

Activity 5: Methods

Java programs are organized into *classes*, each of which has one or more *methods*, each of which has one or more *statements*. Writing methods allows you to break down a complex program into smaller blocks of reusable code.

Content Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- Apply methods from the Math class based on their documentation.
- Explain the syntax of a method declaration (parameters and return type).
- Draw a diagram that shows the call stack at a given point of execution.

Process Skill Goals

During the activity, students should make progress toward:

- Tracing the execution of methods to determine contents of memory. (Critical Thinking)



Model 1 Math Methods

Consider the following methods defined in the Math class:

```
public static int abs(int a)
public static double log(double a)
public static double pow(double a, double b)
public static double random()
public static int subtractExact(int x, int y)
```

Note this list isn't exhaustive; Math has over 70 methods in total. To invoke methods from another class (like Math), you must first specify the class name:

```
value = abs(-5);           // Error: cannot find symbol
value = Math.abs(-5);     // correct
```

The period in this example is called the *dot operator*. When reading the above code out loud, you would say "math dot abs". Here is the Java documentation for the methods listed above:

Modifier and Type	Method and Description
static int	abs (int a) Returns the absolute value of an int value.
static double	log (double a) Returns the natural logarithm (base <i>e</i>) of a double value.
static double	pow (double a, double b) Returns the value of the first argument raised to the power of the second argument.
static double	random () Returns a double value with a positive sign, greater than or equal to 0.0 and less than 1.0.
static int	subtractExact (int x, int y) Returns the difference of the arguments, throwing an exception if the result overflows an int.

Questions (15 min)

Start time: _____

1. What type of value does `Math.random()` return? Give an example of what it would look like.

2. When *invoking* a method, what do you need to specify before the method name and after the method name?

3. For each method, write a Java statement that invokes it and assigns the result to a variable.

4. When *defining* a method, what do you need to specify before the method name and after the method name?

5. Define a method named `average` that requires two integers `x` and `y` and returns a `double`. (Don't write any semicolons or braces.)

*What you wrote for the previous question is called the method's **signature**. The variables declared inside the parentheses are called **parameters**. When invoking the method, the values you provide are called **arguments**. Since arguments will be assigned to parameters, their types must be compatible.*

6. How many parameters and arguments does each method have? In the table below, what is the relationship between the last two columns?

Method	# Params	# Args
<code>abs</code>		
<code>log</code>		
<code>pow</code>		
<code>random</code>		
<code>subtractExact</code>		
<code>println</code>		

7. Consider the statement `System.out.println("Price: " + price);` where the value of `price` is 9.99. What is the argument that `println` receives?

8. Consider the statement `System.out.printf("Price: %f", price);` where the value of `price` is 9.99. Why does `println` use *plus* and `printf` use *comma* to specify the arguments?

Model 2 Invoke and Return

Each statement in this program *invokes* (or calls) a method. At the end of a method, Java *returns* to where it was invoked. The list of events on the right illustrates how the program runs.

```
1 public class Model {  
2  
3     public static void main(String[] args) {  
4         System.out.println("First line.");  
5         threeLine();  
6         System.out.println("Second line.");  
7     }  
8  
9     public static void newLine() {  
10        System.out.println();  
11    }  
12  
13    public static void threeLine() {  
14        newLine();  
15        newLine();  
16        newLine();  
17    }  
18  
19 }
```

```
INVOKE println  
RETURN to line 5  
INVOKE threeLine  
    INVOKE newLine  
        INVOKE println  
        RETURN to line 11  
    RETURN to line 15  
    INVOKE newLine  
        INVOKE println  
        RETURN to line 11  
    RETURN to line 16  
    INVOKE newLine  
        INVOKE println  
        RETURN to line 11  
    RETURN to line 17  
RETURN to line 6  
INVOKE println  
RETURN to line 7
```

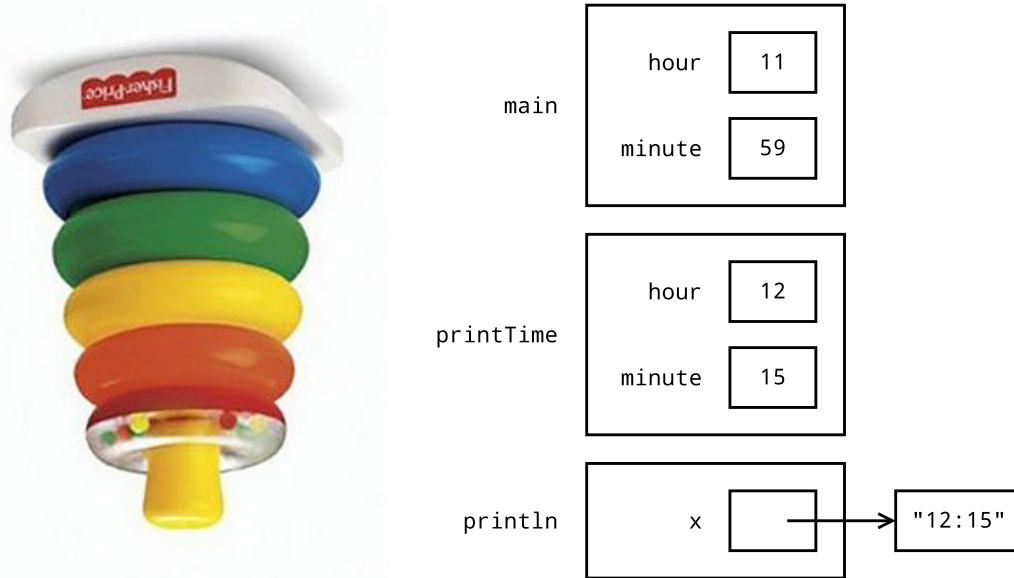
Questions (15 min)

Start time: _____

9. How many lines of source code invoke the `println` method?
10. How many times is `println` invoked when the program runs?
11. For each `INVOKE` on the right, draw an arrow to the corresponding line of code. (Plan ahead so that crossing lines will still be legible.)
12. What is the output of the program? Please write `\n` to show each newline character.
13. When Java sees a name like `x`, `count`, or `newline`, how can it tell whether it's a variable or a method? (Hint: syntax)
14. What is the difference between a method and a variable? What do they have in common?
15. In your own words, describe what methods are for. Why not just write everything in `main`?

Model 3 Stack Diagrams

Each method has its own area of memory to store parameters and other variables. When a method is invoked, Java allocates this memory on the *call stack*. For convenience, we draw “stack” diagrams upside down.



```
public static void printTime(int hour, int minute) {  
    System.out.println(hour + ":" + minute);  
}
```

```
public static void main(String[] args) {  
    int hour = 11;  
    int minute = 59;  
    printTime(12, 15);  
}
```

Questions (15 min)

Start time: _____

16. Based on the diagram, how many methods does the program call?
17. Based on the diagram, how many variables does the program have?
18. How do stack diagrams extend the memory diagrams we've seen previously?

19. How is it possible that two variables with the same name can have different values?

20. Draw a stack diagram to show the state of memory just before `println` is called. Assume the user inputs the value 10. (You should be able to do this kind of math without a calculator.)

```
public static void show(double c) {
    double f;
    String str;
    f = c * 1.8 + 32;
    str = String.format("%.1f C = %.1f F\n", c, f);
    System.out.println(str);
}

public static void main(String[] args) {
    double c;
    Scanner in = new Scanner(System.in);
    System.out.print("Enter temperature in Celsius: ");
    c = in.nextDouble();
    show(c);
}
```

21. What is the difference between the `String.format` method (used in the previous question) and `System.out.printf`?