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.  
In 1801, the Jacquard loom could produce entirely different weaves by changing the "program" – a series of pasteboard cards with holes punched in them.  
 Code-breaking algorithms have also existed for centuries.  
For example, when a bug in a compiler can make it crash when parsing some large source file, a simplification of the test case that results in only few lines from the original source file can be sufficient to reproduce the same crash.  
 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.  
 It is very difficult to determine what are the most popular modern programming languages.  
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.  
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.  
 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.  
Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process.  
 Different programming languages support different styles of programming (called programming paradigms).  
However, readability is more than just programming style.  
  
The first compiler related tool, the A-0 System, was developed in 1952 by Grace Hopper, who also coined the term 'compiler'.