The structure of the COBOL language is carefully explained in the course of the 60 lessons each of which is accompanied by clear, appropriate sketches and program segments followed by review questions to which full answers are found in the rear of the book.

This text might not be a literary masterpiece but it most certainly accomplishes its stated goal, i.e. to teach those who need to learn the language quickly. I think this would make an excellent choice for any student of business. It is probably suitable for a semester's course in college although it may be used to great advantage as a self-instructional text.

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37[12].—BRYAN HIGMAN, *A Comparative Study of Programming Languages*, American Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1967, iii + 164 pp., 22 cm. Price $8.50.

There is an essential need for comparative studies of programming languages. Unfortunately, this book does not contribute much to filling the void. It is a little book which gives an unbalanced and much too superficial view of programming languages. It is not suitable as a textbook but might be useful to someone with a knowledge of, say, Fortran who wants a feel for other programming languages with a decided "European" view. About a third of the book attempts to lay the formal groundwork for the comparative study of languages; this is however later ignored and instead a philosophical view is presented. The introduction to the basics of programming linguistics is good.

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38[12].—WILLIAM F. SHARP, *Basic*, The Free Press, New York, 1967, xi + 137 pp., 26 cm. Price $6.75 Hardbound, $3.95 Paperbound.

As an introduction to Computer Programming, using the BASIC language should prove to be most successful with students of both scientific or business orientation. It is clear, precise, amply illustrated and written in a style which is both interesting and engaging.

The first seventy-two pages are devoted to the various instructions and procedures, questions being asked along the way and their answers supplied in full. Once the fundamentals have been learned the student is told (page 71)—"you now know something about computers. You know they are *not* giant electronic brains, but they can be programmed to do rather clever things; and you have a fair notion of the manner in which this is done."

Who could ask for more?

The appendices will probably prove to be of great use to particular students. The first describes the Dartmouth /GE system while the second describes the UWBIC (University of Washington) system. The rest of the book lists some useful programs written in BASIC.

All in all this is a fine book carefully thought out and prepared and deserves a good measure of success.

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39[12].—KEITH NICOL, *Elementary Programming and ALGOL*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, 1965, viii + 147 pp., 24 cm. Price $6.50.

This hard cover book by Keith Nicol of the Edinburgh School of Computer Services is an honest attempt to present the fundamental principles of computers. These basic concepts are incorporated in the first four chapters but are written in a needlessly detailed fashion. To the uninitiated this could be most discouraging, and even for the initiated it makes for difficult reading.

The next three chapters deal with various hints on programming (a questionable practice since the reader still doesn't know what a program is all about), computer hardware and applications of computers. These chapters could have been omitted in large part since they do not add very much to the understanding of programming per se.

It is not until we arrive at Chapter 8 that we encounter the introduction to ALGOL programming itself which, according to the cover, is the principle purpose of the book—'a teach-yourself-programming book which will have a general appeal.'

The introduction to Algol is, indeed, clear and well planned but it lacks a sufficiently developed sequence of problems to satisfy most students. For this reason the book is not suitable for classroom use but rather for individual reading of a somewhat superficial nature.

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40[12].—JOHN H. FASAL, *Nomography*, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1968, xviii + 382 pp., 26 cm. Price $14.50.

With the enormous expansion in the use of large-scale digital computers, the impression is generally held that there is less need for nomography. A nomogram, however, is not really a computing device. Rather, it is a method of presenting the voluminous results of computing with two or more independent variables in a more useful and compact form. Therefore, the increase in the volume of available data reinforces the need for nomography.