

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. Sometimes software development is known as software engineering, especially when it employs formal methods or follows an engineering design process. Assembly languages were soon developed that let the programmer specify instruction in a text format (e.g., ADD X, TOTAL), with abbreviations for each operation code and meaningful names for specifying addresses. Programmable devices have existed for centuries. 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. After the bug is reproduced, the input of the program may need to be simplified to make it easier to debug. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. By the late 1960s, data storage devices and computer terminals became inexpensive enough that programs could be created by typing directly into the computers. However, readability is more than just programming style. 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. Many applications use a mix of several languages in their construction and use. Following a consistent programming style often helps readability. Provided the functions in a library follow the appropriate run-time conventions (e.g., method of passing arguments), then these functions may be written in any other language. Languages form an approximate spectrum from "low-level" to "high-level"; "low-level" languages are typically more machine-oriented and faster to execute, whereas "high-level" languages are more abstract and easier to use but execute less quickly. For example, when a bug in a compiler can make it crash when parsing some large source file, a simplification of the test case that results in only few lines from the original source file can be sufficient to reproduce the same crash. Allen Downey, in his book *How To Think Like A Computer Scientist*, writes: Many computer languages provide a mechanism to call functions provided by shared libraries. Various visual programming languages have also been developed with the intent to resolve readability concerns by adopting non-traditional approaches to code structure and display. 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. It is very difficult to determine what are the most popular modern programming languages. Following a consistent programming style often helps readability. Following a consistent programming style often helps readability.