Python for Web Developers 

Learning Journal

# Objective

We find that the students who do particularly well in our courses are those who practice metacognition. Metacognition is the art of thinking about thinking; developing a deeper understanding of your own thought processes. With the help of this Learning Journal, you’ll broaden your metacognitive knowledge and skills by reflecting on what you learn in this course.

Thanks to this Learning Journal, when you finish the course you’ll have a complete and detailed record of your learning journey and progress over time. We really recommend that you take the time to complete this Journal; students do better in CF courses and in the working world as a result!

## Directions

First complete the pre-work section before you start your course. Then, once you’ve begun learning, take time after each Exercise to return to this Journal and respond to the prompts.

There will be 3 to 5 prompts per Exercise, and we recommend spending about 10 to 15 minutes in total answering them. Don’t overthink it—just write whatever comes to mind!

Also make sure that, once you’ve started filling this document in, you upload it as a deliverable on the platform. This is so that your mentor can also see your Journal and how you’re progressing over time. Don’t worry though—what you write here won’t affect how you’re graded for the Exercise tasks. The learning journal is mostly for you and your self-evaluation!

## Pre-Work: Before You Start the Course

Reflection questions (to complete before your first mentor call)

1. What experiences have you had with coding and/or programming so far? What other experiences (programming-related or not) have you had that may help you as you progress through this course?

I’ve had some coding experience in my previous jobs using C++, C#, and PHP. However, during this CF Boot Camp, I acquired much expertise to help me succeed through this course.

1. What do you know about Python already? What do you want to know?

Python is a high-level scripting and trendy programming language that is dynamically typed. I’d like to know how to use It in Web Development and AI.

1. What challenges do you think may come up while you take this course? What will help you face them? Think of specific spaces, people, and times of day of week that might be favorable to your facing challenges and growing. Plan for how to solve challenges that arise.

Remember, you can always refer to [Exercise 1.4](https://careerfoundry.com/en/steps/your-cf-team#receiving-support) of the Orientation course if you’re not sure whom to reach out to for help and support.

### Exercise 1.1: Getting Started with Python

#### Learning Goals

* Summarize the uses and benefits of Python for web development
* Prepare your developer environment for programming with Python

#### Reflection Questions

1. In your own words, what is the difference between frontend and backend web development? If you were hired to work on backend programming for a web application, what kinds of operations would you be working on?

The front-end is the interface that users see and interact with. At the same time, the backend is the background operations that use servers and APIs including interacting with databases, files, or other servers.

If I were hired to work on backend programming, I would work with servers and APIs, interact with database CRUD operations, and files, processing user requests and data.

1. Imagine you’re working as a full-stack developer in the near future. Your team is asking for your advice on whether to use JavaScript or Python for a project, and you think Python would be the better choice. How would you explain the similarities and differences between the two languages to your team? Drawing from what you learned in this Exercise, what reasons would you give to convince your team that Python is the better option?

*(Hint: refer to the Exercise section “The Benefits of Developing with Python”)*

Python and JavaScript are both high-level scripting programming languages that use understandable command keywords and dynamic typing. However, Python differs from JavaScript in that Python was designed for prototyping and is easy to learn, read, and maintain the code while JS flexibility makes for less readability and maintainability.

1. Now that you’ve had an introduction to Python, write down 3 goals you have for yourself and your learning during this Achievement. You can reflect on the following questions if it helps you. What do you want to learn about Python? What do you want to get out of this Achievement? Where or what do you see yourself working on after you complete this Achievement?

I’d like to learn how to apply infrastructure software design by using Python.

I’d like to learn how to use Python for backend and frontend web development and to recognize when it is better to use Python for backend or frontend projects.

### Exercise 1.2: Data Types in Python

#### Learning Goals

* Explain variables and data types in Python
* Summarize the use of objects in Python
* Create a data structure for your Recipe app

#### Reflection Questions

1. Imagine you’re having a conversation with a future colleague about whether to use the IPython Shell instead of Python’s default shell. What reasons would you give to explain the benefits of using the IPython Shell over the default one?

IPython shell is more practical and user-friendly, especially when it comes to reading code thanks to syntax highlighting, which displays different features of your code in contrasting fonts and colors. Also, when you need to keep indenting text for nested statements, the IPython Shell does it automatically.

