

#1-2: Programming Basics

CS SCHOLARS – PROGRAMMING

Learning Objectives

Recognize and use the basic **data types** in programs

Interpret and react to basic **error messages** caused by programs

Use **variables** in code and trace the different values they hold

Python and Pyzo

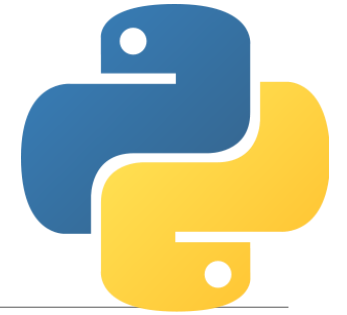
Programs are Algorithms for Computers

Computers only know how to do what we tell them to do. **Programs** communicate with a computer and tell it what to do.

Algorithms can be expressed as programs in many different **programming languages**. Different languages use different **syntax** (wording) and commands, but they all share the same set of algorithmic concepts.

In this class, we'll use **Python**, a popular programming language.

Python is Simple and Highly Useful



The Python programming language is designed to be easy to read and simple to implement algorithms in.

There are also a **huge number of libraries** that implement useful things in Python. We'll use libraries that support graphics, data analysis, randomness, and more.

Python's main weakness is **efficiency** – it can be slower than other languages. But that won't matter for our purposes.

An IDE is a Text Editor for Programs

When writing programs, we use IDEs – Integrated Development Environments. These are like text editors for programs.

In this class, we recommend that you use the Pyzo IDE. It is fairly lightweight, which makes it good for novices. But you can also use repl.it, an online IDE that also supports Python

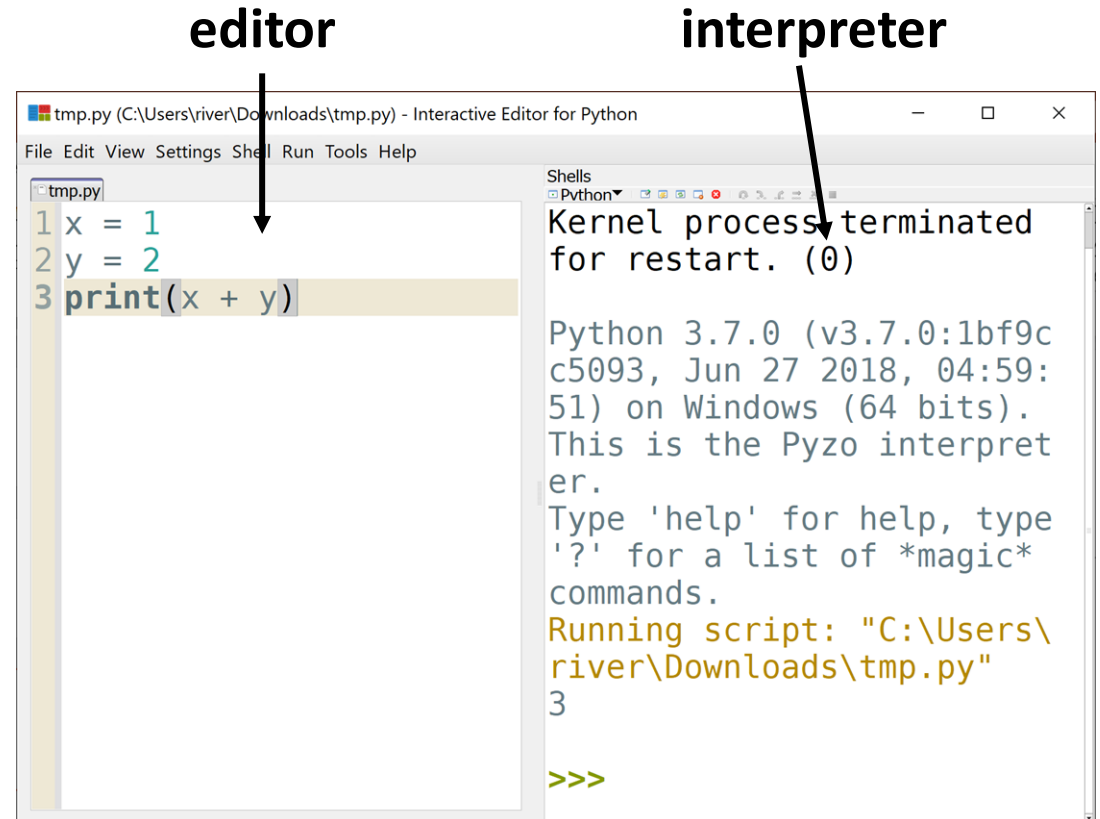
We will mostly use two parts of the IDE while writing code- the **editor** and the **interpreter**.

