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## 11 Conclusion


Illustrations
Programming is a lot more than just writing algorithms or programs. Programming is all about communication. Communication with others: the other programmers that will participate to your development effort but also with yourself. Indeed finding good names is a really important task because using the right name often opens the door to new spaces where your design can bloom and expand.

The purpose of a programming style guide such as this book is to provide a simple vehicle for addressing the needs of a good communication. The goal is to make source code clear, easy to read, and easy to understand and extend.

These conventions are not cast in stone but they set the foundation of a common culture. Culture is important when programming.

We got influenced by the excellent little book called *Smalltalk with Style*. We hope that you will enjoy this one and that it will help you to become a better communicating designer.

Feedback and suggestions are welcome at stephane.ducasse@inria.fr. PullRequests on https://github.com/SquareBracketAssociates/Booklet-PharoWithStyle are also welcome.

Special thank to Réné-Paul Mages, Christopher Furhman, Benoit St Jean and Masashi Fujita, Nathan Reilly, Esteban Maringolo for their feedback. S. Ducasse - 12 August 2019.
Names are important. We will never repeat it enough. A good name is often
driven by a domain.

1.1 Guideline: Favor simple direct meaning

Some native English writers use often more precise but less common terms.
Consider that your software may be read by people from different cultures.
So use simple, mainstream, and common terms. Avoid hidden or implied
meanings that can only be understood by a limited group of people. Make
information explicit.

1.2 Guideline: Avoid underscores and favor camel case

Prefer

[timeOfDay

over

[Not timeofday
[Not time_of_day

Prefer

[GnatXmlNode

over

[Not GNAT_XML_Object

Prefer
When creating private low-level methods that bind to external C-libraries, you may want to use underscores to follow C conventions to ease tracing back the communication between libraries. In such a case, limit your use to carefully thought cases.

1.3 Guideline: Use camel case

Remember MaxLimit, maxLimit, maxlimit, and MAXLIMIT are all different identifiers in Pharo.

| MaxLimit maxLimit |
MaxLimit := 10.
maxLimit := 20.
MaxLimit

Still, Pharo favors camel case, so use it systematically for words. Wikipedia defines camel case as: Camel case (stylized as camelCase) is the practice of writing phrases such that each word or abbreviation in the middle of the phrase begins with a capital letter, with no intervening spaces or punctuation.

For local variables, method parameters and instance variables, use

maxLimit

instead of

Not maxlimit
Not MAXLIMIT

For classes, or shared variables, use

OrderedCollection
MaxLimit

instead of

Not ORDEREDCOLLECTION
Not MAXLIMIT

Note In a compound word, do not confuse a prefix or suffix with a word when trying to determine which words should begin with an upper case letter. For example, some readers may think that the "c" in subclass should be upper case, but sub is a prefix, not a word. When in doubt about prefixes and suffixes, check a dictionary.
1.4 Guideline: Use descriptive names

Choose descriptive names that capture domain entities unambiguously.

Prefer
[superclass
over
[Not superClass

1.4 Guideline: Use descriptive names

Choose descriptive names that capture domain entities unambiguously.

Prefer
[timeOfDay
over
[Not tod
Prefer
[milliseconds
over
[not mil
Prefer
[editMenu
over
[not eMenu

1.5 Guideline: Pay attention to meaning

Non-English native speakers often misplace word qualifiers. In English the qualifier is often before the word it qualifies.

Prefer
[DateParser
over
[Not ParserForDate

Prefer
[userAssociation
(an association of users)
over
Compare the three following variables:

```plaintext
sizeToRead
sizeJustRead
readSize
```

In this situation, avoid homographs (https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/homograph). That is, words that are written the same way but can have different meanings or pronunciations. For example, Did you read that book? ... Yes, I read it yesterday. About readSize: does this mean that the size was just read (red) or it is the size to read (reed)? Favor words with unique pronunciation.

1.6 **Guideline: Method selectors start with lowercase**

Prefer

```plaintext
getMethodsNamesFromClass: aClass

| methodsNames |
| methodsNames := aClass selectors.

methodsNames do: [ :each | names add: each ]
```

over

```plaintext
GetMethodsNamesFromClass: aClass

| methodsNames |
| methodsNames := aClass selectors.

methodsNames do: [ :each | names add: each ]
```

Also, in this example the method selector is not good because method names are called selectors in Pharo. In addition in English methodsNames should be written methodName. It should be `{methodsNames}.getSelectorsFrom:` or something similar.

1.7 **Guideline: Follow domain**

Follow the domain concepts and culture of the project. Do not invent your own terms because you think they are better. Favor regularity (consistency) over preciseness.

Prefer

```plaintext
GnatXmlNode
```

over

```plaintext
not GNAT_XML_Object
```

When representing the XML Ada abstract syntax tree in Pharo, we should not follow Ada naming conventions. The name should convey that the class is an
Abstract syntax tree node. Hence GnatXmlNode is much better than GnatXmlObject.

Another example is the following: In Moose, an importer is an object creating FAMIX entities (classes, methods, etc.) from the data structure representing a language element, usually an Abstract Syntax Tree (AST). Therefore GNATInstaller, which creates entities from an AST, should be renamed GnatImporter and GNATImporter, which loads an AST in memory should be renamed GnatASTLoader.

**1.8 Guideline: Shared variables start with uppercase**

Begin class names, global variables, pool variables, and class variables with an uppercase letter. If the word is compound, then use use camel case for the rest.

```
Point "Class"
Transcript "global variable"
PackageGlobalOrganizer "class variables"
```

**1.9 Guideline: Private variables start with lowercase**

Begin instance variables, temporary variables, method parameters, and method selectors with lower case. If the word is compound, then use camel case for the rest.

```
address
classExtensionSelectors
classTags

Prefer
[ | dataset f xMatrix scale x | 

ever
[ | dataset f Xmatrix scale X | ]
```

**1.10 Guideline: Avoid underscore in variable identifiers**

In Pharo variables are using camelCase, just follow this convention.

```
Prefer
[ | dataset pca scaledX reducedX | 

ever
[ | dataset pca scaled_X reduced_X | ]
```
1.11 **Guideline: Favor unique meaning and pronunciation**

Choose names that have a unique meaning. Avoid homographs.

Prefer

- `sizeToRead`
- `sizeJustRead`

Not `readSize`

Does this mean that the size was just read (red) or is it the size to read (reed)?

1.12 **Guideline: Class names should indicate the class’ parent**

Suffix class names with the root class to convey the kind of object we are talking about.

For example, without the `Morph` suffix, the reader is forced to check the superclass to understand if the class is about a graphical object or not.

Prefer

- `ClyBrowserButtonMorph`

Not `ClyBrowserButton`

Prefer

- `ClyQueryViewMorph`

Not `ClyQueryView`

In the following, not mentioning the `Presenter` suffix makes it unclear to the reader that it is a Presenter object as opposed to a Model object.

