
CS 61A Interfaces, Linked Lists, and Generators

Fall 2019

Discussion 7: October 16, 2019

1 Interfaces

In computer science, an **interface** is a shared set of attributes, along with a specification of the attributes' behavior. For example, an interface for vehicles might consist of the following methods:

- `def drive(self)`: Drives the vehicle if it has stopped.
- `def stop(self)`: Stops the vehicle if it is driving.

Data types can implement the same interface in different ways. For example, a `Car` class and a `Train` can both implement the interface described above, but the `Car` probably has a different mechanism for `drive` than the `Train`.

The power of interfaces is that other programs don't have to know *how* each data type implements the interface – only that they *have* implemented the interface. The following `travel` function can work with both `Cars` and `Trains`:

```
def travel(vehicle):
    while not at_destination():
        vehicle.drive()
    vehicle.stop()
```

Magic Methods

Python defines many interfaces that can be implemented by user-defined classes. For example, the interface for arithmetic consists of the following methods:

- `def __add__(self, other)`: Allows objects to do `self + other`.
- `def __sub__(self, other)`: Allows objects to do `self - other`.
- `def __mul__(self, other)`: Allows objects to do `self * other`.

In addition, there is also an interface for sequences:

- `def __len__(self)`: Allows objects to do `len(self)`.
- `def __getitem__(self, index)`: Allows objects to do `self[i]`.

Questions

1.1 What would Python display?

```
class A():
    def __init__(self, x):
        self.x = x
    def __repr__(self):
        return self.x
    def __str__(self):
        return self.x * 2
```

```
class B():
    def __init__(self):
        print("boo!")
        self.a = []
    def add_a(self, a):
        self.a.append(a)
    def __repr__(self):
        print(len(self.a))
        ret = ""
        for a in self.a:
            ret += str(a)
        return ret
```

```
>>> A("one")
```

```
>>> print(A("one"))
```

```
>>> repr(A("two"))
```

```
>>> b = B()
```

```
>>> b.add_a(A("a"))
```

```
>>> b.add_a(A("b"))
```

```
>>> b
```

```
>>> c = A("c")
```

```
>>> b.add_a(c)
```

```
>>> str(b)
```

- 1.2 Write the function `is_palindrome` such that it works for any data type that implements the sequence interface.

Assume that the `Link` class has implemented the `__len__` method and a `__getitem__` method which takes in integers.

```
def is_palindrome(seq):
    """ Returns True if the sequence is a palindrome. A palindrome is a sequence
    that reads the same forwards as backwards
    >>> is_palindrome(Link("l", Link("i", Link("n", Link("k")))))
    False
    >>> is_palindrome(["l", "i", "n", "k"])
    False
    >>> is_palindrome("link")
    False
    >>> is_palindrome(Link.empty)
    True
    >>> is_palindrome([])
    True
    >>> is_palindrome("")
    True
    >>> is_palindrome(Link("a", Link("v", Link("a"))))
    True
    >>> is_palindrome(["a", "v", "a"])
    True
    >>> is_palindrome("ava")
    True
    """
```

2 Linked Lists

There are many different implementations of sequences in Python. Today, we'll explore the linked list implementation.

A linked list is either an empty linked list, or a `Link` object containing a `first` value and the `rest` of the linked list.

To check if a linked list is an empty linked list, compare it against the class attribute `Link.empty`:

```
if link is Link.empty:
    print('This linked list is empty!')
else:
    print('This linked list is not empty!')
```

Implementation

```
class Link:
    empty = ()
    def __init__(self, first, rest=empty):
        assert rest is Link.empty or isinstance(rest, Link)
        self.first = first
        self.rest = rest

    def __repr__(self):
        if self.rest:
            rest_str = ', ' + repr(self.rest)
        else:
            rest_str = ''
        return 'Link({0}{1})'.format(repr(self.first), rest_str)

    def __str__(self):
        string = '<'
        while self.rest is not Link.empty:
            string += str(self.first) + ' '
            self = self.rest
        return string + str(self.first) + '>'
```

Questions

- 2.1 Write a function that takes in a linked list and returns the sum of all its elements. You may assume all elements in `lnk` are integers.

```
def sum_nums(lnk):
    """
    >>> a = Link(1, Link(6, Link(7)))
    >>> sum_nums(a)
    14
    """
```

- 2.2 Write a function that takes in a Python list of linked lists and multiplies them element-wise. It should return a new linked list.

If not all of the `Link` objects are of equal length, return a linked list whose length is that of the shortest linked list given. You may assume the `Link` objects are shallow linked lists, and that `lst_of_lns` contains at least one linked list.

```
def multiply_lns(lst_of_lns):
    """
    >>> a = Link(2, Link(3, Link(5)))
    >>> b = Link(6, Link(4, Link(2)))
    >>> c = Link(4, Link(1, Link(0, Link(2))))
    >>> p = multiply_lns([a, b, c])
    >>> p.first
    48
    >>> p.rest.first
    12
    >>> p.rest.rest.rest is Link.empty
    True
    """
```

3 Iterators and Generators

An **iterable** is a data type which contains a collection of values which can be processed one by one sequentially. Some examples of iterables we've seen include lists, tuples, strings, and dictionaries. In general, any object that can be iterated over in a **for** loop can be considered an iterable.

While an iterable contains values that can be iterated over, we need another type of object called an **iterator** to actually retrieve values contained in an iterable. Calling the **iter** function on an iterable will create an iterator over that iterable. Each iterator keeps track of its position within the iterable. Calling the **next** function on an iterator will give the current value in the iterable and move the iterator's position to the next value.

