COMP2012H

Access Control:
public, protected, private
Example: print

Let's add a `print()` method to our U. Admin. classes.

```cpp
// Example code

class Person {
public:
    void print() const; ... 
};
class Student : public Person {
public:
    void print() const; ... 
};

void Person::print() const {
    cout << "--- Person details ---" << endl;
    cout << "Name: " << name << "Addr: " << address << "Dept: " << dept << endl;
}

void Student::print() const {
    cout << "--- Student details ---" << endl
         << "Name: " << name << "Addr: " << address << "Dept: " << dept << endl
         << "Enrolled in:" << endl;
    for (int i = 0; i < num_courses; ++i) {
        enrolled[i].print();  // Assume a print function in the Course class
    }
}
```
Example: Doesn't Compile!

• The implementation of `Student::print()` given before doesn't work. It will cause a compilation error.

• `Student::print` cannot access `Student::name`, `Student::address`, or `Student::dept`.
  
  – Since `name` is a private data member of the base class, the derived class cannot access it.
  
  – Public inheritance does not change the access control of the data members of the base class: private members are still only available to its own methods, and not to any other classes including derived classes (except friends).
One Solution: Protected Data Members

class Person
{
    protected:
        string name;
        string address;
        Department dept;
    public:
        void print() const;
        ...
};

• By making name, address, dept protected, they are accessible to methods in the base class as well as methods in the derived classes.
• They should not be public though!
Member Access Control: public, protected, private

• There are 3 levels of member (data or methods) access control:
  – **public**: members can be used by itself and the whole world; any function can access them.
  – **protected**: methods (and **friends**) of itself and any derived class can use it.
  – **private**: members can only be used by its own methods (and its **friends**).

• Without inheritance, **private** and **protected** have exactly same meaning.

• The only difference is that methods of a derived class can access **protected** members of a base class, but cannot access **private** members of a base class.
protected vs. private

• So why not always use protected instead of private?

  – Because protected means that we have less encapsulation: Remember that all derived classes can access protected data members of the base class.
  – Assume that later you decided to change the implementation of the base class having the protected data members.
  – For example, we might want to represent address by a new class called Address instead of string. If the address data member is private, we can easily make this change. The class documentation does not need to be changed.
  – If it is protected, we have to go through all derived classes and change them. We also need to update the class documentation.
protected vs. private

- In general, it is preferable to have private members instead of protected members.
- Use `protected` only where it is really necessary. `private` is the only category ensuring full encapsulation.

- In our example, there is no reason at all to make `name`, `address`, `dept` `protected`, as we can access the name and address through the public member functions:
Example: print Using Public Functions Only

```cpp
void Student::print() const
{
    cout << "--- Student details ---" << endl
    << "Name: " << get_name() << endl
    << "Addr: " << get_address() << endl
    << "Department: " << get_dept() << endl
    << "Enrolled in:" << endl;

    for (int i = 0; i < num_courses; ++i) {
        enrolled[i].print();
    }
}
```
Example Again

- Let's use the print method now:

```java
Person mouse("Mickey", "Disney World", arts);
Teacher einstein("Albert Einstein", "USA", physics, professor);
Student plato("Plato", "Greece", philosophy);
plato.enroll_course("COMP151");

mouse.print();
einstein.print();
plato.print();
```
Example Again: Output

(assume: `enum Department { arts, physics, philosophy, ... }`)

--- Person details ---
Name: Mickey
Addr: Disney World
Dept: 0

--- Teacher details ---
Name: Albert Einstein
Addr: USA
Dept: 1
Rank: Full Professor

--- Student details ---
Name: Plato
Addr: Greece
Dept: 2
Enrolled in:
COMP151