

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