

API key

3 languages

ArticleTalkTools

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An **application programming interface (API) key** is a unique identifier used to [authenticate](#) and [authorize](#) a user, developer, or calling program to an [API](#).<sup>[1]</sup> However, they are typically used to authenticate and authorize a *project* with the API rather than a human user.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

## Usage [\[edit\]](#)

The API key often acts as both a unique identifier and a secret token for authentication and authorization, and will generally have a set of access rights on the API associated with it.<sup>[3]</sup>

## HTTP APIs [\[edit\]](#)

API keys for HTTP-based APIs can be sent in multiple ways:<sup>[4]</sup>

In the [query string](#):

```
POST /something?api_key=abcdef12345 HTTP/1.1
```

As a [request header](#):

```
GET /something HTTP/1.1
X-API-Key: abcdef12345
```

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In 2017, Fallible, a Delaware-based security firm examined 16,000 android apps and identified over 300 which contained hard-coded API keys for services like Dropbox, Twitter, and Slack.<sup>[5]</sup>

## References [[edit](#)]


- ↑ <sup>***a***</sup> <sup>***b***</sup> "API Key - What is an API Key?" ↗. *Last Call - RapidAPI Blog*. Retrieved 2019-09-20.
- ↑ <sup>***a***</sup> <sup>***b***</sup> "Why and when to use API keys | Cloud Endpoints with OpenAPI" ↗. *Google Cloud*. Retrieved 2019-09-20.
- ↑ "Generating API Keys" ↗. *www.ibm.com*. 2018-06-12. Archived from the original ↗ on 2021-09-23. Retrieved 2023-04-03.
- ↑ <sup>***a***</sup> <sup>***b***</sup> "API Keys" ↗. *Archived* ↗ from the original on 2019-10-17.
- ↑ "Hundreds of popular Android apps contain hard-coded secret keys" ↗. *ZDNet*. Retrieved 2022-06-20.

## Book sources [[edit](#)]

- De, Brajesh (2017). *API management: an architect's guide to developing and managing APIs for your organization* ↗ (1st ed.). New York: Apress. ISBN 978-1-4842-1305-6. OCLC 978273106 ↗.

## External links [[edit](#)]

- Why and When to Use API Keys ↗

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