Introduction to Bioinformatics using Python

Lecture 2: Introduction to Python

Dr. Alexey Larionov

28 October 2024

www.cranfield.ac.uk

Lecture plan

- Python features
- Installing Python(s) on your PC
- Using Python
  - Interactive use in terminal & IDLE
  - Scripts & Python IDEs
  - Hello Word in VS Code
- Comments & Indentation
- Python packages and environments
  - PIP, Conda, Venv

What is Python?

Python is an interpreted, high-level, general-purpose programming language

- Developed in the Netherlands, early 1990s by Guido van Rossum
- Official website: http://www.python.org

"Python is an experiment in how much freedom programmers need… … …"
- Guido van Rossum

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benevolent_dictator_for_life

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Named after a British comedy team

Monty Python !

"Python is an experiment in how much freedom programmers need… … …"

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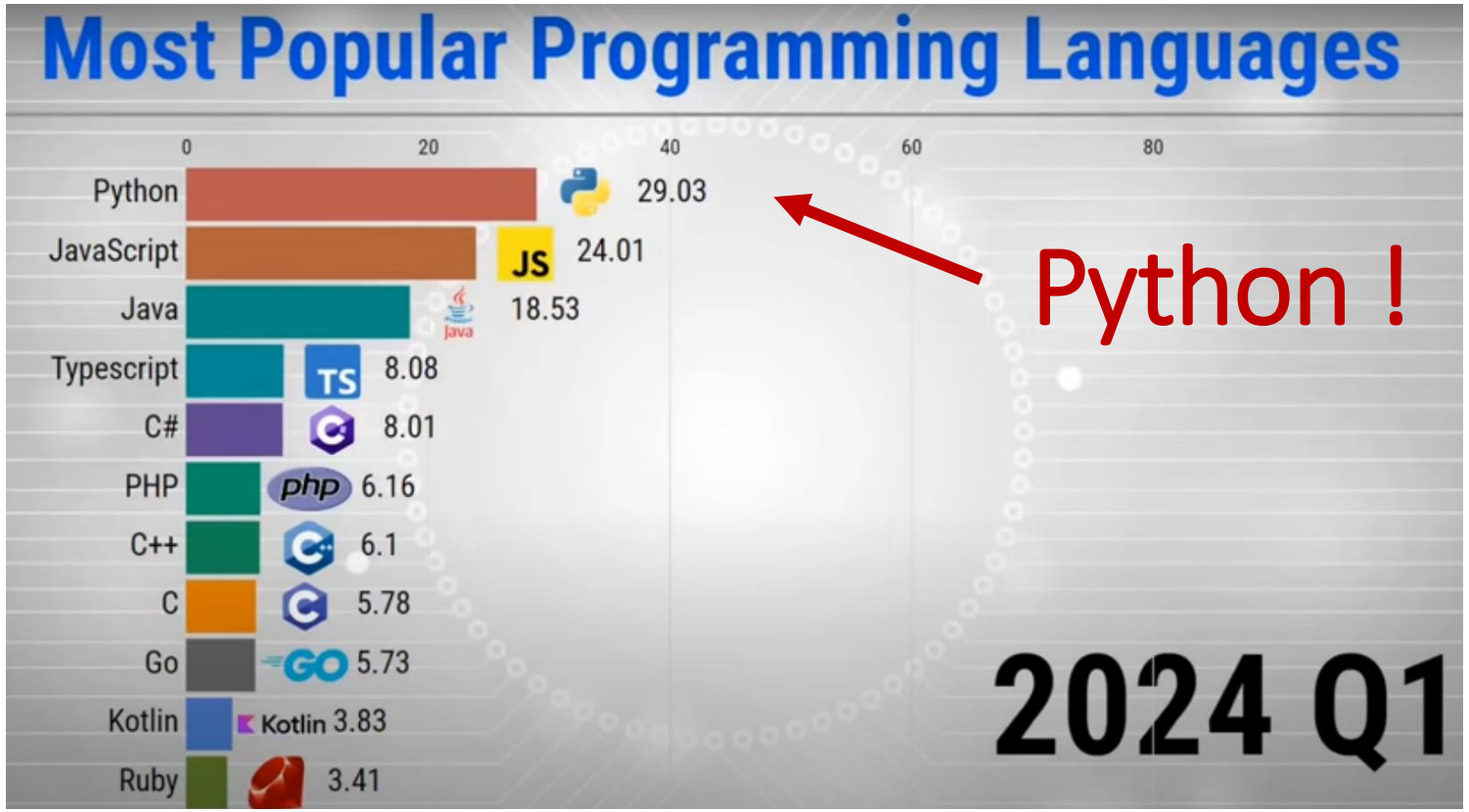
https://spotify.link/ADz0wBup6Db

3 hrs podcast with GVR in 2022 about Python and future of programming

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benevolent_dictator_for_life

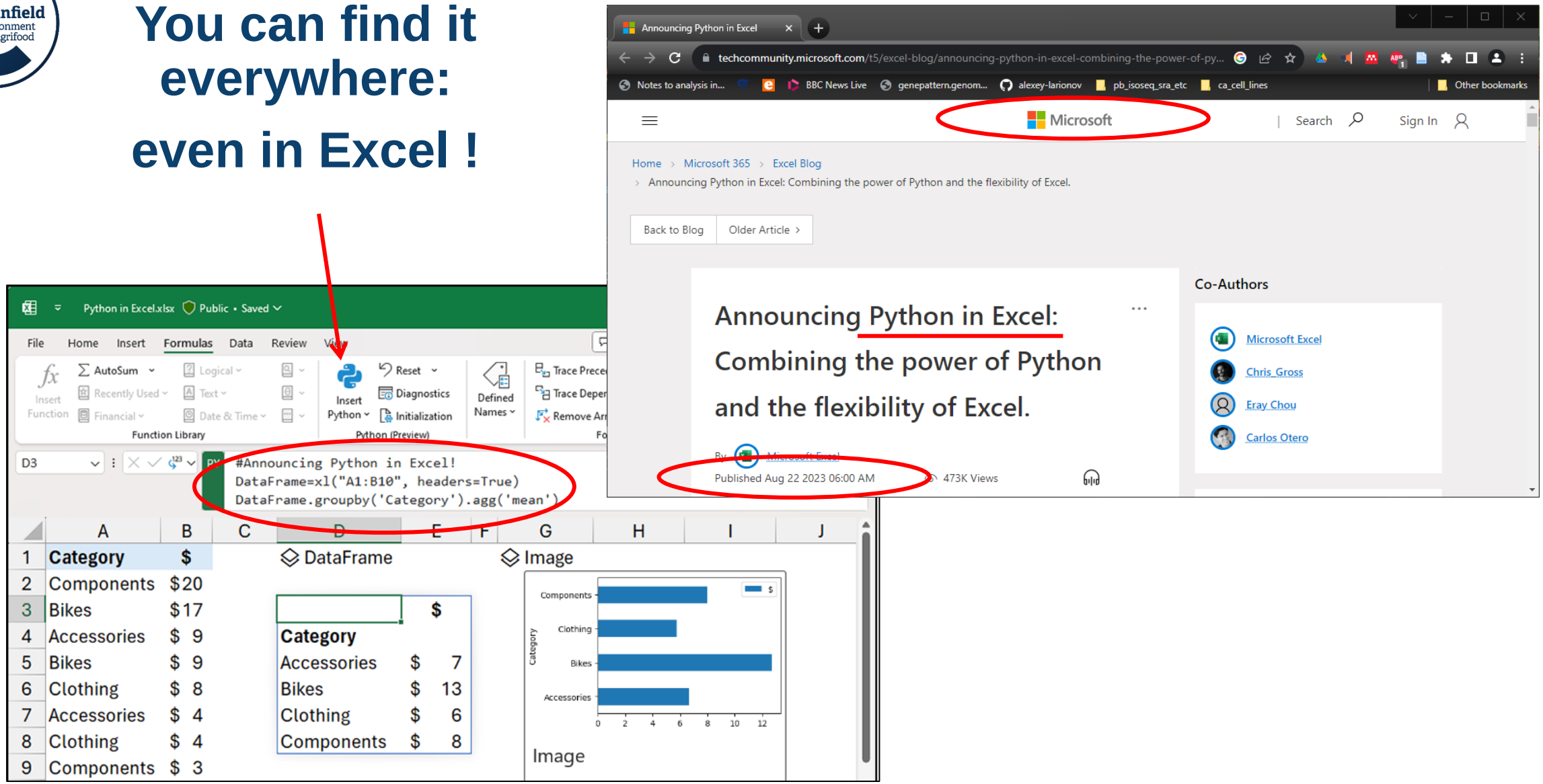
The Most Popular Programming Language in 2024



See ranks from 1965 till 2024 : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOW3Cehg_qg

You can find it everywhere:

even in Excel !



https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/excel-blog/announcing-python-in-excel-combining-the-power-of-python-and-the/ba-p/3893439

Why Python?

- **Widely used in *bioinformatics*** : many libraries available, and their number is growing …
- Object-oriented and Functional from the beginning
- Interpreted : you can run the program straight from the source code
- Portable : Linux, Windows, Mac (anywhere where a Python interpreter is installed)
- Extensible : easily import other code
- Embeddable : easily place your code in non-python programs

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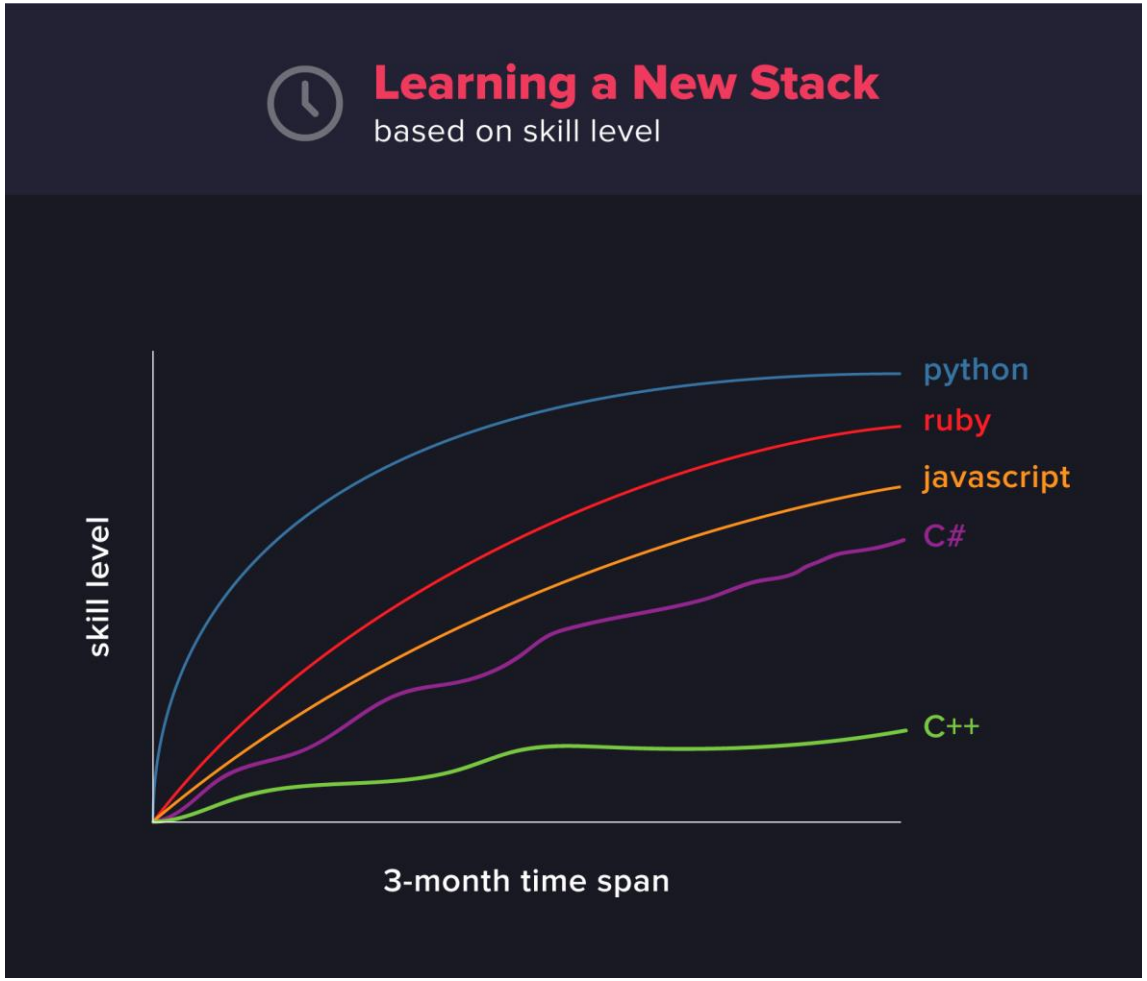
Why Python?

Easy to Learn

- Python is simple and minimalistic in nature
- Less syntax memorisation



https://dev.to/programmerthings/language-review-python-episode-one-5hh6

"Stack" in programming means a set of sequential tasks
(e.g. writing a front-end or a back-end of a web site)

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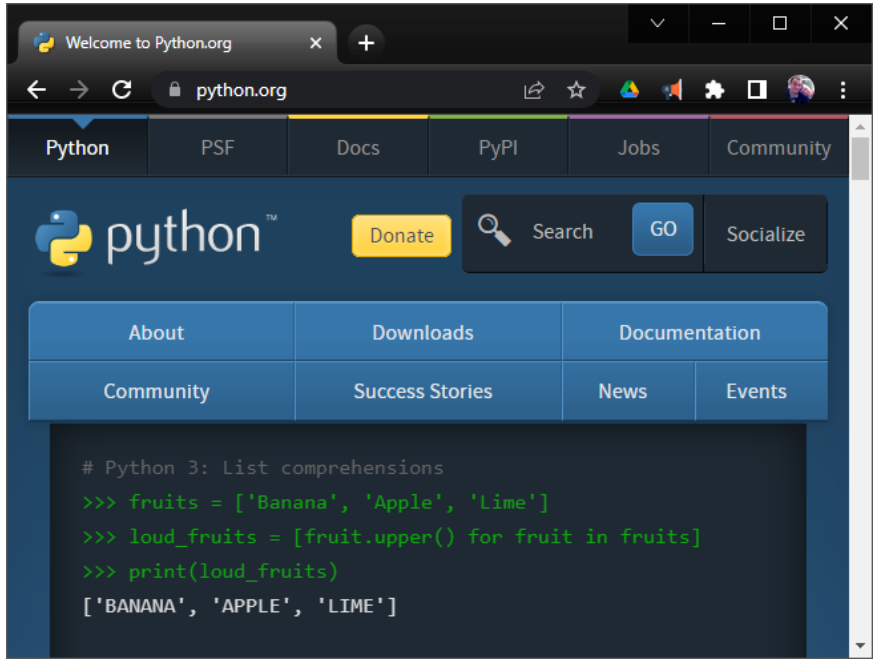
  - PIP, Conda, Venv

How to install Python to your PC ?

