The Language that Powers Rails

Learning

Ruby

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Michael Fitzgerald

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You don't have to know everything about a car to drive one, and you don't need to know everything about Ruby to start programming with it. Written for both experienced and new programmers alike, *Learning Ruby* is a just-get-in-and-drive book -- a hands-on tutorial that offers lots of Ruby programs and lets you know how and why they work, just enough to get you rolling down the road.

Interest in Ruby stems from the popularity of Rails, the web development framework that's attracting new devotees and refugees from Java and PHP. But there are plenty of other uses for this versatile language. The best way to learn is to just try the code! You'll find examples on nearly every page of this book that you can imitate and hack. Briefly, this book:

Outlines many of the most important features of Ruby Demonstrates how to use conditionals, and how to manipulate strings in Ruby. Includes a section on regular expressions Describes how to use operators, basic math, functions from the Math module, rational numbers, etc. Talks you through Ruby arrays, and demonstrates hashes in detail Explains how to process files with Ruby Discusses Ruby classes and modules (mixins) in detail, including a brief introduction to object-oriented programming (OOP) Introduces processing XML, the Tk toolkit, RubyGems, reflection, RDoc, embedded Ruby, metaprogramming, exception handling, and other topics Acquaints you with some of the essentials of Rails, and includes a short Rails tutorial. Each chapter concludes with a set of review questions, and appendices provide you with a glossary of terms related to Ruby programming, plus reference material from the book in one convenient location. If you want to take Ruby out for a drive, *Learning Ruby* holds the keys.

Learning Ruby Details

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hoffnarr says

This book is, like many in the "Learning..." series is a very compact introduction to the language. It is primarily, it seems to me, targeting readers who are familiar with at least one other programming language and need only become accustomed to the syntax of this new language. For this audience, which fortunately includes myself, this book is a decent and very compact introduction to all the most common elements of the language.

There are plenty of examples but they seem to get less obvious and assume more of the reader as the book goes on. The most annoying element of the book is that the author seems to delight in teaching you the 5 least common and most difficult ways of doing everything before telling you the easiest and most common way of doing something. This ought to be reversed.

Lewis Cawthorne says

More I depth material free online, and nothing in here I would ever refer back to.

Mjoneill says

Currently I'm enjoying this book very much. I find the stratagem employed by the author to be really compatible with my learning method. Still, it's not exactly perfect. It seems to have a slight Mac OS X and Windows bias. It really isn't enough to derail a reader, but at some points I find myself kind of scratching my head and tinkering until I figure out how to translate the examples into something appropriate for the OS I'm working on (Ubuntu Linux).

Note: I cannot speak to the utility of this book for the programmer. I'm just a dabbler. I enjoy learning some rude fundamentals of various interpreted languages.

Jacob says

At about 230 pages, *Learning Ruby* is a quick read, but while I appreciate brevity, this introduction to the Ruby language lacks depth and isn't likely to answer many of the questions that a newcomer to the language might have. The book probably is good enough for a programmer who doesn't really want to learn the ins and outs of the language but just needs to know enough to start hacking on a Rails project.

The core language features are covered passably well, but this could have been improved by expanding the discussion of Ruby's more interesting traits, such as the weird, sigil-filled syntax or the heavy use of blocks

and closures. The section on exception handling is a mere two pages and doesn't even show how to define custom exceptions. More coverage of the standard library would have been helpful, too; I would have liked to have seen some overviews of the net/http, net/smtp, socket, and logger modules myself. Two XML modules are discussed, and in both cases the book shows how to assemble an XML document from scratch but not how to parse an existing XML document -- that's an astonishing omission. There is no real discussion of Unicode here, something that any programmer working in the 21st century needs to know. The chapter on Rails shows you how to start a new Rails project but stops short before anything interesting happens with the project. It does, however, list the URLs of several Rails screencasts and tutorials on the web, all of which are free, unlike this book.

Mina Habib says

Hmm it a good book only if you know nothing about Ruby... But if you're having some Ruby experience you won't like it much!

Francesco Abeni says

Beinga a Ruby beginner myself, I cannot judge the accuracy of the topics in the book, but my impression was very good. It won't make you a Ruby developer at once, but it will prepare you for everything that you're going to meet later on.

It's pleasant to read, with just a little of humor but not so much as to feel treated like an idiot. The topics are clearly and logically organized.

Unfortunately it is getting obsolete now: 7 years in IT are a huge time. So I won't reccomend to anyone unless a newer edition comes out.

Vladimir Tarasov says

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Jeremy says

Haven't finished book.

Harry Yeh says

A great introduction to Ruby the programming Language. I would say that you should learn Ruby before Jumping into Rails since much of the web framework makes more sense once you understand the architecture of how Ruby is.

Great introduction to the Language and Programming if you haven't done much before.

Michel says

Great book