

Collections and Generics

Objectives

- Define the terms collection and ADT
- Introduce the types of collections that will be covered in this course
- Define the concept of an interface
- Identify when and how to use generics

Collections

Collection: a group of items that we wish to treat as a conceptual unit.

- The proper choice of a collection for a given problem can improve the efficiency and simplicity of a solution.

Abstract Data Type (ADT)

It is a *collection* of data together with the *operations* on that data.

Each ADT is a specific model that defines which methods belong to the collection.

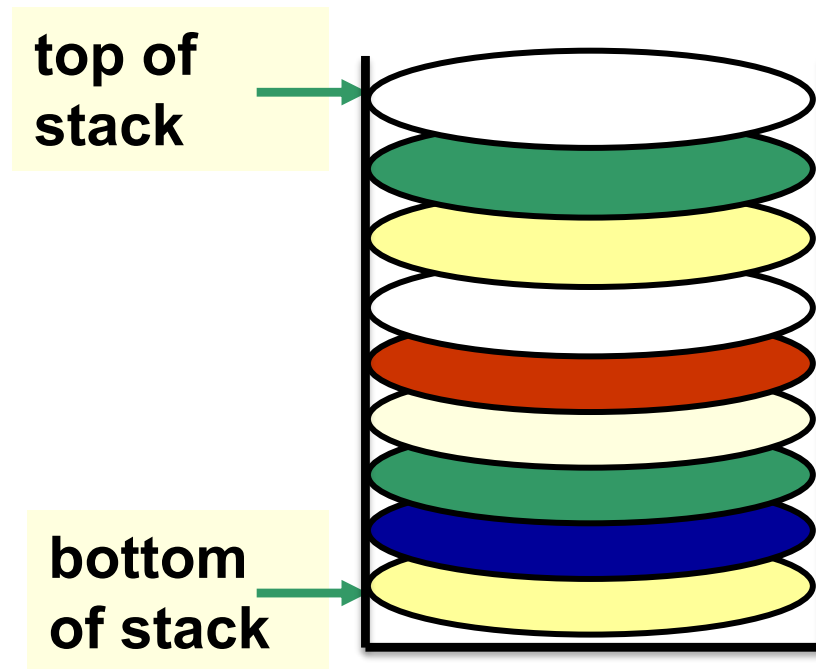
The ADT specifies **WHAT** the operations do, not **HOW** they do it.

ADT

- For example, there must be at least one method to add elements to a collection.
 - Where does the new element get added?
 - Is it always added to the end? The front?
- In this course, we will learn about **stacks, queues, lists, and trees**.

Stacks

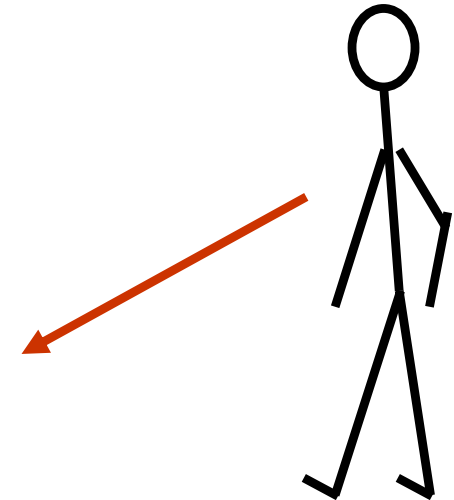
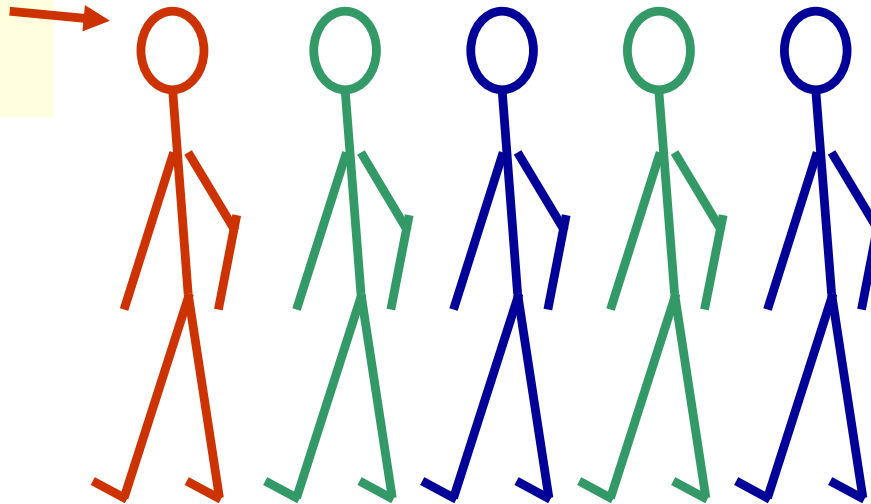
Stack: a collection whose elements are added and removed from one end, called the ***top*** of the stack.



