MODULE 2

Syllabus:

Introducing Classes: Class Fundamentals, Declaring Objects, Assigning Object Reference Variables, Introducing Methods, Constructors, The this Keyword, Garbage Collection, The finalize() Method, A Stack Class.

A Closer Look at Methods and Classes: Overloading Methods, Using Objects as Parameters, A Closer Look at Argument Passing, Returning Objects, Recursion, Introducing Access Control, Understanding static, Introducing final, Arrays Revisited.

Class is a basis of OOP languages. It is a logical construct which defines shape and nature of an object. Entire Java is built upon classes.

3.1 Class Fundamentals

Class can be thought of as a user-defined data type. We can create variables (objects) of that data type. So, we can say that class is a *template* for an object and an object is an *instance* of a class. Most of the times, the terms *object* and *instance* are used interchangeably.

The General Form of a Class

A class contains data (member or instance variables) and the code (member methods) that operate on the data. The general form can be given as –

```
class classname
{
    type var1;
    type var2;
    ......
    type method1(para_list)
    {
        //body of method1
    }
    type method2(para_list)
    {
        //body of method2
    }
    .......
}
```

Here, *classname* is any valid name given to the class. Variables declared within a class are called as *instance variables* because every instance (or object) of a class contains its own copy of these variables. The code is contained within *methods*. Methods and instance variables collectively called as *members* of the class.

A Simple Class

Here we will consider a simple example for creation of class, creating objects and using members of the class. One can store the following program in a single file called **BoxDemo.java**. (Or, two classes can be saved in two different files with the names **Box.java** and **BoxDemo.java**.)

```
class Box
       double w, h, d;
class BoxDemo
       public static void main(String args[])
              Box b1=new Box();
              Box b2=new Box();
              double vol;
              b1.w=2;
              b1.h=4;
              b1.d=3;
              b2.w=5:
              b2.h=6;
              b2.d=2;
              vol=b1.w*b1.h*b1.d;
              System.out.println("Volume of Box1 is " + vol);
              vol=b2.w*b2.h*b2.d;
              System.out.println("Volume of Box2 is " + vol);
       }
}
```

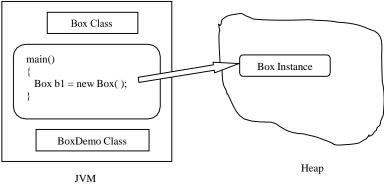
The output would be -

Volume of Box1 is 24.0 Volume of Box1 is 60.0

When you compile above program, two class files will be created viz. **Box.class** and **BoxDemo.class**. Since *main()* method is contained in **BoxDemo.class**, you need to execute the same.

In the above example, we have created a class **Box** which contains 3 instance variables *w*, *h*, *d*. Box b1=new Box();

The above statement creates a physical memory for one object of **Box** class. Every object is an instance of a class, and so, b1 and b2 will have their own copies of instance variables w, h and d. The memory layout for one object allocation can be shown as -



3.2 Declaring Objects

Creating a class means having a user-defined data type. To have a variable of this new data type, we should create an object. Consider the following declaration:

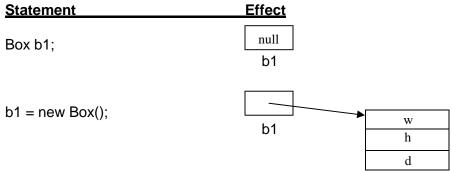
Box b1;

This statement will not actually create any physical object, but the object name *b1* can just *refer* to the actual object on the heap after memory allocation as follows –

$$b1 = new Box ();$$

We can even declare an object and allocate memory using a single statement – Box b1=new Box();

Without the usage of *new*, the object contains **null**. Once memory is allocated dynamically, the object *b1* contains the address of real object created on the heap. The memory map is as shown in the following diagram –



Closer look at new

The general form for object creation is -

obj name = new class name();

Here, *class_name()* is actually a constructor call. A *constructor* is a special type of member function invoked automatically when the object gets created. The constructor usually contains the code needed for object initialization. If we do not provide any constructor, then Java supplies a *default constructor*.

Java treats primitive types like *byte, short, int, long, char, float, double* and *boolean* as ordinary variables but not as an object of any class. This is to avoid extra overhead on the heap memory and also to increase the efficiency of the program. Java also provides the *class-version* of these primitive types that can be used only if necessary. We will study those types later in detail.