Another benefit of the IPython shell is that it lets you test small chunks of code quickly and easily.

1. Python has a host of different data types that allow you to store and organize information. List 4 examples of data types that Python recognizes, briefly define them, and indicate whether they are scalar or non-scalar.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Data type** | **Definition** | **Scalar or Non-Scalar?** |
| Lists | Similar to tuples but are mutable, their internal elements can be modified or deleted. You can rearrange or insert new elements. | Non-Scalar |
| Tuples | Immutable linear arrays. They can store multiple values of any type. However, they are faster to access than lists. | Non-Scalar |
| Dictionary | Stores an unordered set of items (values and objects) indexed by identifiers called keys. The items are key-value pair. | Non-Scalar |
| Strings | In Python, they are immutable arrays of alphanumeric characters and symbols. | Non-Scalar |

1. A frequent question at job interviews for Python developers is: what is the difference between lists and tuples in Python? Write down how you would respond.

Tuples can’t be altered, they are immutable, whereas lists can be, any of the internal elements of a list can be modified or deleted. The only way to change the values of the tuples is to write the new version of your tuple with the same variable name and the new values.

1. In the task for this Exercise, you decided what you thought was the most suitable data structure for storing all the information for a recipe. Now, imagine you’re creating a language-learning app that helps users memorize vocabulary through flashcards. Users can input vocabulary words, definitions, and their category (noun, verb, etc.) into the flashcards. They can then quiz themselves by flipping through the flashcards. Think about the necessary data types and what would be the most suitable data structure for this language-learning app. Between tuples, lists, and dictionaries, which would you choose? Think about their respective advantages and limitations, and where flexibility might be useful if you were to continue developing the language-learning app beyond vocabulary memorization.

Dictionaries would be the most suitable data structure for this language-learning app. Each new word could be the key, and its definition, and category could be the values. This structure allows us to have a unique key and offers fast lookup when users want to retrieve definition or categories base on a specific word. Additionally, dictionaries provide flexibility in adding, updating, and deleting entries that help to continue developing the language-learning app beyond vocabulary.

### Exercise 1.3: Functions and Other Operations in Python

#### Learning Goals

* Implement conditional statements in Python to determine program flow
* Use loops to reduce time and effort in Python programming
* Write functions to organize Python code

#### Reflection Questions

1. In this Exercise, you learned how to use **if-elif-else** statements to run different tasks based on conditions that you define. Now practice that skill by writing a script for a simple travel app using an **if-elif-else** statement for the following situation:

* The script should ask the user where they want to travel.
* The user’s input should be checked for 3 different travel destinations that you define.
* If the user’s input is one of those 3 destinations, the following statement should be printed: “Enjoy your stay in \_\_\_\_\_\_!”
* If the user’s input is something other than the defined destinations, the following statement should be printed: “Oops, that destination is not currently available.”

Write your script here. *(Hint: remember what you learned about indents!)*

|  |
| --- |
| # Define the three destinations  destinations = ["Paris", "Tokyo", "New York"]    # Ask the user where they want to travel  travel\_destination = input("Where would you like to travel? ").strip()    # Check if the user's input is one of the defined destinations  if travel\_destination in destinations:  print(f"Enjoy your stay in {travel\_destination}!")  else:  print("Oops, that destination is not currently available.") |
|  |

1. Imagine you’re at a job interview for a Python developer role. The interviewer says “Explain logical operators in Python”. Draft how you would respond.

Logical operators in Python are used to manipulate boolean values, which can be either True or False. Python provides three main logical operators: 'and', 'or', and 'not'. The 'and' operator returns True only if both operands are True; otherwise, it returns False. On the other hand, the 'or' operator returns True if at least one of the operands is True; otherwise, it returns False. Lastly, the 'not' operator is used to flip the value of a condition. If the condition is true, it becomes false. If the condition is false, it becomes true. These operators are commonly used in conditional statements and loops to control the program flow based on the truth value of expressions.

1. What are functions in Python? When and why are they useful?

Functions in Python, like JavaScript and other languages, are essentially just reusable blocks of code to perform specific tasks. They are useful for organizing code, improving readability, promoting reusability, and reducing redundancy of code by making the code more modular.

