

Sets

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Sets

- Mathematical set: a collection of values, without duplicates or order

- Order does not matter

$$\{ 1, 2, 3 \} == \{ 3, 2, 1 \}$$

- No duplicates

$$\{ 3, 1, 4, 1, 5 \} == \{ 5, 4, 3, 1 \}$$

- For every data structure, ask:

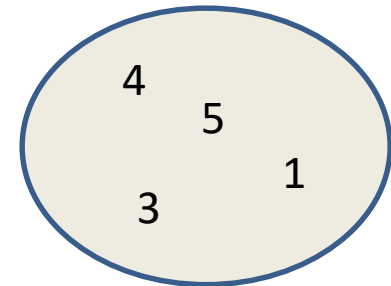
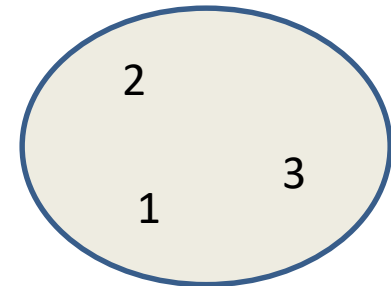
- How to create

- How to query (look up) and perform other operations

- (Can result in a new set, or in some other datatype)

- How to modify

Answer: <http://docs.python.org/3/library/stdtypes.html#set>



Two ways to create a set

1. Direct mathematical syntax:

```
odd = { 1, 3, 5 }
```

```
prime = { 2, 3, 5 }
```

Note: Cannot use “{ }” to express empty set: it means something else ☹️.

2. Construct from a **list**: (also from a tuple or string)

```
odd = set( [1, 3, 5] )
```

```
prime = set( [2, 3, 5] )
```

```
empty = set( [] ) # or set( )
```

Python always **prints** using this syntax above

Set operations

```
odd = { 1, 3, 5 }  
prime = { 2, 3, 5 }
```

- membership \in Python: `in` `4 in prime` \Rightarrow False
- union \cup Python: `|` `odd | prime` \Rightarrow { 1, 2, 3, 5 }
- intersection \cap Python: `&` `odd & prime` \Rightarrow { 3, 5 }
- difference \setminus or $-$ Python: `-` `odd - prime` \Rightarrow { 1 }

Think in terms of set operations,
not in terms of iteration and element operations
– Shorter, clearer, less error-prone, faster

Although we can do iteration over sets:

```
# iterates over items in arbitrary order  
for item in myset:
```

...

But we cannot index into a set to access a specific element.

Practice with sets

```
z = {5, 6, 7, 8}
```

```
y = {1, 2, 3, 1, 5}
```

```
k = z & y
```

```
j = z | y
```

```
m = y - z
```

```
n = z - y
```

Modifying a set

- **Add** one element to a set:

```
myset.add(newelt)
myset = myset | { newelt }
```

- **Remove** one element from a set:

```
myset.remove(elt) # elt must be in myset or raises err
myset.discard(elt) # never errs
myset = myset - { elt }
What would this do?
myset = myset - elt
```

- Remove and return an arbitrary element from a set:
`myset.pop()`

Note: `add`, `remove` and `discard` all return `None`

Practice with sets

```
z = {5, 6, 7, 8}
y = {1, 2, 3, 1, 5}
p = z
q = set(z)    # Makes a copy of set z
z.add(9)
q = q | {35}
z.discard(7)
q = q - {6, 1, 8}
```

Aside: List vs. set operations (1)

Find the common elements **in both** list1 and list2:

```
out1 = []  
for elem in list2:  
    if elem in list1:  
        out1.append(elem)
```

Find the common elements **in both** set1 and set2:

set1 & set2

Much shorter, clearer, easier to write with sets!

Aside: List vs. set operations(2)

Find elements in **either** list1 or list2 (or both) (without duplicates):

```
out2 = list(list1)          # make a copy
for elem in list2:
    if elem not in list1: # don't append elements already in out2
        out2.append(elem)
```

Another way:

```
out2 = list1 + list2      # if an item is in BOTH lists, it will appear TWICE!
for elem in out1:         # out1 = common elements in both lists
    out2.remove(elem)     # Remove common elements, leaving just a single copy
```

Find the elements in **either** set1 or set2 (or both):

set1 | set2

Aside: List vs. set operations(3)

Find the elements in **either list but not in both:**

```
out3 = []
out2 = list1 + list2 # if an item is in BOTH lists, it will appear TWICE!
for elem in out2:
    if elem not in list1 or elem not in list2:
        out3.append(elem)
```

Find the elements in **either set but not in both:**

set1 ^ set2

Not every value may be placed in a set

- Set elements must be **immutable** values
 - int, float, bool, string, *tuple*
 - *not*: list, set, dictionary
- The set itself is **mutable** (e.g. we can add and remove elements)
- **Aside:** *frozenset* must contain immutable values and is itself immutable (cannot add and remove elements)