Setting up Python

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This guide will step you through installing Python 2.7 on your system as well as a text editor with nice highlighting features to make writing your programs a little easier. The steps you need to take vary based on the system you are using.

1 Accessing the terminal window

1.1 Linux

Press CTRL-ALT-T and a terminal window will open. You should be in the home directory of the current user and see `username@machine:~$` or something similar.

Type `exit` and press ENTER to close the terminal window.

1.2 Windows

There is no hot-key for getting the terminal window to open, so we will create one. Hit the START button and type `cmd`. You should see the `cmd.exe` program appear at the top of the list. Right-click on `cmd.exe` and select "Pin to Start Menu." (If this is not an option, the it is already pinned to the start menu.) Close the start menu.

Now reopen the start menu, right-click on "Windows Command Processor," and select "Properties." In the "Start in" field, enter the following: `%HOMEPATH%`. Next, click in the "Shortcut key" field, and press CTRL-ALT-T. Click "Apply," then click "OK."

Now press CTRL-ALT-T and you should see a terminal window which displays `C:\Users\username>` or something similar.

Type `exit` and press ENTER to close the terminal window.

(Note: You could also hit the START key, type `cmd`, and hit ENTER, but this will not take you to your home directory by default.)

1.3 Mac OS X

Press ⌘-SPACE to open Spotlight, then hit ENTER. A terminal window should appear and you should be in your home directory.

Type `exit` and press ENTER to close the terminal window.

2 Installing Python 2.7

2.1 Linux

Linux distributions ship with Python 2.7 already installed. To check what version you are using, open a terminal window and type `python --version` and hit ENTER. You should see it says `Python 2.7.X`.

2.2 Windows

Visit https://www.python.org/downloads/release/python-2710/ and choose the correct download link. (It will be either be "Windows x86-64 MSI installer" if you are on a 64-bit machine, or else "Windows x86 MSI installer" if you are on a 32-bit machine.) If prompted, select the option that allows you to save the file. (But probably it will save automatically.) Find the file and run it. Follow the prompts to install for all users. Select the default directory of `C:\Python27\` . On the "Customize" page, scroll down to make sure that "Add python.exe to Path" will be installed. If you are prompted for permission to install, allow the machine to do so. Now just wait.

When it's done, open a terminal window and type `python --version` and hit ENTER. You should get a response that says `Python 2.7.10` .

2.3 Mac OS X

Mac OS X comes with a version of python, but it's not what we want to use. Instead, go to https://www.python.org/downloads/release/python-2710/. Click the "Mac OS X 64-bit/32-bit installer" and follow the prompts to install it. (I can't help much more than this as I do not have a Mac to test this on.)

Once it is installed, open a terminal window and type `python --version` and hit ENTER. You should get a response that says `Python 2.7.10` .

3 Setting up a text editor

The actual text editor you use is completely irrelevant and can be anything you'd like. I recommend starting with gedit: https://wiki.gnome.org/Apps/Gedit. Click "Download" and select the appropriate link for your operating system. Choose the latest version and download the installation file. Open it and follow the installation prompts on your screen.

Once gedit is installed, open it. From the "Edit" menu, select "Preferences." In the "View" tab, make sure "Display line numbers" is checked. Check the box for "Display right margin at column:" and set the value to 79. Switch to the "Editor" tab and check the box for "Enable automatic indentation." Then click "Close."

You should now be staring at a blank document.