DECOMPOSITION, ABSTRACTION, FUNCTIONS

(download slides and .py files l·yŘ follow along!)

6.0001 LECTURE 4

LAST TIME

- while loops vs for loops
- should know how to write both kinds
- should know when to use them
- guess-and-check and approximation methods
- bisection method to speed up programs

TODAY

- structuring programs and hiding details
- functions
- specifications
- keywords: `return` vs `print`
- scope

HOW DO WE WRITE CODE?

- so far…
  - covered language mechanisms
  - know how to write different files for each computation
  - each file is some piece of code
  - each code is a sequence of instructions
- problems with this approach
  - easy for small-scale problems
  - messy for larger problems
  - hard to keep track of details
  - how do you know the right info is supplied to the right part of code

GOOD PROGRAMMING

- more code not necessarily a good thing
- measure good programmers by the amount of functionality
- introduce **functions**
- mechanism to achieve **decomposition** and **abstraction**

EXAMPLE – PROJECTOR

- a projector is a black box
- don't know how it works
- know the interface: input/output
- connect any electronic to it that can communicate with that input
- black box somehow converts image from input source to a wall, magnifying it
- **ABSTRACTION IDEA**: do not need to know how projector works to use it

EXAMPLE – PROJECTOR

- projecting large image for Olympics decomposed into separate tasks for separate projectors
- each projector takes input and produces separate output
- all projectors work together to produce larger image
- **DECOMPOSITION IDEA**: different devices work together to achieve an end goal

APPLY THESE CONCEPTS

TO PROGRAMMING!

CREATE STRUCTURE with DECOMPOSITION

- in projector example, separate devices
- in programming, divide code into **modules**
  - are **self-contained**
  - used to **break up** code
  - intended to be **reusable**
  - keep code **organized**
  - **keep code coherent**
- this lecture, achieve decomposition with **functions**
- in a few weeks, achieve decomposition with **classes**

SUPRESS DETAILS with ABSTRACTION

- in projector example, instructions for how to use it are sufficient, no need to know how to build one
- in programming, think of a piece of code as a **black box**
  - cannot see details
  - do not need to see details
  - do not want to see details
  - hide tedious coding details
- achieve abstraction with **function specifications** or **docstrings**

FUNCTIONS

- write reusable pieces/chunks of code, called **functions**
- functions are not run in a program until they are "**called**" or "**invoked**" in a program
- function characteristics:
  - has a **name**
  - has **parameters** (0 or more)
  - has a **docstring** (optional but recommended)
  - has a **body**
  - **returns** something

HOW TO WRITE and CALL/INVOKE A FUNCTION

keyword

name

parameters or arguments

specification, docstring

```
def is_even( i ):
    """
    Input: i, a positive int
    Returns True if i is even, otherwise False
    """
    print("inside is_even")
    return i%2 == 0
```

body

later in the code, you call the function using its name and values for parameters

```
is_even(3)
```

IN THE FUNCTION BODY

```
def is_even( i ):
    """
    Input: i, a positive int
    Returns True if i is even, otherwise False
    """
    print("inside is_even")
    return i%2 == 0
```

run some commands

keyword

expression to evaluate and return

VARIABLE SCOPE

- **formal parameter** gets bound to the value of **actual parameter** when function is called
- new **scope/frame/environment** created when enter a function
- **scope** is mapping of names to objects

```
def f( x ):
    x = x + 1
    print('in f(x): x =', x)
    return x

x = 3
z = f( x )
```

formal parameter

actual parameter

Function definition

Main program code
* initializes a variable x
* makes a function call f(x)
* assigns return of function to variable z

VARIABLE SCOPE

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    x = x + 1
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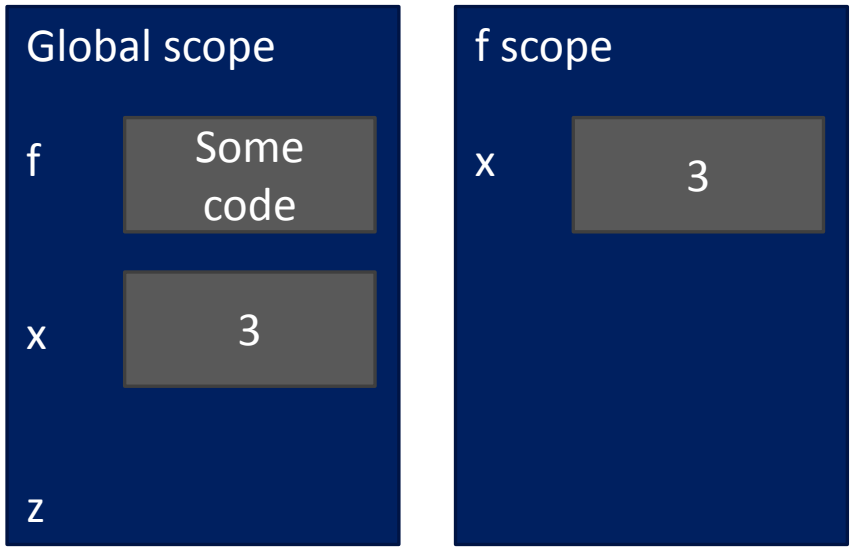

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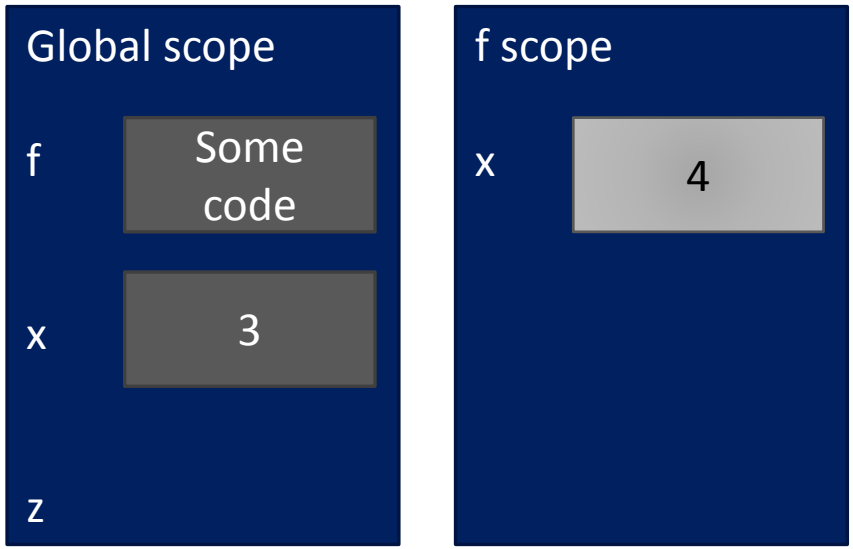

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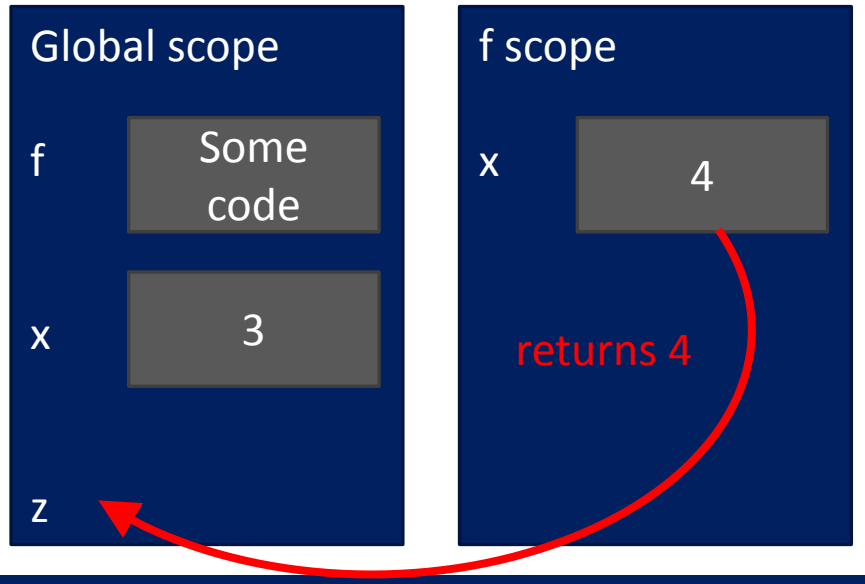

