What is Python?

**Python** is a very popular general-purpose interpreted, interactive, object-oriented, and high-level programming language. Python is dynamically-typed and garbage-collected programming language. It was created by Guido van Rossum during 1985- 1990. Like Perl, Python source code is also available under the GNU General Public License (GPL).

Characteristics of Python

Following are important characteristics of **Python Programming** −

* It supports functional and structured programming methods as well as OOP.
* It can be used as a scripting language or can be compiled to byte-code for building large applications.
* It provides very high-level dynamic data types and supports dynamic type checking.
* It supports automatic garbage collection.
* It can be easily integrated with C, C++, COM, ActiveX, CORBA, and Java.

Applications of Python

The latest release of Python is 3.x. As mentioned before, Python is one of the most widely used language over the web. I'm going to list few of them here:

* **Easy-to-learn** − Python has few keywords, simple structure, and a clearly defined syntax. This allows the student to pick up the language quickly.
* **Easy-to-read** − Python code is more clearly defined and visible to the eyes.
* **Easy-to-maintain** − Python's source code is fairly easy-to-maintain.
* **A broad standard library** − Python's bulk of the library is very portable and cross-platform compatible on UNIX, Windows, and Macintosh.

# Python - Comments

Python comments are programmer-readable explanation or annotations in the Python source code. They are added with the purpose of making the source code easier for humans to understand, and are ignored by Python interpreter. Comments enhance the readability of the code and help the programmers to understand the code very carefully.

Just like most modern languages, Python supports single-line (or end-of-line) and multi-line (block) comments. Python comments are very much similar to the comments available in PHP, BASH and Perl Programming languages.

There are three types of comments available in Python

* Single line Comments
* Multiline Comments
* Docstring Comments

Single Line Comments

A hash sign (#) that is not inside a string literal begins a comment. All characters after the # and up to the end of the physical line are part of the comment and the Python interpreter ignores them.

## Multi-Line Comments

Python does not provide a direct way to comment multiple line. You can comment multiple lines

## Docstring Comments

Python docstrings provide a convenient way to provide a help documentation with Python modules, functions, classes, and methods. The **docstring** is then made available via the \_\_doc\_\_ attribute

# Python - Variables

Python variables are the reserved memory locations used to store values with in a Python Program. This means that when you create a variable you reserve some space in the memory.

Based on the data type of a variable, Python interpreter allocates memory and decides what can be stored in the reserved memory. Therefore, by assigning different data types to Python variables, you can store integers, decimals or characters in these variables.

# Python - Data Types

Python Data Types are used to define the type of a variable. It defines what type of data we are going to store in a variable. The data stored in memory can be of many types. For example, a person's age is stored as a numeric value and his or her address is stored as alphanumeric characters.

Python has various built-in data types which we will discuss with in this tutorial:

* Numeric - int, float, complex
* String - str
* Sequence - list, tuple, range
* Binary - bytes, bytearray, memoryview
* Mapping - dict
* Boolean - bool
* Set - set, frozenset
* None – NoneType

# Python - Operators

Python operators are the constructs which can manipulate the value of operands. These are symbols used for the purpose of logical, arithmetic and various other operations.

Consider the expression 4 + 5 = 9. Here, 4 and 5 are called **operands** and + is called **operator**. In this tutorial, we will study different types of Python operators.

Types of Python Operators

Python language supports the following types of operators.

* Arithmetic Operators
* Comparison (Relational) Operators
* Assignment Operators
* Logical Operators
* Bitwise Operators
* Membership Operators
* Identity Operators

# Python - Decision Making

Decision making is anticipation of conditions occurring while execution of the program and specifying actions taken according to the conditions.

Decision structures evaluate multiple expressions which produce TRUE or FALSE as outcome. You need to determine which action to take and which statements to execute if outcome is TRUE or FALSE otherwise.

Following is the general form of a typical decision making structure found in most of the programming languages −

Python programming language assumes any **non-zero** and **non-null** values as TRUE, and if it is either **zero** or **null**, then it is assumed as FALSE value.

Python programming language provides following types of decision making statements. Click the following links to check their detail.

# Python - Loops

n general, statements are executed sequentially: The first statement in a function is executed first, followed by the second, and so on. There may be a situation when you need to execute a block of code several number of times.

