
Specifying the Format for Help Balloon Content

You specify the format for the content of your help balloons as text strings within the help resource, as text strings within 'STR ' resources, as lists of text strings within 'STR#' resources, as styled text using 'TEXT' and 'styl' resources, or as pictures within 'PICT' resources.

You can easily add Balloon Help on-line assistance to your existing application without changing its code by adding the help resources described in the section entitled **Using the Help Manager**. When you use help resources, the **Help Manager** tracks the cursor and displays and removes help balloons for you. With the individual routines you can also provide Balloon Help on-line assistance without using the help resources. However, this requires that your application track the cursor and display and remove balloons.

Individual sections describe all the help resources in detail. Common to all the help resources are the following identifiers, by which you identify the format of your user help information:

Identifier	Help content format
<u>HMStringItem</u>	Pascal string within the help resource
<u>HMPictItem</u>	'PICT' resource
<u>HMStringResItem</u>	'STR#' resource
<u>HMTEResItem</u>	'TEXT' and 'styl' resources
<u>HMSTRResItem</u>	'STR ' resource
<u>HMSkipItem</u>	No content-skip this item

You can use the HMStringItem identifier to store Pascal strings directly in a help resource. However, you can make it much easier to localize your product by storing your user help content in separate resources-namely, in 'STR#', 'PICT', 'STR ', and 'TEXT' resources-that can be modified by nonprogrammers using tools like the ResEdit resource editor.

To display a diagram or illustration in 'PICT' format, use the HMPictItem identifier. You provide help content by specifying the resource ID of the 'PICT' resource that contains the diagram or illustration, and the **Help Manager** displays the picture in a help balloon.

To display a string stored in a string list ('STR#') resource, use the HMStringResItem identifier. As illustrated in the section under the heading, **Providing Help Balloons for Menus**, you provide help content by specifying two items in your help resource: the resource ID of an 'STR#' resource, and the index to the particular string that you want displayed from within that list.

To display styled text, use the HMTEResItem identifier. You provide help content by specifying a resource ID that is common to both a style

scrap ('styl') resource and a 'TEXT' resource, and the **Help Manager** employs **TextEdit** routines to display your text with your prescribed styles. For example, you might create a 'TEXT' resource with resource ID 1000 that contains the words "Displays your text in boldface print" and a 'styl' resource with resource ID 1000 that applies boldface style to the message. (See **TextEdit** for a description of the style scrap.)

To display text from a simple text string ('STR ') resource, use the HMSTRResItem identifier. You provide help content by specifying the resource ID of an 'STR ' resource, and the **Help Manager** displays the text from that resource in a help balloon. With 'STR ' resources, each text string must be stored in a separate resource. It is usually more convenient to group related help messages in a single 'STR#' resource and use the HMStringResItem identifier.

You can use the HMSkipItem identifier for items or rectangles for which you do not want to provide a help balloon. For example, you specify HMSkipItem for the dashed lines that appear in menus. (Dashed lines cannot have help balloons.)