

Object Equality



EECS2030 E&F: Advanced
Object Oriented Programming
Fall 2024

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Learning Outcomes

This module is designed to help you learn about:

- **Object equality**: To **Override** or **Not** to Override
- Asserting **Object Equality**: `assertSame` vs. `assertEquals`
- Short-Circuit Effect (SCE): `&&` vs. `||`
- Equality for Array-, Reference-Typed Attributes

Equality (1)

- Recall that
 - A **primitive** variable stores a primitive **value**.
e.g., `double d1 = 7.5; double d2 = 7.5;`
 - A **reference** variable stores the **address** to some object (rather than storing the object itself).
e.g., `Point p1 = new Point(2, 3)` assigns to `p1` the address of the new `Point` object
e.g., `Point p2 = new Point(2, 3)` assigns to `p2` the address of another new `Point` object
- The binary operator `==` may be applied to compare:
 - **Primitive** variables: their **values** are compared
e.g., `d1 == d2` evaluates to **true**
 - **Reference** variables: the **addresses** they store are compared (**rather than** comparing contents of the objects they refer to)
e.g., `p1 == p2` evaluates to **false** because `p1` and `p2` are addresses of different objects, even if their contents are identical.

Equality (2.1)

- Implicitly:
 - Every class is a **child/sub** class of the `Object` class.
 - The `Object` class is the **parent/super** class of every class.
- There is a useful accessor method that every class **inherits** from the `Object` class:

- `public boolean equals(Object obj)`

- Indicates whether some other object `obj` is “equal to” this one.
- The default definition inherited from `Object`:

```
public boolean equals(Object obj) {
    return (this == obj);
}
```

e.g., Say `p1` and `p2` are of type `Point`**v1**
 in which the `equals` method is not **redefined/overridden**,
 then `p1.equals(p2)` boils down to `(p1 == p2)`.

- Very often when you define new classes, you want to **redefine / override** the inherited definition of `equals`.

Equality (2.2): Common Error

```
int i = 10;  
int j = 12;  
boolean sameValue = i.equals(j);
```

Compilation Error

The `equals` method is only applicable to reference types.

Fix

Write `i == j` instead.

Equality (3)

```
public class PointV1 {  
    private int x; private int y;  
    public PointV1(int x, int y) { this.x = x; this.y = y; }  
}
```

```
1 String s = "(2, 3)";  
2 PointV1 p1 = new PointV1(2, 3);  
3 PointV1 p2 = new PointV1(2, 3);  
4 PointV1 p3 = new PointV1(4, 6);  
5 System.out.println(p1 == p2); /* false */  
6 System.out.println(p2 == p3); /* false */  
7 System.out.println(p1.equals(p1)); /* true */  
8 System.out.println(p1.equals(null)); /* false */  
9 System.out.println(p1.equals(s)); /* false */  
10 System.out.println(p1.equals(p2)); /* false */  
11 System.out.println(p2.equals(p3)); /* false */
```

- The `equals` method is not explicitly redefined/overridden in class `PointV1` ⇒ The default version inherited from class `Object` is called. e.g., Executing `p1.equals(null)` boils down to `(p1 == null)`.
- To compare contents of `PointV1` objects, **redefine/override** `equals`.

Equality (4.1)

To compare **contents** rather than addresses, override `equals`.

```
public class PointV2 {  
    private int x; private int y;  
    public boolean equals (Object obj) {  
        if(this == obj) { return true; }  
        if(obj == null) { return false; }  
        if(this.getClass() != obj.getClass()) { return false; }  
        PointV2 other = (PointV2) obj;  
        return this.x == other.x && this.y == other.y;  
    }  
}
```

```
1 String s = "(2, 3)";  
2 PointV2 p1 = new PointV2(2, 3);  
3 PointV2 p2 = new PointV2(2, 3);  
4 PointV2 p3 = new PointV2(4, 6);  
5 System.out.println(p1 == p2); /* false */  
6 System.out.println(p2 == p3); /* false */  
7 System.out.println(p1.equals(p1)); /* true */  
8 System.out.println(p1.equals(null)); /* false */  
9 System.out.println(p1.equals(s)); /* false */  
10 System.out.println(p1.equals(p2)); /* true */  
11 System.out.println(p2.equals(p3)); /* false */
```

