

API EXPLAINED TO A 6 YEAR-OLD



Why is it useful?

Think of an API like
the controls to a car.



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You've got a gas pedal to go forward, a brake pedal to stop, a steering wheel to turn, etc.



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You've also got information about the car, how fast it's going (speedometer), how fast the engine is turning (tachometer), how much gas is in the tank, etc.



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You don't need to know how the gas pedal makes the car go forward or the details of how the fuel tank reads its level.



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In fact, the 'under the hood' operation varies wildly from car to car,



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but since the car's interface is (roughly) the same, you can get in just about any car and drive it.



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The set of controls
and information is like
the car's API.



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"Turn this wheel to make the car go to the right. Look here to see how fast you're going." is like a website's API saying, "Give me a string of text and the ID of a parent comment, and I'll post a reply to that comment".



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