

# Matlab I: Getting Started



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## Section 1: Introduction

### *About this Document*

This tutorial series introduces you to the MatlabR2008b suite of applications from MathWorks, Inc. The R2008b release consists of version 7.7 of the primary Matlab application along with some auxiliary modeling and simulation applications and specialized toolboxes. The suite as a whole will be surveyed but the primary application, Matlab 7.7, will be the focus of the tutorial sections designed for getting started. Instruction is aimed toward first-time users; however, those who are already familiar with previous versions of Matlab can use this document to learn about some of Matlab's new features and graphical interface. The tutorial series is organized into four parts containing a total of nine sections.

Part I includes the first four sections and serves to get the user acquainted with the Matlab application. The first section provides a brief introduction to this tutorial series and to Matlab. The second section gives an overview of the Matlab desktop layout and guides the reader through each of the windows and their functions. Also covered in this section is the layout for the built-in Matlab Help. The third section covers the basic methods of getting data into and exporting data from Matlab, including the import wizard, command line I/O functions, and M-books. The fourth section introduces the notation and syntax used by Matlab and contains essential information for routine usage of the application.

Part II includes the fifth and sixth sections which serve to introduce the basic functionalities of the Matlab application such that the user will be able to perform routine tasks. The fifth section covers computational and numerical methods for doing various mathematical operations. The sixth section goes through the basics of programming in the Matlab programming language and the construction of M-files, which are callable scripts, macros, and functions that can be used from the Matlab command line prompt or can be embedded within another such file.

Part III includes the seventh and eighth sections and covers aspects of manipulating and visualizing properties of data sets, including experimental data that have no assumed functional relationships *a priori*. The seventh section treats aspects of graphical display and data visualization, particularly plots. An eighth section covers several ways in which Matlab can be used in the analysis of experimental or collected data.

Part IV encompasses the ninth and final section which deals with optimization methods and with modeling and simulation of dynamical systems. This last section includes an introduction to the Simulink auxiliary application that is distributed with Matlab. Also, this section will introduce the usage of Matlab Toolboxes, which are ensembles of related M-files developed for specific types of applications.

Throughout this document many concepts and techniques are illustrated using Matlab scripts and other auxiliary files. All associated files can be downloaded from links on the same web page:

<http://ssc.utexas.edu/software/software-tutorials#matlab>

### ***Introduction to Matlab***

In the 1960s and 1970s before the appearance of personal computers, complex and large scale calculations were done on large mainframes using code primarily developed with FORTRAN. As a number of related large subroutines were developed for specific computational purposes, they were organized into public domain packages and distributed for free. Matlab was originally created as a front end for one of these, the LINPACK package -- a group of routines for working with matrices and linear algebra. The primary developer, Professor Cleve Moler at the University of New Mexico, eventually founded MathWorks, Inc., to further develop and market the product in a commercial setting. From the original Matlab, a high powered suite of applications has evolved. The current generation release, the MatlabR2008b suite, features the newest kernel, Matlab 7.7. It is largely backward compatible with recent Matlab versions, but there may be some slight changes.

## Section 2: An Overview of Matlab

### *Access to Matlab*

The Division of Statistics and Scientific Computation (SSC) at UT-Austin provides free Matlab access to students in the labs run by the College of Natural Sciences in ACA 1.214 (Mac Lab) and ACA 1.216 (PC Lab). All stations in these labs have access to Matlab, but the application is managed by a network license server that restricts usage to 25 simultaneous logins. UT-Austin faculty and staff can also access Matlab in these labs, but the license is a classroom license and thus can only be used for instructional and learning purposes, not for any research or commercial purposes.

Information Technology Services (ITS) at UT-Austin also provides free Matlab access to students, faculty, and staff on its time sharing mainframes, or via the desktop computers in the Student Microcomputer Facility (SMF) on the second floor of the Flawn Academic Center (FAC 212). To login to these machines it will be necessary to have a UT EID or departmental sponsored account issued by ITS. There is no cost for using software such as Matlab in the SMF although other ITS charges may be incurred if output is being printed or stored on time sharing server disk space. Information about getting an ITS- issued account to accommodate printing and storage is available at

<http://www.utexas.edu/its/account/index.html>

A UNIX version of Matlab is installed on the ITS UNIX system, uts.cc.utexas.edu, which runs on Solaris 8. A Windows version of Matlab is installed on the ITS applications Windows terminal server, wts.austin.utexas.edu running Windows Server 2007. To access these installations, an ITS-issued account must have UTS validation (uts), or AMS validation (wts). Some academic departments (e.g., Chemical Engineering) also have Matlab already installed on machines in their local computer labs. Also, UT-Austin departments are eligible to purchase licenses for Matlab for use within their own labs through the Software Distribution and Sales (SDS) unit of ITS. Details of various licensing options available for purchase by academic departments are available at

<http://www.utexas.edu/its/sds/products/matlab.html>

The most current Matlab suite containing Matlab and its optional auxiliaries and toolboxes is also marketed directly by MathWorks, Inc., which has special academic pricing; and, for individuals enrolled as students, a very inexpensive student edition with full functionality is available. Information and pricing is given at

<http://www.mathworks.com/store/index.html>

The Campus Computer Store on the first floor of FAC also sells the student version of Matlab. A currently valid *student* ID is needed for purchase.

### ***Getting Started***

MathWorks, Inc. now is on a semiannual cycle for releasing updates of Matlab and its various auxiliaries, so the version installed on the ITS servers may be changing periodically. The procedure for launching Matlab is no different from one version to the next. However, the launch method varies.

- With UNIX, the environment PATH variable must include the directory containing the Matlab installation. On the ITS UNIX system this directory is /usr/local/matlab and there is a script that will automatically augment the PATH variable with necessary additions. This script can be run from a shell prompt with the command `eval`/usr/local/etc/appuser``. Please note that backquotes should be used rather than ordinary single quotes. If the Matlab application is being run on a remote X terminal using a UNIX mainframe application, then the DISPLAY variable has to be set to the local terminal and the local terminal has to grant access to the UNIX mainframe. Both of these requirements can be circumvented if the mainframe connection is through a secure shell (SSH) protocol. Otherwise the commands

```
setenv DISPLAY myhost.mydomain:0.0
xhost +remotesystem.remotedomain
```