Linux has Python installed

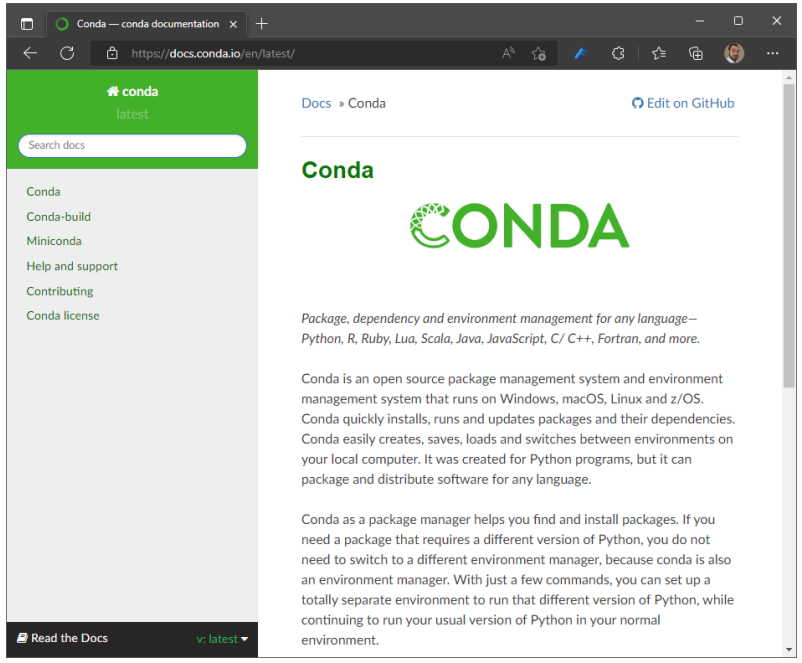
Other providers
Windows: MS Store
MacOS: Brew

Python Foundation



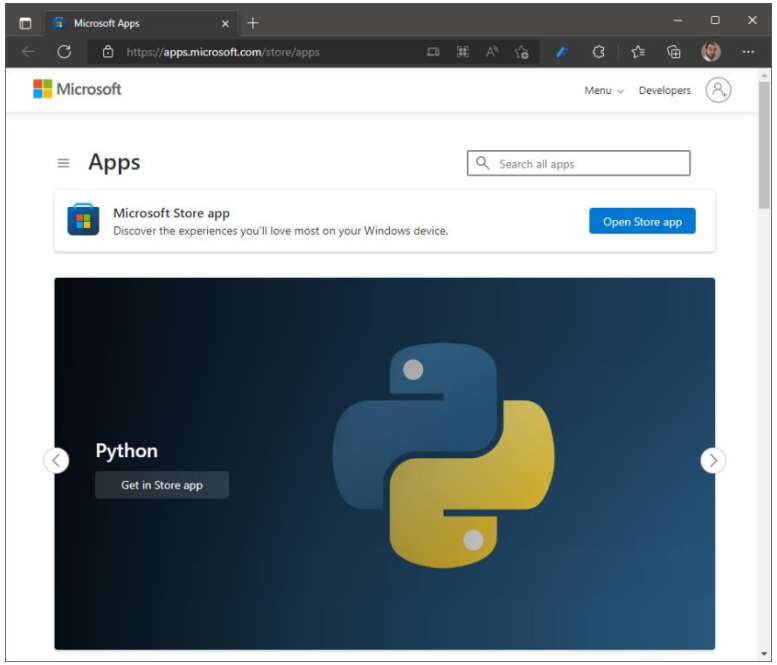
https://www.python.org

Conda



https://docs.conda.io

Miniconda, Anaconda…



https://apps.microsoft.com/store

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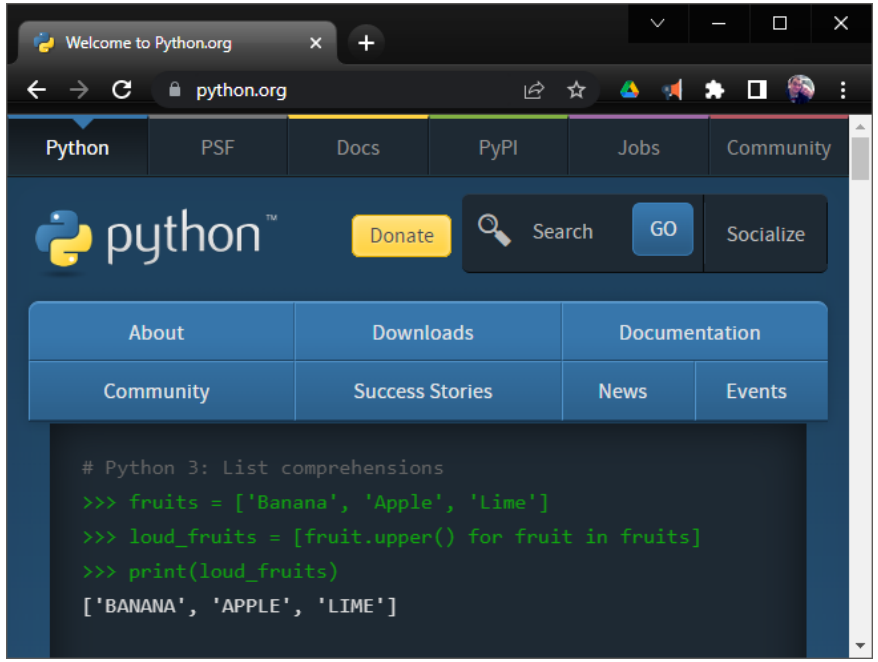

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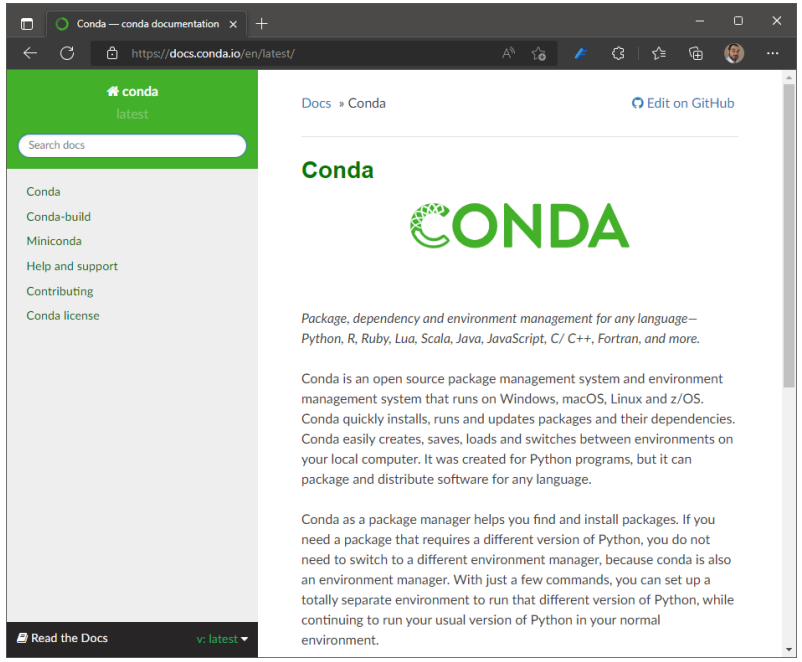
Conda



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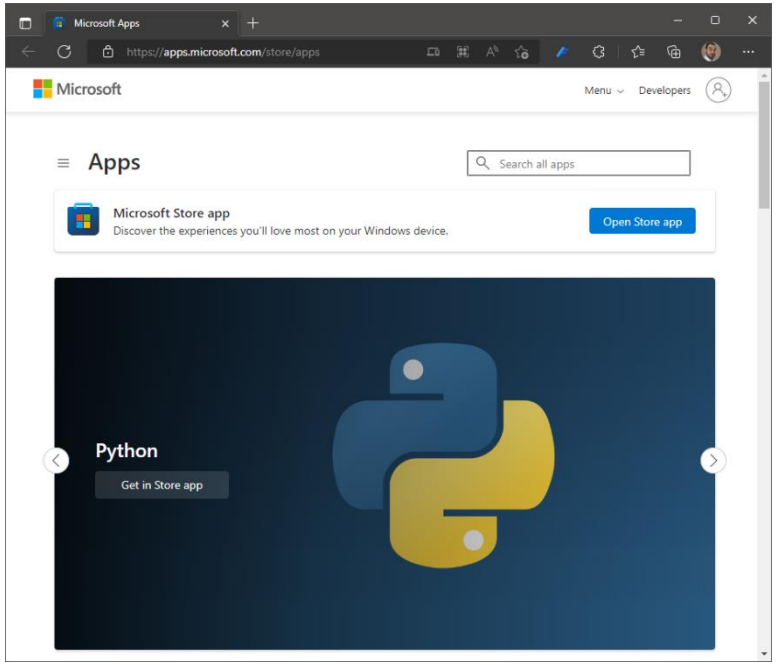
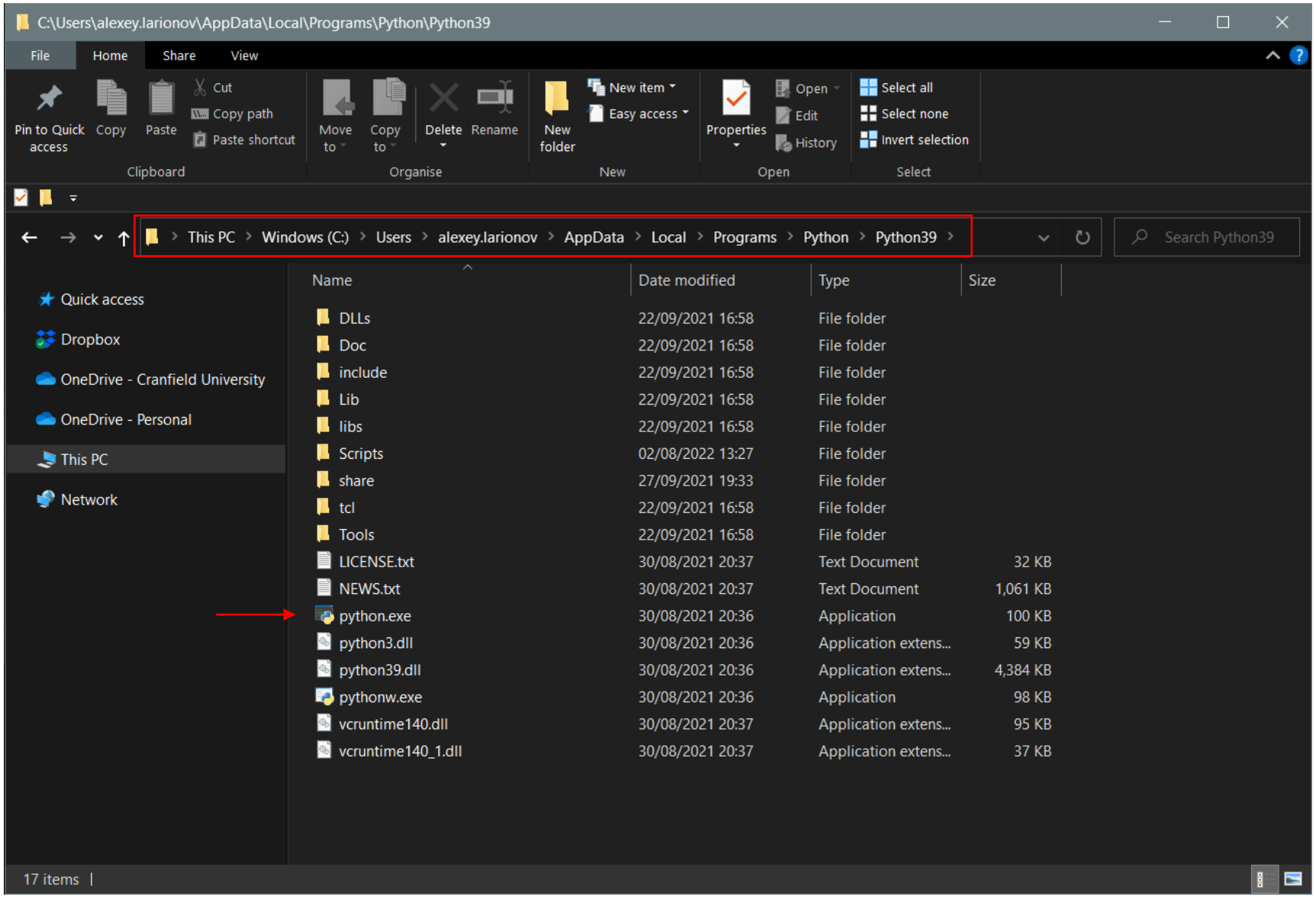


https://apps.microsoft.com/store

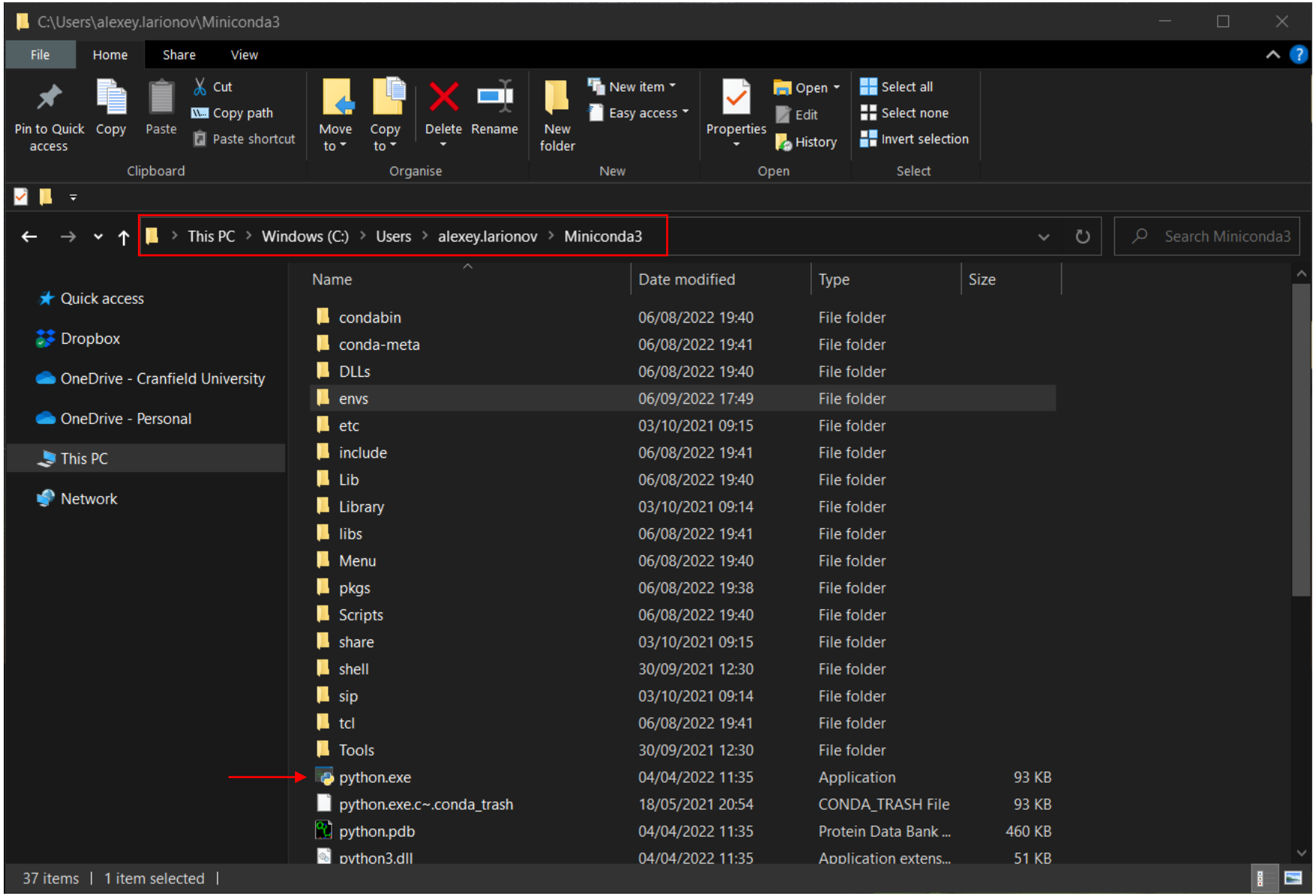
There could (should!) be many Pythons on your PC

