Hi, my name is React

The lesson gives you an introduction to React. You may ask yourself: Why should I learn React in the first place? The lesson might give you the answer to that question.

This chapter is an introduction to React, a JavaScript library for rendering interfaces in single-page and mobile applications, where I explain why developers should consider adding the React library to their toolbelts. We will dive into the React ecosystem, creating your first React application from scratch with no configuration. Along the way, we will introduce **JSX**, the syntax for React, and **ReactDOM**, so you have an understanding of React's practical uses in modern web applications.

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Single page applications (SPA) have become increasingly popular in recent years, as frameworks like Angular, Ember, and Backbone allow JavaScript developers to build modern web applications using techniques beyond vanilla JavaScript and jQuery. The three mentioned are among the first SPAs, each coming into its own between 2010 and 2011, but there are many more options for single-page development. The first generation of SPA frameworks arrived at the enterprise level, so their frameworks are more rigid. React, on the other hand, remains an innovative library that has been adopted by many technological leaders like Airbnb, Netflix, and Facebook.

React was released by Facebook's web development team in 2013 as a view library, which makes it the 'V' in the MVC (model view controller). As a view, it allows you to render components as viewable elements in a browser, while its ecosystem lets us build single page applications. While the first generation of frameworks tried to solve many things at once, React is only used to build your view layer; specifically, it is a library wherein the view is a hierarchy of composable components. If you haven't heard about MVC before, don't bother about it, because it's just there to put React historically into context for people about it, because it's just there to put React historically into context for people who come from other programming languages.

In React, the focus remains on the view layer until more aspects are introduced to the application. These are the building blocks for an SPA, which are essential to build a mature application. They come with two advantages:

- You can learn the building blocks one at a time without having to understand them altogether. In contrast, an SPA framework gives you every building block from the start. This course focuses on React as the first building block. More building blocks will eventually follow.
- All building blocks are interchangeable, which makes the ecosystem around React highly innovative. Multiple solutions can compete with each other, and you can choose the most appealing solution for any given challenge.

React is one of the best choices for building modern web applications. Again, it only delivers the view layer, but the surrounding ecosystem makes up an entirely flexible and interchangeable framework. React has a slim API, a robust and evolving ecosystem, and a great community.

Further Readings

If you'd like to know more about why I chose React, or to find a more in-depth look at the topics mentioned above, these articles grant a deeper perspective:

- Why I moved from Angular to React
- React's flexible ecosystem
- How to learn a framework