Introduction to Matlab

Lesson 01 — Matlab Syntax

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Preliminaries

The Course

- Introduction to Matlab Programming.
- Whenever you see something in pink, there is a clickable link.
- Check the syllabus.

Me

- o Rafa Serrano-Quintero (rafael.serrano@ub.edu).
- o Office hours: Any time. Send me an email and we can arrange a meeting.

You

• A quick roundtable of names, interests, and coding background.

What will we cover?

- 1. Matlab preliminaries.
 - First interactions. Script vs Command Window.
 - o Creating Variables. Basic Operations. Arrays and Matrices.
 - Control Flow. Plots. Functions.
- 2. Basics of root finding, numerical differentiation and integration.
- 3. Basics of numerical optimization.
- 4. Importing and manipulating data. Polynomial fit and evaluation. Nonlinear least squares.

Syllabus Highlights

What you have to do

- 1. Two problem sets
- 2. In class solutions
- 3. Final exam (take-home)

Remarks:

- 1. In topics 2 to 4 we will see a bit of numerical methods.
- 2. I will not ask anything about the details/math of these methods.
- 3. For now, we will just care about Matlab programming and intuitions.

Syllabus Highlights — Materials

- Stormy Attaway (2019). MATLAB: A Practical Introduction to Programming and Problem Solving. 5th. Butterworth-Heinemann
- Peter H. Gruber Script Solving Economics and Finance Problems with MATLAB
- QuantEcon Lectures. These are written for Python and Julia but many ideas port to Matlab easily.
- QuantEcon Cheatsheet for Matlab, Python, and Julia.

What Matters

 Not where you end up relative to your classmates but where you end up relative to your current self!

- Most of you never have programmed, and that's fine!
- What is programming? Problem solving!
- Programming in one diagram:



Example 1

Suppose a firm faces a linear demand curve such as P=a-bQ and the firm's cost function is given by C(Q)=cQ+d where P is price, Q quantity, and a,b,c, and d are positive real constants. Find the optimal quantity to produce.

Example 1

Suppose a firm faces a linear demand curve such as P = a - bQ and the firm's cost function is given by C(Q) = cQ + d where P is price, Q quantity, and a, b, c, and d are positive real constants. Find the optimal quantity to produce.

Solution 1

Deriving the profit function $\Pi = PQ - C(Q)$ with respect to Q, we find

$$\frac{\partial \Pi}{\partial Q} = -2bQ + (a-c) = 0 \Rightarrow Q = \frac{a-c}{2b}$$

Example 2

Suppose now the demand curve is $P = 10 - Q^{1/2} - Q^{1/5}$ and C(Q) = cQ + d.

Solution 2

Now the profit function is $\Pi=10Q-Q^{3/2}-Q^{6/5}-cQ-d$ and the FOC is

$$\frac{3}{2}Q^{1/2} + \frac{6}{5}Q^{1/5} + c - 10 = 0$$

How do we solve this "by hand"? Say $10 - c = 1 \Rightarrow c = 9$. Then, we can define $G(Q) \equiv \frac{3}{2}Q^{1/2} + \frac{6}{5}Q^{1/5} - 1$ and find G(Q) = 0.

$$\circ$$
 $G(0) = -1$

$$\circ$$
 $G(1) = 1.7 > 0$

We know there exists some $q \in (0,1)$ such that G(q) = 0. But we cannot say much more analytically!

In Matlab, we could find the solution with two lines of code:

- Econometrics/Empirical analysis.
- Applied general equilibrium.
- Complement for theory. Substitute when looking at very complex models.
- We will use Matlab but many things translate to other languages (e.g. Python, Julia, R...).
- Try to learn concepts!

Why do this if we have Chat-GPT?

- Good question!
- You should definitely use Chat-GPT. It is an incredibly helpful tool.
- However, a key for a good use of Chat-GPT is to provide correct inputs!
- Chat-GPT also provides wrong answers, you must check the answers and understand the outputs!
- A good understanding of the fundamentals is necessary to use Chat-GPT to its full potential.