C:/Users/alexey.Larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/**python.exe**



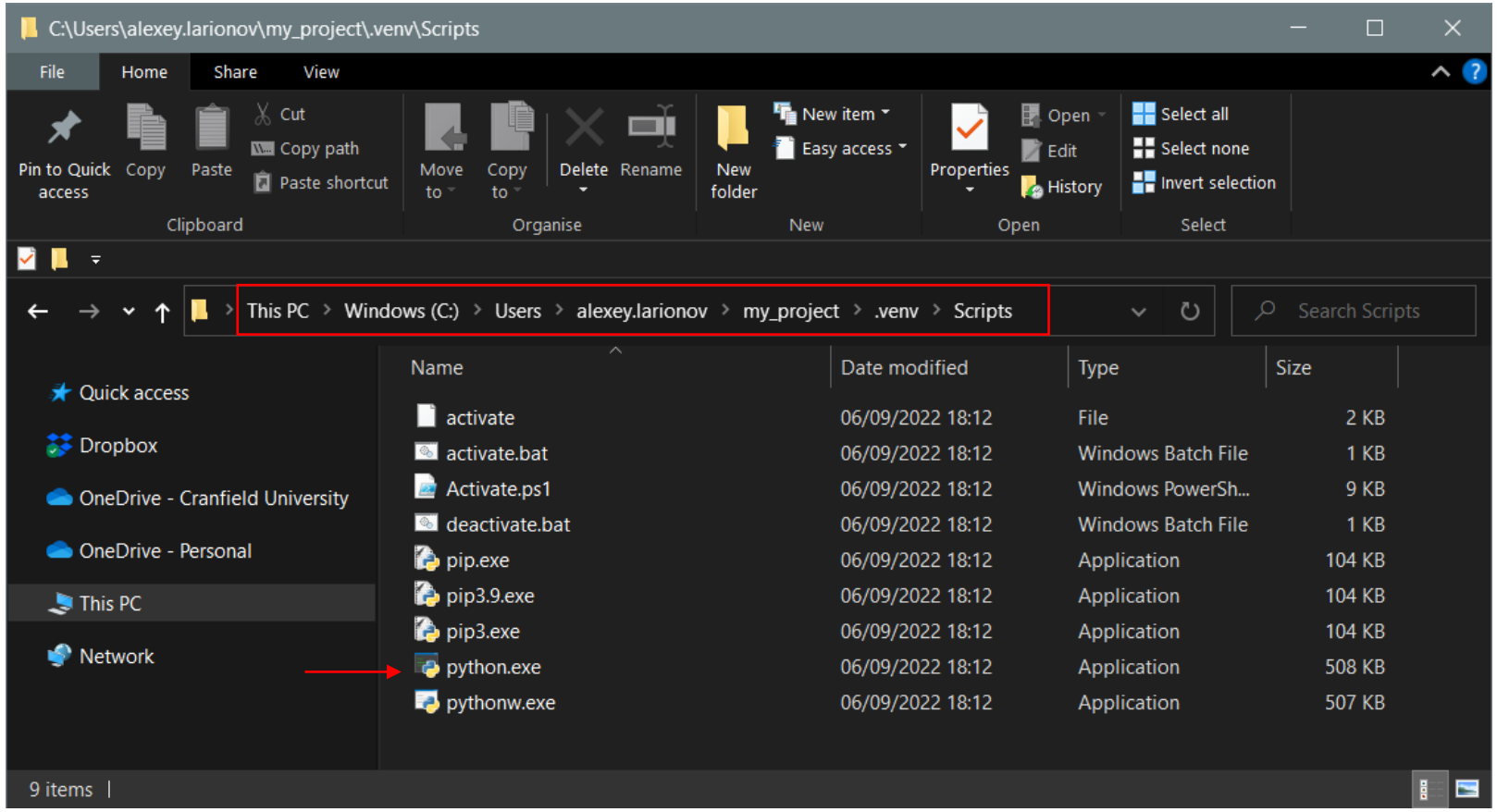
There could (should!) be many Pythons on your PC

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/**python.exe**



There could (should!) be many Pythons on your PC

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my_project/venv/Scripts/**python.exe**



There could (should!) be many ~~Pythons~~ on your PC

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/**python.exe**

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my_project/venv/Scripts/**python.exe**

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/**python.exe**

In fact, I have many more Python environments on my PC …

Called

Interpreters (VS Code)
or
Kernels (Jupyter)
or
Virtual Environments (venv)

It's a good programming practice to create a separate virtual environment for each Python project !

(using conda or venv – as we will discuss later)

The "system / global" Python interpreter is the one that is called by default when you type "python" on the system terminal

The "system" Python interpreter is defined by what of the available Pythons is in PATH variable of the terminal (shell)

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Interactive use in terminal

Open command prompt

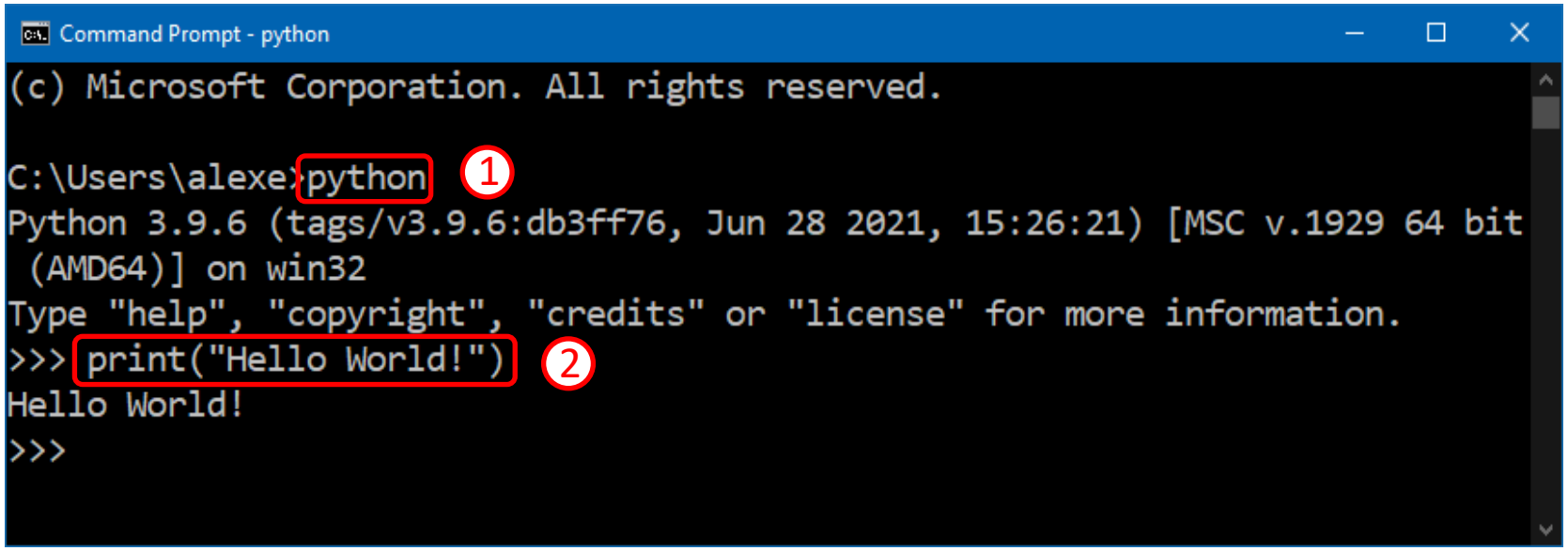
1 Type `python`
to start Python interpreter

2 Type `print("Hello, world!")`
within the Python interpreter

In some Linux systems you may need
to use **`python3`** instead of `python`

In Windows you may use **`py`**
instead of `python`
https://docs.python.org/3/using/windows.html#launcher

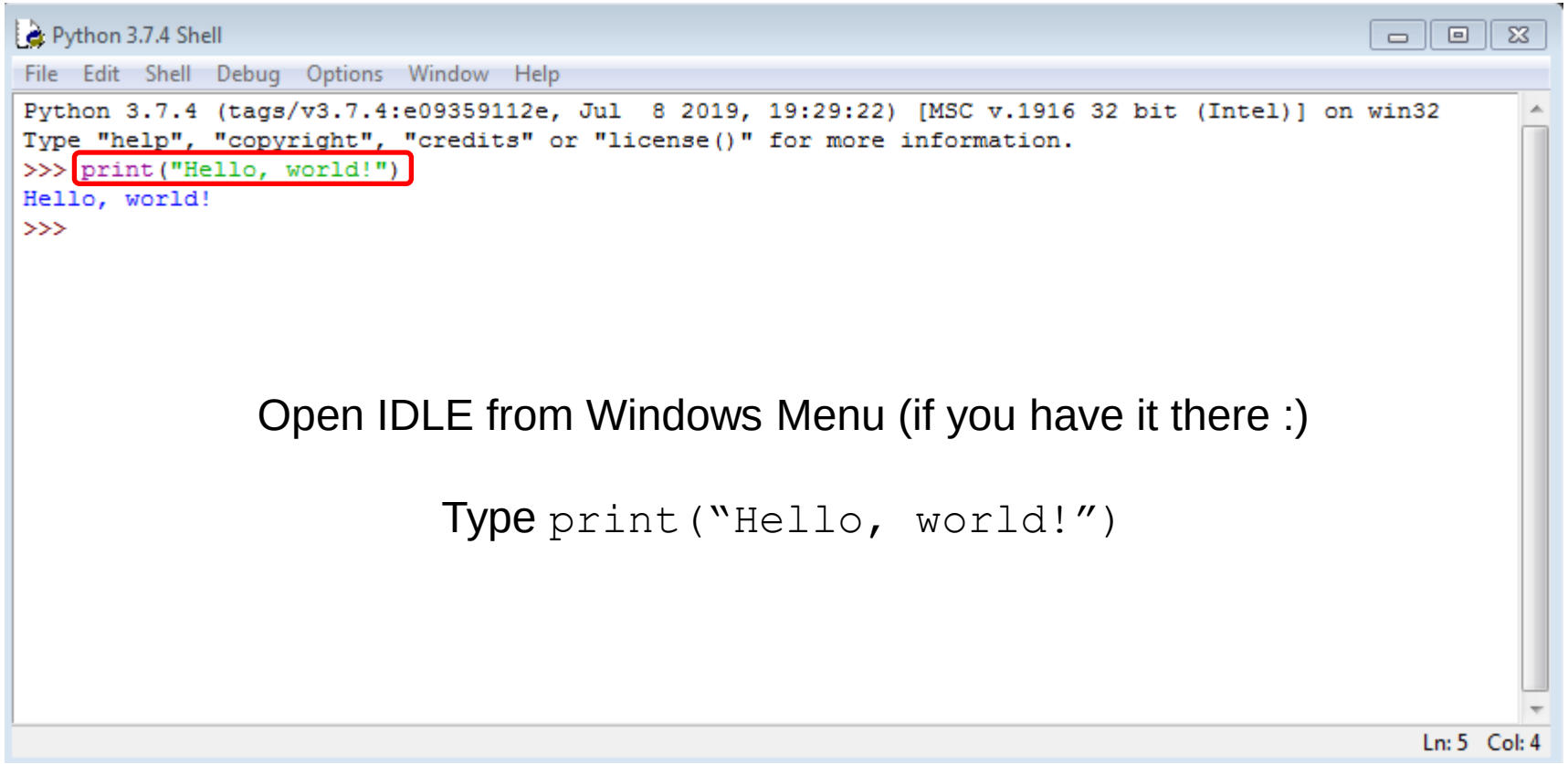
Use `exit()` command to exit



Sometime this interactive way of using Python is called
Read-Evaluate-Print-Loop: REPL

Python IDLE

- **I**ntegrated **D**eve**L**opment **E**nvironment: a tool traditionally supplied with many Python distributions
- It is not actually a proper IDE (like RStudio, NetBeans, VisualStudio etc)
- It's an interactive Python terminal with syntax highlighting, auto-completion, smart indentation etc



Open IDLE from Windows Menu (if you have it there :)

Type `print("Hello, world!")`

I personally don't know a single person who uses Python IDLE …

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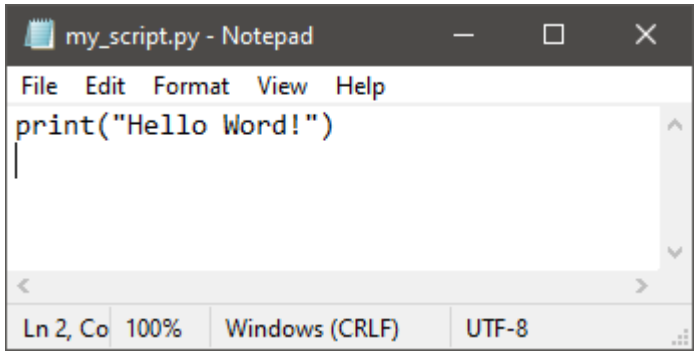
Writing a Python script

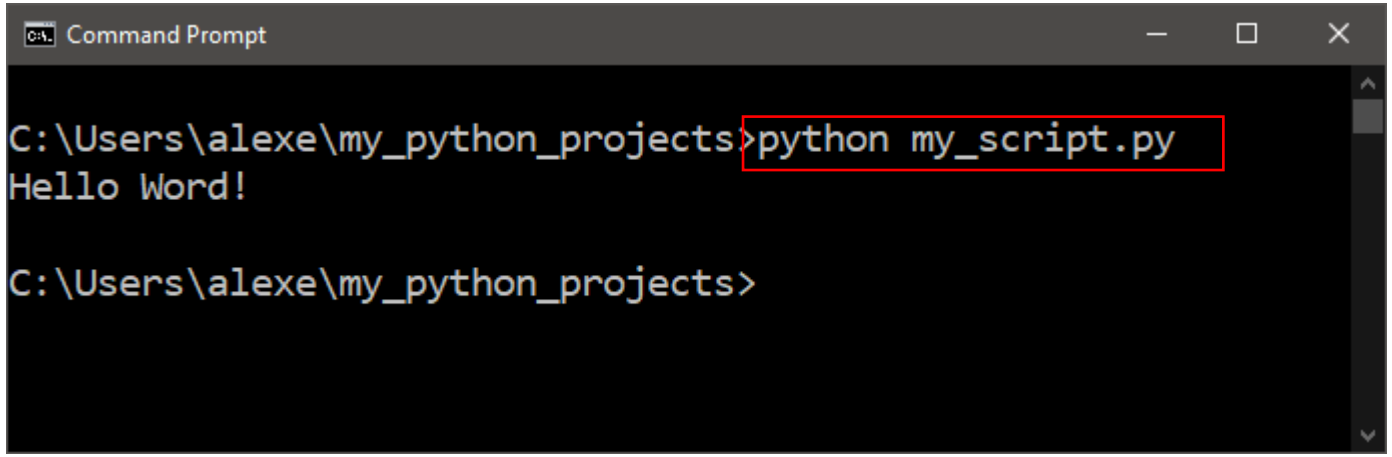
Create a text file called `my_script.py`

