

# Getting started

Before we get started, let's quickly look over the code that has been provided to get started with your monster.

The first thing to notice is the main code block:

```
class MyMonster: Monster
{
    ...
}
```

All of the code we write today will go in between those two curly braces (`{` and `}`).

In between those curly braces you will notice there are already two functions defined for you. Let's take a look at the first one:

```
func initialize()
{
    // The code in this function runs first

    nickname = "Morty"
}
```

This function is the `initialize` function. This is the first, *initial* function that the computer will automatically run when you press the **run button**.

There are lines starting with `//` -- like `// addToBattle goes below this` and `// addToBattle goes above this`. These are called comments. Any line that starts with `//` is ignored by the computer. This allows you to make notes for yourself and other programmers who read your code. Let's get started!

## Name your monster!

In the initialize method, we are storing a `String` in the `nickname` variable. `String` is just a fancy way of saying a *sequence of letters*. A `String` is always surrounded by a pair of quotation marks. It can be as short as `"a"` or as long as the complete works of Shakespeare.

Assign a new nickname to your monster and run the code to make sure it worked.

# The importance of variables

A variable is a place to store information to be used in code. Once you save information to a variable, you can come back to it later. You can read the information, you can manipulate it and you can even replace it. Variables are a powerful tool.

We just set a variable with the line `nickname = "Morty"`. We took `"Morty"` and saved it to the `nickname` variable. Once we did that, the name "Morty" showed up on screen! Your monster has a lot of variables -- it has variables for its health, its animations, its level, and a whole bunch of other things the game needs to keep track of.

Let's go onto the next step so we can customize your monster with an element type.