Prefer

- `ApplicationWithToolBarPresenter`

Not `ApplicationWithToolbar`

In the next example, `DynamicWidgetChange` does not convey that this is not a domain object representing a change, but a Presenter object in the Model-View-Presenter triad:

- `DynamicWidgetChangePresenter`

over
1.13 Guideline: Avoid name collisions

To avoid name space collisions, add a prefix indicative of the project to the name of the class.

---

**Note** You may find that Pharo is lacking a namespace. If you have a couple hundred thousands euros, we can fix that!

Note, however, that even with a namespace you will have to pay attention that your namespace name does not collide with another one.
When choosing an appropriate name for a variable, the developer is faced with the decision: Should I choose a name that conveys semantic meaning to tell the user how to use the variable, or should I choose a name that indicates the type of object the variable is storing? There are good arguments for both styles. Let us see what are the guidelines that can help us find the right balance.

2.1 Guideline: Favor semantic variables

A semantic name is less restrictive than a type name. When modifying code, it is possible that a variable may change type. But unless one redefines the method, the semantics of it will not change. We recommend using semantically meaningful names wherever possible.

In the example below, the typed variable does not indicate how it will be used whereas the semantic variable does.

Prefer

```plaintext
"Semantic variable"
newSizeOfArray := numberOfAdults size max: numberOfChildren size over

"Typed variable"
anInteger := numberOfAdults size max: numberOfChildren size
```

Note that semantic name can convey variable roles. Having more information is definitively useful for clients of the code.

Prefer
"Semantic variable"
selectFrom: aBeginningDate to: anEndDate

over

"Type variable"
selectFrom: aDate to: anotherDate

Finding a semantic name is not always as obvious as demonstrated above. There are cases in which choosing a descriptive semantic name is difficult.

2.2 Guideline: Use typed variables to indicate API

Using type variable is interesting to convey the API (set of messages) that the object held in the variable responds to.

Below aDictionary conveys that the argument should have the same API as a Dictionary (at:, at:put:)

Prefer
properties: aDictionary

over

Not properties: map

You may also want to stress specific types in an API referencing to interface that the object implements.

Prefer
properties: aPuttable

over

Not properties: aCollection

Suppose a String, a Symbol, and nil are valid for a parameter. A developer may be tempted to use the name aStringOrSymbolOrNil.

You may be tempted to aString or anObject. anObject is not really helping the developer that will have to use such variables. At the minimum such a use should be accompanied with a comment that says, "anObject can be a String or aSymbol"

Some developers may argue that type variables should not refer to classes that do not exist. We disagree. As shown in the following guideline it is a lot better to indicate that an argument is block expecting two arguments (hence a binary block) than to just mention a block. And this even if there is no binary block class in the system.

Prefer
inject: anObject into: aBinaryBlock
2.3 Guideline: Get the best from semantic and type variable

over
injected: anObject into: aBlock

Note that for inject:into: the best naming is to mix semantic and type naming as in
injected: initialValue into: aBinaryBlock

2.3 Guideline: Get the best from semantic and type variable

A good practice is to use a mixture of both semantic and typed variable names. Method parameter names are usually named after their type. Instance, class, and temporary variables usually use a semantic name. In some cases, a combination of both can be given in the names.

Prefer
ifTrue: trueBlock ifFalse: falseBlock

over
Not ifTrue: block1 ifFalse: block2
Not ifTrue: action1 ifFalse: action2

The following are other examples of good names.

injected: initialValue into: aBinaryBlock
copyFrom: start to: stop
findFirst: aBlock ifNone: errorBlock
paddedTo: newLength with: anObject

2.4 Guideline: Use semantics for state variable

State variable names (instance variables, class variables, or class instance variables) are usually semantic-based. A combination of semantic and type information can be really powerful, too.

Prefer
"In class PhoneBook"
phoneNumber
name

over
Not number
Not labelForPerson
2.5 **Guideline: Use predicate for Boolean**

Use predicate clauses or adjectives for Boolean objects or states. Do not use predicate clauses for non-Boolean states.

- `alarmEnabled`

2.6 **Guideline: Use common nouns and phrases**

Use common nouns and phrases for objects that are not Boolean.

- "In class Vehicle..."
  - `numberOfTires`
  - `numberOfDoors`

- "In class AlarmClock..."
  - `time`
  - `alarmTime`

- "In class TypeSetter..."
  - `page`
  - `font`
  - `outputDevice`

Note that you can also use `count` instead of `numberOf` as in the following example:

- `numberOfTires`
  - `tireCount`
Method names in Pharo are called selectors. They are used in messages and are the main vehicle to convey adequate meaning. The correct use of words and design of selectors is important.

3.1 **Guideline: Choose selectors to form short sentences**

Choose method names so that someone reading the message can read the expression as if it were a sentence.

Prefer

```
[FileDescriptor seekTo: word from: self position
Not FileDescriptor lseek: word at: self position
```

Write the test first, and make sure that your test scenario reads well.

3.2 **Guideline: Use imperative verbs for actions**

Use imperative verbs for message which perform an action.

```
transform
    selectors do: [:each | self pushDown: each].
    selectors do: [:each | class removeMethod: each]
```

Prefer

```
aReadStream peek
```

over

```
Not aReadStream word
```
Prefer

- `aFace lookSurprised`
- `aFace beSurprised` over
- `Not aFace surprised`

`skipSeparators`

Pay attention that some words can be interpreted as interrogative, whereas you want to give them an imperative meaning.

For example, compare:

- `optimized`
- `triggerOptimization`

This is why using `beOptimized` would be better than a simple `optimized` and why `isOptimized` is better for the interrogative form.

### 3.3 Guideline: Prefix with *as* for conversion

When converting an object to another one, the convention is to prefix the class name of the target with `as`.

- `anArray asOrderedCollection`

Favor the use of existing classes.

### 3.4 Guideline: Indicate flow with preposition

When a process state is going from one object to another, indicate the direction using meaningful names.

For example `flattenProperties:` is not a good name because it does not convey where the properties will be flattened.

- `aConfiguration flattenProperties: aDictionary`

Better names such as `flattenPropertiesFrom:` and `flattenPropertiesInto:` are much better because there are no ambiguities.

- `aConfiguration flattenPropertiesFrom: aDictionary`
- `aConfiguration flattenPropertiesInto: aDictionary`

Here are more examples

- `changeField: anInteger to: anObject`
3.5 Guideline: Indicate return types

Prefer
[ReadWriteStream on: aCollection.
over
[Not ReadWriteStream for: aCollection.

Prefer
[File openOn: stream
over
[Not File with: stream

Prefer
[display: anObject on: aMedium
over
[Not display: anObject using: aMedium

3.5 Guideline: Indicate return types

When a method is returning an object (different from the receiver) and that this object is not polymorphic with the receiver it is important to mention it. Since Pharo is not statically typed, we can use the selector name to give such information to the sender of the message.

For example, the method characterSeparatorMethodSignatureFor: of the pretty printer did not return a character but a block as shown below:

characterSeparatorMethodSignatureFor: aMethodNode
  ^ [ (self needsMethodSignatureOnMultipleLinesFor: aMethodNode)
    ifTrue: [ self newLine ]
    ifFalse: [ self space ]
  ]

Favor characterSeparatorMethodSignatureBlockFor: over characterSeparatorMethodSignatureFor: when the method returns block and not a character as characterSeparatorMethodSignatureFor: indicates.

