

## PHP - Constants Types

A constant is a name or an identifier for a simple value. A constant value cannot change during the execution of the script. By default, a constant is case-sensitive. By convention, constant identifiers are always uppercase. A constant name starts with a letter or underscore, followed by any number of letters, numbers, or underscores. If you have defined a constant, it can never be changed or undefined.

To define a constant you have to use `define()` function and to retrieve the value of a constant, you have to simply specifying its name. Unlike with variables, you do not need to have a constant with a \$. You can also use the function `constant()` to read a constant's value if you wish to obtain the constant's name dynamically.

### **constant() function**

As indicated by the name, this function will return the value of the constant.

This is useful when you want to retrieve value of a constant, but you do not know its name, i.e. It is stored in a variable or returned by a function.

### **constant() example**

```
<?php
    define("MINSIZE", 50);

    echo MINSIZE;
    echo constant("MINSIZE"); // same thing as the previous line
?>
```

Only scalar data (boolean, integer, float and string) can be contained in constants.

### **Differences between constants and variables are**

- There is no need to write a dollar sign (\$) before a constant, where as in Variable one has to write a dollar sign.
- Constants cannot be defined by simple assignment, they may only be defined using the `define()` function.
- Constants may be defined and accessed anywhere without regard to variable scoping rules.
- Once the Constants have been set, may not be redefined or undefined.

### **Valid and invalid constant names**

```
// Valid constant names
define("ONE",      "first thing");
define("TWO2",     "second thing");
define("THREE_3",  "third thing");
define("__THREE__", "third value");

// Invalid constant names
define("2TWO",     "second thing");
```

## PHP Magic constants

PHP provides a large number of predefined constants to any script which it runs.

There are five magical constants that change depending on where they are used. For example, the value of `__LINE__` depends on the line that it's used on in your script. These special constants are case-insensitive and are as follows –

A few "magical" PHP constants are given below –

| Sr.No | Name & Description  |
|-------|---|
| 1     | <b>__LINE__</b><br>The current line number of the file.   |
| 2     | <b>__FILE__</b><br>The full path and filename of the file. If used inside an include, the name of the included file is returned. Since PHP 4.0.2, <b>__FILE__</b> always contains an absolute path whereas in older versions it contained relative path under some circumstances. |
| 3     | <b>__FUNCTION__</b><br>The function name. (Added in PHP 4.3.0) As of PHP 5 this constant returns the function name as it was declared (case-sensitive). In PHP 4 its value is always lowercased.  |
| 4     | <b>__CLASS__</b><br>The class name. (Added in PHP 4.3.0) As of PHP 5 this constant returns the class name as it was declared (case-sensitive). In PHP 4 its value is always lowercased.   |
| 5     | <b>__METHOD__</b><br>The class method name. (Added in PHP 5.0.0) The method name is returned as it was declared (case-sensitive).   |