Python

A quickstart into the key concepts of programming

Variables & operators

Key concepts in programming

- Variables (*integers, strings, dates, etc.)*
- Flow control (*if then, loop, etc.*)
- Functions (*list of steps the code will follow*)

Variables

variables.ipynb

Variables

- Variables are placeholders for *locations in memory.*
  - Variables are names for values
  - Created by use – no declaration necessary
- Variables always have a *type*
  - Variables only have data types after you use them
  - Use the `type` function to determine variable type
- Variables have a *name*
  - Python is case sensitive.
    - myVar is different from Myvar
    - Tip: avoid using names that differ only by case.

What variable names are legal?

- Choose meaningful names
- No leading numbers, no spaces
- lowercase, with words separated by underscores as necessary to improve readability (same for function naming)
- Don't use Python keywords

```
In [10]: 1 import keyword
         2 keyword.kwlist

Out[10]: ['False',
          'None',
          'True',
          'and',
          'as',
          'assert',
          'async',
          'await',
```

Python Variables Are References

- Variables must be created (assigned a value) before they can be used
- A variable is created through assignment:

```
x = 4
```

- What happens?
  - Python creates the object 4
    - Everything in Python is an object, this object is stored somewhere in memory.
  - Python binds a name to the object. x is a reference to the object.
- Consequences:
  - No need to "declare" the variable
  - *dynamically typed*: variable names can point to objects of any type.
    - No need to require the variable to always point to information of the same type.

```
x = 1 # x is an integer
x = 'hello' # now x is a string
x = [1, 2, 3] # now x is a list
```

Python Variables Are Pointers

```
x = 1 # x is an integer
x = 'hello' # now x is a string
x = [1, 2, 3] # now x is a list
x = [1, 2, 3]
y = x
print(y)
[1, 2, 3]
x.append(4) # append 4 to the list pointed to by x
print(y) # y's list is modified as well!
[1, 2, 3, 4]
x = 'something else'
print(y) # y is unchanged
[1, 2, 3, 4]
```

File: variables_are_pointers.py

Check: https://jakevdp.github.io/WhirlwindTourOfPython/03-semantics-variables.html

Everything is an object

- In Python, everything is an object:
  - Some associated functionality (*methods*) and metadata (*attributes*).
  - These methods and attributes are accessed via the `dot(.)` syntax.
  - Use `type` to get information on the class
  - Use `dir` to get an overview on the methods
- File: check_variable_object.py

dir

- The dir() function returns all properties and methods of the specified object, without the values.
- `dir('')`
  - Many of the names in the list start and end with two underscores (*dunder*), like __add__. These are all associated with methods and pieces of data used internally by the Python interpreter.
  - The remaining entries in the list are all user-level methods.
  - dir() is supplied primarily as a convenience for use at an interactive prompt, it tries to supply an interesting set of names more than it tries to supply a rigorously or consistently defined set of names, and its detailed behavior may change across releases.
- Object notation

```
object.method(parameters)
```

id() function

- What is the number returned from the function?
  - It is "an integer (or long integer) which is guaranteed to be unique and constant for this object during its lifetime." (Python Standard Library - Built-in Functions)
- Is it similar to memory addresses in C?
  - In CPython, this will be the address of the object.

x = x + 1

- `x = x + 1`
- Evaluate the value on the right hand side of the equal sign
  - need to know what the current value of x
  - Ex. x = 7, then x + 1 evaluates to 8
- Assign this value (i.e. 8) to the variable name shown on the left hand side x.
- it is a quite a common operation to increase a variable x by some fixed amount c, we can write
  - `x = x + c`
  - `x += c`
  - Note that the order of + and = matters

Operators

operators.ipynb

Arithmetic Operations

Operator	Name	Description
a + b	Addition	Sum of a and b
a - b	Subtraction	Difference of a and b
a * b	Multiplication	Product of a and b
a / b	True division	Quotient of a and b
a // b	Floor division	Quotient of a and b, removing fractional parts
a % b	Modulus	Remainder after division of a by b
a ** b	Exponentiation	a raised to the power of b
-a	Negation	The negative of a
+a	Unary plus	a unchanged (rarely used)

Assignment Operations

- A = value (regular assignment)
- a #= b is equivalent to a = a # b

```
a+= b    a -= b   a *= b   a /= b
a //= b  a %= b   a **= b  a &= b
a |= b   a ^= b   a <<= b  a >>= b
```

Comparison Operations

a == b	a equal to b
a != b	a not equal to b
a < b	a less than b
a > b	a greater than b
a <= b	a less than or equal to b
a >= b	a greater than or equal to b

Boolean operator

- `and, or, not`
- A good general rule is to always use parentheses when mixing `and` and `or` in the same condition.
- Different from the bitwise operator! (&, |, ~)

```
x = 4
(x < 6) and (x > 2)
2 < x < 6
```

Bitwise operator

- bitwise operators only make sense in terms of the binary representation
- Use built-in `bin` function

Operator	Name	Description
a & b	Bitwise AND	Bits defined in both a and b
a | b	Bitwise OR	Bits defined in a or b or both
a ^ b	Bitwise XOR	Bits defined in a or b but not both
a << b	Bit shift left	Shift bits of a left by b units
a >> b	Bit shift right	Shift bits of a right by b units
~a	Bitwise NOT	Bitwise negation of a