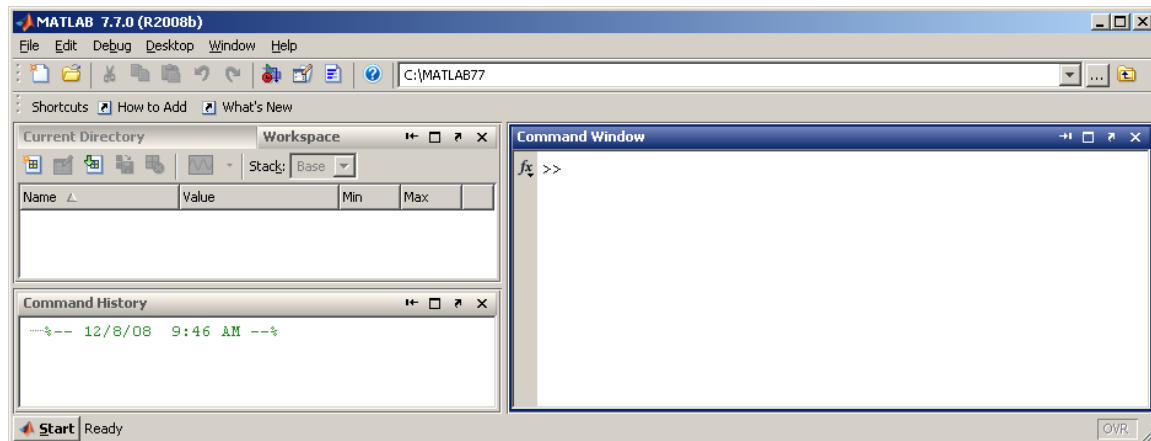
will need to be executed at the shell prompt. Matlab can then be started at a shell prompt with the command `matlab`, or, in background with concurrent access to other processes with the command `matlab &`.

- The Windows distribution can be launched by double clicking on a Matlab icon or shortcut. The default working path in this distribution consists of the Work subfolder of the top level installation folder and the hierarchy within the Toolbox subfolder of the top level installation folder. Access to files in other folders can be set by navigating with the browser from the Set Path option of the *File* pull down menu.

### ***The Desktop Layout***

Once the path environment is set properly and the desktop appears on the monitor screen, using Matlab will be practically the same for all operating system distributions. There are several windows that can be used in arranging the desktop, but an initial configuration will appear upon

launching. If desired this can be modified by selecting an alternate choice from *Desktop > Desktop Layout* on the top navigation bar. Once a preferred configuration is in place, initial or otherwise, it can be saved with a specific name for use in future sessions using *Desktop > Save Layout* from the navigation bar. The name *Default* has been assigned to a three column configuration, different from the initial two column configuration upon launch, which may cause some confusion at first. This tutorial will use the initial two column layout for MatlabR2008b package. The initial desktop for MatlabR2008b has a small Current Directory selection window near the top, with an original location determined when the Matlab package is first installed. If other folders have been added, then another current directory setting can be selected from among those available. If a current directory not yet in the Matlab path is desired, that setting can be specified from navigation after opening the small button with three periods just to the right of the Current Directory field. The main area has the Command window on the right and an upper and lower window on the left side. The upper left panel will show a Current Directory window which shows its contents and which can be toggled with a Workspace window. The lower left panel will show a Command History window. There are also undocked informational windows that can be launched from *Help > Product Help* and *Help > Demos*, and there is an undocked Figure window that is launched whenever a command involving graphical display is executed.



### *The Current Directory Window*

The Current Directory window displays a current directory with a listing of its contents. There is navigation capability for resetting the current directory to any directory among those set in the path. This window is useful for finding the location of particular files and scripts so that they can be edited, moved, renamed, deleted, etc. The default current directory for Windows installations is a *MATLAB* folder within *My Documents*, which is automatically created upon launch of Matlab if it does not already exist. By default its contents are displayed in the upper

left area of toggled windows when the application is first launched or when *Desktop > Desktop Layout > Default* is selected from the navigation bar.

### ***The Workspace Window***

The Workspace window provides an inventory of all the items in the workspace that are currently defined, either by assignment or calculation, in the Command window or by importation with a *load* or similar command from the Matlab command line prompt. These items consist of the set of arrays (including  $1 \times 1$  scalars) whose elements are variables or constants and which have been constructed or loaded during the current Matlab session and have remained stored in memory. Those which have been cleared and no longer are in memory will not be included. The Workspace window shows the name of each variable and various attributes such as array size. The particular attributes to be displayed can be selected from the *Choose Columns* tab of the *View* pull down menu when the Workspace window is active. Values of a variable or constant can be edited in an Array Editor, which is launched by double clicking the variable's icon in the Workspace window.

From the Workspace window, it is also possible to generate a graph of a multi-element vector or matrix variable. To create a graph, choose a variable, click the graph button on the Workspace window toolbar, and select the graph type from the pull down menu. The graph appears in a figure window. The button itself changes to reflect the currently selected style of graph. In addition, you can use the right-click in Windows (or the equivalent button or keystroke operation for other operating systems) on the variable you want to graph. The type of graph desired can then be chosen from the context menu. It is also possible to select multiple variables to graph together. The values of a variable or values within a selected range of contiguous elements can also be displayed in graphic form after opening in an Array Editor window, which will have a graphing button with a pull down menu for type. The right-click procedure for graphical viewing of an array variable can likewise be used after selecting elements in an Array Editor window.

### ***The Command History Window***

The Command History window, at the lower left in the default desktop, contains a log of commands that have been executed within the Command window. This is a convenient feature for tracking when developing or debugging programs or to confirm that commands were executed in a particular sequence during a multi-step calculation from the command line.

