

## Note

In the Notes, any code will be in **blue** and any output in **red**.

### Variable names and keywords

Programmers generally choose names for their variables that are meaningful and document what the variable is used for.

Variable names can be arbitrarily long. They can contain both letters and numbers, but they cannot start with a number. It is legal to use uppercase letters, but it is a good idea to begin variable names with a lowercase letter (you'll see why later).

The underscore character (`_`) can appear in a name. It is often used in names with multiple words, such as `my_name` or `airspeed_of_unladen_swallow`. Variable names can start with an underscore character, but we generally avoid doing this unless we are writing library code for others to use.

If you give a variable an illegal name, you get a syntax error:

```
76trombones = 'big parade'
```

```
SyntaxError: invalid syntax
```

```
more@ = 1000000
```

```
SyntaxError: invalid syntax
```

```
class = 'Advanced Theoretical Zymurgy'
```

```
SyntaxError: invalid syntax
```

`76trombones` is illegal because it begins with a number. `more@` is illegal because it contains an illegal character, `@`. But what's wrong with `class`?

It turns out that `class` is one of Python's *keywords*. The interpreter uses keywords to recognize the structure of the program, and they cannot be used as variable names.

Python reserves 35 keywords:

and	del	from	None	True
as	elif	global	nonlocal	try
assert	else	if	not	while
break	except	import	or	with
class	False	in	pass	yield
continue	finally	is	raise	async
def	for	lambda	return	await

You might want to keep this list handy. If the interpreter complains about one of your variable names and you don't know why, see if it is on this list.