Programming language components

- **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, ...
- **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?

- **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**

Why study / use Javascript?

- **all browsers process Javascript**
  - many web services rely on Javascript in browser
  - can use it in your own web pages
  - can understand what other web pages are doing (and steal from them)
- **easy to start with**
- **easy to do useful things with it**
- **programming ideas carry over into other languages**

- **Javascript has limitations:**
  - no use outside of web pages
  - many irregularities and surprising behaviors
  - no browser matches ostensible standards exactly
  - doesn’t illustrate much about how big programs are built
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 #1: join 2 names (name2.html)

- **Javascript code appears in HTML file between <script> tags**
  <script language=javascript> ... </script>
- **shows variables, dialog boxes, 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 (!= "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

```javascript
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

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

- "nested" loops (while.html):
  ```javascript
  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));

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
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)
The process of programming

• what we saw with Javascript or Toy is like reality, but very small

• figure out what to do
  - start with a broad specification
  - break into smaller pieces that will work together
  - spell out precise computational steps in a programming language

• build on a foundation (rarely start from scratch)
  - a programming language that’s suitable for expressing the steps
  - components that others have written for you
    - functions from libraries, major components, ...
  - which in turn rest on others, often for several layers
  - runs on software (the operating system) that manages the machine

• it rarely works the first time
  - test to be sure it works, debug if it doesn't
  - evolve as get a better idea of what to do, or as requirements change

Real-world programming

• the same thing, but on a grand scale
  - programs may be millions of lines of code
    - typical productivity: 1-10K lines/year/programmer
  - thousands of people working on them
  - lifetimes measured in years or even decades

• big programs need teams, management, coordination, meetings, ...

• schedules and deadlines

• constraints on how fast the program must run, how much memory it can use

• external criteria for reliability, safety, security, interoperability with other systems, ...

• maintenance of old ("legacy") programs is hard
  - programs must evolve to meet changing environments and requirements
  - machines and tools and languages become obsolete
  - expertise disappears