



Gorgo Starting C++

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0. How to use this booklet

This is a short booklet to help a new programmer learn C++.

Each chapter is meant to help you understand a topic, but you will still want to reference API descriptions for more specifics of the parameters and operating conditions. Hopefully, you'll have the context you need to understand API documentation.

Tips

Tips call out details that you need to pay special attention to. **Traps** warn you of common mistakes made. **Wut** calls out a detail that is counter-intuitive, so make sure you pay attention.

Function Signatures

When this book introduces a new function, it shows the function's **signature** and return type. A function's signature is its name and parameter list — it uniquely identifies the function. We also show the return type so you know what the function gives back. For example:

```
int abs(int n);
```

This tells you that `abs` takes one `int` parameter and returns an `int`. You do not need to understand every detail the first time you see it, but it gives you three things at a glance: what the function is called, what goes in, and what comes out. As you work through API documentation on your own, signatures are the first thing you will look at, so getting comfortable reading them early pays off.

Try It

As the intro to the most amazing programming language book ever written [1] starts out:

The only way to learn a new programming language is by writing programs in it.

You need to write some code. Make sure you try writing some programs from scratch. At the end of most sections is a starter program that you can type in and modify to play with. Don't use it as an excuse to avoid writing some of your own starter programs. It's the only way to master a language.

Exercises

Don't skip the exercises at the end of the chapters. You can get the answer key, but don't look at the answer key before you work out the answer yourself. If you look at the answer key first, the concepts will not sink in.

[1] B. W. Kernighan and D. M. Ritchie, *The C programming language*, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988.