With the term *dynamic memory allocation*, we can understand that the keyword *new* allocates memory for the object during runtime. So, depending on the user's requirement memory will be utilized. This will avoid the problems with static memory allocation (either shortage or wastage of memory during runtime). If there is no enough memory in the heap when we use **new** for memory allocation, it will throw a run-time exception.

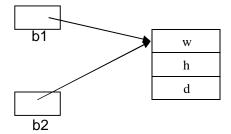
3.3 Assigning Object Reference Variables

When an object is assigned to another object, no separate memory will be allocated. Instead, the second object refers to the same location as that of first object. Consider the following declaration –

Box b1= new Box();

Box b2 = b1;

Now both b1 and b2 refer to same object on the heap. The memory representation for two objects can be shown as -



Thus, any change made for the instance variables of one object affects the other object also. Although b1 and b2 both refer to the same object, they are not linked in any other way. For example, a subsequent assignment to b1 will simply unhook b1 from the original object without affecting the object or affecting b2. For example:

```
Box b1 = new Box();
Box b2 = b1:
// ...
b1 = null;
```

Here, **b1** has been set to **null**, but **b2** still points to the original object.

NOTE that when you assign one object reference variable to another object reference variable, you are not creating a copy of the object, you are only making a copy of the reference.

3.4 Introducing Methods

A class can consist of instance variables and methods. We have seen declaration and usage of instance variables in Program 2.1. Now, we will discuss about methods. The general form of a method is -

```
ret_type method_name(para_list)
{
       //body of the method
       return value;
}
```

Here, ret type

specifies the data type of the variable returned by the method. It may be any primitive type or any other derived type including name of the same class. If the method does not return any value, the *ret_type* should be specified as *void*.

method_name is any valid name given to the method

para_list

is the list of parameters (along with their respective types) taken the method. It may

be even empty also.

body of method is a code segment written to carryout some process for which the method is

meant for.

return

is a keyword used to send value to the calling method. This line will be absent if the ret type is void.

Adding Methods to Box class

Though it is possible to have classes with only instance variables as we did for **Box** class of Program 2.1, it is advisable to have methods to operate on those data. Because, methods acts as interface to the classes. This allows the class implementer to hide the specific layout of internal data structures behind cleaner method abstractions. In addition to defining methods that provide access to data, you can also define methods that are used internally by the class itself. Consider the following example –

```
class Box
       double w, h, d;
       void volume()
              System.out.println("The volume is " + w*h*d);
       }
}
class BoxDemo
       public static void main(String args[])
              Box b1=new Box();
              Box b2=new Box();
              b1.w=2;
              b1.h=4;
              b1.d=3;
              b2.w=5:
              b2.h=6;
              b2.d=2:
              b1.volume();
              b2.volume();
       }
}
```

The output would be -

The volume is 24.0 The volume is 60.0

In the above program, the **Box** objects b1 and b2 are invoking the member method volume() of the **Box** class to display the volume. To attach an object name and a method name, we use dot (.) operator. Once the program control enters the method volume(), we need not refer to object name to use the instance variables w, h and d.

Returning a value

In the previous example, we have seen a method which does not return anything. Now we will modify the above program so as to return the value of *volume* to *main()* method.

```
class Box
{
       double w, h, d;
       double volume()
              return w*h*d;
       }
}
class BoxDemo
       public static void main(String args[])
              Box b1=new Box();
              Box b2=new Box();
              double vol:
              b1.w=2;
              b1.h=4:
              b1.d=3;
              b2.w=5:
              b2.h=6;
              b2.d=2;
              vol = b1.volume();
              System.out.println("The volume is " + vol);
              System.out.println("The volume is " + b2.volume());
       }
}
```

The output would be -

The volume is 24.0 The volume is 60.0

As one can observe from above example, we need to use a variable at the left-hand side of the assignment operator to receive the value returned by a method. On the other hand, we can directly make a method call within print statement as shown in the last line of above program.

There are two important things to understand about returning values:

- The type of data returned by a method must be compatible with the return type specified by the method. For example, if the return type of some method is **boolean**, you could not return an integer.
- The variable receiving the value returned by a method (such as **vol**, in this case) must also be compatible with the return type specified for the method.

