

# Learning the **Pythonic** Way

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# The Man, The Legend: Zed Shaw

So, he made a **web server** too.

It's called **mongrel2**.

Oh, and **Learning Python the Hard Way [LPTHW]**.

and... **Programming, Motherfuckers...**

Need I say more?

# Why Python?

- My job is to convince you that:
  - Python is incredibly easy to program in
  - Python “comes with batteries”
  - Python enables rapid prototyping
  - All your pseudo-code are belong to Python
- Practicality?
  - Systems scripting language of choice
  - Alongside Perl and Ruby; OK, fine

Let's do this.  
One at a time.

All your pseudo-code are belong to Python

# Wikipedia: What is Quicksort?

## Simple version

In simple [pseudocode](#), the algorithm might be expressed as this:

```
function quicksort('array')
  create empty lists 'less' and 'greater'
  if length('array') ≤ 1
    return 'array' // an array of zero or one elements is already sorted
  select and remove a pivot value 'pivot' from 'array'
  for each 'x' in 'array'
    if 'x' ≤ 'pivot' then append 'x' to 'less'
    else append 'x' to 'greater'
  return concatenate(quicksort('less'), 'pivot', quicksort('greater'))
```

# And...Pseudo-what-Python!?

```
def quicksort(array):  
    less = []; greater = []  
    if len(array) <= 1:  
        return array  
    pivot = array.pop()  
    for x in array:  
        if x <= pivot: less.append(x)  
        else: greater.append(x)  
    return quicksort(less)+[pivot]+quicksort(greater)
```

# Really? Yes!

```
>>> quicksort([9,8,4,5,32,64,2,1,0,10,19,27])  
[0, 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 19, 27, 32, 64]
```

Python “comes with batteries”



# There's ~~an app~~ a library for that

- `import httplib`
  - HTTP protocol client
  - **Test your web servers!**
  - Also: `ftplib`, `poplib`, `imaplib`, `nntplib`, `smtplib`...
- `import os` and `import sys`
  - misc. OS interfaces, and system-specific parameters and functions
- `import random`
  - Generate pseudo-random numbers
  - **Sampling, shuffling, etc. – good for testing**
- `import socket`
  - **First test script used this for PJ1CP1**
  - also `SimpleHTTPServer`, `BaseHTTPServer`...
- `import fileinput` → `fileinput.input()` → iterable
  - **Reads lines from** `stdin`, **files listed on command line**, etc.

Python enables rapid prototyping

# Give me a dynamic web app NOW

```
from flask import Flask
app = Flask(__name__)

@app.route("/")
def hello():
    return "Hello World!"

if __name__ == "__main__":
    app.run()
```

Python is incredibly easy to program in

# Use the Interpreter

- Code and experiment interactively
- Use `help()`
- Explore functionality and ideas
- Then code in your main editor

# Just one thing

- **Whitespace matters**
- Defines blocks → C-world thinks { }
- Use spaces
- 4 spaces per indentation level
- spaces > tab → just be consistent
- **Really though, generally aids readability**
- Set your editor preferences ahead of time

# The Colon

- Required for `if/for/while/with/def/class` statements
- Enhances readability
- Has English meaning
- Helps auto-indenting editors
- From the [Python Design FAQ](#)

# Starting a Script and Comments

- Start with:

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
```

- Then you can `chmod +x script.py`
- The `#!` is a special character combination
- Tells the OS **how to execute a file**
- Comments start with a `#`
- They go to the end of the line



# Math – Business as Usual

- `import math` → extra math functions
- Convert between: `int()` and `float()`
- Convert to string: `str()`

```
>>> 2 * 8
16
>>> 4 / 3
1
>>> 4 / 3.
1.3333333333333333
>>> 2 ** 4
16
>>> 18 % 3
0
>>> 18 % 4
2
```

```
>>> float(4) / 3
1.3333333333333333
>>> float(4 / 3)
1.0
>>> int(4 / 3.)
1
>>> str(2**4)
'16'
```

# Danger: Division from the Future

- Python 3 is coming...and `__future__`
- Yes, basic math changes...

