

# 07-args and kwargs

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## 1 \*args and \*\*kwargs

Work with Python long enough, and eventually you will encounter `*args` and `**kwargs`. These strange terms show up as parameters in function definitions. What do they do? Let's review a simple function:

```
In [1]: def myfunc(a,b):  
        return sum((a,b))*0.05
```

```
myfunc(40,60)
```

```
Out[1]: 5.0
```

This function returns 5% of the sum of **a** and **b**. In this example, **a** and **b** are *positional* arguments; that is, 40 is assigned to **a** because it is the first argument, and 60 to **b**. Notice also that to work with multiple positional arguments in the `sum()` function we had to pass them in as a tuple.

What if we want to work with more than two numbers? One way would be to assign a *lot* of parameters, and give each one a default value.

```
In [2]: def myfunc(a=0,b=0,c=0,d=0,e=0):  
        return sum((a,b,c,d,e))*0.05
```

```
myfunc(40,60,20)
```

```
Out[2]: 6.0
```

Obviously this is not a very efficient solution, and that's where `*args` comes in.

### 1.1 \*args

When a function parameter starts with an asterisk, it allows for an *arbitrary number* of arguments, and the function takes them in as a tuple of values. Rewriting the above function:

```
In [3]: def myfunc(*args):  
        return sum(args)*0.05
```

```
myfunc(40,60,20)
```

```
Out[3]: 6.0
```

Notice how passing the keyword "args" into the sum() function did the same thing as a tuple of arguments.

It is worth noting that the word "args" is itself arbitrary - any word will do so long as it's preceded by an asterisk. To demonstrate this:

```
In [4]: def myfunc(*spam):
        return sum(spam)*.05

        myfunc(40,60,20)
```

```
Out[4]: 6.0
```

## 1.2 \*\*kwargs

Similarly, Python offers a way to handle arbitrary numbers of *keyworded* arguments. Instead of creating a tuple of values, **\*\*kwargs** builds a dictionary of key/value pairs. For example:

```
In [5]: def myfunc(**kwargs):
        if 'fruit' in kwargs:
            print(f"My favorite fruit is {kwargs['fruit']}") # review String Formatting and
        else:
            print("I don't like fruit")

        myfunc(fruit='pineapple')
```

```
My favorite fruit is pineapple
```

```
In [6]: myfunc()
```

```
I don't like fruit
```

## 1.3 \*args and \*\*kwargs combined

You can pass \*args and \*\*kwargs into the same function, but \*args have to appear before \*\*kwargs

```
In [7]: def myfunc(*args, **kwargs):
        if 'fruit' and 'juice' in kwargs:
            print(f"I like {' and '.join(args)} and my favorite fruit is {kwargs['fruit']}")
            print(f"May I have some {kwargs['juice']} juice?")
        else:
            pass

        myfunc('eggs', 'spam', fruit='cherries', juice='orange')
```

I like eggs and spam and my favorite fruit is cherries  
May I have some orange juice?

Placing keyworded arguments ahead of positional arguments raises an exception:

```
In [8]: myfunc(fruit='cherries',juice='orange','eggs','spam')
```

```
File "<ipython-input-8-fc6ff65addcc>", line 1
myfunc(fruit='cherries',juice='orange','eggs','spam')
      ^
```

```
SyntaxError: positional argument follows keyword argument
```

As with "args", you can use any name you'd like for keyworded arguments - "kwargs" is just a popular convention.

That's it! Now you should understand how \*args and \*\*kwargs provide the flexibility to work with arbitrary numbers of arguments!