

Functions

Introduction to R for Public Health Researchers

Writing your own functions

This is a brief introduction. The syntax is:

```
functionName = function(inputs) {  
  < function body >  
  return(value)  
}
```

Then you would run the 4 lines of the code, which adds it to your workspace.

Writing your own functions

Here we will write a function that returns the second element of a vector:

```
> return2 = function(x) {  
+   return(x[2])  
+ }  
> return2(c(1,4,5,76))
```

```
[1] 4
```

Writing your own functions

Note that your function will automatically return the last line of code run:

```
> return2a = function(x) {  
+   x[2]  
+ }  
> return2a(c(1,4,5,76))
```

```
[1] 4
```

And if your function is really one line or evaluation, like here, you do not need the curly brackets, and you can put everything on one line:

```
> return2b = function(x) x[2]  
> return2b(c(1,4,5,76))
```

```
[1] 4
```

Writing your own functions

Also note that functions can take multiple inputs. Maybe you want users to select which element to extract

```
> return2c = function(x,n) x[n]  
> return2c(c(1,4,5,76), 3)
```

```
[1] 5
```

Writing a simple function

Let's write a function, `sqdif`, that:

1. takes two numbers `x` and `y` with default values of 2 and 3.
2. takes the difference
3. squares this difference
4. then returns the final value

Writing a simple function

```
> sqdif <- function(x=2,y=3){  
+   (x-y)^2  
+ }  
>  
> sqdif()
```

```
[1] 1
```

```
> sqdif(x=10,y=5)
```

```
[1] 25
```

```
> sqdif(10,5)
```

```
[1] 25
```

Writing your own functions

Try to write a function called `top()` that takes a `matrix` or `data.frame`, and returns the first `n` rows and columns, with the default value of `n=5`.

Writing your own functions

Try to write a function called `top()` that takes a matrix or `data.frame`, and returns the first `n` rows and columns

```
> top = function(mat,n=5) mat[1:n,1:n]
> my.mat = matrix(1:1000,nr=100)
> top(my.mat) #note that we are using the default value for
```

	[,1]	[,2]	[,3]	[,4]	[,5]
[1,]	1	101	201	301	401
[2,]	2	102	202	302	402
[3,]	3	103	203	303	403
[4,]	4	104	204	304	404
[5,]	5	105	205	305	405

Custom functions in apply

You can use any function you want in apply statements. For example, from our split Circulator data

```
> circ = read.csv("http://www.aejaffe.com/winterR_2016/data/
+               header=TRUE,as.is=TRUE)
> dayList = split(circ, circ$day)
> lapply(dayList, top, n = 2)
```

\$Friday

	day	date
5	Friday	01/15/2010
12	Friday	01/22/2010

\$Monday

	day	date
1	Monday	01/11/2010
8	Monday	01/18/2010

Custom functions in apply

You can also designate functions “on the fly”

```
> lapply(dayList, function(x) x[1:2,1:2])
```

\$Friday

	day	date
5	Friday	01/15/2010
12	Friday	01/22/2010

\$Monday

	day	date
1	Monday	01/11/2010
8	Monday	01/18/2010

\$Saturday

	day	date
6	Saturday	01/16/2010
13	Saturday	01/23/2010

Simple apply

sapply() is a user-friendly version and wrapper of lapply by default returning a vector, matrix, or array

```
> sapply(dayList, dim)
```

	Friday	Monday	Saturday	Sunday	Thursday	Tuesday	Wednesday
[1,]	164	164	163	163	164	164	164
[2,]	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

```
> sapply(circ, class)
```

day	date	orangeBoardings	orangeA
"character"	"character"	"integer"	"integer"
orangeAverage	purpleBoardings	purpleAlightings	purpleAverage
"numeric"	"integer"	"integer"	"integer"
greenBoardings	greenAlightings	greenAverage	bannerBoardings
"integer"	"integer"	"numeric"	"integer"
bannerAlightings	bannerAverage	daily	daily
"integer"	"integer"	"integer"	"integer"

```
> myList = list(a=1:10, b=c(2,4,5), c = c("a","b","c"),  
+             d = factor(c("boy","girl","girl")))  
> tmp = lapply(myList,function(x) x[1])  
> tmp
```

\$a

[1] 1

\$b

[1] 2

\$c

[1] "a"

\$d

[1] boy

Levels: boy girl

```
> sapply(tmp, class)
```

```
> sapply(myList,function(x) x[1])
```

a	b	c	d
"1"	"2"	"a"	"1"

```
> sapply(myList,function(x) as.character(x[1]))
```

a	b	c	d
"1"	"2"	"a"	"boy"