# 04 Inheritance

## Inheriting Classes

**Object differences via properties** – Objects are usually very similar to each other. The differences may only be in the properties, for example:

Button ok = new Button();

Button cancel = new Button();

ok.text=”OK”;

cancel.text=”Cancel”;

The behaviour of both buttons (i.e. handling clicks, can draw etc) is the same but the properties are different.

**Object behaviours vs properties** – a blob has properties fill colour, stroke color, center, and radius. A blob has methods jitter and draw. By setting different properties, quite different blobs can be generated even though the behaviours are identical, e.g.

Blob blob1, blob2, blob3, blob4;

void setup(){

blob1 = new Blob(200,200,100);

blob2 = new Blob(400,200,50);

blob2.fill=#5649EA;

blob3 = new Blob(200,400,75);

blob3.fill=#E81CCD;

blob3.stroke=#1811F5;

blob4 = new Blob(400,400,100);

blob4.fill=#D1F739;

}

*All objects of the same class have the same behaviour, but the properties may be different.*

**Objects with total different behaviours** – If two objects have completely different behaviours, then they belong to completely different classes (e.g. Blob vs PFont).

**Objects with similar behaviours** – inheritance is used whenever you want multiple classes to share *some* behaviour but *not all* the behaviour.

For example, the Blob class can jitter and draw itself but it cannot slowly rotate. A RotatingBlob class is nearly the same as a Blob class, but it has an additional property (rotation speed) and a slightly different drawing method (i.e. the points forming the blob’s outline must be rotated first)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Blob | RotatingBlob |
| Fields | fill  stroke  center  radius | fill  stroke  center  radius  **rotationSpeed** |
| Methods | draw  jitter | **draw**  jitter |

Blob and RotatingBlob are so similar that it would be wasteful to create two completely different classes.

**Inheritance** – lets two classes share properties and methods.

**extends keyword** – is the main way to link up two classes via inheritance:

class Blob {

/\*…properties and methods…\*/

}

class RotatingBlob extends Blob {

/\*…properties and methods…\*/

}

RotatingBlob will now inherit properties and methods defined inside the Blob class.

**Sharing is only one way** – RotatingBlob may also have its own special properties and methods that Blob does not have.

**Superclass/Subclass** – Blob is called a superclass or parent class, RotatingBlob a subclass or derived class or child class.

**Generalization/Specialization** – Blob is a more general class, RotatingBlob is a more specialized class.

**How to control what is inherited** – mark fields/methods as either public, private or protected:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| public | Inherited and accessible outside of class |
| protected | Inherited but not accessible outside of class |
| private | Not inherited and not accessible outside of class |

**A sketch of the blob class** –

class Blob {

// Properties

public color fill, stroke;

protected PVector center;

public float radius;

protected ArrayList<PVector> outline;

// Constructor

public Blob(float x, float y, float radius) {

/\* …code… \*/

}

// Draw method

public void draw() {

/\* …code… \*/

}

// Method to jitter the blob

public void jitter(float howMuch) {

/\* …code… \*/

}

}

**A sketch of the Rotating blob class** –

class RotatingBlob extends Blob {

// Property

public float rotationSpeed;

// Constructor

public RotatingBlob(float x, float y,float radius) {

/\* …code… \*/

}

// Overridden draw method

public void draw() {

/\* …code… \*/

}

}

**Advantages of inheritance** – if the subclass is very similar to the superclass, then the subclass does not need much code.

For example, there is no fill property or jitter() method defined for RotatingBlob but this is perfectly valid because of the inheritance relationship:

RotatingBlob blob = new RotatingBlob(400,400,100);

blob.fill=#D1F739;

blob.rotationSpeed=TWO\_PI/500;

/\* …code… \*/

blob.draw();

blob.jitter(0.01);

Likewise, inside the RotatingBlob there is no outline ArrayList defined but this is valid as well due to inheritance:

for (PVector point: outline)

point.rotate(rotationSpeed);

**Overriding methods** – if a subclass wants to modify a method belonging to the superclass, it can override it by defining the same method again, e.g. see the draw() method in the RotatingBlob class.

**super keyword** – used inside a subclass to access methods and properties belonging to the superclass. There are two general cases where this is needed: (i) inside the constructor, when you want the objects of both classes to be set up the same and (ii) inside a method, when you want to reuse the original version of a method you have overridden.

Example of a constructor with super:

class RotatingBlob extends Blob {

/\*…code…\*/

public RotatingBlob(float x, float y,float radius) {

super(x, y, radius);

}

/\*…code…\*/

}

Example of an overridden method with super:

class RotatingBlob extends Blob {

/\*…code…\*/

public void draw() {

// Rotate all the points in the outline

for (PVector point: outline)

point.rotate(rotationSpeed);

// Draw the blob

super.draw();

