



COMPSCI 101

Principles of Programming

L6 – Getting user input, converting between types, generating random numbers



Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lecture, students should be able to:

- ▶ get user input from the keyboard
- ▶ generate a random number
- ▶ convert between types



Recap

From lecture 5

- ▶ use dot notation when using string methods with string instances
- ▶ use string methods: `upper()`, `lower()`, `strip()`, `find()`, `rfind()`
- ▶ use the inbuilt functions: `min()`, `max()`, `round()`



Recap

```
phrase = "When in doubt, mumble."  
pos1 = phrase.find("in")  
pos2 = phrase.rfind("mumb")  
pos3 = phrase.rfind("ni")  
total = pos1 + pos2 + pos3  
print("1. Total:", total)  
  
phrase_lower = phrase.lower()  
print("2.", phrase_lower[:3])  
  
smallest = min(32.7, 56.4, 3, -1.1, 56.99, -1.2)  
largest = max(32.7, 56.4, 3, -1.1, 56.99, -1.2)  
  
num1 = 32.657123  
print("3.", round(num1))  
print("4.", round(num1, 2))
```

```
1. Total: 19  
2. whe  
3. 33  
4. 32.66
```



Getting input from the user

We have already seen how the `print()` function is used to print to the standard output. We would now like our programs to be able to get input from the user from the keyboard (the standard input).

The `input()` function is used to get information from the user. This function displays the prompt, waits for the user to type their information and, as soon as the user presses the 'Enter' key, the `input()` function returns the information typed by the user (to the variable on the left of the assignment operator).

```
user_name = input("Enter name: ")
colour = input("Enter colour: ")
user_word = input("Enter word: ")
print(user_name, "entered", colour, "and the word", user_word)
```

Enter name: **Adriana**
Enter colour: **magenta**
Enter word: **parola**

The user input is shown
in a pink colour

Adriana entered magenta and the word parola



Getting input from the user

The **input() function** can be used with no argument (nothing inside the round brackets) in which case no prompt is displayed.

The input() function always **returns a string**. The end of line character is not returned as part of the returned string.

```
user_number = input("Enter number: ")
user_input = input()

print("You entered", user_number, "and then", user_input)
```

Enter number: 98
??? #user enters stuff here
You entered 98 and then ???

**The user input is shown
in a pink colour**



Exercise

Complete the output if the user enters the number 54 when prompted:

```
user_number = input("Enter number: ")  
  
print(user_number * 2, user_number * 3, user_number * 4)
```

Enter number: 54



Oops!

The following code causes an error:

```
1 age = input("Enter age: ")
2 years_to_go = 100 - age
3 print("Big birthday coming up in ", years_to_go, "years!")
```

```
Enter age: 54
File "LectureCode.py", line 2, in <module>
    years_to_go = 100 - age
TypeError: unsupported operand type(s) for -: 'int' and 'str'
```

What does this error message mean?



Converting between types

The subtraction operator (-) has no meaning if one of the operands is a string. We want to find a way of converting a string containing just digits into a number.

The `int()` function converts a string containing characters which are digits into the corresponding integer value.

```
1 age = input("Enter age: ")
2 age = int(age)
3 years_to_go = 100 - age
4 print("Big birthday coming up in", years_to_go, "years!")
```

```
Enter age: 54
Big birthday coming up in 46 years!
```

Note that the code on lines 1 and 2 can be combined into one line:

```
age = int(input("Enter age: "))
```



Converting between types

Other functions which can be used to convert between types:

▶ `float()`

▶ `str()`

```
1 cost = input("Enter cost $")
2 cost = float(cost)
3 final_price = cost * 0.92
4 print("Final price $", final_price, sep="")
```

```
Enter cost $509.59
Final price $468.8228
```

String concatenation requires that the two operands be strings:

```
1 price = 19.99
2 message = "The price of the item is: $" + str(price)
3 print(message)
```

```
The price of the item is $19.99
```



Converting between types

The conversion has to be legal. Below are two illegal attempts to convert values using `int()`:

```
1 number = int("12 34")
```

```
File "LectureCode.py", line 1, in <module>
    number = int("12 34")
ValueError: invalid literal for int() with base 10: '12 34'
```

```
1 number = int("12.34")
```

```
File "LectureCode.py", line 1, in <module>
    number = int("12.34")
ValueError: invalid literal for int() with base 10: '12.34'
```

Note that converting a string which contains no decimal point into a float is fine:

```
number = float("12")
print(number)
```

```
12.0
```



Random Numbers

Quite often, in our programs, we need to generate random numbers, e.g., for games and simulations.

