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# Information technology — Programming languages — Ada

*Technologies de l'information — Langages de programmation — Ada*

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# Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives or www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html. In the IEC, see www.iec.ch/understanding-standards.

This document was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 22, *Programming languages, their environments and system software interfaces*.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO/IEC 8652:2012), which has been technically revised. It also incorporates the Technical Corrigendum ISO/IEC 8652:2012/Cor.1:2016.

The main changes are as follows:

— improved support for parallel execution is provided via the introduction of parallel loops, parallel blocks, parallel container iteration, and parallel reduction;

— more precise specification of subprogram interfaces is supported via the new aspects Global, Global'Class, and Nonblocking. The Global aspects, in particular, help to determine whether two constructs can safely execute in parallel;

— Pre and Post aspects can now be specified for access-to-subprogram types and for generic formal subprograms; a postcondition for the default initialization of a type can be specified using the new Default_Initial_Condition aspect;

— the behavior of many predefined container operations is now more precisely specified by using pre- and postcondition specifications instead of English descriptions; a restricted (“stable”) view for most containers is introduced to support more efficient iteration;

— more flexible uses of static expressions are supported via the introduction of static expression functions along with fewer restrictions on static strings;

— the Image attribute is supported for nonscalar types, and a user-specifiable attribute Put_Image is provided, which determines the value of the Image attribute for a user-defined type;

— the use of numeric and string literals is generalized to allow their use with other categories of types, via the new aspects Integer_Literal, Real_Literal, and String_Literal;

— array and record aggregates are made more flexible: index parameters are allowed in an array aggregate to define the components as a function of their array index; discriminants can be defined more flexibly within an aggregate for a variant record type;

— new types of aggregates are provided: delta aggregates to allow the construction of a new object by incremental updates to an existing object; container aggregates to allow construction of an object of a container type by directly specifying its elements;

— a shorthand is provided, using the token '@', to refer to the target of an assignment statement in the expression defining its new value;

— declare expressions are provided that permit the definition and use of local constants or renamings, to allow a large expression to be simplified by defining common parts as named entities;

— support for lightweight iteration is added via the introduction of procedural iterators;

— support for the map-reduce programming strategy is added via the introduction of reduction expressions;

— for constructs that use iterators of any sort, a filter can be specified that restricts the elements produced by the iteration to those that satisfy the condition of the filter;

— predefined packages supporting arbitrary-precision integer and real arithmetic are provided;

— the Jorvik profile is introduced to support hard real-time applications that want to go beyond the restrictions of the Ravenscar profile.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html and www.iec.ch/national-committees.

# Introduction

### Design Goals

Ada was originally designed with three overriding concerns: program reliability and maintenance, programming as a human activity, and efficiency. The 1995 revision to the language was designed to provide greater flexibility and extensibility, additional control over storage management and synchronization, and standardized packages oriented toward supporting important application areas, while at the same time retaining the original emphasis on reliability, maintainability, and efficiency. Subsequent editions, including this fourth edition, have provided further flexibility and added more standardized packages within the framework provided by the 1995 revision.

The need for languages that promote reliability and simplify maintenance is well established. Hence emphasis was placed on program readability over ease of writing. For example, the rules of the language require that program variables be explicitly declared and that their type be specified. Since the type of a variable is invariant, compilers can ensure that operations on variables are compatible with the properties intended for objects of the type. Furthermore, error-prone notations have been avoided, and the syntax of the language avoids the use of encoded forms in favor of more English-like constructs. Finally, the language offers support for separate compilation of program units in a way that facilitates program development and maintenance, and which provides the same degree of checking between units as within a unit.

Concern for the human programmer was also stressed during the design. Above all, an attempt was made to keep to a relatively small number of underlying concepts integrated in a consistent and systematic way while continuing to avoid the pitfalls of excessive involution. The design especially aims to provide language constructs that correspond intuitively to the normal expectations of users.

Like many other human activities, the development of programs is becoming ever more decentralized and distributed. Consequently, the ability to assemble a program from independently produced software components continues to be a central idea in the design. The concepts of packages, of private types, and of generic units are directly related to this idea, which has ramifications in many other aspects of the language. An allied concern is the maintenance of programs to match changing requirements; type extension and the hierarchical library enable a program to be modified while minimizing disturbance to existing tested and trusted components.

No language can avoid the problem of efficiency. Languages that require over-elaborate compilers, or that lead to the inefficient use of storage or execution time, force these inefficiencies on all machines and on all programs. Every construct of the language was examined in the light of present implementation techniques. Any proposed construct whose implementation was unclear or that required excessive machine resources was rejected. Parallel constructs were introduced to simplify making safe and efficient use of modern multicore architectures.

