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No. 89

PROGRAMMING

Python for Beginners

Learn to write real Python programs from scratch, with Python 3.14 and 3.15, explained for complete beginners

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CONTENTS

How to use this book 1

PART I · GETTING STARTED

1 What Python is 5
2 Installing Python 7
3 Your first program 9
4 Choosing an editor 11

PART II · THE BASICS

5 Values and variables 14
6 Working with text 16
7 Numbers and maths 18
8 Making decisions 20
9 Loops 22
10 Lists, dictionaries and more 24
11 Functions 26
12 Errors and debugging 28

PART III · GOING FURTHER

13 Working with files 31
14 Modules and packages 33
15 Working with data 35
16 Classes and objects 37
17 Testing your code 39
18 Learning Python with AI 41

PART IV · PROJECTS AND NEXT STEPS

19 Three small projects 44
20 What's new in recent Python 46
21 Where to go next 48

Cheat sheet 50

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Glossary 52
Further reading 53

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to use this book

What this book covers, who it is for, and how to use it.

Python is one of the most popular programming languages in the world and one of the most searched programming topics. It is used to automate everyday tasks, analyze data, build websites and power much of today's AI. It is also famously readable, which makes it a great first language.

This book teaches Python from zero. You will install Python, write your first program, and learn the core ideas, step by step: values and variables, decisions, loops, collections, functions, errors, files and packages. By the end you will build small, useful programs and know where to go next.

Which versions this book covers

- **Python 3.14** (released October 7, 2025) and **Python 3.15** (released October 9, 2026). Everything in this book works in both, and in most earlier Python 3 versions.
- Python 3.10 reached end of life in October 2026, so if you have an older Python installed, upgrade.

Who this book is for

- **Complete beginners** who have never programmed.
- **Office workers** who want to automate boring tasks.
- **Students** starting computer science or data courses.
- Readers of **Vibe Coding** who want to understand the code AI writes.

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How the book is organized

- **Part I — Getting started** (Chapters 1–4): what Python is, installing it, your first program, and choosing an editor.
- **Part II — The basics** (Chapters 5–12): values and variables, text, numbers, decisions, loops, collections, functions, and errors.
- **Part III — Going further** (Chapters 13–18): files, modules and packages, working with data, classes, testing, and learning with AI.
- **Part IV — Projects and next steps** (Chapters 19–21): three small projects, what's new in recent Python, and where to go next.
- **Reference**: cheat sheet, glossary and further reading.

How to read the code

Code appears in boxes like this:

```
print("Hello, world!")
```

Type the examples yourself rather than copying them. Typing builds memory and helps you notice details.

Callouts

TIP
Practical advice you can use straight away.

IN PYTHON
Details about how Python itself works.

WATCH OUT
Common mistakes.

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KEY IDEA

The one thing to remember from a section.

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PART I

Getting started

These chapters explain what Python is, how to install it, how to write and run your first program, and which editor to use.

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CHAPTER 1

What Python is

Python is a general-purpose language designed to be easy to read.

A language for people

Python was created by Guido van Rossum and first released in 1991. Its design puts **readability** first: code uses plain words and indentation instead of lots of symbols.

```
for name in ["Ana", "Ben", "Chen"]:
    print("Hello,", name)
```

Even without knowing Python, you can probably guess what that does.

What it is used for

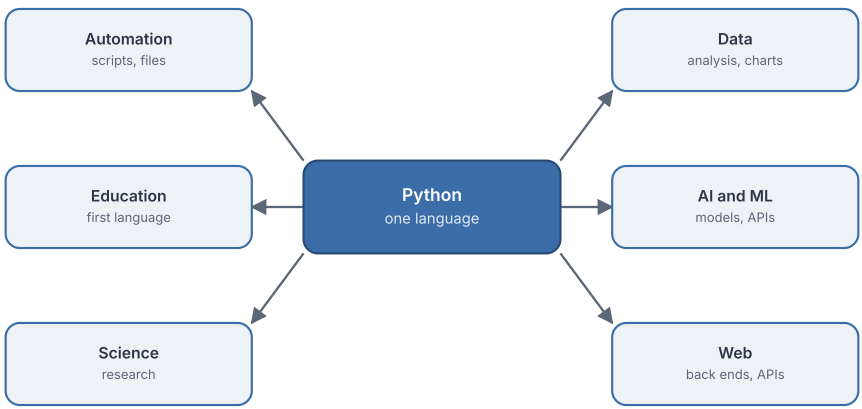


Figure 1.1 Common uses of Python

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How Python runs code

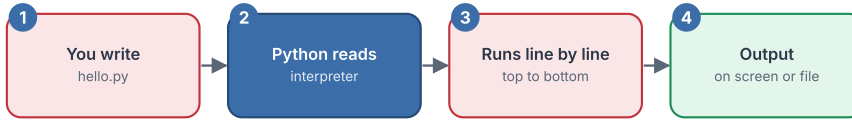


Figure 1.2 From file to output

Python is an **interpreted** language: you write instructions in a text file, and the Python interpreter reads and runs them, top to bottom.

Why learn it now

- It is the main language for AI and data work.
- AI coding tools write a lot of Python; understanding it lets you check and fix their work.
- A huge library of free packages means you rarely start from scratch.

> **KEY IDEA**
>
> Programming is giving precise instructions. Python makes those instructions as readable as possible.

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CHAPTER 2

Installing Python

Installing Python takes a few minutes.

Windows

From Python 3.14, the recommended way on Windows is the **Python Install Manager**, available from python.org and the Microsoft Store. After installing it, open a terminal and run:

```
py install 3.15
```

Then start Python with `py`. The traditional installer remains available through the 3.14 and 3.15 releases.

macOS

Download the installer from **python.org**, or use a package manager such as Homebrew. Then run `python3` in the Terminal app.

Linux

Most distributions include Python 3. Install a newer version with your package manager if needed, and run `python3`.

Check it works

```
python3 --version
```

You should see something like `Python 3.15.0`. On Windows, use `py --version`.

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