

## Book Review: Dive into Python 3

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Dive into Python 3

by Mark Pilgrim

<http://diveintopython3.org/>

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I found Mark Pilgrim's earlier book *Dive into Python* helpful when learning Python several years ago, so I was excited to see his recent book about Python 3.

Although *Dive into Python 3* is mostly new material, I'm very pleased that it continues the “diving in” approach of its predecessor. Throughout the book, the code examples appear before explanations. This approach allows the reader to try and work out what the code does, before having it explained to them. They can then just skim the explanation if they've already “got it”. This makes it easy for the reader to work through the material at a desirable speed. For material that is less interesting, the reader can just skim the code and jump straight to the explanation and read or skim that. I found that this approach very engaging and wish that more educational material took this approach.

*Dive into Python 3* is suitable for a beginner in Python, but is probably too fast paced for a complete beginner to programming. It also contains detailed information for those moving from Python 2. This is largely separated into separate chapters so that a newcomer can easily avoid this material if they want to.

As well as the basics of the language, the book covers unit testing, refactoring and packaging your code and submitting it to PyPI. It works through a detailed example of using *2to3* to convert a module and then going through the bugs that *2to3* does not catch. An appendix lists the changes that *2to3* is able to handle.

This book made me appreciate the difference that Unicode and the new `bytes` type make to string and file handling. As strings require an encoding to become bytes, strings cannot be directly compared to or concatenated with bytes. This is certainly one area where care needs to be taken in converting Python code from 2 to 3.

I highly recommend this book if you want to learn Python 3, whether you are new to Python or familiar with Python 2, particularly if you like to puzzle out things from reading code.

*Dive in to Python 3* can be viewed on line or downloaded at <http://diveintopython3.org/> and is also available in dead tree format.