The purpose of programming is to find a sequence of instructions that will automate the performance of a task (which can be as complex as an operating system) on a computer, often for solving a given problem.  
There are many approaches to the Software development process.  
Integrated development environments (IDEs) aim to integrate all such help.  
Relatedly, software engineering combines engineering techniques and principles with software development.  
Also, specific user environment and usage history can make it difficult to reproduce the problem.  
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.  
In the 9th century, the Arab mathematician Al-Kindi described a cryptographic algorithm for deciphering encrypted code, in A Manuscript on Deciphering Cryptographic Messages.  
Also, those involved with software development may at times engage in reverse engineering, which is the practice of seeking to understand an existing program so as to re-implement its function in some way.  
It affects the aspects of quality above, including portability, usability and most importantly maintainability.  
Trial-and-error/divide-and-conquer is needed: the programmer will try to remove some parts of the original test case and check if the problem still exists.  
 Machine code was the language of early programs, written in the instruction set of the particular machine, often in binary notation.  
Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process.  
Use of a static code analysis tool can help detect some possible problems.  
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.  
For example, when a bug in a compiler can make it crash when parsing some large source file, a simplification of the test case that results in only few lines from the original source file can be sufficient to reproduce the same crash.