Write in the Editor, Run in the Interpreter

The **editor** is just a normal text editor. When we save text, it is saved to a `.py` file, but this is still just normal text.

The **interpreter** does the actual work of converting our Python text into instructions the computer can run. This happens when you click **Run File as Script** from the **Run** menu.

We can also run single lines of code in the interpreter directly. We'll start by doing that. In general, use the interpreter to run short tasks, and the editor for long tasks.



The screenshot shows the Pyzo Python IDE interface. On the left, the **editor** window displays a Python script named `tmp.py` with the following code:

```
1 x = 1
2 y = 2
3 print(x + y)
```

On the right, the **interpreter** shell shows the output of running the script:

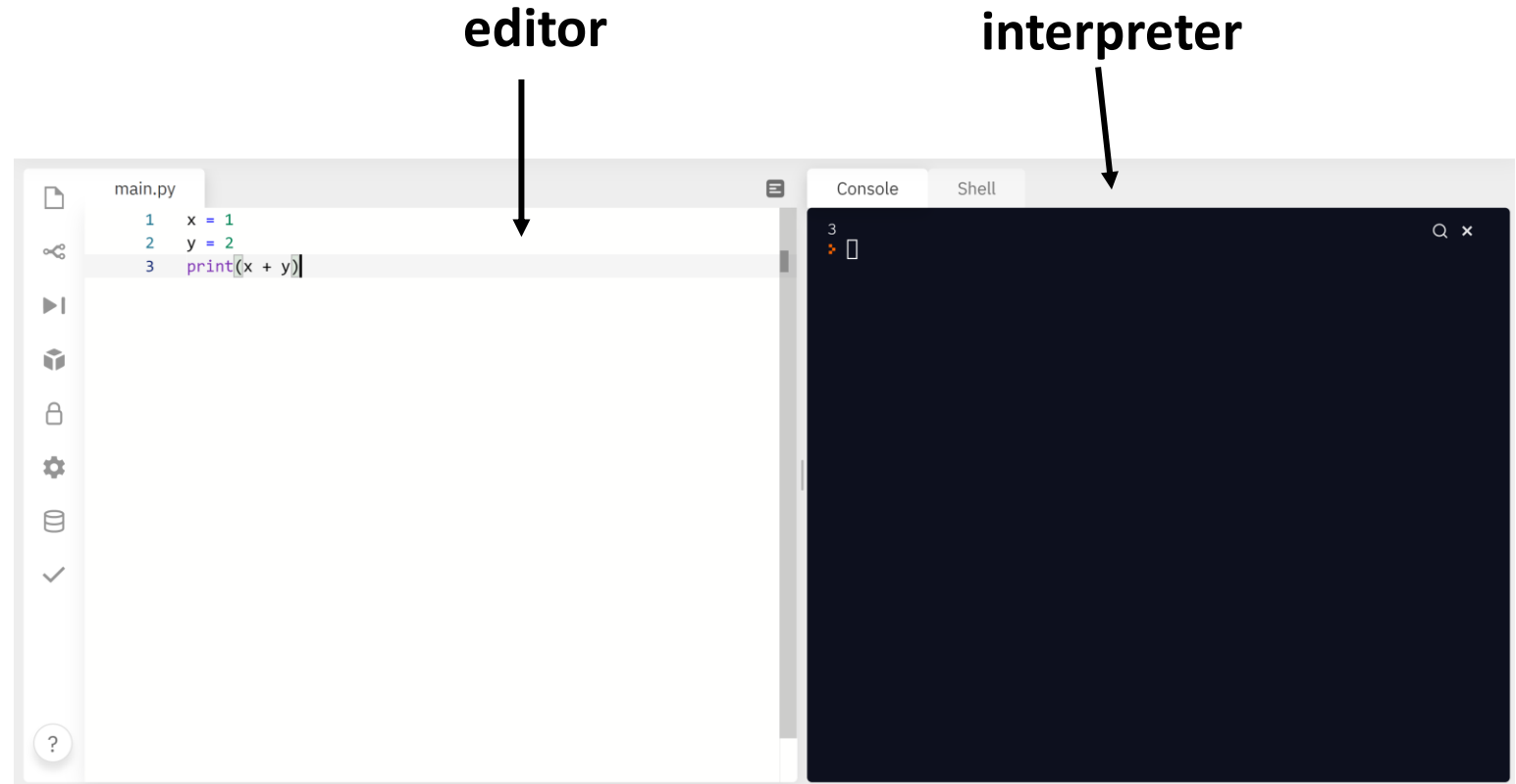
```
Kernel process terminated for restart. (0)

Python 3.7.0 (v3.7.0:1bf9c5093, Jun 27 2018, 04:59:51) on Windows (64 bits).
This is the Pyzo interpreter.
Type 'help' for help, type '?' for a list of *magic* commands.
Running script: "C:\Users\river\Downloads\tmp.py"
3
>>>
```

