

Pseudocode Overview

Pseudocode tests algorithmic logic without forcing one programming language's strict syntax. The question is normally not "Can you memorise C/Java syntax?" It is "Can you execute an algorithm exactly?"

Vocabulary

Keyword	Meaning
READ/Input	take a value
DISPLAY/PRINT	output a value
SET or =	assign/update a variable
SEQUENCE	execute statements in listed order
IF/THEN/ELSE	conditional branch
FOR	known-count loop
WHILE	repeat while condition is true
REPEAT-UNTIL	body runs first, then condition is checked
CASE	choose among alternatives
MOD	remainder
DIV	integer quotient

The only reliable method

Never "read it in your head" for a nontrivial trace. Use [\[\[04_Pseudocode/Dry_Run_Method|the dry-run table\]\]](#). A 10-second table prevents most wrong answers.

Main traps

- Updating a variable and then using its new value in the next line.
- Confusing $x = x + 1$ with a comparison.
- Forgetting that a loop bound can be inclusive or exclusive.
- Forgetting integer division.
- Attaching ELSE to the wrong IF.
- Continuing a recursion past its base case.
- Assuming array indexing when it is explicitly given differently.

Links

- [\[\[04_Pseudocode/Dry_Run_Method|Dry-run method\]\]](#)
- [\[\[04_Pseudocode/Pseudocode_Patterns|Patterns and traps\]\]](#)
- [\[\[04_Pseudocode/Pseudocode_Drills|Pseudocode drills\]\]](#)

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