

CMSC131

Comments

When to comment?

Comments should be added BEFORE or AS you write your code – they are not a “final step” before submitting.

Some times to comment (I)

At the top of every class to explain what its general purpose is and generally how the class works.

At the top of every method in a class to say exactly how it is meant to be used.

Some times to comment (II)

When declaring variables that are not 100% obvious in terms of their purpose.

When you write code that is non-obvious (if it took you some time to figure out how to code it, take some time to document why and how that code now accomplishes its task and what that task is).

Some times to comment (III)

When your method will have side effects
(more on this soon).

Comments

Comments are both for you and for other programmers working on the code.

Comments are used by those working on the code of a class but also for those who use the class in their modules.

There are three styles of comments. We've seen two of these:

```
// Short comment here
```

```
/* Much larger comment over multiple  
   lines here */
```

The third style is...

`/**` Javadoc Comments

A little later in the semester, this slide set will be extended to include discussion of Javadoc comments. They are similar to the `/* */` style, but:

- They start with `/**`
- There is an internal syntax to use with them.

Short version: If done right, you can comment your code well at the same time as you write documentation that will be read by users of your class.

When do you comment a method?

(click all that apply)

1. Before you write the code.
2. As you are writing the code.
3. After you've finished the method.
4. After you've finished the program.

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