Introduction to Python

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Overview

Hardware and software

- **Hardware** -*computers* (desktop, mobile, etc) and related *devices*
- **Software** -*programs* or *systems* which run on hardware
- **Programming language** - notation that defines syntax and semantics of programs

What computers do

- Storage and retrieval
  - Internal memory
  - Hard disk, memory stick
- Operations
  - Processor
- Communication
  - Keyboard, mouse, display
  - Network connector

Python 101

- **Python** - a high level programming language. It is a great language for beginner programmers!
- **Python interpreter** - a program which allow us to run/interpret new programs.
- **Python standard library**: built-in functions and types

Python 101

Python is:

- A modern programming language
- Simple to write and understand
- An **interpreted** language
- A **garbage collected** language
- A language that support multiple paradigms: structured, object-oriented, functional and aspect oriented programming are all on the menu!
- A language with great support and many available libraries

Python is...

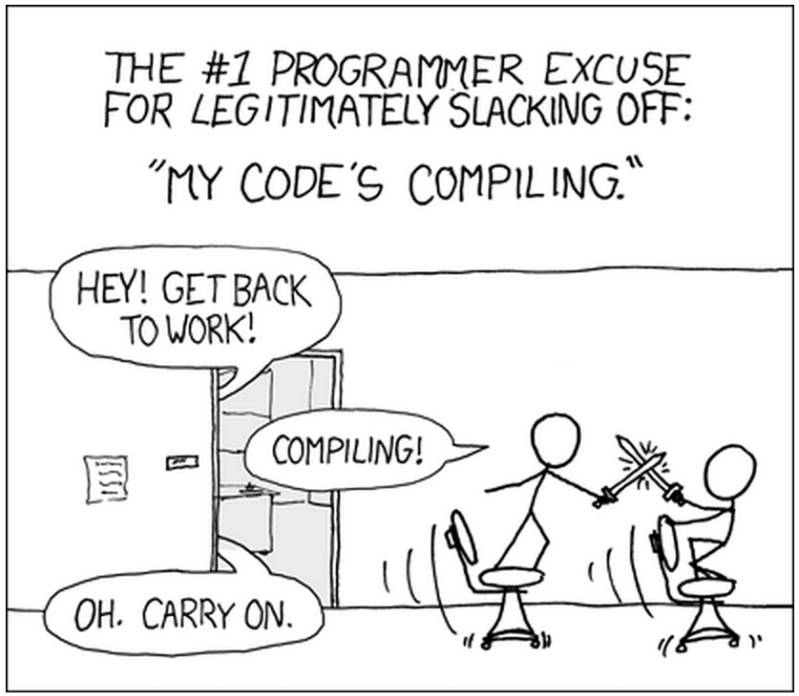
Simple to write and understand

```
'''
Fill rest of the entries in table using optimal substructure property
'''
for i in range(2, n + 1):
    for j in range(2, k + 1):
        eggFloor[i][j] = math.inf
        for x in range(1, j + 1):
            res = 1 + max(eggFloor[i - 1][x - 1], eggFloor[i][j - x])
            if res < eggFloor[i][j]:
                eggFloor[i][j] = res
```

Python 101

Python is...

An **interpreted** language



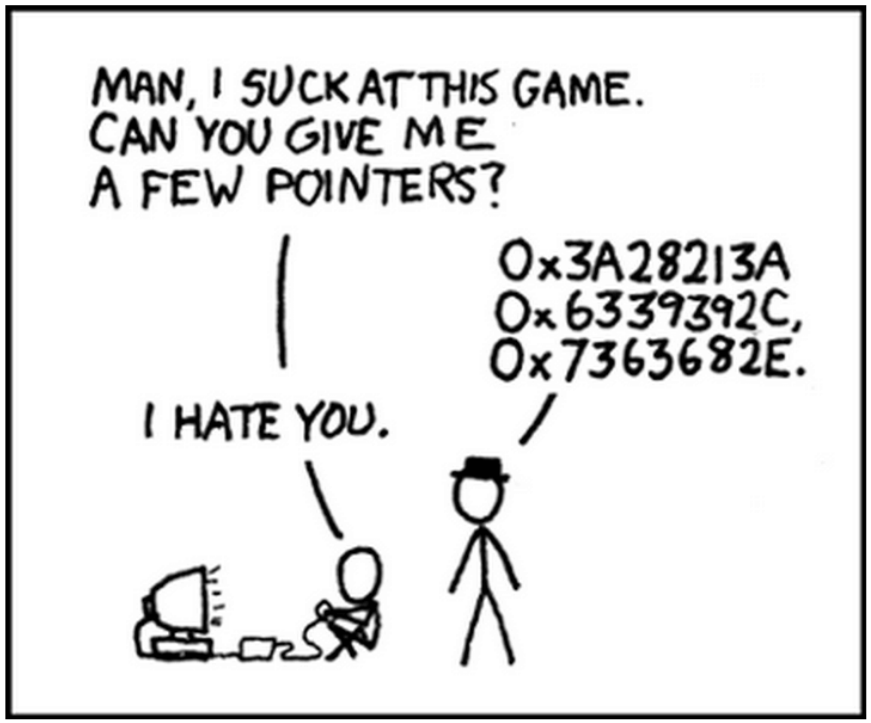
[1]

[1] https://xkcd.com/303/

Python 101

Python is...

