Introduction to Python

Python is a widely used, general purpose, text-based programming language. We recommend downloading and using version 3.2 of Python.

Installing Python will also install the IDLE Python editor, which is the simplest way of writing and running Python programs. IDLE consists of 2 windows, the editor (where programs are written) and the 'Shell' (where programs are run).

When IDLE is run, you will probably see the Python Shell window. You can open a new editor window by clicking 'File → New Window'. Once you have written your program, you should save it (remembering to add .py to the end of your filename). You can then run your Python program by clicking 'Run → Run Module' (or by pressing F5). The first python project (called ASCII Art) explains the creating, saving and running of a simple Python program in more detail.

As Python is text-based, children may make typing mistakes (called syntax errors), which may prevent them from running a program. The 'Notes for Club Leader' that accompany each Python project gives guidance on common syntax errors, along with information on how they can be avoided.

If you'd like to learn more about Python before embarking on projects with your Code Club, a good place to start is the Codecademy Python tutorial. Completing the Code Club Python projects yourself will also give you a good basic knowledge of the language.