

# How can the order of items in a Matplotlib legend be changed?

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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The order of items in a Matplotlib legend can be changed by using the "handles" and "labels" parameters. These parameters allow for the manual reordering of the legend items by specifying the desired order of the labels and corresponding handles. Additionally, the "handles" parameter can be used to specify which specific items should be included in the legend and in what order. By manipulating these parameters, the order of items in a Matplotlib legend can be easily adjusted to suit the user's preferences.

## Change Order of Items in Matplotlib Legend

You can use the following chunk of code to change the order of items in a Matplotlib legend:

```
#get handles and labels
```

```
handles, labels = plt.gca().get_legend_handles_labels()
```

```
#specify order of items in legend
```

```
order =
```

```
#add legend to plot
```

```
plt.legend( for idx in order], for idx in order])
```

The following example shows how to use this syntax in practice.

**Example: Change Order of Items in Matplotlib Legend**

**Suppose we create the following line chart in Matplotlib:**

```
import pandas as pd
```

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

```
#create data
```

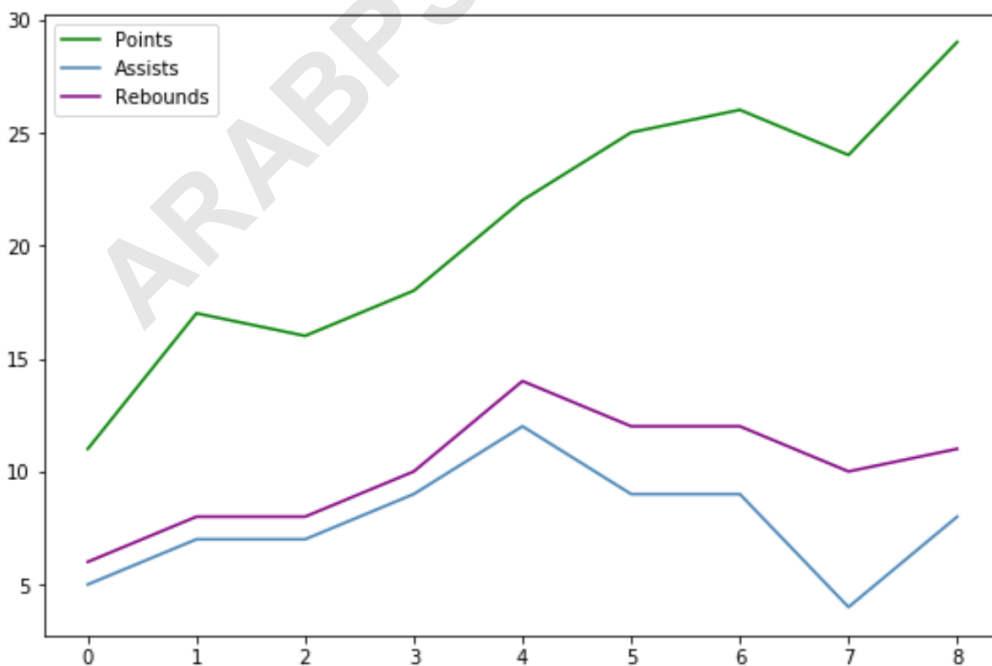
```
df = pd.DataFrame({'points': ,  
'assists': ,  
'rebounds': })
```

```
#add lines to plot
```

```
plt.plot(df, label='Points', color='green')  
plt.plot(df, label='Assists', color='steelblue')  
plt.plot(df, label='Rebounds', color='purple')
```

```
#add legend
```

```
plt.legend()
```



The items in the legend are placed in the order that we added the lines to the plot.

However, we can use the following syntax to customize the order of the items in the legend:

```
import pandas as pd
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

#create data
df = pd.DataFrame({'points': ,
'assists': ,
'rebounds': })

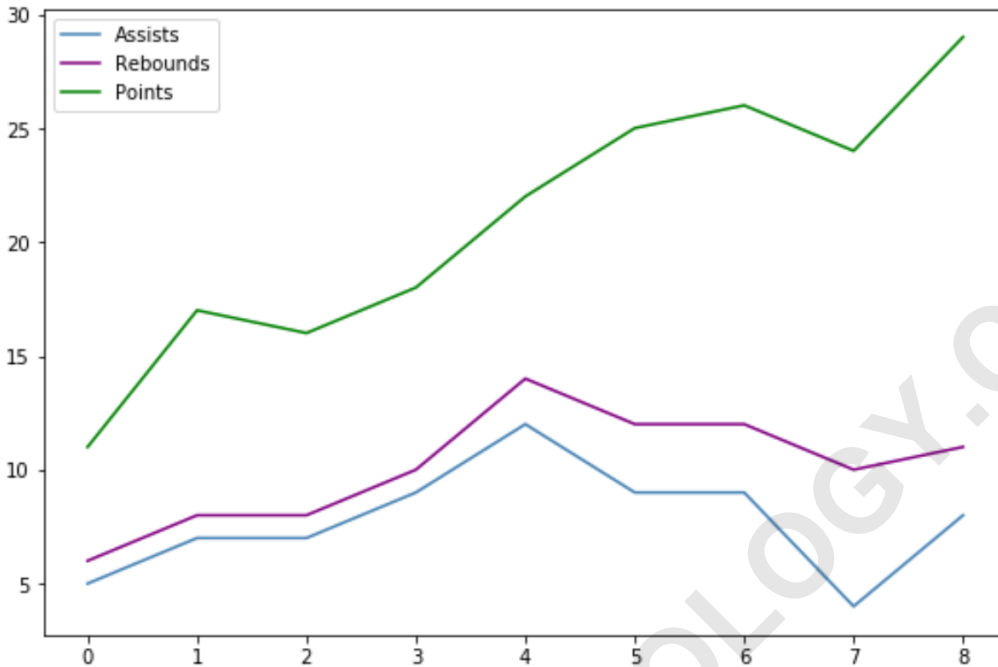
#add lines to plot
plt.plot(df, label='Points', color='green')
plt.plot(df, label='Assists', color='steelblue')
plt.plot(df, label='Rebounds', color='purple')

#get handles and labels
handles, labels = plt.gca().get_legend_handles_labels()

#specify order of items in legend
order =

#add legend to plot
```

`plt.legend( for idx in order], for idx in order])`



**Note that we specified:**

**order =**

**This means:**

The first item in the legend should be the label that was originally in index position 1 of the old legend ("Assists") The second item in the legend should be the label that was originally in index position 2 of the old legend ("Rebounds") The third item in the legend should be the label that was originally in index position 0 of the

## old legend ("Points")

### Additional Resources

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