

# Creating a class from scratch with Soot

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This tutorial is based on the `createclass` example, written by Raja-Vallée-Rai and distributed with the Ashes tools.

## 1 Goals

By the end of this lesson, the student should be able to:

- name the basic classes of Soot and describe their functionality
- create a simple program which uses Soot to create a classfile from scratch.

The `createclass` example creates the Java class file `HelloWorld.class` from scratch, using the Soot framework.

The student should refer to the `Main.java` file, which puts all of the steps together in a working Java file. Even though a typical use of Soot would be to write a new `Transformer`, extending Soot's functionality, we illustrate a standalone application here; the same classes and methods are used in either case.

## 2 Creating a class file using Soot

First, we need to create a class to put methods into. The following steps are necessary to create a class file.

### 2.1 Loading `java.lang.Object`

*Load `java.lang.Object`, the root of the Java class hierarchy.*

This step is not necessary when building code that extends the Soot framework; in that case, loading of classfiles is already done when user code is called.

```
Scene.v().loadClassAndSupport("java.lang.Object");
```

This line of code causes Soot to load the `java.lang.Object` class and create the corresponding `SootClass` object, as well as `SootMethods` and `SootFields` for its fields. Of course, `java.lang.Object` has references to other objects. The call to `loadClassAndSupport` will load the transitive closure of the specified class, so that all types needed in order to load `java.lang.Object` are themselves loaded.

This process is known as *resolution*.

This line also references `Scene.v()`. The `Scene` is the container for all of the `SootClasses` in a program, and provides various utility methods. There is a singleton `Scene` object, accessible by calling `Scene.v()`. *Implementation note:* Soot loads these classes from either classfiles or `.jimple` input files. When the former is used, Soot will load all class names referred to in the constant pool of each class file. Loading from `.jimple` will make Soot load only the required types.

## 2.2 Creation of a new SootClass object

Create the ‘HelloWorld’ SootClass, and set its super class as “java.lang.Object”.

```
sClass = new SootClass("HelloWorld", Modifier.PUBLIC);
```

This code creates a SootClass object for a public class named HelloWorld.

```
sClass.setSuperclass(Scene.v().getSootClass("java.lang.Object"));
```

This sets the superclass of the newly-created class to the SootClass object for java.lang.Object. Note the use of the utility method getSootClass on the Scene.

```
Scene.v().addClass(sClass);
```

This adds the newly-created HelloWorld class to the Scene. All classes should belong to the Scene once they are created.

## 3 Adding methods to SootClasses

Create a main() method for HelloWorld with an empty body.

Now that we have a SootClass, we need to add methods to it.

```
method = new SootMethod("main",  
    Arrays.asList(new Type[] {ArrayType.v(RefType.v("java.lang.String"), 1)}),  
    VoidType.v(), Modifier.PUBLIC | Modifier.STATIC);
```

We create a new public static method, main, declare that it takes an array of java.lang.String objects, and that it returns void.

The constructor for SootMethod takes a list, so we call the Java utility method Arrays.asList to create a list from the one-element array which we generate on the fly with new Type[] ... . In the list, we put an array type, corresponding to a one-dimensional ArrayType of java.lang.String objects. The call to RefType fetches the type corresponding to the java.lang.String class.

**Types** Each SootClass represents a Java object. We can instantiate the class, giving an object with a given type. The two notions – type and class – are closely related, but distinct. To get the type for the java.lang.String class, by name, we call RefType.v("java.lang.String"). Given a SootClass object sc, we could also call sc.getType() to get the corresponding type.

```
sClass.addMethod(method);
```

This code adds the method to its containing class.

## 4 Adding code to methods

A method is useless if it doesn’t contain any code. We proceed to add some code to the main method. In order to do so, we must pick an intermediate representation for the code.

### 4.1 Create JimpleBody

In Soot, we attach a Body to a SootMethod to associate some code with the method. Each Body knows which SootMethod it corresponds to, but a SootMethod only has one active Body at once (accessible via SootMethod.getActiveBody()). Different types of Body’s are provided by the various intermediate representations; Soot has JimpleBody, BafBody and GrimpBody.

More precisely, a Body has three important features: chains of locals, traps and units. A chain is a list-like structure that provides  $O(1)$  access to insert and delete elements. Locals are the local variables in the body; traps say which units catch which exceptions; and units are the statements themselves.

Note that “unit” is the term which denotes both statements (as in Jimple) and instructions (as in Baf).

Create a Jimple Body for ‘main’ class, adding locals and instructions to body.

```

JimpleBody body = Jimple.v().newBody(method);
method.setActiveBody(body);

```

We call the Jimple singleton object to get a new `JimpleBody` associated with our method, and make it the active body for our method.

## 4.2 Adding a Local

```

arg = Jimple.v().newLocal("l0", ArrayType.v(RefType.v("java.lang.String"), 1));
body.getLocals().add(arg);

```

We create a few new Jimple Locals and add them to our Body.

## 4.3 Adding a Unit

```

units.add(Jimple.v().newIdentityStmt(arg,
    Jimple.v().newParameterRef(ArrayType.v(
        RefType.v("java.lang.String"), 1), 0)));

```

The `SootMethod` declares that it has parameters, but these are not bound to the locals of the Body. The `IdentityStmt` does this; it assigns into `arg` the value of the first parameter, which has type “array of strings”.

```

// insert "tmpRef.println("Hello world!")"
{
    SootMethod toCall = Scene.v().getMethod
        ("<java.io.PrintStream: void println(java.lang.String)>");
    units.add(Jimple.v().newInvokeStmt
        (Jimple.v().newVirtualInvokeExpr
            (tmpRef, toCall, StringConstant.v("Hello world!"))));
}

```

We get the method with signature `<java.io.PrintStream: void println(java.lang.String)>` (it is named `println`, belongs to `PrintStream`, returns `void` and takes a `String` as its argument – this is enough to uniquely identify the method), and invoke it with the `StringConstant` “Hello world!”.

