Dictionaries Cheat Sheet

A Python dictionary (dict) is a special container type. It contains a collection of items, which are called key-value pairs and have the following form

```
key: val
```

The key in an item must be an immutable object and the val can be any type of object. The items contained in a dictionary are delimited by curly braces ({ and }) and separated by commas. For example,

```
A = {'CA': 38332521, 'TX': 26448193, 'MI': 9895622}
```

creates a new dict containing 3 items and assigns variable A a reference to it.

The keys in a dictionary are used to retrieve and update values, and to create items.

- To create an item or update a value for a key: `a_dict[k] = exp`
  
  If `a_dict` contains an item whose key equals `k`, then the assignment replaces the value in this item with the value of `exp`; otherwise, the assignment creates an item with key equal to `k` and value equal to `exp` and adds this new item to `a_dict`.

- To retrieve a value: when not on the left-side of an assignment, `a_dict[k]` returns the value in the item in `a_dict` whose key equals `k`; or raises a KeyError, if `a_dict` does not contain any item whose key equals `k`.

A dict is iterable; but you iterate through a dict using its keys.

```
exp in a_dict: returns True if exp is a key in a_dict; and False, otherwise.
```

```
for var in a_dict: iterates through the keys of a_dict, assigning each key to var in its turn and executing the associated suite
```

```
len(a_dict): returns the number of items in a_dict
max(a_dict): returns the maximum key in a_dict
min(a_dict): returns the minimum key in a_dict
```

```
a_dict.keys(): returns the collection (iterable) of keys in a_dict
a_dict.values(): returns the collection (iterable) of values in a_dict
a_dict.items(): returns the collection (iterable) of items in a_dict
del a_dict[exp]: deletes the item in a_dict whose key equals exp
```