

# CSSE 220 Day 15

Function Objects and the Comparator Interface  
Merge Sort  
Fork/Join Framework

Checkout *ForkJoinIntro* project from SVN

# Questions

# Today's Plan

- ▶ Merge sort recap
  - ▶ Introduction to function objects, **Comparator**
  - ▶ Parallelism with the Fork/Join Framework
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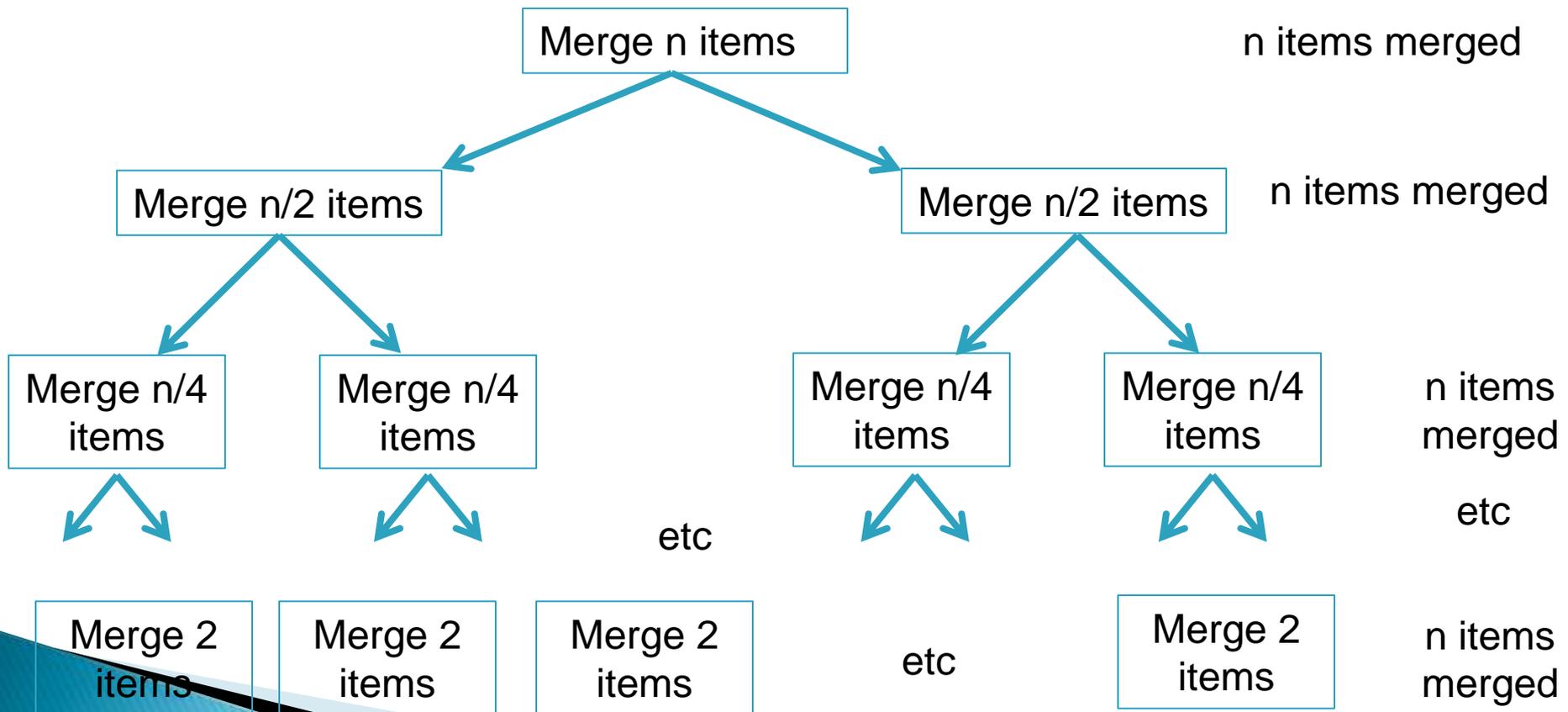
# Merge Sort Recap