A much better design is to rewrite this method and its users to use a character. Returning a block in such situation is overkill and it hampers reusing the method without being forced to send a message.

The following method is corresponding to its name.

characterSeparatorMethodSignatureFor: aMethodNode
  ^ (self needsMethodSignatureOnMultipleLinesFor: aMethodNode)
    ifTrue: [ self newLine ]
    ifFalse: [ self space ]
A good example is the API of the `FileReference` class. The message `path-String` indicates clearly that it returns the path as a string while to access the path object the message `path` should be used.

3.6 **Guideline: Use interrogative form for testing**

When interrogating the state of an object, use a selector beginning with a verb such as `has`, `is`, `does`,...

Prefer

```smalltalk
isAtLineEnd
```

over

```smalltalk
Not atLineEnd
```

```smalltalk
aVehicle hasFourWheels
```

over

```smalltalk
Not aVehicle fourWheels
```

3.7 **Guideline: Avoid using parameter and variable name type**

Avoid the parameter type or name in the method name if you are using typed parameter names.

Prefer

```smalltalk
fileSystem at: aKey put: aFile
```

over

```smalltalk
Not fileSystem atKey: aKey putFile: aFile
```

"for semantic-based parameter names"

```smalltalk
fileSystem atKey: index putFile: pathName
```

"useful when your class has several #at:put: methods"

```smalltalk
fileSystem definitionAt: aKey put: definition
```

Prefer

```smalltalk
aFace changeTo: expression
```

over

```smalltalk
Not aFace changeExpressionTo: expression
```
3.8 Guideline: Use accessors or not

There are different schools about whether to use accessors. In his seminal book Kent Beck discusses it in depth. Here we give a list of arguments for and against and you should decide and follow the conventions of the project you work on. In any case, if you use accessors or not, be consistent.

Arguments in favor of accessors:

- Accessors abstract from the exact state internal representation.
- Accessors may hide that values are derived or not.
- Subclasses may freely redefine the way accessors are implemented.

Arguments against accessor use:

- Accessors expose the internal state of an object.
- When the class is small, using accessors may blow up the number of methods.
- Using refactorings, we can always easily introduce accessors.

3.9 Guideline: Name accessors following variable name

When you use accessors, name them consistently: The getter is name as the variable it refers to. The setter is the same but with an extra terminating colon :.

For getter, prefer

```
^ tiles
```

over

```
^ getTiles
```

Do not use get or set in accessor selectors!

Watch out.

Pay attention a Setter is just setting a value and just returning (implicitly) the receiver. The following setter definition is not correct.

```
BinaryNode >> root: rootNode

^ root := rootNode
```

Favor the following one instead:
BinaryNode >> root: rootNode

    root := rootNode

Note that we do not need to comment a basic setter.

For lazy initialization:

    tiles
    ^ tiles ifNil: [ tiles := OrderedCollection new ]

For setters

    tiles: aCollection
    tiles := aCollection

Put accessors in the 'accessing' protocols. When you have accessors doing extra work place them in a separate protocols to stress their difference.

3.10 Guideline: Avoid return in lazy block

You may want to use accessors to implement lazy initialization: the instance variable is initialized only if needed by checking if its value is nil.

Do not place returns inside the block.

    tiles
    ^ tiles ifNil: [ tiles := OrderedCollection new. ]

Over

    tiles
    ^ tiles ifNil: [ tiles := OrderedCollection new. ^tiles ]

or even

    tiles
    tiles ifNil: [ tiles := OrderedCollection new ].
    ^ tiles

3.11 Guideline: Avoid prefixing with set public accessors

Some developers may be tempted to name setter methods by prefixing the variable name

Prefer

    tiles: aCollection
    tiles := aCollection
3.12 Guideline: Use basic or raw to access low-level

```smalltalk
setTiles: aCollection
tiles := aCollection
```

Following K. Beck's advice, use setTiles: only for private messages to initialize objects from class side methods.

Guideline: Use basic or raw to access low-level

When two methods are needed for the same state variable, e.g., one returning the actual object stored and one returning and raising an event, prefix the one returning the actual object with the word basic or raw.

```smalltalk
method: aCompiledMethod
    self basicMethod: aCompiledMethod.
    self signal: MethodChanged
```

```smalltalk
basicMethod: aCompiledMethod
    method := aCompiledMethod
```

When you have a getter that returns an object and a getter than return a different representation of the same object add a suffix

```smalltalk
path
    ^ path
```

```smalltalk
pathString
    ^ self path asString
```

3.13 Guideline: Follow conventions and idioms

When designing new objects, you may mimic some practices that the system uses already with for example dictionaries, sets, etc.

**Example.** Since a style sheet acts as a dictionary of properties it is much better to use at: instead of get:, especially if you define the message to set a value to a property as at:put: and not set:.

Prefer

```smalltalk
stylesheet at: #fontColor
```

over

```smalltalk
stylesheet get: #fontColor
```

Prefer

```smalltalk
[aCollection groupedBy: [ :each | each odd ]]
```

over

```smalltalk
[Not aCollection groupBy: [ :each | each odd ]]
```
3.14 **Guideline: Distinguish class vs. instance selectors**

When defining a class method, we may name it the same way as an accessor of the class. Such practice hampers code readability in the sense that it is difficult to identify rapidly class methods. The senders will report both the instance and class usage. You may think that you will identify the message because the receiver is a class or an instance but there are many situations were this is not the case. So it’s better to enrich the class method with a distinct word.

**Example**

In Pillar, annotations have parameters and the accessor method `parameters:`. Now, in some version, an instance creation method with the same name than the accessor method.

Reading the code of the parser, it is not clear whether array second is a class or an instance.

```smalltalk
[ :array | array second parameters: (array third ifNil: [
SmallDictionary new ])]
```