First Time Opening Matlab

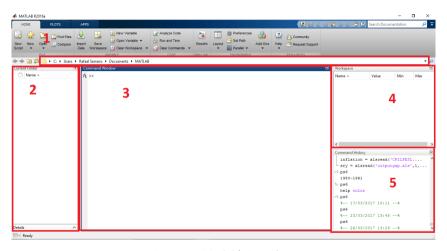
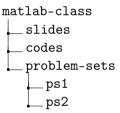


Figure 1: Matlab's Interface

Working Directories

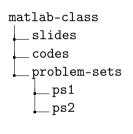
• For Matlab to find files and know where its working, it needs a working directory.

• A directory is a folder that has relationships to other folders.



 Say we want to run codes in the codes subfolder. Then, we must point to where the folder is.

Working Directories



- In this example matlab-class is called the parent directory.
- But problem-sets is the parent directory of ps1 and ps2.
- The working directory refers to the directory on your computer that Matlab assumes is the starting place for all paths that you construct or try to access.

Paths

Suppose matlab-class is in C:\Users\Rafa\Documents\matlab-class\.

• That is called the **absolute path**.

matlab-class
slides
codes
problem-sets
ps1
ps2

The absolute path of slides is
 C:\Users\Rafa\Documents\matlab-class\slides\.

• The **relative path** is a path relative to the working directory.

• The relative path of ps1 would be ./problem-sets/ps1/.

Matlab understands relative paths.

The Two Most Useful Commands

• If you make some mistake and need Matlab to stop, Ctrl+C on the command window.

• When you do not know how a command works or what it does, use help.



Scripts vs Commands

- o The command window allows us to evaluate commands we type.
- Scripts are recipes that can be saved. Useful for:
 - Reproducing a set of codes **exactly** in the same order
 - Automating tasks
 - Correcting mistakes in long tasks
- A script is evaluated sequentially line by line.

Scripts vs Commands

- To start a new script:
 - o Home -> New Script
 - Type edit in the command window
- Write comments with the symbol %
- Everything after a % will not be processed by Matlab
- A block of comments is defined within %{ %}

Script Example

```
clear all
2 close all
3 clc
5 % This is a comment
7 % {
     This is a block of comments. Everything within the two
        symbols is not processed by Matlab. Useful to define
        headers or helps for user defined functions.
9 %}
```

- We can **assign** values to a variable.
- Matlab has several types of objects (arrays, struct arrays, cell arrays...)
- To name a variable the first character **needs to be a letter**.
- Matlab is case sensitive $x \neq X$

Forbidden names:

- *i* and *j* indicate complex numbers.
- pi is assigned to π .
- o ans is assigned to the last value that has not been assigned to anything.
- Inf or -Inf are $\pm \infty$.

- NaN represents "Not a Number" (typically missing data).
- o eps is the machine epsilon (we will comment a bit on this below).

```
clear
2 clc
                    % === Creating Variables === %
8 % Assignment and basic operations
_{9} x = 5
10 x * 2
11 \times -7
12 x + 7
13
14 % Creating variable from another
15 y = x^2; % Semicolon; suppresses output
16 disp(y)
```

```
1 x = 3;

2 y = 4;

3 x = y;

4 y = 2;
```

• What is the value of x?

```
1 x = 3;

2 y = 4;

3 x = y;

4 y = 2;
```

• What is the value of x?

- The = operator is an assignment operator.
- In Matlab, x = 4 **not** 2, so it will not be equal to y anymore.
- In some languages, this operator might tie *x* and *y* together. Always check!

Matlab as a Calculator

- To perform basic arithmetic operations Matlab uses five symbols.
- These operators are defined for both *matrices and scalars*.

Table 1: Basic Arithmetic Operators

Operator	Meaning
+	Addition
-	Subtraction
*	Multiplication
/	Division
^	Exponentiation

Matlab as a Calculator

Exercise 1

Use Matlab as a calculator and try to solve the following operations using the functions needed. Solve them for x=0 and $x=\frac{\pi}{4}$

$$\frac{\ln(1+x^2) - \sqrt{1+x^2}}{1+\sin^2 x}; \ln|x-\pi| + xe^x$$

Hint: Check commands log, sqrt, sin, abs, pi, and exp.

