

Python Learning Journal

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About Myself

I'm just a normal Guy. I'm 32 years old, I live in Texas, I love Jesus, and my wife, and good coffee. I took a coding class in college (back in 2017) and it has piqued my interest ever since. Though, only in the last year have I gotten serious about software.

I enjoy the basic full-stack, and I'm a web-content creator for Texas Tech University, but making websites is simple stuff. Diving into packages, frameworks, backends, APIs, and more complex languages is equal parts fun and headache inducing.

1.1: Getting Started With Python

Learning Goals

- Summarize the uses and benefits of Python for web development
- Prepare your developer environment for programming with Python

Okay, starting off my Python journal here. Day one saw me installing Python with the Windows x64 installer. I'm running out of disk space on my laptop. The installer does it's thing, I open a command prompt and initiate python's built in REPL (Read Execute Print Loop) (is that pronounced "repple"?), then type in `print("Hello World!")` and just like that, I've mastered Python!

I learned about "environments" which are directories of particular Python packages and files to separate dependencies.

Another critical thing I learned was the *import* keyword, to utilize Python's built-in package management system, e.g., `import math` will bring in a package with mathematical functionality.

Similar to *import* is the keyword *pip* which installs packages from the Python Package Inventory. So, `pip install xyz` will install the xyz package in the current directory location from the terminal.

Python is dynamically typed, meaning that a variable can be assigned a string value, then reassigned as an integer value, with no qualms (like JavaScript).

Python lines do not have semicolons...

1.2: Data Types in Python

Learning Goals

- Explain variables and data types in Python
- Summarize the use of objects in Python
- Create a data structure for your Recipe app

Python data types are more fun than riding a jet ski. We all know that Python has data types of string, integer, boolean, tuple, list, dictionary, and noneType (and there are probably others).

It was good to practice the syntax of built-in functions and methods on different data types. How to “slice” properly, sort(), min(), max(), count(), pop(), extend(), append(), copy(), and more.

Apparently, objects in Python are called “dictionaries” allowing for an entity of key/value pairs of different data types.

For the basic data structures of the Achievement’s recipe app, I’ve chosen to store all recipes as a list of dictionaries (each recipe is a “dictionary”). This allows for standardized key/value pairs for all recipes.

1.3: Operators & Functions in Python

Learning Goals

- Implement conditional statements in Python to determine program flow
- Use loops to reduce time and effort in Python programming
- Write functions to organize Python code

Conditional statements execute code based on a boolean value. That’s it, that’s what they do: they execute a code block based on “True” or “False”. Start a conditional statement with the “if” keyword, then a value, then desired comparators, if any, like “AND” or “OR” or “NOT” and another value. End it with a colon. Indent. Now, write a code block to be executed if the statement is truthy. Now, add “elif” or “else” or perhaps *nest* another “if”.

The two loops discussed in this chapter were for-loops and while-loops. The for-loop will execute a code block for a certain number of times as specified by an “iterable”, which would be

anything with a “length” (array, tuple, string). The while-loop will run the code block FOREVER... until the conditional statement becomes falsy. If you said ```while True: ``` the code block would be executed in an infinite loop, and everyone would laugh and point at how terrible it is, forever.

In a loop, use “break” or “continue” to either exit the loop, or skip an iteration.

Functions are reusable code blocks that can be passed arguments to do or return something. Start a Python function with “def” to define the function, then the function name, then two parentheses “()” and if desired, throw some parameters in those parentheses. Parameters can be assigned default values with the equals sign.

1.4: File Handling in Python

Learning Goals

- Use files to store and retrieve data in Python

Using files to store and retrieve data in Python. This was a fresh new concept for me, but obviously a very important topic to create any meaningful Python-based software.

For basic (text) reading and writing, declare a file path and a method flag as arguments of the open function like so ``` file_variable = open('./thing.txt', 'rt') ``` the t is for “text” and it’s implied by default. Then use the `readlines()` method to read the data: ``` print(file_variable.readlines()) ``` to return an array of each line in the text file, and finally, CLOSE the file with the `.close()` method.

To READ a text file, you would use something like: ``` file_variable = open('./thing.txt', 'w') ``` then the method `.writelines(array_name)` would write each element of an iterable. But all the items would smoosh together, so be sure to include a newline character “\n” after each iteration.

Okay, now pickles. Use pickles to store more complex data types (dictionaries). First ``` import pickle ```, then, let’s say the dictionary is named “my_dictionary”, DUMP the dictionary into a .bin file like this: ``` file_variable = open('thing.bin', 'wb') ``` then ``` pickle.dump(my_dictionary, file_variable) ``` then ``` file_variable.close() ``` boom, pickles!