The programming challenge was seen as how to write the logic, not how to define the data. Object-oriented programming takes the view that what we really care about are the objects we want to manipulate rather than the logic required to manipulate them. Examples of objects range from human beings (described by name, address, and so forth) to buildings and floors (whose properties can be described and managed) down to the little widgets on a computer desktop (such as buttons and scroll bars).

The first step in OOP is to identify all the objects the programmer wants to manipulate and how they relate to each other, an exercise often known as data modeling. Once an object has been identified, it is generalized as a class of objects (think of Plato's concept of the "ideal" chair that stands for all chairs) which defines the kind of data it contains and any logic sequences that can manipulate it. Each distinct logic sequence is known as a method. Objects communicate with well-defined interfaces called *messages*.

The concepts and rules used in object-oriented programming provide these important benefits:

- The concept of a data class makes it possible to define subclasses of data objects that share some or all of the main class characteristics. Called inheritance, this property of OOP forces a more thorough data analysis, reduces development time, and ensures more accurate coding.
- Since a class defines only the data it needs to be concerned with, when an instance of that class (an object) is run, the code will not be able to accidentally access other program data. This characteristic of data hiding provides greater system security and avoids unintended data corruption.
- The definition of a class is reuseable not only by the program for which it is initially created but also by other object-oriented programs (and, for this reason, can be more easily distributed for use in networks).
- The concept of data classes allows a programmer to create any new data type that is not already defined in the language itself.

Simula was the first object-oriented programming language. Java, Python, C++, Visual Basic .NET and Ruby are the most popular OOP languages today. The Java programming language is designed especially for use in distributed applications on corporate networks and the Internet. Ruby is used in many Web applications. Curl, Smalltalk, Delphi and Eiffel are also examples of object-oriented programming languages.

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-

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