

CSc 110, Autumn 2017

Lecture 16: Fencepost Loops and Review

Adapted from slides by Marty Stepp and Stuart Reges



A deceptive problem...

- Write a method `print_letters` that prints each letter from a word separated by commas.

For example, the call:

```
print_letters("Atmosphere")
```

should print:

```
A, t, m, o, s, p, h, e, r, e
```

Flawed solutions

- ```
def print_letters(word):
 for i in range(0, len(word)):
 print(word[i] + ", ", end='')
 print() # end line
```

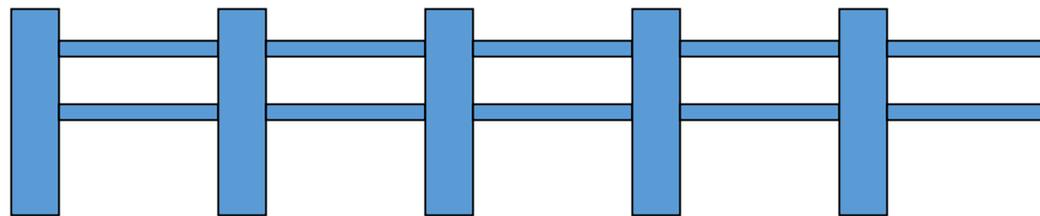
  - Output: A, t, m, o, s, p, h, e, r, e,
- ```
def print_letters(word):  
    for i in range(0, len(word)):  
        print(", " + word[i], end='')  
    print()    # end line
```

 - Output: , A, t, m, o, s, p, h, e, r, e

Fence post analogy

- We print n letters but need only $n - 1$ commas.
- Similar to building a fence with wires separated by posts:
 - If we use a flawed algorithm that repeatedly places a post + wire, the last post will have an extra dangling wire.

*for length of fence :
place a post.
place some wire.*



Fencepost loop

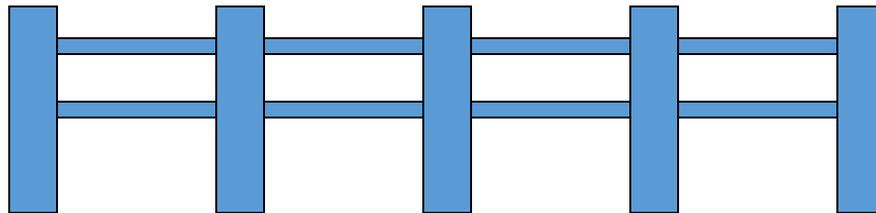
- Add a statement outside the loop to place the initial "post."
 - Also called a *fencepost loop* or a "loop-and-a-half" solution.

place a post.

for length of fence – 1:

place some wire.

place a post.



Fencepost function solution

- ```
def print_letters(word):
 print(word[0])
 for i in range(1, len(word)):
 print(", " + word[i], end='')
 print() # end line
```
- Alternate solution: Either first or last "post" can be taken out:

```
def print_letters(word):
 for i in range(0, len(word) - 1):
 print(word[i] + ", ", end='')
 last = len(word) - 1
 print(word[last]) # end line
```

# Fencepost question

- Write a function `print_primes` that prints all *prime* numbers up to a `max`.
  - Example: `print_primes(50)` prints  
`2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47`
  - If the maximum is less than 2, print no output.
- To help you, write a function `count_factors` which returns the number of factors of a given integer.
  - `count_factors(20)` returns 6 due to factors 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 20.

# Fencepost answer

```
Prints all prime numbers up to the given max.
```

```
def print_primes(max):
 if (max >= 2):
 print("2", end='')
 for i in range(3, max + 1):
 if (count_factors(i) == 2):
 print(", " + str(i))
 print()
```

```
Returns how many factors the given number has.
```

```
def count_factors(number):
 count = 0
 for i in range(1, number + 1):
 if (number % i == 0):
 count += 1 # i is a factor of number
 return count
```

# Review question

- Write a function `random_triangle` that prints a triangle of the passed in string that is random height between 1 and 10. It should return the total number of stars printed.

- Example: `random_triangle("*")` might print

\*

\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

In this case it would return 10

# Review question

- Write a function `average_temp` that prompts the user for temperatures and prints the average. The average should be rounded to one number after the decimal point.

- Example: `average_temp()` might print

```
How many temperatures? 4
temperature? 92
temperature? 90
temperature? 85
temperature? 95
Average temperature: 90.5
```