Java Card 2.0 Language Subset and Virtual Machine Specification

1. Introduction

The information in this document describes the subset of standard Java which is supported in the Java Card 2.0 specification. This document is not intended to stand on its own; rather it relies heavily on existing documentation of standard Java. In particular, two books are required for the reader to understand the material presented herein.

The Java Language Specification provides a baseline definition of the Java language. The language subset defined here is based on the language specified in this book.

The Java Virtual Machine Specification defines the standard operation of the Java Virtual Machine. The virtual machine material presented in this subset is based on the definition specified in this book.

2. A Subset of Java

Java Card is a new system for programming smartcards. It is based on the Java language and virtual machine. Java Card programs are written with standard Java development tools, but may be installed and executed on smartcards. It would be ideal if Java Card programs could be written using all of the Java language, but a full Java Virtual Machine implementation is far too big to fit on even the most advanced smartcards available today.

A typical smartcard has under 1K of RAM and 16K of ROM. The code for implementing string manipulation, single and double-precision floating point arithmetic, and thread management would be larger than the ROM space on a card. Even if it could be made to fit, there would be no space left over for class libraries or application code. Then there is the question of RAM use. The only workable option is to implement Java Card as a subset of Java. In other words, we must leave some features out.

Fortunately, smartcard programs are by their nature extremely simple things. This allows us to omit features from Java with little or no impact on the kinds of programs we would write using Java Card.

3. Language

Java Card programs are written in Java. They are compiled using Java compilers. Java Card is a subset of Java, and familiarity with Java is required to understand Java Card programming. The items discussed in this section are not fully described. For complete documentation on the Java language, refer to *The Java Language Specification*.

3.1 Unsupported Items

The items listed in this section are elements of the Java language which are not supported in Java Card systems.

3.1.1 Features

3.1.1.1 Dynamic Class Loading

A Java Card system is not able to load classes dynamically. Classes are either masked into the card's ROM or installed through the secure installation process after the card has been issued. Programs running on the card may only refer to classes which already exist on the card, as there is no way to download classes during the card's normal operation. See *The Java Card 2.0 Programmers Guide* for more information.

3.1.1.2 Security Manager

The security model of Java Card systems differs from standard Java in fairly significant ways. Security policies are implemented in code which is masked into a card's ROM. There is no Security Manager class which makes policy decisions on allowing operations.

3.1.1.3 Threads

The Java Card Virtual Machine does not support multiple threads of control. Neither class `Thread` or any of the thread-related keywords can be used in Java Card programs.

3.1.1.4 Cloning

Java Card does not support cloning of objects. Java Card's version of class `Object` does not implement a `clone()` method, and there is no `Clonable` interface provided.

3.1.1.5 Garbage Collection & Finalization

Java Card does not implement a garbage collector. Nor does Java Card allow explicit deallocation of objects, as this would break Java's required pointer-safety. Therefore, objects which are allocated are never deallocated. Unreachable objects are just garbage and their storage will never be reclaimed. As second-order effect of this is that `finalize()` methods will never be called.

3.1.2 Keywords

The following keywords indicate types which are not supported for Java Card, or unsupported options related to Threads.

`char`	`float`	`synchronized`	`volatile`
`double`	`long`	`transient`	

3.1.3 Types

Java Card does not support types `char`, `double`, `float` or `long`, or operations on those types. It also does not support arrays with more than one dimension.

3.1.4 Classes

In general, none of the standard Java classes are supported in Java Card. Some classes from the `java.lang` package are supported (§3.2.4), but none of the rest are. Some noteworthy classes which are not supported are `String`, `Thread` (and all thread-related classes), wrapper classes such as `Boolean` and `Integer`, and class `Class`.

3.2 Supported Items

It is much more difficult to succinctly describe what is left in Java Card than to describe what is missing. If a language feature is not explicitly described as unsupported, it is part of the supported subset. Notable supported features are described in this section.

3.2.1 Features

3.2.1.1 Packages

Java Card programs follow the standard rules for Java packages. Java Card classes are written as `java` source files, which include package designations. Package mechanisms are used to identify and control access to classes, static fields and static methods. In all respects, packages in Java Card are used exactly the way they are in standard Java.

