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. 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. After the bug is reproduced, the input of the program may need to be simplified to make it easier to debug. Techniques like Code refactoring can enhance readability. Normally the first step in debugging is to attempt to reproduce the problem. The first compiler related tool, the A-0 System, was developed in 1952 by Grace Hopper, who also coined the term 'compiler'. It affects the aspects of quality above, including portability, usability and most importantly maintainability. 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. Also, specific user environment and usage history can make it difficult to reproduce the problem. Computer programmers are those who write computer software. Some text editors such as Emacs allow GDB to be invoked through them, to provide a visual environment. Some text editors such as Emacs allow GDB to be invoked through them, to provide a visual environment. 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. In the 9th century, the Arab mathematician Al-Kindi described a cryptographic algorithm for deciphering encrypted code, in A Manuscript on Deciphering Cryptographic Messages.

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. 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. Some languages are more prone to some kinds of faults because their specification does not require compilers to perform as much checking as other languages. Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability. Programmers typically use high-level programming languages that are more easily intelligible to humans than machine code, which is directly executed by the central processing unit. Computer programmers are those who write computer software. 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. 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. Ideally, the programming language best suited for the task at hand will be selected. Compilers harnessed the power of computers to make programming easier by allowing programmers to specify calculations by entering a formula using infix notation. Programming languages are essential for software development.