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The Zen of Python

PEP 20, by Tim Peters. This document has been placed in the public domain.

These are the official guiding principles for Python's design. You can also read them in the interpreter by typing `import this` — the official Easter egg.[1]

1. Beautiful is better than ugly.
2. Explicit is better than implicit.
3. Simple is better than complex.
4. Complex is better than complicated.
5. Flat is better than nested.
6. Sparse is better than dense.
7. Readability counts.
8. Special cases aren't special enough to break the rules.
9. Although practicality beats purity.
10. Errors should never pass silently.
11. Unless explicitly silenced.
12. In the face of ambiguity, refuse the temptation to guess.
13. There should be one-- and preferably only one --obvious way to do it.
14. Although that way may not be obvious at first unless you're Dutch.
15. Now is better than never.
16. Although never is often better than *right* now.
17. If the implementation is hard to explain, it's a bad idea.
18. If the implementation is easy to explain, it may be a good idea.
19. Namespaces are one honking great idea -- let's do more of those!

Quick quiz

1. Which official line says that readability matters?
2. How do you print this list from a Python interpreter?
3. Is PEP 20 copyrighted, or in the public domain?

Answers. 1. "Readability counts."[1] 2. Type `import this`.[1] 3. It has been placed in the public domain.[1]

Source, checked 17 November 2026. All 19 lines, the Easter egg, and the public-domain notice are from PEP 20 — The Zen of Python, by Tim Peters. https://peps.python.org/pep-0020/

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