# Unit-1: Basic User Interface Screen elements

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# 1.0 Learning Objective

After studying this unit you will be able to learn

- The user interface elements available within the Android Software Development Kit (SDK).
- Uses of various user interface elements
- How to use a variety of different components and controls to build a screen
- How your application can listen for various actions performed by the user.
- How to style controls and apply themes to entire screens.

# 1.1 Introduction

Most Android applications inevitably need some form of user interface. In this unit, we will discuss the user interface elements available within the Android Software Development Kit (SDK). Some of these elements display information to the user, whereas others gather information from the user.

You learn how to use a variety of different components and controls to build a screen and how your application can listen for various actions performed by the user. Finally, you learn how to style controls and apply themes to entire screens.

## **1.2 Introduction to Views, Controls and Layout**

Before we go any further, we need to define a few terms. This gives you a better understanding of certain capabilities provided by the Android SDK before they are fully introduced. First, let's talk about the View class.

#### **Introduction to Android Views**

This class represents the basic building block for user interface components. A View occupies a rectangular area on the screen and is responsible for drawing and event handling. View is the base class for widgets, which are used to create interactive UI components (buttons, text fields, etc.). The ViewGroup subclass is the base class for

layouts, which are invisible containers that hold other Views (or other ViewGroups) and define their layout properties.

All of the views in a window are arranged in a single tree. You can add views either from code or by specifying a tree of views in one or more XML layout files. There are many specialized subclasses of views that act as controls or are capable of displaying text, images, or other content.

Once you have created a tree of views, there are typically a few types of common operations you may wish to perform:

**Set properties:** for example setting the text of a TextView. The available properties and the methods that set them will vary among the different subclasses of views. Note that properties that are known at build time can be set in the XML layout files. Set focus: The framework will handle moving focus in response to user input. To force focus to a specific view, call requestFocus().

**Set up listeners:** Views allow clients to set listeners that will be notified when something interesting happens to the view. For example, all views will let you set a listener to be notified when the view gains or loses focus. You can register such a listener using setOnFocusChangeListener(android.view.View.OnFocusChangeListener). Other view subclasses offer more specialized listeners. For example, a Button exposes a listener to notify clients when the button is clicked.

Set visibility: You can hide or show views using setVisibility(int).

#### **Introduction to Android Controls**

The Android SDK contains a Java package named android.widget. When we refer to controls, we are typically referring to a class within this package.The Android SDK includes classes to draw most common objects, including ImageView, FrameLayout, EditText, and Button classes. All controls are typically derived from the View class. We cover many of these basic controls in detail.

#### Introduction to Android Layout

One special type of control found within the android.widget package is called a layout. A layout control is still a View object, but it doesn't actually draw anything specific on the screen. Instead, it is a parent container for organizing other controls (children). Layout controls determine how and where on the screen child controls are drawn. Each type of layout control draws its children using particular rules. For instance, the LinearLayout control draws its child controls in a single horizontal row or a single vertical column. Similarly, a TableLayout control displays each child control in tabular format (in cells within specific rows and columns).

By necessity, we use some of the layout View objects within this unit to illustrate how to use the controls previously mentioned. However, we don't go into the details of the various layout types available as part of the Android SDK until the next unit. We will lean in more details about layout in next unit.

#### 1.3 TextView

TextView is a user interface element that displays text to the user. Following table shows important XML Attributes of TextView control.

Attribute	Description
id	id is an attribute used to uniquely identify a text view
gravity	The gravity attribute is an optional attribute which is used to control the
	alignment of the text like left, right, center, top, bottom, center_vertical,
	center_horizontal etc.
text	text attribute is used to set the text in a text view.
textColor	textColor attribute is used to set the text color of a text view. Color
	value is in the form of "#argb", "#rgb", "#rrggbb", or "#aarrggbb".
textSize	textSize attribute is used to set the size of text of a text view. We can
	set the text size in sp(scale independent pixel) or dp(density pixel).
textStyle	textStyle attribute is used to set the text style of a text view. The
	possible text styles are bold, italic and normal.

background	background attribute is used to set the background of a text view. We			
	can set a color or a drawable in the background of a text view			
padding	padding attribute is used to set the padding from left, right, top or			
	bottom.			

