We can consider algorithms to be practical solutions to problems. These solutions are not answers, but specific instructions for getting answers.
Before writing a program:
* Have a thorough understanding of the problem
* Carefully plan an approach for solving it

While writing a program:
* Know what “building blocks” are available
* Use good programming principles
Algorithms

* Computing problems
  * All can be solved by executing a series of actions in a specific order

* Algorithm: procedure in terms of
  * Actions to be executed
  * The order in which these actions are to be executed

* Program control
  * Specify order in which statements are to be executed
* Decide the steps to be followed for solving the problem in question.
* Once you have designed an algorithm, you need to specify it in some fashion.
* Using a natural language is the obvious choice; however, the usual uncertainty of any natural language makes a brief and clear description of algorithms surprisingly difficult.
Pseudocode and Flowcharts

* Description of the algorithm in a standard form (easy to understand for anyone)
* Language independent

The constructs used to build algorithms can be described in two ways:

* Pseudocode (mix. of English and programming language)
* Flowcharts (using charts)
Pseudocode

- Artificial, informal language that helps us develop algorithms
- Similar to everyday English
- Not actually executed on computers
- Helps us “think out” a program before writing it
  * Easy to convert into a corresponding program
  * Consists only of executable statements
alternatives in normal English language

if criterion 1
  action 1
else if criterion 2
  action 2
else if criterion 3
  action 3
otherwise
  action 4

if (criterion 1)
  action_1;
else if (criterion 2)
  action_2;
else if (criterion 3)
  action_3;
else
  action_4;
Control Structures

* Flowchart
  * Graphical representation of an algorithm
  * Drawn using certain special-purpose symbols connected by arrows called flowlines

* Single-entry/single-exit control structures
  * Connect exit point of one control structure to entry point of the next (control-structure stacking)
  * Makes programs easy to build
Flowcharts

- Graphical representation of an algorithm
- Drawn using certain special-purpose symbols connected by arrows called flowlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start/ Stop</td>
<td>A computational result assigned to a var. at LHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>input / output operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A point where a choice is made by two alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direction of program flow between steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iterative or counting loop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Flowcharts - Example

Temperature conversion from F to Celsius

Start

Tell user to enter temp. in F

Get temp. in F (temp_F)

Calculate temp. (temp_C)  
\[ \text{temp}_C = \frac{5}{9} (\text{temp}_F - 32) \]

Print temp. in C (temp_C)

Stop
At the final step, the algorithm, expressed in either flowcharts or pseudocodes, are translated into the programming language (MATLAB, C, Fortran, etc.)
Programming

* The process of designing, writing, testing, debugging / troubleshooting, and maintaining the source code of computer programs
* Problem solving using a computer
* A program is a **sequence of instructions** that specifies how to perform a computation (mathematical or symbolic).
* The **source code** is written in programming language.
* Purpose is to create a program that exhibits a certain behavior.
Step 1: Problem analysis.
The designer must fully understand the nature of the problem to be solved and the need for the solution.

Step 2: Problem statement.
Develop a detailed statement of the problem to be solved with a computer program.

Step 3: Processing scheme.
Define the inputs required and the outputs to be produced by the program.
Step 4: Algorithm.

Design the step-by-step procedure using the top-down design process: divide the overall problem into subordinate problems.

This list of tasks is the structure plan; it is written in pseudocode, i.e. a combination of English, mathematics and estimated MATLAB commands or in a flowchart.

The goal is to design a plan that is understandable and easily translated into a computer language.
Step 5: Program algorithm.
Translate or convert the algorithm into a computer language (e.g. MATLAB) and debug the syntax errors until the tool performs successfully.

Step 6: Evaluation.
Test all of the options and conduct a validation study of the computer program, compare results
- with other programs that do similar tasks,
- experimental data if appropriate
- theoretical predictions.

Step 7: Application.
Solve the problems using the program was designed to solve.
A good program is:
- Efficient
- Correct (correct syntax & semantics)
- Readable (Easy to read & understand)
- Easy to maintain & enhance
Programming Languages

Computer languages are used to develop programs to be executed. They can be described in terms of levels.

**Machine language:**
- Lowest-level language
- Binary-encoded instructions that are directly executed by the hardware.
- Language is closely tied to the hardware design.
- Machine specific: machine language for one computer is different from that of a computer having a different hardware design.
- Strings of numbers giving machine specific instructions

Example:

+1300042774
+1400593419
+1200274027
Assembly language:

- Also unique to a specific computer design.
- Commands or instructions are written in text statements instead of numbers.
- Assembly language programming requires good knowledge of the specific computer hardware.
- System software called an assembler translates the assembly language program to a machine language program for execution on the hardware.
- English-like abbreviations representing elementary computer operations (translated via assemblers)

Example:
LOAD  BASEPAY
ADD   OVERPAY
STORE GROSSPAY
High-level languages:

Compiled Languages:
- Have English-like command syntax.
- Include languages such as Basic, Fortran, COBOL, Pascal, Ada, C, C++, and Java.
- Supported on many computer designs and knowledge of the specific hardware is not as critical in writing a program.
- System software called a compiler translates the program into machine language.

Interpreted languages: MATLAB
- Interpreted and executed using an interpreter.
• **Interpreted languages** are easier to learn. An interpreter lets the programmer know immediately when and where problems exist in the code; compiled programs make the programmer wait until the program is complete.

• **Interpreters** therefore can be easier to use and produce more immediate results; however the source code of an interpreted language cannot run without the interpreter.