In this way, the relationship between an iterable and an iterator is analogous to the relationship between a book and a bookmark - an iterable contains the data that is being iterated over, and an iterator keeps track of your position within that data.

Once an iterator has returned all the values in an iterable, subsequent calls to **next** on that iterable will result in a **StopIteration** exception. In order to be able to access the values in the iterable a second time, you would have to create a second iterator.

One important application of iterables and iterators is the **for** loop. We've seen how we can use **for** loops to iterate over iterables like lists and dictionaries.

This only works because the **for** loop implicitly creates an iterator using the built-in **iter** function. Python then calls **next** repeatedly on the iterator, until it raises **StopIteration**.

The code to the right shows how we can mimic the behavior of **for** loops using **while** loops.

Note that most iterators are also iterables - that is, calling **iter** on them will return an iterator. This means that we can use them inside **for** loops. However, calling **iter** on most iterators will not create a new iterator - instead, it will simply return the same iterator.

We can also iterate over iterables in a list comprehension or pass in an iterable to the built-in function **list** in order to put the items of an iterable into a list.

In addition to the sequences we've learned, Python has some built-in ways to create iterables and iterators. Here are a few useful ones:

- **range(start, end)** returns an iterable containing numbers from start to end-1. If **start** is not provided, it defaults to 0.
- **map(f, iterable)** returns a new iterator containing the values resulting from applying **f** to each value in **iterable**.
- **filter(f, iterable)** returns a new iterator containing only the values in **iterable** for which **f(value)** returns **True**.

```
>>> a = [1, 2]
>>> a_iter = iter(a)
>>> next(a_iter)
1
>>> next(a_iter)
2
>>> next(a_iter)
StopIteration
```

```
counts = [1, 2, 3]

for i in counts:
    print(i)

items = iter(counts)
while True:
    try:
        i = next(items)
        print(i)
    except StopIteration:
        break #Exit the while loop
```

Questions

- 3.1 What would Python display? If a `StopIteration` Exception occurs, write `StopIteration`, and if another error occurs, write `Error`.

```
>>> lst = [6, 1, "a"]
>>> next(lst)
```

```
>>> lst_iter = iter(lst)
>>> next(lst_iter)
```

```
>>> next(lst_iter)
```

```
>>> next(iter(lst))
```

```
>>> [x for x in lst_iter]
```

Generators

A **generator function** is a special kind of Python function that uses a **yield** statement instead of a **return** statement to report values. *When a generator function is called, it returns a generator object, which is a type of iterator.* To the right, you can see a function that returns an iterator over the natural numbers. The **yield** statement is similar to a **return** statement. However, while a **return** statement closes the current frame after the function exits, a **yield** statement causes the frame to be saved until the next time **next** is called, which allows the generator to automatically keep track of the iteration state.

Once **next** is called again, execution resumes where it last stopped and continues until the next **yield** statement or the end of the function. A generator function can have multiple **yield** statements.

Including a **yield** statement in a function automatically tells Python that this function will create a generator. When we call the function, it returns a generator object instead of executing the body. When the generator's **next** method is called, the body is executed until the next **yield** statement is executed.

```
>>> def gen_naturals():
...     current = 0
...     while True:
...         yield current
...         current += 1
>>> gen = gen_naturals()
>>> gen
<generator object gen at ...>
>>> next(gen)
0
>>> next(gen)
1
```

When **yield from** is called on an iterator, it will **yield** every value from that iterator. It's similar to doing the following:

```
for x in an_iterator:
    yield x
```

The example to the right demonstrates different ways of computing the same result.

Questions

- 3.1 Implement `filter_link`, which takes in a linked list `link` and a function `f` and returns a generator which yields the values of `link` for which `f` returns `True`.

Try to implement this both using a while loop and without using any form of iteration.

```
def filter_link(link, f):
    """
    >>> link = Link(1, Link(2, Link(3)))
    >>> g = filter_link(link, lambda x: x % 2 == 0)
    >>> next(g)
    2
    >>> next(g)
    StopIteration
    >>> list(filter_link(link, lambda x: x % 2 != 0))
    [1, 3]
    """
```

```
while _____:

    if _____:

        _____

    _____
```

```
def filter_no_iter(link, f):
    """
    >>> link = Link(1, Link(2, Link(3)))
    >>> list(filter_no_iter(link, lambda x: x % 2 != 0))
    [1, 3]
    """
```

```
if _____:

    return
```

```
>>> square = lambda x: x*x
>>> def many_squares(s):
...     for x in s:
...         yield square(x)
...     yield from map(square, s)
...
>>> list(many_squares([1, 2, 3]))
[1, 4, 9, 1, 4, 9]
```



```
elif _____:
```

```
    _____
```

```
_____
```

- 3.2 Implement `sum_paths_gen`, which takes in a `Tree` instance `t` and returns a generator which yields the sum of all the nodes from a path from the root of a tree to a leaf.

You may yield the sums in any order.

```
def sum_paths_gen(t):
    """
    >>> t1 = Tree(5)
    >>> next(sum_paths_gen(t1))
    5
    >>> t2 = Tree(1, [Tree(2, [Tree(3), Tree(4)]), Tree(9)])
    >>> sorted(sum_paths_gen(t2))
    [6, 7, 10]
    """
```

```
if _____:
```

```
    yield _____
```

```
for _____:
```

```
    for _____:
```

```
        yield _____
```