

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. Whatever the approach to development may be, the final program must satisfy some fundamental properties. The following properties are among the most important: In computer programming, readability refers to the ease with which a human reader can comprehend the purpose, control flow, and operation of source code. Unreadable code often leads to bugs, inefficiencies, and duplicated code. 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).

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. It is usually easier to code in "high-level" languages than in "low-level" ones. 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. 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. Debugging is a very important task in the software development process since having defects in a program can have significant consequences for its users. A similar technique used for database design is Entity-Relationship Modeling (ER Modeling). 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. One approach popular for requirements analysis is Use Case analysis. 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). Ideally, the programming language best suited for the task at hand will be selected. 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.

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. In the 1880s, Herman Hollerith invented the concept of storing data in machine-readable form. Debugging is a very important task in the software development process since having defects in a program can have significant consequences for its users. 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. 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. Trade-offs from this ideal involve finding enough programmers who know the language to build a team, the availability of compilers for that language, and the efficiency with which programs written in a given language execute. Techniques like Code refactoring can enhance readability. 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.