Using Notepad++ with Python
A Primer

1. Introduction
Notepad++ (not to be confused with Microsoft's Notepad program) provides a handy set of tools for programming. While not a full development environment, it meets the needs of Python programmers thanks to the simplicity of coding in Python.

2. Opening, Saving, and Closing Files
Opening, saving, and closing files works the same as you might expect from any other text editor or word processor. However, Notepad++ allows you to have multiple files open at once via a tabbed editing window (similar to Mozilla Firefox). You can close a selected tab by going to File > Close (or Ctrl+W).

3. Syntax Coloring
Ordinarily, Notepad++ will not use special colors for the keywords or other syntactical structures of Python (known as "syntax coloring"). To activate syntax coloring, click on the Language menu, and choose Python from the list. Alternatively, if you save or open a Python file (which has a .py extension), Notepad++ will assume Python syntax coloring for you.

4. Selecting and Commenting
To quickly select a line, click on the line's number in the grey gutter margin on the side of the window. To select multiple lines, click and drag across all of the line numbers you want to select. If you want to comment one or more selected lines, go to Edit > Block Comment/Uncomment (or Ctrl+Q).

5. Indenting
All you need to do to indent a line is to press Tab, as usual. To indent multiple lines, select them, and press Tab. To "outdent" them, select all of the lines, and press Shift+Tab (or, go to Edit > Remove Tab (Outdent)). Notepad++ has the option of showing you the indent depth of a line. This feature, called "indent guides", is activated automatically; you can turn it on/off by going to View > Show Indent guide.

6. Searching and Replacing
You can search for and/or replace specific text within your documents by going to any of the various options in the Search menu. You can also replace text in multiple documents, and use regular expressions in your search fields.

7. Expanding and Collapsing Blocks
Python files have a natural structure where some lines serve as "headers" to a set of lines that follow them; these sets of lines are called blocks. The most common lines that serve as block headers are lines that start with "def" and "class". When writing a Python file, you might want to hide some blocks to give yourself a better sense of the organization of your code. You can hide a block by clicking on the small [-] symbol next to the line number of the header line for that block. You can unhide it by clicking on the [+] symbol that replaces the [-].

8. Preparing to Run Your Program
Make sure you save your program before you try to run it with the Python Interpreter. It is recommended that you run the Interpreter from the command line, and not use the Run dialog in Notepad++ (some Python programs, like "Hello World", will not display long enough for you to actually read the results if you run the program from Notepad++).