Adding Methods that takes Parameters

Having parameters for methods is for providing some input information to process the task. Consider the following version of **Box** class which has a method with parameters.

```
class Box
       double w, h, d;
       double volume()
       {
              return w*h*d;
       }
       void set(double wd, double ht, double dp)
              w=wd;
              h=ht;
              d=dp:
       }
}
class BoxDemo
       public static void main(String args[])
              Box b1=new Box();
              Box b2=new Box();
              b1.set(2,4,3);
              b2.set(5,6,2);
              System.out.println("The volume of b1 is " + b1.volume());
              System.out.println("The volume of b2 is " + b2.volume());
       }
}
```

The output would be -

The volume of b1 is 24.0 The volume of b2 is 60.0

In the above program, the **Box** class contains a method **set()** which take 3 parameters. Note that, the variables **wd**, **ht** and **dp** are termed as **formal parameters** or just **parameters** for a method. The values passed like 2, 4, 3 etc. are called as **actual arguments** or just **arguments** passed to the method.

3.5 Constructors

Constructor is a special type of member method which is invoked automatically when the object gets created. Constructors are used for object initialization. They have same name as that of the class. Since they are called automatically, there is no return type for them. Constructors may or may not take parameters.

```
class Box
{
       double w, h, d;
       double volume()
              return w*h*d;
       }
       Box()
                     //ordinary constructor
       {
              w=h=d=5;
       Box(double wd, double ht, double dp)
                                                  //parameterized constructor
              w=wd:
              h=ht:
              d=dp;
       }
}
class BoxDemo
       public static void main(String args[])
              Box b1=new Box();
              Box b2=new Box();
              Box b3=new Box(2,4,3);
              System.out.println("The volumeof b1 is " + b1.volume());
              System.out.println("The volumeof b2 is " + b2.volume());
              System.out.println("The volumeof b3 is " + b3.volume());
       }
}
```

The output would be -

The volume of b1 is 125.0 The volume of b2 is 125.0 The volume of b3 is 24.0

When we create two objects **b1** and **b2**, the constructor with no arguments will be called and the all the instance variables **w**, **h** and **d** are set to 5. Hence volume of **b1** and **b2** will be same (that is 125 in this example). But, when we create the object **b3**, the **parameterized constructor** will be called and hence volume will be 24.

Few points about constructors:

• Every class is provided with a *default constructor* which initializes all the data members to respective *default values*. (Default for numeric types is zero, for character and strings it is null and default value for Boolean type is false.)

In the statement

classname ob= new classname();

the term classname() is actually a constructor call.

- If the programmer does not provide any constructor of his own, then the above statement will call default constructor.
- If the programmer defines any constructor, then default constructor of Java can not be used.
- So, if the programmer defines any parameterized constructor and later would like to create an object without explicit initialization, he has to provide the default constructor by his own.

For example, the above program, if we remove ordinary constructor, the statements like Box b1=new Box();

will generate error. To avoid the error, we should write a default constructor like – Box(){ }

Now, all the data members will be set to their respective default values.

3.6 The this Keyword

Sometimes a method will need to refer to the object that invoked it. To allow this, Java defines the *this* keyword. *this* can be used inside any method to refer to the *current object*. That is, *this* is always a reference to the object which invokes the method call. For example, in the **Program 2.5**, the method *volume()* can be written as –

```
double volume()
{
     return this.w * this.h * this.d;
}
```

Here, usage of *this* is not mandatory as it is implicit. But, in some of the situations, it is useful as explained in the next section.

Instance Variable Hiding

As we know, in Java, we can not have two local variables with the same name inside the same or enclosing scopes. (Refer **Program 1.7** and a **NOTE** after that program from Chapter 1, Page 16 & 17). But we can have local variables, including formal parameters to methods, which overlap with the namesof the class instance variables. However, when a local variable has the same name as an instance variable, the **local variable** *hides* the **instance variable**. That is, if we write following code snippet for a constructor in **Program 2.5**, we will not get an expected output –

Here note that, formal parameter names and data member names match exactly. To avoid the problem, we can use –

```
Box(double w, double h, double d)
{
    this.w=w; //this.w refers to data member name and w refers to formal parameter this.h=h; this.d=d;
}
```

3.7 Garbage Collection

In C and C++, dynamically allocated variables/objects must be manually released using **delete** operator. But, in Java, this task is done automatically and is called as **garbage collection**. When no references to an object exist, that object is assumed to be no longer needed, and the memory occupied by the object can be reclaimed. Garbage collection occurs once in a while during the execution of the program. It will not occur simply because one or more objects exist that are no longer used. Furthermore, different Java runtime implementations will take varying approaches to garbage collection.