Arrows point from the labels "editor" and "interpreter" to their respective windows in the screenshot.

repl.it Editor and Interpreter

In repl.it, the editor and the interpreter look like this.



Sidebar: How Files Work

Your computer uses file and folders to organize data content locally (on the hardware). You can view your files and folders with **Finder** (Mac) or **File Explorer** (Windows).

A **file** is a single piece of content – a document, or a picture, or a song, or Python code.

A **folder** is a structure that holds files and/or other folders. Folders can be nested for further organization. Folders let you manage files directly.

Data Types

Data Is Information We Can Manipulate

Most programs we write will keep track of some kind of information and change it with actions. We call that information **data**.

Data have different **types** depending on their properties. We'll start by going over three core types: **numbers**, **text**, and **truth values**.

Data can also be combined using **operations**. We'll show some basic operations for each data type.

Numbers in Python

Integers (0, 14, -7) are whole numbers.

Floating point numbers (3.0, 5.735, 8e10) include a decimal point.

- +** : addition
- : subtraction
- *** : multiplication
- /** : division
- **** : power ($2^{**}3 = 8$)

Python can combine multiple operations together as a whole and follows order of operations. Use parentheses **()** to specify the order as needed.

An **expression** like $4^{**}2$ or $(5-2)/3$ is a piece of code that **evaluates to a data value**. You tell the interpreter to evaluate a piece of code by pressing Enter.

Two New Math Operators

Python also supports two other math operators you might not be as used to.

Modulo, or **mod** (%) finds the remainder when one number is divided by another.

For example, $7 \% 4$ is equal to 3

You can get the tens digit of a number with $1234 \% 10$

Floor division, or **div** (//) divides numbers by rounding down to nearest whole number. This effectively cuts off any digits after the decimal point.

For example, $7 // 4$ is equal to 1 , not 1.75

Cut off the last digit of a number with $1234 // 10$

Text in Python

Text values in Python are called **strings**, for reasons we'll go over later. Text is recognized by Python when it is put inside of quotes, either single quotes (`'Hello'`) or double quotes (`"Hello"`).

Strings can be **concatenated** together using addition.

E.g, `"Hello" + "World"` produces `"HelloWorld"`.

Truth Values in Python

Finally, Python can evaluate whether certain expressions are true or false. These types of values are called **Booleans** after the mathematician George Boole.

