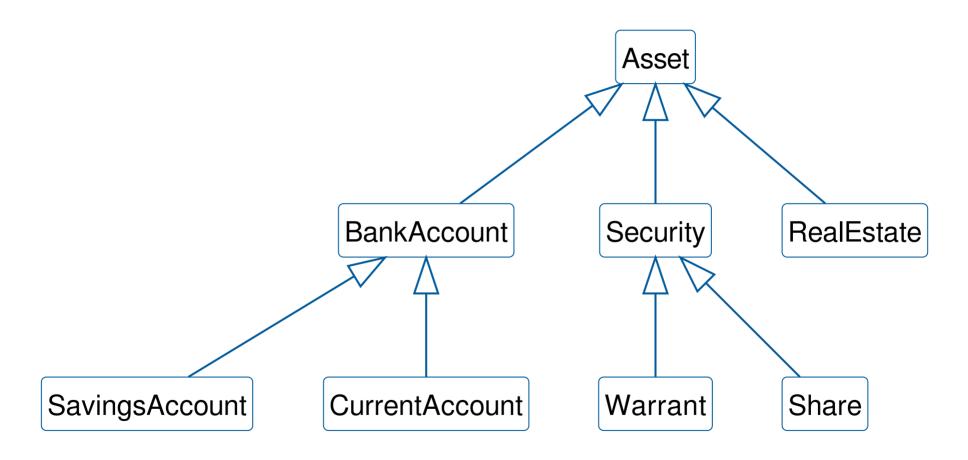
DOWNCAST EXAMPLE 2

```
private String getSquareColor(Square sq) {
    if (sq instanceof ColoredSquare) {
        ColoredSquare coloredSquare = (ColoredSquare) sq;
        return coloredSquare.getColor();
    } else {
        return "unknown";
    }
}
```



EXERCISE: TYPE CHECKING

Evaluate statements with reference to the following inheritance hierarchy.



Which expression yields True?

share share = new Share();

share instanceof RealEstate

share instanceof Warrant

share instanceof SavingsAccount

share instanceof Asset

share instanceof Security

share instanceof BankAccount

Which expression yields True?

BankAccount account = new BankAccount();

account	instanceof	BankAccount
account	instanceof	RealEstate
account	instanceof	Security
account	instanceof	Asset
account	instanceof	Warrant
account	instanceof	SavingsAccount

3.8 THE KEYWORD "FINAL"



The keyword final can be used in Java in class, method and attribute definitions to indicate that the respective property can no longer be changed. However, the exact meaning differs.



FINAL IN CLASS DEFINITIONS

```
final class MyClass {
    // ...
}
```

For class definitions, such as final class MyClass, the keyword means that MyClass can no longer be subclassed. Examples of this are the String and StringBuffer classes. The 'final' declaration of a class is usually justified by security or performance considerations.

FINAL IN METHOD DEFINITIONS

Methods marked as final may not be overridden in subclasses. This ensures certain functionalities along an inheritance chain.



FINAL IN VARIABLE AND ATTRIBUTE DEFINITIONS

```
final Square sq = new Square(1.9);
sq.setSideLength(2.5); // changes square contents!
sq = null; // not possible since sq is final!
```

Variables and attributes marked as final cannot be changed after declaration and simultaneous initialization.

However, it should be noted that the referenced object can change its attribute values through method calls!

EXERCISE: FINAL

Which statements are correct regarding the following code snippet?

```
final class Square {
    final double addArea(final Square sq) {
        // ...
}
```

The method addArea cannot be overridden
The method addArea cannot be overloaded
The parameter q can no longer be changed
The addArea method does not need to calculate anything since the result is already marked with final
No subclasses can be created from the class Square
The parameter ${\tt q}$ does not need to be checked because it is already ${\tt final}$



3.9 ABSTRACT CLASSES



Abstract classes, unlike concrete classes, are not ready to execute - they describe an abstract entity that can be reused in concrete classes.



As an example, the class GeometricObject could be the parent class of class Square and calculate the object's perimeter.



