Programming involves tasks such as analysis, generating algorithms, profiling algorithms' accuracy and resource consumption, and the implementation of algorithms (usually in a particular programming language, commonly referred to as coding).  
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.  
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.  
Compiling takes the source code from a low-level programming language and converts it into machine code.  
For this purpose, algorithms are classified into orders using so-called Big O notation, which expresses resource use, such as execution time or memory consumption, in terms of the size of an input.  
Many applications use a mix of several languages in their construction and use.  
Compilers harnessed the power of computers to make programming easier by allowing programmers to specify calculations by entering a formula using infix notation.  
It is usually easier to code in "high-level" languages than in "low-level" ones.  
Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability.  
This can be a non-trivial task, for example as with parallel processes or some unusual software bugs.  
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.  
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).  
Techniques like Code refactoring can enhance readability.  
 Some languages are very popular for particular kinds of applications, while some languages are regularly used to write many different kinds of applications.  
In 1801, the Jacquard loom could produce entirely different weaves by changing the "program" – a series of pasteboard cards with holes punched in them.