Lab: References and Objects
CSC 207, “Algorithms and Object-Oriented Design”
Department of Computer Science
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The file /home/hajiamini/courses/CSC207/Switch.java contains a class definition for objects of a familiar and particularly simple kind: two-position switches, like the power switch on a vacuum cleaner.

A Switch has one bit of internal state: It can be either in the “on” position or in the “off” position. Its repertoire of behaviors is likewise quite limited: It has a report method that tells the caller what the state of the switch is and a turn method that allows the caller to turn the switch off or on (that is, to force the state of the switch to a specified value). The one extra feature that is supported is a toggle method that changes the current state of the switch to the opposite value.

1. Copy the Switch.java into your own directory and run javac to compile it.

2. Write the definition for a SwitchTester class with a public, static main method that determines and reports the state of a newly created Switch object.

3. In the main method (or, if you prefer, in a separate method that main invokes), create a new Switch object, assign it to a variable, and then assign that variable to a second variable. The textbook asserts that these “reference variables” are now referring to one and the same Switch. Test this claim by changing the state of the switch that one variable refers to and then inspecting the state of the switch that the other variable refers to. What result do you expect to see if the textbook’s assertion is correct?

4. Design and implement a similar test to verify or refute the textbook’s assertion that when an object (such as a Switch) appears as an argument in a method call, what is actually passed to the method is a reference to that object rather than a separate copy of it, so that side effects on the object’s state occurring inside the method body persist after return from the method.

5. Design and implement a similar test to determine whether two separately created switches can be toggled independently, without changing the state of the other.

6. Design and implement a test to verify or refute the textbook’s assertion that two separately created switches are not “equal” (as determined by the == operator) even if they have the same internal state.

7. In the SwitchTester class, write a public, static method that takes a Switch as its argument and returns a String value — either "on" or "off", depending on the state of the switch.

8. Extend the class definition of Switch, adding a new method called sameState that takes another Switch as its argument and determines whether the state of that Switch is the same as the state of the Switch within which the method is called. For example, after the declarations

   Switch power = new Switch();
   Switch lights = new Switch();

the call power.sameState(lights) should return true if the two switches are both on or both off, false if one is on and the other is off.

Recompile the Switch class definition and design and implement unit tests for the sameState method, adding them to the main method of your SwitchTester class. Recompile and run SwitchTester as a program.

9. Extend the class definition of Switch, adding a new method called conformToConsensus that takes three switches as arguments and causes the Switch within which the method is called to adjust its internal state, if necessary, to match the state of the majority of the arguments (turning
10. It is possible for a class to have two or more constructors, provided that their parameter lists are different enough that the Java compiler can determine unambiguously, by looking at the number and types of the arguments, which of the constructors is being called.

Add to the definition of Switch a second constructor that takes a Boolean value as its argument and initializes the on field of the newly constructed Switch to that Boolean value.

Revise the SwitchTester program so that it tests this new constructor.

11. Add two static fields, OFF and ON, to the definition of the Switch class, each denoting one of the two Boolean values that can be stored in the on field of a Switch object. (This enables application programmers to write, for instance, ‘Switch.OFF’ rather than ‘false’ when supplying a parameter to the turn method.) Revise the SwitchTester program to use these new constants.