

# Java Semaphore: Key Methods



**Douglas C. Schmidt**  
**[d.schmidt@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:d.schmidt@vanderbilt.edu)**  
**[www.dre.vanderbilt.edu/~schmidt](http://www.dre.vanderbilt.edu/~schmidt)**

**Institute for Software  
Integrated Systems  
Vanderbilt University  
Nashville, Tennessee, USA**



# Learning Objectives in this Part of the Lesson

- Understand the concept of semaphores
- Be aware of the two types of semaphores
- Note a human known use of semaphores
- Recognize the structure & functionality of Java Semaphore
- Know the key methods defined by the Java Semaphore class

<<Java Class>>	
G Semaphore	
•	Semaphore(int)
•	Semaphore(int,boolean)
•	acquire():void
•	acquireUninterruptibly():void
•	tryAcquire():boolean
•	tryAcquire(long,TimeUnit):boolean
•	release():void
•	acquire(int):void
•	acquireUninterruptibly(int):void
•	tryAcquire(int):boolean
•	tryAcquire(int,long,TimeUnit):boolean
•	release(int):void
•	availablePermits():int
•	drainPermits():int
•	isFair():boolean
•	hasQueuedThreads():boolean
•	getQueueLength():int
•	toString()

---

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

---

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {
    ...
    public void acquire() { ... }

    public void
        acquireUninterruptibly()
    { ... }

    public boolean tryAcquire
        (long timeout,
         TimeUnit unit)
    { ... }

    public void release() { ... }
    ...
}
```

---

See [docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/util/concurrent/Semaphore.html](https://docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/util/concurrent/Semaphore.html)

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {
    ...
    public void acquire() { ... }

    public void
        acquireUninterruptibly()
    { ... }

    public boolean tryAcquire
        (long timeout,
         TimeUnit unit)
    { ... }

    public void release() { ... }
    ...
}
```

*These methods forward to their implementor methods, which are largely inherited from the `AbstractQueuedSynchronizer` framework*

See [docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/util/concurrent/locks/AbstractQueuedSynchronizer.html](https://docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/util/concurrent/locks/AbstractQueuedSynchronizer.html)

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

---

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore
- `acquire()` atomically obtains a permit from the semaphore

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {

    ...
    public void acquire() {
        sync.
        acquireSharedInterruptibly(1);
    }
    ...
}
```

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore
  - acquire() atomically obtains a permit from the semaphore
    - Can be interrupted

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {

    ...
    public void acquire() {
        sync.
        acquireSharedInterruptibly(1) ;
    }
    ...
}
```



See [docs.oracle.com/javase/tutorial/essential/concurrency/interrupt.html](https://docs.oracle.com/javase/tutorial/essential/concurrency/interrupt.html)

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

---

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore
  - `acquire()` atomically obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `acquireUninterruptibly()` also obtains a permit from the semaphore
    - Cannot be interrupted

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {

    ...
    public void
        acquireUninterruptibly() {
        sync.acquireShared(1)
    }
    ...
}
```





# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore
  - `acquire()` atomically obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `acquireUninterruptibly()` also obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `tryAcquire()` obtains a permit if it's available at invocation time

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {

    ...
    public boolean tryAcquire()
        ... {

        sync.
            nonfairTryAcquireShared(1)
            >= 0;

    }
    ...
}
```



# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore
  - `acquire()` atomically obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `acquireUninterruptibly()` also obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `tryAcquire()` obtains a permit if it's available at invocation time

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {
    ...
    public boolean tryAcquire()
        ... {
        sync.
        nonfairTryAcquireShared(1)
        >= 0;
    }
    ...
}
```



Untimed `tryAcquire()` methods will “barge”, i.e., they don't honor the fairness setting & take any permits available

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

---

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore
  - `acquire()` atomically obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `acquireUninterruptibly()` also obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `tryAcquire()` obtains a permit if it's available at invocation time
  - `release()` atomically increments the permit count by 1

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {

    ...
    public void release() {
        sync.releaseShared(1);
    }
    ...
}
```