3.2.1.2 Dynamic Object Creation

Java Card programs can dynamically create objects, both class instances and arrays. This is done, as usual, by using the `new` operator. Objects are allocated out of the heap.

As noted in (§3.1.1.5), Java Card does not garbage collect objects. Any objects allocated on the card may continue to exist and consume resources even after they become unreachable.

3.2.1.3 Virtual Methods

Java Card objects are real Java objects. Invoking virtual methods on objects in Java Card is exactly the same as in standard Java. Inheritance is supported, including the use of the `super` keyword.

3.2.1.4 Interfaces

Java Card classes may define or implement Interfaces, just as in standard Java. Invoking virtual methods on interface types works as expected. Type checking and the `instanceof` operator also work correctly with interfaces.

3.2.1.5 Exceptions

Java Card programs may define, throw and catch exceptions, as in standard Java. Class `Throwable` and its relevant subclasses are supported. (Some `Exception` and `Error` subclasses are omitted as those exceptions cannot occur in Java Card.)

3.2.2 Keywords

The following keywords are supported in Java Card. Their use is the same as in standard Java.

`abstract`	`default`	`if`	`package`	`switch`
`boolean`	`do`	`implements`	`private`	`this`
`break`	`else`	`import`	`protected`	`throw`
`byte`	`extends`	`instanceof`	`public`	`throws`
`case`	`final`	`int`	`return`	`try`
`catch`	`finally`	`interface`	`short`	`void`
`class`	`for`	`native`	`static`	`while`
`continue`	`goto`	`new`	`super`	

3.2.3 Types

Java Card supports the use of the standard Java types `boolean`, `byte`, `short`, and `int`. Objects (class instances and single-dimensional arrays) are also supported.

Some Java Card implementations do not support use of the `int` data type.

3.2.4 Classes

None of the classes in the `java.lang` package are supported directly. Instead, classes from `java.lang` are mapped to classes in the `java.card` package.

3.2.4.1 Object

Java Card classes descend from `java.lang.Object`, as in standard Java. Most of the methods of `Object` are not supported, but the class itself is.

3.2.4.2 Throwable

Since Java Card supports the use of exceptions, it supports class `Throwable` and its subclasses, where applicable.

3.2.4.3 System

Class `java.lang.System` is not supported. Java Card supplies a class `java.card.System` which provides an interface to system behavior.

3.3 Conditional Support

Several features of the Java language are only supported in certain conditions. These features are described below.

3.3.1 int

The `int` keyword and 32-bit integer data types may not be supported on all Java Card implementations. A Java Card Virtual Machine which does not support the `int` data type will reject programs which use that type.

3.3.2 native

Native methods are only available when creating the classes which are masked into ROM on a card. For reasons of both security and portability, native methods are not allowed in code which is installed post-issuance.

3.4 Limitations

In addition to the static limitations described previously, Java Card also imposes some limitations on the runtime behavior of programs.

3.4.1 Objects

3.4.1.1 Methods

Classes can implement a maximum of 127 instance methods (including inherited methods).

3.4.1.2 Class Instances

Java Card class instances can contain a maximum of 255 bytes of data in their fields.

3.4.1.3 Arrays

Java Card arrays can hold a maximum of 16383 (14 bits of addressing) fields.

3.4.2 Methods

The maximum size of Java Card stack frame is 127 bytes. This includes the parameters, locals, and operand stack.

3.4.3 Switch Statements

Java Card systems which do not support the `int` data type are limited to a maximum of 65536 cases in switch statement. Systems with `int` support have the same maximum as standard Java.

3.4.4 <clinit>

There is limited support for initialization of static field values in `<clinit>` methods. Static fields may only be initialized to values of primitive data types, or arrays of primitive data types. Primitive data types include `boolean`, `byte`, `short`, and `int`.

4. VM

4.1 `class` File Subset

The Java Card Virtual Machine operates on standard Java `class` files. As the Java Card Virtual Machine supports only a subset of the behavior of the standard Java Virtual Machine, it also supports only a subset of the standard `class` file format.

