Australian
National
University

COMP1730/COMP6730
Programming for Scientists

Sequence types, part 2

Announcements

- Mid-semester exam results in **2-3 weeks**.
- Homework 4 due next Monday, but can be checked this week if you submitted it yesterday.
- Solving lab exercises is **highly recommended**!
- Guest lecture tomorrow by A/Prof. Robert Lanfear (Research School of Biology) about how programming helps his research.

Lecture outline

- Lists
- Mutable objects & references

Sequence data types (recap)

- A *sequence* contains $n \geq 0$ values (its *length*), each at an *index* from 0 to $n - 1$.
- python's built-in sequence types:
  - strings (`str`) contain only characters;
  - lists (`list`) can contain a mix of value types;
  - tuples (`tuple`) are like lists, but immutable.
- Sequence types provided by other modules:
  - NumPy arrays (`numpy.ndarray`): fast matrix operations, linear algebra.

Lists

- python’s `list` is a general sequence type: elements in a `list` can be values of any type.
- List literals are written in square brackets with comma-separated elements:

```
>>> a_list_of_ints = [2, -4, 2, -8 ]
>>> a_date = [12, "August", 2015]
>>> pairs = [ [ 0.4, True ],
              [ "C", False ] ]
>>> type(pairs)
<class ’list’>
```

Creating lists

```
>>> monday = [18, "July"]
>>> friday = [22, "July"]
>>> [monday, friday]
[ [18, "July"], [22, "July"] ]
>>> list("abcd")
[’a’, ’b’, ’c’, ’d’]
>>> list(range(10))
[0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
>>> [1/x for x in range(1,6)]
[1.0, 0.5, 0.3333333, 0.25, 0.2]
```

Lists of lists

```
>>> A = [ [1, 2], [3, 4, 5],
          [6, 7, 8, 9] ]
>>> A[0]
[1, 2]
>>> A[1][2]
5
>>> [1, 2, 3][2]
3
```

- Indexing and slicing are *operators*
- Indexing and slicing associate to the left.
  `a_list[i][j] == (a_list[i])[j]`.

Lists of lists

```
>>> A[0]
[1, 2]
>>> A[0:1]
[ [1, 2] ]
>>> A[0:1][1:]
[ ]
>>> A[0:1][1]
IndexError: list index out of range
```

- Indexing a list returns an element, but slicing a list returns a list.

n-dimensional arrays

- NumPy arrays can be *n*-dimensional.

```
>>> np.array([ [1,2,3], [4,5,6] ])
array([[1, 2, 3],
       [4, 5, 6]])
>>> np.zeros( [2, 3] )
array([[ 0., 0., 0.],
       [ 0., 0., 0.]])
>>> np.eye(3)
array([[ 1., 0., 0.]
       [ 0., 1., 0.]
       [ 0., 0., 1.]])
```

- Indexing an *n*-d array returns an $(n-1)$-d array.

```
>>> A = np.array([[1,2,3],[4,5,6]])
>>> A[0]
array([1,2,3])
>>> np.transpose(A)[0]
array([1,4])
```

- Arrays support extended forms of indexing.

```
>>> A[:,1]
array([2,5])
```

Lists vs. NumPy arrays

- Lists can contain an arbitrary *mix* of value types; all values in an array (or a column of a matrix) must be of the same type.
- Arrays support more general forms of indexing (*n*-dimensional, indexing with an array of integers or Booleans).
- Arrays support element-wise math operations.
- NumPy/SciPy provides many functions on arrays and matrices (e.g., linear algebra).
- Arrays are more (time and memory) efficient, but this matters only when they are large.

Operations on lists

- `list + list` concatenates lists:

```
>>> [1, 2] + [3, 4]
[1, 2, 3, 4]
>>> np.array([1, 2]) + np.array([3, 4])
array([4, 6])
```

- `int * list` repeats the list:

```
>>> 2 * [1, 2]
[1, 2, 1, 2]
>>> 2 * np.array([1, 2])
array([2, 4])
```

Mutable objects and references

Values are objects

- In python, every value is an *object*.
- Every object has a unique$^{(\star)}$ identifier.

  ```
  >>> id(1)
  136608064
  ```

  (Essentially, its location in memory.)
- *Immutable* objects never change.
  - For example, numbers (`int` and `float`), strings and tuples.
- *Mutable* objects can change.
  - For example, arrays and lists.

Immutable objects

- Operations on immutable objects create new objects, leaving the original unchanged.

```
>>> a_string = "spam"
>>> id(a_string)
3023147264
>>> b_string = a_string.replace(’p’, ’l’)
>>> b_string
’slam’
>>> id(b_string)
3022616448
>>> a_string
’spam’
```

not the same!

Mutable objects

- A mutable object can be modified yet it’s identity remains the same.
- Lists and arrays can be modified through:
  - element and slice assignment; and
  - modifying methods/functions.
- `ndarray` and `list` is the only mutable types we have seen so far but there are many other (sets, dictionaries, user-defined classes).