---

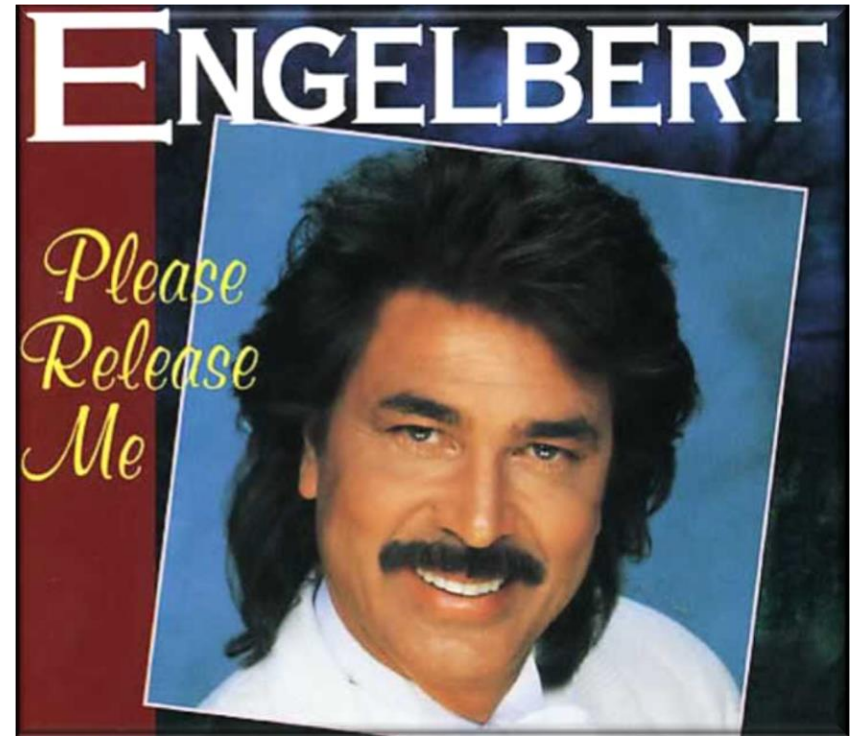
Recall it's valid for the permit count to exceed the initial permit count!!

# Overview of Key Java Semaphore Methods

- Its key methods acquire & release the semaphore
  - `acquire()` atomically obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `acquireUninterruptibly()` also obtains a permit from the semaphore
  - `tryAcquire()` obtains a permit if it's available at invocation time
  - `release()` atomically increments the permit count by 1
    - If the permit count is now  $> 0$  - a thread waiting to acquire the semaphore can then proceed

```
public class Semaphore
    implements ... {

    ...
    public void release() {
        sync.releaseShared(1);
    }
    ...
}
```



---

# Overview of Other Java Semaphore Methods

# Overview of Other Java Semaphore Methods

- There are many other Semaphore methods

void	<a href="#"><u>acquire</u></a> (int permits) – Acquires # of permits from semaphore, blocking until all are available, or thread interrupted
void	<a href="#"><u>acquireUninterruptibly</u></a> (int permits) – Acquires # of permits from semaphore, blocking until all available
boolean	<a href="#"><u>tryAcquire</u></a> (int permits) – Acquires given # of permits from semaphore, only if all are available at the time of invocation
void	<a href="#"><u>release</u></a> (int permits) – Releases # of permits, returning them to semaphore
boolean	<a href="#"><u>tryAcquire</u></a> (long timeout, TimeUnit unit) – Acquires a permit from semaphore, if one is available within given waiting time & thread has not been interrupted
boolean	<a href="#"><u>tryAcquire</u></a> (int permits, long timeout, <u>TimeUnit</u> unit) – Acquires given # of permits from semaphore, if all available within given waiting time & current thread has not been interrupted

# Overview of Other Java Semaphore Methods

- There are many other Semaphore methods
- Some methods can acquire or release multiple permits at a time

void	<a href="#"><u>acquire</u></a> (int permits) – Acquires # of permits from semaphore, blocking until all are available, or thread interrupted
void	<a href="#"><u>acquireUninterruptibly</u></a> (int permits) – Acquires # of permits from semaphore, blocking until all available
boolean	<a href="#"><u>tryAcquire</u></a> (int permits) – Acquires given # of permits from semaphore, only if all are available at the time of invocation
void	<a href="#"><u>release</u></a> (int permits) – Releases # of permits, returning them to semaphore
boolean	<a href="#"><u>tryAcquire</u></a> (long timeout, TimeUnit unit) – Acquires a permit from semaphore, if one is available within given waiting time & thread has not been interrupted
boolean	<a href="#"><u>tryAcquire</u></a> (int permits, long timeout, TimeUnit unit) – Acquires given # of permits from semaphore, if all available within given waiting time & current thread has not been interrupted

# Overview of Other Java Semaphore Methods

- There are many other Semaphore methods
  - Some methods can acquire or release multiple permits at a time
  - Likewise, some of these methods use timeouts



void	<code>acquire(int permits)</code> – Acquires # of permits from semaphore, blocking until all are available, or thread interrupted
void	<code>acquireUninterruptibly(int permits)</code> – Acquires # of permits from semaphore, blocking until all available
boolean	<code>tryAcquire(int permits)</code> – Acquires given # of permits from semaphore, only if all are available at the time of invocation
void	<code>release(int permits)</code> – Releases # of permits, returning them to semaphore
boolean	<code><a href="#">tryAcquire(long timeout, TimeUnit unit)</a></code> – Acquires a permit from semaphore, if one is available within given waiting time & thread has not been interrupted
boolean	<code><a href="#">tryAcquire(int permits, long timeout, TimeUnit unit)</a></code> – Acquires given # of permits from semaphore, if all available within given waiting time & current thread has not been interrupted

Ironically, the timed `tryAcquire()` methods *do* honor the fairness setting, so they don't "barge"



---

# End of Java Semaphore: Key Methods