Write in the file `print("Hello, world!")`

Open terminal in the folder containing your script

Type in the terminal `python my_script.py`





A good Python IDE shipped with Anaconda …

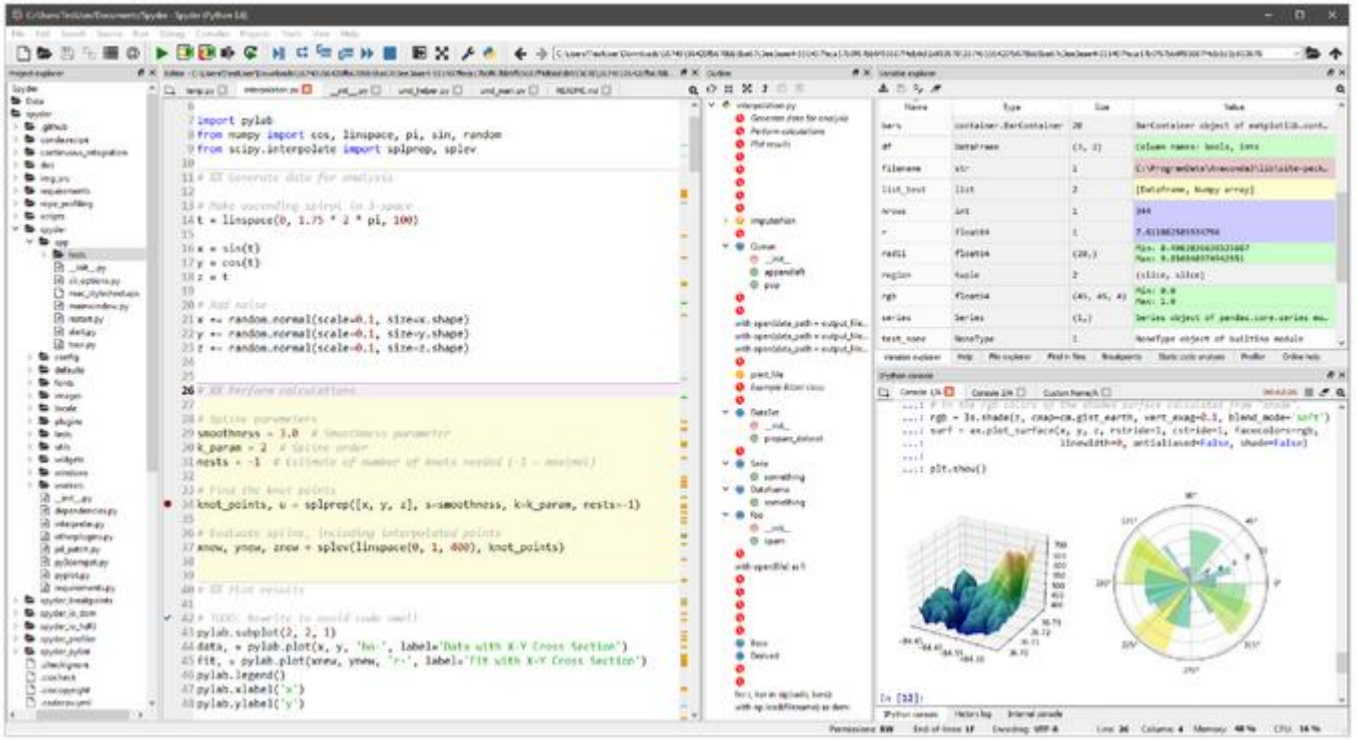
Spyder or Spider ?
https://wikidiff.com/spyder/spider

Spyder is an open-source cross-platform integrated development environment (IDE) for scientific programming in Python

- Spyder installer includes a number of important Python packages, including NumPy, SciPy, Matplotlib, pandas, IPython, SymPy and Cython, as well as other open-source software

SPYDER
The Scientific Python Development Environment

Feels like R-Studio for Python …



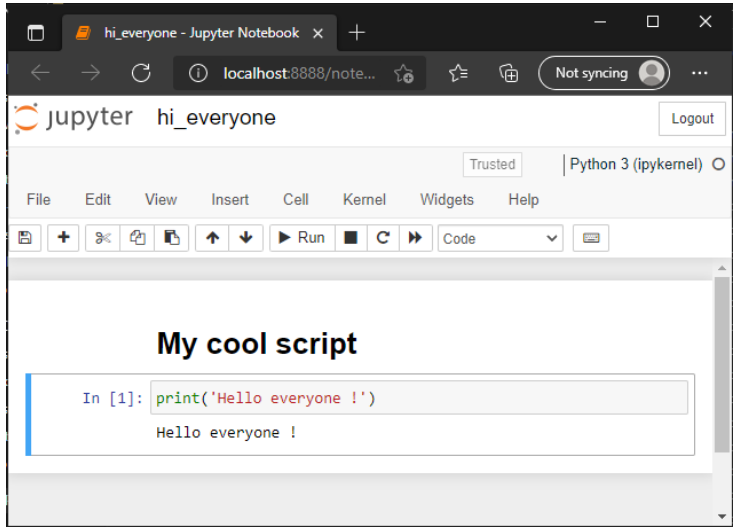
The proper ways to write Python code

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Jupyter

Jupyter or Jupiter?

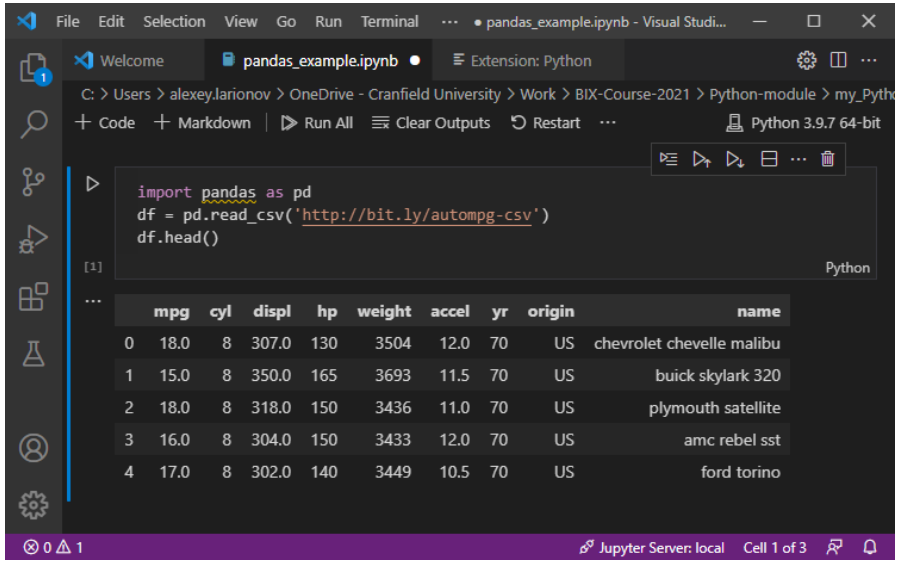
Now, forget all the ways of using Python shown in the previous slides !

- **Jupyter Notebook for interactive analysis**
- De-facto standard in data science & bioinformatics
- Keeps well-formatted comments, plots and code together: Reproducible Research !



https://jupyter.org

- **VS Code or PyCharm for coding**
- Good for software developers
- Could be confusing for beginners
- Supports Jupyter Notebooks too !



https://code.visualstudio.com

The proper ways to write Python code

https://blog.jetbrains.com/pycharm/2017/09/pycharm-community-edition-and-professional-edition-explained-licenses-and-more

Mac users ?

- **Jupyter Notebook for interactive analysis**
- De-facto standard in data science & bioinformatics
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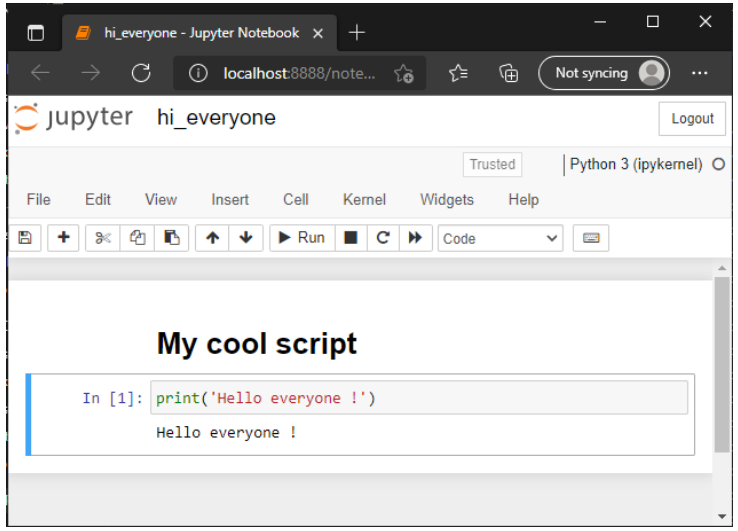

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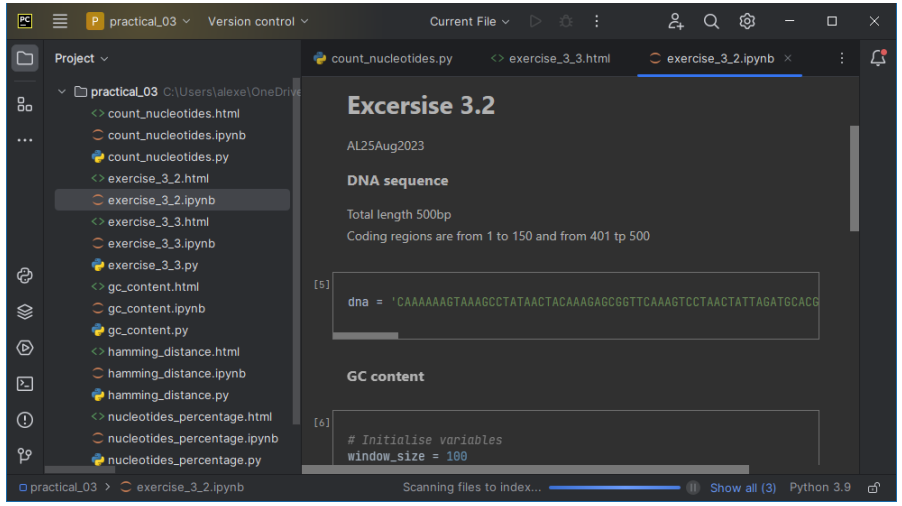

https://www.jetbrains.com/pycharm/download/other.html

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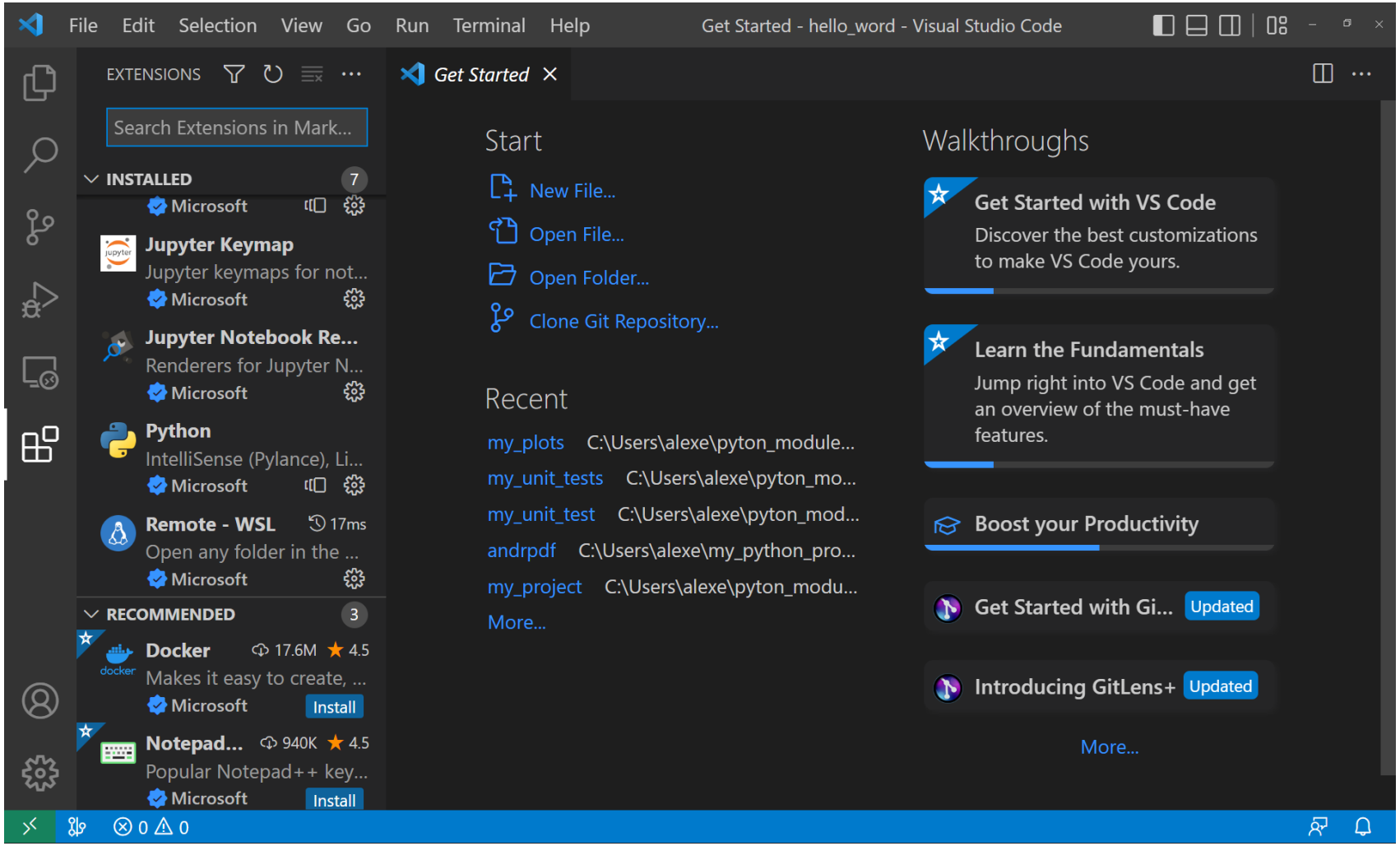
Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

You will have time for this during the practical session !



