For the majority of C++ programmers, the pace and style of David Chapman's *Teach Yourself Visual C++ 6 in 21 Days* will make a good deal of sense. The author covers all the essentials of basic Windows and Microsoft Foundation Classes (MFC) development, and then addresses several new features in Visual C++ 6, all while moving quickly enough for the busy, working programmer. Chapman's first section introduces the basic Visual C++ 6 tools, like the AppWizard and ClassWizard, and discusses the essentials of building dialog-based applications using basic Windows controls such as static text, edit, button, and list box controls. Further chapters cover mouse and keyboard basics, timers, menus, and fonts. In short, the first week provides a traditional introduction to Windows and MFC programming without the frills. The second set of tutorials delves into Graphical Device Interface (GDI) graphics programming, always a challenging topic for new MFC programmers. Then the author moves to using ActiveX controls inside your applications (a real strength of Visual C++, enhanced in the new release). The basics of toolbars, saving and restoring files to MFC applications, and an introduction to Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) programming round out this set of chapters. The last set of exercises will give the MFC developer some new expertise. First, the author looks at the potential of ActiveX Data Objects (ADOs) for database development and how to build reusable libraries in both static and dynamic targets. Advanced material introduces the basics of networking and the TCP/IP protocol and discusses MFC support for working with the Web. For readers with a little more time, handy appendices discuss additional topics such as printing, the MFC container and helper classes, and the basics of exception handling and debugging. Clearly, the constraints of the 21-day format have not prevented this author from successfully covering many essential topics in today's MFC programming with a good level of detail. --Richard Dragan
I purchased this book to learn the Visual aspect of Visual C++. In that regard it is on target. Don't get it to teach you C++ because it is not designed to do so and there are lots of good books for learning C++ itself. I like the fact that it stays on the Visual part -- I have seen many Visual C++ books that throw in 1-2 chapters on the visual portion as an obvious afterthoughts.

The flaws in this book render it half-useless, however. (1) Many of the examples in the text are incorrect and won't compile. (2) There are too many chapters where one rewrites the same drawing program. Since the first chapter drawing program won't compile, and all of the other ones say to do the same things as in that chapter to start with, this renders at least 3 chapters useless. (3) I would prefer more useful examples than another variant of scribble (especially since it doesn't work anyway). (4) I downloaded the example chapter code from their website. The chapter codes I tried work, but obviously aren't based on a person working through the actual chapters, since the code has many differences from what you get from the compiler. I expect that they used code from past text revisions, possibly based on earlier versions of Visual C++. (5) It would be helpful if they supplied (either in a CD or at their website) actual code derived from various points in each chapter (e.g., open file for Chapter 10 version 3 to see the code for the partially completed project on page 210). (6) It would be good to have MANY more compilable points in the chapters. As it stands, one has to make scores to hundreds of changes between times where it allows compilation. This makes it very difficult for a beginner (i.e., a person who would buy a training text) to get exactly right. (7) The exercise portions of each chapter should be somehow marked, not buried in the text of paragraphs -- this would allow users to work through examples more quickly and not miss some important step.

Overall, good fundamentals but badly flawed execution. Quite disappointing compared with the rest of the series.

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