Python is an example of high-level programming language. There are two kinds of languages: high-level languages and low-level languages: interpreters and compilers. An interpreter reads a high-level program and executes it. A compiler reads the program and translates it completely before the program starts running. The high-level program is called the source code, and the translated program is called the object code or the executable. Once a program is compiled, you can execute it repeatedly without further translation. Many modern languages use both processes. They are first compiled into a lower level language, called **byte code,** and then interpreted by a program called a **virtual machine**. Python uses both processes, but because of the way programmers interact with it, it is usually considered an interpreted language.

There are two ways to use the Python interpreter: shell mode and program mode. In shell mode, you type Python expressions into the **Python shell,** and the interpreter immediately shows the result. Working directly in the interpreter is convenient for testing short bits of code because you get immediate feedback. Alternatively, you can write an entire program by placing lines of Python instructions in a file and then use the interpreter to execute the contents of the file as a whole.

Resource: <http://interactivepython.org/runestone/static/CS152f17/GeneralIntro/ThePythonProgrammingLanguage.html>