



# WHAT THE HELL IS AN API?



Suppose your program is a robot and you want your robot to get into a car and drive across the city.



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When you drive a car,  
do you care how it  
works inside?



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Do you care if it's a V6 or V8? a **diesel**, or a **hybrid**?

All of those things affect how the car works, but those aren't the interface.



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The interface of a car is the steering wheel, gearshift, and pedals – plus all of the other levers and controls to access all of the car's other functions.



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So if you were hypothetically building a robot to control a car, **you don't have** to teach it how an internal combustion engine works.



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You have to teach it how to accelerate, brake, steer, and shift gears, by working those controls.



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So now let's relate this back to a programming example.

Twitter has an API.

That means you can write a program that accesses or controls Twitter.



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You don't have to know how Twitter works internally.

**You just have to know their API** the interface for programmers to interact with their service.



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Most of the major web services like Google, Facebook, Reddit...

all have **APIs** you can use them to automate almost anything you would do manually.



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