- ▶ Basic recursive idea:
  - If list is length 0 or 1, then it's already sorted
  - Otherwise:
    - Divide list into two halves
    - Recursively sort the two halves
    - **Merge** the sorted halves back together

# Analyzing Merge Sort

If list is length 0 or 1,  
then it's already sorted

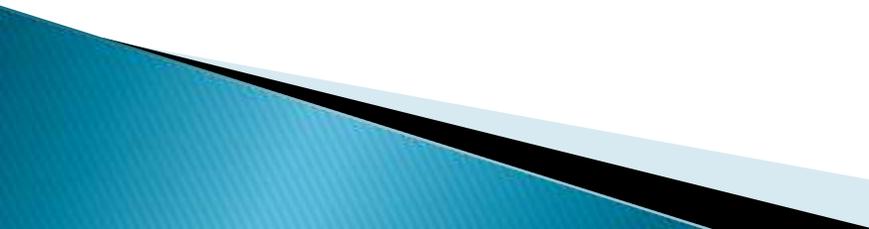
- ▶ Otherwise:
  - Divide list into two halves
  - Recursively sort the two halves
  - **Merge** the sorted halves back together



# Function Objects

- » Another way of creating reusable code

# A Sort of a Different Order

- ▶ Java libraries provide efficient sorting algorithms
    - `Arrays.sort(...)` and `Collections.sort(...)`
  - ▶ But suppose we want to sort by something other than the “natural order” given by `compareTo()`
  - ▶ *Function objects* to the rescue!
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# Function Objects

- ▶ Objects defined to just “wrap up” functions so we can pass them to other (library) code
  - ▶ For sorting we can create a function object that implements Comparator
  - ▶ Let's try it!
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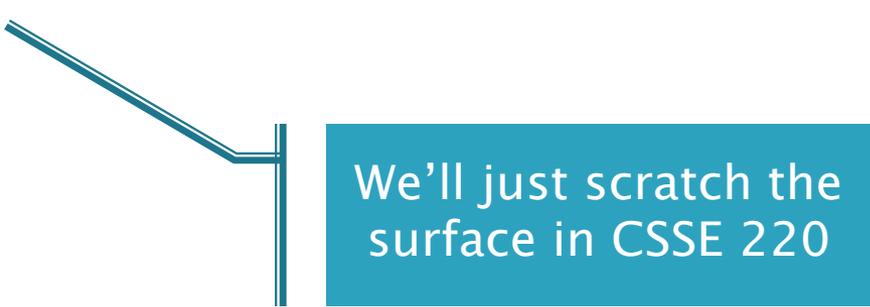
# Intro. to Fork-Join Parallelism

- »» Function objects and recursion meet multicore computers

Some slides and examples derived from Dan Grossman's materials at <http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/djg/teachingMaterials/>

# Changing a Major Assumption

- ▶ *Sequential programming*: one thing happens at a time
  - No longer the case!
- ▶ *Parallel programming*: multiple things happen simultaneously
  
- ▶ Major challenges and opportunities
  - Programming
  - Algorithms
  - Data



We'll just scratch the surface in CSSE 220

# Simplified View of History

- ▶ Parallel code is often much harder to write than sequential
- ▶ Free ride from the CPEs
  - From 1980–2005 performance of same sequential code doubled every two years
- ▶ No one knows how to continue this!
  - Speed up clock rate?
    - Too much heat
    - Memory can't keep up
  - But the “wires” keep getting smaller, so...
    - Put multiple processors on same chip!

# What do we do with all of them?

- ▶ Run multiple totally different programs
  - Operating system handles this
  - Uses *time-slicing* plus multiple cores
- ▶ Multiple things at once in one program
  - We'll play with this today!

