

Practical Concurrent and Parallel Programming 1

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Friday 2016-09-02*

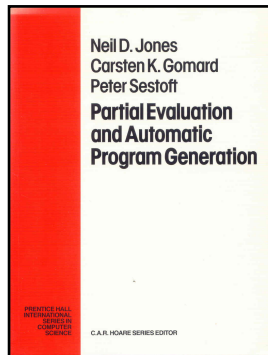
Plan for today

- Why this course?
- Course contents, learning goals
- Practical information
- Mandatory exercises, examination

- Java threads
- Java locking, the **synchronized** keyword
 - Use **synchronized** on blocks, not on methods
- Visibility of memory writes
- Threads for performance

The teachers

- Course responsible: Peter Sestoft
 - MSc 1988 and PhD 1991, Copenhagen University



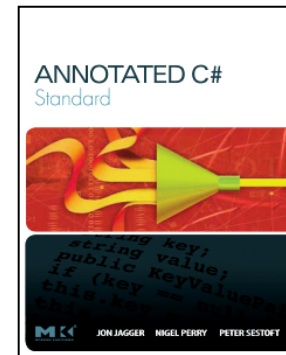
1993



2002, 2005, 2016



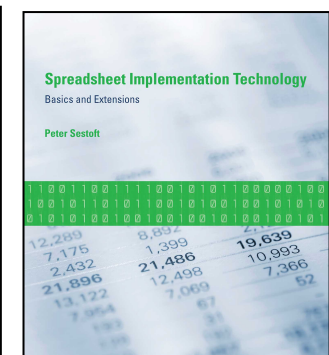
2004 & 2012



2007



2012, 2017



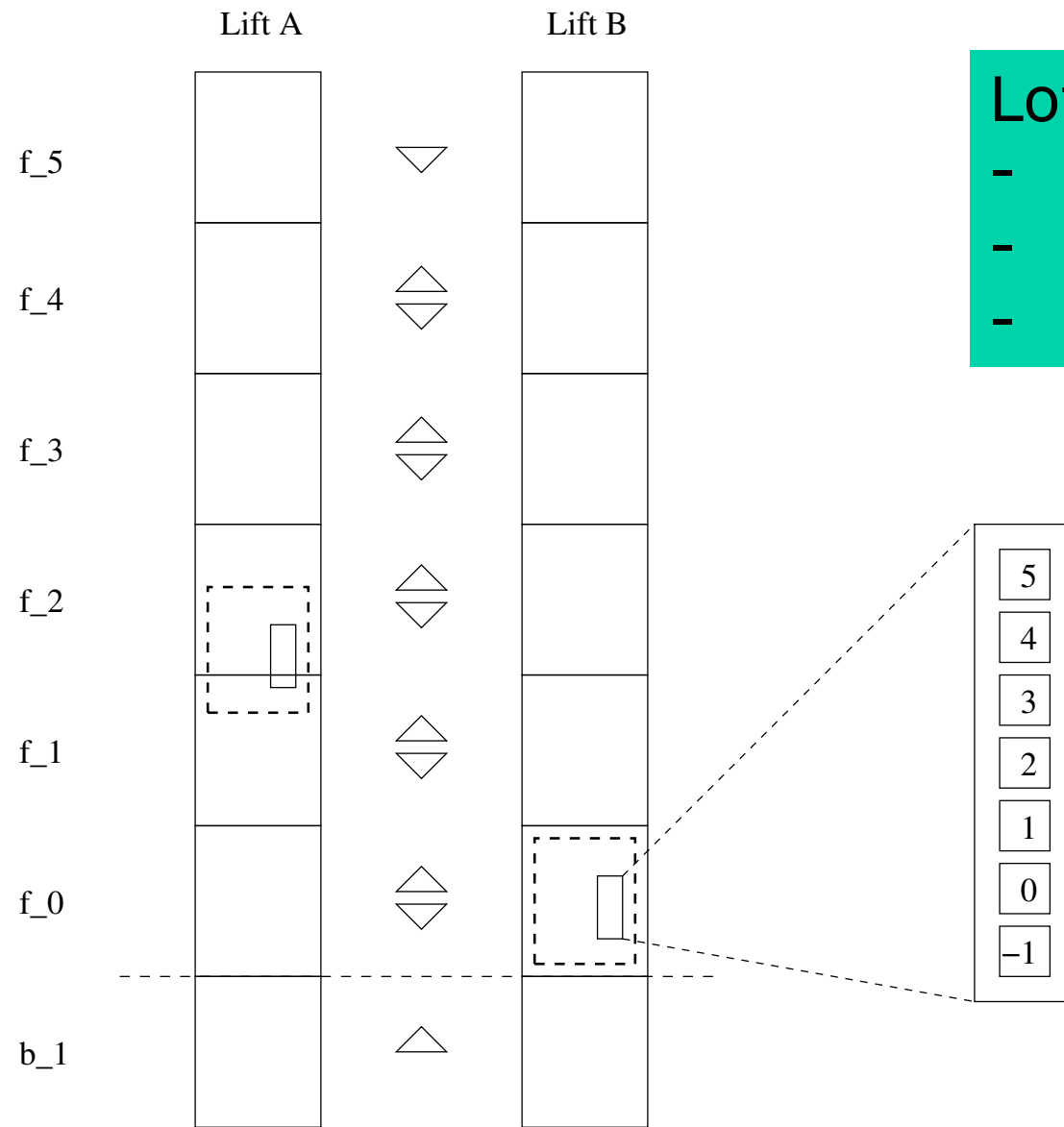
2014

- Co-teacher: Claus Brabrand
- Exercises
 - Alexander Bock, ITU PhD student, ITU MSc graduate
 - Gediminas Kucas, ITU MSc student
 - Sigurt Bladt Dinesen, ITU MSc student
 - (Amund Ranheim Lome, ITU MSc graduate)

Why this course?