To create an instance, it is better to name the method `withParameter:`. This way we can immediately spot that the second element is a class.

```smalltalk
[ :array | array second withParameters: (array third ifNil: [
SmallDictionary new ])]
```
3.15 Guidelines: Follow existing protocols

``` Smalltalk
PRAbstractAnnotation class >> withParameters: aCollection

| parameters |
^ self new
  hadAllKeys: aCollection = parameters;
  parameters: parameters;
  yourself

is better than

PRAbstractAnnotation class >> parameters: aCollection

| parameters |
^ self new
  hadAllKeys: aCollection = parameters;
  parameters: parameters;
  yourself

Now if you favor a fluid interface with many parameters, using withParameters: may not be good.

3.15 Guidelines: Follow existing protocols

Protocols are ways to sort methods. It is important to place your methods in adequate protocols since it will ease future exploration of your class.

Pharo provides auto categorisation of protocol for the common methods. So use it as much as possible. When you override your specific methods, place them in similar protocols.
Comments are important. Comments tell readers that they are smart guys and that they correctly guessed your intentions or your code. Do not believe people that say that methods do not need comments. Obviously here is what they mean:

1. obvious methods such as accessors do not need comments,
2. a good comment is not describing in English how the code executes,
3. it is better to split long methods into smaller ones with a single responsibility,
4. but a good comment is always welcome because it reinforces the understanding of the reader.

A comment should be adapted to the level of granularity (i.e., package, class, method) to which it applies.

4.1 Guideline: Method comments

Method comments should contain sufficient information for a user to know exactly **how to use** the method, **what** the method does including any side effects, and **what it answers** without having to look at the source code. Imagine that the source code is not available.

The main method comment is not about its implementation. Do not rephrase the implementation. The second level comments can include information about the implementation. Insert a new line to separate method comments from the method body.
Comments

Collection >> asCommaString
"Return collection printed as 'a, b, c'"
"#('a' 'b' 'c') asCommaString >>> 'a, b, c'"

^ String streamContents: [:s | self asStringOn: s delimiter: ',', ']

The comments of a method should typically include:

1. the method purpose (even if implemented or supplemented by a subclass)
2. the parameters and their types
3. the possible return values and their types
4. complex or tricky implementation details
5. example usage, if applicable, as a separate comment

Finally, accessors do not need comments; the only comment that accessor could have is the purpose of the instance variable.

day
"Answer number of days (an instance of Integer) from the receiver to January 1, 1901."

4.2 Guideline: Avoid relying on a comment to explain what can be reflected in code

Good Pharo source code is self-documenting, often making comments on statements redundant. Statements need only be commented to draw the reader's attention. If the source code implements an algorithm that requires explanation, then the steps of the algorithm should be commented as needed.

Do not comment an obvious fact that is expressed simply as plain code.

Prefer
| result |
result := self employees
collect: [:employee | employee salary > amount].
over
| result |
"Store the employees who have a salary greater than in result."
result := self employees
collect: [:employee | employee salary > amount].
4.3 **Guideline: Use active voice and short sentences**

When writing comments, use active voice and avoid long and convoluted sentences. A method comment should state what the method does, its arguments, its effects and output.

"Active voice"
createShell
"Create the receiver's shell. Hook the focus callback."

Not "Passive voice"
createShell
"The receiver's shell is created. The focus callback is hooked."

4.4 **Guideline: Include executable comments**

Pharo offers executable examples in comment using the message `>>>`. Executable examples in comments are super cool because as the reader you can execute the code and understand the parameters. In addition the documentation is always synchronized because tools such as the test runner can check that examples are correct.

ProtoObject >> ifNil: nilBlock ifNotNil: ifNotNilBlock
"If the receiver is not nil, pass it as argument to the
ifNotNilBlock block
else execute the nilBlock block"

"(nil ifNil: [42] ifNotNil: [:o | o + 3 ]) >>> 42"
"(3 ifNil: [42] ifNotNil: [:o | o + 3 ]) >>> 6"

^ ifNotNilBlock cull: self

Object >> split: aSequenceableCollection
"Split the argument using the receiver as a separator."
"optimized version for single delimiters"
"($(/ split: '/foo/bar')>>>#('' 'foo' 'bar') asOrderedCollection"
"([[:c| c isSeparator] split: 'aa bb cc dd'] >>> #('aa' 'bb' 'cc' 'dd') asOrderedCollection"

| result |
result := OrderedCollection new: (aSequenceableCollection size / 2) asInteger.
selE self split: aSequenceableCollection do: [ :item |
result add: item ].

^ result
4.5 **Guideline: Use CRC-driven class comments**

A class is not in isolation, but *implements* responsibilities (mainly one) and *collaborates* with other entities. Therefore a class comment should be composed of at least 3 parts: the class, its responsibilities and how it uses its collaborators. The Class Responsibility Collaboration (CRC) pattern is powerful to design but also to comment classes. Use it for commenting class.

Knowing the instance variables is the least importance! Follow the template given by Pharo that is shown below.

Please comment me using the following template inspired by Class Responsibility Collaborator (CRC) design:

For the Class part:
  State a one line summary. For example, "I represent a paragraph of text".

For the Responsibility part:
  Three sentences about my main responsibilities - what I do, what I know.

For the Collaborators Part:
  State my main collaborators and one line about how I interact with them.

Public API and Key Messages
- message one
- message two
- (for bonus points) how to create instances.

One simple example is simply gorgeous.

Internal Representation and Key Implementation Points.

4.6 **Guideline: Comment the unusual**

When a behavior is unusual, performing unexpected actions or using an unexpected algorithm, it is important to comment it. In general comments should make irregular and unusual aspects clearer. You may want to include implementation-dependent, or platform specific idiosyncrasies.
Chapter 5

About code formatting

Code formatting improves code comprehension. A reader gets used to regular formatting. Again follow the conventions.

5.1 **Guideline: Be consistent**

One important guideline when writing code is to follow conventions and in addition to be consistent. Systematically apply a formatting style. Keep the violations to conventions to a minimum.

This applies at all levels:

- Class names,
- Method names,
- Instance variable names,
- Method body, and
- Comments.

Inconsistencies will break the reading flow and understanding of code. Inconsistencies often indicates that different developers touch the code and they may also be the source of bugs or indicate difficult places in the code.

5.2 **Guideline: Use the general method template**

- Separate method signature and comments from method body with an empty line.
• Add an extra tab to the comments.
• Add an extra line to stress the beginning of the method body.
• Use a tab to separate the method body from the left margin.

message selector and argument names
"A comment following the guidelines."

| temporary variables | statements

For example:

```
addLast: newObject
    "Add newObject to the end of the receiver. Answer newObject."

lastIndex = array size ifTrue: [ self makeRoomAtLast ].
lastIndex := lastIndex + 1.
array at: lastIndex put: newObject.
^ newObject
```

Do not let space before the first word of the comment, align comment with method body, make sure that the reader can identify the beginning of the method body by placing an empty line between the method signature and the method body.

Prefer the following

```
collectionNotIncluded
    "Return a collection for which each element is not included in 'nonEmpty'"

^ collectionWithoutNil

collectionNotIncluded
    "return a collection for which each element is not included in 'nonEmpty'

^ collectionWithoutNil
```

```
and over:
```
```
collectionWithoutEqualElements
    "return a collection not including equal elements"

^ collectionWithoutEqualElements
```

5.3 **Guideline: Indent method body**

Use indentation to convey structure! Do not glue everything on the left margin.
5.4 Guideline: Separate signature and comments from method body

Don’t indent your method like this:

```
initialize
super initialize.
symbols := Bag new.
names := Set new
```

Prefer

```
initialize
super initialize.
symbols := Bag new.
names := Set new
```

5.4 **Guideline: Separate signature and comments from method body**

Separating method comments from the method implementation favors focusing our understanding to the right level. When we want to understand what the method does, we just have to read the comments. When we want to understand how the method is implemented, we just read the method body.

Prefer

```
performCrawling: aName
"Takes the last word in uppercase as a symbol and eventually add it to the bag symbols"

name := aName copy.
self getUpperCase.
self stemSymbolFrom: aName.
self toUpperCase.
^ symbol
```

over

