

C++ Getting Started

[< Previous](#)[Next >](#)

C++ Get Started

To start using C++, you need two things:

- A text editor, like Notepad, to write C++ code
- A compiler, like GCC, to translate the C++ code into a language that the computer will understand

There are many text editors and compilers to choose from. In this tutorial, we will use an IDE (see below).

C++ Install IDE

An IDE (Integrated Development Environment) is used to edit AND compile the code.

Popular IDE's include Code::Blocks, Eclipse, and Visual Studio. These are all free, and they can be used to both edit and debug C++ code.

Note: Web-based IDE's can work as well, but functionality is limited.

We will use **Code::Blocks** in our tutorial, which we believe is a good place to start.

You can find the latest version of Codeblocks at <http://www.codeblocks.org/>. Download the **mingw-setup.exe** file, which will install the text editor with a compiler.

C++ Quickstart

Let's create our first C++ file.

Open Codeblocks and go to **File > New > Empty File**.

Write the following C++ code and save the file as `myfirstprogram.cpp` (**File > Save File as**):

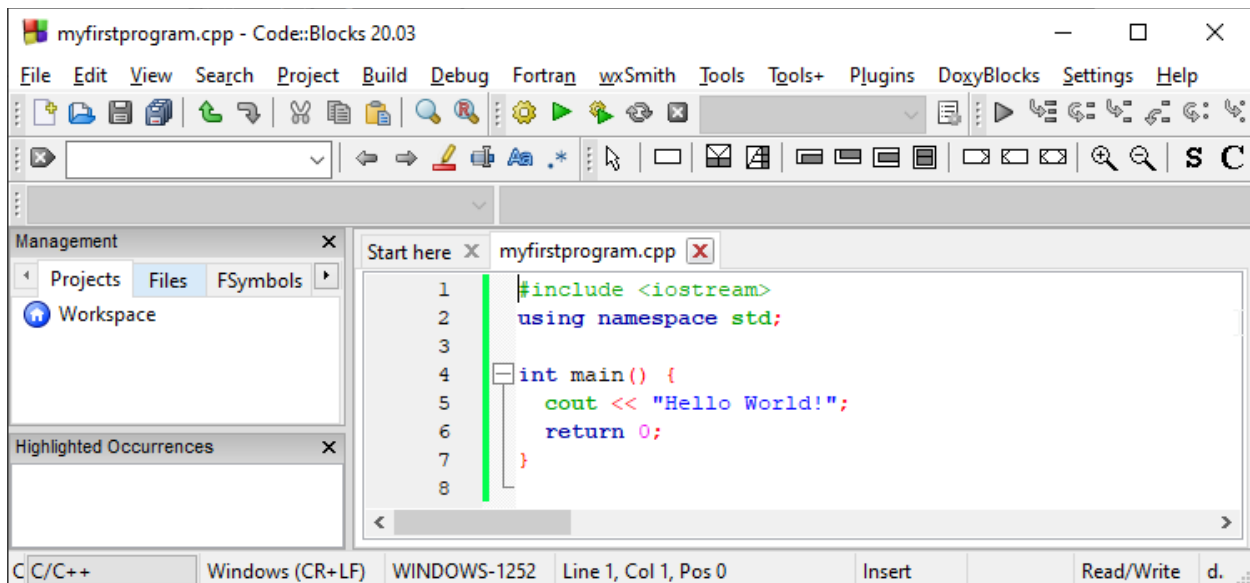
`myfirstprogram.cpp`

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    cout << "Hello World!";
    return 0;
}
```

Don't worry if you don't understand the code above - we will discuss it in detail in later chapters. For now, focus on how to run the code.

In Codeblocks, it should look like this:



Then, go to **Build > Build and Run** to run (execute) the program. The result will look something to this:

```
Hello World!  
Process returned 0 (0x0) execution time : 0.011 s  
Press any key to continue.
```

Congratulations! You have now written and executed your first C++ program.

Learning C++

When learning C++ at W3Schools.com, you can use our "Try it Yourself" tool, which shows both the code and the result. This will make it easier for you to understand every part as we move forward:

myfirstprogram.cpp

Code:

```
#include <iostream>  
using namespace std;  
  
int main() {  
    cout << "Hello World!";  
    return 0;  
}
```

Result:

```
Hello World!
```

C++ Syntax

Let's break up the following code to understand it better:

Example

```
#include <iostream>  
using namespace std;  
  
int main() {  
    cout << "Hello World!";  
    return 0;  
}
```

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Example explained

Line 1: `#include <iostream>` is a **header file library** that lets us work with input and output objects, such as `cout` (used in line 5). Header files add functionality to C++ programs.

Line 2: `using namespace std` means that we can use names for objects and variables from the standard library.

Don't worry if you don't understand how `#include <iostream>` and `using namespace std` works. Just think of it as something that (almost) always appears in your program.

Line 3: A blank line. C++ ignores white space. But we use it to make the code more readable.

Line 4: Another thing that always appear in a C++ program, is `int main()`. This is called a **function**. Any code inside its curly brackets `{}` will be executed.

Line 5: `cout` (pronounced "see-out") is an **object** used together with the *insertion operator* (`<<`) to output/print text. In our example it will output "Hello World!".

Note: Every C++ statement ends with a semicolon `;`.

Note: The body of `int main()` could also been written as:
`int main () { cout << "Hello World! "; return 0; }`

Remember: The compiler ignores white spaces. However, multiple lines makes the code more readable.

Line 6: `return 0` ends the main function.

Line 7: Do not forget to add the closing curly bracket `}` to actually end the main function.

Omitting Namespace

You might see some C++ programs that runs without the standard namespace library. The `using namespace std` line can be omitted and replaced with the `std` keyword, followed by the `::` operator for some objects:

Example

