Reserved words

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A *reserved word* is a character-string with a predefined meaning in a COBOL source unit.

The following table identifies words that are reserved in Enterprise COBOL and words that you should avoid because they might be reserved in a future release of Enterprise COBOL.

- Words marked *X* under *Reserved* are reserved for function implemented in Enterprise COBOL. If used as user-defined names, these words are flagged with an S-level message.
- Words marked *X* under *Standard only* are 85 COBOL Standard reserved words for function not implemented in Enterprise COBOL. (Some of the function is implemented in the Report Writer Precompiler.) Use of these words as user-defined names is flagged with an S-level message.
- Words marked *X* under *Potential reserved words* are words that might be reserved in a future release of Enterprise COBOL. IBM® recommends that you not use these words as user-defined names. Use of these words as user-defined names is flagged with an I-level message.
  This column includes words reserved in the 2002 COBOL Standard.

The default reserved word table is shown below. You can select a different reserved word table by using the WORD compiler option. For details, see WORD in the *Enterprise COBOL Programming Guide*.

Table 1. **Reserved words**

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
+ Arithmetic operator - unary plus or addition	X		
- Arithmetic operator - unary minus or subtraction	X		
* Arithmetic operator - multiplication	X		
/ Arithmetic operator - division	X		
** Arithmetic operator - exponentiation	X		
> Relational operator - greater than	X		
< Relational operator - less than	X		
= Relational operator - equal and assignment operator in COMPUTE	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
== Pseudo-text delimiter in COPY and REPLACE statements	X		
>= Relational operator - greater than or equal	X		
<= Relational operator - less than or equal	X		
<> Relational operator - not equal		X	
*> Comment indicator	X		
>> Compiler directive indicator		X	
ACCEPT	X		
ACCESS	X		
ACTIVE-CLASS			X
ADD	X		
ADDRESS	X		
ADVANCING	X		
AFTER	X		
ALIGNED			X
ALL	X		
ALLOCATE	X		
ALPHABET	X		
ALPHABETIC	X		
ALPHABETIC-LOWER	X		
ALPHABETIC-UPPER	X		
ALPHANUMERIC	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
ALPHANUMERIC-EDITED	X		
ALSO	X		
ALTER	X		
ALTERNATE	X		
AND	X		
ANY	X		
ANYCASE			X
APPLY	X		
ARE	X		
AREA	X		
AREAS	X		
ASCENDING	X		
ASSIGN	X		
AT	X		
AUTHOR	X		
B-AND			X
B-NOT			X
B-OR			X
B-XOR			X
BASED			X
BASIS	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
BEFORE	X		
BEGINNING	X		
BINARY	X		
BINARY-CHAR			X
BINARY-DOUBLE			X
BINARY-LONG			X
BINARY-SHORT			X
BIT			X
BLANK	X		
BLOCK	X		
BOOLEAN			X
BOTTOM	X		
BY	X		
BYTE-LENGTH	X		
CALL	X		
CANCEL	X		
CBL	X		
CD		X	
CF		X	
CH		X	
CHARACTER	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
CHARACTERS	X		
CLASS	X		
CLASS-ID	X		
CLOCK-UNITS		X	
CLOSE	X		
COBOL	X		
CODE	X		
CODE-SET	X		
COL			X
COLLATING	X		
COLS			X
COLUMN		X	
COLUMNS			X
COM-REG	X		
COMMA	X		
COMMON	X		
COMMUNICATION		X	
COMP	X		
COMP-1	X		
COMP-2	X		
COMP-3	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
COMP-4	X		
COMP-5	X		
COMPUTATIONAL	X		
COMPUTATIONAL-1	X		
COMPUTATIONAL-2	X		
COMPUTATIONAL-3	X		
COMPUTATIONAL-4	X		
COMPUTATIONAL-5	X		
COMPUTE	X		
CONDITION			X
CONFIGURATION	X		
CONSTANT			X
CONTAINS	X		
CONTENT	X		
CONTINUE	X		
CONTROL		X	
CONTROLS		X	
CONVERTING	X		
COPY	X		
CORR	X		
CORRESPONDING	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
COUNT	X		
CRT			X
CURRENCY	X		
CURSOR			X
DATA	X		
DATA-POINTER			X
DATE	X		
DATE-COMPILED	X		
DATE-WRITTEN	X		
DAY	X		
DAY-OF-WEEK	X		
DBCS	X		
DE		X	
DEBUG-CONTENTS	X		
DEBUG-ITEM	X		
DEBUG-LINE	X		
DEBUG-NAME	X		
DEBUG-SUB-1	X		
DEBUG-SUB-2	X		
DEBUG-SUB-3	X		
DEBUGGING	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
DECIMAL-POINT	X		
DECLARATIVES	X		
DEFAULT	X		
DELETE	X		
DELIMITED	X		
DELIMITER	X		
DEPENDING	X		
DESCENDING	X		
DESTINATION		X	
DETAIL		X	
DISABLE		X	
DISPLAY	X		
DISPLAY-1	X		
DIVIDE	X		
DIVISION	X		
DOWN	X		
DUPLICATES	X		
DYNAMIC	X		
EC			X
EGCS	X		
EGI		X	

