

Before You Begin

Please read the following topics before you begin the course.

This Course is for Hands-On Students!

This course was designed for 4th-8th grade students by experienced software professionals. We have created a program that will give students a solid, practical foundation in the field of game programming. Lessons begin with basic concepts, including sample code, and move quickly to hands-on implementation. Students will enjoy writing their own programs as they progress through the course.

Each chapter includes at least one “Your Turn” activity in which your student will complete all or parts of a game or other program that demonstrates the concepts they have learned. Beginning in Chapter 2, these activities will have students writing and running their very own Visual Basic programs. These activities will start simple and will move up in complexity as the course progresses. In the final chapter, students will complete a final project, which will allow them to apply all they have learned in the course.

What Do Students Need to Start?

Students will need to meet the following requirements in order to successfully complete the course:

- Students should have completed the first-semester *KidCoder™: Windows Programming* course
- Students should have the pre-requisite computer skills listed in the Student Textbook
- Students should have a Windows-based computer that meets the minimum hardware and software requirements listed in the Student Textbook
- Students will need an Internet connection to complete the download and installation of Visual Basic 2010 Express during the first activity. An Internet connection is optional for the rest of the course.

Why Did We Choose the “Visual Basic” Programming Language?

This course is taught using the Visual Basic programming language. We feel that this is one of the easiest and quickest modern programming languages to learn. Students can create a real Windows program within seconds! In addition, concepts and techniques learned in this course can be applied to other, more advanced programming languages.

What Do Teachers Need to Do?

The course is largely a self-study curriculum where students can simply read the textbook, complete the activities, and refer to this Solution Guide to clear up any questions about the activities. Teachers may choose to have greater involvement if they wish to administer the course for a more formal grade or school credit. Some students, especially younger students, may need additional assistance.

Grading a student's progress is done in two ways. First, each chapter has a hands-on activity which should be completed by the student. These activities are the focal point of the course and we recommend assigning at least 50% of the course grade to the activities. Guidance on grading activities is given below. In addition, we provide 10-question short-answer tests for every chapter.

Please see the chapter on “Evaluating Student Progress” for more details!

How Do I Get Help?

If you have questions or concerns about any of the activities, solutions, or tests, please contact us according to the instructions on our website. We will provide responses to your questions as soon as possible. Please also check the Errata section of our website for any reported corrections or clarifications to this edition.

Evaluating Student Progress

If teachers wish to grade student progress, they will be responsible for administering tests and evaluating student programs.

Administering Tests

Chapter tests can be found in a “Tests” directory underneath the root folder where you installed the Solution Files. You can access the tests using Windows Explorer or through the Windows Start Menu (Programs → KidCoder → Game Programming → Solution Menu). Tests are in Adobe Acrobat .PDF format for easy printing on a home printer. You will also find a complete answer key for all tests in another .PDF file. Test questions are free-form answers, not multiple-choice. In most cases the answers are derived from the Student Textbook and are listed in the answer key. However some questions may ask the student to be creative and teachers may use good judgment evaluating the answer.

How Do I Evaluate Student Programs?

If you do not have a background in programming or computers, you may be wondering how to evaluate your student’s progress. But don’t worry! This course is designed primarily for student self-study; your level of involvement depends on your interest in the material. This Solution Guide includes easy-to-understand activity solutions. If your student is stuck on any activity you can review the provided solution with them. Each solution is written so that a novice computer user can understand and evaluate a student’s progress.

Evaluating a student’s program is like grading an art project. The process can be very subjective. To make it easier, follow these guidelines:

- Have your student build and run the program on a computer. Check to make sure that the program performs all the tasks as outlined in the activity requirements.
- Have your student turn-in a printed copy of the source code.
- Check this printed copy for the key elements that are mentioned in the activity solution. Note that all solutions will be slightly different as there are many ways to achieve the same ends through code.
- Finally, have the student walk through the printed program and the computer program with you. If they can explain how the program works to you, they understand it well enough to have passed the activity.

While each student’s program will look slightly different than the provided solution, the program outputs and behavior should meet the requirements specified in the activity. We will clearly point out all of the elements to look for in every activity solution.

Activity Solutions

The next chapters contain complete solutions for each Student Textbook activity. Each activity solution will generally contain:

- A picture of the screen the student will produce
- The complete source code the student is responsible for writing.

When installing the “Solution Files” from the setup program, your computer will also receive fully coded activity solution projects. If you have installed Visual Basic 2010 Express on your computer (just as done during the student’s first activity) then you can review the solutions using the same Integrated Development Environment (IDE) as the student. The student will spend most of their hands-on time within this Visual Basic software, so teachers may also wish to become familiar with the essentials of the development environment. You can launch each project from the Solution Menu (Windows Start Programs → KidCoder → Game Programming → Solution Menu).

If you do not have Visual Basic 2010 Express installed, you may still view the solution files using any text editor! Simply open Windows Notepad, Wordpad, or your preferred text editor and navigate to the “C:\KidCoder\Game Programming\Your Turn Solutions” directory to find the activity solution folder. Open the source file, generally named *.vb (e.g. “Form1.vb”) into your text editor for review.