

As early as the 9th century, a programmable music sequencer was invented by the Persian Banu Musa brothers, who described an automated mechanical flute player in the Book of Ingenious Devices. In the 9th century, the Arab mathematician Al-Kindi described a cryptographic algorithm for deciphering encrypted code, in A Manuscript on Deciphering Cryptographic Messages. Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability. The choice of language used is subject to many considerations, such as company policy, suitability to task, availability of third-party packages, or individual preference. Some languages are very popular for particular kinds of applications, while some languages are regularly used to write many different kinds of applications. In 1801, the Jacquard loom could produce entirely different weaves by changing the "program" – a series of pasteboard cards with holes punched in them. Some languages are very popular for particular kinds of applications, while some languages are regularly used to write many different kinds of applications. Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability.

Trial-and-error/divide-and-conquer is needed: the programmer will try to remove some parts of the original test case and check if the problem still exists. Different programming languages support different styles of programming (called programming paradigms). For example, COBOL is still strong in corporate data centers often on large mainframe computers, Fortran in engineering applications, scripting languages in Web development, and C in embedded software. Many programmers use forms of Agile software development where the various stages of formal software development are more integrated together into short cycles that take a few weeks rather than years. While these are sometimes considered programming, often the term software development is used for this larger overall process – with the terms programming, implementation, and coding reserved for the writing and editing of code per se. In 1801, the Jacquard loom could produce entirely different weaves by changing the "program" – a series of pasteboard cards with holes punched in them. Whatever the approach to development may be, the final program must satisfy some fundamental properties. Later a control panel (plug board) added to his 1906 Type I Tabulator allowed it to be programmed for different jobs, and by the late 1940s, unit record equipment such as the IBM 602 and IBM 604, were programmed by control panels in a similar way, as were the first electronic computers. The choice of language used is subject to many considerations, such as company policy, suitability to task, availability of third-party packages, or individual preference. FORTRAN, the first widely used high-level language to have a functional implementation, came out in 1957, and many other languages were soon developed—in particular, COBOL aimed at commercial data processing, and Lisp for computer research. Readability is important because programmers spend the majority of their time reading, trying to understand, reusing and modifying existing source code, rather than writing new source code. Some languages are very popular for particular kinds of applications, while some languages are regularly used to write many different kinds of applications. Expert programmers are familiar with a variety of well-established algorithms and their respective complexities and use this knowledge to choose algorithms that are best suited to the circumstances. Implementation techniques include imperative languages (object-oriented or procedural), functional languages, and logic languages. Many programmers use forms of Agile software development where the various stages of formal software development are more integrated together into short cycles that take a few weeks rather than years. Trial-and-error/divide-and-conquer is needed: the programmer will try to remove some parts of the original test case and check if the problem still exists. Programs were mostly entered using punched cards or paper tape.