Booleans can be either **True** or **False** (no quotes, and capitals are required). These names are built into Python directly.

To get a Boolean, we can write **True** or **False** directly, or do a **comparison**. The basic comparison operators are familiar: **<**, **>**, **<=**, and **>=**.

We can also check if two values are equal (**==**), or not equal (**!=**).

E.g., `"Hello" == "World"` evaluates to **False**

Activity: Predict the Type

Let's do a Kahoot to see if you can identify data types correctly!

Join by going to kahoot.it, then enter the game's pin.

Type Mismatches Cause Errors

Be careful when mixing types in Python, as that can cause **error messages**. An error message is how the computer tells you it doesn't understand a command you wrote.

For example, `"Hello" + 5` results in a `TypeError`.

```
Traceback (most recent call last):  
  File "<console>", line 1, in <module>  
TypeError: can only concatenate str (not "int") to str
```

Similarly, `"Hello" < True` results in a `TypeError`.

On the other hand, integers and floating point numbers can be mixed. When this happens, the result is usually a floating point number.

For example, `8 * 2.0` results in `16.0`

Data Type Names

When reading error messages, note that Python uses shortened names for the four types we've covered.

Integers are called `int`

Floating point numbers are called `float`

Strings are called `str`

Booleans are called `bool`

Writing Code in Files

Writing Longer Programs: Use the Editor

What if we want to run more than one line of code at a time? We'll need to use the **editor**.

Write lines of code in the editor, save the file, then click **Run File as Script** on Pyzo (or just **Run** on repl.it).

Your IDE will interpret the entire text file into Python code the computer will understand. It will then run line-by-line through the entire program sequentially, where each line is ended by the enter key.

This is different from the interpreter, which ran each line **individually** (though with the context of the previous lines).

Print Displays Data

Code run from a file doesn't show the evaluated result of every line (unlike code run from the interpreter). If we want to display a result, we need to use the command **print**.

`print` takes an input expression between parentheses, evaluates the expression, and displays the evaluated result in the interpreter.

For example:

`print(4 - 2)` displays `2` in the interpreter.

`print("15-110")` displays `15-110`; note that the quotes aren't included.

`5 > 3` does **not** display `True` when run from the editor; it displays nothing, and the result is thrown away.

Activity: Hello World

You do: add a print command in the editor that prints the message "Hello, World". Then run the program to see the output.

This is the traditional first program that you write in any new language!

Printing Multiple Values

If you want to display multiple values in the interpreter on the same line, you have two choices.

First, if you're printing strings, you can concatenate them together.

```
print("Result: " + "2")
```

Alternatively, you can use commas to separate the values. `print` will then separate the printed values with spaces automatically. This is helpful for printing mixed types.

```
print("Result:", 2)
```

Comments are Ignored by the Computer

When writing a program with multiple lines, you might want to leave notes to yourself outside of the program commands. Use **comments** to do this.

Any text that follows a **#** on a line will be ignored by the computer:

```
print("Hello World") # a greeting
```

To comment out a block of code, put `"""` or `' '` at the beginning and end:

```
"""  
print("ignore")  
print("this")  
"""
```

You can also select a block of code and click Comment/Uncomment in Pyzo to toggle comments.

Error Messages

Syntax Needs to be Exact

Computers aren't very clever. If you change the syntax of code even a little bit, the computer might not understand what you mean and will raise an error.

```
Print("Hello World") # NameError  
print "Hello World" # SyntaxError
```

When you get an error message, **read it carefully**. Error messages contain useful information that will help you fix your code.

Debug Errors By Reading the Message

1. Look for the **line number**. This line tells you approximately where the error occurred.
2. Look at the **error type**.
3. If it says **SyntaxError**, look for the **inline arrow**. The position gives you more information about the location of the problem (though it isn't always right).
4. If it says something else, **read the error message**. The error type and its message gives you information about what went wrong.

