**A RESTful API**

An API, or **application programming interface**, is kind of like a coding contract: it specifies the ways a program can interact with an application. For example, if you want to write a program that reads and analyzes data from Twitter, you'd need to use the Twitter API, which would specify the process for authentication, important URLs, classes, methods, and so on.

For an API or web service to be RESTful, it must do the following:

1. Separate the client from the server
2. Not hold state between requests (meaning that all the information necessary to respond to a request is available in each individual request; no data, or **state**, is held by the server from request to request)
3. Use HTTP and HTTP methods (as explained in the next section).

There are some other requirements, but they're beyond the scope of this lesson.

**The Four Verbs**

The number of HTTP methods you'll use is quite small—there are just four HTTP "verbs" you'll need to know! They are:

1. GET: retrieves information from the specified source (you just saw this one!)
2. POST: sends new information to the specified source.
3. PUT: updates existing information of the specified source.
4. DELETE: removes existing information from the specified source.

So when we sent our GET request to codecademy.com, we retrieved information. When you add to or update your blog, you're sending POST or PUT requests; when you delete a tweet, there goes a DELETE request.