Matlab as a Calculator

```
Solving for x = 0. Check commands:
```

o log, sqrt, sin, abs, pi

```
% === Ex. 1: Solve Complex Operations === %
x = 0;

op1 = (log(1 + x^2) - sqrt(1 + x^2)) / (1 + sin(x)^2);
op2 = log(abs(x - pi)) + x.*exp(x);
```



Arrays — Vectors and Matrices

- Matrices and arrays are the fundamental representation of data in Matlab.
- An array is just a systematic arrangement of objects. A vector is a one-dimensional array, while a matrix is a two-dimensional array.
- Row vectors (the default in Matlab) are created as

```
% === Vectors === %

% === Vectors === %

rowV = [1 2 3 4 5]; % Spaces separate elements
rowV2 = [6,7,8,9,10]; % Commas work as spaces
```

Arrays — Vectors and Matrices

• Column vectors are created with the semicolon operator;

```
colV = [1; 2; 3; 4; 5];
```

Sequences as row vectors

```
1 % A sequence from 0 to 10 in steps of 2
2 seq1 = 0:2:10;
3 % 1000 equally spaced elements in [0,10]
4 seq2 = linspace(0,10,1000);
```

Check your workspace!

Arrays — Vectors and Matrices

- Matrices can be created element by element or by concatenating vectors.
- A semicolon; after a number indicates a new row.

```
A = [1 2 3; 4 5 6; 7 8 9];

B = [4 5 6; 7 9 2; 1 5 32];

ConcatenatedMatrix = [rowV; rowV2];
```

Produces:

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 8 & 9 \end{bmatrix} B = \begin{bmatrix} 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 9 & 2 \\ 1 & 5 & 32 \end{bmatrix} Concatenated Matrix = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\ 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 \end{bmatrix}$$

Arrays — Vectors and Matrices

Array Indexing

• In matrix
$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 8 & 9 \end{bmatrix}$$
 the element $a_{2,3} = 6$ is the element in row 2 and column 3.

• In Matlab we can access element $a_{i,k}$ as A(j,k) to access 6 in matrix A before:

```
A(2,3) % Element in row 2 and column 3 of matrix A
```

• For vectors, we can index by the position only.

```
colV(1) % First element in colV vector
```

Arrays — Vectors and Matrices

Array Indexing

• For matrices in general, we can access whole columns or rows.

```
A(2,:) % Index the 2nd row and all columns
```

o In general, we can index matrices as

Table 2: Basic Indexing

Index	Result
A(i,j) A(i,:) A(:,j)	$a_{i,j}$ Row i Column

Arrays — Vectors and Matrices

Create the vectors
$$v_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 1, 2, 3 \end{bmatrix}$$
 and $v_2 = \begin{bmatrix} 4 \\ 5 \\ 6 \end{bmatrix}$. Note that to transpose a matrix/vector you can use the apostrophe (*).

1. Concatenate
$$v_1$$
 and v_2 to create the matrix $M_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 4 \\ 2 & 5 \\ 3 & 6 \end{bmatrix}$

2. Concatenate
$$v_1$$
 and v_2 to create the matrix $M_2 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \end{bmatrix}$

3. Extract element in position (2, 2) of M_1 and M_2 .

Arrays — Operations

- We can use the same operators described in Table 1 BUT mind the laws of matrix algebra.
- Matrix products A*B

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 8 & 9 \end{bmatrix} B = \begin{bmatrix} 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 9 & 2 \\ 1 & 5 & 32 \end{bmatrix} AB = \begin{bmatrix} 21 & 38 & 106 \\ 57 & 95 & 226 \\ 93 & 152 & 346 \end{bmatrix}$$

• To transpose a matrix *A*:

```
1 % To transpose a matrix use transpose() or '
2 A'
3 transpose(A)
```

Arrays — Operations

Element-wise Operations

• Element-wise product of A and B is computed by $a_{i,j} \times b_{i,j}$

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 8 & 9 \end{bmatrix} B = \begin{bmatrix} 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 9 & 2 \\ 1 & 5 & 32 \end{bmatrix} A \odot B = \begin{bmatrix} 4 & 10 & 18 \\ 28 & 45 & 12 \\ 7 & 40 & 288 \end{bmatrix}$$

o In Matlab, we use

```
1 % Element-wise multiplication of A and B
2 A.*B
3
4 % Be careful with element wise multiplication. Check what would happen if:
5 rowV.*rowV2'
```

