

Recursion

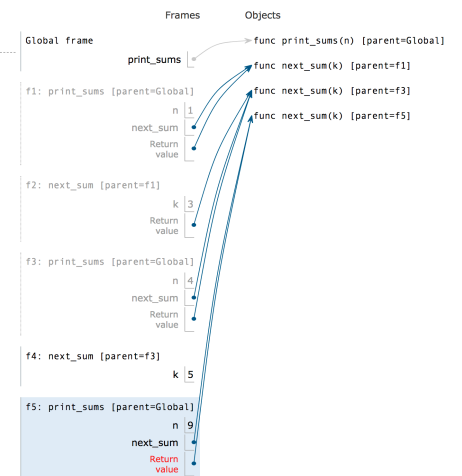
Announcements

Self-Reference

(Demo)

Returning a Function Using Its Own Name

```
1 def print_sums(n):  
2     print(n)  
3     def next_sum(k):  
4         return print_sums(n+k)  
5     return next_sum  
6  
7 print_sums(1)(3)(5)
```

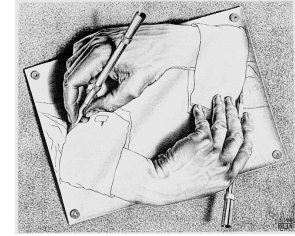
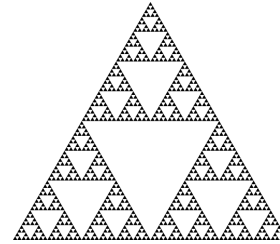


Recursive Functions

Recursive Functions

Definition: A function is called recursive if the body of that function calls itself, either directly or indirectly

Implication: Executing the body of a recursive function may require applying that function

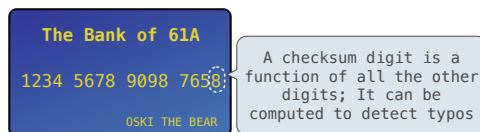


Drawing Hands, by M. C. Escher (Lithograph, 1948)

Sum Digits

$$2+0+2+1 = 5$$

- If a number a is divisible by 9, then `sum_digits(a)` is also divisible by 9
- Useful for typo detection!



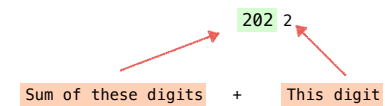
- Credit cards actually use the Luhn algorithm, which we'll implement after `sum_digits`

The Problem Within the Problem

The sum of the digits of 6 is 6.

Likewise for any one-digit (non-negative) number (i.e., < 10).

The sum of the digits of 2022 is



That is, we can break the problem of summing the digits of 2022 into a **smaller instance of the same problem**, plus some extra stuff.

We call this **recursion**.

Sum Digits Without a While Statement

```
def split(n):  
    """Split positive n into all but its last digit and its last digit."""  
    return n // 10, n % 10  
  
def sum_digits(n):  
    """Return the sum of the digits of positive integer n."""  
    if n < 10:  
        return n  
    else:  
        all_but_last, last = split(n)  
        return sum_digits(all_but_last) + last
```

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The Anatomy of a Recursive Function

- The **def statement header** is similar to other functions
- Conditional statements check for **base cases**
- Base cases are evaluated **without recursive calls**
- Recursive cases are evaluated **with recursive calls**

```
def sum_digits(n):  
    """Return the sum of the digits of positive integer n."""  
    if n < 10:  
        return n  
    else:  
        all_but_last, last = split(n)  
        return sum_digits(all_but_last) + last
```

(Demo)

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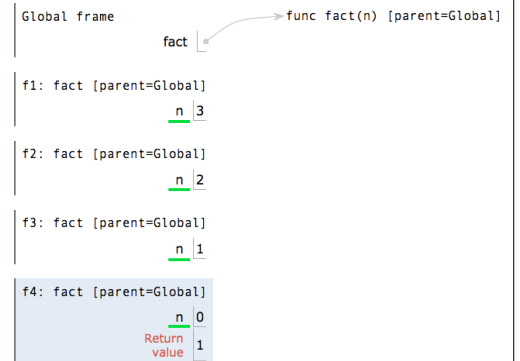
Recursion in Environment Diagrams

Recursion in Environment Diagrams

```
1 def fact(n):  
2     if n == 0:  
3         return 1  
4     else:  
5         return n * fact(n-1)  
6  
7 fact(3)
```

- The same function **fact** is called multiple times
- Different frames keep track of the different arguments in each call
- What **n** evaluates to depends upon the current environment
- Each call to **fact** solves a simpler problem than the last: smaller **n**

(Demo)



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Iteration vs Recursion

Iteration is a special case of recursion

$$4! = 4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1 = 24$$

Using while:

```
def fact_iter(n):
    total, k = 1, 1
    while k <= n:
        total, k = total*k, k+1
    return total
```

Math: $n! = \prod_{k=1}^n k$

Names: n, total, k, fact_iter

Using recursion:

```
def fact(n):
    if n == 0:
        return 1
    else:
        return n * fact(n-1)
```

$$n! = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } n = 0 \\ n \cdot (n-1)! & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Names: n, fact

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Verifying Recursive Functions

The Recursive Leap of Faith

```
def fact(n):
    if n == 0:
        return 1
    else:
        return n * fact(n-1)
```

Is fact implemented correctly?

1. Verify the base case
2. Treat `fact` as a functional abstraction!
3. Assume that `fact(n-1)` is correct
4. Verify that `fact(n)` is correct

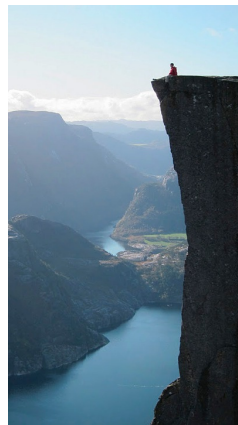


Photo by Kevin Lee, Preikestolen, Norway

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Mutual Recursion

The Luhn Algorithm

Used to verify credit card numbers

From Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luhn_algorithm

- **First:** From the rightmost digit, which is the check digit, moving left, double the value of every second digit; if product of this doubling operation is greater than 9 (e.g., $7 * 2 = 14$), then sum the digits of the products (e.g., 10: $1 + 0 = 1$, 14: $1 + 4 = 5$)
- **Second:** Take the sum of all the digits

1	3	8	7	4	3
2	3	1+6=7	7	8	3

= 30

The Luhn sum of a valid credit card number is a multiple of 10

(Demo)

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Recursion and Iteration

Converting Recursion to Iteration

Idea: Figure out what state must be maintained by the iterative function.

```
def sum_digits(n):  
    """Return the sum of the digits of positive integer n."""  
    if n < 10:  
        return n  
    else:  
        all_but_last, last = split(n)  
        return sum_digits(all_but_last) + last
```

What's left to sum

A partial sum

(Demo)

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Converting Iteration to Recursion

Idea: The state of an iteration are passed as arguments.

```
def sum_digits_iter(n):  
    digit_sum = 0  
    while n > 0:  
        n, last = split(n)  
        digit_sum = digit_sum + last  
    return digit_sum
```

Updates via assignment become...

```
def sum_digits_rec(n, digit_sum):  
    if n > 0:  
        n, last = split(n)  
        return sum_digits_rec(n, digit_sum + last)  
    else:  
        return digit_sum
```

...arguments to a recursive call

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