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JAVASCRIPT: CORE LANGUAGE

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TL/DR

JavaScript is how we add dynamism to our web pages…

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AIMS

- At the end of this (sub-section) of the topic you will be able to:
  - Understand the role that JavaScript plays amongst the other core web technologies
  - How JavaScript interacts with HTML, CSS, & the Browser
  - Gain an understanding of the core JavaScript syntax

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OVERVIEW

- At the end of this (sub-section) of the topic you will be able to:
  - Understand the role that JavaScript plays amongst the other core web technologies
  - Gain an understanding of the core JavaScript syntax
  - How JavaScript interacts with HTML, CSS, & the Browser

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JAVASCRIPT

- The third part of our triumvirate of web technologies (alongside HTML & CSS)
- Separates functionality (or behaviour) from a web page's content & presentation
- A high-level, dynamic, weakly typed, prototype-based, multi-paradigm, interpreted programming language.
- Originally a project at Netscape which lead to the first Javascript implementation
- This was then formalised to produce the ECMAScript specification which anyone can implement to produce their own variation. NB. The name "Javascript" itself is a trademark of Oracle
- No single Javascript implementation - different engines in most web browsers - each implements ECMAScript specification to varying degrees (some feature might be missing & some engines have additional features)

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THE LANGUAGE

- Multi-paradigm - so can support different programming styles, e.g. event-driven, functional, imperative, OO,
- API for working with:
  - Text, arrays, dates, regular expressions, DOM manipulation
- No support for I/O,
  - i.e. networking, storage, graphics - facilities which are generally provided by the host environment (browser API, server side libraries)
- Designed as a "*glue language*" - easy for web designers & part-time programmers to assemble components of web pages

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ASIDE: JAVA(SCRIPT)?

- Javascript & Java are two wholly separate languages
- For historical reasons there are some superficial similarities between the two:
  - Some syntax, standard libraries, & the name
- Brendan Eich was originally employed by Netscape to write a version of Scheme to run in the browser. Management made the decision that Javascript should "look like Java" (which was the *hot new thing* in the mid/late-90s)
- That all said, syntactically speaking, Java isn't hugely different from its predecessors - *why might this be?*

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JS ENGINES

- Interpreted & VM based so requires an environment to live in: **JS Engine**
- Many engines, but some are more important than others
- V8 - the google chrome engine (also used in Node.js)
- Spidermonkey - Firefox engine
- JavaScriptCore - marketed as Nitro & used in Safari
- You can work with JS in the browser fairly easily.
- Can also install a standalone tool to run JS outside the browser (e.g. Node.js) - this enables Javascript to run server side

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WHAT'S JAVASCRIPT FOR?

- (slightly weird) General purpose programming language
- Web programming (it's raison d'être)
  - Primarily: Interacting with the DOM (for a given web page) and the user agent (via various Browser APIs)
  - Secondarily: Providing a server-side environment so that our core tools can be (reasonably) cohesive - (Advanced Web Tech considers the server side but for now *we are staying client side*)

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WHAT DOES JS LOOK LIKE?

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>Example</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <button id="hellobutton">Hello</button>
    <script>
        document.getElementById('hellobutton').onclick = function() {
            alert('Hello world!');
            var myTextNode = document.createTextNode('Some new words.');
            document.body.appendChild(myTextNode);
        };
    </script>
  </body>
</html>
```

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USING JAVASCRIPT

- Similar to CSS, we have choices for how to integrate HTML with Javascript
- **Inline**, e.g.
  - <button id="hellobutton" onclick="alert('Hello World')">Click Me</button>
- Within a **script block** <script></script>, e.g.

