

```

from collections import MutableMapping

class MapBase(MutableMapping):
    """Our own abstract base class that includes a nonpublic _Item class."""

    #----- nested _Item class -----
    class _Item:
        """Lightweight composite to store key-value pairs as map items."""
        __slots__ = '_key', '_value'

        def __init__(self, k, v):
            self._key = k
            self._value = v

        def __eq__(self, other):
            return self._key == other._key    # compare items based on their keys

        def __ne__(self, other):
            return not (self == other)        # opposite of __eq__

        def __lt__(self, other):
            return self._key < other._key    # compare items based on their keys

```