Arrays — Matrix Operations

Table 3: Matrix Arithmetic Operations

Operator	Meaning
+	Addition
-	Subtraction
*	Multiplication
.*	Element-wise product
\	Left division $(A \setminus B = A^{-1}B)$. Equivalent to mldivide()
/	Right division $(A/B = AB^{-1})$. Equivalent to mrdivide()
./	Element-wise division
^	Exponentiation
. ^	Element-wise exponentiation
<pre>inv()</pre>	Inverse of matrix

Arrays — Matrix Operations

Exercise 3 Solve the following system of linear equations using inv() and \.

$$3x + 2y - z = 1$$

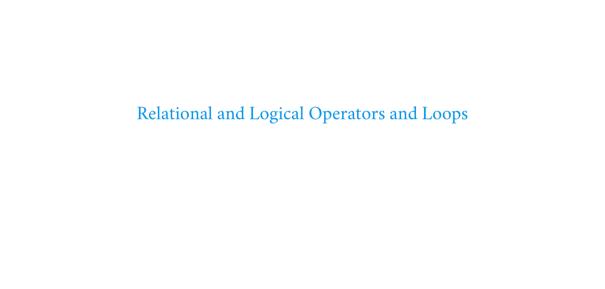
$$2x - 2y + 4z = -2$$

$$-x + \frac{1}{2}y - z = 0$$

Arrays — Matrix Operations

To solve systems of equations, it is recommended to use \ instead of inv(). If you're interested you can check this or try this example.

```
1 % === Ex.2 Solve the system === %
2 b = [1; - 2; 0];
3 A = [3 2 -1; 2 -2 4; -1 0.5 -1];
4 x = inv(A)*b;  % Slower and inaccurate
5 x_oth = A\b;  % This method is preferred
6 x_oth2 = mldivide(A,b);  % Same as the previous one
7 disp([x,x_oth,x_oth2])
```



Consider the following propositions:

A.1 Juana is either in the cafeteria or the office.

B.1 Coffee from the cafeteria that tasted okay never killed anyone in the past.

A.2 Juana is not in the cafeteria.

B.2 This coffee from the cafeteria tastes okay.

A.3 Juana is in the office.

B.3 This coffee won't kill me.

- Matlab understands that A.3 follows from A.1 and A.2.
- Matlab does not understand that B.3 follows from B.1 and B.2. (Strictly speaking, it does not follow.)

Relational Operators

- Check if $a \neq b$
- Check wether $a \leq b$

Logical Operators

- o Check wether one or more conditions are satisfied
- Access elements that are **NOT** equal to *a*.

- Relational and logical operators return either true or false values.
- In Matlab, *true* is coded with 1 and *false* with 0.
- But these are not numbers!!
- The result is a *logical array*.
- When writing logical expressions make sure conditions return either false or true.

Example 3

Suppose A = [3, 2, -1, 20, 5, 6, -2, 5.6] and we want to know those elements larger than 5, those equal to 5, and those lower or equal to 5.

- Just using > will **not return the numbers**.
- It will return true or false depending whether the element satisfies the condition.

```
A = [3 \ 2 \ -1 \ 20 \ 5 \ 6 \ -2 \ 5.6]
A > 5
A = 5
A < 5
```

• If we want to obtain the numbers themselves we need to index with the condition.

```
A (A > 5)
A (A == 5)
A (A <= 5)
```

Table 4: Relational Operators

Operator	Meaning
==	Exactly equal to
~=	NOT equal to
<	Lower than
<=	Lower or equal than
>	Greater than
>=	Greater or equal than

- We can combine conditions using and, or, not, any, all.
- Suppose we want to get all elements from *A* that are lower or equal than 3 **or** greater or equal than 6.

$$_{1} A (A <= 3 | A >= 6)$$

• Note that, an equivalent extraction is those elements in A that are **not** greater than 3 and lower than 6.

```
_{1}A(^{\sim}(A > 3 \& A < 6))
```

• The parenthesis are important for the *not* operator!

Table 5: Logical Operators

Operator	Meaning
&	Element-wise AND
&&	AND for scalars
	Element-wise OR
11	OR for scalars
~	NOT
any()	True if any element of a vector is true
all()	True if all elements of a vector are true

Exercise 4

Create a random matrix of size 5×5 with the command ranmat = randn(5).