Programming languages provide various control structures that allow for more complicated execution paths.

A loop statement allows us to execute a statement or group of statements multiple times. The following diagram illustrates a loop statement −

while loop

Repeats a statement or group of statements while a given condition is TRUE. It tests the condition before executing the loop body.

2 for loop

Executes a sequence of statements multiple times and abbreviates the code that manages the loop variable.

3 nested loops

You can use one or more loop inside any another while, for or do..while loop.

1 break statement

Terminates the loop statement and transfers execution to the statement immediately following the loop.

2 continue statement

Causes the loop to skip the remainder of its body and immediately retest its condition prior to reiterating.

3 pass statement

The pass statement in Python is used when a statement is required syntactically but you do not want any command or code to execute.

# Python - Numbers

Number data types store numeric values. They are immutable data types, means that changing the value of a number data type results in a newly allocated object.

Python supports four different numerical types −

* **int (signed integers)** − They are often called just integers or ints, are positive or negative whole numbers with no decimal point.
* **long (long integers )** − Also called longs, they are integers of unlimited size, written like integers and followed by an uppercase or lowercase L.
* **float (floating point real values)** − Also called floats, they represent real numbers and are written with a decimal point dividing the integer and fractional parts. Floats may also be in scientific notation, with E or e indicating the power of 10 (2.5e2 = 2.5 x 102 = 250).
* **complex (complex numbers)** − are of the form a + bJ, where a and b are floats and J (or j) represents the square root of -1 (which is an imaginary number). The real part of the number is a, and the imaginary part is b. Complex numbers are not used much in Python programming.

# Python - Strings

Strings are amongst the most popular types in Python. We can create them simply by enclosing characters in quotes. Python treats single quotes the same as double quotes. Creating strings is as simple as assigning a value to a variable.

var1 = 'Hello World!'

var2 = "Python Programming"

print "var1[0]: ", var1[0]

print "var2[1:5]: ", var2[1:5]

# Python - Lists

The most basic data structure in Python is the **sequence**. Each element of a sequence is assigned a number - its position or index. The first index is zero, the second index is one, and so forth.

Python has six built-in types of sequences, but the most common ones are lists and tuples, which we would see in this tutorial.

There are certain things you can do with all sequence types. These operations include indexing, slicing, adding, multiplying, and checking for membership. In addition, Python has built-in functions for finding the length of a sequence and for finding its largest and smallest elements.

## Python Lists

The list is a most versatile datatype available in Python which can be written as a list of comma-separated values (items) between square brackets. Important thing about a list is that items in a list need not be of the same type.

Creating a list is as simple as putting different comma-separated values between square brackets. For example –

list1 = ['physics', 'chemistry', 1997, 2000];

list2 = [1, 2, 3, 4, 5 ];

list3 = ["a", "b", "c", "d"]

# Python - Tuples

A tuple is a collection of objects which ordered and immutable. Tuples are sequences, just like lists. The differences between tuples and lists are, the tuples cannot be changed unlike lists and tuples use parentheses, whereas lists use square brackets.

Creating a tuple is as simple as putting different comma-separated values. Optionally you can put these comma-separated values between parentheses

tup1 = ('physics', 'chemistry', 1997, 2000);

tup2 = (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 );

tup3 = "a", "b", "c", "d";

# Python - Dictionary

Each key is separated from its value by a colon (:), the items are separated by commas, and the whole thing is enclosed in curly braces. An empty dictionary without any items is written with just two curly braces, like this: {}.

Keys are unique within a dictionary while values may not be. The values of a dictionary can be of any type, but the keys must be of an immutable data type such as strings, numbers, or tuples.

dict = {'Name': 'Zara', 'Age': 7, 'Class': 'First'}

print "dict['Name']: ", dict['Name']

print "dict['Age']: ", dict['Age']

# Python - Functions

A function is a block of organized, reusable code that is used to perform a single, related action. Functions provide better modularity for your application and a high degree of code reusing.

As you already know, Python gives you many built-in functions like print(), etc. but you can also create your own functions. These functions are called user-defined functions.

Defining a Function

You can define functions to provide the required functionality. Here are simple rules to define a function in Python.

