Java’s Classes Types

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236703 - Object-Oriented Programming
In This Tutorial

• Explanation of the nested class concept.
• Access modifiers and nested classes.
• The types of nested classes in Java.
• Inheritance and inner classes.
• Nested classes in the JVM.
• Limits and caveats
The Concept

• Like C++, Java supports defining classes inside other classes. The general term for these classes is **nested classes**.
• Classes which are not defined inside other classes are called **top-level classes**.
• In Java, there are 4 types of nested classes.
• Reminder: in Java there are 4 access control modifiers. Here’s a more accurate table of their effects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modifier</th>
<th>Accessible from (in addition to defining class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>Any class of any package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protected</td>
<td>Subclasses + any class of the same package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td><strong>Only classes that share the same top-level class as the defining class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>default</td>
<td>Any class of the same package</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• What does this mean about nested classes?
Access Control Example

- All classes here have access to private variables of all of the others.
  - Though E must have an instance of the other classes to access them.
Type 1 – Static Nested Classes

• Defined as member classes, with the `static` modifier.
• Most similar to nested classes in C++.
• Helps in encapsulation – for example, if `B` is useful only to `A`.

• A static nested class can have any visibility, just like any other member.
• Cannot access non-static members of enclosing class.

```java
class A {
    ...
    static class B {
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```
Inner Classes

• Nested classes which are not static are called **inner classes**.
• There are 3 kinds of inner classes:
  – non-static member class, a.k.a. (regular) inner class
  – local class
  – anonymous class
• An instance of an inner classes is associated with an instance of the enclosing class.
• Consequentially, inner classes can access **non-static** members of the enclosing class.
  • Also static members, of course.
More on Inner Classes

• Instances of enclosing / nested classes do not contain each other – they are only associated with each other.
• An instance of an enclosing class may be associated with multiple instances of inner classes.
• An instance of an inner class is associated with exactly one instance of the enclosing class.
Type 2 – Non-Static Member Classes

• Defined as member classes, **without** the static modifier.
• An instance of B is always associated with an instance of A.
• A.B can have any visibility.
• Created with qualified `new`

```java
class A {
    ...
    class B {
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```

A a = new A();
A.B ab = a.new B();

// ‘ab’ is associated with ‘a’
Access to enclosing class

- If B is an inner class of A, it may access the associated A instance’s this pointer via the qualified A.this.
- This access is only available for non static nested classes (why?).

```java
class A {
    private void foo() { System.out.println("A"); }
    class B {
        void foo() { System.out.println("B"); }
        void bar() {
            A.this.foo(); // prints A
            foo();        // prints B
        }
    }
    ...
```
Type 3 – Local Classes

- Defined inside a method, and only visible from the point it is declared to the end of the method.
- If defined inside a non-static method, is considered an inner class and has access to non-static members – otherwise, behaves more like static nested class.
- Can access parameters as well as local variables declared in the same method before the class is declared, but only as long as they are marked `final`.
Local Classes - Example

class Outer {
    private int x;
    void f(final int z) {
        final int y = 4;
        Inner i = new Inner(); // Illegal - Inner is not declared
    class Inner {
        void inc() { x += z + y; } // Legal - y and z are final
    }
    Inner i = new Inner(); // Legal - inner is declared
}
static void g() {
    Inner i = new Inner(); // Illegal - Inner is not declared
    class Inner { // Legal - we can use the same name
        void inc() {
            x++; // Illegal - cannot access non-static field x
        }
    }
}
• Typically, only one instance of a local class is needed per method invocation.

• **Anonymous classes** are also created inside the body of a method, however
  – Defining the class also defines an instance of it (if any)
  – How can we define an anonymous class that has no running instances at all?
  – No more instances can be defined from that class

• Probably the most complicated of the nested class types, and probably the most useful.
Anonymous Classes - Syntax

```java
new <parent class / interface> (<ctor arguments>) {  
    <anonymous class body>
}
```

• Simple example:

```java
interface A {
    void g();
}

class B {
    void f() {
        A a = new A() {
            @Override public void g() {} 
        };
        a.g();
    }
}
```
Anonymous Classes & Constructors

• Anonymous classes cannot have constructors* (they don’t even have a name).
• Constructors of a parent class can be invoked using the argument list.

```java
class A {
    public A(int x) {...}
    void g() {...}
}
class B {
    A f() {
        return (new A(3){...});
    }
}
```

* They can have instance initializers, though. Outside of our scope.
Anonymous Classes – Java 8

• Since Java 8, an interface with exactly one abstract method can be replaced with a lambda expression (can contain several default and or static methods).
• Very useful with creating an anonymous class's instance:

```java
public interface Predicate<T> { boolean test(T t); }

candidates.stream().filter(c -> c.getOOPGrade() > 90);

candidates.stream().filter(new Predicate<Person>() {
    @Override
    public boolean test(Person p) {
        return p.getOOPGrade() > 90;
    }
};
```

Old and obsolete!
Anonymous Classes – Java 8

• Since Java 8, an interface with exactly one abstract method can be replaced with a lambda expression (can contain several default and or static methods).
• Very useful with creating an anonymous class's instance:

```java
public interface Comparator<T> { int compare(T t1, T t2); }

candidates.stream().sort(
    (c1, c2) -> c2.getOOPGrade() - c1.getOOPGrade());

candidates.stream().filter(new Comparator<Person>(){
    @Override
    public int compare(Person p1, Person p2) {
        return p2.getOOPGrade() - p1.getOOPGrade();
    }
});
```

Old and obsolete!
It is recommended to add the `@FunctionalInterface` annotation* to the interface, to indicate it’s should to be replaced with a $\lambda$ expression:

```java
@FunctionalInterface
interface I {
    void foo(Person p1, Person p2);
    default int bar() {...};
    static void cool(){...};
}
```

* Annotations will be taught later on in this course.
# Nested Class Types Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Inner (associated with outer instance)</th>
<th>Definition point</th>
<th>Visibility</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Static nested class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>As a member of another class.</td>
<td>Depends on access modifier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-static member class</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>As a member of another class.</td>
<td>Depends on access modifier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(regular inner class)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local class</td>
<td>Yes (if defined in non-static method)</td>
<td>Inside a method.</td>
<td>From the point it is defined to the end of the method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous class</td>
<td>Yes (if defined in non-static method)</td>
<td>As an expression (since defining it also returns the instance).</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nested Classes and the JVM

• There is no concept of nested classes in bytecode or in the JVM. The compiler generates a separate .class file for each class.

• Since access modifiers are enforced in the JVM, the compiler sometimes has to work hard to split nested classes into independent classes.
Inner Classes and the JVM

Likewise, any outer local variables used are passed in the constructor, which is why only final locals are permitted (what would happen otherwise?)

```java
public class Outer {
    class Inner {}
}
```

Inner actually compiles to something like:

```java
class Outer$Inner {
    Outer $this;
    Inner(Outer $this) {
        this.$this = $this;
    }
}
```
More Information

- Sun’s official tutorial at http://docs.oracle.com/javase/tutorial/java/ja
vaOO/nested.html