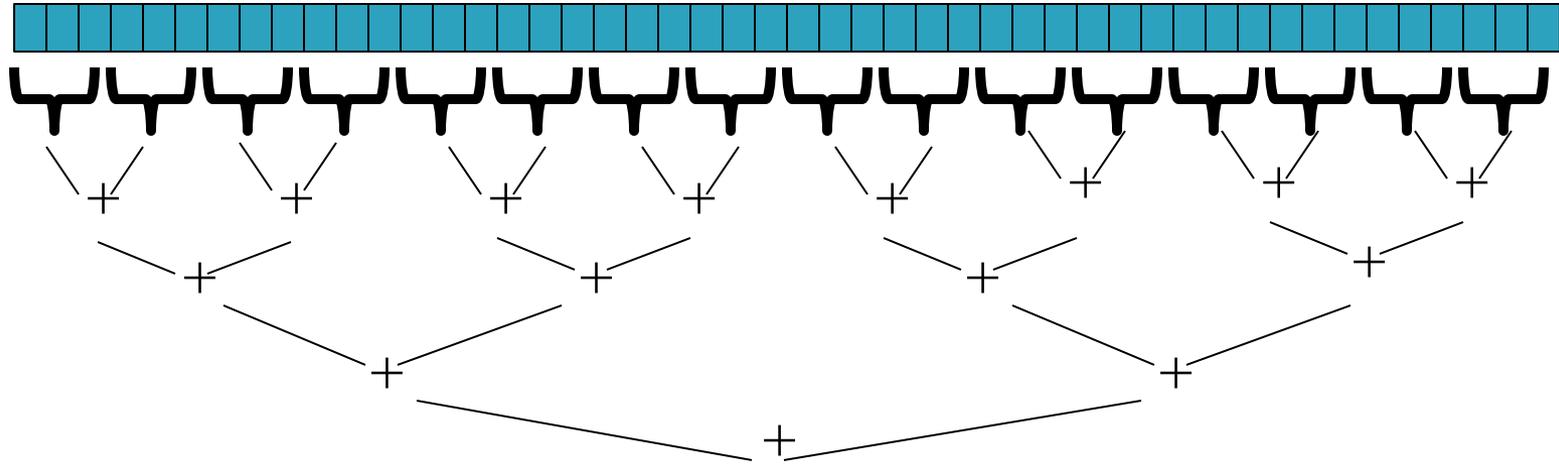
# Parallelism vs. Concurrency

- ▶ *Parallelism*: Use more resources for a faster answer
- ▶ *Concurrency*: Correctly and efficiently allow simultaneous access to data

# An analogy

- ▶ CS1 idea: Writing a program is like writing a recipe for a cook
  - ▶ Parallelism: slicing lots of potatoes
  - ▶ Concurrency: sharing stove burners
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# Parallelism Idea



- ▶ Example: Sum elements of a large array
- ▶ Use divide-and-conquer!
  - Parallelism for the recursive calls

# Fork-Join Framework

- ▶ Specifically for recursive, divide-and-conquer parallelism
  - Will be in Java 7 standard libraries, but available in Java 6 as a downloaded `.jar` file
- ▶ *Fork*: splitting off some code that can run in parallel with the original code
  - Like handing a potato to a helper
- ▶ *Join*: waiting for some forked code to finish
  - Like waiting for the potato slices from the helper

# Getting good results in practice

- ▶ Set a *sequential threshold*
  - A size below which we just “slice ‘em ourselves”
- ▶ Library needs to “warm up”
  - Java Virtual Machine optimizes as it runs
- ▶ Wait until your computer has more processors 😊
  
- ▶ Here there be dragons!
  - Memory–hierarchy issues
  - Race conditions
  - We’re ignoring lots of gory details!

# Fork-Join Lab

- ▶ Find a partner for HW15
- ▶ You'll:
  - Write some code
  - Run some experiments
  - Write a lab report
- ▶ This is the second time we've tried this:
  - Enjoy playing with the tools and ideas
  - Ask questions!

Follow the written homework instructions carefully. There's a lot more independent learning here than we've been doing so far.