```
>>> from __future__ import division
>>> 6 / 7 # defaults to float
0.8571428571428571
>>> 6 // 7 # "floor" division
0
>>> 6 // 7.
0.0
>>> 6.5 // 7
0.0
>>> 7. // 7
1.0
>>> 7 // 7
1
```

# Danger: Division from the Future

- Always **read the top of** a script first

```
SyntaxError: from _future_ imports  
must occur at the beginning of the  
file
```

# Booleans

- **True/False** – actual values
- Logical Operators
  - and – not && (although **& is set and bit and**)
  - or – not || (although **| is set and bit or**)
  - not – not ^ (although **^ is set and bit xor**)
  - As expected...

```
>>> True and True
True
>>> True or False
True
>>> not True
False
>>> not False
True
```

# Lists

- Think arrays of arbitrary objects—**can mix and match type!**
- **Sorting**

`sorted(x)` – returns a new list

`x.sort()` – sorts in place

```
>>> x = [3, 5, 7, 2, 8, 1, 4, 9, 6]
```

```
>>> sorted(x)
```

```
[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
```

```
>>> x
```

```
[3, 5, 7, 2, 8, 1, 4, 9, 6]
```

```
>>> x.sort()
```

```
>>> x
```

```
[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
```

# Lists

- **Comprehensions** – construct lists dynamically; **they nest too!**
- Functional Programmers: think **map()**

```
>>> evens = [x*2 for x in xrange(10)]
```

```
>>> evens
```

```
[0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18]
```

```
>>> evens = [x for x in xrange(10) if x % 2 == 0]
```

```
>>> evens
```

```
[0, 2, 4, 6, 8]
```

# Lists

- **Slicing** – cutting up lists and other iterables (strings etc.)

```
>>> x = [0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
```

```
>>> x[:] # copy x
```

```
[0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
```

```
>>> x[-1] # last position in list
```

```
9
```

```
>>> x[0:3] # 0th through 2nd positions
```

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

```
>>> x[1:] # copy starting at 1st position
```

```
[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
```

```
>>> x[:4] # copy up to 3rd position
```

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

# Lists

- **Stacks and Queues** – LIFO and FIFO – lists are just so versatile

```
>>> x = []
>>> x.append(0)
>>> x.append(1)
>>> x.pop()
1
>>> x.append(2)
>>> x.pop()
2
```

```
>>> x = []
>>> x.append(0)
>>> x.append(1)
>>> x.pop(0)
0
>>> x.append(2)
>>> x.pop(0)
1
```



# Dictionaries

- **Key-Value Storage** – arbitrary keys, arbitrary values
- **del** – remove object from dictionary or list

```
>>> d = {'a' : 0, 'b' : 1, 2 : 0}
>>> d[2]
0
>>> d['a']
0
>>> d['b']
1
>>> del d['b']
>>> d
{'a' : 0, 2 : 0}
```

# Dictionaries

- `len()` – get length of **dictionary or list**
- `keys()`, `values()` – get lists of these
- `key in d` – membership **in dictionary or list**

```
>>> d = {'a' : 0, 'b' : 1, 2 : 0}
>>> len(d)
3
>>> d.keys() # note, no ordering
['a', 2, 'b']
>>> d.values() # ordering...
[0, 0, 1]
>>> 'a' in d
True
>>> 'x' in d
False
```

# Tuples and Strings = Sequences

- Tuples are just values separated by `' , '`
- They are both (strings too) **immutable**
- Otherwise, they behave like lists

```
>>> t = ('x', 'y')
>>> t[0] = 2
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
TypeError: 'tuple' object does not support item assignment
>>> t[0]
'x'
>>> t[1]
'y'
```

# Tuples: Packing and Unpacking

- Quick and easy way to name values

```
>>> position = 249,576
>>> x,y = position
>>> x
249
>>> y
576
```

# Sets: Creating

```
s1 = set([1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5])
```

 No duplicates

```
>>> s1
```

```
set([1, 2, 3, 4, 5])
```

```
>>> s1.add(4)
```

Adding elements

```
>>> s1
```

```
set([1, 2, 3, 4, 5])
```

```
>>> s1.add(7)
```

```
>>> s1
```

```
set([1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7])
```

```
>>> sorted(s1)
```

```
[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7]
```

You can sort sets!?

