

Human languages allow words and phrases to be combined in many ways, which allows us to say many different things. Computer languages, though typically less grammatically flexible, follow a similar principle.

Casual computing has become much more widespread in the past 20 years, and language-based interfaces, which once were the default way in which people interacted with computers, have largely been replaced with graphical interfaces. But they are still there, if you know where to look. One such language, JavaScript, is built into almost every web browser and is thus available on just about every consumer device.

This book intends to make you familiar enough with this language to be able to make a computer do what you want.

On programming

I do not enlighten those who are not eager to learn, nor arouse those who are not anxious to give an explanation themselves. If I have presented one corner of the square and they cannot come back to me with the other three, I should not go over the points again.

Confucius

Besides explaining JavaScript, I also will introduce the basic principles of programming. Programming, it turns out, is hard. The fundamental rules are typically simple and clear. But programs built on top of these rules tend to become complex enough to introduce their own rules and complexity. You're building your own maze, in a way, and you might just get lost in it.

There will be times when reading this book feels terribly frustrating. If you are new to programming, there will be a lot of new material to digest. Much of this material will then