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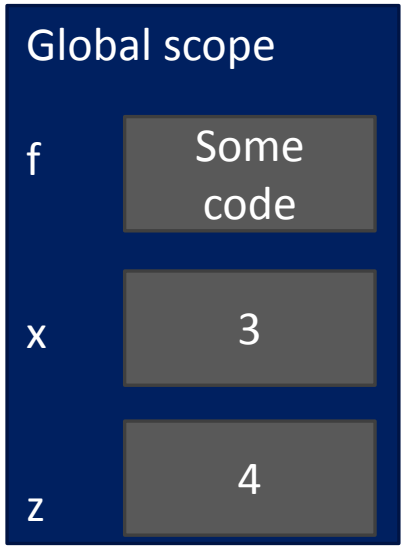

ONE WARNING IF NO `return` STATEMENT

```
def is_even( i ):
    """
    Input: i, a positive int
    Does not return anything
    """
    i%2 == 0
```

without a return statement

- Python returns the value **None, if no `return` given**
- represents the absence of a value

`return` vs. `print`

- return only has meaning **inside** a function
- only **one** return executed inside a function
- code inside function but after return statement not executed
- has a value associated with it, **given to function caller**

- print can be used **outside** functions
- can execute **many** print statements inside a function
- code inside function can be executed after a print statement
- has a value associated with it, **outputted** to the console

FUNCTIONS AS ARGUMENTS

- arguments can take on any type, even functions

```
def func_a():
    print 'inside func_a'
def func_b(y):
    print 'inside func_b'
    return y
def func_c(z):
    print 'inside func_c'
    return z()
print func_a()
print 5 + func_b(2)
print func_c(func_a)
```

call `func_a`, takes no parameters

call `func_b`, takes one parameter

call `func_c`, takes one parameter, another function

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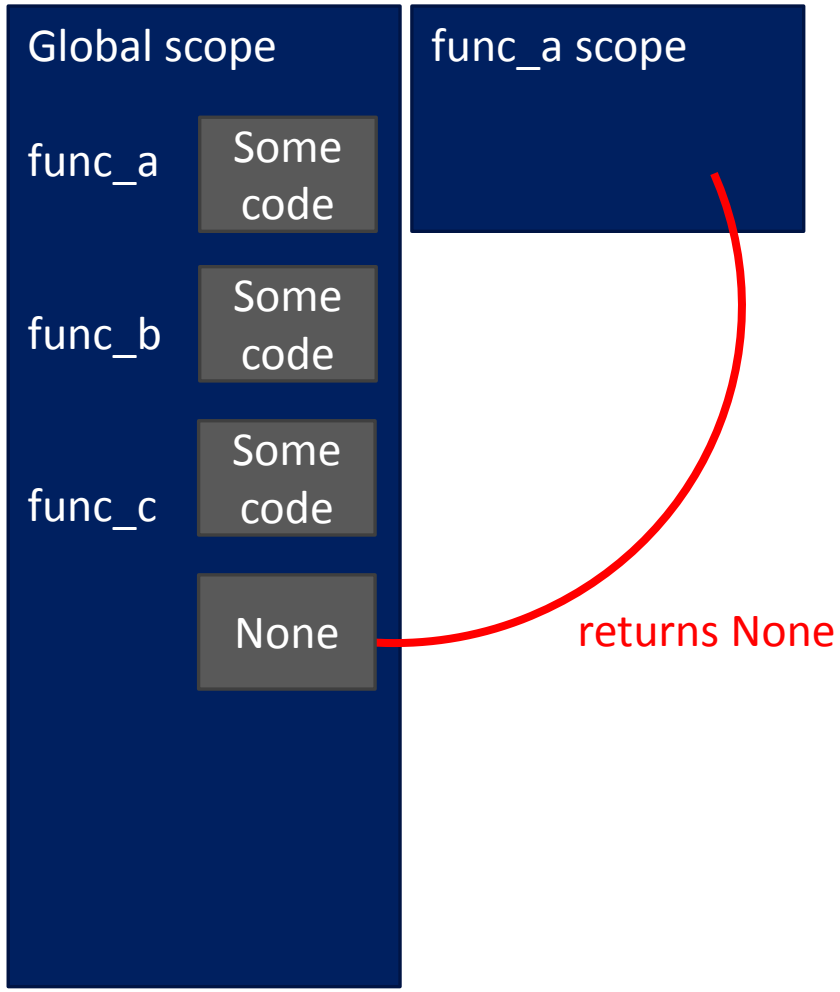

