Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability.  
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.  
They are the building blocks for all software, from the simplest applications to the most sophisticated ones.  
However, Charles Babbage had already written his first program for the Analytical Engine in 1837.  
Ideally, the programming language best suited for the task at hand will be selected.  
Unreadable code often leads to bugs, inefficiencies, and duplicated code.  
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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.  
There exist a lot of different approaches for each of those tasks.  
To produce machine code, the source code must either be compiled or transpiled.  
Compiling takes the source code from a low-level programming language and converts it into machine code.  
Scripting and breakpointing is also part of this process.  
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.  
  
The first compiler related tool, the A-0 System, was developed in 1952 by Grace Hopper, who also coined the term 'compiler'.