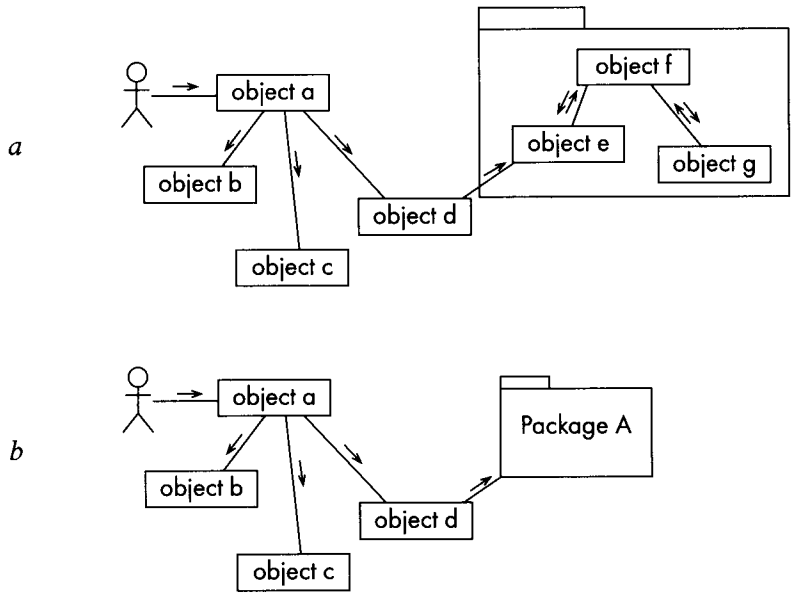

Figure 6.16 *a* *Grouping objects into a package in a collaboration diagram*
b *A package allows the developer to focus on object interactions in the rest of the diagram*

Specifying operations

In Chapter 5, we saw how a data dictionary notation can be used to document the details of the data in the developing system. However, that notation is restricted to data, and does not provide the means to record details about operations on classes. We have seen in this chapter that interaction diagrams are very useful for specifying the message passing between the group of objects involved in the execution of a use case scenario. However, these diagrams say very little about what happens inside an operation, they don't specify in any detail what an operation does. For this we need operation specifications.

Early on in the development of the system we are not concerned with the details of how an operation works; all we need at that stage is a brief description of what it does, not how it does it. For this sort of description the best tool to use is clear, everyday English or a mixture of English and data dictionary notation. For example, the operation findBike(bike#) in the Bike class can be described as follows:

findBike(bike#)
: This operation finds the Bike object whose number corresponds to the bike number input (bike#) and returns