

Methods of measuring programming language popularity include: counting the number of job advertisements that mention the language, the number of books sold and courses teaching the language (this overestimates the importance of newer languages), and estimates of the number of existing lines of code written in the language (this underestimates the number of users of business languages such as COBOL). 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 factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability. A study found that a few simple readability transformations made code shorter and drastically reduced the time to understand it. 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. Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process. 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. 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.

Programmable devices have existed for centuries. 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). Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process. This can be a non-trivial task, for example as with parallel processes or some unusual software bugs. 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. 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. Use of a static code analysis tool can help detect some possible problems. Compilers harnessed the power of computers to make programming easier by allowing programmers to specify calculations by entering a formula using infix notation. Compilers harnessed the power of computers to make programming easier by allowing programmers to specify calculations by entering a formula using infix notation. 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. A study found that a few simple readability transformations made code shorter and drastically reduced the time to understand it. Integrated development environments (IDEs) aim to integrate all such help. 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. 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. However, because an assembly language is little more than a different notation for a machine language, two machines with different instruction sets also have different assembly languages. Machine code was the language of early programs, written in the instruction set of the particular machine, often in binary notation. Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process.