```
<script>
    document.getElementById('hellobutton').onclick = function() {
        alert('Hello world');
    };
</script>
```

- Using an **external script** (placed within either <head> or <body>)
  - HTML 4:

```
<script type="text/javascript" src=‘‘javascript.js"></script>
```

  - HTML 5:

```
<script src="javascript.js"></script>
```

  - NB. Can use any number of scripts

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BROWSER CONSOLE JS

- Useful for learning JS & playing around without too much HTML & CSS (we'll quickly grow beyond this though)

- Gives us a little programming environment almost anywhere there is a (reasonably modern & not-locked-down) web browser.

- Let's look at some simple examples of how we can write JS directly in the browser console:

#1

HELLO NAPIER

New Tab

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Persist Logs

```
>> console.log('hello napier!!!')
   hello napier!!!                                   debugger eval code:1:1
<- undefined
```

#2

INTERACT WITH THE WEB PAGE/SCREEN

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Persist Logs

```
document.body.style.backgroundColor = "lightgreen";
"lightgreen"
```

#3

USE STANDARD JAVASCRIPT FUNCTIONS

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Today's date is Thu Sep 13 2018 16:10:26 GMT+0100 (BST)

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Persist Logs

```
let d = new Date();
undefined
document.body.innerHTML = "<h1>Today's date is " + d + "</h1>"
"<h1>Today's date is Thu Sep 13 2018 16:10:26 GMT+0100 (BST)</h1>"
```

#4

CONSTRUCT A WEB PAGE

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Hello Napier!!!

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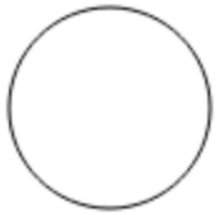
```
let p = document.createElement("P");
let t = document.createTextNode("Hello Napier!!!");
p.appendChild(t);
document.body.replaceWith(p);
```

undefined

#5

GRAPHICS



```
let c = document.createElement("canvas");
var ctx = c.getContext("2d");
ctx.beginPath();
ctx.arc(95,50,40,0,2*Math.PI);
ctx.stroke();
document.body.replaceWith(c);
```

```
undefined
```

#6

SOUND - BEEPS

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Filter output

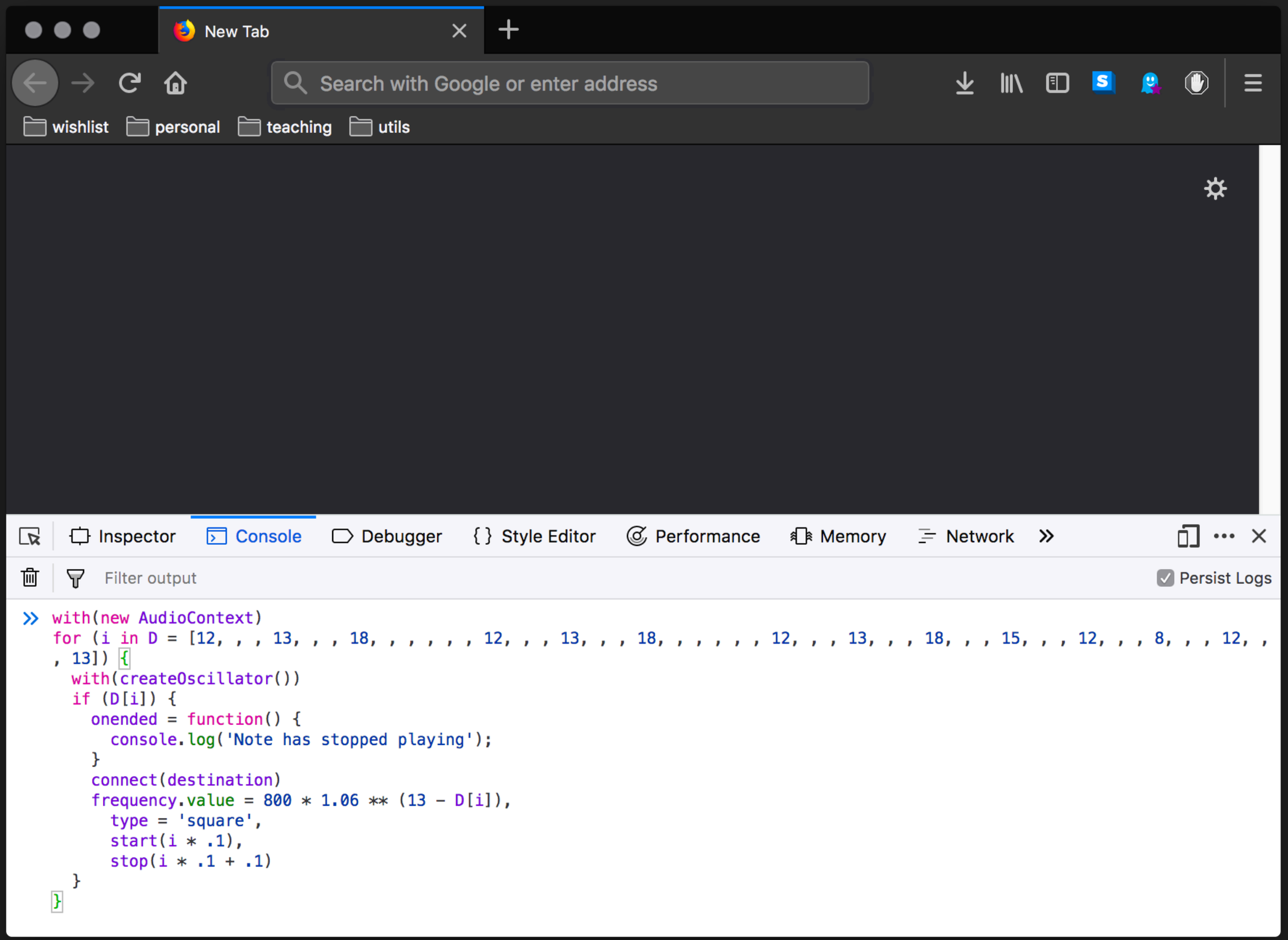
Persist Logs

