

More on Functions

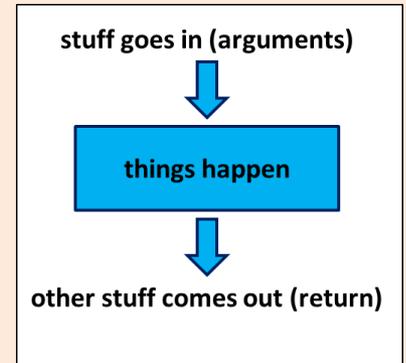
Genome 559: Introduction to Statistical and
Computational Genomics

Elhanan Borenstein

A quick review

■ Functions:

- Reusable pieces of code (write once, use many)
- Take arguments, “do stuff”, and (usually) return a value
- Use to organize & clarify your code, reduce code duplication



■ Defining a function:

```
def <function_name>(<arguments>):  
    <function code block>  
    <usually return something>
```

■ Using (calling) a function:

```
<function defined here>  
  
<my_variable> = function_name(<my_arguments>)
```

A quick review

- Functions have their own namespace
 - Local variables inside the function are invisible outside
- Arguments can be of any type!
 - Number and strings
 - Lists and dictionaries
- Return values can be of any type!
 - Number and strings
 - Lists (as a way to return multiple values)

Returning lists

- Recall the increment function:

```
# This function increment every element in
# the input list by 1
def incrementEachElement(a_list):
    new_list = []
    for item in a_list:
        new_list.append(item+1)
    return new_list

# Now, create a list and use the function
my_list = [1, 20, 34, 8]
print my_list
my_list = incrementEachElement(my_list)
Print my_list
```

```
[1, 20, 34, 8]
[2, 21, 35, 9]
```

- Is this good practice?

Returning lists

- What will happen if we do this?

```
# This function increment every element in
# the input list by 1
def incrementEachElement(a_list):
    for index in range(len(a_list)):
        a_list[index] +=1

# Now, create a list and use the function
my_list = [1, 20, 34, 8]
incrementEachElement(my_list)
print my_list
```

- **(note: no return value!!!)**

Returning lists

- What will happen if we do this?

```
# This function increment every element in
# the input list by 1
def incrementEachElement(a_list):
    for index in range(len(a_list)):
        a_list[index] +=1

# Now, create a list and use the function
my_list = [1, 20, 34, 8]
incrementEachElement(my_list)
print my_list
```

- (note: no return value)

```
[2, 21, 35, 9]
```

WHY IS THIS WORKING?

Pass-by-reference vs. pass-by-value

- Two fundamentally different function calling strategies:
- **Pass-by-Value:**
 - The value of the argument is copied into a local variable inside the function
 - C, Scheme, C++
- **Pass-by-reference:**
 - The function receives an implicit reference to the variable used as argument, rather than a copy of its value
 - Perl, VB, C++
- **So, how does Python pass arguments?**

Python passes arguments by reference

(almost)

- So ... this will work!

```
# This function increment every element in
# the input list by 1
def incrementEachElement(a_list):
    for index in range(len(a_list)):
        a_list[index] +=1
```

```
>>> my_list = [1, 20, 34, 8]
>>> incrementEachElement(my_list)
>>> my_list
[2, 21, 35, 9]
>>> incrementEachElement(my_list)
>>> my_list
[3, 22, 36, 10]
```

Python passes arguments by reference

(almost)

- How about this?

```
def addQuestionMark(word):  
    print "word inside function (1):", word  
    word = word + "?"  
    print "word inside function (2):", word  
  
my_word = "really"  
addQuestionMark(my_word)  
print "word after function:", my_word
```

Python passes arguments by reference

(almost)

- How about this?

```
def addQuestionMark(word):  
    print "word inside function (1):", word  
    word = word + "?"  
    print "word inside function (2):", word  
  
my_word = "really"  
addQuestionMark(my_word)  
print "word after function:", my_word
```

```
word inside function (1): really  
word inside function (2): really?  
word after function: really
```

- Remember:
 1. Strings/numbers are immutable
 2. The assignment command often creates a new object

Passing by reference: the bottom line

- **You can (and should) use this option when:**
 - Handling large data structures
 - “In place” changes make sense
- **Be careful** (a double-edged sword):
 - Don't lose the reference!
 - Don't change an argument by mistake
- When we learn about objects and methods we will see yet an additional way to change variables

