**Part 1**

The .NET Framework is an integral Windows component that supports building and running the next generation of applications and XML Web services. The .NET Framework is designed to fulfill the following objectives:

* To provide a consistent object-oriented programming environment whether object code is stored and executed locally, executed locally but Internet-distributed, or executed remotely.
* To provide a code-execution environment that minimizes software deployment and versioning conflicts.
* To provide a code-execution environment that promotes safe execution of code, including code created by an unknown or semi-trusted third party.
* To provide a code-execution environment that eliminates the performance problems of scripted or interpreted environments.
* To make the developer experience consistent across widely varying types of applications, such as Windows-based applications and Web-based applications.
* To build all communication on industry standards to ensure that code based on the .NET Framework can integrate with any other code.

The .NET Framework is a software framework developed by Microsoft that runs primarily on Microsoft Windows. Programmers produce software by combining their own source code with the .NET Framework and other libraries.

Source:

http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/zw4w595w(v=vs.71).aspx