Comparing Objects
Learning Objectives

- Be able to implement the Comparable interface
- Be able to use the compareTo method to compare objects
Poll:

What gets returned when we compile & call `compare(false, true)`?

```java
public static int compare(boolean a, boolean b) {
    if (a > b) {
        return 1;
    } else if (a == b) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return -1;
    }
}
```
Poll:

What does the array \{2, 0, 1\} look like after we pass it in as input to mystery()?

```java
public static void mystery(int[] arr) {
    for (int i = 0; i < arr.length; i++) {
        int min = i;
        for (int j = i + 1; j < arr.length; j++) {
            if (arr[j] < arr[min]) {
                min = j;
            }
        }
        if (i != min) {
            int temp = arr[i];
            arr[i] = arr[min];
            arr[min] = temp;
        }
    }
}
```
Poll:

If we are trying to order the strings "Film" and "Movie", which comes first?
**Common Java Object Methods**

Four methods are essential for ordering & comparing Java objects

- `equals`: used for defining when two objects are *structurally* equal to each other
- `hashCode`: you'll learn about it in a future course
- `compare`, `compareTo`: for today!

Many built-in Java objects (like String) define these for you.

- For your own objects, you'll need to define them yourself.
compare & compareTo

Way back when, we've already seen `compareTo` for Strings!

```java
firstString.compareTo(secondString);
```

returns:

- 0 if both Strings are equal
- a negative number if `firstString` is less than (comes before) `secondString`
- a positive number if `firstString` is greater than (comes after) `secondString`
**compare & compareTo**

compareTo returns:

- 0 if both Strings are equal
- a negative number if `firstString` is less than (comes before) `secondString`
- a positive number if `firstString` is greater than (comes after) `secondString`

```
"apple".compareTo("banana"); // -1
"banana".compareTo("apple"); // 1
"apple".compareTo("apple"); // 0
```
Poll:

How could we change this code so that it can sort an array of Strings (instead of ints?)

```java
public static void mystery(int[] arr) {
    for (int i = 0; i < arr.length; i++) {
        int min = i;
        for (int j = i + 1; j < arr.length; j++) {
            if (arr[j] < arr[min]) {
                min = j;
            }
        }
        if (i != min) {
            int temp = arr[i];
            arr[i] = arr[min];
            arr[min] = temp;
        }
    }
}
```
Solution:

```java
public static void mystery(String[] arr) {
    for (int i = 0; i < arr.length; i++) {
        int min = i;
        for (int j = i + 1; j < arr.length; j++) {
            if (arr[j].compareTo(arr[min]) < 0) {
                min = j;
            }
        }
        if (i != min) {
            String temp = arr[i];
            arr[i] = arr[min];
            arr[min] = temp;
        }
    }
}
```
**Activity:** Imagine that we have a `Student` class that stores a `firstName`, `lastName`, `program`, and `programGPA`.

- We want to be able to compare two `Student` objects by their last names.
- If they have the same last name, then break ties by comparing their first names.
- If they have the same first & last name, then they are the same student.
  - (Speaking as a "Harry Smith" in the US, this is a gross oversimplification...)

```java
public class Student {
    private String firstName, lastName, program;
    private double programGPA;
    public int compareTo(Student other) {
        return -1; // TODO
    }
}
```
One Solution

```java
public int compareTo(Student other) {
    if (this.lastName.compareTo(other.lastName) < 0) {
        return -1;
    } else if (this.lastName.compareTo(other.lastName) > 0) {
        return 1;
    } else {
        if (this.firstName.compareTo(other.firstName) < 0) {
            return -1;
        } else if (this.firstName.compareTo(other.firstName) > 0) {
            return 1;
        } else {
            return 0;
        }
    }
}
```
A Concise Solution

```java
public int compareTo(Student other) {
    if (this.lastName.equals(other.lastName)) {
        return this.firstName.compareTo(other.firstName);
    }
    else {
        return this.lastName.compareTo(other.lastName);
    }
}
```
The **Comparable ADT**

- Built-in Java interface
- Defines a single abstract method for comparison: `compareTo`
  - By definition of interfaces, any class that implements `Comparable` must implement `compareTo`
- Objects of a class that implements `Comparable` are "sortable"
  - **If a class implements** `Comparable`, other built-in Java libraries will know how to make use of it!
  - e.g. makes `Arrays.sort(...)` possible automatically!
The Comparable ADT

`compareTo` compares two objects for ordering:

- returns a negative `int` if the `object on which the method is invoked` is less than the `object passed as a parameter`.
- returns `0` if the `object on which the method is invoked` is equal to the `object passed as a parameter`.
- returns a positive `int` if the `object on which the method is invoked` is greater than the `object passed as a parameter`.

```java
Object obj1; // the object that the method is invoked on in this example
Object obj2; // the object passed as a parameter in this example
obj1.compareTo(obj2);
```
Making an Object Sortable

Simply implement `Comparable`!