Required Arguments

- How about this?

```
def printMulti(text, n):  
    for i in range(n):  
        print text
```

```
>>> printMulti("Bla",4)  
Bla  
Bla  
Bla  
Bla
```

- What happens if I try to do this:

```
>>> printMulti("Bla")
```

```
Traceback (most recent call last):  
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>  
TypeError: printMulti() takes exactly 2  
arguments (1 given)
```

Default Arguments

- Python allows you to define defaults for various arguments:

```
def printMulti(text, n=3):  
    for i in range(n):  
        print text
```

```
>>> printMulti("Bla", 4)  
Bla  
Bla  
Bla  
Bla
```

```
>>> printMulti("Yada")  
Yada  
Yada  
Yada
```

Default Arguments

- This is very useful if you have functions with numerous arguments/parameters, most of which will rarely be changed by the user:

```
def runBlast(fasta_file, costGap=10, E=10.0, desc=100,  
            max_align=25, matrix="BLOSUM62", sim=0.7, corr=True):  
    <runBlast code here>
```

- You can now simply use:

```
>>> runBlast("my_fasta.txt")
```

- Instead of:

```
>>> runBlast("my_fasta.txt", 10, 10.0, 100, 25, "BLOSUM62", 0.7,  
            True)
```

Keyword Arguments

- You can still provide values for specific arguments using their label:

```
def runBlast(fasta_file, costGap=10, E=10.0, desc=100,
             max_align=25, matrix="BLOSUM62", sim=0.7, corr=True):
    <runBlast code here>
    ...

>>> runBlast("my_fasta.txt", matrix="PAM40")
```

Modules

Modules

- Recall your makeDict function:

```
def makeDict(fileName):  
    myFile = open(fileName, "r")  
    myDict = {}  
    for line in myFile:  
        fields = line.strip().split("\t")  
        myDict[fields[0]] = float(fields[1])  
    myFile.close()  
    return myDict
```

- This is in fact a very useful function which you may want to use in many programs!
- So are other functions you wrote (e.g., makeMatrix)

Modules

- A module is a file that contains a collection of **related** functions.
- You have already used several built-in modules:
 - e.g.: sys, math
- Python has numerous standard modules
 - Python Standard Library: (<http://docs.python.org/library/>)
- **It is easy to create and use your own modules:**
 - **JUST PUT YOUR FUNCTIONS IN A SEPARATE FILE!**

Importing Modules

- To use a module, you first have to import it into your namespace
- To import the entire module:
`import module_name`

my_prog.py

```
import utils
import sys

Dict1 = utils.makeDict(sys.argv[1])
Dict2 = utils.makeDict(sys.argv[2])

Mtrx = utils.makeMatrix("blsm.txt")

...
```

utils.py

```
# This function makes a dictionary
def makeDict(fileName):
    myFile = open(fileName, "r")
    myDict = {}
    for line in myFile:
        fields = line.strip().split("\t")
        myDict[fields[0]] = float(fields[1])
    myFile.close()
    return myDict

# This function reads a 2D matrix
def makeMatrix(fileName):
    < ... >
```

The dot notation

- Why did we use `utils.makeDict()` instead of just `makeDict()`?
- Dot notation allows the Python interpreter to organize and divide the namespace

Code like a pro ...



***Write
comments!***

Why comments



- **Uncommented code = useless code**
- **Comments are your way to communicate with:**
 - Future you!
 - The poor bastard that inherits your code
 - Your users (most academic code is open source!)
- **At minimum, write a comment to explain:**
 - Each function: target, arguments, return value
 - Each File: purpose, major revisions
 - Non-trivial code blocks
 - Non-trivial variables
 - Whatever you want future you to remember

Best (real) comments ever

```
# When I wrote this, only God and I understood what I was doing  
# Now, God only knows
```

```
# I dedicate all this code, all my work, to my wife, Darlene,  
# who will have to support me and our three children and the  
# dog once it gets released into the public.
```

```
# I am not responsible of this code.  
# They made me write it, against my will.
```

```
# drunk. fix later
```

```
# Magic. Do not touch.
```

```
# I am not sure if we need this, but too scared to delete.
```

```
# Dear future me. Please forgive me.  
# I can't even begin to express how sorry I am.
```

```
# no comments for you!  
# it was hard to write so it should be hard to read
```

```
# somedev1 - 6/7/02 Adding temporary tracking of Logic screen  
# somedev2 - 5/22/07 Temporary my ass
```

