

USER FRIENDLY by J.D. "Illiad" Frazer



<http://ars.userfriendly.org/cartoons/?id=20080627>

CS 252:

Advanced Programming Language Principles



Blocks and Message Passing

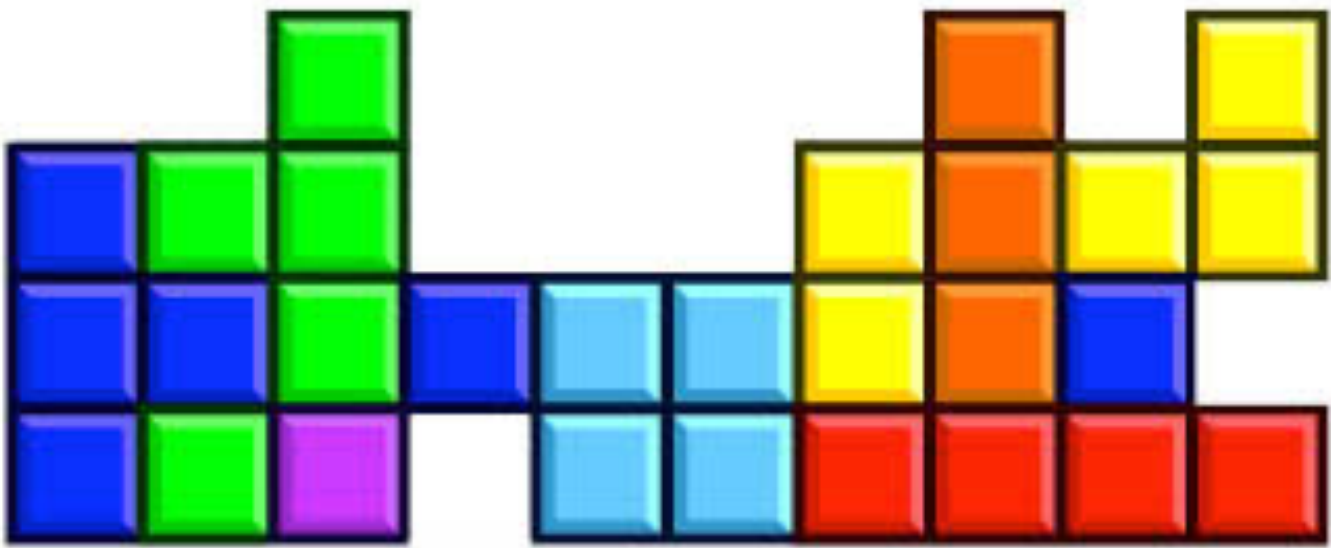
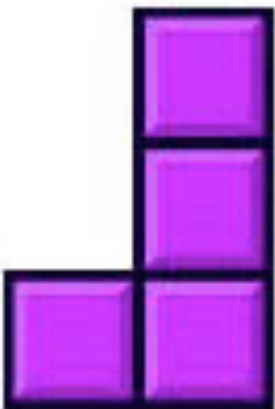
Prof. Tom Austin

San José State University

Smalltalk influences on Ruby

- Everything is an object
- Blocks
- Message passing

Blocks



File I/O

```
file = File.open(  
    'temp.txt', 'r')  
file.each_line do |line|  
    puts line  
end  
file.close
```

File I/O with blocks

```
File.open('file', 'r') do |f|  
  f.each_line { |ln| puts ln }  
end
```

Creating custom blocks

Ruby methods can accept blocks to

- create custom **control structures**
- eliminate **boilerplate code**

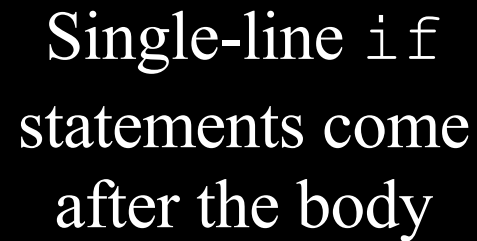


`with_prob`

- **Accepts:**
 - a probability (between 0 and 1)
 - a block
- **Executes block probabilistically**
 - `with_prob 0 { puts "hi" }`
 - `with_prob 1 { puts "hi" }`
 - `with_prob 0.5 { puts "hi" }`

```
def with_prob (prob)
  yield if (Random.rand < prob)
end

with_prob 0.42 do
  puts "There is a 42% chance "
    + "that this code will print"
end
```



