Java is a widely-used, object-oriented programming language known for its platform independence, which means that Java code can run on any device equipped with a Java Virtual Machine (JVM). It was developed by Sun Microsystems in 1995 and has since become one of the most popular programming languages globally, powering applications ranging from desktop and mobile apps to large enterprise systems and web servers. Java follows the principle of "Write Once, Run Anywhere" (WORA), allowing developers to compile code into bytecode that the JVM interprets, making it easily portable across different operating systems.

Java's core features include support for object-oriented programming, promoting modular and reusable code through classes and objects. It provides a rich set of built-in libraries and frameworks that simplify common programming tasks. Java supports multiple programming concepts such as inheritance, polymorphism through method overloading and overriding, abstraction, and encapsulation, which helps manage complexity and enhance security. Exception handling with try-catch-finally blocks improves the robustness of programs by managing runtime errors gracefully.

Furthermore, Java includes powerful features like multithreading for concurrent execution, automatic memory management via garbage collection, and a strong type system to prevent many common programming errors. It supports the use of interfaces and abstract classes to define contracts for classes and promote flexible architectures. Java's widespread adoption is bolstered by its extensive community support and continuous development, making it suitable for building scalable, maintainable, and secure software applications across a variety of domains such as mobile development (Android), cloud computing, big data, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things.