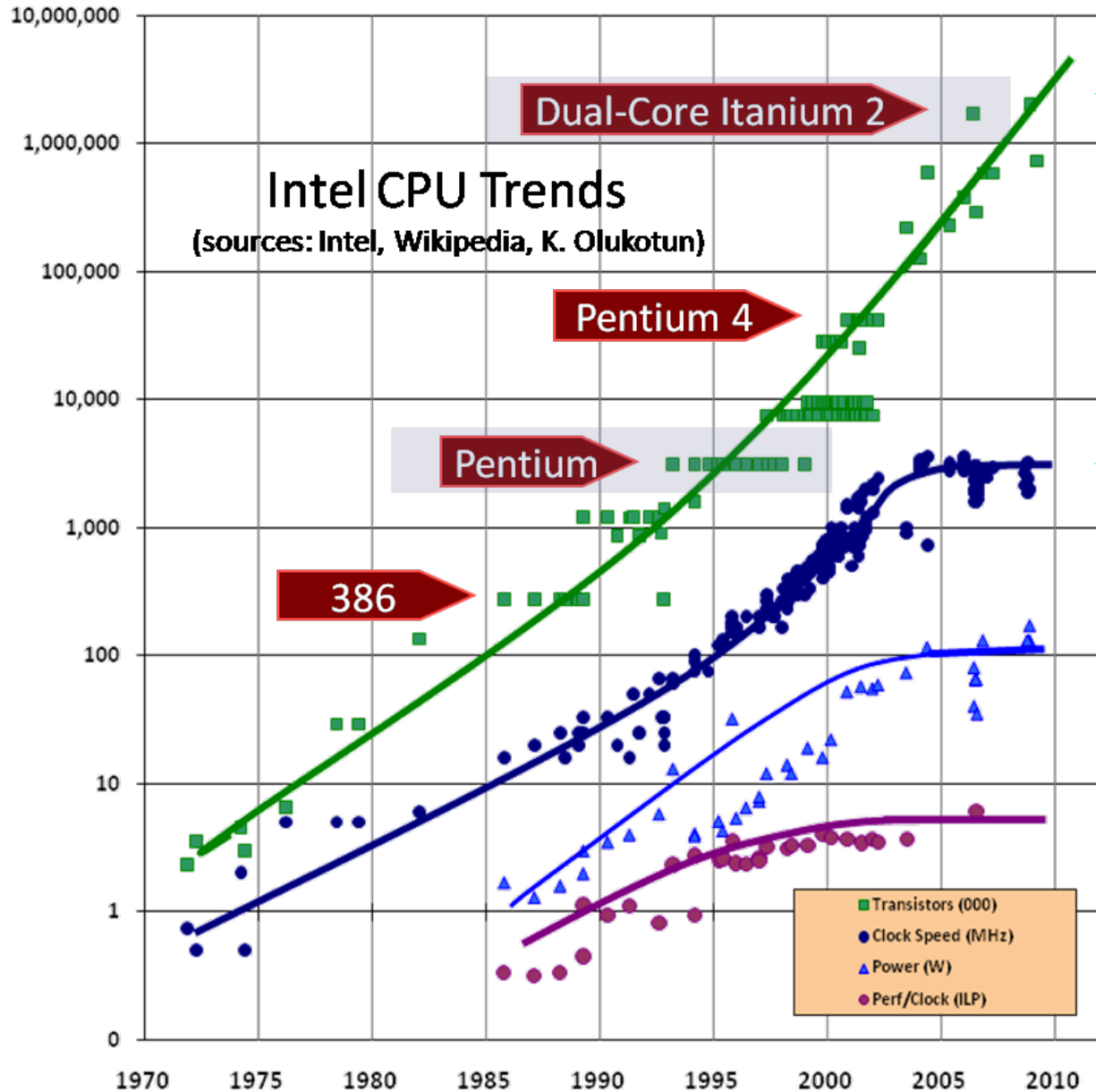
- Parallel programming is necessary
 - For responsiveness in user interfaces etc.
 - The real world is parallel
 - Think of the atrium lifts: lifts move, buttons are pressed
 - Think of handling a million online banking customers
 - For performance: *The free lunch is over*
- It is easy, and disastrous, to get it wrong
 - Testing is even harder than for sequential code
 - You should learn how to make correct parallel code
 - in a real language, used in practice
 - You should learn how to make fast parallel code
 - and measure whether one solution is faster than another
 - and understand why

Example: 2 lifts, 7 floors, 26 buttons



Lots of concurrency:
- lifts move
- buttons are pressed
- doors open & close

The free lunch is over: No more growth in single-core speed



Moore's law

Clock speed

Herb Sutter: The free lunch is over, Dr Dobbs, 2005.
Figure updated August 2009.
<http://www.gotw.ca/publications/concurrency-ddj.htm>

Course contents

- Threads, locks, mutual exclusion, scalability
- Java 8 streams, functional programming
- Performance measurements
- Tasks, the Java executor framework
- Safety, liveness, deadlocks
- Testing concurrent programs
- Transactional memory, Multiverse
- Lock-free data structures, Java mem. model
- Message passing, Akka

Learning objectives

After the course, the successful student can:

- ANALYSE the correctness of concurrent Java software, and RELATE it to the Java memory model
- ANALYSE the performance of concurrent Java software
- APPLY Java threads and related language features (locks, final and volatile fields) and libraries (concurrent collections) to CONSTRUCT correct and well-performing concurrent Java software
- USE software tools for accelerated testing and analysis of concurrency problems in Java software
- CONTRAST different communication mechanisms (shared mutable memory, transactional memory, message passing)

Expected prerequisites

- From the ITU course base:
“Students must know the Java programming language very well, including inner classes and a first exposure to threads and locks, and event-based GUIs as in Swing or AWT.”
- Today we will briefly review the basics of
 - Java threads
 - Java synchronized methods and statements
 - Java’s **final** keyword
 - Java inner classes and lambdas

