

# Programming Assignment #1: SneakyQueens

COP 3503, Fall 2016

**Due:** Tuesday, September 6, *before* 11:59 PM

## Abstract

This is a warm-up assignment to get you thinking mathematically, algorithmically, and *cleverly*. It will encourage you to think in terms of implementing efficient solutions to problems, since your program needs to have a worst-case runtime that does not exceed  $O(m + n)$  (linear runtime). It's also a fairly gentle return to Java for those who haven't used it in a while, and involves a direct application of the base conversion knowledge you gained in Computer Science 1 (albeit with a minor twist).

You might find this problem very tricky at first. It's important to struggle with it. Don't be discouraged if you don't solve it right away. Maybe walk away, take a break, and come back to it later (perhaps even the following day). You might be amazed by what your brain can do if you let it work on a problem in the background and/or if you come back to a problem well-rested, with a fresh perspective.

Please feel free to seek out help in office hours if you're lost, and remember that it's okay to have conceptual discussions with other students about this problem, as long as you're not sharing code (or pseudocode, which is practically the same thing). Just keep in mind that you'll benefit more from this problem if you struggle with it a bit before discussing it with anyone else.

## Deliverables

SneakyQueens.java

(Note: Capitalization of your filename matters!)

# 1. Problem Statement

You will be given a list of coordinate strings for queens on an arbitrarily large square chess board, and you need to determine whether any of the queens can attack one another in the given configuration.

In the game of chess, queens can move any number of spaces in any of eight directions: up, down, left, right, or any of four possible diagonal directions (up-left, up-right, down-left, or down-right). For example, the queen on the following board (denoted with a letter 'Q') can move to any position marked with an asterisk (\*), and no other positions:

8			*					
7			*				*	
6	*		*			*		
5		*	*		*			
4		*	*	*				
3	*	*	Q	*	*	*	*	
2		*	*	*				
1		*	*		*			
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h

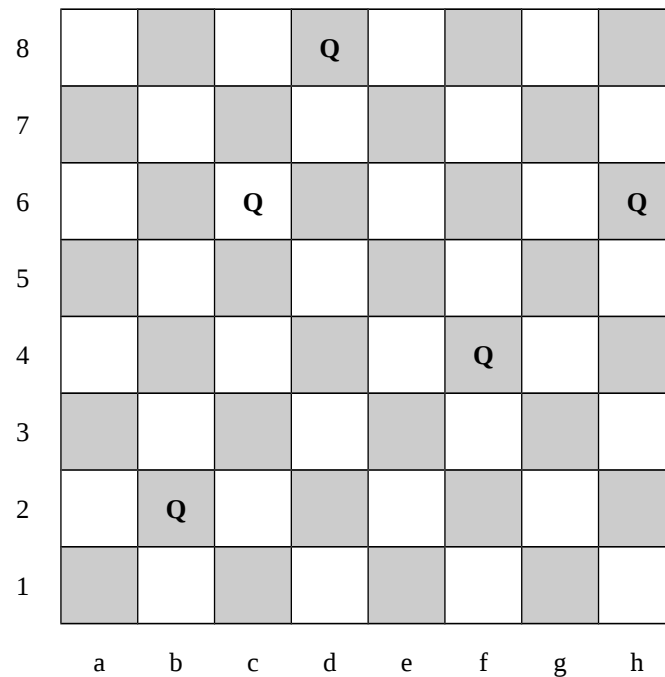
**Figure 1:** The queen at position d3 can move to any square marked with an asterisk.

Thus, on the following board, none of the queens (denoted with the letter 'Q') can attack one another:

4			Q	
3	Q			
2				Q
1		Q		
	a	b	c	d

**Figure 2:** A 4x4 board in which none of the queens can attack one another.

In contrast, on the following board, the queens at *c6* and *h6* can attack one another, as can the queens at *f4* and *h6*:



*Figure 3: An 8x8 board in which some of the queens can attack one another.*

## 2. Coordinate System

One standard notation for the location of a chess piece on an 8x8 board is to give its column, followed by its row, as a single string with no spaces. In this coordinate system, columns are labeled *a* through *h* (from left to right), and rows to be numbered 1 through 8 (from bottom to top).

So, for example, the board in Figure 2 (above, on pg. 2) has queens at positions *a3*, *b1*, *c4*, and *d2*.

Because you're going to be dealing with much larger chess boards in this program, you'll need some sort of notation that allows you to deal with boards that have more than the 26 columns we can denote with the letters *a* through *z*. Here's how that will work:

Columns will be labeled *a* through *z* (from left to right). After column *z*, the next 26 columns will be labeled *aa* through *az*. After column *az*, the next 26 columns will be labeled *ba* through *bz*, and so on. After column *zz*, the next 26 columns will be labeled *aaa* through *aaz*.

Essentially, the columns are given in a base 26 numbering scheme, where digits 1 through 26 are represented using *a* through *z*. However, this counting system is a bit jacked up since there's no character to represent the value zero. (That's part of the fun.)

All the letters in these strings will be lowercase, and all the strings are guaranteed to be valid representations of board positions. They will not contain spaces or any other unexpected characters.

*For example:*

1. In the coordinate string *a1*, the *a* tells us the piece is in the first column (from the left), and the 1 tells us the piece is in the first row (from the bottom).
2. Similarly, the string *z32* denotes a piece in the 26<sup>th</sup> column (from the left) and 32<sup>nd</sup> row (from the bottom).
3. The string *aa19* represents a piece in the 27<sup>th</sup> column (from the left) and 19<sup>th</sup> row (from the bottom).
4. The string *fancy58339* would represent a piece in the 2,768,999<sup>th</sup> column (from the left) and the 58,339<sup>th</sup> row (from the bottom). (However, as you'll see below, 2,768,999 exceeds the maximum width of the chess boards you'll be required to handle.)