Geo metrical Object
$$P = a \cdot 4$$

$$P = \pi \cdot d$$

$$P = a + b + c$$



Circles, triangles, squares and rectangles all have perimeters, but the calculation is different in each case. Abstract classes allow us to express that geometric objects can always calculate a perimeter, without knowing how the calculation is performed in each case.

THE KEYWORD "ABSTRACT"

With the keyword abstract we mark classes that are abstract and methods that are to be implemented by child classes.

```
public abstract class GeometricObject {
    public abstract double calculatePerimeter();
}
```

This also means that no instance of the class GeometricObject can be created with new. As a consequence, the implementation of calculatePerimeter may still be missing.

However, concreate subclasses need to implement the method to ensure that there is Java code to be executed when the method is called.

Based on GeometricObject a class for squares could be defined as follows:

```
public class Square extends GeometricObject {
    private double sideLength;

    public double calculatePerimeter() {
        return 4 * sideLength;
    }
}
```

... and for rectangles:

```
class Rectangle extends GeometricObject {
    double height;
    double width;

    public double calculatePerimeter() {
        return 2 * (height + width);
    }
}
```

Accordingly the following does not work:

```
GeometricObject o1 = new GeometricObject(); // not ok for abstract class
```

... and the following is possible:

```
GeometricObject o2 = new Square(); // concrete class can be instantiated
GeometricObject o3 = new Rectangle(); // concrete class
```

EXAMPLE STRING INSTRUMENT

Class StringInstrument specifies the attribute name and enforces the operation getNumberOfStrings from all subclasses. Accordingly, guitar and bass must override the abstract method and provide an implementation.

```
public abstract class StringInstrument {
    protected String name;

public StringInstrument(String name) {
        this.name = name;
    }
    abstract int getNumberOfStrings();
}
```

Advantage: it is guaranteed that each string instrument can supply the number of strings.

Guitar

```
class Guitar extends StringIntstrument {
    public Guitar(String name) {
        super(name);
    }
    int getNumberOfStrings() {
        return 6;
    }
}
```

Bass Guitar

```
class Bass extends StringIntstrument {
    public Bass(String name) {
        super(name);
    }
    int getNumberOfStrings() {
        return 4;
    }
}
```

Application in Main method

```
static public void main(String[] args) {
    System.out.println("Number of strings: " +
        new Gitarre("GL-2NT").getNumberOfStrings()); // Output: 6
    System.out.println("Number of strings: " +
        new Bass("HBZ-2004").getNumberOfStrings()); // Output: 4
}
```

EXERCISE: ANIMAL ABSTRACTION

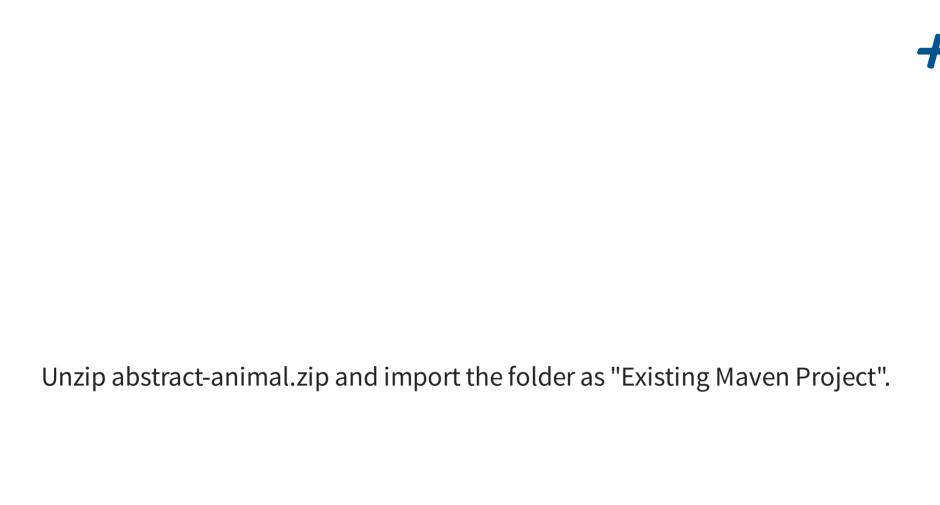


Animals have both common and different characteristics. In this exercise, a scenario will be implemented with an abstract base class Animal and two concrete classes

Dog and Cat.

