

No. 90

PROGRAMMING

JavaScript for Beginners

Learn the language of the web, from your first script to interactive pages and Node.js, explained for complete beginners

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to use this book

What this book covers, who it is for, and how to use it.

JavaScript is the programming language of the web. Every modern browser runs it, which is why it powers interactive websites, web apps and online tools. With **Node.js** it also runs on servers and computers, so one language can build a whole application. Alongside Python, it is one of the most searched programming languages in the world.

This book teaches JavaScript from zero. You will run code in your browser, learn the core of the language, make web pages respond to clicks and typing, fetch data from the internet, and write small programs with Node.js.

Which versions this book covers

- Modern JavaScript as defined by the yearly **ECMAScript** standard, up to **ECMAScript 2026**, approved in June 2026.
- Current versions of Chrome, Edge, Firefox and Safari.
- The current **LTS** (Long-Term Support) release of Node.js.

Everything in this book works in any up-to-date browser.

Who this book is for

- **Complete beginners**.
- **Designers and marketers** who want to understand web pages.
- **Python learners** adding a second language.
- Readers of **Vibe Coding** who want to read the code AI generates for websites.

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How the book is organized

- **Part I — Getting started** (Chapters 1–4): what JavaScript is, running code, your first page, and tools.
- **Part II — The language** (Chapters 5–12): variables and types, text, numbers, decisions, loops, arrays, objects, and functions.
- **Part III — The web and beyond** (Chapters 13–18): the DOM, events, forms, asynchronous code and fetch, Node.js and npm, and errors and debugging.
- **Part IV — Projects and next steps** (Chapters 19–22): security basics, projects, learning with AI, and where to go next.
- **Reference**: cheat sheet, glossary and further reading.

Callouts

TIP

Practical advice you can use straight away.

IN JAVASCRIPT

Details about how the language itself works.

WATCH OUT

Common mistakes.

KEY IDEA

The one thing to remember from a section.

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PART I

Getting started

These chapters explain what JavaScript is, how to run it, how to build a first interactive page, and which tools to use.

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CHAPTER 1

What JavaScript is

JavaScript adds behaviour to web pages, and much more.

Part of every web page



Figure 1.1 HTML, CSS and JavaScript

- **HTML** describes structure: headings, paragraphs, buttons.
- **CSS** describes style: colours, fonts, layout.
- **JavaScript** describes behaviour: what happens when you click, type or load data.

A short history

JavaScript was created in 1995 by Brendan Eich at Netscape, in just ten days. It is standardized as **ECMAScript**, and a new edition is published every year. Despite the name, it is not related to Java.

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Where it runs

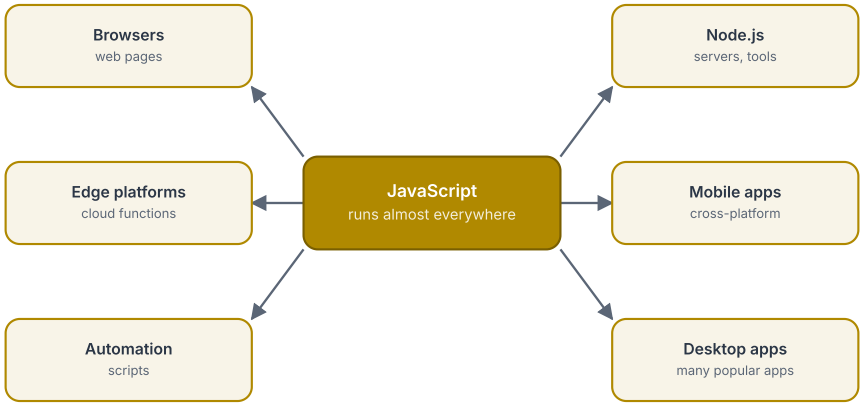


Figure 1.2 Places JavaScript runs

Why learn it

- You can start with nothing but a browser.
- It is essential for web development.
- Huge community and free packages.
- Many AI app builders generate JavaScript and TypeScript code.

KEY IDEA

If something on a web page moves, changes or responds, JavaScript is probably involved.

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CHAPTER 2

Running JavaScript

You can run JavaScript right now, in your browser.

The browser console

Open any web page, then open **developer tools** (often F12, or right-click and choose Inspect) and pick the **Console** tab.

Browser console (simplified, example) *Illustration, not an actual program screen*

CONSOLE

Developer tools ready

You type	Result
`2 + 3`	`5`
`'Hi ' + 'Ana'`	`'Hi Ana'`
`[1, 2, 3].length`	`3`
`typeof null`	`'object'`

Figure 2.1 Trying code in the console

```
2 + 3
"Hello" + " " + "world"
console.log("It works!")
```

Node.js

Install the LTS version of **Node.js** from nodejs.org. Then save this as `hello.js`:

```
const name = "Ana";
console.log(`Hello, ${name}!`);
```

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Run it in a terminal:

```
node hello.js
```

Semicolons

JavaScript usually works without semicolons at line ends, but most style guides use them. Pick one style and stay consistent.

> **TIP**
> Keep the console open while you learn. It shows results and errors immediately.

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