

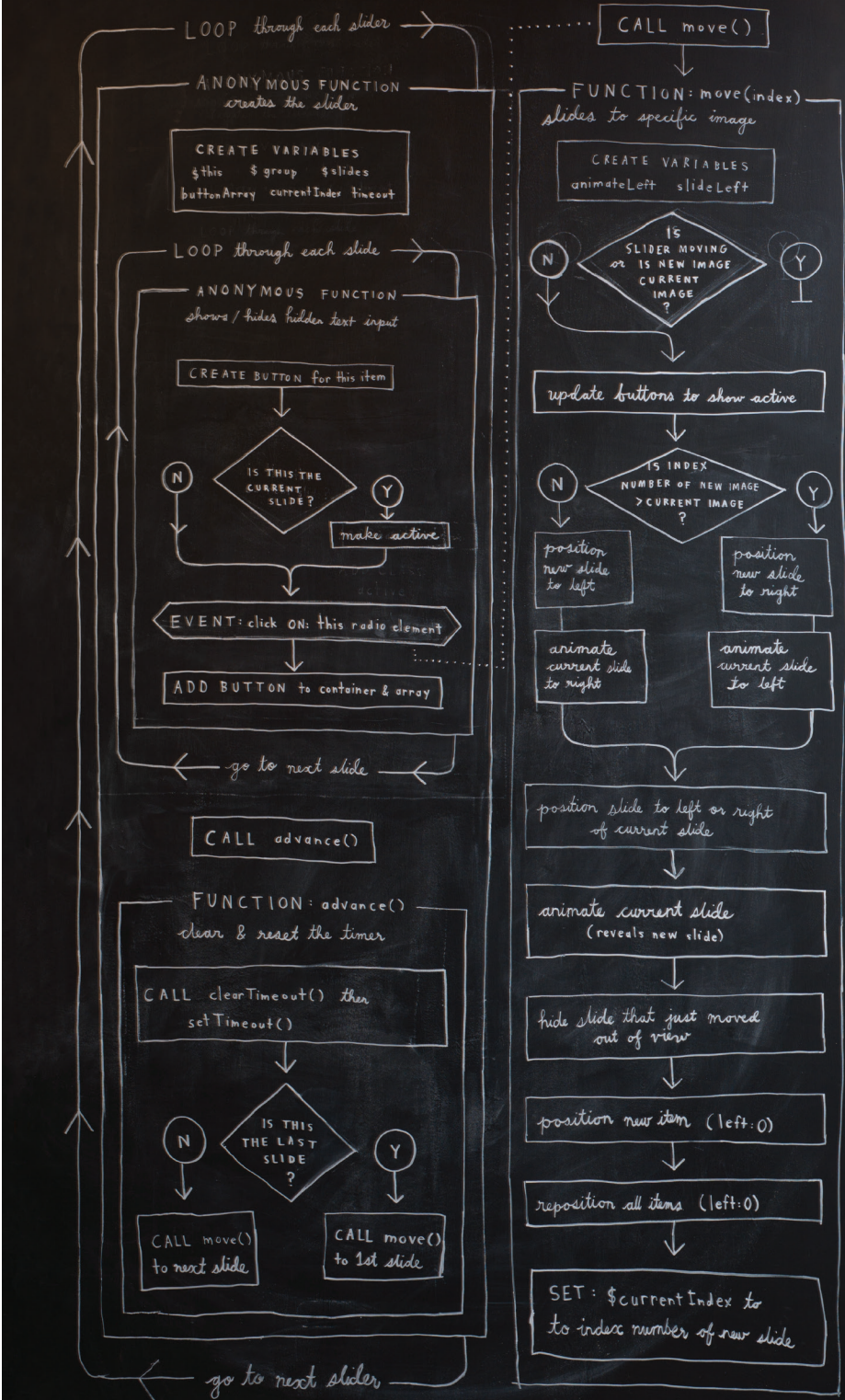
WRITING A SCRIPT

To write a script, you need to first state your goal and then list the tasks that need to be completed in order to achieve it.

Humans can achieve complex goals without thinking about them too much, for example you might be able to drive a car, cook breakfast, or send an email without a set of detailed instructions. But the first time we do these things they can seem daunting. Therefore, when learning a new skill, we often break it down into smaller tasks, and learn one of these at a time. With experience these individual tasks grow familiar and seem simpler.

Some of the scripts you will be reading or writing when you have finished this book will be quite complicated and might look intimidating at first. However, a script is just a series of short instructions, each of which is performed in order to solve the problem in hand. This is why creating a script is like writing a recipe or manual that allows a computer to solve a puzzle one step at a time.

It is worth noting, however, that a computer doesn't learn how to perform tasks like you or I might; it needs to follow instructions every time it performs the task. So a program must give the computer enough detail to perform the task as if every time were its first time.



Start with the big picture of what you want to achieve, and break that down into smaller steps.

1: DEFINE THE GOAL

First, you need to define the task you want to achieve. You can think of this as a puzzle for the computer to solve.

2: DESIGN THE SCRIPT

To design a script you split the goal out into a series of tasks that are going to be involved in solving this puzzle. This can be represented using a flowchart.

You can then write down individual steps that the computer needs to perform in order to complete each individual task (and any information it needs to perform the task), rather like writing a recipe that it can follow.

3: CODE EACH STEP

Each of the steps needs to be written in a programming language that the computer understands. In our case, this is JavaScript.

As tempting as it can be to start coding straight away, it pays to spend time designing your script before you start writing it.