Cat +Cat(String, int, String) Animal +makeSound(): void +humanAge(): int -name: String -age: int +Animal(String, int) +getName(): String Dog +getAge(): int -breed: String +makeSound(): void +humanAge(): int +Dog(String, int, String) +getBreed(): String +makeSound(): void

+humanAge(): int



Base class Animal:

- Each animal has a name and an age
- The abstract method make Sound () outputs the sound of the animal to the console
- The abstract method humanAge () returns the human age of the animal

Class Dog:

- A dog also has an attribute breed
- Dogs go woof!
- An algorithm for calculating human age can be found, for example, in the ifelse exercise in Chapter 1

Class Cat:

- Cats say miao!
- Calculation of human age: analogous to Dog, whereas 1 cat year corresponds to 16 human years, 2 corresponds to 24, then 4 years each

Test your solution with the following main method:

To check the output:

```
woof!
miao!
Zoe is 22 human years old, Paul is 36.
```



3.10 DESIGN DECISION: INHERITANCE OR AGGREGATION?



When considering which classes should be defined for a task, you are typically faced with the decision to use *inheritance* or *aggregation*.

Class A has/consists of one/several Class B

```
class A {
    private B b;
    // or:
    private B[] bList;
}
```

Aggregation is preferable when composing one class from others, i.e. when there is a "has another class" or "consists of one or more other classes" relationship.

Aggregation offers more possibilities than single inheritance and creates less tight dependencies between classes.

Class A is a Class B

```
class A extends B { ... }
```

Inheritance is useful when it comes to specializations, for example

- Person to Student or Lecturer;
- Assets in bank accounts, real estate or stocks;
- Geometric object to square, rectangle, circle or triangle.



3.11 INHERITANCE EXERCISE



PERSONS, STUDENTS AND LECTURERS

Implement the following UML class structure consisting of Person, Student and Lecturer.

Unzip person-inherite.zip and import the folder as "Existing Maven Project".

CLASS HIERARCHY



«abstract»

Person

-lastName: String-firstName: String

+generateId(): String «abstract»

+getLastName(): String +getFirstName(): String

+update(n: String, v: String): void

+toString(): String

Student

-studentNumber: String

+getStudentNumber(): String

+update(n: String, v: String, m: String): void

+generateId(): String

+toString(): String

Lecturer

-telephone: String

-personnelNumber: int

+getPersonelNumber(): int

+getPhone(): String

+update(n: String, v: String, t: String): void

+generateId(): String

+toString(): String

Realize class structure in Java

- Create the class Person, Student and Lecturer
- Mark the class Person as abstract
- Let classes Student and Lecturer inherit from Person
- Add the attributes from the UML class diagram

CONSTRUCTORS

- Add a CTOR Person that expects lastName and firstName of type String as parameters
- Add a CTOR Student that expects lastName, firstName and studentNumber of type String as parameters
- Add a CTOR Lecturer that expects lastName, firstName, personelNumber and telephone as parameters, only the personelNumber is of type int, all other parameters are of type String
- Assign the parameters to the corresponding attributes in all constructors, call the super constructor if necessary

GETTER

- Add getters in the Person class for the lastName and firstName attributes
- Add getters in the Student class for the studentNumber attribute
- Add getters in the class Lecturer for the attributes personel Number and telephone

METHODS

- Add an abstract method generateId to the Person class
- Implement the generateId method in the Student and Lecturer class:
 - Student: should return <name>-<first name>-<studentNumber>
 - Lecturer: should return < name > < first name > < personel Number >
- Implement the update method and assign the parameters accordingly:
 - Person: with the parameters lastName and firstName
 - Student: with the parameters lastName, firstName and matrikelnummer
 - Lecturer: with the parameters lastName, firstName and telephone

METHOD TOSTRING

- Implement the toString method in the Person class, return id=<id> and use the generateId method
- Implement the toString method in the Student class, return Student (id=<id>) and use the toString from the Person class
- Implement the toString method in the Lecturer class, return

 Lecturer (id=<id>, phone=<phone>) and use the toString from
 the Person class

EXERCISE: OBJECT CREATION

Which statements are correct?