We'll talk more about the debugging process in future lectures.

```
example.py
1 print(Hello World)
2 Print("Hello World")
```

```
Running script: "C:\Users\river\Downloads\example.py"
File "C:\Users\river\Downloads\example.py", line 1
    print(Hello World)
          ^
SyntaxError: invalid syntax
>>>
```

← inline arrow
↑ line number

```
example.py
1 print("Hello World")
2 Print("Hello World")
```

```
Running script: "C:\Users\river\Downloads\example.py"
Hello World
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "C:\Users\river\Downloads\example.py", line 2, in
    <module>
      Print("Hello World")
NameError: name 'Print' is not defined
>>>
```

↑ error type

Activity: Debug the Code

You do: Let's practice debugging! Given the following code and error message, determine A) what the problem is, and B) how to fix it.

```
example.py
1 print("You're in " + 15-110)
```

```
Running script: "C:\Users\river\Downloads\example.py"
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "C:\Users\river\Downloads\example.py", line 1, in
<module>
    print("You're in " + 15-110)
TypeError: can only concatenate str (not "int") to str

>>> |
```

Whitespace is Syntax, Sometimes

Be careful when using whitespace (spaces, tabs, and the return key) – it can sometimes count as syntax too!

In general, whitespace at the **beginning** of a line has meaning; we'll discuss what it means more in a few weeks. Whitespace in the **middle of tokens** causes errors. Whitespace **between tokens** is okay.

```
    print("Hello World") # IndentationError
p r i n t ( "Hello World" ) # SyntaxError
print ( "Hello World" ) # this is okay!
```

To save yourself trouble later: in Pyzo, go to **File > Indentation**, and select **Use Spaces** now. repl.it should already be set up to use spaces.

Variables

Variables Let Us Store Data

Our last core building block is the **variable**. Variables let us **save data** so we can reuse it in future computations.

A variable is a name that we define in the program (without quotes), like `x` or `result`. We define a variable with an equal sign:

variable = expression

Note that the variable can only go on the left side of this code, and its value (or an expression that evaluates to a value) goes on the right. For example:

```
myPet = "Stella"  
result = 5 + 2  
42 = foo # SyntaxError
```

Rules for Variable Names

Variable names can use any combination of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, digits, and underscores. They must start with a letter or `_`. Starting with a lowercase letter is recommended.

Variable names are case sensitive. For example, `Banana` is not the same as `banana`.

Mistyping a variable name is a common cause of `NameErrors`.

Expressions vs. Statements

Python needs to keep track of certain pieces of data that change over time as a program runs (like which variables exist and what their values are, what has been printed to the screen, etc). We call this information the **program state**.

When you set a variable to a new value, you change the program's state. That makes variable assignment too complex to be represented as expressions (which are more like data values).

A **statement** is an action taken by the program that may change the program state. It does *not* evaluate to a value; instead, it executes a change, then moves on to the next line. Variable assignments are statements.

Using and Updating Variables

Once we've defined a variable, we can use it in later expressions. Unlike in math, we can also **change** the variable to a new value, if needed.

```
x = 5
y = x - 2 # x evaluates to 5
x = x - 1 # x is 5 on the right
           # then changes to 4
print("x:", x) # x: 4
```

Python is Sequential

Note that Python runs every line in order and doesn't peek ahead. If you want to use a variable, you must define it **before** it is used.

```
print(foo) # this causes an error!  
foo = 42
```

```
foo = 42  
print(foo) # this is fine!
```

Activity: Trace the Variable Values

You do: Trace through the following lines of code. What values do **a** and **b** hold at the end?

a = 4

b = a - 2

a = a + 1

b = 7

Augmented Assignment

It's common to update variables with variable assignment. Python has some nice built-in syntax that provides a handy shorthand.

```
x = x + 1
```

is the same as

```
x += 1
```

You can also use `-=`, `*=`, `/=`, etc.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize and use the basic **data types** in programs
- Interpret and react to basic **error messages** caused by programs
- Use **variables** in code and trace the different values they hold