Standard Friday plan

- Fridays until 9 December (except 21 Oct)
- Lectures 0800-1000 in auditorium 1
- Exercise startup
 - 1000-1200 in auditorium 1 and 2A54 and 4A54
- Exercise hand-in: 6.5 days after lecture
 - That is, the following Thursday at 23:55

Course information online

- Course LearnIT page, restricted access:
<https://learnit.itu.dk/course/view.php?id=3016179>
 - Exercises and hand-ins, deadlines, feedback
 - Mandatory exercises and hand-ins, deadlines, feedback
 - Discussion forum
 - Non-public reading materials
- Course homepage, public access:
<http://www.itu.dk/people/sestoft/itu/PCPP/E2016/>
 - Overview of lectures and exercises
 - Lecture slides and exercise sheets
 - Example code
 - List of all mandatory reading materials

Exercises

- There are 13 sets of weekly exercises
- Hand in the solutions through LearnIT
- You can work in teams of 1 or 2 students
- The teaching assistants provide joint feedback
- Six of the 13 weekly exercise sets are mandatory
- At least five of those must be approved
 - otherwise you cannot take the course examination
 - failing to get 5 approved costs an exam attempt (!!)
- Exercise may be approved even if not fully solved
 - It is possible to resubmit
 - Make your best effort
 - What is important is that **you learn**

The exam

- A 30 hour take-home written exam/project
 - Start at 0900 Tuesday 10 January 2017
 - End at 1500 Wednesday ~~12~~ **11** January at 1500
 - Electronic submission in LearnIT
 - Followed by random sample “cheat check”
- Expected exam workload is 16 hours
 - Individual exam, no collaboration
 - All materials, including Internet, allowed
 - Always credit the sources you use
 - Plagiarism is **forbidden** – as always
- The old (January 2015 and 2016) exams are on the public homepage

Stuff you need

- Buy Goetz et al: *Java Concurrency in Practice*
 - From 2006, still the best on Java concurrency
 - Most contents is relevant for C#/.NET too
- Free lecture notes and papers, see homepage
- A few other book chapters, see LearnIT

- **Java 8** SDK installed on your computer
 - Java 7 or earlier will **not** work

- Various optional materials, see homepage:
 - Bloch: *Effective Java*, 2008, **highly recommended**
 - Sestoft: *Java Precisely*, 3rd edition 2016
 - more ...

What about other languages?

- .NET and C# are very similar to Java
 - We will point out differences on the way
- Clojure, Scala, F#, ... build on JVM or .NET
 - So thread concepts are very similar too
- C and C++ have some differences (ignore)
- Haskell has transactional memory
 - We will see this in Java too (Multiverse)
- Erlang, Scala, F# have message passing
 - We will see this in Java too (Akka)
- Dataflow, CSP, CCS, Pi-calculus, Join, C ω , ...
 - Zillions of other concurrency mechanisms

Other concurrency models

- Java threads interact via shared mutable fields
 - Shared: Visible to multiple threads
 - Mutable: The fields can be updated, assigned to
- This is a source of many problems
- **Alternatives** exist:
- No sharing: interact via message passing
 - Erlang, Scala, MPI, F#, Go ... and Java Akka library
- No mutability: use functional programming
 - Haskell, F#, ML, Google MapReduce, ...
- Allow shared mutable mem., but avoid locks
 - Transactional memory, optimistic concurrency
 - In Haskell, Clojure, ... and Java Multiverse library

Other parallel hardware

- We focus on multicore (standard) hardware
 - Typically 2-32 general cores on a CPU chip
 - (Instruction-level parallelism, invisible to software)
- Other types of parallel hardware exist
- Vector instructions (SIMD, SSE, AVX) on core
 - Typically 2-8 floating-point operations/CPU cycle
 - Soon available through .NET JIT and hence C#
- General purpose graphics processors GPGPU
 - Such as Nvidia CUDA, up to 2500 cores on a chip
 - We're using those in a research project
- Clusters, cloud: servers connected by network

Threads and concurrency in Java

- A **thread** is
 - a sequential activity executing Java code
 - running at the same time as other activities
- Concurrent = at the same time = in parallel
- Threads communicate via fields
 - That is, by updating **shared mutable state**

A thread-safe class for counting

- A thread-safe long counter:

```
class LongCounter {  
    private long count = 0;  
    public synchronized void increment() {  
        count = count + 1;  
    }  
    public synchronized long get() {  
        return count;  
    }  
}
```

TestLongCounter.java

- The state (field **count**) is **private**
- Only **synchronized** methods read and write it

A thread that increments the counter

- A Thread `t` is created from a Runnable
- The thread's behavior is in the `run` method

```
final LongCounter lc = new LongCounter();
Thread t =
    new Thread(
        new Runnable() {
            public void run() {
                while (true)
                    lc.increment();
            }
        }
    );
```

An anonymous inner class, and an instance of it

When started, the thread will do this: increment forever

- This only *creates* the thread, does not *start* it

Starting the thread in parallel with the main thread

```
public static void main(String[] args) ... {
    final LongCounter lc = new LongCounter();
    Thread t = new Thread(new Runnable() { ... });
    t.start();
    System.out.println("Press Enter ... ");
    while (true) {
        System.in.read();
        System.out.println(lc.get());
    }
}
```

```
Press Enter to get the current value:
60853639
103606384
263682708
...
```

