

# Python String Interpolation

- PEP 502
- Also known as variable interpolation
- What is it?

# String Interpolation: What is it?

- Is the process of evaluating a string literal containing one or more placeholders
- Yields a result in which the placeholders are replaced with their corresponding values.

# String Interpolation Example

```
def main():  
    # in Python 2  
    bananas = 3  
    print "I have %d bananas" % bananas  
    print "I have %(bananas)d bananas" % locals()
```

# String Interpolation vs Concatenation

*#Concatenation is no bueno*

```
def main():  
    bananas = 3  
    print "I have " + bananas + " bananas"
```

- Allows for easier and more intuitive string formatting and content-specification when compared to string concatenation

# Goals

- Eliminate need to pass variables manually
- Eliminate repetition of identifiers and redundant parentheses

# Goals

- Remove awkward syntax
- Eliminate mismatch errors
- Avoid need for `locals()` and `globals()` usage, parsing the given string and passing in named parameters automatically

# Limitations

- Backwards compatibility
- Python specifies both single and double quotes to enclose strings, so it is not reasonable to choose one of them now to enable interpolation.
- ' (accent) a shortcut for repr()

# Remaining Options

- Operator for printf style string formatting via %
- Class, such as `string.Template()`
- Method or Function, such as `str.format`
- New Syntax



## Implementation: Printf formatting via operator

```
>>> params = {'user': 'nobody', 'id': 9, 'hostname':  
             'darkstar'}
```

```
>>> 'Hello, user: %(user)s, id: %(id)s, on host:  
      %(hostname)s' % params
```

```
Hello, user: nobody, id: 9, on host: darkstar  
#Output
```

# Implementation: Printf formatting via operator

## Cons :

- Can only take in one argument besides original string.
- Multiple parameters require a passed in dictionary or tuple.
- Easier to make syntax errors

## Implementation: stringTemplate Class

```
>>> params = {'user': 'nobody', 'id': 9, 'hostname':  
             'darkstar'}
```

```
Template('Hello, user: $user, id: ${id}, on host:  
$hostname').substitute(params)
```

- Uses safe-substitution, which silently ignores malformed templates containing dangling delimiters, unmatched braces, or placeholders that are not valid Python identifiers.

## Implementation: str.format()

```
# when using keyword args, var name shortening  
# sometimes needed to fit :/  
>>> 'Hello, user: {user}, id: {id}, on host: {host}'  
    .format(user=user, id=id, host=hostname)  
'Hello, user: nobody, id: 9, on host: darkstar'
```

- Extremely Verbose, not very convenient

# New Syntax(Last Resort)

- New syntax is generally avoided, in the interest of backwards compatibility.
- Build off of `str.format()`

# New Syntax Proposal

```
>>> location = 'World'
>>> f'Hello, {location} !'    # new prefix: f''
'Hello, World !'             # interpolated result
```

# Expression Evaluation

- Expressions are parsed with the equivalent of:
- `ast.parse('(' + expression + ')', '', 'eval')`

## Expression Evaluation(cont.)

- Expressions in an f-string are evaluated left-to-right
- This is detectable only if the expressions have side effects



# Safety

- Only string literals can be considered for format-strings
- Neither `locals()` nor `globals()` are used during transformation

## Safety (ctd.)

- Recursive interpolation not supported
- Mistakes or malicious code can be obscured inside a string
- Highly recommended to avoid constructs in format-strings

# Backwards Compatibility

- uses existing syntax & avoids historical features
- format strings designed to be backwards compatible

# Community Feedback

- Criticism of wordiness of PEP itself
- Problems with implementation of e-strings
- Lack of `globals()` and `locals()` was a requested community feature

# References

- <https://docs.python.org/3/library/string.html#formatstrings>
- <https://docs.python.org/3/library/ast.html#ast.parse>
- <http://legacy.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0502/>
- <http://www.gossamer-threads.com/lists/python/dev/1216389>