Queues

Queue: a collection whose elements are added to the rear and removed from the front.

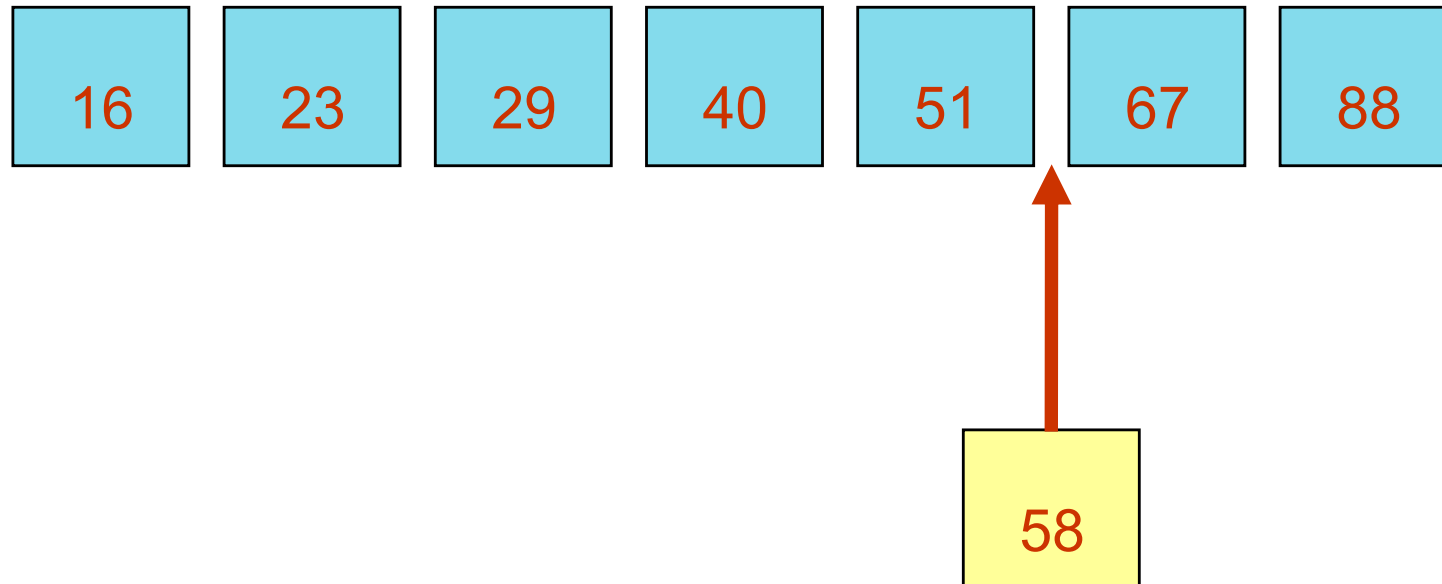
First person served
will be the one at
the front of queue



