Expert programmers are familiar with a variety of well-established algorithms and their respective complexities and use this knowledge to choose algorithms that are best suited to the circumstances..  
They are the building blocks for all software, from the simplest applications to the most sophisticated ones.  
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.  
It is usually easier to code in "high-level" languages than in "low-level" ones.  
 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.  
Sometimes software development is known as software engineering, especially when it employs formal methods or follows an engineering design process.  
Text editors were also developed that allowed changes and corrections to be made much more easily than with punched cards.  
Integrated development environments (IDEs) aim to integrate all such help.  
 A similar technique used for database design is Entity-Relationship Modeling (ER Modeling).  
Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process.  
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.  
Unreadable code often leads to bugs, inefficiencies, and duplicated code.  
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.  
Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability.