

Basics of Javascript Arrays

Relevant Links

- Flanagan's book, 7.1-7.8
- MDN's page on the Array global¹

Javascript Arrays

- In Javascript, arrays can contain absolutely any elements and have a variable length.
- Easiest way to create is with an array literal, e.g. `[]`, `[1, 2, 3]` or `[1, [3, 4]]`.
- Access an array value via bracket notation: `arr[2]`. Indexing starts at 0.
- Set any array value similarly: `arr[5] = 2`. You can set values out of bounds!
- Arrays are actually just objects, and can have properties that are non-numeric.
- The length of an array is one more than the largest numeric property.

```
var a = [1, 4, 5];  
a[2];           // 2 -> 5  
a[6] = 2;  
a;  
a.length;      // 7  
a.foo = 5;      // A random property.
```

- The most basic way to iterate over an array's elements is with a for loop:

```
var a = [1,2,3,4], i;  
for (i = 0; i < a.length; i += 1) {  
    console.log(a[i]);  
}
```

Standard Methods

Consult individual method pages as well as section 7.8 from the book.

Inserting/Removing elements:

push² adds one or more elements to the end of the array. *Returns the new length of the array.*

pop³ removes the last element of the array and returns it.

unshift⁴ adds one or more elements at the beginning of the array, shifting other elements to the right. *Returns the new length of the array.*

¹https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/JavaScript/Reference/Global_Objects/Array

shift⁵ removes the first element of the array and returns it. Shifts all other elements accordingly.

Slicing:

slice⁶ returns a *new* array containing a specific range of elements from the original array.

splice⁷ removes and/or inserts elements at a specified location in the array.

Finding:

indexOf⁸ searches into an array looking for a specific element. Returns the index of the first match, or -1 if the search fails.

lastIndexOf⁹ finds the last match instead.

Others:

reverse¹⁰ reverses the array *in place*.

sort¹¹ sorts the array *in place*. You can provide a custom sorting function, a topic we will discuss more later.

concat¹² returns a new array comprising of the concatenation of the original array and the arguments.

join¹³ used for arrays of strings. Join the strings together, possibly inserting a separator.

There is another set of methods following a higher-order-function paradigm. We will discuss these in future segments.