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# Python Introduction

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Python is an extremely popular computer language. Python is general purpose, good for solving many types of problems.

Compared to other languages Python is in the "programmer efficient" niche - allowing the programmer to specify what they want pretty easily, perhaps at the cost of running a little slower or using more memory.

The style of Python is minimal - don't require the programmer to type in a lot words. Mostly get out of the programmer's way. Python is designed to have a consistent style across the language. There is a thematic consistency in how its parts fit together across many situations.

## Open Source

Python is distributed for free as open source software. This means many people and organization contribute code to make Python work, and it is free for anyone to use.

The central web site for Python information is [python.org](http://python.org). Python was created in 1991 and for many years was run by Guido Van Rossum, who is kind of a rock star for creating such a world-influencing technology.

## Cross Platform

Python is cross-platform, meaning a python program developed on Mac OS X, can likely also run on Windows or Linux without any change to the code. When the Python code gets to the part where it, say, it wants to check the mouse location, running on Windows, it uses the Windows-specific mouse facility, and running on the Mac it uses the Mac-specific facility. In this way, the programmer is insulated from many platform-specific details and their code just works.

## Python Version 3

We will use Python version 3 in this course. Python version 3 made some changes vs. Python 2.x, in particular changing strings to be unicode, and the print() function to be a function. For the most part, Python 2.x code looks very similar to Python 3.x code. So working in both versions is not a big issue. That said, use of Python 2.x in the world is now dying out.