



*Erk IRC Client, Version 0.860*

# Ǽrk Plugin Guide

A guide for using and writing plugins for the Ǽrk IRC Client

**<https://github.com/nutjob-laboratories/erk>**

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## Summary

Ərk plugins are Python 3 classes that inherit from a base class, named “Plugin”, that is imported from the Ərk application. They are loaded from a subdirectory in the main directory where Ərk stores settings and scripts, **.erk/plugins**, located in the user’s home directory.

A basic plugin looks something like this:

```
from erk import *

class DumpPlugin(Plugin):
    name = "Dump Plugin"
    version = "1.0"
    description = "Displays all IRC network traffic"

    def input(self, data):
        print("<- "+data)

    def output(self, data):
        print("-> "+data)
```

If this was saved to a file and placed in **.erk/plugins**, the next time Ərk is started, it would load the plugin and appear in Ərk’s “Plugins” menu like so:



Once loaded, the plugin would print all network traffic, both input and output, from all servers that Ərk is connected to, to the console.

## Using Ərk Plugins

To install an Ərk plugin, simply place it in the **.erk/plugins** directory in your home directory. The next time Ərk starts up, the plugin will be loaded automatically. If there are major errors in the plugin (for example, improper Python code), Ərk will not start, and any errors will be printed to the console. If there are minor errors (for example, if plugins are missing needed attributes), Ərk will start normally, and any errors will be displayed to the user in a dialog window. Plugins with minor errors will *not* be loaded into the client, and, thus, will be ignored by Ərk.

Uninstalling Ərk plugins is as easy as deleting the plugin from **.erk/plugins**. No other steps are required.

# Writing Ərk Plugins

## Plugin Requirements

Ərk plugins are Python 3 classes that must meet four basic requirements:

- The class must inherit from the base class **Plugin**
- The class must have a **name** attribute string
- The class must have a **version** attribute string
- The class must have at least one event method

To get access to the first requirement, simply import **Plugin** from **erk**. You can either explicitly import Plugin:

```
from erk import Plugin
```

or use a “splat” and import it implicitly:

```
from erk import *
```

The end result is the same either way; the only thing exported by **erk** is **Plugin**.

The second two requirements, the **name** and **version** attributes, are used by Ərk to display the plugin in the client (see page 3). These should be class attributes, rather than instance attributes<sup>1</sup>. **name** should be set to the name of the plugin, a short descriptive string; it must contain at least one character that is not whitespace. **version** should be the version number of the plugin; if no version number is required, this attribute can be set to a blank string, but it *must* exist. A third attribute, **description**, is optional; this should be a short string that describes what the plugin does.

The last requirement is for the plugin to have at least one event method. An event method is a plugin method that Ərk will execute when a specific event occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/class-instance-attributes-python/>

## Event Methods

Ərk executes the event method of every plugin that contains that event method when a specific event occurs (like the reception of a public message, a private message, or a notice message). In short, Ərk plugins are event-driven<sup>2</sup>.

### input

Arguments **data** (string)

Description Triggered every time Ərk receives data from an IRC server. **data** contains the data sent to the client.

### output

Arguments **data** (string)

Description Triggered every time Ərk sends data to an IRC server. **data** contains the data sent to the server.

### public

Arguments **channel** (string), **user** (string), **message** (string)

Description Triggered every time Ərk receives a public message. **channel** contains the name of the channel the message was sent to, **user** contains the nickname, username, and hostname of the user that sent it (in the format **nickname!username@hostname**), and **message** contains the contents of the message.

### private

Arguments **user** (string), **message** (string)

Description Triggered every time Ərk receives a private message. **user** contains the nickname, username, and hostname of the user that sent it (in the format **nickname!username@hostname**), and **message** contains the contents of the message.

### action

Arguments **target** (string), **user** (string), **message** (string)

Description Triggered every time Ərk receives a CTCP action message. **target** contains the target of the message (if it's a public message, **target** will contain the name of the channel the message was sent to, and if it's a private message, **target** will contain the nickname the Ərk client is using), **user** contains the nickname, username, and hostname of the user that sent it (in the format **nickname!username@hostname**), and **message** contains the contents of the message.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Event-driven\\_programming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Event-driven_programming)

## Plugin Built-In Tools

The **Plugin** class contains some tools to make interacting with the Ærk client and any connected IRC servers easy.

### irc Object

The **irc** object is part of the **Plugin** class, and is the way plugins interact with IRC servers. It is integrated as an instance attribute of the class. This object is the instance of the Twisted IRC client<sup>3</sup> that Ærk is using for communication with the IRC server. Anything you can normally do with the Twisted IRC client, you can use **irc** for. Whenever an event method is triggered, the **irc** object used is the Twisted instance that is connected to the server event that triggered the method. So, for example, if you wanted to write a private event method that forwards all private messages to another user with the nickname "OtherNick", you could write:

```
def private(user,message):  
    self.irc.msg("OtherNick",user+": "+message)
```

If the **irc** object is unavailable (due to a disconnection, error, or other reason), the object's value is set to **None**.

For help on how to use the **irc** object, take a look at the documentation for the Twisted IRC Client<sup>4</sup>.

### Built-In Methods

The Plugin class also comes with several methods built into it. These methods are used to interact with the Ærk graphical user interface (GUI).

#### print

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Arguments   | <b>text</b> (string), ...   |
| Returns     | Nothing   |
| Description | Prints <b>text</b> to the currently open window; if the currently open window can't be found, then the text will print to the console. To print multiple items in the same command, separate the strings to print with commas (much like Python's <b>print</b> function). |

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<sup>3</sup> `twisted.words.protocols.irc.IRCClient`

<sup>4</sup> <https://twistedmatrix.com/documents/current/api/twisted.words.protocols.irc.IRCClient.html>

## **write**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Arguments   | <b>target</b> (string), <b>text</b> (string)  |
| Returns     | Bool  |
| Description | Prints <b>text</b> to the window with <b>target</b> as its name. Windows are named after the chat they display; so, for example, the window displaying channel chat for #erk would be named "#erk". The window displaying private chat with a user named "Bob" would be named "Bob". If the window was found and the text was written to it, <b>write</b> will return <b>True</b> ; if the window was <i>not</i> found, <b>write</b> will return <b>False</b> . |

## **console**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Arguments   | <b>text</b> (string)  |
| Returns     | Nothing   |
| Description | Prints <b>text</b> to the window associated with the current server connection, called the "console". |

## **exec**

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Arguments   | <b>text</b> (string)   |
| Returns     | Nothing  |
| Description | Executes the contents of text as if it were entered into the text input widget in the Ærk client. This allows plugins to execute miscellaneous scripting commands (see <i>Ærk Scripting and Commands</i> ). If <b>text</b> does not contain a command, it will be sent to the currently open window as chat. |

## **script**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Arguments   | <b>filename</b> (string)  |
| Returns     | Nothing   |
| Description | Executes the contents of <b>filename</b> as an Ærk script. This functions exactly like the Ærk command <b>/script</b> (see <i>Ærk Scripting and Commands</i> ). |