```
var context = new (window.AudioContext || window.webkitAudioContext)();
var oscillator = context.createOscillator();
oscillator.type = 'sine';
oscillator.frequency.value = 440;
oscillator.connect(context.destination);
oscillator.start();
```

undefined

#7

SOUND - BIT TUNES


New Tab
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teaching
utils
Inspector
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Filter output
Persist Logs
with(new AudioContext)
for (i in D = [12, , , 13, , , 18, , , , , , 12, , , 13, , , 18, , , , , , 12, , , 13, , , 18, , , 15, , , 12, , , 8, , , 12, ,
, 13]) {
with(createOscillator())
if (D[i]) {
onended = function() {
console.log('Note has stopped playing');
}
connect(destination)
frequency.value = 800 * 1.06 ** (13 - D[i]),
type = 'square',
start(i * .1),
stop(i * .1 + .1)
}
}

#8

SOUND - THEREMIN

New Tab

Search with DuckDuckGo or enter address

Inspector | Console | Debugger | Style Editor | Performance | Memory | Network

Filter output

Persist Logs

```
var context = new (window.AudioContext || window.webkitAudioContext)();
var oscillator = context.createOscillator();
h = window.innerHeight;
oscillator.connect(context.destination);
oscillator.start(0);
document.addEventListener("mousemove", function(e) {
    oscillator.frequency.value = e.clientY / h * 1000 + 300;
});
```

undefined

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JS AS A LANGUAGE

- We are going to:
    - Look at JavaScript as a standalone language
- This means:
    - To consider it's keywords, commenting, variables, primitive datatypes, native objects, & operators
    - Examine control structures (if-else, conditional, switch) & looping
    - Functions, Objects, & Exception handling
    - JavaScript object serialisation using JSON
    - We also want some idea of some best practice when applying JS to real problems

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LEARNING JS

- Having tried out some JS we can, with the benefit of hindsight and some experience, now let's look at the language in a little more detail.

- **IMPORTANT: If you want to become a good programmer in *any* language then you need to practise. Reading code or documentation is much less useful than writing code & solving problems.**

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JS LANGUAGE FEATURES

- Case sensitive - Like all programming we have to be precise. Develop a habit for using case then stick to it
    - NB. I nearly always use lowercase (& snake_case rather than camelCase)
- Whitespace - spaces, tabs, newlines outside of strings are whitespaces. Generally not a problem. Choose a way to use whitespace then be consistent in laying out your code
- Semicolons are automatically inserted if you leave them out
    - This can interfere with the whitespace and cause valid code to be incorrectly parsed
    - So good practise to end statements with a semicolon

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KEYWORDS

- Avoid the following when naming variables, function names, or labels

- **JavaScript keywords:** abstract, arguments, await*, boolean, break, byte, case, catch, char, class*, const, continue, debugger, default, delete, do, double, else, enum*, eval, export*, extends*, false, final, finally, float, for, function, goto, if, implements, import*, in, instanceof, int, interface, let*, long, native, new, null, package, private, protected, public, return, short, static, super*, switch, synchronized, this, throw, throws, transient, true, try, typeof, var, void, volatile, while, with, yield

- **Built-in Objects, Properties, & Methods:** Array, Date, eval, function, hasOwnProperty, Infinity, isFinite, isNaN, isPrototypeOf, length, Math, NaN, name, Number, Object, prototype, String, toString, undefined, valueOf