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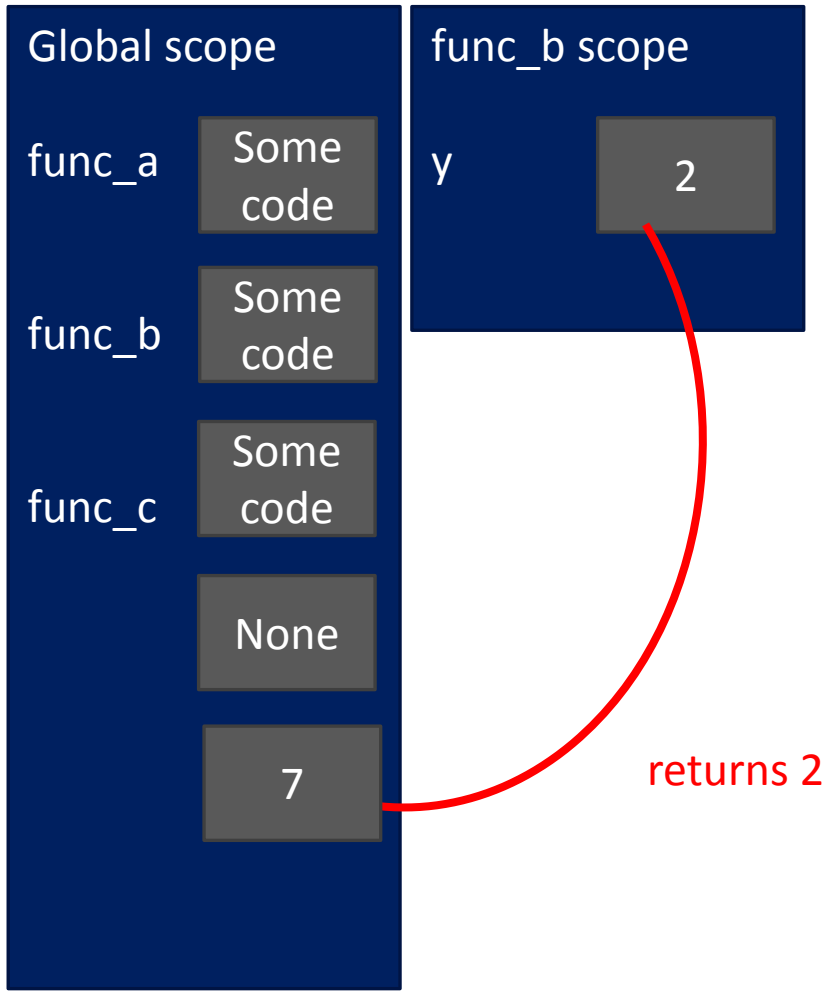