VS Code may look confusing at the beginning …

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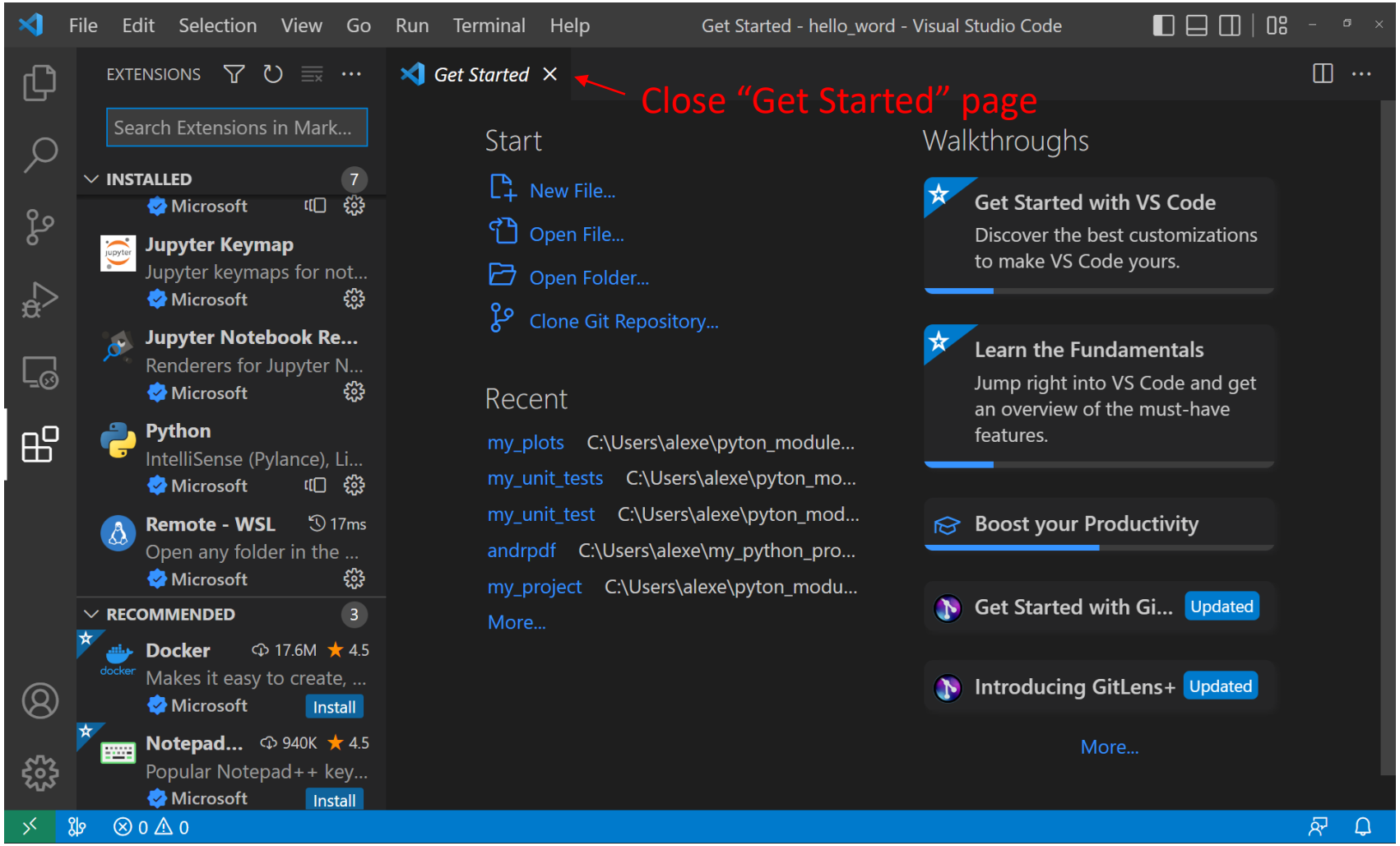

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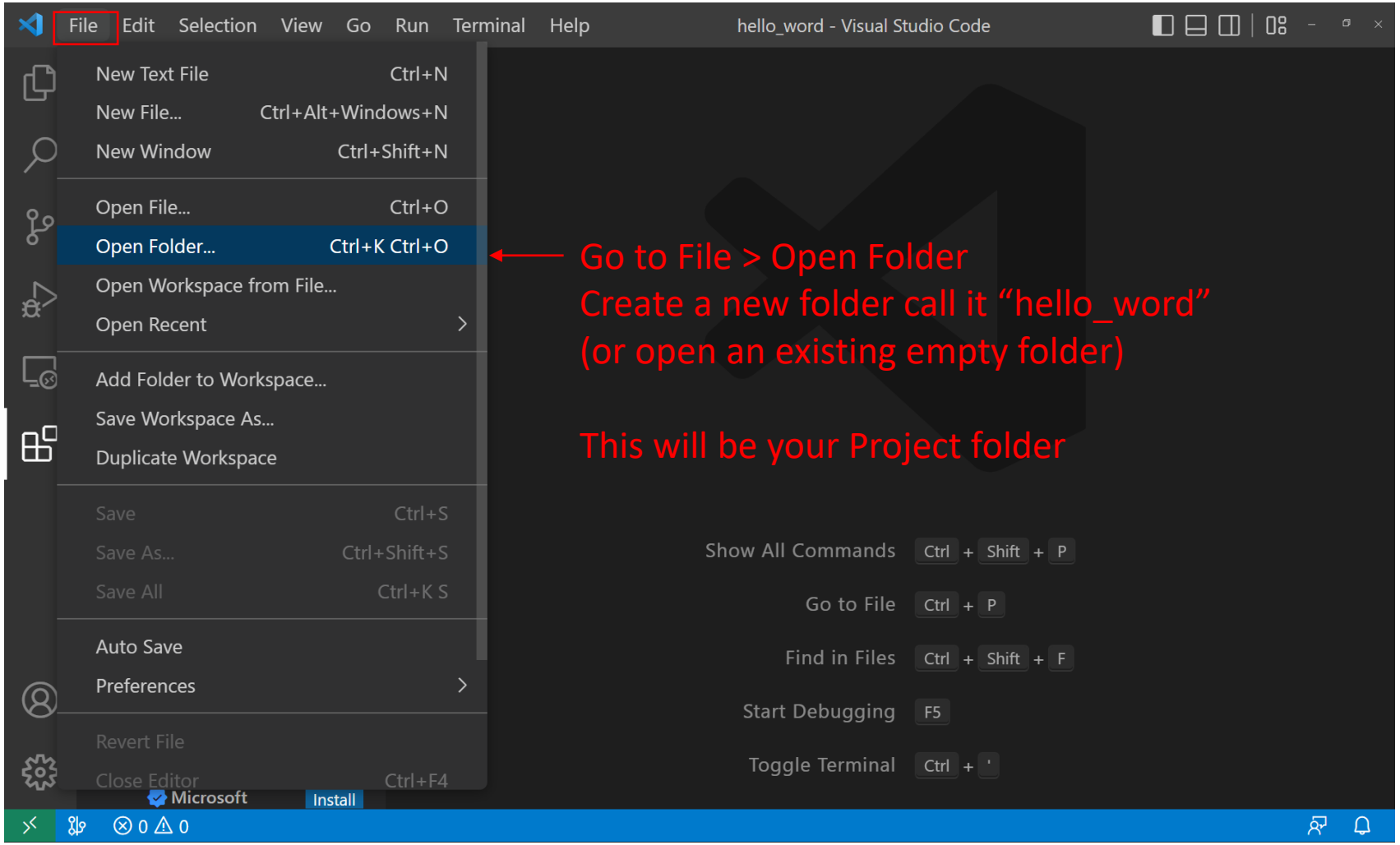
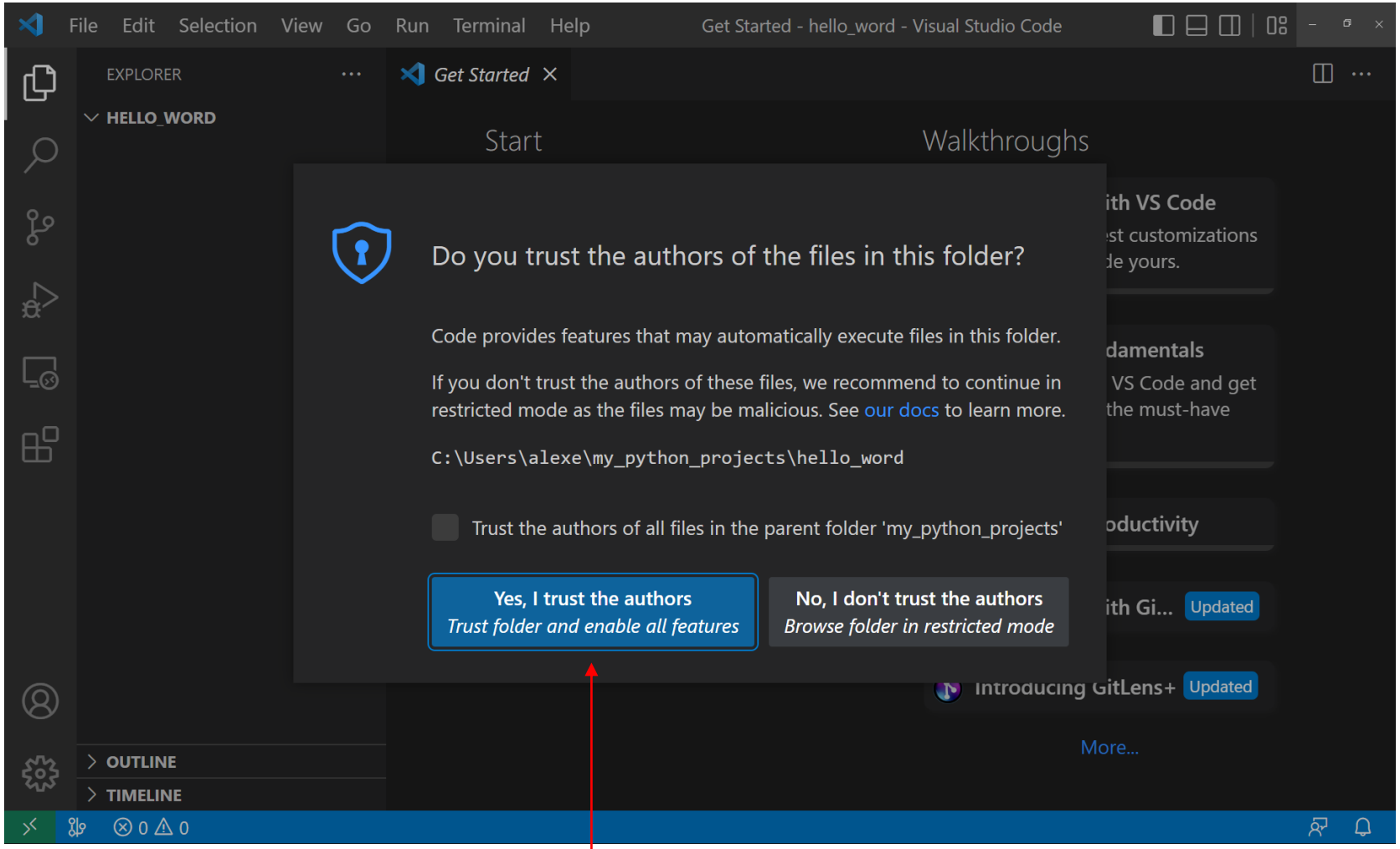


It’s a good programming practice to make a Project folder for any Python project, even if it includes a single file

Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

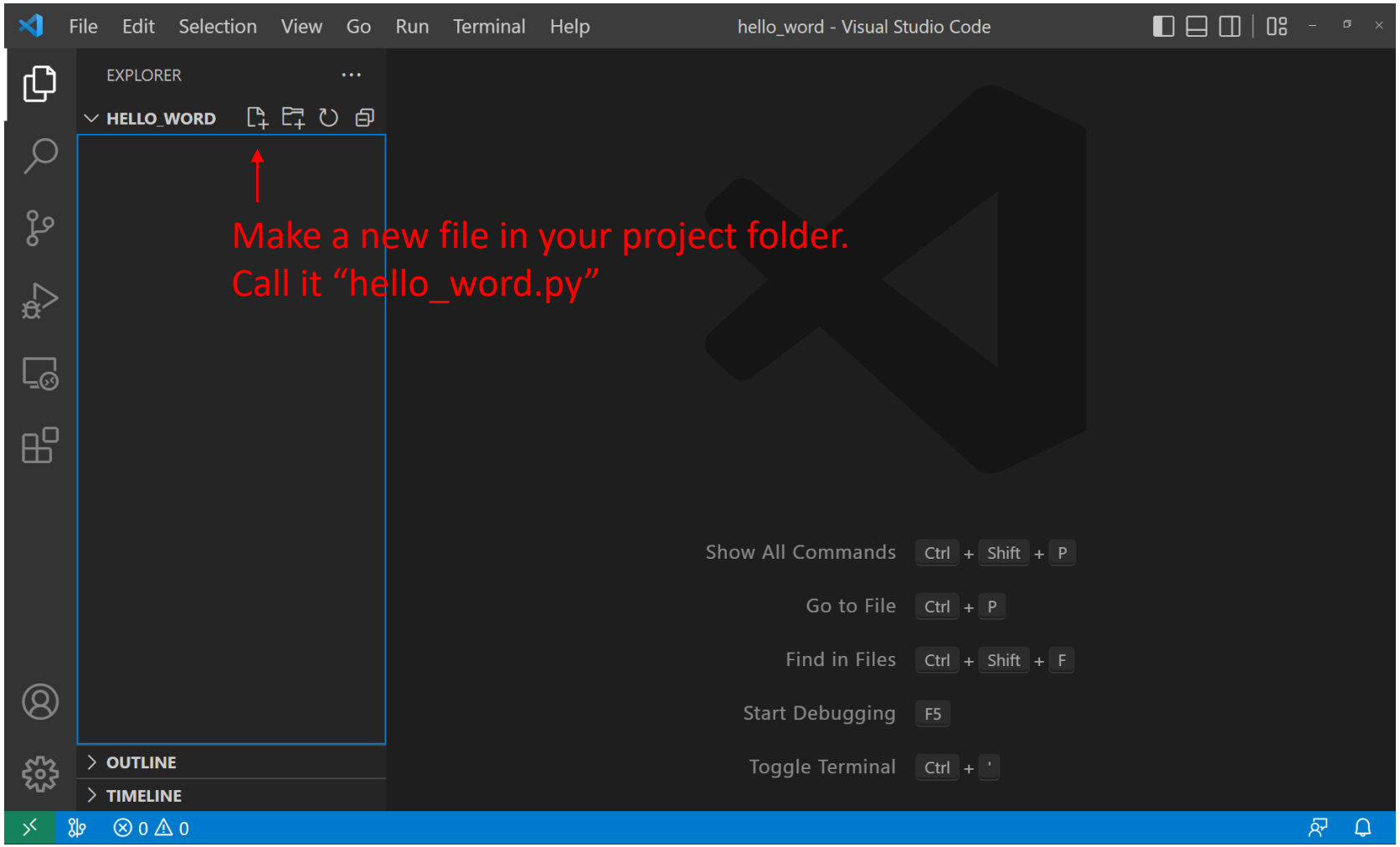
Sorry, VS-Code is slightly paranoid :)