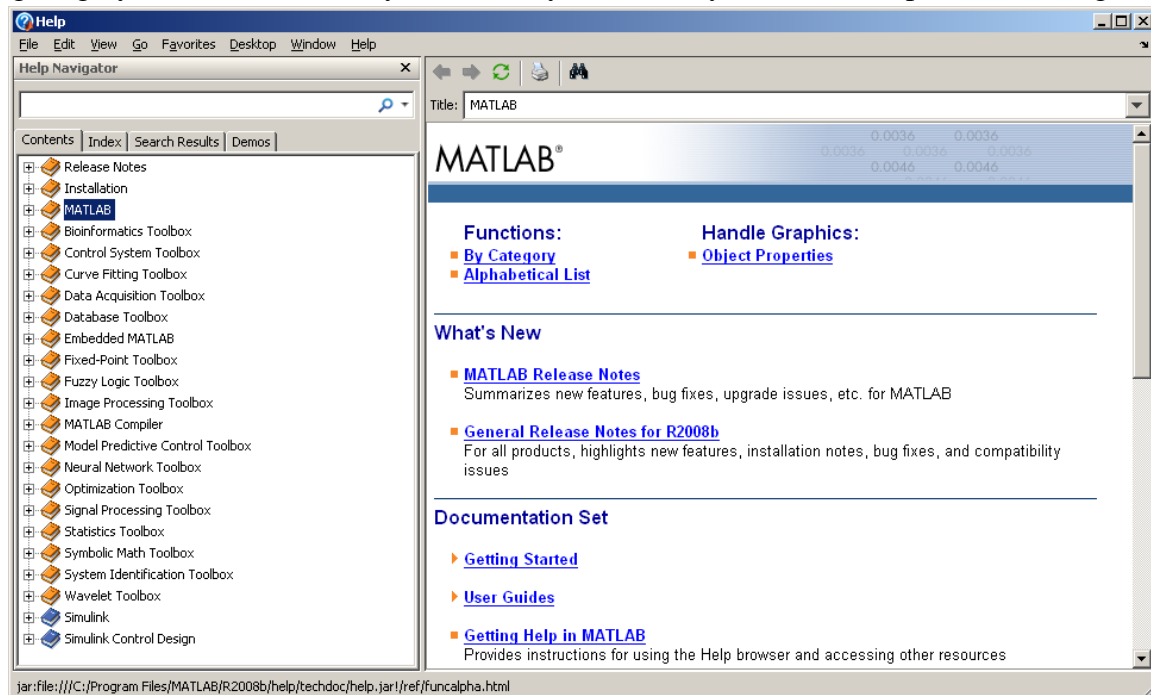
### ***The Command Window***



The Command window is where the command line prompt for interactive commands is located. This is also the only window that appears if you execute the UNIX version of Matlab outside of an X environment, e.g., on a vt100 screen. Commands and scripts can be executed from a vt100 window, but graphics and desktop tools will not be available. The Matlab prompt on the command window consists of two adjacent right angle brackets, i.e., `>>`. Results of command operations will also be displayed in this window unless the command line is terminated by a semi-colon, in which case the display of results is suppressed. If a command or script specified on the command line is questionable or cannot be executed because of invalid syntax, undefined variables, etc., a diagnostic message will be displayed in the Command window in red font. The current value of any saved variable is also displayed in this window if its name is entered at a prompt.

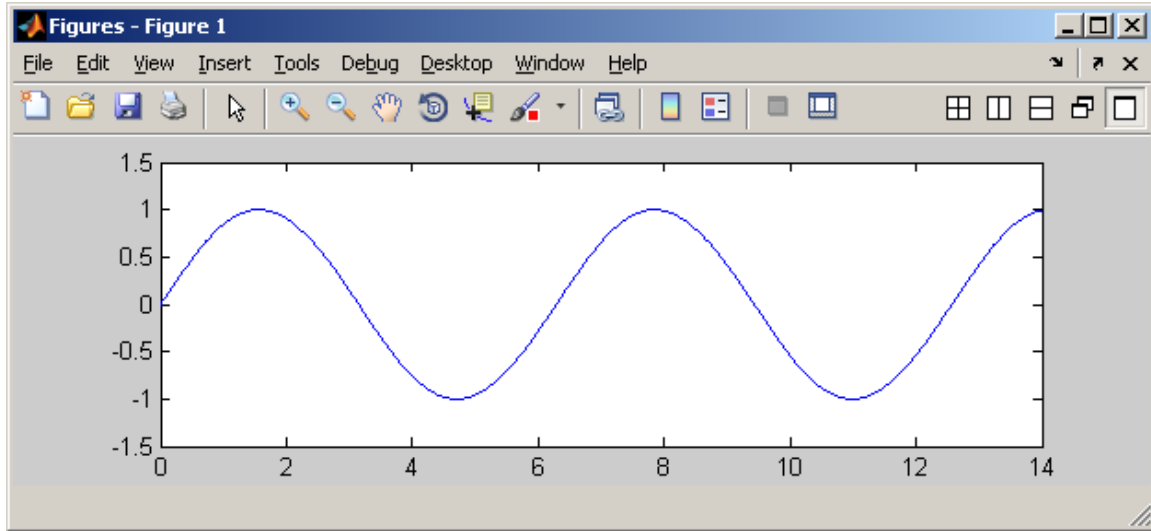
### *The Help Window*

Separate from the main desktop layout is a Help desktop with its own layout. This utility can be launched by selecting *Help > Product Help* from the Help pull down menu. This Help desktop has a right side which contains links to help with functions, help with graphics, and tutorial type documentation. The left side has various tabs that can be brought to the foreground for navigating by table of contents, by indexed keywords, or by a search on a particular string.



### *The Figure Window*

There is a Figure window that floats independently from the main desktop. If not already present, it is launched when command execution results in graphical output. From the *Edit* menu on the main Figure Window toolbar, there are selections for editing figure properties, axis properties, and properties of objects within figures. On the *Tools* menu of the main Figure Window toolbar there are selections for further manipulation such as zooming and perspective rotation. There is also a main Figure Window toolbar menu for *Help*, which includes specific graphics help and demos.



### Section 3: Notation, Syntax, and Operations

Like other command driven applications, Matlab requires information to be presented in a certain manner in order to be properly interpreted. It is a bit more rigid than some, for example case sensitivity for names of constants and variables, and a bit more flexible than others, for example many default values and interpretations for missing or incomplete arguments.

#### *Variable names*

The case sensitive names of variables and assigned constants can contain any of the 26 lower case and 26 upper case letters of the standard Latin alphabet along with the ten digits between **0** and **9** and the underscore. A name can be any sequence of 1 to 31 of these characters, but the first must be an upper or lower case letter and there cannot be any embedded blank spaces. Names longer than 31 characters are permitted but only the first 31 are used for unique identification. Constants and variables can be assigned values using the assignment operator, a single equal character ( $=$ ), e.g.,  $a = 3$ .

#### *Numerical conventions*

Matlab uses standard numerical notation. Numeric variables and constants are stored and displayed as sequences of base 10 digits. The radix point for fraction expansion is the period ( . ), and the lower case letter **e** is used for floating point exponent representation. Note that this is **not** the natural logarithm base "e". The **e** must be immediately followed by a + or – sign and then an integer. The + is optional for positive exponents, and arbitrary preceding zeros are permitted. For example, the integer **2000** can be represented as  $2.0e+003$ ,  $2e3$ ,  $0002.000e0003$ , or even with a negative exponent as  $20000e-1$ ; and the fraction  $\frac{1}{2000}$  can be represented as  $0.0005$ ,  $5e-4$ , or  $05.0000e-0004$ , or even with a positive exponent as  $0.00005e001$ .

