

Homework 3



Functions

1. The Laplace Distribution is a continuous probability distribution with a shape that's determined by a center parameter μ and a spread parameter b . Write a function that returns the probability density of the Laplace distribution evaluated at some real number value x and call the function `lap_pdf`. Allow the user to pass two optional arguments specifying the parameters of the distribution that are otherwise set to default values of 0 and 1 respectively. Test out your function at a view values of x and a couple parameter values to test if it's working the way you expect it to.
2. Consider the following function:

```
x = 1
def f(y):
    return x + y
```

1. Does this function have access to the value of x in the global namespace even though you haven't passed it in as an argument? Write an analogous function in R and compare the behavior.
 2. Add a line to the function before the `return` where you reassign x to have a new value. Does running the function change the value that x takes in the global namespace? Compare this behavior to R.
 3. Add one more line above the previous one to declare that x is a global variable (as opposed to a local variable): `global x`. How does this change the behavior of the function? Compare it to a similar modification in R where you instead reassign x with the super-assignment operator: `<<-`.
3. In class I gave an ill-conceived poll that asked you to, "Write a function that takes a given string, and outputs it as a single string repeated n times, each one separated by a `..`" We saw that a naive implementation does not work:

```
def dotted_print(x, n):
    return print(x * n, sep = "..")

dotted_print("hello", 3)

## hellohellohello
```

The reason is that `x * n` is evaluated first, which smushes the repeated strings together to form a single scalar string. With only one string there (albeit one with repetitions inside it), `print()` has nothing to glue together with a `..`

You can fix this behavior by being sure that each repeated string remains a separate element before getting passed to `print()` and that print recognizes each of those elements to be separate. You can get there by incorporating two ideas:

- As we've seen, you can use `*` and `+` operators with string types to repeat and concatenate them. They can also be used on list types with a similar functionality. The list type is one way to preserve the separation between the repeated strings.
- The `*` character can also be used before a variable passed to a function (this character keeps very busy in Python!). This can be read to mean, "expand this as a sequence" (see p. 43 in *Whirlwind*). If you look in `?print`, this allows you to pass a compound data structure not as a single `value`, but as multiple values that take advantage of the `....`

Use these ideas to fix `dotted_print()`.

Methods

1. Consider the following list of strings:

```
l = ["my", "it's", "smokey", "out"]
```

1. Query two attributes of this list that are of interest to you.
 2. Use the `.append()` list method to add the string `"today"` to this list.
 3. Use list comprehension (see Lab 2) and string methods to capitalize each of the words in this list.
 4. Construct one additional list comprehension that uses a string method of your choice and asserts a logical condition for the operation using the `if` keyword.
2. One of the most common places that you'll find object-oriented programming in R is in print methods. Any time you type the name of a variable at the console, it often doesn't actually print out the value of that object, but rather calls on its particular print method.
 1. Create a linear model object using `lm()` (you're welcome to use the `mtcars` example from the slides) and call it `m1`. What is the class of `m1`? What is its type (use `typeof()`)? What do you get when you print it to the console by either just typing the name of the object or using `print()`? Compare that with what you get if you print the object using `print.default()`.
 2. Run the `summary()` of the model object and save it as `s1`. Answer the same questions as above for `s1`.
 3. Create a ggplot object and save it as `p1`. Answer the same questions as above for `p1`. What command would you use to pull up the help file for the print method of a ggplot?