Decide whether you trust yourself …

Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

Make sure you selected file explorer tab



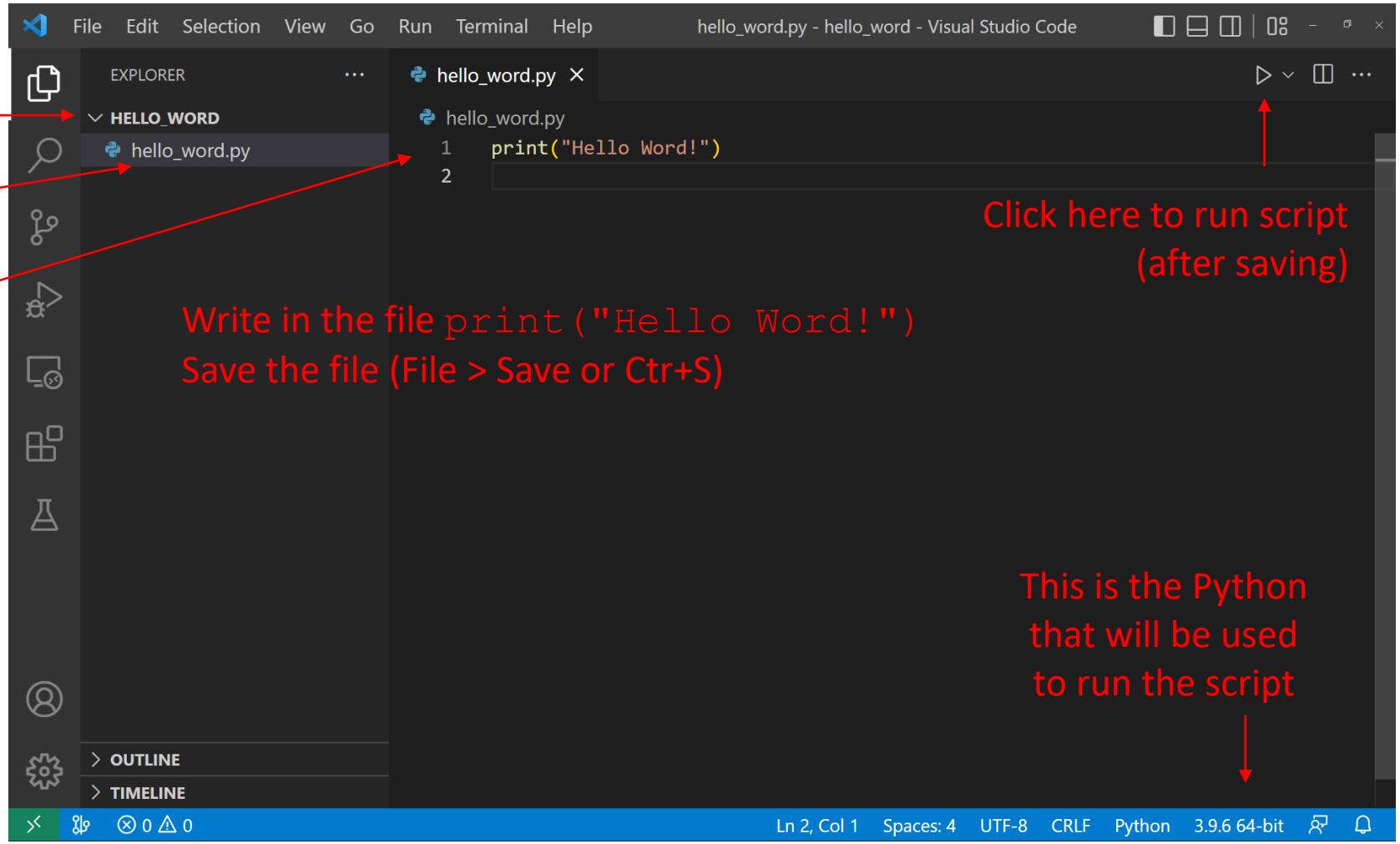
If you are prompted to install Python extension: agree to it :)

Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

This is the name of your folder

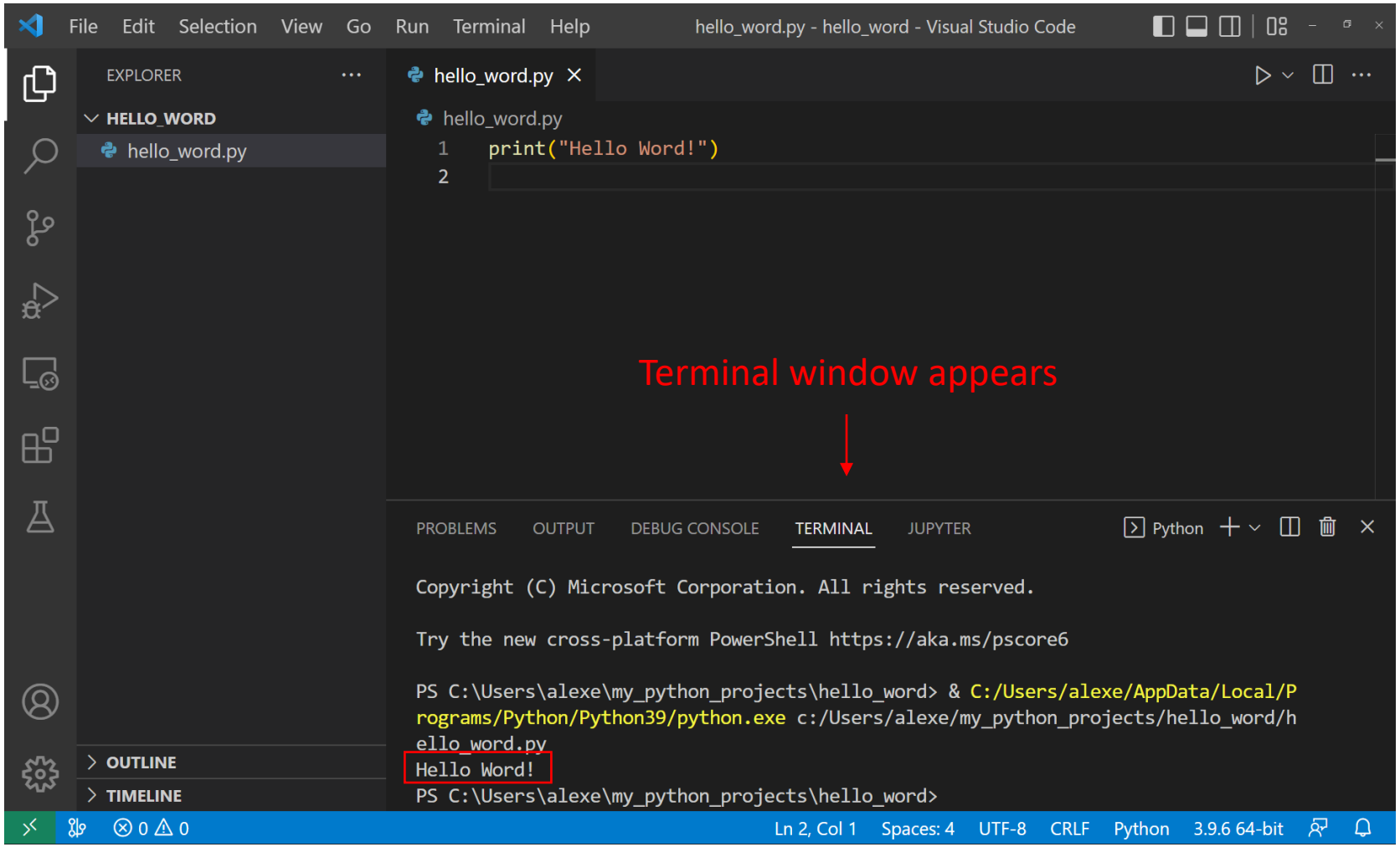
This is the name of your file

This is the content of your file



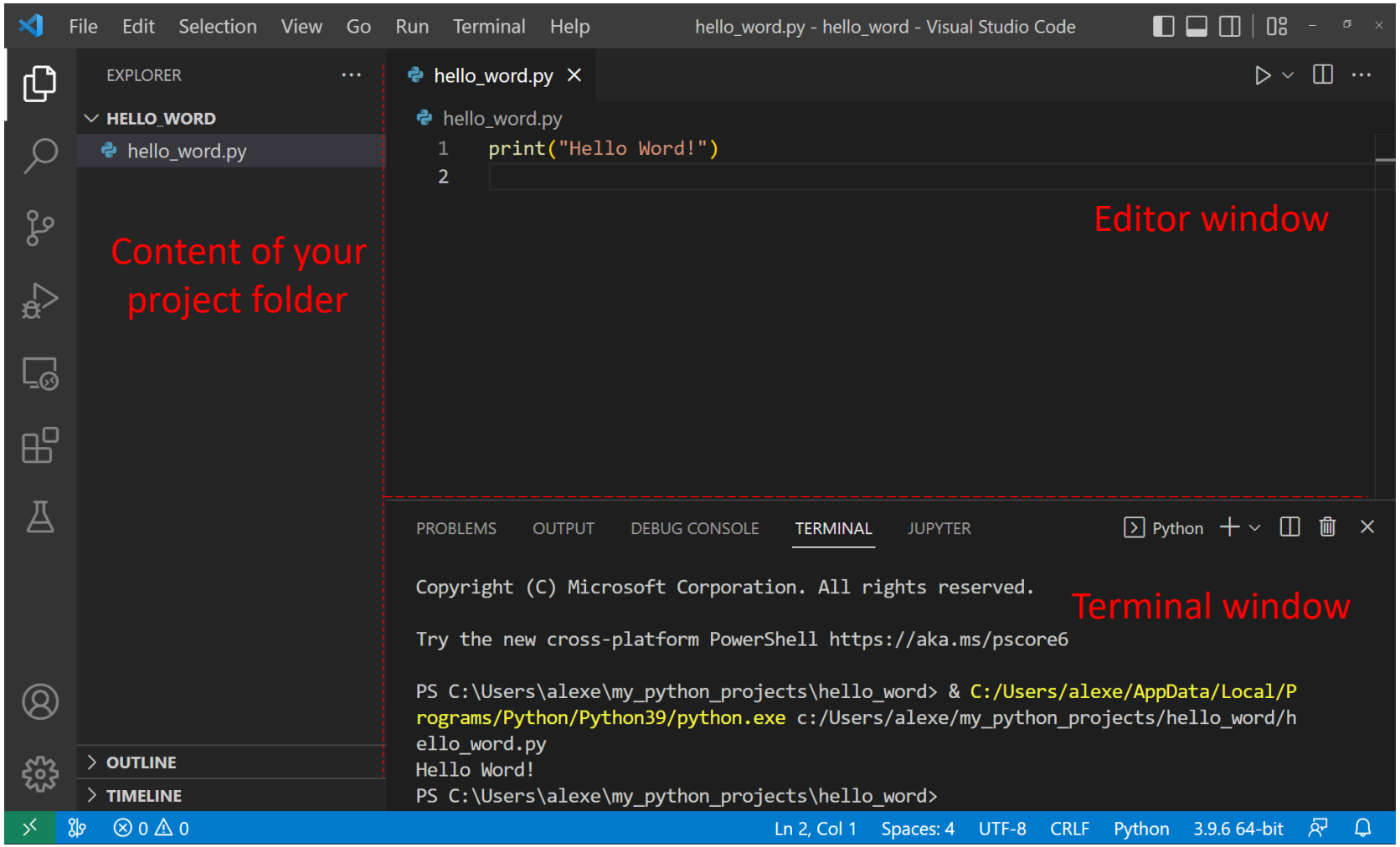
If you work on Windows, you may need to configure terminal when you attempt running the script

Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python



Hurray !!! You have run your first Python script in VS Code !!!

Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python



VS Code is not so confusing after all ☺

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Comments in your script

Comments are not executed.
However, it's a good practice to put comments in your script

```
# A traditional one-line comment

"""
This is an example of multi-line comment:
You should not worry if comments make a half of your script !
"""
```

Comments in your script

Use English US Keyboard

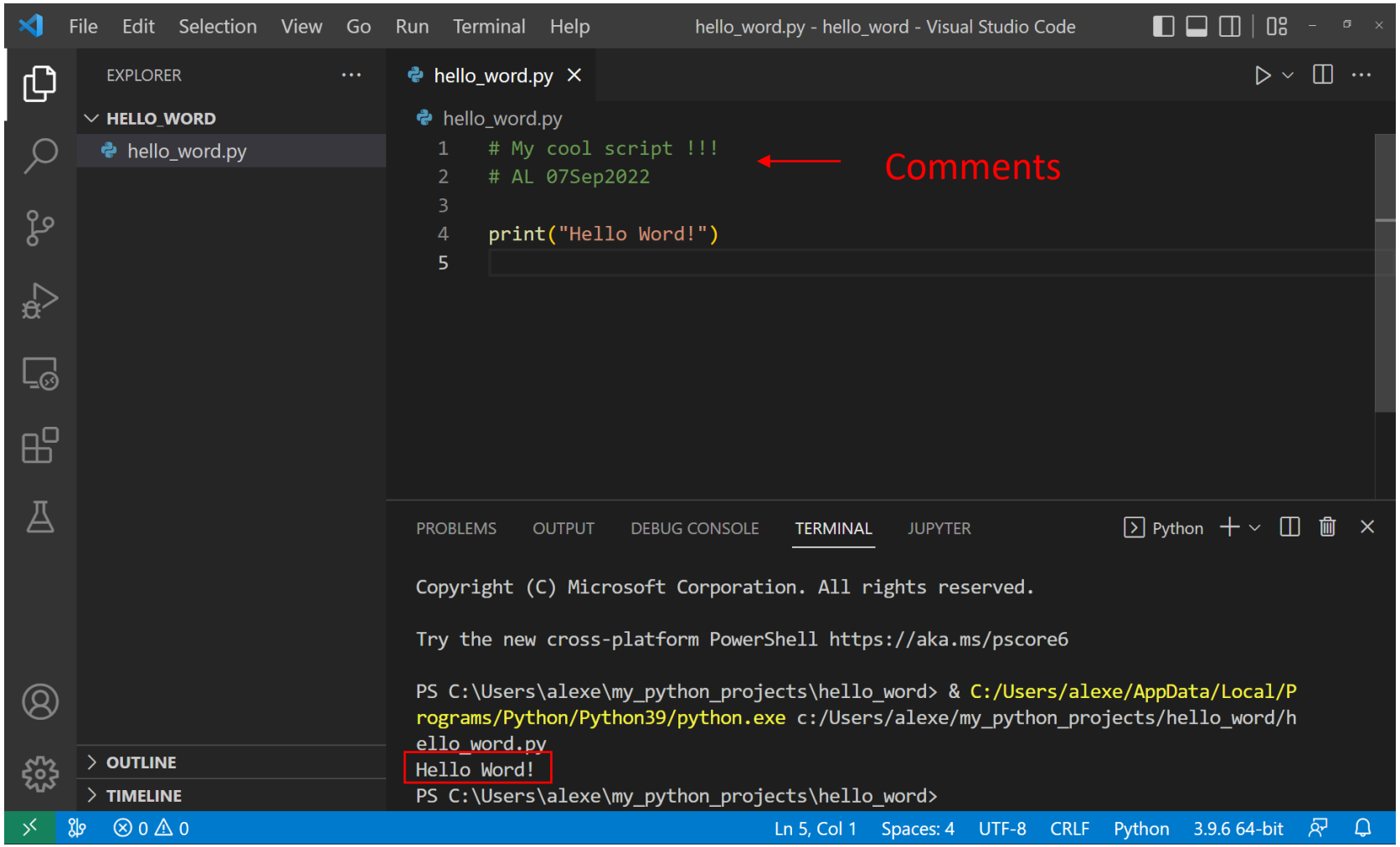
English UK Keyboard may type £

Comments are not executed.
However, it's a good practice to put comments in your script

```
# A traditional one-line comment

"""
This is an example of multi-line comment:
You should not worry if comments make a quote of your script !
"""
```

Comments in Python



Result is the same: comments are not executed !

Indentation

Most programming languages do not care about indentations …

But most human do …

Non-indented C-style Code:

```
if(condition_1){
if(condition_2){
function_X()
}
else{
function_Y()
}
}
```

Indented C-style Code:

```
if(condition_1){
        if(condition_2){
                function_X()
        }
        else{
                function_Y()
        }
}
```

Indentation is required in Python

Indented C-style Code:

```
if(condition_1){
        if(condition_2){
                function_X()
        }
        else{
                function_Y()
        }
}
```

Indented Python Code:

```
if(condition_1):
        if(condition_2):
                function_X()

        else:
                function_Y()

...
```

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The Python philosophy

A small (!) core language …

and lots (!) of modules

Module = Package = Library

math

sys

os

only load what you need &
do not reinvent the wheel

Built-in modules: for standard tasks

built-in modules come with Python, they don't need to be installed

- However, to use a built-in module, you still need to import it: `import <module name>`

Examples:

```
import sys # system module
sys.executable   # the Python that you use …

import os # os module
os.getcwd()  # working folder …

import math # math module
math.sin(0.5)  # math functions …
```

If you want to find what modules are installed in your Python environment:

```
help("modules")
```

For specific module:

```
help("math")
```

Multiple ways of importing a module

- Simple import

```
import math
factorial = math.factorial(5)
print(factorial)
```

- A specific function can be imported from a module

```
from math import factorial
factorial = factorial(5)
print(factorial)
```

NOT import factorial from math

- Modify the names of modules and their functions by aliasing

```
import math as m
factorial = m.factorial(5)
print(factorial)
```

- `import` statement may reference everything defined within the module by using an asterisk (*)

```
from math import *
factorial = factorial(5)
print(factorial)
```

Don't use this method !