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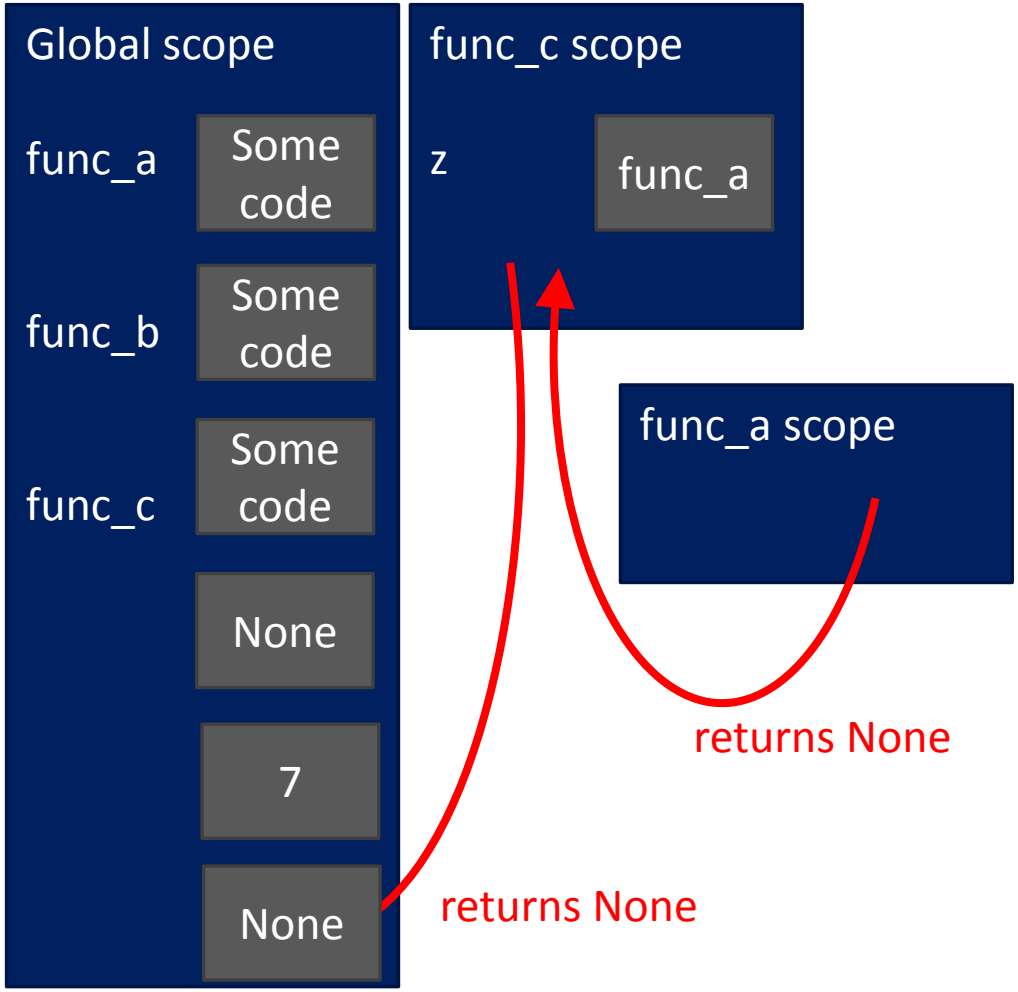

SCOPE EXAMPLE

- inside a function, **can access** a variable defined outside
- inside a function, **cannot modify** a variable defined outside -- can using **global variables**, but frowned upon

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

x = 5
f(x)
print(x)
```

x is re-defined in scope of f

different x objects

```
def g(y):
    print(x)
    print(x + 1)

x = 5
g(x)
print(x)
```

x from outside g

x inside g is picked up from scope that called function g

```
def h(y):
    x += 1

x = 5
h(x)
print(x)
```

UnboundLocalError: local variable 'x' referenced before assignment

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    x = 1
    x += 1
    print(x)

x = 5
f(x)
print(x)
```

