CS 61A Fall 2025

Control, Environment Diagrams

Discussion 1: September 3, 2025

Find your group, and then get started on this worksheet on Berkeley time. It's best if everyone has a way to view this worksheet (on your phone/tablet is fine, but a laptop is better).

Now switch to Pensieve, a shared editing app that has this same worksheet in a format that makes it easy to collaborate with your group and ask questions of an AI tutor.

• Everyone: Go to pensieve.co, log in with your @berkeley.edu email, and enter your group number (which was in the email that assigned you to this discussion). As long as you all enter the same number (any number), you'll all be using the same shared document.

Once you're on Pensieve, you don't need to return to this page; Pensieve has all the same content (but more features). If for some reason Penseive doesn't work, return to this page and continue with the discussion.

Attendance

Your TA will come around during discussion to check you in. You can start on the worksheet before being checked in; you don't need to wait for your TA to get started.

If you didn't attend for a good reason (such as being sick), fill out this form (within 2 weeks of your discussion): attendance form

Ice Breaker

Everyone say your name and some activity you enjoy doing outside. For each activity, ask if anyone else in your group likes to do that too. (Optional: after discussion you could make plans to go do one of these activities together.)

Then, each person share an expression that people say when they really like something, such as "that's awesome" or "nice one" or "bruuuhhh." Each person should try to come up with a different expression. Feel free to ask your group for help if you're stuck. You can even use other languages than English. Then, during the discussion, if someone says or does something well, use your expression!

While and If

Learning to use **if** and **while** is an essential skill. During this discussion, focus on what we've studied in the first three lectures: **if**, **while**, assignment (=), comparison (<, >, ==, ...), and arithmetic. Please don't use features of Python that we haven't discussed in class yet, such as **for**, **range**, and lists. We'll have plenty of time for those later in the course, but now is the time to practice the use of **if** (textbook section 1.5.4) and **while** (textbook section 1.5.5).

Q1: Race

The race function below sometimes returns the wrong value and sometimes runs forever.

```
def race(x, y):
   """The tortoise always walks x feet per minute, while the hare repeatedly
   runs y feet per minute for 5 minutes, then rests for 5 minutes. Return how
   many minutes pass until the tortoise first catches up to the hare.
   >>> race(5, 7) # After 7 minutes, both have gone 35 steps
   7
   >>> race(2, 4) # After 10 minutes, both have gone 20 steps
   10
   assert y > x and y \le 2 * x, 'the hare must be fast but not too fast'
   tortoise, hare, minutes = 0, 0, 0
   while minutes == 0 or tortoise - hare:
        tortoise += x
        if minutes % 10 < 5:</pre>
            hare += y
        minutes += 1
   return minutes
```

Find positive integers x and y (with y larger than x but not larger than 2 * x) for which either: - race(x, y) returns the wrong value or - race(x, y) runs forever

You just need to find one pair of numbers that satisfies either of these conditions to finish the question, but if you want to think of more you can.

Notes: -x += 1 is the same as x = x + 1 when x is assigned to a number. -0 is a false value and all other numbers are true values.

If you want to discuss this problem with a TA, just ask.

Q2: Fizzbuzz

Implement the classic Fizz Buzz sequence. The fizzbuzz function takes a positive integer n and prints out a single line for each integer from 1 to n. For each i:

- If i is divisible by both 3 and 5, print fizzbuzz.
- If i is divisible by 3 (but not 5), print fizz.
- If i is divisible by 5 (but not 3), print buzz.
- Otherwise, print the number i.

Try to make your implementation of fizzbuzz concise.

```
def fizzbuzz(n):
    0.00
   >>> result = fizzbuzz(16)
   fizz
    4
   buzz
    fizz
    7
    8
    fizz
    buzz
    11
    fizz
    13
    14
    fizzbuzz
    >>> print(result)
    None
    "*** YOUR CODE HERE ***"
```

Problem Solving

A useful approach to implementing a function is to: 1. Pick an example input and corresponding output. 2. Describe a process (in English) that computes the output from the input using simple steps. 3. Figure out what additional names you'll need to carry out this process. 4. Implement the process in code using those additional names. 5. Determine whether the implementation really works on your original example. 6. Determine whether the implementation really works on other examples. (If not, you might need to revise step 2.)

Importantly, this approach doesn't go straight from reading a question to writing code.

For example, in the is_prime problem below, you could: 1. Pick n is 9 as the input and False as the output. 2. Here's a process: Check that 9 (n) is not a multiple of any integers between 1 and 9 (n). 3. Introduce i to represent each number between 1 and 9 (n). 4. Implement is_prime (you get to do this part with your group). 5. Check that is_prime(9) will return False by thinking through the execution of the code. 6. Check that is_prime(3) will return True and is_prime(1) will return False.

