

Worksheet 17: Move Zeros Using Two Pointers

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions

- Answer in the blanks.
 - For “write code” questions, write valid Python code.
 - For “what is the output” questions, write the exact output (including spaces/newlines).
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Part A – Key ideas

1) Fill in the blanks: what does “in-place” mean?

Choose from `do` and `don't`.

In-place means we _____ change the input list itself. We _____ create a new list.

2) Two pointers: `read` and `write`

Fill in the blanks.

- `read` starts at _____ (`0` or `1`?) and moves to the _____ (`left` or `right`?) end.
 - `write` starts at _____ (`0` or `1`?) and points to the next place to write a _____ (`zero` or `nonzero`?) number.
 - If `numbers[read]` is zero, we only move _____ (`read` or `write`?).
 - If `numbers[read]` is nonzero, we copy it to `numbers[_____]` (`read` or `write`?).
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Part B – Trace the algorithm

3) What is the output? (scan only)

What does this code print?

```
numbers = [0, 1, 0, 3, 0, 2]

read = 0
write = 0
n = len(numbers)

while read < n:
    if numbers[read] != 0:
        numbers[write] = numbers[read]
        write = write + 1
    read = read + 1

print(numbers)
print("write =", write)
```

Output:

4) After scan, fill zeros

Suppose after the scan step we have:

```
numbers = [1, 3, 2, 3, 0, 2]
write = 3
n = 6
```

Now run:

```
for k in range(write, n):
    numbers[k] = 0
```

What is `numbers` after filling zeros?

Answer: `numbers =`

5) What is the output? (full algorithm)

What does this code print?

```
numbers = [1, 0, 2, 0, 0, 3]

write = 0
n = len(numbers)

for read in range(n):
    if numbers[read] != 0:
        numbers[write] = numbers[read]
        write = write + 1

for k in range(write, n):
    numbers[k] = 0

print(numbers)
```

Output:

Part C – Fix and write code

6) Debugging (2 bugs)

This code is trying to move zeros to the end, but it has **two bugs** (Line A and B).

```
numbers = [0, 1, 0, 3, 0, 2]

read = 0
write = 0
n = len(numbers)

while read <= n:          # Line A
    if numbers[read] != 0:
        numbers[write] = numbers[read]
        write = write + 1    # Line B
    read = read + 1
```

Corrected lines:

- Line A: while :
• Line B:

7) Fill in the missing code (all while-loops)

```
numbers = [0, 1, 0, 3, 0, 2]

read = 0
write = 0
n = len(numbers)

# Step 1: move all nonzeros to the front (keep order)
while read < n:
    if numbers[read] != 0:
        numbers[write] = numbers[read]
        write = write + 1
    read = read + 1

# Step 2: fill zeros from write to the end
k = _____
while _____:
    numbers[k] = _____
    k = _____

print(numbers)
```

Expected output:

```
[1, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0]
```