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Head First Java, 2nd Edition



Synopsis

Learning a complex new language is no easy task especially when it's an object-oriented computer programming language like Java. You might think the problem is your brain. It seems to have a mind of its own, a mind that doesn't always want to take in the dry, technical stuff you're forced to study. The fact is your brain craves novelty. It's constantly searching, scanning, waiting for something unusual to happen. After all, that's the way it was built to help you stay alive. It takes all the routine, ordinary, dull stuff and filters it to the background so it won't interfere with your brain's real work--recording things that matter. How does your brain know what matters? It's like the creators of the Head First approach say, suppose you're out for a hike and a tiger jumps in front of you, what happens in your brain? Neurons fire. Emotions crank up. Chemicals surge. That's how your brain knows. And that's how your brain will learn Java. Head First Java combines puzzles, strong visuals, mysteries, and soul-searching interviews with famous Java objects to engage you in many different ways. It's fast, it's fun, and it's effective. And, despite its playful appearance, Head First Java is serious stuff: a complete introduction to object-oriented programming and Java. You'll learn everything from the fundamentals to advanced topics, including threads, network sockets, and distributed programming with RMI. And the new, second edition focuses on Java 5.0, the latest version of the Java language and development platform. Because Java 5.0 is a major update to the platform, with deep, code-level changes, even more careful study and implementation is required. So learning the Head First way is more important than ever. If you've read a Head First book, you know what to expect--a visually rich format designed for the way your brain works. If you haven't, you're in for a treat. You'll see why people say it's unlike any other Java book you've ever read. By exploiting how your brain works, Head First Java compresses the time it takes to learn and retain--complex information. Its unique approach not only shows you what you need to know about Java syntax, it teaches you to think like a Java programmer. If you want to be bored, buy some other book. But if you want to understand Java, this book's for you.

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Customer Reviews

I really wanted to like this book. I bought the Head First book on design patterns and love it. It was the right mix of irreverence and information. So, I bought this book even though I have been a Java developer for over 5 years. I was excited to see how the Head First authors handled a beginners book for Java. Not too well, in my opinion. Chapter Three, in particular, was a mess. This chapter introduces the notion of variables yet never explains what an integer variable is. No explanation is given of the float type. We are told that a byte holds 8 bits...but not told what a bit is. We are not told how to assign a hexadecimal value to an int. We are not told that if we assign a numeric value with a leading zero...the compiler will assume that you meant to use octal values. The reader is not told that Strings are immutable. These are all things that will trip up a beginner (the target market for this book). The author of this chapter doesn't even bother to mention that a Java array uses a zero-based index. Both primitives and the notion of classes are introduced in Chapter Three. Yet, the author doesn't mention that all primitives (except boolean) have wrapper classes. Strings are introduced...but, no mention is made of the StringBuffer or StringBuilder (very useful and often used classes). These items are included in the back of the book in Appendix B. There are so many things left out that I wonder if the publisher actually had any beginners read this book. Readers of this book will finish this book still ignorant of many Java essentials. Here is one of their dumbed-down explanations for an object reference: "Think of a Dog reference variable as a Dog remote control. You use it to get the object to do something (invoke methods).

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