Converting these strings to their corresponding numeric coordinates is one of a few key algorithmic / mathematical challenges you face in this assignment. You might want to write a separate helper method that does that for you.

### 3. Runtime Requirements

In order to pass all test cases, the worst-case runtime of your solution cannot exceed  $O(m + n)$ , where  $m$  is both the length and width of the square chess board, and  $n$  is the number of coordinate strings to be processed. This figure assumes that the length of each coordinate string is bounded by some constant, which means you needn't account for that length in your runtime analysis, provided that each string is processed or examined only some small, constant number of times (e.g., once or twice).

Equivalently, you may conceive of all the string lengths as being less than or equal to  $k$ , in which case the worst-case runtime that your solution cannot exceed would be expressed as  $O(m + nk)$ .

**Note!**  $O(m + n)$  is just another way of writing  $O(\max\{m, n\})$ , meaning that your runtime can be linear with respect to  $m$  or  $n$  – whichever one happens to be the dominant term for any individual test case.

### 4. Method and Class Requirements

Implement the following methods in a class named `SneakyQueens`. Please note that they are all **public** and **static**. You may implement helper methods as you see fit.

```
public static boolean  
allTheQueensAreSafe(ArrayList<String> coordinateStrings, int boardSize)
```

**Description:** Given an `ArrayList` of coordinate strings representing the locations of the queens on a  $boardSize \times boardSize$  chess board, return `true` if none of the queens can attack one another. Otherwise, return `false`.

*(Method specification continued on the following page...)*

**Parameter Restrictions:** *boardSize* will be a positive integer, with  $boardSize \leq 60,000$ , describing both the length and width of the square board. (So, if  $boardSize = 8$ , then we have an  $8 \times 8$  board.) *coordinateStrings* will be non-null, and any strings within that ArrayList will follow the format described above for valid coordinates on a  $boardSize \times boardSize$  board.

**Output:** This method should **not** print anything to the screen. Printing stray characters to the screen (including newline characters) is a leading cause of test case failure.

```
public static double difficultyRating()
```

Return a double indicating how difficult you found this assignment on a scale of 1.0 (ridiculously easy) through 5.0 (insanely difficult).

```
public static double hoursSpent()
```

Return an estimate (greater than zero) of the number of hours you spent on this assignment.

## 5. Compiling and Testing SneakyQueens on Eustis

Recall that your code must compile, run, and produce precisely the correct output on Eustis in order to receive full credit. Here's how to make that happen:

1. To compile your program with one of my test cases:

```
javac SneakyQueens.java TestCase01.java
```

2. To run this test case and redirect your output to a text file:

```
java TestCase01 > myoutput01.txt
```

3. To compare your program's output against the sample output file I've provided for this test case:

```
diff myoutput01.txt TestCase01-output.txt
```

If the contents of `myoutput01.txt` and `TestCase01-output.txt` are exactly the same, `diff` won't print anything to the screen. It will just look like this:

```
seansz@eustis:~$ diff myoutput01.txt TestCase01-output.txt
seansz@eustis:~$ _
```

Otherwise, if the files differ, `diff` will spit out some information about the lines that aren't the same.

I've also included a script called `run-all-test-cases.sh` that you can use to run all six test cases.

## 6. Grading Criteria and Miscellaneous Requirements

The *tentative* scoring breakdown (not set in stone) for this programming assignment is:

- 80%     passes test cases (in linear runtime)
- 10%     difficultyRating() and hoursSpent() are implemented correctly
- 10%     adequate comments and whitespace; source code includes your name

Please be sure to submit your .java file, not a .class file (and certainly not a .doc or .pdf file). Your best bet is to submit your program in advance of the deadline, then download the source code from Webcourses, re-compile, and re-test your code in order to ensure that you uploaded the correct version of your source code.

**Important! Programs that do not compile will receive zero credit.** When testing your code, you should ensure that you place SneakyQueens.java alone in a directory with the test case files (source files, sample output files, and the input text files associated with the test cases), and no other files. That will help ensure that your SneakyQueens.java is not relying on external support classes that you've written in separate .java files but won't be including with your program submission.

**Important! You might want to remove main() and then double check that your program compiles without it before submitting.** Including a main() method can cause compilation issues if it includes references to home-brewed classes that you are not submitting with the assignment. Please remove.

**Important! Your program should not print anything to the screen.** Extraneous output is disruptive to the TAs' grading process and will result in severe point deductions. Please do not print to the screen.

**Important! Please do not create a java package.** Articulating a package in your source code could prevent it from compiling with our test cases, resulting in severe point deductions.

**Important! Name your source file, class(es), and method(s) correctly.** Minor errors in spelling and/or capitalization could be hugely disruptive to the grading process and may result in severe point deductions. Similarly, failing to make any of the three required methods, or failing to make them public and static, may cause test case failure. Please double check your work!

**Input specifications are a contract.** We promise that we will work within the confines of the problem statement when creating the test cases that we'll use for grading. For example, the strings we pass to allTheQueensAreSafe are guaranteed to be properly formed coordinate strings. None of them will contain spaces, capital letters, punctuation, or other characters that would violate the coordinate notation system described in this writeup. Similarly, we will never pass a boardSize value less than 1 or greater than 60,000 to your allTheQueensAreSafe method.

**However,** please be aware that the test cases included with this assignment writeup are by no means comprehensive. Please be sure to create your own test cases and thoroughly test your code. Sharing test cases with other students is allowed, but you should challenge yourself to think of edge cases before reading other students' test cases.

*Start early! Work hard! Ask questions! Good luck!*