

ATLS 4120/5120: Mobile Application Development

Week 10: Kotlin

History

- Kotlin was developed by JetBrains in July 2011
- In February 2012 Kotlin was open sourced
- Kotlin 1.0 was released in February 2016
- Google announced Kotlin support at Google IO in 5/17
- Integrated into Android Studio 3.0
- Kotlin-first <https://developer.android.com/kotlin/first>
- In May 2019 Google announced that Kotlin was now its preferred language for Android development.

Kotlin

- Kotlin is a modern language that is expressive and concise
 - Reduces boilerplate code that exists in Java
- Kotlin is fully interoperable with Java
 - Kotlin can call Java-based code and Java can call Kotlin-based code
- Kotlin is object-oriented
- Kotlin is statically and strongly typed
- Kotlin is cross platform

Variables and Constants

- Variables and constants allow us to store values to be used in our programs
 - Use `val` for a variable whose value never changes (immutable).
 - Trying to change the value will result in the error “Val cannot be reassigned”.
 - Use `var` for a variable whose value can change. (mutable)
- Only use variables when the value will change, otherwise use constants.
- You can’t change a constant into a variable or a variable into a constant.
- To evaluate the value of a variable in a statement use `$variable`
 - To evaluate an expression `${expression}`

Types

In Kotlin everything is an object. Kotlin has some basic types because they’re common but they are really still objects with functions and properties.

All the number types, Int, Double, Float, Long, Short, and Byte can be converted to any other number type with member functions such as `toInt()`, `toFloat()`, etc.

Kotlin also has data types

- Char for characters (can’t be treated directly as numbers)
- String
 - Strings are immutable
 - Elements of a string are characters that can be accessed by indexes: `s[i]`.
 - You can concatenate strings using the `+` operator or string templates
- Boolean
 - True or false

Type Inference

- If you provide an initial value for a variable or constant Kotlin can infer the type
- Kotlin is a statically-typed language. The type is resolved at compile time and can never change.
- Without an initial value for a variable or constant you must provide the type

Example:

<https://pl.kotl.in/XAmnrnDeW>

```
var message : String
message = "Hello class"
println(message)
var age : Int = 20
println(age)
var name = "Aileen"
println(name)
firstName="Aileen" (error, needs var or val)
val firstName = "Gail"
firstName = "me" (error, can't change a constant)
println(firstName)
name = 20 (error, wrong type)
println("Hi " + name)
println("Hi $name")
```

Operators

- Kotlin supports the standard arithmetic and comparison operators
- Assignment is =
- Equality is ==
- String concatenation: +
- Augmented assignment operators +=, -=
 - a=a+2 or a+=2
- Logical operators
 - Logical NOT: !
 - Logical AND: &&
 - Logical OR: ||
- Comparison operators <, >, <=, >=
 - Kotlin translates these calls to compareTo()
- Range operator ..
 - a..b defines a closed range that includes a and b.
 - Note that it's two periods, not three as in Swift

Conditionals

In Kotlin the test condition must be in parenthesis. The body must be in curly brackets if there's more than one instruction.

```
val temp = 30
val freezing = 32
if (temp < freezing){
    println("It's cold outside")
} else {
```

```
        println("It's nice out")
    }
}
```

Change temp to 40 to test the else statement.

Kotlin also supports conditional expressions

- Each conditional branch returns the result of the expression on its final line

```
val messageString: String = if (temp < freezing) {
    "It's cold outside"
} else {
    "It's nice out"
}
println(messageString)
```

Kotlin does not support the ternary operator (?) shorthand. Use conditional expressions instead.

If we omit the curly braces for the blocks because they contain only single statements it even looks a bit like the ternary operator. We can also remove the String type declaration because it can use type inference.

```
val messageString = if (temp < freezing) "It's cold outside" else
    "It's nice out"
```

When

Kotlin doesn't have a switch statement, the when statement is used instead and has a similar structure.

- A when statement compares a value against possible matching branches
- Each branch in a when expression is represented by a condition, an arrow (->), and a result.
- The test condition can be a single value, multiple values separated by commas, or can be a range
- Branches do not automatically fall through so you don't need a break in each case.
- The value for a branch must be the same data type as the variable in the test condition
- You can also supply an else option to execute if no other matches apply

```
when (age) {
    0 -> println("You're a baby")
    1, 2, 3, 4 -> println("You're a wee bitty one")
    in 5..21 -> println("Enjoy school")
    in 22..55 -> println("Welcome to the real world")
    else -> println("I don't know what you're doing")
}
```

The when statement can also be used as an expression where each branch becomes the returned value of the expression. In this case the when statement MUST be exhaustive.

