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2.4: Comments

Before we talk about code, I want to mention those little things that go in between your code: programmer's comments. Java supports not one, not two, but three different comment syntaxes. I will describe them here.

First, Java supports Visual Basic-style single-line comments (using the C++ `//` syntax):

```
// This is a comment
int i = 4; // This is a comment too.
        //set i to 4.
```

Second, Java also supports C-style `/* ... */` comments, which can span multiple lines:

```
/*
  A long comment, extending over
  several lines.
*/
```

Note that C-style comments do not nest. The following produces a syntax error:

```
/*
  /* A shorter comment than we intended:
     this is the end of the whole comment ->
  */
*/
```

Compiler says:

```
test.java:7: Missing term.
           */
           ^
```

It's OK to put C++-style comments inside of C-style comments, however, and vice versa:

```
/*
  // A perfectly good
  // four-line comment
*/
```

This suggests an important general style rule: Always use `//` comments within normal code. Use them to comment individual lines, or to document blocks inside of functions. Then, if you ever want to comment out a whole section of code quickly, you can easily use `/* ... */`-style comments to do it!

Third, Java supports another type of comment, the "documentation comment," `/**` which looks like this `*/`. It's a proper subset of C-style comments. Documentation comments are used by tools such as

Oracle/Sun's javadoc to automatically document your Java source code. [Javadoc](http://docs.oracle.com/javase/7/docs/technotes/guides/javadoc/index.html) (<http://docs.oracle.com/javase/7/docs/technotes/guides/javadoc/index.html>) is a useful tool, well worth the small investment of learning how to use it. The [online Java API documentation](http://docs.oracle.com/javase/7/docs/api/) (<http://docs.oracle.com/javase/7/docs/api/>) is actually produced from the Java source code by the javadoc tool.