```
#include <iostream>

int main() {
    std::cout << "Hello World!";
    return 0;
}
```

C++ Output (Print Text)

The `cout` object, together with the `<<` operator, is used to output values/print text:

Example

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    cout << "Hello World!";
    return 0;
}
```

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You can add as many `cout` objects as you want. However, note that it does not insert a new line at the end of the output:

Example

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    cout << "Hello World!";
    cout << "I am learning C++";
    return 0;
}
```

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C++ New Lines

[< Previous](#)[Next >](#)

New Lines

To insert a new line, you can use the `\n` character:

Example

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    cout << "Hello World! \n";
    cout << "I am learning C++";
    return 0;
}
```

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Tip: Two `\n` characters after each other will create a blank line:

Example

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    cout << "Hello World! \n\n";
    cout << "I am learning C++";
    return 0;
}
```

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Another way to insert a new line, is with the `endl` manipulator:

Example

```
#include <iostream>
using namespace std;

int main() {
    cout << "Hello World!" << endl;
    cout << "I am learning C++";
    return 0;
}
```

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Both `\n` and `endl` are used to break lines. However, `\n` is most used.

But what is `\n` exactly?

The newline character (`\n`) is called an **escape sequence**, and it forces the cursor to change its position to the beginning of the next line on the screen. This results in a new line.

Examples of other valid escape sequences are:

Escape Sequence	Description
<code>\t</code>	Creates a horizontal tab
<code>\\</code>	Inserts a backslash character (<code>\</code>)
<code>\"</code>	Inserts a double quote character

C++ Comments

[< Previous](#)[Next >](#)

C++ Comments

Comments can be used to explain C++ code, and to make it more readable. It can also be used to prevent execution when testing alternative code. Comments can be single-lined or multi-lined.

Single-line Comments

Single-line comments start with two forward slashes (`//`).

Any text between `//` and the end of the line is ignored by the compiler (will not be executed).

This example uses a single-line comment before a line of code:

Example

```
// This is a comment  
cout << "Hello World!";
```

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This example uses a single-line comment at the end of a line of code:

Example

```
cout << "Hello World!"; // This is a comment
```

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C++ Multi-line Comments

Multi-line comments start with `/*` and ends with `*/`.

Any text between `/*` and `*/` will be ignored by the compiler:

Example

```
/* The code below will print the words Hello World!
to the screen, and it is amazing */
cout << "Hello World!";
```

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C++ Variables

[< Previous](#)[Next >](#)

C++ Variables

Variables are containers for storing data values.

In C++, there are different **types** of variables (defined with different keywords), for example:

- **int** - stores integers (whole numbers), without decimals, such as 123 or -123
- **double** - stores floating point numbers, with decimals, such as 19.99 or -19.99
- **char** - stores single characters, such as 'a' or 'B'. Char values are surrounded by single quotes
- **string** - stores text, such as "Hello World". String values are surrounded by double quotes
- **bool** - stores values with two states: true or false

Declaring (Creating) Variables

To create a variable, specify the type and assign it a value:

Syntax

```
type variableName = value;
```

Where *type* is one of C++ types (such as `int`), and *variableName* is the name of the variable (such as `x` or `myName`). The **equal sign** is used to assign values to the variable.

To create a variable that should store a number, look at the following example:

Example

Create a variable called **myNum** of type `int` and assign it the value **15**:

```
int myNum = 15;  
cout << myNum;
```

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You can also declare a variable without assigning the value, and assign the value later:

Example

```
int myNum;  
myNum = 15;  
cout << myNum;
```

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Note that if you assign a new value to an existing variable, it will overwrite the previous value:

Example

```
int myNum = 15; // myNum is 15  
myNum = 10; // Now myNum is 10  
cout << myNum; // Outputs 10
```

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Other Types

A demonstration of other data types:

Example

```
int myNum = 5;           // Integer (whole number without decimals)
double myFloatNum = 5.99; // Floating point number (with decimals)
char myLetter = 'D';     // Character
string myText = "Hello"; // String (text)
bool myBoolean = true;   // Boolean (true or false)
```

You will learn more about the individual types in the [Data Types](#) chapter.

Display Variables

The `cout` object is used together with the `<<` operator to display variables.

To combine both text and a variable, separate them with the `<<` operator:

Example

```
int myAge = 35;
cout << "I am " << myAge << " years old.";
```

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Add Variables Together

To add a variable to another variable, you can use the `+` operator:

Example

```
int x = 5;
int y = 6;
int sum = x + y;
cout << sum;
```

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C++ Exercises

Exercise:

Create a variable named `myNum` and assign the value `50` to it.