3.8 The *finalize()* Method

Sometimes an object will need to perform some action when it is destroyed. For example, if an object is holding some non-Java resource such as a file handle or character font, then you might want to make sure these resources are freed before an object is destroyed. To handle such situations, Java provides a mechanism called *finalization*. By using finalization, you can define specific actions that will occur when an object is just about to be reclaimed by the garbage collector. To add a finalizer to a class, you simply define the *finalize()* method. The Java run time calls that method whenever it is about to recycle an object of that class.

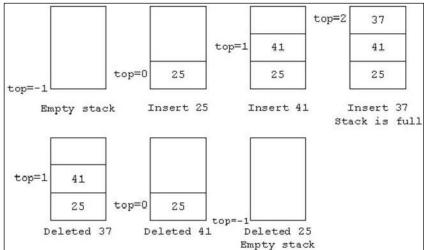
```
The finalize() method has this general form:
    protected void finalize()
    {
        // finalization code here
}
```

Here, the keyword protected is a specifier that prevents access to finalize() by code defined outside its class. Note that finalize() is only called just prior to garbage collection. It is not called when an object goes out-of-scope. So, we can not know when *finalize()* method is called, or we may be sure whether it called or not before our program termination. Therefore, if at all our program uses some resources, we should provide some other means for releasing them and must not depend on *finalize()* method.

3.9 A Stack Class

To summarize the concepts of encapsulation, class, constructor, member initialization etc, we will now consider a program to implement stack operations.

Concept of Stack: A stack is a Last in First Out (LIFO) data structure. Following figure depicts the basic operations on stack:



Inserting an element into a stack is known as **push** operation, whereas deleting an element from the stack is **pop** operation. An attempt made to push an element into a full stack is **stack overflow** and an attempt to delete from empty stack is **stack underflow**.

```
class Stack
{
     int st[] = new int[5];
     int top;
     Stack()
     {
           top = -1;
     }
     void push(int item)
           if(top==4)
                 System.out.println("Stack is full.");
           else
           st[++top] = item;
     }
     int pop()
           if(top==-1)
           {
                 System.out.println("Stack underflow.");
                 return 0;
           }
           else
                 return st[top--];
     }
}
class StackDemo
     public static void main(String args[])
     {
           Stack mystack1 = new Stack();
           Stack mystack2 = new Stack();
           for (int i=0; i<5; i++)
                 mystack1.push(i);
           for(int i=5; i<10; i++)
                 mystack2.push(i);
           System.out.println("Contents of mystack1:");
           for(int i=0; i<5; i++)
                 System.out.println(mystack1.pop());
```

3.10 Overloading Methods

Having more than one method with a same name is called as method overloading. To implement this concept, the constraints are:

- the number of arguments should be different, and/or
- Type of the arguments must be different.

NOTE that, only the return type of the method is not sufficient for overloading.

```
class Overload
     void test()
                          //method without any arguments
           System.out.println("No parameters");
     void test(int a) //method with one integer argument
           System.out.println("Integer a: " + a);
     void test(int a, int b) //two arguments
       System.out.println("With two arguments : " + a + " " + b);
     void test(double a)
                                 //one argument of double type
           System.out.println("double a: " + a);
}
class OverloadDemo
{
     public static void main(String args[])
           Overload ob = new Overload();
           ob.test();
           ob.test(10);
           ob.test(10, 20);
           ob.test(123.25);
     }
}
```

3.11 Overloading Constructors

One can have more than one constructor for a single class if the number and/or type of arguments are different. Consider the following code:

```
class OverloadConstruct
     int a, b;
     OverloadConstruct()
           System.out.println("Constructor without arguments");
     }
     OverloadConstruct(int x)
           a=x;
           System.out.println("Constructor with one argument:"+a);
     }
     OverloadConstruct(int x, int y)
     {
           a=x;
           b=y;
           System.out.println("Constructor with two arguments:"+ a +"\t"+ b);
}
class OverloadConstructDemo
     public static void main(String args[])
     {
           OverloadConstruct ob1= new OverloadConstruct();
           OverloadConstruct ob2= new OverloadConstruct(10);
           OverloadConstruct ob3= new OverloadConstruct(5,12);
     }
}
Output:
     Constructor without arguments
     Constructor with one argument: 10
     Constructor with two arguments: 5
                                                12
```

