heapq — Heap queue algorithm¶

New in version 2.3.

This module provides an implementation of the heap queue algorithm, also known as the priority queue algorithm.

Heaps are arrays for which `heap[k] <= heap[2*k+1]` and `heap[k] <= heap[2*k+2]` for all *k*, counting elements from zero. For the sake of comparison, non-existing elements are considered to be infinite. The interesting property of a heap is that `heap[0]` is always its smallest element.

The API below differs from textbook heap algorithms in two aspects: (a) We use zero-based indexing. This makes the relationship between the index for a node and the indexes for its children slightly less obvious, but is more suitable since Python uses zero-based indexing. (b) Our pop method returns the smallest item, not the largest (called a “min heap” in textbooks; a “max heap” is more common in texts because of its suitability for in-place sorting).

These two make it possible to view the heap as a regular Python list without surprises: `heap[0]` is the smallest item, and `heap.sort()` maintains the heap invariant!

To create a heap, use a list initialized to `[]`, or you can transform a populated list into a heap via function `heapify()`.

The following functions are provided:

`heapq.heappush`(*heap*, *item*)

Push the value *item* onto the *heap*, maintaining the heap invariant.

`heapq.heappop`(*heap*)

Pop and return the smallest item from the *heap*, maintaining the heap invariant. If the heap is empty, `IndexError` is raised.

`heapq.heappushpop`(*heap*, *item*)

Push *item* on the heap, then pop and return the smallest item from the *heap*. The combined action runs more efficiently than `heappush()` followed by a separate call to `heappop()`.

New in version 2.6.

`heapq.heapify`(*x*)

Transform list *x* into a heap, in-place, in linear time.

`heapq.heapreplace`(*heap*, *item*)

Pop and return the smallest item from the *heap*, and also push the new *item*. The heap size doesn’t change. If the heap is empty, `IndexError` is raised. This is more efficient than `heappop()` followed by `heappush()`, and can be more appropriate when using a fixed-size heap. Note that the value returned may be larger than *item*! That constrains reasonable uses of this routine unless written as part of a conditional replacement:

```
if item > heap[0]:
        item = heapreplace(heap, item)
```

Example of use:

```
>>> from heapq import heappush, heappop
>>> heap = []
>>> data = [1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 2, 4, 6, 8, 0]
>>> for item in data:
...     heappush(heap, item)
...
>>> ordered = []
>>> while heap:
...     ordered.append(heappop(heap))
...
>>> print ordered
[0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
>>> data.sort()
>>> print data == ordered
True
```

Using a heap to insert items at the correct place in a priority queue:

```
>>> heap = []
>>> data = [(1, 'J'), (4, 'N'), (3, 'H'), (2, 'O')]
>>> for item in data:
...     heappush(heap, item)
...
>>> while heap:
...     print heappop(heap)[1]
J
O
H
N
```

The module also offers three general purpose functions based on heaps.

`heapq.merge`(*iterables)

Merge multiple sorted inputs into a single sorted output (for example, merge timestamped entries from multiple log files). Returns an *iterator* over the sorted values.

Similar to `sorted(itertools.chain(*iterables))` but returns an iterable, does not pull the data into memory all at once, and assumes that each of the input streams is already sorted (smallest to largest).

New in version 2.6.

`heapq.nlargest`(*n*, *iterable*[, *key*])

Return a list with the *n* largest elements from the dataset defined by *iterable*. *key*, if provided, specifies a function of one argument that is used to extract a comparison key from each element in the iterable: `key=str.lower` Equivalent to: `sorted(iterable, key=key, reverse=True)[:n]`

New in version 2.4.

Changed in version 2.5: Added the optional *key* argument.

`heapq.nsmallest`(*n*, *iterable*[, *key*])

Return a list with the *n* smallest elements from the dataset defined by *iterable*. *key*, if provided, specifies a function of one argument that is used to extract a comparison key from each element in the iterable: `key=str.lower` Equivalent to: `sorted(iterable, key=key)[:n]`

New in version 2.4.

Changed in version 2.5: Added the optional *key* argument.

The latter two functions perform best for smaller values of *n*. For larger values, it is more efficient to use the `sorted()` function. Also, when `n==1`, it is more efficient to use the built-in `min()` and `max()` functions.