### Language Summary

An Ada program is composed of one or more program units. Program units can be subprograms (which define executable algorithms), packages (which define collections of entities), task units (which define concurrent computations), protected units (which define operations for the coordinated sharing of data between tasks), or generic units (which define parameterized forms of packages and subprograms). Each program unit normally consists of two parts: a specification, containing the information that is visible to other units, and a body, containing the implementation details, which are not visible to other units. Most program units can be compiled separately.

This distinction of the specification and body, and the ability to compile units separately, allows a program to be designed, written, and tested as a set of largely independent software components.

An Ada program will normally make use of a library of program units of general utility. The language provides means whereby individual organizations can construct their own libraries. All libraries are structured in a hierarchical manner; this enables the logical decomposition of a subsystem into

individual components. The text of a separately compiled program unit names the library units it requires.

*Program Units*

A subprogram is the basic unit for expressing an algorithm. There are two kinds of subprograms: procedures and functions. A procedure is the means of invoking a series of actions. For example, it can read data, update variables, or produce some output. It can have parameters, to provide a controlled means of passing information between the procedure and the point of call. A function is the means of invoking the computation of a value. It is similar to a procedure, but in addition will return a result.

A package is the basic unit for defining a collection of logically related entities. For example, a package can be used to define a set of type declarations and associated operations. Portions of a package can be hidden from the user, thus allowing access only to the logical properties expressed by the package specification.

Subprogram and package units can be compiled separately and arranged in hierarchies of parent and child units giving fine control over visibility of the logical properties and their detailed implementation.

A task unit is the basic unit for defining a task whose sequence of actions can be executed concurrently with those of other tasks. Such tasks can be implemented on multicomputers, multiprocessors, or with interleaved execution on a single processor. A task unit can define either a single executing task or a task type permitting the creation of any number of similar tasks.

A protected unit is the basic unit for defining protected operations for the coordinated use of data shared between tasks. Simple mutual exclusion is provided automatically, and more elaborate sharing protocols can be defined. A protected operation can either be a subprogram or an entry. A protected entry specifies a Boolean expression (an entry barrier) that blocks the execution of the body until it evaluates to True. A protected unit can define a single protected object or a protected type permitting the creation of several similar objects.

*Declarations and Statements*

The body of a program unit generally contains two parts: a declarative part, which defines the logical entities to be used in the program unit, and a sequence of statements, which defines the execution of the program unit.

The declarative part associates names with declared entities. For example, a name can denote a type, a constant, a variable, or an exception. A declarative part also introduces the names and parameters of other nested subprograms, packages, task units, protected units, and generic units to be used in the program unit.

The sequence of statements describes a sequence of actions to be performed. The statements are executed in succession (unless a transfer of control causes execution to continue from another place).

An assignment statement changes the value of a variable. A procedure call invokes execution of a procedure after associating any actual parameters provided at the call with the corresponding formal parameters.

Case statements and if statements allow the selection of an enclosed sequence of statements based on the value of an expression or on the value of a condition.

The loop statement provides the basic iterative mechanism in the language. A loop statement specifies a sequence of statements that are executed repeatedly as directed by an iteration scheme, or until an exit statement is encountered.

A block statement comprises a sequence of statements preceded by the declaration of local entities used by the statements.

Certain statements are associated with concurrent execution. A delay statement delays the execution of a task for a specified duration or until a specified time. An entry call statement is written as a procedure call statement; it requests an operation on a task or on a protected object, blocking the caller until the operation can be performed. A called task can accept an entry call by executing a corresponding accept

 

statement, which specifies the actions then to be performed as part of the rendezvous with the calling task. An entry call on a protected object is processed when the corresponding entry barrier evaluates to true, whereupon the body of the entry is executed. The requeue statement permits the provision of a service as a number of related activities with preference control. One form of the select statement allows a selective wait for one of several alternative rendezvous. Other forms of the select statement allow conditional or timed entry calls and the asynchronous transfer of control in response to some triggering event. Various parallel constructs, including parallel loops and parallel blocks, support the initiation of multiple logical threads of control designed to execute in parallel when multiple processors are available.

Execution of a program unit can encounter error situations in which normal program execution cannot continue. For example, an arithmetic computation can exceed the maximum allowed value of a number, or an attempt can be made to access an array component by using an incorrect index value. To deal with such error situations, the statements of a program unit can be textually followed by exception handlers that specify the actions to be taken when the error situation arises. Exceptions can be raised explicitly by a raise statement.

*Data Types*

Every object in the language has a type, which characterizes a set of values and a set of applicable operations. The main categories of types are elementary types (comprising enumeration, numeric, and access types) and composite types (including array and record types).

An enumeration type defines an ordered set of distinct enumeration literals, for example a list of states or an alphabet of characters. The enumeration types Boolean, Character, Wide_Character, and Wide_Wide_Character are predefined.

