✕ TECHSHEET
Java Programming

Java is one of the most widely used and influential programming languages in history. These days, it can be found on anything from smartphones to supercomputers. But why is it so popular? And what do you look for when hiring a **Java Developer**?

History

Java was developed in the early 90's as an alternative to C++, the main programming language at that time. The goal was to develop a programming language that could be used to create interactive devices like PDA's and set-top boxes. Unfortunately, the television industry wasn't ready for this kind of technology and the creators were forced to take a different direction. Luckily, they found the internet.

Most of us will remember downloading countless Java updates in the early days of the internet. Back then, Java had to be downloaded to your computer in order to run the web application. Nevertheless, it became the standard for interactive web pages. Websites were no longer just static pages of text and images but now also included animations, interactive forms and even games or video. Unsurprisingly, Java quickly became one of the most popular programming languages and has been in the TIOBE top 3 for over 20 years. These days, it is used to create software for pretty much every type of device you can imagine.

Though its rise in popularity was largely thanks to the internet, it was the 2006 decision to make Java Open-Source that solidified its status as the go-to programming language for many developers. Now, everyone within the developer community was able to contribute to the future of the platform. And they did, happily. Today, there are more resources available for java than for any other programming language out there. From books and tutorials, to frameworks and libraries.

Recently, Java has been losing ground to other languages such as Python, but it remains one of the most popular and influential languages in the history of programming. It has given rise to new languages like Scala, Kotlin and Groovy and is the driving force behind some of the most impactful software ever written. From Mars Rovers to Minecraft - Java powers the world.

Facts & Figures 2020

Released:	1995
TIOBE rank:	#2
Last version:	v.11 (2018)
Current version:	v.15 (2020)
Based on:	C/C++

Runs on:
Java Virtual Machine (JVM)

Frameworks:
Spring, Struts, Hibernate, Play, JSF, GWT, Grails

Did you know?

There are over 12 million Java Developers worldwide and it runs on more than 3 billion devices

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What makes a Java Developer?

Everyone is unique and no two developers are the same. Some have a natural talent for programming, while others have to study and train for years to master the complexities of a programming language like Java. That's one of the reasons why it's so difficult to judge a developer's skills and seniority based on just their years of experience alone. Besides, many skilled developers will happily admit that at least part of their success is simply a matter of Google-Fu - The art of using online resources to find a solution instead of trying to reinvent the wheel. So, how do you know if a developer has the skills you're looking for?

Fortunately, there are a few things you can look for to determine if a candidate fits your profile:

- ⊠ **Education**: Not every development position requires a degree in Computer Science or Engineering, but it can tell you a lot about a developer's ability to work in structured way, switch between different technologies, and their general understanding of the engineering process. This is especially important for developers who are also involved in architecture or project management, and those who work independently.
- ⊠ **Experience**: While the years of experience a developer has doesn't always reflect their level of skill, a lot can be learned from looking at their work experience. More specifically, the type of applications they've worked on. For example, how many users does it have and how are they using the application? Or, what were the business goals behind the application?
- ⊠ **Technology**: Mastering a programming language is as much about understanding the concepts, as it is about knowing how to dot your I's and cross your T's. Concepts like Object-Oriented Programming - a style or way of programming that isn't exclusive to Java, but also used in languages like Python and C#. That's why developers who are skilled in one of these are usually able to learn the other ones with relative ease.
- ⊠ **Context**: The days where a developer could just sit behind a laptop all day without talking to anyone are long gone. Developing software is almost always a team effort. In those settings, it helps to have a solid understanding of the role others play, as well as your own. In short, look for developers who see the bigger picture.
- ⊠ **Communication**: Software developers are not generally known to be great communicators, but communication plays a a vital role in any team effort. Especially in software development. That's why communicative skills are becoming more important by the day.
- ⊠ **Methodology**: It seems like Agile is everywhere these days, but don't be fooled. Every company has its own way of developing software and everyone has their own definition of Agile. If they even have one at all. To work around that, it is helpful to ask candidates about their preferred methodology and how they understand it.

Hiring a Java Developer

Despite its popularity and the impressive number of professional software developers who work with Java, it's not easy hiring a Java developer. As with most professionals in IT, skilled Java developers are in high demand. There are more job openings for software engineers than there are engineers to fill them and that doesn't look to be changing any time soon. With so many companies competing for the same talent, how do you hire the best developers?

One easy way to solve the problem is by offering more money. Surveys show money is still the key driver for most developers when looking for a new job. The second one is being able to work with modern technology. Of course, that's easier said than done. Simply upping the salary is a costly game and there is no guarantee the employee will stay with you when they get a higher offer somewhere else. And changing the technology you work with doesn't happen overnight.

No, for most companies the solution has nothing to do with the compensation or the technology. It's about getting the word out. Connecting to the right people in the right way. Finding what is special or unique about a company or a job and showing people how they could be a part of it. Employer Branding is a term you'll hear a lot these days, but usually only in the context of large corporates with unlimited recruitment budgets. For those who are still on their way to reaching the Fortune 500, a targeted approach is still the best option.

Understanding the market, the technology, and the people, and using that to make the perfect match.