What is API

* You can consider an API as the alternative "user interface" that software uses to interact with other software.
* We humans are familiar with user interfaces that have fancy layouts with buttons, fonts, colors, graphics, etc; and most of that is unnecessary to a machine.  Machines wouldn't open up a program or website, take a screenshot of that section of the monitor.
* Machines just need a shorthand way to do things like checking the current weather or adding an event to your calendar.  That's what an API provides.
* APIs can be web-based, or specific to a platform.  Google has APIs for search, calendars, translations, etc.  Facebook and Twitter have APIs that allow software to automatically post status updates.  Apple provides many APIs for building iPhone apps.