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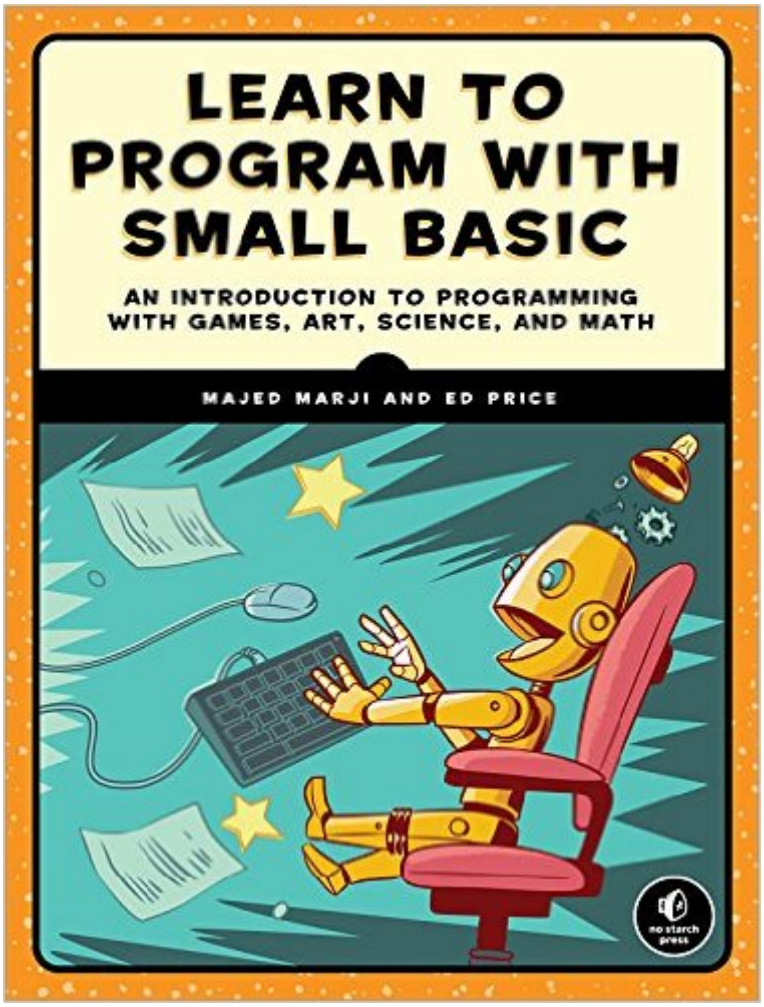
Learn To Program With Small Basic: An Introduction To Programming With Games, Art, Science, And Math



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Synopsis

Small Basic is a free, beginner-friendly programming language created by Microsoft to inspire kids to learn to program. Based on BASIC, which introduced programming to millions of first-time PC owners in the 1970s and 1980s, Small Basic is a modern language that makes coding simple and fun.Learn to Program with Small Basic brings code to life and introduces you to the empowering world of programming. You'll master the basics with simple activities like displaying messages and drawing colorful pictures, and work your way up to programming playable games! You'll learn how to:Store and manipulate data with variablesProcess user input to make interactive programsUse if/else statements to make decisionsCreate loops to automate repetitive codeBreak up long programs into bite-sized subroutinesInside, you'll find hands-on projects that will challenge and inspire you. You'll command a turtle to draw shapes, program magical moving text, solve all kinds of math problems, help a knight slay a fearsome dragon, and more! Each chapter ends with extra practice examples so you can take your programming skills to the next level!

Book Information

Paperback: 344 pages

Publisher: No Starch Press; 1 edition (May 2, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1593277024

ISBN-13: 978-1593277024

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.8 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #522,157 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Computers & Technology > Programming #1059 inÂ Books > Computers & Technology > Programming > Introductory & Beginning #3643 inÂ Books > Computers & Technology > Programming > Languages & Tools

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 - 8

Customer Reviews

Like a lot of kids (and adults), my son enjoys computer games. IÃ¢Â Â™ve noticed that as heÃ¢Â Â™s gotten more into it, like a lot of kids, his technical knowledge has skyrocketed. His reading has improved, his math skills are growing, and it seems like heÃ¢Â Â™s ready for some

