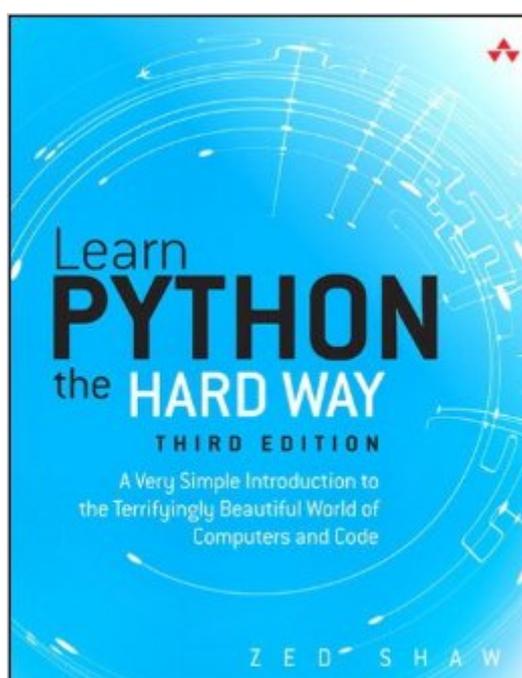


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Learn Python The Hard Way: A Very Simple Introduction To The Terrifyingly Beautiful World Of Computers And Code (Zed Shaw's Hard Way Series)



Synopsis

You Will Learn Python! Æ Zed Shaw has perfected the world's best system for learning Python. Follow it and you will succeed-just like the hundreds of thousands of beginners Zed has taught to date! You bring the discipline, commitment, and persistence; the author supplies everything else. Æ In Learn Python the Hard Way, Third Edition, you'll learn Python by working through 52 brilliantly crafted exercises. Read them. Type their code precisely. (No copying and pasting!) Fix your mistakes. Watch the programs run. As you do, you'll learn how software works; what good programs look like; how to read, write, and think about code; and how to find and fix your mistakes using tricks professional programmers use. Most importantly, you'll learn the following, which you need to start writing excellent Python software of your own: Installing a complete Python environment Organizing and writing code Basic mathematics Variables Strings and text Interacting with users Working with files Looping and logic Data structures using lists and dictionaries Program design Object-oriented programming Inheritance and composition Modules, classes, and objects Python packaging Debugging Automated testing Basic game development Basic web development It'll be hard at first. But soon, you'll just get it-and that will feel great! Æ This tutorial will reward you for every minute you put into it. Soon, you'll know one of the world's most powerful, popular programming languages. You'll be a Python programmer. Æ Watch Zed, too! The accompanying DVD contains 5+ hours of passionate, powerful teaching: a complete Python video course!

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Customer Reviews

I have been teaching programming for more than a dozen years and I can't decide if I love or hate this book. The fundamental approach, "type this code and see what happens" is right on the money but all too often the code is followed by the advice to "look up the details on the web." The author does not direct the reader to specific sites (like this book's website -- which contains all the content). Rather, you are sent adrift and told to find your way. As everyone knows the quality of advice across the web is hit or miss and some programming symbols are hard to find. For example in the section called "symbol review" the author suggest looking up operators like `==`, `{`, `@`, `]` or escape sequences like `\\` or `\a` or string formats like `%%`. I agree that the exercise of trying to find these things is useful but I paid for the book and I want to have the answer key. Similarly, in the section titled "learning to speak object oriented", he introduces `randint()` but does not say how it works. It is easy to do a web search for it but one of the top five results on Google is just wrong and others require you to know the difference between `[0, 10]` and `(0, 10)`. The repeated calls to make flashcards makes sense but not if he fails to provide the information that belongs on the cards. While the lack of detailed tables for key features is horrid, the information provided is superb and there are very few typos. Sadly the typos are fixed on the book's website but there is no errata to allow you to correct the hard copy (which will make you nuts when you get to page 133 and there are `[]` where `{ }` belong).

I approached this book with half a B.S. of Computer Science complete and various levels of experience using C, Java, PHP, Ruby, C#, etc... so, what I'm trying to say is. This review is not meant to be a rant from a new programmer. And if you are a new programmer reading this, I highly suggest you look elsewhere to begin your journey into Computer Science / Programming / Python. I read this book as the free HTML version which Zed offers, which is very kind of him to do. My expectations were high since I regularly see this book listed as one of the first you should read when learning Python. At around lesson 41 though I really began to lose my patience. As other reviewers have stated, I will simply reiterate. The writing style is very light, degrading, and misleading. You are

constantly told to do exactly what the author states you should do which is a huge disservice to learning. The examples that stand out the most to me is when Zed states to avoid Vim, avoid IDLE, avoid Python 3.... I assume most beginners will have no idea what he is talking about and take his word for it. I definitely agree Vim can be intimidating for some but I would avoid being so finite about how a student wants to learn. Let them make the decision and simply guide them. The strictness of avoiding Python 3 to me is utterly ridiculous. The differences would most likely be unnoticeable at this level of programming... the only problem I have ever ran into is print() vs. print. I see this as the author simply being lazy and not wanting to update his book. Python 3 should be taught. This is the same mentality you hear from old HTML/XML programmers who do not want to adopt HTML5 standards. Students should be urged to adopt the most recent version of the language.

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