Programming languages are essential for software development..  
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.  
By the late 1960s, data storage devices and computer terminals became inexpensive enough that programs could be created by typing directly into the computers.  
 Debugging is a very important task in the software development process since having defects in a program can have significant consequences for its users.  
 Following a consistent programming style often helps readability.  
 After the bug is reproduced, the input of the program may need to be simplified to make it easier to debug.  
  
Integrated development environments (IDEs) aim to integrate all such help.  
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).  
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.  
 The first computer program is generally dated to 1843, when mathematician Ada Lovelace published an algorithm to calculate a sequence of Bernoulli numbers, intended to be carried out by Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine.  
 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.  
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.  
 Computer programmers are those who write computer software.  
 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.