Programming in Python[1]

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Lecture VIII: Files

Files

A file is an abstraction the operating system uses to preserve data among the execution of programs. Data must be accessed sequentially. (Italian reading people might enjoy this)

- We need commands to ask to the OS to give access to a file (`open`).
- It is easy to read or write data sequentially, otherwise you need special commands (`seek`) to move the file "cursor"
- The number of open files is limited ($\approx$ thousands), thus it is better to `close` files when they are not in use

Files contain bits (normally considered by group of bytes, 8 bits), the interpretation ("format") is given by the programs which manipulate them. However, "lines of printable characters" (plain text) is a rather universal/predefined interpretation, normally the easiest to program.

File read access

```
f = open('filename.txt', 'r') # read only

# iterating on a file reads (all) the lines
for i in f:
    print(i)

# End of file already reached, result is ''
f.readline()

f.close()

# File closed, error!
f.readline()
```

To avoid remembering to close explicitly, Python provides the context manager syntax.

```
with open('filename.txt', 'r') as f:
  for i in f:
    print(i)
```

Make a program readable

You never write a program only for a machine! You, others, tools will *read* the program for different purposes. Every minute spent in making a program more understandable pays off hours saved later.

- Type hinting makes clear what a function needs to work properly, and what it produces
- Documentation helps understanding without the need to read implementation details
- Examples of use make easy to remember how to use a function and can be used for verification

Example

```
from typing import Union

Num = Union[int, float]

def cube(x: Num) -> Num:
    """Return the cube of x.

    >>> cube(-3)
    -27

    >>> abs(cube(0.2) - 0.008) < 10e-5
    True
    """
    return x * x * x
```

Examples can be tested by:
`python -m doctest filename.py`.

Procedural abstraction

Procedural abstraction is key for our thinking process (remember the power of recursion, for example): giving a name to a procedure/function enhances our problem solving skills.

```
def sum_int(a: int, b: int) -> int:
    """Sum integers from a through b.

    >>> sum_int(1, 4)
    10

    >>> sum_int(3, 3)
    3
    """
    assert b >= a
    result = 0
    for i in range(a, b+1):
        result = result + i
    return result
```

Another “sum”

This is very similar. . .

```
def sum_cubes(a: int, b: int) -> int:
    """Sum the cubes of the integers from a through b.

    >>> sum_cubes(1, 3)
    36

    >>> sum_cubes(-2, 2)
    0

    """
    assert b >= a
    result = 0
    for i in range(a, b+1):
        result = result + int(cube(i))
    return result
```

Another "sum"

This is also very similar...

$\frac{1}{a\cdot(a+2)} + \frac{1}{(a+4)\cdot(a+6)} + \frac{1}{(a+8)\cdot(a+10)} + \cdots + \frac{1}{(b-2)\cdot(b)}$

(Leibniz: $\frac{1}{1\cdot 3} + \frac{1}{5\cdot 7} + \frac{1}{9\cdot 11} + \cdots = \frac{\pi}{8}$)

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```
def pi_sum(a: int, b: int) -> float:
    """Sum \frac{1}{a(a+2)} terms until (a+2) > b.

    >>> from math import pi
    >>> abs(8*pi_sum(1, 1001) - pi) < 10e-3
    True

    """
    assert b >= a
    result = 0.0
    for i in range(a, b+1, 4):
        result = result + (1 / (i * (i + 2)))
    return result
```

Can we abstract the similarity?

```
from typing import Callable

def gen_sum(a: int, b: int, fun: Callable[[int], Num], step: int = 1) -> Num:
    """Sum terms from a through b, incrementing by step.

    >>> gen_sum(1, 4, lambda x: x)
    10

    >>> gen_sum(1, 3, cube)
    36

    >>> from math import pi
    >>> abs(8*gen_sum(1, 1000, lambda x: 1 / (x * (x + 2)), 4) - pi) < 10e-3
    True

    """

    assert b >= a
    result = 0.0
    for i in range(a, b+1, step):
        result = result + fun(i)
    if result.is_integer():
        return int(result)
    return result
```

Homework

- https://classroom.github.com/a/5W5A587v