

PYTHON

Characteristics of Python

Following are important characteristics of Python Programming –

- It supports functional and structured programming methods as well as OOP.
- It can be used as a scripting language or can be compiled to byte-code for building large applications.
- It provides very high-level dynamic data types and supports dynamic type checking.
- It supports automatic garbage collection.
- It can be easily integrated with C, C++, COM, ActiveX, CORBA, and Java.

Applications of Python

The latest release of Python is 3.x. As mentioned before, Python is one of the most widely used language over the web. I'm going to list few of them here:

- Easy-to-learn – Python has few keywords, simple structure, and a clearly defined syntax. This allows the student to pick up the language quickly.
- Easy-to-read – Python code is more clearly defined and visible to the eyes.
- Easy-to-maintain – Python's source code is fairly easy-to-maintain.
- A broad standard library – Python's bulk of the library is very portable and cross-platform compatible on UNIX, Windows, and Macintosh.
- Interactive Mode – Python has support for an interactive mode which allows interactive testing and debugging of snippets of code.
- Portable – Python can run on a wide variety of hardware platforms and has the same interface on all platforms.
- Extendable – You can add low-level modules to the Python interpreter. These modules enable programmers to add to or customize their tools to be more efficient.
- Databases – Python provides interfaces to all major commercial databases.

- GUI Programming – Python supports GUI applications that can be created and ported to many system calls, libraries and windows systems, such as Windows MFC, Macintosh, and the X Window system of Unix.
- Scalable – Python provides a better structure and support for large programs than shell scripting.

Assigning Values to Variables

Python variables do not need explicit declaration to reserve memory space. The declaration happens automatically when you assign a value to a variable. The equal sign (=) is used to assign values to variables.

The operand to the left of the = operator is the name of the variable and the operand to the right of the = operator is the value stored in the variable. For example –

```
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#!/usr/bin/python

counter = 100      # An integer assignment
miles   = 1000.0    # A floating point
name    = "John"    # A string

print counter
print miles
print name
```

Here, 100, 1000.0 and "John" are the values assigned to *counter*, *miles*, and *name* variables, respectively. This produces the following result –

```
100
1000.0
John
```

Multiple Assignment

Python allows you to assign a single value to several variables simultaneously. For example –

```
a = b = c = 1
```

Here, an integer object is created with the value 1, and all three variables are assigned to the same memory location. You can also assign multiple objects to multiple variables. For example –

```
a,b,c = 1,2,"john"
```

Here, two integer objects with values 1 and 2 are assigned to variables a and b respectively, and one string object with the value "john" is assigned to the variable c.

Standard Data Types

The data stored in memory can be of many types. For example, a person's age is stored as a numeric value and his or her address is stored as alphanumeric characters. Python has various standard data types that are used to define the operations possible on them and the storage method for each of them.

Python has five standard data types –

- Numbers
- String
- List
- Tuple
- Dictionary

Python Numbers

Number data types store numeric values. Number objects are created when you assign a value to them. For example –

```
var1 = 1  
var2 = 10
```

You can also delete the reference to a number object by using the del statement. The syntax of the del statement is –

```
del var1[,var2[,var3[....,varN]]]]
```

You can delete a single object or multiple objects by using the del statement. For example –

```
del var  
del var_a, var_b
```

Python supports four different numerical types –

- int (signed integers)
- long (long integers, they can also be represented in octal and hexadecimal)
- float (floating point real values)
- complex (complex numbers)

Examples

Here are some examples of numbers –

int	long	float	complex
10	51924361L	0.0	3.14j

100	-0x19323L	15.20	45.j
-786	0122L	-21.9	9.322e-36j
080	0xDEFA BCECBDAECBFBAEL	32.3+e18	.876j
-0490	535633629843L	-90.	-.6545+0j
-0x260	-052318172735L	-32.54e100	3e+26j
0x69	-4721885298529L	70.2-E12	4.53e-7j

- Python allows you to use a lowercase l with long, but it is recommended that you use only an uppercase L to avoid confusion with the number 1.

Python displays long integers with an uppercase L.
- A complex number consists of an ordered pair of real floating-point numbers denoted by $x + yj$, where x and y are the real numbers and j is the imaginary unit.

Python Strings

Strings in Python are identified as a contiguous set of characters represented in the quotation marks. Python allows for either pairs of single or double quotes. Subsets of strings can be taken using the slice operator (`[]` and `[:]`) with indexes starting at 0 in the beginning of the string and working their way from -1 at the end.

