

Re: How to improve C skill?

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- *From:* Richard Heathfield <rjh@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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weidongtom@xxxxxxxx said:

Hi,

I have just finished reading some tutorials on C, I am wondering how I could improve my skill. Is there any advice? Is reading others' codes the best way?

Crank up the warning level of your compiler as high as it will go, and write lots and lots of programs. Remember that much of what your tutorials taught you is likely to be wrong. Most C tutorials are written by people who don't know C. Come to think of it, so is most C code. So, whilst "reading others' code" can be helpful, get into the habit of thinking "why is this code bad? What don't I like about it? What diagnostic messages does it cause my compiler to emit? Do I understand those messages? What don't I understand about the code itself? *WHY* is the author doing such-and-such?"

I have been reading quite a few books on the programming language C, but when I tried to start a project of my own, I find myself to be incompetent.

Honesty will get you everywhere! :-) Seriously, true competence (in *any* field worth pursuing) takes about ten years of diligent study and *practice*. Ten years to be a competent doctor, lawyer, programmer, whatever.

Devise a project of your very own – e.g. a simple text processor – and define N things you'd like it to do (where N is initially at least 4). Implement those features, one at a time, learning all about diagnostic messages as you go! When you've implemented all N features, think up another N/4 features (rounded down), and notice how awkward it is to fit them in. Re-factor the code to make adding the new features much more pleasant, and now you're starting to learn about programming. Once all 5N/4 features are implemented, let N = 5N/4 and go round again,

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until you start to hit practical limits. This is feature creep with a vengeance! But it will introduce you gently to large programs.

What should I do?

Write C programs.

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Richard Heathfield

"Usenet is a strange place" – dmr 29/7/1999

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