
Writing a computer program is a lot like solving a puzzle. This book will help you to learn the two most popular programming languages – C and Python – by gradually presenting important computer science topics. It can serve as an introduction to these languages for beginners or as a refresher for those who have been out of the loop for awhile. In this tutorial, we'll discuss data types, operators, expressions and statements, arrays, strings and simple I/O operations before covering more advanced concepts such as working with files or databases in Python. And that's just scratching the surface! With this book under your arm there's no need to go through hundreds of pages of documentation looking for some elusive answer. What this book covers Chapter 1, Data Types and Expressions, will help you to understand the fundamentals of programming languages – data types, variables, operators and expressions. You'll learn how to write your first programs using variables and constants. Chapter 2, Statements and Functions, explains the basics of writing a structured program – a collection of statements that are executed in a particular order. In this chapter you'll be introduced to loops – one of the most fundamental tools for solving programming problems! Together with Python's concise syntax and rich set of built-in data structures you'll be able to solve complex problems quickly in no time. Chapter 3, Conditional Statements, teaches you how to create a program that can make decisions based on the information it has. You'll learn how to use Python's if and else statements as well as Python's switch statement – a very powerful tool for debugging. Chapter 4, Loops and Iterators, teaches you about a particular type of decision-making statements used to repeat a block of code. You'll learn how to write loops that either run once or repeat themselves, as well as how to iterate through certain objects such as strings or lists. Chapter 5, Functions, shows you how to write your own functions in Python. You'll learn how to write small programs that are modular and reusable, extending their functionality without the need to modify existing code. Chapter 6, Modules, introduces you to the concept of encapsulation – the idea that during development you would be working with modules rather than tools directly. You'll learn how to use Python's standard math module as well as wrap existing commands into their own modules. And that's just the tip of the iceberg! Chapter 7, Files and Databases, teaches you to work with data stored either in files or databases. Using Python you can read and write text files, CSV files and Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets. You'll learn about the Python code to connect to a MySQL or a PostgreSQL database using a SQL language. And that's just the start! Chapter 8, Input/Output, will help you to learn how to read from standard input and write information to standard output, as well as how Python reads from file objects. In this chapter you'll also learn how to interact with users in an interactive environment using Python's input() function. Chapter 9, Classes and Object-Oriented Programming, teaches you the basics of object-oriented programming in Python – a powerful paradigm used to solve programming problems.

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