

Design by Contract

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Design by contract

Bertrand Meyer, Object-Oriented Software Construction, Prentice Hall, 1997



Roadmap

1. Contracts, exceptions, failures, defects and assertions
2. Data abstraction — Stack example
3. Class invariants
4. Programming by Contract
5. Assertions



Roadmap

1.Contracts, exceptions, failures, defects and assertions

2.Data abstraction — Stack example

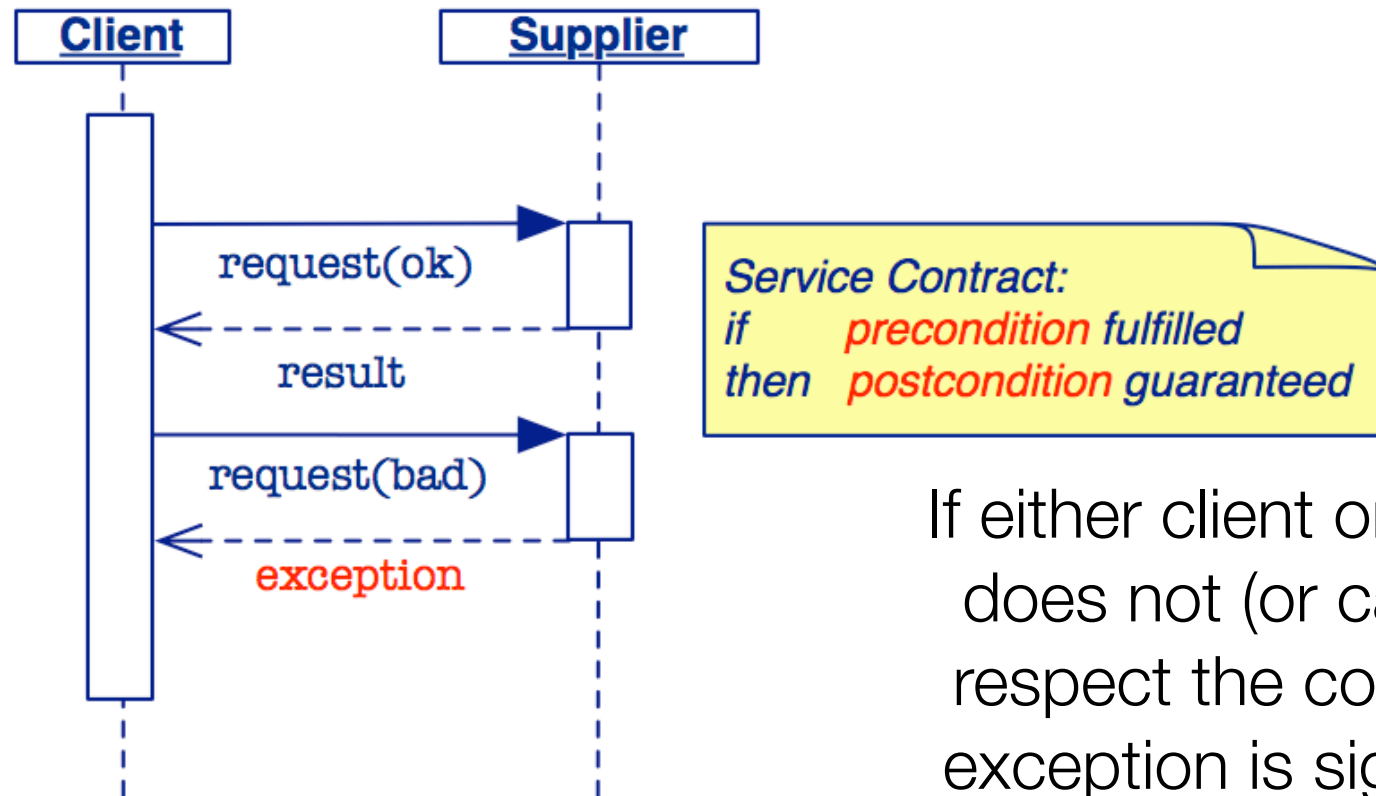
3.Class invariants

4.Programming by Contract

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Contracts



If either client or server does not (or cannot) respect the contract, exception is signaled.

Exceptions, failures and defects

An *exception* is the occurrence of an *abnormal condition during the execution* of a software element

A *failure* is the *inability of a software element to satisfy its purpose*

A *defect* (AKA “*bug*”) is the *presence in the software of some element not satisfying its specification*

Contracts may fail due to defects in the client or server code. *Failure* should be signaled by raising an *exception*

Assertions

An assertion is a declaration of a boolean expression that the programmer believes should hold at some point in a program.

Assertions should not affect the logic of the program

If an assertion fails, an exception should be raised

```
x = y*y;  
assert x >= 0;
```

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Stacks

A Stack is a classical data abstraction with many applications in computer programming.