Matlab accommodates complex-valued numbers of two dimensional divisional algebra using the symbols **i** and **j** as default notations for  $\sqrt{-1}$ . These two symbols are initially identical, accommodating an historical notational difference between mathematical literature and engineering literature. They both represent the upper intersection of the imaginary axis with a circle of radius 1 centered at the origin of the complex plane, thus a single one of the two possible square roots. Similarly they are not separate roots of -1 in the classical **i j k** notation of higher dimensional divisional algebras such as Hamiltonian quaternions, and in fact **k** does not have an initial built-in assigned value. Once **i** or **j** has been assigned some value the symbol must be immediately preceded by a numerical value in order to signify an imaginary part. If not, it will be interpreted as a separate entity. Thus:

$(1 + 1i)$  is a single complex number with magnitude 1 for both real and imaginary parts  
 $(1 + 1*i)$  is a sum of the integer 1 and whatever value **i** happens to have at the time

Although **i** has an initial built-in value of  $\sqrt{-1}$ , it can be overwritten by assignment, and this is frequently the case because that letter is commonly used to denote an index counter in loops.

### ***Geometrical and directional conventions***

Most of Matlab's geometrical and directional conventions should be familiar. The principal domain for multi-valued functions is symmetrically centered around zero, so that, for example, the inverse sine function *asin* has the principal domain  $[-\pi/2, +\pi/2]$ . When a branch cut is needed for analytic continuation in the complex plane, it extends from a point on the real axis to negative infinity along that axis, as is typically done in complex analysis. Angles in the complex plane or in polar coordinates are considered positive when measured in a counterclockwise sense. Likewise the chirality of multidimensional coordinate systems is established by the counterclockwise (right hand thumb) rule: if the fingers of the right hand are curled from the positive  $n^{\text{th}}$  axis toward the positive  $(n+1)^{\text{th}}$  axis then the right thumb will point in the positive direction of the orthogonal  $(n+2)^{\text{th}}$  axis. Of course in terms of plotting and visualization,

dimensionality is limited to 3. For data analysis using matrix techniques, Matlab interprets columns as variables with rows as observations or cases.

### *Operator and delimiter symbolics*

Basic Matlab notation essential for computation includes symbols that distinguish between operations on elements within matrices and between matrices as a whole. The difference between these all stem from the fundamental definition of matrix multiplication specifying that a product matrix element is the inner product of the corresponding row vector of the left hand component with the column vector of the right hand component, e.g.,

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \text{ and } \mathbf{Y} = \begin{pmatrix} e & f \\ g & h \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \mathbf{X} * \mathbf{Y} = \begin{pmatrix} (a * c) + (b * g) & (a * f) + (b * h) \\ (c * e) + (d * g) & (c * f) + (d * h) \end{pmatrix}$$

The Matlab notation for binary operations on matrices, vectors, and their elements are as follows:

- + for matrix or element addition
- for matrix or element subtraction
- .\* for element multiplication
- \* for matrix multiplication
- ./ for element division
- / for right matrix division (right multiplication by an inverse)
- \ for left matrix division (left multiplication by an inverse)

There is also Matlab notation for a few unary operations

- .^ for raising an element to a power
- ^ for raising a matrix to a power
- .' for a simple row to column transpose (period and single vertical quote)
- ' for converting to complex conjugate transpose (single vertical quote)

Matlab also has specific notation and symbols for delimiters, separators, grouping, type assignment, and so forth: Essential among these are:

- [ ] for vector and matrix delimiter
- ( ) for grouping, vector and matrix element indices, function argument delimiter
- :
- ;
- blank space* for matrix column element separator

- , *comma* for matrix index separator, function argument separator
- . *period* for radix expansion separator (American convention)
- ' ' *single vertical quote* for demarcation of character strings

Note that a single vertical quote must be the ascii character code 34 symbol; other quote mark variants with other ascii character codes cannot be substituted. The Matlab notation for Boolean logicals uses the following symbols:

= = for logical equality  
 & for AND  
 | for inclusive OR,  
 ~ for NOT  
 <= for less than or equal,  
 >= for greater than or equal  
 ~= for not equal,  
 1 for true,  
 0 for false.

There is not a specific symbol notation for an exclusive OR, but there is a functional equivalent:  $xor(p,q)$  is the same as the compound logical  $(p \& \sim q) / (\sim p \& q)$ .

Matlab also has special interpretation for certain symbols related to positioning within a line of command instruction or code. Important and commonly used examples are:

Ignore Further Text:    % anywhere in a line (uncompiled comment for rest of the line)  
 Suppress Display:       ; at the end of the line  
 Continue on Next Line:  ... (three periods) at the end of a line

When working interactively at a keyboard, Matlab has a standard notation to indicate a status of being ready for input

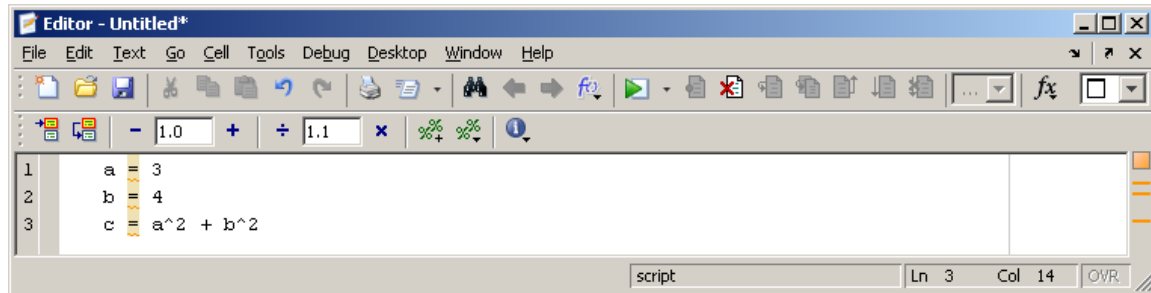
>> *prompt* for keyboard input in the command window

Also for interactive input from a keyboard, Matlab has a couple of standard notations to interrupt functioning. These are:

