

Documenting Your Python Project: A Beginner's Guide

Making Your Code Understandable and Maintainable

Michael Borck

Table of contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Why Document Your Project? | 2 |
| Why Use Docstrings? | 2 |
| What are Docstrings? | 2 |
| Example: Function Docstring | 2 |
| Writing a README.md | 3 |
| Example: README.md | 3 |
| Usage | 3 |
| Features | 3 |
| License | 4 |
| Setting Up MkDocs | 4 |
| Editing mkdocs.yml | 4 |
| Writing Documentation Pages | 5 |
| Serving Documentation Locally | 5 |
| Building the Documentation | 5 |
| Summary | 5 |
| Next Session | 5 |

Why Document Your Project?

- Improve code readability
- Help others understand your code
- Facilitate maintenance and collaboration

Why Use Docstrings?

- Documentation: Provides clear explanations of your code's functionality.
- Maintainability: Makes it easier for others (and yourself) to understand and maintain the code.
- Automatic Documentation: Tools like MkDocs and Sphinx can generate documentation from docstrings.
- Testing: With `doctest`, you can include examples that serve as both documentation and tests.

What are Docstrings?

- Inline documentation for modules, classes, functions, and methods
- Written as triple-quoted strings

Example: Function Docstring

```
def add(a, b):  
    """  
    Add two numbers and return the result.  
  
    Args:  
        a (int or float): The first number.  
        b (int or float): The second number.  
  
    Returns:  
        int or float: The sum of `a` and `b`.  
  
    Examples:  
    >>> add(2, 3)  
    5
```

```
>>> add(1.5, 2.5)
4.0
"""
return a + b
```

Writing a README.md

Purpose of README.md - Provide an overview of your project - Explain how to install and use it - Highlight key features and dependencies

Example: README.md

```
# Project Title

## Overview
Brief description of your project.

## Installation
```bash
pip install your_project
```

## Usage

```
from your_project import your_function
result = your_function()
print(result)
```

## Features

- Feature 1
- Feature 2

## License

MIT

```
Introducing MkDocs
```

```
What is MkDocs?
```

- Simple static site generator for project documentation
- Easy to setup and use

```
Installing MkDocs
```

```
Install MkDocs
```

```
```bash
```

```
pip install mkdocs
```

Setting Up MkDocs

Create MkDocs Project

```
mkdocs new my_project_docs  
cd my_project_docs
```

Editing mkdocs.yml

Basic mkdocs.yml Configuration

```
site_name: My Project Documentation  
  
nav:  
  - Home: index.md  
  - API Reference: api.md
```

Writing Documentation Pages

Example: index.md

```
# Welcome to My Project

This is the documentation for My Project.

## Getting Started

Follow these instructions to get started.
```

Serving Documentation Locally

Serve Documentation

```
mkdocs serve
```

- Access the documentation locally at <http://127.0.0.1:8000>

Building the Documentation

Build Static Site

```
mkdocs build
```

- Generates static site in the `site/` directory

Summary

- Use **docstrings** for inline documentation
- Create a **README.md** for project overview
- Use **MkDocs** for project documentation

Next Session

- Focus on finalising the project.
- Distribution methods.