

CS 152

Computer Programming Fundamentals

Switch statements

Brooke Chenoweth

University of New Mexico

Fall 2026

switch example

```
int myNumber = 10;
switch ( myNumber ) {
    case 1:
    case 2:
    case 3:
        IO.println ( "You got 1, 2, or 3" );
        break;
    case 5:
        IO.println ( "You got 5" );
        break;
    default:
        IO.println ( "Some other number" );
}
```

Equivalent if statement

```
int myNumber = 10;
if(myNumber == 1 || myNumber == 2 || myNumber == 3) {
    IO.println ( "You got 1, 2, or 3" );
} else if (myNumber == 5) {
    IO.println ( "You got 5" );
} else {
    IO.println ( "Some other number" );
}
```

The switch statement

- Tests value of expression and jumps to location in the switch statement.
- Expression is limited to certain types:
 - int, short, byte, char
 - String
 - *Cannot* be float or double
- Positions in switch are marked with *case labels* of the form `case constant:`, where *constant* is literal of same type as expression.
- Optional default: as last case.

Break statements in switch

- The break makes computer skip the rest of the switch statement.
- If you leave it out, computer will just fall through to next case.
- Occasionally want this (multiple cases handled same way)

new switch example

Forgetting the `break` statements is a common source of bugs. JDK 14 introduced a new style switch. (Note the arrow instead of colon for the cases)

```
int myNumber = 10;
switch ( myNumber ) {
    case 1, 2, 3 -> {
        IO.println("You got 1, 2, or 3" );
    }
    case 5 -> IO.println("You got 5" );
    default -> {
        IO.println("Some other number" );
    }
}
```

Another example

```
String computerMove;

switch ( (int)(3*Math.random()) ) {
    case 0:
        computerMove = "Rock";
        break;
    case 1:
        computerMove = "Paper";
        break;
    case 2:
    default:
        computerMove = "Scissors";
        break;
}

IO.println("Computer picks " + computerMove);
```

Switch expression

```
String computerMove =  
    switch( (int)(3*Math.random()) ) {  
        case 0 -> "Rock";  
        case 1 -> "Paper";  
        default -> "Scissors";  
    };  
  
IO.println("Computer picks " + computerMove);
```

Cases must be *exhaustive* with switch expressions.

Ternary Operator

This if statement is just being used to initialize `s`

```
int n = someNumber;  
String s;  
if(n < 10) {  
    s = "small";  
} else {  
    s = "large";  
}
```

We could rewrite it with a ternary expression instead.

```
int n = someNumber;  
String s = n < 10 ? "small" : "large";
```