Proficient programming usually requires expertise in several different subjects, including knowledge of the application domain, details of programming languages and generic code libraries, specialized algorithms, and formal logic. Text editors were also developed that allowed changes and corrections to be made much more easily than with punched cards. Proficient programming usually requires expertise in several different subjects, including knowledge of the application domain, details of programming languages and generic code libraries, specialized algorithms, and formal logic. 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 applications use a mix of several languages in their construction and use. Different programming languages support different styles of programming (called programming paradigms). However, with the concept of the stored-program computer introduced in 1949, both programs and data were stored and manipulated in the same way in computer memory. Sometimes software development is known as software engineering, especially when it employs formal methods or follows an engineering design process. New languages are generally designed around the syntax of a prior language with new functionality added, (for example C++ adds object-orientation to C, and Java adds memory management and bytecode to C++, but as a result, loses efficiency and the ability for low-level manipulation). A study found that a few simple readability transformations made code shorter and drastically reduced the time to understand it. Some languages are very popular for particular kinds of applications, while some languages are regularly used to write many different kinds of applications. When debugging the problem in a GUI, the programmer can try to skip some user interaction from the original problem description and check if remaining actions are sufficient for bugs to appear. A similar technique used for database design is Entity-Relationship Modeling (ER Modeling). In the 1880s, Herman Hollerith invented the concept of storing data in machine-readable form. 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. Debugging is a very important task in the software development process since having defects in a program can have significant consequences for its users. Debugging is often done with IDEs. Standalone debuggers like GDB are also used, and these often provide less of a visual environment, usually using a command line. 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 first compiler related tool, the A-0 System, was developed in 1952 by Grace Hopper, who also coined the term 'compiler'. It is usually easier to code in "high-level" languages than in "low-level" ones. Popular modeling techniques include Object-Oriented Analysis and Design (OOAD) and Model-Driven Architecture (MDA). The first step in most formal software development processes is requirements analysis, followed by testing to determine value modeling, implementation, and failure elimination (debugging).

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.