- An else class MUST be included when a when statement is used as an expression

```
var msg = when (age) {
    0 -> "You're a baby"
    1, 2, 3, 4 -> "You're a wee bitty one"
    in 5..21 -> "Enjoy school"
    in 22..55 -> "Welcome to the real world"
    else -> "I don't know what you're doing"
```

```
        else -> "I don't know what you're doing"
    }
    println(msg)
```

Null Safety

Kotlin variables by default cannot be assigned a null value. This helps avoid the dreaded null reference exception error (`NullPointerException` in Java).

For a variable to be able to be assigned a null value you must define it to be nullable by adding “?” after its type.

```
var city: String = null (error, null cannot be a value of a non-null type String)
var city: String? = null
```

Not null assertion

- The not null assertion `!!` operator converts any value to a non-null type
- Throws an exception if it’s null
- Shouldn’t be used if there’s any chance it’s null

```
println(city!!) (error, NullPointerException)
```

You need to check to see if a variable or property is null before using it. There are a few ways to check to see if a variable is null before accessing it.

Explicit null check

- Uses an if statement to test if the variable is null

```
if (city != null){
    println(city.toUpperCase())
} else {
    println("City is null")
}
```

Safe Call operator

- Using the safe call operator the method is called only if the property is not null
- Equivalent to the if/else null check
- Can be used in chains
- If it evaluates to null on the left side of an assignment the assignment is skipped

```
println(city?.toUpperCase())
```

let() method

- The `let()` method will only execute an action on a reference that is not null

```
city?.let{println("I'm not null")}
```

Elvis operator (`?:`)

- returns a default value if the variable is null
- returns the value of the variable if it’s not null

```
println(city ?: "Elvis sighting")
```

null values are useful when representing “no value”.

When calling `findViewById()` it expects the resource ID of a view which is an integer. If you pass an integer that doesn't match a view resource id in the layout, `findViewById()` returns null and can cause a `NullPointerException`. View binding is null safe because you reference view objects directly and don't look them up by integer IDs.

Loops

Kotlin does not support the traditional C (and Java) style for loop. Instead it uses a for-in loop like Swift.

- Iterates through anything that provides an iterator
 - collection
 - range
- Requires parenthesis around test expression

```
for (count in 0..10)
{
    println(count)
}
```

```
for (i in 6 downTo 0 step 2) {
    println(i)
}
```

While loops are similar to other languages

- While loops evaluate its condition at the start of each pass through the loop
- do-while loops evaluate its condition at the end of each pass through the loop
 - same as repeat-while in Swift

Functions

Rather than repeating the same series of expressions each time that you need a result, you can wrap the expressions in a function and call that function instead.

In Kotlin functions can be written in three places

1. Outside a class (top-level functions)
 - a. Scope is the package
 - b. Useful for utility functions that don't belong in any one class
 - c. Reduces the need to create a helper class just for utility functions
 - d. Don't need a class or object to call these functions
2. Inside a class (member functions)
 - a. Scope is the class
3. Inside other functions (local functions)
 - a. Scope is the function

Regardless of where they're defined they follow the same form

- Keyword fun
- Function name
- Argument list (optional)
- Return type (optional, can be inferred)

- If a function does not return a value its return type is Unit (does not need to be specified)
- Body in { }

```
fun sayHi() {
    println("Hello world")
}
sayHi()
```

Parameters must include their type. Multiple parameters are separated by a comma.

```
fun sayHello(message: String) {
    println(message)
}
sayHello("Hello class")
```

You can assign default parameters which will be used if no value is passed in for that parameter.

```
fun sayWhat(message: String = "I am the default message") {
    println(message)
}
sayWhat()
sayWhat("I am not the default message")
```

You can name parameters to help associate a value with an argument.

```
fun sayWho(message: String, name: String) {
    println("$message $name")
}
sayWho("Hi there", "Xuedan")
sayWho("Hi there", name="McKenna")
```

If a function does not return a value its return type is Unit

- Returned implicitly, no need for a return statement
- Unit is a class with only one instance/value
- Similar to void in Java

You can specify a return type after the list of parameters and a colon.

```
fun sayWhere(name: String, place: String): String {
    return "$name is going to $place"
}
println(sayWhere("Lili", "Hawaii"))
```

When a function returns a single expression you can eliminate the curly braces and the keyword return and just assign the value as an expression.

```
fun sayWhereTo(name: String, place: String): String = "$name is going to $place"
println(sayWhereTo("Sohia", "Hawaii"))
```

The return type also becomes optional because it can be inferred in the expression.

```
fun sayWhereToNow(name: String, place: String) = "$name is going to  
$place"  
println(sayWhereToNow("Pratyusha", "Hawaii"))
```

Comments

Comments are used to include notes, citations, or explanations in your code.

- `//` is used for single line comments
- `/* comment */` is used for multi-line comments