They are the building blocks for all software, from the simplest applications to the most sophisticated ones..  
 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.  
 Auxiliary tasks accompanying and related to programming include analyzing requirements, testing, debugging (investigating and fixing problems), implementation of build systems, and management of derived artifacts, such as programs' machine code.  
 Programmable devices have existed for centuries.  
In the 9th century, the Arab mathematician Al-Kindi described a cryptographic algorithm for deciphering encrypted code, in A Manuscript on Deciphering Cryptographic Messages.  
 Debugging is a very important task in the software development process since having defects in a program can have significant consequences for its users.  
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.  
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.  
 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.  
Programming languages are essential for software development.  
 Some languages are very popular for particular kinds of applications, while some languages are regularly used to write many different kinds of applications.  
 Programs were mostly entered using punched cards or paper tape.  
Integrated development environments (IDEs) aim to integrate all such help.  
Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability.  
In 1801, the Jacquard loom could produce entirely different weaves by changing the "program" – a series of pasteboard cards with holes punched in them.