

# ARRAYS AND ITS BASICS

## Arrays

Often programs must manipulate many similar objects. For example, if we were writing a program for searching the library's catalog, we might imagine that the program would have a different object for each book. We could hope to have a separate variable referencing each object, but this isn't practical if our program deals with thousands of objects (as with our library example). Luckily, Java provides a construct called an *array* for this situation.

### 19.1. Basics

An array is essentially a line of variables. Each single variable in the array is called an array element.

To create a variable for referencing an array, use a variable declaration of the following form.

```
<typeOfElement>[] <arrayVariableName>;
```

For example, the following creates a variable `score` that can reference an array of numbers.

```
double[] score;
```

This creates a variable that can reference an array. Like object variables, it does not actually reference an array yet. To create an array and assign the array variable to reference it, we will use the `new` keyword.

```
score = new double[6];
```

This is the syntax for creating an array: the `new` keyword, followed by the type name of each array element, followed by the length of the array enclosed in brackets. The integer in brackets can be any expression (`2 * numStudents` instead of `3`, for example).

Creating such an array sets up the `score` variable to look as follows in the computer's memory. (The numbers in the array, however, all default to 0.)

`score` 

To work with an array, we reference individual elements according to their array index. The first array element has an index of 0, the second has an index of 1, and so on.



Yes, that's *one less than the array length*. So if you declare an array `score` of length 3, the three array indices are 0, 1, and 2, since Java always begins numbering from 0. (Starting from 0 turns out to be more convenient than the intuitive choice of 1.) So even though the array has a length of 3, there is no array element with an index of 3

If you try to access an undefined array index, the program will crash with an `ArrayIndexOutOfBoundsException`. So be careful with array indices.

To refer to an array element in an expression, type the array variable name, followed by the element's array index enclosed in brackets. You can also do this on the left-hand side of an assignment statement to alter an array element's contents.

```
double[] score = new double[3];
score[0] = 97.0;
score[1] = 83.0;
score[2] = 66.0;
println("Average = " + ((score[0] + score[1] + score[2]) / 3.0));
```

In these statements we create an array of three numbers, called `score`. We assigned its three boxes to refer to three test scores, 97, 83, and 66. And finally we printed the average of these. The computer will display 82.0.

The significance of arrays comes when you use an expression to access a particular element of the array. [Figure 19.1](#) contains a short program that reads a sequence of numbers into an array and then prints the numbers in reverse order. For example, the user might experience the following in running the program. (What the user types is in boldface.)

```
How many scores? 3
Type the scores now.
2
3
5
Here they are in reverse order.
5.0
3.0
2.0
```

There's no way we could write a program to accomplish this using what we had seen in previous chapters. Using arrays, however, allows us to store an arbitrarily large sequence of data with no troubles.

**Figure 19.1:** The `PrintReverse` program.

```
1 import acm.program.*;
2
3 public class PrintReverse extends Program {
4     public void run() {
5         // create the array
6         int num_scores = readInt("How many scores? ");
7         double[] score;
8         score = new double[num_scores];
9
10        // fill the array
11        for(int i = 0; i < num_scores; i++) {
12            score[i] = readDouble("Score " + i + ": ");
13        }
14
15        // print it in reverse
16        println("Here they are in reverse order.");
17        for(int i = num_scores - 1; i >= 0; i--) {
18            println(" " + score[i]);
19        }
20    }
21 }
```

Java includes a special technique for accessing the length of an array, using the word `length`. In any expression, you can write the array name, followed by a period and the word `length`, and the value will be the number of items that the array was created to hold. As an example, we could rewrite line 11 of [Figure 19.1](#) as follows.

```
for(int i = 0; i < score.length; i++) { //@ num_scores
```

It's preferable to use the `length` keyword when appropriate, in favor of using some other variable that happens to represent the length of the array.



You'll recall that the `String` class provides a `length` method that returns the number of characters in a string. Thus, if we want to know how long the `String` referenced by a variable `name` is, we use `name.length()`.

With arrays, though, `length` is a special word built into Java, not a method. As a result, parentheses are *not* applied to `length` when used with an array. To determine how long the array referenced by `score`, we type `score.length`, not `score.length()`.

Source : <http://www.toves.org/books/java/ch19-array/index.html>