* 3 minutes

Ansible models your IT infrastructure by describing how all your systems interrelate, rather than just managing one system at a time.

The core components of Ansible are:

* Control Machine. It’s the machine from which the configurations are run. It can be any machine with Ansible installed on it. However, it requires that Python 2 or Python 3 be installed on the control machine as well. You can have multiple control nodes, laptops, shared desktops, and servers all running Ansible.
* Managed Nodes. The devices and machines (or just machines) and environments that are being managed. Managed nodes are sometimes referred to as *hosts*. Ansible isn’t installed on nodes.
* Playbooks. Playbooks are ordered lists of tasks that have been saved so you can run them repeatedly in the same order. Playbooks are Ansible’s language for configuration, deployment, and orchestration. They can describe a policy that you want your remote systems to enforce, or they can dictate a set of steps in a general IT process. When you create a playbook, you do so by using YAML, which defines a model of a configuration or process, and uses a declarative model. Elements such as **name**, **hosts**, and **tasks** stays within playbooks.
* Modules. Ansible works by connecting to your nodes and then pushing small programs (or *units of code*)—called *modules*—out to the nodes. *Modules* are the units of code that define the configuration. They’re modular and can be reused across playbooks. They represent the system’s desired state (declarative), are executed over SSH by default, and are removed when finished. A playbook is typically made up of many modules. For example, you could have one playbook containing three modules: a module for creating an Azure Resource Group, a module for creating a virtual network, and a module for adding a subnet. Your library of modules can be on any machine and doesn’t require any servers, daemons, or databases. Typically, you’ll work with your favorite terminal program, a text editor, and most likely a version control system to track changes to your content. You can preview Ansible Azure modules on the Ansible [Azure preview modules](https://galaxy.ansible.com/Azure/azure_preview_modules) webpage.
* Inventory. An **inventory** is a list of managed nodes. Ansible represents what machines it manages to use a .INI file that puts all your managed machines in your chosen groups. You don’t need to use more SSL-signing servers when adding new machines, avoiding Network Time Protocol (NTP) and Domain Name System (DNS) issues. You can create the inventory manually, or for Azure, Ansible supports dynamic inventories> It means that the host inventory is dynamically generated at runtime. Ansible supports host inventories for other managed hosts as well.
* Roles. **Roles** are predefined file structures that allow automatic loading of certain variables, files, tasks, and handlers based on the file’s structure. It allows for easier sharing of roles. You might, for example, create roles for a web server deployment.
* Facts. **Facts** are data points about the remote system that Ansible is managing. When a playbook is run against a machine, Ansible will gather facts about the state of the environment to determine the state before executing the playbook.
* Plug-ins. **Plug-ins** are code that supplements Ansible’s core functionality.

Need help? See our [troubleshooting guide](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/learn/support/troubleshooting?uid=learn.wwl.implement-ansible.examine-ansible-components&documentId=ad51d8af-08ed-28d1-ec18-7bd31ddf05a3&versionIndependentDocumentId=865e1de0-ae93-c3d5-583f-b448b47d8a0b&contentPath=%2FMicrosoftDocs%2Flearn-pr%2Fblob%2Flive%2Flearn-pr%2Fwwl-azure%2Fimplement-ansible%2F4-examine-ansible-components.yml&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.microsoft.com%2Fen-us%2Flearn%2Fmodules%2Fimplement-ansible%2F4-examine-ansible-components&author=lumac) or provide specific feedback by [reporting an issue](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/learn/support/troubleshooting?uid=learn.wwl.implement-ansible.examine-ansible-components&documentId=ad51d8af-08ed-28d1-ec18-7bd31ddf05a3&versionIndependentDocumentId=865e1de0-ae93-c3d5-583f-b448b47d8a0b&contentPath=%2FMicrosoftDocs%2Flearn-pr%2Fblob%2Flive%2Flearn-pr%2Fwwl-azure%2Fimplement-ansible%2F4-examine-ansible-components.yml&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.microsoft.com%2Fen-us%2Flearn%2Fmodules%2Fimplement-ansible%2F4-examine-ansible-components&author=lumac#report-feedback).