The Python Standard Library

Knowing how to look for help is an essential skill when starting your programming career. With any programming language, there is a way to use the language. The structure of it, the organization of it, and the documentation of it. Python is no exception. The Python developers have created an extensive help document that allows users to see how to use the basic code needed to write programs in the language.

* <https://docs.python.org/3/reference/index.html#reference-index>
* <https://docs.python.org/3/library/>

Throughout this course it is extremely important that you follow new coding concepts along with the standard library documentation. When you’re faced with a new code structure or object be vigilant in looking up the corresponding help page in the reference index.

## An example lookup

Let’s assume we want to search for how to use the built in help function. The first step is to search the function’s name help(), with Python 3 and the library doc, in your favourite internet search engine. Let’s do this.

1. Open an internet search engine and look for “Python 3 built in help()”
2. With the results open look at the source of each page, specifically for any URL that points to the dev’s website python.org

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1. Open the python.org link and browse over the page.
2. Since we are looking for help(), it may be prudent to quickly jump to the desired paragraph. To do this simple search the page by pressing **Ctrl + F**, and the typing in **help(**. We leave out the closing parenthesis as we do not know if there are arguments that the function may need.

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1. With the corresponding doc in hand we can now see what the function does and what arguments it accepts. Pay close attention to the style of the docs. Keywords and parameters can be presented in square brackets, which implies optional.

## Self-Assignment: Documentation practice.

Search for each of the following Python code expressions and answer the questions that follow.

* **help()**
* **print()**
* **import**
* **\_\_main\_\_()**