Numeric types provide a means of performing exact or approximate numerical computations. Exact computations use integer types, which denote sets of consecutive integers. Approximate computations use either fixed point types, with absolute bounds on the error, or floating point types, with relative bounds on the error. The numeric types Integer, Float, and Duration are predefined.

Composite types allow definitions of structured objects with related components. The composite types in the language include arrays and records. An array is an object with indexed components of the same type. A record is an object with named components of possibly different types. Task and protected types are also forms of composite types. The array types String, Wide_String, and Wide_Wide_String are predefined.

Record, task, and protected types can have special components called discriminants which parameterize the type. Variant record structures that depend on the values of discriminants can be defined within a record type.

Access types allow the construction of linked data structures. A value of an access type represents a reference to an object declared as aliased or to an object created by the evaluation of an allocator. Several variables of an access type can designate the same object, and components of one object can designate the same or other objects. Both the elements in such linked data structures and their relation to other elements can be altered during program execution. Access types also permit references to subprograms to be stored, passed as parameters, and ultimately dereferenced as part of an indirect call.

Private types permit restricted views of a type. A private type can be defined in a package so that only the logically necessary properties are made visible to the users of the type. The full structural details that are externally irrelevant are then only available within the package and any child units.

From any type a new type can be defined by derivation. A type, together with its derivatives (both direct and indirect) form a derivation class. Class-wide operations can be defined that accept as a parameter an operand of any type in a derivation class. For record and private types, the derivatives can be extensions of the parent type. Types that support these object-oriented capabilities of class-wide operations and type extension are tagged, so that the specific type of an operand within a derivation class can be identified at run time. When an operation of a tagged type is applied to an operand whose specific type is not known until run time, implicit dispatching is performed based on the tag of the operand.

Interface types provide abstract models from which other interfaces and types can be composed and derived. This provides a reliable form of multiple inheritance. Interface types can also be implemented by task types and protected types thereby enabling concurrent programming and inheritance to be merged.

The concept of a type is further refined by the concept of a subtype, whereby a user can constrain the set of allowed values of a type. Subtypes can be used to define subranges of scalar types, arrays with a limited set of index values, and records and private types with particular discriminant values.

*Other Facilities*

Aspect clauses can be used to specify the mapping between types and features of an underlying machine. For example, the user can specify that objects of a given type must be represented with a given number of bits, or that the components of a record must be represented using a given storage layout. Other features allow the controlled use of low level, nonportable, or implementation-dependent aspects, including the direct insertion of machine code.

Aspect clauses can also be used to specify more abstract properties of program entities, such as the pre- and postconditions of a subprogram, or the invariant for a private type. Additional aspects are specifiable to allow user-defined types to use constructs of the language, such as literals, aggregates, or indexing, normally reserved for particular language-defined categories of types, such as numeric types, record types, or array types.

The predefined environment of the language provides for input-output and other capabilities by means of standard library packages. Input-output is supported for values of user-defined as well as of predefined types. Standard means of representing values in display form are also provided.

The predefined standard library packages provide facilities such as string manipulation, containers of various kinds (vectors, lists, maps, etc.), mathematical functions, random number generation, and access to the execution environment.

The specialized annexes define further predefined library packages and facilities with emphasis on areas such as real-time scheduling, interrupt handling, distributed systems, numerical computation, and high-integrity systems.

Finally, the language provides a powerful means of parameterization of program units, called generic program units. The generic parameters can be types and subprograms (as well as objects and packages) and so allow general algorithms and data structures to be defined that are applicable to all types of a given class.

 

# Information technology — Programming Languages — Ada

## 1 Scope

This document specifies the form and meaning of programs written in Ada. Its purpose is to promote the portability of Ada programs to a variety of computing systems.

This document specifies:

— The form of a program written in Ada;

— The effect of translating and executing such a program;

— The manner in which program units can be combined to form Ada programs;

— The language-defined library units that a conforming implementation is required to supply;

— The permissible variations in conformance to the rules of this document, and the manner in which they are to be documented;

— Those violations of the requirements of this document that a conforming implementation is required to detect, and the effect of attempting to translate or execute a program containing such violations;

— Those violations of the requirements of this document that a conforming implementation is not required to detect.

This document does not specify:

— The means whereby a program written in Ada is transformed into object code executable by a processor;

— The means whereby translation or execution of programs is invoked and the executing units are controlled;

— The size or speed of the object code, or the relative execution speed of different language constructs;

— The form or contents of any listings produced by implementations; in particular, the form or contents of error or warning messages;

— The effect of unspecified execution;

— The size of a program or program unit that will exceed the capacity of a particular conforming implementation.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 639-3:2007, *Codes for the representation of names of languages — Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages*

ISO 3166-1:2020, *Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions — Part 1: Country codes*

ISO/IEC 10646:2020, *Information technology — Universal coded character set (UCS)*