Matplotlib Python plotting

START HERE

`import matplotlib.pyplot as plt`
The usual import

`fig, ax = plt.subplots()`
Figure plus one axes

`ax.plot(<x>, <y>)`
Draw a line

`ax.set(xlabel="<x>", ylabel="<y>")`
Label the axes

`ax.legend()`
Show labelled series

`fig.tight_layout()`
Fix overlapping text

`fig.savefig("<file>.png", dpi=150)`
Write to a file

`plt.show()`
Open the window

CONCEPTS

Prefer the object style: fig and ax methods. plt.plot() works on the implicit current axes and gets confusing with several plots.

Figure the canvas, saved as one file
- **Axes** one plot: data, limits, labels
  - **Axis / Artists** ticks, lines, text, patches

Without a GUI backend (servers, CI) call savefig and skip show; matplotlib.use("Agg") forces a file-only backend.

FIGURE AND AXES

`fig, ax = plt.subplots()`
One figure, one axes

`fig, axs = plt.subplots(<rows>, <cols>)`
Grid of axes (2-D array)

`plt.subplots(figsize=(<w>, <h>))`
Size in inches

`plt.subplots(..., sharex=True, sharey=True)`
Share axis ranges

`plt.subplots(layout="constrained")`
Automatic non-overlapping layout

`fig, axd = plt.subplot_mosaic("AB;CC")`
Named axes layout; axd["A"]

`fig.add_subplot(<rows>, <cols>, <n>)`
Add axes to an existing figure

`ax.twinx()`
Second y axis on the right

`plt.close("all")`
Free all open figures

`fig.subplots_adjust(hspace=<f>, wspace=<f>)`
Manual spacing

PLOT TYPES

`ax.plot(<x>, <y>, "o-", label="<name>")`
Line with markers

`ax.scatter(<x>, <y>, c=<vals>, s=<size>)`
Scatter, colour/size by data

`ax.bar(<x>, <height>)`
Vertical bars

PLOT TYPES (cont.)

`ax.barh(<y>, <width>)`
Horizontal bars

`ax.hist(<data>, bins=<n>)`
Histogram

`ax.imshow(<2d-array>, cmap="viridis")`
Show an array as an image

`ax.boxplot(<data>)`
Box-and-whisker plot

`ax.errorbar(<x>, <y>, yerr=<err>)`
Points with error bars

`ax.fill_between(<x>, <lo>, <hi>, alpha=0.3)`
Shaded band

`ax.pie(<sizes>, labels=<names>)`
Pie chart

`ax.contourf(<X>, <Y>, <Z>)`
Filled contours

`ax.pcolormesh(<X>, <Y>, <Z>)`
Colour grid on coordinates

`ax.violinplot(<data>)`
Distribution shape per group

`ax.stackplot(<x>, <y1>, <y2>)`
Stacked areas

`ax.step(<x>, <y>, where="mid")`
Step line

`ax.hexbin(<x>, <y>, gridsize=<n>)`
Hex-binned density

`ax.quiver(<X>, <Y>, <U>, <V>)`
Arrow field

LABELS AND TEXT

`ax.set_title("<text>")`
Axes title

`ax.set_xlabel("<text>")`
X axis label (ylabel likewise)

`ax.set(title="<t>", xlabel="<x>", ylabel="<y>")`
Set several properties at once

`fig.suptitle("<text>")`
Title over the whole figure

`ax.text(<x>, <y>, "<text>")`
Text at data coordinates

`ax.annotate("<text>", xy=(<x>, <y>), xytext=(<x>, <y>), arrowprops=dict(arrowstyle="→"))`
Label a point with an arrow

`ax.bar_label(<bars>)`
Value labels on bars

LABELS AND TEXT (cont.)

`ax.axhline(<y>) / ax.axvline(<x>)`
Reference line

LEGEND

`ax.legend()`
Legend from label= arguments

`ax.legend(loc="upper left")`
Choose the corner

`ax.legend(bbox_to_anchor=(1, 1), loc="upper left")`
Place outside the axes

`ax.legend(ncols=<n>, frameon=False)`
Columns, no box

LIMITS, SCALES, TICKS

`ax.set_xlim(<lo>, <hi>)`
X range (ylim likewise)

`ax.set_yscale("log")`
Log axis (xscale likewise)

`ax.invert_yaxis()`
Flip the y direction

`ax.set_xticks(<positions>, labels=<names>)`
Custom ticks and labels

`ax.tick_params(axis="x", rotation=45)`
Rotate or style tick labels

`ax.grid(True, alpha=0.3)`
Grid lines

`ax.set_aspect("equal")`
Equal unit lengths

STYLE AND COLOUR

`ax.plot(..., color="<c>", linestyle="--", linewidth=<w>)`
Line style

`ax.plot(..., marker="o", markersize=<s>)`
Marker style

`ax.scatter(..., alpha=0.5)`
Transparency

`plt.colorbar(<mappable>, ax=ax)`
Colour scale for scatter/imshow

`cmap="viridis"`
Colormap name (also plasma, gray, coolwarm)

`plt.style.use("ggplot")`
Apply a style sheet

`plt.rcParams["<key>"] = <val>`
Change a global default

STYLE AND COLOUR (cont.)

`with plt.rc_context({"<key>": <val>}):`
Temporary settings

`plt.rcdefaults()`
Reset rc settings

SAVE AND SHOW

`fig.savefig("<file>.png", dpi=150)`
Save as raster

`fig.savefig("<file>.pdf")`
Vector output (also svg)

`fig.savefig(..., bbox_inches="tight")`
Trim whitespace

`fig.savefig(..., transparent=True)`
Transparent background

`plt.show()`
Display figures, blocks until closed

`matplotlib.use("Agg")`
File-only backend, set before pyplot

RECIPES

Labelled line plot

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import numpy as np
x = np.linspace(0, 10, 200)
fig, ax =
plt.subplots(figsize=(6, 4),
layout="constrained")
ax.plot(x, np.sin(x),
label="sin")
ax.plot(x, np.cos(x),
label="cos")
ax.set(xlabel="x",
ylabel="value", title="Waves")
ax.legend()
fig.savefig("waves.png",
dpi=150)
```

Panels with shared x

```
fig, (a, b) = plt.subplots(2, 1,
sharex=True)
a.plot(x, y1)
b.plot(x, y2)
b.set_xlabel("time")
fig.align_ylabels()
```

Heatmap with colorbar

```
fig, ax = plt.subplots()
im = ax.imshow(data,
cmap="viridis")
fig.colorbar(im, ax=ax,
label="units")
ax.set_xticks(range(len(cols)),
labels=cols)
```

Two y axes

```
fig, ax1 = plt.subplots()
ax1.plot(t, temp, color="C0")
ax2 = ax1.twinx()
ax2.plot(t, rain, color="C1")
ax1.set_ylabel("temp");
ax2.set_ylabel("rain")
```