

G-code

G-code is the commonly used name to refer to a numerical programming language. As is the case with all languages, G-code has its own syntax and semantics. A line of code is referred to as a block, and a program is defined as multiple blocks. All programs start and end with the percent symbol (%). While writing G-code, the backslash (/) can be used to comment out an entire line, whereas if you want to make comments about a block, parentheses are to be used. Anything inside of a set of parentheses will be ignored by the compiler. As is the case with most other languages, G-code ignores white space, so spacing is used to clarify the code for the writer as well as future users.

All points of G code are comprised of words and numbers. A word is simply a letter. For example, the block "X0" is simply the *word* X and the value 0. The words X, Y, and Z refer to the three axes, while the G words refer to the movement, motion, and location. When first started up, any blocks of code will use the point (0,0,0) as home, however G54 establishes a new temporary "home" point and G52 establishes the point where the temporary reference point is to be set. In other words, the block of code "G54 G52 X100 Y100 Z0" changes the reference point from (0,0,0) to (100,100,0) and the remainder of the code will run from this point, unless a new reference point is defined.

Similarly, other G-code words can be used to define how the space between two points should be interpolated. In some instances you may want two points to be connected via a straight line, while at other times it would be better to have them connected via a circular pattern. When dealing with circular interpolation, you can set it to be done in either a clockwise or counterclockwise manner. Beyond just linear and circular interpolation, there are dozens of G-code words that determine how the code is to be run.