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The following code sample shows a typical use, with an XML layout and code to modify the contents of the text view:

<LinearLayout

xmlns:android="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res/android"

android:layout\_width="match\_parent"

android:layout\_height="match\_parent">

<TextView

android:id="@+id/text\_view\_id" android:layout\_width="wrap\_content" android:layout\_height="wrap\_content" android:text="This is TextView" android:layout\_centerInParent="true" android:textSize="35sp" android:padding="15dp" android:textColor="#aaa" android:background="#fff"/>

</LinearLayout>

This code sample demonstrates how to modify the contents of the text view defined in the previous XML layout:

public class MainActivity extends Activity {

protected void onCreate(Bundle savedInstanceState) {
 super.onCreate(savedInstanceState);
 setContentView(R.layout.activity\_main);
 final TextView helloTextView = (TextView) findViewById(R.id.text\_view\_id);

```
helloTextView.setText(R.string.user_greeting);
}
```

To display this TextView on the screen, all your Activity needs to do is call the setContentView() method with the layout resource identifier in which you defined in the preceding XML shown.

You can change the text displayed programmatically by calling the setText() method on the TextView object. Retrieving the text is done with the getText() method. To customize the appearance of TextView we can use Styles and Themes.

# 1.4 EditText

EditText is a user interface element for entering and modifying text. Following table shows important XML Attributes of EditText control.

Attribute	Description			
id	This is an attribute used to uniquely identify an edit text			
gravity	The gravity attribute is an optional attribute which is used to control			
	the alignment of the text like left, right, center, top, bottom,			
	center_vertical, center_horizontal etc.			
text	This attribute is used to set the text in a text view.			
hint	It is an attribute used to set the hint i.e. what you want user to enter in			
	this edit text. Whenever user start to type in edit text the hint will			
	automatically disappear.			
lines	Defines how many lines tall the input box is. If this is not set, the entry			
	field grows as the user enters text.			
textColorHint	It is an attribute used to set the color of displayed hint.			
textColor	This attribute is used to set the text color of a edit text. Color value is			
	in the form of "#argb", "#rgb", "#rrggbb", or "#aarrggbb".			
textSize	This attribute is used to set the size of text of a edit text. We can set			
	the text size in sp(scale independent pixel) or dp(density pixel).			

textStyle	This attribute is used to set the text style of a edit text. The possible
	text styles are bold, italic and normal.
background	This attribute is used to set the background of a edit text. We can set
	a color or a drawable in the background of a edit text
padding	Padding attribute is used to set the padding from left, right, top or
	bottom.

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Following layout code shows a basic EditText element.

<EditText android:id="@+id/txtName" android:layout\_height="wrap\_content" android:hint="Full Name" android:lines="4" android:layout\_width="fill\_parent" />

The EditText object is essentially an editable TextView. You can read text from it in by using the getText() method. You can also set initial text to draw in the text entry area using the setText() method. You can also highlight a portion of the text from code by call to setSelection() method and a call to selectAll() method highlights the entire text entry field.

By default, the user can perform a long press to bring up a context menu. This provides to the user some basic copy, cut, and paste operations as well as the ability to change the input method and add a word to the user's dictionary of frequently used words. You can set the editable attribute to false, so the user cannot edit the text in the field but can still copy text out of it using a long press.

#### 1.5 AutoCompleteTextView

In Android, AutoCompleteTextView is a view i.e. similar to EditText, except that it displays a list of completion suggestions automatically while the user is typing. A list

of suggestions is displayed in drop down menu from which user can choose an item which actually replace the content of EditBox with that.

It is a subclass of EditText class so we can inherit all the properties of EditText in a AutoCompleteTextView.

Following layout code shows a basic AutoCompleteTextView element.

<AutoCompleteTextView android:id="@+id/ac" android:layout\_width="fill\_parent" android:layout\_height="wrap\_content" android:text=" Auto Suggestions EditText"/>

To display the Array content in an AutoCompleteTextView we need to implement Adapter. In AutoCompleteTextView we mainly display text values so we use Array Adapter for that. ArrayAdapter is used when we need list of single type of items which is backed by an Array. For example, list of phone contacts, countries or names.

ArrayAdapter(Context context, int resource, int textViewResourceId, T[] objects) AutoCompleteTextView ac = (AutoCompleteTextView) findViewById(R.id.ac);

Following code retrieve the value from a AutoCompleteTextView in Java class.