Equality (4.2)

- When making a method call `p.equals(o)`:
 - Say variable `p` is declared of type Point **V2**
 - Variable `o` can be declared of any type (e.g., Point **V2**, `String`)
- We define `p` and `o` as **equal** if:
 - Either `p` and `o` refer to the same object;
 - Or:
 - `o` does **not** store the **null** address.
 - `p` and `o` at runtime point to objects of the same type.
 - The `x` and `y` coordinates are the same.
- **Q:** In the `equals` method of `Point`, why is there no such a line:

```
class PointV2 {  
    public boolean equals(Object obj) {  
        if(this == null) { return false; }  
    }  
}
```

A: If `this` was `null`, a **NullPointerException** would have occurred, preventing the body of `equals` from being executed.

Equality (4.3)

```

1 public class PointV2 {
2     public boolean equals(Object obj) {
3         ...
4         if(this.getClass() != obj.getClass()) { return false; }
5         PointV2 other = (PointV2) obj;
6         return this.x == other.x && this.y == other.y;
7     }
8 }

```

- Object obj at L2 declares a parameter obj of type Object.
- PointV2 other at L5 declares a variable p of type PointV2.
We call such types declared at compile time as **static type**.
- Applicable attributes/methods callable upon a variable depends on its **static type**.
e.g., We may only call the small list of methods defined in Object class on obj, which does not include x and y (specific to PointV2).
- If we are certain that an object's "actual" type is different from its **static type**, then we can **cast** it.
e.g., Given that this.getClass() == obj.getClass(), we are sure that obj is also a Point, so we can cast it to PointV2.
- The **cast** (PointV2) obj creates an **alias** of obj, upon which (or upon its alias such as other) more methods can be invoked.

Equality (5)

Two notions of **equality** for variables of **reference** types:

- **Reference Equality**: use `==` to compare **addresses**
- **Object Equality**: define `equals` method to compare **contents**

```
1 PointV2 p1 = new PointV2(3, 4);  
2 PointV2 p2 = new PointV2(3, 4);  
3 PointV2 p3 = new PointV2(4, 5);  
4 System.out.println(p1 == p1);    /* true */  
5 System.out.println(p1.equals(p1)); /* true */  
6 System.out.println(p1 == p2);    /* false */  
7 System.out.println(p1.equals(p2)); /* true */  
8 System.out.println(p2 == p3);    /* false */  
9 System.out.println(p2.equals(p3)); /* false */
```

- Being **reference**-equal implies being **object**-equal.
- Being **object**-equal does **not** imply being **reference**-equal.

Requirements of equals

Given that *reference variables* x, y, z are not null:

-

$$\neg x.equals(\text{null})$$

- *Reflexive*:

$$x.equals(x)$$

- *Symmetric*

$$x.equals(y) \iff y.equals(x)$$

- *Transitive*

$$x.equals(y) \wedge y.equals(z) \Rightarrow x.equals(z)$$

Equality in JUnit (1.1)

- **assertSame**(exp1, exp2)
 - Passes if exp1 and exp2 are references to the same object
≈ **assertTrue**(exp1 == exp2)
≈ **assertFalse**(exp1 != exp2)

```
PointV1 p1 = new PointV1(3, 4);  
PointV1 p2 = new PointV1(3, 4);  
PointV1 p3 = p1;  
assertSame(p1, p3); ✓  
assertSame(p2, p3); ✗
```

- **assertEquals**(exp1, exp2)
 - ≈ `exp1 == exp2` if exp1 and exp2 are **primitive** type

```
int i = 10;  
int j = 20;  
assertEquals(i, j); ✗
```

Equality in JUnit (1.2)

- assertEquals**(exp1, exp2)

- $\approx$ `exp1.equals(exp2)` if exp1 and exp2 are **reference** type

Case 1: If equals is **not** explicitly overridden in exp1's dynamic type
 $\approx$ **assertSame**(exp1, exp2)

```
PointV1 p1 = new PointV1(3, 4);
PointV1 p2 = new PointV1(3, 4);
PointV2 p3 = new PointV2(3, 4);
assertEquals(p1, p2);    ✗ /* :: different PointV1 objects */
assertEquals(p2, p3);    ✗ /* :: different object addresses */
```

