ArrayLists Reference for Hangman

This handout gives you a quick reference for some of the concepts related to ArrayLists that may be useful to you for implementing Part III of the Hangman assignment.

ArrayLists
You can think of an ArrayList as being a special object which is used to store a list of other objects. In your case, you’ll be using an ArrayList to store the list of Strings which can be chosen as words for Hangman.

Using ArrayLists
ArrayLists are defined in the java.util package. To use ArrayLists, you’ll need to import the package:

    import java.util.*;

Declaring an ArrayList variable
ArrayLists can store a variety of different types of information—for example, you can create an ArrayList of GOvals, an ArrayList of GRects, or in the case of Hangman an ArrayList of Strings.

When declaring a variable of type ArrayList, you’ll need to specify what type of data is stored in the ArrayList using a special angular bracket notation. Your declaration will look something like this:

    private ArrayList<String> wordList;

The information in the angular brackets tells Java that this is an ArrayList of Strings. ArrayLists themselves are objects and are created using constructors, just as GOvals and GRects are created using constructors. Here is how we would create a new ArrayList and assign it to our variable wordList:

    wordList = new ArrayList<String>();

Adding elements to your ArrayList
Call the add method to add elements to your ArrayList. Because your ArrayList has been declared to contain Strings, you can call the add method with a String as an argument:

    String word = readLine("?");       // reading a String from the user
    wordList.add(word);
Accessing elements of your ArrayList

To access an element of your ArrayList, you can call the `get` method, passing in the index of the element you want to access. Remember, ArrayLists (as with regular arrays in Java) are zero-indexed—in other words, the first element in the list is actually at index 0, the second element is at index 1, and so forth. Because your list is declared to contain `Strings`, Java assumes that the element returned by `get` is a `String`:

```java
int index = 0; // index of first element in ArrayList
String word = wordList.get(index);
```

Determine the size of your ArrayList

Your ArrayList will keep track of the number of element which you have added. To determine the number of elements in the ArrayList, call the `size` method:

```java
int totalCount = wordList.size();
```

Chapter 11.8 is your friend for more information about ArrayLists

There’s a lot more to learn about ArrayLists. This handout is just providing a quick references for the Hangman assignment. We will cover ArrayLists more extensively in class and you can read more about ArrayLists in Chapter 11.8 of the class textbook.