



## Sams Teach Yourself Perl in 24 Hours (3rd Edition)

By Clinton Pierce



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Learn Perl programming quickly and easily with 24 one-hour lessons in *Sams Teach Yourself Perl in 24 Hours*. The book's step-by-step lessons teach you the basics of Perl and how to apply it in web development and system administration. Plus, the third edition has been updated to include five chapters on new technologies, information on the latest version of Perl, and a look ahead to Perl 6. *Sams Teach Yourself Perl in 24 Hours* focuses on real-world development, teaching you how to:

- Effectively use Perl for large development projects using Perl modules
- Use Perl for data processing
- Utilize Perl as a "glue" language with other programming languages
- Use Perl as a web development language

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# Introduction

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is virtually indistinguishable from magic." —Arthur C. Clarke

Remember this well: *There's nothing magical about programming a computer.*

Like anything that seems magical, there's always a trick to it—and programming is no different. All you need are some analytical thinking skills, the desire to learn, and some time to learn Perl. The best way to learn how to program a computer—or any task really—is to have a goal. Your goal could be to spice up your Web pages, convert a program you already have to Perl, or to satisfy idle curiosity—it doesn't really matter.

Now, given that you've established a goal and have some thinking skills, what does this book have for you?

This book will teach you the basics of the Perl programming language. You'll learn just enough Perl to do something useful. You will not be overwhelmed with details that, although interesting, will only get in your way and that you'll probably never use again. Each new concept in this book is demonstrated by lots of working code examples. Go ahead—flip through the book and see.

But why Perl? Almost every company that uses programming of some kind uses Perl. Perl is found in finance, manufacturing, genetics, the military, and every other application known to humankind. And, of course, Perl is used on the Internet and the World Wide Web. Perl isn't going away any time soon, which is why learning it is an investment in your time that will pay off for years to come.

It's also possible to create really stunning Perl programs with just a small bit of code. Using a little bit of Perl to glue together other applications, languages, and technologies, you'll be creating useful Perl programs in no time.

## How to Use This Book

This book is divided into 24 segments that take roughly an hour to complete. You can work through the lessons in the space of a day (if you don't plan to eat or sleep), or you can take your time and work through the hour lessons at your own pace.

At the end of each hour, you'll be able to accomplish a new set of tasks. The lessons contain clear explanations of the language features and how they work. In addition, each hour provides you with the opportunity for hands-on training, simply by following the steps described.

## Conventions Used in This Book

*Sams Teach Yourself Perl in 24 Hours* uses a number of conventions that are consistent throughout this book:

- Each hour begins with an overview of what you will learn.
- Step-by-step instructions are preceded by a To Do icon.
- Every hour ends with a summary and a series of commonly asked questions and answers; hopefully, you'll find the answers to your questions among them.

In addition, these elements appear throughout the book:

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**Note** - Notes provide you with comments and asides about the topic at hand.

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**Tip** - Tips offer shortcuts and hints on getting the task done.

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**Caution** - Cautions explain roadblocks you might encounter when you work with Perl and tell you how to avoid them.

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**New terms** are emphasized by being placed in bold for your easy reference.

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