

*parameter*

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**parameter.** The term *parameter* has two different meanings—it can refer either to a T<sub>E</sub>X parameter or to a macro parameter.

A T<sub>E</sub>X parameter is a control sequence that names a value. The value of a parameter can be a number, a dimension, an amount of glue or muglue, or a token list. For example, the `\parindent` parameter specifies the distance that T<sub>E</sub>X skips at the start of an indented paragraph.

You can use the control sequence for a parameter either to retrieve the value of the parameter or to set that value. T<sub>E</sub>X interprets the control sequence as a request for a value if it appears in a context where a value is expected, and as an assignment otherwise. For example:

```
\hskip\parindent
```

produces horizontal glue whose natural size is given by `\parindent`, while:

```
\parindent = 2pc % (or \parindent 2pc)
```

sets `\parindent` to a length of two picas. The assignment:

```
\parindent = 1.5\parindent
```

uses `\parindent` in both ways. Its effect is to multiply the value of `\parindent` by 1.5.

You can think of a parameter as a built-in register. You'll find a complete list of the T<sub>E</sub>X parameters on pages 272–275 of *The T<sub>E</sub>Xbook*.

A macro parameter is a placeholder for text that is to be plugged into the definition of a macro. See “macro” (p. ‘macro’) for more information about this kind of parameter.