Machine code was the language of early programs, written in the instruction set of the particular machine, often in binary notation. In the 1880s, Herman Hollerith invented the concept of storing data in machine-readable form. One approach popular for requirements analysis is Use Case analysis. Programmable devices have existed for centuries. 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. After the bug is reproduced, the input of the program may need to be simplified to make it easier to debug. These compiled languages allow the programmer to write programs in terms that are syntactically richer, and more capable of abstracting the code, making it easy to target varying machine instruction sets via compilation declarations and heuristics. Computer programmers are those who write computer software. 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. Debugging is a very important task in the software development process since having defects in a program can have significant consequences for its users. Integrated development environments (IDEs) aim to integrate all such help. High-level languages made the process of developing a program simpler and more understandable, and less bound to the underlying hardware. Text editors were also developed that allowed changes and corrections to be made much more easily than with punched cards. In 1801, the Jacquard loom could produce entirely different weaves by changing the "program" a series of pasteboard cards with holes punched in them. Following a consistent programming style often helps readability. In 1206, the Arab engineer Al-Jazari invented a programmable drum machine where a musical mechanical automaton could be made to play different rhythms and drum patterns, via pegs and cams. High-level languages made the process of developing a program simpler and more understandable, and less bound to the underlying hardware. 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. Whatever the approach to development may be, the final program must satisfy some fundamental properties. One approach popular for requirements analysis is Use Case analysis. 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. Computer programming or coding is the composition of sequences of instructions, called programs, that computers can follow to perform tasks. 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.

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.