New person is
added to the rear
of the queue

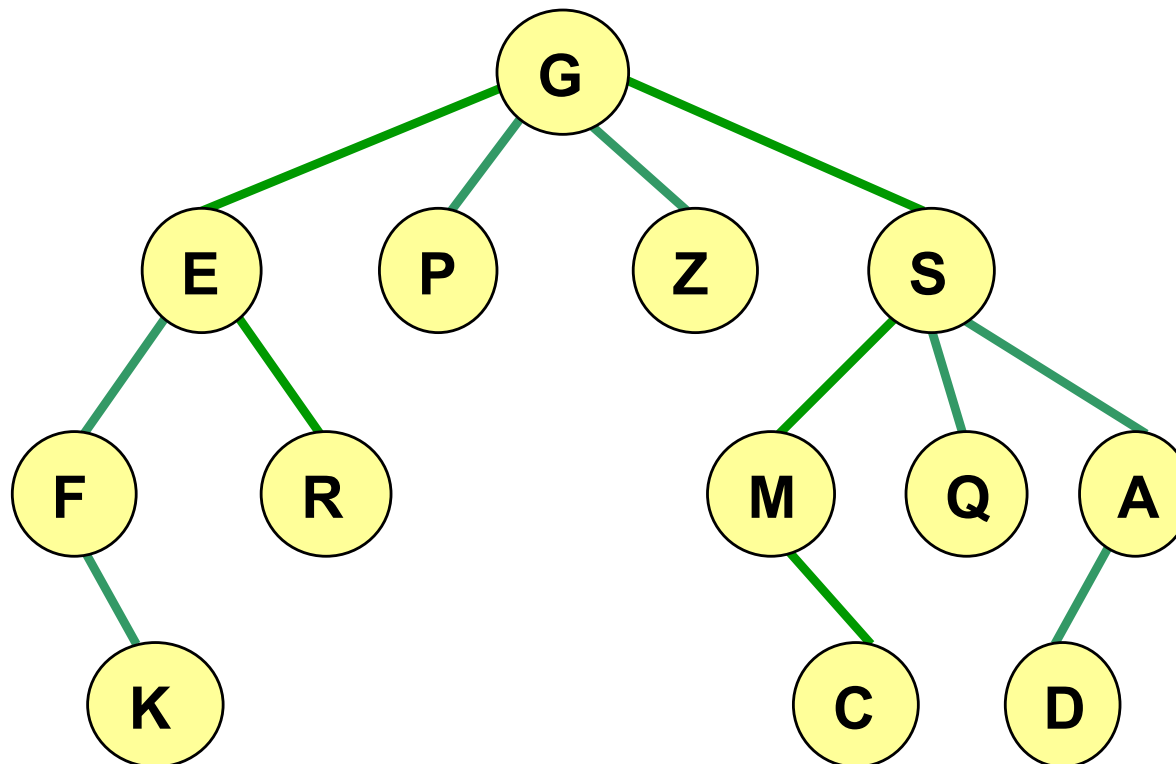
Lists

Lists: there are several types of lists; this is an example of an Ordered List. New numbers must be added such that all of the numbers remain in order.



Trees

Trees: a non-linear collection in whose elements are represented hierarchically with parent-child relationships.



Abstraction

- Abstraction separates the ***purpose*** of an entity from its ***implementation*** or how it works
 - ***Example in real life***: a car (we do not have to know how an engine works in order to drive a car)
 - ***Example in computer systems***: a computer (we do not need to know how information is stored and manipulated by the CPU to be able to execute programs)

Java Interfaces

Java has a **programming construct** called an **interface** that we can use to define what the operations on an ADT are.



A Java interface is a list of **abstract methods** (the signatures of the methods) and constants

- Must be **public**
- Constants must be declared as **static final**

Java Interfaces

An interface is essentially a template for classes. Classes that implement an interface must contain **all** methods defined by the interface.