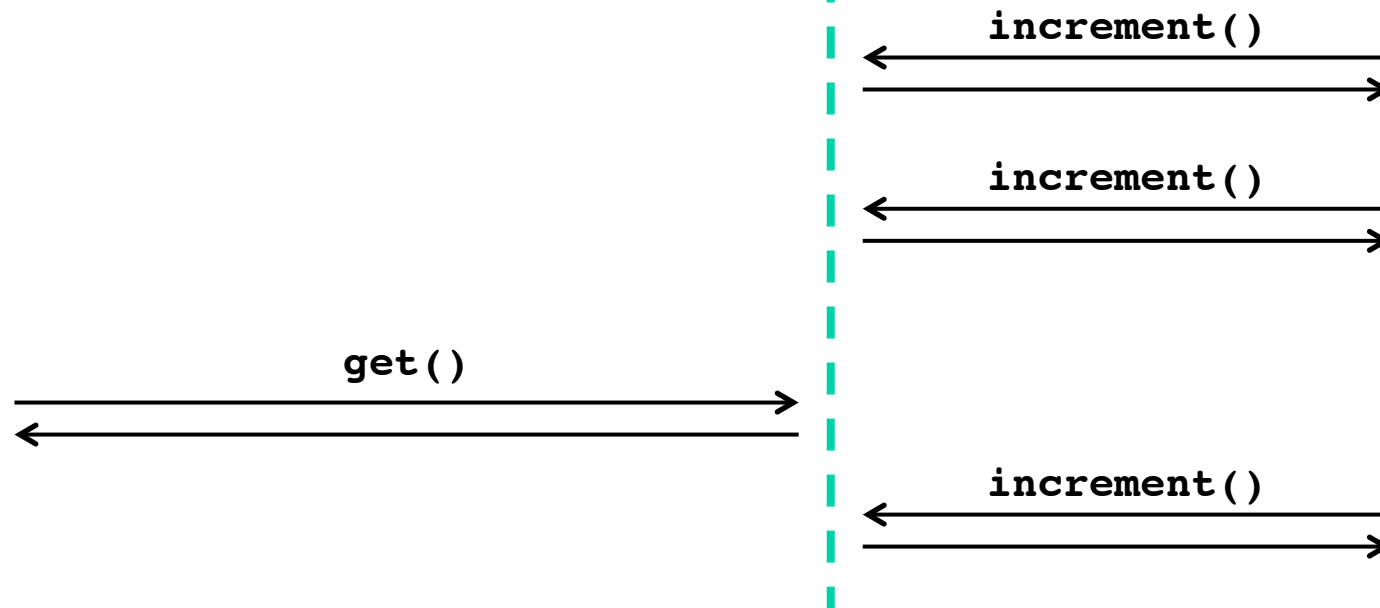
Creating and starting a thread (and communicating via object)

Thread "main"
(active)

```
lc = new LongCounter()  
  
t = new Thread(...)  
  
t.start()
```

Object lc
(passive)

Thread t
(active)



Java 8 lambda expressions

- Instead of old anonymous inner classes:

```
Thread t = new Thread(  
    new Runnable() {  
        public void run() {  
            while (true)  
                lc.increment();  
        }  
    });
```

TestLongCounter7.java

- ... we use neat Java 8 lambda expressions:

```
Thread t = new Thread(() -> {  
    while (true)  
        lc.increment();  
});
```

TestLongCounter.java

Locks and the `synchronized` statement

- Any Java object can be used for *locking*
- The **synchronized** statement

```
synchronized (obj) {  
    ... body ...  
}
```

- Blocks until the lock on **obj** is available
- Takes (acquires) the lock on **obj**
- Executes the body block
- Releases the lock, also on **return** or exception
- By consistently locking on the same object
 - one can obtain **mutual exclusion**, so
 - at most one thread can execute the code at a time

A synchronized method simply locks the "this" reference around body

- A synchronized instance method

```
class C {  
    public synchronized void method() { ... }  
}
```

really uses a **synchronized** statement:

```
class C {  
    public void method() {  
        synchronized (this) { ... }  
    }  
}
```

- Q: What is being locked? (The entire class, the method, the instance, the Java system)?

What about synchronized *static* methods?

- A synchronized static method

```
class C {  
    public synchronized static void method()  
        { ... }  
}
```

locks on the class runtime object C.class:

```
class C {  
    public void method() {  
        synchronized (C.class) { ... }  
    }  
}
```

Use synchronized statements, not synchronized methods

- So it is clear what object is being locked on
- So only your methods lock on the object

```
class LongCounter {  
    public synchronized void increment() { ... }  
    public synchronized long get() { ... }  
}
```

Good

```
class LongCounterBetter {  
    private final Object myLock = new Object();  
    public void increment() {  
        synchronized (myLock) { ... }  
    }  
    public long get() {  
        synchronized (myLock) { ... }  
    }  
}
```

TestLongCounterBetter.java

Only these
methods
can lock on
myLock

Clear what
is locked on

Better

Multiple threads, locking

- Two threads incrementing counter in parallel:

```
final int counts = 10_000_000;
Thread t1 = new Thread(() -> {
    for (int i=0; i<counts; i++)
        lc.increment();
});
Thread t2 = new Thread(() -> {
    for (int i=0; i<counts; i++)
        lc.increment();
});
```

TestLongCounterExperiments.java

- Q: How many threads are running now?

Starting the threads, and waiting for their completion

```
t1.start(); t2.start();
```

- A thread completes when the lambda returns
- To wait for thread `t` completing, call `t.join()`
- May throw `InterruptedException`

```
try { t1.join(); t2.join(); }  
catch (InterruptedException exn) { ... }
```

```
System.out.println("Count is " + lc.get());
```

- What is `lc.get()` after threads complete?
 - Each thread calls `lc.increment()` ten million times
 - So it gets called 20 million times

Removing the locking

- Non-thread-safe counter class:

```
class LongCounter2 {  
    private long count = 0;  
    public void increment() {  
        count = count + 1 ;  
    }  
    public long get() { return count; }  
}
```

- Produces very wrong results, not 20 million:

```
Count is 10041965  
Count is 19861602  
Count is 18939813
```

- Q: Why?

