



# Why are there 3 courses (Part A, Part B, Part C)?

*Optional reading since there is a video that covered much the same information.*

As you might expect, there was originally a single course "Programming Languages" that we subsequently divided into three parts (Part A, Part B, Part C). This reading explains why and how the three parts fit together. A video covers similar points, so no need to go over both.

In many senses, Programming Languages is a single course:

- The concepts build on each other to tell a single, coherent story.
- Part B makes sense only after Part A, and Part C makes sense only after Part B.
- The material was designed together and is taught together in a single 10-week course by the instructor at the University of Washington.
- Stopping after Part A (or Part B) is like putting down a novel in the middle -- you may have had a great reading experience with interesting characters and plot, but the author intended more and you aren't getting the full story.

Still, after careful consideration, the instructor decided to split the course into three parts for a few reasons:

- The total amount of material and difficulty of material is higher than for most MOOCs, easily two-three times as much as in many other courses. So multiple courses better communicates that.
- Similarly, learners who finish Part A or Part A and Part B have accomplished a tremendous amount and splitting the course allows these learners to enjoy the satisfaction of completing something significant.
- The split into three parts are "natural places to take a break" and then resume with the next part. Separate courses make such "rests" easier in terms of managing deadlines.

A natural concern is that the split was done to make certificates cost more. This was not and is not the motivation. In fact, because the instructor *really* wants you to do all three parts, we have made the prices low to encourage you to continue. Parts B and C cost less than Part A and the total is low for ten challenging weeks of material (most single-part MOOCs have only a fraction as much content), so cost is hopefully not a good reason to stop in the middle.

Note that the three parts are not all the same length. Instead, they are more natural places to divide the material. Part A has 3 programming assignments and 1 exam, Part B has 2 programming assignments (1 of which is generally considered the most challenging/rewarding in the course), and Part C has 2 programming assignments and 1 exam.

✓ Complete

Go to next item

