Structured programming frequently employs a top-down design model, in which developers map out the overall program structure into separate subsections. A defined function or set of similar functions is coded in a separate module or submodule, which means that code can be loaded into memory more efficiently and that modules can be reused in other programs. After a module has been tested individually, it is then integrated with other modules into the overall program structure.

Program flow follows a simple hierarchical model that employs looping constructs such as "for," "repeat," and "while." Use of the "Go To" statement is discouraged.

Structured programming was first suggested by Corrado Bohm and Guiseppe Jacopini. The two mathematicians demonstrated that any computer program can be written with just three structures: decisions, sequences, and loops. Edsger Dijkstra's subsequent article, *Go To Statement Considered Harmful* was instrumental in the trend towards structured programming. The most common methodology employed was developed by Dijkstra. In this model (which is often considered to be synonymous with structured programming, although other models exist) the developer separates programs into subsections that each have only one point of access and one point of exit.