Case 2: If equals is explicitly **overridden** in exp1's dynamic type
 $\approx$ `exp1.equals`(exp2)

```
PointV1 p1 = new PointV1(3, 4);
PointV1 p2 = new PointV1(3, 4);
PointV2 p3 = new PointV2(3, 4);
assertEquals(p1, p2);    ✗ /* ≈ p1.equals(p2) ≈ p1 == p2 */
assertEquals(p2, p3);    ✗ /* ≈ p2.equals(p3) ≈ p2 == p3 */
assertEquals(p3, p2);    ✗ /* ≈ p3.equals(p2) ≈ p3.getClass() == p2.getClass() */
```

Equality in JUnit (2)

@Test

```
public void testEqualityOfPointV1() {
    PointV1 p1 = new PointV1(3, 4); PointV1 p2 = new PointV1(3, 4);
    assertFalse(p1 == p2); assertFalse(p2 == p1);
    /* assertSame(p1, p2); assertSame(p2, p1); */ /* both fail */
    assertEquals(p1.equals(p2)); assertEquals(p2.equals(p1));
    assertTrue(p1.getX() == p2.getX() && p1.getY() == p2.getY());
}
```

@Test

```
public void testEqualityOfPointV2() {
    PointV2 p3 = new PointV2(3, 4); PointV2 p4 = new PointV2(3, 4);
    assertFalse(p3 == p4); assertFalse(p4 == p3);
    /* assertSame(p3, p4); assertSame(p4, p3); */ /* both fail */
    assertTrue(p3.equals(p4)); assertTrue(p4.equals(p3));
    assertEquals(p3, p4); assertEquals(p4, p3);
}
```

@Test

```
public void testEqualityOfPointV1andPointv2() {
    PointV1 p1 = new PointV1(3, 4); PointV2 p2 = new PointV2(3, 4);
    /* These two assertions do not compile because p1 and p2 are of different types. */
    /* assertFalse(p1 == p2); assertFalse(p2 == p1); */
    /* assertSame can take objects of different types and fail. */
    /* assertSame(p1, p2); */ /* compiles, but fails */
    /* assertSame(p2, p1); */ /* compiles, but fails */
    /* version of equals from Object is called */
    assertEquals(p1.equals(p2));
    /* version of equals from PointP2 is called */
    assertEquals(p2.equals(p1));
}
```

Equality (6.1)

Exercise: Persons are *equal* if names and measures are equal.

```
1 public class Person {  
2     private String firstName; private String lastName;  
3     private double weight; private double height;  
4     public boolean equals(Object obj) {  
5         if(this == obj) { return true; }  
6         if(obj == null || this.getClass() != obj.getClass()) { return false; }  
7         Person other = (Person) obj;  
8         return  
9             this.weight == other.weight  
10            && this.height == other.height  
11            && this.firstName.equals(other.firstName)  
12            && this.lastName.equals(other.lastName);  
13     }  
14 }
```

Q: At L6, will we get a *NullPointerException* if `obj` is `null`?

A: **No** ∴ Short-Circuit Effect of `||`

`obj` is `null`, then `obj == null` evaluates to **true**

⇒ no need to evaluate the RHS

The left operand `obj == null` acts as a **guard constraint** for the right operand `this.getClass() != obj.getClass()`.

Equality (6.2)

Exercise: Persons are *equal* if names and measures are equal.

```
1 public class Person {
2     private String firstName; private String lastName;
3     private double weight; private double height;
4     public boolean equals(Object obj) {
5         if(this == obj) { return true; }
6         if(obj == null || this.getClass() != obj.getClass()) { return false; }
7         Person other = (Person) obj;
8         return
9             this.weight == other.weight
10            && this.height == other.height
11            && this.firstName.equals(other.firstName)
12            && this.lastName.equals(other.lastName);
13     }
14 }
```

Q: At L6, if swapping the order of two operands of disjunction:

`this.getClass() != obj.getClass() || obj == null`

Will we get a **NullPointerException** if `obj` is `null`?

A: Yes ∴ Evaluation of operands is from left to right.