```
>>> 6 in s1
```

Returns a list

```
False
```

```
>>> 6 not in s1
```

```
True
```

Test element membership too...

# Sets: Manipulating

```
>>> s1 = set([1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5])
>>> s2 = set([7, 4, 64, 62, 5, 1])
>>> s1 & s2
set([1, 4, 5])
>>> s1 | s2
set([64, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 62])
>>> s1 ^ s2
set([64, 2, 3, 7, 62])
>>> s1 - s2
set([2, 3])
>>> s2 - s1
set([64, 62, 7])
```

Regular set operations  
**just work**

# Strings

- **Strip** – remove surrounding white space

```
>>> '    this is a test    '.strip()  
'this is a test'
```

- **Length** – same as lists: `len()`
- **Slicing** – same as lists/other sequences
- **Formatted** – C printf-style inline

```
>>> '%d\t%d\t%s\n' % (6, 7, 'hello')  
'6\t7\thello\n'
```

# Strings: Me, Myself, and Irene

- So there are several types of strings...
- Single- or double-quotes accepted
- Triple and you got something special
  - Keeps newlines and whitespace generally

```
>>> 'string'
'string'
>>> "string"
'string'
>>> '''test
...                                yeah
...                                '''
'test\n\t\tyeah\n'
```



# Raw Strings

- **Maintain escapes** inside them
- That is, the `'\'` stays put

```
>>> r'This string\t has escapes\n\n.'  
'This string\\t has escapes\\n\\n.'
```

```
>>> 'This string\t won\'t have escapes\n\n.'  
"This string\t won't have escapes\n\n."
```

# Looping: In Theory

- `for` – always a `foreach`
  - Use `enumerate` to get more C-stylish with an `i`
- `while` – similar to C `while`
- `range`, `xrange` – create ranges to iterate on
  - `range` – actually creates a list in memory
  - `xrange` – does not create a list in memory
  - **Just use** `xrange`
- `break`, `continue` – similar to C

# Looping: Applied

Tricky: **Modifying lists** etc. while looping.  
**Generally work on copies.**

```
>>> for x in xrange(5):  
...     print x  
...
```

```
0  
1  
2  
3  
4
```

```
>>> while (x > 0):  
...     print x  
...     x -= 1  
...
```

```
4  
3  
2  
1
```

```
>>> for i,x in enumerate(['test', '15-441', 'test']):  
...     print i,x  
...
```

```
0 test  
1 15-441  
2 test
```

# Branching

- if → as expected
- elif → else if construct
- else → as expected

```
>>> if '' or None or 0 or [] or set([]) or ():  
...     pass  
... else:  
...     print 'huh, they all appear as false.'  
...
```

huh, they all appear as false.

```
>>> if False:  
...     pass  
... elif True:  
...     print 'else if!'  
...  
else if!
```

# Defining Functions

- The magic keyword: `def`
- **Formal parameters** – as normal C args
- `*arguments` – contains non-formal args
- `**keywords` – contains a dictionary with non formal keyword parameters
- Be thinking: **varargs from C**
- Parameters **can have defaults**
- Parameters **can be named**

# One Function to Rule Them All

```
>>> def example(x, y=None, *args, **keywords):  
...     print x, '\t', y, '\t',  
...     print args, '\t', keywords  
...  
>>> example(1, 2, 3, 4, test='test', test2='test2')  
1 2 (3, 4) {'test': 'test', 'test2': 'test2'}
```

# The Power of Passing

- Rapidly create a skeleton/**think abstractly**
- **pass** – a **noop statement** – it does nothing

