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## Shell Scripting: If Variable Is Not Defined, Set Default Variable

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If var is defined AND NOT EMPTY, use var, otherwise set a default variable under Bash. For e.g. my script needs a parameter for output variable. It can be text or html. I set it as follows in my script



[1]

```
output=$1 # either text or html
```

However, sometime user forget to pass the parameter to my shell script and my enter logic fails. So how do I set default value to text, if no parameter passed?

BASH, POSIX shell, and Korn (all versions) support the parameter expansion and testing. For e.g. if \$1 is defined AND NOT EMPTY, use \$1; otherwise, set to "text", enter:

```
output=${1-text}
echo $output
```

OR (see my comment below):

```
output=${1:-text}
echo $output
```

Try another example at a shell prompt:

```
$ vech=Bus
$ echo ${vech-Car}
$ echo ${vech:-Car}
$ unset vech
$ echo ${vech-Car}
$ echo ${vech:-Car}
```

Finally, here is a sample script:

```
#!/bin/bash
output=${1-text}
echo "Setting output to $output..."
```

Now, run it as follows:

```
$ ./script.sh html
$ ./script.sh text
$ ./script.sh
```

You can also force to user to pass the parameter:

```
#!/bin/bash
output=${1-text}
[ $# -eq 0 ] && { echo "Usage: $0 format" ; exit 1; }
echo "Setting output to $output..."
```

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