

Head First Ruby

A Brain-Friendly Guide



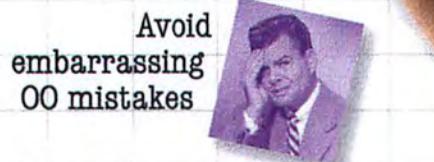
Get more
done with
less code



Do heavy lifting
easily with blocks



Master the Ruby
Standard Library



Avoid
embarrassing
OO mistakes



Bend your mind
around more than
40 Ruby exercises

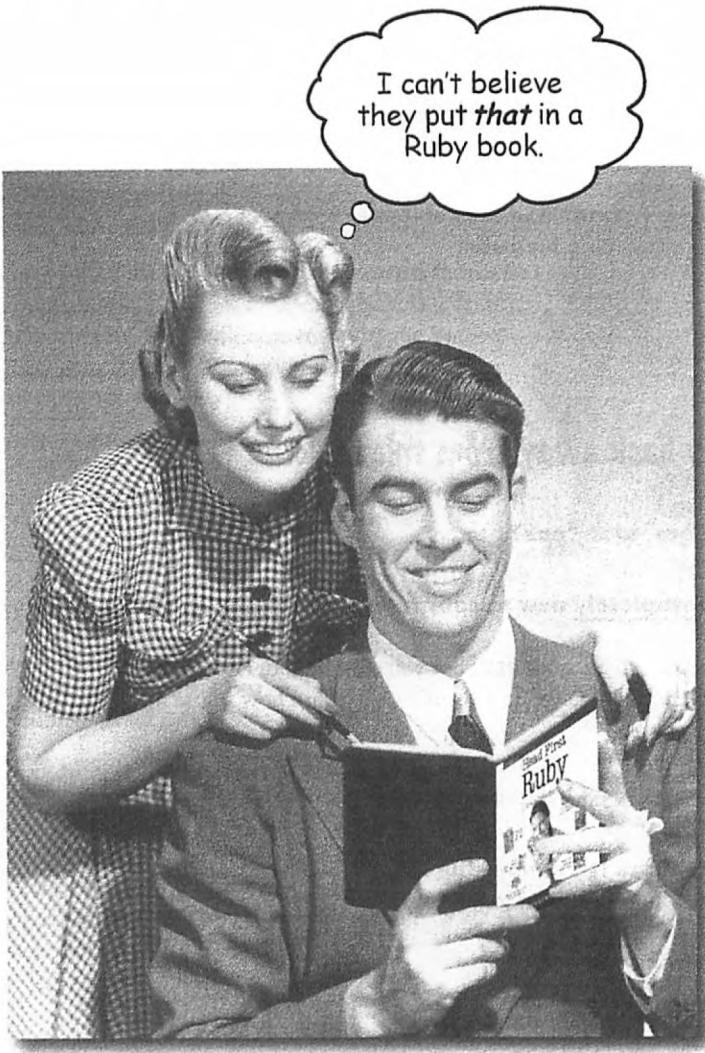


Serve your
web app
to the world

Jay McGavren

how to use this book

Intro



In this section, we answer the burning question:
"So why DID they put that in a book on Ruby?"

Who is this book for?

If you can answer “yes” to ***all*** of these:

- ➊ Do you have access to a computer with a text editor?
- ➋ Do you want to learn a programming language that makes development **easy** and **productive**?
- ➌ Do you prefer **stimulating dinner-party conversation** to **dry, dull, academic lectures**?

this book is for you.

Who should probably back away from this book?

If you can answer “yes” to any ***one*** of these:

- ➊ **Are you completely new to computers?**
(You don’t need to be advanced, but you should understand folders and files, how to open a terminal app, and how to use a simple text editor.)
- ➋ Are you a ninja rockstar developer looking for a **reference book**?
- ➌ Are you **afraid to try something new**? Would you rather have a root canal than mix stripes with plaid? Do you believe that a technical book can’t be serious if it describes class inheritance using armadillos?

this book is *not* for you.



[Note from Marketing: this book is for anyone with a valid credit card.]

We know what you're thinking.

"How can this be a serious book?"

"What's with all the graphics?"

"Can I actually learn it this way?"

And we know what your brain is thinking.

Your brain craves novelty. It's always searching, scanning, *waiting* for something unusual. It was built that way, and it helps you stay alive.

Today, you're less likely to be a tiger snack. But your brain's still looking. You just never know.

So what does your brain do with all the routine, ordinary, normal things you encounter? Everything it *can* to stop them from interfering with the brain's *real* job—recording things that *matter*. It doesn't bother saving the boring things; they never make it past the "this is obviously not important" filter.

How does your brain *know* what's important? Suppose you're out for a day hike and a tiger jumps in front of you, what happens inside your head and body?

Neurons fire. Emotions crank up. *Chemicals surge*.

And that's how your brain knows...

This must be important! Don't forget it!

But imagine you're at home, or in a library. It's a safe, warm, tiger-free zone. You're studying. Getting ready for an exam. Or trying to learn some tough technical topic your boss thinks will take a week, ten days at the most.

Just one problem. Your brain's trying to do you a big favor. It's trying to make sure that this *obviously* non-important content doesn't clutter up scarce resources. Resources that are better spent storing the really *big* things. Like tigers. Like the danger of fire. Like how you should never again snowboard in shorts.

And there's no simple way to tell your brain, "Hey brain, thank you very much, but no matter how dull this book is, and how little I'm registering on the emotional Richter scale right now, I really *do* want you to keep this stuff around."