Stacks support two mutating methods: push and pop.

| <i>Operatio</i> | <i>Stack</i> | <i>isEmpty()</i> | <i>size()</i> | <i>top()</i> |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| |  | TRUE | 0 | (error) |
| push(6) |  | FALSE | 1 | 6 |
| push(7) |  | FALSE | 2 | 7 |
| push(3) |  | FALSE | 3 | 3 |
| pop() |  | FALSE | 2 | 7 |
| push(2) |  | FALSE | 3 | 2 |
| pop() |  | FALSE | 2 | 7 |

Example: Balancing Parentheses

Problem

Determine whether an expression containing parentheses `()`, brackets `[]` and braces `{ }` is correctly balanced

Examples

balanced

```
if (a.b()) { c[d].e(); }  
else { f[g][h].i(); }
```

not balanced

```
((a+b()))
```

A simple algorithm

Approach:

when you read a *left* parenthesis, *push the matching parenthesis on a stack*

when you read a *right* parenthesis, *compare it to the value on top of the stack*

if they match, you pop and continue

if they mismatch, the expression is not balanced

if the stack is empty at the end, the whole expression is balanced, otherwise not

Using a Stack to match parentheses

Sample input: “([{ }]]”

| <i>Input</i> | <i>Case</i> | <i>Op</i> | <i>Stack</i> |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| (| left | push) |) |
| [| left | push] |)] |
| { | left | push } |)]] |
| } | match | pop |)] |
|] | match | pop |) |
|] | mismatch | ^false |) |

The ParenMatch class

A ParenMatch object *uses a stack* to check if parentheses in a text String are balanced:

```
public class ParenMatch {  
    private String line;  
    private StackInterface stack;  
  
    public ParenMatch (String aLine, StackInterface aStack)  
    {  
        line = aLine;  
        stack = aStack;  
    }  
}
```

A declarative algorithm

We implement our algorithm at a high level of abstraction:

```
public boolean parenMatch() {
    for (int i=0; i<line.length(); i++) {
        char c = line.charAt(i);
        if (isLeftParen(c)) { // expect matching right paren later
            stack.push(matchingRightParen(c)); // Autoboxed to Character
        } else {
            if (isRightParen(c)) {
                // empty stack => missing left paren
                if (stack.isEmpty()) { return false; }
                if (stack.top().equals(c)) { // Autoboxed
                    stack.pop();
                } else { return false; } // mismatched paren
            }
        }
    }
    return stack.isEmpty(); // not empty => missing right paren
}
```

Ugly, procedural version

```
public boolean parenMatch() {
    char[] chars = new char[1000]; // ugly magic number
    int pos = 0;
    for (int i=0; i<line.length(); i++) {
        char c = line.charAt(i);
        switch (c) { // what is going on here?
            case '{' : chars[pos++] = '}'; break;
            case '(' : chars[pos++] = ')'; break;
            case '[' : chars[pos++] = ']'; break;
            case ']' : case ')' : case '}' :
                if (pos == 0) { return false; }
                if (chars[pos-1] == c) { pos--; }
                else { return false; }
                break;
            default : break;
        }
    }
    return pos == 0; // what is this?
}
```

Helper methods

The helper methods are trivial to implement, and their details only get in the way of the main algorithm.

```
private boolean isLeftParen(char c) {  
    return (c == '(') || (c == '[') || (c == '{');  
}  
  
private boolean isRightParen(char c) {  
    return (c == ')') || (c == ']') || (c == '}');  
}
```


What is Data Abstraction?

An implementation of a stack consists of:

a *data structure* to represent the state of the stack

a *set of operations* that access and modify the stack

Encapsulation means *bundling together related entities*

Information hiding means *exposing an abstract interface* and hiding the rest

An Abstract Data Type (ADT):

encapsulates data and operations, and

hides the implementation behind a well-defined interface

StackInterface

Interfaces let us *abstract* from concrete implementations:

```
public interface StackInterface {  
    public boolean isEmpty();  
    public int size();  
    public void push(Object item);  
    public Object top() ;  
    public void pop();  
}
```

How can clients accept multiple implementations of an ADT?
Make them depend only on an interface or an abstract class.

Interfaces in Java

Interfaces reduce coupling between objects and their clients:

A class can implement multiple interfaces ... but can only extend one parent class

Clients should depend on an interface, not an implementation ... so implementations don't need to extend a specific class

Define an interface for any ADT that will have more than one implementation

Why are ADTs important?

Communication — Declarative Programming

An ADT exports what a client needs to know, and nothing more!

By using ADTs, you communicate what you want to do, not how to do it!

ADTs allow you to directly model your problem domain rather than how you will use to the computer to do so

Why are ADTs important?

Software Quality and Evolution

ADTs help you to *decompose a system into manageable parts*, each of which can be separately implemented and validated.

