

Chapter 5: Development Environments

Development Environments

Before we wrap up this lesson, let me just say a word or two about development environments. In my first course, we used the BlueJ environment to provide a text editor, a visual interface, and convenient ways to create classes as well as compile and run both programs and applets. If you took that course and like BlueJ, feel free to continue using it. If you didn't take the course and would like to investigate BlueJ, you can find a link to it in the Supplementary Material for this lesson.

You can also check out some of the other environments that work equally well. Oracle provides the popular NetBeans. Eclipse and IntelliJ IDEA are other popular ones. These are full-featured integrated development environments (IDEs) that lots of professional programmers use. They're great, but they have a lot of features we don't really need for the level of programming we'll be doing in this course. And they can take some time to learn to use.

In the middle ground, there are some simple IDEs designed for a student environment. BlueJ is one of those, as is DrJava. They provide editors, simple visual interfaces, and a few debugging tools.

At the simplest level, there are several text editors that provide Java compile and run options, either built-in or as add-ons. Three that I've checked out and like are ConTEXT, jGRASP, and TextPad. Links for all of them (as well as for the IDEs) are in this lesson's Supplementary Material.

That's about all I'm going to say about your development environment. If you've done enough programming to be ready for this class, you should be able to compile and run stand-alone programs and applets without any hand-holding. If you have any difficulties, feel free to let me know and I'll try to help sort them out. You can also try out and use any (or all) of the environments I mentioned. If you prefer a plain text editor and a command-line environment, that's fine, too!

From here on out, I'll assume you can compile and run anything we write so we don't waste our limited time going over the compilation process or how to run a program.

Pick your environment, and let's jump in!

Summary

That wraps up our introduction and review. (Finally!) I know we covered an awful lot for one lesson. These are tools we'll use over and over again as we progress with Java, so I want to make sure we're all on the same page to start with.

In Lesson 2, we'll start looking a little deeper into some of Java's topics, like arrays and loops, and how we can use them together to make our lives as programmers a lot easier.

If you have any questions or thoughts to share, please post them in the Discussion Area. To get there, click the **Discussion** link at the top or bottom of any page in the classroom. I'll talk to you soon!

Next Steps



To finish the lesson, you'll need to complete the steps outlined below. Simply click "Next Up" at the bottom of the page to access the next activity. Or, if you wish to skip around, click the Book Icon in the top-right corner. There you'll find links to all the activities in this lesson. Here are your remaining activities:

- **Check out the FAQs.** Since learning something new usually raises questions, every lesson in this course comes with an FAQs section.
- **Browse the Supplementary Material section.** Here you'll find links to helpful online resources relating to the lesson.
- **Do the assignment.** Get some hands-on practice applying what you've just learned.
- **Take the quiz.** Reinforce what you learned with a short five-question quiz.
- **Participate in the Discussion Area.** Ask questions about anything that came up in the lesson, and share your insights. This is where we'll create a learning community.

Additional Resources

In addition, there are some additional resources you may find helpful throughout the course. Access these resources by clicking the link for Resources listed after Lesson 12. There you'll find:

- **Recommended books and resources.** This is a list of books and other resources that you can consult to extend your learning.