```
performCrawling: aName
"Takes the last word in uppercase as a symbol and eventually add it to the bag symbols"

name := aName copy.
self getUpperCase.
self stemSymbolFrom: aName.
self toUpperCase.
^ symbol
```

5.5 **Guideline: Use space to give breath to code**

Gluing all the characters together slows down reading. The reader needs to separate expressions. Gluing characters also hampers the identification of
logical groups such as conditional branches.

Put horizontal space to make it easier to read code and clearly identify variables, arguments, assignments, block delimiters and returns.

Prefer

```plaintext
stemSymbolFrom: aName

| stemmer symbol |
stemmer := SymbolStemmer new.
symbol := stemmer performCrawling: aName.
^ symbol
```

Over

```plaintext
stemSymbolFrom:aName

|stemmer symbol|
stemmer:=SymbolStemmer new.
symbol:=stemmer performCrawling:aName.
^symbol
```

Parentheses do not need spaces (after ( and before )) since they show that an expression fits together. But favor space for [ and ], since they may contain complex expressions.

```plaintext
drawOnAthensCanvas: aCanvas bounds: aRectangle color: aColor

(self canDrawDecoratorsOn: aCanvas) ifFalse: [ ^ self ].
self drawOnAthensCanvas: aCanvas.
next drawOnAthensCanvas: aCanvas bounds: aRectangle color: aColor
```

5.6 **Guideline: Align properly**

Understanding that a piece of code is a coherent expression eases understanding of more complex expressions.

Make sure that your indentation reinforce the identification of block of functionality.

Prefer

```plaintext
self phoneBook add:

(Person new
  name: 'Robin';
  city: 'Ottawa';
  country: 'Canada').
```

Over
5.7 Guideline: Use tabs not spaces to indent and use spaces to help reading

When navigating from one element to the next one, spaces and tabs are the same. Since they do not have a visual representation the reader cannot know in advance if the white space in front of word is a tab or multiple spaces. It is then annoying to handle spaces manually.

- Avoid extra spaces at the beginning and use tabs to indent.
- Use one space to separate instructions.
- Avoid extra spaces everywhere: one is enough!
- Avoid extra spaces at the end of the line.

Prefer

```plaintext
stemSymbolFrom: aName

| stemmer symbol |
stemmer := SymbolStemmer new.
symbol := stemmer performCrawling: aName.
^ symbol
```

5.8 Guideline: Do not break lines randomly

White lines attract the eyes and force the reader to ask himself why the code is separated that way. Only separate method signature and comment from method body with a new line.

Prefer

```plaintext
stemSymbolFrom: aName

| stemmer symbol |
stemmer := SymbolStemmer new.
symbol := stemmer performCrawling: aName.
^ symbol
```
About code formatting

```
| p |
p := next.
[ p isNotNil and: [ p isKindOf: RubParagraph ] ]
whileFalse: [ p := p next ].
^ p
```

Over

```
| p |
p := next.
[ p isNotNil and: [ p isKindOf: RubParagraph ] ] whileFalse: [ p := p next ].
^ p
```

5.9 Guideline: Highlight control flow

Help the reader to understand control flow logic of your code by using indentation.

Prefer

```
size
 "Returns size of a tree - number of nodes in a tree"
self root isNil
  ifTrue: [ ^0 ].
^ self size: self root
```

Over

```
size
 "Returns size of a tree - number of nodes in a tree"
self root isNil
  ifTrue: [ ^0 ].
^ self size: self root.
```

And prefer
5.9 Guideline: Highlight control flow

```smalltalk
depth: aNode
    "Returns depth of a tree starting from the given node"

    | leftDepth rightDepth |
    leftDepth := -1.
    aNode leftChild isNotNil
        ifTrue: [ leftDepth := self depth: aNode leftChild ].
    rightDepth := -1.
    aNode rightChild isNotNil
        ifTrue: [ rightDepth := self depth: aNode rightChild ].

    leftDepth > rightDepth
        ifTrue: [ ^ 1 + leftDepth ]
        ifFalse: [ ^ 1 + rightDepth ].
```

Over the terribly unreadable

```smalltalk
depth:aNode
    "Returns depth of a tree starting from the given node"

    | leftDepth rightDepth |
    leftDepth := -1.
    aNode leftChild isNotNil
        ifTrue: [ leftDepth := self depth: aNode leftChild ].
    rightDepth := -1.
    aNode rightChild isNotNil
        ifTrue: [ rightDepth := self depth: aNode rightChild ].

    ( leftDepth > rightDepth )
        ifTrue: [ ^ (1 + leftDepth) ]
        ifFalse: [ ^ (1 + rightDepth) ].
```
Some coding idioms will make your code a lot clearer. Knowing them is also good because you will code faster.

6.1 **Guideline: Do not query twice for the same object**

The message `ifNotNil:` expects a block with one argument. This argument is the object that is not nil.

For example,

```
self doThat ifNotNil: [:that | self doSomethingWith: that]
```

is better than:

```
| that |
that := self doThat.
that ifNotNil: [self doSomethingWith: that]
```

Similarly, have a look at the messages containing the `ifPresent:` variations.

```
aCol at: key ifPresent: [:present | self doSomethingWith: present]
```

6.2 **Guideline: Move returns outside branches**

When two branches of a condition are returning a value, better move the return out of the blocks.

Prefer
6.3 **Guideline: Use streamContents**

When you want to manipulate a potentially long stream you can avoid to have to define the explicit stream creation and access using `streamContents` with a block whose argument is a ready to use stream.

Prefer

```smalltalk
String streamContents: [:s | self displayStringOn: s]
```

over

```smalltalk
stream := WriteStream on: (String new: 1000).
stream ...
^ stream contents
```

6.4 **Guideline: Avoid `, when in loop**

In Pharo string concatenations are expressed using the message `#,.`

```
'Pharo', ' with Style'
>>> 'Pharo with Style'
```

The implementation of the method is however not really efficient since it copies the underlying collection during each concatenation as we show below. The alternative is to use a write stream or to use `streamContents:` but using a stream makes the code more complex. Therefore there is a key question to be answered: When is it pointless to use a WriteStream and just use `#,`?

Avoid `, when the code is in a loop or recursion, use a stream.

```
String streamContents: [:s | 1 to: 10000 do: [ :i | s << i asString ]]
```
6.4 Guideline: Avoid `, when in loop

Use `, when constructing error messages, class initialisation code, or situations where there is no loop.

Note that in printOn: methods, the argument is already a stream so we use it and avoid using message `,.

Difference in speed

The following snippets shows the difference in execution on large concatenations.

