`\edef` ⟨*control sequence*⟩ ⟨*parameter text*⟩ `{` ⟨*replacement text*⟩ `}`

This command defines a macro in the same general way as `\def`. The difference is that TEX expands the ⟨*replacement text*⟩ of an `\edef` immediately (but still without executing anything). Thus any definitions within the ⟨*replacement text*⟩ are expanded, but assignments and commands that produce things such as boxes and glue are left as is. For example, an `\hbox` command within the ⟨*replacement text*⟩ of an `\edef` remains as a command and is not turned into a box as TEX is processing the definition. It isn't always obvious what's expanded and what isn't, but you'll find a complete list of expandable control sequences on pages 212–215 of *The TEXbook*.

You can inhibit the expansion of a control sequence that would otherwise be expanded by using `\noexpand` (p. '`\noexpand`'). You can postpone the expansion of a control sequence by using `\expandafter` (p. '`\expandafter`').

The `\write`, `\message`, `\errmessage`, `\wlog`, and `\csname` commands expand their token lists using the same rules that `\edef` uses to expand its replacement text.

Example:

```
\def\aa{xy} \count255 = 1
\edef\bb{w\ifnum \count255 > 0\aa\fi z}
% equivalent to \def\bb{wxyz}
\def\aa{} \count255 = 0 % leaves \bb unaffected
\bb
```

produces:

wxyz