

Things To Know When Starting A Career In Programming

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Agenda



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- Five tips for learning new programming languages efficiently
- Conclusion

Introduction



- I've been working as a Programmer at GSK for just over 2 years, having initially joined on a graduate placement programme after completing 3 months of SAS training at Amadeus Software Ltd.
- Prior to this, I studied for a Master's degree in Mathematics at the University of Sussex.



Five tips for learning new programming languages efficiently

1. Ask Questions



If you're working on a programming task, but are perhaps unsure of exactly what is required, or maybe you've spent a while trying to resolve an issue without making any real progress, don't be afraid to speak to a more experienced programmer and get some help.



2. Take advantage of documentation



For beginners (and indeed any level of programmer), code documentation is another great way to learn about aspects of the programming language you are using. Whether it be a language such as SAS which has an extensive documentation site of its own, or an open source language such as Python or R, you can find thousands of webpages with information on how to resolve just about any programming issue.



3. Write user-friendly code



- New programmers can often feel the need to write complex pieces of code, in order to prove their capabilities. However, something worth considering is that a large part of the job of programming is to take a piece of code that already exists and modify it to meet our needs. This is a lot easier when the code has been written in a way that is readable and understandable. This could mean adding indentations and line breaks at sensible locations, and adding comments to explain different steps.

```
data untidy;set _untidy;run;
```

```
data tidy;  
    set _tidy;  
run;
```

4. Take frequent breaks



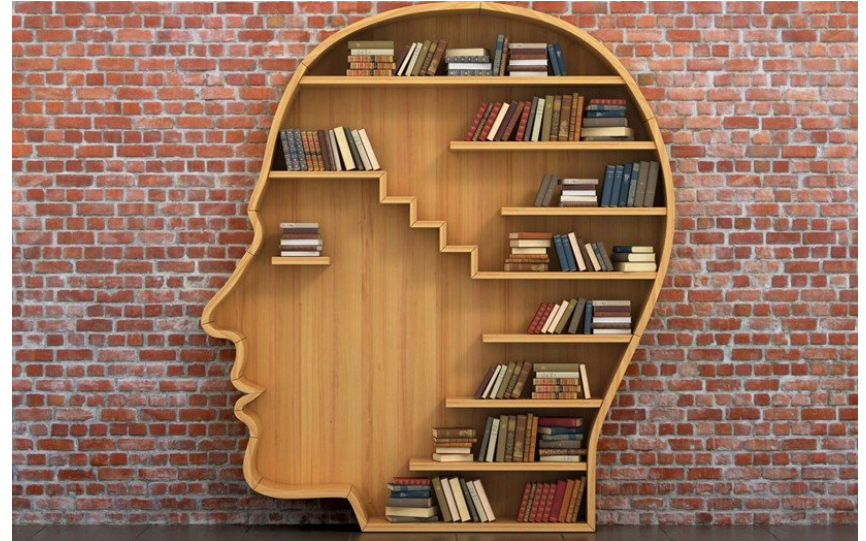
When working on a programming problem, sometimes the best way of resolving it is to take a break and work on a different task, or even to spend some time away from the screen altogether. Then when you return to the problem, you will often find that you've been able to gather your thoughts during the time away, and therefore come to a solution much quicker.



5. Always be ready to learn new things



There are always new technologies being released, and programmers have to be prepared to upgrade their skills on an ongoing basis in order to meet the latest requirements of their market.



Conclusion