

Re: Pass by reference or by value?

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Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Python/comp.lang.python/2007-08/msg01934.html>

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On Thursday 16 August 2007, Robert Dailey wrote:

Hi,

I previously created a topic named "Pass by reference or by value" where I inquired on how python's function parameters work. I received a lot of nice responses, however I'm still confused on the topic. Note that I come from a C++ background to Python, so any comparisons to C++ would be very helpful.

Very short answer:

Think of normal objects as always-pointers. There are no references. `param = 5` sets the local variable "param" (be that of imaginary type `int*` or `int`, I don't care) to whatever 5 is. This does not call an operator=`=`, this plain overwrites the variable.

If you want to change arguments in that way, you can use a list as an ugly hack:

```
def foo(param):  
    param[0] = 5  
    print param[0]
```

```
a = [4]
```

```
foo(a)
```

yeah, I said ugly. That hack makes sure that a method of the passed object is called instead of of the local namespace dict. (please note that I'm throwing around abstract concepts without caring about an implementation).

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Regards, Thomas Jollans

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