• **Compilers** produce better optimized code that generally run faster and compiled code is self sufficient and can be run on their intended platforms without the compiler present.
Compilation Process:
• Original program is called the **source program**.
• Translated machine language program is called the **object program**.
• Errors detected by the compiler (called **compile errors** or **syntax errors**) must be corrected and compilation performed again.
• The process of compiling, correcting errors (or **debugging**) must often be repeated several times before the program compiles without compile errors.
Execution Process:

• To prepare the object program for **execution**, system software is applied to link other machine language statements to the object program and then load the program into memory.
• The program is executed and new errors, called execution errors, run-time errors or **logic errors** (also called **bugs**) may be identified.
• These program errors are caused when the programmer errors in determining the correct steps to be taken in the problem solution, such as an attempt to divide by zero.
• These errors must be corrected in the source program, which must again be compiled and link-loaded for execution.
Notice that even when a program executes without an error message, the results must be checked carefully to be sure that they are correct.
MATLAB: MATrix LABoratory
MATLAB
Mathematical Computation Tool

• Matlab is a computer program that combines computation and visualization power
• Matlab is both a computer programming language and a software environment for using that language effectively.
• The name Matlab stands for MATrix LABoratory, because the system was designed to make matrix computations particularly easy.
• The Matlab environment allows the user to manage variables, import and export data, perform calculations, generate plots, and develop and manage files for use with Matlab.
The Matlab environment is an interactive environment:

- **Single-line commands can be entered and executed.** This means that you can type commands at the Matlab prompt and get answers immediately, which is very useful for simple problems.
- **Matlab is an executable program,** developed in a high-level language, which interprets user commands.
• Portions of the Matlab program execute in response to the user input, results are displayed, and the program waits for additional user input.
• Use of this environment doesn’t require the compile-link/load-execution process described above for high-level languages.
Engineering Problem Solving

- Engineering often involves applying a consistent, structured approach to the solving of problems.
- A general problem-solving approach and method can be defined, although variations will be required for specific problems.
- Problems must be approached methodically, applying an algorithm, or step-by-step procedure by which one arrives at a solution.
The problem-solving process for a computational problem can be outlined as follows:
1. Define the problem.
2. Create a mathematical model.
3. Develop a computational method for solving the problem.
4. Implement the computational method.
5. Test and assess the solution.
As an example of the problem solving process, consider the following problem:

A small object is launched into flight from the ground at a speed of 50 km/hour at 30 degrees above the horizontal over level ground. Determine the time of flight and the distance traveled when the ball returns to the ground.
Assumptions:
Air resistance is negligible
Gravitational acceleration \( g = 9.8 \, \text{m/s}^2 \)
unit conversions: \( \text{km/h} = \frac{1000 \, \text{m}}{3600 \, \text{s}} \)
360 degrees = \( 2 \pi \) radians

Given:
Initial velocity: 50 km/hour
Angle: 30°

Output:
the results to be produced are the time of flight (seconds) and the distance traveled (meters).
**Problem Solving Example – Mathematical Model**

**Time:** $t \, (s)$, with $t = 0$ when the object is launched.

**Initial velocity magnitude:** $v = 50 \, \text{km/hour}$.

**Initial angle:** $\theta = 30^\circ$.

**Horizontal position of ball:** $x(t) \, (m)$.

**Vertical position of ball:** $y(t) \, (m)$.

**Acceleration of gravity:** $g = 9.8 \, \text{m/s}^2$, directed in negative $y$ direction.

- $v_h = v \cos \theta$
- $v_v = v \sin \theta$

- $x(t) = vt \cos \theta$

- $y(t) = vt \sin \theta - \frac{1}{2} gt^2$
Using the mathematical model, expressions for the desired results can be obtained. The object will hit the ground when its vertical position is zero:

\[ y(t) = vt \sin \theta - \frac{1}{2}gt^2 = 0 \]

**Flight time:**

\[ t_g = \frac{2v \sin \theta}{g} \]

**The horizontal position (distance of travel) at this time:**

\[ x(t_g) = vt_g \cos \theta \]
The equations defined in the computational method can be readily implemented using Matlab.

*The commands used in the following solution will be discussed in detail later in the course, but observe that the Matlab steps match closely to the solution steps from the computational method.*
% Flight trajectory computation
% Initial values

g = 9.8; % gravity, m/s^2

v = 50 * 1000/3600; % launch velocity, m/s

theta = 30 * pi/180;

disp('time of flight (s):') % label for time of flight
tg = 2 * v * sin(theta)/g % time to return to ground, s
disp('distance traveled (m):') % label for distance

xg = v * cos(theta) * tg
% Compute and plot flight trajectory

t = linspace(0,tg,256);

x = v * cos(theta) * t;

y = v * sin(theta) * t - g/2 * t.^2;

plot(x,y), axis equal, axis([ 0 20 0 4 ]), grid, ...
xlabel('Distance (m)'), ylabel('Height (m)'), ...
title('Flight Trajectory')
Problem Solving Example – Comments:

- **Words following percent signs (%) are comments to help in reading the Matlab statements.**
- If a Matlab command assigns or computes a value, it will **display the value on the screen if the statement does not end with a semicolon (;).**
- The **three dots (...) at the end of a line mean that the statement continues on the next line.**
• **More than one statement** can be entered on the same line if the statements are *separated by commas*.  
• The statement `t = linspace(0,tg,256);` *creates a vector of length 256*.  
• In addition to the required results, the flight trajectory has also been *computed and plotted*. This will be used below in assessing the solution.
Elements of good programming style include:

- **Use comments**, both at the beginning of a script, and also throughout the script to introduce different logical sections.
- **Describe each variable briefly** in a comment when it is initialized.
- **Separate sections of code** with blank lines.
- **Indent multiple line structures** to make them stand out as a logical unit.
- **Use spaces in expressions** to make them more readable (for example, on either side of operators and equal signs).