# 5 Write to class file

The demonstration program uses Soot’s `Printer` to write the `SootClass` to a `.jasmin` file and invoke `jasmin` to assemble it into a `.class` file.

```

Printer.v().write(sClass, "");

```

In order to generate Jimple instead, one would instead use the following code:

```

Printer.v().printTo(sClass, new java.io.PrintWriter(System.out, true));

```

The Jimple created for the `HelloWorld` class is:

```

public class HelloWorld extends java.lang.Object
{
    public static void main(java.lang.String[])
    {
        java.lang.String[] r0;
        java.io.PrintStream r1;

        r0 := @parameter0: java.lang.String[];
    }
}

```

```

        r1 = <java.lang.System: java.io.PrintStream out>;
        virtualinvoke r1.<java.io.PrintStream: void println(java.lang.String)>
            ("Hello world!");
        return;
    }
}

```

## 6 Conclusion

We've seen how to use the basic objects and methods of Soot, and how to create Jimple statements. This tutorial was brought to you by these classes: Scene, SootClass, SootMethod, Body, JimpleBody, Local, and Unit.

## Appendix A: Complete code for createclass example

The code for this example is reproduced below. It can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.sable.mcgill.ca/soot/tutorial/createclass/Main.java>.

```

/* Soot - a J*va Optimization Framework
 * Copyright (C) 1997-1999 Raja Vallee-Rai
 *
 * This library is free software; you can redistribute it and/or
 * modify it under the terms of the GNU Lesser General Public
 * License as published by the Free Software Foundation; either
 * version 2.1 of the License, or (at your option) any later version.
 *
 * This library is distributed in the hope that it will be useful,
 * but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of
 * MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the GNU
 * Lesser General Public License for more details.
 *
 * You should have received a copy of the GNU Lesser General Public
 * License along with this library; if not, write to the
 * Free Software Foundation, Inc., 59 Temple Place - Suite 330,
 * Boston, MA 02111-1307, USA.
 */

/*
 * Modified by the Sable Research Group and others 1997-1999.
 * See the 'credits' file distributed with Soot for the complete list of
 * contributors. (Soot is distributed at http://www.sable.mcgill.ca/soot)
 */

/* Reference Version: $SootVersion: 1.beta.6.dev.2 $ */

/** Example of using Soot to create a classfile from scratch.
 * The 'createclass' example creates a HelloWorld class file using Soot.
 * It proceeds as follows:
 *
 * - Create a SootClass <code>HelloWorld</code> extending java.lang.Object.
 *
 * - Create a 'main' method and add it to the class.
 */

```

```

* - Create an empty JimpleBody and add it to the 'main' method.
*
* - Add locals and statements to JimpleBody.
*
* - Write the result out to a class file.
*/

package ashes.examples.createclass;

import soot.*;
import soot.jimple.*;
import soot.util.*;
import java.io.*;
import java.util.*;

public class Main
{
    public static void main(String[] args)
    {
        SootClass sClass;
        SootMethod method;

        // Load java.lang.Object
        Scene.v().loadClassAndSupport("java.lang.Object");

        // Declare 'public class HelloWorld'
        sClass = new SootClass("HelloWorld", Modifier.PUBLIC);

        // 'extends Object'
        sClass.setSuperclass(Scene.v().getSootClass("java.lang.Object"));
        Scene.v().addClass(sClass);

        // Create the method, public static void main(String[])
        method = new SootMethod("main",
            Arrays.asList(new Type[] {ArrayType.v(RefType.v("java.lang.String"), 1)}),
            VoidType.v(), Modifier.PUBLIC | Modifier.STATIC);
        sClass.addMethod(method);

        // Create the method body
        {
            // create empty body
            JimpleBody body = Jimple.v().newBody(method);

            method.setActiveBody(body);
            Chain units = body.getUnits();
            Local arg, tmpRef;

            // Add some locals, java.lang.String l0
            arg = Jimple.v().newLocal
                ("l0", ArrayType.v(RefType.v("java.lang.String"), 1));
            body.getLocals().add(arg);

            // Add locals, java.io.printStream tmpRef

```

```

        tmpRef = Jimple.v().newLocal
            ("tmpRef", RefType.v("java.io.PrintStream"));
        body.getLocals().add(tmpRef);

// add "l0 := @parameter0"
        units.add(Jimple.v().newIdentityStmt(arg,
            Jimple.v().newParameterRef
                (ArrayType.v(RefType.v("java.lang.String"), 1), 0)));

// add "tmpRef = java.lang.System.out"
        units.add(Jimple.v().newAssignStmt(tmpRef, Jimple.v().newStaticFieldRef(
            Scene.v().getField("<java.lang.System: java.io.PrintStream out>"))));

// insert "tmpRef.println("Hello world!")"
    {
        SootMethod toCall = Scene.v().getMethod
            ("<java.io.PrintStream: .void println(java.lang.String)>");
        units.add(Jimple.v().newInvokeStmt
            (Jimple.v().newVirtualInvokeExpr(tmpRef, toCall,
                StringConstant.v("Hello world!"))));
    }

// insert "return"
        units.add(Jimple.v().newReturnVoidStmt());
    }

    Printer.v().write(sClass, "");
}

}

```

## 7 History

- March 8, 2000: Initial version.
- September 1, 2000: Changed syntax to conform with the current release.
- May 31, 2003: Updated for Soot 2.0.