Additional modules: your customised toolbox

There are LOTS of modules for specialized bioinformatics tasks !

- You must install additional modules (=packages) before use
- Packages (=modules) are installed outside of Python
  - You can not ***install*** a package inside a Python script
  - Inside a Python script you only ***import*** already installed packages
- Two main tools to install Python packages are PIP and Conda

Some cool Python modules:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o06MyVhYte4

PIP - Package Installer for Python

- PIP is PyPA recommended tool to install packages from PyPI
  - Tool to install packages
  - The repository of Python packages

- Installs Python packages and their Python dependencies

- Installs into currently active Python environment

- PIP usually comes with Python installation
  - May be missed in Conda Python environments (although could be easily added by Conda)

Python Packaging Authority

Python Packages Repository

```
pip install …
```

This is how you install a module with PIP from the system terminal !

Where PIP installs the additional libraries ?

What is the “currently active environment” ?

C:/Users/alexey.Larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/**python.exe**
/pip.exe
/Libs/<libraries>

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my_project/.venv/Scripts/**python.exe**
/Scripts/**pip.exe**
/Libs/<a different set of libraries>

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/**python.exe**
/pip.exe
/Libs/<a third set of libraries>

Packages/libraries
are only visible within a
specific Python environment

Different Python environments
may have different sets of
installed packages/libraries

Lecture plan

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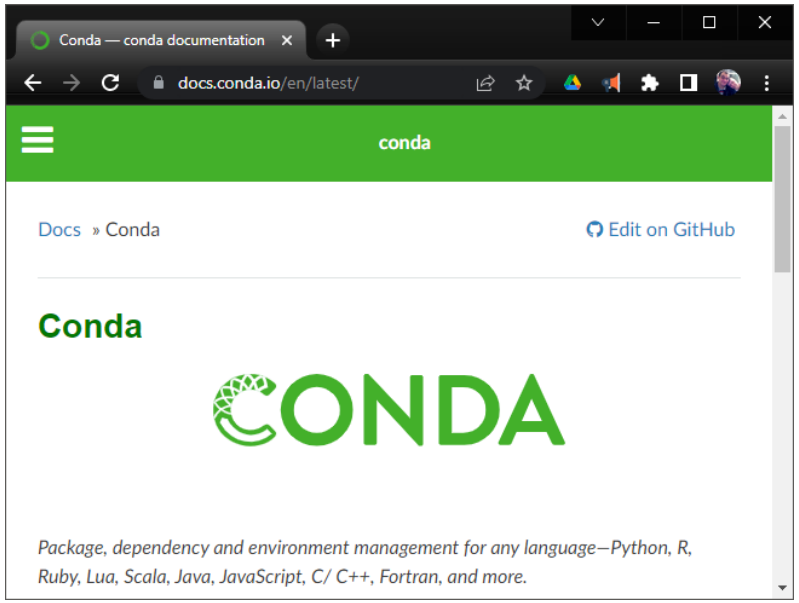
  - Scripts & Python IDEs
  - Hello Word in VS Code
- ✓ Comments & Indentation
- Python packages and environments
  - PIP, Conda, Venv

Conda: a third-party package manager

Conda ≠ Python

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/**python.exe**
/conda.exe

- Supports Python and other languages
- Installs Python and non-Python dependencies (uses pre-compiled binaries for installation)
- Many repositories (in addition to defaults)
  - conda-forge, bioconda, etc
- Organises Python environments
  - maintains CONDA environments tree
- By default, installs into currently active CONDA environment



https://docs.conda.io/en/latest

CONDA-FORGE

BIOCONDA

CONDA environments

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/**python.exe**
/conda.exe
/Libs/<base set of libraries>
/envs/emoji_env
/matplotlib
/cutatapt
/my_project_1
/my_project_2
/…

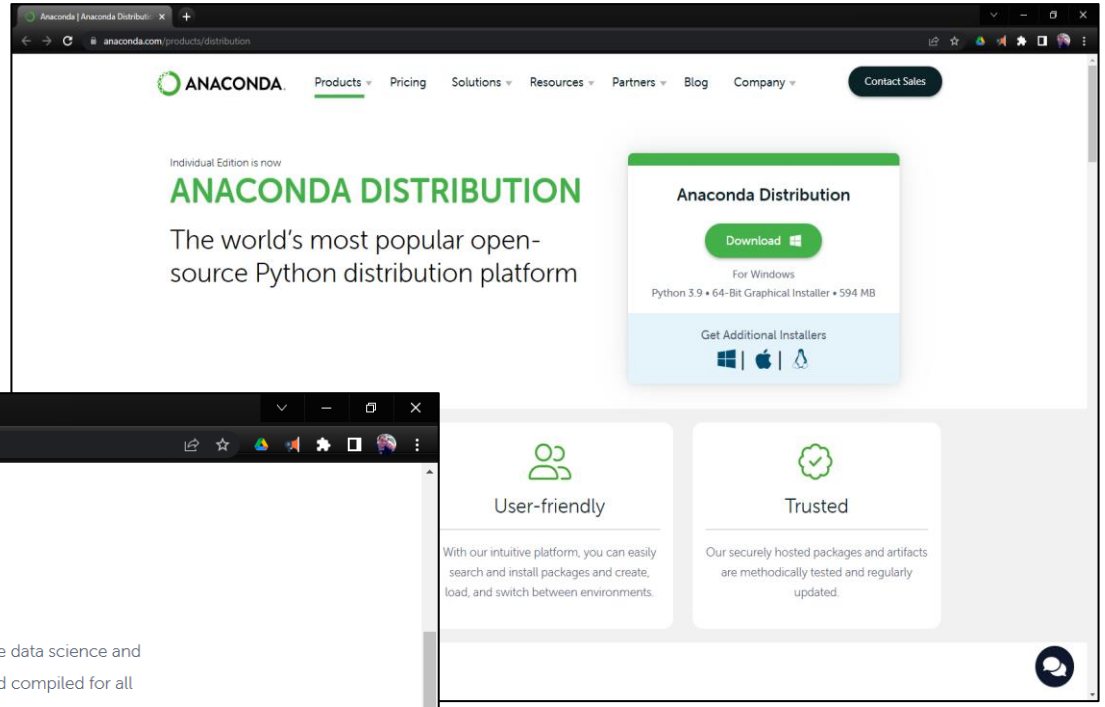
Currently active Conda environment

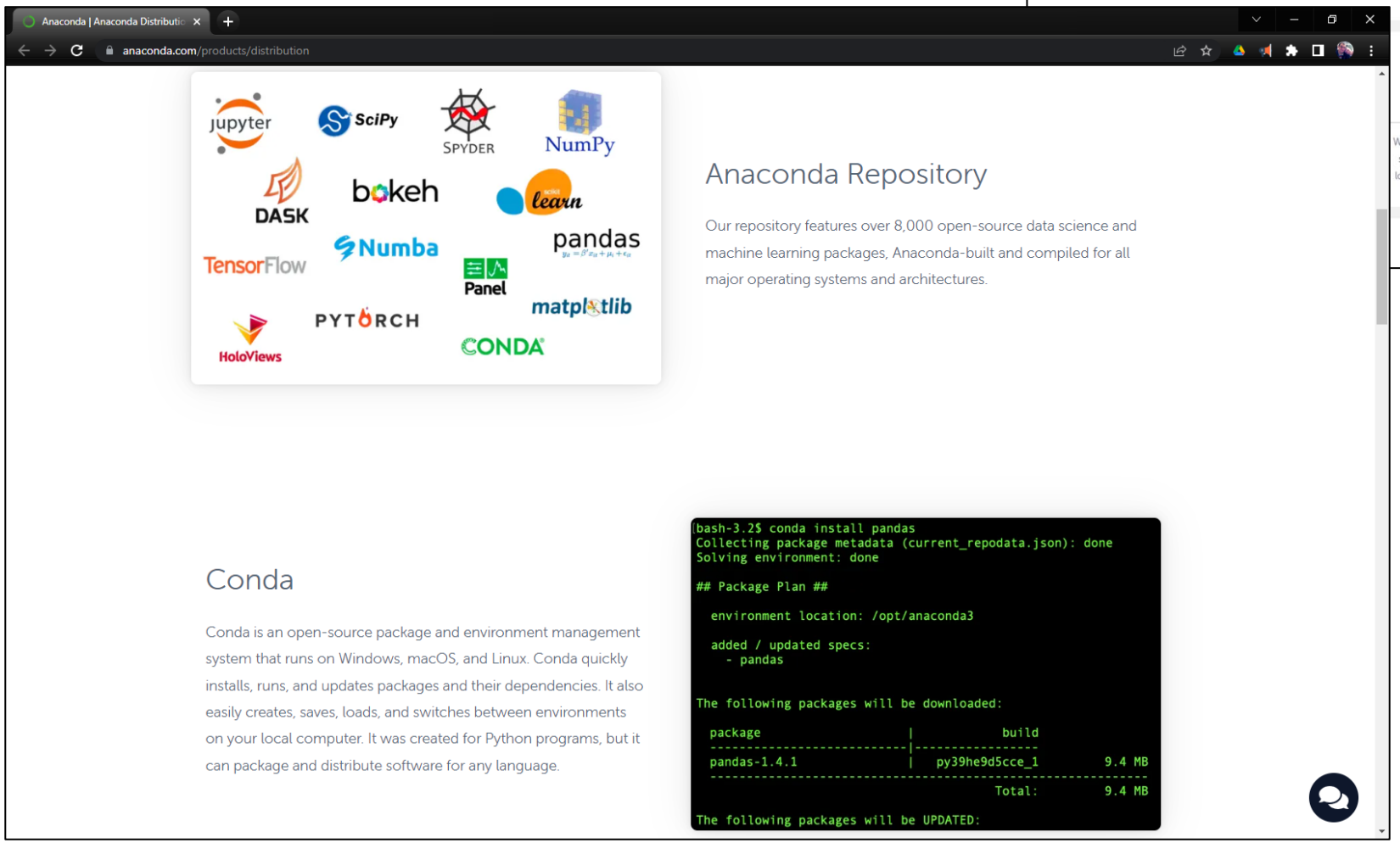
```
(base)> conda env list
(base)> conda create --name emoji_env
(base)> conda activate emoji_env
(emoji_env)> conda install emoji
(emoji_env)> ...
(emoji_env)> conda deactivate
(base)> ...
```