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
EJECT	X		
ELSE	X		
EMI		X	
ENABLE		X	
END	X		
END-ACCEPT			X
END-ADD	X		
END-CALL	X		
END-COMPUTE	X		
END-DELETE	X		
END-DISPLAY			X
END-DIVIDE	X		
END-EVALUATE	X		
END-EXEC	X		
END-IF	X		
END-INVOKE	X		
END-JSON	X		
END-MULTIPLY	X		
END-OF-PAGE	X		
END-PERFORM	X		
END-READ	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
END-RECEIVE		X	
END-RETURN	X		
END-REWRITE	X		
END-SEARCH	X		
END-START	X		
END-STRING	X		
END-SUBTRACT	X		
END-UNSTRING	X		
END-WRITE	X		
END-XML	X		
ENDING	X		
ENTER	X		
ENTRY	X		
ENVIRONMENT	X		
EO			X
EOP	X		
EQUAL	X		
ERROR	X		
ESI		X	
EVALUATE	X		
EVERY	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
EXCEPTION	X		
EXCEPTION-OBJECT			X
EXEC	X		
EXECUTE	X		
EXIT	X		
EXTEND	X		
EXTERNAL	X		
FACTORY	X		
FALSE	X		
FD	X		
FILE	X		
FILE-CONTROL	X		
FILLER	X		
FINAL		X	
FIRST	X		
FLOAT-EXTENDED			X
FLOAT-LONG			X
FLOAT-SHORT			X
FOOTING	X		
FOR	X		
FORMAT			X

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
FREE	X		
FROM	X		
FUNCTION	X		
FUNCTION-ID			X
FUNCTION-POINTER	X		
GENERATE	X		
GET			X
GIVING	X		
GLOBAL	X		
GO	X		
GOBACK	X		
GREATER	X		
GROUP		X	
GROUP-USAGE	X		
HEADING		X	
HIGH-VALUE	X		
HIGH-VALUES	X		
I-O	X		
I-O-CONTROL	X		
ID	X		
IDENTIFICATION	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
IF	X		
IN	X		
INDEX	X		
INDEXED	X		
INDICATE		X	
INHERITS	X		
INITIAL	X		
INITIALIZE	X		
INITIATE		X	
INPUT	X		
INPUT-OUTPUT	X		
INSERT	X		
INSPECT	X		
INSTALLATION	X		
INTERFACE			X
INTERFACE-ID			X
INTO	X		
INVALID	X		
INVOKE	X		
IS	X		
JAVA	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
JNIENVPTR	X		
JSON	X		
JSON-CODE	X		
JSON-STATUS	X		
JUST	X		
JUSTIFIED	X		
KANJI	X		
KEY	X		
LABEL	X		
LAST		X	
LEADING	X		
LEFT	X		
LENGTH	X		
LESS	X		
LIMIT	X		
LIMITS		X	
LINAGE	X		
LINAGE-COUNTER	X		
LINE	X		
LINE-COUNTER		X	
LINES	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
LINKAGE	X		
LOCAL-STORAGE	X		
LOCALE			X
LOCK	X		
LOW-VALUE	X		
LOW-VALUES	X		
MEMORY	X		
MERGE	X		
MESSAGE		X	
METHOD	X		
METHOD-ID	X		
MINUS			X
MODE	X		
MODULES	X		
MORE-LABELS	X		
MOVE	X		
MULTIPLE	X		
MULTIPLY	X		
NATIONAL	X		
NATIONAL-EDITED	X		
NATIVE	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
NEGATIVE	X		
NESTED			X
NEXT	X		
NO	X		
NOT	X		
NULL	X		
NULLS	X		
NUMBER		X	
NUMERIC	X		
NUMERIC-EDITED	X		
OBJECT	X		
OBJECT-COMPUTER	X		
OBJECT-REFERENCE			X
OCCURS	X		
OF	X		
OFF	X		
OMITTED	X		
ON	X		
OPEN	X		
OPTIONAL	X		
OPTIONS			X

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
OR	X		
ORDER	X		
ORGANIZATION	X		
OTHER	X		
OUTPUT	X		
OVERFLOW	X		
OVERRIDE	X		
PACKED-DECIMAL	X		
PADDING	X		
PAGE	X		
PAGE-COUNTER		X	
PASSWORD	X		
PERFORM	X		
PF		X	
PH		X	
PIC	X		
PICTURE	X		
PLUS		X	
POINTER	X		
POINTER-24			X
POINTER-31			X