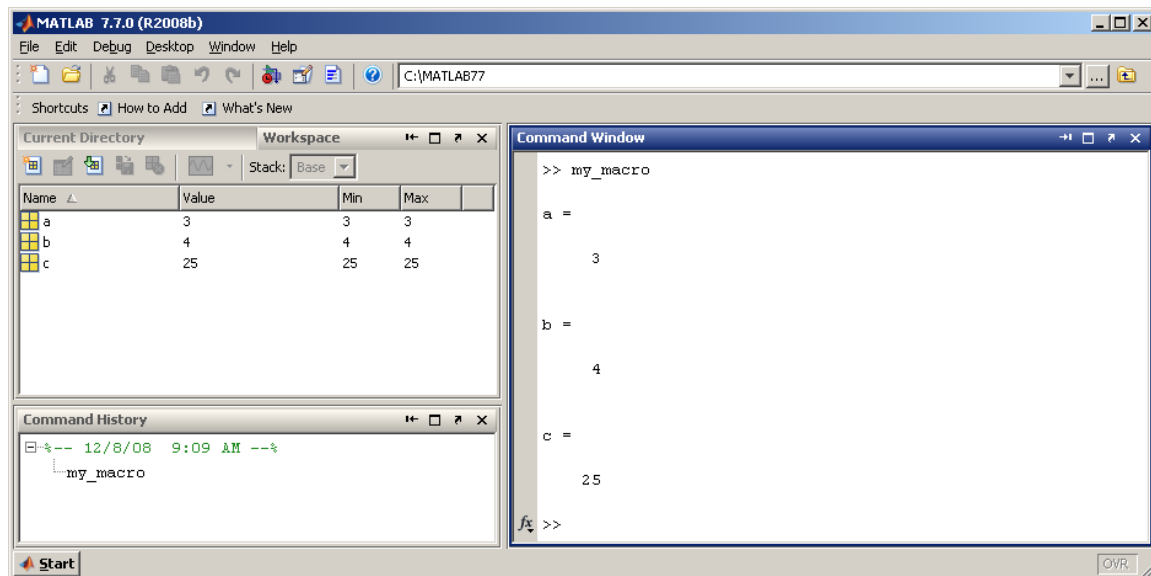
^c simultaneous control key and lower case **c** to stop execution and return to prompt  
 ^q simultaneous control key and lower case **q** to stop execution and exit Matlab

### ***Multiple operations***

Matlab accommodates multiple operations equivalent to macros in various other environments. A set of commands to be performed sequentially as a batch can be specified in a Matlab m-file. A new m-file can be created by selecting *File > New > Blank M-file* from the toolbar. This opens up a floating editing window into which a sequence of commands can be entered.



The contents of this window can then be saved to a particular file name using *File > Save As* from the Editor Window toolbar. The save process will append a ".m" extension onto the file name given, for example *my\_macro.m*, letting Matlab know that it is an m-file. Once this has been done it can be executed by typing the file name at a Command Window prompt.



If the same operation is to be iterated or repeated several times, Matlab has flow structures that can be used. As an example, suppose we want to create a vector whose elements are the differences between cubes and squares of some range of consecutive integers. We could generate this using the *for* command

```
>> for n = 1:5
```

```
x = n^2;  
y = n^3;  
z(n) = y - x;  
end;  
>> z
```

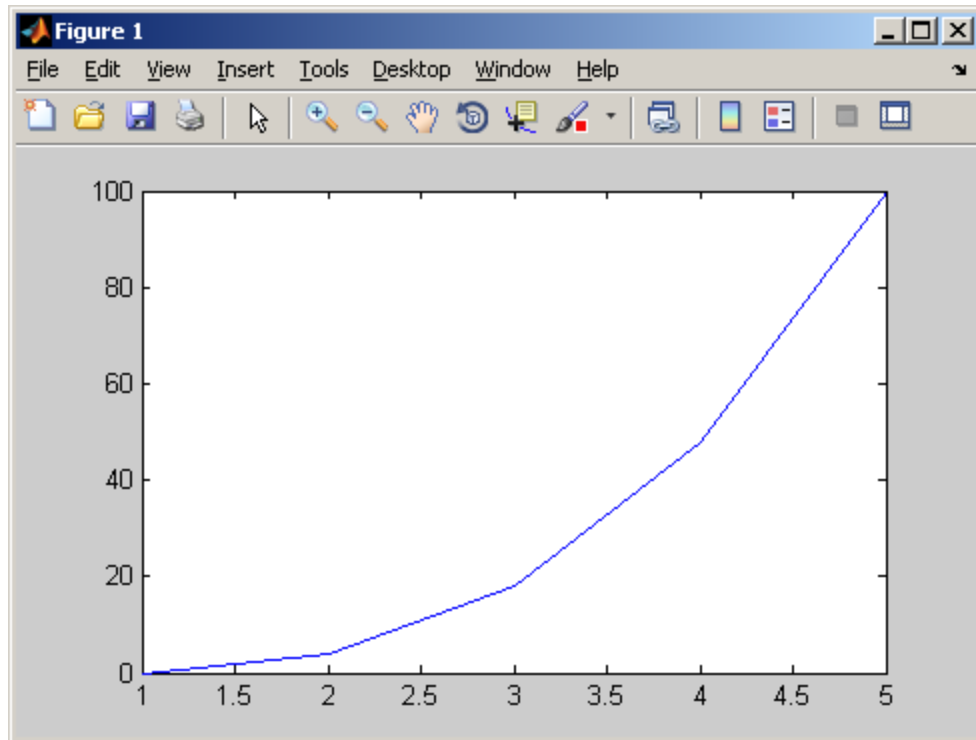
```
z =  
  
    0     4    18    48   100
```

Note that the *for* command requires an *end* statement so that Matlab will know when to go on to the next index value. Other similar commands which can accommodate multiple repeated operations, such as *while*, are discussed in section 5.

### ***Displaying content of multi-element variables***

When a created element is a vector or a matrix, such as the vector ***z*** above, its contents can be displayed in a variety of plotting formats by selecting its icon in the Workspace Window and then selecting the plot type from the plotting icon in that same window. A plot of the element values can also be produced from the command line in the Command Window. With the example vector ***z***, this can be done simply with

```
>> plot(z)
```



In Section 7 methods of customizing a display such as this will be presented.



## Section 4: Importing and Exporting Information

Information can be imported into and exported from the Matlab application by several different methods. Some of the more common procedures are discussed below. Before proceeding with this section, download Part\_1\_Getting\_Started.zip from <http://sscnew.cns.utexas.edu/software/software-tutorials#matlab> and copy the following files to a location where they can be accessed by the Matlab program.

planetsize.txt  
 planets1.txt  
 planets2.txt  
 planets3.txt  
 planetdata.doc  
 planets6.xls  
 planets7.jpg

and copy them into a location within the Matlab search path (for example, in the default work folder or directory). If you cannot access these external documents, you can also find their ASCII text contents within this document. Remember that the planetdata.doc, planets6.xls, and planets7.jpg files are binary and must be transferred in that mode

### *Command Line Import*

The most elementary method for importing external information is piece by piece directly from the command line by typing at the keyboard. For example:

```
>> earthradius = 6371;
```

will assign the numerical value 6371 to a variable *earthradius*. For extensive amounts of information there are more efficient methods.