```
[[ String streamContents: [:s | 1 to: 10000 do: [:i | s << i asString ]] ] bench
  >>> '551.890 per second'

[[ | s |
  s := ''.  
  1 to: 10000 do: [:i | s := s, i asString ] ] bench
  >>> '8.465 per second'

[[ String streamContents: [:s | 1 to: 1000 do: [:i | s << i asString ]] ] bench
  >>> '6313.137 per second'

[[ | s |
  s := ''.  
  1 to: 1000 do: [:i | s := s, i asString ] ] bench
  >>> '967.819 per second'
```
One key responsibility for a class is to initialize correctly the instance it creates. This avoids to place the burden on clients of such objects. In this chapter we will present some patterns to initialize objects.

7.1 **Guideline: Take advantage of automatic object initialization**

By default Pharo offers a way to initialize your objects. The method **initialize** is automatically sent by the method **new**.

Imagine that we implement a game and that this game needs to initialize the number of turns the game is played. Avoid to force the clients of the game to have the responsibility to initialize the turn. Indeed if the clients forget to send the expression `turn:`, the game logic may be simply broken.

```plaintext
Game new turn: 0
```

Therefore when you want to initialize the state of your object, simply redefine

```plaintext
Game >> initialize
   super initialize.
   turn := 0.
```

This way `Game new` will automatically set the value for `turn`.

From a test perspective, it is often a good practice to have a test covering the default initialization.
GameTest >> testDefaultInitialization

    self assert: Game new turn equals: 0

7.2 **Guideline: No automatic initialize**

When you do not want to get the automatic initialization to happen you should use the message `basicNew` on the class side and create your own `initializeSomething:` method.

Let us imagine that the computation of the tiles of a game would be costly or that there is no simple default. We can propose a class creation interface whose responsibility is to request the mandatory information and initialize only what is needed for the object creation.

Here we define a class method `tileNumber:` and we do not invoke `new` but `basicNew`. Indeed `new` sends the message `initialize` and we do not want to pay the price for it. `basicNew` just allocates the new object and does not perform any other operation.

```
Game class >> tileNumber: aNumber
    ^ self basicNew
    initializeTiles: aNumber ;
    yourself
```

Now on the instance side we can define the initialization of tiles as shown by the method `initializeTiles:`.

```
Game >> initializeTiles: aNumber
    tiles := Array new: aNumber
```

If you use `new` instead of `basicNew` in previous definition, the `initialize` method and the method `initializeTiles:` will be executed.

7.3 **Guideline: No double super new initialize**

Since Pharo is automatically sending the message `initialize` as part of the object creation process using the pattern below, there is no need for the developer to do it in addition.

Now you may wonder what is the problem if you inadvertently redefine `new` in one of your class as follows:

```
Game class >> new
    ^ super new initialize
```

In Pharo, the method `initialize` of the class `Game` will be invoked twice.
Understanding possible mistakes is a nice way to avoid them or to spot errors made in your code. Here are some common mistakes.

8.1 **Guideline: Use parentheses to disambiguate messages with the same priority**

**For keyword-messages**

The Pharo compiler does not know where to cut an expression composed on multiple keyword-based messages. For example, assert:includes: in the expression `self assert: uUMLClass variables includes: 'name'` can be a message that the object `self` can understand. For example testcases understand the message `assert:equals:` and the following expression is fully valid: `self assert: uUMLClass variables equals: 'name'`.

Therefore, this is the programmer responsibility to use parentheses to separate correctly the messages having the same priority. The following example illustrates this point.

```plaintext
testDefineASimpleClass

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>uUMLClass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
uUMLClass := UMLClass named: 'ComixSerie'.
uUMLClass instVar: 'name'.
self assert: uUMLClass variables includes: 'name'```

There is no message `assert:includes:`. The expression `uUMLClass variables includes: 'name'` should be parenthesized, because this is the re-
Potential traps

result of the execution of this expression that should be passed as argument of
the message assert:

```plaintext
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>testDefineASimpleClass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uUMLClass := UMLClass named: 'ComixSerie'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uUMLClass instVar: 'name'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self assert: (uUMLClass variables includes: 'name')</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

**Between binary messages**

Pharo does not make any assumption about the possible mathematical meaning of messages. As a programmer you cannot describe the weight of a binary messages. It means that in an expression composed of multiple binary messages, they will be executed from left to right.

For example `1 + 2 * 3` returns 9 since first the message plus is resolved and its result is the receiver of the message `*`.

```plaintext
1 + 2 * 3
>>> 9
```

To get the correct mathematical behavior, one should use parentheses.

```plaintext
1 + (2 * 3)
>>> 7
```

### 8.2 Guideline: no need for extra parentheses

There is no need for parentheses surrounding unary message. There is not much benefit to add parentheses around unaray messages. In Pharo unary messages are the messages that have the highest priority. They are executed first.

Prefer

```plaintext
xMatrix := PMMatrix rows: x asArrayOfRows.
```

over

```plaintext
xMatrix := PMMatrix rows: ( x asArrayOfRows ).
```

**No parentheses around message with higher priority**

In the similar way, there is no need to put parentheses around binary messages involved in keyword-based expressions. Binary messages are executed prior to keyword-messages. In the following `=` is executed before `ifTrue:`.

Prefer
8.2 Guideline: no need for extra parentheses

reducedX do: [:row |
  (row at: 'target') = 'Iris-setosa'
  ifTrue: [ a add: row asArray ]].

over
reducedX do: [:row |
  ((row at: 'target') = 'Iris-setosa')
  ifTrue: [ a add: (row asArray) ]].

Prefer

depth: aNode
"Returns depth of a tree starting from the given node"

| leftDepth rightDepth |
leftDepth := -1.
aNode leftChild isNotNil
  ifTrue: [ leftDepth := self depth: aNode leftChild ].
rightDepth := -1.
aNode rightChild isNotNil
  ifTrue: [ rightDepth := self depth: aNode rightChild ].
^ (leftDepth > rightDepth)
  ifTrue: [ ^ (1 + leftDepth) ]
  ifFalse: [ ^ (1 + rightDepth) ]

over

depth: aNode
"Returns depth of a tree starting from the given node"

| leftDepth rightDepth |
leftDepth := -1.
aNode leftChild isNotNil
  ifTrue: [ leftDepth := self depth: (aNode leftChild) ].
rightDepth := -1.
aNode rightChild isNotNil
  ifTrue: [ rightDepth := self depth: (aNode rightChild) ].
( leftDepth > rightDepth )
  ifTrue: [ ^ (1 + leftDepth) ]
  ifFalse: [ ^ (1 + rightDepth) ].

No parentheses around variable

Putting parentheses around a variable does not produce an array, it has no effect. Do not confuse parentheses and curly braces. Curly braces is a shortcut to produce an array with the elements they surround: \{ a \} produces an array with one element whose value is the value held by the variable a as shown by the examples below.

In this code snippet, {} creates an array.
Potential traps

In this snippet, the parentheses do not do anything.

No parentheses around single message

There is no need to put extra parentheses over a single message. It has no effect. Parentheses make sense to disambiguate one message over a set of messages composing an expression.

Prefer

```
m := pca transform: xMatrix

over

m := (pca transform: xMatrix)
```

8.3 Guideline: receiver of ifTrue:ifFalse: is a boolean

Do not use a block as receiver of a ifTrue:,ifFalse:,ifTrue:ifFalse: or ifFalse:ifTrue: messages.

The following expressions does not work

