

A Short and Incomplete Introduction to Python

Part 7: dicts and other data structures

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Dictionaries

Dictionaries

The `dict` type implements a key/value mapping:

```
>>> D = { }  
>>> D['a'] = 1  
>>> D[2] = 'b'  
>>> D  
{ 'a': 1, 2: 'b' }
```

Dictionaries can be created and initialized using the following syntax:

```
>>> D = { 'a':1, 2:'b' }  
>>> D['a']  
1
```

The `for` statement can be used to loop over keys of a dictionary:

```
>>> D = { 'a':1, 'b':2 }
>>> for val in D.keys():
...     print(val)
'a'
'b'
```

Loop over
dictionary *keys*.
*The .keys() part can
be omitted, as it's the
default!*

If you want to loop over dictionary *values*, you have to explicitly request it.

```
>>> D = dict(a=1, b=2)
>>> for val in D.values():
...     print(val)
1
2
```

Loop over
dictionary *values*
The .values()
cannot be omitted!

The 'in' operator (1)

Use the `in` operator to test for presence of an item in a collection.

`x in S`

Evaluates to `True` if `x` is equal to a *value* contained in the `S` sequence (list, tuple, set).

`S in T`

Evaluates to `True` if `S` is a substring of string `T`.

The 'in' operator (2)

Use the `in` operator to test for presence of an item in a collection.

`x in D`

`x in D.keys()`

Evaluates to `True` if `x` is equal to a *key* in the `D` dictionary.

`x in D.values()`

Evaluates to `True` if `x` is equal to a *value* in the `D` dictionary.

Exercise 7.A: Write a function `wordcount(filename)` that reads a text file and returns a dictionary, mapping words into occurrences (disregarding case) of that word in the text.

For example, using the `lorem_ipsum.txt` file:

```
>>> wordcount('lipsum.txt')
{'and': 3, 'model': 1, 'more-or-less': 1,
 'letters': 1, [...]}
```

For the purposes of this exercise, a “word” is defined as a sequence of letters and the character “-”, i.e., “e-mail” and “more-or-less” should both be counted as a single word.

How to copy an object? (0)

```
>>> a = [1, 2]
>>> b = a
>>> b.remove(1)
>>> print (b)
[2]
>>> print (a)
[2]
```

How to copy an object? (1)

```
>>> from copy import copy
>>> a = [1, 2]
>>> b = copy(a)
>>> b.remove(1)
>>> print(b)
[2]
>>> print(a)
[1, 2]
```

How to copy an object? (2)

Note that `copy.copy` makes a *shallow* copy:

```
>>> D = { 'a':[1,2], 'b':3 }
>>> print(D['a'])
[1, 2]
>>> E = copy(D)
>>> print(E)
{ 'a':[1, 2], 'b':3 }
>>> E['a'].remove(1)
>>> print(D['a'])
[2]
```

How to copy an object? (3)

To make a copy of nested data structures, you need `copy.deepcopy`:

```
>>> from copy import deepcopy
>>> D = { 'a':[1,2], 'b':3 }
>>> print(D['a'])
[1, 2]
>>> E = deepcopy(D)
>>> print(E)
{ 'a':[1, 2], 'b':3 }
>>> E['a'].remove(1)
>>> print(D['a'])
[1, 2]
>>> print(E['a'])
[2]
```

Appendix

Mutable vs Immutable

Some objects (e.g., tuple, int, str) are *immutable* and cannot be modified.

```
>>> S = 'UZH'
```

```
>>> S[2] = 'G'
```

```
Traceback (most recent call last):
```

```
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
```

```
TypeError: 'str' object does not support item assignment
```

list, dict, set and user-defined objects are *mutable* and can be modified in-place.

Dictionary, sets and mutable objects

Not all objects can be used as dictionary *keys* or items in a set:

- ▶ *Immutable* objects **can be** used as `dict` keys or set items.
- ▶ *Mutable* objects **cannot be** used as `dict` keys or set items.

(Explanation for the technically savvy: a dictionary is essentially a **Hash Table**, therefore keys of a dictionary must be *hashable* objects. If objects were allowed to mutate, their hash value would change too and we would lose the mapping.)