- 1. Extract the elements of the first column of ranmat that are positive.
- 2. Extract the elements of the second row of ranmat that are negative.

If-Else Statements

- Typically, relational and logical operators are used as conditions.
- o If something happens, do something. Else do another thing.
- If-Else statements start with if and are closed with end. General syntax:

```
b = 3;
if b < 0
disp('b is negative')
else
disp('b is non-negative')
end</pre>
```

If-ElseIf-Else Statements

o If we want to include two possible conditions, we use elseif

```
1 b = 4;
2 if mod(b,2) == 0 % Check if even
3    disp('b is even')
4 elseif mod(b,5) == 0 % Check if divisible by 5
5    disp('b is divisible by 5')
6 else
7    disp('b is not even nor divisible by 5')
8 end
```

- Sometimes we need to repeat the same operation several times.
- When we know how many times exactly, we should use for loops.
- o If we do not know how many times, but we know a criterion, then we should use while

Suppose we want to simulate an AR(1) process for 100 periods such as

$$y_{t+1} = \rho y_t + \varepsilon_t$$

```
where \rho = 0.85, y_1 = 0, and \varepsilon_t \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)
```

```
1 T = 100;
2 rho = 0.85;
3 y = zeros(T,1);
4 for t=2:T
5     y(t,1) = rho*y(t-1,1) + randn;
6 end
```

Check command randn!!

• Here t is the iterator variable.

```
    The range of the loop is given by the
expression 2:T.
```

So we know t is going to take values2,3,4,5,6...

```
• Why do we do y = zeros(T,1) outside
of the loop?
```

```
1 T = 100;
2 rho = 0.85;
3 y = zeros(T,1);
4 for t=2:T
5    y(t,1) = rho*y(t-1,1) +
        randn;
6 end
```

Preallocation:

• We want to store the values for y.

```
• And we know the size of this vector.
```

 We could start with y [1] and expand it with each iteration.

```
rho = 0.85;
y = zeros(T,1);
for t=2:T
y(t,1) = rho*y(t-1,1) +
randn;
end
```

= 100;

• A better method is to **preallocate** y.

 Suppose we want to add one to a number for as long as it remains below a threshold. We can use while loops!

• We need a **condition** to be satisfied.

```
    Similar to an if statement. If it is true, evaluate.
    Otherwise stop.
```

 Caution: the condition must become false at some point, otherwise we get an infinite loop.

```
1 a = 0;
2 while a < 25
3          a = a + 1;
4 end</pre>
```

An Example with Grades

Example 4

Suppose we have a list of grades of students. Create a loop that goes through all the grades and checks whether that student has passed the subject or not. To get the list, generate a random list of 200 grades uniformly distributed between 0 and 10 (check rand command), and to assign if a student has passed or not, generate a vector called passed that equals one if the student has obtained a grade larger or equal than 5, and 0 otherwise.

An Example with Grades

```
1\% === Ex. 5 List of students === %
2 nstudents = 200;
grades = 10.*rand(nstudents,1);
4 pass = ones(nstudents,1);
for student = 1:nstudents
     if grades(student,1) >= 5
         pass(student,1) = 1;
9 else
         pass(student,1) = 0;
     end
11
12 end
```

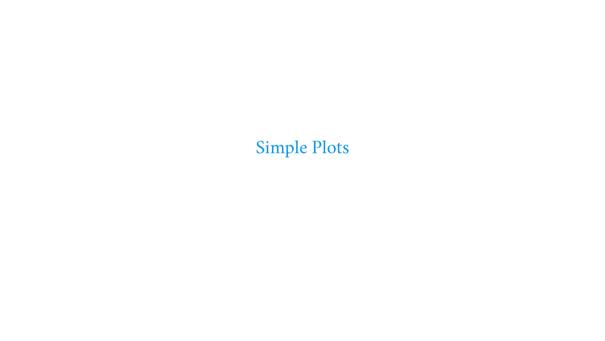
An Example with Grades — A More Efficient Approach

The previous example was perfectly correct, but we could improve performance by *vectorizing* the operations.

```
pass_vect = zeros(nstudents,1);
pass_vect(grades >= 5) = 1;

% To test they are equal
sisequal(pass,pass_vect)
```

Vectorizing is **extremely important**. In this simple example, the vectorized function takes $\approx 18\%$ of the time it takes for the loop.