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def g(y):
    print(x)

x = 5
g(x)
print(x)
```

```
def h(y):
    x += 1

x = 5
h(x)
print(x)
```

x from global/main program scope

HARDER SCOPE EXAMPLE

Python Tutor is your best friend to help sort this out!

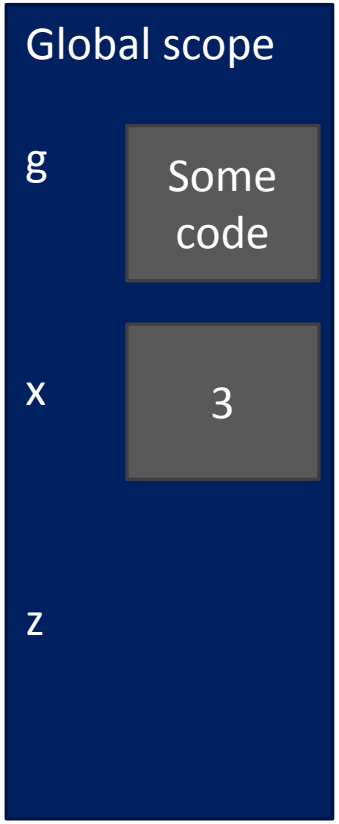
http://www.pythontutor.com/

SCOPE DETAILS

```
def g(x):
    def h():
        x = 'abc'
    x = x + 1
    print('g: x =', x)
    h()
    return x