3.12 Using Objects as Parameters

Just similar to primitive types, even object of a class can also be passed as a parameter to any method. Consider the example given below –

```
class Test
{
    int a, b;
    Test(int i, int j)
    {
```

```
a = i;
                b = j;
           }
           boolean equals(Test ob)
                 if(ob.a == this.a && ob.b == this.b)
                      return true;
                 else
                      return false;
     }
     class PassOb
           public static void main(String args[])
                 Test ob1 = new Test(100, 22);
                 Test ob2 = new Test(100, 22);
                 Test ob3 = new Test(-1, -1);
                 System.out.println("ob1 == ob2: " + ob1.equals(ob2));
                 System.out.println("ob1 == ob3: " + ob1.equals(ob3));
           }
     }
Output:
     ob1 == ob2: true
     ob1 == ob3: false
```

Using one object to initialize the other:

Sometimes, we may need to have a replica of one object. The usage of following statements **will not** serve the purpose.

```
Box b1=new Box(2,3,4);
Box b2=b1;
```

In the above case, both b1 and b2 will be referring to same object, but not two different objects. So, we can write a constructor having a parameter of same class type to *clone* an object.

3.13 A Closer Look at Argument Passing

In Java, there are two ways of passing arguments to a method.

- Call by value: This approach copies the *value* of an argument into the formal parameter of the method. Therefore, changes made to the parameter of the method have no effect on the argument.
- Call by reference: In this approach, a reference to an argument is passed to the parameter. Inside the subroutine, this reference is used to access the actual argument specified in the call. This means that changes made to the parameter will affect the argument used to call the subroutine.

In Java, when you pass a primitive type to a method, it is passed by value. When you pass an object to a method, they are passed by reference. Keep in mind that when you create a variable of a class type, you are only creating a reference to an object. Thus, when you pass this reference to a method, the parameter that receives it will refer to the same object as that referred to by the argument. This effectively means that objects are passed to methods by use of call-by-reference. Changes to the object inside the method *do* affect the object used as an argument.

```
class Test
{     int a, b;
     Test(int i, int j)
     {
          a = i;
          b = j;
     }
     void meth(Test o)
     {
          o.a *= 2;
          o.b /= 2;
     }
} class CallByRef
{
     public static void main(String args[])
     {
}
```

```
Test ob = new Test(15, 20);
System.out.println("before call: " + ob.a + " " + ob.b);
ob.meth(ob);
System.out.println("after call: " + ob.a + " " + ob.b);
}
```

Output:

before call: 15 20 after call: 30 10

3.14 Returning Objects

In Java, a method can return an object of user defined class.

```
class Test
{
     int a;
     Test(int i)
           a = i;
     Test incrByTen()
           Test temp = new Test(a+10);
           return temp;
}
class RetOb
 public static void main(String args[])
    Test ob1 = new Test(2);
    Test ob2;
    ob2 = ob1.incrByTen();
    System.out.println("ob1.a: " + ob1.a);
    System.out.println("ob2.a: " + ob2.a);
    ob2 = ob2.incrByTen();
    System.out.println("ob2.a after second increase: " + ob2.a);
}
```

Output:

```
ob1.a: 2
ob2.a: 12
ob2.a after second increase: 22
```

3.15 Recursion

A method which invokes itself either directly or indirectly is called as *recursive method*. Every recursive method should satisfy following constraints:

- It should have at least one non-recursive terminating condition.
- In every step, it should be nearer to the solution (that is, problem size must be decreasing)

```
class Factorial
     int fact(int n)
           if (n==0)
                return 1;
           return n*fact(n-1);
     }
   }
   class FactDemo
     public static void main(String args[])
           Factorial f= new Factorial();
           System.out.println("Factorial 3 is "+ f.fact(3));
           System.out.println("Factorial 8 is "+ f.fact(8));
     }
Output:
     Factorial of 3 is 6
     Factorial of 8 is 40320
```

3.16 Introducing Access Control

Encapsulation feature of Java provides a safety measure viz. **access control.** Using **access specifiers**, we can restrict the member variables of a class from outside manipulation. Java provides following access specifiers:

- public
- private
- protected

Along with above access specifiers, Java defines a default access level.

Some aspects of access control are related to inheritance and package (a collection of related classes). The *protected* specifier is applied only when inheritance is involved. So, we will now discuss about only *private* and *public*.

