

Specification of Programming Language Syntax

by

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Abstract

Normally Backus Naur Form (BNF) or extended BNF (EBNF) is used to specify the syntax of programming languages. Users typically find such specifications hard to interpret and it is often not easy to check whether a parser conforms precisely with the BNF specification. There is also the problem that the BNF may be ambiguous.

This document suggests way to specify the syntax of programming languages that is concise and easily understood by users. It essentially specifies a recursive descent parsing algorithm making it easy to implement a parser conforms precisely to the specification. Syntax specified in this way is guaranteed to be unambiguous.