11.1.1   Overview of ES6+

Dana rolls up her sleeves to get to work. Her first step is to learn a bit about JavaScript: What are the functions of this language? What versions are out there? The first thing she discovers is that JavaScript was developed back in 1995, which means it's certainly proved its worth, since it's still so ubiquitous today! Dana also finds out that there was a major update to JavaScript not too long ago, called ECMAScript. She knows that updates are part of every major language—they fix bugs, provide efficiencies, and generally improve things for developers, so she's delighted that there was such a significant update so recently.

Now, dive in and see just what this update does for JavaScript—and for Dana.

ECMAScript. It sounds as alien as the UFOs Dana is researching. She has heard of JavaScript before—it's been around forever—so what is this new term that she's uncovered?

ECMAScript, also referred to as "ES," is a scripting language designed to help standardize JavaScript. This means that ES provides guidelines and rules for JavaScript to follow, such as how a function should be created to run correctly, also known as the **proper syntax**.

Because ES has provided standardization for JavaScript, it also brings updates to the language. There are updates to every major coding language that fix bugs, update code, and provide overall quality of life improvements for the developers. ES6 is no exception!

There have been many updates to ES over the years, though the sixth update was a major one. You'll probably see "ES6+" mentioned out in the wild pretty often; this is a reference to the "big" update (ES6) as well as the later ones. It's also commonly known as "ES2015" or "ECMAScript 2015."

(It was such an important update that it's even known by its year!) There are quite a few different ways to reference this language, but we'll be referring to it as ES6, JavaScript, or JS in this module.

Benefits of the ES6 Update

We've briefly mentioned that the ES6 update was useful, but let's talk a bit more about why it was such a big deal.

Imagine two laptops, one old and one new, side by side. They're similar enough: they're close in size and shape and can complete many of the same tasks, but the newer laptop has an edge. It is faster and can perform tasks with greater efficiency than the older model.

JavaScript after the ES6 update is like the newer computer. This update included many updates to the syntax, which streamlined the code and made it easier to both read and write. Additional, quality of life improvements were implemented as well, such as adding Python-like generators and `for...of` loops. Even functions were updated and streamlined!

NOTE

`for...of` loops is a new syntax associated with JavaScript, so it's okay to not be familiar with it yet! We'll discuss this syntax in more detail as we learn more about the language.

Later editions of ECMAScript brought about new additions as well, but they are for more advanced uses of the language. In this module, our focus will be on basic JavaScript and ES6 capabilities such as arrow functions. Both are still used today, and there's a chance you'll come up against older versions of JavaScript during interviews as well.