- **HTML & Window objects & properties:** alert, all, anchor, anchors, area, assign, blur, button, checkbox, clearInterval, clearTimeout, clientInformation, close, closed, confirm, constructor, crypto, decodeURI, decodeURIComponent, defaultStatus, document, element, elements, embed, embeds, encodeURI, encodeURIComponent, escape, event, fileUpload, focus, form, forms, frame, innerHeight, innerWidth, layer, layers, link, location, mimeTypes, navigate, navigator, frames, frameRate, hidden, history, image, images, offscreenBuffering, open, opener, option, outerHeight, outerWidth, packages, pageXOffset, pageYOffset, parent, parseFloat, parseInt, password, pkcs11, plugin, prompt, propertyIsEnum, radio, reset, screenX, screenY, scroll, secure, select, self, setInterval, setTimeout, status, submit, taint, text, textarea, top, unescape, untaint, window

- **HTML Event Handlers:** onblur, onclick, onerror, onfocus, onkeydown, onkeypress, onkeyup, onmouseover, onload, onmouseup, onmousedown, onsubmit

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COMMENTS

```
// A short, one line comment

/* a longer, multi-line
comment about something

that must be important */


/* Comments /* cannot be nested */ as this is a syntax error */
```

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VARIABLES

- Variables can be declared in three ways:
  - Block level using **let**
  - function level using **var** or **const**
- Don't have a type attached - any value can be stored in any variable
- Variable declared anywhere inside a function will resolve to that variable when it's named is used (within the function)
- Variable *value* is undefined until initialised, e.g. var a = 203
- Variables declared outside a function are *global*
- If a variable isn't found then a ReferenceError exception will happen

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PRIMITIVE DATATYPES

- Undefined, Null, Number, String, Boolean, Symbol
- Undefined - assigned to all uninitialised variables & returned where checking for object properties that don't exist
- Null - When something has been declared but the value is empty
- Numbers - IEEE754 doubles (floating point, use toFixed() to round) - accuracy to 16 significant digits
- Strings - sequence of characters enclosed in double quotes. Access individual letters using charAt(). Compare using ==
- Boolean - true & false. Useful for comparisons
- Symbol - New (ECMAScript 6). A unique & immutable identifier.

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NATIVE OBJECTS

- Arrays, Dates, Errors, Math, Regular Expressions, Functions
- Arrays - Objects representing lists of values indexed by keys. Keys are numeric & use zero based indexing. Can be multi-dimensional.
- Date - Object that stores a signed millisecond count from zero (representing 1970-01-01 00:00:00 UT). Various methods to access fields of data object
- Error - Object that can be used to create custom error messages
- Math - Object storing math-related constants, e.g. E, Natural Log, Pi, and functions, e.g. max, min, random
- Regular Expressions - Object used to store text patterns
- Function - Object constructed using the Function constructor & used to collect statements into reusable groups

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OPERATORS

- Arithmetic: +, -, *, /, %
- Unary: + (string to number), - (reverse sign), ++, —
- Assignment: =, +=, -+, *=, /=, %=
- Destructuring assignment: [a, b, c] = [3, 4, 5];
- Logical: !, ||, &&
- String: =, +, +=
- NB. Bitwise (operators & assignments), Ternary conditional

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CONTROL STRUCTURES

If...else