1. In the section for Exercise 1 in this Learning Journal, you were asked in question 3 to set some goals for yourself while you complete this course. In preparation for your next mentor call, make some notes on how you’ve progressed towards your goals so far.

In all honesty, so far this has mostly been a refresher of things I’ve already learned about python. We’re still at the super basic level of Python. I’m looking forward to the part where we get into reading from files and parsing data. That will be super useful for my current role which has a lot of mundane tasks like that. Also, I’m hoping to learn more about how Python helps in web development. This hasn’t been touched on yet. I’m assuming this is mostly backend stuff but am super excited to learn how knowing Python can help me get my foot in the door in a new industry and career. The refresher has been good though. It’s nice to see how similar different languages can be to one another. I’m seeing a lot of similarities between Python and JavaScript.

### Exercise 1.4: File Handling in Python

#### Learning Goals

* Use files to store and retrieve data in Python

#### Reflection Questions

1. Why is file storage important when you’re using Python? What would happen if you didn’t store local files?
2. In this Exercise you learned about the pickling process with the **pickle.dump()** method. What are pickles? In which situations would you choose to use pickles and why?
3. In Python, what function do you use to find out which directory you’re currently in? What if you wanted to change your current working directory?
4. Imagine you’re working on a Python script and are worried there may be an error in a block of code. How would you approach the situation to prevent the entire script from terminating due to an error?
5. You’re now more than halfway through Achievement 1! Take a moment to reflect on your learning in the course so far. How is it going? What’s something you’re proud of so far? Is there something you’re struggling with? What do you need more practice with? Feel free to use these notes to guide your next mentor call.

### Exercise 1.5: Object-Oriented Programming in Python

#### Learning Goals

* Apply object-oriented programming concepts to your Recipe app

#### Reflection Questions

#### Reflection Questions

1. In your own words, what is object-oriented programming? What are the benefits of OOP? Object-oriented programming (OOP) is a programming paradigm that organizes code around objects, which are instances of classes. Its benefits include improved code organization, easier maintenance and debugging, enhanced code reusability, and increased productivity through inheritance and polymorphism.
2. What are objects and classes in Python? Come up with a real-world example to illustrate how objects and classes work. In Python, objects are instances of classes, which act as blueprints or templates. Think of a car manufacturing company where cars are produced based on a design blueprint. The blueprint represents the class, and each car produced is an object. The class defines attributes like color, model, and speed, as well as methods such as accelerating and braking. When a new car is manufactured, it becomes an object of the class, inheriting the blueprint's characteristics and behaviors. Multiple cars can be created from the same class, each with unique attribute values. In Python, you can create a class called "Car" with attributes and methods, and then create objects (cars) with specific attribute values. Objects can use the methods defined in the class, just like real-world cars following a design blueprint to perform actions.
3. In your own words, write brief explanations of the following OOP concepts; 100 to 200 words per method is fine.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Method** | **Description** |
| Inheritance | In Python, inheritance is like a family relationship between classes. Imagine you have a parent class, which is like a wise and experienced teacher. Then, you have a child class, who is like a student learning from the teacher. The child class can inherit the knowledge and skills (attributes and methods) of the parent class. It can also add its own unique knowledge and skills. This helps to avoid repeating the same things in multiple classes and makes it easier to create specialized classes based on more general ones. Inheritance is like passing down knowledge and abilities from one class to another, just like a family passing down traits and skills from one generation to the next. |
| Polymorphism | In Python, polymorphism is when multiple objects of the same class all have the same methods, but they can behave differently. Sort of like the ability of superheroes to perform different actions with the same method name based on their individual powers. For example, imagine a "Superhero" class with a method called "attack." Different superheroes, like "Superman" and "Spider-Man," can inherit from this class and override the "attack" method to perform their unique attacks, such as "Superman" using laser vision and "Spider-Man" using web-slinging. Despite having the same method name, each superhero's attack behaves differently. Polymorphism allows objects of different classes to be treated as interchangeable, enabling flexibility and dynamic behavior based on their specific implementations. |
| Operator Overloading | Operator overloading in Python is the ability to define how operators behave with user-defined classes. It allows customizing the behavior of operators such as +, -, \*, /, and others for objects of a class. For example, by overloading the + operator, you can define how two objects should be added together. This enables more intuitive and meaningful operations with custom classes, making them behave like built-in types. By implementing special methods like add or mul, you can define the desired behavior of operators when applied to instances of your class, extending the language's capabilities to suit specific object interactions |