String v = ac.getText().toString();

#### Check your progress-1

- a) Which class represents the basic building block for user interface components?
  - (A) View (B) ViewGroup (C) TextView (D) EditText
- b) Which subclass is the base class for layouts?
  - (A) View (B) ViewGroup (C) TextView (D) EditText
- c) You can add views from \_\_\_\_\_
  - (A) Code (B) XML Layout file (C) Either (A) or (B) (D) Neither (A) nor (B)



# 1.6 Spinner

In Android, Spinner provides a quick way to select one value from a set of values. It is similar to dropdown list in other programming language. In a default state, a spinner shows its currently selected value. It provides an easy way to select a value from a known set. Following table shows important XML Attributes of spinner control.

Attribute	Description	١		
dropDownHorizontalOffset	Amount of pixels by which the drop down should be offset horizontally.			
dropDownSelector	List select display.	or to	use for spinnerMode="dropdown"	
	May be a "@[+][packa form "?[pacl	referenc age:]type kage:]typ	ce to another resource, in the form e/name" or a theme attribute in the pe/name".	
	May be a color value, in the form of "#r "#rroabb", or "#aarroabb",			
dropDownVerticalOffset	Amount of pixels by which the drop down should be offset vertically.			
dropDownWidth	Width of the dropdown in spinnerMode="dropdown".			
gravity	Gravity setting for positioning the currently selected item.			
popupBackground	Background drawable to use for the dropdown in spinnerMode="dropdown".			
prompt	The prompt to display when the spinner's dialog is shown.			
spinnerMode	Display mode for spinner options. Must be one of the following constant values.			
	Constant	Value	Description	

dialog	0	Spinner options will be presented to
		the user as a dialog window.
dropdown	1	Spinner options will be presented to
		the user as an inline dropdown
		anchored to the spinner widget itself.

#### Table-20

As with the auto-complete method, the possible choices for a spinner can come from an Adapter. You can also set the available choices in the layout definition by using the entries attribute with an array resource. Following is an XML layout for showing spinner

<Spinner

```
android:id="@+id/Spinner01"
android:layout_width="wrap_content"
android:layout_height="wrap_content"
android:entries="@array/colors"
android:prompt="@string/spin_prompt" />
```

This places a Spinner control on the screen. When the user selects it, a pop-up shows the prompt text followed by a list of the possible choices. This list allows only a single item to be selected at a time, and when one is selected, the pop-up goes away.

First, the entries attribute is set to the values that shows by assigning it to an array resource, referred to here as @array/colors.

#### Populate the Spinner with User Choices

The choices you provide for the spinner can come from any source, but must be provided through a SpinnerAdapter, such as an ArrayAdapter if the choices are available in an array or a CursorAdapter if the choices are available from a database query.

For instance, if the available choices for your spinner are pre-determined, you can provide them with a string array defined in a string resource file:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<resources>
<string-array name="planets_array">
<item>Mercury</item>
<item>Venus</item>
<item>Venus</item>
<item>Earth</item>
<item>Jupiter</item>
<item>Jupiter</item>
<item>Uranus</item>
<item>Neptune</item>
</string-array>
</resources>
```

With an array such as this one, you can use the following code in your Activity or Fragment to supply the spinner with the array using an instance of ArrayAdapter:

Spinner spinner = (Spinner) findViewById(R.id.spinner);

// Create an ArrayAdapter using the string array and a default spinner layout ArrayAdapter<CharSequence> adapter = ArrayAdapter.createFromResource(this, R.array.planets\_array, android.R.layout.simple\_spinner\_item);

// Specify the layout to use when the list of choices appears
adapter.setDropDownViewResource(android.R.layout.simple\_spinner\_dropdown\_ite
m);

// Apply the adapter to the spinner spinner.setAdapter(adapter);

The createFromResource() method allows you to create an ArrayAdapter from the string array. The third argument for this method is a layout resource that defines how the selected choice appears in the spinner control. The simple\_spinner\_item layout is provided by the platform and is the default layout you should use unless you'd like to define your own layout for the spinner's appearance.

You should then call setDropDownViewResource(int) to specify the layout the adapter should use to display the list of spinner choices.

Call setAdapter() to apply the adapter to your Spinner.

#### **Responding to User Selections**

}

When the user selects an item from the drop-down, the Spinner object receives an on-item-selected event.

То define the selection handler event for spinner, implement the а AdapterView.OnItemSelectedListener interface and the corresponding onltemSelected() callback method. For example, here's an implementation of the interface in an Activity:

public class SpinnerActivity extends Activity implements OnItemSelectedListener {

The AdapterView.OnItemSelectedListener requires the onItemSelected() and onNothingSelected() callback methods.

Then you need to specify the interface implementation by calling setOnItemSelectedListener():

Spinner spinner = (Spinner) findViewById(R.id.spinner); spinner.setOnItemSelectedListener(this); If you implement the AdapterView.OnItemSelectedListener interface with your Activity or Fragment (such as in the example above), you can pass this as the interface instance.

#### 1.7 Button

A user interface element the user can tap or click to perform an action. To display a button in an activity, add a button to the activity's layout XML file:

<Button

}