A **garbage collected** language



[2]

[2] https://xkcd.com/138/

Python 101

Python mantra[3]:

- Beautiful is better than ugly
- Explicit is better than implicit
- Simple is better than complex
- Flat is better than nested
- Sparse is better than dense
- Readability counts

[3] https://www.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0020/

Basic elements of a Python program

- **Lexical elements** - a Python program is divided into a number of **lines**.
- **Comments** - start with a hash (#) character and ends at the end of the line.
- **Identifiers** (or **names**) - are sequences of characters which start with a letter (a..z, A..Z) or an underscore (_) followed by zero or more letters, underscores, and digits (0..9).
- **Literals** - are notations for constant values of some built-in types.

Demo

Basic elements of a Python program

01-BasicSyntax.py

Data vs. Information

- **Data** - collection of symbols stored in a computer (e.g. 123 decimal number or 'abc' string are stored using binary representations)
- **Information** - interpretation of data for human purposes (e.g. 123, 'abc')

Python data model

All data in Python programs is represented by objects, an **object** being Python's abstraction for data.
An **object** has:

- an **identity** - we may think of of it as the object's address in memory.
- a **type** - which determines the operations that the object supports and also defines the possible values.
- a **value**.

Types

- **Types** classify values. A type denotes a **domain** (a set of possible values) and **operations** on those values.
- **Numbers** - are immutable, so once created, their values cannot be changed.

Identity, value and type

Recall what is a *name* and an *object* (*identity*, *type*, *value*).

- mutable objects: lists, dictionaries, sets
- immutable: numbers, strings, tuples

Determine the identity and the type of an object using the built-in functions:

- id(object)
- type(object), isinstance(object, type)

Standard types in Python (1/3)

int[4]:

- Represents the mathematical set of integers (positive and negative, unlimited precision)

bool:

- Represents the the truth values True and False.

float:

- Represents the mathematical set of double precision floating point numbers.

[4] https://docs.python.org/3/library/stdtypes.html

Standard types in Python (2/3)

Sequence types[5]

- Finite ordered sets indexed by non-negative numbers
- Let a be a sequence.
  - len(a) returns the number of items
  - a[0], a[1], . . . , a[len(a)-1] represent the set of items
- Examples: [1, 'a']

string

- A string is an immutable sequence
- The items of a string are Unicode characters

[5] https://docs.python.org/3/library/stdtypes.html#sequence-types-list-tuple-range

Standard types in Python (3/3)

list[6]

- Mutable sequence of elements
- Typically used to store collections of homogeneous items
- Every item has a predecessor and successor

tuple[7]

- Immutable sequence
- Typically used to store collections of homogeneous items

dict[8]

- Mapping between unique keys and values

[6] https://docs.python.org/3/library/stdtypes.html#list
[7] https://docs.python.org/3/library/stdtypes.html#tuple
[8] https://docs.python.org/3/library/stdtypes.html#dict

List

Lists represent the finite ordered sets indexed by non-negative numbers.
Operations:

- Creation
- Accessing values (index, len), changing values (**lists are mutable**)
- Removing items (pop), inserting items (insert)
- Slicing
- Nesting
- Generate list using range(), list in a for loop
- Lists as stacks (append, pop)

Tuple

Tuples are immutable sequences. A **tuple** consists of a number of values separated by commas.
Operations:

- Packing values (creation)
- Nesting
- Empty tuple
- Tuple with one item
- Sequence unpacking

Dictionary

A **dictionary** is an unordered set of (key, value) pairs with unique keys. The keys must be immutable.
Operations:

- Creation
- Getting the value associated to a given key
- Adding/updating a (key, value) pair
- Removing an existing (key, value) pair
- Checking whether a key exists

Demo

Basic compound types

02-BasicCompoundTypes.py

Variables and expressions

NB!

Variables are reserved memory locations to store values

- A **variable** has:
  - Name
  - Type
    - Domain
    - Operations

A variable is introduced in a program using a name binding operation - assignment.

Variables and expressions

- **Expression** - a combination of explicit *values*, *constants*, variables, *operators*, and *functions* that are interpreted according to the particular*rules of precedence*, which computes and then *produces/returns* another value.
- **Examples**:
  - numeric expression: $1 + 2$
  - boolean expression $1 < 2$
  - string expression: '1' + '2'

Statements

NB!

Statements are the basic operations of a program. A program is a sequence of statements

Statements

- **Assignment**
  - Assignments are used to (re)bind names to values
  - Bind name:
    - x = 1 *#is a variable (of type int)*
  - Rebind name:
    - x = x + 2 *#a new value is assigned to x*
  - Rebind name of mutable sequences:
    - y = [1, 2] *#mutable sequence*
    - y[0] = -1 *#the first item is bound to -1*
- **Block**
  - A block is a section of a program that is executed as a unit
  - A sequence of statements is a block
  - Blocks of code are denoted by line indentation

Demo

Controlling program flow

03-ControlProgramFlow.py