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, specific user environment and usage history can make it difficult to reproduce the problem.  
Unreadable code often leads to bugs, inefficiencies, and duplicated code.  
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.  
This can be a non-trivial task, for example as with parallel processes or some unusual software bugs.  
One approach popular for requirements analysis is Use Case analysis.  
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.  
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.  
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.  
To produce machine code, the source code must either be compiled or transpiled.  
A study found that a few simple readability transformations made code shorter and drastically reduced the time to understand it.  
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.  
Many factors, having little or nothing to do with the ability of the computer to efficiently compile and execute the code, contribute to readability.  
 Code-breaking algorithms have also existed for centuries.