Simple Plots

- o Matlab has a powerful command to generate figures plot.
- To plot the AR(1) process we simulated before, is as easy as

```
1 figure
2 plot(1:T,y)
```

- Command figure opens a clear figure window.
- o plot takes as first argument the x-axis vector (the time periods) and the value of y_t as second argument.

A More Involved Example

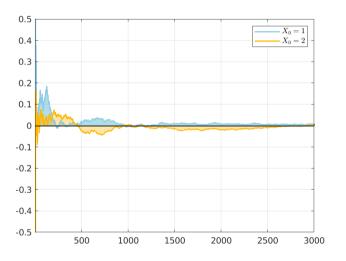
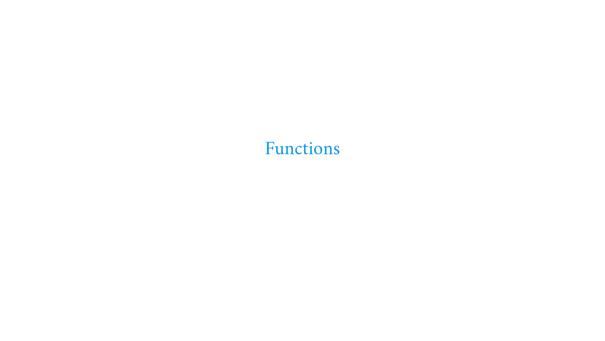


Figure 2: A Model of Unemployment Dynamics



- o Commands are functions that take inputs and yield a result.
- o In Matlab we can create our own functions just like in the mathematical sense.
- If f(x) = 3x + 1 then we can plug any x and the result is 3x + 1. This function in Matlab would be

```
function [fx] = simple_function(x)
fx = 3*x + 1;
end
```

• The general structure of a function is

```
function [out1,out2,...,outN] = name(in1,in2,...,inN)
% Document the function. Author, inputs, outputs...
Operations
out1 = %operations to get out1;
...
outN = %operations to get outN;
end
```

- Save the function as an .m file in the working directory (or add to path).
- The name of the file **must be** the name you assigned.

Example 5

Create a function called my_wave that gives as output the plot of a sinusoidal wave. The function should take as arguments the parameters that will give the amplitude, the frequency, and the upper and lower bounds in which it will be plotted. By default, plot 1000 points. Plot the sinusoidal wave with amplitude and frequency one for comparison. A sinusoidal wave W with amplitude A and frequency f is computed as

$$W = A\sin(2\pi f x)$$

A general function to compute a sine wave

```
function [wave] = mv_wave(A, freq, lb, ub)
     points = 1000;
     x = linspace(lb,ub,points);
     wave = A.*sin(2.*pi.*freq.*x);
     figure
     plot(x, wave, '--', 'LineWidth', 1.3)
     hold on
     grid on
     plot(x, sin(x), '-', 'LineWidth', 1.3)
     legend({'$A\sin(\omega x)$', '$\sin(x)$'}, 'Interpreter','
11
         latex','Location','best')
      xlabel('$x$','Interpreter','latex')
12
      title(['Sinusoidal wave with amplitude', num2str(A), ' and
13
          frequency ', num2str(freq)])
14 end
```

Anonymous Functions

- Anonymous functions are functions not stored in an .m file.
- These functions work within a script and they are stored in the workspace as function_handle objects.
- To create an anonymous function that multiplies a number by two:

```
% Create the function
bytwo = @(x) 2*x;
% Call it
a = bytwo(10);
```

Anonymous Functions

- Note that these functions can contain only **one** computable statement.
- Typically:
 - Used for functions in the mathematical sense.
 - o Simple.
 - Can take multiple inputs.

Anonymous Functions

Exercise 5

Write the Rosenbrock function as an anonymous function and compute the value of f(1,1), f(0,0), f(1,0), and f(0,1). The Rosenbrock function is given by:

$$f(x,y) = (1-x)^2 + 100(y-x^2)^2$$