

Python Decorators

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What is a Decorator?

An object.



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An object.

A callable object which is passed a function reference as its sole argument.



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What is a Decorator?

An object.

A callable object which is passed a function reference as its sole argument.

The return value of the callable object rebinds the function's identifier.



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What is a Decorator?

An object.

A callable object which is passed a function reference as its sole argument.

The return value of the callable object rebinds the function's identifier.

The return value of the callable object is usually another function.



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Why Decorators?

A way to add or replace define-time or run-time attributes and behavior in functions and methods.



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Why Decorators?

A way to add or replace define-time or run-time attributes and behavior in functions and methods.

A way to register, annotate, wrap... decorate... a function.



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Why Decorators?

Kind of like superclassing a function in a weird kind of way.

Kind of like mixins are for classes.

But not really.



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What is a Decorator?

The result of PEP 318.

Created June 2003

Last modified January 2005

Realized in Python 2.4 November 2004



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What does a decorator look like?

```
funcdef ::= [decorators] "def" funcname "(" [parameter_list]
                                                ")" ":" suite

decorators ::= decorator+

decorator ::= "@" dotted_name ["(" [argument_list [","]] ")"]
            NEWLINE

dotted_name ::= identifier ( "." identifier ) *

parameter_list ::= (defparameter ",") *
                  ( ~ ~ "*" identifier [, "*" identifier ]
                    | "*" identifier
                    | defparameter [","] )

defparameter ::= parameter ["=" expression]
```



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What does a decorator look like?

```
@someReference [ (*args) ]
```



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is the form of a *decorator expression*



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The expression is evaluated to return a callable



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```
@someReference [ (*args) ]
```

is the form of a *decorator expression*

The expression is evaluated to return a callable

Python remembers the callable object in an
internal reference



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What does a decorator look like?

```
@someReference [ (*args) ]
```

is the form of a *decorator expression*

The expression is evaluated to return a callable

Then a function is defined



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What does a decorator look like?

```
@someReference [ (*args) ]
```

is the form of a *decorator expression*

The expression is evaluated to return a callable

Then after that the remembered callable is
invoked with the function as the sole
argument



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What does a decorator look like?

```
@someReference [ (*args) ]
```

is the form of a *decorator expression*

The expression is evaluated to return a callable

Then after that the return value of the callable
is rebound to the function's identifier



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What does a decorator look like?

`@someReference`

**If the decorator expression has no arguments,
then the decorator expression is a reference
to the decorator itself**



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What does a decorator look like?

```
@someReference [ (*args) ]
```

If the decorator expression has arguments, then the decorator expression evaluates a callable **factory** for decorators, passing the arguments to the decorator factory



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What does a decorator look like?

```
@someReference [ (*args) ]
```

Calling the decorator factory returns a
decorator



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What does a decorator look like?

```
@decl  
def func(arg1, arg2, ...):  
    pass
```

is equivalent to:

```
def func(arg1, arg2, ...):  
    pass  
func = decl(func)
```



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What do decorators look like?

```
@dec2
@dec1
def func(arg1, arg2, ...):
    pass
```

is equivalent to:

```
def func(arg1, arg2, ...):
    pass
func = dec2(dec1(func))
```



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What does a decorator look like?

```
def decl(func):  
    print "decorating", func  
    return func
```



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What does a decorator look like?

```
def decl(func):  
    print "decorating", func  
    return func  
  
print "before definition"  
@decl  
def f(x):  
    print "f of", x  
print "after definition"
```



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What does a decorator look like?

```
print "before definition"  
@decl  
def f(x):  
    print "f of", x  
print "after definition"
```

outputs:

```
before definition  
decorating <function f at 0x54fe70>  
after definition
```



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What does a decorator look like?

before definition

decorating <function f at 0x54fe70>

after definition

```
>>> f(1)
```

```
f of 1
```

```
>>>
```



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What does a decorator factory look like?

```
>>> def factory(name):  
...     def dec(func):  
...         func.attribute = name  
...         return func  
...     return dec  
...  
>>>
```



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What does a decorator factory look like?

