

1 A tiny word counter

We will build a minimal word counter and explain its parts. The program runs in $O(n)$ over the bytes of the input. We assemble the final script in the chunk `<<wc.py>>=` by referring to named subchunks that we define later.

`<wc.py>=`

1.1 Imports

`<imports>=`

```
import sys
from collections import Counter
from pathlib import Path
import argparse
```

1.2 Argument parsing

`<parse-args>=`

```
def parse_args(argv=None):
    p = argparse.ArgumentParser(
        description="Count words in a file or stdin."
    )
    p.add_argument("file", nargs="?", help="Path to text file; default: stdin")
    p.add_argument("-n", "--top", type=int, default=10,
        help="Show top-N words (default: 10)")
    return p.parse_args(argv)
```

1.3 Counting logic

`<count-words>=`

```
def words_from_text(text: str):
    # Very naive tokenization: split on whitespace and punctuation
    # Lowercasing makes counts case-insensitive.
    import re
    for w in re.findall(r"[A-Za-z0-9-9']+", text.lower()):
        yield w

def count_words(stream) -> Counter:
    c = Counter()
    for line in stream:
        c.update(words_from_text(line))
    return c
```

1.4 Program entry point

`<main-guard>=`

```
def main(argv=None):
    args = parse_args(argv)
```

November 19, 2025

```
if args.file:
    data = Path(args.file).read_text(encoding="utf-8", errors="ignore")
    stream = data.splitlines(keepends=True)
else:
    stream = sys.stdin

counts = count_words(stream)
for word, n in counts.most_common(args.top):
    print(f"{n:7d} {word}")

if __name__ == "__main__":
    main()
```