additional challenges. So, I asked him if he wanted to learn how to program his own games someday. He told me that heÃ¢Â Â™d noticed that a lot of programming seems quite complicated. And heÃ¢Â Â™s right. So I pointed out, well, you gotta start somewhere. When I was in high school, I took a lot of business classes. Eventually, that led to a programming course, where I learned Microsoft Basic. ItÃ¢Â Â™s a programming language invented by Bill Gates and a friend or two, who are now, of course, the richest people in the world. At first, learning Basic wasnÃ¢Â Â™t too difficult but it got pretty complicated, pretty quickly.So Microsoft has been working on that. And what theyÃ¢Â Â™ve come up with is Ã¢Â ÂœSmall Basic.Ã¢Â Â• I showed my son that he could download the program for free. He played around a bit, and came back to say that it looked good, and fun, but he needed some additional help. This book offers a thorough introduction into Small Basic. ItÃ¢Â Â™s laid out like a simplified text book. ItÃ¢Â Â™s not exactly easy reading, but it offers simple stories that introduce the programming basics that every language uses Ã¢Â Â” if this happens, then do that Ã¢Â Â” in fun and engaging ways. Once my son learns the Ã¢Â ÂœbasicsÃ¢Â Â• of Small Basic, I think heÃ¢Â Â™ll be ready to learn new ways to do the same things in other programming languages.

Although a scan of the table of contents may make the book sound like a Computer Science 101 text, it is the structure within those chapters and Marji and PriceÃ¢Â Â™s engaging writing style that really sets this book apart. It is clearly written with an eye towards a middle school audience. The text is easy to read and filled with little jokes and gags that are guaranteed to make the coolest 13-year-old roll her eyes (thatÃ¢Â Â™s a good thing). But beyond the standard descriptions of concepts and examples, my favorite part of the book by far is that each chapter provides the reader with challenges that utilize the new content introduced in the chapter and draw on what has been previously learned.So often, computer programming books are filled with math-based challenges (count by 2s . . . now count by 3s . . . find the prime number . . . is the number a square) that would put a classroom of middle school students (and their teacher) to sleep. These challenges, on the other hand, keep their audience in mind. They are engaging and creative and appropriate for a middle school aged audience. Further, they leverage the website for the book to provide resources, hints and solutions. Readers can access comment-only Ã¢Â ÂœstarterÃ¢Â Â• files to get them moving and provide a roadmap for their projects or, if they get hopelessly stuck, can access solutions Ã¢Â Â” all online. I particularly like the fact that the solutions do not appear in the book itself. That would make it too easy to simply page to the back and type in the solution. By requiring the reader to take the additional step of hopping online and navigating to the correct URL before

seeing a solution, readers are encouraged to keep trying to solve the challenges on their own.In Learn to Program with Small Basic, Marji and Price have accomplished something very difficult. They have created an outline of basic computer science principles that is appropriate for middle schoolers in a text based programming language. Many of the resources that are currently being produced are of the drag-and-drop, block-based graphical structure. While I believe that these are a great way to get younger students interested in coding, the Small Basic programming language and its intuitive IDE has worked incredibly well in my middle school classroom. In my end of course surveys, a strong majority of students (nearly 70%!) recommended that I limit the use of block-based programming languages in order to provide them with even more opportunities to do text-based programming with Small Basic. I am certain that Learn to Program with Small Basic will be a trusted companion as I expand this portion of my course and I am thrilled that such a resource is available.

As an enthusiastic that began to program with BASIC on an old MSX I still have an special admiration to Basic (all them ;-))Nowadays I am an teacher that teachs in a small University here in Brazil. I discovered Small Basic a few months ago and began to use it to create and test small algorithms and show my students. If focuses, of course, in simplicityI have the paperback version of this book and it is amazing. I read half of the book and tested various of the programs it teaches. Altought it starts from the very beginning (focusing on the new programmers) it also has a lot of exercises that you can test and discover new ways to program with Small Basic. A special note here is that this book explains in a useful way how to use graphics (Yes, Small Basic has the TURTLE lol). And I also believe that this is a good start for game programming also because it has a few examples about games.It is obvious that this book was written with love and dedication. It is clear for me that the authors are deeply envolved with Small Basic Community. My 14yo son will also use this to learn programming (when he pauses Minecraft) and I am planning to create a small course focused to teach kids about programming in my city.Well, this book is very easy to read (of course also to them that does not have prior knowledge in programming) and fullfilled with examples and it has also paper/impression of quality.Buy this book and have fun, specially if you used Basic in the past!

This book has been really fun to read and the instructions are very detailed and very easy to follow. No previous experience is needed, and I was impressed by how quickly I went from no experience to writing simple programs. My 8-year-old son was watching over my shoulder when I was writing

some of the code and his first question was "when can I try it too!". I'm excited to move beyond the basic skills and try out some of the activities in the later sections of the book. Learning all that Small Basic can do is my summer project and this book is the best tool I could ever want!*I received a copy of this book from the publisher to review for myself. I was not compensated in any other way and all opinions posted here are mine and mine alone!

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