

M C G I L L P H Y S I C S

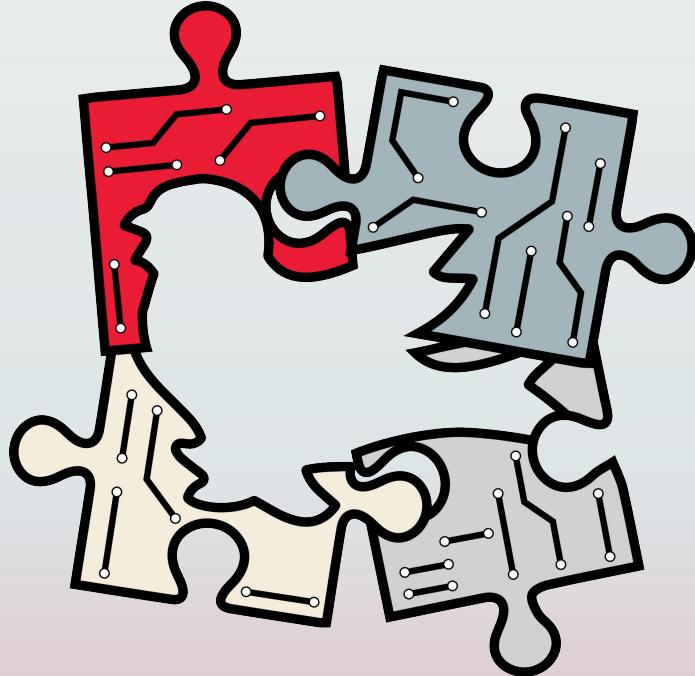
H A C K A T H O N

Introduction to Programming
in Python Part 2:
Pre-session instructions



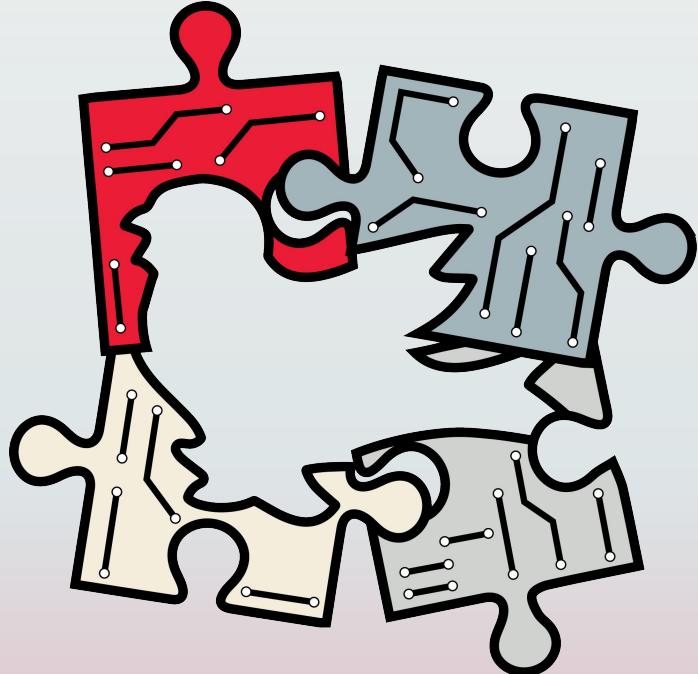
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Thursday January 29



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Windows

OPTION 1:

1. (Recommended but heavy)

Install “Windows subsystem for Linux” by opening powershell and running

```
> wsl --install
```

This will download and install Ubuntu. Once installed, run:

```
> wsl.exe -d Ubuntu
```

Now, follow the instructions and create a name and password. If you don't see anything while typing your password, that's normal.

If you picked this option, go to the Linux instructions

OPTION 2:

2. (Lighter but harder)



Do everything the Windows way by installing python directly on Powershell via:

```
> winget install  
Python.Python.3.12
```

Follow steps on the installer. Once done, check by running:

```
> python --version
```

REMEMBER:

Some attempts have been made by Microsoft in newer versions of Powershell to understand Linux commands.

For this upcoming session most commands will be the same as Linux and Mac but no promises can be made.

If you want to list files in your current working directly, instead of writing `ls`, you write `dir`.

If you don't know what this means, don't worry, we'll touch on this.



STEP 1:



Open up
your terminal
app and type:

```
$ python --version
```

If you see something like
“python: command not
found”, follow step 2.
Otherwise, skip to step 3.

STEP 2:

Navigate to
<https://www.python.org/downloads/macOS> and install python.

Stable Releases

- [Python 3.14.2 - Dec. 5, 2025](#)
 - [Download macOS installer](#)

Once installed, check again:

```
$ which python
```

STEP 3:

Now, simply run:

```
$ python
```

If it prompts you that you
need “developer tools”,
install them.

To exit python, type:

```
>>> exit()
```



STEP 1:

If you are here from WSL,
you should now see a green
prompt with your username
and a blue section such as

```
user@username:/mnt/c/Users/username$
```

Now, install Python using
Ubuntu's package manager
apt

```
$ sudo apt install python3
```

This will prompt you for your
password and install python if
you don't already have it.

STEP 2:

Once installed, check again:

```
$ which python3
```

You should see something
like.

```
$ /usr/bin/python3
```

If so, you are done! Just
make sure to run python by
writing *python3*.

?Questions

If you are struggling with any of these steps, there are plenty of tutorials online that go through these steps in more detail. You can also get guidance from your favorite AI Chatbot. If none of these options work, come see me before the session starts on Thursday and I can try to do my best to get you set up.