



Fundamentos de Programação

António J. R. Neves
João Rodrigues

Departamento de Electrónica, Telecomunicações e Informática
Universidade de Aveiro



Summary

- Files
- Command line arguments
- Exceptions and assertions



Text Files

- Most of the programs we have seen so far are transient in the sense that they run for a short time, take input and produce output, but when they end, everything disappears.
- One of the simplest ways for programs to maintain their data is by reading and writing text files.
- A text file is a sequence of characters stored on a persistent medium like a hard drive, flash memory, or CD-ROM.
- Characters are encoded in bytes according to a standard coding table such as UTF-8 or ASCII, for instance.



Opening and closing files

- We must prepare a file before reading or writing. This is called **opening** the file.
- The built-in function `open` takes the name of the file and returns a `file` object that we can use to access it.

```
fileobj = open(file_name, 'r') # open for reading
fileobj = open(file_name, 'w') # open for writing
```

- More modes: `'r'`, `'w'`, `'a'`, `'r+'`, `'w+'`, `'a+'`, `'rb'`, ...
- After using the file, remember to **close** it.

```
fileobj.close()
```

- The **with** statement will automatically close files.

```
with open(file_name, mode) as fileobj:
    statements to read/write fileobj
# fileobj.close not required!
```



Text *versus* binary mode

- Normally, files are opened in ***text mode***. This means:
 - You read/write *strings* of characters (type `str`).
 - Characters are *encoded*: one character may use several bytes. (The encoding may be specified with the `encoding=` optional argument.)
 - Platform-specific *line endings* are converted to/from `\n`.
- For files that don't contain text, you should use `'rb'` or `'wb'` to open in ***binary mode***. This means:
 - You read/write strings of *bytes* (type `bytes`, not `str`).
 - No conversions occur.



Reading a file

- We can use a `for` loop to read a file *line by line*.

```
fin = open('words.txt')
for line in fin:    # for each line from the file
    print(line)     # do something with it
fin.close()
```

- Another way is using the `readline` method.

```
while True:
    line = fin.readline()    # returns line to the end
    if line == "": break    # empty means end-of-file
    print(line)
```

- We can also read the entire file as string.

```
text = fin.read()    # read as much as possible (up to EOF)
```

- Or read at most N characters.

```
str = fin.read(10)    # read upto 10 chars (empty means EOF)
```



Moving the file cursor

- We generally read and write sequentially, from start to end.
- But sometimes we need to "jump" around.
- The `tell()` method tells you the current position within the file.
- The `seek(offset)` method changes the current file position to `offset` bytes from the *start*. (An optional argument can specify a different reference point).

```
a0 = f.readline()    # read a line
pos = f.tell()       # store position
a1 = f.readline()    # read second line
f.seek(pos)          # return to stored position
a2 = f.readline()    # read second line again (a2==a1)
```



Write a file (1)

- To write to a file, open it with mode `'w'` (or `'a'`).

```
fout = open('output.txt', 'w')
```

- Opening it in `'w'` mode creates a new file or *truncates* an existing one, *i.e.* it deletes the old data and starts from scratch.

- The `write` method puts data into the file.

```
line1 = "To be or not to be,\n"  
fout.write(line1)
```

- Again, the `file` object keeps track of where it is, so if you call `write` again, it adds the new data to the end.

```
line2 = "that is the question.\n"  
fout.write(line2)
```




Write a file (2)

- The argument of `write` has to be a string, so we have to convert other types of values.

```
x = 0.75
fout.write('X: ' + str(x))
```

- Or use the string format method.

```
fout.write('{:s} costs {:.2f}€.'.format('coffee', x))
```

- You may also use `print` with the `file=` argument.

```
print('X:', x, file=fout)
print('{:s} costs {:.2f}€.'.format('coffee', x),
      file=fout)
```

- When you are done writing, remember to close the file!

```
fout.close()    # OR use the with statement
```



Filenames and paths

- The `os` module provides functions for working with files and directories (“`os`” stands for “operating system”).

`os.getcwd()` returns the name of the current directory.

- A string that identifies a file is called a ***path***.
- An **absolute path** starts with `/` (the topmost directory).
- A **relative path** starts from the current directory.
- To find the absolute path to a file, you can use:

`os.path.abspath(path)`



Filenames and paths

- There are functions to check existence and type of files.
 - `os.path.exists(f)` checks whether a file exists.
 - `os.path.isdir(f)` checks whether a filename is a directory.
 - `os.path.isfile(f)` checks whether it's a regular file.
- And a function to get the contents of a directory.
 - `os.listdir` returns a list of the files (and other directories) in the given directory.



Example

- The method `walk()` generates the file names in a directory tree by walking the tree either top-down or bottom-up.

```
import os
for root, dirs, files in os.walk(".", topdown=False):
    for name in files:
        print(os.path.join(root, name))
    for name in dirs:
        print(os.path.join(root, name))
```



Command Line Arguments

- The *Python* `sys` module provides access to any command-line arguments via the `sys.argv`:
 - `sys.argv` is the list of command-line arguments;
 - `len(sys.argv)` is the number of command-line arguments;
 - `sys.argv[0]` is the program (script) name.

```
import sys
print('Number of args:', len(sys.argv), 'arguments.')
print('Argument List:', sys.argv)
```

- Run above script as follows:

```
python3 test.py arg1 arg2 arg3
```

- Produces:

```
Number of arguments: 4 arguments.
Argument List: ['test.py', 'arg1', 'arg2', 'arg3']
```

- Explore `getopt` module



Exceptions

- Python provides an important feature to handle any unexpected events in your program: **exceptions**.
- You've seen exceptions before.

```
int("one")      #-> ValueError: invalid literal for int()  
open("foo")     #-> FileNotFoundError: No such file...
```

- When Python encounters a situation that it cannot cope with, it **raises** an exception.
- That interrupts the normal flow of execution: the current function is interrupted, then the one that called it, etc., until the main program itself is interrupted.
- Information about the event is transmitted all the way through in an *exception object*.



Handling exceptions

- You can intercept selected exceptions and recover normal execution with the **try** statement.
- Example: handle errors accessing files:

```
try:
    fh = open("testfile", "r")
    fh.read()
except IOError:
    print("Error: can\'t find file or read data")
else:
    print("Written content in the file successfully")
    fh.close()
```

- The **except** statement can also be used with no exceptions or with more than one.



Exception information

- An exception can have an *argument*, which is a value that gives additional information about the problem.

```
# Define a function here.
```

```
def temp_convert(var):  
    try:  
        return int(var)  
    except ValueError as x:  
        print("Not numeric\n", x)
```

```
# Call above function here.
```

```
temp_convert("xyz")
```




Raising exceptions

- We can raise exceptions (of any type) by using the **raise** statement.

```
def functionName( level ):
    if level <1:
        raise Exception(level)
    # code here is not executed if we raise the exception
    return level

try:
    v = functionName(-10)
    print("level = ", v)
except Exception as e:
    print("error in level argument", e.args[0])
```



Assertions

- An **assertion** is a condition that we know (or require) to be true at some point in a program.
- Use the **assert** statement for checking assertions.
- It evaluates the condition and, if false, raises an exception.
- We can turn off assertion checking when we are done with testing of the program (call Python with `-O` flag).
- We can place assertions at the start of a function to check for valid input, or after a function call to check for valid output.

```
def KelvinToFahrenheit(Temperature):  
    assert Temperature >= 0, "Colder than absolute zero!"  
    return ((Temperature-273)*1.8)+32  
print(KelvinToFahrenheit(-5))  
#-> AssertionError: Colder than absolute zero!
```