### Exercise 1.6: Connecting to Databases in Python

#### Learning Goals

* Create a MySQL database for your Recipe app

#### Reflection Questions

1. What are databases and what are the advantages of using them?

Databases are organized data collections, making accessing and managing data more efficient. Using them in coding like Python enhances data integrity, consistency, and security, enabling complex searching/querying, simplifying data handling and promoting scalability in applications. Put simply, databases are like digital filing cabinets for data. They keep data safe, easy to find, and easy to change. Using them in Python makes handling a lot of data easier and safer.

1. List 3 data types that can be used in MySQL and describe them briefly:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Data type** | **Definition** |
| Int | A whole number of data types. This can be used to store integers, for instance, the age of a person or the number of items in a stock. |
| Varchar | A variable-length character string data type. This is typically used to store text information, like names or addresses. The length parameter indicates the maximum number of characters it can hold. |
| DateTime | A data type for storing date and time values. This is useful for recording events, like when a record was created or updated. |

1. In what situations would SQLite be a better choice than MySQL?

SQLite is best when you need a lightweight, file-based database for small-scale applications, local/single-user storage, or for development/testing. It doesn't require a server setup

1. Think back to what you learned in the Immersion course. What do you think about the differences between JavaScript and Python as programming languages?

Python is a programming language that's easy to learn and use. It's great for making small programs quickly because it has a simple and clean way of writing code. It's like a straightforward tool for small tasks. On the other hand, JavaScript is mainly used for making websites more interactive and dynamic. It's like a powerful tool for making things happen on websites. So, Python is good for small stuff, while JavaScript is good for web stuff. To be a bit more technical, I could mention that Python employs indentation for blocks, while JavaScript uses braces and Python is an interpreted language while JavaScript is both interpreted and compiled, making it faster.

1. Now that you’re nearly at the end of Achievement 1, consider what you know about Python so far. What would you say are the limitations of Python as a programming language?

1. Speed: Python is interpreted, not compiled

2. Memory Use: Due to being so dynamic, Python’s data types can use up more memory than languages with statically typed variables

3. Dependencies: Python appears to rely heavily on it’s vast ecosystem of third-party libraries, I can imagine that staying up to date with these can become a challenge

4. GUI: We haven’t touched on GUI yet, but from what I’ve seen support for GUI development seems to be a bit limited.

### Exercise 1.7: Finalizing Your Python Program

#### Learning Goals

* Interact with a database using an object-relational mapper
* Build your final command-line Recipe application

#### Reflection Questions

1. What is an Object Relational Mapper and what are the advantages of using one?

An Object-Relational Mapper (ORM) is a translator between a database and a programming language like Python. It helps you work with databases more conveniently by treating database tables as objects. It makes your code simpler and easier to understand and protects against security issues. Overall, it makes working with databases in Python much easier and safer.

1. By this point, you’ve finished creating your Recipe app. How did it go? What’s something in the app that you did well with? If you were to start over, what’s something about your app that you would change or improve?

The process of building the app went fine. There wasn’t a ton of time to get very creative here. These assignments took a lot longer than the suggested time, but if I had to redo it again I would probably spend more time on the user experience of the app. I added certain things such as displaying 2 separate lists of results from the search option, one that shows anything with at least one ingredient and another that only shows recipes with all ingredients that were searched. It would be nice to add a cancel function to each option, say if you selected the wrong option, etc.

1. Imagine you’re at a job interview. You’re asked what experience you have creating an app using Python. Taking your work for this Achievement as an example, draft how you would respond to this question.

I have previous experience in creating Python applications that involve database interaction and CRUD operations. In particular, I have worked with the SQLAlchemy library to manage databases. I have developed applications that allow users to create, read, update, and delete data entries. These applications follow an object-oriented approach, utilizing classes and methods to handle various operations on the data. Input validation and data integrity are key considerations in these applications to ensure accurate and reliable data handling. Overall, my experience with Python includes developing database-driven applications with a focus on functionality, efficiency, and data management.

