Programming language components

- **syntax: grammar rules for defining legal statements**
  - what's grammatically legal? how are things built up from smaller things?
- **semantics: what things mean**
  - what do they compute?
- **statements: instructions that say what to do**
  - compute values, make decisions, repeat sequences of operations
- **variables: places to hold data in memory while program is running**
  - numbers, text, ...

- **most languages are higher-level and more expressive than the assembly language for the toy machine**
  - statements are much richer, more varied, more expressive
  - variables are much richer, more varied
  - grammar rules are more complicated
  - semantics are more complicated
- **but it's basically the same idea**

What is Javascript?

- **designed & implemented in 1995 by Brendan Eich at Netscape**
- **a comparatively simple language that could be compiled and run within a browser (not true of Java, the competitor at the time)**
- **provides dynamic effects (e.g., drag and drop), local computation, effective and efficient interaction with server**
- **extremely widely used**
  - supported by all browsers
  - Javascript code on almost all web pages

Javascript components

- **Javascript language**
  - statements that tell the computer what to do
    get user input, display output, set values, do arithmetic,
    test conditions, repeat groups of statements, …
- **libraries, built-in functions**
  - pre-fabricated pieces that you don't have to create yourself
    `alert`, `prompt`, math functions, text manipulation, ...
- **access to browser and web pages**
  - buttons, text areas, images, page contents, ...

- **you are not expected to remember syntax or other details**
- **you are not expected to write code in exams**
  (though a bit in problem sets and labs)

- **you are expected to understand the ideas**
  - how programming and programs work
  - figure out what a tiny program does or why it's broken

Basic example 0: echo a name (name.html)

- Javascript code appears in HTML file between <script> tags

  `<script> ... </script>`
- this example shows a variable and a dialog box

```
<html>
<body>
<P> nam2.html: echoes a name
<script>
    var name;
    name = prompt("What's your name?");
    alert("hello, " + name);
</script>
```

Basic example 1: join 2 names (name2.html)

- Javascript code appears in HTML file between <script> tags

  `<script> ... </script>`
- shows variables, dialog boxes, and an operator

```
<html>
<body>
<P> name2.html: joins 2 names
<script>
    var firstname, secondname, result;
    firstname = prompt("Enter first name");
    secondname = prompt("Enter last name");
    result = firstname + secondname;  // + means "join" here
    alert("hello, " + result);        // and here
</script>
```

Basic example 2: add 2 numbers (add2.html)

- dialog boxes, variables, arithmetic, conversion

```
<html>
<body>
<P> add2.html: adds 2 numbers
<script>
    var num1, num2, sum;
    num1 = prompt("Enter first number");
    num2 = prompt("Enter second number");
    sum = parseInt(num1) + parseInt(num2); // "+" means "add"
    alert(sum);
</script>
```

`parseInt(...)` converts a sequence of characters into its integer value
there's also a parseFloat(…) for floating point numbers

Adding up lots of numbers: addup.html

- variables, operators, expressions, assignment statements
- while loop, relational operator (!= means "not equal to")

```
<html>
<body>
<script>
    var sum = 0;
    var num;
    num = prompt("Enter new value, or 0 to end");
    while (num != 0) {
        sum = sum + parseInt(num);
        num = prompt("Enter new value, or 0 to end");
    }
    alert("Sum = " + sum);
</script>
```

Find the largest number: max.html

- needs an If to test whether new number is bigger
- needs another relational operator
- needs parseInt or parseFloat to treat input as a number

```
var max = 0;
var num;
num = prompt("Enter new value, or 0 to end");
while (num != 0) {
    if (parseFloat(num) > max)
        max = num;
    num = prompt("Enter new value, or 0 to end");
}
document.write("<P> Max = " + max);
```

Variables, constants, expressions, operators

- **a *variable* is a place in memory that holds a value**
  - has a **name** that the programmer gave it, like **sum** or **Area** or **n**
  - in Javascript, can hold any of multiple types, most often
    numbers like **1** or **3.14**, or
    sequences of characters like **"Hello"** or **"Enter new value"**
  - always has a **value**
  - has to be set to some value initially before it can be used
  - its value will generally change as the program runs
  - ultimately corresponds to a location in memory
  - but it's easier to think of it just as a name for information
- **a *constant* is an unchanging literal value like 3 or "hello"**
- **an *expression* uses operators, variables and constants to compute a value**

  3.14 * rad * rad
- ***operators* include + - * /**

Computing area: area.html

```
var rad, area;
rad = prompt("Enter radius");
while (rad != null) {
   area = 3.14 * rad * rad;
   document.write("<P> radius = " + rad + ", area = " + area);
   rad = prompt("Enter radius");
}
```

- **how to terminate the loop**
  - 0 is a valid data value
  - `prompt()` returns null for Cancel and "" for OK without typing any text
- **string concatenation to build up output line**
- **there is no exponentiation operator so we use multiplication**