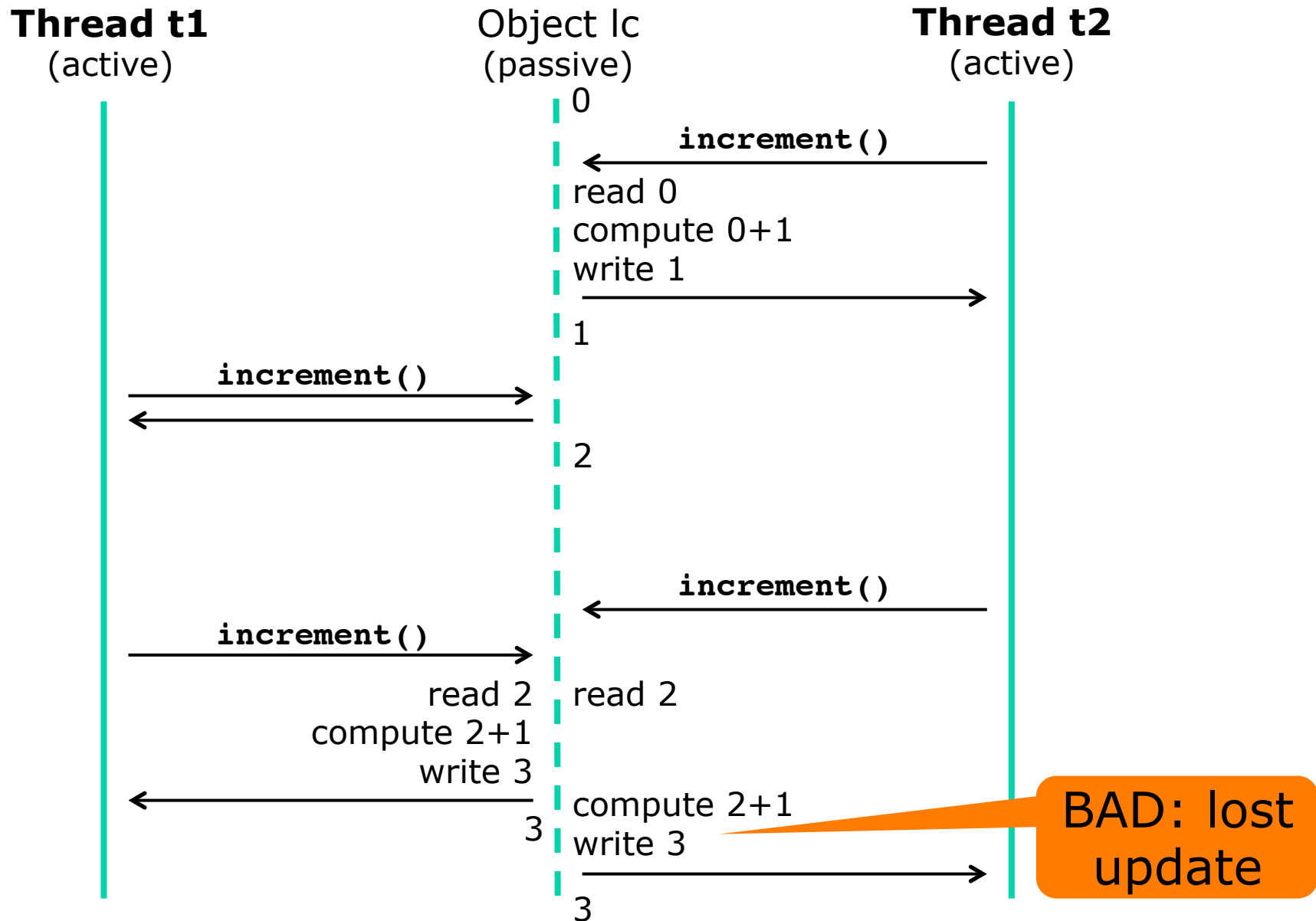
The operation `count = count + 1` is not atomic

- What `count = count + 1` means:
 - read `count`
 - add 1
 - write result to `count`
- Hence *not atomic*
- So risk that two `increment()` calls will increase `count` by only 1