Sample problem #1

- Write a function that calculates the first n elements of the Fibonacci sequence.
 - Reminder: In the Fibonacci sequence of numbers, each number is the sum of the previous two numbers, starting with 0 and 1. This sequence begins: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377, 610, 987, ...
- The function should return these n elements as a list

Solution #1

```
# Calculate Fibonacci series up to n
def fibonacci(n):
    fib_seq = [0, 1];
    for i in range(2,n):
        fib_seq.append(fib_seq[i-1] + fib_seq[i-2])

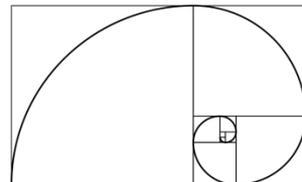
    return fib_seq[0:n]    # Why not just fib_seq?

print fibonacci(10)
```

```
[0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34]
```

Sample problem #2

- Make the following improvements to your function:
 1. Add two **optional** arguments that will denote alternative starting values (instead of 0 and 1).
 - `fibonacci(10)` \rightarrow `[0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34]`
 - `fibonacci(10,4)` \rightarrow `[4, 1, 5, 6, 11, 17, 28, 45, 73, 118]`
 - `fibonacci(10,4,7)` \rightarrow `[4, 7, 11, 18, 29, 47, 76, 123, 199, 322]`
 2. Return, in addition to the sequence, also the ratio of the last two elements you calculated (how would you return it?).
 3. Create a module “my_math” and include your function in this module. Import this module into another program and use the function.



Solution #2

my_math.py

```
# Calculate Fibonacci series up to n
def fibonacci(n, start1=0, start2=1):
    fib_seq = [start1, start2];
    for i in range(2,n):
        fib_seq.append(fib_seq[i-1]+fib_seq[i-2])

    ratio = float(fib_seq[n-1])/float(fib_seq[n-2])
    return [fib_seq[0:n], ratio]
```

my_prog.py

```
import my_math
seq, ratio = my_math.fibonacci(1000)
print "first 10 elements:",seq[0:10]
print "ratio:", ratio
# Will print:
# first 10 elements: [0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34]
# ratio: 1.61803398875

fib = my_math.fibonacci # creating a local name
print fib(5,12,14)
# Will print:
# [[12, 14, 26, 40, 66], 1.65]
```

Challenge problem

- Write your own sort function!
- Sort elements in ascending order.
- The function should sort the input list **in-place** (i.e. do not return a new sorted list as a return value; the list that is passed to the function should itself be sorted after the function is called).
- As a return value, the function should return the number of elements that were in their appropriate (“sorted”) location in the original list.
- You can use any sorting algorithm. Don’t worry about efficiency right now.

Challenge solution 1

```
def swap(a_list, k, l):
    temp = a_list[k]
    a_list[k] = a_list[l]
    a_list[l] = temp

def bubbleSort(a_list):
    n = len(a_list)
    a_list_copy = [] # note: why don't we use assignment
    for item in a_list: a_list_copy.append(item)

    # bubble sort
    for i in range(n):
        for j in range(n-1):
            if a_list[j] > a_list[j+1]:
                swap(a_list, j, j+1) # note: in place swapping

    # check how many are in the right place
    count = 0
    for i in range(n):
        if a_list[i] == a_list_copy[i]: count += 1
    return count
```

This is the actual sorting algorithm. Simple!

```
>>> ls = [1, 3, 2, 15, 7, 4, 8, 12]
>>> print bubbleSort(ls)
2
>>> print ls
[1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15]
```

Alternative challenge solution 1

```
def swap(a_list, k, l):
    temp = a_list[k]
    a_list[k] = a_list[l]
    a_list[l] = temp

def bubbleSort(a_list):
    n = len(a_list)
    a_list_copy = [] # note: why don't we use assignment
    for item in a_list: a_list_copy.append(item)

    # bubble sort
    for i in range(n):
        for j in range(n-1-i):
            if a_list[j] > a_list[j+1]:
                swap(a_list, j, j+1) # note: in place swapping

    # check how many are in the right place
    count = 0
    for i in range(n):
        if a_list[i] == a_list_copy[i]: count += 1
    return count
```

Why is this better?
Why is this working?

```
>>> ls = [1, 3, 2, 15, 7, 4, 8, 12]
>>> print bubbleSort(ls)
2
>>> print ls
[1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15]
```