### *The Import Wizard*

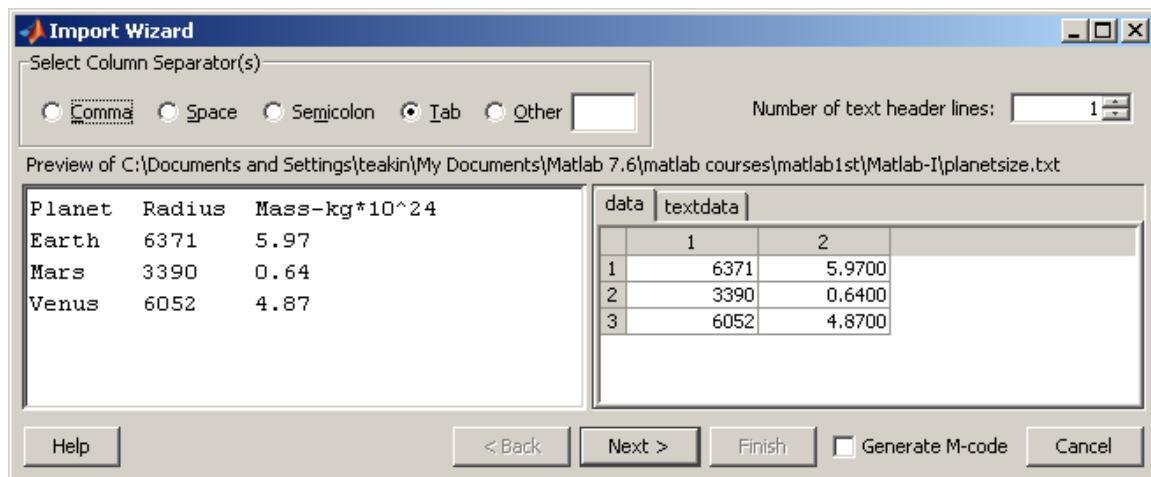
Matlab provides an import utility tool for convenient importation of data from external files. This tool can be activated by selecting *File > Import Data*, or by executing the `uiimport` command at a Matlab command line prompt. This utility can be used for importing both text and numerical data contained within the same data file, but entries have to be in a matrix format with specified column separators. From the file menu or from a command line execution of `uiimport` with no specified file name you will be prompted to browse to the desired file containing the data to be imported. This will launch the Import Wizard. When the name of a file in the Matlab path follows the `uiimport` command, the content of that file is loaded into the Import Wizard. As an example, consider a small file, *planetsize.txt*, containing a few planets' names, radii, and masses with columns separated by tabs:

```
Planet Radius Mass-kg*10^24
Earth 6371 5.97
Mars 3390 0.64
Venus 6052 4.87
```

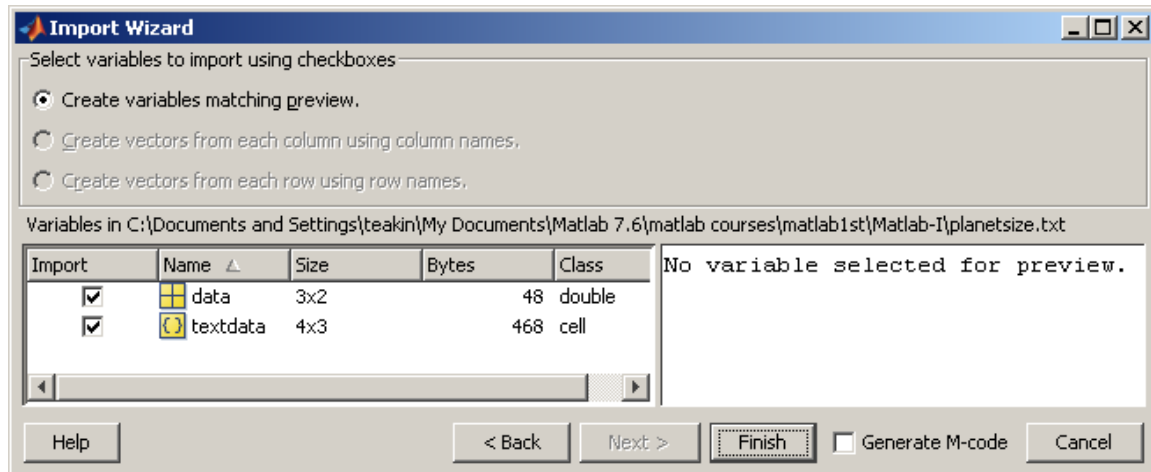
This file can be imported directly with the command

```
>> uiimport planetsize.txt
```

or, with *File > Import Data* this file can be specified from a browse tool button. With either method, the contents of the file will be displayed in a floating Import Wizard window. A preview screen appears which lets you confirm the data importation, with separate tabs to examine the numerical data and the text fields:



To continue, click on the **Next >** button and a new screen **lets** you selectively choose which information from the file to import into the Matlab workspace. The process is completed by clicking Finish.



After clicking the **Finish** button there should be the variables *data* and *textdata*, depending on which were selected, appearing in the Workspace window.

### ***Import Functions***

There are a variety of other ways to import structured data using the Command Window. Below several of these functions are described in detail.

#### **csvread**

This function imports numeric data with comma-separated values (csv). For example, in the planetary data above, suppose that we have an external file *planets1.txt*, containing the kilometer radial distances and  $10^{24}$  kg mass values for Earth, Mars and Venus:

```
6371, 5.97
3390, 0.64
6052, 4.87
```

The command

```
>> planets1 = csvread('planets1.txt')
```

would create a 3x2 matrix with the name *planets1* whose content is the same as that shown on the data tab generated previously by using the import wizard for the *planetsize.txt* file.

#### **dlmread**

This function is similar to **csvread** but more flexible, allowing the delimiter to be specified by any character rather than restricting it to be a comma. For example, suppose that the file *planets2.txt* had the format

```
6371; 5.97
```

```
3390; 0.64
6052; 4.87
```

where values are separated by semi-colons. The command

```
>> planets2 = dlmread('planets2.txt', ';')
```

would create that same 3x2 matrix with the name *planets2*.

### load

This is similar to **csvread** and **dlmread** but the separators can be blank spaces. For example, if the file *planets3.txt* has the structure

```
6371 5.97
3390 0.64
6052 4.87
```

then the command

```
>> load planets3.txt
```

would create the same 3x2 matrix with the name *planets3*. Note that the target for the `load` command is not enclosed in parentheses and does not need to be enclosed in single quotes.