- NB: Same for `count += 1` and `count++`

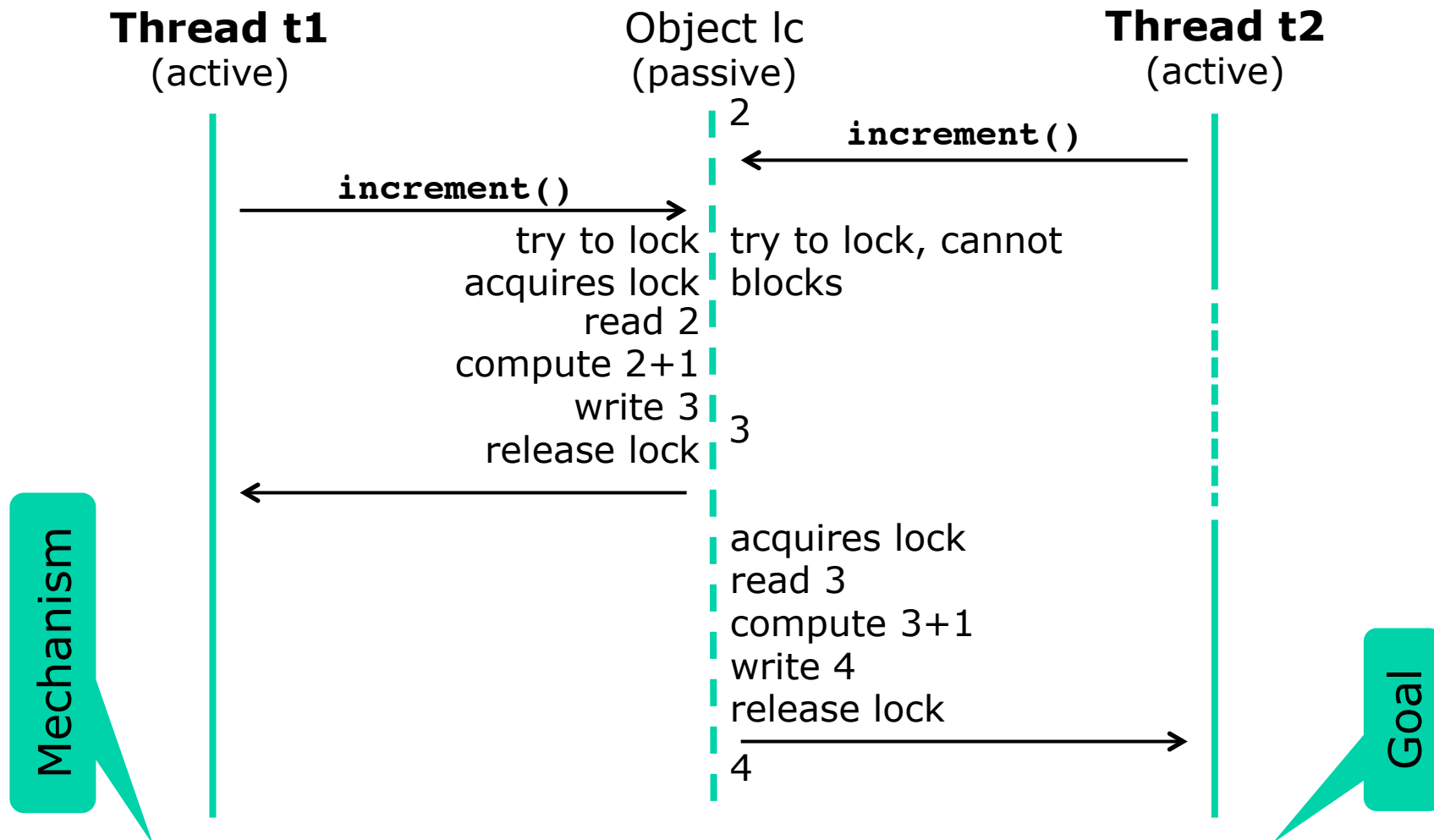
No locking: lost update

Without locking



How does locking help?

With
locking



- Locking can achieve **mutual exclusion**
 - Lock on the same object before **all** state accesses
 - Unfortunately, quite easy to get it wrong

Why synchronize just to read data?

```
class LongCounter {  
    private long count = 0;  
    public synchronized void increment() {  
        count = count + 1;  
    }  
    public synchronized long get() {  
        return count;  
    }  
}
```

TestLongCounter.java

Why needed?

- The **synchronized** keyword has **two** effects:
 - **Mutual exclusion**: only one thread can hold a lock (execute a synchronized method or block) at a time
 - **Visibility** of memory writes: All writes by thread A before releasing a lock (exit synchr) are visible to thread B after acquiring the lock (enter synchr)

Visibility is really important

```
class MutableInteger {  
    private int value = 0;  
    public void set(int value) { this.value = value; }  
    public int get() { return value; }  
}
```

WARNING: Useless

TestMutableInteger.java

- Looks OK, no need for synchronization?
- But thread t may loop forever in this scenario:

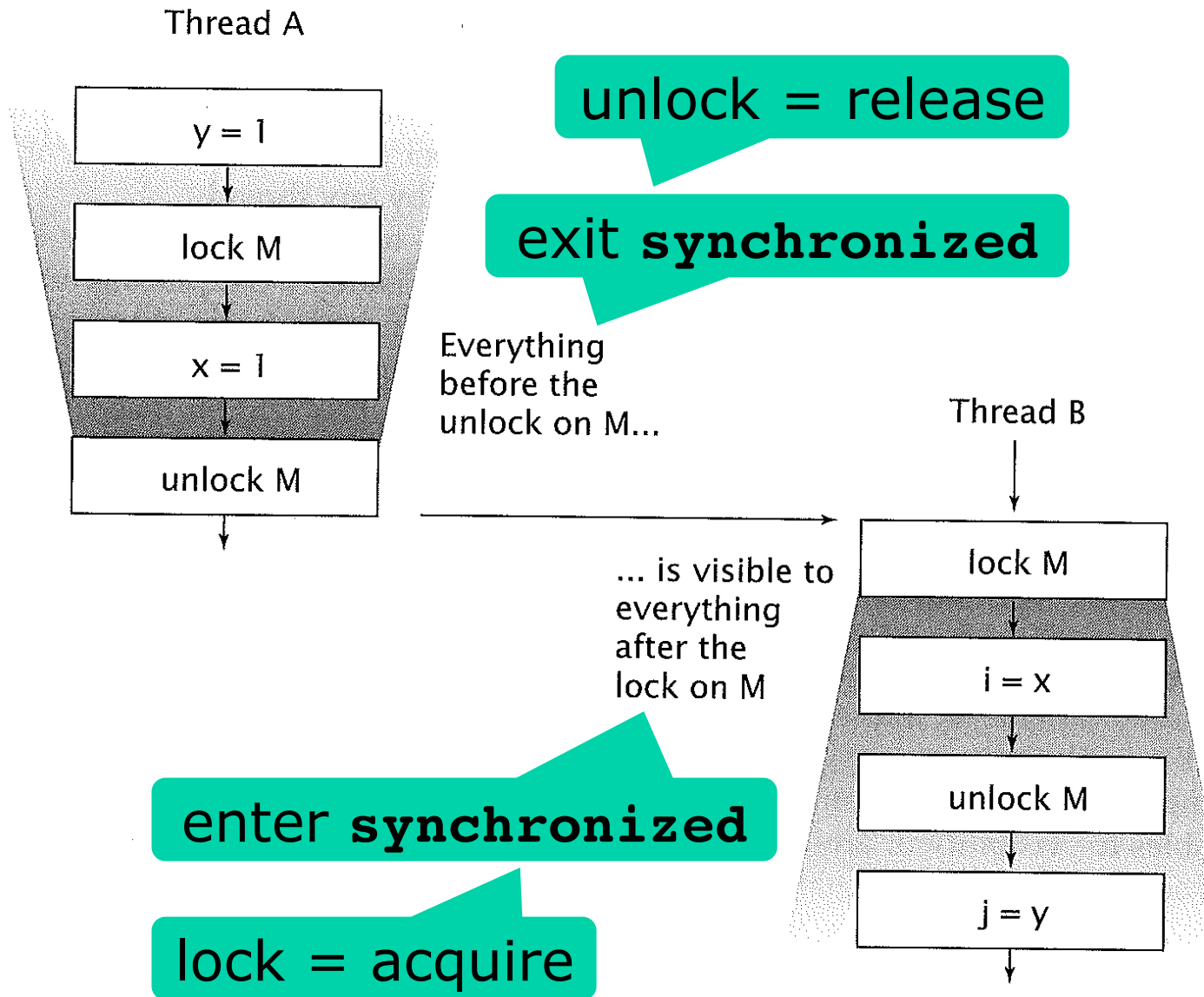
```
final MutableInteger mi = new MutableInteger();  
Thread t = new Thread(() -> {  
    while (mi.get() == 0) { }  
});  
t.start();  
mi.set(42);
```

