

# key

A `String` system variable that contains the value of the last key typed.

The `key` variable is helpful for checking whether an `ASCII` key has been typed. For example, the expression `key === "a"` evaluates to `true` if the `a` key was typed and `false` if not. `key` doesn't update for special keys such as `LEFT_ARROW` and `ENTER`. Use `keyCode` instead for special keys. The `keyIsDown()` function should be used to check for multiple different key presses at the same time.

## Examples



```
// Click on the canvas to begin detecting key presses.

function setup() {
  createCanvas(100, 100);

  describe(
    'A gray square. The last key pressed is displayed at the center.'
  );
}

function draw() {
  background(200);

  // Style the text.
  textAlign(CENTER);
  textSize(16);

  // Display the last key pressed.
  text(key, 50, 50);
}
```



```
// Click on the canvas to begin detecting key presses.

let x = 50;
let y = 50;

function setup() {
  createCanvas(100, 100);

  background(200);

  describe(
    'A gray square with a black circle at its center. The circle moves when the user presses the keys "w", "a", "s", or "d". It leaves a trail as it moves.'
  );
}

function draw() {
  // Update x and y if a key is pressed.
  if (keyIsPressed === true) {
    if (key === 'w') {
      y -= 1;
    } else if (key === 's') {
      y += 1;
    } else if (key === 'a') {
      x -= 1;
    } else if (key === 'd') {
      x += 1;
    }
  }
}
```

This page is generated from the comments in `src/events/keyboard.js`. Please feel free to edit it and submit a pull request!

## Related References

<b>key</b> A <code>String</code> system variable that contains the value of the last key typed.	<b>keyCode</b> A <code>Number</code> system variable that contains the code of the last key typed.	<b>keyIsDown</b> Returns true if the key it's checking is pressed and false if not.	<b>keyIsPressed</b> A <code>Boolean</code> system variable that's true if any key is currently pressed and false if not.
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