```
android:layout_width="wrap_content"
android:layout_height="wrap_content"
android:text="@string/button_text"
android:drawableLeft="@drawable/button_icon"
... />
```

To specify an action when the button is pressed, set a click listener on the button object in the corresponding activity code:



Figure-61

public class MyActivity extends Activity {

protected void onCreate(Bundle savedInstanceState) {
 super.onCreate(savedInstanceState);

setContentView(R.layout.content\_layout\_id);

```
final Button button = findViewById(R.id.button_id);
button.setOnClickListener(new View.OnClickListener() {
    public void onClick(View v) {
        // Code here executes on main thread after user presses button
    }
});
}
```

The above snippet creates an instance of View.OnClickListener and wires the listener to the button using setOnClickListener(View.OnClickListener). As a result, the system executes the code you write in onClick(View) after the user presses the button.

Every button is styled using the system's default button background, which is often different from one version of the platform to another. If you are not satisfied with the default button style, you can customize it.

## 1.8 Checkbox

A checkbox is a specific type of two-states button that can be either checked or unchecked.

Sync Browser	1
5/31/2012 4:58 PM	
Sync Calendar	2
6/1/2012 11:15 AM	
Sync Contacts	1
6/1/2012 3:50 PM	<b>•</b>

#### Figure-62

To create each checkbox option, create a CheckBox in your layout. Because a set of checkbox options allows the user to select multiple items, each checkbox is managed separately and you must register a click listener for each one.

#### **Responding to Click Events**

When the user selects a checkbox, the CheckBox object receives an on-click event. To define the click event handler for a checkbox, add the android:onClick attribute to the <CheckBox> element in your XML layout. The value for this attribute must be the name of the method you want to call in response to a click event. The Activity hosting the layout must then implement the corresponding method.

For example, here are a couple CheckBox objects in a list:

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>

<LinearLayout xmlns:android="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res/android"

android:orientation="vertical"

android:layout\_width="fill\_parent"

android:layout\_height="fill\_parent">

<CheckBox android:id="@+id/checkbox\_meat"

android:layout\_width="wrap\_content"

android:layout\_height="wrap\_content"

android:text="@string/meat"

android:onClick="onCheckboxClicked"/>

<CheckBox android:id="@+id/checkbox\_cheese"

android:layout\_width="wrap\_content"

android:layout\_height="wrap\_content"

android:text="@string/cheese"

```
android:onClick="onCheckboxClicked"/>
```

</LinearLayout>

Within the Activity that hosts this layout, the following method handles the click event for both checkboxes:

```
public void onCheckboxClicked(View view) {
  // Is the view now checked?
  boolean checked = ((CheckBox) view).isChecked();
  // Check which checkbox was clicked
  switch(view.getId()) {
    case R.id.checkbox meat:
       if (checked)
         // Put some meat on the sandwich
       else
         // Remove the meat
       break:
    case R.id.checkbox_cheese:
       if (checked)
         // Cheese me
       else
         // I'm lactose intolerant
       break;
    // TODO: Veggie sandwich
```

#### } }

#### 1.9 Radio Button

Radio buttons allow the user to select one option from a set. You should use radio buttons for optional sets that are mutually exclusive if you think that the user needs to see all available options side-by-side. If it's not necessary to show all options side-by-side, use a spinner instead.



# To create each radio button option, create a RadioButton in your layout. However, because radio buttons are mutually exclusive, you must group them together inside a RadioGroup. By grouping them together, the system ensures that only one radio button can be selected at a time.

#### **Responding to Click Events**

When the user selects one of the radio buttons, the corresponding RadioButton object receives an on-click event.

To define the click event handler for a button, add the android:onClick attribute to the <RadioButton> element in your XML layout. The value for this attribute must be the name of the method you want to call in response to a click event. The Activity hosting the layout must then implement the corresponding method.

For example, here are a couple RadioButton objects:

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>

<RadioGroup xmlns:android="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res/android"

android:layout\_width="match\_parent" android:layout\_height="wrap\_content" android:orientation="vertical"> <RadioButton android:id="@+id/radio\_pirates" android:layout\_width="wrap\_content" android:layout\_height="wrap\_content" android:text="@string/pirates" android:onClick="onRadioButtonClicked"/> <RadioButton android:id="@+id/radio\_ninjas" android:layout\_width="wrap\_content" android:layout\_height="wrap\_content" android:layout\_height="wrap\_content" android:text="@string/ninjas" android:text="@string/ninjas" android:text="@string/ninjas" android:onClick="onRadioButtonClicked"/> </RadioGroup>

Within the Activity that hosts this layout, the following method handles the click event for both radio buttons:

```
public void onRadioButtonClicked(View view) {
    // Is the button now checked?
    boolean checked = ((RadioButton) view).isChecked();
```

```
// Check which radio button was clicked
switch(view.getId()) {
    case R.id.radio_pirates:
        if (checked)
            // Pirates are the best
            break;
    case R.id.radio_ninjas:
        if (checked)
            // Ninjas rule
            break;
}
```

}

# 1.10 Pickers

Android provides controls for the user to pick a time or pick a date as ready-to-use dialogs. Each picker provides controls for selecting each part of the time (hour, minute, AM/PM) or date (month, day, year). Using these pickers helps ensure that your users can pick a time or date that is valid, formatted correctly, and adjusted to the user's locale.

time			Set date		
		*			*
			Sep		
8 :	30	AM	Oct	07	2011
9	31	PM	Nov	08	2012
	•	T	<b>*</b>	•	•
Cancel		Set	Cancel		Set

Figure-64

It is recommended that you use DialogFragment to host each time or date picker. The DialogFragment manages the dialog lifecycle for you and allows you to display the pickers in different layout configurations, such as in a basic dialog on handsets or as an embedded part of the layout on large screens.

#### **Creating a Time Picker**

To display a TimePickerDialog using DialogFragment, you need to define a fragment class that extends DialogFragment and return a TimePickerDialog from the fragment's onCreateDialog() method.

#### Extending DialogFragment for a time picker

To define a DialogFragment for a TimePickerDialog, you must:

- Define the onCreateDialog() method to return an instance of TimePickerDialog
- Implement the TimePickerDialog.OnTimeSetListener interface to receive a callback when the user sets the time.

Here's an example:

```
public static class TimePickerFragment extends DialogFragment
implements TimePickerDialog.OnTimeSetListener {
```

@Override

public Dialog onCreateDialog(Bundle savedInstanceState) {
 // Use the current time as the default values for the picker
 final Calendar c = Calendar.getInstance();
 int hour = c.get(Calendar.HOUR\_OF\_DAY);
 int minute = c.get(Calendar.MINUTE);

```
// Create a new instance of TimePickerDialog and return it
return new TimePickerDialog(getActivity(), this, hour, minute,
DateFormat.is24HourFormat(getActivity()));
```

```
}
```

}

```
public void onTimeSet(TimePicker view, int hourOfDay, int minute) {
    // Do something with the time chosen by the user
}
```

#### Showing the time picker

Once you've defined a DialogFragment like the one shown above, you can display the time picker by creating an instance of the DialogFragment and calling show().

For example, here's a button that, when clicked, calls a method to show the dialog:

<Button

```
android:layout_width="wrap_content"
android:layout_height="wrap_content"
```

```
android:text="@string/pick_time"
android:onClick="showTimePickerDialog" />
```

When the user clicks this button, the system calls the following method:

```
public void showTimePickerDialog(View v) {
    DialogFragment newFragment = new TimePickerFragment();
    newFragment.show(getSupportFragmentManager(), "timePicker");
}
```

This method calls show() on a new instance of the DialogFragment defined above. The show() method requires an instance of FragmentManager and a unique tag name for the fragment.

#### **Creating a Date Picker**

Creating a DatePickerDialog is just like creating a TimePickerDialog. The only difference is the dialog you create for the fragment.

To display a DatePickerDialog using DialogFragment, you need to define a fragment class that extends DialogFragment and return a DatePickerDialog from the fragment's onCreateDialog() method.

#### Extending DialogFragment for a date picker

To define a DialogFragment for a DatePickerDialog, you must:

- Define the onCreateDialog() method to return an instance of DatePickerDialog
- Implement the DatePickerDialog.OnDateSetListener interface to receive a callback when the user sets the date.

Here's an example:

public static class DatePickerFragment extends DialogFragment implements DatePickerDialog.OnDateSetListener {

```
@Override
public Dialog onCreateDialog(Bundle savedInstanceState) {
    // Use the current date as the default date in the picker
    final Calendar c = Calendar.getInstance();
    int year = c.get(Calendar.YEAR);
    int month = c.get(Calendar.MONTH);
    int day = c.get(Calendar.DAY_OF_MONTH);
    // Create a new instance of DatePickerDialog and return it
    return new DatePickerDialog(getActivity(), this, year, month, day);
}
public void onDateSet(DatePicker view, int year, int month, int day) {
    // Do something with the date chosen by the user
}
```

#### Showing the date picker

}

Once you've defined a DialogFragment like the one shown above, you can display the date picker by creating an instance of the DialogFragment and calling show().

For example, here's a button that, when clicked, calls a method to show the dialog:

```
<Button
android:layout_width="wrap_content"
android:layout_height="wrap_content"
android:text="@string/pick_date"
android:onClick="showDatePickerDialog" />
```

When the user clicks this button, the system calls the following method:

```
public void showDatePickerDialog(View v) {
    DialogFragment newFragment = new DatePickerFragment();
    newFragment.show(getSupportFragmentManager(), "datePicker");
}
```

This method calls show() on a new instance of the DialogFragment defined above. The show() method requires an instance of Fragment Manager and a unique tag name for the fragment.

```
Check your progress-2
a) ______ provides a quick way to select one value from a set of values from
   drop down list?
   (A) Button
                (B) Checkbox
                                (C) EditText (D) Spinner
b) When the user selects an item from the drop-down, the Spinner object receives
   an event.
c) When the user selects a checkbox, the Checkbox object receives an on-click
   event. (True/False)
d) Android provides controls for the user to pick a _____as ready-to-use dialogs.
   (A) Date
                          (C) Date or Time
              (B) Time
                                              (D) None of these
e) Radio buttons allow the user to select many options from a set. (True/False)
f) Every button is styled using the system's default button background, which is
   often different from one version of the platform to another. (True/False)
```

#### 1.11 Let us sum up

In this unit you have learned about user interface elements available within the Android Software Development Kit (SDK). We have discussed use of various user interface elements and use of different components and controls to build a screen, this unit also explains about how application can listen for various actions performed by the user and how to apply style controls and themes to entire screens.

# **1.12 Check your Progress: Possible Answers**

1-a) (A) View	1-b) (B) View Group

1-d) (D) TextView 1-e) (B) EditText

2-a) (D) Spinner

2-b) on-item-selected 2-c) True

1-c) (C) Either (A) or (B)

1-f) (B) EditText

2-f) True

2-d) (C) Date or Time 2-e) False

# **1.13 Further Reading**

- https://developer.android.com/reference/android/widget/TextView •
- https://developer.android.com/reference/android/widget/EditText
- https://developer.android.com/reference/android/widget/Button •
- https://developer.android.com/reference/android/widget/CheckBox
- https://developer.android.com/reference/android/widget/Spinner

# 1.14 Assignment

- Write short note on EditText
- Explain the use of TextView, EditText, Button, Checkbox, Spinner, Radio Button.
- What is difference between checkbox and radio button

# 1.15 Activity

• Write an application to demonstrate use of user interface element you have learned in this unit.