### fscanf

This is a lower level import function, equivalent to the C language function of the same name but with the important difference that the result is vectorized. It requires extra manipulations of opening and closing the file, but is more versatile in allowing text and numbers to be read in together. For example, if we want to import the data from our file *planetsize.txt* we could use the following sequence of commands to import the contents of the file in vectorized form

```
fid = fopen('planetsize.txt');
planetsize = fscanf(fid, '%c');
fclose(fid);
```

where the `'%c'` argument for **fscanf** is identical to the C language, i.e., parsing as character strings. The variable *planetsize* is then actually an 80 element row vector of characters (including blank spaces, tabs, and linefeeds) which have numerical ASCII character code values. Characterized data values need to be converted to numbers before mathematical manipulations will make sense. For example, we could convert the characters in the string representing the earth radius, i.e., elements 39 – 42, to numerical form using the **str2num** Matlab function:

```
>> earthradius = str2num(planetsize(39:42))
```

The variable *earthradius* will be in numerical form, ready for performing mathematical operations, e.g.,

```
>> earthvolume = (4/3)*pi*((earthradius)^3)
```

### **textread**

The **textread** function is similar to the primitive **fscanf** but will allow data variables to be defined as part of the import process. As an example, again suppose that the file *planetsize.txt* contains the information that we want to import into Matlab. We can specify the number of header lines to skip before reaching the actual data (one such line in this example), and the individual data formats for each column of data. The file contains the character string planet names in the first column, the decimal integer planet radii in the second column and the floating point planet masses in the third column. Thus, the command

```
>> [planets, radii, masses] = textread ...
    ('planetsize.txt', '%s %d %f', 'headerlines', 1)
```

where ‘%s’ signifies string, ‘%d’ signifies decimal, and ‘%f’ signifies floating point in the format argument, will give the display

```
planets =
    'Earth'
    'Mars'
    'Venus'

radii =
    6371
    3390
    6052

masses =
    5.9700
    0.6400
    4.8700
```

and add the column vector variables *planets*, *radii*, and *masses* to the workspace.

### ***M-file Scripts***

If data are already present within a text file containing only legitimate Matlab command syntax, then that data can be imported by giving the file name an extension “.m” if not already present, and then typing that file name (without the “.m” extension) in the Matlab command window. For example, an external M-file *planetradii.txt* containing

```
earthradius = 6371
```

```
marsradius = 3390
venusradius = 6052
```

can be re-named to *planetradii.m* and then used as a source to import these variables and their values using the command

```
>> planetradii
```

### ***Export Functions***

#### **diary**

The simplest way to export data to an external file is to make use of the **diary** function. This is a utility for logging a transcript of the Matlab command line input and screen output. The logging process starts subsequent to the command

```
>> diary filename
```

where “filename” is a chosen text file name; and the logging process terminates with the command

```
>> diary off
```

thus creating an external file that can be edited with a text editor to remove extraneous material. For an example, let us create new variables using the data imported from the *planetsize.txt* file:

```
>> volumes = (4/3).*pi.*((radii).^3);
>> densities = (10^27).*masses./((10^15).*volumes);
>> planetinfo(:,1) = volumes;
>> planetinfo(:,2) = densities;
```

The variable *planetinfo* will then be a 3 x 2 matrix with column 1 containing planet volumes in cubic kilometers and column 2 containing planet densities in grams per cubic centimeter. To export this information to an external file *planets4.txt* we first activate the diary, set the display format to exponential form, type in the name of the variable *planetinfo*, and turn off the **diary**:

```
>> diary planets4.txt
>> format short e
>> planetinfo
>> diary off
```

The external file *planets4.txt* then contains

```
format short e
planetinfo
```

```

planetinfo =
1.0832e+012  5.5114e+000
1.6319e+011  3.9219e+000
9.2851e+011  5.2450e+000

diary off

```

This *planets4.txt* file can then be put into a text editor for deleting unwanted lines, adding column headers, etc.

### **dlmwrite**

The **dmlwrite** function allows you to write external data files in which the delimiter can be specified. Let us assume that we have the variables from the **textread** example above loaded into the workspace; that we have defined the vector variables *volumes* and *densities* as shown above; and that we want to write out a new file *planets5.txt* with the new volume and density data. We create a local array *planets5* in the Command Window by typing in the desired data, a column for each of the two vector variables

```

>> planets5(:,1) = volumes;
>> planets5(:,2) = densities;

```

The command

```

>> dlmwrite('planets5.txt',planets5, ';')

```

requests that the contents of the array *planets5* be written to an external file *planets5.txt* using a semicolon delimiter. Thus the new external file *planets5.txt* will contain

```

1083206916845.75;5.5114
163187806143.123;3.9219
928507395798.201;5.245

```

### **save**

This utility is a primitive function that will save an array in an external file with columns separated by blank space. With no arguments at all, the **save** command will store the current values of all variables in a binary file *matlab.mat* from which they can be retrieved in a subsequent Matlab session. Using the same array *planets5* created above, the command

```

>> save planets5.txt planets5 -ascii -tabs

```

will produce an external file *planets5.txt* whose content is

```

1.0832069e+012  5.5114124e+000

```

```
1.6318781e+011  3.9218617e+000
9.2850740e+011  5.2449771e+000
```

Without an extension such as “.txt” and the flag “-ascii”, the default external file will be given a default extension “.mat” and will be in binary format. Without the flag “-tabs” each row will be a single character string variable and the separate display columns cannot be copied and pasted to spreadsheet separate columns.

### **fprintf**

This is another low level function that is equivalent to the C language function of the same name. It is useful for exporting information that contains both text and data in a specified format, using syntax similar to that of the C programming language. As an example, suppose we want to export the newly computed planet volume and density values shown above into a file *planetinfo.txt* that has the same layout as the imported file *planetsize.txt*. For this purpose we need to create strings of 49 characters for each line in a new array, both the header line which identifies the data in each column and the three subsequent data lines themselves. We will give the new 4x49 array the arbitrary name *outdata*. The header for the column of planet names, consisting of the first ten characters of each line, can be created by assignment

```
>> outdata(1,1:10) = 'Planet      '
```

and the headers for the variable columns, spanning 38 subsequent characters, can be generated by

```
>> outdata(1,11:50) = 'Volume (km^3)           Density(g/cc)      '
```

The subsequent data lines will have the planet names and variable values. For these, the numeric values in the *planetinfo* variable need to be converted to text using the Matlab **num2str** utility. For example

```
>> outdata(2,1:10) = 'Earth      '
>> outdata(2,11:50) = num2str(planetinfo(1,:))
>> outdata(3,1:10) = 'Mars       '
>> outdata(3,11:50) = num2str(planetinfo(2,:))
>> outdata(4,1:10) = 'Venus      '
>> outdata(4,11:50) = num2str(planetinfo(3,:))
```

We also need to create an end of line character for each line in the 51<sup>st</sup> position. This is done using the Matlab **sprintf** command, which functions as a printing command in the same way as its namesake does in the C programming language

```
>> outdata(1:4,51) = sprintf('\n')
```

where ‘\n’ is the notation for the end-of-line character. As an output format we want the text strings with a line feed in the display wherever there is an end-of-line character in the array. We



can create a format variable, for example *outformat*, which specifies the display characteristics by assigning it a string value with parsing instructions

```
>> outformat = '%s \n'
```

where ‘%s’ indicates a string and ‘\n’ indicates a linefeed at the end-of-line character. The new file with the derived variable data can then be created with a sequence of two commands, the first opening a new file with **fopen** and assigning it a numerical file ID and the second printing the contents in the desired format with **fprintf**, both of which are analogous to their namesake commands in the C programming language. In our example we created the output array by row whereas **fprintf** assembles by column. Thus the array that we want exported is actually the transpose of that which we created, i.e., *outdata'* (with the trailing single quote mark) rather than *outdata* itself. In the Command Window we therefore execute the commands

```
>> fid = fopen('planetinfo.txt', 'w')
>> fprintf(fid, outformat, outdata')
>> fclose(fid)
```

where the "w" is the permission argument of **fopen** signifying permission to create and write to the file. A new external text file, *planetinfo.txt*, will be created, containing the information in the variable *outdata* that was created.

