C++ (pronounced "see plus plus") is a statically typed, free-form, multi-paradigm, compiled, general-purpose programming language. It is regarded as an intermediate-level language, as it comprises a combination of both high-level and low-level language features.[2] It was developed by Bjarne Stroustrup starting in 1979 at Bell Labs as an enhancement to the C language and originally named **C with Classes**. It was renamed C++ in 1983.[3]

C++ is one of the most popular programming languages[4][5] and its application domains include systems software (such as Microsoft Windows), application software, device drivers, embedded software, high-performance server and client applications, and entertainment software such as video games.[6] Several groups provide both free and proprietary C++ compiler software, including the GNU Project, Microsoft, Intel and Embarcadero Technologies. C++ has greatly influenced many other popular programming languages, most notably C# and Java.

C++ is also used for hardware design, where the design is initially described in C++, then analyzed, architecturally constrained, and scheduled to create a register-transfer level hardware description language via high-level synthesis.[7]

The language began as enhancements to C, first adding classes, then virtual functions, operator overloading, multiple inheritance, templates, and exception handling among other features. After years of development, the C++ programming language standard was ratified in 1998 as *ISO/IEC 14882:1998*. That standard is still current, but is amended by the 2003 technical corrigendum, *ISO/IEC 14882:2003*. The next standard version (known informally as C++0x, in reference to the long-standing expectation that it would be released sometime before 2010) is in development; its final draft was approved on March 25, 2011 and the formal specification is expected to be published in the summer of 2011.[8]