

In Oracle SQL\Plus, variables created with the **DEFINE** command are **always treated as substitution variables** and are **always typed as character strings**. SQL\Plus does **not** assign numeric, date, or other data types to DEFINE variables.

◆ **Key idea**

DEFINE creates a *text substitution* variable. SQL*Plus simply replaces &varname with the text you defined before sending the statement to Oracle.

◆ **Example**

```
DEFINE myvar = 123
```

```
SELECT &myvar + 10 FROM dual;
```

Even though 123 looks numeric, SQL*Plus still treats it as **text** and substitutes it directly into the SQL statement. Oracle then interprets the resulting SQL.

◆ **How SQL*Plus variables differ**

Feature	DEFINE	ACCEPT	Bind Variables (VARIABLE)
Type	Always text	Can prompt user; still text	Real Oracle datatypes
Scope	SQL*Plus only	SQL*Plus only	Stored in SQL engine
Usage	&var or &&var &var		:var

◆ **If you need typed variables**

Use **bind variables** instead:

```
VARIABLE num NUMBER
```

```
EXEC :num := 123;
```

```
SELECT :num + 10 FROM dual;
```

◆ **Summary**

- DEFINE variables = **text substitution only**
- They have **no datatype**

- Oracle assigns meaning only after substitution