Function blocks begin with the keyword def followed by the function name and parentheses ( ( ) ).

Any input parameters or arguments should be placed within these parentheses. You can also define parameters inside these parentheses.

The first statement of a function can be an optional statement - the documentation string of the function or docstring.

The code block within every function starts with a colon (:) and is indented.

The statement return [expression] exits a function, optionally passing back an expression to the caller. A return statement with no arguments is the same as return None.

Syntax

def functionname( parameters ):

"function\_docstring"

function\_suite

return [expression]

# Python - Modules

A module allows you to logically organize your Python code. Grouping related code into a module makes the code easier to understand and use. A module is a Python object with arbitrarily named attributes that you can bind and reference.

Simply, a module is a file consisting of Python code. A module can define functions, classes and variables. A module can also include runnable code.

Example

The Python code for a module named aname normally resides in a file named aname.py. Here's an example of a simple module, support.py

def print\_func( par ):

print "Hello : ", par

return

# Python - Files I/O

This chapter covers all the basic I/O functions available in Python. For more functions, please refer to standard Python documentation.

Printing to the Screen

The simplest way to produce output is using the print statement where you can pass zero or more expressions separated by commas. This function converts the expressions you pass into a string and writes the result to standard output as follows −

#!/usr/bin/python

print "Python is really a great language,", "isn't it?"

This produces the following result on your standard screen −

Python is really a great language, isn't it?

Reading Keyboard Input

Python provides two built-in functions to read a line of text from standard input, which by default comes from the keyboard. These functions are −

raw\_input

input

The raw\_input Function

The raw\_input([prompt]) function reads one line from standard input and returns it as a string (removing the trailing newline).

#!/usr/bin/python

str = raw\_input("Enter your input: ")

print "Received input is : ", str

This prompts you to enter any string and it would display same string on the screen. When I typed "Hello Python!", its output is like this −

Enter your input: Hello Python

Received input is : Hello Python

The input Function

The input([prompt]) function is equivalent to raw\_input, except that it assumes the input is a valid Python expression and returns the evaluated result to you.

#!/usr/bin/python

str = input("Enter your input: ")

print "Received input is : ", str

This would produce the following result against the entered input −

Enter your input: [x\*5 for x in range(2,10,2)]

Recieved input is : [10, 20, 30, 40]

# Python - Object Oriented

Python has been an object-oriented language since it existed. Because of this, creating and using classes and objects are downright easy. This chapter helps you become an expert in using Python's object-oriented programming support.

If you do not have any previous experience with object-oriented (OO) programming, you may want to consult an introductory course on it or at least a tutorial of some sort so that you have a grasp of the basic concepts.

However, here is small introduction of Object-Oriented Programming (OOP) to bring you at speed −

Overview of OOP Terminology

Class − A user-defined prototype for an object that defines a set of attributes that characterize any object of the class. The attributes are data members (class variables and instance variables) and methods, accessed via dot notation.

Class variable − A variable that is shared by all instances of a class. Class variables are defined within a class but outside any of the class's methods. Class variables are not used as frequently as instance variables are.

Data member − A class variable or instance variable that holds data associated with a class and its objects.

Function overloading − The assignment of more than one behavior to a particular function. The operation performed varies by the types of objects or arguments involved.

Instance variable − A variable that is defined inside a method and belongs only to the current instance of a class.

Inheritance − The transfer of the characteristics of a class to other classes that are derived from it.

Instance − An individual object of a certain class. An object obj that belongs to a class Circle, for example, is an instance of the class Circle.

Instantiation − The creation of an instance of a class.

Method − A special kind of function that is defined in a class definition.

Object − A unique instance of a data structure that's defined by its class. An object comprises both data members (class variables and instance variables) and methods.

Operator overloading − The assignment of more than one function to a particular operator.

What is pass in Python?

The pass keyword represents a null operation in Python. It is generally used for the purpose of filling up empty blocks of code which may execute during runtime but has yet to be written. Without the pass statement in the following code, we may run into some errors during code execution.

def myEmptyFunc():

# do nothing

pass

myEmptyFunc() # nothing happens

## Without the pass keyword

# File "<stdin>", line 3

# IndentationError: expected an indented block