CS134 Lecture 29:
Special Methods & Linked Lists
Announcements & Logistics

- **HW 9** due Monday @ 10 pm on GLOW
- Short: 6 questions for practice on OOP concepts
- **Lab 9 Boggle**: two-week lab now in progress
  - **Part 1** auto-tester feedback will be returned today
  - You can fix anything broken before turning in Part 2
  - **Part 2** due May 1/2 (handout posted)
  - Part 2 also has a **prelab**!
    - Asks you to draw out the Boggle game logic

*Do You Have Any Questions?*
Last Time

- Finished implementation of **Tic Tac Toe game**
  - (Fun?) Application of object-oriented design and inheritance
  - A little exposure to software design
- Designed to help with the **Boggle lab**
Today’s Plan

• Discuss special methods, their purpose and how to call them

• Build a recursive list class
  • Our own implementation of list!
  • Preview of the fun world of design and implementation of data structures

• Learn how to implement several special methods which let us utilize built-in operators in Python for user-defined types
Python's Built-in list Class

- A class with methods (that someone else implemented)
- `pydoc3 list`
- Let's implement our own list class with similar functionality

Help on class list in module builtins:

```
class list(object)
    list(iterable=(), /)

    Built-in mutable sequence.
    
    If no argument is given, the constructor creates a new empty list.
    The argument must be an iterable if specified.

    Methods defined here:

    __add__(self, value, /)
        Return self+value.

    __contains__(self, key, /)
        Return key in self.

    __delitem__(self, key, /)
        Delete self[key].

    __eq__(self, value, /)
        Return self==value.

    __ge__(self, value, /)
        Return self>=value.

    __getattribute__(self, name, /)
        Return getattr(self, name).

    __getitem__(..., )
        x.__getitem__(y) <=> x[y]

    __gt__(self, value, /)
```
Special Methods/Magic Methods
Special Methods

- Start and end with __ (double underscore)
  - Called magic methods (or informally dunder methods)
- Often not called explicitly using dot notation and called by other means
- What special methods have we already used seen/used so far?

- **__init__**(self, val)
  - When is it called?
    - Automatically when we create an instance (object) of the class
    - Can also be invoked as **obj.__init__(val)** (where obj is an instance of the class)
Special Methods

• `__str__(self)`
  • When is it called?
    • When we `print` an instance of the class using `print(obj)`
    • Also called whenever we call `str` function on it: `str(obj)`
    • Can also be invoked as `obj.__str__()`

• `__repr__(self)`
  • Also returns a string but its format is very specific (can be used to recreate the object of the class)
  • Useful for debugging
  • Don't worry about any more specifics for this method for CS134
Special Methods for Operators

- We can use mathematical and logical operators such as `==/+` to compare/add two objects of a class by defining the corresponding special method.

- Example of polymorphism (using a single method or operator for different uses):
  - `__eq__` (self, other):
  - `__ne__` (self, other):
  - `__lt__` (self, other):
  - `__gt__` (self, other):
  - `__add__` (self, other):
  - `__sub__` (self, other):
  - `__mul__` (self, other):

- There are many others!

---

- `__add__`: why we can concatenate sequences with `+` as well as add ints with `+`
Special Method: `__len__`

- `__len__(self)`
  - Called when we use the built-in function `len()` in Python on an object `obj` of the class: `len(obj)`
  - We can call `len()` function on any object whose class has the `__len__()` special method implemented.
  - All built-in collection data types we saw (string, list, range, tuple, set, dictionaries) have this special method implemented.
  - This is why we are able to call `len` on them.
  - What is an example of a built-in type that we can't call `len` on?
    - `int`, `float`, `Bool`, `None`
Python's Built-in list Class

• A class with methods (that someone else implemented)
• pydoc3 list
• Let’s implement our own list class with similar functionality

Help on class list in module builtins:

class list(object)
    list(iterable=(), /)

    Built-in mutable sequence.
    If no argument is given, the constructor creates a new empty list.
    The argument must be an iterable if specified.

    Methods defined here:

    __add__(self, value, /)
        Return self+value.

    __contains__(self, key, /)
        Return key in self.

    __delitem__(self, key, /)
        Delete self[key].

    __eq__(self, value, /)
        Return self==value.

    __ge__(self, value, /)
        Return self>=value.

    __getattribute__(self, name, /)
        Return getattr(self, name).

    __getitem__(...)  
        x.__getitem__(y) <=> x[y]

    __gt__(self, value, /)

Other sequence specific methods:
    __getitem__
Other Special Methods for Sequences

- What other sequence operators have we used in this class?
- They each have a special method that is called whenever they are used
  - **Get** an item at an index a sequence using `[ ]`: calls `__getitem__`
    - e.g., `word_lst[2]` implicitly calls `word_lst.__getitem__(2)`
  - **Set** an item at an index to another val using `[ ]`: calls `__setitem__`
    - e.g., `word_lst[0] = "hello"` implicitly calls `word_lst.__setitem__(0, "hello")`
**in** Operator: **__contains__**

- **__contains__(self, val)**
  - When we say `if elem in seq` in Python:
    - Python calls the **__contains__** special method on `seq`
    - That is, `seq.__contains__(elem)`
  - If we want the **in** operator to work for the objects of our class, we can do so by implementing the **__contains__** special method
Building Our Own Sequence Type
How to Store a Sequence

- A sequence is just an **ordered collection** of values
  - Can query for the 0th, 1st, 2nd item and so on..
- A sequence may be mutable or immutable
- Let's think about how we can design such a sequence
  - How to store these ordered values?
- Let's look at two options
Array: Contiguous Sequence

- Option 1: Just store the items contiguously in memory
- Such a sequence is called **an array** in computer science
- To access a **item**, just need to know where the array starts and the **index** of item in array
- Great for static sequences!
Option 1: Just store the items contiguously in memory

Such a sequence is called an array in computer science.

To access an item, just need to know where the array starts and the index of item in array.

Suppose we want to create a dynamic sequence.

• Want to be able to insert: e.g. want to insert 6 between 5 and 11.
Array: Contiguous Sequence

- Option 1: Just store the items contiguously in memory
- Such a sequence is called an array in computer science
- To access a item, just need to know where the array starts and the index of item in array
- Suppose we want to create a dynamic sequence
  - Want to be able to insert: e.g. want to insert 6 between 5 and 11
  - Need to move everything over by one to make space
Insert Efficiently?

• If our array is made up of millions of items and we need to insert a lot:
  • Expensive to maintain ordering in an array
  • Maybe we need a different way to store items

• All we care about is that items are in order:
  • Each item has an item before it or after it in the sequence
  • Knowing this is sufficient to recover the total ordering, why?
Linked List

• Another way to design an ordered mutable sequence:
  • A nested *chain* of values, or a **linked list**
  • Each value has something after it: the rest of the sequence
• Must have a last item for a finite sequence
  • To signify last item it's next value should be **nothing**
• What is a good type to represent nothing in Python?
Our Own Class **LinkedList**

- Attributes:
  - `_value`, `_rest`

- **Recursive class**:
  - `_rest` points to another instance of the *same class*
  - Any instance of a class that is created by using another instance of the class is a *recursive class*
Next Time: Code for Linked List