

What is an exception?

- What happens when procedure execution hits an unexpected condition?
 - Trying to access beyond the limits of a list will raise an `IndexError`
 - `Test = [1,2,3]`
 - `Test[4]`
 - Trying to convert an inappropriate type will raise a `TypeError`
 - `Int(Test)`
 - Referencing a non-existing variable will raise a `NameError`
 - `a`
 - Mixing data types without appropriate coercion will raise a `TypeError`
 - `'a' / 4`
- These are **exceptions** –exceptions to what was expected

What to do with exceptions?

- What to do when procedure execution is stymied by an error condition?
 - Fail silently: substitute default values, continue
 - Bad idea! User gets no indication results may be suspect
 - Return an “error” value
 - What value to chose? `None`?
 - Callers must include code to check for this special value and deal with consequences → cascade of error values up the call tree
 - Stop execution, signal error condition
 - In Python: **raise an exception**

```
raise Exception("descriptive string")
```

Dealing with exceptions

- Python code can provide handlers for exceptions

```
try:
    f = open('grades.txt')
    # ... code to read and process grades
except:
    raise Exception("Can't open grades file")
```

- Exceptions raised by statements in body of `try` are handled by the `except` statement and execution continues with the body of the `except` statement

Handling specific exceptions

- Usually the handler is only meant to deal with a particular type of exception. Sometimes we need to clean up before continuing.

```
try:
    f = open('grades.txt')
    # ... code to read and process grades
except IOError,e:
    print "Can't open grades file: " + str(e)
    sys.exit(0)
except ArithmeticError,e:
    raise ValueError("Bug in grades calculation " +
                     str(e))
```

Types of exceptions

- Already seen common error types:
 - **SyntaxError**: Python can't parse program
 - **NameError**: local or global name not found
 - **AttributeError**: attribute reference fails
 - **TypeError**: operand doesn't have correct type
 - **ValueError**: operand type okay, but value is illegal
 - **IOError**: IO system reports malfunction (e.g. file not found)

Other extensions to `try`

- `else`:
 - Body of this clause is executed when execution of associated `try` body completes with **no exceptions**
- `finally`:
 - Body of this clause is always executed after `try`, `else` and `except` clauses, even if they raised **another error** or **executed a `break`, `continue` or `return`**
 - Useful for **clean-up code** that should be run no matter what else happened (e.g. close file)

An example

```
def divide(x, y):  
    try:  
        result = x / y  
    except ZeroDivisionError, e:  
        print "division by zero! " + str(e)  
    else:  
        print "result is", result  
    finally:  
        print "executing finally clause"
```

An example, revised

```
def divideNew(x, y):  
    try:  
        result = x / y  
    except ZeroDivisionError, e:  
        print "division by zero! " + str(e)  
    except TypeError:  
        divideNew(int(x), int(y))  
    else:  
        print "result is", result  
    finally:  
        print "executing finally clause"
```