Types, declarations, conversions

- **variables have to be declared in a var statement**

- **each variable holds information of a specific type**
  - really means that bits are to be interpreted as info of that type
  - internally, 3 and 3.00 and "3.00" are represented differently

- **Javascript usually infers types from context, does conversions automatically**
  - "Sum = " + sum

- **sometimes we have to be explicit:**
  - `parseInt(...)` if can't tell from context that string is meant as an integer
  - `parseFloat(...)` if it could have a fractional part

Making decisions and repeating statements

- **if-else statement makes decisions**
  - the Javascript version of decisions written with ifzero, ifpos, ...

```
if (condition is true) {
      do this group of statements
} else {
    do this group of statements instead
}
```

- **while statement repeats groups of statements**
  - a Javascript version of loops written with ifzero and goto

```
while (condition is true) {
     do this group of statements
}
```

if-else examples (sign.html)

- can include else-if sections for a series of decisions:

```
var num = prompt("Enter number");
while (num != null) {
    num = parseInt(num);
    if (num > 0) {
        alert(num + " is positive");
    } else if (num < 0) {
        alert(num + " is negative");
    } else {
        alert(num + " is zero");
    }
    num = prompt("Enter number");
}
```

"while loop" examples

- **counting or "indexed" loop:**

```
i = 1;
 while (i <= 10) {
     // do something (maybe using the current value of i)
     i = i + 1;
}
```

- **"nested" loops (while.html):**

```
var n = prompt("Enter number");
while (n != null) {    // "!=" means "is not equal to"
    i = 0;
    while (i <= n) {
        document.write("<br>" + i + " " + i*i);
        i = i + 1;
    }
    n = prompt("Enter number");
}
```

Functions

- **a function is a group of statements that does some computation**
  - the statements are collected into one place and given a name
  - other parts of the program can "call" the function
    that is, use it as a part of whatever they are doing
  - can give it values to use in its computation (arguments or parameters)
  - computes a value that can be used in expressions
  - the value need not be used
- **Javascript provides some useful built-in functions**
  - e.g., prompt, alert, ...
- **you can write your own functions**

Function examples

- **syntax**

```
function name (list of "arguments") {
    the statements of the function
}
```

- **function definition:**

```
function area(r) {
   return 3.14 * r * r;
}
```

- **using ("calling") the function:**

```
rad = prompt("Enter radius");
alert("radius = " + rad + ", area = " + area(rad));

alert("area of CD =" + area(2.3) - area(0.8));
```

Ring.html

```
var r1, r2;
r1 = prompt("Enter radius 1");
while (r1 != null) {
   r2 = prompt("Enter radius 2");
   alert("area = " + (area(r1) - area(r2))); // parens needed!
   r1 = prompt("Enter radius 1");
}

function area(r) {
   return 3.14 * r * r;
}
```

Why use functions?

- **if a computation appears several times in one program**
  - a function collects it into one place
- **breaks a big job into smaller, manageable pieces**
  - that are separate from each other
- **defines an interface**
  - implementation details can be changed as long as it still does the same job
  - different implementations can interoperate
- **multiple people can work on the program**
- **a way to use code written by others long ago and far away**
  - most of Javascript's library of useful stuff is accessed through functions
- **a good library encourages use of the language**

A working sort example

```
var name, i = 0, j, temp;
var names = new Array();

// fill the array with names
name = prompt("Enter new name, or OK to end");
while (name != "") {
    names[names.length] = name;
    name = prompt("Enter new name, or OK to end");
}
// insertion sort
for (i = 0; i < names.length-1; i++) {
    for (j = i+1; j < names.length; j++) {
        if (names[i] > names[j]) {
            temp = names[i];
            names[i] = names[j];
            names[j] = temp;
        }
    }
}
// print names
for (i = 0; i < names.length; i++) {
    document.write("<br> " + names[i]);
}
```

Summary: elements of (most) programming languages

- constants: literal values like 1, 3.14, "Error!"
- variables: places to store data and results during computing
- declarations: specify name (and type) of variables, etc.
- expressions: operations on variables and constants to produce new values
- assignment: store a new value in a variable
- statements: assignment, input/output, loop, conditional, call
- conditionals: compare and branch; if-else
- loops: repeat statements while a condition is true
- functions: package a group of statements so they can be called / used from other places in a program
- libraries: functions already written for you

How Javascript works

- **recall the process for Fortran, C, etc.:**
  compiler -> assembler -> machine instructions
- **Javascript is analogous, but differs significantly in details**

- **when the browser sees Javascript in a web page (<script> tags)**
  - passes the Javascript program to a Javascript compiler
- **Javascript compiler**
  - checks for errors
  - compiles the program into instructions for something like the toy machine, but richer, more complicated, higher level
  - runs a simulator program (like the toy) that interprets these instructions
- **simulator is often called an "interpreter" or a "virtual machine"**
  - probably written in C or C++ but could be written in anything
- **browser and simulator interact**
  - when an event like click happens, browser tells Javascript ("onClick")
  - Javascript tells browser to do things (e.g., pop up dialog box for `alert`)