ADTs *protect clients from changes* in implementation.

ADTs encapsulate client/server *contracts*

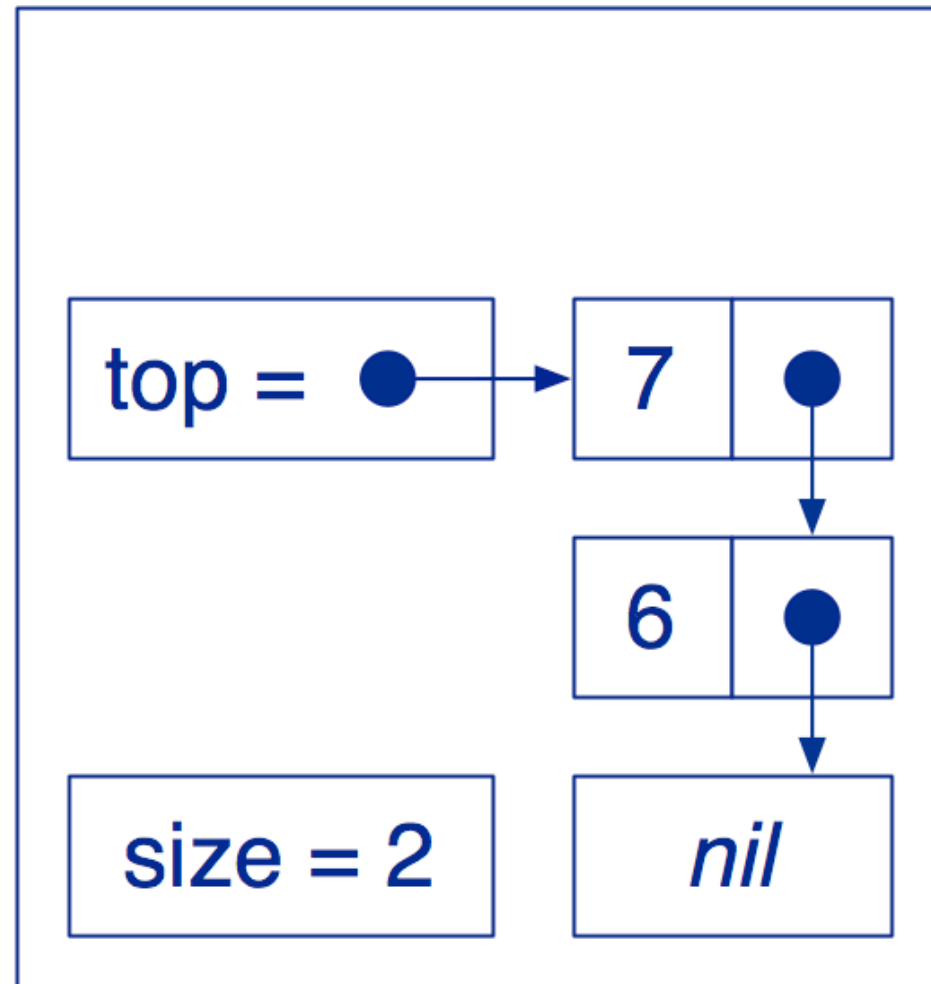
Interfaces to ADTs can be *extended* without affecting clients.

New implementations of ADTs can be *transparently added* to a system

Stacks as Linked Lists

A Stack can easily be implemented by a linked data structure:

```
stack = new Stack();  
stack.push(6);  
stack.push(7);  
stack.push(3);  
stack.pop();
```



LinkStack Cells

We can define the Cells of the linked list as an inner class within LinkStack:

```
public class LinkStack implements StackInterface {  
    private Cell top;  
    private class Cell {  
        Object item;  
        Cell next;  
        Cell(Object item, Cell next) {  
            this.item = item;  
            this.next = next;  
        }  
    }  
    ...  
}
```

Private vs Public instance variables

When should instance variables be public?

Always make instance variables private or protected.

The Cell class is a special case, since its instances are strictly private to LinkStack!

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LinkStack ADT

The constructor must construct a *valid initial state*:

```
public class LinkStack implements StackInterface {  
    ...  
    private int size;  
    public LinkStack() {  
        // Establishes the class invariant.  
        top = null;  
        size = 0;  
    }  
    ...  
}
```

Class Invariants

A class invariant is any condition that expresses the *valid states* for objects of that class:

- it must be *established* by every constructor

- every public method

 - may assume it holds when the method starts

 - must re-establish it when it finishes

Stack instances must satisfy the following invariant:

- size ≥ 0

- ...

LinkStack Class Invariant

A valid LinkStack instance has an integer size, and a top that points to a sequence of linked Cells, such that:

size is always ≥ 0

When size is zero, top points nowhere ($== \text{null}$)

When size > 0 , top points to a Cell containing the top item

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Design by Contract

Every ADT is designed to provide certain *services* given certain *assumptions* hold

An ADT establishes a contract with its clients by associating a precondition and a postcondition to every operation O , which states:

if the precondition does not hold, the ADT is not required to provide anything!

