

20.14. Glossary

attribute

One of the named data items that makes up an instance.

class

A user-defined compound type. A class can also be thought of as a template for the objects that are instances of it.

constructor

Every class has a “factory”, called by the same name as the class, for making new instances. If the class has an *initializer method*, this method is used to get the attributes (i.e. the state) of the new object properly set up.

initializer method

A special method in Python (called `__init__`) that is invoked automatically to set a newly created object's attributes to their initial (factory-default) state.

instance

An object whose type is of some class. The words instance and object are used interchangeably.

instance variable

A variable that stores a value associated with the instance. The instance variables together store the state of an instance.

instantiate

To create an instance of a class, and to run its initializer.

method

A function that is defined inside a class definition and is invoked on instances of that class.

object

A compound data type that is often used to model a thing or concept in the real world. It bundles together the data and the operations that are relevant for that kind of data. Instance and object are used interchangeably.

object-oriented programming

A powerful style of programming in which data and the operations that manipulate it are organized into classes and methods.

object-oriented language

A language that provides features, such as user-defined classes and inheritance, that facilitate object-oriented programming.

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