

Thinking Like a Programmer

Breaking Down Problems 2

If you're not familiar with the concept of a mean, it is what people generally want when they say "average." To get an average, you add all of the numbers and divide by the count of numbers you added. As an example, consider the following numbers:

4, 6, 7, 2, 1

To compute the average, you add them together to get 20. Then, you divide the total by the count of numbers, which is 5:

$$(4 + 6 + 7 + 2 + 1) / 5 = 4$$

The average (mean) of the above set of numbers is 4.

What's important here is identifying the question. In this case, it required an understanding of averages and recognizing it as the question. If you did not know what an average was ahead of time, it would be difficult to solve that particular problem.

Learning new programming techniques gives you more tools to apply to any given problem. If a problem seems impossible, it is essential to go through the tools that you have and brush up on less familiar ones. Discovering the right tool is often the hardest part of solving a problem.

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