```
def log_error(message):  
    pass
```

```
while True:  
    pass
```

```
def open_binary(path):  
    pass
```

```
for x in xrange(10):  
    pass
```

```
def close_binary(path):  
    pass
```

```
def new_client(client_socket):  
    pass
```

# None

- None is kind of like NULL
- That's pretty much it.
- You can use it as a **guard value**



# Classes: The What

- The magic keyword: `class`
- Another magic keyword: `self`
- `self` refers to the current object
- `self` stores class variables etc.
- `self` is always an argument to a class method

# Classes: The How

```
>>> class myclass(object):
...     def __init__(self):
...         self.x = 0
...     def increment(self):
...         self.x += 1
...     def get(self):
...         return self.x
...
>>> instance = myclass()
>>> instance.get()
0
>>> instance.increment()
>>> instance.get()
1
```

# Iterators and Generators

- The power to create **your own** xrange
- **Classes** with `next()` and `__iter__()` methods
  - Then their **instantiated objects** may be used as **iterator objects**
- **Functions** can use the `yield` keyword
  - **State is retained for successive yields**

# Iterator Example

```
>>> class myiter:
...     def __iter__(self):
...         return self
...     def next(self):
...         raise StopIteration
...
>>> for x in myiter():
...     print x
...
```

# Yield Example

```
>>> def myiter():  
...     for x in [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]:  
...         yield x  
...  
>>> for x in myiter():  
...     print x  
...  
1  
2  
3  
4  
5
```

# Exceptions: Except and Finally

- `try...except`
  - Often enough for most tasks
  - **Multiple exceptions** in one except
  - Or **one except per exception** type
- `try...except...finally`
  - `finally` executed on the way out, cleanup handler
  - Also on `return`, `break`, `continue`

# Exceptions: In Practice

```
>>> try:
...     open('test.txt', 'r')
... except IOError:
...     print 'error'
... finally:
...     print 'code that is guaranteed to run'
...
error
code that is guaranteed to run
```

# Exceptions: Making Them...

```
>>> raise ValueError
```

```
Traceback (most recent call last):
```

```
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
```

```
ValueError
```

raise **special classes** you have created  
**with meaningful names.**



# Writing Tests

- `import doctest`
  - **Dynamically finds tests** in your documentation!
  - Check examples in **docstrings**
- `import unittest`
  - Test whole programs or APIs **or other programs**

# Writing Documentation

- PEP 257 -- Docstring Conventions

<http://www.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0257/>

- Sphinx – Python Documentation Generator

<http://sphinx.pocoo.org/>

# Pythonic Style

PEP 8 -- Style Guide for Python Code

<http://www.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0008/>

# @zedshaw LPTHW Reference

- We did lessons
  - 1-5, 10, 13, 18, 23, 29, 32, 40, 47
- **Bonus:** Up to **10 points** towards HW's/Projects
- What should you do:
  - Finish the rest of LPTHW/fill in the gaps
  - Type in all the Python code yourself
  - Follow instructions!
  - **Place all code into your Project 1 repo**
    - **/scripts/ subfolder**
    - Email us your feelings/experience

# How do I get LPTHW?

- Free online

<http://learnpythonthehardway.org/book/>

- Zed Shaw provided PDF

CMU IP-only site

<http://xxx.xxx.xxx.xxx>

- How long does it take?

- ~1-2 days for an experienced programmer

# More Python References

Python Tutorial

<http://docs.python.org/tutorial/>

Super Useful Python Documentation

<http://docs.python.org/library/>

Python Interpreter

```
python
```

```
>>> help(x)
```

Shameless plug.

[www.phototags.org](http://www.phototags.org)

Help **Wolf's** research.

GitHub:

Git it, got it, good.

```
git clone git://github.com/theonewolf/15-441-Recitation-Sessions.git
```