

# Software Developer

TECHNOLOGY · O\*NET 15-1252.00 · SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

SHIP MORE, DEBUG FASTER, AND SPEND THE SAVED HOURS ON THE HARD PROBLEMS.

## 1 YOUR ROLE TODAY

Software developers design, build and maintain systems. The architecture, the trade-offs and the judgement on what to build stay yours. The boilerplate, the first-pass tests and the documentation are where AI is already a daily tool — with review on everything it writes.

### WHAT THE JOB INVOLVES

- Design, write and test software.
- Review and debug code.
- Write and maintain technical documentation.
- Collaborate on requirements and architecture.
- Maintain and improve existing systems.
- Plan and estimate development work.

### SKILLS THAT MATTER MOST

- Programming
- Complex problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Systems analysis
- Reading comprehension
- Active learning

O\*NET job zone: Job Zone 4 — considerable preparation.

## 2 THE FOUR COPILOT TOOLS

<b>COPILOT CHAT</b>	Free, secure chat. Works from the open web and anything you paste or upload. No access to your internal files unless you give it.
<b>M365 COPILOT</b>	Sits inside Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and Teams. Works on your own emails, files and meetings (only what you already have permission to see).
<b>COPILOT COWORK</b>	You hand over a longer job and it works through the steps, showing progress so you can steer. Good for multi-stage work that used to eat an afternoon.
<b>COPILOT AGENTS</b>	A custom helper you (or IT) set up once to handle a specific, repeatable job — answering a common question, triaging a queue, drafting from a template.

## 3 AI OPPORTUNITY MAP

Where the four tools fit the real work — with a practical example for each.

TASK	BEST TOOL	PRACTICAL EXAMPLE
Write boilerplate and first-draft functions	<b>M365 COPILOT</b>	Draft a function or test from a clear description, then review and refactor.
Understand an unfamiliar codebase	<b>COPILOT CHAT</b>	Ask for an explanation of a module or a tricky bit of code.
Write tests and documentation	<b>M365 COPILOT</b>	Generate unit tests and a first-draft README, then check coverage and accuracy.
Investigate a bug	<b>COPILOT CHAT</b>	Talk through the error and likely causes; you confirm against the actual system.
Build a small internal tool	<b>COPILOT COWORK</b>	Delegate a first cut of a script or utility, then take it the rest of the way.
Answer 'how do we do X here' for the team	<b>COPILOT AGENTS</b>	An agent grounded in your repo and docs that answers setup and convention questions.

## 4 SKILLS TO BUILD

The AI-literacy habits this role needs.

- Reviewing every line — AI code compiles and can still be wrong or unsafe.
- Writing precise specs so the draft is close.
- Keeping security and licensing in mind for generated code.
- Knowing what not to paste into a tool that leaves your environment.

## 5 GETTING STARTED — 3 QUICK WINS THIS WEEK

- ✓ Generate tests for one function this week and check the coverage.
- ✓ Ask Copilot to explain a module you've been avoiding.
- ✓ Draft a README for a project that hasn't got one.

## 6 GETTING AHEAD — YOUR 90-DAY PLAN

<b>Days 1–30 · Get started</b>	Use Copilot in your editor for boilerplate, tests and docs. Review everything as if a junior wrote it.
<b>Days 31–60 · Build the habit</b>	Delegate small internal tools to Cowork. Build prompts for your team's conventions.
<b>Days 61–90 · Get ahead</b>	Set up a repo-grounded agent for onboarding and conventions. Track review quality, not just speed.

## 7 WHERE TO LEARN NEXT

Four short intro courses, in order. Start at the top.

- 01** Start with Copilot Chat  
The no-risk way in. Ask, draft, summarise, compare. One hour.

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**02** Work inside M365 Copilot  
Use it in the apps you already live in: Outlook, Word, Excel, Teams.

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**03** Delegate with Copilot Cowork  
Hand over the multi-step jobs. Learn to brief, check and steer.

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**04** Build a Copilot Agent  
Turn your most repeated task into a helper that runs itself.

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Sources — Occupation overview: O\*NET 30.2, occupation 15-1252.00 ([oneline.org/link/summary/15-1252.00](https://oneline.org/link/summary/15-1252.00)) and the ESCO occupational profile ([esco.ec.europa.eu](https://esco.ec.europa.eu)). Copilot tool descriptions: Microsoft 365 Copilot and Copilot Cowork product documentation, Microsoft, May 2026. AI mapping and pathways: Craig Stanley Studio. Verify figures and policy against your own systems before acting.