}

/\*…code…\*/

}

## Inheritance Hierarchies

Many classes can be related by inheritance. For example, besides a rotating blob, we may also be interested in defining classes for pulsating blobs, moving blobs etc:

class Blob {}

class RotatingBlob extends Blob {

}

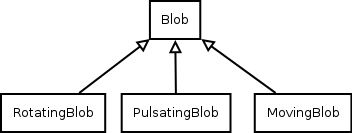
class PulsatingBlob extends Blob {

}

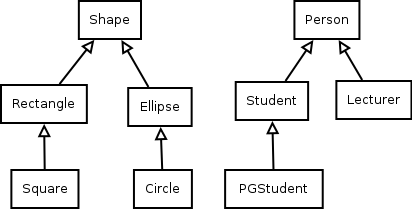
class MovingBlob extends Blob {

}

**Inheritance diagram** – can be used to visualize the relationship:



**Inheritance hierarchy** – a group of two or more inheriting classes, e.g.:



## Abstract Classes

The highest levels of an inheritance hierarchy are usually so generalized that it does not make sense to use them to create objects. However, they do have properties that should be inherited, for example a shape is too abstract to draw but it has a position and a size:

class Shape {

protected PVector position,size; // common properties

public Shape(float x, float y, float w, float h) {

position=new PVector(x,y);

size=new PVector(w,h);

}

public void draw() { // how to draw a shape?

}

}

The means that people may incorrectly create objects of type shape, e.g.

Shape someShape = new Shape(30,40,100,100);

When what was intended was for only subclasses to be used to create shapes, e.g.

Rectangle rect=new Rectangle(30,40,100,100);

Circle circle=new Circle(500,500,23);

**abstract keyword** – the solution is to mark classes as abstract if they are not meant to be used to create objects, i.e.

abstract class Shape {

/\*…class definition…\*/

}

## Abstract methods

If it does not make sense to implement a method in a superclass, but all subclasses should implement it, then mark it abstract as well.

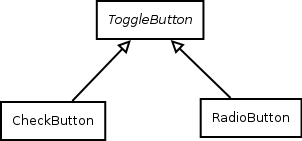
abstract class Shape {

/\*…methods & properties…\*/

abstract public void draw();

}

**Toggle button example** – a toggle button is a button that stays on or off after you click it. GUIs usually have two different types of toggle buttons: radio buttons and check buttons. They are drawn differently and have different shapes (square vs. circle). However they share all other behaviours.



**Inheritance diagrams with abstract classes** – use italics or a different style to distinguish abstract from concrete classes.

Sketch of the ToggleButton class with abstract methods bolded:

abstract public class ToggleButton {

protected PVector position;

protected float size;

protected boolean state;

protected String label;

public ToggleButton() {/\*…code…\*/}

public boolean mouseClicked() {

if (**ptInRegion(mouseX, mouseY)**) {

state=!state;

return true;

}

return false;

}

**abstract public boolean ptInRegion(float x, float y);**

**abstract public void drawButton();**

public void drawLabel() {/\*…code…\*/}

public void draw() {

**drawButton();**

if (label!=null) drawLabel();

}

}

Note how implemented methods can call abstract methods!

**Implementation of abstract methods** – must be done in the subclasses, e.g.

public class RadioButton extends ToggleButton {

/\*…fields…\*/

public RadioButton() {/\*…code…\*/}

**public boolean pointInButtonRegion(float x, float y)** {

return PVector.dist(center,

new PVector(x,y))<=size/2;

}

**public void drawButton()** {

noFill();

stroke(255);

strokeWeight(4);

ellipseMode(CORNER);

ellipse(position.x, position.y, size, size);

if (state) {

fill(255);

ellipse(position.x+size/4, position.y+size/4,

size/2, size/2);

}

}

/\*…other methods…\*/

}

**Creating objects** – create objects from inheriting classes in the normal way:

CheckBox cb1, cb2;

RadioButton rb1, rb2;

void setup(){

cb1=new CheckBox(100,100,30, null);

cb2=new CheckBox(300,100,30, "pizza");

cb2.set();

rb1=new RadioButton(100,200,30, null);

rb1.set();

rb2=new RadioButton(300,200,30, "milk");

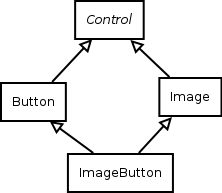
}

Note that the set method is inherited!

# Single vs Multiple Inheritance

**Single inheritance** – if every class inherits from at most one other class, then inheritance is single.

**Multiple inheritance** – occurs when one class can inherit from more than one class. For example all GUI controls have a position on the screen and can draw themselves. A button is a control and an image is a control. A image button is a button with an image as the background:



The main problem with multiple inheritance is working out what gets inherited:

class Control {

PVector position;

abstract public void draw();

}

class Button extends Control {

public void draw(){ /\*…draw the button…\*/ }

}

class Image extends Control {

public void draw(){ /\*…draw the image…\*/ }

}

**class ImageButton extends Button, Image {**

**/\* Which draw method is inherited?? \*/ }**

**}**

This makes the language messy and therefore Processing only allows single inheritance.

**Multiple to Single Inheritance** – multiple inheritance hierarchies can be converted into single inheritance hierarchies with some thought, e.g. we could make an image a property of Button and dispose of the ImageButton class:

class Control {

PVector position;

abstract public void draw();

}

class Button extends Control {

public Image image=null;

**public void draw(){**

**// draw the image**

**if (image!=null) image.draw();**

**/\*…draw the rest of the button…\*/**

**}**

}

class Image extends Control {

public void draw(){ /\*…draw the image…\*/ }

}