1. You’ve finished Achievement 1! Before moving on to Achievement 2, take a moment to reflect on your learning in the course so far:
   1. What went well during this Achievement?

Due to some limited previous Python experience, I was able to navigate this achievement fairly swiftly and maintain a pace of about 2 exercises per week.

* 1. What’s something you’re proud of?

I am proud of the fact that my knowledge of basic Python scripting has expanded somewhat. This is extremely useful for anyone that works an office job that has a lot of mundane time-consuming tasks.

* 1. What was the most challenging aspect of this Achievement?

Honestly, it was all the depreciated code and lack of thorough explanations in the reading. This course moved at such a pace that if I didn’t have previous Python experience, I bet I would’ve struggled mightily. From a more technical side, the SQL app was the hardest. Learning all the various SQL keywords and incorporating them into the Python app was a challenge.

* 1. Did this Achievement meet your expectations? Did it give you the confidence to start working with your new Python skills?

Overall, the course met expectations. The outdated code and confusing reading was a little disappointing at times, but for the most part, this was a nice refresher on some Python skills I had forgotten and I even learned a few new things along the way. Confidence isn’t something I’ve gotten a lot of from Career Foundry courses. They move at such a pace that you just must keep moving. You don’t have any extra time to sit and practice more of what you just learned. By the time you finish one exercise you typically have to start the next and by the end of the achievement, you’re struggling to remember concepts from few weeks ago. If you move on to other achievements, it gets even worse. I find myself wondering what I remember from the React and JavaScript courses I just had a few months ago. I haven’t had the opportunity to go back and gain more experience with them.

* 1. What’s something you want to keep in mind to help you do your best in Achievement 2? As a relatively new programmer it's important to keep a few key things in mind. First, Python emphasizes readability, meaning indentation is super important, so strive for clean and well-structured code. Second, I need to remember to take advantage of Python's extensive library, which offers numerous pre-built modules and functions.

1. Well done—you’ve now completed the Learning Journal for Achievement 1. As you’ll have seen, a little metacognition can go a long way!

### Pre-Work: Before You Start Achievement 2

In the final part of the learning journal for Achievement 1, you were asked if there’s anything—on reflection—that you’d keep in mind and do similarly or differently during Achievement 2. Think about these questions again:

* Was your study routine effective during Achievement 1? If not, what will you do differently during Achievement 2?
* Reflect on your learning and project work for Achievement 1. What were you most proud of? How will you repeat or build on this in Achievement 2?
* What difficulties did you encounter in the last Achievement? How did you deal with them? How could this experience prepare you for difficulties in Achievement 2?

Note down your answers and discuss them with your mentor in a call if you like.

Remember that can always refer to [Exercise 1.4](https://careerfoundry.com/en/steps/your-cf-team#receiving-support) of the Orientation course if you’re not sure whom to reach out to for help and support.

### Exercise 2.1: Getting Started with Django

Learning Goals

* Explain MVT architecture and compare it with MVC
* Summarize Django’s benefits and drawbacks
* Install and get started with Django

#### Reflection Questions

1. Suppose you’re a web developer in a company and need to decide if you’ll use vanilla (plain) Python for a project, or a framework like Django instead. What are the advantages and drawbacks of each?
2. In your own words, what is the most significant advantage of Model View Template (MVT) architecture over Model View Controller (MVC) architecture?
3. Now that you’ve had an introduction to the Django framework, write down three goals you have for yourself and your learning process during this Achievement. You can reflect on the following questions if it helps:

* What do you want to learn about Django?
* What do you want to get out of this Achievement?
* Where or what do you see yourself working on after you complete this Achievement?

### Exercise 2.2: Django Project Set Up

#### Learning Goals

* Describe the basic structure of a Django project
* Summarize the difference between projects and apps
* Create a Django project and run it locally
* Create a superuser for a Django web application

#### Reflection Questions

1. Suppose you’re in an interview. The interviewer gives you their company’s website as an example, asking you to convert the website and its different parts into Django terms. How would you proceed? For this question, you can think about your dream company and look at their website for reference.

