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..  
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.  
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.  
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).  
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.  
 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.  
However, Charles Babbage had already written his first program for the Analytical Engine in 1837.  
One approach popular for requirements analysis is Use Case analysis.  
Provided the functions in a library follow the appropriate run-time conventions (e.g., method of passing arguments), then these functions may be written in any other language.  
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.  
Programming languages are essential for software development.  
This can be a non-trivial task, for example as with parallel processes or some unusual software bugs.  
While these are sometimes considered programming, often the term software development is used for this larger overall process – with the terms programming, implementation, and coding reserved for the writing and editing of code per se.  
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.  
In 1801, the Jacquard loom could produce entirely different weaves by changing the "program" – a series of pasteboard cards with holes punched in them.