4.1.1 Not Supported

4.1.1.1 Field Descriptors

Field descriptors may not contain *BaseType* characters **C**, **D**, **F** or **L**. *ArrayType* descriptors for arrays of more than one dimension may not be used.

4.1.1.2 Constant Pool

Constant pool table entry tags which indicate unsupported types are not supported.

Constant Type	Value
CONSTANT_String	8
CONSTANT_Float	4
CONSTANT_Long	5
CONSTANT_Double	6

Table 4.1 Unsupported constant pool tags

Constant pool structures for types `CONSTANT_String_info`, `CONSTANT_Float_info`, `CONSTANT_Long_info` and `CONSTANT_Double_info` are not supported.

4.1.1.3 Fields

In `field_info` structures, the access flags `ACC_VOLATILE` and `ACC_TRANSIENT` are not supported.

4.1.1.4 Methods

In `method_info` structures, the access flag `ACC_SYNCHRONIZED` is not supported. The access flag `ACC_NATIVE` is not supported in applet class files.

4.1.2 Supported

4.1.2.1 ClassFile

All items in the `ClassFile` structure are supported.

4.1.2.2 Field Descriptors

Field descriptors may contain *BaseType* characters **B**, **I**, **S** and **Z**, as well as any *ObjectType*. *ArrayType* descriptors for arrays of a single dimension may also be used.

4.1.2.3 Method Descriptors

All forms of method descriptors are supported.

4.1.2.4 Constant Pool

Constant pool table entry tags for supported data types are supported.

Constant Type	**Value**
`CONSTANT_Class`	7
`CONSTANT_Fieldref`	9
`CONSTANT_Methodref`	10
`CONSTANT_InterfaceMethodref`	11
`CONSTANT_Integer`	3
`CONSTANT_NameAndType`	12
`CONSTANT_Utf8`	1

Table 4.2 Supported constant pool tags

Constant pool structures for types `CONSTANT_Class_info`, `CONSTANT_Fieldref_info`, `CONSTANT_Methodref_info`, `CONSTANT_InterfaceMethodref_info`, `CONSTANT_Integer_info`, `CONSTANT_NameAndType_info` and `CONSTANT_Utf8_info` are supported.

4.1.2.5 Fields

In `field_info` structures, the supported access flags are `ACC_PUBLIC`, `ACC_PRIVATE`, `ACC_PROTECTED`, `ACC_STATIC` and `ACC_FINAL`.

The remaining components of `field_info` structures are fully supported.

4.1.2.6 Methods

In `method_info` structures, the supported access flags are `ACC_PUBLIC`, `ACC_PRIVATE`, `ACC_PROTECTED`, `ACC_STATIC`, `ACC_FINAL` and `ACC_ABSTRACT`. The access flag `ACC_NATIVE` is supported for non-applet class files.

The remaining components of `method_info` structures are fully supported.

4.1.2.7 Attributes

The `attribute_info` structure is supported. The `Code`, `ConstantValue`, `Exceptions` and `LocalVariableTable` attributes are supported. The `LocalVariableTable` attribute is not merely supported, but *required*.

4.2 Bytecode Subset

4.2.1 Unsupported Bytecodes

lconst_<l>	fconst_<f>	dconst_<d>	ldc2_w2	lload
fload	dload	lload_<n>	fload_<n>	dload_<n>
laload	faload	daload	caload	lstore
fstore	dstore	lstore_<n>	fstore_<n>	dstore_<n>
lastore	fastore	dastore	castore	ladd
fadd	dadd	lsub	fsub	dsub

lmul	fmul	dmul	ldiv	fdiv
ddiv	lrem	frem	drem	lneg
fneg	dneg	lshl	lshr	lushr
land	lor	lxor	i2l	i2f
i2d	l2i	l2f	l2d	f2i
f2d	d2i	d2l	d2f	i2c
lcmp	fcmpl	fcmpg	dcmpl	dcmpg
lreturn	freturn	dreturn	monitorenter	monitorexit
multianewarray	goto_w	jsr_w		

4.2.2 Supported Bytecodes

nop	aconst_null	iconst_<i>	bipush	sipush
ldc	ldc_w	iload	aload	iload_<n>
aload_<n>	iaload	aaload	baload	saload
istore	astore	istore_<n>	astore_<n>	iastore
aastore	bastore	sastore	pop	pop2
dup	dup_x1	dup_x2	dup2	dup2_x1
dup2_x2	swap	iadd	isub	imul
idiv	irem	ineg	ishl	ishr
iushr	iand	ixor	iinc	i2b
i2s	if<cond>	ificmp_<cond>	ifacmp_<cond>	goto
jsr	ret	tableswitch	lookupswitch	ireturn
areturn	return	getstatic	putstatic	getfield
putfield	invokevirtual	invokespecial	invokestatic	invokeinterface
new	newarray	anewarray	arraylength	athrow
checkcast	instanceof	wide	ifnull	ifnonnull

4.2.3 Static Restrictions on Bytecodes

A `class` file must conform to the following restrictions on the static form of bytecodes for it to be acceptable to a Java Card Virtual Machine.

4.2.3.1 ldc, ldc_w

The `ldc` and `ldc_w` bytecodes can only be used to load integer constants. The constant pool entry at *index* must be a `CONSTANT_Integer` entry.

4.2.3.2 lookupswitch

The value of the *npairs* operand must be less than 65536. The bytecode can contain at most 65535 cases.

4.2.3.3 tableswitch

The values of the *high* and *low* operands must both be less than 65536 (so they can fit in 16 bits). The bytecode can contain at most 65535 cases.

4.2.3.4 wide

The `wide` bytecode cannot be used to generate local indices greater than 127, and it cannot be used with any instructions other than `iinc`. It can only be used with an `iinc` bytecode to extend the range of the increment constant.

4.3 Exceptions

Java Card provides full support for the Java exception mechanism. Users can define, throw and catch exceptions just as in standard Java. Java Card also makes use of the standard exceptions and errors defined in *The Java Language Specification*. An updated list of Java's standard exceptions is provided in the JDK documentation.

Not all of Java's standard exceptions are supported in Java Card. Exceptions related to unsupported features are naturally not supported. Class loader exceptions (the bulk of the checked exceptions) are not supported. And no exceptions or errors defined in packages other than `java.lang` are supported.

Note that some exceptions may be supported to the extent that their error conditions are detected correctly, but classes for those exceptions may not be present in the API.

The supported subset is described in Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5.

4.3.1 Checked Exceptions

Exception	Supported	Not Supported
ClassNotFoundException		•
CloneNotSupportedException		•
IllegalAccessException		•
InstantiationException		•
InterruptedException		•
NoSuchFieldException		•
NoSuchMethodException		•

Table 4.3 support of checked exceptions

4.3.2 Runtime Exceptions

Runtime Exception	**Supported**	**Not Supported**
ArithmeticException	●	
ArrayStoreException	●	
ClassCastException	●	
IllegalArgumentException	●	
IllegalThreadStateException		●
NumberFormatException		●
IllegalMonitorStateException		●
IllegalStateException	●	
IndexOutOfBoundsException	●	
ArrayIndexOutOfBoundsException	●	
StringIndexOutOfBoundsException		●
NegativeArraySizeException	●	
NullPointerException	●	
SecurityException	●	

Table 4.4 Support of runtime exceptions

4.3.3 Errors

Error	**Supported**	**Not Supported**
LinkageError	•	
ClassCircularityError	•	
ClassFormatError	•	
ExceptionInInitializerError	•	
IncompatibleClassChangeError	•	
AbstractMethodError	•	
IllegalAccessError	•	
InstantiationError	•	
NoSuchFieldError	•	
NoSuchMethodError	•	
NoClassDefFoundError	•	
UnsatisfiedLinkError	•	
VerifyError	•	
ThreadDeath		•
VirtualMachineError	•	
InternalError	•	
OutOfMemoryError	•	
StackOverflowError	•	
UnknownError	•	

Table 4.5 Support of errors