```
[lastNode =0] value
  ifTrue:[ lastNode := curNode ]
  ifFalse:[ lastNode next: curNode ]

[lastNode =0]
  ifTrue:[ lastNode := curNode ]
  ifFalse:[ lastNode next: curNode ]
```

The correct is the following

```
lastNode = 0
  ifTrue:[ lastNode := curNode ]
  ifFalse:[ lastNode next: curNode ]
```

8.4 Guideline: receiver of whileTrue: is a block

The receiver of the message whileTrue: is a block, and its argument is, too.
8.5 Guideline: Use a Block when you do not know execution time

The following line is incorrect:

```
(number < limit) whileTrue: [ do something ]
```

The following line is correct:

```
[[ number < limit ] whileTrue: [ do something ]
```

8.5 Guideline: Use a Block when you do not know execution time

Often newcomers get confused about when to use ( ) and [ ]. A good way to understand is that we should use [ ] when we do know whether an expression will be executed (may be multiple times).

`ifTrue:ifFalse:`

The conditional is always executed, while each of the arguments is a block because we do not know which ones will be executed.

```
lastNode = 0
  ifTrue: [ lastNode := curNode ]
  ifFalse: [ lastNode next: curNode ]
```

`timesRepeat:`

timesRepeat:'s argument is a block because we do not know how many times it will be executed.

```
n timesRepeat: [ lastNode := curNode next ]
```

`do:/collect:`

The argument of iterators such as do:, collect:,... is a block because we do not know how many times (if any) the block will be executed.

```
aCol do: [ :node | ...]
```

8.6 Guideline: initialize does not need to return super

The method initialize is a method that modifies the receiver. It is used by convention to initialize the default value of the receiver. It is invoked by default by the message new.

The following definition is not idiomatic:
Potential traps

```small
initialize
  default := 'no'.
  ^ super initialize
```

First it returns a value and this value is not really used. Prefer the following definition:

```small
initialize
  default := 'no'.
  super initialize
```

Second, the ordering implies that the first local information should be computed then the one of the superclass. It may happen that you need this order but it is rare so prefer the following canonical form:

```small
initialize
  super initialize
  default := 'no'.
```

8.7 **Guideline: super is just self**

super is the receiver of the message, just as `self`. No super is not the superclass, nor an instance of the superclass. super is the receiver of the message.

There is no need to use `super` when returning an expression not passing it as argument. For example passing `super` as argument is useless and show that the developer did fully get what `super` it.

```small
foo
  anotherObject bar: super.
  self continue.
```

Better use `self`

```small
foo
  anotherObject bar: self.
  self continue.
```

Similarly

```small
foo
  ^ super
```

Better use `self`
Guideline: use super to invoke a method with the same selector

Super is used to start the method lookup in the superclass of the class of the method containing super. However, super is only necessary when the method you want to invoke has the same than the current one since using self in such a case simply creates an infinite loop.

For example, the following just creates an infinite loop, since the method initialize is calling itself infinitively.

```
initialize
  self initialize.
  self continue
```

This is the only case where you must use super to invoke the method that cannot be reached by the method lookup when it starts from the class defining the method. The correct definition is then:

```
initialize
  super initialize.
  self continue
```

Now there is no need to use super for messages that have a different selector than the method they belong to. For example, there is no need to use super bar in the following, since the defining method is called foo and you send the message bar.

```
foo
  super bar.
  self continue
```

The correct definition is just to use self.

```
foo
  self bar.
  self continue
```

While using super often does not break your code, it may because if you have a method named bar in the same class this method will not be invoked. So always be suspicious when you read or write such kind of code.
About printing and Streams

Stream usage in the case of printing objects may be sometimes confusing. In this chapter we clarify some of pitfalls.

9.1 **Guideline: printString vs. displayString**

Newcomers are often confused between printString and displayString and their counterparts printOn: and displayStringOn::.

- printString is used for debugging, that’s why the default implementation shows the class name. It’s implemented by specializing printOn: on your classes.

- displayString is used for nicely display objects in list. It is implemented by specializing displayStringOn: on your classes.

If you have aPerson:

```perl
aPerson printString
>>> 'aPerson ('John Doe')'
```

```perl
aPerson displayString
>>> 'John Doe'
```

9.2 **Guideline: About printString**

Let us take a moment to step back about stream usage in printOn: methods. The printString method creates a stream and passes this stream as argument of the printOn: method as shown below:
About printing and Streams

Object >> printString
  "Answer a String whose characters are a description of the receiver.
  If you want to print without a character limit, use fullPrintString."
^ self printStringLimitedTo: 50000

Object >> printStringLimitedTo: limit
  "Answer a String whose characters are a description of the receiver.
  If you want to print without a character limit, use fullPrintString."
^self printStringLimitedTo: limit using: [:s | self printOn: s]

Object >> printStringLimitedTo: limit using: printBlock
  "Answer a String whose characters are a description of the receiver produced by given printBlock. It ensures the result will be not bigger than given limit"

  | limitedString |
  limitedString := String streamContents: printBlock limitedTo: limit.
  limitedString size < limit ifTrue: [^ limitedString].
  ^ limitedString , '...etc...' 

What you should see is that the method printStringLimitedTo:using: is creating a stream and passing it around.

When you redefine the method printOn: in your class, if you send the message printString on the instance variables of your object, you are in fact creating yet another stream and copying its contents in the first one. Here is an example:

MessageTally >> displayStringOn: aStream
  self displayIdentifierOn: aStream.
  aStream
    nextPutAll: ' (';
    nextPutAll: self tally printString;
    nextPutAll: ')'

This is clearly counterproductive. It is much better to send the message print: to the stream or printOn: to the instance variable it as follows:

MessageTally >> displayStringOn: aStream
  self displayIdentifierOn: aStream.
  aStream
    nextPutAll: ' (';
    print: self tally;
    nextPutAll: ')'

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9.3 Guideline: Unnecessary stream creation

To understand what the method `print:` is, here its definition:

```
Stream >> print: anObject
  "Have anObject print itself on the receiver."
  anObject printOn: self
```

Pay attention, sending the `printString` message is often wrong and it is the duties of the system to do it.

9.3 **Guideline: Unnecessary stream creation**

Unnecessary stream creation can happen in other situations than `printString`. Here is an example taken from Pharo.

```
printProtocol: protocol sourceCode: sourceCode

  ^ String streamContents: [ :stream |
    stream
      nextPutAll: '"protocol: ';
      nextPutAll: protocol printString;
      nextPut: $"; cr; cr;
      nextPutAll: sourceCode ]
```

What you should see is that a stream is created and then another stream is created and discarded with the expression `protocol printString`. A better implementation is the following using `print:`.

