COMPUTING AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Data Types

Difficulty level: Easy

Computing and Digital Literacy

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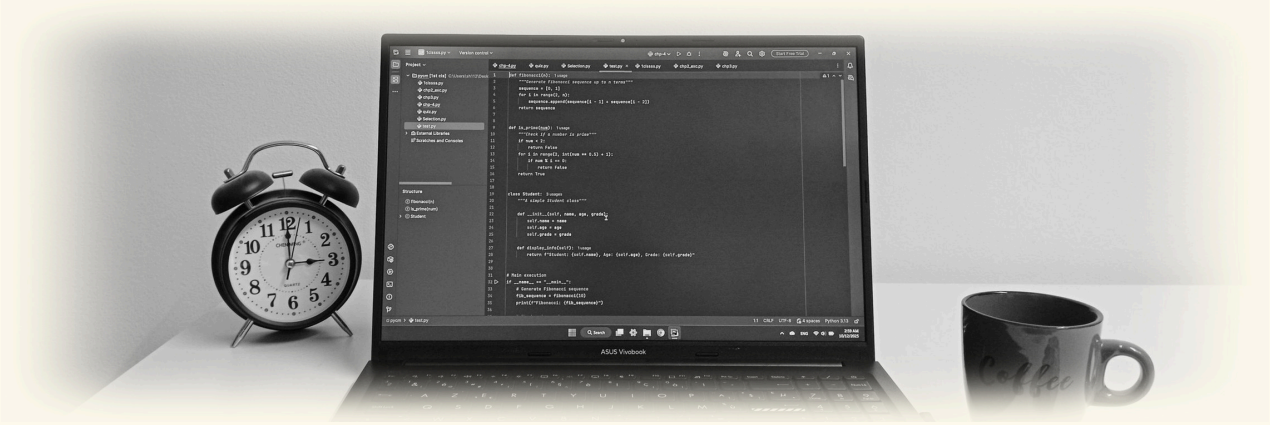
Overview of the concept

This is how a computer tells a number apart from a word or a yes-or-no answer. Your age is a number it can add, your name is text it can display, and whether you are logged in is a yes or no it can check. Mixing them up breaks a program, like trying to add two names together. Knowing the type tells you what you are allowed to do with a piece of information.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q What type is each of these values: 12, 4.50, “Sam”, True?

SOLUTION

The one rule to remember first: the type is decided by what the value looks like, not what it means.

12 is a whole number, so it is an integer. 4.50 has a decimal point, so it is a float.

“Sam” is text in quotes, so it is a string. True is a yes-or-no value, so it is a boolean.

EXAMPLE 2

Q What is 12 + 3, and what is “12” + “3”?

SOLUTION

12 + 3 adds two numbers: 12 + 3 = 15.

“12” + “3” joins two pieces of text: “12” + “3” = “123”.

Check the type before predicting the result: the same symbol does a different job on numbers and on text.

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Practice questions

1 What type is 42?

- A Integer
- B Float
- C String
- D Boolean

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2 What type is 3.5?

- A Integer
- B String
- C Float
- D Boolean

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3 What type is “hello”?

A Integer

B Float

C Boolean

D String

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4 What type is True?

A String

B Boolean

C Integer

D Float

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5

What is “12” + “3” in most languages?

A 15

B “123” (the texts join)

C “15” (the texts join)

D It fails: you cannot add text.

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6

What is 12 + 3?

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7 Which type holds yes-or-no values?

- A Integer
- B Float
- C String
- D Boolean

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8 Is “42” a number or text?

- A A number
- B Text (a string)
- C A boolean
- D A float

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9 Which type would a price such as 4.99 be?

- A Integer
- B Float
- C String
- D Boolean

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10 A program stores a password "3845" and then tries to add 1 to it. What goes wrong?

- A It fails: the password is text, so you cannot add a number to it.
- B It works: the password becomes 3846.
- C It works: the password becomes 38451.
- D It works: the password stays "3845".

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ANSWER KEY

1. Integer

2. Float

3. String

4. Boolean

5. “123” (the texts join)

6. 15

7. Boolean

8. Text (a string)

9. Float

10. It fails: the password is text, so you cannot add a number to it.

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