Loop while zero

This write by thread "main" may be forever invisible to thread t

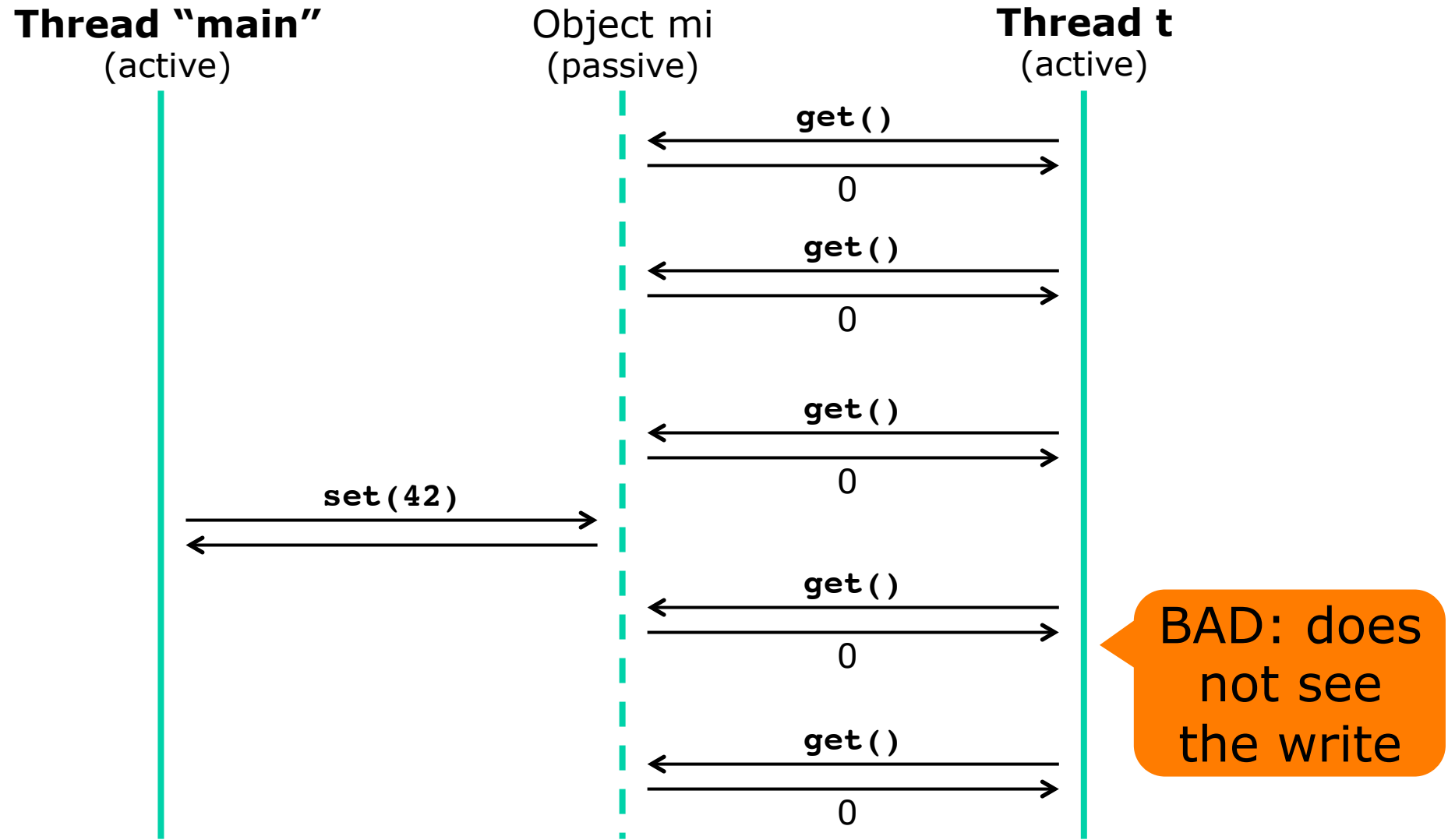
- Two possible fixes:
 - Add **synchronized** to methods **get** and **set**, OR
 - Add **volatile** to field **value**

Visibility by synchronization



Goetz p. 37

Communication through mutable shared state fails if no visibility



The **volatile** field modifier

- The **volatile** field modifier can be used to ensure visibility (but not mutual exclusion)

```
class MutableInteger {  
    private volatile int value = 0;  
    public void set(int value) { this.value = value; }  
    public int get() { return value; }  
}
```

OK

- All writes by thread A before writing a **volatile** field are visible to thread B when, and after, reading the **volatile** field
- Note: A single **volatile** write+read makes writes to all other fields visible also!
 - A bit mysterious, but a consequence of the implementation
 - This is Java semantics; C#, C, C++ volatile are different

Goetz advice on volatile

Use volatile variables only when they simplify your synchronization policy; avoid it when verifying correctness would require subtle reasoning about visibility.