The random module contains a function, **randrange()**, which can be used to generate a random number. In order to use this function we need to import the random module into our program (just as we did when we wanted to use the functions defined in the math module – `math.sin()`, `math.cos()`, ...).

Whenever we need to get a random number in a program, the first line of the program will be the following import statement:

```
import random
```



Random Numbers

The, **randrange() function** requires two values defining the range of the random number to be generated:

- ▶ the first number is the lowest number which can be generated and the second number is one past the biggest number to be generated, e.g., `random.randrange(5, 10)` has an equal chance of generating 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9.

```
import random

dice1 = random.randrange(1, 7)
dice2 = random.randrange(1, 7)

print("You threw", dice1, "and a", dice2)
```

```
You threw 4 and a 1
```



Exercise

Complete the following program so that it prompts the user for their first name. The program removes a random letter from the first name and prints the resulting name.

```
import random
first_name = input("Enter name: ")

print(first_name)
```

```
Enter name: Adriana
Adriaa
```

```
Enter name: Jerry
Jery
```

```
Enter name: Eric
ric
```



Random Numbers

The `randrange()` function has an optional step argument:

```
random.randrange(start, end, step)
```

When the step argument is omitted the default step is 1. The step argument dictates which random numbers are generated within the range (the step is the amount between each random number generated). For example:

```
random.randrange(1, 7, 2) #generates either 1, 3 or 5
random.randrange(1, 7, 3) #generates either 1 or 4
random.randrange(78, 100, 7) #generates either 78, 85, 92, or 99
random.randrange(-30, 100, 30) #generates either -30, 0, 30, 60, or 90
```



Exercise

Give the smallest and the largest possible random number which can be generated by the following four statements:

```
import random
print("1.", random.randrange(4, 17, 3))

print("2.", random.randrange(-1, 7, 2))

print("3.", random.randrange(100, 700, 2))

print("4.", random.randrange(50, 100, 10))
```




Line Continuation

The preferred way of line continuation (breaking long lines of code over multiple lines) is to use parentheses, brackets and braces.

There will be other examples of this in later lectures.

```
1 user_dice = input("Enter dice throw: ")
2 comp_dice = random.randrange(1, 7)
3 message = ("Your dice: " + user_dice +
             ", computer dice: " +
             str(comp_dice))
4 print(message)
```

The backslash character at the end of a line of code in the program also can be used to indicate that the statement continues onto the next line, e.g.,

```
1 user_dice = input("Enter dice throw: ")
2 comp_dice = random.randrange(1, 7)
3 message = "Your dice: " + user_dice + ", computer dice: " + \
             str(comp_dice)
4 print(message)
```

Note that the backslash is the last character on the line of code.



Exercise

Complete the following program which prompts the user once for the total of 4 dice throws, the program calculates the sum of four random dice throws, and outputs the four dice values and the difference between the user guess and the dice throwing simulation sum (see example outputs):

```
prompt = 'Enter sum (4 dice): '  
dice_sum = 0  
the_dice = "("
```

```
print("The dice:",  
      )  
print("Your total:",  
      )  
print("You are out by:",  
      )
```

```
Enter sum (4 dice): 12  
The dice: (3 4 3 2)  
Your total: 12 Dice total: 12  
You are out by: 0
```

```
Enter sum (4 dice): 15  
The dice: (3 1 4 6)  
Your total: 15 Dice total: 14  
You are out by: 1
```

```
Enter sum (4 dice): 12  
The dice: (6 3 6 4)  
Your total: 12 Dice total: 19  
You are out by: 7
```



Summary

In a Python program:

- ▶ the `input()` function is used to get user input from the keyboard
- ▶ a random number can be generated using `random.randrange(...)`
- ▶ we can convert between types using `str()`, `int()`, `float()`



Examples of Python features used in this lecture

```
dice1 = random.randrange(1, 7)
age = random.randrange(66, 99)
even_number = random.randrange(50, 99, 2)
tens = random.randrange(50, 101, 10)

user_input = input("Enter age: ")
age = int(user_input)

cost = input("Enter cost $")
cost = float(cost)

price = 32.45
message = "Final price $" + str(price)
```