Try this approach together on the next two problems.

Important: It's highly recommended that you **don't** check your work using a computer right away. Instead, talk to your group and think to try to figure out if an answer is correct. On exams, you won't be able to guess and check because you won't have a Python interpreter. Now is a great time to practice checking your work by thinking through examples. You could even draw an environment diagram!

If you're not sure about how something works or get stuck, ask for help from the course staff.

Q3: Is Prime?

Write a function that returns True if a positive integer n is a prime number and False otherwise.

A prime number n is a number that is not divisible by any numbers other than 1 and n itself. For example, 13 is prime, since it is only divisible by 1 and 13, but 14 is not, since it is divisible by 1, 2, 7, and 14.

Use the % operator: x % y returns the remainder of x when divided by y.

```
def is_prime(n):
    """
    >>> is_prime(10)
    False
    >>> is_prime(7)
    True
    >>> is_prime(1) # one is not a prime number!!
    False
    """
    "*** YOUR CODE HERE ***"
```

Description Time: Come up with a **one sentence description** of the process you implemented to solve is_prime that you think someone could understand without looking at your code. Try not to just read your code, but instead describe the process it carries out.

Q4: Unique Digits

Write a function that returns the number of unique digits in a positive integer.

Hints: You can use // and % to separate a positive integer into its one's digit and the rest of its digits.

You may find it helpful to first define a function has_digit(n, k), which determines whether a number n has digit k.

```
def unique_digits(n):
   """Return the number of unique digits in positive integer n.
   >>> unique_digits(8675309) # All are unique
   7
   >>> unique_digits(13173131) # 1, 3, and 7
   >>> unique_digits(101) # 0 and 1
   2
   "*** YOUR CODE HERE ***"
def has_digit(n, k):
   """Returns whether k is a digit in n.
   >>> has_digit(10, 1)
   True
   >>> has_digit(12, 7)
   False
   0.00
   assert k \ge 0 and k < 10
    "*** YOUR CODE HERE ***"
```

Environment Diagrams

An environment diagram keeps track of names and their values in frames, which are drawn as boxes.

Q5: Bottles

Answer the following questions and afterwards, step through the diagram to check your answers.

- 1) What determines how many different frames appear in an environment diagram?
- a) The number of functions defined in the code
- b) The number of call expressions in the code
- c) The number of return statements in the code
- d) The number of times user-defined functions are called when running the code
- 2) What happens to the return value of pass_it(bottles)?
- a) It is used as the new value of remaining in the global frame
- b) It is used as the new value of bottles in the global frame
- c) It is used as the new value of pass_it in the global frame
- d) None of the above
- 3) What effect does the line bottles = 98 have on the global frame?
- a) It temporarily changes the value bound to bottles in the global frame.
- b) It permanently changes the value bound to bottles in the global frame.
- c) It has no effect on the global frame.

```
bottles = 99 take = 1

def pass_it(around): bottles = 98 return take

remaining = bottles - pass_it(bottles) bottles = remaining
```

See the web version of this resource for the environment diagram.

Q6: Double Trouble

Draw the environment diagram on paper or a whiteboard (without having the computer draw it for you)! Then, check your work by stepping through the diagram.

See the web version of this resource for the environment diagram.

Optional: Exam Practice

If you all finish early, it's a great idea to get ready for Midterm 1 by trying out this slight variant of a Spring 2023 Midterm 1 question.

Q7: Repeating

Definition: A positive integer n is a *repeating sequence* of positive integer m if n is written by repeating the digits of m one or more times. For example, 616161 is a repeating sequence of 61, but 61616 is not.

Implement repeating which takes positive integers t and n. It returns whether n is a repeating sequence of some t-digit integer.

```
def repeating(t, n):
   """Return whether t digits repeat to form positive integer n.
   >>> repeating(1, 6161)
   False
   >>> repeating(2, 6161) # repeats 61 (2 digits)
   >>> repeating(3, 6161)
   False
   >>> repeating(4, 6161)  # repeats 6161 (4 digits)
   >>> repeating(5, 6161) # there are only 4 digits
   False
   if pow(10, t-1) > n: # make sure n has at least t digits
       return False
   end = ____
   rest = n
   while rest:
       if rest % pow(10, t) != end:
          return ____
   return True
```

The iterative process needed to implement this function is to check that the last t digits of the rest match the last t digits of n, then remove the last t digits of rest.