Equality (6.3)

Exercise: Persons are *equal* if names and measures are equal.

```
1 public class Person {  
2     private String firstName; private String lastName;  
3     private double weight; private double height;  
4     public boolean equals(Object obj) {  
5         if(this == obj) { return true; }  
6         if(obj == null || this.getClass() != obj.getClass()) { return false; }  
7         Person other = (Person) obj;  
8         return  
9             this.weight == other.weight  
10            && this.height == other.height  
11            && this.firstName.equals(other.firstName)  
12            && this.lastName.equals(other.lastName);  
13     }  
14 }
```

Q: At L11 & L12, where is the `equals` method defined?

A: The `equals` method **overridden** in the `String` class.

When implementing the `equals` method for your own class, **reuse** the `equals` methods **overridden** in other classes wherever possible.

Equality (6.4)

Person collectors are equal if containing equal lists of persons.

```
class PersonCollector {  
    private Person[] persons;  
    private int nop; /* number of persons */  
    public PersonCollector() { ... }  
    public void addPerson(Person p) { ... }  
    public int getNop() { return this.nop; }  
    public Person[] getPersons() { ... }  
}
```

Redefine/Override the equals method in PersonCollector.

```
1 public boolean equals(Object obj) {  
2     if(this == obj) { return true; }  
3     if(obj == null || this.getClass() != obj.getClass()) { return false; }  
4     PersonCollector other = (PersonCollector) obj;  
5     boolean equal = false;  
6     if(this.nop == other.nop) {  
7         equal = true;  
8         for(int i = 0; equal && i < this.nop; i++) {  
9             equal = this.persons[i].equals(other.persons[i]);  
10        }  
11    }  
12    return equal;  
13 }
```

Equality in JUnit (3)

```
@Test
public void testPersonCollector() {
    Person p1 = new Person("A", "a", 180, 1.8);
    Person p2 = new Person("A", "a", 180, 1.8);
    Person p3 = new Person("B", "b", 200, 2.1);
    Person p4 = p3;
    assertFalse(p1 == p2); assertTrue(p1.equals(p2));
    assertTrue(p3 == p4); assertTrue(p3.equals(p4));
    PersonCollector pc1 = new PersonCollector();
    PersonCollector pc2 = new PersonCollector();
    assertFalse(pc1 == pc2); assertTrue(pc1.equals(pc2));
    pc1.addPerson(p1);
    assertFalse(pc1.equals(pc2));
    pc2.addPerson(p2);
    assertFalse(pc1.getPersons()[0] == pc2.getPersons()[0]);
    assertTrue(pc1.getPersons()[0].equals(pc2.getPersons()[0]));
    assertTrue(pc1.equals(pc2));
    pc1.addPerson(p3);
    pc2.addPerson(p4);
    assertTrue(pc1.getPersons()[1] == pc2.getPersons()[1]);
    assertTrue(pc1.getPersons()[1].equals(pc2.getPersons()[1]));
    assertTrue(pc1.equals(pc2));
    pc1.addPerson(new Person("A", "a", 175, 1.75));
    pc2.addPerson(new Person("A", "a", 165, 1.55));
    assertFalse(pc1.getPersons()[2] == pc2.getPersons()[2]);
    assertFalse(pc1.getPersons()[2].equals(pc2.getPersons()[2]));
    assertFalse(pc1.equals(pc2));
}
```

Beyond this lecture...

- Play with the source code

`ExampleEqualityPointsPersons.zip`

Tip. Use the debugger to step into executing the various versions of `equals` method.

- Go back to your Review Tutorial: Extend the `Product`, `Entry`, and `RefurbishedStore` classes by *overridden* versions of the `equals` method.

Index (1)

Learning Outcomes

Equality (1)

Equality (2.1)

Equality (2.2): Common Error

Equality (3)

Equality (4.1)

Equality (4.2)

Equality (4.3)

Equality (5)

Requirements of equals

Equality in JUnit (1.1)

Index (2)

Equality in JUnit (1.2)

Equality in JUnit (2)

Equality (6.1)

Equality (6.2)

Equality (6.3)

Equality (6.4)

Equality in JUnit (3)

Beyond this lecture. . .