As early as the 9th century, a programmable music sequencer was invented by the Persian Banu Musa brothers, who described an automated mechanical flute player in the Book of Ingenious Devices.  
Some languages are more prone to some kinds of faults because their specification does not require compilers to perform as much checking as other languages.  
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.  
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.  
Proficient programming thus usually requires expertise in several different subjects, including knowledge of the application domain, specialized algorithms, and formal logic.  
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).  
Use of a static code analysis tool can help detect some possible problems.  
Assembly languages were soon developed that let the programmer specify instruction in a text format (e.g., ADD X, TOTAL), with abbreviations for each operation code and meaningful names for specifying addresses.  
Provided the functions in a library follow the appropriate run-time conventions (e.g., method of passing arguments), then these functions may be written in any other language.  
When debugging the problem in a GUI, the programmer can try to skip some user interaction from the original problem description and check if remaining actions are sufficient for bugs to appear.  
There exist a lot of different approaches for each of those tasks.  
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.  
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.  
Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability.  
 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.