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
POINTER-32	X		
POINTER-64			X
POSITION	X		
POSITIVE	X		
PRESENT			X
PRINTING		X	
PROCEDURE	X		
PROCEDURE-POINTER	X		
PROCEDURES	X		
PROCEED	X		
PROCESSING	X		
PROGRAM	X		
PROGRAM-ID	X		
PROGRAM-POINTER			X
PROPERTY			X
PROTOTYPE			X
PURGE		X	
QUEUE		X	
QUOTE	X		
QUOTES	X		
RAISE			X

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
RAISING			X
RANDOM	X		
RD		X	
READ	X		
READY	X		
RECEIVE		X	
RECORD	X		
RECORDING	X		
RECORDS	X		
RECURSIVE	X		
REDEFINES	X		
REEL	X		
REFERENCE	X		
REFERENCES	X		
RELATIVE	X		
RELEASE	X		
RELOAD	X		
REMAINDER	X		
REMOVAL	X		
RENAMES	X		
REPLACE	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
REPLACING	X		
REPORT		X	
REPORTING		X	
REPORTS		X	
REPOSITORY	X		
RERUN	X		
RESERVE	X		
RESET	X		
RESUME			X
RETRY			X
RETURN	X		
RETURN-CODE	X		
RETURNING	X		
REVERSED	X		
REWIND	X		
REWRITE	X		
RF		X	
RH		X	
RIGHT	X		
ROUNDED	X		
RUN	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
SAME	X		
SCREEN			X
SD	X		
SEARCH	X		
SECTION	X		
SECURITY	X		
SEGMENT		X	
SEGMENT-LIMIT	X		
SELECT	X		
SELF	X		
SEND		X	
SENTENCE	X		
SEPARATE	X		
SEQUENCE	X		
SEQUENTIAL	X		
SERVICE	X		
SET	X		
SHARING			X
SHIFT-IN	X		
SHIFT-OUT	X		
SIGN	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
SIZE	X		
SKIP1	X		
SKIP2	X		
SKIP3	X		
SORT	X		
SORT-CONTROL	X		
SORT-CORE-SIZE	X		
SORT-FILE-SIZE	X		
SORT-MERGE	X		
SORT-MESSAGE	X		
SORT-MODE-SIZE	X		
SORT-RETURN	X		
SOURCE		X	
SOURCE-COMPUTER	X		
SOURCES			X
SPACE	X		
SPACES	X		
SPECIAL-NAMES	X		
SQL	X		
SQLIMS	X		
STANDARD	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
STANDARD-1	X		
STANDARD-2	X		
START	X		
STATUS	X		
STOP	X		
STRING	X		
SUB-QUEUE-1		X	
SUB-QUEUE-2		X	
SUB-QUEUE-3		X	
SUBTRACT	X		
SUM		X	
SUPER	X		
SUPPRESS	X		
SYMBOLIC	X		
SYNC	X		
SYNCHRONIZED	X		
SYSTEM-DEFAULT			X
TABLE		X	
TALLY	X		
TALLYING	X		
TAPE	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
TERMINAL		X	
TERMINATE		X	
TEST	X		
TEXT		X	
THAN	X		
THEN	X		
THROUGH	X		
THRU	X		
TIME	X		
TIMES	X		
TITLE	X		
TO	X		
TOP	X		
TRACE	X		
TRAILING	X		
TRUE	X		
TYPE	X		
TYPEDEF			X
UNIT	X		
UNIVERSAL			X
UNLOCK			X

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
UNSTRING	X		
UNTIL	X		
UP	X		
UPON	X		
USAGE	X		
USE	X		
USER-DEFAULT			X
USING	X		
UTF-8	X		
VAL-STATUS			X
VALID			X
VALIDATE			X
VALIDATE-STATUS			X
VALUE	X		
VALUES	X		
VARYING	X		
VOLATILE	X		
WHEN	X		
WHEN-COMPILED	X		
WITH	X		
WORDS	X		

Word	Reserved	Standard only	Potential reserved words
WORKING-STORAGE	X		
WRITE	X		
WRITE-ONLY	X		
XML	X		
XML-CODE	X		
XML-EVENT	X		
XML-INFORMATION	X		
XML-NAMESPACE	X		
XML-NAMESPACE-PREFIX	X		
XML-NNAMESPACE	X		
XML-NNAMESPACE-PREFIX	X		
XML-NTEXT	X		
XML-SCHEMA	X		
XML-TEXT	X		
ZERO	X		
ZEROES	X		
ZEROS	X		

RELATED REFERENCES

Context-sensitive words

Parent topic:

→ Appendixes