Hint: try it in a Main method!

An instance can be created with...

new Student("Max", "Pattern")
new Lecturer("Erika", "Pattern")
new Student("Erika", "Pattern", "xy123")
new Person("Max", "Pattern")
new Lecturer("Max", "Pattern", 123, "0123 45677")

EXERCISE: METHODEN ACCESS

Which of the following calls/statements is correct?

Hint: try it in a Main method!

```
student s1 = new Student("Erika", "Muster", "xy123");

s1.toString() yields Student (id=Erika-Muster-xy123)

s1.update("Erika", "Neumuster", "ab321")

s1.update("Erika", "Neumuster")

s1.toString() yields Erika-Muster-xy123

s1.generateId()
```

EXERCISE: TERMS

Which statements are correct?

The generateId() method in the Person class is overridden by the generateId() method in the Student class		
The generateId() method in the Person class overloads the generateId() method in the Student class		
The constructor in the Student class overloads the constructor in t Person class		
The constructor in the Student class must call the constructor in t Person class with the super keyword to chain		

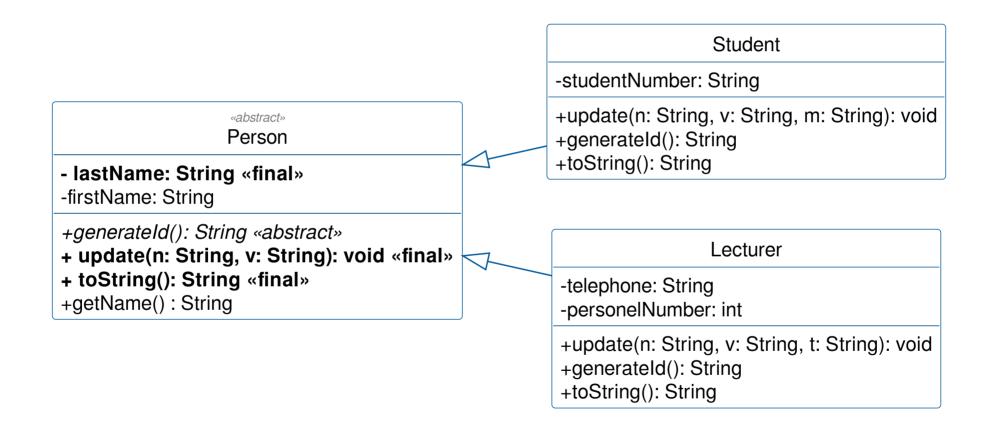
Which statements are correct?

The method update (String lastName, String firstName) in the class Person overloads the method update (String lastName, String firstName, String studentNumber) in the class Student			
The method update (String lastName, String firstName) in the class Person is overridden by the method update (String lastName, String firstName, String studentNumber) in the class Student			
The toString() method in the Person class is overridden by the toString() method in the Student class			
The toString() method in the Person class overloads the toString() method in the Student class			



EXERCISE: FINAL KEYWORD

Let's assume the method toString and update and the attribute lastName in the class Person become final.



Try the changes in your Java program, which statements are true?				
Overloading of the method Lecturer.update (String, String, String) is still possible.				
Overwriting the method Student.toString is no longer possible.				
Calling getName () is no longer possible - because the attribute name is `final				
The method Person.update (String, String) shows an error, because the attribute name is final.				
Overloading the method Student.update (String, String, String) is still possible				
Overwriting the method 'Lecturer.toString' is still possible.				



EXERCISE: INSTANCEOF (1)

Given s, which expressions yield true?

Sti	ıde	nt s = new Stude	ent("Muster", "Erika", "xy123");
)	S	instanceof	Person
)	S	instanceof	Lecturer
	S	instanceof	Student
)	S	instanceof	Object



EXERCISE: INSTANCEOF (2)

Given p, which expressions yield true?

Person p = new Lecturer("Muster", "Max", 123, "01234567890");

p instanceof Student

p instanceof Person

p instanceof Lecturer

p instanceof Object