Single-line if
statements come
after the body

```
def with_prob (prob, &blk)  
  blk.call if (Random.rand < prob)  
end
```

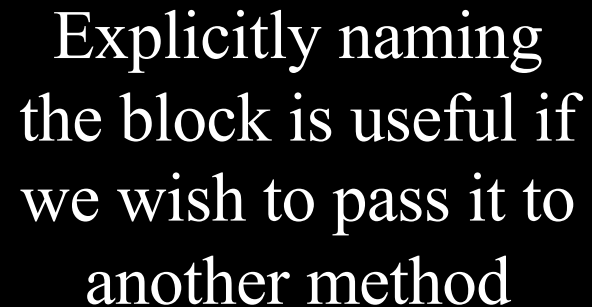
Note that there
is no '&' here.

We can explicitly
name the block of code

```
with_prob 0.42 do  
  puts "There is a 42% chance "  
    + "that this code will print"  
end
```

```
def with_prob (prob, &blk)  
  blk.call if (Random.rand < prob)  
end
```

```
def half_the_time (&block)  
  with_prob(0.5, &block)  
end
```



Explicitly naming
the block is useful if
we wish to pass it to
another method


Conversion table example (in class)

Blocks are *closures*, though there are some differences between JavaScript functions and Ruby blocks.

Let's see how the two compare...

Writing `withProb` in JavaScript

```
function withProb(prob, f) {  
  if (Math.random() < prob) {  
    return f();  
  }  
}
```



JavaScript uses
callbacks rather
than blocks

What is the difference?

```
def coin_flip          function coinFlip() {
  with_prob 0.5        withProb(0.5,
  do                   function() {
    return "H"         return "H";
  end                 });
  return "T"          return "T";
end                   }
```

Singleton classes

JavaScript & prototypes

```
function Employee(name, salary) {  
    this.name = name;  
    this.salary = salary;  
}  
var a = new Employee("Alice", 75000);  
var b = new Employee("Bob", 50000);  
  
b.signingBonus = 2000; _____  
console.log(a.signingBonus);  
console.log(b.signingBonus);
```

Can we do the
same thing in
Ruby?

In Ruby, every object has a special *singleton class*.

This class holds methods unique to that object.

Singleton Class Example

(in-class)

A sepia-toned photograph of two people sitting at desks in a classroom, passing a small white card between them. The person on the left is wearing a dark shirt and has their arm extended towards the center. The person on the right is wearing a dark, patterned long-sleeved shirt and jeans, also with their arm extended. The card is held between their hands. The background shows rows of empty desks and chairs, suggesting a classroom or lecture hall setting. The overall mood is quiet and focused.

Message Passing

Message passing (object interaction)

- Sender sends
 - message: method name
 - data: method parameters
- Receiver
 - processes the message
 - (optionally) returns **data**

If receiver doesn't understand message?

```
irb> "hello".foo
```

```
NoMethodError: undefined  
method `foo' for  
"hello":String  
  from (irb):2  
  from /usr/bin/irb:12:in  
  `<main>'
```

```
irb>
```

`method_missing`

- You can override this behavior
 - Smalltalk: `doesNotUnderstand`
 - Ruby: `method_missing`
- This method is called when an unknown method is invoked

```
class Person
  attr_accessor :name
  def initialize(name)
    @name = name
  end
  def method_missing(m)
    puts "Didn't understand #{m}"
  end
end
```

```
bob = Person.new "Robert"  
class << bob  
  def method_missing m  
    phrase = m.to_s.sub(  
      /say_(.*)/, '\1')  
    puts phrase  
  end  
end
```

Rails ActiveRecord example

```
Person.find_by(first_name: 'David')
```

```
Person.find_by_first_name "John"
```

```
Person.find_by_first_name_and_last_name \  
  "John", "Doe"
```

Record example (in class)

Lab: Ruby Metaprogramming

Today's lab explores blocks and `method_missing`.

Download `tree.rb` from the course website. The lab description is available in both Canvas and the course website.