INFORMATION HIDING

- author of class definition may **change data attribute** variable names

replaced `age` data attribute by `years`

```
class Animal(object):
    def __init__(self, age):
        self.years = age
    def get_age(self):
        return self.years
```

- if you are **accessing data attributes** outside the class and class **definition changes**, may get errors
- outside of class, use getters and setters instead
  use `a.get_age()` NOT `a.age`
  - good style
  - easy to maintain code
  - prevents bugs

PYTHON NOT GREAT AT INFORMATION HIDING

- allows you to **access data** from outside class definition

```
print(a.age)
```

- allows you to **write to data** from outside class definition

```
a.age = 'infinite'
```

- allows you to **create data attributes** for an instance from outside class definition

```
a.size = "tiny"
```

- it's **not good style** to do any of these!

DEFAULT ARGUMENTS

- **default arguments** for formal parameters are used if no actual argument is given

```
def set_name(self, newname=""):
    self.name = newname
```

- default argument used here

```
a = Animal(3)
a.set_name()
print(a.get_name())
```

prints ""

- argument passed in is used here

```
a = Animal(3)
a.set_name("fluffy")
print(a.get_name())
```

prints "fluffy"