```
if (expr) {
  //statements;
} else if (expr2) {
  //statements;
} else {
  //statements;
}
```

Switch Statement

```
rswitch (expr) {
 case SOMEVALUE:
  // statements;
  break;
 case ANOTHERVALUE:
  // statements;
  break;
 default:
  // statements;
  break;
}
```

Conditional Operator

```
result = condition ? expression :
alternative;
```

LOOPING

For Loop

```
for (initial; condition; loop statement) {
  /*
   statements will be executed every time
   the for{} loop cycles, while the
   condition is satisfied
  */
 }
```

For In Loop

```
for (var property_name in some_object) {
  // statements using some_object[property_name];
}
```

While Loop

```
while (condition) {
  statement1;
  statement2;
  statement3;
  ...
}
```

Do… While Loop

```
do {
  statement1;
  statement2;
  statement3;
  ...
} while (condition);
```

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FUNCTIONS

Various ways to declare functions:

```
function add(x,y) { return x + y; };

var add = function(x,y) { return x + y; };

var add = new Function('x','y','return x + y');
```

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OBJECTS

- JS supports object orientation using *prototype-based inheritance*

- Can create objects & assign data and method to them in various ways, e.g.

```
var cow = new Object();
cow.colour = 'brown';
cow.commonQuestion = 'What now?';
cow.moo = function(){
  console.log('moo');
}
cow.feet = 4;
cow.accordingToLarson = 'will take over the world';
```

```
var cow = {
  colour:'brown',
  commonQuestion:'What now?',
  moo:function(){
    console.log('moo);
  },
  feet:4,
  accordingToLarson:'will take over the world'
};
```

EXCEPTION HANDLING

- Handle run time errors by:
  - Trying to execute the statements
  - Catching any thrown exceptions
  - & Finally cleaning things up.

```
try {
  // Statements in which exceptions might be thrown
} catch(errorValue) {
  // Statements that execute in the event of an exception
} finally {
  // Statements that execute afterward either way
}
```

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JAVASCRIPT BEST PRACTICES

- W3C: https://www.w3.org/wiki/JavaScript_best_practices
- Some are debatable but thinking about them **will** make you into a better web developer, e.g.
  - Call things by their name — easy, short and readable variable and function names
  - Avoid globals
  - Stick to a strict coding style
  - Comment as much as needed but not more
  - Avoid mixing with other technologies
  - Use shortcut notation when it makes sense
  - Modularise — one function per task
  - Enhance progressively
  - Allow for configuration and translation
  - Avoid heavy nesting
  - Optimize loops
  - Keep DOM access to a minimum
  - Don't yield to browser whims
  - Don't trust any data
  - Add functionality with JavaScript, don't create too much content
  - Build on the shoulders of giants
  - Development code is not live code

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SUMMARY

- We've considered:
  - The role that JavaScript plays amongst the other core web technologies
  - Gained an understanding of the core JavaScript syntax and considered JavaScript as a standalone language

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SUMMARY

- In this topic we have :
  - Looked at the role that JavaScript plays amongst other web technologies
  - Gained an understanding of the core JavaScript syntax
  - Discovered how JavaScript interacts with HTML, CSS, & the Browser

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QUESTIONS ???

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COMING UP…

- We'll take a look at Designing for the Web.

- Specifically the tools & techniques (& other miscellaneous stuff) the help us to put HTML, CSS, & JS to good use in producing robust, reliable, & well engineered web interfaces.

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RESOURCES

- MDN JS Reference:

  https://developer.mozilla.org/bm/docs/Web/JavaScript

- W3Schools JS & DOM reference:

  https://www.w3schools.com/jsref/