### ***M-Books***

The **M-Book** feature is used to transfer data between Matlab and Microsoft Word, a commonly used word processing utility. As an example, suppose that we want to export some information into a small Microsoft Word document with the name *planetdata.doc*.

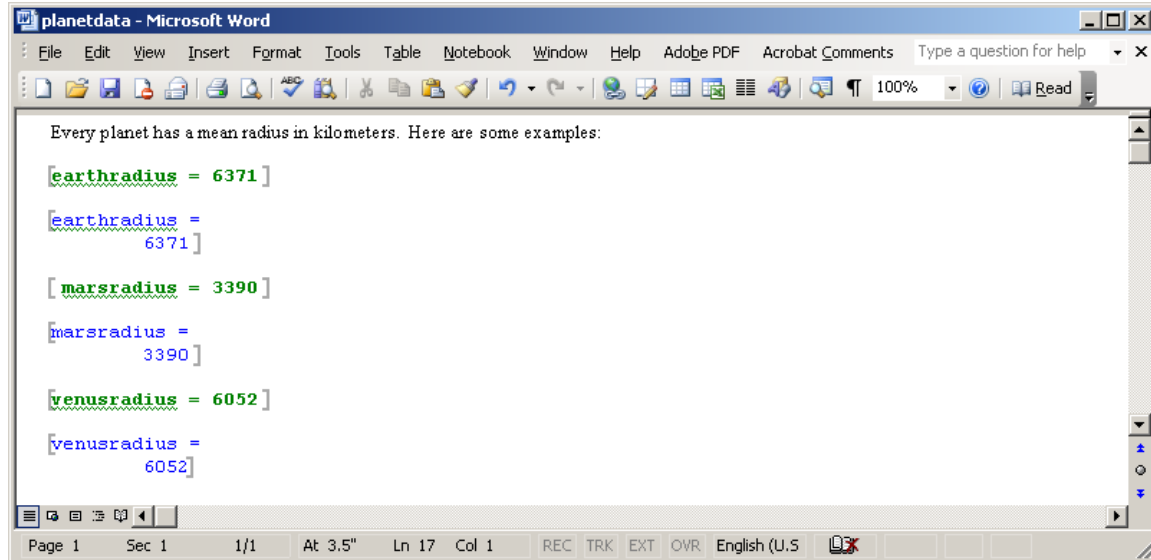
We would first need to set up the proper configuration, which can be done with the command

```
>> notebook('-setup')
```

Subsequently the command

```
>> notebook planetdata.doc
```

opens up a Word document in a floating window into which you can copy and paste the desired information from the Matlab command window, as well as composing any annotation. This also adds a "Notebook" pulldown menu to the Word navigation toolbar, from which cell operations can be performed. In the display below, the command lines that have been defined as Input Cells from the *Notebook* pulldown menu get colored green, and can be evaluated with *Notebook > Evaluate Cell*



When finished, selecting *File > Save* from the navigation bar of the floating window will save its contents into a Word document with the chosen name, **planetdata.doc** in this instance. This new file will be placed into the folder designated as the Current Directory. Note that you can later import the information from the saved document by opening it from the Command Window

```
>> open planetdata.doc
```

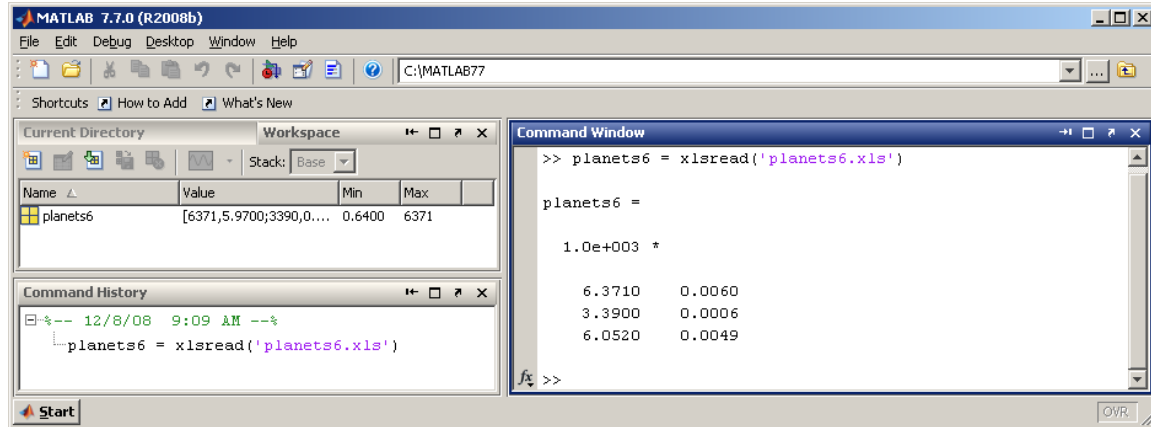
and evaluating cells in Word with *Notebook > Evaluate Cell*, as has been done in the illustration above. This will add the evaluated variables into the Matlab workspace.

### ***Advanced Methods for Binary Information***

In addition to the basic methods presented in this tutorial, there are several utilities available in Matlab for importing specialized types of binary files. Examples are **aviread** for audio-video interleaved (AVI) files, **imread** for image files in common formats such as .jpg or .gif, and **xlsread** for Excel spreadsheets.

For example, the data from the Excel spreadsheet *planets6.xls* can be imported into the Matlab workspace with the command

```
>> planets6 = xlsread('planets6.xls')
```



As another example, the data from the JPEG image file *planets7.jpg* can be imported with the command

```
>> planets7 = imread('planets7.jpg')
```

The data that is imported is not the binary file itself, but rather a 3 dimensional matrix of pixel intensity values where a third index specifies a primary color (red, green, blue). The imported image itself can be viewed with the command

```
>> imshow(planets7)
```