Interfaces cannot be instantiated, however they can be a *variable type*. i.e.

- `MyInterface data = new MyInterface();`  Invalid.
- `MyInterface data = new MyClass();`  Valid, if MyClass implements MyInterface.

```
public interface SimpleADT {  
    // Add a new element to the collection.  
    public void add ( String dataItem );  
    // Remove an element from the collection.  
    public void remove ( String dataItem );  
    // Returns an item at a specified position in the collection.  
    public String getItem ( int pos );  
    // Returns the number of elements in this collection.  
    public int size ( );  
    // Returns a string representation of this collection.  
    public String toString ( );  
}
```

```
public class SimpleCollection implements SimpleADT {  
    private String[] array; // Use an array to store items.  
    private int count; // Keep track of item count.
```

```
// What methods are required in here?
```

```
}
```

Generic Types

What data type(s) can we store in SimpleCollection or any other implementation of SimpleADT?

What if we wanted to store other types? Could we create a SimpleCollection to store Integers? Doubles? Person objects? Rectangle objects?

This is where **generics** can help!

- Generics allow us to make an interfaces and classes that work for *any* data type.
- To do this, the interface/class definition needs **<T>** or **<E>** or **<MyType>**, etc.
- It is conventional to use **<T>** but any letter or sequence of letters is allowed in the **< >**.

Generic Types

- Note that in generics we cannot use primitive types. However, there are **wrapper classes** for them, i.e. Integer for int, Double for double, Boolean for boolean, etc.
- The **actual type** is known only when an application program creates an object of that class
 - Example:
 - SimpleCollection<String> s = new ...
 - SimpleCollection<Integer> n = new ...
 - SimpleCollection<Double> d = new ...
 - SimpleCollection<Person> p = new ...
 - SimpleCollection<Rectangle> r = new ...

Generic Types

- Will the class automatically handle other types just by adding <T>? *No!*
- We have to also adjust the methods a little to work with this generic type.
 - We'll have to use T anywhere the data type is being used. For example,
 public void add (String dataItem);
would be converted to:
 public void add (T dataItem);

```
public interface SimpleADT {  
    // Add a new element to the collection.  
    public void add ( String dataItem );  
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    public void remove ( String dataItem );  
    // Returns an item at a specified position in the collection.  
    public String getItem ( int pos );  
    // Returns the number of elements in this collection.  
    public int size ( );  
    // Returns a string representation of this collection.  
    public String toString ( );  
}
```

```
public interface SimpleADT<T> {  
    // Add a new element to the collection.  
    public void add ( T dataItem );  
    // Remove an element from the collection.  
    public void remove ( T dataItem );  
    // Returns an item at a specified position in the collection.  
    public T getItem ( int pos );  
    // Returns the number of elements in this collection.  
    public int size ( );  
    // Returns a string representation of this collection.  
    public String toString ( );  
}
```

```
public class SimpleCollection<T> implements  
    SimpleADT<T> {  
    private T[] array; // Use an array to store items.  
    private int count; // Keep track of item count.
```

```
    public SimpleCollection (int initCapacity) {  
        count = 0;  
        array = (T[])(new Object[initCapacity]);  
    }
```



Why such complex declaration?

```
// Other methods...
```

```
}
```

```
public class SimpleCollection<T> implements  
    SimpleADT<T> {  
    private T[] array; // Use an array to store items.  
    private int count; // Keep track of item count.
```

```
    public SimpleCollection (int initCapacity) {  
        count = 0;  
        array = new T[initCapacity];  
    }
```



Why is this wrong?

```
    // Other methods...
```

```
}
```

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public class SimpleCollection<T> implements  
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    private T[] array; // Use an array to store items.  
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```



Why is this wrong?

```
    // Other methods...
```

```
}
```

Data Structures

- Implementing collections is done with some kind of underlying ***data structure***.
- The main two data structures used for this are:
 - Arrays
 - Linked Lists