The plus (+) sign is the string concatenation operator and the asterisk (*) is the repetition operator. For example –

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```
#!/usr/bin/python
```

```
str = 'Hello World!'
```

```
print str      # Prints complete string
print str[0]    # Prints first character of the string
print str[2:5]  # Prints characters starting from 3rd to 5th
print str[2:]   # Prints string starting from 3rd character
print str * 2    # Prints string two times
print str + "TEST" # Prints concatenated string
```

This will produce the following result –

```
Hello World!
H
llo
llo World!
Hello World!Hello World!
Hello World!TEST
```

Python Lists

Lists are the most versatile of Python's compound data types. A list contains items separated by commas and enclosed within square brackets ([]). To some extent, lists are similar to arrays in C. One difference between them is that all the items belonging to a list can be of different data type.

The values stored in a list can be accessed using the slice operator ([] and [:]) with indexes starting at 0 in the beginning of the list and working their way to end -1. The plus (+) sign is the list concatenation operator, and the asterisk (*) is the repetition operator. For example –

```
#!/usr/bin/python
```

```
list = [ 'abcd', 786 , 2.23, 'john', 70.2 ]
tinylist = [123, 'john']
```

```
print list      # Prints complete list
```

```

print list[0]      # Prints first element of the list
print list[1:3]    # Prints elements starting from 2nd till 3rd
print list[2:]     # Prints elements starting from 3rd element
print tinylist * 2 # Prints list two times
print list + tinylist # Prints concatenated lists

```

This produce the following result –

```

['abcd', 786, 2.23, 'john', 70.2]
abcd
[786, 2.23]
[2.23, 'john', 70.2]
[123, 'john', 123, 'john']
['abcd', 786, 2.23, 'john', 70.2, 123, 'john']

```

Python Tuples

A tuple is another sequence data type that is similar to the list. A tuple consists of a number of values separated by commas. Unlike lists, however, tuples are enclosed within parentheses.

The main differences between lists and tuples are: Lists are enclosed in brackets ([]) and their elements and size can be changed, while tuples are enclosed in parentheses (()) and cannot be updated. Tuples can be thought of as read-only lists. For example –

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```

#!/usr/bin/python

```

```

tuple = ( 'abcd', 786 , 2.23, 'john', 70.2 )
tinytuple = (123, 'john')

```

```

print tuple      # Prints the complete tuple
print tuple[0]   # Prints first element of the tuple
print tuple[1:3] # Prints elements of the tuple starting from 2nd till 3rd
print tuple[2:]  # Prints elements of the tuple starting from 3rd element
print tinytuple * 2 # Prints the contents of the tuple twice
print tuple + tinytuple # Prints concatenated tuples

```

This produce the following result –

```
('abcd', 786, 2.23, 'john', 70.2)
abcd
(786, 2.23)
(2.23, 'john', 70.2)
(123, 'john', 123, 'john')
('abcd', 786, 2.23, 'john', 70.2, 123, 'john')
```

The following code is invalid with tuple, because we attempted to update a tuple, which is not allowed. Similar case is possible with lists –

```
#!/usr/bin/python
```

```
tuple = ( 'abcd', 786 , 2.23, 'john', 70.2 )
list = [ 'abcd', 786 , 2.23, 'john', 70.2 ]
tuple[2] = 1000 # Invalid syntax with tuple
list[2] = 1000 # Valid syntax with list
```

Python Dictionary

Python's dictionaries are kind of hash table type. They work like associative arrays or hashes found in Perl and consist of key-value pairs. A dictionary key can be almost any Python type, but are usually numbers or strings. Values, on the other hand, can be any arbitrary Python object.

Dictionaries are enclosed by curly braces ({ }) and values can be assigned and accessed using square braces ([]). For example –

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```
#!/usr/bin/python
```

```
dict = {}
dict['one'] = "This is one"
dict[2] = "This is two"

tinydict = {'name': 'john', 'code': 6734, 'dept': 'sales'}
```

```
print dict['one'] # Prints value for 'one' key
```



```
print dict[2]      # Prints value for 2 key
print tinydict     # Prints complete dictionary
print tinydict.keys() # Prints all the keys
print tinydict.values() # Prints all the values
```

This produce the following result –

```
This is one
This is two
{'dept': 'sales', 'code': 6734, 'name': 'john'}
['dept', 'code', 'name']
['sales', 6734, 'john']
```

Dictionaries have no concept of order among elements. It is incorrect to say that the elements are "out of order"; they are simply unordered.

Data Type Conversion

Sometimes, you may need to perform conversions between the built-in types. To convert between types, you simply use the type name as a function.

There are several built-in functions to perform conversion from one data type to another. These functions return a new object representing the converted value.