The academic field and the engineering practice of computer programming are both largely concerned with discovering and implementing the most efficient algorithms for a given class of problems..  
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.  
 The first step in most formal software development processes is requirements analysis, followed by testing to determine value modeling, implementation, and failure elimination (debugging).  
The choice of language used is subject to many considerations, such as company policy, suitability to task, availability of third-party packages, or individual preference.  
This can be a non-trivial task, for example as with parallel processes or some unusual software bugs.  
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.  
Many programmers use forms of Agile software development where the various stages of formal software development are more integrated together into short cycles that take a few weeks rather than years.  
 Debugging is often done with IDEs. Standalone debuggers like GDB are also used, and these often provide less of a visual environment, usually using a command line.  
Integrated development environments (IDEs) aim to integrate all such help.  
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.  
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).  
 Programmable devices have existed for centuries.  
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.  
 Implementation techniques include imperative languages (object-oriented or procedural), functional languages, and logic languages.  
Many applications use a mix of several languages in their construction and use.