x = 3
z = g(x)
```

Some code



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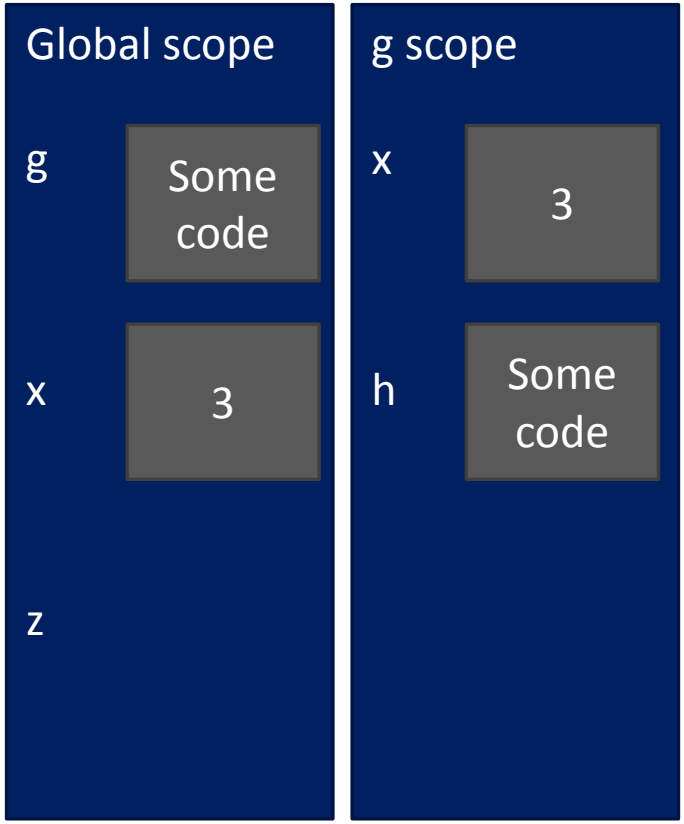

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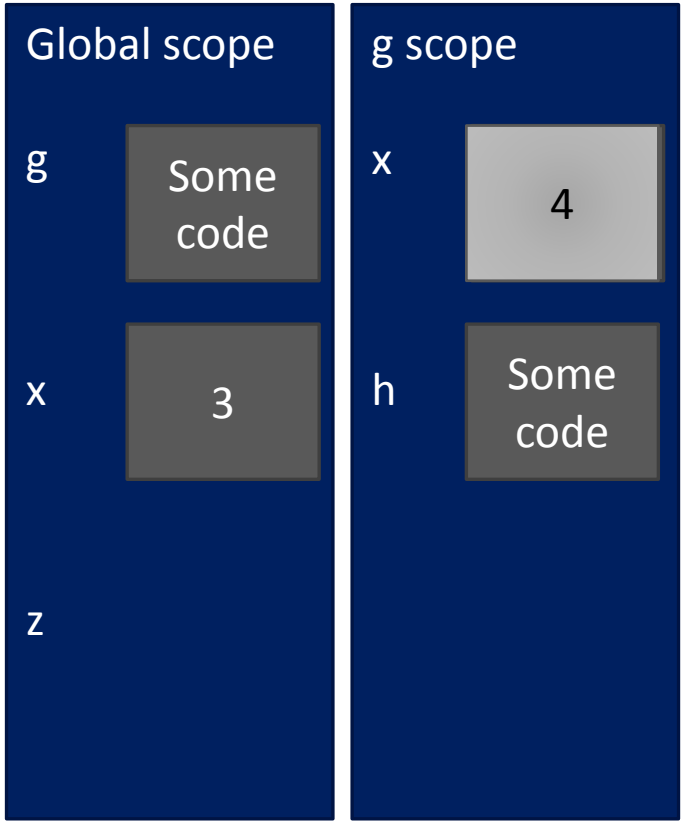

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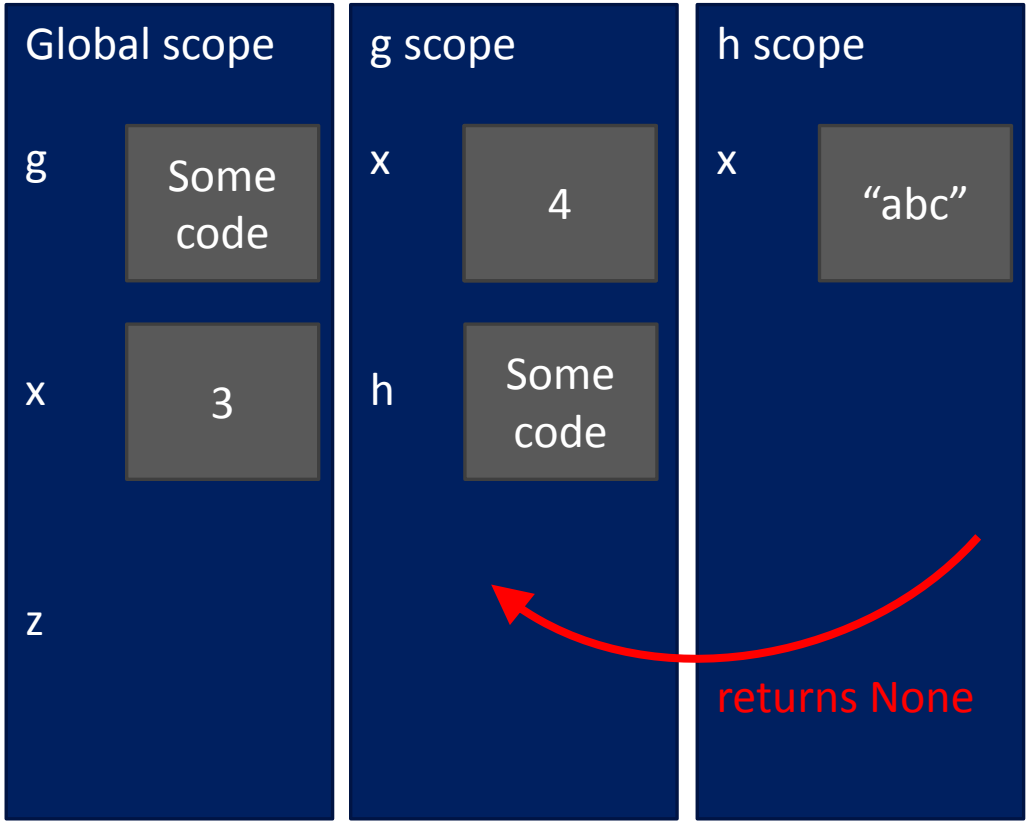

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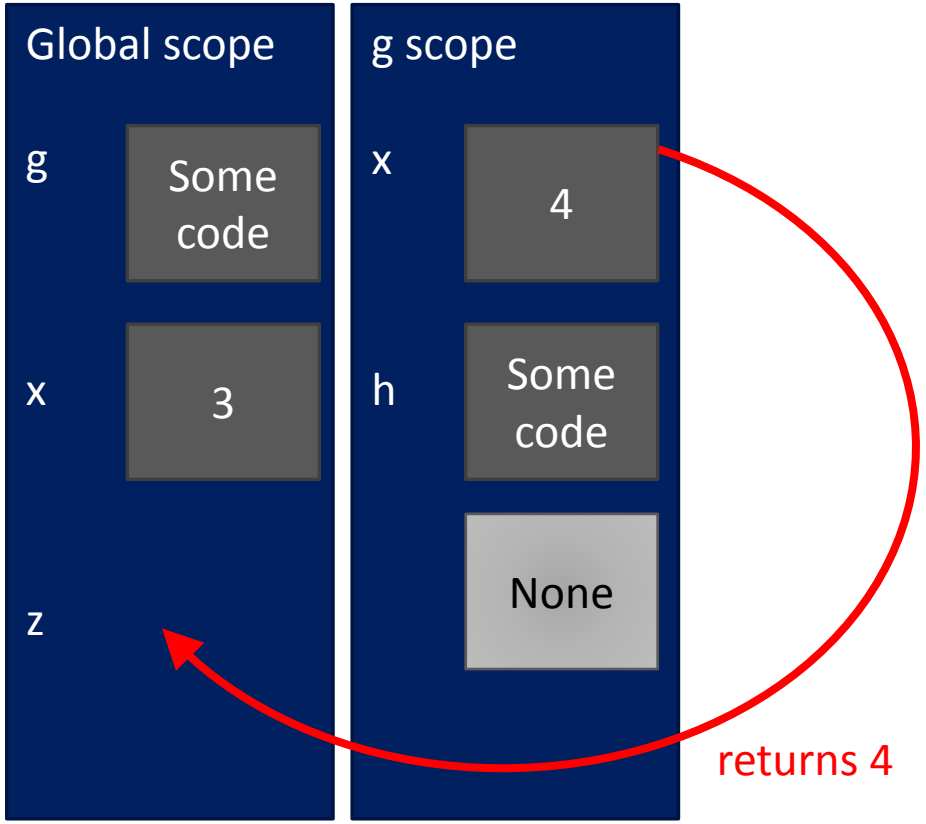

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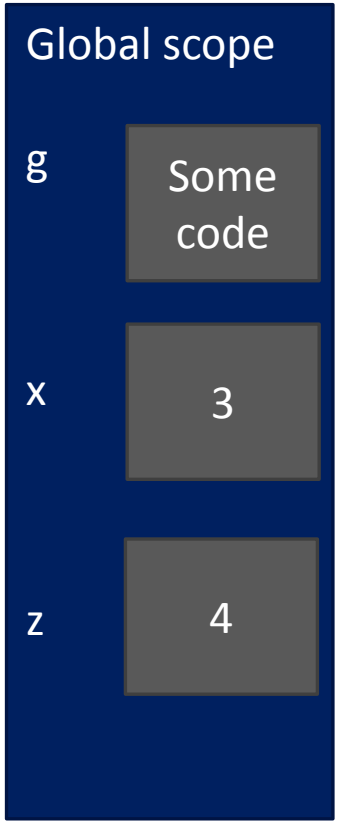

DECOMPOSITION & ABSTRACTION

- powerful together
- code can be used many times but only has to be debugged once!

6.0001 Introduction to Computer Science and Programming in Python
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