(*Hint: In the Exercise, you saw the example of the CareerFoundry website in the Project and Apps section.*)

1. In your own words, describe the steps you would take to deploy a basic Django application locally on your system.
2. Do some research about the Django admin site and write down how you’d use it during your web application development.

### Exercise 2.3: Django Models

#### Learning Goals

* Discuss Django models, the “M” part of Django’s MVT architecture
* Create apps and models representing different parts of your web application
* Write and run automated tests

#### Reflection Questions

1. Do some research on Django models. In your own words, write down how Django models work and what their benefits are.
2. In your own words, explain why it is crucial to write test cases from the beginning of a project. You can take an example project to explain your answer.

### Exercise 2.4: Django Views and Templates

#### Learning Goals

* Summarize the process of creating views, templates, and URLs
* Explain how the “V” and “T” parts of MVT architecture work
* Create a frontend page for your web application

#### Reflection Questions

1. Do some research on Django views. In your own words, use an example to explain how Django views work.
2. Imagine you’re working on a Django web development project, and you anticipate that you’ll have to reuse lots of code in various parts of the project. In this scenario, will you use Django function-based views or class-based views, and why?
3. Read Django’s documentation on the [Django template language](https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/3.2/ref/templates/language/#templates) and make some notes on its basics.

### Exercise 2.5: Django MVT Revisited

#### Learning Goals

* Add images to the model and display them on the frontend of your application
* Create complex views with access to the model
* Display records with views and templates

#### Reflection Questions

1. In your own words, explain Django static files and how Django handles them.
2. Look up the following two Django packages on Django’s official documentation and/or other trusted sources. Write a brief description of each.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Package** | **Description** |
| ListView |  |
| DetailView |  |

1. You’re now more than halfway through Achievement 2! Take a moment to reflect on your learning in the course so far. How is it going? What’s something you’re proud of so far? Is there something you’re struggling with? What do you need more practice with? You can use these notes to guide your next mentor call.

### Exercise 2.6: User Authentication in Django

#### Learning Goals

* Create authentication for your web application
* Use GET and POST methods
* Password protect your web application’s views

#### Reflection Questions

1. In your own words, write down the importance of incorporating authentication into an application. You can take an example application to explain your answer.
2. In your own words, explain the steps you should take to create a login for your Django web application.
3. Look up the following three Django functions on Django’s official documentation and/or other trusted sources and write a brief description of each.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Function** | **Description** |
| authenticate() |  |
| redirect() |  |
| include() |  |

### Exercise 2.7: Data Analysis and Visualization in Django

#### Learning Goals

* Work on elements of two-way communication like creating forms and buttons
* Implement search and visualization (reports/charts) features
* Use QuerySet API, DataFrames (with pandas), and plotting libraries (with matplotlib)

#### Reflection Questions

1. Consider your favorite website/application (you can also take CareerFoundry). Think about the various data that your favorite website/application collects. Write down how analyzing the collected data could help the website/application.
2. Read the [Django official documentation on QuerySet API](https://docs.djangoproject.com/en/3.2/ref/models/querysets/). Note down the different ways in which you can evaluate a QuerySet.
3. In the Exercise, you converted your QuerySet to DataFrame. Now do some research on the advantages and disadvantages of QuerySet and DataFrame, and explain the ways in which DataFrame is better for data processing.

### Exercise 2.8: Deploying a Django Project

#### Learning Goals

* Enhance user experience and look and feel of your web application using CSS and JS
* Deploy your Django web application on a web server
* Curate project deliverables for your portfolio

#### Reflection Questions

1. Explain how you can use CSS and JavaScript in your Django web application.
2. In your own words, explain the steps you’d need to take to deploy your Django web application.
3. (Optional) Connect with a few Django web developers through LinkedIn or any other network. Ask them for their tips on creating a portfolio to showcase Python programming and Django skills. Think about which tips could help you improve your portfolio.
4. You’ve now finished Achievement 2 and, with it, the whole course! Take a moment to reflect on your learning:
   1. What went well during this Achievement?
   2. What’s something you’re proud of?
   3. What was the most challenging aspect of this Achievement?
   4. Did this Achievement meet your expectations? Did it give you the confidence to start working with your new Django skills?

Well done—you’ve now completed the Learning Journal for the whole course.