

Unit Testing (I). Exceptions

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Overview

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Unit testing
(I)

Exceptions
Exception
handling
Specifications
and exceptions

1 Unit testing (I)

2 Exceptions

- Exception handling
- Specifications and exceptions

Obligatory testing doggo

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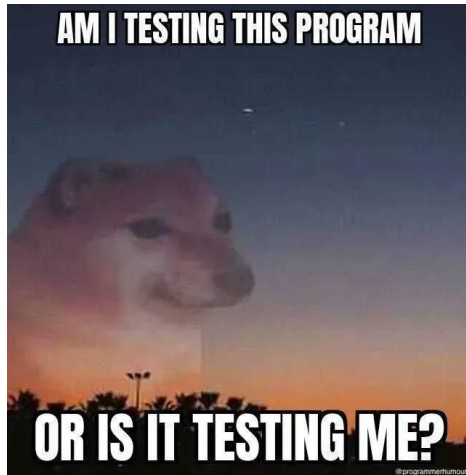
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Testing

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Exception
handling

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and exceptions

What is testing?

Observing the behavior of a program over many executions.

- We execute the program for some input data and compare the result we obtain with the known correct result.
- **Questions:**
 - How do we choose input data?
 - How do we know we have run enough tests?
 - How do we know the program worked correctly for a given test? (known as the oracle problem)

Testing

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Exception
handling
Specifications
and exceptions

- Testing cannot prove program correctness, and cannot identify all defects in software. However, what it **can** prove is incorrectness, if at least one test case gives wrong results.
- **Problems with testing**
 - We cannot cover a function's input space
 - We have to design an oracle as complex as the program under test
 - Certain things are practically outside of our control (e.g. platform, operating system and library versions, possible hardware faults)

Unit Testing

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Exceptions

Exception
handling

Specifications
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- Tests that verify the functionality of a specific section of code, usually at function level.
- Testing is done in isolation. Test small parts of the program independently

How to test a function

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Exception
handling
Specifications
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- 1 Write the function's specification
- 2 Create a test function called *test_ < function_name >* that has no input parameters, does not return anything and calls no functions except the one under test (e.g. *test_add_student()*)
- 3 Add test cases to the test function using Python's `assert`¹ keyword
- 4 Run the test function. It should fail with an *AssertionError*
- 5 Write the code for the function under test
- 6 Test functions that do not raise *AssertionError* must complete quietly

¹https://docs.python.org/3/reference/simple_stmts.html#the-assert-statement

Exceptions

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Exceptions

Exception
handling
Specifications
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An **exception** is an event that disrupts normal program flow

- Exceptions are present and used in many programming languages
- They are raised by code to signal an exceptional situation
- Your code will both raise (create) exceptions as well as "treat" them

NB!

The presence of an exception does not automatically mean that there's an error in the code

Exceptions

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Exception
handling
Specifications
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Most programming languages that support exceptions² use a common terminology and syntax

- Raising or throwing exceptions
- Catching or treating an exception
- Exception propagation
- **try** / **raise** (throw) / **except** (catch) keywords

²<https://docs.python.org/3/tutorial/errors.html#exceptions>

Exception handling

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Exceptions

Exception
handling

Specifications
and exceptions

Exception handling³ is the process of handling error conditions in a program systematically by taking the necessary action.

```
try :  
    # code that may raise the ValueError exception  
except ValueError:  
    # code that runs if ValueError was raised  
else:  
    # code that runs in case there are no exceptions  
finally:  
    # this code always runs
```

³<https://realpython.com/python-exceptions/>

Exception handling

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Exceptions
Exception
handling
Specifications
and exceptions

A few points from the Python syntax above

- If you want to catch exceptions, the code has to be in a **try - except** block
- Exceptions are caught according to type
- A try block can catch **one**, **several** or **all** exception types
- Creating exceptions in your code is done using the **raise** keyword
- You can provide additional arguments (such as an error message) to exceptions you raise

Exception handling

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Exceptions
Exception
handling
Specifications
and exceptions

Where is an exception handled:

- 1 The function where the exception was raised
- 2 Any function that called the raising function (transitively)
- 3 The Python runtime, in which case program execution stops

Discussion

If the phrase "*unhandled exception has occurred in your application...*" sounds familiar, now you understand what happened!

Exceptions

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Exceptions

Exception
handling

Specifications
and exceptions

Demo

Exceptions example – **ex30_exceptions.py**

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Exceptions
Exception
handling
Specifications
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When to use exceptions?

- Signal an exceptional situation - the function is unable to do its work (e.g. function preconditions are violated, or the function encountered a situation in which it cannot make progress - a required file was not found, was not accessible, etc.)
- Enforce function preconditions
- Generally speaking, you should **not use** exceptions to control program flow!

Function specification

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handling
Specifications
and exceptions

Is a way to abstract **functions** that only works if we provide:

- Meaningful function name
- Short description (the problem solved by the function)
- Type and meaning of each input parameter
- Conditions over the input parameters (**preconditions**)
- Type and meaning of each output parameter
- Relation between input and output parameters (**post condition**)
- **Exceptions** raised by the function

Exceptions and function specification

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Exception
handling

Specifications
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- **Precondition** - condition that must be true prior to running a section of code
- **Post condition** - condition that must be true after running a section of code

```
def gcd(a, b):  
    '''  
    Return the greatest common divisor of two  
    positive integers  
    a,b - integers  
    Return the greatest common divisor of a and b  
    Raise ValueError if a <= 0 or b <= 0  
    '''
```