

Defining Functions

Function Definitions

The general form of a function definition:

```
def function_name(parameters):  
    body
```

- `def`: a keyword indicating a function definition
- `function_name`: the function name
- `parameters`:
 - the parameter(s) of the function, 0 or more and are separated by a comma
 - a parameter is a variable whose value will be supplied when the function is called
- `body`:
 - 1 or more statements, often ending with a return statement

Example of a function definition:

```
def f(x):  
    return x ** 2
```

return statement

The general form of a return statement:

```
return expression
```

The rules for executing a return statement:

1. Evaluate the expression. This produces a memory address.
2. Pass back that memory address to the caller. Exit the function.

Function Calls

Function calls are expressions and the result can be stored in a variable.

The general form of a function call:

```
function_name(arguments)
```

The rules for executing a function call:

1. Evaluate the arguments to produce memory addresses.
 2. Store those memory addresses in the corresponding parameters.
 3. Execute the body of the function.
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Example of a function definition and function calls:

```
>>> def area(base, height):  
    return base * height / 2  
>>> area(3, 4)  
6.0  
>>> result = area(10, 7.45)  
>>> result  
37.25
```

Saving your programs to ".py" files

We usually save our Python programs in ".py" files. A file can contain multiple function definitions and other statements. Before calling a function from a ".py" file in the shell in IDLE, you need to first execute Run -> Run Module, or else the shell will not recognize the function call.

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