When a member of a class is modified by the public specifier, then that member can be accessed by any other code. When a member of a class is specified as private, then that member can only be accessed by other members of its class. When no access specifier is used, then by default the member of a class is public within its own package, but cannot be accessed outside of its package. Usually, you will want to

restrict access to the data members of a class—allowing access only through methods. Also, there will be times when you will want to define methods that are private to a class. An access specifier precedes the rest of a member's type specification. For example,

```
public int x; private char ch;
```

Consider a program given below -

```
class Test
    int a;
{
     public int b;
     private int c;
     void setc(int i)
           c = i;
     int getc()
           return c;
}
class AccessTest
     public static void main(String args[])
           Test ob = new Test();
           ob.a = 10;
           ob.b = 20;
           // ob.c = 100;
                              // inclusion of this line is Error!
           ob.setc(100);
           System.out.println("a, b, and c: " + ob.a + " " + ob.b + " "
                                             + ob.getc());
     }
}
```

3.17 Understanding static

When a member is declared **static**, it can be accessed before any objects of its class are created, and without reference to any object. Instance variables declared as **static** are global variables. When objects of its class are declared, no copy of a **static** variable is made. Instead, all instances of the class share the same **static** variable.

Methods declared as **static** have several restrictions:

- They can only call other **static** methods.
- They must only access static data.
- They cannot refer to this or super in any way.

If you need to do computation in order to initialize your **static** variables, you can declare a **static** block that gets executed exactly once, when the class is first loaded.

```
class UseStatic
     static int a = 3;
     static int b;
     static void meth(int x)
                                       //static method
     {
           System.out.println("x = " + x);
           System.out.println("a = " + a);
           System.out.println("b = " + b);
     }
     static
                //static block
     {
           System.out.println("Static block initialized.");
           b = a * 4;
     }
     public static void main(String args[])
           meth (42);
     }
}
```

Output:

Static block initialized.

x = 42 a = 3b = 12

Outside of the class in which they are defined, **static** methods and variables can be used independently of any object. To do so, you need only specify the name of their class followed by the dot operator. The general form is –

classname.method();

Consider the following program:

```
class StaticDemo
{
    static int a = 42;
    static int b = 99;

    static void callme()
    {
        System.out.println("Inside static method, a = " + a);
    }
}
```

```
class StaticByName
{
    public static void main(String args[])
    {
        StaticDemo.callme();
        System.out.println("Inside main, b = " + StaticDemo.b);
    }
}
```

Output:

Inside static method, a = 42 Inside main, b = 99

3.18 Arrays Revisited

Arrays have been discussed earlier. An important point to be noted with arrays is: arrays are implemented as objects in Java. Because of this, we can use a special instance variable *length* to know the size of an array.

```
class Test
{
    public static void main(String args[])
    {
        int a1[]=new int[10];
        int a2[]={1, 2, 3, 4, 5};
        int a3[]={3, 8, -2, 45, 9, 0, 23};

        System.out.println("Length of a1 is" + a1.length);
        System.out.println("Length of a2 is" + a2.length);
        System.out.println("Length of a3 is" + a3.length);
    }
}
```

Output:

Length of a1 is 10 Length of a2 is 5 Length of a3 is 7

Question Bank:

- 1. Define class. Give syntax and example.
- 2. Briefly explain static members of the class with suitable examples.
- 3. Discuss method overloading. Write a program to overload a method *area()* to compute area of a triangle and a circle.
- 4. Define a constructor. What are the salient features of Constructor? Write a Java program to show these features.
- 5. How do you overload a constructor? Explain with a program.
- 6. What are different parameter passing techniques in Java? Discuss the salient features of the same.
- 7. What are various access specifiers in Java? List out the behaviour of each of them.
- 8. Create a Java class called Student with the following details as variables (USN, Name, Branch, Phone Number). Write a Java program to create n student objects and print USN, Name, Branch, and Phone number with suitable heading.
- 9. What is inheritance? Discuss different types of inheritance with suitable example.
- 10. Discuss the behavior of constructors when there is a multilevel inheritance. Give appropriate codeto illustrate the process.
- 11. Mention and explain the uses of *super* keyword in Java.
- 12. How do you pass arguments to superclass constructor through the subclass constructor? Explain with a code snippet.
- 13. Discuss usage of *final* keyword in Java. Give suitable examples.
- 14. What do you mean by method overriding? Discuss with a programming example.
- 15. Explain abstract class and abstract method with suitable code snippet.