The Basics

A Code Sample

```
x = 34 - 23               # A comment.
y = “Hello”               # Another one.
z = 3.45
if z == 3.45 or y == “Hello”:
    x = x + 1
    y = y + “ World”      # String concat.
print x
print y
```

Enough to Understand the Code

- **Assignment uses `=` and comparison uses `==`.**
- **For numbers `+ - * / %` are as expected.**
  - Special use of `+` for string concatenation.
  - Special use of `%` for string formatting (as with printf in C)
- **Logical operators are words (`and, or, not`) *not* symbols**
- **The basic printing command is `print`.**
- **The first assignment to a variable creates it.**
  - Variable types don’t need to be declared.
  - Python figures out the variable types on its own.

Basic Datatypes

- **Integers (default for numbers)**

```
z = 5 / 2    # Answer is 2, integer division.
```

- **Floats**

```
x = 3.456
```

- **Strings**
  - Can use “” or ‘’ to specify.
    `“abc”` `‘abc’` (Same thing.)
  - Unmatched can occur within the string.
    `“matt’s”`
  - Use triple double-quotes for multi-line strings or strings than contain both ‘ and “ inside of them:
    `“““a‘b“c”””`

Whitespace

Whitespace is meaningful in Python: especially indentation and placement of newlines.

- **Use a newline to end a line of code.**
  - Use `\` when must go to next line prematurely.
- **No braces `{ }` to mark blocks of code in Python… Use *consistent* indentation instead.**
  - The first line with *less* indentation is outside of the block.
  - The first line with *more* indentation starts a nested block
- **Often a colon appears at the start of a new block. (E.g. for function and class definitions.)**

Comments

- Start comments with # – the rest of line is ignored.
- Can include a “documentation string” as the first line of any new function or class that you define.
- The development environment, debugger, and other tools use it: it’s good style to include one.

```
def my_function(x, y):
  """This is the docstring. This
  function does blah blah blah."""
  # The code would go here...
```

Assignment

- ***Binding a variable*** **in Python means setting a** ***name*** **to hold a** ***reference*** **to some** ***object*****.**
    - *Assignment creates references, not copies*

- **Names in Python do not have an intrinsic type. Objects have types.**
    - Python determines the type of the reference automatically based on the data object assigned to it.

- **You create a name the first time it appears on the left side of an assignment expression:**

```
x = 3
```

- **A reference is deleted via garbage collection after any names bound to it have passed out of scope.**

Accessing Non-Existent Names

- **If you try to access a name before it's been properly created (by placing it on the left side of an assignment), you'll get an error.**

```
>>> y

Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "<pyshell#16>", line 1, in -toplevel-
    y
NameError: name 'y' is not defined
>>> y = 3
>>> y
3
```

Multiple Assignment

- **You can also assign to multiple names at the same time.**

```
>>> x, y = 2, 3
>>> x
2
>>> y
3
```

Naming Rules

- Names are case sensitive and cannot start with a number. They can contain letters, numbers, and underscores.

```
bob   Bob   _bob   _2_bob_   bob_2   BoB
```

- There are some reserved words:

```
and, assert, break, class, continue, def, del, elif,
else, except, exec, finally, for, from, global, if,
import, in, is, lambda, not, or, pass, print, raise,
return, try, while
```