- tells Java "*this object can be sorted!*
- `Comparable` is generically typed, so you have to specify the type 🤔

```java
public class Student implements Comparable<Student> {
    private String firstName, lastName, program;
    private double programGPA;
    public int compareTo(Student other) {
        if (this.lastName.equals(other.lastName)) {
            return this.firstName.compareTo(other.firstName);
        } else {
            return this.lastName.compareTo(other.lastName);
        }
    }
}
```

// ... other methods ...
Implementing `Comparable`

- Mark that the class implements `Comparable<ClassName>`
- Implement `compareTo` returning a -ve, 0, or +ve value in the correct cases
- Keep in mind that the magnitude of the return value doesn't matter, just the sign!
**Using `Arrays.sort()`**

Arrays is the name of a library (static class) built-in to Java. You have to import it to use it.

```java
import java.util.Arrays;

public static void main(String[] args) {
    String[] arr = {
        "cherry",
        "apple",
        "banana"
    }; 
    Arrays.sort(arr); // sorts in place
    System.out.println(Arrays.toString(arr)); // [apple, banana, cherry]
}
```

`Arrays.sort` works on any array of objects that implement `Comparable`.
Sorting Lists

To sort a List, you need to use `Collections.sort()` instead of `Arrays.sort()`.

```java
import java.util.Collections;

public static void main(String[] args) {
    List<String> l = new ArrayList<String>();
    l.add("cherry");
    l.add("apple");
    l.add("banana");
    Collections.sort(l); // sorts in place
    System.out.println(l); // [apple, banana, cherry]
}
```
equals() is only useful for determining *referential* equality between objects

- Do these two references point to the same object?

equals() is a method that compares two objects for *structural* equality.

- Do these two objects represent the same thing?
The Duration Class

credit to this course website for the example idea

```java
public class Duration {
    private int minutes;
    private int seconds;

    public Duration(int minutes, int seconds) {
        this.minutes = minutes;
        this.seconds = seconds;
    }

    public boolean equals(Duration other) {
        ... }
}
```
Poll

Which of the following `Duration` objects is not *referentially* equal to `d1`? (i.e. not equal using `==`)?

```
Duration d1 = new Duration(1, 30);
Duration d2 = new Duration(1, 30);
Duration d3 = d1;
Duration d4 = d2;
```
**Poll**

Which of the following `Duration` objects should be considered *structurally* equal to `d1`?

- `Duration d1 = new Duration(1, 30);`
- `Duration d2 = new Duration(0, 90);`
- `Duration d3 = d1;`
- `Duration d4 = d2;`
- `Duration d5 = new Duration(1, 20);`
Drafting an Equals Method

How can we write the `equals()` method for the `Duration` class?

We want:

- the object to always be structurally equal to itself
  - (that is, referential equality should imply structural equality)
- a null object should never be structurally equal to anything
- two Durations should be equal if they represent the same amount of time
Poll

Is this good enough?

```java
public boolean equals(Duration other) {
    if (other == null) {
        return false;
    }
    return this.minutes == other.minutes && this.seconds == other.seconds;
}
```
Activity

Write a better `equals()` method for the `Duration` class.
Solution

```java
public int lengthInSeconds() {
    return this.minutes * 60 + this.seconds;
}

public boolean equals(Duration other) {
    if (other == null) { // handle null case
        return false;
    }
    if (other == this) { // handle referential equality
        return true;
    }
    return this.lengthInSeconds() == other.lengthInSeconds();
}
```
Discussion

Can you think of a place that it might be useful to define an `equals()` method in your Snake project?
**Relationship Between `equals()` & `compareTo()`**

Ideally, when `compareTo()` returns 0, `equals()` should return `true`, and vice versa. It's possible, though, that you might want to compare objects in a way that's more or less "detailed" than testing for equality.

- In practice: defining custom comparators allows for flexible behavior, but that's beyond the scope of this class
- For us: it's OK if `compareTo()` might say that some objects are "equal" even if `equals()` would return `false`.
This is a reasonable implementation of both methods, although they imply two different notions of equality.
Activity

The object Roster maintains an array of unique Student objects. Write a method that prints the array of students in sorted order.

- Note: don't print null Student references if they're present
- Keep in mind that Student implements Comparable<Student>, so you should offload the hard word of sorting to Arrays.sort(...)
- Student objects can be printed directly since they have a toString() method implemented.