Anaconda

Anaconda = Python + Conda + Many packages + …

https://www.anaconda.com/download

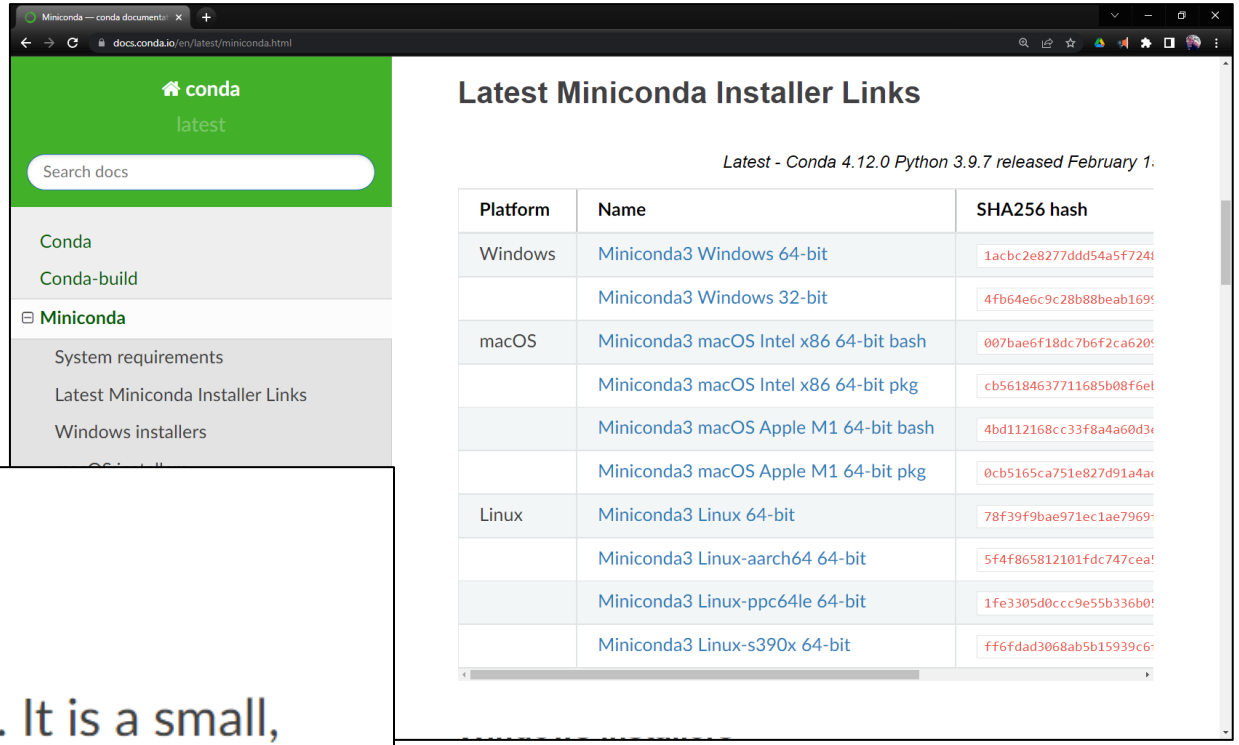




Miniconda

Miniconda = Python + Conda

https://docs.conda.io/en/latest/miniconda.html



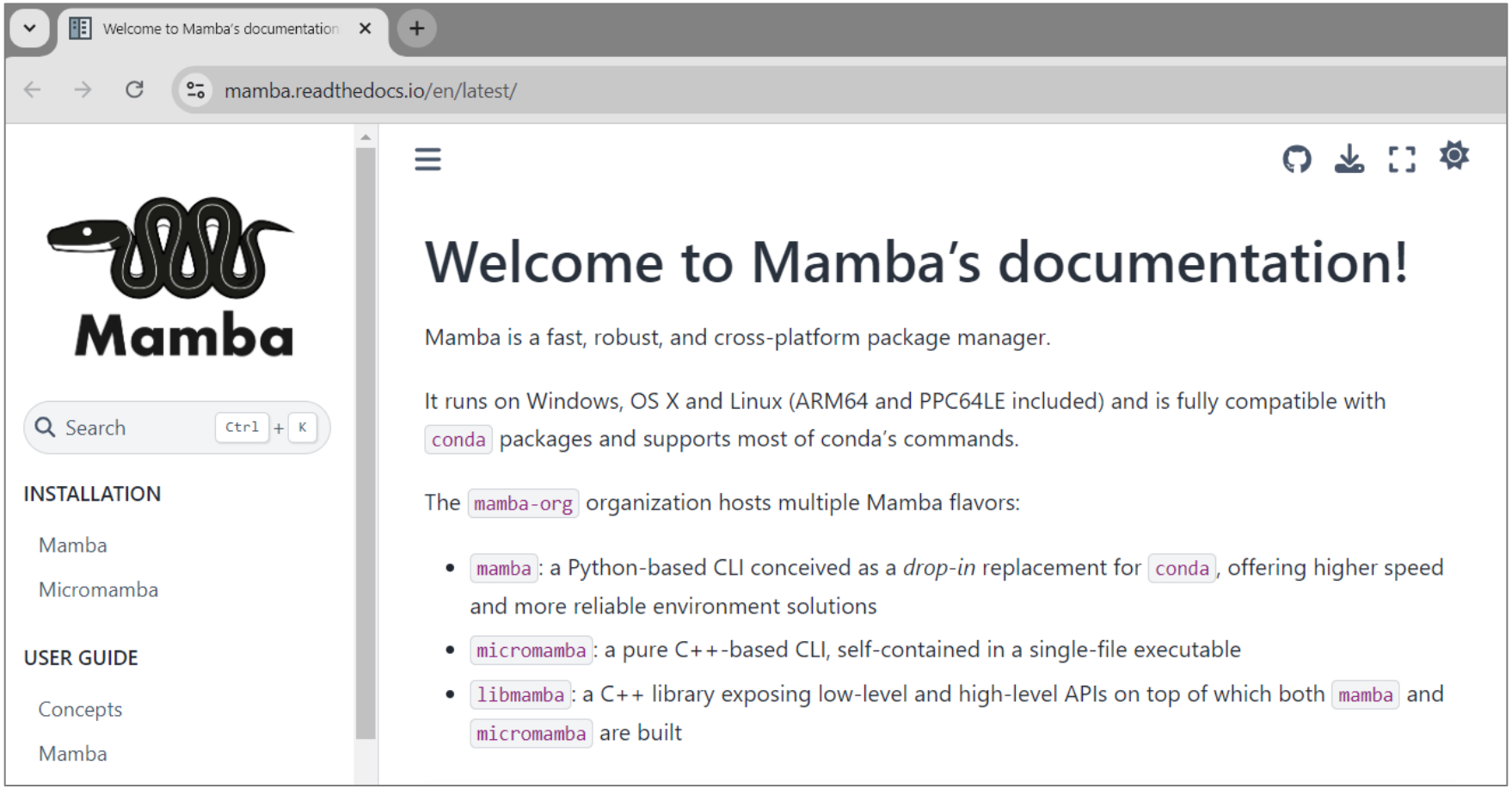
Miniconda

Miniconda is a free minimal installer for conda. It is a small, bootstrap version of Anaconda that includes only conda, Python, the packages they depend on, and a small number of other useful packages, including pip, zlib and a few others. Use the `conda install` command to install 720+ additional conda packages from the Anaconda repository.

Mamba

An efficient implementation of Conda

Not recommended in this course



https://mamba.readthedocs.io/en/latest

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Python environments

"Global" environments

Created when you install Python (including ***base*** Conda env)

C:/Users/alexey.Larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/…

Never recommended to use directly

CONDA environments created by user

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/…

/envs/emoji_env

/matplotlib

/cutatapt

/my_project_1

/my_project_2

/…

```
(base)> conda env list
(base)> conda create ...
(base)> conda activate ...
(emoji_env)> conda install ...
(emoji_env)> ...
(emoji_env)> conda deactivate
(base)> ...
```

Recommended to use during this course

"Local" venv environment

Within project folder, created by venv module

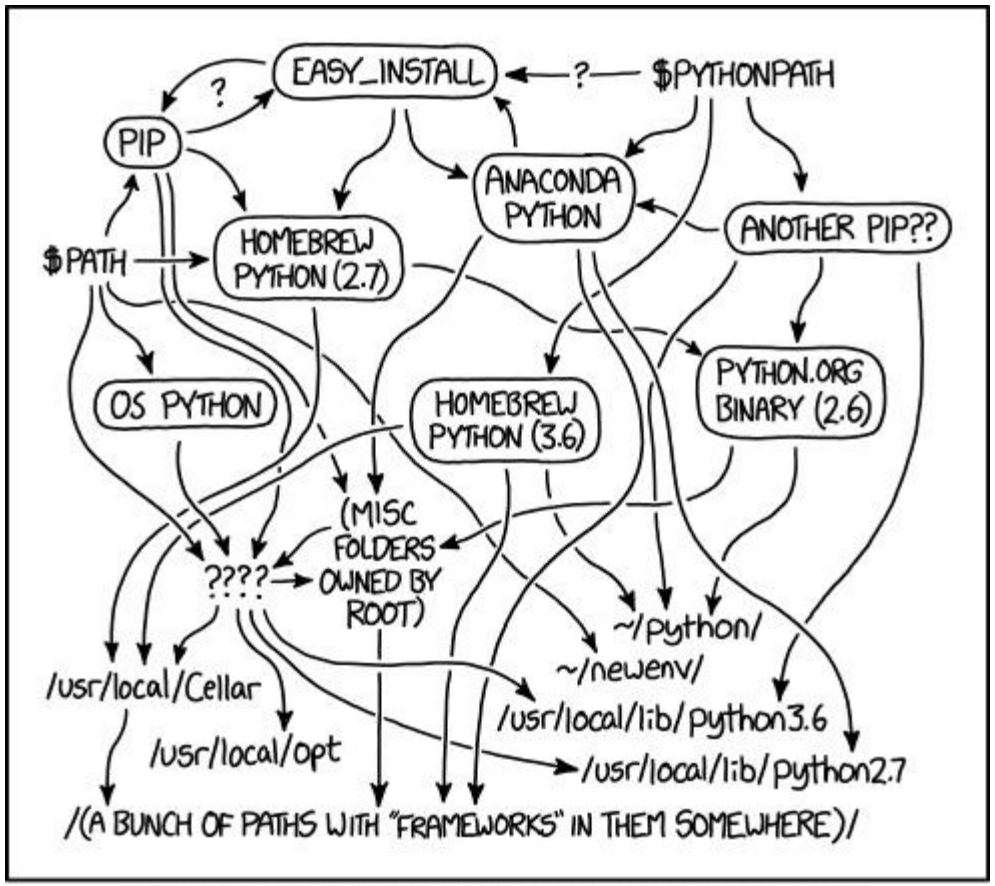
C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my_project/venv/…

```
> python -m venv venv
> venv/Scripts/activate
(venv)> pip install ...
(venv)> ...
(venv)> venv/Scripts/deactivate
> ...
```

Not recommended during this course
unless you already know what you are doing

Python environments

- Using environments allows avoiding conflicts between Python packages
- It's **NOT** recommended to install bioinformatics packages into global (system) environments !!!
- A good practice is to create a separate environment for each bioinformatics project



MY PYTHON ENVIRONMENT HAS BECOME SO DEGRADED THAT MY LAPTOP HAS BEEN DECLARED A SUPERFUND SITE.*

* Superfund sites are "polluted locations requiring a long-term response to clean up hazardous materials" (Wikipedia)

https://www.explainxkcd.com/wiki/index.php/1987:_Python_Environment

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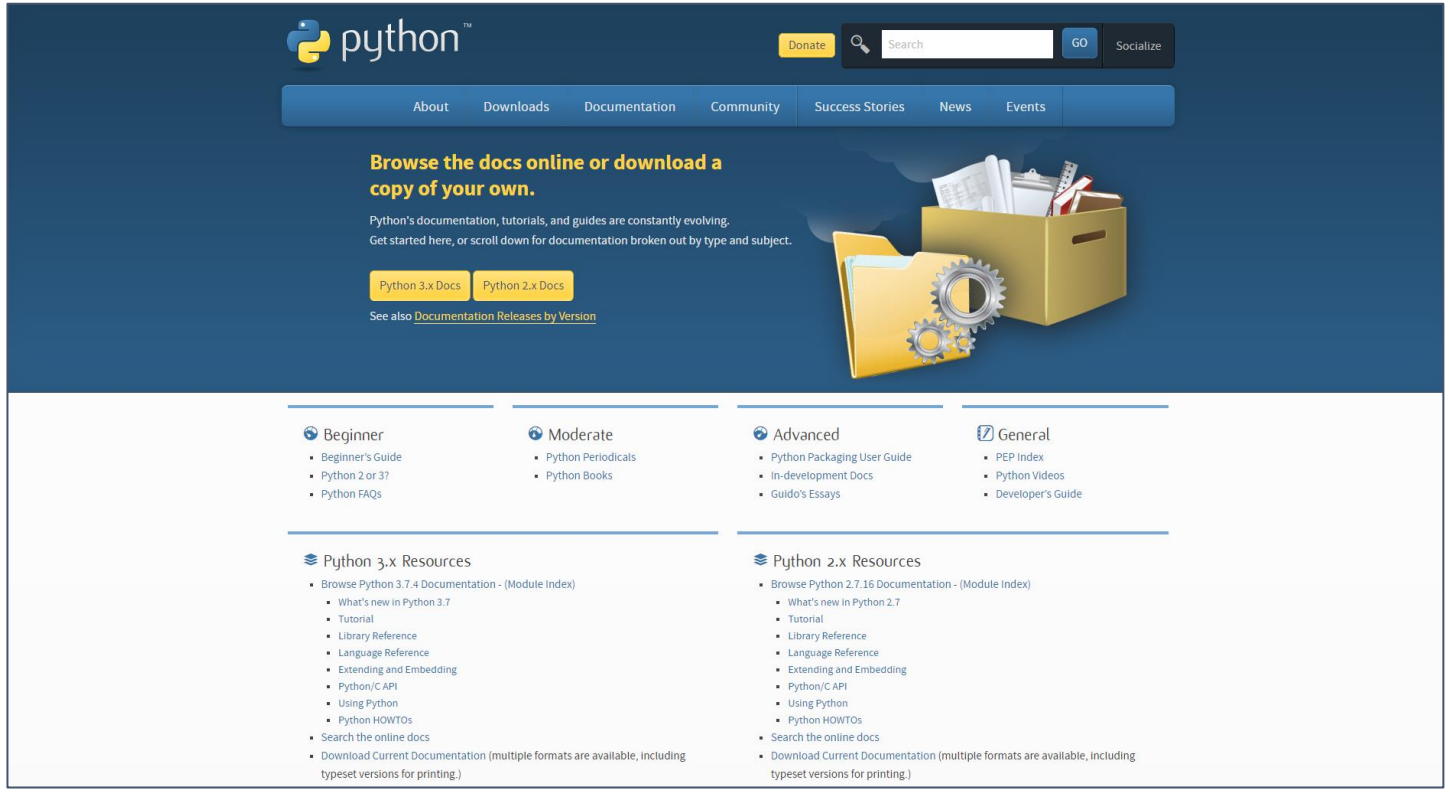
https://www.python.org/doc/

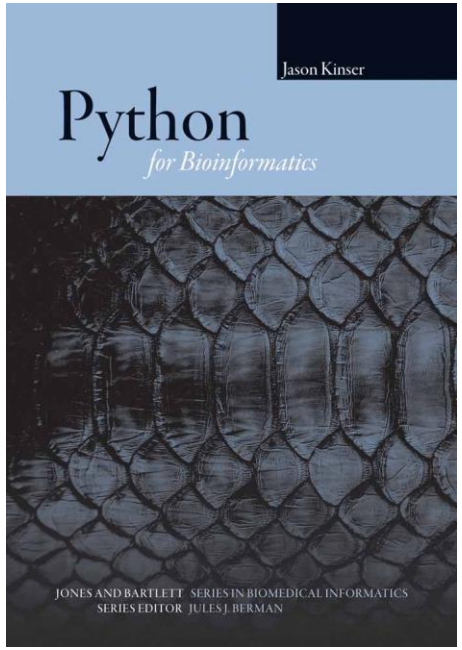


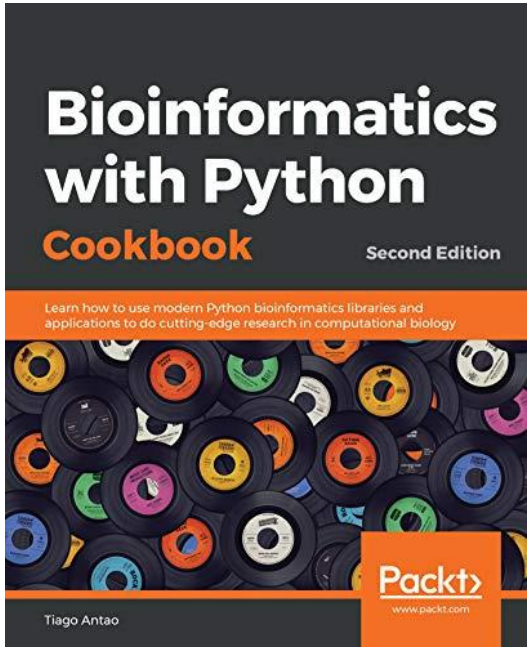
https://wiki.python.org/moin/BeginnersGuide

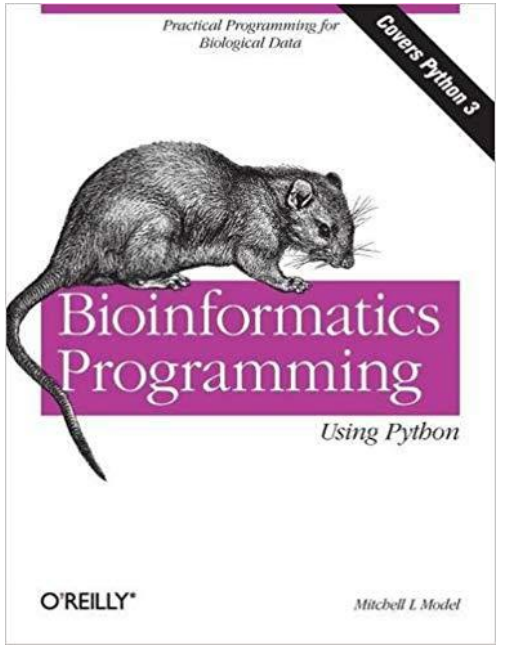
https://realpython.com

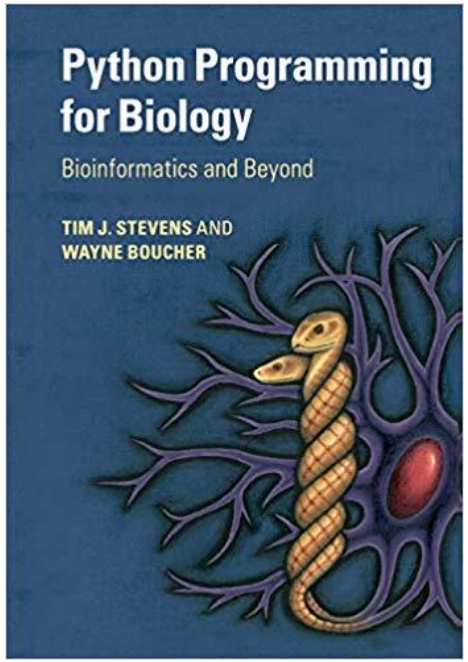
https://realpython.com/python-beginner-tips

Some books (see more in the Reading List)









Many other resources on the Internet …

e.g. LinkedIn-Learning course “Python Essential Training”
https://www.linkedin.com/learning/python-essential-training-18764650
(set of video lectures and tasks, available through Cranfield LinkedIn)

Questions