```
printProtocol: protocol sourceCode: sourceCode

  ^ String streamContents: [ :stream |
    stream
      nextPutAll: '"protocol: ';
      print: protocol;
      nextPut: $"; cr; cr;
      nextPutAll: sourceCode ]
```

9.4 **Guideline: `printString` vs. `asString`**

Another difficulty you may encounter is to see the difference between `printString` and `asString`.

- `printString` is used for debugging, that’s why the default implementation shows the class name. It’s implemented by specializing `printOn:` on your classes.

- `asString` converts an object into a string. It is equivalent to the `toString()` in other languages.
Let us take an example with the symbol `#foo`.

Printing the symbol `#foo` is just printing it as symbol.

```
#foo printString
>>> '#foo'
```

Sending the message `asString` to the symbol `#foo` converts it to a string.

```
#foo asString
>>> 'foo'
```

The situation is the same for strings but it can be a bit more destabilizing. The conversion of a string to a string is the string itself.

```
'foo' asString
>>> 'foo'
```

Now printing a string includes the quotes and quotes should be double quoted.

```
'foo' printString
>>> '''foo'''
```
In this chapter we present some points about existing libraries or functionality that are often misunderstood and lead to code of lesser quality.

10.1 **Transcript: A misunderstood object**

we present why Transcript can be really badly used. We present that with some simple care we can develop modular solutions that are flexible and can take advantages of using Transcript without the inconvenients. Let us imagine that you still want to log strings.

10.2 **First simple case**

Transcript is a kind of stdout on which you can write some strings outputs. It is cheap. The class exposes a stream-based API (and this is a really important design point as we will see in the future).

Here is a typical not really good use of Transcript

```plaintext
myMethod

    Transcript show: 'foo' ; cr
```

It is bad because it hardcodes a reference to Transcript while Pharo proposes some helpers methods such as `traceCr:`.

```plaintext
myMethod

    self traceCr: 'foo'
```

Some developers may think that this is not important but it can help you if one day you want to control the logging and for example use an object
with the same API but to do something else. So avoid hardcoding globals. But there is more.

10.3 The real concern

The problem amongst others is that Transcript is a singleton and in fact an UGLY global variable. Once you use it for real in your code, you basically killed the modularity of your program and the only thing that you can do is to hope that nothing bad can happen.

Let us look at a concrete simple case. The microdown Parser came (yes we removed this) with a simple method named closeMe:

```smalltalk
MicAbstractBlock >> closeMe
    Transcript << ' Closing ' << self class name; cr; endEntry
```

So this method is producing a little trace so that the parser developer could understand what was happening. So you can think that this is ok.

There are two main problems:

- First what if you want to deploy your application in a system where you do not want at all to get Transcript its class and all its family. I’m thinking for example about people producing minimal images.

- Second, when Pharo is built on Jenkins all the tests are executed because we love tests. And this Transcript expression produces dirt on the build log. You do not want to have read such trace when you are trying to understand why the build is not working.

```smalltalk
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicCodeBlock
Closing MicHeaderBlock
Closing MicHeaderBlock
Closing MicHeaderBlock
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Closing MicHeaderBlock
Closing MicHeaderBlock
Closing MicHeaderBlock
```
Now let us see the good way to have a log and be able to unplug it.

## 10.4 Encapsulation to the rescue

The solution is really simple. Just use object-oriented programming and encapsulation. To support the Parser developer, we can simply add a stream to the class.

For example we define a new variable to and initialize it to a write stream.

```smalltalk
Object subclass: #MicAbstractBlock
    instanceVariableNames: 'parent children parser logStream'
    classVariableNames: ''
    package: 'Microdown-Model'

MicAbstractBlock >> initialize
    super initialize.
    children := OrderedCollection new.
    logStream := WriteStream on: (String new: 1000)
```

Then we can rewrite the method `closeMe` as follows

```smalltalk
MicAbstractBlock >> closeMe
    logStream << 'Closing ' << self class name; cr
```

Then we can provide a simple setter method so that the developer can set for example the Transcript as a stream to write to.

```smalltalk
MicAbstractBlock >> logStream: aStream
    logStream := aStream
```

## 10.5 When instance creation is delicate

If we do not control the creation of instances of the class using the stream, we will have difficulties to configure it with the correct stream. So if you want to be able to configure the class to use a different logger, we should define a class variable so that we can send message to the class and at initialization time, we can take the value from the class variable instead of hard-coding the WriteStream.

Here is a sketch to illustrate the idea.

We add a class variable `DefaultStream` to the class.
We define one setter. This is using this setter that we will be able to say to the system that for a given execution it should write to the Transcript: for example doing \texttt{MicAbstractBlock logStream: Transcript}.

\begin{verbatim}
MicAbstractBlock class >> logStream: aStream
  DefaultStream := aStream
\end{verbatim}

We make sure that the class variable is initialized to a default stream. Now we do it in way that we can later reset the stream to such default stream.

\begin{verbatim}
MicAbstractBlock class >> reset
  self logStream: (WriteStream on: (String new: 1000))
\end{verbatim}

Here we hardcode the stream and alternate solution that extract this expression in a separate messages if it makes sense for subclass to specialize.

\begin{verbatim}
MicAbstractBlock class >> initialize
  self reset
\end{verbatim}

And we will be able to reset the default solution either by reinitializing the class \texttt{MicAbstractBlock initialize} or \texttt{MicAbstractBlock logStream: MicAbstractBlock defaultValueForStream}

Now we make sure that the instance creation uses the default stream hold by the class.

\begin{verbatim}
MicAbstractBlock >> initialize
  super initialize.
  children := OrderedCollection new.
  logStream := DefaultStream
\end{verbatim}

The net result is that we have the control and we can decide what is happening. In addition we can write tests to make sure that the logging is correct. Because using Transcript makes this a brittle exercise since someone else may write to the Transcript when you do not expect it.

\subsection*{Conclusion}

Transcript is not bad per se. But it promotes bad coding practices. Developers should stop listening to the sirens of easy and cheap global variables. With a little bit of care and a limited infrastructure is to possible to get the best of both worlds: modular objects and taking advantages of the existing infrastructure whose Transcript belongs to.

What we presented about Transcript can be applied to any global object or singleton. This is not because a library exposes a singleton that you have to
blindly use it. You should apply sound principle and protect you some impact of changes.

10.7 About error

One question that you can ask yourself is which one of the two following situation is the best:

- Case one. Using the expression `self error: 'Oh no!'` and defining the method `error: ` in your class (or calling)
- Case two. Using the expression `Error signal: 'Oh no!'`

The case one is better. As general principle, defining a method and sending a message is often better because sending self-send messages create hooks that your subclasses can take advantage of.

For example imagine the following situation

```
MyClass >> ohNoError
  Error signal: 'Oh no!'

MyClass >> ohNoErrorUser
  x isSomethingBad
    ifTrue: [ self error: 'Oh no!' ]
```

Then you can redefine `ohNoError` in your subclass.

```
MyClassSubclass >> ohNoError
  Error signal: 'Oh no! Really no!'
```
Chapter 11

Conclusion

Remember that you write code once and will read it a thousand times. Take the time to give good names. However finding good names is not an easy task, but you can use refactorings to improve things easily. This goes in pair with tests. You write a test once and it gets executed million times. Therefore, write tests to exercise the names you use and change them until they help you telling stories that can be understood.