Locking can guarantee both visibility and atomicity; volatile variables can only guarantee visibility.

Goetz p. 38, 39

- Rule 1: Use locks (**synchronized**)
- Rule 2: If circumstances are right, and you are an expert, maybe use **volatile** instead
- Rule 3: There are few experts

That was Java.

What about C# and .NET?

- C# Language Spec. §17.3.4 *Volatile Fields*
- CLI Ecma-335 standard section §I.12.6.7:
 - "A volatile write has *release* semantics ... the write is guaranteed to happen *after* any memory references *prior* to the write instruction in the CIL instruction sequence"
 - "volatile read has *acquire* semantics ... the read is guaranteed to occur *prior* to any references to memory that occur *after* the read instruction in the CIL instruction sequence"
- C#'s **volatile** is weaker than Java's
 - And very unclearly described
 - Maybe use C# **lock** or `MemoryBarrier()` instead

Ways to ensure visibility

- Unlocking followed by locking the same lock
- Writing a volatile field and then reading it
- Calling one method on a concurrent collection and another method on same collection
 - `java.util.concurrent.*`
- Calling one method on an atomic variable and then another method on same variable
 - `java.util.concurrent.atomic.*`
- Finishing a constructor that initializes final or volatile fields
- Calling `t.start()` before anything in thread `t`
- Anything in thread `t` before `t.join()` returns

(Java Language Specification 8 §17.4, and the Javadoc for concurrent collection classes etc, give the full and rather complicated details)

Using threads for performance

Example: Count primes 2 3 5 7 11 ...

- Count primes in 0...99999999

```
static long countSequential(int range) {  
    long count = 0;  
    final int from = 0, to = range;  
    for (int i=from; i<to; i++)  
        if (isPrime(i))  
            count++;  
    return count;  
}
```

Result is 664579

TestCountPrimes.java

- Takes 6.4 sec to compute on 1 CPU core
- Why not use all my computer's 4 (x 2) cores?
 - Eg. use two threads t1 and t2 and divide the work:
t1: 0...49999999 and t2: 5000000...99999999

Using two threads to count primes

```
final LongCounter lc = new LongCounter();
final int from1 = 0, to1 = perThread;
Thread t1 = new Thread(() -> {
    for (int i=from1; i<to1; i++)
        if (isPrime(i))
            lc.increment();
});
final int from2 = perThread, to2 = perThread * 2;
Thread t2 = new Thread(() -> {
    for (int i=from2; i<to2; i++)
        if (isPrime(i))
            lc.increment();
});
```

Same code twice,
bad practice

TestCountPrimes.java

- Takes 4.2 sec real time, so already faster
- Q: Why not just use a **long count** variable?
- Q: What if we want to use 10 threads?

Using N threads to count primes

```
final LongCounter lc = new LongCounter();
Thread[] threads = new Thread[threadCount];
for (int t=0; t<threadCount; t++) {
    final int from = perThread * t,
            to = (t+1==threadCount) ? range : perThread * (t+1);
    threads[t] = new Thread(() -> {
        for (int i=from; i<to; i++)
            if (isPrime(i))
                lc.increment();
    });
}
for (int t=0; t<threadCount; t++)
    threads[t].start();
```

Last thread has
to==range

Thread processes
segment [from,to)

- Takes 1.8 sec real time with **threadCount** 10
 - Approx 3.3 times faster than sequential solution
 - Q: Why not 4 times, or 10 times faster?
 - Q: What if we just put **to=perThread * (t+1)**?

Reflections: threads for performance

- This code can be made better in many ways
 - Eg better distribution of work on the 10 threads
 - Eg less use of the synchronized LongCounter
- Use Java 8 parallel streams instead, **week 3**
- Proper performance measurements, **week 4**
- Very bad idea to use many (> 500) threads
 - Each thread takes much memory for the stack
 - Each thread slows down the garbage collector
- Use *tasks* and Java “executors”, **week 5**
- More advice on scalability, **week 7**
- How to avoid locking, **week 10 and 11**

Why “concurrent” and “parallel”?

- Informally both mean “at the same time”
- But some people distinguish
 - Concurrent: related to correctness
 - Parallel: related to performance
- Soccer (*fodbold*) analogy, by P. Panangaden
 - The referee (*dommer*) is concerned with concurrency: the soccer rules must be followed
 - The coach (*træner*) is concerned with parallelism: the best possible use of the team’s 11 players
- This course is concerned with correctness as well as performance: concurrent and parallel

Processes, threads, and tasks

- An operating system **process** running Java is
 - a Java Virtual Machine that executes code
 - an object heap, managed by a garbage collector
 - one or more running Java threads
- A Java **thread**
 - has its own method call stack, takes much memory
 - shares the object heap with other threads
- A **task** (or future) (or actor)
 - does not have a call stack, so takes little memory
 - is run by an executor, using a thread pool, week 5

This week

- Reading
 - Goetz chapters 1, 2 and 3
 - Sutter paper
 - Bloch item 66
- Exercises week 1, on homepage and LearnIT
 - Make sure you are familiar with Java threads and locks and inner classes
 - Make sure that you can compile, run and explain programs that use these features
- Read **before** next week's lecture
 - Goetz chapters 4 and 5
 - Bloch item 15