Element & slice assignment

```
>>> a_list = [1, 2, 3]
>>> id(a_list)
3022622348
>>> b_list = a_list
>>> a_list[2] = 0
>>> b_list
[1, 2, 0]
>>> b_list[0:2] = [’A’, ’B’]
>>> a_list
[’A’, ’B’, 0]
>>> id(b_list)
3022622348
```

the same object!

Modifying list methods

- *a_list*.append(*new element*)
- *a_list*.insert(*index*, *new element*)
- *a_list*.pop(*index*)
  - *index* defaults to −1 (last element).
- *a_list*.insert(*index*, *new element*)
- *a_list*.extend(*an iterable*)
- *a_list*.sort()
- *a_list*.reverse()
- Note: Most do not return a value.

Lists contain references

- Assignment associates a (variable) name with a *reference* to a value (object).
  - The variable still references the same object (unless reassigned) even if the object is modified.
- *A list contains references to its elements.*
- Slicing a list creates a new list, but containing references to the same objects (“shallow copy”).
- Slice assignment *does not copy*.

```
>>> a_list = [1,2,3]
>>> b_list = a_list
>>> a_list.append(4)
>>> print(b_list)
```

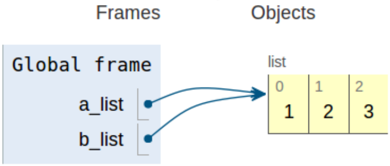
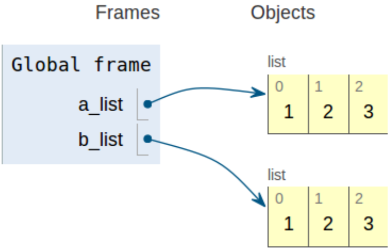


Image from `pythontutor.com`

```
>>> a_list = [1,2,3]
>>> b_list = a_list[:]
>>> a_list.append(4)
>>> print(b_list)
```



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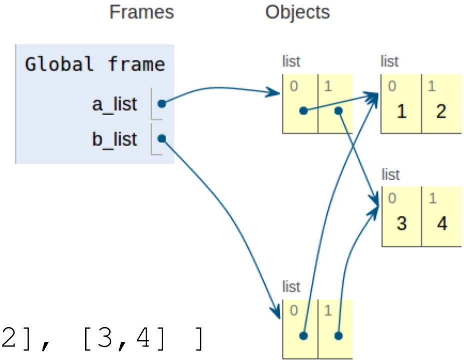
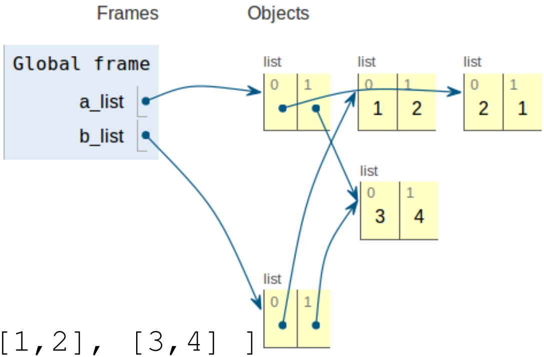


Image from `pythontutor.com`

```
>>> a_list = [ [1,2], [3,4] ]
>>> b_list = a_list[:]
>>> a_list[0].reverse()
>>> b_list.reverse()
>>> print(b_list)
```



```
>>> a_list = [ [1,2], [3,4] ]
>>> b_list = a_list[:]
>>> a_list[0] = a_list[0][::-1]
>>> b_list.reverse()
>>> print(b_list)
```

Image from `pythontutor.com`

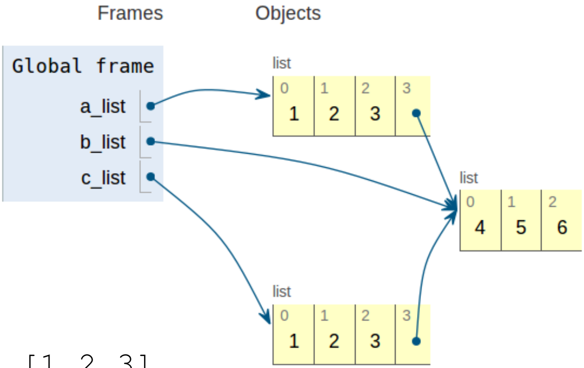


Image from `pythontutor.com`

```
>>> a_list = [1,2,3]
>>> b_list = [4,5,6]
>>> a_list.append(b_list)
>>> c_list = a_list[:]
>>> b_list[0] = 'A'
```

Common mistakes

```
>>> a_list = [3,1,2]
>>> a_list = a_list.sort()

>>> a_list = [1,2,3]
>>> b_list = a_list
>>> a_list.append(b_list)

>>> a_list = [[]] * 3
>>> a_list[0].append(1)
```

NumPy arrays

- Slicing arrays does *not (even shallow) copy*:

```
>>> x = np.arange(1,6)
>>> y = x[1:-1]
>>> y
array([2, 3, 4])
>>> x[0:3] = np.zeros(3)
>>> y
array([0, 0, 4])
```

- The slice acts like a “window” into the array.
- Indexing with an array *does* copy.