```
>>> @factory("what's in a name")
... def f(x):
...     print "f of", x
...
>>> f(1)
f of 1
>>> f.attribute
"what's in a name"
>>>
```



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What does a decorator factory look like?

A decorator factory can have arguments.



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What does a decorator factory look like?

A decorator factory can have arguments.

A decorator factory's arguments are separate and distinct from the decorator's sole (function) argument.



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What does a decorator factory look like?

A decorator factory can have arguments.

A decorator factory's arguments are separate and distinct from the decorator's sole (function) argument.

“Baking in” a decorator factory's arguments into a decorator definition is a form of a programming pattern called a **CLOSURE**



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Annotating a function with attributes

```
def author(name) :  
    def decorator(func) :  
        func.author = name  
        return func  
    return decorator
```

```
@author("Mark Pilgrim")  
def diveIntoPython() :  
    print "Great book!"
```



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Does a decorator have to return a function?

```
>>> def stringThing(func) :  
...     return "thing"  
...  
>>> @stringThing  
... def printSomething() :  
...     print "something"  
...  
>>>
```



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Does a decorator have to return a function?

```
>>> printSomething()  
Traceback (most recent call last):  
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>  
TypeError: 'str' object is not callable  
>>>
```



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Does a decorator have to return a function?

```
>>> printSomething()  
Traceback (most recent call last):  
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>  
TypeError: 'str' object is not callable  
>>> printSomething  
'thing'  
>>>
```



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Does a decorator have to return a function?

```
>>> printSomething()  
Traceback (most recent call last):  
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>  
TypeError: 'str' object is not callable  
>>> printSomething  
'thing'  
>>> type(printSomething)  
<type 'str'>  
>>>
```



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Is it useful for a decorator to return something besides a function?

```
>>> class traced:
...     def __init__(self, func):
...         self.func = func
...     def __call__(self, *args, **kwargs):
...         print "entering", self.func
...         try:
...             return self.func(*args, **kwargs)
...         finally:
...             print "exiting", self.func
...
>>>
```



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Is it useful for a decorator to return something besides a function?

```
>>> @traced
... def hello():
...     print "my pretty"
...
>>> hello()
entering <function hello at 0x558770>
my pretty
exiting <function hello at 0x558770>
>>>
```



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What if an outer decorator expression expects a function?

```
def traced(func):  
    def wrapper(*args, **kwargs):  
        print "entering", func  
        try:  
            return func(*args, **kwargs)  
        finally:  
            print "exiting", func  
    return wrapper
```



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What if an outer decorator expression expects a function?

“Baking in” an outer function's free variables into an inner function definition is a form of a programming pattern called a **LEXICAL CLOSURE**



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Can a decorator factory return a decorator which defines a wrapper?

```
def factory(expr):  
    def ensure(func):  
        def wrapper(*args, **kwargs):  
            assert eval(expr), "Uh-oh"  
            return func(*args, **kwargs)  
        return wrapper  
    return ensure
```



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Can a decorator factory return a decorator which defines a wrapper?

```
@factory("len(args) == 1")  
def printOne(*args):  
    print args[0]
```



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Can a decorator factory return a decorator which defines a wrapper?

```
>>> printOne("TriZPUG")
TriZPUG
>>> printOne("TriZPUG", "HZPUG")
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
  File "<stdin>", line 4, in wrapper
AssertionError: Uh-oh
>>>
```



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How do I practice "safe decorating?"

```
def factory(expr):  
    def ensure(func):  
        def wrapper(*args, **kwargs):  
            assert eval(expr), "Uh-oh"  
            return func(*args, **kwargs)  
        wrapper.__name__ = func.__name__  
        wrapper.__dict__ = func.__dict__  
        wrapper.__doc__ = func.__doc__  
        return wrapper  
    return ensure
```



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How do I practice “safe decorating?”

Always return a function from a decorator

**Always copy the old functions attributes to
the new function**



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Acknowledgments

Dive Into Python (closures)

Python in a Nutshell (function attributes)

Phillip Eby in Dr. Dobbs (decorators)

Python Reference Manual (functions, PEP)



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