The Specific Notification Pattern: “Fair” Semaphore Semantics

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Learning Objectives in this Part of the Lesson

• Understand the *Specific Notification* pattern

• Be aware of the semantics of “fair” semaphores

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Class Semaphore

```java
import java.lang.Object;
import java.util.concurrent.Semaphore;

public class Semaphore extends Object implements Serializable {
    // A counting semaphore. Conceptually, a semaphore maintains a set of permits. Each acquire() blocks if necessary until a permit is available, and then takes it. Each release() adds a permit, potentially releasing a blocking acquirer. However, no actual permit objects are used; the Semaphore just keeps a count of the number available and acts accordingly.

    Semaphores are often used to restrict the number of threads than can access some (physical or logical) resource. For example, here is a class that uses a semaphore to control access to a pool of items:
```
An Overview of Fair Semaphore Semantics
Overview of Fair Semaphore Semantics

- Threads calling acquire() on a “fair” semaphore obtain permits in “first-in, first-out” (FIFO) order.

See docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/util/concurrent/Semaphore.html

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Overview of Fair Semaphore Semantics

• Threads calling acquire() on a “fair” semaphore obtain permits in “first-in, first-out” (FIFO) order
• FIFO ordering applies to internal points of execution within semaphore methods

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- Threads calling acquire() on a “fair” semaphore obtain permits in “first-in, first-out” (FIFO) order.
- FIFO ordering applies to internal points of execution within semaphore methods.
  - e.g., one thread can invoke acquire() before another, but reach the ordering point after the other.

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Overview of Fair Semaphore Semantics

- Threads calling acquire() on a “fair” semaphore obtain permits in “first-in, first-out” (FIFO) order
  - FIFO ordering applies to internal points of execution within semaphore methods
- The Specific Notification pattern provides an effective model for implementing fair semaphore semantics

See [www.dre.vanderbilt.edu/~schmidt/PDF/specific-notification.pdf](http://www.dre.vanderbilt.edu/~schmidt/PDF/specific-notification.pdf) (especially Listing 3)
End of the Specific Notification Pattern: Fair Semaphore Semantics