Programming languages are essential for software development..  
By the late 1960s, data storage devices and computer terminals became inexpensive enough that programs could be created by typing directly into the computers.  
As early as the 9th century, a programmable music sequencer was invented by the Persian Banu Musa brothers, who described an automated mechanical flute player in the Book of Ingenious Devices.  
It affects the aspects of quality above, including portability, usability and most importantly maintainability.  
 Programmable devices have existed for centuries.  
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.  
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.  
However, readability is more than just programming style.  
 Auxiliary tasks accompanying and related to programming include analyzing requirements, testing, debugging (investigating and fixing problems), implementation of build systems, and management of derived artifacts, such as programs' machine code.  
 Different programming languages support different styles of programming (called programming paradigms).  
A study found that a few simple readability transformations made code shorter and drastically reduced the time to understand it.  
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).  
 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.  
It involves designing and implementing algorithms, step-by-step specifications of procedures, by writing code in one or more programming languages.  
Sometimes software development is known as software engineering, especially when it employs formal methods or follows an engineering design process.