In other words...

Design by Contract = Don't accept anybody else's
garbage!

Pre- and Postconditions

The precondition binds clients:

- it defines what the ADT requires for a call to the operation to be legitimate

- it may involve initial state and arguments

The postcondition, in return, binds the supplier:

- it defines the conditions that the ADT ensures on return

- it may only involve the initial and final states, the arguments and the result

Benefits and Obligations

A contract provides benefits and obligations for both clients and suppliers:

| | <i>Obligations</i> | <i>Benefits</i> |
|------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Client</i> | Only call pop() on a non-empty stack! | Stack size decreases by 1. Top element is removed. |
| <i>Supplier</i> | Decrement the size. Remove the top element. | No need to handle case when stack is empty! |

Stack pre- and postconditions

Our Stacks should deliver the following contract:

| <i>Operation</i> | <i>Requires</i> | <i>Ensures</i> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <code>isEmpty()</code> | - | <i>no state change</i> |
| <code>size()</code> | - | <i>no state change</i> |
| <code>push(Object item)</code> | - | not empty, size == old size + 1. |
| <code>top()</code> | not empty | <i>no state change</i> |
| <code>pop()</code> | not empty | size == old size |

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Assertions

An assertion is any boolean expression we expect to be true at some point

Assertions have four principle applications

Help in writing correct software

formalizing invariants, and pre- and post-conditions

Documentation aid

specifying contracts

Debugging tool

testing assertions at run-time

Support for software fault tolerance

detecting and handling failures at run-time

Assertions since Java 1.4

assert is a keyword in Java as of version 1.4

```
assert expression;
```

will raise an AssertionError if expression is false.

NB: Throwable Exceptions must be declared; Errors and runtime errors need not be!

Testing Invariants

Every class has its own invariant:

```
protected boolean invariant() {  
    return (size >= 0) &&  
        ( (size == 0 && this.top == null)  
        || (size > 0 && this.top != null));  
}
```

Why protected and not private?

Disciplined Exceptions

There are only two reasonable ways to react to an exception:

- clean up the environment and *report failure* to the client
("organized panic")

- attempt to change the conditions that led to failure and *retry*

It is not acceptable to return control to the client without special notification

Disciplined Exceptions

When should an object throw an exception?

If and only if an assertion is violated

If it is not possible to run your program without raising an exception, then you are abusing the exception-handling mechanism!

Checking pre-conditions

Assert pre-conditions to inform clients when they violate the contract.

```
public Object top() {  
    assert(!this.isEmpty());    // pre-condition  
    return top.item;  
}
```

When should you check pre-conditions to methods?

Always check pre-conditions, raising exceptions if they fail.

Checking post-conditions

Assert post-conditions and invariants to inform yourself when you violate the contract.

```
public void push(Object item) {  
    top = new Cell(item, top);  
    size++;  
    assert !this.isEmpty();           // post-condition  
    assert this.top() == item;       // post-condition  
    assert invariant();  
}
```

When should you check post-conditions?

Check them whenever the implementation is non-trivial.

Running parenMatch

```
public static void parenTestLoop(StackInterface stack) {
    BufferedReader in =
        new BufferedReader(new InputStreamReader(System.in));
    String line;
    try {
        System.out.println("Please enter parenthesized expressions to test");
        System.out.println("(empty line to stop)");
        do {
            line = in.readLine();
            System.out.println(new ParenMatch(line, stack).reportMatch());
        } while(line != null && line.length() > 0);
        System.out.println("bye!");
    } catch (IOException err) {
    } catch (AssertionException err) {
        err.printStackTrace();
    }
}
```

Running ParenMatch.main ...

```
Please enter parenthesized expressions to test
(empty line to stop)
(hello) (world)
"(hello) (world)" is balanced
()
"()" is balanced
static public void main(String args[]) {
"static public void main(String args[]) {" is not balanced
()
"()" is not balanced
}
"}" is balanced

"" is balanced
bye!
```

Which contract is
being violated?

What you should know!

What is the difference between encapsulation and information hiding?

What is an assertion?

How are contracts formalized by pre- and post-conditions?

What is a class invariant and how can it be specified?

What are assertions useful for?

How can exceptions be used to improve program robustness?

What situations may cause an exception to be raised?

Can you answer these questions?

Why is strong coupling between clients and suppliers a bad thing?

When should you call `super()` in a constructor?

When should you use an inner class?

How would you write a general `assert()` method that works for any class?

What happens when you `pop()` an empty `java.util.Stack`? Is this good or bad?

What impact do assertions have on performance?

Can you implement the missing `LinkStack` methods?

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