perplexity

1. Interview-Style Opening

"This is the cornerstone of Modern Java (Java 8+). A **Functional Interface** is essentially an interface that acts as a blueprint for a lambda expression.

Without them, we wouldn't have cleaner code, the Streams API, or the declarative programming style we use today. The key rule to remember is: **One Single Abstract Method (SAM)**. It can have 100 default or static methods, but it must have exactly one abstract method."

2. Problem Understanding and Clarification

- **Definition:** An interface with exactly one abstract method.
- **Annotation:** `@FunctionalInterface` is optional but recommended. It forces the compiler to break the build if someone accidentally adds a second abstract method.
- **Purpose:** It serves as the "Target Type" for a lambda expression. The compiler infers the implementation of that single method from the lambda.

3. Why is it Required?

Before Java 8, if you wanted to pass behavior (code) to a method, you had to use **Anonymous Inner Classes**.

The Old Way (Verbose):

```
// Thread needs a Runnable (which is a functional interface)
new Thread(new Runnable() {
    @Override
    public void run() {
        System.out.println("Running!");
    }
}).start();
```

The New Way (Concise):

```
// Java infers that () -> {} implements Runnable.run()
new Thread(() -> System.out.println("Running!")).start();
```

It bridges the gap between Object-Oriented Java (everything is an object) and Functional Programming (functions as first-class citizens).

4. Pre-defined Functional Interfaces (The "Big Four")

Java provides a `java.util.function` package so we don't have to write custom interfaces like `MyFilter`, `MyMapper`, etc.

Interface	Method Signature	Purpose	Example Use Case
Predicate<T>	`boolean test(T t)`	Takes an object, returns true/false.	Filters (Stream `.filter()`)
Function<T, R>	`R apply(T t)`	Takes T, transforms it, returns R.	Mapping (Stream `.map()`)
Consumer<T>	`void accept(T t)`	Takes T, does something, returns nothing.	Side-effects (Printing, Saving to DB)
Supplier<T>	`T get()`	Takes nothing, returns a result.	Factories, Lazy Generation

5. Java Code (Real-World Example)

Here is how I use these daily in a **Stream pipeline**.

```
import java.util.function.*;
import java.util.*;
import java.util.stream.Collectors;

public class FunctionalExample {

    public static void main(String[] args) {
        List<String> rawOrders = Arrays.asList("ORD-123", "ORD-456", "INVALID", "ORD-789"

        // 1. Predicate: Check if order is valid
        Predicate<String> isValidOrder = s -> s.startsWith("ORD-");

        // 2. Function: Extract the ID number (String -> Integer)
        Function<String, Integer> extractId = s -> Integer.parseInt(s.split("-")[^1]);

        // 3. Consumer: Print the ID
        Consumer<Integer> logId = id -> System.out.println("Processed Order ID: " + id);

        // 4. Supplier: Error message
        Supplier<String> errorMsg = () -> "No valid orders found!";

        // Putting it all together
        List<Integer> validIds = rawOrders.stream()
                .filter(isValidOrder)  // Uses Predicate
                .map(extractId)        // Uses Function
                .peek(logId)           // Uses Consumer
                .collect(Collectors.toList());
    }
}
```

6. Edge Cases and Follow-Up Questions

Q: Can a functional interface have methods from the `Object` class?
A: Yes! Abstract methods from `java.lang.Object` (like `toString`, `equals`) do NOT count towards the "Single Abstract Method" limit. You can still define them and the interface remains functional.

Q: What about `BiFunction` and `BiConsumer`?
A: The standard interfaces only accept one argument. If you need to process two arguments (e.g., `map.forEach((k, v) -> ...)`), you use the `Bi...` variants.

Q: What happens if I add a second abstract method to an interface annotated with `@FunctionalInterface`?
A: Compilation Error: "Unexpected @FunctionalInterface annotation. Multiple non-overriding abstract methods found."

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1. https://jenkov.com/tutorials/java-functional-programming/functional-interfaces.html
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5. https://stackoverflow.com/questions/14655913/precise-definition-of-functional-interface-in-java-8
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