

Text

Code Comments

Section 21.13

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Code comments are a prime example of how programming languages are mostly for us humans, as they are entirely *for* humans alone. Code comments are pieces of information you put in the code that the computer ignores. This allows us to add notes and narration into our code without having to worry about syntax, to help make it clear to ourselves – and to others – what our program is intended to do.

Here’s an example of how to add a comment to your code.

```
# Say hello to the user
print("Hello Agent!")
```

You can also add a comment *inline* next to the greeting like this:

```
print("Hello Agent!") # Say hello to the user
```

In the output of both the above examples, we see just the printed "Hello Agent!" statement and no indication of our commented line above it, or the commented text next to it.

```
Hello Agent!
```

Comments can be very useful to us when our code starts to get complicated, or during the "building" stages when we’re still figuring out how to get our program to work.

If you need to add several lines of comments in a block, you can use the `#` notation before each new line.

```
# One comment line
# Second comment line
# Third comment line
print("Hello!")
```

When to use comments

Comments are particularly helpful in 3 situations:

When you're building a new program.

As we’re trying to build out code to complete a series of tasks – especially if that task is a complicated one – using comments as a way to think through the logic can be extremely helpful. We can remind ourselves what the goal is of a particularly tricky bit of code, and if we have to come back to work on our program again later, comments can help remind us what we’re building, and where we got to when last we worked on it.

Documenting your program for others.

Later on in this course we’ll talk more about programming style and how to write clean, organized, well-structured code that shouldn’t need lots of comments, but all programs benefit from an amount of inline documentation that code comments can provide. In particular, if you’re working with other programmers or if your program will need to be maintained by others in the future code comments can help them understand what you’re program is doing, and the broader context for why you built the program the way you did if it’s important.

When you want to temporarily "turn off" parts of your code.

Sometimes while building or debugging, it can be helpful to quickly turn on or off smaller chunks of our code. Instead of deleting the code, or copy-pasting it somewhere else, then having to re-write it or remember where in the program it was meant to go, we can simply comment the code out inline.

```
print("Hello Agent Q.")
# print("Hello Agent S.")
print("Hello Agent M.")
```

In the example above, we’ve commented out the `print("Hello Agent S")` line, which means when we run this program, the computer will skip over that entire line and only print the "Hello Agent Q" and "Hello Agent M" lines.

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